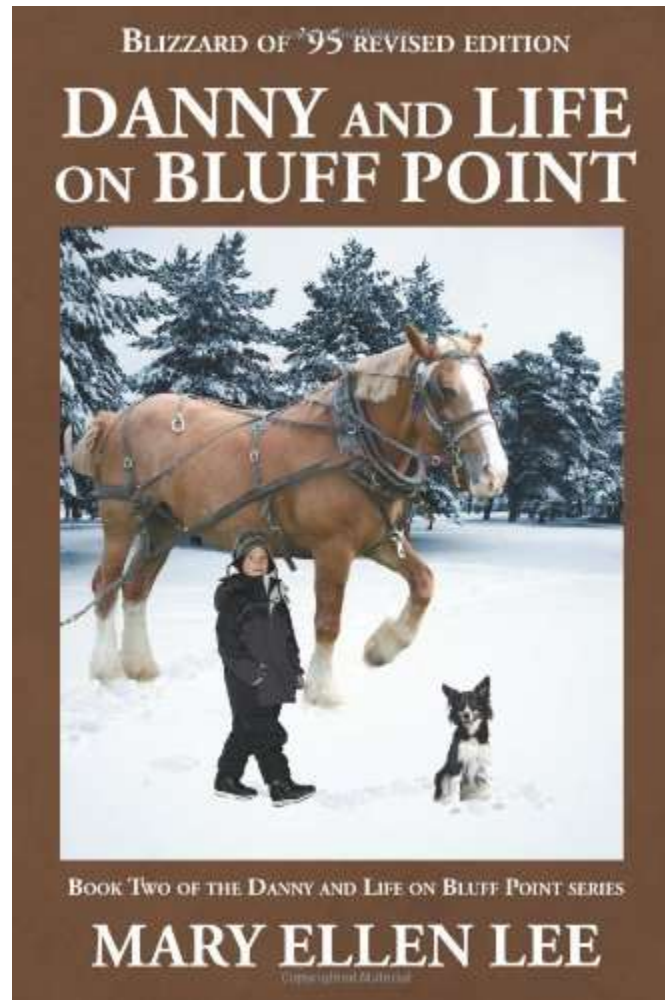




<https://www.amazon.com/Mary-Ellen-Lee/e/B004YG6IP2>

Mary Ellen Lee's **Danny and Life on Bluff Point: The Blizzard of '95** is the second book of the *Danny and Life on Bluff Point* series.

This semi fictional series is founded upon the actual journals set down during the childhood of the author's grandfather. The main character of the narrative is patterned upon author Lee's own father Danny.

On the journal pages Danny is a ten-year-old lad who thinks often about becoming tall and strong like *his* father. The youngster, and only son, who is younger than his older sister Ruthie who 'used to be a lot of fun', but, is now more interested in girly stuff and is older than two younger sisters Mary and Carolyn who are still just a little young to be a friend to Danny leaves the lad feeling alone and lonely at times.

In each book of the series, The Reader is allowed to share Danny's aspirations, hopeful imaginations and adventures along with his challenges and successes. Hence, each tome actually presents a number of smaller tales leading up to the chief dramatic, title, event.

It is during **The Blizzard of '95**, that Miss Spaulding, the children's teacher, arrives, as was the custom of the time, to live with the Lee family for three months. In their community, as in others, in addition to the small stipend the teacher, often a teenager herself, received for educating the youngsters; each family having children attending the local one room school each took turns at housing the teacher and making her feel at home during the school term.

Initially, Danny isn't especially happy about the teacher being at his house. *To me it only meant one more female in a house full of them.* He is convinced that the kids at school will tease him. Moreover, he is not very happy to begin having more of the extra chores needing to be done assigned to himself. Soon, Danny realizes that although there **is** more work to be done, he now also has a possibility to show his father that he **can** take on more responsibility and contribute more to the caring of the family.

I received these dandy, historically factual books for review during the time I was teaching fourth grade, they were a dandy fit for the youngsters who initially thought 'Social Studies' to be a bit of a drudge. Journal writing took on a whole new meaning for the youngsters I taught during those two years.

The 'Life on Bluff Point' series offers super reading opportunities with the daily life lessons taught and realization of unsophisticated tasks needed simply for living in a time when there were no big box stores; necessary materials from nails, to fuel, to clothing and foods, were most often wrought at home. At first my students were a bit surprised to discover that even in a day of one room schools, no TV, no video games and family as center of life children still had fun and good times.

I introduced the Danny books during the Teacher Reading aloud time following our lunch break. As we followed the life of Danny and talked about how our lives differ and often resemble his too, I found my students becoming more interested in his story and our Social Studies activities as well.

A home seemingly filled with females, according to Danny, even Clara the cat was a girl, is a well written book presented as a view through the eyes of a typical ten-year-old. Times have changed a bit and today's kids do have TV and the like, however, many still have chores and while they may be different from those carried out by Danny are still chores and teach responsibility and family continuity as did his.

Setting and characters are well detailed, we have snow storms and tornadoes and scary times today as did Danny back then, as I read aloud my students often offered details of similar times and circumstances relating to those about which Danny had written and I was reading. Kids were drawn into the narrative despite initial feelings that the book might not be worth hearing since there were no monsters, or big trucks, or any of the endless array kids are presented today.

Chapters are short, dialogue move the tale along, the farm and one room school, family members and locations, all become familiar, and subjects for sketches.

Danny is pleased that, Miss Spaulding encourages his interest in history and even tries to assist him in his search for the town founder's cabin. The big event in this particular book is a huge blizzard during which time something unexpected and sad takes place. My students, as Danny, learned important life lessons regarding happiness and sorrow, responsibility and dedication.

Enjoyment of Danny's journals is not restricted only to those who might actually live in Bluff Point, the setting, family dynamics, behaviors and verbiage of the era presented while differing some from that of today are not all that dissimilar, boys and girls continue to fuss some with siblings, chafe with restrictions and chores, and dread many school activities until they are better acquainted with the activity. It was not long before calls for 'just one more chapter' began to ring, and vying for who might first take the book home to read for themselves indicated to me that the book had hooked and held my students' complete interest.

While the series is presented as a mid grade offering, I enjoyed reading the series as well, we learn so much about the early days of our nation from the journals our forbears kept.

My students enjoyed listening and discussing the daily offering as I read. The life and simple moralistic teaching of Danny’s time by Ma and Pa, is presented in a non judgmental manner, and has not changed too much from what parents also try to instil today. Reading about Danny allowed my students opportunity to discuss *their* family dynamics, including hopes, aspirations, and rules often leading to initial surprise and then understanding that each family *does* have rules, and its *not just the one nutty bossy family in which I live*.

I Enjoyed the read, happy to recommend for school and public library, for the middle grade reading list and book shelf, and as a gift for middle grade students male and female. My students, boys and girls alike enjoyed the Danny series very much.

5 Stars

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Reviewed by: molly martin

<http://www.AuthorsDen.com/mjhollingshead>

30+ years classroom teacher

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About the Author

Writer Lee, trained in biology, retired after a career in which she did research for thirty-three years. She lives with her family in the Finger Lakes Region in upstate New York. Her family goes back four generations in this area. Both she and her father grew up near Keuka Lake, the setting for her stories. MaryHer children's historical novels take place in this region. Author Lee is an avid reader of nonfiction American history and uses her knowledge to enhance each book’s historical value.

Mary Ellen Lee is an active outdoor person. She's into gardening, water sports and bike riding.

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