



## Teaching Guide

### *Martha Ann's Quilt for Queen Victoria*

By **Kyra E. Hicks**

Illustrated by **Lee Edward Födi**

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Suggested for grades 2 – 6

Ages 7 - 11

32 pages

### **SUMMARY**

Martha Ann is 12 years old when Papa finally saves enough money to purchase the family's freedom from slavery. In 1830, the family leaves Tennessee to begin a new life in Liberia. On market days, Martha Ann watches the British navy patrolling the Liberian coast to stop slave catchers from kidnapping family and friends and forcing them back into slavery.

Martha Ann decides to thank Queen Victoria in person for sending the navy. But first, she has to save money for the 3,500-mile voyage to England, find a suitable gift for the queen, and withstand the ridicule of family and friends who learn of her impossible dream to meet the Queen of England.

*Martha Ann's Quilt for Queen Victoria* is the true story of Martha Ann Ricks, an ex-slave who spent fifty years saving spare coins to fulfill her dream.

### **THEMES**

- Believe in your dream – even when others laugh and do not support you.
- Saving for a cherished item or experience is possible.
- The works of your own hands and creativity are valuable.
- A parent's example can make a lasting impression on a child.

### **KEY DATES**

This book is appropriate to teach year-round. However, a few special times may include:

- Black History Month: February (USA, Canada); October (UK)
- National Woman's History Month: March (USA); October (Canada)
- National Quilting Day: third Saturday of March
- Liberian Independence Day: July 26, 1847
- Anniversary of Martha Ann's visit with Queen Victoria: July 16, 1892

## PREPARING TO READ THE BOOK

The following may help place Martha Ann's story in the context of a student's life today.

1. What well-known person would you like to meet? Why do you want to meet this person?
2. Locate Tennessee, Liberia, and England on a world map.
3. Name three facts about Queen Victoria.
4. Is there something you are saving money for? Do you save your money at home or in a local bank or both?
5. How are you creative? Are you talented in music, art, sewing, computer graphics or writing?
6. Name three ways your family life is different from Martha Ann's nineteenth century life.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The following questions can be explored while reading the story:

1. When Martha Ann lived in the United States, why didn't she attend school?
2. Describe Martha Ann's personality.
3. Martha Ann's father saved \$2,400 to purchase his family from slavery. How much do you think the \$2,400 would be worth in today's dollars? Visit <http://www.measuringworth.com/calculators/ppowerus/> to calculate this figure.
4. Why did Martha Ann want to make her parents proud?
5. How did Martha Ann earn the money she saved? How long did it take Martha Ann to save money to afford the voyage from Liberia to England?
6. Why did Martha Ann want to meet Queen Victoria? What qualities of Queen Victoria's character inspired Martha Ann?

Some students might want to know if other African Americans admired Queen Victoria. Consider the symbolic role Queen Victoria played as queen of Canada when American slaves fled the United States for freedom in Canada.

7. Who laughed at Martha Ann's dream? Why did they laugh?
8. Does a special gift have to be expensive or something you buy in a store? What makes a gift special?
9. How did Martha Ann get the idea to design a quilt with a coffee tree?
10. How did Martha Ann feel when she finally met Queen Victoria?
11. What do you think Martha Ann and Queen Victoria might have talked about?
12. Why did the crowds come out to greet Martha Ann when she returned to Liberia?
13. How do you think Martha Ann felt when she returned home?

## FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS & ACTIVITIES

Some students may want to have a present-day Martha Ann experience. The following questions and activities may provide starting places.

1. Discuss examples of well-known persons who do good for others.
2. Write a letter or email to a well-known person you would like to meet.
3. Learn more about Liberia and its current leader, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, the first woman elected President of an African country.
4. Martha Ann could not attend school when she was a slave in the United States. Why is school important to you today? What would you do if you could not attend school?
5. Save money for one of your dreams.
6. Do you have quilts at home? Do you think they are more special now that you know about the quilt Martha Ann made?
7. The *Coffee Tree* quilt was given to Queen Victoria in 1892. Where do you think the quilt might be today?

## LEARN MORE ABOUT MARTHA ANN RICKS

- *Martha Erskine Ricks: 19<sup>th</sup> Century Quiltmaker* by Kyra E. Hicks.  
[http://www.anyonecanflyfoundation.org/library/Hicks\\_on\\_Ricks\\_essay.html](http://www.anyonecanflyfoundation.org/library/Hicks_on_Ricks_essay.html)
- Martha Ann Ricks portrait at the National Portrait Gallery in London, England  
<http://www.npg.org.uk/live/search/person.asp?LinkID=mp63618>

## LEARN MORE ABOUT LIBERIA

- Miller, Debra A. *Liberia*. Modern Nations of the World. San Diego: Lucent Books, 2004.
- Reef, Catherine. *This Our Dark Country: The American Settlers of Liberia*. New York: Clarion Books, 2002.
- Streissguth, Thomas. *Liberia in Pictures*. Minneapolis: Twenty-First Century Books, 2006.

## LEARN MORE ABOUT QUEEN VICTORIA

- Green, Robert. *Queen Victoria: A First Book*. New York: F. Watts, 1998.
- Victoria - <http://www.royalinsight.gov.uk/output/Page118.asp>
- Victoria - The World of Royalty - <http://www.royalty.nu/Europe/England/Victoria.html>

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kyra E. Hicks is a quilter, just like Martha Ann. Kyra's quilts have appeared in more than thirty exhibits in the United States and abroad. She loves historical research and rediscovering the lives of quilters past. She is the author of *Black Threads: An African American Quilting Sourcebook* (McFarland & Company, Inc., 2002), a comprehensive reference book covering two hundred years of African American quilt history. She hosts [www.BlackThreads.blogspot.com](http://www.BlackThreads.blogspot.com), a blog about African American quilting news. Kyra is available for school visits.

Kyra lives in Arlington, Virginia, where she tends her colorful, fragrant rose garden. She is keen to hear how *Martha Ann's Quilt for Queen Victoria* is received by young readers and teachers. Visit her Web site at [www.BlackThreads.com](http://www.BlackThreads.com) or email her at [Black.Threads@yahoo.com](mailto:Black.Threads@yahoo.com).

### ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Lee Edward Födi has been writing and illustrating stories for as long as he can remember. He has always been interested in stories of history, and as a child, he specially loved to hear his mother tell the story of his great-great-grandfather's adventures in the American Civil War. Lee studied English literature and fine arts. He now lives in Vancouver, Canada. Lee is the author and illustrator of the children's fantasy book, *Kendra Kandlestar and the Box Of Whispers* and its sequel, *Kendra Kandlestar and the Door to Unger*. Visit his Web site at [www.LeeFodi.com](http://www.LeeFodi.com).

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