



# **The Battle of Athens**

A Not-Too-Tall Tale

Retold by: Patience Clay

Illustrated by: Nikki Frances Fonacier

Copyright © 2022, Copper Jungle, LLC - All Rights Reserved

ISBN: 978-1-954790-13-1

v1.00



In 1946, Bill White had just finished fighting in World War II. He was eager to get home to Athens, Tennessee, in McGinn County, where he had heard there was trouble.



A Democratic political machine built by Paul Cantrell had taken complete control of the county.



They controlled the newspapers, the schools, and police. They used this power to give jobs and money to supporters and arrest the opposition.



Bill and several other veterans (or “GIs”) decided to do something about it. They hadn’t fought for freedom in WWII just to come home to this!



They formed the Nonpartisan GI League and began recruiting supporters.



Cantrell's Sheriff, Pat Mansfield, and his deputies harassed and arrested the GIs.



The GIs didn't back down. Soon it was time for a county election. The GI League offered their own candidates.





The GI League asked for help from the state and federal governments to ensure a fair election, but no help came.



The day of the election was tense. The Sheriff had hired extra thugs to watch the ballot box.



People were prevented from voting. A poll watcher was arrested while trying to ensure a fair election.



There were confrontations at several polling places. One of the deputies stopped a black man from voting and shot him as he left.



This was too much for Bill and the GIs. They decided it was time to fight for freedom. “Let’s get our guns!” someone yelled.



Bill and several others went and got rifles and submachine guns.  
They handed them out to the GIs.



The crooked deputies ran off with the ballot box and retreated to the jail.



Bill demanded that the deputies bring the box out and count the votes in front of everyone.





The deputies refused, leaving Bill and the GIs no choice but to take the ballot box by force.



The battle lasted for several hours.



The GIs paused to let the deputies evacuate their wounded in an ambulance.



But the cowardly Sheriff Mansfield used the ambulance to escape, abandoning his own men!



Soon, the GIs got close enough to throw dynamite at the jail.



The jail was blown open and the deputies surrendered.

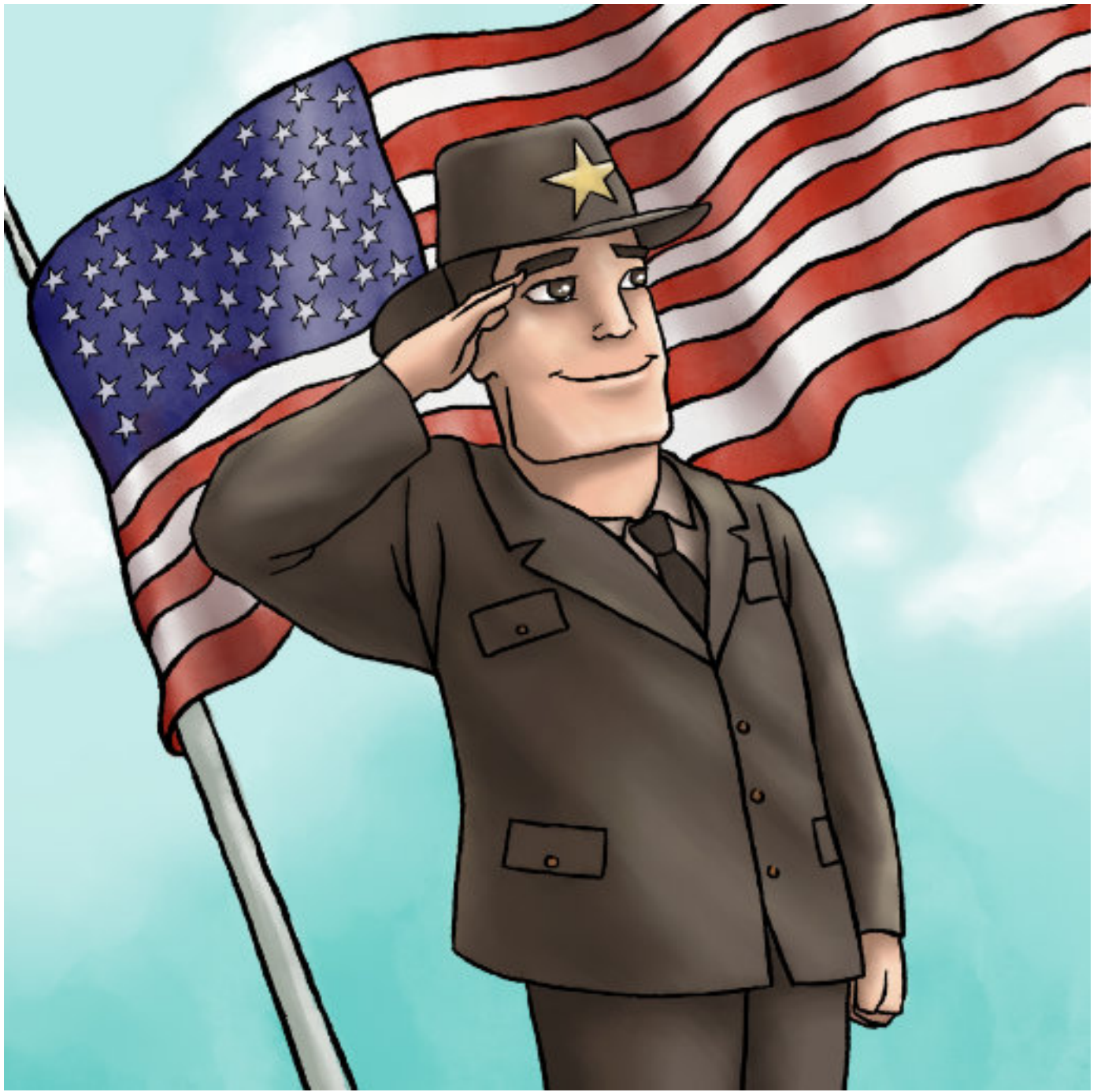


The GIs and the townspeople counted the votes. Five GI League candidates won, including Henry Knox for Sheriff!



The Cantrell political machine was broken and freedom was returned to Athens, Tennessee and the rest of McGinn County.





Bill White was made a Sheriff's deputy and spent several years helping keep the peace in Athens for which he'd fought so hard.

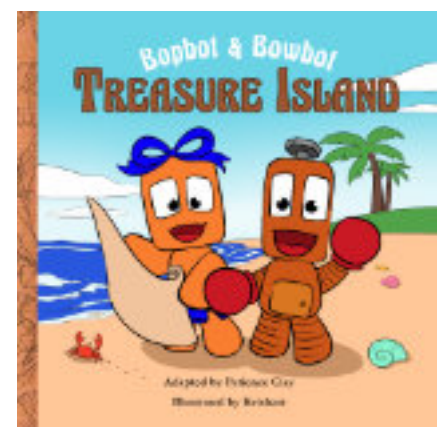
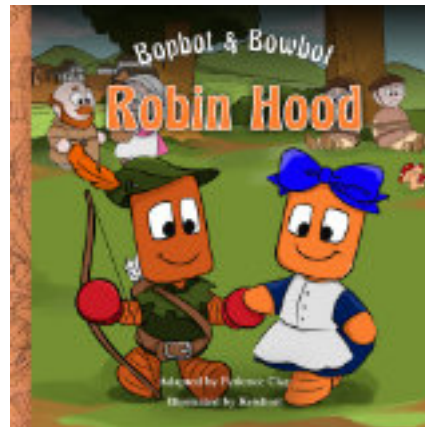
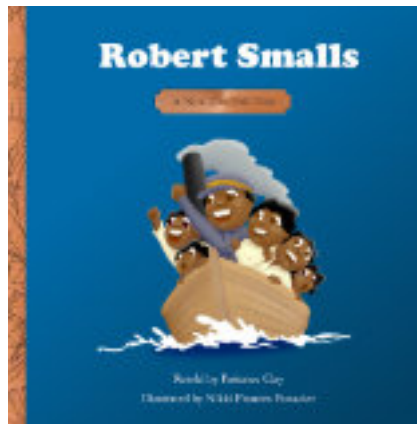


## **About the Author**

Patience Clay is a parent and history buff. She has always loved sharing history with her kids. Now, she wants to share some of her favorite true tales with other children around the world.



Collect these other great Copper Jungle titles!



Visit [CopperJungle.net](http://CopperJungle.net) for more books, games, and free printable coloring pages!