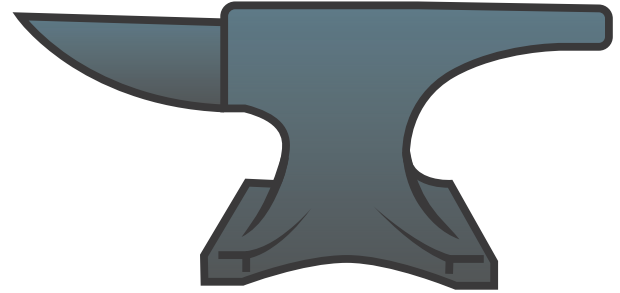
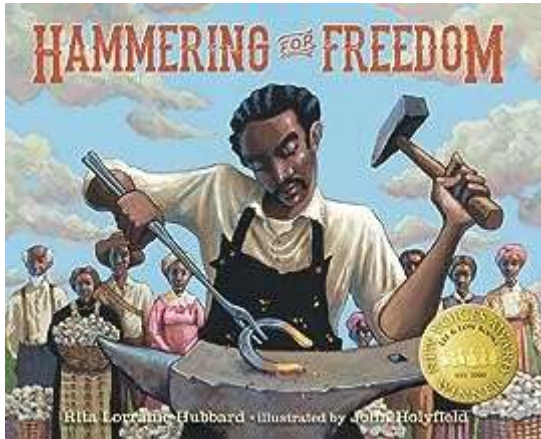


# Read for Pleasure

## Hammering for Freedom

By Rita Lorraine Hubbard & John Holyfield



**Born into slavery in Tennessee, William 'Bill' Lewis watched his family work long gruelling days in the fields. He wished there was something he could do to break them out of this bondage of slavery.**

**After learning the blacksmith trade, Bill earned so much fixing old tools and forging new ones that he was allowed to keep a little money for himself. With just a few coins in his pocket, Bill set a daring plan in motion. He was determined to buy his family's freedom.**

### **Title Talk**

*The title of this story is: Hammering for Freedom.*

- What is a blacksmith?
- Why do blacksmiths use a hammer?
- What tools can a blacksmith repair or make new?
- Why might someone want to hammer for FREEDOM? Discuss what this might mean.
- Who might they want freedom for?

## **Cover Chat**

Now look at the cover of this picture book.

- Who do you think we see in the centre of this book's front cover?
- His name is William 'Bill' Lewis. What is he doing?
- Who do you think is watching him? Why might they be watching?
- What are the baskets full of? How would they have been filled?
- How difficult and painful is it to pick cotton?
- What ethnicity are all of these people?
- This true story begins in America in 1810. How were black people treated at this time? Discuss.
- How would you have felt if you were a slave?
- What would you have dreamed of?
- Do you think Bill Lewis and his family would have had the same dream? Why do you think this? Discuss.

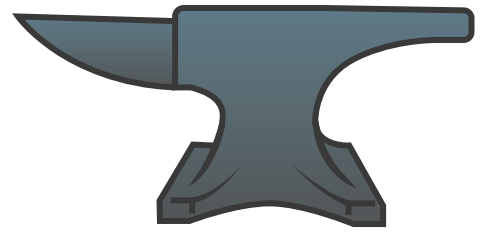
## **Page 1-2**

- Where and when was Bill Lewis born?
- Was he born into slavery? What would this mean for him and his family?
- Why do you think Bill as a little boy used to watch his mum lower herself onto a rickety old stool and stand near her after work each evening?
- How do you think he was feeling while doing this? Would you have felt the same way? Why?

## **Page 3-4**

- What skilled trade does Bill begin to learn as a young boy?
- What would this entail? Describe the hard work of a blacksmith in your own words. Why would it be such a hard job to do?
- Why do you think the colonel (who owned Bill) let him keep some of the money he earned from his blacksmithing job?
- The author tells us that just as Bill's stack of coins grew so did his dream of becoming free. What do you think this means?
- What would FREEDOM mean for Bill?
- How do you think he will gain this freedom? Discuss.





### **Page 5-6**

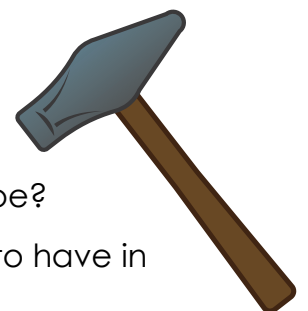
- Who does Bill marry?
- When do they have a baby son? What do they call him?
- How would marrying and having a baby change Bill? How might it make him more determined to gain his freedom? Discuss.
- What does Bill ask his owner? Why does he want to ask this?
- How hard will Bill need to work if he is to secure enough money to buy his and his family's freedom? How long do you think this would take?

### **Page 7-8**

- What does Bill decide to do first with the money he has saved?
- Why do you think he does this?
- Where does he choose to set up his new business? Why is this location perfect?
- Why do you think he leaves for his new adventure with such a heavy heart? How else might he feel at this time? Why might this be?
- How did Bill make history when he first opened his shop?

### **Page 9-10**

- What was Bill's first job? How might the success of this job lead to more work and more paying customers? Discuss.
- How long and hard a day did Bill work as a blacksmith?
- What does this tell us about his character and his determination? Discuss.



### **Page 11-12**

- Whose freedom does Bill want to buy first? Why might this be?
- What would this mean for any children Jane and Bill were to have in the future? Why is this so important to Bill?
- Why do you think Bill needed a white escort to help buy Jane's freedom?
- What does this tell us about how black people were treated during this time in history? Discuss.
- For how much money did Bill buy his wife's freedom?

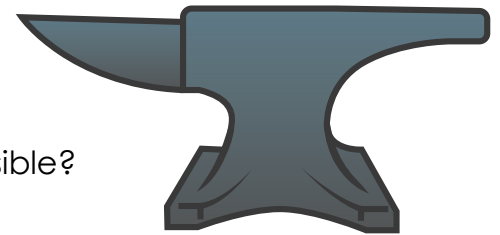
- Why do you think they both waited until they got home before celebrating and showing each other how happy they were?

### **Page 13-14**

- What else does Bill make that generates him more money?
- His hands are now CALLOUSED. What does this mean?
- How else does the author describe Bill's hands? How true is this?
- Why do you think the many years saving are described by the author as being BONE-WEARY? Discuss.
- Whose freedom does he want to buy next and for how much?
- Did it surprise you that Bill bought his wife's freedom before buying his own freedom? What does this tell us about Bill's character?

### **Page 15-16**

- Whose freedom does Bill want to buy next?
- Why would he want to do this as quickly as possible?
- What would this mean for Bill's work?
- What other things does Bill now start making?
- Are these things popular? What would this mean for Bill and Jane?



### **Page 17-18**

- For how much does Bill buy his son's freedom?
- Why do you think it was cheaper to buy his son than either his wife or himself?
- Why did buying his son's freedom cause him to have 'a song in his heart'? Would you have felt the same way? Why would this be?
- How do you think his son will help Bill achieve his dream as he grows up and gets stronger?
- Who do you think Bill will buy next?

### **Page 19-20**

- Why do you think black and white people were separated even when attending church? How did people feel about this at this time?

- How would people feel about such separating today? Discuss.
- Bill becoming a much-loved member of the community. Why?

### **Page 21-22**

- How much did Bill pay the colonel to buy his mother and aunt's freedom?
- Why do you think it was a lot less to buy their freedom than it was to buy his own?
- What did his mother whisper to Bill after her freedom had been bought?
- What does HALLELUJAH mean?
- Why do you think she whispered this to Bill and not say it loudly?
- Why do you think Bills sisters cried and his brothers hung their heads and waved slowly? How would this make Bill feel? Discuss.

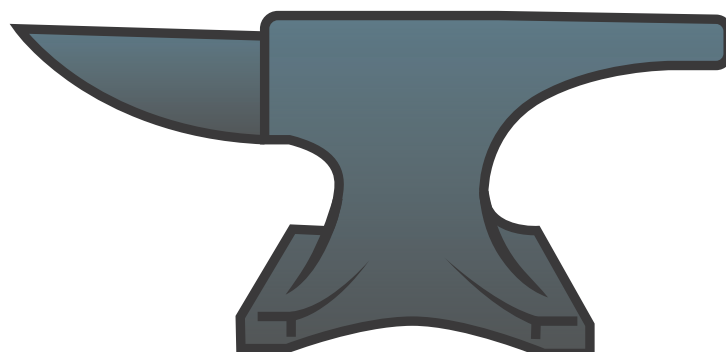
### **Page 23-24**

- What does Bill do when he is nearly fifty years old?
- Why does he need to do this?
- How much does Bill's new house cost?
- Why are people shocked when Bill buys this house?
- Why is the happiness of him and his family moving into a new home tinged with sadness?
- What do you think Bill will be determined to do next?



### **Page 25-26**

- How many years did it take Bill to complete his dream of setting all his family free?
- What does this tell us about Bill's character?



## **John Murray**

John is a recognised specialist in developing children's reading and comprehension.

The creator of Reading Explorers, Top Class Comprehension and Reading Rocketeers, his seminars and CPD training focus on the teaching, learning and enjoyment of reading.

An independent Literacy consultant, he aims to support schools to improve their performance and secure best practice. Above all, it is to ignite within us a passion for books and a genuine love for the written word.

His enthusiasm and expertise can be seen throughout his work and his resources and training are used in classrooms worldwide.



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