History and History Makers: Of People and Places

chapter 8

The United States has always viewed history in its own way. More than a century ago, Ralph Waldo Emerson described the great American tradition as "trampling on tradition," and Abraham Lincoln said that Americans had a "perfect rage for the new." But by the beginning of the twentieth century, Americans were feeling more confident and began to look back. U.S. history became a standard part of the school curriculum, thousands of towns erected statues of Abraham Lincoln and Ulysses S. Grant, and historical pageants flourished, including in the South, where Confederates began to look back with pride on their role in the Civil War.

We are including both fiction and nonfiction in this chapter because the two genres complement each other. And especially in relation to war, it is almost impossible to separate memoirs and autobiographical writings from fiction. We are also including materials written for both adults and young adults because the reporting of history for a general audience is often done in a manner accessible to young readers. We will first write a general introduction to historical fiction, then head to the American West, and then look at books about war, the Holocaust, and Vietnam.

TABLE 8.1 Suggestions for Evaluating Historical Fiction

A good historical novel usually has	A poor historical novel may have
A setting that is integral to the story	A story that could have happened any time or any place. The historical setting is for visual appeal and to compensate for a weak story
An authentic rendition of the time, place, and people being featured	Anachronisms in which the author illogically mixes up people, events, speaking styles, social values, or technological developments from different time periods
An author who is so thoroughly steeped in the history of the period that he or she can be comfortably creative without making mistakes	Awkward narrations and exposition as the author tries to teach history through characters' conversations
Believable characters with whom young readers can identify	Oversimplification of the historical issues and a stereotyping of the "bad" and the "good" guys
Evidence that even across great time spans people share similar emotions	Characters who fail to come alive as individuals having something in common with the readers. They are just stereotyped representatives of a particular period
References to well-known events or people or other clues through which the reader can place the happenings in their correct historic framework	
Readers who come away with the feeling that they know a time or place better. It is as if they have lived in it for at least a few hours	

Focus Box 8.1

Historical Fiction about the United States

Bread and Roses, Too by Katherine Paterson. Clarion, 2006. As she did in her 1992 *Lyddie*, Paterson writes about the awful labor conditions that existed in the New England mills at the turn of the last century when prejudices and ethnic rivalries added a new layer of danger to already tense labor protests.

Copper Sun by Sharon Draper. S & S/Atheneum, 2006. The worst aspects of slavery and the best sides of friendship are illustrated through this story of a fifteen-year-old girl taken to a Carolina plantation from her African home.

Counting on Grace by Elizabeth Winthrop. Random, 2006. Winthrop's story was inspired by a Lewis Hines 1910 photo of a French Canadian girl, who was one of the "mill rats," working long hours in terrible conditions.

Hattie Big Sky by Kirby Larson. Delacorte, 2006. Hattie is an orphan who at age sixteen inherits a land claim in Montana. When she sets out from Iowa, she has no idea of the hardships ahead or of the kinds of prejudice, as well as the kinds of support and help, that she will receive from strangers as she works to save her claim.

The Horse Thief: A Novel by Robert Newton Peck. HarperCollins, 2002. It is 1938 in Chickalooke, Florida, and seventeen-year-old Tullis Yoder has a job taking care of the horses in a rodeo. When the owner falls on hard times and decides to sell the horses to a slaughterhouse, Tullis and various "helpers" steal the horses and lead them to life.

How It Happened in Peach Hill by Marthe Jocelyn. Random, 2007. During the Roaring Twenties, fifteen-year-old Annie travels through upstate New York with her mother who advertises herself as a spiritual adviser and fortune-teller. In a short-lived scheme, Annie pretends to be severely retarded so she can tell her mother what she overhears.

Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy by Gary D. Schmidt. Clarion, 2004. Schmidt was on summer vacation in Maine when he heard the haunting story of how at the turn of the century an African American community was "cleared off" from a Maine island so that a nearby community could develop its tourist industry.

Lyddie by Katherine Paterson. Dutton, 1992. Lyddie goes to work in a Massachusetts textile mill when her family goes broke and finds a cause in a labor movement.

No Promises in the Wind by Irene Hunt. Follett, 1970. During the Great Depression, fifteen-year-old Josh leaves home with his brother and a friend to find shelter and food.

Sacrifice by Kathleen Benner Duble. Simon and Schuster, 2005. In 1692 Massachusetts, Abigail and her sister are accused and imprisoned for being witches. Their mother comes up with a terrible plan to free them.

Uncommon Faith by Trudy Krisher. Holiday House, 2003. Cataclysmic events nearly always have repercussions long after the event itself, and Krisher's book does a wonderful job of illustrating this in relation to a Millbrook, Massachusetts, livery fire that in the summer of 1837 killed six people and injured many others.

An Unlikely Friendship: A Novel of Mary Todd Lincoln and Elizabeth Keckley by Ann Rinaldi. Harcourt, 2007. After Abraham Lincoln is assassinated, Mary Todd Lincoln asks to have her best friend, former slave, and dressmaker Elizabeth Keckley, brought to her. This is the story of both women.

The Unresolved by T. K. Welsh. Dutton, 2006. On June 15, 1904, more than a thousand people from the German section of New York City die in a terrible fire that during an afternoon pleasure cruise sweeps the *General Slocum* steamship. Welsh gives the story a supernatural slant through the part played by the ghost of fifteen-year-old Mallory Meer, whose Jewish boyfriend (a survivor) is accused of starting the fire.

Focus Box 8.2

Historical Fiction about the World

The Book of Mordred by Vivian Vande Velde. Houghton Mifflin, 2005. After the fall of Camelot, a young widow seeks help from young Sir Mordred. Velde portrays a lost time when King Arthur and Mordred disagree on what is right for Camelot.

The Book of the Lion by Michael Cadnum. Viking, 2000. Seventeen-year-old Edmund goes to the Holy Land as knight crusader's squire and takes part in the bloody Battle of Arsuf.

Broken Song by Kathryn Lasky. Viking, 2005. Reuven, a Jewish boy in Russia at the turn of the last century, made his first appearance in Lasky's 1981 *The Night Journey*, but now he's back for this well-researched account of anti-Semitism in Russia and what it took for him to save his sister and himself.

Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine asks Princess Alais of France to bring back a packet of letters hidden in Canterbury Cathedral. Alais learns that she is not the only one interested in the letters.

nte's Daughter by Kimberley Burton Heuston. Front Street, 2003. This fictional memoir is a good illustration of how an author can make a story more interesting to young readers by having it told through the eyes of a young person, in this case, Dante's only daughter, Antonia Alighieri, who eventually entered a convent.

The Edge on the Sword by Rebecca Tingle. Putnam, 2001. Set in late ninth-century England, this is the imagined story of the teen years of Ethelflaed of Mercia, an extraordinarily accomplished woman noted in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.

Frontier Wolf by Rosemary Sutcliff. Dutton, 1980. A young Roman commander of a group of scouts in northern England must begin a retreat from the forces of native tribes.

Incantation by Alice Hoffman. Little, Brown, 2006. Hoffman uses the background of the Spanish Inquisition to tell a powerful story of friendship, faith, jealousy, resilience, and love. The protagonist is sixteen-year-old Estrella, whose family pretends to be Catholic but secretly keeps their Jewish faith.

A Single Shard by Linda Sue Park. Clarion, 2001. This winner of the Newbery Medal is set in twelfth-century Korea and is a good illustration of the archetypal journey. A young orphan apprentices himself to a master craftsman of celadon pottery and the journey occurs when he must take a sample of his master's work to the royal palace.

The Squire, His Knight, and His Lady by Gerald Morris. Houghton Mifflin, 1999. Along with *The Squire's Tale* (Houghton Mifflin, 1998), this lively and humorous book straddles historical fiction and fantasy.

Thursday's Child by Sonya Hartnett. Candlewick, 2002. This novel makes clear that life in the Australian Depression was no better than that during the American Depression.

Some Consistently Good Writers of YA Historical Fiction

Laurie Halse Anderson *Fever 1793*, which tells how fourteen-year-old Mattie's life changes, is a wonderful example of good writing. Church bells ring out, announcing the yellow fever that strikes down hundreds of people in Philadelphia, including one of Mattie's friends. Mattie's family struggles to keep their coffeehouse open, but when Mattie's mother becomes ill, Mattie tried to escape. Laurie Halse Anderson's novel, as teachers and librarians have recognized, pairs naturally with Jim Murphy's *An American Plague: The True and Terrifying Story of the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793*.

Tracy Chevalier Although a writer of books for adults, Tracey Chevalier has been found by many teenagers who read her novels and consider her one of their own. Two of her historical novels are especially fine and deserve to be recommended. *Girl with a Pearl Earring* is about sixteen-year-old Griet, who must help to support her family. She is hired by the Johannes Vermeer family and immediately disliked by the wife and daughter. Vermeer is constantly in debt, mostly because he paints so slowly and produces few canvases. Griet grows closer to the painter as she mixes and prepares paints, and Vermeer uses Griet as a model for his most famous painting. *Girl with a Pearl Earring* was filmed in 2003 and is almost as good as the book.

In *The Lady and the Unicorn*, the impecunious Nicholas des Innocents convinces a nobleman to commission six tapestries of unicorns—with Nicholas's designs—to be placed in the nobleman's mansion. Nicholas goes to Brussels to visit a master weaver. In all these travels, the successfully virile Nicholas meets and seduces women, all of whom become part of his designs in the tapestries. The novel is full of the sights and sounds and beauty and ugliness of the last years of the fifteenth century. As Wendy Smith concluded her review of Chevalier's book in the December 21, 2003, *New York Times Book Review*, acknowledging that Nicholas has changed: "He's still no saint, but through him, Chevalier reminds us that art has the power to illuminate the understanding of those who make it as well as those who view it."

Bruce Clements In *The Treasure of Plunderell Manor*, Bruce Clements has written a very funny book that is at once an historical novel and a spoof of historical and Gothic novels. It begins with Laurel heading for Plunderell Manor to

become the maid of Alice, heir to the manor. Laurel meets Lord and Lady Stayne who ask Laurel to spy on Alice. Later, sanctimonious Lady Stayne asks Alice if she is well. Then she turns to Laurel, who is Catholic, and says,

> And you? We must concern ourselves with your soul, too. Catholics go to hell, from the Pope on down. Just because you are simple and ignorant and weak, God will not forgive you for being a child of Rome. You may do as you wish, of course, but my advice is that you join the Anglican Church immediately.

Here the adventures begin. The Staynes drop Laurel and Alice at a deserted monastery, assuming the girls will soon die of cold or starvation. Alice is incapable of doing anything remotely helpful, but Laurel saves the day. In fact, she's forced to save several days during the rest of the book.

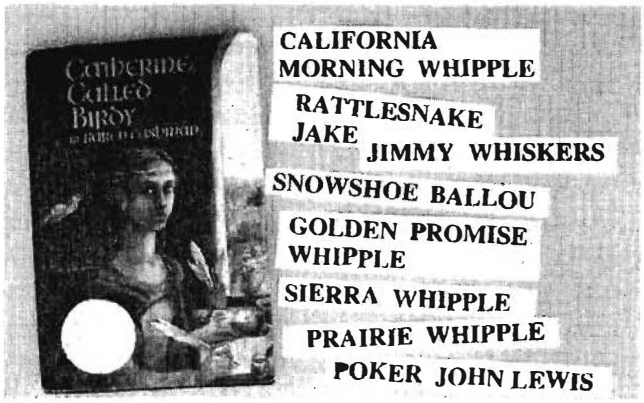
Christopher and James Lincoln Collier These two brothers specialize in historical fiction. Their best-known book, *My Brother Sam Is Dead*, comes from the time of the Civil War and was a Newbery Award book. *The Bloody Country* and *The Winter Hero* continue the story. Another trilogy, *War Comes to Willy Freeman, Jump Ship to Freedom,* and *Who Is Carrie?* focuses on African Americans and their role in early American history. Throughout the 1990s, the two produced the *Drama of American History* series for Benchmark Books.

Karen Cushman Karen Cushman has chosen to write about girls embarking on journeys to discover themselves. Her first two books are set in medieval Europe. *Catherine Called Birdy* (Newbery Award book) is the diary of a fourteen-year-old daughter of a knight whose feisty and witty observations bring the thirteenth century to life in ways that few historians could. In *The Midwife's Apprentice,* Cushman looks at the same period, but at a different part of the social scale. She writes about an orphan who manages to get herself apprenticed to a midwife. Her 2003 *Rodzina* has a similar plot, except that it is set in the American West in 1881. Rodzina is a large, ungainly Polish American girl who is sent west on an orphan train. As the train moves along, she sees the younger and more attractive children adopted. The two invitations she receives are disastrous and she runs away and returns to the train, finally making herself so useful that she becomes an assistant to the woman she calls "Miss Doctor." California's gold rush is the setting for *The Ballad of Lucy Whipple.* Lucy, whose original name was California Morning Whipple, finds herself dragged "like a barrel of lard" from Massachusetts to Lucky Diggings, California. The gold she finds is in pie-baking.

The Loud Silence of Francine Green is a recent work by Cushman. Set in 1949 in Los Angeles during an early anti-communist hysteria mixed with worries about the atomic bomb, thirteen-year-old Francine is an average girl until she meets Sophie, a thorough-going nonconformist. Francine learns about freedom and life, and she begins to question everything from her parents' indifference to Sister Basil's punishment of Sophie for the "sin of intellectual curiosity."

Jennifer Donnelly Donnelly has a single historical novel but one of the best. *A Northern Light* is based in part on the sensational murder of Grace Brown, whose body was found in Big Moose Lake in the Adirondack Mountains. While not the

One of the ways that Karen Cushman establishes her historical books is to choose names that fit into the period. The names in her Catherine Called Birdy *were different from those in* The Ballad of Lucy Whipple, *shown on the right, but they were created through similar linguistic processes.*



center of Donnelly's novel, the murder is always there, lurking in the background. It's better known to most adults as the basis for Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*.

Donnelly's novel is about sixteen-year-old Mattie, who lives a life of near poverty in 1906. Her mother is dead, and her father has hardened and is almost unreachable. Mattie, her sister Beth, and Weaver, a young African American boy who is Mattie's closest friend, love to play with language. Each day, one of them selects a word, like *inquisition*, and the three duel back and forth, supplying synonyms until they are bored.

When Mattie's friend has twins and Mattie helps, Mattie learns an important distinction between reality and literature. Of all the books she had read, "not one of them tells the truth about babies. Dickens doesn't. Oliver's mother just dies in childbirth and that's that. Brontë doesn't. Catherine Earnshaw just had her daughter and that was that. There's no blood, no sweat, no pain, no fear, no stink. Writers are damned liars. Every single one of them."

Mattie takes a job as a waiter at a resort on Big Moose Lake. She meets Grace Brown, a resort guest, who leaves a packet of letters with Mattie. Before she goes boating with her boyfriend, Grace asks Mattie to burn these letters if she doesn't return. Grace doesn't return.

When her teacher, Miss Wilcox, who loves Jane Austen, asks Mattie what she thinks of books, Mattie answers,

> Well, it seems to me that there are books that tell stories, and then there are books that tell truths. . . . The first kind, they show you life like you want it to be. With villains getting what they deserve and the hero seeing what a fool he's been and marrying the heiress and happy endings and all that. Like *Sense and Sensibility* and *Persuasion*. But the second kind, they show you life like it is. Like in *Huckleberry Finn* where Huck's Pa is a no-good drunk and Jim suffers so. The first kind makes you cheerful and contented but the second kind shakes you up.

Leon Garfield Wit, humor, and liveliness permeate Leon Garfield's books. His world is the eighteenth century, with an occasional detour into early nineteenth-

century England. Garfield set a standard for historical writing that few can match. Garfield's eighteenth century is the world of Fielding and Smollett—lusty, squalid, ugly, bustling, and swollen, full of life and adventure and the possibility that being born an orphan may lead you ultimately to fame and fortune. His stories play with reality versus illusion, daylight versus dreams, flesh versus fantasy. His ability to sketch out minor characters in a line or two is impressive. Of a man in *The Sound of Coaches,* he wrote, "He was one of those gentlemen who [e]ffect great gallantry to all the fair sex except their wives." Of the protagonist we are told, "although jealousy was ordinarily foreign to Sam's nature, they did, on occasion, talk the same language." The funniest of Garfield's books are *The Strange Affair of Adelaide Harris* and its sequel, *The Night of the Comet.* In *Adelaide,* Bostock and Harris, two nasty pupils in Dr. Bunnion's Academy, become so entranced with stories of Spartan babies abandoned on mountaintops, there to be suckled by wolves, that they borrow Harris's baby sister to determine for themselves the truth of the old tales. Therein begins a wild comedy of errors and an even wilder series of coincidences and near duels and wild threats that hardly let up until the last lines.

Carolyn Meyer When Carolyn Meyer wrote nonfiction books, she frequently found herself coming up against blank walls where she could find no more information. Because she wanted the stories to continue, she began asking, "What if?" and so began her career as a writer of fiction. Her most highly acclaimed books are probably *White Lilacs,* about the dismantling of a black community in early Texas; *Mary, Bloody Mary,* about the youth of the woman who became one of England's most unpopular rulers; and *Where the Broken Heart Still Beats: The Story of Cynthia Ann Parker,* about a woman who was captured by Comanche Indians at age nine and unsuccessfully "rescued" by white settlers years later. Two recent Meyer books are *Patience, Princess Catherine*, in which the young princess goes to England to become queen, only to have her young husband die, which leaves her waiting seven years to learn what the new king has planned for her. In *Marie, Dancing*, Meyer writes a fictional portrait of the ballet dancer who was the model for Degas's statue, "The Little Dancer."

Scott O'Dell *The King's Fifth* is probably Scott O'Dell's most convincing work, with its picture of sixteenth-century Spaniards and the moral strains put on anyone involved in the search for gold and fame. It is convincing, often disturbing, and, like most of O'Dell's historical novels, generally worth pursuing. Students coming to high school with a good reading background probably already know O'Dell from his *Island of the Blue Dolphins* and *Sing Down the Moon*, both of which present original and positive portrayals of young Native American women suffering at the hands of white settlers in the middle to late 1800s. He was a pioneer in featuring strong young women in these two books, and within the last couple of decades several good writers have followed his lead.

Ann Rinaldi Among Ann Rinaldi's best books are *A Break with Charity: A Story about the Salem Witch Trials* and *Cast Two Shadows,* a Civil War story. She tackled a particularly ambitious subject in *Wolf by the Ears*, a fictional story of Sally Hemmings's family. Sally was a mulatto slave in Thomas Jefferson's household,

and some historians believe that Jefferson fathered several of her children. Rinaldi's book implies that this is true, but the question is never clearly answered, even though the protagonist, supposedly Jefferson's daughter, asks it often enough. The book's title comes from Jefferson's statement about slavery: "as it is, we have the wolf by the ears and we can neither hold him, nor safely let him go. Justice is in one scale, and self-preservation the other." Most of Rinaldi's numerous books deal with some aspect of the Revolutionary or the Civil War.

Mildred D. Taylor Her own family history provided Mildred D. Taylor with material for her prize-winning series. *The Land* won the 2002 Coretta Scott King Award. It was written as a prequel to the earlier books *Song of the Trees*; *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*; *Let the Circle Be Unbroken*; and *The Road to Memphis.* Together, the series chronicles the generations of the Logan family, African American landowners near Vicksburg, Mississippi. *The Land* opens in post–Civil War Georgia when Paul-Edward Logan is about to leave his childhood behind. He is the son of a white plantation owner and a former slave of African American and Native American descent, and he is confused by his station in society. He has always been treated much like his white brothers, but now that he is approaching manhood, his father begins to treat him differently. The father thinks he might save the boy's life by teaching him that his welfare will always be subject to the whims and desires of white men. As reviewer James Blasingame said in *The English Journal,* "The author is fair to her characters, creating good and bad people of all races and genders, while keeping the reality of place and time. Rereading the previously written novels will be even more enjoyable after reading *The Land.*"[5]

Rosemary Sutcliff From her excellent early novel in 1954, *The Eagle of the Ninth,* through her 1990 *The Shining Company,* Rosemary Sutcliff has been acclaimed as the finest writer of British historical fiction for young people. We must find ways for librarians and teachers to get her books to the right young readers, those who care about history and a rattling good story, and who are not put off by a period of time they know little about. *The Shining Company* may be harder to sell than her earlier books about the Normans and the Saxons (e.g., *The Shield Ring* and *Dawn Wind*) because it is set in a more obscure time, seventh-century Britain. Sutcliff knew about the cries of men and the screams of stricken horses and the smell of blood and filth, and she cared about people who make history, whether knaves or villains or, in this case, naïve men who trusted their king and themselves beyond common sense.

Frances Temple *The Ramsay Scallop* is a wonderful book about medieval Europe. In it, Frances Temple describes the apprehension that thirteen-year-old Eleanor of Ramsay feels as she awaits marriage to twenty-two-year-old Lord Thomas of Thornham. Thomas is no happier about his upcoming marriage because he has become cynical about life and religion after fighting in the Crusades. Father Gregory sends them off on a pilgrimage to the cathedral in Santiago, Spain, and asks that they remain chaste during the trip. Temple's portraits of the people and the time and the friendships they form and the deceit and pain

Focus Box 8.3

New Books about the History of the Civil Rights Movement

Cause: Reconstruction America 1863–1877 by Tonya Bolden. Alfred Knopf, 2005. Archival photos, excellent graphics, and political cartoons help Bolden achieve a sense of storytelling as she writes about the Civil Rights Act of 1866, the plight of Native Americans and freed slaves, and the women's suffrage movement during a time of national expansion. Chapter titles are intriguing quotes as with "Why Is This, Ma?" a question that a black child asks about the family's treatment at a train station.

Day of Tears: A Novel in Dialogue by Julius Lester. Hyperion, 2005. The book begins with the largest slave auction in United States history, which was held in 1859 on Pierce Butler's plantation in Georgia. The book is recommended for reading aloud or for reader's theater because so much of the story is told through monologues and reminiscences.

Elijah of Buxton by Christopher Paul Curtis. Scholastic, 2007. Web links that will bring added meaning to Curtis's story of an eleven-year-old boy, who was born free in the Buxton Settlement in Canada, and then became the youngest "conductor" on the underground railroad include www.blackhistoricalmuseum.com/history.htm; www.undergroundrailroadconductor.com; www.nps.gov/archive/frdo/freddoug.html; www.buxtonmuseum.com and www.asu.edu/clas/english/englished/yalit/elijah/index.html/. This last one was prepared as a webquest by our students at Arizona State University.

Fire from the Rock by Sharon Draper. Dutton, 2007. Draper tells the fictional story of a young girl chosen in 1957 to be one of the first black students to enroll in Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. Chapters alternate between the girl's journal and third-person accounts of the events.

5,000 Miles to Freedom: Ellen and William Craft's Flight from Slavery by Judith Fradin. National Geographic, 2006. In this true story from 1848, a fair-skinned black woman disguises herself as Mr. William Johnson, accompanied by a black slave, who was really her husband. They first escaped to the North and then went on to England where they gave speeches and worked for abolition. After the Civil War, they returned to Georgia to run a farm and open a school.

Freedom Riders: John Lewis and Jim Zwerg on the Front Lines of the Civil Rights Movement by Ann Bausum. National Geographic, 2006. Bausum tells the story of the 1960s Civil Rights movement through the eyes of two young men—one white and one black—who joined in the freedom rides of the 1960s. Bausum's book was honored as the most distinguished piece of youth literature written in 2006 by a Wisconsin resident.

Getting Away with Murder: The True Story of the Emmett Till Case by Chris Crowe. Phyllis Fogelman, 2003. Crowe regretted that he never heard about Emmett Till's death

they meet are brilliant. Temple has written several more contemporary books about young refugees as in *Grab Hands and Run* and *A Taste of Salt.*

Current Historical Interests

Just as there are fashions and fads in clothing, toys, dances, and music, the world of book publishing also has its trends. An issue or a concern gets in the news with people talking about it on television and online and articles appearing in magazines and newspapers. Pretty soon someone writes a book that is well received and then someone else writes another well-received book, which inspires further investigation and writing. Over the past decade, this happened with two subjects as shown by Focus Box 8.3, New Books about the History of the Civil Rights Movement, and Focus Box 8.4, New Books about Native Americans. As much as any other YA author Walter Dean Myers is responsible for bringing

until forty years after it happened. He wrote his well-researched book in hopes that other kids would not grow up as uninformed as he was. A year later, he also told the story in fiction form in *Mississippi Trial, 1955*.

My Mother the Cheerleader by Robert Sharenow. HarperCollins, 2007. The year is 1960 and the city is New Orleans. Thirteen-year-old Louise is yanked out of school because an African American child, Ruby Bridges, has enrolled in her school. Louise's mother runs a boarding house, but thanks to Louise taking over many of her chores, every morning she joins the other "cheerleaders" as they heckle Ruby Bridges and shout racial epithets. Louise gradually comes to sees the situation from new angles.

New Boy by Julian Houston. Houghton, 2005. It is the 1950s and fifteen-year-old Rob Garrett comes from the South to be the first African American to attend a prestigious Connecticut boarding school. He learns that prejudice wears different faces, especially when he visits a cousin in Harlem and meets Malcolm X and his followers.

The Power of One: Daisy Bates and the Little Rock Nine by Judith Fradin and Dennis Brindell Fradin. Clarion, 2004. Daisy Bates and her husband, L. C. Bates, published the *Arkansas State Press*, which in the 1950s presented news from the local black community not only for Little Rock, but for the world. She was the mentor and constant supporter of the nine African American students who in 1957 integrated Central High School in Little Rock.

A Summer of Kings by Han Nolan. Harcourt, 2006. Nolan uses her skill in characterization to present two believable teens living in New York City and traveling different routes leading up to the 1963 march in Washington, D.C., and Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, "I Have a Dream" speech.

We Are One: The Story of Bayard Rustin by Larry Dane Brimmer. Boyds Mills/Calkins Creek, 2007. Many people believe that Bayard Rustin, a lifelong advisor to Martin Luther King, Jr., was the intellect behind the Civil Rights movement.

We Shall Overcome: A Living History of the Civil Rights Struggle Told in Words, Pictures and the Voices of the Participants by Herb Boyd. Sourcebooks MediaFusion, 2004. Boyd uses a clear, journalistic style to tell his living history which begins with the murder of Emmett Till in 1955 and ends with the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1968. Each chapter is dedicated to a specific person or event.

A Wreath for Emmett Till by Marilyn Nelson, illustrated by Philippe Lardy. Houghton, 2005. Nelson used an arcane poetic form to prepare a crown of sonnets to honor Emmett Till. The last line of each of the fifteen poems becomes the first line of the next. Both the artwork and the formality provide readers with the distance they need to absorb the tragedy of the situation and to contemplate its implications.

African American characters into many highly acclaimed books—both fiction and nonfiction. See his write-up on p. 257.

Focus Box 8.4

New Books about Native Americans

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian by Sherman Alexie, art by Ellen Forney. Little, Brown, 2007. Although teens had already been reading Alexie's short stories which were the basis of the 1998 *Smoke Signals* film, this is the first of Alexie's books published as YA. In 2005, the Grove Press published a new and fuller edition of *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*, which had earlier been published by the Atlantic Monthly Press and also by HarperPerennial.

The Buffalo and the Indians: A Shared Destiny by Dorothy Hinshaw Patent, illustrated by William Muñoz. Clarion, 2006. Patent starts each chapter by retelling a Native myth. She is such a good writer, that she is able to communicate both the spiritual and the very practical ways in which the Plains Indians were connected to the bison that roamed the plains before Europeans came to America.

Crooked River by Shelley Pearsall. Knopf, 2005. This well-written piece of historical fiction for young teens is set in 1812 Ohio and tells the story of a slowly developing friendship between thirteen-year-old Rebecca Carver and Amik, an Indian man accused of murder and chained in the loft of the Carvers' cabin.

The Great Circle: A History of the First Nations by Neil Philip. Clarion, 2006. Readers will come away with a new appreciation for the difference between the doctrine of possession that seemed so natural to Europeans when they came to the "New World" and the view held by First Nation cultures that the earth is a great wheel with all people and animals joined together in a connected web.

Jim Thorpe: Original All-American by Joseph Bruchac. Dial, 2006. Bruchac tells Thorpe's story in first person, but sticks close to documented sources for the life of this most famous football player at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School. Kids will enjoy the fact that Pop Warner was the Carlisle coach.

The Relocation of the North American Indians by John M. Dunn. World History Series, 2005. An *SLJ* reviewer predicted that readers would find this carefully researched and well-balanced presentation, "anything but a textbook experience." There's good documentation, boxed quotes, and good-sized illustrations, maps, and photos.

Remember Little Bighorn: Indians, Soldiers, and Scouts Tell Their Stories by Paul Robert Walker. National Geographic, 2006. Walker tells a two-year story that runs from the summer of 1874 until June of 1876 and gives some new perspectives to an old story.

Saving the Buffalo by Albert Marrin. Scholastic, 2006. Although his title presents current attitudes toward the "Lord of the Great Plains," much of the book is about the earlier destruction of these animals. Marrin writes with vigor and does not shrink from the violence that was involved in "harvesting" buffalo and the desire to weaken Native Americans who depended on the buffalo for many things.

Wabi: A Hero's Tale by Joseph Bruchac. Dial, 2006. Tweeners are especially apt to enjoy this journey of self discovery. It is told through the character of Wabi, a horned owl with some unusual characteristics. When his great-grandmother tells him that some of his ancestors were human, he decides to become human so that he can court Dojihla, a girl from the Abenaki village. Of course there are complications.

Where the Great Hawk Flies by Liza Ketchum. Clarion, 2005. Two boys in 1782 are enemies and later friends—one white and one half-Indian.

The Winter People by Joseph Bruchac. Dial, 2002. Based on a true incident in the fall of 1759, Bruchac's coming-of-age story is about fourteen-year-old Saxso, an Abenaki boy, who is trying to rescue his mother and sisters who have been taken by the English. Bruchac's more contemporary *Bearwalker* (HarperCollins, 2007) is a teen mystery/adventure, which received starred reviews.

Wounded Knee by Neil Waldman. Atheneum, 2001. Waldmar gives different viewpoints about the events that led up to the infamous slaughter of Native Americans.

Margaret A. Edwards Award Winner (1994)

Walter Dean Myers, Bringing the Arts to a Second Generation

Hoops, *Motown and Didi: A Love Story*, *Fallen Angels*, and *Scorpions* were the books the Margaret A. Edwards committee honored, but Myers also has many other well-received YA books. His name dominates the list of Coretta Scott King Awards. His first YA book, *Fast Sam, Cool Clyde, and Stuff*, was a King Honor book in 1976, while King winners include *The Young Landlords*, in 1980; *Motown and Didi*, in 1985; *Fallen Angels*, in 1989; *Now Is Your Time! The African American Struggle for Freedom*, in 1992; and *Slam!*, in 1994. Other King Honor books include *Somewhere in the Darkness*, in 1993; *Malcolm X: By Any Means Necessary*, in 1994; and *Monster*, in 2000. His most recent book is *What They Found: Love on 145th Street* (Random, 2007).

Myers has frequently told audiences of booklovers how, when he was in something like third or fourth grade, he discovered from reading and from looking at the pictures in books that he was "different." He seldom found a black face in a book, and if it was there, it was a picture of someone he could not identify with. He set out to change this by becoming a writer about African Americans, first the people he knew in everyday life, and then later he was brave enough to go back and look into historical events.

His best known book is *Monster*, which was a nominee for the American Book Award and winner of the 2000 Printz Award. It is about a sixteen-year-old boy charged with being an accomplice in the murder of a Harlem drugstore owner. What makes the book so unusual is that the boy (Steve Harmon) is a budding screenwriter and so finds it easier to talk about his alleged crime as if it were being played out in a movie rather than in real life. Steve goes over and over his actions as he puts them into the script he is writing. The underlying question that he tries to push away from his mind is whether he is the monster that the prosecuting attorney describes.

Myers got the idea for the book and the way the boy uses third person whenever he is thinking or talking about the crime through interviewing inmates in New York and New Jersey prisons. In a February 4, 2000, interview for www.teenreads.com, Myers said he was struck by how frequently the young men denied being responsible for their actions. They used all kinds of verbal tricks to maintain their belief that they were really good people just caught up in bad circumstances.

In another interview published in the May 2007 *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, interviewers Keith Miller and Allison Parker noted that in several of Myers's books, the main characters have artistic inclinations. Steve Harmon in *Monster* is learning to make films, Spoon and Gabi in *The Beast* share a love for poetry, Crystal in the book named after her sings in a church choir and writes poetry, and Mark Purvis in *Harlem Summer* loves to play the saxophone and aspires to a career as a jazz musician. The interviewers asked Myers if he was trying to appeal to readers who gravitate toward the arts or if he was simply trying to give support to the arts at a time of reduced funding.

Myers answered, "My characters are often involved with the arts because of my own preoccupation with writing, music, and the graphic arts." Both Myers's wife and his son, Christopher, are fine artists, and he often collaborates with Christopher—as when Christopher did the illustrations for Myers's 2003 *Time to Love: Stories from the Old Testament*, his 2006 *Jazz*, and his 2005 *Autobiography of My Dead Brother*, the contemporary story of fifteen-year-old Jesse who lives in today's Harlem. He loves cartooning and sketching, while one of his friends is into music. But Rise, who is two years older and Jesse's best friend, moves away from the group and into a life of violence. Christopher Myers's realistic drawings of such characters as Jesse's worried parents, a local policeman, and kids in the neighborhood, along with a comic strip, inspired one reviewer to describe the book as "photorealism."

Focus Box 8.5

Westerns Too Tough to Die

American Massacre by Sally Denton. Knopf, 2003. Based on the Mountain Meadows Massacre of September 1857, this novel tells the story of a group of pioneers who were misled and then killed by Utah settlers who wanted to discourage travel through their state. The book has the power to raise voices in support of—and opposed to—her interpretation.

Borderlands by Peter Carter. Farrar Straus & Giroux, 1990. Ben Curtis joins a cattle drive in 1871, meets an African American he learns to respect, and loses his brother in a gunfight.

Clem's Chances by Sonia Levitin. Orchard, 2001. With his father chasing gold in California, his mother dead, and Clem being cheated by another family, Clem Fontayne decides his best option is to go west.

I Should Be Extremely Happy in Your Company: A Novel of Lewis and Clark by Brian Hall. Viking, 2003. Brian tells the story of the famous expedition from the viewpoints of Lewis, Clark, Sacagawea, and her interpreter husband. Jealousy erupts when Clark learns that President Jefferson had clearly chosen Lewis as the expedition's leader.

The Last Picture Show by Larry McMurtry. Dial, 1966. The end of the West comes to dusty and drying up Thalia, Texas, where even the movie house shuts down.

Little Big Man by Thomas Berger. Dial, 1964. An old-timer tells of his life in the Old West, his capture by the Cheyennes, his work as a scout for General Custer, and other realities and myths.

North to Yesterday by Robert Flynn. Knopf, 1967. A band of misfits are determined to drive cattle on the old trails—shut down ten years. It's a Western adventure with touches of Don Quixote.

The Professor's House by Willa Cather. Knopf, 1925. The most intriguing part of the novel is about Tom Outland and the discovery of what we now call Mesa Verde National Park.

Stop the Train by Geraldine McCaughrean. HarperCollins, 2001. In this rollicking adventure about the Oklahoma Land Rush in 1893, city slickers try to steal land from settlers.

Wagons West by Frank McLynn. Grove, 2002. McLynn describes the first overland wagon train to California in 1841 (and later ones as well) along with all the irritations and terrors of the journey across America.

Walking Up a Rainbow by Theodore Taylor. Harcourt, Brace, 1994. In the 1850s, fourteen-year-old Susan Darden Carlisle is left an orphan in Iowa. To save her family home, she sets out to drive several thousand sheep from Iowa to California.

West of Everything: The Inner Life of Westerns by Jane Tompkins. Oxford University Press, 1992. Tompkins writes about western literature, films, and everything in between or around or near. It is a wonderful book of scholarship—readable and enlightening.

Wounded Knee by Neil Waldman. Atheneum, 2001. Waldman gives different viewpoints about the events that led up to the infamous slaughter of Native Americans.

Focus Box 8.6

War's Effects on Young People

Ain't Gonna Study War No More by Milton Meltzer. Harper and Row, 1985. Meltzer traces pacifism in the United States starting with the Quakers.

Climb to Conquer: The Untold Story of World War II's 10th Mountain Division Ski Troops by Peter Shelton. Scribner, 2003. Young men, expert skiers, became part of the army in World War II and fought in Italy. At one time, the division had ten or fifteen of the top skiers in the world.

The Deserter's Tale: The Story of an Ordinary Soldier Who Walked Away from the War by Joshua Key and Lawrence Hill. Atlantic Monthly, 2007. Key enlisted in the army on the assurance that he would be sent to a "nondeployable" base and would never see combat. Instead, he was sent to Iraq to hunt terrorists. So he walked away.

Hiroshima: A Novella by Laurence Yep. Scholastic, 1995. Though the story is centered around Hiroshima residents, Yep also tells the story of the bomb itself.

Johnny Got His Gun by Dalton Trumbo. Lippincott, 1939. Filled with patriotic fervor, Joe enlists, but after the battle, he has no arms or legs, and he is blind, deaf, and mute.

Lord of the Nutcracker by Iain Lawrence. Delacorte, 2001. It is 1914 and a ten-year-old London boy is sent, for safety, to live with his aunt in the country. He lives the war, first its patriotism and then its horror, through tin soldiers that his toymaker father sends to him.

Kipling's Choice by Geert Spillbeen. Houghton Mifflin, 2005. John Kipling is determined to get into World War I. His father, Rudyard Kipling, helps him join the Irish Guards. He is wounded and dies slowly on the battlefield.

The Loud Silence of Francine Green by Karen Cushman. Clarion, 2006. It is August of 1949 and Francine is an eighth grader at All Saints School for Girls in Los Angeles. It is the Cold War and she gets in trouble for challenging her teachers' descriptions of "the Godless" communists.

Manzanar by John Armor and Peter Wright. Time Books, 1989. The two authors use Ansel Adams photographs and a commentary by John Hersey to create a record of this Japanese internment camp.

Or Give Me Death: A Novel of Patrick Henry's Family by Ann Rinaldi. Harcourt, 2003. Patty and Anne, the daughters of Patrick Henry and his mentally ill wife, tell their moving story in this book that found a place on *VOYA*'s Top Shelf Fiction for Middle School Readers.

Red Scarf Girl: A Memoir of the Cultural Revolution by Ji Li Jiang. HarperCollins, 1997. A young girl tells how she was asked to betray her Chinese family.

Slap Your Sides by M. E. Kerr. HarperCollins, 2002. Jubal Shoemaker is a Quaker who, in the midst of the patriotism of World War II, has mixed feelings about his brother's being a conscientious objector. See also Kerr's *Linger* (HarperCollins, 1993) about patriotism during the Persian Gulf War.

Soldier Boys by Dean Hughes. Atheneum, 2001. Parallel stories tell about two young soldiers, American Spencer Morgan and German Dieter Hedrick, who enter their country's service full of idealism, only to learn how hellish war is.

Under the Blood-Red Sun by Graham Salisbury. Delacorte, 1994. The bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, changes the life of a young Japanese American as he searches for his father and grandfather.

Unknown Soldiers: The Story of the Missing of the First World War by Neil Hanson. Knopf, 2006. Hanson writes about three soldiers—an American, a Frenchman, and a German—using letters to families to draw a picture of the horrors of war, the gas and explosives in one of the worst sectors of the Western Front.

When My Name Was Keoko: A Novel of Korea in World War II by Linda Sue Park. Clarion, 2002. A brother and a sister use the loss of their Korean names as the focus of their memories of the 1940s when Japan occupied Korea.

Zlata's Diary: A Child's Life in Sarajevo by Zlata Filipovic. Penguin, 1994. A fifth-grade girl kept a diary of the horrors, the friendships, and the love and the blood that she saw during the Serbian-Croatian war.

Focus Box 8.7

Experiencing the Holocaust to Keep It from Happening Again

After the Holocaust by Howard Greenfield. Greenwillow, 2001. Eight survivors of the Holocaust share their experiences on what happened to them after the defeat of Hitler.

After the War by Carol Matas. Simon and Schuster, 1996. A survivor of Buchenwald returns to her small town in Poland. When she can find no news of her relatives, she joins an underground group who smuggle her into Palestine.

Auschwitz: The Story of a Nazi Death Camp by Clive A. Lawton. Candlewick, 2002. Lawton has written a good introductory book with two-page chapters, which are arranged chronologically so that the book moves from mundane facts about building an organization to horrendous information about medical experiments and the disposing of bodies.

The Beautiful Days of My Youth: My Six Months in Auschwitz and Plaszow by Ana Novac. Holt, 1997. As Nazis kill and cremate concentration camp victims, Novac keeps a diary of the horrors.

The Boy in the Striped Pajamas: A Fable by John Boyne. Random/David Fickling Books, 2006. Nine-year-old Bruno, the only child in an affluent German family, is shocked when his family moves to a place in Poland where, from his new bedroom window, he can see a high wire fence and hundreds of people wearing striped pajamas.

Dancing on the Bridge of Avignon by Ida Vos. Houghton Mifflin, 1995. In Nazi-occupied Holland, Rosa finds solace in her violin while being Jewish becomes more and more dangerous. Read also *Anna Is Still Here* (Houghton Mifflin, 1993) and *Hide and Seek* (Houghton Mifflin, 1991).

Hidden Child by Isaac Millman. Farrar/Frances FosterBooks, 2005. For middle school students, this seventy-three-page biography tells the story of a Jewish boy whose Parisian mother bribed officials to take him out of the deportation line and to a hospital. Six years later when he is fifteen, he is adopted by an American Jewish family.

Hiding to Survive: Stories of Jewish Children Rescued from the Holocaust by Maxine B. Rosenberg. Clarion, 1994. Fourteen Americans, now in their fifties and sixties, remember what they can of being hidden.

In Kindling Flame: The Story of Hannah Senesh, 1921–1944 by Linda Atkinson. Lothrop, Lee and Shepard, 1985. Senesh, a Hungarian Jew, was a resistance fighter. See also *Hannah Senesh: Her Life and Diary* (Schocken, 1972).

The Key Is Lost by Ida Vos, translated by Terese Eddelstein. HarperCollins, 2000. The author writes from her own childhood memories when she and her sister were separated from their parents and forced into hiding during the Nazi occupation of Holland.

One, by One, by One: Facing the Holocaust by Judith Miller. Simon and Schuster, 1990. A journalist examines how West Germany, Austria, France, the Netherlands, Russia, and the United States each handled its responsibility for the Holocaust.

Return to Auschwitz by Kitty Hart. Atheneum, 1982. Thirty years after surviving the Holocaust, Hart returns to the camp to help make an English documentary.

The Righteous: The Unsung Heroes of the Holocaust by Martin Gilbert. Holt, 2003. The author collected stories of people who helped save Jews from Hitler's killing machine.

Sala's Gift: My Mother's Holocaust Story by Ann Kirschner. Free Press, 2006. At sixty-seven, Sala Garncarz Kirschner gave her daughter a present, a collection of papers about her life from 1940 when she thought she would be working six weeks in a Nazi labor camp to 1946 when she arrived in New York as a war bride.

Someone Named Eve by Joan M. Wolf. Clarion, 2007. Wolf tells a fictionalized story of a young Jewish girl from the Czechoslovakian village of Lidice who was one of the ten children chosen from the doomed village to be taken to a Lebensborn center for "Germanization."

Suite Française by Irène Némirovsky. Knopf, 2004. Nemirovsky, a Russian born Jew who migrated to France at an early age, was an accomplished novelist when she was arrested and taken to Auschwitz where she died at the age of 39. Her daughters saved her notebooks but did not read them until sixty years later when they were surprised to discover in their mother's tiny handwriting the polished story now published as *Suite Française*.

Surviving Hitler: A Boy in the Nazi Death Camps by Andrea Warren. HarperColllins, 2001. The many photographs will help middle school students relate to this account of a boy's experiences in one of the death camps.

Yellow Star by Jennifer Roy. Marshall Cavendish, 2006. Middle schoolers will appreciate the detailed observations in this moving retelling of the experiences of Jennifer Roy's Aunt Syvia in the Lodz Ghetto during the Nazi occupation of Poland.

Focus Box 8.8

Nonfiction Books about Vietnam

American Daughter Gone to War: On the Front Lines with an Army Nurse in Vietnam by Winnie Smith. Pocket Books, 1994. As an idealistic twenty-one-year-old, Smith requested assignment as a combat nurse. She went on duty in an intensive care unit in Saigon caring for soldiers flown directly in from the battlefield.

Bloods: An Oral History of the Vietnam War by Black Veterans by Wallace Terry. Ballantine, 1984. As a reporter in Vietnam, Terry began interviewing African American soldiers. He continued the practice when he returned home and has arranged the interviews in a book that speaks to such issues as race relations and media manipulation.

Born on the Fourth of July by Ron Kovic. Pocket Books, 1976. Because of the powerful 1989 movie made by Oliver Stone (starring Tom Cruise) students will already be aware of how Kovic came home from Vietnam in a wheelchair, how he was embittered by the way the Veteran's Administration treated him, and how he became involved in the antiwar movement.

Dispatches by Michael Herr. Vintage, 1991. Larry Johannessen says that of all the books he has taught, this is the one that does the best job of capturing the *feel* of Vietnam.

Everything We Had: An Oral History of the Vietnam War by Thirty-Three American Solders Who Fought It by Al Santoli. Ballantine, 1981. Santoli's interviews with men and women take readers through the war from 1962 until the fall of Saigon in 1971.

Homecoming: When the Soldiers Returned from Vietnam by Bob Greene. Ballantine, 1990. Greene is a syndicated columnist who solicited letters from soldiers asking them to tell about their coming-home experiences. The letters document the double war that the veterans had to fight—the one in Asia and the one at home.

If I Die in a Combat Zone by Tim O'Brien. Dell, 1987. O'Brien's book will help students see how Vietnam literature fits into the bigger body of war literature because it starts with O'Brien's going to war identifying with the hero of Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms.*

In the Combat Zone: An Oral History of American Women in Vietnam by Kathryn Marshall. Little, Brown, 1987. Marshall interviewed twenty women veterans and lets their diverse experiences and the way they tell them speak to an often overlooked part of the war.

Nam: The Vietnam War in the Words of the Men and Women Who Fought There by Mark Baker. Morrow, 1981. Berkley paperback. The interviewees come from a wide spectrum, and the interviews are so well done that many people feel this is the "classic" answer to the question of "What was Vietnam really like?"

Offerings at the Wall: Artifacts from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Collection by Thomas B. Allen. Times Publishing, 1995. Allen took colored pictures of items left at the Wall and wrote the accompanying texts.

Patriots: The Vietnam War Remembered from All Sides by Christian G. Appy. Viking, 2003. A collection of 135 interviews from generals down (or up) to rag-tag soldiers allows readers to come to their own conclusions on what the war was or was not.

A Rumor of War by Philip Caputo. Ballantine, 1977. Caputo went to Vietnam as a young Marine infantry officer in 1965. His book documents his descent from innocence and idealism to disillusionment and despair, all within sixteen months.

Shrapnel in the Heart: Letters and Remembrances from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial by Laura Palmer. Random House, 1987. Palmer was a journalist who covered the war. Afterwards, she gathered 100 letters left at the Vietnam Memorial, traced down the writers, and then interviewed them for her book.

365 Days by Ronald J. Glasser, M. D. Bantam, 1971. Glasser was an Army doctor whose indictment of the war is built on elements of memoir, oral history, and fiction.

10,000 Days of Thunder: A History of the Vietnam War by Philip Caputo. Atheneum, 2005. Photos and maps add to Caputo's account of the war along with a superb bibliography.

Voices from Vietnam by Barry Denenberg. Scholastic, 1995. Anecdotes and horror stories all from Vietnam during the longest war in our history.

What Should We Tell Our Children about Vietnam? by Bill McCloud. University of Oklahoma Press, 1989. McCloud is a junior high social studies teacher who wrote letters to military leaders, ordinary and extraordinary veterans, politicians, protesters, and journalists, asking them to help him decide what to tell his students about Vietnam. The 128 published letters form one of the most readable records of the war.

When I Was a Young Man by Bob Kerry. Harcourt, 2002. An innocent young man sees the Vietnam War as good and patriotic, until on February 25, 1969, he leads his Navy Seal team on a raid into a Vietnamese village and kills thirteen women and children. In the process, he becomes someone he can no longer recognize.