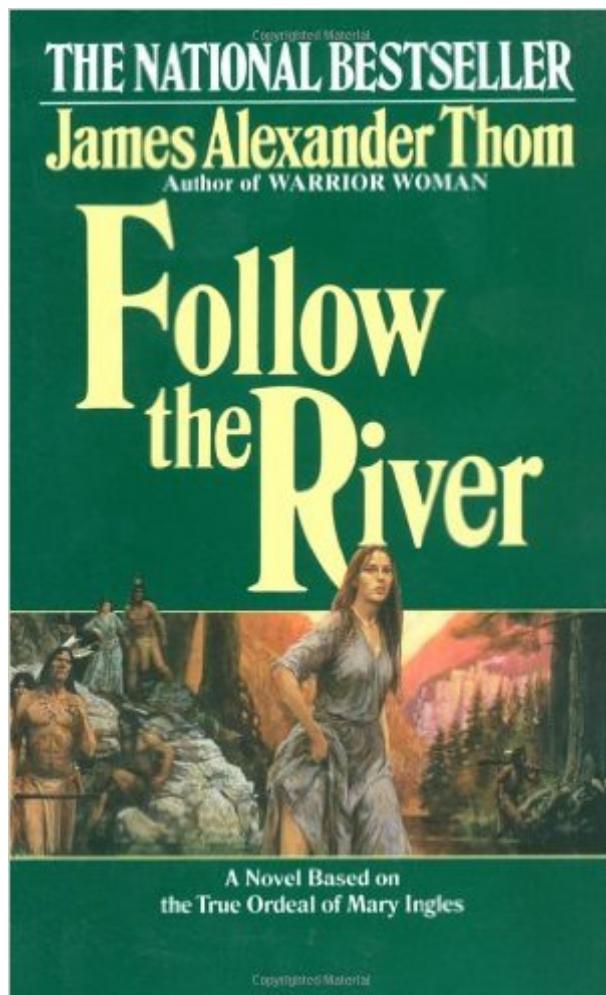


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# Follow The River



## Synopsis

Mary Ingles was twenty-three, married, and pregnant, when Shawnee Indians invaded her peaceful Virginia settlement, killed the men and women, then took her captive. For months, she lived with them, unbroken, until she escaped, and followed a thousand mile trail to freedom--an extraordinary story of a pioneer woman who risked her life to return to her people.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 starsÂ  See all reviewsÂ (789 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

A great docu/drama. Thom did an incredible job "filling in" the details if you will, of Ingles incredible story. Something that few, if none of us can relate to these days. This one had actually slipped under the radar until my wife pointed it out to me, as it was not required reading where I went to school. But I feel that I appreciate it even more now than I would have then. A warning though, much of it is quite gruesome, and it does not portray Indians in a soft, "lets make white people feel ashamed for what they did " modern manner. It sheds light into certain savagery committed by Indians that is not heard much in the days of political correctness and bending over backwards to appease. Parts of this book are very disturbing and very,very brutal. But I think this "punch in the face" style of not holding anything back is the beauty of the book. It presents the story as it happened, stripped bare for all to see. You will appreciate the hardship.

Thom has fictionalized a true story with such powerful description that one forgets the fact that most of the details are imagined. They are, however, totally believable, and even though the reader

knows the ending (she finally makes it home), the book is difficult to put down. Every footstep of the journey is vivid. The author also manages to portray the Indians as human beings in spite of the gory details of the massacre. Mary Ingles was a fourth great-grandmother of a friend of mine, and this makes the book more immediate for me. My own great-great grandfather was survivor of a Shawnee massacre in the same area 20 years later. I am astounded at the courage and endurance of these brave people who were our forebears. As a writer, I was amazed at how many different ways Thom describes weather, terrain, pain, and terror. Mary's decision to give up her baby to the Indian girl was a selfless, practical act, and her mental and emotional strength kept her from descending into a morass of romantic, sentimental, blubbering guilt. This book should be required in American history courses as adjunct reading material. It tells us what a history book cannot--the human side of the early development of this country.

I've read this book three times and teach it to my twelfth grade English classes. Mary Ingles is an inspiration of the possibilities of endurance of the human spirit. Victim of a brutal Shawnee attack in the summer of 1755 she is force marched from Virginia to Shawnee, Ohio while nine months pregnant giving birth on the trail. She is sold into slavery and taken to the area near Big Bone Lick State Park in Kentucky. Together with an old Dutch woman she escapes and begins a 1,000 mile trek home through unknown and hostile wilderness. In 43 harrowing days she goes from 125 pounds to under 80 pounds as she faces the elements, starvation, wild animals, hostile Indians, implacable nature, and a companion that turns cannibal. The reader shares the agony of the journey with Mary as she must go the final miles on her hands and knees. The most amazing thing about the story is it is true. Like his other historical novels Thom has done his research and he makes the history come alive for his reader.

I usually don't like history books, they bore me to death. My sister suggested this book to me, and at first I didn't think anything of it. She's a book worm, and I'm not, so I thought I wouldn't be interested. Once I read the first page, I couldn't put it down! Thom caught my attention and held it throughout the whole book! He has very vivid details that make me feel like I am with the character, suffering with them, fearing with them, and crying with them. After I read this book, I read all of Thom's books. And every time I would hear about one of the characters in History class, it amazed me at how much I thought I knew the character personally! Thom also caught my attention because he writes about Native Americans in a respectful way, and I LOVE Native Americans!!!! They are sooo interesting to me!! I want to learn how to speak one of the languages sometime. I loved how Thom

made them sound like humans because I hate it when books talk about all the bad things that Native Americans did, and not all of the amazing things they did! He also uses a lot of their words, and made you learn the language along with the character. Thom is amazing to me. He can make you feel the pain that the characters are going through! Even though it would be disgusting to read and imagine, Thom wants you to know how serious it was in real life, and how real this is! It's reality! --not just a fairy tale. Thom tells about REAL thoughts that people have. Usually books tell the characters thoughts, but they don't go into detail, they don't tell everything that people REALLY think. I would LOVE to talk to ANYONE about this book, whether or not you liked it. PLEASE E-MAIL ME and chat!!! (about ANY of Thom's books!!) :o)

As a West Virginia resident and one that lives near the Ohio river, I find myself thinking about Mary and her journey home. I find myself wondering what the river looked like to her. This is a fantastic book. I have passed this book on to several people and they all tell me that they can not put it down. If you read this book you will find yourself asking, "what is going to happen next". What is so remarkable is that this is a true story. I found myself crying when Mary left her newborn baby behind. The perils she and Gretel endure are unbelievable. I would hope that I would be able to persevere as she did in such trying times. I don't think a man could have done any better. West Virginia history classes need to teach about this wonderful women and not focus so much on learning the counties. I could not believe that this story takes place in our beautiful state and had never even heard of this woman. The Hallmark channel showed a TV movie based on the book but played lightly on the hardships and was not a true adaptation of the book.

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