

A Band of Angels by Deborah Hopkinson and illustrated by Raul Colon.

A Band of Angels is about a young girl listening to her Aunt Beth tell the story of the young girl's great-great-grandmother Ella, (page 6) a freed slave who paid her way to attend Fisk School and became one of the Jubilee Singers. The Jubilee Singers (location 15) were a talented group of young Fisk students who rescued the school from financial ruin by touring the country singing spiritual songs, or "jubilee songs" - so called because the word jubilee means a time of hope and freedom. The Jubilee Singers (location 17) eventually sang at the White House for President Grant and even traveled to England to sing for Queen Victoria! They raised enough money on their tour to save the school which became Fisk University here in Nashville. The school is still open today and there are still Jubilee Singers who travel the world to sing.

Throughout the book, the young girl imagines Ella's journeys, and the illustrator, Raul Colon, depicts the events as if they were a collection of pictures in a scrapbook. (page 10)

The story is based on the real Jubilee singer Ella Sheppard Moore who was born in 1851. She played the piano as the Jubilee singers traveled the country. Her great-granddaughter is Beth Madison Howse, the Aunt Beth of the story, who graduated from Fisk University and was a librarian there for 40 years. Beth Howse was awarded the Storyteller of the Year in 2013 by HBCUstory, an organization which advocates for preserving, presenting, and promoting inspiring stories of historically black colleges and universities.

On the inside front and back of the book, you can see the illustrations of the 1871 Jubilee Singers, including Ella Sheppard, as if they were in a scrapbook. Beside each picture is the singer's name and a short bit of information about them.

You can even go to Google and listen to some of the songs the Jubilee Singers recorded, as well as find albums by the current Jubilee Singers.

Create your own scrapbook!

- Supplies:
- Printer paper
 - Envelopes
 - Brown paper bags
 - Glue stick or tape (double sided is great)
 - Stapler
 - Hole punch and ribbon or string
 - Markers
 - A black pen
 - Photos, receipts, ephemera (Look up this word! What does it mean?)

What about yourself or from your family can you save and share in your scrapbook?

Tell YOUR story

- a. Where do you live?
- b. What things do you do?
- c. What are your favorite things?
- d. Who are the people you love?

Tell a family story

- a. What stories does your family tell over and over?
- b. What makes your family special?
- c. What kinds of trips or vacations does your family take?
- d. How do you celebrate the holidays?

Record what life is like during the COVID-19 pandemic

- a. What has changed for you?
- b. What has changed for your family?
- c. What are you doing about school?
- d. How has your routine changed?
- e. How have your travel plans changed?
- f. Save receipts, news reports, pictures, items that show how life is different now