

editor's shelf by Larry Shea *Editor's Shelf*

The purpose of Editor's Shelf is to highlight the following: new editions of important previously published works; reissues of significant works that had been out of print; U.S. editions of works published elsewhere in English; additional volumes in a publisher's series that *MultiCultural Review* has reviewed; translations; previously published works that have been reissued in a new form, such as audiocassettes, audio CDs, floppy disks, or CD-ROM; and online reference sources. Paperback reprints are not included unless the reprint contains at least some new material. The initial releases in a publisher's series and works that have undergone major changes in the course of their republication in new edition or new media will receive full-fledged reviews in MCR. The Publisher Directory contains addresses and phone numbers of publishers whose works appear in Editor's Shelf.

New Editions

Dorfman, Ariel. *In Case of Fire in a Foreign Land: New and Collected Poems from Two Languages*. Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2002. 160 pp. Translations by Edith Grossman and the author. Bilingual (Spanish-English) ed. ISBN 0-8223-2987-5, \$15.95 (pb).

This bilingual collection of poetry contains 10 new poems along with poems first published in 1988 in Dorfman's acclaimed *Last Waltz in Santiago*. The poems address love, disappearance, and loss at a time of unspeakable political violence in Chile, Dorfman's adopted country. The dead and the disappeared, from Allende himself to ordinary students and workers, come to the poet in dreams in which he imagines and replays their fate. Other poems describe the pain of exile and the choices people make to abandon their country for safety or to risk all by staying and resisting. The new poems explore life in exile and present the eloquent voices of those who struggle for human rights and justice in Chile and around the world.

—Lyn Miller-Lachmann

Keats, Ezra Jack. *Keats's Neighborhood: An Ezra Keats Treasury*. New York: Viking, 2002. 128 pp. With an introduction by Anita Silvey. ISBN 0-670-03586-6, \$25.00.

This edition collects 10 of the more than 100 children's books by Keats (1916-1983). The first book included is his most famous, *The Snowy Day* (1962), which was awarded the Caldecott Medal and was one of the first children's books to have an African American as its central character. Peter, the small boy whose day is described, is featured in six other stories here, usually along with his friend, Archie. By the time

of *A Letter to Amy* (1968), Peter has grown up enough to have a crush on a girl he wants to invite to his birthday party.

Keats's work was influential in its portrayal of characters of various ethnic groups, as well as in its use of urban settings not often seen in picture books of the time. Silvey writes in her introduction that "critics virulently attacked Keats and his books" in the late 1960s and 1970s, in large part because he was a white author who wrote about black boys.

This edition includes an account of Keats's life and artistic development. Several tributes to him from other children's book illustrators, including Jerry Pinkney and Eric Carle, are also scattered throughout. To fit 10 books into this format, the volume does change the size and page placement of the illustrations of the original works. The expanses of color and bold but simple designs of the original books would probably be more effective for reading to children (who would not likely be interested in the added material on Keats in any case). As a study of the significance of Keats's works, however, and as a handy way to view their development (as in the changes of his collage technique from book to book, for example), this edition is valuable for anyone with a strong interest in children's literature and its history.

Malotki, Ekkehart, ed. *Hopi Tales of Destruction*. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska, 2002. 288 pp. ISBN 0-8032-8283-4, \$27.95 (pb).

The seven traditional tales from the Hopi of northern Arizona that are collected here were first published in 1993 in an English/Hopi edition entitled *Hopi Ruin Legends: Kiqötutuwuutsi*. Malotki—who collected, translated, and edited the tales—writes in a new preface that these stories "provide explanations for the demise of villages that now lie in ruin." The tales have been passed down orally in various forms for centuries and are, according to Malotki, a "mixture of mythic, legendary, and historic events."

One tale, for example, tells the story of Qa'ötaqtipu, a village whose name translates as "Burnt Corn," probably due to some charred corncobs found there by later Hopis. The village was abandoned before the coming of the Spaniards in the sixteenth century, but its name may be the inspiration for the tale told here of its destruction by fire.

Brutality, including human sacrifice, is common in the tales. However, villages generally bring destruction upon themselves through hubris or by living life out of balance (*koyaanisqatsi*); in one tale, a village becomes obsessed with gambling on a game called *totolospí*, and its desperate leader calls upon the Yaayapontsa, who control the wind and fire, to destroy the village itself.

The book includes an extensive glossary of terms useful for understanding Hopi culture, along with a bibliography. Each tale is introduced with historical background on the village involved, accompanied by extensive notes. The tales themselves are translations of oral tales Malotki recorded from four of the few Hopi remaining who are conversant in the Hopi language and its traditions. It is noted in the preface that the traditional storytelling such as is included here is nearly extinct. It is remarkable, though, how such stories had survived centuries longer than the villages that inspired them.

Rulfo, Juan. *Pedro Páramo*. Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 2002. 164 pp. Illus. with photos by Josephine Sacabo. Trans. from Spanish by Margaret Sayers Peden. ISBN 0-292-77121-5, \$35.00.

The Mexican writer Rulfo (1918-1986) published this novel in 1955 in Spanish; Peden's English translation first appeared in 1994. (Rulfo's other works include a 1954 collection of short fiction, *El llano en llamas*, translated in 1967 as *The Burning Plain*.) In this new edition, the text is accompanied by about 50 moody photos by Sacabo. The book is co-published by the Wittliff Gallery in San Marcos, Texas, which has organized a traveling exhibit of the original photographs included here. As it happens, Smithsonian Institution Press also recently published a collection of photography by the novel's author entitled *Juan Rulfo's Mexico*.

Rulfo's novel is a dreamlike story of a man searching for his long-absent father, Pedro Páramo, who loves a mysterious woman named Susana. The photographs included are from a series entitled "The Unreachable World of Susana San Juan," and they combine Southwestern landscapes with elusive portraits of a female figure meant to represent the novel's Susana. In this attractively produced book, the words and mysterious images work together to greater effect than either might have alone.

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). *The State of the World's Children 2003*. New York: UNICEF, 2002. 132 pp. ISBN 92-806-3784-5, \$12.95 (pb).

The theme of this year's report on the condition of children around the world is "Child Participation," defined here as encouraging children to make their views known on the issues that concern them, and for leaders to take children's opinions into account when making decisions. According to this report, hopes for developing democracy around the world rely on raising children to believe that their voices are an important part of their society and how it will be run.

The report includes "panels," or chapters, on issues related to child participation; these incorporate a number of stories and quotes from children in different countries. The end of the report contains several world maps highlighting statistical variations among nations and numerous tables with country-by-country statistics on a wide assortment of

indicators related to education, population, economic status, health, and women's issues.

First U.S. Publication of Works Published Abroad in English _____

Bates, Judy Fong. *China Dog and Other Tales from a Chinese Laundry*. New York: Counterpoint, 2002. ISBN 1-58243-188-4, \$14.00 (pb).

Like the author, many of the characters in this collection of short stories have immigrated to Canada from China. These eight stories mostly concern ordinary incidents where characters try to fit in or successfully make their way in a new society. In "The Gold Mountain Coat," for example, a girl tells of two Chinese-Canadian brothers who have for years been working nearly every day in their father's restaurant in a small Ontario town. When the family of one of the men is finally emigrating from China to live with him, the brothers must solve the dilemma of having only one winter coat between them to go to the airport to meet the new arrivals. In another, "My Sister's Love," an attractive girl's parents put an end to the too-close relationship between her and her much older godfather (*kai yaah*), and they eventually put her into an arranged marriage with a boy closer to her own age.

Bates is a teacher and storyteller, and she has related some of her stories on CBC radio. The tales in *China Dog* have the feeling of stories that might be told around a kitchen table, and the seemingly unremarkable incidents in them provide an inside look at the members of these émigré communities.

Gao, Anhua. *To the Edge of the Sky: A Story of Love, Betrayal, Suffering and the Strength of Human Courage*. New York: Overlook Press, 2003. 498 pp. ISBN 1-58567-362-5, \$27.95.

Gao was born in China in 1949, the same year as the birth of the People's Republic of China; her parents were high-ranking Party members, which afforded her an easier life than most others at the time. Both of her parents died by the time Gao was 11. Most of this memoir (first published in England in 2000) recounts her struggles through the harsh, unpredictable circumstances of life in Communist China from the 1960s until she left the country in 1994 to marry an Englishman she had met first as a pen pal.

Much of Gao's story is of the personal travails that could occur in any society—health problems, an abusive first husband who dies from a gas heater malfunction, and a sister whose growing mental problems end in suicide. The country's atmosphere of suspicion and forced self-criticism permeates Gao's life and all of those around her, though, particularly in 1985 when she is imprisoned for several months on baseless charges of being a foreign spy.

Gao tells her story simply; she had worked as an English translator in China and her story is in her words, with only

an occasional odd locution (the spelling and punctuation throughout is also of her adopted England). Her life story encompasses much of China's history in the second half of the twentieth century, but it remains a personal tale that shows how history and society are reflected in ordinary lives.

Reissues of Out-of-Print Works

Korall, Burt. *Drummin' Men: The Heartbeat of Jazz: The Swing Years*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2002. 400 pp. ISBN 0-19-515762-1, \$18.95 (pb).

This oral history of jazz drummers of the swing era (approximately 1935 to 1945) was first published in 1990. Oxford University Press has also recently published in hardcover Korall's follow-up volume on jazz drummers during the bebop era. This volume studies at length seven great drummers, from Chick Webb (1907-1939) to Buddy Rich (1917-1987), with much shorter sections on seven lesser-known drummers. The longer chapters interweave the author's own memories and biographical and musical commentary with excerpts from interviews with figures of the period, including some of the drummers featured. In the brief quotes that open the chapters, some of the comments run to standard praise from fellow musicians and fans, but the longer quotes provide more balanced and musically insightful information.

Drummin' Men concentrates on the music, though it does include information about the personal problems that many of the musicians faced. There are chapter notes and an index, a lengthy discography, and very brief biographies of the contemporary figures quoted. The book does not seem to have been updated since 1990, so a few items are out of date.

Nabhan, Gary Paul. *Enduring Seeds: Native American Agriculture and Wild Plant Conservation*. Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 2002. 250 pp. ISBN 0-8165-2259-6, \$19.95 (pb).

This study of the importance of the survival of ancient and traditional agricultural species was first published in 1989. Nabhan is a ethnobotanist whose *The Desert Smells Like Rain*, on the agriculture of the O'odham people of the Arizona desert, was also recently republished by the University of Arizona Press.

In *Enduring Seeds*, Nabhan uses several case studies to explore the need for preserving biodiversity and traditional crops. His Native American focus gives him an unusual, long-term perspective on the subject. Criticism of modern industrial livestock farming is certainly not unheard of, but Nabhan begins his treatise on turkey farming with a description of a 1,700-year-old mummified turkey domesticated by Native Americans. Other chapters consider the pressures on populations of American wildflower populations and the effectiveness of such methods as seed banks for saving

traditional agricultural species. Nabhan frequently takes a personal approach to the stories he tells, with dramatic scene setting and personal portraits of those he encounters.

This publication has a new foreword by Miguel Altieri as well as the original one by Wendell Berry. It contains bibliographic essays by chapter, a lengthy list of works cited, and an index. With biological and agricultural diversity such an important subject today, it is unfortunate that no updates have been made to the main text or the works cited since 1990.

Youth of the Rural Organizing and Cultural Center. *Minds Stayed on Freedom: The Civil Rights Struggle in the Rural South: An Oral History*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2002. 202 pp. Introduction by Jay MacLeod. ISBN 0-8133-1123-3, \$20.00 (pb).

In 1989, 18 eighth and ninth graders from Holmes County, Mississippi, began an oral history project under the direction of their teacher in a summer program sponsored by the Rural Organizing and Cultural Center. Their interviews of the local African Americans who were active in the civil rights struggles of the 1960s were collected into this book, originally published in 1991.

The students researched their subject before beginning the interviews, and so they were able to ask well-thought-out questions about many aspects of the history of the time and the conditions blacks lived through. The civil rights struggle in Holmes County began in earnest with a 1963 attempt by 14 blacks to register to vote, and it later included fire bombings and shootings. The interviews are transcribed with an attempt to reproduce the language as spoken, and the students' questions are also as colloquial as one would expect from young teenagers. Because many of the interviewees are neighbors or grandparents of the students, one feels a true sense of information being passed down to another generation.

The volume includes an introduction by the students' teacher, a chronology of events in Holmes County and nationally from 1963 to 1967, and black-and-white photos from the civil rights era and of the interviewees (and some of the interviewers) from 1989.

Foreign Language Editions

Allende, Isabel. *La Ciudad de las Bestias*. New York: Rayo/HarperCollins, 2002. 416 pp. ISBN 0-06-051031-5, \$19.95.

It is a tribute to the increasing importance of Spanish language publishing in American publishing houses that this novel by the notable Chilean author is being simultaneously published in this, its original Spanish version, and in an English translation entitled *City of Beasts*. (The two editions have nearly identical covers, except for the text.) And it may be a tribute to J. K. Rowling that an established author of adult fiction is publishing a lengthy novel aimed at readers aged 10 and up. At 416 pages, this book does not quite reach the thickness of Harry Potter's latest adventures, but it seems

unlikely that such a book would have appeared five years ago.

Allende's hero is a 15-year-old boy named Alexander Cold. Spending the summer with his eccentric grandmother, he goes on a journey in the Amazon rainforest and, along with a younger girl named Nadia, has numerous adventures. The two youngsters are kidnapped by a tribe that possesses the power of turning invisible, and they enter a mountain in search of the mysterious "Beasts" of the title. The fast-paced plot and exotic setting seek to draw in teenage readers, who might also learn something from Allende's environmentalist message.

Translations

Dahesh, Dr. *Memorias de un Dinar*. New York: Daheshist Publishing, 2002, 1990. 382 pp. ISBN 0-935359-19-2, \$35.00.

Dahesh (1909-1984) was a Lebanese novelist, philosopher, and poet. The Daheshist Publishing Company is dedicated to publishing the more than one hundred books that he wrote in the original Arabic as well as in several other languages; the present volume is a reissued Spanish translation of one of his novels.

The book's title can be translated as "Memories of a Dinar," with the dinar being a large gold coin that is transferred through various people in different situations. The basic theme is the destructive power of the love of money. Toward the end, several historical figures such as Hitler, Churchill, and Mussolini make an appearance. The most remarkable aspect of the book is the more than 100 full-color full-page drawings that accompany the stories; some of these depict a variety of brutal actions in a style so dramatic that they are sometimes humorous.

McDermott, Gerald. *Zomo el conejo: Un cuento de África occidental*. San Diego, Calif.: Libros Viajeros/Harcourt, 2002. 32 pp. Trans. by F. Isabel Campo and Alma Flor Ada. ISBN 0-15-216777-3, \$7.00.

This picture book for preschoolers is a Spanish translation of a book published in 1992 under the title *Zomo the Rabbit: A Trickster Tale from West Africa*. Zomo is a figure from African folklore (an introductory paragraph from the author compares him to such characters as Br'er Rabbit). After speaking with Padre Cielo (a personification of the sky), Zomo embarks on an adventure that includes encounters with a fish, a bull, and a leopard. The most striking feature of the book is the stylized, brightly colored drawings, which in some cases (as in the portrait of Padre Cielo) seem to be influenced by African art, such as traditional masks. *Zomo el conejo* will catch the attention of young children with its bold illustrations; its African influences make it stand out in some ways from other children's books, though its picaresque tale of an animal's adventures will not seem too unfamiliar to its young audience.

Starr, Meg. *El día más feliz de Alicia*. New York: Star Bright, 2002. 38 pp. Illus. by Ying-hwa Hu and Cornelius Van Wright. Trans. by María Fiol. ISBN 1-832054-01-6, \$15.95.

The author of this picture book for young children dedicates it to the children of East Harlem and of "todos los otros barrios." The story is of a young girl named Alicia (who looks to be around five) and how everything goes perfectly her way on her birthday. (The book is also being published by Star Bright in English as *Alicia's Happy Day*.) Each two-page spread is a colorful drawing of Alicia, often with her mother, as she walks through the streets of what apparently is East Harlem; street and store signs are seen in both Spanish and English. Taxis make way for her to cross the street, an ice cream vendor has a large cone just for her, and a plane skywrites "Feliz cumpleaños!" At the story's end, her family and friendly neighborhood folks present her with a birthday cake (it has only three candles, but Alicia does appear older than that). The last page is sheet music for a tune by Pepe Castillo with the same title as the book. This is a lively and happy story that will give readers a sense of the connections of family and neighborhood in Alicia's life in the city.

New Volumes in Series

100 Who Shaped History

Juettner, Bonnie. *100 Native Americans Who Shaped American History*. San Mateo, Calif.: Bluewood Books, 2003. 112 pp. ISBN 0-912517-51-4, \$7.95 (pb).

This collection of 100 biographies is organized chronologically by date of birth, beginning with Dekanawida (c. 1550-c. 1600), the founder of the Iroquois Confederacy, and ending with the writer Sherman Alexie (b. 1966). Though each is only a page long, the biographies include much information and give some idea of the subject's historical importance. Names of persons, tribes, and many other proper nouns are placed in bold in the entries, and each entry includes a very small outline of the United States with a dot indicating the area the person came from. Each biography is also accompanied by a photo or drawing, usually of the subject, though for Native American artisans their work is sometimes pictured. (Oddly, the biography of the Iroquois leader Handsome Lake features a painting of his rival Red Jacket.)

At the end of the book, readers can take a trivia quiz, where the numbers of the biographies with the correct answers are given; two suggested projects for students are also included. This volume works best as a quick reference to historical figures, or as a way to demonstrate the variety and scope of the accomplishments of Native Americans through the years.

African-American Biographies

Broadwater, Andrea. *Mary McLeod Bethune: Educator*

and *Activist*. Berkeley Heights, N.J.: Enslow, 2003. 112 pp. ISBN 0-7660-1771-0, \$20.95.

This recent volume on Bethune (1875-1955) begins with the story of her struggle to encourage blacks to vote in Daytona Beach, Florida, in 1920 despite the many obstacles placed before blacks and the fierce opposition of the Ku Klux Klan. The story then goes back to her childhood in South Carolina, her early career as a teacher, and her founding of the Daytona Normal and Industrial Institute for Negro Girls in 1904. This school later merged with the Cookman Institute to form Bethune-Cookman College (the only existing historically black college founded by an African-American woman). Later chapters relate her experiences as president of the National Council of Negro Women and her work in the Roosevelt Administration heading the bureau for minorities of the National Youth Administration. A final chapter describes the legacy of Bethune's work. Like the other entries in this series for middle school readers, the book includes black-and-white illustrations and photographs, a chronology, chapter notes, lists of further reading and related web sites, and an index.

The American Girls Collection

Shaw, Janet. *Changes for Kaya*. Middleton, Wis.: Pleasant Company, 2002. 80 pp. Illus. by Bill Farnsworth and Susan McAliley. Book 6 in series. ISBN 1-58485-434-0, \$12.95 (cl); 1-58485-433-2, \$5.95 (pb).

Shaw, Janet. *Kaya and Lone Dog*. Middleton, Wis.: Pleasant Company, 2002. 96 pp. Illus. by Bill Farnsworth and Susan McAliley. Book 4 in series. ISBN 1-58485-430-8, \$12.95 (cl); 1-58485-429-4, \$5.95 (pb).

Shaw, Janet. *Kaya Shows the Way*. Middleton, Wis.: Pleasant Company, 2002. 88 pp. Illus. by Bill Farnsworth and Susan McAliley. Book 5 in series. ISBN 1-58485-432-4, \$12.95 (cl); 1-58485-431-6, \$5.95 (pb).

Shaw, Janet. *Kaya's Escape!* Middleton, Wis.: Pleasant Company, 2002. 88 pp. Illus. by Bill Farnsworth and Susan McAliley. Book 2 in series. ISBN 1-58485-426-X, \$12.95 (cl); 1-58485-425-1, \$5.95 (pb).

Shaw, Janet. *Kaya's Hero*. Middleton, Wis.: Pleasant Company, 2002. 88 pp. Illus. by Bill Farnsworth and Susan McAliley. Book 3 in series. ISBN 1-58485-428-6, \$12.95 (cl); 1-58485-427-8, \$5.95 (pb).

Shaw, Janet. *Meet Kaya*. Middleton, Wis.: Pleasant Company, 2002. 80 pp. Illus. by Bill Farnsworth and Susan McAliley. Book 1 in series. ISBN 1-58485-424-3, \$12.95 (cl); 1-58485-423-5, \$5.95 (pb).

Little girls have been playing with dolls for as long as we've been human. If you are a Native mother, you would

be hard put to find a doll to give your daughter that would come near to being a representation of herself unless you made it. And that is what makes the Nimiipuu (Nez Percé) doll and character in this series so enticing.

This series of stories taking place in 1764 could have been a lot worse. The young protagonist has a name, a family, and friends. In the course of the series, she grows and matures. But whatever information the author got from her advisers from the tribe is filtered through a white consciousness and further adapted to fit the mold of this formula series. All life-threatening conflicts are resolved by the end of each story, and all moral and emotional conflicts are resolved by the end of the series. This structure is especially problematic in historical books about Indian people, whose conflicts—over, for instance, water and land rights and sports mascots—are ongoing. And books conceptualized as teaching tools, or enlisted in the cause of selling a product, usually result in stilted writing. Here, Indian parents and grandparents lecture so that the author can convey information about the people. Besides being culturally dissonant, this breaks the cardinal rule of “show, don't tell.” Occasionally, there's a story that rings true, as when Kaya's father tells her about the first time he was thrown from a horse (*Meet Kaya*).

Anachronistic wording such as the Lakota word “teepee” and the French words “travois” and “parfleche” (the stories take place in the pre-contact period) appear throughout, even in dialogue. Nimiipuu words during that time might have been translated as “dwelling,” “pony drag,” and “carrying bag.” By relegating everything Kaya says and feels to similes and metaphors and comparing her every thought to nature, the author misses the subtleties of Indian language and thought patterns. And her descriptive phraseology (“dark” and “gleaming” faces, “high” cheekbones) reflects an outsider's perspective.

Traditionally, Nimiipuu names given to children had to do with ancestors, place, and responsibility, and names were changed several times during a person's life. Unless the baby was dying and had to be named quickly, naming was done after great consideration, often by an elder or holy person. It's unbelievable that an eighteenth-century Nimiipuu mother would name her baby for the first thing she saw after giving birth, as depicted in *Kaya and Lone Dog*.

The series has some distortions related to family and intertribal relationships. A prepubescent Indian girl in 1764 would probably not have had a relationship with her father that included physical touching (*Meet Kaya*). Horse-stealing raids were not the same as raids to capture women and children, nor were they done at the same time (*Kaya's Escape!*). Kaya's sightless sister, Speaking Rain, would have been raised to be self-reliant.

Although the people are not visually depicted as savages, they all look alike. They are all the same tone of brown, and their facial and physical features are the same. Finally, by setting these books before white encroachment, the author and

publisher were able to sidestep the nasty parts and to relegate some of that history to the "Looking Back" sections. While some of those sections contain good information (the boarding school story in *Kaya's Escape!* and the story of the Dalles Dam in *Kaya Shows the Way*), others are rife with error (the explanation of how the tribe got the name Nez Percé in *Meet Kaya*), and the overall effect is to oversimplify and sanitize the history for young non-Native girl readers.

—Beverly Slapin
Oyate, Berkeley, Calif.

American Girls Short Stories

Porter, Connie. *Addy's Summer Place*. Middleton, Wis.: Pleasant Company, 2003. 48 pp. Illus. ISBN 1-58485-697-1, \$4.95.

Shaw, Janet. *Kaya and the River Girl*. Middleton, Wis.: Pleasant Company, 2003. 48 pp. Illus. ISBN 1-58485-792-7, \$4.95.

Tripp, Valerie. *Thanks to Josefina*. Middleton, Wis.: Pleasant Company, 2003. 48 pp. Illus. ISBN 1-58485-698-X, \$4.95.

These latest entries in the short story series for middle-grade girls present adventures in the lives of familiar and new American Girls characters. *Addy's Summer Place* takes place during the Reconstruction Era. Her father, now reunited with the family, has taken a job on the Jersey Shore building a resort, and Addy, her mother, and her baby sister travel from Philadelphia to join him. In a story with much atmosphere and historical information but not much tension, Addy encounters segregation (and eats in an elegant ice cream parlor for blacks only), catches rabbits, and confronts an impoverished, racist white girl.

Kaya and the River Girl features the newest American Girl, a Nez Percé youngster recently reunited with her blind half-sister. Kaya competes in a race with the swifter Spotted Owl, a "river girl" (member of the Wishram) who also befriends her sister, making Kaya jealous. After hearing an instructional story, Kaya returns to the river and there comes to work with Spotted Owl to save Elder Woman from a deadly current. The many events and conflicts in a brief tale give it a disjointed, contrived quality, but the historical section that follows offers useful information on trading among tribes.

Despite some stilted dialogue, *Thanks to Josefina* effectively portrays conflicts among sisters and the youngest one's efforts to resolve them. The story takes place after the flood that killed the family's sheep. The Montoya girls begin weaving blankets to raise money for a new herd, but they have trouble working together. Back matter describes the colorful blankets woven by the Hispanic residents of New Mexico in the early nineteenth century.

—Lyn Miller-Lachmann

Baseball Hall of Famers

Kingsbury, Robert. *Roberto Clemente*. New York: Rosen, 2003. 112 pp. ISBN 0-8239-3602-3, \$29.25.

Spencer, Lauren. *Hank Aaron*. New York: Rosen, 2003. 112 pp. ISBN 0-8239-3600-7, \$29.25.

These volumes are part of a new six-entry series for elementary students on the lives of baseball greats; other players included are Yogi Berra, Sandy Koufax, Willie Mays, and Nolan Ryan.

The book on Clemente begins with his childhood in Puerto Rico and his growing love for baseball, including the story of how the African-American player Monte Irvin, while playing in the Puerto Rican winter league, became Clemente's idol. A few years later in 1954, before being drafted by the Pittsburgh Pirates, Clemente played in the Puerto Rican winter league himself in the same outfield with Willie Mays. Further chapters in the book relate his rise to stardom with the Pirates and his struggles along the way with injuries and cultural differences. (A minor correction: the Hall of Famer who helped Clemente in his first Pirate spring training was George Sisler, and not Gene Sisler, as stated here.) He won the World Series with the Pirates in 1960 and 1971 and a Most Valuable Player award in 1966, but died tragically after the 1972 season in a plane crash while working to bring needed supplies to earthquake victims in Nicaragua.

The Hank Aaron volume describes the beginning of his career with the Indianapolis Clowns in the waning years of the Negro Leagues and his lengthy career with the Milwaukee, and later Atlanta, Braves, where he set several records, including the mark for career home runs at 755. At times, the author uses odd or even incorrect baseball expressions; at one point, Aaron's feats are not enough "to keep the Braves at number one," meaning first place. Elsewhere it is noted that even such current greats as Barry Bonds and Rickey Henderson have "game numbers" that are "a few thousand shy of Aaron in running and batting"; Henderson in fact passed Aaron in runs scored in 2000, which would never have been referred to as "running" in any case.

Illustrated with numerous black-and-white and color photos, each volume concludes with a time line, a glossary, a short reading list, a list of organizations and web sites, a bibliography, and an index.

Black Stars

Haskins, Jim, ed. *Black Stars of Civil War Times*. New York: Wiley, 2003. 128 pp. ISBN 0-471-22069-8, \$12.95 (pb).

Haskins, Jim, ed. *Black Stars of the Civil Rights Movement*. New York: Wiley, 2003. 128 pp. ISBN 0-471-22068-X, \$12.95 (pb).

These two volumes are the newest entries in a series for middle school students; the previous volumes were on heroes of colonial and Revolutionary times and of the Harlem Renaissance. Each volume contains about 20 biographical profiles (each four to seven pages) of significant figures in African-American history and culture. Included in the Civil War volume are Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman, along with some lesser-known persons such as the physician Alexander T. Augusta. The volume on the civil rights movement begins with the same person who concluded the Civil War volume, Booker T. Washington (after different introductory pages, the chapters on Washington are mostly identical in the two books). Entries are arranged chronologically by year of birth, and the biographies are accompanied by black-and-white photos and illustrations and occasional sidebars. Each book contains a chronology, chapter notes, a bibliography, and an index. As with the earlier volumes in this series, most of the biographies here are adapted from those in a previous series published by Wiley that included books on African-American military heroes, entrepreneurs, teachers, musicians, inventors, and women writers.

Books of Black Heroes

Hudson, Wade. *Scientists, Healers, and Inventors: An Introduction for Young Readers*. East Orange, N.J.: Just Us Books, 2003. 72 pp. ISBN 0-940975-97-1, \$9.95 (pb).

This book of 47 single-page biographical sketches, intended for students in the middle elementary grades, is the third in this series of inspirational biographies; it follows *Book of Black Heroes from A to Z* (1988) and *Great Women in the Struggle* (1991). The entries are divided into the three categories of the title, and they are presented alphabetically within each category. (A chronological ordering might have made the developing role of African-Americans in these fields more apparent.) Most entries begin with a comment about the significance of the person's life and work, followed by a straightforward recounting of his or her life. Perhaps in an effort to help students relate to these heroes, all figures are referred to by their first names throughout. Each historical figure is shown in a black-and-white photo or a pencil drawing (one rather odd drawing of transplant surgeon Samuel K. Kountz portrays him with a face mostly covered by a surgical mask and with an ominously raised scalpel). The book also includes a glossary of scientific terms, a chronology of events placing many of these figures in the context of African-American history, a selected bibliography, and an index.

Scientists, Healers, and Inventors provides students with accounts of inspiring figures in a broad range of fields of work and historical periods. The information on each is presented in a concise and clear manner, though the staid overall design and format of the book (including the black-and-white cover photos, with a large, grainy central image of a group of doctors) might not easily grab the attention of its young audience.

Collective Biographies

Weatherford, Carole Boston. *Great African-American Lawyers*. Berkeley Heights, N.J.: Enslow, 2003. 112 pp. ISBN 0-7660-1837-7, \$20.95.

This volume for middle school students offers eight- and nine-page biographies, written in a straightforward style and generally accompanied by full-page black-and-white photos. Entries are by year of birth, from Charles Hamilton Houston (1895-1950), the first special counsel for the NAACP, to Carol Moseley-Braun (b. 1947), the former U.S. Senator from Illinois. Some persons, such as Moseley-Braun or former Virginia governor L. Douglas Wilder, appear to be included for their political, not legal, accomplishments; others, such as Johnnie Cochran, are clearly here as a result of their careers as lawyers. The book concludes with a list of further reading (in some cases, books written by the lawyers themselves), web sites, chapter notes, and an index.

Coming to America

Parker, Lewis A. *Why Japanese Immigrants Came to America*. New York: Rosen, 2003. 24 pp. ISBN 0-8239-6463-9, \$18.75.

Parker, Lewis A. *Why Mexican Immigrants Came to America*. New York: Rosen, 2003. 24 pp. ISBN 0-8239-6459-0, \$18.75.

Parker, Lewis A. *Why Vietnamese Immigrants Came to America*. New York: Rosen, 2003. 24 pp. ISBN 0-8239-6461-2, \$18.75.

The titles of the books in this series for lower elementary students (volumes are also available on German, Irish, and Italian immigrants) don't really give the whole story. Rather than simply answering why immigrants came, the series tells how people from these countries came to America and how they fared after they arrived. The past tense came also seems too limiting; as it is noted in one volume, "Each year, thousands of Vietnamese immigrants still come to America for a better way of life." As it happens, this search for a better life, however vague a concept, may be a more appropriate and encompassing answer to the *why* of these titles than the specific historical circumstances that are cited: high taxes in Japan caused by its modernization after opening up to the West; the hardships during the period of the Mexican Revolution around 1910 to 1930; and the aftermath of the Vietnam War.

The origins and development of each nation's American immigrant population is told through simple text, which is often in caption boxes (each book has about 400 total words). Most pages have a short text accompanied by large black-and-white and color photos and a few maps. Each volume concludes with a short glossary, a very brief index of 9 to 12 words, and a list of two books for further reading. Because of the rapidly changing Internet, a web site address is given where students can find an updated list of web links. The books in these series do present the history of each country's immigrants in a clear and visually lively style,

though a treatment for older readers would have allowed more depth.

The Constitution

Hudson, David L., Jr. *The Fourteenth Amendment: Equal Protection Under the Law*. Berkeley Heights, N.J.: Enslow, 2002. 128 pp. ISBN 0-7660-1904-7, \$20.95.

This book for middle school students is part of a series (now with 10 volumes) that discusses the history and significance of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, as well as some of the most noteworthy amendments, such as those concerning freedom of speech and religion, Prohibition, and female suffrage.

The Fourteenth Amendment was ratified in 1868, and it has been at the heart of many constitutional controversies ever since. It was originally intended to extend to state and local cases some of the protections found in the Bill of Rights against intrusive behavior by federal authorities. As the author points out, the amendment currently has ramifications in cases involving “racial profiling, abortion rights, the right to die, affirmative action, and grandparent visitation rights,” as well as student issues such as “school dress codes, school prayer, evolution versus creationism, locker searches, drug testing, sexual harassment, and zero tolerance policies.” This broad scope, while making the amendment a vitally important topic, likely also makes its meaning hard to grasp for younger students, at least in comparison to concepts such as freedom of speech or religion. This book does a good job in presenting the history of the amendment as the Supreme Court over the years applies its provisions—particularly those of “due process” and “equal protection”—to a wider range of rights and circumstances. Enough background and specific examples are provided to enable students to grasp at least the outlines of this complicated subject.

The volume includes some black-and-white photos and illustrations of important figures and events in the amendment’s history, as well as chapter notes, a short reading and web site list, and an index.

Culture and Customs of Africa Culture and Customs of Latin America and the Caribbean

Ferreira, César, and Dargent-Chamot, Eduardo. *Culture and Customs of Peru*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2003. 184 pp. ISBN 0-313-30318-5, \$44.95.

Owomoyela, Oyekan. *Culture and Customs of Zimbabwe*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2002. 184 pp. ISBN 0-313-31740-2, \$44.95.

These volumes for secondary students and general readers thoroughly survey the history, culture, and people of each country. Both series follow a similar format: a chronology of the country’s history is followed by an introduction and then chapters on religion, social customs, literature, media, and the arts (each chapter ends with a list of references). The informed

and detailed discussion of the development of various arts in each country is a notable feature here, and is not often found in country series for students at this level. (On the other hand, students who are not looking for in-depth information may find the wealth of detail here slow going.) In each book, the text is accompanied by about 30 black-and-white photos, mostly of the country’s people and their everyday lives. The volumes end with a bibliography, glossary, and index.

Cultures of the World

Burbank, Jon. *Nepal*. Tarrytown, N.Y.: Marshall Cavendish/Benchmark Books, 2002. 144 pp. ISBN 0-7614-1476-2, \$24.95.

Goodman, Jim. *Thailand*. Tarrytown, N.Y.: Marshall Cavendish/Benchmark Books, 2002. 144 pp. ISBN 0-7614-1478-9, \$24.95.

Ferroa, Peggy, and Chan, Elaine. *China*. Tarrytown, N.Y.: Marshall Cavendish/Benchmark Books, 2002. 144 pp. ISBN 0-7614-1474-6, \$24.95.

Rajendra, Vijeya and Sundran. *Australia*. Tarrytown, N.Y.: Marshall Cavendish/Benchmark Books, 2002. 144 pp. ISBN 0-7614-1473-8, \$24.95.

Tope, Lily Rose R., and Nonan-Mercado, Detch P. *Philippines*. Tarrytown, N.Y.: Marshall Cavendish/Benchmark Books, 2002. 144 pp. ISBN 0-7614-1475-4, \$24.95.

Wanasundera, Nanda Pethiyagoda. *Sri Lanka*. Tarrytown, N.Y.: Marshall Cavendish/Benchmark Books, 2002. 144 pp. ISBN 0-7614-1477-0, \$24.95.

These six titles are the third group to be published in an updated second edition of the country series for middle school students; the first edition was published in 1990.

Each book includes a brief introduction and chapters on geography, history, government, economy, environment, the people, lifestyle, religion, language, arts, leisure, festivals, and food (including a few recipes). The text is accompanied by striking, brightly colored photos (many of them full-page) of nature, art, and everyday life. The books conclude with topographical, economic, and cultural maps of the country; pages of economic and cultural facts; a time line; a glossary; suggestions for further reading; a bibliography; and an index. The bright design and photos, along with the extensive information provided, make this series a good choice for students who would like to research life in the 18 countries in this edition.

Discovering Cultures

Asher, Sandy. *China*. Tarrytown, N.Y.: Benchmark/Marshall Cavendish, 2002. 48 pp. ISBN 0-7614-1179-8, \$16.95.

Asher, Sandy. *Mexico*. Tarrytown, N.Y.: Benchmark/Marshall

Cavendish, 2002. 48 pp. ISBN 0-7614-1175-5, \$16.95.

Reiser, Robert. *Brazil*. Tarrytown, N.Y.: Benchmark/Marshall Cavendish, 2002. 48 pp. ISBN 0-7614-1180-1, \$16.95.

Reiser, Robert. *Japan*. Tarrytown, N.Y.: Benchmark/Marshall Cavendish, 2002. 48 pp. ISBN 0-7614-1177-1, \$16.95.

This new illustrated series of country guides for students in grade two and up also includes volumes on France and Italy. Each book has six chapters of about six pages each on the country's geography, people, daily life, schools, sports and activities, and holidays and celebrations. Most chapters include one page highlighting an aspect of the culture or providing a game, story, or recipe. The China volume, for example, includes pages on making egg drop soup, playing a version of hopscotch called *Tiao Fangzi*, and creating a tangram set.

Each book concludes with a page on the country's flag and currency; the numbers from 1 to 10 in its official language; a short glossary; a portrait of several well-known people (the Brazil volume includes soccer player Pelé and composer Heitor Villa-Lobos); a short list of books, web sites, and videos; and an index. With its many colorful photos, specific information on everyday life, and numerous activities suitable for younger students, this series provides an accessible introduction to a variety of cultures.

Equal Rights Leaders

McLeese, Don. *Cesar E. Chavez*. Vero Beach, Fla.: Rourke Publishing LLC, 2002. 24 pp. ISBN 1-58952-285-0, \$19.27.

McLeese, Don. *Jackie Robinson*. Vero Beach, Fla.: Rourke Publishing LLC, 2002. 24 pp. ISBN 1-58952-288-5, \$19.27.

McLeese, Don. *Martin Luther King, Jr.* Vero Beach, Fla.: Rourke Publishing LLC, 2002. 24 pp. ISBN 1-58952-286-9, \$19.27.

McLeese, Don. *Rosa Parks*. Vero Beach, Fla.: Rourke Publishing LLC, 2002. 24 pp. ISBN 1-58952-287-7, \$19.27.

This series for early elementary students (the other volumes available are on Susan B. Anthony and Eleanor Roosevelt) provides straightforward accounts of the lives of significant social figures. Nine pages of large-type text (with about four or five sentences each) are accompanied by a full-page black-and-white photo. The first page tells the significance of the person, the following pages recount his or her life story, and the final page in each book tells of the honors each received and his or her continuing legacy. Each book ends with a chronology, a glossary of four to nine words

that are bolded in the book's text, an (understandably) very short index, and a list of several books and web sites for further research. The easy-to-follow text and fairly complete accounts of these figures' background and achievements make this series a good choice for elementary classrooms and libraries looking for volumes on the leaders of the struggle for civil rights.

Finding Out About Holidays

Gnojewski, Carol. *Martin Luther King, Jr., Day: Honoring a Man of Peace*. Berkeley Heights, N.J.: Enslow, 2002. 48 pp. ISBN 0-7660-1574-2, \$18.95.

Previously published titles in this series for elementary students include ones on Christmas, Independence Day, Mardi Gras, Earth Day, and Valentine's Day; a volume on Cinco de Mayo was reviewed in Editor's Shelf in December 2002.

Much of the present work is a well-presented biography of King, along with a short history of the civil rights movement and its importance. The final chapters describe the struggle to make King's birthday a national holiday, as well as some of the events that are held on the holiday to celebrate his legacy. The book has color and black-and-white photos throughout that are placed in a lively design; occasional sidebars show young students giving their answers to the question of what learning about King has taught them. The end of the book contains a project to make a "friendship circle," a list of Words to Know, suggestions for further reading, Internet addresses, and an index. For students in the second through fourth grades, this book is attractive and informative.

First Peoples

Gleimius, Nita; Sibanyoni, Evelina; and Mthimunye, Emma. *First Peoples of Africa: The Zulu*. Minneapolis: Lerner, 2002. 48 pp. ISBN 0-8225-0661-0, \$23.93 (\$17.95 school and library).

Knowles, Gerald M. *First Peoples of North America: The Navajo*. Minneapolis: Lerner, 2002. 48 pp. ISBN 0-8225-0662-9, \$23.93 (\$17.95 school and library).

LoBaido, Anthony C.; Ng, Yumi; and Rozario, Paul A. *First Peoples of Asia: The Kurds*. Minneapolis: Lerner, 2002. 48 pp. ISBN 0-8225-0664-5, \$23.93 (\$17.95 school and library).

Losleben, Elizabeth. *First Peoples of the Middle East: The Bedouin*. Minneapolis: Lerner, 2002. 48 pp. ISBN 0-8225-0663-7, \$23.93 (\$17.95 school and library).

Theunissen, Steve. *First Peoples of New Zealand: The Maori*. Minneapolis: Lerner, 2002. 48 pp. ISBN 0-8225-0665-3, \$23.93 (\$17.95 school and library).

These five volumes make a total of 16 now published in this series, for students in the middle grades, of heavily illustrated introductions to indigenous peoples. Each volume has about 20 chapters, each a two-page spread surrounded by brightly colored borders, with text wrapped around lively color photos. The topics covered include geography and landscape; native plants and animals; the origins and history of the people; economic, social, and family life; and arts and religion. Chapters on language usually provide a dozen words with pronunciation help. The political and cultural struggles that many of these peoples face are usually touched on, though not in much depth (the volume on the Kurds, for example, mentions their situation in Iraq only briefly). The volumes end with a glossary; a list of books, videos, web sites, and organizations; and a short index.

Gateway Biographies

Blue, Rose, and Naden, Corinne J. *Harriet Tubman: Riding the Freedom Train*. Brookfield, Conn.: Millbrook Press, 2003. 48 pp. ISBN 0-7613-2571-9, \$23.90 (\$17.93 school and library).

Dodson Wade, Mary. *Condoleezza Rice: Being the Best*. Brookfield, Conn.: Millbrook Press, 2003. 48 pp. ISBN 0-7613-2619-7, \$23.90 (\$17.93 school and library).

Naden, Corinne J., and Blue, Rose. *Mae Jemison: Out of This World*. Brookfield, Conn.: Millbrook Press, 2003. 48 pp. ISBN 0-7613-2570-0, \$23.90 (\$17.93 school and library).

The 45 entries in this series for grades two to four are a mixture of contemporary political figures such as Rice (others in the series include George and Laura Bush, Dick Cheney, and Al Gore), African-American pioneers and leaders such as Tubman and Jemison (others include Benjamin Banneker and Madame C. J. Walker), and an assortment of literary, scientific, and entertainment figures.

Harriet Tubman gives a standard account of the life of the Underground Railroad conductor. The volume on Jemison, the first African-American woman in space, focuses on her career choices, first in becoming a doctor and then in fulfilling a longtime dream of flying in space on a 1992 shuttle flight. The account of Rice's highly successful career considers the turns she took from her first love of music to academia and then to politics; it also gives information about her personality and varied interests, such as her devotion to the NFL's Denver Broncos.

Each volume includes color and black-and-white photos, sidebars on related topics (such as, in the Jemison book, ones on spacesuits and the history of the U.S. space program), lists for further reading, and an index.

The Greenwood Histories of the Modern Nations

Gondola, Ch. Didier. *The History of Congo*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2002. 248 pp. ISBN 0-313-31696-1, \$39.95.

The volumes in this series of historical surveys for high school students to adults generally focus on historical and political events rather than social or cultural development. This latest entry details the complex history of the region of the Congo River Basin in Africa, starting in ancient times and quickly moving to the establishment of a Belgian colony in the region in the 1880s. Subsequent chapters describe the events that led to its many changes in government and even in name—from Congo Free State, to Belgian Congo, to the Democratic Republic of Congo (after independence in 1960), to Zaire (under Mobutu's rule), and recently back to the Democratic Republic of Congo. In his introduction, the author states that his intention throughout is to explore the contradictions of a nation that is so rich in resources and yet has seen such poverty and struggle.

The book includes a time line, a chapter-by-chapter bibliographical essay, short biographies of notable persons in the country's history, several maps (though no photos), and an index.

In a Perfect World

Fridell, Ron. *Education for All: Floating Schools, Cave Classrooms, and Backpacking Teachers*. Brookfield, Conn.: Twenty-First Century Books/Millbrook Press, 2003. 80 pp. ISBN 0-7613-2624-3, \$26.90 (\$20.18 school and library).

Fridell, Ron. *The War on Hunger: Dealing with Dictators, Deserts, and Debt*. Brookfield, Conn.: Twenty-First Century Books/Millbrook Press, 2003. 80 pp. ISBN 0-7613-2650-2, \$26.90 (\$20.18 school and library).

These two entries in this series for students in grades five to eight focus on explaining the causes and consequences of hunger and a lack of proper education throughout the world. Both books are mostly concerned with these problems in developing countries. In each book there is an identical color-coded world map indicating which countries these are, and they turn out to include all of the world excluding the United States, Canada, Western Europe, Japan, and Australia.

In *Education for All*, various reasons why some countries spend little on education—such as rising populations, mounting debt, and unstable governments—are outlined. Among the startling statistics presented is that industrialized countries spend \$4,636 per pupil per year, while developing countries spend \$165 on average. Though much of the book is a long list of the problems education faces around the world, some hope is offered, for example in the descriptions of the creation of partnership schools in conjunction with

various nongovernmental agencies. A chapter on education in the United States discusses problems of poor reading skills and failing inner-city schools, with a look at the pros and cons of charter schools.

The War on Hunger looks at the areas of the world where hunger is the most pervasive, particularly in Africa. The reasons why hunger exists in a world that produces so much food are discussed; these include land use problems, factory farming, and third-world debt. A chapter on hunger in the United States is also included.

Both books end with suggestions of actions students can take to combat these problems, such as writing letters, volunteering, and raising money. The books also include lists of web sites (with suggested key words for web searches on the topic), chapter notes, and indexes. This series could serve to give middle school students a better understanding of problems faced by children around the world, and it may inspire some of them (as the author intends) to become involved with the search for solutions.

In Focus

Ross, John. *Mexico in Focus: A Guide to the People, Politics and Culture*. Northampton, Mass.: Interlink, 2003. 102 pp. ISBN 1-56656-421-2, \$12.95 (pb).

This fairly brief but detailed study offers an unflinching introduction, from a progressive viewpoint, to the society, culture, politics, and history of Mexico. Sections on society, for example, include headings such as “The Criminal Police” and “The Dysfunctional Courts.” Throughout the book, the author's discussion of current Mexican reality is informed by a political and historical perspective of the struggle of common Mexican people for a better life.

Though *Mexico in Focus* is classified as a “Travel” book on its back cover, it should not be considered as a competitor to guides from Fodor's or Frommer's. The book has few maps, relatively small black-and-white photos (except for a four-page color insert), and the section on “Where to Go, What to See” is only four pages long. Even in this section, rather than recommend the hottest nightspots in Cancun, the author suggests trying native foods, such as the goat stew *birria* in San Luis Potosí. This work instead provides an insightful guide to Mexico's society and culture that would be useful for someone who is planning a long stay there, or anyone who would like to understand this nearby but very different culture from a perspective not found in those colorful guides to the most popular sights and cities.

In World History

Worth, Richard. *The Spanish Inquisition in World History*. Berkeley Heights, N.J.: Enslow, 2002. 112 pp. ISBN 0-7660-1825-3, \$20.95.

This book for middle schoolers begins dramatically, as its first chapter is an account of the case of one Benito García, a Spanish Jew who had converted to Christianity but was

brought before the Spanish Inquisition in 1490 on suspicion of continuing to practice Judaism. After 200 lashes and other torture, García was implicated in the supposed crucifixion of a young Christian boy and, like many others, burned at the stake.

The Spanish Inquisition in World History then goes back to describe the origins of the Inquisition, life in medieval Spain, the rise of Torquemada, and the eventual fall of the Inquisition. A final chapter compares the Spanish Inquisition to other religious persecutions and considers its impact on Spain's history. Black-and-white drawings illustrate the text, and an occasional box provides a "Source Document" from the period, or from earlier histories on the subject. The book ends with chapter notes, books and web sites for further reading, an index, and a time line. One of the notable facts to be learned is just how wide-ranging that time line is, as the Inquisition was founded in 1231 and not fully abolished until 1835.

Issues in Focus

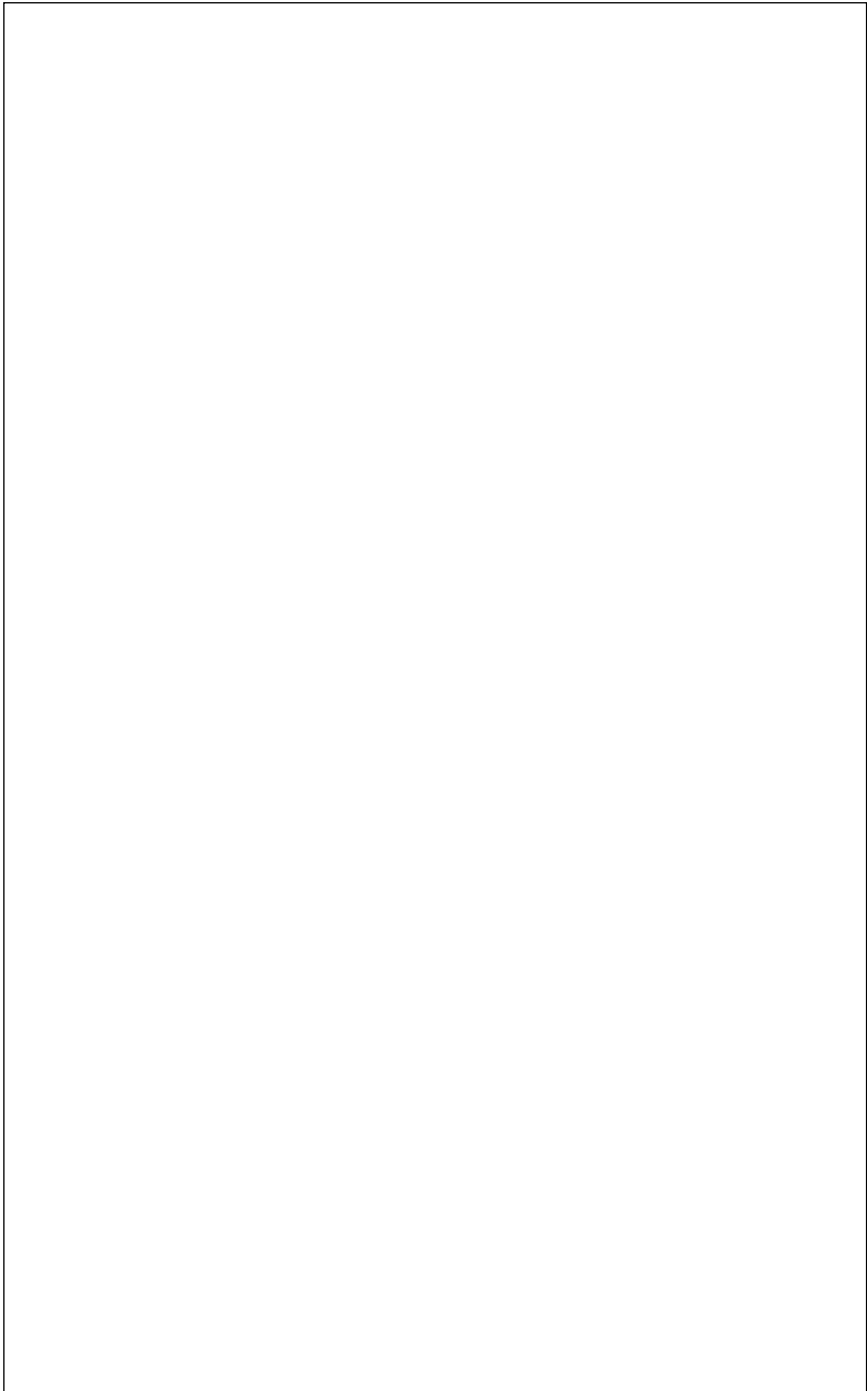
Altman, Linda Jacobs. *Human Rights: Issues for a New Millennium*. Berkeley Heights, N.J.: Enslow, 2002. 128 pp. ISBN 0-7660-1689-7, \$20.95.

Other entries in this series for junior high students include *The Death Penalty*, *The Debate over Genetically Engineered Food*, and *Global Warming*. The present volume has the difficult task of encompassing the even larger problem of human rights. As is noted on the book's back cover, a Sudanese boy being sold into slavery, the massacre at Tiananmen Square, and the driving of every Muslim from a Bosnian town are all affronts to human rights. Similar topics and many more are covered here.

The author begins with a discussion of the concept of human rights and law, going back to the origins of law in the Code of Hammurabi more than 3,750 years ago. Succeeding chapters discuss the eighteenth-century development of rights in the United States, England, and France; the struggle to eliminate slavery; and the horrendous violations of human rights of the twentieth century. Later chapters consider the role of civil disobedience and such figures as Thoreau and Martin Luther King, Jr. in the struggle for civil rights; the legacy of the activist 1960s; and further progress as well as abuses around the world. The book contains black-and-white drawings and photos, chapter notes, a

glossary, suggested further reading, and an index. *Human Rights: Issues for a New Millennium* covers a great deal of territory, but it should help students to draw connections between a number of historical topics such as slavery and the Holocaust and the issues of human rights we face today.

Journey to Freedom:
The African American Library



De Marco, Tony. *Jackie Robinson*. Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2002. 40 pp. ISBN 1-56766-918-2, \$25.64 (\$17.95 school and library).

Crushshon, Theresa. *Malcolm X*. Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2002. 40 pp. ISBN 1-56766-920-4, \$25.64 (\$17.95 school and library).

Fahlenkamp-Merrell, Kindle. *Louis Armstrong*. Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2002. 40 pp. ISBN 1-56766-919-0, \$25.64 (\$17.95 school and library).

Jones, Amy Robin. *Toni Morrison*. Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2002. 40 pp. ISBN 1-56766-925-5, \$25.64 (\$17.95 school and library).

Meadows, James. *Marian Anderson*. Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2002. 40 pp. ISBN 1-56766-921-2, \$25.64 (\$17.95 school and library).

Meadows, James. *Slavery: The Struggle for Freedom*. Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2002. 40 pp. ISBN 1-56766-923-9, \$25.64 (\$17.95 school and library).

McNair, Joseph D. *Ralph Bunche*. Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2002. 40 pp. ISBN 1-56766-922-0, \$25.64 (school and library).

Summer, L. S. W. C. *Handy: Founder of the Blues*. Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2002. 40 pp. ISBN 1-56766-927-1, \$25.64 (\$17.95 school and library).

Venable, Rose. *The Civil Rights Movement*. Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2002. 40 pp. ISBN 1-56766-917-4, \$25.64 (\$17.95 school and library).

Whitehurst, Susan. *Dr. Charles Drew*. Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2002. 40 pp. ISBN 1-56766-916-6, \$25.64 (\$17.95 school and library).

Williams, Carla. *Thurgood Marshall*. Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2002. 40 pp. ISBN 1-56766-924-7, \$25.64 (\$17.95 school and library).

Williams, Carla. *The Underground Railroad*. Chanhassen, Minn.: The Child's World, 2002. 40 pp. ISBN 1-56766-926-3, \$25.64 (\$17.95 school and library).

What is immediately striking about the entries in this 42-volume series for middle school students is a serious and elegant design unusual for this level. Each volume has a large photo bordered in black on the cover (the books are an expansive 9 1/4 x 10 1/2 inches), and within the books the color and black-and-white photos and drawings are designed to appear like actual photos affixed to the page. Captions and short sidebars are deep red boxes with gold type and borders.

The majority of the volumes in the entire series, as of those listed above, are biographies of individual figures in African-American history. These are easy-to-follow and fairly complete, and they include a time line, a list of books and web sites, and a glossary that defines the terms that are occasionally bolded in the text. What is most distinctive again from other biographies of this type is the visual element, with such illustrations included as a collage made by Louis Armstrong of news clippings about Jackie Robinson, and a classically 1950s photo from Toni Morrison's high school yearbook.

The volumes on larger topics such as slavery and the civil rights movement naturally treat their subjects less comprehensively than the biographies do. (Other titles besides those above include ones on African-Americans in the Revolutionary War, the Emancipation Proclamation, and Kwanzaa.) The subject volumes do a good job, however, of giving a general background and including the most important events, figures, and concepts. Overall, the *Journey to Freedom* series has something of a coffee-table-book, Time-Life feel to it. This may seem almost intimidating to its intended audience at first, but the clear, large text and striking visual elements should make these books a valuable resource for students investigating African-American history, and in particular some of its most interesting figures.

Latinos in American History

Bush Gibson, Karen. *Jovita Idar*. Bear, Del.: Mitchell Lane, 2003. 48 pp. ISBN 1-58415-151-X, \$19.95.

Menard, Valerie. *Álvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca*. Bear, Del.: Mitchell Lane, 2003. 48 pp. ISBN 1-58415-153-6, \$19.95.

Thatcher Murcia, Rebecca. *Dolores Huerta*. Bear, Del.: Mitchell Lane, 2003. 48 pp. ISBN 1-58415-155-2, \$19.95.

Whiting, Jim. *Gaspar de Portolá*. Bear, Del.: Mitchell Lane, 2003. 48 pp. ISBN 1-58415-158-X, \$19.95.

Many of the persons profiled in this new series from Mitchell Lane (20 volumes are planned) will not be familiar to most middle school students. This is part of the motivation behind the series, which is subtitled "The Hispanic Influence in the United States," as it seeks to make up for the lack of knowledge of the historical contributions of Hispanics from the country's earliest days to today. The four subjects of the present volumes are Cabeza de Vaca, a Spanish explorer of Florida and Mexico in the early sixteenth century; de Portolá, a Spanish soldier who led the 1769 expedition that named Los Angeles and was in the first group of Europeans to see San Francisco Bay; Idar, a teacher, journalist, and civil rights activist in Texas in the early twentieth century; and Huerta, one of the most important leaders of the United Farm Workers from the 1960s onward.

Each volume tells the life story of its figure with some

background on the historical period, accompanied by color photos, drawings, and maps. Whiting relates de Portolá's incredibly arduous journeys in dramatic fashion, often ending chapters in portentous sentences such as, "And many of them would be dead before the year was out." The most unusual story may be that of Cabeza de Vaca, who started out to conquer lands for Spain, but ended up briefly enslaved by the indigenous Americans he encountered before living peacefully alongside them for a time. One feature of these biographies is that the people in them, like Cabeza de Vaca, meet their share of failures; de Portolá's first historic journey, for example, never succeeded in its stated goal of finding the previously discovered Monterey. Each volume concludes with a chronology, a historic time line, a list of books and web sites, and an index.

The New Americans

Garcia, Alma M. *The Mexican Americans*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2002. 240 pp. ISBN 0-313-31499-3, \$44.95.

As the latest in this series for high school and general readers notes, Mexican Americans are among the fastest growing immigrant populations in the United States. The book begins with the early history of Spanish exploration in the New World through the beginnings of U.S.-Mexico relations. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Mexicans moved easily across the U.S. border, as industrialization in the Southwest created the need for new workers. The author discusses how this changed over time, with particular emphasis on the effects of the Immigration Act of 1965 and other laws that affected Mexican Americans. Later chapters cover such subjects as family and rituals, gender relations, achieving citizenship, political identity, the children of immigrants, and the current state of U.S.-Mexico relations. A section on "The Latino Wave in American Culture" is not quite up-to-date, and it features some curious writing, with statements such as "Ricky Martin's appearance on the Grammy Awards in 1999 heralded him into the American culture." The rest of the book is written in straightforward, if somewhat dry, prose.

The Mexican Americans includes about 20 black-and-white photos and several charts on Mexican-American demographics. The book ends with page-long biographies of about a dozen Mexicans and Mexican-Americans (including César Chávez and Linda Ronstadt); a very short glossary of Spanish terms; a list of references; and an index.

On My Own Biography

Walker, Sally M. *Jackie Robinson*. Minneapolis: Lerner/First Avenue Editions, 2002. 48 pp. Illus. by Rodney S. Pate. ISBN 0-87614-904-2, \$6.95 (pb).

Zemlicka, Shannon. *Pocahontas*. Minneapolis: Lerner/First Avenue Editions, 2002. 48 pp. Illus. by Jeni Reeves. ISBN 0-87614-906-9, \$6.95 (pb).

These two biographies for early elementary students feature clear, simple prose and color drawings to tell each part of their stories. They are part of a series of biographies (now numbering about a dozen) of such varied figures as Booker T. Washington, Daniel Boone, and Pablo Picasso. (Lerner also publishes a similar series titled *On My Own History*.) The books use such documentary-style techniques as starting chapters with "Pepper Street, Pasadena, California, 1927" and "The village of Werowocomoco, in what later became Virginia, about 1595." Throughout, these biographies try to present the viewpoint and feelings of the person whose life is being told, as in the recurrent descriptions of Robinson's struggle to keep his temper in the face of the terrible insults and discrimination he faced.

In the case of Pocahontas, the author alerts the reader at the start that we have little solid information about the historical truth of much of her life. Later in the book, we are told that it is possible that John Smith made up the famous story of Pocahontas saving him from being killed by her tribe, or that he may have simply misunderstood what was going on. As Pocahontas marries John Rolfe, one of the Englishmen who has held her as a hostage, and then moves to England, the author admits that we really can only speculate on her motivations and feelings. In this way, the series title "On My Own" is appropriate, as students might be led to give their own opinions on what happens. The books end with a historical afterword, a list of dates, and a selected bibliography.

Oxfam Country Profiles

Crabtree, John. *Peru*. Oxford, England: Oxfam Publishing, 2002. 96 pp. ISBN 0-85598-482-1, \$9.95 (pb).

Frost, Nicola. *Indonesia*. Oxford, England: Oxfam Publishing, 2002. 96 pp. ISBN 0-85598-481-3, \$9.95 (pb).

These two volumes are part of the 20 available in this series of portraits of developing countries around the world. Produced by Oxfam Great Britain, the series uses British spelling and punctuation and metric measurements throughout. The books examine the social, political, and economic situation in each country, with a particular emphasis on the effect developments have had on the lives of ordinary, and most often poor, working people. Most of the many black-and-white photos in each book were taken by a single documentary photographer from that country, which gives a more personal look than is usual for such country guides.

The accounts of poverty, political corruption, and exploitation of the powerless in each country can make for fairly grim reading; the conclusion of the Peru volume admits that "[l]ooking at Peru in terms of the 'macro' picture, you may be forgiven for feeling a little depressed." However, each book also considers the ways that ordinary people have striven to make their lives and their country better. The Indonesia title portrays an organic farmer with his strawber-

ries, and a sidebar in *Peru* tells of the more than 3,500 *comedores* (community kitchens) to be found in Lima alone that work to provide cheap food to people who could not afford to eat otherwise. The books contain a list of dates, a page of facts and figures, suggested further reading, an index, and an account of the work that various Oxfam organizations are currently doing in the country.

Penguin Lives

Remini, Robert V. *Joseph Smith*. New York: Viking, 2002. 208 pp. ISBN 0-670-03083-X, \$19.95.

The Penguin Lives series makes a particular effort to match subject to biographer in its fairly short biographies for a general audience. Remini has previously written an award-winning three-volume biography of Andrew Jackson, and here he emphasizes the political, social, and religious background of the Jacksonian Age as a way to understand better the remarkable life of the man he calls "unquestionably the most important reformer and innovator in American religious history."

Smith was born in 1805, and at age 17 he had the first of his visions of the angel Moroni, who led him to the discovery of the golden plates on which was written the Book of Mormon in a version of Egyptian script. Remini is not a Mormon, and he evenhandedly presents the believing and skeptical interpretations of Smith's many visions, other incredible events, and the origins of polygamy among Mormons. After gathering a successful community of followers (including Brigham Young), Smith and his fellow Mormons encountered hostility in just about every community in which they tried to settle. After his followers destroyed the printing press of a newspaper critical of them, Smith and some of his leaders were temporarily imprisoned in an Illinois town for inciting riot; a mob broke in and killed the Mormon leader. Smith's life story is not very well-known, and Remini does an excellent job of combining its remarkable events, the origins of the Mormon church, and the historical background that helps to explain both the fierce initial opposition to the Mormons and the startling success they achieved after Smith's death.

Pioneers of Modern U.S. Hispanic Literature

Yglesias, José. *Home Again*. Houston, Tex.: Arte Público, 2002. 176 pp. ISBN 1-55885-354-5, \$12.95 (pb).

Yglesias (1919-1995) was a Cuban-American writer; this is the fifth of his novels to be reprinted in this series. *Home Again* was originally published by Arbor House in 1987. It is the first-person account of a retired novelist named Pinpin, who goes back to live among his Cuban-American relatives in his hometown of Tampa, Florida. He has spent most of his adult life living in very different communities, partly among the Boston Brahmin society of his late wife, Cora (he frequently refers dismissively to all those he met there as "Wasps") and among the left-wing intelligentsia of New

York City. Throughout the novel, Pinpin flashes back to scenes from his earlier life and also recounts what happens when he becomes involved again with the characters of his youth.

As a narrator, Pinpin is blunt in his opinions of people and his difficulties in getting along with them. At one point, after telling of his longtime affair with his wife's friend, Susie, Pinpin says, "Note this, this is a fact: Susie served as the model for all the Hispanic girls in my stories. Which gives you an idea how smart critics are." The novel would likely have more resonance and provide more connections if read after Yglesias's earlier work. On its own, it is of interest for its portrait of several wildly different communities, and for the outspokenness of its irascible narrator.

Real-Life Reader Biography

Bankston, John. *Alicia Keys*. Bear, Del.: Mitchell Lane, 2002. 32 pp. ISBN 1-58415-133-1, \$15.95.

Bankston, John. *Venus Williams*. Bear, Del.: Mitchell Lane, 2002. 32 pp. ISBN 1-58415-129-3, \$15.95.

Granger, Stacey. *Colin Powell*. Bear, Del.: Mitchell Lane, 2002. 32 pp. ISBN 1-58415-144-7, \$15.95.

Mangal, Mélina. *Virginia Hamilton*. Bear, Del.: Mitchell Lane, 2002. 32 pp. ISBN 1-58415-170-6, \$15.95.

Wade, Linda R. *Condoleezza Rice*. Bear, Del.: Mitchell Lane, 2002. 32 pp. ISBN 1-58415-145-5, \$15.95.

Wilson, Wayne. *Allen Iverson*. Bear, Del.: Mitchell Lane, 2002. 32 pp. ISBN 1-58415-134-X, \$15.95.

According to the publisher, these books for students from grade three and up are "non-fictionalized stories that present the lives of contemporary role models for young readers." More than 80 biographies of figures from entertainment, sports, children's literature, and politics have so far been released. Each begins with a chapter that tells of the difficult challenges the person had to overcome (for Rice, the racism of her hometown of Birmingham, Alabama) or a significant moment of decision or triumph (for author Hamilton, receiving the Hans Christian Andersen Award in 1992). The books then provide straightforward biographies that focus on how much each person had to persevere to succeed; these are accompanied by black-and-white photographs and followed by a chronology and a short index. The Hamilton biography also includes a list of books published, and the Keys volume has a discography.

One problem with the emphasis on contemporary figures is that it is difficult to have the accounts remain up-to-date and to be sure that the people portrayed will remain figures of interest or worthy role models. The Venus Williams story

ends in July 2002, for example, and several more chapters in the rivalry with her sister, Serena, have already occurred since then. The volume on Keys concludes with her triumph at the age of 21 at the 2002 Grammy Awards, and it is still hard to say how much staying power her career will have. (The release next year of a volume on Norah Jones would not be surprising.) Allen Iverson is a problematic, though fascinating, figure for this series in several ways, as his biography does not shy away from his various problems, but it does not include his latest controversial arrest in 2002. The advantage of choosing these mostly contemporary subjects, however, is that the series does provide accessible accounts of people whom children in the middle elementary grades are likely to be interested in. No inspirational life story will do much good if it can't entice someone into picking it up and reading it.

Stories from Where We Live

St. Antoine, Sara, ed. *Stories from Where We Live: The Gulf Coast*. Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 2003. 280 pp. ISBN 1-57131-636-1, \$19.95.

Dividing North America into "eco-regions" (an explanation of the concept is included in the book), this series combines essays, reminiscences, short stories, works of scientific observation, and poems to create a portrait of life and nature in different geographical regions. (Other volumes are on the North Atlantic coast, the prairie, and the California coast.) The book's jacket states that it is for "young readers (ages 9 & up) and their families"; the actual reading level here starts perhaps a little higher (around fifth or sixth grade), but many of the highly literate entries included could hold the interest of readers of any age. In fact, the way that several entries look back on youth (such as the natural scientist E. O. Wilson's account of his Alabama boyhood in the 1940s) would appeal to older readers perhaps even more than younger ones.

Some of the writers here are well known (Zora Neale Hurston, Barry Hannah, and John James Audubon), though the majority are not. The mixture of fact and fiction, and of scientific account and personal story, gives a broad range to the literary landscape. It might be thought that the geographical range included is a bit too broad, going from the Florida Everglades to the coast of Texas, and extending somewhat inland. But even if this is not a homogenous geographical region, the differences among the areas included could provide further room for discussion. A teaching and activity guide is available at the web site, www.worldashome.org. Though inconsistencies in quality are inevitable in such a diverse anthology (some of the poetry makes little impact, for example), this title will give readers in a broad range of ages a fascinating entry into the lives of the people, animals, plants, and wild places of this vibrant region.

Visual Geography Series

Behnke, Alison. *China in Pictures*. Minneapolis: Lerner, 2003. 80 pp. ISBN 0-8225-0370-0, \$27.93 (\$20.95 school and library).

Behnke, Alison. *Italy in Pictures*. Minneapolis: Lerner, 2003. 80 pp. ISBN 0-8225-0368-9, \$27.93 (\$20.95 school and library).

Behnke, Alison. *Japan in Pictures*. Minneapolis: Lerner, 2003. 80 pp. ISBN 0-8225-1956-9, \$27.93 (\$20.95 school and library).

Braun, Eric. *Norway in Pictures*. Minneapolis: Lerner, 2003. 80 pp. ISBN 0-8225-0369-7, \$27.93 (\$20.95 school and library).

Broberg, Catherine. *Kenya in Pictures*. Minneapolis: Lerner, 2003. 80 pp. ISBN 0-8225-1957-7, \$27.93 (\$20.95 school and library).

Broberg, Catherine. *Saudi Arabia in Pictures*. Minneapolis: Lerner, 2003. 80 pp. ISBN 0-8225-1958-8, \$27.93 (\$20.95 school and library).

Engfer, Lee. *India in Pictures*. Minneapolis: Lerner, 2003. 80 pp. ISBN 0-8225-0371-9, \$27.93 (\$20.95 school and library).

Hamilton, Janice. *Mexico in Pictures*. Minneapolis: Lerner, 2003. 80 pp. ISBN 0-8225-1960-7, \$27.93 (\$20.95 school and library).

Streissguth, Tom. *Brazil in Pictures*. Minneapolis: Lerner, 2003. 80 pp. ISBN 0-8225-1959-3, \$27.93 (\$20.95 school and library).

Zuehlke, Jeffrey. *Egypt in Pictures*. Minneapolis: Lerner, 2003. 80 pp. ISBN 0-8225-0367-0, \$27.93 (\$20.95 school and library).

These volumes and eight others (on Afghanistan, Argentina, Canada, the Czech Republic, Germany, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Vietnam) form the revised second edition of this series for students in the middle grades. Changes from the first edition include updating of statistics, information, and maps; added back matter such as a list of famous people and sights to see from each country; and a new visual design. The cover of each book proclaims that it is "web enhanced @ www.vgsbooks.com," where up-to-date information and additional material are available.

Considering the title of the series, it comes almost as a surprise that each book contains a great deal of detailed text on the five subject areas of the land, history and government, the people, cultural life, and the economy. Numerous color and black-and-white photos and several maps are included, but most are one-third to one-half page in size

and do not at all outweigh the conventional presentation of information through the text. Various sidebars include short lists of words in the native language, cultural traditions (such the Japanese tea ceremony), and national recipes (for Italy, pasta con pomodoro). The new design of the series, in an attempt to appear “web enhanced,” perhaps, includes elements meant to resemble computer text. In captions, for example, key words are highlighted in black boxes (as if by a computer cursor) and have arrows pointing from them to the photos. Some enlarged quotes and short sidebars are backed by a distracting abstract design, presumably of a globe.

The entries in this series are not really the photographic travelogues some might expect. However, the combination of lively photographs, comprehensive text, and a great deal of supplementary material (including a time line, information on flags and currency, reading lists, a glossary, a bibliography, and an index) makes the Visual Geography Series a valuable resource for middle school students.

Women Who Shaped History

Mattern, Joanne. *Coretta Scott King: Civil Rights Activist*. New York: Rosen, 2003. 24 pp. ISBN 0-8239-6504-X, \$17.25 (\$12.95 school and library).

Mattern, Joanne. *Sojourner Truth: Early Abolitionist*. New York: Rosen, 2003. 24 pp. ISBN 0-8239-6502-3, \$17.25 (\$12.95 school and library).

This series for students in the lower elementary grades (the simple text is at about second-grade reading level) includes a total of six portraits of American women who fought for women’s and civil rights or who were pioneers in their field. Of the two present volumes, Sojourner Truth’s story includes the perhaps surprising facts that she was born a slave in New York State (slavery wasn’t abolished there until 1827), and that she never learned to read or write (her famous autobiography was told to a writer who published it in 1852 as *Narrative of Sojourner Truth*). Her successful legal battle to keep her son from being sold into slavery to Alabama is described, as are her lectures on behalf of the antislavery cause. The title on Coretta Scott King gives an account of her early life, her marriage to Martin Luther King, Jr., and her later work with the King Center. The books contain black-and-white and color photos and drawings. The text design is fairly busy, and some of the captions repeat information given in the main text.

In biographies so short for students at this level, topics are naturally covered very briefly; the civil rights movement and Martin Luther King Jr.’s work in it are described in two short pages of text. It can also be difficult to convey the drama of such concepts as “fighting for rights” or “supporting people in their struggle.” Though brief, these books do give an introduction for younger students to these important figures. Each volume includes a time line, a glossary, a list of

several books for further reading, and a very short index.

Other Media

Ada, Alma Flor. *I Love Saturdays y domingos*. Burbank, Calif.: Disney Educational Productions, 2002. Illus. by Elivia Savadier. Videocassette, 18 min. Series: Beyond the Page. ISBN 0-89625-893-9, \$19.95.

Look, Lenore. *Henry’s First-Moon Birthday*. Burbank, Calif.: Disney Educational Productions, 2002. Illus. by Yumi Heo. Videocassette, 18 min. Series: Beyond the Page. ISBN 0-89625-892-0, \$19.95.

Perdomo, Willie. *Visiting Langston*. Burbank, Calif.: Disney Educational Productions, 2000. Illus. by Bryan Collier. Videocassette, 18 min. Series: Beyond the Page. ISBN 0-89625-895-5, \$19.95.

Shange, Ntozake. *Float Like a Butterfly*. Burbank, Calif.: Disney Educational Productions, 2002. Illus. by Edel Rodriguez. Videocassette, 18 min. Series: Beyond the Page. ISBN 0-89625-891-2, \$19.95.

Part of Disney’s Beyond the Page series of adaptations of children’s picture books, these four videos combine slightly animated versions of the book with scenes of children at an Internet café discussing it, watching a video on a related topic, and participating in an Internet chat with the writer (and sometimes both the writer and illustrator) of the book. The friendly proprietor of the café, Shelley, leads the group of children (who seem to be at least eight years old) through all of these multimedia adventures.

In *I Love Saturdays y domingos*, for example, a young girl tells of her weekends, where she spends every Saturday with her Anglo grandparents and every Sunday with her Hispanic grandparents; each thing she does with her different grandparents shows some cultural difference (as in eating pancakes one day, huevos rancheros the next). After the kids in the café watch a video on grandparents, they have a chat with author Ada, who tells them what she was trying to achieve in the story and introduces her young granddaughter, who inspired it.

The scenes with the children do show some staginess, particularly as they seem a little old for picture books of this type. (The video is said to be for kindergarten to grade three, and the actors are clearly at the top end of this range.) The books themselves are well selected, however, and the minimal animation is very effective. The opportunity to hear from the authors themselves also makes for an unusual and worthwhile experience.

Bhutan . . . Land of the Thunder Dragon. Issaquah, Wash.: Bennett-Wade HD Productions, 2002. DVD disc, 70 min. ISBN 1-932068-04-X, \$29.95.

Discoveries . . . Argentina: Golden Dorado & Life in

the North. Issaquah, Wash.: Bennett-Wade HD Productions, 2002. DVD disc, 100 min. ISBN 1-932068-02-3, \$29.95.

Discoveries . . . Ireland: A Celtic Treasure. Issaquah, Wash.: Bennett-Wade HD Productions, 2002. DVD disc, 65 min. ISBN 1-9719280-6-1, \$29.95.

The travelogues in these DVDs feature attractive video photography of some stunning sights (particularly in the Bhutan and Ireland volumes). *A Celtic Treasure* is one of three DVDs on Ireland available; it focuses on coastal regions. This DVD sticks to a tourist's-eye view of the country, with narration that is sometimes clichéd (such as the introduction that Ireland must be "savored slowly like a fine wine"). However, the seaside cliffs, castle ruins, and green patchwork fields are as beautiful as would be expected, and the occasional breaks of live music played by young Irish musicians are always lively and entertaining.

Much of the DVD on Argentina is taken up by several scenes of a few Americans, with Argentine guides, on a river fishing expedition to capture the golden dorado gamefish of the title. These are interspersed with sequences on Buenos Aires and the tango, historic buildings, local markets, and cattle and gauchos. The fishing scenes seem almost unedited as they drag along, until an American woman finally catches a large fish and releases it. The narration in this DVD also takes a tourist's view, remarking several times on the quaintness of all the horse-drawn vehicles one still sees in the country.

Bhutan, a mountainous country between India and China, is so little known that all of the sights shown in its DVD (such as its remarkable architecture) are likely to be new and intriguing to any viewer. This film does make some attempt to give a sense of what it is like to live in Bhutan. In a few sections, the local guide for the camera crew tells of life in his country, and numerous close-up shots show the remarkable faces of the people of Bhutan as well as the difficult work of growing crops and building structures by hand. Near the end of the DVD, though, a segment on fly fishing as a tourist attraction leads to a scene of an American woman (possibly even the same one as in the Argentina DVD) who eventually catches a fish while being closely watched by some local boys. When she simply releases the fish rather than keeping it to eat, the boys around her must think she is crazy.

The Civil Rights Movement. Part 1: Separate but Equal. ABC News Classroom Edition. Burbank, Calif.: Disney Educational Productions, 2002. Videocassette, 19 min., 4 sec. ISBN 0-89625-896-3, \$19.95.

The Civil Rights Movement. Part 2: Awakening a Nation. ABC News Classroom Edition. Burbank, Calif.: Disney Educational Productions, 2002. Videocassette, 15 min., 18 sec. ISBN 0-89625-897-1, \$19.95.

The Civil Rights Movement. Part 3: America Arises.

ABC News Classroom Edition. Burbank, Calif.: Disney Educational Productions, 2002. Videocassette, 17 min., 16 sec. ISBN 0-89625-898-X, \$19.95.

The Civil Rights Movement. Part 4: The King Assassination. ABC News Classroom Edition. Burbank, Calif.: Disney Educational Productions, 2002. Videocassette, 18 min., 31 sec. ISBN 0-89625-899-8, \$19.95.

The Civil Rights Movement. Part 5: Beyond Martin Luther King, Jr. ABC News Classroom Edition. Burbank, Calif.: Disney Educational Productions, 2002. Videocassette, 18 min., 56 sec. ISBN 0-89625-900-5, \$19.95.

Global Human Rights. Part 1: Global Concerns. ABC News Classroom Edition. Burbank, Calif.: Disney Educational Productions, 2002. Videocassette, 23 min. ISBN 0-89625-901-3, \$19.95.

Global Human Rights. Part 2: South Africa, A Case Study. ABC News Classroom Edition. Burbank, Calif.: Disney Educational Productions, 2002. Videocassette, 23 min. ISBN 0-89625-902-1, \$19.95.

Global Human Rights. Part 3: China, A Case Study. ABC News Classroom Edition. Burbank, Calif.: Disney Educational Productions, 2002. Videocassette, 23 min. ISBN 0-89625-902-X, \$19.95.

These two series of videotapes (each tape is about 20 minutes long) are mostly made up of reports culled from the archives of ABC News. Two or three special reports are linked together by photo and video montages with a narrator (who seems to be a teenager) and occasionally by brief excerpts from historical interviews. The first video on the civil rights movement, for example, features a 1974 ABC report inspired by the twentieth anniversary of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and a 1995 feature that looks back on the Montgomery bus boycott of 1955.

The great advantage of this presentation is that students get a chance to see the actual people and places from historical events they may have read about. Not only do we see Rosa Parks 40 years after she refused to leave her seat near the front of the bus, but we also hear from a white woman who was on the bus at the time and still, decades later, sounds amazed at what Parks had done. One possibly confusing element is the use of footage filmed at a variety of periods for ABC News. It is disorientating to move from the Harry Reasoner of 1974 (wearing a very wide tie, naturally) to Deborah Roberts in 1995. And when a report covers a current, and not historical, event, information may not reflect what we now know (although the narrator generally brings the story up to date after the report ends). For example, in a story in the Global Human Rights series about Northern Ireland, the scenes from 1994 are not quite reflective of the

present situation—and John Major is no longer the British prime minister.

One element added to these news reports is that every minute or so a border pops up around the screen with a “Fast Fact” that is related in two or three sentences flashed at the bottom. The facts are often quite interesting, but it’s too difficult to watch an image, listen to a narrator, and read a sentence on a different subject at the same time. The design of the series also incorporates a distracting green neon glow behind some titles and images, and images from interview excerpts sometimes float across the screen or spin around for little purpose. However, the reports themselves are very well done, the narration ties things together well, and the chance to see the people and places of the historic times included is worthwhile.

Norfolk, Bobby. *Norfolk Tales*. Little Rock, Ark.: August House, 2002. CD, 52 min. ISBN 0-87483-693-X, \$14.95.

Norfolk, Bobby. *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People’s Ears*. Little Rock, Ark.: August House, 2002. CD, 62 min. ISBN 0-87483-695-6, \$14.95.

Norfolk is a storyteller (and former stand-up comic) who has made numerous recordings of his versions of traditional folktales. These two sets of five stories each were recorded in 1987 and 1989, and they are now available from his new publisher, August House. Norfolk gives a lively rendition of these traditional stories, creating different voices for the characters, complete with animal sounds.

Norfolk Tales includes several tales based on West African folklore (including two featuring the character of Anansi the spider) as well as “Jack and the Three Sillies” and “Tilly and the Eight Steps.” The title tale of *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People’s Ears* is adapted from a book based on West African folklore; other stories here include another Anansi tale and versions of the Brothers Grimm tale of the Brementown musicians and of the story of Jack and the Beanstalk.

Young children will enjoy these energetic stories, though it is likely that some of the storytelling experience is lost without the physical presence and body language of the teller. One fact that might cause confusion with sales of *Norfolk Tales*: The jackets of both CDs received for review were labeled with the UPC code and ISBN numbers for *Why Mosquitoes Buzz*.

What is Buddhism? Wynnewood, Pa.: Schlessinger Media/Library Video Company, 2003. Videocassette, 20 min. ISBN 1-57225-548-X, \$29.95.

What is Christianity? Wynnewood, Pa.: Schlessinger Media/Library Video Company, 2003. Videocassette, 20 min. ISBN 1-57225-549-8, \$29.95.

What is Hinduism? Wynnewood, Pa.: Schlessinger Media/Library Video Company, 2003. Videocassette, 20 min. ISBN 1-57225-550-1, \$29.95.

What is Islam? Wynnewood, Pa.: Schlessinger Media/Library Video Company, 2003. Videocassette, 20 min. ISBN 1-57225-551-X, \$29.95.

What is Judaism? Wynnewood, Pa.: Schlessinger Media/Library Video Company, 2003. Videocassette, 20 min. ISBN 1-57225-552-8, \$29.95.

What is Religion? Wynnewood, Pa.: Schlessinger Media/Library Video Company, 2003. Videocassette, 20 min. ISBN 1-57225-553-6, \$29.95.

These videos comprise the series Understanding World Religions, intended for students in grades four to six. Each video begins with a narrator in a different setting that is meant to represent understanding and togetherness, such as a community softball game or a friendship mural being painted by a group of teenagers. The narrator introduces the subject of the video and he also returns to briefly introduce each section. Sections in the volume on Islam, for example, include “History,” “Practices,” “Places of Worship,” “Sacred Writings,” “Beliefs,” “Traditions,” and “Holidays.” For each topic, a female narrator provides information about the religion over a montage of people practicing it, historical drawings and photos, religious sites, and numerous other images. The fast-moving imagery shows great variety in presenting each subject; important words and concepts frequently appear in large lettering. Of particular interest are the sections where the people who practice the religion discuss what it means to them, such as a scene of a Muslim-American family having a traditional meal for Eid al-Fitr.

A short teacher’s guide included in each video, and available online, gives a list of terms and vocabulary words (though not all of those highlighted on the video), suggested activities, and a short list of books and web sites. Much of the teacher’s guide is devoted to “Guidelines for Teaching about Religion in Public Schools,” including the guideline that teachers should always avoid role-playing when teaching religious topics, as it may lead to unconstitutionally involving students in religious practices. This well-organized and visually impressive series makes a strong effort to be evenhanded and respectful, and it would be a good choice for introducing students to the often-sensitive subject of different religious heritages and beliefs. 