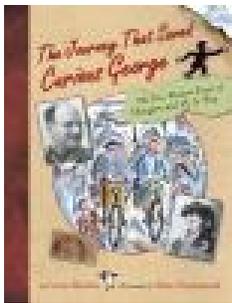


The Journey That Saved Curious George: The True Wartime Escape of Margret and H.A. Rey by Louise Borden

A Choose to Read Ohio Toolkit



About the Book

World War II had just started. Hans and Margret Rey were German-born Jewish artists living in France. As Hitler's tanks rolled into Paris in 1940, the Reys escaped on bicycles. In one bicycle basket were the Reys' drawings and story of a mischievous little monkey with the French name Fifi.

The Journey That Saved Curious George: The True Wartime Escape of Margret and H.A. Rey is the exciting and inspiring story of how the Reys and Fifi made it to New York, where Fifi became Curious George.

Louise Borden's text captures the tension in Paris in 1940 and the urgency to escape, the uprooting of lives, and the difficulty of leaving a place you love. At the same time, this story is about the creative process — the inspiration, joy, and constant work that went into creating the curious, lovable monkey.

Allan Drummond's delightful illustrations enhance the narrative and are full of teachable material. This guide provides you with ideas for exploring the Reys' true story through discussion, examination of primary source material, research, and written and oral projects



*Photograph Used With
Permission from Houghton
Mifflin Books For Children*

About the Author

Louise Borden was born in Cincinnati in 1949. Inspired by a grandmother who loved history, Borden grew up fascinated by the stories of ordinary people and their relation to historical events. An avid reader of nonfiction and historical fiction, Borden majored in history at Denison University. She worked as a teaching assistant and later as a teacher for young children, and realized a lifelong dream when she became co-owner of The Bookshelf, a bookstore in her hometown of Cincinnati.

In 1971, Borden (then Walker) married Peter Borden. It was when the younger of their two daughters started elementary school that Borden began work on her first children's book, **Caps, Hats, Socks, and Mittens: A Book About the Four Seasons**. Her love of

history has come into play in many of the books that have followed, as has her experience — through both teaching and parenthood — with children's thoughts, feelings, and concerns. Borden enjoys playing tennis, watching baseball (she's still an avid fan of the Cincinnati Reds), and reading, a pastime which keeps her mindful of the interests of her audience.

Author Resources:

Louise Borden's Official Website

<http://www.louiseborden.com/index2.html>

Kids Reads Author Page on Louise Borden

<http://www.kidsreads.com/authors/au-borden-louise.asp#talk0509>

Includes an interview with the author about **The Journey that Saved Curious George**.

2006 CET TV Interview

<http://www.cetconnect.org/MediaPlayer.aspx?vid=580>

Louise Borden discusses her work in this audio file of an interview on Cincinnati Educational Television.



Discussion Questions

Pre-Reading

Ask students to share what they know or remember about Curious George. You may want to read one of the books, such as the original **Curious George**, **Curious George Rides a Bike**, or **Curious George Gets a Medal**.

Have students pay attention to the illustrations. Return to the illustrations after students have read **The Journey That Saved Curious George**. Have them note what the Reys took from their own lives and put in their Curious George books, such as Hans Rey's pipe, their love of animals and zoos in particular, their life among palm trees in Brazil, and their departure from Europe on an ocean liner.

The story of Curious George was born during a turbulent time in history. Research some of the themes of World War II. Help students understand that it was called a world war because so many countries fought in it; the battlefields stretched across Europe, North Africa, Asia, and the Pacific. The Reys were two of the millions of Europeans whose lives were affected by the conflict, especially because they were Jewish. An explanation of the danger faced by Jews in Europe will help students understand why quick escape was so important.

Louise Borden started her research for this book with a question: How did the Reys escape from Paris? Remind students that successful research means asking one question after another. It is like finding the pieces to a puzzle.

After Reading

1. What are the descriptive words Borden uses to give readers the flavor of Hamburg, Germany, the Reys' birthplace? How are Hamburg and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, similar and different?
2. Look at the items on pages 22 and 23. If you wanted to write a story about the Reys and Curious George, what information could you gather from these primary sources?
3. Look at a map of France. In which direction did the Reys travel when they left Paris? Why might it have been too dangerous to stay in France?
4. What do we learn about the "largest motorized evacuation in history" from the Reys' journey? What were the hardships of the trip?



Extension Projects

Language Arts

Ask students to retell the escape from Paris to Lisbon in their own words. If they need help, write the chapter titles from pages 44–62 on the board to remind them of the sequence of events. Have students prepare to make a timeline by writing a list of dates with an event next to each date. As they review the story, remind them to look for phrases such as "the next day," as well as for dates.

Library skills

Have students gather primary sources to be used in a book about themselves. Page through **The Journey That Saved Curious George** and list the primary sources Borden used. How did they help her solve the mystery of what the Reys did and where they went? Ask each student to imagine that he or she has been elected president and a biography is being written about him or her. Where could a writer find out about the student's school years? Answers might include school records, interviews with teachers, and the students' possessions.

Have students make a list of primary sources they own that an author could use. Examples include a yearbook, sports medals, homework assignments, and letters or cards to relatives.

Have students bring in several of their primary sources to share in small groups. Each group should make a list of the items and what they could learn from each. Examples might be swimming medal/ good in sports; yearbook/member of the chess club; homework assignment/ did well in social studies; letters/ has an aunt in Canada

Finally, tell students that it is truly possible that they might write their autobiography or someone else might write a book about them. Have students list the primary sources they would start collecting from now on to help a writer. Students should give reasons for each choice.

History

Have students create two lists of events: one of the major events in the Reys' lives and the other of world events that affected the Reys. Suggest that students use library resources to find these dates:

- Start of World War I (1914)
- End of World War I (1918)
- Start of World War II (1939)
- German troops enter Paris (1940)
- End of World War II (1945)



Additional Resources

Websites

Educators and Librarians Activity Time Guide

http://www.houghtonmifflinbooks.com/features/cgsite/journey_lp.shtml

Lesson plans and activities for *The Journey that Saved Curious George*

About Margret and H.A. Rey

<http://www.houghtonmifflinbooks.com/features/cgsite/history.shtml#authors>

Learn about the authors of the Curious George books on this page from Houghton Mifflin's Curious George site

Curious George

<http://www.houghtonmifflinbooks.com/features/cgsite/index.shtml>

Resources for teachers and librarians from publisher Houghton Mifflin

H.A. and Margret Rey Collection

<http://www.lib.usm.edu/~degrum/html/collectionhl/ch-reys.shtml>

The Rey Collection is a highlight of the de Grummond Children's Literature Collection and includes original drawings and manuscripts.

Margret and H.A. Rey Center

<http://theycenter.org/Welcome.html>

The Rey Center is a multigenerational center for learning and exploration which provides a direct connection to the lives of Margret and Hans Rey, lives that were filled with continued learning and community service.

School-Wide Parallel Reading Using World War II and Growing Up Themes by Carol Hurst

<http://www.carolhurst.com/profsubjects/reading/parallel.html>

On exhibit at the Jewish Museum in New York City: *Curious George Saves the Day: The Art of Margret and H.A. Rey*, March 14 - August 1, 2010

<http://www.thejewishmuseum.org/exhibitions/curiousgeorge>



Books

Josephson, Judith Pinkerton. **Growing Up in World War II: 1941 To 1945.** Lerner Publications, 2003.

Josephson gives a general introduction to the times, including such topics as work, play, and education. *World War II* follows a similar pattern, but the emphasis is on what it was like to live through the war years.

Miller, Wanda J. **Teaching U.S. History Through Children's Literature: Post-World War II.** Libraries Unlimited, 1997.

Miller integrates historical fiction and nonfiction and suggests two or more titles—one for use with classes and one for use with small reading groups. Summaries of the books, author information, activities, and topics for discussion are supplemented with vocabulary lists and ideas for research topics and further reading.

Wee, Robert James. **World War II in Literature for Youth: A Guide and Resource Book.** Scarecrow Press, 2004.

This title provides a wealth of information with annotated listings of more than 3,500 titles—a broad sampling of books on the war years, 1939-1945. Includes both fiction and nonfiction works about all aspects of the war.

Cited Resource: **Book guide for *The Journey That Saved Curious George*** was used with permission of Houghton Mifflin Books For Children.

http://www.houghtonmifflinbooks.com/features/cgsite/journey_lp.shtml

Book Details:

The Journey that Saved Curious George: The True Wartime Escape of Margret and H.A. Rey by Louise Borden.

Houghton Mifflin, 2005. Ages 9-12. ISBN-13: 978-0618339242

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>.