

Owney, the Mail-Pouch Pooch

Mona Kerby (Illustrations) , Lynne Barasch (Illustrator)

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One rainy night in 1888, a stray dog wandered into the U.S. Post Office in Albany, New York. Workers found him the next morning asleep on a pile of mail pouches. The dog seemed to like the post office and the smell of the mailbags and the men's wool uniforms. When no one came to claim him, they named him Owney and made him their pet. However, Owney's loyalty and sense of adventure soon made it clear he wasn't just an average mutt. Over the course of nine years, Owney guarded the mail—not only in Albany but on mail trains that traveled all over the United States.

Accompanied by lively pen-and-watercolor illustrations, this is a delightful true story of a special dog whose faithful service earned him a trip around the world. Owney can be seen in the Smithsonian's National Postal Museum.

Owney, the Mail-Pouch Pooch is a 2009 Bank Street - Best Children's Book of the Year.

Owney, the Mail-Pouch Pooch Details

Date : Published April 29th 2008 by Farrar, Straus and Giroux (BYR)


ISBN : 9780374356859

Author : Mona Kerby (Illustrations) , Lynne Barasch (Illustrator)

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Genre : Childrens, Picture Books, Nonfiction, Animals, Dogs, History, Adventure

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From Reader Review Owney, the Mail-Pouch Pooch for online ebook

Mikayela Talley says

3.) This book was absolutely adorable and entertaining. "Owney the Mail-Pouch Pooch," is about a stray dog that sought shelter in the postal office. After weeks of trying to make him a house pet, the mailmen realized that the postal office was where he truly belonged. He was a very hard worker and an even better traveler. After being away from Albany for months, the postal workers were interested to see where all he had gone on his postal excursion. Owney was given a collar where tags from every destination that he went would be placed. Once he came back from his next tour, his collar was full of tags. Being that he was such an amazing worker, he was given the trip of a lifetime and was actually put in to a dog show where he won the "Greatest Dog Traveler in the World." As the book comes to an end, Owney retires and we as readers find out that this book is based on a true story. This was once of my favorite children's book that I have read so far. It had a sweet story and an even better ending that left you happy and hopeful. I would recommend this book to anyone because of the wonderful pictures and the exciting journey that is found within. Elementary students of all ages would enjoy that book and would give them a new view of how many different places one can travel. Such a great read and highly recommended.

Theme: 1.) The places you go are endless and the people you meet will be incredible. 2.) Being a hard working person (or dog) will always pay off in the end.

Robin says

What a great story! And the fact that it is true makes it all the better. I really enjoyed reading this with Benji tonight. He wanted to know if it was a true story too, and it has a great author's note at the end that explains how she did her research and even some decisions about what to include. For example, she looked for two accounts of the same story. In some cases she found differing accounts, as in how he got his name, so she didn't include that story. What a great model for children! Includes pictures of Owney at the end. I think we'll be visiting the Postal Museum in DC the next time we visit so we can see Owney. Loved it, and thanks to Just One More Book for recommending it!

Molly says

This almost made me cry (note: I'm a softy for dog books.) Owney, a stray terrier, adopted himself out to the Albany Post Office. He took himself on trips- all the while guarding the mail and anyone wearing a blue postal service uniform. This would be a great choice for families who are visiting the Smithsonian and might have a chance to see Owney for themselves (as the note indicates, Owney was preserved and you can visit him!)

Chak says

This was one of the best children's books I've ever read. It's a true story about a stray mutt who was adopted by the Albany US Post Office. The dog traveled from his homebase of Albany all over the world by rail and ship. Owney was quite famous in his day and this book is a great tribute to him (as is the exhibit in the Smithsonian!).

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. Read this book. Seriously. Best for ages 4-8, I think. But I'm significantly older than that, and I loved it.

Amy says

Picture Biography

I really enjoyed this book, especially in the end when I realized that it was based on a true story. The story begins in 1888, when a stray dog ended up in a post office to find a warm place to sleep. He slept on a pile of canvas bags full of mail. He seemed naturally protective of the United States mail. Eventually the mail workers claimed him as their own and named him Owney. Some mail workers tried to take him home for a family pet but Owney always ran back to the post office: that was his new home. One day, Owney hopped into a mail car at the train station that was heading to New York. He returned to Albany several months later but no one knew exactly where he had been. So the mail workers tied a note to his collar asking others to attach their depot tags to his collar as well so that the postal employees would know where Owney had been. So the next time, he jumped into a train and returned several months later, he could barely hold his head up because his collar was so heavy with tags. Owney traveled all across the United States and then some and he was once captured by dogcatchers in Canada until the postal workers sent \$2.50 to release him. When Owney got older, the postal workers decided to send him on a trip across the trip to reward him for being such a good worker. He traveled to Japan, China, Hong Kong, and many more places before returning to New York City. Once home, Owney was placed in a dog show by the postal employees and won "Greatest Dog Traveler in the World" medal. Soon after, Owney retired and was given plenty to eat and a soft mail pouch to sleep on. In the back of the book, is a real photograph of Owney. It is quite an amazing story.

Act. 1: Reading Logs - This story is kind of a long picture book. It would definitely work for a younger grade - second, maybe first and up. But, if you are reading to a younger grade, you book could be split up (not read all in one sitting) and then after each few pages the students could write their reactions and opinions about the story in their journal.

Act. 2: Timeline - The students could create a timeline about the events that occurred in the book and the events that occurred in real life during that time. The timelines could then be compared to each other.

Ellie Jackson says

When I reached the end of the book, I was surprised to find that it was based on a true story about a real dog named Owney! This book would fit great into a social studies lesson and I think the students would be as amazed and touched as me. They could even write their own stories about adventures of the famous dog.

Laura says

This is a delightful introduction to both a famous American canine and the biography genre, albeit one of a dog. Told in narrative form with wonderful illustrations, children (and adults!) of all ages will learn a great deal about the late nineteenth century, the postal service, and the intelligence of man's best friend. This book was well researched and was written by dog lover Mona Kerby. Her web site is also wonderful, including links to a video about the time period and a readers theatre script written by and for fourth grade students.

(Personal--my grandfather was postmaster in Lebanon, Indiana, at the turn of the century. No, he wouldn't have met Owney--but he had a dog named Midge that would go with him each day to the post office! Don't think she was a world traveler though.

Connections for students: Students can...practice map reading, write a letter to "Owney," create an Owney dog tag, make a basic timeline.

Mary says

D'awww.

Melanie Berthiaume says

Owney, the Mail-Pouch Pooch
By Mona Kerby
Illustrated by Lynne Barasch

Categories/Genres for this class fulfilled by this resource: Picture Book

Estimate of age level of interest: 7-9

Estimate of reading level: Grades K-3

Brief description: The mostly true story of a stray dog that ventured into a post office to get out of the rain and became a beloved traveler, guarding the mail as it went on its way.

Identify at least 2 characteristics of this genre(s) and subgenre and discuss how they appear:

This book focuses on telling the true story of Owney, the Mail Dog with a few fictional embellishments to carry the story along. The illustrations portray him as a cute, perky dog with personality who does his job with pride. An author's note and bibliography give readers access to further information. The author has used an historical event to create an engaging story.

In what ways and how well does this resource as a whole serve its intended audience?

This book serves its young audience well just by being an enjoyable story that will keep readers entertained

as well as being based on a true story of a dog. The author has a wonderful website with puzzles, games, a reader's theater script and other activities related to the book. <http://www.monakerby.com/owney.htm>

Awards if any:

Bank Street College, Best Children's Books of the Year List, 100th Anniversary Edition, 2009.

One of the most comprehensive annotated book lists for children, aged infant-14. The Committee reviews over 4000 titles each year for accuracy and literary quality and considers their emotional impact on children. It chooses the best 600 books, both fiction and nonfiction, which it lists according to age and category.

WINNER! California Young Reader Medal, Picture Book for Older Reader Category, 2010. See <http://www.californiayoungreadermedal...>

Kansas State Reading Circle Recommended Primary Titles, 2009

Missouri Show Me Reader Award Nominee, 2010-2011. See http://www.maslonline.org/?page=1011_...

Pennsylvania Keystone to Reading Book Award Master List, 2009-10.

See <http://www.ksra.org/Resources/keyston...>

Pennsylvania Young Reader's Choice Awards Program Nominee, 2009-10.

See: <http://www.psla.org/association/commi...>

South Carolina Book Award Nominee, 2010-2011. See <http://www.scasl.net/bookawards/index...>

Tennessee Volunteer State Book Award Nominee, 2010-2011. See <http://www.discoveret.org/tasl/>

WINNER! Vermont Red Clover Award 2010. See <http://www.mothergooseprograms.org/li...>

H.W. Wilson Web's Core Collection "A Most Highly Recommended Title."

Parents' Choice Silver Honor Award, 2008.--The Parents' Choice Awards recognize books that "meet and exceed standards set by educators, scientists, performing artists, librarians, parents, and kids themselves." "Top Five" in Economic Role of Government Choice--for acclaimed children's books that use enjoyable stories to teach an economics lesson. The selection of books is based on objective research criteria and on direct experience in teaching with the books. The award is given by the Rutgers University Project on Economics and Children.

"This appealing and informative story, based on historical records, offers teachers and parents an excellent vehicle for teaching... Motivating children to learn about public sector workers and services doesn't get much better than this." ~ Rutgers University Project on Economics and Children.

Rutgers University Project on Economics and Children, Book of the Month Selection, February 2009.

Best Kid Books of the Year by Sue Corbett for the Miami Herald, 2008--"Kerby restores to fame the canine hero of the title, a real dog who traveled the rails guarding the mail at the end of the 19th Century. Barasch's watercolors bring this historical dog to endearing life."

Recommended as a great illustrated book at James Patterson's ReadKiddoRead.com--A site dedicated to making kids readers for life. "An Author's Note and bibliography provide more information about this remarkable pup."

Links to published reviews from professional sources e.g. ALA, Booklist, Kirkus, SLJ, etc. if any:

<https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-re...>

Maureen says

This picture book is a great story to introduce children to non-fiction. Owney was a dog famous for protecting the mail and mail carriers in the 1800s. This is a great book for children who love dogs or getting mail. What a cute story about a truly amazing dog.

Summary from the Westerville Library page: In 1888, Owney, a stray terrier puppy, finds a home in the Albany, New York, post office and becomes its official mascot as he rides the mail train through the Adirondacks and beyond, criss-crossing the United States, into Canada and Mexico, and eventually traveling around the world by mail boat in 132 days.

Beverly says

I learned about the existence of this historical terrier mutt from a song on Stephen Michael Schwartz's recent album for children "Songs from the Sandbox." He wrote and performed "Owney's Song." So I started looking for books about Owney and ran across this one at the library. Illustrations by Lynne Barasch are reminiscent of James Stevenson in style. And the story was based on extensive research by the author. It was fascinating.

Juliana Lee says

True story of the real homeless dog who made his home in an Albany NY mailroom. Owney wasn't owned by any one person, but all the mail carriers adopted him as their own. Owney lived in the mail room, chased rats, slept on mail bags, and add scraps. Soon he began going out on deliveries and jumped mail cars traveling all over the country by train. Everywhere he went, Owney received a medal from the local post office. He even boarded a ship and sailed around the world with the mail!

Esther says

I absolutely love this warm story about a dog names Owney who became famous for his travels. Owney, the Mail-Pouch Pooch is a story about a dog who takes shelter at a post office one night and falls asleep on some mail bags. The next morning, when he is discovered, he becomes very defensive and protects his mail bags. The story continues on show how Owney became accepted as an unofficial post office mascot. And that is just the beginning. The book continues on showing the traveling Owney did as he goes around the country with the mail and eventually the world. Everywhere he goes, he gets a small charm to hang on his dog collar and by the end of his journeys, he has a lot of charms all of which he wears with pride. He eventually is unable to hop trains and go around the world due to old age, so he sticks around the place where it all began with his charms and dreaming of days gone by. The best part of this is that this story has a bit of truth to it and there was really a dog named Owney who did travel around the world collecting medals.

The author really does a good job describing Owney and his journeys. I read that she wrote this story from the different accounts given about the dog named Owney. Even though Owney is only a dog, the way the

author builds up his character sharing his beginnings as a homeless dog to becoming an national star really makes the reader want to know more about Owney. I have to confess that I teared up a bit at the end and I think it is due to the author's ability to draw out emotion through her words and storytelling. I also enjoyed the circular motion the story hat with Owney's story ending where it began.

I would love to use this to show how you can take history and make it fun. I do not how close to the truth this story is, but there was a element of truth to it. I feel like that would be it easier for students to connect with the story knowing that a dog names Owney truly existed. I could also use it to teach voice and character.

Rachel Feather says

Children love adventure stories about animals. This is another one, but it's true! Owney was the official USPS dog and traveled the world on mail trains and trucks. This true adventure teaches children about more than just this lovable pooch... it teaches how the mail service works, geography, and overcoming obstacles. It is a little lengthy. It was a struggle for me to make it through the whole book. But spread over a couple days, with pauses at climatic parts, students will remain engaged.

Kaitlyn Craig says

Even though this book was based off a real story, I put it under this category since the illustrations are fictional and there was not a separate shelf for it. This book had decent illustrations and a good storyline, but nothing really grabbed my attention until the end when I found out that it was about a real dog.
