



Freedom Walkers: The Story of the Montgomery Bus Boycott Grades 6-8

By Russell Freedman

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On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks refused to move to the back of the bus and give up her seat to a white man. This refusal to give up her dignity sparked the Montgomery bus boycott, a yearlong struggle, and a major victory in the civil rights movement. Source notes, map, bibliography, index.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Starred Review. Grade 4–6—Freedman begins this outstanding history by reminding his audience that the injustices of racial segregation did not happen that long ago in the United States. Throughout the book, he gives accounts of how much coordination and sacrifice went into conducting the Montgomery Bus Boycott—far more than students are likely to imagine from the usual popular and oversimplified versions offered in textbooks and on television. There is a refreshing emphasis on depictions of regular people and forgotten local crusaders working together to make the boycott possible and triumphant, from inspiring descriptions of drivers getting up at dawn to take others to work to accounts of well-known civil-rights lawyers working to find the right plaintiff to challenge unjust laws. Freedman's prose style pulls readers into the narrative, integrating the actual recorded words and deeds of the people to tell the story. The high-quality, black-and-white photographs range from everyday scenes of African-American boycotters meeting, waiting for carpools, and protesting to representations of more famous figures, such as Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Jr., etc. Extensive chapter notes, an annotated selected bibliography, and a thorough index round out the exemplary presentation. Pair this volume with Ann Bausum's *Freedom Riders* (National Geographic) and Nikki Giovanni's *Rosa* (Holt, both 2005) for a powerful introduction to the Civil Rights Movement.—*Michael Santangelo, Brooklyn Public Library, NY*

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Starred Review As Freedman points out, the Montgomery Bus Boycott was a triumphant historical event, and there are numerous memoirs, articles, and scholarly works, for adults and for young readers, about the leaders and the ordinary heroes. In his signature clear prose, Freedman draws on the best of those personal stories and historical accounts to provide a dramatic overview of how the 381-day resistance to segregated buses spearheaded the civil rights movement. He brings close the experience of what it was like to be there, on the bus and on the street. With the eloquent accounts of the legendary heroes—Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King and more—are the stories of other important activists, including Jo Ann Robinson (president of the Women's Political Council) and teenager Claudette Colvin, as well as the lawyers and politicians. The photo-essay design is attractive and spacious. On every spread, readers will find beautifully reproduced black-and-white photos, including famous pictures as well as a few not often seen, including a picture of a leaflet urging boycott. Suggest Diane McWhorter's *A Dream of Freedom* (2004) and Ellen Levin's *Freedom's Children* (1993) to readers who will want to find out more. Freedman provides fully documented chapter notes and an excellent bibliographic essay. *Hazel Rochman*

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