

Library Connections

The MOBILE PUBLIC LIBRARY Newsletter

Until We Meet Again: Virtual Storytime

by Cherold Rhodes, Ben May Main Library

ISSUE 06
Summer 2020

MOBILE Public Library Storytime is a valuable resource for our community. It is more than just a story and a free form of entertainment provided each week. Storytime provides a whole host of benefits for families and young children. Children begin to learn skills fundamental to reading, and their caregivers are inspired with ideas to expound upon at home. These skills include learning how to listen and interact with a story, important vocabulary, how books work, letter sounds, and that books and reading are fun. Storytime connects caregivers and children in a meaningful, fun environment, and it helps children gain skills that are important for their development.

When the “Stay at Home” orders were put into place to safeguard the community, we used imagination and innovation to redesign Storytime and make it available in a safe environment. Our mission of providing this valuable resource for the community continued. Virtual Storytime was born.

Youth specialists from across the system worked together in an effort to provide a sense of consistency and connection to families with small children as they designed Virtual Storytime. Making the switch from in-

person Storytimes to Virtual Storytimes felt awkward to youth staff. They are accustomed to seeing and connecting with smiling faces as they present stories, songs and crafts. To



overcome this obstacle they drew upon their experiences with children and thought of them as they gazed into a phone or camera.

As you watch the youth staff sharing Virtual Storytime, they are thinking of all the children who attended Storytimes before the “Stay at Home” and “Safer at Home” orders. When you leave comments, hearts, laughs and likes on the videos, it helps remind youth staff that they do still have that audience. It lifts spirits and helps keep the Storytime experience and connection going.

Expanding Access: Get Your Library Card Online

ON April 1, in response to our closure due to COVID-19, we introduced a new service: virtual library cards. Also known as “e-cards,” the virtual library card is a fancy way of saying that we made it possible for citizens to get a library card without having to visit our libraries in person.

To date, nearly 1,600 people have filled out a simple online form asking for name, email, phone, and address. We are able to send requesters their library card and PIN through email in about a day’s time. We then send the physical library card through postal mail. Some users have simply needed their

card updated in order to access online content, and we were able to quickly take care of those requests as well.

We want as many citizens of all ages as possible to experience all the digital entertainment, online information and educational courses and databases that we have to offer. Our virtual card is the solution to providing the greatest access to as many people as possible during a difficult time. We can’t wait to continue serving our community online and in person.



Imagine Your Story: Summer Reading Celebration

by Emmie Powell, Children's Librarian, West Regional Library

As with most everything these days, the Summer Reading Celebration (SRC) at MPL looks different this year from years past. While the delivery is different, the goals are the same: connect, read and have fun.

All you need to do to register for SRC is fill out a short online form found at src.mobilepubliclibrary.org. Register from any device, or call any branch and register over the phone. Every child registered will be entered to win an iPad, so make sure that every child in your household signs up.

This year we offer weekly bingo cards for families to complete. Each bingo card features a variety of fun and engaging activities to enjoy. Make "bingo" and you'll be entered to win a Family Fun Pack filled with great prizes. To participate in the fun, print out a bingo card from our website, or pick one up curbside at the library. Text a picture of your completed bingo card to 251-366-3639, email it to mainyou@mplonline.org or turn it in at any library location. Be sure to participate every week, as often as you'd like, for more chances to win a wonderful prize.

Many library locations will be hosting weekly Story Quests. Each Story Quest takes you on an outdoor walk where you'll read a book through a series of signs paired with fun actions and a themed craft to take home! You'll get to enjoy a great story in the sunshine and at a

safe distance from others! For more information about participating locations, dates and times please visit the library's website or call any library branch.

We hold Virtual Storytimes six days a week at 10 a.m. In addition, we provide fun virtual programs every day in which to participate. Be sure and follow our Children's Services Facebook page so you don't miss any of our virtual programming or Storytimes.



IMAGINE
YOUR STORY



Adults & Teens Join the Celebration

MPL's 2020 Summer Reading Celebration kicked off on June 1. Adults who register are eligible to win a \$100 Visa gift card, while teens may enter to win an iPad.

Participation in the adult challenge earns adults a chance to win an AncestryDNA kit. The theme this year is Imagine Your Story. Imagine telling your family's story with an AncestryDNA Kit. We're challenging adults to read or listen to eight books in eight weeks. Adults may also participate by completing fun activities or writing short book reviews. Read or listen to any genre you like. The more you do, the more chances you have

to win!

Teens are being asked to complete up to 30 different challenges, including such tasks as reading a book with a one-word title, reading a book with a red cover or drawing a scene from a book

they've read. For every five challenges they complete, teens are rewarded with extra entries into the iPad drawing, and they pick up some fun MPL swag along the way.

Go online and log your participation through Beanstack, use the Beanstack Tracker app or grab the Summer Reading Logs from our SRC website, src.mobilepubliclibrary.org.



“60 Minutes” Interview at Local History & Genealogy

by Elizabeth Theris-Boone, Manager, Local History & Genealogy

ON Feb. 8, 2020, the Local History & Genealogy division of Mobile Public Library was delighted to host Alabama’s very own environmental journalist and filmmaker Ben Raines and American broadcast journalist Anderson Cooper for an interview as part of the CBS News “60 Minutes” segment about the discovery of the remains of the Clotilda, now universally known as the last American slave ship.

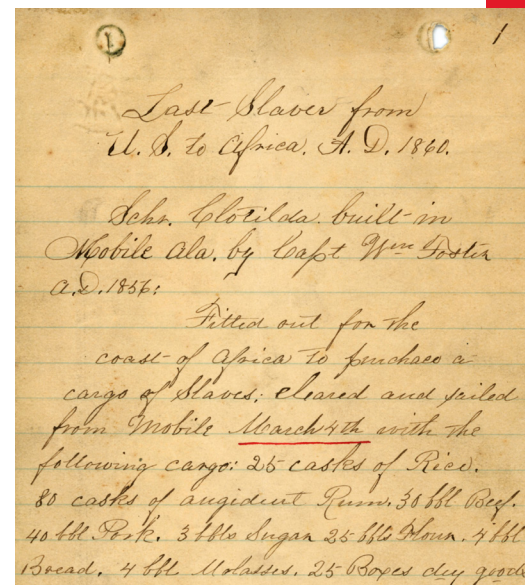
We were especially gratified to not only loan the use of items from the library’s Clotilda Collection for this fascinating interview, but also to learn that this collection played a small part in the discovery of the slave ship’s remains. This discovery, officially confirmed in a report prepared by Dr. James Delgado and associates, with SEARCH Inc.,

for the Alabama Historical Commission in May 2019, was actually made by Ben Raines and the University of Southern Mississippi’s hydrographic science team in mid-2018. When Mr. Raines first decided to search for the elusive remains, a feat previously attempted with no success, he conducted extensive research on all available stories of the Clotilda, including Captain Foster’s written account of the ship’s voyage.

This account, available for viewing in the Clotilda Collection on the MPL Digital Archives, reveals a key piece of information about where the schooner was burned by Foster to conceal his crime: “I got a steam tug to tow sch[n] [schooner?] up Spanish river into the Ala. River at “Twelve Mile Island.” [...] I then burned my schr. to the water’s

edge and sunk her.” This confirmed Raines’ belief that the ship had been burned at Twelve Mile Island, a location no one had yet searched.

We were fortunate to have the opportunity to host this interview and listen to the story of how the remains of the last American slave ship were discovered. When the time comes, be sure to tune in to “60 Minutes” to see the interview.



The Story of the Schooner Clotilda and Its Resurgence

THE story of the schooner Clotilda has caused a sensation in this country’s news since it first returned to American shores in July 1860, carrying an illegal cargo of abducted and enslaved Africans, from the congratulatory tone of Southern newspaper reports from that time, chortling over whichever swashbuckling captain had been bold enough to thumb his nose at the government, to the solemn tones of national newspapers today, eager to report on a noteworthy story but aware of its abhorrent beginnings.

Excitement over the Clotilda and its story resurged in January 2018, when journalist Ben Raines discovered what appeared to be

the schooner’s remains in the Mobile-Tensaw Delta, though further investigation showed this ship would have been too large to be the Clotilda. Fortunately, this significant setback did not prevent Raines from trying again, and he and his team did discover remains of what would be proven in May, 2019, to be the Clotilda.

Since then, numerous sources have been following the story, including National Geographic, which has published a short documentary about the founding of Africatown, where the people brought here by the Clotilda put down their roots and created a home. Mobile Public Library loaned the use of items from

its Clotilda Collection for this documentary, which can be viewed on YouTube: “What the Discovery of the Last American Slave Ship Means to Descendants.” The Local History & Genealogy division of the Mobile Public Library also assisted with researching newspaper articles and maps for these projects. The February 2020 issue of National Geographic magazine features, “Last Journey into Slavery,” a stirring piece not only because it details the suffering of the people on that terrible voyage but also because it recounts their strength and resilience, how they bonded together and created a community, and tells the stories of the lives they made for themselves.

Curbside Service Is a Huge Hit

by Christie Lovvorn, West Regional Library

IN an effort to bring more services to the community during the COVID-19 outbreak, the library began offering curbside service on Wednesday, May 13. With this service, patrons may request items by placing holds through their online accounts, or they may call an individual branch and staff will place holds on their account by phone.

Patrons have responded to the service with kindness and enthusiasm, with one person saying, “Curbside service is fabulous!” Another commented, “I think this is wonderful that you are doing this. Thank you so much for all your work.” Regular

patrons, especially, welcomed our curbside service. “We usually come to the library once a week and we are so excited we can come get books,” exclaimed one patron. “I’m so excited! You have no idea how much I’ve missed y’all,” said another. During the first week of curbside service alone, patrons picked up more than 4,400 items.

Additionally, many patrons have expressed special

gratitude for the children’s craft kits that can be included when they pick up their holds. Most recently, we have expanded curbside service to offer printing, copying, scanning and faxing services.

Library staff have expressed the same reactions as patrons and are grateful to be able to provide a service that promotes social distancing while still meeting the needs of the community.



Mobile Public Library Digital Collection

Service Type	Service	Available
<i>E-Video</i>	Kanopy	36,400
	films/documentaries	
	Hoopla movies	13,760
	Hoopla TV	2,263
	Total	52,423
<i>E-Audio</i>	Hoopla	76,424
	CloudLibrary	2,292
	Total	78,716
<i>E-Books</i>	Hoopla	332,741
	CloudLibrary	14,493
	(Consortia)	
	Total	347,234

MPL Entertains Families at Home with Virtual Programming

by Lisa Barnes, Librarian, Ben May Main Library

THE Mobile Public Library staff was eager to bring education and entertainment to members of the public missing the library during this time of social distancing. Staff has created fun themed digital escape rooms and quizzes, with plans for more to come.

Kids and families:

- **Avengers**

Do you have what it takes to be an Avenger? Tests math, history and reading comprehension.

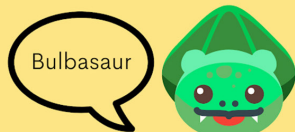
- **Pokemon**

Take on the role of a Pokemon trainer and battle gym leaders with your Pokemon knowledge.

Pokemon Escape Room

Pick your starter!

Choose between...



- Bulbasaur
- Charmander
- Squirtle

Back Next

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Google Forms

- **Stranger Mobile**
Set in the world of the Netflix hit series, "Stranger Things," Stranger Mobile takes place in the Upside Down of Mobile and challenges you on Mobile trivia.

Teens or adults:

- **Sherlock Holmes' New Assistant**

A more challenging escape room that lets users imagine themselves working alongside the great detective. Test your puzzle-solving skills.

- **Middle Earth**

Test your knowledge of "Lord of the Rings" and solve puzzles to escape the Nazguls to destroy the One Ring.

Adults:

- **Hollywood Murder Mystery: Choose Your Suspect**

Tackle this short story with a choose-your-own-adventure-style ending.

- **Newsbank Escape Room**

Challenge your searching skills and learn how to search our online newspaper archives.

We also have more quizzes in a variety of subjects including "Star Wars," pop music, and classical music.

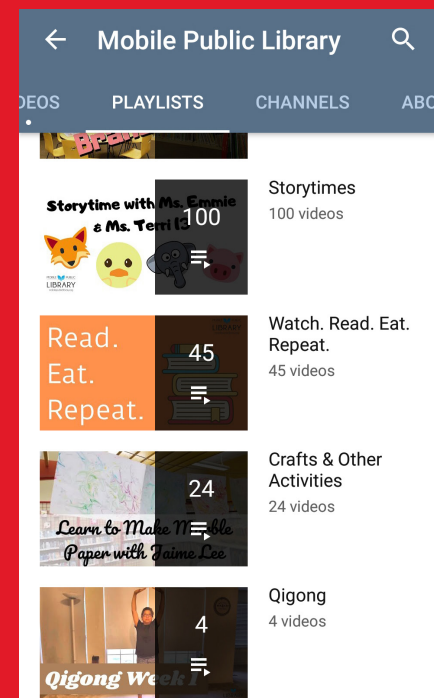
So far, over 700 eager participants have completed these programs. Staff plans to create more escape rooms and quizzes this summer as part of the Summer Reading Celebration. We hope you have been enjoying our lineup.

Join Us on YouTube

THE Mobile Public Library's Youtube Channel debuted in March 2016 with a video demonstrating online account access. Since then, monthly videos have been posted explaining how to set up apps and use databases, and how various library services work.

Beginning in March 2020, our Youtube channel has become a place to host online versions of the programs we currently can't do in person. We are posting Storytimes, qigong, children's crafts, book and movie reviews, knitting how-tos, hand-lettering projects, origami, cooking and technology how-tos. Our staff is hard at work on more new and exciting ideas to provide creative content for our community.

With two or more videos added each day, our channel has a little something for everyone. Subscribe to our Youtube Channel, "Mobile Public Library," to get informed, entertained, and inspired.



Book Bundles

Do you need books for your kids but don't know what to request? Let us pick out a bundle of 10 books for you. Pick from three different types.

A Beginner Reader Bundle is perfect for your little new readers, ages 4-10. Tell us their reading level and we will pick 10 books recommended to new readers at that level.



Children's Book Bundles

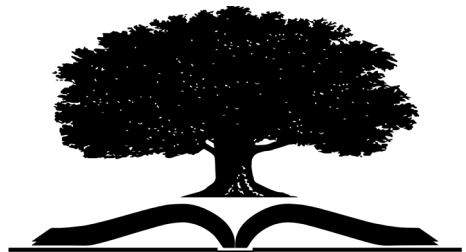
Kids Subject Bundles contain books and DVDs from our nonfiction collection on a subject of your choosing.

Request the Picture Book Bundle and get a mystery bundle of books perfect for read-along time. In picture books, the illustrations are as important to the story as the text and are recommended for ages 9 and under.

Partnering with USA Children's & Women's Hospital

THE Mobile Public Library and USA Children's & Women's Hospital have partnered with other local agencies to provide literacy information and resources to newborns and their mothers. The goal is to spark a love of reading starting at birth.

Bright Beginnings Books for Babies gives each newborn at USA Children's & Women's Hospital a library bag, a copy of "The Very Hungry Caterpillar," a brief library card application, and a brochure explaining the importance of reading to babies from the very beginning. During the first three years, the brain develops faster than at



FRIENDS
of the Mobile Public Library



any other time in life.

The first batch of bags was delivered on December 31, just in time for the first children born in the new year. The program will run throughout 2020 and looks to serve 2,700 families in the Mobile area.

A large portion of the funding for the project comes from the Friends of the Mobile Public Library. Thank you!

Mobile Public Library
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Mobile, AL 36602

Our Mission is to Support Literacy and Connect Our Community

INFORM

ENTERTAIN

INSPIRE