



1998

The Jefferson Cup honors a distinguished biography, historical fiction, or American history book for young people. The Virginia Library Association's Children's and Young Adult Round Table (CYART) has presented the award annually since 1983. Through the award, CYART seeks to promote reading about America's past; to encourage writing of U.S. history, biography, and historical fiction for young people; and to recognize authors in these disciplines.

1998 JEFFERSON CUP AWARD

LEON'S STORY

by Leon Walter Tillage

Farrar Straus Giroux Grades 5 and up

Leon's Story is based on the reflections of Leon Walter Tillage, a Baltimore school custodian and son of a North Carolinian sharecropper. Born in 1936, Tillage describes his life as an African American before, during, and after the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. He recalls sitting on Coca-Cola crates in the balcony at the movie theater—hiding during intermissions to avoid being struck by objects thrown by the white children sitting in the seats below. He remembers his father's murder by a carload of drunken white teenagers—and the \$100 compensation paid.

Tillage describes his life during the days of the Ku Klux Klan and Jim Crow laws, but *Leon's Story* is told with dignity, compassion, and optimism. Based on a speech he gives annually during an assembly at The Park School and additional interviews conducted by Susan Roth, *Leon's Story* is gentle, direct, honest, and powerful. Susan Roth's black-and-white collages honor the simplicity and strength of Leon Walter Tillage and his story.

HONOR BOOKS

KENNEDY ASSASSINATED! THE WORLD MOURNS

by *Wilborn Hampton* Candlewick Press Grades 5-8

Wilborn Hampton has frozen a moment in time for today's readers. On November 22, 1963 he happened to be the first in the United Press International news office to hear that President Kennedy had been shot. This first-hand account of his energetic fact collecting and reporting over the next few days gives those tragic events a real immediacy. Journalism has changed and the author has covered many stories since, but this one will always be the biggest—a turning point in American history.

OUT OF THE DUST

by *Karen Hesse* Scholastic Press Grades 6-9

The compelling yet lyrical language of this novel in free verse gives a clear picture of rural Oklahoma in the dust bowl Depression years. Its heroine is Billie Jo, "a red-headed, freckle-faced, narrow-hipped girl with a fondness for apples and a hunger for playing fierce piano." It is not only possible to see Billie Jo's home; we also know what it sounds, feels, and tastes like. Her feelings are richly revealed as she suffers terribly through her mother's death, agonizing over whether to stay home or leave for good. Even the music she loves fails to offer solace. As Billie Jo says, "hard times aren't only about money, or drought or dust. Hard times are about losing spirit, and hope, and what happens when dreams dry up."

TREASURES IN THE DUST

by *Tracey Porter* HarperCollins Grades 5-7

Out of the Depression and Oklahoma dust bowl come two girls' voices telling of treasures in the dust—family, friends, and their dreams for a better life. Porter's alternate-chapter format uses rich imagery and poetic language to portray Annie, "a plain brown bird of a girl. A sparrow" in contrast with Violet, "more like a hawk...spirited and ready to fly." Annie and Violet have been friends and neighbors for eleven years. But times are hard and Violet's family, ruined by the loss of their livestock, must leave their home for the California migrant camps. A powerful and hopeful picture of 1930s America.

LILY'S CROSSING

by *Patricia Reilly Giff* Delacorte Press Grades 5-8

School's out and Lily can't wait for summer to truly begin with her family's move to their house on stilts over the Atlantic Ocean. World War II has changed everyone's life. Lily's best friend moves, Lily's father is being sent overseas to help rebuild Europe, and Lily is thrown together with Albert, a refugee with secrets and traumas of his own. Will Lily's habit of telling lies cost Albert his life? Will her father be able to keep his promise to let Lily know where he is in Europe in spite of the censors? Patricia Reilly Giff shows readers that love and friendship do make a difference in this charming book about a rascally little girl in small town America during World War II.

WORTHY OF SPECIAL NOTE

LOU GEHRIG: THE LUCKIEST MAN

by *David Adler* Harcourt Brace & Co. Grades 3-5

David Adler's simple text tells the story of Lou Gehrig, a Yankee Legend, whose record of playing in 2,130 consecutive games stood unbroken until Y Cal Ripken, Jr surpassed it in 1995. Gehrig lived his life with courage, humility, and steadfastness and faced his biggest challenge, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, with grace and dignity. Mayor Fiorella La Guardia spoke for the people of New York on July 4, 1939 at the Yankee Stadium's Lou Gehrig Appreciation Day, when he told Gehrig "You are the greatest prototype of good sportsmanship and citizenship." Terry Widener's acrylic paintings excellently portray Gehrig—his style and era.

JACK LONDON: A BIOGRAPHY

by *Daniel Dyer* Scholastic Press Grades 7-10

Jack London's life and writing are deftly placed in contrast with the times in which he lived. A hard-living man, London's diverse experiences enriched his writing with details that the author knew first-hand. The biography provides a balanced look at London's life, investigating both his positive and negative qualities. Daniel Dyer has created a biography that is both informative and entertaining—an excellent accompaniment to a study of London's works.

CHARLES A. LINDBERGH: A HUMAN HERO

by *James Cross Giblin* Clarion Books Grades 5-9

In this skillfully designed book, Giblin presents a balanced portrait of Lindbergh, a man remembered for his aviation achievements, a family tragedy, and controversial viewpoints. Lindbergh, shy as a young person, first developed a love for motorcycles and then for airplanes, purchasing his first airplane before really understanding how to fly it. Giblin tells of Lindbergh's overnight rise to fame and his contentious relationship with the media in the early years of our hero-worshipping society. The famous kidnapping and murder of Lindbergh's first son is handled with empathy. Giblin is frank in discussing Lindbergh's active stance first as a naïve isolationist and then as a Nazi sympathizer. The most compelling part of the book describes Lindbergh's 1927 thirty-three hour solo nonstop flight over the frigid Atlantic. The text is meticulously researched, complimented by an abundance of archival photographs, and contains a lengthy bibliography and thorough index.

MARVEN OF THE GREAT NORTH WOODS

by *Kathryn Lasky* Harcourt Brace & Co. Grades K-2

"For Marven, my dad, with love," reads Kathryn Lasky's dedication to this true story of a small, city-bred ten-year-old's odyssey. Wearing a cut-down overcoat of his father's and homemade skis, Marven sets out from the lonely train platform at Bemidji, Minnesota, following a track through the snow to the distant forest, where he finds a world very different from his familiar Duluth. In the Great North Woods Marven lives among giant

French Canadian lumberjacks during the winter of 1918, safe from the deadly influenza epidemic which prompted his Jewish immigrant parents to send their only son so far from his loving family. As Marven brings order to the bookkeeping operation at the logging camp, he shares the rough-and-tumble life of the lumberjacks: prodigious breakfasts, rollicking dances, French Canadian songs about bears and beautiful women.

The melting of the snow signals the end of Marven's exile, and his huge bearded friend, the logger Jean Louis, presents him with his very own axe. Although the story ends with Marven's reunited family, "one big hugging bundle" on the train platform in Duluth, Lasky's postscript tells us that the real Marven was still skiing at age eighty-three! Kevin Hawkes' colorful illustrations contrast warm indoor settings with the blue-white splendor of the North Woods by day and by night.

COMMANDER IN CHIEF: ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND THE CIVIL WAR

by Albert Marrin

Dutton Children's Books Grades 7-12

Albert Marrin's meticulous research has culminated in a unique biography about Abraham Lincoln. For example, the frontispiece pictures Lincoln with his hair in disarray; the caption explains that the President rumbled it intentionally. Throughout the book, illustrations are well-placed and compliment the text. Numerous quotations by Lincoln and his contemporaries add a sense of immediacy to the biography. The author's writing style is both lively and sympathetic, portraying Lincoln as a highly-complex man with unwavering principles. By the end of the book, the reader gains a true appreciation for the effect unfolding events had on Lincoln's character.

SKY PIONEER: A PHOTOBIOGRAPHY OF AMELIA EARHART

by Corinne Szabo

National Geographic Society Grades 4-8

Szabo's handsome, upbeat, visual biography celebrates Earhart's career and character, focusing on her achievements as a pioneer aviator. The lively text, sixty carefully chosen photos with lengthy, informative captions, and thirteen quotes from Earhart's writings make this volume stand out among the many Earhart biographies. The reader gets to know Earhart as a child of progressive parents and as a World War I nurse's aide; however, it is Earhart the daring, skillful, record-breaking aviator who gets primary coverage. Through maps and through the commentary and photos she sent home, the reader sees Earhart attempting to become the first woman to fly around the world. Szabo concludes by discussing theories of Earhart's disappearance. A bibliography, index, and photo credits are appended.

PREVIOUS JEFFERSON CUP AWARD WINNERS

1997	<i>The Ornament Tree</i> by Jean Thesman
1996	<i>The Great Fire</i> by Jim Murphy
1995	<i>Pink and Say</i> by Patricia Polacco
1994	<i>Across America on An Emigrant Train</i> by Jim Murphy
1993	<i>Children of the Dust Bowl</i> by Jerry Stanley

1992	<i>The Wright Brothers</i> by Russell Freedman
1991	<i>Franklin Delano Roosevelt</i> by Russell Freeman
1990	<i>Shades of Gray</i> by Carolyn Reeder
1989	<i>Anthony Burnes: The Defeat and Triumph of a Fugitive Slave</i> by Virginia Hamilton
1988	<i>Lincoln: A Photobiography</i> by Russell Freedman
1987	<i>After the Dancing Days</i> by Margaret Rostkowski
1986	<i>Sarah, Plain and Tall</i> by Patricia MacLachlan
1985	<i>In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson</i> by Bette Bao Lord
1984	<i>Who Speaks for Wolf?</i> By Paula Underwood Spencer
1983	<i>The Jewish Americans: A History in Their Own Words</i> by Milton Meltzer

For information about the award or to submit a nomination, please contact:

Sherry Inabinet

Middlesex County Public Library Inc.

P. O. Box 189

Urbanna, VA 23175

Eligibility:

The book must be an original work published in the year prior to the selection.

The book must be about U.S. history or an American person, or fiction that highlights the U.S. past, 1492 to present.

The author must reside in the U.S.

The book must be published especially for young people.

The book must be accurate, informative, well-researched, unbiased, literate, and give a clear and interesting picture of America's past.

Selection:

The Jefferson Cup Committee selects the winning book. The committee has eight members: a chairperson, selected by the previous year's committee, six individuals from throughout the state, selected by the current chair; and the outgoing chairperson of CYART

1998 JEFFERSON CUP AWARD COMMITTEE

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