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EDU HIS-6710 C07 – The Enduring Legacy of the American Revolution – Freedom

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Title: Empowering Arts: A Study of 19th Century Freedom Movements through Arts and Artifacts

Grade Level: K-3rd

Final Proposal Abstract:

The linked lessons in this plan are designed to introduce key concepts, events, and significant figures in the freedom movements to students in K-3rd grade, particularly through the arts. The rationale is twofold. First, for children to later understand complex issues in the fights for freedom (abolition of slavery and women's suffrage/equal rights), they need a foundation – basic familiarity with the concept of slavery, and an understanding of what life was like for slaves and for women prior to the passage of the 13th, 14th, 15th and 19th Amendments. Second, the arts are powerful tools for engaging children in historical content and reinforcing recognition of key figures, the heroes of the freedom movements. Young children (and perhaps all of us) learn best through doing things: moving, painting, singing, touching, examining, discussing, playing. To nurture historical inquiry, we must provide opportunities for young students to manipulate and play with historic content, just as the foundation of scientific inquiry is observation of and experimentation with real things.

Informal surveys of middle grade students' prior knowledge about the struggles of the 1800's often indicate some familiarity with Harriet Tubman and Abraham Lincoln, but usually no other 19th century figures, and little understanding of slavery. Likewise, it is a rare student who can name a prominent female figure (aside from Tubman) in American history. The activities herein are designed to address this gap.

Aside from recognition of prominent heroes, a secondary goal is to engage students in the fascinating personal stories of lesser known individuals who took risks to change their own lives or help others, or who had the courage to fight for what they believed in despite intense social pressure. Why did these individuals take such risks? What conditions of daily life inspired or provoked them to take action? In literary terms, what was their "call to adventure?" Students will hear words from diaries and letters, view images, examine artifacts, read historical fiction, and listen to tales about the lesser-known heroic acts of individuals. They will respond and reflect on their learning through various art media.

While activities in this plan could be used sequentially, the intent is to provide a collection of lessons and resources that might be spread over a whole school year, inserted into already established units, or used independently as enrichment activities in the targeted grades. If we truly recognize black history

and women's history as our history, the study of these struggles should not be relegated to Black History Month and Women's History Month as so often happens in elementary school. Even if such study were "equal" in terms of time and effort spent on the subject, it would be equal but separate, as if somehow it still doesn't belong in the mainstream story of America. We need to avoid this subtle message. The historic fight for rights and freedom needs to be an integrated theme, a seamless part of the whole fabric.

Seminar impact:

First and foremost, the seminar gave me background content from authorities in their fields that I, as an elementary school generalist, need to assure that I am presenting an accurate picture of the 19th century to my students. As a subject, history is unfortunately at the bottom of the heap in elementary school, subservient to a literacy/math driven curriculum. Social studies content in primary grades tends to be organized around community and holidays, with little time dedicated to historic content, and a tendency toward perpetuating prevailing stereotypes. The seminar and connected research is helping me to focus on essential concepts and debunk myths. It is giving me a framework of core ideas that I can work into our school's curriculum through an interdisciplinary approach.

The model of this seminar – to stuff us full of information, resources, and ideas, and then set us free to design projects suited to our individual setting, is perfect. As a teacher, I feel that pedagogy is my craft, and I am good at figuring out how to teach my students creatively based on their needs and the particular demands of the school (schedules, mandates, etc.) To be able to do this, what I need in terms of professional development is a continual influx of sound information and time to focus on it. The seminar has provided both.

In terms of the seminar's overall organization – balancing text with imagery, lecture, and field study – the field study served to reinforce what I already knew about myself as a learner: that taking guided trips to historic sites and museums, where I can interact with artifacts and feel the "place" in my body, is the best way to pique my curiosity and engage me in wanting to learn more detail through text. While I can't assume that all learners are the same, I strongly suspect this to be true for many of my students as well.

Central Questions:

- What do the words freedom, slavery, and equal rights mean?
- Why do people enslave other people?
- How did ordinary people become heroes in the fights to end slavery and guarantee equal rights for all people?
- What was daily life like for slaves? What was it like to escape from slavery?
- What can we learn from analyzing the arts produced by various groups of people and during earlier time periods – the paintings, crafts, songs, poetry, etc?

Challenge Questions:

- When slavery ended, did black people in America truly have equal rights and freedom?
- Are there people in the world, and even in the United States today, who do not have basic rights and freedoms? Is everyone equal? Is it fair?
- Were slave owners bad people? If people bought products produced by slaves, did that make them bad people? Is it okay for us to trade with other countries today when we know that the products are produced by people who do not have basic rights?

Lesson Length:

These ideas are presented as open-ended activities to be used as part of an interdisciplinary unit or as enrichment. There is no set length as they can be adapted to meet the needs of the particular setting.

Key Ideas:

- Although freedom and equal rights are basic values and principles of American democracy, certain groups of people have been denied freedom and rights in our country's history.
- African people were captured and sold into slavery by white people in America in the early 1800's for economic reasons, especially in the South where they were forced to work on plantations.
- Many people, both black and white, opposed slavery and fought courageously in many ways to end it.
- Even in extreme hardship, people have found ways to preserve their culture and reflect on their lives.
- Both well known figures and ordinary people fought for the rights of women and African Americans.

Intended Learning Outcomes:

- Students will understand that there have been dark times in our nation's history, but that people have fought to overcome injustices.
- Students will understand that slavery was driven by money – that slaves were part of a system to produce products at low cost.
- Students will understand how slavery destroyed family life, but that African Americans managed to preserve their values and culture in spite of it, forming a vital part of our national heritage.
- Students will understand the concept of the Underground Railroad and the role of Vermont in opposing slavery.
- Students will become aware that women and men did not have equal rights in our nation's past, and people fought for equality.
- Students will become more visually literate, and will be able to analyze and interpret images in an historical context at an age-appropriate level.
- Students will recognize, by name and image, key figures in the fights for freedom and equal rights.

National History Standards:

- **Comprehension standard 2** The student comprehends a variety of historical sources
- **Analysis and interpretation standard 3** The student engages in historical analysis and interpretation
- **History standard 1A** The student understands family life now and family life in various places long ago
- **History standard 1B** The student understands the different ways people of diverse racial groups and various national origins have transmitted their beliefs and values
- **History standard 2B** The student understands how communities in North America varied long ago
- **History standard 3D** The student understands the interactions among various groups of people in the history of his or her state
- **History standard 4B** The student understands ordinary people who have exemplified values and principles of American democracy
- **History standard 4C** The student understands historic figures who have exemplified values and principles of American democracy
- **Historic standard 4D** The student understands events that celebrate and exemplify fundamental values and principles of American democracy
- **Historic standard 6A** The student understands folklore and other cultural contributions from various regions of the United States and how they help to form a national heritage

Preparation for Teaching:

Several good sources of background material for the teacher are included in the bibliography. Depending on available technology, the teacher may choose images to be projected rather than just sharing them in books.

These activities are designed to be used concurrently with a language arts unit on freedom. Students should be reading or listening to a selection of the outstanding trade books listed in the bibliography, and engaging in age-appropriate responses to literature.

Primary sources:

- Slave narratives
- Images of art and artifacts such as slave quilts and folk art paintings
- Images from the American Memory site
- Slave songs and lullabies
- Declaration of Sentiments
- “Ain’t I a Woman?” speech

Activities:

Strand 1 – Visual literacy

1. Use Visual Thinking Strategies techniques to invite students to “read” images. Ask, “What’s happening in this picture?” without giving commentary other than restating the students’ observations and drawing

attention to the particular details (do not judge “correctness” of responses – the idea is to actively engage viewers, drawing them into personal interaction with the image without fear of being wrong). Ask, “What about the picture gives you that idea?” Encourage students to explain their thinking using contextual details and connections to their prior knowledge. Continue until the group has exhausted their observations and sharing of ideas. Depending on the goals of the session, at this point the teacher may offer historical content and/or scholarly interpretation to extend (but not disvalue) the students’ ideas.

This could be a stand-alone lesson if several images are available on a particular theme. Otherwise the activity could be used as a warm-up for another lesson, to introduce and draw students into a particular time period/place. A provocative image from a picture book might be selected for this activity prior to reading the book aloud.

Good sources of imagery include American Memory and art museum websites, picture books with “narrative” illustrations, and artwork from the “Picturing America” collection (prints or on-line).

2. Use historical images as writing prompts. Choose images that include well rendered but anonymous figures. Students free-write, citing visual details. Who is this person? What is (s)he thinking? What is happening? What might the “dialogue bubbles” say? Alternatively, an image might be used as a “frozen story” – students write fictional pieces to tell the story that has “frozen” on this particular frame.
3. Distribute enlarged historic photographs (primary sources) of heroes in the freedom movements. Have students copy an image to create a portrait (drawn or painted) of their chosen hero to reinforce visual recognition. Hang a gallery of the primary and newly created secondary visual sources.
4. Study the ways in which people have visually recorded their daily lives or the lives of their ancestors, giving viewers glimpses into the past through their folk artistry. Consider how the artwork reflects hardship and joy, family life and love, values and traditions, the place and the land. Good choices for this activity would be the story/collage quilts of Faith Ringgold and/or Michael Cummings, or the folk paintings of Clementine Hunter (primary source.)

Strand 2 – Slavery and abolitionists

1. Read aloud and discuss picture books about slavery, choosing from the many outstanding trade book offerings of historic fiction and biography (see annotated bibliography for suggested titles).
2. Examine quilts (actual quilts or photographs) with students and talk about what patterns they can see in the quilts. What are the separate shapes? Do the shapes when pieced together remind them of anything? Do they have any quilts in their own families, and do the quilts have any stories attached to them? How can quilts be used to tell a story or keep a record of family events? How do quilts recycle resources? How might slaves have used quilts?

Read and discuss some of the picture book tales of quilts used in the Underground Railroad. Talk about the difference between historical fiction and fact, and why lack of evidence (primary sources) at this time places much of the Underground Railroad quilt lore in the realm of fiction, although slaves certainly did make quilts and may have had their own family stories and reminders sewn into the blocks.

Talk about the connection between quilts and abolition activities (women made quilts for the Anti-Slavery Fair to raise money for the cause).

As a math spatial/geometry activity, use cut paper squares and triangles to build some of the quilt blocks that were pieced in the 19th century, particularly North Star, Log Cabin, and Wild Geese Flying.

Have students bring in scraps of cloth from old clothing or rags from home. Use these and other cloth to create quilt squares that reflect images from their learning about slavery and the Underground Railroad. Use fabric glue or iron bonding to piece the appliqué. Create a classroom quilt by basting or pinning the squares to a sheet (so students can keep their own work at the end.)

3. Teach songs from and about the time period. Examples: “Follow the Drinking Gourd,” “Wade in the Water,” “Harriet Tubman” by Peter and Mary Alice Amidon. Listen to recordings. Talk about the hidden messages in the music. Listen to the ways that parents tried to keep their children safe through lullaby lyrics.
4. As a geography activity, examine maps showing Underground Railroad routes. Familiarize students with locations (e.g. states, Canada, Rokeby) and regions (the North, the South). Have students create fictional maps to visual an escape route (a story taken from one of the published children’s books about escape from slavery or perhaps from *Slave Narratives*).
5. As a science activity, introduce the idea of reading nature to find your way, get clues, and survive. Include astronomy activities (North Star, drinking gourd, new moon, Venus), botany (edible and medicinal plants, growth habits of moss, plants used to mask body scent and confuse bloodhounds), and bird songs used as signals.

Strand 3 – Women’s suffrage

1. Read/discuss picture books depicting roles of women and girls in the 19th century, and picture book biographies of early leaders in the women’s rights movement.
2. Host a tea party to discuss the Declaration of Sentiments. Sing suffragist songs from the time period, and short songs (to be written to popular melodies – see examples appended) that will increase name recognition.
3. Show clips of documentaries on Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Seneca Falls events.
4. Listen to clips of speeches such as Sojourner Truth’s “Ain’t I a Woman?” speech.

Assessment:

Assessment should be informal and formative for this age group, with continual adjustments made to the content and delivery in accordance with students' prior knowledge and evidence of new learning. The intent is not mastery, but rather to provide an introductory framework - exposure and familiarity with the people, events, and concepts of the time period. Evidence of this familiarity could be gleaned from group brainstorming sessions (e.g. "Tell me everything you know about slavery...."), "reading" pictures (progress would be indicated if students make increasing amount of historical references and inferences), student generated artwork (portraits, quilt squares, maps, etc.), oral discussions about stories and responses to questions with increased correct use of pertinent vocabulary and terms (slavery, Underground Railroad, plantation, freedom, equal rights, etc.), brief visual "quizzes" in the guise of games, and connections students make between historical content and their own lives.

Accommodations:

Appropriate steps will be taken to assure that accommodations are made for any child with individual needs. These might include but not be limited to the use of microphones for hearing-impaired children, verbal description and enlargement of images for sight-impaired children, groupings and partnering of children for particular learning styles, preferential seating, alternative pacing for children who need to move, and more complex reading material and independent research suggestions for gifted children.

**Annotated Bibliography
Slavery and African American Experience**

Adler, David A. *A Picture Book of Harriet Tubman*. New York: Holiday House, 1992.

As its title implies, this is part of a trade book series by Adler called "Picture Book Biographies." Each page has a few sentences of text covering Tubman's life from birth to death, with a full-page, full color illustration suitable for young children. While Harriet is pictured cowering from her mistress who is chasing her with a whip, the illustration is not overly graphic. The author describes the brutality of slavery in a matter-of-fact way - for example, "the master threw a metal weight at the runaway. It hit Harriet instead and almost killed her." It is enough information for primary students to gain an understanding of the injustice of slavery without overwhelming detail.

Bernstein, Rebecca. *Addy's Cook Book*. Middleton, WI: Pleasant Company, 1994.

A companion volume to the American Girl Addy series, this presents eighteen easy recipes spaciouly laid out on double page spreads, organized into Breakfast, Dinner, and Favorite Foods. Each is attractively illustrated with photographs and full color drawings. Also included are plans for an emancipation party and information on kitchens of the 1860's. This is a great resource for Living History events.

Bial, Raymond. *The Strength of These Arms: Life in the Slave Quarters*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997.

Essentially a long photo essay, Bial presents the view that slaves “made lives for themselves despite oppressive, often brutal conditions.” With a clean layout and a photo on nearly every page, the book is attractive, blending primary black-and-white photos with contemporary shots of exteriors and interiors. The historical photographs are credited; others have captions. A bibliography is appended. This would not be a first choice for young children, but it could be a useful reference for expanding understanding of slave life.

- - -. *With Needle and Thread: A Book About Quilts*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin , 1996.

Bial presents an overview of mostly American quilt making through history for middle grade readers: the patterns, some techniques, thoughts and motivations of the women who made the quilts. The design is attractive with clear photographs on crisp white pages, and the information is succinct, making this a good choice for background information, especially for time-restrained teachers who need to skim. A “Further Reading” list is appended. While the book doesn’t talk much about slave quilts, it does include a photo and a brief discussion of the role of quilts in the Anti-Slavery Fairs. During the antebellum period, the pattern Job’s Tears was renamed Slave Chain.

Brown, Susan Taylor. *Robert Smalls Sails to Freedom*. Minneapolis: Millbrook Press, 2006.

This easy-to-read biography in the consistently well done “On My Own History” series focuses on the life of Robert Smalls, whose unique escape from slavery turned him into a hero for the Union cause. The story begins with 8-year old Robert working as a house slave in Beaufort, South Carolina. It follows his life as he grows up, marries, and becomes part of the slave crew on the steamboat Planter, delivering messages to Confederate forts around Charleston during the war. Robert orchestrates a plan to impersonate the captain, steal the boat, and turn it over to the Union Navy, thereby sailing the crew to freedom. The story is an exciting episode in Civil War history, laid out with nicely rendered, full-color illustrations on every page, and a controlled text. A few illustrations may be a bit confusing because the skin tones of the white figures appear dark. An afterward tells how Smalls went on to become a lawmaker. There is a good bibliography.

Bryan, Ashley. *All Night, All Day: A Child’s First Book of African-American Spirituals*. New York: Atheneum, 1991.

Twenty spirituals are collected in this book with musical arrangements by David Manning Thomas (for piano and guitar). It includes many with freedom overtones - “Get on Board,” “Wade in the Water.” Interspersed with the music are pages of Bryan’s signature-style illustration: impressionistic, bright, swirling pastel colors of flora, families feasting, eddying water, quilt shapes and stars, musicians, angels, doves.

This is a useful source of lyrics to accompany recordings, or for musically inclined teachers, to play on their instruments.

Dell, Pamela. *Aquila's Drinking Gourd: A Story of the Underground Railroad*. Excelsior, Minnesota: Tradition Books, 2003.

Part of the "Scrapbooks of America" series, this is a fictional account told by the character Aquila, a young girl sold away from her family at a slave market at the opening of the book, and crossing the Ohio River at its end. The book is designed for the school market, and it has somewhat the feel of a textbook. Bold vocabulary words are defined in a glossary at the back accompanied by a timeline. There are also a few suggested activities at the end, as well as two pages on the history of the Underground Railroad. The layout is attractive, with period photos or other primary source illustrations on nearly every page. It would be best used as a supplemental book for the better readers in second or early third grade who want to do independent work.

Greenwood, Barbara. *The Last Safe House*. Tonawanda, NY: Kids Can Press, 1998.

This book of historical fiction intended for 8-12 year olds is based on actual accounts of escaped slaves who made it to Canada on the Underground Railroad. Interspersed in the story of Eliza's flight to Ontario are many details about daily life - descriptions of typical work in the big house, recipes, instructions on how to make tin lanterns and corn husk dolls, songs, explanation of swamp gas - all illustrated with sepia and grey pencil drawings. The book includes a map of routes, a glossary, and an index. It is a good choice for integrating social studies content into language arts classes, and it is available as an oversized paperback.

Grifalconi, Ann. *Ain't Nobody a Stranger to Me*. New York: Hyperion, 2007.

A tale told by a gran'pa to his granddaughter as they walk hand in hand down a country lane, this book relates an escape on the Underground Railroad, and its title is drawn from the words of the man on whom the story is loosely based. This is a great read-aloud for even the youngest children, as it avoids the horrors of slavery, touching instead on the suspense of flight and hiding, and focusing on the celebration of making it thanks to the kindness of strangers. The grandfather explains that when the Quaker family saw them with their baby hiding in a barn, they never said, "That's no white baby! That's only a brown baby." To them, she was just a hungry little child." Jerry Pinkney's watercolors are gloriously splashed with color in the scenes depicting the girl and her gran'pa, and painted with a toned down palette of browns, greys, and blues when illustrating the reminiscences, making it easy for the viewer to understand the time shift. This is a highly recommended book for reading aloud to students in K-3rd grade.

Hopkinson, Deborah. *Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt*. New York: Knopf, 1993.

This fictional picture book is one of several that help to perpetuate what may be a legend - that slaves sewed quilts into patterns serving as maps or clues to aid in the escape on the Underground Railroad. This is, nonetheless, an exciting tale about a girl named Clara who moves from being a field hand to working in the

Big House, where she gets the idea to design her quilt with landmarks leading North. The illustrations by James Ransome are large and bright, effectively carrying the narrative, which is longer than many picture books, to a satisfying conclusion with Clara's escape.

- - -. *Up Before Daybreak: Cotton and People in America*. New York: Scholastic, 2006.

This non-fiction book for older elementary students focuses on cotton through American history, with many primary black-and-white photographs and documents, all well referenced. An index increases the value of this as a reference source. Chapters are arranged chronologically, leading off with how the Industrial Revolution exploded the demand for cheap (slave) labor on the southern plantations. The thread continues through other chapters in history wherein freedom is compromised by greed - the millworkers, child laborers, sharecroppers. It ends with a brief look at present day exploitation of children around the world so we can wear our comfortable cotton clothing in the United States.

While this book is beyond the target age of this project, the information could easily be adapted to awareness activities for younger children. The framing of the information around a single product is an interesting approach, clearly tying economics and trade to the issue of human rights and freedom.

Hughes, Langston. *The Negro Speaks of Rivers*. New York: Disney Jump at the Sun Books, 2009.

Award-winning Illustrator E.B. Lewis brings the Langston Hughes poem to life with lush, double-spread watercolor paintings, one for each line of the poem. In an afterward, Lewis describes his reflections on the essence of the words, and on the power of water in life. He describes this project as a labor of love. The sensitivity of his work reflects that love. This is a collection of fine art between book covers.

Each painting stands alone, lending itself to Visual Thinking Strategies approaches and discussion of deeper meaning and wider ramifications. For example, a parent and child cradled cozily together in a hammock beside the Congo might be used to talk about the universality of familial love, and to foreshadow the horror of slaves being captured. "When Abe Lincoln went down to New Orleans" begs speculation on what he is thinking and feeling. A magnificent painting of a woman's bare feet on a parched, cracked river bottom leads to conversation about drought and famine today, particularly in African countries, and how for all of us, water, "older than the flow of blood in human veins," is precious. It is important that we convey to our students the story of freedom from slavery as a universal human story, owned by all of us, not just as something bad that happened to other people long ago. Poems and images such as these help to connect the strands and themes, using metaphors such as the river to deepen the conversation

Johnston, Tony. *The Wagon*. New York: Tambourine Books, 1996.

Poetic text and oil paintings by James E. Ransome combine in this picture book written from the point of view of a boy born into slavery, and how his frustration and anger grew as he did. "...I was born. Everything was beautiful that day, Mama said, especially my skin like smooth, dark wood. But like all my family birth to grave, my skin made me a slave." Emancipation is proclaimed, "But ol' Freedom dragged her feet, took her sweet time catching up to those words." The spare text ends as the family heads toward Washington in their wagon to attend the funeral of Mr. Lincoln.

Some of the language would be confusing to young children, but the illustrations are sophisticated and painterly, and well worth sharing with primary students if the teacher provides some explanation. The palette is dark in some spreads, which might present problems for large groups. This book conveys a strong sense of place.

Kernan, Elizabeth. *Harriet Tubman: A Lesson in Bravery*. New York: Rosen Publishing Group, 2003.

This very easy biography has just ten pages of text. Sepia toned illustrations face each written page. These photos and drawings are captioned, but no credits are given. The book includes a glossary and index. The font is clear and the spacing good for beginning readers. Use this as a supplemental book for eager early readers.

Lester, Julius. *From Slave Ship to Freedom Road*. New York: Dial Books, 1998.

Very powerful and sometimes disturbing paintings by Rod Brown illustrate this book for older audiences. The paintings are part of a larger series, "From Slavery to Freedom," done by the artist, and many of them are in private collections.

Lester pairs the paintings with provocative narrative, personal commentary, and "imagination exercises": "For white people," "For African Americans," and "For Whites and Blacks." He writes, "They took the sick and the dead and dropped them into the sea like empty wine barrels. But wine barrels did not have beating hearts..."

This is hard material, but it is highly recommended for Visual Thinking Strategies exercises, and as a prompt for writing and honest discussion.

Levine, Ellen. *Henry's Freedom Box*. New York: Scholastic, 2007.

Every primary student should experience this amazing account of Henry "Box" Brown's escape to freedom in a mail crate. Kadir Nelson created large page illustrations that pull the reader into and through the book beginning with the irresistible cover art of young Henry. These illustrations, particularly the facial expressions, have outstanding potential for "reading the pictures" as a formal exercise, or for new readers who look to the pictures for clues. Especially poignant is the scene where Henry watches as his wife and children are sold and taken away in a wagon. Henry's success in mailing himself from Richmond to

freedom in Philadelphia is inspiration for anyone who dares to hope and believe in “harebrained” plans.

McCully, Emily Arnold. *The Escape of Oney Judge: Martha Washington’s Slave Finds Freedom*. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 2007.

Although classified as historical fiction, this is a well-researched and cited picture book account of Oney Judge’s life and escape from Martha Washington. The illustrations by the author are clear, accessible watercolors with much period detail, especially in terms of dress and interiors. This is geared toward older primary or 3rd graders because of the many references that would be unfamiliar to the usual picture book crowd, but for that reason it would be a good teaching tool to introduce vocabulary such as General, republic, dry goods store, bondage, etc. In addition, it introduces several topics worth discussing: As the child of a black slave and a white servant, Oney was chosen to work in the big house at Mount Vernon because of her fair skin. Oney realizes, when the government is moved to Philadelphia, that the Washington’s periodically send their slaves back to Mount Vernon to avoid complying with the new Pennsylvania law that slaves living in that state for more than six months must be freed. And the Washington’s are pictured at the dining table, perplexed and vexed that a slave so well treated would run away. The Haitian slave revolt is mentioned. This book should be used with a map at hand, so students can trace both the movement of the new government and Oney’s escape to Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Highly recommended for an abundance of historical content in a small space.

McGill, Alice. *In the Hollow of Your Hand: Slave Lullabies*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000.

In a picture book accompanied by a CD of McGill singing the lullabies, the author shares vignettes about the songs she collected from her relatives and friends in Mary’s Chapel, North Carolina. The community is named after freed slave Mary Smith who gave up her savings to build a church. The songs are funny and at times scary and sad, such as in these lyrics, “Go to sleepy little baby. Mama gone, Papa gone, all been sold to Georgie. Birds and butterflies pickin’ in his eye. Poor little thing, don’t you cry...I’ma tell your mama, tell your papa, make them bad boys leave you alone.” McGill explains that scary elements are included to make children follow rules for their own safety.

This audio-visual package can enhance the curriculum in so many ways. Students can analyze the underpinnings of the lyrics and/or compare them to lullabies in their own lives, or the CD can be played as background music to set a mood. The music is appended so that a teacher could play the songs on piano or guitar if he/she were musically talented. For the purposes of this project, the collage quilts by fine artist Michael Cummings are the gems of the book. In an energetic, informal folk art style, Cummings has illustrated each song using scraps of cloth, buttons, beads, etc. to create layered and embellished scenes of children and their loved ones. These can be used to inspire students to make similar quilt squares reflecting their learning about slavery or their own places/lives.

Porter, Connie. *Meet Addy*. Middleton, WI: Pleasant Company, 1993.

In this first book about Addy in the fictional American Girl series, Addy and her mother escape to freedom after Master Stevens sells brother Sam and Poppa. The story, told in five chapters, includes heartache (as when baby Esther must stay behind) and suspense (as Momma slips in the river). It works as both as a read-aloud and as a short chapter book for independent readers, luring them further into the other five basic titles about Addy in the series. All of the books include full color illustrations on every few pages and a section called “Looking Back - A Peek into the Past” that includes period photos and information about 1864. More advanced readers might also enjoy reading about Addy in *Shadows on Society Hill*, *An Addy Mystery* by Evelyn Coleman.

Raven, Margot Theis. *Night Boat to Freedom*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006.

Christmas John reflects back on the stories told to him by Granny Judith as she worked her dye pot and stitched her quilt - how she was captured in her village with the lure of red flannel cloth, and red became the color of slavery, but how they must now learn the color of freedom. John learned to row people across the Ohio to freedom, each time returning to tell Granny the colors worn by the fugitives, the new colors of freedom, which are then incorporated in her quilt. When the time comes for Christmas John to make his escape, he will not leave without Granny, although the dogs are in pursuit. The illustrations by E.B. Lewis are quite beautiful in their rendition of faces, emotions, and place (slave quarters, dye pots, loom, etc), although the darkness of the escape scenes may make those pages difficult to share with a large group. The author describes the story as “like Granny Judith’s quilt: patches of truth stitched together by voices alive with history.” The characters were drawn from hundreds of accounts in *The Slave Narrative Collection*.

This book should be included in any unit that explores the realities, myths and metaphors of quilts in the history of slavery. Interestingly, race is never mentioned - not that of the capturers, the “stationmasters”, or the patrols. It is a good general book for younger audiences, portraying the fear and tension of escape but not the graphic reality of slave life; and this particular story has a happy ending.

Ringgold, Faith. *Aunt Harriet’s Underground Railroad in the Sky*. New York: Crown Publishers, 1993.

Painter Faith Ringgold pays tribute to Harriet Tubman in this imaginative, energetic picture book. The story features Cassie and her baby brother Be Be, children introduced in Ringgold’s previous book, *Tar Beach*, in which they fly over the rooftops of their New York City neighborhood. In this book the siblings meet Harriet Tubman on one of their imaginary flights. Be Be escapes from Cassie and boards the train, while Cassie follows Harriet on a tour through the history of slavery and freedom, narrated with minimal text and illustrated with full page paintings. One page reads, “If we tried to escape and were caught, we might have a foot cut off or get sold away from our families. And then we never

saw our families and friends again.” As Cassie makes her way through swamps and darkness to safe houses, she finds messages left by Be Be saying that he is very frightened but will not turn back, because freedom is more important than just staying together. At the end amidst joyful reunion and celebration, a quilt hangs in the sky commemorating the 100th anniversary of Tubman’s first flight to freedom.

Without prior background, this might be a confusing book. But used in conjunction with Ringgold’s other work (especially if her story quilt paintings happen to be touring at a local art museum), it is a gripping blend of history and emotion, speaking in a way that is not scary to core fears that all children have. After reading other biographical material on Tubman, I would introduce *Tar Beach* (which touches on 20th century discrimination against black and Native American people) and then this book. Ringgold’s work should definitely be included in any unit (for any age group) featuring quilts.

- - -. *Tar Beach*. New York: n.p., 1991.

This is Ringgold’s signature book illustrated with one of her magnificent story quilts. Ringgold learned her craft from memories passed on intergenerationally through several women in her family, one of whom was a slave in antebellum Florida. The geometric designs surrounding her painted cloth panels reflect African influences. In this picture book, the African-American story is brought forward in time to the mid-20th century, when skilled steel workers were not allowed to join unions if their fathers had not been members. The main character, Cassie, thinks about this as she flies over Harlem in her imagination, correcting the injustices in her personal world. The flying motif alludes to slave songs and folklore in which flying is a metaphor for escape.

Robert Smalls Official Website and Information Center. 2000-2009. Robert Smalls Legacy Foundation. 1 Mar. 2009 <<http://www.robertsmalls.org/index.htm>>.

This gives background information on the life of Robert Smalls, who escaped from slavery with other slaves by piloting a stolen steamer in 1862. The site lists many additional references.

Schroeder, Alan. *Minty: A Story of Young Harriet Tubman*. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 1996.

This fictionalized account of Harriet Tubman’s childhood is based on facts but has scenes “invented for narrative purposes.” It is beautifully illustrated in watercolor and colored pencil by Jerry Pinkney, who has won numerous prestigious awards for illustration including Caldecott Honors, Coretta Scott King Awards, and N.Y. Times Best Illustrated Book Awards. The illustrations alone could be used to “read” details about the time period and place. *Minty* begins as a house slave, but her rag doll burned in the fire and she is banished to the fields when she spills a pitcher. A dramatic spread shows the overseer ordering her to check the muskrat traps under the river although she can’t swim. Later scenes show Old Ben teaching *Minty* survival skills and signs in nature that she would use later in her life. Although she fails to take an opportunity to escape, at the

book's close she is drifting to sleep dreaming of the day when she will have enough courage to follow the road to freedom.

Stroud, Bettye. *The Patchwork Path: A Quilt Map to Freedom*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick, 2005.

This is another picture book based on Tobin and Dobard's work, *Hidden in Plain View*, a controversial book (based on a family story) claiming that slaves used quilt square patterns to communicate in code along the Underground Railroad. The strength of this story is the description of Hannah and Papa's journey North, through rain and secret tunnels, hiding under church floors and resting at safe houses. The telling is a bit confusing in places, and the quilt designs don't always make sense in terms of the route likely taken by escaping slaves. But it will be engaging to students to discuss the possibilities of how codes and secret signals must have been used to help slaves escape. The stylized oil paintings are by Erin Bennett.

Tingle, Tim. *Crossing Bok Chitto: A Choctaw Tale of Friendship and Freedom*. El Paso, Texas: Cinco Puntos Press, 2006.

This picture book, drawn from the Choctaw oral history tradition, presents an underrepresented piece of the story of how slaves escaped from bondage. The Choctaws aided fugitives. If a slave made it to the Choctaw settlement across Bok Chitto, a Mississippi river, he or she was free. Tingle tells a mystical tale of how seven slaves escaped just in time thanks to the friendship between a young Choctaw girl and slave boy. The two share in each other's church services prior to the escape, a glimpse into religious practices of the time period, and the role of faith during trying times. Tingle is a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (those who journeyed on the Trail of Tears), and illustrator Jeanne Rorex Bridges is an award-winning Cherokee artist. Her paintings are large, sensitive and beautifully composed.

This is a good source of imagery for the Visual Thinking Strategy approach to art. It is appropriate for any age viewer as it raises questions about how oral history differs from textual sources, and how the validity of each differs depending on the cultural point of view. In a market flooded with books on the Underground Railroad, this story illuminates a different part of the picture. It also serves as a reminder that many people suffered forced migration by the ruling government.

Tobin, Jacqueline, and Raymond G. Dobard. *Hidden in Plain View: A Secret Story of Quilts and the Underground Railroad*. New York: Doubleday, 1999.

The authors present an engaging theory that some slave quilts contained secret codes in their patterns to aid in escape via the Underground Railroad. Their research was sparked by a particular quilt with its oral history handed down through generations of the family of Ozella McDaniel Williams. They compared this story to certain African textile traditions, such as using knots and beads to convey symbolic meaning, and drew the conclusion that similar messages could be used to map out routes and plans. This theory remains fascinating although it has since been challenged by other researchers who say that the evidence is thin.

Several picture books have been written based on this idea, citing this book as the source of their information. Therefore, it is a recommended read for any teacher trying to present a fair picture of how messages were conveyed along the Underground Railroad, or by slaves who did not use that network for their escape.

Turner, Glennette Tilley. *An Apple for Harriet Tubman*. Morton Grove, Illinois: Albert Whitman & Company, 2006.

This biographical picture book is based on a story the author heard from Harriet Tubman's great niece - that when Harriet was whipped by a cruel overseer for biting into an apple, she vowed not only to be free one day, but also, "to have all the apples I want." The narrative jumps ahead to Harriet's escape and subsequent work as a conductor on the Underground Railroad, ending with her planting a row of apple trees at her home in Auburn, New York. The family story goes on to say that Harriet fulfilled both of her wishes, sharing her apples with her neighbors each fall as a symbol of freedom. The full page illustrations are by painter Susan Keeter.

Turner, Robyn Montana. *Faith Ringgold*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1993.

A short biography in the "Portraits of Women Artists for Children" series, this is included here for additional information about Ringgold's process and evolution as an artist. The large, picture book format lends itself to the inclusion of many color and black-and-white photos of the artwork and influential people in Ringgold's life, including a faded image of her great-great-grandmother, circa 1900, a former slave who was part Cherokee.

Weatherford, Carole Boston. *Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom*. New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2006.

This expansive picture book opens with a two-page spread of Harriet talking to God, and God speaking back in the voice of the whip-poor-will. Each successive spread reveals another step of Harriet's spiritual path and earthbound journey to freedom. The perspective magnifies the forest as "in the underbrush, Harriet sinks into a deep sleep. God cradles her." The magnificent paintings by Kadir Nelson, who was awarded the Caldecott Honor, aptly portray the spiritual dimensions of the historical person and her brave deeds. It is a rare blend in a picture book - equal weight given to Harriet's conversations with God and her narrative.

This book should be included in units on freedom, slavery, the Underground Railroad, and brave women in history. Its religious tones should not exclude it from the public school curriculum - rather, it stands as a testimonial on how faith pulled people through the worst of times in our history.

Whitehead, Kathy. *Art From Her Heart: Folk Artist Clementine Hunter*. New York: G. P. Putnam, 2008.

This picture book biography, using few words and many full page, folk-style illustrations by Shane W. Evans, tells the story of Clementine Hunter, a descendant of slaves in Louisiana. Hunter worked as a manual laborer on the

plantation, picking cotton and pecans, doing kitchen work, and painting on scrap wood and canvas in the dim light of her lantern. She began these painted reflections of her everyday life in her fifties, and displayed them on her clothesline. She was “discovered” eventually, and her work now hangs in museums around the country.

This book is an excellent vehicle for visually experiencing a slice of life and sparking discussion about plantation work after emancipation. It is also the perfect book for introducing what it means to have a “sense of place”, and for encouraging students to do their own place-based paintings. The upbeat, inspirational tone provides some relief from the heaviness of studying the black experience in America in this time period.

Williams, Sherley Anne. *Working Cotton*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1992.

This slice-of-life picture book portrays a single day in the life of a migrant family working the cotton fields through the eyes of a young girl. Use it to compare and contrast the slave labor on cotton plantations of the South to contemporary migrant workers (in this case on a California farm). The acrylic paintings by Carole Byard earned both a Caldecott Honor and Coretta Scott King Honor for illustration.

Wolny, Philip. *The Underground Railroad: A Primary Source History of the Journey to Freedom*. New York: Rosen, 2004.

Part of a series for middle grade students, this title presents images and documents from the time period, with short chapters of text explaining the information in the primary source material. The book is above the level for this project’s target audience, but can serve as a handy reference. Transcriptions are included for the primary texts which are difficult to read, and an image list and photo credits enable the reader to track down the images in different formats. The book is indexed and includes a glossary and bibliography.

Woodson, Jacqueline. *Show Way*. New York: G.P. Putnam, 2005.

This beautifully designed picture book chronicles the matrilineal line forward through seven generations to the author’s baby girl, using quilts as the framework. The early quilts were slave maps stitched with chokecherry-dyed red thread onto muslin. Each generation learns to sew as time progresses through the Civil War, abolition, sharecropping, the civil rights riots of the 1960’s, and the present. Each generation is filled with strength and love, from mama to baby, as the family story is shared. This is a very powerful, positive book despite its difficult topics - the overall theme is generational love. The layouts by illustrator Hudson Talbot are bright, incredibly artful and creative, using the fabric and quilt motif in many interesting and arresting ways. The two-page spread showing a 1960’s era Freedom march depicts well-dressed people in black marching up a hill made of quilt patches, black with white stitching, “embroidering” the words of Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, and Sojourner Truth. The next page shows two little girls in pink against a collage of black and white period images - newspaper

scraps, racist banners, photos of rioting. In other spreads, the quilts are colorful pathways to the stars or frames for pictures of familial love and celebration. The design of this book makes it appropriate for all grades. For older students, it would provide a good introduction to the history of the civil rights movement, or to oral history/genealogy projects. The quilt is a good metaphor for the bonds that hold families together, and the pieces of our personal histories that make us who we are. Highly recommended.

Women's Rights

Adams, Colleen. *Women's Suffrage: A Primary Source History of the Women's Rights Movement in America*. New York: Rosen, 2003. Part of the "Primary Sources in American History" nonfiction series for middle school, this is a handy source of general information, primary documents, and full page photographic portraits. While these images can be found in online sources, it is easier in some classrooms to have them available in print form.

Bardhan-Quallen, Sudipta. *Ballots for Belva: The True Story of a Woman's Race for Presidency*. New York: Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2008. Another good book on the growing list of picture book biographies about historical women in politics, this one chronicles Belva Lockwood's race for Presidency in 1884. While Woodhull had run before her, Lockwood is credited as being the first woman to complete her candidacy and win official votes in an election. The full color illustrations are by Courtney A, Martin.

Blumberg, Rhoda. *Bloomers!* New York: Bradbury Press, 1993.

Tackling a lighter-weight topic than many of the issues in the fights for rights in America, this picture book relates the story of how Libby Miller wore a pair of loose trousers to Seneca Falls in 1851, inspiring her cousin Elizabeth Cady Stanton to design her own loose pants to escape the utterly impractical and uncomfortable women's fashions of the day. When Stanton told her friend, journal editor Amelia Bloomer, about the style, news spread and "bloomers" really took off. An initially reluctant Susan B. Anthony adopted the trend after visiting with Amelia. Mary Morgan used old photographs to research her colorful illustrations.

This is a high interest book for primary students studying the women's movement. It would be a good resource for showing students how to look for period details, perhaps having them do their own illustrations of primary source photographs. Students should also try to climb stairs in long skirts while holding baby dolls.

Fritz, Jean. *Do You Want Women to Vote, Lizzie Stanton?* New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1995. In eight short chapters, each with a single black-and-white drawing, Fritz presents this biography for older elementary students. Beginning with the young Lizzie and her two sisters, and ending with Elizabeth's death, the author covers a lot of ground, particularly the relationship with Susan B. Anthony.

While the book is above the level of this project's intended audience, it might work as a read-aloud for third graders, or a recommendation to more advanced students desiring independent research.

Hearne, Betsy. *Seven Brave Women*. New York: Greenwillow, 1997.

"There are a million ways to be brave," says the author, after introducing seven brave women in her own genealogy in this upbeat picture book on the power of women and their places in history. "In the old days, history books marked time by the wars that men fought....But there are other ways to tell time." These are ordinary women who worked hard and accomplished amazing things. Each of them lived during the time of a U.S. war, but did not fight in it. This is a good picture book for reminding children that our history is more than dates and battles, and for thinking about what makes a hero. It also would be useful as a kick-off for having students research their own family heroes, male or female. Bright oil paintings by Bethanne Andersen illustrate the text.

Krull, Kathleen. *A Woman for President: The Story of Victoria Woodhull*. New York: Walker & Company, 2004. While most suffragists were arguing for women's right to vote, the little known Victoria Woodhull was running her own campaign to be elected President of the United States. In an odd legal twist, while women could not vote, no law barred them from holding public office. Woodhull suspended her campaign before Election Day, and therefore did not receive any votes officially. This picture book biography is illustrated with full-page, full-color illustrations by Jane Dyer. This should be of special interest to students who were aware of Hillary Clinton's race for the Presidency.

Parker, Barbara Keevil. *Susan B. Anthony: Daring To Vote*. Brookfield, Connecticut: Millbrook Press, 1998. This is a basic middle level biography of Susan B. Anthony. It's good for quick background information as it is clearly written with an index, and a "Those Who Made a Difference" section with important dates appended. It includes some photos and political cartoons. An interesting author's note talks about the controversial statue in Washington D.C. of the women suffragists.

Rappaport, Doreen. *American Women: Their Lives in Their Words*. New York: Thomas Y, Crowell, 1990. Although it has an older publication date, this book for older students holds up as an excellent reference on women's history in the United States. The author provides brief commentary about each of the selections of speeches and writings by women in their struggles for equality. Some black-and-white photos are included as well as a substantial index and source list.

Stone, Tanya Lee. *Elizabeth Leads the Way: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the Right to Vote*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2008.

This fun picture book biography of Elizabeth Cady Stanton begins with the question, "What would you do if someone told you, you can't be what you want to be because you are a girl?" It goes on to ask, "Would you ask why? Would

you talk back? Would you fight for your rights? Elizabeth did.“ In just fourteen spreads, the book has just the right tone in describing the motivations and tracing significant events in Stanton’s life from age four to the reading of Declaration of Sentiments at Seneca Falls, ending with a thumbnail of her familiar round-faced, white-haired portrait. The bright, energetic gouache and colored pencil illustrations by Rebecca Gibbon make this a perfect book for sharing with a group - highly recommended for primary students learning about fights for freedom.

White, Linda Arms. *I Could Do That! Esther Morris Gets Women the Vote*. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 2005. In an engaging picture book biography with humorous illustrations by Nancy Carpenter, White presents the little known (at least in New England) story of the woman credited with convincing Wyoming legislators to give women the right to vote. Esther Morris supposedly did this during a tea party, which makes this a great book to share during an Elizabeth Cady Stanton tea party. Students should enjoy the illustration of rough, cowboy-hatted Wyoming men holding guns and flower-adorned china tea cups as Esther pitches her ideas. The best part of this book is the “I can do that!” attitude, which should appeal to both boys and girls, and could stimulate good discussion about positive thinking and fighting for what you believe in.

Professional Reading and References

Ginzberg, Lori. *Untidy Origins: A Story of Women’s Rights in Antebellum New York*. N.p.: University of North Carolina Press, 2005.

Ginzberg introduces the six women from Jefferson County, New York, “striking in their ordinariness,” four of the six being middle-aged farmwives, who drew up an unprecedented petition demanding rights for women. In a readable style, she presents their family histories and a strong sense of Place. The book demands that that reader ponder the question, how can “small communities of thinkers and activists buffer themselves against insult” and “imagine political life differently”? Although I have not yet thought of any way to apply this book to my teaching, I did enjoy the history and ideas contained therein.

Leighow, Susan, and Rita Sterner-Hine. *The Antebellum Women’s Movement, 1820-1860: A Unit of Study for Grades 8-11*. Los Angeles: Organization of American Historians and the Regents, University of California, 1998.

This spiral-bound collection of lessons grew out of a collaboration between history professors and experienced history teachers sponsored by the National Center for History in the Schools. The lessons in the unit are based on primary sources, aiming to provide students with the experience of analyzing and

interpreting evidence, and developing “historical empathy.” There are letters, black and white photos, engravings, journal excerpts, songs, interviews, essays, and texts of speeches. While the lessons are beyond my young students, I’ve modified and used some of the discussion questions, as well as the primary documents. Recommended.

Salerno, Beth. *Sister Societies: Women’s Antislavery Organizations in Antebellum America*. DeKalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 2005.

This book, chronically over 200 women’s antislavery societies in the 1800’s prior to the Civil War, has the feel of a dense thesis. Organized chronologically, it thoroughly discusses each new development in these organizations. It is extensively cited and indexed, and includes a long section of notes, thereby increasing its value as a reference. The bibliography in particular would be a great resource for anyone wishing to dig deeper into this topic. Furthermore, each chapter ends with a “Conclusion” section, which helps in terms of skimming for ideas.

For my own purposes as a primary teacher, this book was not especially useful, although I personally enjoyed certain sections, such as those relating to the sewing circles.

Stauffer, John. *The Black Hearts of Men: Radical Abolitionists and the Transformation of Race*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004.

This is a compelling collective biography chronicling four men’s journeys through the morality of racism. The author provides a very thorough treatment of his four subjects, the radical abolitionists John Brown, Frederick Douglass, Gerrit Smith, and James McCune Smith, and the evolution of their beliefs. The struggle over slavery is illuminated from many perspectives, giving the reader a layered, multidimensional understanding of the time period through the lenses of religion, politics, economics, literary/philosophical thought, and iconic cultural identity. Stauffer draws extensively on the writings of his main subjects to reveal their interior ruminations, reflections, and motivations. These become increasingly interesting as the lives of the four men intersect and their correspondences are examined. The in-depth exploration of the lesser known Gerrit Smith and James McCune Smith is especially welcome. This book provided fascinating background information - although I probably won’t draw on its content for primary elementary students, it helps me to understand the bigger picture of the abolition movement.

Vest, Kathleen. *Using Primary Sources in the Classroom*. Huntington Beach, CA: Shell Education, 2005.

A large format paperback featuring pages designed for reproduction, this how-to book covers many types of primary sources: artwork, photos, published and unpublished writing, oral histories, maps, cartoons, music, film, and artifacts. For each type of primary source, sample lessons are presented at various grade levels. A final chapter deals with assessment of document-based lessons, and how to design constructed response questions. There is a teacher resource CD included at the back with digital copies of all images in the book. While the sample lessons span history, its general principles can be applied to any time period. I think this is an excellent resource for getting started with primary sources.

Appendix:

Sample songs for name recognition

To the tune of “This Old Man”

Susan B.

Anthony

Fought for rights for you and me

She marched and she spoke and she argued and she wrote

So we could have the right to vote

To the tune of “Yankee Doodle”

Once there was a little girl

Her name was Elizabeth Cady

She said, “When I grow up I

I don’t want to be a fancy lady.”

Fight the fight for women’s rights

Like Elizabeth Cady Stanton

When a girl grows up to be smart and tough

She can do whatever a man can

She married Henry, had seven kids

But still she kept on fighting

A pen is mightier than a sword...

Her weapon was her writing.

Chorus