

# The POINT!

E-Letter for Western Pennsylvania Social Studies Educators

Vol. 15 No. 2

February 2022



## David McCollough, *The Pioneers*, Simon & Shuster. 2019.

Book Review: Leo West

Here is a book that provides a great way to involve students in research. Covering the opening and settlement of the Northwest Territory and the first settlers to venture west, it pulls the reader toward wanting to know more. First, the narrative leads the reader to look for a map of Ohio and find the site of the original settlement, then follow up to locate other sites that arise as the story unfolds. Names of a variety of known historic figures leads to searches either on line or in books, to learn more about the character or the incident. A variety of historic events such as the burning of Washington D.C. and the Confederate raids on Northern States are mentioned in the story which reads like a historical novel, following the lives of real people who settled Ohio.

Journals and diaries of the characters provided the sources for the story which begins in New England before the constitution was ratified. Settling the Northwest territory was begun under the Articles of Confederation. Settlement of the Ohio territory was designed to reward veterans of the Revolutionary War.

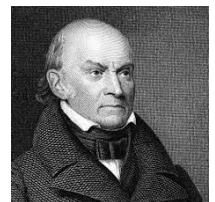
As the story unfolds, events such as the War of 1812, development of new states, treatment of native Americans, the inadequacy of early military forces, the limitation of slavery, the underground railroad, and the Civil War lead the reader to search for more information.

John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Aaron Burr, and John Quincy Adams all appear and lead to questions about who were these characters and why are they important.

This narrative could be a catalyst to inspire students to search for information that answers questions that arise as the story unfolds.



Aaron Burr



John Quincy  
Adams

## Soldiers & Sailors Hall!

Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Hall & Museum houses a vast collection of primary and secondary documents and military artifacts. It is their mission to promote the use of these educational items and create an understanding for all groups who visit the museum. They provide a rich learning experience for all people by exploring the deeds and sacrifices of ordinary citizens during extraordinary circumstance

Education Department 412-621-4253-Ex.210

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## Classrooms Without Borders

### Did you know that January 23 is National Handwriting Day in America?

Hardly of significance on its own and rarely celebrated, but today, take a moment to consider all the miraculous things that were achieved by putting pen to paper and writing something meaningful.

A document and pledge of independence and justice, an elegant ode and plea for peace and unity in the world, a silent but integral protest against the worst atrocities suffered by mankind.



## Hollywood and the Holocaust - Part 2 hosted by the University of Miami School of Education and Human Development

Sunday, January 23, 2022

5:00 PM Eastern Time

Zoom | [Click here for more information](#)



## Arab-Israeli Conflict

### with Avi Ben-Hur

Tuesday, January 25, 2022

2:00 PM Eastern Time

Zoom | [Click here for more information](#)



## Author Talk with Rebecca Donner All the Frequent Troubles of Our Days

Tuesday, January 25, 2022

4:00 PM Eastern Time

Zoom | [Click here for more information](#)



# The Point

For

Western Pennsylvania  
Social Studies Educators

EDITORS

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*The Point* is the  
e-newsletter

of the former WPCSS  
issued monthly via e-mail.

WPCSS was a non-profit 501c  
organization dedicated to promoting  
the teaching and learning of social  
studies in Western Pennsylvania

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## PCN Civics101

<https://pcntv.com/civics-101/>

Civics 101, a free public service of PCN, is an online educational tool to help Pennsylvania students understand how our state government works. This tool is intended to supplement classroom learning, but can also be a useful tool in the home. Programs include interviews with elected officials, tours of the state capitol and Governor's residence, and so much more. In addition, an interactive video game is available to keep children interested and engaged. A Continuing Education section provides adults with a deeper level of study through talks on related topics. The site is accompanied by a Teacher's Guide, which provides ideas for ways Civics 101 resources may be used in the classroom.

### Anti-bias advocate discusses classroom content

The "discomfort and struggle" of physical growing pains provide an analogy for the instructional growing pains the US is experiencing, and a shared understanding on race, gender and culture can create a better atmosphere for dialogue, educator and anti-bias author Lorena German says in this Q&A. "We cannot pick and choose the conversations we want to have -- either we have them all, or we have none," says German, who adds that "textured teaching" includes flexibility and a community focus. **Full Story:** Edutopia (1/7)

### S.D. bill would ban teaching "action civics"

This legislation prohibits public colleges, technical colleges or state-accredited school districts from directing, requiring or compelling students to protest or lobby as part of a grade, course or credit.

The draft states that it doesn't prevent students from voluntarily and freely exercising their freedom of speech, and doesn't include education activities or assignments that simulate protest or lobbying in a school setting.

Students shouldn't be "forced to choose one political ideology over another or be forced to protest or lobby as part of their education," according to a release from her office.

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*Don't get so tolerant that you tolerate intolerance. -Bill Maher,  
comedian, actor, and writer (b. 20 Jan 1956)*

### Trauma-weary students help organize RESeT event

Students' responses to Fairview High School's reactions to recent traumatic events affecting students led Assistant Principal Rose Lupinacci to work with some seniors on a daylong RESeT conference that offered schoolwide sessions on mental health, suicide, sexual violence prevention, self-care and leadership. Students such as senior Tessa Kertzer said holding the conference during school hours showed that administrators were listening. **Full Story:** Daily Camera (Boulder, Colo.) (1/7)



### Uproar over diluted civil rights teaching standards

Less-specific grade-level objectives for teaching about civil rights were preliminarily approved by the Mississippi State Board of Education in December and have raised such ire that the board has scheduled a public hearing for Jan. 28. Specific people and groups, such as Rosa Parks and the Ku Klux Klan, now are generically referenced as "important figures" or part of "resistance to Reconstruction reforms." **Full Story:** Mississippi Today (1/5)



### How nearly 2K slaveholding US lawmakers affected the US

An intensive Washington Post database and investigation of the 5,558 men and one woman born before 1840 who served in the US Congress reveals that more than 1,700 from 37 states -- and 12 of the first 18 presidents -- were slaveholders. The database helps connect the dots between slaveholders' interests and various laws discussed during the birth and growth of the nation, and the information helps illuminate the current racial divide and the importance of discussing it. **Full Story:** The Washington Post (tiered subscription model) (1/10)



### What Is Critical Race Theory, and Why Is It Under Attack?

Debates about critical race theory are coming to your district, board room, and classroom. Here's what you need to understand about the academic concept-and how it's portrayed in political circles.



### Map: Where Critical Race Theory Is Under Attack

This national map tracks where state policymakers are attempting to limit how teachers can discuss racism and sexism in the classroom.



### History standards shift amid debates about race, CRT

States' efforts to revise standards for US history and social studies education are occurring amid a complex national debate over teaching about race and bans on critical race theory, according to a review of standards revisions in Louisiana, New Mexico and South Dakota by Education Week. This article looks at the undertaking in these states, with each issuing at least one draft set of standards last year and receiving public feedback. **Full Story:** Education Week (1/18)



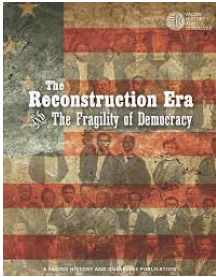
*History is about who tells it.*

*Daveed Diggs, actor, rapper, singer-songwriter,  
screenwriter*



### Lessons on Reconstruction found lacking, absent

US public schools' coverage of the post-Civil War period of Reconstruction is "partial" or "nonexistent" in the education standards for 45 states and the District of Columbia, according to Zinn Education Project historians, who say students are missing out on this important period of US history. While some educators interviewed said they need training to teach the details, others noted concerns about political efforts to limit discussions about race and other topics in classrooms. **Full Story:** TIME (tiered subscription model) (1/12)



### Strategies to address events of Jan. 6 with students

On the first anniversary of the Jan. 6 insurrection at the US Capitol in Washington, D.C., some teachers say they approach teaching about the events as if students know little about it -- because many are unaware -- while also creating a safe space to discuss the events and ensuring students know where to find factual information. Emma Humphries of the nonprofit iCivics suggests teachers ask students what they know and whether they have questions about Jan. 6. **Full Story:** National Public Radio (1/5)



### High-schooler decries omission of women in US history

Northern Virginia high-school senior Micaela Wells -- appalled by the lack of women mentioned in the textbook used in an Advanced Placement US History class -- asked 30 peers aged 6 to 17 years old to name historical figures important in the nation's history. Wells writes in the commentary that of the 35 named individuals, only one was female (Amelia Earhart), and when asked to name any female figure in US history, almost half of the students were unable to name one. **Full Story:** The Washington Post (tiered subscription model) (1/1)



### Historical markers face scrutiny for racism, context

Public discussion about racism has brought scrutiny to language and other aspects of historical markers that dot roads across the country, including the removal of two signs thus far after the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission reviewed 2,500 for factual errors, racist references or incomplete historical context. The review of the markers prompted concerns about sexism, racism and other issues with some sites, said Jacqueline Wiggins, a retired educator who serves on the Marker Review Panel. **Full Story:** The Associated Press (12/30)



### Students brainstorm solutions to school's parking woes

A student competition saw Cleveland middle-schoolers putting their STEM skills to use solving a real-world problem: adding 10 spaces to the school's parking lot without cutting into a garden. The contest winners presented their plans to city officials, and the accepted suggestions will be made before the start of the next school year. **Full Story:** Cleveland online

*Start with a yes and see where that takes you. Tina Fey, actor, comedian, writer, producer*

## **Writings from 1930s literary project available online**

The Federal Writers Project, which started in 1935 as part of President Franklin Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration, remains one of the largest literary projects in the US, with many of its 275 books, 700 pamphlets and 340 other works online via the Library of Congress. Writer Zora Neale Hurston and more than 6,500 other professional and aspiring writers participated at the peak of the project and produced works including travel guides as well as life histories and narratives of enslaved individuals. **Full Story:** [Book Riot \(1/13\)](#)



## **Paths among tombs date back 4.5K years**

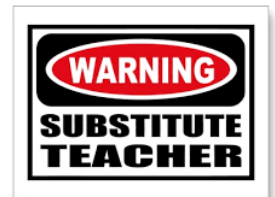
A network of pathways dating back about 4,500 years have been found winding through a series of tombs in Saudi Arabia and are described in The Holocene. The paths, called funerary avenues, may have provided a passage for those attending funeral rites, with one stretching for about 170 kilometers, or about 105 miles. **Full Story:** [Live Science \(1/17\)](#) [Professional Learning to Combat Misinformation](#)

Want to learn how to judge fact from fiction online? Interested in teaching your students to do the same? Join us for a **Civic Online Reasoning institute** to explore how fact checkers evaluate digital information and how you can use the **Civic Online Reasoning curriculum** to teach students these skills. The institute will take place online the evenings of February 16, February 23, and March 2



## **What is overlooked in news coverage of substitutes?**

Local and national news outlets are covering the substitute teacher shortage affecting schools nationwide. Yet, Amanda von Moos and Jessie Weiser, leaders at the nonprofit Substantial Classrooms, say reporters may be missing parts of the story -- mainly that substitute teacher shortages persisted even before the coronavirus pandemic and that there are ties between substitute teacher shortages and equity. **Full Story:** [Phi Delta Kappan](#)



## **Cardona: Expectation is for in-person learning**

The expectation is that schools will remain open to in-person learning as they return from winter break amid a surge in coronavirus hospitalizations, Education Secretary Miguel Cardona said during a Sunday TV appearance. The surge has some schools making plans for remote or hybrid learning or enhancing efforts to test students for the virus. **Full Story:** [The Associated Press \(1/2\)](#), [CNN \(1/2\)](#), [The Hill \(1/2\)](#), [The Wall Street Journal \(1/2\)](#)



Miguel Cardona

## **CBS 60 Minutes Holocaust Clip**

**<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/holocaust-stories-artificial-intelligence-60-minutes-2020-08-30/>**

CBS presentation of a program that attempts to converse with the dead. Using artificial intelligence, it takes questions about the holocaust and has a person who is now deceased provide answers. Unfortunately, commercials interrupt the video. Perhaps some computer experts could block these but even with them the program is worth using. The creation of the project was set with a live survivor, Pincas Gutter, a Polish Jew who today lives in Canada but as a child survived several death camps. Worth seeing and **•• See also: [Page 7 for another Pincas video.](#)**



Pincas Gutter



**Civic  
Impact**



## **Rule of Law Essay Contest** **Fact Sheet, Contest Rules, and Resources**

**This essay contest is open to all 5th and 6th grade classes in Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and U.S. Virgin Islands schools**

### **MyImpact Challenge.** **Bill of Rights Institute**

The Bill of Rights Institute launched a national civics contest called MyImpact Challenge. This contest is for students and teachers who are making an impact with citizenship projects in their communities. The contest **will award \$40,000 in total prizes, including a \$10,000 student grand prize and teacher prizes!**

### **N.J., Ill. enact laws to mandate Asian American history**

Legislation recently signed into law in New Jersey and Illinois requires instruction to students about the contributions that Asian American and Pacific Islanders have made to US history while also addressing anti-Asian racism, stereotypes, violence and bullying, says Kani Ilangovan, founder of New Jersey chapter of Make Us Visible, a group that sought the legislation in that state. The experiences of the AAPI population "are largely invisible in the official storytelling of the United States," says Sohyun An, an associate professor at Kennesaw State University in Georgia. **Full Story:** TIME (tiered subscription model) (1/24)

### **N.M. works to make social studies more inclusive**

New Mexico aims to be a model for the nation as it works to overhaul its social studies education standards. The effort seeks to ensure the state's civics, history and geography curricula are more inclusive of the state's population, including how the legacy of Spanish conquistadors is taught. **Full Story:** The Associated Press (1/20)

### **Ill. museum exhibit presents history of teaching**

An exhibit at Northern Illinois University's Blackwell History of Education Museum demonstrates how teaching and learning has evolved with time, says Patrick Roberts, professor and faculty director of the museum. The exhibit -- "A Worthy Calling: 125+ Years of Teaching Teachers" -- includes textbooks, toys, tests and technology, including a Braille typewriter for students with visual impairments. **Full Story:** WNIJ-FM/WNIU-FM (DeKalb, Ill.) (1/6)

### **Ga. barrier island serves as middle-school classroom**

Educator Ben Wells has for years seen how the 45-minute boat ride from Savannah, Ga., to Ossabaw Island transforms the middle-schoolers who learn about the site's 5,000-year human and ecosystem history. A barrier island, Ossabaw is a state Heritage Preserve and hub for environmental science that Wells says gives an interactive boost to the school's marine science program and the study of sea turtles. **Full Story:** Savannah Morning News (Ga.) (1/3)

### **Excellent Video on Holocaust**

Story of a boy who survived the Holocaust.

\*\*\*Politische Pole-Jude | The story of Pinchas Gutter - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bdxbvDSwYZ4>