For a free catalog listing many student and teacher materials for social study classes and for human relations training, write to:
The Racism/Sexism Resource Center,
Rm 300, 1841 Broadway,
New York, N.Y. 10023
TWO HISTORY TEXTS: a Study in Contrasts
A study guide and lesson plan

OBJECTIVES: To increase participants' understanding of race and sex bias in history textbooks.
To develop participants' skills in analyzing their own, or any, textbook.

RATIONALE: All textbooks contain some degree of bias. Comparing one that is especially biased with one that is especially free of bias can clarify understanding and analytic skills.

TIME PERIOD: Two to five class periods or one workshop day.

MATERIALS: One essay analysis. One copy of Ten Quick Ways. One copy of Test Your Textbooks. One Glossary. One set of Parallel Quotes.

ACTIVITY: Prior to beginning group activity, teacher or facilitator must:

1. Reproduce enough copies of Parallel Quotes so that each group member has a set.

2. Read essay, glossary and all enclosed materials.

3. Teacher/facilitator should open discussion on importance of increasing awareness of racism and sexism in textbooks.

4. Then the glossary definitions should be discussed, using the examples to clarify group understanding. It is not essential for everyone to fully understand or agree at this point, or at any point in this lesson. The aim is always to increase sensitivity and let participants discover and point out nuances, rather than have discussion leader clarify everything.

5. Form small groups, of five or so, and give everyone a copy of the Parallel Quotes and Questions. Each group can discuss all of the questions or a few of them, depending on time for this activity. Each group then reports back to the larger group.

6. Large group discussion.

7. Textbook Analysis: Each participant examines their own textbook, looking for two examples of race or sex bias. They rewrite the biased paragraphs to eliminate the ethnocentrism or sexism. Participants can read their examples and rewrites to the entire class or group.

Prepared for the Center by: Dr. Robert B. Moore
Published by: The Racism and Sexism Resource Center for Educators
1841 Broadway, New York, New York
CHAPTER TEN
Life in Old Mississippi

Many people in Old Mississippi practiced the art of good living. Those who could afford it enjoyed the arts of music, literature, painting, and architecture. The others, both black and white, developed a folk culture of their own.

Your Mississippi

Mississippi: Conflict and Change

A controversy in Mississippi over the state's refusal to approve a new state history textbook for public school use has national implications for educators, students, textbook publishers, Third World groups and those concerned with the issue of censorship.

Mississippi school districts purchase textbooks with state appropriated funds but must choose from books that have been approved for adoption by a state-appointed textbook review committee. The Mississippi History Textbook Committee meets every six years to review texts and can recommend as many as five books for each subject area.

A Mississippi history course is required for all students enrolled in public school and, by custom, is required in many private schools. In 1962, the only text submitted for the review committee was Mississippi: A History, written by John K. Bettersworth, a history professor at Mississippi State University. In 1968, his revised Mississippi: Yesterday and Today was the only book submitted. In 1974 he presented another revised text, this one titled Your Mississippi.

Also submitted in 1974 was a new textbook, Mississippi: Conflict and Change, edited by Charles Sallis, a historian at Millsaps College in Jackson and James W. Loewen, a sociologist at Towson, who collaborated with six authors, students and teachers at the same institutions.

Although the textbook committee could have approved both texts for adoption, they approved only the revised Bettersworth and had been filed in U.S. District Court by students, teachers and school officials against the Mississippi History Textbook Committee and the Mississippi State Textbook Purchasing Board, and at four other districts. The suit charges that the present and previous textbook rating committees:

1. Have adopted for use in all history courses taught in Mississippi, only those texts which minimize, ignore or [downgrade] the role of blacks and other minorities in the history of the United States and of Mississippi, and which present historical events in a manner sympathetic to principles of racial segregation and discrimination, black inferiority and "white supremacy."

Books Reviewed

The Racism/Sexism Resource Center has carefully reviewed and analyzed each of the books in question. By any reasonable criteria, including those used by the Mississippi review committee, Conflict and Change is not only eligible for adoption, but is far superior in format and content to all history textbooks we have seen. In our opinion, not only should Conflict and Change be adopted, but Your Mississippi should not have been adopted. It is too distorted, biased, and full of omissions to qualify for use as a history text, and it clearly fails to meet many of the Mississippi committee's major criteria. In contrast, Conflict and Change—while not without flaws—is one of the most progressive history textbooks available.

Parents, educators and students concerned about pluralistic education should be concerned about the Mississippi case. While this case is specifically related to the compulsory nature of state history courses in Mississippi, the issue involved is general in that compulsory education laws throughout the nation require students to use textbooks which, to varying degrees, distort realities about Third World peoples, women, working people and the processes and forces of social change.

The authors of Conflict and Change had great difficulty finding a publisher willing to handle their "controversial" book. A court decision in favor of the plaintiffs would encourage the production of more such books. The book's presentation of multicultural and historical truths is an honest description of white racism that should engage the interest of all groups sharing these concerns. If this case, which pits such a progressive book against a strikingly inferior one, cannot be won, it will be all the more difficult to win other battles to replace merely mediocre books with better ones.

Myth as History

For those concerned with the increasingly discussed "censorship" of the school text, the issue is two-fold. Firstly, those in control of textbook selection are apparently threatened by a book that deals honestly with Mississippi history and are attempting to suppress it. This represents censorship in its most blatant form. Secondly, should the Bettersworth book be adopted as a "history text? As the historian Virgil Vogel has noted:

"To draw the curtain over unpleasant happenings in history is not less to be deplored than to conscious falsification. The selectivity of the historian is revealing. If omitted events are of a sort which would dampen the impression the writer seeks to create, we are getting historical fiction, for only novelist can take such liberties."

Your Mississippi overtly and covertly reinforces white chauvinism and racism through omission, distortion and falsification of reality. To argue that the book should be burned, for it could be used constructively as an example of mythologized history in the South is "academic censorship." However, the argument is not that the book should be burned, but could be used constructively as an example of mythologized history. But a state-government's approval of such biased propaganda for use in required education programs is untenable. The book is not a balanced history and is not a source of "reliable and accurate basic information" as the Mississippi textbook adoption criteria specify.

Terms like "balanced," "valid," "accurate," and "honest" are always subjective terms open to interpretation from different perspectives and ideologies. The best we can do is provide youth with materials which present as many viewpoints and as much information as possible. Conflict and Change does this; Your Mississippi does not. As a supplementary text, the book would be useful, just as Mein Kampf would be useful in a course on German history. But for the state to officially sanction and allow the expenditure of state funds collected from all of Mississippi's people on a book that ignores and disapproves so many Mississippisians and for local districts to choose this book as the required Mississippi history text is deplorable. This is the issue that should be challenged in Court.

Focus of Study

In comparing the two books, we examined their formats, illustrations, and word usage, as well as their treatment of the cultures and histories of Native Americans, African Americans, other racial and ethnic groups and women in Mississippi. We also
NATIVE AMERICANS

The books differ sharply in their approach to Native Americans: Choctaws, Chicanas, Natchez and others. For some, Native American viewpoints and loaded, racist language are all evident in Your Mississippi. The student is told about “tribes” that “roam or go on the ‘warpath’; looked forward to going to a happy hunting ground after death. An elected group of Indians were a special feature, sought after in the United States. There were two main social classes: The upper class had more money, more possessions (chief, the chief, the Nobles, and the Honored People. The lower class, who owned very little. The upper class knew that the Natchez society was referred to as "unusual," and in one instance as "very unreasonable," because of the archaic structure. Marital norms were not "very unusual," but are in the western world.

Conflict and Change states that while the Great Sun was very powerful, "the people did not submit to him. They were independent of the authority and their own rulers. In this sense, the Natchez and the Choctaw were very similar. But while the Natchez and the Choctaw were very similar, the Choctaw's way of life was much more complex. It was a daily life of the Natchez Indians. Indian was calm, except when the tribe was on the warpath in the winter. Of the food, they were. Of the fun, they were. (This is the task of providing food not serious? Suppose this is the fun, they were. (This is the task of providing food not serious? Suppose this is the fun, they were. (This is the task of providing food not serious? Suppose this is the fun, they were. (This is the task of providing food not serious? Suppose this is the fun, they were. (This is the task of providing food not serious? Suppose this is the fun, they were. (This is the task of providing food not serious? Suppose this is the fun, they were. (This is the task of providing food not serious? Suppose this is the fun, they were.

Conflict and Change sometimes uses the words "Indian" or "American" in the same way that in the previous chapter. But, when Native society is referred to as "Indian," and in one instance as "very unreasonable," because of the archaic structure. Marital norms were not "very unusual," but are in the western world.

Indian Massacres

Bettsworth continually refers to "Indian massacre" and "Indian towns." This is a reference to the experiences of the Choctaws and the Chicanas when their Tensas were forced from their homes. Bettsworth's use of the term "Indian" is consistent with the term's use in the nineteenth century. In the southern states, the word "Indian" was used to identify any Indian, whether native or foreign. Bettsworth's term is used in the same way, but he also uses the term "American" to identify people of European descent.

Cultural Bias

Conflict and Change gives a fuller description of Native American society than most other books. Bettsworth attempts to present them as "ethnically" on their own—rather than European—terms, and more honestly and accurately than many other books on European invaders. [See Parallel Quotes, pg. 92] The text states that the Choctaw's and the Natchez's use of another culture by your own standards is a kind of bias and that much of the information in the book was written by Europeans and Americans, who did not understand what they saw. It is further noted that the Choctaw's and the Natchez's use of another culture by your own standards is a kind of bias and that much of the information in the book was written by Europeans and Americans, who did not understand what they saw. It is further noted that the Choctaw's and the Natchez's use of another culture by your own standards is a kind of bias and that much of the information in the book was written by Europeans and Americans, who did not understand what they saw.

SLAVERY

Bettsworth's treatment of slavery units—almost totally—the conditions, expectations, and treatment of the Black people held in bondage. "Slave Treatment" receives a total of four paragraphs. The chapter begins with the brutality of the system and accumulates the mitigating factors. While there were a number of cases where slave owners were not "painted," the brutality of the system was emphasized. Bettsworth's treatment of the system was gloomy. He notes that the brutality of the system was emphasized. Bettsworth's treatment of the system was gloomy. He notes that the brutality of the system was emphasized. Bettsworth's treatment of the system was gloomy. He notes that the brutality of the system was emphasized. Bettsworth's treatment of the system was gloomy. He notes that the brutality of the system was emphasized. Bettsworth's treatment of the system was gloomy. He notes that the brutality of the system was emphasized. Bettsworth's treatment of the system was gloomy. He notes that the brutality of the system was emphasized.

Although Conflict and Change mentions "Columbus' discovery of America," a marginal note asks, "Why is discovery in quotes?" After briefly describing De Soto's expedition, his cruelty and the attempts of Native nations to drive the expedition out, the book asks readers to think about the brutality of the system and accumulate the mitigating factors. "The Slave Code of the Constitution of 1832 was intended to protect the slaves" and, "The courts were supposed to look after the interests of the slaves." The latter is followed by descriptions of two court cases that were decided in favor of Black people held in bondage. While admitting that those cases were exceptions, Bettsworth does not comment on the rules, and thus leaves a disturbed impression with the reader.

He does not discuss the brutality and inhumanity of the system of human slavery, but rather places the blame on the Indians themselves. Bettsworth states, "Plantation owners cautioned their overseers against using the code to treat their slaves. The Slave Code of 1812 required the master to keep all of his slaves in good health and well-being on the cradle to the grave. He concludes that, "In general, slaves were treated well if they knew what the basis of good or bad was in the life of creating the ‘critical problem’ of what to be next."

Another View

Conflict and Change, on the other hand, discusses the social distinctions that developed around the establishment of an ideology justifying slavery, the use of violence and punishment to maintain discipline, and the conditions and family life of people held in slavery and their resistance to oppression. Still, the book's focus is on the welfare of people held in slavery in terms of education, freedom, and legal rights. While discussing how people held in bondage often utilized church meetings and other activities, the book states that, "Religion also offered hope and consolation to many of the people who felt the burden of slavery. It was a way for the people with hope for a better hereafter, in order to distract them from resistances activities."
Conflict and Change provides much more information and analysis of the role of Black people in the South during the Civil War, and the arming of black soldiers had deep meaning for race relations in Mississippi and the rest of the South. It is difficult to return armed soldiers to slavery or to second-class citizenship.” Yet, in the post-war period, Black people in the South were in fact returned to economic bondage in the South, and many of the issues that weresubjegated as second-class citizens.

Two issues peripheral to slavery and discussed in each book need mention. Young’s book includes Civil War tariffs effectively, while Conflict and Change is fuzzy. These tariffs were a divisive element prior to the War because they benefited northern industry while hurting the South’s trade. But they were still relevant to the South and led to nullification efforts. These efforts, while prompted by more than just the tariff issue, were important in the evolution of American history.

Neither book deals satisfactorily with the doctrine of “Manifest Desti- tony” or the U.S. expropriation of much of South India by the British, as they related to events in Mississippi without any question to the lack of justifications for these events or their relation to increasing U.S. imperial-

CONSTRUCTION

Neither book adequately explains why blacks numbered in the millions and a mere 400,000 free and a male, although Conflict and Change also considers the issue of Davis Bond and refers to the govern- ment’s deliberate policy of making freedmen use free blacks as examples of what might have been effective post-war policies. Betterworth, simply said that Black people “came to expect more than just the bureau could provide.” See Goldsworthy, Vol.

Betterworth repeats the most out- dated and discredited myths about Reconstruction and the state’s scholarship. [See Parallel Quotes, #6, 9, 10, 11.] His thesis is that corrupt Black leaders were responsible for the Civil War. The right of black people to bring the state to ruin until put in their place by “redeemer democracy” was the triumph of the political system. This section contains the most blatant stereotyping of Black people. The Klan begins as “a secret social and fraternal club” of the sort that were “very popular at that time.” Part of the initiation ritual involved a white member “across the counter in bedstead and hood to reassure his best girl. This frightened the blacks.” at the time almost all of the associations and shaking “colored” man of Hollywood fame, his eyes bulging and trembling, that he ‘get his head moving.’ Taking advantage of this fear, the Klan turned into a force for fear, a way for the freedmen, especially to frighten them away from voting places.” One assumes the Klan simply stood around watching. This is the book that is the book that the Mississippi Textbook Committee con- sidered “consistent with the valid findings of recent research.”

Conflict and Change provides much more information about white people in general and about the Reconstruction. Betterworth’s recon- struction was significant in Mississippi history, than it presents about Black people. The absence of specific data, and to cause new ideas to take hold. For a long time, however, new industries were not emerging.

Even today some leaders of the state seem to be afraid of new ideas, afraid of change, afraid of “outsiders.” They fail to see that change may be beneficial. Even today uncomfortable with the idea that Mississippi leave the state within three years after their graduation. Mississippi’s economy is based on small-sized cities, green woodlands, and relatively clean air could support a way of life such as exists hard in rural and urban America. But policies formed long ago, mistakes made in the distant past, not just the current policies, can be unactuating to many young people today. If we are to change these policies and make Mississippi a state that can draw in outsiders and hold its own among its neighbors, we must learn from the mistakes of the past so we can avoid them in the future.

In its extended treatment of share- cropping, Conflict and Change has a section headed, “The Great Migration Begins”:
CIVIL RIGHTS ERA 1954-1970's

Betttersworth's coverage of the civil rights struggle is distorted, both by conviction and by circumstances of maintaining, in chapter 11, that the seeming conflict of 1960 was not civil war but a civil war for Southern Independence," the author concludes the struggle for civil rights the civil rights movement. On the war," he assures the reader that, "gratuitously, Mississippians, black and white, have been able to live together along as—anyhow, we always had. Wilt, if black and white "always" had related harmoniously, was there a "civil war" rights?"

His answer appears to be: outside forums—particularly the Federal Gover- nment. Betttersworth fails to cite a single civil-rights act by black Mississippians prior to 1965. He merely notes that in that year "Federal voting registrars moved into the state to help the black to vote. [Why they were needed is not mentioned.] Civil rights marches and boycotts followed." Conflicting sources suggest that the marches and boycotts (by unspecified people for unspecified reasons) resulted from the presence of Federal registrars.

Supreme Court Intervention

In a paragraph headed "Resistance," one reads that, "After the Supreme Court's desegregation decision of 1954, school boards throughout Mississippi found it impossible to resist." [See Parallel Quotes #1] Resistance took the form of establish- ing all-black "Freedom Schools" (1964) and the State Sovereignty Commission (1965) "to take the Mississippi case to the Supreme Court," Betttersworth notes. (In both these quotes it is clear Betttersworth means only white Mississippians.) We never learn what these groups did only that they were established. White violence against the civil rights movement. In 1966 "followed" James Meredith's admission to the University of Mississippi by the Federal Government and indeed spilled over. "A Mississippians" trial was for the murder of Medgar Evers, a black civil rights leader. African-American workers in Neshoba County were murdered. Names of victims or state institutions to that violence.

Facing up to Problems

Betttersworth views issues such as race relations and industrialization through rosy-colored glasses—omitting the events and ignoring the analysis. Betttersworth could apparently contradict his portrayal of the problems and promise of their state.

INDUSTRIALIZATION

Betttersworth's treatment of industrialization is as summary and raspy as his handling of migration. For instance, World War II brought tremendous strides in all phases of Mississippi's economic life. The last 30 years...
sprinkled with red pepper. In a para-
graph headed "Making Do," Bett-
erworth makes this observation from a song sung by "Southern women" and then talks about how "Southern people" made substi-
tutes. Bettwerorth mentions that Change mentions the same substi-
tutes, but states, "In all these processes, women were at the bottom. Women had to supervise not only the home but in many cases the farm, phletely, saw the book as an important statement in the struggle for human rights. Bettwerorth discusses other activities of "white" women in support of the war effort.

Bettwerorth notes the work of Frances Willard in establishing the Women's Christian Temperance Union and the Women's League of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. Finally, he cites the two Mississippi women who were crowned "Miss Americ-
a" in 1914, a contest he says he focused on women's rights or women's roles in Mississippi in an enlightened manner.

Counting Women

In the section titled "Women in the Future of Mississippi," Conflict and Change asks students to:

Skin earier chapters and count the number of different women mentioned in this chapter. Do the figures represent a decrease, a increase in recent years? In what fields have most of these women worked?

Only four of the biographies in this book have been about individual women. Which fields and occupations are most common? What do these statistics say about discrimination against women? Or is there another explanation? Help re-
readers. Send information or facts that may be useful for this review. Who do you think should be the next subject, or choose someone from your own community.

The authors of Conflict and Change clearly attempted to give prominence to women's issues. While they praised Missour's treatment of women in the first part of the book, they noted that some aspects of women's life in the state have not changed. While they praised Mississippi's treatment of women with regard to their roles in the home, they noted that women still have little control over their lives.

Bettwerorth also discusses the role of women in the war effort, including the work of the Women's Christian Temperance Union and the Women's League of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. He notes that while women were at the bottom in many of these processes, they were still able to make a difference in the struggle for human rights.

ILLUSTRATIONS

One criterion of the State Textbook Commission standards is that illustrations be used to support the text. The book contains only two pictures of individual African American women (in a black and white photograph) and two pictures of white women (in a color photograph). The black and white photograph shows a woman in a dress, while the color photograph shows a woman in a hat.

Wordings

The book contains brief notes on the use of words in the text. For example, the word "slave" is used throughout the book, while the word "freedom" is used only occasionally. In some cases, the word "slave" is used to refer to both African Americans and whites, while in other cases, it is used to refer only to African Americans.

Framing

The final chapter of the book is titled "Framing," and it discusses the use of visual images in the text. The book contains two images, both of which are used to support the text. One image is a map of Mississippi, while the other is a photograph of a woman in a dress.

In conclusion, Conflict and Change is an important book for students and educators. It provides a comprehensive overview of Mississippi's history and offers valuable insights into the struggles of African Americans and whites in the state. The book is well-written and provides a valuable resource for anyone interested in Mississippi's past and present.
SUMMARY

To fully appreciate the positive and, in many ways, unique characteristics of Conflict and Change, you have to read it yourself. The book is not flawless, but it is one of the best history textbooks to be found.

Your Mississippi is also worth reading as an example of "mythologized history." But it clearly fails to meet some of the Textbook Review Committee's major criteria, including:

The scope and sequence of materials should be consistent with the valid findings of recent research.

Wherever applicable, the content of texts should assure that the contributions of all ethnic groups at different socioeconomic levels receive fair and equitable treatment.

Illustrations should extend and expand the text, not merely echo what has been said in print.

Suggested exercises and activities which help the student synthesize, review, and summarize the content should be included.

The content of each text should be accurate, valid and up to date.

Suggestions for study included in the text should not only promote an understanding of the materials presented but also should stimulate original thinking.

Conflict and Change provides an analysis of and abundant information about a complex and varied region of the U.S. While the history of Mississippi has been especially marked by the racism characteristic of the general American experience, that state is not unique in the need for its young people to understand their past and act upon their future. With the publication of Conflict and Change, publishers and writers have an advanced model to emulate when they produce American history textbooks. Parents, teachers and students should pressure them to take note.

PERSPECTIVE

All textbooks reflect—consciously or unconsciously—the viewpoint and interpretation of their authors. Thus, different books provide different interpretations of historical events. Historians and authors can try to provide a range of viewpoints and of information. Readers can try to evaluate which perspectives are dominant and which are neglected, and then develop their own interpretation of history.

Example: "Much of the development accomplished in California was the work of the Spanish priest, Junipero Serra. In 1769 he founded the San Diego Mission, the first of nine he established." Discussion: This quote is based on records left by Serra and other Spaniards. There is much evidence that the Indians he impressed to do all the actual physical work considered themselves enslaved. Spanish records show that they frequently escaped and rebelled. If the Indians had written this quote, the word "development" might have read "destruction of our civilization."

MYTH

A myth is an ill-founded belief. In the U.S.A, as elsewhere, events that occurred were reported and recorded by those in power in society. Such one-sided, self-serving interpretations often do not reflect reality but are gradually accepted as the whole truth.

Example: "There had never been a very active anti-Spanish movement in Puerto Rico, but the American troops were warmly welcomed anyhow. A leading citizen may have expressed the feelings of his people when he said simply, 'We are glad that the U.S. is to be our country.'" Discussion: There was a long history of activities and rebellions against Spanish rule, which had forced concessions from the Spanish. It is true many Puerto Ricans welcomed the U.S. troops. What is omitted here is that the troops were welcomed by people who expected the U.S. defeat of Spain to bring about the independence they sought. There is no evidence that the people of Puerto Rico had any desire to be annexed to the U.S.

ETHNOCENTRISM

People often feel that their own group's values, culture and standards are superior to all others. They develop a perspective which judges other people's culture and customs as different from, and therefore inferior to, their own culture. Authors, historians and students can try to develop an understanding of other viewpoints, values and customs and recognize that all have legitimacy on their own terms. Judging other cultures by the standards of one's own culture is ethnocentric.

Example: "The Mexican Government did not want to sell Texas or give it up. For this reason the Government passed a number of laws to control the Mexican settlers. Americans could no longer bring slaves into Texas. Americans who moved to Texas were supposed to become Mexican citizens." Discussion: Was Texas Texas then, or was it Mexico? Mexico's motivations for passing these laws are not explored from the Mexicans' point of view. (For example, slavery had been abolished in Mexico in 1829.) The reader is left with the impression that the laws were passed solely as a defense against the immigrants. Also, most countries require that people who live in their lands permanently apply for citizenship.

EUROCENTRISM

Presenting information from the perspective of European Americans on this continent, authors often ignore the experiences, motivations, aspirations and views of people of color. To interpret the experiences and action of Euro-Americans and of people of color only from the perspective of Euro-Americans, and not give similar space and legitimacy to other perspectives, is Eurocentric.

Example: (Concerning Jefferson's purchase of Louisiana) "Like Henry the Navigator, Jefferson inspired discovery—but with a difference... the President's aim was to spread representative government and the blessings of freedom."

Discussion: The Euro-American viewpoint presented totally ignores the viewpoints of Native Americans whose territory was being traded and of slaves who were taken into those territories. How did they feel about "representative government and the blessings of freedom?"

DISTORTION

Authors often twist the meaning of history by slanting their presentation of facts. Whether or not this is done intentionally, the prejudice and ethnocentrism of authors results in a distorted view of history.

Example: "Many former slaves—as well as white people—were supported by a new system of farming called share-cropping." Discussion: "Were supported by" is accurate for some rich white landowners. For the "many former slaves" this is a gross distortion. By their hard work, for which they received next to no remuneration, they supported the whites who took advantage of them. Many poor whites also were exploited by the sharecropping system.

OMISSION

One way of distorting history and maintaining myths is to omit certain information and viewpoints which do not support the author's views. Such omissions seriously distort a reader's understanding of events.

Example: "During World War II almost all Japanese Americans in the nation were confined to concentration camps in the western part of the country." Discussion: Older textbooks generally omitted descriptions of Japanese internment. Newer texts report it, and the text quoted above gave a detailed description of the unfairness and illegality involved. What is
Glossary

Omission (continued)

common in this, and in most of the new texts, is the omission of the fact that German Americans and Italian Americans were not interned despite the fact that the U.S. was fighting Germany and Italy, as well as Japan. This omission is racist, as it is omitting the mention that the atom bomb was not dropped on any white enemy nation.

Sterotype

An untruth or oversimplification about the traits and behaviors common to an entire people is a stereotype. The stereotype is applied to each member of the group, without regard to that person's individual character. Authors, like other people, often believe stereotypes common within their own culture. Such stereotypes then distort what they report about particular groups of people.

Example: "Among black men, physical prowess was generally held in higher esteem than intellectual ability." or "In the old North West, the Indians were active with tomahawks and scalping knives."

Discussion: Were Black men really polled to see that most held "physical prowess in higher esteem than mental skills"? Or is this a racist stereotype about the mental inferiority of Blacks? The stereotype of Indians with "tomahawks and scalping knives" has long been a world fixation. Very few books tell their readers that scalping was a practice introduced by Europeans who wanted proof of a "dead Indian" before paying rewards they routinely offered to murderers of Indians.

Characterization

Many words and descriptions are commonly used to create negative images of groups of people. The use of such characterization reinforces stereotypes. Examples of such words are savage, lazy, massacre, primitive, warlike, and uncouth. Inaccurate, inscrutable, scattered, grey, gossipy.

Example: "Americans believed that, if war came, these tribesmen, bribed by the English, would ravage the frontier regions and massacre the women and children."

Discussion: Attach the adjectives (listed in words that characterize) to the specific group of people they have traditionally been applied to. Since most people would make the same mistakes (i.e., inscrutable Aryan), we can assume that most people have been exposed to the same stereotyped characterizations.

Bias

A highly personal and unreasoned distortion of judgment. To the extent that textbooks reflect the perspectives, ethnocentric and stereotypes of the authors, they are biased.

Example: "Most white Southerners and many Negroes scorned the carpet-baggers. Some responsible Negroes tried to warn their neighbors against associating with unequal carpet-baggers."

Discussion: What is the perspective? Why is this ethnocentric? What value-loaded adjectives are given away about the bias of the author?

Racism

Racism is an attitude, action or institutional structure which subordinates a person or group because of their color. In the U.S. today, only whites can be racist since they control the institutions which have the power to oppress people. Textbooks have always been one form of that oppression, since our textbooks are generally written by and published by whites and overrepresent the perspectives and the biases of white historians.

Example: All of the above examples demonstrate white racism.

Example: "The colonist on the Frontier had to clear his own land, build his own house, and help to defend his home and his village against Indian attack."

Discussion: Outside of the fact that Indians were defending their homes and homelands from white invasion, the quote totally ignores the females who were involved in all of the activities mentioned.

Sexism

Sexism is prejudice or discrimination against women. Sexism is any attitude, action or institutional structure which subordinates a person or group because of their sex. Since most authors, editors and historians are and have been male, they reflect the perspective that male activity is most important and that the viewpoints and actions of females are of little consequence. U.S. institutions have always been controlled by males and have been run for the advantage of males.

Example: "Today Americans look every year for new and unique gifts, refrigerators, hair dryers, and many other conveniences. The first Americans, on the other hand, possibly waited a thousand years or more for the bettering of the single instrument on which their lives depended."

Discussion: The implied judgment in the above says, "Look how much better our way of life is, compared to that of the first Americans." It implies, as well, that the Indians didn't try very hard, when it came to improving their own lives. It is judging another people's ancient civilization by the standards of our own present situation. A double whammy.

ParaLlel QuoTes: and Questions

Your Mississippi

1. Did the women have legitimate grievances?
2. Did these books treat the women with respect or make light of their concerns?
3. Is the statement that one of the women was described as being "unsuitably coy and hard to please" necessary?
4. Why does each book put "petticoat rebellion" or "insurrection" in quotes?

Mississippi: Conflict and Change

Women came to Mississippi from the very beginning. Law arranged with orphans to send "cook girls," with their belongings packed in small trunks called caskets. They were quickly married to the bachelors in the Louisiana colony. Their life was much harder than it had been in France, however, and at one point, to protect their living conditions, they staged a "petticoat rebellion."

In 1812 the United States went to war with England over freedom of the seas. In the Mississippi Territory the War of 1812 was mainly an Indian war. Westerners had known for some time that their Indian troubles were caused by the English. In 1811 the Shawnee Chief, Tecumseh, attempted to organize the western Indians against the United States. He visited the Chota, the Chickasaws, the Creeks, and the Seminoles to get their help.

When war was declared against England on June 1, 1812, the Mississippi Territory was ready for trouble with the Indians. It was not long in coming. On July 27 the Indians won in the Battle of Burnt Corn. With fresh supplies from Pensacola, the Creeks then prepared to expel the whites from the border area. Their next move was a massacre at Fort Mims on August 30.

1. Which quotation makes a better attempt to present the viewpoint and concerns of many Indians?
2. Is it correct to say that the British were the cause of "Indian trouble"? What does that imply about the Indians?
3. If the U.S. was fighting England for freedom of the seas, what were Indians fighting the U.S. for?
4. What impressions of Tecumseh do you get from each book?
5. One book uses the term "massacre" and the other term "massacree." What does each term imply?
Mississippi: Conflict and Change

William Johnson, a free black in Natchez, was an exceptional man. The son of a black woman and a white man, Johnson regularly did business with whites and became quite wealthy. He owned over 1,000 acres of land and eight slaves and operated three barber shops. In 1851, Johnson was murdered by a white man. His murderer was never convicted because the only witness—blacks—could not testify in court against a white.

1. Is it important to know that Johnson was the son of a black woman and a white man?
2. From which book’s treatment of Johnson’s experiences do we learn more about Johnson?

While governor [1844-1848], Brown led a fight for the creation of a strong public school system.

In his successful campaign for governor, Brown pushed for public education for whites, saying that the education of its people ensures the safety of a government.

1. If Brown’s fight was for a strong public education system for whites, is it important to state it?
2. What perceptions might result if this is not stated? What perceptions might result if it is stated?

V The Blacks in War Time. The Civil War was a perfect time for slaves to revolt. Yet, they never did. In many cases the slaves actually kept the plantations going while their masters were fighting.

Blacks During the War. Some slaves remained loyal to their owners throughout the war. Some even went off to war as servants of Confederate officers. But long before the Emancipation Proclamation, the Union Army had been freeing blacks, and blacks had been taking their own freedom.

For white Mississippians, the usual fears of slave rebellion increased enormously. They tried to counter these fears by isolating blacks from outside news and restricting them to the plantations. By September 1861, there were reports of plots in the river counties. In July 1862, the provost marshal of Natchez reported hanging 40 blacks during the preceding year. In 1863, a group of blacks in Lafayette County revoluted, drove off their overseers, and divided their master’s property among themselves. Confederate troops put down slave rebellions near Holly Springs and in Amite County.

1. Do these quotes represent differing interpretations of history or conflicting facts about historical events?
2. How might it serve the viewpoint of one or both books to present false information? What impressions do each of the quotes leave with the reader?
3. Is the difference important?
Mississippi: Conflict and Change

The legislature then passed a series of laws which came to be known as the "Black Code." The code contained certain provisions which they could not use in the state courts, their testimony would be accepted in state courts, their marriages were legalized (with separate records to be kept), and they might own personal property.

However, black people faced serious controls under the code. The law provided no inducement for the education of young black children as apprentices. Former owners of the children were given first choice. Blacks had to live in a town or on a home of their own vagrants. If they could not pay the fine, they were "forced out" with former owners given the first option. Blacks had to have licenses to do certain jobs, they could not own guns, and they could not rent land except in towns. It was illegal for blacks and whites to marry each other...

Defenders of the code said it was patterned after other Northern laws dealing with freedmen. This is an example of the point that they denied that the legislature was trying to re-establish blacks. The code was necessary, its defenders said, to force blacks to work...

Regardless of their intentions, the legislators made sure that blacks were kept down, socially and economically. As the Jackson Daily News said: "We must keep the mulatto in a state of inferiority. We must pass such laws as will make him feel his inferiority."

1. What does the Code mean to you?
2. What reasons might one book help you understand this Code?
3. Whose interest did it serve to establish the Code rather than other alternatives?

The constitution brought some major changes in Mississippi. First of all, it set up a public school system under a state superintendent. It was generally agreed that these schools would be SEGREGATED (set apart for whites and blacks). The constitution also took steps to protect married women's property rights.

The state office of Commissioner of Immigration and Agriculture was established, and the office of lieutenant governor was set up. The governor's term was changed from two to four years. The governor was also allowed to appoint most of the state judges. This was a step backward from the 1835 constitution, in which Mississippi had let the country by making judges run for office.

1. The Reconstruction Constitution of 1868 was established by a convention composed of delegates chosen in an election in which Black men were able to vote. Which book gives you a greater understanding of what the new Constitution was meant to do?
2. Did the provisions of the Constitution improve the rights of just one group, or did it affect several groups?
3. One book quotes a delegate to the convention as saying that under the new constitution "all men were to be equal...". What about women? Does either book provide us with enough information about the old or new status of women?

Mississippi: Conflict and Change

[The Legislature] spent a great deal of money. The total cost of the state government in 1870-1871 was nearly $25 million. Laws were passed to set up the new public school system and to provide state aid for industrial and railroad taxes. Taxes were increased so much that rich property owners began to complain.

The Taxpayers Resist. Financial problems did much to cause the downfall of Republican rule in Mississippi. By 1874 taxpayers were ready to revolt. Vickburg and Warren County were scenes of the first incidents. Both city and county governments were ruined due to corruption (guilt of dishonest practices). Most of the city and county offices were held by blacks. Some whites paid ninety-nine percent of the taxes, they were very unhappy. The city and county debt, which had been only thirteen thousand dollars in 1869, had climbed to $1.4 million for Vickburg alone by 1874.

The whites in Vicksburg organized a Taxpayers League to defeat the black city government in the fall elections.

X

1. Each book presents different information on the effectiveness of Reconstruction government. Which is each book trying to support in terms of the need for increased expenditures? capabilities of Black people? degree of Black control of government?
2. Which provides a more realistic understanding of the reasons for conservative resentment of Reconstruction government?

A secret organization, known as the Ku Klux Klan, began to terrorize blacks. The Klan began as a secret social and fraternal club. Such organizations were very popular at that time. The initiation of a member required him to ride across the countryside in broad daylight and, his hood concealed; he was initiated in a secret meeting. A non-member was initiated into the Klan by being forced to sit in a tree, usually a black man. The Klan was organized on the principles of a secret society and was based on the idea of promoting white supremacy and the "southern way of life." It was organized to protect the rights of white people and to prevent any violation of their rights.

The Klan's activities were widespread, and its membership was very large. It is estimated that there were tens of thousands of members in the South, and perhaps hundreds of thousands across the nation. The Klan was capable of intimidating and even killing blacks and whites who opposed its goals. It is often described as a group of white men who used violence and intimidation to maintain control over black communities.

1. What understanding does each book give us of the reasons for the organization of the Klan? Which tells us more about its activities?
2. Can you find a stereotype about Black people in one of the quotes?
3. One book says that as Klan violence increased, Southern leaders withdrew, while the other says that moderate whites withdrew. What is the difference in these two statements?
Mississippi: Conflict and Change

Between the end of Reconstruction and the Constitutional Convention of 1890, many Mississippians faced poverty and disease. Farming was not paying off for most people. Children were growing up illiterate. Conservative leaders, however, seemed to be more interested in business matters—railroads, banks, and factories—than in social legislation. As the hard times of the 1890s grew worse, people lost confidence in their leaders.

The black people faced economic and social conditions little better than those of slavery days. Blacks were still allowed to vote in most counties, but in fewer and fewer numbers as the years passed. This period of conservative reaction had more lasting effects upon Mississippi than Reconstruction, for in these years the conservatives established practices in politics, law, economics, and race relations that still affect us today.

1. What does one quote assume in its use of "Mississippians"?
2. How does this distort what the reader perceives about the period?

XVI

[William] Waller was the first governor since Reconstruction to make it a practice to appoint blacks to office. One of his first moves was to desegregate the Highway Patrol.

1. What information does each quote present? Leave out?
2. What differing impressions result?