

***Bold, Cautious, True: Walt Whitman and American Art of the Civil War Era***

at the Katonah Museum of Art (October 18, 2009 – January 24, 2010)

**POST VISIT ACTIVITIES – Writing from Art**  
**Integrating creative and critical thinking in response to historical art.**

You can use the following activities to help students integrate their own thoughts and writing with a painting, sculpture, or object of their choice from the KMA exhibition.



1. Select one of the characters in this painting. Imagine you are this character and you are writing a letter to your mother. What will you tell the folks at home about your life in the Union army?

Before you begin writing, think about the following questions: Where is this character? What experiences has he had? How do you think he might feel about these experiences? What hopes or dreams might the character have? How does he feel about other characters in the painting, and why?



2. Imagine that you have been transported through time to the Civil War era. You have landed in the midst of the painting of your choice from the KMA exhibition. Write a story telling about the adventures you have there. Consider all of the elements of a good story – setting, character, narrative. Did you land in the North or the South? What other characters are there with you? What happened before this moment? What happens next?



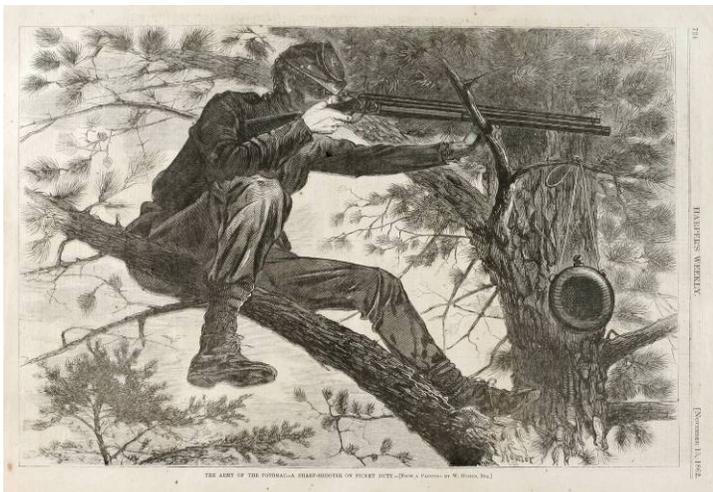
3. Create an interview with any character in a work of art from the Museum. Write a list of questions you would want to ask, and imagine what the person's responses would be. Consider asking details about the events of the time, or questions about their everyday life, or how they feel about recent experiences.

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**POST VISIT ACTIVITIES – The role of the Artist**

The four paintings below each illustrate some aspect of the Civil War Era. Examine these four images and answer the following questions:

- How is the point of view of these painting different?
- What might be some reasons why these artists created these paintings and engravings?
- What might be the role/roles of an artist during a war?
- What things can painters tell us about the world? How is it the same or different than what writers tell us?



As an artist working in the world today, how would you illustrate a current event? Consider what perspective you would illustrate:

- A detail that captures a small moment from the event
- An important figure that has a central role in the event
- A general overview of the event
- The human experience – a moment shared by a few people

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**POST VISIT ACTIVITIES – “List poems” inspired by Walt Whitman**

Pamela Hart, writer in residence

Walt Whitman loved to use lists in his poems. Catalogues, lists, inventories have long been part of poetry, as well as daily life. Poets like Whitman often make their poems exclusively out of lists. Read examples of list poems, such as the excerpts below, out loud so that students can hear the rhythm.

Have students write several list poems. You can suggest topics or have them brainstorm to come up with their own. Sample topics could include:

Things that make me smile

What I'm afraid of

Stuff that drives me nuts

My favorite things in (name of a place, for example, New York City)

Memories from a specific event or moment

Describe all of the items found in a particular place (a room, pocket book/backpack, street corner)

Some tips for writing List Poems:

Think of specifics, use exact and colorful names

Have the items in your list be surprising

Have a variety of items and kinds of items

Make your list poem BIG

From **SONG OF MYSELF**

By Walt Whitman

I am afoot with my vision.

By the city's quadrangular houses—in log huts, camping with  
lumbermen,

Along the ruts of the turnpike, along the dry gulch and rivulet bed,  
Weeding my onion patch or hoeing rows of carrots and  
parsnips, crossing savannas, trailing in forests,

Prospecting, gold-digging, girdling the trees of a new purchase,  
Scorch'd ankle-deep by the hot sand, hauling my boat down  
the shallow river,

Where the panther walks to and fro on a limb overhead, where  
the buck turns furiously at the hunter,

Where the rattlesnake suns his flabby length on a rock, where  
the otter is feeding on fish,

Where the alligator in his tough pimples sleeps by the bayou,

Where the black bear is searching for roots or honey, where  
the beaver pats the mud with his paddle-shaped tail;

....

Scaling mountains, pulling myself cautiously up, holding on by  
low scragged limbs,

Walking the path worn in the grass and beat through the  
leaves of the brush...

\*\*\*\*\*

Now I will do nothing but listen,  
I hear bravuras of birds, bustle of growing wheat, gossip of  
    flames, clack of sticks cooking my meals,  
I hear the sound I love, the sound of the human voice,  
I hear all sounds running together, combined, fused or following,  
Sounds of the city and sounds out of the city, sounds of the  
    day and night,  
Talkative young ones to those that like them, the loud laugh of  
    work-people at their meals,

From **SONG OF THE BROAD-AXE**

Welcome are all earth's lands, each for its kind;  
Welcome are lands of pine and oak;  
Welcome are lands of the lemon and fig;  
Welcome are lands of gold;  
Welcome are lands of wheat and maize—welcome those of the grape;  
Welcome are lands of sugar and rice; Welcome the cotton-lands—welcome those of the white potato and sweet  
potato;  
Welcome are mountains, flats, sands, forests, prairies;  
Welcome the rich borders of rivers, table-lands, openings;  
Welcome the measureless grazing-lands—welcome the teeming soil of orchards, flax, honey, hemp;  
Welcome just as much the other more hard-faced lands; Lands rich as lands of gold, or wheat and fruit lands;  
Lands of mines, lands of the manly and rugged ores;  
Lands of coal, copper, lead, tin, zinc;  
LANDS OF IRON! lands of the make of the axe!

# Using Picture Books for Older Readers to Expand Curriculum on American Civil War An Annotated Bibliography

by Michael Thomas Clark, Lower School Librarian, Hackley School

## Slavery

***Almost to Freedom.*** By Vaunda Micheaux Nelson, illustrated by Colin Bootman.

Tells the story of a young girl's dramatic escape from slavery via the Underground Railroad, from the perspective of her beloved rag doll.

***Big Jabe.*** By Jerdine Nolen, illustrated by Kadir Nelson.

Momma Mary tells stories about a special young man who does wondrous things, especially for the slaves on the Plenty Plantation.

***Christmas in the Big House, Christmas in the Quarters.*** By Patricia McKissack, illustrated by John Thompson.

Describes the customs, recipes, poems, and songs used to celebrate Christmas in the big plantation houses and in the slave quarters just before the Civil War.

***Crossing Bok Chitto: A Choctaw Tale of Friendship and Freedom.*** By Tim Tingle, illustrated by Jeanne Rorex Bridges.

In the 1800s, a Choctaw girl becomes friends with a slave boy from a plantation across the great river, and when she learns that his family is in trouble, she helps them cross to freedom.

***The Escape of Oney Judge.*** By Emily Arnold McCully, illustrated by the author.

Young Oney Judge risks everything to escape a life of slavery in the household of George and Martha Washington and to make her own way as a free black woman.

***The Freedom Riddle.*** By Angela Shelf Medearis, illustrated by John Ward.

Master Brown agrees to grant Jim his freedom if Jim can stump him with a riddle.

***Freedom River.*** By Doreen Rapport, illustrated by Bryan Collier.

Describes an incident in the life of John Parker, an ex-slave who became a successful businessman in Ripley, Ohio, and who repeatedly risked his life to help other slaves escape to freedom.

***Friend on Freedom River.*** By Gloria Whelan, illustrated by Gijsbert van Frankenhuyzen.

The Winter of 1850 finds young Louis alone with his mother when his father heads north for work, but when runaway slaves ask Louis for help being ferried across the Detroit River he wonders what his father would do.

***Harriet and the Promised Land.*** By Jacob Lawrence, illustrated by the author.

A poem relating the dedicated efforts of Harriet Tubman to lead her fellow slaves to freedom.

***Henry's Freedom Box.*** By Ellen Levine, illustrated by Kadir Nelson.

A fictionalized account of how in 1849 a Virginia slave, Henry "Box" Brown, escapes to freedom by shipping himself in a wooden crate from Richmond to Philadelphia.

***I Want to Be Free.*** By Joseph Slate, illustrated by E. B. Lewis.

A children's story based on a sacred Buddhist tale that recounts the story of an escaped slave who rescues an abandoned baby from slave hunters.

***January's Sparrow.*** By Patricia Polacco, illustrated by the author.

After a fellow slave is beaten to death, Sadie and her family flee the plantation for freedom through the Underground Railroad.

**Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led her People to Freedom.** By Carole Boston Weatherford, illustrated by Kadir Nelson.  
A fictionalized account of Harriet Tubman's escape from slavery for freedom in Philadelphia, where she turns her talents to leading others along the Underground Railroad.

**Nettie's Trip South.** By Ann Turner, illustrated by Ronald Himler.  
A ten-year-old northern girl encounters the ugly realities of slavery when she visits Richmond, Virginia and sees a slave auction.

**Night Boat to Freedom.** By Doreen Rappaport, illustrated by E. B. Lewis.  
At the request of his fellow slave Granny Judith, Christmas John risks his life to take runaways across a river from Kentucky to Ohio. Based on slave narratives recorded in the 1930s.

**The Old Slave.** By Julius Lester, illustrated by Jerry Pinkney.  
An elderly slave uses the power of his mind to ease the suffering of other slaves and eventually leads them back to Africa.

**The Patchwork Path: A Quilt Map to Freedom.** By Bettye Shroud, illustrated by the author.  
While her father leads her toward Canada and away from the plantation where they have been slaves, a young girl thinks of the quilt her mother used to teach her a code that will help guide them to freedom.

**The People Could Fly: The Picture Book.** By Virginia Hamilton, illustrated by Leo & Diane Dillon.  
Retells a folktale in which a group of slaves, unable to bear their sadness and starvation any longer, calls upon African magic that allows them to fly away.

**Phillis's Big Test.** By Catherine Clinton, illustrated by Sean Qualls.  
Describes teenage slave Phillis Wheatley's test in 1772 in which she had to prove that she was the author of a collection of poems.

**Secret Signs: Along the Underground Railroad.** By Anita Riggio, illustrated by the author.  
A deaf child helps pass information along the Underground Railroad using his paintbrush and a panoramic egg.

**Show Way.** By Jacqueline Woodson, illustrated by Hudson Talbott.  
A mother passes on the tradition of making quilts, or "Show ways", that serve as secret maps for freedom seeking slaves.

**Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt.** By Deborah Hopkinson, illustrated by James E. Ransome.  
A young slave stitches a quilt with a map pattern which guides her to freedom in the North.

**Tears for Ashan.** By D. Marie, illustrated by Norman Childers.  
A young African boy's friendship with an older boy ends when the latter is taken away on a slave ship.

**Under the Quilt of Night.** By Deborah Hopkinson, illustrated by James E. Ransome.  
A young girl flees from the farm where she has been worked as a slave and uses the Underground Railroad to escape to freedom in the North.

**Way Up and Over Everything.** By Alice McGill, illustrated by Jude Daly.  
In this retelling of a folktale, five Africans escape the horrors of slavery by simply disappearing into thin air.

## Civil War and Reconstruction

**The Brother's War: Civil War Voices in Verse.** By J. Patrick Lewis, illustrated with Civil War era photographs.  
Presents poems that adopt the voices of soldiers, commanders, and slaves and other civilians during the Civil War, pairing each poem with a period photo, and includes facts on the conflict.

**Freedom Ship.** By Doreen Rappaport, illustrated by Curtis James.  
Based upon the true story of Robert Smalls, a slave who kidnapped a Confederate ship and its weaponry and delivered it to the Union along with several runaway slaves.

***From Slave to Soldier: Based on a True Civil War Story.*** By Deborah Hopkinson, illustrated by Brian Floca.

A boy who hates being a slave joins the Union Army to fight for freedom, and proves himself brave and capable of handling a mule team when the need arises.

***The Gettysburg Address.*** By Abraham Lincoln, illustrated by Michael McCurdy.

An illustrated text of the Gettysburg Address.

***Hold the Flag High.*** By Catherine Clinton, illustrated by Shane W. Evans.

An introduction to the Civil War battle of Morris Island, South Carolina, during which Sergeant William H. Carney became the first African American to earn a Congressional Medal of Honor by preserving the flag.

***The Last Brother: A Civil War Tale.*** By Trinka Hakes Noble, illustrated by Robert Papp.

Eleven-year-old Gabe enlists in the Union Army in Pennsylvania along with his older brother Davy; and as bugler, does his best to protect Davy during the Battle of Gettysburg.

***Ghosts of the Civil War.*** By Cheryl Harness, illustrated by the author.

The ghost of Willie, President Abraham Lincoln's older son, transports Lindsey back to his own time, where she sees and hears many things from both sides of the Civil War. Includes passages from contemporary documents, a glossary, biographical sketches, and a bibliography.

***Marching to Appomattox: The Footrace that Ended the Civil War.*** By Ken Stark, illustrated by the author.

Describes how geography, luck, perseverance, a diplomacy between General Robert E. Lee and Ulysses S. Grant helped to change the course of history at the end of the Civil War.

***Papa's Mark.*** By Gwendolyn Battle Lambert, illustrated by Colin Bootman.

After his son helps him learn to write his name, Samuel T. Blow goes to the courthouse in his Southern town to cast his ballot on the first election day ever on which African-Americans were allowed to vote.

***Pink and Say.*** By Patricia Polacco, illustrated by the author.

Chronicles the friendship of Pink, a fifteen-year-old African-American Union soldier, and Say, his poor white comrade, as one nurses the other back to health from a battle wound and the two of them are imprisoned at Andersonville. Based on a true story.

***Seeing the Elephant.*** By Pat Hughes, illustrated by Ken Stark.

Ten-year-old Izzie wants to join the war like his older brothers and go into battle against the Confederate Army, but when he meets a Rebel soldier in a hospital, he begins to see things differently.

***The Silent Witness: A True Story of the Civil War.*** By Robin Friedman, illustrated by Claire A. Nivola.

Presents the true story of eight-year-old Lula McLean, in whose parlor Robert E. Lee surrendered to Ulysses S. Grant in 1865, and her rag doll that was left on the parlor sofa and taken by Union Colonel Thomas Moore as a souvenir.

***Thunder at Gettysburg.*** By Patricia Lee Gauch, illustrated by Stephen Gammell.

Fourteen-year-old Tillie is sent to accompany a neighbor to Weikert's farm when the fighting at Gettysburg gets too close to home, and instead finds herself trapped in the battle that raged for three days, from July 1-3, 1863.

***Virgie Goes to School with Us Boys.*** By Elizabeth Fitzgerald Howard, illustrated by E. B. Lewis.

In the post-Civil War South, a young African American girl is determined to prove that she can go to school just like her older brothers.

***A Yankee at the Seder.*** By Elka Weber, illustrated by Adam Gustavson.

As a Confederate family prepares for Passover the day after the Civil War has ended, a Yankee arrives on their Virginia doorstep and is invited to share their meal, to the dismay of ten-year-old Jacob. Includes historical notes about Corporal Myer Levy, on whom the story is based, and his prominent Philadelphia family.

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### **Useful Web Resources**

#### **To hear Walt Whitman's poems:**

The Walt Whitman Archive:

<http://www.whitmanarchive.org/multimedia/index.html>

LibriVox – acoustical liberation of books in the public domain:

<http://librivox.org/leaves-of-grass-by-walt-whitman/>

[Eaglesweb.com](http://www.eaglesweb.com) - poetry for the ear in the tradition of Homer:

[http://www.eaglesweb.com/Sub\\_Pages/whitman\\_poems.htm](http://www.eaglesweb.com/Sub_Pages/whitman_poems.htm)

#### **For teaching Walt Whitman and The Civil War:**

National Endowment for the Humanities - EDSITEment: Walt Whitman's Notebooks and Poetry

[http://edsitement.neh.gov/view\\_lesson\\_plan.asp?id=427](http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=427)

Web English Teacher: Walt Whitman lesson plans

<http://www.webenglishteacher.com/whitman.html>

The Civil War Homepage: photo gallery, recommended books & videos, maps, research material

<http://www.civil-war.net/>

The Civil War-PBS series

<http://www.pbs.org/civilwar/>

Library of Congress: The Civil War

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/themes/civil-war/>

#### **To connect with contemporary art that deals with the theme of war:**

Kara Walker in Art21: Artist Kara Walker responds to *Gone With The Wind* as well as issues such as slavery and the meaning of freedom in her unique, personal style.

<http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/walker/index.html>

Allison Smith at the New Museum: Artist Allison Smith is inspired by American history and historical reenactments. This lesson plan investigates the idea of declarations, proclamations, and trench art

<http://www.gclass.org/lessons/plans/allison-smith-what-are-you-fighting-for>



# HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL TIMELINE OF THE CIVIL WAR

**JUNE 16**

Abraham Lincoln delivers “A House Divided” campaign speech in Springfield, Illinois.



**GEORGE P.A. HEALEY** (1813-1894)  
*Abraham Lincoln*, 1860.  
Oil on canvas, 30 3/8 x 25 3/8 inches.  
Collection of the Corcoran Gallery of Art,  
Washington, D.C., Museum Purchase, Gallery Fund

**APRIL 17**

Virginia secedes from the Union. State offers Richmond as Confederate capital.



**EASTMAN JOHNSON** (1824-1906), *A Ride for Liberty—The Fugitive Slaves, March 2, 1862*, 1862.  
Oil on board, 21 1/2 x 26 inches.  
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, The Paul Mellon Collection.

**DECEMBER 18**

The Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is passed, abolishing slavery.

**LATE FEBRUARY-MID MARCH**

Eastman Johnson accompanies Gen. George B. McClellan’s army as civilian observer. Witnesses a scene that leads to painting *A Ride for Liberty—The Fugitive Slaves*.

**APRIL 9**

Grant accepts Lee’s surrender in home of Wilmer McLean at Appomattox Court House, Virginia. Lincoln returns to Washington.

**NOVEMBER 6**

Lincoln wins presidential election with less than 40% of popular vote. His name does not appear on ballot in ten Southern states.

**NOVEMBER 19**

Lincoln delivers Gettysburg Address.

1855

1856

1858

1860

1861

1862

1863

1864

1865

**MAY 15**

Walt Whitman copyrights first edition of *Leaves of Grass*, a volume of 12 poems.



**CHARLES HINE** (1827-1871), *Walt Whitman*, 1860.  
Oil on canvas, 27 x 22 inches  
Brooklyn College Library Archives and Special Collections

**APRIL 12-13**

First shots of Civil War fired at Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor.

**JANUARY 1**

Emancipation Proclamation takes effect.

**APRIL 14**

Actor John Wilkes Booth shoots Lincoln as he watches a play at Ford’s Theater in Washington. President dies the next morning.

**SPRING**

Whitman publishes his third edition of *Leaves of Grass*.

**DECEMBER 16**

Whitman reads his brother’s name among the list of wounded soldiers and boards a train for Virginia the same day to find him.

**NOVEMBER 8**

Lincoln is reelected president in landslide victory over Gen. McClellan.

**APRIL 30**

*New York Post* reports that artists David Johnson, Sanford R. Gifford, and Worthington Whittredge have enlisted in New York State Militia. Jervis McEntee also enlists. Whittredge is actually denied a place in the militia. Thomas Satterwhite Noble, Kentucky painter living in St. Louis, joins Confederate cavalry.

By end of Civil War, more than 620,000 on both sides killed and over 470,000 wounded.

## Hand Sewn Book / Libro Cosido a Mano

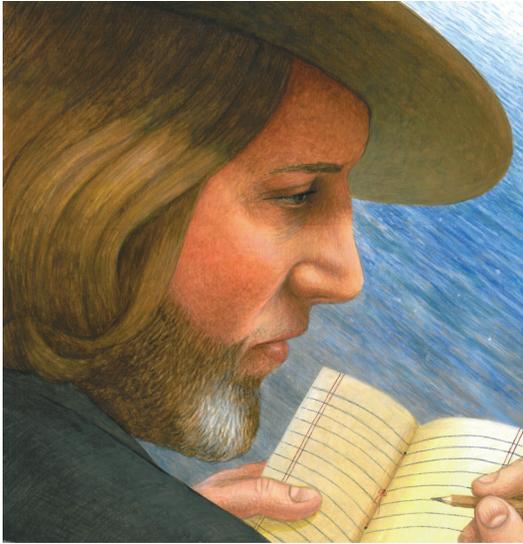


Illustration by Brian Selznick  
 Copyright (c) 2004 by Brian Selznick, from the book *Walt Whitman: Words for America* by Barbara Kerley, illustrated by Brian Selznick (Scholastic Press, 2004)

### Materials

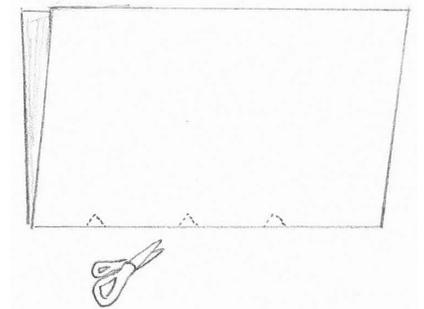
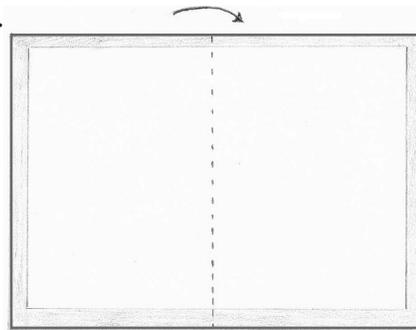
1 Sheet of construction paper  
 3 Sheets of white lightweight paper  
 String (approximately 6 inches long)  
 Scissors

### Materiales

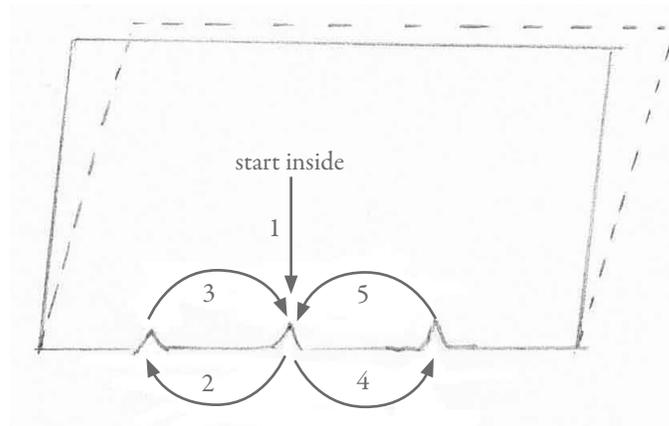
1 hoja de papel cartoncillo  
 3 hojas de papel blanco ligero  
 Cordón (aproximadamente 6 pulgadas de largo)  
 Tijeras

### Procedure / Procedimiento

1. Place the white paper on top of the construction paper and fold both in half so that the construction paper is on the outside. / Coloca el papel blanco encima del papel cartoncillo y dóblalos juntos a la mitad, de manera que el papel cartoncillo quede en la parte de afuera.



2. Using the scissors, cut three evenly spaced triangles out of the folded side of the book. / Usando tijeras, corta 3 triángulos iguales del lado de la parte que esta doblada.
3. Thread the string through the center hole on the inside, pulling all but one inch of the string through. Weave the string through the remaining holes according to the diagram. Tie the string. / Cose el cordón a través del hoyo central en la parte de afuera, jalando el hilo hasta que le falte una pulgada. Amarra el cordón.



4. Decorate the cover and use your book as a sketchbook or journal to write stories in. / Decora la cubierta y úsalo como tu libro de dibujo o tu diario para escribir historias.