

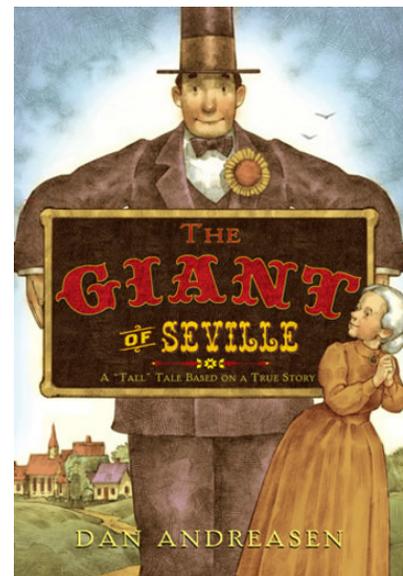
# The Giant of Seville

by Dan Andreasen  
A Choose to Read Ohio Toolkit

## About the Book

Based on the life of a real circus giant, Captain Martin Van Buren Bates!

Nothing exciting ever happens in the sleepy town of Seville, Ohio—until Captain Martin Van Buren Bates arrives. Standing seven feet and eleven and a half inches, Captain Bates is a giant who has toured around the world in the circus. In search of a quiet home for himself and his wife, (who is also a giant!) Captain Bates decides to get off the train in Seville, although he fears he will be too big for the little town. But Seville is full of surprises, and the giant is about to learn that the only thing that matters is the size of one's heart.



A “tall” tale based on the true story of a real-life circus giant, **The Giant of Seville** is a heartwarming tale of friendship and acceptance that will resonate with children. The book includes an author's note and an archival photograph of Captain Martin Van Buren Bates and his wife, Anna Swann Bates, Seville's most famous residents.

Permission to use book jacket image and book description granted by Abrams Books. Photo of Martin Van Buren Bates and his wife Anna, with friend, from <http://yeapotter.com/mvbbates.htm>.

## Book details

**The Giant of Seville** by Dan Andreasen.

Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2007, ISBN 978-0-8109-0988-5. Ages 4 - 8.

[http://www.abramsbooks.com/Books/The\\_Giant\\_of\\_Seville-9780810909885.html](http://www.abramsbooks.com/Books/The_Giant_of_Seville-9780810909885.html)

**The Giant of Seville** is a 2007 Horace Mann Upstander Award Honor Book.

<http://upstandersaward.org/honor.html>

## About the Author

Dan Andreasen is the author and illustrator of **The Giant of Seville: A Tall Tale Based On a True Story, With a Little Help from Daddy** and **A Special Day for Mommy**, and the illustrator of numerous books for children, including **Sailor Boy Jig** by Margaret Wise Brown; **Chico** by Sandra Day O'Connor; **Otis and Sydney and the Best Birthday Ever** by Laura Numeroff and **Streets of Gold** by Rosemary Wells. He lives in Medina, Ohio, about twenty minutes from Seville, with his wife and three children.



*Author biography and photograph courtesy Abrams Books for Young Readers; used with permission.*

## Author Resources

**Dan Andreasen page on Shannon Associates site**

[http://www.shannonassociates.com/artists/index.cfm?artist\\_name=danandreasen](http://www.shannonassociates.com/artists/index.cfm?artist_name=danandreasen)

View dozens of images of Dan Andreasen's art on his illustration agency's website.

**For publicity and speaking engagement inquiries:**

Contact Laura Mihalick, Publicity & Marketing Associate  
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## Talk about it!

Topics to share when discussing this book with children

- What is a giant? Talk about giants in fairytales like *Jack and the Beanstalk* and about real-life giants. How do you think it would feel to be much taller than everyone around you? What activities would be easier to do? What would be harder to do?
- Have you ever been to the circus? The circus today is much different than it was in the past. What kinds of things do we see in a circus today? Why would Captain Bates have been in the circus?
- Captain and Anna Bates were much larger than other people. How do we deal with differences in people today? How do you feel about being taller, shorter, faster, or slower than other people?
- Although this story is called a tall tale, it is based on a true story. Martin and Anna Bates were real people who lived in Seville, Ohio, and they really were that tall. A tall tale is a story that has been stretched. Things happen in a tall tale that do not happen in real life, but the tall tale is told as if it were completely true. Do you know any tall tales?
- Some parts of ***The Giant of Seville*** are stretched a little bit, just for fun. What things happen in the story that you think did not happen in real life?
- Calling this story a “tall” tale is also a pun. Captain Bates was very tall, so it is a play on words to call the story “tall”. A pun is the humorous use of a word that plays with different meanings of the same word, or similar meanings or sounds of different words. What other puns do you know?
- The people of Seville accepted Captain and Anna Bates as they were, even though they were different than everyone else. What does it mean to accept differences in others? What are some ways to be accepting of all people?
- The people of Seville were very generous to Captain and Anna Bates. What does it mean to be generous? In what ways did the townspeople of Seville show their generosity?



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

## 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.

These activities also map to Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences.

- Pair children and have them measure one another's heights. Make a graph of the students' heights. Ask each child to estimate approximately how many of them it would take to reach the height of the giants in the book. (M Measurement PK-2 Benchmarks A, C, D; Multiple Intelligences: Logical/Mathematical)
- The residents of Seville go out of their way to welcome Captain Bates into their community. Ask the children to tell about a time someone did something nice for them or a time when they did something nice for someone else. Then, have each child write his/her story on a giant paper heart for display. (SS Citizenship Rights and Responsibilities K-2 Benchmarks A, B; ELA Writing Applications PK-2; Multiple Intelligences: Intrapersonal, Interpersonal and Verbal/Linguistic)
- The residents of Seville threw a square dance for Captain Bates. Teach the group square dancing techniques and practice square dancing together. Group leaders may find square dance instructional books and CDs at the library, or locate free downloads such as these from EZ-Tracks (<http://www.ez-tracks.com/Country-SubCat-Square%20Dance.html>). Dosado has a list of square dance call definitions to help you out: [www.dosado.com/lists/defs/bs-msdef.htm](http://www.dosado.com/lists/defs/bs-msdef.htm). (FA-Dance Creative Expression and Communication K-4 Benchmark A; FA-Music Historical, Cultural, and Social Contexts K-4; Multiple Intelligences: Rhythmic/Musical and Bodily-Kinesthetic)
- Have the children retell the beginning, middle, and end of **The Giant of Seville**. Then, give each a graphic organizer (see <http://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/>) to plan the beginning, middle, and end of his/her own tall tale. After that, have each write his/her own tall tale. (ELA Writing Processes K-2; Multiple Intelligences: Verbal/Linguistic)
- Have the children design and create their own top hats using construction paper and other art supplies. (FA-Visual Arts Creative Expression and Communication K-4; Multiple Intelligences: Visual/Spatial)

Activities adapted from Classroom Book of the Week by Kate Narita (<http://katenarita.blogspot.com/2009/11/giant-of-seville-by-dan-andreasen.html>). Used with permission.



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

## Explore more!

### GiantFest

<http://giantfest.com/index.html>

Seville, Ohio's annual celebration of the Van Buren family

### Martin Van Buren Bates and Anna Haining Swan

<http://yeahpot.com/mvbbates.htm>

A history of the Bates family from Potter Family Genealogy

### Circus Historical Society

<http://www.circushistory.org/index.htm>

This site takes a look at the history of the circus.

### Medina County Historical Society

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

### The Village of Seville, Ohio

<http://villageofseville.org/>

## More Books to Read and Share

*These books have similar themes to **The Giant of Seville** and are good companion books.*

Kathy Combs, Kitty Griffin and Mike Wohnoutka (illus.), **The Foot-Stomping Adventures of Clementine Sweet**

Sally Derby, **Whoosh Went the Wind!**

Pat Mora and Raul Colón (illus.), **Dona Flor: A Tall Tale About a Giant Woman with a Great Big Heart**

Jerdine Nolen and Kadir Nelson (illus.), **Thunder Rose**

Mary Pope Osborne and Michael McCurdy (illus.), **American Tall Tales**

*Book recommendations from Classroom Book of the Week by Kate Narita*

*(<http://katenarita.blogspot.com/2009/11/giant-of-seville-by-dan-andreasen.html>). Used with permission.*

## 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>.