



Mahalia Jackson: Gospel Singer and Civil Rights Champion (Young Patriots series)

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“Haley” Jackson grew up in poverty on the levees of New Orleans, hunting alligators along the Mississippi River for food and gathering driftwood for fuel with her brother Peter. But every Sunday, when her father preached at the Baptist Church, young Mahalia sang proudly in the choir—the youngest member at age 5! Lively illustrations and engaging text pull young readers into the world in which Mahalia Jackson grew up. Whether constructing her doll’s braid from blades of grass, stuffing a cornhusk mattress, or adjusting to life in her Aunt Duke’s home after her mother died, young Mahalia displayed the persistence and courage that foreshadowed the civil rights champion and world-famous gospel singer she would become. Working as a maid and a laundress, she always found the time for her passion—singing her special brand of music known as gospel in churches. She met the challenge of being black in what was largely a white entertainment world, overcoming poverty and prejudice and pioneering the way for all aspiring African Americans who succeeded her. Singing for royalty, presidents, and working closely with her friend Martin Luther King, Haley never forgot her early days on the levee and she found special joy encouraging young African-Americans to follow their ambitions.

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