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The Prescott Girls Receives 2026 Independent Author Award for Fiction: Northeast

SAN FRANCISCO, California — The Prescott Girls: A Letter From Philadelphia, a historically based middle-grade novel inspired by real nineteenth-century needlework samplers and the lives of the Prescott sisters of Dresden, Maine, has been named the winner of the 2026 Independent Author Award for Fiction: Northeast. The book was also recognized as a finalist in both the Historical Fiction and Educational categories.

Written and independently published by Aric Wilmunder through A Well-Regulated Press, The Prescott Girls grew out of the discovery of a collection of early nineteenth-century samplers found at a California auction house in 2020. Research into the young girls who stitched the samplers eventually led Wilmunder and his wife, Lori, to the Old Pownalborough Court House in Dresden, Maine, where several of the Prescott sisters once lived with their mother following the death of their father.

“What began as a search for a holiday gift unexpectedly became a five-year journey into Maine history, family stories, museums, and early American needlework,” Wilmunder said. “The recognition is especially meaningful because the project was never created simply as a commercial book. It grew out of a desire to help preserve and share the remarkable story of the Prescott family and the Pownalborough Court House.”

The novel blends historical fiction with documented people, artifacts, and locations, drawing heavily from original samplers, regional history, genealogical research, and period clothing and architecture. The project also includes a growing collection of teacher resources, historical study guides, and interpretive materials available through the book’s website.

The Lincoln County Historical Association, which operates the Old Pownalborough Court House Museum, partnered in the return of several of the historic samplers to Maine. Copies of the book are now available through the museum and online retailers.

More information about the book, historical background, educational resources, and ongoing project updates can be found at:

<https://www.theprescottgirls.com>

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