

Preliminary review of four fifth-grade US History Textbooks

by Bob Peterson March 24, 2008

Topic	Harcourt School Publishers	Houghton Mifflin	Macmillan McGraw-Hill	Scott Foresman
The Word RACISM				
In index	no	no	no	no
In glossary	no	no	no	no
In text	no	no	no	no
The Word Anti-Semitism				
In index	no	no	no	no
In glossary	no	no	no	no
In text	no	no	no	no
The Word prejudice				
In index				
In glossary				
In text				
The Word stereotype				
In index	no	no	no	no
In glossary	no	no	no	no
In text	no	no	no	no
The Word discrimination				
In index	no	yes	no	Yes
In glossary	no	yes	no	Yes page r79
In text	no	yes (2)		Yes (1)
The Word Anti-Semitism				
In index	no	no	no	no
In glossary	no	no	no	no
In text	No (3)	no	No (4)	no

(1) Scott Foresman

Discrimination

p. 445 California gold rush “Newcomers did find opportunities, but many also faced discrimination.” Example is the tax on immigrant miners.

p. 466 In section “Slavery in the South.” Speaking of free African Americans before the Civil War, “Throughout the country African Americans suffered from discrimination. They did not have the rights of full citizenship.” Example given was that in New York state after property requirement for voting was dropped it still applied to free blacks.

p. 553 In a short biographical description of Japanese immigrant George Shima (1863-1926) the text states, “Shima sometimes met discrimination. When he bought a new home near a university, some white people protested.”

p. 613 In a section, titled “The Great Migration” there are four references to discrimination. “Many African Americans in the South were poor sharecroppers. Discrimination held them back from a good education, job opportunities, and many of their basic rights as citizens.” [No specifics are given, and denial of voting rights is not mentioned.] “In Northern cities, they still faced discrimination and segregation. They could only live in certain neighborhoods and attend certain schools. When World War I ended many lost their jobs or found that only low paying jobs were open to them. [Note the passive tense – the black workers “lost their jobs.” No mention of them being fired or the racist actions taken by unions to exclude black workers, or the multiple post WW I race riots that led to the deaths of dozens of African Americans.] The two other references occur when it mentions that “The main goal of [W.E.B.] Du Bois and the NAACP was to bring an immediate end to racial discrimination against African Americans.” And that “To [Booker T.] Washington, education and training for jobs were keys to equality. With education, he believes, African Americans would gradually overcome racial discrimination in both the South and the North.”

p. 614 Section titled “Fighting Discrimination” In this one paragraph biography of Ida Wells-Barnett it mentions that she “found and won a battle against the passage of state law that would have segregated blacks and whites on trains and buses in Illinois. [Note: No mention is made of her main life work – incessant writing and organizing against the lynching of black men. In fact, the word “lynching” does not appear in the book’s text, index, or glossary.”

The word “discrimination” does not appear in the five description of the “Struggle for Equal Rights” which focuses on Thurgood Marshall, the Brown decision, the Montgomery Bus Boycott and a story of Martin Luther King when he was 14 years old.

On the question of anti-Semitism, Jews, and the Holocaust.

In the index under Holocaust one page is listed, p. 628. Anti-Semitism is not listed, three pages are cited for “Jews.” Two of the pages are from the WW II chapter.

In 8 pages on WW II there are three paragraphs that discuss mistreatment of Jews and the Holocaust.

The other reference is on page 218 in the chapter “Religion in the Colonies” “Some colonies continued to be refuges for religious groups that faced persecution in Europe. For example, many Jews came to the 13 Colonies. They settled in Rhode Island, new

York and South Carolina. In 1763 Jews in Newport, Rhode Island built what today is the oldest synagogue in the United States.”

There is no reference in the entire US history book to any discrimination or anti-Semitism against Jews in the United States. The reference is to what affected them in Europe.

j

Puerto Rico/Puerto Ricans

Puerto Rico is mentioned on three pages. The first two, 580 and 581 are in the context of the Spanish-American war. That Puerto Rico as a colony of Spain and on page 581 that “The United States gained control of several Spanish territories, including Puerto Rico, the Philippines and Guam.” “Puerto Rico and Guam are still part of the United States and their people are United States citizens.”

The third reference is on page 688 in a graphic which shows flags of countries and territories in the Caribbean. Puerto Ricans are not mentioned.

(2) Houghton Mifflin,

Discrimination

Although in the index discrimination is listed, of the four the three pages that are listed, discrimination is listed on one page, 425 in the discussion of “Free Blacks” it states: “free blacks in the South often faced discrimination. Discrimination is the unfair treatment of particular groups. State laws limited the right of free blacks. For example, they could not travel without permission or meet in groups without a white person present,” On the other three pages (484, 627, 628) the word discrimination does not appear in the text, although “segregation” explained on those three pages.

Jews

The treatment of Jewish people and anti-Semitism is limited to entries on four pages. Anti-Semitism is not listed in the index, glossary or text. In the first reference to Jews in the book it is on page 196 which deals with people who came to the middle colonies. “Others were Jews and Catholics.”

The next reference to Jews is on page 542 in the chapter “Immigrants in America” dealing with the years “1880-1924.” The paragraph reads:

Immigrants were looking for work. Growing businesses like those of Andrew Carnegie and John D Rockefeller offered plenty of jobs. Some immigrants also came to escape war or persecution. Persecution is unfair treatment or punishment. For example, many Jews in Eastern Europe were hurt or killed because of their religion. Jewish people hope to escape persecution by moving to the United States.” Even though the index lists pp 542-544 after “Jews” no further reference is made to Jews on pages 543 or 544. There are three paragraphs that states that “immigrants’ lives were not easy,” that they “worked long hours for low pay,” and that they “faced prejudice from people who were frightened by unfamiliar languages and customs.”

The last two entries are on page 600 and 605 in the section on WWII. On 600 the text states Hitler “also blamed Jewish people for many of Germany’s problems and stirred up hatred against them.” On page 605 in the one paragraph description of the Holocaust it states, “In Europe, the Nazis had forced Jews and other people that they blamed for

Germany's problems into concentration camps. A concentration camp is a place where large numbers of people are held prisoner and forced to work. Over 12 million people, including about six million of them Jews, died in concentration camps. This mass murder is known as the Holocaust."

Puerto Rico/Puerto Ricans

Puerto Ricans are not mentioned in the entire history book. Puerto Rico is mentioned twice on page 574. "In the 1890s, Spain held colonies in Cuba and Puerto Rico in the Caribbean Sea." And "Spain surrenders, and in August 1898 agreed to give Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Guam to the United States."

(3) Harcourt

Jews

The first mention of Jews in the book on US history is on page 514 in a photo caption that reads "German soldiers used force to imprison Jews and other people whom they labeled as enemies." There is no mention of Jews being in the United States at all in any context (not even as part of the immigrant wave of the late 1800s or early 1900s, etc.) The reference to WWII on page 524 includes two paragraph description of Anne Frank and her diary. (It does not tell that she was murdered by the Nazis). On page 525 "The Holocaust" is described in five paragraphs and one picture. In the five paragraphs Jews are mentioned twice: "The largest group of victims were Jews." And "This terrible mass murder of more than two-thirds of all European Jews became known as the Holocaust."

(4) Macmillan/McGraw-Hill

Jews

There is no reference to anti-Semitism. In the index under "Jewish synagogue" page 6 is listed. There is an inset picture labeled "A Jewish synagogue" along with a "A Christian Church", "A Hindu Temple" and "A Muslim Mosque." The other reference to Jews in the two volume book is on page 345 where there is a one page paragraph description of the Holocaust in which Jews are mentioned three times:

"Hitler often spoke out against Jewish people. As the Nazi party gained power in Europe, it targeted Jewish people and other groups. Jews and other Europeans were taken from their homes and held in concentration camps. This because knows as the Holocaust. In the camps, many were worked to death as slave laborers. Many others were killed by Nazi soldiers. Those who did not die were mistreated. About 10 million people died during the Holocaust, including 6 million Jewish people."

Puerto Rico/Puerto Ricans

Puerto Rico is mentioned on three pages, all in the context of the Spanish-American War. On page 314 the text states: "In 1898 Cuba and Puerto Rico were the only remaining Spanish colonies in the Americas." On page 316, "Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines became U.S. territories." On page 317, "Guam and Puerto Rico remain U.S. territories, and their people are American citizens." No other mention is made of Puerto Rico or Puerto Ricans. There is no reference to whether it was legitimate for the US to get Puerto Rico, or as the book puts it, for how Puerto Rico "became" U.S. territories