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# The Historical Representation of Abraham Lincoln within Trade Books Written Between the Time Frame of 1930 and 1970

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The Historical Representation of Abraham Lincoln within Trade Books Written Between the

Time Frame of 1930 and 1970

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**Abstract**

As educators learn to amend to the Common Core State Standards, they are left with little-to-no time for subjects like science and social studies as the focus is primarily on reading and English language arts. History is slowly becoming a background routine for educators and is falling behind centerfold curriculum in classrooms across the country. This is inclusive of the studies of individuals who helped shape our country and nation. This study analyzes a data sample of 11 children and young adult literature trade books about Abraham Lincoln, our sixteenth president, in search of patterns and common representations. Within the findings, patterns of omission and inclusion were seen across the board. This study allows educators to understand the significance of implementing history lessons in their classrooms and provides those educators with thorough ideas to aide them in integrating history in traditional and nontraditional ways.

### **Dedication**

This research is dedicated to my students- so that they may know that anything is possible. For J.D. and Ceil Griswell, thank you for always believing in me, even from afar. For my friends and family, for always supporting me and keeping me sane while I spent late nights and weekends working on homework, studying, and researching. And last, but certainly not least, to my parents for teaching me the value of education. You helped give me the one gift that can never be taken away, my education. You always believed in me, and for the endless love, support, and encouragement throughout all of my life, I can't thank you enough. I love you!

### **Acknowledgements**

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## **Introduction**

In classrooms, children learn to read and then they eventually read to learn. Students read multiple texts, from multiple genres, for multiple purposes. Through these texts, educators should be providing students with opportunities to critically think and evaluate historical information from a variety of different perspectives. With a subject of a highly valued and admired historical individual, such as Abraham Lincoln, educators will be able to provide a classroom climate to their students where they can critically evaluate information from nearly a century ago and determine how it is relevant to today's society. This research analyzes the historical representation of Abraham Lincoln in children and young adult literature trade books.

## **Literature Review**

President Abraham Lincoln was more than just the sixteenth president of the United States of America. He was a very active man who held many jobs growing up, but quickly became a leader. Abraham Lincoln helped the United States of America abolish slavery by leading the Union to a win in the American Civil War. In life and in death, Lincoln had many enemies. These include, but are not limited to, citizens, military leaders, and elected officials in the 11 states who left the Union after he was elected, the man who killed him, and those who cheered his assassination. Their collective resentment did not die with Lincoln just as the hard feelings in the South did not expire with reunification or the end of Reconstruction. One is left to ponder how the multifaceted history of the sixteenth president of the United States of America is represented, how these representations change over time, and how these representations appear in trade books.

A majority of the states have adopted the Common Core State Standards (Common Core State Standards Initiative [hereafter CCSS], 2010), and extraordinary importance is placed on the

utilization of nonfiction text starting in elementary school. The newfound utilization of nonfiction in the classroom is due to the ever-changing and adapting society that calls for innovative ways of educating. Educators are required to teach about individuals and events that took place in the past, but history is evolving as time goes on, and they are responsible for including the new material as well. Educators are confronted with new expectations, a surplus of curricular resources, an ever-expanding historical timeline to cover, and recognition that they cannot fit everything in. This review explores the guidelines set forth in the Common Core State Standards and C3 (College, Career, and Civic Life) Framework for Social Studies (National Council for the Social Studies [hereafter NCSS, 2013]) for suggestions on what educators should be concentrating on within their classroom. It will discuss the array of text-based curricular resources teachers have access to, and each of their positive and negative qualities. Finally, this review will discuss the historical significance of President Abraham Lincoln.

### **State and National Initiatives**

The utilization of the Common Core State Standards, along with supplemental education initiatives, has expanded throughout the United States of America because the principles upon which they are based are grounded in decades of research on best practice pedagogy. The Common Core State Standards focus on coherence and instruction in addition to results within assessments (CCSS, 2010). The standards have imbedded a familiar set of guidelines for discipline-specific, age-appropriate cognitive tasks that are implemented to build college and career ready students as well as provide an equal education for every student. The Common Core State Standards have been implemented in social studies and English language arts classrooms, but as of late the focus has been shifted towards the National Council for the Social Studies C3 Framework. The Common Core State Standards and National Council for the Social

Studies have comparable outlying goals when it comes to their students becoming successful career and college ready individuals. “The C3 Framework is centered on an Inquiry Arc—a set of interlocking and mutually supportive ideas that frame the ways students learn social studies content” (NCSS, 2013, p. 6). By engaging in the four social studies disciplines of civics, economics, geography, and history, students will develop the knowledge and skills to commendably achieve success. Deliberately, the C3 Framework and social studies instruction align with Common Core State Standards and English language arts education.

**Common Core and ELA.** Common Core encourages English language arts educators to incorporate progressively challenging texts that characterize varied viewpoints while integrating non-fiction with fiction. Common Core State Standards (2010) highly suggest the use of nonfiction in instruction with increasing text complexity (Schwebel, 2014). Common Core has suggested that English language arts educators dedicate, at minimum, half of their literacy instruction on nonfiction texts (CCSS, 2010). Analyzing and incorporating texts that integrate several viewpoints enable students to look deeper at what they are reading and to think more critically. Authors Uecker, Kelley, and Napierala (2014) state, “We know that through the Common Core State Standards students will encounter more complex text and will, therefore, need to employ effective reading comprehension strategies when faced with increasing complexity” (p. 50). As a result, English language arts and social studies educators need to provide their students with the necessary reading and comprehension strategies.

In order for English language arts educators to do so, they must integrate discipline-specific close reading approaches. An academic skill that is built upon all grade levels is the ability to search for information and evaluate or summarize the read-upon material. As stated by Common Core State Standards (CCSS, 2010), “Critical evaluation of evidence is the key portion

of the information search process and inquiry learning” (Callison, 2013, p. 19). The students will be required to understand the text and summarize the information by critically evaluating what they are comprehending.

English language arts educators should not be the only teachers implementing literacy lessons. The crucial tools that are the connection piece between literacy and social studies include reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Understanding and exploring the content within the separate subject areas are based on the principle that teaching literacy in isolation and not integrating several subject areas leads to students learning about literacy but not using these four crucial tools to increase their learning (Ateh & Wyngowski, 2015). The Common Core State Standards (2010) note that literacy is a shared responsibility between all content areas and all educators implement discipline-specific and age-appropriate reading and completing writing prompts in the classroom, which include social studies and history teachers.

**C3 and Social Studies/History.** The C3 Framework aims to support the Common Core State Standards (CCSS, 2010). The C3 Framework is divided into four separate dimensions, which all focus on creating college, career, and civic-ready students. Students are required to construct and answer compelling and supportive questions. “Central to a rich social studies experience is the capability for developing questions that can frame and advance an inquiry” (NCSS, 2013, p. 23). Creating questions leads to students organizing the curricular content within disciplines such as civics, economics, geography, and history. As all topics in social studies have a multitude of texts that follow, educators benefit by using additional resources outside of their textbooks. While using more than just their textbooks, social studies educators should balance reading of literature with informational texts, including those texts that fall within

the history/social studies category (CCSS, 2010). Educators can supplement their lessons by incorporating trade books and primary sources.

Similar to Common Core State Standards (2010), educators incorporate discipline-specific close reading strategies that are needed in order to evaluate sources, such as primary and secondary sources, and develop claims by using evidence to support those claims (NCSS, 2013). “State and national initiatives require close readings of diverse, varied, and interconnected text in order for students to gain a more comprehensive view of an event, era, or person” (Bickford & Bickford, 2015, p. 113). When grouping close reading strategies with informational texts, the sources can be expanded upon and extend the history-based trade books into a civic education (Bickford & Bickford, 2015). Discipline-specific, text-based facts facilitate students’ close readings which is a primary goal of the C3 Framework.

To demonstrate students’ learning, social studies educators can use age-appropriate text-based writing prompts. Aligning with the CCSS (2010), the NCSS (2013) places an importance on writing and teaching reading, writing, and inquiry. With reading and writing interconnecting, text-based writing prompts create a content area transition between social studies and English language arts (Monte-Sano, De La Paz, & Felton, 2015). By incorporating the different content areas with a text-based writing prompt, students are more likely to communicate their conclusions by action and will most likely understand the content being discussed.

### **Curricular Resources**

Social studies and English language arts educators are not short on text-based curricular resources that they can utilize in their classrooms. Textbooks, primary sources, and trade books are forms of resources that are currently being used in social studies classrooms today. However, each group has positives, but they can also have distinct complications when used in

the classroom (Bickford & Badal, 2016). Social studies and English language arts educators must be careful and choose wisely when selecting resources to utilize in their classroom.

Resources can show “inconsistencies in how topics are presented,” as well as identify “various historical misrepresentations” (Sakowicz, 2016, p. 34). For this reason, and many others, educators must do their best to select resources that are free of bias and accurately represent historical events.

**Primary sources.** Primary sources can be text-based documents or visual artifacts that were written by an individual who had existed through or experienced the time period at first hand. Primary sources are one of the most common resources used in a social studies classroom. These sources have the capability to transform the reader to the specified time period and uncover firsthand versions of historical occasions and individuals. For these simple reasons, primary sources create a tremendous complementary resource in a social studies classroom, but they should not always be used as the principal focus of instruction.

An educator should look at material with an open-mind to outline the positive and negative attributes of their curricular resources. Primary sources, as with all curricular resources, possess negative aspects. Primary sources are not always adequate for elementary students, as they are mostly written by adults, for other adults. “Working with primary sources can present certain difficulties. Unfamiliar vocabulary, lack of punctuation, colloquial language, and differences in spelling, handwriting, word meaning, and grammar make it difficult for students to understand the primary source” (Morris, Morgan-Fleming, & Janisch, 2011, p. 153). This factor can make it difficult for a student to read and comprehend. Additionally, primary sources are not provided as a common resource in a classroom. Without students being exposed to primary sources, it will become more difficult for the students to examine the documents. Not only are

primary sources visually difficult to understand, they are often written in an account of the author, potentially being biased. History students, at times, fail to recognize history is shaped as much by the story-teller as by the events told, which causes struggles when analyzing primary sources (Nokes, 2011). It is an educator's job to discover and implement a variety of primary sources into a lesson or unit that allows the students to not only read and analyze the primary sources, but uncover the significance and connections between the primary sources and the past.

**Textbooks.** Textbooks are typically considered the primary instructional tool used for teaching social studies in the elementary, middle, and high school level classes (Bean, Zigmond, & Hatman, 1994). Textbooks are popular in the social studies classroom because they provide a guide for educators when it comes to making decisions about instruction and curriculum, events are organized in a sequential format, include additional instructional features such as maps, pictures, and review questions, and offer important points for readers to reflect on when thinking about the intended content (Bean, Zigmond, & Hartman, 1994; Roberts, 2014). For these specified reasons, textbooks may be considered the primary source of social studies instruction in a classroom. However, textbooks have a reputation for being uninteresting, bland in nature, and provide insufficient treatment towards most historical topics (Bean, Zigmond, & Hartman, 1994). Textbooks are also not written at different levels for kids of diverse abilities, leaving educators to adapt textbook use for children who experience difficulty. In addition to being bland, boring, and one specific reading level, textbooks are becoming increasingly censored.

Censorship thrives in textbook publishing because publishers want to bolster sales with innocuous, widely-acceptable content. Censorship can be viewed in different forms and can incorporate a large set of guidelines based on concerns. Textbook publishing companies are trying to appease specific interest groups and often have "lists of words, topics, and phrases

writers should use lest any group be offended” (Matusevich, 2006, p. 361). Historical textbooks contain more pages but less content because publishing companies are finding themselves censoring and limiting what material meets the decided-upon guidelines. Textbooks, further, are quite extensive, written in dry language, and are generally written above the targeted students' grade range (Matusevich, 2006; Roberts, 2014).

**Trade books.** A third fundamental curricular resource that educators have available to utilize in their classrooms include trade books. Per Merriam-Webster.com (2019), a trade book is “a book intended for general readership.” Whereas primary sources are usually difficult for students to comprehend, and textbooks can be dull and cumbersome, “trade books are engaging, relatively inexpensive, and a logical, interdisciplinary link between English language arts and social studies/history” (Bickford & Schuette, 2016, p. 21). These curricular resources contain exciting and fascinating characters that captures the students' attention while providing historical context. Age and reading level appropriateness is an important aspect to consider when selecting material for classroom instruction. Trade books are written about similar subjects, but at diverse reading levels that are intended to cover a variety of age ranges. “Trade books can provide... teachers with secondary historical sources written at various reading levels, enabling the selection of works developmentally appropriate for specific students” (Sakowicz, 2016, p. 34). Similar to textbooks, trade books are typically written in a sequential fashion that is logically coherent, but also allows students to follow and comprehend while being engaged (Moss, 1992). Although trade books may not provide students and readers with a timeline of events, they do start at the beginning of an occasion and proceed to the end, including pictures and fascinating specifics as the story develops. While the benefits of trade books seem large, another addition possibly makes them stand out amongst their curricular resource peers. Trade books are of no

shortage to an educator. “Almost every historical figure, event, and era is distilled and recorded within dozens, if not hundreds, of trade books” (Bickford & Schuette, 2016, p. 21). Not only are trade books inexpensive and engaging, they are also very effortlessly attainable for the everyday classroom educator.

As all curricular resources are not without negative characteristics, trade books carry their own. One negative aspect to contemplate when utilizing trade books in the classroom is the limited research that exists on trade books, including the lack of research on trade books' historical accuracy and representation (Bickford & Schuette, 2016). These historical misrepresentations incorporate the prevalent demises that affect educators implementing trade books in the classroom. “Historical misrepresentations can result in students forming an inaccurate understanding of historical figures” (Sakowicz, 2013, p. 40). However, these misrepresentations may occur in trade books, but they should not be taken unforgivably. Educators have the ability to find the misrepresentations, and correct them so as to share them with their students. Historical misrepresentations are common in trade books, even nonfiction trade books. Educators need to be aware of what is detailed, omitted, and disregarded. As such, President Abraham Lincoln is historically consequential, and it is worthwhile exploring how trade books have changed and how they align with the historiography.

### **Historical Significance of Abraham Lincoln**

The boy who split railroad ties, and taught himself how to read and write. The infamous politician, and the sixteenth president of the United States of America. The man with many jobs, and the debated Great Emancipator, that is Abraham Lincoln. Students around the United States of America grow up hearing his name, reading books about him, and seeing his face on not only the penny, but also on the five dollar bill. Why is he important enough to be discussed so

heavily and to be displayed on two sets of currency? As one of the presidents of the United States of America, and whose election sparked the succession of seven Deep South states, considerable examination has surrounded Abraham Lincoln. Questions about his childhood, his parents, his role in politics, his leadership skills in the war(s), and engagements as president have all been analyzed and researched at one time or another throughout American history. Abraham Lincoln has been deemed a hero and even a villain at times. So who was Abraham Lincoln? Why was, and is he still, so important in history? More significantly, it is important to reinvent and scrutinize the best practices and ways of discussing him as he be considered a subject of conversation in our students' schools.

Abraham Lincoln was not just a lawyer or a congressman; he was a predominant feature as to why slavery ended while serving as the sixteenth president of the United States of America. Abraham Lincoln has a vast known amount of information regarding his childhood and political career, making him widely recognized across the United States.

Abraham Lincoln was born on February 12, 1809, to Thomas and Nancy (Hanks) Lincoln in Elizabethtown, Kentucky (Donald, 1995). Lincoln grew up in a log cabin and was poor, both of which were common where he grew up (Bickford, 2018; Burton, 2007; Donald, 1995). A heavy discussion of what Abraham Lincoln is remembered by is his hard and burdened, yet miraculously happy life as a child. Young Lincoln, age 8, lost his mother to 'milk sickness,' most formally known as 'brucellosis,' and his mother's death caused a turmoil in Lincoln's heart that would not be spoken of for years to come (Donald, 1995). Within a year of Nancy Lincoln's death, his father was remarried to Sarah (Bush) Lincoln and this provided a turning point in Lincoln's life. Abraham Lincoln is said to credit his love of learning and his strive for becoming a better man to his stepmother (Donald, 1995). "He was not energetic except in one thing. . . he

was active and persistent in learning” (Guelzo, 2004, p. 90). The ability that Lincoln was able to teach himself, had a total of less than one full year of schooling, the dedicated hard work on his father’s farm, and his passion of reading quickly led to a productive life.

Abraham Lincoln began his early life working several low-paying jobs just to make ends meet. He worked as a clerk where he began reading as many law books as he could get his hands on, split rails for his father on the farm, studied to become a town surveyor, became a postmaster, and eventually a lawyer for which he is well-known for his circuit court cases (Donald, 1995). During his time as a lawyer, Lincoln had several partners. However, he was also invested in politics, where his true passion evolved. Abraham Lincoln had run for state legislature, twice, and was elected the second time (Peterson, 1994). Lincoln had met several people along his journey as a state legislator, which eventually evolved into him working on the Judicial Circuit. He had believed that this was a perfect step for him and his family as to allow himself to meet as many people as he could in hopes that when he someday ran for a higher office in Washington, D.C., he would have votes on his side (Donald, 1995). Abraham Lincoln devoted his time and energy to his family and was often found lying on the ground near the fire reading and playing with his sons (Donald, 1995). It is suggested that even though Lincoln and his wife, Mary (Todd) Lincoln struggled at times, they lived a fortunate life.

Abraham Lincoln began his run for State Senate in 1854 against Stephen Douglas, known as *the small giant* (Pinsker, 1993). The two candidates took part in a series of debates throughout the state of Illinois to campaign for themselves. Lincoln was running as a reluctant Republican who was against the Kansas-Nebraska Act, and he proved to be an aggressive candidate. “Lincoln was not just a willing Republican in the winter of 1854-55; he was the leading member of that party. By establishing himself as the point man for this emerging

Republican movement, Lincoln began moving swiftly toward a goal even larger than a seat in the U.S. Senate” (Pinsker, 1993, p. 3). This movement was the beginning towards a presidency that will live on in United States history.

Abraham Lincoln is most known in his role as sixteenth president of the United States of America for ending the slavery era. “Thomas Lincoln’s hostility to slavery was based on economic as well as religious grounds” (Donald, 1995, p. 24). Some speculate that Lincoln’s belief that slavery is wrong was instilled in him as a young boy. “Lincoln had early exposure to and distaste in slavery as a Kentucky youth living near a slave trading trail and as a young man on a Mississippi riverboat, yet these formative experiences did not compel him to work to eradicate slavery as an adult” (Bickford, 2018, p. 152). After Lincoln was elected president in 1860, seven states in the Deep South succeeded out of fear of the Republican parties’ opposition to slavery, particularly their resistance to its expansion. The succeeding states formed a confederacy and Lincoln engaged federal troops in what would cause the Civil War. The Civil War was a turning point in American history, as Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which was a guideway into freeing the enslaved African Americans. Although the Emancipation Proclamation freed only the Confederate slaves, Lincoln ultimately freed all the slaves at the war’s end. Lincoln cared deeply about his soldiers and hated that the country was divided, for he believed a divided country cannot stand (Donald, 1995). He provided the country with infamous speeches that still live on today, and he is still known as “The Great Emancipator” (Schwartz & Schuman, 2005, p. 186). Abraham Lincoln, first and foremost, brought together a nation that was once broken. Between Lincoln’s roles in politics where he aspired to lead a great country, to actually leading the United States of America to a new era of abolished slavery, there is no doubt about Lincoln’s historical significance. These actions demonstrate not only why

Lincoln is being discussed in schools across the country, but also how the historical significance is being represented.

Lincoln was viewed quite differently in the Union, the old Confederacy, and the border states – in Northern parlors, on Southern plantation porches, and in freedmen's shanties – in the days, years, and decades after his death. In American memory, the freedmen felt a need and want to praise and honor Lincoln (Peterson, 1994). After President Lincoln was assassinated, he was depicted as a hero and a martyr for more than twenty years to come (Peterson, 1994). After the Civil War, Lincoln became the face of many monuments and statues. He was often thought of during the Reconstruction period in whether or not it would be different if he were to have lived (Peterson, 1994). After the Civil War era, a new generation began to rise, and that generation thought of Lincoln as more than just a mere memory, but more so as a revered possession of the country (Peterson, 1994). Abraham Lincoln was not just acknowledged, but he was sanctified, as no American's words were more quoted as gospel than Lincoln's (Peterson, 1994).

Abraham Lincoln's elevation post-Civil War quickly bled into the centennial celebration of Abraham Lincoln's birth. Guided by images conveyed through reminiscence, biographies written, and politics, Lincoln was depicted as 'Savior of the Union' as his memory was mostly shaped with memories of the war (Peterson, 1994, p. 175). Yet, the youth of America connected with the 'Self-made Man' image of Lincoln (Peterson, 1994, p. 176). This image continued throughout the 1940s as Harry Hansen (1926, p. 435) wrote "Out of the pages of this book emerges no heroic figure, no epic character, no titan towering above puny men. This is the book of the railsplitter, of the country storekeeper, the young lawyer, the frontier advocate, the practical backwoods politician" (Peterson, 1994, p. 275). Towards the 1960s, Lincoln's career in

law was the topic of conversation. Many errors and misconceptions stemmed from William H. Herndon regarding Lincoln's sessions on the circuit court, and John J. Duff, a New York lawyer, stated that no lawyer of his day could do so many things well (Peterson, 1994).

As the end of the twentieth century grew near, Abraham Lincoln was spoken less of, and he was in danger of slowly fading from American minds (Peterson, 1994). Yet, it was at this time when historical museums were popular and sought to restage his life to sell the Lincoln legend. Impersonators of Abraham Lincoln were often found within museums, and Lincoln's fame, especially throughout Illinois due to downtown Springfield acting as a shrine to him, continued to rise and flourish once more (Peterson, 1994).

### **Lincoln in Curricula**

Abraham Lincoln is one of, if not the most, widely discussed topic in classrooms throughout the United States of America. There is no shortage of research, biographies, and information written in regards to him. Lincoln ranks second amongst mentions in textbooks published in 1982 and 1997, "being featured in 1.6 illustrations on average per book in 1982 and 7.8 times on average per book in 1997" (Hutchins, 2011, p. 652). Although Lincoln is featured in almost every social studies textbook, that does not mean the information, or representations of him, have always remained accurate. Lincoln has been presented as a great leader, has a reputation for honesty, was a powerful speaker, a self-taught man, and a savior of the union (Hutchins, 2011; Peterson, 1994; Schwartz & Schuman, 2005). However, of all the praise, heroism, and facts that revolve around Abraham Lincoln's life, the teaching curriculum reflects changing representations of him. Students often hear stories about Lincoln's childhood of living in log cabins and splitting rails, and how he grew up honestly and abolished slavery. While most of this is true, different variations may have arisen throughout curricular resources.

Curricular resources regarding Abraham Lincoln have been implemented in social studies classrooms dating back to as early as the 1930s. However, trade books written between the time frame of 1930 through 1970 have not been analyzed to determine how Abraham Lincoln is represented and presented. John Bickford (2018) recently conducted a study on Abraham Lincoln's historical significance represented within trade books, but out of the 55 books he scrutinized, only nine of the books were published earlier than 2000, three of which were written before 1970. Educators throughout the nation are implementing primary sources, textbooks, and trade books more habitually in their classrooms. A historical topic as momentous and extensively discussed as one of our presidents, the man himself who abolished slavery, should be analyzed for historical representation via trade books written under just one century from his assassination date.

### **Conclusion**

Abraham Lincoln has played a major role in the history of the United States of America, and continues to play a role. Lincoln's past actions speak louder than his words, although his speeches remain a famous piece of history. With this being the case, it is especially crucial that students learn and deeply comprehend the significant concepts regarding Abraham Lincoln that are represented within social studies classrooms. The Common Core State Standards place a heavy focus on nonfiction, or informational, text in the classrooms and suggest that at least half of all literacy texts implemented in the classroom be nonfiction (Bickford & Badal, 2016). There are several nonfiction text-based curricular resources available to classroom educators, and after taking them into consideration, it is important to address the need for Abraham Lincoln focused curricular resources in the elementary social studies and English language arts curriculum. Identifying the different representations that one prominent historical figure, Abraham Lincoln,

possessed, and how many ways he can be represented justifies an analysis that determines how his historical representations were presented between 1930 and 1970. By concluding this research using well-represented biographies on Lincoln's lifetime, educators will have an improved indication of what resources to use that precisely portray the representations of Abraham Lincoln and how they were presented during that specific time frame.

### **Methods**

In order to analyze my selected trade books in great depth, I used a mixed methodology of both qualitative and quantitative analysis (Krippendorff, 2013). To determine my data sample, I used a convenient sample of all readily obtainable trade books focused on Abraham Lincoln published during this time period, found in Appendix A. The entire sample is intended for juvenile students, which can be geared for grades kindergarten through eighth grade. The data sample used for this research was on the smaller side, however, I did collect a sample in which the books are intended for children and young adult literature. The children and young adult literature used align with the Common Core State Standards and the literacy components that are represented within. Common Core State Standards uses lexile levels to distinguish grade levels (primary, intermediate, middle, secondary). Readability designators for these particular books were unobtainable for all but two trade books. In such, the grade levels in my sample are inflated. Out of the entire data sample, all 11 books are nonfiction. With all books being nonfiction, the content analysis protocol questions are compared easily.

To ensure the accuracy of my findings, I first read each book while taking notes on general observations, and I recorded details for specific ideas that took place within the text. During this open coding stage of my content analysis, I searched for common patterns that were existent within the trade books. These patterns were analyzed using the content analysis

questions found in Appendix B. I kept track each time a question was addressed within the book, as well as when a question was mentioned, but not specifically addressed. In addition, I referenced the author of the text, the year of publication, and the grade level at which the text is written for. This open coding reading was akin to a survey of content emphasized, simply included, and disregarded.

After reviewing the data found using open coding, I analyzed what changes needed to take place in order to establish questions that will yield quantifiable data. The content analysis protocol questions were modified, and a few were added during the axial coding stage in order to make the data more inclusive all around. The final content analysis protocol questions can be seen in Appendix C. During this axial coding stage, I analyzed not only how often the content analysis questions were addressed within the text, but how (and when) they were addressed. I noted when specific questions were addressed and to what extent they were described within the text, noting whether the information was explicit and detailed, minimized, vague or implicit, or omitted from the text. I also noted specific features within the text that address Abraham Lincoln's frontier life, his self-taught education, his involvement in politics, his opinion on slavery and whether or not he abolished slavery, his active role in the Civil war, and so on. This axial coding reading was a refined scrutiny of text and subtext. Readers can note differences between open coding and axial coding by comparing appendices.

## **Findings**

### **Clear and Important Patterns**

The following section is based on clear and important patterns in which I am exposing findings that are pertinent to educators and researchers. This section notes significant findings and verifiable patterns seen throughout the texts.

One noteworthy pattern was the absence of acknowledgement that public consciousness and memory change overtime, as well as the recognition that history is told by humans who are shaped by the present. Out of the total data pool ( $n = 11$ ), zero trade books recognize that history is told by humans who are shaped by the present, and one lone trade book recognizes that memory changes over time for the readers. Trade book authors, regardless of the year, did not present history as a story shaped by the storyteller and the time it was told. This was determined using questions 15 and 16 from the content analysis protocol, as seen in Appendix C. Instead, these books appeared to be more of a timeline in paragraph form. The results from the findings and other notable patterns can be found below.

As part of the content analysis protocol, the first set of questions focused on the structure of the text. Through these questions, the text structure of the books consists of the text's format, genre, and main character within the text. The data sample is too small to organize other than this year of publication range. Table 1, entitled Text Structure, shows the results found when comparing these text structures included.

Table 1

<i>Text Structure</i>	
<u>Genre</u>	<u>Children's and Young Adult Literature</u>
Historical Nonfiction	1(9)
Narrative Nonfiction	2(18)
Biography Nonfiction	8(73)
<u>Format</u>	
Picture Book	5(45)
Chapter Book	6(55)
<u>Main Character</u>	
Abraham Lincoln	10(91)
Not Abraham Lincoln	1(9)

*Note.* Data are shown as number (percentage).

Table 1 represents the findings in relation to the Text Structures of the book(s). The representative sample ( $n = 11$ ) consisted of trade books from children and young adult's literature, spanning from kindergarten through eighth grade. When considering the book's genre, three main options were considered, including historical nonfiction, narrative nonfiction, and biography nonfiction. The findings yielded uneven numbers between the three different genres. Out of the sample ( $n = 11$ ), biography nonfiction ( $n = 8$ ; 73%) was represented within most of the books, narrative nonfiction ( $n = 2$ ; 18%) yielded a few results, with historical nonfiction ( $n = 1$ ; 9%) only representing one book. It was noted that the information was consistent throughout in regards to all books representing some genre of nonfiction. Yet, it was also noted that the information was inconsistent across the children's literature in the findings of the uneven amount of genres of the representative sample ( $n = 11$ ). The formats of the books across the children and young adult literature varied more so than the genre. When considering the children and young adult literature sample ( $n = 11$ ), the findings related to the format were nearly identical. The children and young adult literature consisted of picture books ( $n = 5$ ; 45%), and chapter books ( $n = 6$ ; 55%). A significant finding in the books that were chosen for a representative sample was how many books solely focused on Abraham Lincoln as the main character. Out of the children and young adult literature sample, Abraham Lincoln was the main character ( $n = 10$ ; 91%) in all but one book. In that sole book ( $n = 1$ ; 9%), Abraham Lincoln was discussed but the focus was on the frontier life within the 1800s rather than Abraham Lincoln as the main character.

Abraham Lincoln's frontier life was also analyzed. There is a plethora of historical details regarding how Lincoln, and his family, grew up in poverty and continued to work several

jobs at one time throughout his life to get through. The representative sample ( $n = 11$ ) was analyzed and the findings are presented in Table 2, entitled Frontier Life.

Table 2

*Frontier Life*

<u>Growing Up in Poverty</u>	<u>Children and Young Adult Literature (<math>n = 11</math>)</u>
Explicit and Detailed	6(55)
Minimized/ Vague	3(27)
Omitted	2(18)
<u>Working Several Jobs at Once</u>	
Explicit and Detailed	1(9)
Minimized/ Vague	8(73)
Omitted	2(18)

*Note.* Data are shown as number (percentage).

The data represented in Table 2, Frontier Life, depicts the two common patterns surrounding Abraham Lincoln's frontier life and how they were represented in the sample of ( $n = 11$ ) trade books. When looking at Abraham Lincoln's frontier life and of the books included, ( $n = 6$ ; 55%) of the trade books included explicit information about his life in poverty, ( $n = 3$ ; 27%) minimized the information relevant to his childhood poverty, and ( $n = 2$ ; 18%) omitted any discussion of Lincoln's childhood in poverty. On a different scale, when looking at the sample of trade books ( $n = 11$ ) that discuss Abraham Lincoln's frontier life filled with working several jobs, even some at the same time, ( $n = 1$ ; 9%) of the books explicitly describe his many jobs, ( $n = 8$ ; 73%) minimized information on his many jobs, and ( $n = 2$ ; 18%) omitted any discussion of the many jobs he had. Although the topics are different, they are similar in the fact that they are both a description of Lincoln's childhood and how he was raised. When considering the topics of his frontier life, his life of poverty was described in greater detail ( $n = 6$ ; 55%) than the detail of the several jobs he had to carry in order to get by. Of the books that omitted information regarding Lincoln's life in poverty ( $n = 2$ ; 18%), *A Man Named Lincoln* by Gertrude Norman

(1960) is a Biography and *Abraham Lincoln: For the People* by Anne Colver (1960) is a Narrative Nonfiction. Additionally, of the books that omitted information regarding Lincoln's life of working several jobs at a time to get by ( $n = 2$ ; 18%), *Meet Abraham Lincoln* by Barbara Clary (1965) is a Biography, and *Abe Lincoln's Birthday* by Wilma Pitchford Hays (1961) is a Narrative Nonfiction. The two genres play a part in the similarities between the omissions in aspects of his frontier life.

Abraham Lincoln's dispositions were depicted within the trade books. Abraham Lincoln did not lead a normal life, but his kindness and honesty were depicted continuously throughout his life regarding personal situations. Table 3, entitled Personality, shows how children and adult literature trade books written between 1930 and 1970 represent the personality traits of Abraham Lincoln.

Table 3

<i>Personality</i>	
<u>Kindness</u>	<u>Children and Young Adult Literature (<math>n = 11</math>)</u>
Explicit and Detailed	7(64)
Minimized/ Vague	3(27)
Omitted	1(9)
<u>Honesty</u>	
Explicit and Detailed	7(64)
Minimized/ Vague	4(36)
Omitted	0(0)
<u>Kindness and Honesty- Continuous</u>	
Yes	9(82)
No	2(18)

*Note.* Data are shown as number (percentage).

Table 3, Personality, shows some distinct patterns of representation amongst the findings. The findings regarding Abraham Lincoln's character traits, such as kindness and honesty, were remarkably similar within the children and young adult's literature trade books. When looking at

the statistics for kindness, ( $n = 7$ ; 64%) of the books explicitly described Lincoln's acts of kindness, ( $n = 3$ ; 27%) minimized the information regarding Lincoln's kindness, and ( $n = 1$ ; 9%) omitted any notions of Lincoln being kind. Similarly, when regarding Abraham Lincoln's honesty, the results were almost identical. Within the children and young adult's literature trade books, ( $n = 7$ ; 64%) provided explicit details about Honest Abe, ( $n = 4$ ; 36%) minimized his honesty, and ( $n = 0$ ; 0%) omitted Lincoln's honesty. More staggering yet, surprising results were yielded when looking specifically at whether or not the children and young adult's literature trade books ( $n = 11$ ) discussed his personality traits of kindness and honesty when he is young and an older adult during his time as president of the United States. Within the data sample, ( $n = 9$ ; 82%) of the books showed a continuous flow of his character traits throughout his life, while ( $n = 2$ ; 18%) did not continue his traits throughout his adult life.

One aspect of Abraham Lincoln's life that is familiar to those around the world, especially in the education world, is his self-taught education and how he taught himself how to read, write, and add sums. Table 4, entitled Self-Taught, reports findings represented within the trade books ( $n = 11$ ) regarding Abraham Lincoln's continuous self-taught education.

Table 4

<i>Self-Taught</i>	
<u>Education</u>	<u>Children and Young Adult Literature (<math>n = 11</math>)</u>
Explicit and Detailed	9(82)
Minimized/ Vague	2(18)
Omitted	0(0)
<u>Education- Continuous</u>	
Yes	11(100)
No	0(0)

*Note.* Data are shown as number (percentages).

Presented with astounding results as seen in Table 4, Self-Taught, the children and young adult's literature trade books consistently discuss Lincoln's perseverance to continue his

education. Out of the data sample ( $n = 11$ ), ( $n = 9$ ; 82%) explicitly detailed Lincoln's self-made education, the information was minimized in ( $n = 2$ ; 18%) of the books, and omitted from ( $n = 0$ ; 0%) of the trade books. More specifically, all trade books ( $n = 11$ ; 100%) discuss Lincoln's self-taught education as a child that continued throughout his adult life. With 100% of the books continuing this trend, this discussion is detailed and explicitly shown how important this topic was within Abraham Lincoln's historical representation.

Most well-known for his Presidency, Abraham Lincoln and the events surrounding his presidency were considered within the content analysis protocol questions. Notions about Lincoln's role in politics, even at an early age, were represented throughout many of the trade books. Table 5, entitled Politics, represents data gathered regarding Lincoln's early role in politics, his presidency, and role in the Civil War.

Table 5

*Politics*

<u>Early Days</u>	<u>Children and Young Adult Literature (<math>n = 11</math>)</u>
Explicit and Detailed	5(45)
Minimized/ Vague	5(45)
Omitted	1(10)
<u>Presidency</u>	
Explicit and Detailed	0(0)
Minimized/ Vague	10(91)
Omitted	1(9)
<u>Civil War</u>	
Explicit and Detailed	4(36)
Minimized/ Vague	4(36)
Omitted	3(28)

*Note.* Data are shown as number (percentage).

Lincoln's early career in politics is interestingly depicted more often and in more detail than his presidency or his role in the Civil War. Lincoln's early role in politics, such as his time as state legislator and his active speeches against Stephen Douglas, are depicted explicitly in ( $n =$

5; 45%) of books, minimized in ( $n = 5$ ; 45%) of books, and omitted in ( $n = 1$ ; 10%) of trade books. The connotation of his years as president of the United States of America is not explained with such detail as his active role before his presidency. The trade books connote presidency explicitly in ( $n = 0$ ; 0%) of the books, minimizes in ( $n = 10$ ; 91%) of the books, and omits in ( $n = 1$ ; 9%) of the books. During his presidency, the Civil War happened to be a major key factor that lead to Lincoln's active role in today's historical representation. Mentioning of the Civil War in explicit detail was noted in ( $n = 4$ ; 36%) of the books, minimized in ( $n = 4$ ; 36%) of the books, and omitted in ( $n = 3$ ; 28%) of the books.

When considering the findings as a whole, there are some very unambiguous patterns. The children and young adult literature trade books ( $n = 11$ ) were all inclusive of following Abraham Lincoln's self-taught education from his time as a child into his adult life. All trade books ( $n = 11$ ; 100%) provided examples of Abraham Lincoln having an intrinsic motivation to learn and teach himself how to read, write, and add sums and he continued to teach himself throughout his adult life. He learned how to write his name, how to read contracts to help others understand them, how to read a book on surveying and then how to properly survey a property line. This emphasizes Lincoln's self-made, or taught, education and how that truly impacted his upbringing as well as his reputation. Following education, the children and adult literature trade books ( $n = 11$ ) tend to focus more on Abraham Lincoln's early role in politics rather than his role as president of the United States of America. Within the trade books, the authors focused heavily on Abraham Lincoln as a state legislator and his role for state senator against Stephen Douglas rather than his time as president. However, more than half of the data pool discusses Lincoln's involvement in the Civil War which is a representation of his time during president. Lincoln's time as president of the United States was omitted completely in one ( $n = 1$ ; 9%) of the

trade books, while the remaining selection ( $n = 10$ ; 91%) included one of Abraham Lincoln's greatest accomplishments either in detailed and explicit or minimized and vague format.

### **Unanswered Questions**

The trade books represented within my data pool are limited, but the information included and presented within them is not. The books are descriptive, but not all inclusive as to answer curious questions that arise when annotating and analyzing the trade books. While I was reading and answering the questions during my open and axial coding stage, I found myself questioning several aspects of Abraham Lincoln's life. These questions, in particular are not ones for which I have a clear answer. I was not able to answer them while reading the books, or while researching him. Therefore, I felt as if this section was an important addition to include within my research to draw attention to the detail that researchers and educators are always seeking answers to questions that may not have answers.

**Self-Taught.** How did Abraham Lincoln teach himself how to read, write, and add sums? In the 1800s, students rarely went to school due to the lack of schoolmasters. In certain instances, the students actually taught the schoolmasters. With Lincoln having received less than a year's worth of schooling, how was it that he was able to read very detailed and difficult law books later in life? His father did not know how to read, nor did his mother. Although his stepmother granted him access to several books, she was not able to teach him how to read, for she did not know much herself. Without being provided the means and ability to learn, I questioned, what more did Abraham Lincoln do in order to teach himself that we readers may not know about? In thinking about my own education and how much access students are provided with in the education world today, I found it extremely difficult to comprehend how one is able to understand phonics and the English language enough to teach themselves how to

read without years of guidance from someone more skilled. Considering that I am a 21<sup>st</sup> century adult who is completing a graduate degree, I can only wonder how a young learner a century ago would grapple with this concept.

**Hero.** Was Abraham Lincoln only considered a hero or great because his troops won the Civil War and freed the southern enslaved African Americans? What would have happened if the Union had lost and the Confederate soldiers won? Would he have been considered a great president if he was not assassinated, or did the people of the United States of America take pity on him because he was assassinated? These questions continued to circulate within my mind when I was reading through the data pool trade books. Although Abraham Lincoln was never called a hero within the books, he was referred to as *great* and *greatness* several times.

However, is freeing the enslaved African Americans in the Confederate states the one and only reason he is discussed today? Would educators and students spend time discussing Abraham Lincoln if it were not for the positive outcome of the Civil War? These questions are open-ended questions that will never be answered because he did free the enslaved African Americans in the Confederate states, the Union did win the war, and he was assassinated. Furthermore, the trade books did not give credit to enslaved African Americans for contributing to their own freedom during this time frame. It does not mean that one cannot reflect on these thoughts and critically think about what could have been if the said outcomes would not have occurred.

**Future President.** Did Abraham Lincoln have the intrinsic motivation to work towards being President of the United States because he wanted to, or did he race against Senator Stephen Douglas because his wife claimed she was going to marry the future president? As I was reading and annotating, several books mentioned that Mrs. Mary Todd Lincoln stated she was going to marry the future president of the United States of America when she was choosing between

Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas for her suitor. Yet, a few books also did discuss how Abraham told a farmer's wife when he was a boy that he would grow up someday to be president. Would Abraham Lincoln have been complacent staying a lawyer for the remainder of his life would it have not been for Mary Lincoln being insistent that he run for president, or did he truly, for himself, want to run? One would accept that Abraham Lincoln ran for president for himself because of his long journey in politics and that he did become our sixteenth president. Yet, when analyzing data and noting that Abraham Lincoln stated he would go back to being a lawyer after his second term as president, an individual could wonder if he ran for president to make his wife happy.

### **Importance of Lincoln to 21<sup>st</sup> Century Students**

While reading the trade books within my data pool, I was curious as to how this research is important to not only educators and researchers, but students as well. When determining whether curriculum is appropriate for their students, educators will read through the entire curriculum, cross-compare it to similar curriculum, and pick out pieces in which their students will understand, but most importantly, be interested in and find relatable. There have been numerous research articles that discuss students' willingness to learn new concepts and skills when they are interested in the material, or when the material is directly related to them. Owens and Nowell (2001), when discussing picture books in relation to social studies lessons state, "Anyone who has recently spent time in elementary school classrooms has heard children pleading for more when their teachers use children's literature" (p. 33). Students become engaged with their text if the texts can draw power to the pictures to connect with the student. In knowing this, educator's lessons are more effective when they supplement with outside resources to their students' personal lives.

Abraham Lincoln was represented as a very kind and caring child who enjoyed laughing and joking around with other individuals. He was self-taught for a majority of his life with less than a year of schooling. His family was poor and could not afford luxuries that others were able to enjoy. In addition, Lincoln had intrinsic motivation to pursue his dreams, and even when he did not quite reach them, he did not give up. He persevered until he was president of the United States of America, and his memory lives on today. Students who read about Abraham Lincoln may not just be reading about him because he was one of our presidents, and he is important to know. Instead, they could be directly relating their lives to his own.

Although students do go to school, or get home-schooled in today's age, some grow up in households where their parents are not able to afford luxuries. An overlooked luxury might include eating three meals a day. These particular students may be reading about Abraham Lincoln and his life to see that although life may get tough, and the road is not always a clear path to where they will end up, by not giving up, the children could have a career that is enjoyable and one they love. Reaching destinations takes time, and by reading through the books about Abraham Lincoln's struggles and triumphs, students may make connections to their own lives in hopes that they will also find that intrinsic motivation to pursue their hopes and dreams. Pushing students to become more intelligent, independent and self-sufficient, and full of belief in themselves is the true goal of educators in the school system. However, if the students can connect these goals that educators encourage to a book about a historical figure in which they consider a role model, that may spark a fire within the students more than it would from an educator or parent.

### **Discussion**

The findings of this study produced purposeful outcomes for both researchers and educators. The outcomes from the findings can assist researchers and determine specific patterns in historical representation relevant to Abraham Lincoln between the years of 1930 and 1970. The outcomes, additionally, can help them explore further research. Educators can create and build curriculum by utilizing the findings to select applicable and well-represented trade books for their classroom to supplement their curriculum. The findings were not intended to criticize or demean any particular author, but to discover the historical information within children and young adult literature written not even 100 years after Abraham Lincoln's assassination.

### **Implications for Researchers**

There are many reasons why this study is relevant to researchers. This is one of a few studies where a president's historical representation in trade books has been looked at, especially within trade books written almost a century ago. There are a few studies where presidential trade books have been analyzed to discover misrepresentations in addition to representations, however, none focus on trade books dating back to the 1930s. Andrew Jackson's representation in trade books has been researched (Sakowicz, 2016), as well Abraham Lincoln's representation in trade books (Bickford, 2018), but with a focus on trade books written for a dated audience had yet to be investigated. With this in mind it is important to point out that Lincoln is the first of the presidents to be researched in this way. Within this study, common patterns and findings appeared, similar to those found in prior studies.

Omission, a historical misrepresentation, appeared within this study as it has in numerous other studies (Bickford & Lindsay, 2017; Sakowicz, 2016). The appearance of omission seemed

most prominent with areas like the acknowledgement that public consciousness and memory change over time, as well as recognition that history is told by humans who are shaped by the present, as stated above. However, another appearance of omission that occurred frequently was comparing Lincoln to ordinary humans. Several trade books did not directly compare Lincoln to ordinary humans, but rather listed several connections in which students or educators might compare.

In addition to omission from research, a common misrepresentation that has occurred time and time again throughout curricula is the notion that Abraham Lincoln freed the enslaved African Americans. If research was not dedicated on Abraham Lincoln, educators would still be instilling this misrepresentation in their teaching as trade books note that he freed all of the enslaved African Americans, not just the southern enslaved African Americans. However, “Teachers, if aware of misrepresentative patterns and their selected book’s deficiencies, can appropriately address the situation with intentional pedagogy” (Bickford, 2018, pg. 156). Trends such as Lincoln abolishing slavery carry over from trade books written between 1930 and 1970, to trade books written in 2018. Regardless of the time frame in which a trade book was written, researchers and educators can use the representations and misrepresentations from trade books to effectively supplement their instruction.

Another important finding to note is the pattern in which nearly every trade book represented Lincoln’s honesty and kindness continuously throughout his lifetime. The trade books provided examples and scenarios as to how Abraham Lincoln was kind or honest as a child, and even as he moved into his young adult life, and finally his adult life. Abraham Lincoln was not just a kind nor honest child, but he held these character traits and beliefs until he was assassinated.

An interesting thought for educators to consider in this research is the pattern that there are more chapter books represented in the children and young adult literature category than picture books. Several of the books within the representative sample may not have had outlined chapters and were considered a picture book, yet could have very well been over one-hundred pages. Comparing these particular books to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, these books would have been chapter books rather than picture books considering the length of the text. Picture books are intended for the primary grades in 21<sup>st</sup> century education, however, picture books written in the 1930s and 1940s could extend throughout upper intermediate and young adult levels. Likewise, most of the children and young adult literature books represented a continuous flow of discussion regarding Abraham Lincoln's personality traits. Starting as a young boy, Lincoln was represented as a kind and honest child, making sure to always tell the truth and be kind towards any and all individuals he came in contact with. However, this trait did not end as a teenager, but merely grew and expanded to aide him be the successful, adult man that is still looked so intently upon. Nearly all trade books continued his personality traits into adulthood within their stories; whereas all trade books did show a continuous pattern of self-taught education.

Lastly, dated trade books do not use human-first language. Trade books written between 1930 and 1970 use terms such as *slaves* and *Negroes*, where the language is less inclusive than today. As history is always evolving along with education, the use of the term *slavery* has been debated and new terminology has been proposed. Kaitlyn Greenidge (2017) uses the term *enslaved* in her essay to "put the emphasis on the humanity of people who were brought to this continent against their will and forced to work in bondage for generations" (Ferriss, 2017, pg. 1). Along with *slavery*, using the term *Negro* has been at the root of a racial controversy for decades. A group in the late 1960s campaigned to change the term because the ". . . word 'Negro' is an

inaccurate epithet which perpetuates the master-slave mentality in the minds of both black and white Americans” (Bennett, 1967, pg. 1). Trade books written in or after the 2000s may not have these terms anymore due to racial equality and the authors keeping up-to-date with inclusive language. Educators and researchers can use human-first language, or the lack of it, in trade books to discuss the importance of how individuals were viewed in the past and are viewed now.

### **Implications for Educators**

Social studies is often an area of curriculum that is set aside in today’s classrooms. With a heavy emphasis on common core, many educators find it difficult to incorporate the social studies curriculum into their daily, or even weekly, classroom routine. It can also be easy for educators to teach social studies word-for-word right out of the text book. This study shows educators the importance of social studies and historical thinking in the classroom, introduces educators to new ways to incorporate history into their reading and writing curriculum, and makes educators aware of the patterns present within. Most importantly, this research informs educators of ways that these trade books and the information within them can be used in their own classroom to promote historical literacy and thinking.

The Inquiry-Based approach is a common and well-researched approach that has become a central part of program strands in jurisdictions and general outcomes across the United States (Friesen, 2013). Inquiry holds a central place in the social studies areas of study, and students “construct meaning in the context of their lived experience through active inquiry and engagement with their school and community” (Alberta Education, 2007, pg. 5). Inquiry-based learning is an active form of learning in which students are given a posed question, problem, or scenario by a facilitator rather than just being presented with facts. The Inquiry-Based approach

goes hand-in-hand with nonfiction texts. Susan Mandel Glazer (1994) mentioned that nonfiction materials and publications were the ones most likely to foster wonder and “keep curiosity alive and well” (p. 7). By introducing students to nonfiction texts, their exhilarating educational journey can be one of discovery and authenticity. Outside of the classroom, most adults read nonfiction—newspapers, manuals, directions, magazines, memos, and informational trade books (Zinsser, 1998). In order to create a connection between real-world and the classroom, “We needed to get more trade nonfiction into our classrooms, so the kids could read it, appreciate it, learn from it, and write it more authentically” (Harvey, 2002, pg. 15). By utilizing nonfiction texts in the classroom, such as *Real People Abraham Lincoln* by Frances Cavanah (1950), or *America's Abraham Lincoln* by Martin McNeer (1957), students will be able to make connections to the real-world and act upon their curiosities. This approach also helps educators align their lessons with the Common Core State Standards reading informational texts and reading literature standards (CCSS, 2010).

When considering a social studies curriculum, educators should also be conscious of the many gaps that occur. Previous research has shown that using lone text books in a classroom can lead to many misconceptions and leave out significant historical detail (Moss, 1992). Likewise, although more all-encompassing, trade books can also lead students to misconceptions or leave them with questions, wanting to know more about a topic, similar to how these misconceptions can leave educators with questions. How then can educators fill these gaps? Supplementing social studies lessons and linking trade books with primary sources is a worthy way to facilitate historical thinking. A relevant historical document to study alongside of a trade book representation of Abraham Lincoln would be the Emancipation Proclamation. Students might like to look at the original proclamation and try to decode cursive and old English. There are

also many websites that offer educators with primary sources and document based questions (DBQ's) to assist social studies- related topics. *Sample Essays* (AP Study Notes, 2016) is a website that provides educators with DBQs specific to historical events. In relation to Abraham Lincoln, this website provides a plethora of DBQ's regarding the Emancipation and post Civil War.

Educators can also make enhancements to education within the classroom by using trade books to introduce literature circles. Using literature circles to encourage reading informational texts in a classroom is a great way for educators to adapt lessons and offer reading instruction at multiple levels (Barone & Barone, 2016). Literature circles help involve students in reading and stimulate student lead discussion within groups of students who hold equal ability and interest levels. When directing a literature circle, the educator will often provide the students with summaries of a few books and allow them to pick their desirable choices. At this point students are divided into groups by the educator based on interest and ability levels (DeVault, 2009). Educators could perhaps use any of the books listed in Appendix A to conduct literature circles dependent on the classroom they are in. Students read at different levels, and the books in Appendix A include several options within several reading levels. This exercise would permit students to feel in control of their learning and also support students to stay engaged while reading about Abraham Lincoln and his part in history. Students can actively partake in group discussion, debate historical events and individuals, and obtain a new sense of historical knowledge while contributing in these role-based groups.

Making sure curriculum is practical to students, educators are in charge of findings ways to show historical change over time, and how understandings can change. Given the 21<sup>st</sup> century, educators could provide students with a picture of a cell phone from 1970, 1980, 1990,

2000, 2010, and today's cell phone. The students can be in charge of analyzing and scrutinizing the pictures to determine how the cell phone and technology has changed over the decades.

What do the students know about cell phones from the 1970s, and how does that compare to what they know about them today? The same example can go towards Abraham Lincoln and history. Educators can take an excerpt from a trade book written in 1930 and an excerpt from a trade book written in 2018. By showing the students the excerpts from the two very different time frames, educators can then ask their students if they can find differences and similarities between the two excerpts. After analyzing and discussing the texts, an educator then might decide to ask their students if they can determine which text-based excerpt is from 1930 and which one is from 2018. Even though some of the trends may stay the same, our understandings of Abraham Lincoln may vary from year to year, much like technology.

In addition, educators continuously study curricula to determine how relevant it is to what they are teaching in the classroom. With the new Common Core State Standards, educators are utilizing material and curricula that is research-based and that will make an important impact in their classroom with their students. Abraham Lincoln is a common resource throughout the nation and plays a significant role in our nation's history. More than any president the nation has had, Lincoln is the most consequential. The nation was at a Civil War, a war within itself, during his time as president. Lincoln was able to make the nation whole again rather than divided. With research focused on Abraham Lincoln, educators can use trends pointed out within older books in their classroom to show how history truly has a meaningful effect on today's society. By bringing to light the patterns that are represented within older books, educators can utilize those patterns when creating curricula as to how to represent Lincoln within their lessons. The trends represented within dated trade books can be useful in determining which pieces of history

on Abraham Lincoln align with today's civilization. History is monumental, and educators are responsible for incorporating the past into the future, and by applying trends from dated trade books to 21<sup>st</sup> century learning, students can delve into a time period that may seem unrealistic to them.

This research allows educators to better comprehend how history and social studies can be integrated into the everyday lives of their students, including tying in this information to an English language arts classroom outside of a normal textbook. It provides multiple examples on how educators can incorporate these history-focused trade books into the classroom to reach students on a deeper comprehension level in which primary sources and textbooks might not be able to achieve. More importantly, this research shares why educators need to integrate history into their daily curriculum.

### **Limitations**

Although the protocol questions were refined and addressed, this inquiry has limitations. First, oversights are possible because a second reviewer was not used. Many similar studies do not incorporate a second reviewer (Bickford, 2018; Hutchins, 2011; Sakowitz) yet this study could benefit from established interrater reliability. Second, students' interpretations may differ from a researcher's evaluations because an adult author might encode a message that a child reader may fail to decode. To mitigate this concern, I noted places where disparate interpretations would likely emerge. Third, the data pool was intended to include all Lincoln-based trade books published during these specific periods, yet there is a possibility that some were overlooked. Fourth, the available reading complexity measures were unavailable for most books, so precise triangulation of three or more sources was impossible. Finally, definitive conclusions and broad claims cannot emerge from this single study.

**Areas for Future Study**

Further areas of exploration in relation to this study may include, but are not limited to, the following: Research on Abraham Lincoln and the historical representation in middle level and secondary trade books, text books, primary sources, and additional curricular resources. The resources could be written between 1930 and 1970, or can be resources that spread throughout the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Researchers may also benefit by utilizing this study to address the historical representation of the Civil War in children's literature, along with other prominent historical figures involved in the Civil War, such as General Ulysses S. Grant. It may also be of interest to those who wish to study the political debates between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas in search of information regarding the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Additionally, this study may also be of interest to those who intend to research the other Presidents sculpted on Mount Rushmore including: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Theodore Roosevelt.

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*Appendix B – Content Analysis Protocol for Open Coding*

1. Title, Author's Name, Publication Date, Company:
2. What is the book's genre?
  - a) Trade Book
3. Who was the main character(s)? Was there anyone besides Abraham Lincoln?
4. Did the book include information about Abraham Lincoln's frontier life?
5. How was Abraham Lincoln's 'honesty' and 'kindness' depicted in the book?
6. How did the book portray Abraham Lincoln's self-taught education?
7. Did the book compare Lincoln to ordinary Americans?
8. Does the book discuss Lincoln's family life?
9. How does the book discuss Lincoln's role in the Civil War?
10. Does the book state that Lincoln abolished slavery?
11. Does the book portray Lincoln to be a 'hero'?
12. Does the book acknowledge that public consciousness and memory change over time?
13. Does the book recognize that history is told by humans who are shaped by the present?

Appendix C – *Content Analysis Protocol Revised for Axial Coding*

1. Title, Author's Name, Publication Date, Company, Illustrator:

- a) Title:
- b) Author's Name:
- c) Publication Date:
- d) Publication Company:
- e) Illustrator:

2. Intended grade level of the book:

- a) Primary (K-2)
- b) Intermediate (3-5)
- c) Middle Level (6-8)

3. What is the book's genre?

- a) Fiction: Historical Fiction
- b) Non-fiction:
  - i. Narrative non-fiction
  - ii. expository
  - iii. biography

4. Format

- a) Picture book
- b) Chapter book

5. How many pages are in the book?
6. Who was the main character(s)? Was there anyone besides Abraham Lincoln?
7. Did the book include information about Abraham Lincoln's frontier life?
  - i. (Explicit and detailed)
  - ii. (Minimized, vague, or implicit)
  - iii. (omitted entirely)
8. How was Abraham Lincoln's 'honesty' and 'kindness' depicted in the book?
  - i. (Explicit and detailed)
  - ii. (Minimized, vague, or implicit)
  - iii. (omitted entirely)
9. How did the book portray Abraham Lincoln's self-taught education?
  - i. (Explicit and detailed)
  - ii. (Minimized, vague, or implicit)
  - iii. (omitted entirely)
10. Did the book compare Lincoln to ordinary Americans?
  - i. (Explicit and detailed)
  - ii. (Minimized, vague, or implicit)
  - iii. (omitted entirely)
11. Does the book discuss Lincoln's family life?
  - a) Did the book discuss his immediate family (Father, Mother, Siblings, Step-Mother)?
    - i. (Explicit and detailed)

- ii. (Minimized, vague, or implicit)
- iii. (omitted entirely)

b) Did the book discuss his marriage to Mary Todd and his children?

- i. (Explicit and detailed)
- ii. (Minimized, vague, or implicit)
- iii. (omitted entirely)

12. How does the book discuss Lincoln's role in the Civil War?

- i. (Explicit and detailed)
- ii. (Minimized, vague, or implicit)
- iii. (omitted entirely)

13. Does the book state that Lincoln abolished slavery?

- i. (Explicit and detailed)
- ii. (Minimized, vague, or implicit)
- iii. (omitted entirely)

14. Does the book portray Lincoln to be a 'hero'?

a) Uses the word 'hero'

- i. (Explicit and detailed)
- ii. (Minimized, vague, or implicit)
- iii. (omitted entirely)

b) Suggests Lincoln fits the characteristics of 'hero' on the following definition:

“a person noted for courageous acts or nobility of character” (dictionary.com)

- i. (Explicit and detailed)

- ii. (Minimized, vague, or implicit)
- iii. (omitted entirely)

15. Does the book acknowledge that public consciousness and memory change over time?

- i. (Explicit and detailed)
- ii. (Minimized, vague, or implicit)
- iii. (omitted entirely)

16. Does the book recognize that history is told by humans who are shaped by the present?

- i. (Explicit and detailed)
- ii. (Minimized, vague, or implicit)
- iii. (omitted entirely)

17. Does the book discuss Lincoln's/his family's dislike of slavery?

a) Lincoln's dislike:

- i. (Explicit and detailed)
- ii. (Minimized, vague, or implicit)
- iii. (omitted entirely)

b) Lincoln's father's dislike:

- i. (Explicit and detailed)
- ii. (Minimized, vague, or implicit)
- iii. (omitted entirely)

18. How does the book discuss Lincoln's role in politics?

a) His run for state legislature:

- i. (Explicit and detailed)
  - ii. (Minimized, vague, or implicit)
  - iii. (omitted entirely)
- b) His run for state senator:
    - i. (Explicit and detailed)
    - ii. (Minimized, vague, or implicit)
    - iii. (omitted entirely)
  - c) His run for presidency:
    - i. (Explicit and detailed)
    - ii. (Minimized, vague, or implicit)
    - iii. (omitted entirely)