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WOW REVIEW

READING ACROSS CULTURES
VOLUME X, ISSUE 2

Winter 2018

Traveling Back In Time to the Early 20th Century

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WOW Review: Volume X Issue 2
Winter 2018
Traveling Back In Time to the Early 20th Century

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Volume X Issue 2: Traveling Back In Time to the Early 20th Century

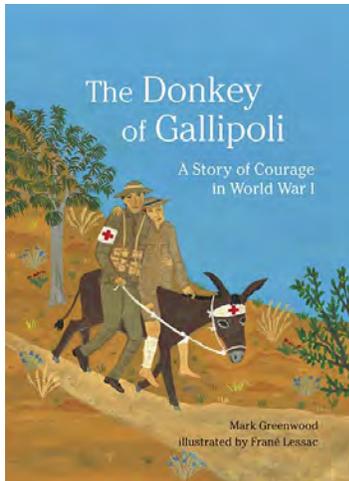
Introduction:

In this issue of WoW Review, you are invited to travel back in time to the early 20th century. So much happened during the years between 1900 and 1930. The world was going through great changes and people were immigrating across nations for all kinds of reasons. The world experienced World War I, the crash of the U.S. Stock Market, and the Great Depression. The books reviewed in this issue present historical moments though remarkable stories that any reader of history and historic fiction would love. For World War I aficionados, five books are highlighted: *In Flanders Fields: The Story of the Poem* by John McCrae; *Once a Shepherd*; *The Donkey of Gallipoli: A True Story of Courage in World War I*; *The Great War, Stories Inspired by Items from the First World War*, and *The Poppy Lady: Moina Belle Michael and Her Tribute to Veterans*. Those interested in Russia during that time period will love *The Family Romanov*, and those who read Russian will enjoy *We Lived in 1917: Encyclopedia for Children*. Finally, *The Hired Girl* gives readers entrée into the working conditions of young women in the rural U.S. during the early 20th century. All are remarkable and allow readers a window into the past while encouraging them to think about how the world has changed and perhaps, how it has not. Happy Reading!

Spring 2018: (Submission Deadline: March 1, 2018) – Open Issue. Submit reviews of recent children’s and young adult books that highlight intercultural understanding and global perspectives.

Summer 2018: (Submission Deadline: May 31, 2018) – Moral/Ethical Dilemmas: Books that highlight dilemmas of conscience or situations that present aspects of communities and societies that conflict with traditional thinking or ways of behaving.

Holly Johnson, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH



The Donkey of Gallipoli: A True Story of Courage in World War I

Written by Mark Greenwood

Illustrated by Frané Lessac

Candlewick, 2008, 32 pp

ISBN: 978-0763639136

The story serves as a tribute to World War I foot soldiers and in particular to Jack Simpson, an Englishman who fought in the war as a soldier in the Australian Army. When Jack Simpson was a boy in England, he and his friend Billy earned money by giving donkey rides on the beach for a penny a ride. In the winter, Jack used his donkey and a cart to deliver milk for money to help feed his family. Jack dreamed of one day leaving his home and going “on a great adventure.” Eventually Jack left England and sailed off on his great adventure to Australia where he worked in a variety of jobs: cutting cane, driving cattle, working in a mine, panning for gold, and working on ships. Jack began to feel homesick when he heard that England and Germany were at war. Jack thought that enlisting in the army could solve his problem of homesickness. He joined the Australian Army to do something worthwhile for his new country and as an opportunity to visit England. Instead, the Australian Army sent Jack to Egypt where he trained to be a stretcher bearer and then to Turkey to join the Gallipoli Campaign. While fighting in Gallipoli, stretchers became scarce. Jack found a niche of his own, when he saw a cowering donkey on the other side of the battlefield and crawled through the battle to befriend the donkey. From that point on, the donkey, led by Jack, saved many injured soldiers on the battlefield. Jack’s heroics allow him to make an invaluable contribution to the war effort. Jack was eventually killed in battle and buried in Gallipoli in a cemetery called Hell Spit. The battle of Gallipoli is not a well-known story in the U.S. because the U.S. had not joined the war yet, but is well known in England and Australia.

Mark Greenwood stated that he has a passion for history. Two of his books, *The Legend of Moondyne Joe* and *The Legend of Lasseter’s Reef* won the West Australian Premier’s Award for children’s books. *Ned Kelly & The Green Sash* won the West Australian Young Readers’ Book Award, and the CBCA selected *Simpson and His Donkey* as an Honour Book. In 2014, his book *Jandamarra*, illustrated by Terry Denton, was shortlisted for a number of awards including the CBCA Eve Pownall Award, the NSW Premier’s Literary Awards Patricia Wrightson Prize for Children’s Literature and the West Australian Young Readers’ Book Awards. Mark often teams with his wife, illustrator Frané Lessac, to produce books that promote an understanding of multicultural issues, such as *Drummer Boy of John John*, *Magic Boomerang*, *Outback Adventure*, and *Our Big Island*.

Frané Lessac, a U.S. born illustrator, author, and painter, lives and works in Western Australia with her husband and children’s author Mark Greenwood. Her body of work includes over 40 children’s books many of which received awards for her illustrations. Lessac studied film at USC and UCLA. After completing her academic studies, Lessac moved from Los Angeles to the Car-

ibbean island of Montserrat where inspired by the island's visual beauty, she began her artistic career painting.

This true story demonstrates how one person can make a difference. Jack made a difference to the English by saving the lives of wounded soldiers unable to make it to safety on their own. This picturebook tells an inspiring story and is accompanied with beautiful paintings. The story is a fitting tribute to those who served during war. The illustrations are amazingly detailed. The illustrator uses a folkloric gouache style that is colorful and dramatic.

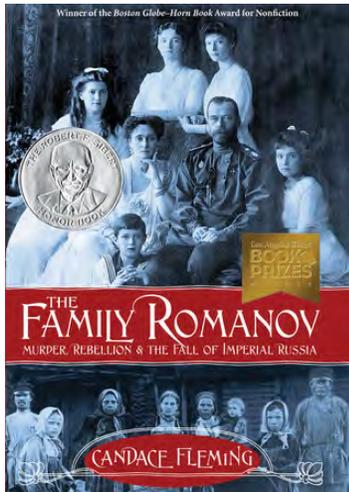
This book gives homage to the fallen of Gallipoli and one soldier's unique heroics in particular. One note of caution is that as a war story, the content may not be suitable for young readers. Close examination of one scene shows army boats moving ashore under an onslaught of Turkish gunfire while a dead body floats in blood-tinged water. This story would be a good fit for older readers who have studied World War I. The story is not straightforward and includes several shifts in plot. Younger students may not be able to follow why Jack, an Englishman, who worked in Australia, enlisted in the army because of the war with Germany, sails to train in Egypt, and fought and died in a battle in Turkey. In addition, this story does not back away from the grimness of war. The complexity of the story and the realistic illustrations of war are better suited for an audience in grade 4 and above.

Other WWI books appropriate to pair with this story are *The Language of Doves*, written by Rosemary Wells and illustrated by Greg Shed (1996), and *World War I for Kids: A History with 21 Activities* (For Kids series) by R. Kent Rasmussen (2014). One book offers another personal story that connects with World War I, and the other is a nonfiction resource for World War I information.

The Language of Doves tells the story of Julietta and her grandfather. For her sixth birthday, her grandfather gives Julietta a dove. Julietta names the bird Isabella after a dove her grandfather had as a boy. During World War I, her grandfather's Isabella carried messages for the Italian Army. Serving as a wartime messenger bird, the first Isabella received a medal for heroism. Julietta hopes her Isabella will learn to return to her when released. To the child's disappointment, her dove always returns to her grandfather. Julietta becomes heartbroken when grandfather dies and all of his doves are sold. Julietta thinks her Isabella is among the sold doves. Julietta is surprised when Isabella flies home to her, and carries a message from her late grandfather in his familiar writing. This is not only a great story, but the book also provides information that many students may not know regarding the wartime use of messenger birds.

World War I for Kids: A History with 21 Activities offers an overview of daily life in the trenches, and how new weapons technology changed modern warfare. Through text and pictures the author addresses a wide array of topics, including: causes of war, public reaction, war tactics, animals on the battlefield, the role of women in the war, and the role of African Americans in the U.S. military. The text provides a great deal of appropriate historical information for elementary students, but the combat related images are graphic.

Megan McCaffrey, Governors State University, University Park, IL



The Family Romanov
Written by Candace Fleming
Schwartz & Wade, 2014, 292 pp.
ISBN 978-0-375-86782-8

By combining an intimate family portrayal with intrigue and politics, this compelling narrative captures the imagination and intellect of readers. Fleming tells the familiar story of the doomed Romanov family within the context of social unrest and turmoil in Russia during the early 1900s. She invites us into the lives of Tsar Nicholas, his wife Alexandra, and their five children, providing intimate details about each family member and their closeness and isolation as a family. Their lives of extravagance and wealth stand in sharp contrast to the desperate poverty of the common people, which Fleming reveals through interspersing stories of the Romanovs with firsthand accounts from workers and peasants. Nicholas refused to acknowledge or act to change those social conditions, except to violently repress occasional uprisings. Years of deprivation and oppression and the high cost of World War I created conditions that fed resistance and uprisings. At the same time, Alexandra and Nicholas were distracted by their young son's illness and turned to a self-proclaimed holy man Rasputin, causing further alienation and rumor. Rasputin and Lenin played key roles in using the German invasion of Russia to manipulate both the weak tsar and disillusioned citizens into a revolution. Fleming's ability to craft an exciting narrative of intriguing individuals within a complicated history of desperation and oppression results in a powerful work of nonfiction that received multiple awards including:

- The Boston Globe-Horn Book Award for Nonfiction
- Robert F. Sibert Honor Book
- ALSA Excellence in Nonfiction Award Finalist
- Winner of the Orbis Pictus Award for Outstanding Nonfiction

Fleming makes excellent use of a wide range of primary sources, including ones that became available after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. By integrating excerpts from diaries, letters, memoirs, and other firsthand accounts along with photographs, she brings multiple voices and points of view into the narrative, vividly portraying the details of people's lives. She weaves the voices of the Romanovs with the voices of peasants and factory workers, providing a strong contrast that traces the deplorable conditions and increasing tensions that led to the Russian Revolution and the deaths of the Romanov family.

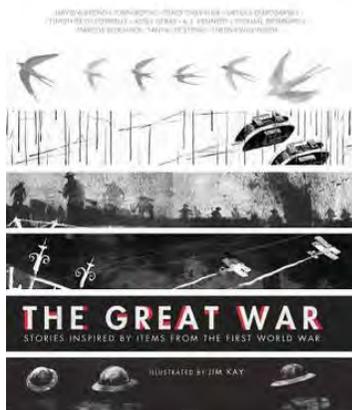
The meticulous research that underlies this book is evident through the many excerpts from primary sources and the captioned photographs, as well as the inclusion of source notes and a lengthy bibliography along with a map and genealogy. Fleming describes her initial interest in uncovering the true story of what happened to Russia's last imperial family and her growing questions about how this could have happened that led her to take a wider lens. She notes that

the book is three stories in one—an intimate look at the Romanov family, the sweep of revolution from the worker’s strikes of 1905 to Lenin’s rise to power in November 1917, and the personal stories of the men and women who struggled for a better life (p. 256). She includes an extensive bibliography and indicates that she talked with Russian scholars, examined thousands of photographs and dozens of newspapers, and read Karl Marx. She worked with archivists at two key collections to get access to original sources and traveled to Russia, retracing the footsteps of the Romanovs. She was able to get access to previously unavailable primary documents in museums and archives due to the collapse of the Soviet Union and discusses the differing translations of these documents and how she selected which to use. This careful description and documentation of her research process and decisions not only are essential to establishing the credibility of her work but also provide readers with insights into the inquiry processes that they can engage in themselves to look at history.

This book can be paired with other books set in the Soviet Union era, such as M. T. Anderson’s (2017) *Symphony for the Dead: Dmitri Shostakovich and the Siege of Leningrad*, set during WWII, 1941-1944, or with Eugene Yelchin’s *Arcady’s Goal* (2015) and *Breaking Stalin’s Nose* (2011), both set in the 1940s and 50s during the time of Stalin. Another interesting pairing would be to pair historical fiction about the Romanov family with this nonfiction book to critically examine the ways in which the authors have played with historical facts in their narratives. Possible pairings include *The Lost Crown* (Sarah Miller, 2012), *Tsarina* (Patrick Nelle, 2014), *Anastasia’s Secret* (Susanne Dunlap, 2011), and *Anastasia and Her Sisters* (Carolyn Meyer, 2015).

This book is both a biography and an introduction to this time period in Russian history. It is also a great read that brings history to life. The Family Romanov is proof that history does not need to be boring and dull, but instead as riveting and absorbing as any novel.

Kathy G. Short, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ



The Great War, Stories Inspired by Items from the First World War

Written by David Almond, John Boyne, Tracy Chevalier, Ursula Dubosarsky, Timothée De Fombelle, Adèle Geras, A. L. Kennedy, Michael Morpurgo, Marcus Sedgwick, Tanya Lee Stone, and Sheena Wilkinson

Illustrated by Jim Kay

Walker Books, 2014, 289 pp.

ISBN: 9780763675547

What do a helmet, sheet music, compass, a butter dish, and a writing kit have in common? In *The Great War*, these ordinary objects each propel powerful, personal stories set in the World War I era—stories that speak in many ways to various readers of the impact of war on individuals and society.

Inspired by actual items from the World War I era, this collection of short stories reflects a variety of genres, perspectives, and contexts. Eleven noted authors were asked to select an item from authentic WWI artifacts and create a story around the item. Despite being fictional in terms of characters and their connections to WWI, each story reflects the author’s knowledge of historical events and insights of this particular era. With diverse creative approaches to story, these authors reveal war’s impact, not only on those present during its ongoing, but also in following years as some stories are told from a time well past WWI and supported by memories of those characters and the impacts over the years and generations beyond.

As the world marks the centennial years of WWI, this book brings to light the impact of war on individuals, communities, and nations with a focus on communities within Great Britain. Themes that weave across these 11 stories include defining self through one’s country, looking across time for understandings, personal loss, peace through understanding conflict, and building relationships through shared burdens. Young readers at the middle school level and beyond are the audience for this book for which contemporary authors position objects within significant social contexts giving voice to those who no longer live to speak of their experiences during this troubled time—voices that can give potential heed to individuals and nations today. For example, Michael Morpurgo tells of a tin helmet that was handed down by past generations in a family. Once taken for granted, its importance is unveiled through a school assignment for a young British lad. Marcus Sedgwick takes the perspective of an “angel,” actually the ghost of a soldier, who is brought to consciousness by an observant young boy who finds a piece of metal, a remnant of a Zeppelin, embedded in a tree. The ghost weaves in and out of the minds of people past and present as the story tells of why the piece of metal is in the tree. David Almond focuses on the power of story that can be shared from generation to generation as a woman who lost her fiancée in WWI brings his writing tools to a class to instill the power of writing in students by sharing her story. As the narrative continues with one young lad sharing the same story as he becomes an adult, Almond concludes with, “Go on. Create a better world. Write a world that has no war in it” (p. 145).

Significant to these stories is the art of Jim Kay. Both informative and provocative in black and white images with recurring shapes reflecting shrapnel, the illustrations provide authentic insights to the situations and contexts within WWI. Between the stories, images and brief informational blurbs help to situate the stories by revealing soldiers in a trench, women in a munitions factory, the Zeppelin bomb, the Lusitania, fighter planes, the role of horses, and the destruction of war among other topics. Kay, who also created the images for *A Monster Calls* (Patrick Ness, 2012), uses an abstract approach with realistic topics to connect stories and readers to WWI. The book's cover repeats these images in horizontal strips across both the front and back while the actual book's bound cover reveals the bold numbers 1914 on the front and 1918 on the back, both in a distressed white on black background. End pages are red with continuous shrapnel shapes in black.

The book's organization is such that a story stands alone; however, combined they appeal comprehensively to both the universal and individual aspects of war. Following the 11 stories, brief images and explanations of the objects at the center of each story are provided. Additionally, a picture and brief biography of each author and the illustrator is provided that reveals their awards, previous works, and diverse nationalities.

Teaching of past eras, especially social issues such as war, is problematic when trying to engage readers in ways that ask them to relate the humanity of an era or event to that of today. Stories such as these help readers make those connections in whatever way they best can relate and create a basis for understanding the larger issues. Other books that can support this understanding are: *World War I, The Definitive Visual History* (R. G. Grant, 2014); *The War to End All Wars* (Russell Freedman, 2013); and *War Horse* (Michael Morpurgo, 2010).

Janelle Mathis, University of North Texas, Denton, TX



The Hired Girl

Written by Laura Amy Schlitz
Candlewick Press, 2015, 387 pp
ISBN: 978-0-7636-7818-0

“You’d be all right in a Gentile home. Why don’t you work for the Gentiles?”

–Malka, pp.103

In 1911, life is merciless for 14-year-old Joan Skraggs. Her mother has died and her father needs her to take over the housework. He takes Joan out of school and places her in virtual servitude to the needs of their farming household. Without pay—not even the egg money her mother was able to keep—Joan has seemingly no hope for the future she envisioned that involves a life of reading, beauty, and love. Joan dreams of being a hired girl because she could make her own money. Deciding to go on strike to force her father to allow her the egg money most women of the households keep for their own results in her father burning her few beloved books. Joan makes the decision to run away. She plans her escape and uses the money her mother secretly left in Joan’s beloved doll, Belinda. Her mother had sewn the egg money into Joan’s doll and encouraged Joan to find a way to have money of her own—to spend any way she wants.

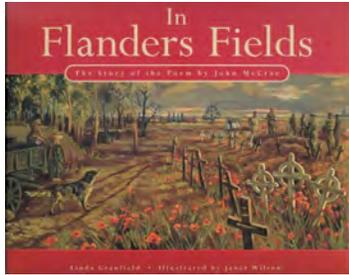
Changing her name to avoid her father’s detection and lying about her age, Joan stumbles upon a position as a hired girl in a Jewish household earning six dollars a week. Told through Joan’s diary, readers enter the world of a naïve, but determined young girl as she escapes her malevolent father and becomes a hired girl. It is her hope of greater things, however, that motivates her and guides her work ethic while experiencing a new world so very different from what she had known. Told over the course of 18 months, Joan learns more about her own faith, the faith of her new household, and the strength of those belief systems. She also learns about herself, Baltimore, the literary world, and love.

A powerful chronicle of life for servants during the early 20th century, *The Hired Girl* is both thoughtful and inspiring. In addition to experiencing Joan’s journey from farm to city life, readers are invited to think about their own ideas of faith systems, their similarities and differences, as well as the sincerity of believers who hold particular traditions and beliefs. Joan’s love of and openness to learning serves as a model of tolerance and understanding that is truly compelling.

Books complementing this text include Kirby Larsen’s *Hattie Big Sky* (2008) and *Hattie Ever After* (2014), both similarly show the resolve a young girl to find her dreams. Books about the Triangle Factory would also fit into the work conditions of young women during the early 20th century. Shelly Sander’s Rachel trilogy, which includes *Rachel’s Secret* (2012), *Rachel’s Promise* (2013), and *Rachel’s Hope* (2014) present a young Jewish girl as she makes her way from the pogroms of Russia to the U.S. between 1903 and 1905.

Laura Amy Schlitz authored the Newbery Medal winner, *Good Masters! Sweet Ladies! Voices from a Medieval Village* (2008) as well as the Newbery Honor book, *Splendors and Glooms* (2012). She lives in Maryland and is a writer, a teacher, and a librarian. She has several other books for young readers and has won awards for many of them. More information can be found at: https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/116504.Laura_Amy_Schlitz

Holly Johnson, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH



In Flanders Fields: The Story of the Poem by John McCrae

Written by Linda Granfield

Illustrated by Janet Wilson

Doubleday, 1995, 32 pp

ISBN: 978-1550051445

The stanzas of the famous WWI poem are interspersed with a biographical sketch of John McCrae and descriptions, photos, and drawings of the front lines, particularly life in the trenches. The result is a nonfiction text that gives the historical and cultural context for how the poem came into existence and became so well-known. It also explains how the poem inspired the use of red poppies as symbols of remembrance. Red poppies grew and bloomed quickly, covering the fields where fallen soldiers were temporarily buried before being moved to permanent military cemeteries.

John McCrae, an established Canadian physician and poet, felt compelled to serve in WWI based on his family history, his personal history of fighting in the Boer War, and his feelings of duty to serve. Canada was still part of the British dominion during WWI, so Britain's declaration of war automatically included Canada and other Commonwealth countries. There was tremendous pressure on young men to enlist and serve. While there was no draft or conscription in Canada until 1918, those who did not volunteer faced public humiliation as women handed non-uniformed men a white feather or threw white flour on them as a rebuke for cowardice (www.firstworldwar.com/atoz/whitefeathers.htm). Colleen Heffernan's novel, *A Kind of Courage* (2005), gives a layered look at that "obligation" to fight in the war as she tells the story of a young conscientious objector sent to work on a farm in Alberta who faces harassment from boys too young to serve and adults with sons in the war.

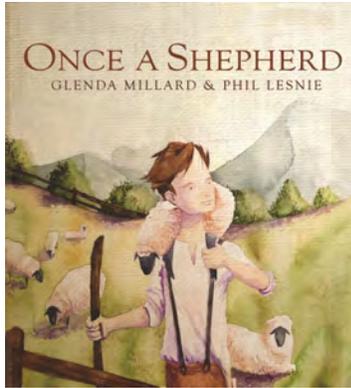
In Flanders Fields explains the events in the Spring of 1915 that gave John McCrae the inspiration to write his poem and relates why the three stanzas are so significant. While he was still alive, his poem was used as a recruitment tool and, since his death, red cloth poppies have been worn in remembrance of veterans. Through my own personal experience of living in France, the U.S., and Canada, Canada puts a much greater importance on Remembrance Day. Families diligently attend Remembrance Day services and sport red poppies for weeks before and after November 11th. In spite of shifting views over the last 100 years regarding armed conflict, McCrae's "torch" and the call to follow in his footsteps have kept alive the need to never forget those who fell in the Great War.

Linda Granfield is a Canadian author of many nonfiction books about history, especially 20th century wars. Following the success of *In Flanders Fields*, the author wrote several companion books: *Where Poppies Grow: A World War I Companion* (2005) and *Remembering John McCrae: Soldier-Doctor-Poet* (2011). In addition, picturebooks depicting life in the trenches, particularly the documented British-German Christmas gatherings along the front line early in the war, include: *And the Soldiers Sang* (J. Patrick Leis & Gary Kelley, 2011), *Christmas in the Trenches* (John McCutcheon & Henri Sørensen, 2006), and *Shooting at the Stars: The Christmas Truce of 1914* (John Hendrix, 2014).

Janet Wilson is a Canadian illustrator, known for her thought-provoking oil paintings and illustrations that have garnered major awards. Her recent publications include her series of books about the power of “one” to motivate and encourage readers to make a positive difference: *One Peace: True Stories of Young Activists* (2008), *Our Earth: How Kids are Saving the Planet* (2010), *Our Rights: How Kids are Changing the World* (2013), and *Our Heroes: How Kids are Making a Difference* (2014).

In Flanders Fields: The Story of the Poem by John McCrae was a White Ravens 1997 selection by the Internationale Jugendbibliothek/International Children’s Library in Munich.

Susan Corapi, Trinity International University, Deerfield, IL



Once a Shepherd
Written by Glenda Millard
Illustrated by Phil Lesnie
Candlewick, 2014, 32 pp
ISBN: 978-0763674588

“Once the world was all at peace” (n.p.)

Prior to World War I, Tom Shepherd, a young shepherd, tended his flock and felt at peace with the world. He was in love with Cherry, his sweetheart, and had plans to settle down with her and continue his life as a shepherd. Tom and Cherry married and soon had a child on the way. With the onset of the war, however, Tom must leave the peace of his home life and enter a world of conflict, pain, and fear. He never sees his unborn child, nor his wife again. What he does see is the hell of war, and when he stops to help an enemy soldier on the battlefield, he is shot and dies. The enemy soldier takes Tom’s coat, lovingly stitched by his wife, and returns it to Tom’s family as a way of repaying the care Tom gave him on the battlefield. Cherry takes material from the coat and makes a toy sheep for the child Tom never saw. Once again, there is peace in the world.

This is a subtle, but profound, picturebook illustrated in a palette of muted watercolors. The soft greens and blues of life before and after the war are juxtaposed with the darker palette of the battlefield representing the disruption war creates to the lives of those affected by it. The strength of this picturebook is the simplicity of the written text as well as the illustrations to show how war damages not only those who go to battle, and the land involved as the battlefield, but the entire families of those who must serve in the military.

The manner in which the text presents the disruption of war on a peaceful life and world landscape—and the missing Tom Shepherd at the end of the story—represents both the senselessness of war and the hope for peace that does not require the sacrifices of young people in events that often seem absurd. Appropriate for all age groups, this picturebook would make a great introduction to the study of World War I itself, but also any historical (and current) conflicts. Infused with humanity through the love of Tom’s family life, but also his actions on the battlefield, this is also a wonderful tool for thinking about the concepts of the other, drawing “sides,” and the enemy.

Books to complement this text include *In Flanders Fields: The Story of the Poem* by John McCrae (Granfield, 2014) and *The Great War: Stories Inspired by Items from the First World War* (Kay, 2015). For readers interested in books about horses and war, there is also *The War Horses: The Tragic Fate of a Million Horses in the First World War* (Butler, 2011) or *The Donkey of Gallipoli: A True Story of Courage in World War I* (Greenwood, 2008), both of which reinforce the senselessness and destruction of war. For older readers interested in how World War I started, read the graphic novel *Terrorist: Gavril Princip, the Assassin Who Ignited World War I* (Rehr, 2015).

Author Glenda Millard is writer for young people who lives in Victoria, Australia. She reports that she accidentally became a writer when she was 45. She has written a number of books for young people, and more information about her and her books can be found at her website: glendamillard.com. Illustrator Phil Lesnie is based in Sydney, Australia. More can be found out about Phil at Goodreads, LinkedIn, or his Facebook page. His other works include *A Soldier, A Dog, and A Boy* (Hathorn, 2016), which can be found in the U.S.

Holly Johnson, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH



The Poppy Lady: Moina Belle Michael and Her Tribute to Veterans

Written by Barbara Elizabeth Walsh

Illustrated by Layne Johnson

Calkins Creek, 2012, 40 pp

ISBN: 978-1590787540

This nonfiction book tells the story of the woman who promoted the poppy as a tribute to veterans. In 1914, while on a vacation tour across Europe, Moina Belle Michael witnessed the outbreak of World War I. Her vacation trip provided her with an unintended, firsthand exposure to the horrors of war. Upon her return home, Moina taught at the University of Georgia. In 1917, when President Wilson asked Congress to enter the war, Moina worried about the young men who would fight the war. Once the U.S. declared war, Moina decided she had to do something to help. Initially she knitted socks and sweaters and rolled bandages. Always wanting to do more, she went to military camps and delivered books, magazines, and candy to soldiers, waiting to be transported to the battlefields in Europe. When the time came for the soldiers to leave, Moina stood on the train station platform to see them off.

Still wanting to do even more for the war effort, Moina went to New York City to become a canteen worker for the YMCA. She completed the training, but at 49 years old, she was too old to work overseas. Instead, she set up a recreation room in the basement of a Columbia University building. She brightened the room with flowers and the young men and women who would soon cross the “submarine-infested Atlantic” to face “the gas, bombs, and shrapnel of the battle front,” came to the room to rest and socialize. During this time, Moina read the poem, “We Shall Not Sleep,” written by a young Canadian doctor, Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae. The poem so moved her, that Moina wrote her own five-line verse in which she made a promise to the soldiers who would not be coming home. From that poem and because many of her students were among the missing, Moina wanted a symbol to remind people of their sacrifice and courage. Moina, who had already done so much to support the troops overseas and at home, decided to use the poppy as a symbol of tribute to veterans and their fallen comrades.

Author Barbara Elizabeth Walsh and artist Layne Johnson worked with experts, primary sources, and Moina’s great-nieces to research and understand Moina Belle Michael. Walsh also used original interviews and Moina’s own book, *The Miracle Flower* (1941) to inform the story. Walsh’s first and only book was inspired by her father’s interaction with Moina during the 1940s. As a young soldier during World War II, Walsh’s father met Moina and was touched by her kindness. Her father’s stories about Moina encouraged Walsh to find out more about the “Poppy Lady” who soldiers respected and remembered fondly.

Johnson’s oil paintings offer several dramatically lit, almost saintly portraits of Moina Belle Michael as well as a somber scene of a battlefield, covered with red poppies and white crosses. Rich with color, Johnson’s narrative paintings portray Moina Belle Michael’s life and times with warmth, drama, and attention to detail. The illustrations depict soldiers going off to war, women working on the home front, and period dress. Johnson has collaborated on more than a doz-

en children’s books over the past 20 years and once stated in an interview, “It’s challenging to show not just what the words say but what they don’t.” He has received awards for his illustrations in *Farmer George Plants a Nation* (2013), *Off Like the Wind! The First Ride of the Pony Express* (2010), *Brian’s Bird* (2000), and *The Poppy Lady*. Johnson is a member of the Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators and the Picture Book Artists Association.

This well-written informational picture book will be enjoyed by readers and especially lends itself to a read aloud. Teachers will find it an excellent addition to units on World War 1, service to others, and/or altruism. Matt de la Pena’s (2016) *Last Stop on Market Street* creates an interesting pairing with *The Poppy Lady* in regard to the theme of altruism or service. Moina Bell Michael provided service to soldiers during both World Wars and had a large national impact. By comparison, the grandmother and grandson in *Last Stop on Market Street* provide service at the local community level when, after attending church one Sunday, they volunteer at a local soup kitchen. These two stories work well together to demonstrate service on two separate levels.

In Flanders Fields: The Story of the Poem by John McCrae written by Linda Granfield and illustrated by Janet Wilson (2014) offers additional background to support *The Poppy Lady*. The selection of the poppy as a symbol of remembrances by Moina Bell Michael is based on the poem by Colonel John McCrae. Granfield tells the story of McCrae’s poem and explains the symbolic meaning of the poppy.

Karen Kenney’s (2014) *National Geographic Kids Everything World War I: Dig in with Thrilling Photos and Fascinating Facts* is a visually engaging book filled with photos, statistics, and facts from World War I. This book provides curious students of World War I with all types of information and complements other World War I stories or stands alone as a resource book.

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We Lived in 1917: Encyclopedia for Children

Written by Pavel Rogozny

Illustrated by Ekaterina Gavrilova

Peshkom v Istoriiu, 2017, 72 pp.

ISBN: 978-5-905474-70-5

Book available only in Russian.

“Humanity lives by myths; one myth has always been replaced by another” (p. 5).

This quotation is the beginning of the first contemporary book about the Russian Revolution of 1917 written for contemporary children. *We Live in 1917: Encyclopedia for Children* by Pavel

Rogozny, a professional historian from St. Petersburg who more often writes academic papers, is his first attempt to write for children about the subject he knows well. It is difficult to imagine how to tell about the October Revolution, which resulted in the creation of the Soviet Union in a form of a crossover picturebook, but Pavel Rogozny has managed to do exactly that.

Portrayals of the Russian Revolution vastly depend on who is telling the story and when. The Soviet historians and the Soviet children’s authors mostly saw the days of the Revolution as the heroic time that saved Russia from the tyranny of the tsar. The Russian émigrés in Europe and the U.S. referred to it as the most horrific event in the Russian history. After perestroika, historians and writers in Russia are trying to find new ways to tell about the past. Many contemporary Russian children’s writers strive to develop a truthful and non-ideological narrative of Soviet history appropriate to a child’s perceptions.

Pavel Rogozny’s overall goal is to be an impartial and unbiased historian. This book depicts the general condition of life in the country at the beginning of the 20th century and the development of industries, transportation, and communications. Rich and beautiful illustrations incorporate old photographs of St. Petersburg and Moscow, new big factories and poor peasants’ houses, along with ordinary families’ pictures and tsar’s family portraits. Each two-page spread bears its own theme—science, education, religion, arts, fashion, etc.

The book describes and visualizes the details of life for Russian industrial workers, peasants, and educated city dwellers. It shows clothes and footwear of different strata of population; fashions of the time for adults and for children. Another important topic is the education system in Russia of that time and who was entitled to what kind of education. The book reviews the state of the arts and literature of the epoch. To see the roots of the Revolution, the reader needs to understand the social and cultural situation in Russia of the 1910s.

From the arts and fashion, the author moves to describing the position of the Russian Empire in the World War I. Narrating victories and defeats of the Russian army, Rogozny tries to be as dispassionate as possible. He shows how the war and new technology were connected. The book portrays the achievements of the Russian science, such as the Mendeleev Periodic Table and Pavlov’s research of the nervous system as well as the great accomplishments of the Rus-

sian medicine of that time. It also talks about the discrepancy between the level of medical science and the practical condition in the hospitals.

From the pages about the history of revolutionary movements and politics of the time, the young reader will easily receive a comprehensive picture of the political divisions just before the Revolution. These are probably the most telling pages of the book. Each leader of a political party – left, right, or centrist – is portrayed with a bubble stating the main motto of his party or a movement, such as monarchists, constitutional democrats, the Bolsheviks, or anarchists.

With many details, step by step, almost day by day, the book moves the reader through the events of 1917. The February Revolution, the Tzar's abdication, and the failure of the Provisional Government brought the country to the Bolsheviks revolt in October 2017. The Bolsheviks took power, first in St. Petersburg and Moscow, and later in the entire country. That led to the Civil War and massive immigration. The book provides compact biographies of the major players of the Revolution. Many of them were killed later; others ended up in exile.

The author consistently does not take sides. He suggests that the Bolsheviks' slogans of ending the war and distributing the land were attractive to people, especially to poor people. At the same time, he truthfully reports how the Bolsheviks expelled many well-educated people from the country.

The book will help children get necessary information about the events of a hundred year ago. The publishing house "Peshkom v Istoriuu" ("Into History on Foot") published a lot of books about history—from the Paleolithic times to various periods of Russian history. *We Live in 1917* has two companion books, *The Photographs from 1917* by Alexandra Litvina and Ekaterina Stepanenko (2017), and *Walking Revolutionary Moscow* by Natalia and Vasiliy Volkov (2017).

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