

Book Reviews

Cynthia Williams Resor. *Exploring Vacation and Etiquette Themes in Social Studies: Primary Source Inquiry for Middle and High School*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017. Pp. xvii, 115. Paper, \$32.00.

Cynthia Williams Resor. *Investigating Family, Food, and Housing Themes in Social Studies*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017. Pp. ix, 127. Paper, \$34.00.

Cynthia Williams Resor. *Discovering Quacks, Utopias, and Cemeteries: Modern Lessons from Historical Themes*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019. Pp. xii, 139. Paper, \$40.00.

In this series, Cynthia Williams Resor draws on her experiences as a middle and high school social studies teacher, a trained historian, and a professor of social studies education to curate primary source sets designed to inject more social history into the study of the past. Her intended audience for these teaching resources is middle school or high school teachers, although the themes she works with (and her selected primary sources) could also enrich elementary or undergraduate history courses. Resor makes two arguments across these volumes: first, for the inclusion of more social history into middle and secondary classrooms; second, for teaching that social history in thematic units.

Resor argues, convincingly, for the pedagogical value of social history as both a mechanism for student engagement and as an important analytical framework students should use to examine the past. Teachers will find in Resor's series considerations of daily life not often covered in more traditional middle school or secondary curricula, and teachers unfamiliar with key concepts in the study of social history will find a brief but helpful introduction in the first volume. Certainly, considering cultural history, popular culture, social class, sex and gender, and generational change (among other social history topics) leads to a fuller understanding of the past. Considering home life, dating, vacations, funeral practices, and other moments in the lives of "ordinary people" also has the added benefit of enticing students to draw connections between the past and their own lives, and in doing so, assess change and continuity over time.

Resor's first volume opens with an introduction to thematic teaching and closes with guidance for teachers who wish to research and create their own thematic lessons and units. Resor uses these principles of thematic instruction in her own organization of primary source sets according to various themes, indicated by each volume's title. Some of Resor's themes closely connect (such as those pertaining to the domestic sphere in her second volume), while others are more tenuously linked (notably medical quackery, real and imagined utopian communities, and various ways of memorializing the dead in the third volume). However, all of Resor's social history themes have the potential to both hook students' attention and draw them into making comparisons between historical actors and their own lives.

Each of Resor's themes follows a similar structure. First, Resor provides commentary on the context and historiography of the theme. Second, Resor includes suggestions for teaching the theme, including compelling questions that frame inquiry into the primary sources that follow, suggested activities for introducing students to the theme, and graphic organizers for students to use while evaluating the primary sources. Finally, Resor includes the primary sources themselves. Resor casts a wide net for different types of primary sources. Selections from medieval epics, etiquette columns on proper courtship, estate appraisal documents, scrapbooks, and recipes from a 1796 American cookbook represent just some of the genres of primary sources included in these volumes. These primary source texts have been excerpted and occasionally lightly edited, including some brief contextualizing headers introducing the source and footnotes defining some challenging vocabulary. Numerous black and white reproductions of photographs, advertisements, and other visual sources round out these collections.

Although collections of related primary sources always have some value for teachers, the most important feature of these books is Resor's excellent contextualizing and historiographical commentary for each theme.

This commentary prefaces every primary source set. The well-researched introductions provide teachers with the content knowledge necessary to teach on the themes found within the primary source set. Resor's commentaries situate the primary sources into a wider context and chronology, as well as provide an overview of how historians have considered, conceptualized, and studied these themes over time. The notes and additional sources that follow these commentaries provide a treasure-trove of additional resources teachers can use to further deepen their content knowledge for teaching. Resor's engaging tone transforms what could be seen as mundane or ordinary topics (such as road trips, evening dinner, or over-the-counter medicines) into fascinating historical studies, unearthing the captivating, and at times, surprising or shocking, pasts of these commonplace ideas.

These volumes do face some publishing limitations. None of the visual sources are printed in color, and both the primary sources and the graphic organizers lack the whitespace necessary to make student copies directly from the book. However, the connected website at www.teachingwiththemes.com provides full color images, editable digital versions of the graphic organizers, and additional primary sources to supplement the printed books. While some of the content on this website requires a passcode from the printed books, most is freely available to all.

Teachers with significant autonomy over the content and scope of their social studies courses – including interdisciplinary, project-based learning, or history elective courses – could easily adapt the sources and materials contained in these volumes into rich instructional units. For teachers in more traditional courses, the units in these volumes would require more heavy adaptation and supplementation. Resor draws her primary resources only from the United States and Europe, a major limitation she acknowledges. This geographic spread of content would fit naturally within a course on Western Civilization; world history teachers, however, would need to incorporate other regions of the globe. Teachers of either United States history or European history may find themselves incorporating only some of the included sources in their courses. Teachers wishing to follow a chronologically-based sequence of units would have difficulty teaching these thematic units, as each unit crosses decades and centuries examining their particular theme. However, these themes and their sources could still provide a historical framework or an enduring issue that could be revisited at multiple points throughout a course. The themes of domestic life in the second volume, in particular, could easily form an enduring issue to revisit again and again in chronological units. Across teaching context, this series both justifies and exemplifies enlivening social studies curricula through social history.

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Jared McBrady

Gorton, Stephanie. *Citizen Reporters: S.S. McClure, Ida Tarbell, and the Magazine that Rewrote America*. New York: Harper Collins, 2020. Pp. 368, \$28.99.

In 1873, Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner authored *The Gilded Age: A Tale of Today*, a novel that used satire to define the late nineteenth century in the United States as shaped as much by unbridled greed and corruption as dramatic economic progress. As Americans read the novel, the global economy, as if to acknowledge the book that gave the era its name, had deteriorated into what became known as the Panic of 1873, the largest global financial crisis until the Great Depression. Twenty years later, as Americans once again faced what became known as the Panic of 1893, readers first encountered a subversive new magazine entitled *McClure's* which aimed to use investigative reporting, rather than humor, to uncover the era's most pressing political, economic, and social issues. Stephanie Gorton's *Citizen Reporters: S.S. McClure, Ida Tarbell, and the Magazine that Rewrote America* provides accessible biographies of two of the magazine's primary figures to illustrate *McClure's* seminal role in creating Progressive Era journalism.

Along with economic growth and instability, the decades after the Civil War also brought a more literate American population and the rapid increase in popular magazines – 575 in 1860 to around 5,000 in 1895. An impoverished Irish immigrant whose mercurial personality was responsible for both his successes and failures, Samuel S. McClure was an unlikely candidate to create one of these magazines that at one point had over