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CBC Features. Vol 49, no. 1 (Spring-Summer 1996)

New York, N.Y.: Children's Book Council, (Spring-Summer 1996)

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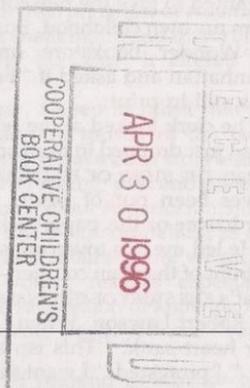
★ CBC Features ★

Vol. 49, No. 1

Spring-Summer 1996

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Materials Available

COOPERATIVE CHILDREN'S BOOK CENTER
4290 Helen C. White Hall
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. Russell Freedman .

When a friend had her first baby some time ago, I wanted to give the newcomer a favorite book from my own childhood. So I went to the Books of Wonder bookstore on 7th Avenue in Manhattan and asked if "Ferdinand the Bull" was still in print.

The clerk looked at me with pity, as though I had just dropped in from another planet. "You mean THE STORY OF FERDINAND," he said. "It's never been out of print. Do you want the hardcover or the paperback?"

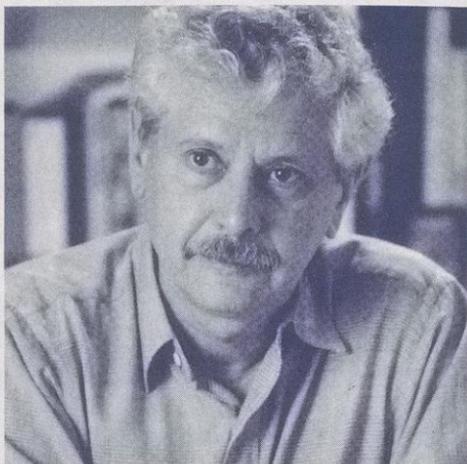
He led me to a towering stack of books piled in front of the main counter—all copies of Munro Leaf's THE STORY OF FERDINAND, with illustrations by Robert Lawson. When I picked up a copy, my heart sank. "This isn't what I'm looking for," I protested. "I want the original edition."

Alas, I had been deceived by the rosy glow of childhood memory. The book I remembered—or thought I remembered—was a big book. It filled your lap. And it was gorgeously illustrated in living color. The shrunken, barebones version I now held in my hand had only black-and-white line drawings. Even so, I was assured, it was identical to the original 1936 edition. THE STORY OF FERDINAND had never been bigger, had never been in color.

At home, I re-read the book before wrapping it as a baby gift. And I saw immediately why it cast its spell on me a half-century ago. A deceptively simple storyline features mounting suspense, a thrilling climax, and a satisfying ending. It can be read easily by a child but isn't in the least condescending in either word or picture. Robert Lawson's drawings of Spanish landscapes, architecture, and bullfighting are evocative and witty. And Munro Leaf's comic narrative tells a subversive tale that I loved as a child and never forgot.

Ferdinand is a true outsider. While the other bulls charge each other and butt their heads together, practicing for the bullring, he sits peacefully under his favorite cork tree, smelling the flowers. As a boy I was delighted by Lawson's drawing of that tree, with its corks hanging like acorns from the branches. Many years passed before I learned that cork really comes from the bark of the tree.

When Ferdinand is stung by a bee, his wild antics are mistaken for fierce aggression, and he is carted off to the bullring in Madrid. Once in the ring, he declines to fight, preferring to sit and smell the sweet scent of flowers adorning the hair of ladies in the stands. Carted back to his pasture, Ferdinand triumphs in the end by



being true to himself. This is one of the first books I can remember reading that delivers a powerful message wrapped in an irresistible story.

At the time, I was lucky enough to be growing up in a home that was filled with books and book talk. My father was manager of the West Coast office of the Macmillan Publishing Company. At night, Dad would sit propped up in bed, reading galley proofs. As he finished each page, he tossed it overboard. When I entered my parents' room in the morning, I had to wade through galley pages littering the floor. Dad claimed that he read a book a night.

He often brought authors home for dinner. John Steinbeck, Margaret Mitchell, William Saroyan, and other famous and not so famous, all had dinner at our house when I was a boy. They were entertaining talkers, they often looked fantastic, and they seemed to lead romantic lives, but their books didn't mean a thing to me. My literary hero was Howard Pease, author of SHANGHAI PASSAGE and other sea-going adventure novels published during the 1930s. I believe I read every book that Howard Pease wrote.

The first time I really connected books with the person who wrote them was when I was in the fifth grade and, wonder of wonders, Howard Pease came to my school. Yes, Margaret Mitchell and Steinbeck and Saroyan and plenty of others had all been to my house. But Howard Pease, standing right there talking to my class—he was a *real writer!*

When I learned that he also lived in our

neighborhood, San Francisco's Richmond District, I was thrilled. I wanted my father to invite *him* to dinner, but no luck. I guess he wasn't a Macmillan author. I remember lying in bed at night, listening to the ghostly calls of fog horns coming from San Francisco Bay, imagining Howard Pease sitting at his typewriter just a few blocks away.

Like my father, I read all sorts of books. Two special favorites were Robert Lewis Stevenson's *TREASURE ISLAND* and Ernest Thompson Seton's *WILD ANIMALS I HAVE KNOWN*, an adventure novel and a collection of natural history sketches. Back then, I didn't worry about distinctions like fiction and nonfiction. A book was absorbing and fun to read, or it was a bore.

I understand that *WILD ANIMALS I HAVE KNOWN* was one of the earliest books to popularize natural history to a wide audience of young readers. I haven't seen the book for a long time, and I have no idea how accurate it is, or to what extent, if any, Seton anthropomorphized the wild animals he wrote about. In terms of its lasting effect on me, however, the book's accuracy doesn't seem all that important. What counts is that I read it with as much pleasure and satisfaction as any novel or story. Seton seemed to be writing about animals as they really lived, not dressed up and behaving like humans. I've never forgotten that book, and I've been a student of animal behavior ever since I read it. Thanks to Ernest Thompson Seton, I've written some natural history books of my own.

Another book that I enjoyed as a boy, and that remains in my memory, is Hendrik Van Loon's *THE STORY OF MANKIND*. I still have the copy I received as a gift from my father when I was ten or eleven years old. And I remember exactly *where* I read it—curled up on the maroon chesterfield in the living room of our San Francisco flat. I spent several foggy summer days on that sofa, absorbed in *THE STORY OF MANKIND*.

The title is significant. It was a history book, to be sure, unmistakably a book of nonfiction, yet I read it that summer not to fulfill a school assignment, not to write a report, but because I enjoyed it. I read it for pleasure, for the thrill of discovery. History according to Van Loon wasn't just a bunch of facts and dates. It was the exciting stories of real people leading meaningful lives. I think this was the first book that gave me a sense of human history as a living force, and it kept me turning the pages. *THE*

STORY OF MANKIND wasn't "just like a story." It *was* a story.

One other book demands to be mentioned. As a freshman in college, I read the Modern Library edition of John Dos Passos's trilogy, *U.S.A.* That novel, a fascinating amalgam of fact and fiction, opened my eyes to the possibilities of stylistic and structural experimentation in prose and introduced me to an interpretation of American history that I found challenging and disturbing. *U.S.A.* expanded my horizons. It altered my view of the world.

Today, as a writer, I keep in mind that the word *history* is made up mostly of the word *story*. Historians have always been storytellers. I know from my own reading, past and present, that a nonfiction book about American history, or natural history, can be as compelling as any adventure story while retaining the weight of authenticity. For young readers especially, nonfiction offers the satisfaction of knowing that the people and events portrayed are "really real."

Of course, I don't pretend to aim for total objectivity in my presentation of "reality," especially "reality" belonging to a different time and place. Historians always maintain a double vision—of the past and the present, trying to recreate the past as truthfully as possible, while enjoying the privilege accorded to posterity—the ability to judge and evaluate. Truth has to be sought not only by scholarship but, I believe, by fairmindedness—an attempt to measure the subject against certain ethical, social, and historical ideals.

A fourth-grader who wrote to me about my Abraham Lincoln biography had this to say: "I am very glad I read your book. I learned a lot about Abraham Lincoln, and the book was fun to read. It was kind of like a regular story."

That's a reminder of what I'm always aiming for—a regular story well told.

Russell Freedman is the author of more than forty nonfiction books ranging from American history to animal behavior, among them the Newbery Medal winner LINCOLN: A PHOTOBIOGRAPHY and the Newbery Honor Books ELEANOR ROOSEVELT: A LIFE OF DISCOVERY and THE WRIGHT BROTHERS: HOW THEY INVENTED THE AIRPLANE. He is the 1992 recipient of the Washington Post-Children's Book Guild Award for Nonfiction and the 1996 Regina Medal, both honors for a body of work in children's literature.

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The purpose of The Children's Book Council is to promote the use and enjoyment of children's trade books and to disseminate information about books for young people and about children's trade book publishing.

BRINGING HISTORY TO LIFE IN THE CLASSROOM

• Robert Stremme •

"How do you teach your students about Hiroshima and the effects of the atomic bomb?" I received this question repeatedly last summer when, as one of the 1995 Keizai Koho Center Fellows, I was awarded the opportunity to visit Japan. As a fifth-grade elementary school teacher I rarely get as far as the Civil War in our study of United States history. The major emphasis on World War II does not come until high school for most students. The question stumped me for a few moments, then I remembered—trade books! "Yes," I answered, "We teach about Hiroshima and the atomic bomb with trade books."

During the year the students had read Eleanor Coerr's *SADAKO AND THE THOUSAND CRANES* (Putnam). Sometimes they chose to read it as their monthly book report title; often, they elected to read it with our librarian, Mr. McAvoy, as a discussion book. Either way, the title brought up many strong opinions and discussions as our ten-year-old students questioned why Sadako suffered and eventually died because of a war and a bomb that exploded when she was still a small child. These elementary school students also learned to fold paper cranes in honor of Sadako while learning about and pondering the horrors of atomic warfare.

This is what I told my Japanese friends in Hiroshima as I had the honor of laying the paper cranes made by our students at the Sadako Memorial in Hiroshima Peace Park. Here was visible proof that the story of Sadako transcends across countries and cultures. Our group of American educators stood and watched group after group of Japanese students approach the memorial with long strings of paper cranes to join with the thousands of colorful origami cranes made by our U.S. students—a testament to the power of one child's history.

Another period of history that we do not formally cover with a textbook is the Civil War. Again it is a trade book that helps introduce this time period to the children. Patricia Polacco's *PINK AND SAY* (Philomel) covers so many areas of this period in our history that it becomes difficult to include all of them in our discussions. Pink and Say, two teenagers fighting for the Union, meet up with each other after Say has been badly wounded running from the battle scene. Pink carries Say to his slave home in Georgia and Say enters a world very different from his home back in Ohio. In the end, Pink and Say are captured by Confederate soldiers.



Because of his color, Pink is hung while Say is sent to prison. This read-aloud book teaches some of the causes for the Civil War, moves on to how soldiers lived and fared during the war, and ultimately ends with a discussion of slavery and racial issues.

The discussion about slavery often leads to the reading of another trade book, Deborah Hopkinson's *SWEET CLARA AND THE FREEDOM QUILT* (Knopf). Clara links together bits and pieces of talk from the "big house" and stitches a quilt that shows escaping slaves the way north. My fifth-graders study the quilt to find the path to freedom. Although we have not had the opportunity to take it further, I do know of schools who have stitched their own freedom quilts.

Race and equality are difficult topics for elementary students to understand. Whereas both *PINK AND SAY* and *SWEET CLARA AND THE FREEDOM QUILT* look at slavery and race from an 1800s point of view, Libba Moore Gray's *DEAR WILLIE RUDD* (Simon & Schuster) helps students to appreciate another point of view. In the story, Miss Elizabeth, as a grown woman, writes a letter to her family's deceased African-American servant—Willie Rudd. In it, she tells Rudd that if they could be together again they would both use the front door of the house, sit together at the kitchen table, or sit at the front of the bus and movie theater. As an adult, she comes to understand the meaning of prejudice and apologizes to him about the past. This modern-day story of racial prejudice helps the students to connect the reality of racism with their own lives.

We have a textbook, but as I approach each

formal unit of history in our curriculum, the first thing I do is to take out trade books that match the current topic. Ellin Greene's *THE LEGEND OF THE CRANBERRY* (Simon & Schuster) gives us a glimpse into the time of Paleo-Indians hunting the mastodon on the continent of North America. Although a legend, the book gives a feel of early North American history and the students go on to create their own legends to explain how things in nature occurred.

Studying about European explorers and their impact on the New World, we read selections from *THE WORLD IN 1492* (Scholastic). The students chart what was happening in each of the known continents, noting the similarities and differences. They also get a sense of time and place when we use Connie and Peter Roop's *I, COLUMBUS* (Walker), and chart his journey through paraphrased journal entries. I begin each day reading another journal entry and we chart the explorer's progress on a map. The students also use these journal entries as a basis for writing about other European explorers. Too, these entries help the students as they move explorers across the computer screen in a simulation game. Our textbook covers the conquests of the major explorers, but Jean Fritz's *AROUND THE WORLD IN A HUNDRED YEARS* (Scholastic), Betsy & Giulio Maestro's *EXPLORATION AND CONQUEST THE AMERICAS AFTER COLUMBUS: 1500-1620* (Lothrop), and Dinah Starkey's *ATLAS OF EXPLORATION* (Scholastic), help students learn about the explorers' personalities and personal lives.

Our next large unit of study involves the Pilgrims. One of my favorite books in this time period is Lucille Recht Penner's *EATING THE PLATES: A PILGRIM BOOK OF FOOD & MANNERS* (Macmillan). The description of the voyage over on the Mayflower, and the early domestic habits of the Plimoth Plantation settlers hit the fifth-graders right where it makes an impact—food. We read together about the moldy cheese, worm-leaden bread, and stagnant water on the Mayflower, and the children are sure that they would never survive to even begin the voyage. *EATING THE PLATES* gets its title from the fact that due to a lack of plates the Pilgrims often used stale bread to hold their food, and when the food softened the hard bread they "ate their plate." A favorite day is when the students bring in food made from the recipes included in the book. Our feast includes succotash stew, fresh corn soup, red pickled eggs, bannock cakes, and swizzle. Stale bread serves as our trenchers and when finished we "eat the plates!" We follow the rules for manners laid down in the book. Children must eat in silence and while standing! Those are tough rules for elementary students to follow: one meal like that and they are ready to return to the twentieth century. Penner's

follow-up book, *A NATIVE AMERICAN FEAST* (Macmillan) does the same thing for Native American foods and customs.

To get a feel for the life of children in the Plimoth Plantation we again go outside our textbook and read Kate Water's collection of books: *SARA MORTON'S DAY*, *A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A PILGRIM GIRL*, *SAMUEL EATON'S DAY*, *A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A PILGRIM BOY*, and her newest addition *TAPENUM'S DAY*, *A WAMPANOAG INDIAN BOY IN PILGRIM TIMES* (Scholastic). The simple text and accurate photographs give the students an excellent glimpse into childhood of the 1600's. The journal and woodcut formats of Gary Bowen's *STRANDED AT PLIMOTH PLANTATION 1626* (Scholastic) help the students to understand how a teenager would live in the 1600's.

Perhaps our most ambitious long-term project involves Sally Keehn's *I AM REGINA* (Philomel). This historical period concerns the French and Indian War, and the Indians are taking captives deep into Indian territory. Based on a true story, ten-year-old Regina and her sister, Barbara, are captured and taken from Pennsylvania into Ohio where they spend nine years with Indian tribes. Eventually Regina forgets her early upbringing and becomes totally immersed in the Native American culture. The war ends and the captives are transported east where anxious relatives claim sons, daughters, and wives that they do not recognize. My students keep an extensive journal while we read this book, and write an entry after each period of reading. Their outrage at the Indians for killing and destroying Regina's family eventually turns to outrage at the settlers for killing and destroying the Native Americans' way of life. They see that conflict has two sides. This book helps the students to understand the reasons behind the French and Indian War, and the hardships the settlers had in establishing homes in a sometimes hostile land. Their journal writings reflect a better grasp of Native American culture and life. They share in the final joy when Regina is reunited with her family, and we shed some tears together at the end.

In my classroom trade books poke out from every possible space. The children know that we will begin reading about history in our textbooks, but then we will find a trade book to make it come alive!

Bob Stremme has served as Chair and Vice-Chair of the National Council for the Social Studies-CBC joint Notable Trade Book committee, and is currently Chair of the NCSS SIG on Literature in the Social Studies. Stremme is a fifth-grade teacher at the Longstreth Elementary School, Centennial School District, in Warminster, PA. He also teaches pre-service teachers at Eastern College in St. Davids, PA.

SHH! WE'RE REWRITING THE CONSTITUTION: WOMEN IN HISTORY

• Milli-Ann Iuso-Cox •

Reading about history and historical figures is valuable for our children today, giving them insight in our past and hope for our future.

Traditionally history has been written from the viewpoint of men. But where were the women? What were they doing during all that time?

Finding the answers to these questions is a major aim of today's educators. Fortunately there are many exciting new books and curriculum materials that bring suffragists to the attention of our young people in a manner that will inspire and direct them toward their own positive actions and highest potential.

August 26, 1995, marked the 75th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th amendment, which gave women the right to vote. Organizations around the country journeyed to Washington, D.C., to initiate a year-long celebration of its ratification and to honor the courageous foremothers who made it possible. A weekend of festivities culminated with a National Suffrage Parade replicating the 1913 suffrage parade of 5,000 women orchestrated by Alice Paul and the National Women's Party.

A group of East Coast youngsters, 10 to 12 years old, watched a video entitled *Winning A Voice*, a musical documentary featuring San Francisco Bay Area children telling of the 145-year struggle of American women for a voice in their government. They were outraged at the indignities they saw as the suffragists struggled for justice. They responded vocally as they watched and cheered their heroines on to the final victory in Tennessee.

The West Coast video performers sent their costumes to their East Coast peers to wear in the National Suffrage Parade. These excited Easterners eagerly donned the period costumes, picked up the placards bearing the artist-drawn portraits of their newly-discovered heroines and the ratification banner, and began the long march. Suddenly the children burst into songs, the suffrage songs they learned after watching the musical documentary. They began chanting for the ERA. The admiring crowds joined in. The young "Suffragists" held their placards higher, sang more sweetly and stood taller. Their confidence was growing. A new generation of leaders was in the making!

This kind of shared learning can be replicated across the country in the homes, libraries and schools of our nation. This year is a fitting time to pay tribute to the remarkable women who helped bring the promises of America to half its population via the ballot. In the process, we can



learn the answers to the questions which in the last 20 years have brought us the body of knowledge that some call HerStory and other call Women's Studies: *her* side of the human story. This is not an easy task, since this information has been absent from our own education as well. Consequently, activities in which we learn together make sense.

The children themselves can be put in charge of planning the tribute or celebration. To get in the spirit and feel empowered, they can read together the beautifully illustrated picture book *I'M IN CHARGE OF CELEBRATIONS* (Scribner) and identify with the unnamed heroine who puts herself in charge of 108 celebrations besides the traditionally celebrated holidays. Students then each have the opportunity to share something unique that they and their families may celebrate.

Once the young people are in the celebratory mood, it is time to learn the story behind the amendment. The first step is to learn about the constitution itself. Students may read together Jean Fritz's lively, appealing book *SHH! WE'RE WRITING THE CONSTITUTION* (Scholastic). Then students may break into cooperative learning groups to read, discuss and present the other books in the Scholastic series: *WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA*, *BEN FRANKLIN?*, *AND THEN WHAT HAPPENED*, *PAUL REVERE?*, *WHY DON'T YOU GET A HORSE*, *SAM ADAMS?*, and *CAN'T YOU MAKE THEM BEHAVE*, *KING GEORGE?*. These short books about the Constitution and its makers are spiced with humor and illustrations portraying the idiosyncrasies as well as the attributes of the

founding fathers.

References for children about the forming of the constitution include: *WE THE PEOPLE* (Doubleday), *THE CONSTITUTION*, (Children's Press), and *OUR CONSTITUTION AND OUR DECLARATION* (both Millbrook).

Encourage the students to write their own constitution or Bill of Rights for any place where they need to work with others in an orderly, productive, harmonious way: library, classroom, school, or home. Students may then individually research and choose one of the original signers to portray as they sign their own constitution. Hopefully, along the way the group will begin to wonder: Where were all the women? What were they doing?

In order to answer these questions in a meaningful way, working beyond the basic textbooks in activities that span the curriculum is important. It is difficult, if not impossible, for students to identify with these noteworthy role models in the limited way in which they are often presented in the texts.

For young people, biographies which sensitively capture the greatness and the uniqueness of notable women are valuable. They open the doors to an expanded future, presenting not only who important heroines are, but also how they are: self-determined, committed, and impassioned. Parents, teachers and librarians must work together to find creative means to bring this rich heritage to young people.

Begin the investigation of the story behind the 19th Amendment by dramatically introducing Jean Fritz's newest, liveliest book, *YOU WANT WOMEN TO VOTE, LIZZIE STANTON?* (Putnam), and then having someone portray Elizabeth Cady Stanton in a surprise classroom visit. Many talented students and/or parents will be eager to play the part of this spunky woman who held out for the "sacred right to the elective franchise" despite the pleas of her father, husband, and sister suffragists. Students who perform as great persons are virtually becoming their own role models as they practice "how to be." This Living HerStory, portraying great women, integrates learning and character through the opportunity to practice exemplary behavior.

Now you have a model of Living HerStory for students to emulate as they settle down to do the necessary research involved. Again, the students may divide into small HerStory Groups, i.e., cooperative learning groups, to do this work. Each group may be assigned a suffragist to research and present to the class in Living HerStory. A set of cooperative learning tasks is included in the *WINNING A VOICE ACTIVITY BOOK* (HerStory for Futures Unlimited).

In this 19th Amendment Anniversary year,

it is appropriate to focus enthusiastically on these books about courageous suffragists who spent their lifetimes making it possible for women to have a voice in their government, increased opportunity and more freedom. Both boys and girls need to grow up with the knowledge that women have overcome great adversity to achieve important goals. Emphasizing their success against great odds will encourage tomorrow's leaders to push forward for even greater reform.

It is our responsibility as parents and educators to help this new generation discover HerStory. When we uncover women's histories, the resulting curriculum is more respectful of the whole human experience. The value of exploring, demonstrating, and practicing the ways women approach their world is also important, not only because, as the Chinese proverb reminds us, "Women hold up half the sky," but also because our whole society will benefit from the understanding and use of all its human resources.

Here is a suggested reading list:

Biographies about suffragists for children:

Lucretia Mott and Susan B. Anthony
• *WOMEN WITH A CAUSE* (Garrard Publishing)
Elizabeth Cady Stanton

- *ELIZABETH CADY STANTON* (Gryphon House)
- *ELIZABETH CADY STANTON* (Highland)

Lucy Stone

- *I SPEAK FOR THE WOMEN* (Carolrhoda)

Mary Church Terrell

- *MARY CHURCH TERRELL* (Enslow)

Sojourner Truth

- *WALKING THE ROAD TO FREEDOM* (Carolrhoda)
- *SOJOURNER TRUTH AND THE VOICE OF FREEDOM* (Millbrook)

Ida B. Wells

- *IDA B. WELLS-BARNETT AND THE ANTI-LYNCHING CRUSADE* (Millbrook)
- *IDA B. WELLS-BARNETT* (Enslow)

Children's reference books about suffrage:

- *THE DAY THE WOMEN GOT THE VOTE* (Scholastic)
- *THE NINETEENTH AMENDMENT* (Children's Press)
- *THE YOUNG OXFORD HISTORY OF WOMEN IN THE US* (Oxford University Press)
- *WINNING A VOICE* (HerStory for Futures Unlimited)
- *THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT* (Children's Press)
- *WOMEN'S RIGHTS* (Franklin Watts)

Milli-Ann Iuso-Cox is a women's history specialist and the founder of HerStory for Futures Unlimited, a nonprofit organization promoting "HerStory"—women's part in the human story—in elementary and middle grade education. She has been an educator for 25 years and is the author of WINNING A VOICE (HerStory for Futures Unlimited), the story of the suffragist struggle to achieve the right to vote.

FINDING THE STORY IN HISTORY

• Diane Stanley •

I had the good fortune to be born into a remarkably creative and adventuresome family, particularly notable for its strong women. They were artistic in almost every sense, imaginative, articulate and curious. They were also a shade eccentric for Abilene, Texas. Growing up surrounded by these people added a richness and excitement to my life. Only now, looking back, can I see how surely they molded the person I became and the life work I have chosen. As a product of that environment, it is perfectly natural that I should be a writer and illustrator of books about history.

My grandmother, Pearl, once said that her favorite book was *THE DISCOVERY AND CONQUEST OF MEXICO* by Bernal Díaz del Castillo. That tells a lot about her. She was a serious reader, eager to learn about the history and culture of other countries, as well as an intrepid traveler. As a fearless (and foolish) young mother, she thought nothing of popping her children into a station wagon and heading south of the border. This was in the 1920's, when Mexico had few good roads and was just settling down after a bloody revolution.

Pearl especially loved Mexico and Central America, but she went lots of other places, too—Europe, India, Thailand, China, Japan, and Egypt. And wherever she went she brought things home and put them in her house. I remember the tiny embroidered silk shoes from China that were made for a woman with bound feet. There was the side off a painted Sicilian cart, Greek icons, Guatemalan embroideries and Spanish *santos*. She collected all these things because she found them beautiful but also because each had a tale to tell about the people who made them and the culture it represented.

My aunt Nancy raised this traveling and collecting mania to new heights. She went just about everywhere imaginable, though her trip to Afghanistan was canceled when the Soviets invaded it. In her seventies she was leading tour groups to Guatemala, having by that time become a self-taught expert on both pre-Columbian art and Guatemalan textiles. Today her photographs of Guatemalan villagers are in the costume collection at the Metropolitan Museum in New York.

My mother, Fay, was the third of these amazing women. Glamorous and flamboyant, she was frequently compared to Auntie Mame. It always surprised people to discover that under all that razzle-dazzle was a first class intellect and a remarkable store of wisdom. Like her



mother and sister, she was forever reading a book or flying off somewhere. But in addition, she was a writer. Her first books were mysteries and her day job was writing advertising copy, but as she got older what really grabbed her was history.

She had been at Pearl Harbor when it was bombed during World War II and years later she began planning a novel based on that experience. To research it, she returned to Hawaii several times, interviewed hundreds of survivors, and made an extensive study of the war in the Pacific. Though she died before she could finish the book, her visits to Hawaii did bear fruit—she became intrigued by the sad story of Princess Kaiulani and the loss of Hawaiian independence. She wrote about it in a children's book, *THE LAST PRINCESS* (Simon & Schuster), which I illustrated.

The evening after my grandmother's funeral, we all began telling "Pearl stories." Soon we found ourselves laughing hysterically, yet deeply moved by how surely we could summon her back just by talking about the crazy things she had said or done. As the next generation passed, there came the Fay stories and the Nancy stories. Today when I write about historical figures, I am always searching for those anecdotes that will bring the dead to life.

My family taught me that every culture has something from which we can learn. There are many kinds of art, each with its particular beauty. Likewise there are many styles of dressing, many cuisines, many kinds of families and governments and religions. Each culture has

its own unique point of view, and to the extent we can learn to see through others' eyes, we are enriched. This is what I try to achieve through my books.

It has been said that all history is really biography. It certainly is a good place to start, especially for young readers. We are all interested in people, after all, and Cleopatra, Dickens, and Leonardo da Vinci were certainly more colorful than most. When I look for someone to write about, I hope for three things—a character of real significance, a background of interesting times, and most importantly, a subject who was also an engaging person. I am not necessarily looking for a hero. I try to present a balanced picture of a person with strengths and weaknesses. We all have our faults, even geniuses and great leaders. But even with a warts-and-all approach, I hope to leave my readers with an appropriate awe for the special qualities of these characters. After all, there has to be some reason why they got to be so famous!

Each of these characters comes to us trailing myths, many of which are either false or misleading. Cleopatra, an extreme example, is commonly regarded as a beautiful Egyptian sex-kitten. She was, in fact, none of those things. First of all, she was Greek, the last of the Ptolemies, who came to Egypt in the wake of Alexander the Great. And judging by her portraits on coins of the time, she was rather homely. It was not her beauty that drew people to her, but her intelligence and the force of her personality.

Leonardo da Vinci has been pigeonholed in the "great artist" category. Though he obviously deserves that accolade, it was not how he thought of himself. When he wrote to the Duke of Milan, listing the services he might offer, the very last thing Leonardo mentioned was painting. After all, he had only become an artist because he was illegitimate and therefore barred from the noble professions. As the years passed, he grew increasingly "weary of the paintbrush," and was consumed instead by a passion for invention and scientific study. In *LEONARDO DA VINCI (Morrow)* I tried hard to present all sides of a very complex man.

In my biographies, the background is intricately woven into the subject's story, just as it is in real life. To understand the dangers and challenges Queen Elizabeth faced, for example, you must know about the struggle between Catholic and Protestant forces in sixteenth-century Europe and the significance of Henry VIII's break with the Roman Church. And you cannot appreciate the boldness of Peter the Great's vision unless you have a sense of the rigidly conservative culture in seventeenth-century Russia.

Such background information goes beyond fleshing out the story of an individual figure, however. It gives a greater dimension to the concept of history itself. A narrow focus on dates, battles, treaties and kings is not only boring, it's bad history. So when a broad approach can be both more accurate and fun, it seems the obvious way to go.

Recently, my interest in history and biography has expanded to include books about people who are not famous at all. The first of these is *THE TRUE ADVENTURE OF DANIEL HALL (Dial)*. The hero of this tale is a fourteen-year-old boy who set out on a whaling voyage in 1856. He did not return to new Bedford until 1860, having survived all sorts of dangers including a grueling winter in Siberia where he was attacked by bears and treed by wolves. In 1861 he published an account of his adventures, which I used as my source material. I loved the story for its own sake, but was pleased that at the same time I could portray the nitty-gritty of life on a whaling ship in the nineteenth century.

The second book is *ELÉNA (Hyperion)*, the family saga of a dear friend of my grandmother. It became part of Pearl's storytelling repertoire, and consequently, part of my childhood. Full of the drama of the 1910-1920 revolution in Mexico, it even features a cameo appearance by Pancho Villa. It is a truly magical story and the main character, the mother, is a woman of incredible strength and wisdom. It was a delight to hear it told once again, this time by Eléna herself, then to tell it for children.

Whether the subjects of these books are commoners or kings, I dearly hope that the children who read them will not only have a good time, but also expand their horizons. I recently told a class that I had written a book on Leonardo. "Isn't he a Ninja Turtle?" one boy asked. Though it breaks my heart to hear questions like that, I can see how a nine-year-old would know more about a cartoon character than a Renaissance genius. Building cultural literacy happens one step at a time, and it is just as critical to our future as the mastery of math and science. If we don't know who we are and where we come from, what worked in the past and what was a disastrous failure, our next generation of leaders will not be equipped to face an increasingly complex world. We must do what we can to help them keep on reading.

Diane Stanley is the author and illustrator of LEONARDO DA VINCI (Morrow) and THE TRUE ADVENTURE OF DANIEL HALL (Dial). Other books include ELÉNA (Hyperion), and several joint projects with her husband, Peter Vennema, including SHAKA, KING OF THE ZULUS, BARD OF AVON, and CLEOPATRA (all Morrow).

BUILDING A COLLECTION: SELECTION CRITERIA AND A SHORT BIBLIOGRAPHY

• Ann Welton •

A child's sense of history is not the same as an adult's. One December I was reading *CHRISTMAS IN THE BARN* by Margaret Wise Brown to a class of kindergarteners. The book was published in 1952, and my library's copy is nearly mint. When I finished reading I observed to the class, "Boys and girls, this book is nearly as old as I am." One little girl responded, "Oh, Mrs. Welton, it doesn't look *that* old!" Clearly, I had attained to the historic quite without intent or effort. Later that spring I read Eve Bunting's *THE WALL* to a group of first-graders. Having grown up during the Vietnam years, this book has for me a current-events immediacy. Yet when I was done reading, after a short silence, one of the boys observed, "My grandfather was in that war." What was to me a book set recently was to this child a book about long-ago times.

Clearly my students' perception of the historical is not the same as mine. Whether or not it is true that time does in some way move more slowly for children than for adults, it is observable that children see the day-to-day events of their lives moving quickly into a "time ago." For the truly historical to have meaning it must resonate with life as children experience it now or have at sometime in their own recent past. The way to a collection that addresses this child's sense of the historical is to look for books that address issues which children recognize.

For me, as for many other media specialists, the scope of my collection is in part determined by the adopted social studies curriculum. Though I have little say in text adoptions, I can look for certain elements in the trade books I choose that address both the historical period the text dictates and the needs of children. I find an issues perspective helpful in addressing both these elements. Thus, in teaching social studies to fifth graders, I emphasize the difference between an event itself and the underlying issues. This distinction allows students to generalize and personalize. It also serves to encourage understanding of people in far off times and places and unfamiliar circumstances.

I consider historical books for children, whether nonfiction or fiction, to be worthy of selection if they meet the following criteria: strong narrative thrust; characters, whether real or imagined, in whom the reader becomes invested; situations which are familiar enough to allow the child to enter into the story with some degree of understanding; and illustrative merit when one is considering picture books.

The bibliography below gives a sampling of books selected to support curriculum on the



American Civil War which appears as a focus of study in our fifth-grade social studies text. Rather than just looking at the events of the war themselves, an issues focus mandates including titles dealing with slavery, civil rights, and the ways in which the legacy of slavery affects us today.

Understanding and comprehending the elements which create an historical perspective is cumulative. It is a lengthy process of layering and forming opinions based on solid information. As such, it begins early. In selecting books addressing the fifth-grade curriculum, one also looks for books which address the same issues for younger children. The picture books, fictional and folkloric treatments, and historical reports listed below present the Civil War and the civil rights movement to children from kindergarten through the tenth grade.

AJEEMAH AND HIS SON. James Berry. Harper-Collins, 1992. (0-06-021043-5).

The brutality of slavery, both physical and emotional, is palpable in this story of a father and son who are enslaved and sent to Jamaica. The father survives, the son does not, and the ending is bittersweet. Ages 11 - 16.

THE BOYS' WAR. Jim Murphy. Clarion, 1990. (0-89919-893-7).

Many boys between the ages of twelve and sixteen fought in the Civil War. This moving work brings the horrors of war home. Ages 11 - 15.

COMING HOME: FROM THE LIFE OF LANGSTON HUGHES. Floyd Cooper. Philomel, 1994. (0-399-22682-6).

Many cultural influences went into the making of poet Langston Hughes, a product of his unique upbringing. Ages 7 - 11.

FREEDOM'S CHILDREN: YOUNG CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVISTS TELL THEIR OWN STORIES. Ellen Levine. Putnam, 1993. (0-399-21893-9).

The act of walking into a school building is

physically dangerous. Going to church is potentially deadly. This is not Bosnia, but the United States a short thirty-five years ago. Read these narratives which have a heart-stopping immediacy. Ages 10 - 16.

THE GREAT MIGRATION: AN AMERICAN STORY. Jacob Lawrence. HarperCollins, 1993. (0-06-023037-1).

The harshness of life in the rural South encouraged many African Americans to seek a better situation in the industrial North. Chronicled in a series of paintings, the journey North is brought to life. Includes a poem by Walter Dean Myers. Ages 5 - 9.

HER STORIES: AFRICAN AMERICAN FOLKTALES, FAIRY TALES, AND TRUE TALES.. Virginia Hamilton. Illus. by Leo and Diane Dillon. Scholastic/Blue Sky, 1995. (0-590-47370-0).

A large, clearly set text and glowing acrylic illustrations giving this collection of 19 tales about African American women great sharing potential. Ranging from the romantic to the horrific, these stories offer a rich atmospheric panorama of African American experience. Ages 9 - 14.

LINCOLN: A PHOTOBIOGRAPHY. Russell Freedman. Clarion, 1987. (0-89919-380-3).

Freedman's Newbery Award-winning book gives a pictorial dimension to the life of the man who though ambivalent about freeing slaves, nonetheless issued the Emancipation Proclamation. Ages 9 - 14.

MAIZON AT BLUE HILL. Jacqueline Woodson. Delacorte, 1992. (9-385-30796-9).

Bright Maizon is one of only five African American girls attending an exclusive prep school. She feels isolated and misplaced in her struggles to fit in to a society significantly different from what she knows. Ages 10 - 15.

MANY THOUSAND GONE: AFRICAN AMERICANS FROM SLAVERY TO FREEDOM. Virginia Hamilton. Illus. by Leo and Diane Dillon. Knopf, 1993. (0-394-92873-3).

Factual accounts of slavery in America, runaway slaves, and the exodus to freedom in the north are delivered in lyric, tellable prose. Though the picture is grim, the indomitable spirit of Black Americans comes through. Ages 9 - 15.

NETTIE JO'S FRIENDS. Patricia McKissack. Illus. by Scott Cook. Knopf, 1989. (0-394-89158-9). Nettie Jo desperately needs a needle so that she can make a new dress for her beloved doll. However the animals she asks for help seem more in need of her aid than she of theirs—until the end. A tale of resourcefulness and humor. Ages 5 - 8.

NOW LET ME FLY: THE STORY OF A SLAVE FAMILY. Delores Johnson. Macmillan, 1993. (0-02-947699-5).

A young girl is captured in Africa and endures long years of slavery as she works to help her family survive in the United States. Moving and powerful, the story evokes the pain of servitude,

separation, and loss of family. Ages 5 - 10.

THE PEOPLE COULD FLY: AMERICAN BLACK FOLKTALES. Told by Virginia Hamilton. Illus. by Leo and Diane Dillon. Scholastic, 1994. (0-590-48211-4).

This by now classic collection of Black folktales not only contains compelling stories but demonstrates the spiritual sustenance that allowed Black Americans to survive slavery with their spirit intact. Ages 9 - 14.

PINK AND SAY. Patricia Polacco. Philomel, 1994. (0-394-22671-0).

When white Sheldon Curtis is wounded and left for dead on a Georgia battlefield, he is rescued by black Pinkus Aylee, whose mother helps nurse him back to health. Though it ends tragically for Pinkus, this story is one in which love, acceptance, courage, and commemoration are pitted against rote hatred and intolerance. Ages 6 - 12.

THE SLAVE DANCER. Paula Fox. Bradbury, 1973. (0-02-735560-8).

This Newbery Award-winning book tells the story of thirteen-year-old Jessie Bollier's four months on a slave ship, where he must play his fife to "dance the slaves." Ages 11 - 14.

SMOKY NIGHT. Eve Bunting. Illus. by David Diaz. Harcourt, 1994. (0-15-269954-6).

In this Caldecott Award-winning book, Daniel worries about the safety of his cat during a riot in his neighborhood. Street violence, in part the legacy of denial of civil rights, is here viewed through the eyes of a child. Ages 5 - 11.

SOUL LOOKS BACK IN WONDER. Tom Feelings. Dial, 1993. (0-8037-1001-1).

Feelings' accomplished mixed media illustrations evoke the sense of awe and joy in life that the poetry of Maya Angelou, Langston Hughes, Walter Dean Myers, Lucille Clifton, and others express so exuberantly—and who can resist the title? Ages 5 - 9.

WORKING COTTON. Sherley Anne Williams. Illus. by Carole Byard. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992. (0-15-200004-6).

A brief vernacular narrative graphically spells out the harshness of life for the children of migrant workers. Ages 4 - 12.

ZORA HURSTON AND THE CHINABERRY TREE. William Miller. Illus. by Cornelious Van Wright and Ying-Hwa-Hu. Lee & Low, 1994. (1-880000-14-8).

Both the engaging story line about a child learning the importance of storytelling and dreaming, and the touching artwork serve ably as an introduction to Hurston, a provocative and original voice of the Harlem Renaissance. Ages 9 - 12.

Ann Welton is an elementary librarian/media specialist at Terminal Park Elementary in Auburn, WA. She is also the author of EXPLORERS AND EXPLORATION: THE BEST RESOURCES FOR GRADES 5-9 (Oryx), a collection of print works on exploration of land, sea, and space.

RESEARCH TELLS THE STORY

• Jean Fritz •

History can be like an attic, spilling over with odds and ends from the past, some so tantalizing that they may be mistaken for complete stories, requiring only a bit of invention here and there to round them out. Be on guard. Now is the time to take those attic finds and rush downstairs. You don't want invention; you want emotional involvement. You need to travel far, poking into hidden corners of the past until you feel you are inside both the skin and the times of your character.

This is research: reading, reading, reading both primary and secondary sources. Much may be repetitive but don't lose patience. Reading the same material over and over immerses you deeper into your subject and into the period. Moreover, from time to time you will stumble upon a fresh fact. Trivial as it may seem, it may add another dimension to your story.

When I was working on my book about Patrick Henry, I had difficulty finding specific references to his childhood. His grandson, who also wrote a biography, evidently had the same trouble so he rounded up surviving old men who had once been Patrick's playmates. "What was different about Patrick as a boy?," he asked them. One after another, they shook their heads. They couldn't think of a thing until one of the men said, "Oh yes he *was* different. Patrick liked to wear clean underwear." Trivial, yes, but memorable.

At the end of my reading, I went to Virginia to retrace Patrick's steps. I visited all the homes that Patrick had lived in. I waded in the stream where he had fished; I sat under the tree where he liked to play his fiddle. By this time I knew Patrick pretty well. I recognized the landmarks instead of meeting them for the first time. I imagined him jumping on his horse in his clean underwear. I felt as close to Patrick Henry as if I'd been a neighbor. And I was ready to write.

Often it is hard, if not impossible, to find a specific fact that you long for. I wanted so much to know the name of the horse that Paul Revere rode on his famous ride, but in the end I had to send Paul galloping into history on an anonymous horse. It was not until the book had been published that I accidentally came upon the name—Brown Beauty. Of course if I'd known in time, the horse on the jacket of the book would have been brown and I would have felt more confident on a horse reliably named.

How can you be sure that what you read is accurate? You can't so you keep alert. While part of your mind is digesting what you read, accumulating facts, shaping them into a story, another part of your mind must be skeptical. This was especially true when I was working on



Photo by Janet Woodcock

my book about Pocahontas. Since she left no personal record, writers are apt to speculate and when an eminent historian speculates, you have to pay attention. One such historian suggested that Pocahontas' uncle, Opechcanough, had been captured many years before by Spaniards, taken to Spain for eight years, then returned to the Jamestown area where he was supposed to convert his tribe to Christianity. Instead, Opechcanough assembled his tribe and together they returned to the waiting Spaniards and murdered them, every one. Then Opechcanough took a new name which, according to his authority, means "he whose soul is white." Such a theory deserved serious checking. I went to the Library of the American Indian in Chicago. The people there did not accept this scenario and as a last check I called the Smithsonian Institute and asked the authority on native American language about the translation of Opechcanough. He said the language of those particular Indians had been lost but in any case no native language had a word to correspond to our word for "soul."

Plain common sense plays a part in evaluating accuracy. What about Opechcanough and the house key? According to the settlers, in his old age Opechcanough persuaded the settlers to build him an English house which so delighted him that he spent all his time just going in and out the front door, locking it, unlocking it, locking it again. It was hard for me to believe that a man who had lived for eight years in Spain could be so carried away by a simple house key. As far as I was concerned, that put an end to the story that he had lived in Spain.

Sometimes people act as if research is a chore. On the contrary. Raking through the past for stories—how can that be anything but fun?

Jean Fritz has received many honors for her books, including the American Library Association's Laura Ingalls Wilder Award in 1986 for a body of work that has made a "substantial and lasting contribution to literature for children." Her most recent title is YOU WANT WOMEN TO VOTE, LIZZIE STANTON? (Putnam).

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