



American Tall Tales

By Mary Pope Osborne

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The perfect addition to every family's home library and just right for sharing aloud, *American Tall Tales* introduces readers to America's first folk heroes in nine wildly exaggerated and downright funny stories.

Here are Paul Bunyan, that king-sized lumberjack who could fell "ten white pines with a single swing"; John Henry, with his mighty hammer; Mose, old New York's biggest, bravest fireman; Sally Ann Thunder Ann Whirlwind, who could "outgrin, outsnort, outrun, outlift, outsneeze, outsleep, outlie any varmint"; and other uniquely American characters, together in one superb collection.

In the tradition of the original nineteenth-century storytellers, Mary Pope Osborne compiles, edits, and adds her own two cents' worth—and also supplies fascinating historical headnotes. Michael McCurdy's robust colored wood engravings recall an earlier time, perfectly capturing all the vitality of the men and women who carved a new country out of the North American wilderness.

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American Tall Tales By Mary Pope Osborne Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #31909 in Books
- Brand: Puffin
- Published on: 1991-09-24
- Released on: 1991-09-24
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 11.00" h x .59" w x 8.25" l, 1.36 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 115 pages

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

American folk heroes of the 19th century spring to life in these splendidly retold sagas. Osborne's reputation as a gifted raconteur (*Favorite Greek Myths* ; *Beauty and the Beast*) is reaffirmed in this compendium, which retells the legends of familiar figures (Davy Crockett, Paul Bunyan, Johnny Appleseed, Pecos Bill), as well as lesser known personalities, such as Crockett's fictional wife Sally Ann Thunder Ann Whirlwind, a composite character shaped by tales of various real-life women. Also chronicled are heroes hailing from places other than the backwoods, including Stormalong, a giant sailor who as a baby was washed onto a Cape Cod beach by a tidal wave, and Mose, a New York City fireman immortalized in an 1848 Broadway play. As tantalizing as Osborne's storytelling are McCurdy's (*The Owl-Scatterer*) elaborate, full-color wood engravings, which in their robust stylization dramatically render the grandeur of these engrossing yarns.

Ages 6-up.

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From School Library Journal

Grade 3-6-- This strikingly handsome, oversized volume presents nine all-American figures whose overblown exploits take them from coast to coast and through all manner of occupations and preoccupations. Osborne has chosen familiar fictitious characters--Pecos Bill, Paul Bunyan, Febold Feboldson--and actual people, such as Johnny Appleseed and Davy Crockett, and relates episodes that stress the individuals' human weaknesses as well as strengths. She has melded several legendary characters into a single heroine, Sally Ann Thunder Ann Whirlwind, who more than holds her own in such grand company. The rip-roaring action, broad humor, and colorful language of the convention are all here, but the violence is kept to a minimum and the laughs aren't at anyone's expense, except perhaps the subjects, who feel rather foolish on occasion. McCurdy's intricate wood engravings tinted with watercolor equal their tall task. He sets these larger-than-life folk on majestic landscapes brimming with energy, rich with wildlife and local color. The author's thoughtful introduction and notes round out this superlative offering. It's "the whole steamboat!" --Luann Toth, *School Library Journal*

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From Kirkus Reviews

For the 90's, a handsome, well-documented collection of stories about nine uniquely American characters. In her intelligent introduction, Osborne explains their genesis ``from various combinations of historical fact, the storytelling of ordinary people, and the imagination of professional writers" and notes that changing times put a new light on stories deriding various groups (including women and even animals). Thus her intention is to emphasize ``gargantuan physical courage and absurd humor" and to ``bring out the vulnerable and compassionate side" despite the stories' ``ineradicable taint of violence." Osborne succeeds pretty well in her intention, piecing together stories that make fine introductions to characters like Mose and Stormalong. Her approach suits Johnny Appleseed and John Henry better than it does Davy Crockett battling a panther, but she does manage to put a new slant on Pecos Bill and his bouncing bride without undermining the story (there's no question of a wife's disobedience here; Sue wants to ride Bill's horse as a test of skill). The telling is more polished than lively--Glen Rounds's irrepressible wit (*Ol' Paul, the Mighty Logger*, 1949) is more fun, but these versions are perfectly acceptable. McCurdy's vigorous wood engravings, tinted with lucid color, contribute a rugged frontier flavor; lively, though a bit formal in style, they suit the text admirably. Each story is introduced by source notes; a story-by-story bibliography provides a good roundup of this popular genre. (Folklore. 6-12) -- *Copyright ©1991, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Irma Patterson:

Your reading 6th sense will not betray an individual, why because this American Tall Tales book written by well-known writer who knows well how to make book that may be understand by anyone who all read the book. Written inside good manner for you, leaking every ideas and producing skill only for eliminate your own personal hunger then you still question American Tall Tales as good book not merely by the cover but also by content. This is one e-book that can break don't determine book by its deal with, so do you still needing an additional sixth sense to pick this!? Oh come on your looking at sixth sense already alerted you so why you have to listening to another sixth sense.

Annie Hendricks:

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Paul Steinbach:

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William Leone:

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