

Teacher Resources

Educator Chari R. Smith of Portland, Oregon, has written *Extraordinary Women from U.S. History: Readers Theatre for Grades 4-8*. (Portsmouth, NH: Teacher Idea Press, 2003). Each short drama is preceded by a bit of historical background, presentation suggestions, and lists of props (very few) and characters (from 14 to 30). Follow-up activities and references end each section. This 126-page book opens with general advice and warm-up activities that will be especially helpful to novice thespians. The nine women featured are Sacagawea, Susan B. Anthony, Harriet Tubman, Elizabeth Blackwell, Nellie Bly, Amelia Earhart, Laura Ingalls Wilder, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Babe Didrikson Zaharias.

Donna B. Levine, who has been an elementary school library media specialist in Colorado, has created *American Musicians Making History*, also published by Teacher Idea Press in 2003. If this 192-page book had a theme song, she writes, “it would be Aaron Copland’s *Fanfare for the Common Man*.” Most of the lesson plan features one composer and a specific era of American history, with guidelines for the teacher and handouts for students. Levine tackles tough topics with aplomb, such as “Minstrelsy” and “Jazz as Social Protest.” She provides historical background from the early 1900s, then asks students to “Compare the lyrics of Irving Berlin’s ‘God Bless America’ with those of Woody Guthrie’s ‘This Land is Your Land,’ showing similarities and differences.” If social studies teachers want to speak with music teachers about possible collaboration, they might do well to have this book in hand.

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All NCSS members should by now have received their ballot forms for the upcoming NCSS Board of Directors election. Please take a moment to vote — NCSS is your organization, governed by your elected Board of Directors, and every vote counts. The deadline for returning your ballot is March 31, 2004 — you don’t have to wait until then to mail your ballot!

If you did not receive your ballot package, please send an e-mail to tdaly@ncss.org.

Books Received

Yvonne Wakim Dennis and Arlene Hirschfelder have teamed up to produce *Children of Native America Today* (Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge, 2003). Each chapter features one tribe and is illustrated with at least four current, colorful photographs of healthy Native American children taking part in interesting activities. The book is organized by geographic region (Northeast, Southeast, Central, Plains, Basin-plateau, Southwest, California/Washington, and Alaska) and presents three tribes from each. It also includes chapters on Hawaiian and urban peoples. A map showing tribal locations, a glossary, and resources for further study round out this 64-page masterpiece. As Buffy Sainte-Marie says in the foreword, “Indians Exist. We are alive and real. We have fun, friends, families, and a whole lot to contribute to the rest of the world.”

DK books tapped veteran author Peter Chrisp to write *Ancient Greece Revealed* (New York: Dorling Kindersley, 2003). Clever graphics and crisp chunks of text are the hallmarks of DK products for young readers, and this 37-page book is no exception. Transparent overlay pages, which were constructed with “the very latest computer-imaging techniques,” reveal the inner workings of the Trojan Horse; the original decor of the Parthenon; the results of a clash between warships from Athens and Sparta; and the plaster, clay, and wax beneath a reconstruction of the head of King Philip II of Macedon (336 BC), who lost one eye in battle. These spectacular overlays will keep certain boys in your elementary classroom occupied for quite a while, and, with luck, spark their interest in ancient Greece.

The Carpet Boy’s Gift, by Pegi Dietz Shea, illustrated by Lane Morin, is a semi-fictional story that “honors the legacy of Iqbal Masih.” (Gardiner, ME: Tilbury house, 2003). Iqbal was a real boy who was a slave laborer in a rug factory in Pakistan at the age of four. He became a local labor organizer and then a leader in the movement to abolish child labor. In the book, as in life, twelve-year-old Iqbal, is assassinated. This event is described briefly, but not depicted. The story is made palatable to an elementary audience as it is told through the eyes of other children who survive; they walk away from an abusive workplace toward a more hopeful future. Crucial notes at the end of this 40-page book explain that “a law against child slavery had been passed in Pakistan in 1992, but most factory owners didn’t obey the law and the police didn’t enforce it.” The last four pages, which are addressed to teachers, discuss the problem of child labor worldwide, suggest activities to combat the problem, and cite related resources, many of which are on the web.