

## Assessing and Addressing Historical Misrepresentations within Children's Literature about the Civil Rights Movement

John H. Bickford III  
*Eastern Illinois University*

THOSE WHO FREQUENTLY ENCOUNTER history-based children's literature view it quite differently. Writers craft the storytelling for young readers; young readers want to be engaged; teachers want the books read; publishers want the books sold; and history education researchers worry about emergent patterns of historical representation (and misrepresentation) within the books sold for young children. Research on the historical representations within children's literature, especially of the Civil Rights Movement (hereafter CRM), is significant for many reasons.

First, state and national initiatives have shifted the emphasis of what elementary students should read in both English/language arts and social studies/history. *Common Core State Standard Initiative* (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School [NGA & CCSS], 2010) prescribes a significant change in the types of texts students read in English/language arts. A relatively equivalent balance between literature (fiction, historical fiction, etc.) and informational texts (non-fiction trade books and primary source documents like letters, diary entries, and newspaper

articles) will replace the preponderance of fiction at the elementary level (NGA & CCSS, 2010; Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSSO], 2012). Elementary students, specifically, will spend half their English/language arts class time reading non-fiction. To supplement changes in English/language arts, *National Council for the Social Studies* (NCSS, 2013) required increased readings of informational texts and the intentional juxtaposition of primary and secondary accounts at every grade level, beginning in elementary school, for history and social studies classes. As teachers select secondary accounts—children’s historical fiction, biography, and/or narrative non-fiction—that tell distinctly different stories, they must provide modified complementary primary source material. Students are to be assessed on their detailed readings of diverse texts and their ability to demonstrate newly developed understandings through writing, speaking, and listening (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers [PARCC], 2012). The new emphases on non-fiction and content area literacy are considerable for elementary teachers, where time reductions for history/social studies have increased in previous decades due to the increased emphasis on reading and math (Heafner & Groce, 2007; McMurrer, 2008; Wilton & Bickford, 2012).

Second, the education initiatives require that teachers dramatically change how they teach, yet provide no history materials and social studies curricular guides for elementary teachers to rely upon (NGA & CCSS, 2010; PARCC, 2012). To elementary teachers, this likely seems like an unsupported mandate. Educators cannot turn to academia for guidance because there is a dearth of scholarship investigating the elementary-based curricular materials. History education researchers have explored textbooks and curricula for Advanced Placement high school history classes because it has a long tradition, but the education initiatives are quite new (NGA & CCSS, 2010; PARCC, 2012). Scholarship—especially that which targets the elementary level—has not kept pace with demand.

Third, elementary teachers subscribe distinct importance to the CRM. Whether following a model for elementary social studies curricula-based inquiry, “expanding horizons,” or biography (Barton, McCully, & Marks, 2004; Levstik & Barton, 2001; Wade, 2002), the CRM and interrelated historical figures are seemingly always included. The CRM is frequently first introduced in

elementary English/language arts and then ubiquitously extended in both history/social studies and English/language arts curricula in middle level (grades 6-8) and high school (grades 9-12). The CRM, thus, is oft repeated.

Fourth, and largely in conjunction with the third point, the recent fiftieth anniversaries of the March on Washington and the Selma to Montgomery March along with continued historical scholarship has sparked renewed public interest in the CRM. Entire magazines intended for distinctly different audiences have recently been devoted to CRM-related historical content. The magazine for the American Federation of Teachers guided practicing teachers and teacher educators to a more comprehensive understanding of labor unions' role initiating the March on Washington (Jones, 2013b). Eric Arnesen (2014), the consulting editor for *Cobblestone: Discover American History*, targeted elementary students, their parents, and teachers in a recent issue entitled "Unsung Heroes of the Civil Rights Movement." These examples of recent journals are manifestations of contemporary interest in the movement. Similarly, CRM-centered literature is a veritable industry in comparison with other popular history topics for elementary social studies. Popular websites for children's books like Amazon, Scholastic, and Barnes and Noble indicated that the CRM had more books than any other historical event, person, or topic included within elementary- and middle-level history curricula save the Holocaust and World War II. Teachers, thus, have a seemingly inexhaustible selection.

Fifth, while the possible choices may seem limitless, teachers may be unaware of each book's historical representation. Middle level and high school history teachers likely have stronger history backgrounds and have a stronger potential to identify fallacies or lacunae; elementary teachers usually have stronger background in reading and mathematics (Heafner & Groce, 2007; McMurrer, 2008; Wilton & Bickford, 2012). A curious teacher cannot trust that online summaries and/or reviews are accurate. The writers of summaries and reviews are usually non-experts (i.e., teachers or parents) or those with a vested interest in the sale of the book (i.e., authors and editors). Teachers, thus, are left to literally judge a book by little more than its cover. Research has examined the accuracy and representation within history textbooks on numerous historical topics (Chick, 2006; Clark, Allard, & Mahoney, 2004;

Fitzgerald, 2009; Lindquist, 2009; Loewen, 1995; Matusevich, 2006), but only rarely has it been conducted in rigorous fashion on trade books.

Finally, research on historical misrepresentations within trade books is limited. Many have explored the children's literature of select historical figures and time periods, yet limited data pool or inexact methodology compromise the findings (e.g. Field & Singer, 2006; Henning et al., 2006; Kohl, 2007; Schwebel, 2011; Williams, 2009). Empirical research about children's literature demonstrated various misrepresentations regarding gender (Chick & Corle, 2012; Chick, Slekar, & Charles, 2010); Christopher Columbus (Bickford, 2013a); slavery (Bickford & Rich, 2014b); Rosa Parks, Helen Keller, and Eleanor Roosevelt (Bickford & Rich, 2014a); Native Americans (Bickford & Hunt, 2014); Thanksgiving (Bickford & Rich, 2015a); child labor (Bickford & Rich, 2015b); and Abraham Lincoln and Amelia Earhart (Bickford, Dilley, & Metz, 2015). Their misrepresentations appeared contextually contingent to the historical figure or era. Many significant misrepresentations, for instance, appeared in books about Columbus, Lincoln, Parks, and Keller, but only minor, nuanced misrepresentations emerged in Earhart- and Roosevelt-based children's literature. Trade books about slavery, Thanksgiving, and Native Americans were egregiously misrepresentative, but child labor-based children's literature was relatively representative. In short, predictions of historical misrepresentations would be unhelpful.

There is, thus, a need for research that distinguishes history from story within CRM-related children's literature. I focus on primary- and intermediate-level trade books for the aforementioned reasons. I am aware of their introductory nature; I do not argue that anything less than a robust historical narrative is unusable and should be jettisoned. Children's trade books are not intended to be an extensive study, yet they should also not be ahistorical. Teachers, scholars, and (likely) parents concur that young readers must be given more than myths. In the subsequent section, I detail my empirical approach. To encourage awareness of trade books' lacunae and fallacies, I report historical misrepresentations in the Findings section. In the Implications and Applications section, I provide teachers with scaffolding that can both historically balance their curriculum and enrich students' experiences with the trade books.

## Methods

Careful readings of diverse historiography shaped my epistemology. The CRM's roots of resistance began and are best told through a social history of slavery and an awareness of nineteenth-century black culture and consciousness. The resultant implications of slavery and reactionary responses to freedom contributed mightily to the CRM's scope and sequence. Reconstruction, and its promises, retractions, and violence, gave way to the "nadir of race relations" (Guelzo, 2012; Logan, 1965, p. 79), which only shrouded—but did not halt—the nineteenth-century fight. Struggles palpably reemerged in the twentieth century in diverse paths (e.g., labor, religious, and social organizations), with distinct goals (e.g., economic, political, and social equality), through anonymous participants and famous leaders using diverse tactics (e.g., Ella Baker, W. E. B. DuBois, Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, A. Philip Randolph, Eleanor Roosevelt, Bayard Rustin, Booker T. Washington, and Malcolm X), and from unanticipated catalysts (e.g., innumerable cases of abuse, lynching, judicial and jury injustice, and arbitrary but exacting laws). The aforementioned items only partially complete the historical timeline, yet most remain beyond the grasp of the American public as various surveys and polls indicate America's apathy towards or ignorance of history. Rosa Parks, for instance, was far from a tired seamstress, but an intentionally defiant activist emboldened by decades of advocacy. While popular consciousness credits Parks with initiating the modern CRM, historians note its origin rested decades before Parks' arrest on that fateful December 1955 evening. James Loewen's (1995) seminal analysis of the dubious narratives and distinct lacunae within history textbooks provides high school students a (partial) reprieve. Knowing that students' historical understandings begin in elementary school, and will garner more attention due to state and national initiatives, I sought to explore the historicity of the most common curricular tool used in elementary social studies classrooms: trade books. The historiography and my epistemology guided this research.

I used content analysis, a rigorous qualitative research methodology (Krippendorff, 2013; Maxwell, 2010; Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). To establish a representative and sizeable sample, I reviewed three popular resources for children's literature (Amazon, Scholastic, and Barnes and Noble) and collected the titles of all CRM-centered

children's trade books published in the last twenty-five years. To determine the books' reading level and intended audience, I triangulated multiple indicators like Lexile, Grade Level Equivalent, Guided Reading Level, and Developmental Reading Assessment. To direct the data pool towards elementary content, I limited books to appropriate reading grade levels (1.0-6.0). I employed systematic sampling, the most appropriate form of random sampling for children's literature, and selected 10% ( $n = 20$ ) of the books (see **Appendix A**) (Krippendorff, 2013). Consistent with best practice methods, these steps ensured a representative, sizeable sample.

I followed appropriate steps to establish empirically based codes. I first read each book while recording both observable patterns and anomalies to the patterns. This was an initial scrutiny of the books' narratives to better understand what was and was not included; it indicated potential areas of historical representations and misrepresentations. I recognize that an adult writer might encode historical content that a child would not decode. To address this concern, I noted *how* it was included. Specifically, I discerned implicit from explicit inclusion and distinguished detailed from minimized content. Since an adult author might include historical details that a young child might not understand or might not have the prior knowledge to draw upon, I distinguished whether it would be reasonably clear to a typical student of the intended reading level.

To ensure the credibility of these tentative patterns and anomalies to the patterns, a second reviewer evaluated the children's books. To remain as objective as possible, this was done independently from my initial review. We discussed our (tentative) findings. I then synthesized the notes from both analyses about observable patterns into (tentative) codes. Based on the emergent patterns recorded in the previous step, these codes became the content analysis research instrument (see **Appendix B**). To determine presence and credibility of the codes, the second researcher and I then independently reread and reevaluated each book. This generated empirical findings. This approach coheres with best practice content analysis methodology (Krippendorff, 2013; Maxwell, 2010; Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009) and mirrors similar children's literature research (Bickford, 2013a; Bickford, Dilley, & Metz, 2015; Bickford & Hunt, 2014; Bickford & Rich, 2014a, 2014b, 2015a, 2015b; Chick & Corle, 2012; Chick, Slekar, & Charles, 2010).

## Findings

This research generated meaningful findings that indicated significant discrepancies between the understandings of historians and children's authors. While it is unreasonable to expect direct correspondence between historians and children's authors, I identified meaningful differences and significant lacunae that should not be disregarded. These findings have implications for how classroom teachers organize their curricular material.

### *Violence*

Recent biography on historical figures of the CRM attends to Rosa Parks (Theoharis, 2013), Malcolm X (Marable, 2011), Bayard Rustin (Podair, 2009), Ella Baker (Ransby, 2003), and A. Philip Randolph (Bynum, 2010). Current scholarship also explores CRM-related events or elements like the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom (Jones, 2013a) and black capitalism and other forms of resistance to white economic segregation (Ezra, 2013). White reactionary violence, in all its varied forms, was inextricably woven into every narrative; the verbal hostility of white public opinion paralleled the brutality from the fringe. Whether a Baptist minister, a labor organizer, or factory-worker-turned-boycotter, every participant endured violence and lived in constant fear. Violence and ostensible threats of violence were ubiquitous in history, yet children's authors did not focus on this central feature of the resistance.

Of the reviewed books, a simple majority ( $n = 11$ ; 55%) explicitly incorporated violence (Adler, 1989; Adoff, 2000; Benjamin, 1996; Levine, 1990; McKissack & McKissack, 1991; Myers, 2000; Pinkney, 2010; Rappaport, 2001; Ruffin, 2001; Strazzabosco, 1996; Winget, 2003). Almost a third ( $n = 6$ ; 30%) omitted violence entirely from their narratives with not a single reference (Baker, 2001; Bauer, 2009; Bridges, 2003; Kurtz, 2008; Mara, 2007; Myers, 1993). A small number ( $n = 3$ ; 15%) implicitly or vaguely referenced violence in ways that a young reader might not detect (Medearis, 2004; Weatherford, 2005; Wiles, 2001)—for example, “I just pray there's no trouble, Mama fretted” denotes prayer and worry but only connotes the threat of violence (Weatherford, 2005, p. 21). While the adult writer implicitly encoded messages about the violence that

African Americans encountered, it is unlikely that a young reader would decode the message. This indicates the presence of omission in a large portion of books. Omission, whereby the author disregards relevant content to attend to the young reader's sensitivities, is a common historical misrepresentation in children's literature (Bickford, 2013a). When compared with slavery-based children's literature, CRM-centered children's literature achieved historicity at far higher rates. Nearly three-fourths of slavery-based books omitted or significantly minimized the violence (Bickford & Rich, 2014b).

Considering the omission of violence in slave-based books and the young ages of the intended reader, it was unexpected that the majority of the CRM children's narratives included some mention of violence. While graphic violence is not appropriate for young children, it is historically misrepresentative to disentangle violence from the CRM. To tell a CRM story sans violence would reduce the struggle to separate drinking fountains and compulsory seating at the back of the bus. A similarly misrepresentative tale would reduce the Holocaust to forced relocation and the required wearing of the Star of David. If such events are to be told to young children, they should be told in a historically representative way.

### *Segregation's Genesis*

Historians have documented meticulously both the birth and lifespan of American slavery (Berlin, 1998; Blassingame, 1977; Schermerhorn, 2012) along with its significant impact on the emerging American political landscape (Keller, 2007; Levine, 1977). Historians have also detailed Reconstruction and the "nadir of race relations" that followed slavery's conclusion and produced segregation (Hunter, 1997; Logan, 1965, p. 79). Segregation, like slavery, consequentially influenced American politics and society; its roots extended from slavery through Reconstruction and its branches stretched far into the twentieth century (Guelzo, 2012). A historical account that disregards segregation's genesis is incomplete.

Children's authors, however, largely omitted explicit mention to slavery and Reconstruction. A significant majority ( $n = 14$ ; 70%) of children's books disregarded both (Baker, 2001; Bauer, 2009; Benjamin, 1996; Bridges, 2003; Mara, 2007; McKissack & McKissack, 1991; Medearis, 2004; Myers, 1993, 2000; Pinkney,



2010; Rappaport, 2001; Strazzabosco, 1996; Weatherford, 2005; Wiles, 2001). A small portion ( $n = 6$ ; 30%) explicitly mentioned either slavery or Reconstruction (Adler, 1989; Adoff, 2000; Kurtz, 2008; Levine, 1990; Ruffin, 2001; Winget, 2003). Without an explanation for its origin, the child is left with little other than ahistorical assumptions. To omit segregation's start allows the young reader to (wrongly) presume that segregation was predestined and natural. Segregation was neither; it had an origin and a purpose. By contextualizing the CRM within the 1950s and 1960s, children's authors construct a narrative of a relatively short series of isolated events. If not told otherwise, young children would (likely) not view the CRM as a century-plus struggle just as they would (likely) not subscribe to a heliocentric model for the universe when reading an astronomy book. Graphic details of segregation's start are not encouraged for young readers, but neither is omission (Bickford & Hunt, 2014). Children's authors, however, disregarded its birth, leaving the young reader with partial understandings and unaware of the gaps left by the authors.

### *Segregation's Architects and Maintenance Workers*

The freedoms that ex-slaves enjoyed after the Civil War were quickly—and purposefully—removed by reactionary forces, specifically a sundry of white local and state political, religious, and social groups (Hunter, 1997; Levine, 1977). Some of these nineteenth-century architects of segregation remained into the twentieth century while other groups, like the White Citizens Council, emerged (Guelzo, 2012; Logan, 1965). These eclectic groups were the maintenance workers for twentieth-century segregation; they worked with varying degrees of coordination to ensure the social marginalization, economic subjugation, and political disenfranchisement of African Americans (Jones, 2013a; Marable, 2011; Ransby, 2003; Theoharis, 2013). A history of the CRM could not fairly or accurately be told without noting white Americans' social, economic, political, and legal reactionary forces.

A significant majority ( $n = 14$ ; 70%) of children's authors failed to identify those who originated and maintained segregation, the historical context that the CRM opposed (Adler, 1989; Baker, 2001; Bauer, 2009; Benjamin, 1996; Bridges, 2003; Kurtz, 2008;

Mara, 2007; McKissack & McKissack, 1991; Medearis, 2004; Myers, 1993; Pinkney, 2010; Ruffin, 2001; Strazzabosco, 1996; Weatherford, 2005). A small portion ( $n = 6$ ; 30%) of the children's literature explicitly mentioned segregation's perpetrators (Adoff, 2000; Levine, 1990; Myers, 2000; Rappaport, 2001; Wiles, 2001; Winget, 2003). This appears as historically misrepresentative as a Holocaust-based book failing to mention Nazi involvement or ordinary Germans' contributions and acquiescence. A story about how the victims of bullies rose above mistreatment is incomplete without mention of the bully. When told in such a way, a young child (likely) comprehends the victim moving beyond victim-status, but not the bully's involvement and guilt. This fragmented paradigm is further splintered when some children's authors failed to credit African Americans for their intentional, oft-effective resistance to segregation as one credited only the Supreme Court (Bridges, 2003) and another credited only Congress (Wiles, 2001) for positively affecting change and modifying laws. Young children should not be exhaustively exposed to gratuitous information about the extent that white America went to resist integration, but white America should not avoid blame. If the story is to be told, the literature should not leave young readers with only half-truths to grasp (Bickford, 2013a).

### *Global Outlook*

The struggle for equal freedom and fair treatment in America mirrored similar struggles across the globe, specifically a colonial resistance in Africa and resistance to British domination in India (Jones, 2013a; Marable, 2011; Ransby, 2003; Theoharis, 2013). African Americans, including civil rights leaders like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Bayard Rustin, and Ella Baker, closely followed and identified with Mahatma Gandhi's resistance to British rule (Anderson, 1997; Podair, 2009; Ransby, 2003). The history of the American CRM is most appropriately told within a global context and Gandhi's influence should be credited.

Children's authors largely disregarded both the global context and Gandhi. The vast majority of books ( $n = 15$ ; 75%) failed to overtly situate the CRM as part of a larger pattern of resistance (Adler, 1989; Baker, 2001; Bauer, 2009; Benjamin, 1996; Bridges, 2003; Kurtz, 2008; Levine, 1990; Mara, 2007; Medearis, 2004;

Myers, 1993, 2000; Pinkney, 2010; Ruffin, 2001; Weatherford, 2005; Wiles, 2001). The lack of background context germinates American exceptionalism into the field of a young child's mind as American historical figures are included and appropriately credited while non-Americans' influences are omitted. Exceptionalism, like omission, is a historical misrepresentation that frequently manifests itself in children's literature (Bickford, 2013a; Bickford & Rich, 2014a, 2014b; Williams, 2009). It would be similarly historically misrepresentative to credit only Benjamin Franklin's scientific curiosity while disregarding his non-American counterparts the world over.

### *The Many Forms of Segregation*

Jim Crow segregation has commonly been represented in images of separate drinking fountains or restaurant signs indicating only white patrons were welcome. Segregation, though, was multifaceted. Social segregation (e.g., separate bathrooms) was ubiquitous, but did not have powerfully negative ramifications like political and economic segregation (Ezra, 2013; Jones, 2013a). Political segregation, or restrictions of voting privileges and other forms of disenfranchisement, enabled white privilege to manifest in laws and court rulings; African Americans resisted through voter registration and public agitation (Podair, 2009; Ransby, 2003; Theoharis, 2013). Economic segregation, seen in restrictions on employment opportunities and arbitrary job dismissals, hurt African Americans through fiscal marginalization or the threat of it; African Americans resisted through various boycotts and black capitalism endeavors (Bynum, 2010; Kersten, 2007; Marable, 2011). African Americans were humiliated by social segregation, fiscally marginalized via economic segregation, and disenfranchised through political segregation (Jones, 2013a). A historical account that does not include all three is inadequate.

Every children's book surveyed ( $n = 20$ ; 100%) included social segregation, but the vast majority ( $n = 15$ ; 75%) mentioned *only* social segregation (Adler, 1989; Baker, 2001; Bauer, 2009; Benjamin, 1996; Bridges, 2003; Kurtz, 2008; Mara, 2007; Medearis, 2004; Myers, 1993, 2000; Pinkney, 2010; Rappaport, 2001; Ruffin, 2001; Weatherford, 2005; Wiles, 2001). Stated differently, only a

small percentage ( $n = 5$ ; 25%) referenced the two most powerful forms of segregation, which happened to be the two focal points for the March on Washington for *Jobs and Freedom* (emphasis added) (Adoff, 2000; Levine, 1990; McKissack & McKissack, 1991; Strazzabosco, 1996; Winget, 2003). The leaders of the March on Washington for *Jobs and Freedom* advocated for decent, accessible public housing, integrated education, the abolition of political segregation, the termination of economic segregation, and a minimum wage (Bynum, 2010; Kersten, 2007; Jones, 2013a). Whereas the March on Washington centered on economic and political forms of segregation, the children's literature minimized the concerns to simply separate drinking fountains and other forms of social segregation. Omission, a historical misrepresentation, emerged when the narratives centered on social segregation and neglected political and economic segregation (Bickford & Rich, 2015a, 2015b). It is perhaps presentist because it centers on the termination of social segregation, the CRM's biggest victory, and omits how the movement failed to compel change in its other demands (Wineburg, 2001). In other words, it is crediting the CRM for what it solved while ignoring its failures.

Some authors offered suspect credit or dubiously omitted credit where credit was due. One credited the federal government, stating, "The U.S. government said: 'Segregation is wrong.' People should live where they want. People should eat where they want. Children should go to school where they want" (Bridges, 2003, p. 6). In this case, the author placed the onus for abolishing social segregation on the federal government while simultaneously omitting the federal government's role in initiating and maintaining social, political, and economic segregation. Another author offered no source for credit, as if a gravity-like force compelled change: "The country was changing. New laws were passed. Blacks could go to the same school as whites" (Adler, 1989, p. 21). It is unreasonable to expect every book to explicitly detail every aspect of the multifaceted segregation. Yet it appears dubious that authors include only the most benign form of segregation. If the segregation cannot be addressed holistically, in age-appropriate ways, and without egregious omissions, then it likely should be set aside for later grade levels. Since the content is similarly complex and contentious, young students are not introduced to, say, the Holocaust or Andrew Jackson's Indian Removal Act.

To avoid such historical misrepresentations, other non-intricate and non-controversial history topics can easily be included.

### *Contributory Organizations*

The CRM has been aptly characterized as “an eclectic band” of diverse betterment organizations (Davis, 1972, p. 321). The amalgamation included organizations of black nationalists and socialists, Baptists and the Nation of Islam, students and seamstresses, preachers and professors (Marable, 2011; Ransby, 2003; Theoharis, 2013). At times, the organizations were cooperative and at other times, they were competitive; their influence, like their membership, ebbed and flowed (Bynum, 2010; Podair, 2009; Jones, 2013a). A social history of the CRM perhaps best represents the conglomeration.

The children's literature largely disregarded or dramatically minimized the role of organizations. A small portion ( $n = 3$ ; 15%) mention two or more organizations (Adoff, 2000; Levine, 1990; McKissack & McKissack, 1991); a slightly larger portion ( $n = 6$ ; 30%) referred to a single organization (Benjamin, 1996; Myers, 2000; Pinkney, 2010; Strazzabosco, 1996; Weatherford, 2005; Winget, 2003); the majority ( $n = 11$ ; 55%) referenced no groups (Adler, 1989; Baker, 2001; Bauer, 2009; Bridges, 2003; Kurtz, 2008; Mara, 2007; Medearis, 2004; Myers, 1993; Rappaport, 2001; Ruffin, 2001; Wiles, 2001). Stated differently, the vast majority ( $n = 17$ ; 85%) of books mentioned one or no advocacy organizations. Instead of creating a social history demonstrating the involvement of thousands of like-minded individuals collectively agitating for better treatment through meaningful organizations, the books focus largely on popular historical figures, mostly Dr. King and Rosa Parks. This indicates heroification, exceptionalism, and omission, which appear quite common in children's literature (Bickford, Dilley, & Metz, 2015; Bickford & Rich, 2014a, 2014b, 2015a, 2015b). In other words, the children's narratives deify King (heroification), view Parks as the anomalous catalyst for change (exceptionalism), and disregard the contributions of countless others through organizational action (omission) (Bickford & Rich, 2014a, 2014b). The reviewed children's literature appears ahistorical due to the plethora of historical misrepresentations. If elementary students can memorize the states' capitals and multiplication, they can likely comprehend

the numerous contributions that various organizations and people made to the CRM.

### *Significant Events*

The CRM was a lengthy sequence of interrelated events spurred by revolutionary action and reactionary response. Rosa Parks' refusal to cede her seat had a galvanizing effect and the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom was a high point, yet neither adequately covers—much less singularly represents—the entire movement. Historians have detailed how African Americans' individual resistance (both active and passive) shifted to collective action during the first half of the twentieth century and then transformed into what is collectively known as the Civil Rights Movement (Guelzo, 2012; Hunter, 1997; Jones, 2013a; Levine, 1977). Many distinct events contributed mightily to the inertia of organizational action. An incomplete yet illustrative inventory of distinguished crests includes Truman's desegregation of military (1948), the *Brown v. Board of Education* court decision (1954), Claudette Colvin's arrest (March 1955), Emmett Till's murder (August 1955), Rosa Parks' arrest (December 1955), the year-long Montgomery Bus Boycott (beginning in December 1955), young student desegregation activists known as the Little Rock Nine (1957), various sit-ins at a cornucopia of businesses (beginning in 1960), the desegregation of University of Mississippi (1962), college students advocates known as Freedom Riders (1961-1964), the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom (August 1963), the church bombing in Birmingham, Alabama (September 1963), Freedom Summer (1964), the Selma to Montgomery March (1965), and Johnson's Civil Rights Act (1964) and Voting Rights Act (1965). The CRM was, thus, a complex string of interrelated events.

Children's authors, however, largely created simplistic narratives. While the reviewed children's books collectively referenced these seventeen historical events, the vast majority ( $n = 13$ ; 65%) mentioned only one or two (Adoff, 2000; Baker, 2001; Benjamin, 1996; Bridges, 2003; Kurtz, 2008; Mara, 2007; Medearis, 2004; Myers, 1993, 2000; Pinkney, 2010; Rappaport, 2001; Weatherford, 2005; Wiles, 2001). Barely a third of the books ( $n = 7$ ; 35%) mentioned three or more of the historical events (Adler, 1989; Bauer, 2009; Levine, 1990;

McKissack & McKissack, 1991; Ruffin, 2001; Strazzabosco, 1996; Winget, 2003). As would be expected, Rosa Parks' arrest and the March on Washington were most commonly cited. Omission of other relevant events contributes to the books' exceptionalism of Parks and heroification of Dr. King (Bickford, Dilley, & Metz, 2015). Disregarding historical precursors decontextualizes the significance of Rosa Parks' arrest and subsequent events (Theoharis, 2013); contextualizing King's speech at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom as a positive culmination discounts the reactionary Alabama church bombing and the diverse directions that various organizations took (Jones, 2013a).

The children's literature also dubiously (mis)represented Dr. King's death. Thirteen books included Dr. King, yet only one ( $n = 1/13$ ; 8%) explicitly detailed that he was assassinated by a reactionary white man angry at King's advocacy (Adler, 1989). A significant portion ( $n = 6/13$ ; 46%) omitted his death entirely (Baker, 2001; Bauer, 2009; Kurtz, 2008; Medearis, 2004; Myers, 1993; Ruffin, 2001). A similarly high number ( $n = 6/13$ ; 46%) ambiguously or insufficiently detailed his death in ways a child would not fully grasp (Adoff, 2000; Levine, 1990; Strazzabosco, 1996; McKissack & McKissack, 1991; Rappaport, 2001; Winget, 2003). Such details might not be expected in books that centered on, say, the Greensboro, North Carolina sit-ins or the Montgomery Bus Boycott, yet their omission was stark in books that centered on Dr. King or that attempted to take a more complete view of the CRM. Such omission resultantly positioned Dr. King at the steps of the Lincoln Monument and situated his legacy within the hopeful tone of his famous speech. Through omission, the vast majority ( $n = 15$ ; 75%) of children's literature largely ended with a positive exclamation about how the concerns of the CRM were fulfilled (Adler, 1989; Adoff, 2000; Baker, 2001; Bauer, 2009; Benjamin, 1996; Bridges, 2003; Kurtz, 2008; Mara, 2007; Myers, 1993, 2000; Pinkney, 2010; Strazzabosco, 1996; Weatherford, 2005; Wiles, 2001; Winget, 2003). Only a small minority ( $n = 5$ ; 25%) indicated further attention was needed or that similar action as uncompleted or ongoing (Levine, 1990; McKissack & McKissack, 1991; Medearis, 2004; Rappaport, 2001; Ruffin, 2001). Civil rights advocacy is quite common at the time of this writing, most specifically in regards to racial profiling, police brutality, and marriage equality.



The omission of the need for further civil rights action mirrored the approach taken about Dr. King's death. Both omissions situate the individual authors' stories in a positive light, which was likely the authors' intent considering their targeted audience. In response, I first assert that if the content cannot be taught in a representative way, then it could be left for older grades. No credible teacher would tell the story of the Second World War without including genocide and anti-Semitism. Similarly, the origin and originators of segregation (along with various other elements) should not be disentangled from the CRM; they are inextricably intertwined. Second, I contend that students' comprehension of a single narrative—no matter the degree of historical representation—cannot meet the prescriptions of state and national initiatives.

The first point appears quite valid, considering how historically misrepresentative a book about Lincoln would be if it were to end on January 1, 1863 with the delivery of the Emancipation Proclamation. It would be absurd for a curricular unit about Lincoln to have no mention of the Civil War's conclusion and no reference to his assassination. What appears inconceivable for Lincoln is pervasive for the CRM. The subsequent section addresses the second point.

### **Implications and Applications**

The patterns of historical misrepresentation were ostensible, derived mostly from errors of omission, and varied in degree of flagrancy. Such findings have significant implications for classroom teachers. Teachers purchasing classroom materials, like trade books, trust their historicity. They should not instinctively do so as findings indicated various patterns of historical misrepresentations. Readers, especially practicing elementary teachers, may want me to select, or endorse, a specific book or to recommend books that should be removed. While certain books, like *If You Lived at the Time of Martin Luther King* (Levine, 1990), can be characterized as historically representative, there is no flawless book. I do not encourage teachers to discard their age-appropriate, engaging trade books. I, instead, encourage curricular balance and provide different ways to create such balance using multiple trade books and primary source materials, which appear as the subsequent two subsections. In the third subsection, I use third-grade reading and writing standards



to demonstrate the possibilities of the first and second subsections (NGA & CCSS, 2010).

### *Multiple Trade Books*

State and national initiatives prescribe students' evaluations of multiple accounts of the same event. Students are expected to scrutinize different trade books and distinguish areas of convergence and divergence. In a way, each book is like a flashlight shined onto a darkened, distant past. Even some of the more historically misrepresentative trade books still shine a light, even if that light is not as bright (or historically extensive) as others. Teachers can intentionally select two books with varying degrees of historicity and intentionally juxtapose for students to assess. While not historically flawless, Patricia McKissack and Frederick McKissack's *Martin Luther King, Jr.: Man of Peace* (1991) is more historically representative with fewer lacunae than David Adler's *A Picture Book of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (1989). Teachers can have students read the latter, which is below the third-grade reading level, prior to reading the former, which is at the third-grade reading level. As students are eased into the historical content with Adler's trade book, McKissack and McKissack's will act as a catalyst for questions about content that Adler disregarded. While both books include Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks, the Montgomery Bus Boycott, and the March on Washington, McKissack and McKissack's incorporates Emmett Till's lynching and its galvanizing effect on the CRM, various students' sit-ins at restaurants, Freedom Riders, and a host of organizations like Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). Students, upon reading both, have a better understanding of the repeated content and also the authors' influence on readers' understanding, as Adler heroifies King and omits the array of other advocates' and groups' contributions to the CRM. Without McKissack and McKissack's complement, students would read to comprehend Adler's account. Such singular reading may end with comprehension, but not historical thinking.

In a different approach, teachers can select trade books with distinctly different main characters yet whose stories act upon each other in unique ways. In a way, each story is a distinct map of the similar terrain. One centered on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., for

instance, can effectively supplement another about Rosa Parks due to areas of convergence. King and Parks had distinctly different roles before, during, and after the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Juxtaposing trade books where the historical characters connect compels students to explore the areas of convergence. Or, students could read one book about Ruby Bridges and another about Rosa Parks. While stories of Bridges and Parks do not directly intersect, the historical themes of non-violent action and assertive resistance to segregation do. Reading about Bridges and Parks encourages students to actively make logical connections. Students could also read two trade books that intentionally diverge. Due to their differences in tactic, tone of speech, educational background, and religion, to name a few, one trade book focused entirely on Malcolm X may effectively complement another focused entirely on Dr. King. Reading both books elicits students' awareness of important distinctions as they cognitively map the distinct path each historical figure walked.

There are, as noted, many ways for teachers to purposefully juxtapose multiple trade books to potentially overcome the historical misrepresentations in a single book. In reviewing numerous sources, students can better grasp historical nuances. As students read multiple trade books about the same event, teachers can employ graphic organizers to guide students as they visually organize their understandings. (Specific strategies are provided in the final subsection.) Juxtaposing trade books enables elementary students to grasp the convergence or divergence within different trade books, which are age-appropriate *secondary* accounts of a historical event. If teachers expect students to think like historians, however, their curriculum must have more than secondary accounts.

### *Primary Source Supplementation*

Juxtaposition of trade books enables students to notice similarities and differences, but the contemporary educational initiatives encourage students' exploration of informational texts, like primary source material (NGA & CCSS, 2010; CCSSO, 2012; NCSS, 2013; PARCC, 2012). If teachers are cognizant of trade books' historical lacunae, they can integrate primary sources that balance the misrepresentations. While historians value speeches, letters, and newspaper accounts, they confound inexperienced students.

Primary sources demand an attention, prior knowledge recall, and cognitive strategies that most young students do not have; students of all ages must be trained to read informational texts for more than simply comprehension (Bickford, 2013b; Nokes, 2011; Wineburg, Smith, & Breakstone, 2012). Elementary students will gravitate to sources they find manageable. Young children find visual primary sources, like photographs, posters, and video clips, both appealing and informative. Teachers need only to locate such visual sources. Young learners might not respond as well to text-based primary sources, which are written with adult vocabulary, prose, and syntax (and are sometimes in cursive). Teachers can locate, shorten, and modify the language of informational texts. Using photographs, posters, newspaper headlines, transcribed (and modified) speeches, and (adapted) letters, teachers better prepare students to think historically as they scrutinize the source, its context, and perspective. Primary source supplementation elicits students' historical evaluation of informational texts and enriches their experience with the history-based trade books. As students deploy discipline-specific literacy strategies, they experience history like historians, which is the intent of the contemporary educational initiatives (NGA & CCSS, 2010; CCSSO, 2012; NCSS, 2013; PARCC, 2012).

Just as elementary math students are not expected to deploy mathematicians' cognitive prowess, no one expects young children to deploy historians' schema. With age-appropriate cognitive tasks, though, teachers can nurture what has been termed "shadows of historical thinking" (Bickford, 2013b, p. 61). Previous scholarship on elementary-level history instruction provides essential methodological steps for teachers interested in engaging students in historical thinking (Bickford, 2013b; Levstik & Barton, 2001). They include various ways to foster students' employment of heuristics and evaluation of evidence. These methods, however, must center on age-appropriate primary documents. With increased prescriptions for elementary teachers' inclusion of *diverse* informational texts comes elementary teachers' need for *digestible* informational texts. Whereas elementary teachers have traditionally used historical trade books, they likely want informational texts that can easily be applied to the popular children's literature. Researchers have modified rich primary source material to developmentally appropriate reading levels for slavery and impactful twentieth-century American women,

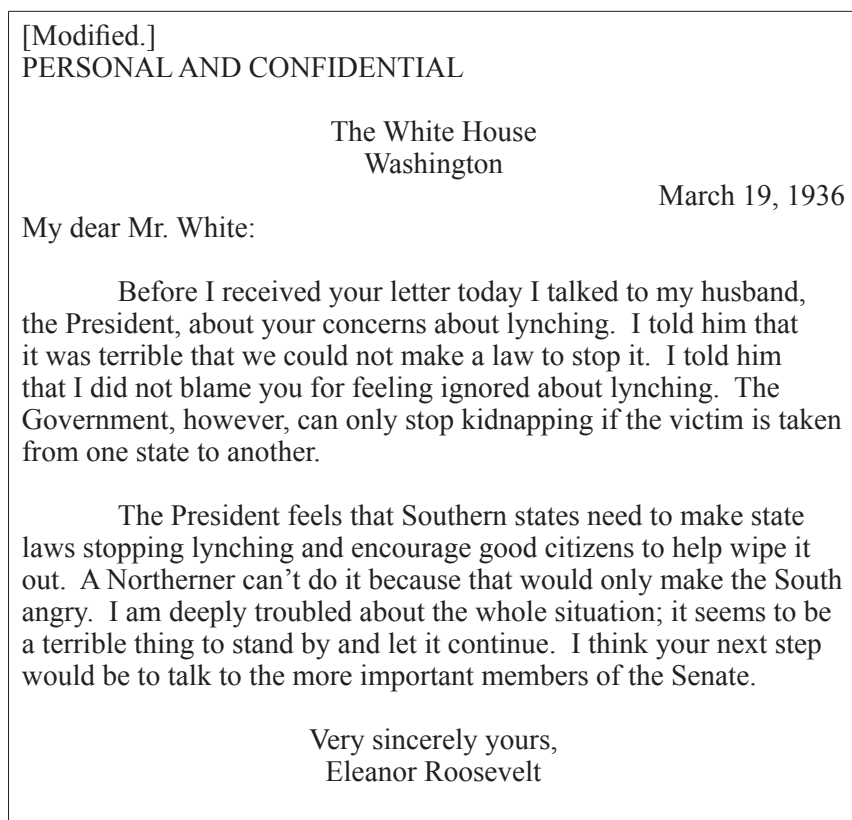
[Modified.]

Lynching, or attacking and killing someone, is spreading throughout the north. People in Michigan and Illinois have acted badly. People in the south are largely responsible for this. The governor of Illinois should be praised for trying to stop it. There are large rewards for catching any one involved in the lynchings; this will put a stop to them here in the north.

**Figure 1:** Lynching Disease Spreading Northward. (1893, June 10). Cleveland Gazette 10, no. 44. *The African-American Experience in Ohio, 1850-1920. American Memory.* Library of Congress.

yet have not for the CRM (Bickford & Rich, 2014a, 2014b). Teachers can find primary documents (and lesson ideas and sometimes an accompanying movie) within *Voices of Civil Rights* (The History Channel, 2005), *Stride Toward Freedom: The Aftermath of Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (Fauver & Ruderman, 2001), *Exploring History through Primary Sources: Civil Rights Movement* (Norris & Brock, 2003), and *Putting the Movement Back into Civil Rights Teaching* (Menkart, Murray, & View, 2004). These resources, however, must all be purchased and the lessons and primary sources are largely intended for secondary students; elementary teachers, thus, must adjust lessons for age-appropriateness and modify the primary sources for both length and language. *Putting the Movement back into Civil Rights Teaching* is the only curriculum guide intended students of all ages. Its sections address focus on political and economic segregation, education, and culture; its website provides links to current events and digital clips of various documentaries. Only a small proportion of sections, however, are intentionally directed at elementary teachers ( $n = 14/107$ ; 13%). Further, most of the suggested activities direct teachers away from trade books, which are ubiquitous in elementary school. Trade books are used as grounding resource for a class novel or the basis for ability-grouped or interest-grouped literacy circles. Since all of the aforementioned materials must be purchased and because none focuses on elementary curricula, I encourage teachers to search for and select primary sources that best fit their employed literature.

While certainly not a comprehensive list, the subsequent primary source documents are illustrative possibilities that address the specific



**Figure 2:** White, W. (1939). Letter from Eleanor Roosevelt to Walter White, March 19, 1936. NAACP Records, Manuscript Division. Library of Congress.

historical misrepresentations mentioned above. **Figure 1** and **Figure 2** reveal the ubiquitous, unconcealed nineteenth- and twentieth-century violence. **Figure 3** and **Figure 4** indicate segregation's roots in slavery. **Figure 5** shows the Gandhi's influence on the CRM. **Figure 6** and **Figure 7** indicate demands of the termination of economic, political, and social segregation. **Figure 8** illustrates the many contributory organizations to the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. **Figure 9** indicates how the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom did not quell reactionary violence. **Figure 10** demonstrates both presidential involvement and subsequent concerns for political equality.



# GANG OF 25 SEA ISLAND COTTON AND RICE NEGROES,

By LOUIS D. DE SAUSSURE.

On *THURSDAY* the 25th Sept., 1852, at 11 o'clock, A.M., will be sold at RYAN'S MART, in Chalmers Street, in the City of Charleston,

*A prime gang of 25 Negroes, accustomed to the culture of Sea Island Cotton and Rice.*

CONDITIONS. — One-half Cash, balance by Bond, bearing interest from day of sale, payable in one and two years, to be secured by a mortgage of the negroes and approved personal security. Purchasers to pay for papers.

No.	Age.	Capacity.	No.	Age.	Capacity.
1 Aleck,	33	Carpenter.	16 Hannah,	60	Cook.
2 Mary Ann,	31	Field hand, prime.	17 Cudjoe,	22	Prime field hand.
3—3 Louisa,	10		3—18 Nancy,	20	Prime field hand, sister of Cudjoe.
4 Abram,	25	Prime field hand.	19 Hannah,	34	Prime field hand.
5 Judy,	24	Prime field hand.	20 James,	13	Slight defect in knee from a broken leg.
6 Carolina,	5		21 Richard,	9	
7 Simon,	1½		22 Thomas,	6	
5—8 Daphne, infant.			5—23 John,	3	
9 Daniel,	45	Field hand, not prime.	1—24 Squash,	40	Prime field hand.
10 Phillis,	32	Field hand.	1—25 Thomas,	28	Prime field hand.
11 Will,	9				
12 Daniel,	6				
13 Margaret,	4				
14 Delia	2				
7—15 Hannah,	2 months.				

**Figure 3:** De Saussure, Louis D. (1852). Gang Of 25 Sea Island Cotton And Rice Negroes. Newspaper Roll #4428, 06, no. 37: 02. American Memory Collection Emergence of Advertising in America: 1850-1920. Library of Congress.

[Modified.]

Massa [Master] Charles became our Massa after Massa Kit die. It was 'bout the same as all white folks who owned slaves, some good and some bad. We has plenty to eat—more'n I has now—and plenty clothes and shoes. But the overseer was Uncle Big Jake, what's black like de rest of us, but he so mean I think the devil would make him the overseer down below. That was the bad part of Massa Charles, 'cause he lets Uncle Jake whip de slave so much. And even if your stomach is full, and you have plenty clothes, that bullwhip on your bare hide make you forget de good part, and that's the truth.

**Figure 4:** Ford, Sarah. WPA Slave Narrative Project, Texas Narratives, Volume 16, Part 2. American Memory Collection Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1938. Federal Writer's Project, United States Work Projects Administration (USWPA); Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

[Modified.]

In the summer of 1956 the name of Mahatma Gandhi was well-known in Montgomery. People who had never heard of the little brown saint of India knew his name like he was familiar. Lots of people in the movement started using nonviolent resistance, or refusing to fight back, while love was everyone's goal. In other words, Christ gave us the spirit and the motivation while Gandhi showed us how.

**Figure 5:** King, M. L., Jr. (1958, p. 85). *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers.

The above informational texts are but a small sample from an immeasurable, accessible pool of primary sources. Informational texts can be easily revised to developmentally appropriate reading levels (Bickford, 2013b; Wineburg & Martin, 2009). I encourage the reader to consider *Online Repositories for Primary Source Material* (see **Appendix C**), which is intended to supplement the historical misrepresentations reported above. It has four sections: A Comprehensive View of African American Experience; Slavery; Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott; and Assorted Topics from 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. Through primary source supplementation,



**Figure 6:** Davidson, Bruce (1963). March on Washington crowd at the Washington Monument. Unprocessed in PR 13 CN 2009:106, no. 4 [P&P]. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. <<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.print>>.

teachers can surmount the various historical misrepresentations within trade books and achieve the rigorous prescriptions of state and national initiatives in English and history. I, therefore, encourage the integration of trade books and informational texts and detail a path in the subsequent subsection.

### *History Literacy with Multiple Trade Books and (Modified) Informational Texts*

State and national initiatives provide space for the integration of English with history, literature (fiction and historical fiction) with informational texts (non-fiction trade books and primary sources), and reading with writing (NGA & CCSS, 2010; CCSSO, 2012; NCSS, 2013; PARCC, 2012). The intent is for elementary teachers to integrate diverse literature and informational texts into their instruction just as historians contextualize their narrative using various primary and secondary accounts. Third-grade students, for





**Figure 7:** Trikosko, Marion S. (1963 Aug. 28). Marchers carrying “District 65” sign at the March on Washington, 1963. LC-U9-10347-34 [P&P]. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. <<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.print>>.

instance, are required to “compare and contrast the most important points and key details presented in two texts on the same topic” (CCSSI.RI.3.9). The subsequent activities are intended for a third-grade class with two integrated English/language arts and social studies/history periods. (Suggestions are organized by cognitive tasks and are not regimented by minute or period, as deference is given to the classroom teacher to adapt as needed.)

I select Marion Bauer’s *Martin Luther King, Jr.* (2009), Angela Shelf Medearis’s *Singing for Dr. King* (2004), Andrea Davis Pinkney’s *Sit-in: How Four Friends Stood Up by Sitting Down* (2010), and Deborah Wiles’s *Freedom Summer* (2001) because of their diverse yet appropriate reading levels and their possibilities when purposefully juxtaposed. Two are at or slightly above the third-grade reading level (Medearis, 2004; Pinkney, 2010) and two are distinctly below the third-grade reading level (Bauer, 2009; Wiles, 2001). Two focus on King and his impact on the CRM (Bauer, 2009; Medearis, 2004), while two others center on non-illustrious

Mathew Ahmann, *Executive Director of the National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice.*

Reverend Eugene Carson Blake, *Vice-Chairman of the Commission on Race Relations of the National Council of Churches of Christ in America.*

James Farmer, *National Director of the Congress of Racial Equality.*

Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., *President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.*

John Lewis, *Chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.*

Rabbi Joachim Prinz, *President of the American Jewish Congress.*

A. Philip Randolph, *President of the Negro American Labor Council.*

Walter Reuther, *President of the United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America, AFL-CIO, and Chairman, Industrial Union Department, AFL-CIO.*

Roy Wilkins, *Executive Secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.*

Whitney M. Young, Jr., *Executive Director of the National Urban League.*

**Figure 8:** Jones, W. (2013a). Pamphlet on Final Plans for the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, August 28, 1963.

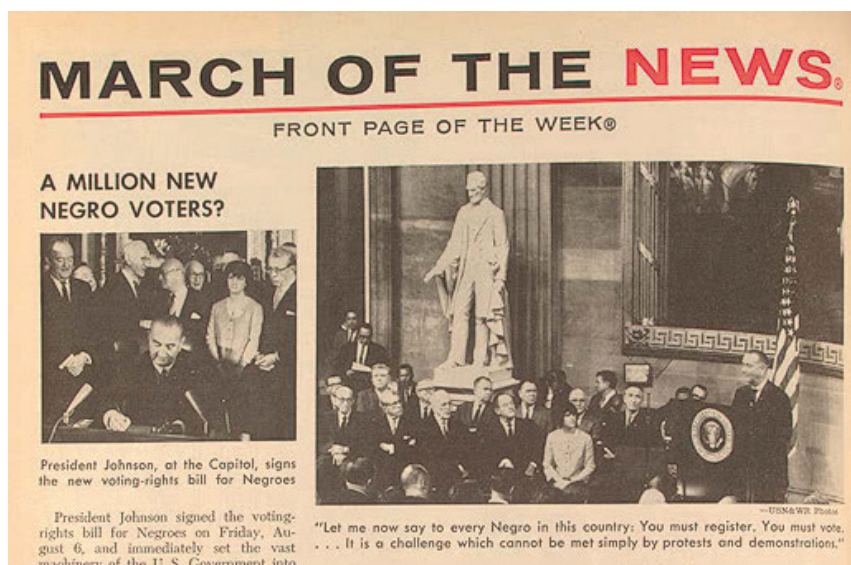
advocates' influence on the CRM (Pinkney, 2010; Wiles, 2001). The diversity in content and reading levels provides space for both ability-grouped *and* interest-grouped literacy circles.

The teacher should first assign students to a literacy circle for a book that is at or below their reading level while ensuring all four groups have appropriate numbers of students. The teacher can assign the ability-grouped literacy circles appropriate tasks to ensure students' comprehension. As a culmination to this first step, the teacher could ask each group to share three to five newly generated understandings with the entire class. This whole class activity will serve to ensure students' grasp of essential aspects of the historical



**Figure 9:** Front-page coverage of 16th Street Baptist Church Bombing, Birmingham, Alabama., 1963; Birmingham Public Library Digital Collections Birmingham AL.

content and possibly spark others' interest in their particular book. For the second task, the teacher could then allow students to choose a specific book based on their curiosity and assign the interest-grouped literacy circles similar activities to facilitate comprehension. Children could graphically organize their understandings on a Venn diagram as they identify similarities and differences between the two books. The teacher, then, could ask each group to share their Venn diagrams with the entire class. Students will benefit from this whole-class activity as they will have read two of the books and will be able to listen to and review four different Venn diagrams. To generate a student-led discussion, the teacher could provide students



**Figure 10:** August 6, 1965. *U.S. News and World Report*, August 16, 1965. Humanities and Social Sciences Division, General Collections. (9-20).

the opportunity to list unanswered questions about the content within different books. The students, as a third step, could integrate content from all four books onto a large, multifaceted concept map or a timeline. Whereas Venn diagrams are an effective approach to detailing similarities and differences, concept maps help students organize multiple events and timelines help students historicize a series of events. While students will likely perceive the concept map or timeline as a concluding assessment, it is a representation of the students' collective foundational historical knowledge prior to scrutinizing primary source material.

The teacher could then organize students into groups of five and provide the above documents to each group. Students will scour the documents, possibly making statements like, “Document Seven has to do with the March on Washington!” and, “They’re sitting, not marching, in Document Six!” The students, in doing so, are declaring initial ideas recently generated from evaluation of primary sources. The teacher, then, should ground students' investigation with significant questions. The Library of Congress (2014) suggests both observational questions (Who created this? When was this



created? Why was this created?) and interferential questions (What do you see that you did not expect? What questions does it raise?). Students could work in groups to analyze ten documents and answer various questions. With engaging yet confusing sources, manageable yet complex tasks, and a readily available support group of peers, students are challenged to think in discipline-specific ways. The teacher can easily monitor students' work as they cooperatively analyze the informational texts. Such analysis might take two class periods. When momentum ebbs or when frustration flows, I encourage teachers to consider having students stand, leave their work on their desks, and move—like musical chairs—to another student's seat. Students can then read another student's writing, contribute ideas where appropriate, and select ideas to take back to their original seat. This step could be repeated if the teacher views it as beneficial. In doing so, the third-grade students both provide and receive feedback.

While small group primary source analysis is the intent, the informational texts serve as inquiry catalysts for students who will likely wonder about the omission of seemingly relevant content within their trade books. Violence was omitted in the trade books, yet was embedded within many of the primary sources. The trade books centered on social segregation, but voting, violence, and jobs were at the forefront of the majority of the documents. Dr. King's dream at the March on Washington governed two of the books as nary another speaker was mentioned and the narratives all ended positively, yet many others spoke at the March on Washington for *Jobs and Freedom* (emphasis added) and bombs blew up both a church and children mere weeks after King shared his dream. The teacher should ask students to write their questions down in order to contribute to a large-group discussion.

During this whole-class discussion, the teacher should encourage the class to revisit their previously developed concept map. Likely, viewing the concept map or timeline as flawed, students will want to revise it and incorporate their newly assembled understandings. Students will integrate and cite understandings generated from diverse, yet modified primary source materials and age-appropriate, engaging, yet imperfect secondary accounts. In other words, this task compels students to contextualize and situate understandings generated from diverse informational texts. The revised concept map

or timeline is an assessment of students' historical understanding suitable for the age group for various reasons. Students are compelled to identify and organize their initial understandings of the events, reexamine the events using new frameworks, and develop and assimilate new understandings. This task is appropriately—but not exceedingly—rigorous; it allows diverse learners to develop differing levels of complexity and it provides suitable space and flexibility for different students' attempts at organization. Finally, criticality and various elements of historical thinking are integrated throughout the process. Other scholars have developed similarly innovative assessment paradigms, practices, and rubrics (Monte-Sano, 2012; VanSledright, 2014; Wineburg et al., 2012).

### Conclusion

Just as elementary teachers expect children's hands to get literally dirty at times in science class, elementary students' hands should be figuratively dirty in history class. Discipline-specific literacy strategies are the necessary gardening tools; expertise only develops through frequent, precise use. Primary sources and secondary history-based trade books are the respective seeds and starter plants; each of which must be nurtured along and students must frequently scrutinize—and not simply read—each type of text. Students' historical understandings are the fertile ground in which all tools and materials spend time. State and national initiatives provide the space and the push for such cultivation. Here, I provided a potential pathway for a popular, oft-included historical topic.

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## Appendix A: Data Pool

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## Appendix B: Content Analysis Instrument

- 1) Author's Name, Year, Book's Title, Publication Date, Publication Company
- 2) Intended age/grade (approximate)
- 3) Genre
- 4) Word Choice: Books, when characterizing *segregation*, employed mostly Tier 1 words ("mistreated") than Tier 2 ("segregation") and Tier 3 ("Jim Crow")
  - a. Tier 1:
  - b. Tier 2:
  - c. Tier 3:
- 5) Violence:
  - a. Explicit:
  - b. Implicit:
  - c. Omitted:
- 6) Genesis of Segregation: Books were mostly silent on who initiated and maintained the segregation
  - a. The beginning:
    - i. Explicitly mentioned slavery/segregation:
    - ii. Omitted/too implicit to be identified:
  - b. The historical actors in the beginning:
    - i. Explicitly mentioned whites:
    - ii. Omitted whites or did not identify anyone as source of segregation:
- 7) Global outlook (e.g., reference to Gandhi):
  - a. Explicit:
  - b. Implicit:
  - c. Omitted:

8) Rosa Parks & MLK:

a. Do MLK books mention RP?

i. Yes:

ii. No:

b. Do RP books mention MLK?

i. Yes:

ii. No:

9) Which issues were mentioned?

a. Social segregation:

b. Political segregation:

c. Economic segregation/War on Poverty:

d. Anti-War:

10) Which religious/political/social organizations were mentioned?

a. NAACP:

b. Christian organizations:

c. Nation of Islam/Black Muslims:

d. Women's Political Council:

e. Black Panthers:

f. SNCC:

g. CORE (freedom riders):

h. SCLC:

i. OAAU:

j. KKK:

k. White Citizens Council:

11) Which historical events are included in the book's timeline?

a. Slavery:

b. Truman's desegregation of military:

- c. *Brown v. Board*:
- d. Claudette Colvin:
- e. Emmett Till:
- f. Rosa Parks's arrest:
- g. Montgomery Bus Boycott:
- h. Little Rock Nine:
- i. University campus integration:
- j. Sit-ins at restaurants:
- k. Freedom Riders (CORE):
- l. March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom:
- m. Birmingham, Alabama church bombing:
- n. Freedom Summer:
- o. Selma to Montgomery March:
- p. Civil Rights Act of 1964:
- q. Voting Rights Act of 1965:

12) Does the book mention how the major historical figure died?

- a. RP (peaceful):
  - i. Included:
  - ii. Omitted:
- b. MLK (violent):
  - i. Included, with killed, killer's name and killer's race/organization identified:
  - ii. Omitted:
  - iii. Ambiguously/insufficiently detailed:
- c. Malcolm X (violent):
  - i. Included, with killed, killer's name and killer's race/organization identified:



- ii. Omitted:
  - iii. Ambiguously/insufficiently detailed:
- 13) How does the book characterize the civil rights movement now?
- a. As completed:
  - b. As in need of further action/attention:
- 14) Does the book distinguish northern segregation/racism from southern segregation/racism? If so, how?
- 15) Does the book include primary sources?
- a. Letters/leaflets:
  - b. Newspapers:
  - c. Photos:
  - d. Speeches:
- 16) Examples of Presentism:
- 17) Examples of Omission:
- 18) Examples of Exceptionalism:
- 19) Examples of Heroification:
- 20) Were there any parts of the book that just seemed historically inaccurate or implausible?

## Appendix C: Online Repositories for Primary Source Material

### A Comprehensive View of the African American Experience

*The African-American Mosaic: A Library of Congress Resource Guide for the Study of Black History and Culture*

This five-century coverage of the African and African-American experience includes books, periodicals, prints, photographs, music, film, and audio recording. <<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/african/>>.

### *Explore: Black History and Culture*

The rotating Public Broadcasting Service collections center on topics (organized alphabetically here) like Ancestry, Race, & Identity; The Birmingham Campaign; Civil Rights Icons; The Civil Rights Movement; Emancipation, Reconstruction, & Jim Crow South; Enslavement & the Underground Railroad; The March on Washington; and Religion. <<http://www.pbs.org/black-culture/explore/>>.

## **Slavery**

### *Africans in America*

The Public Broadcasting Service collection is organized into four sections (The Terrible Transformation, 1450-1750; Revolution, 1750-1805; Brotherly Love, 1791-1831; Judgment Day, 1831-1865) with a primary documents (Resource Bank), contextualizing descriptions (Narrative), and accompanying lesson plans (Teacher's Guide). <<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/home.html>>.

### *Atlantic Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Americas*

The image-based repository has primary visual documents etchings, drawings, and photographs centered on specific themes: Maps: Africa, New World, Slave Trade; Pre-Colonial Africa: Society, Polity, Culture; Capture of Slaves & Coffles in Africa; European Forts & Trading Posts in Africa; Slave Ships & the Atlantic Crossing (Middle Passage); Slave Sales & Auctions: African Coast & the Americas; New World Agriculture & Plantation Labor; Plantation Scenes, Slave Settlements & Houses; Domestic Servants & Free People of Color; Miscellaneous Occupations & Economic Activities; Marketing & Urban Scenes; Music, Dance, & Recreational Activities; Family Life, Child Care, Schools; Religion & Mortuary Practices; Military Activities & The U.S. Civil War; Physical Punishment, Rebellion & Running Away; Emancipation & Post-Slavery Life; Portraits & Illustrations of Individuals. <<http://hitchcock.itc.virginia.edu/Slavery/search.html>>.

## **Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott**

### *Historical Thinking Matters: Rosa Parks*

The Historical Thinking Matters collection provides primary source resources (abridged for length, but not modified for language) along with classroom strategies. The eight informational texts and writing assignment are similar to many Document-Based Question format

and could be adapted easily for elementary students. The webquest enables students to historicize Martin Luther King and the history of and significance to nonviolent resistance, or civil disobedience, beyond the United States. <<http://historicalthinkingmatters.org/rosaparks/>>.

*Everyday Americans, Exceptional Americans: Rosa Parks*

This activity appears to be an abridged version of the activities and primary sources located on Historical Thinking Matters. Fewer resources, simpler questions, more direct scaffolding, and less focus on events beyond 1955 enable teachers to engage younger students more efficiently with historical scrutiny of 1955. <<http://chnm.gmu.edu/tah-loudoun/blog/psas/rosa-parks-and-the-montgomery-bus-boycott/>>.

*Teaching with Documents: An Act of Courage, The Arrest Records of Rosa Parks*

The National Archives document-based exploration includes the actual documents of both from Parks's arrest and subsequent court case. The visual-based informational texts elicit the young students' attention and facilitate their digestion. <<http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/rosa-parks/index.html>>.

### **Assorted Topics from 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s**

*Teaching with Documents: Order of Argument in the Case, Brown v. Board of Education*

The National Archives document-based exploration includes the actual documents of this (in)famous case with scaffolding to guide the teacher. The primary source material is abridged for length but the content and language are likely beyond the grasp of most elementary students. <<http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/brown-case-order/>>.

*Teaching with Documents: Court Documents Related to Martin Luther King, Jr., and Memphis Sanitation Workers*

The National Archives document-based exploration addresses historical content rarely incorporated with young learners: King's labor and socio-economic advocacy. The website includes the actual documents of this court case and subsequent strike along with history books, videos, software, and links to other websites. The primary source material is abridged for length but the content and language are likely beyond the grasp of most elementary students. <<http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/memphis-v-mlk/>>.

*Court Documents Related to Segregation in Public Facilities and Schools*

The National Archives document-based exploration addresses historical content rarely incorporated with young learners: the desegregation of Boston's public schools and discrimination on planes. The website includes the actual documents of this court case and scaffolding for teachers. The primary source material is abridged for length but the content and language are likely beyond the grasp of most elementary students. <<http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/segregation-public-facilities.html>>.