Teachers can help students to understand, retain, and relate to what is taught in a Social Studies class by selecting television shows, novels, films, and plays which broaden the students' environment beyond their personal experience. Several events in American History can be made more stimulating by the use of novels to present vivid pictures of happenings. For example, "Last of the Mohicans" and "Northwest Passage" can help students to experience scenes of exploration and early settlement; and "Gone With the Wind" and "The Red Badge of Courage" present accounts of the Civil War. (A selected list of novels for use in Social Studies classes, and criteria for the selection and use of fiction are provided.) (SW)
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THIS MONTH'S COVER
Armor dented, hope undaunted, Richard Kiley as the Man of La Mancha sings his impossible dreams. The star of the current off-Broadway hit was photographed by Boo Golby.

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A NOVEL Approach To Social Studies

by Alexander M. Butman

WHAT IS THE BASIC OBJECTIVE of the general Social Studies curriculum? Primarily, we are trying to give the student an understanding of the story of man and the history of our civilization in a context that he can personally relate to. But when we structure the curriculum and plan the course (geography, physical factors, historical and chronological sequence, social change, political change, economic modification, variations in climate and natural phenomena, technical advance, social mores, to mention only some study areas), we segment the whole into separate parts for the student's ease of learning. Too often we forget to put them all back together into a total picture.

It is just this exposure to the whole situation which makes it possible for the student to really understand the event. The word "understand" is key. If the student learns all the "facts" about the colonists, the people, the places, the dates, the events, the "true and false" test items, he most likely will not actually understand, on a personal basis, very much about them. "Textbook students" do not generally associate with the life and times of the past. They learn "items" with which they have no feeling of connection. Like students learning nonsense syllables, they have trouble assimilating and retaining information that has no personal meaning. On the other hand, students seem to more fully comprehend people and events that they can associate with or that they have actually lived through or experienced.

Few students of today will ever forget the total picture, both historically and socially, of the fateful assassination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy. The news, TV coverage and personal national reaction were things they saw and felt in their own life experience. They went through the emotional experience of "being there." By the use of good fiction and dramatization of events past (and present), we can broaden the student's personal experience beyond the limits of his direct environment. Good fiction, television shows, films and plays are usually better tools for communicating the past than even journals, diaries and other prime source material. These media have an innate ability for communication by feeling and impact, involving us almost instantly.

The survey nature of the course is minimized when using novels. For example, in a course in American History you could highlight about ten to twelve periods by using novels, between which you would intersperse the regular text material.

It is not the purpose of this article to be a definite book list or bibliography. However, the following examples will serve to demonstrate the types of novels which could significantly enlighten and enrich students of Social Studies.

Age of Exploration and Settlement
Last Of The Mohicans (several editions avail.), Northwest Passage (Crest 95$).

Pre-Revolutionary and Revolutionary Period
The Strong Men (Ace 50$), Johnny Tremain (Riv Lit $1.25), April Morning (Bantam 50$), Light in the Forest (Bantam 50$), Drums Along the Mohawk (Bantam 75$).

New England
The Scarlet Letter (several editions avail.), Look To The Mountain (Bantam 60$), The Crucible (Play) (Bantam 60$).

Alexander M. Butman has taught English and American History and was a visiting lecturer in American Foreign Policy. He was Educational Director for a large paperback publishing house and a member of the Executive Committee at the Columbia Teachers College Conference on Paperbacks. Mr. Butman is Director of Paperback Programs, American Education Publications, a subsidiary of Xerox Corporation.
Virginia
The Great Meadow (Signet 50¢).

War of 1812
Captain From Connecticut (Bantam 50¢).

Westward Expansion and the Railroad
The Oregon Trail (Signet 60¢), The Way West (Pocket Books 50¢), The Light In The Forest (Bantam 50¢), The Octopus (Bantam 75¢), Shane (Bantam 50¢), Travels of Jaimie McPheeters (Pocket Books 75¢), The Ox-bow Incident (Signet 60¢), Giants in the Earth (Perennial 95¢), The Virginian (Popular Library 50¢).

The Civil War
Gone With The Wind (Pocket Books 95¢), The Red Badge Of Courage (SEA) Banners at Shenandoah (Bantam 60¢), Across Five Aprils (Tempo, 50¢).

World War I
All Quiet On The Western Front (Crest 60¢), The Young Lions (movie or TV only).

The 20's and 30's
The Grapes Of Wrath (Bantam 95¢), It Can't Happen Here (Dell 60¢), All The King's Men (Cliff $1.00), Looking Backward (Signet 60¢), An American Tragedy (Signet 95¢), Inherit the Wind (Bantam 50¢).

World War II
Run Silent, Run Deep (Pocket Books 50¢), The Guns Of Navarone (Washington Square Press 60¢), A Bell For Adano (Bantam 60¢), The Wall (Pocket Books 75¢), Sink The Bismarck (Bantam 45¢), The Moon Is Down (Bantam 50¢), The Bridge Over The River Kwai (Bantam 50¢), The Caine Mutiny (Dell 95¢), The Raft (Pyramid 45¢), The Cruel Sea (Pocket Books 75¢).

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SOCIAL STUDIES
(continued from page 17)

After the World War, the Bomb, and Cold War
Fail Safe (Dell 75$), The Bridges at Toko-Ri
(Bantam 50$), The Ugly American (Crest
60$), Seven Days In May (Bantam 95$), Advise
And Consent (Pocket Books 95$), On
The Beach (Perennial 60$), 1984 (Signet
net 75$), Alas, Babylon (Bantam 60$), An-
imal Farm (Signet 75$), Brave New World
(Bantam 75$).

These are only a few of literally hundreds that
you can use. Excellent lists are available such as:
THE PAPERBACK GOES To SCHOOL (BIPAD, 122
E, 42 Street, New York, New York).

Great care must be taken in the selection of
the novels and I should like to suggest the follow-
ing criteria for selection and use.
1. Make sure the book is available.
2. Select only novels that are historically
accurate and deal directly with the subject
selected. Read it, yourself!
3. Do not use novels which are simply set in
a period but which do not adequately de-
scribe the life and events of the period.
4. Make sure that the novels are within the
reading level and comprehension range of
the student. The English Department can
be of great help in advising you in this
area.
5. Make sure the students read for com-
prehension and experience and do not be-
come involved in the literary aspects of the
works.
6. Be sure to "introduce" each novel for the
students with a pre-reading discussion.
7. After reading the novel be sure to discuss
it as primary material.
8. Make sure the student's sophistication is
adequate for the assigned novel.

You will find that the mandatory assigning of
novels as a major framework for most Social
Studies courses is a rewarding experience for
both student and teacher. It leaves the student
with a lasting and personal understanding of
events whether they be social, political, economic
or historical. I could not, after teaching this way,
go back to just using text material alone. For one
example, what better way can one make the rise
of a demagogue understandable to today's high
school students than through a reading of All the
King's Men? How better can one really involve
the student in a meaningful discussion of democ-
ropy, monarchy, communism, socialism, etc.,
than by a class reading of 1984, Brave New
World, Julius Caesar, or Animal Farm?

TRYING FICTION

Sound fiction, whether in novel, play, or film
form, when used to actually structure a social
studies course, renders the subject real and com-
prehensible. Fiction makes history, political
events, revolutions and social upheaval come
alive! Fictionalized, even romanticized "histor-
icals" contribute flesh and blood to otherwise
static heroes; add excitement and enlightenment
to dr ŋ text and endless data and dates.
The ready availability of inexpensive paper-
backs has placed this approach economically
within the grasp of every school system. The
wide range of material makes the curriculum
flexible and dynamic. If you want to give your
students an unforgettable experience rather than
a quickly forgotten exegesis—try good fiction.