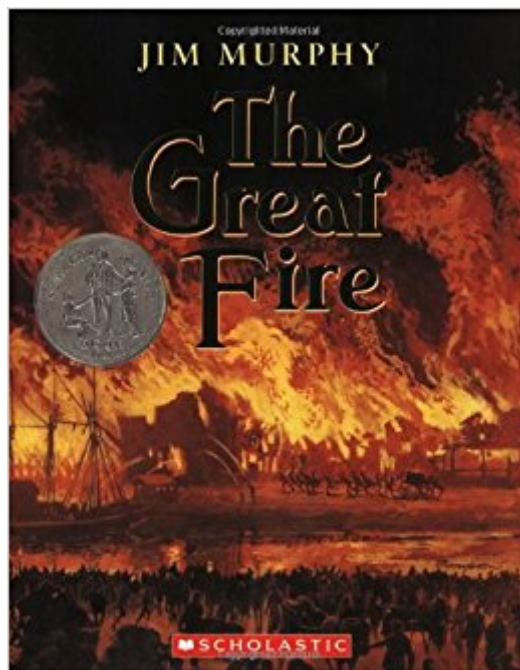


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# The Great Fire



## Synopsis

The Great Fire of 1871 was one of most colossal disasters in American history. Overnight, the flourishing city of Chicago was transformed into a smoldering wasteland. The damage was so profound that few people believed the city could ever rise again. By weaving personal accounts of actual survivors together with the carefully researched history of Chicago and the disaster, Jim Murphy constructs a riveting narrative that recreates the event with drama and immediacy. And finally, he reveals how, even in a time of deepest despair, the human spirit triumphed, as the people of Chicago found the courage and strength to build their city once again.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 1130 (What's this?)

Paperback: 144 pages

Publisher: Scholastic Paperbacks; 1 edition (August 18, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0439203074

ISBN-13: 978-0439203074

Product Dimensions: 0.2 x 8 x 10 inches

Shipping Weight: 15.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 48 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #88,266 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #31 in Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > United States > State & Local #65 in Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > United States > 1800s #456 in Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > Reading & Writing

Age Range: 9 - 12 years

Grade Level: 5 - 12

## Customer Reviews

For more than a century, poor Mrs. O'Leary and her cow have shouldered the blame for Chicago's infamous Great Fire of 1871. Now Murphy (*The Boys' War*; *Across America on an Emigrant Train*) lays bare the facts concerning one of the biggest disasters in American history, in the process exculpating the maligned bovine and her owner. Murphy demonstrates that the fire could have been contained: he unfolds a tale of botched communication, class discrimination (the fire began in a working-class section of the city and only later spread to the wealthier areas) and plain old bad luck. Strategically quoting the written accounts of witnesses—who include a 12-year-old girl and a

newspaper editor-Murphy both charts the 31-hour spread of the fire and conveys the atmosphere in the streets. This volume, beautifully printed in sepia tones, contains historic photos, engravings and newspaper clippings on nearly every page. Especially helpful are maps placed at intervals throughout the book that represent the progress of the fire. Engrossing. Ages 8-12. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Grade 5-12-Jim Murphy's primary source-based account (Scholastic, 1995) of the October 1871 conflagration that virtually wiped Chicago from the map is fully voiced by Taylor Mali. Weaving together technical details with firefighters', journalists', and ordinary citizens' accounts of their personal physical and emotional traumas as they unfolded across the 24 hours of the fire, this version of the long-mythologized event carefully repairs earlier historians' class- and gender-biased reports. Modern listeners will not be surprised to hear that some men fled and some women hauled traditionally man-sized loads in the face of the flames, but they will be fascinated by how very modern some of the responses to the disaster seem: the mayor of Chicago, for instance, called for help-and received it-from fire departments as far away as Cincinnati and Pittsburgh. Murphy carefully explains how specific mistakes led to the fire becoming so quickly out of control, as well as how political precepts of the era worked to keep these facts from public view. This is excellent social history as well as suspenseful storytelling. The diversity and multitude of personal accounts is presented in both text and voice so that there is no sense of frustration in the changes of viewpoints, but rather a better appreciation of the event as a dynamic experience from which we still have much to learn. Francisca Goldsmith, Berkeley Public Library, CA Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

very good

nice read

Great!

5-star rating is for the quick delivery. Book rating would be 4-star based on my 11 year old son's interest in the book. Good historical information, quick read with pictures throughout. We purchased the book along with an audio version of it to follow along.

Amazing book with details left and right. I like how it has people who were in the Fire and survived words in it

My 10 year old son did his book report and project on this book! He loved it and it was greatly informative!

My great nieces loved this book! Read after visiting Chicago...

Great, love this author

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