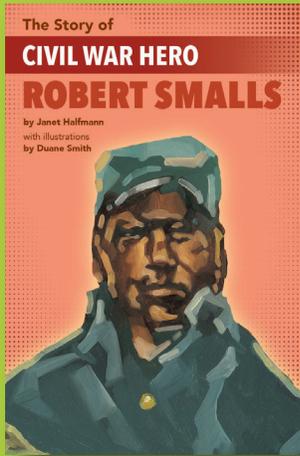


TEACHER'S GUIDE



LEE & LOW BOOKS

The Story of Civil War Hero Robert Smalls

written by Janet Halfmann, illustrated by Duane Smith

About the Book

Genre: Nonfiction Biography

*Reading Level: Grade 6

Interest Level: Grades 3–8

Guided Reading Level: V

Accelerated Reader® Level/
Points: N/A

Lexile™ Measure: N/A

*Reading level based on the ATOS
Readability Formula

Themes: African/African American
Interest, Biography/Memoir, Conflict
Resolution, Courage, Heroism,
History, Nonfiction, Overcoming
Obstacles, Persistence/Grit, Slavery,
United States History, War

SYNOPSIS

Growing up enslaved in South Carolina, Robert Smalls always dreamed of the moment freedom would be within his grasp. Now that moment was here.

Robert stood proudly at the Planter's wheel. Only seven miles of water lay between the ship and the chance of freedom in Union territory. With precision and amazing courage, he navigated past the Confederate forts in the harbor and steered the ship toward the safety of the Union fleet. Just one miscalculation would be deadly, but for Robert, his family, and his crewmates, the risk was worth taking.

The Story of Civil War Hero Robert Smalls is the compelling account of the daring escape of Robert Smalls, an enslaved steamboat wheelman who became one of the Civil War's greatest heroes. His steadfast courage in the face of adversity is an inspiring model for all who attempt to overcome seemingly insurmountable challenges. This chapter book edition includes black-and-white illustrations as well as sidebars on related subjects, a timeline, a glossary, and recommended reading.



BACKGROUND

The Story Of Series

The Story of Civil War Hero Robert Smalls is part of LEE & LOW's *Story Of* series. Every title in our *Story Of* chapter book line introduces independent readers to a diverse historical figure with a powerful life story. All books in this series include informative sidebars, highlighted vocabulary words, a timeline, a glossary, photographs and images with captions and labels, a bibliography with complete sources, and recommended reading.

Nonfiction Text Features

The Story of Civil War Hero Robert Smalls has different nonfiction text features that readers need to be aware of. The chart below lists the nonfiction features that readers will find. Consider printing or enlarging this chart for students to refer to in your classroom or library.

See the section titled, "Nonfiction Text Features: *The Story of Civil War Hero Robert Smalls*" for details on how to teach these features with specific information in the book.

Types of Print	Words that are darker are called bold and words that are slanted are called <i>italics</i> , which point out specific information.
Sidebar	Additional information about a person, time period, or subject that is helpful to understand the story.
Table of Contents	A list of the book's sections that says what information is in the book.
Timeline	A lists of the dates and years when events happened.
Glossary	An alphabetical list of vocabulary words mentioned in the book and their definitions, located in the back of the book.
Captions	A line underneath a photograph or image that describes what's in the picture.
Text Sources	A list of the books, images, photographs, and other forms of information that the author used to write the story.
Title	The name of the chapter (that's usually larger in size and in a different font) that describes the text and information that follows.
Label	A word that tells the name of the part of the photograph or image.
Key	A guide to understanding the symbols within a photograph or image.

Additional LEE & LOW titles in The Story Of series:

The Story of Movie Star Anna May Wong written by Paula Yoo, illustrated by Ling Wang
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-story-of-movie-star-anna-may-wong>

The Story of Tennis Champion Arthur Ashe written by Crystal Hubbard, illustrated by Kevin Belford
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-story-of-tennis-champion-arthur-ashe>

The Story of Olympic Swimmer Duke Kahanamoku written by Ellie Crow, illustrated by Richard Waldrep
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-story-of-olympic-swimmer-duke-kahanamoku>

The Story of Trailblazing Actor Ira Aldridge written by Glenda Armand, illustrated by Floyd Cooper
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-story-of-trailblazing-actor-ira-aldrige>

The Story of World War II Hero Irena Sendler written by Marcia Vaughan, illustrated by Ron Mazellan
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-story-of-world-war-ii-hero-irena-sendler>

The Story of Civil Rights Hero John Lewis written by Jim Haskins & Kathleen Benson, illustrated by Aaron Boyd
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-story-of-civil-rights-hero-john-lewis>

The Story of Car Engineer Soichiro Honda written by Mark Weston, illustrated by Katie Yamasaki
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-story-of-car-engineer-soichiro-honda>

The Story of Banker of the People Muhammad Yunus written by Paula Yoo, illustrated by Jamel Akib
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-story-of-banker-of-the-people-muhammad-yunus>

The Story of Environmentalist Wangari Maathai written by Jen Cullerton Johnson, illustrated by Sonia Lynn Sadler
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-story-of-environmentalist-wangari-maathai>

The Story of Civil War Hero Robert Smalls written by Paula Yoo, illustrated by Dom Lee
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-story-of-olympic-diver-sammy-lee>



VOCABULARY

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

The story contains several content-specific and academic words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary below.

Content Specific

abolitionist, auction, blockade, bunker, cargo, channels, chattel slavery, commercially, Confederate States of America, constitution, field hands, foreman, freight, fugitive, garment, indentured servant, slave, industrialized, Juneteenth, lease, Mason-Dixon Line, militia, planter, prestige, propellers, Reconstruction, reef, rig, secede, wharf

Academic

abolish, agreement, agricultural, commence, cluster, anticipation, deliberate, discrimination, divisive, economy, generation, justify, navigate, penalize, scarce, disposition, territories, truce, wealthy

BEFORE READING

Prereading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 5 and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Before introducing this book to students, you may wish to develop background knowledge and promote anticipation by posing questions such as the following:

1. What do you know about slavery? How did enslaved people fight against slavery? What tactics did they use?
2. Explain what resistance means to you. What does it mean to resist? How do you continue to resist, even if something is difficult or frustrating?
3. What do you know about captains? What do captains do? What are some characteristics associated with captains? Do you think it would be difficult to be a captain? Why or why not?
4. What do you know about the pressures of going to war? How are wars portrayed in the media?
5. What is racism? What does racism look like? Is racism still a part of our society today? Why or why not? What are the differences and similarities between racism and discrimination?
6. What is freedom? How would you describe what freedom is? Does everyone have the same freedoms?
7. What do you know about the history of the Civil War? The American Civil War was a civil war in the United States from 1861 to 1865, fought between the northern United States and the southern United States. Why were the two sides fighting? What do you think it was like to be an African American person fighting in the Civil War? Do you think the armed forces have changed for African Americans today? Why or why not?

Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strand 1, Craft & Structure, Strand 5, and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

1. **Book Title Exploration:** Talk about the title of the book, *The Story of Civil War Hero Robert Smalls*. Then ask students what they think this book will most likely be about and whom the book might be about. What do they think might happen? What



information do they think they might learn?
What makes them think that?

2. Read the dedications: Read the dedications on the inside of the book. Why do you think Janet Halfmann and Duane Smith chose these dedications? Why do you think they chose to tell this story?
3. Encourage students to stop and jot in their reading notebooks during the read-aloud when they: learn new information, see a powerful image, have an emotional reaction or an idea, have a question, or hear new words.
4. Have students quickly write a feeling in their notebooks during reading. After reading, ask students why they wrote that feeling down and have them write a journal entry about it.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

Have students read to find out:

- how Robert Smalls challenged and outsmarted the Confederacy
- how Robert Smalls obtained freedom
- what kinds of experiences Robert Smalls had after he was freed and why
- how Robert Smalls fought for African Americans to have rights

Encourage students to consider why the author, Janet Halfmann, would want to share with young people this story about Robert Smalls.

AFTER READING

Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop appreciation for the content. Encourage students to refer to passages and/or illustrations in the book to support their responses. **To build skills in close reading of a text, students should cite evidence with their answers.**

Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3; and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

Chapter One: Dreams of Freedom

1. What inspired Robert Smalls to dream of freedom?
2. What was the status of Robert and his mother?
3. Where was Robert born?
4. What work was Robert forced to do in the McKee household?
5. How did the McKees treat Robert?

Slavery

6. Why did slave labor become the preferred form of labor in the United States?
7. What is chattel slavery?
8. How were enslaved Africans treated?
9. How was slavery significant for the North and South? How did that change over time?
10. What is the difference between field hands and house slaves?
11. What arguments were used to justify slavery?
12. What is the Underground Railroad?

Chapter Two: On the Waterfront

13. How did Charleston affect Robert and his desire for freedom?
14. Why did Robert enjoy ships?
15. What were Robert's jobs on the waterfront?

Sailing Ships in the 1800s

16. What were the different types of ships available in the 1800s?
17. What is the difference between a schooner and a clipper ship?
18. What is the significance of the steamboat?



19. How were ships first made and how did they evolve over the years?

Chapter Three: A Shelter in the Storm

20. Who is Hannah Jones and what is her relationship to Robert?
21. How did having a family affect Robert?
22. How much did Hannah and Elizabeth's freedom cost? How did Robert and Hannah raise the money?
23. Explain the significance of 1860.
24. What is the difference between the Confederate States of America and the Union?

What Caused the Civil War?

25. What did the Southern economy consist of? What did the Northern economy consist of?
26. How many people were enslaved when the United States Constitution was drafted?
27. What was the Fugitive Slave Act?
28. Why was the 1820 Missouri Compromise agreed upon?
29. What is the significance of the Mason-Dixon line?
30. What is the significance of the Kansas-Nebraska Act?
31. Why was Abraham Lincoln's presidency important? How did it shape the Civil War?

Chapter Four: Robert at the Wheel

32. What was the *Planter*? What was Robert's role on the *Planter*?
33. Why was Robert conflicted working on the *Planter*?
34. How did the opportunity for Robert to acquire freedom present itself? What was the plan?

The *Planter*

35. What are some characteristics of the *Planter*?

36. What was the *Planter*'s role in the Civil War?
37. Who did the *Planter*'s crew consist of?
38. What is the importance of the steam whistles?

Chapter Five: The Escape

39. When did Robert take the chance for escape?
40. What did Robert and the crew do to escape?
41. What did the steam signals represent?

Chapter Six: Full Steam Ahead

42. Why did Robert yell "Full Steam Ahead"?
43. What gift did Robert and his crewmates bring to the Union army?
44. How did the Union receive Robert and the *Planter*?

The Wedding Chest Escape

45. Why and how did Lear Green escape?
46. What was the significance of the Underground Railroad in Lear Green's story?
47. How is Lear Green honored today?

Chapter Seven: A National Hero

48. What made Robert Smalls a national hero?
49. How did Robert Smalls become captain of the *Planter*? Why was this historic?
50. In what ways did Robert experience discrimination?
51. What did Robert's life look like after the war?
52. How did Robert fight for the rights of African Americans?
53. What happened to the *Planter*?
54. When did Robert die?
55. How is Robert Smalls honored today?



Extension/Higher Level Thinking

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1-3; and Craft & Structure, Strands 4 and 6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1-3; and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. What does the title *The Story of Civil War Hero Robert Smalls* mean to you after reading? How did your perceptions of Robert Smalls change after reading this story?
2. How did Robert use persistence and determination to achieve his goals? Why did Robert risk his life, as well as his family's and crewmates', for freedom?
3. How did Robert's childhood affect the way that he fought against slavery? How was injustice a part of Robert's life before the Civil War?
4. What did freedom mean to Robert? How did slavery impact his sense of freedom and desire to obtain it?
5. Although Robert Smalls is the focus of the book, he did not act alone. What role did the crew and his wife play in the success of their escape? Why did those who ran away from slavery have to depend on others?
6. How did Robert's family influence his desire for freedom? Why did Robert plan to escape after he got married and had children? What are the differences between having a family while enslaved and having a family while free?
7. In what ways did Robert Smalls overcome the many different obstacles in his life, starting at an early age? What were the different ways that Robert overcame racist barriers?
8. Why is Robert Smalls still honored after his death? What has he come to represent over the years, and why? What is his legacy? What are the different ways that he is admired and acknowledged today?
9. How would you describe Robert Smalls to a person who had never heard of him before? What are some of the qualities that you would

use to speak about Robert? What are the most important things to say when explaining Robert's life and legacy?

10. Explore the structure of the text. Was it written as chronology, comparison, cause/effect, or problem/solution? Why do you think the author made this choice? How does it compare to other texts you have read?

Reader's Response

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4-6)

1. What is one big thought that you have after reading this book? Think about Robert Small's dedication to freedom. How was he an influential figure, both during his lifetime and now?
2. What do you think the essential message is to the reader? Think about possible motivations behind Janet Halfmann's intentions in writing the book. What do you think she wanted to tell her readers?
3. Have students make a text-to-self connection. What kind of connections did you make from this book to your own life? What do Robert's experiences, thoughts, and feelings mean to you?
4. Have students make a text-to-text connection. Did you think of any other books or historical people while you read *The Story of Civil War Hero Robert Smalls*? Why did you make those connections?
5. Have students make a text-to-world connection. What kind of connections did you make from this book to what you have seen in the world, such as on television or in a newspaper? Why did this book make you think of that?



ELL Teaching Activities

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)
(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

1. Assign ELL students to partner-read the story with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader.
2. Have each student write three questions about the story. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
3. Depending on students' level of English proficiency, after the first reading:
 - Review each chapter and have students summarize what is happening in the chapter, first orally, then in writing.
 - Have students work in pairs to retell either the plot of the story or key details. Then ask students to write a short summary, synopsis, or opinion about what they have read.
4. Have students give a short talk about how Robert's story inspired them and how he showed dedication to both freedom and gaining rights for African Americans.
5. The book contains several content-specific and academic words that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary. Expose English Language Learners to multiple vocabulary strategies. Have students make predictions about word meanings, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, list synonyms and antonyms, create an action for each word, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word. Guide students to the glossary at the back of the book for further definitions.
6. Use the text features to help ELL students make sense of what they're reading. The

table of contents, chapter titles, callout boxes, bolded words, and diagrams are all visual, vocabulary, and content aids in helping students prepare to engage with the text.

INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

(Introduction to the Standards, page 7: Students who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value evidence, and use technology and digital media strategically and capably)

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas. These can also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for building a home-school connection.

English Language Arts

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1-3; Craft and Structure, Strands 4-6; Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7-9; Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)
(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3; Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6; Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9; Range of Writing, Strand 10)
(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3; Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

1. Write and design a commemorative plaque for Robert Smalls. What would you want to say about Robert Smalls in a paragraph? What were the most important parts of his life, and what would you want to share with visitors? Have students consult PBS's "Which Slave Sailed Himself to Freedom?" from Henry Louis Gates, Jr. for more information about Robert Smalls and his life (<https://www.pbs.org/wnet/african-americans-many-rivers-to-cross/history/which-slave-sailed-himself-to-freedom/>).
2. If possible and available, have students select a book about another enslaved person from the "Recommended Further Reading: Slavery" section of *The Story of Civil War Hero Robert Smalls* and compare and contrast the two books. Analyze the main characters' different actions in these texts and how they are similar. What risks did they take to achieve their goals?



What did they have to do in order to overcome adversity and oppression in their lives? How did they demonstrate bravery and courage despite the horrors of slavery? Provide students with a graphic organizer to differentiate the two titles, and then have students write an essay answering the previous questions.

3. Have students think about expository nonfiction versus narrative nonfiction. How was reading *The Story of Civil War Hero Robert Smalls* different from reading a newspaper article about Robert Smalls? Have students read the article, “Civil War hero Robert Smalls seized the opportunity to be free” (https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/civil-war-hero-robert-smalls-seized-the-opportunity-to-be-free/2012/02/23/gIQAcbtmR_story.html). Then students can create a Venn Diagram with the headings “Narrative Nonfiction: *The Story of Civil War Hero Robert Smalls*” and “Expository Nonfiction: ‘Civil War hero Robert Smalls seized the opportunity to be free.’” Students can compare and contrast the different formats of the texts and the information they learn in both.
4. Encourage students to select a resource from the Text & Sidebar Sources from the back of the book. Students can examine the piece, whether it’s a book, video, photograph, or website, and write a reaction to how they think the author and illustrator were informed by this information and how it helped to develop the book.
5. Tell students to imagine they will be interviewing the Robert Smalls for a local newspaper or talk show. Have them develop a list of five interview questions they want to ask. What do they want to learn about in terms of the Civil War, Smalls’ escape, and his life after enslavement? Lead a class discussion, creating a combined list of questions and then narrowing that list down to ten questions.

6. Read *Seven Miles to Freedom* (www.leeandlow.com/seven-miles-to-freedom), the picture book version of *The Story of Civil War Hero Robert Smalls*. Students can compare and contrast what it was like to read the picture book versus the chapter book version. What were the experiences like? What did they learn from the picture book that they didn’t learn from the chapter book, and vice versa? How did it make them think about what it would be like to write a picture book versus a chapter book about a historical figure? Have students write a comparative essay and then share their thoughts with a partner or the whole class. Students can also examine how both picture books and chapter books are important for reading and learning.
7. Have students think about the main idea and details for a chapter of their choosing. Looking at the table of contents, have students pick a chapter that interested them. Then, have students write three key details, the most important information, in that chapter. Students can then generate the main idea, or what the chapter was mainly about. Finally, have students form small groups with each student representing a different chapter to share their results.

Details:
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
Main Idea: _____



Social Studies/Geography

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3; Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6; Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9; Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3; Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6; Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9; and Range of Writing, Strand 10)

1. Conduct a research study on the Civil War. At the end of the unit, students should share a visual presentation of their choosing with small groups or the whole class, including relevant timelines and photographs. Consider posing the following questions during the unit: What kinds of violence were enslaved people victims of? How many African Americans were in the Confederacy vs. the Union? For additional teaching resources, PBS has organized a list of online collections from the Library of Congress that feature maps, photographs, speeches, and other primary source documents from the Civil War. Additionally, there are lesson plans and primary source sets for further information and Civil War exploration in the classroom (<http://www.pbs.org/kenburns/civil-war/classroom/resources-librarycongress/>). The Zinn Education Project also offers a list of free resources, lesson plans, and activities to use with students on the Civil War. Lesson plans range from election role play, walking tours with maps, and other handouts that contain primary source documents for students to examine (<https://zinnedproject.org/teachingmaterials/?period=1850>). Teaching Tolerance provides lesson plans and articles about culturally responsive, historically accurate ways of teaching about the Civil War in the classroom (<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/fall-2011/getting-the-civil-war-right>) (<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/portfolio-activity-forgetting-the-civil-war-right>).
2. Have students examine the timeline in the back of the book, and create a new timeline based on historical events that were occurring during that time period. In order for students to understand the historical context of Robert Smalls's life, encourage students to research what other events were happening in that time. Display both enlarged timelines in the front of the class so that students have easy access to both the dates and events. Students can work in groups in different years and then add their events and findings to the class timeline, located below the enlarged timeline from the book.
3. Using a T-chart graphic organizer, students should present their research about how the Fugitive Slave Act affected African Americans in the United States. What did this law limit or prevent? What factors led to these laws? What were the effects of this law? What statement did this law make to enslaved African Americans? Students can reflect in an essay after the T-chart exercise about their reactions to learning about these laws and how it changed their prior thinking. Check out the Zinn Education Project's resources on the Fugitive Slave Act for more information (<https://www.zinnedproject.org/news/tdih/fugitive-slave-act/>).
4. Encourage students to research other African American historical figures during the Civil War. What did they accomplish? How did they raise awareness around the particular cause that they were passionate about? How did they become leaders in their community? Students can select one figure and conduct a research project on that person. They can present on their findings in a variety of formats: written essay, visual presentation, a combination of both, and more. Consult the Library of Congress "Depictions of African Americans in the War Effort" for lesson plans, primary resources, and more (<https://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/african-american-civil-war-depictions/>).
5. Have students read *The Story of Civil War Hero Robert Smalls* along with *The Story of Civil Rights Hero John Lewis* (<https://www.leeandlow.com>).



leeandlow.com/books/the-story-of-civil-rights-hero-john-lewis). Encourage students to think about the following questions: What do Robert Smalls and John Lewis have in common, despite living during different time periods? How were Robert's and John's actions incredibly important to African Americans during the time before the Civil War and during the Civil Rights movement? How did they use their hard work and dedication to help others? Consider having students conduct a larger research study on the parallels between the Civil War and the Civil Rights movement. Look at Teaching Tolerance's "Civil Rights Civil War, Done Right: A Tool for Teaching the Movement" (<http://arhistoryhub.com/hub/lrchs-lp-civil-war.pdf>) and "Getting the Civil War Right" (<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/portfolioactivity-for-getting-the-civil-war-right>) as well as the National Park Service's "Civil War to Civil Rights" curricular unit (<http://arhistoryhub.com/hub/lrchs-lp-civil-war.pdf>).

Arts/Media

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1-3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4-6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7-9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9, and Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

1. Have students watch "Robert Smalls: How a Slave Became an American Hero" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQvFi8zHoEs>). What details overlap with *The Story of Civil War Hero Robert Smalls*? Are there any differences? Why is Robert Smalls's story so unique? What surprises or does not surprise you? What questions do you have? Students can discuss their reactions in small groups or partners, and then share their ideas with the whole class.
2. Encourage students to create their own sidebar after conducting additional research on the Civil War to add to *The Story of Civil War Hero Robert Smalls*. What do they think

would be relevant to add to the book? How were the sidebars different from the rest of the text? What do they want to include? What photographs should go along with their sidebar? Students can present their pieces to a partner, small group, or the whole class.

3. Ask students to write their own free verse or narrative free verse poems after reading *The Story of Civil War Hero Robert Smalls*. Encourage students to think about how *The Story of Civil War Hero Robert Smalls* made them feel and how it made them think differently about the Civil War and slavery. Students can present their pieces to a partner, small group, or the whole class.

School-Home Connection

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

1. If possible, provide students with a copy of Lee & Low's *Seven Miles to Freedom: The Robert Smalls Story* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/seven-miles-to-freedom>). Encourage family members to read the picture book version of *The Story of Civil War Hero Robert Smalls* at home. Have students and their families talk about what resistance, dedication, and discrimination means to them.
2. Robert Smalls's family drives him to escape. Have students bring in something from their family to share with the class. Ask students to write a summary explaining how their item is significant to and representative of who they are.
3. Have students explore online the National Museum of African American History and Culture (<https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/collection>). Who are some other famous African Americans from the 19th century? How



did they shape history? How did they react to and handle the situation when they were faced with obstacles?

Nonfiction Text Features

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)
(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

Types of Print	Point students to the words that are darker in the book, such as abolish . Why do they think those words are darker, or in bold? What can they use to figure out what the word means if they do not know the meaning? Encourage students to look at the rest of the sentence, and if they still don't know the word's meaning, then point them to the glossary.
Sidebar	When students see: "Slavery," why do they think that the text and format look different from the text on the first few pages in Chapter One? Why do they think that there are these specific parts in the book? What is the point of sidebars? What kind of information can they learn from sidebars?
Table of Contents	Point students to the Table of Contents prior to reading. Why do they think a Table of Contents exists? Why is a Table of Contents important?
Timeline	Show students the timeline in the back of the book. Encourage students to think about why timelines are important. After reading, make photocopies of the timeline and then cut up the different events. Have students rearrange and place the different events in order.
Glossary	Prior to reading, show students the glossary in the back of the book. Why do students think that there is a glossary? What can you find in a glossary? When students read and encounter a bold word, have them go to the glossary and read the definition.

Captions	Ask students why they think there is a line of text next to a photograph, illustration, or diagram. What is the purpose of that line of text, or a caption? How would it be different if there was no caption? Have students look at a photograph with the caption covered. Then uncover the caption. Have students describe what they see with the additional knowledge of the caption. How do their feelings about the photograph change? Use the caption and the rest of the page to describe the photograph in more detail.
Text Sources	Have students look at the text sources in the back of the book. Why do you think the author chose to include these? Why is it important to show the sources that you used in your writing? Have students select one of the web links (or books if available) and have them look for information that the author could have used in writing the book.
Title	Show students the text that comes after the chapter number. Then, have students read the title of that chapter and make a prediction from the words about what the chapter is going to be about. How does the title of the chapter help them to think about what they're about to read?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Janet Halfmann is the author of more than forty books for children, including Lee & Low’s *Midnight Teacher*, which Kirkus called “An excellent homage to an African-American woman who taught ahead of her time” in a starred review. When she’s not writing, Halfmann enjoys working in the garden, exploring nature, visiting new places—especially wildlife areas and living-history museums—and watching movies. Halfmann lives with her husband in South Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Visit Janet Halfmann on the Web at janethalfmannauthor.com.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Duane Smith was an artist, illustrator, and graphic designer with a degree from Pratt Institute in New York City and a Master’s in Illustration from the Fashion Institute of Technology. His wide-ranging works were featured in periodicals, books, movie storyboards, and galleries. Smith also worked in graphic design and interactive media development, and split his time between homes in Brooklyn and Albany, New York. He died in 2020.

ABOUT LEE & LOW BOOKS

LEE & LOW BOOKS is the largest children’s book publisher specializing in diversity and multiculturalism. Our motto, “about everyone, for everyone,” is as urgent today as it was when we started in 1991. It is the company’s goal to meet the need for stories that children of color can identify with and that all children can enjoy. The right book can foster empathy, dispel stereotypes, prompt discussion about race and ethnicity, and inspire children to imagine not only a world that includes them, but also a world where they are the heroes of their own stories. Discover more at leeandlow.com.

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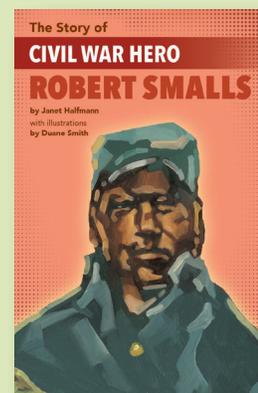
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Book Information for

The Story of Civil War Hero Robert Smalls



\$8.95, PAPERBACK

9781643790169

80 pages, 5-1/2 X 8-1/4

*Reading Level: Grade 5

Interest Level: Grades 3–8

Guided Reading Level: V

Accelerated Reader® Level/Points:
N/A

Lexile™ Measure: N/A

THEMES: African/African American Interest, Biography/Memoir, Conflict resolution, Courage, Heroism, History, Nonfiction, Overcoming Obstacles, Persistence/Grit, Slavery, United States History, War

RESOURCES ON THE WEB:

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All guided reading level placements may vary and are subject to revision. Teachers may adjust the assigned levels in accordance with their own evaluations.