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ABSTRACT OF
TREATMENT OF THE "NEGRO" IN A SELECTED GROUP
OF SOCIAL STUDIES MIDDLE GRADE TEXTBOOKS

A THESIS
PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY
OF DANBURY STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE

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OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
MASTER OF SCIENCE

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ABSTRACT

This study reviews, analyses and evaluates the treatment of the Negro in middle grade social studies textbooks. The middle grades in this context consist of fifth through eighth grades. The object of this project was to assess the quantitative and qualitative treatment of the Negro in textbooks at this grade level and to weigh possible effects on the Negro image in American national life.

More than sixty middle grade social studies textbooks were initially surveyed, and through a process of elimination, thirty of these books were selected and used as the basis for this study. Since geography and history are the two most widely accepted discipline concentrations at this level, only geography and history textbooks are included in the selected texts. All of the textbooks surveyed are among the latest offered by American publishers. For the most part, they are (1958 to 1960) editions. In some cases older editions are included, but this was done to insure the widest possible coverage of books most frequently used in the nation's schools.

Each selected textbook was thoroughly read and all materials were extracted, studied and the findings classified under appropriate topical headings. In many instances tables were constructed, reflecting individual textbook treatment within specific topical areas, and may be found in the body of

the report. Other materials and textbook references to Negroes were also compiled, placed under similar headings and included in the appendices of the study. It is worth noting that all textbooks and material references may be easily identified throughout the study by following a code system which embraces authors, titles and topics.

All of the selected textbooks in their material coverage of the Negro, tended to concentrate on four major topical areas.

- A. American Negro backgrounds: African homelands
- B. The institution of slavery in American life and thought
- C. The emancipated Negro in the Reconstruction period.
- D. The role of the American Negro in the life and culture of the nation.

Textbook content and discussion on these four areas of Negro function were thoroughly analysed and evaluated, and might properly be characterized as forming the main focus of the entire study.

A number of conclusions have been drawn from the findings of this study and may be placed under these two category listings.

- A. Those aspects of Negro function and participation that are stressed, emphasised or confirmed by positive inference in most of the examined textbooks:
 1. The racist concepts of African, and American Negro cultural backwardness and decadence.
 2. The idea that slavery in America was confined exclusively to members of the Negro race.
 3. Negro contentment and satisfaction with "slave status".

4. The anti-democratic character of anti-slavery movements
5. The traditional derogatory view of the Negro's role as a citizen in post civil war America.
6. Those aspects of Negro function and participation that are omitted and ignored in most of the examined textbooks.
 1. The fact of existence of free Negroes functioning as citizens throughout the history of the American nation.
 2. Negro efforts to help himself or otherwise change his "caste status" in American life.
 3. Positive contributions of Negro Americans in the building and perpetuation of the nation.
 4. Any individual Negro act or contribution exemplifying such nationally accepted virtues as:
 - a. Loyalty to country
 - b. Courage in battle
 - c. Opposition to tyranny
 - d. Willingness to sacrifice for sacred ideals of freedom and justice.
 5. The foundations and development of "Jim Crowism," or the existence of racial discrimination, segregation, and racism as facts of twentieth century American life.

This study consists of eight chapters, twelve tables, and a total of 146 pages.