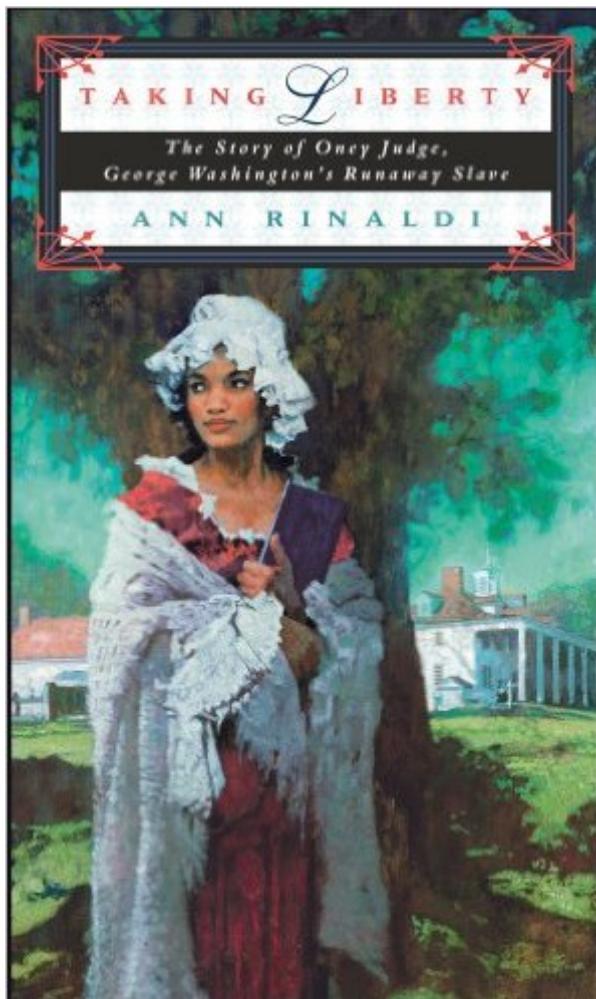


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# Taking Liberty: The Story Of Oney Judge, George Washington's Runaway Slave



## **Synopsis**

When I was four and my daddy left, I cried, but I understood. He became part of the Gone. The only life Oney Judge has ever known is servitude. As part of the staff of George and Martha Washington, she isn't referred to as a slave. She is a servant -- and a house servant at that, a position of influence and respect on the plantation of Mount Vernon. When she rises to the position of personal servant to Martha Washington, her status among the household staff -- black and white -- is second to none. She is Lady Washington's closest confidante and, for all intents and purposes, a member of the family -- or so she thinks. Slowly, Oney's perception of her life with the Washingtons begins to crack as she realizes the truth: No matter how close she becomes with Lady Washington, no matter what secrets they share, she will never be a member of the family. And regardless of what they call it, it's still slavery and she's still a slave. Oney must make a choice: Does she stay where she is, comfortable, with this family that has loved her and nourished her and owned her since the day she was born? Or does she take liberty -- her life -- into her own hands and, like her father, become one of the Gone? Told with immense power and compassion, *Taking Liberty* is the extraordinary true story of one young woman's struggle to take what is rightfully hers.

## **Book Information**

Lexile Measure: 580L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 272 pages

Publisher: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers (November 1, 2002)

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Shipping Weight: 11.5 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 starsÂ  See all reviewsÂ  (25 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #736,568 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #115 inÂ  Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > United States > Colonial & Revolutionary Periods #422 inÂ  Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > United States > Colonial #1032 inÂ  Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Multicultural Stories > African-American

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## **Customer Reviews**

Oney Judge was born on George Washington's famous home, Mt. Vernon. She had grown up there, she loved it there. On the surface, she led a good life. She was a personal favorite to the General and Lady Washington. She was treated like one of the family. Only problem was, Oney was a slave. "Taking Liberty" tells the story of Oney's childhood on Mt. Vernon and her loyalty to the family that loved her. But above all, it tells of her quest for the most basic human right, to be free. I have often credited my love for history to Ann Rinaldi. Her books are always educational, historically accurate and above all, fun. "Taking Liberty" is her latest book, carrying on her wonderful style. Once again, I have found myself completely drawn in. Anyone, of any age, who enjoys a good story doesn't want to miss this.

This is the only book, other than two children's picture books, to be written about Oney Judge and that in itself makes it a very important publication. But, beyond that, it is very well written, interesting and closely tied to the facts of her life. It is listed as a novel for "young readers" but I think it is a good read for any age (I'm a septuagenarian myself). My only complaint is I wish Ms. Rinaldi had carried the story beyond the escape, but can understand her reasons for not doing so. I highly recommend this book for a person of any age. As a side note, my county library system carries 50 other books written by Ann Rinaldi, but not this one. The neighboring county carries over 20 books by Ann Rinaldi--but not this one. I'm hesitant to even suggest it, but can't but wonder if there is some sort of concerted effort afoot to keep us from learning that the father of our country trafficked in human beings. I spent my adult life teaching high school social studies and never heard of Oney Judge until 15 years after I had retired.

*Taking Liberty*, is a thrilling adventure, by Ann Rinaldi, about a young slave girl, and how she learns that a mother's advice is the best advice in the world. Her mother has put Oney Judge in a hard position, show the love that she has for her mom and run, or stay with the Washington's and never take her chance at being a free girl.

"Let Freedom Ring," a popular quote the Americans chanted around the time of George Washington, but to the Negro slaves this quote would mean a lot more. George Washington didn't treat his slaves cruelly but he still did own plenty on his plantation during the American Revolution. One of his house servants, sweet and charming, little Oney Judge was smart but could never understand why freedom meant so much to people. She thought she was lucky because house servants got better treatment than other Negroes. House servants had to be mixed with both black

and white though. Oney Judges father was a white man, but worked as a servant because of crimes committed in England, her mother was black. Her father left when she was around four to be free. As Oney grew she understood more and more what freedom was and why it was so important. Oney was Ms. Washington favorite and later became her maid. She followed her everywhere. When General Washington was elected president Ms. Washington went to live in New York and so Oney followed her to where she would later become free, or you can call it a runaway slave. Which leads back to the beginning of the story when Oney is old and an abolitionist newspaper wants a cover story on someone close to the George Washington. I recommend this book for any one in grades 6th -10th , especially African American. This book was book was inspirational, gives you a deeper feeling of what was actually going on during those times, and teaches you to be appreciative.Taking Liberty is a very inspirational story. This story inspires anyone, letting them know they can do anything. During slave times Blacks were on a very tight leash. During the American Revolution all they heard the Whites talking about being free, but they all thought "what about me." To have the guts to runaway from your owner or even ask for or about freedom you were pretty brave. For anyone to actually survive and live back then in those conditions you were strong. Thats why reading this is so inspirational because you realize that a lot of things are possible.This book also teaches you to appreciate of everything you're able to do and say. Slaves weren't even allowed to take pride in themselves because technically they didn't belong to themselves. It teaches you to appreciate small things like being allowed to walk to where you want or sleeping on your own bed, or even allowed to use the bathroom in certain places. As you get further and further in the book you start to feel all the things that they felt and you grow sorry for them. You realize that a lot of the stuff around you is a priviledge, not a right.Taking Liberty makes you understand things about much more than the key terms in a social studies text book. You just don't learn the meaning of the word slaves, or the dates they were brought here as slaves. In this book you find a lot of things. It makes you understand how they felt, why they did some of the things they did, and the life they lived. It tells you where they slept, how much they ate, and the relationships they had with the whites.This book was so intriguing during the whole entire story. When you're reading this you don't want to put the book down. Taking Liberty is inspirational, makes you appreciate things more, and helps you understand the things going on in those times. These are the best qualities that make this book so good. I recommend it to mostly African Americans or people in the age group of grades 6th - 10th .

Taking Liberty by Ann Rinaldi Love This Book!!! November, 2004This book was an excellent book. I require it to anyone who reads it. If you're into the Slavery type of books, I recommend this to you.

When I saw this book on the shelf I just knew it was a good book for me. It's a page-turner. I was reading until 11 o'clock at night, it was good. *Taking Liberty* was a book about a girl named Oney Judge. She was living with her mother, doing all kinds of work. Her father was a white man, who was also serving for the White House until he became one of "The Gone". She was serving with her mom until her mom stole a dress from a woman who lived at the White House. Mrs. Washington found out about someone stealing the dress. And Oney was the only one who knew. So Oney one day went to tell Mrs. Washington. And Mrs. Washington told and made her work in the fields. Since Oney got her mother in trouble, her mother started to abuse Oney. From that day on Oney was living a good life. She was now Mrs. Washington's personal servant. She learned many things while working for her. She would hang in the kitchen with Hercules, the cook, and learned how to read. He would have her read recipes so that she would learn how to cook and to read. While she was having a good life, her mother was out in the fields. One day the general came to the White House and told Mr. Lude that he was going to take all the servants that he wanted to become part of "The Gone". Now doesn't that book sound awesome to you? If you want to find out the ending then just read the book! A great recommendation!

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