



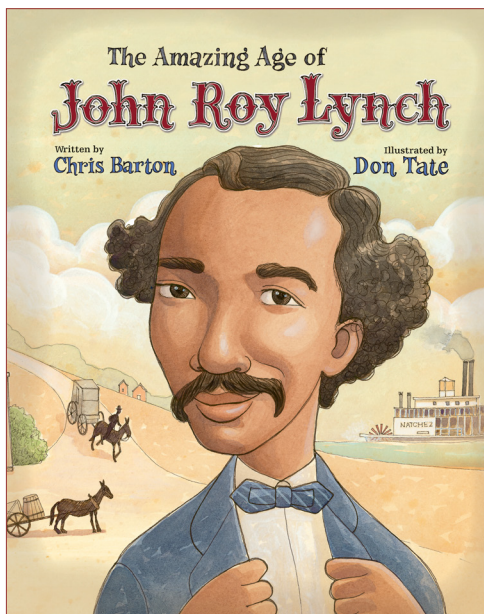
EERDMANS BOOKS  
for Young Readers  
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## EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

INCLUDES COMMON CORE  
STATE STANDARDS CORRELATIONS

# THE AMAZING AGE OF JOHN ROY LYNCH

Written by **CHRIS BARTON** Illustrated by **DON TATE**



*John Roy Lynch had an Irish father and an enslaved mother. By the law of the South before the Civil War, that made John Roy and his brother half Irish and all slave.*

John Roy Lynch spent most of his childhood as a slave in Mississippi, but the Emancipation Proclamation and the end of the Civil War promised African Americans the freedom to learn and work as they wanted. While many people in the South were unhappy with the social change, John Roy thrived in the new era and was eventually elected into the United States Congress. This biography gives readers an in-depth look at the Reconstruction period through the life of one of the first African American congressmen.

## ABOUT the Author

**CHRIS BARTON** won a Sibert Honor in 2010 for his first book, *The Day-Glo Brothers* (Charlesbridge). He also wrote *Shark vs. Train* (Little, Brown), which garnered numerous awards and was a *New York Times* bestseller. Chris lives in Austin, Texas. Visit his website at [www.chrisbarton.info](http://www.chrisbarton.info).

## ABOUT the Illustrator

**DON TATE** has illustrated numerous critically acclaimed books for children. In 2013, he earned an Ezra Jack Keats New Writer Honor Award for his book *It Jes' Happened: When Bill Traylor Started to Draw* (Lee & Low Books). Don also lives in Austin, Texas. Visit his website at [www.dontate.com](http://www.dontate.com).

## PRAISE FOR *The Amazing Age of John Roy Lynch*

★ "Barton offers an immersive, engaging, and unflinching portrait of the difficulties of the Reconstruction era, while Tate's cartoonlike artwork softens moments of cruelty and prejudice without diminishing them."

— *Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

Hardcover ISBN: 978-0-8028-5379-0 ❖ \$17.00

8<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" x 10<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" ❖ 50 pages ❖ Ages 7–10

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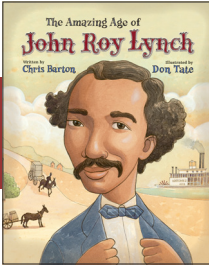
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If you have any suggestions for using *The Amazing Age of John Roy Lynch* with young readers, we would be happy to hear from you.

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Discussion guide written by Debbie Gonzales

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## EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

### THEMATIC CONNECTIONS

- ❖ Leadership
- ❖ Overcoming hardship
- ❖ Biography
- ❖ Reconstruction
- ❖ Racism
- ❖ U.S. History

### KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Before reading *The Amazing Age of John Roy Lynch*, examine the book's front and back cover. Describe the illustrations. Identify the time period during which the story is set. Define the word *amazing*. Predict what this book is going to be about. (RI.2, RI.3)

Interpret the message of the opening passage, "John Roy Lynch had an Irish father and an enslaved mother. By the law of the South before the Civil War, that made John Roy and his brother half Irish and all slave." Explain what being "half Irish and all slave" means. (RI.2)

Examine the illustration depicting a burning building and a man on horseback holding a torch. Describe the scene. Discuss the phrase, "In a way, the Civil War wasn't really over." What is meant by this? (RI.1)

Explain why learning to read and write was important to John Roy Lynch. (RI.1, RI.3)

### SPEAKING AND LISTENING / WRITING

Closely observe the illustration depicting John Roy as a two-year old standing beside his sick father's bedside. Interpret the expressions of the characters shown in the drawing — Catherine's, Patrick's, and Mr. Deale's. Write a short narrative piece from John Roy's point of view revealing his feelings at that moment. (W.3)

Examine the illustration depicting Mrs. Davis singing in church. Study the expressions of the children seated in the pews behind her. Describe their feelings about Mrs. Davis's interpretation of Scripture. Discuss why they are responding in this way. (SL.2)

Discuss the reasons why promises of freedom for John Roy and his people were destroyed. Tell how and why Mississippi blacks were made to be slaves under different names such as apprentices, vagrants, and convicts. (SL.1, SL.2)

Study John Roy's speech spoken on the floor of the House of Representatives. Write a short essay stating your opinion of the message. Do you agree with John Roy Lynch? Explain your answer. (W.1)

The word *diligence* is defined as persevering, hard-working, and persistent. In a short informative paragraph, list the ways that John Roy Lynch demonstrated diligence. Tell how his persistence benefitted him and others. (W.2)

### VOCABULARY USE AND ACQUISITION

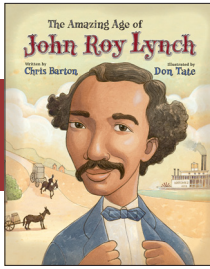
Define the word *liberate*. Consider Patrick Lynch's plan to liberate his family. Explain how his ownership would allow for them to live in freedom. (L.4)

Define the word *privilege*. Study the illustration depicting young John Roy fanning Mrs. Davis. Tell why Mrs. Davis thought John Roy should feel grateful for the privilege to serve her ice water and shoo flies from her table. Did John Roy feel grateful for the chance to serve Mrs. Davis in this way? Explain your answer. (L.4, RI.7)

The word *justice* is defined as lawfulness, fairness, and equality. The word *peace* means harmony, agreement, and order. Based on these definitions, explain your idea of what it might mean to be a Justice of the Peace. List the skills needed to serve as a Justice of the Peace. Explain why Governor Ames chose John Roy Lynch for the job. Identify ways that serving as Justice of the Peace prepared John Roy to become a U.S. Congressman. (L.4, RL.1)

To *reconstruct* means to rebuild, restore, and reorganize. Historically, the years after the Civil War have been known as the Age of Reconstruction. Compare and contrast the definition of the word with the actions that occurred during that time period. (L.4)

Define the word *emancipation*. Discuss the term in reference to President Lincoln's declaration that slaves be set free. (L.4)



## EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

### CRAFT AND STRUCTURE

Discuss how purchasing a boat ride back to Natchez became the beginning of an amazing age for John Roy. Consider how that boat ride began a sequence of remarkable opportunities for him. **(RI.2, RI.3)**

A metaphor is a figure of speech, one that can be used to symbolize a theme or thought. Explore the metaphor of black and white photography and the racial relations of the day. Consider how working as a messenger in the portrait shop helped to develop John Roy's leadership skills. **(RI.3)**

### INTEGRATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND IDEAS

Young John Roy Lynch was banished from serving the Davises in their big house on Homochitto Street and was forced to endure hard labor because he enraged his master by speaking the truth. Explain how this action was a reflection of his inner character. Explain how speaking truth as a youngster provides a foreshadowing of the man he would become. **(RI.7)**

In 1862, John Roy was a teenage field slave. Ten years later, at age 25, he became a congressman working for peace in the most violent period in United States history. Based on these facts, examine how his age, his accomplishments, and the time during which he lived were each amazing. **(RI.7)**

### RECOMMENDED FURTHER READING

Bolden, Tonya. *Cause: Reconstruction America, 1863–1877*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005.

Greene, Meg. *Into the Land of Freedom: African Americans in Reconstruction*. Minneapolis: Lerner, 2004.

Hakim, Joy. *A History of US: Reconstructing America 1865–1890*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Hansen, Joyce. *“Bury Me Not in a Land of Slaves”: African-Americans in the Time of Reconstruction*. Danbury, CT: Franklin Watts, 2000.

McPherson, James M. *Into the West: From Reconstruction to the Final Days of the American Frontier*. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2006.

Mettger, Zak. *Reconstruction: America After the Civil War*. New York: Dutton, 1994.

Osborne, Linda Barrett. *Traveling the Freedom Road: From Slavery & the Civil War Through Reconstruction*. New York: Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2009.

Rappaport, Doreen. *Free At Last! Stories and Songs of Emancipation*. Illus. Shane W. Evans. Somerville, MA: Candlewick, 2004.

Ruggiero, Adriane. *Reconstruction*. New York: Marshall Cavendish, 2006.

