

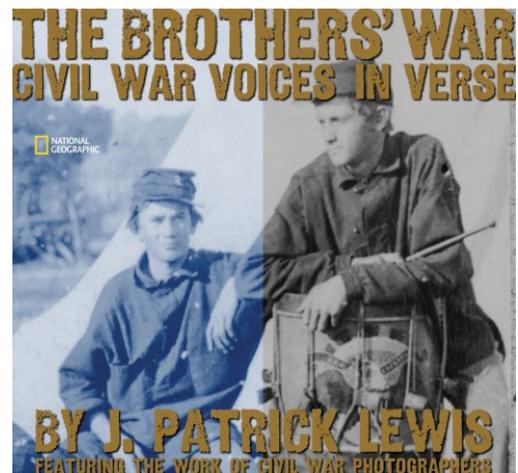
The Brothers' War: Civil War Voices in Verse

by J. Patrick Lewis

A Choose to Read Ohio Toolkit

About the Book

A century and a half ago our country stood divided into North and South. The Civil War, the most violent in American history, was killing and wounding over a million people. But those are just the facts. What did it feel like to be a teenage soldier dying in a ditch? A military leader watching a soldier blown to bits? A former slave fighting not only for the North but for his own future? In this collection of poems, J. Patrick Lewis adopts the voices of soldiers and civilians, Northerners and Southerners, famous and obscure, dead and alive, to bring the emotional side of war to life for a new generation of readers.



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Book details:

The Brothers' War: Civil War Voices in Verse by J. Patrick Lewis

National Geographic Society, 2007, ISBN 978-1-4263-0036-3

Ages 10–14 / Grades 5–8

<http://www.ngchildrensbooks.org>



About the Author

J. Patrick (Pat) Lewis is the award-winning and prolific author of more than 45 picture books for children. His poetry has appeared in dozens of magazines and more than 70 anthologies. He is proud to be the author of a National Children's Book Week Poem and is a frequent contributor of children's books reviews for *The New York Times*.

Lewis writes full-time, makes over fifty elementary school visits a year, keynotes at literature conferences, and presents teachers' workshops on introducing poetry in the classroom. He has three grown children and four grandchildren. He lives in Westerville, Ohio.

See Pat's photo album here: <http://www.jpatricklewis.com/scenes.shtml>.

Author biography and photograph courtesy J. Patrick Lewis; used with permission.

Author Resources:

J. Patrick Lewis' official website

<http://www.jpatricklewis.com/>

Interview with J. Patrick Lewis from Wild Geese Guides

<http://wildgeeseguides.blogspot.com/2010/01/j-patrick-lewis-poetry-interview.html>

For publicity and speaking engagement inquiries:

<http://www.jpatricklewis.com/visits.shtml>

Talk About It!

- This book is titled ***The Brothers' War***. Why? How do the poems reveal the impact of the war on human families and communities?
- Talk about the American Civil War: its place in history and what it means today. Discuss the impact of the war, slavery, economics, etc. Explore different aspects of the war and their effect on our country.
- This book is illustrated with actual photographs, some of which can be difficult to view. Talk about the difference it makes to the reader, especially in a book on a more serious subject, to look at photographs instead of illustrations that someone has drawn. Does the book have a different effect because of the photographs?
- Photography was a much different process during the time of the Civil War. Discuss photography as a process, then and now.
- ***The Brothers' War*** is written using poetry and actual letters. Talk about poetry and journaling as literature forms. Do these forms effectively tell the stories? Look at other books that use poetry and journaling.
- This book offers a timeline that covers the period of the Civil War. Examine that timeline. Discuss the span of time that involved the war and the time that has passed since the war. How long was the Civil War? What events have happened in your life during the same amount of time?

Learn and have fun!

Educators: *These activities align to Ohio Academic Content Standards as indicated in parentheses after each activity. These are examples. Other content standards may also apply.*

Kids, parents, and others: *These ideas are useful for library programs, family activities, and other projects. Academic content standards define what students in K-12 should know and be able to do at each grade. They are included for teachers who want to use this book in school. For more information on the Ohio Academic Content Standards, see the Ohio Department of Education website at <http://www.ode.state.oh.us> and click on "Academic Content Standards" in the Educators section.*

- Does your community have a local museum or historical society? If so, visit to learn how American Civil War history involves your community, or have a speaker come to your library or classroom to give a presentation about the Civil War. The Ohio Civil War 150 site (<http://www.ohiocivilwar150.org/>), sponsored by the Ohio Historical Society, can help you identify speakers and field trip locations. (*SS History 6-8 Benchmark G; People in Societies 3-5, 6-8; Geography 3-5, 6-8*)
- Create a timeline of the American Civil War. Use World Book Student, available to students through INFOhio (<http://www.infohio.org/>) and to all Ohio residents through Ohio Web Library (<http://www.ohioweblibrary.org/>). Click on "Timelines" under "Research Tools" to get started. Using the encyclopedia's search function, use "Civil War" as your keyword search and select images to use in your timeline. You may use the same techniques to create a timeline of events that are important to you, your life, your family history, etc. (*SS History 3-5, 6-8 Benchmarks A, G; Skills and Methods 3-5, 6-8; Library Technology Literacy 3-5, 6-8 Benchmark C*)
- The theme of **The Brothers' War** can be found right before the title page. It states, "If war is nothing more than lists of battles, then human lives count less than saber rattles." Using captions and other informational text features from this book, estimate the number of lives lost in the Civil War. Use INFOhio or Ohio Web Library to research how many people died or were wounded in the Civil War. Compare/contrast these statistics to another war, such as the Iraq War. Then browse war quotes from Oxford Reference Online Premium, and design a poster with all your compiled information. (*SS History 6-8 Benchmark G; Skills and Methods 3-5, 6-8, Library Technology Literacy 3-5, 6-8 Benchmark C*)
- Explore writing through poetry and journaling. Keep a journal for a set period of time, or write a poem about something of interest, a certain time period (in history or your life), the Civil War, or war in general. (*ELA Writing Applications 5-7*)
- Poetry is meant to be heard, as its origins are from the oral tradition. Pick your favorite poem from **The Brothers' War**, and enact the poem using costuming, actions, and appropriate props. (*ELA Communication: Oral and Visual 5-7*)
- Use a map to locate and plot the locations of the battles described in **The Brothers' War**. A Google Lit Trip (<http://www.googlelittrips.org/>) using Google Earth to explore the geography of the book can be found here: <http://bit.ly/duT5yh> (opens Google Lit Trips). (*SS Geography 3-5, 6-8 Benchmark A*)
- Learn more about photography by contacting and interviewing a local photographer. Use library resources to research the history of photography. When was photography invented, and how it has changed? In what ways has the process improved? Experiment with photography. Have your photos developed, then use them to create a poster and presentation. (*ELA Communication: Oral and Visual 5-7; Library Information Literacy 3-5, 6-8*)



<http://oh.webjunction.org/ohctrointro>

Explore More!

Explore these websites that take a closer look at the Civil War:

The Civil War Homepage

<http://www.civil-war.net/>

Ohio Civil War 150

<http://www.ohiocivilwar150.org/>

2011 marks the sesquicentennial (150th anniversary) of the start of the American Civil War. The Ohio Civil War 150 website, a project of the Ohio Historical Society and its partners, includes digital collections, teacher resources, a statewide calendar of Civil War-related events, discussion forums, a timeline, and much more.

Find out more about the Underground Railroad:

Ohio Historical Center

<http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/entry.php?rec=1518>

National Geographic

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/railroad/>

National Register of Historic Places

<http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/travel/underground/>

Find more photographs of the Civil War at

The Library of Congress - <http://www.loc.gov>

The National Archives and Records Administration - <http://www.nara.gov>

Find more books about the Civil War at

Carol Hurst's Children's Literature Site

<http://www.carolhurst.com/subjects/ushistory/civilwar.html>

About Choose to Read Ohio

Choose to Read Ohio (CTRO) spotlights Ohio authors and promotes reading across Ohio. The State Library of Ohio, in partnership with Ohioana Library Association, developed this initiative to encourage Ohioans of all ages to share literature by authors native to, residing in, or associated with Ohio. CTRO is adaptable for use in classrooms, libraries, bookstores, by book discussion groups, families, and other community groups.

Explore Choose to Read Ohio resources & toolkits: <http://oh.webjunction.org/ohctrointro>.