

Listing of all books read for TAH consideration

<p><i>My America Series</i> <u>Our Strange New Land - Elizabeth's Diary</u> By Patricia Hermes Scholastic Inc. New York. 2000</p> <p><u>I Walk in Dread</u> <u>Diary of Deliverance Trembly</u> <u>Witness to Salem Witch Trials</u> By Lisa Faustino Scholastic Inc. New York. 2004</p> <p><i>Titlewave website</i> <u>Virginia Bound</u> By Amy Butler Houghton Mifflin Clarion Books. 2003</p> <p><i>Cody's "Off the shelf"</i> <u>Indian Captive - The Story of Mary Jamison</u> By Lois Lenski. Harper Trophy. 1941. renewed 1969</p> <p><i>Cody's</i> <u>The Kidnapped Prince</u> The Life of Olaudah Equiano Adapted by Ann Cameron Dell Yearling. 1995</p> <p><i>Cody's</i> <u>Salem Witch</u> <u>My Side of the Story</u> By Patricia Hermes Houghton Mifflin, Kingfisher. 2006</p>	<p><i>Cody's</i> <u>The Witch of Blackbird Pond</u> By Elizabeth George Speare Bantam Doubleday Dell. 1958/1993</p> <p><i>Montclair School Library</i> <u>The Sign of the Beaver</u> By Elizabeth George Speare Houghton Mifflin Yearling Book.1983</p> <p><i>Montclair School Library</i> <u>Guests</u> By Michael Dorris Hyperion. 1999</p> <p><i>Montclair School Library</i> <u>Sarah Bishop</u> By Scott O'Dell Scholastic. 1980</p> <p><i>Montclair School Library</i> <u>My Brother Sam is Dead</u> James Lincoln Collier & Christopher Collier, Scholastic. 1974/2005</p> <p><i>HSS Standards list</i> <u>A Break with Charity</u> A story about the Salem Witch Trials By Ann Rinaldi Harcourt, Gulliver Books. 1992</p> <p><i>HSS Standards list</i> <u>Calico Bush</u> By Rachel Field Simon and Schuster Aladdin Paperbacks. 1931/1998</p> <p><i>HSS Standards list</i> <u>My Name is Not Angelica</u> By Scott O'Dell Random House. 1989 Yearling Book</p>
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Books excerpted for TAH Grant teachers

From: My America Series

Our Strange New Land - Elizabeth's Diary

By Patricia Hennes

Scholastic Inc. New York

This book has a girl for the main character. She writes the diary, becomes more tom-boyish and independent in the setting of the new world, and does not fall victim to the worst problems associated with the colony at Jamestown. Nevertheless, the difficulties are laid out in the course of the narrative. Primarily there is disease, hunger, and internal strife in the colony. There is a good representation of many of the colonists as lazy and wanting to have servants or slaves. And the hope that this region of the New World will yield gold is also mentioned.

The treatment of the Indians includes a sprightly portrait of Pocahontas, the ultimate tom boy. As well, the Indians are depicted as being generous and as having the ability to survive well on the land which proves so intractable for the white men. One good description of an Indian village is given. There is a portrayal of initial good relations with the Indians superseded by growing hostility on both sides as the colony falls into disrepair and distrust and hostile actions are taken by whites against the Indians and visa versa.

From: Titlewave website

Virginia Bound

By Amy Butler

Houghton Mifflin

Clarion Books

This is a terrific read with drama, plot, character development and history all rolled into one. The setting is Jamestown in 1627. The main character is a 12 year old boy who has been kidnapped in London, sold into servitude, and shipped off to Virginia where he winds up working for a cruel tobacco farmer. The farmer's other servant is an Indian Girl, thought to be mute. After the distrust between the two servants breaks down, (she is not mute but only uses this as a protective device) they plan to run away together to her tribe where, she assures him, he will be taken in as a brother - a much better fate than remaining indentured. The plot thickens when the boy is rented out to a kind carpenter for a few weeks and the carpenter sees his potential and wants to buy his contract from the farmer. Will the farmer agree to sell him? Will the boy desert the Indian girl? Will she be able to flee alone?

This is a very attractive story with enough hardship to be realistic and yet a happy ending that keeps the reader's attention and has one cheering as it unfolds. The descriptions of life in London, and in Virginia are excellent and give a good picture of those realities. The sympathies lay with the oppressed, both the indentured in general, and with the Indians who see their lives disappear before their very eyes.

From: Montclair School Library

My Brother Sam is Dead

James Lincoln Collier & Christopher Collier

Scholastic

The setting is the Revolutionary War 1775-78 in Connecticut. The story has a 12 year old boy as its main character and narrator, and his brother, Sam who joins the American side as a patriot (age 18), as the main plot device to move the story forward. It is in arguments with the Tory father of the family over Sam's decision to fight against the king, that issues of the war get explored.

The book is an anti-war novel. Both sides are seen as wrong. The boy narrator goes back and forth trying to decide which side to support... the dad or Sam, the British or the Americans. War is clearly hell and a mass of confusion. For example, the Tory father is killed by the British, while Sam, the patriot is hung by the Americans for something he did not do. The book is considered "heavy" and "dark" but calling it complex may be more to the point. There are no easy answers in consideration of such important historical events and this book may lend itself to discussion along these lines. There are two maps, a bibliography, and a detailed timeline in the book.

Cody's "Off the shelf"

Salem Witch

My Side of the Story

By Patricia Hennes

Houghton Mifflin Kingfisher series

This is an attractive book for children with two stories told, and two perspectives given just by turning the book over and reading the other person's side of the events. One is a girl who opposes the very idea of witches. The other is a boy whose father is a judge and he is much more skeptical and unsure of what is going on in Salem. They are friends and the culminating point in the plot is where he helps her and her family escape after she is named a witch. She only finds out years later that he has helped them. She suspected that he was a spy against them.

The main characters are fictional but much of the dialogue is taken from actual transcripts of the witch trials. Tituba is dealt with briefly as are Dorcas the 5 year old accused and Giles Cory, the man crushed by stones over a couple of days time. There is strong reference to the fear resonating from, and the subsequent generalized hysteria created by Indian raids in Maine. The atmosphere of suspicion and accusation is well presented and the hangings are depicted in relatively graphic detail.

From: HSS Standards list

My Name is Not Angelica

By Scott O'Dell

Random House

Yearling Book

This book is set in St. John, (Virgin Islands) in 1733 and thus is listed here only because it is a good read and has some value in its depiction of slavery, and a historic slave revolt on that island.

The main character is a slave kidnapped in Africa (story much like Equiano's) and made a house slave on St. John's (because she is so bright and beautiful). But as the slave revolt is fomented the laws and provisions promulgated for punishing the slaves become part of the story and are a valuable piece of history in a piece well designed for a 5th grade audience.

Books read & considered for TAH Grant, not excerpted

Montclair School Library

The Sign of the Beaver

By Elizabeth George Speare Houghton Mifflin - Yearling Book

The year is 1768. The main character is a 12 year old boy who has gone to settle in Maine near the Penobscot River with his father. He is left alone for months by his father who has returned to Massachusetts to bring back the rest of the family. The entire story takes place when he is alone and its main content is his being befriended by the Indians. There are interesting depictions of the food, housing, and life challenges of the white settler as well as similar descriptions of an Indian village, ceremonies, and games. There is a respect shown to the superior knowledge of the Indians with regard to the land, the plants, hunting know-how etc. And there is a rather touching portrayal of the land being so changed by the settlers as to become uninhabitable by the Indians.

There is no one historical event around which the novel revolves and is rather a cultural study and comparison. It is good read.

Cody's "off the shelf"

Indian Captive - The Story of Mary Jamison

By Lois Lenski

Harper Trophy

This book was written in 1941. It is another book that goes into what the Indians produced and how they lived. The twist this time is the participation of the white girl who is an actual historic figure who lived with the Seneca from the time she was about 12 until she died at 91 years old. The historic details covered in this book are centered only on her first few years with the tribe, but apparently they are taken from actual accounts she gave when interviewed as an 80 year old. She was captured in 1758.

This book does have the feature of the French and Indian war setting, and the war is mentioned briefly throughout, including the taking of Fort Duquesne by the British. There is one lyrical passage about the ill effects of the white settlement on Indian life, and another when Mary makes her speech choosing to stay with the Seneca. But overall the book and its illustrations have too many ugly and unsympathetic depictions of the natives and too many charged words to be of value.

Cody's "off the shelf"

The Kidnapped Prince

The Life of Olaudah Equiano

Adapted by Ann Cameron

Dell Yearling

This book is the autobiographical slave narrative of Equiano, rendered for 5th graders in simpler language and manageable sentences. It starts with Equiano's life in Benin, and ends shortly after he is able to purchase his freedom and move to England. His original narrative covers more of his life after freedom.

The issue in this book is the depiction of slavery. Equiano was a seafaring slave, with some education and many skills. He was well liked and cared for by his owners, and he admired them in return. He was able to trade enough goods while on his travels (including when he piloted ships full of slaves) to save money to buy his freedom. So, whereas he has some good passages describing the torture and mistreatment of plantation slaves, in general, his is a much lighter story than a typical slave's. As such, it may contribute to the wrong impression for 5th graders. Indeed, his issue is that, no matter how good he had it there is no substitute for freedom. Yet, unless this is absolutely clear, it may be detrimental to student's understanding of the conditions of the slaves. As a result, they may not take those conditions seriously enough.

Cody's "off the shelf"

The Witch of Blackbird Pond

By Elizabeth George Speare Bantam Doubleday Dell

This is essentially a romance novel in the Jane Austin tradition. Three daughters all wind up with Mr. Right by the end of the novel. Again the main character is a spunky, tom boyish girl this time about 15 years old.

The issue of witches in New England is de-contextualized. This is the story of one misunderstood old woman Quaker who is befriended by the main character. The old woman is suspected of being a witch, her house is burned down but she escapes with the hero. Meanwhile the young heroine is placed on trial as a witch-symp and there is a Perry Mason moment where a surprise witness comes to the stand and she is acquitted. Whereas there are plenty of good depictions of the life in a small puritan village, there is no mention of the depth of the hysteria or the series of events that lead to the death of 19 witches in Salem, for example. It is a wonderful read but probably doesn't serve the needs of teachers truly looking for fiction that will help teach actual historical events.

Montclair School Library

Guest

By Michael Dorris

Hyperion

This is a story told entirely from the perspective of a 12 year old Indian boy in the Northeast. The tribe has invited the white settlers to the harvest dinner and he is upset with this decision. He goes into the woods to search for himself - a rite of passage called in this book "time alone." There are several charming encounters with others in the forest; an porcupine who speaks to him, a disaffected young squaw who want to be a warrior and wears boy's clothes, and of course his own psychological interior.

This book doesn't hold promise for the TAH purposes. It is a coming of age story told about an Indian, and there is not much of value historically beyond some depiction of the Indian village and landscape. Indeed, it has a very modern psychological bent and doesn't try to get at what may have been real issues in a young man's vision quest. The fact that it is the Thanksgiving story does not contribute much either, though it shows the whites as fairly selfish and imposing greatly on the Indians from the perspective of white dominance...as if the Indians should feel privileged.

Montclair School Library

Sarah Bishop

By Scott O'Dell

Scholastic

This is Scott O'Dell at his worst. He has taken the setting of the Revolutionary War as an excuse to write another adventure of a girl, armed with a musket, learning how to survive alone in a cave, make clever things out of "nothing," and befriend animals. He even figures out how to throw in a witch trial before he is done, and Sarah is tried as a witch because she lives in a cave.

The book starts out much like My Brother Sam is Dead in that it is a tale of a family where the son is a patriot and the father a Tory. They both are killed early on and Sarah is accused of burning down a courthouse. She runs off trying to find her way out of her conundrum. She lives in the cave, encounters difficulties and terrifying people. In the end she is acquitted by a split decision and returns to the wilderness to live happily ever after.

HSS Standards list

A Break with Charity

A story about the Salem Witch Trials

By Ann Rinaldi

Harcourt, Gulliver Books

This is a long and involved book on the trials. It begins well and keeps interest but eventually begins to seem endless. It is historically accurate. The protagonist was a historic person and no less an ancestor of Nathaniel Hawthorne. But perhaps this book is too detailed for 5th grade. For example, it goes into quite a bit of detail on the differences among the judges and magistrates over their developing doubt of the hysterical girls' stories.

The girl who is the main character has happened upon the origin of the group of witch accusers. She struggles with telling or not telling about their lies throughout the novel. Her family is among those accused of witchcraft and still she remains silent, frozen with fear. At her lowest point she almost turns into one of those who believes in witches. In the final section of the book though, she regains her courage and testifies about all she knows providing the first break in the wall of hysteria, a break which ends with Brattle's letter denouncing the trials as a sham based on evidence that is no more than common gossip. (In an epilogue the author mentions that it is *her* invention that Brattle's letter was based on the protagonist's testimony.) The epilogue supposedly written in 1706 and the Author's Note are some of the most interesting part of the book. There is a bibliography of scholarly works on Salem.

HSS Standards List

Calico Bush

By Rachel Field

Simon and Schuster

Aladdin Paperbacks

The setting here is the French and Indian War but the war is so distant that, beyond being mentioned briefly, it never truly enters the story. This is a story of an indentured girl in Maine. She is in a family that is warm and caring and she doesn't suffer anything that they do not. She is French and that leads to a plot device wherein she and an Indian make friends, a fact that proves advantageous when the Indians come to raid the family and instead do them no harm. Other than that this is simply a chronicle of a year spent homesteading in the wilderness in Maine in 1743 and the obvious difficulties that would entail. There is some hunger, death of a baby, a leg crushed by a felled tree, but everyone remains pretty hail and hardy and there is a triumphant note throughout. The Indians are mentioned as a constant threat and there is no real coming to terms with what the coming of the white man means to them.

The language is quite archaic, being written in 1931, and the descriptions of the countryside, while beautiful and evocative, are probably too long and detailed for most 5th graders.

Dear America Series

I Walk in Dread .

The Diary of Deliverance Trembley

Witness to the Salem Witch Trials

By Lisa Faustino

Scholastic

This is a book on the witch trials that tries to set the stage for the trials by creating a picture of Salem village through the life story of Deliverance, the diary's "author." The result of this is that there are so many sub-plots going at once, it is hard to believe that a 5th grader would be able to follow the book to know that the witch trials are of the essence here.

One feature of this book is that the story of Giles Corey (the man crushed to death by stones as a result of refusing to testify when he was accused of being a witch) is given a lot of play. In general though the language is difficult and the intricacies stand in the way of clarity.

Calico Captive

By Elizabeth George Speare

Houghton Mifflin

This book is based on a true "captive narrative" written about experiences that took place in 1754. This is the one book put down without finishing the reading. It is unredeemable in its depiction of the Indians who capture the white family and march them to Canada. The Indians are debased in the narrative almost without exception. For example, their village is called "squalid." The Indians themselves are called "savage" "heathen" "worthless critters" etc.

Furthermore, once the story moves beyond the main character's encounter with the Indians, she is sold to a French family in Quebec as a servant. This is so far from the needs of the T AH Grant that I stopped reading the book.

Other historical fiction - Colonial Period

My America Series

- The Journal of William Thomas Emerson - A Revolutionary War Patriot
- The Winter of Red Snow - Revolutionary War Diary of Abigail Jane Stewart
- A Journey to the New World -the Diary of Remember Patience Whipple
- The Journal of Jasper Jonathan Pierce - A Pilgrim Boy
- Love thy Neighbor- The Tory Diary of Prudence Emerson

Others by Ann Rinaldi

- Cast Two Shadows: The American Revolution in the South
- The Fifth of March: A Story of the Boston Massacre
- Finishing Becca: A Story about Peggy Shippen and Benedict Arnold
- The Secret of Sarah Revere

Books listed & ordered but *not available* from the

History-Social Science Standards Book List, Grade 5 standard 5.4:

- Stranded at Plimoth Plantation, Gary Bowen. ISBN: 0060225416
- Witch Hunt: It happened in Salem Village, Stephen Krensky. ISBN: 0394819233
- Caesar's Story: 1759, Joan Lowery Nixon. ISBN: 0385326769

Note: there are others on this list as well beyond what is here and/or what was read and notated above.

Books listed & ordered but *not available* from the **Titlewave Website**

- The Com Raid, James Lincoln Collier. ISBN 0809206196
- World's Apart, Kathleen Karr. ISBN: 0761451951
- Moon of Two Dark Horses, Sally M. Keehn. ISBN: 0698119495

Books suggested & ordered but *not available* from the **Montclair School Library**

- Night Journeys, Avi.
- Samuel's Choice, Richard Berleth.
- My mother, the Witch, Rose Blue
- Constance: A Story of Early Plymouth, Patricia Clapp
- War comes to Willy Freeman, James Lincoln Collier
- Come All You Brave Soldiers: Blacks in the Revolutionary War, Clinton Cox
- A Killing in Plymouth Colony, Carol Otis Hurst
- Tituba of Salem Village, Ann Lane Perry