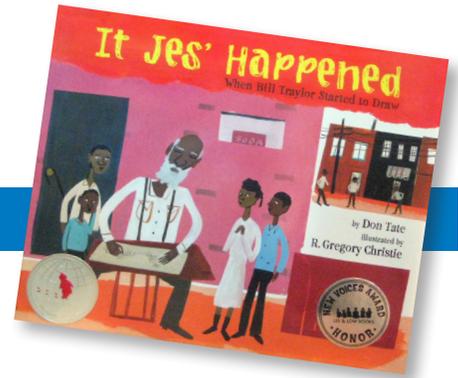


It Jes' Happened: When Bill Traylor Started to Draw



A RIF GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND FAMILIES

Themes: Folk Art, Slavery, Transitions

Book Brief: A former slave, Bill began drawing at the age of 85. His drawings were based upon his memories of rural life and the observations he made of the bustling

urban life in Montgomery, Alabama.

Author: Don Tate

Illustrator: R. Gregory Christie



TIME TO READ!

Before reading, make predictions: When did Bill start to draw? What types of things did he draw? Where did Bill do most of his drawing?

Do you like to draw? How do you feel when you are drawing?

After reading, ask questions:

- ◆ Why did Bill choose to draw as an older adult?
- ◆ Do you think he drew pictures as a child? Explain.
- ◆ Why did Charles Shannon take an interest in Bill?
- ◆ What was Bill saying through his art?

While reading, make connections: Have you ever moved to a new place or enrolled in a new school?

RELATED ACTIVITIES

SWEET, SWEET POTATO

Ingredients: 1 large sweet potato, 1 tsp. cinnamon sugar, cooking oil spray

Cut sweet potato into 1 inch cubes. Toss with cinnamon sugar mixture. Spray baking sheet with cooking oil spray. Lay sweet potato cubes out on baking sheet and spray a light coating of cooking oil on cubes. Bake in oven at 350 degrees for 30 minutes.

FRONT STEP FINDINGS

Bill Traylor sat on the sidewalk and, on recycled cardboard, drew pictures of people and events around him. Sit on your front steps and create a picture using the back of a cereal box as your canvas. What is happening around your neighborhood?

How would your picture change based on the time of day? The time of year?

HOMEMADE CRAFTS

Visit a local craft show, bazaar, or school fair that sells homemade objects. What do you notice about the types of crafts? Do you see anything you would like to try making? Ask some of the artists how they came up with their ideas.



TECHNOLOGY LINK

Create your own folk art scene at www.nga.gov/kids/zone/facesplaces.htm.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

OTHER BOOKS ABOUT AFRICAN AMERICAN ARTISTS

Art from Her Heart: Folk Artist Clementine Hunter, Kathy Whitehead (2008), *Dave the Potter*, Laban Carrick Hill (2010), *Deep Blues: Bill Traylor, the Self Taught Artist*, Mary E. Lyons (1995).

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