

## ★ **Spies of Mississippi: The True Story of the Spy Network That Tried to Destroy the Civil Rights Movement.**

**By Rick Bowers.**

2010. 128p. illus. National Geographic, \$16.95 (9781426305955); lib. ed., \$26.90 (9781426305962). 323.1196. Gr. 7–10.

**W**ith all the books on the civil rights movement for young people, it's hard to believe there's a topic that hasn't yet been touched. But Bowers, through impeccable research and personal investigation, seems to have come up with something chillingly new. In 1956, the state of Mississippi conceived a Sovereignty Commission that began as a propaganda outlet and morphed into a spy network, with a goal of stopping integration and crushing the civil rights movement in the state. Written with clarity and understated power, the book methodically shows how white politicians organized the network and willing blacks accepted payment to infiltrate groups like the NAACP, or in some cases rail against civil rights organizations in churches and African American newspapers. After the election of Governor Ross Barnett, the commission's tactics grew bolder, and violence became a part of the mix. Those with knowledge of the era will find this a vivid depiction of those turbulent days, but for them as well as students new to the history the extremes will be an eye-opener. The inset of photographs might have worked better spread throughout the text, but the story is so powerful it hardly needs visuals. Sources, an extensive bibliography, and copies of some of the commission documents (all were unsealed in 2007) are appended. —*Ilene Cooper*



## **The Civil Rights Movement.**

**By Erinn Banting.**

2009. 46p. illus. Weigl, lib. ed., \$29.05 (9781590368824). 323.1196. Gr. 5–8.

This slim overview of the civil rights movement, part of the African American History series, hits the most important events of the 1950s and 1960s, but more care could have been taken with the details. The book begins by defining civil rights and then moves to a brief history of African Americans in the U.S. Glancing at the way World War II affected segregation, more time is then spent on *Brown v. Board of Education*, Rosa Parks and the Montgomery bus boycott, sit-ins, freedom riders, groups like the NAACP and SNCC, and the role of the government in making sure laws were both passed and obeyed. Black-and-white and color photographs are well-chosen, though sometimes poorly cropped. Some captions are confusing; one makes the vague claim that public places and lunch counters were segregated “for several years.” The writing is overly broad at times, though certainly fact-filled. Activities, a glossary, and pointers to a few books and Web sites are appended. —*Ilene Cooper*

every spacious double-page spread, sets the shocking assassination of the children within a general overview of both the racist segregation of the times and the struggle against it. The civil rights history includes the start of the NAACP, the resistance of Rosa Parks, sit-ins at lunch counters, the leadership of Dr. Martin

Luther King Jr., and more. Also included are specific examples of racist hatred, including Police Commissioner Connor's order to use fire hoses on young African American children. One of the most shocking photos shows Klan members at a rally with their children in full regalia. Final pages feature full-page biographies with small portraits of each of the four girls as well as the two young boys who died on the streets. Many readers will use the extensive source notes and bibliography that close this close view of that tragic Sunday. —*Hazel Rochman*

## **Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, 1954.**

**By KaaVonia Hinton.**

2009. 48p. illus. Mitchell Lane, lib. ed., \$21.50 (9781584157380). 344.73. Gr. 5–8.

From the Monumental Milestones: Great Events of Modern Times series, this slim volume provides short accounts of the five cases (originating in South Carolina, Virginia, Delaware, and the District of Columbia as well as Kansas) that were combined and argued before the U.S. Supreme Court as *Brown v. Board of Education*. The book's final chapter describes the Court's historic ruling and its effects on school desegregation in the U.S. Sidebars present information on topics such as the education for African Americans in the U.S. and the integration of Central High in Little Rock, Arkansas. The book's many photos portray the people mentioned as well as the 1950s setting. Back matter includes a chronology, a black history time line, a glossary, and chapter notes. Though the book's page design, using pink and lavender, is unattractive, and the text could have been more tightly edited, students looking for a brief, illustrated book on the subject may find this a useful resource. —*Carolyn Phelan*

## **Inspiring African-American Inventors: Nine Extraordinary Lives.**

**By Jeff C. Young.**

2009. 128p. illus. Enslow, lib. ed., \$33.27 (9781598450804). 608.996. Gr. 5–8.

This collective biography from the Great Scientists and Famous Inventors series profiles nine African American inventors: Lewis Howard Latimer, Jan E. Matzeliger, Granville T. Woods, George Washington Carver, Madam C. J. Walker, Garrett A. Morgan, Percy Lavon Julian, Patricia Era Bath, and Lonnie G. Johnson. Besides providing biographical information, the book discusses inventions such as the shoe-lasting machine, the three-way traffic signal, synthesized cortisone, and laser surgery for cataracts. The book's page design, using colors for backgrounds, borders, and sidebars as well as in the illustrations, sometimes distracts the eye from the text, but many of the illustrations, primarily photos and reproductions of drawings, are well chosen. Because the series is part of the MyReportLinks.com imprint, the book includes pictures of Web pages accompanied by directions for reaching online links to approved sites related to the inventors. Clearly written and logically organized, this volume provides a useful guide to the subject. —*Carolyn Phelan*

## **Jacob Lawrence: A Painter's Story.**

**By Sneed B. Collard.**

2009. 42p. illus. Marshall Cavendish/Benchmark, lib. ed., \$20.95 (9780761440581). 759.13. Gr. 2–4.

This entry in the American Heroes series takes a welcome turn from George Washington and Davy Crockett to introduce young readers to one of the preeminent twentieth-century African American artists. Collard recounts a few important touchstones of Lawrence's life (coming of age in Harlem during the Great Depression, working under the WPA, being drafted into the Coast Guard

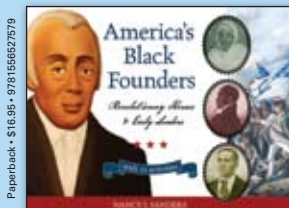
## ★ **New perspectives for Black History Month** ★



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An Eyewitness Account of the Kidnapping of Emmett Till

“A book that should be read, a story that demands to be told.”  
—*Voya*



### **America's Black Founders**

Revolutionary Heroes and Early Leaders

“A solid resource for teachers and librarians who wish to engage children in this formative period of American history.”  
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