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A study of the reading references in five senior high school American history textbooks

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Boston University
A STUDY OF THE READING REFERENCES IN FIVE
SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL AMERICAN HISTORY TEXTBOOKS

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the School of Education
Boston University

In partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

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Boston University
School of Education
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Gift of K. J. Coady, Jr.
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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

1. The Problem

Statement of the Problem. The objectives of this study are (1) to determine the total number of reading references given in five senior high school textbooks, (2) to classify these references, (3) to determine the number of various kinds of books referred to, (4) to compare a list made up of the references most commonly found in textbooks with three recent reading lists compiled for the use of high school libraries\(^1\), (5) to make some estimate of the utility of reference lists in high school textbooks.

Importance of the Study. The importance of extensive reading to the educational development of pupils has long been stressed. Bining\(^2\) speaks of the huge sums of money spent by schools for chemistry and physics laboratories and the failure of the schools to provide for little more than a perfunctory

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\(^1\)Refer to Library Aids, pp. 14-15.

acquaintance with books in all subjects. Tyler\textsuperscript{3} stated that, "reading is the most difficult and the most abstract of the various means of learning, but it is also of greatest value." The Committee on American History in Schools and Colleges\textsuperscript{4} asserted, "the budget for social studies books should at least equal the annual expenditure for equipment for physics, chemistry and the other sciences." By this study the inadequacy of reading reference lists in textbooks will be shown; the study will reemphasize the need for intelligently conceived reference lists.

2. Definitions of Terms

The definitions of the following terms are based upon Wesley's\textsuperscript{5} suggestions for grouping reading references.

Reference Books. Atlases, dictionaries of biography, general encyclopedias, yearbooks and state manuals are examples of the reading references included under this heading.

Parallel Textbooks. This term is meant to include other

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\textsuperscript{3}Keith Tyler, "Interrelations of Reading and Other Forms of Learning in Clarifying and Enriching Experiences," William S. Gray, editor, \textit{Reading and Pupil Development}, Supplementary Educational Monograph Number 51, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, October, 1940, p. 156.


textbooks in senior high school American history.

**Source Books.** Compilations of contemporary material printed for school use are called source books.

**Series and Sets.** A series is composed of three or more volumes, each of which is written by a different author. A set is composed of three or more related volumes written by the same author.

**Specialized Studies.** Under this heading were included books of which the following are examples: labor, agriculture, the frontier, warfare, feudalism, costumes, invention, travel, the South, and the Reconstruction period. Books that could not be classified elsewhere were placed under this heading.

**Biographies.** The written history of a person's life, memoirs, letters and autobiographies were included in this group. It should be noted that much source material is sometimes inserted in biographical works.

**Fiction.** This heading was considered self explanatory. It includes poems, novels, short stories, etc.

**Pamphlets and Periodicals.** All manuscripts and publications appearing at fixed intervals of time were included under this heading.

**Limitations of Definitions.** It was found that in several instances a reading reference could have been placed under any of three or four headings. At such times the final classification of the book was arbitrarily decided by the analyst. For example Richardson's *Messages and Papers of Presidents,*
could have been placed under "Source Books," "Series and Sets," or "Biographies." In this particular case the writer placed it under "Source Books."
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Much has been written, in a general way, by leaders in the social studies field, on the subject of reading references found in textbooks. More definite, thorough studies of the specific subject, reading references of senior high school American history textbooks, have been written by students doing research. Presented below are some of the studies that most nearly approach this one—along with the views of prominent men in the social studies' field.

Similar studies. Swindler, in a study of school reading reference books in 113 high schools in Virginia, found many of the books in the library were "too advanced and difficult, and that a good portion of them were distinctly on the college level." He found high school libraries to be inadequate because in many instances the schools were slaves to the textbook method of instruction. From the situation described above he concluded that social studies authorities and students

should give their attention to the problem of selecting suitable materials for the high school level, particularly the senior high school level. Swindler compiled a smaller "selected" list of social studies' books for high school libraries.

Wesley and Hurra\textsuperscript{2} made a study of the library content of fifty-eight Minnesota high school libraries. Their conclusions were: (1) that social studies teachers were insufficiently aware of the contents of the school libraries at their disposal; (2) that most schools had librarians with some specialized training and real interest in their work; (3) that the libraries had considerable possibilities but several inadequacies; (4) that the general content of most high school libraries consisted of at least two good encyclopedias of recent date, one specialized encyclopedia, and seven or eight sets of social science reference books. These varied considerably in kind and quality with 1906 as the median date of publication.

Grady\textsuperscript{3} examined two groups of high school United States history textbooks. One group averaged some twenty years older than the other. The extent to which the supplementary books recommended in textbooks coincided with those books found most useful by teachers and pupils was not part of the study. Grady arrived at the following conclusions: (1) The number of


\textsuperscript{3}Grady, "Recommendations for Supplementary Reading made by Textbooks in United States History," \textit{School Review}, 53:224-36, April, 1945.
supplementary books recommended in the later group of textbooks is greater than the number recommended in earlier textbooks; (2) a greater percentage of fiction and biography was recommended for supplementary reading in the later textbooks than in the earlier ones; (3) the later textbooks were slightly more in agreement on the recommendations of books for supplementary reading than earlier textbooks, although the agreement was not extensive in either group; (4) the percentage of books which were recommended in both the earlier and later textbooks was small indicating that comparatively few supplementary books could be considered standard books.

Heaps wrote from the viewpoint of a school librarian. He analyzed the reading references at the ends of the chapters on World War I in five high school American history books. Using the compiled list of reading references he compared them with a selected list from three bibliographical sources. He arrived at the following conclusions: (1) A close correlation existed between the choices of textbook authors and librarians in regard to what constituted a recommended book for the World War I period, (2) Textbook authors were apt to be too liberal in the inclusion of titles, both from the standpoint of availability and cost. It would have seemed better to have included a limited number of supplementary references and to have left further enrichment to the individual school. The teacher and

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the librarian could then, cooperatively prepare supplementary material with consideration for local book holdings and availability. (3) Certain textbooks seemed non-selective in regard to material included. They listed many out-of-print items and books of general uselessness. Many textbook authors included books on the college level which would be unsatisfactory for inclusion in high school libraries. (4) Textbook authors seemed to treat the cost of items in bibliographies as unimportant. This was revealed by the wholesale inclusion of reading references costing four or more dollars. It might have seemed more plausible, in consideration of the generally limited funds, to list merely the useful, less expensive references. (5) Textbook authors might have done well to enlist further cooperation of social studies' teachers and school librarians in the compilation of textbook bibliographies. The preferences of teachers and librarians are based upon actual use and are therefore of greater value than the professional opinions of the authors who are often teaching on a higher level.

MacReynolds⁵ found that only one reference was recommended by all of the twenty-two textbooks which he examined. This showed the lack of agreement in texts of that time as to what reading references should be included. Horn⁶ suggested that a


⁶ Horn, op. cit., p. 247.
more select list of books be compiled. He referred to several now out-of-date lists that might be used. He said that it was evident that competent committees could render an invaluable service by construction, after due deliberation, minimum and expanded lists of books which would prove most valuable for various units in the social studies. A further suggestion was that such a list should have a statement of its authenticity by a competent scholar in the field.

Wesley stated that no person can possibly live through all experiences; therefore knowledge, particularly in the field of social studies, must be gained vicariously through extensive reading.

For a wise choice of reading references Wesley and Horn both urged that teachers consult book lists of learned organizations, guides printed by the American Library Association, publishers' book lists and textbook reference book lists.

Kepner referred to reading references as standard equipment. He explained, however, that in many cases books were practically useless for the average high school student because they were often written on a college level.

8Ibid., p. 326.
9Ibid., op. cit., p. 247.
Johnson spoke of some history textbooks which showed complete lack of discrimination and disregard for library resources in their choice of references. For example:

"A high school textbook in United States history, issued by one of the best known publishing houses in the country, referred to such works as Kingsford's ten volume *History of Canada*, the collected writings of Adams, Jefferson, Franklin, and Dickinson, Force's *American Archives*, the New York State Documents, and the *Annual Register* for 1765 as familiarly as if these were an indispensable part of every school library!"

Despite these constructive suggestions of previous investigators it is obvious that many of the weaknesses of textbook references lists still exist. In the following pages a description of another study of references is presented. The last chapter contains the findings, suggestions and conclusions resulting from this study.

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CHAPTER III
THE OUTLINE OF PROCEDURE

Five senior high school American history textbooks were selected. The choice of these books was based upon their wide use and the recency of their publication. Two of these books were published in 1946, one in 1943 and two in 1942.

General Procedure. The general procedure of analysis is given below:

1. The lists of reading references at the end of every chapter, unit or topic, in each book were analyzed. Every reference and the duplication of every reference was noted and compiled in a master list.

2. An actual count of the number of reading references in each book was made.

3. An actual count was made of the same reading references mentioned in all five textbooks.

4. An actual count was made of the same reading references mentioned by three or more textbooks.

5. An actual count was made of all references mentioned by all five textbooks.
6. The list mentioned in #4 above, was compared with three selected lists of books for high schools.

7. A complete annotated bibliography was made of the list in #4 above; an asterisk was placed before the author's name of all reading references of #3 above.

The Five Books Used

The letter preceding the name of each book represents the text throughout the study. Following the date of publication of each book is a brief analysis of the organization of reading references within the book.


This text was divided into units which were subdivided into topics—there were three to twenty topics in a unit. The reading references were at the end of each topic under the heading of "Books to Read," "Questions in Text," and "Floor Talks."


The reading references were located within all headings at the end of each chapter. "Map Studies," "Reading and Reports," "Imaginative Literature" and "History Visualized."


This text was divided into eight units which were further subdivided into four or five chapters. The reading references were placed at the end of each chapter under "For Supplementary Reading" and "Topics for Report." At the end of every unit there were further reading references under the heading of "Books Worth Reading on Unit."
4. D---Wirth, Fremont P., The Development of America. Boston: American Book Company, 1942. This text differed in that the reading references were at the end of units, two to five chapters in length. The reading references were under the major heading of "Readings for Unit." The sub-headings were "General Accounts," "Biography," "Source Material," and "Fiction."

5. E---Yarbrough, William H., Clarence V. Bruner and Herbert F. Hancox, A History of United States for High Schools. Chicago: Laidlaw Brothers, 1943. At the end of each chapter under the major heading of "Suggested Readings," were found reading references entitled "Supplementary Readings," "Advanced References," "Fiction," and "Biography." Further reading references were sometimes found under "Suggested Activities."

Library Aids Used for Comparing Reading Texts

Information which would be pertinent to this particular study was given after the date of publication of each list.

1. A Basic Book Collection for High Schools. Compiled by a Joint Committee of the American Library Association, National Council of Teachers of English, Jesse Boyd, Chairman. Chicago: American Library Association, Chicago, 1942. There were 1,500 books mentioned in this list. All the books listed were in print when the book went to press. This book gave a select list of reading references for high school libraries.

2. Logasa, Hannah, compiler, Historical Fiction and Other Reading References for Classes in Junior and Senior High Schools. Third revised and enlarged edition. Philadelphia; McKinley Publishing Company, 1941. The book of reference material was compiled especially for history classes. The list contains more than 2,000 books. The latest copyright date of a book was chosen because children liked the style and modern material found in such books and, also the book was
more likely to be in print.

The four prominent social studies people who collaborated in this compilation were: Donnal V. Smith, Alice Spieseke, Francis Sweeney and Fremont P. Wirth. There were 3,800 books listed.
CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF READING REFERENCES

All references. The references for textbook "A" were counted first. Each new reading reference was placed on an index card and the card was filed alphabetically, according to the name of the author. Each time a book was referred to again, that was recorded. All references, beyond the first, to a particular book are here called duplications. This same procedure was used in counting the reading references of the remaining textbooks. To distinguish the reading references of the texts, a different colored pencil was used for each.

The cards were analyzed to determine the number of individual reading references mentioned by each text; the number of duplications of reading references was also recorded. Table I of the following page shows the results.

Card classification. The cards were next classified into the types mentioned under "Definitions" on page 2. There were eight classes in all. The 2,512 cards were again analyzed and placed under the classification which seemed most appropriate. The results are found in Table II, page 17.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Reading References</td>
<td>827</td>
<td>739</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>1,078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Reading References and Duplications</td>
<td>1,226</td>
<td>1,022</td>
<td>855</td>
<td>732</td>
<td>1,912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Duplication</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>834</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE II

THE DISTRIBUTION OF INDIVIDUAL READING REFERENCES AND DUPLICATIONS
CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO TYPE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Texts</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reference Books</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parallel</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source Books</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Series and Sets*</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialized Studies</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>633</td>
<td>1,616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biographies</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiction</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pamphlets and Periodicals</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>675</td>
<td>698</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>563</td>
<td>1,038</td>
<td>3,318</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*When one reading reference from a series or set was mentioned the entire series or set was recorded in the Table. This accounts for the total "individual reading references" being less than those of Table I.
References found in three or more texts. The references which were mentioned by three or more texts were tabulated separately. They amounted to 270.

It might be thought that the majority of the reading references in the list of 270 could be found in A Basic Book Collection for High Schools. Only thirty-six of the list were found in this library aid, however.

Seventy-one of the 270 books were found in Logasa's Historical Fiction. Twenty-two books found in the second library aid were also found in the first.

The last and largest library aid examined, to find how many of the 270 books were mentioned, was the Standard Catalogue for High School Libraries. Of the 270 books 126 were found in this library listing.

It was further determined that 105 books of the 270 could not be found in any one of these library aids.

The fact that so many of the books could not be found in these listings compiled by experts in reading and social studies led the analyst to check further the availability of the 270 references. It seems that there should have been a larger number of books common to all three library listings.

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References checked for availability. The 270 cards were filed according to publisher. They were looked up in the Publisher's Trade List Annual\(^4\) for the years 1942 and 1946 in order to determine how many of the 270 were in print when the history text-books were published. It was discovered that 76 of the 270 were out-of-print in 1942 and that 106 of the 270 were out-of-print in 1946. These findings show a disregard on the part of textbook authors in ascerting whether a reference book was in-print or out-of-print before including it as a reference for the textbook.

CHAPTER V
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Objectives. The objectives of this study are (1) to determine the total number of reading references given in 5 senior high school textbooks, (2) to classify these references, (3) to determine the number of various kinds of books referred to, (4) to compare a list made up of the references most commonly found in textbooks with three recent reading lists compiled for the use of high school libraries, (5) to make some estimate of the utility of reference lists in high school textbooks.

Findings. The findings of the study are below.

1. There were 2,512 individual reading references found in all five textbooks. These books were referred to a total of 3,318 times. The smallest number of references in any textbook were 375, the median was 739 and the largest was 1,078.

2. Almost half the references made were to "special studies." The two next most popular categories were "fiction," and "biography," respectively, considerably behind this in order were "source books," "series and sets," "pamphlets and
periodicals," and "parallel textbooks." What have been classified as reference books were almost wholly neglected. Two of the textbooks examined made no reference to such works and the other three referred to them a total of seven times.

3. There was a surprising lack of agreement between the references most commonly made and those listed in popular library aids. Less than one-half of the 270 books mentioned by three or more textbooks are listed in the Standard Catalog for High School Libraries. Almost forty per cent of the 270 are not to be found in any of 3 popular high school library aids.

4. Of the 2,512 references only seventeen were listed in all five textbooks.

5. Only 270 of the references were mentioned in three or more textbooks.

6. Of these 270 references 76 were out-of-print in 1942 and 106 were out of print in 1946.

**Conclusions.** As a result of the findings listed above the following conclusions are made.

1. The typical textbook refers to too many references.
2. There is not sufficient uniformity in the textbook references listed by the various authors.
3. Compilers of textbook reference lists have little regard for the actual content of high school libraries. While there is no conclusive data available, the writer's experiences leads him to believe that not even a significant
fraction listed in the typical textbook can be found in the average high school library.

4. It is doubtful whether the relative content of high school libraries by categories is similar to that of reference lists in textbooks. Again the writer's experience as well as the Wesley-Wurra study, referred to above, indicate that references most available in school libraries are "reference books" and "parallel textbooks."

5. There ought to be more agreement between textbooks listings and library lists published by leading authorities. The National Council for the Social Studies might periodically compile a selected list of reading references to be used in senior high school American history courses similar to the list published by the "National Council of Teachers of English."

6. Textbook authors should enlist more help of social studies teachers and librarians in compiling the textbook reading references. A list such as that just mentioned should prove of assistance to authors as well as teachers and librarians.

7. Compilers of references should give more consideration to whether the books listed are in print—-it is of course true that some books, even though out of print, are frequently found in high school libraries. It is further true that the period covered by this study was one during which the publishers found it difficult to keep even popular school books on the market.
Suggestions for further study. In the course of the research carried out in this study the need for several additional analyses has occurred to the writer. These fell into three major classifications: (1) Other studies similar to this one are needed dealing with other subjects and other grade levels. (2) The actual social studies content of school libraries ought to be determined. This could make several studies divided either on the basis of geography or on the size of the schools or both. (3) Carefully evaluated lists of references could be developed; these ought to begin with a basic list for small libraries and suggest additions to be made as the library expanded. Further, these lists should periodically be brought up to date. This third recommendation could probably best be carried out under the sponsorship of the National Council of Social Studies rather than any graduate school of education.
THE 270 REFERENCES FOUND
IN THREE OR MORE TEXTBOOKS

Biographies

   A vivid account of life in the far west from the personal experiences of a cowboy--found in May
   Lamberton Becker's Golden Tales of the West.

   A record of Jane Addams's life, with a clear picture of her long struggle to have her social work accepted
   as a necessary endeavor in Chicago.

   A dramatized biography of Alexander Hamilton.

   The account of Lincoln's life and the presidency during the Civil War.

   A complete thorough biography of Wilson from 1856-1924.

   Tells of Marshall as a frontiersman, soldier, Lawmaker, politician and statesman; 1755-1835.

   The life of the president as shown in his own letters; selections from the correspondence of T. Roosevelt and
   H. C. Lodge, 1884-1918.

1 O.P. and I.P. are the abbreviations used for out of print and
   in print books, respectively; the numbers '42 and '46 refer
   to the years 1942 and 1946.

2 An asterisk is placed before the seventeen references listed
   in all five textbooks.
   Gives the biography of famous women of the United States colonial days—Dorothy Madison, Rachel Jackson, wife of Andrew Jackson, and beautiful Emily Marshall.

   Extremely popular biography partially based on the work of Thwaites.

    An account of the abolition movement in America and the part played by William Lloyd Garrison in the freeing of the slaves.

    An Englishman interprets Lincoln in a distinguished volume.

    Contains brief sketches of famous men of the field of science and invention.

    One of a series of biographies edited by Oberholtzer, called the *American Crisis Biographies*. An interesting, accurate account of a man in a critical period.

    Good accounts of T. Jefferson, Jefferson Davis and John Calhoun.

    Gives clear grasp of Hamilton's important contribution to American nationality. The biography is thoughtful but often inaccurate.

    A life that bears testimony to the values of democracy and intelligent self direction and a book that will continue to be widely read.

A study of the statesman and the critical period in which he took part—critical and generous. From the American Statesman Series.

18. Gompers, S., Seventy Years of Life and Labor, an Autobiography. New York: Dutton, 1925. 2 Vols. (I.P. '42; T.P. '46)
    An excellent autobiography of the man who was the founder of the American Federation of Labor; contains much history of the labor movement.

    A biography of Douglas; an account of political party discord and the Civil War.

20. James, W. The Raven, a Biography of Sam Houston. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1931. (I.P. '42; O.P. '46)
    A biography of Sam Houston which will be preferred by advanced readers.

    A biography of fascinating interest; strongly biased in Hamilton's favor. One of the American Statesman series.

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