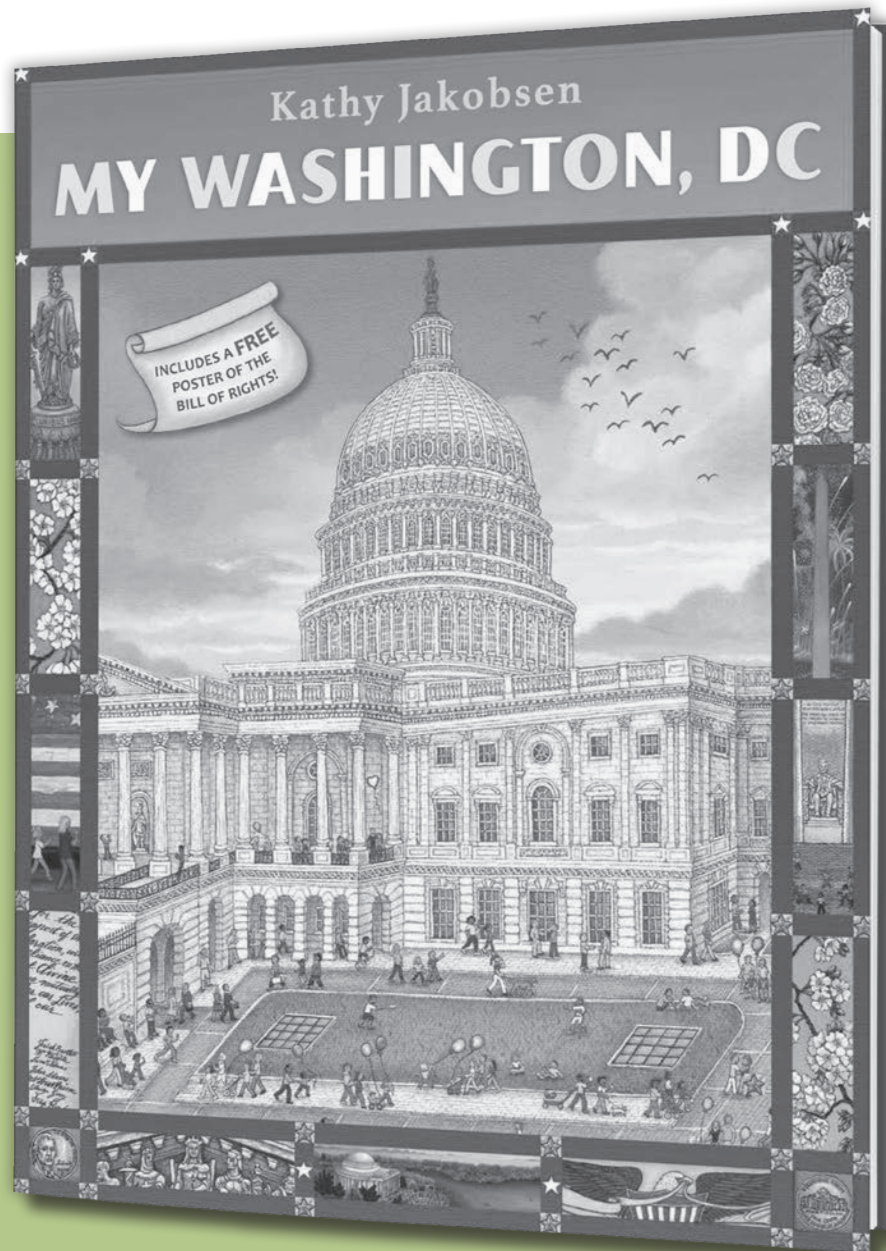


MY WASHINGTON, DC



Curriculum connections

- ❖ Social Studies & Geography
- ❖ American History
- ❖ Language Arts

Ages 4-8

MY WASHINGTON, DC

Details abound in Kathy Jakobsen’s vibrant presentation of our nation’s capital. Going beyond a tour of streets and buildings, Jakobsen offers a survey of the ideals and ideas upon which our country is founded. In addition to an overview of the landmarks, museums, and moments, *My Washington, DC* is packed with information about the history, culture, and values that are embedded in the architecture and landscape. As you travel through the city with Becky and Martin, you and your students will find numerous opportunities for reflection, connections, and further inquiry and will be inspired to learn more about the capital city and about your own community. The teaching ideas in this guide are invitations to go deeper.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Mapping

The endpapers of *My Washington, DC* contain a map, allowing readers to trace Becky and Martin’s journey through the landmarks of the city. As you read and reread the book, encourage your students to locate the featured buildings and landmarks on this map. Then, use Google Earth to see a bird’s-eye view and a street level view, allowing your students to virtually experience the path Becky and Martin have travelled. If you have time, use Kathy Jakobsen’s map as a model for students to create maps of their school and the surrounding area.

A Picture Book View of Washington, DC

Read *My Washington, DC* as part of a text set designed to deepen students’ knowledge about our nation’s capital. Work with your school or local public librarian to gather a collection of picture books that feature this city. Read *My Washington, DC* as a whole class to offer students an overview of the city’s significance and structure.

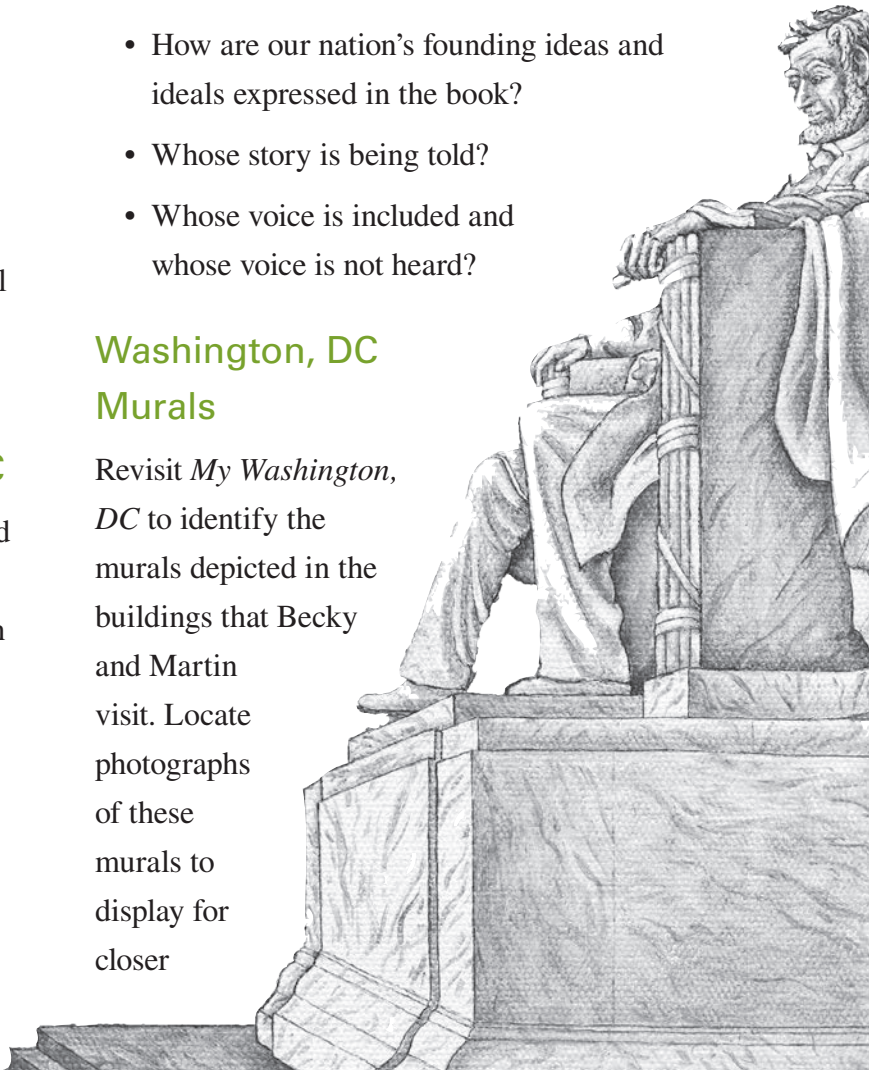
For each text, consider these questions:

- What is the book about?

- What slice of life in our capital city is represented?
- What role do the illustrations play in conveying the book’s content and themes?
- How are our nation’s founding ideas and ideals expressed in the book?
- Whose story is being told?
- Whose voice is included and whose voice is not heard?

Washington, DC Murals

Revisit *My Washington, DC* to identify the murals depicted in the buildings that Becky and Martin visit. Locate photographs of these murals to display for closer



study and use online resources to learn more. What stories are told in these murals? What connections and questions do they inspire? Consider how and why these murals were chosen to decorate the walls of these important buildings. Investigate murals in your own community. Where are they located? How did they come to be there? What stories do they tell? Collaborate with your art teacher to create a mural that expresses the ideals held by your classroom community. What do you value in your work as co-learners and how can these values and behaviors be depicted in mural form?

Museum Exploration

As they travel through our nation's capital, Becky and Martin visit several museums including the Library of Congress, the National Archives, the National Air and Space Museum, the National Museum of Natural History, and the National Museum of American History. Divide your class into working groups and let them know that they will be serving as museum docents. Using the website for their assigned museum and a multimedia platform (collaborate with the technology specialist in your school), each group should curate images and develop text for a narrated virtual tour. As an extension to this activity, students could learn more about the museums in your surrounding community.

White House Pets

In the blog on her website, author Kathy Jakobsen describes how much fun she had researching the presidential pets that are depicted on the White House lawn. Invite your students to do the same, offering texts that provide information on the animals that have accompanied the families who have lived in the White House. To conduct their inquiry, students can use newspaper and magazine articles, other picture books about White House pets, or online resources, like these:

- The White House: Presidential Pets whitehouse.gov/photos-and-video/photogallery/presidential-pets
- CNN: The Presidential Pets of the White House cnn.com/2013/08/20/politics/gallery/presidential-pets/
- The Washington Post: Presidential Pets washingtonpost.com/news/in-sight/wp/2016/03/24/a-presidential-menagerie-animals-that-have-lived-at-the-white-house/
- Smithsonian Channel: Presidential Pets smithsonianchannel.com/videos/presidential-pets/12705

Enlist the support of your school librarian or technology specialist to help students identify





appropriate websites and to distinguish between fictional and factual information. Consider having students work individually, self-selecting an animal from Jakobsen’s double page spread, or ask students to collaborate in small groups. Be sure to have students share their learning orally, in writing, or in a multimedia presentation.

What’s in Season? Attracting Visitors to Your Hometown

Becky and Martin arrive in Washington, DC in time to see the cherry trees bloom, a peak season for tourism. Learn more about these cherry trees using the following online resources:

- Washington DC: Five Things You Need to Know About the Cherry Blossom Festival washington.org/article/5-things-you-need-know-about-national-cherry-blossom-festival
- National Park Service: Bloom Watch nps.gov/subjects/cherryblossom/index.htm

Spend some time thinking and talking about what might attract tourists to your community. Is there a special natural phenomenon for which your town is known? Is there a special event or activity that draws outsiders in for a visit? Arrange for a visit from someone who works at your local chamber of commerce. Students can ask prepared questions to learn more about tourism in your town. As an extension to this activity, students could create posters, podcasts, or travel brochures that highlight the aspects of your community that they feel are worthy of sharing with visitors.

Going Deeper: Getting to Know a Community

Walking the streets, visiting public buildings, and touring museums are ways to get to know a community. But how does a person go beyond the public face of a community to develop a deeper understanding of daily life in a geographic area? Engage students with this question through a consideration of your own local community. Begin by asking students to draw and/or write about “my [insert the name of your town].” Their pictures and/or words will express their personal connections with their hometown—perhaps they will share favorite places, people, and activities. Next, ask students to come up with questions they may have about their community, and sort these questions into categories. Invite guest speakers to help students expand their knowledge of historical and present day life in your community, for example: a member of the town planning board, the town archivist, a town historian, a leader of a local social services agency, a member of the school, or a public safety officer.

ART

Painting with Oil

Collaborate with your school art teacher or an artist in your community to offer your students an opportunity to paint with oil. Discuss the potential of this medium (fine detail, rich color, layer, and texture) and offer students the chance to view a wide range of paintings rendered in oil. Consider whether you would like to focus exclusively on the folk art style or explore a broader range of artistic styles. Extend your collaboration by inviting your school or public librarian to share additional children's picture book titles with oil paintings, such as the works of illustrators Paul O. Zelinsky and Alison Jay, both folk artists. Next, invite your students to use oil to depict scenes from your school. Display students' art and consider extending the project by co-authoring a picture book featuring the paintings and text describing daily life in your school community.

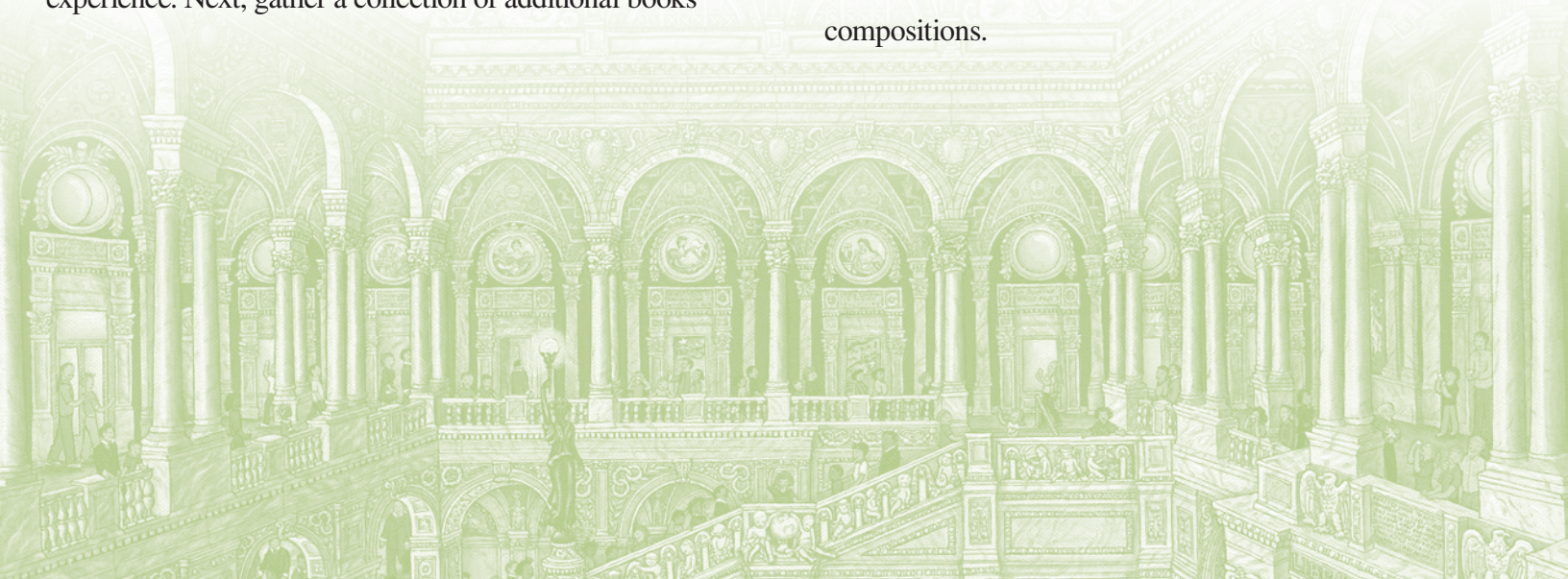
Book Design: Borders

In *My Washington, DC*, Kathy Jakobsen makes use of borders to provide additional visual and text information for readers. Invite students to study these borders closely, describing what they see and how it enhances their reading experience. Next, gather a collection of additional books

that make use of borders (ask your school and public librarian for assistance). Ask students to survey these texts, making a list that describes the different ways that illustrators employ borders in their artwork. Invite students to create a poster or book page that includes illustrative borders.

Symbols and Statements

Becky and Martin are surrounded by symbols and quotes as they tour the buildings of Washington, DC. Select several of these symbols and quotes and gather students to work in small groups tasked with researching the story behind the words and images. Support students' use of online resources to uncover information about origin and significance. Students should write a narrative that tells how and why the words and images have been memorialized and that reflect on the political, social, and emotional significance of their assigned symbol or quote. After the groups have shared their learnings with the whole class, extend this inquiry by inviting students to individually select one of the symbols or quotes they find personally meaningful. Ask students to create a response in art or with poetry, and develop an anthology of their compositions.



MY WASHINGTON, DC

Paired Reading with My New York

Invite your students to read and compare *My Washington, DC* and *My New York*. What are the similarities between the books? What are the differences? How does Kathy Jakobsen combine art, text, and design elements to provide readers with insight into life within these communities? What kinds of information are shared in each of the books? Where is the information located (main text, illustration, side bar, back matter)? How is each book introduced and concluded? What back matter is included?

Writing the Story of Your Community

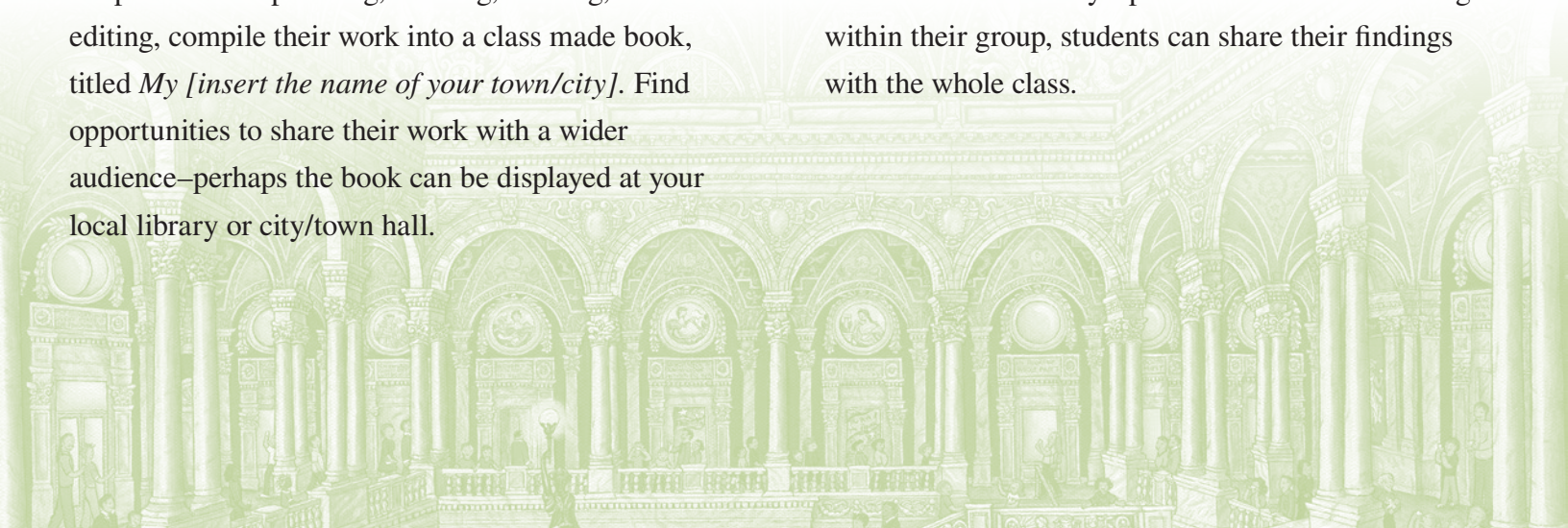
My Washington, DC and *My New York* are excellent mentor texts for students' own visual and written presentations of their community. Invite students to select a landmark, building, or personally meaningful space within your school or local community. Students should spend time studying that location, sketching the landscape, and noticing key details. Conduct research to learn more about the locations that students have chosen, interviewing community members and consulting historical documents. Encourage students to think carefully about how, like Jakobsen, they will use borders and text boxes to offer more information to their readers/viewers. When students have completed the processes of planning, drafting, revising, and editing, compile their work into a class made book, titled *My [insert the name of your town/city]*. Find opportunities to share their work with a wider audience—perhaps the book can be displayed at your local library or city/town hall.

Close Reading of the Founding Documents and Seminal Texts

Our country's founding documents are featured in *My Washington, DC* along with the Gettysburg Address and Dr. Martin Luther King's "I Have A Dream" speech. Group students for a close reading of these documents. Give students one line from a text and challenge them to locate the text from which the line is drawn. Working in small groups, students will read and reread the text. After discussing the text together, groups of students will work to put the text into their own words, expressing their understandings by creating a written, visual, or oral response to share with their classmates.

Critical Literacy: Founding Documents, Seminal Texts, and Today's Political Speeches

As an extension to the above activity in which students work collaboratively to interpret the documents and speeches referenced in *My Washington, DC*, invite students to consider how the ideals and ideas expressed in the included texts resonate in today's political speeches. Ask the groups to make notes while listening to a campaign speech or a speech given upon appointment to office; students should note connections they make between the text they studied and the words of today's politicians. After conferring within their group, students can share their findings with the whole class.



Counting Challenge & Hidden Pictures

In the opening pages of *My Washington, DC*, Becky challenges readers to locate the many stars and eagles that can be found in the images throughout the book. Your students will enjoy poring over the images and keeping a running tally as they reread the book. They will also have fun looking for Speedy the cat, who appears on every page. Invite your students to play with the concept of hidden pictures in their own artwork. Ask students to draw a detailed picture of a location in your school building, such as your classroom, the library, the gymnasium, or the cafeteria. Students should plan in advance to hide objects, symbols, or letters in their illustrations. Be sure to have students include a key or instructions so that viewers will know what they are searching for.

Shapes and Patterns

As they travel through Washington, DC, Becky and Martin are surrounded by magnificent architecture, striking landscapes, and shapes and patterns of all varieties! Assign each student in your class a page of *My Washington, DC* for close study. Students should prepare to point to and describe the shapes and patterns they identify. Extend this exploration with additional books that highlight the shapes that can be found in city environments such as Diana Murray's *City Shapes* (Little, Brown, 2016). Next, arrange to tour your school and community and ask students to sketch the patterns and shapes that they see.

Planning a Trip to Washington, DC

Becky and Martin had a wonderful time exploring Washington, DC. Invite your students to consider what would be involved if they were to travel to this city. Turn the planning exercise into a math lesson

by investigating the costs of travel, lodging, food, and entertainment. Extend the activity by creating an itinerary. Which landmarks and museums would students like to visit? How much time do they have available? How much time would they like to spend in each location? How will they travel between locations?

Funding Monuments and Public Buildings

Your students may be surprised to learn that American schoolchildren were asked to contribute “pennies” toward the construction of the Washington Monument. Similarly, the public was asked to chip in toward the cost of completing the Statue of Liberty. Identify the monuments closest to your school and research the history of that monument. Who decided it should be there? Who built it? Who paid for it? As an extension, investigate the funding of public buildings in your community, such as your public library. What percentage of the cost is funded through local taxes? Through federal grants? Through individual and community group contributions? Ask students to debate the value of public monuments and public buildings and our collective responsibility in their creation and maintenance.

The Architecture of Washington, DC: Modeling the Monuments

Kathy Jakobsen's art highlights the shapes and patterns found in the featured landmarks and monuments in the book. Offer students the opportunity to develop a three-dimensional understanding of these buildings by challenging them to work in groups to create a model of Washington, DC landmarks. Students may benefit from exploring additional resources, such as Lynn Curlee's *Capital* (Atheneum, 2003) or the website for Washington, DC that is maintained by the National Park Service: [nps.gov/state/dc/index.htm](https://www.nps.gov/state/dc/index.htm).

MY WASHINGTON, DC

PRAISE FOR THE BOOK



MY WASHINGTON DC

HC 978-0-316-12612-0

Also available as an ebook

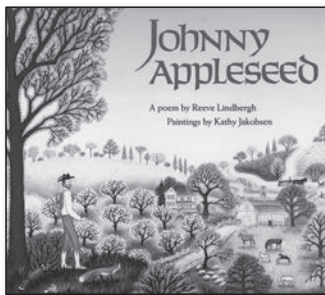
★ “Even children too young to read the text can get lost in these illustrations and become engrossed in searching for the three travelers as well as the cat that can be found in each scene... A star-spangled introduction to the nation’s capital.”

–Booklist

“This merry work is a good choice for young readers who are curious about our capital as well as educators who want to introduce Washington, DC, before a trip or lesson.”

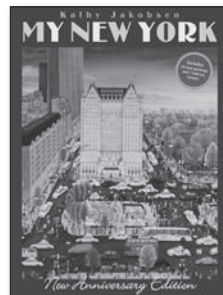
–School Library Journal

ALSO BY KATHY JAKOBSEN



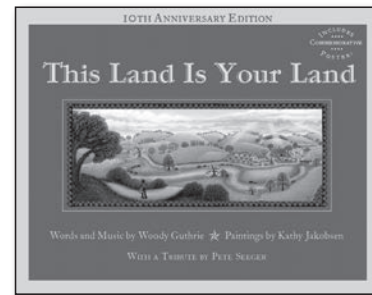
JOHNNY APPLESEED

PB 978-0-316-52634-0



MY NEW YORK

HC 978-0-316-92711-6



THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND

HC 978-0-316-04272-7

Also available as an ebook

about the author



Keith Hallquist

Kathy Jakobsen is one of the premier folk artists in the United States. She is the creator of *My New York*, *This Land Is Your Land*, and *Johnny Appleseed*. Her oil paintings have been exhibited across the United States, Europe, and Japan. The American Folk Art Museum called Kathy “one of the best landscape folk painters of the century” in their Encyclopedia of Twentieth-Century American Folk Art and Artists. In 1984, she was commissioned to create an “Easter at the White House” painting, and she is delighted to return to such an inspiring city with *My Washington, DC*. Kathy invites you to visit her online at kathyjakobsen.com.