Children's Book for Teaching History

Exploration and Colonization



Native Homes: Native Nations of North America

By: Bobbie Kalman

This book explores the different dwellings of Indians. It shows the way they lived there and the interior/ exterior. This includes housing such as pueblos and longhouses. (800L, Grade Level: 3.7)



If you Lived with the Indians of the Northwest Coast

By: Anne Kamma

This book shows the lives of the Northwest Coastal Indians through the eyes of a child. This child shows what a boy would have done or been a part off at that time. (870L, Grade Level: 3.9)



If you Lived with the Cherokees

By: Peter Roop

This book tells what it was like to grow up in a Cherokee family in the Great Smoky Mountains about 200 years ago. (800L, Grade Level: 3.8)



The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses

By: Paul Goble

This book illustrates a perfect example of Indian beliefs as this young girl becomes a horse and rides with them freely forever. She is considered to have a special gift, much like a horse whisperer. Because of this gift, she is given the duty of caring for the tribes horses upon which she is able to run free with them forever. (670L, Grade Level: 4.7)







The Legend of the Indian Paintbrush

By: Tomie dePaola

This legend tells of the way a flower received its name. A young man has a dream vision in which he sees himself capturing the sunset in a painting. Upon this dream he is given the position as the village's painter. He finds a white buckskin canvas and the brightest of flowers to paint the sunset but is unable to capture its beauty. (840L AD, Grade Level: 2.8)

How Chipmunk Got His Stripes

By: Joseph Bruchac

This American Folktale tells how the chipmunk got his stripes through an altercation with a black bear. The black bear was so sure of him that he said he could stop the sun from rising and the squirrel disputed this idea. Once the sun rose as expected, the squirrel began to tease the big black bear, and so his stripes were born. (260L AD, Grade Level: 2.5)

The Arrow Over the Door

By: Joseph Bruchac

This story is told in differing viewpoint between the Indian boy, Stands Straight, and Quaker boy, Samuel Russell. On King George's orders, Straight scouts out Samuels home in 1777 resulting in a meeting that the two will never forget. Based on a true story. (810L, Grade Level: 5.5)



Encounter

By: Jane Yolen

When Christopher Columbus landed on San Salvador he was greeted with open arms by the Indians, except for one. A young boy of the Taino feared the visitors would be the ruin of his people. The accounts and warnings of this boy were ignored. Now, he has grown old and reflects on the ruins of his people. (680L, Grade Level: 4.0)



Struggle for a Continent: The French and Indian Wars (1689-1763)

By: Betsy Maestro and Giulio Maestro

In this series of books, the struggle for the establishment of America is seen as a series of event connected to make in important whole. In this particular book the tales of the French and Indian wars fought for seventy-four years are revisited to determine the future of the United States. The French and Indian Wars were caused by the continuous feud between the European powers carried over to the Americas. (1060L, Grade Level: 7.3)



Fort Mose: And the Story of the Man Who Built the First Free Black Settlement in Colonial America

By: Glennette Tilley Turner

This book reveals the formation of the first free black settlement, Fort Mose, and the story of Francisco Menendez through developed imagery and informative explanation. (1180L, Grade Level: 10.7)



Thanksgiving: The True Story

By: Penny Colman

This book delves into the past of Thanksgiving and its true origin. This nonfiction work answers the questions of the antecedents for Thanksgiving including the relations between the Native Americans, and the meal itself. (830L, Grade Level: 6.5)



Child Out of Place: A Story of New England

By: Patricia Q. Wall

In this story about a young house servant named Matty, the treatment of African Americans is explored through one girl's inner turmoil. Matty experiences a constant discouragement for hope among her relatives but still remains to believe a better life is awaiting her. This story also reveals an important and long neglected chapter in the history of slavery in America, the New England chapter. The setting for this fictional story is borrowed from a real 18th century mansion in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, the MacPheadris-Warner House, now a museum. (~800L, Grade Level: ~7)



Copper Sun

By: Sharon M. Draper

The story of a once free African American woman stripped away from her home and family in brutality. Amari lost all she had except hope when she was brought on a slave ship to the Carolina's as a Birthday Present. This story explores the chance of Amari and a friend, Polly, at escape. This novel reveals the cruelty and heartlessness of slavery. (820L, Grade Level: 4.8)



Children of the Longhouse

By: Joseph Bruchac

When Ohkwa'ri overhears a plan of a raid, he informs the elders. Although he knows he has done the right thing, he fears that he has made enemies. One of these foes is Grabber who plans to hurt Ohkwa'ri when the village plays a game of brutal lacrosse or Tekwaarathon. The question of this story is will peace prevail against wrath. (950L, Grade Level: 4.2)





The Double Life of Pocahontas

By: Jean Fritz

The true story of the life of Pocahontas in which she can live between two worlds is revived by Jean Fritz. Pocahontas is the daughter of a powerful chief, Powhatan, who allows her to live amongst both Indians and Whites along with her "brother" John Smith, until the settlers take her and force her to act as though she were white. This action causes turmoil in her life, and sets a precedent for the relations between Native Americans and the English. (910L, Grade Level: 6.5)

The Witch of Blackbird Pond

By: Elizabeth George Speare

Kit Tyler moves to the America's from her originally Caribbean home in order to join her relatives in a Puritan village. Here she feels lonely and restrained on account of the religion's strict laws. In her isolation, she found a friend by the name of Witch of Blackbird Pond. On the discovery of her new friendship, the Puritans place blame and suspicion of witchcraft on Kit. (850L, Grade Level: 6.9)

American Revolution



The Cherokees: The Civilaztion of the American Indian Series

By: Grace Steele Woodward

This book explains the Cherokee tribe. They were much more advanced than any other Indian tribe. They had a set of laws, courts, government, syllabary, and much more. However, they were not civilized enough for the Colonists. They were forced to go against their culture and become more civilized by their unappreciated neighbors. (890L, Grade Level: 5.8)





The Trailblazing Life of Daniel Boone and How Early Americans Took to the Road

By: Cheryl Harness

This book tells the life of Daniel Boone through exciting story telling and vivid illustrations. It takes the reader back to the exact time being spoken of, creating a special interest among children. (1130L, Grade Level: 8.5)

Daniel Boone and Cumberland Gap

By: Andrew Santella

This book allows the reader to be an eyewitness to the history of the United States. Each page adds on to the development of the nations, including full colored photographs and engravings. (870L, Grade Level: 7.8)



Nancy Ward/ Dragging Canoe: Cherokee Chieftainess/ Cherokee-Chickamauga War Chief

By: Pat Alderman

This story includes the two most amazing Indian personalities, nancy Ward and her cousin, Dragging Canoe. (910L, Grade Level 6.5)



Beloved Mother: The Story of Nancy Ward

By: Charolette Jane Ellington

The expansion of the Americans was leading to violence among tribes. These tribes could not defeat their much larger foes. Nancy Ward, beloved and remembered for her dedication and victory after leading and rallying her tribe to a win at the Creek War, is following the path of peace continuously disappointing her cousin, Dragging Canoe. (850L, Grade Level: 6)



George vs. George: the American Revolution as seen from Both Sides

By: Rosalyn Schanzer

This book goes through both government and military strategies of both sides of the American Revolution. (1120L, Grade Level: 8.6)



If You Lived at the Time of the American Revolution

By: Kay Moore

Katie's Trunk

By: Ann Turner

This book reveals the way a Patriot and a Loyalist would have lived during the American Revolution. The book also delves into the fight for Independence itself. (860L, Grade Level: 4.5)

Times had changed for Katie. Being a part of a Loyalist family had turned her life upside down especially when her life is left in the hands of Patriots. This book explores the hatred among neighbors because of where the loyalty lied. (660L AD, Grade Level: 4.9)



illustrations by Ron Himler



Johnny Tremain

By: Esther Forbes

A silversmith's apprentice, Johnny Tremain, finds himself swept up in the adventures of the Sons of Liberty including James Otis, John Hancock, and John and Samuel Adams. In the eve of the Revolutionary War, Boston saw the Tea Party, and much more. These events are seen as a living drama through the eyes of young Johnny Tremain in Esther Forbes historically fictitious book. (840L, Grade Level: 5.3)

My Broches Sam Is Dran Interester Unite

My Brother Sam Is Dead

By: James Lincoln Collier & Christopher Collier

In this tragic book the split of the America's is seen as it truly was. The crucial decision of family or what you believe in is tested on a young man, Tim Meeker, who lives in a loyalist town with a loyalist father, and a Patriot brother. Although, he loves them both dearly he must pick a side to fight on in the American Revolution, whether it be his father's or his brother's. (770L, Grade Level: 5.8)

Constitution and Government



We the Kids: The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States

By: David Cartow

David Cartow's illustrations and foreword present the preamble in a kid friendly way in order to develop a better understanding of its meaning. (600L, Grade Level: 4.0)

Growth of the New Nation



Weaver's Daughter

By: Kimberly Brubaker Bradley

It is 1791 in the Southwest Territory, now Tennessee. Lizzy Baker loves her life as a weaver's daughter, but finds that her annual bouts of sickness may be too much to bear this coming year. She gains a new rich neighbor, Miss Beaumont and her handsome stepson. (600L, Grade Level: 5.1)



Jefferson's Sons: A Founding Father's Secret Children

By: Kimberly Brubaker Bradley

This story tells of the children Thomas Jefferson had with one of his slaves, Sally Hemings. The children tell of their invisible life as a child of a president. This calls into question the real meaning of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." (600L, Grade Level: 5)



The Devil's Backbone: The Story of the Natchez Trace

By: Jonathan Daniels

The Natchez Trace has as dark and bloody a history as any thoroughfare since the beginning of our nation. (800L, Grade Level: 6)



Sacajawea

By: Joseph Bruchac

This novel tells of the bravery and maturity of Sacajawea. At the age of sixteen she is already impregnated and kidnapped by a French man, but her journey continues when she battles the western frontier alongside William Clark and Meriwether Lewis.

This nonfiction story is told through both Clark's and Sacajawea's voices; including some of Clark's actual journal entries. (840L, Grade Level: 6.7)



Death Comes for the Archbishop

By: Willa Cather

This novel tells of a missionaries attempt at spreading the gospel along with the westward expansion in the harsh desert of New Mexico. (1150L, Grade Level: 10.0)



Davy Crockett: Frontier Hero

By: J.T. Moriarty

This is a book containing biographical information about Davy Crockett ranging from his childhood, to his famous hunting, to his political career. (600L, Grade Level: 5.0)



Lyddie By: Katherine Paterson

Lyddie wants to find a way to get her family out of debt. She hers of how much money the Lowell girls make in Massachusetts at the mills, so she moves away. However, she finds that her hopes of coming home and reuniting the family may never come true. (860L, Grade Level: 5.0)

Sectionalism, Slavery and Growth of the Republic



On Shaky Ground: The New Madrid Earthquakes of 1811-1812

By: Norma Hayes Bagnall

The earthquakes ranging from 1811-1812 are collectively remembered as the New Madrid Earthquakes. These tremors would have measured an 8 or above on the Richter scale, lasting for lengths at a time. These tremors were felt across the nation including from Mexico to Canada. The quakes created and destroyed. Villages disappeared all together, the Mississippi River ran backwards, and new lakes and rivers were formed everywhere. Bagnall takes real life accounts and photos to establish this work, which describes these devastating tremors. (1000L, Grade Level: 8.0)



Sequoyah: The Cherokee Man Who Gave His People Writing

By: James Rumford

This book tells of Sequoyah as a man of greatness who gave the Cherokee a writing system. (700L AD, Grade Level: 3.9)

Sequoyah and His Talking Leaves Alight Buth Cryptor Theresenergy



Sequoyah and His Talking Leaves: A Play About the Cherokee Syllabary

By: Wim Coleman, Pat Perrin and Siri Weber Feeney

Sequoyah helped to preserve the culture and history of the Cherokee with his formation of the Cherokee written language. (610L, Grade Level: 3.4)

The Trail of Tears

By: Joseph Bruchac

In 1838, settlers moving west forced the great Cherokee Nation, and their chief John Ross, to leave their home land and travel 1,200 miles to Oklahoma. This story tells of the struggles faced by all of the Cherokee Nation, and the betrayal they faced along with death and heartache. (610L, Grade Level: 4.3)



On This Long Journey, the Journal of Jesse Smoke, a Cherokee Boy, the Trail of Tears, 1838

By: Joseph Bruchac

In 1838 Tennessee, Jesse has to face the terror of the Indian Removal. He has returned from the Mission School because of its being shut down. He returns to his widowed mother and family. They await the news of whether John Ross will be able to delay the removal, when they are ripped away from their home and placed in stockade camps. Jesse is unsure him and his family will survive this journey, the Trail of Tears. (880L, Grade Level: 5.8)





Unforgettable Americans

Who Was Davy Crockett?

By: Gail Herman, Robert Squier, and Nancy Harrison

Learn what is fact or folktale in the book about the true Davy Crockett, a former congressman of Tennessee, and hero of the Alamo. (610L, Grade Level: 3.4)

A Picture Book of Davy Crockett

By: David A. Adler, John Wallner and Alexandra Wallner

A biography through pictures, this book explains the life of Davy Crockett from his birth, to his first rifle, to his final acts. (690L AD, Grade Level: 3.6)

Make Way for Sam Houston

By: Jean Fritz

Jean Fritz explains the life of Sam Houston in this book by bringing him back to life. (1010L, Grade Level: 6.5)





A Picture Book of Sam Houston

By: David A. Adler, Michael S. Adler and Matt Collins

Known as the leader of the Republic of Texas, Sam Houston led the Texas into independence after defeating the Mexican Army. This book tells of all of his great accomplishments. (800L, Grade Level: 5.0)

James K. Polk: Eleventh President, 1845-1849

By: Mike Venezia

This children's book presents an engaging biography on the life and actions of James K. Polk. (300L, Grade Level: 1.8)



HEART BACK

David Crockett Creating a Legend

By: Mary Dodson Wade and Joy Fisher

Although Davy Crockett was a fascinating hero, this book explores his other sides as a U.S. Congressman, business man, and freedom fighter. This memorable man was born in East Tennessee, and later grew up to be the hero of Texas at the Alamo. In this biographical book, children are opened up to the fascinating life of Davy Crockett. (200L, Grade Level: 1.5)

Henry's Freedom Box: A True Story from the Underground Railroad

By: Ellen Levine and Kadir Nelson

Henry "Box" Brown had on of the most ingenious ideas to escape slavery. Running, buying, or sneaking was not on his agenda. However, a box and a mailing address were. In this true story, the ideas of freedom, slavery, and reform are explored through one young man's journey. (380L AD, Grade Level: 1.9)



Follow the Drinking Gourd

By: Jeanette Winter

This illustrative book tells the story of how one family listened to a song and followed the "drinking gourd," the big dipper, to freedom. African Americans would sing the song as a subliminal map to a place of freedom. (630L AD, Grade Level: 3.9)



Unspoken: A Story from the Underground Railroad

By: Henry Cole

This story is told without words and only pictures. This is a Civil War story of a little girl who helps a slave hide from the Confederate army. (0L AD, Grade Level: 0)





Up Before Daybreak: Cotton and People in America

By: Deborah Hopkinson

In this non-fiction book, Hopkinson tells the lives of slaves, sharecroppers, and mill workers. Sometimes heartbreaking, the stories allow insight to the life of those who produced cotton from picking it, to selling it, to using it. (1060L, Grade Level: 7.2)

Sojourner Truth: Ain't I a Woman?

By: Patricia C. McKissack and Fredrick McKissack

At the beginning her name was Isabella as a slave born in New York, but upon her freedom she changed her name to Sojourner in which she carried her legacy as a preacher, abolitionist, and civil rights activist. (960L, Grade Level: 4.9)



Dragon's Gate

By: Laurence Yep

Otter travels from China to California in hopes to find technology that he could take home to the Middle Kingdom to escape the threatening Manchu invaders. He is a stranger among the whites and Chinese in California where he does not see gold but only vast whiteness. Otter and the others board a machine that will change his life-a train for which he would open the Dragon's Gate. (730L, Grade Level: 6.1)

Elijah of Buxton

By: Christopher Paul Curtis

Young Elijah is a born free boy living in Buxton, Canada. He desires to be famous but has no way other than his birth being free, and his skill for throwing rocks until one day he finds himself with a monumental opportunity. His friend has been saving money in order to buy his family out of slavery, but it is stolen. Elijah's road to fame is paved by wherever he tracks and captures this thief. (1070L, Grade Level: 7.8)