

Our Stories, Our History
Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry: Mississippi in the 1930s through Historical Fiction
A Middle-School Unit

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Overview

Through a study of Mildred Taylor's *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, this unit introduces middle-school students simultaneously to historical fiction as a genre, and to historical writing and research as parallel and corollary sources. The goal is to broaden students' appreciation and understanding of a particular historical period, as well as of the varied and mutually-reinforcing ways to approach historical inquiry and writing.

The unit is designed to be taught to students in grade 7 or 8, as an intensive 6-week course, but it can be adapted for other uses. It is written as a complement to the current Pittsburgh Public Schools Kaplan-based curriculum for 7th grade, to augment the current units 8 and 9, designed to be taught during the final report period of 7th grade. Lessons are presented to fit double-period blocks (approximately 90-100 minutes) but could be adapted to different time frames. The number and length of lessons can be adapted to meet varying needs.

Rationale

Pittsburgh Public Schools' current middle-school-level Communications curriculum introduces students to our rich oral-tradition heritage. A 7th-grade unit on folktales, myths and legends in the spring ends with students creating their own story in this tradition.

Watching my current 7th-graders approach this unit, I have been impressed with a number of things. First, most feel that they have no stories in their own lives. Most feel – often with justification – that no one has told them stories about their own families. Television, movies, video games, and internet connections seem to have replaced what once was the richest source of information for humans – story telling, sitting together and telling and hearing where things came from and how things used to be, and dreaming together of how things could be in a better world. For most of my students family history, and history in general, are gray areas of far less concern than items of popular culture they share with their peers.

I find this trend alarming -- indeed, frightening. It epitomizes for me a process of desocialization of our young people, of atomization, of creating human beings whose sense of connection with one another is minimal, and often confrontational. This loss of story is a loss of human-ness. But the problem is not irreversible.

I also have noticed in my students a *love* of story. Nearly to a person, my 7th graders greeted the final assignment for the unit on folk tales with enthusiasm. This was an assignment to write their own folk tale, myth, or legend, being true to the characteristics of the genre in which they chose to tell their story. For some, the stories are pure fiction. However, a good number of my students have chosen to tell a story from personal experience, and even, in a few cases, to transmit a story they have heard from someone close to them.

As often happens when I find myself confronting despair, my students have made me optimistic – in this case about the potential for regaining story in our lives. I can see in them glimmers of my own passion, at their age (and today), for historical fiction as a way of finding a connection with other people from other times and places. In particular, I am encouraged by their joy in telling their own stories. This unit is designed to help them become familiar with how others have done this well, and to encourage them to explore both the genre of historical fiction, and the historical research tools through which they can make their stories richer windows to how things once were, or are today.

Why *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*?

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry is the Newbery Medal-winning, central novel in Mildred Taylor's autobiographical fiction series. Set in rural Mississippi in the 1930's, this is the story of the tight-knit Logan family's trials and triumphs as told by nine-year-old Cassie. The family confronts the general problems of poverty exacerbated by the Great Depression, as well as challenges of separation (father has to leave to work), illness, and brutal racism. Taylor has said that these novels record "not only the joy of growing up in a large and supportive family, but my own feelings of being faced with segregation and bigotry." As one reviewer summarized, "Nine-year-old Cassie Logan, growing up protected by her loving family, has never had reason to suspect that any white person could consider her inferior or wish her harm. But during the course of one devastating year when her community begins to be ripped apart by angry night riders threatening African Americans, she and her three brothers come to understand why the land they own means so much to their Papa. 'Look out there, Cassie girl. All that belongs to you. You ain't never had to live on nobody's place but your own and long as I live and the family survives, you'll never have to. That's important. You may not understand that now but one day you will. Then you'll see.'"

This unit focuses on Mildred Taylor's novel, *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* for several reasons. First, as this unit is written, Pittsburgh Public Schools middle-school-level curriculum uses this novel as the central reading for the eighth of the nine 7th-grade Communications units. The ninth unit is a research unit which could easily be folded into this one, continuing the exploration begun here, as presented below.

Second, this novel provides an easy entrée for middle-school-level students to explore a different time and place, as its main characters include people with whom they have much in common. Cassie and her brothers are similar in age, and some of their daily experiences could mirror those of our students today. Most of their lives, however, are sculpted by circumstances far different from those our students live with. Thus a good bridge is offered to our students, across which they can travel building empathy and understanding where it did not previously exist.

Third, this novel is based on the author's love of and learning from her own family's stories (the kind of oral tradition our students in Pittsburgh Public Schools have just explored). This offers an excellent starting point. That Taylor has also done much research to bolster her understanding and her ability to tell the stories is an excellent example for our students. Taylor's use of particular authors' crafts lends itself to connected reading/writing lessons that can empower our students as readers and writers. The novel is a natural for introducing young people to the genre of historical fiction at its best.

Finally, *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* is set in a time and place, and deals with events, which can intrigue and fill in gaps for our students. Most young people know that there was horrible slavery in the United States "back then," and that people like Harriet Tubman and Abe Lincoln had something to do with ending it. Most of our students are at least somewhat familiar with the stories of Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, Jr. They know things were bad "back then," and that leaders led, and things changed. However, most of our students (and too many adults) know very little about life between slavery and the Civil Rights movement. Many young people this age even think that Tubman and King were contemporaries. Most know next to nothing about what life was like for the majority of African Americans and poor white people in the area that gave birth to the Civil Rights movement -- the U.S. South, and, in particular, the rural South, including Mississippi, in the 1930s. A study of this novel, and its time and place, can begin to fill in some of these gaps.

What the students need to know going into the unit

This unit is designed to be taught to students who have completed at least sixth-grade Communications, as taught in Pittsburgh Public Schools, or its equivalent. Students should begin it with a familiarity with basic literary terms, including those associated with story telling in its various forms, including folk tales and legends. It will be helpful for students to have some experience with computers, including Internet searching. Students should have had exposure to finding information from various media, including online sources and film. Students should have a background in reading and writing in various genres, including responding individually, and via group investigations and discussion, to literature and to informational text.

Objectives/Learning goals

This unit is designed to deepen students' familiarity with, interest in, and ability to make use of various means of learning about and responding to both history and the fiction based on history. A primary goal is to empower students to find, interpret, and react to

information about the world in which they live, and which will soon be theirs to survive in and to change.

In particular, this unit seeks to:

1. Demonstrate and have students experiment with the ways in which historical fiction connects readers to people and events of the past. In this context, help students to analyze the use of literary elements by an author, including characterization, setting, plot, theme, point of view, tone, and style.

2. Help students develop the tools with which to explore the historical background to the fiction which they are reading, and to put the story and its characters in context of time and place. Students will select a topic relevant to the period under study and research that topic. As part of this goal, students will be given guided experience in exploring informational text, online resources, and film sources which purport to present historical fact.

3. Give students tools with which to determine the objectivity, or particular bias and purpose, of a work of fiction, as well as of informational sources. Students will evaluate sources they come across as they are doing research.

4. Develop students' abilities to present the findings of their research both orally and in writing. A goal of this unit is to hone the students' tools and develop their ability to write and speak about the results of their studies.

5. Help students interpret their readings, both of fiction and informational text, by writing and presenting a dramatic scene that did – or could have -- take(n) place in *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. A goal is to develop students' abilities to write and present a dramatic scene.

6. Provide students with examples and experiences showing how historical fiction can help us take a fresh look at our own times. Students will describe connections between the novel and the world in which students live today.

Strategies, classroom activities

While each teacher who uses this unit will bring her/his own experience and approach to it, this unit offers a general approach, and some particular applications and activities, which flow from successful experiences with three 7th-grade classes during the 2006-07 school year..

(Note: The sample lessons presented below assume a two-period Communications/ELA block, and roughly follow an America's Choice-type lesson structure [being used at this time in Pittsburgh Public Schools Accelerated Learning Academies]. However they can be adapted for use in different class settings. These sample lessons include "Guiding Questions" taken from the "Key Concepts" identified in the Kaplan Curriculum for the two units – numbers eight and nine – in which this novel and

this research are presented. The Kaplan unit titles and “key concepts” are presented in Appendix B below.)

Teacher, prepare thyself

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry is a novel that deals frankly with issues we are used to circumventing. For many of us, teaching this unit will be the first time we have confronted use of “the ‘n’ word” and the stark stories of racial brutality that fill this novel. There is no skirting the direct relationship our students, and we ourselves, will have with the dark side of our country’s racial history. The strength of this novel rests on the strong-but-human Logan family whose story it is.

Before introducing this novel to our children, each teacher must confront for her/himself the issues the Logan family confronts. I strongly recommend as a starting point reading Taylor’s *The Land*, which will help the teacher help the students understand the significance of and history of the family’s ownership of their land, as well as “Dealing with History, Political Correctness, and Other Sensitive Issues,” the seventh chapter in Chris Crowe’s *Teaching the Selected Works of Mildred D. Taylor*. I also recommend reading Margaret Walker’s *Jubilee*. This piece of historical fiction presents an easy path to getting a handle on the South’s transition from slavery through Reconstruction to the conditions the Logan family faced in *Roll of Thunder* from the perspective of a strong black woman who lived through it. In addition, the teacher should become familiar with the 1954 murder of Emmett Till, the young boy whose story brought the world’s attention to the brutality of Mississippi racism. While Till was murdered twenty years after *Roll of Thunder*’s story, times and the place had not changed much.

Finally, the teacher should read *Roll of Thunder* carefully before teaching it. This may sound like a no-brainer, but there are some works of fiction that teachers (without telling anyone) enjoy reading just ahead of their students. This one won’t work that way. Each of us needs to be fully aware of and to think through the things our students will confront, and our own reactions, as we read this novel.

Teacher, prepare thy students

Since few of our students will have confronted these issues so boldly and frankly before *in school* and *in the groupings in which they will be working*, it is important to lay a strong foundation for this adventure in each classroom. Hopefully by this time in the school year each classroom will be a trusting, mutually-respecting learning community. Hopefully students have been made to feel that they are in a classroom which respects and celebrates diversity, and acknowledges and discusses intolerance and those who have struggled to end it. Even the strongest such community, however, could be ruptured as students deal with their own feelings about their own and other races in more public situations than before. It is critical that the teacher directly, openly, specifically think through and present ways to make this work for each particular group of students.

I highly recommend preceding or beginning this unit with a class viewing and discussion of Teaching Tolerance's film *A Place at the Table* (free to teachers; see "Sources" below). In this film students from diverse backgrounds sit around a campfire discussing (with appropriate and well-placed video clips as backdrops) the issues of intolerance their families and they, themselves, have faced. Each presents pride in her/his own background, and respect for the peers that are doing the same. It's a well-done modeling of the kind of atmosphere that will make this unit work well in our classrooms.

Materials/resources

Each student needs his/her own copy of *Roll of Thunder*, which should be with each student each day at school, and available at home. Those classrooms guided by the Pittsburgh Public Schools Kaplan curriculum should have the "Grade Seven Communications Core Curriculum" for units 8 and 9.

The classroom library should include a rich array of nonfiction and other appropriate fiction relevant to the Great Depression; African-American history with particular emphasis on Reconstruction and the Harlem Renaissance, the period leading up to and including the Civil Rights Movement; Mississippi and the U.S. South. (See the attached "Resources/Bibliography" for some suggestions.)

All other materials are teacher-discretionary and will probably work best as each teacher develops her/his own. (I found store-bought teaching guides for this unit sorely lacking.) Among the materials for the students should be a set of questions for students to use to guide their reading and to check for understanding. For each chapter, these questions should include one which asks the student to respond to a prompt *in the voice of and from the perspective of* one of the major characters in the novel. Taken as a whole, these sets of questions should be sure to give each student a chance to respond at least once in the voice of at least: Stacey, Jeremy, Uncle Hammer, Papa, and Mama.

The "Appendix" to this unit contains a complete set of chapter questions that meet this requirement along with other materials I developed and successfully used with my students when I taught this unit in the 2006-07 school year. I include them here only as guides, with the hope that they may prove useful, or prove good starting points for thinking about what to use with other classes.

Library/Media resources

This unit becomes more powerful the more the teacher can team with a Library/Media Specialist, preferably in the building, and/or in a nearby public library. The research aspects of this unit depend on access to print and online resources, and on frequent reflection and discussion on the comparative and blended value of various resources. If there is a Library/Media Specialist in the building, I suggest giving her/him a copy of this unit as quickly as possible so that she/he can share ideas and help plan for student success.

Lesson One. Setting a purpose for reading, introducing the story

Guiding Question: How does historical fiction connect readers to the people and events of the past?

Opening (whole class)

In her 1976 “Author’s Note,” Mildred D. Taylor has given us a wonderful tool for beginning our journey. Ask the students to imagine themselves sitting in the shelter of a large, old tree, listening to an older relative who loves to tell stories, and read the “Author’s Note” to them out loud. Drama is important here. Let the students get a feeling for the passion and joy that Taylor feels for her father’s stories.

Activity One (whole class)

After reading the whole “Note,” take the students back through it to savor and discuss particularly image-full or provocative sentences. For example, the second sentence foreshadows so well what we are about to read:

He could tell a fine old story that made me hold my sides with rolling laughter and sent happy tears down my cheeks, or a story of stark reality that made me shiver and be grateful for my own warm, secure surroundings.

Ask for discussion: what can we anticipate from this book? Sadness, joy . . . what?

And enjoy together the next sentence:

He could tell stories of beauty and grace, stories of gentle dreams, and paint them as vividly as any picture with splashes of character and dialogue.

What a wonderful sentence to start a discussion of author’s craft!

The next sentence should begin a discussion of setting – both time and place – and can be used to introduce the research aspect of this unit:

His memory detailed every event of ten or forty years or more before, just as if it had happened yesterday.

Here begin a time line on the board, with room on both ends for expansion. Write 1976 on the line, go back ten, then forty years, and write those dates on the time line as well. As 1936 is written, move back a couple of notches, write 1933 in large characters, and let the students know that our novel takes place during that year, during the Great Depression. Move up and down the timeline with the rest of the “Author’s Note” and with students’ comments and questions. Use as a starting point Taylor’s sentence:

From the fireside in our northern home or in the South where I was born, [from my father’s stories] I learned a history not then written in books but one passed from generation to generation on the steps of moonlit porches and beside dying fires in

one-room houses, a history of great-grandparents and of slavery and of the days following slavery; of those who lived still not free, yet who would not let their spirits be enslaved.

Add/discuss appropriate dates to the timeline (for example, 1600s for start of slavery; 1840s-1860s for Harriet Tubman, 1863 for Emancipation Proclamation, 1865 for Juneteenth [June 19, 1865 when the last slaves – in Texas -- learned that they had been Emancipated], 1870s for Reconstruction, 1954 for *Brown v. Board of Education* [banning school segregation]). Add the years the students were born in, the current year, and 1955 for Rosa Parks and Montgomery Bus Boycott, and other dates the students may propose that are relevant. Students may well be shocked at the spans of time between people and events they have considered contemporary (Harriet Tubman and Rosa Parks, for example), and hopefully they'll be intrigued by the prospect of perspective.

Then return to 1933 and the Great Depression. Ask them what they know about it, writing comments on the board. Ask them what they know about Mississippi. Write comments on the board. As students share what they know (or think they know), encourage questions as well, writing them as part of a web around each of the central words. Tell students they will be researching these things and places as part of experiencing this novel.

Interweave into this discussion some basic points about historical fiction as a means of getting to know what life was like in real historical times and places. Use Taylor's line:

From my father the story teller I learned to respect the past, to respect my own heritage and myself.

Let the students know that Taylor is offering us the opportunity to learn along with her, and to enjoy the experience. We will simultaneously explore the stories and the real events behind them.

Activity two (introduce whole class; work in small groups)

Have the students make K/W charts or lists of things they know and things they don't know about the time and place of this novel. Give them some hints of things to think about, including dates, who was affected, how the Depression ended, etc., to get them going.

Closing

Have students share, record for class in keep-able format, questions to explore.

Homework

"Mildred D. Taylor Quiz" (Appendix C) or teacher-prepared similar piece.

Lesson Two, Part 1. Setting the scene for research

Guiding Question: What kinds of questions can we pose to begin productive research?

Opening (whole class)

Have a timeline on the board with decade markers from 1840 through the present year. Ask students to volunteer to call out an event that we discussed during the previous lesson, and to find the time of that event on the timeline. (Make sure that key events make it onto the timeline, including Great Depression, time of *Roll of Thunder*, Harriet Tubman's work, end of slavery—both Emancipation Proclamation and end of Civil War as well as Juneteenth, Brown v. Board.)

Discuss with students the end-of-the-unit research paper and presentation students will be delivering. Tell students how research begins with good questions. Our first goal today is to begin to pose some questions that can lead us to form teams and that can guide productive research.

. With students, list four or five key topics for research that emerge from the timeline. Be sure to include Jim Crow, sharecropping, Ku Klux Klan. Have students contribute the questions that they developed about the Great Depression in their groups during the previous lesson. Teacher will have to lead to combine, narrow, expand and combine topics to make them manageable and profitable.

Activity (limit time)

Guide students to form groups to research a topic from the list. Groups meet to brainstorm and record initial questions to explore.

Closing

Students share initial questions; add to class chart.

Lesson Two, Part 2: Beginning to read the novel

Guiding Question: How does historical fiction connect readers to the people and events of the past?

Opening (whole class)

Review previous night's homework ("Mildred D. Taylor quiz" or equivalent) giving students a chance to refer back to the text to explain where they found their answers.

Activity (whole class, then group/individual)

Tell students that at the end of this unit they will be writing and performing in skits based on something that happens in this novel, or that could have happened to the characters in this time and place. Lead a discussion with the goal of having students understand that as we read we will be looking for information about the novel's setting and characters to help prepare us.

Provide students with questions to help guide their reading. Model for students reading text, finding and writing answers. It is important that these questions provide an opportunity both for students to check for understanding of the text, and to develop their appreciation of the way Taylor's characters unfold and change in the novel. It is especially important for students to take advantage of the opportunities Taylor presents to see this world from various vantage points. (See the example in Appendix D for some suggested questions to use with Author's Note and Chapter One. Appendix E offers questions for chapters two through eleven.)

Continue reading, discussing (if in groups) and writing answers to questions.

Closing (whole class)

Discuss, share answers to a question or two. Preview additional questions.

Homework

Continue, complete answering questions for Chapter One.

Lesson Three, Part 1: Organizing to do the research

Guiding Question: What kinds of questions can we pose to begin to do productive research?

Opening

Ask a student to volunteer the topic (s)he is planning to research (from the previous day's discussion). Write the topic on the board, ask students for ideas on what to do next. Guide discussion so students understand that good research begins with good questions. Lead class in coming up with some questions that could be explored for the topic on the board.

Activity

In groups, students list questions to explore as they begin their research.

Closing

Students share questions, suggest possible places to get information.

Lesson Three, Part 2: Continuing reading the novel

Guiding Question: How does historical fiction connect readers to the people and events of the past?

Opening (whole class)

Review some of the answers students wrote on their homework papers (questions about Chapter 1). ***Here it will begin to be apparent which students were able to finish the first chapter and answer questions independently, and for which students the assignment was more difficult to complete. This can be the basis for developing flexible groups for the next few lessons.***

Activity (flexible groups)

In groups, ***either*** have the students read the chapter together beginning where the class left off the previous day, and help one another answer the questions, ***or***, for those students who successfully completed the homework, have them work on an alternative assignment which could be:

- a. Picking a scene from Chapter One to act out for the class, rewriting it in script form; or
- b. Rewriting a scene from Chapter One in the voice of Jeremy or T.J. or Miss Crocker.
- c. Exploring resources in the classroom to use for research.
- d. Selecting vocabulary words from the chapter, or using a teacher-supplied list, to explore, define, use in sentences, make into sentence strips, prepare to present to class.
- e. Write questions about the historical context of the chapter that occurred to them while reading, or that come up with another perusal of the chapter.
- f. Other teacher-defined activities that present themselves as students discuss their reading.

Closing

Introduce homework.

Exit slip: Write down one aspect of the Logan family's environment (the setting of this novel) that is different from the way we live.

Homework

Using the book, write predictions of the kinds of conflicts that will happen in this book.

Lesson Four, Part 1
A trip to the Library/Computer Lab
and collaboration with Library/Media teacher
(hopefully in Computer Lab)

Guiding Questions: What kinds of questions can we pose to begin to do productive research? What kinds of evidence can we find to support our findings?

Opening

Provide the students with a copy of “information” from a web site that obviously distorts reality to suit a propaganda purpose. (I took excerpts from a website I found doing a Google search combining Rosa Parks’ name with loaded words like “Communist” and “conspiracy” and “Jews,” made them into a flyer for my students, and sparked a very productive discussion.)

Activity

Invite your Library/Media specialist, another librarian, or prepare a demonstration of how to evaluate a web site, and/or where to begin doing research using resources available through the school library and computer center. I suggest asking students to begin their research using the on-line encyclopedia or URLs the teacher has explored for each topic students will be researching, and following the links those sources offer.

Remind students they will be looking for answers to particular questions. Have them underline key words in their questions.

If this lesson takes place in the Computer Lab, help students begin searching using their key terms. Otherwise, have students list terms they can use while researching. Help students identify other good sources (print) they can use as part of their research.

Closing

Exit slips with one thing learned so far from research *or* one new question that came up in the course of today’s research.

Lesson Four, Part 2
Continuing to read the novel

(Guiding Question: How does historical fiction connect readers to the people and events of the past?

Opening

Have students share their predictions about conflict in the novel.

Activity

Using information teacher has gathered from previous lessons as to which students need more support in reading the novel, divide students into groups to jigsaw Chapter Two. Assign the first two pages to the more struggling readers, with larger chunks to other groups. Provide questions for each group (some are suggested in Appendix E). Have groups read assigned pages, answer questions.

Have class reconvene, groups share their pieces, students complete answers to questions (*excluding* the last question if this is one asking for students to write in the voice of one of the characters, as in Appendix E).

Closing

Preview homework.

Exit slip: a new prediction about major conflict in the novel.

Homework

Write a defined piece in the voice of an assigned character from the novel (example, as in question 6 from the Chapter Two questions in Appendix E: Imagine you are Mr. Morrison, and that Papa has just brought you to his home. Describe what you notice about the Logan family and their home, and what you hear from their friends and neighbors after church. What do you think about your new home? Write *at least seven sentences* to describe what you see, think, and feel.)

And so on

If this unit description has been successful, the teacher/reader will now have a sense of how she/he can proceed through the rest of the novel and the research and report to meet the learning objectives described above. Additional lessons should, of course, reflect students' responses to the initial lessons, and continue to provide differentiated experiences based on student needs.

The teacher may use a variety of means of assessment, based on particular class structures and needs. Among these, the following should be considered:

- Responses to questions on each chapter (samples for each chapter are presented in Appendix E).
- Periodic teacher-designed quizzes based on actual class experiences.
- Student skits or other oral presentations of scenes from the novel; the writing and production of a play scene can be evaluated based on teacher-developed rubrics both for writing and for performance.
- Performance on an end-of-the-novel exam (an example is presented here in Appendix F).
- Constructed-response answers to teacher-designed questions calling on students to evaluate their reading. This could include questions asking the

students to compare/contrast responses of different characters to the same event, or the same character's changing attitudes.

- The teacher will develop rubrics for assessing the students' plans for research, their research work, and the written and oral products of their research.

This unit provides opportunities for teacher-created writing experiences which could meet portfolio requirements for responses to literature, persuasive writing, informative writing, and narrative writing.

Evaluations of the effectiveness of this unit should be constant, and the teacher should adjust lessons based upon them. It should also be noted that the impact of this unit, if it is successful, will continue to unfold for the students over subsequent years. Those who have been encouraged to read things they otherwise would not have read may build on the impact of this unit for a lifetime. Students who have been intrigued to expand their approach to their own writing may find themselves just beginning a long-term quest. Finally, it is hoped that students will develop an interest in, and even a love for, historical fiction as a means of discovery, and historical research as a means of gathering information for its own sake, and to use as a basis of creating their own historical fiction.

Appendix A
Learning Objectives: Standards/Assessment Anchors
Grades 7-8

This unit addresses the following PSSA-based Assessment Anchors:

R7.A.1.1 (and R7.A.2.1): Identify and use context clues that help define unfamiliar words.

R7.A.1.3: Make and support generalizations and inferences based on literature.

R7.A.1.4 and R7.A.1.5: Explain/summarize main ideas and relevant details from literature.

R7.A.2.3, R7.A.2.4, R7.A.2.5: Explain, interpret, and analyze nonfiction.

R7.B.1.1, R7.B.2.1: Interpret, analyze, and evaluate literary elements including setting, characters, and theme.

R7.B.2.2: Identify, interpret, and describe point of view of the narrator in nonfiction text.

R7.B.3.1, R7.B.3.2: Distinguish between facts and opinions and essential and nonessential information within or between texts..

R7.B.3.3: Interpret and analyze organizational features of nonfiction text, such as graphics and charts.

This unit addresses the following Pennsylvania Standards:

1.1.8.C: Use knowledge of root words as well as context clues and glossaries to understand specialized vocabulary in the content areas during reading.

1.1.8.F: Understand the meaning of and apply key vocabulary across the various subject areas.

1.2.8.C: Produce work in at least one literary genre that follows the conventions of the genre.

1.3.8.A: Read and understand works of literature.

1.3.8.B: Analyze the use of literary elements by an author, including characterization, setting, plot, theme, point of view, tone, and style.

1.4.8.A: Write short stories, poems and plays.

1.4.8.B: Write multi-paragraph informational pieces.

1.5.8.F: Edit writing using the conventions of language.

1.6.8.C: Speak using skills appropriate to formal speech situations.

1.6.8.F: Use media for learning purposes.

1.8.8.A: Select and refine a topic for research.

1.8.8.B: Locate information using appropriate sources and strategies.

1.8.8.C: Organize, summarize and present the main ideas from research.

Appendix B
Kaplan Unit Questions, Key Concepts

Unit 8: Why do people react differently to adversity?

Key Concepts:

1. Historical fiction connects readers to the people and events of the past.
2. Injustice in literature can help us reflect on injustice in our society.
3. Characters' personality traits and backgrounds affect their reaction to adversity.
4. To express themes about justice, hope, and courage, authors may present characters who rise above adversity.

Unit 9: What can we learn from people who have overcome challenges?
(Modified in this unit to include additional related research topics)

Key Concepts:

1. Posing thoughtful, focused questions and using reliable sources will make research productive.
2. The ideas we present in a research report should be supported by evidence.
3. Research presentations allow us to formally explain and defend our conclusions.

Appendix C: Mildred D. Taylor quiz



Mildred D. Taylor

In 1997, Mildred D. Taylor received the prestigious ALAN Award from the Assembly on Literature for Adolescents for her contribution to the field of young adult literature. Her "Acceptance Speech" was printed in the Alan Review 25 (Spring 1998). Here is some of what she said there. Read her remarks, and answer the questions that follow.

Front *Song of the Trees* to *The Well* I have attempted to present a true picture of life in America as older members of my family remember it, and as I remember it in the days before the civil rights movement. In all of the books I have recounted not only the joy of growing up in a large and supportive family, but my own feelings of being faced with segregation and bigotry.

I have recounted events that were painful to write and painful to be read, but I had hoped they brought more understanding. Now, however, there are those who think that perhaps my recountings are too painful and there are those who seek to remove books such as mine from school reading lists. There are some who say the books should be removed because the "N" word is used. There are some who say such events as described in my books and books by others did not happen. There are those who do not want to remember the past or who do not want their children to know the past and who would whitewash history, and these sentiments are not only from whites.

Name _____ Date _____

Directions: Circle the letter of the answer you think *best* answers the question.

1. This passage is from

- A. a letter written by Mildred D. Taylor
- B. the introduction to a book by Mildred D. Taylor
- C. Mildred D. Taylor's autobiography
- D. A speech by Mildred D. Taylor

2. Read the following sentence from this passage:

"I have recounted events that were painful to write and painful to be read, but I had hoped they brought more understanding. Now, however, there are those who think that perhaps my recountings are too painful and there are those who seek to remove books such as mine from school reading lists."

What does the word "recountings" mean as used here?

- A. adding and subtracting numbers again
- B. telling stories again
- C. making someone hurt
- D. using offensive language again

3. Which sentence from the passage best describes why Mildred D. Taylor has written her books?

- A. "I have recounted events that were painful to write and painful to be read."
- B. "There are some who say such events as described in my books and books by others did not happen."
- C. "I have recounted events that were painful to write and painful to be read, but I had hoped they brought more understanding."
- D. "In all of the books I have recounted not only the joy of growing up in a large and supportive family, but my own feelings of being faced with segregation and bigotry."

4. Why was *this passage* probably written?

- A. to explain her work
- B. to explain her life
- C. to entertain
- D. to tell a story

Appendix D: Questions for Chapter One

Name _____ Date _____



Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, Chapter 1



1. From what she writes in her "Author's Note" at the beginning of the book, why do you think Mildred Taylor wrote *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*?

2. Describe the setting (time, place) of this story. _____

3. Who is telling this story? What do we know about her and her family? _____

4. Why does Papa care so much about owning the land the Logans live on? _____

5. What are the main differences between the schools for black and white children?

Appendix E: Questions for Chapters 2 through 11

Name _____ Date _____



Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, Chapter 2



1. What are Mama and Big Ma doing at the beginning of this chapter? Why?

2. What does Mr. Morrison’s story imply about how black and white workers are treated on the railroad? _____

3. Why do you think Papa brought Mr. Morrison home? (There may be more than one reason) _____

4. The author says that when people gathered at the Logan home after church on Sunday, “angry, hopeless words” were said (page 39). What were people upset about?

Name _____ Date _____



Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, Chapter 3

1. What problems do the Logan children face getting to school when it rains? How do they deal with them?

2. Stacey promises Little Man that he won't get splattered by mud by the white kids' school bus "no more, least not for a long while" (pages 48-49). What does he do to keep this promise? Does it work?

3. Who is Jeremy Simms? What is unusual about him? (see page 49)

4. What does Mr. Avery mean when he tells Mama, "It's . . . it's them again. They's riding t'night"? What does Mama do when she hears this? (pages 60-61)



Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, Chapter 4



1. Mama asks Cassie if there is anything Cassie wants to tell her, and Cassie responds: "I was on the verge of blurting out the awful truth about the bus and the men in the night" but she decides not to. What is she talking about here? What "truth" is so "awful?" Why doesn't she tell her mother?

2. TJ tries to get Stacey and the other Logan children to do **two** things that they refuse to do. What are these two things? Why do they refuse?

3. Why do Cassie and her brothers think, at first, that the night men were out the previous night? What do they learn was the real reason the night men were out?

4. Why is Stacey angry with TJ? What does he do to get back at TJ?



Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, Chapter 5



1. Who goes to Strawberry with Big Ma? Why does each of them go?

2. What is “market day?” _____

3. What is “the mercantile?” _____

4. In what ways is Mr. Jamison different from most of the white adults in this area at this time? Is there any other white person we’ve met so far in this book who is respectful to any of the Logans? If so, who?

5. How does Cassie get in trouble? What does Stacey do about it? What would you have done?

6. What does Big Ma make Cassie do? Why does Big Ma do this?

Name _____ Date _____



Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, Chapter 6



1. On page 118, Stacey tries to get Cassie to lose her anger that she's feeling toward Big Ma. Stacey says, "There's things you don't understand, Cassie -- ." Why is Cassie angry? What do you think Stacy means by what he says?

2. Who is Uncle Hammer? Why is he at the Logan home? _____

3. Why does Big Ma not want Cassie to tell Uncle Hammer about their visit to Strawberry?

4. How does Mama react to Cassie's news from Strawberry? How is her reaction different from Uncle Hammer's?

5 On page 133, Stacey says, "I heard Big Ma tell Mama last night that if Mr. Morrison didn't stop Uncle Hammer, Uncle Hammer might get killed" What do you think Stacy is talking about?

Name _____ Date _____



Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, Chapter 7



1. What happened to the coat Uncle Hammer gave to Stacey? How does Uncle Hammer react when he finds out? How is his reaction different from Mama's and Big Ma's?

2. What kind of person does the coat incident show TJ to be? Would you want him as a friend? Why or why not?

3. What is Little Man so surprised at as his father and uncle tell childhood stories?

4. What is Mr. Morrison's story about as the family sits together on Christmas Eve? Why do you think Papa and Mama have different reactions to their children hearing this story?

5. All of the adults in the Logan family are upset about the Wallaces and their store. What does Mama want to do about the Wallace store?



Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, Chapter 8



Directions: *Read* and *respond to* the **whole** question for each of the questions below.

1. In the beginning of the chapter, Cassie offers to carry Lillian Jean's books. Christopher John, and Jeremy are shocked, and Little Man threatens to tell Mama who, he tells Cassie, is "gonna whip you good." But Stacey says, "This here thing's between Cassie and Lillian Jean and ain't nobody telling nobody nothin' 'bout this." Why do you think Stacey reacted this way. What does this tell us about the way Stacey reacts to adversity?

2. When Cassie describes her walk to the forest with Papa, to "where the trees lay fallen," she says, "For a while we stood looking again at the destruction, then, sitting on one of our fallen friends, we talked in quiet, respectful tones, observing the soft mourning of the forest." What **literary device** does the author use when she describes the trees? What does this tell us about the relationship between the Logan family and the trees?

3. What is the **main message** Papa gives Cassie about the kind of adversity she is going to face in her life, and how to respond to it?



Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, Chapter 9

Directions: *Read* and *respond to* the *whole* question for each of the questions below.

1. What does the coming of spring mean to Cassie? What will happen soon in her life, and what is she looking forward to? In your own words, describe Cassie's feelings about the things that spring brings to her life.

2. How does Jeremy feel about spring coming? Why? **Be specific.**

3. In the first six pages of this chapter Cassie reports several things that are signs of trouble for the Logan family and their friends. Describe **three** of these things and tell why they are causes for concern.

4. Why does Mr. Avery tell Papa, "I--I feel real bad 'bout what T.J. done—"? Who is Mr. Avery, and what is he talking about?



Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, Chapter 10



Directions: *Read* and *respond to* the *whole* question for each of the questions below.

1. Why does Papa say he does not want Uncle Hammer to know about his broken leg? What does Papa think Uncle Hammer would do if he knew about how Papa's leg got hurt?

2. Isn't Papa angry, too, about what happened to him? Why doesn't he want to get revenge?

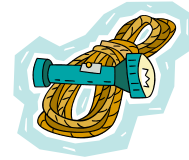
3. After his incident with Kaleb Wallace and the truck, Mama warns Mr. Morrison that he might be in danger if he stays with them. Do you think Mr. Morrison agrees or disagrees that he might be in danger? How does he react to this adversity; why does he decide to stay?

4. Why do you think Mildred D. Taylor wrote the conversation among the Logan children and Jeremy about the trees, and about how Jeremy feels about the trees?

Name _____ Date _____



Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, Chapter 11



Directions: *Read* and *respond to* the **whole** question for each of the questions below.

1. Why does T.J. come to the Logan home in the middle of the night? Why doesn't he go to the front door?

2. Who hurt T.J.? Why did they hurt him?

3. Why do you think Stacey would help T.J. after all of the problems T.J. caused for him?

4. Compared to Stacey, what kind of friends were R.W. and Melvin to T.J.? **Be specific.**

5. T.J. did not hurt Mr. or Mrs. Barnett. Why is he worried about being blamed for that?

Appendix F: *Roll of Thunder* Final Test

Name _____ Date _____



Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry Test



- Directions:**
1. Circle letter of the **best** answer for each multiple-choice question.
 2. Select **two** of the four essay answers and respond to each.
 3. For **each** of the essay answers, be sure to:
 - a. Begin your answer by restating the question.
 - b. Use **the number of** examples from the book the question asks for.
 - c. Make sure you answer **all parts** of each question.
 - d. End your answer with a concluding paragraph.

1. What is T.J. being accused of at the end of the story?
 - a. betraying his friends.
 - b. helping R.W. and Melvin rob the Wallace store.
 - c. killing Mr. Barnett.
 - d. running away from home.
2. What are the night men doing at the Avery home that night?
 - a. coming to arrest T.J. and take him to jail.
 - b. coming to question T.J. and his family.
 - c. coming to seize T.J. to beat him or kill him.
 - d. coming to protect T.J. from lynchers.
3. Who goes to the Avery house to protect T.J. from the night men?
 - a. only Stacey.
 - b. only Stacey, Papa, and T.J.'s parents..
 - c. only Stacey, Papa, T.J.'s parents, and Mr. Morrison.
 - d. only Stacey, Papa, T.J.'s parents, Mr. Morrison, and Mr. Jamison.
 - e. Stacey, Papa, T.J.'s parents, Mr. Morrison, Mr. Jamison, and Mr. Granger.
4. Why do the night men give up and let the sheriff take T.J. to jail?
 - a. Mr. Jamison convinces them they should follow the law.
 - b. Mr. Jamison successfully blocks the road.
 - c. Mr. Granger tells them to go fight the fire.
 - d. Mr. Morrison frightens them with a gun.
5. How does the fire start?

Resources/Bibliography

Note: There is an abundance of resources in a variety of formats for teachers and students of African-American social and cultural history and its impact on and relationship to the history and culture of the United States and the world. There is a dramatically growing body of literature about the period of time between Reconstruction and the Depression, including the Harlem Renaissance – the time and events which are at the center of this unit. Included here are only those which this writer found particularly useful and accessible. All of the books and videos/DVDs are available through the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, either directly or through its Inter-library Loan service. The electronic resources listed here are available directly through the Worldwide Web, or via the Carnegie Library's resources available to all library-card holders.

The Logan Family Series – Mildred Taylor's Novels/Novellas

(note: all of the starred novels have won awards from the American Library Association; each has won at least two other national awards including Coretta Scott King and National Book awards; Roll of Thunder is a Newbery Medal book)

The Land*. New York: Puffin, 2003 (a reissue; first published 2001). Paul-Edward Logan tells the story of his travels from being the biracial son of a former slave and the master who loved her, through his Georgia youth during and after the Civil War, through the travels and adventures that led to him buying the land that is at the heart of the Logan family's lives thereafter. Set in the 1870s-1880s. **A must read for the teacher of this unit.

The Well. New York: Scholastic, 1995. Narrated by 10-year-old David Logan; set in 1910.

Mississippi Bridge. New York: Dial, 1990. Cassie is 7, but this is narrated by Jeremy Simms; it's 1931.

Song of the Trees. (first published 1975) This novella is Cassie's first narration, set in 1932 when she is eight. This story is included in the *Elements of Literature* anthology currently used in Pittsburgh Public Schools 7th-grade Communications classes. **A must-read for the teacher of *Roll of Thunder*** as it gives a good sense of the Logan family's connection with their land, and the forces that threaten it.

The Friendship. New York: Scholastic, 1987. A novella which immediately precedes *Roll of Thunder*, narrated by Cassie who is nine (set in 1933).

**Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*

**Let the Circle Be Unbroken*. New York: Puffin, 1995 (a reissue; first published 1981). A immediate sequel to *Roll of Thunder* in which the Logan family and their neighbors continue the struggles against racism and for their land and dignity in 1934 Mississippi. Cassie, now 10, continues to narrate. Includes references to the African American struggle for the right to vote.

**Road to Memphis*. New York: Puffin, 1992 (a reissue; first published 1990). Follows *Let the Circle Be Unbroken*; catches up with the Logan family in 1941. Cassie is entering her

last year of high school in Jackson, Mississippi and her older brother Stacey is driving his first car. After a family trip to Memphis, a sequence of events, including pregnancy, death and the intrusions of Pearl Harbor and World War II wreaks havoc on the family, threatening to separate them from each other, perhaps forever. Drawing upon their strength as a family and the support of their community, the Logans' fight for survival, particularly Cassie, who dreams of becoming a lawyer.

Print Resources for Teachers

On *Roll of Thunder* in the classroom; on Mildred Taylor

Bader, Barbara. "How the Little House Gave Ground: The Beginnings of Multiculturalism in a New, Black Children's Literature." *Horn Book Magazine*, Nov/Dec 2002, Vol. 78, Issue 6, p. 657, 17p. Accessed via EBSCOhost March 16, 2007.

Brooks, Wanda and Hampton, Gregory. "Safe Discussions Rather than First Hand Encounters: Adolescents Examine Racism through One Historical Fiction Text," *Children's Literature in Education*, Vol. 36, Number 1, March 2005, pages 83-98. Accessed via EBSCOhost March 2007. A discussion of experiences teaching *Roll of Thunder* in an urban setting, including using the book "to explore the nature of racism while creating a safe space to confront and more deeply understand racism's impact on the past as well as the students' current reality."

Crowe, Chris. *Presenting Mildred D. Taylor*. New York: Twayne Publishers; 1999. A book in Twayne's United States Author Series: Young Adult Authors. Accessible to our students as well, this is the most comprehensive treatment I've come across of Taylor's life and work. Useful bibliography, good index. Would be good to have available in the classroom during this unit.

*Crow, Chris. *Teaching the Selected Works of Mildred D. Taylor*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann; 2007. An invaluable, complete resource. Especially useful: Chapter 7, "Dealing with History, Political Correctness, and Other Sensitive Issues." Insightful, provocative, useful ideas for teaching, many good resources listed (print and electronic). Would make an excellent book for teachers to read and discuss together.

Davis-Undiano, Robert Con. "Mildred D. Taylor and the Art of Making a Difference." *World Literature Today*, May-August 2004, Vol. 78, Issue 2, p. 11-13. Accessed via EBSCOhost March 16, 2007.

Hinton, KaaVonia and Berry, Theodora, "Literacy, Literature, and Diversity," *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, Vol. 48, No. 4, December 2004/January 2005, pages 284-288. Accessed via EBSCOhost, March 16, 2007.

Johnson, Nancy J. and Giorgis, Cyndi, "Talking with Mildred D. Taylor," *Book Links*, July 2006, pages 44-45. A brief question and answer exchange which can be a good introduction for students to Taylor and this book.

Mangal, Melina. *Classic Story Tellers: Mildred Taylor*. Hockessin, DE: Mitchell Lane Publishers; 2005. An adequate, accessible biography with good list of resources, timeline; not as rich or nearly as well illustrated as Crowe's *Presenting Mildred D. Taylor*, but some more recent resources are cited.

On-line teaching plans for/using *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*

(note: there are others of these findable via a Google search; these are some that I found useful and not ads for thing to buy)

Bontempo, Barbara T. "Exploring Prejudice in Young Adult Literature through Drama and Role Play." *The Alan Review*, Volume 22, Number 3, Spring 1995. Discusses several drama activities to use with *Roll of Thunder*. Available at <http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/ALAN/spring95/Bontempo.html>. (accessed April 15, 2007)

eMints, *Roll of Thunder* teaching guides. Links to teaching plans and other resources, including web sites good for students on the Depression and racism. <http://www.emints.org/ethemes/resources/S00001567.shtml> (accessed April 15, 2007)

McGovern, Molly and Vanderwall, Rick, "Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry: A Unit Plan." Self-described, "This language arts/social studies unit is for middle school students, grades six through nine. The lessons blend a study of the basic structure, laws, and etiquette of the Jim Crow System with a reading of Mildred D. Taylor's *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. Students then apply what they have learned to a web quest to create a TV news investigative report documenting the downfalls of sharecropping during the Jim Crow era." Price Laboratory School, University of Northern Iowa. Useful. (http://www.jimcrowhistory.org/resources/lessonplans/amlit_lp_roll_of_thunder.htm) (Accessed April 14, 2007)

Web English Teacher: "*Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry.*" Links to lesson plans, ideas, projects other teachers have developed. <http://www.webenglishteacher.com/mtaylor.html>

VHS/DVD Resource for Teacher/Adults Only

Mississippi Burning. Frederick Zollo production, 1988 (2001 DVD available). R-rated, probably for violence and language, a powerful film about racism and the KKK in a small Mississippi community. I recommend watching this film before teaching this unit. Despite its imperfections (good white people saving poor Black people) it helps set a framework.

Anthology: Black Southern Writing

Killens, John Oliver, and Ward, Jerry W., Jr., editors and commentators. *Black Southern Voices: an Anthology of Fiction, Poetry, Drama, Nonfiction, and Critical Essays*. New York: Meridian, 1992. If I were to list just one resource for teachers, this would be it. Divided into sections including Fiction, Poetry, Drama, Nonfiction, Critical Essays, one of the most stirring, thought-provoking, and perspective-giving contributions is Killens' short introduction. For example:

Ironically, those writers of the sixties, who claimed universally that it was “Nation Time!” (and it was indeed “Nation Time”) seemed not to understand that with any people the bottom line for “Nationhood” and “Liberation” is land, earth, soil, dirt. Black dirt; our own black dirt to dig black hands into, black Southern dirt to create upon, the good clean sweet black loamy earth to hold, to smell to touch, to taste, to cultivate, to watch the good earth grow, harvest and prosper, to forge black and positive images.

and

There is a black Southern psyche, a point of view that is both unique and distinct. Our outlook is different. We look at life out of dark eyes from the vantage point of the bottom rung of the ladder. Consequently our outlook is from far greater depths. More breadth. More elevating. Our viewpoint is more profound.

This rich and broad collection of writing reflects and substantiates this vision, this perspective, and should be required reading for all to desire to teach our literary and/or historical heritage.

Mississippi Auto-Biography

Holland, Endesha Ida Mae. *From the Mississippi Delta*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997. Autobiography of an African American woman born into poverty in Greenwood, Mississippi in 1944, raped by a white employer on her eleventh birthday, rebel, prostitute, given a new lease on life through her involvement with SNCC and the civil rights movement, currently a California professor and author of several plays including one with the same title as this book which was nominated in 1988 for a Pulitzer Prize. Eminently readable.

Relevant fiction

Fast, Howard. *Freedom Road*. New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1944. An electrifying novel of Reconstruction and its aftermath, Fast’s tribute “to the men and women, black and white, yellow and brown, who have laid down their lives in the struggle against fascism.” I read this novel with my mother when I was about 12 or 13, and was immensely moved by the bravery of the African American characters, and the horror of the racism they encountered.

Killens, John Oliver. *Youngblood*. Atlanta: University of Georgia Press, 2000 (reissue edition); first published 1954. Killens’ first published novel is based on his family’s life in the Jim Crow U.S. South (Crossroads, Georgia in the novel) from the turn of the century to the Great Depression. This novel profoundly affected my life when I read it at about the age our 7th graders are now (it was a new book then).

Walker, Margaret. *Jubilee*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966. Historical fiction, based on family history orally passed to Walker, focused on a woman’s life and evolution from slavery through the Civil War through Reconstruction through the racist backlash against it, all in the U.S. South. An inspiring and highly informative work.

African-American history

African Americans and Land: Historical Perspectives

Glave, Dianne D. and Stoll, Mark, editors. *“To Love the Wind and the Rain”*: African Americans and Environmental History. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006.

Harris, Rosalind and Worthen, Dreamal, “African Americans in Rural America,” from Brown, David L., editor, *Challenges for Rural America in the Twenty-First Century*. (need rest of citation)

The U.S. South/African Americans during the pre-Civil Rights Movement period

Blee, Kathleen M. *Women of the Klan: Racism and Gender in the 1920s*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991. Particularly read along with Brown (2000), Gutman (1977) and Jones (1985), provides strong evidence and insight into lives of Southern women in the period in which *Roll of Thunder* takes place. Also sheds new light on the extent and depth of KKK impact at this time. A “Postscript on Sources” provides insight into how difficult it is to find good information on the secret societies. Much of what is in this book comes from the author’s interviews and use of widely spread primary sources. (*Publishers Weekly* says of this book, “Probably no future history of the Ku Klux Klan will be written without reference to this ground-breaking work.”) Note, too, that this author is local and available to speak.

Brown, Mary Jane. *Eradicating this evil: women in the American anti-lynching movement, 1892-1940*. New York: Garland Publishers, 2000. A fascinating, detailed account of the work of Southern women – African American and white -- in various forms and through various organizations, to expose, protest, and outlaw lynching. Provides insight into some of the social backdrop to *Roll of Thunder*. Well indexed; extensive bibliography.

Dittmer, John. *Local People: the Struggle for Civil rights in Mississippi*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994. The first four chapters, which set the scene, are particularly useful for this unit. Steven Lawson, a historian of the Civil Rights movement, praises Dittmer for providing “a broad historical context for the civil rights movement in Mississippi, and readers will surely benefit from his analysis of the underlying social, economic, and political forces behind” what became the history-making movement. “His greatest contribution stems from his focus on the local scene and the ‘ordinary’ people [like the Logan family – KD comment], as he realistically and poignantly uncovers the ways in which black Mississippians struggled to maintain their dignity behind the veil of state-sponsored racism.”

Egerton, John. *Speak Now against the Day: the Generation before the Civil Rights Movement in the South*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1994. In particular, the first two chapters (“1932-1938: A Feudal Land” and “1938-1945: Road of Hope”) are profoundly useful in understanding the time and setting of *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* from a unique perspective. Vernon E. Jordan, Jr., says of this book, “Here at last is the story of the South’s visionaries, its prophets, its unsung heroes – the men and women, black and white, who tried to tell us long before *Brown v. Board*] that segregation was a cancer on the

American soul. They were fearless critics of injustice in the era of white supremacy, and they richly deserve to be remembered and celebrated.”

Fairclough, Adam. *Better Day Coming: Blacks and Equality, 1890-2000*. New York: Viking. 2001. This history focuses on the U.S. South. Particularly useful for this unit are the first chapter, which chronicles the rise of white supremacy, and the seventh through ninth chapters, titled “The Radical Thirties,” “Blacks in the Segregated South, 1919-42,” and “The NAACP’s Challenge to White Supremacy, 1935-45.” This book is highly researched and annotated, with useful sources for anyone wishing to investigate any particular aspect of this history.

Foner, Philip S. and Lewis, Ronald L., editors. *Black Workers: A Documentary History from Colonial Times to the Present*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989. A truly eye-opening, inspiring, informative collection of contemporary writings, speeches, documents. Of particular interest for this unit are sections six and seven, respectively “The Era of Postwar Prosperity and the Great Depression, 1920-1936,” and “The Black Worker from the Founding of the CIO to the AFL-CIO Merger, 1936-1955.” Among the contributions are several about working conditions the Logan parents could have faced, and those faced by their neighbors who worked other people’s land.

Gutman, Herbert G. *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925*. New York: Vintage Books, 1977. Written largely in response to “The Moynihan Report” of 1965 (*The Negro Family in America: The Case for National Action*), this highly-documented volume (many table and appendices), as John Hope Franklin put it, “successfully challenged the traditional view that slavery virtually destroyed the Afro-American family.” The subject is relevant to our look at the Logan family in *Roll of Thunder*.

Jones, Jacqueline. *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family, from Slavery to the Present*. New York: Vintage Books. 1985. Widely hailed at the time of its publication as a book that turns “an arc light on several dark and unexplored corners” (Toni Morrison) and “should be required reading for everyone who cares about the progress of justice and equality in America,” (Coretta Scott King), as well as “a seminal work of scholarship, which has no rival in its subtle explication of the complex interface of work, sex, race and class” (Henry Louis Gates). Chapters of particular interest for this unit include the Introduction, “A Bridge of ‘Bent Backs and Laboring Muscles’: the Rural South, 1880-1915,” “Between the Cotton Field and the Ghetto: the Urban South, 1880-1915,” “To Get Out of This Land of Suffering’: Black Women Migrants to the North, 1900-1930,” and “Harder Times: The Great Depression.” Detailed notes, a detailed index, and the “Selected Bibliography” of primary and secondary sources offer the interested reader many roads to more information and thought.

Sternsher, Bernard, editor. *The Negro in Depression and War: Prelude to Revolution, 1930-1945*. Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969. An invaluable, nay, essential collection of essays by participants and historians from DuBois to Bethune, examining, as the sections of the book are labeled, “white action,” “black reaction,” and “black and white activists” in this period, contemporaneous with the Logan family’s struggles. The “suggested reading” section is divided into topics including “Negro rural life” which, alone, would make this

book an invaluable tool. A product of the 1960s, this collection breathes determination, conviction, and scholarship.

Trotter, Joe William. *The African-American Experience*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001. Of particular interest for this unit, Part IV, “Emancipation and the First Generation of Freedom, 1865-1915” for its in-depth look at relationships with the land and the rise of the conditions that the Logan family faced, and Part V entitled “Migration, Depression, and World Wars, 1915-1945.”

Trotter, Joe W., and Leis, Ear., editors. *African Americans in the Industrial Age: a Documentary History, 1915-1945*. An exciting and invaluable collection of primary sources, among the most relevant included in the section “The Great Depression, 1929-1939.”

Contemporaneous Pittsburgh African American Experience

Glasco, Laurence. “Double Burden: The Black Experience in Pittsburgh.” In Hays, Samuel P., editor, *City at the Point: Essays on the Social History of Pittsburgh*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1989.

Reconstruction and Its Impact and Aftermath

Bennett, Lerone, Jr. *Black Power, U.S.A., the Human Side of Reconstruction, 1867-1877*. Chicago: Johnson Publishing Company, Inc., 1967. A detailed, informative, readable account of how “black and white men made the first and, in many ways, the last real attempt to establish an interracial democracy in America,” and of “the only period in American history in which black people had real, that is to say effective, power.” Of particular interest are the chapters “Democracy Comes to Mississippi,” and those on what Bennett calls the “white counterrevolution” that brought terror and Jim Crow to the South. includes an interesting list of sources.

Foner, Eric. *Forever Free: the Story of Emancipation and Reconstruction*. New York: Vintage Books, 2006. Perhaps the most readable and concise book I came across on this period. A wonderfully pleasant way to become acquainted with African American accomplishments during this period, as well as the rise of Jim Crow. Highly recommended.

Foner, Eric. *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*. New York: Harper & Row, 1988. Described by the publisher as “the first comprehensive, modern account of the period,” documenting and commenting on the how freed slaves, Southern white, and Northerners of many stripes, and their society as a whole, responded to emancipation, Black political power, and the racist response to it that fueled anti-Black vigilantism including the Ku Klux Klan.

Litwack, Leon and Meier, August, editors. *Black Leaders of the Nineteenth Century*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. 1988. Sixteen essays by a range of historians include a number on Reconstruction leaders, including Eric Foner’s “Black Reconstruction Leaders at the Grass Roots.”

Rabinowitz, Howard N. *Southern Black Leaders of the Reconstruction Era*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. 1982. Fourteen essays by fourteen college historians, each with a focus on an individual leader or an area.

Stampp, Kenneth M. *The Era of Reconstruction, 1865-1877*. New York: Vintage Books, 1965. An early, concise, indexed history of the period, useful for a quick overview.

Stalcup, Brenda. *Reconstruction: Opposing Viewpoints*. San Diego: Greenhaven Press, Inc. 1995. A tremendously useful volume for its inclusion of contemporary-to-the-period public documents and speeches and writings of key players, from Lincoln to Douglass, from KKK leaders to Grand Jury indictments of the KKK. Organized into five chapters, each of which includes six or more contemporaneous opposing points of view on such issues as initial plans for post-emancipation government, "Radical Reconstruction," and the end of Reconstruction; along with a debate between historians William R. Brock and C. Vann Woodward on why Reconstruction failed (too radical, not radical enough). Excellent source of primary documents, good chronology, annotated bibliography.

Woodward, C. Vann. *Reunion and Reaction: The Compromise of 1877 and the End of Reconstruction*. London: Oxford University Press, 1991 (paperback reprint). This is the classic history of the period and its legacy, originally published in 1951, with a new introduction by the author which comments on many of the debates his interpretation of the period has sparked.

Harlem Renaissance: History

Watson, Steven. *Harlem Renaissance: Hub of African-American Culture, 1920-1930*. New York: Pantheon Books. 1995. The many photographs, tight biographies, and boxed excerpts of major works make this volume a useful overview of the period, its major players, and their artistic work.

Harlem Renaissance: Literary Work

Lewis, David Levering, ed. *Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader*. New York: Penguin Books, 1995. This 770-page anthology is divided into three parts: essays, poetry, and fiction. Each contains a good cross-section of the work of the period's major writers. The paperback format does make it "portable" and affordable.

Locke, Alain, ed. *The New Negro: Voices of the Harlem Renaissance*. New York: Atheneum. 1992. This is a reprint of the 1925 volume which Arnold Rampersad calls the "definitive text, the Bible" of the Harlem Renaissance. Rampersad's introduction is a concise, hard-hitting history of the period and its productions. Locke's 1925 "Forward" introduces and evaluates the philosophical and artistic work of each contributor.

Walker, Alice, ed. *I Love Myself When I Am Laughing . . . and Then Again When I Am Looking Mean and Impressive: A Zora Neale Hurston Reader*. New York: Feminist Press, 1979. Introductions by Alice Walker and Mary Helen Washington provide insight into struggles of female participants in the Harlem Renaissance, as well as Hurston's pioneer work, excerpts from which make up the bulk of this volume.

Harlem Renaissance: Multi-Media

Wintz, Cary D., ed. *Harlem Speaks: A Living History of the Harlem Renaissance*. Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks Media Fusion, 2007. A compilation of essays by 21 college professors about key figures and debates of the Harlem Renaissance. The big draw for me is the 60-minute CD with the voices and music of many key figures, from W.E.B. DuBois to Marcus Garvey to Bessie Smith.

African-American Literature, general

Andrews, William L., et al, ed., *Oxford Companion to African American Literature*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. The dictionary format of this volume belies its readability and scope. A host of contributors have put together this highly useful resource. In his foreword, Henry Louis Gates, Jr. calls it “a feast of wonders.” “Read it like a novel . . . This *Companion* establishes, at last, the firmest foundation for the study of African-American literature, by presenting articles on virtually every aspect of the history and development of the literature created by persons of African descent.” The detailed index makes it eminently useful as a research source as well.

Wideman, John Edgar, ed. *My Soul Has Grown Deep: Classics of Early African-American Literature*. Philadelphia: Running Press, 2001. A powerful, 1270-page anthology of the work of twelve major writers, from Richard Allen and Phyllis Wheatley through Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. DuBois, James Weldon Johnson and Paul Laurence Dunbar. What makes this volume exceptionally valuable is that the essays, poems and fiction are printed in their entirety (includes “The Souls of Black Folk”).

African-American (and related) Folktales

Hamilton, Virginia. *Her Stories: African-American Folktales, Fair Tales, and True Tales*. New York: Blue Sky Press. 1995. Just what the title promises. Excellent resource for this unit. Hamilton’s afterword is certain to strike and chord, to inspire future story collectors and tellers.

Hamilton, Virginia. *In the Beginning: Creation Stories from Around the World*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 1988. An excellent resource for helping students see the connections among people as we have tried to explain where life comes from. A good explanation of the sources and uses of mythology.

Hamilton, Virginia. *The People Could Fly*. Several editions. I used: New York: Knopf Books for Young Readers. 2000. Book and CD. Every folktale here is a winner. I have read these stories, and Virginia Hamilton’s comments, to students in grades K through 8, never failing to engage. The title story is one of the most captivating available.

McKissack, Patricia C. *The Dark-Thirty: Southern Tales of the Supernatural*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992. McKissack describes this work as “a collection of original stories rooted in African American history and the oral storytelling tradition. They should be shared at that special time when it is neither day nor night and when shapes and shadows

play tricks on the mind. When you feel fear tingling in your toes and zinging up your spine like a closing zipper, you have experienced the delicious horror of a tale of the dark-thirty.”

McKissack, Patricia C. *Porch Lies: Tales of Slicksters, Tricksters, and Other Wily Characters*. New York: Schwartz & Wade Books, 2006. Continuing Virginia Hamilton’s tradition of putting into print grandparents’ stories from the rich oral tradition of African Americans, particularly in the U.S. South.

Print Resources for Students

Relevant Fiction

Durbin, William. *The Journal of C.J. Jackson: A Dust Bowl Migrant; Oklahoma to California, 1935*. New York: Scholastic, 2002. A boy and his family struggle with, and leave behind, the Depression-era Oklahoma “Dust Bowl.”

Hesse, Karen. *Witness*. New York: Scholastic, Inc. 2001. Prose-poem story of a friendship between an African American girl and a Jewish girl threatened and deepened when the Ku Klux Klan moves into their small Vermont town in 1924. Extraordinary book.

Janke, Katelan. *Survival in the Storm: the Dust Bowl Diary of Grace Edwards*. New York: Scholastic, 2002. A “Dear America” volume set in the Texas panhandle, 1935.

McKissack, Patricia C. *Color Me Dark: the Diary of Nellie Lee Love, the Great Migration North*. New York: Scholastic, Inc. 2000. A “Dear America” volume of good historical fiction which tells of a family’s trials as it moves from the South to Chicago, just on time for the white race riots that followed World War I.

Nelson, Marilyn. *A Wreath for Emmett Till*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2005. Sonnet illustrated by Philippe Lardy; includes a short essay on Till’s life and murder. A glimpse at Mississippi, after the Logan story but not much different.

Anthologies of African American Writing

Hudson, Wade. *Powerful Words: More Than 200 Years of Extraordinary Writing by African Americans*. New York: Scholastic Nonfiction, 2004. A highly-accessible collection of important letters, essays, speeches, poetry, and excerpts from novels by a cross-section of writers from Benjamin Banneker (1791) through Toni Morrison and Lauryn Hill (1990s). Includes extensive chronology, index, and enticing list of sources.

African-American History relevant to 1930s and/or Mississippi

Battle, Thomas C., and Wells, Donna M., editors. *Legacy: Treasures of Black History*. Washington: National Geographic, 2006. Preface by John Hope Franklin. Art and artifacts from Howard university’s Moorland-Spingarn Research Center.

Beckner, Chrisanne. *100 African Americans Who Changed American History*. Milwaukee: World Almanac Library, 2005. Single-page biographical essays organized in the chronological order of birth, from Crispus Attucks (1723) to Muhammad Ali (1942). A useful tool for students looking for an overview. Useful index. “Suggested Projects” promised in the Table of Contents is not there.

Bolden, Tonya. *Tell All the Children Our Story: Memories and Mementos of Being Young and Black in America*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2001. An excitingly-presented book that delivers on the promise of its title. Three sections include one on Reconstruction and its aftermath, and one on the struggles and accomplishments of the 20th century, including the period of *Roll of Thunder*. Lots of great photos, including of schools similar to the one from *Roll of Thunder*. Includes quotes from key African American figures from their youth.

Cooper, Michael L. *Bound for the Promised Land: the Great Black Migration*. New York: Lodestar Books, 1995. A well-put-together history of the 1915-1930 movement of African Americans out of the South, which helps set a framework and context for *Roll of Thunder*. The introduction and the first chapter (“In the Shadow of the Plantation”) describe life at the time of *Roll of Thunder*, with startling, useful photos. The rest of the book helps to put that time and place in context.

Crowe, Chris. *Getting away with Murder: the True Story of the Emmett Till Case*. New York: Phyllis Fogelman Books, 2003. Written for teens “of all races,” to “keep alive the memory of the Emmett Till case and provide a broader understanding of the beginning of the civil rights movement.” The story of Till’s 1955 murder in Mississippi, and the refusal of the justice system to deal with it, gives insight into the society the Logan family lived amongst. Well researched, many photographs (including one of Till’s battered face), good list of resources including a good number of websites.

Greenfield, Eloise, (with Little, Lessie Jones, and Jones, Pattie Ridley). *Childtimes: A Three-Generation Memoir*. “Three black women – grandmother, mother, and daughters – reminisce about their “childtimes” in this lyrical memoir. . . . *This book is about three children and their times, the times in which they grew up . . . This book is about family. Kinsfolk touching across the centuries. . . . This book, most of all, is about black people struggling, not just to stay alive, but to live.*” (from book flap)

Hamilton, Virginia. *W.E.B. DuBois: a Biography*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1972. A readable, respectful and loving presentation driven by the author’s determination to bring DuBois to young people. As she concludes, “An ocean lay between the Doctor’s death and our lives, but that didn’t matter. He was our great man, our keeper, and we were his dream. The distance between us was never far.” Includes a list of DuBois’s published writings and “selected sources.” Well indexed.

Myers, Walter Dean. *Now Is Your Time! The African-American Struggle for Freedom*. New York: HarperCollins. 1991. Chapters are on individual leaders and events; relevant material in chapters on Ida B. Wells, Lewis Howard Latimer, court battles before and leading to civil rights movement.

Tackach, James, editor. *Early Black Reformers*. Farmington Hills, MI: Greenhaven Press, 2003. With essays from slavery times through the Montgomery bus boycott, relevant chapters include writings by Ida B. Wells-Barnett, W.E.B. DuBois, and Richard Wright on the Jim Crow U.S. South.

Thomas, Velma Maia. *We Shall Not Be Moved: The Passage from the Great Migration to the Million Man March*. New York: Crown Publishers, Inc. 2002. A unique volume which includes inserts that reproduce a decree, a map, a pamphlet, and more.

Trotter, Joe William, Jr. *From a Raw Deal to a New Deal? African Americans 1929-1945*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996. Written, laid-out and illustrated for readers from middle-school through high school, this book provides an excellent overview of life in the U.S. of the Logan family. Could easily be made required reading for our students. Useful chronology, list of resources, and index.

Reconstruction

Bolden, Tonya. *Cause: Reconstruction America 1863-1877*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 2005. The illustrations in this book are enough to make it invaluable, as they reproduce innumerable artifacts, campaign posters, photographs, paintings, and newspaper and magazine articles from the period. The text provides a rich, inspired narrative which captures the passion of the freed slaves, supporters of emancipation, and the opponents of freedom and emancipation including the founders and builders of the KKK. Highly researched (many primary sources), documented and indexed.

Cooper, Michael L. *From Slave to Civil War Hero: The Life and Times of Robert Smalls*. New York: Dutton. 1994. An easy-to-read 59-page biography of one of the former slaves elected to the U.S. Congress during Reconstruction after heroic actions during the Civil War.

Frankel, Noralee. *Break Thos Chains at Last: African Americans 1860-1880*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1996. A richly-illustrated volume in the “Young Oxford History of African Americans,” edited by Robin D.G. Kelley and Earl Lewis. The author is Assistant Director on Woman and Minorities at the American Historical Association. Contains a helpful “further reading” list, and an interesting discussion of primary sources for this period.

Hansen, Joyce. *“Bury Me Not in a Land of Slaves” : African-Americans in the Time of Reconstruction*. New York: Franklin Watts. 2000. An excellent book; gives students a full, eminently readable, richly illustrated, well-researched and documented (including primary sources) story of Reconstruction and its aftermath. The author has won a good number of prestigious awards, including four Coretta Scott King awards, for children’s and young-adult fiction.

Ragsdale, Bruce A. and Treese, Joel D. *Black Americans in Congress, 1870-1989*. Washington, D.C.: Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives. 1990.

Introduction by Ron Dellums provides a quick overview of the history of African American representation, and lack thereof, in the U.S. Congress. The remainder of this book's 164 pages is made up of two-page biographies, with one large photo each, of each of the African Americans who had served in Congress through 1989. Presented in alphabetical order, a reader looking for Reconstruction-era leaders gets a quick glimpse of the many who have followed.

Worth, Richard. *African Americans during Reconstruction*. New York: Chelsea House. 2006. A well-put-together, accessible, useful history which can help students understand how the Logan family got to where they are in *Roll of Thunder*, and the conditions they face. Contains helpful time line, glossary, guide to further reading (including web sites), and full index. ***Recommended as an introduction/refresher for teachers as well.***

Harlem Renaissance

Haskins, Jim. *Black Stars of the Harlem Renaissance: African Americans Who Lived their Dreams*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2002. A useful introduction, with concise biographies of 19 key figures, a chronology, bibliography, and index.

Jaques, Geoffrey. *Free within Ourselves: the Harlem Renaissance*. New York: Franklin Watts. 1996. A concise, accessible short volume (107 pages plus notes, extensive bibliography, and detailed index). Good summaries of major figures and controversies of the period.

The Great Depression: the Era of *Roll of Thunder*

Ruth, Amy. *Growing Up in the Great Depression*. Minneapolis: Lerner Publications Company. 2003. A book in the "Our America" series. Easy to read, well illustrated. A good introduction.

DVD/VHS Resources

Civil Rights Era, and into the 21st century. Explores the struggle of African-Americans in their faith and how it became a force for social, political and cultural change in the United States.

Color Me Dark: the Story of Nellie Lee Love, the Great Migration North: Chicago, Illinois, 1919. New York: Scholastic. 2000. A 30-minute Dear America live-action video, excellently done, which portrays the trials of a close family as they arrive, from the South, in Chicago to face the 1919 white race riots.

Eyes on the Prize: Awakenings (1954 - 1956). Warner Home Video. 1992. This 60-minute long video shows what life was like for African Americans at the time it was produced. Particularly relevant for this unit is the report on Emmet Till, which includes a graphic portrayal of the results of the brutality inflicted on him.

Freedom Song. Warner Brother/TNT, 2000. Starring Danny Glover and Vondie Curtis-Hall, the story of “a father, a son, and a movement that would change American forever.” Set in Mississippi in the years leading up to and during the voter registration struggles of the early 1960s, the film is a powerful introduction to life from the vantage point of young African-Americans in, and fighting, the Jim Crow era and the Ku Klux Klan. My students were riveted to this film. *Warning: strong, realistic language; much use of “the N word” as well as profanity; realistic portrayal of beating of civil rights workers.*

Homecoming: Sometimes I Am Haunted by Memories of Red Dirt Clay. 1998; 56 minutes. (need rest of citation)

The Murder of Emmett Till. Boston: PBS Home Video, 2003. Documents the brutal 1955 murder of Emmett Till, a teen from Chicago who broke the unwritten Jim Crow South laws by whistling at a white woman in a grocery store in Money, Miss. His 2 white killers were acquitted by an all-white, all-male jury, and later sold to a journalist the story of how they killed the boy, adding momentum to the civil rights movement. 60 minutes.

**A Place at the Table*. Teaching Tolerance, a service of the Southern Poverty Law Center. Described by publisher: “Throughout our nation's history, individuals and groups – from Baptists fighting for religious freedom to families seeking gender equity in sports – have toppled barriers to become full participants in our democracy. These stories of everyday bravery are highlighted in the film. To help students identify with ongoing efforts to achieve equality, the film is narrated by teenagers who explain how their families struggled for and found “a place at the table.”” *A Place at the Table* includes: 40-minute documentary film in VHS format; 144-page classroom text that includes narratives, historical documents, first-person stories and commentary; and Teacher's guide with 13 detailed lesson plans for grades 8 and above.” Available free to teachers (http://www.tolerance.org/teach/resources/place_at_the_table.jsp).

Reconstruction & Segregation, 1865-1910. Schlessinger Media, 1996, 2003. A DVD in the “United States History” series. Developed for grades 5-12. Includes teachers guide. 30 minutes.

The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow. San Francisco, CA: California Newsreel, 2002. PBS television series of America’s segregation history, race relations, and African American Civil Rights. Jim Crow was not a person, yet affected the lives of millions of people. Named after a popular century minstrel song that stereotyped African Americans, “Jim Crow” came to personify the system of government-sanctioned racial oppression and segregation in the United States.

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry. Tomorrow Entertainment, 1976. 95 minutes. Stars Morgan Freeman, Claudia McNeil, Janet MacLauchlan. True to the book; worth showing students **after** they’ve read and worked with the book.

This Far by Faith: African-American Spiritual Journeys. Boston: PBS Video, 2003. Documents the African-American religious experience during the last three centuries from

the early African slaves, through the Civil War, Reconstruction, Jim Crow, the Great Depression, the

The Untold Story of Emmett Louis Till. THINKFilm and Till Freedom Come Productions, 2005. Rated PG. *New York Magazine* called this 70-minute film “the most important documentary of the year,” credited with helping to reopen the Till murder case. Includes first-hand accounts from witnesses who had not spoken out before. Powerful film.

“What is Freedom? Whose Land Is This?” Episodes 7 and 8 in *Freedom, a History of US.* PBS video; Kunhardt Productions, 2003. A 60-minute video covering Reconstruction and its aftermath, including the new segregation legalized via *Plessy v. Ferguson* (“separate but equal”) as well as the racial conflict directed against new immigrants to the U.S.

Electronic Resources

Note: Turned loose on the World Wide Web, your students will stumble into the vast world of “information” and information on African American history and contributions to U.S. culture. Much of what’s there is repetitive and less useful than the resources you already have. Undoubtedly your students, and you, will find resources that are informative and fun. BEWARE: I found many links on good sites to be dead. Listed below are the few I recommend, after culling through a far greater number. Each was alive and well during the spring of 2007. Some of these include online ads. Prepare students to avoid these (this, in and of itself, is a valuable lesson).

Mississippi History

<http://mshistory.k12.ms.us/>

This is the website of the Mississippi Historical Society. The feature article when accessed on March 31, 2007 was “Isaiah T. Montgomery, 1847-1924,” By Neil R. McMillen (http://mshistory.k12.ms.us/features/feature82/Isaiah_Montgomery.htm), an excellent, rich history of African American leadership and achievement in the period during and following Reconstruction. (accessed March 2007)

Jim Crow and Southern History

“The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow,” a PBS website designed for use by students and teachers. Links include personal stories on video and audiotape as well as in written word, interactive maps, history, and more, including one for teachers which offers lesson plans and resources with a focus on oral history. An excellent resource for teachers and students. (<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/index.html>)(accessed April 14, 2007)

“Remembering Jim Crow,” a project of American RadioWorks. Links to radio interviews and stories of survivors of Jim Crow, as well as to information and resources based on this documentary. Includes links to other useful sites and an extensive list of books on the subject. Produced in cooperation with the Center for Documentary Studies, Duke University. An excellent source of personal experiences that can bring this era to life. (<http://americanradioworks.org/features/remembering/index.html>) (Accessed April 14, 2007)

“The History of Jim Crow,” self-described (accurately): Site provides access to historic background, source material, and lesson plans that utilize the materials in Geography, Literature, and Teacher Resources. Jim Crow History Resources presented by New York Life. (<http://www.jimcrowhistory.org/home.htm>) (Accessed April 14, 2007)

“Sampling of Jim Crow Laws,” a list, by state, of some of the specific laws from the Jim Crow era. From (and linked to) Martin Luther King Historical Site. (http://www.nps.gov/malu/documents/jim_crow_laws.htm) (Accessed April 14, 2007)

The Great Depression

Nelson, Cary. “A Depression Photo Essay,” a powerful collection of photos showing the human face of the Depression’s poverty, including a few showing Jim Crow facilities and some picket lines. Includes links to other Depression sources. Part of the Modern American Poetry website at www.english.uiuc.edu/maps/depression/photoessay.htm. (Accessed April 21, 2007)

“The Great Depression: A Brief Overview.” Just as its title promises, this overview could be printed on two sides of a piece of paper and given to students to read and discuss, or students could access it online. Part of “Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?” a WebQuest teaching guide for upper elementary grades. www.todaysteacher.com/TheGreatDepressionWebQuestBriefOverview.htm. (Accessed April 21, 2007)

The Learning Page: “Race Relations in the 1930s and 1940s,” part of “Great Depression and World War II, 1929-1945.” An excellent portal to essays, photos and primary sources on this topic and on the Great Depression in general. Your more web-savvy students will enjoy exploring the links and finding useful and fun sources. <http://memory.loc.gov/learn/features/timeline/depwwii/race/race.html>. (Accessed April 21, 2007)