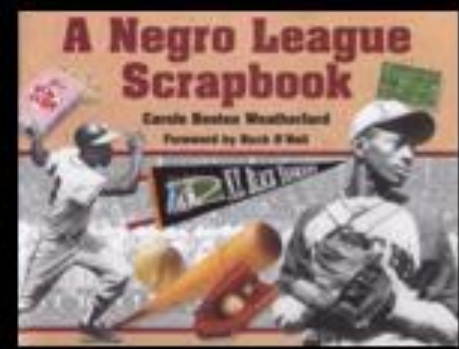
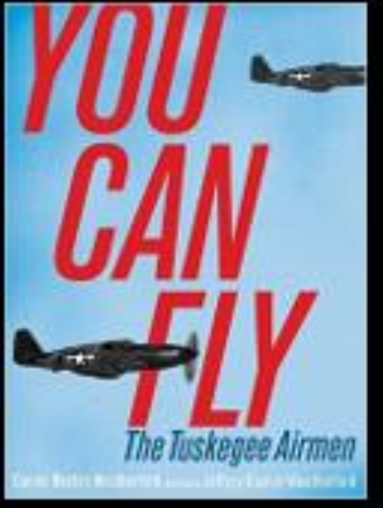
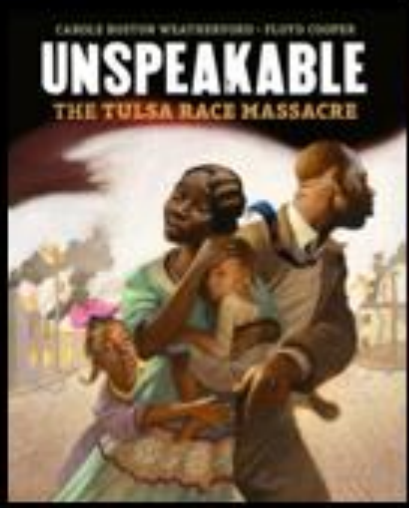


# BLACK HISTORY BOOKS

Timeline, Bibliography & Lesson Links  
By Carole Boston Weatherford  
Award-winning Author  
Professor of English  
Fayetteville State University



## Introduction

This guide was compiled to help educators select grade-appropriate nonfiction and biographies to use across the curriculum. The guide has two parts:

- An annotated bibliography organizing titles by historical period and providing links to activities and lessons; and
- An appendix with a table of books by grade levels, curriculum levels and formats (hardcover, paperback, e-book).

This document includes diverse children's and young adult books that center African American heritage, heroes and culture. The titles span more than 400 years of African American history--from slavery, segregation and civil rights to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The listed books sometimes blend the genres of poetry, nonfiction, biography and historical fiction.

The award-winning author of more than 50 books for children and young adults, I am a professor of English at Fayetteville State University in North Carolina. In addition to training future and current educators and writing children's books, I coach other creatives. I often collaborate and tour with my son, award-winning illustrator Jeffery Weatherford.

For information about professional development, keynotes or school visits, contact [cbwpoet@gmail.com](mailto:cbwpoet@gmail.com).

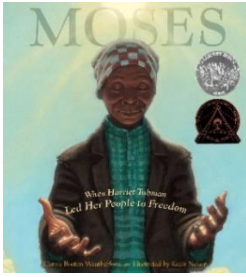
For more teaching resources and author information, visit <http://cbweatherford.com>.

Feel free to share this resource widely.

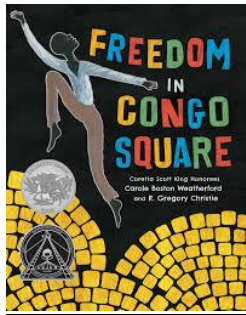
# Historical Timeline of Books by Carole Boston Weatherford

## Time Periods, Annotations & Teaching Resources

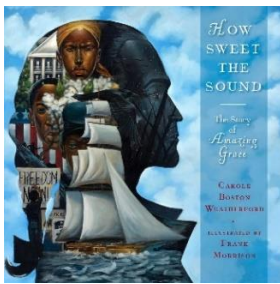
### ***Slavery & Reconstruction***



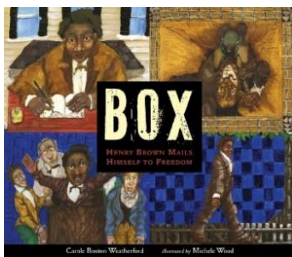
***Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom.*** Ill. by Kadir Nelson. Little Brown, 2006. Grades: K-up  
Annotation: Harriet Tubman's conversations with God lead her on the UGRR.  
Awards: Caldecott Honor, Coretta Scott King Award, NAACP Image Award  
Themes: Courage, resistance, slavery, freedom, bold women  
Curriculum links: ELA, social studies, music, STEM  
Teachers/Reading [Guide](#)  
[Read-aloud](#)



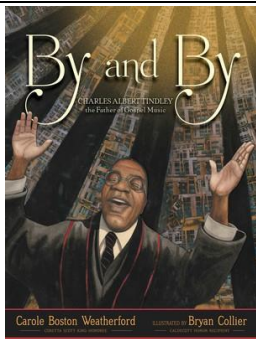
***Freedom in Congo Square.*** Ill. by C. Gregory Christie. Little Bee Books, 2016.  
Grades: K-3  
Annotation: A Sunday ritual among enslaved and free Blacks in 18th century New Orleans preserved African traditions.  
Awards: Caldecott Honor, Coretta Scott King Honor, Charlotte Zolotow Award  
Themes: Slavery, freedom, music  
Curriculum links: ELA, social studies, music  
Teachers/Reading [Guide](#)  
[Read-aloud](#)



***How Sweet the Sound: The Story of Amazing Grace.*** Ill. by Frank Morrison. Atheneum/Simon & Schuster, 2018. Grades: 2-5  
Annotation: Chronicles the hymn writer's life and the legacy of his 1772 hymn.  
Awards: Bank Street Best Children's Book of the Year  
Theme: Slavery, abolition, freedom, faith  
Curriculum links: ELA, social studies, music  
Parent/Teachers [Guide](#) (for play *Amazing Grace*) Primary Sources [Activity](#)



***BOX: Henry Brown Mails Himself to Freedom.*** Ill. by Michele Wood. Candlewick, 2020. (1849) Grades 3-8  
Annotation: Biography about one of slavery's most daring escapes.  
Theme: Slavery, resistance, freedom  
Curriculum: ELA, social studies  
[Teaching Ideas](#) [Lesson Plan for 3-5](#) [Lesson Plan for 6-8](#)



***By and By: Charles A. Tindley, The Father of Gospel Music.*** Ill. by Bryan Collier. Atheneum/Simon & Schuster, 2020. (1851-1933)  
Annotation: Biographer of minister and hymn writer Charles Tindley.  
Theme: Literacy, faith, music  
Curriculum links: ELA, social studies, music  
Music Lesson Plan from Maryland State Department of Education (to come)  
[Read-aloud](#)



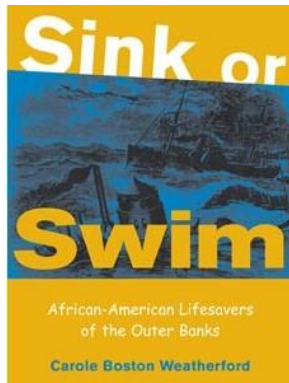
**Juneteenth Jamboree. Ill. by Yvonne Buchanan. Lee & Low, 1995. K-3**

Annotation: A girl whose family has just moved to Texas experiences Juneteenth, the first African-American holiday. Commemorates the date in U.S. history when the last enslaved people in the country were freed.

Theme: Freedom, slavery

Curriculum links: ELA, social studies

Teachers [Guide](#)



**Sink or Swim: African-American Lifesavers of the Outer Banks.** Coastal Carolina Press, 1999. Reissued by Just Us Books/Sankofa.

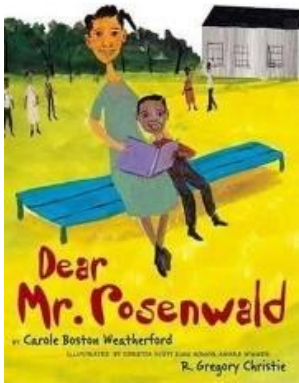
Annotation: True story about an all-Black lifesaving crew in North Carolina.

Themes: Heroism, hurricanes, Reconstruction, racism, slavery

Curriculum links: ELA, social studies, music, character education

Reading [Guide](#)

**Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century: Harlem Renaissance to Great Depression**



**Dear Mr. Rosenwald: The School that Hope Built. Ill. by Gregory Christie.**

Scholastic Press, 2006. Reissued by GAS-Gifts, 2018. Grades 2-6

Annotation: Historical fiction about Black sharecroppers building a school.

Awards: NAACP Image Award finalist, Golden Kite Honor for text

Themes: Education, community, segregation

Curriculum links: ELA, social studies

Reading [Guide](#)     [Lesson Plan \(NPS\)](#)

[Read-aloud](#)



**Becoming Billie Holiday. Ill. by Floyd Cooper. Boyds Mills/Wordsong, 2008.**

(Recorded anti-lynching hymn Strange Fruit, 1941) Grades 7-up

Annotation: Verse biography of the jazz icon's first 25 years—up to the recording her signature song, the anti-lynching anthem, "Strange Fruit."

Themes: Jazz, Harlem, anti-racism, resistance

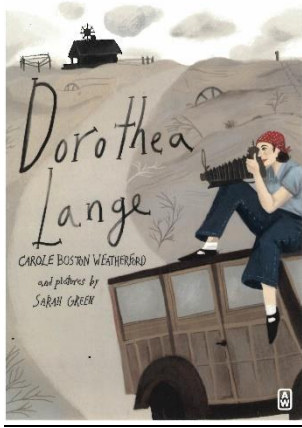
Awards: Coretta Scott King Honor for text

Curriculum links: ELA, music

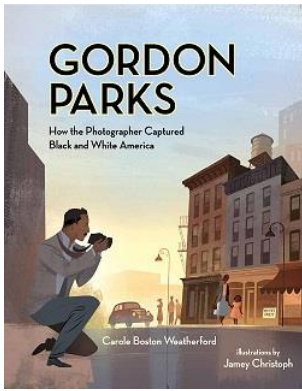
Reading [Guide](#)

[Lesson Plan for One Poem activity on "Coda: Strange Fruit"](#)

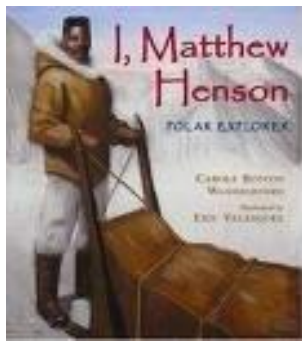
[Discussion Questions](#) on "Strange Fruit"



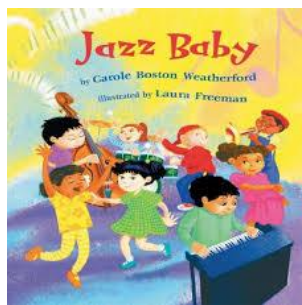
**Dorothea Lange: The Photographer Who Found the Faces of the Depression.** Ill. by Sarah Green. Albert Whitman, 2017. Grades 2-5  
Annotation: The photographer and story behind the photo “Migrant Mother.”  
Themes: Bold women, poverty, empathy, photography, Dust Bowl  
Curriculum links: ELA, social studies, art  
[Lesson Plan](#) from NEH [Lesson Plan](#) from PBS  
Photo Analysis [Worksheet](#) (National Archives)



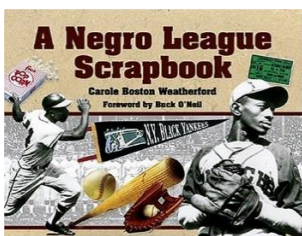
**Gordon Parks: How the Photographer Captured Black and White America.** Ill. by Jamey Christoph. Albert Whitman, 2015. Grades 2-6  
Annotation: The story behind the 1942 photo “American Gothic.”  
Awards: NAACP Image Award  
Themes: Anti-racism, resistance, empathy, photography, creativity  
Curriculum links: ELA, social studies, art  
[Lessons/Activities](#) from National Gallery of Art  
Photo Analysis [Worksheet](#) (National Archives)  
[Read-aloud](#)  
[Mini-documentary](#)



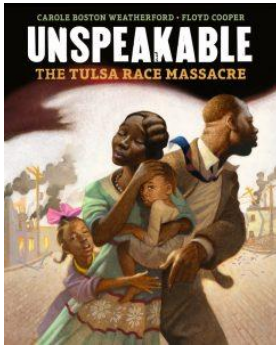
**I, Matthew Henson: Polar Explorer.** Ill. by Eric Velasquez. Walker, 2008. Grades 2-6  
Annotation: Biography of the man who, with Commander Robert Peary, discovered the North Pole in 1909.  
Awards:  
Themes: Exploration, courage, perseverance, anti-racism  
Curriculum links: English, STEM, geography, character education  
[Lesson Plan](#) (for Jim Haskins’ Henson biography) Character Education [lessons](#)



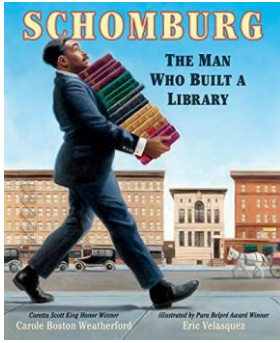
**Jazz Baby.** Ill. by Laura Freeman. Lee & Low, 2002. Grades: Pre-K-2  
Annotation: A rhythmic jazz pat-a-cake inspired by the 1938 Ella Fitzgerald recording of the nursery rhyme, “Tisket-A-Tasket.”  
Themes: Jazz, dance/movement  
Curriculum links: ELA, music  
[Teachers Guide](#)  
[Read-aloud](#)



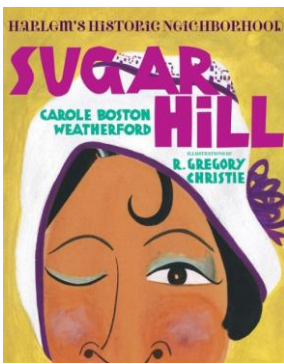
**A Negro League Scrapbook.** Boyds Mills Press, 2004. (1920, Rube Foster founds Negro League) Grades 2-8  
Annotation: Rhyming text, fact-filled sidebars and vintage photographs.  
Themes: Sports, anti-racism  
Curriculum links: ELA, social studies, physical education  
[Reading Guide](#) [Lesson Plan](#) from Ken Burns *Baseball*



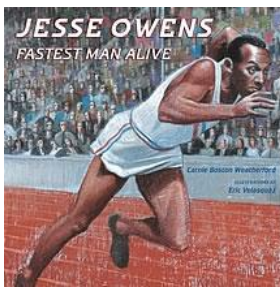
**UNSPEAKABLE: The Tulsa Race Massacre.** Ill. by Floyd Cooper. Lerner, 2021. (1921) Grades 2-6  
Annotation: Chronicles the 1921 race massacre, the worst in U.S. history.  
Themes: Racism, social justice  
Curriculum links: ELA, social studies  
Teachers Guide: to come



**Schomburg: The Man Who Built a Library.** Ill. by Eric Velasquez. Candlewick Press, 2017. Grades 3-8  
Annotation: The lifelong quest and legacy of Afro-Puerto Rican bibliophile Arturo Schomburg, a self-taught historian of the Harlem Renaissance.  
Awards: Sibert Honor, WNDB Walter Award, NCSS Carter G. Woodson Honor, North Carolina Award for Young People's Literature, ILA Social Justice Award  
Themes: History, primary sources, anti-racism, resistance  
Curriculum links: ELA, social studies  
[Teachers Guide](#)

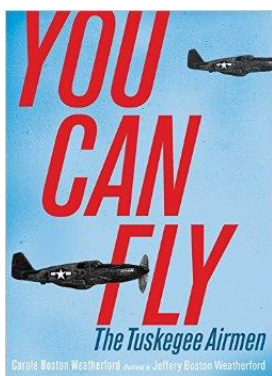


**Sugar Hill: Harlem's Historic Neighborhood.** Ill. by Gregory Christie. Park Ridge, IL: Albert Whitman, 2014. (Harlem Renaissance) Grades K-3  
Annotation: Rhyming text celebrates the one-time home of prominent Blacks and its heyday during the Harlem Renaissance.  
Awards: Arnold Adoff Early Poetry Honor  
Theme: Community, achievement  
Curriculum links: ELA, social studies, music  
Harlem Renaissance [Lesson Plan](#)  
[Read-aloud](#)  
Nicholas Brothers' [dance video](#) from *Stormy Weather*

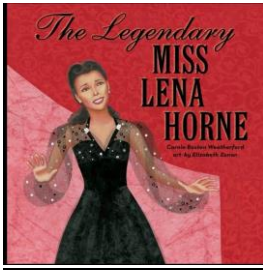


**Jesse Owens: Fastest Man Alive.** Ill. by Eric Velasquez. Bloomsbury, 2007. Grades 2-8  
Annotation: Poems about Owens winning four medals at 1936 Berlin Olympics.  
Themes: Sports, anti-racism, Nazi Germany  
Curriculum links: ELA, social studies, physical education  
[Study Guide](#) from National Holocaust Memorial Museum  
[Lesson Plan](#) from PBS  
Owens' Four Olympic wins [video](#)

## **World War II to the Civil Rights Movement**



**You Can Fly: The Tuskegee Airmen.** Ill. by Jeffery Weatherford. Atheneum/Simon & Schuster, 2016. (WWII)  
Annotation: Poetry collection about the pioneering Black, WWII pilots.  
Awards: ALSC Notable  
Themes: Bravery, war, anti-racism  
Curriculum links: ELA, social studies  
Reading, Discussion, Activity [Guide](#)  
[Lesson Plan \(National Park Service\)](#)  
U.S. Army [film](#) about the Tuskegee Airmen



***The Legendary Miss Lena Horne.*** Ill. by Elizabeth Zunon, Atheneum/Simon & Schuster, 2017.

Annotation: Poetic biography of an activist and Hollywood pioneer

Awards: Arnold Adoff Early Poetry Award

Themes: Bold women, anti-racism, resistance, Hollywood

Curriculum links: ELA, social studies, music, drama/theater

[Read-aloud](#)



***Beauty Mark: A Verse Novel of Marilyn Monroe.*** Candlewick, 2020.

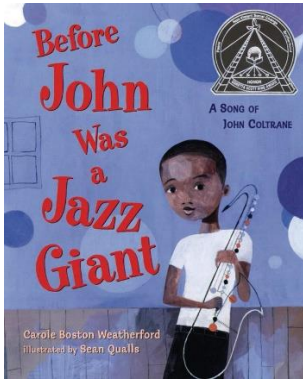
Grades 8-up

Annotation: First person poems reflect on the life of the screen icon, who at age 35 is about to sing Happy Birthday to President John Kennedy.

Themes: Talent, foster care, substance/sexual abuse, mental illness

Curriculum links: ELA, drama/theater

[Discussion Guide](#)



***Before John Was a Jazz Giant: A Song of John Coltrane.*** Ill. by Sean Qualls. Henry Holt, 2008.

Annotation: Poetic riff on how the sounds of the jazz legend's childhood inspired his creativity.

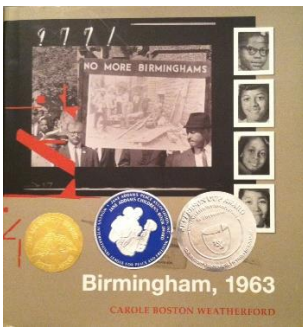
Awards: Coretta Scott King Honor, SCBWI Golden Kite Honor for text

Themes: Family, community, talent, jazz

Curriculum links: ELA, music

[Lesson Plan](#)

[Read-aloud](#)



***Birmingham: 1963. Boyds Mills/Wordsong,*** 2007.

Annotation: Elegy narrated by a fictional eyewitness to the 1963 bombing of Sixteenth Street Baptist Church that left four girls dead.

Awards: Lee Bennett Hopkins Poetry Award, Jefferson Cup, Jane Addams Honor

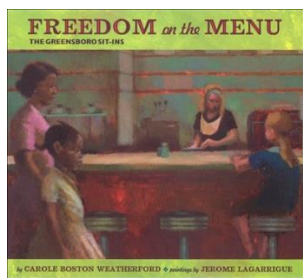
Theme: Anti-racism, social justice

Curriculum links: ELA, social studies

[Lesson Plan](#) (Kids in Birmingham/4-12)

[Lesson Plan](#) (BCRI/6-12)

[Lesson Plan](#) (ALEX/11)



***Freedom on the Menu: The Greensboro Sit-ins.*** Ill. by Jerome Lagarrigue. Dial Books, 2004. (1960, student sit-ins begin, sparking the mass movement phase of the civil rights struggle)

Annotation: Historical fiction about a seminal civil rights protest

Awards: North Carolina Juvenile Literature Award

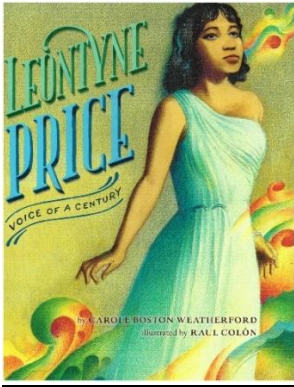
Theme: Anti-racism, resistance

Curriculum links: ELA, social studies

[Teachers Guide](#)

[Lesson Plan](#) (C-Span)

[Lesson Plan](#) (MLK Institute)

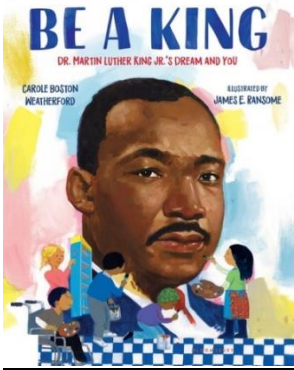


**Leontyne Price: Voice of a Century.** Ill. by Raul Colon. Knopf, 2014.

Annotation: Biography of the opera star who in 1961 broke the color barrier by singing *with* the Metropolitan Opera.

Theme: Talent, anti-racism

Curriculum links: ELA, music



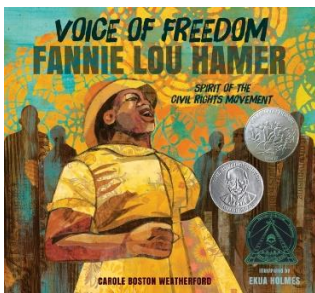
**You Can Be a King: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Dream and You.** Ill. by James E. Ransome. Bloomsbury, 2018. Grades K-5

Annotation: Braided story of how kids can follow King's humanitarian example.

Themes: Service, leadership, anti-racism, anti-bullying, empathy

Curriculum links: ELA, social studies, art

[Teaching Ideas](#)



**Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights**

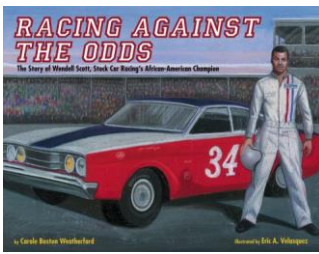
**Movement.** Ill. by Ekuia Holmes. Candlewick, 2015. (1965 Voting Rights Act).  
Grades 3-up.

Annotation: Verse biography of the sharecropper-turned-voting rights activist.

Themes: Voting, racism, resistance, civic engagement

Curriculum links: ELA, social studies, art

[Teachers Guide](#)



**Racing Against the Odds: The Story of Wendell Scott, Stock Car**

**Racing's African-American Champion.** Ill. by Eric Velasquez. Marshall  
Cavendish, 2009. (1963, Scott wins his only race) Grades 1-5

Annotation: Poetic biography of the race car champion.

Theme: Sports, perseverance, anti-racism

Curriculum links: ELA, social studies, technology

NASCAR [Lesson Plan](#) NASCAR Hall of Fame [article](#)

## Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century-Present



**R-E-S-P-E-C-T: Aretha Franklin, the Queen of Soul.** Ill. by Frank Morrison.

Atheneum/Simon & Schuster, 2020. Grades K-5

Annotation: Poetic biography that riffs on Franklin's 1967 chart-topper chronicles her success and activism.

Awards: Society of Illustrators Original Art Show Silver Medal

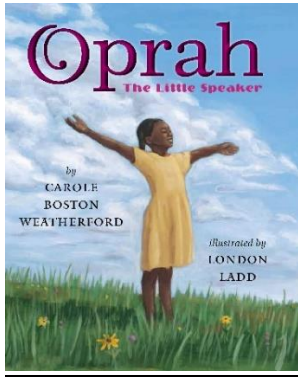
Themes: Talent, anti-racism, resistance

Curriculum links: ELA, social studies, music

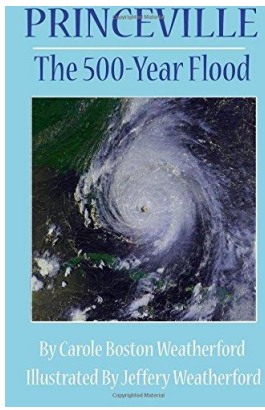
Reading Guide: to come

[Playlist](#)

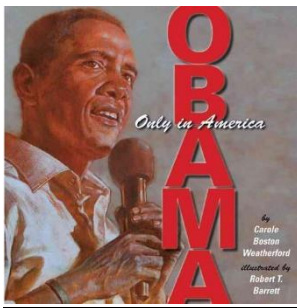




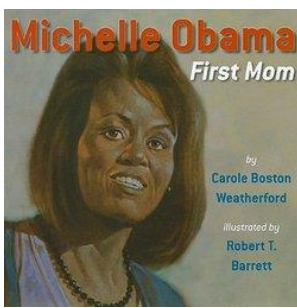
**Oprah: The Little Speaker.** Ill. by London Ladd. Two Lions, 2009. Grades K-2  
Annotation: Poetic biography of Winfrey got her start speaking in church years before her famous TV talk show premiered in 1986.  
Themes: Literacy, public speaking, talent  
Curriculum links: ELA



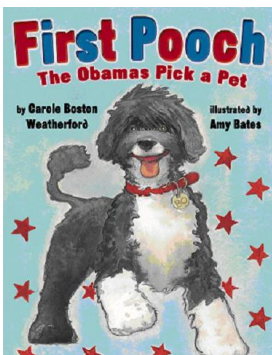
**Princeville: The 500-Year Flood.** Coastal Carolina Press, 2001. (1999 hurricane Floyd floods eastern NC, leaving Princeville residents homeless. 1885, all-black Princeville, NC is incorporated) Grades 2-4  
Annotation: Fictional family grapples with disaster relief and recovery after a 1999 hurricane flooded their all-Black town, leaving 1,000 homeless.  
Themes: History, disaster preparedness, hurricanes  
Curriculum links: ELA, social studies, science  
[Lesson Plan](#)



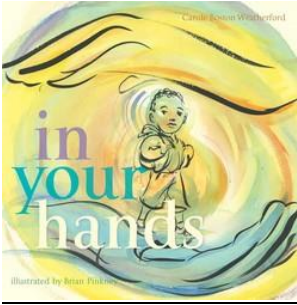
**Obama: Only in America.** Ill. by Robert Barrett. Marshall Cavendish, 2010. (2008 elected first black president)  
Annotation: Poetic biography of the first Black president, inaugurated in 2009.  
Themes: Preparation, democracy, the presidency  
Curriculum links: ELA, social studies  
[Lesson Plan](#) from NEH



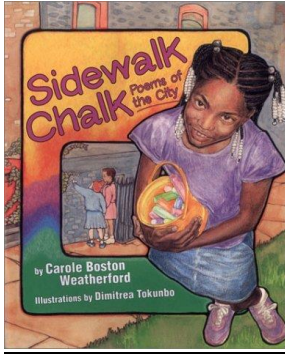
**Michelle Obama: First Mom.** Ill. by Robert Barrett. Two Lions, 2010.  
Annotation: Poetic biography of the first Black First Lady (2009-2017).  
Themes: Bold women, education, goal-setting  
Curriculum links: ELA, social studies  
[Lesson Plan](#) on FLOTUS garden  
FLOTUS Let's Move School [Action Plan](#)



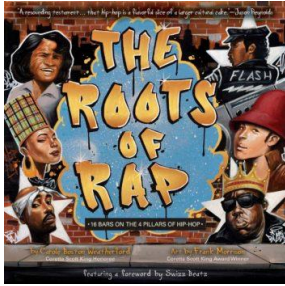
**First Pooch: The Obamas Pick a Pet.** Ill. by Amy Bates. Marshall Cavendish, 2009. Grades Pre-K-2  
Annotation: The story of how the first daughters girls got their dog.  
Themes: Family, pets, moving to a new home  
Curriculum links: ELA, social studies  
First Pets [Resource Packet](#)  
Top Dogs at the White House [article](#)



***In Your Hands***. Ill. by Brian Pinkney. Atheneum/Simon & Schuster, 2017. All ages  
Annotation: A Black mother's prayer for her son.  
Themes: Anti-racism, faith, family  
Curriculum links: ELA  
Black Lives Matter at School [Resources](#)

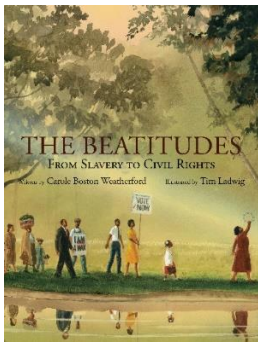


***Sidewalk Chalk: Poems of the City***. Ill. by Dimetrea Tokunbo. Boyds Mills/Wordsong, 2001. Grades Pre-K-5  
Annotation: Poetry collection celebrating an urban community.  
Themes: Family, community, diversity  
Sidewalk Chalk Poetry Fest [Activities](#)

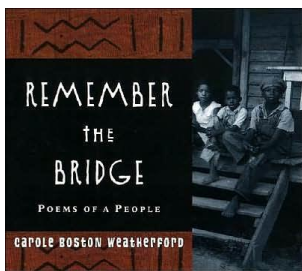


***The Roots of Rap: 16 Bars on the 4 Pillars of Hip Hop***. Ill. by Frank Morrison. Little Bee Books, 2019.  
Annotation: A poetic history of old school rap and the birth of hip hop.  
Theme: Poetry, resistance, self-expression  
Curriculum links: ELA, music  
[Lesson Plans](#)  
[Playlist](#)  
[Read-aloud](#)

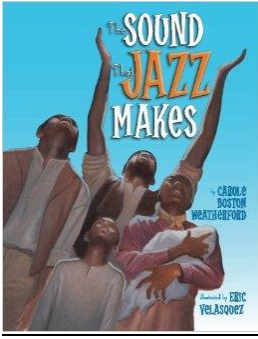
## Historical Surveys Spanning Multiple Centuries



***The Beatitudes: From Slavery to Civil Rights***. Ill. by Tim Ladwig. Eerdmans, 2010.  
Annotation: A poetic survey of how faith inspired the freedom struggle.  
Themes: Social justice, slavery, segregation, resistance  
Curriculum links: ELA, social studies  
[Discussion Guide](#)  
[Read-aloud](#)



***Remember the Bridge: Poems of a People***. Philomel Books, 2002.  
Annotation: A poetry and photo collection celebrating trials and triumphs.  
Awards: North Carolina Juvenile Literature Award  
Themes: Social justice, slavery, segregation, resistance, resilience  
Curriculum links: ELA, social studies  
[Lesson Ideas](#)



***The Sound That Jazz Makes.*** Ill. by Eric Velasquez. Walker, 2000. All ages  
Annotation: A rhythmic verse traces the roots of jazz from Africa to America.  
Awards: NCSS Carter G. Woodson Award  
Themes: Jazz, Black history, self-expression  
Curriculum links: ELA, social studies, music  
Jazz [Timeline & Discography](#)  
Jazz in America [Lesson Plan](#) (Grade 5)

# APPENDIX

# Carole Weatherford's Books by Grade, Genre & Curriculum Links

Books are hardcover unless indicated otherwise. PB=paperback EB=ebook SP=Spanish OP=out of print	Grades	Biography or History	Poetry	Sports	STEM Links	Music	Primary Sources
<i>A Bat Cave: An Abecedarian Bedtime Chronicle</i> (PB/EB)	Pre-K-2		x		x	x	
<i>The Beatitudes: From Slavery to Civil Rights</i>	2-6	x	x				
<i>Beauty Mark: A Verse Novel of Marilyn Monroe</i> (EB)	8-up	x	x				
<i>Becoming Billie Holiday</i>	6-12	x	x			x	x
<i>Before John Was a Jazz Giant: A Song of John Coltrane</i>	Pre-K-3	x	x			x	
<i>Birmingham, 1963</i>	3-8		x				x
<i>BOX: Henry Brown Mails Himself to Freedom</i> (EB)	3-8	x	x				x
<i>By and By: Charles Albert Tindley, The Father of Gospel Music</i> (EB)	2-5	x	x			x	
<i>The Carolina Parakeet: America's Lost Parrot in Art and Memory</i> (PB)	Adult	x			x		x
<i>Champions on the Bench: The 1955 Cannon Street YMCA All-Stars</i> (OP)	2-5	x		x			
<i>Dear Mr. Rosenwald</i> (PB)	2-5	x	x				x
<i>Dorothea Lange: The Photographer Who Found the Faces of the Depression</i> (EB)	2-5	x	x				x
<i>First Pooch: The Obamas Pick a Pet</i> (PB/EB)	Pre-K-3	x					
<i>Freedom in Congo Square</i> (EB)	K-5	x	x			x	
<i>Freedom on the Menu: The Greensboro Sit-ins</i> (PB)	K-6	x					
<i>Gordon Parks: How the Photographer Captured Black and White America</i> (EB)	2-4	x	x		x		x
<i>How Sweet the Sound: The Story of Amazing Grace</i> (EB)	2-6	x	x			x	
<i>I, Matthew Henson: Polar Explorer</i> (PB)	1-4	x	x				
<i>In Your Hands</i> (EB)	K-8		x				
<i>Jazz Baby</i> (PB/SP/EB)	Pre-K-2		x			x	
<i>Jesse Owens: Fastest Man Alive</i>	3-8	x	x	x			
<i>Juneteeth Jamboree</i> (PB/EB/SP)	K-3	x					
<i>The Legendary Miss Lena Horne</i> (EB)	2-8	x	x				
<i>Leontyne Price: Voice of a Century</i> (EB)	2-4	x	x			x	
<i>Michelle Obama: First Mom</i> (PB & EB)	2-5	x	x				
<i>Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom</i>	K-8	x	x				
<i>A Negro League Scrapbook</i> (PB)	3-8	x	x	x	x		x
<i>Obama: Only in America</i> (PB/EB)	2-4	x	x				
<i>Oprah: The Little Speaker</i> (PB/EB)	K-3	x	x				
<i>Princeville: The 500-Year Flood</i> (PB)	K-3	x			x		x
<i>Racing Against the Odds: The Story of Wendell Scott, Stock Car Racing's African-American Champion</i> (PB/EB)	2-4	x	x	x	x		
<i>Remember the Bridge: Poems of a People</i> (OP)	All ages	x	x				x
<i>R-E-S-P-E-C-T: Aretha Franklin, The Queen of Soul</i> (EB)	K-5	x	x				
<i>The Roots of Rap: 16 Bars on the 4 Pillars of Hip Hop</i>	2-8		x			x	
<i>Schomburg: The Man Who Built a Library</i> (EB)	3-8	x	x				x
<i>Sidewalk Chalk: Poems of the City</i> (PB)	K-5		x			x	
<i>Sink or Swim: African-American Lifesavers Outer Banks</i> (PB)	4-8	x	x		x		x
<i>The Sound that Jazz Makes</i> (PB & EB)	2-8	x	x			x	
<i>Stormy Blues</i>	Adult		x				
<i>Sugar Hill: Harlem's Historic Neighborhood</i> (EB)	2-5	x	x			x	
<i>The Tan Chanteuse</i> (PB/OP)	Adult						
<i>The Tar Baby on the Soapbox</i> (PB)	Adult						
<i>Unspeakable: The Tulsa Race Massacre</i> (PB/EB)	4-8	x	x				

<i>Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement (PB)</i>	3-12	x	x			x	x
<i>You Can Fly: The Tuskegee Airmen (PB/EB)</i>	3-12	x	x		x		x
MORE TO COME!							

