

Phoebe's Heron

 evergreenaudubon.org/phoebes-heron

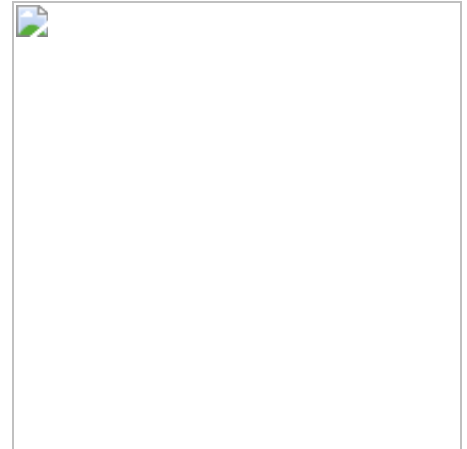
JoAnn Hackos

November 29, 2018

Phoebe's Heron

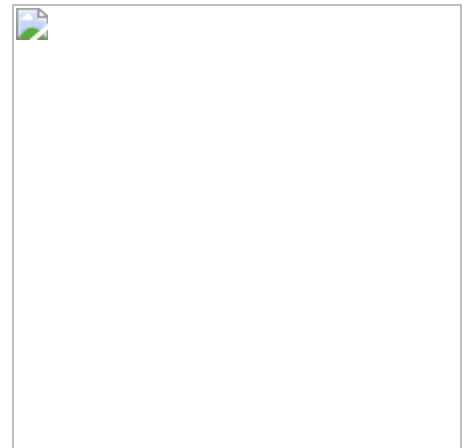
by Winnie Anderson

It's getting close to Christmas and time to find the best new books for your children and grandchildren. If you have a daughter or granddaughter of middle-school age, consider *Phoebe's Heron*. Winnie Anderson, a first-time Evergreen novelist, brings 1900 Evergreen to life by tracing the story of Phoebe Greer in the fictional but close-to-real-life Ridge community. Phoebe's father moves the family to a cabin on Upper Bear Creek in an effort to find a cure for her mother's tuberculosis in the clear, high-altitude air. Phoebe begins an adventure in learning about the out-of-doors with a new found friend, Jed, a youngster who has been taught to hunt fish, birds, and critters by his plume-hunting father.



Great Blue Heron (c) Rachel Hutchison

Anderson paints a picture of life on the Ridge at a time when it is still quite wild, despite the presence of the upper-class patrons of Pinedale. Phoebe quickly discards her Victorian city dress for a "divided skirt" that lets her jump to rocks in the stream, climb trees, jump across a stream from a rope swing, and run across a meadow away from an angry bull. She and Jed and her family take part in a bell-ringing ceremony for the Fourth of July up along Bear Creek. At the same time, Phoebe learns that her father and his friends don't approve of mountain men like Jed's father or young Jed. She has to learn where her loyalties really lie.



At the heart of the story is Phoebe's discovery of a Great Blue Heron's nest and her realization that this beautiful bird will likely be killed for its plumes. Her best friend in Denver comes from a family of milliners, making and selling hats adorned with bird feathers and even entire birds. The underlying theme in *Phoebe's Heron* is the near extinction of many North American birds for their plumes. This context, then, draws us to the early founding of the Audubon Society, begun by women who work to protect the birds and end the practice of shooting them for the millinery trade.

If you're an Evergreen enthusiast, a bird watcher, and a supporter of Evergreen Audubon, you need to acquire a copy of *Phoebe's Heron*. And, if you're planning to order *Phoebe's Heron* for a young lady for Christmas, be certain to order it in enough time to read it yourself. I found it both warm and delightful. The founding and continuing success of the Audubon Society matters to all of us.

Crispin Books
2018