

Carter G. Woodson Book Awards

The Racism and Social Justice Committee of the National Council for the Social Studies created the Carter G. Woodson Book Award, in 1974, to promote cultural literacy in children and young adults. This annual award recognizes authors, illustrators, and publishers of outstanding books that increase understanding of ethnicity in the United States. The award was named in honor of African American educator Dr. Carter G. Woodson.

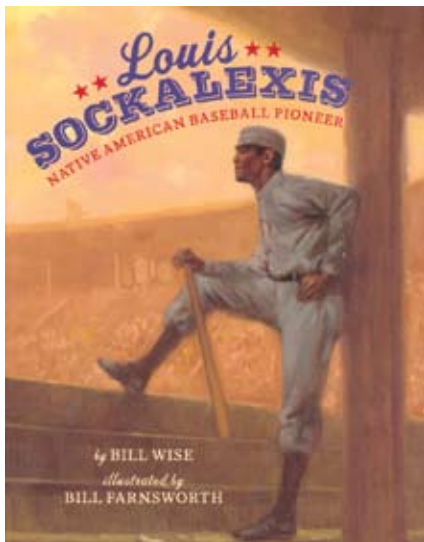
Dr. Woodson, called the “Father of Black History,” earned a Ph.D. in history from Harvard in 1912 and dedicated his life to researching, writing, and publishing works that increased the literary resources available on black history and important contributions made by black Americans. In 1926, he established “Negro History Week”, an early version of today’s widely celebrated “Black History Month.”

NCSS and the Carter G. Woodson Book Award Committee are pleased to announce the award winners of the elementary (K–6), middle (5 – 8), and secondary (7 – 12) levels for 2008. These award and honor books are outstanding examples of books that focus on individual or collective experiences of ethnic minorities in the United States. Reviews provide a summary of each book along with specific NCSS thematic strands identified for curriculum development and classroom use.

— Dr. Carrie Sorensen

2008 Carter G. Woodson Awards Committee Chair

2008 Carter G. Woodson Award Book: Elementary Level



Louis Sockalexis: Native American Baseball Pioneer, by Bill Wise, illustrations by Bill Farnsworth. New York, N.Y. Lee & Low Books, Inc.

Reviewed by Kathryn A. Clark, social studies teacher, Dr. An Wang Middle School, Lowell, Massachusetts.

Bill Wise has penned a heartwarming story

about an extraordinary young man determined to hit one out of the park and become a professional ball player in the 1800s.

This story begins at a major league game between the Cleveland Spiders and the New York Giants. Thousands of fans packed the stadium. Tension was in the air. Louis Sockalexis was the first Native American to play major league ball. Amidst taunting cries, Sockalexis remained composed and positive.

From there, the story takes a look back at the incredible journey Sockalexis had traveled to become an exceptional ball player. At 12, he discovered his love for the game while playing ball with children

near his home on the Penobscot Indian reservation in Maine. He played and practiced whenever he could. Soon he was playing for his high school team. Word spread about his skill as an athlete and people came from all over Maine to watch him play. After graduation, Sockalexis attended Holy Cross College in Massachusetts on an athletic scholarship. There, he became one of the biggest stars in college baseball of his time, and was soon offered a contract with the Cleveland Spiders.

Sockalexis endured prejudice and racism during his career. Though his professional baseball career was short-lived, he persevered with courage as he set records and garnered fans. Baseball fans everywhere will cheer loudly as they read this amazing story.

① Culture; ② People, Places, and Environments; ③ Individual Development and Identity.

2008 Carter G. Woodson Honor Book: Elementary Level



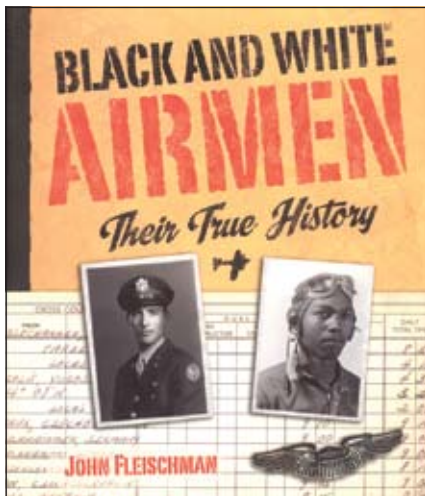
Surfer of the Century, by Ellie Crowe, illustrations by Richard Waldrep. New York, N.Y.: Lee & Low Books, Inc.

Reviewed by Denise B. Geier, Ed.D., Educational Consultant, New Jersey.

Born in 1890, Duke Kahanamoku grew up in Hawaii, swimming and surfing. He lived across the street from Waikiki Beach—so it was not surprising that he loved the ocean. Throughout his life, he capitalized on his swimming skills. Despite facing discrimination and a lack of funding, he broke swimming records, and in 1912, he won the Olympic Gold Medal in Stockholm, Sweden. As an international champion, he also introduced the world to surfing. Duke continued to swim and won the Olympic Gold again in 1920 in Belgium. However, at the following Olympic games, Johnny Weissmuller broke Duke's record.

Duke continued to surf, swim, and promote Hawaii. In 1925, he and his friends rescued swimmers using surfboards, initiating the practice of using them as standard lifeguard equipment. When Duke returned to Hawaii in 1930, he ran for public office and became sheriff, a position he held for the next 26 years. As the "Father of Modern Surfing," Duke Kahanamoku promoted Hawaii's spirit of "aloha" throughout his life. ❶ Culture; ❷ People, Places, and Environments; ❸ Individuals, Groups, and Institutions.

2008 Carter G. Woodson Award Book: Middle Level



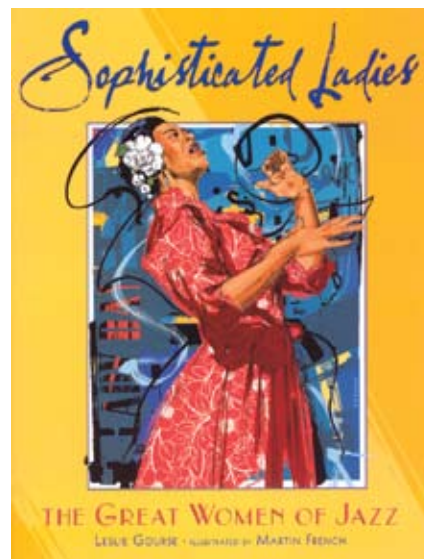
Black and White Airmen: Their True History, by John Fleischman. Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Reviewed by Christine Kiphart, assistant head of school, *The Oaks School, Los Angeles, California*.

The book opens with a photograph: two old friends sitting on the front steps of a house, giggling like schoolboys. The two men, John Lehr and Herb Heilbrun, grew up in the 1920s, in the same neighborhood of Cincinnati, Ohio. They went to the same school and even had the same third grade teacher, but they never knew each other, because John was black and Herb was white. When the United States entered World War II, John and Herb both became pilots—Herb for the Army Air Forces, and John as one of the famed "Tuskegee Airmen." They flew side by side in the brutal air war against Nazi Germany, but never met because the Army was rigidly segregated. Years, families and careers later, Herb attended an event honoring the Tuskegee Airmen. The two men, now in their seventies, finally met.

Black and White Airmen: Their True History is the compelling true story of a friendship between two men whose lives paralleled through war and peace. Full of photographs and primary source material, it is a well written, historically rooted, and engaging look into the world of World War II pilots and racially segregated America. As a learning tool, it's an opportunity to witness the effects of racism within social and military institutions and an exceptional two-voice perspective on culture and change. As youngsters, John and Herb could have never imagined being friends. Now, they were the best of friends. ❸ People, Places, and Environments; ❹ Individual Development and Identity; ❺ Individuals, Groups, and Institutions.

2008 Carter G. Woodson Honor Book: Middle Level



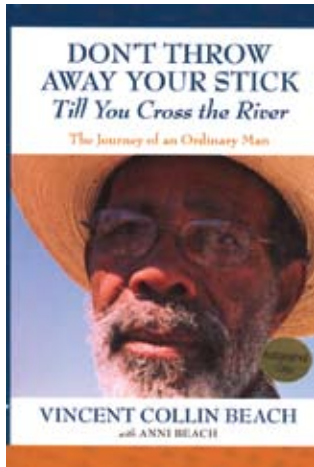
Sophisticated Ladies: The Great Women of Jazz, by Leslie Gourse, illustrations by Martin French. New York, N.Y.: Dutton Children's Books

Reviewed by Amy Camardese, Ph.D., associate professor, Department of Education, Westminster College, New Wilmington, Pennsylvania.

Sophisticated Ladies tells the stories of 14 American female blues and jazz singers. Each brief biography acquaints the reader with the singer's background and rise to fame. Their stories include the dedication and struggles that often accompany a singer's career. We learn about famous singers such as Bessie Smith, Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, Dinah Washington, Sarah Vaughan, and Cassandra Wilson, as well as about many who were not so well known. Martin French has provided a whimsical illustration of each singer.

Each of the performers has a unique story. The blues singer of the 1920s, Bessie Smith, overcame humble beginnings, performed in New York City and in 1980 was awarded two Grammy's. Leslie Gourse profiles the fascinating lives of women blues and jazz singers in chronological sequence and ends the book with the more contemporary jazz singer, Diana Krall. Readers become familiar with blues and jazz songs that are expressions of life's ups and downs and include topics such as addiction, poverty, celebrations, and love. ❶ Culture; ❷ Time, Continuity, and Change; ❸ People, Places, and Environments

2008 Carter G. Woodson Award Book:
Secondary Level



Don't Throw Away Your Stick Till You Cross the River: The Journey of an Ordinary Man, by Vincent Collin Beach with Anni Beach. Chandler, Ariz.: Five Star Publications, Inc.

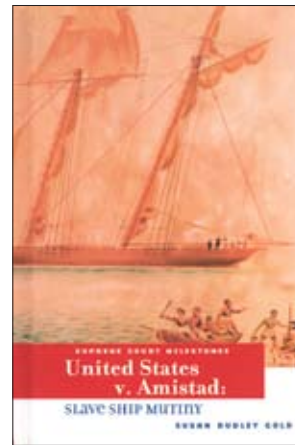
Reviewed by Carrie Sorensen, professor of Teacher Education, Saginaw Valley State University, Saginaw, Michigan.

This unusually titled book describes the “ordinary” life story of Vincent Collin Beach, who was born and

raised in rural Jamaica. His parents were poor yet hardworking and had high expectations of their children. Beach, now in his eighties, recounts enlisting in the British Royal Air Force at the age of 20. He remained in the RAF after V-E Day instead of returning to Jamaica. He developed a fascination with Big Band/jazz music and, with no musical background, purchased an old clarinet. Drawn by the American jazz music scene, he decided to immigrate to the United States, but faced racism and segregation. He married and supported his family as a musician during his 22-year career as a member of the United States Air Force military band. Beach discusses his joys, mistakes, and sorrows, especially the loss of two sons to Lupus. Beach’s life events provide a wonderful opportunity for secondary readers to examine how social, economic, and historical forces can affect an individual’s life. Beach’s approach to life also offers a valuable message to young people: do your best, admit your mistakes, make

a difference, remain optimistic, and have faith. **I Culture; II Time, Continuity and Change; III Individual Development and Identity.**

2008 Carter G. Woodson Honor Book:
Secondary Level



United States v. Amistad: Slave Ship Mutiny, by Susan Dudley Gold. New York, N.Y.: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark.

Reviewed by Patrick M. Westcott, assistant professor, Rowan University, Glassboro, New Jersey.

As author Susan Dudley Gold notes, the *Amistad* case was among the first “civil rights” lawsuits argued before the U.S. Supreme Court. The case involved African slaves aboard the Spanish-owned *Amistad*, who revolted,

killed the captain and took control. The ship sailed into U.S. waters and was taken by the U.S. Coast Guard. The case became front-page news, pitting President Martin Van Buren, who filed the claim on Spain’s behalf and former President John Quincy Adams, who represented the Africans. Fascinating sidebars populate the book including a profile of Lewis Tappan, an eighteenth-century abolitionist; the four children aboard the *Amistad*; and life as a Supreme Court justice in the 1800s. Clearly written with a strong narrative pull, *United States v. Amistad* is a worthy addition to the secondary social studies library. **II Time, Continuity, and Change; III Individuals, Groups, and Institutions; IV Power, Authority, and Governance.**

Teaching Women’s History through Literature:
Standards-Based Lesson Plans for Grades K-12

by Kay A. Chick

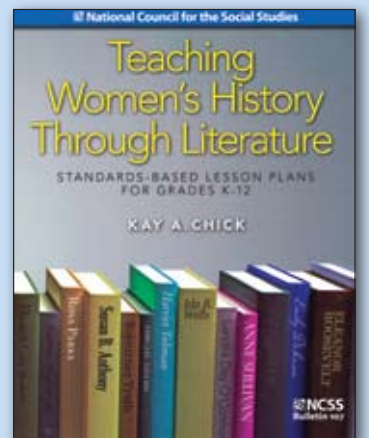
NCSS Bulletin No. 107, 132 pp. 2008

Women used to be almost invisible in history books used in school, and although they now have a stronger presence in textbooks, teachers often have difficulty finding the right additional resources for teaching women’s history. Kay A. Chick’s publication fills an important gap by identifying appealing literature that will engage students in the study of women’s history. Biographies and historical fiction are the principal genres of literature selected. The author pays special attention to choosing developmentally appropriate books and lesson plans that can advance standards-based teaching at the primary, intermediate, middle school and high school grade levels.

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