

Slavery and the American Civil War (1861-1865)

Across Five Aprils Hunt, Irene

Young Jethro Creighton grows from a boy to a man when he is left to take care of the family farm in Illinois during the difficult years of the Civil War.

Bull Run Fleischman, Sid

Northerners, Southerners, generals, couriers, dreaming boys and worried sisters describe the glory, the horror, the thrill, and the disillusionment of the first battle of the Civil War.

A Dangerous Promise (The Orphan Train Adventures series) Nixon, Joan Lowery

After being taken in by Captain Taylor and his wife in Kansas, twelve-year-old Mike Kelly and his friend Todd Blakely join the Union army as musicians and see the horrors of war firsthand in Missouri.

Dear Ellen Bee: A Civil War Scrapbook of Two Union Spies Lyons, Mary E. and Muriel M. Branch

A scrapbook kept by a young black girl details her experiences and those of the older white woman, "Miss Bet," who had freed her and her family, sent her north from Richmond to get an education, and then worked to bring an end to slavery. Based on the life of Elizabeth Van Lew.

Charley Skedaddle Beatty, Patricia

During the Civil War, a twelve-year-old Bowery Boy from New York City joins the Union Army as a drummer, deserts during a battle in Virginia, and encounters a hostile old mountain woman.

Elijah of Buxton Curtis, Christopher Paul

In 1859, eleven-year-old Elijah Freeman, the first free-born child in Buxton, Canada, which is a haven for slaves fleeing the American south, uses his wits and skills to try to bring to justice the lying preacher who has stolen money that was to be used to buy a family's freedom.

Jayhawker Beatty, Patricia

In the early years of the Civil War, teenage Kansan farm boy Lije Tulley becomes a Jayhawker, an abolitionist raider freeing slaves from the neighboring state of Missouri, and then goes undercover there as a spy.

Jip: His Story Paterson, Katherine

While living on a Vermont poor farm during 1855 and 1856, Jip learns his identity and that of his mother and comes to understand how he arrived at this place.

The Legend of Bass Reeves Paulsen, Gary

Recreates the mythology of U.S. Marshal Bass Reeves, a black man born into slavery who became the most successful lawman of the Wild West, bringing hundreds of fugitives to justice with such courage and honor that he became a legend.

Numbering All the Bones Rinaldi, Ann

It is 1864, the Civil War is moving toward an end. President Lincoln has proclaimed his 'great measure,' and Southern slaves are slowly gaining their freedom. But for thirteen-year-old Eulinda, a house slave on a Georgia plantation, it is the most difficult time of her life...

Out From This Place Hansen, Joyce

A fourteen-year-old black girl tries to find a fellow ex-slave, who had joined the Union army during the Civil War, during the confusing times after the emancipation of the slaves.

Stealing Freedom Carbone, Elisa

A novel based on the events in the life of a young slave girl from Maryland who endures all kinds of mistreatment and cruelty, including being separated from her family, but who eventually escapes to freedom in Canada.

Trouble Don't Last Pearsall, Shelley

Samuel, an eleven-year-old Kentucky slave, and Harrison, the elderly slave who helped raise him, attempt to escape to Canada via the Underground Railroad.

Turn Homeward, Hanalee Beatty, Patricia

Twelve-year-old Hannalee Reed, forced to relocate in Indiana along with other Georgia millworkers during the Civil War, leaves her mother with a promise to return home as soon as the war ends.

Early Twentieth Century America (1900-1939)

Al Capone Does My Shirts (sequel Al Capone Shines My Shoes) Choldenko, Jennifer

A twelve-year-old boy named Moose moves to Alcatraz Island in 1935 when guards' families were housed there, and has to contend with his extraordinary new environment in addition to life with his autistic sister.

All of a Kind Family (All of a Kind Family series; book 1) Taylor, Sydney

The adventures of five sisters growing up in a Jewish family in New York in the early twentieth century.

Bread and Roses, Too Paterson, Katherine

Jake and Rosa, two children, form an unlikely friendship as they try to survive and understand the 1912 Bread and Roses strike of mill workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts.

Bud, Not Buddy Curtis, Christopher Paul

Ten-year-old Bud, a motherless boy living in Flint, Michigan, during the Great Depression, escapes a bad foster home and sets out in search of the man he believes to be his father--the renowned bandleader, H.E. Calloway of Grand Rapids.

Dave at Night Levine, Gail Carson

When orphaned Dave is sent to the Hebrew Home for Boys where he is treated cruelly, he sneaks out at night and is welcomed into the music- and culture-filled world of the Harlem Renaissance.

Esperanza Rising Ryan, Pam Munoz

Esperanza and her mother are forced to leave their life of wealth and privilege in Mexico to go work in the labor camps of Southern California, where they must adapt to the harsh circumstances facing Mexican farm workers on the eve of the Great Depression.

The Grape Thief Franklin, Kristine L.

In 1925, in a small Washington State community made up of families from different ethnic backgrounds, twelve-year-old Cuss tries to stay in school as he watches those around him struggle with various financial difficulties.

Letters From Rifka Hesse, Karen

In letters to her cousin, a young Jewish girl chronicles her family's flight from Russia in 1919 and her own experiences when she must be left in Belgium for a while when the others immigrate to America.

Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy Schmidt, Gary D.

In 1911, Turner Buckminster hates his new home of Phippsburg, Maine, but things improve when he meets Lizzie Bright Griffin, a girl from a poor, nearby island community founded by former slaves that the town fathers--and Turner's--want to change into a tourist spot.

The Locked Garden Whelan, Gloria

After their mother dies of typhoid, Verna and her younger sister Carlie move with their father, a psychiatrist, and stern Aunt Maude to an asylum for the mentally ill in early-twentieth-century Michigan, where new ideas in the treatment of mental illness are being proposed, but old prejudices still hold sway.

A Long Way From Chicago: A Novel in Stories Peck, Richard

A boy recounts his annual summer trips to rural Illinois with his sister during the Great Depression to visit their larger-than-life grandmother.

Moon Over Manifest Vanderpool, Clare

Twelve-year-old Abilene Tucker is the daughter of a drifter who, in the summer of 1936, sends her to stay with an old friend in Manifest, Kansas, where he grew up, and where she hopes to find out some things about his past.

Out of the Dust Hesse, Karen

In a series of poems, fifteen-year-old Billie Jo relates the hardships of living on her family's wheat farm in Oklahoma during the dust bowl years of the Depression. Exquisitely written, this Newbery Medal-winner is a poetic, compelling, and often melancholy novel of a young girl growing up in the Oklahoma Dust Bowl during the Depression.

Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry Taylor, Mildred

A black family living in Mississippi during the Depression of the 1930s is faced with prejudice and discrimination which its children do not understand.

Seven Wonders of Sassafras Springs Birney, Betty

Eben McCallister is fascinated by the Seven Wonders of the World and wishes he could escape the small farming community of Sassafras Springs to do some exploring. No one else in Sassafras Springs seems to want to leave. Eben's father, tired of his moping, challenges him to find seven wonders in Sassafras Springs that can compare with the Seven Wonders of the World. If he does, he will get the adventure he's been wanting - a trip out West. Eben doesn't expect to have much luck, but he has to give it a try.

Smuggler's Island Avi

Living on a poor island in 1932, a young boy determines, despite his family's bitter opposition, to identify and somehow bring to justice the liquor smugglers who have been terrorizing the island.

Souder Armstrong, William

Angry and humiliated when his sharecropper father is jailed for stealing food for his family, a young black boy grows in courage and understanding by learning to read and through his relationship with his devoted dog Souder.

Turtle in Paradise Holm, Jennifer L.

In 1935, when her mother gets a job housekeeping for a woman who does not like children, eleven-year-old Turtle is sent to stay with relatives she has never met in far away Key West, Florida.