Notable Social Studies
Trade Books for Young People

2011
About the List and Criteria for Selection
The books that appear in this annotated list were evaluated and selected by a Book Review Committee appointed by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) and assembled in cooperation with the Children’s Book Council (CBC). NCSS and CBC have cooperated on this annual bibliography since 1972. Books selected for this bibliography were published in 2010 and were written for children in grades K-12. The Book Review Committee looks for books that emphasize human relations, represent a diversity of groups and are sensitive to a broad range of cultural experiences, present an original theme or a fresh slant on a traditional topic, are easily readable and of high literary quality, have a pleasing format, and, where appropriate, include illustrations that enrich the text. Each book is read by several reviewers, and books are included on the list by committee assent; the annotations do not necessarily reflect the judgment of the entire committee.

Publishers’ addresses are available in standard reference works such as *Children’s Books in Print* (R.R. Bowker) and *Literary Market Place* (R.R. Bowker), and from CBC. CBC’s Members List may be downloaded at www.cbcbooks.org/about/ourmembers. Credits for permission to reproduce the cover art included in this supplement are printed on page 16.

Titles are arranged by broad subject categories. Although many are appropriate for more than one category, they have been placed where their usefulness in social studies education appears greatest. Annotators have also indicated the thematic strands (shown below) from *National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies: A Framework for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment*, to which the book relates.

### Thematic Strands of the NCSS Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

1. **Culture**
2. **Time, Continuity, and Change**
3. **People, Places, and Environments**
4. **Individual Development and Identity**
5. **Individuals, Groups, and Institutions**
6. **Power, Authority, and Governance**
7. **Production, Distribution, and Consumption**
8. **Science, Technology, and Society**
9. **Global Connections**
10. **Civic Ideals and Practices**

### Parts of a Notable Listing

1. The titles marked with the green binoculars icon are Selectors’ Choices—books that individual committee members responded to with particular enthusiasm. 2. Title: Subtitle 3. Author(s) 4. Illustrator 5. Publisher. 6. Number of pages 7. International Standard Book Numbers (ISBNs) are included for all available editions (trade, library, and paperback). The symbol “F” indicates that a paperback edition is forthcoming. A publisher’s name in parentheses indicates that a different publisher will issue the paperback edition. 8. Price as of January 2011 9. Reading levels: P: Primary (K-2), I: Intermediate (3-5), M: Middle (6-8), H: High (9-12). They are intended as guidelines and are not meant to limit the potential use of titles. 10. Brief descriptive annotation, plus notations of the presence of additional textual materials, if any. 11. Initials indicating the reviewer responsible for the annotation (see list at right). 12. Thematic strands of the curriculum standards for social studies in order of relevancy (see list above).

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### 2011 Book Review Committee Members

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**Scott Waters**, Professor, Elementary Education, Emporia State University, Emporia, KS. (SDW)
BioGraphy


Clemente! Willie Perdomo. Illustrated by Bryan Collier. Henry Holt Books for Young Readers. 32pp. Trade ISBN 978-0-8050-8224-1, $16.99. (P, I) The first Latin American inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame, Roberto Clemente was known not only for his exceptional baseball skills, but his charity work throughout Latin America. Timeline, Author’s Note, Illustrator’s Note, Bibliography, Websites. (SDW) 3, 10


Driven: A Photobiography of Henry Ford. Don Mitchell. National Geographic Children’s Books. 64pp. Trade ISBN 978-1-4263-0155-1, $18.95. (M) Clear photographs and a fascinating narrative recount the life of the intelligent, complex, “driven” visionary who would change the course of history, labor, and society through his determination to make cars affordable for the general popu-

lation. Source Notes, Bibliography, Webbiography, Chronology. (CG) 4, 7, 8

The Extraordinary Mark Twain (According to Susy). Barbara Kerley. Illustrated by Edwin Fotheringham. Scholastic Press, Scholastic. 48pp. Trade ISBN 978-0-545-12508-6, $17.99. Paperback F (Scholastic Press). (I, M) Twain’s daughter Susy began penning a biography of him when she was 13 years old to “set the record straight.” Fotheringham’s exuberant, oversized illustrations match the life of Twain through America’s and Susy’s eyes perfectly. Author’s Note, Selected Timeline, Sources. (CG) 3, 4


Jackie’s Gift. Sharon Robinson. Illustrated by E.B. Lewis. Viking. 32pp. Trade ISBN 978-0-670-01162-9, $16.99. (P, I) In this funny, touching and true story, Jackie Robinson discovers that his new Brooklyn neighbors do not have a Christmas tree. He brings them one, not realizing that they celebrate Hanukkah instead of Christmas. Author’s Note. (ASL) 1, 4


Kubla Khan: The Emperor of Everything. Kathleen Krull. Illustrated by Robert Byrd. Viking. 48pp. Trade ISBN 978-0-670-01114-8, $17.99. (I) Kubla Khan, the thirteenth-century emperor of China, was a wise and influential leader. Details about his childhood and rise to power, the construction of the Imperial City, luxurious court life, and inventions are shared in an engaging text with impressive illustrations. Map, Sources, Author’s Note, Illustrator’s Note. (EVH) 1, 4

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My Havana: Memories of a Cuban Boyhood. Rosemary Wells with Secundino Fernandez. Illustrated by Peter Ferguson. Candlewick Press. 72pp. Trade ISBN 978-0-7636-4305-8, $17.99 (I, M) Forced to leave his beloved city when Fidel Castro and the Communist Party take over, a homesick Dino tries to capture the beauty of Havana in his sketchpad. Years later, living in the United States, his memories never fade. Author’s Note. (SDW) 4, 2, 3

Odetta: The Queen of Folk. Stephen Alcorn. Scholastic Press, Scholastic. 40pp. Trade ISBN 978-0-439-92818-2, $18.99. (P, I) In the early 1960s, Odetta Holmes was the star of the folk music world. She inspired Joan Baez, Janis Joplin, and Bob Dylan, among many others. Odetta received numerous national music awards and was also an outspoken civil rights activist and humanitarian. Author’s Note, Selection of Recordings. (KAC) 3, 10

She Sang Promise: The Story of Betty Mae Jumper, Seminole Tribal Leader. Jan Godown Annino. Illustrated by Lisa Desimini. National Geographic Children’s Books. 48pp. Trade ISBN 978-1-4263-0592-4, $17.95. (P, I) Betty Mae Jumper was one of the first women to be elected leader of the Seminole Tribe. She grew up in Florida and was bilingual, but didn’t have the opportunity to start school until the age of 14. Betty Mae went on to start the first Seminole newspaper and was named an advisor to President Richard Nixon. Afterword, Timeline, Author’s Note, Glossary. (KAC) 3, 2, 10


Summer Birds: The Butterflies of Maria Merian. Margarita Engle. Illustrated by Julie Paschkis. Henry Holt Books for Young Readers. 32pp. Trade ISBN 978-0-8050-8937-0, $16.99. (P, I) This simple, elegant book is about 13-year-old Maria Merian who is fascinated by the transformative nature of caterpillars, moths, butterflies, and common amphibians. Young Maria questions the notion of her time: that “summer birds,” the medieval name for butterflies, are born of mud. She uses her keen observation skills to prove otherwise. Colorful, whim-
sical illustrations add to this amazing biographical sketch of Young Maria. Author’s Note. (IWL) 8

**Under a Red Sky: Memoir of a Childhood in Communist Romania.** Haya Leah Molnar. Farrar, Straus and Giroux Books for Young Readers. 320pp. Trade ISBN 978-0-374-31840-6, $17.99. (M, H) This account of the author’s childhood has depictions of intriguing family members and their lifestyles behind the iron curtain. A young girl learns about oppression, politics, and her Jewish religion through family stories and experiences. Author’s Note, Photographs. (EVH) 1, 4

**Contemporary Concerns**

**31 Ways to Change the World.** We Are What We Do. Candlewick Press. 80pp. Trade ISBN 978-0-7636-4506-9, $8.99. (P, I) This book presents the top 31 ideas out of more than 4,000 suggestions put forth by children in Great Britain on ways to change the world. From “teach your granny to text,” to “grow something and eat it,” this book helps children think about the little things they can do to make a difference. (KAC) 2, 3, 9


**Saraswati’s Way.** Monika Schröder. Farrar, Straus and Giroux Books for Young Readers. 240pp. Trade ISBN 978-0-374-36411-3, $16.99. (M, H) This is the story of a 12-year-old Indian boy who fights against poverty and wants to have education. Young adults will learn about world cultures and global issues. Author’s Note, Glossary. (SCP) 4, 9


**Environment/Energy/Ecology**


**In the Garden with Dr. Carver.** Susan Grigsby. Illustrated by Nicole Tadgell. Albert Whitman & Company. 32pp. Trade ISBN 978-0-8075-3630-8, $16.99. (I) Dr. George Washington Carver traveled the South showing poor communities how to grow nutritious crops; how to recover their soil, ruined by growing cotton; and how to recover their health. Author’s Note. (DS) 3, 7, 8

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Folktales


Geography/People/Places


A Long Walk to Water. Linda Sue Park. Clarion Books / Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 128pp. Trade ISBN 978-0-547-25127-1. (M, H) A young girl’s daily eight-hour routine of fetching water and a boy’s search for safety from war are depicted through a dual narrative. Based on the true ex-
experiences of Salva Dut, whose childhood in war-torn Sudan led to his humanitarian efforts to raise money for village wells. Author’s Note, Message from Salva Dut. (EVH) 3, 4

Rain School. James Rumford. Houghton Mifflin Books for Children / Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 32pp. Trade ISBN 978-0-547-24307-8, $16.99. (P, I) A young boy from Chad goes to school for the first time, but when he arrives he learns that the students must first build the school. When the school year ends, the rain washes away the building. While the structure may have been temporary, education is lasting. Map. (ASL) 1, 2, 3


Where the Streets Had a Name. Randa Abdel-Fattah. Scholastic Press, Scholastic. 320pp. Trade ISBN 978-0-545-17292-9, $17.99. Paperback F (Scholastic). (M) A Palestinian girl and her friend living in Bethlehem devise a plan to prevail over curfews and other laws to travel to Jerusalem to get a remedy for the girl’s ailing grandmother. (JEL) 1, 9, 2

History/Life & Culture in the Americas


Climbing Lincoln’s Steps: The African American Journey. Suzanne Slade. Illustrated by Colin Bootman. Albert Whitman & Company. 32pp. Trade ISBN 978-0-8075-1204-3, $16.99. (P, I) The author uses the marble steps of the Lincoln Memorial as a metaphor for the many steps that African Americans have taken towards equality and justice. She describes the historic events on those steps, from Marian Anderson’s performance to Martin Luther King Jr.’s speech, and finally to a visit by the first African American president and his family. Timeline. (GAS) 1, 2, 3, 5, 10

Countdown. Deborah Wiles. Scholastic Press, Scholastic. 352pp. Trade ISBN 978-0-545-10605-4, $17.99. Paperback F (Scholastic Paperbacks). (M, H) This wonderfully creative book juxtaposes events surrounding the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Civil Rights Movement with the emotional ups and downs of teenager Franny Chapman. Interspersed throughout the novel are photographs of the people, social experiences, and cultural icons of the early 1960s. These images, excerpts from speeches of prominent leaders, and classic sound bites of the era like “Duck and Cover” create an authentic backdrop for the novel. (IWL) 4, 8, 10


The Diary of Piper Davis: The Fences Between Us. Kirby Larson. (Dear America) Scholastic. 352pp. Trade ISBN 978-0-545-22418-5, $12.99. (M) A 13-year-old girl records her experiences in a diary, beginning in November 1941, including the journey with her father to an Idaho internment camp where her Japanese neighbors have been interned. Author’s Note, Historical Note, Websites, Epilogue, Bibliography, Primary Sources (including photos, maps, and transcript from FDR’s speech to Congress on December 8, 1941). (GMI) 2, 4, 5


The Good, The Bad and The Barbie: A Doll’s History and Her Impact on Us. Tanya Lee Stone. Viking. 144pp. Trade ISBN 978-0-670-01187-2, $19.99. (M, H) Color photographs and commentary from both fans and detractors make this history of the Barbie doll, from her creation to present day, an engaging and well researched read. The author chronicles the changes in Barbie and the societal changes they reflect. Author’s Note, Source and Photo Notes, Bibliography, Index. (ASL) 1, 2


Liberty or Death: The Surprising Story of Runaway Slaves Who Sided with the British During the American Revolution. Margaret Whitman Blair. National Geographic Children’s Books. 64pp. Trade ISBN 978-1-4263-0590-0, $18.95. (M) This gripping Revolution-era account of slaves fighting on the side of the British contains exacting scholarship and resources. The uniqueness of the topic along with an edgy graphic layout easily grips the reader’s interest. Index, Sources, Epilogue, Timeline, Map on end sheets, Resource Guide with Webligraphy. (KK) 1, 5, 6


New York City: An Illustrated History of the Big Apple. Richard Platt. Illustrated by Manuela Cappon. (Through Time) Kingfisher. 48pp. Trade ISBN 978-0-7534-6416-8, $16.99. (I, M) This splendidly illustrated volume presents historical events and daily life in New York City, 1600 to present day. Each event gets a double-page spread, complete with aerial views or cutaways of landmarks and detailed information about how all different types of people lived. Timeline, Glossary, Index. (ASL) 2, 3


Skywalkers: Mohawk Ironworkers Build the City. David Weitzman. Roaring Brook Press. 128pp. Trade ISBN 978-1-59643-162-1, $19.99. (M) With skill, bravery, and agility, Mohawk ironworkers built America’s skyscrapers and bridges. They walked the girders and leaped from one beam to another, hundreds and even thousands of feet in the air. Period drawings and photographs highlight the enormity of their achievements. Author’s Note, Glossary, Source Notes, Index. (KAC) 7, 8, 3

Sources of Light. Margaret McMullan. Houghton Mifflin Books for Children / Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 240pp. Trade ISBN 978-0-547-07659-1, $16.00. (M, H) This is the story of a young, white girl living with her mother in Mississippi, in 1962, as the civil rights movement gains steam. Sam, as she is called, uses photography to make sense of life and the turmoil around her. Author’s Note. (JEL) 2, 4

Spies of Mississippi. Rick Bowers. National Geographic Children’s Books. 128pp. Trade ISBN 978-1-4263-0595-5, $16.95. (M, H) This book tells the true story of the spy network that tried to destroy the civil rights movement. Young adults will learn about the victories and heroes who fought against white supremacy. Selected Primary Documents, Bibliography, Quote Sources, Index. (SCP) 1, 6, 10

Stable. Ted Lewin. Roaring Brook Press. 40pp. Trade ISBN 978-1-59643-467-7, $17.99. (P, I) With Brooklyn’s Kensington Stables as a jumping off point, Lewin’s beautiful watercolors and simple text detail a past when horses were used for everything and more than 180,000 of them lived in New York City and Brooklyn. Author’s Note. (SDW) 2

The Taxing Case of the Cows: A True Story about Suffrage. Iris Van Rynbach and Pegi Deitz Shea. Illustrated by Emily Arnold McCully. Clarion Books / Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 32pp. Trade ISBN 978-0-547-23631-5, $16.99. (P, I) This book recounts the little-known story of two sisters whose cows were confiscated during the sisters’ struggle against taxation without representation. The story offers an illustration of actions against women that fueled the suffrage movement. Bibliography, Author’s Note. (EVH) 6, 10


When Molly Was a Harvey Girl. Frances M. Wood. Kane Miller, A Division of EDC Publishing. 234pp. Trade ISBN 978-1-935279-51-8, $15.99. (M, H) Two young ladies who have just lost their parents answer an advertisement to become Harvey Girls (waitresses) at a small train depot in New Mexico. A story about life in the Wild West during the 1800s. Author’s Note. (JEL) 2


Reference

**National Geographic Wild Animal Atlas.**
National Geographic Children’s Books. 64pp. Trade ISBN 978-1-4263-0699-0, $18.95. (I) Organized by continents, this atlas connects animals to geographical areas. Large pages (10.5” X 14”) and colorful graphics (photos and maps) will provide readers with a good introduction. Bibliography, Glossary, Index. (GMI) 3, 9


**Social Interactions/Relationships**


**Betti on the High Wire.** Lisa Railsback. Dial. 288pp. Trade ISBN 978-0-8037-3388-6, $16.99. Paperback F (Puffin). Paperback ISBN 978-0-14-241877-2, $6.99. (I, M) Babo, an orphaned 10-year-old girl, is renamed Betti when she is adopted by a family in America. Before being adopted from her war-torn country, Betti lived with other orphans in an abandoned circus camp. When Betti comes to America, she must learn a new language. She must learn how to eat new food. She must learn new ways of interacting with others. And she must learn to trust her new family. Students will enjoy reading about even the most mundane activity as they experience it through Betti’s eyes. (IWL) 1, 4, 5, 9


American boy his own age, who has been sent to live with his aunt in Brother’s Alabama town. (SDW) 4, 5, 3


Half Brother. Kenneth Oppel. Scholastic Press, Scholastic. 368pp. Trade ISBN 978-0-545-22925-8, $17.99. Paperback F (Scholastic Press). (M, H) Zan, a chimpanzee, becomes part of Ben’s family as a participant in an advanced sign language experiment. Ben grows to love Zan as a brother; and as the research concludes, Ben has to make a difficult choice between obeying his father and protecting Zan. (EVH) 4

The Heart and the Bottle. Oliver Jeffers. Philomel. 32pp. Trade ISBN 978-0-399-25452-9, $17.99. (P) This is a brilliant story about love and loss and a little girl who isolates her heart from the rest of the world. (JEL) 4

Livvie Owen Lived Here. Sarah Dooley. Feiwel & Friends. 240pp. Trade ISBN 978-0-312-61253-5, $16.99. Paperback F (Square Fish, an imprint of Macmillan Children’s Publishing Group). (I, M) Livvie’s family has had to move repeatedly because of her outbursts, but she believes that she has a way to get back to a house where they were all happy. This touching novel is narrated by Livvie, a severely autistic 14-year-old girl. (ASL) 1, 4


Nothing. Janne Teller. Translated by Martin Aitken. Simon & Schuster Children’s Publishing. 240pp. Trade ISBN 978-1-4169-8579-2, $16.99. Library ISBN 978-1-4169-8579-2. (H) This edgy young adult novel set in Denmark challenges readers to consider what is truly meaningful in life. Young Pierre Anthon is overwhelmed by the seeming meaninglessness of life and decides he may as well live in a plum tree. His classmates attempt to convince him that life does have meaning. First, they argue and fight with him. Then they decide to collect their most valued possessions to prove to him that everyone has something in life that really does matter. (IW) 4, 5, 6


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Stand Straight, Ella Kate: The True Story of a Real Giant. Kate Klise. Illustrated by M. Sarah Klise. (P, I) Told with warmth and humor, this delightfully illustrated story of enterprising, eight-foot-tall Ella Kate Ewing, gently reminds the reader to acknowledge the challenges and accept the possibilities of physical differences. Author’s Note, Biographical and Physiological Notes on end sheets. (KK) 1, 4


The Water Seeker. Kimberly Willis Holt. Henry Holt Books for Young Readers. 320pp. Trade ISBN 978-0-8050-8020-9, $16.99. (M) A family saga of rough conditions along the Oregon Trail highlights a young man’s coming of age and the gift he and his father share of sensing where water can be found. (KK) 2, 3, 4

World History & Culture


London. Author’s Note, Bibliography. (ASL) 2, 3

Annexed. Sharon Dogar. Houghton Mifflin Books for Children / Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 352pp. Trade ISBN 978-0-547-50195-6, $17.00. (M, H) This historical novel, based on Anne Frank’s diary, tells us about the Holocaust from the perspective of Peter Van Pels, a 15-year-old boy hiding alongside Anne. Young adults can empathize with the historical figures. Author’s Note, Further Information. (SCP) 2, 4, 10


I Feel Better with a Frog in My Throat: History’s Strangest Cures. Carlyn Beccia. Houghton Mifflin Books for Children / Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 48pp. Trade ISBN 978-0-547-22570-8, $17.99. (I, M) An inquisitive examination of unusual cures used throughout history and whether or not these cures actually were effective. Selected Bibliography, Author’s Note. (JEL) 8, 1, 9

La Noche Buena: A Christmas Story


Refusing to Crumble: The Danish Resistance in World War II. Michael Burgan. Illustrated with photographs and prints. Compass Point Books, a Capstone division. 64pp. Library ISBN 978-0-7565-4298-6, $24.99. (M, H) How Danes, individually and in groups, fought back against the German occupation of their country. The book recounts stories of courage and daring, as Danes banded together to fight the invaders and to save their Jewish fellow citizens from being sent to concentration camps. Timeline, Glossary, Bibliography, Webliography, Index. (GAS) 6, 5


The Children's Book Council

The Children's Book Council is a not-for-profit trade association of publishers of trade books for children and producers of book-related materials for young people. The CBC offers children's publishers the opportunity to work together on issues of importance to the industry at large, including educational programming, literacy advocacy, and collaboration on development projects with other national organizations including NCSS. Every Child a Reader, the CBC Foundation, is responsible for managing Children's Book Week.

Other bibliographies on which the CBC cooperates are:

**Outstanding Science Trade Books for Students K-12**
Reprinted from the March issues of Science and Children, Science Scope, and The Science Teacher, a joint project of the National Science Teachers Association and the CBC. Single copies are available for $5. Send orders to the Children's Book Council, attn: Outstanding Science, 54 West 39th Street, 14th floor, New York, NY 10018. This list can also be found online at www.cbcbooks.org/reading lists/outstandingscience.

**Children's Choices**
Reprinted from the October issue of The Reading Teacher, a joint project of the International Reading Association (IRA) and the CBC. Single copies are available for $1.00 and a self-addressed stamped #12 envelope. For multiple copies of annotated lists, send $9 for 10 copies, $50 for 100 copies, or $185 for 500 copies. All prices include shipping and handling. Checks, payable to the International Reading Association, should be sent to IRA, Dept. EG, 800 Barksdale Road, P.O. Box 8139, Newark, DE 19714-8139.

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**National Council for the Social Studies**

National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) is a professional, non-profit association for social studies teachers and educators at all levels from early childhood through college. It engages and supports teachers in strengthening and advocating social studies.

NCSS publishes two major journals. Social Education addresses all levels of the profession, offering articles whose source ranges from the latest research to practical classroom ideas. Social Studies and the Young Learner is devoted to K-6 social studies education, meeting teachers' needs for new information and effective teaching activities. Middle Level Learning, which provides ideas and activities for the middle grades, is an online supplement to NCSS periodicals published three times a year.

As part of their membership benefits, NCSS members receive a subscription to Social Education or Young Learner. All members also receive the NCSS newsletter, The Social Studies Professional, which provides information on professional news, opportunities, resources for teachers, workshops, travel and study programs and NCSS activities.

NCSS developed and published the social studies standards, which are used nationally as a basis for curriculum planning and student performance assessment. The annotations of books in this list include references to the thematic strands of the social studies standards to which the book relates (see page 2).

This list of Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People is an NCSS member benefit, published in the May/June issue of Social Education, which is sent to all members who subscribe to Social Studies and the Young Learner, as well as to the regular subscribers of Social Education. The list is also available online to NCSS members at members.ncss.org; prior year lists are available at www.socialstudies.org/notable.

For information on membership and services, e-mail membership@ncss.org, call 301 588-1800, or visit www.socialstudies.org/membership. NCSS is located at 8555 Sixteenth Street, Suite 500, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910. Visit NCSS online at www.socialstudies.org.

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