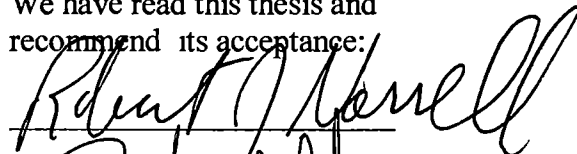
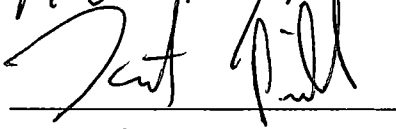


To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis by Erin McConnell Stover entitled "Putting the Present in the Past: the Impact of Economic, Political, and Social Changes on the History Curriculum in the Public Schools of Tennessee, 1945-1990." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Art, with a major in History.


Robert J. Norrell, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and
recommend its acceptance:


Accepted for the Council:


Associate Vice Chancellor and
Dean of the Graduate School

PUTTING THE PRESENT IN THE PAST: THE IMPACT OF
ECONOMIC, POLITICAL, AND SOCIAL CHANGES ON THE
HISTORY CURRICULUM IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF
TENNESSEE, 1945-1990.

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Arts
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Erin McConnell Stover
May 2000

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ABSTRACT

Schools serve as vehicles for the transmission of culture and values. History and social studies classes teach students about their relationships with different members of society, and they help formulate national identity. This thesis examines what Tennessee public school students learn in their state and American history classes, and how political and societal forces have shaped what they have learned. Parents, educators, and various interested citizens have long battled over this curriculum. Their influence and changing values in American society have determined what students learn in their history classes.

This paper begins with an examination of the Cold War Era Curricula of this time focused on teaching students to be responsible democratic citizens. Textbooks glorified the American experience and stressed cooperation in American history. American history consisted mainly of white men, politics, and military events during this time. As social and racial tensions grew during the 1960s, the history curriculum examined conflict in American history. As multiculturalism became a more popular teaching tool, history textbooks and curriculum highlighted the contributions of minorities and women. Increased representation, however, did not mean that minorities and women were integrated into the story. Textbook publishers often just added them onto the original story. Multiculturalism peaked in the 1970s and met significant challenge in the conservative climate of the 1980s. During the Regan Era conservative forces exercised considerable influence over the curriculum, and history textbooks once again focused on political, military, and white history. As textbooks avoided offending

different groups in society, they became longer and more boring. These trends continued into the 1990s.

Contemporary political and societal values have shaped the state and history curricula taught in Tennessee's public schools throughout the twentieth century. Textbooks and instructional material reflect what a society considers important, and the values that they want their children to learn. The present thus becomes interwoven with the presentation of the past. What students learn about their history helps determine how they understand their society. The ever-changing values and priorities of that society shape the values and priorities of that society's history as well.

PREFACE

The effort to understand public education in Tennessee led the author to many different people and places across the state. This thesis explores what shapes and determines the curriculum used in the history courses in Tennessee's public schools and how changes in society have influenced what students learn. Individual school districts in Tennessee retain much authority over what is taught in their schools. Many of the most useful curriculum guides were found in the central offices of these individual districts. The State Department of Education publishes very little pertaining to specific instruction in the state's public schools. Textbooks and curriculum guides support many of the most important arguments presented in this thesis. Because the author had to rely on sources available from different offices across the state, those sources appear somewhat haphazard.

Most Tennessee school districts recycle textbooks when new ones are purchased. Therefore, an inconsistent and incomplete number of older ones remain. The majority of the textbooks studied for this paper came from the shelves of the George Peabody Library in Nashville. They are part of a collection of old textbooks donated by teachers and schools. As the only curriculum library in the state to keep such a collection, the George Peabody Library proves an invaluable source for teachers and scholars for this reason. Even though compiling sources from which to build this thesis presented such an obstacle, they provide important insights into public education in Tennessee and show how much the teaching of the past depends upon the present.

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INTRODUCTION

Education represents the transmission of culture as well as knowledge. The teaching of history embodies the creation of identity and formation of relationships in society. It shapes how people understand themselves and the circumstances in which they live. History curricula therefore interest numerous people with a variety of agendas. Liberal and conservative forces, as well as groups representing different minorities, have all acted to mold the history curricula taught in elementary and high schools in order to produce ideas and characteristics that they find favorable in students. Public school curricula in all areas of the country and across all subjects stand vulnerable to the political climate and pressure of interest groups. The curriculum represents a conglomeration of the values and ideas that various groups in American society prize. It therefore reacts to forces in society.¹ History and social studies curricula are particularly vulnerable to this pressure because they inform students of the civilization in which they live. The teaching of history remains vital to young peoples' understanding of themselves, their community, and their country. In *Historical Literacy: the Case for History in American Education*, Paul Gagnon asserts that students learn history because "it provides the only avenue we have to reach an understanding of ourselves and of our society."² What students are and are not taught is of great importance. Historians, educators, politicians, and concerned citizens have debated this question of the past five decades. Shifting priorities and conditions in American society have directed this debate and have forged the curriculum.

¹ Herbert M. Kliebard, *Forging the American Curriculum: Essays in Curricular History and Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1992) xii

² Paul Gagnon, *Historical Literacy: the Case for History in American Education* (New York:

The debate over the American history curriculum began in the late 1940s and early 1950s, when the Cold War caused citizens to become concerned that textbooks contained communistic or subversive materials. Social studies curricula thus emphasized democratic values and patriotism. The volatile political climate of the 1960s and 1970s, fueled by the Civil Rights Movement, intensified the argument over textbooks and curriculum. Critics focused attention on the treatment of women and minorities and issues such as slavery. This resulted in the rise of multiculturalism as an educational concept. Throughout the 1980s conservative forces gained momentum in the struggle over control of the curriculum and raised questions about religion in public schools. The representations of women, minorities, and controversial issues remained hotly contested during this time. Changing values and priorities have made American history more complex. Questions remain, however, about how much that story has actually changed, and if it has changed for the better. The evolution of the American and state history curricula in the public schools of Tennessee over the last sixty years shows considerable change in approach and in the treatment of women and minorities. The main narrative of state and national history as taught in the public schools, however, continues to stress white, male, political history.

This thesis seeks to determine how the content of secondary-level American and Tennessee history courses has evolved since the 1930s, and how changes in politics and society affected this development. It specifically addresses what students learned in these courses, focusing on what textbooks and course content taught students about the roles of

women, African Americans, and other minority groups. It does not propose to determine what students should learn in their American and Tennessee history classes.

The nature of public education in Tennessee illustrates the connection between politics and curriculum. Educational administration occurs at the county or city level in Tennessee, which allows curriculum to reflect the values of the community. Thus, the political climate and ethnic composition of individual school districts influence the curriculum used in those schools. Although the state determines the broad curricular framework, local school boards define curricula.³ Differences in politics and population stand out between the three Grand Divisions of East, Middle, and West Tennessee. The public school district of Knox County in East Tennessee is approximately 85 percent white and 14 percent African American, and the population is politically and religiously conservative. Knox County curriculum guides encourage a traditional approach to history, favoring political and military aspects of history and emphasizing "great white men." Davidson County in Middle Tennessee, which includes Metropolitan- Nashville public schools, represents the most ethnically integrated of the larger school systems in the state. Currently, the Davidson County public school system contains an approximately 57 percent white and 40 percent African American student body. The remaining population consists mostly of Hispanic and Asian American students. Unlike Knox County, Davidson County experienced severe white flight as a consequence of court-mandated busing in the early 1970s. Despite an ever-increasing number of African-American students, the curriculum of Davidson County remains fairly traditional. The Memphis City School System in West Tennessee, which is separate from the Shelby

³ Bruce Opie, Director of Social Studies Curriculum, interview by author, 5 February 1999, State

County school system, is one of only four school systems in the state with a black majority, and the only one in which that majority is significant. Currently, African Americans compose about 85 percent of the student body in Memphis. The curriculum effective in this school system proves the most progressive and multicultural in the state.⁴

Textbooks play a pivotal role in education. Their importance in the classroom cannot be understated. As Frances Fitzgerald notes in her important book, *America Revised: History School Books in the Twentieth Century*, "Like time capsules, the texts contain the truths selected for posterity."⁵ High school history textbooks represent the only version of the past that the majority of American students ever learn. The market determines that past because textbook companies publish books to sell rather than to inform. The textbook industry targets states with large populations, like Texas, so the politics of these states has a great impact on what companies publish. Most publishers avoid controversy in history texts to generate more sales, which often makes them dull and disagreeable to students.⁶ A textbook study completed in the early 1990s contended that public policy requirements have led to texts that are misleading, confusing, and boring.⁷ The religious and political conservatives in Tennessee and the rest of the South have enjoyed great influence over the curriculum for the last several years because of their strength in state politics. This control proves so important because textbooks determine most of the curriculum in a particular course.

Department of Education, Nashville

⁴ "Ethnic Composition by County" (Nashville: State Department of Education, 1997) [online] available at www.state.tn.us/education/cissushist.htm.

⁵ Frances Fitzgerald, *America Revised: History School Books in the Twentieth Century* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1979) 47

⁶ Loewen, 309

⁷ Michael Apple and Linda K. Christian-Smith, eds, *The Politics of the Textbooks* (New York: Routledge, 1991) 5, 59

States with statewide textbook adoption policies exert greater control on the textbook industry than states that adopt books by individual school district. This grants them disproportionate influence over the textbooks published for the entire country. Most of these states, including Tennessee, are in the South and Southwest, where economic instability, poverty, and racial tensions created a need for strict state control over education in the early twentieth century.⁸ Textbook publishers must comply with the demands of states with statewide adoption policies because they typically purchase a limited variety of textbooks. The often-conservative influence of these states on the curriculum can therefore extend to the country at large.

Texas best illustrates the impact of statewide adoption policies on the textbook industry. With one of the largest school-age populations in the country, as well as one of the strictest adoption policies, many publishers create texts to sell to Texas. In its 1983 study of Texas textbook adoption, *As Texas Goes, So Goes the Nation*, the politically liberal organization People for the American Way demonstrates the influence of this state on the American curriculum. Every summer a fifteen- member commission meets to consider textbook adoption for the following school year. The members select between two and five books for each subject and grade level, and they grant hearings to those wishing to protest the content of any particular textbook. Since the 1960s, Mel and Norma Gabler have reviewed and protested numerous textbooks for a variety of reasons. They represent the interests of a number of conservative groups, including the Moral Majority, the Eagle Forum, and the Pro-Family Forum. Their efforts have ensured the perpetuation of a traditional curriculum through the maintenance of established racial and

⁸ Philip Altbach, Gail P. Kelly, Hugh Petrie, and Lois Weis, eds., *Textbooks in American Society: Politics,*

gender roles in social studies and home economics textbooks, the inclusion of patriotic documents in history textbooks, and Creationism in science textbooks.⁹ They have also made efforts to remove material meant to generate discussion from teacher's manuals. Although the Gablers and their supporters do not enjoy exclusive influence over the adoption of textbooks in Texas, the state continues to favor conservative textbooks over more progressive ones. Texas's power in the textbook market has generated a more conventional curriculum nationwide.

Like Texas, Tennessee adopts textbooks at the state level. Tennessee's process, however, allows local school districts much more authority in the final selection of texts. State curriculum frameworks require Tennessee history to be taught at the seventh grade level in a one semester course. They also mandate that American history be taught in eighth and eleventh grade, followed by American government in twelfth grade.¹⁰ Textbooks and curriculum guides supplied by local school districts determine the content of these courses. Tennessee state law provides for the adoption of textbooks by a State Textbook Commission composed of nine individuals appointed by the governor and the State Commissioner of Education. Members of the Commission include the superintendents of one county and one city school district; a teacher or supervisor of instruction from grades 1-3, 4-8, and 9-12; and three citizens knowledgeable about education but not involved in the public schools. The Commission reviews books for content, style, applicability, and cost, and sends approved textbooks to individual school districts for local review and adoption. The books are selected in three to five year

Policy, and Pedagogy (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991) 16

⁹ People for the American Way, *As Texas Goes, So Goes the Nation* (Austin, TX, 1983)

¹⁰ "State Curriculum Framework," (Nashville: State Department of Education, 1997) [online] available at

cycles.¹¹ Unlike Texas, Tennessee does not limit the number of different textbooks that can be adopted for each subject and grade level. Although the Commission typically adopts several social studies textbooks for the elementary grades, it adopts very few American and Tennessee history textbooks each cycle.¹² Greater decentralization in education in Tennessee, however, has not resulted in a more liberal curriculum than those found in other southern states.¹³

The struggle over curriculum represents the contest for cultural control in American society. This conflict centers on whose knowledge textbooks transmit from one generation to the next.¹⁴ This thesis examines numerous textbooks used across Tennessee during different time periods to demonstrate how heavily outside forces influence education. Over the course of the last half of the twentieth century, Americans became more concerned with curricular content. The American public showed little interest in the content of American history textbooks until the 1960s, when school desegregation and the Civil Rights Movement encouraged the evaluation of how texts portrayed African Americans, women, and other minorities. The vast amount of secondary literature on the content and nature of history textbooks published since the 1960s testifies to this. Since that time, numerous groups have expressed interest in what students learn in social studies and history courses. Controversy over the treatment of

www.state.tn.us/education/cisushist.htm

¹¹ "The Tennessee Comprehensive Education Study, State of Tennessee: A Task Force Review of Public Education" (Nashville: Tennessee State Department of Education, 1982) 162-163

¹² Official lists of textbooks adopted in Tennessee show that six to eight different American history textbooks are usually available for adoption. Usually only one Tennessee state history textbook is available.

¹³ Many southern states exercise strict state control of education. All of them have statewide textbook adoption policies. The curriculum in public schools in the South, as Frances Fitzgerald notes, is often very conservative because it is tied so closely to politics. Although Tennessee allows individual school districts more freedom in determining curriculum, education remains conservative across most of the state.

¹⁴ Apple, 23

women and minorities continues to this day, despite efforts at inclusion and changes of approach in texts. The Cold War Era provides an excellent example of how directly the political climate and values of a society affect the curriculum. This study begins there.

CHAPTER ONE: "DEMOCRACY'S HOPE: THE COLD WAR AND THE HISTORY CURRICULUM

In the years prior to and immediately following World War II, textbooks and curriculum focused on instilling hope and pride in Americans. History textbooks of this era glorified the past and democratic ideals, emphasized hardship and bravery, and conveyed the sense that Americans always triumphed. The books promoted optimism and patriotism and removed conflict from the past. This proved important to a country recovering from a severe economic depression and a brutal global war. These trends became even more pronounced as the country moved into the Cold War Era.

The state government in Tennessee took a more active interest in public education during the late 1920s and 1930s. In the 1930s the General Assembly established regulations for the State Board of Education and local school boards¹⁵ Citizens and politicians demonstrated concern over the poor quality of public education across the state, but made little effort to combat it. A 1931 survey of the Nashville City Schools completed by Peabody College revealed that junior and senior high students lagged behind students in other areas of the country in all subjects. The report paid special attention to seventh and eighth grade social studies scores because many students in Tennessee did not pursue education past the eighth grade at this time. Social studies courses in these grades, therefore, were expected to educate students in the principles and duties of democratic citizenship. Educators feared students did not receive adequate

¹⁵ Edell M. Hearn, "Public Educational Changes Through Legislation in Tennessee, 1935-1959," Ph.D. Diss., University of Tennessee Knoxville, 1959.

instruction in these areas. The report indicated the disparities between black and white schools and noted the lack of quality teachers.¹⁶

The American history curriculum at this time purported to encompass political details and “human interests.” An outline for the course shows its depth. Students studied Native American cultures present before the arrival of Columbus and the advent of American slavery. Topics even included social history such as “Life in the Colonies.”¹⁷ The focus, however, remained political and military. A list of the most important dates to be emphasized contained all political and military events.¹⁸ Despite this, the study of history in these years included more than it would in upcoming decades.

History textbooks of the 1930s and 1940s related exciting, if distorted, stories. They presented political histories that emphasized government actions and military campaigns, anchored American history in Europe, and conveyed a strong sense of national pride.¹⁹ Although considered tremendously inadequate in modern times, these books were written in a dynamic style and were stimulating to read. They told stories of heroes and villains, beautiful women and honorable men. They contained fewer facts and more narrative than recent texts. Despite such attributes, textbooks of this time upheld racial prejudices and offered students a one-sided perspective of American history.

Popular textbooks used in Tennessee public schools during the first half of this century illustrate this trend. Their treatment of minorities and women, as well as of topics such as colonialism, slavery, and Reconstruction, reflected attitudes typical of the

¹⁶ Division of Surveys and Field Studies, George Peabody College for Teachers, *Public Schools of Nashville Tennessee A Survey Report*, (Nashville, Tennessee, 1931) 143-151

¹⁷ Nashville Public Schools, *Course of Study Junior High and Intermediate Grades* (Nashville, Tennessee, 1928) 119

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 114-137

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 64

time period. Silas Erwin Scates's textbook *A School History of Tennessee* provides an excellent example of the standard history curriculum of the 1930s and 1940s. The author introduced the book by stating, "The choice of material is especially adapted to Tennessee history because no state is richer in heroic pioneer character and conditions than our own."²⁰ Scates then began his tale with the story of "The First White Man in Tennessee." Gertrude and John Van Duyn Southworth started their American history textbook, *American History*, in a similar fashion, dating American history from the European exploration of the "New World." The omission of Native Americans and the glorification of white settlers characterized both texts. Scates provided a three-paragraph description of the Native American populations of Tennessee prior to white settlement, noting especially the "prosperous Cherokees" who lived in "rude villages" and appeared "more civilized than the other Indians."²¹ The Southworths offered even less, writing only that among the treasures Columbus returned to Spain with were "a few of the curious red-skinned natives."²²

A sharp contrast existed in these authors' accounts of white settlers. The Southworths lauded Columbus as the discoverer of America. Scates wrote, "We shall see how proud and liberty-loving people from three countries of Europe came to America and settled this mountain region. They were people of good conscience and they lived on

²⁰ Silas Erwin Scates, *A School History of Tennessee* (New York: World Book Company, 1925).

²¹ Scates, *A School History of Tennessee*, 1.

²² Southworth and Southworth, *American History*, 3.

good terms with one another in their new home.”²³ The Southworths devoted considerable time to various explorers and individuals, and Scates dedicated entire chapters to men such as James Robertson, John Sevier, and Daniel Boone. He made no mention of women. Although the language used adds drama to these portrayals, it also led to inevitable conclusions on the part of students about the superiority of the white race in history.

The treatment of issues such as slavery, the Civil War, and Reconstruction in these texts perpetuated the same theme. African Americans remained invisible in these books until the conflict over slavery arose as part of the sectional crisis of the mid-1800s. The authors addressed the institution of slavery as a political and economic issue instead of a moral one, and they ignored the role of white Americans in securing and maintaining it. The Southworths listed slavery behind states' rights as a cause of secession. In addition to their long political and economic account of the slavery issue, the Southworths wrote, “life in the plantation South was very pleasant” and went on to give a detailed description of the charm and elegance of the life of the planters. They then wrote of the slaves:

The slaves, too, usually led a happy life. Although they were educated only in the work they had to do, almost never traveled beyond the home plantation, and seldom developed into anything but mere working machines, they were usually treated humanely and often with great consideration. They had good food and warm clothing. When their daily work was done they were allowed to go to their cabins, which were built in a group not far from the plantation house of their master. There they could sing, and dance, and enjoy themselves in other ways. They were deeply religious, and delighted in singing chants about Bible events

²³ Scates, *A School History of Tennessee*, 13

Except that they received no pay, their lot was much like that of any other servants.²⁴

Scates first mentioned slaves in his chapter concerning Tennessee hero Andrew Jackson. He wrote nothing of the slaves themselves, stating only, "The bitter feeling that resulted in the Civil War arose over slavery and the problems that grew out of it."²⁵ According to Scates, these problems were political and economic, and he paid them relatively little attention. The authors' presentations of slavery led readers to conclude that morality played an insignificant role in the dispute over slavery, and that the institution was not cruel or unjust. African Americans disappeared from the pages of these books after discussion of Civil War related issues.

The victimization of white southerners by freed slaves and northern politicians permeated textbook representations of Reconstruction during the 1930s and 1940s. Both Scates and the Southworths condemned the evil effects of the carpetbagger and scalawag, and portrayed Reconstruction as a time of oppression. The Southworths described the ramifications of Reconstruction with these words: "Those who had been slaves were now supreme, and their former masters were shorn of their power. Negroes swaggered throughout the streets, and neither the life nor the property of any white man was safe."²⁶ Such a terrible situation led to the "practical" solution of the Ku Klux Klan, which, in the words of Scates, was essential to "breaking the stranglehold that the Radicals had upon

²⁴ Southworth and Southworth, *American History*, 168. The "Sambo thesis" prevailed in the historiography of slavery at this time. This thesis argued that blacks were infantile and needed whites to care for and civilize them. Ulrich Phillips, one of the earliest historians of slavery, and Stanley Elkins espoused these views. The scholarship of historians such as Edmund Morgan and Eugene Genovese overturned this interpretation in the 1960s and 1970s.

²⁵ Scates, *A School History of Tennessee*, 283.

²⁶ Southworth and Southworth, *American History*, 211.

the state” of Tennessee.²⁷ Tennesseans’ understanding of the South as a place victimized by the North perpetuated sectional tensions throughout much of the first half of the twentieth century. It also upheld the notion that whites, not blacks, suffered oppression.²⁸

The themes of triumph over hardship and the flowering of American ideals pervaded these textbooks. They only told, however, of the triumphs of white men. Scates excludes women and minorities completely, as do the Southworths, with the exception of six lines devoted to the Women’s Suffrage Movement.²⁹ The desire of the authors to portray a triumphant America resulted in the exclusion of material highlighting contradictions and failures within the American system. The tense atmosphere of the Great Depression and the Second World War created the need to reaffirm the public’s faith in America. This meant emphasizing the good and overlooking the blemishes.

The same themes appear in textbooks devoted to the history of black Americans. An African-American history textbook, The Negro, Too, In American History by Merl Esspe, published in Nashville in 1943, reflected the same values found in the Scates and Southworth books. Esspe, a professor of history at Tennessee Agricultural and Industrial College during the 1940s, showed the presence of blacks in America throughout all of the years of its history. He focused on the contributions of African Americans to creating American culture without emphasizing the oppression that they suffered in the process. Esspe also glorified the American experience. Like Scates and the Southworths, he eliminated conflict from his narrative. He wrote that when one looks at the past they see

²⁷ Scates, *A School History of Tennessee*, 310

²⁸ The Dunning interpretation of Reconstruction, prominent in the first half of the twentieth century, asserted that African Americans were inferior, and that southern whites should have had control of race relations in the South immediately following the Civil War. It also contended that the South should have been restored to the Union quickly and without vengeance.

²⁹ Southworth and Southworth, *American History*, 334

“two persons of different color sharing, planning, working and fighting together- out of which has emerged a great democracy that we call America.”³⁰ The persistent adoption of this book through the 1960s, when Tennessee schools began to desegregate in earnest, indicates that it was probably used mostly in black schools.³¹

Eppse effectively called attention to the presence of African Americans in American history. He described blacks in North America during exploration to demonstrate that their presence preceded slavery. In his discussion of slavery, however, he focused on the difficulty of slave labor, but not the treatment they received at the hands of white masters. He even wrote of how slavery benefited blacks: “in a certain sense this life not only gave the Negro a security, but also a kind of education. In it he learned the basic habits of routine, work, order, and the general ways of living in American culture.”³² Eppse listed slavery as an underlying cause of the Civil War, but attributed more importance to economic differences between the North and the South and the dispute over secession. He downplayed racial conflict and emphasized the cooperative nature of America. As was typical of textbooks of the day, Eppse presented an optimistic and patriotic interpretation of the black experience in American history.³³

Only one textbook used in Tennessee during the 1940s addressed the issue of race as it pertained to slavery. A 1944 edition of *Forman's Our Republic: A Brief History of the American People*, revised by Freemont P. Wirth, a professor of history at George

³⁰ Eppse, Merl R., *The Negro, Too, in American History*, (Nashville. National Publication Company, 1943) introduction

³¹ Tennessee Textbook Commission, “Tennessee Official List of Textbooks with Wholesale Prices, Retail Prices, and Copyright Dates” (Nashville, 1952 and 1962)

³² Ibid., 39

³³ Ibid., chapter 7 All textbooks published in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, present an optimistic and patriotic version of the past. Textbook authorities such as Frances Fitzgerald note that the glorification of the American experience was common during this time period

Peabody College in Nashville, made the only clear link between race and slavery to be found in any of these texts. The book states, "If a man had black skin, he was put into a caste and branded as an inferior, whether he lived in the North or the South, whether he was slave or free."³⁴ This indicates that not all elements of American society cooperated or enjoyed the benefits of democracy. He did not discuss how whites oppressed blacks, and the book does not mention Native Americans at all. Women also received little attention in this narrative. Although Wirth proved more progressive than other authors did, his work still reflected the common attitudes of the time. He too focused on democracy, cooperation, and American greatness. He closed the work by stating, "Our devotion to the democratic way of life has been demonstrated by our devotion and loyalty to our ideals and institutions."³⁵

The emphasis on cooperation in American history grew in the late 1940s and 1950s as the Cold War occupied a more prominent place in American politics and culture. Cooperation became the key to the American curriculum in the late 1940s in all subjects and at all grade levels. Educators sought to merge core knowledge into daily life and make schools more democratic. They highlighted active learning, cooperative

³⁴ *Forman's Our Republic a Brief History of the American People*, revised and enlarged by Freemont P Wirth (New York Appleton-Crofts, Inc , 1944) 366

³⁵ *Ibid* , 951

planning, and the recognition of individual differences.³⁶ In Tennessee, the Department of Education stipulated that the curriculum should cover three core areas: immediate personal problems, citizenship, and planning for the future. Schools stressed classes in health and physical education to fulfill requirements for the first part of the framework. In the area of citizenship the focus turned to the role of America in the larger world. American experiences in World War II led to the idea that to help insure peace “public schools must give far more attention to the geography, the history, the literature, the language, and the customs of other nations and races of the world.”³⁷ This resulted in a vast expansion of the curriculum. The Department of Education also mandated the teaching of Civics to instruct students in the duties of democracy and placed great emphasis on the teaching of history and social studies. Many Tennesseans also believed that the secondary curriculum focused too much on college preparation. Because few students in Tennessee pursued higher education, demand rose for more vocational training. Schools thus expanded programs in agriculture and work cooperatives³⁸

At all grade levels and across all subjects, the function of education became the production of responsible democratic citizens. Administrators encouraged teachers to provide students with “meaningful, democratic citizenship experiences” through the use

³⁶ Diane Ravitch, *The Troubled Crusade: American Education, 1945-1980* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1983) chapter 2.

³⁷ Tennessee State Department of Education, *Improving Education in Tennessee: Post War High School Curricula and Secondary Teacher Education* (Nashville, Tennessee, 1944) 3

³⁸ *Ibid*, chapters 1-2

of cooperative planning and teaching.³⁹ A bulletin designed by the State Department of Education in 1949 sought to help teachers and communities make adjustments in their approach to education. It stressed the rights and obligations of individuals in a democratic society, including that of all people to relate to others as equals. These trends greatly influenced the teaching of social studies in Tennessee because they encompassed the teaching of history and citizenship.⁴⁰ Just as it determined American culture and politics during the 1950s, response to the Cold War molded curriculum in America's public schools.

The Cold War had far-reaching and long-lasting effects on the secondary school curriculum in the United States. Educators placed renewed emphasis on science and math, and history and other social studies reflected consensus. Emphasis shifted dramatically in the history textbooks of the 1950s. Textbooks of the Cold War Era gave less attention to individuals and glorified the virtues of democracy and national unity. Textbooks of this decade stressed economics, politics, and society, and intended to foster national unity and condemn Communism.⁴¹ In 1951, the Tennessee General Assembly passed a law requiring the teaching of American history and government in public schools.⁴² Curricula, especially in history and government, emphasized democratic virtues and ideals

Cold War schools attempted to teach children certain values by which to live. In *Democracy's Hope*, a teaching manual prepared in 1951 by the teachers of the Nashville

³⁹ Tennessee State Department of Education, *Curriculum Planning For Our Schools* (Nashville, Tennessee, 1949) 2

⁴⁰ Ibid , 12-13, 54

⁴¹ Fitzgerald, *America Revised*, 57

⁴² Tennessee General Assembly, "Junior and Senior High Schools, Curriculum, American History and Government", 1951

City Schools, superintendent W.A. Bass called public schools the “cradle of American Democracy.”⁴³ This manual suggested ways teachers could make democratic living a part of every class. Activities in social studies stressed involvement in the community and personal responsibility. It also called on teachers to nurture Christian faith in their students.

Schools also tried to control the ideas that students encountered. People feared the presence of communistic ideas in schools and textbooks.⁴⁴ Parents and citizens took an active interest in what their children learned in school. Social studies and history textbooks became a special target of this concern. Fueled by the excitement aroused by McCarthyism, many states investigated their textbooks and teachers for socialist leanings. Public pressure on the Tennessee General Assembly resulted in an investigation of the social studies textbooks used in public schools. Tennesseans demanded this investigation “to insure that their children would not be indoctrinated by Communist ideas in what they considered to be a time of national peril.”⁴⁵

On January 14, 1953, Senate Joint Resolution 15 passed the Tennessee General Assembly. This act created a committee to study the textbooks used in elementary, secondary, and college level courses to uncover any communist or socialist tendencies any of these books might contain.⁴⁶ The resolution, sponsored by ten senators representing the three Grand Divisions and both political parties, called for the formation

⁴³ Teachers of the Public Schools of Nashville, Tennessee, *Democracy's Hope, a Manual for Teaching Democracy in the Elementary Grades* (Nashville, Tennessee, 1951) 1

⁴⁴ Ravitch, *The Troubled Crusade*, pg 81 Cold War fears manifested themselves in public schools through loyalty oaths, which teachers were required to take, and textbook investigations, such as the one conducted in Tennessee in 1953

⁴⁵ Richard McKinstry, “The 1953 Tennessee Textbook Investigation” MA Thesis, University of Tennessee Knoxville, 1953, 16-17

⁴⁶ Public Acts of the State of Tennessee, 78th General Assembly, Senate Joint Resolution 15, 1953

of a committee comprised of two senators and three representatives to examine the character, material, and content of textbooks.⁴⁷ Members of veteran and patriot groups such as the American Legion and Daughters of the American Revolution, both of which proved pivotal in exerting the pressure to start the investigation, testified about the alleged subversive material in some social studies texts. Most criticized them for being either too pacifist or not patriotic enough. The head of the American Legion in Nashville criticized the Tennessee history textbook *Discovering Tennessee* by Mary Rothrock, for omitting some of the governors and the Spanish American War. Many individuals who testified, however, maintained that the State Textbook Commission eliminated all textbooks containing subversive materials. The investigating committee failed to find questionable content in the social studies textbooks used in the state's schools. Nor did it find subversion in the history, political science, or sociology departments of the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.⁴⁸

Although fears of Communism manifested themselves in the Tennessee textbook investigation, the investigation itself proved moderate. Legislators repeatedly expressed faith in the state's educators during the short inquiry. The investigators expected to find little and devoted limited resources to it. It calmed public fears about the content of the curriculum. Although some criticized it as an affront to academic freedom, most citizens demonstrated their support for it. The committee only examined textbooks, and did not question the integrity of the state's teachers. It reinforced, however, the need for textbooks that forcefully promoted American values.⁴⁹ The American ideals of

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 39-57.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

democracy, freedom, and ironically, equality, all found ample space on the pages of American and state history books used in Tennessee throughout the 1950s.

Fremont P. Wirth's textbook *United States History* exemplified the values and concerns of the 1950s. He reflected the conservative political nature of Tennessee, and many of his chapters devoted a section to the South. The Tennessee State Textbook Commission consistently adopted Wirth's book throughout the 1950s.⁵⁰ Wirth emphasized the progress of the United States in the twentieth century and condensed events occurring before 1865.⁵¹ Like most textbooks of the 1950s, *United States History* downplayed the role of individuals and stressed cooperation and national unity. Of cooperation Wirth wrote, "On the athletic field, in the world of work, and within the halls of government, cooperation is the American way."⁵² The focus on cooperation and unity in 1950s textbooks did not result in the inclusion of women and minorities as part of the narrative of American history. Racial segregation and inequality proved the greatest social irony in Tennessee in the 1950s, given what the curriculum taught students about the world in which they lived.

Wirth's presentation of certain events and issues in American history held a sharper political focus than earlier texts. He devoted three of ten units in the book to political establishments and consistently focused on the growth of democratic institutions. He even placed colonial religion in a democratic light. Wirth stated that "The fundamental belief of this group, that men could create their own church, was

⁵⁰ Tennessee State Textbook Commission, "Tennessee Official List of Textbooks with Wholesale Prices, Retail Prices, and Copyright Dates" (Nashville, 1956)

⁵¹ Fremont P. Wirth, *United States History*, revised ed., (New York: America Book Company, 1955), v

⁵² Ibid

important to the growth of democracy.”⁵³ He completely ignored, however, Native Americans and their conflict with European settlers.

Although Wirth included women in his narrative, he discussed them only in relation to politics and white men. He wrote three paragraphs about the struggle for women’s rights in the nineteenth century, stating, “It was during this period also that under the direction of Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Lucy Stone attempts were made to secure for women the right to vote and also the right to control their own property after marriage ”⁵⁴ He emphasized what women wanted to accomplish and where they succeeded. He also gave two pages to women in the closing pages of his book, in which he described the suffrage movement and the triumphs of women in the twentieth century ⁵⁵ He made no mention of the oppression women suffered or of the resistance they encountered in their struggle to gain their rights.

Wirth made similar efforts to incorporate African Americans into the story of American history. He devoted an entire chapter to slavery. Although he addressed it as a primarily economic and political question, he acknowledged the moral aspect of the issue. He did not, however, address the powerful conflict that erupted in this country over slavery.⁵⁶ He related his account of slavery almost exclusively in political terms, ignoring African- Americans as people. In this book slavery remained a secondary cause of the Civil War. “The basic issue between the North and the South,” Wirth wrote, “was the nature of the Union. The status of slavery served to aggravate this basic issue ”⁵⁷ In

⁵³ Ibid, 23

⁵⁴ Ibid, 194

⁵⁵ Ibid , 692-693

⁵⁶ Ibid, 207.

⁵⁷ Ibid

the 1950s, the Civil War served to protect and expand democratic institutions, not alter the condition of millions of human beings.⁵⁸

Throughout Wirth's narrative of slavery and war a white member of society performed no violent or cruel act towards blacks. Even the Ku Klux Klan was established to protect the South and "discipline the most difficult Negroes and 'carpetbaggers'."⁵⁹ Wirth's book taught students that minimal conflict and cruelty existed in the American past. Even throughout the Civil War and its aftermath, Americans remained essentially good. Students who read this book took away from it an understanding of the prominent place of white men, politics, and cooperation in American history.

These same principles applied to state histories as well. Mary Rothrock's *Discovering Tennessee*, adopted in the early 1950s and again in the early 1960s, traces the development of the state through the efforts of hardworking, virtuous, white communities. This historical and sociological overview of Tennessee stressed bravery, cooperation, and patriotism for state and country. Although Rothrock praised the Jeffersonian small farmer she believed to be the backbone of the state, *Discovering Tennessee* came under close scrutiny during the textbook investigation of 1953. The investigators found the text to be free of subversive material, but determined it to be inadequate as a history text.⁶⁰ Indeed it was inadequate as a history text. Although it examined the economy and resources of Tennessee, the book contains only one

⁵⁸ As noted above, the revision of historiography stemming from the Civil Rights Movement led to an examination of the place of blacks in the Civil War and its effect on them. Eric Foner's *Reconstruction America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988) is the most recent and notable of such interpretations.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 261

⁶⁰ McKinstry, 68

paragraph on the Civil War, and completely ignored Reconstruction and secession.

Rothrock also neglected events prominent in Tennessee's history, such as the Scopes Trial. She fully disregarded women in her story of Tennessee, and afforded blacks and Native Americans very little consideration.

Discovering Tennessee illustrates many of the racial biases prevalent in the South and across the country at mid-century. Although typically free of conflict, the book left no doubt about the superiority place of white men in American society. In her chapter on the "First Tennesseans," Rothrock presented the Cherokees and Chickasaws who inhabited the area before white settlement as friendly and happy people who simply vanished to make room for white settlement. She made no distinctions between the tribes, and stated that "wherever they came from, the Indians all looked alike. They were tall, erect, and slender. They had copper-colored skin, straight black hair, and small, keen black eyes."⁶¹ She glosses over the brutal conflict between the Native Americans and the white settlers and always refers to the two groups as "them and us", keeping them separate.

Rothrock separates whites from all other residents of Tennessee throughout *Discovering Tennessee*. Despite the use of her book by African- American students, Rothrock began her chapter on the first settlers of Tennessee by stating that "we are descended from the whites that came to America many, many years ago."⁶² She acknowledged that blacks were "helpful" in building Tennessee, and assessed slaves as the best agricultural laborers ⁶³ Her short account of slavery denies the oppression of the

⁶¹ Mary U Rothrock, *Discovering Tennessee* (Knoxville: Mary Rothrock, 1951) 27

⁶² *Ibid.*, 55

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 132

institution and the conflict generated by it. According to Rothrock, Tennessee became great through the collaborative efforts of all that lived there. She demonstrates this sense of cooperation repeatedly. She devotes an entire chapters to Tennessee communities and the importance of living together. Rothrock closes a seven page section on the history of black Tennesseans by stating, "This is not all the record of Negro life in Tennessee, but it is enough to remind us that it takes all Tennesseans regardless of race, working together to make a good state."⁶⁴

Tennessee experienced economic and demographic changes throughout the 1950s that seriously affected public education. As the state matured industrially, tertiary and professional industries grew within the metropolitan areas of the state. Cities became more economically dynamic while rural economies stagnated. This caused significant migration from the rural areas to the cities and other states. Young people participated in this migration most heavily. Population movements hurt education in rural areas, where investment in public education proved increasingly futile as the younger members of the communities moved out. Tennesseans also realized the need for providing pertinent educational opportunities for students entering non-agricultural trades. As a result, the demand for technical and vocational instruction grew stronger.⁶⁵

Population shifts created new challenges for city school systems as well. Movements to consolidate county and city governments emerged in Knox, Davidson, and Shelby Counties as the cities grew. Increasing populations and subsequent demands for

⁶⁴ Ibid , 136

⁶⁵ "Public Education and the Tennessee Social and Economic Outlook" report submitted to the Tennessee General Assembly, Nashville, Tennessee, 1957, 118-120 , 121-125

services such as waste management and water supply strained city budgets.

Consolidation promised to improve the efficiency of government and the funding for it. Joining city and county governments, however, also meant the consolidation of city and county school systems. Consolidation of the county and city school systems raised questions about the financing of education, administration of the schools, and improvement of the quality of the curriculum. The implications of recent court-ordered school desegregation cases in Knoxville and Nashville were conspicuously absent from formal discussion of consolidation. Supporters of consolidation in Knoxville hoped it would ameliorate discrepancies in teacher pay, taxation, and curriculum between city and county schools. Because the enrollment in the city schools decreased slightly every year, and that of the county grew, consolidation appeared beneficial.⁶⁶ Knoxville, however, delayed consolidation for several more years. Memphis and Shelby County also failed to consolidate. A report written for the Shelby County Consolidation Committee stipulated that while both systems demonstrated need for improvement, such improvements did not require consolidation.⁶⁷ The joining of these two school systems could mean tremendous racial mixing, as Memphis City Schools, then as now, had the largest African American enrollment in the state. The two systems remain separate.

The Nashville and Davidson County governments and school systems consolidated in the early 1960s. Supporters hoped consolidation would alleviate educational problems such as high dropout rates, out-migration, and gaps in vocational

⁶⁶ Thomas McComb Jr and Martha Donaldson, *Knoxville-Knox County Consolidation and the County and City School Systems* (Knoxville: The Bureau of Public Administration, University of Tennessee, 1958).

⁶⁷ Division of Surveys and Field Services, George Peabody College for Teachers, *Shall We Merge? A Survey Report for the Memphis and Shelby County Consolidation Committee* (Nashville, Tennessee, 1957).

training⁶⁸ A nine member Board of Education appointed by the mayor of Nashville administered the consolidated public schools. The unifying charter stressed that a non-elected school board would be better able to serve the community because it would not have to respond to voting constituencies. The new Metropolitan Board of Education emphasized vocational training and sought more “meaningful and purposeful” programs in the social studies.⁶⁹ History and social studies curriculum continued to be seen as an important instrument for teaching the duties and responsibilities of democratic citizenship. As social tensions mounted, however, the history curriculum came under increasing attack. As the 1960s dawned, the political climate grew increasingly volatile. Because of this upheaval, history textbooks and curricula entered their most liberal and inclusive phases.

⁶⁸ *A Comprehensive Survey of the Metropolitan School System of Nashville and Davidson County, Tennessee* (White Plains, New York: Educational Research Services, Inc, 1963)

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 5, 71

CHAPTER TWO: HISTORY FOR EVERYONE: THE RISE AND PEAK OF MULTICULTURALISM

Political and social turmoil fundamentally changed American society during the 1960s and 1970s. The Civil Rights Movement struck at the institutional segregation and racism that defined much of American culture, particularly in the South. The liberal nature of American politics manifested itself in Lyndon Johnson's Great Society. The government attempted to provide equality of opportunity to all people, especially in education. Military conflict in Vietnam created discord at home. Americans became wearier of their government and society as they adjusted to these changes. Curricula and textbooks of the time period reflected America's shifting social and political values.⁷⁰

The Civil Rights Movement first challenged the teaching of traditional history in the public schools. As African Americans pursued a more equal share in American life, their presentation in American history texts came under close scrutiny. In 1962, the NAACP brought a lawsuit against the Detroit school board to prevent the use of American history textbooks that the group claimed portrayed slavery in a favorable light. This lawsuit started a massive investigation of American history texts for racial bias.⁷¹ Women and other minorities also called for greater representation in textbooks.

Curricular trends mandated that students learn to respect the worth and dignity of each

⁷⁰ William H. Chafe, *The Unfinished Journey: America Since World War II*, 3rd ed (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) offers an interesting and thorough overview of this dynamic period and the 1980s and early 1990s. Taylor Branch *Parting the Waters: America During the King Years, 1954-1963* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988) and John Lewis, *Walking With the Wind: a Memoir of the Movement* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1998) provide comprehensive and interesting accounts of the Civil Rights Movement and how it revolutionized American society.

⁷¹ Fitzgerald, *America Revised*, 39

individual and uphold the rights of all to equal educational opportunities.⁷² Throughout the 1960s textbooks met these demands, and curricula reflected more multicultural values in American society. By the early 1970s, changes began to appear in Tennessee's curriculum.

Implementation of the concept of multiculturalism as an educational concept wrought the greatest curricular changes in Tennessee. Multiculturalism represents a controversial attempt to overcome ethnic and racial differences in order to forge a new national identity.⁷³ It arose as a teaching tool in the 1960s, peaked in the 1970s, and continues to be an important aspect of education. The almost immediate flourishing of secondary literature on curriculum and changes in educational policy illustrate the widespread and intense demands for these changes. Alterations in social studies curricula expressed new concerns over racial and ethnic questions. Citizens expected schools to teach students how to handle changes in society properly. The 1974 *Rules, Regulations, and Minimum Standards*, published by the State Board of Education, remarked that "a society recognizes ethnic differences, not as barriers, but a positive elements in a pluralistic culture-the social studies program shall emphasize human dignity, developing in each student an appreciation of himself, those who are like him, and those who are different."⁷⁴ Public schools, theoretically at least, proposed to eliminate racial tension and bias through the curriculum.

⁷² *Deciding What to Teach: Project on the Instructional Program of the Public Schools*, (Washington D C: National Education Association, 1963) 216

⁷³ Robert Emmett Long, ed *Multiculturalism* (New York: The H W Wilson Company, 1997) vii

⁷⁴ Tennessee State Board of Education, "Rules, Regulations, and Minimum Standards" (Nashville, Tennessee, 1974) 53

The late 1960s and early 1970s witnessed the most dramatic re-writing of American history textbooks since they first were used in this country.⁷⁵ Content shifted toward inclusion of neglected groups in history, especially blacks and women. Textbooks added these groups onto the original story, but the narrative changed very little. They also began to focus on conflict in history.

Inquiry texts became popular during the late 1960s and 1970s. These books provided students with background to a particular historical event or issue, such as slavery, and then provided excerpts from primary documents highlighting different contemporary positions on the matter. Students used the material presented to reach conclusions about certain issues. These books, therefore, made the study of history the study of conflict

Inquiry textbooks presented conflicting accounts of controversial events in American history within a political context. Most sources they provided came from political documents. Many of these books devoted several chapters to slavery. Bernard Feder's *Viewpoints: USA* examines the question of slavery and its relationship to the coming of the Civil War. The chapter title asks, "How did slavery divide the nation?" Other issues, such as state's rights, received minimal attention. He provides documents such as political orations, laws, and newspaper articles to show how deeply the question of slavery divided Congress. They also pointed to the political, economic, and moral

⁷⁵ Fitzgerald, *America Revised*, 58

aspects of slavery⁷⁶ The book explores Reconstruction and the global role of the United States in the twentieth century in a similar fashion. Inquiry texts remained popular only for a short time because they proved difficult to use. They presumed significant knowledge of historical events on the part of the students, and left many gaps in factual information for teachers to fill. More standard textbooks quickly came back into use.

The 1954 *Brown v the Board of Education* decision profoundly altered American education. This decision helped launch the Civil Rights Movement by fueling African Americans' demands for greater freedom and equality in politics and society. Extending equality into the realm of education meant changing the curriculum. As more schools desegregated the irrelevance of a curriculum based solely on white middle class values became apparent. Students had to learn the values necessary for life in an integrated society. These included sensitivity and empathy, as well as open-mindedness toward the wider world. Society chose the schools to teach these values⁷⁷ Not all school districts, however, responded to pressure for these changes with the same degree of swiftness or willingness.

Desegregation proceeded slowly and inconsistently in Tennessee. Although federal courts mandated desegregation in Tennessee's public schools in the late 1950s, the process itself did not begin in earnest until the late 1960s. A report to the State Department of Education in 1966 indicated that approximately one third of the state's students attended desegregated schools. This proved misleading, however, because of the distribution of the African American population across the state. Although more than 36

⁷⁶ Bernard Feder, *Viewpoints USA* (Nashville: American Book Company, 1967) 123-163

⁷⁷ Robert R. Leeper, ed., *Curricular Concerns in a Revolutionary Era* (Washington D.C.: Association for the Supervision and Curricular Development, 1971) chapters 5 and 6

percent of black students statewide attended desegregated schools in the late 1960s, only 16 percent of them lived in West Tennessee, which contained 63 percent of the state's black students.⁷⁸ Memphis failed to achieve substantial desegregation because of the high density of the African-American population. Memphis tried three times to consolidate with the Shelby County school system, which would have allowed greater racial balance, but county residents refused to merge. Whites in Memphis abandoned the public schools, leaving most of the black students in all-black schools. Desegregation efforts proved most disappointing in Knoxville, which had the smallest black enrollment and highest level of segregation in 1978. Of the three urban school systems, Metropolitan-Nashville schools desegregated most thoroughly.⁷⁹

Residents and politicians vigorously opposed all efforts to force integration through busing. This became most obvious in Nashville, where a 1971 busing order raised a storm of protest. The consolidation of the city and county school systems in Nashville made desegregation easier and busing feasible. Anti-bussing sentiment, however, pervaded Nashville.⁸⁰ Even the state legislature resisted bussing. The 1972 Education Appropriations Bill stated that state funds could not be used to transport students to any other school except that "closest to their home."⁸¹ The State Board of Education adopted a resolution stating in part that it deplored efforts to bus students

⁷⁸ State Department of Education, "1966 Desegregation Report" (Nashville, Tennessee, 1966) pg 29-30

⁷⁹ Flora McKinnon Gutterman, "A Descriptive Study of the School Demographic Changes in Tennessee Public Schools Resulting From Federal, Judicial, and Executive School Desegregation Decisions" Ph D Diss., University of Tennessee Knoxville, 166-172

⁸⁰ Richard Pride and David Woodward, *The Burden of Busing the Politics of Desegregation in Nashville, Tennessee* (Knoxville University of Tennessee Press, 1985) chapter 1

⁸¹ Gary V Branson and Donald J Steele, Jr *State Policy Making for the Public Schools of Tennessee* (Columbus, Ohio. The Educational Governance Project, The Ohio State University, 1973) 45

outside their residential neighborhoods to achieve racial balance in the schools⁸² Busing in Nashville resulted in a noticeable loss of white students to outlying counties and private schools.⁸³ The yearly reports produced by the State Department of Education during the 1970s and 1980s show that the total enrollment in Davidson County public schools decreased by more than twenty thousand students between 1970 and 1985.⁸⁴ Decreasing percentages of white students and increasing percentages of black students indicate that this trend demonstrated white flight. Desegregation also brought changes in the social studies curriculum across the state. The three Grand Divisions responded to demands for a more inclusive history curriculum differently.

In preparation for the 1967-1968 school year, the Memphis City School Board published a detailed guide designed to make African-American history part of the curricula. The guide targeted seventh through twelfth grade students and intended "to promote a better understanding of America's past by developing awareness of the history about black Americans, their problems, and their accomplishments, both individually and as a group."⁸⁵ The guide stressed that the information contained within it was not to be taught separately. Among the general objectives listed in the guide were the fostering of understanding that minorities have made significant contributions to American history and the reinterpretation of traditional views of blacks.⁸⁶ The guide provided teachers with an extensive list of resources useful in teaching African-American history. In

⁸² Ibid, 46

⁸³ Gutterman, 172.

⁸⁴ Tennessee State Department of Education, *State of Tennessee Annual Statistical Report of the Department of Education for the Scholastic Year Ending June 30, 1970, 1975, and 1980*. (Nashville: State Department of Education, 1970, 1975, and 1980)

⁸⁵ Memphis City Schools, Department of Instruction, *A Suggested Guide for Integrating Black History in to the American History Curriculum, Grades 7-12, Vol. I*. (Memphis: Memphis City Schools, 1967)

⁸⁶ Ibid, ix

addition, it furnished extensive objectives, concepts, and teaching methods for each major area of American history taught in a standard course. The guide also emphasized the importance of the teacher in achieving an integrated curriculum. It stated that, "Teachers have the responsibility of finding ways to help the Negro child improve his self image, to help the white child appreciate the Negro as a valuable, contributing member of society, and to make all students aware of the rights of all citizens regardless of race."⁸⁷ This guide enabled teachers to incorporate black history into the American history curriculum

Corresponding curricular changes made in Nashville in the early 1970s attained little in the way of integrating blacks into American history. The county's effort at curricular integration consisted of thirty-seven lessons to be used throughout eighth and eleventh grade American history classes. Each exercise included a student and a teacher card and covered topics ranging from "Blacks in the Civil War" to "Black Cowboys."⁸⁸ Although the cards covered a number of topics, they perpetuated the separateness of black history. They did not attempt to forge a stronger black identity or to create unity among all students. The very nature of this document also invited its separation from the main history curriculum. Although the introduction to it stipulated that "this guide . . . is to be integrated into the regular curriculum," it made no provisions for its implementation

⁸⁷ Ibid , 7

⁸⁸ Metropolitan-Nashville Public Schools, *The Negro in American History a Series of Episodes*, (Nashville Metropolitan-Nashville Public Schools, 1971), from the office of Judith Cannizarro

into that curriculum⁸⁹ It lacked objectives, concepts, and methods to link them to American history as it was usually taught.

Multiculturalism challenged the traditional core of American history found in textbooks throughout the early 1960s. The function of American history at this time became the rediscovery of forgotten or excluded people.⁹⁰ This mainly meant blacks, and African-American history received a great deal more attention in new textbooks than either women or Native Americans. In 1972, the Tennessee General Assembly passed legislation requiring all public schools in the state to offer a course in African-American history and culture. The legislation specified that the curriculum should include all racial, ethnic, and gender groups in an interdependent and complementary way.⁹¹ Such significant changes in the history curriculum solidified the accomplishments of the 1960s. Schools used curriculum to help students adjust to fundamental shifts in society. Movement towards multiculturalism reflects increased commitment to equality of opportunity in the United States.

The call for inclusion in the social studies curriculum produced an outpouring of instructional materials to help create a more diverse approach to history. A 1968 report on the Metropolitan- Nashville schools found that material demonstrating the contributions of different ethnic groups had been introduced in social studies classes across Davidson county. Teachers reported teaching units containing discussions of African- American history and racial problems in the United States This reflected a

⁸⁹ Ibid , opening letter

⁹⁰ Lloyd Kramer, Donald Reid, and William L. Barney, eds , *Learning History in America. Schools, Culture, and Politics*, (Minneapolis. University of Minnesota Press, 1994) 4

⁹¹ Tennessee General Assembly Education, "Black History and Culture", 1972

growing awareness of education as a means for solving social problems.⁹² A curriculum outline for African- American history published by the United Federation of Teachers in 1972 declared that "Ours is a time of ethnic consciousness, even conflict," that demanded history make students aware of one another.⁹³ This comprehensive outline of the black experience in America added a great deal to textbooks. The guide suggested lessons in the heritage of Africa, slavery, black family life, the church, and protest. Significantly, it outlined a lesson on the effects of racism in America. The lesson defines racism and examines it as a worldwide phenomenon. It then traces how servitude in the American colonies came to be linked to race, and carries the development of racism and its effects through the twentieth century.⁹⁴ Prior to this time period textbook discussions of slavery rarely addressed the issue of race in securing and maintaining the institution. Nor did the idea of race inform the presentations of any other era in American history. The recognition of racial conflict within the American past, therefore, signified a major departure from earlier curricula.

Native Americans also demanded fairer treatment in history courses. Falsities and distortions about the role of Native Americans in the history of Tennessee and America continued to plague textbooks during this time. Native American advocacy groups criticized textbooks for failing to credit Indians with the original discovery of America, and for denying their integral part in the development of American culture.⁹⁵

⁹² E.C. Merrill, *Project Pace Setter. A Report on Changes, Problems, and Priorities in the Metro Public Schools of Nashville and Davidson County* (Nashville, Tennessee, 1968) 44-45, Ibid 6

⁹³ Kenneth Aran, Herman Arthur, Richard Koblinger, and Harvey Goldenburg, *The History of Black Americans. A Study Guide and Curriculum Outline* (New York: United Federation of Teachers, 1972) 5

⁹⁴ Ibid, 26-36.

⁹⁵ Jeanette Henry, *Textbooks and the American Indian* (San Francisco: Indian Historian Press, Inc., 1970) chapters 1-3

New instructional materials stressed empathy and inclusion. A supplemental text for junior high social studies adopted in the middle 1970s attempted to develop understanding among ethnic groups, minorities, and women. The book, designed to follow the chronology of American history, related stories about the hardships and hostility members of minority and immigrant groups faced in this country.⁹⁶ A curriculum guide written for Davidson County schools to celebrate the national bicentennial stressed the contributions of blacks, Indians, women, Jews, and immigrants to American victory in the Revolutionary War. The guide illustrated how each of these groups contributed to the war, and even how the war effected slavery in the colonies.⁹⁷ This document made an important statement about changes in Tennessee. Efforts to correct the lack of information about different minority groups in American history marked an important development in the American curriculum. It is doubtful, however, that any of these guides or supplemental materials experienced extensive use in the classroom. Their use depended on the resourcefulness of teachers, and teachers usually relied on texts.

Despite curricular changes, the core of American and Tennessee history continued to emphasize white, male, political history. A Knox County curriculum guide written in 1975, entitled "The Civil War and its Aftermath," demonstrated this. Performance objectives contained in this curriculum focused almost exclusively on political and military aspects of the Civil War. These explicitly state what students will be able to do as a result of knowledge gained from a lesson, and they dictate what

⁹⁶ Robert W. Edgar, *Reliving the American Experience: Developing Unity Among Diverse Peoples* (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1974).

⁹⁷ Metropolitan-Nashville Public Schools, "A Guide to the Celebration of the National Bicentennial, 1975-

students must know for evaluation following a course of instruction. They therefore highlight what is considered most important in a lesson. Performance objectives for this unit on the Civil War called for students to explain the military strategies of the North and South during the war and how these contributed to success or failure. Another required students to compare selected military and political personalities, all of whom were white males. Only one out of fifteen mentioned slavery and blacks in any capacity.⁹⁸

The focus on white, political history persisted in Metropolitan-Nashville schools as well. Curriculum guides for American history used in Davidson County in the late 1970s stipulated that students should know the chronological order of the presidents, and that they should demonstrate understanding of the working of the three branches of government. The only objective relating to race involved understanding the short and long term social, political, and economic effects of slavery.⁹⁹ In social studies, trends of inclusion only made textbooks longer. They did not change the story they told. Instead of integrating women and minority groups into the narrative, textbooks often placed them under separate headings at the end of certain chapters. They thus gained representation, but their story remained apart from the "main" story. Their addition lengthened textbooks and fragmented chapters. This depicted progress, but illustrated continuity in the history curriculum.

1976," (Nashville, Tennessee, 1975) 46-50.

⁹⁸ J. Paul Williams, "A 45-Day Course of Instruction United States History, The Civil War and Its Aftermath", (Knoxville: Knox County School, 1975) From the office of Alfred Bell, Knox County Public Schools

⁹⁹ Metropolitan Nashville public schools, "Social Studies Skills", (Nashville: Metropolitan Public Schools, 1978) From the Judith Cannizarro, Metropolitan-Nashville Public Schools

American and state history textbooks used in Tennessee followed national trends of inclusion. Blacks, women, and Native Americans enjoyed increased consideration in the textbooks of the 1960s and 1970s, but they did not become integrated into the central narrative. African Americans received a great deal more consideration than either women or Native Americans. Two popular American history textbooks used in Tennessee throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s indicated the continued presence of traditional history in Tennessee classrooms. *History of A Free People* (1969) by Henry Bragdon and Samuel McCutchen and *Rise of the American Nation* (1972) by Lewis Paul Todd and Merle Curti both enjoyed many years of adoption and use in Tennessee.¹⁰⁰

History of a Free People and *Rise of the American Nation* both include Native Americans and African Americans, but only in relation to whites. They first mentioned both Indians and blacks as part of the Spanish colonies. Although they addressed issues concerning minorities in greater detail, white men perform no cruel or immoral acts in these books. Todd and Curti, whose textbook proved the most inclusive of all those studied, gave only six lines to Native Americans as part of the unit on discovery and settlement. They refrained from stating that Columbus discovered America, writing instead, "In reality, Columbus 'rediscovered' the New World . Other Europeans had

¹⁰⁰ Henry W Bragdon and Samuel P McCutchen *History of a Free People* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co , 1969) , Lewis Paul Todd and Merle Curti *Rise of the American Nation*, 3rd ed (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, Inc , 1972)

explored there many years before.”¹⁰¹ These books emphasized America as a European country. Both Native Americans and African Americans had a peripheral part in the story. The true tale of discovery and settlement, according to these textbooks, involved only Europeans.

Tennessee history followed a similar path during this time period. *This is Tennessee: A School History* by Mary Rothrock and Sam Smith, one of two Tennessee history textbooks used in the middle of the 1970s, treated Native Americans in a similar way. The authors described the Cherokee and Chickasaw Indian tribes of the territory, but placed their importance to the history of the state in white terms. They wrote that the Chickasaw Indians “owned all of West Tennessee” and “in the warfare which was later to break out between the French and the English, they were always on the side of the English.”¹⁰² Their importance, therefore, reflected their effect on the white settlement of the state. In describing the terrible violence between the Native Americans and whites that occurred throughout settlement of the state, the authors freely used words such as massacre and savages in reference to the Indians. They wrote, “Life was hard during the next few years. Small parties of Indians constantly lurked about, killing and scalping,

¹⁰¹ Todd and Curti, *Rise of the American Nation*, 12

¹⁰² Mary U. Rothrock and Samuel B. Smith, *This is Tennessee. A School History* (Nashville: Tennessee Book Company, 1973) 34

capturing, burning and stealing.”¹⁰³ Whites, on the other hand, perpetrated little violence against the Native Americans. Rothrock and Smith offered a much more distorted view of the Native Americans than the American history texts, but all three books only examined Native Americans in their relationship to whites. The authors thus stereotyped Indians and afforded them no significance in their own right.

The same proved true of the treatment of women in these textbooks. Although their representation improved significantly, women remained on the periphery of history. They received their greatest portrayal in “notable women.” Both American history textbooks first significantly acknowledged women as part of the reform movement of the middle 1800s. Bragdon and McCutchen gave one page to the issue of women’s rights in the 1850s. They stated that women could not vote, hold property after marriage, attend institutions of higher learning, or work in the professions outside of teaching. They went on to write, however, “Particularly in the West, women had a high station ”¹⁰⁴ Their words implied that the lot of women was not that bad. Notable women Dorothea Dix, Elizabeth Blackwell, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton highlighted the corresponding section of Todd and Curti’s book, which is longer and more sophisticated. They noted that “Slowly, and against strong opposition, women began to win places in what had been considered a ‘man’s world’.”¹⁰⁵ In *This Is Tennessee*, Rothrock and Smith ignored women until the passing of the nineteenth amendment. They briefly described the new freedoms women enjoyed in the early twentieth century, focusing on changing trends in

¹⁰³ Ibid, 105

¹⁰⁴ Bragdon and McCutchen, *History of a Free People*, 283

¹⁰⁵ Todd and Curti, *Rise of the American Nation*, 333

fashion and hair.¹⁰⁶ Every mention of women in these books was as part of a war or reform effort. Much like Native Americans, they received no attention in their own right. In these three portrayals, neither man nor society oppressed women.

Both *History of a Free People* and *Rise of the American Nation* acknowledged the presence of blacks in American history prior to the sectional crisis. Bragdon and McCutchen devoted an entire page to "Negro Slavery" in the colonial era, noting that the growing slave trade was a "horrible example of man's inhumanity to man." This stood as the only evidence that whites might have been involved in the horrors of slavery. Todd and Curti included a section on African Americans in almost every chapter of their book, and they too began with "Slavery in the New World." They presented slavery, however, in primarily economic terms. According to Todd and Curti, the genesis of the slave trade lay in a labor shortage. They wrote, "To solve the labor shortage, the Portuguese and Spaniards . . . began importing Africans to work as slaves in their New World colonies."¹⁰⁷

Beginning in the 1960s and 1970s textbooks examined the life of slaves in much greater depth than in previous years. *History of a Free People* and *Rise of the American Nation* depicted the lives of the slaves and even acknowledged the importance of race in maintaining slavery. Bragdon and McCutchen highlighted the factor of race stating, "The slave system was based on the assumption that slavery was the natural and best condition for Negroes."¹⁰⁸ Todd and Curti did not address the lives of slaves, but emphasized notable figures such as Frederick Douglass and Harriett Tubman, who had no place in

¹⁰⁶ Rothrock and Smith, *This Is Tennessee*, 365, 367

¹⁰⁷ Todd and Curti, *Rise of the American Nation*, 14

¹⁰⁸ Bragdon and McCutchen, *History of a Free People*, 333.

earlier texts. Both books devoted considerable space to slavery, but the focus tended to be more political and economic than moral. Whites did not oppress blacks in these accounts of slavery. The slaves in these stories suffered no cruelty at the hands of their masters, nor did whites want them ignorant; the system made them that way. African Americans also lost their identity as people as the sectional crisis emerged in the textbooks. In both books, the sectional debate preceding the Civil War presented slavery as an exclusively political issue. Rothrock and Smith gave slavery mostly economic consideration stating, "Slave labor was well suited, however, to the agricultural life of the South, especially on the big cotton plantations of the Deep South."¹⁰⁹ They completely neglected the question of race and presented slavery's economic role in Tennessee's history. The textbooks of this time period offered a much more thorough and balanced portrait of slavery than their predecessors did, but they taught slavery as a political problem and ignored the individual experiences of slaves.

Textbooks also presented Reconstruction in a new light. Focus on the victimization of the South became emphasis on efforts to deal with the destruction of war, including the social and economic problems faced by the freed slaves. Todd and Curti approached Reconstruction politically, and offered a much more balanced view of the Radical Republican Congress than that found in earlier texts. They wrote of the motivations of Congress " . . . many Republican Congressmen approached the complicated problems of Reconstruction with a genuine desire to help the freedmen and

¹⁰⁹ Rothrock and Smith, *This is Tennessee*, 258

guarantee them fair opportunities in life ”¹¹⁰ They also provided a radically different image of the carpetbagger stating, “Some sincerely wanted to help the freedmen exercise their newly acquired rights. Some hoped to get themselves elected to political office. Some came to make their fortunes, as Americans had long been doing by acquiring farm land or by starting new businesses.”¹¹¹ Bragdon and McCutchen took a similar approach, “The Radical Republicans included men inspired by both self-interest and idealism, by desire of partisan advantage, and by genuine concern for the Negroes ”¹¹² Both books included a section on the activities of the Freedmen’s Bureau, which had been previously neglected, and described the hardships faced by the emancipated slaves after the Civil War. They each gave a short description of the Ku Klux Klan as a secret terrorist society that intimidated blacks The Klan alone, however, oppressed blacks.

In contrast, Rothrock and Smith perpetuated the more traditional interpretation of Reconstruction. They described Tennessee’s first governor following the war, unionist Governor William Brownlow, as “ill-fitted by personality and experience to guide Tennessee through its first, turbulent, post-war years” and called the acts of his

¹¹⁰ Todd and Curti, *Rise of the American Nation*, 405

¹¹¹ Ibid, 414

¹¹² Bragdon and McCutchen, *History of a Free People*, 367

administration “tyrannical.”¹¹³ They stressed the negative effects of the Freedmen’s Bureau and presented the Ku Klux Klan as a purely fraternal organization. In their account the Klan resembled a “social club” that played pranks and inspired curiosity. The aims of the Klan, according to *This is Tennessee*, involved such noble pursuits as the protection of Confederate widows and orphans. The group vowed “to support the United States Constitution, and to aid in the execution of all constitutional laws.” In upholding their aims, the Klan exercised a “restraining influence on the excesses of the Loyal Leagues and of extremists in the Freedmen’s Bureau.”¹¹⁴ This book demonstrated that ideas about race and important events in southern history continued to be taught in a very traditional manner in Tennessee, despite curricular changes wrought by the rise of multiculturalism. As a state textbook, it more immediately reflected the political and social nature of Tennessee.

Rothrock and Smith’s short examination of the Scopes Trial further reflected the differences between state and national histories. None of the American history texts mentioned the famous Tennessee trial. For an event of its importance, Tennessee history texts paid it relatively little attention. Rothrock and Smith presented the trial as a publicity stunt. The authors favored Bryan and sought to excuse Governor Austin Peay and the Tennessee General Assembly for creating the law. They wrote of Peay, “he was a governor trapped by history, a governor in agony over a senseless law and a trial which embarrassed the reputation of the state and tarnished its image.”¹¹⁵ Rothrock and Smith considered the trial a blight on the face of the state and glossed over it. They did not

¹¹³ Rothrock and Smith, *This is Tennessee*, 306

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 311

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 378-379

relate the issues underlying the trial, nor did they attempt to explain what the case portrayed about American culture.

Segregation by race and African Americans' fight for equality first found expression in the textbooks of the early 1970s. Both *History of A Free People* and *Rise of the American Nation* addressed Jim Crow laws, but only Bragdon and McCutchen identified them as "a practice of white supremacy."¹¹⁶ Both books focused on the legal and political aspect of segregation, and not on the effect it had on the black population or on the development of institutionalized racism. The authors kept the story of the Civil Rights Movement political by attributing most of the positive action to some level or branch of government. For example, in writing about progress in race relations, Bragdon and McCutchen stated that, "After the war several northern states passed anti-discrimination laws. President Eisenhower carried on from where President Truman left off by abolishing discrimination and segregation in the armed services." The Supreme Court "extended the constitutional rights of Negroes" through the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, and "Meanwhile . . . Congress passed the first Civil Rights Act since

¹¹⁶ Bragdon and McCutchen, *History of a Free People*, 541

Reconstruction.”¹¹⁷ Neither book allowed African Americans the opportunity to play a significant role in their fight for freedom or addressed how local governments resisted the expansion of civil rights.

Emphasis on individuals and non-violent resistance exemplified the textbooks’ portrayal of the Civil Rights Movement. The textbooks gave men such as Martin Luther King and Malcolm X consideration and emphasized the ideal of non-violence. In contrast, both books took a negative stand on the militant Black Power movement. Todd and Curti wrote, “Many Americans, black as well as white, blamed the violence on a group of new militant black leaders.”¹¹⁸ Bragdon and McCutchen stated that, “The riots showed that responsible Negro leadership, such as that which organized the magnificently disciplined March on Washington, had not reached down to the poor in the ghettos.”¹¹⁹ They offered no reasons as to why the Civil Rights Movement might have taken such a turn.

These textbooks made significant strides toward the inclusion of women and minorities in American history. Their work revolutionized the teaching of American history but did not alter it completely. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, despite the addition of blacks, women, and social and cultural history, the main narrative remained political and white. Even during its peak in the 1970s, the multicultural approach to history proved unable to modify the traditional curriculum at its core, especially in the South. This represented one of numerous problems facing public education at this time. Immediate economic concerns also created demand for curricular changes.

¹¹⁷ Ibid , 744-5.

¹¹⁸ Todd and Curti, *Rise of the American Nation*, 825

¹¹⁹ Bragdon and McCutchen, *History of a Free People*, 772

Inadequate financing and low student achievement stood foremost among problems plaguing public education in Tennessee in the 1970s. Public schools in Tennessee relied more on state and federal subsidies and less on local funding than schools in most other states. Education expenditures remained well below national averages during the 1970s. Significant disparities in expenditures existed between large and small school districts across the state, although no district adequately financed its schools.¹²⁰ Lack of funds resulted in large classes, outdated textbooks, and low teacher salaries. Tennessee schools also suffered from a high drop out rate. In 1970 only 44.5 percent of whites and 24.5 percent of blacks that entered ninth grade graduated from high school within four years.¹²¹ In a legislative hearing about the state of the public schools, many teachers and administrators expressed concern over growing drug and discipline problems. All of these elements contributed to an unsatisfactory school environment. Many educators believed that much of the problems stemmed from a curriculum that many of the students found irrelevant. Consequently, they pushed for more technical and vocational instruction.¹²² Many hoped that providing students with an alternative to the college preparatory curriculum would correct some of the problems. Teachers, administrators, and other interested citizens from Knoxville, Nashville, and Memphis all demonstrated interest in developing a more thorough vocational curriculum in the state's public schools at the junior and senior high levels

¹²⁰ Branson and Steele, 32-43

¹²¹ Ibid, 7

¹²² School Study Committee, "The Public School System of Tennessee the Report From the Special

As the 1980s approached, curricula in American high schools became more technically and vocationally focused. Humanistic subjects such as history and literature suffered as a consequence. As the urgency of the Civil Rights Movement passed, pressure to incorporate minorities into social studies eased, and conservative forces reclaimed control of the government and of the schools.

CHAPTER THREE: THE CONSERVATIVE BACKLASH

The Republican Revolution of 1980 unleashed an era of political and social conservatism in America. Americans reacted against big government, and various groups sought to exercise more social control through dominating institutions such as schools. Religious fundamentalism surged and traditional Christian organizations exerted immense power in politics. The intense demand for change subsided after the turbulence of the preceding decades. As conservative forces gained public influence, trends in curriculum moved to the right. Although multiculturalism remained an important concept in teaching throughout the 1980s and 1990s, critics increasingly attacked its desirability and usefulness in the classroom.

A multicultural approach to the social studies curriculum resulted in the inclusion of vast amounts of information in textbooks. Questions arose as to whether or not that information helped create the informed citizenry necessary in a democracy¹²³ Interested parties contended that students needed to learn more patriotic lessons to make them better citizens. Many believed a multicultural and conflict-centered curriculum detracted from students' ability to learn the basics of American history. An investigation by the Bradley Commission found that most American history curricula lacked a coherent framework and synthesis. They argued that the inclusion of various groups fractured the narrative instead of completing it.¹²⁴ Concerned citizens believed that curricula had strayed too far from the mainlines of the American story, and that students knew and cared less about their past as a consequence. The 1983 report *A Nation at Risk* showed that American

¹²³ Kramer, Reid, and Williams, Eds , *Learning History in America*, 5

¹²⁴ Paul Gagnon, ed , *Historical Literacy: the Case for History in American Education* (New York Macmillan Publishing Co, 1989), 189

students lagged far behind their counterparts in other countries in terms of education.

This created anxiety about the future of the United States, and contributed to an increasing demand for a return to a curriculum focused on the basics. The National Committee on Excellence in Education advocated a return to traditional educational values, higher graduation requirements, and improving teachers' performance.¹²⁵

Curricula across the country demonstrated a renewed emphasis on basic subjects such as math, science, and language arts in response to growing concerns about the shortcomings of American public education. In Tennessee, the state assumed more control over the curriculum, implementing new statewide frameworks. These guides listed specific objectives, topics, skills, and concepts to be taught each school year. The curriculum for grades four through eight stressed instruction in mathematics and language arts, particularly reading. Vocational and technical courses continued to hold an important place in secondary schools.¹²⁶

Critics charged that history instruction deprived students of a sense of chronology and comprehensiveness about the past. They blamed the haphazard inclusion of minority

¹²⁵ Chester Finn and Diane Ravitch, *Against Mediocrity The Humanities in America's High Schools* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1984)

¹²⁶ Tennessee State Board of Education, *Rules, Regulations, and Minimum Standards for the Governance of Public Schools in the State of Tennessee* (Nashville, Tennessee, 1982) 34-41

histories in the American history curriculum, as well as trends in teaching history as “social studies,” for this.¹²⁷ A national standardized American history exam given to high school juniors in 1983 justified many of these concerns. The assessment, administered to students from all socio-economic and racial backgrounds in public and private schools, demonstrated that students lacked the most fundamental knowledge of American history.¹²⁸ For example, only 54 percent of students who took the exam placed the Civil War in the correct decade, and only 20 percent of them identified George Washington as a general in the American Revolution.¹²⁹ Concern over the implications of results such as these led to a revived focus on basics in history. The basics included prominent political and military figures and events. Support for basic history surged during the 1980s. Multiculturalism, however, continued to be a feature of the curriculum. The 1982 *Rules, Regulations, and Minimum Standards For the Governance of Public Schools in the State of Tennessee* stated that black history and the contributions of African Americans must be included in the teaching of state, American, and world history at all grade levels.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Finn and Ravitch, *Against Mediocrity*, 80-81

¹²⁸ Diane Ravitch and Chester Finn, *What Our 17-Year-Olds Don't Know: A Report on the First National Assessment of History and Literature* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987) 1-34

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 54, 75-78

¹³⁰ “Rules and Regulations” (Nashville, Tennessee, 1982) 41

Politically strong, religiously conservative groups waged significant battles for control of public classrooms and effected many changes in the curriculum. Organizations such as the Christian Coalition and the Moral Majority sponsored a number of lawsuits, mostly in the South, during the 1980s. One such case, *Mozert v. Hawkins County Public Schools*, occurred in East Tennessee in 1986. Brought by Vicki Frost, a Christian fundamentalist, the case argued that a series of reading textbooks used in the public schools taught secular humanism, and therefore violated separation of church and state. Secular humanism consists of an ambiguous conglomeration of ideas about the attributes and abilities of humans that many fundamentalists perceive as a religion because it allegedly challenges the authority of the Bible. *Mozert* stipulated that if textbooks promoted secular humanism then they must also include Christian teachings.¹³¹ Although the plaintiffs in *Mozert* met defeat, a similar case in Alabama resulted in the removal of history, social studies, and home economics textbooks from classrooms. As a result of *Smith v. School Board of Commissioners of Mobile County* (1982) textbooks were removed from classrooms until publishers balanced references to secular humanism with Christian teachings about the role of God in society. In *McLean v. Arkansas* (1981), a state court ruled that science textbooks must balance evolution with creationism in compliance with the state's Balanced Treatment Act. Although none of these cases survived the scrutiny of the Supreme Court, they still restrained textbook publishers. Because the industry must accommodate market demands, most avoided the inclusion of potentially controversial material at all costs.¹³²

¹³¹ Stephen Bates, *Battleground One Mother's Crusade, the Religious Right, and the Struggle for Control of Our Classrooms* (New York: Poseidon Press, 1993).

¹³² Joan Delfattore, *What Johnny Shouldn't Read: Textbook Censorship in America* (New Haven: Yale

The teaching of evolution in public schools ignited debate in Tennessee and across the South throughout the twentieth century. The famous Scopes Trial in Dayton, Tennessee in 1925 represented the first legal conflict between science and religion and symbolized all trials involving "liberty versus mindless majoritarianism" for years to come. Although the trial put fundamentalism on the defensive, it hardly stifled the debate. Laws stipulating that evolution must be taught as theory and not fact continued to challenge the teaching of evolution in public schools. A bill outlawing the teaching of evolution failed to pass the Tennessee General Assembly as recently as 1994 ¹³³

The Scopes Trial symbolized an important struggle in American culture and history. None of the American history textbooks, however, mentioned the trial, much less the significant debate that spawned it. The state history textbooks offered brief accounts of the Scopes Trial, but presented it only as an embarrassing moment in Tennessee's history with no discussion of the issues that surrounded it. In *Your Tennessee*, published in 1979 and adopted in the early 1980s, Jesse Burt did not even use the word evolution in his assessment of the case. In the two paragraphs about the trial, he mentioned only that it involved a conflict between science and religion.¹³⁴ As the *Mozert* case indicated, the place of religion in public education remained a volatile issue in Tennessee. Religion always held an important place in the state's culture and politics.

University Press, 1992) 72-75, 94, 120-121.

¹³³ Edward J. Larson, *Summer for the Gods: the Scopes Trial and America's Continuing Debate Over Science and Religion* (New York: Basic Books, 1997) 146, 242, 262-263

¹³⁴ Jesse Burt, *Your Tennessee*, rev ed. (Austin: Steck-Vaughn Company, 1979), 251-252

The tendency of textbooks to avoid controversy led to the delicate treatment of this controversial issue in this and other texts. The continuation of this debate suggested the conservative influence shaping curricula in Tennessee, the South, and the country.

Multiculturalism and inclusion inspired most of the concern about the social studies curriculum. Conservatives charged that the troubles and achievements of women and minorities received too much attention, and that American history texts overplayed racial and ethnocentric attitudes. In 1983, The Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington D.C. undertook a study of American history textbooks to determine if the attention different ethnic groups received in textbooks distorted American history. They found that the treatment of minorities and ethnic groups remained modest in most texts. African Americans received a great deal more space than Native Americans, European immigrants, or women. An average range of only 25-47 pages of texts that typically ran six to eight hundred pages covered black history.¹³⁵ Despite such evidence that inclusion had not undermined traditional American history, the cry for a return to the basics persisted, and the textbook industry responded. State curriculum frameworks and textbooks continued to demonstrate an interest in multiculturalism, but avoided controversy to keep from offending any particular group.

Curricula used in Tennessee's public schools reflected this trend. Although overtures toward multiculturalism endured throughout the 1980s, they amounted to little more than lip service. United States history curriculum guides for Knox and Davidson counties for the early and middle 1980s stressed political and military events in American and state history. The Social Studies Guide for the Metropolitan-Nashville Schools,

¹³⁵ Nathan Glazer and Reid Ueda, *Ethnic Groups in History Textbooks* (Washington D.C. Ethics and

written in 1982, emphasized the importance of knowing and understanding the contributions of minority groups to history, but allowed little social or ethnic history in the teaching of the course. As in the 1970s, American history objectives included chronological knowledge of the presidents and their administrations, the working of the three branches of government, and the short and long-term impact of slavery on the political, social, and economic life of America. Most of the suggested topics included political developments or wars, although they also included the changing roles of women and abolitionism. Political events and people, however, overshadowed social history.¹³⁶ Suggested topics in Tennessee history followed the same pattern. They called for knowledge about the Cherokees and their removal from Tennessee, but gave considerably more attention to Tennessee governors, presidents, and Civil War battles.¹³⁷ By the middle of the 1980s, major changes in strategies and goals had incorporated multiculturalism into the Davidson County curriculum, but these changes were broad and did not apply to any particular subject¹³⁸

The teaching of American history in Knoxville proved even more conservative. Curriculum guides for the eleventh grade United States History course stressed political history and gave less overall attention to women and minorities. The goals listed for this course of instruction included the instillation of values such as integrity and productivity in a changing society. Other goals consisted of promoting personal responsibility,

Public Policy Center, 1983)

¹³⁶ Metropolitan-Nashville Public Schools, "Social Studies Guide, 5-8 and 9-12" (Nashville Metropolitan Public Schools, 1982) From the office of Judith Cannizarro, Metropolitan-Nashville Public Schools

¹³⁷ Ibid, 109-111

¹³⁸ Ada Willoughby, "The Impact of Desegregation on the Curriculum of the Secondary Schools of Nashville, Tennessee". (Ph D diss., Loyola University of Chicago, 1985).

democracy, and good citizenship, as the curriculum of the 1950s sought to do.¹³⁹ The general goals for the course did not mention race or ethnicity. Each proposed unit of study highlighted dates, presidents and political figures, events, and vocabulary.

Although they mentioned women and minorities, the infrequency with which they appear in teaching guides suggest their unimportant place in the curriculum.

Knox County Schools offered a semester-long course in women's history during the 1980s, but this also reflected traditional history. The course was organized around six units of study, three of which involved the role of women in wars, and one of which examined their role during the Federal period. The curriculum guide for the course warned teachers that "Very few, if any, students will consider the possibility of the way history has been written prejudicial to historical and military events—to which women have made few contributions."¹⁴⁰ The subjugation of women's history to political and military history demonstrated the persistence of the teaching of conventional history in Tennessee.

Textbooks adopted in the early and middle 1980s attempted to blend conservatism and multiculturalism. Efforts to represent various ethnic groups made textbooks longer than ever before, and efforts to please all and offend none resulted in textbooks written in a flat style with boring characters and events that excluded causation and discord. The dull, conflict-free narrative of textbook American history bored students and discouraged

¹³⁹ Faye Church, Donna Everhart, and Dennis Johnson, "A Course Guide for High Schools, United States History A" (Knoxville: Knox County Schools, 1984) 5-8. From the office of Alfred Bell, Knox County Public Schools.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

them from the study of history.¹⁴¹ Refining conflict in American history carried the benefits of potentially making students more patriotic and of generating better social relations. It also kept them from thinking critically about the past. This is important because students learn history in part to form a social identity. The danger, however, lies in preventing students from learning to analyze historical accounts and misleading them about how American culture developed.

Textbooks used in Tennessee during the 1980s illustrated the validity of this point. In *The United States: A History of the Republic* (1984), an American history textbook adopted and used in Tennessee in the middle 1980s, authors James Davidson and Mark Lytle depicted this pattern. They gave a brief four-page description of the Indian cultures present in America before the voyage of Columbus, but neglected their ensuing conflict with the Europeans. "Columbus, convinced that he had reached India, called the friendly people who greeted him Indians," encompassed the authors's analysis of the meeting of these two cultures.¹⁴² Davidson and Lytle reinforced the view of Columbus as discoverer of the New World, and Europeans quickly pushed Native Americans from their pages. The authors went on to lament the eventual fate of Columbus, noting that "even more insulting to Columbus, the new great continent was not even named after him."¹⁴³ Their words marginalized the importance of Native Americans in American history and downplayed the centrality of European and Indian conflict during the colonial era.

¹⁴¹ Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me*.

¹⁴² James Davidson and Mark Lytle, *The United States: A History of the Republic*, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1984) 35.

¹⁴³ *Ibid*, 37

Jesse Burt treated the Cherokee and Chickasaw Indians in a similar fashion in *Your Tennessee*. Although Burt gave an extensive account of the lives and culture of the Native Americans who lived in Tennessee prior to white settlement, he also minimized conflict. He noted in a chapter on the removal of the Chickasaw from West Tennessee that, "The events discussed in this chapter raised serious questions about the treatment of Indians, but the focus of the information is on rounding out the state."¹⁴⁴

Davidson, Lytle, and Burt made significant efforts to include African Americans in their histories, but continued to keep them outside the main narrative of American and Tennessee history. All of the authors acknowledged the presence of blacks in all periods in American history, but focused mainly on free blacks. Both books also confessed the horrors of slavery, but in ambiguous ways. Neither implicated whites in creating or perpetuating the institution. Davidson and Lytle wrote that slaves performed "tiring and repetitive tasks," and that "Few owners were purposely brutal to their slaves."¹⁴⁵ Burt stated that, "The Tennessee slave system permitted considerable association between whites and blacks, and many slaves apparently had positions of responsibility."¹⁴⁶ He stressed the small farm nature of Tennessee agriculture allowed for a more humane system of slavery. Like that of the other authors, Burt's careful use of language acknowledged the mistreatment of slaves, but it avoided placing blame for it on humans. Whites never treated slaves cruelly in his book. He wrote, "Slave auctions often separated husbands from their wives and children," not white slave owners; and slaves

¹⁴⁴ Burt, *Your Tennessee*, 119

¹⁴⁵ Davidson and Lytle, *United States History*, 75-76

¹⁴⁶ Burt, *Your Tennessee*, 135

who actively resisted “were subject to the lash,” but not to the white man holding it.¹⁴⁷

Words such as these implied the involvement of whites without stating it. They undermined the humanity of the issue. Although they described the life of the slaves themselves, the story of slavery emerged as part of the story of American politics and war. It left African Americans in a place inferior to whites in history, and effectively removed the emotion and conflict that surrounded the issue of slavery.

Textbooks treated the Civil Rights Movement negligibly throughout the 1980s. The Civil Rights Movement received sympathetic, if limited, coverage by Davidson and Lytle. They address the evolution of Jim Crow segregation, but wrote only four pages on the Civil Rights Movement. These four pages included the struggle of not only African Americans, but women, Hispanics, and American Indians as well. Like most textbooks of the time, they emphasized the role of notable men such as Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. Unlike previous chapters in the book, however, conflict played an important role in Davidson and Lytle’s examination of the Civil Rights Movement. They wrote concerning white reactions to the fight for desegregation: “The response to such tactics was often violent. Angry mobs attacked freedom riders. Police dispersed protesters with water hoses, police dogs, or electric cattle prods. Civil Rights workers were frequently imprisoned and fined.”¹⁴⁸ This represented one of few examples of cruelty on the part of whites. Davidson and Lytle also justified the emergence of Black Power because, “despite the new laws, blacks still faced discrimination in housing, employment, and education.”¹⁴⁹ Burt, in contrast to Davidson and Lytle, devoted only eighteen lines to the

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, 139

¹⁴⁸ Davidson and Lytle, *United States History*, 675

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, 677

Civil Rights Movement in Tennessee, and placed it almost exclusively within the framework of school desegregation.

Women gained little representation in American history textbooks during the 1980s. Unlike African Americans, women received even less consideration than they did a decade earlier. They were never victims of oppression and did not participate in American life. Women made their first significant appearance in *United States History* during the chapter on the reform movement of the middle 1800s. Davidson and Lytle described women as reformers and focused on the suffrage movement. Notable women such as Elizabeth Blackwell, Margaret Fuller, and Louisa May Allcott dominated the discussion. They then disappeared until the Progressive Era half a century later. Explanation of their role in this time period received less than one page, even though women actively promoted social and political reform during this time. The women's movement of the 1960s received even less consideration. Davidson and Lytle wrote, "Although women in the 1960s had full political rights and many worked outside the home, some women argued that they continued to be victims of discrimination."¹⁵⁰ This statement suggested that the complaints of women were not justified because they had been granted political equality. The authors did not probe issues concerning the economic, social, or sexual inequalities between men and women.

Burt treated women in Tennessee history in a similar fashion. He first acknowledged women with a few lines recognizing their contributions during the Civil War. The women's suffrage movement occupied less than one page in Burt's text, and notable Tennessee feminists Sue Shelton White and Maria Thompson Daviess claimed

¹⁵⁰ Ibid , 391-394 Ibid , 679

most of that space.¹⁵¹ In the closing pages of the book Burt devoted almost two pages to the "outstanding women" of Tennessee, noting that, "Since frontier times, Tennessee women have been achievers."¹⁵² They obviously achieved little worth mentioning.

History curriculum in Tennessee public schools continued down a conservative path as America entered the 1990s. Although some citizens groups and educators expressed interest in making history instruction more multicultural, curricula remained essentially the same. United States History curriculum guides written for Knox County public schools in 1990 were almost identical in style and content to those of the 1970s and 1980s. Objectives for each unit focused on political figures and military events, and did not reflect any serious effort to include Native Americans, African Americans or women.¹⁵³ Only Memphis City Schools demonstrated a truly multicultural approach to the teaching of American history. Objectives and topics listed in the Memphis City Schools' 1994 curriculum guide for United States History consistently included the concept of diversity, as well as the roles of minorities and women in different periods of American history.¹⁵⁴ Curriculum guides accompanying the annual Memphis in May International Festival also demonstrated efforts of the Memphis School Board to make social studies multicultural. Those from 1989 and 1990 provided extensive information on Kenya and France, respectively. The guides offered teachers information on the

¹⁵¹ Burt, *Your Tennessee*, 245

¹⁵² Ibid, 335.

¹⁵³ Bill Clabo, Denise Johnson, Sidney McGee, Judy Newgent, Yvonne Peirce, and Judy Sharp, "A Course Guide for High Schools, United States History B" (Knoxville Knox County Schools, October 1990) From the office of Alfred Bell, Knox County Public Schools

¹⁵⁴ Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Memphis City Schools "Social Studies Curriculum Guide" (Memphis Memphis City Schools, 1994) From the office of Lawrence Moaton, Memphis City Schools

history and culture of these countries, and suggested numerous learning activities for different grade levels.¹⁵⁵

The early 1990s witnessed a small resurgence of attempts to include women in minorities in the history curriculum in Tennessee. Independent curriculum guides suggested ways to incorporate both women and Native Americans into history and social studies lessons at all grade levels. A curriculum guide published by the United States Department of Education entitled *Thanksgiving: An Indian Education Curriculum Unit* highlighted distortions and falsities present in textbooks and the society at large. This included the use of the popular Plains Indian image, complete with tipi, war paint, and headdress to describe a myriad of diverse cultures present in North America prior to the arrival of Columbus. The guide provided Native American creation stories, agricultural maps, and an adjusted timeline of events typically considered important in American history to include events significant to Native American history.¹⁵⁶ A similar guide suggested ways to include Tennessee women in the teaching of Tennessee history. Published by the League of Women Voters of Tennessee, this guide provided biographical sketches in chronological order of several notable women in order to raise awareness about their contributions to Tennessee's history. Suggested classroom activities promoted the understanding of the life experiences of Tennessee women, analyzed the role of women in society during different historical periods, and sought to

¹⁵⁵ Division of Curriculum and Program Development, *Memphis in May International Festival, Inc Salutes Kenya, 1989* (Memphis Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Memphis City Schools, 1989), Division of Curriculum and Program Development, *Memphis in May International Festival, Inc Salutes France, 1990* (Memphis Division of Curriculum and Development, Memphis City Schools, 1990)

¹⁵⁶ Esther Stutzman, *Thanksgiving: An Indian Education Curriculum Unit* (Washington D C. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research, 1990)

illustrate the interdependence of all people.¹⁵⁷ Although the guide conformed to structures established by traditional political and military history, it offered an important additional aspect to that story. Like most other curriculum guides and supplementary instructional materials for multicultural education, these were independent of the school systems and depended upon the ambition of individual teachers to reach the classroom.

Legislators also made vague efforts to insure the persistence of a multicultural curriculum. In 1992 the Tennessee General Assembly passed two pieces of legislation that encouraged, but did not require, a more multicultural approach to education. The consistently poor academic performance of black males inspired legislation to create a curriculum "to enhance feelings of self-worth and positive achievement among African-American males, and enable them to bring a confident sense of personal worth and value to their educational experience."¹⁵⁸ Further legislation made the compilation of an index of sources on African-American contributions to Tennessee, United States, and world history a responsibility of the state Commissioner of Education.¹⁵⁹ The first piece of legislation applied to school districts with a significant African-American populations, of which there are few in Tennessee. Its impact, therefore, could not be expected to significantly alter curriculum across the state. An index of sources related to African-American history enabled interested teachers to incorporate such material more thoroughly into their classes, but does not require them to do so. With few exceptions, American and state history curricula used in Tennessee in the 1990s continued to

¹⁵⁷ Carole Stanford Bucy, *Tennessee Women: A Guide for Teachers* (Nashville: The League of Women Voters of Tennessee, 1993)

¹⁵⁸ Tennessee General Assembly, Education-Part 12-"Pilot Program for African-American Males", 1992.

¹⁵⁹ Tennessee General Assembly, "Powers and Duties of the Commissioner" 1992

emphasize political, white-oriented, male history. They thus uphold a tradition begun long ago.

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CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION

Educators, sociologists, politicians, parents, liberals, and conservatives battle over the content and style of the American curriculum. A plethora of groups with a variety of agendas express interest in and devote effort to determining what the country's youth learn. Whoever determines the curriculum decides whose knowledge informs the values of future generations. Shaping curricula thus holds an immeasurable amount of power. The American curriculum is an ever-changing entity that reflects the political and social climate in which it exists. Although the basic structure of the curriculum changed little over the course of the twentieth century, its meaning and intent varied according to social concerns. Shifts in the political nature of the country caused movements in the curriculum. Efforts to stabilize and immunize curriculum from outside forces have failed because of the political nature of public education. Public investment in education makes it accountable to the people. The values, attitudes, fears, and hopes, of the population, therefore, will always influence what students learn in public schools.

Social studies and history curricula prove especially vulnerable to outside influences. Political and social tensions generated by events such as the Cold War and Civil Rights Movement determined the focal points of these curricula in different ways. Although African Americans made significant strides in their struggle for Civil Rights during the 1950s, the instillation of patriotism and democratic ideas in students remained important in the curriculum. Although the Cold War continued throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the history curriculum stressed multiculturalism and conflict in the American experience in order to help reform social relationships. Despite more conservative focus in the 1980s and 1990s, multiculturalism remained an important educational tool.

Curricula reflected social priorities and concerns. Economic, political, and cultural changes altered the curriculum at local, state, and national levels.

Traditional history emphasizing political figures and events continues to dominate secondary history courses in Tennessee's public schools. Although women, African Americans, other minority groups, and social history now share the pages of American and Tennessee history textbooks, they remain peripheral. The curriculum expanded through inclusion, but failed to fully integrate different elements of American history into a cohesive narrative. The persistence of conventional history demonstrates how deeply the ideas it represents are engrained in American society. It represents the values Tennesseans and all Americans want their children to learn. The American history curriculum provides an important vehicle through which students acquaint themselves with their society and its values. It therefore bears great responsibility. What students learn in their American and Tennessee history classes is only one part of the whole story. Whether the history these students learn is the best or most appropriate continues to be at the center of intense debate. Traditional history in Tennessee classrooms has withstood social and political upheaval over the last sixty years. These upheavals, however, affect the curriculum. They have brought, and continue to bring, the present into the teaching of the past. The curriculum consists not only of the facts and ideas that constitute American history, but also of the values and beliefs that make it relevant to students.

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VITA

Erin Stover received a Bachelor of Arts in history and Secondary Education from Spring Hill College 1998 and a Master of Art in History from the University of Tennessee in 2000. Her main academic interests include twentieth century American history, with emphasis on the history of education. She has worked extensively in elementary and secondary schools in Tennessee and Alabama, and she intends to pursue a career teaching American history at the high school level.