

# Middle School Historical Fiction Booklist

**Codes** indicate Historical Fiction (HF).

**Accelerated Reader (AR) Levels** indicate school grade and month, based on vocabulary difficulty.

**AR Points** indicate the length of the book (more points; longer book).

Level is given first, then points. (7.2 / 7.0 - seventh grade, second month / relatively long book).

AR tests are available for all the books with AR levels / points.

Author	Title	Genre	AR
Armstrong, Jennifer	<i>Steal Away</i>	HF	5.9 / 8.0
Beatty, Patricia	<i>Who Comes with Cannons?</i>	HF	5.8 / 6.0
Carbone, Elisa Lynn	<i>Stealing Freedom</i>	HF	5.6 / 10.0
Collier, James L. & Christopher	<i>War Comes to Willie Freeman (Arabus Family Saga, Vol. 1)</i>	HF	5.1 / 7.0
Collier, James L. & Christopher	<i>Jump Ship to Freedom (Arabus Family Saga, Vol. 2)</i>	HF	5.4 / 7.0
Collier, James L. & Christopher	<i>Who is Carrie (Arabus Family Saga, Vol. 3)</i>	HF	5.0 / 6.0
Forrester, Sandra	<i>Sound the Jubilee</i>	HF	5.0 / 6.0
Fox, Paula	<i>The Slave Dancer</i>	HF	7.0 / 8.0
Fritz, Jean	<i>Brady</i>	HF	5.9 / 6.0
Greenwood, Barbara	<i>The Last Safe House</i>	HF	5.2 / 3.0
Hamilton, Virginia	<i>The House of Dies Drear</i>	HF	6.0 / 9.0
Hamilton, Virginia	<i>The Mystery of Drear House (sequel to The House of Dies Drear)</i>	HF	6.6 / 8.0
Hansen, Joyce	<i>I Thought My Soul Would Rise and Fly: The Diary of Patsy, A Freed Girl</i>	HF	5.1 / 5.0
Hansen, Joyce	<i>Which Way Freedom</i>	HF	6.8 / 7.0
Hansen, Joyce	<i>Out From This Place (sequel to Which Way Freedom)</i>	HF	5.3 / 5.0
Houston, Gloria	<i>Bright Freedom's Song: A Story of the Underground Railroad</i>	HF	5.7 / 6.0
Lyons, Mary E.	<i>Letters from a Slave Girl: The Story of Harriet Jacobs</i>	HF	6.8 / 6.0
McGill, Alice	<i>Miles Song</i>	HF	5.6 / 7.0
McKissack, Patricia	<i>A Picture of Freedom: The Diary of Clotee, A Slave Girl</i>	HF	5.3 / 5.0
Pearsall, Shelley	<i>Trouble Don't Last</i>	HF	4.8 / 8.0
Pinkney, Andrea Davis	<i>Silent Thunder: A Civil War Story</i>	HF	5.4 / 7.0
Reeder, Carolyn	<i>Shades of Gray</i>	HF	5.8 / 7.0
Ruby, Lois	<i>Steal Away Home</i>	HF	5.1 / 8.0
Smucker, Barbara	<i>Runaway to Freedom: A Story of the Underground Railroad</i>	HF	5.7 / 5.0
Woodruff, Elvira	<i>Dear Austin, Letters from the Underground Railroad</i>	HF	5.2 / 3.0

## Armstrong, Jennifer *Steal Away*

New York: Orchard Books, 1992.

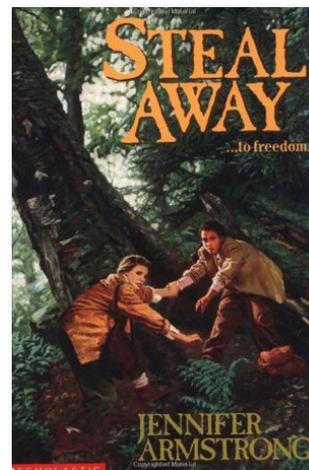
Historical Fiction. 207 pages.

AR Level 5.9 / 8.0 points

Jumps generations and settings to get story told. Mary Emmons goes, in 1896, with her grandmother (Susannah McKnight Emmons) to Toronto from NYC. They are visiting Bethlehem (Beth) Reid, who is quite ill and has a girl about Mary's age (Free) living with her. Their visit is to write down Susannah and Bethlehem's joint memoir of their experiences together in 1855. (At the very end, "Grandma F." sends it on to yet another young girl, 1960).

Mary, in Vermont, is orphaned, so sent to live with an aunt and uncle in Virginia. Uncle Reid is a minister who preaches the justification of slavery based on the Bible. Aunt Reid has "spells", cousin Fidelity feigns them as well, and cousin Byron, while solicitous of his sister, is hot to trot for her slave, Beth. Beth is "given" to Susannah, who is very uncomfortable (a) having a slave and (b) not doing things for herself. Eventually the two plan to leave together, though Beth's risk is far greater if caught. Beth realizes she must get to Canada, while Susannah plans for them both to stay in Vermont. Disguised as boys, with a couple of close calls, they end up being helped by the Tuke family, Quakers in Pennsylvania, after Susannah cuts her hand badly on a knife. When she has recovered, the two are sent to their respective destinations. Susannah marries Nat Emmons, who she knew from childhood, and Bethlehem becomes a teacher of black children in Canada.

Susannah has always been haunted by not "understanding" Bethlehem's plight and not remaining her "friend." As they take turns writing down the narrative, the distant Free discourages offers of friendship by Mary, who realizes her patronizing approach after Free helps a black man injured in the street while Mary recoils from the scene. Bethlehem reassures Susannah that things have worked out as they should and there is no resentment. Mary offers Free a place to live after Bethlehem has died, but Free respectfully declines. That, Mary realizes, is also the proper scheme. Free is "Grandma F." who passes on the story to another generation. [Jumping of dates / places / narrators can be confusing.]



## Beatty, Patricia *Who Comes with Cannons?*

New York: Morrow Junior Books, 1992.

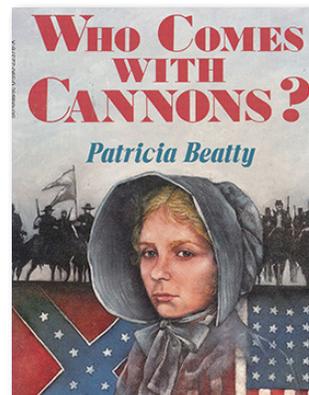
Historical Fiction. 186 pages.

AR Level 5.8 / 6.0 points

Tabitha Ruth ("Truth") Hopkins, 12, is sent from her home in Indiana to live with her deceased mother's brother and family in North Carolina when her father, also consumptive, must go to a hospital in California. They are all Quakers. Aunt Elizabeth and Uncle Matthew Bardwell welcome her, but 19 year old Robert is resentful, calls her a "kettle cousin," and expresses concern over her disruption of what they are doing, which is serving as "Station Six" on the UGRR. She lets them know that she supports their work.

Her cousin Todd refers to Daniel Fields' coming to Goldsboro—and he does, with a coffle of escaped slaves he is returning south. One, Squire, helped in his original escape a decade ago by the Bardwell family, escapes again and seeks help again. The three Quaker children ride atop the hay wagon taking him to the next station, which turns out to be run by the family of schoolmate, Martha Buchan. The Civil War begins, and pacifist Quakers are not popular. Todd marries Lucy Coxley at First Day meeting. After a nighttime visit by rowdy Confederate neighbors, Robert and Todd set out for Canada. Truth helps continue their UGRR work, hiding escapees under the hearthstone and helping transport them.

Todd and Robert have been conscripted but refused to "learn" war skills. They are "cannon fodder" and Todd is wounded at Manassas. He's smuggled home via UGRR and recovers in The Rock, a cave under a pile of boulders on the farm. Robert has disappeared but, as his body was not found after the battle, there is hope for his survival. Truth's friend Martha has special feelings for him. Finally, it is learned (via UGRR messages) that he is in a Yankee prison in Elmira, NY. Matthew, who will be



“mute” from a seizure, and Truth, who has a Yankee accent, will go north to get him. They begin on UGRR (no traveling pass; Quaker with northern girl) to north, then by train to NYC. In the station, Matthew is beaten unconscious. Squire has been alerted, gets Quakers/doctor to help, and goes on with wife Liley to take Truth to Frederick Douglass in Washington. Douglass sends Truth to Mary Todd Lincoln, who gets her husband to write order freeing Robert. On to Elmira, where they get him and begin return trip. Once in south, they must travel again on UGRR. Matthew eventually recovers and returns home via UGRR.

War hits NC. Truth en route to help Lucy Coxley when baby (Elizabeth Mary) is born; battle ensues while they all huddle on parlor floor. After war, everyone is back home. Truth gets letter from Mr. Hartling, teacher, who took a shine to her but was conscripted, and she receives permission from the Elders to tell how God has used her at the meeting. Author’s Notes on The Quakers, UGRR, North Carolina, People in the Book, Places in the Book.

Carbone, Elisa Lynn

### ***Stealing Freedom***

New York: Dell Yearling / Random House, 1998.

Historical Fiction. 258 pages.

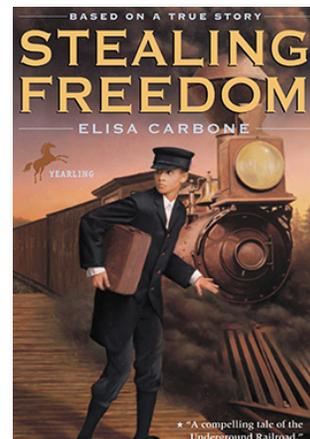
AR Level 5.6 / 10.0 points

Based on true story of Ann Maria Weems. Map of her escape route and author’s note on her research and the historical facts follow story. In Unity, Maryland, 1853, the enslaved Weems family (John and Arabella, plus children Addison, Augustus, Joseph, Catharine and Ann Maria) lives on the plantation of Charles and Carol Price. Their son Richard is the same age as Ann Maria, who doesn’t know her birthday except as corn-planting time, so is 11. Uncle Abram and Aunt Mimi run away, and eventually make it to Canada. Hard times force the Prices to sell all the Weems, except Ann Maria who is kept for a house servant. Addison, Augustus and Joseph are sold south. The rest are bought by an abolitionist, Jacob Bigelow, and freed in Washington City. Prices refuse to sell Ann Maria so, unbeknownst to her, plans for her stealing are set afoot.

Meanwhile, she works as a house slave, walks Richard to school, etc. and falls in love with Albert. He gets serious when she is 13, but she tells him to pop the question again when she is 15. They promise not to run without the other and the very next night Ann Maria, who has been made to sleep in Mistress Carol’s room but moaned so much she got to sleep in the kitchen again, is kidnapped. She thinks she’s being sold south, but has actually been snatched by The Powder Boy, paid by UGRR agents, and put on “the Road.”

She is hidden in a garret room at Mr. Bigelow’s while the slave catchers are all hot to find her. She is in Washington City, as are her parents and Catharine, but it is unsafe to get them together because of the slave catchers’ vigilance. In fact, Officer Orme keeps barging in to look for the Weems girl. In preparation for the next step, Ann Maria is disguised as a boy and becomes Mr. Bigelow’s (“William Penn”) new carriage boy, Joe Wright—her “name for the Road.” She learns how to drive, then is delivered to Dr. H. in front of the White House. He takes her across the Mason-Dixon Line to Philadelphia, where she is housed at the home of William and Mrs. Still. First night in a real bed; first bath in tub with running water. Ann Maria discovers that she is already a celebrity with the Philadelphia Vigilance Committee.

Dr. H. then delivers his “package” to Reverend Ray in NYC, where her father was also known. Reverend Ray takes her right on to the Tappans, whose furniture was burned by pro-slavers. After Thanks Giving, she is delivered to Reverend Freeman, who will escort her to Canada by train. A daguerreotype is taken of Ann in her “boy” disguise and they depart, going up the Hudson Valley and then across NY by train. At Niagara Falls, slave catchers take a man off the train and their dogs are on the verge of identifying Ann Maria. She pretends they have been attracted to the bacon/bread that Rev. Freeman “had in his pocket” and they pass on over the suspension bridge to freedom in Canada. On by train and carriage, they arrive at Uncle William and Aunt Mimi’s in Dresden. Ann Maria goes to Mrs. Wallace’s home school, attracts attention of Samuel, a schoolmate, but is reunited with Albert, who has also escaped.



Collier, James Lincoln and Christopher  
***War Comes to Willie Freeman (Arabus Family Saga, Vol. 1)***

New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc., 1983.

Historical Fiction. 178 pages.

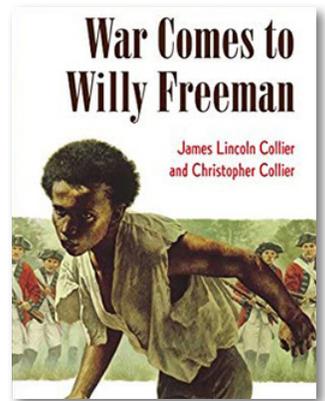
AR Level 5.1 / 7.0 points

Enslaved Willie (Wilhelmina) Freeman (age 13) lives with Ma (Lucy) and Pa (Jordan Freeman, historical person) in Connecticut near Fort Griswold (Groton), where Colonel Ledyard is garrisoned with troops during the Revolutionary War. Willie is the narrator. They supply food to the fort and Pa works for Col. Ledyard. British attack. Pa goes to fort to assist, taking Willie to bring the horse home. She can't get away and ends up inside fort also, witnessing brutal slaughter of Col. Ledyard (historical fact), Pa and many others, even though they had agreed to a truce. British burn Groton and other Connecticut towns on Long Island Sound on their way to NYC. Willie returns home (New London) to find their hut standing but Ma captured and headed for NYC with British. She takes Pa's "jolly boat" (small fishing boat) and sails behind them to go to Uncle Jack Arabus and Aunt Betsy and Cousin Daniel, whom she has never met, slaves of Captain Ivers in Newfield.

Uncle Jack is serving in American army, would be freed afterward in return for his service. Capt. Ivers reluctantly lets Willie stay. She fears he will re-enslave her, as her papers are hidden somewhere back in their cabin in New London. After a few days, she (still wearing her milking britches and looking like a boy) steals off at dusk in the jolly boat for NYC, before Capt. Ivers can take the boat and re-enslave her. She is taken by an American raiding party, rowing across the Sound to attack the British by night. Left on the beach with their boats and guards, she tosses pebbles into the woods and, while guards are distracted, escapes west down the beach toward NYC. British soldier plans to molest her, but she "proves" she's a boy by showing roast potatoes from under shirt. She comes to Brooklyn, meets black boy, claims she works for Black Sam Fraunces, which he knows isn't true because he does. He "teaches" her how to lie convincingly (thinking the true parts of her story are too fantastic to be true) and smuggles her across with his load of wood. He's Horace. Willie meets Sam Fraunces, who does know Jack Arabus, tells him her (true) story, and will stay on as tavern staff and a boy for now.

They venture into Canvas Town in search of Willie's Ma, but a woman who says she knows her is dead when they come back with coppers. Willie sends letter, written by Horace, to Aunt Betsy; reveals to Horace she's a girl. British occupy NYC, even for a while after war. Willie doesn't find Ma on emptying prison ships. Back at Fraunces' Tavern, a Mr. Goodrich comes in from New Haven and says that Willie's Ma is seriously ill. Willie risks re-enslavement by Capt. Ivers to go and nurse Ma. She arrives at Ivers', where Jack Arabus is still with his family because Ivers won't free him after all and where Ma is terminally ill in the basement. Willie wants an M.D., but none will come per Ivers' wishes. Ma dies. Willie beats on Capt. Ivers. Ivers whips her. Jack steps in and punches Ivers in the mouth, then takes off. Ivers pursues. Willie takes off, too, then comes back to help bury Ma. She then takes Jack's discharge papers, proving he's free, to Mr. Goodrich in New Haven. He insists she go to court as well, where the judge assures Jack's freedom and gives Willie free papers as well. Ivers is irate. Jack goes to Stratford and buys a dory so he can fish, save money and buy Aunt Betsy and Dan free. Willie goes back to NYC and Fraunces' Tavern.

Section: How Much of this Book is True? Hierarchy: women inferior to men, blacks to whites, children to adults; therefore, black girls at the bottom of the stack.



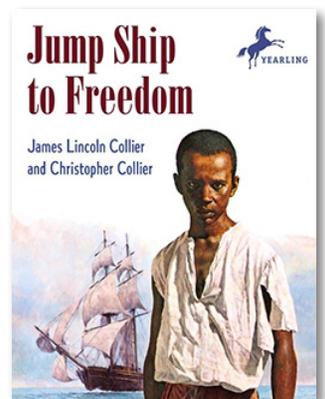
Collier, James Lincoln and Christopher  
***Jump Ship to Freedom (Arabus Family Saga, Vol. 2)***

New York: Delacorte Press, 1981.

Historical Fiction. 198 pages.

AR Level 5.4 / 7.0 points

Narrated by enslaved lad Daniel. Daniel Arabus, age 14 in 1787, plans to use his daddy's soldiers' notes (pay for service, not negotiable) from the Revolutionary War to buy freedom from Captain and Mrs. Ivers. His father, Jack, was sent to fight in Capt. Ivers' place, for which he was to be given his freedom. However, he had to sue Capt. Ivers in court to gain his freedom—and he won (actual, historical landmark case). The soldiers' notes that he had planned to use for the



purchase of his wife and son's freedom are non-negotiable, so he goes to sea to earn money to buy their freedom. Mrs. Ivers takes the notes and keeps them in the Bible by her bedside; Capt. Ivers has no intention of freeing Daniel and Mum.

Daniel blocks the chimney with straw, simulating a fire, and steals back the notes during the ensuing chaos. Strongly suspected in spite of his denials, he plans to find Mr. William Samuel Johnson, who travels between Continental Congress in NYC and the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, and arrange to redeem the notes / buy freedom. Capt. Ivers takes him on board his brig, the Junius Brutus, to load cargo and sail, he thinks, to New York. Instead, Dan learns from his childhood friend Birdsey (Capt. Ivers' nephew) that they are sailing to the West Indies where, from what he overhears, Daniel expects to be sold to work in the sugar cane fields.

A huge storm, several chapters long, ends with Birdsey swept overboard, the main mast snapped and much of the cargo either destroyed or jettisoned. Limping into NYC harbor, Capt. Ivers goes into NYC to try to get a docking fee waived. In his absence, Daniel, who fears being sold in NYC, dives overboard in spite of Big Tom (free black) trying to stop him. Daniel, the only one who can swim, swims to Bedloe's Island. There, he gets a man to row him to Manhattan. There he seeks out Black Sam Fraunces, tavern owner who knew / admired Daniel's father. En route to Fraunces' tavern, Daniel meets one of the employees, Carrie, whom he calls Nosey because she is so inquisitive, who becomes his "only" friend. She shows him around.

Black Sam Fraunces will help Daniel. An old, sick Quaker - Peter Fatherscreft - is staying in a third-floor room. He needs to get to Philadelphia to tell the Constitutional Convention about the slavery compromise. (These political things are explained occasionally in the book.) Daniel and Nosey/Carrie steal back the soldiers' notes, but Big Tom and Capt. Ivers trail him to Fraunces' Tavern. He escapes up a chimney and down a roof, hides in a church, until Mr. Fatherscreft's carriage arrives. He serves as the dying man's companion, pondering the irony of helping deliver the news that will keep him enslaved. Mr. Fatherscreft dies and, after a moral search, Daniel decides that a promise to a dying man supersedes his own interests and continues to Philadelphia to deliver the message to Mr. Johnson. Capt. Ivers is there.

General Washington, counteracting Alexander Hamilton's orders to "get the nigger out," takes Daniel to Mr. Johnson to deliver the compromise. Daniel does go back with Capt. Ivers, who is enjoined from selling him out of state. He earns some money and, with the soldiers' notes, buys his and Mum's freedom. They move into an old lean-to house in Stratford.

How Much of this Book is True? Tells fact and fiction. Also use of "nigger."

### Collier, James Lincoln and Christopher *Who is Carrie? (Arabus Family Saga, Vol. 3)*

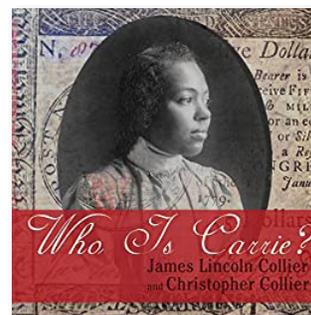
New York: Dell Publishing, 1984.

Historical Fiction. 158 pages.

AR Level 5.0 / 6.0 points

Narrated by Carrie. Sequel to *Jump Ship to Freedom*, covering years when Dan is still working as sailor / Ivers' slave, prior to selling the notes and buying freedom. Carrie/Nosey is a kitchen maid in Fraunces' Tavern and has lived there as long as she can remember. She has a habit of sassing and of skidding off when she is curious about an event in NYC. Head waiter Horace is her best friend there (the cooks are white) and Dan Arabus drops by her "best" friend when Capt. Ivers' ship Junius Brutus is in port. Everyone goes to General Washington's arrival in NYC to be inaugurated as the first President. Carrie sneaks off and sees it from up a lamp post. Carrie is kidnapped by Capt. Ivers, but rescued by Dan and Mrs. Fraunces, who says Dan's daddy brought her to him.

Running question: should Dan sell soldiers' notes, as price keeps fluctuating. In end, Carrie overhears Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson reach compromise over payment of bonds and location of new capital in Virginia, tells Dan so he can get best value. Fraunces becomes President Washington's steward in Cheer Street house, takes Carrie with him to keep her out of Ivers' way. Life there includes levees (political evenings) and drawing rooms (social soirees); "gleaming" a room or windows, "polishing" furniture. Shows how easy communication is for urban slaves. Carrie wants to know who she is. Dan sees Dr. Johnson's name on Capt. Ivers' paper. Johnson doesn't remember much. Carrie hides in a clock during a pre-theatre dinner at which Johnson is a guest. Discovery leads to mirth.



Willie (Wilhelmina, Dan's mother's sister) is free in Philadelphia, although Ivers is after her periodically. Horace loves her, wants to be with her there. Fraunces too extravagant for Washington, is replaced by someone even more extravagant. Horace ends up as steward, now at home on Broad Way, and may soon go with Washington and the new government to Philadelphia! Carrie wants to escape in hold of Ivers' ship with Daniel's help. She gets sick, is discovered, is taken by Ivers to Washington to check out her story and is nursed back to health there. Upshot: Carrie is Dan's cousin / Willie's sister. She is therefore free, but lacks papers to prove it so will probably remain enslaved. Dan acknowledges her as cousin / kin.

Epilogue: discusses difficulty for 18th century slaves to gain freedom; likelihood Carrie stays enslaved (Jack Arabus / Capt. Ivers' true story previously told in *War Comes to Willy Freeman* by same authors) How Much of This Book Is True? Separates fact from fiction.

**Forrester, Sandra**

***Sound the Jubilee***

New York: Puffin Books, 1995.

Historical Fiction. 183 pages.

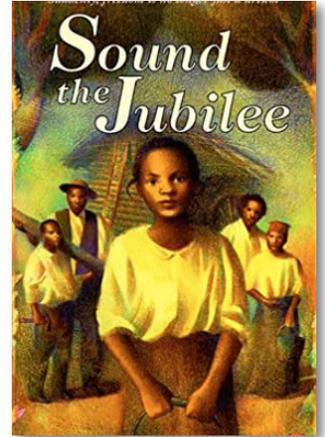
AR Level 5.0 / 6.0 points

Preface tells of historical community of slaves on Union-held Roanoke Island during the Civil War, a community almost never mentioned in historical accounts. Titus and Ella live with their children Angeline, Maddie and baby son Pride on River Bend Plantation owned by Master and Mistress McCartha. Ella can read and has taught her daughters. Middle child Maddie is main character.

McCartha son dies of typhoid in Civil War. Slaves discuss possibility of being freed when advancing bluecoats reach them. Titus thinks about running, doesn't. Another slave, Shad, does, but is brought back, physically tormented and broken. At Christmas, Master's gifts to slaves are worn cast-off clothes; Titus is insulted. Shortly thereafter, Union Army is nearby and Mistress takes slave family with her to relative safety of their summer home on Nags Head. While at Nags Head, Titus brings home to meet his family a family-less slave from Mr. Tate's farm, Royall. Angeline and Royall fall in love, then Mistress forbids him to come around.

Yankees take Roanoke Island. Mistress prepares to leave, and so does the family - but they go to freedom on Roanoke instead of with her. Royall goes along. Union soldiers sign them up (Royall takes name surname Tate, family takes surname Henry) and they are given tents to live in. Chores of daily life listed. Brother Earl has church services. Zebedee comes (age 12) with non-relative family. Becomes good friends with Maddie. Maddie starts teaching school. Children come to learn, then some adults, eventually Zebedee. Maddie is clumsy, acts before she thinks, loses Ella's trust and resigns herself to it. Titus and Royall go off to Civil War. Pride is chronically ill; survives but remains sickly. Titus and Royall built house before leaving, and started one for Royall and Angeline. Zebedee, Maddie et al. work on this one. Royall comes home with shattered leg, but is nursed back to health. Angeline and Royall marry. No word from Titus. Angeline pregnant. Word received of Titus' death before baby comes. It's a girl.

Miss James, "real" schoolteacher, arrives. Maddie still helps with beginning classes. Eventually builds shell-ringed monument to Titus, is able to grieve. War ends, but Southern landowners are "pardoned" and given back their land. So family prepares to go in search of new acreage to farm (has some money saved from jobs and army pay). Use Whitman's *Song of the Open Road* as inspiration (was a favorite of Titus').



Fox, Paula  
***The Slave Dancer***

New York: Dell Publishing, 1973.

Historical Fiction. 127 pages.

AR Level 7.0 / 8.0 points

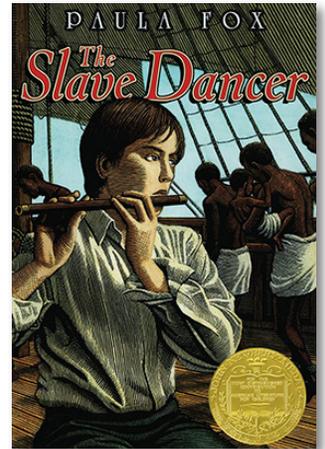
Thirteen-year-old (white) Jessie Bollier is snatched from the docks in New Orleans, where he plays his fife to earn a little money to help support his seamstress mother and younger sister Betty, and taken on the ship *The Moonlight*, which is involved in the now-illegal transportation of slaves from Africa.

The Captain, Cawthorne, is a greed-driven cruel master who indulges in good food and brandy while the crew, and eventually the "cargo," has just enough to survive. Jessie is taught chores on board ship as it sails to Africa. There, anchored off-shore, the Captain held private meetings with a slave broker. The slaves were brought on board on four successive nights and then the ship began its return voyage. Tobacco and liquor had been paid to the Africans, and the slaves were shackled below decks in extremely cramped quarters. Jessie plays "dance tunes" so the slaves, still shackled (at least the men) can move around ("dance") and stay somewhat fit for their sale in Cuba.

Sick and dead slaves are thrown overboard. Several crew members also fall ill, die and are thrown overboard, although some crew members tell Jessie this is not nearly the worst voyage statistically they have seen. Various crew members are cruel, mentally unstable or cynical, but Jessie is protected somewhat because of his age, although the Captain has him given 5 lashes when he refuses to play one day. Slave conditions, which are deplorable, are described from Jessie's point of view. Repulsed at first, he gradually becomes numb to them in self-defense.

As they near Cuba, the danger of detection increases. Flags of different countries are flown (and the Captain puts on different uniforms) depending on the nationality of the approaching vessels. Slaves are all unshackled, the irons thrown overboard, and plans made to remove the slaves by night. A Spaniard and his slave (tongue has been cut out) are being wined and dined on the eve of the slaves' removal. Cawthorne gets out fancy clothes, orders the slaves to put them on and dance at a fancy "ball" on deck. Most of the crew is drunk when a ship approaches. Pandemonium. Flags are switched. Slaves are thrown overboard to get rid of any evidence of the illegal trade. The sails are set and the ship sails off as fast as possible. (date: June 3, 1840)

A young slave boy with whom Jessie has made some contact is saved when Jessie hides him below decks. The two boys hide there throughout a tumultuous voyage and storm. When they finally can come out, they find the crew, except for a very drunk Cawthorne, dead and the ship aground off-shore. Realizing it will sink, they take a broken piece of boom and manage to get to shore. A slave named Daniel, escaped and living in the woods, finds them and gives them food and shelter. He arranges for Ras, the slave boy, to be taken to safety via the UGRR and tells Jessie how to get home. In later years, Jessie has moved to the North and leads a "normal" life, except that he cannot stand to hear any music.



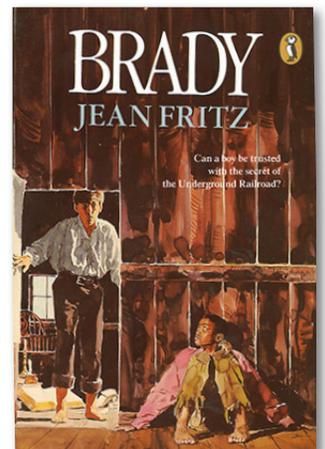
Fritz, Jean  
***Brady***

New York: Puffin Books, 1960.

Historical Fiction. 223 pages.

AR Level 5.9 / 6.0 points

Brady Minton lives on a farm with his mother, from Virginia and in favor of slavery, his father, a minister who believes slavery is a sin and should be gradually abolished, his older brother Matt, who has just been named Professor of History at Washington College in nearby "Little" Washington, PA, his Uncle Earl, newly widowed and sheriff, and their daughters, Mary and Dorcas. Brady has a friend Range. They stealthily walk through woods and find black folks working in the garden of Drover Hull, a wild-ish hermit who is suspected of witchcraft. It's June, 1836 and Pa writes Matt's appointment as Professor of History on the family history page of the Bible.



Brady, eager to tell something important, blurts out about the runaways at supper. He is reprimanded later and told that the UGRR is a matter of life and death. (Also saw "crippled" barber, Tar Adams, in woods.) Laban Williams, a schoolmate with a distinctive pocket knife and a love of slavery, taunts Brady. Mr. Parley Potter, traveling clockman, visits periodically. Mr. McKain is a local abolitionist who is very out-spoken. The last spry Revolutionary War veteran thereabouts, he has a canon on his property which he fires on very special occasions. Range and Brady are in woods. Range shoots a nursing squirrel; Brady rescues the babies and has Catfish, a cat whose litter of kittens has died, become their surrogate mother.

Grounded to the farm for the summer for running his mouth, Brady "hands" around, doing various chores. He drives the Virginia float in the July 4 parade. Afterward, they keep Mr. McKain from making any abolitionist remarks from the podium by having him read the Declaration of Independence. Laban and his father don't recognize it, so Brady et al. trick them into yelling out against it and making fools of themselves. Mr. Minton delivers an anti-slavery sermon. A portion of the congregation says they will worship elsewhere. Threatening signs are posted on their farm. Brady suspects the Williams, but there is no proof.

Brady has never been in his father's Sermon House (detached study where he writes his sermons). Alone one day / door unlocked. Brady explores, touches Jerusalem on old Holy Land map and presto - door opens and a small "Jerusalem room" is revealed. Inside is slave boy Moss and caged mouse Leisa (whom he "gentled."). Next visit, Brady brings baby squirrel. Surprised by Range, he slips out, forgets squirrel, Moss scoots it out. Mr. Minton is UGRR conductor. Sermon House is station. Parley Potter, Tar Adams, Drover Hull, Uncle Will all involved.

Itinerant abolitionist preacher, Moses Lowe, visits. Pelted by eggs, more signs - gone in 48 hours or it'll "get hot." Brady sent to Matt in Washington, but returns. Their barns set afire, he saves horses, rouses family, finds Laban Williams' jackknife in garden. Barn is lost and Mr. Minton's leg broken. Brady "delivers" Moss, who decides on a last name of "Brady," (a "strong" name) to next conductor, who turns out to be Drover Hull over near Uncle Will's. Uncle Will sends him home with a letter. Fearing his father's wrath, Brady is overwhelmed when father is proud of him, agrees to let him help run the station, writes in family Bible, "On this day the barn burned down and Brady Minton did a man's work." Can put later, when safe, "On this day, I became a conductor for my father's UGRR station."

Greenwood, Barbara

### ***The Last Safe House: A Story of the Underground Railroad***

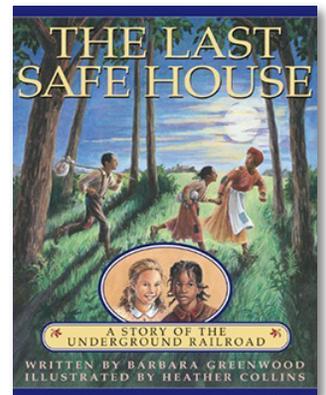
Kids Can Press. Ltd., 1998.

Historical Fiction. 115 pages.

AR Level 5.2 / 3.0 points

In June 1856, escaped slave Eliza Jackson arrives in St. Catharines, Ontario. At age 11, she is following her mother (caught by slave catcher) and brother Ben, from whom she had become separated. She stays at the home of the Reid family, whose daughter Johanna, age 12, at first feels annoyed by the intrusion. But a friendship develops. Eliza tells of her trip on the UGRR, fears punishment when she accidentally breaks a bowl, is given one of Johanna's dresses, helps with household chores including baking cookies (gingerbread man running). Her brother Ben arrives and tells of his journey. Slave catchers come, but are thwarted. Then their mother is located and sends back a cornhusk doll as a sign. Caroline is shocked that her friend Johanna is associating with a black girl, but Eliza is thrilled to be called a "friend." Six months after leaving, she sends Johanna an embroidered friendship sampler.

A number of inserted articles on historical topics, including: the UGRR; codes; map; a woman called Moses; sold into slavery; set-up of a cotton plantation; gingerbread man recipe; deciding to run; follow the North Star; slavery in Canada; abolitionists; Levi Coffin; life on a plantation; swamp ghost; escapes; put a lantern (directions for making) in the window; freedom to read and write; Frederick Douglass; storytelling/"Brer Rabbit and Tar Baby"/share a story; slave catchers; Alexander Ross; songs; cornhusk doll directions; freedmen finding work; Mary Ann Shadd; glossary, bibliography.



## Hamilton, Virginia

### ***The House of Dies Drear***

New York: Aladdin Paperbacks / Simon & Schuster, 1996 (originally 1968).

Historical Fiction. 279 pages.

AR Level 6.0 / 9.0 points

Virginia Hamilton, herself descended from fugitive slaves, grew up in Yellow Springs, OH, where the UGRR had been active. She attended Antioch College and Ohio State, then lived for years in NYC before moving back to Yellow Springs with her husband and children.

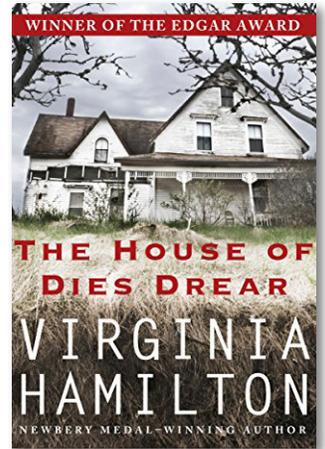
Thomas Small, his twin baby brothers Billy and Buster, and his parents leave Great-grandmother Jeffers and their home in rural North Carolina to go to a (southern) Ohio college town where Mr. Small will teach history at the college. He is eager to research UGRR activity in the town and has rented the supposedly haunted home of Dies Drear, UGRR stationmaster who was murdered there, along with two slaves. (The Smalls are black, but this comes out gradually.)

The house is gloomy and foreboding. Mr. Pluto, longtime black caretaker of the house, has arranged their furniture. Pushing a button in a front door panel, Thomas reveals a tunnel under the front stairs. Neighbor children Macky and Pesty Darrow tease / intimidate Thomas. During the night, someone puts wood and metal triangles in their bedroom doorjamb. Mr. Small believes these were a clue to escaping slaves.

The Small family goes to (black) church and receives a cool response. While they explore the town, someone pours flour/ apple juice paste all over their kitchen. Mr. Pluto is suspected. Thomas and Papa go to the cave where Pluto lives, but he disappears inside. They follow, pull a rope on one wall, reveal a huge cavern with carpets, tapestries, furniture, glass, etc. - the "treasure" of Dies Drear which has been the goal of the Darrow men, who think they are searching for gold. Pesty is also there. Pluto's son Mayhew, an actor, has come home to help his father, who is aging and ill. Disguised as his father, he helps confuse those snooping around the cave. Multiple entrances to the caves and tunnels in the hill on which Drear House sits are revealed - Pluto's cave, the kitchen wall and hall mirror at Drear House among them.

A plot to keep the Darrows from snooping is executed in which Thomas, his father, Mayhew and Pesty on horseback dress up as ghosts (Dies, the two slaves and a steed) to scare the Darrows, who eventually realize they've been tricked. Embarrassed, they go off and the existence of the treasure is kept secret.

Positive points: UGRR secrecy, competition between abolitionists and slavery sympathizers, typical small town resistance to (black) newcomers. Doubts of "new kit." Good portrait of professional black family. However, "hiding place" dramatically over-drawn, unrealistic.



## Hamilton, Virginia

### ***The Mystery of Drear House***

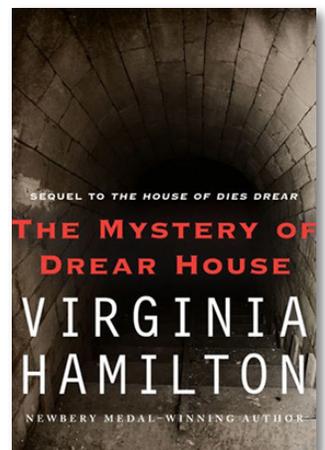
New York: Collier Books / Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987.

Historical Fiction. 219 pages.

AR Level 6.6 / 8.0 points

Concerned that the Darrows will eventually return and discover the treasure-filled cavern, Mr. Small is cataloging the contents and Pluto, who has long been its guardian, continues. Macky is shunned by his older brothers. Pesty cleans. More tunnels and rooms are revealed. One tunnel comes from the closet in Pesty's "invalid" mother's bedroom. Mattie Darrow's mind rambles and she becomes particularly agitated talking about the Indian Maiden. We learn that Mattie goes into the tunnels and spends time in a smaller cavern decorated as a luxurious Victorian bedroom. There is also an orphans' chamber, where fleeing children could be safe, where Pesty plays. The Indian Maiden was a conductor for the children; she was killed and they returned to slavery in the end.

Great-grandmother Jeffers comes to live. She befriends Mattie and Pluto. They go to Mattie's through the tunnel. A "door" is



revealed when a fireplace / turntable rotates in the Drear House guest room. The twins get in by accident, but are rescued. Because it is dangerous to have “so many secrets” and so many people in on them, Mr. Small devises a plan to reveal the “recent” discovery. Pluto and Mattie are given the credit (and \$10K each by the Drear foundation). The ornery Darrow men are “summoned” to a surprise revelation / press conference to minimize their angry reaction. They also come to Drear House for Thanksgiving Dinner.

Hansen, Joyce

***I Thought My Soul Would Rise and Fly: The Diary of Patsy, a Freed Girl***  
**(Dear America series)**

New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1997.

Historical Fiction. 172 pages.

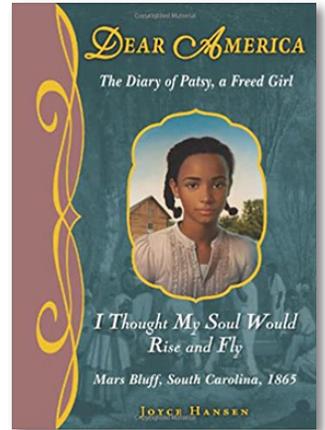
AR Level 5.1 / 5.0 points

At end are several pages of Historical Notes, telling of life in the South for “freed” slaves in 1865 as they faced working for wages, leaving, or staying, on the plantations, dangers from Ku Klux Klan, Black Codes limiting “freedom,” Civil Rights Act of 1866 - basically unenforced until 1950s and 1960s. Photo section, words/music to “Free at Last,” maps.

Patsy, orphaned slave girl with a limp and a stammer, lived on the Davis plantation in Mars Bluff, SC. A house servant, she was “taught” to read as a joke by Annie, the daughter, who thought that because Patsy had difficulty speaking she was unable to learn. She learned. Her favorite book was *Goody Two-Shoes*. She has always lived at Davis Hall, but the war has just ended and she/everything is in a state of uncertainty. She helps Cook and writes in a diary given to her by Annie and Charles, also as a joke.

Contrast: white church (where slaves in gallery have a “catechism” which promises obedience) vs. slave service in bush arbor; Nancy, compliant house slave who has bonded with Mistress, and Patsy, who wishes a family member would come for her; post-war called of Master and Mistress, Sir and Ma’am. Various slaves leave, some going to sea islands for land which, we later learn, is “given” and then withdrawn. Reverend McNeal (black) holds services and Union meetings, reads from newspaper of people searching for missing family. He also tells them of a promised teacher. Ex-slaves clean up spinning house and make it a school - but no teacher comes. Then Rev. McNeal is beaten up and Patsy is coaxed into reading from newspaper. She doesn’t stammer when reading. She reads of teachers elsewhere being harassed and threatened, and eventually is coaxed into teaching the children. Finally, even Nancy helps with her chores so she can spend mornings teaching.

Sir sickens and dies. More and more ex-slaves leave, after the crop comes in especially, when the acreage they were promised is not given to them. Patsy decides that her new, free, two-part name will be Phyllis Frederick (for Phyllis Wheatly and Frederick Douglass). No family ever comes for her, but she is absorbed by other slaves into their family. Epilogue (still fiction) tells that she gets an education, then more in the North, and comes back to be a teacher for black children in the South. [Good portrait of interactions between slaves and planter’s family.]



Hansen, Joyce

***Which Way Freedom?***

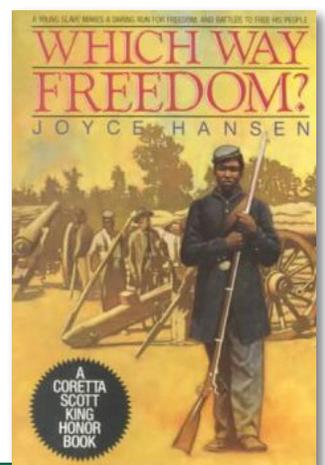
New York: Avon Books, Inc., 1986.

Historical Fiction. 120 pages.

AR Level 6.8 / 7.0 points

Story “starts” on April 12, 1864. Obi and Thomas are with other former slaves now Union soldiers in the Sixteenth U.S. Heavy Artillery of Colored Troops. They are at Fort Pillow, Tennessee, on the Mississippi River, expecting a Confederate attack. Obi reflects back on how he got to this place.

In July 1861, Obi was one of three slaves on the small tobacco plantation of Master John Jennings, his wife Martha (“soft” on the slaves”) and his nasty brother Wilson. The Jennings worked in the



fields with Obi, Easter and little Jason (young - carried water). (Book uses nominative pronouns for other cases; ex: "Hope Wilson keep he evil self there.") Wilson insists Obi and Easter must finish the harvest by month's end - earlier than usual. Obi tries to sneak into the woods to old Buka, now free because he's useless and kept alive by food from younger slaves. Hints that it's about escaping, which it is. Obi barely remembers his mother Lorena, vaguely, mostly her shrieks when he was sold off at age 10, and is planning throughout the book how he might locate her. Buka tells him she's in the past, and he eventually accepts this at the end.

Tyler Phillips from next plantation joins Rebel army and is killed. War becomes serious. Battles coming closer; Confederates recruiting slaves and tell Obi they'll be back in three weeks. Obi plans to run instead, but before he can, he's hired out, earlier than usual. Then his mistress tells them the Master plans to sell them before the soldiers return for Obi. Now running is mandatory. Easter says she and Jason will also go.

Buka will help guide them. He is sick and is often carried, but guides them and tells of swamps, etc. Through circumstances, Jason is now housed with Mistress and, much to Easter's dismay, cannot be taken. Obi and "Ezra" (Easter's name to go with her disguise as a boy) have a pass written by one of the Phillips' slaves, but hesitate to use it because they're not positive what it says. They arrive at a river, across which is an island (Sea Islands) where Obi's mother may be. Buka ("Baako" = firstborn) dies. Daniel and Mariah becomes friends of theirs. Easter et al. weave a sweetgrass (pine needles wrapped with swamp grass fronds) "basket" big enough to hold them. Obi and Daniel "sail" off in it during Union/Confederate conflict, but are overturned. Rescued, they are on the island. Obi's mother has been moved on. Daniel joins Union army; Obi works for wages as free contraband. Daniel is killed, spying for Union. Emancipation Proclamation brings legal but not actual release. Obi joins army to finish Daniel's mission (bring out Easter, Mariah, maybe Jason).

Back to 1864, Union is attacked by Rebels, who slaughter all "contraband"—even children ("little generals")—and Union officers/whites instead of taking prisoners. Obi and Thomas hide/survive. Obi takes Obadiah Booker (Buka) for his new name. "Which way freedom?" is problem faced by running slaves - which way to go when in trackless woods, is Union Army sheltering runaways or sending them back, etc. Loose ends = Easter and Jason, still in South at book's end.

Hansen, Joyce

### ***Out From This Place***

New York: Avon Books, Inc., 1988.

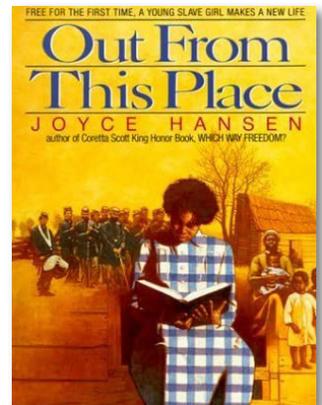
Historical Fiction. 134 pages.

AR Level 5.3 / 3.0 points

Author's note at beginning: during Civil War, Union occupation of Sea Islands enabled slaves to flee there to work for wages at confiscated plantations. Promised ownership of the land they had tilled, ex-slaves were very disillusioned when the land was returned to the original owners during Reconstruction.

May 1862 to March 31, 1866. Easter and Obi have escaped to a Sea Island where they are working confiscated land being held by Union forces. Easter goes back for young Jason, whom she had promised to rescue. Obi has gone when she returns with Jason, and she and the other slaves from their old plantation work on land they are promised at the war's end. Easter watches the children while their mothers work the cotton fields for a wage. Rayford, who led them from the plantation, marries Rose, the cook from the plantation. Jason wants to sing and dance for a snake oil salesman's traveling show/sale. Julius wants to marry Easter, who still wants to search for Obi when the Union Army returns. Julius joins, then returns when blacks are released near the war's end.

After holding an in-house school, the ex-slaves are sent to a "real" teacher, Miss Grantley, who tells Easter she should go to a school in Philadelphia. Then Miss Grantley is transferred and Easter fills in as teacher while they await the next teacher's arrival. Mr. Reynolds, who has been the Union supervisor, tells the ex-slaves that the original owners are to get the property back. Rayford and the others resist. Soldiers return, gunfire is exchanged, and Rayford is killed. A new proposition is made whereby the slaves will bring in the current cotton crop, earning a wage, and then be given an equal amount of uncleared land. Easter stays to ensure Rose gets the acreage she and Rayford worked. She plans to find Obi, but it's unsafe to be alone outside certain areas because of the "buckra" (poor white) hostility. Hooded buckras burn the first school building. Easter eventually writes Miss Grantley that she will go to the school in Philadelphia. Last chapter has Obi returning from the war, planning to find her.



Houston, Gloria

***Bright Freedom's Song: A Story of the Underground Railroad***

Orlando: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1998.

Historical Fiction. 136 pages.

AR Level 5.7 / 6.0 points

Bright Freedom Cameron (age 15 at end of story and 7 at its earliest point) lives with her father Charles (Tearlach) and mother Marie on Mairi Mountain, part of the Blue Ridge Mountains in North Carolina. Her father is a smith, but was once indentured to a cruel master, who branded his hand.

Prologue, 1862, finds Bright driving a wagon of rocks and "bundles" along a road at night with Marcus (FKA Tom), a large black man posing as her father's slave. Her father, however, has no slaves and has, in fact, worked himself to exhaustion delivering ever increasing numbers of bundles by night while working at the forge by day. Bright and Marcus play it cool when Union soldiers looking for deserters confront them.

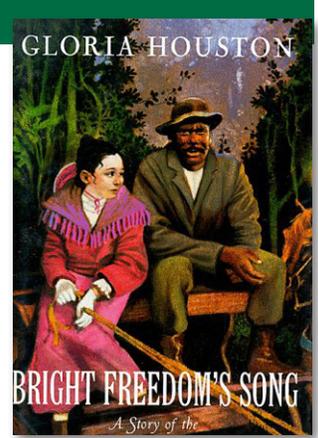
Flashback to Bright's earlier childhood, when she sees her first "brown face" in the hen house while collecting eggs. It's Marcus, escaped from the same master who had held Charles' indenture, on his way to freedom. Charles has been helping many runaways, using cave network in mountains, his connecting root cellar, and eventually a place under his forge connected to the pit where he stands to work on the undercarriages of wagons. Ma feeds the folks, and eventually Bright does as well. A fellow ex-indentured servant, Edward Haverford, does have slaves, twins Cuba and Cain, for his daughter Daphne, whom Bright visits. Haverford's trusted slave Caesar has run and his former owner just can't understand why...

Toby is a new apprentice at the forge, along with Cameron's son Andrew. (Baby Piegien was born while Pa and Bright visited the Haverfords.) They go on "errands" whenever bundles arrive or leave. The Civil War starts. Mountain folk, most of whom were indentured or were the children of indentured people, help escaping slaves. Others just help anyone who is passing by and needs food/rest with no political agenda. These people get busy! Lotsa slaves run up the mountain ridges to freedom.

Bright tires of the cooking/emptying slop jar aspect and longs to drive the wagon, but her Scotch-Irish father will hear none of it. Then he gets the lung fever and can't go, even when troops are coming. Bright and Marcus do the deed, with women and children in the wagon under rocks to "repair a farmer's dam" and men jogging through the woods nearby. They outsmart Union officers. (Chapter 25 repeats the Prologue.)

Bright has been named for a favorite hymn about "bright freedom's song," which the two sing softly in celebration. Mr. Coffin from Ohio has just come to dinner. There's a conversation on the slavery/abolition issue and Pa learns that "their work" has been dubbed the UGRR.

Afterward separates history from fiction and goes into a several page discussion of white folk in indentured positions in England and America ("kidnap" = to carry off to forced labor to British colonies in America...)



Lyons, Mary E.

***Letters from a Slave Girl: The Story of Harriet Jacobs***

New York: Aladdin Paperbacks, 1996.

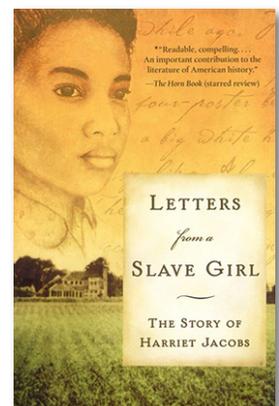
Historical Fiction. 150 pages.

AR Level 6.8 / 6.0 points

Dedicated "to all women everywhere who seek to escape their oppression," the book tells in letter form the story of Harriet's life. Although the real Harriet did not write these letters, she wrote many in her later life. The content is gleaned from her autobiography and the format is guided by spellings, etc. from real family documents as well as by the fact that the real Harriet was taught to read as a child by her mistress.

Part I: 1825-1833 - covers the first section of her life

Mama: letters to her deceased mother tell of the death of Margaret Horniblow, moving in with Gran and working at the tavern, going to Norcom house and worrying about consequences for outspoken brother John ("like his daddy").



Daddy: Gran given freedom in will, but greedy/financially needy Dr. Norcom plans to sell her; gets on block so he can't sell her privately, nobody bids except Elizabeth's sister, who bought her cheap and then frees her; Doctor Norcom whispers filthy words in Harriet's ear; she falls in love with "R", a free-born carpenter she met at a dance; he has money to buy her freedom; Doctor Norcom forbids her to ever see "R" again, starts building a cottage for her; she begins affair with Samuel Sawyer, becomes pregnant, laughs that she has outsmarted the doctor.

R: tells R about birth of Joseph (although "his father not the one I love"); solar eclipse (8/13/1831); Nat Turner's revolt; subsequent tightening of reins on slaves, esp. by poor whites (poem sent to Harriet is found and ripped up, cabin trashed); birth of daughter Louisa.

Part II: 1835-1842 - hiding and escape

Uncle Joseph: tells of going to work in fields rather than move into Doctor Norcom's little cottage and her children be freed (she didn't trust him to free them anyway); Harriet runs and is hidden in town by a friendly white woman; Dr. Norcom puts up posters with \$300 reward; family members (incl. children) imprisoned for not telling where she is, gradually released; Dr. Norcom borrows \$500 from Martha Blount, who is hiding Harriet, to go to NY to look for her; fears she is seen by Jenny, hides in swamp two days while new hiding place is prepared.

Uncle Stephen: hidden in cramped crawl space under eaves in Gran's cottage; Aunt Betty is distraught because Uncle Stephen has run away; Samuel Sawyer is elected to Congress; before he leaves for D.C., Harriet reveals herself to him and asks for his children's freedom, which he eventually does; sends Dr. Norcom a letter "from New York"; Samuel marries John: brother has not communicated since running, then writes from New Bedford, Mass.; ships out on whaling ship; Joseph is moody (turns out, he heard talking and realizes Harriet is hidden), Aunt Betty dies (Gran's last daughter)

Aunt Betty: writes deceased Aunt, plans to flee north by ship, then has second thoughts and lets Sarah take her place; Jenny may have seen Harriet, so she joins Sarah on the ship and both sail north to freedom.

Part III: 1842-1897 - Harriet: The Rest of Her Story

1842-1852: Narrative (third person) tells of Harriet's jobs, move to Boston, reunion with Louisa, dressmaking, move to Rochester where she met Frederick Douglass, attempts of the Norcoms to find and retrieve her, purchase of her freedom by Mrs. Willis

1853-1870: published story; schoolteacher

1870-1897: twilight, boardinghouse in Cambridge.

McGill, Alice

### *Miles' Song*

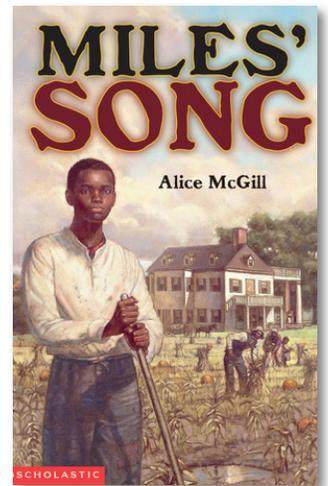
New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000.

Historical Fiction. 213 pages.

AR Level 5.6 / 7.0 points

Miles is in Mama Cee (Caroline's) cabin, having been banished from the mansion in Gency Tillery's plantation because he was caught looking in a book. As his nanny, Mama Cee had pulled strings (turned Ol' Miss was married before, Mama Cee has the papers to prove it sewn into her head wrap, and Gency doesn't know) to get Miles, now age 12, a prized post as servant-in-training. He learns proper speech, manners and behavior for a house servant. He has been stripped of his fine clothes and awaits his fate which, it turns out, is to be taken to the breaking ground by Bounty, an old black slave tracker. Bounty is mean, but fakes being crazy and singing a goofy song to let Miles know he will deliver his message (I love you) to Mama Cee when he returns.

The breaking ground is a boot camp for recalcitrant slaves run by breakers, Avery, Burgess and Cobb, the slaves sleep on hay in a barn, cook their own stew, and fell trees for lumber sales. Miles is befriended by Elijah, who speaks well in private but uses field slave language around the breakers. He speaks so well that Miles guesses he can read and asks to learn. Elijah teaches him, giving him letters and then words as they work together. Miles helps Cookie, learning how to do basic cooking himself, until Cookie finally goes a little daffy, is considered "broken" in spirit, and sent back to his master. Nero, a slave being broken, runs. He's brought back and chokes on his shirt piece stuffed in his mouth so he won't cry out while he's whipped. Miles takes his ripped shirt and vows to wear it always as a reminder. Elijah teaches Miles a lot of good stuff, including hiding his emotions and using field slave language to feign stupidity. Elijah and Miles go to town as Cobb's slaves when he sells the lumber; Cobb is so pleased he eventually buys Elijah. Before going back home, Miles tells Elijah he wants to be free. Elijah says he'll arrange it, but to get dismissed as a house servant.



Bounty comes for Miles, who is reinstated in the great house. He goofs up and offers to be a field slave to save the trainer Macon from that fate. There is a hammer ring in the woods at corn husking time, and someone slips a letter from Elijah into Miles' pocket. It contains a map to memorize and destroy. Fever hits the plantation quarters and a number of slaves die. Work is suspended. When that's over, Gency Tillery has heat-less, window-less cabins built by the woods for the old ones who can no longer work. Miles finally tells Mama Cee that he can read and that they are going to run. Elijah sneaks into the barn, gives him final instructions, says "Bounty in" and has to run himself. Doubtful, Miles approaches Bounty, who does, in fact, take them off in a plantation wagon with Gency's Big Red, whom they eventually sell. Turns out that Bounty has been getting money for returning slaves, then helping them really escape, using the bounty money to finance the escape. He takes Miles and Mama Cee by train to the three mountains on the map. Mama Cee gets sick; they build a travois and take her on, but she dies in the woods just short of freedom. She has told Miles, "If you got anything in view to do - do it, do it, do it." He turned it into a song, which he takes with him to Elijah and freedom. Bounty buries Mama Cee.

McKissack, Patricia C.

***A Picture of Freedom: The Diary of Clotee, a Slave Girl, Belmont Plantation, Virginia, 1859 (Dear America series)***

New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1997.

Historical Fiction. 183 pages.

AR Level 5.3 / 5.0 points

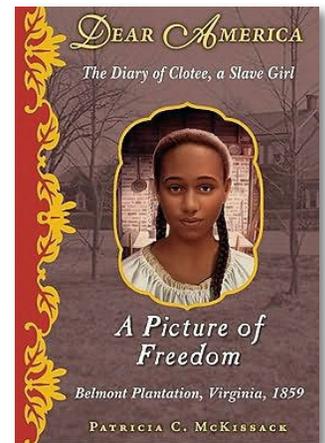
One of the better written, more sophisticated, but followable UGRR books. A video also available. Part of "Dear America" series. Clotee, in spite of an historical sounding epilogue, is totally fiction (per publication info at end of book).

Clotee is a house slave at the Hensley's, working with Aunt Tee in the kitchen and waiting on the white family. While fanning young mas' William during his study time with his mother, Miz Lilly, she has learned to read. Her mother was sold away, then died, and she is cared for by Aunt Tee and Uncle Heb (an "arranged" slave marriage that worked). Spicy, a new slave, has been badly abused but becomes friends with Clotee. She catches the eye of Hince, Mas' Henley's winning race horse jockey—also rumored to be his son—but another slave girl, Missy, is also interested in Hince. Mas' Henley brings a new horse, Dancer, home "for William," but Dancer is actually a spirited race horse, too much for William. William eventually takes him for a ride and comes back badly injured. Although Clotee had previously warned Miz Lilly of William's plan, she says nothing, because she did nothing to prevent it - and lets Uncle Heb take a fatal beating because he saddled up the horse on William's orders. Mas' Henley shoots Dancer.

Mr. Harms, a new tutor for William, arrives, but Clotee gets to continue fanning / learning. When cooler weather comes, Mr. Harms begins a treatment of William's paralyzed legs which requires that Clotee stay and help. She suspects that Mr. Harms realizes she can read. He does, but does not say so. There is an abolitionist with a patch over one eye rumored to be in the area. The Belmont slaves are all told to be on the alert and report a sighting immediately. However, the man in questions appears in the woods down by the river, and Mr. Harms is seen nearby. The slaves say nothing.

A Campbelle family from the Deep South challenges their new horse, Cam, and Hince to a challenge, since Mas' Henley won't sell Hince to them. The helpers appear to have drugged Cam, who loses, but Mas' frees Hince before the Campbellles return. They take money instead of their "goods." Mr. Harms is himself an abolitionist and conductor on the UGRR. He speaks with Clotee in secret and arranges for her to run, along with Spicy and Hince. (A previous escape attempt by four slaves ended in death for the fugitives, which the slaves doubt as a scare tactic but which Mr. Harms confirms because they didn't trust any white people and chose to attempt the escape unassisted.) At the river bank, Clotee decides to stay and - because Mr. Harms has been unmasked and forced to leave - become the next conductor on the UGRR at Belmont. Epilogue. "follows" slaves' stories as free adults.

Historical Note. Life in America in 1859. Tells about resistance to slavery including Slave Codes, Anthony Burns, Quakers, Garrison, Douglass, Stowe, Truth, Tubman, Garnet, Brown, code songs, slave life, etc. Picture section: slave life, posters, Tubman, etc. Good at showing: petulance of white family's whims; "control" of slave bodies, but not minds; infiltration of abolitionists; intrigue/betrayal among slaves for small considerations.



Pearsall, Shelley  
***Trouble Don't Last***

New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002.  
Historical Fiction. 230 pages.  
AR Level 4.8 / 8.0 points

Samuel, an eleven-year-old slave, is always blundering into “trouble.” His mother was sold before he can remember and he has been raised by Lilly and Harrison, two older slaves. Samuel tells the story. Samuel breaks a blue plate. Lilly, the cook, has to pay for it. Mas Hackler tells her to give Samuel no supper and takes his blankets. Miz Catherine is fat and mean. Harrison comes during the night, takes Samuel, and they run. Samuel is luke-warm on the idea. They hide in a tree, are chased and on the verge of being found when a rainstorm interrupts the search. How did Harrison (who’s run off once before) know the tree was there? He won’t say. They sleep. Harrison shows Samuel the things in the tow sack, including things of the Hackler’s he’s “stolen”—gives rationale for why it’s not stealing (hand doesn’t belong to him, belongs to Mas Hackler...)

Looking for River Jordan (Ohio River). Find a smaller one with smelly water; ford it. They get to corn fields near a big river (Ohio). Harrison makes owl sound; it’s answered. The River Man (patterned on John Parker) rows them across but eventually sets Hetty Scott adrift when she won’t leave the fancy dresses she’s stolen. He tells them to walk upright, not hunched over like slaves. But don’t run.

The gray ball of yarn in the tow sack is Samuel’s ?!?! They are sent to a cellar. There’s food and blankets. Widow Taylor is carrying on her newly-dead husband’s UGRR work, but she’s scared. Talks to the dead Jacob. Samuel sympathetic, Harrison not. Next night she takes them under hay and feed sacks in a wagon to church. While ladies sing, Rev. Pry will help. Rev. Pry and Mr. Keepheart interview them and write their stories to share with the sympathetic congregation. They sleep on pews; Harrison rips up the stories. Miz Kettle, Ham and Eggs bring dress/bonnet for Samuel, darkens Harrison’s hair. “Doesn’t know” other conductors. Ham has stringer of fish. White man takes all but a head. (hostile whites steal from blacks in north, too).

Green Murdock helps Old and Young (doesn’t want to know their names), uses cards to see future/Ace of Spades. Green’s a peddler. Harrison very ill. In Negro Hollow, free blacks August and Belle help, nurse Harrison. From his ravings/fever, Samuel figures out that Harrison is his grandfather. August puts them in box car headed north. Ordee Lee there also; folded paper with wisps of wife/kids’ hair. Momma in Chat-ham, Canaday (inside yarn ball). Train ride. Captured at docks, pretending to be stevedores. Constable looks sympathetic. Ordee Lee’s paper is “free papers” (not) and they are on board (Sandusky). Find Momma in Canada.

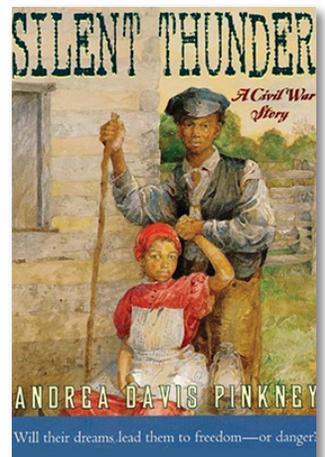
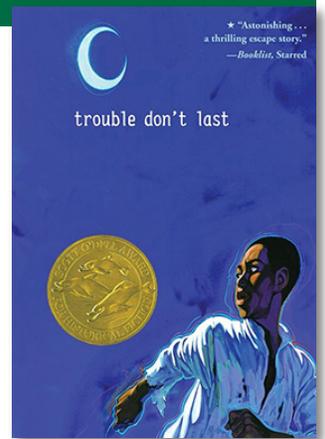
Well told, appropriate vocabulary; Samuel’s viewpoint (fears, distrust, superstitions, doubts); local author

Pinkney, Andrea Davis  
***Silent Thunder: A Civil War Story***

New York: Jump at the Sun. Hyperion Books for Children, 1999.  
Historical Fiction. 216 pages.  
AR Level 5.4 / 7.0 points

“Silent thunder” is desire, longing.

Alternating chapters give first-person accounts by Summer, age 11, and her brother Roscoe, who dreams of running to freedom and joining the Union Army (1862-3). Summer is learning household chores from their mother and eventually learns also that the reason for Master Gideon’s birthday look-sees of her and Roscoe is because he is their father. Roscoe is personal servant to Gideon Parnell’s “only son,” the bright but sickly Lowell. Mama is the only one who can ease Lowell’s chronic asthma attacks. Roscoe has eavesdropped on Lowell’s lessons and can read. He starts teaching Summer her letters, but she is so excited that she nearly reveals this. Roscoe makes her a burlap and stick dolly, Walnut, in whom to confide.



Roscoe and Clem, an older boy who was severely beaten when he tried to escape with his love from the next plantation (her children wouldn't belong to Gideon and he forbade the match) plan to run off to the Union Army and, at the end of the story, do this during the Christmas Eve and following festivities. Doc Bates, the kindly physician/veterinarian, is their first "conductor" on the UGRR. Meanwhile, Gideon Parnell has a stroke and Mama effectively runs the plantation, although Missy Claire's brother from the South comes to inspect the operation at Christmas. Thomas Farnsworth, the brother, left after the Emancipation Proclamation was made to see to his own Louisiana plantation, as he feared the South was losing the war. When Roscoe flees, he leaves behind a replacement corn cob dolly for Summer with "Summer is a blooming flower" stitched into the hem of its dress. Summer applies this to Mama as well, after Mama tells Missy Claire that she will make her own decisions now that she is free.

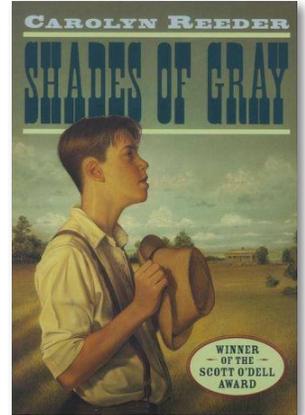
## Reeder, Carolyn *Shades of Gray*

New York: Aladdin Paperbacks / Simon & Schuster, 1989.

Historical Fiction. 152 pages.

AR Level 5.8 / 7.0 points

At the end of the Civil War, twelve-year-old Will Page is taken from Winchester, VA in the lush but ruined Shenandoah Valley to his Aunt Ella and Uncle Jed's farm by Doc Martin. Will's family has all died (father in the war, brother Charlie as he was decoying Union sentries, sister and mother of illness) and he is going to his mother's sister, whom he has never met. Uncle Jed refused to join the Confederate army and is looked on as either a Union sympathizer or a coward. Will's family had a couple of faithful slaves (Lizzie has been hired by Doc Martin); Uncle Jed does his own work.



Will meets his cousin Meg; Enos and Sam are in Ohio, working and sending back money. The cow and horse were taken by Confederates and they have little extra food when Will arrives at the war-ravaged Virginia Piedmont. Will is very bitter regarding Yankees, responsible for his family's deaths, and transfers that to his uncle, whom he refuses to call by name. Throughout most of the book, Will nurtures this bitterness. Unaccustomed to manual labor, Will learns chores by working with his uncle. They put up a new fence around the pasture and a new roof on the barn. His uncle is a gentle teacher, seems to understand and tolerate Will's anger, while not catering to it. Teaches Will to check the line of rabbit traps.

Will goes fishing with Meg, encounters Hank, Patrick and Amos Riley, sons of the local storekeeper. Hank insults Uncle Jed and challenges Will, who avoids a fight the first time. On a subsequent encounter, however, Hank puts a piece of bark on his shoulder, Will knocks it off, and they fight. Will loses, but feels Hank fought dirty. Doc Martin sends a letter saying he would be proud to raise Will as his son. Will accuses Meg of snooping and reading the letter, but learns that Meg can't read. Will keeps the planned departure to himself; promises to teach Meg to read.

Jim Woodley, a wounded Union soldier on his way home on foot, is sent to the Jones' by one of the Rileys. Will can't believe they will harbor a Yankee, then remembers his mother helping wounded soldiers indiscriminately. Meg enjoys Jim's stories; Jim is sensitive to Will's anger. Eventually they discover a mutual enjoyment of Dickens. Will is gradually able to tolerate the Yankee, who stays a week to get well enough to continue travel. He is purposely absent when Jim leaves; Jim leaves him Moby Dick, which he starts to read aloud to the family on a rainy day.

At the general store, Will trips and Mr. Riley thinks Hank tripped him. He didn't, but Will is evasive and Hank gets a whipping. Later Uncle Jed lets Will know about his dishonesty; Will returns and tells the truth; it is decided Will should also get a whipping he doesn't deserve (at the hands of Uncle Jed), but Hank calls it off at the last minute. Uncle Jed refers to Will as "son" and Will calls him "Uncle Jed." He's learned that (1) some people didn't like war, not a particular side, and (2) it may have taken more courage to resist and take people's reactions than to have gone.

In the end, Will writes Jim (who has sent money for a cow and a horse, which Uncle Jed has decided to keep because it was a gesture of friendship, not charity) to thank him for the book, tells everyone about Doc Martin's offer, but has decided to stay. They're a family.

\*One of the better character developments of a young adult.

Ruby, Lois  
***Steal Away Home***

New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers / Simon & Schuster, 1994.

Historical Fiction. 192 pages.

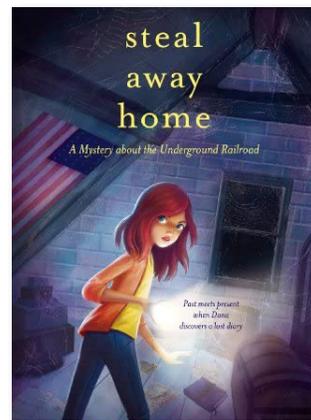
AR Level 5.1 / 8.0 points

Flips between group of contemporary 12-year-olds in Lawrence, Kansas, and a Quaker family settling the Kansas Territory in 1856. Modern scenes have flippant dialogue, couple of suggestive remarks. Nineteenth century scenes feature quainter language and Quakers using “thee” and “thou.” Respect and formality of relationships shown as well (married couple calls each other “Mr. Weaver” and “Mrs. Weaver”).

The modern Shannon family buys a 135-year-old home. While stripping wallpaper, daughter Dana uncovers a secret room containing a cot with a skeleton. Her father is a university professor, mom a little excitable. She has a number of friends including Jeep, a black boy. She finds and hides a black book, which appears to be a journal of Mrs. Weaver, wife of Caleb and mother of James and Rebecca, who built the house. From it, they learn of a UGRR conductor, Lizbet Charles, who is frequently at the Weavers’ home and who must remain hidden because of slave catchers from the Nebraska territory, eager to neutralize the power of any “free soilers.” James Weaver (age 12 in the journal) sketches buildings, but grows up to design a building Dana’s dad is trying to save. Dana and her friends break in and explore the place, even though it is dangerous (weak floors, etc.). She turns the diary over to the history department. Later when the house is being dedicated, they discover a partially buried stone marker under a tree. It reads, “Buildings crumble, but leaves and grass are eternal. I plant this tree in memory of Matthew Luck Charles and Elizabeth Charles. April 20, 1877. J.B.W. / amen.”

The flashback story, most of which is revealed only to the reader and not to the Shannon children, tells of the Weavers and their pacifist life in a potentially violent setting. Pro-slavery activists conduct raids. Caleb is defending (he’s a lawyer) people who have “stolen” slaves. Whenever he’s away, his wife shelters Lizbet Charles, a conductor in the UGRR. Lizbet tells them about escapes, including Box Brown and Ellen Craft. Solomon, a free black who is “recaptured” by slaves, is eventually returned to Kansas, where he works and meets Lizbet. They fall in love. Lizbet knows how to use roots to heal and helps Rebecca when she has a fever. They also cure Solomon. When Mrs. Weaver’s father has a stroke in Boston, she and Rebecca go to be with him, staying until he dies and through the winter weather. Lizbet shows up, relieving James from cooking chores, helping nurse Solomon, but revealing herself to Mr. Weaver, who guesses that she is “Mrs. Weaver’s handiwork.” He prays, deciding she can stay, even though he is a lawyer breaking the law. Marshal Fain even has deputies camp outside the house in the snow, hoping to apprehend Lizbet. She becomes sick and dies in the upstairs room, so father, son and Solomon wall up the room so she won’t be found.

Background is prairie life (fires, winters, etc.) and the free/slave politics in the territory. Flipping back and forth in time can be confusing.



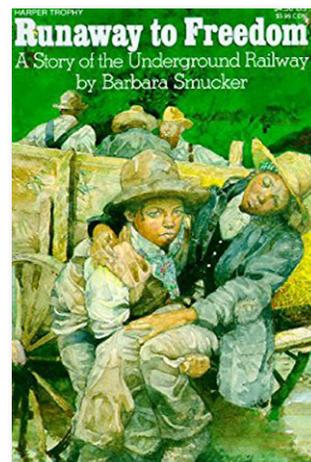
Smucker, Barbara  
***Runaway to Freedom: A Story of the Underground Railway***

UK: Clarke, Irwin & Company Limited / Harper Collins Publishers Ltd., 1977.

Historical Fiction. 152 pages.

AR Level 5.7 / 5.0 points

Julilly (June Lilly) is sold south (journey south recounted) away from a kindly Master to a cruel one. At age 13, she is alone. She befriends a slave girl named Liza, who has been crippled by beatings. She recalls Mammy Sally’s whispered information about meeting in Canada, then Alexander M. Ross arrives from Canada to study birds and, using slaves as “guides” through the local woods, imparts information on escaping. Lester, Adam, Julilly and Liza decide to go. They flee through the night woods, use water paths to throw off dogs, etc. While hiding in a barn one day, Lester and Adam go back across a stream to catch fish and are recaptured, leaving Julilly and the crippled but tenacious Liza to go on alone. Following the North Star and using a



compass provided by Ross, they cross the Appalachian Mountains (gun-toting woman sends them packing; kindly German / Mennonites take them in) and come to the Ohio River Valley. Jeb and Ella Brown, free blacks, take and hide them from the ever-pursuing slave hunters, then Jeb rows them across the Ohio where they are taken to Levi Coffin's house.

They are then put on a real train for Cleveland, where they are smuggled aboard a schooner, the *Mayflower*, and spend the night of crossing hiding in the lifeboat, pursued right up until departure. Lester is already in St. Catharines; Adam, too, re-escaped, but died. Mammy Sally is also there. They work at the Welland House Hotel. The girls learn that life will still be hard, that they are not welcome in St. Catharines' white schools, and that they will work hard and, although paid, will stay poor. But they are free, no more beatings / whippings.

Historical elements include: hiding and escape stories taken from first-hand experiences found in the narratives of fugitive slaves; infiltration of Alexander M. Ross, Canadian ornithologist; work of Levi Coffin in southern Ohio; concealment and transportation of slaves, alone and with help; variety of responses to fugitives, slave hunters, hostile, helpful, abolitionists, proactively helpful, organized / impromptu; over-arching hunger, fatigue, lack of cleanliness and shelter. Bibliography.

**Woodruff, Elvira**

***Dear Austin: Letters from the Underground Railroad***

New York: Scholastic Inc., 1998.

Historical Fiction. 137 pages.

AR Level 5.2 / 3.0 points

Levi writes letters from Sudbury, PA, to his brother Austin, who has gone overland to Oregon in previous book. The brothers have been orphaned and Levi plans to join Austin, but for now... Dates are May 6, 1853, through October 30, 1853, with a final letter from Darcy to Levi dated May 16, 1873. In first few letters, Levi recounts boyhood adventures in Sudbury (taunting Old Man Grissard's bull with red ladies' drawers; detective club planning to investigate light behind Preacher Tully's smokehouse; plucking chickens and taking dancing lessons as punishments; critter races with frogs (Plug Ugly); jumping off Widow's Rock at swimming hole; whittling walking-stick tops in the hay loft, etc.) One day the boys overhear remarks at the general store about the Underground Railroad.

Possum, one of Levi's friends. Jupiter (mute) and his younger sister Darcy (sings well) are two black friends. Darcy wants to learn a new song as a gift and, at Levi's suggestion, lingers outside dancing class window to learn a new tune. Mrs. Simpson, the dancing teacher, runs her off and tells her to stay with her own kind. Later Darcy disappears and it is feared she has been snatched by slave catchers.

Levi takes off to find her, and Jupiter goes along. They meet Miss Milly Keck, who gives them each a biscuit and her horse four biscuits, Fergus T. McGrath, who was doctoring a snake bite when they came upon him and who gives them a ride in his wagon with his animals and some food, some drunk Southern whites, who are menacing until they get a whiff of the animal odor still clinging to the pair, and a party of Blacks including a deep-voiced man who quizzes them and turns out to be Moses (Harriet Tubman). They learn that Preacher Tully and Jupiter's daddy Winston (and Miss Amelia baked pies) are part of the UGRR. Warned not to go to a nearby slave auction, they do just that, still searching for Darcy. Separated, Levi sees a slave and her children parted, then looks for Darcy in the slave pens. Jupiter, meanwhile, is captured and sold. The successful bidder ("Be still, oh, mah heart.") is Fergus T. McGrath. Then Winston Hale and Preacher Tully appear and the boys are rescued. Back in Sudbury, Winston and Jupiter go on to Canada because only one is technically free. Levi and Miss Amelia plan to leave for Oregon in the spring. Final letter is from Darcy to Levi, twenty years later, asking his help in locating her father and brothers.

