

Shirley Raye Redmond
Mailing address
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Date

Beth Parker
Mountain Press Publishing
PO Box 2399
Missoula, MT 59806

Dear Beth Parker:

Would you be willing to look at my 32-page picture book manuscript, *Where's Blind Tom Today?* It is the true story about a horse that played a role in building the transcontinental railroad from Omaha, Nebraska, to Promontory Summit, Utah. This tale about an obscure, all-American "horse hero" has child appeal and would be marketable to adult "trainiacs" at the nearly 300 railroad museums in the U.S. with bookstores/gift shops. It is not anthropomorphized, and the title's query was the telegraph operator's way of asking how many miles of track had been laid each day.

Two summers ago, I attended a lively reenactment of the Golden Spike Ceremony in Promontory. The 140-year celebration will be observed in 2009, the same year as the bicentennial of President Lincoln's birth. The railroad was one of Lincoln's dream projects. The Lincoln Bicentennial would provide many opportunities to promote the book through a variety of venues, such as the Golden Spike National Historic Site in Utah, which receives thousands of visitors each year.

Currently, there are no children's books about Blind Tom on the market. Past titles about the building of railroads are chapter books for older readers, such as *The Transcontinental Railroad* by Elaine Landau (Franklin Watts 2005) and *Railroad Fever* (National Geographic Books 2004). *Full Steam Ahead* by Blumberg and *10-Day Mile* by Fraser, both published in 1996, are now out of print.

I have several nonfiction children's books in stores now. *Patriots in Petticoats: Heroines of the American Revolution* (Random House) was named one of the best children's books of 2005 by the Bank Street College of Education in New York. *Lewis & Clark: A Prairie Dog for the President* (Random Step Into Reading) has sold more than 130,000 copies and is recommended by the Lewis & Clark Trail Association. *Pigeon Hero!* (Simon & Schuster) was an Oppenheim Best Book Gold Medal Winner for 2004. The title sells in venues such as the National D-Day Museum in New Orleans.

I'm a professional member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, Women Writing the West, the Albuquerque chapter of Sisters in Crime, and Southwest Writers.

Sincerely,

Signature