

Elementary School: Virginia Studies

Historical fiction:

- *A Lion to Guard Us* by Clyde Robert Bulla. This is an excellent historical fiction novel written at the fourth grade level. It is the adventure of a young girl and her younger brother and sister who leave London to travel to Jamestown in 1609. Their father, a carpenter, was on the first ships. Their mother dies shortly after the father leaves. They ride on the Sea Venture and shipwreck in Bermuda in a storm, just as the Thomas Gates voyage did. Not only does the book reinforce that the settlers were traveling from London with the Virginia Company to Jamestown, but it depicts life on the sailing vessels.
- *The Double Life of Pocahontas* by Jean Fritz And
- *Where was Patrick Henry on the 29th of May* and others by Jean Fritz. The Patrick Henry and Pocahontas books are the only ones directly tied to the Virginia Studies curriculum. The Patrick Henry one is a great introduction to her style for students. They can then explore other related titles about King George III, Sam Adams, Ben Franklin, the Constitution, etc.
- Fritz, Jean.
Can't You Make Them Behave, King George?. Paper Star Publisher, 1997.
The biography of George the Third, King of Britain, at the time of the American Revolution is presented in this non-fiction novel.
- *An Eye for an Eye*. Interesting historical fiction novel of a young girl and her family living near Williamsburg in the pre-Revolutionary War period. Explores the reasons some people were loyalists and others were patriots. The heroine is skilled with boats and ends up pretending to be her twin brother to sail with a patriot ship to find her older brother (a Son of Liberty) who had been captured by the British.
- *Crossing the Delaware: A History in Many Voices* by Louise Peacock. This is a wonderful book if it can be found. It was out-of-print. It combines primary sources from Washington (mostly letters) and others (journals, diaries) leading up to and after the Battle of Trenton with a modern narrative as one revisits the site and traces Washington's steps, and a created series of beautiful letters from a soldier (Henry) to "Jenny" (the reader is left unsure of her relationship to the writer. Could be sister, wife, girl friend). Beautifully illustrated. Effective to use as "readers' theater." Gives students an example of how various literature styles can combine to create a wonderful story.
- *Jefferson: A Picture Book Biography*. By James Giblin. A beautifully illustrated simple biography of Jefferson.
- *Bull Run* by Paul Fleishman. Great reviews for this historical fiction piece told in the voices of 16 people near and in the first battle of the Civil War.
- *Ghost Cadet* by Elaine Marie Alphin. A young boy visiting his grandmother in New Market, VA, befriends a ghost who was a young cadet at the Battle of New Market in this historical fiction novel. Great to tie-in during Civil War study with a field trip to New Market. Definitely gives the Southern slant to the war.
- *Shades of Grey* by Carolyn Reeder. In this historical fiction novel, an orphaned Virginia boy is sent to live with his uncle and aunt after the Civil War. The uncle had

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remained neutral. The boy thinks his uncle was a coward, but finds that remaining neutral took great courage.

- Pink and Say. This short retelling of the relationship of two young Civil War soldiers, one black, one white, by a surviving relative of one is so touching and can lead to the study of numerous issues. It should be studied by every student at 4th, 5th or 6th grade.

McKissack, Patricia.

A Picture of Freedom: The Diary of Clotee, a Slave Girl. New York: Scholastic, 1997.

In 1859 twelve-year-old Clotee, a house slave on Belmont Plantation in Virginia who must conceal the fact that she can read and write, records in her diary her experiences and her struggle to decide whether to escape to freedom. (Dear America Series)

Steel, Christy & Kerry Graves.

A Free Black Girl Before the Civil War: The Diary of Charlotte Forten, 1854.

This is an excellent book that depicts historical facts through the eyes of an African American female in the 1850s. It is written in a diary format.

DEAR AMERICA SERIES. Many of these can be read in the classroom to supplement American history studies. One I have used for a novel study is:

- When Will this Cruel War Be Over: The Civil War Diary of Emma Simpson, Gordonsville, VA, 1864 by Barry Denenerg. In this historical fiction novel based on an actual diary, the women of a Virginia family experience this Civil War as their home and community are raided or destroyed by marauders.

American Girl Collection: This series is popular supplemental reading for girls and should be encouraged to add to their understanding of different historical time periods. One that is used as the background for studying Colonial Virginia is:

- Welcome to Felicity's World, 1774: Growing up in Colonial Virginia by Gail Langer Kawoski., Meet Felicity and Changes for Felicity, a Winter Story by Valerie Tripp. These are set in Williamsburg. If timing is right, parts of them can be well used to lead up to a Colonial Christmas celebration.

Films, videos, video series, etc.

- Three Ships, Three Stories – Recreation of the voyage of the Susan Constant and others to Jamestown in 1607.
- Liberty's Kids. Outstanding PBS series following events leading up to and during the Revolutionary War as experiences by four young people. Cartoon format, but excellent in content and interest.
- Commonwealth Series. Various episodes produced by Virginia public television stations give additional background to different historical periods.

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