

When the delegates to the Constitutional Convention met in Philadelphia in 1787, the U.S. population was believed to number about 3 million. This October the U.S. population is expected to cross a new threshold one hundred times greater—the 300 million mark. In this issue of *Social Education*, in addition to our usual range of features, we present a set of articles related to the new population milestone, and offer some suggestions for teaching during the week of Constitution Day (September 17).

On Constitution Day, we commemorate the achievements of the delegates to the Constitutional Convention more than 200 years ago, who believed that the new nation, though small on the world scale, would be a model to others in the conduct of its affairs. In the Teaching with Documents feature that opens this issue, Lee Ann Potter outlines the important role played by delegates' estimates of the size and whereabouts of the U.S. population as they allocated representation in Congress. The featured document is an estimate dating to 1785, found in the records of New Jersey delegate David Brearly, that the U.S. population numbered 3 million; this was found to be an underestimate when the first U.S. census was taken in 1790 and showed the population to be 3.9 million inhabitants. Potter's teaching suggestions show students the challenges faced by the delegates as they searched for the best formula for political representation of the population.

Three features in this issue look at different dimensions of the 300 million population mark. Judith Waldrop and Kimberly Crews, of the U.S. Census

Bureau, compare the U.S. population today with that at the time of the last milestone—200 million in 1967. Their article highlights the expansion of education since that time, the change in the number of working women, the increased diversity of the population, and the growth of the West.

In his internet column, C. Frederick Risinger identifies websites dealing with population topics that will appeal to web-savvy students and have significant educational value. Teachers will find these sites especially useful in identifying past, present and future population trends and prompting debate on issues arising from the rapid growth of the population of the United States.

In our Looking at the Law column, Sonya Olds Som and Eileen Momblando examine one of these issues—immigration reform. Focusing on the question of amnesty, they examine the theory and practice of laws regulating immigrant workers and highlight a significant development in litigation over immigration—civil claims brought against companies hiring undocumented workers under the RICO (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations) Act. A related teaching activity by James H. Landman complements their article.

In a lesson plan for Constitution Day, Eli Lesser leads us on a journey back to the intellectual world which influenced those who framed the Constitution. Students review the different trends of political thought to which delegates were exposed and consider how these perspectives affected specific articles of the Constitution. The lesson plan is one of a variety of resources for teachers offered by the National Constitution

Center in Philadelphia, where Lesser is the director of Teacher Education and Civic Outreach.

As our thoughts turn to the upcoming congressional elections, we present two features by *Social Education* staff for teachers interested in the topic of voter participation. One describes a volunteer program organized in Montgomery County, MD, in which students volunteer at the polls and receive service-learning credit. The second presents statistics suggesting that reports of a decline in voter turnout over the last two decades are misleading because of inaccurate estimates of the number of eligible voters.

For teachers facing the annual problem of how to engage students in educationally valuable activities after they have finished their examinations, Isaac Cosby Hunt III recommends a competition he stages in his Advanced Placement U.S. History classroom. In "May Madness," students compete in play-offs in which they advance the rival claims to historical significance of different important personalities. The activity both engages students and widens their knowledge about a range of historical figures.

Lois McFadyen Christensen shows how the use of artwork in elementary social studies classes can pique the interest of students in historical topics. In a contribution to our Elementary section, she shows how the work of Bernice Sims, a "memory painter" who was a civil rights activist, can promote the understanding by students of the objectives and methods that have been used in the past to promote the ideals of

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came to North America. It's actually a tutorial, and it's designed for teachers and higher-ability secondary students. Still, it's something that a teacher of U.S. or world history and geography can complete in an hour and learn a heck of a lot about the recent historiography of the settlement of North America. Topics covered include Early Migrations to North America, European Migrations to North America, and both African and Asian migration (including the slave trade) to this continent.

Limits To Growth:

Immigration In The Classroom

www.limitstogrowth.org/WEB-text/immigration-classroom.html

Limits to Growth claims to be "an iconoclastic view to immigration and culture." Teachers will want to be careful about assigning this site to students, but it does a good job of presenting the case for restricting immigration to the United States. It's not hateful, but it definitely has an agenda. On its "Immigration in the Classroom" page, it has links to news stories and government reports blaming legal and illegal immigrant students for low reading scores, for busting budgets of local schools, and for nearly all of the increase of K-12 school enrollments over the past 10 years. Again, be careful with this site; however, it represents a point of view reflected by many U.S. citizens.

The American Immigration Home Page

www.bergen.org/AAST/Projects/Immigration Teachers and students in a Bergen County, Pennsylvania, 10th grade U.S. history class, developed this set of outstanding teaching materials. Jonathan Lee, Robert Siemborski, and their students created these materials around 1995. Using easy to read materials illustrated with pictures and graphs, they cover issues such as "Reasons for Immigration," "Treatment/Reception by other Americans," and "Legal/Illegal Immigration." They focus on four time periods for each topic, ranging from 1607 to the present. They

are an excellent example of a student-developed project that can be used by students throughout the nation ... and world. The internet is a wonderful thing.

United Nations Population Fund

www.unfpa.org/issues/index.htm

While the focus of this column is on the United States and its rapidly growing population, we have to keep the global connection in mind. This arm of the United Nations is the largest source of funding for population programs and maintains a website that explores population issues, weighs in on the state of world population, presents news and feature articles, and more. I have included it because it takes a worldwide view of population issues and related topics such as gender equality, improving reproductive health, and sustainable development. It does not have a "teacher's page," but does provide a wealth of information and resources for both students and teachers.

As I mentioned at the beginning, I was struck by the focus on immigration and immigration policy as I searched for links related to the U.S. population hitting 300 million. The resources listed above should lead teachers and supervisors to sites that cover population growth in general and that also discuss the role of immigration in the rapid U.S. population expansion. We need another column to examine the lack of growth (even decline) of population in Europe, Russia, Japan, and other industrialized nations. They are going to have tremendous problems dealing with health care, pensions, and finding enough people to do the work needed. 🌐

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democracy, justice and equality.

In this issue's Research and Practice column, Ronald W. Evans puts the current controversies over the social studies curriculum in historical perspective, pointing out that historically there have been five major competing camps in the struggle to influence the direction of social studies. "At its heart," he points out, "this is a struggle over both the nature of social studies and the kind of society in which we want to live." (321)

The results of a major recent research study into the practice of social studies in elementary and middle schools are presented to our readers by James S. Leming, Lucien Ellington and Mark Schug. Their study surveyed a randomly selected sample of more than 1,000 second-, fifth- and eighth-grade teachers nationwide. The authors emphasize the dangers of the current situation, in which schools do not place much importance on social studies. On the basis of the survey, they conclude that teacher education programs need to emphasize subject matter more in their training of teachers, and they also urge history educators to place more emphasis on teaching about American historical heroes.

This issue concludes with a recent NCSS position statement offering guidelines for the effective use of instructional technology in the social studies classroom. 🌐

As always, the editors of Social Education welcome the comments of readers on any of the contributions to this issue.