

# It Jes' Happened: When Bill Traylor Started to Draw



## A RIF GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS

**Themes:** Folk Art, Slavery, Transitions

**Book Brief:** A former slave, Bill began drawing at the age of 85. His drawings were based upon his memories of rural life and the observations he made of the bustling urban life in Montgomery, Alabama.

**Author:**

Don Tate

**Illustrator:**

R. Gregory Christie

**Content Connections:** Social Studies, Art



## TIME TO READ!

### BEFORE WE READ, LET'S LOOK AT...

**The Cover:** How old do you think Bill Traylor was when he started to draw?

**The Pictures:** How do the pictures help you create a visual timeline for this story?

**Prior Knowledge:** Bill Traylor drew many pictures from memories. A memory is an image stored in the mind. What kind of memories do you already have stored? Are memories always happy? Describe with a partner one of your favorite memories. Depending on the age of your students, this might be a good opportunity for a discussion of slavery and the Civil War.

**Vocabulary:** blacksmith, Civil War, rheumatism, scarce, sharecropper,

**Purpose for Reading:** Compare and Contrast. Think about the similarities and differences between Bill's life on the farm and his life in the city.



## WHILE WE READ

### MONITORING COMPREHENSION

- ◆ Do you think Bill wanted to stay and work on the farm?
- ◆ How did Bill's family feel during the violence after the Civil War?

- ◆ Do you know someone whose personality is similar to an animal's?
- ◆ Where did Bill's inspiration come from?
- ◆ Why did Charles Shannon take an interest in Bill?

## LET'S THINK ABOUT

**Our Purpose:** How is Bill's life on the farm similar to his life in the city? How is it different? Which one do you think he enjoyed most?

**Extending Our Thinking:** How are Bill and Charles alike? What do you think Bill was trying to say through his artwork? How do you think others perceived Bill in Montgomery?

### NOTE TO EDUCATORS

- ◆ Extension Activities for Educators also available.
- ◆ Vocabulary Scaffolding Sheet also available.



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