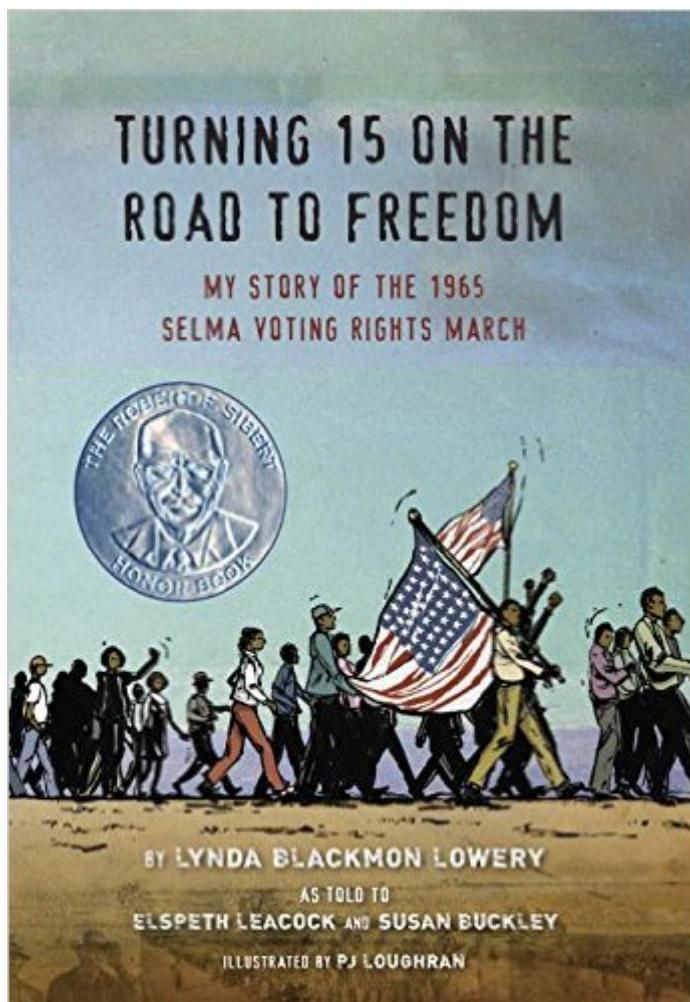


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Turning 15 On The Road To Freedom: My Story Of The Selma Voting Rights March



Synopsis

A memoir of the Civil Rights Movement from one of its youngest heroes A Sibert Informational Book Medal Honor BookKirkus® Best Books of 2015Booklist® Editors' Choice 2015BCCB® Blue Ribbon 2015As the youngest marcher in the 1965 voting rights march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, Lynda Blackmon Lowery proved that young adults can be heroes. Jailed nine times before her fifteenth birthday, Lowery fought alongside Martin Luther King, Jr. for the rights of African-Americans. In this memoir, she shows today's young readers what it means to fight nonviolently (even when the police are using violence, as in the Bloody Sunday protest) and how it felt to be part of changing American history. Straightforward and inspiring, this beautifully illustrated memoir brings readers into the middle of the Civil Rights Movement, complementing Common Core classroom learning and bringing history alive for young readers.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars (See all reviews) (35 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #42,442 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #6 in Books > Teens > Social Issues > Prejudice #7 in Books > Teens > Education & Reference > History > United States > 20th Century #9 in Books > Teens > Biographies > Social Activists

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

I read "Turning 15.." on Christmas morning surrounded by family, and found after completing it that I still couldn't put it away. It lay around for days so I could just open a page and re-immerse myself in its power and clarity. Then after seeing the film "Selma" a few days later I just wanted to read it again. Finally I passed it on to my (sometimes dismissive) 9 year old son whose assessment was "pretty cool!" I think this book is an evocative window into a place and time, as well as an essential

primer on the real unsung heroes of the civil rights movement, who gave and risked so much to make us all more free.

I love this book. Every kid (and every kid's parent) should read this little marvel. It very nicely teaches that doing something important with others can really change the world. Bravo.

Excellent read. As an adult, I read it in about an hour...definitely well worth it. I'm planning to send either my copy or buy another one for my goddaughters who are 14 and already activists. It will be good for them to read.

Today I read the whole book to my 9th and 10th grade students -- who sat rapt. They hadn't been read to in so long and it seemed to be such a pleasurable experience for them. I could show the pictures on the overhead. Amazing technology. They would not let me stop -- and wanted to keep hearing more of the story. After, I showed them the trailer for "Selma" and we watched an excerpt from "Eyes on the Prize" on the Selma march. So, thank you Susan and Elspeth and Lynda -- for giving us another way to enter the horror and glory that was the Selma march.

I was 28 when courageous black Alabama citizens and white sympathizers set forth March 21, 1965, across Selma's Edmund Pettus Bridge to begin their successful march to Montgomery, the state capital, to demonstrate their determination to force the state of Alabama to allow all of its black citizens to register to vote. I, like many Americans, had watched on television the brutal acts committed by the local police and sheriff's deputies to end demonstrators' attempt March 7 to cross the bridge and march to Montgomery. Having lived in Tennessee for two years, having years later received a bachelor's degree in history, and having thereafter become a public school teacher, I had not been naïve about racial prejudice prior to the Selma events. Nonetheless, I was shocked. A week after recently watching the movie Selma, I read an excellent memoir (just published by Dial Books) about the Selma to Montgomery event written in retrospect (assisted by two professional writers) by a teenage participant, Lynda Blackmon Lowery. Unlike the movie, Selma, many parts of Turning 15 on the Road to Freedom; My Story of the 1965 Selma Voting Rights March stirred my emotions. Geared for readers in their teen years, the memoir reaches out as well to adults born after 1965 and to jaded seniors like me. Here are my reasons for recommending this book especially to young people. Turning 15 is a personal story. We experience vicariously the thoughts, emotions, and actions of an actual participant. We gain insight about the effects of racial hatred on actual African

Americans. We learn of the sense of security felt by most black children growing up in segregated black communities. We understand better the need black Americans felt to right collectively racially-committed wrongs. Mrs. Lynda Lowery cites her grandmother's advice: "... if you give someone or something control over you, then you've given up yourself." We celebrate the realization experienced by thoroughly-segregated people like the young Lynda that white racists did not represent all white Americans. After the bloody attempt by early demonstrators to cross the Pettus bridge March 7, many white people traveled to Selma to exhibit their support. Lynda wrote: "It was a whole different feeling suddenly with white people living in your house. They marched with us and were willing to go to jail with us. They ate what we ate. We cooked collard greens and cornbread, and they ate it and enjoyed it as much as we did. They were happy to be with us, even if they had to sleep on the floor. ... There was a whole new feeling in Selma." I especially appreciated the details Mrs. Lowery gave us about her experiences. Here are two examples of information I did not know and found fascinating. School children were used extensively to demonstrate and crowd the jails. Mothers who were maids took employers' food home surreptitiously that their children ate the next day after they were arrested and put in jail. Twenty-one school girls, mostly high school students, were put in a steel cell (called the "sweatbox") that had no windows, water, toilet, or lights and kept there until every girl had passed out. It is always the detail of individuals' lives that make history especially interesting. This memoir is written simply, but it touches upon all the important Selma/Montgomery subject matter events. Anybody who reads at or above the sixth grade level will have no difficulty finishing it in one sitting. Yet the reader will be informed about every topic or event an instructor would want a student of his to read about, examples ranging from the different instances of segregation existent in Selma to the deaths of three people murdered, one by the police and the other two by racist thugs. Mrs. Lowery also explains, quite simply, the Voting Rights Act passed in 1965 and how it has been degraded most recently by the United States Supreme Court. Finally, I am concerned about what our young generation doesn't but should know about our nation's past. Racism in America persists. My grandchildren and friends their ages should be exposed to appealing sources of information that instruct them to recognize that no nation is a "shining city on the hill" and that those who proclaim such assertions should be looked upon with skepticism. Take nothing, therefore, for granted. Human history is a story of struggle for freedom and dignity against unwarranted control. Lynda learned from her experiences that "the person I wanted to be was a person who would stand up against what was wrong. I wanted not only to protect myself, but to protect others, not only to fight for myself, but to be out there fighting for others." Mrs. Lowery's memoir is a worthwhile, appealing book. 5-star rating for middle school

readers.

This is my husband's aunt (mom's sister) and I was excited to receive the book on it's release date! I read the book already and are taking to Auntie to get personally signed. Thanks!

From it's provocative first sentence -- "By the time I was fifteen years old, I had been in jail nine times," to it's powerful conclusion, this book allows young readers to feel what it was like to be part of the Civil Rights movement. It also takes the reader inside the close-knit community of African American families in Selma and shows how pastors, parents, teachers and children all had roles to play in making the case for freedom and the right to vote. The combination of documentary photographs and illustrations also serves to bring the reader into the action. It's a fascinating read and a great way to engage young people with the roles that ordinary people play in great events and movements.

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