of its social consequences. A laudable desire to combat racism, and especially to bolster self-respect among Negro students, might result in exaggerating Negro contributions and the heroic qualities of Negro figures. In our view this would be an equal distortion of historical truth, and in the long run would fail to have the desired social effects.

We do feel, however, that the seriousness of the problem of racism underscores the textbook author's responsibility to portray the Negro's role in American life fully, accurately, and without either sentimentality or condescension. There should be a conscious effort to portray outstanding Negro figures selected by the same criterion of historical significance applied to non-Negro figures. Even those textbooks that now make some effort in this direction tend to single out men like Booker T. Washington and the minor scientist George Washington Carver, whose attitudes about race relations are least disturbing to conservative whites.

Equally or more worthy of inclusion by the standard of historical relevance are men like Denmark Vesey, Nat Turner, Frederick Douglass, W. E. B. DuBois, and the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Always and everywhere our children should be told the truth, and the whole truth, as near as the best current scholarship can bring us to this elusive quality. This means, among other things, not obscuring the harsher aspects of the truth — the fact that Negroes entered American society as slaves, the brutalities of slavery, the racism of the Reconstruction and post-Reconstruction era, and the continuing depth and harshness of the problem of segregation and discrimination.

In the light of these general principles, the greatest defect in the textbooks we have examined is the virtual ommission of the Negro. As several of the individual reports point out, the Negro does not "exist" in the books. The authors of the books must know that there are Negroes in America, and have been since 1619, but they evidently do not care to mention them too frequently. In one book there is no account of slavery in the colonial period; in a second, there is not a single word about Negroes after the Civil War; in a third (composed of documents and substantive chapters), the narrative does not mention Negroes in any connection.

As Ralph Ellison's novel, *Invisible Man,* demonstrates, whites frequently do not "see" Negroes. But Negroes are Americans, their history is part of American history. They need to be "seen" in textbooks. The space given Negro history will, of course, depend in part on the nature of the textbook, and minimum standards of coverage are proposed later in this report. What is especially important is that the discussions of Negroes appear as an integral part of the book. Perfunctory or casual treatment may imply that Negroes are not part of America.

Important aspects of Negro experience, of course, depart from that of many other groups in America. Negroes were not just another immigrant group: no other group could be so readily identified by its color, no other group was so systematically enslaved, and no other group has been subjected to as persistent and virulent discrimination. From the seventeenth century to our own day, Negro life has been filled with violence.

These facts highlight another failing of these textbooks that is almost as distressing as the invisibility of Negroes in them. All the texts play down or ignore the long history of violence between Negroes and whites, suggesting in different ways that racial contacts have been distinguished by a progressive harmony.

The tone of a textbook is almost as important as anything it has to say. In their blandness and amoral optimism these books implicitly deny the obvious deprivations suffered by Negroes. In several places they go further, implying approval for the repression of Negroes or patronizing them as being unqualified for life in a free society.

"The tone of a textbook is almost as important as anything it has to say. In their blandness and moral optimism these books implicitly deny the obvious deprivations suffered by Negroes."

(The report describes what should be included in textbooks to portray "accurately the Negro's role as understood by current scholarship." The entire range of American history through seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries is covered. Coming to the twentieth century, the five historians state:)

Segregation and violence continued to characterize race relations in the South during the first half of the twentieth century. The hundreds of lynchings which used to occur annually have almost disappeared, but bombings, burnings, and shootings have increased.

A more important change has been the movement of millions of Negroes to the cities and to the North. Here repression has been somewhat more subtle but only somewhat less damaging. Employers and unions relegate most Negroes to menial jobs. They are segregated into ghettoes, where they pay high rents for slum housing. Segregated housing means in turn segregated and inferior schools.

The other side of the story is the increasingly vigorous effort, especially by Negroes themselves, to change the situation. The growing Negro vote in crucial northern cities and the cold-war campaign to win the support of the uncommitted nations of the world has made the federal government more responsive to the plight of Negroes. Prodded by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the federal courts began to declare in the 1930's and 1940's against racial discrimination in voting, jury service, and educational opportunities. This movement culminated in the Brown decision of 1954 outlawing racial segregation in the public schools.

Meanwhile the executive branch of the federal government had begun to move against segregation and discrimination in the armed forces and in civil service employment. Some state legislatures acted against discrimination in housing and employment, and Congress took its first cautious steps since Reconstruction to advance civil rights.

In the years since the Brown decision a civil rights mass movement has taken shape among Negroes, utilizing the tactics of non-violent direct action to demand immediate and full equality in all areas. The Reverend Martin Luther King led Negroes of Montgomery, Alabama, in a year-long boycott of the city's segregated bus system. Negro college students launched "sit-in's" throughout the South in a movement that ended segregation at lunch counters and other public facilities in hundreds of southern communities. "Freedom riders" gave effect to court decisions outlawing segregation in transportation facilities.

By 1963 mass demonstrations for equality in public facilities, jobs, education, and housing had spread from the South to many northern cities and over 200,000 people joined in a "March on Washington" in support of President Kennedy's proposal that Congress pass a substantial civil-rights bill. These efforts were pursued in the face of mob violence, the arrests of thousands of demonstrators, the assassination of an NAACP leader in Mississippi, and the death of four Negro girls in the bombing of a Birmingham church.

This civil rights revolution seems to us to be one of the major historical events of the mid-twentieth century and to demand full treatment in any American history textbook. The gains that have been made should be described realistically and not as an ode to the inevitable justice and progress of the democratic system. It should be made clear that the outcome of the civil rights struggle is still in doubt, and that the inequalities are so great as to defy quick remedy by even the most vigorous effort.

In the midst of this civil rights revolution, historians and educators have a clear responsibility, at the very least, to see to it that the role of Negroes in American life is taught fully and accurately. ■

In addition to the over-all analysis in the historian's summary report, these seven textbooks were analyzed individually:

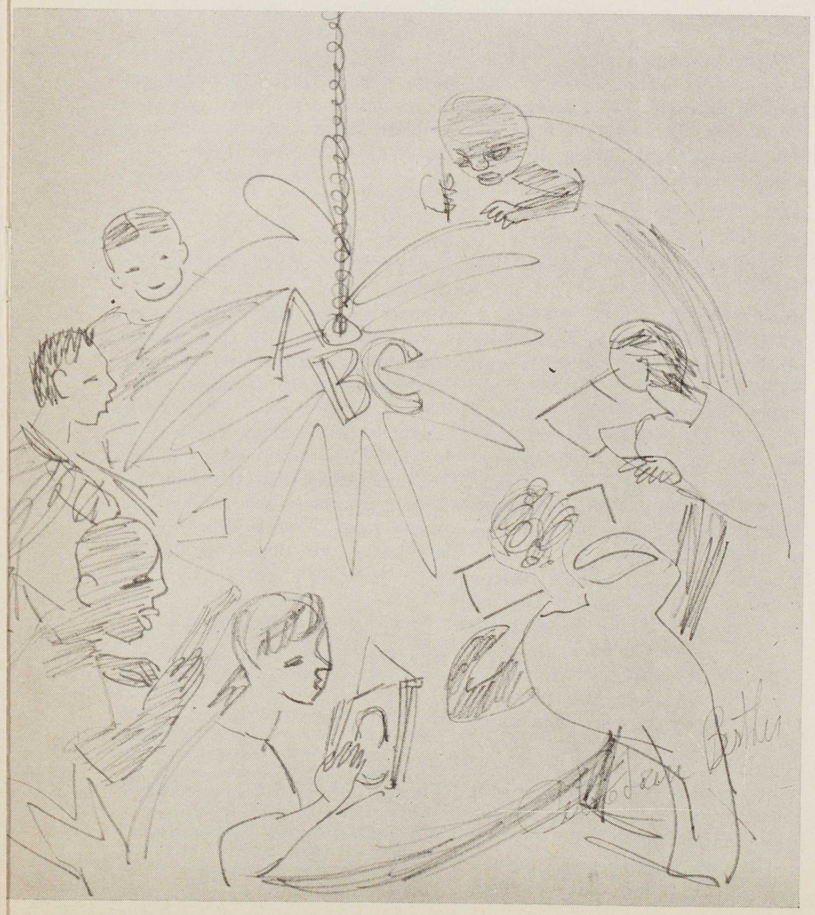
AMERICA IS MY COUNTRY by Harriett M. Brown and Joseph F. Guadagnolo. (Houghton Mifflin Co., 1961.)

THE GROWTH OF AMERICA by Rebekah R. Liebman and Gertrude A. Young. (Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1959.)

STORY OF AMERICA by Ralph V. Harlow and Ruth Elizabeth Miller. (Henry Holt and Co., rev. ed., 1957.)

THE STORY OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY by Mabel B. Casner and Ralph H. Gabriel. (Harcourt, Brace and Co., third ed., 1955.)

THE STORY OF AMERICAN FREEDOM by Edna McGuire. (The Macmillan Co., 1961.)

STORY OF THE AMERICAN NATION by Mabel B. Casner, Edward L. Biller, and William H. Hartley. (Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1962.)

TRAIL BLAZERS OF AMERICAN HISTORY by Miriam E. Mason and William H. Cartwright. (Ginn and Co., 1961.)