

Carter G. Woodson Book Awards, 2016

Established in 1974 by the National Council for the Social Studies, the Carter G. Woodson Book Awards highlight social science texts for young readers. The award's creation was the culmination of efforts by the 1973 NCSS Racism and Social Justice Committee. The committee focused on increasing equity and the educational needs of minority students. The award's aim is to not only honor outstanding books, but also encourage the writing, publishing, and reading of quality materials related to ethnic minorities.

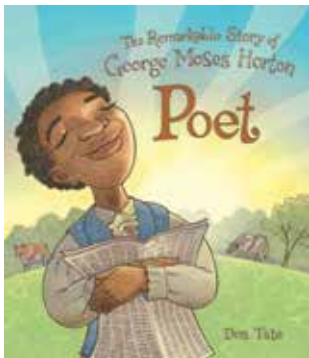
The award was named after distinguished historian and educator Carter G. Woodson, who was a catalyst for telling the stories of African American men and women.

This year the Woodson committee selected six books. Nominated books were selected based on the following criteria: (1) non-fiction; (2) set in the United States; (3) deal with experiences of one or more ethnic/racial groups; and (4) written for young people at one of two levels: Elementary (K-6) or Secondary (7–12). The reviews below highlight our selections for the 2016 Carter G. Woodson Book Awards.

—Derrick Kimbrough, Chair, Carter G. Woodson Book Awards Committee

Elementary Winner

Poet: The Remarkable Story of George Moses Horton, by Don Tate. Peachtree Publishers. Reviewed by Marilyn J. Ward, Department of Education, Carthage College, Kenosha, Wisconsin.



Young George loved words and wanted to learn to read, but he was enslaved, and learning to read was against the law for slaves. He learned his alphabet by listening to white children reciting theirs and taught himself to read from an old spelling book that he found. George read everything he could find—the Bible, newspapers, and advertisements. He especially loved reading poetry and composing his own verses. As a teenager, he sold fruits and vegetables to students at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and performed his verses for them. They were awestruck and asked him to write poems for their sweethearts, for which they paid him 25 cents per poem. The story of the slave poet reached the wife of a professor, who arranged to have George's poems published. George became a

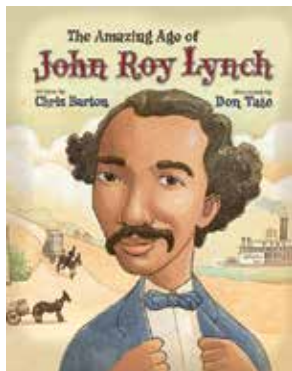
full-time writer, but he was still not a free man. With the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, he was finally free, at the age of 66. George's love of words took him on a great journey. "Words loosened the chains of bondage long before his last day as a slave." This inspirational story about the first African American to be published in the South is a joy to read. Some of Horton's poems are incorporated into the warm, expressive mixed media illustrations. Back matter includes a comprehensive author's note and source list. Ⓜ TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE; Ⓜ PEOPLE, PLACES, AND ENVIRONMENTS; Ⓜ INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY; Ⓜ INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, AND INSTITUTIONS.

Elementary Winner

The Amazing Age of John Roy Lynch, by Chris Barton, illustrated by Don Tate. Eerdmans Books for Young Readers. Reviewed by Kristy A. Brugar, assistant professor, Social Studies Education, Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

The Amazing Age of John Roy Lynch chronicles the life of one of the first African Americans elected to Congress. Throughout the text, Barton contextualizes John Roy Lynch's story within the national landscape from pre-Civil War to Reconstruction. Lynch was born prior to the Civil War to an Irish father and an enslaved mother, making him "half Irish and all slave" (p. 2). He spent most of his childhood enslaved in Mississippi. Following the Emancipation Proclamation and the ending of the Civil War, Lynch worked a variety of paying jobs and attended school (formally and informally). Within 10 years, he became involved

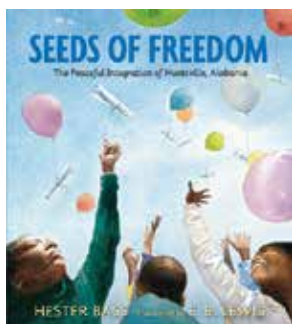
in politics—speaking to the Natchez Republican club about the new Mississippi Constitution, serving as a Justice of the Peace, and being elected to the Mississippi House of Representatives (and serving as Speaker of the House). In addition, he was elected and served in the U.S. House of Representatives.



This well-researched text is accompanied by wonderful illustrations. In addition, Barton uses primary source material and presents thorough back matter: a historical note, timeline, author and illustrator notes, maps, and a young adult friendly bibliography. For further information about *The Amazing Age of John Roy Lynch* (including an educator's guide) go to <http://chrisbarton.info/books/lynch.html>. ● TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE; ● INDIVIDUAL, GROUPS, AND INSTITUTIONS; ● POWER, AUTHORITY, AND GOVERNANCE.

Elementary Honor

Seeds of Freedom: The Peaceful Integration of Huntsville, Alabama, by Hester Bass, illustrated by E.B. Lewis. Candlewick Press. Reviewed by Kristy A. Brugar, assistant professor, Social Studies Education, Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.



In the 1950s and 1960s, Huntsville, Alabama, was known as the “Space Center of the Universe.” Set in the early 1960s, *Seeds of Freedom: The Peaceful Integration of Huntsville, Alabama*, delves into a lesser known, but inspirational story of Huntsville. Author Hester Bass uses the metaphor of seeds of freedom to describe the actions of individuals and small groups, which grew and flourished into the peaceful integration of Huntsville. The city and its citizens were dependent on the federal government through the space industry. Because of this relationship,

local citizens were hesitant to use violent protest. However, they were not exempted from the racial discrimination and inequity—change was necessary. Citizens worked together for a peaceful integration of their city and schools. Bass describes boycotts and sit-ins in Huntsville similar to those held around the country (e.g., in Greensboro). *Seeds of Freedom* provides young readers an opportunity to explore the civil rights movement, the power of individuals and small groups, grass-roots actions, and examples of peaceful protest.

Young readers will enjoy the engaging prose and E.B. Lewis's beautiful watercolors, which convey the actions and emotions of those involved. This well-researched text is an excellent addition to any classroom library. *Seeds of Freedom* includes a detailed Author's Note for teachers and students and a selected bibliography. ● INDIVIDUAL, GROUPS, AND INSTITUTIONS; ● POWER, AUTHORITY, AND GOVERNANCE; ● CIVIC IDEALS AND PRACTICES.

Secondary Winner

Passenger on the Pearl: The True Story of Emily Edmonson's Flight from Slavery, by Winifred Conkling. Algonquin Young Readers. Reviewed by Paige Lilley-Schulte, associate professor in the College of Education at Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, Louisiana.



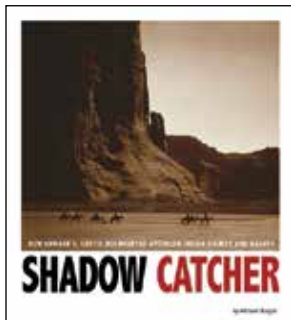
Passenger on the Pearl uniquely illustrates the hardship that enslaved people faced in the 1800s, as seen through the eyes of a young African American female. This engaging book focuses on the personal journey of Emily Edmonson, who begins the story as an enslaved adolescent, but later goes on to graduate college and become a teacher at the first school dedicated to African American young women. Readers easily empathize with the emotional turmoil Emily experiences as she attempts to gain freedom by sailing north on the *Pearl*, with many other slaves. Her escape attempt, the largest in American history, results in Emily and her siblings' capture. She and her sister are sent to New Orleans to be sold, but are saved from the horrific conditions they encountered when an outbreak of yellow fever results in their return to Virginia. The sisters are eventually freed by ransom through the efforts of their parents and abolitionists. Several individual stories intersect to illustrate the struggles

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of that time, including details about Harriet Beecher Stowe, who bases two of her characters in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* on the experiences of Emily and her sister. These intersecting stories give the reader a multi-layered perspective of the issue of slavery. Maps, sidebars, photographs, and illustrations enhance the narrative and provide a historical focus to the experiences of Emily Edmonson and the people in her life. ● TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE; ● INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY; ● POWER, AUTHORITY, AND GOVERNANCE.

Secondary Honor

Shadow Catcher: How Edward S. Curtis Documented American Indian Dignity and Beauty, by Michael Burgan. Compass Point Books. Reviewed by Kathleen Barker, assistant director of Education & Public Programs, Massachusetts Historical Society.

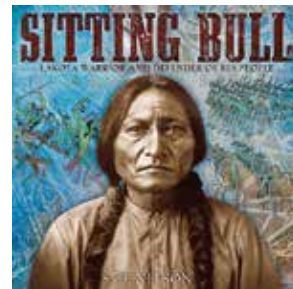


In 1907, photographer Edward S. Curtis published the first volume of his groundbreaking 20-volume project, *The North American Indian*. Michael Burgan's engaging book takes readers behind the scenes to better understand Curtis and "the Cause" (as he called it) that consumed decades of his life. He traveled the American West with a camera and a wax cylinder, determined to record the "vanishing" American Indians and their ways of life. Readers follow Curtis on some of his expeditions, meeting many of the men and women captured by his camera, including his first American Indian subject, Princess Angeline, and well-known figures such as the Apache warrior Geronimo, and the Nez Perce chief Joseph. Curtis's obsession was a costly one, both financially, and personally, and Burgan describes Curtis's attempts to fund his project and maintain his marriage through the life of the project. Although successful initially, Burgan notes that by the time volume 20 was published in 1930, Curtis was divorced and destitute, his prints and negatives in the hands of the Morgan Company, who sold them to a collector a few years later for a mere \$1,000. In the final chapter, Burgan

gently addresses some of Curtis's critics. He acknowledges Curtis's paternalistic approach to the project and the inaccuracy of the "vanishing Indian" theory. Burgan also discusses—and provides visual evidence of—Curtis's occasional manipulation of photographs, or staging of scenes in order to produce images of American Indians as he thought they should appear. Overall, however, Burgan suggests that despite its flaws, Curtis's work should be appreciated as an amazing glimpse into an important facet of America's history. The book includes detailed source notes and a bibliography that suggests works on the history of Native Americans, photography, and ethnography. ● CULTURE; ● TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE; ● PEOPLE, PLACES, AND ENVIRONMENTS.

Secondary Honor

Sitting Bull: Lakota Warrior and Defender of His People, by S.D. Nelson. Abrams Books for Young Readers. Reviewed by Derrick Kimbrough, assistant principal, Federico Garcia Lorca Elementary School (Chicago Public Schools), Chicago, Illinois.



Award-winning author and illustrator S.D. Nelson provides an in-depth look at the experiences of the Lakota/Sioux warriors and chiefs. Sitting Bull's lifelong quest to preserve his people's way of life and land is told through a series of historical photographs, timelines, and maps. From the early years of killing his first buffalo to being named the leader of his people, Sitting Bull was instrumental in fighting against the wasichus (white people) and their efforts to move his people to reservations.

Historical photographs and the author's extensive note at the end give readers a well-rounded account of this period and the experiences of the Lakota/Sioux. Through the warrior's story, details are provided that surpass what can be found in any social studies textbook. Nelson's accounts of the events are shared in a story-like perspective that can be easily followed by a variety of ages. This book is an excellent source full of primary resources. ● CULTURE; ● TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE; ● PEOPLE, PLACES AND ENVIRONMENTS; ● INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY; ● INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, AND INSTITUTIONS; ● POWER, AUTHORITY, AND GOVERNANCE; ● CIVIC IDEALS AND PRACTICES ●