

# Literature on the Civil Rights Era for Young Readers

An Annotated Bibliography

*Compiled and Written by*

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*Prepared for*

We'll Never Turn Back:  
Voices of the Civil Rights Movement

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## Introduction

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The books in this bibliography help to tell the story of the civil rights movement from 1954 to 1968. They document the efforts of both prominent and lesser-known African American activists and their allies to end segregation in schools, restaurants, lodging accommodations, public facilities and the workplace; to extend the right to vote to all citizens, and to create a more just, free, and equitable nation.

We included titles that provide a context for this time period: several books examine the 400-year history of African Americans, while others show what life was like in our country at the time of Jim Crow laws, when people of color faced widespread bigotry, discrimination and violence. Several books in the bibliography focus on the songs and music of the civil rights movement, which had roots in Africa, in the Bible, in the experiences of enslavement as well as emancipation, and in the ongoing struggle for justice and equality. These songs inspired, supported, and sustained the activists.

Children and young adults participated in a full range of civil rights actions and nonviolent protests. Many of the titles included in the bibliography reflect their experiences and perspective. These books may be especially useful in helping young readers to identify and empathize with the challenges of that turbulent time and the courage of the participants.

We also encourage teachers of older grades to use the titles that are in picture book format with their students. Reading books aloud to a group creates shared background knowledge and a common reference point for class discussions, and the illustrations convey important historical context and emotional truth.

We found it truly satisfying to identify so many excellent books on this subject. We hope that, in reading them, young people and educators alike will discover much that is thought provoking, powerful, and inspiring.

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## Nonfiction in Picture Book Format

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Please note that the grade levels indicated in this section, as well as the section on Historical Fiction in Picture Book Format, refer to children reading on their own. These picture books can be read aloud to all ages, including students in grades six through eight. Reading aloud to a group will create shared background knowledge and a common reference point for class discussions about such topics as racial equality, social justice, courage, and self respect.

The illustrations in these books are a powerful complement to the texts. Using many artistic styles and different media, including oils, watercolors, pastels, and collage, the picture book artists have created vivid, vibrant, and historically-based images that convey the experiences and emotions of the period.

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### **King, Martin Luther, Jr. *I Have a Dream.***

Illustrated by Kadir Nelson.

Schwartz & Wade Books, 2012. 32 pages

All grades. In this dramatically illustrated edition of Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous "I Have a Dream" speech, key passages are combined with large, powerful illustrations showing people of many races, children and adults, coming together to listen to the speech. Entire text of the speech is included in endnotes.

### **Newton, Vanessa. *Let Freedom Sing.***

Illustrated by the author.

Blue Apple Books, 2009. 32 pages

Grades 2 – 5. This book uses the gospel song "This Little Light of Mine" as its refrain. The simple text honors both many famous African Americans (including Rosa Parks, Dr. King, Ruby Bridges and Barack Obama) as well as ordinary people who let their lights shine. The exuberant illustrations and spare words make this book an excellent introduction to the civil rights movement for younger children. With lyrics to several civil rights songs.

### **Pinkney, Andrea Davis. *Sit-In: How Four Friends Stood Up By Sitting Down.***

Illustrated by Brian Pinkney.

Little, Brown, 2010. 32 pages

Grades 2 – 5. Told in free verse, this book is about a defining moment in the struggle for racial equality when four college students staged a peaceful protest by sitting down at the Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina in 1960. See also Carole Boston Weatherford's *Freedom on the Menu*.

### **Rappaport, Doreen. *The School is Not White!: A True Story of the Civil Rights Movement.***

Illustrated by Curtis James.

Jump at the Sun/Hyperion Books for Children, 2005. 32 pages

Grades 3 – 5. Dreaming of a better life for their children and inspired by the words of President Kennedy, the Carter family struggles to integrate an all-white school in Drew, Mississippi in 1965.

**Raven, Margot Theis.** *Let Them Play.*

Illustrated by Chris Ellison.

Sleeping Bear Press, 2005. 32 pages

Grades 2 – 5. In 1955, the Cannon Street YMCA had the only African American Little League team in South Carolina. That year, 61 all-white teams pulled out of the Little League State Tournament so they would not have to play the Cannon Street team. See also Carole Boston Weatherford's fictionalized version, *Champions on the Bench.*

**Shore, Diane Z. and Jessica Alexander.** *This is the Dream.*

Illustrated by James Ransome.

Harper Collins Publishers, 2006. 36 pages

Grades 2 – 5. With simple verse, this book outlines the African American experience before, during, and after the civil rights movement. The book shows scenes of segregation, then pictures depicting the years of protest, and finally the country seen as a more just and inclusive place. The vibrant collage illustrations and spare words make this book an excellent introduction to the civil rights movement.

## Nonfiction

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**Aretha, David.** *With All Deliberate Speed: Court-ordered Busing and American Schools.*

The Civil Rights Movement series, Morgan Reynolds, 2012. 128 pages

Grades 6 – 8. This book explores the history of integrating public schools by busing students outside their neighborhoods. The busing experience in Boston – including its ugliest aspects – is prominently featured. A broad social and historical context is provided with information about school segregation, Brown v. Board of Education, and successful and unsuccessful busing programs. With many quotes and photos from the period. See also Richard Michelson's picture book, *Busing Brewster.*

**Bausum, Ann.** *Marching to the Mountaintop: How Poverty, Labor Fights, and Civil Rights Set the Stage for Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Final Hours.*

National Geographic, 2012. 104 pages

Grades 5 – 8. This book focuses on a key moment in the civil rights movement and nonviolent resistance by examining the Memphis sanitation workers' strike in 1968 – the reason that Martin Luther King, Jr. was in Memphis on April 4, 1968, the day he was assassinated. With an extensive timeline and illustrated with many historical photos.

**Bolden, Tonya.** *Tell All the Children Our Story: Memories and Mementos of Being Young and Black in America.*

Abrams, 2001. 128 pages

Grades 4 – 8. Using period photographs, paintings, drawings and selections from memoirs, letters and journals, the author creates a history of African American children's experiences from colonial times through to the civil rights era and the present.

**Bowers, Rick. *Spies of Mississippi: The True Story of the Spy Network That Tried to Destroy the Civil Rights Movement.***

National Geographic, 2010. 120 pages

Grades 6 – 8. Based on archival material and extensive research, this book details the activities of the Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission, a civil rights-era state agency that disseminated segregationist propaganda, blocked voting rights for African Americans, and spied on and harassed those who challenged white power.

**Boyd, Herb. *We Shall Overcome.***

With DVDs narrated by Ossie Davis & Ruby Dee.

Sourcebooks, 2004. 263 pages

Grades 7 – 8. This overview of the civil rights movement includes major events and figures in the years 1955 – 1968, often told in the words of the participants themselves. The book includes audio discs with recollections by Fannie Lou Hamer and the Little Rock Nine; speeches by Medgar Evers, Ralph Abernathy and others; and protest songs of the movement, as well as the voices of segregationist leaders.

**Brimner, Larry Dane. *Birmingham Sunday.***

Calkins Creek, 2010. 48 pages

Grades 5 – 8. This book documents the bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, on September 15, 1963, which resulted in the deaths of four young African American girls – and discusses how the tragedy spurred the passage of the landmark 1964 Civil Rights Act. Includes full-page biographies of each of the four girls; illustrated with historic photos. See also Carole Boston Weatherford's book of poetry, *Birmingham, 1963*.

**Crowe, Chris. *Getting Away with Murder: The True Story of the Emmett Till Case.***

Phyllis Fogelman Books, 2003. 128 pages

Grades 7 – 8. This is the story of the 14-year-old boy from Chicago who was murdered while visiting relatives in the Mississippi Delta in 1955. The horrific crime and the justice system's failure to convict the white murderers was a powerful catalyst for the civil rights movement.

**Freedman, Russell. *Freedom Walkers: The Story of the Montgomery Bus Boycott.***

Holiday House, 2006. 114 pages

Grades 4 – 8. In 1955, when Rosa Parks refused to move to the back of the bus and give up her seat to a white man, her actions led to the year-long Montgomery Bus Boycott. The author presents stories of the many people who were behind this major victory in the civil rights movement.

**Haskins, James. *The March on Washington.***

Harper Collins, 1993. 144 pages

Grades 4 – 8. This book details the work and planning that went into organizing the 1963 March on Washington in support of racial equality and job opportunity, including A. Philip Randolph's initial proposal in 1941, the uneasy coalition of different civil rights groups, the event itself, and the changes that came after. Illustrated with historic photos.

**Levinson, Cynthia. *We've Got a Job: The 1963 Birmingham Children's March.***

Peachtree Publishers, 2012. 176 pages

Grades 5 – 8. The story of one of the great moments in civil rights history is seen through the experiences of four young people who were at the center of the action and who were among the 4,000 children who boycotted school to participate in a march to protest segregation. In photo-essay format, this book includes background information about the time period and the leadership roles of adult activists.

**McWhorter, Diane. *A Dream of Freedom: The Civil Rights Movement from 1954 to 1968.***

Scholastic, 2004. 160 pages

Grades 4 – 8. This lively overview history of the civil rights movement includes key events and concise profiles of many significant figures. Also included is information about Malcolm X, the Black Panthers, and the Black Power movement. With photos on every page.

**Morrison, Toni. *Remember: The Journey to School Integration.***

Houghton Mifflin Co., 2004. 78 pages

Grades 3 – 8. Actual photographs (in full-page sepia) of the events surrounding school integration are combined with fictional and poetic text, which conveys the experiences and emotions of students who were involved.

**Nelson, Kadir. *Heart and Soul: The Story of America and African Americans.***

Illustrated by the author.

Balzer & Bray, 2011. 108 pages

Grades 4 – 8. This introduction to African American history, from slavery to the election of President Obama, is illustrated with many striking full-page paintings and is narrated in the fictionalized, informal voice of an African American woman looking back on her life and remembering what her elders told her.

**Osborne, Linda Barrett. *Miles to Go for Freedom: Segregation and Civil Rights in the Jim Crow Years.***

Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2011. 118 pages

Grades 5 – 8. Told through first-person accounts, photographs, and other primary sources, this book is an overview of racial segregation and early civil rights efforts in the North and South during the Jim Crow years, from the 1890s to 1954. Illustrated with items from the Library of Congress's African American history collection, including photographs, drawings, and documents.

**Partridge, Elizabeth. *Marching for Freedom: Walk Together, Children, and Don't You Grow Weary.***

Viking, 2009. 72 pages

Grades 4 – 8. This book focuses on the 1965 march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama to secure the right to vote for African Americans. The events of the 5-day march are seen from the point of view of the courageous children who participated. Illustrated with large photographs on every page.



**Rappaport, Doreen.** *Nobody Gonna Turn Me 'Round: Stories and Songs of the Civil Rights Movement.*

Illustrated by Shane W. Evans.

Candlewick Press, 2006. 63 pages

Grades 3 – 8. Short chapters and powerful words and imagery tell the story of extraordinary people who risked everything to fight racism and segregation in the civil rights era. Their stories are interwoven with the lyrics of songs that inspired and fortified the civil rights activists. With full-color illustrations on every page.

**Rochelle, Belinda.** *Witnesses to Freedom: Young People Who Fought for Civil Rights.*

Puffin Books, 1997. 97 pages

Grades 4 – 8. Photographs and text describe the experiences of young African Americans who were involved in significant events of the civil rights era, including Brown v. Board of Education, the Montgomery bus boycott, and the sit-in movement. Presented through the participants' own words and reflections. Illustrated with historic photos.

**Stotts, Stuart.** *We Shall Overcome: A Song That Changed the World.*

Clarion Books, 2010. 72 pages

Grades 5 – 8. This is a social history that examines the origins of the protest song and describes the importance of the song in civil rights, labor, and anti-war movements in America. Includes an audio CD with a performance by Pete Seeger. With many archival images and illustrations.

**Tarrant-Reid, Linda.** *Discovering Black America: From the Age of Exploration to the Twenty-first Century.*

Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2012. 244 pages

Grades 5 – 8. This book examines more than 400 years of African- American history set against a background of American and global events with first-person narratives drawn from diaries, written oral accounts, autobiographies, and interviews, including correspondences between Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X. Illustrated with artwork and archival photographs.

**Tougas, Shelley.** *Birmingham 1963: How a Photograph Rallied Civil Rights Support.*

Compass Point Books, 2011. 64 pages

Grades 5 – 8. This book explores and analyzes the historical context and significance of the iconic photograph of three African American teens being hit by a blast of water during the civil rights protests in Birmingham, Alabama, and it shows the power of images and the media to affect social change. Illustrated with many photographs. See also *Little Rock Girl 1957: How a Photograph Changed the Fight for Integration* by the same author, which explores the newspaper photograph of African American Elizabeth Eckford trying to enter Little Rock's all-white Central High School in 1957.

**Turck, Mary.** *Freedom Song: Young Voices and the Struggle for Civil Rights.*

Chicago Review Press, 2009. 146 pages

Grades 5 – 8. This history of the civil rights movement has a special focus on stories about



young people and includes first-person interviews. The book also explores how songs helped strengthen the movement; with song lyrics, historic photos, and an audio CD with music by the Chicago Children's Choir

## Collective Biography

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**Adler, David A. *Heroes for Civil Rights*.**

Illustrated by Bill Farnsworth.

Holiday House, 2008. 32 pages

Grades 3 – 6. Brief information accompanied by quotes is presented for several important civil rights leaders, including both famous and less well-known black and white Americans. Each biographical sketch is accompanied by a full-page portrait.

**Bausum, Ann. *Freedom Riders: John Lewis and Jim Zwerg on the Front Lines of the Civil Rights Movement*.**

National Geographic, 2006. 79 pages

Grades 5 – 8. An important piece of civil rights history is told through the experiences of two men of different racial backgrounds, John Lewis and Jim Zwerg. The book examines their families, childhoods, and the events leading up to and including their participation in the freedom rides of the early 1960s. Illustrated with black-and-white photographs.

**Brimner, Larry Dane. *Black & White: The Confrontation Between Reverend Fred L. Shuttlesworth and Eugene "Bull" Connor*.**

Calkins Creek, 2011. 112 pages

Grades 5 – 8. This book profiles civil rights leader Fred Shuttlesworth and the Birmingham, Alabama city commissioner Eugene "Bull" Connor, and the effect of their adversarial relationship on the course of the civil rights movement. The author uses court documents, police and FBI reports, newspapers, interviews, and photographs to document each man's history.

**Cook, Michelle. *Our Children Can Soar: A Celebration of Rosa, Barack, and the Pioneers of Change*.**

Illustrated by thirteen artists.

Bloomsbury, 2009. 32 pages

Grades 2 – 6. A significant person is highlighted on each two-page spread as the author, using short, repeating phrases, connects key figures in the struggle for African American equality and justice, including Jackie Robinson, Rosa Parks, Ruby Bridges, Martin Luther King, Jr., Thurgood Marshall, and Barack Obama. Includes brief biographies of each person in the endnotes; with vibrant illustrations in picture book format.

**Michelson, Richard. *As Good as Anybody: Martin Luther King Jr. and Abraham Joshua Heschel's Amazing March Toward Freedom*.**

Illustrated by Raul Colón.

Alfred A. Knopf, 2008, 40 pages

Grades 2 – 6. This book traces the early lives of Martin Luther King, Jr. in Georgia and Rabbi

Abraham Joshua Heschel in Poland, showing how they both encountered and responded to bigotry. The two men came together for the 1965 march in Selma, Alabama. In picture book format.

**Olson, Lynne.** *Freedom's Daughters: The Unsung Heroines of the Civil Rights Movement from 1830 to 1970.*

Scribner, 2001. 460 pages

For older students and teachers. Historians and journalists have often overlooked the many women who led and participated in the civil rights movement. The author points out in the preface that: "Virtually all the major early works about the period portray the movement through the filter of men and their organizations." The focus here is on women activists, including Pauli Murray, Ida B. Wells, Mary McLeod Bethune, Mary Church Terrell, Eslanda Goode Robeson, Ella Baker, Diane Nash, Casey Hayden, Septima Clark, Penny Patch, Gloria Richardson, Fannie Lou Hamer, Eleanor Holmes Norton, and others.

**Pinkney, Andrea Davis.** *Hand in Hand: Ten Black Men Who Changed America.*

Illustrated by Brian Pinkney.

Disney/Jump at the Sun, 2012. 243 pages

Grades 5 – 8. This book presents the stories of ten men from different eras in American history from slavery to the present day. Among the civil rights leaders included are A. Philip Randolph, Thurgood Marshall, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X. Illustrated with portraits of each man.

**Pinkney, Andrea Davis.** *Let it Shine: Stories of Black Women Freedom Fighters.*

Illustrated by Stephen Alcorn.

Harcourt, 2000. 107 pages

Grades 4 – 8. The stories of ten women who were African American activists for the causes of abolition, women's rights, and civil rights are included. Among the civil rights activists are Rosa Parks and Fannie Lou Hamer. Illustrated with full-page portraits.

## Biography

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### Daisy Bates:

**Fradin, Judith Bloom and Dennis Fradin.** *The Power of One: Daisy Bates and the Little Rock Nine.*

Clarion Books, 2004. 176 pages

Grades 7 – 8. Daisy Bates worked for civil rights as an activist, journalist, and organizer, but her best-known role was as the mentor of the nine black students who integrated Central High School in Little Rock in 1957. This biography includes archival photographs and primary source materials.

### **Ruby Bridges:**

**Bridges, Ruby.** *Through My Eyes.*

Scholastic Press, 1999. 63 pages

Grades 3 – 8. Bridges tells her own story, which combines her adult perspective, news reports of the time, and her dramatic memories of how, as a six-year-old and accompanied by U.S. marshals, she integrated her school in New Orleans in 1960. Illustrated with sepia-toned photos.

**Coles, Robert.** *The Story of Ruby Bridges.*

Illustrated by George Ford.

Scholastic, 1995. 2004. 32 pages

Grades 2 – 5. This is the story of Ruby Bridges, who became the first African American student at the Frantz Elementary School in New Orleans in 1960. Angry crowds taunted the courageous girl as she was escorted to class by federal marshals. With extended quotes from Ruby's teacher, Barbara Henry. In picture book format.

### **Claudette Colvin:**

**Hoose, Phillip M.** *Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice.*

Melanie Kroupa Books, 2009. 133 pages

Grades 5 – 8. On March 2, 1955, 15-year-old Claudette Colvin refused to give her seat to a white woman on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, nine months before Rosa Parks' famous action. She again challenged segregation as a plaintiff in the landmark case that struck down the segregation laws of Montgomery. Based on extensive interviews with Colvin and others and illustrated with photos, period newspaper articles, and other documents.

### **Marian Wright Edelman:**

**Siegel, Beatrice.** *Marian Wright Edelman: The Making of a Crusader.*

Simon & Schuster, 1995. 159 pages

Grades 6 – 8. This biography includes information about Marian Wright Edelman's childhood experience of segregation, her adolescent activism, her participation in the civil rights movement, and her work as an advocate for children. Many quotations from Edelman are in the text. The annotated bibliography and references to related people and topics provide useful tools for student research.

### **Charlayne Hunter-Gault:**

**Hunter-Gault, Charlayne.** *To The Mountaintop: My Journey Through the Civil Rights Movement.*

Flash Point/Roaring Book Press, 2012. 198 pages

Grades 6 – 8. Starting with the inauguration of Barack Obama in 2009 and going back to the early 1960s, Hunter-Gault covers many of the significant moments in the civil rights movement, including her own pivotal role in desegregating the University of Georgia.

With a detailed timeline and the text of relevant news articles published from 1960-65, and illustrated with black and white archival photos.

### **Mahalia Jackson:**

**Orgill, Roxanne.** *Mahalia: A Life in Gospel Music.*

Candlewick Press, 2002. 132 pages

Grades 6 – 8. This biography focuses on the music as well as the life of gospel singer Mahalia Jackson. Her participation in civil rights actions, including the Montgomery bus boycott and the March on Washington, inspired others. The author uses vernacular rhythms, a storyteller's technique, anecdotes, and some invented dialogue to capture Jackson's life and accomplishments. Illustrated with period photographs.

### **Coretta Scott King:**

**Shange, Ntozake.** *Coretta Scott.*

Illustrated by Kadir Nelson.

Katherine Tegen Books, 2009. 32 pages

Grades 3 – 8. In poetry, the author recounts Coretta Scott's life, from her childhood to her marriage with Martin Luther King, Jr., and her involvement with the civil rights movement. Passages from civil rights songs are included in the text; illustrated with large, powerful imagery in picture book format.

### **Martin Luther King, Jr.:**

**Bolden, Tonya.** *M.L.K.: Journey of a King.*

Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2007. 128 pages

Grades 5 – 8. This lively and accessible biography focuses on King's belief that agape, the selfless love for one's neighbor, binds all peoples together, as evidenced in his life and work. Illustrated with 80 photographs of M.L.K. leading the movement, as well as images of his family, his fellow protestors, and other leaders of the day.

**Farris, Christine King.** *March On!: The Day My Brother Martin Changed the World.*

Illustrated by London Ladd.

Scholastic Press, 2008. 32 pages

Grades 3 – 6. Written by the sister of Martin Luther King, Jr., this book is about the day he traveled to Washington, D.C., helped to lead the demonstrations there, and delivered his "I have a dream" speech. The author also includes information about how M.L.K. wrote his speech, about his mentors, and what the day was like for her. In picture book format with large vivid illustrations. See also by the same author: *My Brother Martin: A Sister Remembers Growing Up with the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*, illustrated by Chris Sontpiet. This book discusses King's family life, his younger years, his first encounters with discrimination, and his adult role models.

**Myers, Walter Dean.** *I've Seen the Promised Land: The Life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*  
Illustrated by Leonard Jenkins.

Harper Collins Publishers, 2004. 32 pages

Grades 2 – 4. This is a concise and vividly illustrated look at King's life and accomplishments. The text begins with the 1955 arrest of Rosa Parks and King's leadership during the successful yearlong bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama, and it ends with his support of the striking sanitation workers in Memphis in 1968 and his assassination a few days later.

**Rappaport, Doreen.** *Martin's Big Words: The Life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Illustrated by Bryan Collier.

Hyperion Books for Children, 2001. 32 pages

Grades 2 – 5. This simple and concise biography uses quotes from some of King's best-known speeches to tell the story of his life and work. A timeline is included. In picture book format and illustrated with vibrant collage artwork.

**Watkins, Angela Farris.** *My Uncle Martin's Big Heart.*

Illustrated by Eric Velasquez.

Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2010. 32 pages

Grades 2 – 5. Written from a child's perspective, the author introduces readers to her uncle, Martin Luther King Jr., contrasting the family moments they shared with his role in the world. In picture book format with large, vivid illustrations. Also by the same author and illustrator: *My Uncle Martin's Words for America*, which focuses on key words and phrases from King's speeches, such as justice, freedom, equality. With a timeline of significant events.

#### **W. W. Law:**

**Haskins, James.** *Delivering Justice: W.W. Law and the Fight for Civil Rights.*

Illustrated by Benny Andrews.

Candlewick Press, 2005. 32 pages

Grades 3 – 6. Determined to make a difference in his community, mail carrier W.W. Law (1923 – 2002) assisted African Americans in registering to vote, joined the NAACP, trained protestors in the use of nonviolent civil disobedience, and, in 1961, led the Great Savannah Boycott which caused Savannah to become one of the first southern cities to move toward desegregation. In picture book format.

#### **John Lewis:**

**Haskins, James.** *John Lewis in the Lead: A Story of the Civil Rights Movement.*

Illustrated by Benny Andrews.

Lee & Low, 2006. 36 pages

Grades 3 – 6. This biography of John Lewis, now a congressman from Georgia, focuses on his younger years and his involvement with the voter registration drives that sparked 'Bloody Sunday,' when hundreds of people walked across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama and were met with violence. Includes a note by Congressman Lewis and a timeline. Full color illustrations on every page.

## **Malcolm X:**

**Crushon, Theresa.** *Malcolm X.*

The African American Library: Journey to Freedom series, 2002. 40 pages

Grades 3 – 6. Set in the context of the late Jim Crow era and early civil rights movement, this biography begins with Malcolm Little’s childhood with a father who spoke out against racism, and continues with the loss of his parents, his turn to petty crime, his self-education while in prison, and his embrace of Islam. As a leader in the Nation of Islam, he disagreed with other civil rights leaders and saw violence as a means of addressing injustice. His views about the separation of the races and violent means changed after he traveled to Mecca. Illustrated with sepia-toned photographs.

**Myers, Walter Dean.** *Malcolm X. A Fire Burning Brightly.*

Illustrated by Leonard Jenkins.

Harper Collins, 2000. 32 pages

Grades 3 – 6. This well-conceived picture book biography focuses on Malcolm Little’s childhood, troubled adolescence, imprisonment, conversion to Islam, and evolving beliefs about the value of an integrated society and the most effective means for achieving equality for African Americans. The title refers to Malcolm X’s oratory style and serves as a metaphor for a “complex man living in a complex time of turmoil and change” who “blazed his way through the history” of the civil rights era. With color-saturated illustrations and featuring quotes from his speeches.

## **Thurgood Marshall:**

**Adler, David.** *A Picture Book of Thurgood Marshall.*

Illustrated by Robert Casilla.

Holiday House, 1997. 32 pages

Grades 3 – 5. This biography suggests that Marshall was destined for the practice of law and includes anecdotes that reveal his personal experience of segregation along with information about cases he argued and won against segregation, including *Brown v. Board of Education*. Known as Mr. Civil Rights, Marshall served on the U.S. Court of Appeals, as U.S. Solicitor General, and then as the first African American justice on the Supreme Court.

**Williams, Carla.** *Thurgood Marshall.*

The African American Library: Journey to Freedom series, 2002. 40 pages

Grades 5 – 8. This biography provides a more detailed story of Marshall’s life and the context in which he argued cases against segregation, in particular that of educational institutions. Despite his reservations about sit-in protests, he argued and won the case before the Supreme Court that ended segregation in restaurants. Marshall worked on behalf of civil rights for all Americans, and he believed firmly in affirmative action. Illustrated with sepia-toned photographs.



**Rosa Parks:**

**Giovanni, Nikki. *Rosa*.**

Illustrated by Bryan Collier.

Henry Holt, 2005. 40 pages

Grades 3 – 6. This biography shows Parks as a strong and politically aware activist whose refusal to give up her seat on the bus, together with the response of the Women’s Political Caucus, led to the Montgomery bus boycott. Other key moments in the civil rights movement are included. With dramatic and vivid illustrations in picture book format.

**Bayard Rustin:**

**Brimner, Larry Dane. *We Are One: The Story of Bayard Rustin*.**

Calkins Creek, 2007. 48 pages

Grades 5 – 8. This biography begins and ends with the March on Washington, which Rustin organized. A complex, brilliant, and sometimes controversial man, Rustin was an early social justice activist, conscientious objector, and advisor to Martin Luther King, Jr. His story is told through his own words, archival photographs, and through the spirituals and protest songs that he often sang.

**Paula Shelton:**

**Shelton, Paula Young. *Child of the Civil Rights Movement*.**

Illustrated by Raul Colón.

Schwartz & Wade Books, 2010.

Grades 3 – 6. Written by the daughter of civil rights leader Andrew Young, the author writes about her experiences as a child in the segregated South and her family’s participation in the Selma to Montgomery march with Martin Luther King, Jr. In picture book format.

**John Stokes:**

**Stokes, John A. *Students on Strike: Jim Crow, Civil Rights, Brown, and Me*.**

National Geographic, 2008. 125 pages

Grades 6 – 8. In this memoir, Stokes tells of growing up in the Jim Crow South and about organizing a strike in 1951 to protest the conditions in his segregated school in Prince Edward County, Virginia. The students eventually became plaintiffs in a lawsuit that was part of the 1954 *Brown v. Board* Supreme Court decision. In 1959, Prince Edward County closed its schools rather than comply with desegregation orders, and deprived thousands of black students of an education until county schools reopened in 1964. Black-and-white photos and maps are included.



### **Howard Thurman:**

Issa, Kai Jackson. *Howard Thurman's Great Hope*.

Illustrated by Arthur L. Dawson.

Lee and Low Books, 2008. 32 pages

Grades 3 – 6. This biography tells the story of the early life and education of Howard Thurman, a distinguished and highly regarded preacher and spiritual leader. He crusaded for peace and unity, encouraging people of all races to work together on behalf of equality. The afterword explains that Thurman became a teacher and advisor to many leaders of the civil rights movement in the 1960s, including Martin Luther King, Jr., Marian Wright Edelman, Jesse Jackson and Vernon Jordan. In picture book format and fully illustrated.

### **Ida B. Wells:**

Fradin, Dennis B. and Judith B. Fradin. *Ida B. Wells: Mother of the Civil Rights Movement*.

Clarion Books, 2000. 178 pages

Grades 6 – 8. This biography identifies Ida B. Wells as one of the most important and least known of civil rights leaders because her work predated the modern civil rights era by more than fifty years. Born into slavery, she was among the early civil rights activists, helping to found the NAACP. Wells fell into obscurity but was rediscovered when research revealed her important role in laying the groundwork for the modern civil rights movement.

## **Poetry**

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Lewis, J. Patrick. *Freedom Like Sunlight: Praisesongs for Black Americans*.

Illustrated by John Thompson.

Creative Editions, 2000. 40 pages

Grades 3 – 8. This collection of poems sings praise of African Americans whose courage and dignity helped shaped our nation's history. Included are poems about Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X. With full-page portraits and biographical information.

Lewis, J. Patrick. *When Thunder Comes: Poems for Civil Rights Leaders*.

Illustrated by R. Gregory Christie and others.

Chronicle Books, 2012. 36 pages

Grades 3 – 8. This collection of poems about civil rights leaders includes figures from the American civil rights movement and activists from other countries and justice movements, including Gandhi, Harvey Milk, Aung San Suu Kyi, and Nelson Mandela. This is an excellent book for showing students the ongoing work for social justice around the world. Illustrated with vivid full-page paintings by five artists.

McKissack, Patricia. *Stitchin' and Pullin': A Gee's Bend Quilt*.

Illustrated by Cozbi A. Cabrera.

Random House, 2008. 40 pages

Grades 3 – 6. African American women from Gee's Bend have quilted together for more

than a hundred years. One day, a young girl joins the quilting bee, and she tells her story and the story of her ancestors' struggle for freedom in a series of poems that include moments from civil rights history. With vibrant and powerful illustrations and information about the Gee's Bend quilts, which have been shown in museums around the world; in picture book format. Use with Ramsey and Stroud's *Belle, The Last Mule at Gee's Bend: A Civil Rights Story*.

**Shange, Ntozake. *We Troubled The Waters: Poems*.**

Illustrated with paintings by Rod Brown.

Harper Collins, 2009. 32 pages

Grades 7 – 8. This book's powerful poetry and art explore the harsh realities and hatreds of the civil rights era through the experiences of people who embody the power of the human spirit to endure and create change. Illustrated with full-page paintings.

**Weatherford, Carole Boston. *The Beatitudes: From Slavery to Civil Rights*.**

Illustrated by Tim Ladwig.

Erdmans Books for Young Readers, 2010. 32 pages

Grades 2 – 6. This free-verse poem tracing significant events in African American history was inspired by the Sermon on the Mount, as written in Matthew 5:3-12, King James Version. Words from this familiar biblical passage run along the bottom of each double spread. With a note from the author about the important role that black religious organizations played in African American communities from slavery through the civil rights movement. The back matter has one-paragraph biographies of the thirteen figures featured in the text.

**Weatherford, Carole Boston. *Birmingham, 1963*.**

Wordsong/Boyd's Mills Press, Inc., 2007. 40 pages

Grades 5 – 8. Written in free verse and illustrated with historic photos, this book tells about the day in 1963 that the KKK dynamited the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, murdering four young girls.

**Weatherford, Carole Boston. *Remember the Bridge: Poems of a People*.**

Philomel Books, 2002. 53 pages

Grades 5 – 8. The 21 poems in this book evoke both the actual and imagined experiences of African Americans across four centuries, from the slave trade to the civil rights era. The author was inspired by the black-and-white photos, drawings, and etchings which illustrate the book.

## Historical Fiction in Picture Book Format

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**Bandy, Michael and Eric Stein. *White Water*.**

Illustrated by Shadra Strickland.

Candlewick Press, 2011. 40 pages

Grades 2 – 4. On a bus trip into town with his grandmother, an African American child accepts certain aspects of segregation as “that is the way we did things.” But he wonders

about the water quality in the whites-only drinking fountain. Unable to rid his thoughts of this question, he returns to town on his own to discover that the same water pipes deliver water to both side-by-side fountains, and this inspires him to question inequity and to seek answers. With a note explaining that the story is based on author Michael Bandy's childhood experience.

**Birtha, Becky. *Grandmama's Pride*.**

Illustrated by Colin Bootman.

Albert Whitman, 2005. 32 pages

Grades 2 – 5. While on a trip in 1956 to visit their grandmother in the South, two sisters become aware of segregation for the first time, while their mother and grandmother do all they can to avoid the indignities of the Jim Crow laws. When they return the following summer, the Supreme Court has desegregated the schools, buses, and public places.

**Blue, Rose. *Ron's Big Mission*.**

Illustrated by Don Tate.

Dutton Children's Books, 2009. 32 pages

Grades 2 – 5. Based on the true story of the summer day in 1959 when nine-year-old Ron McNair walked into the Lake City, South Carolina public library and insisted on checking out books, despite the rule that only white people could have library cards. McNair grew up to be an astronaut, and he lost his life aboard the space shuttle Challenger.

**Coleman, Evelyn. *White Socks Only*.**

Illustrated by Tyrone Geter.

A. Whitman, 1996. 32 pages

Grades 2 – 5. A young girl's grandmother tells the story about her first trip alone into town during the days when Mississippi was still segregated. This book shows what life was like in the South and the brave action of those who took a stand against the status quo.

**Evans, Shane. *We March*.**

Roaring Brook Press, 2012. 32 pages

Grades 2 – 4. Illustrations and brief text portray the events of the 1963 march in Washington, D.C., where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his historic speech. The images show families with young children getting ready, traveling, and participating in the march, with an emphasis on people and community coming together.

**Harrington, Janice. *Going North*.**

Illustrated by Jerome Lagarrigue.

Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004. 32 pages

Grades 2 – 5. In poetic text, a young girl tells the autobiographical story of her parents' decision to move to Lincoln, Nebraska in search of better jobs and better schools, and to escape the segregation they experience in Alabama. Along the way, the family meets the challenges of finding gas, finding places to eat and rest, and hostility. The author's note explains the analogy of being pioneers seeking a better future.

**Johnson, Angela. *A Sweet Smell of Roses.***

Illustrated by Eric Velasquez.

Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2005. 32 pages

Grades 2 – 4. Inspired by the young people who took a stand against injustice, this book tells of two young sisters who participate in a civil rights march with Martin Luther King, Jr. The story pays tribute to the many unnamed children who participated in the struggle for civil rights.

**Littlesugar, Amy. *Freedom School, Yes!***

Illustrated by Floyd Cooper.

Philomel Books, 2001. 36 pages

Grades 3 – 5. This story is based on the 1964 Mississippi Freedom School Project. It celebrates the strength of the black people in the community, the determination of their white allies, and the bravery of one young girl whose house is attacked because the young white teacher is staying there.

**Malaspina, Ann. *Finding Lincoln.***

Illustrated by Colin Bootman.

Albert Whitman, 2009. 32 pages

Grades 2 – 5. In segregated 1950s Alabama, Louis cannot use the public library to research a class assignment about Abraham Lincoln, but one of the librarians lets him in after hours and helps him find the book that he needs. Includes an author's note with historical information about library segregation in the South and the court rulings that ended it.

**Mason, Margaret H. *These Hands.***

Illustrated by Floyd Cooper.

Houghton Mifflin, 2010. 32 pages

Grades 2 – 5. An older African American man tells his grandson about all the wonderful things he has learned to do with his hands, but he also remembers the time when he was not allowed to touch the dough at the Wonder Bread factory where he worked because the bosses said white people would not eat bread made by his hands. Based on the true story of bakery labor unions that fought for fair treatment and with information about that labor movement.

**McKissack, Pat. *Goin' Somewhere Special.***

Illustrated by Jerry Pinkney.

Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2001. 36 pages

Grades 2 – 5. This story is based on the author's experience in segregated 1950s Nashville. A young African American girl braves a series of indignities and overcomes obstacles. She is helped by black and white allies as she travels to one of the few integrated places in town: the public library.

**Michelson, Richard.** *Busing Brewster.*

Illustrated by R. G. Roth.

Alfred A. Knopf, 2010. 26 pages

Grades 2 – 5. Bused across town to a school in a white neighborhood of Boston in 1974, a young African American boy describes his first day in first grade. This book is especially useful in showing that racial conflict did not just happen in the South and that it continues to happen well beyond the civil rights era. Included are historical notes on court-ordered busing.

**Mitchell, Margaret King.** *When Grandmama Sings.*

Illustrated by James E. Ransome.

Amistad, 2012. 32 pages

Grades 2 – 5. In the segregated South of the 1950s, an eight-year-old girl accompanies her grandmother, a gifted and inspirational singer in a jazz band, on tour. She experiences firsthand the hotels and restaurants that are marked “White Only” and refuse them service, and the police who search their cars and luggage for no reason. Through it all, the grandmother, believing in the power of music to bring people together, sings to ever-growing and enthusiastic crowds.

**Pinkney, Andrea Davis.** *Boycott Blues: How Rosa Parks Inspired a Nation.*

Illustrated by Brian Pinkney.

Greenwillow Books, 2008. 32 pages

Grades 2 – 5. In the vibrant illustrations and text, a dog, strumming a guitar, uses the rhythm of the blues to recall Rosa Parks’ refusal to give up her seat on the bus to a white man. He also tells about Martin Luther King Jr.’s inspiring speech calling for a boycott, and the resulting 1955 bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama.

**Ramsey, Calvin A. and Bettye Stroud.** *Belle, The Last Mule at Gee’s Bend: A Civil Rights Story.*

Illustrated by John Holyfield.

Candlewick Press, 2011. 32 pages

Grades 2 – 5. In Gee’s Bend, Alabama, Miz Pettway tells a young visitor about the historic role her mule played in the struggle for civil rights. Inspired by a speech given by Martin Luther King, Jr., members of the community registered to vote, despite many challenges and threats. Later, two mules from Gee’s Bend pulled M.L.K.’s casket through the streets of Atlanta. This is a fictionalized version of actual events and includes factual information about the community of Gee’s Bend. Pair this book with Patricia McKissack’s book of poetry, *Stitchin’ and Pullin’: A Gee’s Bend Quilt.*

**Ramsey, Calvin A.** *Ruth and the Green Book.*

Illustrated by Floyd Cooper.

Carolrhoda Books, 2012. 32 pages

Grades 3 – 5. When Ruth and her parents take a trip in their new car from Chicago to Alabama to visit her grandmother in the early 1950s, they encounter Jim Crow laws. They also learn about a pamphlet called “The Negro Motorist Green Book” that will

help them find safe and welcoming places. Includes factual information about “The Green Book”, which helped African Americans avoid some of the indignities of segregation laws and practices.

**Reynolds, Aaron. *Back of the Bus*.**

Illustrated by Floyd Cooper.

Philomel Books, 2010. 32 pages

Grades 2 – 4. A young boy narrates the story of being on the bus the day that Rosa Parks refused to leave her seat for a white passenger, and he subsequently witnesses her arrest. He compares Rosa Parks’ determination and courage to his mother’s strength and facial expression with “eyes all fierce like a lightnin’ storm.” His tiger’s eye marble becomes a symbol for hope that segregation will come to an end.

**Swain, Gwenyth. *Riding to Washington*.**

Illustrated by David Geister.

Sleeping Bear Press, 2008. 36 pages

Grades 2 – 5. A young white girl rides the bus with her father to the March on Washington in 1963 to hear Martin Luther King, Jr. speak. During the trip, the girl experiences firsthand the injustices in segregated America, and she comes to see that Dr. King’s dream belongs to all Americans.

**Weatherford, Carole Boston. *Champions on the Bench: The Cannon Street YMCA All-Stars*.**

Illustrated by Leonard Jenkins.

Dial Books for Young Readers, 2002. 32 pages

Grades 2 – 5. In 1955, the Cannon Street YMCA had the only African American Little League team in South Carolina. That year, 61 all-white teams pulled out of the Little League State Tournament so they would not have to play the Cannon Street team. This story is based on the actual events of that time. See also Margot Raven’s *Let Them Play*.

**Weatherford, Carole Boston. *Freedom on the Menu: The Greensboro Sit-ins*.**

Illustrated by Jerome Lagarrigue.

Dial Books for Young Readers, 2005. 32 pages

Grades 2 – 5. The 1960 sit-ins at the Woolworth’s lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina, are seen through the eyes of a young black girl. An ordinary family becomes involved in the cause, when the girl’s siblings also participate in the sit-ins. Eventually, she and her family get to sit down at the counter and have the banana split that she’s been longing for. See also Andrea Pinkney’s *Sit-In: How Four Friends Stood Up By Sitting Down*.

**Wiles, Deborah. *Freedom Summer*.**

Illustrated by Jerome Lagarrigue.

Atheneum, 2001. 32 pages

Grades 2 – 5. In 1964, in Mississippi, a young, white boy is pleased that a new law will allow his best friend, who is African American, to share the town pool and other public places with him. On the day the Civil Rights Act goes into effect, they visit the town pool together



but find a work crew filling it in with asphalt; town officials have decided to destroy the pool rather than integrate it. A powerful look at children's experience during the civil rights struggle.

**Woodson, Jacqueline.** *The Other Side.*

Illustrated by E. B. Lewis.

Putnam's, 2001. 32 pages

Grades 2 – 5. Two girls, one white and one black, gradually get to know each other as they sit on the fence that divides their town – the barrier between their worlds has become a peaceful place where they can be together throughout the summer. But they are confused by the racial tension that haunts their world and also hopeful about overcoming it.

## Historical Novels

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**“The things that I don't like I will try to change.”** – Medgar Evers  
(Dedication for *A Thousand Never Evers* by Shana Burg)

This quote captures the courage and resilience, the determination and self-pride demonstrated by the young people in these novels set in the modern civil rights era. They also experience confusion during the great changes that take place as a result of the civil rights movement. Most of the authors have drawn from their own experiences in writing these stories.

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**Burg, Shana.** *A Thousand Never Evers.*

Delacourt Press, 2008. 301 pages

Grades 6 – 8. Life for African Americans in the small town of Kuckachoo, Mississippi in 1964 remains firmly in the grip of Jim Crow laws, racial discrimination and injustice, and the threat of violence in all aspects of public life including access to voting, good schools, decent housing, fair wages, and the use of public institutions. The lively voice of seventh grader Addie Ann Pickett reveals both her curious naiveté about the growing civil rights movement and her keen insight into the personalities and motives of her family, friends, and townspeople. This notably well-written novel was inspired by conversations the author had with her father, who moved the family to Alabama to do legal work on undoing Jim Crow laws and helped African Americans gain access to their voting rights. The author's note, afterword, time line, and weaving of actual historical events into the narrative, make this novel especially useful for curriculum units on the civil rights movement.

**Conkling, Winifred.** *Sylvia & Aki.*

Tricycle Press, 2011. 151 pages

Grades 4 – 6. This novel captures actual historical events that led ultimately to Brown v. Board of Education. Sylvia Mendez and Aki Minumitsu, who eventually meet and become friends, each face discrimination as children due to lack of access to schools and to the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. The Mendez family takes over the Minumitsu's farm when Aki and her family are sent to live in the internment camp



at Poston, Arizona. Sylvia's being denied enrollment in the neighborhood school leads to *Gonzalo Mendez v. Westminster School District of Orange County*. Thurgood Marshall of the NAACP files a friend-of-the-court brief in this early school discrimination case. Each chapter in the book begins with a relevant Mexican or Japanese proverb.

**Curtis, Christopher Paul. *The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963*.**

Delacourt Press, 1995. 210 pages.

Grades 4 – 8. No bibliography of this era would be complete without Curtis's well-known novel that chronicles the lively Watson family and their journey to Birmingham, Alabama. Along the way, they deal with the paucity of restaurants and accommodations at which African Americans could stop for food and rest, and while they are there the infamous bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church takes place. Told with humor and empathy.

**Dowell, Frances O'Roark. *Ten Miles Past Normal*.**

Atheneum Books, 2011. 211 pages

Grades 6 – 8. Much of this novel about 14-year old Janie Gorman centers on the challenge of fitting in at high school while living with her back-to-the-land, liberal parents on a North Carolina farm. The story ties in with the civil rights movement through an oral history project in which Janie and a handful of her friends get to know several activists who had established a Freedom School. At the school, illiterate people learned to read and write so that they could register to vote.

**Greenberg, David T. *A Tugging String*.**

Dutton Children's Books, 2008. 167 pages

Grades 5 – 8. Subtitled *A Novel about Growing Up During the Civil Rights Era*, this book mixes autobiography with fiction in telling the story of 12-year-old Duvy, whose father, Jack Greenberg, is a civil rights lawyer involved with voter registration in Selma, Alabama in 1960. The author takes a somewhat unusual and sometimes awkward approach by including his father's real-life legal work for the civil rights movement as part of the story – documented with photographs, explanatory footnotes, and excerpts from actual speeches. There is a Final Word from Jack Greenberg, identifying which aspects of the story are factual and which are "emotionally true."

**Hegedus, Bethany. *Between Us Baxters*.**

West Side Books, 2008. 306 pages

Grades 5 – 8. The Author's Note explains the historical context of this novel, which takes place in 1959 in a small town in rural Mississippi where Jim Crow laws and beliefs prevail. The story focuses on the relationship between Polly Baxter, a white girl from an economically struggling family, and Timbre Ann Biggs, an African American girl. Their unusual friendship becomes severely tested when the local Ku Klux Klan chapter begins to burn down successful African American businesses, including that of Timbre Ann's father, as a reaction to the integration of public schools following *Brown v. Board of Education*.

**Levine, Kristin. *The Lions of Little Rock*.**

Putnam, 2012. 298 pages

Grades 6 – 8. Set in 1958, a year after the Little Rock Nine integrated Central High School, the shy and quiet Marlee Nisbett finds a new friend at the start of her first year in middle school. Confident and out-spoken Liz Lion is actually “passing white” and leaves school abruptly without saying good-bye. The girls find a way to continue their relationship at a time when having a friend of another race is fraught with danger. The Author’s Note explains the historical events woven into the narrative, and her own parents’ support for integrating the schools she attended as a child.

**Magoon, Kekla. *The Rock and the River*.**

Aladdin, 2009. 290 pages

Grades 6 – 8. This novel and its sequel, *Fire in the Streets* explore the role of the Black Panthers in the era of the civil rights movement. Set in Chicago in 1968, Sam and his brother, nicknamed Stick, are the sons of a prominent civil rights activist who is in regular contact with Martin Luther King, Jr. Three events – Sam’s witnessing of the brutal and unprovoked beating of his brother’s friend by two Chicago police officers, the shooting of King, and a violent assault on his father – intensify Sam’s struggle to come to terms with his parents’ nonviolent beliefs and his brother’s increasing and secret involvement with the Black Panthers. Both novels deal candidly with the protagonists’ access to hand guns. The Author’s Note provides a useful summary of the historical events and the evolution of the Black Panther Party that are the context for this novel.

**See also:**

**Magoon, Kekla. *Fire in the Streets*.**

Aladdin, 2012. 321 pages

Grades 6 – 8. This novel continues the story of *The Rock and the River*, from the perspective of Maxie, Sam’s first girl friend. Maxie wishes to join the Black Panthers, persuaded that the organization’s more radical approach to ending discrimination and racism toward her people is reasonable.

**McKissack, Patricia C. *A Friendship for Today*.**

Scholastic Press, 2007. 172 pages

Grades 4 – 6. Ten-year-old Rosemary will be attending the formerly whites-only school in her neighborhood now that *Brown v. Board of Education* has been decided in favor of integrating public schools. Grace, a white girl from a poor family, faces some of the same bullying from classmates that Rosemary faces. The survival of a badly injured cat becomes a point of contact between Rosemary and Grace, whose unhappy family deeply resents the integration of their school. This gently-toned novel echoes McKissack’s own experiences as the only black child in her sixth grade class in the newly integrated schools of Kirkwood, Missouri.

**Robinet, Harriette Gillem. *Walking the Bus-Rider Blues.***

Atheneum, 2000. 146 pages.

Grades 3 – 6. The larger issues and events of the civil rights movement, including the Montgomery Bus Boycott, provide a frame for the challenges faced by 12-year-old Alfa and his family. Alfa and his 15-year-old sister Zinnia live with their grandmother in a two-room tarpaper house for which they struggle to pay the rent. The family contends with local bullies, racial prejudice, the mysterious theft of hard-earned money, and being accused of stealing from the well-off white household where grandmother Merryfield works as a maid. The Author's Note explains the history of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, as well as her own childhood experience of segregation. The steady message is the importance of standing up for yourself when faced with racial discrimination as well as everyday problems.

**Rodman, Mary Ann. *Yankee Girl.***

Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004. 216 pages

Grades 4 – 6. This novel is told from the perspective of a white girl, whose family has moved to Jackson, Mississippi in 1964, when Alice Ann's father, an FBI agent, is sent to protect African American people registering to vote. Alice Ann struggles with her conscience and her perceived need to follow a crowd of popular girls who harass an African American girl newly enrolled in the formerly all-white school. Actual headlines from the Jackson Daily Journal at the outset of each chapter capture the Ku Klux Klan-led violence that surrounded the integration of the schools, voter registration, boycotts, and protest marches. Based on the author's childhood experiences.

**Scattergood, Augusta. *Glory Be.***

Scholastic Press, 2012. 202 pages

Grades 4 – 8. This novel is set in the small town of Hanging Moss, Mississippi during the summer of 1964, and is told from the perspective of Gloriana who always celebrates her birthday at the swimming pool which is now slated to be integrated. In the story, Glory befriends the daughter of a Freedom Worker who has come to town to open a medical clinic for African Americans. With her family's black maid serving as her moral compass, Glory writes a letter to the editor challenging the closing of the town pool for "needed" repairs when the closing is part of a pattern of discrimination and racial inequality in a community afraid of change.

**Williams-Garcia, Rita. *One Crazy Summer.***

Amistad, 2010. 215 pages

Grades 4 – 6. Three young sisters – Delphine, Vonetta, and Fern – travel to Oakland, California where they spend the summer with their mother Cecile, who left them to the care of their father and grandmother to work within the Black Panther organization during the 1960s. Coming to terms with their mother's personality and life as an activist, while being cared for during the day at a Black Panthers community center, provides a nuanced view of the Black Power Movement from a child's perspective. Winner of numerous honors including the Coretta Scott King Award.