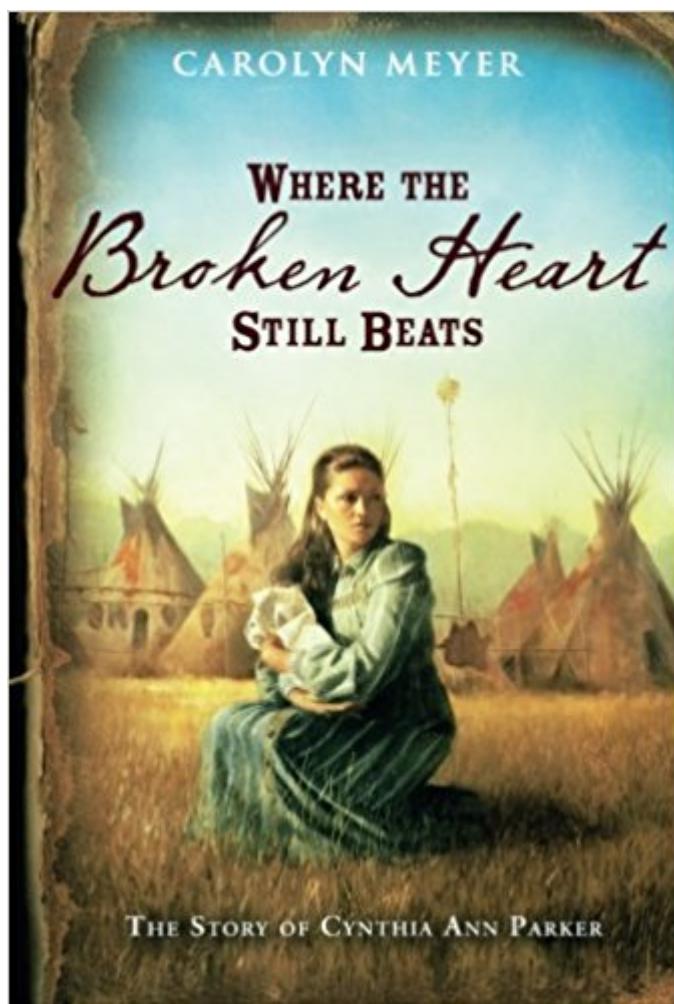


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# Where The Broken Heart Still Beats: The Story Of Cynthia Ann Parker



## **Synopsis**

At the age of nine, Cynthia Ann Parker was captured in an Indian raid and taken to live as a slave with the Comanche. Twenty-four years later, she is the wife of a chief and the mother of a young warrior destined to become the great chief Quanah Parker. But in 1861, Parker and her infant daughter are recaptured and returned against their will to a white settlement. This moving story is a riveting examination of the conflicts between Native Americans and white settlers.

## **Book Information**

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## **Customer Reviews**

Grade 7 Up-- In December 1860, a 34-year-old woman, Naduah--kidnapped 25 years earlier by Comanche Indians--was ``rescued'' by soldiers and returned to the white family who recognized her as their niece/sister/cousin Cynthia Ann Parker. Where the Broken Heart Still Beats tells her story. Naduah-Cynthia Ann was a real person, and Meyer skillfully interweaves fact and fiction in her book, alternating third-person reminiscences of Naduah's life among the Comanche with journal entries by her 12-year-old cousin, Lucy (the most sensitive and understanding of the Parkers). The struggle between the two ways of life is long and, in the end, unsuccessful. Both points of view, the Parkers' frustration at Cynthia Ann's reluctance to be ``civilized'' and Naduah's longing for her Indian family and customs, are presented believably and without editorializing. The setting, Texas

at the beginning of the Civil War, is smoothly integrated into the story; the captivating characters are well drawn. Meyer includes a map, a bibliography, and an author's note in which she discusses her research and ties loose ends together. Unaccountably missing is the information that Naduah-Cynthia Ann's son, Chief Quanah Parker, later located his mother's brother Silas and lived with the family for a time. This omission aside, *Where the Broken Heart Still Beats* is a fascinating look at the Comanche and their captives and will be enjoyed by teens who like historical fiction and/or are interested in Native Americans and the West. --Ann W. Moore, formerly at Lane Road Library, Columbus, OH

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“A skillful examination of how individual identity is determined by cultural and social structures, and of what happens when these are drastically altered.” •Kirkus Reviews  
“The captivating characters are well drawn. . . . a fascinating look at the Comanche and their captives and will be enjoyed by teens who like historical fiction and/or are interested in Native Americans and the West.” •SLJ

“Where the Broken Heart Still Beats” was the first of many of Carolyn Meyers’ books I have recently read. As a resident of Parker County, Texas I wanted to learn more of the history and legend of Cynthia Ann Parker, so I bought it as a research project. I was immediately drawn into the author’s lovely voice, and I read it in one sitting. I loved her use of alternating points of view between Cynthia Ann Parker and her cousin Lucy Parker. This is the true story of Cynthia Ann, who was abducted as a child by Comanche Indians in 1836 (only two months after the Republic of Texas won its independence from Mexico). She lived with the Indians for a time as a slave but later married Peta Nocona and happily raised a family for almost twenty-five years. Her son, Quannah Parker, became a famous leader of the Comanche people in the nineteenth century. She and her baby daughter, Topsannah (Prairie Flower) were recaptured by the Texas Rangers in 1860, and she was sent back to her white family. But by then, she completely identified with the Indian way of life, and she felt as if she had been captured, not rescued. She never saw her husband or her sons again. Meyers’ portrayal of the results of a tragic culture clash is both poignant and fascinating.

We will never know the true occurrences surrounding the capture of white settlers by the natives, so we fabricate the stories to the best of our abilities based on bleak memoirs. The story of Cynthia Ann Parker written by Carolyn Meyer gives the reader a realistic picture of what Naduah’s

recaptivity with her white family might have been like. The story was well written, yet heartbreaking.

This book is written for a young audience. A true story of a woman who loved her Indian captors and married into the tribe. This story touches upon her life, but is lacking in the details of her daily existence among her tribal people. Ages 12-17 will enjoy this rendition of a captives life.

I liked the story very much. I do find it sad that Cynthia went through so much sorrow in her life. First a captive by Indians then a captive by her family who thought they were helping. Good read in all.

The story of Cynthia Ann Parker has haunted me for years. I read her story years ago and lent the book to a friend and never got it back. When I found it on I had to have it. Cynthia Ann's life was such a tragedy, although she had many years of happiness with the Indians.

I have studied about Cynthia Ann Parker, some of what was in the book didn't fit to other things that I had read and learned. I know that being so long ago, that not everyone is going to agree to what truly happen.

Even though day-to-day activities were not, in fact, actual occurrences to these characters, It was still a good read. My husband was actually born at Fort Parker in 1934 (his parents were the caretakers), so we read everything we can on Cynthia Ann's life.

I enjoyed this book, but did not realize until I finished that it was a work of historical juvenile fiction. It is well written and truly gives the reader an idea of what it may have been like during those times. As I am engaged in genealogy research, I had purchased two other books with this one. (I am still reading them.) Initially, I wasn't sure if I would keep this book, but have decided to so that my descendants may get a flavor of what their distant ancestors lived like. I would certainly suggest it for middle school readers as it may pique their interest in history and a desire to learn more about their background and thereby know more about themselves.

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