

Real Reg.
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Thompson, Frances

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

**A Port Credit
authoress
who doesn't believe
in Dick and Jane**

By KRYSTYNA JONES

Frances Thompson of Port Credit has written two books for children — both adventurous and interesting and both avoiding rigid sex roles for boys and girls.

Her books *Danger in the Coves* and *Escape from Grand Pre*, are part of the Buckskin series, published by MacMillan of Canada.

"The idea behind the books is simple," says Mrs. Thompson. "We had to combine a background of Canadian history with adventure."

"When you really think about it, we have a very exciting history. All sorts of things happened that textbooks don't reveal, although school books are now more interesting than they were in my day."

Danger in the Coves, which came out in 1963, has 122 pages and tells about the adventures of Davy. Among other things, he crosses the icy St. Lawrence River by canoe, watches the fires that destroyed much of Quebec City in 1845, and is captured by gangs of "crimps."

Escape from Grand Pre (1966) is about Marie and Andre Melanson and their grandfather. They live in the village of Grand Pre in Acadia. The book has been

deep interest in Acadians.

"The second one was much more difficult than the first," she explains.

"That time I had to start researching again from scratch and the title was difficult to decide on but then it just sort of came to me.

"You have restrictions when writing children's books. Ideas that may sound fantastic to you may mean nothing to young readers.

"You have to somehow figure out how to keep their attention. Without realizing, it you sometimes begin to think like a child."

Two for the Unknown Land is the title of Mrs. Thompson's third children's book, which hasn't been published yet.

In this story about the landing of the Vikings in Newfoundland, the little girl involved possesses a stronger character than the boy.

Mrs. Thompson says there is a great scarcity of good children's ones.

"Authors, for the past several years, have been getting away from the idea that boys must always be the heroes.

"They've realized that you don't have to do that to come up with a good book.

"Stories involving girls have had to become more interesting."

She believes the classic children's books will always be popular — among them *The Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame, *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White and especially A.A. Milne's books on Winnie the Pooh.

"However I'm not so sure who enjoys these most — adults or children."