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Election 2008

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Challenging History:
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Teaching about Aboriginal Canada through Picture Books
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This set of books offers insight into Canadian aboriginal cultures and the contributions of these groups to the fabric of the nation.

A Comparative View of Diversity in the United States and Canada
Cherry A. McIlhenny Banks
Students will gain a more profound understanding of multicultural issues by examining the ways in which Canada and the United States have diverged when addressing race and culture.

Teaching Social Studies through Storytelling:
The Enduring Spirit of the Arctic
John Kilbourne
Stories such as the featured account of an ill-fated Inuit walrus-hunting trip serve as an important part of that culture's tradition of passing down lessons and experiences from one generation to the next.

Book Review
History in the Making: An Absorbing Look at How American History Has Changed in the Telling over the Last 200 Years, by Kyle Ward
ROBERT SHAPFER
Editor's Notebook

As the historic election of 2008 draws closer, this issue of Social Education offers features and teaching tips that will interest and assist teachers as their classes follow the final stages of the campaigns. It also offers a set of historical and contemporary articles on Canada, recent Supreme Court cases, U.S. history and the Holocaust.

Allan J. Lichtman opens our coverage of the election with an evaluation of the candidates' prospects for victory based on his predictive system, "The Keys to the White House," which has a track record of success in previous elections. His approach is valuable for social studies classes because it is wide-ranging and draws on politics, sociology, and foreign policy as well as the economic variables so often quoted as determinants of election outcomes. Lichtman predicts that Barack Obama will win the popular vote, though notes that this is the first time that the Keys have been tested in a presidential election with an African American candidate.

In the Internet column, C. Frederick Risiger and Ray Heitzmann look at one of the most engaging ways of teaching about presidential elections—the use of political cartoons. They recommend a set of websites on which readers can locate historically important cartoons, and offer teaching suggestions to help teachers use this technique effectively in the classroom.

Other election-related articles include a feature on the Electoral College by the staff of Social Education and PBS NewsHour Extra. The presidential election of 2000 reminds us that the votes of the Electoral College are the ones that count. The article describes the Electoral College system and its role in elections, including a lesson plan that teachers can use to explain it to students. A pull-out chart provides the popular and electoral voting results in all U.S. presidential elections.

We also list websites that will encourage students who are registered voters to turn out, and other sites that involve students in the excitement of the elections, by increasing their sense of the importance of voting, providing hard-to-find information on the campaign finances and policy positions of candidates, and offering up-to-date predictions of the popular and electoral vote.

While we emphasize the importance of voting, it is only one form of civic participation, and there is a wider problem of a lack of civic engagement among youth. In a Point of View article, Ted McConnell sounds the alarm bell on the damage being done to civic education by the focus of schools on reading and math, and emphasizes the urgency of improving civic education in schools, noting that minority students are particularly likely to be shortchanged by the reduced emphasis on civic education.

Our Looking at the Law column conducts its annual review of cases decided by the Supreme Court in its last term, and offers a preview of upcoming cases. Charles F. Williams shows how the Court often departed from its usual conservative vs. liberal divide in the recent term, which "featured a number of unexpected bedfellows, sometimes even in those cases that were most divisive." (291) Tiffany Willey offers a lesson plan related to one of the most controversial cases of the last term, the tough gun law in the District of Columbia.

The National Archives recently launched the Digital Vaults, an interactive and user-friendly exhibit of online documents, photos and other graphics, and sound recordings. Suzanne Isaacs and Lee Ann Potter describe the Digital Vaults, offer teacher tips on how to make the most of their Vault explorations, and suggest class activities using this new resource.

A. Scott Henderson investigates the problem of teaching about Holocaust denial, highlighting a British libel case in which historian David Irving sued Holocaust scholar Deborah Lipstadt for libel because she placed him in the ranks of Holocaust deniers. Lipstadt's victory at the trial owed much to an evaluation of Irving's historical writings, in which he was shown to have misrepresented documents relating to the Holocaust. Henderson points out that some of the materials submitted as evidence at the trial can be used by teachers introducing students to the problem of Holocaust denial.

Heather Lattimer asks how history students can achieve a better understanding of the trends and interconnections of history, and advocates the use of an "Essential Questions" approach that frames historical units and guides students toward meaningful conclusions about history. She illustrates how the use of this approach in an eleventh-grade class engaged apathetic students, improved the quality of homework, and resulted in a 15-point gain in test scores.

This issue includes a special section of three articles about Canada. Marilynnne Black presents picture books that will enable teachers to introduce the cultures and history of the Native peoples of Canada. The accompanying teaching activities enable children to make the most out of their readings of folktales, as well as their understanding of the daily lives and art of Canada's aboriginal groups.

Cherry McGee Banks compares and contrasts the Canadian and U.S. approaches to diversity. On the one hand, both nations have a history of problems arising from discrimination, such as the treatment of their populations of Japanese ancestry in World War II, but there are also differences in their official approaches to diversity. Banks suggests that students would benefit from projects comparing the different policies in each country.

John Kilbourne introduces the reader to the Canadian region of Nunavut, which lies to the north and west of Hudson Bay. Storytelling is an important tradition of the communities living in this difficult environment, and Kilbourne shares the account of a survivor of an ill-fated expedition of ten Inuit males who set out on a walrus hunt.

As always, the editors of Social Education welcome the comments of readers on any of the contributions to this issue at socied@ncss.org.
Teaching about Aboriginal Canada through Picture Books

Marilynne V. Black

All children need to see themselves reflected in the books they read. Through reading, they make connections and relate to characters, places, and events. As Susan Shipton states, “Like food and shelter, every child has a right to high-quality books, books that both act as mirrors to reflect their lives and act as a window into other people’s lives.” In this way, children develop a strong sense of self as individuals, members of a family, members of an ethnic group, and citizens of a country. In addition, cultural pluralism, “where the importance of accepting different races, ethnicities, languages and cultures is well recognized” affirms that children need to have their own ethnicity honored and that of others explored. Only by learning about others can we relate to them and realize that we are more alike than we are different. Furthermore, we may find that stereotyping and prejudice diminish while tolerance and cultural understanding flourish.

How can teachers help their students become, not only self aware, but aware of others? Bainbridge and Malicky advocate integration of language arts and social studies using children’s literature. In British Columbia, for instance, social studies in most of the elementary grades do not have prescribed textbooks, and therefore, trade books become a valuable resource. Picture books, in particular, are extremely useful tools as they both tell stories and provide visual information at the same time. Any book that focuses on cultural aspects of a particular group is helpful. We read about a people’s beliefs and customs and see how they dress, live, travel, eat, and play. Understanding culture, in all its facets, ultimately leads to global understanding and empathy. The book Cultural Connections, by Ron Jobe, former president of the International Board on Books for Young People, clearly delineates how teachers can access cultures through books by studying both visual cultural markers, such as those mentioned above, and language markers, such as names, expressions, dialogue patterns, and story types.

Illustrations not only help inform readers, they also foster a sense of place through their depictions of landscape, including flora and fauna. In addition, they often help us see the interaction between people, landscape, and climate. In Mwakwa Talks to the Loon, for instance, illustrations depict a Canadian Native hunter paddling a canoe; clothing styles among Canadian Natives that include beads and headdresses; Canadian Native homes—structures made seemingly of birch bark; the presence of fish (and fish drying racks); geese, and moose; as well as a display of the Northern Lights.

Ann Swanson aptly quotes Louis Reil (1844-1885), a Canadian politician and Metis leader (Metis are mixed race descendants of Europeans and Natives) who founded the province of Manitoba, and led two rebellions against the Canadian government. Convicted of treason and hung, he is today considered by many to be a folk hero. Reil stated, “Our people will sleep for a hundred years and when they awaken it will be the artists that give them back their spirit.” Nowhere is this statement more accurate than for many First Nations groups. Norval Morrisseau was one of the first recognized Canadian Native artists who reached world acclaim. In British Columbia, Mungo Martin and Bill Reid, are two of the better-known artists (both carvers), who brought their tribal cultures...
to prominence. Today, such Native artists as George Littlechild and Leo Yerxa bring their artistry to vibrant children's picture books while Richard Van Camp and David Bouchard write evocatively from a Native perspective.

The aboriginal people of North America are extremely diverse and their cultures very rich. In Canada, as in other parts of North America, Native people adapted well to their environments. These locales include the harsh and barren Arctic, the lush Pacific Northwest coast rainforest, and the open central prairies. Their artistic expressions have always been linked to the natural resources available: cedar masks and totems, soapstone sculptures, and reed baskets. Artists often incorporate traditional symbols and designs in their paintings, while at the same time seeking to explore new mediums.

Language, Legends, and Myths
Tribal designations exist across international borders; as a result what applies to Canada also applies to parts of the United States. Therefore, a number of the books mentioned in this article are actually U.S. publications. Paul Goble is one of many American authors who has written and illustrated Native legends (such as The Legend of the White Buffalo Woman) and Larry Wright's The Legend of the Lady's Slipper and The Legend of the Loon are two other examples. Today, Native languages are taught in some schools with significant Native populations; additionally, Native languages are increasingly incorporated into texts of trade books. Bouchard's Nokum is My Teacher displays English on one side of the page and Cree on the other side. Other books, such as Mwakwa Talks to the Loon, sprinkle Native words throughout the text without compromising the meaning or flow.

Legends and myths are a revealing way to explore culture. In the case of First Nations peoples, there is an abundance of quality literature available. E. Pauline Johnson (1861-1913), a Canadian poet and author, was the daughter of a Mohawk chief and a British mother. Her stories are considered classics of Native and Canadian children's literature. She is probably best known in British Columbia for her Legends of Vancouver. The tale The Lost Island from that collection was recently published in 2004 in picture book format. In the book, illustrations include Native masks and designs, and ceremonial robes worn by the Coast Salish. Other visual cultural markers include totems and longhouse facades.

Native creation tales are wonderfully varied, easy to locate, and offer great opportunities to make comparisons and contrasts. A Mohawk tale recounts that the world was covered with water until a muskrat brought mud from the bottom of a lake to form the first land, while a Blackfoot version states it was an old woman toad. Several other tribes have similar stories. The Haida believe that the first people came from a giant clamshell. It is especially interesting to compare and contrast similar stories from around the world with those closer to home. Such stories can be categorized in the following sub-groups:

- Beginning of the universe
- Beginning of the Earth
- Beginning of people
- Explanations of natural phenomena (e.g., thunder)
- Animals and their characteristics
- Plants and their characteristics
- Discovery of fire
William Toye’s *The Fire Stealer* can be contrasted with Jonathan London’s *Fire Race: A Karuk Coyote Tale about How Fire Came to the People* as they both deal with the discovery of fire.15 Wargin’s *The Legend of the Lady’s Slipper* is one of many stories dealing with the creation of plants.16 Other stories, such as Susan H. Sheterly’s *Raven’s Light*, explain how the sun or moon were created.17 *Maple Moon* tells of the possible discovery of maple syrup by a Mississauga boy.18 *The Legend of the Loon* could well be used in conjunction with William Toye’s *The Loon’s Necklace* and *Mwakwa Talks to the Loon*.19

A central character in creation stories is often a trickster. The Natives of the American Southwest have Coyote, the Pacific Northwest have Raven, and the Australian aboriginals have Tiddlick, a giant frog. Some of these stories are about a great flood. For instance, *Raven Returns the Water*, from the Pacific Northwest, can be compared to Bible stories of the flood as can the Australian aboriginal tale *The Biggest Frog in Australia*, Mexican tales such as *The Tree That Rains: The Flood Myth of the Huichol Indians of Mexico*, and South America’s *Llama and the Great Flood*.20

**Native Perspectives**

Stories about Natives and Native legends by non-indigenous people have often led to concern and debate about the appropriation of voice. However, increasingly, Native groups are writing and publishing their own stories and legends. Established in 1980, Theytus Books became the first publishing house in Canada to be owned and operated by First Nations people. Today, contemporary First Nations literature is growing rapidly in Canada. C.J. Taylor has written a number of legends both from her Mohawk heritage as well as from other Native nations. *Bones in the Basket* tells stories about the creation of the world and helps capture the richness and diversity of seven nations.21 *How Two Feathers Was Saved from Loneliness* is a story about the beginning of agriculture.22 Stories from the Inuit and Métis are becoming more accessible. Michael Kusugak is a prominent Canada Inuit author. His books *Arctic Stories, Baseball Bats for Christmas*, and *Northern Lights: The Soccer Trails* depict modern Inuit children and their daily lives.23 Several Inuit tales are told in *Arctic Adventures: Tales from the Lives of Inuit Artists*.24 It includes brief biographies of the artists associated with each story and shows an example of their art.

Canadian educator, writer and presenter, David Bouchard, a Métis, has written a number of books including *Qu’Appelle: Song Within My Heart and The Elders are Watching*.25 In the latter, the emphasis is on reverence for the earth—a core belief for many Native groups. His book, *Nokum is My Teacher* depicts a young boy asking for guidance from his beloved grandmother.26 An added bonus is that the book is accompanied by a CD of the story in the Cree language. It ends with drumming and chanting by Northern Cree, a Native recording group.

Although not an Inuit, Maxine Trottier, a prolific Canadian author, has written *Dreamstones*. It is the story of a young boy in the days of sailing ships and Arctic exploration who wanders away from the ice-bound ship.27 When he falls asleep...
he dreams that an Inukshuk comes to life and rescues him. Another, Storm at Batoche, has Louis Reil as a principal character.28 An author's note gives background information about Reil.

Contemporary stories depicting aboriginal children have, until recently, been harder to find. However, now a growing number of stories such as A Boy of Tache and A Salmon for Simon are filling the void.29 Each of these books is illustrated by Anne Blades in her signature primitive style. The Very Last First Time portrays a modern Inuit girl searching for mussels on the ocean floor under the ice at low tide.30 Illustrator Ian Wallace chose deep blues and purples to depict the watery undersea world. In addition, he incorporates a number of Inuit spiritual beings hidden in the formations under the ice. There are also a number of stories where Natives play a significant role. For instance, Four Pictures By Emily Carr tells about the life of the renowned Canadian artist, including time she spent among the peoples of the Pacific Northwest.31 The illustrations are in comic book style. The Cinderella-like tale Sarah and the People of Sand Rivertells a story of Icelandic settlers in Manitoba interacting with a Native group dying of smallpox.32 A granddaughter, Sarah, is later helped by the spirit of that group. Ian Wallace's stunning illustrations bring both the Icelandic and Native cultures to life.

Literature and Historical Empathy

It is often through historical fiction that students see issues and events from the perspective of others.33 These perspectives must include those outside “the culture of power,” such as aboriginal groups, who have been historically marginalized. Discussing the injustices in history not only helps develop critical thinking, but it also helps to develop historical empathy. Linking historical fiction to what children are learning about Native Canadian culture fosters this type of empathy. Including such stories in the classroom is today made easier by the increasing number of books that deal with controversial issues in a sensitive manner, and that are often written or illustrated by aboriginal people.

Shi-Shi-Etko and As Long As the Rivers Flow are two stories that deal with the forced placement of Native children into residential schools—where they were often abused—from the perspective of children.34 Another social issue, HIV, is handled in a positive manner by Larry Loyie in The Gathering Tree, about a young Native man with HIV who returns to his rural Native home to attend a gathering.35 The stewardship of land and its animals is a social issue that is a central theme in many Native tales. The Mountain Goats of Temlaham, Keepers of the Earth: Native Stories and Environmental Activities for Children, and A Man Called Raven are just a few.36

Many curricular areas, in addition to social studies, can be augmented by aboriginal stories. For instance, many art projects can develop from the study of illustrations. A number of William Toye's books have been stunningly illustrated by Elizabeth Cleaver with collages that mix block prints, torn paper, and natural items. Another of Cleaver's books, The Enchanted Caribou, uses silhouettes.37 Award winning Leo Yerxa's Ancient Thunder also uses a type of collage in which the paper appears to be tanned hides.38 George Littlechild's This Land is My Land incorporates family photos into bold and graphic pictures.39 Having children try their hands at these and other styles adds a great deal to their understanding, not only of art but of culture as well. Other activities can involve listening to Native music or performing a play, such as one from Bruchac's book Pushing Up the Sky: Seven Native American Plays for Children.40 Areas of the science curriculum can benefit by using a variety of stories such as those with an environmental focus.

Today's nonfiction books have changed drastically from the dry, text-laden books of 20 years ago. Now many
are more like picture books. Some, such as *The Kids Book of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada*, are longer—with, for example, 63 pages instead of the usual 36—but have the dimensions of a large picture book. In addition, the text is broken up with ample white space and many pictures, maps, diagrams, and sidebars. In this particular book, for instance, the uses of birch bark by the Algonquians and cedar by the peoples of the Pacific Northwest are detailed, in addition to the inclusion of short biographies of noteworthy Native people. Another title, *The Inuit Thought of It: Amazing Arctic Innovations* explains the invention of such artifacts as parkas, snow goggles, and kayaks. This book highlights Inuit words with italics and provides a clear explanation of their meanings. The transition between traditional and modern Inuit life is explored. These inclusions do much to foster an appreciation of indigenous cultures and of how these cultures have been affected by non-Native groups.

Canadian aboriginal people—First Nations, Inuit, and Métis—have added a great deal to the fabric of Canada. Their lives are an integral part of Canadian history. It is partially through books that children can gain an understanding and appreciation of the cultures of Canada's first people and recognize their contributions. These books are highly readable, visually appealing, and wonderful adjuncts to the stories.

### Notes

8. The term "First Nations" refers to Canada's aboriginal peoples, with the exceptions of Métis and Inuit peoples.
11. Auger, *Mawhoo Talks to the Loon*.

### References


### Marilynine V. Black was a teacher for three years and elementary teacher-librarian for 25 before retiring. She then undertook a Masters of Arts in Children's Literature at the University of British Columbia completing it in 2005. For years she has worked as a children's literature consultant (The Heart of the Story/Stories from the Heart) and has spoken locally, nationally, and internationally.
A Comparative View of Diversity in the United States and Canada

Cherry A. McGee Banks

As immigration continues to rise, Canada and the United States are faced with the challenge of maintaining national cohesion while creating inclusive societies that allow people of all groups to fully participate in the social, economic and political spheres of their societies. In this article, readers will learn about some of the ways that the United States and Canada have responded to the challenges and opportunities of diversity.

Diversity issues can be examined within multiple contexts. This paper looks at political, legal, and historical contexts, with the purpose of providing a template for identifying issues that might frame further comparative analysis of diversity in Canada and the United States.

When carrying out a comparative analysis of diversity, it is important to note specific terms and language used. For example, while “multicultural education” is used in Canada and the United States to describe efforts to address diversity, other terms are also used. In Canada, the term “anti-racism” is used, in some ways in opposition to “multicultural education,” to convey a stronger statement on culture as well as methods and perspectives for reducing racism and promoting tolerance. This term is rarely used in the United States where terms like “diversity” and “inclusion” are more often used as synonyms for multicultural education.

Political Context
That political context can influence public policy on diversity is evident by the divergent responses of Canada and the United States to linguistic diversity within their borders. While there were Native American languages as well as a variety of European languages spoken during the early settlement of colonies in North America, English eventually became the dominant language in modern day Canada and the United States. However, Canada, unlike the United States, developed an official language education policy that includes self-contained, withdrawal, transitional, and mainstream programs that enable students to maintain their mother tongue. Canada also has an official bilingual policy that requires all official documents to be made available in both English and French. The United States has a very different official response to language diversity. Many U.S. politicians fiercely defend speaking English as a marker of an individual’s commitment to the United States and the legitimacy of his or her residence in the country.

On the surface it would appear that there are stark differences between language policies in the United States and Canada. A close analysis, however, reveals a more complex picture. Students could investigate the extent to which what is happening on the ground in the United States reveals a much more accepting climate for language diversity than statements by politicians suggest. After all, economic as well as political power can influence a nation’s response to language diversity. Students could look at the ways in which economic factors are driving businesses in California, the southwest part of the United States, and Florida to print signs and provide brochures in Spanish, as well as to hire bilingual staff. Students could also research the extent to which businesses in Hawaii are providing services in Asian languages.
When the political context of language policies is implicit, its connection to larger societal issues such as economic realities remain unexamined. Examining both the political context and economic dimensions of language policies can deepen students' understanding of all aspects of the issue.

**Legal Context**

The Japanese internment in the United States and Canada is an example of the extent to which laws exist within a sociopolitical context. Students can learn how two nations that pride themselves on being nations of laws, failed to protect the rights of individuals within their borders.

After the Japanese government bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, both the U.S. and Canadian governments interned people of Japanese descent. Even before this, however, Japanese people living in the U.S. and Canada faced discrimination and did not have the full protection of the law. For many years Japanese immigrants were legally prevented from becoming citizens in both countries. There were also tight restrictions on Japanese immigration. In 1907, the Canadian government limited the number of Japanese immigrants to 400 people a year. The United States used measures such as the Gentleman's Agreement—an informal agreement between the U.S. and the empire of Japan—to restrict Japanese immigration. In addition, the California Alien Land Law restricted the rights of Japanese to own and lease land. Students can use key concepts such as prejudice and discrimination to reflect on the following generalization: When sanctioned by law, prejudice can lead to increasing levels of discrimination.

Leading up to the internment, people of Japanese descent living in British Columbia (where most Japanese living in Canada were based) and the western United States experienced increasing levels of discrimination. Initially, these residents were under surveillance; later, their respective governments required them to surrender cameras, radios, binoculars, and other items that were labeled contraband. Finally, fear, economic gain, and prejudice, led both North American countries to force Japanese into internment camps. Eight internment camps were erected in British Columbia. Sixteen internment camps were established in the United States.

The historical experience of people of Japanese descent in North America offers a good opportunity for students to study the gap between the law as an ideal and the law in daily practice. One way to explore this is for students to examine how individuals from marginalized groups as well as those from mainstream groups describe their experiences with the law and with representatives of the legal system.

**Historical Context**

Canada and the United States share commonalities with respect to the history of people of African descent in North America. During the American Revolutionary War, many Africans who were enslaved in the United States escaped to Canada in search of freedom. Between 1783 and 1785, Black Loyalists (slaves who fought on the side of the British in exchange for freedom) established communities in Nova Scotia where some of their descendants remain today. Once in Canada, some Africans left and established communities in Sierra Leone on the west coast of Africa. The story of enslaved Africans who fought with the British is a unique angle on the issue of freedom and the Revolutionary War. The story of these individuals and their experiences, however, are generally not addressed in U.S. or Canadian textbooks.

At the end of the Revolutionary War, George Washington (still a general at the time and not yet president) demanded that enslaved Africans who had joined forces with the British be returned to their owners. Instead, Sir Guy Carleton, the British commander in chief, agreed to pay for their freedom and allow the former slaves to stay in Canada. Other enslaved Africans had joined Washington's Revolutionary Army and fought against the British in hope of earning their freedom. The economic advantages of the slave system, coupled with a newly formed and fragile union that supported slavery, allowed such a system to continue in the United States for nearly 100 more years. Students can use key concepts such as change, cooperation, and conflict to reflect on generalizations about the legacy of slavery and the ways in which the past is implicated in the present.

As educators review their curriculum, they should consider the extent to which students are encouraged to reflect on intergroup conflicts and tensions in their nation's history and in contemporary society. Questions such as, Were groups that are currently experiencing conflict in the U.S. and Canada always involved in conflict? Were groups that are now part of the mainstream in the U.S. and Canada always part of the mainstream? The answers to these and similar questions can give students a more complex view of intergroup interactions and provide teachers with a direction for considering curriculum revision.

**Conclusion**

The issues covered in this article can serve as a departure point for engaging students in discussions on multicultural issues in the U.S. and Canada. The examination of such issues in multicultural nation-states benefits from a comparative approach that allows diverse perspectives to be raised and examined. Using a comparative approach for examining multicultural issues within the political, legal, and historical contexts can reveal important intersections, parallels, and connections between the United States and other nations.

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**Notes**

DIGITAL VAULTS from page 300

Although the Digital Vaults is not a search engine, you do have the ability to search the site. In the “Search” section you can look for documents by keyword or by the tags associated with each document. When the search results appear, they do so as thumbnail images.

In the “Create” section, you and your students can make your own poster or make a movie. To make a poster, you can use the documents placed in your collect tray or documents provided in several different categories. Categories include the Civil War, Civil Rights, Presidents, and more. The process is easy—you can select a document and drop it onto the poster screen, change background colors, alter the size, rotate the image, and add text or clip art to enhance your creation. Upon completion, you can save your poster, print it out, or e-mail it to a friend.

We hope you and your students enjoy this new online experience and that you will return frequently to discover new resources and activities that enable you to further teach with documents.

Teaching Suggestion
Assign your students to create a poster using the Digital Vaults site about whatever topic you chose, and ask them to e-mail their completed poster to you.

Creating a movie is similar to creating a poster. Using the same drag-and-drop technology, you and your students can begin by selecting a starting point from the list of topics, then work your way through the list of additions to the movie maker, adding the background layers of sound and color and an opening title. Finally, you and your students can use the tools to make the images you selected come alive, such as adding a zoom or a pan to the image to create movement on the screen, or adding a caption to the bottom of every image to help tell the story. When finished, you simply need to press “play” to view your masterpiece—then save it or e-mail it to a friend.

Teaching Suggestion
Instruct students to make a movie using the Digital Vaults about whatever topic you chose, and e-mail it to a classmate. Direct students to take on the role of a film critic and assign them to write a one-page critique of their classmate’s film. You may choose to develop a rubric or set of evaluation criteria with students for this activity prior to the writing exercise.

Please join us in Houston this November for the 88th NCSS Annual Conference, the nation’s premier social studies professional development event.

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November 14–16
National Council for the Social Studies
Teaching Social Studies through Storytelling: The Enduring Spirit of the Arctic

John Kilbourne

The region in the Canadian Arctic, now known as Nunavut ("our land" in the language of the Inuit) is a vast territory with a small population. Lying north and west of Hudson Bay, and previously part of Canada's Northwest Territories, it consists of 750,000 square miles of land and 62,000 square miles of water. It has been continuously populated for approximately 4,000 years. According to the 2006 census, it had 29,474 inhabitants, of whom 24,640 identified themselves as Inuit (83.6%). About three in five were under twenty-five years of age.

Nunavut was created as a homeland for the Inuit people after a majority of residents ratified the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement Act in 1992. This was an accord drafted over 20 years by a committed group of Canadians (both Inuit and non-Inuit) that resulted, in 1993, in the largest land claims settlement in Canada, with $1.1 billion to be paid out between 1993 and 2007. The official creation of Nunavut took place in a magnificent ceremony on April 1, 1999, in Iqaluit.

Iqaluit became the official capital of Nunavut in 1999. Its name means "place of many fish" in Inuktitut, the language of the Inuit. It is the largest community in the region, located on the south coast of Baffin Island at the head of Frobisher Bay. In 2006, the Census reported the population of Iqaluit to be 6,184 (58% Inuit and 41% non-aboriginal), a growth of 18% from 2001.

As the capital of Nunavut, the economy of Iqaluit is based mainly on government. There are many new government buildings and government employees servicing the needs of the new territory, including social services, education, health, arts, and culture. Because of its modern airport, oil and mining companies use Iqaluit as a service and supply center. Many Inuit in Iqaluit continue to harvest fish and seals for food and clothing while other local residents produce and sell Inuit arts and crafts.

The original religion of many Inuit was shamanism. Although shamanism is still practiced in secret, most Inuit have converted to Christianity over time. This began with the arrival of Christian missionaries in the 1800s and continues to this day. Today in Iqaluit, nearly 85% of the population reports being a member of a Christian faith.

As its name suggests, Iqaluit is a prime fishing area that has provided Inuit with a reliable source of food for many years. In Iqaluit, local residents often head to Sylvia Grinnell River to catch Arctic char, to Ogac Lake to catch cod, or to the ocean to catch shrimp. Some locals actually move to outpost camps during fishing and hunting seasons, returning to the city only for work. Other Iqaluit residents purchase fresh fish and shrimp from the local food markets.

By engaging with the ocean, land, rivers, lakes, and animals, Inuit learn through observation, discovery, and experience. Information about where and how to fish and hunt, and a sense of sharing and community is passed from one generation to the next. This knowledge and these values, which are hallmarks of traditional Inuit culture, are known as Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ); and Inuit in Iqaluit work hard to weave them into their daily lives. Fishing is an excellent activity for promoting these guiding principles.

The spirit of the Arctic lives on in the people of the region. It is illustrated in the true story on pages 322–323 that is the centerpiece of this article. On my first visit to the Canadian Arctic, I had been told about Pitsioqok Alanga and his incredible survival story. When our family moved to the Canadian Arctic in 2001 as part of my sabbatical study, we discovered that Pitsioqok and his family actually lived next door to the home we rented in Iqaluit, Nunavut.

Throughout history, storytelling has been very important to the Inuit. It is through their stories that important information is passed from one generation to the next. Hugh Brody, referring to the importance of stories for a young girl, says the following in his informative book, The Other Side of Eden:

The land to which she belongs is the subject of many kinds of stories. Stories about its creation, or the continued on page 325
“The Enduring Spirit of the Arctic”

Simonie Alainga was a “living Inukshuk” in the town of Iqaluit. His wisdom about life guided many. Simonie’s superb experience and knowledge about the land and sea was only surpassed by his unending commitment to his family and community. Many Inuit talk about the efforts he put forward, especially during the Christmas holidays, to bring festive happiness to the people of Iqaluit. Titus Alookoo, a long time friend said, “When you went into [Simonie’s] house in Iqaluit, you always saw Baffin people staying there because they felt comfortable, and they were also fed and there was always tea on the stove for anyone who came into Simonie’s house.”

On Tuesday, October 25, 1994, Simonie Alainga, his son Pitseolak and eight others, including Pitseolak’s uncles, cousins, and good friends, boarded Simonie’s 38-foot fishing boat, the Qaqsauq, for a walrus hunt. They had planned to go a week earlier, but were delayed by mechanical problems. Because they would travel nearly 200 kilometers and be gone for several days, the boat was packed with food, sleeping necessities, ammunition, and fuel. Their first stop would be an outpost camp, a location two days from Iqaluit by boat. After unloading and reorganizing their provisions, the team of ten would then travel another seven to eight hours to Loks Land, their hunting spot near the mouth of Frobisher Bay. The fact that there were ten men in the hunting party had notable significance.

Among Stone Age peoples, a core-hunting group comprised approximately ten adult males in their prime. Modern society still depends on the cooperation of approximately ten adults, male or female, to accomplish major undertakings. There are ten soldiers in a platoon, eleven players on a football team, nine on a baseball team, twelve members on a jury, ten to twelve on a board of directors, and nine Supreme Court justices. Ten vigorous adults usually assure inspiration, leadership, cooperation, and purpose.

The team of ten vigorous Inuit males set out on October 28 to hunt Aiviq (Walrus). Despite the rough and tumbling seas, their hunt went extremely well. It was not long before they had taken 12 walrus. Together they worked as a well-organized team; some were shooting, some were retrieving, some were skinning and butchering, while others helped to pilot Qaqsauq.

With the meat of 12 walrus stacked neatly aboard the boat, they began their journey back to Iqaluit on Saturday, October 29. They made slow progress as the waters continued to tumble the boat and its passengers. For whatever reason, possibly the extra weight, possibly a mechanical malfunction, the boat began to take on water. The resourceful crew quickly fixed a gasoline generator and hooked it up to a small water pump hoping to pump the water out of the boat’s hold. At approximately 11 p.m., they sent a mayday distress signal to a nearby outpost camp at Gold Cove that their boat was taking on water. Each time they radioed, they were uncertain if anyone heard their message, as they never received a reply.

The water pump could not handle the volume of water so some of the men began a desperate attempt to get rid of the water with five-gallon buckets. It was soon obvious that their efforts were not working, so a decision was made to abandon the Qaqsauq and board the 16-foot canoe boat that they had brought along for the hunt. All ten men attempted to board the canoe. The icy water splattered the canoe, nearly capsizing the boat the moment they boarded. One large gush finally toppled the boat, spilling all ten men into the rough and frigid waters of Frobisher Bay.

Wearing a green military winter parka with deep pockets, wind pants, kamiks (boots) tied below the knees, a baseball cap covered with a tuque (knitted winter hat), and seal skin mitts, Pitseolak suddenly found himself under water looking up. Billy Kowinik, wearing a floater suit, a one-piece survival outfit, was nearby. Pitseolak, realizing it was not time for him to die, somehow managed to swim to Billy and hang on to his floater suit. Together they made it back to what remained of the Qaqsauq. Billy pulled himself up onto a small section of the boat that was above water. Pitseolak asked Billy to help him climb aboard as well. Frightened and cold Billy said, “I have pulled myself up and you must do the same.” Pitseolak gathered his inner strength and pulled himself up along side Billy. Sharing a small piece of the boat, they began a desperate search for the other eight men, fathers, uncles, cousins, and close friends. They looked and looked for any sign of their lost relatives and companions. While they were looking, they both pondered what they should have done differently to avoid this terrible misfortune. Almost in unison, they realized it would do no good to expend energy on the past. If they were to survive, they had to look forward.

For Pitseolak and Billy, this was the beginning of a three-day passage. Their bodies, half-submerged in the icy waters of Frobisher Bay, clung desperately to the wreckage of the Qaqsauq. For several hours their floating abode did not move. At one point they noticed several walrus nearby staring at them. The walrus were so close they could actually look into their eyes. Both Pitseolak and Billy were concerned that one might try to ram their floating raft. This they feared would certainly mean the end, as the weight of the walrus would quickly sink what remained of the boat. The walrus, according to Pitseolak, looked as though they were hugging each other by clasping their flippers. With one eye still on the walrus, the two men noticed a group of seals nearby, which the walrus politely avoided. This behavior seemed particularly peculiar, given that walrus hunt seals. Suddenly, Pitseolak and Billy felt their vessel begin to move. It was as if the walrus had swum underneath and were helping to direct them towards land. At this point, while listening to Pitseolak, I asked him if he thought the actions of the walrus were somehow connected to the sea goddess Sedna? (The sea goddess legend is well known throughout the Arctic. It’s the story of a young woman who lived in the sea and controlled all sea creatures—specifically...
seal, walrus, fish, and whale.) Pitseolak paused when I asked him this question, but he did not answer directly. He resumed recounting the events.

He had continued to pray throughout he and Billy's ordeal. It was through prayer that he found the will to live and the strength to endure. His life from about the age of nine to that moment flashed through his mind. He felt sorrow for the mistakes he had made and the anxiety he had caused others. He also felt deep love, deeper than ever before, for those near and dear to him, most especially to his wife Kootoo. It was at this point in recounting his story that Pitseolak, an upright man, husband, father, accomplished hunter and provider to many, began to cry. It was a moment that I, the listener, would never forget. It was not long until tears began to flow from all of our eyes, and there was a long pause to honor and celebrate our collective cleansing.

As Pitseolak and Billy continued to cling to the remains of the Qaarsaq, Pitseolak kept dipping his lower legs and feet into the icy water to keep his blood circulating. His father had taught him that because salt water freezes at a lower temperature than fresh water, he needed to keep sloshing seawater in his boots to keep his feet from freezing. Both he and Billy were cold, thirsty, and hungry. Somehow despite the hardships, they endured.

Some Inuit elders believe that Pitseolak and Billy’s will to live is linked to their duty to pass their story onto others.

It’s an age-old Inuit tradition that whenever there is a tragedy there are survivors who live on and tell the stories of what happened. People live to pass on the experience for future generations. Somebody had to live to tell the story. Sometimes miracles do happen... There were a lot of prayers, and they were answered. "

As word of the accident spread, the search for the missing hunters intensified. There was a mass exodus of search teams. Two twin otters (airplanes), a Hercules jet, an Aurora aircraft, a Labrador helicopter, a Canadian helicopter, a department of Fisheries and Oceans boat, and a chartered fishing boat, all took off to look for their friends and fellow Canadian citizens.

On Monday, it began to snow and a small amount began to accumulate on a section of the boat. The fresh snow provided a little water and allowed Pitseolak and Billy to quench their thirsts. Pitseolak reminded Billy to let the snow melt in your mouth before you swallow. This was another lesson his father had taught him. It was during this time that they also began to hear the engine of an airplane overhead. Because of persistent low clouds and snow flurries, however, the crew of the plane was unable to see the two survivors.

Also on Monday, with limited visibility, the search crews found debris floating in the rough seas near where the boat went missing. The Qaarsaq’s cabin door, engine cover, and a piece of the wheelhouse were recovered. When night fell and none of the hunters had been found, the search efforts were called-off until first light Tuesday morning.

After nearly 60 hours, half submerged in icy waters and clinging to the remains of the Qaarsaq, Pitseolak remembered another lesson his father had taught him. He broke a small piece from the boat’s glass windshield and placed it over the dark section of one of his sealskin mitts. His hope was that during a break in the cloud cover, he could create a reflection from the sun that the plane’s crew might spot. His plan worked. On Tuesday afternoon, at 1:30 p.m., the crew of the Hercules aircraft spotted Pitseolak and Billy floating about 16 kilometers from shore. A helicopter dropped a raft from overhead and guided it towards the two men. Once aboard the raft, they were picked up by a Fisheries and Oceans vessel and taken to a nearby outpost camp. Both Pitseolak and Billy were conscious and talking when their rescuers arrived. They had continued to talk to one another during their entire three-day ordeal. Because of the extreme cold and hunger, their clothes were soaked through to the skin and their limbs were swollen. So swollen were their limbs that their clothing had to be cut off. From the outpost camp, they were taken by helicopter to Baffin Regional Hospital in Iqaluit. Miraculously, both Pitseolak and Billy survived.

The outpouring of family and friends that gathered to honor the eight fallen comrades and the two survivors was unlike anything Iqaluit had ever witnessed. Hundreds of folks from throughout the north and from all walks of life gathered at St. Jude’s Anglican Cathedral, the nearby Parish Hall.

Before the service began, the crowd inside the church remained silent. Some cast their eyes down in respect. Others stared blankly at the front of the church, where eight white, wooden crosses leaned against the altar. Minutes before the service began, the crowd in the church reception area parted and a young man in a wheelchair was escorted to the front of the congregation. 

That young man was Pitseolak Alainga.

The bodies of the eight other Inuit hunters have never been found: Iola Nooshoota, 21; Ooteta Ooshukke, 24; Joepee Panipak, 28; Kellypalik Pishukte, 45; Sammujaliie Kootoo, 52; Eepeebee Peterloosie, 56; Simonie Alainga, 57; and Johnny Shoo, 59.

Note
1. The phrase “living Inukshuk” seems to me to be an appropriate description for Simonie Alainga. The Inukshuk have been a prominent feature of Canadian Arctic for thousands of years. The stacked, stone profiles epitomize the words “strong” and “eternal”—sharing wisdom, knowledge and hope. Inukshuk are positioned in ways to make it obvious that they are markers. Across the Arctic, Inukshuks are used for navigation, reference points for favorite hunting and fishing locations, and to point our food caches. The Inukshuk is the official symbol for the 2010 Winter Olympic Games in Vancouver, British Columbia.
5. Ibid., Nov. 11, 1994.
SPIRIT OF THE ARTIC from page 322

appearance of various creatures. Stories about traveling on it and living from it. She listens to her elders describe ancient times and recent times, passing on their knowledge about what this place is, what inner meanings it may hold, how best to make use of its creatures. From stories of creation and the hunt, the girl builds an image, or set of images, of her world. As in all great narratives, history, geography, personal adventure and mysteries intertwine. There are misadventures, murder, and star-
vation, to be sure, but spiritual powers and every kind of humor mean that even the worst is part of being in the best possible place, in one’s own land.¹

This article presents Pitseolak’s true story, written to the best of my ability after he shared the story with our family in early December 2001. I am deeply grateful to Pitseolak for sharing such a heartbreaking event. Our time together was one of the highpoints of my family’s time living in Iqaluit. I have supplemented what Pitseolak shared, with primary sources obtained from the archives of the local newspaper, The Nunatsiaq News. The teaching suggestions accompanying this article will help students understand the setting and cultural background of the story.


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TEACHING ACTIVITY

Using a map of Canada, show students the geographic areas mentioned in the story, e.g., territory of Nunavut, town of Iqaluit, and Frobisher Bay.

Have students discuss the importance of groups or teams of ten adult males or females. Can they name other import groups or teams that are made up of 8-12 males or females?

Have student research Inukshuks. Students may collect rocks and build their own small Inukshuks using clear Liquid Nails glue/cement.

Have students discuss any stories that their parents or grandparents might have shared that would be very important if they were in a hazardous situation.

Using the following websites have students research the story of the Inuit Sea Goddess Sedna, www.hvgb.net/~sedna/story.html or www.arctic.uoguelph.ca/cpl/Traditional/myth/sedna.htm

Have students discuss primary and secondary sources of history.

Can they site examples of each from the text?