

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Books and literature help children and young adults develop language, cognitive, and social skills. Additionally children's literature enables individuals to develop a deeper appreciation for their own, and others' cultures and histories. This thesis analyzes the young adult historical fiction series *Dear America*, published by Scholastic press, and examines how these books construct nation and racialized girlhood in the United States. The *Dear America* series features fictional diaries from girls at varying historical moments, and, with this in mind, I examine eight books from the series set during the Revolutionary War, Westward Expansion, and Civil War time periods. My analysis found that the *Dear America* series constructs sometimes contradictory notions of girlhood and nation. In the series I found that girlhood is constructed through the performance of daily feminized labor, heteronormativity, and resistance. Nation is constructed in the texts through a focus on foundational myths of the Revolutionary War and the figure of George Washington, as well as on racial hierarchies, and the rhetoric of individual persistence despite difficult situations.

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Gender, Race, and Nation in the *Dear America* Series

by
Kali Furman

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I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

Kali Furman, Author

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Introduction

The Project

Children's literature is important for several developmental and relational reasons that include allowing young readers to develop a deeper appreciation for culture and history. Books and literature help children and young adults develop language, cognitive, and social skills, enabling them to think critically and creatively as well as develop emotional intelligence (Norton). However, while literature is important for children, not all children benefit equally from access to, and representation in, literature. In the United States, due to systemic power and social inequities, the literature taught in schools has often been written by and for white middle-class audiences and has overlooked and misrepresented the contributions and experiences of people from underrepresented communities (Lenz and Mahood). Therefore, it is vitally important that the children's literature taught in schools, carried in libraries, and read by children be written by, about, and for people of varying identities, and backgrounds. In particular, historical fiction for children can enable students to "judge relationships and realize that their present and future are linked to actions in the past" (Norton, 523). Although children's historical fiction can re-inscribe dominant narratives, it can also serve as a critical intervention to help students learn complex, multiple histories and understand the impact those histories have on the world today.

This thesis analyzes the young adult historical fiction series *Dear America*, which is published by Scholastic press, and examines how these books construct nation and racialized girlhood in the United States. The *Dear America* series features fictional diaries from girls at varying historical moments. While authored by many different individuals, they all have the same composition: on the cover is a photo of the

protagonist, title, location, and year in which the story takes place. The books are in a diary format and cover approximately one to two years of a girl's life during a particular historical moment. Each book closes with an epilogue and a "Life in America" section that provides historical notes and photos focusing on the year and historical events covered in the book. Books vary in length and are targeted towards students aged eight through fourteen in third through eighth grades. From 1996 to 2004 Scholastic published thirty-six books in the original *Dear America* series. In 2010 the series re-launched and Scholastic published eighteen books; eleven were new editions of original series books and seven were new books. When the series was republished, Scholastic changed the front cover of the books and included the authors' names – something not done in the original publication of the series. Not featuring the author's names on the front cover of the original series was a point of criticism because it contributed to a lack of clarity on the point of the book's fictional status.

The popularity of the series led to several Scholastic book spin-offs in the United States and internationally, including Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand series. In the United States, Scholastic published the *Royal Diaries*, featuring famous princesses; *My America*, journals from younger children; and *My Name is America*, boys' journals in the same style as the *Dear America* books. Additionally, some books in the *Dear America* series were briefly turned into TV episodes by HBO (Hubler). The *Dear America* books are sold through bookstores, websites like Amazon, through their website, and through Scholastic's connections with schools, such as book fairs. On its main website Scholastic offers a summary of each novel and author information for the *Dear America* series. Scholastic has a "Teaching with *Dear America*" webpage which features

an interactive timeline providing historical context to the subjects in the books. Scholastic provides a variety of suggested activities including quizzes, arts and crafts, recipes and whiteboard-ready slides. Scholastic also provides a discussion guide and brief interviews with the authors of the novels. These discussion guides include a note to the discussion leader, a book summary, discussion questions, student activities, and a list of subjects and skills connected to the book. Additionally, they provide a detailed summary of the books including reading levels, grade interest levels, genre, and subjects lists.

This project contributes to scholarship on the *Dear America* series. I have a personal connection to this project because I read these books as a young girl and they ignited my imagination and helped to inspire my lifelong interest in histories. The thesis combines some of my long-standing interests and my academic background that includes a bachelor's degree in History with an emphasis in women's history, and minors in English and Gender Studies. This foundation of knowledge provides an interdisciplinary lens through which I engage with these texts.

My analysis examines how the novels within the *Dear America* series construct experiences of girlhood and the nation. The central research questions for this study are:

1. How do the texts construct an understanding of nation in the United States?
2. How do texts in the *Dear America* series create racialized girlhood?

Using a feminist literary analysis, I examine eight books in the *Dear America* series: four books from the original series that were re-published when the series re-launched in 2010 and four books from the original series that were not re-published. Given the scope of this master's thesis, it is unrealistic to examine all books within the series. I selected eight

books to highlight a variety of time periods and perspectives in both the original and re-launched iterations of the series.

The Approach

My analysis of the *Dear America* series is built on a theoretical framework that centers issues of oppression. Oppression is a historically rooted concept impacting individuals, communities, and systems in a variety of ways. Hardiman, Jackson, and Griffin, for example, define oppression as:

an interlocking, multileveled system that consolidates social power to the benefit of members of privileged groups and is maintained and operationalized on three dimensions: (a) contextual dimension, (b) conscious/unconscious dimension, and (c) applied dimension (27).

Hardiman et al. identify how oppression manifests through these dimensions at the individual, societal, and institutional levels. Black feminist theorist Patricia Hill Collins describes the organization of power that enacts oppression as the matrix of domination, which describes how “structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal domains of power reappear across quite different forms of oppression” (21). Oppression is enacted and expressed through beliefs, attitudes, policies, practices, norms, values, beliefs and customs based on the intersections of various identities, such as race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, and nationality. An understanding of oppression as interlocking, systemic, and multidimensional is essential to this thesis because the *Dear America* series details historical events in the United States over time, many of which were formative moments in the development or deconstruction of systemic and interpersonal oppression.

Systemic power and oppression has been used to advantage some groups of people while actively disadvantaging others (Adams). In the United States patterns of

privilege and oppression have been justified and perpetuated in part through the ways that history is taught. In the United States during the culture wars of the 1990s there was rigorous public debate over what type of national history should be taught in public schools as a result of the development of the National History Standards. These arguments are ongoing and are important context to the publication and circulation of the *Dear America* series. The development of the National Historical Standards began in 1991 when the United States Congress created a council to oversee the three-year project (Moreau). The idea for the National History Standards was put forth under the administration of President George H.W. Bush in order to improve education in the United States following critiques like the 1983 education report *A Nation at Risk*. The standards were developed by the National Center for History in Schools through the work of a large team of history teachers, state social studies specialists, state school officers, and academic historians (National Center for History in the Schools). The National History Standards came under criticism by the Republican right, which argued that the standards omitted important historical people and events in favor of politically correct ones (Nash, Crabtree, and Dunn).

The criticism of the National History Standards was brought to the forefront in 1994 when Lynne Cheney, former chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities, published her article “The End of History” in the *Wall Street Journal*. Cheney put forth a sharp criticism of the standards arguing the authors of the standards “save their unqualified admiration for people, places and events that are politically correct” (NP, Accessed April 29th, 2015). Cheney closed her article by advocating for people to galvanize against the national adoption of the National History Standards; otherwise she

claimed, the result would be “much that is significant in our past will begin to disappear from our schools” (Ibid). Cheney’s article re-launched a fervent public debate about the role of history in schools on national identity. The fight over the National History Standards was not new, just a different manifestation of debates that have been occurring about history since the inception of the United States (Nash, Crabtree, and Dunn).

The debates over the National History Standards were just one front of the culture wars of the 1990s that vigorously examined national identity in the United States. In their book *History on Trial* Nash, Crabtree and Dunn argue that “[i]t is not surprising that the political Right would open a history front in the culture wars,” because, “[h]istory ... is about national identity” (7). The conservative pushback against the National History Standards focused on the influence of feminist, multicultural and postmodern educational theories. Eventually the National History Standards were adopted in 1996 after many of the teaching examples were removed in an attempt to appease critics of the standards (Moreau). The debates over what history should be taught in schools did not end with the adoption of the National History Standards. As recently as February of 2015 the legislature of the state of Oklahoma moved to ban all A.P. History classes because legislators feel that state funds shouldn’t be used in courses that “emphasizes ‘what is bad about America’ and characterizes the United States as a ‘nation of oppressors and exploiters’” (Rampell, NP). The critics of courses that more critically analyze the history of the United States, both in the 1990s and currently, advocate for a teaching of history that Ronald Takaki describes as the dominant historical narrative in the United States, which he calls the “Master Narrative.”

According to Takaki “this powerful and popular but inaccurate story” maintains that the United States “was settled by European immigrants, and Americans are white” (4). He goes on to argue that the Master Narrative is re-inscribed in such a way that the “narrow definition of who is an American reflects and reinforces a more general thinking that can be found in the curriculum, news and entertainment media, business practices, and public policies” (5). The *Dear America* series details events in the United States over time, many of which were formative moments in the development or deconstruction of multiple forms of systemic and interpersonal oppression. As texts that are used by educators and librarians, it is important to analyze the *Dear America* series and the historical events it describes in relation to these master narratives of United States history. The cultural debates about the role of history in schools and the contentious fight over the National History Standards are important historical context to the *Dear America* series, as the series was originally published in 1996 and Scholastic actively provides curriculum and learning outcomes that specifically fulfill the National History Standards.

Organization

The following chapter begins with an exploration of the core concepts of power, intersectionality, and the social construction of identity. The theoretical framework of oppression outlined in this chapter is built upon to explore theorizations of power and the social construction of identity. The chapter then examines theorizations of the nation as an imagined community, provides an overview of the historical fiction genre, and reviews the previously published literature on the *Dear America* series. This analysis provides context for the genre of historical girlhood fiction and offers insight to the contribution of this thesis to the field.

Chapter two describes the methodology of this study, discussing the emergence of feminist literary criticism, ideology critique, and reader response theory. Additionally, this chapter describes in detail the rationale behind the selection of texts for examination in this study. After discussing the methodology of the study I move on to my analysis. In the analysis chapter I discuss the constructions of girlhood, race, and nation in each of the eight books examined in this study. For both research questions, I discuss three themes that emerged from my analysis. I discuss the ways that girlhood is constructed through daily feminized labor, heteronormativity, and resistance. Additionally, I analyze how nation is constructed through a foundation myth focused on the Revolutionary War, racial hierarchies, and narratives of individual persistence. I conclude this thesis with a summary of the broad themes from my findings and implications for future research.

Chapter 1

Nation, Historical Fiction, and the *Dear America* Series

Introduction

In the introduction to this thesis I outlined the theoretical framework of systemic oppression. In particular, systems of oppression manifest at the individual, societal, and institutional levels through categories such as race, gender, sexuality, religion, age, and global location. Literature helps to create the world we live in; as such, writing and literature both create and resist structures of power (Klages). Literature is layered with issues of power and who can speak, write, and read, and whose values are centered within narratives. This chapter builds on such theorizations of oppression and examines the core concepts of intersectionality, power, and the social construction of identity with a particular focus on gender and race. An understanding of systemic power and the social construction of race and gender is essential in order to explore the construction of nation and girlhood in the *Dear America* series. In order to further develop this analysis, the chapter goes on to examine theories of nation and national identity, the racialization and gendering of nation, and connections between nation and the historical novel. Additionally this chapter provides an orientation to the genre of historical fiction and examines the scholarship to date on the *Dear America* series.

Core Concepts

Three core concepts are vital to this project that seeks to examine constructions of racialized girlhood and nation: intersectionality, power, and the social construction of identity. Intersectionality, a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw her 1989 article, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of

Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics,” describes the multiple forms of oppression faced by black women and other women of color. Such intersections explain the juxtapositions of simultaneous identities like race, class, gender, and sexuality, and reveal how they impact women’s lived experiences. Throughout the history of feminist theory in the United States, there have been tensions and criticism of the dominant, primarily white and middle-class, feminist theorists for centering the issues only most relevant to them. These theorizations failed to address the multiple forms of oppression experienced by women of color, leading intersectionality theorists to “focus on simultaneous and multiple oppressions” which broadens “the notion of feminism to include a struggle against all forms of oppression” (Mann, 179). Intersectionality is essential to understanding oppression and power and the ways they impact individuals, communities, and societies. In order to examine how the *Dear America* series constructs both nation and girlhood it will be important to analyze how intersecting identities, oppression, and privilege are addressed within the texts.

Oppression is inexorably linked with power relations. Feminist theorizations of power have primarily focused on the dynamics of gendered power, although intersectional approaches help reveal the intersections of other power dynamics such as race and class. Among these feminist theorizations are liberal, radical, Marxist and socialist feminist theorists who theorize power as top-down, exercised by the privileged against marginalized people. By contrast, postmodern theorists advocate for a dismantling of such hierarchal, binary approaches to power. Postmodernists maintain that power is not only top-down, but that it is more complexly produced and reinforced (Mann). The work of French philosopher Michel Foucault is particularly important in

postmodern theorizations of power. Foucault argues “there is no binary and all-encompassing opposition between rulers and ruled at the root of power relations and serving as a general matrix – no such duality extending from the top down and reacting on more and more limited groups to the very depths of the social body” (1). Rather than viewing power as something binary and controlled, Foucault views power as disbursed through multiple societal relations and understands discourses as producers that continually reinforce power. The postmodern understanding of power as constructed through discourse is central to this study because I am examining the social construction of race and gender in the *Dear America* series, and identities such as race and gender are shaped by discursive practices.

Foucault argues that it is important to “chart the development of certain discursive practices, so that we can see that, rather than being permanent, as their familiarity would suggest, discourses are constantly changing and their origins can be traced to certain key shifts in history” (Foucault quoted in Mills, 23). The theorization of discursive power is closely connected with an understanding of identities as socially constructed, rather than essential or innate. Postmodernism rejects the premise that individuals or communities have core essential identities; rather they theorize these are products of social constructions that regulate normative behaviors.

Queer theory builds on the postmodern notions of non-essential identities and further elaborates on the construction of gender and sexuality. Susan Mann identifies a critique of normativity, as well as an understanding of gender and sexual identities as unstable, and the ways cultures create sexual and gender hierarchies as the main premises

of queer theory. Queer theorist Judith Butler's work further analyzes the ways in which gender and sexuality are constructed through a postmodern theory of performativity:

Gender is not exactly what one 'is' nor is it precisely what one 'has.' Gender is the apparatus by which the production and normalization of masculine and feminine take place along with the interstitial forms of hormonal, chromosomal, psychic, and performative that gender assumes... Gender is the mechanism by which notions of masculine and feminine are produced and naturalized, but gender might very well be the apparatus by which such terms are deconstructed and denaturalized (42).

Through performativity theory Judith Butler highlights the ways that gender and sexuality are actively performed and normalized, as well as the ways that they can be disrupted. In dominant culture gender and sexuality are perceived to be fixed identities, however within Butler's theory of performativity gender and sexuality are unstable and in flux. Despite the unstable nature of gender and sexuality, individuals are policed and constricted by the normative understandings of gender and sexual expression. Within queer theory one of the most important components of normative understanding of gender and sexuality is heteronormativity, the assumption of heterosexuality as the natural cultural norm. Queer theorists argue "that heteronormativity is core to the very construction of woman, man, masculinity, femininity, romance, intercourse, adulthood, morality, marriage, childbirth, parenting, and aging" (Mann, 237). These normative understandings of gender and sexual expression are intertwined with other identities such as race and class and these intersections play an important role in how gender and sexuality are constructed and policed.

Postmodernism has been criticized, particularly by intersectional feminist theorists, because the focus on individualism devalues and denies the power of group

identities for marginalized people and resisting dominant structures (Mann). Strategic essentialism uses identity categories for social and political organizing, while at the same time recognizing the limitations of essentialism and honoring the diversity of experiences within identity categories. When analyzing identity it is important to recognize the nuances of identities and their constructions and avoid essentialization, taking into consideration intersections of multiple identities given that no identity exists in a vacuum.

Paula M. L. Moya describes the ways that identities are both real and socially constructed:

... identities are constructed because they are based on interpreted experience and on theories that explain the social and natural world, but they are also real because they refer outward to casually significant features of the world... Because identities refer – sometimes in partial and inaccurate ways – to the changing but relatively stable contexts from which they emerge, they are neither self-evident, immutable, and essential nor are they radically unstable or arbitrary (472).

Moya highlights the importance of identity while recognizing how identities are shaped and understood in their socio-political contexts. In this sense she avoids the essentialism of identity politics in part by advocating for recognition of fallible truth claims about the relationships between social locations and experiences. For this literary analysis of the *Dear America* series I utilize postmodern theorizations of power as constructed and dispersed through discourse but also employ notions of strategic essentialism in order to examine the construction of multiple identities within the series.

While there are many ways that identities are socially constructed, the construction of race and gender are central to this project. Carmelita Castañeda and Ximena Zúñiga state that “race is a sociopolitical, not a biological, construct, one that is

created and reinforced by social and institutional norms and practices, as well as individual attitudes and behaviors” (58). In the United States race has been used to “justify the dominance of peoples defined as ‘white’ (colonists/settlers) over other peoples defined as racially different or inferior, such as, first, Native Americans and enslaved Africans, and later, Mexicans, Chinese, Puerto Ricans, South Asians, and other marginalized racial groups” (Castañeda and Zúñga, 58). The racialization of different groups of people has evolved throughout the history of the United States and is intertwined with economic, social, political, and legal policy. Additionally, the ways in which race intersects with other identities such as gender, age, nationality, and ability impacts the ways in which peoples are racialized and race is constructed.

David Glover and Cora Kaplan discuss the historical understandings and shifts in conceptualizations of gender in the Western context, noting that, “our ideas and beliefs about sexuality have been revolutionized over the last hundred years – indeed, they are still changing” (17). An important distinction is the relationship between sex and gender. Glover and Kaplan emphasize that these concepts “are therefore intimately related, but not because one is ‘natural’ while the other represents its transformation into ‘culture.’ Rather, *both* are inescapably *cultural* categories that refer to ways of describing and understanding human bodies and human relationships, our relationship to our selves and to others [orig. emph.]” (17) Glover and Kaplan’s discussion of gender draws on the work of postmodernism and queer theory, highlighting the social construction of gender.

The three core concepts detailed in this section are intersectionality, power and the social construction of identity. Intersectionality theory is important in analyzing how of intersections of identities and oppression in the *Dear America* series. Postmodern

theorizations of power are important foundations to understanding the social construction of identity, particularly gender and race, which are central to this study and the following section that addresses theories of nation and national identity, the racialization and gendering of nation, and connections between nation and the historical novel.

Nation

In order to analyze theorizations of nation it is first important to differentiate between nation and nation-state. The modern nation-state has evolved over time through a particular historical development in Europe and focuses on ideas of sovereignty, equality, and democratic institutions (Ting). There are many variables that contribute to the construction of nation including religion, language, law, economics, and colonization practices. Tamar Mayer differentiates between nation and state in the following way:

“although *nation* and *state* are often used interchangeably, they are emphatically not synonymous. A state is a sovereign political unit, which has tangible boundaries, abides by international law and is recognized by the international community. But while it may have tangible characteristics and is always self-defined, a nation is not tangible” (2).

Mayer’s distinction that nation is not tangible is built upon the understanding of Benedict Anderson’s theorization of nation as an imagined community.

In *Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Anderson examines the evolution of the concept of nation and development of nationalism within varying historical contexts. Anderson offers the definition of nation as “an imagined community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (6). He argues that this national community is imagined because all members of a nation will never know each other, limited because nation has some form of boundary, and sovereign

because the concept of nation emerged in a time when the divine right of monarchs was actively questioned and challenged. According to Anderson, three cultural concepts had to be questioned in order for the concept of nation to emerge: scripts that controlled access to truths, the divine right of monarchs, and a conception of the beginning of earth and humanities' existence as identical. In addition to these concepts, capitalism and printing, particularly books and newspapers, were essential to the development of the concept of nation and nationalism because they provided a basis for the development of national consciousness. The convergence of capitalism and print marketing did this by creating a common, accessible mode of communication, helping to build an image of ancient times that is essential to the idea of nation, and it shaped new kind of language power (Anderson).

As cultural notions shifted over time and printing enabled the communication of national ideas, it also "link[ed] fraternity, power and time meaningfully together" (36). It is through these linkages that Anderson argues for nation as an imagined community because "regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship" (7). Anderson's theorization of nation is primarily focused on the pre-conditions that make it possible for the nation form to develop (Reicher and Hopkins). Anderson's theorizations of nation as imagined community have been foundational for further studies of nation, nationalism, and national identity.

Other authors have built upon Anderson's theories to examine how social actors and systems within nations participate in the construction of imagined communities through discourse, as well as the construction of national identity. For example, Ruth

Wodak, Rudolph de Cilia, and Martin Reisigl examine how the “imaginary community reaches the minds of those who are convinced of it” through “discourse, predominantly in narratives of national culture” (22). Thus, they conclude that national identity is the product of discourse. The discourse of national identities is also the focus of cultural theorist Stuart Hall’s theorizations of nations as “systems of cultural representation” in which people “participate in the *idea* of the nation” through national culture, building upon the idea of imagined communities (Hall, 612). Hall describes national cultures being constructed of intuitions, symbols and representations. He argues that national culture:

... is a *discourse* – a way of constructing meanings which influences and organises both our actions and our conception of ourselves. National cultures construct identities by producing meanings about ‘the nation’ with which we can *identify*; these are contained in the stories which are told about it, memories which connect its present with its past, and images which are constructed of it” (613).

Hall identifies five ways that narratives of national culture are used to discursively construct national identities. The first is the narrative of the nation, which is expressed through national histories, literature, media, and other forms of popular culture. These narratives provide the imagery of national events, symbols and rituals that represent the shared experience that gives meaning to the nation. Historical narratives are particularly important to nation and historical narratives are discussed in most theorizations of nation. Different narratives of national history are used to secure the national imaginary through the use of icons and symbols (Reicher and Hopkins). National histories are vital to theorizations of nation, which is reflected in both the narratives of nation and narratives of national culture.

The second way national identity is constructed is through narratives of origins, continuity, tradition and timelessness. This second aspect of Hall's theory maintains that "the essentials of the national character remain unchanged through all the vicissitudes of history" (614). This way of narrating national culture ensures continuity of an imagined national character. The third narrative is the invention of tradition. Hall draws upon the work of Hobsawm and Ranger to articulate how rituals of a largely symbolic nature are created to instill values and norms overtime that "make historical confusion and defeats understandable; they transform disorder into community" (Wodak et al., 24). Hall identifies foundational myths as the fourth narrative of national culture. The foundational myth provides a story that explains the origins of the nation and national character. These myths are often set so far back in the past that they are no longer part of 'real' conceptions of time. Foundational myths can be used in official narrations of nation-states and to found new nations. The fifth and final narrative discussed by Hall is the idea of a pure, original people or 'folk.' This narrative is used to symbolically ground national identities, though "in the realities of national development, it is rarely this primordial folk who persist or exercise power" (Hall, 615). These five narratives of national culture are employed in creating national identity and seek to unify members despite the diversity of identities and inequities present within the nation.

Hall argues that national cultures have never been simply unified and that national cultures are a structure of cultural power. He points to the influence of colonialism, the ways that many modern nations were created out of violent conquests, and that nations are comprised of a variety of classes, genders, and ethnicities as evidence of this structural power. According to Hall, national cultures should not be thought of as unified

but as constituting “a *discursive* device which represents difference as unity or identity [orig. emph.]” (617). Colonialism, race, and gender are all intertwined within nation and national identity and represent difference. Colonialism can be defined as “the conquest and control of other people’s land and goods. But colonialism in this sense is not merely the expansion of various European powers into Asia, Africa or the Americas from the sixteenth century onwards; it has been a recurrent and widespread feature of human history” (Loomba, 32). While colonialism can be broadly defined as one political power or nation having control over another country or region, colonialism manifests in a variety of different forms.

Due to this project’s focus on the construction of nation in the United States, settler colonialism is an important form of colonialism to examine. Within settler colonialism “subordinate groups (often of a different race) are relegated to menial and low-paying jobs, denied the citizenship rights held by the dominant group, and forced to assimilate the language and culture of the dominant group” (Mann, 417). Walter L. Hixson argues that “American history is the most sweeping, most violent, and most significant example of settler colonialism in world history” evolving over the course of “three centuries, resulting in millions of deaths and displacements” (1). When Europeans arrived in the Americas during the fifteenth century the indigenous population is estimated to have been in the millions, but by the 1900s the number of indigenous peoples in the United States was approximately 250,000 (Macionis). Andrea Smith argues that genocide and colonialism form one pillar that upholds white supremacy in the United States. The genocide of indigenous peoples through colonialism enables “non-indigenous peoples rightful claim over this land. Through this logic of genocide, non-

Native peoples then become the rightful inheritors of all that was indigenous – land, resources, indigenous spirituality, or culture” (68). Smith’s discussion of genocide and colonialism demonstrated the necessity of continually disappearing Native peoples in order for the continued settler colonization of the United States. Colonialism is intertwined with the construction of nation and national identity. Colonialism is also linked to the construction of race.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, race is not biologically determined but rather socially constructed. Throughout European colonization racial stereotypes have been created and recreated, beginning with the Greek and Roman empires where the images of outsiders evolved. The racial stereotypes of ‘the other’ shifted through time and were influenced by discourses of Christianity and science, which led to images of savagery (Loomba). The early scientific studies of race during European colonial expansion intensified racial stereotypes. Scientific racism was inscribed “by attributing racial characteristics to biological differences such as skull and brain sizes ... and by insisting on the connection between these factors and social and cultural attributes, science turned ‘savagery’ and ‘civilisation’ into fixed and permanent conditions” (Loomba, 183). This science was used to further connections between race and nation:

Scientific racism from the eighteenth century calcified the assumption that race is responsible for cultural formation and historical development... While sometimes nations can be imagined as multi-racial, more often, as in the case of Australia, the very idea of nationhood was developed by excluding certain racial others, such as the Aboriginal peoples (Loomba, 185).

Colonialism and race impact the ways that the nation-state is created, nation is imagined, and cultural identities are formed. Gender is another important construct that impacts the

ways that nation is imagined and narratives of national culture are used to construct national identity.

In many theorizations and studies of nation and nationalism, the role of gender has been under-examined. Many studies focus on the role of state bureaucracy and intellectuals, while the role of women and the gendered dynamics of national reproduction through symbols, culture, and biology remain under theorized (Yuval-Davis). Feminist interventions into the study of nation have examined the gendered dynamics of nation and argue for the importance of connections between gender and nation. For example, Mayer suggests:

Despite its rhetoric of equality for all who partake in the ‘national project,’ *nation* remains, like other feminized entities – emphatically, historically and globally – the property of men. At the same time, if it is gendered, *nation* remains – quite like gender and sexuality – a construction that speaks to the conflicted urges of human community. For both ‘nation’ and ‘gender’ help construct a fiction of ‘innateness’ in the name of bonds whose fragile, endangered status is evidenced in the fierceness with which they are defended (1).

Mayer, like Hall, highlights that despite the rhetoric of unity created by the narratives of national culture the nation remains influenced by power structures and constructs difference.

As Hall argues, national culture is discursively created through narratives of nation, origins, timelessness, the invention of tradition, foundational myths and the idea of an original people. While national culture works to construct and present a unified imaginary of nation, systemic power and oppression impact these imaginings because “elites play a major role in constructing the nation and its narratives, the nation is generally represented so that it serves the aspirations of the elite” (Mayer, 9).

Colonialism, race, and gender have all contributed to definitions of the other, the ways that nation-states have been constructed, and how nation is imagined. In the case of the United States, settler colonialism is inextricably linked to formation of nation. In order to analyze the *Dear America* series it is important to understand how power, race, and gender are intertwined in the narratives of national culture that construct the imagined community of nation.

Historical Fiction

As discussed in the previous section, narratives of national culture are composed of institutions, symbols and representations. Of particular importance to this thesis is the narrative of nation that constructs stories, images, national symbols and traditions through the telling of national histories, literatures, and media. Historical fiction participates in these narratives of nation and the construction of imagined communities of nation through the telling of national histories in literature. History enables a collective understanding “from which a national character can be formed. Historical fiction uses and thereby perpetuates national constructions of culture: it thus functions most effectively as a national fiction” (Wilson, 109). This section examines the development of historical fiction and in particular historical fiction for children.

The historical novel explores tensions between the past and present, and authors within the genre each have “a different approach to the way in which their practice as historical novelists intersects with ‘reality’ and with ‘history’; but each is moved to articulate this to the readership of their novels” (de Groot, 9). The historical novel form emerged in Europe during the early nineteenth century, coming out of the development of the larger novel genre and the rise of nationalism. Prior to the designation of the historical

novel as a standing form, many different types of prose incorporated history. One of the earliest examples is Chinese author Luo Guanzhong, who in 1522 published the influential *Three Kingdoms*, an early work of historical fiction prose (de Groot). History was interwoven into eighteenth century European novels, particularly romance novels written by and for women. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries women authors were writing historical romance fiction for primarily female audiences. These novels were often concerned with romantic desire and were associated with popular culture.

Walter Scott's *Waverly* (1814) is often described as the first defined historical novel because of the unique way he drew on emerging, distinct historical moments (de Groot). *Waverly* contains several of what are now seen as distinctive attributes of the historical novel: an author's note, extensive footnotes and addendums meant to demonstrate the historical accuracy of the work. Despite the common categorization of Scott as the first historical novelist, power and privilege impact his legacy in literary history. De Groot points out that Scott's "originary definition establishes an authority for his writing that is in some way false." Scott's designation is part of the "development of the historical novel" that "is particularly Eurocentric" (13). This is also true of the novel form because the traditional genealogy of the novel often ignores the writing of marginalized people such as women, people of color, and authors outside of Europe.

Marxist literary theorist Georg Lukács was highly influential in analyzing the core features of the historical novel. Lukács cites the French Revolution as a significant historical event from which the historical novel developed because of the ways in which it created an understanding of national history. In his book *The Historical Novel* Lukács states:

[T]he awakening of national sensibility and with it a feeling and understanding for national history occurs not only in France. The Napoleonic wars everywhere evoked a wave of national feeling, of national resistance to the Napoleonic conquests, an experience of enthusiasm for national independence... The appeal to national independence and national character is necessarily connected with a reawakening of national history, with memories of the past, of past greatness, of moments of national dishonor, whether this results in a progressive or reactionary ideology (25).

Lukács focuses on the juxtaposition of economic and social forces following the French Revolution as enabling a societal perception of the process of creating and understanding history. He also emphasizes that the emergence of the historical novel as a genre in the nineteenth century is exemplified by the work of Scottish author Sir Walter Scott. Scott's work was distinguished from the broader novel genre of the eighteenth century because of his ability to capture the significance of national historic moments through individual characters connecting with the audience. The historical novel continued to develop as a literary genre into the twentieth century and has grown to be an expansive field, with many sub or overlapping genres. For example, historical novels for children have been widely circulated since the mid-nineteenth century, following the popularity of Fredrick Marryat's *Children of the New Forest*, published in 1848 (de Groot). The historical children's literature of the nineteenth century focused on important events and men that fit into the greater cultural narrative of colonialism. Throughout its circulation historical fiction for children has been recognized for "the pedagogical potentiality of the historical novel explicitly asserts that the ... historical framework can be both entertaining and educational" (de Groot, 90). However, as de Groot points out, it shares similar possibilities and conflicts as historical fiction for adults.

Historical fiction enables the reader to imagine the future because it “not only expresses what today may be seen upon the surface of life and is consciously known, but can delve into the real origins both of oppression and degeneration and of the path to liberation. It creates models which accelerate the consciousness and resoluteness of the longing for liberation” (Lukács, 340). It is through a connection with history and a greater understanding of past that one can imagine the future as opportunity. However, Lukács cautions that the form can fail to establish a connection between the reader and the socio-historical context of the novel and then “the function of history becomes merely that of a background, a decorative stage” (286). In this way, the distinguishing feature of historical fiction, an ability to connect past with present, is both a strength and weakness. The balance between past and present is connected to questions of authenticity and the author’s ability to accurately represent historical figures or time periods.

This criticism surfaces in the context of tensions between historical fiction and contemporary attitudes, beliefs, and values. In her article “Writing Backward: Modern Models in Historical Fiction,” Anne Scott Macleod argues that over the past twenty years historical novels for children have shied away from providing in-depth detail of the harsh realities of the time periods they write about. She states “[t]oday’s publishers, authors, and reviewers often approach historical fiction for children as the early nineteenth century did – as an opportunity to deliver messages to the young” (Accessed November 22, 2014). She uses examples from various children’s historical fiction, such as Karen Cushman’s *Catherine, Called Birdie* to demonstrate ways that authors have written characters that are more reflection of modern sentiments, such as a focus on

independence, rather than an accurate portrayal of the sentiments and cultural context of the historical time period.

Macleod argues that by falling into formulas that create similar characteristics reflective of modern sentiments, but not necessarily the historical context in children's historical novels, authors dismiss the importance of nuance and complexity. She states "[s]uch stories suggest that people of another time either did understand or should have understood the world as we do now, an outlook that quickly devolves into the belief that people are the same everywhere and in every time, draining history of its nuance and variety" (Accessed, November 22, 2014). Kim Wilson addresses this draining of history in her book, *Re-Visioning Historical Fiction for Young Readers: The Past Through Modern Eyes*. Wilson analyzes historical fiction for children focusing on the narratives of positive progression in relation to contemporary attitudes rather than past realities. She argues:

What I have identified then in historical fiction for children published over the past thirty to forty years is an inherently embedded humanistic metanarrative of positive progression. Such an interpretive metanarrative presupposes two premises as irrefutable; first, that anything moving into the future is better than all that came before; and second, that there are core human values and emotions consistent to every age (5).

Wilson's identification of the metanarrative of positive progression and core values is consistent with Stuart Hall's analysis of continuity and timelessness as narratives of national culture. One chapter of Wilson's book focuses on analyzing Scholastic historical journals, though not the *Dear America* series. Throughout *Historical Fiction for Young Readers* Wilson discusses the contemporary values that surface in historical fiction for children. Other authors address the inserting of contemporary values in historical fiction

and are discussed in the scholarship on the *Dear America* series detailed in the following section.

Nation, History, and Contemporary Issues in the *Dear America* Series

The previously published material on the *Dear America* series is largely concentrated in publications focused on children's literature and education. Most articles address one or two components of the series – generally associated with particular themes, time periods, or individual texts within the series. There are three broad categories under which the previously published material falls: first, historical accuracy; second, an analysis of the presence of contemporary perspectives within the text; and third, issues of nation and national identity. One key article that addresses all of three categories of historical accuracy, contemporary perspectives, and national identity is Angela E. Hubler's 2000 article "Girl Power and History in the Dear America Series." She analyzes five books in the original series and focuses on the ways these books vary in their success at portraying complex characters and constructing history. Hubler begins by establishing the importance of history for feminism and builds this to discuss how the version of history presented by the books might connect with girls and their own experiences with adolescence. She utilizes frameworks from literary critic George Lukács' *The Historical Novel* and cultural critic Fredric Jameson who both "focus on the historical novel or other cultural representations of history rather than on history itself" (99). She argues that an accurate knowledge of complex history can offer girls an understanding on their own experiences, as well as an understanding of the history of gender oppression and resistance.

Historical Accuracy

The theme of historical accuracy is present in most of the literature on the *Dear America* series. Several articles criticize the ways in which books in the series handle significant historical institutions such as colonialism and slavery. One important article addressing slavery directly is T. Lee Williams' "A Closer Look: The Representation of Slavery in the *Dear America* Series." This article analyzes the representation of slavery in four of the Scholastic historical journals; three from *Dear America* and one from *My Name is America*. The *Dear America* novels examined are *A Picture of Freedom: The Diary of Clotee, a Slave Girl*; *I Thought My Soul Would Rise and Fly: The Diary of Patsy, a Freed Girl*; and *When Will the Cruel War Be Over? The Civil War Diary of Emma Simpson*. *A Picture of Freedom* and *When Will this Cruel be Over?* are used in the analysis for this project.

Williams found across the books that none of the main characters are field slaves, which lessens the presence of more commonly addressed topics of physical and emotional violence. As a result she argues that the novels present an inaccurate portrayal of history on several fronts: main characters are presented as overly optimistic, having more literacy skills than slaves often did in reality, that they misrepresent family structures, and have inaccurate portrayal of the relationships with white people, specifically in the context of slave owners and abolitionists. In the conclusion of the article Williams discusses the problematic presentation of exceptionalism amongst the characters in the *Dear America* books.

The critique of individualistic focus and a lack of depiction of the harsh realities of the time periods written about is addressed by Marlene Atleo et al. in their critical

review of Ann Rinaldi's *My Heart is on the Ground: The Diary of Nannie Little Rose, A Sioux Girl*. This text details the experience of the character Nannie Little Rose, a Sioux girl, at a government-run boarding school based on the Carlisle Boarding School. Atleo et al. criticize the novel for being culturally appropriative, lacking historical accuracy and cultural authenticity, and containing stereotypes of native cultures, especially the roles of women and girls:

The book adds to the great body of misinformation about Native life and struggle in the United States and Canada. This one book epitomizes the utter lack of sensitivity and respect that has come to characterize the vast majority of children's books about Native Americans. Non-Native readers of my *My Heart is on the Ground* will continue to be validated in whatever feelings of superiority they may have; Native children will continue to be humiliated (Accessed November 22, 2014).

The second book told from the perspective of a Native girl in *Dear America* series, *The Girl Who Chased Away Sorrow: The Diary of Sarah Nita a Navajo Girl*, has also been criticized for the way it represents Native Americans, specifically the Navajo. The author of *The Girl Who Chased Away Sorrow*, Ann Turner, is not Navajo or an indigenous person and has been criticized for misrepresenting Navajo culture, tradition, and the Long Walk. In *A Broken Flute: The Native Experience in Children's Literature* Beverly Slapin discusses the way Turner fit the story, which would be told in an oral tradition, into the diary format was for Sarah Nita's granddaughter to record it. Slapin points out that a Diné child would not take notes during an elder's story: "that would be rude... The elder would tell a story to be learned, not written down" (46). Additionally, Slapin criticizes the "romantic-sounding imaginary Indian speech patterns that white writers seem to like so well," for example, the title of the book *The Girl Who Chased Away Sorrow* (Ibid).

The effect this has is the construction of “Native experiences into a European worldview and form – while pretending to be an indigenous worldview and form” (48). *The Girl Who Chased Away Sorrow* is analyzed later in this project. Angela Hubler discusses *Dear America* series editor Tracy Mack’s response to the critique of *My Heart is on the Ground* and quotes an online response (the hyperlink to which no longer works, as the response was posted in 1999): “A large mission... of the *Dear America* series as a whole, is to give voice to those who historically were denied it – namely girls be they white, Native American, African American, etc.” (100). The theme of voice is important for this series and is addressed throughout later sections of this chapter.

Hubler argues that such faults are more present in *My Heart is on the Ground* than in some of the other books, but that they are indicative of general faults throughout the series, primarily the lack of historical accuracy and a focus on individualistic voice. The critiques of *My Heart is on the Ground* lie in the inaccurate representation of life at the Carlisle Indian School and issues of colonialism and cultural appropriation. Hubler argues that *Standing in the Light: The Captive Diary of Catherine Carey Logan* and *Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie: the Oregon Trail Diary of Hattie Campbell* both also fail to appropriately address issues of racism and sexism. Despite some texts in the series failing to address larger systemic issues, and failing to present historically accurate representations of girlhood, Hubler suggests other novels in the series are successful. She discusses *A Picture of Freedom: the Diary of Clotee, a Slave Girl* and *Dreams in a Golden Country: the Diary of Zipporah Feldman, a Jewish Immigrant Girl* as examples of texts in the series that present nuanced and complex stories that reflect historical accuracy, address larger systems such as racism, and portray collective action. *Across the*

Wide and Lonesome Prairie: the Oregon Trail Diary of Hattie Campbell and *A Picture of Freedom: Diary of Clotee, a Slave Girl* are examined in this project.

Contemporary Perspectives

Angela Hubler argues that the authors of *Standing in the Light* and *My Heart is on the Ground* focus more on contemporary issues for girls under the frameworks of self-esteem and voice rather than grounding their work in the historicized context of the novel's setting. The issue of voice is also addressed in Alisa Clapp-Itnyre's "Battle on the Gender Homefront: Depictions of the American Civil War in Contemporary Young-Adult Literature." The article analyzes the ways in which gender roles are constructed in four young adult Civil War novels. Two of the novels analyzed by Clapp-Itnyre are part of the *Dear America* and *My Name is America* series, Karen Hesse's *A Light in the Storm: The Civil War Diary of Amelia Martin* and Jim Murphy's *The Journal of Edmond Pease: A Civil-War Union Soldier*.

Clapp-Itnyre compares the titles of the two historical journal series by Scholastic, arguing the names of the series are sexist. She notes that the names of the girlhood series *Dear America* is passive whereas that for the boyhood series, *My Name is America*, is active. Clapp-Itnyre argues that the format of diaries has the potential to be empowering for readers but that power is limited because the diaries present is an individualistic approach. She states "[i]t is then, exactly in the elements of language, voice, and narration that many of our current diaries are still failing to be feminist" (155). Clapp-Itnyre argues that in novels with male protagonists, the boys are politically active and engaged whereas in novels with female protagonists the girls are apolitical. She found that Amelia, the protagonist of *A Light in the Storm*, experiences the Civil War largely

metaphorically through the divorce of her parents that is caused by their political divide over the war. Although Amelia is presented as smart, having read books like *Origin of the Species* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and makes reference to heroic deeds, but the deeds are secondary to the domestic problems of her family and her romantic interests.

National Identity

A final important theme from the previously published material is national identity. This theme is addressed by Kim Wilson in her article “Are They Telling Us the Truth?” Constructing National Character in the Scholastic Press Historical Journals.” This article analyzes national identity in the *My Name is America* series and the Australian Scholastic historical journal series *My Australian Story*. While Wilson does not specifically analyze the *Dear America* series, this article provides important analysis about connections between history, historical fiction, and national character. Wilson argues that history and historical fiction create a communal experience that forms national character. Wilson states “[g]iven that so much time and effort has been devoted to establishing and perpetuating a national character – a national character pertinent to the current day – it is not surprising that a critical evaluation of the historicity of the Scholastic Press historical journal series finds them lacking in fidelity to the past” (138). In her conclusion, similar to other critiques of the *Dear America* series, Wilson argues that the authors of Scholastic historical journals conflate contemporary perspectives within an inaccurate representation of historical context.

Conclusion

This chapter provides an overview of the core theoretical concepts of intersectionality, power, and the social construction of identity. Benedict Anderson's

concept of nations as imagined communities has been foundational in theorizations of nation. It is important to understand nations not just as states with territories, peoples, and a government, but also as the process of an imagined community constructed within socio-historical and political contexts. Additionally, this chapter presents an orientation to the genre of historical fiction, children's publishing, and a review of scholarship on the *Dear America* series. I explore the theorizations, racializing, and gendering of nation, the narratives of national culture that construct national identities, and connections between historical fiction and the nation. I also provide an orientation to the genre of the historical novel and to the literature to date on the *Dear America* series. While much of the scholarship on *Dear America* focuses on the issue of historical accuracy, this project does not. This project does not ask whether or not the histories within the *Dear America* series are accurate, but rather explores how race, class, girlhood, and nation are constructed in a selection of texts within the series. I now turn to a discussion of the methodology employed in my analysis of the books in the *Dear America* series.

Chapter 2

Methodology

Literary analysis, the examination and interpretation of literary texts, has existed as long as there has been literature (Goulimari). Literary analysis is comprised of diverse and overlapping theoretical frameworks and methodologies that “manage multiple general ideas and devise multiple strategies for interpretation” (Castle, 3). Literary theories help to inform different analyses of texts that “examine factors that shape how a text is written and how we are able to read it” (Klage, 3). There are a variety of literary theories, ranging from formalist to post-colonial to feminist. Feminist literary analysis emerged out of the feminist movement of the 1970s and called into question many foundational topics in literary criticism including “the notion of the canon, the definition of the aesthetic, and of the reader, and the meaning of ‘theory’ itself” (Rooney, 18). It is important to note that while there is a great diversity of approaches within feminist literary criticism, there are some generally distinguishable features:

Feminist critics generally agree that the oppression of women is a fact of life, that gender leaves its traces in literary texts and on literary history, and that feminist literary criticism plays a worthwhile part in the struggle to end oppression in the world outside of texts (Warhol and Herndl, x).

In this way feminist literary criticism highlights and critiques power structures at the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality, among other markers of difference. In order to examine the construction of girlhood, race, and nation in the *Dear America* series this project engages in a textual literary analysis drawing on a feminist literary framework.

Fields such as feminist criticism, New Historicism and post colonialism have all relied on the hermeneutics of suspicion as a mode of reading (Felski). Paul Ricoeur coined this phrase when describing the analytically suspicious styles of Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud (Sedgwick). This type of “suspicious” reading in literature examines ideologies within texts because “works of literature, as things of this world, are always caught up in social hierarchies and struggles over power. The value of a text simply is its use, as measured by its role in either obscuring or accentuating social antagonisms” (Felski, 7). These ideologically grounded forms of literary analysis have been critiqued by scholars such as Eve Sedgwick and Rita Felski for becoming the *de facto* method of criticism, despite it being only one form of analysis among many. In her book *Uses of Literature* Felski argues for an analytical framework that moves towards a positive aesthetic that focuses on:

an expanded understanding of ‘use’ – one that offers an alternative to either strong claims for literary otherness or the whittling down of texts to the bare bones of political and ideological function. Such a notion of use allows us to engage the worldly aspects of literature in a way that is respectful rather than reductive, dialogic rather than high-handed (7).

Felski’s project focuses on the use of literature in response to what she feels is a hypercritical, inherently negative reading of texts. Reader-response theory highlights the role of reading for both critics and every-day readers of literary texts. Reader response theory demonstrates “the various roles the subjectivity of the reader play in the production and meaning of a text” (Schweickart and Flynn, 3). As someone who has read the *Dear America* series as an every-day reader, when I was a child, and as a critic for this project, my analysis is shaped through my lens. This project engages in a critical

examination of the construction of gender, race, and nation in the *Dear America* series. As will be explored in the following chapter, the books within this series present varying and at times conflicting constructions of gender, race and nation in the context of the United States. This reading is not solely critical, but also finds moments of resistance within these texts. Future projects could include interviews with teachers and people who have read the books to more fully take into account reader response in an analysis of the *Dear America* series.

Selection of the Texts

In order to explain the text selection methods for this study, it is important to explain the construction of the *Dear America* series. The original series, published from 1996 to 2004, contains thirty-six books focusing on historical events from 1620 to 1968. The series re-launched in 2010 and focuses on historical events from 1620 to 1954. On its “Teaching with *Dear America*” webpage, which features the books in the re-launched series, Scholastic identifies seven time periods the books fall under: Colonial Period (1607-1776), Revolutionary War (1775-1781), Westward Expansion (1804-1890), Civil War (1861-1865), Turn of the 20th Century (1900-1920), the Great Depression (1930-1939), World War II (1939-1945), and the Civil Rights Movement (1947-1967) (Accessed April 25, 2015). I used these dates as an organizing category for the books in both iterations of the series.

In the original series there were four books set in the Colonial Period, two books set in the Revolutionary War, thirteen books set in the period of Westward Expansion, four books set in the Civil War, six books set at the Turn of the 20th Century, three books set in the Great Depression, three books set during World War II, and one book set during

the Civil Rights Movement time period, although the book focuses on the Vietnam War. In the current series there is a combination of new books and books from the original series that were republished. In the Colonial Period there are three original series books that were brought back. There are two books set in the Revolutionary War, one original series and one new book. There are three books set during the period of Westward Expansion, one original series book and two new books. There are four books set in the Civil War; all are original series books that were brought back. There are three books set at the Turn of the 20th Century; there is one original series book and two new books. In the current series there is only one book during the Great Depression and it is an original series book. The World War II and Civil Rights Movement periods each have one new book. For a complete list of the books in the original *Dear America* series and the re-launched *Dear America* series see Appendix A and B.

For this study I engage in a textual literary analysis of books that were not brought back in the re-launch of the series and books that were in order to explore how the texts construct an understanding of nation, nationality, and racialized girlhood in the United States. Due to the expansive number of books within the series across both iterations and the constraints of this project, I selected eight books within the series to examine, rather than the series in its entirety. I analyzed four books from the original series that were not brought back when the series re-launched and four books that were. In order to account for the diversity of authors and protagonists, as well as the breadth of time and subject matter covered by the series, I specifically chose books from three of the time periods covered in the *Dear America Series*: the Revolutionary War, Westward Expansion, and the Civil War. The majority of books in both iterations of the series take

place within these three time periods. In the original series books, within these time periods account for 53% of the total series, and in the re-launched series they make up 50% of the series. I first selected four books from the original series that were brought back when the series re-launched in the Revolutionary War, Westward Expansion, and Civil War time periods. The Revolutionary War and Westward Expansion time periods had one book each that had been brought back. Of the four Civil War period books, two are from the perspective of white girls and two are from the perspectives of black girls who were slaves. I selected one book from the perspective of a white protagonist and one from the perspective of a black protagonist, and one book is set just prior to the beginning of the Civil War and one near its end. I selected the books that were not brought back by choosing books that were set in similar time periods and that dealt with similar events to the selections from the current iteration of the series. Due to the fact that all Civil War period books were brought back, I chose three books from the Westward Expansion time period that were not brought back to analyze. These selections give a broad examination of the time periods and perspectives presented by the *Dear America* series. The books I examined from the original series that were not brought back include:

- *Love thy Neighbor: The Tory Diary of Prudence Emerson Green Marsh, Massachusetts, 1774* by Ann Turner
- *Valley of the Moon: The California Diary of Maria Rosalia de Milagros Sonoma Valley, Alta California, 1846* by Sherry Garland
- *So Far From Home: The Diary of Mary Driscoll, an Irish Mill Girl Lowell, Massachusetts, 1847* by Barry Denenberg

- *The Girl Who Chased Away Sorrow: The Diary of Sarah Nita, a Navajo Girl New Mexico, 1864* by Ann Turner

The books that I examined that were re-published when the series re-launched are:

- *The Winter of Red Snow: The Diary of Abigail Jane Stewart Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, 1777* by Kristina Gregory
- *Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie: The Diary of Hattie Campbell The Oregon Trail, 1847* by Kristina Gregory
- *A Picture of Freedom: The Diary of Clotee a Slave Girl Belmont Plantation, Virginia 1859* by Patricia C. McKissack
- *When Will this Cruel War be Over: The Diary of Emma Simpson Gordonsville, Virginia, 1864* by Barry Denenberg

In the final section of this chapter I provide a brief plot summary of each book examined in this study.

Book Summaries

The Winter of Red Snow is the diary of eleven-year-old Abigail Jane Stewart during the winter of 1777 at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. Her diary describes the winter that George Washington's army spent there during the Revolutionary War, with a particular focus on the characters of George and Martha Washington. Abigail has interactions with both George and Martha Washington because her mother is the laundry woman for them. Abigail is the second eldest child in the Stewart family, having an older sister, a younger sister, and a baby brother. The diary begins with the birth of her baby brother, who they are afraid won't live because her mother has already had five sons die within the first year of their lives. Ultimately, the entire family survives the winter and in the epilogue

we learn that Abigail goes on to marry a blacksmith and her older sister, Elisabeth, marries a soldier she meets during the winter detailed in the book. Abigail's diary tells the story of the Stewart family's daily lives throughout the winter of 1777 and into the spring of 1778.

Love They Neighbor is the diary of thirteen-year-old Prudence Emerson and takes place in Green Marsh Massachusetts in 1774. Prudence's diary details the growing hostility her Tory family faces as tensions between the colonies and Great Britain escalate. Prudence is one of six children in the Emerson family; she has three sisters and two brothers. Her sister Kate is blind. Prudence's father owns a store and her mother is a very skilled midwife. *Love They Neighbor* primarily focuses on the political tensions between Patriots and Tories in the months leading up to the Revolutionary War. The environment in Green Marsh eventually becomes hostile to the point that the majority of the Emerson family moves to Boston. The book closes with the family moving again because of the escalating conflict, ultimately settling on the island of Nantucket. In the epilogue we learn that Prudence eventually marries and has five children, living out the remainder of her life on Nantucket with her family.

Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie is the diary of thirteen-year-old Hattie Campbell as she and her family make the journey from Booneville, Missouri to Oregon City, Oregon in 1847. Hattie is tasked with recording their journey, detailing the life of her family and the others they travel with. Throughout the journey Hattie details the daily tasks associated with traveling across the country in wagons and on foot, as well as the

injuries and deaths that occur along the way. She describes interactions with Native Americans, traders, and Mormons throughout the journey. Hattie is the eldest child in the Campbell family, ahead of two little brothers – although Hattie had four sisters die of fevers the year before the family moves to Oregon. Throughout her diary Hattie describes the family's journey and the lives of the people they travel with. Her best friend is Pepper and in the epilogue we learn that Hattie marries Pepper's brother Wade. Pepper and Hattie get their dream they thought of as girls on the Oregon Trail and for the rest of their lives, "shared a fence and a vegetable garden" (140).

Valley of the Moon is the diary of thirteen-year-old Maria Rosalia de Milagros, or Rosa for short, a servant at a wealthy rancho estate in Sonoma, California in 1846. Rosa and her brother, Domingo, are mixed-race orphans who were raised at a mission for several years before being taken to work at the Medina rancho. It is at the mission where Rosa learns to read and write. The Medina family has three daughters who are a focal point in the book. *Valley of the Moon* details Rosa's daily life as a servant and her search for her parents' identities. Throughout her diary she shares the details of her life as well as lives of the wealthy Medina daughters she serves, particularly the courtship and ultimately marriage of the eldest daughter Miguela and a white American man, Henry Johnston. Rosa becomes best friends with Johnston's niece Nelly and has a crush on his nephew Walter. Ultimately, in the conclusion and epilogue of the book we learn that Rosa and her brother were the children of a Native American woman and the brother of Señor Medina. Rosa and Domingo are accepted into the family and inherit land and wealth as a result. Rosa marries Walter; they start a winery and have five children together.

The Girl Who Chased Away Sorrow tells the story of twelve-year-old Sarah Nita and her family's experience on the Long Walk, where the Navajo were removed from their land and marched from Fort Defiance to Fort Sumner in 1864. The diary is recorded once Sarah Nita has become a grandmother. Her granddaughter writes the journal while Sarah Nita tells the story. It is not told in a traditional date entry format, but it is broken up into three parts detailing what happened to Sarah Nita and her family before the Long Walk, during the Long Walk, and their first few weeks at Fort Sumner. The book begins with stories of Sarah Nita's family in the time leading up to when the United States soldiers came. When the soldiers came to remove their community and take them to Fort Sumner Sarah Nita and her sister were out taking care of the sheep and hide until the next day. They then decided to go to what they call 'tsyei,' Canyon de Chelly, where members of their father's family live. They only spend a brief time with their family before soldiers arrive and force everyone to move to Fort Sumner. The descriptions of the journey are focused on the small group of people they are with as they are marched to the fort in the middle of winter. Once they arrive at Fort Sumner Sarah Nita and her sister eventually find their parents. In the epilogue we learn that after four years at Fort Sumner the family was finally able to leave, with some returning to Canyon de Chelly and others settling together elsewhere. Sarah Nita eventually marries High Jumper, who she traveled with throughout the long walk, and they have four children.

So Far From Home is the diary of fourteen-year-old Mary Driscoll that details her immigration experience from Ireland to Lowell, Massachusetts in 1847. Mary's diary

begins in Ireland with her preparations to travel to America. *So Far From Home* describes the deteriorating living conditions in Ireland and the massive migration of people to the United States. Mary is able to afford passage to because her aunt and older sister, who already immigrated, send money for her to make the journey. Mary describes the harsh conditions on the ship to Boston, as well as the living conditions of the Acre, where she lives with her aunt in Massachusetts. Mary gets a job working at a textile factory and begins to develop a friendship with one of the Yankee girls with whom she works. Originally she is saving her wages to buy passage for her parents, but they die before being able to leave Ireland. The diary closes with Mary taking her savings to help out her friend Sean, who she met aboard the ship to the United States, after he has been wrongly arrested. In the epilogue we learn that Mary dies of the cholera epidemic in 1849.

A Picture of Freedom is the diary of twelve-year-old Clotee, a slave girl living on the Belmont Plantation in Virginia during 1859. The diary centers around life on the plantation and growing tension over abolitionists and the escalation towards the Civil War. Clotee's diary describes her daily life, the lives of her loved ones on the plantation and the family that owns the plantation – Mas' Henley, Miz Lilly, and their son William. Particularly important to Clotee's life are Aunt Tee and Uncle Heb and her best friends Spicy and Hince. Clotee teaches herself to read and write while she is responsible for fanning Miz Lilly and William during his lessons. Miz Lilly hires a tutor for William, Mr. Harms, who is a part of the Underground Railroad. Throughout *A Picture of Freedom* Clotee learns more about abolitionism, works with fellow slaves on the plantation to

resist, and eventually helps slaves escape to freedom by becoming a captain on the underground railroad when Mr. Harms is discovered and forced to leave. In the epilogue we learn that after the Civil War Mr. Harms arranged for Clotee to travel North and then she returned to Virginia where she “dedicated her life to the education of former slaves, women’s suffrage, equal rights, and justice for all people regardless of race, creed or nationality” (204). She never married or had children.

When will this Cruel War be Over? is the diary of fourteen-year-old Emma Simpson, who is the daughter of plantation owners in Virginia, during 1864 and the end of the Civil War. Emma’s diary describes the changes in her life as a result of the Civil War. The diary opens with Emma’s brother’s body being returned for burial and her describing how much their lives have changed since the Civil War began. Much of the early part Emma’s diary is filled with her flashbacks and remembrances of times gone by. Emma lives on her family’s plantation with her mother, aunt and two cousins, as well as their slaves. Emma’s father is an officer with the Confederate army and has been away for several years. Throughout the diary Emma discusses her relationship with a young confederate soldier named Tally. Eventually, Emma’s mother dies after a lengthy illness and then the Simpson’s lives change even more dramatically when the Union Army uses their home for headquarters for a period of time. In the epilogue we learnt that Tally and Emma marry and have two children.

Chapter 3

Gender, Race, and Nation in the *Dear America* Series

In the previous chapters I have outlined the ways that systems of oppression are enacted. I also explained that literature helps to construct, and is constructed by, systemic power and resistance to power. Additionally, I discuss ways that identities like gender and race are socially constructed and how nation is an imagined community. National identity is constructed through narratives of national culture that are composed of institutions, symbols, and representation. Historical fiction constructs narratives of nation and imagined community by telling national histories and constructing national symbols and ideologies. Using this foundation, the current chapter analyzes the construction of gender, race, and nation in eight books in the *Dear America* series. I divide my analysis into two sections, Girlhood and Nation, and analyze their constructions through the themes found in the texts. The first section looks at the construction of girlhood at the intersections of gender, race, and class through the themes of daily feminized labor, heteronormativity, and resistance. The second section addresses the construction of nation through the themes of origin stories focused on the Revolutionary War and the figure of George Washington, racial hierarchies, and the rhetoric of individual persistence despite difficult situations.

Girlhood

This section examines the construction of girlhood in the *Dear America* series. Throughout the previous chapters, I have discussed the social construction of gender through normalized acts and resistance as theorized within queer theory. Through the books examined in the *Dear America* series, girlhood is constructed through daily acts of

feminized labor, heteronormativity, and resistance. These constructions of girlhood are varied within the intersections of race and class. Within the texts the acts of feminized labor, heteronormativity, appearance, and resistance are demonstrated through the daily recordings of life for the protagonists. While these diaries take place in different historical periods, each of these themes is present throughout.

Daily Feminized Labor

Throughout the books examined in this study, the protagonists described their roles in daily feminized labor, including but not limited to cooking, laundry, and the care of children. The type of feminized labor the girls participate in is also racialized. In *The Winter of Red Snow*, *Love Thy Neighbor*, and *Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie* feminized labor is constructed through the lens of white adolescent girls and the type of work they perform within their families. This is done primarily through descriptions of daily life where the protagonists are expected to do things like help with cooking, laundry, and care for younger siblings. Doing chores and helping with the daily functioning of the household is a large part of the lives of Abigail and Prudence in *The Winter of Red Snow* and *Love Thy Neighbor*. Prudence is eldest daughter in her family and as such had an extensive list of work she must do. She writes that she must “[w]ash clothes with Mama and Verity ... [s]pin thread for sewing ... [h]elp Mama with little Alice in the morning... [h]arvest herbs to help Mama with her midwifery ... [t]each Alice her letters when I come home from school ... [s]crub the kitchen floor” and finally “help Mama knead and bake twenty loaves of bread each week” (17). In *The Winter of Red Snow* Abigail’s mother is the laundress for George and Martha Washington during their winter at Valley Forge. Abigail and her sisters spend a great deal of time helping with the

laundry and taking it to and from the Washington's house:

At noon Papa took us in the little sleigh to pick up two canvas sacks of laundry. We hauled water until my knees bled from the bucket banging them. The big kettle boiled for hours... Mama, Elisabeth, Sally, and I dipped with poles, scrubbed, dipped, then wrung everything out. My hands are raw from lye (27).

The acts of feminized labor that Abigail and Prudence engage in are primarily based in their homes, but for Hattie in *Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie* her acts of labor for her family are done in the context of the Oregon Trail. Hattie describes going to collect firewood, finding vegetables, and gathering water for her family and the others they travel with.

While the protagonists in *The Winter of Red Snow*, *Love Thy Neighbor*, and *Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie* engage in daily feminized labor for their families, the labor performed in *Valley of the Moon*, *A Picture of Freedom*, and *So Far From Home* is performed largely for other people through the servitude and wage labor. For Rosa in *Valley of the Moon* and Clotee in *A Picture of Freedom* their labor is forced through their roles as a servant and a slave and stand in sharp contrast to the racial and class privilege of the families they serve, as well as Emma in *When Will This Cruel War be Over?* Throughout her diary Clotee describes the work done by herself and fellow slaves on the Belmont Plantation:

I got up extra early and churned the butter for breakfast and helped out in the kitchen the way Aunt Tee 'spects me to every mornin'... Aunt Tee say I'm lucky, gettin' picked to work in the Big House. I aine so sure. Livin' right under Mas' Henley and Miz Lilly aine so easy to me... But field work is hard – hard on your back, and in the summer, the heat is smothery. I guess what it comes to is bein' a slave aine no good no matter where they got you workin' (6).

Clotee's life of work is in stark contrast to Emma's daily life where she has very little work she is expected to do. Most of the descriptions of work done by Emma are helping her aunt with her baby, spending time with her sick mother, and attending to her studies.

At the beginning of Emma's diary she describes a morning with her mother:

After Iris serves us biscuits and apple butter for breakfast, we read from the Bible – which mother is quite adamant about – and then we begin my studies. I do not care much for the arithmetic, geometry, rhetoric, or French lessons, preferring the time we spend on reading (17).

The type of work Emma is expected to do, in the form of school and helping with her baby cousin, is part of the gender roles performed by an upper class white southern girl.

In *Valley of the Moon*, Rosa, a mestizo servant, describes the Medina's family's expectations of her since she is "a servant, a half-Indian orphan, a girl. I am supposed to know nothing but work and obedience" (4). The class and racial privilege of the Medina daughters contrast Rosa's daily life, which largely consists of work:

The Medinas are *criollos*, from the highest class of society in Alta California, being descendants of pure Spanish blood, as their white skin indicates. They disdain work and consider it beneath them to participate in any manual chores. Their lives center around social gatherings and attending church (21).

The class and racial differences between the Medina daughters and Rosa's girlhood are very apparent when Rosa moves to stay for a time with Miguela and her husband after they are married because he has no servants. Rosa writes: "I dared not refuse, so I set about cleaning the house, washing clothes, and helping the cook, who refused to do the heavy work" (167). While the daily work done by Rosa and Clotee is forced through systemic oppression based on the intersections of their race and class without monetary

compensation, labor in *So Far From Home* is constructed through descriptions of wage labor in the form of servant and textile factory work.

Throughout *So Far From Home* Mary describes the daily feminized labor she performs in a textile factory and compares it with her sister Kate's work as a maid, as well as the work done by the Yankee girls in the factories. While Mary is still in Ireland she exchanges letters with her Aunt Nora who is already living in the United States. Aunt Nora describes the type of work available for girls in Massachusetts, saying "there is a need for girls who wish to be maids-of-all-work in respectable homes – such as where Kate works. American girls do not care for that kind of work. 'Tis beneath them, she says" (10). Kate is a maid for the wife of the mill owner with whom Mary gets a job as a bobbin girl when she arrives. Mary expresses a preference for working in the mills, "[t]isn't for me to be someone's servant, like Kate. A day's pay for a day's work, that's what I say" (11). After Mary arrives she begins to learn more about the harshness of the working conditions in the factories and the divisions between labor for Irish and Yankee girls.

Throughout her diary Mary describes the poor working conditions in the textile factory. She discusses the harsh conditions girls work in such as heat exhaustion, lack of water or air, and the ability to be fired for missing a day of work or for involvement with unions. Mary describes a day in the mills:

'Tis always hot in the mills. Today two girls fainted before the noon bell. Laura says the corporation doesn't want to the thread to become brittle and break. I ask if they worried that we might become brittle and break. Laura said the corporation won't allow water buckets in the rooms. They think we'll take too much time drinking water. Imagine. I am thirsty all the time now because my throat is so sore.

'Tis hard to breathe, and the lint flies everywhere. I stand on the staircase just to get some air (101).

In addition to the poor working conditions Mary describes the dangers of millwork, telling the story of a boy who has finger cut off in a machine while working and a girl who gets her hair caught in the machine and her scalp ripped off. Mary describes how her “bones ache, my ankles swell up, and my body throbs from head to toe at night” (79). She describes the noise in the spinning room where she works as “what hell itself sounds like” (Ibid). However, Mary shares that she still prefers “work in the mills,” because once she is done, “my time, such that 'tis, is my own” (Ibid). During her free time Mary likes to take walks and through that she begins to develop a friendship with Annie, a Yankee girl who trained her at the factory.

Through her friendship with Annie, Mary begins to learn more about the sources of tension between the Yankee and Irish girls in the mills:

I asked Annie why the Yankee girls don't like the Irish. She said they blame us for what happened at the mills. They say that factory work was better before there were so many Irish. There was time to sit and rest. Now the corporation doesn't care about the girls the way they once did. There are enough Irish girls looking for work that they don't have to (112).

Mary doesn't understand “why the Irish are to blame for all of this.” She reflects, “[s]urely we aren't the reason the windows are nailed shut. Or why the rooms are always hot and so filled with dirt, you can hardly breathe. Is it our fault that the days are long? Wouldn't we prefer ten-hour day too?” (112). The treatment of workers in the mills and the way Mary is treated by some of the Yankee girls are the focal point of her diary. These interactions demonstrate the way whiteness has been constructed over time, as when the Irish were not considered white during the first decades of immigration to the

United States. However because many of the Irish immigrants already spoke English and had easier access to naturalization processes they gained access to white privilege and citizenship over time (Takaki).

Daily feminized labor in the *Dear America* series is constructed through intersections of race and class and the daily tasks performed by the protagonists for their families and others.

Heteronormativity

The theme of heteronormativity emerges throughout the construction of girlhood in the *Dear America* series. Heteronormativity, as defined earlier in this thesis, assumes heterosexual relationships as the natural cultural norm. The importance of heterosexuality is demonstrated throughout the books examined in this series. In *The Winter of Red Snow*, *Love thy Neighbor*, *Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie*, and *When Will this Cruel War be Over?* heteronormativity is constructed through girls' desires for romantic relationships and marriage. In *The Winter of Red Snow* and *Love thy Neighbor* neither of the protagonists, Abigail and Prudence, are particularly interested in finding romance for themselves. However, their friends and girl family members are, so during their diaries they do discuss marriage. In *The Winter of Red Snow*, Abigail writes about her older sister Elizabeth's plans to "sew a coat and, on the inside collar, embroider her name, *Elisabeth Anne Stewart*, so that the soldier who wears it will remember her and come see her. Many girls have become brides this way" (10). Abigail herself sews a hunting shirt for a drummer boy, but she does not express any interest in finding a beau. Elizabeth's plan eventually works, as in the epilogue we learn she marries Ben Valentine, the boy to whom she gives her bounty coat. Although Abigail does not express a personal interest in

marriage in her diary, the epilogue explains that she gets married at the age of fifteen to a blacksmith. Eventually Abigail and her husband have nine children and move to a homestead in the Ohio River Valley.

Romantic relationships are less prevalent in *Love thy Neighbor* than *The Winter of Red Snow*, however, they are still a part of Prudence's girlhood. At one point in her diary Prudence is interested in being friends with a Patriot boy, but because she is a Tory their friendship never progresses. Throughout *Love the Neighbor*, Prudence exchanges letters and eventually lives for a time with her cousin Betsy, who is much more interested in romance. In their correspondence, Prudence often speaks of the political situation whereas her cousin Betsy talks frequently about a soldier she corresponds with. Eventually Betsy grows weary of discussing politics and tells Prudence "if you love me, do not speak to me of politics! I believe it is a disease, and I am sick of it" (94). In her diary Prudence does not particularly focus on romance, however in the epilogue we do learn that she eventually marries and has five children.

While Prudence and Abigail do not directly speak to their own desire for romantic partnerships, the protagonists of *Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie* and *When Will this Cruel War be Over?* do. In *Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie* Hattie often reflects on love and marriage, but it intensifies when her best friend on the journey, Pepper, falls in love and marries while on the Oregon Trail. While Hattie is excited for her friend, she writes, "what I didn't tell her was that I was filled with envy. How I wanted to have someone love me, too. If she is fourteen and old enough to marry, then I at thirteen am old enough to fall in love" (69). Thoughts like these persist throughout the story and in conjunction with the amount of death she sees, and hardships the Campbell

family experience, she begins to reflect on how she might be changing in the journey. At one point, for example, she declares, “maybe like Ma I’m becoming brave” (127).

Hattie’s desire to mature into traditional femininity is reflected in one particular moment of frustration several months into their journey:

I’m tired of being brave and I’m tired of being dirty. I crawled into the wagon where no one could see me and took off my dress... What boy will ever think me nice to look at? Among the flour bags I found my satchel and the spare dress still tucked inside. I unfolded it, pulled it over my head, then tied the starched ribbon around my waist. Even though Ma said it’s not to be worn until Oregon, *I do not care*. I want to feel pretty now. Next, I undid my braid and bushed my hair one hundred strokes until at last it seemed the dust was out. For near an hour I tried to twist it on top my head the way Ma does, but could not figure how, so for now will settle for a long braid (102).

Hattie’s desire to feel pretty and her desire to emulate her mother are reflective of the construction of girlhood throughout *Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie*. In the epilogue we learn that Hattie marries Pepper’s brother, Wade, a few years after their arrival in Oregon City and eventually they adopt twins.

This relationship between heterosexual desirability and appearance is also represented in *When Will this Cruel War be Over?* Throughout her diary Emma often writes about marriage and questions her own desirability. She writes, “I wonder if anyone will ever think me presentable – although I know this is a silly question to ask, especially at this time. I certainly hope I am not becoming vain, but it is useless to try and put these thoughts aside once they arise” (24). Emma connects her thoughts about appearance and marriage to her life before the Civil War. She reflects that “[t]ry as I might, I cannot seem to stop thinking about times past. The long walks, the buggy rides into town, the dances and fancy balls after which we would fest on cake, strawberries, and ice cream, the

sparkling conversation, the laughter and the merriment – there is none of that now” (19).

Despite the lack of merriment in her life because of the Civil War, Emma still wonders about love and marriage:

I wonder if I will ever fall in love. He will have to be someone whom I feel is worthy. I must confess I do have an image in my heart. I do have a weakness for beauty... Of course he must have other characteristics. He must be intelligent and possess a sense of honor. I could never marry anyone I did not respect. The most important thing is to be sure you love the one you marry with your whole heart (25).

Emma often wonders about love in relation to her letter exchanges with a confederate soldier, Tally, whom she met at a party in Richmond as the war was just beginning.

Although Emma spends a great deal of time thinking about the positive aspects of marriage, her older cousin Rachael argues the contrary. Emma writes that Rachel “thinks that boys hide their real feelings and true characters are not to be trusted... She maintains that girls are in every way superior to boys, and she believes that married life is infinitely taxing and she will never embark on that course” (52). Despite Rachel’s frequent critiques of marriage, Emma still feels “especially when” she “thinks of Tally” that she does not share Rachel’s feelings. Emma writes that she looks “forward to, some day, being married, for I consider that the natural course of life” (65). Throughout Emma’s diary she remarks on the ways that Rachel becomes increasingly more vocal about her anti-marriage views, as well as her outrage toward the North during the Civil War. At one point Emma writes that Rachel “confided that she was becoming quite melancholy and believes she has gone into a steep decline” (95). Ultimately in the epilogue of the book, we discover that Rachel suffers a nervous breakdown during the war and her mother has her committed to an asylum where she dies under suspicious circumstances in 1868.

There is no clear explanation for Rachel's behavior, it is only noted through Emma's reflections on her views towards marriage and her hatred of the Yankee soldiers. The connections between her non-normative views and her eventual commitment to an institution, suggest a harsh punishment for her behaviors. The harsh ending to Rachel's character is sharply contrasted by Emma's fate. Emma and Tally marry, move to Richmond, and have two children. She teaches piano and volunteers at the Richmond Public Library and becomes an authority on Charlotte Bronte.

The depictions of heteronormativity in *The Winter of Red Snow*, *Love thy Neighbor*, *Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie*, and *When Will this Cruel War be Over?* are centered on the experiences of the white protagonists. The narratives of heteronormativity are more complicated by race and class through the romances depicted in *Valley of the Moon* and *A Picture of Freedom*. In *Valley of the Moon* the eldest Medina daughter, Miguela, is being courted by, and eventually marries an American man, Henry Johnston. Rosa gets along with Johnston and becomes friends with his niece, Nelly, who comes to live with him. Eventually Señor Johnston tells Rosa that he wants to marry Miguela because of the likelihood that she will be able to have children because of her "hips and thighs as strong as the trunks of an oak tree" (35). While he originally is only interested in Miguela for her family connections and ability to have children, the dynamics of their relationship change after Miguela miscarries their first pregnancy when she gets cholera and is staying with her parents. Rosa describes them once they are finally reunited after the miscarriage: "[t]hey hugged, and you never would have known that a few months ago Miguela was calling him names and wishing he would go away" (152). In the epilogue we learn that Miguela and Henry have eleven children. The middle

Medina daughter, Rafaela, also expresses romantic interest in an American man, Señor Johnston's nephew, Walter. Rosa too has a crush on Walter, but when she learns of Rafaela's feelings for him her "heart sank. Why, I do not know. After all, why should an American boy as fine as Walter Johnston want to marry a servant girl like me?" (127). Ultimately, Rosa's relationships with the Medina daughters and her romantic relationships change as she explores her own identity through her investigation into her parentage.

In Rosa's diary she often discusses how she wants to know who her parents were. She has memories of arriving at the mission with her little brother and her mother dying, however, initially, she does not know more than that her "mother had the brown skin of an Indian," and they had "the light brown of *mestizos* – half-Indian and half-Spanish" (5). Eventually across the span of the diary Rosa tracks down the padre that took care of her and Domingo and learns that her mother was "the daughter of the tribal shaman" from a tribe very far south in California and, "she was following in his footsteps and was learning the cures of herbs and roots when the Mexican government forced her village to relocate" (181). Her father was the brother of Señor Medina and was a captain in charge of relocating her mother's tribe. They fell in love and he bought them a house in San Francisco Bay, but was gone while the smallpox epidemic broke. Rosa's mother went to the mission for vaccines, but there was only enough for two and "like any good mother, she made the ultimate sacrifice and gave the vaccine to her children, taking none for herself" (182). Rosa's father returned to find them gone and was told that they had died in the plague; he died some time later. Rosa's discovery of her parent's identity is the culmination of the diary and results in sudden changes in her life. Because the Medina

family accepts the proof of Rosa and Domingo's parentage provided by the padre and accepts them into the family, Rosa and Domingo suddenly inherit wealth and land. We learn later that Rosa eventually marries Walter Johnston and they have five children together. This narrative constructs marriage as obtainable for Rosa only through the class and racial privilege she gains by realizing her father's identity as a Medina.

In *A Picture of Freedom* heteronormativity is constructed through romantic and forced relationships. Clotee doesn't often discuss romance in terms of herself, but often describes the romantic and forced relationships of her friends, in particular Wook, Spicy and Hince. Clotee's friend Wook works in the fields and is just a few years older than Clotee. In the early part of her diary, Clotee is surprised when she finds out Wook is getting married, and eventually gets the chance to talk to her about it:

Like I suspicioned, Wook hates bein' married. But Mas' Henley made her marry Lee. See, Miz Lilly keeps up with the girls who come of age, and she tells Mas' Henley. When Wook turned fifteen, he told her to choose a husband. When she didn't, he picked out Lee – said they'd make strong babies. 'Lee don't love me,' she said. 'And I don't love him. This aine no marriage' (49).

The descriptions of the ways the slave women and girls are used to create more slaves and wealth stands in sharp contrast to the romantic ideals of marriage in Emma's diary. Eventually Wook and her parents try to run away but are killed in the process. Another way romantic relationships are constructed in Clotee's diary is through the relationship between her best friends, Hince and Spicy. Over the course of the diary, Hince and Spicy fall in love, but when Hince is to be given to a plantation owner in the Deep South as the result of Mas' Henley losing a bet, their hopes for being together are threatened. Ultimately, Clotee helps Spicy and Hince run away by devising a plan to disguise Spicy

as Hince's slave because Hince could pass for white and writing them a travel pass. In the epilogue we learn that they make it to Canada and are married for at least fifty years.

In this way, heteronormativity is constructed in the *Dear America* series through the depictions of marriage, romance, and forced relationships complicated by gender, race, and class. While none of the girls get married or have children in their diaries, this is the ultimate outcome for all of the protagonists except for Mary in *So Far From Home* and Clotee in *A Picture of Freedom*.

Resistance

The final theme that helps to construct girlhood in the *Dear America* series is resistance. In *Love Thy Neighbor*, *The Winter of Red Snow*, and *A Picture of Freedom* characters demonstrate resistance to their expected gender norms. Throughout *Love Thy Neighbor* Prudence focuses on asking questions, which often arise as resistance to the roles of her daily life and the impact of the political situation in which her family lives. Throughout her diary, Prudence makes reference to the ways in which she does not live up to her name. In her first entry she reflects that her mother often "tells me that her wits must have wandered when she named me 'Prudence.' She tells me there never was and never will be anything prudent about me. When she says this, she always smiles to soften the words" (3). Prudence's aunt gives her the diary because she feels that Prudence needs to improve her penmanship. However, Prudence decides to use her diary to:

write down all the questions I have about: Tories and Patriots, Papas who have different views (Abigail's papa is a Patriot), being the oldest girl in a family, growing up, wearing corsets, and having the misfortune to have curly red hair. I shall only write down what is in my heart (5).

Not only does this list capture how girlhood is constructed through Prudence's diary, it also reflects her resisting the expectations of her aunt. Both Prudence and Abigail's friend Lucy demonstrate resistance to the expected roles of white girls during the Revolutionary War time period.

At one point in *The Winter of Red Snow* Abigail and her friend Lucy travel to Philadelphia with their fathers. The fathers go to see if any of their families might come to stay at Valley Forge with them, out of growing concern because of the number of British soldiers in Philadelphia. While in the city Abigail and Lucy visit a wigmakers shop and Lucy decides to sell her hair so the money can help her family. Abigail writes:

I could speak not. An English officer might be the next customer! Lucy is so willful and headstrong she just tied on her bonnet and curtsied. In the street she said to me, 'It shall be days before Papa finds out and by then he shall be so pleased to have silver coin it will matter not (43).

Lucy's hope to use the money for her family was ended when someone found her hiding place and stole the money. Lucy successfully hides her hair short hair for a time, but eventually she is found out when a boy snatches off her bonnet in public. Abigail describes the "shock on her face – on her *mother's* face – I cannot put in words. There she stood with her shorn hair for all to see. I hurried to her side untying my own cap, then put it on her head. Tears ran down her cheeks and wet my hand as I tied the string" (61). As punishment and in order to shame her, Lucy's father shaved her head, and did not let her cover head. This causes Lucy to run away to Philadelphia until her hair grows back. This punishment demonstrates the ways that a normative feminine appearance is valued and necessary to the performance of gender. Lucy resists gender norms about her appearance and willfulness by selling her hair and eventually by running away, but she

does so in order to help her family, not for her own individuality. Prudence resists gender norms by actively questioning the world around her and speaking back to authority figures around her. Lucy and Prudence both in some way resist the gender norms that they live with; this is also true of Clotee in *A Picture of Freedom*.

The first and major way that Clotee resists the expected gender roles of a slave girl is by teaching herself to read and write. Clotee is required to fan Miz Lilly and her son, William, during his lessons. She writes, “I been fannin’ them, liftin’ and lowerin’ the big fan made of woven Carolina sweet grass – up an’ down, up and down ... It may seem like a silly job. But, I don’t mind one bit ’cause while William is learnin’, so am I” (3). Clotee writes that slaves are not supposed to read and that she “can’t help but laugh a little bit when I think of what Mas’ Henley would think if he knew I could read better than his boy – and that it was his own wife that had teached me!” (4) Clotee resists the violence and control of her life through her thoughts and emotions:

Mas’ Henley thinks he owns everything here at Belmont...
I know he can tell me to come... When he say do this, I
better do it or he’ll put the whip to my back. But I done
learned that cain’t tell me what to think – and feel – and
know. He look at me every day but he cain’t see what’s in
my head. He cain’t own what’s inside me. Nobody can (6).

Clotee continues to learn and educate herself despite the dangers of getting caught. She knows “[a]nybody found teachin’ a slave in the state of Virginia can be sent to jail.” She goes on to wonder “why the white folks is so determined to keep us from knowin’ things? What are they scared of?” (4) Clotee continues to resist through reading and writing whenever she can, and through her growing interest in abolitionism. These things are amplified when Miz Lilly hires a tutor for William, Mr. Harms.

At first, Clotee is unsure about Mr. Harms, but slowly over time she notices things about him that cause her to question if he wants to help slaves. Over time he drops clues to Clotee that he knows she can read and eventually she realizes that he is an abolitionist, working with others on the Underground Railroad. Through Mr. Harms she begins to get concrete answers to her questions about what exactly abolitionism is and how the Underground Railroad works. Clotee begins to wonder if she can be an abolitionist when Mas' Henley kills her Uncle Heb and she sees Aunt Tee grieving. She writes "Aunt Tee misses Uncle Heb so much, she just shakes with hurt... Nobody should have to be a slave. If a slave can be a abolitionist, then I want to be one, 'cause I hate slavery and I want it to end" (88). Eventually she sees herself as maybe becoming an abolitionist when Mr. Harms gives her pamphlets about it that feature former slaves and women. Clotee learns that "[a]bolitionists live everywhere, just like I thought. But, what makes me happiest [sic] is that some abolitionists are women and some are even people who done been slaves, just like me" (148). In particular, Clotee finds inspiration in Sojourner Truth writing that she is "so glad to know about Miz Sojourner" and that she intends "to be like her one day" (156). Eventually Mr. Harms leaves Belmont Plantation after being found out by Mas' Henley, though prevented from going to jail by a plot devised by Hince, Spicy, and Clotee. When he goes, Clotee decides to take his place and run the Underground Railroad station at Belmont.

Resistance to gendered norms in the *Dear America* series takes place through the questioning of gender roles in *Love Thy Neighbor*, resistance to feminized appearance through Lucy in *The Winter of Red Snow*, and through education and resistance to the institution of slavery in *A Picture of Freedom*.

Nation

I now turn to the second section of this analysis, nation. Nation, as outlined in this project, is an imagined community created through discourses of national identity. Stuart Hall identifies five narratives that work to construct national identity: of particular importance to this analysis are narratives of foundational myths and narratives of nation that construct stories, images, national symbols, and traditions through the telling of national histories. Nation is constructed in the *Dear America* series through origin stories focused on the Revolutionary War and the figure of George Washington, racial hierarchies, and rhetoric of individual persistence despite difficult situations.

Origin Stories

The Winter of Red Snow and Love Thy Neighbor construct nation in the United States through an origin story focused on the Revolutionary War and the iconic image of George Washington. This has the effect of constructing a foundational myth and national symbols. These books center whiteness to the origins of the United States in two main ways. One is by featuring almost entirely white characters, with only a few minor characters of color. The second is by discussing the creation of the United States in the context of Patriots and Tories, and not other populations living in and around the colonies or the ongoing project of settler colonialism. Both Abigail and Prudence's diaries focus on the Revolutionary War, though one is from the perspective of a Patriot and one of a Tory.

In *Love They Neighbor* the conflict between Patriots and Tories is portrayed through the daily changes it wrought on the Emerson family, such as the decrease in business at Prudence's father's store and the way they became isolated from the majority

of the community in Green Marsh. Prudence documents this through changes in her friendships and the family's treatment in school and church, as well as incidents of violence like having their home's window broken, or a Tory neighbor's home being stoned. Tension between Tories and Patriots directly impacts Prudence's relationship with her best friend, Abigail. Abigail's family are Patriots, and eventually her father no longer allows Abigail to be friends with Prudence. Prudence describes the loss as feeling "as though someone I love has died" (25). Prudence and Abigail's deteriorating friendship is only one way that political conflicts cause changes in the Emersons lives.

The conflict is exacerbated in school, as the Patriot and Tory children sit on different sides of the classroom and over time the teacher becomes increasingly hostile towards the children from Tory families. This culminates in Prudence talking back to her teacher when the teacher snapped at her sister, Verity, after she could not remember the names of all the colonies saying that "true *Patriots* knew the names of all the colonies" (73). After Prudence talks back to the teacher she is told to leave school for the day and all the Tory children leave with her. Prudence's mother then starts to school the children at home, for which her siblings are very grateful. Her brother Jacob said, "'I thank you, Pru, for being saucy to that schoolmistress.' He felt he had been delivered, and Verity agreed" (75). Throughout *Love Thy Neighbor* the tensions the children experienced in school are experienced by the entire family while they attend church. Prudence observes that after church "outside the doors, people gathered in groups, and I was dismayed to see that it was just like at our school, the Tory families together and the Patriots apart" (39). The construction of nation is explored through the lens of the Tory experience in the time leading up to the Revolutionary war.

The Winter of Red Snow also contributes to the Revolutionary War origin story of the United States through Abigail's depictions of the Continental Army and the iconic image of George Washington in his role as General. Throughout the book the soldiers of the Continental Army go through a transformation from being beleaguered and starving to ultimately triumphant. This portrayal is created through Abigail's observations of and experiences with soldiers, interactions with George and Martha Washington, and descriptions of the British, which are primarily narrated through her father's opinions that she records in her diary. At the beginning of Abigail's diary she describes the arrival of the soldiers to Valley Forge. At first all they could hear was the drums in the distance, but then:

Finally through the gray we saw them ... the sight of them took our breath away. 'They have no shoes' Elisabeth whispered. ... We were unable to speak. Their footprints left blood in the snow... For many hours we watched the soldiers march single file into our valley. Hundreds and hundreds were barefoot, the icy mud cutting their feet. Some had rags wrapped around their legs because they had no trousers... no trousers, imagine! (14)

The plight of soldiers who are starving and badly wounded is described throughout Abigail's diary. She describes multiple thefts by soldiers of things like livestock and wood, and many incidents of court Martials where soldiers are drummed out of the army. One of the more vivid experiences Abigail has with soldiers is when Martha Washington invites Elisabeth and Abigail to go with her on visits to the soldier camps. Abigail describes stopping outside the schoolhouse that had been converted to be an army hospital:

A man's scream from inside the schoolhouse was so horrible, so full of begging and pain, I looked at Mrs. Washington with tears in my eyes. 'What's happening?' I

asked. She, too, could not hold back tears. 'I'm afraid, my dear, that the surgeon is at work.' I then realized the trough was overflowing, not with firewood, but with human hands and feet (67).

The images of Patriot soldiers as starving and dying are sharply contrasted with Abigail's father's frustrations with the British and their sympathizers. This is demonstrated when they are in Philadelphia and Papa criticizes the "arrogant rich," the "Philadelphians who'd rather spend money on themselves, than to help our starving soldiers." He argues that "there should be a law against such vanities" like wigs "in the time of war" (42). Although George and Martha Washington are shown to have some frivolous tendencies, such as when Martha Washington is looking for forty eggs to bake a birthday cake for the General, they are largely constructed as being humble and virtuous leaders.

The character of George Washington is central to the depictions of soldiers in *The Winter of Red Snow* and how they are transformed. One of Abigail's first descriptions of George Washington highlights the depiction of him as a pious leader:

Elisabeth and I wandered into the woods to gather pinecones for kindling. As we were filling our aprons we heard a voice... Ahead, at the edge of a clearing, was an officer kneeling in the snow, his head bowed, his hands folded in prayer... 'That doth look like General Washington.'... Not wanting to disturb him, we crept away. I felt safer knowing the Commander in Chief of our Army was a man of prayer (25).

In the beginning of *The Winter of Red Snow* the soldiers are depicted as being weak, however, through the guidance of George Washington they are shown to strengthen over their time in Valley Forge. Abigail describes an "inspection" of the troops by George Washington about a month before the army leaves Valley Forge. She observes the soldiers stood in "perfectly straight rows," while George Washington sat on "his gray

horse, most dignified, flanked by his generals, all in sharp uniform” (119). The general has the soldiers fire round after round while the people of Valley Forge watch the exercise. Abigail writes that “the whole effect filled every one of us with excitement and hope – this was our army! No longer weak or frightened or cold. This *feu de joie* truly was a ‘fire of joy’” (120). The army’s improvement and the people of Valley Forge’s patriotism are guided through George Washington.

Throughout the *Diary of Red Snow* Abigail and her sister interact with and observe the actions of George and Martha Washington. The two main non-white characters in the book are George and Martha Washington’s slaves, Billy Lee and Oney. However, they are never described as slaves in the book; they are referred to as personal servants. Although Billy Lee is personal servant to the General and Oney is the personal servant of Mrs. Washington, they were in fact slaves, something that a young reader of this series might not understand since it is never named and the historical notes do not discuss George and Martha Washington, despite their prominence in the text. Brushing over the Washington’s slave ownership further contributes to the mythical construction of the figures George and Martha Washington as heroic national icons.

While *The Winter of Red Snow* largely helps to construct a romanticized idea of patriotism in the United States through the portrait of George Washington, it does disrupt the normative narrative of male soldiers by including stories about how women were involved with the Continental Army, primarily through the depiction of camp followers. Abigail first learns of camp followers when visiting the edge of the soldier encampment with her father. She describes seeing that “rows of huts made it look like a village.” Abigail records what her father had to say about the camp followers:

There are nearly 300 women... some are wives with children and some are sweethearts. But some just like the excitement. ‘Those are women’ – Papa could hardly say these words – ‘of poor reputation’ (23).

The depiction of camp followers as causing trouble is furthered when Abigail tells the story of a woman being drummed out of the army because “she was caught trying to tempt” patriot soldiers “to ride with her into Philadelphia where they’d have warm beds and plenty of food” (49). The role of camp followers is also described by Martha Washington during a trip Abigail takes with her to the camps, “[t]he women offer much help to the brigades,” she said. ‘But once the Army is on the march again, going toward battle or from it, my husband says camp followers are a nuisance’” (66). The reoccurrence of camp followers throughout *The Winter of Red Snow* are often described in a way that highlights the role of women in the Revolutionary War, but does so in a way that questions the morality of their behavior, such as Abigail’s father’s description. Despite being several negative descriptions of women’s involvement in the army, there were moments where Abigail sees women delivering much needed supplies and hears stories of women stepping in to help run cannons during battles.

Both *The Winter of Red Snow* and *Love thy Neighbor* present the origins of the United States at the Revolutionary War. While *The Winter of Red Snow* contains some black characters, both books construct white-centered accounts of this time period. The foundational myth of the United States through the Revolutionary War is one way that nation is constructed through the *Dear America* series.

Racial Hierarchies

Another way nation is constructed in the *Dear America* series is through racial hierarchies. These racial hierarchies are constructed in the books through stereotypical

and romanticized depictions of Native Americans, descriptions of manifest destiny, class and ethnic distinctions of whiteness, and slavery. The stereotypical and romanticized depictions of Native Americans take place throughout the books set in the time of Westward Expansion.

As discussed in earlier sections of this analysis, the revelation that Rosa is a part of the Medina family in *Valley of the Moon* suddenly grants both race and class privilege because of her father. However, the ultimate discovery of her mother's identity romanticizes the indigenous part of her identity in a way that is incongruent with the portrayal of Native Americans throughout the book whereby indigenous peoples are stereotypically constructed as hostile and helpless. Rosa describes traveling to a village of the Medina's cook, Lupita's, tribe:

These few miserable-looking people are all who are left of Lupita's once numerous nation. Most died of diseases. Others slaved at missions for years until the missions closed down and they had no place to go. They dispersed to work on *ranchos* or returned to the hills to eke out a living in terrible poverty (71).

The portrayal of the Mexican government's treatment of the native peoples of California and Rosa's own mixed racial heritage, particularly the narrative of her mother's sacrifice, are two of the ways that Native Americans are romanticized and stereotyped during the Westward Expansion time period in the books examined.

The Girl Who Chased Away Sorrow also contributes to re-inscribing racial stereotypes and romanticizing indigenous peoples. As discussed earlier, *The Girl Who Chased Away Sorrow* has been criticized for misrepresenting the Navajo culture and the harsh realities of the intentional removal of the Navajo people by the United States government. Its protagonist, Sarah Nita, does describe some of the hardships of the Long

Walk, but as the book progresses there is more of a focus on the goodness of one particular soldier, rather than on systemic atrocities against indigenous peoples. Sarah Nita depicts people starving and being driven to walk for hours on end and soldiers refusing to let them stop when the elderly or ill need rest. She records an instance where her aunt tries to convince the soldiers to stop:

When Aunt returns, she's so angry, her cheeks glitter with tears. 'They can do nothing for the old ones, he said. Either they keep up, or they will be left to die.' ... And so it is my elders who support Sah-nee's grandmother, helping her step by step until the light goes and we can huddle by the fires to get warm (109).

In addition to leaving the elderly to die, Sarah Nita describes particular forms of gendered violence against Navajo women. A soldier is described shooting a pregnant woman when she needed to stop because she was going into labor. Additionally, once they arrive at Fort Sumner and go to the river to bathe, the other women warn them to bathe with their clothes on because "some of the soldiers are cruel to our women" (149). While *The Girl Who Chased Away Sorrow* does depict some of the brutal genocidal policies of the United States government in this way, it also constructs the portrayal of the white savior in the form of one soldier.

This soldier, whom Sarah Nita calls Mica Eyes, is consistently depicted as helping Sarah's little sister, Kaibah, and by extension the family. He first helps them by one day using his horse to help them round up their goat herd. Next, when Kaibah hurts her ankle, Mica Eyes picks her up and lets her ride with him all day during the march. The developing relationship between her sister and the soldier makes Sarah Nita uncomfortable, but she starts to re-examine her feelings after he helps to save their aunt from drowning. She reflects that "[t]his is the second time that Mica Eyes has rescued us,

and I am beginning to think Sister is right, that he has no dark winds inside him” (133). By giving so much detail to the behavior of one kind soldier and de-emphasizing the brutality of the Long Walk, *The Girl Who Chases Away Sorrow* presents a whitewashed narrative of settler colonial practices against the Navajo.

The whitewashing of settler colonialism and stereotypical depictions of Native Americans is also present in *Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie*. Hattie’s father is the driving force behind the family’s move to Oregon because “he’d been unhappy about so many people settling here in Missouri” and that “taxes are high” (6). Ironically, Hattie’s father’s frustration with people immigrating to Missouri is what drives them to move west. Hattie describes how her father came to choose Oregon as their destination since “California is like a foreign country and we don’t speak Spanish” (8). Hattie’s father’s political opinions shape how nation is constructed through the doctrine of manifest destiny:

Our new president is James Polk. Pa says the only reason he won the election is because he promised to make Oregon and California territories of the United States. So if enough of us get up and go, it’ll help push the foreigners aside for good. It’s our ‘Manifest Destiny’ ... it’s our responsibility to spread democracy all the way to the pacific coast (8).

Despite her father’s enthusiasm for moving west, Hattie’s mother was resistant to moving, stating that she does not “care about ‘Manifest Destiny.’ The West is wilderness. It’ll be a frightfully long journey with no turning back” (8). Ultimately Hattie’s father uses the promise of a fresh start in a new place with no sad memories to convince Hattie’s mother to make the journey to Oregon.

While Hattie's parents spend a great deal of time debating the trip prior to leaving Missouri, Hattie spends time thinking about the journey ahead and what she is afraid of.

She lists four things:

1. Indians
2. Copperhead snakes
3. A toothache
4. Losing my little brothers Ben and Jake, they're all I got now (9).

This is first of many times that indigenous people are depicted as frightening, threatening characters in *Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie*. For example, the guide for the Campbell family's journey, Tall Joe, keeps scalps of Pawnee people displayed on his belt. Before the group actually has any interactions with indigenous folks Hattie hears from people that "they are dirty and vicious, but I don't know" (34). Throughout the diary, people point out to Hattie that she should be less afraid, like her friend Pepper who says that "there are probably plenty more good Indians than bad" (20). Eventually after a few very limited interactions with indigenous people Hattie suddenly decides that she is no longer going to be afraid of them. She states:

I tasted my first salmon, traded to us by Indians who came into camp. They were friendly and smiled easy. For once I was relaxed. It really is true, I've decided: They're as different among themselves as white folks are. I'm going to stop being afraid of them. Just like that (119).

The combination of the deeply racialized depictions of indigenous people throughout the diary and then the sudden change of Hattie's attitudes, result in a construction of nation in the United States that centers whiteness and re-inscribes racial stereotypes, erases the harsh realities of settler colonialism in the United States, and oversimplifies dealing with prejudice.

Hattie's blatant description of the assumed superiority of white travelers over indigenous peoples is one way whiteness is dominant in the *Dear America* series. Another way that racial hierarchies are constructed in the *Dear America* series is through class and ethnic distinctions of whiteness. This is demonstrated through the depictions of the Irish immigrant experience in *So Far From Home* and the different class backgrounds of white people involved in the Belmont Plantation in *A Picture of Freedom*. In *So Far From Home* Mary describes in detail the ways the Irish are perceived as inferior to Yankees. When Mary was still living in Ireland she heard stories about America that depicted it as a land of hope and possibilities. Upon her arrival in Massachusetts Mary immediately begins to realize things were not as pictured it. When she is walking through the affluent area of Lowell where Kate works and the Acre where the majority of Irish people lived, she observes:

The Acre is not far from the mills but it might as well be on the other side of the ocean. The roads are narrow, twisting, and muddy – not like the roads where Mrs. Abbott lives. The houses are crowded together, and goats, geese, chickens, and pigs roam everywhere. There are no houses such as Mrs. Abbot's in the Acre. There must be two Lowells. One where Mrs. Abbott lives and one where Aunt Nora lives. Perhaps there are two Americas (68).

Throughout her diary Mary describes the poor treatment of the Irish, both through her own experiences and those of her friend Sean. Through letters to Mary, Sean describes his difficulty finding work and low wages paid to Irish laborers, highlighting how Irish people, though visibly Caucasian, were not considered to be white or worthy of privilege because of their ethnicity and class.

Clotee also describes class distinctions between white people in *A Picture of Freedom* through her descriptions of Mas' Henley, Miz Lilly, and the overseer Waith.

Throughout Clotee's diary she describes the tensions between Mas' Henley and Miz Lilly, often depicting them at odds with one another with the exception of agreement on the importance of slavery. Clotee describes the origins of their relationships through the opinions of Aunt Tee who says "Mas'er married the money and not Miz Lilly. He was hopin' that if'n he owned Belmont it would make him a gentleman. He aine no gentleman though, no matter how much money he got" (21). Later Clotee reflects similar sentiments from Uncle Heb who says "Mas Henley aine nothing' but white trash who married into a fine Virginia family" (43). The class differences between Mas' Henley and Miz Lilly reflects the way class impacts white people within the hierarchy of race. This is also shown through the overseer Waith, who is a former slave catcher that is described as being particularly cruel. Clotee writes that "Aunt Tee say Waith is po' white trash that aine never had it so good. That means he's gon' want to make sure he pleases Mas' and Miz Henley, to keep what he's got. I plan to stay clear of the man – he scares me" (143). Despite the class differences between the white characters in *A Picture of Freedom*, they are always above slaves in the racial hierarchy.

The reality of racial hierarchies between slaves and white people on the plantations are demonstrated through Clotee and Emma's descriptions of slavery and the Civil War. Clotee emphasizes how the race of slaves is constructed through gender when describing Hince's mixed race heritage:

I told Uncle Heb 'bout what Spicy said. 'Color of yo' skin don't matter when you're a slave,' Uncle Heb s'plained to me real easy-like. 'Virginia law say, if the mama be black, then her chir'ren be black. If the mama be a slave, then her chir'ren be a slave. Hince looks white but he's black 'cause his mama Ola was black. Never mind who is Daddy be' (28).

Throughout *A Picture of Freedom* Clotee describes the ways that slaves are treated as inferior to white people. In the escalation of the final storyline of Hince and Spicy running away, Mas' Henley describes his perspective on slaves to Mr. Harms, stating “[y]ou abolitionists don’t understand and you never will. Our slaves love us. They run away when you people come down exciting them about freedom – freedom to do what? They are like children – unable to do for themselves” (177). In *When Will this Cruel War be Over?* Emma often records these racist, paternalistic attitudes and beliefs about slaves held by white people during the Civil War period. Emma believes that her parents’ paternalistic nature is something that impacts the behavior of their slaves:

Both Father and Mother could be quite firm and strict when it was warranted – Father especially – but I think the wisdom of their way can be readily seen in the continued loyalty of our Negroes, while all around us others are running off to join the Yankees or worse, as witness the events at the Garlington house (129).

Throughout *When Will this Cruel War be Over?* Emma records the growing number of slaves leaving plantations and often reflects on the fact that their slaves have not. However, at the end of the book we learn that all but two of the slaves leave Emma’s family’s plantation by the end of the war. Through descriptions of slavery, particularly paternalistic depictions of slaves in *A Picture of Freedom* and *When Will this Cruel War be Over?*, racial hierarchy is constructed.

In addition to descriptions of slavery, racial hierarchies are also created through depictions of the Civil War in Emma’s diary. Emma often expresses her dread and sense of gloom, which have come about because of the war and the events that happen in her life as result. She spends a great deal of time in the early part of her diary reflecting on her life before the war, writing, “I cannot help but remember, with great longing, those

glorious days before this horrible war descended upon us and ruined everything.

Everything. I cannot help but yearn for a return to that time” (56). As time goes on she

begins to feel quite hopeless:

The war has been going on for far longer than anyone thought, so long that I fear we have become accustomed to it. We have grown accustomed to having no men around, accustomed to things we had taken for granted – coffee, ink, flour for baking – all becoming precious, and accustomed to all the gaiety having vanished from our lives. We seem to have lost all hope, as if this is the way it will be forever (46).

In addition to her own personal feelings about the changes that the war has brought to her life, Emma also receives conflicting messages about the war through letters from Tally and her father.

Emma’s father and her friend (and eventually husband) Tally are serving in the Confederate Army during the Civil War. Throughout Emma’s diary she records their letters and the difference between their perceptions of the war. Emma’s father is convinced of the moral nature of the war, certain that the Confederacy will triumph:

He says we should not be discouraged, and assures us that the Yankees are an inferior breed, and that the Lord will watch over us and not allow the wicked Abolitionists to prevail... Father maintains that the Abolitionists would like to destroy our country and see the Negroes set free so they could live just like white people, and he is certain that that is not the Lord’s plan. He is sure that setting them free would ruin their lives as well as ours (110).

In stark contrast to Mr. Simpson’s certainty in the righteousness of the Civil War are Tally’s letters that depicts the harsh conditions soldiers live in and their ever-dwindling morale. Emma writes that Tally:

complains that the war is going badly and the men are discouraged and tired of seeing things so unspeakable that

he cannot commit them to paper. He believes our efforts are futile and curses the politicians who got us into this war – politicians who stay home while his comrades are falling in gruesome sacrifice (73).

Tally and her father's descriptions of the war, in addition to her own experiences, leave Emma confused about whether or not the war is worth the damage it has brought. In the last entry of her diary Emma wonders, "[i]s there anything worth dying for? Is this awful waste – this painful sacrifice – justified in God's eyes?" (150)

Nation is constructed during the periods of Westward Expansion and the Civil War through racial hierarchies at the intersections of race and class, as well as through descriptions of the Civil War in *A Picture of Freedom* and *When Will this Cruel War be Over?*

Individual Persistence

The final way nation is constructed in the *Dear America* series is through the narrative of individual persistence despite difficult situations, which is reminiscent of the myth in the United States of being able to pull yourself up by your bootstraps. Every book analyzed for this project in some way shows the protagonist's ability to find a better life after the events in diary, or, at the very least, maintain a positive attitude. The books in the Revolutionary Time period both depict their characters going on to marry and have children, surviving the difficult situations placed before them because of the war.

The books in the Westward Expansion time period each detail difficult to horrendous historical events, yet each of the books maintains some type of narrative that emphasizes individual persistence and overcoming difficulties despite the odds. Hattie and her family make it to Oregon and she ends the book with a description of feeling at home when she saw "Mama out on the dance floor with Pa, her arm looped through his,

and her head thrown back in laughter, I knew we were truly finally in Oregon. Just like that” (137). Rosa is removed from servitude in *Valley of the Moon* through the discovery of father’s identity and is able to finally marry Walter. Sarah Nita and her family survive Fort Sumner and the book ends in an idealized way, with the image of Sarah Nita and High Jumper together in their old age. And Mary, despite being the character that dies the youngest in her epilogue, dying of cholera at the age of seventeen, still maintains that her life in America is better than Ireland. This is demonstrated through her conversations with Sean. They both agree that America is wasn’t they thought it would be, but unlike Sean who is “thinking now ’twas a mistake to come here,” Mary still feels that it is “better than back home. At least here there is food to eat and hope for tomorrow” (121).

The myth of persistence continues in the Civil War time period with Clotee living out her dream of becoming an abolitionist and continuing on to become an educator of former slaves. In *When Will this Cruel War be Over* Emma survives the war, partially through the idol she finds in the protagonist of Jane Austen’s *Jane Eyre*. Emma writes:

I have developed the highest regard for her character: her steadfastness to principle; her concern for others less fortunate than herself – this despite her own numerous misfortunes; her integrity, even in the face of dire consequences. I hope someday to be able to emulate these character traits (105).

Emma’s connection with Jane Eyre because of her ability to persist despite the difficult situation around her also speaks to the construction of nation in the form of a narrative of individual persistence despite difficult situations. The narrative of individual persistence in the texts from the *Dear America* series align with Kim Wilson’s identification of the metanarrative of positive progression in children’s historical fiction. Which, as discussed

in the first chapter, is consistent with Stuart Hall's analysis of continuity and timelessness as narratives of national culture.

Conclusion

Each of the time periods examined in the *Dear America* series, the Revolutionary War, Westward Expansion, and the Civil War work to construct girlhood and nation through depictions of the protagonists' daily lives and the historical political context in which they live. The first section of this analysis looks at the construction of girlhood at the intersections of gender, race, and class through the themes of daily feminized labor, heteronormativity, and resistance. The construction of girlhood emphasizes the importance of heteronormativity through both the protagonists and minor characters. This emphasis on heterosexual marriage and having children becomes clear in the epilogues of each book when the protagonists, except Mary and Clotee, marry and have children. However, even though in *So Far From Home* and *A Picture of Freedom* the protagonists do not marry or have children, the other girl characters in the books do – most notably Mary's sister Kate and Clotee's friend Spicy. Connected to heteronormativity and the construction of gender roles is the theme of feminized labor which, in the books examined in this study is depicted as being performed for members of the girls' family or through forced or wage labor. Future research on the *Dear America* series could explore how, or if, feminized labor is constructed in books from the series during later time periods when industrialization removed the need for some of the work performed by girls during the Revolutionary War, Westward Expansion, and Civil War time periods. The theme of resistance, though not present in strong ways in every book, is important because the various portrayals of resistance, such as Prudence's constant questioning and

Clotee's activism, complicate the construction of girlhood in the *Dear America* series beyond the centralized notions of feminized labor and heteronormativity.

The second section of this analysis addresses the construction of nation through the themes of origin stories focused on the Revolutionary War and the figure of George Washington, racial hierarchies, and the narrative of individual persistence despite difficult situations. Particularly important to the construction of nation in the United States is settler colonialism. Through these books the construction of a national origin myth in the context of the United States is centered on the Revolutionary War. Through the focus on political tensions between Patriots and Tories these books have the effect of erasing the role of settler colonialism in the creation of the United States. The construction of racial hierarchies in the books demonstrates the ways that intersections of race, class, and gender impact the construction of nation. Throughout books like *Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie* and *The Girl Who Chased Away Sorrow* stereotypes about indigenous people are re-inscribed, which contributes to a softer depiction of the harsh realities of settler colonialism. Despite the hardships described in each of the books, all of the protagonists maintain a positive outlook or ultimately move on to some kind of happy ending. This has the effect of re-inscribing the narrative of the United States as a place of possibility where individuals can overcome challenges to reach a better life. While some of the books, like *Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie* and *The Girl Who Chased Away Sorrow*, do not construct nuanced depictions of the lives of girls during a period of violent nation building, some do. *A Picture of Freedom* and *So Far From Home* both offer complex protagonists and more nuanced depictions of the intersections of gender, race, and class in the construction of girlhood and nation.

Conclusion

This project examines the constructions of racialized girlhood and nation in the *Dear America* series through a theoretical framework that centers an understanding of intersectional, systemic oppression and the social construction of identity. The *Dear America* series is published in two iterations: first from 1996-2004, and currently since 2010. The current series, downsized in number of texts, only features diaries told from female protagonists who are white or black, which removes a great amount of perspectives from the original series. While not always accurate or nuanced, the original series had more books that address multiple experiences of girlhood from perspectives that challenge the homogeneity of the construction of nation in the United States. For this project I analyzed eight books from the *Dear America* series, four from each version of the series. The books from the *Dear America* series examined in this project construct sometimes contradictory notions of girlhood and nation.

Girlhood in the series is constructed through racialized, gendered, and classed daily feminized labor, heteronormativity, and resistance to gender roles and expectations. For example, labor is conducted by girls for their families in the form of household needs and caring for children in *The Winter of Red Snow*, *Love Thy Neighbor*, *When Will This Cruel War be Over?*, and *Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie*. Labor is also performed for others in the form of servitude in *Valley of the Moon* and *A Picture of Freedom* and in the form of wage labor in *So Far From Home*. Heteronormativity and resistance are constructed throughout the series at the intersections of race, class, and gender.

However, these constructions are not uniformly represented across the texts. For example, in *Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie* and *When Will this Cruel War be*

Over? constructions of heteronormativity through looks and marriage are central to the books. However, in *So Far From Home* marriage is barely addressed and the majority of the narrative focuses on labor issues. Additionally, resistance is unevenly represented in the texts. For example, characters like Emma and Hattie in *When Will This Cruel War be Over?* and *Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie* do little to challenge their roles or question the situations occurring around them. This stands in sharp contrast to characters like Prudence and Clotee in *Love Thy Neighbor* and *A Picture of Freedom*, respectively, who actively challenge the gender roles ascribed to them and actively question and engage with the political climate in which they live.

A key focus of this project is on the ways constructions of girlhood are intertwined with notions of nation within the texts, as shown by the ways each of the protagonists' lives are impacted by the socio-political context in which they are living and narrating. While some of the books help provide multiple perspectives on the construction of nation, many contribute to what Takaki calls "the master narrative of U.S. history" (4). *Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie* and *The Girl Who Chased Away Sorrow* both misrepresent the brutal reality of the ongoing project of settler colonialism in the United States and contribute to what Andrea Smith discusses as the continual construction of indigenous peoples as disappeared. However, wedges of dissonance in the narrative of nation in the United States are constructed through perspectives such as Prudence and Clotee in *Love Thy Neighbor* and *A Picture of Freedom*. While some of the harsh realities of the creation of nation are described in the *Dear America* series, they are often couched in such a way that a young reader might not pick up on them. For example, rape is described in *The Girl Who Chased Away Sorrow* as soldiers being "cruel to our women"

(149). While, as an adult reader I automatically read this phrase as a warning about rape, that might not be the case for a reader in elementary school.

It is vitally important to engage with youth around issues of systemic oppression and social justice. I believe future paths for further research on the *Dear America* series could be used to expand on an examination of the texts and to research how individuals and teachers read these books. Future research could analyze more texts within the *Dear America* series, as well as the curricular materials available for teachers online from Scholastic. Additionally, conducting interviews with individuals who have read these books and teachers who use them in their classrooms could provide valuable information about moments of recognition and opportunities for teaching and learning about systemic and historic oppression.

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Appendices

Appendix A:

Complete list of books from the original *Dear America* series, 1996-2004

Author	Book	Book Setting and Date	Subject	Grade Level Equivalent
Bartoletti, Susan Campbell	<i>A Coal Miner's Bride: The Diary of Anetka Kaminska</i>	Lattimer, Pennsylvania, 1896	Changes and New Experiences, Family Life, Courage, Bravery, Heroism, Europe, Immigration	5.5
Bauer, Marion Dane	<i>Land of the Buffalo Bones: The Diary of Mary Ann Elizabeth Rodgers, An English Girl in Minnesota</i>	New Yeovil, Minnesota, 1873	Changes and New Experiences, Westward Exploration and Expansion, Family Life, Courage, Bravery, Heroism, Moving	4.9
Denenberg, Barry	<i>Early Sunday Morning: The Pearl Harbor Diary of Amber Billows</i>	Hawaii, 1941	Death, Grief, Loss, Family Life, Courage, Bravery, Heroism, Moving, Survival	5.5
Denenberg, Barry	<i>Mirror, Mirror on the Wall: The Diary of Bess Brennan</i>	The Perkins School for the Blind, 1932	Confronting and Resolving Fears, Great Depression, Courage, Bravery, Heroism, Disabilities, School Life	4.9
Denenberg, Barry	<i>One Eye Laughing, the Other Weeping: The Diary of Julie Weiss</i>	Vienna, Austria to New York, 1938	Family Life, Courage, Bravery, Heroism, European, Immigration, Jewish Experience	6.6
Denenberg, Barry	<i>So Far From Home: The Diary of Mary Driscoll, An Irish Mill Girl</i>	Lowell, Massachusetts, 1847	Changes and New Experiences, Industrial Revolution and Gilded Age, Family Life, European, Immigration	3.5

Denenberg, Barry	<i>When Will this Cruel War be Over?: The Diary of Emma Simpson</i>	Gordonsville, Virginia, 1861	American Civil War, Civil War Period and Reconstruction, Family Life	6.5
Fraustino, Lisa Rowe	<i>I Walk in Dread: The Diary of Deliverance Trembly, Witness to the Salem Witch Trials</i>	Massachusetts Bay Colony, 1691	Equality, Fairness, Justice, Thirteen Colonies and Life	6.4
Garland, Sherry	<i>A Line in the Sand: The Alamo Diary of Lucinda Lawrence</i>	Gonzales, Texas, 1836	American History, Courage, Bravery, Heroism, Honor, Wars and Military	4.8
Garland, Sherry	<i>Valley of the Moon: The California Diary of Maria Rosalia de Milagros</i>	Sonoma Valley, Alta California, 1846	Westward Exploration and Expansion, Family Life, Hispanic and Latin American, Native American	5.6
Gregory, Kristiana	<i>Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie: The Diary of Hattie Campbell</i>	The Oregon Trail, 1847	Westward Exploration and Expansion, Family Life, Determination and Perseverance, Pioneers	5.2
Gregory, Kristiana	<i>The Great Railroad Race: The Diary of Libby West</i>	Utah Territory, 1868	Changes and New Experiences, Westward Exploration and Expansion, Industrial Revolution and Gilded Age, Trains and Subways	5.8
Gregory, Kristiana	<i>The Winter of Red Snow: The Diary of Abigail Jane Stewart</i>	Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, 1777	Colonial and Revolutionary America, American Revolutionary War	2.8
Gregory, Kristiana	<i>Seeds of Hope: The Gold Rush Diary of Susanna Fairchild</i>	California Territory, 1849	Changes and New Experiences, Westward Exploration and Expansion, Family Life, Courage, Bravery, Heroism, Honesty	6.1

Hansen, Joyce	<i>I Thought My Soul Would Rise and Fly: The Diary of Patsy, a Freed Girl</i>	Mars Bluff, South Carolina, 1865	Civil War Period and Reconstruction, Slavery, Underground Railroad, Abolition	4.8
Hesse, Karen	<i>A Light in the Storm: The Diary of Amelia Martin</i>	Fenwick Island, Delaware, 1861	Civil War Period and Reconstruction, Family Life	5.6
Hopkinson, Deborah	<i>Hear My Sorrow: The Diary of Angela Denoto, A Shirtwaist Worker</i>	New York City, 1909	American History, Homelessness and Poverty, Immigration and Assimilation Experiences, Italian American, Jobs, Careers, Work	4.4
Janke, Katelan	<i>Survival in the Storm: The Dust Bowl Diary of Grace Edwards</i>	Dalhart, Texas, 1935	Great Depression, Family Life, Courage, Bravery, Heroism, Survival, Weather	5.9
Lasky, Kathryn	<i>A Journey to the New World: The Diary of Remember Patience Whipple</i>	Mayflower, 1620	Changes and New Experiences, Pilgrims, Survival	3.1
Lasky, Kathryn	<i>A Time for Courage: The Diary of Kathleen Bowen</i>	Washington D.C., 1917	Family Life, Elections and Voting, Determination and Perseverance, Equality, Fairness Justice, Prejudice and Tolerance Experiences	5.9
Lasky, Kathryn	<i>Christmas After All: The Diary of Minnie Swift</i>	Indianapolis, Indiana, 1932	Great Depression, Family Life, Christmas, Survival	5.5
Lasky, Kathryn	<i>Dreams in the Golden Country: The Diary of Zipporah Feldman, a Jewish Immigrant Girl</i>	New York City, 1903	Changes and New Experiences, Family Life, Courage, Bravery, Heroism, City Life, Immigration	4.8

Levine, Beth Seidel	<i>When Christmas Comes Again: The World War I Diary of Simone Spencer</i>	New York City to the Western Front, 1917	European, Christmas, Romantic Relationships, World War I	5.9
McDonald, Megan	<i>All the Stars in the Sky: The Santa Fe Trail Diary of Florrie Mack Rider</i>	The Santa Fe Trail, 1848	Changes and New Experiences, Westward Exploration and Expansion, Family Life	5.5
McKissack, Patricia	<i>A Picture of Freedom: The Diary of Clotee, A Slave Girl</i>	Belmont Plantation, Virginia, 1859	Slavery, Underground Railroad, Abolition, Literacy, Tolerance and Acceptance	5.2
McKissack, Patricia	<i>Color Me Dark: The Diary of Nellie Lee Love, the Great Migration North</i>	Chicago, Illinois, 1919	African American History, Family Life, Prejudice and Tolerance Experiences, Social Studies through Literature	6.5
McKissack, Patricia	<i>Look to the Hills: The Diary of Lozette Moreau, A French Slave Girl</i>	New York Colony, 1763	African American History, Slavery, Underground Railroad, Abolition, Loyalty	5.4
Murphy, Jim	<i>My Face to the Wind: The Diary of Sarah Jane Price, A Prairie Teacher</i>	Broken Bow, Nebraska, 1881	Westward Exploration and Expansion, Courage, Bravery, Heroism, School Life, Survival	4.9
Murphy, Jim	<i>West to a Land of Plenty: The Diary of Teresa Angelino Viscardi</i>	New York to Idaho Territory, 1883	Changes and New Experiences, Westward Exploration and Expansion, Courage, Bravery, Heroism, Extended Families, Italian American	4.8
Osborne, Mary Pope	<i>My Secret War: The World War II Diary of Madeline Beck</i>	Long Island, New York, 1941	Confronting and Resolving Fears, Family Life, Courage, Bravery, Heroism, World War II	5.3
Osborne, Mary Pope	<i>Standing in the Light: The Captive Diary of Catharine Carey Logan</i>	Delaware Valley, Pennsylvania, 1763	Native American, Thirteen Colonies and Life	4.8

Rinaldi, Ann	<i>My Heart is on the Ground: The Diary of Nannie Little Rose, A Sioux Girl</i>	Carlisle Indian School, Pennsylvania, 1880	Native American History, Family Life, Courage, Bravery, Heroism, Culture and Diversity, Prejudice and Tolerance Experiences	5.2
Turner, Ann	<i>Love Thy Neighbor: The Tory Diary of Prudence Emmerson</i>	Green Marsh, Massachusetts, 1774	American Revolutionary War, Democracy, Family Life, Friends and Friendship, Prejudice and Tolerance Experiences	4.9
Turner, Ann	<i>The Girl Who Chased Away Sorrow: The Diary of Sarah Nita, A Navajo Girl</i>	New Mexico, 1864	Native American History, Family Life, Courage, Bravery, Heroism	6.2
White, Ellen Emmerson	<i>Voyage on the Great Titanic: The Diary of Margaret Ann Brady</i>	R.M.S. Titanic, 1912	Death, Grief, Loss, American History, Boats and Underwater Craft, Travel and Vacations	3.3
White, Ellen Emmerson	<i>Where Have all the Flowers Gone?: The Diary of Molly MacKenzie Flaherty</i>	Boston, Massachusetts, 1968	Family Life, Courage, Bravery, Heroism, Jobs, Careers, Work, Vietnam War	5.9

Appendix B:

Complete list of books from the current iteration of the *Dear America* series, 2010-2013

Author	Book	Book Setting and Date	Subject	Grade Level Equivalent
Bartoletti, Susan Campbell	<i>Down the Rabbit Hole: The Diary of Pringle Rose</i>	Chicago, Illinois, 1871	Death, Grief, Loss, Industrial Revolution and Gilded Age, Disabilities, Running Away, Siblings	4.6
Blundell, Judy	<i>A City Tossed and Broken: The Diary of Minnie Bonner</i>	San Francisco, California, 1906	American History, Earthquakes	4.7
Denenberg, Barry	<i>When Will this Cruel War be Over?: The Diary of Emma Simpson</i>	Gordonsville, Virginia, 1861	American Civil War, Civil War Period and Reconstruction, Family Life	6.5
Fraustino, Lisa Rowe	<i>I Walk in Dread: The Diary of Deliverance Trembly, Witness to the Salem Witch Trials</i>	Massachusetts Bay Colony, 1691	Equality, Fairness, Justice, Thirteen Colonies and Life	6.4
Gregory, Kristinia	<i>Across the Wide and Lonesome Prairie: The Diary of Hattie Campbell</i>	The Oregon Trail, 1847	Westward Exploration and Expansion, Family Life, Determination and Perseverance, Pioneers	5.2
Gregory, Kristinia	<i>Cannons at Dawn: The Second Diary of Abigail Jane Stewart</i>	Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, 1779	Colonial and Revolutionary America, American Revolutionary War	2.5
Gregory, Kristinia	<i>The Winter of Red Snow: The Diary of Abigail Jane Stewart</i>	Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, 1777	Colonial and Revolutionary America, American Revolutionary War	2.8

Hansen, Joyce	<i>I Thought My Soul Would Rise and Fly: The Diary of Patsy, a Freed Girl</i>	Mars Bluff, South Carolina, 1865	Civil War Period and Reconstruction, Slavery, Underground Railroad, Abolition	4.8
Hesse, Karen	<i>A Light in the Storm: The Diary of Amelia Martin</i>	Fenwick Island, Delaware, 1861	Civil War Period and Reconstruction, Family Life	5.6
Larson, Kirby	<i>The Fences Between Us: The Diary of Piper Davis</i>	Seattle, Washington, 1941	World War II, America, Prejudice and Tolerance Experiences	2.5
Lasky, Kathryn	<i>A Journey to the New World: The Diary of Remember Patience Whipple</i>	Mayflower, 1620	Changes and New Experiences, Pilgrims, Survival	3.1
Lasky, Kathryn	<i>Christmas After All: The Diary of Minnie Swift</i>	Indianapolis, Indiana, 1932	Great Depression, Family Life, Christmas, Survival	5.5
Lowry, Lois	<i>Like the Willow Tree: The Diary of Lydia Amelia Pierce</i>	Portland, Maine, 1918	World War I, America, Adoption	2.7
McKissack, Patricia	<i>A Picture of Freedom: The Diary of Clotee, A Slave Girl</i>	Belmont Plantation, Virginia, 1859	Slavery, Underground Railroad, Abolition, Literacy, Tolerance and Acceptance	5.2
Osborne, Mary Pope	<i>Standing in the Light: The Captive Diary of Catharine Carey Logan</i>	Delaware Valley, Pennsylvania, 1763	Native American, Thirteen Colonies and Life	4.8
Patron, Susan	<i>Behind the Masks: The Diary of Angeline Reddy</i>	Bodie, California, 1880	Westward Exploration and Expansion, Parents, Violence and Crime	5.7
Pinkney, Andrea Davis	<i>With the Might of Angels: The Diary of Dawnie Rae Johnson</i>	Hadley, Virginia, 1954	Segregation and Integration, African American, Civil Rights Movement, Prejudice and Tolerance Experiences, School Life	2.4

White, Ellen Emmerson	<i>Voyage on the Great Titanic: The Diary of Margaret Ann Brady</i>	R.M.S. Titanic, 1912	Death, Grief, Loss, American History, Boats and Underwater Craft, Travel and Vacations	3.3
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