

Picture Books for Older Readers - Historical Fiction

J Pic+ (Grades 2 & up)

North America

[ANNE HUTCHINSON'S WAY](#)

by Atkins, Jeannine

A fictionalized episode from the life of Anne Hutchinson, who arrived with her family in Massachusetts in 1634, but was soon banished for holding religious meetings and teaching ideas with which Puritan ministers disagreed.

[BACK OF THE BUS](#)

by Reynolds, Aaron

J Pic+

From the back of the bus, an African American child watches the arrest of Rosa Parks. Montgomery, Alabama, 1955.

[BOY WHO DREW BIRDS: A STORY OF JOHN JAMES AUDUBON](#)

by Davies, Jacqueline

In the early 1800's, young Audubon is determined to learn if the same birds return to the same nest every Spring.

[BUFFALO SONG](#)

by Bruchach, Joseph

The story of the first efforts to save the vanishing bison (buffalo) herds from extinction in the United States in the 1870's and 1880's. Based on the true story of Samuel Coyote, a Salish (Kalispel) Indian who rescued and raised orphaned buffalo calves.

[COMING ON HOME SOON](#)

by Woodson, Jacqueline

After Mama takes a job in Chicago during World War II, Ada Ruth stays with Grandma but misses her mother who loves her more than rain and snow.

[COOLIES](#)

by Yin,

A young boy hears the story of his great-great-great-grandfather and his brother who came to the United States to make a better life for themselves helping to build the transcontinental railroad in the mid-1800's.

[DAD, JACKIE, AND ME](#)

by Uhlberg, Myron

In Brooklyn, New York, in 1947, a boy learns about discrimination and tolerance as he and his deaf father share their enthusiasm over baseball and the Dodgers' first baseman, Jackie Robinson.

DEAR MR. ROSENWALD

by Weatherford, Carole

Young Ovella rejoices as her community comes together to raise money and build a much-needed school in the South in the 1920's, with matching funds from the president of Sears, Roebuck, and Company and support from Professor James of the Normal School.

EMILY

by Bedard, Michael

In the 1800's, when a mother and child pay a visit to their reclusive neighbor Emily (Dickinson), who stays in her house writing poems, there is an exchange of special gifts.

FREEDOM RIVER

by Rappaport, Doreen

Describes an incident in the 1800's in the life of John Parker, an ex-slave who became a successful businessman in Ripley, Ohio, and who repeatedly risked his life to help other slaves escape to freedom.

FREEDOM SCHOOL, YES!

by Littlesugar, Amy

In 1964, when their house is attacked because her mother volunteered to take in the young white woman who has come to teach black children at the Freedom School, Jolie is afraid, but she overcomes her fear after learning the value of education.

GOIN' SOMEPLACE SPECIAL

by McKissack, Pat

In segregated 1950's Nashville, a young African American girl braves a series of indignities and obstacles to get to one of the few integrated places in town: the public library.

GOING NORTH

by Harrington, Janice

In 1964, a young African American girl and her family leave their home in Alabama and head for Lincoln, Nebraska, where they hope to escape segregation and find a better life.

HARD-TIMES JAR

by Smothers, Ethel

Emma, the daughter of poor migrant workers in the 1950's, longs to own a real book, and when she turns eight and must attend school for the first time, she is amazed to discover a whole library in her classroom.

HENRY'S FREEDOM BOX

by Levine, Ellen

A fictionalized account of how in 1849 a Virginia slave, Henry "Box" Brown, escapes to freedom by shipping himself in a wooden crate from Richmond to Philadelphia.

LANDED

by Lee, Milly

In the early 1900's, after leaving his village in southeastern China, 12-year-old Sun is held at Angel Island, San Francisco, before being released to his father, a merchant living in the area. Includes historical notes. Based on a true story.

LEGEND OF FREEDOM HILL

by Altman, Linda Jacobs

During the California Gold Rush, Rosabel, an African American, and Sophie, a Jew, team up and search for gold to buy Rosabel's mother her freedom from a slave catcher.

LOUISA MAY AND MR. THOREAU'S FLUTE

by Dunlap, Julie

In 19th-century Concord, Massachusetts, 7-year-old Louisa May Alcott joins other local children on the varied excursions led by teacher and naturalist Henry David Thoreau, and is inspired to write her first poem.

MALIAN'S SONG

by Bruchac, Marge

Tells the true story of the deliberate English attack by British Major Robert Rogers on the St. Francis Abenaki community near Montreal in 1759, and is written in text that interweaves Abenaki and English.

MARCHING WITH AUNT SUSAN

by Murphy, Claire

J PIC+ MUR

Not allowed to go hiking with her father and brothers because she is a girl, Bessie learns about women's rights when she attends a suffrage rally led by Susan B. Anthony.

MUSIC FOR ALICE

by Say, Allen

A Japanese American farmer in Oregon recounts her agricultural successes and setbacks and her enduring love of dance, starting in the years before World War II. Based on the true life story of Alice Sumida, who with her husband Mark, established the largest gladiola bulb farm in the country during the last half of the 20th century.

NIGHT BOAT TO FREEDOM

by Raven, Margot Theis

At the request of his fellow slave Granny Judith, Christmas John risks his life to take runaways across a river from Kentucky to Ohio. Based on slave narratives recorded in the 1930's.

PEARL

by Atwell, Debby

Events in the history of the United States, from George Washington's presidency through the beginning of the space program, are related to the experiences of one family.

RED SASH

by Pendziwol, Jean

A young Native American boy is at the heart of this charming adventure that takes place nearly 200 years ago. Pendziwol's engaging text combines with Debon's vivid and historically accurate illustrations to give an authentic picture of life at a fur trading post in the Lake Superior area in the early 1800's.

SCRIMSHAW RING

by Jaspersohn, William

J PIC+

A young boy living in Newport, Rhode Island, in 1710 enjoys imaginary adventures with make-believe pirates, until the day that real pirates come ashore for evil purposes and leave him a remarkable memento. Based on real events. Includes ideas for activities related to family heirlooms.

SHI-SHI-ETKO

by Campbell, Nicola

J PIC+ CAM

Shi-shi-etko, a Native American girl, spends the last four days before she goes to residential school learning valuable lessons from her mother, father, and grandmother, and creating precious memories of home.

SHIN-CHI'S CANOE

by Campbell, Nicola

J PIC+ CAM

When Shin-chi and his sister go off to his first year of Residential School in a cattle truck, she warns him of all the things he must not do. The days are long, he is very lonely and always hungry, but he find solace down at the river with a gift from his father, a tiny cedar canoe. It seems like a very long time until the salmon swim upriver again and he can finally go home.

SHOW WAY

by Woodson, Jacqueline

The making of "Show ways," or quilts which once served as secret maps for freedom-seeking slaves in the 1800's, is a tradition passed from mother to daughter in the author's family.

TREE OF HOPE

by Littlesugar, Amy

Florrie's daddy used to be a stage actor in Harlem in the 1930's before the Depression forced the Lafayette Theater to close, but he gets a chance to act again when Orson Welles reopens the theater

to stage an all-black version of Macbeth.

UNDER THE QUILT OF NIGHT

by Hopkinson, Deborah

In the 1800's, a young girl flees from the farm where she has been worked as a slave and uses the Underground Railroad to escape to freedom in the north.

YANKEE AT THE SEDER

by Weber, Elka

J PIC+ WEB

As a Confederate family prepares for Passover the day after the Civil War has ended, a Yankee arrives on their Virginia doorstep and is invited to share their meal, to the dismay of 10-year-old Jacob.

Other Continents - J Pic+ books

5,000-YEAR-OLD PUZZLE: SOLVING A MYSTERY OF ANCIENT EGYPT

by Logan, Claudia

A fictionalized account of the excavation of a secret tomb at Giza, Egypt, in 1925, told through the experiences of a young boy who accompanies his father on an archeological dig.

ALWAYS WITH YOU

by Vander Zee, Ruth

J Pic+ VAN

Orphaned at the age of four when her village in Viet Nam is bombed in the 1960's, Kim is rescued by soldiers and raised in an orphanage, always finding comfort in her mothers last words--"Don't be afraid. I will always be with you."

BRAVE SOLDIER

by Debon, Nicolas

During World War I, a young soldier's initial enthusiasm for the war effort turns to bitterness.

CHARLOTTE IN GIVERNY

by Knight, Joan

While living in France in 1892, Charlotte, a young American girl, writes a journal of her experiences including those among the impressionist painters at the artist colony of Giverny. Includes profiles of artists who appear in the journal and a glossary of French words.

CHARLOTTE IN PARIS

by Knight, Joan

The young daughter of American artists living in Giverny, France, in 1893, records in her journal her exciting trip to Paris to attend an Impressionist art exhibition. Includes biographical sketches of the artists featured in the story.

[ERIKA'S STORY](#)

by Vander Zee, Ruth

A woman recalls how she was thrown from a train headed for a Nazi death camp in 1944, raised by someone who risked her own life to save the baby's, and finally found some peace through her own family.

[FANTASTIC JOURNEY OF PIETER BRUEGEL](#)

by Shafer, Anders

For over two years in the mid-1500's, Pieter Bruegel keeps a journal of his trip from his home in Antwerp, The Netherlands, to Rome, where he studies art before returning home again.

[FIRST PAINTER](#)

by Lasky, Kathryn

Following the death of her mother, Mishoo the new shaman, must find a way to help her prehistoric tribe during a drought.

[Greatest skating race : a World War II story from the Netherlands](#)

by Borden, Louise

J PIC+

During World War II in the Netherlands, a 10-year-old boy's dream of skating in a famous race allows him to help two children escape to Belgium by ice skating past German soldiers and other enemies.

[HARMONICA](#)

by Johnston, Tony

Torn from his home and parents in Poland during World War II, a young Jewish boy starving in a concentration camp finds hope in playing Schubert on his harmonica, even when the commandant orders him to play.

[I AM THE MUMMY HEB-NEFERT](#)

by Bunting, Eve

A mummy recalls her past life in ancient Egypt as the beautiful wife of the Pharaoh's brother.

[ORPHAN SINGER](#)

by McCully, Emily Arnold

J PIC+ MCC

In the 1700's, determined that their daughter realize her musical destiny, her poor but devoted parents send her away as a baby to the Venetian "ospedale," knowing she will be raised as an orphan and will never again be allowed to return home.

[PATROL: AN AMERICAN SOLDIER IN VIETNAM](#)

by Myers, Walter Dean

In the 1960's, a frightened American soldier faces combat in the lush forests of Vietnam.

PIRATE DIARY: THE JOURNAL OF JAKE CARPENTER

by Platt, Richard

J PIC+

The fictional diary of a 9-year-old boy who, in 1716 sets off from North Carolina to become a sailor, but ends up a pirate instead.

PIRATE MEETS THE QUEEN

by Faulkner, Matt

J PIC+

In the 1500's, when the son of notorious Irish pirate queen Granny O'Malley is captured by the English, Granny tries to meet with Queen Elizabeth I

ROAD TO SANTIAGO

by Figueredo, D.H.

In Cuba, in the early 1950s, a young boy and his family try their best not to let the rebel soldiers keep them from traveling to Santiago to celebrate Christmas with their relatives. Based on a true incident in the life of the author.

SAILING HOME: A STORY OF A CHILDHOOD AT SEA

by Rand, Gloria

Captain Madsen's 4 children fondly recall their exciting sailing with their father and mother on the bark John Ena at the turn of the 20th century.

STOLEN SMILE

by Lewis, J Patrick

From his jail cell in Italy, Vincenzo Peruggia tells how and why he stole the Mona Lisa from the Louvre in 1911.

VILLAGE THAT VANISHED

by Grifalconi, Ann

In southeastern Africa, a young Yao girl and her mother find a way for their fellow villagers to escape approaching slave traders.

WARLORD'S FISH

by Pilegard, Virginia Walton

In ancient China, an artist and his young apprentice are kidnapped and taken into the desert, where their captors' caravan is lost until the artist's carved wooden goldfish points the way to safety.

WARLORD'S PUPPETEERS

by Pilegard, Virginia Walton

While traveling back to their warlord's palace in ancient China, Chuan and the artist to whom he is apprenticed join a troupe of puppeteers, and Chuan learns about puppet proportions. Includes instructions for making a simple sock puppet.