



**2005
Jefferson Cup**

AWARD

**U.S. HISTORY
HISTORICAL FICTION
BIOGRAPHY**

**Presented by
Youth Services Forum
of the
Virginia Library
Association**

2005 Jefferson Cup Award

U.S. HISTORY • HISTORICAL FICTION • BIOGRAPHY

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A House of Tailors

*By Patricia Reilly Giff • Random House, Wendy Lamb Books
Grades 4-8*

“Sometimes in life there are no choices...” Although Dina is only 13 she feels that she has been sewing with her mother and sister forever. She wishes she could go with her sister to live in Brooklyn with their “rich” uncle. Her wish is granted when she returns from an early morning and secretive meeting with a friend in France and is chased by German soldiers. She barely eludes the soldiers and loses the gift from her friend — a pattern for a new hat. Her family decides she must leave Germany or be charged as a spy. How disappointed she is to discover that her uncle and his wife live on the top floor of a house in a small apartment and that she is expected to sew to make money for the family. She realizes that she has come from one house of tailors to another and this one is poorer. Her room is nothing but a closet with no window and no view of the river she misses. It isn’t long before Dina begins to wish that she were still in Germany with her family and away from the uncle with whom she is constantly arguing. She determines to save money to return home.

Mrs. Giff gives us a lively and believable character, as well as a very realistic picture of life in 1870 Brooklyn. The reader can almost feel the heat, smell the dirty streets, and see the shops and the street merchants. The taste of cold ice cream shared in a park and the letters from home offer good contrasts to the drabness of Dina’s life.

It is the time of a smallpox epidemic in Brooklyn and Dina cares for her aunt and little cousin as well as protects them from the health inspectors who visit the apartments to take sick people away to the hospital to die. At Christmas a terrible fire destroys their home and wipes out all of Dina’s savings. After the family resettles, the uncle offers to help her return to Germany. Dina must decide between her beloved family in Germany and her family and friends in America, including Johann, a friend and aspiring tailor.

Giff’s author’s notes explain that this story is based on the life of her great-grandmother, who also tried to escape sewing by coming to America.

HONOR BOOKS

Al Capone Does My Shirts

By Gennifer Choldenko • G.P. Putnam’s Sons • Grades 5-9

Built on an island in the middle of San Francisco Bay, Alcatraz Federal Prison was a community unto itself. In 1935, twelve-year-old Moose Flanagan and his family move to Alcatraz when his father gets a job as an electrician and guard. Moose is unhappy about the move, but his mother is anxious to settle there because she hopes to send Moose’s autistic older sister, Natalie, to a special school nearby. Warden Williams is quick to tell Moose that Alcatraz children always obey the rules. The warden has a blind spot regarding his daughter, Piper, however. She relishes the power she has over the other children on the island and browbeats them into participating in a money-making scheme; namely, collecting clothing from classmates in their mainland school to be taken back to Alcatraz and laundered by the notorious gangster, Al Capone.

The Voice That Challenged a Nation: Marian Anderson and the Struggle for Equal Rights

By Russell Freedman • Clarion Books • Grades 4-9

The stage is set for Anderson’s historic 1939 concert at the Lincoln Memorial. The book begins in anticipated silence illustrating the one that fell just before she began to sing. But before the reader can find fulfillment, Freedman goes back in time to Anderson’s childhood. He vividly accounts Anderson’s life from her childhood in Philadelphia through her acclaimed U.S. and European concert tours in the 1920s and 1930s. Freedman relays the sting of discrimination Anderson felt when she tried to apply to a music conservatory and was told, “We don’t take colored” and later, when Anderson toured the U.S., how she and her entourage were turned away from hotels and restaurants. There are thrilling accounts of her successes in Europe where she performed for royalty. At the end of the book the reader is brought back to the concert in which the beauty of Anderson’s voice can be felt. The backdrop for the historic concert is provided--the refusal of the Daughters of the American Revolution to revise their policy of “white artists only” and allow Anderson to perform at Constitution Hall and the intervention of

The Jefferson Cup Award

honors a distinguished American biography, historical fiction or history book for young people. The Youth Services Forum of the Virginia Library Association has presented this award annually since the 1982 publishing year. Through the award, the Youth Services Forum seeks to promote reading about America's past, to encourage the quality writing of United States history, biography and historical fiction for young people, and to recognize authors in these disciplines.

Howard University officials and Eleanor Roosevelt who organized the free public performance on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial before 75,000 people. The many photographs are well chosen and include concert and family pictures as well as examples of program notes from some of Anderson's recitals.

Going North

By Janice N. Harrington • Farrar, Straus & Giroux • Grades 1-6

Jessie and her family are looking for a better life. Leaving behind relatives and the red soil of Alabama, they set out for the North. But traveling through the segregated South in the 1960's is not so easy for the African American family. Too often they can't find motels, gas stations, or restaurants that will serve them or treat them fairly. Going North is a vibrantly illustrated picture book of emotional power that tells the story of Jessie and her family and how they become pioneers of sorts, hoping for a better future.

Friend on Freedom River

By Gloria Whelan • Sleeping Bear Press • Grades K-6

It's December and the Detroit River is soon to be frozen over and closed to any boat traffic. Young Louis is approached by a family escaping slavery and must make the decision to travel the distance across the river and deliver the mother, daughter and son to freedom in Canada. Louis decides to make the trip despite the risks because he remembers his father's instructions to "just do what you think I would have done." This richly illustrated picture book is a good introduction to the Michigan Underground Railroad that helped approximately 40,000 people on the road to freedom.

Worthy of Note

The Truth About Sparrows

By Marian Hale • Henry Holt • Grades 5-8

In her debut novel, Texas author Marian Hale shares the experiences of a Depression-era family who lives and works in a small Texas fishing village in the shadow of the Aransas Pass Seawall. Here 12-year-old Sadie learns the truth about friendship, the strength of family, and surviving loss. She comes to know the true meaning of home while her family struggles to make a new life after leaving Dust Bowl affected Missouri.

A Dream of Freedom: The Civil Rights Movement from 1954 to 1968.

By Diane McWhorter • Scholastic • Grades 5-12

In 1963, author Diane McWhorter was a sixth grade student in Birmingham Alabama. She describes herself as a member of the last generation to grow up under segregation. Reflecting, in part, McWhorter's childhood experiences, A Dream of Freedom traces the civil rights movement and introduces American heroes, both adults and children, like Emmett Till, Elizabeth Eckford, and James Meredith. Illustrated with many dynamic news photos and propelled by McWhorter's clear and passionate writing, the book is a powerful portrait of a defining moment in American history.

Series Worthy of Note

American Battlefields

Published by Enchanted Lion Books • Grades 3-8

The four books published in 2004 open this new series by introducing readers to the military conflicts at Lexington & Concord, The Alamo, Gettysburg and Little Bighorn. It is identified that these battles were significant to U.S. history because of their impact on the future. Beautifully designed with full-color illustrations and photographs, these books include summaries of pre-war stages, short biographies of major personalities, details of the battles and the impact on American history.

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

Deborah Wright, 2006 Chair

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Eligibility

- The book must be an original work published in the year prior to the selection.
- The book must be about U.S. history, an American person, or fiction that highlights the United States past, 1492 to the present.
- The author must reside in the United States.
- The book must be published 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 nine members: a chairperson selected by the previous year's committee, six individuals representing the six regions in the state, the outgoing chairperson of the Youth Services Forum, and the outgoing Jefferson Cup Award Committee chairperson.

2005 Jefferson Cup Award Committee

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