



Thomas Jefferson Builds a Library

By Barb Rosenstock

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As soon as Thomas Jefferson learned to read, he found his passion: books, books, and more books! Before, during, and after the American Revolution, Jefferson collected thousands of books on hundreds of subjects. In fact, his massive collection eventually helped rebuild the Library of Congress—now the largest library in the world. Barb Rosenstock’s rhythmic words and John O’Brien’s whimsical illustrations capture Jefferson’s passion for the written word as well as little-known details about book collecting. Author and artist worked closely with experts to create the first picture book on Jefferson’s love of reading, writing, and books. An author’s note, bibliography, and source notes for quotations are also included.

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Thomas Jefferson Builds a Library By Barb Rosenstock Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #218827 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Calkins Creek
- Published on: 2013-09-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.50" h x 9.50" w x .50" l, .85 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 32 pages

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 1-5—It is no small feat to entertain children in a book about loving books (an increasingly crowded shelf), but this duo succeeds admirably through well-chosen facts, staggering statistics, an interactive text, and humor. Readers glimpse Jefferson's childhood, adolescence, fatherhood, and presidency through his obsession with reading. There is levity and energy in O'Brien's ink and watercolor scenes. Jefferson's horse has a book-shaped saddle; young Tom fiddles while reading the music from a book mounted to the bridle. There is also sadness, when Jefferson reads to his wife on her deathbed. The full-spread compositions are supplemented by insets shaped like open books that contain quotes by or about Jefferson and his times or interests. In one, a slave remembers that his master might have 20 books surrounding him on the floor. Another describes his revolving bookstand holding five volumes, so he “never needed to stop writing to read or stop reading to write.” Rosenstock details the man's substantial and ongoing involvement in developing and contributing to the national library. The final scene shows Jefferson opening a large book portraying modern and Colonial visitors mingling at the Library of Congress; a minor disappointment is that O'Brien drew generic bookcases instead of the splendid reading room. An author's note adds more information, including context for the fact that the author of the Declaration of Independence owned about 600 enslaved individuals throughout his life. This is a unique portrayal of the life and passions of the third president.—Wendy Lukehart, District of Columbia Public Libraryα(c) Copyright 2013. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

From [Booklist](#)

This attractive picture book uses Thomas Jefferson's love of reading and collecting books as a lens through which to view the story of his life. Even as a young child, Tom reads through his father's library, and as a young man, he collects his own. He marries, has children, and makes sure that they read, too. He uses what he has learned from books to write the Declaration of Independence, and other papers through his presidency and retirement to 1814, when a fire destroyed the Library of Congress. The story concludes with Jefferson selling his beloved books to form the basis of the new collection there. The writing, punctuated with questions, statements, and exclamations in red ink, sketches the biographical framework and fills it in with quotes and bits of history to create an unusual portrait of the man. O'Brien's ink drawings, enhanced by watercolor washes in subdued tones, have a quirky humor all their own. An informative author's note rounds out this appealing introduction to Jefferson. Grades 3-5. --Carolyn Phelan

Review

"This attractive picture book uses Thomas Jefferson's love of reading and collecting books as a lens through which to view the story of his life. . . An informative author's note rounds out this appealing introduction to Jefferson." --*Booklist*

"This unusual picture-book biography fosters a new understanding of Thomas Jefferson's life as viewed through his love of books and its impact on our burgeoning nation. . . Sure to be enjoyed, this is an engaging study of one of our Founding Father's great legacies." --*Kirkus Reviews*

"It is no small feat to entertain children in a book about loving books (an increasingly crowded shelf), but this duo succeeds admirably through well-chosen facts, staggering statistics, an interactive text, and humor. .

. This is a unique portrayal of the life and passions of the third president." --*School Library Journal*

"Jefferson's well-documented obsession with books--reading, recommending, lending, gifting, and collecting--gets the picture-book treatment in this chatty biography that describes the journey of Jefferson's collection from private stash to the basis of the Library of Congress. . ." --*Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Thomas Lemos:

What do you with regards to book? It is not important together with you? Or just adding material when you want something to explain what the one you have problem? How about your spare time? Or are you busy man? If you don't have spare time to do others business, it is give you a sense of feeling bored faster. And you have time? What did you do? Everybody has many questions above. The doctor has to answer that question due to the fact just their can do that. It said that about reserve. Book is familiar in each person. Yes, it is appropriate. Because start from on jardín de infancia until university need that Thomas Jefferson Builds a Library to read.

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