

Editor's Notebook

As we look ahead to the summer and upcoming school year, this issue of *Social Education* offers engaging and creative ideas for using film and literature to enhance social studies instruction. The main focus of the issue is a special section on film edited by William B. Russell III. We also offer the annual features on recent literature that our members always enjoy—the Notable Trade Books pullout and the reviews of the award-winning Carter G. Woodson books.

Before the section on film, our regular columns offer imaginative suggestions for lessons on important past and present topics. In the Sources and Strategies column, Cheryl Lederle draws from the magnificent collection of Walt Whitman's papers at the Library of Congress. The featured document is a letter from Whitman informing his mother that his brother George was alive and well after being wounded in battle during the Civil War. Lederle offers teaching suggestions, and introduces other documents from the Whitman collection.

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Supreme Court decision that struck down the Virginia law prohibiting interracial marriage. In our Lessons on the Law column, Jason Gillmer examines the court case of *Loving v. Virginia*, in which Richard and Mildred Loving asserted their right to marry each other. Gillmer reviews the legal and social consequences of the Court's decision, and suggests topics for class discussion.

Until the 1920s, an American woman who married a foreigner automatically lost her U.S. citizenship. In our Teaching with Documents column, Sara Lyons Davis examines one woman's protest against being deprived of her citizenship rights in this way. Harriot Stanton Blatch married an Englishman in 1882. The daughter of renowned suffragist Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Blatch was no stranger to activist politics and her campaign against this citizenship law was part of her wider campaign for women's rights, which contributed to the eventual repeal of the law. Davis suggests an engaging set of teaching activities.

In the special section, contributors recommend films and offer teaching suggestions on a wide range of topics that are suitable for the social studies classroom.

The first two articles in the special section deal with core social studies disciplines. Andrea S. Libresco recommends a rich array of movies that can enhance U.S. History and U.S. Government classes, and suggests probing questions for students to consider as they review films on historical and contemporary issues. Joshua L. Kenna and William B. Russell III show how teachers can fascinate students with geography through the use of animated films, and then convert students' interest into knowledge and understanding.

Jeffrey M. Hawkins addresses the timely topic of introducing students to LGBTQ issues through appropriate films that can be linked to historical events that are part of the typical social studies curriculum.

Just as written texts require close reading, the interpretation of films requires a basic understanding of the language and art of film making. Christopher H. Clark, Patricia G. Avery, and Robb Virgin offer guidelines that will help students to uncover the language of film, and suggest short excerpts from well-known movies that teachers can use to illustrate the art of film making.

Three articles in the special section deal with different dimensions of human rights. Kathy Swan, Joseph Karb, and Mark Hofer show how students can construct documentary videos about human rights violations. As an example, they discuss a student video on sex trafficking that won the 2013 *Speak Truth to Power* video competition, a project of Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights. Alan S. Marcus recommends films that can assist high-quality teaching about the Holocaust (and warns that one popular movie, *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, has serious flaws). Stewart Waters and William B. Russell III discuss films that are useful for understanding global struggles against discrimination and for promoting the pursuit of the rights of women, children, and ethnic minorities.

Scott Alan Metzger concludes the special section with an article identifying methods of using films to develop the historical empathy of students and expand their skills in the critical analysis both of history and the messages that film makers try to communicate.

At the center of this issue is the annual pullout presenting the latest selection of Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People, which offers annotations of outstanding books published last year that can enhance the social studies curriculum. The selected books have been chosen by a committee of NCSS members in cooperation with the Children's Book Council. We also present reviews of the latest books to have won Carter G. Woodson awards for their contribution to an understanding of race and ethnicity in the United States.

C. Frederick Risinger rounds off the articles in this issue with an Internet column that touches on a topic of great urgency—a worldwide trend away from democracy toward oligarchy and autocracy—and raises important questions about the future of our own democracy. He emphasizes that strengthening American democracy is “OUR job! This is why we became social studies educators.” (184)

After the articles, we present two recent official NCSS position statements: one is on the President's Executive Order of January 27, 2017, affecting immigration from seven primarily Muslim countries, while the other addresses “Powerful, Purposeful Pedagogy in Elementary School Social Studies.” The last segment of this issue reproduces the resolutions that were passed by the NCSS House of Delegates at its meeting during last December's NCSS conference and subsequently approved by the NCSS Board of Directors.

As always, the editors of *Social Education* welcome the comments of readers on any of the contributions to this issue at socialed@ncss.org.