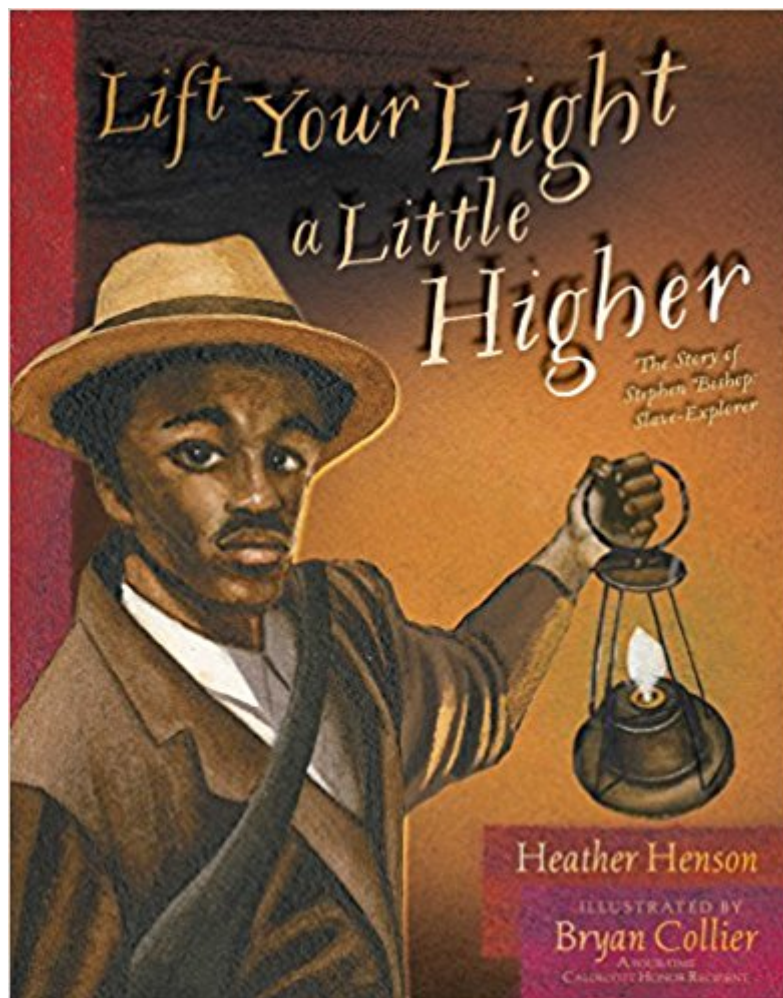




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# Lift Your Light A Little Higher: The Story Of Stephen Bishop: Slave-Explorer



## Synopsis

Grab your lantern and follow the remarkable and world-famous Mammoth Cave explorer and slave Stephen Bishop as he guides you through the world's largest cave system in this remarkable homage to the resilience of human nature. Welcome to Mammoth Cave. It's 1840 and my name's Stephen Bishop. I'll be your guide, so come with me, by the light of my lantern, into the deepest biggest cave in all of the United States. Down here, beneath the earth, I'm not just a slave. I'm a pioneer. I know the cave's twists and turns. It taught me to not be afraid of the dark. And watching all these people write their names on the ceiling? Well, it taught me how to read too. Imagine that. A slave, reading. But like I said, down here I'm not just a slave. I'm a guide. I'm a man. And this is my story.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 670 (What's this?)

Hardcover: 32 pages

Publisher: Atheneum/Caitlyn Dlouhy Books (September 6, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 148142095X

ISBN-13: 978-1481420952

Product Dimensions: 9 x 0.5 x 11.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 7 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #698,160 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #85 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Runaways #444 in Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > United States > Colonial & Revolutionary #903 in Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Multicultural

Age Range: 4 - 8 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

## Customer Reviews

Gr 1-4 • In 1840s Kentucky, Stephen Bishop, a slave, gave public tours of Mammoth Cave for his master's profit. Henson takes this factual piece of history and weaves a germane and trenchant story. Written in the first person, with Bishop leading readers through a tour, this book packs intricate meaning into each line. For example, when describing the cave, Bishop

says, "Specially when you're searching out a path that's hardly been lit, a trail that's never been smooth or flat or plain to follow," implying that the path of the cave is much like that of a slave. Collier's superb watercolor and collage illustrations are painterly and grainy and complement the text perfectly. Bishop, who also becomes known as "Guide," cleverly learns to read by showing people how to make marks on the cave with a candle. They write their names; he learns to read. Readers follow Bishop as he showcases his skill and reflects on his seemingly incompatible roles in life—the limits of slavery and his unlimited exploration and knowledge of Mammoth Cave. The work ends with Bishop warning readers that there is little information on his life beyond the cave, explaining that history books do not record his death and that sometimes "you just got to go beyond what's written down to get to what's been left untold." VERDICT Complex and just waiting for an in-depth discussion, this is a solid purchase for biography and U.S. history collections. —Jennifer Steib Simmons, Anderson County Library, SC

This story whispers of the life of a man most contemporary American readers should know but don't. Stephen Bishop, born circa 1821, had intimate knowledge of Mammoth Cave in Kentucky, where he served as guide for visitors who traveled far to tour the underground passageways. Despite the ban against teaching slaves to read, Stephen acquired literacy and wrote his name on the ceiling of Mammoth Cave by using smoke from a lighted candle. Henson weaves Bishop's impressive scientific discoveries of cave life into the sparse narrative, demonstrating the magnitude of his contributions despite that little is known of his life or death. Collier's strikingly symbolic collage illustrations often draw a stark line between what appears above and below the ground, emphasizing the covert nature of Bishop's achievements. Perhaps the book's most memorable illustration appears when, speaking in Bishop's voice, Henson says that slaves are "bought and sold...same as an ox or mule" while overlapping silhouettes of black and brown textured faces appear within the collage cutout of an ox plowing a field. Rich backmatter will help young readers understand more about the historical context in which Bishop lived and died. A story that recovers an important piece of African-American history inextricably tied to the history of Mammoth Cave, a national monument visited by 2 million people each year. (Picture book/biography 4-8) —Kirkus, Starred Review

Underground, Stephen Bishop (born around 1821) was an intrepid explorer and leader, world renowned for his knowledge of Mammoth Cave, the largest cave system on earth. He discovered new species of shrews and crawdads in the underground caves and became the first cartographer of the region. However, his skin was black, which made his aboveground identity in 1840s Kentucky that of a slave known

simply as "Guide." In a first-person fictionalized narrative, Bishop himself guides us through his remarkable life story. Bishop's tone vacillates between pride in his accomplishments and growing legacy and a stonier tone regarding his life as a slave ("But being known is not the same as being free"). Speaking directly to readers, Bishop tells of how he has become literate by showing the "fine folks" he leads through the caves how to write their names on the walls and ceilings with candle smoke ("And in return they teach me, sometimes, without knowing what's been taught"). Collier's deft watercolor and collage illustrations pay special attention to perspective and lighting, the dark browns and burnt oranges of the cave contrasting with the bright greens and blues of aboveground. Collier also takes great care to place Bishop in the forefront of the cave scenes, whether it's a full portrait of his face or his intent gaze as he observes the tourists writing. This is a fitting tribute to a historical figure who led so many yet had to remain behind. Eboni Njoku -- *The Horn Book* This sensitive portrayal hints that every man and woman who walked this earth, free or slave, has a story worth telling. --Billie B. Little, *BookPage Online* This story whispers of the life of a man most contemporary American readers should know but don't. Stephen Bishop, born circa 1821, had intimate knowledge of Mammoth Cave in Kentucky, where he served as guide for visitors who traveled far to tour the underground passageways. Despite the ban against teaching slaves to read, Stephen acquired literacy and wrote his name on the ceiling of Mammoth Cave by using smoke from a lighted candle. Henson weaves Bishop's impressive scientific discoveries of cave life into the sparse narrative, demonstrating the magnitude of his contributions despite that little is known of his life or death. Collier's strikingly symbolic collage illustrations often draw a stark line between what appears above and below the ground, emphasizing the covert nature of Bishop's achievements. Perhaps the book's most memorable illustration appears when, speaking in Bishop's voice, Henson says that slaves are "bought and sold -- same as an ox or mule" while overlapping silhouettes of black and brown textured faces appear within the collage cutout of an ox plowing a field. Rich backmatter will help young readers understand more about the historical context in which Bishop lived and died. A story that recovers an important piece of African-American history inextricably tied to the history of Mammoth Cave, a national monument visited by 2 million people each year. (Picture book/biography 4-8) (Kirkus, STARRED REVIEW 7/15/16) In the middle of the 19th century, Stephen Bishop, an enslaved African-American man, gained attention for the subterranean tours he conducted of Kentucky's Mammoth Cave. Writing in the imagined voice of Bishop himself, Henson (Grumpy Grandpa) allows readers to embark on one such tour as Bishop describes the shadowy environs of the cave, the cruel reality of slavery, and the power inherent in his role as

“Guide” • a man able to walk before other men, not behind. Collier’s (Trombone Shorty) collages strongly evoke the dark, claustrophobic confines of the cave system, as well as haunting moments of both strength and injustice (silhouettes of human faces appear along the flank of an ox, emphasizing the status of slaves as property). Henson’s poetic narrative is lyrical, but at times vague; a helpful closing note expands on what little is known of Bishop’s life. Ages 4–8. (Publishers Weekly August 15, 2016)

Underground, Stephen Bishop (born around 1821) was an intrepid explorer and a leader, world renowned for his knowledge of Mammoth Cave, the largest cave system on earth. He discovered new species of fish and crawdads in the underground caves and became the first cartographer of the region. However, his skin was black, which made his aboveground identity in 1840s Kentucky that of a slave known simply as “Guide.” In a first-person fictionalized narrative, Bishop guides us through his remarkable life story. Bishop’s tone vacillates between pride in his accomplishments and growing legacy and a stonier tone regarding his life as a slave (“But being known is not the same as being free”). Speaking directly to readers, Bishop tells of how he has become literate by showing the “fine folks” he leads through the caves how to write their names on the walls and ceilings with candle smoke (“And in return they teach me, sometimes, without knowing what’s been taught”). Collier’s deft watercolor and collage illustrations pay special attention to perspective and lighting, the dark browns and burnt oranges of the cave contrasting with the bright greens and blues of aboveground. Collier also takes great care to place Bishop in the forefront of the cave scenes, whether it’s a full portrait of his face or his intent gaze as he observes the tourists writing. This is a fitting tribute to a historical figure who led so many yet had to remain behind. (The Horn Book Magazine September/October 2016)

This title recounts the biography of little-known slave explorer, Stephen Bishop, who led tours through the intricate and extensive pathways of Mammoth Cave in Kentucky during the 19th century. Attractively illustrated in earth tones by award-winning artist Bryan Collier, the book describes, in lyrical language, Bishop’s excursions through the underground world and the freedom his expertise offered him. Restricted by the bonds of slavery above ground, Bishop becomes a leader, a scholar, and an equal below in the caves. In an author’s note, Henson explains that she pieced together information for the book and imagined what Bishop’s life would have been. In writing instruction, teachers can employ the same concept to show point of view in first person narrative. The poetic content may be adapted for dramatic reader’s theater or paired with Marilyn Nelson’s or Carol Boston

Weatherford's biographical works in verse. Inspired artwork and expressive language unmask Bishop's obscurity in history and elevate his life. **Highly Recommended** (School Library Connection January/February 2017) Were you to tour Kentucky's Mammoth Cave in the middle of the nineteenth century, there's a good chance that a slave named Stephen Bishop would have been your guide. Not that you would have known his name as he narrates in this fictionalized account, Bishop would simply have been called Guide, but that moniker only hints at his relationship to the cave. Bishop's owner may have tasked him with its exploration, but Bishop put his heart into the job, traversing areas considered impassable and identifying such cave dwellers as the eyeless fish and albino crawdads. Although the highlights of Bishop's years at Mammoth Cave emerge from the text and Henson's closing note, the first-person narration takes a form closer to reflection than biography, focusing on how he was a freer man in the cave than he could be above ground. "Down here, I am Guide—a man able to walk before other men, not behind; a man able to school even the brightest scholar." Collier's mixed-media collages underscore this message, contrasting the stiff and stoic poses of Bishop with his family above ground with the more animated and expressive depictions of him in the cave that was his virtual domain. Children drawn to caving adventure may find fewer thrills than they hoped for (little is said, for example, of Bishop's discovery of the Bottomless Pit), but those who with a fascination for unsung heroes and adventurers will be pleased to call Mr. Bishop by name. **Highly Recommended** (Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books November 2016)

I loved it! A wonderful introduction to Stephen Bishop and his fascinating life. I did not know about this aspect of Mammoth Cave, and am looking forward to now taking my son so we can appreciate the history of the cave and the guides. Well written, beautifully illustrated and the Author's notes in the back give you even more historical information about Stephen's life and Mammoth Cave.

Stephen Bishop is a man whose name I've heard all my life, being from Kentucky, and having spent many happy hours in Mammoth Cave. I heard that a book about him had finally been written and I was thrilled. Somehow I missed the part about it being a child's story. But even so, it misses the mark. The illustrations are beautiful. However, I left the book with not one bit of information about Mr. Bishop. What a pity that a man as interesting and intelligent as he was got a few words about a slave in a cave. One of the other reviewers thrilled over the lyrical tone of the book. I would have settled for information. Or a story. Stephen Bishop deserves so much more.

My daughter loves all the books written by Heather Henson, and this one is no different.

Stephen Bishop was a slave who explored and mapped Mammoth Cave. The book is set in 1840 where you can follow the light of Bishop's lantern deep into the massive cave as he gives people and the reader a tour. For the reader though, the tour is about slavery, about civil rights and about the ability for a man to discover value through exploring darkness. Bishop was the first to see many of Mammoth's sights, including the blind fish. He learned to read as people signed their names on the cave's ceiling, though learning to read and write was forbidden for slaves. This man's story is a tale of resilience, self worth and discovery. Henson tells the story almost in verse, capturing the highlights of the man's discoveries but also weaving the dark side of slavery with the darkness of the cave. Henson gives Bishop a strong voice, one that stands out on the page and demands to be heard. Told in the voice of The Guide, Bishop explains slavery and its structure to the reader just as he explains his role and his attitudes towards life and the cave that made him famous. The author's note contains information on Bishop and how he was sold along with the cave to several owners. Collier's illustrations are exceptional. He has several that are simply amazing in their power. One that caused me to linger for some time was the page with the oxen with faces on their sides, faces of slavery in various colors that are wrinkled and damaged. It's a powerful reminder of the place of slaves as property. There are other pages that show hope in the slanting light of sun as Bishop exits the dark of the cave is one. Exceptional. A strong picture book biography of a man many won't have heard of before, this book speaks to the tragedy of slavery and the resilience and power of one man. Appropriate for ages 6-9.

Sorry , I did not buy this book from you, but from my local bookseller. However, I wanted to post a review, because it is important that books like this one aren't overlooked. This story is simple and true. Most of the best stories are. I really appreciated the clear voice and the first person details about the life of Stephen Bishop. The notes in the back are useful for more information about the history. Bravo Ms. Henson and Mr. Collier for a great collaboration!

This is a very special book about an overlooked piece of Kentucky history. It is not a biography as one reviewer had expected, it is so much more than that. "Lift Your Light" is the imagined voice of a

man who in essence had no voice due to slavery. Also, the illustrations are wonderful and rich. I imagine a curious and adventurous child (or grownup) would want to read this book over and over again.

Intriguing is this biography of Mammoth Cave's first and foremost experienced cave guide who was a slave. His journey into the cave shows us what the cave meant to him personally. Written by Heather Henson and brilliantly illustrated by Bryan Collier. Published by Atheneum Books for Young Readers as a Caitlyn Diouhy Book. #PB #biography #history #cave

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