African American children's literature: past and present

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AFRICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE:

PAST AND PRESENT

by

Annie L. Freeman

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Masters of Arts Degree in the Graduate School
of Rowan University
May, 1997

Approved by

Professor

Date Approved: April 21, 1997
This thesis examines and analyzes the history of African American children’s literature, which began in the 1890s, and highlighted negative stories written by whites about African Americans. It progresses to the 1990s, and highlights warm, rich stories with similar background experiences, written by and about African Americans.

This thesis discusses the lack of African American children’s literature, and the difficulty in finding it in quantities: in libraries, bookstores, or book reviews.

Because of the lack of cultural literature in abundance for African American children, social portraits experienced by African American children in children’s literature are generally representative of those expressed by white American authors. For this reason, an annotated bibliography of African American children’s literature books, written by African American authors, is also included. These books are listed in two specific categories: 1) African American children’s literature books for the elementary student, and 2) African American children’s literature books for the middle school student. This thesis also includes an author’s index, which names many African American children’s authors.
MINI-ABSTRACT

Annie L. Freeman

African American Children's Literature: Past and Present, 1997; Thesis advisor- Dr. Lynne Levy

This thesis tells of the negative beginning of African American children's literature from the 1890s up to the 1990s, which highlights positive stories. Also included in this thesis is an annotated bibliography and author's index of African American children's literature books and some of their many African American authors.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Along the road leading to this thesis project, quite a number of people have given me tremendous assistance. Because of this, with sincere gratitude, I want to thank all of those individuals who have assisted me in my preparation and research. Most importantly, I thank my family for their encouragement, support, and assistance in overcoming difficulties along the road to the completion of my studies. Lastly, I thank my advisor, Dr. Lynne Levy, for her patience and guidance.
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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

When children's literature about African Americans first appeared, from the late 1890s up to the early 1990s, it was written by whites, primarily for white Americans, and depicted negative characterizations of African Americans. African American literature for children has greatly improved over the years. It has been brought into the forefront. However, one enormous problem still exists: it is relatively difficult to find in abundance in such places as bookstores, public or school libraries or in book reviews.

Because of these facts, I felt compelled to write a thesis to examine the historical development of African American children's literature for African American children. This thesis will explore the need of a literary education through African American children's literature for African American children, as well as for children of all races, but especially for the African American child.

Purpose

Statistics show in the early 1990s, that out of the 2,500 to 3,500 children's books published yearly, less than 2 percent of them featured African Americans as major characters or highlighted information on African Americans or African American life. Even when books revealing such information were published, they were difficult to find. In 1997, the situation has somewhat improved. This is attributable mostly to the fact that there are now many more African American writers. However, their books are still not found in abundance in either school or public libraries, or in bookstores; nor are they reviewed in great quantity in book reviews.
African American children's literature generally is defined as literature that is both written about African Americans, and written by African American authors as well. Therefore, it is the intention of this thesis to introduce some of the many African American authors who write for and about African American children in literature. This thesis will educate the general public, educators, librarians, and parents of the extreme need and importance of African American children to be able to identify with the type literature they read.

Literature functions as a major socializing agent. It tells students who and what their society and culture values, what kinds of behaviors are acceptable and appropriate, and what it means to be a decent human being. "If African American students cannot find themselves and people like them in the books they read and have read to them, they receive a powerful message about how they are undervalued in both school and society" (Bishop, 1990, p.561).

This thesis will include the history of African American children's literature, which will touch on early 1827, and encompass 1882 through the early 1890s to the 1930s and 40s to the present. It will also tell how African American children's literature has evolved from the totally negative stories about African Americans, especially the African American male, into warm, rich, positive stories highlighting African American children and their families. The impact of these positive images, of which similar background and cultural experiences are portrayed in literature when read, many times helps African American students to build strong self-esteem and a positive self-image.

Also, in this thesis, will be an annotated bibliography of various African American children's literature books. A list of African American children's literature authors will also be included for reference [see appendix]. By no means will this annotated bibliography or list of authors be considered complete. It is merely a sampling of the many African American children's literature books and the many authors who write them.
Limitations

This analysis will include historical fiction, folklore, folktale, biographies, poetry, picture books, and picture story books for African American children in preschool up to the middle school student. Because the emphasis of this study is on African American children's literature and their authors, only books written by African Americans are examined.

Demographics

"Literature assumes such importance in the curricular component that is a major prominence in elementary classrooms; the question of what students read takes on major importance" (Bishop, 1990 p. 561). The same is found to be true at the H.L. Bonsall Family School, where I am the librarian.

The H.L. Bonsall Family School is located in the urban city of Camden, New Jersey. Bonsall is a [preschool through grade eight] family school with a population of a little over 1,050 students, and 160 faculty and staff members.

The family school concept was developed about six years ago as a means to keep the students from preschool through grade five from leaving their warm, nurturing environment of an elementary school at the completion of grade five, and entering into a cold middle school setting. It was thought that the longer a child is kept in a warm, nurturing, academic environment, the better the he/she will achieve upon his/her arrival at the high school level. Research, to my knowledge, has not yet been completed to follow up on this theory to see if the concept is working.

Reading the various informational literature on the need for African American children's literature has opened my eyes to an aspect of another need at the H.L. Bonsall Family School. There is a need of an increase of African American children's literature by African American authors which has been written especially for African American children to be added to the Bonsall Family School Library Media Center. It is, therefore, my intention that each and every student at this predominantly African American inner city
family school develops tremendous self-esteem and confidence and a feeling of self-worth and importance, not only through a warm, nurturing, academic environment, but also through African American literature.
CHAPTER TWO
Survey Of Literature

African Americans have been represented in general literature since the seventeenth century. Essentially, the depictions are stereotyped, pejorative, and unauthentic (Broderick, 1973). Unlike that of African American literature written for adults, African American children's literature has had a past that included limited awareness among readers; circumscribed publication and distribution; omission from libraries, schools and bookstores; and uniformed criticism (Harris, 1990). Children's literature created by African Americans first emerged in the latter part of the 19th century; however, it has never achieved recognition as a central component of children's literature.

When required reading lists are assigned to school children in primary grades, generally they consist of such classics as The Little Engine That Could (Piper, 1954; 1980) and The Tale of Peter Rabbit (Potter, 1902; 1989). Intermediate grades reading lists usually include Little House On the Prairie (Wilder, 1953), Bridge To Terebithia (Patterson, 1977), and Charlotte's Web (White, 1952; 1975). By the time they get to high school, children will have summed up their reading with The Scarlet Letter (Hawthorne, 1983), Lord of the Flies (Golding, 1962), and whatever other works thought necessary for cultural literacy enhancement. Regrettably, these types of books reflect only values, experiences, perspectives, interpretations and knowledge of white people.

Although many texts written by African Americans or other people of color exhibit tremendous literary merit, and are also considered African American classics, such as Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry (Taylor, 1976), or M. C. Higgins the Great (Hamilton, 1974), they are not read by the vast majority of students. Why? Because African American writers of children's literature have simply been ignored. They are not a part of the selected traditions.
Because literature is a valued cultural commodity, traditions evolve around its definitions, functions, and values (Williams, 1961; 1977). Children's literature, too, is valuable, and is a valued cultural commodity. It also serves an extremely important role as a mediator between children, cultural knowledge, and socialization by adults. Furthermore, "since children's literature has long maintained this traditional role in society," it also possesses real as well as symbolic power (Harris, 1990, p.538).

When a tradition is selective, by choosing a certain race of people, particularly the African American, and sets up untruthful and damaging stereotypes regarding them throughout American literature, the meanings and knowledge shaped by it become significant because they shape individuals' perceptions of the world and their role in it (Harris, 1990, p.541). The selective traditions of African American children's literature have been overflowing with stereotypes.

The images of African Americans were analyzed by critic Sterling Brown (1953) in American literature, and it was determined that the literary portrayals of the African American were primarily to entertain whites, and when combined with prevailing theological argument, provide literary justification for institutionalized racism. In conclusion, suggests Brown, the "Negro has met with as great an injustice in American literature as he has in American life (Broderick, 1973, p.47). Most books about African Americans who were referred to at that time as "Negroes" were typically stereotyped characterizations. Two of the many stereotypes identified by Brown were the "contented slave" and "the comic Negro" (Broderick, 1973, p. 54).

Examples of Stereotypes

The first, which is the "contented slave" is represented in the 1827, Tales of Peter Parley About America, written during slavery to give the young reader an overview of life as seen by traveler Jenkins while traveling in the United States. The book, which was written by Samuel G. Goodrich (1827), was an attempt to dehumanize slavery, and personalize the existing problem as merely good masters and bad masters. The belief was that slaves who had good masters were happy, but the slaves who had bad masters were
miserable. Another book, *Diddie, Dumps and Tots* (Pyrnelle, 1882), was written to defend slavery as being totally pleasant with a happy master and slave relationship. The second stereotype, "the comic Negro," was usually of an African American male stereotyped as dimwitted, constantly grinning, eating, misunderstanding simple directions and always scratching his head. This is represented in *Epaminondas and his Auntie* (Bryant, 1907; 1938). Epaminondas is portrayed as an incredibly stupid male slave. There were few horrors of slavery ever portrayed in children’s literature.

Research suggests that literature for African American children did not appear until the 1890s (Fraser, 1973). Thus far, early writers and contemporary researchers cite the work of Mrs. A. E. Johnson, in the 1890s, as the beginnings of African American Children’s literature (Muse, 1975). Johnson’s first novel, *Clarence and Corinne* (1890) was not necessarily an entertaining novel, but one to teach obedience, refinement and morality to children in order to motivate them to achieve the virtues of the stable status of the middle class through hard work and perseverance. Clarence and Corinne, who were brother and sister, did overcome poverty-stricken beginnings and acquired an education, achieved respect, each got married, and achieved middle class status. Although this book was written by an African American, it could relate to any ethnic group, and only featured white characters. Paul Laurence Dunbar’s collection of dialect poems, *Little Brown Baby*, first published in 1895, would be more of a suitable label for the first black book written, because it was written by an African American especially for and about African Americans. It was humorous and it celebrated racial pride.

During the early 1900s, with the emergence of the African American middle class, which was an educated group of people, culturally conscious literature was demanded for African American children. Books which contradicted stereotypes appeared. These books were called "oppositional texts." Two such books, *Hazel* (1913), and *Zeke* (1931) were written by Mary White Ovington, a radical white woman, who was associated with the NAACP. In her books, Ovington also had a few stereotypes, although she was trying to provide children of African American descent with cultural images, instill racial pride, and highlight their racial achievements through her straightforward discussions about negative
racial attitudes and lynchings.

In the 1920s, W.E.B. DuBois' work appeared. His powerful essays, *The Souls of Black Folks* (1903; 1961), and *Dusk of Dawn* (1940; 1975), were published. In the interest of African American children, Dubois, along with Augustus G. Dill, formed the DuBois and Dill Publishing Company. It published *The Brownies' Book*, which was a special periodical for African American children. He also published two biographies, Elizabeth Ross Haynes' *Unsung Heroes* (1921), and Julia Henderson's *A Child Story of Dunbar* (1921). *The Brownies' Book*, written by W.E.B. DuBois and literary editor Jessie R. Fauset, featured folktales, poetry, biographies, fiction, drama, and news pieces, which were designed to educate and politicize children and their parents.

Between 1930 and 1940, Carter G. Woodson contributed to the positive African American influence of African American children's literature established by W.E.B. DuBois. He established Negro History Week and founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. He also authored the book *The Mis-Education of the Negro*, stating that education in his day was not made to benefit African Americans. He contended that schooling for the African American needed a complete metamorphosis. Adding that, in order to accomplish this, new text books free of racial ideology, teachers, goals, and techniques were also needed. Some of his goals and objectives were achieved through his enterprise, Associated Publishers, which published poetry anthologies, biographies, folklore collections, and histories, which were intended to educate, emancipate, and entertain. Another well known African American author who effected major positive change in African American literature for children was Arna Bontemps. From the 1940s through the 1970s, African American children's literature was propelled into the mainstream, led by Arna Bontemps. His extensive body of work spans over two generations. His works include 16 novels, biographies, poetry anthologies, histories and folktales. Arna Bontemps' work is of significance because it represents the integration of African American children's literature into the mainstream. Bontemps celebrates African American folk culture and language patterns in his work (Harris, 1990). Other contributors during this time were Langston Hughes, James Weldon Johnson, and Claude McKay;
along with Jessie Jackson, author of *Call Me Charlie* in 1945, and Lorenzo Graham, author of *North Town*, which was written in 1965.

Starting in the 1970s and beyond, culturally conscious literature appeared. These books reflected various degrees of social and cultural traditions. The main purpose of these books was "to speak to African American children about themselves and their lives." (Harris, 1990, p. 543) Contributing to these types of books were authors and illustrators like Lucille Clifton, Tom Feelings, Eloise Greenfield, Rosa Guy, Virginia Hamilton, Sharon Bell Mathis, Walter Dean Myers, the late John Steptoe, Mildred Taylor, and Brenda Wilkinson. Writers of the 1980s and 90s who also fit into this culturally conscious category include Angela Johnson, Patricia McKissack, Emily Moore, Joyce Carol Thomas, Camille Yarbrough and Faith Ringgold. These writers have distinguished themselves because their work is unquestionably African American in range of content and in tone. Many of them have received numerous prestigious awards, such as the Newbery and Caldecott Medals, because of the quality of their work.

The works of culturally conscious authors present a wide array of African American experiences. The portrayed images of their works are both historically and culturally authentic. Without resulting to inaccurate dialect, the oral language is captured. An example of this is in *Mirandy and Brother Wind* (1988) where extraordinary illustrations capture truthful portrayal of physical features and language:

First thing, Orlina come siding up to Mirandy, asking, "Who gon' be yo' partner?" Mirandy tried not to act excited. "He's real special." Then she added, "I wish you and Ezel luck. Y'all gon' need it." "Me and Ezel? Girl, don't be silly." (unpaged)

Authors during this period also presented historically accurate portrayals of the horrors of the African American experience. This was not intended to frighten or render the children hopeless, but merely to bring out these aspects in children's literature that are rarely seen in the African American experience. An example of an accurate historical fact portrayal that also highlights African American resistance in literature is shown in Mildred Taylor's *The Friendship* (1987). A story which takes place in the south, it is about an elderly African American man named Mr Tom Bee who goes to a local store to purchase
tobacco. The store is owned by a white man named John Wallace, whose life he had saved several years earlier. Although promised by Wallace that Mr. Bee would never be disrespected in front of whites, an unfortunate incident took place in Wallace's store. Urged on by some other whites in the store, to put Mr. Bee "in his place" for calling Wallace "John," Mr. Bee is shot by Wallace. Although wounded, Mr. Tom Bee vows never to call Wallace "Mister." Culturally conscious books such as this represent exceptional aesthetic experiences. They entertain, educate, inform and instill racial pride.

**Trends in Selection of African American Literature**

Purves and Beach (1972) found that children prefer literary works with subject matter related to their personal experiences. They engage more with materials related to their personal experiences, and seek out works with which they can identify or which contain characters whose experiences reflect their own. Arguably, reading comprehension among African American children would improve if the literacy materials were more meaningful to them (Kunjufu, 1984).

To affirm their cultural heritage and who they are, African American children need to see positive reflections of themselves in the literary text that they are reading. If not, it is unlikely that they will learn to enjoy reading or value learning. Children need to understand languages, ways of life, beliefs and other perspectives. In order to rid our society of cultural, economic and geographical barriers of African American children, white children, along with children of other colors, need to read African American books as well.

For various reasons, much of the African American children's literature never reaches the hands of the American children. Some books may simply be out of print. For those available, many of them are unknown to librarians, teachers and parents. There are many unknown reasons why these books are not available.
CHAPTER THREE

An Annotated Bibliography of
African American Children’s Literature Book

The following annotated bibliography of African American children’s literature books, which are examined and analyzed in this thesis, are written by African American authors, for African American children, and can be thoroughly enjoyed by children of any race. These books are arranged alphabetically by author. Book review sources are listed wherever possible; many of the books analyzed.

The types of books examined are realistic fiction, historical fiction, folk tales, poetry, biographies, picture books and picture story books. These African American children’s literature books are listed in two separate categories. The first list consists of books for the elementary school students and the second is a list especially selected for the middle school students. To further assist in the breakdown of a specific reading level, a suggested reading level has been added whenever possible.
African American Children’s Literature Books for the Elementary Student


K-5. Aardema’s splendid retelling of 12 African folk tales is illustrated with a bold variety of dramatic, detailed, colorful illustrations some framed, some tumbling over the pages.

Booklist


Gr. 2-5. Everett Anderson’s father has died. This story reveals Everett’s thoughts as he works through denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance of the death and is finally able to go on with his life. Detailed black and white drawings add to the feelings of anguish as Everett thinks about what it means to die. This is just one of the Everett Anderson Series.


PreK-up. This is a simple story of a child’s everyday adventure. Clever, colorful photo-collage illustrations feature a cheerful African American girl in an appealing urban landscape.

School Library Journal


All ages. A fine anthropological alphabet book that conveys a vision of tribal life in East Africa. A companion volume, *Moja Means One*, is a counting book. Book presents a word, with English translation, for each of the 24 letters in the Swahili alphabet. This is really for school age children and interested adults.


PreK-2. In this tender yet unromanticized sequel to *The Patchwork Quilt*, a grand family reunion helps Tanya to see her family history in a new light. Pinkney’s richly detailed,

K-2. Of the 13 poems presented here, 12 appeared in books published between 1973 and 1993. The new poem, entitled *Connie*, represents the best of Giovanni: a series of quicksilver images that capture a mood to perfection. Painted in Bryan's signature style, the illustrations fill the pages with sunny colors and bold patterns. This book has plenty to offer, including illustrations that feature African American children in many cultures and settings and a warmth of feeling in both the poetry and the artwork.

*Booklist*


K-2. Poet Eloise Greenfield tells this warm family story with tenderness and grace; and Floyd Cooper makes an outstanding debut. His muted realistic paintings complement this story of Tamika, a young girl who grows emotionally through love. It is a rich life for Tamika and for those who experience and grow, and these are rich visual images to support that belief.

*Kirkus Review*

Awards: School Library Journal, starred review
Best Books, 1988


Gr. 2-5. "It's Nathaniel talking, and Nathaniel's me. I'm talking about my philosophy."
This stellar collection of poems is written in first person. Like Greenfield's *Honey, I Love* (Crowell, 1978), the collection as a whole characterized an individual African American child through the child's lyrical impressions of self and the surrounding world. Here, the child is a little older, his world a little wider. Nathaniel is a confident nine-year-old, making observations about his life, sifting through bittersweet memories of his past, and dreaming of his future. Gilchrist's black and white illustrations fill the pages but are so skillfully composed that they do not crowd or overshadow the poems themselves. While all the
poems remain true to a nine-year-old's perspective, the mature poet's playfulness with words and rhythms gives resonance, depth, and unity to the collection as a whole. Overall, Nathaniel Talking will strike a chord of recognition in children everywhere, and is sure to set feet tapping and earflaps flapping.

*School Library Journal*


K 3. This is a story about a warm African American family with a common problem: an only child with an imaginary friend. Janell's mother doesn't really believe her daughter's pretend friend, Nessie, but is willing to put up with her, until there is a problem with Aunt Bea during her visit. Later, when Janell starts school, the need for an imaginary friend vanished and so does Nessie.


PreK-up. City is the operative word in this bustling, urban ABC book. It begins, "A is for arcade or ads for Apartments, on short streets with alleys alive with stray pets. A is for Afghans named after their owners who drive them to art shows in silver Corvettes." Cummings' lively cartoonist illustrations depict all of these and more and are sure to keep the keen-eyed reader engaged. The rhymes themselves are quite clever and packed with vocabulary expanding images. Each illustration is a hearty slice of urban life, with all its intersecting dramas and scenes within scenes. Certainly city children will identify with the book, but any child should find in its busy illustrations much worth discussing or poring over alone.

*Booklist*


With rich oil-wash illustrations, this series of simple poems tells a joyful friendship story in the voice of Zuri Jackson, who admires her spirited buddy, Danitra Brown.

*Booklist*


PreK-1. At his best Hughes wrote with a lyrical simplicity, with humor and heartfelt emotion, that appeals to children. However, these alphabet poems, first written in 1936 and published now for the first time [as part as the Opie Library], are condescending and cute. What is best about this small book is the art and design. The illustrations are color
photographs of animal models made from papier-mâché and other materials; the artists are young grade school students at the Harlem School of the Arts. The cover is gorgeous, and the book designs display the humor, fantasy, and brilliant color of the kids' work.

Booklist


PreK-1. Several things distinguish this winning group of board books. First, they feature an African American little boy and his family; second, they steer clear of "traditional" board book topics [such as ABCs], concentrating, instead, on feelings stemming from experiences many children have in common: stomping through puddles on a rainy day and being afraid of noises at night. Johnson's texts are spare and sweetly poetic, baby birds sitting, their mama flying in the air. Sister says, "Look, Joshua, she's tending to them too. Feeding them, loving them, like mama does for you." Mitchell's watercolors in muted tones are equally quiet and simple as they show a loving family and a curious, contented little boy.

Booklist


PreK-1. In a story with a plot that's not unfamiliar but has lots of heart, Sara isn't too pleased about her babysitter, Miss Alice. But Miss Alice has a few tricks up her sleeves, and several pairs of shoes on her feet. First, Miss Alice puts on her dancing shoes, and the duo twirls up a storm. Then, it's time for a stroll, with Miss Alice wearing her old brown walkers. Nighttime means bare feet. By the time Miss Alice leaves, the pair have stepped lively through the whole day. Once again, Johnson offers a story that depicts a warm relationship between African American characters. Page is a new picture book illustrator. He captures the story's frequent joyous moments. Tucked in the tale is a nice message about being open to new people walking into your life.

Booklist


PreK-2. In this touching picture book, a mother and a pre-school-aged daughter talk together as the child is being prepared for bed. Mama's childhood memories, as related by her daughter, are warm slices of life from a previous generation, resulting in a beautiful realized evocation of treasured childhood and family moments.

Award: School Library Journal, starred review

PreK-4. Interpreting this moving anthem, [also known as the Black National Anthem,] *Lift Every Voice and Sing,* this picture book offers impressionistic artwork that is inspired by the hymn yet not bound by a literal translation of the words. The book embodies the spirit of the music and the feelings of those who sing it.

Booklist


Based on the popular black folk ballad about the contest between John Henry and the steam drill, this is a tall tale told with rhythm and wit and illustrated with dappled pencil and watercolor pictures that connect the great working man with the human and natural community.

Booklist


Gr.3-up. Michael's mother wants to throw out an old box that belongs to his 100-year-old great-great-aunt. The box doesn't seem to be worth much. It only has 100 pennies in it, but Michael knows that Aunt Dew has saved the pennies as memories of the events in her life. Keeping the box is important to her. In the end, the boy manages to save it and his aunt's memories. The illustrations are framed in the soft brown shape of an old box.

Awards: Best Books for Children
Newbery Medal Honor Book, 1976


PreK-3. Sultry watercolor washes in a realistic flowing style spread luxuriously and consistently over every two pages in this story set in the rural south. Young Mirandy wants to win her town's cakewalk jubilee, a festive dance contest. [According to the "Author's Note, this dance was "first introduced in America by slaves, and is rooted in the African American culture." ] Everyone says that if she captures the Wind he will do her bidding, but nobody seems to know how to capture him. In the end, Mirandy does believe that she has captured Brother Wind, but she also proves that she is a true friend to clumsy Ezel.

McKissack's sincere belief in the joy of living is delightfully translated into the story which concludes, "When Grandmama Beasley had seen Mirandy and Ezel turning and spinning, moving like shadows in the flickering candlelight, she'd thrown back her head, laughed, and said, "Them chullin' is dancing with the Wind!"" A captivating story, with a winning heroine, told in black dialect.

*School Library Journal*

K-3. *Monkey-Monkey's Trick* is based on an African folk tale. It will appeal to both readers and listeners. Disguising himself as an Ugly Monster, Hyena has the upper hand until Monkey-Monkey learns that he has been tricked. Because Meisel's illustrations give viewers a glimpse of who is in disguise. The refrain, “I know someone who sings [eats, dances, laugh] that way, thought Monkey-Monkey. But who?” will encourage audience participation. Watercolor and pen illustrations supply ample context clues for young readers, who will enjoy practicing their reading skills to find out which animal is the trickster.

_School Library Journal_


Gr. 2-5. Along with the facts we are now learning about the bravery of African Americans during the Civil War, we have a picture book based on the exploits of a member of the all black regiments in the U.S. Army right after the Civil War. Miller does note that the Kiowa, Apache, and Cheyenne whom the soldiers fought were defending the land they lived on. But, from there, we see the role of the army only as a honorable one. Miller describes the training, the battles, and Stance's bravery, leading to his medal. Michael Bryant chooses a loose watercolor approach to illustrating that only suggests details. He uses the double page spread to compose his characters in scenes of animated activity, while close ups define specific characters. End paper maps add useful information. Robert Miller also gives us another African American hero in *The Story of Nat Love*. He also brings us the series of the Black Cowboys.

_Booklist_


Gr. 1-5. This picture book biography of colorful Old West cowboy Nat Love follows his life from his early days as a slave on a plantation in Tennessee to his death in 1925 after becoming a legendary figure. Young readers will delight in Nat’s exciting adventures, from the roping and shooting contests Nat wins, to his capture by Indians and his daring midnight escape. Bryant’s sprawling watercolor illustration, all double page spreads, nicely convey the spacious feeling of the untamed Old West. A great primary stratum selection for black history month.

_Booklist_


Gr. 3-5. Based on a true story told to William Faulkner, this picture book is about a clever
slave who wins his freedom. During the festivities at Christmas on the plantation, Jim, the
slave foreman, gets Master Brown to agree to a bargain: if Jim can stump the master with a
niddle, Jim will be free. For a whole year in the plantation, Jim works out his riddle and
memorizes his verses. The next Christmas when master can’t guess the answer,
he keeps his word and sets Jim free. The harshness of slavery is here, but it’s in the
background. The realistic, full-page pictures show the Christmas fun, and the focus is on
Jim as a proud, dignified man.

Booklist

Musgrove, Margaret. (1976). Ashanti to Zulu: African traditions. Illustrated by Leo
and Diane Dillon. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers.

All ages. This stunning alphabet book describes and brilliantly illustrates aspects of African
culture. The captions are small gems of anthropological reporting. Among the tribes
described are the Dogon, the Fanta, and the Kung. This is an illustrated book for older
children and adults as well.
Caldecott Medal Honor Book, 1976


PreK-4. Bill Pickett, one of 13 children born to parents who were freed slaves, grew up in
Texas watching the cowboys drive cattle along the Chisholm Trail. Observing a bulldog
manage a cow by biting and holding on to the beast’s lip, young Bill discovered he could
do the same thing. He became an accomplished horseman with a range of tricks, but it was
“bull-doggin” that brought the crowds to their feet throughout his long career. The story is
told with verve, relish, and just enough of a cowboy twang. Pinkney gives an excellent
overview of the history of rodeos and black cowboys in the closing note. Brian Pinkney’s
pictures are in his typical scratch board technique, and are well suited to the story. Their
lines and colors swirling with movement and excitement on the deep black surface.

Booklist

Pinkney, Andrea D. (1994). Dear Benjamin Banneker. Illustrated by Brian

Gr. 1-5. Born to free black parents in 1731, Benjamin Banneker grew up on their Maryland
tobacco farm. He, too became a farmer until, in his late fifties, he taught himself astronomy
and wrote his own almanac, the first by an African American. He sent a copy of the
almanac to Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson, along with a letter taking Jefferson to task
for slave holding. Excerpts from his letter and Jefferson’s reply appear in the book. Since
eighteenth century, language requires some interpretation, the author summarizes the
general meaning of each quoted passage. The artwork, subtle shapes of oil paints over
scratch board pictures, is handsome as well as distinctive.

Booklist

PreK-3. In an urban neighborhood, a small boy sits on the front steps of his house and beats out the music of the city.

*Booklist*

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PreK-3. Surrounded by her extended family in Philadelphia, Ernestine listens to their stories of "back home," visits the bustling railway station, takes the train. The illustrations in watercolor and pencil show a loving home and a vibrant city neighborhood.

*Booklist*

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K-5. This book is a history lesson introducing 12 notable African American women, in a guise of a story about a special family dinner. Intense color and strong, boldly outlined shapes.

*Kirkus Reviews*

Award: A 1994 Notable Children’s Trade Book, Social Studies

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Gr. 1-5. Ringgold has often used the metaphor of dreams to interpret events in her book. Here, she views the life of Martin Luther King through her impressionistic lens. The frame of the story is the narrator’s dream, in which King is a child who must go to a segregated school and hear his daddy called “boy.” He watches police on horseback beat up protesters, and he is taken to prison, where his grandmother holds him and tries to explain segregation. As an adult, King helps Rosa Parks, he makes his “I Had A Dream” speech, and is murdered. As the dream starts, all the people of the world carry their hate and prejudice in paper bags; at the book’s conclusion, the people are willing to burn their bags. When they do, these words appear in the sky: “Every Good Thing Starts with a Dream.” Within the confines of a biography, this book will affect readers; it captures the feel of Dr. King’s life even if the fantasy framework over shadows he soul stirring facts.

*Booklist*

PreK-3. This is a vibrant adaptation of Creole folktale. Expressively told, excitingly drawn, this book will have wide appeal. The story has a compelling charm. This is a wonderful book to read aloud. Pinkney's scenes will electrify storytelling of picture book sharing sessions.

*The Horn Book*
Awards: Parent's Choice Award for Illustration, 1989
Caldecott Honor Book, 1990
Coretta Scott King Honor Book, 1990
Booklist, starred review


K-2. Roberto resents having always to be nice to spoiled crybaby Stevie, whom Mother keeps on weekdays while Stevie's mother works. When Stevie moves away, Roberto suddenly realizes that Stevie was like a little brother. This is a warm and touching story.

*Booklist*


PreK-3. The poems in *Brown Honey in Broomwheat Tea,* (1993) focus on the African American experience and center on a young girl. In this companion volume, the poems follow a little boy, in a similar nuclear family, through the year, with a poem for each month. The exuberant boy bites into gingerbread in January, rules as the king in March, attends church in June, goes horseback riding in August, drinks “love for breakfast” in October, and celebrates his father, “a gift all by himself,” in December. Cooper's paintings glow with light and warmth, conveying a strong sense of joy in living. With its large pictures and simple [sometimes thought provoking] poems, this will work well with groups.

*Booklist*


PreK-3. Walters has created a family oriented guide to preparing for and celebrating Kwanzaa that encourages early planning and the sharing of family histories. The principles and symbols are clearly explained, and the directions for making simple gifts are accompanied by adequate line drawings. Walter's enthusiasm for her subject brightens this modest effort.

*Booklist*

K-2. Walter and Cummings use precise characterization and sharp attention to detail to bring freshness to a familiar situation of a young black boy who has to deal with a younger sister in the middle of the terrible twos. Brandon agrees to help his mother by watching Gina, although he’d rather do anything else, even vacuum. It’s truly a tough job. Gina runs off to try her mother’s make-up, knocks over his toy garage, and spills her milk. After lunch, he can’t find her. His anger dissipates into fear as he and his mother search the house and when they find her napping on the floor beside her bed, his relief helps him to put his problems with Gina into perspective. Walter allows Brandon’s feelings to flow out of each situation, expressing them with concrete accuracy. Cummings’ full page close ups of the faces of mother, brother, and sister are done in warm watercolors, capturing Brandon and Gina’s many moods.

School Library Journal


Gr. 3-5. Wright details the experiences and hardships faced by Ginny, a young African American girl, and her family as they travel west from Virginia to California in 1865. Unwelcome on the big wagon trains departing from Independence, Missouri, Ginny’s family must form its own group of newly freed friends and relatives. They endure snake bites, drought, broken wagon wheels, extreme temperatures, and treacherous mountains before finally reaching California in this fictional journey. Griffith’s watercolor illustrations vividly depict the panoramic western landscapes as well as close up details of daily life.

Booklist


Gr. 3-5. “Why are they called spirituals?” Sister asks Daddy at a concert in the park. He tells her about her African ancestors and how they brought their rich cultures with them to America, not in suitcases, as her little brother imagines, but in their music, their words, and their beliefs. While the family listens to the band, Daddy tells how the various African people blended their songs with Christianity and retold the Bible stories until they were free at last. “Everyone sang” about their loneliness, fear, and hope. The history is directly told in a blend of speaking voices, poetry, and song, and Geter’s stirring charcoal-like illustrations capture the contemporary individual portraits and their connections in history, memory and music.

Booklist
Gr. 3-5. Eight-year-old Tamika, her older sister, and their parents live in an inner city apartment building where her father is the superintendent. Although gangs and drugs are constant threats, Tamika works hard to keep her mind and body safe and strong. After Daddy is murdered by drug dealers [who threaten the rest of the family], the three are forced to move to another, much smaller apartment. The fact that Tamika and her family are able to survive these terrible changes and move forward in their lives is a tribute to their inner strength. Yarbrough’s presentation is clearly written and age appropriate. Large print, short chapters, and frequent illustrations will make this easily accessible to first time chapter book readers.

Booklist
African American Children's Literature Books for Students Grades Six Through Eighth.


All grades. "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," printed immediately after the title page, establishes the tone for this objective and absorbing history of the Negro people. The life of the Negro in the West Indies and the United States is depicted, in the days of bondage and since; both celebrated and less well-known leaders are introduced. In background chapters, the author presents several African tribes, noting that there are more kinds of people, with greater differences, in Africa than in all of Europe. He relates the story of human slavery in the world previous to modern times and describes the new people that resulted from the introduction of the Africans into Latin America, the Caribbean region, and the United States. A twenty page chronology parallels events in the story of the Negro with half-page black and white drawings at the beginning of each chapter portray a scene or person from the chapter. This book can be read aloud.


Bold graphic illustrations by renowned artist John Lawrence help to evoke the powerful emotions that are a part of this brief first person narrative from the viewpoint of Brown's daughter, Annie. The narrative aptly tells the story of John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry.

*Library Talk*


Gr. 6-up. In a series of letters to his parents, Carl Davis III tries to make sense of the chaos and insecurities in his life. He has been sent by his parents from Brooklyn to rural South Carolina to live with his grandmother. At first, the 12 year old feels anger and betrayal for this abrupt change in his life. As time goes on, he has a change of heart and comes to admire and respect his grandmother. Carl is an incisive, articulate, and witty person; his letters reveal an individual who is seeking to assert his blackness in an environment which he feels is stifling him at every turn. As it turns out, his parents have sent him away so that he could avoid the drug scene. For some reason or another, his family has trouble communicating this and other things to him. In fact, it is his grandmother who is able to open his eyes to a lot of things about his family and himself. Carl's letters touch upon various feelings and questions which young adolescents generally experience at some point in their lives.

*School Library Journal*

Gr. 5-up. This is a story which takes place in North Carolina, where thirteen year old Thomas moves with his family from Ohio. His father, a college professor, teaches history in the town where the abolitionist Dies Drear had operated an important station on the Underground Railway. When moving to North Carolina, the family moved into Dies Drear’s isolated, long-empty house with its sliding panels, secret tunnels, and nearby cave hideouts. The family becomes alarmed when efforts of displeased neighbors attempt to frighten them away so that the family will never possibly locate any of Dies Drear’s hidden treasure. This is an exciting mystery.


Gr. 4-7. Hamilton’s eight lively retellings of tales from the American South feature feuding birds, foolish bats, and hummingbirds with attitudes. In one story, Blue Jay and Swallow bring fire to humankind; in another, Hummingbird loses her voice in a battle with the wind. Each tale is written in the style of a *cante fable* (a story that includes a song or verse and ends with a moral). The moral, printed in italics, enhances and reflects the oral nature of the stories, which Hamilton roots in the work of Martha Young, a nineteenth century Alabama folklorist who collected black folktales and songs and wrote original stories in the African American tradition. Dialect has been eliminated, with the stories retold in an easygoing style that gracefully lends itself to reading and telling aloud. Moser’s finely detailed watercolors have an inherent humor that makes the characters especially vivid, and the jacket illustration is a wonderful, slyly funny collection of bird personalities. The text, the layout, and the illustrations work together seamlessly in this beautifully designed, well crafted collection.

*Booklist*


Gr. 6-9. In a sequel to “Which Way Freedom?” (1986), Hansen focuses on Easter, the girl that Obi [black hero of first book] left behind him. Like Obi, Easter is determined, after her escape from bondage, to find and keep freedom. A tenacious and resourceful adolescent, she joins those recently emancipated Sea Islands workers who rebel when the government denies them promised land. Always hunting for Obi, Easter at last decides she will leave the South, go North to train as a teacher, and hope that her path and Obi’s will cross. At the close, there is a strong hint, in an epilogue, that may happen: “No matter how long it took, he would find her.”

Gr. 5-8. Readers who think that the story of African Americans in aviation begins with the World War II Tuskegee squadron and ends with astronaut Mae Jemison will note that nearly a third of this book is devoted to African Americans who flew during the period before World War II. Eugene Bullard flew with the French before the Lafayette Escadrille, and Bessie Coleman thrilled crowds in the 1920's. In addition to introducing the people involved, Haskins ably sets the background scene, revealing a social context of discrimination that includes, for example, an account of the protest undertaken by the 477th Bombardment Group during World War II. He also relates the better-known, generally more positive, story of the Tuskegee squadron. An excellent job of dealing with the particular and the more general aspects of "what it was like." Bibliography and a chronology appended.

Booklist


Gr. 5-8. Look beyond the title to the subtitle, which more accurately describes the contents of the book. Haskins presents a true, short, readable history of the Civil War and Reconstruction. More than other books on the period, the text and illustrations emphasize the roles of blacks and women. Abundantly illustrated with many reproductions of contemporary photographs, sketches, paintings, engravings, posters and records, this attractive book opens a valuable window on the period.

Booklist


A collective biography including Dr. Charles Drew [discovered method for storing blood plasma]; Fannie Lou Hamer [worked to gain equal rights]; Eddie Robinson [football coach]; Madam C.J.Walker [entrepreneur who became a millionaire]; Crispus Attucks [hero in the American Revolution]; Matthew Henson [codiscoverer of the North Pole]; Marian Anderson [opera singer]; Ralph Bunche [diplomat and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize]; Romare Bearden [20th century artist]; Shirley Chisholm [politician leader and congresswoman]; Malcolm X [Black Muslim]; and Ronald McNair [astronaut on ill-fated Challenger].

Library Talk
Hughes, Langston. *The block*. Illustrated by Romare Bearden. New York: Viking. Gr. 6-up. Thirteen poems by Hughes have been matched with pieces of Bearden's exuberant six panel collage that is in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art; together, words and pictures express the vitality and excitement of an urban neighborhood.


Lipsyte, Robert. (1994). *Joe Louis: a champ for all America*. New York: Harper Collins. 96p. index. Gr. 5-8. It's amazing how Lipsyte in just 96 pages can convey the excitement of boxing even to the non enthusiasts, paint a vivid picture of the mores and prejudices of pre-World War II in America, and provide a well written, easy reading account of the life of a man who truly smashed color barriers. Although sports actions dominates, there is more than enough information for biography or black history reports. This sympathetic biography of the Brown Bomber is sure to be popular with boxing fans, reluctant readers, and those who have enjoyed Lipsyte's brand of good sports writing in other Superstar Lineup books. The volume is illustrated with black-and-white photographs and contains a brief list of further reading.

McKissack, Patricia C. and Frederick. (1994). *African American scientists*. Brookfield, Connecticut: Millbrook Press. Ingenuity and determination helped these African Americans to overcome obstacles which they faced because of their race. This collection includes well documented, interesting profiles of well known inventors such as Benjamin Banneker and George Washington Carver, as well as other less well known and rarely written about scientists who nevertheless made remarkable contributions to our society. Several women and African American astronauts are included. [Photographs.] A Proud Heritage Series.

McKissack, Patricia C. and Frederick. (1992). *Sojourner Truth: ain't I a woman?*. New York: Scholastic. 186p. Gr. 5-up. Born Isabella Van Wagener in 1797, this woman survived years as a northern slave, gained her freedom in 1827, and then joined the abolitionists to work for the civil
Library Talk


Gr. 6-9. Medearis' simple, candid first person poems speak in a number of contemporary teenage voices: "I was born at the wrong time," says one kid, whose mother marched for civil rights. In "Black Barbie Doll," a girl answers those who jeer at her for her white friends and good grades.

Booklist


Gr. 7-10. Like Haley's "Roots" (1976), this is the saga of an African American family across 250 years. This story is told through the experiences of one young person in each crucial historical period, beginning with Muhammad Bilal on a slave ship in 1753 and ending with Malcolm Lewis, a contemporary Harlem teenager in search of his identity in a multicultural society. The best episode is set in the 1960s South, when star basketball player Tommy Lewis is tempted to accept a scholarship as a token Negro in an all-white college; instead, he takes part in a civil rights demonstration and chooses a stunning way to expose the official violence that has always kept the races apart. Several characters on all sides of the struggle are drawn with sensitivity and humor. The message is urgent and immediate for all of us: "You can't make much progress if you don't leave home, but you can sure mess yourself up if you don't remember where home is."

Booklist


Gr. 6-up. A convincing novel about two teenager loners in Harlem, Motown and Didi, who become allies in a fight against Touchy, the drug dealer whose dope is destroying Didi's brother, and find themselves falling in love with each other.

School Library Journal


Gr. 5- up. It's summer time in Harlem, and The Mouse (as he calls himself) and his friends look beyond dance contests and basketball for diversion. The rumor of a huge cash stash in an abandoned building in Harlem left by gangster Tiger Moran in 1930 offers possibilities [and] the kids take on the challenge. Tightly integrated subplots strengthen [this] already well crafted novel. Each chapter begins with a rap by Mouse [and] rap is
Myers deftly paints a humor laced picture of Harlem in sparkling prose, with characters that have universal appeal.

School Library Journal
Award: Starred review, A.L.A. Booklist


Gr. 6-12. Patterson concisely traces the major events of the civil rights movement and examines the shift in civil rights groups’ methods, philosophy, goals, and leadership from nonviolent integration to black power, from desegregation and voting rights, jobs, housing, and poverty, and from the NAACP to the Black Panthers.

Booklist


Gr. 7-up. Beginning with a look at the 1955 Montgomery bus boycott, Patterson explores how this event propelled Dr. King into the national limelight and how he made an impact upon American society. King’s family and Southern background are highlighted, firmly establishing the foundations which heavily molded him. Patterson examines the major events in King’s campaign and the furtherance of the goals of the civil rights movement. The setbacks that the freedom movement experienced are presented, as well as the problems that King encountered with his critics and opponents, resulting in a balanced portrayal of King and a good background of the movement. What distinguishes this book is its incisiveness and inclusion of information generally not found in biographies about King for this age group.

School Library Journal


Gr. 5-8. Uncomfortable as the only black student in her suburban middle school, Deirdre ["Dee"] Willis realizes that acting white gets you nowhere; instead, stand proud and show everybody what you’ve got. Characters are drawn with warmth and wit in this contemporary story.

Booklist


Gr. 4-6. A short, but very powerful story about a black family living in Ohio in 1950. 'Lois’ daddy buys a gold Cadillac and tries to take the family home to Mississippi. The proud, loving family and the shock of their harsh encounter with institutionalized racism
are skillfully described in a book that stands as fiction and history. A moving story of a closely knit black family’s encounter with ignorance and prejudice which gives young readers an unforgettable look at the pride and pain of growing up black in America.


This bitter, memorable, and beautifully written story of a close-knit, poor black family in Mississippi during the Depression is drawn from stories from the author’s family. The sequel to this book is *Let the Circle Be Unbroken*. Award: Newbery Medal Book


Gr. 5-8. Told with the immediacy of a family narrative, this short, intense novel about racial violence concerns the Mississippi boyhood of David Logan [the father in Taylor’s 1977 Newbery Medal winner, “Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry”]. Taylor has used her gift for storytelling and skillful characterization to craft a compelling novel about prejudice and the staying power of human dignity. *Booklist* Award: School Library Journal, Starred review


Gr. 5-8. Turner looks at black history in a new and useful way. Along with 14 biographical sketches, this book contains skits about each subject, which can be acted out with a minimum of props and costumes. *Booklist*


Gr. 6-10. The history is dramatic: in 1781, a slave woman, Mum Bett, took her owner to court and won her freedom under the Massachusetts Constitution. Her story is told in the voice of her fictional younger sister, Aissa, who describes the events leading up to that historical time, what it is like to be a slave, to be sold away from home, to work for someone who saw you only as property, to hide your true self. What readers will respond to are the facts of Bett’s life and the bitter truth of the young slave’s commentary. For powerful leaders who are fighting the Revolutionary War and hammering out the Constitution, the sisters are invisible. As the action builds to the climax of the trial, Aissa raises the elemental question: if the great Constitution says that all men are created equal,
does "men" include black men and all women?

*Booklist*


Gr. 8-12. Candid and funny, this is also a deeply moving story about a New York City teenager whose rudeness and humor hide her heartbreak when she's sent to live with her pastor uncle's family in Georgia.

*Booklist*

144p.

Gr. 5-8. Shimmershine, according to Angie’s elderly cousin, is that good feeling and pride which people have in their racial heritage and physical features. Ten year old Angie desperately needs this shimmershine to overcome the taunts from her classmates about her dark complexion and kinky hair, as well as the negative feelings that she has about her parent’s separation. With the help of a friend, Angie learns how to be her own person by speaking up for herself and standing her ground against a group of class bullies. Her participation in a special dance and drama class, conducted by a dynamic teacher who instills in her students an appreciation for their African heritage, enables Angie to blossom and finally earn the respect of her taunting classmates. Yarbrough sensitively tackles the issue of color distinctions among blacks.

Black dialect is used in dialogue throughout.

*School Library Journal*
Statement of Conclusion

Anyone who is genuinely interested in locating information on African American children’s literature authors, and some of their many books, can refer to Books by African American Authors and Illustrators, written by Helen E. Williams, and Black Authors and Illustrators of Children’s Books: A Biographical Dictionary, written by Barbara Rollack. These are both very informative books that could possibly assist you with information. They were of tremendous assistance to me in my research. These two books allow you to know who are some of the many African American children’s literature book authors, and their works. Black Authors and Illustrators of Children’s Books: A Biographical Dictionary, also gives biographical information about the authors.

African American literature for children has come a long way in America; yet, it still has a greater road to travel. Although African American children’s literature is being published, and is ready to be read or utilized, it has not yet reached its fullest potential or reached the hands of all of its would be readers. Why? Maybe because the major importance of African American children’s literature has not yet become widely known. The ability of African American literature to help build self-esteem and promote a positive self-image in the African American student, or allow him/her to see himself/herself positively in society through literature, has not been realized. One way in which to utilize African American children’s literature is to incorporate it into various aspects of the school curriculum.

Ways to Incorporate African American Children’s Literature

Picture books can be used to address various issues. Issues such as a new family arrival, sibling rivalry, and family relationships can be dealt with through the use of picture books. An example of this is in Eloise Greenfield’s First Pink Light (1991). This is a story of a little boy named Tyree, who attempts to stay awake all night to see his dad when he arrives home at dawn from caring for his grandmother. The beautiful soft pictures by Jan Spivey Gilchrist express the warm, loving feeling between Tyree and his mother as they
wait for his father’s arrival. Despite the separation, this story exhibits a sense of togetherness and love in an African American family. It also shows Tyree’s father not only taking care of his family responsibilities at home, but his responsibilities away from home, with his ill mother as well.

Books by Faith Ringgold, *Tar Beach* (1991) and *Dinner At Connie’s House* (1993), are also books which focus on family life. They combine fantasy with realistic and historical fiction. These books could be excellent books for discussing the concepts of real and make believe; fact or fiction. For example, Cassie in *Tar Beach* (1991), imagines herself flying over a city and gaining ownership over everything she passes over. She also pretends that the rooftop on which her family gathers in the evenings for fellowship, is actually a tar beach.

*Dinner At Connie’s House* (Ringgold, 1993), takes Cassie and her cousin Lonnie on a tour of talking pictures of African American women leaders in history. These pictures are discovered by Cassie and Lonnie while trying to find Aunt Connie’s family dinner surprise. In discussing this particular book, it should be pointed out to the students that, although part of the story [with the talking pictures] is fiction, the people were real, and their stories are true.

Many books allow for the integration of different subject matters into the curriculum, such as, the teaching of the alphabet as found in *C is for City*, (Nikki Grimes, 1995), *Ten Black Dots*, (Donald Crews, 1986) which teaches numbers. Other books which discuss African American traditions and customs are shown in the books *Cornrows*, (Camille Yarbrough, 1979), and *Me and Nessie*, (Eloise Greenfield, 1975) which address hair braiding as well as other important subject matter. There are many African American biographies and books of history, which tell of the numerous brave acts of African Americans for example, during the raid on Harper’s Ferry, *John Brown: One Man Against Slavery*, (Gwen Everett, 1993), and during the Civil War, *Buffalo Soldiers: The Story of Emanuel Stance*, (Robert Miller, 1995) or Jim Haskin’s, (1992), *One More River To Cross: The Stories of Twelve Black Americans*, which are collective biographies of twelve
African Americans. Although African American children’s literature is often highlighted during African American History Month, this allows African American children’s literature to be incorporated into the curriculum, become utilized and enjoyed year round.

Whatever the reason is that does not allow African American children’s literature to be used in great quantity to compliment the school literature based program, it is hoped that perhaps, this annotated bibliography will be of some assistance. Although many of these books are fictional in their character, many are based on fact, and can be used to help teach or reinforce information across the curriculum, or can be read purely for literature enhancement.

Written words many times have a tremendous amount of power, and we should not ever underestimate their effects, especially their negative effects, on children.
REFERENCES


Brothers.


AUTHOR'S INDEX

Included is a list of African American children's literature book authors, listed alphabetically. This list is by no means complete.

Abdul, Raoul
Adams, Russell L.
Archer, Elsie
Ataway, William
Baker, Augusta
Baker, Bettye
Bambara, Toni Cade
Ben-Morin, Alvin Lester
Bean, Lenore
Bonham, Arna
Booker, Simon
Brennburg, Petronella
Brewer, John Mason
Brooks, Gwendolyn
Brown, Claude
Brown, Margaret W.
Brown, Ashley
Burroughs, Margaret
Caines, Jeannette Franklin
Campbell, Barbara
Carrow, Jan
Chesnutt, Charles Waddell
Childress, Alice
Clifton, Lucille
Cornish, Sam
Crowe, Donald
Crow, Nina
Cullen, Countee
Cummings, Pat
Derveaux, Alexis
Doddson, Owen
Duckett, Alfred
Durham, John
Egypt, Ophelia Settle
Evans, Mari
Everett, Gwen
Fox, Elton Clay
Feelings, Muriel
Feelings, Tom
Flournoy, Valerie
Gaines, Ernest J.
Gibbs, Ruth Duckett

Graham, Shirley
Greenfield, Eloise
Grimes, Nikki
Guy, Rosa
Hamlin, Virginia
Hansen, Joyce
Haskins, James
Hoyt-Goldsmith, Diane
Hughes, Langston
Hunter, Kristin
Johnson, Angela
Johnson, Brenda
Johnson, James Weldon
Lester, Julius
Little, Leslie Jones
Medearis, Angela Shelf
Mathis, Sharon Bell
Mekias, Frederick
Mekissack, Patricia
Miller, Robert
Moore, Carmen
Myers, Walter Dean
Palmer, C. Everard
Patterson, Lilla
Petry, Ann
Perry, Margaret
Pickney, Andrea Davis
Pickney, Brian
Pickney, Gloria Jean
Polacco, Patricia
Ringgold, Faith
San Souci, Robert D.
Steptoe, John
Taylor, Mildred
Thomas, Joyce Carol
Walker, Mildred Pits
Walker, Alice
Wilkinson, Brenda Scott
Wright, Courtni C.
Yarbrough, Camille