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A Carter G. Woodson mural, photographed in 2009, on 9th St NW in Washington, DC

The Carter G. Woodson Book Award, 2022



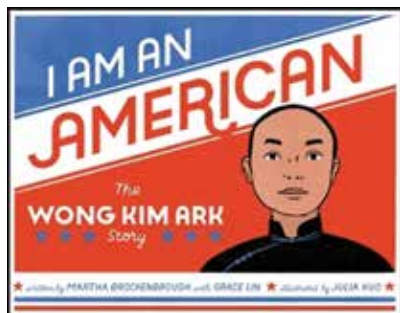
For nearly 50 years, the National Council for the Social Studies has presented the Carter G. Woodson Book Award to texts that accurately and sensitively depict the experience of one or more historically marginalized racial/ethnic groups in the United States. The award originated in 1974, named to honor distinguished scholar Dr. Carter Godwin Woodson, the Harvard-trained historian whose scholarship and dedication to making Black History known and visible led to the eventual creation of Black History Month. Texts must be non-fiction, published and set in the United States, written for elementary through high school-aged young people, and must accurately reflect and represent the racial/ethnic group(s) portrayed.

With many outstanding texts to consider, the Book Awards Committee paid special attention to books that elevate voices and stories that have particularly gone unnoticed in literature for young people and therefore might be absent from classrooms. In this way, we hope to diversify and increase the number of stories included and increase access to rich resources that can be incorporated into social studies. Several books selected also explore the intersectionality between two or more marginalized microcultures, giving readers and teachers the opportunity to explore the complexity surrounding identity. We hope these texts find their way into schools, libraries, and other places where people read, and enlarge readers' understanding of the diverse lived experiences of members of BIPOC communities.

—Heidi J. Torres, Chair,
Carter G. Woodson
Book Awards Committee

Elementary Level Winner

I Am an American: The Wong Kim Ark Story, by Martha Brockenbrough with Grace Lin, illustrated by Julia Kuo. Little, Brown and Company. Reviewed by Jennifer Welch, High School History Teacher, Passaic Academy for Science and Engineering, Passaic, New Jersey.



As the U.S.-born child of Chinese immigrants, Wong Kim Ark was detained when he returned to the United States,

in 1895, after a visit to China. Despite being born in California, he was not permitted to re-enter his birth country. Federal law had barred his parents, Chinese immigrants, from becoming naturalized citizens. Wong Kim fought the idea that he was not a U.S. citizen in court and was detained for five months on steamships off of San Francisco during the trial.

His case went to the Supreme Court, and in a landmark 1898 decision, Wong Kim Ark secured citizenship not only for U.S.-born Chinese, but for all children of immigrants. *I Am an American: The Wong Kim Ark Story* recounts how Wong Kim Ark's persistent struggle ensured that the Citizenship Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment applied to all those born in the United States to immigrants.

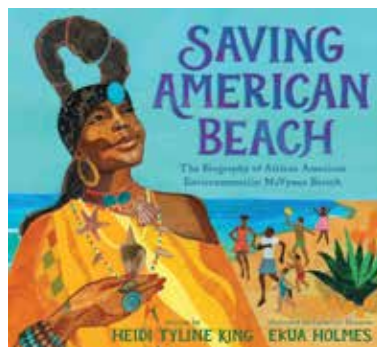
I Am an American makes clear, in a sensitive but age-appropriate way, the environment of discrimination and violence that Chinese immigrants and their descendants faced in the United States. This is an important story of discrimination and justice and how Wong Kim Ark lived out his commitment to U.S. citizenship, despite living in a country that told him he was not allowed to be an American.

This is a picture book with evocative and engaging illustrations that can also serve as an excellent introduction to Asian American immigration and citizenship law for use in middle school and secondary school classrooms.

Social Studies Standard: 5 INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, AND INSTITUTIONS; 6 POWER, AUTHORITY, AND GOVERNANCE; 7 CIVIC IDEALS AND PRACTICES.

Elementary Level Honoree

Saving American Beach: The Biography of African American Environmentalist MaVynee Betsch, by Heidi Tyline King, illustrated by Ekua Holmes. Putnam: G.P. Putnam's Sons. Reviewed by Sydney G. Beauchamp, Senior Lecturer, Department of Elementary Education, School of Education at Indiana University South Bend, Indiana.



This is a beautifully written and illustrated biography of opera singer and environmentalist MaVynee Betsch. Betsch's great grandfather, Abraham Lincoln

Lewis, purchased a beach in 1930s northern Florida so African Americans could swim free of the roped off, segregated sections of nearby beaches. It became a safe space to enjoy the music of Duke Ellington and Ray Charles. As a child, MaVynee Betsch found her passion for singing while dancing and enjoying the sandy shores of American Beach. She became an opera singer, traveling the world and delighting audiences. When her mother fell ill, Betsch returned home to help, and she reconnected with American Beach. However, her beloved beach had changed. It was littered and in need of repair. She literally lived on the beach, working day and night, to save it from commercial businesses and further pollution. Because of her efforts, American Beach is now on the National Register of Historic Places with the National Park Service.

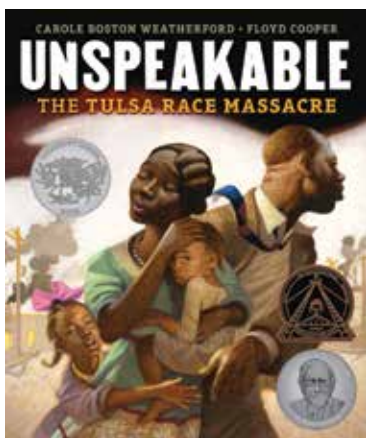
This is a powerful and timely story about African Americans as agents of change and about the preservation of our natural spaces. The Author's Note at the back of the book gives much context to the time period, and more information about MaVynee Betsch's extraordinary great grandfather. The stunning illustrations by Ekua Holmes bring this incredible story to life. Holmes's dedication at the front of the book includes the American Beach Museum website, which displays original photos and more history about the historic site.

Social Studies Themes: 1 CULTURE; 2 TIME, CONTINUITY,

AND CHANGE; ④ PEOPLE, PLACES, AND ENVIRONMENTS; ⑩ CIVIC IDEALS AND PRACTICES.

Middle Level Winner

Unspeakable: The Tulsa Race Massacre, by Carole Boston Weatherford, illustrated by Floyd Cooper. Carolrhoda Books. Reviewed by Ann Adkins, Fifth Grade Teacher, St. Pius X/St. Leo School, Omaha Nebraska.



With clear and sensitive language, Carole Boston Weatherford describes the rise of the successful Greenwood community in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and the circumstances that led to the Tulsa Race

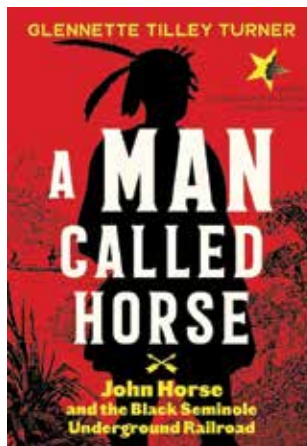
Massacre. Greenwood, a community inhabited by descendants of enslaved people, Black Indians, and others who had come to escape racism further South, was so economically successful it was known as “Black Wall Street.” The success of a Black community did not sit well with some white citizens of Tulsa, and, in May of 1921, rampaging white mobs attacked Black residents, destroying homes and businesses in the Greenwood District.

Until recently this was a largely untold story, and Weatherford’s narrative brings this event to a younger audience. Floyd Cooper’s impressionistic illustrations help readers identify with the deep emotions conveyed. The Author’s and Illustrator’s Notes add further insight and explain Cooper’s personal connection to the events. This book offers a powerful way to introduce students to a horrific episode in our history and can be used to spark more in-depth research into the events.

Social Studies Themes: ① CULTURE; ② TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE; ⑤ INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, AND INSTITUTIONS; ⑥ POWER, AUTHORITY, AND GOVERNANCE; ⑩ CIVIC IDEALS AND PRACTICES

Middle Level Honoree

A Man Called Horse: John Horse and the Black Seminole Underground Railroad, Glenette Tilley Turner. Harry N. Abrams/Abrams Books for Young Readers. Reviewed by Ann Adkins, Fifth Grade Teacher, St. Pius X/St. Leo School, Omaha Nebraska.



A man of mixed Seminole and African heritage, John Horse was a warrior, leader, army guide, interpreter, and advocate for his people. Beginning in 1812, in Florida, Glenette Tilley Turner’s story chronicles the triumphs and challenges of this Black Seminole chief.

John Horse’s life experiences were predicated on and complicated by his identity as a Black Seminole and the unfair treatment he and others who shared that heritage received as a result of this dual identity.

Turner’s book describes Horse’s travels and life from 1812 to 1882, detailing the stops and events in between. She describes the complicated interactions with both officials in the United States and in Mexico and Horse’s allegiances at different times to one or the other. She veers from Horse’s story to add details that explain more about the events impacting his life.

The book invites readers in with design elements on each page based on those found in archival photographs. There are many illustrations, engravings, photographs, maps, paintings, and portraits that help readers develop a better sense of the world in which John Horse lived.

This is a beautifully presented book that introduces readers to the powerful and little known story of a man who spent his life fighting for his people’s rights.

Social Studies Themes: ① CULTURE; ② TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE; ③ INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY; ⑤ INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, AND INSTITUTIONS; ⑥ POWER, AUTHORITY, AND GOVERNANCE.

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Secondary Level Winner

Race Against Time, by Sandra Neil Wallace and Rich Wallace. Calkins Creek. *Reviewed by Jennifer Welch, High School History Teacher, Passaic Academy for Science and Engineering, Passaic, New Jersey.*



In 1919, while Black farm workers in an Arkansas village church meeting were discussing unionizing, white mobs opened fire and set the building ablaze. Immediately, in what became known as the Elaine Massacre, vigilantes set upon the town's Black community, killing untold

numbers and dispossessing residents of their property. After days of rioting, federal troops arrested more than a hundred Black farmers. An all-white jury sentenced 12 defendants to death.

Race Against Time focuses on the Elaine Massacre, one of the numerous white supremacist riots carried out in more than three dozen U.S. cities during the "Red Summer" of 1919. The book is a gripping legal thriller that chronicles the heroics of Scipio Jones, attorney for the "Elaine 12."

Born into slavery, and barred from attending law school, Scipio Jones read law books on his own and subsequently passed the bar. A prominent Arkansas attorney, Jones was hired to defend the Black men charged in the Elaine massacre. He worked to protect the defendants both from white mobs attempting to lynch them and from the state government seeking to execute them.

This book briefly and effectively explains legal terms and procedures, while retaining the focus on the stories of the imprisoned men and their families as well as the threat to Jones, who slept in a different location each night to ensure his own safety.

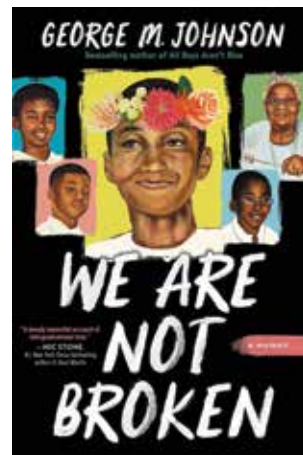
The beautiful pages include several news clippings and photographs from mainstream and

Black presses, giving students deeper insight with the primary documents.

Social Studies Standard: 5 INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, AND INSTITUTIONS; 6 POWER, AUTHORITY, AND GOVERNANCE; 10 CIVIC IDEALS AND PRACTICES.

Secondary Level Honoree

We are not Broken: A Memoir, by George M. Johnson. Little, Brown and Company Books for Young Readers. *Reviewed by Elizabeth Sturm, Associate Professor, Department of Special Education, College of Education and Social Sciences at Lewis University, Romeoville, Illinois.*



George Johnson, who uses the pronoun they, writes about growing up as a black boy in their grandmother's house, being shaped by her love, and the impact of spending significant time with other young family members.

Memoir, as a form of creative nonfiction, requires skill in staying true to the viewpoint of the storyteller. Johnson exhibits this skill and even recounts exchanging memories later in life with a cousin and realizing that their memories differed.

Towards the end of the memoir about a childhood spent with their brother, cousins, and grandmother Nanny, Johnson writes, "No matter how we each remember those times, the stories are still valid and vivid. Different viewpoints but a shared truth that can't be erased." (p.172).

This memoir is enhanced with a color photo section at the center, which reminds readers of the story's authenticity.

The shared truth in *We are not Broken* is of intergenerational love and how family terms—like the word "brother"—carry more than biological meaning. Adolescents will identify with the events, funny, loving, serious, and sad, that Johnson recalls.

Social Studies Themes: 1 CULTURE; 2 TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE; 7 INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY.