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Cornelia Meigs , William Durbin (Foreword)

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Barred from his family home- stead by his mean-spirited uncle, eighteen-year-old Chris weathers a Minnesota winter in a small cabin with his grandfather. Poverty and the tempting stories of a wandering Easterner convince Chris to harvest the trees on his grandfather's land and float the logs down the spring floodwaters of the Mississippi to the lumber mills in Saint Louis. Filled with stories of raft hands and river pilots, this fast-paced novel has all the momentum of the great Mississippi.

Swift Rivers Details

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Author : Cornelia Meigs , William Durbin (Foreword)

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From Reader Review Swift Rivers for online ebook

Steve Ward says

An excellent tale of adventure and intrigue that I couldn't put down! The author does a very good job of describing the trials and tribulations of the main character all the while telling about pioneer life in the Louisiana Purchase territory. I'd recommend this book for any reader older than 8.

Lisa Kay says

I read this aloud as part of Sonlight Core D to my 11 year old. In his words, "That was one of the most boring books you've ever read." Well, I can't actually disagree. I enjoyed the story and we learned about river rafting, but it is cumbersome to read aloud and the detailed descriptions seemed to be told for their own sake rather than as a necessary part of the story line. Not our favorite, and not a great way for us to end the year, unfortunately.

Larry Wegman says

A somewhat simplistic kids' novel about an early, young, midwestern pioneer. Exciting, has the attitude that all people are either good or bad, with nothing in between or complex. Somewhat racist toward native Americans.

Nathaniel says

I liked it.

Lisa says

Set in Minnesota around 1835 during the Jacksonian era, this is a story of the early history of the logging industry, when logs were floated down the Mississippi River to the markets at St. Louis, Missouri.

Alyson says

3.5??

Jill says

The story is a little slow to get going but held my interest. However, even taking the time period this was written into account, there are several passages concerning Native American tribes are overtly racist and detract from an otherwise decent book. Were I to do this as a read-aloud I would skip them entirely.

Example of the author's description of Native American "savages": "Red men are not usually watchful at night, since enemies of their own kind are seldom prone to come upon them in the dark. But where they have to do with things concerning the whites, they realize that the same customs do not prevail. One Indian is seldom willing to watch along, however. The darkness holds terror for superstitious souls who picture the night as filled with dreaded spirits and with forces which they do not understand. If the logs were to be guarded, it must be by two men together."

I decided not to include the second quote as I find it upsetting.

Rebecca says

It was a little slow to get into and had longer chapters than we were used to. But my daughter really got into the story and wondered what was going to happen next. Enjoyable real life adventure.

Melissa says

The story is a simple one: young man has difficulties at home and sets out to make his fortune. Set in the 1830s when the President was Andrew Jackson, this is primarily a story of rivermen on the Mississippi and the way logs were floated to market. Young Chris Dahlberg from the upper Louisiana Purchase (Minnesota) acts on his friend Louis Hale's idea: he timbers some land and puts the logs in the local river and floats them to the Mississippi where they're joined to others to float to St. Louis. In the course of the adventure he meets a French/Indian (Chippewa) who is in charge of the log raft. This man, Pierre Dumenille, is the first problematic character. Meigs handles the dual ethnicity fairly well, but has some trouble getting past her era's attitudes concerning the First Nations. While it's only a bit patronizing towards Pierre, the attitude is far more racist toward a group who live along the Mississippi. Overall, I did enjoy reading about Chris's adventures. I read this for my 2018 Reading Challenge and my Newbery Challenge (Honor Book 1933).

Kathleen says

I read of other Sonlight users not loving this book, saying it was hard to get into, but my daughter and I really enjoyed it. We couldn't wait to see where the adventure would lead next.

Thomas Bell says

Boring. Also good to remember that it was written in the early 1900s. All the tree-huggers out there would really not like this book, so it would never win an honor today. It was also very boring, the characters weren't

well developed, and as soon as you thought one was, they all but exited the book as the adventure was carried southward. The book is about carrying logs down the river to be sold. The author is completely unsuccessful in her attempt to make it a lot more things than that. After reading the Windy Hill, I was excited to pick this up, but I have been sorely disappointed.

Angela says

This review is for school, and is only a synopsis on the book.

Chris Dahlberg lives with his uncle, a mean-spirited man. After a vicious temper flare when Chris' uncle was saying cruel things about his grandfather, Chris leaves his uncle's home and spends the winter with his grandfather. Chris is persuaded by the tempting idea of heading down the Mississippi and drive logs down the spring floodwaters to the markets of St. Louis. When Chris starts out, he is guided by a half Indian pilot. Halfway through their journey, their first pilot is exchanged for another pilot, an enemy of the first. Both pilots use different strategies and ideas. After fun, exciting, and some scary adventures, they finally reach their destination. Chris returns home, and tells his grandfather of his exciting adventures along the Mississippi river.

Tricia Douglas says

This book was selected for our GR Newbery book group. I'm so happy to be a part of this group as it gives me a chance to read great literature that I normally would not have time for. Swift Rivers was a wonderful story, written in the language of the period (mid 1800s) with characters appropriate for our early country. The only thing that bothered me was all of the clear-cutting of the timber during that period. Wood was an important product, but not replanting the trees was something that was not worried about back then. Environmental worries, I guess, came later during the Industrial Revolution. But I still liked the book because of all the hard work and industriousness of all the early settlers. The story gives the reader an excellent idea of our country's history and the men/women that made it what it is today.

Stephanie says

We read this as part of Sonlight's Core D homeschool curriculum. My kids enjoyed the basic story, but it was above their reading level. (And they are advanced readers.)

I read it out loud to them, which helped. However, I had to stop after almost every paragraph to explain what happened. It is written in an odd way with large words. Great for vocabulary lessons, but not when every other word needs an explanation. Great book, but more suited for teens and adults.

Bookworm says

The story line of this books flows as smoothly and enchantingly as the Mississippi River. In the same captivating style as Big Red, you meet stout-hearted, devoted Chris, who takes the dream his friend proposes, in running logs down small branches of inland water, to the greater branches of the Mississippi and

Missouri, in the hopes of making money enough so that his aging grandfather can live in comfort. Scholarly and impatient but loyal Stuart, his first real friend, that started the idea but didn't have patience enough to work it himself, struggles constantly with learning to stick to a thing to the finish. Pierre Dumenille, the half-French, half indian river guide, who teaches the boys lessons to keep forever. This is a strong, feeling, book, one that you finish with satisfaction at the conclusion, yet regret you're leaving friends. I'd love to read more by this authoress!
