

Growing Readers Review

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Preschoolers and History

Sometime in the preschool years, children begin to understand that they have a past. They can look at pictures of themselves from an early age and comprehend that's how they once looked. "I was a baby, but now I'm big," is a phrase you'll hear a young child repeat. As their sense of time and place develops, they realize that daddy and mommy were also young at one time and they begin to appreciate the stories told by grandparents about their young lives.

As children mature, their perspective on the world develops as well. Not only do they have a personal history, but so do their family, their town, and their country. And other children may have a history that is different from their own.

Betsy Ross is an American tale. History tells us that George Washington went to this seamstress with an idea for a new flag for a new country. She took his pencil sketch and used her skills to create the thirteen stars and thirteen stripes that have become part of United States history. Even young toddlers will appreciate this version of delightful rhythms.

The story of six generations is the heart of *All the Way to America*. The family moves from Sorrento, Italy to America, with each generation telling the next to "work hard, enjoy life, and love their family." This family is Italian, but it is the story of every family who immigrated to this country.

The Great Migration: Journey to the North tells the personal story of the author whose family joined over one million African Americans seeking a better life. This is also a universal story of the courage it takes to leave home for an unknown future.

Young readers will learn many lessons of the past from these excellent stories, and families will have the opportunity to tell their own story to the next generation.

By Susan C. Bremner, EdD



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BOOKS OF EXCELLENCE

SCHOOL AGE

The Great Migration: Journey to the North

Written by Eloise Greenfield;
illustrated by Jan Spivey Gilchrist

In 1929, when Eloise Greenfield was three months old, her father left their home in Parmele, North Carolina to seek a better life for his family in Washington, DC. One month later, Eloise, her 18-month-old brother, and her mother boarded the train to be reunited with him. They left a world of "Whites Only" signs, the Ku Klux Klan, and poverty to become part of the Great Migration, the movement of more than one million African Americans from southern states to the north.

Greenfield tells the story of hardships, fears, and hope through rhythmic free verse. She depicts the sadness and uncertainty of leaving combined with the hopes and dreams of a better life. The children, the mother, and the father each tell the story from their own point of view.

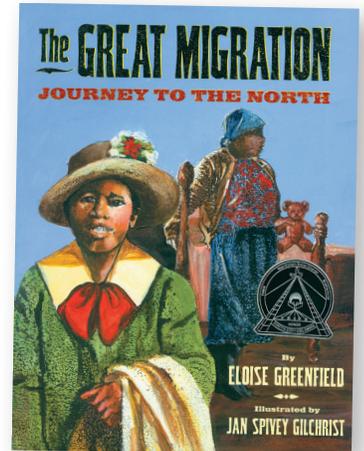
"Will I make a good life for my family, for myself?

The wheels are singing, 'Yes, you will, you will, you will!'

I hope they're right. I think they're right. I know they're right."

Jan Spivey Gilchrist, whose family was also part of the Great Migration, uses grainy collage that adds depth to the story's words. The reader can both hear and see the emotions expressed.

The Great Migration, which won the Coretta Scott King Award, will help today's children understand and appreciate an important chapter of America's past. For adults interested in learning more, *The Warmth of Other Suns* by Isabel Wilkerson focuses on similar content at a deeper level.



About the Author and Illustrator:

Eloise Greenfield is the award-winning poet and author of dozens of children's books that portray the African American experience.

Jan Spivey Gilchrist, who illustrated all of Ms. Greenfield's books, has had her illustrations appear in major U.S. newspapers. She was inducted into the International Literary Hall of Fame for Writers of African Descent.

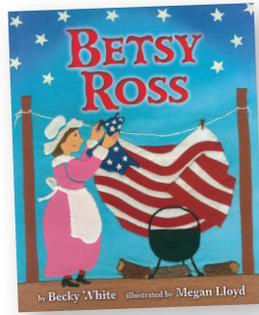


TODDLER

Betsy Ross

Written by Becky White;
illustrated by Megan Lloyd

Betsy Ross ripped and clipped, snipped and dipped, and pinned and stitched the first American flag. This story, simply told, begs to be read aloud and children will soon be able to recite the rhythmic cadence. With appliqué and embroidery, the illustrations give life to the very work that Betsy Ross did to create our first icon. Even very young readers will become engaged with this well-loved American tale.

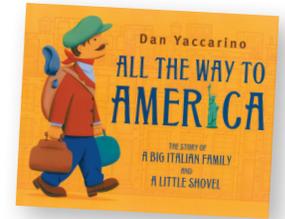


PRESCHOOL

All the Way to America

Written and illustrated by
Dan Yaccarino

All the Way to America celebrates the American dream. It is the story of many American families: each generation working hard to forge their new way while holding fast to the important traditions and values from their past. The author tells the story of his own family's Italian-American heritage through four generations. While the members of each generation hold onto the family tradition to "work hard, but remember to enjoy life, and never forget your family," they each also create their own future in America. For many preschoolers, Dan Yaccarino's story will encourage them to learn more about their own family traditions and heritage.



NOTABLE BOOKS

Farmyard Rhymes

Written and illustrated by Clare Beaton • Infant/Toddler

Nursery rhymes expose children to poems written in earlier eras that often give a glimpse into the past. Fabric and stitches give a fresh look to these old favorite stories.

INDESTRUCTIBLE: **Mary Had a Little Lamb**

Illustrated by Jonas Sickler • Infant/Toddler

Mary's little lamb still follows her to school, but now she lives in a village in Africa — a new twist to a classic tale.

When I Was Young in the Mountains

Written by Cynthia Rylant; illustrated by Diane Goode • Preschool

In this Caldecott Honor book, beautiful watercolors tell the story of an Appalachian childhood.

Our Abe Lincoln

Adapted by Jim Aylesworth; illustrated by Barbara McClintock • Preschool

Children will learn history as they sing and act out the story of our 16th president.

Franklin and Winston: A Christmas that Changed the World

Written by Douglas Wood; illustrated by Barry Moser • School Age

A true narrative of the historic events of the winter of 1941 when Roosevelt and Churchill met and formed an alliance that eventually led to the end of World War II.

The House Baba Built

Written and illustrated by Ed Young • School-Age

China was at war but the children living in the house that Baba built only know of roller skating, riding bikes, playing games of hide and seek and the safety of living in a home built with love.

INDESTRUCTIBLES: Books for Babies

As infants learn about books, they typically taste, touch, and smell them in addition to looking at the interesting pictures. Along the way, babies also learn that someone often says words that go with the pictures and that book reading is a pleasant time to spend sitting on a favorite adult's lap. We want babies to fully experience books with all their senses, but infant books typically have a short life span due to the heavy use they sustain.

Indestructibles names a new brand of books meant for babies and the ways babies use books. They are both waterproof and tear-resistant to endure regular use from infants. Designed by the mother of triplets, *Indestructibles* stand up to the many ways that babies learn about books including chewing, sucking, and pulling. They are also flat and are easily portable. One of this issue's notables, *Mary Had a Little Lamb*, is an indestructible. For more information, go to www.indestructiblesinc.com.

