



Clara and the Bookwagon

Nancy Smiler Levinson , Carolyn Croll (Illustrator)

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Papa will not allow Clara to learn to read—he says that ‘Farm people like us do not have time to read.’ But when the traveling bookwagon, with persuasive Miss Mary at the reins, arrives at their farm, Papa realizes he must change his mind. Based on the true story of America’s first ‘bookmobile.’

Clara and the Bookwagon Details

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ISBN : 9780064441346

Author : Nancy Smiler Levinson , Carolyn Croll (Illustrator)

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Genre : History, Childrens, Picture Books, North American Hi..., American History

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Download and Read Free Online Clara and the Bookwagon Nancy Smiler Levinson , Carolyn Croll (Illustrator)

From Reader Review Clara and the Bookwagon for online ebook

Ellie says

Nice historical fiction for K-2nd grade.

I have to say, that these lines absolutely cracked me up:

"Bump, bump, bump. They rode right up to the garden patch. Papa looked angry. "You have made a mistake," he shouted. "We have no dead here."

Christine says

I love books so I rated it five stars

Judy says

Nice introduction to life in America (Maryland) over 100 years ago. I can easily picture the kids integrating a Bookwagon (a moving library) into their play after they read this story.

Pamela Powell says

This picture book is based on the first traveling bookwagon in the country- at Hagerstown, Maryland. Mary Lemist Titcomb, head librarian, wants to make books available to those who cannot make it to the library in town. Clara is a young girl who lives on a farm. Clara's father thinks that farm people don't have time to read but Clara's persistence and Ms. Titcomb's visit helps change his mind.

Melki says

Sweet story about Clara, a young girl who wants to learn to read, even though her father insists "**Farm people like us do not have time to read.**" Luckily, she meets Mary Lemist Titcomb, the head of the Hagerstown, Maryland Public Library. In 1905, Mary designed a horse-drawn wagon to take books to those unable to travel to the city. This early "bookmobile" was driven by the library's janitor, *who routinely covered 500 square miles of back-road territory.*

This is an interesting true story for bookworms at reading level 3 in grades 2 - 4.

Volkert says

This easy reader chapter book promotes books and reading with an appealing story set in 1905 Maryland. Inquisitive Clara desperately wants to learn to read, but there are no schools nearby, and her father says she's too busy with farmwork to waste her time on books.

Levinson makes historical fiction very appealing to younger readers, with a fine eye to the details of rural life, without getting bogged down in old-fashioned terms. While the story is simple, the characters and plot are realistic. In the process, the reader is introduced to the very first "bookmobile," a horse-drawn wagon, based on historical fact.

In our library, this title doesn't get checked out until it is read-aloud or otherwise introduced to the children. After that it gets a lot of use. Recommended. (Written October 10, 2000.)

Karen says

This book is delightful, from the sweet story to the absolutely charming illustrations. There is even a hefty dose of humor in it, for those who know where to look for it. My second grade son used this book as a study in comparing and contrasting -- it worked quite well.

Maren Swallow says

BEGINNING READER: This book was good. I picked it because my sister's name is clara and she happens to love books. It is a cute story about a girl who really wants to learn how to read, but her father will not let her because she is a farm girl. This book is great for an early reader because it is a great story line, while still simple in reading.

WSL Library says

x3

Andrea says

I saw this in my library's bookstore and it sounded like such a cute story. The cover is adorable and I expected a cute tale about a girl who loved to read getting to read to her heart's content with the traveling library. I've never encountered a traveling library and I couldn't wait to hear about it. Instead, what I got was a hard, unyielding dad who never saw the importance of reading and never gave up with demanding that she do chores. His character ruined the story for me and brought up flashbacks to my own childhood and that kind of hard, controlling father figure is just the type of person I don't like.

I liked learning about the way of life. There weren't schools for farm children. She had to help feed the chickens, cook, take care of her siblings and plant corn in the spring. It was cute that she likes making up her own stories about animals and farm girls like her.

I emphasized that sometimes she got tired of doing farm work. She wanted to learn everything she could, about the moon and stars and how corn grew. She asked her mom how bread rose and her mom was too busy to tell her, then when Clara opened the oven to look, her mom told her to shut it. She sat down in the chair and daydreamed and when her dad opened the door, tired from his day's work, and asked if she was dreaming again, I had a bad flashback. Men getting mad when they see you sitting down, mad because everyone isn't working as hard as they are. I don't like that, people all work and no play, acting like daydreaming is a bad thing. He told her there's no time for dreaming on a farm and if everyone doesn't help out they won't have food on the table. Ugh. He sucked.

Papa had to go to town and Clara asked if she could go, and promised to help. That made me mad that she had to promise to help in order to go. What's wrong with a kid taking a leisurely drive?

I wasn't crazy about the names. Mr. Holzer from the store. That isn't a kid-friendly name. Something simple should be used in a starter book like this. Also, Mary Titcomb. Not a good name at all. Kids would have a field day with that one.

I liked that his store was a book station, so he had library books there that people could check out for free. Clara got excited to read and her dad ruined it, said books are for rich people and farm people don't have time to read. I felt so bad for her, because she started crying and didn't even care about her peppermint stick that she had been excited about. The image of her with a tear running down her cheek, with her face turned away was so sad! Poor thing!

She helped her dad weed and her mom asked if she wanted to pick blueberries and it irritated me that she had to look at her dad to see if she could go. Only when he said she'd been weeding a long time and gave his permission could she go.

It was sweet that once Miss Mary learned Clara's dad thought books were a waste of time for farm people, she set out to change his mind.

It was weird how he was so mad when he saw the wagon, said they had no dead here and Mary said it isn't a hearse wagon to pick up the dead. That's really morbid and heavy for a kid's book.

It bothered me so much that she had to promise to read only when her work was done and her dad said he knows she's good at keeping a promise. I guess it's a good thing she is, otherwise she couldn't be allowed to read.

There were some elements that stood out, that were out of place. After church Reverend Strong--and I don't think he needed a name because he wasn't a central character--showed her his bible. Why would he show her of all people, a little kid who can't even read, his family bible? It was just weird.

When Clara first saw the wagon, she said it was filled with books. The wagon was closed and showed not one single book, so she couldn't know that it had books in it just by looking. Only on the next page when all the doors were open could the books be seen. Miss Mary said indeed 3 times, that was overkill. It felt like every time I turned around she was saying indeed.

It ended with Mary saying she would teach Clara to read, and she would learn fast. She was going to teach her to sound letters out. I think there's a lot more to it than that, but Clara was happy she had stories to read.

It's really cool that this is based on the country's first traveling library in Maryland. Mary Titcomb was head of the library and wanted books to reach those who lived in the country. She established book deposit stations in general stores, churches and homes. She designed a wagon in 1905 to carry the books. The janitor was the driver. It ran for 5 years and then was destroyed when a train hit it, and I was so glad to hear the driver and horses made it out alive. The second one in 1912 had a motor. A cool bit of history on a subject I hadn't known about. I really like the idea of a traveling library.

Breanna Lechase says

1. Awards the book has received (if any): No awards
 2. Appropriate grade level(s): 1st – 3rd
 3. Original 3-line summary: This book is based on the true story of a Maryland librarian who started the first bookmobile in 1905 so that people in rural areas could learn to read and enjoy books in addition to the rich. The main character, Clara, is a young girl who wants nothing more than to learn to read, but her father rejects the idea and says that reading is a waste of time that is reserved for the rich. However, one day a kind librarian brings a wagon full of books and convinces Clara's father to finally let her learn to read.
 4. Original 3-line review: This book shares a very humble and informative story that is important for young children to be exposed to. I especially like that it frames books and reading as something that should be cherished as such things were not always available to everyone. Clara's story is very real, and shares an experience that many children in her predicament could have likely shared.
 5. 2-3 possible in-class uses: This book could be used as part of lessons that are meant to highlight reading as something that is special and exciting. It could also be used in connection to social studies lessons on life in the early 1900s. Additionally, this book could be used during literacy lessons on character, setting, plot, and/or conflict identification.
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Kimberly says

Best part is the facts at the end. But I like the believability of Clara's story within the history.

Diane says

a good story of how books came to people. the first bookwagons.

Nagla says

My children and I really enjoyed this book. I read it to both of my children in the car while we ate chocolate ice cream sundaes. We discussed it and enjoyed our time together. It really drove home what a luxury reading and books used to be and probably still is in developing countries. I also really liked the factual information about the first librarian and the first traveling libraries.

J. says

AR Quiz No. 7309 EN Fiction

Accelerated Reader Quiz Information IL: LG - BL: 2.2 - AR Pts: 0.5
