



Middle Level Learning™

2
Lookout Point: Should 9-11 Change K-12?
Tedd Levy

3
The WPA Slave Narratives: Teaching with Oral Histories
Paul Horton

9
Going Places: Geography on the Internet
Margaret Hill

12
**Teaching with the Use of Current Issues:
The Canadian Model**
George W. Chilcoat, Lynette B. Erickson, and Jerry A. Ligon

16
O & A about Slavery in the United States
Steven S. Lapham



Lookout Point

Should 9-11 Change K-12?

Tedd Levy

In our rapidly changing world, students not only want to know “Where in World is Carmen Santiago?” but also where Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and the other “-stans” are. Could world studies compete with the World Series for students’ attention this year? What is this world coming to?

The terrorist attacks on September 11 and subsequent events have forced a reexamination of the role of the United States in the world and have led some educators to suggest changes in the social studies curriculum. Many of the early proposals have emphasized patriotism. Some have called for prayer. Some have proposed that we teach more about democracy. A few have sensed a need for reexamining what we teach about the world.

Diane Ravitch, a former assistant U.S. secretary of education and frequent critic of social studies, writes, “If curriculum reformers agreed on more time for the study of world history, that would be a major improvement in all of our schools.” But she goes on to say, “What they have in mind is not more world history but more “multiculturalism . . .” — to which she strongly objects.¹

In the middle grades, students commonly take courses on ancient history, world geography, world cultures, and world history. Many curricula call for a selective “in-depth” study of some region of the world or time period, and this focus can be rewarding. In their haste to cover a huge curriculum, however, many teachers feel compelled to skip across the curriculum like water bugs over a murky pond. It’s clear in September that not everything can be learned by June. Students often feel the resulting lessons are tiresome, shallow, and remote, like the radio news report that promises its listeners: “You give us twenty-two minutes, and we give you the world.”

Imagine studying the United States, state by state: New York this week, California next week, and so forth. Or imagine studying New England, then the Southern states, then the Northwest. Few educators would believe that this approach would allow students to understand the history, geography, or culture of the United States, but isn’t this the format of many world study curricula? There is no study of the world; it is the study of individual countries or regions. Does this approach provide a sufficient understanding of today’s world? There’s more to the Earth than the sum of its parts. And if we strive to capture student interest by incorporating today’s events into the classroom, we run the risk of unwittingly adopting a curriculum of crisis, highlighting horrors from East Timor to Somalia to Kosovo to Afghanistan to who knows what’s next.

We need a framework or criteria for deciding how, what, and why some things are important enough to put into the curriculum. We need world-class standards, but we also need standards for the world class.

One way to begin to think about this challenge is to ask, What are the dominant global trends right now? A former president has

posited eight such trends.² He suggests that an optimistic person might identify *globalization* of the economy and culture as an important historical trend, and states that the global capitalist economy has lifted more people out of poverty in the last twenty years than any other economic system at any time in history. Other possible themes might be *technological revolutions*, the *evolution of great advances in science*, and the *expansion of democracy* around the world (and the corresponding increase in ethnic diversity in the population of the United States).

Someone less optimistic might suggest themes such as *environmental degradation*, the *breakdown in healthcare systems* that several nations are experiencing, or the *persistence of poverty* (despite the progress mentioned above, more than half of the people in the world live on less than \$2.00 a day, with associated hunger, lack of education, and unemployment). And last, *violence rooted in ethnic or religious intolerance* (whether it is realized as terrorist acts by individuals or the spread of weapons of mass destruction) seems to be a persistent theme. These problems reflect an astonishing increase in global interdependence, but do they suggest a framework for a world curriculum?

The tragedy of 9-11 adds a new urgency to a long-standing challenge for social studies teachers: We need to teach students a new world literacy that will allow them to be thoughtful, competent, and caring inhabitants of our planet. The world is a different place now as compared with what it was when many world studies curricula were established. How can we make sense of today’s world? Educators could help students and our society by rethinking the traditional curriculum. Social studies teachers do not need a new mountain of information to be added to an overloaded curriculum; rather, we need to reexamine and change what it is in the world that we do. 🌐

Notes

1. Diane Ravitch, “Now is the Time to Teach Democracy,” *Education Week* (October 17, 2001): 48
2. William J. Clinton, quoted in “Optimistic on Crisis, But Work Is Ahead,” *The New York Times* (Connecticut Section), October 14, 2001.

Tedd Levy, a former middle school teacher who is now an educational consultant, was president of NCSS in 1998-99. He lives in Old Saybrook, Connecticut.

Lookout Point is an open forum. For consideration, send your essay of 850 words or less to:

Middle Level Learning c/o National Council for the Social Studies
8555 Sixteenth Street, Suite 500, Silver Spring, MD 20910



The WPA Slave Narratives: Teaching with Oral Histories

Paul Horton

Standardized test questions for each social studies discipline are being debated and instituted in many states. Teachers who have developed successful lessons that delve deeply into a topic fear that teaching to “benchmarks” will force such lessons to the margins of the curricula. In order to successfully defend the centrality of “inquiry” within our courses, we need to stake out ground now and dig in when we adopt assessment strategies. History teachers need look no farther than the *National History Standards* for rationales to justify units of study based on careful inquiry. “Historical analysis and interpretation skills,” are not practiced by speed readers, but by students of history.¹

Students do not learn to become historians by reading textbooks. The authors of any history textbook select evidence to construct their own interpretations. Historians often disagree about analysis and interpretation based on similar sets of documents. In the language of the *National History Standards*, students must learn to “compare competing narratives” in order to begin to think critically as historians should. The pedagogical problem posed by this objective is: How will students be able to assess competing narratives? Fortunately, the problem of access to documents has been lessened somewhat by their availability on the Internet. As a result, many teachers are now constructing units of study that allow students to become historians by reading (for themselves) and interpreting (with the help of a teacher) primary documents.²

Effective middle school teachers know that they must do everything that they can to enliven their subject matter with compelling stories that connect students to the experiences of people in other times and places. Primary documents can invite students to enter the emotional and intellectual experience of real people. Middle school students want to learn about struggles for justice because

they are developing their own moral compasses. A topic that middle school students tend to immerse themselves in is the tragedy of slavery in America.

Uncovering the Story

The U.S. Library of Congress has made available online the Works Progress Administration’s (WPA’s) Slave Narratives, which were compiled between 1936 and 1938 to recover and document the memory of the ex-slaves still living at that time.³ Over 2,300 former slaves from every Southern state were interviewed by journalists employed by the WPA (see sidebar). These interviews were transcribed and form much of the base of primary documents upon which historians have based their understanding of the institution of slavery in the Southern states.

Before students dive into reading the narratives, contexts for understanding and analysis must be created by the teacher. In order to measure initial student understanding, ask students to make a list of facts they “know to be true” about American slavery along with the written sources of those facts. Then ask them to list the visual images that come to mind when they think about American slavery and to couple those images with their sources as much as possible. Ask them to compare the two lists. My students have typically listed many more images and television sources than facts and written sources. When written sources are mentioned, they usually refer to textbooks or general reference works used for reports. Most of the visual sources discussed are movies like *Amistad*, with an occasional reference to the television series *Roots* (also on video) or a PBS documentary. What I try to stress to my students at the end of our discussion is that they each have, as potential historians, predetermined biases about the subject of American slavery before they begin their research. I then ask them to write a paragraph about

how they would try to remain objective when given an opportunity to examine a significant number of documents.

At this juncture the WPA Slave Narratives are introduced. I tell students that most of the former slaves were in their seventies and eighties when they were interviewed and that they were therefore children or very young adults when they were slaves. The shortcomings of the WPA Slave Narratives as sources include: 1) direct memory of a limited time frame, slavery during the 1850's; 2) possible embellishment or erosion of memory; 3) elderly black ex-slaves were sometimes reluctant or afraid to talk candidly with young interviewees, whether black or white; and 4) bad questions angling for confirmation of the interviewer's ideas about slavery. Students should also be made aware that the authenticity of the transcription of an interview was sometimes compromised by an editor or interviewer who sought to make it easier to read by "correcting" African-American dialect.⁴

Real History

Because many middle school students might find some of the narratives difficult to read, excerpts from selected narratives should

be read aloud so that students can develop a feel for listening to and understanding interviews. The teacher should read aloud several passages and students should write down their interpretations (Handouts 1 and 2).⁵ The teacher might also consider using the transcripts and recordings from *Remembering Slavery*, which provide dramatic readings by professional actors who help convey the meaning of the text.⁶ Students should also listen to some of the original interviews recorded on tape in the thirties that are included in *Remembering Slavery*.

Next, ask students to read five to ten of the WPA narratives. For teachers who want a representative sample of narratives (there are over 2,000 at the Library of Congress site), I would recommend using the University of Virginia website xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/wpa/index.html, which features thirteen narratives. Teachers can easily pick and choose narratives from the thirteen with the use of an index with summaries. Bruce Fort (then a researcher at the Department of History) did a great job choosing narratives that represent all areas of the South and that serve to give the student a complex composite picture of the experience of

The Works Progress Administration and the Slave Narratives

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, the federal government created jobs by funding public-works projects like the construction of dams, roads, bridges, parks, and swimming pools. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) also created jobs for white-collar workers through activities such as the Federal Writers' Project (FWP), which had the goal of preparing a comprehensive "American Guide" of the towns, cities, and states in the United States — a written description of their history, geography, and society.

Some black intellectuals, working as writers for the FWP, took the opportunity to interview former slaves, who were by then quite elderly. For example, the novelist and anthropologist Zora Neale Hurston interviewed many ex-slaves in Florida. When these interviews were forwarded to Washington, D.C., the directors of the FWP grew excited by the possibility of large-scale historical research to document the life of slaves, and the WPA Slave Narratives project was born.

Writers, working in seventeen states, compiled the WPA Slave Narratives during 1936-38. The collection consists of more



Zora Neale Hurston (1935)

Library of Congress

than two thousand interviews. Many FWP projects never made it to publication, but all of the Slave Narratives are now available free to the public on the Internet, courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Source: Norman R. Yetman "An Introduction to the WPA Slave Narratives." Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 2001. (memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snintro00.html)

slavery in America. For example, one of the interviewees featured is Lucinda Davis of Tulsa, Oklahoma, who was a slave of Creek Indians (see Handout 2). She spoke the Creek language and did not learn to speak English until after the Civil War. Some of the narratives depict brutal conditions while others offer images of more humane masters. The original narratives, taken as a whole, perhaps over-represent the “benevolent” image of slave life because most of the interviewees were white and some of those interviewed may have “sugarcoated” their responses to avoid offending or challenging stereotypes in the minds of the young people interviewing them.⁷ The selection of narratives at this website aims to provide a representative sample of experiences.

Digging into the Material

In preparation for reading the narratives, I have students construct a chart. In the left margin students list the names of the former slaves and the states and communities where they were held in bondage. Horizontally, across the top of the page, students make columns entitled “Size of Farm or Plantation,” “Nature of Relationship Between the Owner and Slave,” “Relative Autonomy of Slave Life,” and “Reliability of Narrative.” I then describe what each category means. For example, the second category concerns whether the owner knew the slave by name, used more harsh punishment than incentives, and was consistent and rational or tended to be moody, harsh, or impulsive in his treatment of slaves. For the “autonomy” category, I ask students to look for descriptions of time away from the overseer or owner. To what extent, for example, were slaves permitted to hold meetings or travel to do “piecework?” Were slaves permitted to grow their own gardens? Were slave marriages and families recognized and respected? Were they allowed their own religious and social gatherings? Were slaves on one farm permitted to socialize with slaves from other farms or free African Americans? In general, to what extent were slaves allowed lives independent from their masters? I ask students to comment on the reliability of each narrative by judging its internal consistency. I ask students to note

what appear to be exaggerations or omissions in stories. Finally, I instruct students to focus on those portions of each narrative that deal with the slave experience.

The length of class time given students to complete their slave narrative charts can vary. If the class is working in a computer lab, the teacher might be constrained to one day and therefore require students to read fewer narratives. I typically give my middle school students two class days to read ten printed narratives. Some students will have more trouble reading the narratives than others.

Teachers will constantly be asked questions about words, so they need to read all of the narratives in advance. I’ve found that initial frustration with reading dialect gives way to fascination as students read more narratives.

Student Findings

On the next day, I ask students to discuss their reading and their charts. Most students report significant variations in farm size and in the relationships that existed between the owner and slaves. Many students report a pattern of slaves enjoying more autonomy on larger plantations: yeoman farmers who owned fewer slaves knew them personally, but these same slaves, ironically, had relatively less autonomy. What really comes through in our discussions is that the slave experience is incredibly varied and that generalizations are difficult to state

and support. On the other hand, most students find most of the narratives to be compelling and reliable. They typically report that they find the logic of the stories to be internally consistent. They are most impressed by the vivid and concrete details that ex-slaves provide when describing their experiences as young slaves.

After we have our discussion based on the charts they have created, I ask students to write an essay called “Slavery: Myth and Reality.” If we have the time, we extend the unit with enrichment activities. Students have produced documentaries using recordings of the voices of former slaves (available on record and on websites) and created posters on the theme of the myths and realities of slavery.



Minerva and Esther Bendi

Questioning Myths

I have found that two prevalent myths are dealt serious blows as students encounter the narrative evidence. The first myth is the *Gone With the Wind* image of the big house on the plantation. Students learn that, although the plantation image holds true for some farms, especially as slave ownership became more consolidated in the 1850s, many slaves worked on medium- and small-sized farms. The second idea that students begin to call into question after reading the narratives is the image of the sadistic planter Simon Legree (the character in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*), who enjoys beating his slaves. Although there are descriptions of true "Simon Legrees," the picture that emerges from the evidence is that slave owners were usually businessmen who wanted to profit from their investment in slave labor. Because they were interested in the long-term profitability of their investment in human bondage, most owners wanted their slaves healthy enough to work. Most planters saw their slaves, to use Leslie Owen's phrase, as a "species of property" (with its grim pun on the word "species" meaning "money" and also a "genetic grouping").⁸ Of course, this more calculating image of the slave owner is also a far cry from the image of the slavemaster as a kindly and just father, which was a powerful myth in the antebellum South. Students also tend to be surprised by the number of slaves who were skilled craftsmen.

Using the WPA Slave Narratives in the classroom allows middle school students to examine a sample of the evidence that historians have used to construct their descriptions of history.⁹ Bringing these documents into the classroom permits students to become historians, to tap into the excitement of research with primary sources. By working with the same traces of the past that historians rely on, we as teachers can guide our students through the process of historical

thinking. Students are better able to understand slavery to the extent that they can begin to hear the voices of slaves and imagine a world in which freedom was a precious dream. 📖

Notes

1. Charlotte Crabtree and Gary Nash, *National Standards for American History: Exploring the American Experience* (Los Angeles, CA: National Center for History in the Schools, 1996), 26.
2. C. Crabtree and G. Nash, 27.
3. The Slave Narrative collection at the Library of Congress can be viewed through the American Memory website site at memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html. The narratives were also published in a series of books, in forty-one volumes: George P. Rawick, ed., *The American Slave: A Composite Biography* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1972-79).
4. For a discussion of the historiographical issues raised by the use of slave narratives, see John Blassingame, "Using the Testimony of Ex-slaves: Approaches and Problems," *Journal of Southern History* 41 (November 1975), 473-92; John Blassingame, *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews, and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1977); Paul D. Escott, *Slavery Remembered: A Record of Twentieth Century Slave Narratives* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1979).
5. The full text of the interviews excerpted on Handout 2 can be seen at xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/wpa/index.html and in the sources listed in note 3.
6. Ira Berlin et al., eds., *Remembering Slavery: African Americans Talk About Their Personal Experiences of Slavery and Freedom* (book and tape; New York: Norton, 1997).
7. Some of the problems of bias and interpretation in the WPA Slave Narratives are discussed by Norman R. Yetman in "An Introduction to the WPA Slave Narratives." (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 2001. memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snintro00.html)
8. Leslie H. Owens, *This Species of Property: Slave Life and Culture in the Old South* (London: Oxford University Press, 1978).
9. A version of this article appeared in the fall 1999 issue of *The Iowa Council for the Social Studies Journal*. On the cover: Charlotte Beverly; page3: Esther King Casey (Library of Congress).

Paul Horton teaches social studies at the Malcolm Price Laboratory School at the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls, Iowa.

Interviewer Bias

Modern readers will note in some narratives the patronizing tone of the interviewers and the seeming deference of the subjects. While the racial language can be offensive to modern readers, it is important to remember that these narratives were conducted sixty years ago in the Jim Crow South. Just as these former slaves had survived into the twentieth century, so had the ideology of white supremacy that underpinned the slave society of the American South.

— From "Reading the Narratives" at the University of Virginia's American Slave Narratives webpage, xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/wpa/wpahome.html.

Interpreting a Primary Source

In the 1930s, college students and other young people used tape recorders to try to capture the memories of African Americans who had once been slaves in the United States. Slavery ended throughout the nation in 1865, so the former slaves were elderly by the time they were interviewed. Over 2,300 former slaves were interviewed. Small parts of just three different interviews are provided on Handout 2.

The passages from interviews on Handout 2 might be hard for you to read. Don't rush. Try reading the words aloud quietly. When you figure out a difficult word or unfamiliar spelling, try writing down the correct spelling underneath that word. If the word is totally unfamiliar, see if it is in a dictionary. Then go back, read the whole sentence through, and see if it makes sense to you. Here is an example,

Dey treated us purty good, but we hab to wuk hard.
 They pretty had work

Remember that most of the interviews were made with a tape recorder. These passages are transcriptions from a tape. Students of history listened slowly to the taped interviews one by one, writing down what they heard as best they could, word by word. Now it is your responsibility to search for the meaning of those words.

Analyzing a Primary Source

After you have read the three passages from the interviews with elderly former slaves, discuss these questions in small groups or as a whole class. Some of these questions do not have one clear answer, but you may have a better understanding of what slavery in America was all about by pondering them with your classmates and your teacher.

Questions about Interview A

1. Can you tell whether Walter Calloway would have been considered a “field slave” or a “house slave?”
2. The overseer was a person who commanded the slaves as they worked in the field. Why would the person named “Mose” have obeyed the overseer, whose name was Green Bush? What did Green Bush tell Mose to do?

Questions about Interview B

1. The owner of Lucinda Davis was not a white man. What ethnic group did he belong to?
2. Some of the words used by Lucinda Davis are not common anymore. A “shoat” is a young pig, and a “brake” is a piece of rough land. To her, the language of white people sounded like a band of squealing pigs in the woods. Have you ever heard people speaking to each other in another language? Did it sound like they were talking faster or slower than you do? Did their speech sound odd or funny?
3. Some Indian tribes adopted their slaves as members of their tribes when President Lincoln proclaimed that slaves must be freed. If you had been a slave, and an Indian tribe offered you membership, would you have wanted to stay with the tribe, or to head further West on your own?

Questions about Interview C

1. Why does Charity Anderson say that her master was “good” to his slaves?
2. Did her master trust her? How do we know?
3. Why would Charity Anderson want us to know that “all white folks warn’t good to dere slaves?” What sort of person was she talking to during this interview?

Voices of Former Slaves

Selections from the WPA Slave Narratives, 1937-38

Library of Congress



Interview A

Marse John hab a big plantation an' lots of slaves. Dey treated us purty good, but we hab to wuk hard. Time I was ten years ole I was makin' a reg'lar han' 'hin de plow. Oh, yassuh, Marse John good 'nough to us an' we get plenty to eat, but he had a oberseer name Green Bush what sho' whup us iffen we don't do to suit him. Yassuh, he mighty rough wid us be he didn't do de whippin' hisse'f. He had a big black boy name Mose, mean as de debil an' strong as a ox, and de oberseer let him do all de whuppin'. An', man, he could sho' lay on dat rawhide lash. . . .

*Walter Calloway
Birmingham, Alabama*

Interview B

I belong to a full blood Creek Indian and I didn't know nothing but Creek talk long after de Civil War. My mistress was part white and knowed English talk, but she never did talk it because none of de people talked it. I heard it sometime, but it sound like whole lot of wild shoat in de cedar brake scared at something when I do hear it. Dat was when I was little girl in time of de War. . . .

*Lucinda Davis
Tulsa, Oklaboma*



Library of Congress

Interview C

It sho' was hard for us older uns to keep de little cullered chillun out ob de dinin' room whar ol marster ate, cause when dey would slip in and stan' by his cheer, when he finished eatin' he would fix a plate and gib dem and dey would set on de hearth and eat. But honey chile, all white folks warn't good to dere slaves, cause I'se seen pore niggers almos' tore up by dogs, and whipped unmercifully, when dey did'nt do lack de white folks say. But thank God I had good white folks, dey sho' did trus' me to, I had charge of all de keys in the house and I waited on de Missy and de chillun. I laid out all dey clos' . . .

*Charity Anderson
Mobile, Alabama*

Library of Congress



GOING PLACES: GEOGRAPHY ON THE INTERNET

Margaret Hill

Do you still have wall maps hanging in your classroom showing the Soviet Union, East and West Germany, and the “Ivory Coast” as modern countries? For today’s social studies teacher, online map sources and services are an incredibly valuable, up-to-date resource. But as with everything, some online resources are great and others are just so-so. I count the useful websites as those that students can use to learn online geography or those where teachers can download resource maps for their classrooms. Some of the Map Libraries from major universities seem like a gold mine at first glance, but in many there are time-wasting “file not found” responses and lists so general that they are useful only in identifying the haystack in which your mapping needle might be located.

At the standards-aligned SCORE History-Social Science website (www.score.rims.k12.ca.us), which I direct for the San Bernardino County Schools in California, we have tried to provide a user-friendly entrance to the world of Internet maps. (SCORE stands for Schools of California Online Resources for Education). For example, we clearly identify the most useful online map resources, and we include helpful comments, such as alerting the reader if a listed website will be difficult or slow to use if he or she is not sitting in front of a powerful computer. Map resources useful for each grade level are located at the bottom of the home page for that grade. Here are a few of my favorite websites, all of which offer all or many of their services free to the viewer.

Basic Geography Skills and Thrills

A teacher who just wants to find an outline map to use in class for a lesson of one’s own design can get it quickly on the Internet. Thanks to the Houghton Mifflin and Scott Foresman Companies, respectively, free outline maps are available at the click of the mouse at www.eduplace.com/ss/ssmaps/index.html or at www.scottforesman.com/educators/index.html.

For language learners and geographically unsophisticated students, maps that show the Earth and zoom in closer and closer until the specific county, state, or city is located are very useful for teaching the concepts of location and place. As you would expect, the

National Geographic site has wonderful maps of individual countries and of the world at plasma.nationalgeographic.com/mapmachine. But the Xerox PARC Maps site at mapweb.parc.xerox.com/map is my favorite because you can pick the global projection you want and view it in either color or black and white.¹ The viewer can also add details such as political borders and rivers. If you are using it to look at the USA, the database includes even more detail such as roads, railroads, and federal lands. But be warned: sometimes the PARC Map server is very slow.

Geography becomes personally relevant to students who use the interactive mapping programs on the Internet. Through these free mapping services, students can “map” the way from their home to grandma’s house, the local park, or to school. Many of these online mapping services, such as MapQuest, accompany the search engines used to access the Internet. Yahoo, America Online, Lycos, and Excite each have easy mapping links posted on their homepages. For example, at Yahoo (maps.yahoo.com/py/maps.py) all that students have to do is input the address they want to see on a map. Up comes the map with “Zoom In” and “Zoom Out” buttons. Students can map areas of different scale, from as small as their immediate neighborhood to as large as the continent of North America.

Relief maps have always been my favorite. There are wonder-



Afghanistan: Ethnolinguistic Groups, 1997 (www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/afghanistan.html)

Lighting Up the Night

Enjoy a panoramic view of the world at night as seen by meteorological satellites orbiting 500 miles above the Earth. Go online to NASA's "Astronomy Picture of the Day" at antwrp.gsfc.nasa.gov/apod/astropix.html, click on "Archive," then choose the image for "2000 November 27." This illuminated image is actually a composite of hundreds of night photos.

During the day, not many of the works of man are visible from space at this distance—the Great Wall of China and smoke from burning rain forests are notable exceptions. But at night, populous areas show up because electric lights create clusters of white dots that are visible from space.

After opening a high-resolution image, the viewer can scroll east to west and north to south, noticing interesting patterns of light. All around the globe, coastlines are often revealed as solid white lines. Moving from the bright east coast of the United States, scroll east to Europe and to the Mediterranean Sea, which is outlined by light. Note the illuminated Nile River and Trans-Siberian Rail route. In contrast, the outback of Australia is dark as an ocean.

Several national boundaries are suggested in patterns of light. Canada's population appears most dense along the U.S. border. Israel stands out on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean. Moving to the Far East, one sees South Korea as an "island" of light just west of the Japanese islands, while North Korea is quite dark.

This is an awesome picture, a revealing glimpse of humankind's energetic mark on the Earth.*

—Steven S. Lapham

* A similar image (with some cities, fires, and the aurora borealis identified) appears in *Geography for Life: National Geography Standards* by the Geography Education Standards Project (Washington, DC: National Geographic Society, 1994), 12-13.

ful sources for colorful U.S. and world relief maps on the Internet that will help students more clearly understand important geopolitical issues. Many of these sites do interesting things, such as plot probable trail, road, or rail paths that could be constructed as populations grow, or that show watersheds and wind patterns. The down side is that these maps require a huge amount of RAM (Random Access Memory), lots of time to load, and the resulting maps are usually too big to print. Nonetheless, if you have access to one high-end computer in your school (128 megabytes of RAM or more), it is certainly worth time to explore (first by yourself and then with the class) relief maps of the United States hosted by Johns Hopkins University (fermi.jhuapl.edu/states/states.html), or those hosted by the U.S. Geographic Survey at Flagstaff, Arizona (www.flag.wr.usgs.gov/USGSFlag/Data/shadedRel.html), or world relief maps hosted by the U.S. National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (www.ngdc.noaa.gov/seg/topo/globegal.shtml). At the NOAA site, the viewer will find wonderful color topographical maps of each state and continent. Some versions of the global maps can be accessed in small, medium, and large formats to accommodate computers of various power. You can also deal with the printing limits for some maps by adjusting the page set-up with your print command. By selecting the option "50 to 60% under-scaling," you may print out some maps to fit on a 8½" x 11" sheet of paper or an overhead transparency.

Integrating Geography with U.S. History

The potential of the Internet is used to the fullest by some of the historical map sites. Ed Stephan, professor emeritus of sociology at Western Washington University, uses animation and Geographic Information System maps (GIS).² (www.ac.wvu.edu/~stephan/48states.html). Stephan's website runs through U.S. history from 1650 to the present, showing the boundary changes in the contiguous forty-eight states. Others pages at this site show the progression of the development of California's early Catholic missions, or California's first counties, or even Alexander the Great's route of conquest.

Cultural Maps at the University of Virginia is a site dedicated to providing American history in map form (xroads.virginia.edu/~MAP/map_hp.html). Here the viewer can find maps of U.S. territorial expansion, by decade. These maps are of printable size, but much of the detail and clarity of these old paper documents was apparently lost during scanning.

If, like me, you love to examine such things as the planning maps for the Lewis and Clark expedition, or navigation maps to the New World from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, then visit the Hargrett Collection at the University of Georgia (www.libs.uga.edu/darchive/hargrett/maps/maps.html). This site is wonderful for its historical U.S. maps, but it is so large that it can be a time-waster for students. Teachers would do well to explore the site ahead of time, especially the maps for the

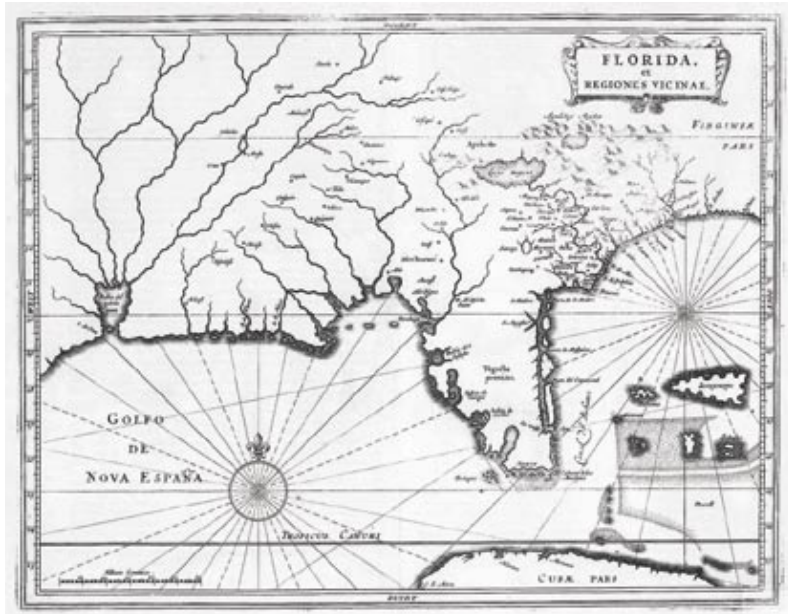
Colonial Period, the Revolutionary War, Westward Expansion, and the Civil War to find and bookmark the maps that they want to project with a lesson or to have students visit as part of an assignment. I prefer the Perry Castañeda Library Map Collection at the University of Texas because it is smaller and very well indexed (www.lib.utexas.edu/Libs/PCL/Map_collection/histus.htm).

World Geography and History

Websites that provide maps for the rest of the world are not as abundant, but they are interesting once you find them. The University of Texas collection, mentioned above, has a vast array of links to maps of different nations. For example, there are over 100 links to maps of Afghanistan (including data on ethnic populations, military, and refugee camps) at www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/afghanistan.html. *The European Periodical Atlas* provides a chronological mapping of European history at hundred-year intervals from the beginning of the millennium to 1300 A.D. (www.euratlas.com/summary.htm) Even better, the HyperHistory site has wonderful content-rich maps linked to ancient and medieval world history text, but they are done in frames to discourage printing and are best accessed by students working independently (www.hyperhistory.com/online_n2/History_n2/a.html).

A Changing Landscape

One of the down sides of the medium of the Internet (as opposed to the printed page) is that what appears in front of the reader may change from day to day—without warning ahead of time or notice afterwards. The web addresses (URLs) suggested in this article have been stable for over a year, and they were all valid at the time that it went to press. Larger institutions, like governments and universities, are less likely to alter a URL once it is made public (URL stands for Universal Resource Locator). Smaller website hosts, like public schools or individuals for whom Internet mapping might be a hobby, are more likely to vary their URLs from day to day—or their site might disappear from the web altogether. Always check that a URL is working the morning of a lesson in which you will use the Internet; even the biggest institutions have occasional problems with their computer servers, which can close a site down temporarily. If a resource that you viewed yesterday is suddenly hard to find, there are three things you can do.



A 1625 map of Florida by De Laet (www.libs.uga.edu/darchive/hargrett/maps/maps.html)

Hargrett Library, University of Georgia

- (1) Check that you correctly entered the URL. Typing a long URL is always risky; it's much safer to "cut and copy" or "bookmark" it.
- (2) Go to the home page of the institution (revealed in the first part of most URLs) and try to find the map from there.
- (3) Have an alternative classroom activity at the ready, in case the web lets you down. Then try the Internet again at the next class meeting.

On the up side, wonderful and unexpected resources for teachers are appearing on the Internet all the time. If, in your web surfing, you find a new and valuable map resource, be sure to submit it to SCORE History/Social Science, using the online submission form at our website (score.rims.k12.ca.us). We may post your discovery. Social studies teachers everywhere will appreciate it.³

Notes

1. PARC stands for Palo Alto Research Center.
2. See Daniel P. Donaldson, "With a Little Help from Our Friends: Implementing Geographic Information Systems (GIS) in K-12 Schools," *Social Education* 65, no. 3 (April, 2001): 147-150.
3. A version of this article appeared in the May, 1999 issue of *Sunburst*, the newsletter of the California Council for the Social Studies.

Margaret Hill is the History/Social Science coordinator at the office of the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools in California. Dr. Hill is also director of the SCORE History/Social Science website.

Teaching with the Use of Current Issues: The Canadian Model

George W. Chilcoat, Lynnette B. Erickson, and Jerry A. Ligon

Introduction

Issues-centered lessons can present social questions and problems that are highly relevant to students' present experiences and hopes for the future. Thus issues-centered lessons are inherently interesting.¹ We believe that, to prepare citizens "to participate in the democratic decision-making processes within a pluralistic society," controversial issues can and should be raised in the social studies classroom.² Teachers may shy away from doing so because of the strong emotions that can be evoked, as well as resistance from parents and administrators. But when it is carefully prepared and taught well, an issues-centered lesson teaches process (as well as the subject matter content). In such a lesson, students learn how to engage in reasoned, civic discourse with one another.

A well-prepared lesson on a current issue meets several criteria;³ it

- uses community resources and non-textbook materials;
- emphasizes contemporary problems, but refers to examples of controversy in history;
 - provides intrinsic motivation and interest;
 - calls upon reflective thinking, requiring the use of facts, academic skills, and social values;
 - encourages students to form reasoned generalizations or conclusions;
 - provides students with practice in temperate, civil public speaking; and

- may challenge students to think about taking action as citizens.

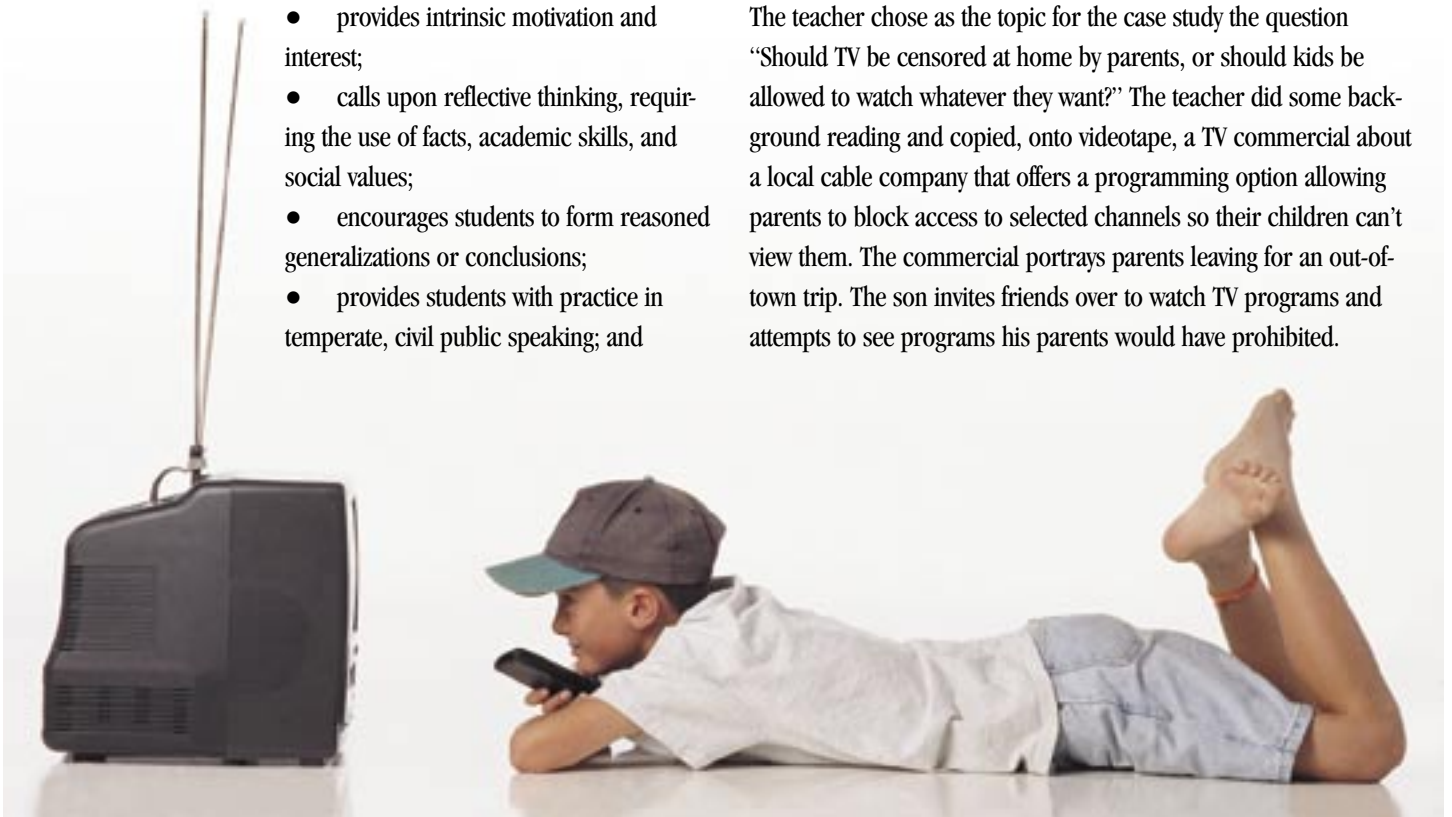
This article discusses the classroom use of an issues-centered instructional model that we refer to as the "Canadian Public Issues Model," which was designed by Paula Bourne and John Eisenberg at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (Figure 1) in 1978.⁴

An Example from the Sixth Grade

The teacher of a sixth grade social studies class in Provo, Utah, wanted students to think about an issue that concerned them and their parents: the public debate over censorship of television viewing. She employed the Canadian Public Issues Model in the manner described below. The lesson took 12 days to complete. The time needed to complete each step (indicated in parentheses) can vary according to the goals set by the teacher for the lesson and the needs of the students.

Step 1. Prepare a Public Issues Case Study (half an hour of preparation)

The teacher chose as the topic for the case study the question "Should TV be censored at home by parents, or should kids be allowed to watch whatever they want?" The teacher did some background reading and copied, onto videotape, a TV commercial about a local cable company that offers a programming option allowing parents to block access to selected channels so their children can't view them. The commercial portrays parents leaving for an out-of-town trip. The son invites friends over to watch TV programs and attempts to see programs his parents would have prohibited.



The topic proved to be of great interest and highly motivating to the students. They were personally interested in this issue because of ongoing congressional and media attention to the topic and because of their pre-adolescent need for freedom to make more of their own decisions. The question really centered on whether the students felt they were responsible enough to make good decisions on their own or whether they needed some type of rules or guidelines that would be externally enforced. Television viewing provided a relevant issue for consideration; however, the findings could illuminate the larger question of the responsibility of young adults in other contexts.

Step 2. Prepare the Class Environment (50 minutes, i.e., one class period)

The teacher introduced the class to the practice of criticism and discourse with the use of the book *Yertle the Turtle* by Dr. Seuss. This story is about an unruly king and how he is overthrown. After the teacher introduced and read the story aloud (15 minutes), students discussed (20 minutes)

what they would do if they were a king and how they would react if they were a peasant. The discussion turned to the outcome of the story: would students have developed a different ending from the one provided by Dr. Seuss? The students contributed their comments about what they would do to change the story's outcome from their own perspectives. In this step (15 minutes) the students and the teacher also discussed how to identify problems, gather information using evidence found in the story, differentiate between fact and opinion, analyze how fact and opinion can affect an issue case study, and formulate alternative outcomes.

Step 3. Read and Develop a Case (50 minutes)

In this step, the class learns about one specific example arising from the issue or controversy. In this lesson, the class viewed the (1-minute long) videotaped commercial about the TV channel blocking product for use by parents. The message given in the visual narrative of the commercial was that the son and his friends would take advantage of parental absence to view inappropriate

programs, and that parents should make the right decision by blocking certain channels before they left. This introduction created a strong opener for class discussion of the issue (20 minutes), and the case study began from this point.

The teacher taped to the chalkboard a piece of poster paper that had two columns labeled "Pros" and "Cons." Several students described, with heart-felt conviction, why they felt that the parents should not block the channels from their children's viewing (9 minutes). As the list grew longer and more exhaustive, the teacher directed their thoughts toward some of the possible "pros" for restricting television viewing. This list was not as easy for the students to generate, but finally the two lists had a comparable

number of entries, indicating that the students recognized two sides to the issue and felt the necessity for a resolution of some sort.

Step 4. Take a Stand on the Issue (four classes of 50 minutes each)

On the first day at this step, the teacher divided the class into small groups of four or five students. In their groups, students decided what stand they wanted to take on the issue and discussed ways to acquire information to support their stand (30 minutes). The teacher may wish to assign different positions to

different groups, if groups have difficulty arriving at a unified stand. But student interest and motivation is highest if the children are able to make their own decisions at this point.

Then the class as a whole discussed their decisions and ideas (20 minutes). Some suggestions they generated were to interview parents, other students, and teachers; do library research on the issue; and call local television stations to get a breakdown of what kinds of shows were broadcast at what hours and what reasons were given by the stations for their scheduling decisions. The students realized (although the teacher had to verbalize this point) that one of the problems with debating public issues is that complete information is rarely available, and is never in one place, so opinions must often be formed on insufficient evidence, and must always be open for reexamination.

Researching an issue involved three tasks: library research, telephone interviews with TV public relations staff, and interviews with parents (2 days). Students read articles from the popular press that the teacher and librarian had found. The telephone

Figure 1. Outline of the "Canadian Public Issues Model" for Studying Current Events (see note 4).

- Step 1. Prepare a Public Issue Case Study
- Step 2. Prepare the Class Environment
- Step 3. Read and Develop a Case Study
- Step 4. Take a Stand on the Issue
- Step 5. Defend the Chosen Position
- Step 6. Argue Against Opposing Views
- Step 7. Modify Positions after Dialogue with Others
- Step 8. Propose a Course of Action and Carry It Out
- Step 9. Assess the Activity

interviews, conducted under the supervision of the teacher, were observed by the entire class. The parent interviews were homework assignments, but interview questions were rehearsed in class.

On the fourth day of this step, each student group began to put together a presentation to explain its position with the rest of the class. In doing this, the students had to sort out the pros and cons they had gathered, then determine what kind of conclusion they could reach and how they could support it. Each group wrote a proposal stating its arguments for the position taken, including an explanation of why the group had chosen this position and how members thought the problem of viewing choices for young people could best be resolved.

Step 5. Defend the Chosen Position (50 minutes)

The teacher combined like-minded students into small groups, being careful to maintain an overall balance of opinions toward the issue. The larger groups then prepared to present their position and their findings (20 minutes). Each group or team presented their side of the television censorship issue to the class in a persuasive manner using evidence and facts (20 minutes). At the end of their presentation, each group drew a conclusion and presented a proposal for a resolution to the problem, based on their position (10 minutes).

Step 6. Argue Against Opposing Views (50 minutes)

After each group finished its presentation, the teacher allowed for other groups and individual class members to respond. The teacher prefaced this discussion by explaining (10 minutes) that civic debate is not a contest in which one puts down another person or viewpoint, but is an argument in which each side uses facts and evidence to support their view and to cast doubt on the position taken by other side (Figure 2). The students seemed to take her instruction to heart as they presented and defended their positions with civility (40 minutes).

Figure 2. Step 6: Arguing Against Opposing Views. Students may challenge a position in any of the following ways:

1. Cite evidence against it;
2. Request additional evidence if that presented seems weak or inadequate;
3. State conflicting interpretations and unsound reasoning;
4. Question the consistency of arguments;
5. Examine general values or principles that have not been considered;
6. Explain undesirable implications (that is, unwanted consequences);
7. Show irrelevance of argument or evidence, if appropriate;
8. Mention analogies that seem applicable to this situation.

Step 7. Modify Positions After Dialogue with Others (50 minutes)

After all the groups had had an opportunity to participate in the class discussion, the teacher directed the students toward determining ways to resolve the issue. The students quickly argued that a combination of proposals and ideas would be needed to address the issue. They generated a broad list of options: limiting TV viewing hours; allowing children to watch only certain shows; blocking some channels; parents and children choosing together; and giving children absolute freedom to choose what they watch on TV.

Step 8. Propose a Course of Action (50 minutes)

The class composed a formal proposition, to be presented to parents, stating the research findings and positions presented by the groups. In addition, a list of rules and suggestions for viewing TV was developed by the students (there was a general consensus), based on the principle that students can evaluate their own TV viewing time effectively. The proposition

was approved by all class members, duplicated, and taken home to be presented and discussed by students and their parents.⁵

Step 9. Assess the Activity (2 class periods)

On the first day of this step, students described their discussion with parents. Then, in small groups, the students discussed and wrote down possible courses of action one could take in light of the interviews and the previous class discussion. A member of each group described the list to the whole class.

The teacher evaluated the students' presentations according to a rubric she had developed beforehand. The evaluation rubric included points for verbal skills, organization, sensitivity to the issue, continuity and progress, relevance, use of evidence, articulation of principles, logical reasoning, factual knowledge, and the moral level of the students' argument. The teacher observed student growth in both reasoning and maturity; they had dealt with a controversial social issues – in this case control over TV viewing of youth – and arrived at a reasonable proposal. She also observed

that students made connections between TV viewing and other relevant social issues.

On the second day of this step, students evaluated the TV viewing activity by designing their own rating system, including an explanation or description for each rating level. The students believed that they had learned more about responsibility, not only for television viewing, but for personal decisions in general. After sharing their findings with their parents, the students felt that they would be allowed greater freedom to make their own decisions as long as they made responsible choices.

Conclusion

The teacher, in this case, chose a topic that is of immediate concern to many students: control over television viewing. Eliciting interest and concern was not a problem. There are many topics to choose from that may affect students personally: the debate over standardized testing; students' access to websites; access to vending machines on school property; bullying and conflict resolution; and the balance between sports and academics.

The Canadian Public Issues Model appears to be an excellent template for teachers to use in developing issues-centered lessons and units of study dealing with contemporary and historical topics. The Canadian Model capitalizes on student interest in the concerns of the community and the larger society. It offers teachers the flexibility to decide how much time and how much depth might be necessary to study a topic. And, most importantly, it encourages students to thoughtfully examine decisions and become aware of

the decision-making process as they develop perspectives on issues they confront in everyday life. 📺

Notes

1. Jack L. Nelson, "The Historical Imperative for Issues-centered Education." In Ronald W. Evans and David W. Saxe, eds., *Handbook on Teaching Social Issues* (Washington, DC: National Council for the Social Studies, 1996), 14-24.
2. James Anthony Whitson and William B. Stanley, "'Re-Minding' Education for Democracy," In Walter C. Parker, ed., *Educating the Democratic Mind* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996), 309-336;
3. R. W. Evans and D. W. Saxe, eds.
4. Paula Bourne and John Eisenberg, *Social Issues in the Curriculum: Theory, Practice, and Evaluation* (Toronto, Canada: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1978).
5. Action outside the classroom that involves public controversy, politics, or personal aspects of family life cannot be required of students without abridging their freedom not to participate in such activity. Students can, however, be assigned to write about what citizens, young people, or parents could do in any given situation.

George W. Chilcoat is a professor of social studies education in the Department of Teacher Education at Brigham Young University Provo, Utah. He taught social studies in public schools for ten years. **Lynnette B. Erickson** is an assistant professor, also in the Department of Teacher Education at Brigham Young University. **Jerry A. Ligon** is a professor of teacher studies in the Department of Teacher Education at National-Louis University in St. Louis, Missouri.

Censorship

What exactly is *censorship*? A *censor* in early Rome was a magistrate who acted as census taker, assessor, and inspector of morals and conduct. Today, the word commonly refers to an official who examines a work in any medium (such as a newspaper, book, or film) for objectionable matter and deletes it (or, in the case of a website, blocks access to it). Often in times of war, censors read communications (such as letters) and delete material considered harmful to the war effort. Thus, censorship is practiced when an official limits the flow of information available to others; it is often considered to be the opposite of "freedom of the press." The practice of censorship is probably as old as the invention of writing itself. The word *censor* derives from the Latin *consere*, meaning to assess or tax, and is akin to the Sanskrit *samsati*, meaning "he recites."

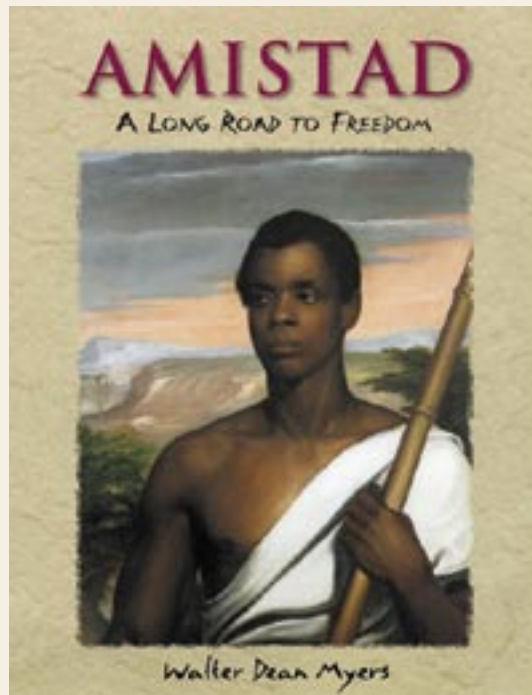
(Source: *Webster's Ninth Collegiate Dictionary*).

Answers to questions on page 16

1. John Quincy Adams.
2. The Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (1865).
3. Sugar, rice, indigo, coffee, cotton, and tobacco.
4. In the northern colonies, most slaves worked as field hands on small farms, as domestics (cooks, personal servants, and "mamies") in houses, as industrial laborers in factories (for example, in ironworks or tanneries), or as skilled craftsmen in small shops.

Q&A about Slavery in the United States

See if you can find the answers to the four questions below by searching in books in the library. A few sources are cited below, but many other books on slavery will contain the answers.



Cinque (Sengbe Pieh) by Nathaniel Jocelyn (1840)

1. In 1839, the captives aboard the slave ship *Amistad* mutinied, killing the captain and taking control of the ship. Under the leadership of Sengbe Pieh, the mutineers attempted to sail the ship to Africa, where they had formerly been free men. They wound up, however, in the United States, where they had to fight in court for their freedom. When their case reached the U.S. Supreme Court, a former president of the United States volunteered to join and lead the defense team. Who was this lawyer?
2. President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, an event that is sometimes remembered, mistakenly, as the end of the institution of slavery. The emancipation only freed “all persons held as slaves within any state...in rebellion against the United States,” which meant in the Confederate states. Thus, slaves were not freed in Missouri, Kentucky, Delaware, Maryland, or West Virginia — slave states that fought on the side of the Union. What law formally freed all slaves living in the United States?
3. England’s North American colonies received less than 5 percent of the total number of Africans who were shipped across the Atlantic Ocean to be slaves. Slavery was part of a large economic system based on cash crops raised in Brazil, Central America, and the West Indies, as well as North America. Spain and Portugal were the first nations to bring African slaves to the New World, but were soon joined by other European nations. What were some of the labor-intensive, tropical or semi-tropical crops that were grown and processed by slaves for European markets?
4. Because the economies of New England and the Middle Colonies did not rely on plantation agriculture, slavery was different there as compared with the South. What sort of work did slaves do in colonies like Massachusetts, New York, and Delaware?

Sources

- Dudley, William, ed. *American Slavery*. San Diego, CA: Greenhaven Press, 2000.
Green, Meg. *Slave Young, Slave Long*. New York: Lerner, 1999.
Haskins, James, and Kathleen Benson. *Bound for America*. New York: Lothrop, Lee, & Shepard, 1999.
Myers, Walter Dean. *Amistad: A Long Road to Freedom*. New York: Dutton Children’s Books, 1998.
Ofosu-Appiah, L. H. *People in Bondage*. Minneapolis, MN: Runestone, 1993.

Answers on page 15