

A CRITICAL CONTENT ANALYSIS OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE FEATURING
BLACK AGRICULTURALISTS

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

There has recently been a push to include agricultural content in the core mainstream K-12 curriculum for all students. Agricultural literacy in the K-12 curriculum is essential to developing tomorrow's future farmers and agricultural consumers. For various reasons the presence of African Americans in the field of agriculture has generally declined over the past century. Additionally, the contributions of African American agriculturalists are absent from the agricultural curriculum development framework. Using a qualitative critical content analysis, this study identifies and examines Black farmers in multicultural children's literature in order to position Black farmers in the traditional K-12 curriculum. If children can see farming from a positive and empowering perspective, they might be inspired to pursue an agricultural career path and engage with science inquiry in the future.

Keywords: Agricultural literacy, Black farmers, critical content analysis, food justice, multicultural children's literature, critical theory

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Recently, the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture (AFBFA) has initiated efforts to develop agricultural education standards and to implement agricultural content literacy into the science curriculum for students in early education through adult education settings (American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture, 2021; Next Generation Science Standards, 2013). These agricultural efforts have been initiated to expand proficiency in the tenets of agricultural literacy, bridge a connection between agricultural literacy and STEM, promote a positive public understanding of agriculture, and inspire students to pursue agricultural careers. Historically, agriculture was absent from the National Science Standards. The National Science Education Standards were developed in 1996, to increase scientific literacy through inquiry-based learning in eight science categories. The eight science categories were: 1) unifying concepts and processes, 2) science as inquiry, 3) physical science, 4) life science, 5) earth and space science, 6) science terminology, 7) science in personal and social perspectives, 8) history and the nature of science. In 1998, the Board on Agriculture assembled a delegation to discuss how agriculture in grades K-12 could fit within the structural framework of the National Science Education Standards. The delegation at this forum consisted of scientists, collaborators, and educators from universities across the United States. In fact, on the board, were two professors from the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana – May Berenbaum and William Ogren. Many delegates at the forum were concerned with the absence of agriculture in the National Science Education Standards (1996). “Scientists were eager to discuss the content standards, and clearly some were concerned that the National Science Education Standards contained few references to food, fiber, and renewable resources” (National Research Council, 1998, p. 11). In fact, the Board on Agriculture had met three years prior to the adoption of the

National Science Education Standards to discuss ways in which agricultural education systems, and activities, could enhance the scientific inquiry process, to add an agricultural presence within the framework of the developing science standards (p. 5). During the 1998 forum, Harold Pratt, of the National Council of Research, explained, in response to the growing concerns about the lack of agriculture within the National Science Education Standards, that the standards were not designed to teach agriculture. In turn, delegates considered how topics with agricultural commonalities such as “food” could be, at the least, a minimal way to approach agriculture within the framework of the current science standards. The forum concluded with an emphasis on the impact that the absence of agriculture in the National Science Education Standards could have on science education.

If [agricultural professional] societies are to have an impact, then it must be recognized that the National Science Education Standards don't say anything about agriculture. You find “food” and “renewable resources” twice. But their absence provides societies with the opportunity to address how agricultural sciences affect the application when we get down into the frameworks and the curricula. That is the challenge.” (p. 33)

In 1998, The Food and Fiber Systems Literacy Frameworks (Leising, 1998) released *A Guide to Food and Fiber Systems Literacy: A compendium of standards, benchmarks, and instructional materials for grades K-12* (Leising, et al., 1998). This framework was adopted by at least 30 states and was designed to provide a comprehensive roadmap for what students in grades K-12 should know and understand about agriculture. In 2010, James Leising and a team from the National Agriculture in the Classroom advisory committee were asked to revise the framework in order to address new priorities presented by students and educators. In 2012, The American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture (AFBDA) developed and adopted The Pillars of

Agricultural Literacy, which was utilized in conjunction with The Food and Fiber Systems Literacy Framework to develop the National Agricultural Literacy Outcomes (2013) and the National Agricultural Literacy Curriculum Matrix (2013).

Agricultural fields and agricultural endeavors have been fighting for recognition, participation, and appreciation for centuries. Many believe that the key to maintaining an agricultural system starts with an agricultural education presence in schools. Terry, Herring, and Larke (1992) predicted a decline in the future of agricultural participation if agricultural literacy did not become an essential component of the curriculum. “Beginning in kindergarten...all students should receive systematic instruction about agriculture” (p. 51).

The science community in general had growing concerns about how students were learning science (National Research Council, 2007). There were frequent debates regarding the way children learn science, the underrepresentation of people of color in science, and what should be taught in K-8 science classrooms (National Research Council, 2007). Bell (2009) wrote about scientific knowledge that is developed from informal learning spaces. Bell (2009) wrote that science is learned within the context of everyday experiences with the natural environment. These debates prompted the publications of science frameworks specifically, *A Framework For K-12 Science Education* (2012) which became a prominent resource during the development of the new science standards (NGSS, 2013). Within the *Framework For K-12 Science Education* (2012) are disciplinary core ideas that students need to acquire in K-12 science education. Although the framework provides places for agricultural learning and literacy throughout the standards one disciplinary core idea that specifically addresses agriculture is:

ESS3.C Human activities in agriculture, industry, and everyday life have had major effects on the land, vegetation, streams, ocean, air, and even outer space. But individuals and communities are doing things to help protect Earth's resources and environments.

A Framework For K-12 Science Education (2012) clearly identified many other examples where agricultural literacy could also be taught in the other disciplinary core ideas as well. The framework was embedded within the performance objectives of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and provided a roadmap for implementation.

Not only did *A Framework For K-12 Science Education* (2012) articulate the importance of an agricultural presence in the science standards, but the framework also addressed the importance of equity and diversity in science education. Chapter 11 of the document *A Framework For K-12 Science Education* (2012) outlines how inequities have limited the scientific achievements of students in diverse demographic groups. Furthermore, because the scientific community has not adequately utilized the funds of knowledge that exist in diverse communities, inequities have also limited the discourse within the science community; thus, further restricting the growth and advancement of the entire science community. "An emerging consensus in education scholarship is that the diverse knowledge and skills that members of different cultural groups bring to formal and informal science learning contexts are assets to build on" (p. 287).

When the NGSS was adopted in 2011, there was an intentional emphasis in the framework that specifically advocated that science education is for all students. In fact, *A Framework For K-12 Science Education* (2012) specifically addressed curriculum writers and wrote:

In this chapter, we highlight equity issues that relate to student's educational experiences and outcomes in science and engineering. We argue that the conclusions and principles

developed here should be used to inform any effort to define and promote standards for science and engineering education. Issues related to equity and diversity become even more important when standards are translated into curricular and instructional materials and assessments (p. 277).

Farming is a fundamental part of humanity. “Farming as a family-owned and independent business has been an important part of the social and economic development of the United States” (Reynolds, 2003, p.1) for centuries. Roughly 98% of the farms operating in the U.S. are Family-Owned Farms (www.fb.org/newsroom/fast-facts). In fact, one farm can feed roughly 166 people in the U.S. (www.fb.org). Sadly, less than 2% of farms are owned and operated by African Americans in the U.S. There are many reasons for the low number of Black farmers in the US today. Most scholars attribute discriminatory practices, such as loan rejections that were guaranteed by the American Farm Bureau, and racism (Hargrove & Jones, 2004) to the decline in Black farmers; a declining trend that is steeper than any other demographic group in the U.S. Others attribute the decline to the persistent connection of slave imagery to Black farmers (White, 2018). The research has established a decline in Black farmers that will continue unless a strategic interruption in the cycle occurs (Reynolds, 2003). Studies have also shown that there are very few newly established Black farms in the U.S. In fact, 81% of the current population of Black farmers were heirs of a parent or grandparent who also farmed (Reynolds, 2003). Additionally, the average age of a Black farmer is 61.9 years, indicating that the quantity of Black farmers is quite literally dying off (Census of Agriculture Highlights, 2014; Sewell, 2019). Early farming efforts to establish progressive Black farming collectives were problematic, but nonetheless, Black farmers have a vital presence in the U.S. today. The vitality of Black farmers today is essential to meeting the growing demands for food production in Black

communities (Gripper, 2020), specifically those communities that are managing issues of food insecurity.

Problem Statement

The population of schools is multicultural, multiracial, and multilingual. In order to provide agricultural instruction that is interesting to all learners from various backgrounds and differing funds of knowledge, educators are going to have to form connections to science from everyday lived experiences.

“In doing so, people “remove binary distinction from doing science or not doing science and being in science or being out of science, [thereby allowing] connections between [learners’] life worlds and science to be made easily [and] providing space for multiple voices to be heard and explored.” (National Research Council, 2012, p. 284)

Two major organizations are developing agricultural curriculum and instructional material for grades K-12: The American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture and The National Agriculture in the Classroom. The American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture consists of four staff members of whom 50% are White men and the other 50% are comprised of White women. Additionally, the board of directors for the AFBFA, a group of twenty members, includes 70% White men and 30% White women. As such, The National Agriculture in the Classroom shared a similar gender and racial demographic composite as the national leadership team is comprised of one White man and one White woman. It is important to note the demographics of the two organizations as their participation could be a factor in the decision-making for curricular materials and the overall goals for the organizations.

The American Farm Bureau Foundation of Agriculture (AFBFA) was founded in 1967. The mission of the AFBFA “is to build awareness, understanding, and a positive public

perception of agriculture through education” (AFBFA, 2020). One of the ways the AFBFA is working towards its mission is by developing an agriculturally literate society with a collection of instructional materials called: Ag Literacy or Agricultural Literacy. In 2012, the AFBFA developed the Pillars of Agricultural Literacy to be a lesson planning tool for teachers to design lesson plans by grade level in order to teach students to understand the relationships between agriculture and the environment, food, animals, lifestyle, technology, and the economy. Teachers are encouraged to use this planning tool as a starting place for accessing resources and developing lesson plans for their students in grades that range from early childhood to early adulthood. The Pillars of Agricultural Literacy start by building a foundational knowledge of key terms and identifications. One foundational knowledge component is in the category of agricultural history in the U.S. In this category, it is written that “Agriculture played an important role in the development of the United States. Colonists brought with them skills for purposeful cultivation of the land.” Again, there was no language to address issues of diversity, equity, and social justice around food and/or agriculture.

Agriculture in the Classroom began in the late 1900s as a grassroots movement comprised of educators with both agricultural and nonagricultural backgrounds. Jean Ibendahl, an Illinois farmer and educator, officially developed Agriculture in the Classroom in 1971. The National Agriculture in the Classroom is currently supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). A combination of teachers and national agencies prompted a move toward developing agricultural curricular materials. The National Agricultural Literacy Outcomes (2013) were developed to define and organize agricultural literacy benchmarks into five major themes: 1. Agriculture and the Environment, 2. Plants and Animals for Food, Fiber, and Energy, 3. Food, Health, and

Lifestyle, 4. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math, 5. Culture, Society, Economy, and Geography (Spielmaker & Leising, 2013). These themes were developed from the AFBFA's Pillars of Agricultural Literacy (2012), a project entitled Food, Land, and People (2012), and research from The Food and Fiber Systems Literacy Frameworks (Leising, 1998). Additionally, between 2013-2018, the National Center for Agricultural literacy developed a website that contained "rigorous standards-based K-12 lessons" (The National Agriculture in the Classroom Annual Report, 2019, p. 14) called the National Agricultural Literacy Curriculum Matrix (2013). The results from the search feature on the curriculum matrix produced very little in the way of lesson plans and companion resources dealing with issues of diversity, equity, and social justice around food and/or agriculture. However, the Agricultural Literacy benchmark labeled T5.9-12 intended for grades 9-12 states that students should "evaluate and discuss the impact of major agricultural events and agricultural inventions that influenced world and US history" (p. 13). A list of influential agricultural inventions and named inventors are provided in the benchmark: Eli Whitney, Cyrus McCormick, John Deere, Artturi Virtanen, and Louis Pasteur. Each of these influential agricultural inventors is a White male.

Currently, the curriculum design frameworks, benchmarks, and planning guides, evident from the Pillars of Agricultural Literacy and the National Agriculture in the Classroom Curriculum Matrix, Benchmarks, and Outcomes, the two leading contributors to agricultural curricular materials, scarcely address issues of inclusivity and equity. The contributions that persons of color, specifically Black agriculturalists, and laborers, have had in the development of the current agricultural infrastructure in the U.S. is substantial. One of the guiding principles of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) is the idea of science education for "all students". If the Pillars of Agricultural Literacy, the foundation for agricultural curriculum and

pedagogical development, and other leading national agricultural curriculum development influences, such as the National Agriculture in the Classroom organization, disenfranchise persons of color by not acknowledging issues of race and culture in agricultural curriculum, then these curricular materials will not achieve the vision of the 21st-century science standards.

Purpose of the Study

Multicultural children's literature is often adopted to elevate issues and problems by providing a voice to multiple variations of lived experiences. Although the primary function of children's literature is to entertain and educate, multicultural children's literature is a useful tool for sharing ideologies about agriculture with all students, especially Black students. Agricultural education in the elementary grades is key to changing the outlook for agricultural literacy in the future. Persons of color have made huge contributions to the agricultural infrastructure and food production systems in the U.S. Mexican American agriculturalists, Asian American agriculturalists, and Native American agriculturalists all have had and continue to have a presence and a voice in the historical and present agricultural landscape. While this paper focuses solely on African American agriculturalists, future studies should acknowledge the vast assets they provide to the agricultural community. The goals indicated in *A Framework For K-12 Science Education* (2012) were that the scientific contributions of people of color be made visible to students and that there is a space in science inquiry from multiple voices and perspectives. The use of multicultural children's literature could provide educators with a resource for accomplishing those goals.

Context/Background

Family oral history suggests that my family's involvement in agriculture captured a range of roles. The following are examples to illustrate our history. I grew up in Chicago, Illinois

listening to family histories that were told around the kitchen table during meals. As a child, I did not understand the significance of my geographic placement in Chicago, IL., or the history of migration that translated to hope for many African American farming families living in the Jim Crow South. One family history often shared was that my maternal grandmother, Big Mama, Cora Lee Crawford Gwin grew up on a farm in Clarksdale, MS. Her family owned the land and they had cattle. On the farm was a family store. Recently, my mother told me that Sam Cooke's father taught my family how to pick cotton correctly, without hurting their hands. Another story that was often shared was of the purchase offer presented to my great grandmother for the purchase of Cora, who would later become my Big Mama. As the story is told, the time was during the Great Depression, people were losing land and farms to the banks and a White farm neighbor rode up on a White horse and said, "How much for Cora?" My great grandmother Leah replied, "You don't have enough money to buy my children and get off of my land before I tell Moses", who was my great grandfather. Around this time, my family like many other African American families in the South, and in the children's literature, migrated North to Chicago. My grandmother kept a store in her kitchen and sold candy, pickles with or without peppermints, and ice cream to us, her grandchildren, and the neighborhood children. My great aunts and uncle, who had also migrated North, maintained an agricultural presence in the North by purchasing acres of farmland in Michigan. We would often visit Aunt Dovie's and Uncle Melvin's farm and play tons of games during the summer.

During the summer visits to my paternal grandparent's home in Fort Wayne, Indiana, we would often visit the local soup kitchen for lunch. I realized, when I was an adult, that the "lunch spot" was actually a soup kitchen. I would ask my grandmother, Rosa Lee Blanks, "what kind of drive-thru only sells one type of soup?" It was always the same. It was unclear if we needed to

patronize the soup kitchen due to financial restraints or if my grandparents were teaching my sister and me a lesson on how to appreciate the little things - noodles, broth, carrots, and celery. In Fort Wayne, the library was right across the street from Taco Bell. And while my sister and I would have breakfast in the morning, comprised of a breakfast item accompanied by greens and watermelon, the possibility of knowing that lunch would be soup, my sister and I would often ask library visitors walking in and out of the library for money to purchase a taco. Access to food variety and food differences was an awareness that I developed through the years.

Fort Wayne, IN. held some of my earliest experiences with growing food. Growing up in Chicago, IL. I noticed the differences in healthy food choices and accessibility that differed when I would visit my maternal grandmother who lived in the inner city of Chicago on 71st and Sangamon and my paternal grandfather and grandmother's house in Fort Wayne. So, while we would often visit the soup kitchen for the noodle and vegetable soup, my grandparents also used most of their land to grow tomatoes, various types of greens, peppers, and watermelon. People would come to my grandparents' home during the summer months and my grandfather would pick bags of fresh collard greens to sell and at times give to families in need. Whenever we would visit, my mother would often ask my grandfather to cook her some fresh greens. My sister and I often reminisce about the quantity of fresh fruits and vegetables we would eat from our paternal grandparents' garden in Fort Wayne, IN. compared to other times of the year living on the Southside of Chicago, IL when my grandmother would have to take the bus or walk many blocks to the nearest grocery store. I now recognize that both of my grandparents lived in a food desert. In Fort Wayne, however, we were more often snacking on garden tomatoes, and eating greens and watermelon for breakfast. My paternal grandparents also kept a store in their kitchen

and sold candy, and frozen cups of juice, which we called Icy Cups, to us, their grandchildren, and people in the neighborhood.

Food access has evolved over the years at the local and state level. As a teen parent at 17, I utilized the WIC and Food programs in Champaign, IL and I remember the options were healthy but limited. Food banks had a very limited selection and very rarely offered fresh fruit options. In 2012, I was the assistant principal of an elementary school in Champaign, IL. This school had a community garden. Demographically, at the time, African American students represented roughly 80% of the school population. The art teacher took on the responsibility of the school garden. I watched the art teacher develop students' interest in the garden with his after-school gardening club. In this after-school club, students learned about various foods and helped to distribute the vegetables to their peers during their lunchtime. Additionally, I wrote and received a grant from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to help students further explore a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables. During the grant work, I personally washed the fruits and vegetable items, cut them into the needed quantities of 300-400 pieces, and then walked from classroom to classroom delivering fresh fruits and vegetables to students in grades K-5. Providing students with a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables was an important way to help them to gain access to the wider cultural lens that those foods provided. For example, an Asian pear has a different texture, taste, and cultural significance than the Bosc pear.

Sharing diverse foods is like sharing diverse stories. Additionally, sharing food stories can be a way for students to learn about and access information about diverse cultures. Many foods have social, cultural, and historical influences on society. Severson (2018) wrote:

Although food has always been a cultural currency, it has never enjoyed the kind of crossover into the arts, politics, and health as it has in the past decade. How we eat has

come to underscore issues of race, class, and environmental degradation. The pleasures of the table softly open hearts and give us a common language and a reason to have a hard conversation about where our food comes from and who cooks it. Any knowledgeable eater these days knows that a bowl of shrimp and grits or a pot of gently simmering lady peas flavored with just a kiss of streak ‘o lean, for example, has roots in the worst chapter of America’s history (p. x).

My early family histories, combined with living the experiences of navigating food deserts, and my developing understanding of the value of healthy and diverse food access informed my perspective and contextualized my research.

Theoretical Base

Critical Theory (CT) is the main theory guiding this study. The utilization of CT, in this study, seeks to examine the space where race and power in agricultural literacy standards can be explored alongside the presence of race and power that exists in children’s literature. CT is used as a tool to examine tenets of race and racism in an effort to transform the power dynamic that exists between marginalized and majority groups, ideologies, and systems.

When the topic of Black farmers surfaces in classrooms today, many students and teachers, associate, through the dominant narratives and curriculum resources, the image of the enslaved Black farmers or the poor Black sharecropper. Cusick (2019) writes:

‘Most Blacks have an impression of farming based on our history in this country,’ said Fresno farmer Will Scott, citing a history of slavery, sharecropping, and Jim Crow laws.

‘But we need to get back into it from a new approach. We need to get young people of color back to the farm not just so they can grow their own food but so they can participate in the food system.’ (para. 19)

Organizations are working to change the single narrative that young African American students, who could potentially show an interest in farming, have regarding agriculture. Schools and programs like The Freedom School are developing curriculum that teaches the power and freedoms that accompany farming. Marie Else, is a curriculum coordinator who works to disseminate the misconceptions about farming by teaching a variety of agricultural topics. She wrote: “Farming has so many parts to it...The kids all kind of gravitate toward different areas. And that’s what we want to teach them: Agriculture is not just planting. It is engineering and science and so many different aspects” (Cusick, 2019, para. 17). Often children’s literature is a curricular resource that classrooms utilize to teach agricultural and racial histories.

Children’s literature supplements the curriculum in an essential way as many parts of African American histories are missing from the mainstream curriculum. Children’s literature has become a critical component to address the absence of African American voices in the curriculum. In fact, some of the goals of the earliest children’s books were written to counter the efforts of discriminatory schooling practices that aimed to erase African American contributions and stories. Beckerman (2020) wrote:

In 1920, W.E.B. Du Bois launched a children's magazine, “The Brownies' Book,” full of poems, folk tales, current events, and stories about Black achievers. “Negro Makers of History” (1928) by historian Carter G. Woodson (founder of Black History Month), "The Story of the Negro" (1948) by poet and novelist Arna Bontemps — it won a Newbery “honor,” the equivalent of an "honorable mention" — and “First Book Of Negroes” (1953) by poet Langston Hughes, were all efforts to present information and uplift in a way that would appeal to kids.

Using CT provided a landscape to analyze the role of the Black farmer as presented in children's literature.

Research Question(s)

In this critical content analysis, I examined children's literature examples that depicted Black life in farming written for elementary and middle school students, that have settings that take place within the United States. This study will specifically examine these research questions:

1. What are the key demographics, genres, and formats featured in the collection of agriculturally themed children's books that present Black life in farming?
2. How do these books provide a counternarrative to the master narrative of Black life in farming?
3. How do agriculturally themed children's books that examine the relationship between Black life and farming written for elementary-aged children adhere to the Pillars of Agricultural Literacy?

Methods

Critical content analysis was used to explore children's books that depict Black life in farming. The analysis focused on the data that illustrated the positioning of the Black life in farming, the occupational structure, and the overall narrative about Black life in farming as portrayed by the agricultural roles and how agriculture functions in Black life. In the first phase of the research, a criterion was developed to identify the books that would be used in the study. Second, a sub-section of books was selected from the larger set to conduct a critical content analysis. During this process, children's books were examined for evidence of counternarratives and critical social justice issues. In this section, I conducted several close readings and recorded

my interpretations of the farmer's role and power dynamics around critical social justice themes: oppression, resistance, community, politics, and economic autonomy (White, 2018). An in-depth description of this process is included in chapter three.

Definition of Terms

Black Farmer/Black Agriculturalist. White (2018) defined farmers as the people who worked on the land, including enslaved people. In this study, the race of the farmer was interpreted by the researcher, contextual clues, or comments by the author(s) and/or illustrator(s). Additionally, the setting of the text was used to determine the character's agricultural context. Some scholars could disagree with the wholeness of this definition and prefer a different delineation or specificity to the term. However, for the purpose of this study, White's (2018) definition of the farmer was utilized. This study also included Black gardeners. The gardening space, for the purpose of this study, is inclusive of both home gardening and community gardening spaces. A garden is defined as a designated space used for both pleasure and purpose (Turner, 2005). Examples in the study included people who lived on farms and people who work on farms. Examples from this study also included people who have a designated garden space and who worked in designated garden spaces in both home and community environments. So, to include Black people in all characteristics and circumstances of farming and agriculture the term Black life in farming, Black farmer, and Black agriculturalist was used interchangeably.

Multicultural Children's Literature. Multicultural literature is literature that expands the pedagogy of multicultural education in order "to reform the curriculum so that it will be more truthful and more inclusive and will reflect the histories and experiences of the diverse groups and cultures that make up U.S. society" (Banks, 1999, p. 29.) Botelho and Rudman (2009) wrote the following:

Along with Harris (1993; 1997), Sims Bishop (1993; 1997), Cai and Sims Bishop (1994), Barrera, Thompson, and Dressman (1997), and Yokota (2001), the Cooperative Children's Book Center (Lindgren, 1991) argues that multicultural children's literature must focus on the populations who have experienced exclusion and marginalization such as African Americans, Native Americans, Latino Americans and Asian Americans. The CCBC's working definition of multicultural children's literature is that it is "literature by and/or about people of color". (p. 83)

For the purpose of this study, multicultural children's literature is literature that expands the pedagogy of multicultural education that is written about and by people of color.

Agricultural Literacy. Frick (1990) defined agricultural literacy as the knowledge and understanding a person has of food and fiber systems. Frick (1990) wrote:

An individual possessing such knowledge would be able to synthesize, analyze, and communicate basic information about agriculture. Basic agricultural knowledge includes: the production of plants and animal products,...the economic impact of agriculture, its societal significance, agriculture's important relationship with natural resources and the environment,...the marketing and processing of agricultural products, public agricultural policies, the global significance of agriculture, and the distribution of agricultural products (p. 41).

Meischen and Trexler (2003) wrote an updated definition that merges the relationship that literacy has with discourse and culture. They wrote:

Agricultural literacy entails knowledge and understanding of agriculturally related scientific and technologically-based concepts and processes required for personal decision making, participation in civic and cultural affairs, and economic productivity. At

a minimum, if a person were literate about agriculture, food, fiber, and natural resource systems, he or she would be able to a) engage in social conversation, b) evaluate the validity of media, c) identify local, national, and international issues, and d) pose and evaluate arguments based on scientific evidence. Because agriculture is a unique culture, an understanding of beliefs and values inherent in agriculture should also be included in a definition of agricultural literacy so people can become engaged in the system (p. 44).

An agriculturally literate person is “a person who understands and can communicate the sources and value of agriculture as it affects our quality of life” (Longhurst et al., 2020, p. 175).

According to the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture (AFBFA, 2020) an agriculturally literate person “understands how the agricultural industry works – not just where food comes from, but who grows it, agriculture’s effect on the economy, environment, technology, lifestyle and its relationship to livestock” (para. 1).

Food Sovereignty (Food Justice). Gottlieb and Joshi (2013) defined food justice as the assurance “that the benefits and risks of where, what, and how food is grown and produced, transported and distributed, and accessed and eaten are shared fairly” (p. 6). Gottlieb and Joshi (2013) defined food sovereignty as the “formulation of trade policies and practices that serve the rights of peoples to food and to safe, healthy and ecologically sustainable production” (p. 140). White (2018) wrote that food sovereignty is a set of “antiracist and [anticapitalistic] principles that guide cooperative efforts, political education, and organizing designed to dismantle systems of White supremacy embedded in the food system (p. 118). Sélingué (2007) wrote that food sovereignty “is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems” (para 3). Food justice and food sovereignty are often used synonymously.

Food justice is the dismantlement of systemic barriers, often in communities of color, to healthy food options (Foodprint, 2021).

Limitations

This study focused primarily on agriculturally themed children's literature featuring Black farmers found on Lee & Low Books, the National Agricultural Literacy Curriculum Matrix, and the Children's Literature Comprehensive Database (CLCD). While I predicted that this would produce a substantial booklist, there could be books that are missed, and therefore, excluded from the study. Lee & Low Books were used for this study because they provide a unique collection of authored and illustrated books from creators who are inside of the culture. The titles from the National Agricultural Literacy Curriculum Matrix's diverse children's literature list were included in this study because I believed that an examination of a booklist from one of the leading resources for agricultural literacy was important. Lastly, the Children's Literature Comprehensive Database (CLCD) was used because of the extensive organization of children's book titles that are accessible through the databases search engine. Moreover, the research utilized these data sources because children's literature found on these booklists are typically accessible to both teachers and students. This study prioritized multicultural over non-multicultural children's books because while they are written for all children, they maintain a focus on racially marginalized groups. Bishop (2003) wrote "[w]hen a group has been marginalized and oppressed, the cultural functions of story can take on even greater significance because storytelling can be seen as a means to counter the effects of that marginalization and oppression on children" (p. 25). Additionally, I utilized agriculturally themed children's literature from authors of all racial backgrounds. African American characters were the main focus of this study because this group of farmers has seen the sharpest decline in the farming

industry, and it was my hope that the implications from this study's findings would identify a catechism for future examination. In future studies, Latinx farmers, Mexican American farmers, Native American farmers, Asian American farmers, and other groups could be a focus of study as they too have had and continue to have a significant presence in U.S. agriculture.

Significance of Study

Multicultural children's literature can provide an avenue for elementary teachers to improve agricultural literacy for young children in the classroom. The insights gained from this study may provide students with a better perspective of Black agriculturalists which could create an awareness of the agricultural opportunities and increase participation in agricultural activities in Black communities. This study may motivate the writers of agricultural curriculum to include the contributions of Black farmers in order to promote inclusively and decrease the critical lack of diversity in agricultural fields. Since the research has established that there is a lack of Black agricultural educators (Kantrovich, 2010; Talbert & Larke, 1995), and therefore, Black agricultural role models, children's books can serve as a catalyst for young children to imagine themselves in agricultural roles.

Penniman and Washington (2018) wrote about the problems plaguing many African American communities. Not only are African Americans unjustly targeted by the police and their neighborhoods overly policed, but the African American neighborhoods are also filled with unhealthy food. "Black people are 10 times more likely to die from poor diets than from all forms of physical violence combined" (p. 224). Penniman and Washington (2018) revealed that the food crisis in African American communities goes beyond the neighborhood into the national community food systems. In fact, the USDA spends roughly \$130 billion in industry and "commodity foods, such as wheat, soy, milk, and dairy" and hardly any funding goes into

providing fresh fruits and vegetables to public school lunches (p. 224). Sadly, nearly 36% of African American children in the U.S. suffer from childhood obesity (<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/wecan/downloads/factsheet-aa.pdf>). There are four times the number of grocery stores in White communities than in Black communities (p. 224). “Fast food chains and junk food corporations disproportionately target their advertising to children of color, resulting in an epidemic of childhood obesity and diabetes” (p. 224).

Recently, Pastor John Hannah spoke out about the destruction of the Jewel’s grocery store during the recent unrest in Chicago, IL. Pastor J. Hannah (personal communication, June 2, 2020) conducted a live response on Facebook in order to assemble community clean-up efforts. “This is what has happened to a place that is already a food desert” (3:04). He continued with a plea to the Jewel’s officials to return to the community because without this particular grocery store many children and families would not have essential healthy food options. Urban Chicago areas are not the only communities with food deserts. In 2011, the USDA established an interactive food desert locator map, as a result of former First Lady Obama’s health initiative *Let’s Move* (2010). According to the 2015 data found on the food desert locator map there are three regions in Champaign County that have limited access to healthy equitable food systems (USDA’s Food Access Research Atlas, 2015).

Equitable food systems, meaning food systems that, at the very least, provide “access to healthy, affordable, culturally appropriate food” (Policy Link, 2021) have been a component of many civil rights movements and organizing efforts. One of the earliest initiatives of The Black Panther Party (1969) was ensuring that African Americans recognized the importance of healthy food access (White, p. 18, 2018). In fact, the Black Panther Party organized many food programs, include free breakfast programs, in response to the lack of healthy food options and

the presence of hunger and food insecurities in African American communities. “Through such programs, the activists of the BPP emphasized their desire to build a well-fed, well-cared for, healthy Black community” (p. 19).

The results of this study could be significant to educators and agriculturalists, but I also hope that agriculturally themed children’s books will be used to elevate critical issues regarding food justice, food security, and food access. This study could expand classroom discussions and enhance curriculum supplements as standards for agricultural education are being developed and implemented.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

An agricultural education curriculum needs to be established from a framework that intentionally creates a space for the contributions of people of color. Being race neutral in agricultural relations is not new. Perea (2011) wrote about the problems with race neutrality that occurred during the New Deal (1933) era that left many agriculturalists of color, specifically Black farmers unprotected by labor laws. The New Deal (1933) added protections to “employees” but purposefully excluded labor protections to “agricultural laborers” in order to maintain the exploitation of Black labor. Perea (2011) wrote:

President Roosevelt and his legislative allies recognized that in order to pass any New Deal legislation at all, it was necessary to compromise with Southern Democrats intent on preserving White supremacy. The compromise position was race-neutral language that both accommodated the southern desire to exclude Blacks but did not alienate northern liberals nor Blacks in the way that an explicit racial exclusion would. An occupational classification like agricultural and domestic employees, excluding most Blacks without saying so, was just such race-neutral language. (pp. 15-16)

The consequences of this legislation manifested into the exploitation of agriculturists of color that still exist today.

Classrooms have often operated from a position of race neutrality evident in policies that support a cultural blindness approach to instruction. Nuri-Robins et al. (2012) defined cultural blindness as “any policy, practice, or behavior that ignores existing cultural differences or that considers cultural differences inconsequential” (p. 87). Freire and Macedo (2014) wrote that “education is, and should be, critical and normative, not neutral” (p. 237). Shaull (2000) wrote:

There is no such thing as a *neutral* education process. Education either functions as an

instrument that is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, *or* it becomes “the practice of freedom,” the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world. (p. 34)

Cultural blindness in classrooms is an outdated practice and has caused unintentional harm to students (Nuri-Robins et al., 2012). Science classrooms are no exception. As a result, the research suggests a culturally responsive approach to teaching and learning.

Teachers pursuing a culturally responsive approach to instruction will need to understand the sense-making practices of particular communities, the science related values that reside in them, and the historical relationship that exists between the community and local institutions of education (A Framework for K-12 Science Education, 2012, p. 284)

The purpose of this literature review is to provide a background into the historical relationship that exists between the agricultural community, agricultural education research, and Black farmers that collectively shape the rationale for Critical Theory as the theoretical framework. In this literature review, is a history of Black Agriculturalism in the U.S. The history of Black Agriculturalists is wrought with examples of collective resilience over the tremendous pressure from discriminatory practices from multiple sources. Next, there is an overview of agricultural education research that has focused primarily on underrepresented student populations. Next, there is a synopsis of present-day Black agricultural work that could expand awareness to the renewed agricultural presence in both Rural and Urban communities. Then, the literature review includes examples in which children’s literature has been used to teach science concepts and enhance content literacy. Later, there are examples of research that has combined a

culturally responsive teaching framework and children's literature to teach science. Additionally included are studies that have framed agriculture within the structure of social justice movements. Lastly, I present the theoretical ideologies that were utilized in the study to prioritize essential issues and focus the dissertation.

History of Black Agriculturalism

Enslaved Black Agriculturalists

From 1619 until around 1860, millions of African people were kidnapped from abroad and brought to the US to farm. "Owners of large plantations and other businesses generally needed ready labor: The purchase of adult slaves (mostly men) was their first priority" (Bolden, 2002, p.15). In the 1700's, sugar was one of the first crops to prompt the expansion of the economic landscape of the plantation. Aronson and Budhos (2010) wrote:

The sugar that piled up on the docks near the plantations was something new in the world: pure sweetness, pure pleasure, so cheap that common people could afford it. Scientists have shown that people all over the world must learn to like salty tastes, sour tastes, mixed tastes. But from the moment we are born, we crave sweetness...And the bitter lives of the enslaved Africans produced so much sugar that the pure sweetness began to spread around the world. (p. 35)

The plantation experience varied depending upon the State but the narratives of slavery, wherever told, were never pleasant. Thomas (1834) wrote a collection of plantation testimonials about the brutality of slavery. In one such narrative a slave was mutilated from the feet up as a way to scare other slaves from running away (p. 26). Editors (2017) wrote:

According to Fredrick Douglass, at the moment of birth, the child of a slave mother was removed from her care. As he explained the purpose of this was to hinder the

development of the child's affection towards its mother, and to blunt the child. This is the inevitable result. Birthdates were withheld, family units disassembled, and literacy and education universally denied. (Chapter 3, Section 1, para 8)

Lester (1998) wrote:

The plantation. It was a country unto itself, and within its confines, large or small, life was generally the same for the slave. His principal occupation was work, and the work with which he was principally occupied was cotton. It was a crop that needed much care and long hours of tedious work. One could tell the month of the year by what work was being done on the cotton. Some crops can be planted, hoed, and left to grow until time for harvest. Not cotton. (p. 65)

Black farm labor greatly impacted the economic and political power held by slaveholders. Many slaveholders manipulated public policies in the slaveholding states. So, whether you owned slaves or not there were incentives for embracing slavery since the slaveholders in the state held the most political sway. Young (2003) wrote:

During election season wealthy planters courted nonslaveholding (sic) voters by inviting them to celebrations that mixed speechmaking with abundant supplies of food and drink. On such occasions slaveholders shook hands with yeomen and tenant farmers as if they were equals...These political and economic interactions were further reinforced by the common racial bond among White Georgia men. Sharing the prejudice that slaveholders harbored against African Americans, nonslaveholding (sic) Whites believed that the abolition of slavery would destroy their own economic prospects and bring catastrophe to the state as a whole. (para. 10)

In short, White farmers and their families built their financial and political influence off the labor of Black farmers. So, when newly freed Black farmers saw an opportunity to build wealth for their own families, many sought out agricultural opportunities as a way to build their own family legacy.

In fact, during the Civil War, many Black soldiers, who fought alongside White Union soldiers to end slavery during the Civil War, defined freedom “as placing us where we could reap the fruit of our own labor”. Many felt that “the best way we accomplish this was to have land and turn it and till it by our own labor” (Foner, 2016, p. 70). As slaveholding plantations were invaded by Union soldiers newly freed Black farmers were allocated land plots for independent farming. Booker T. Washington (1909) wrote:

The result of this was that wherever the Federal armies went slavery ceased. As a consequence thousands of these homeless and helpless people fell into the hands of the Federal Commanders. When General Grant entered Northern Mississippi the refugees became so numerous that he detailed Chaplain John Eaton...to organise (sic) them and set them to work picking cotton which was ripe in the fields. (pp. 6-7)

Freed Black Agriculturalist

During this time, in fact, African American soldiers and newly freed Black people were promised 40 acres of land and help from the U.S. to secure a mule. This promised land assistance stemmed from the need to employ the thousands of homeless freed Black families. One author wrote that “the government freed the slave and then forgot about the Negro” (Schor, 1992, p. 72). Many White slaveowners “received federal compensation for the loss of their slaves” which translated to White people that they were the true “victims of slavery” (Finkenbine, 2005, p. 106). The promise of landownership and compensation for Black farmers would unfortunately

translate into sharecropping. Many African Americans hoped, however, that sharecropping would secure their family's future wealth. In fact, African Americans welcomed farming as a way to escape the poverty of their past and to embrace the freedom of their future. So, as the agricultural servitude of slavery was abolished, the new system of servitude known as sharecropping matured, along with conscripted labor for violations of petty laws.

Although during the post-civil war era many Blacks saw this sharecropping as a “step” toward becoming independent landowners and worked on plantations to secure their right to land, by the 1930s this system was a *de facto* way of life, designed to maintain a subservient Black worker class. (Smith, 2020, p. 4)

Sharecropping marked the start of reconstruction farming in the South. In March of 1865, the Freedman's Bureau was founded and as a result, many historically Black colleges were established by philanthropists, churches, and later The Morrill Act (which established state colleges). The Freedman's Bureau, realizing the fate of newly freed Black families, employed thousands of Black men on leased land to farm abandoned plantations (Washington, 1909). Black farmers understood the difficulties of farming, especially the cotton crop. In fact, cotton was one of the most difficult crops to harvest and required long hours of tedious work; work that most often fell to the hands of Black farmers. “To the racial propagandist, cotton is simply another aspect of race, the exploitation of Black men by White” (Vance, 1929, p. 9).

Black Farmer Narratives & Counternarratives

The story of the Black farmer is a depiction of Black farmers as slaves, ex-slaves (typically biographies of George Washington Carver), or Black farmers who are leaving the horrid South in pursuit of a greater purpose in the North. What is missing are the stories that position Black farmers as essential members of the agricultural community, proud community

activists, and demonstrators of resilience in the midst of extreme oppression. Brooks and McNair (2009) wrote that stories “matter because in the advancement of literary tradition, African Americans gain a vehicle through which they can participate more fully in their textual and, thus, public representation” (p. 126). Most often, educators leave out the history of Black farmers, (Penniman & Washington, 2018) and when by chance Black farmers are included in farm history it is most often a story about George Washington Carver-The Peanut Doctor. A man born into slavery who then goes on to prestigious universities and earns advanced degrees in agriculture. Later, he spreads his knowledge of agriculture to other Black farmers. He becomes the heroic protagonist of the Black farmer for children in the literature. White (2018) wrote that “[I]n emphasizing the ‘talented tenth,’[we] have failed to capture the roles of Black working-class men and women thus often have ignored the legacy of Black farmers” (p. 5). George Washington Carver had an extraordinary presence in the evolution of agriculture and education; however, the story of the Black farmer should also include the lived experiences of the everyday African American farmers; including women. African American women not only purchased and managed family farms, but they also had to overcome both gender and racial discrimination. (Jones-Branch, 2019; Harris, 2019).

There are very few studies that have examined how agriculturally themed children’s literature can impact student’s awareness of their environment. The way African American children see themselves in agriculturally themed children’s books is essential to their roles as potential future Black farmers (Myers, 1986). In the agricultural field, African Americans have experienced what Honneth (1996) called a “denial of recognition” of the impact they have had on the development and expansion of agriculture in the U.S.

Agricultural Schools

The Reconstruction-era education initiatives were wrought with conflict over the development of and support for a universal education system for ex-slaves. White southerners were uncomfortable with the ideology of educating people at the same quality and caliber as their White counterparts (Anderson, 1998, p. 31). In fact, most of the earliest debates over how Black people would be educated surfaced around what curriculum would be used to teach Blacks in the South. Anderson (1998) wrote:

They called for the special instruction of the former slaves in a manner that could not be adapted from the curriculum and teaching materials of the classical liberal tradition. A full curriculum of special instruction for black students was being developed at that time by Samuel Armstrong at the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in Hampton, Virginia. This new curriculum offered the possibility of adapting black education to the particular needs and interests of the South's dominant-class whites. (p. 31)

In fact, one of Samuel Armstrong's most prominent students was Booker T. Washington.

Booker T. Washington, and many others, worked tirelessly to secure land grants and agricultural education opportunities for Black farmers. In 1881, Booker T. Washington founded the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, presently known as Tuskegee University (White, 2018). Washington, however, met many obstacles. The first, was that many newly freed Black farmers were illiterate which would make traditional instructional methods greatly more challenging; and secondly, the majority of Black people were not allowed to attend agricultural schools or federally funded agricultural programs (Schor, 1992, p. 73). The Smith-Hughes Act was enacted in 1917. It was the first public funding source for agricultural education programs (Wakefield & Talbert, 2003). However, segregation and discrimination prohibited both African Americans and women from participating with this funding source until the late 1960's

(Wakefield & Talbert, 2003). Claflin College was established in South Carolina for Black students in 1869, and while Black students greatly outnumbered Whites in South Carolina, federal agricultural funding was primarily given to educate White students (Schor, 1992, p. 73). Withholding funds for Black schools in the south was a strategic plan utilized by White people who “feared that increased literacy among Black citizens would” lead to a “demand for equal political [voting] rights” (Anderson, 1998, p. 98). So, despite Washington’s efforts to establish a stable agricultural infrastructure, African Americans were continually forced into the sharecropping system which kept them impoverished and further “dependent on White plantation owners for food provisions” (Smith, 2020, p. 4).

Early Black Land Ownership

Regardless of the many difficulties in attaining agricultural education, the research has established that thousands of African Americans prevailed and purchased acres of abandoned plantation land in great numbers during the early 1900’s. In fact, land ownership and farm operation for African Americans was at the highest it had been in the U.S. (Martin, 1926; Schor, 1992; Hargrove & Jones, 2004) in the early 1900’s. Martin (1926) documented that many African Americans worked hard to save up their earnings in order to purchase newly allocated farmland (p. 2). “In 1920 about 217,500 negroes in the southern States owned their farms...In some States negroes have been buying farms faster than White people” (p. 2). Hargrove and Jones (2004) found that during “that time, there were more than 900,000 African American farm operators in the United States” (p. 72). Discriminatory lending practices and violence, however, would eventually cause many Black farmers to lose their land and migrate to the North.

After us colored folks was considered free and turned loose, the Klu Klux broke out.

Some colored people started to farming and gathered old stock. If they got so they made good money and had a good farm, the Klu Klux would come and murder em’.

(Lester, 1998, p. 148)

Sewell (2019) wrote:

The number of Black farmers in America peaked in 1920, when there were 949,889.

Today, of the country’s 3.4 million total farmers, only 1.3%, or 45,508, are Black, according to new figures from the US Department of Agriculture released this month.

They own a mere 0.52% of America’s farmland. By comparison, 95% of US farmers are White. (para. 4)

According to the Census of Agriculture (2017) merely .1% of farms are owned by Native Hawaiians. Roughly, .8% of farms in the U.S. are owned by Asian Americans. Around 1.6% of farms in the U.S. are owned by African Americans. Nearly 2% of farms in the U.S. are owned by American Indians. Roughly 4% of farms in the U.S. are owned by people who identify as Hispanic, Latinx, or from a Spanish speaking country; and around 95% of farms in the U.S. are owned by White farmers. Discriminatory lending practices, violence, land theft, and segregated agricultural education funding are some of the causes that have led to the immense decline in Black farmers and Black land ownership (Love, 2017).

Penniman and Washington (2018) wrote a farming guidebook entitled *Farming While Black* that included resources for allocating land, acquiring much needed funding sources, and completing agricultural training programs. Additionally, in 2017, the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) farm service agency developed a guidebook of at least a dozen financial assistance outreach programs geared towards persons of color and women. These

funding programs work to increase the participation of persons of color and women in agriculture and landownership.

Agricultural Education Research

Nelson and Owings (1974) conducted a literature review of future career education research and found that the future of agricultural occupations and academic programs would suffer unless “a steady supply of young people [are] interested in agriculture” (p. 16). Since the 1980’s there has been a decline in enrollment in secondary agricultural courses (Myers, Breja, & Dyer, 2004). Terry, Herring, and Larke (1992) predicted this decline in their study and urged stakeholders to prioritize more agricultural education investments into elementary students. “Beginning in kindergarten...all students should receive systematic instruction about agriculture” (p. 51). While the research has established a need for elementary agricultural education, very few studies have examined young African American student participation in agriculture.

Kovar and Ball (2013) synthesized over twenty years of agricultural literacy research targeting elementary teachers and students. Part of the study’s motivation stemmed from a national agenda aimed at increasing diverse student participation in agricultural programs (p. 168). However, of the 49 journals synthesized, neither the ethnicity nor race of the participants were included in the findings. Talbert and Larke (1995) interviewed minority and non-minority students enrolled in secondary Agriscience courses to examine and compare student attitudes towards agricultural education. The sampling of African American student participants measured roughly 6% of the set. The study revealed that minority students had a negative perception of agriculture and did not perceive future available opportunities in an agricultural occupation, which contrasted the perception of agriculture from non-minority participants. The authors

concluded that more Black teachers could entice Black students to enroll in agricultural fields in the future. Currently, roughly 80% of U.S. public school teachers are White (Loewus, 2020). In the agricultural education fields, however, only 2.2% of agricultural educators identify as a person of color (Kantrovich, 2010, p. 23). Additionally, Luft (1996) conducted a study to examine the extent to which cultural diversity is addressed in secondary agricultural educational settings. Luft (1996) found that students in secondary agricultural settings have limited access to teachers with multicultural educational expertise.

So while the research has identified a need for recruiting diverse pupils into agricultural spaces (Kovar & Ball, 2013; Jones & Bowen, 1998; Talbert & Larke, 1995), the lack of agricultural understanding for Black students (Hess & Trexler, 2011; Trexler, 2000), the need for Black teachers in agricultural fields (Kantrovich, 2010; Talbert & Larke, 1995), and a negative perception of agriculture among Black students (Talbert & Larke, 1995); most of the large-scale elementary grade agricultural research studies have focused on White teachers and White students (Bellah & Dyer, 2009; Wagler, Rusk, Blomeke, et al., 2008).

Since African Americans have been omitted from both the agricultural education research and the agricultural education curriculum framework, agriculturally themed children's books that feature African American characters, can be used as a tool to position Black farmers in early agricultural education spaces.

Black Agriculturalism Today

School-based Initiatives

Chicago Highschool for Agricultural Sciences was founded in 1984 by the Chicago Board of Education. Their school's mission statement as displayed on the webpage:

provides opportunities for diverse students from across the city to study agriculture with the goal of developing marketable skills as well as college level competencies. We will produce technologically proficient graduates who will have the power to change the image of urban agriculture. (Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences Webpage)

Currently Chicago Highschool for Agricultural Sciences' student racial demographics are 46.3% Black, 32% White, 18.8% Hispanic, and 2.9% other or multiracial. Additionally, roughly 44% of the school's student population is low income. Moreover, 50% of the teachers in the school are persons of color. According to the 2020 Illinois Report Card, Chicago Highschool for Agricultural Sciences has a low mobility rate (4%) which is 50% lower than the average of other schools in the district; and a high graduation rate (96%) which is higher than the state's average (88%) and the district's average (81%) high school graduation rate.

This school was established at a time of great concern about the future of agricultural education and the agricultural industry in general. There is a nationwide effort underway to broaden the scope of teaching in and about agriculture beginning at the kindergarten level and extending through adulthood.

(Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences Webpage)

Community-based Agricultural Programs

4-H extension programs were established in 1909 in an effort to increase agricultural education activities for school-aged children. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is a parent organization to 4-H extension programs. The four letter H's in the program's name stand for "Head, Heart, Hands, and Health" (Neff, 2013). While the research has established benefits to 4-H participation, such as leadership development (Skelton, Stair, Dormody, & Vanleeuwen; 2014) and academic achievement (Burnett, Johnson & Herbert; 2000)

the targeted racial demographics of the participants have been predominantly White (Culp, 1997; Wingenbach, et al., 2000). Cano and Banston (1992) examined the factors that influenced the participation of minority students in an Ohio 4-H program. In the 1980's the USDA had asserted that the 4-H initiatives lacked the effectiveness needed to relate "to the needs of minorities and the disadvantaged" and as a result, discriminatory practices had developed (p. 23). During this time in Ohio there were more minority youth than non-minority youth in the state, so it was determined by the extension organizers that minority youth should be a targeted demographic for 4-H recruitment and participation. The minority youth, from the study, reported that the 4-H projects gave them a great deal of positive educational experiences. Many of the minority youth participants reported that participation in 4-H "kept them off the streets" and provided them opportunities to help their community. Another finding indicated that parents played a huge role in 4-H participation. In fact, many of the participants had a mother, grandmother or aunt who had initiated a 4-H program in their community. As with the scholarship in other areas of agriculture, the impact of minority student involvement in 4-H extension programs is limited in the research and warrants further study.

Historically, extension programs were separate for Black agriculturalists and developed through agricultural departments from historically Black colleges (Martin, 1926). Some of the earliest extension work can be found in the Negro extension literature, primarily in the creation of the moveable schools in the South; which were established Booker T. Washington. "Doctor Washington also used a jesup wagon, provided with agricultural equipment to go out among farmers and demonstrate better farming methods" (p. 3). Additionally, there were many African American women who worked to establish these programs with much success (Martin, 1926, p. 5). During these moveable school model programs, African Americans learned how to market

their products for higher profits and to preserve surplus agriculture for winter months. These moveable school models provided a holistic approach to education that extended beyond agricultural prosperity to academic and community development. There were many testimonials of the accomplishments produced through these extension efforts. “In Gloucester County, Va. more than 90 per cent (sic) of the heads of negro families own their own homes, the jail is usually empty, and the courts have little to do” (p. 18).

In addition to the new agricultural presence in public schools, there has been a new public presence of Black farmers in the media and urban communities. In fact, some professional Black athletes have even turned their career focus towards agriculture to embrace their agricultural passions.

Professional Black Agriculturalists

The impact of current and historical discrimination and violence against Black farmers can be seen in nearly every agricultural field in U.S. colleges today. According to a report from the Food and Agricultural Education Information System (2019), only 4.6 % of Agricultural Economics and Agricultural Business Management students were African American. Systemic discriminatory practices towards Black farmers are still experienced today. On June 16, 2020, DeRay McKesson interviewed Angie and June Provost, Louisiana sugar cane farmers, on the podcast, *We Deserve Better*, where they revealed the issues of Black farmers in the South today. They encouraged Black listeners to press forward towards a renewed investment in Black farming because Black farms impact current issues with food justice, food activists, Black communities, and small business owners. Mrs. Provost described how COVID-19 had made it hard for many Black communities to have access to fresh fruits and vegetables, further indicating the need for Black farmers to serve in Black communities. Even with the racialized tribulations

they experienced as Black farmers in the South, the interviewees still encouraged Black people to “step up and speak out and start growing your own food” (18:12) throughout the podcast.

Sewell (2019) wrote about the current state of Black farmers in the U.S. in his interview of fourth-generation Black farmer John Boyd, from Virginia. In the article, Boyd explained how he uses his wife’s White father to sell his beans in order to ensure a fair price. “When the other man takes Boyd’s beans, he’s not docked but complimented. ‘I lose money if I sell them myself,’ he says. ‘In 2019, that shouldn’t be happening. I shouldn’t be losing money because I’m Black’” (para. 10).

While farming is primarily generational, new farming initiatives have been developed by Black farmers in both rural and urban cities across the country. In fact, the call to farm has also inspired young athletes to move from some sports professions into agricultural professions.

Jason Brown was a professional football player for the Baltimore Ravens and St. Louis Rams for many years. In 2009, he signed a football contract for over 37 million dollars (Nochim, 2021). However, in 2012 he retired from the professional football industry altogether at 26 years old. Currently, he owns a 1,000-acre sweet potato, cucumber, and vegetable farm called First Fruits Farm; named after a covenant he made with God (GGWTV, 2018). Brown taught himself about the farming industry by watching tutorials on YouTube (Manfred, 2016) and spending time with his grandparents (GGWTV, 2018). Each year, Brown donates hundreds of thousands of fruits and vegetables to non-profit organizations throughout North Carolina.

First Fruits Farm continues to donate all their crops and, to date, has provided over 850,000 pounds of sweet potatoes and cucumbers to those in need. Dedication of service to others doesn’t stop there. Jason and Tay are committed first and foremost to inspiring

others to get back to the land and discover the power of agriculture. There are tours, events and youth outreach programs – and all who participate are forever changed.

(GGWTV, 2018, para. 6)

Will Allen is another athlete who turned from sports to farming at a young age. Allen was 28 when he retired from the NBA after six years in the basketball league. Allen took a different approach than Brown's 1000-acre farm in North Carolina. He resided in Milwaukee and operated 14 greenhouses on two acres of land in an urban neighborhood (Royte, 2009). His philosophy was that "anyone can grow food" with healthy fertile soil. He developed his soil quality by collecting garbage from the community's compost (Martin, 2013). Through his greenhouses, called Allen's Growing Power Farm, he produced food quantities worth millions of dollars and employed many local residents who were living in low-income housing projects (Martin, 2013). However, after 25 years, Allen's Growing Power Farm closed due to lack of financial and community support (Sims, 2018), but not before Allen's vision trained others and blazed a trail for other local future urban farmers. A children's book was written in his honor entitled *Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table* (Martin, 2019) to highlight the accomplishments he made and the people he inspired in his community.

Farmer Will Allen is as tall as his truck. He can hold a cabbage--or a basketball--in one hand... But some say the special thing about Will Allen is that he can see what others can't see... When he looked at an abandoned city lot... [in Milwaukee he] saw a huge table heaped with food. (Martin, 2019, p. 1)

Children's Literature & Science Education

Science-themed children's literature has often been favored over traditional science textbooks for reasons of increased diverse representation (Rice, 2002; Smolkin & Donovan,

2015) and the increased possibilities to differentiate text complexities (Rice, 2002; Smolkin & Donovan, 2015; Mahzoon-Hagheghi et al., 2018). Additionally, research is finding that children's literature also improves student participation in scientific inquiry (Broemmel & Rearden, 2006; Smolkin & Donovan, 2015; Mahzoon-Hagheghi et al., 2018).

Broemmel and Rearden (2006) found that using children's literature not only had the potential to increase student motivation, but that children's literature can also provide pathways for students to make scientific connections (p. 254). In this analysis, the authors identified 74 picture books, from the Teacher's Choice Booklist (1989-2004), and classified them using the National Science Education Standards (NSES), which were the national science standard at that time. Then they identified subcategories of text features such as genre and topic; then identified any significant visual features. They found that many of the picture books contained information about Life Science and less were about Physical Science. They concluded that picture books could be used to enrich science instruction.

Smolkin and Donovan (2015) examined the role that children's literature could play in science education classrooms. Although the goal is to develop scientifically literate adults, there has been great debate over the role of reading within science instruction. "The study of books is well enough and undoubtedly important..., but the study of things and of phenomena by direct contact must not be neglected" (p. 211). The authors examined a number of science programs that utilized science trade books and found that interactive read-aloud with science trade books provided opportunities for engagement in science inquiry as well as provided resources for language growth (p. 224).

Mahzoon-Hagheghi et al. (2018) wrote an article for preservice teachers that explained how science trade books could help to develop student's comprehension of science literacy. In

this article, they presented several studies that employed children’s literature in supplementary ways within STEM (Science, Technology, Education, Mathematics) K-12 instruction. “By incorporating this type of literature, teachers can introduce different kinds of contexts, concepts, and cultures that can initiate discussion about a science topic” (p. 42). The authors identified eight books that they then categorized using the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). The science content that the children’s literature titles could supplement were also listed. They found that half of the books could be used to engage students in the NGSS science and engineering practice of forming an argument with evidence. In the author’s conclusion they wrote:

When teachers take the time to teach science through the use of children’s literature, students of varying degrees of background knowledge, reading levels, and even learning styles will be more capable of developing a better understanding of science concepts.
(p. 48)

Koller (2013) conducted a content analysis of traditional American farming in children’s picture books. This study examined the children’s books in order to determine the agricultural value. The findings revealed many stereotypical farmer references, specifically in the area of gender; and useful agricultural resources – predominantly found in the nonfiction texts.

While these studies help identify the ways that children’s literature can enhance science content, they did not discuss how cultural contexts within children’s books could influence student’s motivation to learn science or that children’s book characters who share the same racial and cultural backgrounds could develop a student’s identity as a potential future scientists. If students are to truly engage with science content, they should be given opportunities to see themselves as scientists. Unfortunately, neither of these studies provided any evidence that race,

or cultural identity were significant for science education. Knowing that education is not racially or cultural neutral is important so that teachers provide ways for students to see themselves in science classrooms. The studies in the next section were written to address the issues of culture, children's literature, and science education.

Culture, Race, & Science Education

Rice (2002) conducted a research project to understand the value that trade books can bring to science instruction. Many times, trade books have been used for science instruction because women and people of color have been absent from the mainstream science textbooks. "The dearth of females and people of color in science texts suggests that only certain people can be scientists and promotes stereotypes" (p. 553). Therefore, advocates of combining trade books and science instruction recognize the benefits that children's literature can provide in the way of representation.

Rawson and McCool (2014) conducted an image content analysis of 1,656 images of the scientists that were found in nonfiction children's literature published between 1991 and 2011. Older research had identified the stereotypical visualizations of scientists in white lab coats and glasses; but these earlier studies did not analyze or reference gender and race (Chamber, 1983). Later studies included additionally stereotypical illustrated identifiers of scientists as White males and typically middle-aged (p. 12). The image content analysis revealed that 78% of the scientists were White and 60% of the scientists were male. The authors found that a significant number of non-White characters were female (27%) compared to non-White males (17%). The author noted an imbalance between the actual number of minorities in science and engineering fields and the quantity of underrepresented scientists that were presented in the children's literature. The authors conclude that:

[t]he predominance of the White male scientists depicted in popular media makes it more likely that a child's prototype for the scientist will be White and male as well, which in turn makes this prototype less relatable to females and minorities and science less attractive as a potential occupational choice. (p. 17)

Kelly (2018) conducted a content analysis of 28 picture books retrieved from the Outstanding Science Trade Books list. In this study, the researcher identified the character's racial and gender backgrounds and the scientific contributions the text presented. The author used the pedagogy around culturally relevant teaching as a theoretical framework for the development of the research questions. The research questions were framed from a culturally relevant approach to instruction in order to bring awareness to the inclusivity that exists in children's books about science concepts. The findings revealed a lack of diversity among the characters portrayed as scientists in the picture books; most of the scientists were White males. She concluded that the booklist, and the children's book market in general, needed to contain more books to represent diverse scientists.

Agriculture & Social Justice

Opie (2017) wrote about the role that food has played in social justice movements. The Nation of Islam's social justice movements were deeply rooted with food security and food sovereignty initiatives. In fact, Malcom X developed a sense of empowerment from growing his own food. Malcom X believed that food programs, like other economic development programs he introduced, would make African Americans less dependent on "White-controlled businesses" (Opie, 2017, Chapter 7, Section 2, para. 1). Malcom X wrote:

The bulk of the negroes were either on welfare or WPA or they starved. [W]e were much better off than most of the town negroes. The reason was we raised much of our

own food out there in the country where we were. Not only did we have our big garden, but we raised chickens....I loved [having my own garden plot] and took care of it well. I loved especially to grow peas. I was proud when we had them on our table. I would pull out the grass in my garden by hand when the first little blades came up....And sometimes when I had everything straight and clean for my things to grow, I would lay down on my back between two rows and I would gaze up in the blue sky at the clouds moving and think all kinds of things. (Opie, 2017, Chapter 7, para 1)

Without community gardens and local farming efforts, many African Americans would not have been able to participate in social activities that would reduce inequities in their communities. Opie (2017) wrote that food and social justice has been coupled for centuries. “[E]nergy, frustration, anger, perception, pizza, and apples paid for by supporters or donated by farmers and, ultimately, by its daily growth” sustained the movement” (Conclusion, para. 4).

Smith (2020) wrote about the food crisis that occurred during a civil rights movement in Mississippi. During the Greenwood Food Blockade (1962) many Black activists worked to secure food for their local community and in other Black communities outside of Mississippi, as the local government officials were using access to food as a way to deter Black citizens from exercising their voting rights. The food security programs provided a space for discourse around larger issues that were facing agriculturalists in both the South and the North.

By situating the Mississippi food crisis within a larger context of agricultural industrialization – against the backdrop of the social, economic, and political realities of poor Black agricultural workers – Mahoney and McDew’s analysis made clear the complexity of the relationship between food, agriculture, power, and civil rights. (p. 7)

Clearly, farming has had a substantial impact on social justice movements throughout U.S. history.

Theoretical Framework

Critical Theory (CT) is at the forefront of this study. Critical Theory deliberately seeks to expose social constructions of power within master narratives in order to inform political changes. Derivations of Critical Theory were formed from the theories and research around critical consciousness. Willis et al. (2008) wrote that the most significant and influential work around critical theories began with Immanuel Kant's work. Kant believed that the human experience established an epistemology beyond scientific knowledge (p. 6). Kant's work is believed to be the cornerstone of critical debates that eventually influenced future critical theories, specifically Marxism. The Frankfurt School was founded on the principles of Marxism, and as a result, was one of the first proponents of critical theories. Willis et al. (2008) wrote that "[o]ne of the greatest legacies of the Frankfurt School is its insistence that we question every institution and thought that impacts our lives. In doing so, we enhance our ability to continually discover new possibilities for social justice" (p.18).

Siegel and Fernandez (2000) believed that from the Frankfurt School research, the evolution, definition, and history of critical approaches in literacy discourse, there is a transition to Freire's (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Freire's work was birth in the 1960's out of his experiences with Brazil's population who were described, at the time of his research, as poor, illiterate, and working class. Freire rejected the notion that the population's illiteracy was accidental but contended that it was a product of social construction. Siegel and Fernandez (2000) wrote:

Working from Marxist theory, he rejected the idea that the ‘oppressed’ are ‘marginal’ living ‘outside’ of society, and argued, instead that they have always been ‘insiders’ inside the structure which made them ‘beings for others’...[i]lliteracy is thus regarded not as an individual failing but as a historically constructed product of society structured to produce inequality. (p. 146)

Consider the master narratives that have developed the dominant perspectives and curricular pedagogies that frame Black life in agriculture. These master narratives are not simply the results of the failed farming initiatives of Black agriculturalists, but a historical and social construct that has produced inequitable agricultural representation in the Black community. This study analyzed the selected agriculturally themed children’s literature to explore evidence of a counter narrative to Black life in agriculture. It presented a critical reading across multiple genres that identified literature that both reinforced and deconstructed the master narrative and provided a critical shift to the current agricultural pedagogy for elementary students.

Critical Theory provides a landscape that initiates change in society by educating individuals about the powers that have produced social inequalities in order to influence political actions (Rush, 2006). Critical Theory provides a foundation for theorizing critical literacy and critical pedagogy in that they each simultaneously foster social change and action through the acknowledgment and analysis of social inequalities. When Critical Theory is utilized, the rationales for historical and seemingly normative oppressions are severed from the dominant narratives that seek to normalize social injustices without critical interpretation (Honneth, 2006). This ideological severance disrupts the often normalized cycles of social oppression and provides a space for critical discourse of the political, historical, and social contributions of inequalities. Literature, even children’s literature for young children, and curriculum have been places where

scholars have sought to disrupt the dominant narratives through critical analysis and interpretation of such factors in order to shift the balance in power of whose histories and stories are told in classrooms, libraries, and homes. Siegal and Fernandez (2000) questioned the frameworks of critical approaches that seek a singular definition but instead proposed the alignment of critical theories, literacies, and pedagogies because of their shared commitments. Critical theory, critical literacy, and critical pedagogy are positioned in this study because Black farmers have been the subject of social and historical inequalities and children's literature is a place for their stories to be critically interpreted to influence political action by way of curriculum reform.

Critical Theory & Children's Literature Analysis

Critical Theory has provided a critical framing for children's literature analysis. Harris (1992) wrote about the politics of multiculturalism that exists in children's literature. In, *Teaching Multicultural Literature: In Grades K-8*, Harris (1992) documented some of the critical multicultural debates that are elevated in the text and illustrations of children's literature through the politically enculturated lens of the authors. Harris (1992) wrote that children's literature provided a voice to the lived experiences and the political attitudes of the timeframe from which the books were written.

Norris, Lucas, and Prudhoe (2012) wrote that critical literacy "examines issues of power and promotes reflection, transformative change, and action" (p. 59). Harven and Gordon-Biddle (2016) wrote that critical literacy empowers children with the skills to critically examine text for issues of power, social, and privilege inequalities in order to become agents of change. "Critical literacy is 'the practice of challenging texts through a critical analysis of the role that power and privilege play in creating and maintaining social inequality in global communities'" (Harven &

Gordon-Biddle, 2016, p. 161). A major component of critical literacy says that children should be taught to deconstruct meaning in text, specifically, literature written for children, by questioning the author's messages and purposes. This active engagement in the critical examination of text explores alternative narratives, histories, and political influences in order to teach children how to resist the urge to passively accept inequalities. Questioning text is essential, according to Harven and Gordon-Biddle (2016), because:

writers are (a) purposeful in their construction of characters, (b) subjective in their stance on reality, (c) thoughtful in how they guide readers' reactions to the text, (d) intentional in leaving story-related gaps for readers to explore, and (e) mindful of their audience, who are likely to share similar values. Therefore, inquiry-based approaches should address how and why a particular text was constructed to influence its readers. (p. 162)

As a result, the curriculum and pedagogical practices should be designed in such a way that teachers are prepared to develop children's critical minds.

Critical Theory & Critical Pedagogy

Greene (1982) believed that teachers should be prepared to critically engage children with text. Greene (1982) wrote:

The teacher of literacy, to be authentic and effective, must be inquirer, discoverer, critic...ready to engage a subject matter...prepared to think critically...encouraging students to look critically upon the performances in which they are asked to engage. (p. 328)

The criticality in Critical Pedagogy seeks to "problematize teaching and encourage teachers to ask about the nature of student-teacher relationships, the curriculum, schooling, and society" (Scheff & Spector, 2011, p. 17). Utilizing a Critical Pedagogy frame fosters intentionality to

disrupt and examine the status quo systems, decision-making processes, and structures that comprise the totality of the education enterprise. Critical Pedagogy is the way that knowledge and power are created around learning conditions that seek to define a student's identity in relationship to society (Giroux, 2011). Major proponents of Critical Pedagogy seek to mobilize teachers to fight against the dominant pedagogical approaches as an act of pedagogical freedom. Critical Pedagogy in this study functions as a way to view the agricultural education standards as an integral place to identify the plight of the Black farmer's experience and provide educators and students a lens that intentionally disrupts the status quo. This interruption allows space for enhanced agricultural teaching and learning experiences that capture the soul of agricultural history in the U.S. that go beyond the single story of Black farmers. Kincheloe, McLaren, and Steinberg (2011) wrote that:

Critical research can be understood best in the context of the empowerment of individuals. Inquiry that aspires to the name 'critical' must be connected to an attempt to confront the injustice of a particular society or public sphere within the society. Research becomes a transformative endeavor unembarrassed by the label 'political' and unafraid to consummate a relationship with emancipatory consciousness. Whereas traditional researchers cling to the guardrail of neutrality, critical researchers frequently announce their partisanship in the struggle for a better world. (p. 164)

The difference between critical pedagogy and culturally relevant pedagogy is the transition from individual empowerment to collective empowerment (Ladson-Billings, 1992; Howard & Rodriguez-Minkoff, 2017). This study not only sought to interpret the agency of the individual agriculturalists, but also to elevate the demonstrated examples of collective agency and community resilience of Black farmers and agriculturalists by elevating their narratives and

contributions to the field of agriculture; a sphere where they have largely been ignored, and deliberately and often unjustly disadvantaged. Policies were consciously developed and maintained to foster systems of oppression in agricultural spaces. White (2018) wrote about how farming communities responded to oppressive and exploitative systems through acts of collective agency and community resilience. conditions. White (2018) wrote:

For example, when a community of farmworkers faces the refusal of local merchants to sell them farm supplies and develops a cooperative to pool their resources to purchase those supplies from national merchants, they demonstrate resilience in the face of a system that benefits from their exploitation and their oppression. (p. 8)

While White (2018) focused primarily on farm spaces and farming cooperatives, this study combined farm spaces with other agricultural spaces. However, like White's (2018) study, components of collective agency and community resilience will be examined in this study.

Therefore, with collective empowerment at the helm, tenets of culturally relevant pedagogy are also integral to the theoretical framework of this study.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

Many components of the farming industry have arguably found ways to silence the voices of Black farmers and the experiences of Black life in agriculture. This study aimed to engage the agricultural community, publishers of agricultural education curricula, extension services, and K-12 schools by documenting the experiences of the Black farmer. In this methodology section, the research procedures and analytical tools utilized are defined and described. This study aimed to understand the positioning of the Black farmer and Black life in agriculture in children's literature. Another aim of this study was to determine how the narratives of Black farmers and Black life in agriculture contribute to the curriculum and standards of learning in the Pillars of Agricultural Literacy.

Qualitative Methodology

Qualitative inquiry is a customizable research methodology designed to use words and pictures as the item(s) of analysis. It is the creation of narratives that are derived from uniquely studied social phenomena. One of the goals of qualitative inquiry research is that the researcher captures the human experience. The human experience is observed and then analytically connected in the data analysis (Saldana, 2015). Children's literature provides the researcher with a cultural artifact (Brooks & McNair, 2009; Taxel 2003) that bestows unique social phenomena that are the windows and mirrors (Bishop, 1990) into the human experience. Children's literature provides examples of cultural artifacts because they reflect the significant experiences of the historical, social, and political tapestry of the timeframe in which it is published (Taxel, 2003). Saldana (2015) stressed the importance of the researcher's ability to remain open in their inductive thinking as the continual emergence of findings occurs during the investigation. This relationship between the researcher and the findings is one of the main differences between

critical qualitative content analysis (Johnson et al., 2017; Altheide, 1996) and quantitative content analysis (Neuendorf, 2017). Krippendorff (2004) however, disagreed with the dichotomy that exists between the two methodologies and asserted that all content analysis is qualitative. “Ultimately, all reading of texts is qualitative, even when certain characteristics of a text are later converted into numbers” (p. 16). For this study, I conducted a critical qualitative content analysis of agriculturally themed children’s books that feature African American characters, but like Krippendorff (2004), I disagreed with the emphasis placed on dichotomizing qualitative and quantitative research and included a combination of categorical and quantitative data.

Qualitative Content Analysis

According to Beach et al. (2009), the difference between a content analysis and a literary analysis is that in a literary analysis the focus is on the author’s purpose while a content analysis is more focused on the social, historical, political, and cultural significance of the text itself. Bishop (1982) began her monographic content analysis with a compelling synopsis of the power of words. Bishop (1982) wrote that authors have the power to invoke emotional responses through the images they create with the artistry of their language (p. 4). Harris (1986) conducted a critical content analysis of the periodicals that W.E.B DuBois wrote to repair the damage caused by selective tradition. Between the years 1920-1921, W.E.B DuBois published a periodical that aimed to “challenge a selective tradition in children’s literature that negatively depicted Afro-Americans and Afro-American culture” (p. 3). This periodical was written so that African American children would develop an appreciation and love for their Blackness and an understanding of Black history. Harris (1986) wrote:

The Brownie’s Book challenged a selective tradition in children’s literature that reflected the values and power of an upper class...espoused by some of these individuals included

racial intolerance, institutional discrimination, anti-unionism, sexism, and social inequality. (p. 11)

In this critical content analysis, Harris (1986) identified ideologies that reflected an uplifting of the cultural experience of Black people and an authentic representation of the Black family that greatly contrasted the mainstream publications and images about Blackness at the time.

Another quality of qualitative content analysis is the researcher's reflexive and interpretive stance throughout the data collection process. "Categories and variables initially guide the study, but others are expected to emerge throughout the study, including in orientation towards constant discovery and constant comparison of relative situations, setting, styles, images, meanings, and nuances" (Altheide, 1996, p. 16). This expected emergence of variables are the inferences that emerge during the readings of the text. Krippendorff (2004) wrote that the inferences are "intended to answer the research question, which constitute the basic accomplishment of the content analysis" (p. 30).

Content Analysis

Johnson et al. (2017) defined a content analysis as an "umbrella term" utilized in the research community to designate various methods for the analysis of text and visual imagery to describe and interpret the "artifacts of a society" (p. 2). The artifacts in this study are samples of children's literature that portray Black life in agriculture. As such, the content of the children's literature, being the textual and visual artifacts, was interpreted, through a critical lens, with coding and interpretative systems. A content analysis can employ a range of analytical and interpretive approaches. Johnson et al. (2017) wrote that "the content of texts is interpreted through coding and identifying themes or patterns, with the actual approaches ranging from

impressionistic, intuitive, and interpretive analyses to systematic quantitative textual analyses” (p. 2).

Critical is added to this content analysis through the theoretical framework that was used to guide the analytical thinking that I utilized throughout this entire research process. A critical content analysis is different from a content analysis because a critical content analysis prioritizes the critical framework to encapsulate all of the aspects of the research design (Johnson et al., 2017).

Critical Qualitative Content Analysis

A critical content analysis is useful in identifying, analyzing, and categorizing the contextual and visual elements that exist in children’s literature. A critical content analysis can reveal recurring ideas and themes, critical perspectives, and images presented as a counterpoint to expand the agricultural literacy curriculum. In this section, I describe the methodology from previously conducted critical studies to illustrate how the analytical approaches for those studies were used to guide my methodology.

McNair (2008) conducted a content analysis to reexamine and elaborate on Harris’ (1986) study of *The Brownie’s Book*; and secondly to examine children’s literature and documents written by Patricia McKissack. In order to reduce her sample size, McNair (2008) selected every fourth magazine issue from the 24 published issues. During the content analysis, she first focused on obtaining affirmative evidence of the eight themes that Harris’ (1986) study derived. Then she noted themes and assumptions that were not directly addressed in Harris’ (1986) study; specifically, newly examined themes associated with books and reading. In the second part of McNair’s (2008) content analysis, she focused on books that were written by Patricia McKissack that primarily focused on African American characters. McNair (2008)

utilized Berg's (2001) process for content analysis that explored an inductive approach; "an inductive approach begins with the researchers 'immersing' themselves in the documents...in order to identify the dimensions or themes that seem meaningful to producers of each message" (p. 14). After the initial close read, McNair (2008) developed categories from the recurrence of themes and then used those categories as an analytical guide to interpreting the McKissack data. As she read the documents, she transcribed notes and excerpts that were relevant to the prescribed categories. Those notes were written on a literary analysis page that she included in the study's appendix. Similar to McNair (2008), I conducted a content analysis using categories that were developed from Johnson's et al. (2017) process for the critical content analysis of children's literature. Notes and excerpts were then transcribed onto a literary analysis document. An annotated sample of that document is included in the appendix (see Appendix A). McNair (2008) provided a useful model as three major themes emerged from both *The Brownie's Book* study and McKissack literature. First, McNair (2008) found that children's literature challenged the dominant perspective by presenting opposing viewpoints through storytelling. Secondly, children's literature can provide a means for social resistance to the racism that occurs within children's literature and in society. Lastly, she found that children's literature promotes literacy and, in many examples, presents a connection between literacy and freedom. "McKissack appears to believe, as did the famous abolitionist Fredrick Douglass, that people who learn to read are forever free" (p. 18).

Hughes-Hassell, Barkley, and Koehler (2009) also conducted a content analysis, but theirs was conducted to identify issues of representation and equity in transitional children's literature that was designed to support literacy instruction. They conducted the content analysis by first developing a spreadsheet of around 556 book titles that were collected from a database

established by Fountas and Pinnell. During the content analysis, they determined and utilized race and ethnicity data from the text and the illustrations gathered from the children's literature, as well as other online resources. For every book, Hughes-Hassell, Barkley, and Koehler (2009) recorded data for the following categories: the important bibliographical information, the book level, the character's race and/or ethnicity, and lastly, the author's and illustrator's race and/or the ethnicity. It is important to note that if the book contained a nonhuman character, the character was marked as unknown. In my research design, I eliminated books with main characters that were nonhuman during the early research design phase, because I wanted to know how Black life was depicted in agricultural settings; so, therefore, books that depicted animal and/or nonhuman main characters would not have been useful to the research questions. Hughes-Hassell, Barkley, and Koehler (2009) recognized their criteria for race determination as a limitation and wrote:

Visually portraying the race, ethnicity, and cultural authenticity of characters 'may involve tacit knowledge of which the artist might be unaware' (Ibid., 9). We believe the same is true for judging the race, ethnicity, and cultural authenticity of characters portrayed in an illustration. Even identifying the race or ethnicity of a person from a photograph or illustration can prove difficult for individuals who have not been acculturated to the group being portrayed. (p. 9)

Hughes-Hassell, Barkley, and Koehler (2009) found that only 25.8% of the books contained a person of color; which provided further evidence to support the conclusions of decades of research that had also documented the lack of diversity in children's books (Larrick, 1965; Sims Bishop, 1993; Hefflin & Barksdale-Ladd, 2001). Additionally, some researchers speculate that the lack of diversity affects student engagement and comprehension. In the discussion, Hughes-

Hassell, Barkley, and Koehler (2009) wrote that the literacy development of children of color is negatively impacted by the lack of racial diversity found in children's literature. Additionally, Hughes-Hassell, Barkley, and Koehler (2009) concluded that because White children can more easily position themselves in children's literature, they can more readily make connections between the text and themselves "thus increasing the likelihood that they will see reading as pleasurable, be motivated to read, develop a love for reading, and become proficient readers" (p. 12).

Koss (2015) utilized a descriptive content analysis in order to explore issues of gender, race, and disability within children's literature contained in 455 picture books. Koss (2015) established research parameters that would include print books from major trade book publishers so that the data would be collected from children's literature "most commonly found in classrooms and school libraries" (p. 34). Koss (2015) utilized Cohen, Manion, and Morrison's content analysis procedure that established prior codes before the data is collected. After the coding process was completed, the frequency of the codes was systematically calculated and organized into percentages for each category. The findings revealed that children's literature does not inclusively represent the multicultural world that exists. Furthermore, readers of children's literature implicitly "receive the message that...to be White is to be better" which in turn makes it difficult for children of color to develop a positive self-image of themselves as readers and as members of society (p. 37). Like Koss (2015), I also utilized prior codes that were established from demographic information and White's (2018) agency identifiers: community, political, and economic systems. Additionally, the data were interpreted and organized into percentages of frequency and illustrated in the Findings sections.

Again, the word “critical” was added to this study because the theoretical framework for the study utilized the principles of critical theory and because in a critical content analysis the researcher seeks to understand how the nature of power is manifested within the content. A critical reading suggests to the readers that the researcher is examining the text in order to identify and deconstruct potential mainstream societal and political conclusions in order to identify and examine likely inequalities in the narratives (Johnson et al., 2017), and then reconstruct new possibilities.

In critical content analysis, the focus is on critique, on a critical examination of issues of stereotyping and misrepresentation in literature, a deconstruction of books and the societal issues that are reflected in representations of particular groups of people. Freire makes it clear that we should also be looking for reconstruction, for the ways in which texts position characters as resistant to existing stereotypes and representations in order to develop counter-narratives, and to offer new possibilities for how to position ourselves in the world. (Johnson et al., 2017, p. 6)

In a critical content analysis, the critical lens is what frames the research questions and the researcher’s purpose for the books that are selected. In this study, the research questions purposefully sought to determine how critical readings of children’s literature could examine Black farmers and Black life in agriculture. Moreillon (2003) wrote that “children’s literature is instrumental in spreading the light” and changing mindsets. By conducting a critical content analysis of agriculturally themed children’s books that featured Black farmers and Black life in agriculture, the master narrative of Black farmers and Black life in agriculture could be challenged and potentially deconstructed; and then potentially reconstructed. I hoped that

through the reconstruction there would be counternarratives that could position Black farmers beyond the narratives of oppression.

Just as we have mental pictures, examples, and stories of injustice and human suffering in the world, many of us also carry notions about the untapped potential of critical language and literacy research to encourage equality and advocate for social justice. (Willis et al., 2008, p. 13)

Although other categories emerged throughout the analysis, this study analyzed picture books written for elementary-aged children that depicted Black life in agriculture and Black farmers in the U.S. in the following categories:

- Oppression and Resistance
- Community Systems
- Political Systems
- Economic Systems
- Agricultural Space
- Genre
- Format
- Language
- Agricultural Literacy

The narratives of Black life in agriculture and Black farmers were interpreted through my analysis of each of the elements, a critical content analysis of the elements, and outside documents of historical relevance. To interpret the agricultural narratives and agricultural literacy components, I conducted a critical content analysis utilizing a variety of interpretative approaches, one such approach was a directed approach. In a directed approach, a theoretical framework is validated or expanded; in fact, “existing theory or research can help focus the research question” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1281). Critical Theory (CT) was used to focus the research question for the following categories: oppression and resistance, community, political systems, economic autonomy, and the farmer’s agricultural role(s). Under the

theoretical framework of critical Theory (CT), a critical multicultural analysis (CMA) was also utilized as a methodological approach for conducting the critical content analysis.

Critical Multicultural Analysis

In addition to the focused critical analysis lens, I developed from the tenets of critical theory, I also utilized critical multicultural analysis (CMA) as a methodology strategy for conducting the critical content analysis; specifically, when I examined and located the positioning of agency in the agriculturally themed children's books that depicted Black life in agriculture. Johnson (et al., 2017) wrote that:

Critical multicultural analysis (CMA), as developed by Botelho and Rudman (2009), is an important tool for text analysis that compels readers to examine representations of power, authenticity, accuracy, and the sociopolitical and historical context present in a narrative. (p. 29)

Malcom and Lowery (2011) conducted a CMA with six picture books to determine how Caribbean people and their experiences were portrayed in children's literature. Utilizing a CMA, they recognized the importance of analyzing both the text and the illustrations as they serve a dual role in power representation in children's literature. Malcom and Lowery (2011) wrote:

Botelho and Rudman (2009) suggest that picture books provide dual sources of information and emotional response through the combination of visual image and text, and that children are never too young to be influenced by ideology or the transmission of existing norms that lead to internationalization without question. Therefore, it is critical that authors and illustrators recognize the power of their productions. (p. 47)

Without a critical reading, ideologies and narratives are normalized and internalized by readers "without question" from the text and illustrations. Malcom and Lowery (2011) found that many

of the stories contained stereotypical or restrictive narratives around oppression and inferiority. They proposed that more research be conducted with the population to explore and engage with narratives that disclose the true diversity of the Caribbean people; specifically, around issues of race and class.

Vaughn et al. (2021) conducted a CMA to examine agency in 60 Orbis Pictus award-winning picture books written for children between 1990-2019. Vaughn et al. (2021) wrote that “agency is ‘the strategic making and remaking of ourselves, identities, activities, relationships, cultural tools and resources, and histories, as embedded within relations of power’...agency is connected to how individuals construct and negotiate their identities in complex social worlds” (p. 35). By conducting a CMA, Vaughn et al. (2021) were able to examine the positioning of agency in the racial, “cultural and gendered identifies” of the subjects depicted in the nonfiction children’s books (p. 35). They found that many of the children’s books depicted White adult males, which they argued could silence the perspective of young children, specifically children of color. “That few of the texts focus on multiethnic focal subjects or children as models of agency is troubling” (p. 48).

During the critical multicultural analysis process, I placed a heavy emphasis on identifying the placement of agency in children’s literature. Agency, as defined in the most simplistic sociological terms, refers to the exercise of power and free will. White (2018) identified three strategies used to determine agency in agricultural settings: commons as praxis, political systems, and economic autonomy. White (2018) defined commons as praxis as the placement of value outside of what the dominant culture would deem as valuable. Oppression, for example, is valuable to the master narrative of Black life in agriculture and has been a tool used in many systems to present a single-story narrative. Commons as praxis, however, would

place community above the tenets of oppression, thus devaluing the oppressive narrative and re-evaluating and repositioning the power of community in oppressive and dominant spaces. The second agency indicator in agricultural settings, White (2018) named prefigurative politics. Prefigurative politics identifies the “construction of alternative political systems...including free spaces and democratic representation” (p. 9). The last agency indicator, White (2018) named economic autonomy. Economic autonomy is used to describe the development of independent “alternative economic” systems “such as replacing the exchange of federal currency with barter of labor or produce” (p. 10) such as the growing of and bartering of food. These agency strategies provided a “continuum that moves from complete dependence on an oppressive structure to independence” (p. 11).

The agency categories, commons as praxis, political systems, and economic autonomy were established before the critical readings and utilized during the critical readings and re-readings of the children’s literature. As content and illustrations in these categories emerged, during the analysis, a textual sample or description of the illustration was written and extracted from the children’s literature to mark the place where the agency was contained (See Appendix B). These extracted samples were then further analyzed across other samples of agency from the other children’s books to combine the identified tenets of agency within the framework of collective agency and community resilience.

For the following categories: Geographic Location, Approximate age of the character, Ethnic Identity, Farmer’s Agricultural Role, Genre, Format, and Language, I utilized a conventional content analysis during this stage. In a conventional content analysis, the codes and categories come directly from the literature. For these categories, I conducted a first reading, interpreted the data from a critical approach, developed initial codes, and recorded the

information onto the reading response form. Then, I summarized the results of the recurring data and calculated the results into percentages. Lastly, I summarized a critical interpretation of the data. While the text served as the primary critical focus during the analysis, I also utilized the visual imagery in the picture books during the process of the critical analysis.

Lastly, the analytical approach I used for the interpretation of agricultural literacy was as follows. First, I immersed myself in the Pillars of Agricultural Literacy research in order to gain a deeper understanding of the history, foundational knowledge, and learning goals described in the literacy pillars. During this analysis, key terms and specific phrases from the pillars were used to shape the coding framework. Then I read the children's literature and identified the agricultural events and symbols from the text and illustrations. Lastly, I conducted a content analysis of the agricultural events to determine their placement within the pillars. Agricultural events from the children's literature that matched the phrases and key terms from the Agricultural Literacy Pillars were labeled and interpreted. Tenets from the critical visual discourse analysis methodology became extremely useful, as many of the agricultural events were evidenced through the illustrations.

Critical Visual Discourse Analysis

Johnson et al. (2019) wrote about the process of conducting a critical content analysis of visual images. The processes involved in critical visual discourse analysis methodology have stemmed primarily from research in photography and media discourse and studies. However, critical visual discourse analysis has been used to analyze meaning in visual images in other research fields including education and children's literature. Johnson et al. (2019) included Painter's et al. (2013) framework for conducting a critical visual analysis of illustrations. My study utilized a combined framework from both the critical content analysis approach and the

critical visual analysis approach. One of the main metafunctional visual meaning systems is approached from an interpersonal domain. Within the interpersonal metafunctional domain are two systems of analysis: affiliation and feeling. Three of the processes from Painter's et al. (2013) visual meaning systems were used during the analysis in this study: visual focalization, power, and proximity. Painter et al. (2013) wrote:

Interpersonal meaning in a picture book therefore includes both feelings and affiliations. Feelings include the emotions depicted for characters and those evoked in the reader/viewer...Affiliations encompass interactive dimensions of various kinds. (p. 32)

During the critical content analysis for this study, more emphasis was placed on the critical textual analysis than on the visual analysis. Although I did utilize some of the tenets of the critical visual analysis process, those strategies were utilized in a secondary capacity. While the images in children's literature contained all the metafunctional indicators for visual content analysis, I focused solely on three visual meaning systems within the affiliation system of analysis: visual focalization, power, and proximity. These visual meaning system indicators were utilized because they were useful in identifying how agency was positioned within the illustrations.

In a critical visual discourse analysis, the text in the analysis is often equal to or less dominant than the illustrations which give the illustrations more dominant space in the analysis. In this critical content analysis, the meaning-making from the text was given more attention than the illustrations because the critical multicultural analysis of the text provided more useful data to the research design and the research questions.

Research Design

Conceptual Design of Research

Utilizing a critical content analysis, I executed four main phases to complete this study: (a) selected the literature, (b) developed the coding protocols, (c) read and analyzed the selected literature, and (d) established trustworthiness by conducting a close reading of the literature with rigor and inter-rater reliability determinations.

Phase I: Sample Text Selection

Through collaboration with Dr. Violet J. Harris, dissertation committee chair, and consultation with the head of the Social Science, Health, and Education Library at the University of Illinois library, Nancy O'Brien, I decided to use three main sources: the online search engine from Lee & Low Books publishing, an online book collection at the National Agricultural Literacy Curriculum Matrix, and the online database at the Children's Literature Comprehensive Database (CLCD).

Lee and Low was chosen over other publishing companies because it is one of the leading publishers of multicultural and multilingual children's books in the U.S., so I expected to find a good selection of quality books from this publisher. On the Lee and Low Books site, I established a search criterion with words like "farm" for the first search and "farming" for the second search, and "Black farmer" for the third search.

The National Agriculture in the Classroom was an initiative that was established by agricultural stakeholders in 1981 after recommendations from the USDA. In the heading labeled "Teacher Center" is another page entitled "Themes for Learning". On this webpage, there were grade-level categories K-5, 6-8, and 9-10. Under the K-5 list of elementary themes was a booklist entitled "Diversity in Children's Agricultural Literature". On this list was a collection of 63 picture books and novels. From this booklist, I examined the book cover and read the book's synopsis, to identify and confirm the protagonist's racial identity.

The Children's Literature Comprehensive database was established in 1999 by a librarian to provide search access to millions of PreK-12 media resources and thousands of critical unbiased book reviews. In the Children's Literature Comprehensive Database, I used the exact word search feature with the words "African American farm" and "African American garden". To reduce the dataset, I adjusted the Lexile indicator to retrieve books with Lexile levels 1203 and under to reduce the list to books and to access titles written for elementary-aged children. Lexile leveling is a framework used to match readers with books that correspond to their grade level. According to publishers of Lexile Framework for Reading, a Lexile level of 1203 and under measures books that are equivalent to grade levels K-5. However, using the Lexile indicator on the Children's Literature Comprehensive Database search engine proved troublesome, because some of the Lexile levels were not included for every picture book. This resulted in the elimination of roughly 100-200 titles from the original search results. So, I eliminated the Lexile adjustment, and as a result, more picture books were listed in the final search results. Instead of the Lexile level adjustment, I used the age range indicator of birth to 11. Utilizing the combined search parameters on the three online sources, achieved a cumulated booklist of roughly 518 books. Then, I read each list and eliminated books that surfaced on multiple lists.

During the next stage, I re-examined the books that surfaced from the search results to determine if there was in fact a Black farmer and/or a Black life in agriculture presented in the book. To achieve this determination, I read the book's synopsis from the CLCD database and other available textual and aesthetic information from the CLCD database. Also problematic was the use of the term "African American garden" because there is a book award called the "Garden State Teen Book Award". This book award organization was established in the state of New

Jersey, which is nicknamed The Garden State. The books that received the Garden State Teen Book Award had no agricultural relevance, so I had to go through the entire list from the search results to carefully determine if the book in fact featured a depiction of Black life in agriculture. In many cases the books that surfaced on the list from the search parameter “garden” had received a Garden State Teen book award and did not have an agricultural element; so those books were eliminated.

While using the CLCD database, I also adjusted the search criteria to find results to contain “all of the words” to reduce the initial results from over 12,000 findings to around 400. Unfortunately, there were times when I conducted this search using the exact same search parameters, and the number of children’s books that were yielded varied for unknown reasons. I printed and documented the search parameters and search results, to maintain validity, however, it is highly plausible that more books could surface or that book titles were erroneously not included. Lastly, books set outside of the United States were also eliminated, because I wanted to focus on Black life in agriculture and Black farmers in the U.S.

After eliminating books that were featured on multiple lists, eliminating books that were not relevant to the topic, and eliminating books that were set outside of the U.S., roughly 314 books were remaining that depicted Black life in agriculture and/or a Black farmer. I recorded the books’ publication date, genre, various available media formats, and other demographic information. Additionally, I utilized Worldcat.org to determine and verify the publication date, genre, and media formats. Also, I read the book’s synopsis, read the book reviews from the CLCD database, and examined the book’s more recently published book cover to determine the ethnicity, geographical location, gender, and approximate age of the protagonist Farmer character(s). A table (Table 23) was created of the combined list of 314 agricultural-themed

children's books found in the appendix (see Appendix D). Titles were included on the combined list if:

- The book's setting was in the United States.
- The protagonist in the story was a Black farmer or if the book depicted a Black agriculturalist (slave and sharecropper experiences were included).
- The reading age (as indicated in the CLCD description) was for children between the ages of birth-11.

Final List Text Criteria. After the combined list of 314 books was created, 65 picture books were chosen for the critical content analysis using a random sampling method. I chose 65 books because this number represents roughly 40% of the total number of picture books and I believed that 40% was both a large and small number; large enough for a representative sample, but small enough to conduct an in-depth critical analysis of both the text and illustrations. Johnson et al. (2017) wrote that a qualitative content analysis "involves the close reading of small amounts of texts that are interpreted by the analyst and then contextualized in new narratives" (p. 3). I wanted to conduct an analysis of both the text and the illustrations, so I chose a representative sampling of roughly 40% of the picture books. A sampling of 40% also provided a diverse selection of authors, geographic locations, publications across varied time periods, and a variety of biographical representations and protagonists' examples. I chose picture books because visual images are "essential for readers to create meaning...[and] they are integral to the reader's experience and understanding of the book" (Short, 2019, p. 10). To deconstruct the mainstream narrative about Black life in agriculture and the Black farmer a critical content analysis of the visual images of Black agriculturalists was essential to the construction of a counternarrative. Ciecierski et al. (2017) wrote about the potential for picture books to address

important topics and issues related to STEM, social justice, and fluency. Painter et al., (2013) developed a system of critical content analysis for visual images called the systemic-functional semiotics approach. Both text and visual images provide three types and functions of meaning simultaneously: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. I examined the textual and visual images in the picture books using the combined framework from Botelho and Rudman (2009) and Painter et al. (2013):

1. Ideational: Who is doing what to whom; where, when, how, and why? What people, objects, actions, and settings can be described by looking at the picture (Johnson et al., 2019)
2. Focalization: Whose story is told? From whose point of view? (Johnson et al., 2017)
3. Interpersonal: What is the positioning of the images and what feelings do they display? (Johnson et al., 2019)
4. Social processes of the characters: Who has the power? Who has the agency? (Johnson et al., 2017)
5. Textual: How are images grouped, focused, staged, and sequenced? What is the reader made to focus attention to? (Johnson et al., 2019)
6. Closure: How is the plot resolved? What assumptions are made in the story closure? (Johnson et al., 2017)

I organized the combined list by page numbers to find the picture books that would be randomly selected for this study. A standard picture book typically contains 32 pages (Ciecierski et al., 2017) but in some rare cases, picture books can have 50 pages or more. There were 162 books on the list that had 50 pages or less. I eliminated two books that had less than 24 pages, *Juicy Peach* (2000) which had 8 pages, and *Twister's Tricks* (2004) which had only 16 pages. I eliminated

these titles because I wanted the selected picture books to contain a page range of 24-50. I believed that picture books containing a page range of 24-50 would adhere most approximately to the page number guidelines established for the most common traditional picture books (Ciecierski et al., 2017). I numbered the remaining picture books from 1-160 and then used an online random selection tool to select 65 picture books. I chose 65 picture books because I believed that 65 books would be a sufficient enough quantity to yield a diverse selection of authors, time periods, and themes. Table 1 was designed to display the 65 picture books used for the critical content analysis.

Table 1

Final List of Selected Agriculturally-Theme Children's Books for Elementary Aged Children

Picture Books

Book Titles n=65	Author	Publication Year
<i>Friends and Flowers</i>	Gunderson, Jessica	2008
<i>Baby Blessings</i>	Jordan, Deloris	2010
<i>Virgie Goes to School With Us Boys</i>	Howard, Elizabeth	1999
<i>Miss Tizzy</i>	Gray, Libba	1993
<i>Seeds</i>	Shannon, George	1994
<i>Ruby Finds a Worry</i>	Percival, Tom	2019
<i>Lorraine: The Girl Who Sang the Storm Away</i>	Secor, Ketch	2018
<i>Bree Finds a Friend</i>	Huber, Mike	2014
<i>Down Home at Miss Dessa's</i>	Stroud, Bettye	1996
<i>I Believe I Can</i>	Byers, Grace	2020
<i>Bread Lab</i>	Binczewski, Kim	2018
<i>Grandpa Cacao</i>	Zunon, Elizabeth	2019
<i>Grandma Lena's Big Ol' Turnip</i>	Hester, Denia L.	2015
<i>Who Put the Cookies In The Cookie Jar?</i>	Shannon, George	2013
<i>The Old Truck</i>	Pumphrey, Jarrett	2020

Table 1 (cont.)

Book Titles n=65	Author	Publication Year
<i>A Place Called Freedom</i>	Sanders, Scott R.	1997
<i>Two Old Potatoes and Me</i>	Coy, John	2003
<i>How A Seed Grows</i>	Jordan, Helene J.	2015
<i>Sadie's Seed Adventure</i>	Dybvik, Tina	2013
<i>Plant A Little Seed</i>	Christensen, Bonnie	2012
<i>The Chicken-Chasing Queen of Lamar County</i>	Harrington, Janice N.	2007
<i>Our People</i>	Medearis, Angela S.	1994
<i>We Keep a Store</i>	Shelby, Anne	1989
<i>I Love My Family</i>	Hudson, Wade	1993
<i>Flossie & The Fox</i>	McKissack, Patricia C.	1986
<i>Rainbow Stew</i>	Falwell, Cathryn	2013
<i>Tailypo: A Newfangled Tall Tale</i>	Medearis, Angela S.	1996
<i>Family</i>	Monk, Isabell	2001
<i>George Washington Carver: An Innovative Life</i>	Macleod, Elizabeth	2007
<i>Benjamin Banneker</i>	Martin, Isabel	2014
<i>George Washington Carver</i>	Carey, Charles W	1999
<i>The Secret Garden of George Washington Carver</i>	Barretta, Gene	2019
<i>A Weed Is a Flower: The Life of George Washington Carver</i>	Brandenberg, Alik	1965
<i>George Washington Carver</i>	Rau, Dana M.	2014
<i>The Legend of Freedom Hill</i>	Altman, Linda J.	2000
<i>We're Going to The Farm</i>	Streza, Nancy	2012
<i>Sweet Clara and The Freedom Quilt</i>	Hopkinson, Deborah	1993
<i>It Jes' Happened</i>	Tate, Don	2012
<i>Farmer Will Allen and The Growing Table</i>	Martin, Jacqueline Briggs	2019
<i>The Unstoppable Garret Morgan</i>	DiCicco, Joan	2019
<i>Daddy Played the Blues</i>	Garland, Michael	2017
<i>John Lewis In the Lead</i>	Haskins, James Benson, Kathleen	2006
<i>Picking Peas for A Penny</i>	Medearis, Angela Shelf	1990
<i>Overground Railroad</i>	Cline-Ransome, Lesa	2020

Table 1 (cont.)

Book Titles n=65	Author	Publication Year
<i>The Moon Over Star</i>	Aston, Dianna H.	2008
<i>Calvin's Christmas Wish</i>	Miles, Calvin	1993
<i>Granddaddy's Turn: A Journey to The Ballot Box</i>	Bandy, Michael S. Stein, Eric	2015
<i>Voice Of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of The Civil Rights Movement</i>	Weatherford, Carole B.	2015
<i>The Wagon</i>	Johnston, Tony	1996
<i>My Name Is James Madison Hemings</i>	Winter, Jonah	2016
<i>The Underground Railroad</i>	Allen, Nancy	2015
<i>The Hard-Times Jar</i>	Smothers, Ethel	2003
<i>Once Upon a Farm</i>	Bradby, Marie	2002
<i>The Sunday Outing</i>	Pinkney, Gloria	1994
<i>Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom</i>	Weatherford, Carole B.	2006
<i>Down The Winding Road</i>	Johnson, Angela	2000
<i>Working Cotton</i>	Williams, Sherley A.	1992
<i>Freedom's School</i>	Cline-Ransome, Lesa	2015
<i>Joe Louis, My Champion</i>	Miller, William	2004
<i>Friend On Freedom River</i>	Whelan, Gloria	2004
<i>Ruby Bridges</i>	Donaldson, Madeline	2009
<i>Michelle Obama</i>	Raatma, Lucia	2010
<i>Slavery</i>	De Medeiros, James	2008
<i>Dance Y'all</i>	Stroud, Bettye	2001
<i>Slavery in America</i>	Blashfield, Jean	2011

Note: This is the list of the 65 book titles used in this study, the author's name(s), and the date of publication.

Table 1 contains the title, author, and year of publication for each of the children's books used in this study. The books are listed in the order they were read during the study. The order of the list in Table 1 is not significant to the findings.

Phase II: Coding

After the book selection phase, I developed a coding system using the following framework:

1. Ideational: Who is doing what to whom; where, when, how, and why? What people, objects, actions, and settings can be described by looking at the picture (Johnson et al., 2019)
2. Focalization: Whose story is told? From whose point of view? (Johnson et al., 2017)
3. Interpersonal: What is the positioning of the images and what feelings do they display? (Johnson et al., 2019)
4. Social processes of the characters: Who has the power? Who has the agency? (Johnson et al., 2017)
5. Textual: How are images grouped, focused, staged, and sequenced? What is the reader made to focus attention to? (Johnson et al., 2019)
6. Closure: How is the plot resolved? What assumptions are made in the story closure? (Johnson et al., 2017)

Additionally, this study analyzed the narratives of Black life in farming in the picture books written for elementary-aged children for evidence of a counternarrative using the following categories:

Oppression and Resistance: Are there systems of oppression? Is there evidence of oppression? Is the farmer enslaved? Is the farmer a sharecropper? Does Black life in farming include exploitation, oppression, or trauma? Is there evidence of resistance to oppression?

Agricultural Community: Is there evidence of an agricultural community? Are there systems of community in place? How does the farm act as a community? How does the farm engage with other farmers and other Black farming communities?

Political Systems: Does the agricultural space provide access to others? Does the agricultural land provide a space for African American people to exchange ideas?

Economic Systems: Does the agriculturalist own the land? Are there economic systems in place? Does the farmer have economic autonomy? What is the economic system? Is there an alternative economic system? Does the farmer depend solely on the oppressor? Do agricultural activities or communities move the agriculturalist from dependence to independence? Does the agriculturalist grow their own food?

Agricultural Space: What type of work is depicted on the farm? Is the farmer in the field, the kitchen, or a laboratory? How is the agriculturalist positioned on the page?

Genre: What genre is the story? How is the genre significant to the agricultural depictions of Black life in farming?

Formats: What formats are the books available? How is the format significant to the reader's interpretation of Black life in agriculture? How does the format availability widen or limit access to diverse audiences?

Languages: What languages are the books available? How does the language availability widen or limit diverse audiences?

Agricultural Literacy: How does the book approach tenets of agricultural literacy?

Where on the Pillars of Agricultural Literacy would the text best fit?

Phase III: Read, Write, Evaluate – The Analytical Process

In this phase, I conducted a critical content analysis of both the words and illustrations - reading the books many times. The books' text and illustrations were the primary data source, but in addition to the books, I utilized analytical memos and narratives (Saldana, 2015) to capture the essence of the plot and the illustrations. Saldana (2015) suggested that each analytic

memo contain a summary sentence, bullet point, or quote “that encapsulates a significant theme or idea” (p. 71). During the initial close reading, I immersed myself in the text to gain familiarity with the text itself. During the initial close reading of the text, I wrote analytical notes about the individual characters, the setting, and the interpersonal relationships among the characters using Johnson et al. (2017) and Johnson et al. (2019) process for examining textual and visual content. Then, I looked for patterns and differences across the texts and the analytical notes. Interpretative memos were written from the codes, patterns, and categories to produce themes (Johnson et al., 2017, p. 13). Evidence in the form of excerpts from the text was extracted and intertwined with the researcher’s interpretations. During the close readings, I also consulted historical materials and agricultural reference texts to provide additional background and context to the study.

Knowing that the reliability of the codes could potentially affect the validity of the study, I adhered to this process as systematically as possible for each text. Here is an example of how I analyzed an activity: As I read each of the books from the selected sample (n = 65) I recorded my initial observations about the ideational, focalization, interpersonal, social, and textual features of both the text and the illustrations. I examined and identified the examples of agency, the narrator, the overarching theme, the main idea, the text features, and the author’s purpose. Then I identified, using the textual and visual analysis features, the categories that connect to the pillars of agricultural literacy. The agency indicators that the Black farmer portrayed were identified with a textual excerpt(s), a description from the illustration(s), and/or an analytical narrative of the event.

Phase IV: Trustworthiness

Altheide (1996) established that “measures of intercoder reliability” means that the researchers, more than one, are using the same judgments in their selections of codes and themes.

Krippendorff and Bock (2009) wrote that reliability is achieved by applying the following theories: measurement theory and interpretive theory (p. 350). As it relates to this study, interpretive theory says that there is an agreement within the literary community regarding the presented phenomena. I established inter-rater reliability by utilizing three other readers to read three books from the 65 picture books used for the critical content analysis. The three children's books I selected during this process were: *The Secret Garden of George Washington Carver* (Barretta, 2019), *Lorraine: The Girl Who Sang the Storm Away* (Secor, 2018), and *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement* (Weatherford, 2015). I chose these literature examples for inter-rater analysis because they were exemplary children's literature examples for both their literary and aesthetic attributes. Additionally, the readers were given a copy of the Pillars of Agricultural Literacy and the Critical Response Form.

The readers held master's degrees in Curriculum and Instruction, and additional endorsements in literacy from universities in the Midwest. Additionally, the readers averaged over 20 years of experience in teaching reading and using picture books with children. These readers utilized the same coding system that I used. They were given a copy of the children's literature and the Critical Response Form (Appendix A). Then I compared their analysis of the children's books to my analysis. Reader 1 (R1) is a full-time literacy specialist at a public elementary school and has worked in this capacity for over 20 years. Reader 2 (R2) is also a full-time literacy specialist and has worked in this capacity for over 15 years. Reader 3 (R3) has been an educator for 26 years, and while she had a master's degree with a literacy focus, she was positioned as a 3rd grade teacher at the time of the study. Reading to select children's books for instructional purposes is a major component of their educational roles.

The readers were able to identify agricultural and agency events from the children's literature. R1 and R3 identified, labeled, and described the textual and visual evidence from the children's literature. R1 and R3 identified the garden in *The Secret Garden of George Washington Carver* (Barretta, 2019) as community spaces where agency acts were performed with other Black agriculturalists. Knowledge sharing was one of the indicators of agency that R1 labeled in the analysis. R1 and R3 also identified feelings in the images of the characters that were indicated by the colorful facial expressions. R1's analysis aligned with my analysis of Carver's agricultural, and agency acts in the political and economic systems. We both identified how the children's literature examples fit within the tenets of the agricultural literacy frameworks. R1 and R3 identified the relationship that George Washington Carver held within the farming community through his instructional delivery methods. R1 labeled the agricultural literacy information in a different pillar than my analysis. R3's labeling of the agricultural literacy content most aligned with my analysis. This delineation provides further rationale for why the tenets of agricultural literacy need to be more accessible in the elementary curriculum.

R2 focused her written analysis primarily on *Lorraine: The Girl Who Sang the Storm Away* (Secor, 2018). Food identifiers were the main component of this analysis. R2 examined the illustrations and identified the important food categories that were present. Then the analysis contained a summary of the other agricultural events and objects that were present in the illustrations such as the farm animals, the crops, and the food that was positioned with Lorraine. R2 identified a connection between agriculture and food within the Pillars of Agricultural Literacy that shared the same textual and visual descriptors that I utilized in my analysis of the text.

Limitations. This study focused primarily on agriculturally themed children's literature featuring Black farmers found in the Lee & Low Books, the National Agricultural Literacy Curriculum Matrix, and the Children's Literature Comprehensive Database (CLCD). While I predicted that those booklists would produce a substantial quantity of books, there could be books that are missed, and therefore, excluded from the study. The research mainly utilized these data sources because children's literature found on these booklists is typically accessible to both teachers and students. This study prioritized multicultural over non-multicultural children's books because while they are written for all children; they maintain a focus on racially marginalized groups. Bishop (2003) wrote, "[w]hen a group has been marginalized and oppressed, the cultural functions of story can take on even greater significance because storytelling can be seen as a means to counter the effects of that marginalization and oppression on children" (p. 25). I also utilized agriculturally themed children's literature from authors of all racial backgrounds with African American characters as the main focus of this study. I focused on this subgroup because this group of farmers has seen the sharpest decline. In future studies, Latinx farmers, Mexican American farmers, Native American farmers, Asian American farmers, and other groups could be a focus of study as they too have had and continue to have a significant presence in U.S. agriculture.

Additionally, the critical content analysis focused on picture books. I chose picture books because I wanted to conduct a critical analysis of both the text and the illustrations. One important component to the outcome of this study is that students can see themselves in the stories. One way that authors accomplish this is by using illustrations. By deconstructing the text and the illustrations, a more thorough analysis is conducted. In a future study, however, an analysis of both the picture books and novels could provide a more in-depth analysis of the topic.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS FOR RESEARCH QUESTIONS 1 & 2

The books in this section varied in literary and visual quality, but several books strongly emerged as having high literary and visual quality. At the start of this section, I will briefly discuss three texts that are exemplars; chosen because of their beautiful illustrations and compelling plots. *Lorraine: The Girl Who Sang the Storm Away* (Secor, 2018) is a beautiful story about a brave girl, Lorraine, who uses her courage to sing a storm away on her grandfather's farm in Tennessee. This is a story that should be read aloud because the text rhymes and is written in stanzas to create a reading rhythm. There are also variations in font sizes that indicate a change in the reader's voice or parts of the text that could be sung aloud. The illustrator does a great job of creating movement in the characters and landscape, especially on the pages that contain a sheet music overlay. Readers will enjoy looking out into the vastness of the land and experiencing the breeze and sounds that radiate from the pages.

Paint and collage combined to create images that conveyed pain, occasional joy, music, and courage in *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement* (Weatherford, 2015). The literary and visual elements also created an energy that allows you to step into the events that make up Fannie Lou Hamer's biography. The energy is created from the literary style that Weatherford (2015) used to describe the pain and the triumphs of living through the Jim Crow South. The illustrations are a combination of paint and cut pieces that create a collage of imagery that capture the reader's attention and complement the text. The variation in sentence length, punctuation, and font sizes set the reader on a pace that indicates places to slow down and speed up in the text. In one example, Weatherford (2015) wrote "I married Perry Hamer – 'Pap' – as he's known – *a good man of a few words, steady as a rock.*" I

both laughed and cried while reading this book, as the struggle for basic freedoms made me grateful for my ancestors' sacrifices.

Lastly, *Granddaddy's Turn: A Journey to The Ballot Box* (Bandy & Stein, 2015) creates a feeling of anxiety from both the text and the illustrations. The reader is set on a journey to the polling place with the characters as they start. We, like the protagonists, are asking the same questions – where are they going? We ask that question because the information about where the characters are headed is intentionally withheld. When the characters arrive at the polling place, new feelings of anxiety are created in our minds and stomachs as people are jumping in front of them in line. We wait patiently with the characters. And the reader feels the grandfather's deep disappointment when he is turned away from the polling place unable to vote. Tears swell in my eyes every single time I read these sentences “As we headed back down the road toward home, my granddaddy didn't say a word. But I saw something I'd never seen before – my big strong granddaddy had tears in his eyes. ‘Don't worry, Granddaddy. I'll vote for you one day,’ I said to him” (p. 22). These were some of the examples from the children's literature that demonstrated strong literary and visual quality.

This chapter presents findings from the critical content analysis of the selected 65 picture books and answers the first two research questions. Chapter 5 presents findings for the third research question. In total, this study examined three research questions:

1. What are the key demographics, genres, and formats featured in the collection of agriculturally themed children's books that present Black life in farming?
2. How do these books provide a counternarrative to the master narrative of Black life in farming?

3. How do agriculturally themed children's books that examine the relationship between Black life and farming written for elementary-aged children adhere to the Pillars of Agricultural Literacy?

Question 1: What are the key demographics, genres, and formats featured in the collection of agriculturally themed children's books that present Black life in farming? This first research question is answered in the following section of tables and analysis.

In this chapter, I interpreted the data from the total set of books that were read during the critical content analysis (n=65). I developed a collection of tables to summarize the findings and answer the first research question.

Demographics

Table 2 was comprised of the booklists including the book's title, publication year, author's gender, the protagonist's gender, the protagonist's race, and then the book's genre. The book's author and publication year data were collected from the Worldcat.org database. The author's gender was interpreted from pronouns that the author or other online sources used in the author's written descriptions. The protagonists' gender and race were identified using the author's notes and interpretations from the images of the characters and people featured in the books. The genre of the book was interpreted by my knowledge of genre as well as the books' descriptors in the Worldcat.org database, and other online resources. As I was summarizing and interpreting the data, I noticed several trends associated with the gender of the protagonists and the genre of the story.

Table 2***Demographics: Gender, Race, and Genre***

	Title/Author n=65	Author Gender	Gender	Race	Genre
1	<i>Friends and Flowers</i> (Gunderson, 2008)	Female	Female	Black	Realistic Fiction
2	<i>Baby Blessings</i> (Jordan, 2010)	Female	Male	Black	Realistic Fiction
3	<i>Virgie Goes to School with Us Boys</i> (Howard, 1999)	Female	Male	Black	Historical Fiction
4	<i>Miss Tizzy</i> (Gray, 1993)	Female	Female	Black Multiple	Realistic Fiction
5	<i>Seeds</i> (Shannon, 1994)	Male	Male	Black White	Realistic Fiction
6	<i>Ruby Finds a Worry</i> (Percival, 2019)	Male	Female	Black	Fantasy
7	<i>Lorraine: The Girl Who Sang the Storm Away</i> (Secor, 2018)	Male	Female	Black	Realistic Fiction; Rhyming
8	<i>Bree Finds a Friend</i> (Huber, 2014)	Male	Female	Black White	Fantasy
9	<i>Down Home at Miss Dessa's</i> (Stroud, 1996)	Female	Female	Black	Historical Fiction
10	<i>I Believe I Can</i> (Byers, 2020)	Female	Multiple	Multiple	Realistic Fiction, Rhyming
11	<i>Bread Lab</i> (Binczewski, 2018)	Female	Female	Biracial White	Realistic Fiction
12	<i>Grandpa Cacao</i> (Zunon, 2019)	Female	Female Male	Black	Realistic Fiction
13	<i>Grandma Lena's Big Ol' Turnip</i> (Hester, 2015)	Female	Female	Black	Fantasy: Tall Tale; Folklore
14	<i>Who Put the Cookie in the Cookie Jar</i> (Shannon, 2013)	Male	Multiple	Multiple	Nonfiction: Informational; Rhyming
15	<i>The Old Truck</i> (Pumphrey, 2020)	Male	Female	Black	Realistic Fiction
16	<i>A Place Called Freedom</i> (Sanders, 1997)	Male	Male	Black	Historical Fiction
17	<i>Two Old Potatoes and Me</i> (Coy, 2003)	Male	Female	Black	Realistic Fiction
18	<i>How a Seed Grows</i> (Jordan, 2015)	Female	Female	Black White	Nonfiction: Informational

Table 2 (cont.)

	Title/Author n=65	Author Gender	Gender	Race	Genre
19	<i>Sadie's Seed Adventure</i> (Dybvik, 2013)	Female	Female	Black White	Fantasy; Informational
20	<i>Plant a Little Seed</i> (Christensen, 2012)	Female	Male	Black White	Realistic Fiction
21	<i>The Chicken-Chasing Queen of Lamar County</i> (Harrington, 2007)	Female	Female	Black	Realistic Fiction
22	<i>Our People</i> (Medearis, 1994)	Female	Female	Black	Historical Fiction
23	<i>We Keep a Store</i> (Shelby, 1989)	Female	Female	Black	Realistic Fiction
24	<i>I Love My Family</i> (Hudson, 1993)	Male	Male	Black	Realistic Fiction
25	<i>Flossie & The Fox</i> (McKissack, 1986)	Female	Female	Black	Historical Fiction; Fantasy
26	<i>Rainbow Stew</i> (Falwell, 2013)	Female	Male	Black	Realistic Fiction
27	<i>Tailypo: A Newfangled Tall Tale</i> (Medearis, 1999)	Female	Male	Black	Fantasy: Tall Tale; Folklore
28	<i>Family</i> (Monk, 2001)	Female	Female	Biracial Black	Realistic Fiction
29	<i>George Washington Carver: An Innovative Life</i> (MacLeod, 2007)	Female	Male	Black	Biography
30	<i>Benjamin Banneker</i> (Martin, 2014)	Female	Male	Black	Biography
31	<i>George Washington Carver: Journey to Freedom</i> (Carey, 1999)	Male	Male	Black	Biography
32	<i>The Secret Garden of George Washington Carver</i> (Barretta, 2019)	Male	Male	Black	Biography
33	<i>A Weed is a Flower: The Life of George Washington Carver</i> (Brandenberg, 1965)	Female	Male	Black	Biography
34	<i>George Washington Carver</i> (Rau, 2014)	Female	Male	Black	Biography
35	<i>The Legend of Freedom Hill</i> (Altman, 2000)	Female	Female	Black White	Fiction: Legend; Folklore
36	<i>We're Going to The Farm</i> (Streza, 2012)	Female	Female Male	Black White	Fiction: Nursery Rhyme
37	<i>Sweet Clara and The Freedom Quilt</i> (Hopkinson, 1993)	Female	Female	Black	Historical Fiction
38	<i>It Jes' Happened</i> (Tate, 2012)	Male	Male	Black	Biography
39	<i>Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table</i> (Martin, 2019)	Female	Male	Black	Biography

Table 2 (cont.)

	Title/Author n=65	Author Gender	Gender	Race	Genre
40	<i>The Unstoppable Garret Morgan</i> (DiCicco, 2019)	Female	Male	Black	Biography
41	<i>Daddy Played the Blues</i> (Garland, 2017)	Male	Female	Black	Historical Fiction
42	<i>John Lewis in the Lead</i> (Haskins & Benson, 2006)	Male	Male	Black	Biography
43	<i>Picking Peas for a Penny</i> (Medearis, 1990)	Female	Male	Black	Historical Fiction Rhyming
44	<i>Overground Railroad</i> (Cline-Ransome, 2020)	Female	Female	Black	Historical Fiction
45	<i>The Moon Over Star</i> (Aston, 2008)	Female	Female	Black	Historical Fiction
46	<i>Calvin's Christmas Wish</i> (Miles, 1993)	Male	Male	Black	Historical Fiction
47	<i>Granddaddy's Turn: A Journey to The Ballot Box</i> (Bandy & Stein, 2015)	Male	Male	Black	Historical Fiction
48	<i>Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement</i> (Weatherford, 2015)	Female	Female	Black	Biography
49	<i>The Wagon</i> (Johnston, 1996)	Female	Male	Black	Historical Fiction
50	<i>My Name Is James Madison Hemings</i> (Winter, 2016)	Male	Male	Biracial	Biography
51	<i>The Underground Railroad</i> (Allen, 2015)	Female	N/A	N/A	Nonfiction: Informational
52	<i>The Hard-Times Jar</i> (Smothers, 2003)	Female	Female	Black	Historical Fiction
53	<i>Once Upon a Farm</i> (Bradby, 2002)	Female	Male	Black	Realistic Fiction, Rhyming
54	<i>The Sunday Outing</i> (Pinkney, 1994)	Female	Female	Black	Realistic Fiction
55	<i>Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom</i> (Weatherford, 2006)	Female	Female	Black	Biography
56	<i>Down the Winding Road</i> (Johnson, 2000)	Female	Female	Black	Realistic Fiction
57	<i>Working Cotton</i> (Williams, 1992)	Female	Female	Black	Historical Fiction
58	<i>Freedom's School</i> (Cline-Ransome, 2015)	Female	Female	Black	Historical Fiction

Table 2 (cont.)

	Title/Author n=65	Author Gender	Gender	Race	Genre
59	<i>Joe Louis, My Champion</i> (Miller, 2004)	Male	Male	Black	Historical Fiction
60	<i>Friend on Freedom River</i> (Whelan, 2004)	Female	Male	White	Historical Fiction
61	<i>Ruby Bridges</i> (Donaldson, 2009)	Female	Female	Black	Biography
62	<i>Michelle Obama</i> (Raatma, 2010)	Female	Female	Black	Biography
63	<i>Slavery</i> (De Medeiros, 2008)	Male	N/A	N/A	Nonfiction: Informational
64	<i>Dance Y'all</i> (Stroud, 2001)	Female	Male	Black	Historical Fiction
65	<i>Slavery in America</i> (Blashfield, 2011)	Female	N/A	N/A	Nonfiction: Informational

Note: This table identifies the book title, the author's gender, the protagonist's gender and race, and the primary genre of the book.

In addition to the title, author, and publication year, Table 2 displayed the findings on the author's gender, the protagonist's gender and race, and the book's genre categories. Table 2 revealed that 34 books (53%) featured a female protagonist as a main character and 28 books (44%) featured a male protagonist as a main character. None of the books featured other gendered categories such as nonbinary or transgender. Table 2 also showed that 57 books (88%) featured a main character or person that was categorized as Black. In nine of the books (14%), there was a character or person who was White and shared the role of protagonist with the Black character. In these nine books, the role of main character was shared between the Black person and/or character and the White character. Both characters shared the space in the illustrations and were in proximity to each other in the images in the book. Additionally, Table 2 revealed that 19 books (29%) of the books were realistic fiction, 19 books (29%) were historical fiction, six books (10%) were fantasy, four books (6%) were rhyming, three books (5%) were folklore, and one book (2%) was categorized as a nursery rhyme. Table 2 also showed that 46 (71%) of the

books were written by an author who was female and 19 (29%) of the books were written by an author who was male.

Table 3 is a summary of the children’s literature organized into percentages for male and female characters and their representations in the different genre categories. As the data were being compiled, I noticed a significant representation of males in the Biography genre category. This gender representation is aligned with White’s (2018) historical analysis regarding the framework that was developed by Black cooperatives that highly influenced “the intellectual traditions of Black agriculture” (p. 61). The contributions of DuBois, Booker T. Washington, and George Washington Carver laid the groundwork for Black farming communities and a framework for addressing issues of food power in Black communities. However instrumental and influential, their framework largely ignored the agricultural contributions of Black Women. That overlook has cast a shadow on the book publishing industry that has also been over-focused on the contributions of men like George Washington Carver but has largely ignored Black women in agriculture like Fannie Lou Hamer. Table 3 contains a summary of the genre categories for the selected literature, which shows that 73% of the biographies featured Black males. Additionally, on the combined list (n=314), included in the appendix (see Appendix D), 74% of the biographies featured Black males, specifically George Washington Carver who represented 34% of the total biographies on the combined list.

Table 3

Gender of Protagonists in Genre Categories

Genre #	Male #	Female #	Multiple #	%
Fiction				
Realistic Fiction (19)	7	11	1	33 Male 61 Female
Historical Fiction (19)	9	10		47 Male 52 Female

Table 3 (cont.)

Genre #	Male #	Female #	Multiple #	%
Fantasy (6)	1	5		17 Male 83 Female
Legend (1)		2		0 Male 100 Female
Nursery Rhyme (1)	1	1		50 Male 50 Female
Nonfiction				
Biography (15)	11	4		73 Male 27 Female
Informational (6)		2	1	0 Male 20 Female 80 N.A.
Total (65)	28	34	2	44 Male 53 Female
Fiction (45)				
Nonfiction (20)				

Note: This table contains the number of titles in each genre category with the total and percentages in each of the gender categories.

Table 3 showed roughly 45 of the books (69%) were fiction and 31% of the books were nonfiction. There was one title, *Sadie's Seed Adventure* (Dybvik, 2013), that was both informational and fantasy and was therefore placed in both categories of fiction and nonfiction. There were 28 male characters that were positioned in the role of main character or person and 34 female characters or persons in the role of protagonist. In the next section, I will provide more examples of how gender and genre were portrayed in the children's literature.

Gender and Genre

According to Cuddon's (1928-1996) definitions of literary terms, Genre is a French term used to categorize literature. The definition of genre has been extended throughout the years. Gender* is the social and psychological behavior that is deemed appropriate for males and females by the expectations of society (Banks & Banks, 2015, p. 13). Other genders such as

* Gender categories have expanded extensively over the last twenty years. Healthline.com has identified a list of 64 terms used to describe gender identity and expression.

cisgender, for example, would be identified through the author's use of pronouns or through the character's self-identification. None of these books revealed characters that self-identified as other genders. Therefore, to categorize gender in this paper, I analyzed the quantity, illustrations, and descriptions of the male and female protagonists in the literature. In the following paragraphs, I provide a descriptive analysis of the findings.

In total 34/65 (53%) of the protagonist were female and 28/65 (44%) of the books featured a male protagonist. In *I Believe I Can* (Byers, 2020) and *Who Put the Cookie in the Cookie Jar* (Shannon, 2013) each page featured multiple gender representations as there was no single protagonist, so there was not a single character that would be identified as the main character in the story. On the cover of *I Believe I Can* (Byers, 2020), for example, there is an illustration of a young African American male and female character. Both of the characters are illustrated with accurate color hues to demonstrate an authentic representation of African American characteristics. These authentic characteristics are demonstrated in the diversity of hair texture and hairstyle, as one character is given a coiled high-top fade and the secondary character has been given a braided style with pink beads on the ends. On the next pages are two more characters, one White and the other could be identified as biracial. Each of these characters is also given a different facial feature and hairstyle to further depict the diversity in the character's physical appearances. This trend continues throughout the story and the author does not elevate any character into the position of main or primary character. Similarly, in *Who Put the Cookie in the Cookie Jar* (Shannon, 2013), there are multiple stories told in a way to create a complete story of how the cookie is produced. The illustrations in this book are not as authentically developed as each character is illustrated in a similar manner. In the first illustration, for example, the characters skin tones and clothing are different but their physical characteristics

such as facial features, body shape, and hair styles are all very similar. The illustrator changed the characters skin color, but the hair textures were not given any distinct variances which would be important for the development of authenticity.

The nonfiction category represented either biography or informational text.

Approximately, 15/65 (23%) of the books were biography and 6/65 (9%) were informational.

Who Put the Cookie in the Cookie Jar (Shannon, 2013), *How to Grow a Seed* (Jordan, 2015), *Sadie's Seed Adventure* (Dybvik, 2013), *The Underground Railroad* (Allen, 2015), *Slavery* (De Medeiros, 2008), and *Slavery in America* (Blashfield, 2011) were the informational texts. The

biography texts will be discussed in a later section. *Who Put the Cookie in the Cookie Jar*

(Shannon, 2013) was an informational text that explained the process for processing and packing the ingredients for a cookie recipe. Additionally, this text also contained a rhyming element.

Each word at the end of the sentence rhymes with a word on the same page or on the following page. The rhyming word followed a patterned syntax. The patterned syntax was typically a single syllable word. In some of the rhyming lines, however, there was variation. *Who Put the Cookie in the Cookie Jar* (Shannon, 2013) was the only nonfiction text that rhymed, but there were other examples of rhyming text in four of the realistic fiction books. It is important to note that none of the examples of rhymed text include poetry. The gender representations in *Who Put the Cookie in the Cookie Jar* (Shannon, 2013) varied in how they were portrayed in the illustrations. The illustrations were painted in bright vivid colors, but the visual details did not present the characters with authentic facial features, body shapes, or hair style techniques. On the pages, female and male characters share an equitable amount of space on the pages and in the various agricultural occupations that are depicted in the illustrations. The female characters wore both pants and dresses in the illustrations, and on one page a female character is illustrated wearing

traditional Sikh clothing. In *How to Grow a Seed* (Jordan, 2015), the reader learns how to plant a seed indoors using everyday recycled materials such as an empty eggshell carton. The young female protagonist is featured on the cover and opening pages wearing red overalls and a gardener's hat. She is positioned in the story in the role of teacher and observer as she is often depicted in the illustrations close to the ground examining something. In one illustration, there is a family preparing to eat a meal outside, but the young girl is positioned away from the family with her hands and knees on the ground. She seems to be digging in the ground and there is a gardening tool beside her. The illustrator does a good job with the characters facial features and coiled patterned hair style. These features make the character's depiction a more authentic representation. Upon consultation with various online sources, *Sadie's Seed Adventure* (Dybvik, 2013) was categorized as both fantasy and informational. The information components included the knowledge that readers were provided about seed dispersion and the fantasy components included the characters supernatural abilities. *The Underground Railroad* (Allen, 2015), *Slavery* (De Medeiros, 2008), and *Slavery in America* (Blashfield, 2011) were the traditional nonfiction informational books about slavery. They depicted both illustrations and photographs from the period. They each referenced and featured key figures like Fredrick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, and Abraham Lincoln in the text and photographs. One characteristic that made *Slavery* (De Medeiros, 2008) stand out is the focus on slave rebellions. Many books about slavery depict enslaved people as passive (Gilbert, 2018), but De Medeiros (2008) does a great job unfolding the stories of the many slave rebellions.

There were five realistic fiction texts that contained a rhyming component: *We're Going to The Farm* (Streza, 2012), *Picking Peas for a Penny* (Medearis, 1990), *I Believe I Can* (Byers, 2020), *Lorraine: The Girl Who Sang the Storm Away* (Secor, 2018), and *Once Upon a Farm*

(Bradby, 2002). In *We're Going to The Farm* (Streza, 2012), the text was written as a nursery rhyme and a song that mimics the rhythm and lyrics of *The Farmer and the Dell* (Unknown, 1820). The rhyming patterns in *Picking Peas for a Penny* (Medearis, 1990), *I Believe I Can* (Byers, 2020), *Lorraine: The Girl Who Sang the Storm Away* (Secor, 2018), and *Once Upon a Farm* (Bradby, 2002) were unconventional. Some of the lines followed a pattern similar to that of a couplet and then the pattern would change. Some of the rhyming examples fit the syntax perfectly, and other examples were imperfect. One example of an imperfect rhyme is in *Once Upon a Farm* (Bradby, 2002); the two words that were intended to rhyme were *prayer* and *year*. In *I Believe I Can* (Byers, 2020), there were other examples of imperfect rhymes; one such example was with the words *defeat* and *be*. There was no significance in how gender was represented in this genre category as they each are balanced with multiple gender representations.

There were three texts that were examples of folklore: *Tailypo: A Newfangled Tall Tale* (Medearis, 1999), *Grandma Lena's Big Ol' Turnip* (Hester, 2015), and *The Legend of Freedom Hill* (Altman, 2000). The story *Tailypo: A Newfangled Tall Tale* (Medearis, 1999) was an adaptation of an original story about a mutilated, angry, supernatural creature whose tail is cut off or eaten in the more traditional variations of the story (Jones, 2018; Wahl, 1991; Galdone, 1977). The original version of the story takes place in the Appalachian region and was traditionally told to children to prevent them from harming animals (Goldstein, Grider, & Thomas, 2007). In Medearis (1999) version of Tailypo, *Tailypo: A Newfangled Tall Tale*, the creature's tail is accidentally amputated when the protagonist, a young African American boy and his dog, pull onto the creature's tail while it was escaping through an open window. The protagonist then saves the tail and sells it for food, which differs from the other variation in

which the protagonist typically would eat the tail (Galdone, 1977). In the cover matter of *Grandma Lena's Big Ol' Turnip* (Hester, 2015), the author described the book's adaptation from a Russian folktale entitled *The Turnip* (Afanas'ev, 1800; Haney, 2014). In the original Russian version of the folktale, the grandfather was the planter of the turnip who then calls on the grandmother to help him to pull it from the ground. After the grandmother, came the granddaughter and then the puppy and so forth. In Hester's (2015) adaptation, the grandmother plants the turnip and calls on the grandfather and then the uncle for help.

In the author's notes, Hester (2015) explained that the grandmother figure is a more traditional example, than the grandfather, of the person who cooks in the African American community. In my family, my grandmother was the person responsible for cooking the important family meals. However, the father and grandfather figures in my family were responsible for preparing and cooking the poultry and beef. In fact, on the list of books in this study were many examples of males cooking such as in *Grandpa Cacao* (Zunon, 2019), *Two Old Potatoes and Me* (Coy, 2003), and *Rainbow Stew* (Falwell, 2013) which featured fathers and grandfathers in the kitchen cooking. Other examples include the George Washington Carver books *George Washington Carver: Journey to Freedom* (Carey, 1999) and *The Secret Garden of George Washington Carver* (Barretta, 2019), because George Washington Carver would often cook the plants that he would grow. One illustration in *Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table* (Martin, 2019) depicted two males serving food and drinks at a family table; additionally, both of the male figures were wearing kitchen aprons. Lastly, the young boy character in *Tailypo: A Newfangled Tall Tale* (Medearis, 1999) was depicted preparing food and carrying a bowl of food to serve his family. So, while female or grandmother figures are important to meal preparation,

there were some examples of fathers, grandfathers, and young men depicted in the service of food preparation, which demonstrates the significance of male figures in food preparation spaces.

Hester (2015) wrote “This kind of cooking is often called ‘soul food’ or just southern-style cooking”. The term soul food first appeared in print during the early 1960’s (Wolff, 2020) at the time of other great African American social movements such as the Civil Rights Movement. Soul food is a term used to describe food items associated with African American communities, comfort foods, and specialty foods. Historically, these food items were introduced to enslaved and newly freed black people in the fashion of unwanted leftover rations (Wolff, 2020; Hayford, 2018), but currently the term soul food has been elevated and the preparation and appreciation of the food items has evolved. Different variations of greens, including turnip greens, collard greens and mustard greens are often associated with soul food.

Legends often focus on people or places with historical or geographical significance. *The Legend of Freedom Hill* (Altman, 2000) tells the story of how a small mining town earned the name *Freedom Hill*. In the story, the protagonist, a young African American girl, and her Jewish friend work to free the protagonist’s enslaved mother who has been captured by a slave catcher. After they learn of a mining strategy, from a local assayer, the two girls find enough to free the protagonist's mother. The protagonists decide to give the mining claim to the slave catcher in order to free all the other captured slaves as well. Altman (2000) wrote in *The Legend of Freedom Hill* “That day, five slaves went free, a catcher went from hunting slaves to hunting gold, and a whole town learned a thing or two ‘bout what matters in this old world of ours” (p. 15). These folktales engaged the reader in a fanciful way without the pathos of slavery and subsequent historical cruelty. The female characters in this story are presented as heroes as they save one character from slavery and a slave catcher from a life of treachery. The illustrations are

depicted using watercolors and the illustrator does a good job of including authentic facial features and distinctive hairstyles for all the characters. While the characters are given similar body shapes, the character's postures provide variety which adds feelings and authenticity to the character's body language.

The remaining titles, 35/65 (54%) were either realistic fiction 16/65 (25%) or historical fiction 20/65 (31%). The textual and visual features gave the reader important clues that the story was either historical or realistic fiction. The images in the realistic fiction stories indicated the time placing images such as cars, skylines, and uniformed housing in the background of the illustrations. These images were in contrast to the historical fiction stories which featured horses, wagons, and colonial style clothing. Additionally, the historical fiction books depicted the characters traveling by foot long distances to attend school like in *Virgie Goes to School with Us Boys* (Howard, 1999) and *Freedom's School* (Cline-Ransome, 2015), to vote like in *Granddaddy's Turn: A Journey to The Ballot Box* (Bandy & Stein, 2015), and to deliver goods like in *Flossie & The Fox* (McKissack, 1986). In the historical fiction stories, many of the illustrations featured male characters dressed in suspenders and overalls while the female characters wore headwraps and aprons. In the illustrations in *The Wagon* (Johnston, 1996), for example, many of the women wore long dresses and hair wraps. This story was about the character's journey from slavery to freedom, so the characters outfits and hairstyles are not as refined as in *Dance Y'all* (Stroud, 2001). In *Dance Y'all* (Stroud, 2001) there are horses and wagons, but the characters clothing is more colorful, and the characters' hairstyles are unwrapped and more expressive.

In the realistic fiction book category, 11/16 (68%) featured a female protagonist and 5/16 (31%) featured a male protagonist. Of the historical fiction titles, 11/20 (55%) featured a female

protagonist and 9/20 (45%) featured a male protagonist. Therefore, roughly 60% of the realistic and historical fiction books featured a female protagonist and roughly 40% featured a male protagonist. Casey, Novick, and Lourenco (2021) conducted a study of gender representation in 3,280 children's books and found that the author's gender had the greatest effect on the gender of the protagonist featured in the books. In their study, they found that male authors "overrepresented male characters", (para. 4) but female authors presented both male and female protagonist characters in their books. Like their findings, authorship was also a factor in the gender of the protagonist characters in this study as 71% of the authors of the selected (n=65) children's literature were female and 29% were male. Since, 53% of the protagonists were female characters, authorship could have been a factor. Additionally, Casey, Novick, and Lourenco (2021) study also analyzed the genre and found that males were overrepresented in nonfiction books. In total, 44% of the children's literature from this study featured a male protagonist and 53% of the literature featured a female protagonist. In Table 2, the data showed that 74% of the authors in the realistic fiction category were female authors and 26% of the authors in the realistic fiction category was males.

The two genre categories that featured the most gender-related significance was found in the fantasy and biography categories. In five of the six (83%) fantasy books the protagonist was female. In the biography category, eleven of the fifteen (73%) were about a male figure, with biographies about George Washington Carver accounting for 33% of the total number of biographies on the selected list (n=65); which is close to the percentage of books about George Washington Carver on the combined list (Appendix D). The overrepresentation of males in nonfiction books that Casey, Novick, and Lourenco (2021) found was also evident in this study and provides further evidence for White's (2018) assertion that women were largely left out of

the agricultural framework, which may have consequently impacted the number of biographies that featured Black women in agriculture. Interestingly enough Table 2, showed that 73% of the biographies were written by female authors and 73% of the books featured a male person.

In this section, I briefly discuss how the gender roles of the female characters were depicted in the fantasy genre. In five of the six fantasy books, the African American girl characters were independent and depicted in ways that portray a disconnection from the peers in their group. In *Ruby Finds a Worry* (Percival, 2019), the African American female character is playing in a garden space alone when she begins to develop a worry. The worry is depicted as a yellow circular-shaped object that hovers behind her and follows her. As the plot continues, she meets another worried peer, and they solve their problems together. In *Flossie & The Fox* (McKissack, 1986), Flossie is depicted playing with a wooden doll by herself at the start of the story until her grandmother asks her to take eggs to a neighboring farm. Flossie has to be brave, because her grandmother explains that she may encounter a fox on her journey. In the story, Flossie outwits the fox several times by forcing the fox to prove that he is a fox instead of other more harmless animals. McKissack (1986) *Flossie & The Fox*:

Fox's eyes flashed anger. Then he chuckled softly. 'My dear child, he said, sounding right disgusted, 'of course I'm fox. A little girl like you should be simply terrified of me...Flossie tossed her head in the air. 'Well, whatever you are, you sho' think a heap of yo'self, 'she said and skipped away. (p. 10)

In the illustration Flossie is bravely standing tall face to face with the fox (p. 11). In *Bree Finds a Friend* (Huber, 2014) the African American female character is playing alone pretending to plant blueberries when another peer joins her, and a new friendship develops around worms that are dressed up as different family members. In *Sadie's Seed Adventure* (Dybvik, 2013), the African

American female character is depicted as an independent, adventurous, and curious character when she meets up with a horticulturist, White male, who teaches Sadie about seed dispersal systems. *Grandma Lena's Big Ol' Turnip* (Hester, 2015) was set in the kitchen of an elderly African American female character who is sitting alone learning and reading about vegetables. She plants, cooks, and prepares the vegetable food items alone, but has help from various family's members during the harvest time when she pulls an extraordinarily large tulip from the garden.

Long (2016) studied how female protagonists escape the constraints of gender roles in the fantasy canon. Long (2016) examined the Pippi Longstocking character, an independent female character who has extraordinary strength and loves to play. The depiction of the independent female character featured in the canon of fantasy literature allows for exploration, empowerment, and freedom. Long (2016) wrote:

Crossing the boundary from the “real” world into a fantastical other space can become a metaphor for crossing or even transcending gender boundaries: the impulse to explore, the urge to transgress and the tendency to re-narrate, which often underpin fantasy entries in the children's literature canon, become tools with which to reclaim and re-imagine the concept of gender in childhood. (p. 281)

Sadie's Seed Adventure (Dybvik, 2013) is a prime example of a female character that Long (2016) would argue crosses gender boundaries. Sadie is dressed the same way as the male character, as if she is about to participate in a jungle expedition. Additionally, her hair is pulled back into a ponytail, and she is wearing work boots to indicate that she is about to participate in hard work. She immediately lowers herself into the dirt and begins asking questions. Throughout the book she participates in multiple activities that are outside and adventurous; outdoor and

adventurous characterizations are typically associated with male characters (Casey, Novick, and Lourenco, 2021).

All of the female characters examined in the fantasy literature were depicted as independent and exploratory. Additionally, all except one of the characters in the fantasy books were young. The exception being the protagonist in *Grandma Lena's Big Ol' Turnip* (Hester, 2015) who is an elderly woman depicted with a curvy body type and grey hair.

Gender Roles & Education

Many of the stories indicated the importance of education, and an in-depth analysis of the way educational attainment was interpreted from the children's literature is presented in a later section of this chapter. This section, however, presents findings on how gender roles were represented in classroom environments. In *Virgie Goes to School with Us Boys* (Howard, 1999), the female character is not allowed to attend school until two years after her brothers. This story revealed an intersection of how access to education was impacted by both gender roles and race. Ihle (1986) wrote about the debates and obstacles that Black women faced during the Reconstruction Era. One such debate was on the purpose of education for Black women. Ihle (1986) wrote:

Indeed, many of the opinions expressed about black women's education sounded remarkably similar to what was said about White women's; although teacher training for women was fine, their main responsibility was to their husbands and their children.

Virtually no one was interested in preparing women for community leadership except as teachers or as appendages to their husbands. (p. 4)

In *Virgie Goes to School with Us Boys* (Howard, 1999), Virgie had been begging to go to school with her brothers for quite some time and the brothers would make up various reasons why

school was inappropriate for Virgie. Howard (1999) wrote one such response: “there’s hardly any girls that go. Girls don’t need school” (p. 2). In the illustrations, Virgie has her hands on her hips and there is a scowl on her face as she debates with her brother about attending school.

Another finding in the children’s literature that was examined in other studies (Dalton, 2004; Diekman & Murnen, 2004; Niemi, Smith, & Brown, 2014) is the overrepresentation of female teacher characters. Niemi, Smith, and Brown (2014) examined teacher characters in children’s literature and found that of the 74 selected children’s books that featured a teacher character, 76% of the teachers were female. This study produced similar results. Of the 13 featured teacher characters, eight of the depictions (62%) featured a female teacher character. In fact, the only male teacher presented in the children’s literature was George Washington Carver who was featured in the five remaining representations. Of the eight featured female teacher characters, three teachers (38%) were depicted as a Black woman and five (63%) were depictions of White women. These results demonstrate the occupational dominance of women in teaching positions. As noted in Ihle’s (1986) study, teaching was the occupation that women were most often singularly encouraged to pursue in early education initiatives.

Race

Table 2 also showed the race of the primary characters and people presented in the texts. Race is a socially constructed and complex category based primarily on physical characteristics that vary across cultures. “Race is a doing – a dynamic set of historically derived and institutionalized ideas and practices that...associates differential value, power, and privilege with these characteristics...” (Glasgow, 2017, p. 171). Many people argue that the current knowledge of the complexity of race requires new learning theories around the understanding of racial identity. Race is often difficult to discuss without defining ethnicity. Ethnicity identifies “a group

of persons distinguished largely by common culture, typically including language, religion, or other patterns of behavior and belief” (Cornell & Hartman, 2007 p. 17). The definitions of race and ethnicity have been debated tremendously (Zack, 2017; Bhopal, 2004) Ethnicity is derived from the word “ethnos”, which means nation. Race, however, was originally designed to divide populations of people by their physical characteristics. “Western ideas of races can be traced to relational and genealogical notions of tribes, clans, and lines of descent” (Zack, 2017, p. 15). In short, race was a concept that was originally designed to separate people into groups of supremacy and inferiority (Zack, 2017). To separate the two concepts of race and ethnicity, race has been used to distinguish biological markers and ethnicity has been used to distinguish cultural markers (Cornell & Hartmann, 2007). Currently, researchers have confirmed one definition of race as a social construction (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Banks, 2015). Cornell and Hartmann (2007) wrote:

Stuart Hall (1992) who has offered some of the most interesting scholarly analyses of race and ethnicity argues that collective identity and experience are not givens, but are ‘constructed historically, culturally, and politically - and the concept which refers to this is ethnicity’ ...[because] ethnicity acknowledges the place of history, language, and culture in the construction of subjectivity and identity’. (p. 39)

According to the US census, a Black person is a person who has origins with “any of the Black racial groups of Africa” (www.census.gov). For this study, Black is defined by the biological markers interpreted by the researcher from the illustrations. The methodology was designed to intentionally select children’s books that featured Black life in agriculture. As presented in Chapter 3, the search term Black, in combination with agricultural terms, was used on the CLCD website. As a result, the word Black was attached to a collection of children’s books in the

keyword descriptions found on the website. All of the 65 books except two featured an agriculturalist that was a Black person and all of the books featured at least one main character who was Black.

The two exceptions to the Black agricultural protagonist were found in *Friend on Freedom River* (Whelan, 2004) and *Bread Lab* (Binczewski, 2018). In *Friend on Freedom River* (Whelan, 2004) the agriculturalist is a young White farmer, named Louis, who has been placed in charge of the farm while his father is away. He helps a Black enslaved family of three to escape across the Detroit River into Canada. When the enslaved family reaches Canada, the farmers on the Canadian side are also White. While the African American characters were not depicted as an agriculturalist, one of the characters talk about a time when he is catching catfish on the plantation. The other literature example that features a White agricultural character is in *Bread Lab* (Binczewski, 2018). The agriculturalist is a White plant scientist, named Aunt Mary, who works with plants and other farmers. She is the aunt of the protagonist who is a young biracial girl named Iris. The protagonist lives with her Black father and White mother, who are only present at the beginning and end of the book. In the majority of the book, the protagonist is learning about breadmaking with her plant scientist aunt.

Two book covers featured a certain race, but the races of the characters in the story were different. In *Friends and Flowers* (Gunderson, 2008) the cover of the book featured a Black female character and a White female character, giving the impression that the story was about both characters. However, the Black character, named Lindsey, and her mother are the main characters in the story. The White character, Julia, moves to another town early on in the plot. The cover most likely featured both characters in order to give the reader the impression that the story is about a Black character and a White character, and while that is how the story begins, the

main character is the Black girl. Similarly, *I Believe I Can* (Byers, 2020) presented two Black characters on the cover, which implies that the story is primarily about two African American children, but the plot of the story is about children of a variety of racial backgrounds. A reader could interpret that they are going to read a story about African American children, but that is misleading because the children on the cover are unrelated to the plot of the story.

In six of the titles, *How a Seed Grows* (Jordan, 2015), *Sadie's Seed Adventure* (Dybvik, 2013), *Plant a Little Seed* (Christensen, 2012), *The Legend of Freedom Hill* (Altman, 2000), *Seeds* (Shannon, 1994) and *We're Going to The Farm* (Streza, 2012), the role of the protagonist, from the text evidence and the illustrations, was shared by one Black character and one White character. In *How a Seed Grows* (Jordan, 2015), the protagonist is an African American female, unnamed, who is older and more knowledgeable, and is teaching a younger White male, who is mainly an observer, how to grow seeds in various conditions. In *Seeds* (Shannon, 1994) the protagonist is a young White male, and the secondary protagonist is an elderly African American male. In *Sadie's Seed Adventure* (Dybvik, 2013), *Plant a Little Seed* (Christensen, 2012), and *The Legend of Freedom Hill* (Altman, 2000), the plot and the role of the protagonist is shared equally between the two characters of diverse racial backgrounds. In short, the relationships between the characters ranged from observer as in *How a Seed Grows* (Jordan, 2015), to friend as in *Seeds* (Shannon, 1994) and *The Legend of Freedom Hill* (Altman, 2000), and as a mentor in *Sadie's Seed Adventure* (Dybvik, 2013).

Three books featured a biracial character: *Bread Lab* (Binczewski, 2018), *Family* (Monk, 2001), and *My Name Is James Madison Hemings* (Winter, 2016). In *Bread Lab* (Binczewski, 2018), the character's racial background was not an essential element of the plot, but in *Family* (Monk, 2001) and *My Name Is James Madison Hemings* (Winter, 2016), biracial identity is

important to the story's plot. For example, in *Family* (Monk, 2001), the protagonist, a biracial female character named Hope, is visiting relatives that are from her mother's side of the family. Her mother was depicted in the illustrations as an African American female whose family lives in the South on a farm. Her father is depicted as a White man. The family reunites around shared recipes of traditional family foods. As a result of the reunion and food-sharing tradition, Hope brings a recipe from her father's side of the family. She is uncomfortable with the food choice initially, thinking that her cousins would not appreciate it. However, Hope's aunt emphasizes the importance of having recipes from both her Black and White sides of the family because they are an extension of Hope's family membership and to both of her racial identities.

My Name Is James Madison Hemings (Winter, 2016) is a biography about Thomas Jefferson's biracial son. In the author's notes, the reader learns that James Madison Hemings' mother Sally was the granddaughter of an African woman and an English man. This racial equation meant that James Madison Hemings was one-eighth African, but legally White according to the standards of the time period (Winter, 2016). Additionally, as identified from the 1830 census data, his race was, in fact, labeled as White, but in subsequent census data, his racial label was determined as Mulatto. In the author's notes, Winter (2016) wrote about Thomas Jefferson's issues with racial differences in *My Name Is James Madison Hemings*:

But Jefferson's life and legacy are full of contradictions. He wrote beautifully about liberty and equality – and called slavery a 'hideous blot.' And as president, he outlawed the importation and enslavement of people from Africa. [But], he owned more than six hundred enslaved people throughout his life. He believed the people of African heritage were intellectually inferior to White people and that free African Americans should be

exiled to Africa...[and] he tried to get a law passed that would have banished White mothers of mixed raced children. (p. 31)

According to a DNA test that was conducted in 1998 Thomas Jefferson had many previously undocumented descendants from his enslaved community (Stockman, 2018). *My Name Is James Madison Hemings* (Winter, 2016) documents one such account and the contradiction between Thomas Jefferson's public and private life.

Another example of how race was illustrated was found in *The Unstoppable Garret Morgan* (DiCicco, 2019). In this example, the protagonist wants to marry a White woman, but Garret Morgan is discouraged because he was an African American male. During this time, Garrett Morgan worked at the same company as the woman he wanted to marry. She was a seamstress from Germany named Mary Hasek. "Garrett and Mary were instantly drawn to each other. But Black men were not permitted to talk to White female employees. Even a simple conversation with Mary brought a stern warning from Garrett's supervisor" (p. 9). But Garrett Morgan was determined to marry her, so Garrett Morgan quit his job and opened up his own business and they were married shortly after. In the illustration on p. 11, Garrett Morgan is depicted standing over a darker skin toned African American woman and Mary is standing away from him at the back of the room. Garrett Morgan is facing away from Mary with his back turned away from her, and while his eye gaze seems to lift upwards towards Mary, his head is in a downward position. This illustration provides the reader with an example of the body language that Garrett Morgan and Mary had to use to avoid negative consequences.

The race findings illustrate that while the methodology sought to focus primarily on Black agriculturalists, the protagonists in the stories presented diverse racial identities, social interactions, and family units.

Language and Formats

Table 4 was designed to show the published languages, language variations, and formats for each book. The language and formatting data were collected from Worldcat.org. The language variety data were collected from the researcher's analysis of the text styles, eye dialect, or literary dialect, that authors often use to change the spelling and phrasing to indicate diverse language patterns. Additionally, language variety was indicated in Table 4 if the book featured a non-English language within the text. Language variety was featured in the author's use of eye dialect, or literary dialect, to indicate vernacular variations. Non-English language was featured in the text using the first language of the character during dialogic practices.

Table 4

Language and Format

	Book Title/Author	Language and Formats	Language Variety
1	<i>Friends and Flowers</i> (Gunderson, 2008)	English, eBook, print	None
2	<i>Baby Blessings</i> (Jordan, 2010)	English, eBook, print, YouTube	None
3	<i>Virgie Goes to School with Us Boys</i> (Howard, 1999)	English, eBook, print, YouTube Braille	Yes
4	<i>Miss Tizzy</i> (Gray, 1993)	English, eBook, print, YouTube	None
5	<i>Seeds</i> (Shannon, 1994)	English, Print	None
6	<i>Ruby Finds a Worry</i> (Percival, 2019)	English, eBook, print, YouTube	None
7	<i>Lorraine: The Girl Who Sang the Storm Away</i> (Secor, 2018)	English, eBook, print, YouTube	Yes
8	<i>Bree Finds a Friend</i> (Huber, 2014)	English, eBook, print, YouTube	None
9	<i>Down Home at Miss Dessa's</i> (Stroud, 1996)	English, print	Yes
10	<i>I Believe I Can</i> (Byers, 2020)	English, eBook, print, YouTube	None
11	<i>Bread Lab</i> (Binczewski, 2018)	English, print, YouTube	None

Table 4 (cont.)

	Book Title/Author	Language and Formats	Language Variety
12	<i>Grandpa Cacao</i> (Zunon, 2019)	English, eBook, print, YouTube	None, however, character has an accent because he is from Africa
13	<i>Grandma Lena's Big Ol' Turnip</i> (Hester, 2015)	English, eBook, print, YouTube	Yes
14	<i>Who Put the Cookie in the Cookie Jar</i> (Shannon, 2013)	English, eBook, print, YouTube	None
15	<i>The Old Truck</i> (Pumphrey, 2020)	English, eBook, print, YouTube	None
16	<i>A Place Called Freedom</i> (Sanders, 1997)	English, eBook, print, YouTube	None
17	<i>Two Old Potatoes and Me</i> (Coy, 2003)	English, Chinese, VHS, DVD, eBook, print, Braille, YouTube	None
18	<i>How a Seed Grows</i> (Jordan, 2015)	English, print	None
19	<i>Sadie's Seed Adventure</i> (Dybvik, 2013)	English, print, YouTube, eBook, American Sign Language	None
20	<i>Plant a Little Seed</i> (Christensen, 2012)	English, print, eBook YouTube,	None
21	<i>The Chicken-Chasing Queen of Lamar County</i> (Harrington, 2007)	English, Korean, Cassette Tape, print, eBook CD, audiobook, YouTube,	None
22	<i>Our People</i> (Medearis, 1994)	English, eBook, print, YouTube	None
23	<i>We Keep a Store</i> (Shelby, 1989)	English, print, Braille, YouTube	Yes
24	<i>I Love My Family</i> (Hudson, 1993)	English, print, YouTube	None
25	<i>Flossie & The Fox</i> (McKissack, 1986)	English, Chinese, French, Braille, print, eBook, audiobook, YouTube	Yes
26	<i>Rainbow Stew</i> (Falwell, 2013)	English, eBook, print, YouTube	None
27	<i>Tailypo: A Newfangled Tall Tale</i> (Medearis, 1999)	English, print, YouTube	None
28	<i>Family</i> (Monk, 2001)	English, eBook, print, YouTube	Yes
29	<i>George Washington Carver: An Innovative Life</i> (MacLeod, 2007)	English, eBook, print	None
30	<i>Benjamin Banneker</i> (Martin, 2014)	English, eBook, print	None
31	<i>George Washington Carver: Journey to Freedom</i> (Carey, 1999)	English, eBook, print	None

Table 4 (cont.)

	Book Title/Author	Language and Formats	Language Variety
32	<i>The Secret Garden of George Washington Carver</i> (Barretta, 2019)	English, YouTube, print	None
33	<i>A Weed is a Flower: The Life of George Washington Carver</i> (Brandenberg, 1965)	English, eBook, print, YouTube, Braille, Large Print	None
34	<i>George Washington Carver</i> (Rau, 2014)	English, YouTube, print	None
35	<i>The Legend Of Freedom Hill</i> (Altman, 2000)	English, eBook, print	Yes
36	<i>We're Going To The Farm</i> (Streza, 2012)	English, Spanish, eBook, print, YouTube	None
37	<i>Sweet Clara And The Freedom Quilt</i> (Hopkinson, 1993)	English, VHS, eBook, print, YouTube, Braille	Yes
38	<i>It Jes' Happened</i> (Tate, 2012)	English, eBook, print, YouTube	Yes
39	<i>Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table</i> (Martin, 2019)	English, eBook, CD, audiobook, print	None
40	<i>The Unstoppable Garret Morgan</i> (DiCicco, 2019)	English, eBook, print, YouTube	None
41	<i>Daddy Played the Blues</i> (Garland, 2017)	English, eBook, print, YouTube	Yes
42	<i>John Lewis in the Lead</i> (Haskins & Benson, 2006)	English, eBook, print	None
43	<i>Picking Peas for a Penny</i> (Medearis, 1990)	English, eBook, print, VHS, DVD, YouTube	Yes
44	<i>Overground Railroad</i> (Cline-Ransome, 2020)	English, CD, audiobook, MP3, YouTube, eBook, print	Yes
45	<i>The Moon Over Star</i> (Aston, 2008)	English, print, CD, Cassette Tape, audiobook	Yes
46	<i>Calvin's Christmas Wish</i> (Miles, 1993)	English, eBook, print	Yes
47	<i>Granddaddy's Turn: A Journey to The Ballot Box</i> (Bandy & Stein, 2015)	English, eVideo, print, CD, DVD, audiobook, Braille, YouTube	Yes
48	<i>Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement</i> (Weatherford, 2015)	English, VHS, DVD, CD, audiobook, MP3, print, YouTube	Yes
49	<i>The Wagon</i> (Johnston, 1996)	English, eBook, print	Yes

Table 4 (cont.)

Book Title/Author	Language and Formats	Language Variety
50 <i>My Name Is James Madison Hemings</i> (Winter, 2016)	English, eBook, print, YouTube	None
51 <i>The Underground Railroad</i> (Allen, 2015)	English, eBook, print	None
52 <i>The Hard-Times Jar</i> (Smothers, 2003)	English, eBook, print, YouTube	Yes
53 <i>Once Upon a Farm</i> (Bradby, 2002)	English, eBook, print	Yes
54 <i>The Sunday Outing</i> (Pinkney, 1994)	English, eBook, print, YouTube	Yes
55 <i>Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom</i> (Weatherford, 2006)	English, audiobook, eBook, print, artwork reproduction poster, YouTube	Yes
56 <i>Down the Winding Road</i> (Johnson, 2000)	English, eBook, print, YouTube	No
57 <i>Working Cotton</i> (Williams, 1992)	English, eBook, print, YouTube, Braille	Yes
58 <i>Freedom's School</i> (Cline-Ransome, 2015)	English, eBook, print, YouTube	Yes
59 <i>Joe Louis, My Champion</i> (Miller, 2004)	English, eBook, print	None
60 <i>Friend on Freedom River</i> (Whelan, 2004)	English, eBook, print	Yes French text in the book
61 <i>Ruby Bridges</i> (Donaldson, 2009)	English, eBook, print	No
62 <i>Michelle Obama</i> (Raatma, 2010)	English, Spanish, eBook, audiobook, print	No
63 <i>Slavery</i> (Medeiros, 2008)	English, eBook, print	No
64 <i>Dance Y'all</i> (Stroud, 2001)	English, eBook, print	Yes
65 <i>Slavery in America</i> (Blashfield, 2011)	English, eBook, print	No
Total n=65		

Note: This table includes the book's title, author, and publication year along with available formatting data and an indication of language variety.

Language

Table 4 revealed that all of the titles were published in English. In addition to English, the featured titles were published in four other languages: Spanish, Korean, French, and Chinese.

This data did not include information from publishing companies that translate English text to non-English language text. Additionally, one title was performed in American Sign Language (ASL) on YouTube. *We're Going to The Farm* (Streza, 2012) was published as a dual language book written in Spanish and English. *Flossie & The Fox* (McKissack, 1986) was published in French and Chinese. Additionally, *Two Old Potatoes and Me* (Coy, 2003) was published in Chinese. *The Chicken-Chasing Queen of Lamar County* (Harrington, 2007) was published in Korean. *Sadie's Seed Adventure* (Dybvik, 2013) was performed in American Sign Language on YouTube. American Sign Language is a language system used by speakers with auditory impairments. American Sign Language adaptations in video platforms, such as YouTube, could be beneficial to early readers who are deaf or hard of hearing, and who have underdeveloped literacy skills.

In Table 5, I provided examples of at least one sentence or phrase that featured eye dialect. The various authors used eye dialect in the books to show dialectal differences through spelling techniques. Nordquist (2020) wrote that eye dialect “is the regional or dialectal variations by spelling words in nonstandard ways, such as writing wuz for was and fella for fellow. This is also known as eye spelling” (para. 1). Eye dialect brings authenticity to the characters’ or person’s dialogue which brings more authenticity to the characters’ or person’s story.

Table 5

Language Variation Examples

Book Title/Author	Language Variation Examples	Geographic Location
<i>Virgie Goes to School with Us Boys</i> (Howard, 1999)	<i>'rithmetic; underdrawers;</i> silent <i>'cept</i> for twigs crackling	Tennessee, 1865

Table 5 (cont.)

Book Title/Author	Language Variation Examples	Geographic Location
<i>Lorraine: The Girl Who Sang the Storm Away</i> (Secor, 2018)	Lived a pitch <i>forkin</i> ' Pa paw; <i>ruckus</i> ; one morning they play 'neath the Chinypin tree; <i>shortin</i> ' bread	Tennessee
<i>Down Home at Miss Dessa's</i> (Stroud, 1996)	<i>Young'uns</i> drinking coffee <i>Young'uns</i> playing and running in the yard I'm <i>gonna</i> get you	South, 1940's
<i>Grandma Lena's Big Ol' Turnip</i> (Hester, 2015)	You're watering them so much I'm afraid they're <i>gonna</i> drown!	Undisclosed, town
<i>Picking Peas for a Penny</i> (Medearis, 1990)	Picking peas for a penny plenty work to <i>be done</i> ,	Undisclosed town 1930's
<i>Flossie & The Fox</i> (McKissack, 1986)	Take these to <i>Miz</i> Viola <i>Why come</i> Mr. J.W. catch the fox <i>Ever-time</i> they corner that <i>ol'</i> slickster	Tennessee
<i>We Keep a Store</i> (Shelby, 1989)	You <i>ought</i> to get married to <i>Leroy here</i> will make you a good husband.	Undisclosed Country
<i>Family</i> (Monk, 2001)	Who's <i>gonna</i> say grace?	Five hours South
<i>The Legend of Freedom Hill</i> (Altman, 2000)	<i>Miz</i> Violet <i>Stirring up a mess of</i> beans and greens You <i>young'uns oughta be</i>	California; Gold rush
<i>Sweet Clara and The Freedom Quilt</i> (Hopkinson, 1993)	Sweet Clara you <i>aine gon</i> last in the fields <i>Why I got to</i> make stitches so tiny? You <i>gon' be</i> a real seamstress	South of Ohio River
<i>It Jes' Happened</i> (Tate, 2012)	<i>Gits dat</i> pride from his mama I <i>draw'd</i> me a man plowing	Alabama
<i>Daddy Played The Blues</i> (Garland, 2017)	<i>Goin' down</i> this road and I'm <i>feelin'</i> bad baby (song lyrics only)	Mississippi, 1936
<i>Overground Railroad</i> (Cline-Ransome, 2020)	Ruth Ellen you <i>mind your mama and daddy</i> .	North Carolina
<i>The Moon Over Star</i> (Aston, 2008)	I <i>reckon</i> that's something to remember <i>Who'd a</i> thought	1969
<i>Calvin's Christmas Wish</i> (Miles, 1993)	I saw my ma <i>hidin'</i> gifts	North Carolina
<i>Granddaddy's Turn : A Journey To The Ballot Box</i> (Bandy & Stein, 2015)	It's our time, and you <i>got</i> to look your best <i>Y'all</i> be careful now	South, Civil Rights Era

Table 5 (cont.)

Book Title/Author	Language Variation Examples	Geographic Location
<i>Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement</i> (Weatherford, 2015)	<i>Chile</i> ; I reckon I was a show-off	Mississippi
<i>The Wagon</i> (Johnston, 1996)	Swing low, sweet chariot <i>comin'</i> for to carry me home (song lyrics) Sees boys <i>dyin'</i> and <i>dyin'</i> and dead	Carolina
<i>The Hard-Times Jar</i> (Smothers, 2003)	That's why <i>she call it</i> the hard times jar, 'cause it's for hard times.	Florida Pennsylvania
<i>Once Upon a Farm</i> (Bradby, 2002)	Laughed <i>till</i> she cried	Undisclosed
<i>The Sunday Outing</i> (Pinkney, 1994)	<i>Youngun</i> run down to the corner <i>Ole</i> ; We packed enough food to hold you <i>till</i> you get down home.	Philadelphia
<i>Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom</i> (Weatherford, 2006)	Lord <i>don't let nobody</i> turn me 'round	Maryland
<i>Working Cotton</i> (Williams, 1992)	Jesmarie always <i>be thirsty</i> after we <i>eats</i> Sometimes they <i>be your</i> friend	Fresno, California
<i>Freedom's School</i> (Cline-Ransome, 2015)	Real freedom means ' <i>rithmetic</i> and writing. they could learn <i>somethin'</i>	Undisclosed, 1865
<i>Dance Y'all</i> (Stroud, 2001)	After supper we're <i>gonna</i> dance You <i>git</i>	Undisclosed Characters arrive by wagon

Note: The purpose of this table was the give the reader examples of language variety using spelling changes. This technique is called eye dialect (Rankin, 2022).

There were examples of language variations in many of the titles. In Table 5 are language variety examples from the literature. Table 5 displayed 25 book titles and sample excerpts from the various children's literature examples. Additionally, there was one other language present in *Friend on Freedom River* (Whelan, 2004) and a reference to an accent in the book *Grandpa Cacao* (Zunon, 2019). In one example, from *Grandpa Cacao* (Zunon, 2019) the grandfather arrives at the house, from the continent of Africa, and the granddaughter acknowledges that he

has an accent. “Happy birthday!’ he says to me with an accent that sounds like Daddy’s...in that voice I’ve heard on the phone” (p. 24). Another example of a language difference outside of Standard English was in *Friend on Freedom River* (Whelan, 2004) when the protagonist is singing a song in French to his mother. Whelan (2004) wrote in *Friend on Freedom River*:

Singing at the top of his voice, Louis danced with his mother around the table. Alouette, gentille alouette, Alouette, je te plumerai je te plumerai le tete et le tete Alouette. (p. 18)

From a YouTube video, I determined that the text roughly translates to “Lark, sweet lark, I will pluck your feathers off” (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_hFw_cWg9U). The words are the lyrics to a French nursery rhyme. Google translation did not render the same results.

Accents are a “identifiable style of pronunciation, often varying regionally or even socioeconomically” (Nordquist, para. 1, 2018). In the story, *Grandpa Cacao* (Zunon, 2019), the author does not use eye dialect or any other textual styles to indicate that the character has an accent. The only reference to an accent is when the character meets her grandfather and hears his voice for the first time. Nordquist (2018) wrote that a dialect is defined as “a verbal departure from standard language. Dialects are characteristic of a particular group of speakers and have their own charm as well” (para. 4, 2018). An accent differs from a dialect in that an accent is the way of pronouncing another language. Dialect includes both pronunciation and other elements such as “a variety of a language that contains distinctive variations in grammar, syntax, vocabulary and pronunciation” (Hasa, 2016). On the contrast, vernacular determines the language that belongs to specific groups of people (Nordquist, 2019). The difference between a dialect and a vernacular is that a dialect is a part of another language often a nonstandard component of the language, while a vernacular is a unique language attributed to a faction of

people. Authors often use eye dialect to illustrate language variety and to add authenticity to a character or person's speech.

I've always wanted to bring the books down closer and closer to the characters—to get myself, the narrator, out of it as much as I can. And one of the ways to do this is to use the language that the characters actually speak, to use the vernacular, and not ignoring the grammar, the formality of it, to bend it, to twist it, so you get a sense that you are hearing it, not reading it. That you are listening to the characters. (White, p. 8, 2001)

The most observed language variations in the literature are examples of language varieties from both Southern regions and the farming industries. Additionally, the language examples seemed to combine elements of African American Vernacular English (AAVE), farmer language, and language variations that are regionally significant to the dialects found in the South. Some of the examples from the literature were similar to those found in McNair's (2015) study of Southern variations in farmer speech. McNair (2015) wrote:

Farmers were often forced to give up farming due to economic hardship and found jobs within the structure of mill villages that provided work, housing, and community. However, the mill system was so tightly controlled, in some cases even trading in “scrip” rather than money, and was actually an authoritarian hierarchy that harshly subverted goals of personal autonomy and independence. In this context, the linguistic ecology became an active site of competition and selection: phonological shibboleths of distinct communities in the South were renegotiated; nonstandard grammatical constructions were both abandoned and adopted; some older, declining features were revived. (p. 591)

McNair's (2015) study was set in an agricultural town in Georgia. Historically, the primary agricultural resource was cotton. Some of the communal language examples from McNair's

(2015) study were “y’all, fixin to, and gonna” (p. 603). An in-depth linguistical analysis of the language variety sampling is beyond the scope of this study, however, it is clear from the text evidence that the speakers used some of the same regional and farmer-related language varieties.

While authors use eye dialect, or literary dialect, to develop more realistic characters. There are times when eye dialect, when engineered incorrectly, can negatively impact the author’s purpose and the reader’s experience with the text. Walpole (1974) wrote:

Luckily, few readers attempt to judge the accuracy of the dialogue which they read, and no reader demands complete authenticity. In fact, readers have been so well conditioned to the conventions of dialogue that accurate conversational transcripts would dismay them. Nonetheless, even the most willingly receptive reader is jarred by dialogue which seems too unnatural, too stilted, or too inappropriate. (p. 191)

Many literary scholars would most likely disagree with Walpole’s (1974) statement that “no reader demands complete authenticity” when in fact, many authors who have used literary dialect have been highly scrutinized. Minnick (2007) wrote about the impression that the misinterpretation of literary dialect can have on an author’s reputation. For example, when Hurston utilized literary dialect in the novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) she received both admiration and objections (Anderson, 2005). Minnick (2007) wrote:

In Hurston’s case, the conflict is not only over the quality of her dialectal representations but also over her decision to represent dialect at all. African American dialect continued to be associated well into the twentieth century with the plantation tradition...black dialect had long been a staple of the minstrel tradition and therefore in Hurston’s time was still inextricably linked to negative, stereotypical portrayals of African Americans.

(xiv)

Literary scholars have since re-examined Hurston's work and have concluded that her use of literary dialect was not, in fact, stereotypical, but "an attempt to reclaim and destigmatize black vernacular" (Minnick, 2009, p. xiv). During Hurston's literary career many writers avoided using literary dialect with African American characters because they were afraid that their writings would be considered negative and stereotypical. Another heavily critiqued literary artifact is Joel Chandler Harris's (1881) *Uncle Remus: His Songs and Sayings* and his other folktales featuring the Uncle Remus character. Literary scholars studied the language used in Harris' works and were disappointed with the inaccuracies that were recorded as African American speech.

Pederson (1985) wrote:

Thus, the narrative syntax of the Uncle Remus stories is distantly removed from the observed patterns of American folk speech and bears little resemblance to the received forms of colloquial English spoken by any American social group... (p. 293). No field investigator of American English ever recorded and reported such a sentence from the conversation of a folk speaker, black or white. (p. 294)

An in-depth analysis of the authenticity of literary dialect is beyond the scope of this study, but examples of literary dialect were included to show how authors from this study utilized literary dialect with their African American characters.

In Table 6 there is a numerical summary of the data from Table 4 to include the quantity and percentages for each data category. The data in Table 6 was contrived from calculating the number of books that contained data for each category. The second column is the percentage of each data set compared to the total (n=65).

Table 6***Language in Publications and Format Percentages***

	#	%
Languages Published		
English	65	100
Korean	1	2
Chinese	2	3
French	1	2
Spanish	2	3
American Sign Language	1	2
Format		
Cassette Tape	2	3
C.D.	6	9
Audiobook	8	12
eBook	52	80
YouTube	43	66
Print	65	100
Braille	8	12
Large Print	1	2
DVD	4	6
Language Variety in Text	26	40

Note: This table contains a quantity and percentage for each data category presented in Table 5.

Table 6 showed that 40% of the books contained some examples of language variety using eye dialect and adding French-language text. The data also showed that digital access was available for most of the books as 66% of the books were accessible on YouTube and 80% of the books were accessible in an eBook format. Multiple accessibilities make it easier for teachers, students, and parents to read books about Black agriculturalists.

Format

In addition to print, the titles were available in various other formats. For example, eight titles were available in Braille. Braille provides access to readers with visual impairments through the use of a textile writing system. Additionally, one of the titles was available in a Large Print format. Large Print is an additional alternative, to the more traditional print size, that is used by readers with visual impairments.

Visual formats and adaptations to print were available on VHS, DVD, and YouTube.

Four titles were available as a VHS: *Two Old Potatoes and Me* (Coy, 2003), *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement* (Weatherford, 2015), *Sweet Clara and The Freedom Quilt* (Hopkinson, 1993), and *Picking Peas for a Penny* (Medearis, 1990).

Additionally, four titles were available as a DVD: *Granddaddy's Turn: A Journey to The Ballot Box* (Bandy & Stein, 2015), *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement* (Weatherford, 2015), *Two Old Potatoes and Me* (Coy, 2003), and *Picking Peas for a Penny* (Medearis, 1990). Forty-one (68%) of the titles were available on YouTube.

The variation in available formatting suggests that some books were more popular than others. There are many reasons for a text's popularity. Curriculum writers will at times use portions of children's books in their curriculum anthologies. For example, *Two Old Potatoes and Me* (Coy, 2003) and *A Weed is a Flower: The Life of George Washington Carver* (Brandenberg, 1965) were literature insertions in Cengage Learning's (2017) National Geographic *Reach for Reading* Common Core reading program anthology that was designed for their 3rd grade reading curriculum series. These literature insertions not only engage students in literature, but also increase the popularity of the literature which, as a result, shapes the publishing and social media marketing for such literature. In addition to popularity, the COVID-19 pandemic may have also been a contributing factor to the increase of accessible titles on YouTube. Much of the data for this study was collected during the COVID-19 pandemic, which was a time when many school districts were transitioning to an online or hybrid school model. Without a doubt, the global pandemic had an impact on the increase in digital literacy. An in-depth analysis of the impact of the global pandemic and the digital adaptations of children's literature is beyond the scope of this study.

Question 2: How do these books provide a counternarrative to the master narrative of Black life in farming?

Counternarrative Analysis

This section presents the analysis by providing a collection of tables and expositions of the findings. The focus of the analysis is how the selected picture books provide a counternarrative to the master narrative of Black life in farming. White (2018) introduced the master narrative with the following quote: “historians, novelists, filmmakers, and persons engaged in casual conversation often tell the story of the relationship between landless African American farmers and the soil as one of oppression and exploitation” (p. 3). The master narrative is the dominant narrative that resonates in the research and discourse about Black life in agriculture which often associates Black life in agriculture with oppression, slavery, and illiteracy (Daniel, 1990). The master narrative absolutely exists, but the findings also reveal examples of large-scale Black Family-Owned Farming communities that relish an appreciation for their agricultural history; images that seldom circulate in the discourse and media around Black life in agriculture. This part of the analysis was guided by the tenets of Critical Theory and White’s (2018) Collective Agency and Community Resilience (CACR) theoretical framework. White (2018) explained this framework as strategic community activities that organized focused resistance in agricultural spaces. The presence and examination of these activities help to provide a counternarrative to Black life in farming to balance the narrative of oppression that is most often associated with Black life in farming. The analysis was organized and coded into the following categories:

- oppression and resistance
- community
- political systems
- economic systems

- geographic location and agricultural space

Oppression and Resistance

There were several ways that oppression and resistance were portrayed in the children's literature. The three main ways that oppression manifested were through: literacy restrictions, exploitation of labor, and acts of violence. Resistance was present in the selected children's literature in the forms of education, civil disobedience, and agency.

Table 7 was designed to show the number of incidences contained in the children's literature for each of the oppression indicators. Table 7 also showed the major types of oppressive acts that were presented in the children's literature. These data were collected by repeat readings of the children's literature and then as oppression indicators surfaced evidence was recorded and organized.

Table 7

Indications of Oppression

Indications of Oppression	#	%
Literacy Restrictions	13	20
Illiteracy	3	5
Segregated Schools	10	15
Labor Exploitation	35	54
Slavery	22	34
Sharecropping	11	17
Migrant Workers	2	3
Acts of Violence	22	32
Voting Rights Denial	3	5
Physical Abuse	18	28
Other Collective Oppression	4	6
Food Desert	1	2
Other Prejudice	3	5

Note: This table contains the indicators of oppression, the number of times the evidence surfaced, and the approximate percentage.

Table 7 revealed that 54% of the books contained an example of labor exploitation in one of three categories: slavery, sharecropping, and migrant work. Table 7 also revealed that 32% of the books also contained evidence to indicate acts of violence in the form of physical abuse and the denial of voting rights. The third largest oppressor was in the way that literacy was restricted for African American children, families, and communities. Table 7 revealed that 20% of the books described examples of acts that enforced literacy restrictions.

Literacy restrictions. Limiting access to education was one of the main forms of oppression for African Americans that was most often linked to slavery. In fact, teaching a slave to read was illegal in many states. Additionally, many southern states enacted literacy laws that punished anyone caught teaching enslaved people to read or write. Rasmussen (2010) quoted one statute:

all in every person and persons whosoever who shall hereafter teach or cause any Slave or Slaves to be taught to write or show use or employ any Slave as a scribe in any manner of writing whatsoever hereafter talked to write every such person in persons show for every such offense forfeit the sume (sic) of 100 pounds (p. 125)

In the following stories, limited access to education was one of the methods of oppression; and, by default resistance was depicted through the character's determination at education by various means. *Virgie Goes to School with Us Boys* (Howard, 1999), *A Place Called Freedom* (Sanders, 1997), *George Washington Carver: An Innovative Life* (MacLeod, 2007), *George Washington Carver: Journey to Freedom* (Carey, 1999), *The Secret Garden of George Washington Carver* (Barretta, 2019), *A Weed is a Flower: The Life of George Washington Carver* (Brandenberg, 1965), *Calvin's Christmas Wish* (1993, Miles), *It Jes Happened* (2012, Tate), *Granddaddy's Turn: A Journey To the Ballet Box* (2015, Bandy &

Stein), *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement* (2015, Weatherford), *My Name is James Madison Hemings* (Winter, 2016), *The Hard-Times Jar* (2003, Smothers), and *Freedom's School* (2015, Cline-Ransome) were the stories that depicted literacy restrictions.

In *Virgie Goes to School with Us Boys* (Howard, 1999) it has only been two years since the characters were freed from slavery and one of their first acts as free people was to gain access to educational opportunities. As presented in the section on Gender and Education, female children had an added obstacle to educational opportunities as many debated the purpose of early educational initiatives for girls. A quote from the male relative provides such as example, since “girls don’t usually go to school with us boys” (p. 2). However, in this farming community the Quakers had established a school for both male and female students. Education is positioned as the demonstration of freedom. On one page the protagonist, Virgie, says that she is going to teach her parents everything that she has learned so that they can learn to be free as well. Howard (1999) wrote in *Virgie Goes to School with Us Boys* “When we go home on Friday...we’ll tell Mama and Papa all we’ve learned. That way might seem like they’ve been to school too. Learning to be free, Just like us” (p. 21). Freedom is often associated with access to educational activities such as attending school and learning to read. In *A Place Called Freedom* (Sanders, 1997), a Quaker family also helped the newly freed family establish their housing and farming community by providing them shelter and loaning them farming equipment. The protagonist’s mother is already literate in the beginning of the plot because while enslaved she was responsible for teaching the “master’s children” how to read and write. The mother, therefore, teaches her own children how to read while they are establishing their new community as freed people; and eventually becomes the town’s primary teacher for all the community’s citizens. Sanders (1995)

wrote in *A Place Called Freedom* “We all celebrated...by building a school where Mama could teach everyone young and old, to read and write and do sums. She made me want to learn everything there was to know” (p. 24). In the illustration, there is a depiction of African American learners with ages ranging from toddler to the elderly. These textual and illustrated examples, of the character’s immediate inclination towards developing a literate identity, are a demonstration of resistance to an oppressive system.

In *It Jes Happened* (Tate, 2012), the protagonist, Bill Traylor, is a sharecropper who was never taught to read or write. In fact, he is well past 80 years old when he first learned to write his own name. The protagonist, Bill Traylor, used scraps of cardboard and paper to illustrate his farming memories. Often, his illustration would be paired with oral histories and stories that Bill would recall from his years as a sharecropper. In the text, Tate (2012) wrote “Folks from all ages came to watch Bill work. One of his admirers taught Bill to write his name. Soon he was proudly signing his drawings” (p. 21). The readers of this narrative could form an interpretation that illiteracy was directly linked to agricultural spaces, especially if this were the only literature that depicted Black life in farming. When in many cases, educational systems were limited, poorly funded, and subordinate for African American sharecroppers in the South.

The author’s notes in *Calvin's Christmas Wish* (Miles, 1993) indicate that the story is about the author’s childhood farm life. Additionally, the author’s notes reveal that he was 39 years old when he first learned to read and write. He wrote “I went to school for a few years, but when I was older, my family needed me to work on the farm.” In *Calvin's Christmas Wish* (Miles, 1993), we know the family is poor because the family’s lack of money is mentioned throughout the story and additionally the family does not have electricity. However, it is unclear if the family is a sharecropping family or not. This text example demonstrates another

connection between illiteracy and Black life in farming. Often, farming families were forced to use their children as farm labor in order to earn enough money for basic needs. Additionally, educational resources were extremely limited in African American agricultural communities (Walters & Briggs, 1993).

In *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement* (Weatherford, 2015) and *Freedom's School* (Cline-Ransome, 2015), the protagonists' farm labor also required a reduced amount of schooling. In *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement* (Weatherford, 2015) Fannie Lou Hamer was only allowed to go to school four months of the year because the rest of the time she was needed in the fields picking cotton as a sharecropper. Fannie Lou Hamer used "newspaper scraps" of literature from the landowner's garbage to teach herself how to read. When Fannie Lou Hamer wanted to exercise her right to vote, she was asked to read and explain portions of the Mississippi constitution. She failed the assessment initially, but later passed it. Weatherford (2015) wrote "I had to give my name and workplace, and then read, copy, and explain parts of the Mississippi constitution. I didn't know nothing about the law. No wonder I flunked the test. Now at least I knew that voting was my right" (p. 14).

Similarly, in *Granddaddy's Turn: A Journey to the Ballet Box* (Bandy & Stein, 2015), the protagonist, a young African American male, and his grandfather walk to the polling place expecting to exercise their right to vote. Instead, an unjust literacy test implemented by a White male police officer was used to turn the grandfather away. In *Granddaddy's Turn: A Journey to the Ballet Box*, Brandy and Stein (2015) wrote:

But before we could even walk to the voting booth a deputy stopped us and asked my granddaddy "what are you doing Uncle?" where we lived, if the White folks didn't

know your name, they usually called you either Uncle or George - or Auntie if you were a lady. Can you read this, Uncle?" the deputy asked. My granddaddy just stared at the pages and shook his head. "No sir I can't," he replied. The deputy slammed the book shut, saying, "Well, Uncle, if you can't read this, then you can't vote." (p. 24)

Unlike Fannie Lou Hamer, the grandfather in *Granddaddy's Turn: A Journey to the Ballet Box* (Bandy & Stein, 2015) never voted in his lifetime. As the story continued, the grandson, however, takes a photograph of his grandfather with him to the voting booth and votes holding the photograph in his hands. The literature indicates that many African American sharecroppers, who most likely transitioned from slavery to sharecropping, were illiterate due to oppressive slave literacy laws. As a result of the literacy laws, segregated school systems, and prejudicial voting requirements, many African American sharecroppers and citizens, specifically those living in the South, were denied the right to vote.

Like the scraps of garbage Fannie Lou Hamer used to teach herself to read, the parents in *Freedom's School* (Cline-Ransome, 2015), also use the "scraps of learning" from the preacher to teach themselves how to read and write. In the illustrations, you can see the parents using a stick to write the letters ABC in the dirt. On this page, the author wrote:

Just like the livestock gobbled food scraps flung by the Master, Mama and Daddy had picked up scraps of learning at church. Preacher gave them pieces of words here and there. Every time Mama and Daddy got a piece, they'd give me and Paul some, too. But scraps of learning don't amount to much – they just made me hungry for more". (p. 3)

In another part of the story, the teacher is interrupted by a farmer asking that his much older sons attend school because "works been keeping them in the fields." The teacher allows it even though the classroom is filled with younger children.

The protagonist in *The Hard-Times Jar* (Smothers, 2003), also uses scraps as a literacy tool in the story. The protagonist, Emma Jean, is the daughter of a migrant farming family and throughout the narrative she writes her fictional stories on old scraps of brown paper bags that she called “grocery bag books”. The family is too poor to afford “store-bought” books and it is implied that the character does not attend school regularly. During the protagonist’s breaks, from picking apples with other migrant farm laborers, she writes fiction stories inspired by her farming experiences. Later in the story, her mother reduces her farming duties to allow her to attend school. While the protagonist loves to read, she is initially disappointed by the reduced agricultural duties, because it would mean less money for the family.

On the combined list there were a total of 18 biographies for George Washington Carver, five of those titles appeared on the list of 65 books during the selection process. In each of the biographies, *George Washington Carver: An Innovative Life* (MacLeod, 2007), *George Washington Carver: Journey to Freedom* (Carey, 1999), *The Secret Garden of George Washington Carver* (Barretta, 2019), *George Washington Carver* (Rau, 2014) and *A Weed is a Flower: The Life of George Washington Carver* (Brandenberg, 1965), Carver’s desire for formal education was portrayed in both the text and the illustrations. In *George Washington Carver: An Innovative Life*, the author described Carver as thirsty for educational access that was often denied to African American people. In an illustration in *A Weed is a Flower: The Life of George Washington Carver* (MacLeod, 2007), Carver is standing outside of a schoolhouse looking into an open window where the illustration depicts a White teacher and White children learning to read. He is holding a flower in his hand and staring into the classroom window. This was a very powerful illustration in the book because you could sense the strong desire George Washington Carver felt to attend school. The reader experiences an awareness of the exclusion that racism

and segregation had created. At age twelve, he left the farm and his family in order to attend school, because the nearest school only allowed White students. All the biographies described Carver's acceptance to Highland College that was later retracted due to his race. Despite the prejudicial acts and systemic racism, depicted in the literature, George Washington Carver, continued to excel academically. In fact, his academic perseverance moved him to acquire elementary, secondary, and university education, including a doctoral degree. He overcame many prejudices and became one of the first African American faculty members at Iowa State College. Later in 1896, he began teaching at Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute; where he taught African American students and farmers how to become more efficient agriculturalists.

Carey (1999) wrote in *George Washington Carver: Journey to Freedom*:

George taught his students by letting them discover things for themselves. He sent them out into the woods that surrounded the institute to search for plants and insects...He encouraged them to conduct their own experiments and... inspired them by teaching them to appreciate the miracles and beauty of nature. (p. 22)

He traveled outside of the classroom into the farming communities using a Jesup wagon and gave farming demonstrations across the South. One of the most important agricultural lessons, from the selected children's literature, was in how to grow a crop other than cotton. Cotton had depleted the soil's nutrients and had kept many African American farmers impoverished. Planting peanuts and other crops helped to replenish the soil's nutrients and gave the farmers a better crop and better return on their crop's production. On their website, Tuskegee University lists over 300 peanut-based patents that evolved from George Washington Carver's research at Tuskegee.

One of the most uniquely written biographies was written by Newberry Award winner Marilyn Nelson (2001) entitled *Carver: A Life in Poems*. This biography is listed in the combined booklist (Appendix D) but did not appear on the final booklist achieved from the random sample. I briefly discuss it in this section, because of several distinctive features. First, the biography was uniquely written as a collection of poems that represented different parts of his life. Another distinctive feature was that many of the poems were paired with a photograph to illustrate the significance of the biographical event. The photographs in this book were a collection of some of the more personal artifacts that belonged to George Washington Carver. For example, in one photograph was a pair of glasses and a glasses case sits adjacent to them. This photograph allows the reader to step into the life of George Washington Carver and to see what perhaps George Washington Carver saw when he first opened his eyes in the mornings. One example poem is a conversation between God and Susan Carver, George Washington Carver's stepmother:

Father, you have given us, instead of our own children, your and Mary's orphans, Jim and George. What would you have us make of them? What kind of freedom can we raise them to? They will always be strangers in this strange, hate-filled land. (p. 11)

George Washington Carver's stepmother was aware of the prevailing racism and racist ideologies and messages that society would unavoidably communicate to him.

Labor Exploitation. Labor exploitation was depicted in the literature by examples of slavery, sharecropping, and migrant farm work.

Slavery. In the stories with enslaved people, the agricultural work depicted in the illustrations and the text was very little. So, while the African American protagonists were placed in agricultural setting, such as on a farm or on a plantation, the character was chopping wood,

Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom (Weatherford, 2006), *The Wagon* (Johnston, 1996), *My Name Is James Madison Hemings* (Winter, 2016), or escaping from the plantation, *Friend on Freedom River* (Whelan, 2004), or being captured, *The Legend Of Freedom Hill* (Altman, 2000); and had very little, if any, contact with agricultural work.

In *The Legend of Freedom Hill* (Altman, 2000) and *Friend on Freedom River* (Whelan, 2004), the story is set outside of an agricultural setting and neither the text nor illustrations depicts the African American character(s) performing an agricultural role. In *The Legend of Freedom Hill*, the protagonist, a young African American girl, Rosabel, has freedom papers purchased by an abolitionist, but her mother is a runaway slave. The agriculturalist in this story is a Jewish mother, who makes the protagonist soup with vegetables from the garden. In *Friend on Freedom River* the enslaved people are running away from their master and meet a young White farmer boy, who is the protagonist. His father, who is away during the story, frequently helps slaves escape. The young boy, Louis, however, has been put in charge of the farm. Consequently, the father's additional duties, which included helping enslaved people escape to Canada by crossing the Detroit River, became his responsibility. These are the only two books in the study that does not explicitly depict an African American agriculturalist. The reader could interpret information to infer an agricultural role, but without any textual or illustrated evidence. A future study of African American agriculturalists would most likely exclude these two children's books.

In *When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom* (Weatherford, 2006), *My Name is James Madison Hemings* (Winter, 2016), and *The Wagon* (Johnston, 1996), the enslaved person is the story's protagonist, but is not depicted performing an agricultural role. However, in these stories the text or illustration provide an agricultural condition. In *When Harriet Tubman Led*

Her People to Freedom (Weatherford, 2006), there is a textual example of the agricultural duties that Harriet Tubman would be forced to perform as an enslaved person. Weatherford (2006) wrote, “Now he means to sell me south in chains to work cotton, rice, indigo, or sugarcane, never see my family again” (p. 1). That is the only agricultural connection between Harriet Tubman and the plot from the story. The illustrations show her using an ax to cut a log and then abandoning the ax to begin her journey North to freedom.

In *My Name is James Madison Hemings* (Winter, 2016) the enslaved protagonist, a biracial young male, is spared agricultural duties, that the other enslaved characters in the story must perform, but later is made to learn carpentry and woodworking skills. *My Name is James Madison Hemings* (Winter, 2016) showed an example of the education that was offered to his enslaved children that differed from his White children. Winter (2016) wrote:

And while our father assisted his grandchildren with their studies in English and Latin, giving them books, sharing his brilliance with them, my brothers and I were put to work. When each of us reached the age of twelve, we were sent to our uncle Johnny's workshop, assigned the task of helping him build chairs and tables and whatever other furniture our father wanted. (p. 17)

He is spared the agricultural duties because he is Thomas Jefferson's son. In one of the illustrations enslaved people are depicted hunching down in the fields working in the background while the protagonist looks out over them and thinks: “Unlike me, you will never be free”. His thinking references the promise that Thomas Jefferson made to his enslaved mother, that upon his death her children would be freed from slavery.

Benjamin Banneker (Martin, 2014) also referenced Thomas Jefferson's problematic and contradictory relationship with slavery in a letter that Benjamin Banneker wrote to Thomas

Jefferson in 1791. In one of the illustrations, Martin (2014) included a scanned depiction of the handwritten letter that Benjamin Banneker wrote to Thomas Jefferson. Interestingly enough, the letter was enclosed with one of Banneker's almanacs. In this letter, Benjamin Banneker reminded Thomas Jefferson of the political climate in which he had written the Declaration of Independence; during which time he and many White citizens felt the pain of oppression from Great Britain's governing of the colonies. Benjamin Banneker (1793) wrote:

This, Sir, was a time when you clearly saw into the injustice of a state of slavery, and in which you had just apprehensions of the horrors of its condition. It was now that your abhorrence thereof was so excited, that you publicly held forth this true and invaluable doctrine, which is worthy to be recorded and remembered in all succeeding ages : ``We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, and that among these are, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Here was a time, in which your tender feelings for yourselves had engaged you thus to declare, you were then impressed with proper ideas of the great violation of liberty, and the free possession of those blessings, to which you were entitled by nature; but, Sir, how pitiable is it to reflect, that although you were so fully convinced of the benevolence of the Father of Mankind, and of his equal and impartial distribution of these rights and privileges, which he hath conferred upon them, that you should at the same time counteract his mercies, in detaining by fraud and violence so numerous a part of my brethren, under groaning captivity and cruel oppression, that you should at the same time be found guilty of that most criminal act, which you professedly detested in others, with respect to yourselves. (p. 4)

At the time of this letter, Thomas Jefferson owned over 600 enslaved people and depended on them to fund his lavish lifestyle. In an article featuring opinions from his descendants of African descent, one descendent was quoted saying: “the contributions that the slave community did at this one plantation afforded Thomas Jefferson the leisure to be the genius that he became” (Stockman, 2018, para 5). The Library of Congress has a scanned copy of Thomas Jefferson’s (1791) response to Benjamin Banneker’s letter that expressed Thomas Jefferson’s concern with equality of Black people. In the letter, Thomas Jefferson wrote that he believed that Black men were as talented as all other men. In later letters, however, he wrote conflicting opinions (Library of Congress, mss.028).

Like *When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom* (Weatherford, 2006), and *My Name is James Madison Hemings* (Winter, 2016), the protagonist in *The Wagon* (Johnston, 1996), a young African American enslaved male, is not depicted performing agricultural duties, but helps his father with woodworking tasks instead. In the opening illustration in *The Wagon* (Johnston, 1996), there is a field of cotton in the background and in the next illustration the protagonist is depicted using an ax to cut down a tree. The protagonist’s father is a wagon maker on the plantation. In several illustrations that follow, the protagonist is again holding an ax. In one illustration, there is silhouette of Abraham Lincoln holding an ax behind the protagonist that mimics the shadow of the young boy. In the text, the message is that chopping wood helps Abraham Lincoln persevere through difficult times. There is a connection made in the reader's mind between Abraham Lincoln and the enslaved young boy. The image suggests that the two people, Abraham Lincoln and the enslaved boy, are alike in that they are both struggling for the sake of freedom. Neither the protagonist nor the father is named in the text.

The dynamics in which the character transitions from an enslaved person to a free person is different in each of the stories. The enslaved person either freed themselves, were freed by the slave master, or war served to change the law, and subsequently slavery ended. By either account, the protagonist either immediately left the farming community and migrated North or stayed and worked within the parameters of a sharecropping system. The one exception to this pattern was found in *A Place Called Freedom* (Sanders, 1997) when the newly freed characters migrated North, but maintained their agricultural roles as freed people. The next sections describe how the enslaved person or people transition from slavery to freedom and the way that agriculture is positioned in the character's new space.

In *My Name Is James Madison Hemings* (Winter, 2016) the enslaved persons were freed by their master, Thomas Jefferson, without consequence. Thomas Jefferson dies, and the protagonist and his family are seen simply walking away in the daylight in a tranquil manner. And while Thomas Jefferson did not free James Madison Hemings' mother, Sally Hemings, the text revealed that she left the plantation with her newly freed children and never returned. This is the only story that depicted an unbothered, daytime illustration of the transition from enslaved to freedom. The daylight is not the only difference between this family's transition from slavery to freedom, but also different is the level of assistance the family requires. In the other examples, the characters received help to escape from either other farmers or from their plantation's master. In *My Name Is James Madison Hemings* (Winter, 2016), however, the people transitioning to freedom are depicted exercising their free will seemingly without risk to themselves or others.

In *Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom* (Weatherford, 2006), *The Legend of Freedom Hill* (Altman, 2000), and *Friend on Freedom River* (Whelan, 2004) the enslaved free themselves by running away. The enslaved are depicted leaving the agricultural

setting in the dark of the night as in *Friend on Freedom River* (Whelan, 2004) and *Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom* (Weatherford, 2006), or they are camouflaging themselves among travelers heading North to find gold as in *The Legend of Freedom Hill* (Altman, 2000). In each of these stories, the protagonist does not perform an agricultural role in any part of the story before or after slavery. In *When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom* (Weatherford, 2006) and *Friend on Freedom River* (Whelan, 2004), the main characters escape slavery and head to Canada. In *The Legend of Freedom Hill* (Altman, 2000), the protagonist and her enslaved mother run away to California. These depictions contrast with the master narrative regarding Black life in agriculture that associates slavery and agriculture. The literature in these examples remove the agricultural purpose from the enslaved person, positioning the agricultural spaces separately from agricultural work. Additionally, agriculture does not surface in the character's space as a freed person either which could erroneously suggest a severing of agricultural connection from the character with the transition from slavery to freedom.

In the end of *The Wagon* (Johnston, 1996) the laws regarding slavery change, and the protagonist goes to sleep as a slave, and then wakes up as a free person. Johnston (1996) wrote, "Then everything changed. The President wrote some words one day. We had gone to bed slaves. But we woke up free" (p. 21). After an illustration that depicts the characters celebrating and praying, the family is seen leaving the agricultural space on a wagon. The wagon was built by the protagonist's dad but given to him along with two mules by the slave master. The slave master is described by the characters as "sharp-edged, but not mean". They then leave the farm, that is located in one of the Carolinas, and travel to an undisclosed location. The reader

understands that they are migrating North, because they plan to stop in Washington, D.C. in order to attend Abraham Lincoln's funeral.

In *A Place Called Freedom* (Sanders, 1997), the story takes place on a plantation in 1832 and the slave master has set the protagonist and his family free at the start of the story. Although, they have been set free, the protagonist and his family still leave while it is dark because the father explains that it is safer to travel that way. The protagonist and his family leave the plantation in the South and immediately head North to a new setting in Indiana. As in the other stories that depict enslaved people, the characters leave the plantation, but unlike the other stories, this family continues in their agricultural functions and eventually they develop an entire agricultural community. The protagonist even considers becoming either a farmer or a teacher when he grows up because the character has developed a positive relationship with both agriculture and literacy. Sanders (1995) captured this in the following text:

For a long while, I couldn't decide whether I wanted to grow up and become a farmer like Papa or a teacher like Mama. 'I don't see why a teacher can't farm,' Mama said. 'I don't see why a farmer can't teach,' said Papa. They were right, you know, because I raised the beans and potatoes for supper, and I wrote these words with my own hand. (p. 27)

Sharecropping. Several of the stories depict Black life in agriculture as sharecropping. The Landlord Tenant Act of 1868 established in North Carolina, and in similar manners in other Southern states, created an imbalance of power between the landlord and the farmer. Norton (2020) wrote:

The laws entitled property owners to set the worth of a crop at settling time and did not obligate landlords to put contracts in writing or require tenants to have access to ledgers or records. Beyond that, poor farmers without money to buy the fertilizer, tools, animals,

and machinery necessary to farm had to borrow from landowners or merchants on credit, often at exorbitant interest rates... An 1887 report of the state's Bureau of Labor Statistics stated that the crop lien system had proven "a worse curse to North Carolina than droughts, floods, cyclones, storms, rust, caterpillars, and every other evil that attends the farmer". (p. 22)

This law allowed landlords to retain power economically through the exploitation of farm workers. In the following literature examples, *Overground Railroad* (Cline-Ransome, 2020) and *Daddy Played The Blues* (Garland, 2017), the sharecropping system affected the families so adversely that at the start of the story they are leaving their homes at sunrise to avoid potential conflict with the landowner.

In *Overground Railroad* (Cline-Ransome, 2020) the protagonists are leaving the South after having worked as sharecroppers. From the text and illustrations, we learn that the family leaves both their farming community and their other extended family members in the middle of the night before their land lease has expired. In one illustration is a depiction of a line of family members some of them with arms crossed and others with hands holding a travel bag. The faces of the characters seem to hold both contentment and discontentment at the same time. All of their eyes are looking forward towards the reader as if to suggest that hope lies ahead of them. Often sharecroppers were forced to sign unjust contracts with landowner, so sharecroppers would leave in the middle of the night to avoid harassment and other harmful consequences. "No more picking, Daddy said mad. No more working someone else's land", Mama said proud. We're gonna make our way up North, they both said" (p. 10). They leave the farm and head to New York, which in the text is compared to the Promised Land (p. 22).

In *Daddy Played the Blues* (Garland, 2017), the story is set on a farm in Mississippi where the protagonist, who belongs to a sharecropping family, is sadly watching as her family is packing and preparing to leave the farm. The text reveals that they are renting a farm, which was a systemic way to keep sharecroppers in a cycle of debt. Garland (2017) wrote in *Daddy Played the Blues*, “Between the boil weevils, the floods, and the landlord, there was no way a family could scratch a living anymore” (p. 2). They leave the farm and head to Chicago where they have heard of better employment opportunities. As they journey North, the characters sing Southern songs while glancing out at the landscape. The illustrations depict the vastness of the land and the people who are seemingly oblivious to the migrating family. The illustrated depiction of migration in *Daddy Played the Blues* (Garland, 2017) is hugely different from *Overground Railroad* (Cline-Ransome, 2020). In *Overground Railroad* (Cline-Ransome, 2020) the illustrators show lines of African American people loading train cars and a haste is felt from these depictions. In *Daddy Played the Blues* (Garland, 2017), the roads, bridges, and crossings are empty of other travelers.

The *Chicago Defender* was one of the most widely read newspapers in the South during this time. In fact, African Americans would share copies of the newspapers which would add to the newspaper’s readership. “It is estimated that at its height each paper sold was read by four to five African Americans, putting its readership at over 500,000 people each week” (Graham, 2019, para. 6). Migration was not just a geographic movement, but a political movement designed to hurt the Southern economy as a responsive action to bring about change. The *Chicago Defender* was instrumental in describing the movement as such. Michaeli (2016) wrote:

On the letters page, readers praised *The Defender*’s role in the exodus. “We have one or two little papers here but they dare not say what you say,” read a typical letter from

Atlanta. “They are trying to say everything they can to change the Race man’s mind so he will not leave Georgia, but they are leaving Atlanta every day, and I am proud to see it, for I am expecting to do the same thing in short”. (para. 13)

Not only had the *Chicago Defender* been instrumental in escalating the migration, but it also impacted the news coverage that Southern newspapers were reporting. Michaeli (2016) wrote that Southern newspapers that had previously celebrated the Jim Crow south and lynchings started changing their news coverage to explore topics that would appease Black readers.

Michaeli (2016) wrote:

A *Defender* columnist, whose byline was “The Scrutinizer,” quoted an editorial from *The Telegraph* out of Macon, Georgia, that described farmers who awoke to find “every male negro over 21 on his place gone—to Cleveland, to Pittsburgh, to Chicago, to Indianapolis. Better jobs, better treatment, higher pay.” Labor agents, *The Telegraph* editorial asserted, were “stealing” blacks from the South; the paper warned that the migrants would freeze to death in the North. Forced, however, to admit that the Southern economy needed cheap African American labor, the newspaper demanded that state authorities use every method at their disposal to keep blacks from leaving. “We must have the Negro in the South,” the editorial read. “He has been with us so long that our whole industrial, commercial and agricultural structure has been built on a black foundation. It is the only labor we have—if we lose it, we go bankrupt”. (para. 15)

Freedom’s School (Cline-Ransome, 2015) was placed in the sharecropping section firstly because of the characters proximity to enslavement and secondly because of how the protagonist referred to harvesting of the crop; however, the text does not explicitly name them sharecroppers. The text reads “We went to sleep slaves and woke up free”. Then there was a part of the text

where the parents describe “bein’ free means you have to work harder than ever before” (p. 2). Additionally, the protagonist says, “my mama and daddy’ll have to work their crop alone” (p. 5). Also, sharecroppers were usually very poor and had very little food. Zipf (2006) described sharecropping as a repressive system that left many African Americans in “horrific poverty”. The poverty was evident in *Freedom’s School* (Cline-Ransome, 2015) when the farmers had very little food to eat, a characteristic of sharecropping presented in the literature that is noticeably different in the literature examples where the agriculturalist has control over the planting decisions. The protagonist indicated the family’s limited food supply with the following text, “I mixed the meal for cornbread and made a little bit of the greens with the last piece of salt pork” (p. 13). The next three stories, also sharecropping stories, share a similar description of their limited food supply.

In *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer* (Weatherford, 2015), the protagonist is also starving. In fact, in one part of the text, Fannie Lou Hamer believes that starvation is associated with being Black. Weatherford (2015) writes, “One day I asked, [w]hy wasn’t I White, so I could have some food” (p. 5). She started working in the fields with her family at the age of six with the rest of her other twenty siblings. The text revealed that the landowner paid Fannie Lou Hamer’s mother \$50 for giving birth to another field hand. Hamer revealed that although they were gathering fifteen tons of cotton each harvest season, it was still not enough of a profit to “pay back the money we borrowed from the owner for seed, food, clothing, and supplies” (p. 3). In the story, Hamer explained that sharecropping was just a “gentler” form of slavery. So, similar to the other literature examples, the sharecroppers are exploited and starving.

Food shortage is also narrated in *It Jes Happened* (Tate, 2012). The protagonist, Bill Traylor a sharecropper in Alabama, references the sparsity of food. In *It Jes Happened*, Tate (2012) wrote:

Money was scarce. ‘You could have that building over there full of money,’ Bill once said, ‘but you couldn’t eat it.’ So everyone – even the littlest child – worked on the farm to grow the food they needed to fill their empty bellies. (p. 8)

In this story, Bill Traylor and his family transition from slavery to sharecropping. Traylor worked on the land as a sharecropper until the age of 81, when he then moved to Montgomery, Alabama without any money and without the ability to write his own name.

John Lewis, an original Freedom Rider, Civil Rights and Human activist, and esteemed Congressman began his life in a sharecropping family. In *John Lewis in the Lead* (Haskins & Benson, 2006), we learn about John Lewis’ early experiences as a sharecropper. He was five years old when he was tasked to care for 60 farm animals on the farm where he and his family lived and worked in Troy, Alabama. “They worked on a White man’s land in return for a place to live and a share of the crops they grew” (p. 6). He began his life as a visionary and activist around the age of sixteen, when he requested a library card at the county library, knowing that African Americans were not allowed to have library cards. After the librarian declined, stating the library was for “Whites only” he wrote a letter of protest. John Lewis (1999) wrote in *Walking with the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement*:

I didn’t hate the librarian at the Pike County Library who turned me away – very politely – when I walked up to her desk...and said I would like to apply for a library card so I could check out a book. I knew I would be refused. But that was the first formal protest action of my life. I went home and wrote a petition stating that the library must be opened

to black people – public tax-paying black people... We got no response, and we did nothing further. But it was a start. It was an act, and that meant something, at least to me.

(p. 52)

Garret Morgan was impacted by the experiences he lived through in his youth growing up in a sharecropping family in Claysville, Kentucky. DiCicco (2019) chronicled this part of his life in *The Unstoppable Garret Morgan*. DiCicco (2019) wrote “[a]s sharecroppers, the Morgans worked on land owned by a different family in exchange for a share of the crop at harvest time. After the cost of their housing, farm tools, and seed was subtracted from their share, they often found themselves in debt” (p. 3). Additionally, fires were very common during this time and had an adverse effect on sharecroppers because they often lived in shacks that were made from materials that would easily burn. These early experiences with farm fires later inspired Garret Morgan’s invention of the gas mask. Asante (2010) wrote:

As fate would have it, Morgan was able to demonstrate the device on July 25, 1916, when he wore it as he, along with others, rescued twenty-four trapped workers from a smoke-filled tunnel beneath Lake Erie... He was later given a contract from the U.S. Navy to make masks. His mask was used in World War 1 and by fire departments throughout the country. Yet because of racism, some people cancelled their orders for his gas mask when they discovered that he was an African American inventor. (p. 230)

Additionally, Asante (2010) wrote that Garret Morgan “was awarded a gold medal for his heroism by the grateful city of Cleveland” (p. 230). DiCicco (2019) captured it differently in *The Unstoppable Garret Morgan*:

The next day, the story of the rescued men was front-page news. But Garrett and his brother were not given credit for their bravery. Only the White volunteers were named

and later awarded the Carnegie Medal of Honor. Many people had heard of Garrett's heroic actions and grew angry that he was excluded. (p. 27)

The citizens of Cleveland banded together and wrote letters to the Carnegie Foundation, but when these efforts did not work, Cleveland's Citizen's Committee "held a ceremony and presented him with a solid gold, diamond studded medal" (p. 27). Garret Morgan's patented gas mask invention saved many lives.

MacLeod's (2007) *George Washington Carver: An Innovative Life* also wrote about the afflictions of sharecropping. Although George Washington Carver was not a sharecropper, he saw the effects that sharecropping imposed on the progress of Black agriculture in the South.

George felt that farmers in the south were still slaves to cotton. Cotton sucks more nutrients of the soil than most plants, so cotton crops became poorer each year. In addition, most Blacks rented their farms from White owners. The farmers had to pay the owners a share of their crop. That left the farmers little money, so they borrowed to pay expenses. This trapped the African American farmers in a cycle of poverty. (p. 20)

White (2018) wrote that George Washington Carver was committed to not only helping African Americans become better farmers, but he also wanted sharecroppers to earn enough money to purchase their own land. He was purposed "to provide the intellectual means by which sharecroppers or tenant farmers could make enough profit to purchase their land, feed their families, and achieve economic autonomy using agriculture as a strategy of self-sufficiency and sustainability" (p. 37).

In *Ruby Bridges* (Donaldson, 2009), Ruby's parents work on her grandparents' farm as sharecroppers. Their sharecropping experience is described in the text as the following, "Her grandparents were farmers called sharecroppers. This meant they didn't own their land. They

gave the landowner a share of their crops as rent...The work was hard” (p. 6). Ruby’s parents left the Mississippi farm and moved to New Orleans in order to earn higher wages. During this time, the schools were starting to slowly integrate. After passing a challenging kindergarten test, chosen by the school board and given to many African American kindergarten students, Ruby Bridges was chosen to attend William Frantz Public School. Many White families removed their children from the school, and the teacher that would have been Ruby’s first grade teacher, left the school. Additionally, Ruby’s dad lost his new job, and her grandparents were evicted from their land. Naugle (2020) wrote:

The small act of revolution her presence represented had real costs for her family, too. Her father, who won a Purple Heart in Korea, was fired from his job. Her grandparents, all sharecroppers, were turned off their land. What sustained her, Bridges says, was her faith—and the teacher she had all to herself, Barbara Henry, a White woman from Boston who she’s often said was her best friend. (p. 77)

This section described the ways that sharecropping was depicted in the children’s literature samples. In the next section are illustrations of how Black migrant farmers were portrayed.

Migrant Farmers. There were two stories that depicted the agricultural roles of the Black migrant farmer: *The Hard-times Jar* (Smother, 2003) and *Working Cotton* (Williams, 1992). The characters in these stories self-identified as migrant farmers. The findings of a National Agricultural Workers Survey (2016) found that over 80% of migrant or season farm workers are Latinx or Hispanic identifying and as little as 3% identify as Black or African American (Bloss et al., 2021). Additionally, Bloss et al. (2021) stated that the average grade level of educational attainment among the migrant workers of today was 8th grade (p. 2). The Health Resources and Service Administration defines migrant or seasonal farmworkers as temporary or seasonal

agricultural workers (Bloss et al., 2021, p. 3). Additionally, migrant workers frequently relocated in order to harvest. Over time, many farmers have shifted to machine harvesting systems, but produce is most often harvested by hand and requires human labor (Moriarty, 2021) or millions of dollars of unharvested food would be wasted each year.

In *The Hard-times Jar* (Smother, 2003) the entire family travels with the crops and is responsible for working in an apple orchard in order to harvest the apples. In the story, the protagonist, an African American girl, Emma, and her family of four, live in a one-room house and pick apples from an apple orchard in Philadelphia. In *Working Cotton* (Williams, 1992), the protagonist, an African American girl, named Shelan, and her family pick cotton in a field in Fresno, California. In both stories, the workday began before dawn and in *Working Cotton* (Williams, 1992) it ended well after dusk. One difference I notice between the sharecropping and migrant farmer stories is that there seems to be more access to food. In all of the sharecropping stories, hunger seemed to be a common thread. However, in *The Hard-times Jar* (Smother, 2003) the family has breakfast, depicted in the illustrations as a green soup, and cornbread. While harvesting, Emma and her little brother eat some of the apples that have fallen on the ground. Smother (2003) captured this example in the following quote:

‘Apple picking time,’ she said, turning to Emma. Emma had already picked herself one. It tasted of morning, cool and crisp. Emma licked the sweetness dripping down her chin. Robert Earl gathered red fruit off the ground. “Some of these all gushy,” he said with a mouthful of apple. (p. 11)

In *Working Cotton* (Williams, 1992) the family is not depicted eating breakfast, but at lunchtime there is a full pot of greens depicted in the illustration (p. 15). The text tells us that there is also cornbread and occasionally there is meat. In *The Hard-times Jar* (Smother, 2003)

the protagonist asks if they are having red beans and rice for lunch and the mother confirms. Both of the families eat on the ground in the field during their lunchbreaks. There is not a textual or illustrated depiction of food insecurity.

Limited access to education is also present in both of these stories. The author's notes in *Working Cotton* (Williams, 1992) addressed this:

Our shame as a nation is not that so many children worked in the fields but that so few of them have other options, that the life chances of too many are defined by the cycle of the seasons. In environments characterized by minimums - minimum wages, minimum shelters, minimum food and education - individual character, the love of family can only do so much; the rest is up to the country. (Author's notes)

As the story begins, the illustrations show two school buses taking migrant families and their children to the cotton fields. This image immediately causes the reader to notice that the school buses are not taking children to school as they are purposed to for the early mornings. Similarly, in *The Hard-times Jar* (Smother, 2003), Emma is eight years old and has not been in school but has been harvesting apples instead. Additionally, Emma objects to her mother's decision to enroll her in school because she wants to continue helping the family with harvesting in order to save enough money to purchase a store-bought book. Emma's mother says, "tomorrow you won't be picking apples. I won't? Emma's eyes filled with tears. How could she add money to the hard-times jar? How could she ever earn enough money for extras if she didn't go to the orchard? I have to, Emma cried" (p. 15). Shelan also expresses interest in harvesting more crops in *Working Cotton* (Williams, 1992) she notices that other people in her family are picking more cotton than she is. Shelan imagines that if she were older, she could pick a hundred pounds of

cotton a day (p. 23). Both of these examples, illustrate the child's desire to harvest in order to increase the family's income.

Acts of Violence. Violence was also present in the children's literature. Acts of violence were depicted in the children's literature through the kidnapping of children, the murder of farm animals, the destruction of property, and assault. In some of the books, children were subjected to acts of violence and in some literature examples, the violence took place in agricultural settings.

George Washington Carver had a challenging upbringing. He was born a slave on a plantation that was owned by Moses and Susan Carver around 1861. Their farm was raided many times during the Civil War and during one such raid he and his mother were kidnapped. Moreover, when George Washington Carver was returned, his mother was not returned and in fact never recovered. George Washington Carver worked many jobs while pursuing his education. Some of his jobs included work at a hotel, as a cook, and a time as a grocery store clerk. Additionally, he secured bank loans and opened two laundry establishments. Around the age of 19, while living in Fort Scott, Kansas, he witnessed a savage lynching which left a traumatic impact on him. In fact, at the age of 70 he wrote: "As young as I was the horror haunted me and does even now" (Podesta, 1993, p. 34). *George Washington Carver: An Innovative Life* (MacLeod, 2007) is the only one of the five books to illustrate this traumatic moment in George Washington Carver's history. In the text MacLeod (2007) wrote, "Even worse, on March 26, 1876, George saw a crowd drag an African American prisoner out of jail and hang him. The hatred and racial prejudice George saw shocked him, and he ran away from Fort Scott" (p. 10).

Tate (2012) in *It Jes' Happened* also wrote about farm raids that resulted in many farm burnings during the Civil War era. Tate (2012) wrote:

Even though the Civil War was over, Northern soldiers continued to burn many southern farms, villages, and towns. Young Bill and his family watched in horror as the Taylors' farm, and animals were destroyed. (p. 8)

Violence towards farm animals was also present in *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement* (Weatherford, 2015). Weatherford (2015) wrote about Fannie Hamer's experience with farm violence when her parents attempted to elevate their agricultural status by purchasing farm animals and farm equipment of their own. Weatherford (2015) described the incident with the following text:

Once, my father managed to buy a wagon, plow, three mules- Ella, Bird, and Henry – and two cows, Mullen and Della. But a White neighbor poisoned the livestock. Just couldn't stand to see Black people getting ahead. That knocked us right back down to doggone, dirt poor doing without. *My parents never did get a chance to get up again.* I sure did miss Della's milk. (p. 6)

Violence for Fannie Lou Hamer, however, did not stop at the farm animals. It continued into her adulthood when she started her activism work in the South by registering African Americans voters. After leaving a recently desegregated Whites-only restaurant near Winona, Mississippi, Fannie Lou Hamer was incarcerated and suffered a vicious beating that left her permanently injured. Weatherford (2015) described the beating and wrote that one of the jailers yelled profanities at Fannie Lou Hamer during one of the many beatings that took place during this act and shouted, "we're going to make you wish you were dead" (p. 21). What the text excluded was the potential sexual assault that also took place. Jenkins (2021) wrote:

A reporter for a Black newspaper, the Atlanta Daily World, met with them too. It was during this interview that Hamer first indicated the beating included sexual assault. ‘One of the policemen pulled up my dress and they were trying to feel under my clothes’.

(p.iii)

John Lewis in *John Lewis in the Lead* (Haskins & Benson, 2006) also experienced numerous occasions of physical assault in his early experiences with segregation and the voting rights laws in the South. Haskins and Benson (2006) wrote “John had just begun to deliver a statement to the reporters when suddenly hundreds of White people came running from behind buildings and around corners. Waving baseball bats, boards, tire irons, hoes, and rakes, they screamed out insults”. John Lewis was injured in this attack and was rushed to the hospital, but after his release he returned to the fight for voting rights. Both Fannie Lou Hamer and John Lewis experience the murder of a close ally. The illustrations on pages 16-17 in *John Lewis in the Lead* (Haskins & Benson, 2006) depict John Lewis and others carrying the casket of Jimmie Lee Jackson, an activist who was murdered trying to protect his mother, while she was registering to vote. Fannie Lou Hamer’s biography also references the murder of fellow activists with the following quote:

I knew Michael Schwerner and James Chaney real well. They were murdered along with Andrew Goodman for nosing into church firebombings. If I had known that those young men would wind up dead, I would have told them to stay home. I cried like I lost my own sons. (p. 24)

Children also experienced violence in the children’s literature. In *The Wagon* (Johnston, 1996), the young protagonist is surrounded by his relatives after he received a beating from his White slave master. “I got striped good for that. My grandma bathed my raw back” (p. 20). The

older characters are depicted with frustration lines in their faces, and as they are holding the young boy, the older relatives are making eye contact and each face holds a look of contention for the situation. On this page is another comparison made between the boy's pain and the pain that Abraham Lincoln and the country were experiencing during the Civil War. Johnston (1996) portrayed this moment with the following dialogue, "yours is not the only troubled soul," she said, Mr. Lincoln is sometimes overcome with gloom. Sees the Country ripped to rags, as if two furious folks was tugging at a beautiful quilt" (p. 20).

Ruby Bridges was also subjected to violence in the form of verbal insults as she was escorted into her elementary school to attend first grade. According to Donaldson (2009), White parents shouted profanities to Ruby Bridges every morning. "The marshals drove them to William Frantz. White people crowded outside. They shouted mean words at Lucille and Ruby (p. 20). Ruby Bridges was encouraged by her mother "to pray for the White people who shouted at her. Ruby did this every day" (p. 26). The words "Ruby did this every day" was a testament to the violence that Ruby Bridges experienced daily. On the pages with the text are photographs from the actual violence incidents. One photograph depicts Ruby walking out of the school with marshals on both sides of her, and one marshal is positioned in front (p. 20). She is positioned walking in between the two marshals, and behind the third marshal. The photograph is positioned at a downward angle pointing up, which gives the reader a perspective of the height of subjects in the photograph. Ruby looks very small compared to the marshals' heights. These photographs provide the reader with more context into the seriousness of the violence that was surrounding her.

The last incidents of violence were found in *Freedom's School* (Cline-Ransome, 2015). These incidents were unique in that they were directed to children from children. In the other

depictions of violence, adults were the orchestrators of the actions. However, when the protagonists are sent to school away from the farm, the characters encounter a group of five White children as they are walking to school. The White children were positioned in the illustration to block the path, so that the characters were forced to walk towards them. “Where ya’ll in a hurry to?” I heard behind me as we passed a group of boys. I could feel the hate in their voices” (p. 7). As they were passing the boys, rocks were thrown at the characters. One rock hit the character in the leg and another rock hit the other character in the back. Towards the middle of the book, the African American teacher sends the main characters home because there was some undisclosed safety concern. In the background, there is a White man on a horse lurking behind the trees. Several pages pass and the main characters are in school with a classroom full of other Black children when “there is a pounding at the door”. The characters stop working and stare at the door. In the illustrations four children are facing the reader with wide eyes that are fearful that the pounding at the door will be “some of those White folks” (p. 19). The last violence in the book is when the school is burned down. The teacher is leaning over with her hands covering her face outside in the front of the school screaming “Why?, Why?, Why?” as African American community members are depicted carrying buckets of water. In the background behind the trees is the same mysterious White man on a horse overlooking the chaotic scene.

Other Examples of Oppression. In addition to the oppressive demonstrations by way of literacy restrictions, labor exploitation, and acts of violence, oppression was also presented in the children’s literature by way of prejudice, food deserts, and poverty.

In *Joe Louis, My Champion* (Miller, 2004) the protagonist, Sammy, an African American boy admires Joe Louis. He lives on a farm with his family and is anticipating the upcoming

boxing match that Joe Louis has planned to fight. In the story, the owner of the town's store, who is also African American, says that Joe Louis not only had to fight in the boxing ring, but he also had to fight prejudice. The store owner explained that "Joe's shown the world a colored person is as good as anyone. He can be the best at anything he wants to be" (p. 7).

Current day Black people also engage in efforts to farm in urban and rural areas. The existence of food deserts has spurred interest in these food initiatives. For example, *Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table* (Martin, 2019) is a biography about Farmer Will Allen, a retired professional basketball player. In the story, he realizes that his community was located in a food desert. As a result, he decided to purchase abandoned greenhouses to help the community gain access to healthy food options. "He'd seen that fresh vegetables were as scarce in the city as trout in the desert. Will believed everyone, everywhere, had a right to good food" (Martin, 2019, p. 7). On the next page, he imagined how children would eat fresh fruits and vegetables for the first time because of his agricultural investments. "He could see kids who'd never eaten a ripe tomato, never crunched a raw green bean, sitting at his table, eating his vegetables. Will Allen bought that city lot" (Martin, 2019, p. 8). Through his efforts, children became community neighborhood farmers and had access to fruits and vegetables.

In *Tailypo: A Newfangled Tall Tale* (Medearis, 1999), the protagonist, an African American boy, named Kenny Ray, and his family are very poor, and have very little food. In fact, one of the noticeable differences in the sharecropping literature examples is that the sharecropper families are starving, but this story is not a sharecropping story. This family is not described as a sharecropping family, only that the family is poor and that they are harvesting cotton from dusk to dawn. In fact, the family is so hungry that the tail of a creature is sold in order for the family to purchase food. So, while this story shares characteristics of other

sharecropping stories, such as the cotton crop and the hunger, this is a depiction of a poor Family-Owned farming family living in Texas. In *Tailyppo: A Newfangled Tall Tale* (Medearis, 1999), for example, the protagonist was tasked with preparing breakfast, lunch, and dinner while his parents worked in the fields. Each meal consisted of greens and beans; however, we learn that the family had in fact run out of beans and only had a small quantity of greens remaining. “There are just enough greens for dinner tonight and breakfast in the morning. ‘We’re out of beans.’ ‘We’ll be all right,’ Daddy said as they left for the fields. ‘Something good will happen” (p. 4). Moreover, the illustrations and text display that while this conversation takes place after dinnertime, the mother and father are preparing to return to the field in order to work under the light of the moon.

White (2018) wrote about the power of poverty in African American agricultural communities in the south, like in the book *Tailyppo: A Newfangled Tall Tale* (Medearis, 1999), which took place in the deep South of Texas. Often, extreme poverty shaped political landscapes that would benefit unjust lawmakers that sought to disenfranchise Black voters. “If a man is able to feed himself, he votes the way he wants to. Not only is this true, but he does anything else he wants to” (White, 2018, p. 88 quoting William Harrison). People like Fannie Lou Hamer and John Lewis, and many others, worked to break down oppressive systems that kept African American families and their children starving. The cotton system, however, was without fail one of the hardest oppressive systems to break out of. White (2018) wrote:

Nevertheless, in the context of the simultaneous decline of the cotton industry, the powerful maintained the status quo in states such as Mississippi by other means: exacerbating the conditions of poverty; providing inferior education, inadequate health care, and precarious housing; and ignoring high unemployment and the lack of access to

healthy food. Illustrating their blatant racial hostility and greed, members of the regional and local White power structure obstructed federal efforts to respond to the severe conditions of poverty. They used these conditions of deprivation as strategies of oppression to maintain their political, economic, and social control and to keep the black majority from mobilizing politically. (p. 85)

Tailypo: A Newfangled Tall Tale (Medearis, 1999), is just one example of the extreme poverty that many African American cotton growers faced every day. Cotton was the crop depicted in this story and was an agricultural strategy to that kept many African American families impoverished; and as a result, kept them from truly exercising their political powers and enjoying any sort of economic freedoms. So, while the characters in Medearis' (1999) story wore teeth-baring smiles, as depicted in the illustrations, they and their children often went to bed hungry.

This section contained some children's literature examples that depicted oppressive systems. The next section features examples of children's literature narratives that were set in agricultural spaces where oppression was not a component of the story's plot. These examples are important to the deconstruction of the master narrative of Black life in agriculture.

Agricultural Narratives Outside of Slavery, Sharecropping, and Migrant Work

Many of the Black agriculturalists featured in the children's literature selections were placed in narratives that were free of illustrated oppressive systems. The characters enjoyed garden spaces and farm life. Additionally, they visited the farm during family vacations and family celebrations. In these stories, the African American farmers did not indicate that they were renting land, so it can be interpreted that they were not renting land, but landowners. The findings reveal that while Black life in farming was challenging work, the literature illustrated

that the farmers had plenty of food and celebrated during harvest time. Many of the African American gardeners were placed in agricultural spaces that were enclosed by a White picket fence, a marker that is symbolic of a suburban environment.

Table 8 contains a list of the agricultural spaces that were present in each book. Some books contained more than one type of agricultural space. Table 8 also contains information that the author provided about the setting of the book. In some books, the author included the time period and in other stories that information was excluded.

Table 8

Agricultural Spaces

Title/Author	Setting	Agricultural Space
1 <i>Friends and Flowers</i> (Gunderson, 2008)	Suburban	Flower Garden
2 <i>Baby Blessings</i> (Jordan, 2010)	Suburban White picket fence	Fruit Garden Family Food Garden
3 <i>Virgie Goes to School with Us Boys</i> (Howard, 1999)	Jonesborough, Tennessee, 1867	Sharecropping Family Farm* Slavery
4 <i>Miss Tizzy</i> (Gray, 1993)	Suburban White picket fence	Flower Garden
5 <i>Seeds</i> (Shannon, 1994)	Suburban White picket fence	Flower Garden
6 <i>Ruby Finds a Worry</i> (Percival, 2019)	Suburban White picket fence	Flowers Garden
7 <i>Lorraine: The Girl Who Sang the Storm Away</i> (Secor, 2018)	Tennessee	Family-Owned Farm
8 <i>Bree Finds a Friend</i> (Huber, 2014)	School	Dirt Plot Public Garden Pretending to plant blueberries

Table 8 (cont.)

Title/Author	Setting	Agricultural Space
9 <i>Down Home at Miss Dessa's</i> (Stroud, 1996)	South, 1940's	Family-Owned Farm
10 <i>I Believe I Can</i> (Byers, 2020)	Various Undisclosed	Public Garden Soil Plot
11 <i>Bread Lab</i> (Binczewski, 2018)	Undisclosed City Skyline Urban	Backyard Chickens (AA) Other
12 <i>Grandpa Cacao</i> (Zunon, 2019)	Undisclosed Kitchen House Ivory Coast, Africa	Large-Scale Family-Owned Farm
13 <i>Grandma Lena's Big Ol Turnip</i> (Hester, 2015)	House	Family Food Garden Shared with Community
14 <i>Who Put the Cookie in the Cookie Jar</i> (Shannon, 2013)	Various Locations	Various Family-Owned Farms Farm to Table
15 <i>The Old Truck</i> (Pumphrey, 2020)	Undisclosed Farm	Large-Scale Family-Owned Farm
16 <i>A Place Called Freedom</i> (Sanders, 1997)	Tennessee, 1832 Indiana	Developed a Large-Scale Farming Community Family-Owned Farm Slavery Plantation
17 <i>Two Old Potatoes and Me</i> (Coy, 2003)	Suburban White picket fence	Family Vegetable Garden Family Food Garden
18 <i>How a Seed Grows</i> (Jordan, 2015)	Suburban White Picket Fence Garden	Family Vegetable Garden Family Food Garden

Table 8 (cont.)

Title/Author	Setting	Agricultural Space
19 <i>Sadie's Seed Adventure</i> (Dybvik, 2013)	Town Botanical Garden	Public Garden
20 <i>Plant a Little Seed</i> (Christensen, 2012)	Urban Neighborhood	Community Vegetable/Fruit Garden Community Food Garden
21 <i>The Chicken-Chasing Queen of Lamar County</i> (Harrington, 2007)	Rural Farm South Lamar County	Family-Owned Farm
22 <i>Our People</i> (Medearis, 1994)	Various locations	Farm Undisclosed
23 <i>We Keep a Store</i> (Shelby, 1989)	Undisclosed Country	Family-Owned Farm
24 <i>I Love My Family</i> (Hudson, 1993)	North Carolina	Family-Owned Farm
25 <i>Flossie & The Fox</i> (McKissack, 1986)	Tennessee, Quarters	Family-Owned Farm
26 <i>Rainbow Stew</i> (Falwell, 2013)	Undisclosed house	Vegetable Garden Backyard Family Food Garden
27 <i>Tailypo: A Newfangled Tall Tale</i> (Medearis, 1999)	Texas Hill Country	Family-Owned Farm
28 <i>Family</i> (Monk, 2001)	Five hours South	Family-Owned Farm
29 <i>George Washington Carver: An Innovative Life</i> (MacLeod, 2007)	Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, Alabama	Agricultural Specialist Flower Garden Laboratory Classroom/College Slavery
30 <i>Benjamin Banneker</i> (Martin, 2014)	Maryland, 1731	Family-Owned Farm
31 <i>George Washington Carver: Journey to Freedom</i> (Carey, 1999)	Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, Alabama	Agricultural Specialist Flower Garden Laboratory Classroom/College Slavery

Table 8 (cont.)

Title/Author	Setting	Agricultural Space
32 <i>The Secret Garden of George Washington Carver</i> (Barretta, 2019)	Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, Alabama	Agricultural Specialist Flower Garden Laboratory Classroom/College Slavery
33 <i>A Weed is a Flower: The Life of George Washington Carver</i> (Brandenberg, 1965)	Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, Alabama	Agricultural Specialist Flower Garden Laboratory Classroom/College Academic Farming Slavery
34 <i>George Washington Carver</i> (Rau, 2014)	Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, Alabama	Agricultural Specialist Laboratory Slavery
35 <i>The Legend Of Freedom Hill</i> (Altman, 2000)	California, Gold Rush	Vegetable Garden (Jewish woman/mother) Other Slavery
36 <i>We're Going To The Farm</i> (Streza, 2012)	Undisclosed	Undisclosed Farm
37 <i>Sweet Clara And The Freedom Quilt</i> (Hopkinson, 1993)	North Farm Home Plantation South of Ohio River	Plantation Slavery
38 <i>It Jes' Happened</i> (Tate, 2012)	Benton, Alabama; Montgomery, Alabama, 1854	Family Farm* Sharecropper Slavery
39 <i>Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table</i> (Martin, 2019)	Milwaukee, 1993	Family Food Garden Greenhouses
40 <i>The Unstoppable Garret Morgan</i> (DiCicco, 2019)	Claysville, Kentucky, 1877	Parents were Sharecroppers Family Farm*
41 <i>Daddy Played The Blues</i> (Garland, 2017)	Mississippi, 1936	Leaving Farm/South Sharecropping Family Farm*

Table 8 (cont.)

Title/Author	Setting	Agricultural Space
42 <i>John Lewis in the Lead</i> (Haskins & Benson, 2006)	Troy, Alabama; 1945 Selma Alabama	Sharecroppers Family Farm*
43 <i>Picking Peas for a Penny</i> (Medearis, 1990)	1930's	Large-Scale Family- Owned Farm
44 <i>Overground Railroad</i> (Cline-Ransome, 2020)	North Carolina	Leaving Farm/South Sharecropper farming Family Farm*
45 <i>The Moon Over Star</i> (Aston, 2008)	1969	Family-Owned Farm
46 <i>Calvin's Christmas Wish</i> (Miles, 1993)	North Carolina	Family-Owned Farm
47 <i>Granddaddy's Turn: A Journey to The Ballot Box</i> (Bandy & Stein, 2015)	South, Civil Rights Era	Family-Owned Farm
48 <i>Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement</i> (Weatherford, 2015)	Mississippi Delta, 1917	Plantation Sharecropper Family Farm*
49 <i>The Wagon</i> (Johnston, 1996)	Carolina, 1865	Plantation Slavery
50 <i>My Name Is James Madison Hemings</i> (Winter, 2016)	Virginia, 1805	Plantation Slavery
51 <i>The Underground Railroad</i> (Allen, 2015)	Various dates and locations, 1865	Plantation Slavery
52 <i>The Hard-Times Jar</i> (Smothers, 2003)	Pennsylvania, Florida	Apple orchard Migrant Workers Other
53 <i>Once Upon a Farm</i> (Bradby, 2002)	Undisclosed location	Large-Scale Family- Owned Farm
54 <i>The Sunday Outing</i> (Pinkney, 1994)	North Philadelphia North Carolina (farm's location)	Family-Owned Farm
55 <i>Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom</i> (Weatherford, 2006)	1820, Bucktown Maryland	Plantation Slavery

Table 8 (cont.)

Title/Author	Setting	Agricultural Space
56 <i>Down the Winding Road</i> (Johnson, 2000)	Undisclosed location	Family-Owned Farm Cows
57 <i>Working Cotton</i> (Williams, 1992)	Fresno, California	Migrant Workers Cotton Other
58 <i>Freedom's School</i> (Cline-Ransome, 2015)	Undisclosed location, 1865	Sharecropping Family Farm*
59 <i>Joe Louis, My Champion</i> (Miller, 2004)	1937	Family-Owned Farm
60 <i>Friend on Freedom River</i> (Whelan, 2004)	Detroit River, 1850	Pear Tree Slavery Other
61 <i>Ruby Bridges</i> (Donaldson, 2009)	Tylertown, Mississippi New Orleans	Grandparents Sharecroppers Family Farm*
62 <i>Michelle Obama</i> (Raatma, 2010)	Chicago, IL 1964 Washington, DC	Vegetable Garden Community Food Garden
63 <i>Slavery</i> (De Medeiros, 2008)	Various dates and locations, 1865	Plantations Slavery
64 <i>Dance Y'all</i> (Stroud, 2001)	Undisclosed Farm	Family-Owned Farm
65 <i>Slavery in America</i> (Blashfield, 2011)	1600-1865	Plantation Slavery

Note: This table contains the setting and agricultural space details that were provided in the book.

Table 8 revealed a variety of different agricultural spaces that were featured in the children's literature. The oppressive and labor exploitative settings were discussed in the previous section, other agricultural spaces and story plots placed outside of oppressive settings

are discussed in the following sections. A numerical summary of agricultural spaces will be displayed in Table 9.

A visual and textual analysis was conducted of each book. Then, the agricultural spaces were indicated and recorded into Table 8. Table 9 is a numerical summary of the data from Table 8. There is a delineation between Family Farm and Family-Owned Farms. Family Farm differs from Family-Owned Farm because Family Farm includes farming conducted within sharecropping systems, so Family Farm was used in those instances. There was overlap in the representation of agricultural spaces in the children's literature. Some books like *A Weed is a Flower: The Life of George Washington Carver* (Brandenberg, 1965) contained multiple agricultural spaces such as flower gardens, a laboratory, and classroom/college spaces. A visual and textual analysis was conducted of each book and the agricultural spaces were indicated and then recorded in Table 8.

Table 9

Agricultural Spaces Numerical Summary

Agricultural Space	#	%
Garden Space	19	26
Family Food Garden (Home)	6	32
Community Food Garden	2	11
Flower Garden (Home)	8	42
Public Garden	3	16
Farm Space (non-School)	31	42
Family-Owned Farm	17	55
Family Farm*	9	29
Large-Scale Family-Owned Farm	5	16
Plantation	9	12
Classroom/College	6	8
Laboratory	5	83

Table 9 (cont.)

Agricultural Space	#	%
Academic Farm	1	17
Urban Space	8	11
Greenhouse	1	13
Undisclosed/Other	7	87
Total	73	100

Note: This table displays the different agricultural spaces that were present from the children's literature. *Family Farm includes farms that are not owned such as sharecropping positions. The label Family-Owned Farms does not include sharecropping farms.

Data from Table 9 was presented by totaling the different agricultural spaces that were represented across multiple titles. There was some overlap between the farming and plantation stories as in some stories the characters transitioned from slavery to sharecropping or slavery to an independent farmer. There were roughly 73 different agricultural spaces across the various children's literature locations that featured Black agriculturalists. Then, the total in each data category was divided by 73 and a percentage for each category was determined.

Garden Spaces. There were a variety of stories that featured African Americans in garden spaces. In the stories with food gardens, the food crop was typically harvested, prepared, and consumed by the protagonist, their families, and in some stories their community. The garden settings were categorized into three sections dirt plots, flower plots, and food plots.

Dirt Plots. *Ruby Finds a Worry* (Percival, 2019) and *Bree Finds a Friend* (Huber, 2014) are two fantasy stories. In both stories, the protagonist is an African American girl whose agricultural space is dirt and or soil. In both stories, they find something imaginative while digging in the dirt. In *Ruby Finds a Worry* (Percival, 2019), the protagonist, Ruby, finds a worry, that is depicted as a yellow circle with eyes and one eyebrow. The worry appears while she is digging in the garden, and it follows her around until she uses strategies to deal with it. Similarly,

in *Bree Finds a Friend* (Huber, 2014), the protagonist is digging in the dirt of a garden plot when she finds a family of worms. On one page, the illustration shows that worms are dressed in costumes representing the clothing articles of various family members such as grandparents, cousins, and siblings. In both stories, the African American protagonists has a White peer that accompanies them throughout the plot. In *Ruby Finds a Worry* (Percival, 2019) there is a similar-aged White male peer and in *Bree Finds a Friend* (Huber, 2014), the peer is a taller White female classmate.

Flower Plots. The titles in this section were discussed previously in other sections but are included here to provide an expanded analysis of the narrative and characterizations. *Sadie's Seed Adventure* (Dybvik, 2013) is also a fantasy. In the story, the protagonist, a young African American girl, named Sadie, and her White adult gardener friend Marv, travel throughout the story by way of animal fur, water, plants, and bird excrement in order to illustrate how seeds are dispersed into various spaces. The illustrations reveal that Sadie and Marv are in uniform and in the background are plant labels, so they could be working in a sort of botanical garden exhibit. This is a fantasy book because the characters change into seeds, but it is also informational because there are many facts that inform the reader about seed dispersal. Additionally, there are informational pages in the back of the book that provide students with simple science experiences.

In *Seeds* (Shannon, 1994), an older African American man, Bill, and a young White boy, Warren, live next door to each other in a suburban neighborhood. In this realistic fiction story, the protagonist and his friend engage in imaginative play when they create a garden zoo out of the flowers. Each flower has an imaginative animal name such as snapdragon, larkspur rabbit, and pink turtleheads; collectively making up the components of the garden zoo. In the garden,

the protagonist and friend play, sing, and tell fictionalized stories. Later in the story, Warren, moves away to another suburban neighborhood. In one illustration, an elevated view of his new neighborhood is depicted and every house in the neighborhood has a white picket fence. Bill and Warren missed their garden fun, so one day Warren wrote Bill a letter. In turn, Bill sends back a letter to Warren along with seeds from his garden. Warren plants the seeds in his backyard garden with his father; and Bill is inspired by their friendship to write a children's book.

Similarly in *Friends and Flowers* (Gunderson, 2008), the protagonist is a young African American girl, Lindsey, has a friend, Julia, a similar-aged White girl, that moves away early in the story. Before moving away, however, Julia gives Lindsey a tulip bulb from her garden to plant. Lindsey's mother tells her that by the time the tulip blooms, she will have a new friend. The mother teaches Lindsey to spray hot sauce on the tulip bulb to keep the rabbits away from it. The seasons change, while Lindsey is waiting for both the tulip to bloom and a new neighbor friend to arrive. As predicted, when the tulip blooms, there is a new child moving into the neighborhood. The new child is a similar-aged White girl who also loves flowers.

In *Miss Tizzy* (Gray, 1993), the protagonist, an older African American woman in her 80's, named Miss Tizzy, has a garden without a white picket fence, although the surrounding houses do have a white picket fence. The text explains that she does not have a white picket fence surrounding her house because her garden is wild and spreads out. In the illustration, it seems to spill out onto the sidewalk. She also lives in a suburban neighborhood with other houses that have white picket fences. Like the protagonist in *Seeds* (Shannon, 1994), Miss Tizzy invites young children to her garden for songs, games, and stories. On one of the pages there are as many as ten children playing with Miss Tizzy, two of those ten children are African

American. Other than the hat that Ms. Tizzy wears, that features a white flower, the garden primarily serves as a setting for activities.

On the cover of the book, *I Believe I Can* (Byers, 2020), are two African American adolescents. On the pages, however, are illustrations of children from various racial backgrounds. The agricultural space is in the middle of the book. There is an illustration of an agricultural space and one sentence on the next page with the word *soil* on it. The text on the page with the illustrated agricultural space does not provide an agricultural context or agricultural purpose. The author writes “I can build, just like a brick. I keep going, like a clock. I can hold, just like cement. I can last, just like a rock”. In the illustration there are three characters; one young African American boy, a similar-age White boy, and a taller girl wearing a hijab. On the next page the author writes “[g]rounded firm, I’m like soil. Like the sky, I’m boundless too.” In the background, racially diverse children are playing on a playground. In the agricultural space, the unnamed African American boy is standing over a garden plot in an undisclosed location watering a sunflower.

I Believe I Can (Byers, 2020), *Seeds* (Shannon, 1994), *Miss Tizzy* (Gray, 1993), *Friends and Flowers* (Gunderson, 2008), and *Sadie’s Seed Adventure* (Dybvik, 2013) vary in plot and story elements, but they are all set in serene and enjoyable agricultural spaces.

Food Plots. In these stories, the protagonists planted food seeds in their agricultural spaces. In all the stories, except *How a Seed Grows* (Jordan, 2015), the protagonist grew and consumed the food that had been planted and harvested.

In *Baby Blessings* (Jordan, 2010), the protagonists are an African American couple who are speaking affirmations or *blessings* to their child as he is growing from infancy to childhood. In the background, the illustrations show that the mother and father are planting an orange tree.

There is a white picket fence behind the tree in the background. When the child is school-aged, the orange tree is shown bearing fruit. The family harvests the fruit and eats it together in the yard on a blanket. As the family members are eating the fruit, the illustrations show a new infant in the father's arms. While the tree was growing, the new family member was also growing inside of the mother's womb. There is a connection between the infant's growth and the tree's growth. The characters must wait for the child's birth and additionally wait for the harvest. This idea that connects time and life events to plant growth was also present in *Friends and Flowers* (Gunderson, 2008) when Lindsey's mother tells her that her new friend will arrive after the tulip has bloomed.

In *Two Old Potatoes and Me* (Coy, 2003), the protagonist is an African American girl who discovers that old potatoes can be replanted. The father is unsure initially if the potatoes can be replanted but calls his father to confirm that they can. The girl and her father plant the two old potatoes and after weeding, watering, and pest control the father and daughter harvest 67 potatoes. At the end of the story, they eat mashed potatoes. The text tells us that the mother lives in a different home than the father, and that the daughter is living in between both houses in a shared custody situation. This is captured by the following dialogue between the father and daughter "How's your bedroom at your mom's house coming? Dad asks" (p. 19). There is also a white picket fence in the background surrounding this house depicted in the illustrations. There is also a recipe for making mashed potatoes at the end of the book.

In *Rainbow Stew* (Falwell, 2013) three African American children make a stew from vegetables that are harvested from their grandfather's vegetable garden. The children wake up in their grandfather's house and eat a pancake breakfast. They notice that it is raining and are sad because they want to play outside. The grandfather says "[l]et's go find some colors for my

famous rainbow stew” (p. 6). All of the characters go into their grandfather’s vegetable garden and harvest various colorful vegetables. They harvest green spinach, kale, cucumbers, zucchini, peas, beans, yellow peppers, a purple cabbage head, red radishes, tomatoes, potatoes, carrots, and an eggplant. The three grandchildren work together to cut up the vegetables and prepare the stew. While the stew is boiling, they read books together in the living room. Later, they have the vegetable stew for lunch. There is also a white picket fence in this book, but it is primarily surrounding the garden. The illustrations, however, suggest that the story takes place in a suburban neighborhood.

In *How a Seed Grows* (Jordan, 2015) there is a white picket fence on the front cover of the book. In the story, the protagonist, a young African American girl is teaching her friend, a White similar-aged boy, how to plant a bean seed. In the illustrations, we see the seed open as the seed sprouts into a plant. The protagonist then leads her friend into the garden carrying a garden shovel to replant the bean plant. This book is more of an informational realistic fiction book, because the storyline is primarily about the process for cultivating a seed. Nothing is harvested or eaten in this book like in the others.

Grandma Lena’s Big Ol’ Turnip (Hester, 2015) and *Plant a Little Seed* (Christensen, 2012) both have illustrations that suggest they take place in an urban setting. In both stories, the protagonists are looking through a vegetable catalogue. Additionally, in both stories the protagonists develop a community vegetable garden. In *Plant a Little Seed* (Christensen, 2012), there is a newspaper called *Community Garden News* in the illustrations. Also, in both stories, the neighborhood is invited to share the meal that has been prepared from the vegetables harvested from the vegetable garden. In *Plant a Little Seed* (Christensen, 2012), the protagonists are two children, one African American boy and a White similar-aged girl. They plant and

harvest the vegetables together. In one illustration the mothers of the children are in the kitchen preparing the meal from the harvested food. In *Grandma Lena's Big Ol' Turnip* (Hester, 2015), the protagonist, a middle-aged African American woman, plants the turnip by herself, but calls on her extended family members to help her harvest the crop. *Grandma Lena's Big Ol' Turnip* (Hester, 2015) starts realistic, but becomes more fantastic when the turnip is so big that it takes the entire family to harvest it.

Farm Spaces. The following stories are primarily set on a farm. The one exception is *The Sunday Outing* (Pinkney, 1994) which is set in the city of Philadelphia. In this story, Ernestine, a young African American girl, persuades her mother and father to purchase a train ticket to Lumberton, North Carolina so that she can visit family that lives on a farm. Ernestine wants to ride a train that she frequently sees passing by. The reader learns that her family in Lumberton, North Carolina has invited her to visit them. There was no other agricultural space in the book other than the protagonist asking to visit family that lives on a farm where the protagonist was born. We learn that while she was born in the South, she has not returned to visit the relatives that live there. When the protagonists ask what to expect when she arrives her mother pulls out a photograph of her uncle working in a flower garden. The author wrote, "Ernestine looked closely at another photograph of a tall man working in a flower bed. 'That's Uncle June!' Mama smiled and said, 'He'll probably bring you a bouquet from his garden'" (p. 24). The parents agree to allow Ernestine to visit the family in the South. They can only afford one ticket as they are saving money, so Ernestine travels alone via train. Ernestine's mother and father ask the two train conductors, both older male characters, one is White and the other one is Black. The setting shifts between the city and farm. The train is not segregated when they leave the train station from Philadelphia, which could indicate a post Jim Crow era, but the reader is not provided any

further information about the time period. The remaining stories in this section of the paper are set entirely in farm spaces.

Picking Peas for a Penny (Medearis, 1990) was set in the 1930's during the Great Depression. In one illustration we see a newspaper article with a title about high unemployment rates (p. 2). In the illustration there is a line of African American men and women whose facial expressions illustrate discouragement. The protagonist and mother are standing in front of the line of sad faces, but they are smiling. The smile indicates that they have enough resources to stand away from the line of people. In text we learn that picking peas "for a living was plenty good" (p. 2). The protagonist is telling a story that her mother experienced as a young girl harvesting green peas on the Family-Owned Farm as a child. We also learn that the family can eat until they are full, which is a starkly different narrative than the one told in the sharecropping literature examples. The children are promised a penny for every pound of peas they harvest. So, they make a game of it. After harvesting eleven barrels of green peas, the family takes the children to the store. Each is allowed to buy candy because they have earned five cents apiece. The author wrote "I buy candy, gum, and caramel corn and a cold fuzzy soda pop... You can buy a lot with a penny during the depression" (p. 26). A photograph of the family that the book is written about is in the back of the book. There are family names written under the pictures. The illustration (p. 2) of African American men and women standing in line is a depiction of the breadlines that existed during The Great Depression. Margaret Bourke-White (1937), a White American documentary photographer, took a photograph, entitled *The Louisville Flood* which featured a line of African American men and women standing in a food relief line in 1937 that is similar to the illustration that is in Medearis' (1990) book. This photograph gained a lot of attention, because in the background was a billboard of a happy White family riding in a car with

the caption “There’s no way like the American Way”. The Whitney Museum of American Art wrote:

The Louisville Flood shows African-Americans lined up outside a flood relief agency. In striking contrast to their grim faces, the billboard for the National Association of Manufacturers above them depicts a smiling White family of four riding in a car, under a banner reading “World’s Highest Standard of Living. There’s no way like the American Way.” As a powerful depiction of the gap between the propagandist representation of American life and the economic hardship faced by minorities and the poor, Bourke-White’s image has had a long afterlife in the history of photography. (Whitney Museum of American Art, n.d., para. 1)

Zhang (2011) wrote about the breadlines “It was quite tragic, since many capable workers were forced to accept the little ration provided by the government. Certain city folks found it unbearable and relocated themselves to rural areas to farm, in hope of using their labor to produce actual food” (para. 1, 2022). This story is an example of how agriculture provided food and financial security for an African American family.

Down Home at Miss Dessa’s (Stroud, 1996) also takes place on a farm in the South. From the author’s notes we learn that an agricultural community existed in the South that was vital to the African American elderly who often lived alone in farmhouses. As a result, neighbors would often support each other, specifically the elderly, in times of need. Stroud (1996) wrote:

Along the country dirt roads of the South in the late 1940’s, farmhouses were few and far between. As a result, supportive caring neighbors were all important. Neighbors formed a vital part of the network and fabric that united and held together the African American

community. They provided aid when needed and, sometimes, simply offered companionship. (p. 1)

The protagonist are two African American sisters, who come to Miss Dessa's farmhouse to entertain and assist her. Miss Dessa is an elderly African American woman who lives alone on her farm. The protagonists have access to biscuits, jam, peaches, and plums for lunch and snacks. In fact, the protagonist says that coffee is always on the stove and warm biscuits are always in the oven. Miss Dessa's biological daughter lives in New York, so when Miss Dessa slips and has a hurt foot, the two sisters spend time with her while she heals. One illustration reminded me of the times my younger sister and I spent at my grandmother's house in Fort Wayne, In. On p. 23 the older sister is standing behind Miss Dessa braiding her long grey hair while the younger sister is beside Miss Dess. My grandmother often wore her hair in long braids, and this page reminded me of my grandmother's long grey hair and her rich brown skin. In the story, they played, sang, and told stories; then the sisters spent the night in a spare room.

The Chicken-Chasing Queen of Lamar County (Harrington, 2007) is set on a chicken farm. The *Chicken-Chasing Queen* is a young African American girl who enjoys chasing chickens on her grandmother's farm. Each morning she eats breakfast, tells stories, and then chases after chickens. The grandmother gives the protagonist words of advice about kindness, patience, and perseverance. Throughout the story, the protagonist applies this wisdom to her chicken chasing activities. The grandmother, called Big Mama, asks her not to bother the chickens, but the *Chicken-Chasing Queen* is set on catching the fastest chicken until she realizes that the chicken is caring for baby chicks. There are images of eggs, corn on the cob, and cornbread that the character uses to lure the chickens into a closer proximity. The illustrations in this book are very vivid. The illustrator used a combination of images to create a type of collage-

like array of pictures and text. The protagonist is featured in a White shirt and striped skirt, and on top of the skirt are collage-like cut outs of buttons. The chickens are illustrated with patterned pieces of fabric and roughly placed lined paper. These illustrations bring more chaos to the page as the *Chicken-Chasing Queen* is creating chaos among the chickens. In the end, the protagonist begins to feed the baby chickens and decides to wait until they are older to chase them again. It is important to note that the author is a tenured faculty member of the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana. Additionally, she is a poet and former librarian. This is an example of a fun Family-Owned Farming experience that teaches the readers about making responsible choices.

We Keep a Store (Shelby, 1989) takes place in the country in an undisclosed location, but presumably in the South since there is a lot of land and space between the house and the store; however, that information is not disclosed or confirmed in the text. Similar to *The Chicken-Chasing Queen of Lamar County* (Harrington, 2007) the protagonist is an African American girl who also likes chasing chickens. The protagonist likes owning a store because there is access to various food items; and additionally, she states “we don’t even have to pay ourselves for it”. In the illustrations, we see corn on the cob, canned goods, candy, and soap in the store. The protagonist also likes that the customers often visit and stay around to tell stories. While the illustrations show that the family purchases most of their store’s inventory from a catalogue, there is an illustration of women harvesting apples from an apple tree. These apples along with the string beans are dried and canned. This is another example of an agricultural community because customers do not simply buy things and leave, they share stories and help with the agricultural work.

Both *I Love My Family* (Hudson, 1993) and *Family* (Monk, 2001) start with the protagonist and their families traveling South to a relative’s farm. The farm in *I Love My Family*

(Hudson, 1993) is set in North Carolina and the farm in *Family* (Monk, 2001) is in an undisclosed town that is five hours South. *Down the Winding Road* (Johnson, 2000) gives you the same feeling as the other stories because the opening scene is of the family travelling by car into the country and/or farm setting to visit relatives. The difference is that in *Down the Winding Road* (Johnson, 2000), it is unclear where the family originates from. In each story, we know that they visit once a year. In *I Love My Family* (Hudson, 1993) the visit is for a family reunion, in *Family* (Monk, 2001) and *Down the Winding Road* (Johnson, 2000) the visit is a summer trip to visit extended family.

In *I Love My Family* (Hudson, 1993) the theme is mostly about family and their individual roles. The protagonist is an African American boy visiting his father's side of the family during a family reunion. We are introduced to different family members and learn something unique about each of them. The author wrote "Great Aunt Nell is the oldest relative at the reunion. Daddy says she is almost on hundred years old. Everyone loves and respects her" (p. 7). During the family reunion the family sings songs, plays games, and shares stories. Although there is a table full of food, the one agricultural reference to harvesting is when the characters pick peaches from a peach tree.

On the contrary, *Family* (Monk, 2001) gave special attention to the fact the family's food has been grown on the Family-Owned Farm and that recipes are shared among the family. On one page the text reads: "[e]verything except the crab in the crab cakes and the lemons in the lemonade came right here on Aunt Poogee's farm" (p. 16). As discussed previously, Hope is excited to share the peppermint pickles, that she brought, with the family. Hope is initially nervous about the pickles, but her Aunt Poogee, reassures her that her father's recipes are

welcomed at the table because he is family. Additionally, there are various other recipes on the last pages of the book.

Down the Winding Road (Johnson, 2000) is more similar to *I Love My Family* (Hudson, 1993) because the storyline is mostly about family. In this story, the protagonists are African American siblings who are visiting their elderly loved ones who live on a farm in the country. The family members do not engage with agricultural duties. In fact, the only agricultural markers are the illustrations of cows in the background as the family is traveling to their home. The reader cannot even confirm if the cows belong to the family.

In all three books, there is a page where the family eats together at a table that is filled with various colorful food items. *Family* (Monk, 2001), however, is the only one that makes a point of letting the reader know where the food has come from. There is a sense of pride that the food has come from the family's farm. This story is another example that depicts agriculture as a source of food security. In the next two stories, the characters also exhibit a lot of pride; but these stories are about the feeling of pride in owning a Family-Owned Farm.

Grandpa Cacao (Zunon, 2019) differs in that the farm is located on the Ivory Coast of Africa. Additionally, the characters do not visit the farm, as in *I Love My Family* (Hudson, 1993), *Family* (Monk, 2001), and *Down the Winding Road* (Johnson, 2000) but the grandfather farmer comes to the U.S. to visit the protagonist and her family. In *Grandpa Cacao* (Zunon, 2019), the father and daughter are making a chocolate cake when the father tells the daughter about his father's farmland in the Ivory Coast. As the father is explaining the process of harvesting cacao beans, the daughter is preparing and mixing the ingredients for the chocolate cake. At one part of the story, we learn that the father would also help on the farm in his youth. The father explained that many people in the village worked on the cacao farm. The farmers

would bag up the harvested beans and sell them to cacao buyers who would then load the goods onto trucks. In the final pages, the grandfather arrives draped in an African print cloth. He brings his granddaughter a cacao fruit. There is also a chocolate cake recipe in the back of the book along with the step-by-step process for turning cacao beans into chocolate candy bars. Both *Family* (Monk, 2001) and *Grandpa Cacao* (Zunon, 2019) connect agriculture to food appreciation and provide recipes to the reader.

Readers gain an appreciation of the agricultural processes from *Bread Lab* (Binczewski, 2018) which was briefly introduced in the previous section. Iris is feeding her fish and chickens when her aunt, Aunt Mary, a plant scientist, comes to visit and teaches her the process for making bread. In the illustrations, we get an up-close look at the ingredients and how, when combined, they create chemical reactions throughout the bread-making process. In one illustration the aunt and protagonist are laying outside on the grass, with a depiction of the skyline in the background, and the aunt explains that farmers and plants are responsible for many of the foods that are eaten. The author wrote, “And all the food you brought - apples, peanut butter, Blackberry jam, chocolate and crackers - came from plants” (p. 21). As with recipes in *Family* (Monk, 2001) and *Grandpa Cacao* (Zunon, 2019), the reader is provided a recipe for making bread.

Who Put the Cookie in the Cookie Jar (Shannon, 2013) connects agricultural efforts to food production and food processes. With only a couple of sentences on each page, the illustrations help to tell the story of the various agricultural and mechanical labor processes that go into making the ingredients for cookies. In one illustration, people of various racial and ethnic backgrounds and ages are holding hands on top of a picture of the earth. The characters’ skin tones and hair styles provide diversity to the characters’ illustrations. Black life in farming is

depicted with a mother and two children set in a kitchen mixing the ingredients for chocolate chip cookies. There is another image of an African American girl feeding hay to a cow. The agricultural processes depicted in this story are discussed more explicitly in the next chapter.

Once Upon a Farm (Bradby, 2002) and *The Old Truck* (Pumphrey, 2020) are two stories where the lifecycle of a Family-Owned Farm is the primary focus. In both stories, there is an illustration of construction or development on the farmland. In *The Old Truck* (Pumphrey, 2020) the father is constructing a new barn and in *Once Upon a Farm* (Bradby, 2002), the father and son are constructing a new home. In each of the stories there is a red pickup truck that transports harvested goods; the illustrations show food products, exclusively. Additionally, there are images of larger farming equipment such as tractors and combines. The stories differ, however, in their conclusions. In *Once Upon a Farm* (Bradby, 2002) the Family-Owned Farm is sold because of city development that is transforming the surrounding area into a more urban environment. There are images of highways and construction zone cones signaling a change in the farmer's environment. The family eventually sales the farm, but the sounds and smells of the farm remain in the protagonist's memories. The protagonist in *The Old Truck* (Pumphrey, 2020), however, remains on the farm and continues the legacy of farming with her own family. At the story's start the protagonist is a young African American girl sitting on the back of a red pickup truck. As the red pickup truck aged, so does her parents. When the seasons changed, the young girl is growing taller in the illustrations and is eventually the only person in charge of the Family-Owned Farm; which implies that the parents have passed away. In the final scenes, there is an image of the protagonist's daughter sitting on the back of pickup truck. This imagery provides the reader with an awareness of the legacy of Family-Owned Farming that continues through the protagonist's daughter. The Census of Agriculture (2017) revealed that large scale African American Family-

Owned Farms make up 0.1 percent of the total large-scale farm producers in the U.S., and that large-scale African American farms primarily specialize in cattle and dairy products. These stories contribute to the agricultural literacy discussion and will be discussed more in the next chapter.

Lorraine: The Girl Who Sang the Storm Away (Secor, 2018) is set on a farm in Tennessee. In the opening illustrations, Lorraine, a young African American girl, is running through a cornfield with her grandfather, Pa Paw, walking beside her. He is carrying a pail of a freshly harvested food crop, which is most likely corn. Lorraine is described as courageous because she is not afraid of anything. The author wrote “On a Tennessee farm where the music grows wild lived a pitchforkin’ Pa Paw and his fearless grandchild” (p. 2). On the farm, Lorraine and her grandfather spend time singing and dancing. At the breakfast table there are eggs, tomatoes, bacon, bread, and orange juice. On the farm, the illustrations show that the grandfather has a horse and several pigs. When things start to come up missing on the farm, Lorraine is very upset; specifically, when her treasured harmonica disappears. During a storm, the grandfather consoles her by reminding her to be courageous. Additionally, Lorraine is instructed by her grandfather to use her singing voice to drive the storm away. “Lorraine sang up high and old Pa Paw sang low, and they stomped and they stamped with a big do-si-do” (p. 19). Later, when a tree is turned over by the passing storm, Lorraine finds the missing items in the tree trunk. Together, Lorraine and her grandfather sing and dance on the final pages. This was a beautiful story that illustrated the power that comes when characters use their strength. In this story, Lorraine’s strength was her strong voice.

Similarly, *The Moon Over Star* (Aston, 2008) is also set on a grandparent’s farm. The time period is set in 1969 and in the opening scene, the characters are praying for U.S.

astronauts, Neil Armstrong, Edwin Aldrin Jr., and Michael Collins, who have recently launched into space for the first time. The grandchildren primarily participate in imaginative play on the farm. The grandfather, however, is portrayed as a hardworking farmer, whom the text implies had ambitions outside of agriculture; but has farmed nonetheless day after day. Instead of leaving the farm to pursue his dreams, the grandfather encourages the protagonist to pursue her dreams of being an astronaut. “Gramps had looked to the moon all of his life. It told him when to plant and when to harvest. And once upon a summer’s night, It told me to dream” (Aston, 2008, p. 28). Like Lorraine, the protagonist spends most of her time with her grandfather. The protagonist is named Mae, and the reader infers that she will grow up to become the famous African American astronomer, Mae Jemison. Mae Jemison was born in Decatur, Alabama then moved to the south side of Chicago, IL. when she was two years old. After reading a biographical text (Yannuzzi, 1998) about Mae Jemison, the findings suggest that there is not an actual connection between the character named Mae and the actual Mae Jemison.

Dance Y’all (Stroud, 2001) is set in an undisclosed location in a large African American homestead. In the early illustrations, the protagonist Jack Henry, is waiting for his extended family members to arrive for a visit. When the extended family arrives, they are riding on horse-drawn wagons. There are at least three wagons, horses, and mules. “Kinfolk came by the wagonloads” (p. 3). There is a well-built large multiple-level home in the background as well as a large multiple level barn house. All of the characters are well-dressed and many of the women are wearing dresses with their hair tied up or styled. The older men are wearing glasses, suspenders, and one man is wearing a bowtie. After dinner, featured in the illustrations with a large dining table filled with large portions of food, the family dances. There is a gramophone with a golden bass horn attachment as the family, of at least 14 people, dances in a large living

room. The plot of the story is about a young boy's courage in the face of his fear of snakes, but the illustrations provide an example of a merry prosperous Black farming family.

Flossie & The Fox (McKissack, 1986) is also a Family-Owned Farming story. I initially interpreted this story as a slave or sharecropping narrative because the living arrangements were described as quarters. For example, the text indicates that Flossie's grandmother, Big Mama, was either enslaved or a sharecropper because the text says that Flossie lives in or near "Sophie's Quarters" and quarters are typically used to describe slave dwellings. McKissack (1986) wrote, "The sound of Big Mama's voice floated past the cabins in Sophie's Quarters, round the smokehouse, beyond the chicken coop, all the way down to Flossie Finley" (p. 1). In the next illustration, Flossie's grandmother is seen surrounded by large pails of peaches. In the text, Flossie is told to take eggs to a neighboring farm whose chickens have not been laying eggs due to the trauma caused by a lurking fox. The agricultural purpose given to Flossie's character is that of food transporter as her main focus was on carrying the eggs and outwitting the fox for the entirety of the story. This story has similar characteristics to the European version of the *Little Red Riding Hood* (Perrault, 17th Century) fairytale in that the little girl is carrying a basket of food and is approached by a wolf. However, the difference is that little Flossie is very clever enough to outwits the fox before he can cause any harm to her or her family.

These stories were set in garden and farm spaces where African American agriculturalists enjoyed their families, friends, and food. Additionally, agriculture was depicted as a fundamental resource that provided food security, family pride, and a space to dream. These stories provide a space for new narratives about Black life in agriculture to be constructed. In the next section, I move from inspirational and empowering stories that encourage knowledge of and ownership of agriculture. In contrast, the next section explores the hurtful and harmful oppressive narratives.

The findings provide examples from the children's literature of how resistance to oppressive systems was demonstrated, which is important to the narrative of Black life in agriculture.

Resistance. Elements depicting resistance to oppression were seen by the characters striding toward access to education and the efforts of educating others. Additionally, characters were depicted practicing civil disobedience, and engaging in various forms of collective activism and agency.

Education. The laws that legalized and perpetuated the illiteracy of African Americans was one of the most oppressive actions. These laws were particularly effective in the South, specifically among poor Black sharecroppers who were often too exhausted from working in the fields to fight unjust laws. In fact, even after laws would change, they were often not applicable to African Americans living in the South. For example, when the child labor laws were enacted in the 1930s, these laws did not translate to African American children, who spent a great deal of time working in the fields with their parents, and whose communities often did not have schools established for African American children. As a result, the North was a place that often signified access to education, job opportunities, and justice. However, as Fannie Lou Hamer revealed in the *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement* (Weatherford, 2015) "not everyone could move up North" (p. 9). *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement* (Weatherford, 2015), *George Washington Carver: An Innovative Life* (MacLeod, 2007), *George Washington Carver: Journey to Freedom* (Carey, 1999), *The Secret Garden of George Washington Carver* (Barretta, 2019), *A Weed is a Flower: The Life of George Washington Carver* (Brandenberg, 1965), and *John Lewis in the Lead* (Haskins & Benson, 2006) captured African American agriculturalist who maintained their status in the South and demonstrated resistance after encountering oppressive education systems.

Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement (Weatherford, 2015), explains how Fannie Lou Hamer resisted the oppressive systems that were intended to keep her in an illiterate status. She gleaned literacy fragments from the words printed on items intended for the garbage. “I gathered newspaper scraps along the roadside and magazines from the plantation’s trash just to have something to read. I was so hungry to learn” (p. 6). When she initially tried to vote, she could not read the Mississippi Constitution, but she persisted even after being evicted from her home, fired from her job, and receiving multiple threats. In fact, a month later she passed the literacy test. Additionally, the reader learns that she continued to advocate against discriminatory educational practices like segregated schools.

George Washington Carver: An Innovative Life (MacLeod, 2007), *George Washington Carver: Journey to Freedom* (Carey, 1999), *The Secret Garden of George Washington Carver* (Barretta, 2019), *A Weed is a Flower: The Life of George Washington Carver* (Brandenberg, 1965), each describe how George Washington Carver choose to teach in the South, because he wanted to help African American farmers, not only college students, but everyday Black farmers learn how to become better agriculturalists. He, like Fannie Lou Hamer, had a thirst for knowledge at a young age and desperately wanted access to more formal education in the South. Additionally, they both demonstrated resistance against oppressive educational systems. The George Washington Carver biographies convey how the cotton crop had depleted the soil’s nutrients which made agricultural efforts harder for African American farmers to make a living. George Washington Carver educated farmers on how to overcome the oppressive cotton system which was one of the most popularly grown crops in the South at the time. George Washington Carver used his educational and experiential plant knowledge to help African American farmers

minimize their dependency on the cotton crop. George Washington Carver's work to dismantle the cotton crop system is discussed further in the agricultural literacy section in the next chapter.

John Lewis in the Lead (Haskins & Benson, 2006) provided another example of how education was used to fight against oppressive systems. As discussed previously in the sharecropping section, one of his first acts of resistance against oppressive education systems was when he protested the public library system in his town. Additionally, in 1961 he joined the student organization called Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). SNCC was instrumental in establishing Freedom Schools which were designed to educate African Americans about voting legislation and registration. *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement* (Weatherford, 2015), also disclosed Fannie Lou Hamer membership and engagement in SNCC. The story describes her eagerness to improve the lives of African Americans through education in the voting rights legislation. In fact, before the vicious jail beating, she had been attending one of Septima Clark's literacy and citizenship schools in South Carolina. Blakemore (2016) wrote that Septima Poinsette Clark was "called the 'queen mother of the Civil Rights Movement'. The Citizenship Schools were established throughout the South to teach "basic literacy to black students so that they could not only legally register to vote, but also pass onerous literacy and citizenship tests imposed by Jim Crow legislatures" (para. 5).

The next section presents findings from the children's literature of examples that demonstrate how people and characters in agricultural spaces exhibited civil disobedience as a means to resist oppressive systems.

Civil Disobedience. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy cited that Rawls (1999) defined civil disobedience as "a public, non-violent and conscientious breach of law undertaken

with the aim of bringing about a change in laws or government policies” (Brownlee, 2013, para. 1). *John Lewis in the Lead* (Haskins & Benson, 2006), *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement* (Weatherford, 2015), *When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom* (Weatherford, 2006) and *Friend on Freedom River* (Whelan, 2004) are stories that depict examples of civil disobedience. With the Fugitive Slave Laws enacted in 1850, the underground railroad was a way that many enslaved African Americans and White Americans participated in civil disobedience. *The Underground Railroad* (Allen, 2015) described the intricate travel and communication systems that constructed the escape routes. Agricultural communities, food systems, specifically Southern farmers, were integral to the Underground Railroad. Allen (2015) in *The Underground Railroad* wrote “[m]ost of those who worked in the Underground Railroad were ordinary people, such as farmers, ministers, store clerks, and housewives” (p. 21). Gattuso (2020) wrote about the food remains found in the hiding places of homes that were used in the Underground Railroad system. The remains of muskrats and turtles suggest, the slaves forged, hunted, and fished during their escape. “Travelers also relied on their knowledge of local plants and animals to forage. ‘These were people who lived off of the land’” (Gattuso, 2020, para. 16). Food knowledge was also used to confuse the senses of the bloodhounds that were used to capture enslaved people. Allen (2015) in *The Underground Railroad* wrote that slaves would rub onions on the bottom of their feet as one such tactic. Weatherford (2006) wrote in *When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom* that farmers fed and protected Harriet along the journey. Additionally, food storage systems, such as potato holes, were used to hide slaves during their escape. In fact, Harriet Tubman hid in a potato hole for a week when it was unsafe to travel. These food systems were essential to the survival of many African Americans. In *Friend on Freedom River* (Whelan, 2004), the young boy who helped the

slaves escape across the river was a farmer and after they arrived in Canada another farmer met the family and cared for them. These food and farming systems were essential to the survival of many African Americans.

John Lewis and Fannie Lou Hamer were arrested numerous times during their demonstrations. Manojlovic (2014) wrote “Lewis said, ‘the first I was arrested I felt free; I felt liberated; I felt like I had crossed over’” (para. 2). Haskins and Benson (2006) captured many of the arrests and vicious consequences for civil disobedience in *John Lewis in the Lead*.

Throughout the book are images of John Lewis being arrested, beaten, and hospitalized in his fight against oppressive systems in the South. Weatherford (2015) captured Fannie Lou Hamer’s arrests as well as her eviction from her place of residence. In one example from the text, a plantation boss offered to continue Hamer’s employment if she ceased her voting rights exercises. Weatherford (2015) wrote:

Back at the plantation, my boss had already set my stuff in the road. Said they wasn’t ready for that in Mississippi. He gave me a choice: withdraw my name at the courthouse or move on. All I could say was I didn’t go down there to register for you; I was down there to register for myself. (p. 16)

Although the consequences for civil disobedience were imprisonment, death, torture, and other vicious acts, farmers utilized their food knowledge: onions to stray dogs away, potato holes to hide, foraging to eat, and freedom, as tools to resist oppressive systems.

Agency. Agency in agricultural settings is defined as the activities conducted to reform social, political, economic, and environmental systems. The tenets of agency were present in the literature through the illustrations, examples, and establishments of community, political, and economic systems. The tables in this section provide trace evidence of the activities that depicted

agricultural community, agricultural political systems, and agricultural economic systems from the children's literature. After the table, I provide a definition of each of the systems as they were defined in this paper.

Table 10 provided an overview of the textual examples that were found to represent the tenets of agency around agriculture and community. Additionally, within the column that is labeled Text Example, there are other notes that were observed during the readings. The notes that were recorded were related to agriculture and community.

Table 10

Agriculture and Community

Book Title/Author	Text Example
<i>Friends and Flowers</i> (Gunderson, 2008)	Seed Sharing: Neighbor gives her a tulip bulb
<i>Virgie Goes to School with Us Boys</i> (Howard, 1999)	Quakers (farmers) developed schools for African American children
<i>Miss Tizzy</i> (Gray, 1993)	Care for the Elderly (Neighborhood): Neighbors take care of Miss Tizzy when she is sick
<i>Seeds</i> (Shannon, 1994)	Seed Sharing: Bill gives Warren a flower seed
<i>Down Home at Miss Dessa's</i> (Stroud, 1996)	Care for the Elderly (Farming Community): Neighbors take care of Miss Dessa when she hurts herself
<i>I Believe I Can</i> (Byers, 2020)	Community Garden
<i>Grandpa Cacao</i> (Zunon, 2019)	Seed Sharing; Community Harvesting (Shared Labor)
<i>Grandma Lena's Big Ol' Turnip</i> (Hester, 2015)	Community Meal & Soil Preparation
<i>Who Put the Cookie in the Cookie Jar</i> (Shannon, 2013)	Shared Labor in Food Production: Many farmers involved in the process
<i>A Place Called Freedom</i> (Sanders, 1997)	Seed and Farming Equipment Sharing: Quakers loan farm animals and equipment to farmers
<i>Plant a Little Seed</i> (Christensen, 2012)	Community Garden
<i>We Keep a Store</i> (Shelby, 1989)	Community Harvesting & Food Preparation
<i>Flossie & The Fox</i> (McKissack, 1986)	Food Sharing among Farms
<i>George Washington Carver: An Innovative Life</i> (MacLeod, 2007)	Agricultural Community Development; Jesup Wagons

Table 10 (cont.)

Book Title/Author	Text Example
<i>George Washington Carver: Journey to Freedom</i> (Carey, 1999)	Agricultural Community Development; Jesup Wagons
<i>Sweet Clara And The Freedom Quilt</i> (Hopkinson, 1993)	Information Sharing
<i>Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table</i> (Martin, 2019)	Community Garden
<i>The Unstoppable Garret Morgan</i> (DiCicco, 2019)	Farmers help each other put out a Farm Fire
<i>Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement</i> (Weatherford, 2015)	Food Sharing: The neighbors gave them chitlings because they helped with the slaughter, Shelter Sharing, Information Sharing-Freedom Farms
<i>When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom</i> (Weatherford, 2006)	Farmers Network: A farmer fed and hid her during the escape
<i>Freedom's School</i> (Cline-Ransome, 2015)	The agricultural community rebuilt the school after it had been burned down
<i>Joe Louis, My Champion</i> (Miller, 2004)	Agricultural community assembled to listen to the Joe Louis fight on the community radio
<i>Friend on Freedom River</i> (Whelan, 2004)	Farmers Network: A farmer helped the family cross the river. Another farmer met them in Canada.

Note: This table provides the book title, author, and publication year. Additionally, a column of text examples was included to support the indicated themes.

Table 10 displayed roughly 23 examples of how economic systems were interpreted from the text. A discussion of these interpretations follows.

Agricultural Community. Agricultural community was present in Table 10 in various forms and in various agricultural spaces. For the purposes of this paper agricultural community was defined and indicated by examples of agricultural and gardening communities supporting each other. Support was illustrated by the performance of shared agricultural activities; specifically, the sharing of seed, food, labor, and farming equipment. While some of the activities in these book titles may not adhere to the tenets of radical agency, these examples provide evidence to everyday agricultural activities that represent community agency in agricultural spaces. The elements of agriculture and community were observed in both the text

and visual images. For example, in *Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table* (Martin, 2019) there are multiple illustrations of people working together in the greenhouses to care for and harvest plants. The illustrator does a good job giving the people different body types, hair styles, and hair colors. In one illustration, the people in the background are wearing different types of clothing. One female character is wearing a dress while others are wearing long pants and boots. Some characters have headwear such as headbands, hats, and bandanas.

Table 11 provided an overview of the textual examples that were found to represent the tenets of agency in the areas of political systems. There were multiple examples of political systems that were found in both the illustrations and the text.

Table 11

Political Systems

Book Title/Author	Text Example
<i>A Place Called Freedom</i> (Sanders, 1997)	Established a church; people met at “meetings”
<i>George Washington Carver: An Innovative Life</i> (MacLeod, 2007)	Ran Bible Study; Used the Bible as an instructional tool; He also spoke before Congress, met with presidents, and worked with the USDA.
<i>It Jes’ Happened</i> (Tate, 2012)	Had Church by the River
<i>Daddy Played The Blues</i> (Garland, 2017)	Characters attended church
<i>John Lewis in the Lead</i> (Haskins & Benson, 2006)	Church was a meeting/safe space during protests; he became a government official; voting rights
<i>The Moon Over Star</i> (Aston, 2008)	Opening scene is in church
<i>Calvin's Christmas Wish</i> (Miles, 1993)	Church in the illustrations next to the school
<i>Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement</i> (Weatherford, 2015)	The church was an information hub for voter registration; government activity; she ran for various government positions; voting rights
<i>The Sunday Outing</i> (Pinkney, 1994)	Aunt is at church
<i>Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom</i> (Weatherford, 2006)	The church was a meeting space on the Underground railroad
<i>Freedom’s School</i> (Cline-Ransome, 2015)	The church gives her pieces of literacy

Table 11 (cont.)

Book Title/Author	Text Example
<i>We Keep a Store</i> (Shelby, 1989)	Customers assemble to tell stories, information sharing
<i>Our People</i> (Medearis, 1994)	"Our people became politicians"
<i>The Secret Garden of George Washington Carver</i> (Barretta, 2019)	He also spoke before Congress
<i>A Weed is a Flower: The Life of George Washington Carver</i> (Brandenberg, 1965)	Honored by presidents
<i>The Moon Over Star</i> (Aston, 2008)	Reference to President Kennedy and the Space Race
<i>Sweet Clara And The Freedom Quilt</i> (Hopkinson, 1993)	Plantation used to share information
<i>Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table</i> (Martin, 2019)	Over 20,000 visitors come to learn Black businessmen were not allowed to advertise in White newspapers, so Garrett Morgan created a newspaper called CALL that allowed African Americans a space to advertise and read news about Black communities. These articles were written by Black reporters. Runs for a seat on the Cleveland Council.
<i>The Unstoppable Garret Morgan</i> (DiCicco, 2019)	Black reporters. Runs for a seat on the Cleveland Council.
<i>Granddaddy's Turn : A Journey To The Ballot Box</i> (Bandy & Stein, 2015)	Wanted to vote
<i>The Wagon</i> (Johnston, 1996)	Comparison to Abraham Lincoln; Characters travel to Abraham Lincoln's funeral
<i>My Name Is James Madison Hemings</i> (Winter, 2016)	Father was Thomas Jefferson, took place in the White House
<i>Benjamin Banneker</i> (Martin, 2014)	Wrote a letter to Thomas Jefferson
<i>Joe Louis, My Champion</i> (Miller, 2004)	Had ambitions to become a lawyer or a judge

Table 11 revealed examples that were gathered through repeated readings across multiple texts. As evidence surfaced in the area of political systems, the data were recorded. Table 11 provided an overview of the various ways that political systems surfaced in the children's literature. Table 11 displayed roughly 24 examples of how economic systems were interpreted from the text. A discussion of these interpretations follows.

Political Systems. Political systems were present in the children's literature examples in three main ways: information sharing, references to presidents, and government involvement. Included in this list are books that illustrated the importance of political systems to agricultural spaces. In many examples, churches, specifically Black churches, were an essential social justice entity because they provided a space for agriculturalists and others to meet and share critical information in African American agricultural communities.

Historically, the Black church was where many social justice movements were initiated. Taylor and Chatters (2010) wrote about the importance of the Black church to the African American culture:

Black churches have a long tradition of spearheading social, educational, and health services to their congregation and surrounding communities, including youth programs, economic development initiatives, programs for the elderly and their caregivers, income maintenance, and job training programs, to name a few. These programming efforts reflect a particular worldview of African American religious traditions that emphasizes the communal nature of worship, the collectivity of the church, and the role of the Black Church in mediating the broader social environment. (p. 280)

In *A Place Called Freedom* (Sanders, 1995), *George Washington Carver: An Innovative Life* (Macleod, 2007), *It Jes Happened* (2012), *Daddy Played the Blues* (Garland, 2017), *John Lewis in the Lead* (Haskins & Benson, 2006), *The Moon Over Star* (Aston, 2008), *Calvin's Wish* (Miles, 1993), *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement* (Weatherford, 2015), *Sunday Outing* (Pinkney, 1994), *Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom* (Weatherford, 2006), and *Freedom's School* (Cline-Ransome, 2015) the characters attend a church, establish a church, or use a church in a social movement. In *George*

Washington Carver: An Innovative Life, George Washington Carver taught bible study and would often use the bible stories in his instruction, because it was a text that African American farmers were most familiar with. Additionally, the bible contains many references to farmers and agriculture. The church in *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement* (Weatherford, 2015) and *John Lewis in the Lead* (Haskins & Benson, 2006) was used to register voters.

References to various government entities were also presented in the children's literature. In *The Secret Garden of George Washington Carver* (Barretta, 2019) and *George Washington Carver: An Innovative Life* (MacLeod, 2007), George Washington Carver spoke to congress about the ways that agriculture could impact daily practices. *My Name Is James Madison Hemings* (Winter, 2016) took place in the White House and the protagonist's father was in fact Thomas Jefferson. In *The Wagon* (Johnston, 1996) there was a comparison made between the enslaved protagonist and President Abraham Lincoln. Then, after the characters were granted their freedom, they planned to attend Abraham Lincoln's funeral. *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement* (Weatherford, 2015), *John Lewis in the Lead* (Haskins & Benson, 2006), and *Granddaddy's Turn: A Journey to the Ballot Box* (Bandy & Stein, 2015) were each about different aspects of the voting rights movement. Additionally, John Lewis and Fannie Lou Hamer even worked in government positions.

Table 12 was included to provide evidence of the ways that economic systems were presented in the children's literature. As data regarding economic systems surfaced in the critical readings, the text evidence was recorded.

Table 12

Economic Systems

Book Title/Author	Text Example
<i>The Unstoppable Garret Morgan</i> (DiCicco, 2019)	Morgan's inventions/patents were inspired by his farm experiences
<i>Picking Peas for a Penny</i> (Medearis, 1990)	Sold Harvested Goods: Food Crop
<i>The Moon Over Star</i> (Aston, 2008)	Grew their own food: Corn and Watermelon
<i>Granddaddy's Turn: A Journey to the Ballot Box</i> (Bandy & Stein, 2015)	Grew their own food: eggs, cows (milk)
<i>Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement</i> (Weatherford, 2015)	They grow food; their cow Della provided milk; She canned produce, catfish, rabbits. established Farming initiatives
<i>Calvin's Christmas Wish</i> (Miles, 1993)	Chickens: Eggs for breakfast
<i>The Hard-Times Jar</i> (Smothers, 2003)	Saved money for hard times
<i>Once Upon a Farm</i> (Bradby, 2002)	Pigs on the farm; bacon for breakfast; corn cakes, apple tree, ice cream from milk
<i>Joe Louis, My Champion</i> (Miller, 2004)	African American owns the farm store
<i>Down the Winding Road</i> (Johnson, 2000)	Owns their land
<i>Seeds</i> (Shannon, 1994)	Published a book inspired by garden experiences
<i>Lorraine: The Girl Who Sang the Storm Away</i> (Secor, 2018)	Owns land; tomatoes on the table; corn in the pail
<i>Down Home at Miss Dessa's</i> (Stroud, 1996)	Grows her own peaches and plums
<i>Grandpa Cacao</i> (Zunon, 2019)	Owned his farm and sold his goods
<i>Who Put the Cookie in the Cookie Jar</i> (Shannon, 2013)	Ingredients grown on farms and transported to a grocery store.
<i>The Old Truck</i> (Pumphrey, 2020)	Sell their goods and grows food crop
<i>A Place Called Freedom</i> (Sanders, 1997)	Establishes a community; grows food crop
<i>Two Old Potatoes and Me</i> (Coy, 2003)	Grows food
<i>How a Seed Grows</i> (Jordan, 2015)	Grows beans and carrots
<i>Baby Blessings</i> (Jordan, 2010)	Grows an orange tree; and eats the harvest
<i>Plant a Little Seed</i> (Christensen, 2012)	Grows vegetables
<i>The Chicken-Chasing Queen of Lamar County</i> (Harrington, 2007)	Owns land and has eggs for breakfast; chicken farm
<i>Rainbow Stew</i> (Falwell, 2013)	Grows vegetables in a vegetable garden

Table 12 (cont.)

Book Title/Author	Text Example
<i>We Keep a Store</i> (Shelby, 1989)	Owns a farm store; own's land
<i>I Love My Family</i> (Hudson, 1993)	Picks peaches; owns land
<i>Family</i> (Monk, 2001)	Grows her own food; owns land
<i>George Washington Carver: An Innovative Life</i> (MacLeod, 2007)	Taught farmers to sell their own goods
<i>It Jes' Happened</i> (Tate, 2012)	Farm Art sold for money
<i>Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table</i> (Martin, 2019)	Grew his own food; owned land; restaurant served farm grown food

Table 12 displayed roughly 29 examples of how economic systems were interpreted from the text. A discussion of these interpretations follows.

Economic Systems. Two main indicators were used to determine economic systems as displayed in Table 12: land ownership and agriculturally inspired products such as: food, art, and inventions. Growing food was one way to exercise economic autonomy as a means to reduce dependence on oppressive systems. Food crops allowed you the power to exercise self-reliance from the dominant and often oppressive systems such as corporate food regimes. White (2018) wrote that economic autonomy “is a process, a continuum that moves from complete dependence on an oppressive structure to independence” (p. 10). As stated previously, many farmers returned to agriculture during The Great Depression era to minimize dependence on government food rations.

Literature was coded as “land ownership” if there was an absence of language to indicate sharecropping, migrant, or slave labor. Additionally, land ownership was implied when the text indicated that the characters could make land decisions such as cutting down or replanting trees as seen in *Lorraine: The Girl Who Sang the Storm Away* (Secor, 2018) and *Down the Winding Road* (Johnson, 2000). In the text characters indicated annual visits which also suggests that the agricultural space belonged to the family.

In *It Jes' Happened* (Tate, 2012), *Seeds* (Shannon, 1994), and *The Unstoppable Garret Morgan* (DiCicco, 2019) an economic system was depicted by the agriculturally-inspired products that were developed. In *It Jes' Happened* (Tate, 2012), Bill Traylor sold his farm inspired artwork for a penny. In *Seeds* (Shannon, 1994), the protagonist published a book inspired by his garden experiences. In *The Unstoppable Garret Morgan* (DiCicco, 2019), Garrett Morgan's inventions, specifically the gas mask patent, were inspired by the farming fires he had witnessed as a child.

Oppressive systems were depicted in agricultural spaces in the children's literature with various examples evidenced by way of literacy restrictions, labor exploration, and violence. In response to these oppressive systems, educational efforts, civil disobedience, and tenets of agency materialized to counter such systems. In this next section, I provide a summary of the findings of the recurring patterns and themes from the analysis in the areas of geographic location, literacy, and agricultural spaces.

Geographical Location, Literacy, and Agricultural Space

In this section, I present depictions of Black life in agriculture by geographic locations and literacy events. According to the National Geographic Society (2011) "geography is the study of places and the relationship between people and their environments" (para. 1). For many of the books, the geographic location was not indicated in the plot or author's notes. As stated in previous sections, many of the literature examples related to gardening took place in suburban settings evidenced by white picket fences and uniformed housing units. In literature examples where the geographic location was included, a description of the setting and agricultural space is provided in Table 13. Barton and Hamilton (1998) and Barton (2007) defined literacy events as social, cultural, and situated literacy systems. In this section, I present a comprehensive list of the

literacy events that occurred in the various agricultural spaces. The findings illustrate the connections between the agricultural places, spaces, people, and literacy events.

Table 13***Geographic Location and Agriculture***

Book Title/Author	Location	Agricultural Space
<i>Working Cotton</i> (Williams, 1992)	Fresno, California	cotton; Migrant farm Other: Field
<i>The Legend Of Freedom Hill</i> (Altman, 2000)	California, Gold Rush	Vegetable Garden Undisclosed
<i>Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table</i> (Martin, 2019)	Milwaukee	Family Food Garden greenhouses
<i>Friend on Freedom River</i> (Whelan, 2004)	Detroit River	undisclosed
<i>The Hard-Times Jar</i> (Smothers, 2003)	Pennsylvania	Other: apples orchard Migrant farming
<i>The Sunday Outing</i> (Pinkney, 1994)	Philadelphia; North Carolina	Family-Owned Farm
<i>Benjamin Banneker</i> (Martin, 2014)	Maryland	Family-Owned Farm
<i>Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom</i> (Weatherford, 2006)	Maryland; Philadelphia; Canada	plantation
<i>My Name Is James Madison Hemings</i> (Winter, 2016)	Virginia	plantation
<i>The Unstoppable Garret Morgan</i> (DiCicco, 2019)	Claysville, Kentucky	Sharecropper farm Family Farm
<i>Virgie Goes to School with Us Boys</i> (Howard, 1999)	Jonesborough, Tennessee	Sharecropping farm Family Farm
<i>Lorraine: The Girl Who Sang the Storm Away</i> (Secor, 2018)	Tennessee	Family-Owned Farm
<i>A Place Called Freedom</i> (Sanders, 1997)	Tennessee; Indiana	plantation, Large Family-Owned Farm
<i>Flossie & The Fox</i> (McKissack, 1986)	Tennessee, Quarters	Eggs, peaches Family-Owned Farm
<i>Overground Railroad</i> (Cline-Ransome, 2020)	North Carolina	Sharecropper farm cotton, tobacco, peanuts Family Farm
<i>Calvin's Christmas Wish</i> (Miles, 1993)	North Carolina	Family-Owned Farm
<i>I Love My Family</i> (Hudson, 1993)	North Carolina	Family-Owned Farm
<i>The Wagon</i> (Johnston, 1996)	Carolina	plantation

Table 13 (cont.)

Book Title/Author	Location	Agricultural Space
<i>George Washington Carver: An Innovative Life</i> (MacLeod, 2007)	Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, Alabama	Flower Garden, laboratory, Classroom/College
<i>It Jes' Happened</i> (Tate, 2012)	Benton, Alabama; Montgomery, Alabama	Sharecropper Family Farm
<i>John Lewis in the Lead</i> (Haskins & Benson, 2006)	Troy, Alabama; Selma Alabama	chickens; Sharecropper farm Family Farm
<i>Ruby Bridges</i> (Donaldson, 2009)	Tylertown, Mississippi	Sharecropping Farm Family Farm
<i>Daddy Played The Blues</i> (Garland, 2017)	Mississippi	Sharecropper farm Family Farm
<i>Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement</i> (Weatherford, 2015)	Mississippi Delta	cotton; Sharecropper farm Family Farm
<i>Tailypo: A Newfangled Tall Tale</i> (Medearis, 1999)	Texas Hill Country	cotton; Family-Owned Farm
<i>Grandpa Cacao</i> (Zunon, 2019)	Ivory Coast, Africa	Large Family-Owned Farm

Note: This table includes the agricultural spaces and the agricultural product that was produced in the various agricultural spaces.

In Table 13, the Geographic location was determined from the textual information provided in the plot and the author's notes. Agricultural space was determined from the textual information, the author's notes, and the illustrations. Stories that only indicated North or South, were omitted from Table 13, but included in subsequent tables in this section. North Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee are the most recorded geographical locations in the literature and most often the agricultural space was a farm or a plantation. Nine of the farm spaces were Family-Owned Farms, and the other farm spaces were either sharecropping farms, labeled Family Farm, or educational farm spaces.

There were more Family-Owned Farms in the research, but the exact geographic location was not presented in the literature. Family-Owned Farms are discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 5. Sharecropping and plantations were omitted from the Family-Owned Farms list

because the farm spaces were often leased and therefore would not constitute a farm owned by the family, such as indicated with the term Family-Owned Farm. The following is a complete list of the Family-Owned Farms with and without geographic locations indicated in the text:

Lorraine: The Girl Who Sang the Storm Away (Secor, 2018), *Down Home at Miss Dessa's* (Stroud, 1996), *Grandpa Cacao* (Zunon, 2019), *The Old Truck* (Pumphrey, 2020), *A Place Called Freedom* (Sanders, 1997), *The Chicken-Chasing Queen of Lamar County* (Harrington, 2007), *We Keep a Store* (Shelby, 1989), *I Love My Family* (Hudson, 1993), *Family* (Monk, 2001), *Picking Peas for a Penny* (Medearis, 1990), *The Moon Over Star* (Aston, 2008), *Calvin's Christmas Wish* (Miles, 1993), *Granddaddy's Turn: A Journey To The Ballot Box* (Bandy & Stein, 2015), *Once Upon a Farm* (Bradby, 2002), *The Sunday Outing* (Pinkney, 1994), *Down the Winding Road* (Johnson, 2000), *Flossie & The Fox* (McKissack, 1986), and *Tailypo: A Newfangled Tall Tale* (Medearis, 1999). More information about Family-Owned Farms will be discussed in the next chapter as it relates to agricultural literacy.

Table 14 was designed to show the various literacy events that took place across the various agricultural spaces in the children's literature. Through multiple and repeat readings as well as analysis of the illustrations, literacy indicators were interpreted and recorded.

Table 14

Setting, Literacy, and Agriculture

	Title/Author	Setting	Literacy	Agriculture
1	<i>Friends and Flowers</i> (Gunderson, 2008)	Suburban	None	Flower Garden Tulip
2	<i>Baby Blessings</i> (Jordan, 2010)	Suburban White picket fence	Parents read a book about Space to Protagonist	Garden Orange Tree

Table 14 (cont.)

	Title/Author	Setting	Literacy	Agriculture
3	<i>Virgie Goes to School with Us Boys</i> (Howard, 1999)	Jonesborough, Tennessee, 1867	Boarding School Quakers Started Song Lyrics Protagonist Writes <i>Learning to be free</i>	Sharecropping/ Family-Owned Farm Slavery Beans, Grain
4	<i>Miss Tizzy</i> (Gray, 1993)	Suburban White picket fence	Instrument Crayon Drawings	Flower Garden
5	<i>Seeds</i> (Shannon, 1994)	Suburban White picket fence	Protagonist is a Professional Writer	Flower Garden
6	<i>Ruby Finds a Worry</i> (Percival, 2019)	Suburban White picket fence	Attends School Crayon Drawing	Garden Flowers, Soil
7	<i>Lorraine: The Girl Who Sang the Storm Away</i> (Secor, 2018)	Tennessee	Song Lyrics	Family-Owned Farm Corn
8	<i>Bree Finds a Friend</i> (Huber, 2014)	School	School Setting	Soil Plot Pretending to plant blueberries
9	<i>Down Home at Miss Dessa's</i> (Stroud, 1996)	South, 1940's	Protagonist reads a Bedtime Story Song Lyrics	Family-Owned Farm Plums Peaches
10	<i>I Believe I Can</i> (Byers, 2020)	Various Undisclosed	Instruments Crayon Drawing	Flower Garden Soil Plot
11	<i>Bread Lab</i> (Binczewski, 2018)	Undisclosed City Skyline	Protagonist takes notes in notebook <i>Take a Book</i> Sign at house	Backyard Chickens City Skyline (Urban) Aunt is a Farmer Plants food Wheat
12	<i>Grandpa Cacao</i> (Zunon, 2019)	Undisclosed Kitchen House Ivory Coast, Africa	Schoolwork to be finished before helping on farm	Ivory Coast Large Family-Owned Farm Cacao Fruit
13	<i>Grandma Lena's Big Ol' Turnip</i> (Hester, 2015)	House	Protagonist reads a vegetable catalog/and writes	Food Garden
14	<i>Who Put the Cookie in the Cookie Jar</i> (Shannon, 2013)	Various Locations	None	Farm Various crops Farm to Table
15	<i>The Old Truck</i> (Pumphrey, 2020)	Undisclosed Farm	None	Large Family-Owned Farm Fruits and Vegetables

Table 14 (cont.)

	Title/Author	Setting	Literacy	Agriculture
16	<i>A Place Called Freedom</i> (Sanders, 1997)	Tennessee, 1832 Indiana	Mom knows how to read and write from teaching the master's children. Mom taught young and old Protagonist Writes	Developed a Large Farming Community Family-Owned Farm Slavery Plantation
17	<i>Two Old Potatoes and Me</i> (Coy, 2003)	Suburban White picket fence	None	Family Vegetable Garden
18	<i>How a Seed Grows</i> (Jordan, 2015)	Suburban White Picket Fence Garden	Protagonist Writes	Family Vegetable Garden Beans, Soil
19	<i>Sadie's Seed Adventure</i> (Dybvik, 2013)	Town Botanical Garden	None	Garden Seeds, Soil Plants
20	<i>Plant a Little Seed</i> (Christensen, 2012)	Community Garden Harvest Time	Protagonist Reading Vegetable Catalog	Community Vegetable Garden
21	<i>The Chicken-Chasing Queen of Lamar County</i> (Harrington, 2007)	Rural Farm South Lamar County	None	Chicken Farm Eggs Family-Owned Farm
22	<i>Our People</i> (Medearis, 1994)	Various locations	Father is reading the protagonist a story	Rancher Cows Horses Farm
23	<i>We Keep a Store</i> (Shelby, 1989)	Undisclosed Country	The men tell long stories Mom reads inventory	Family-Owned Farm Apples Green Beans Chicken
24	<i>I Love My Family</i> (Hudson, 1993)	North Carolina	Aunt Belle tells funny stories Grandpa tells scary stories Family Tree	Family-Owned Farm Picking peaches
25	<i>Flossie & The Fox</i> (McKissack, 1986)	Tennessee, Quarters	None	Family-Owned Farm Eggs Peaches

Table 14 (cont.)

	Title/Author	Setting	Literacy	Agriculture
26	<i>Rainbow Stew</i> (Falwell, 2013)	Undisclosed house	Books in a home library Grandpa reads a book protagonist read books Photo of graduate	Vegetable Garden
27	<i>Tailypo: A Newfangled Tall Tale</i> (Medearis, 1999)	Texas Hill Country	Protagonist is reading a book	Family-Owned Farm Cotton
28	<i>Family</i> (Monk, 2001)	Five hours South	Protagonist reading a letter from aunt Instruments	Family-Owned Farm Livestock Various vegetables
29	<i>George Washington Carver: An Innovative Life</i> (MacLeod, 2007)	Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, Alabama	Doctorate Degree Professor Jesup Wagons Bible	Agricultural Specialist Flower Garden Peanuts, Sweet Potatoes, Soybeans Laboratory
30	<i>Benjamin Banneker</i> (Martin, 2014)	Maryland, 1731	Benjamin read Studied astronomy Studied the land Published almanacs	Family-Owned Farm
31	<i>George Washington Carver: Journey to Freedom</i> (Carey, 1999)	Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, Alabama	Doctorate Degree Professor Jesup Wagons Bible Tuskegee College	Agricultural Specialist Peanuts, Sweet Potatoes, Soybeans
32	<i>The Secret Garden of George Washington Carver</i> (Barretta, 2019)	Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, Alabama	Doctorate Degree Professor Jesup Wagons Bible Tuskegee College	Agricultural Specialist Garden Peanuts, Sweet Potatoes, Soybeans
33	<i>A Weed is a Flower: The Life of George Washington Carver</i> (Brandenberg, 1965)	Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, Alabama	Doctorate Degree Professor Jesup Wagons Bible	Agricultural Specialist Flower Garden Peanuts, Sweet Potatoes, Soybeans
34	<i>George Washington Carver</i> (Rau, 2014)	Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, Alabama	Doctorate Degree Professor Jesup Wagons Bible	Agricultural Specialist Peanuts, Sweet Potatoes, Soybeans

Table 14 (cont.)

	Title/Author	Setting	Literacy	Agriculture
35	<i>The Legend Of Freedom Hill</i> (Altman, 2000)	California, Gold Rush	Bible Reading	Vegetable Garden
36	<i>We're Going To The Farm</i> (Streza, 2012)	Undisclosed	None	Visit a Farm Livestock Undisclosed
37	<i>Sweet Clara And The Freedom Quilt</i> (Hopkinson, 1993)	North Farm Home Plantation South of Ohio River	Quilt images Dirt Drawings	Slavery Cotton Plantation
38	<i>It Jes' Happened</i> (Tate, 2012)	Benton, Alabama; Montgomery, Alabama, 1854	Learned to write his name at age 81 Illiterate	Sharecropper Farm Slavery
39	<i>Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table</i> (Martin, 2019)	Milwaukee, 1993	College Graduate	Community Garden/Greenhouses
40	<i>The Unstoppable Garret Morgan</i> (DiCicco, 2019)	Claysville, Kentucky, 1877	Private Tutor	Parents were sharecroppers Inventor Farm
41	<i>Daddy Played The Blues</i> (Garland, 2017)	Mississippi, 1936	Music, Lyrics	Leaving Farm/South Sharecropping
42	<i>John Lewis in the Lead</i> (Haskins & Benson, 2006)	Troy, Alabama; 1945 Selma Alabama	Reading in library Bachelor's Degree Fish University	Sharecroppers Chickens
43	<i>Picking Peas for a Penny</i> (Medearis, 1990)	1930's	None	Family-Owned Farm Peas
44	<i>Overground Railroad</i> (Cline-Ransome, 2020)	North Carolina	Reads a cover-worn book <i>Narrative of Fredrick Douglass</i>	Leaving Farm/South Sharecropper farm Cotton, tobacco, peanuts
45	<i>The Moon Over Star</i> (Aston, 2008)	1969	Singing hymn books Books on bookshelf	Family-Owned Farm Watermelon patch
46	<i>Calvin's Christmas Wish</i> (Miles, 1993)	North Carolina	Dropped out of school	Family-Owned Farm
47	<i>Granddaddy's Turn: A Journey to The Ballot Box</i> (Bandy & Stein, 2015)	South, Civil Rights Era	Denied access to vote literacy laws Cannot read Protagonist writes	Family-Owned Farm

Table 14 (cont.)

	Title/Author	Setting	Literacy	Agriculture
48	<i>Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement</i> (Weatherford, 2015)	Mississippi Delta, 1917	Dropped out of school at 6 th grade Won Spelling Bees Self-Taught Denied vote literacy laws Attended Citizenship School	Sharecropper Plantation
49	<i>The Wagon</i> (Johnston, 1996)	Carolina, 1865	Song Lyrics	Slavery Cotton Plantation
50	<i>My Name Is James Madison Hemings</i> (Winter, 2016)	Virginia, 1805	Denied formal education	Slavery Plantation
51	<i>The Underground Railroad</i> (Allen, 2015)	Various dates and locations, 1865	Prohibited literacy laws Thomas Jefferson letter about the UR Slave posters Harper's Magazine Emancipation Procl. Fredrick Douglass newspaper Uncle Tom's Cabin	Plantation Slavery Cotton
52	<i>The Hard-Times Jar</i> (Smothers, 2003)	Pennsylvania, Florida	Wants to write stories Writes during breaks from harvesting <i>Down south it was not allowed</i> Wants her own book Attends school Steals a Book	Apple orchard Migrant Workers
53	<i>Once Upon a Farm</i> (Bradby, 2002)	Undisclosed location	Daddy prayers Construction signs	Large Family-Owned Farm corn
54	<i>The Sunday Outing</i> (Pinkney, 1994)	North Philadelphia North Carolina (farm's location)	Books on the tables Books on the bookshelves	Family-Owned Farm in North Carolina

Table 14 (cont.)

	Title/Author	Setting	Literacy	Agriculture
55	<i>Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom</i> (Weatherford, 2006)	1820, Bucktown Maryland	Songs contained coded messages <i>Your father taught you to read the stars</i> Prayers	Plantation Slavery Cotton Sugarcane Indigo
56	<i>Down the Winding Road</i> (Johnson, 2000)	Undisclosed location	Oral storytelling	Family-Owned Farm Cows
57	<i>Working Cotton</i> (Williams, 1992)	Fresno, California	Mother sings School bus transports to fields	Migrant Workers Cotton
58	<i>Freedom's School</i> (Cline-Ransome, 2015)	Undisclosed location, 1865	<i>Real freedom means arithmetic and writing</i> Learning to read at church Writing with a stick Teacher/school for AA children Kids brought from the field to school Reading books	Sharecropping Fruits and Vegetables
59	<i>Joe Louis, My Champion</i> (Miller, 2004)	1937	News stories about Joe Louis on walls Dreams of being a doctor, teacher, lawyer Dad is reading a newspaper	Family-Owned Farm
60	<i>Friend on Freedom River</i> (Whelan, 2004)	Detroit River, 1850	Song Lyrics	Farmer Pear Tree Slavery
61	<i>Ruby Bridges</i> (Donaldson, 2009)	Tylertown, Mississippi New Orleans	Highest scoring Kindergarten Integrated Schools	Grandparents Sharecroppers
62	<i>Michelle Obama</i> (Raatma, 2010)	Chicago, IL 1964 Washington, DC	Harvard Law School	Vegetable Garden
63	<i>Slavery</i> (De Medeiros, 2008)	Various dates and locations, 1865	1740 Negro Act prohibited growing food and literacy for African Americans Slave posters Bible	Plantations Slavery

Table 14 (cont.)

	Title/Author	Setting	Literacy	Agriculture
64	<i>Dance Y'all</i> (Stroud, 2001)	Undisclosed Farm	Storytelling Record Player	Family-Owned Farm
65	<i>Slavery in America</i> (Blashfield, 2011)	1600-1865		Plantation Slavery

Table 14 shows that many literacy indicators were noted in most of the books. African Americans were displayed in the text and illustrations participating and engaging in literacy activities across multiple types of agricultural spaces. Table 14 showed that literacy activities were displayed in 86% of the children's literature.

Literacy Events

In South Carolina around 1739, approximately a hundred enslaved people marched carrying signs that read Liberty. The enslaved people had armed themselves and were participating in a demonstration of one of the many acts of slave rebellions that would take place over the next hundred years. However, after this rebellion, known as the Stono Rebellion, new restrictive laws were enacted. One such law was known as the Negro Act of 1740, which made it illegal for enslaved Africans to grow their own food and read. This act was one of the earliest restrictive agricultural and literacy policies linking illiteracy and agricultural spaces. Hence begins the narrative of oppression and associations that linked agricultural work to illiteracy. De Medeiros (2008) wrote in *Slavery*:

After the Stono Rebellion, a new law known as the negro Act, was passed in South Carolina in 1740. These laws limited the rights of African American slaves. They could no longer gather in groups, grow food for their own use, earn money, and learn how to read. (p. 13)

One of the most obvious examples which linked to agricultural space and illiteracy was found in *It Jes' Happened* (Tate, 2012). In this text, Bill Traylor did not learn to write his name until he was 81 years old. Indicating the dismal effects of literacy laws and restrictions that existed for African Americans in agricultural spaces in the South. In fact, it is not until Traylor leaves the agricultural space that he learned to write his name for the first time.

However illegal, enslaved people developed their own knowledge sharing systems by utilizing coded song lyrics and symbols. In *Sweet Clara And The Freedom Quilt* (Hopkinson, 1993), Clara used information gathered from the agricultural community to create a quilt with coded symbols outlining the geography of her surrounding landscape. In *Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom* (Weatherford, 2006), Harriet Tubman and many enslaved people used song lyrics to deliver critical messages and information. Weatherford (2006) wrote in the foreword of *Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom*, "Slaves were stirred by sermons about the ancient Israelites' journey out of Egypt and drew hope from African American spirituals - songs that sometimes contained coded messages to aid escape". In fact, many of the stories in the research made a biblical reference to freedom and African American spirituals. In *Overground Railroad* (Cline-Ransome, 2020), the author wrote, "All around me everybody leaving for the North talks in Bible words Exodus Egypt Canaan hoping that Chicago Detroit and New York City are The Promised Land" (p. 22). Additionally, one of the literacy practices, the protagonist, Ruth Ellen performed in *Overground Railroad* (Cline-Ransome, 2020), is a reading from a book written by Fredrick Douglass. In *The Wagon* (Johnston, 1996), *Virgie Goes to School with Us Boys* (Howard, 1999), *Friend on Freedom River* (Whelan, 2004), and *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement* (Weatherford, 2015) the lyrics from spirituals were used to mitigate the pain of bondage and the fear of the

unknown. In *The Wagon* (Johnston, 1996), “Papa sang while the two creaked along ‘*Swing low, sweet chariot, comin’ for to carry me home.*’ The two characters oversaw carrying supplies and enslaved people back and forth between the town and their plantation. During these journeys are when the protagonists would participate in literacy events by way of song. In *Virgie Goes to School with Us Boys* (Howard, 1999), the characters must travel a daunting journey in order to attend the boarding school established by the Quakers because Black children are not allowed to attend school with White children. Many times, that meant that Black children would have to walk a greater distance to attend school. During this time, as the characters were walking through a dark forest, they would sing in order to calm their fears of the dark and the unknown. Howard (1999) wrote in *Virgie Goes to School with Us Boys*:

Then Virgie whispered, ‘Let’s sing!’ ‘Just like a girl!’ Nelson said. But pretty soon he was singing too. ‘*Go Down Moses*’ and ‘*Oh Freedom*’ and ‘*Eyes Have Seen the Glory*’ and all the songs we could think of. The walk went faster then. Seemed not so dark. (p. 14)

In *Friend on Freedom River* (Whelan, 2004), the characters sang while navigating across the Detroit River on a dangerous journey to Canada. Whelan (2004) wrote in *Friend on Freedom River*:

Sarah began to sing and children joined her. *O Lord, O my Lord, keep me from sinkin’ down I tell you what I mean to do Keep me from sin down Sometimes I’m up, Sometimes I’m down Keep me from sinkin down Sometimes I’m almost to the ground Keep me from sinkin’ down I look up yonder and what do I see? I see angels beckonin’ me Keep me from sinkin’ down.* (p. 34)

In *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement* (Weatherford, 2015), Fannie Lou Hamer sang during many of the tribulations and confrontations she endured.

In fact, many of the songs she sang were songs that she had learned from her mother.

Weatherford (2015) wrote in *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement*:

I toured the South with words in my heart and spirituals I learned at my mother's knee. I fired up many a rally. This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine...But I wasn't singing for show. I was singing for freedom...People took to calling me 'the spirit of the civil rights movement.' (p. 18)

Lovell (1939) wrote about the intellectual rebellions to physical and mental oppression that occurred by way of the social realities that were expressed through the Negro Spirituals. Lovell (1939) wrote that the spiritual served three social functions: 1) to document their desire for freedom, 2) to document their desire for justice, and 3) to document their plans for a future.

Lovell (1939) wrote:

'When I get to heav'm, gonna put on my shoes'...that means he was talents, abilities, programs manufactured, ready to wear...He does not mean he will outgrow work, but simply that he will make his work count for something, which slavery prevents...When he gets a chance, he says, his is going to 'shout all ober God's heav'm' – make every section of this community feel his power. (p. 642)

The intellectual rebellions were performed through the singing of the Negro Spirituals and were more essential to resistance than the physical acts of rebellion (p. 637).

Schweiger (2019) wrote about the magnitude and impressiveness of literacy in the South for both the literate and illiterate by way of written and spoken text. Schweiger's (2019) work, *A*

Literate South: Reading Before Emancipation, served to document the literacy events, efforts, and material evidence that surfaced in the South for free and enslaved Black people. Schweiger (2019) wrote that enslaved people were in fact, not entirely illiterate, and in fact, some were even encouraged and taught to read by their masters. However, most of Schweiger (2019) examples were before the slave rebellions which caused many slave holders to become fearful of literacy among Black people. Music was one piece of evidence that literacy had a significance in the South. Schweiger (2019) wrote:

With the advent of new printing technology, musical notation became common in a wide range of publications, including almanacs, dancing manuals, guides to the meaning of dreams, joke books, fortune-telling manuals, and even guides to Freemasonry. Both tunes and texts of songs moved into the oral tradition from print. Slave and master, pietist and Methodist, weaver and miner all learned songs by ear even if they had no books, read poorly, or not at all. Slaves memorized eighteenth-century English hymns in worship services, adapting them to their own tunes and uses, while spiritual songs composed in the midst of camp meeting fervor circulated freely by ear and in print to be learned by both those who could read and those who could not. Spirituals were sung into being by slaves who combined African traditions with imagery, stories, and language from the King James Bible. (p. 127)

Just as Negro Spirituals were tools used in exercises of intellection rebellions in literacy restricted and prohibited spaces, so too is music used to present the intellectual voice of Hip Hop in urban African American and Latino communities. Bridges (2011) wrote about the pedagogical benefits that effectively addressed “the academic and social needs of Black boys...[that create] teaching and learning environments that...increase the capacity of all teachers to effectively

teach diverse student populations” (p. 325). In this study, Hip Hop is compared to the Negro Spirituals because it too functions as an intellectual tool purposed to oppose and express resistance to learning environments wrought with social injustices towards African American youth; social injustices that have negatively impacted literacy achievement. Bridges (2011) wrote:

Hip Hop is the Black man’s Negro Spiritual. It speaks to the struggles, the aspirations, the challenges, and the shortcomings, all in the same place. In a lot of ways, Hip Hop has become what the church used to be which was a place for lots of different points of view within the community. It’s that universal meeting place. It has the ability to bring people of different walks of life together to share an experience of culture, of love and to fight for their rights. It is a place where we seek spiritual renewal and validation. (p. 328)

In one of Bridges (2011) Hip Hop examples the lyrics read “[w]e pickin 100% designer name brand cotton they still plottin”. This Hip Hop lyric example connected an agricultural reference, the literal action of picking cotton to the intellectual decision-making power of consumerism. Picking and growing cotton, again often served as an agricultural crutch to many Black farmers, similar to the decisions that urban youth make regarding their desire to wear name-brand expensive clothing, which Bridges (2011) explained is a crutch to individuality and creativity. Urban youth should instead be encouraged to “create, cultivate and manage their own intellectual and creative products such that they may sustain comfortable lives for themselves and the larger community” (p. 330). In the next section, I present interpretations of literary quality, visual quality, the findings related to agricultural literacy content.

Literary Quality

In this section, I will discuss the literary and visual quality of the 65 books that were featured in this study. Literary and visual quality are important for the continued development and progression of authentic text and images that represent people of color respectfully and diversely. Text and illustrations are important to a child's identity development (Roether, 1998). Roether (1998) wrote:

Visual literacy takes as one of its concepts the idea of schemata, which Piaget defines as "mental image[s] or ... pattern[s] of action [which] become a way of representing and organizing all of the child's previous sensory-motor experience... The illustrations children encounter in their early literature, as sensory experience, can become important parts of this schemata, part of the building blocks of their thinking, something to which they will refer in their actions as they grow up, fulfilling the role [assigned to] them in the formation of identity. (para 1.)

Literary quality is essentially important because the literature that children are exposed to provides readers with a perception of what a community of people values. Illustrations, like text provide an experience and window into the community's culture, greatness, and history. Seale and Slapin (2005) wrote three criteria for evaluating the quality of a children's book: historical accuracy, cultural authenticity, and the disposition of stereotypes.

In this section, I provide readers with a general evaluation of the literary and visual quality of the 65 children's books that were featured in this study. When I considered literary quality, I thought of stories that were culturally accurate and that reminded me of experiences that occurred in my personal childhood. Children's books that have grandmother characters that remind me of my childhood experiences with my grandmother are books that I consider having

high literary quality. For example, *The Chicken-Chasing Queen of Lamar County* (Harrington, 2007) reminded me of my childhood because my maternal grandmother was also named *Big Mama*. Additionally, she was also creatively skilled in how she gave advice much like the grandmother character in Harrington's (2007) book. When I considered literary quality, I examined the development of the character. Is the person of color presented in the story honored or prioritized, or could the character be replaced by another person of color with a different racial background? *Miss Tizzy* (Gray, 1993), for example, is a grandmother character that sings and enjoys children, but some the characteristics are undeveloped. The detail about her front yard being more wild than other front yards on the block, did not register with my experiences of Black grandmothers and their front yards. The grandmothers in my childhood experiences believed that the appearance of the front of the house was important and contributed to the ways they were perceived as good neighbors. Considering the details of the story, Miss Tizzy could be a person of any race, and the fact that she was illustrated as a Black woman was not important to the plot of the story.

Likewise with visual quality, when I read the children's literature, I looked for illustrations that elicited an emotional response. For example, in *Lorraine: The Girl Who Sang the Storm Away* (Secor, 2018), when the protagonist, Lorraine was positioned in an open cornfield with her grandfather. From the illustrations, it looked as if she was running. There was a sense of joy and freedom that I felt when I opened the book for the first time. Looking in the background there were mountains and the image made me wonder what would be like to live in this moment and observe the beauty of the greenspace. Additionally, when the storm hit, the grandfather embraced her and the image elicited a sense of complete protection, like nothing in the world could ever harm her. As they sat embraced in the rocking chair, my eyes noticed in the

background a photograph of who I interpreted as a grandmother watching. With the fireplace lit in the background, it evoked a sense of quiet in the midst of tribulation. When I evaluated the illustrations in a children's books for diversity in how the characters were portrayed, I examined the character's physical appearances. If all the characters are given the same or similar physical features, hair styles, and skin tones then I considered the visual quality of that book to be very low.

In this section, I provided rationale for the ratings that are provided for each of the 65 picture books featured in this study. A rating scale of 1-3 was established to the literary quality, visual quality, and agricultural literacy content. It is important to note that many books that were rated high in literary and/or visual quality were rated lower in agricultural literacy content. Likewise, books that were rated higher in agricultural literacy content were often rated lower in literary and visual quality. But, nonetheless, these are the books we have. This study could be helpful to new writers who are writing for both the science and literary community to understand that we want to see both science content and authentic representations of Black people.

Table 15 is a general evaluation of the literary quality, visual quality, and agricultural literacy content. A rating of 1 was given as the lowest of the three numbers and should be considered a book to avoid. A rating of 2 is given if the book has some good qualities and could be a good resource for the classroom or home library. A rating of 2 means that there are other books that are better, but also other books that are worse. A rating of 3 was given to a book that should be acknowledged as an achievement and advancement in the field and should be a priority purchase to support classroom instruction.

Table 15***Literary Quality Ratings***

Title/Author	Literary Quality	Visual Quality	Agricultural Content
1 <i>Friends and Flowers</i> (Gunderson, 2008)	2	2	3
2 <i>Baby Blessings</i> (Jordan, 2010)	3	2	2
3 <i>Virgie Goes to School with Us Boys</i> (Howard, 1999)	2	3	2
4 <i>Miss Tizzy</i> (Gray, 1993)	2	3	1
5 <i>Seeds</i> (Shannon, 1994)	3	2	2
6 <i>Ruby Finds a Worry</i> (Percival, 2019)	3	3	1
7 <i>Lorraine: The Girl Who Sang the Storm Away</i> (Secor, 2018)	3	3	2
8 <i>Bree Finds a Friend</i> (Huber, 2014)	2	3	1
9 <i>Down Home at Miss Dessa's</i> (Stroud, 1996)	3	3	2
10 <i>I Believe I Can</i> (Byers, 2020)	1	3	2
11 <i>Bread Lab</i> (Binczewski, 2018)	3	2	3
12 <i>Grandpa Cacao</i> (Zunon, 2019)	3	3	3
13 <i>Grandma Lena's Big Ol Turnip</i> (Hester, 2015)	3	3	3
14 <i>Who Put the Cookie in the Cookie Jar</i> (Shannon, 2013)	2	1	3
15 <i>The Old Truck</i> (Pumphrey, 2020)	3	3	3
16 <i>A Place Called Freedom</i> (Sanders, 1997)	3	3	3
17 <i>Two Old Potatoes and Me</i> (Coy, 2003)	3	3	3

Table 15 (cont.)

Title/Author	Literary Quality	Visual Quality	Agricultural Content
18 <i>How a Seed Grows</i> (Jordan, 2015)	2	2	3
19 <i>Sadie's Seed Adventure</i> (Dybvik, 2013)	2	1	3
20 <i>Plant a Little Seed</i> (Christensen, 2012)	3	2	3
21 <i>The Chicken-Chasing Queen of Lamar County</i> (Harrington, 2007)	3	3	3
22 <i>Our People</i> (Medearis, 1994)	3	3	1
23 <i>We Keep a Store</i> (Shelby, 1989)	3	3	2
24 <i>I Love My Family</i> (Hudson, 1993)	3	3	1
25 <i>Flossie & The Fox</i> (McKissack, 1986)	3	3	1
26 <i>Rainbow Stew</i> (Falwell, 2013)	3	3	3
27 <i>Tailypo: A Newfangled Tall Tale</i> (Medearis, 1999)	2	3	1
28 <i>Family</i> (Monk, 2001)	3	3	3
29 <i>George Washington Carver: An Innovative Life</i> (MacLeod, 2007)	3	3	3
30 <i>Benjamin Banneker</i> (Martin, 2014)	2	2	1
31 <i>George Washington Carver: Journey to Freedom</i> (Carey, 1999)	2	3	3
32 <i>The Secret Garden of George Washington Carver</i> (Barretta, 2019)	3	3	3

Table 15 (cont.)

Title/Author	Literary Quality	Visual Quality	Agricultural Content
33 <i>A Weed is a Flower: The Life of George Washington Carver</i> (Brandenberg, 1965)	3	3	3
34 <i>George Washington Carver</i> (Rau, 2014)	2	2	3
35 <i>The Legend Of Freedom Hill</i> (Altman, 2000)	2	3	1
36 <i>We're Going To The Farm</i> (Streza, 2012)	2	1	2
37 <i>Sweet Clara And The Freedom Quilt</i> (Hopkinson, 1993)	3	3	1
38 <i>It Jes' Happened</i> (Tate, 2012)	2	3	2
39 <i>Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table</i> (Martin, 2019)	3	3	3
40 <i>The Unstoppable Garret Morgan</i> (DiCicco, 2019)	3	3	1
41 <i>Daddy Played The Blues</i> (Garland, 2017)	3	3	1
42 <i>John Lewis in the Lead</i> (Haskins & Benson, 2006)	3	3	2
43 <i>Picking Peas for a Penny</i> (Medearis, 1990)	3	3	3
44 <i>Overground Railroad</i> (Cline-Ransome, 2020)	3	3	1
45 <i>The Moon Over Star</i> (Aston, 2008)	3	3	2
46 <i>Calvin's Christmas Wish</i> (Miles, 1993)	2	3	1

Table 15 (cont.)

Title/Author	Literary Quality	Visual Quality	Agricultural Content
47 <i>Granddaddy's Turn: A Journey to The Ballot Box</i> (Bandy & Stein, 2015)	3	3	2
48 <i>Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement</i> (Weatherford, 2015)	3	3	3
49 <i>The Wagon</i> (Johnston, 1996)	2	3	1
50 <i>My Name Is James Madison Hemings</i> (Winter, 2016)	2	3	1
51 <i>The Underground Railroad</i> (Allen, 2015)	2	2	1
52 <i>The Hard-Times Jar</i> (Smothers, 2003)	3	3	2
53 <i>Once Upon a Farm</i> (Bradby, 2002)	3	3	3
54 <i>The Sunday Outing</i> (Pinkney, 1994)	3	3	1
55 <i>Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom</i> (Weatherford, 2006)	3	3	1
56 <i>Down the Winding Road</i> (Johnson, 2000)	3	3	1
57 <i>Working Cotton</i> (Williams, 1992)	3	3	3
58 <i>Freedom's School</i> (Cline-Ransome, 2015)	3	3	2
59 <i>Joe Louis, My Champion</i> (Miller, 2004)	3	3	1
60 <i>Friend on Freedom River</i> (Whelan, 2004)	3	3	2

Table 15 (cont.)

Title/Author	Literary Quality	Visual Quality	Agricultural Content
61 <i>Ruby Bridges</i> (Donaldson, 2009)	3	3	2
62 <i>Michelle Obama</i> (Raatma, 2010)	3	3	2
63 <i>Slavery</i> (De Medeiros, 2008)	3	2	1
64 <i>Dance Y'all</i> (Stroud, 2001)	3	3	3
65 <i>Slavery in America</i> (Blashfield, 2011)	2	2	1

Note: This table contains a rating for literary quality, visual quality, and agricultural literacy content. A rating of 3 is the highest rating and a rating of 1 is the lowest rating.

Table 15 displays the ratings for literary quality, visual quality, agricultural literacy content. The average rating for the literary quality for all 65 books was a 2.68. The average rating for the visual quality for 65 books was 2.74. The average rating for the agricultural literacy content was 1.98. The 17 books that are absolutely essential to a classroom or home library with high literary and visual quality that depict Black life in agriculture with high agricultural literacy value are: *Grandpa Cacao* (Zunon, 2019), *Grandma Lena's Big Ol Turnip* (Hester, 2015), *The Old Truck* (Pumphrey, 2020), *A Place Called Freedom* (Sanders, 1997), *Two Old Potatoes and Me* (Coy, 2003), *The Chicken-Chasing Queen of Lamar County* (Harrington, 2007), *Rainbow Stew* (Falwell, 2013), *Family* (Monk, 2001), *George Washington Carver: An Innovative Life* (MacLeod, 2007), *The Secret Garden of George Washington Carver* (Barretta, 2019), *A Weed is a Flower: The Life of George Washington Carver* (Brandenberg, 1965), *Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table* (Martin, 2019), *Picking Peas for a Penny* (Medearis, 1990), *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement* (Weatherford, 2015), *Once*

Upon a Farm (Bradby, 2002), *Working Cotton* (Williams, 1992), and *Dance Y'all* (Stroud, 2001).

Evaluating, recognizing, and defining literary quality is not an easy task. Librarians are often tasked with evaluating children's books for literary and visual quality, but they too have been met with heavy criticism, especially in the area of young adult literature. Gaffney (2017) wrote:

The trio of "morality, literary quality, and child appeal" that governed early youth librarians' book selections and recommendations survives today in the recurrent professional tensions between the aesthetic and literary qualities valued and lauded in children's and YA literature, more overtly didactic considerations of subject matter or content, and the field's (mostly) open-armed embrace of popular and mass media. (p. 52)

Librarians have been fighting against the ideologies of what critics might define as literary quality to create a space that includes reading that has both literary quality and reading appeal to young readers. In short, a child's appeal for a book is likely going to be different from an adult's perspective. A future study could involve young reader opinions of the literary quality, visual quality, and agricultural literature content for the books featured in this study.

Summary

This chapter provided examples for how Black life in agriculture was depicted in the children's literature and examined the key demographics, genre, and formats. Additionally, this chapter presented examples of how Black life in agriculture endured and resisted oppressive systems. Also, this chapter illustrated how Black life in agriculture was represented by geographic locations and through literacy events. Lastly, this chapter presented an evaluation of the literary quality, visual quality, and the agricultural content.

Most of the fantasy examples featured African American female characters. The fantasy genre provided a space for African American female characters to explore and exercise a level of freedom. The George Washington Carver biographies were the most prevalent on the list. George Washington Carver was a dynamic figure in the life agricultural representation for Black farmers. The following is a brief summary of the challenges and triumphs featured in the collection of George Washington Carver biographies which ultimately revolutionized his contributions to agriculture for all people.

Carver was without a doubt one of the most celebrated and accomplished African American agriculturalist in American history. All of the biographies provided a standard narrative of his childhood and early inspirations that sparked his interests in plants. The one event that was included in *George Washington Carver: An Innovative Life* (MacLeod, 2007) but absent from the others was the traumatic murder, of the African American man, that George Washington Carver witnessed as a teenager.

While George Washington Carver was a celebrated influential agriculturalist, however, the redundancy of his story has caused publishers to ignore the need for the stories of Black women in agricultural spaces. *Friends and Flower* (Gunderson, 2008) *Baby Blessings* (Jordan, 2010), *Miss Tizzy* (Gray, 1993) *Down Home at Miss Dessa's* (Stroud, 1996), *Michelle Obama* (Raatma, 2010), *Bread Lab* (Binczewski, 2018), *Grandma Lena's Big Ol' Turnip* (Hester, 2015), *The Old Truck* (Pumphrey, 2020), *How to Grow a Seed* (Jordan, 2015), *The Chicken-Chasing Queen of Lamar County* (Harrington, 2007), *We Keep a Store* (Shelby, 1989), *Flossie & The Fox* (McKissack, 1986), *Family* (Monk, 2001), *Pickin Peas for a Penny* (Medearis, 1990), *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement* (Weatherford, 2015), *The Hard-Times Jar* (Smothers, 2003), and *Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to*

Freedom (Weatherford, 2006) portrayed women in a dominant agricultural role. Of these 17 books that featured an agriculturally dominant female character, 16 (94%) of them were written by women. So, as indicated from the Casey, Novick, and Lourenco (2021) study, authorship is a factor that contributes to the gender of the character, and in this study both the gender and the agricultural position. Gender and authorship become extremely relevant in this study, because as the need for more agricultural representations of women increases, so will the need for more female authors if these authorship trends continue.

Essential to this study and future studies is an analysis on the intersectionality of race, gender, and agriculture. In a profession that is primarily White, the intersectionality between who is growing food and who is not typically shares the same identifiable characteristics: White and male. So, it is important to understand how race, gender, and agriculture impact each other in communities, especially food insecure communities. As stated in previous sections of this study, women were often left out of funding and education for agricultural initiatives (Wakefield & Talbert, 2003). Additionally, when the foundations of black agriculture was established by key figures, such as Booker T. Washington, women were largely ignored (White, 2018). So, the intersectionality between gender and race is essential to understanding the current inequities that exist in the field of agriculture today. The story of Fannie Lou Hamer captured the influence that race and gender had on agriculture in the U.S. because she had to fight injustices in her dual identities. Nonetheless, she developed many agricultural initiatives including Freedom Farms in order to create employment and educational opportunities in Mississippi for Black men and women. During the 1960's 39% of black women in Mississippi worked in the farming industry and prestigious organizations like the National Council for Negro Women were responsible for overseeing many farming initiatives, and functioned as an agricultural funding source (White,

2018). Smith (2019) wrote about the intersectionality of race, gender, sexuality, and agriculture. “In many conversations on food access and food security at the local, national, and global levels, food issues among LGBTQ communities are often neglected, further exacerbating food inequalities among this population” (p. 831). In fact, many LGBTQ populations, especially those identifying as transgender, are living in food insecure communities. These findings are outside of the common stereotypical perception that has associated many LGBTQ populations with adherently affluent lifestyles (Smith, 2019). As a result, many eco-queer justice movements like, Bushwick Campus Farm and Fancyland are working to address issues that intersect gender, race, sexuality, and agriculture. Smith (2019) wrote:

For example, the Bushwick Campus Farm and Fancyland both resist the corporatization of agriculture by choosing to practice an alternative way of producing. Moreover, they both also challenge the dominant narrative that most farmers who participate in the local food or sustainable agriculture movement are White, heterosexual, middle-class men, by publicly being and farming. These actions foster and maintain spaces that seek to emancipate queer folks from dominant systems. (p. 833)

A future study could examine queer children’s literature that features agricultural spaces to identify how queer farmers are depicted to further address food justice issues in queer communities.

Language variation was evident from the dialectic examples portrayed in the literature. African American farmers often interacted with other farmers of various racial and linguistic backgrounds through the selling of goods and other events which may have impacted their language variety. McNair (2015) wrote “[a]s individual speakers engage in contact between communities, ...features [exist] that are used by people in certain kinds of contact (p. 606). So,

as farmers engaged within their internal and external agricultural communities, language variety was formed. A more in-depth linguistic analysis is beyond the scope of this study but could be a focus for future studies as discussed in Chapter 6.

The available formats make children's literature that feature African American farmers accessible to a variety of readers with both visual and auditory impairments. Additionally, YouTube provides readers with access to literature beyond the traditional library systems by their online sharing platform; that allows readers to share various experiences through literature. One significant format feature was the American Sign Language performance on YouTube for *Sadie's Seed Adventure* (Dybvik, 2013).

The critical content analysis revealed evidence of the oppressive systems of racism that many African American farmers and agriculturalists experienced in the South. However oppressive the South, African American farmers and agriculturalists demonstrated resistance through various demonstrations of agency. African American agriculturalists, like farmers of all races have had to fight, protest, and lobby in order to counter the systemic injustices that have occurred in agricultural spaces. Agriculture being one of the most invaluable and impactful apparatuses in a civilization, is filled with obstacles. These obstacles moved agricultural communities into systems of collective agency. Agency was demonstrated in the literature through systems of community engagement, political involvement, and their acts of economic autonomy. Agency was also demonstrated through the social practices that produced literacy events during a time when traditional literacy systems were inaccessible for many African American agriculturalists.

Literacy was used by oppressors to deny Black farmers their right to vote. Many wanted to exercise their voting power in order to have an impact on their agricultural communities.

Nonetheless, literacy events were performed and practiced in these literacy restricted environments by way of church sermons as evidenced in *Freedom's School* (Cline-Ransome, 2015) and *It Jes' Happened* (Tate, 2012), garbage scraps as in *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement* (Weatherford, 2015), oral storytelling as in *Dance Y'all* (Stroud, 2001), *We Keep a Store* (Shelby, 1989), and *I Love My Family* (Hudson, 1993), books as in *The Hard-Times Jar* (Smothers, 2003), *Tailypo: A Newfangled Tall Tale* (Medearis, 1999), *Overground Railroad* (Cline-Ransome, 2020), and *John Lewis in the Lead* (Haskins & Benson, 2006), almanacs as in *Benjamin Banneker* (Martin, 2014) and song as in *Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom* (Weatherford, 2006), *Friend on Freedom River* (Whelan, 2004), and *Virgie Goes to School with Us Boys* (Howard, 1999). For the children in these agricultural communities, literacy was an establishment of freedom for their entire family. It was the first demonstration towards autonomy and independence that would move them away from systematic oppression.

Discussion

George Washington Carver acknowledged the importance of literacy and knowledge sharing when he transferred the information from the confines of the classroom setting into the natural learning environment of the Black agriculturalists – namely the fields. Through the use of Jesup Wagons, George Washington Carver was able to teach Black farmers in an environment where new information could be utilized in synchronous with formal instruction, creating an impactful agriculturally enriched cycle of practice and theory. Additionally, George Washington Carver used literacy tools from their environments, such as the Bible, which was heavily published and available in most agricultural communities, to merge new information with

background knowledge. George Washington Carver's efforts were a part of larger organizations working in agricultural spaces to educate Blacks in the South.

Jones (1937) wrote about Anna Jeanes, the Quaker philanthropist, who pledged a total sum of one million dollars to the education of Black people in rural American schools in the South. Before this transaction was completed, a Board of Trustees was to be created that would include Booker T. Washington. Many of the problems in the South, circulated around the purpose and commitment to educate Black people. Fear was rampant in the South concerning educational attainment and the trauma that existed and had transpired around prior literacy efforts. Jones (1937) wrote:

Many were genuinely afraid. Might not the rise of an educated and self-supporting Negro population forebode a renewal of the tragic happenings of the Reconstruction days, and would not the training of Negroes to undertake skilled work threaten the economic security of the White worker? And because fear is contagious, and is the strongest and most inhibiting of human emotions, the liberal elements in Southern life and thought seemed to fade away, and the Negro was called upon once again to pass through 'the valley of the shadow'. (p. 7)

It was in the shadow of this fear that the Jeanes supervisory initiatives were developed in 1908. The Jeanes superintendents comprised primarily of African American women (Caliver, 1933; Botsch, 2016), trained teachers, supervised the programs, developed curriculum, and raised money for school facilities. The Jeanes teachers brought about a huge change to the educational landscape of the South and received favorable reports year after year from the State Department of Education (Brewton, 1939). Brewton (1939) wrote:

In Florida, according to the biennial report, ‘the best teaching is being done in those counties where some one (sic) is employed to visit Negro schools to help teachers improve instruction, attendance, the school plant, etc.’, therefore, ‘the service rendered by the Jeanes Teacher is indispensable’. (p. 167)

One pedagogical framework that emerged out of the work of the Jeanes teachers was the impact and significance of linking the curriculum to the learner’s environment. Just as George Washington Carver took the Jesup Wagon into the fields, the Jeanes supervisors’ immense success was notably attributed to the philosophy and instructional design that placed the learner’s environment at the center of the curriculum framework. Jones (1937) wrote:

Briefly the ideal may be described as the linking of rural education to rural life...The curriculum should draw as much of its material as possible from the immediate surroundings, school activities should be related more nearly to the pupils’ daily lives, and the school should be centre...for the continued education of adolescents and adults by means of co-operative and socially useful activities. (p. 110)

Core curricular components would be more efficiently acquired and retained if they were connected to the interest “and active response of his whole environment” (p. 111). Furthermore, this instructional methodology would “bridge the gap between school and home” (p. 112) and create a more valuable educational appreciation and academic contribution for the entire community.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS FOR AGRICULTURAL LITERACY

Question 3: How do agriculturally themed children’s books that examine the relationship between Black life and farming written for elementary-aged children adhere to the Pillars of Agricultural Literacy?

Kovar and Ball (2013) wrote that an agriculturally literate person is a person that understands “the food and fiber system [that] includes its history and current economic, social, and environmental significance to all Americans” (p. 167). Agricultural professions and secondary schools have seen diminishing interest and enrollment (Kovar & Ball, 2013; Baker, Settle, Chiarelli, & Irani, 2013). Additionally, studies have found that science textbooks and curriculum programs (Vallera & Bodzin, 2016) alone do not provide an adequate representation of the agricultural concepts needed to develop an agriculturally literate society. As stated previously, there are two organizations working to develop agricultural science standards, curriculum, and experiences in the classroom: The National Agriculture in the Classroom and The American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture. This chapter presents the findings for how the agriculturally themed children’s books that feature Black life in agriculture address agricultural literacy.

Pillars of Agricultural Literacy

The American Farm Bureau Foundation of Agriculture (2012) developed a framework to increase agricultural literacy in the K-12 classrooms. The pillars of agricultural literacy are as follows:

1. The relationship between agriculture and the environment.
2. The relationship between agriculture and food, fiber, and energy.
3. The relationship between agriculture and animals.

4. The relationship between agriculture and lifestyle.
5. The connection between agriculture and technology.
6. The relationship between agriculture and the economy.

Table 16 presents the indicators that were used to categorize the children’s literature within the pillars of agricultural literacy. The category determination was made by the story elements and the illustrations. Table 16 contains a brief narrative of the evidence and the associated pillar.

Table 16

Agricultural Literacy Indicators in the Literature

	Title/Author/Publication	Indicated Pillars of Agricultural Literacy
1	<i>Friends and Flowers</i> (Gunderson, 2008)	Gardening together. She gives her friend a tulip bulb. <i>Pillar 1</i>
2	<i>Baby Blessings</i> (Jordan, 2010)	Food planting and Harvesting; <i>Pillar 2</i>
3	<i>Virgie Goes to School with Us Boys</i> (Howard, 1999)	Farm Job; Planting and Harvesting on a Farm <i>Pillar 6</i>
4	<i>Miss Tizzy</i> (Gray, 1993)	Flower Gardening, Agriculture and the Environment <i>Pillar 1</i>
5	<i>Seeds</i> (Shannon, 1994)	Flower Seed planting, watering <i>Pillar 1, Pillar 6</i>
6	<i>Ruby Finds a Worry</i> (Percival, 2019)	Gardening; Agriculture and the Environment <i>Pillar 1:</i>
7	<i>Lorraine: The Girl Who Sang the Storm Away</i> (Secor, 2018)	Harvest food crop, Farm life, Caring for animals; <i>Pillar 1, Pillar 2, Pillar 6.</i>
8	<i>Bree Finds a Friend</i> (Huber, 2014)	Soil importance; <i>Pillar 1</i>
9	<i>Down Home at Miss Dessa’s</i> (Stroud, 1996)	Farm life, Eating Healthy Food, Harvesting Food; <i>Pillar 2; Pillar 6</i>
10	<i>I Believe I Can</i> (Byers, 2020)	Flower Gardening, Community; <i>Pillar 1</i>
11	<i>Bread Lab</i> (Binczewski, 2018)	Food and Farming; <i>Pillar 2</i>
12	<i>Grandpa Cacao</i> (Zunon, 2019)	Food and Farming; Food processing, crops to chocolate Economic Impact <i>Pillar 2; Pillar 4; Pillar 6</i>

Table 16 (cont.)

	Title/Author/Publication	Indicated Pillars of Agricultural Literacy
13	<i>Grandma Lena's Big Ol' Turnip</i> (Hester, 2015)	Food and Agriculture; Vegetable Garden; Sharing Food Pillar 2 Pillar 4
14	<i>Who Put the Cookie in the Cookie Jar</i> (Shannon, 2013)	Food production, Pillar 2
15	<i>The Old Truck</i> (Pumphrey, 2020)	Large scale farming; large farm equipment; Farming career, Farm animal present; Pillar 2; Pillar 3 and Pillar 6
16	<i>A Place Called Freedom</i> (Sanders, 1997)	Food eaten from vegetable garden. Labor exploitation; economic impact Pillar 2, Pillar 6
17	<i>Two Old Potatoes and Me</i> (Coy, 2003)	Potato Crop, Food and Agriculture; Healthy Food options Weeding Safely Pillar 1, Pillar 2, Pillar 4
18	<i>How a Seed Grows</i> (Jordan, 2015)	Seeding and Watering Pillar 1
19	<i>Sadie's Seed Adventure</i> (Dybvik, 2013)	Weeding and Seeding, Pollination; Pillar 1
20	<i>Plant a Little Seed</i> (Christensen, 2012)	Community Gardening; Food Harvesting; Healthy Food Options; Pillar 1, Pillar 2, Pillar 4
21	<i>The Chicken-Chasing Queen of Lamar County</i> (Harrington, 2007)	Animal Safety and Welfare; Family Responsibility; Pillar 1, Pillar 3.
22	<i>Our People</i> (Medearis, 1994)	Ranching; Animal Welfare Pillar 3
23	<i>We Keep a Store</i> (Shelby, 1989)	Harvesting food crop, Processing and Canning; Pillar 2 Pillar 4, Pillar 6
24	<i>I Love My Family</i> (Hudson, 1993)	Harvesting peaches Pillar 2
25	<i>Flossie & The Fox</i> (McKissack, 1986)	Food Harvesting – Peaches; Labor Exploitation - Slavery/Sharecropping, Animal Safety, Pillar 2, Pillar 3 Pillar 6
26	<i>Rainbow Stew</i> (Falwell, 2013)	Harvesting; Making Stew with Garden Vegetables, Healthy Food, Family Responsibility; Pillar 2 and Pillar 4
27	<i>Tailypo: A Newfangled Tall Tale</i> (Medearis, 1999)	Labor Exploitation; Sharecropping Cotton; Not enough food. Hunger Pillar 6
28	<i>Family</i> (Monk, 2001)	Farm to table, Healthy Food options Pillar 2 and Pillar 4
29	<i>George Washington Carver: An Innovative Life</i> (MacLeod, 2007)	Seeding and Harvesting, Soil Care, Agriculture and Healthy Food Options, Innovative Farming, Farming Career Pillar 1, Pillar 5, Pillar 6
30	<i>Benjamin Banneker</i> (Martin, 2014)	Innovative Farming Invention; Almanac Pillar 5
31	<i>George Washington Carver: Journey to Freedom</i> (Carey, 1999)	Innovative Farming, Farming Career; Seeding and Soil Care Pillar 1, Pillar 5, Pillar, Pillar 6

Table 16 (cont.)

	Title/Author/Publication	Indicated Pillars of Agricultural Literacy
32	<i>The Secret Garden of George Washington Carver</i> (Barretta, 2019)	Innovative Farming, Soil Care; Farming Career Pillar 1, Pillar 5, Pillar 6
33	<i>A Weed is a Flower: The Life of George Washington Carver</i> (Brandenberg, 1965)	Innovative Farming, Farming Career; Weeding and Seeding Pillar 1, Pillar 5, Pillar 6
34	<i>George Washington Carver</i> (Rau, 2014)	Innovative Farming, Farmer Career; Mother was kidnapped as an enslaved person Labor Exploitation Pillar 1, Pillar 2, Pillar 5, Pillar 6
35	<i>The Legend Of Freedom Hill</i> (Altman, 2000)	Food eaten from vegetable garden; Labor exploitation Pillar 2, Pillar 6
36	<i>We're Going To The Farm</i> (Streza, 2012)	Farm Animal Care and Welfare Pillar 3
37	<i>Sweet Clara And The Freedom Quilt</i> (Hopkinson, 1993)	Labor Exploitation, Activism Pillar 6
38	<i>It Jes' Happened</i> (Tate, 2012)	Labor Exploitation Sharecropper. Not enough food, Animal Care and Welfare; Family Responsibility Pillar 1, Pillar 3, Pillar 6
39	<i>Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table</i> (Martin, 2019)	Soil care, Food Choices, Shared Values, Farming Hunger Food Deserts; Farming Career Pillar 1, Pillar 2, Pillar 4, Pillar 6
40	<i>The Unstoppable Garret Morgan</i> (DiCicco, 2019)	Sharecropping Farm Labor, Pillar 6
41	<i>Daddy Played the Blues</i> (Garland, 2017)	Sharecropping Farm Labor Pillar 6
42	<i>John Lewis in the Lead</i> (Haskins & Benson, 2006)	Sharecropping Farm Labor Activism, Care for chickens Pillar 3, Pillar 6
43	<i>Picking Peas for a Penny</i> (Medearis, 1990)	Harvesting, Family Responsibility, Large Scale Farming Economic Impact Pillar 2, Pillar 6.
44	<i>Overground Railroad</i> (Cline-Ransome, 2020)	Sharecropping Farm Activism Pillar 6
45	<i>The Moon Over Star</i> (Aston, 2008)	Family-Owned Farming, Food Crops, Food crop watermelon. Farming Career, Pillar 2, Pillar 6
46	<i>Calvin's Christmas Wish</i> (Miles, 1993)	Family Responsibility, Animal Care and Welfare Pillar 1, Pillar 3
47	<i>Granddaddy's Turn: A Journey to The Ballot Box</i> (Bandy & Stein, 2015)	Family-Owned Farming, Food Crops, Animal Care, Farming Career Pillar 2; Pillar 4, Pillar 6
48	<i>Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement</i> (Weatherford, 2015)	Sharecropping, Hunger, Farming Career, Activism Pillar 6

Table 16 (cont.)

	Title/Author/Publication	Indicated Pillars of Agricultural Literacy
49	<i>The Wagon</i> (Johnston, 1996)	Slavery, Labor Exploitation, Economic Impact on US economy. Pillar 6
50	<i>My Name Is James Madison Hemings</i> (Winter, 2016)	Slavery, Economic Impact on US economy, Pillar 6
51	<i>The Underground Railroad</i> (Allen, 2015)	Slavery, Labor Exploitation, Economic Impact on US economy, Pillar 6
52	<i>The Hard-Times Jar</i> (Smothers, 2003)	Labor Exploitation, Economic Impact on US economy. Harvesting apples, Migrant Farming Career Pillar 2, Pillar 6
53	<i>Once Upon a Farm</i> (Bradby, 2002)	Large Scale Farming Pillar 6
54	<i>The Sunday Outing</i> (Pinkney, 1994)	Flower Garden; Farm, Pillar 1
55	<i>Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom</i> (Weatherford, 2006)	Labor Exploitation, Economic Impact on US economy, Pillar 6
56	<i>Down the Winding Road</i> (Johnson, 2000)	Family-Owned Farming, Legacy, Healthy Food Choices Pillar 4
57	<i>Working Cotton</i> (Williams, 1992)	Sharecropping, Labor Exploitation, Pillar 6
58	<i>Freedom's School</i> (Cline-Ransome, 2015)	Sharecropping, Labor Exploitation; Farming Career Pillar 6
59	<i>Joe Louis, My Champion</i> (Miller, 2004)	Farm Life, Growing up on a farm, Farming Career Pillar 6
60	<i>Friend on Freedom River</i> (Whelan, 2004)	Slavery, Labor Exploitation Pillar 6
61	<i>Ruby Bridges</i> (Donaldson, 2009)	Sharecropping; Labor Exploitation Pillar 6
62	<i>Michelle Obama</i> (Raatma, 2010)	Vegetable garden Pillar 2, Pillar 4
63	<i>Slavery</i> (De Medeiros, 2008)	Labor Exploitation Pillar 6
64	<i>Dance Y'all</i> (Stroud, 2001)	Farming, Livestock, Harvesting Pillar 2, Pillar 3, Pillar 4
65	<i>Slavery in America</i> (Blashfield, 2011)	Labor Exploitation Pillar 6

Table 17 is a numeric summary of the number of books that belonged to each of the Pillars of Agricultural Literacy. Table 16 includes a description of the evidence connected to the

language in the Pillars of Agricultural Literacy. The descriptors were calculated and then summarized into numbers and percentages in Table 17.

Table 17

Pillars of Agricultural Literacy

Pillars of Agricultural Literacy	#	%
Pillar 1	21	32
Pillar 2	25	38
Pillar 3	9	14
Pillar 4	12	18
Pillar 5	6	9
Pillar 6	40	62

Table 17 showed that 62% of the books had a description or evidence that would connect to the language in the standards of Pillar 6: The relationship between agriculture and the economy. Pillar 2, the relationship between food, fiber, and energy was the next highest pillar, as 38% of the books contained evidence that connected to the language in that pillar. The third highest pillar from Table 17, was Pillar 1: The relationship between agriculture and the environment. Table 17 showed that 32% of the books contained language that connected to that pillar.

Pillar #1: The relationship between agriculture and the environment. The secondary descriptors for this agricultural pillar are as follows: Land Water Stewardship, Family Responsibility, and Environmental Decision Making. Roughly, 32% (21/65) of the books had either a primary or secondary focus around the first agricultural literacy pillar: agriculture and the environment.

Many of the books varied in how African Americans were depicted as land stewards. One of the key learning objectives from the first pillar is that students understand how farmers use the land to grow various things. In many of the stories, African American agriculturalists used their

land to grow both crops and flowers. The children's literature illustrated how the land was used for planting and cultivating gardens, as well as planting and harvesting food crops. Additionally, many stories focused on the importance of healthy soil and water conservation.

In *Friends and Flowers* (Gunderson, 2008) the protagonist spends time with her friend's and personal garden space. She planted a tulip bulb and protected the tulip from squirrels and rabbits by using a makeshift repellent from hot sauce. The text also provided the reader with a planting activity at the back of the book and a diagram that explained the life cycle of the tulip bulb. There was not much emphasis placed on watering, like in the other gardening stories on the list, but the protagonist explained the role that soil plays in the flower planting process. On one page is an illustration of the protagonist measuring the depth of soil needed so that the tulip bulb can grow properly.

The soil is also important in *Bree Finds a Friend* (Huber, 2014). The protagonist is exploring the soil and finds worms. In fact, a new friendship developed as the two characters examined both the soil and the worms. In *Seeds* (Shannon, 1994) and *I Believe I Can* (Byers, 2020) the protagonists used their land for gardening and while the soil is not referenced there is some attention given to watering.

One of the key objectives in the first pillar is that students understand the importance of water sources and water use for growing plants. In *Seeds* (Shannon, 1994) the protagonist weeds and waters the garden. On one page, Bill says "time to turn off the water" which depicts evidence of water conservation. In *I Believe I Can* (Byers, 2020) the character is standing over a soil plot with a watering can. In *How a Seed Grows* (Jordan, 2015) the protagonist used both soil and watering in the process of seed cultivation. Emphasizing the importance of watering and seed growth the protagonist says, "Water your seed a little every day. The water soaks into the

seeds. The seeds begin to grow”. Additionally, *How a Seed Grows* (Jordan, 2015) contained a description of the lifecycle of a seed. In the early growth stages, the protagonist planted the bean seed in an egg carton before replanting it in a larger outdoor garden.

In *Plant a Little Seed* (Christensen, 2012), the protagonists are watering and weeding as they are waiting for their food crops to harvest. “We water and weed and dream and water and wait some more”. There are many illustrations depicting the rich dark color of the soil and the illustrations provide an up-close view of how the food crops are growing underneath the ground.

In *Sadie’s Seed Adventure* (Dybvik, 2013) the protagonists become seeds themselves and the reader learns how seeds travel to different environments. The text combines facts and fantasy content while the characters are transported to different locations. Along the bottom of the pages are additional facts about the different seeds and the growing conditions. In the final pages, the reader learns how to conduct a seed transportation experiment by walking around in natural outdoor spaces with socks on.

All of the George Washington Carver biographies provided an illustration of how healthy soil is vital to the cultivation of healthy crops. The biographies explained how the cotton crop had depleted the soil’s nutrients and addressed how crop rotation added nutrients and improved the health of the soil. In *A Weed is a Flower: The Life of George Washington Carver* (Brandenberg, 1965), the reader learns how planters have harmed the soil by growing the cotton crop. The literature presented two solutions to improve the health of the soil: crop rotation and compost. Brandenberg (1965), wrote “that raising only cotton harmed the soil. It was better if different crops were planted each year”. In *The Secret Garden of George Washington Carver* (Barretta, 2019), the author wrote that George Washington Carver “experimented with new crops to replace cotton, like sweet potatoes and soybeans”. In *George Washington*

Carver (Rau, 2014) the author wrote that “George discovered that planting different crops each year made the soil healthy again”. *George Washington Carver: Journey to Freedom* (Carey, 1999) and *George Washington Carver: An Innovative Life* (MacLeod, 2007) the text not only addressed crop rotation but also how compost can improve the health of the soil. Carey (1999) wrote that “George tried to help these farmers by finding ways to enrich the soil without using expensive fertilizer”. MacLeod (2007) also wrote about the cost-effectiveness of using compost to improve the soil’s health. “Fertilizer improved soil, George knew, but poor farmers couldn’t afford expensive chemicals. He suggested they use manure and compost – decomposed grasses, leaves, and other plant materials” (p. 20).

Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table (Martin, 2019) also included specifications about the importance of soil health and strategies for improving the soil. After Will Allen had purchased the city lot, he realized that the soil was polluted. He, like the farmers in George Washington Carver’s biographies, did not have money for expensive farming equipment. So, Will Allen used compost to renew the soil’s nutrients. “In Belgium, Will learned to make good soil with food garbage. They called it composting. But he needed lots of garbage. He asked his friends to save food waste – apple peels to old zucchinis” (p. 10). Additionally, worms, if properly cared for, helped the compost break down faster. The children in the text studied the worms for many years in order to determine how to most effectively use them in the process of composting.

Family responsibility, another component from pillar 1, was depicted in the text and the illustrations as the process of food harvesting, preparation, and family recipes were passed to the next generation. In *Bread Lab* (2018), the aunt is teaching her niece how to bake bread from scratch and throughout the text, they work together to prepare the bread. In *Grandma Lena’s Big*

Ol' Turnip (Hester, 2015), the grandmother has a hard time harvesting the big turnip, but the entire family participates in the harvest; even the youngest relative Baby Pearl is asked to help. In *Grandpa Cacao* (2019) the grandfather is teaching his granddaughter how to make chocolate cake. In *Who Put the Cookies in The Cookie Jar* (2013), the mother is teaching her daughter how to bake cookies. These are examples of how family responsibility and agricultural duties were depicted in the children's literature.

Another important component of pillar 1 is environmental decision-making. Farmers make crucial environmental decisions in order to maintain a strong ecological system that supports healthy soil and crop cultivation. Four texts provided examples of how planters make environmental decisions related to pest control. In *Friends and Flowers* (Gunderson, 2008), the protagonist, after consultation with her mother, used hot sauce to deter a rabbit from eating her newly planted tulip. "That evening, Lindsey told her mother, "Rabbits are going to eat my tulip!" "We can use a mix of hot-pepper sauce and water to keep them away, Mom said. "Because the mix is natural, it won't hurt animals" (p. 20). In *Two Old Potatoes and Me* (Coy, 2003), the protagonist was worried about insects eating the leaves of her potatoes when her father suggested she use a soap solution. "In July when the plants were as tall as my waist, we picked potato beetles off the leaves. I dropped them into a pail of soapy water. "We have to do this, Dad said. "Otherwise, the bug will eat the leaves and the potatoes won't grow" (p. 14). George Washington Carver also used safe methods for dealing with agricultural pests. In *George Washington Carver: An Innovative Life*, MacLeod (2007) that Carver used "His new cotton, Carver's Hybrid, [which] produced a good crop...resisted damage from swarms of insects called boll weevils" (p. 22). In *George Washington Carver: Journey to Freedom* (Carey, 1999), we learn that "this new breed of

cotton matured quickly, and farmers could pick it before insects such as the boll weevil had a chance to destroy the crop” (p. 25).

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2022) wrote about the importance of understanding and preserving the earth’s biodiversity. “Biodiversity is the rich variety of living things that, woven together, support and sustain life on Earth” (p. 1). Wilson (2022) wrote “biodiversity is the totality of all inherited variation in the life forms of Earth, of which we are one species. We study and it to our great benefit. We ignore and degrade it to our great peril” (p. ii). Many of George Washington Carver’s biographies addressed the importance of human connection to nature, as his early experiences with agriculture stemmed from his research in garden spaces. Barretta (2019) included the following quote from George Washington Carver “regard nature, revere nature, respect nature” (p. 34). Additionally, studies have found that gardening education engaged students with food systems, social and emotional learning, and creative expression. Gareau and Moscovitz (2021) wrote that:

Gardening as environmental education provides different forms of engagement for children...[to] include designing, planting, and maintaining gardens or hydroponic systems, harvesting, preparing and sharing food, working cooperatively in groups; and learning about plant biology, soil ecology, and food and nutrition. Gardens are also canvases for creative expression through art, poetry, and literature. (p. 167)

The relationship between agriculture and the environment is important to the health of the earth. As the population increases so does the strain that human activities, such as agriculture, place on the earth’s resources (Hodges, 2021). Begum (2019) wrote, “since the 1970s, Earth's population has doubled, and consumption has increased by 45% per capita...As a result, humans

have directly altered at least 70% of Earth's land, mainly for growing plants and keeping animals” (para. 8).

Additionally, The National Academy of Sciences (2021) wrote:

The need for sustainable agriculture is becoming ever more significant. The world’s population is still increasing, requiring more from our agricultural systems...agriculture plays a significant role in some of the biggest environmental challenges that humanity is facing, including climate crisis, biodiversity loss, deforestation, and the pollution of our soil, water, and air. (p. 4)

As a result, of the environmental and planetary impact of human activity, students’ understanding of land and water use will be critical to the future survival and health of the earth.

Pillar #2: The relationship between agriculture and food, fiber, and energy. The secondary descriptors for this agricultural pillar are as follows: Food Safety, Inspection, Energy Sources, Shared Values, Ethics, and Production Methods. The findings reveal that approximately 38% of the books address topics in this domain.

The principles in pillar two address topics about food safety, food inspection, eating a healthy diet, identifying food sources, and harvesting food from seeds. There are some heavy overlaps between pillars one and two around land use for planting flower seeds and planting food seeds, so naturally, there are books that appear on both pillars. According to the Pillars of Agricultural Literacy, harvesting, at-home food safety practices, and general farming values would be key objectives for this section. In the 9th-12th grade Knowledge-Building section, the key objective for pillar two is that students learn the “historical significance of long-lasting Family-Owned Farms.” In this section, I created a table of the food and/or fiber product(s) that were featured in the illustrations, harvested, and any additional food items that were presented in

the text. In the table is a list of the children's literature and the food that was presented in the text along with a label. The food item is labeled either family food, cash crop, or sometimes labeled with both, if the agricultural products served two purposes. Cash crops were typically depicted in the literature by way of the illustrations. Typically, the cash crop was in an agricultural space featured in bulk inside of multiple baskets and/or loaded onto the back of a pickup truck for transport. Family food, on the contrary, was typically featured on the kitchen table outside of the agricultural space unless it was being fed to a farm animal.

Table 18 was designed to provide an overview of the types of agriculture that was present in the various books. Additionally, Table 18 listed the item that was displayed in either the text or the illustration. An interpretation was made to categorize the agricultural product as family food or cash crop. In the last column of Table 18 the setting of the agricultural product was disclosed.

Table 18

Food Crops, Cash Crops, and Setting

Title/Author/Date	Family Food and Crops	Cash Crops	Setting
<i>Baby Blessings</i> (Jordan, 2010)	Oranges (family)		Undisclosed Suburban White picket fence
<i>Virgie Goes to School with Us Boys</i> (Howard, 1999)		Peas, Grain (sell)	Jonesborough, Tennessee, 1867
<i>Lorraine: The Girl Who Sang the Storm Away</i> (Secor, 2018)		Corn (family/sell)	Tennessee
<i>Down Home at Miss Dessa's</i> (Stroud, 1996)	Biscuits, Peaches, Plums (family)		South, 1940's
<i>Bread Lab</i> (Binczewski, 2018)	Wheat (family)		Undisclosed City Skyline

Table 18 (cont.)

Title/Author/Date	Family Food and Crops	Cash Crops	Setting
<i>Grandpa Cacao</i> (Zunon, 2019)		Cacao Fruit (sell)	Ivory Coast, Africa
<i>Grandma Lena's Big Ol' Turnip</i> (Hester, 2015)	Turnip (family)		House Garden
<i>Who Put the Cookie in the Cookie Jar</i> (Shannon, 2013)		Wheat, sugarcane, (sell)	Various Locations
<i>The Old Truck</i> (Pumphrey, 2020)		Carrots, Cabbage, Potatoes Fruit (sell)	Undisclosed Farm
<i>A Place Called Freedom</i> (Sanders, 1997)	Corn, wheat, grain, melon, apples, nuts, beans, potatoes (family/sell)	Corn, wheat, grain, melon, apples, nuts, beans, potatoes (family/sell)	Tennessee Indiana 1832
<i>Two Old Potatoes and Me</i> (Coy, 2003)	Potatoes (family)		Suburban White Picket Fence Garden
<i>How a Seed Grows</i> (Jordan, 2015)	Apples, carrots, corn, clover, wheat, beans (family)		Suburban White Picket Fence Garden
<i>Plant a Little Seed</i> (Christensen, 2012)	Pumpkins, corn, radish, melon, peas, carrots, tomato (family)		Community Garden
<i>We Keep a Store</i> (Shelby, 1989)		Apples, green beans, corn (sell)	Undisclosed Country
<i>I Love My Family</i> (Hudson, 1993)	Peaches (family)		North Carolina
<i>Flossie & The Fox</i> (McKissack, 1986)	Eggs (sell/family)	Peaches (sell)	Tennessee
<i>Rainbow Stew</i> (Falwell, 2013)	Spinach, kale, cucumbers, zucchini, peas beans, yellow peppers, cabbage heads, radishes, tomatoes, potatoes, carrots, eggplants (family)		Undisclosed House Garden
<i>Tailypo: A Newfangled Tall Tale</i> (Medearis, 1999)		Cotton	Texas Hill Country
<i>Family</i> (Monk, 2001)	Fish, cream, corn, potatoes, tomatoes, cucumber, cooked chicken, greens (family)		Five hours South

Table 18 (cont.)

Title/Author/Date	Family Food and Crops	Cash Crops	Setting
<i>George Washington Carver: An Innovative Life</i> (MacLeod, 2007)		Peanuts, soybeans, berries, corn, sweet potato, cotton	Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, Alabama
<i>George Washington Carver: Journey to Freedom</i> (Carey, 1999)		Cotton Wheat, fruit trees, vegetables, Black eyed peas, legume, sweet potato, soybeans, alfalfa, peanut (sell)	Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, Alabama
<i>The Secret Garden of George Washington Carver</i> (Barretta, 2019)		cotton Peanut, soybean, sweet potato (sell)	Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, Alabama
<i>A Weed is a Flower: The Life of George Washington Carver</i> (Brandenberg, 1965)		cotton Sweet potato Peanuts (sell)	Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, Alabama
<i>George Washington Carver</i> (Rau, 2014)		cotton peanut, soybeans, sweet potato (sell)	Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, Alabama
<i>The Legend Of Freedom Hill</i> (Altman, 2000)	Biscuits, greens, beans, challah, chicken soup, vegetables (family)		California
<i>Sweet Clara And The Freedom Quilt</i> (Hopkinson, 1993)		Cotton	South of Ohio River
<i>It Jes ' Happened</i> (Tate, 2012)		Cotton	Benton, Alabama Montgomery, Alabama, 1854
<i>Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table</i> (Martin, 2019)	Vegetables, carrots, greens, tomatoes, potatoes, lima beans, ham, Spinach, lettuce, Black eyed peas (sell/community)	Vegetables, carrots, greens, tomatoes, potatoes, lima beans, ham, Spinach, lettuce, Black eyed peas (sell/community)	Milwaukee, 1993
<i>Daddy Played the Blues</i> (Garland, 2017)	Catfish (family)		Mississippi, 1937
<i>Picking Peas for a Penny</i> (Medearis, 1990)		Peas (sell)	1930's

Table 18 (cont.)

Title/Author/Date	Family Food and Crops	Cash Crops	Setting
<i>Overground Railroad</i> (Cline-Ransome, 2020)		Cotton, tobacco, Peanuts	North Carolina
<i>The Moon Over Star</i> (Aston, 2008)	Watermelon (family) Popcorn (family)		1969
<i>Calvin's Christmas Wish</i> (Miles, 1993)	Oranges, apples, tangerines, eggs, apple pie, apples, pecans		North Carolina
<i>Granddaddy's Turn: A Journey to The Ballot Box</i> (Bandy & Stein, 2015)	Fish, cereal (family)		South 1950's
<i>Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement</i> (Weatherford, 2015)	Rabbits, squirrels, cornmeal, chitlins, hog heads, onions, greens, perch, catfish, pigs feet, peanuts, rice (family)	Cotton	Mississippi Delta, 1917
<i>The Wagon</i> (Johnston, 1996)		Cotton	Carolina, 1865
<i>My Name Is James Madison Hemings</i> (Winter, 2016)			Virginia, 1805
<i>The Underground Railroad</i> (Allen, 2015)		Cotton	Various Locations 1865
<i>The Hard-Times Jar</i> (Smothers, 2003)	Cornbread Red beans and rice	apples	Pennsylvania, Florida
<i>Once Upon a Farm</i> (Bradby, 2002)		Corn	Undisclosed Farm
<i>Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom</i> (Weatherford, 2006)	Biscuits, butter beans, berries	Cotton, rice, indigo, sugarcane	Bucktown, Maryland 1820
<i>Down the Winding Road</i> (Johnson, 2000)	Biscuits, pears, apples, muffins, banana, salad, bread, pie, turkey		Undisclosed farm
<i>Working Cotton</i> (Williams, 1992)	Cornbread, greens, meat	Cotton	Fresno, California
<i>Freedom's School</i> (Cline- Ransome, 2015)	Salt pork, cornbread	Tomatoes, carrots, radish	Undisclosed Farm, 1865
<i>Friend on Freedom River</i> (Whelan, 2004)	Fish, perch, catfish, chocolate, pears		Detroit River, 1850

Table 18 (cont.)

Title/Author/Date	Family Food and Crops	Cash Crops	Setting
<i>Dance Y'all</i> (Stroud, 2001)	Pie, corn, ham, greens, turnips, sweet potatoes, biscuits, apples, butter (family)	Cotton, corn	

Table 18 showed that agriculture typically served two purposes: a family food source, namely subsistence farming, and an economic resource, known as cash cropping. Table 18 showed that cotton was one of the most prominent and frequently depicted cash crops from the children's literature.

Tailypo: A Newfangled Tall Tale (Medearis, 1999), *George Washington Carver: An Innovative Life* (MacLeod, 2007), *George Washington Carver: Journey to Freedom* (Carey, 1999), *The Secret Garden of George Washington Carver* (Barretta, 2019), *A Weed is a Flower: The Life of George Washington Carver* (Brandenberg, 1965), *Sweet Clara and The Freedom Quilt* (Hopkinson, 1993), *It Jes' Happened* (Tate, 2012), *Overground Railroad* (Cline-Ransome, 2020), *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement* (Weatherford, 2015), *The Wagon* (Johnston, 1996), *The Underground Railroad* (Allen, 2015), *Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom* (Weatherford, 2006), *Dance Y'all* (Stroud, 2001) and *Working Cotton* (Williams, 1992) depicted cotton in either the text or the illustrations as a cash crop. The reader learned from the George Washington Carver biographies that cotton had a negative impact on the health of the soil; depleting the soil of nutrients which made it extremely difficult for planters to earn a living wage from growing cotton. Barretta (2019) wrote in *The Secret Garden of George Washington Carver*, "When Carver first arrived [to Tuskegee], he said "Everything looked hungry. The land, the cotton, the cattle, the people." Farmers were in trouble. Cotton crops were destroying their land." Other text also described the hardships that were

associated with growing cotton. *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement* (Weatherford, 2015), *Tailypo: A Newfangled Tall Tale* (Medearis, 1999), *It Jes' Happened* (Tate, 2012), and *Overground Railroad* (Cline-Ransome, 2020), each referenced the consistent toil of long hours and hard work that maintained the poverty status among African American agriculturalists. Medearis (1999) wrote in *Tailypo: A Newfangled Tall Tale*, “Times were hard. For weeks the family had nothing to eat but beans and greens for breakfast, beans and greens for lunch, and beans and greens for dinner”. In fact, after dinner, the parents would then return to the cotton fields to continue working in the dark. Weatherford (2015) wrote in *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement* that Fannie Hamer worked “from sunup to sundown, dew to dark, can see to can’t, twenty-foot sacks over our shoulders down miles of rows we bent to pluck the cotton blossoming out”. This work was executed in dangerously hot hundred-degree weather conditions that commenced when Hamer was only six years old. She too, like in the other text, was starving. Weatherford (2015) wrote in *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement* that “Whites had food, clothes, everything, while Blacks worked and worked and went hungry” (p. 3). The environmental, social, and economic systems that existed around the cultivation of cotton was harmful to both the land and the planters.

Another key learning component of pillar two is the appreciation of the historical significance of Family-Owned Farms. *Lorraine: The Girl Who Sang the Storm Away* (Secor, 2018), *Down Home at Miss Dessa’s* (Stroud, 1996), *Grandpa Cacao* (Zunon, 2019), *The Old Truck* (Pumphrey, 2020), *A Place Called Freedom* (Sanders, 1997), *The Chicken-Chasing Queen of Lamar County* (Harrington, 2007), *We Keep a Store* (Shelby, 1989), *I Love My Family* (Hudson, 1993), *Family* (Monk, 2001), *Picking Peas for a Penny* (Medearis, 1990), *The Moon*

Over Star (Aston, 2008), *Calvin's Christmas Wish* (Miles, 1993), *Granddaddy's Turn: A Journey To The Ballot Box* (Bandy & Stein, 2015), *Once Upon a Farm* (Bradby, 2002), *The Sunday Outing* (Pinkney, 1994), *Down the Winding Road* (Johnson, 2000), and *Dance Y'all* (Stroud, 2001) are the stories that take place on a Family-Owned Farm.

Consequently, unlike with the previous section, cotton was often not the cash crop planted on Family-Owned Farms. The cotton crop was typically depicted in the literature on sharecropping farms. Cash crops on Family-Owned Farms, as depicted in the literature, were typically as follows: Corn as in *Lorraine: The Girl Who Sang the Storm Away* (Secor, 2018) and *Once Upon a Farm* (Bradby, 2002), Cacao Fruit as in *Grandpa Cacao* (Zunon, 2019), Carrots, Cabbage, Potatoes, and Fruit as depicted in *The Old Truck* (Pumphrey, 2020), Canned fruits and vegetables in *We Keep a Store* (Shelby, 1989), and Peas as in *Picking Peas for a Penny* (Medearis, 1990). Family-Owned Farms that planted, harvested, and transported cash crops were large scale farms and depicted in the literature with illustrations of inordinately large land plots as in *Lorraine: The Girl Who Sang the Storm Away* (Secor, 2018), *We Keep a Store* (Shelby, 1989) and *Grandpa Cacao* (Zunon, 2019), and images of large farm equipment, such as tractors as in *The Old Truck* (Pumphrey, 2020) and *Picking Peas for a Penny* (Medearis, 1990), and a combine as in *Once Upon a Farm* (Bradby, 2002). The one large-scale Family-Owned Farm existing outside of a sharecropping narrative that harvested cotton was depicted in *Dance Y'all* (Stroud, 2001). Stroud (2011) wrote “The cotton’s all been picked,” Pa said now. “The hay’s been mowed and packed in the barn for the animals’ winter eating. The corn’s been taken to the mill. It’s time to celebrate” (p. 9).

Granddaddy's Turn: A Journey To The Ballot Box (Bandy & Stein, 2015) and *The Chicken-Chasing Queen of Lamar County* (Harrington, 2007), also had large farmland plots

depicting a large-scale Family-Owned Farm but did not illustrate a harvest and display the quantity or type of crop. In *Granddaddy's Turn: A Journey To The Ballot Box* (Bandy & Stein, 2015), the protagonist says that he does not need an alarm clock because he was awakened by the sound of his grandfather's tractor. In the next example, the text does not describe a cash cropping system, but it does have markers that would indicate a cash cropping system. In *The Chicken-Chasing Queen of Lamar County* (Harrington, 2007), the main character is chasing chickens on her Big Mama's, chicken farm. In one illustration, there are thirteen adult hens and ten baby chicks. The grandmother tells her not to chase the chickens because they will not lay eggs, but there is no evidence in the text or the illustrations that the characters are gathering and transporting the eggs. Although, the reader could infer that they are in fact, gathering and selling some of these eggs since the average hen lays around one egg a day, which would translate to 364 eggs a month for this grandmother's chicken farm. So, while the text does not include this information, the reader could infer that some of the eggs are being sold.

Another key component in pillar two is the understanding of how geography affects what kind of agriculture and food is produced. One book that illustrated a significant example of how both race and geography contributed to the food consumption and production was *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement* (Weatherford, 2015). In this literature example, we learned that Fannie Lou Hamer ate a variety of foods including rabbit, squirrel, chitlins, hog head, onions, greens, perch, catfish, and pig's feet. Many of these food items have both cultural and geographical significance. Severson (2018) wrote about an African American chef, Edna Lewis, who was not only an exquisite chef but also an advocate for food justice and racial equality. Severson (2018) wrote:

The importance of Edna Lewis is still shifting still. As the country finds itself again

drilling down into its class and racial divisions, Miss Lewis and her story have taken on yet another layer of importance. Although food has always been cultural currency, it has never enjoyed the kind of crossover into the arts, politics, and health as it has in the past decade. How we eat has come to underscore issues of race, class, and environmental degradation. (p. x)

Food migrated to the North just like the people during the Jim Crow era. When African Americans were not allowed to dine at restaurants with White Americans, Black-owned restaurants flourished and featured many food items, namely Southern Food, that was well-known in agricultural spaces in the South. Opie (2017) wrote:

The U Street corridor can best be described as a stop on the famed “Chitlin’ Circuit,” a string of Black-owned and operated honky-tonks, nightclubs and more elaborate theaters that stretched from Nashville to New York. Entertainers called it the Chitlin’ Circuit because some club owners sold iconic soul food dishes, including pickled pigs’ feet and chitlins. Other nearby eateries opened and did the same. The U Street section had a number of these smaller nightclubs and bar and grills that featured jazz music and food. These establishments catered to Black customers in search of soulful jazz music and food. (Chapter 2, para 3)

These are complex histories and socio-political concerns that would enrich content and discussions.

Pillar #3: The relationship between agriculture and animals. The secondary descriptors for this agricultural pillar are as follows: Animal Welfare, Animal Safety, and Animal Housing Systems. Approximately 14% of the literature featured an element that would fit in this category. The agricultural literacy principles in pillar three centered on animal

relationships with food and agricultural production. Also, important in this pillar are ways that farmers tend to and care for farm animals and livestock. The following table provides an overview of the animals that were depicted in the illustrations and the text from the literature. Stories that referenced animals that were consumed as a food source were not included in this table, such as catfish, for example. This pillar is exclusively for farm animals and livestock involved in the agricultural production process. As such, companion animals such as cats and dogs and scavenger animals such as rabbits are also excluded from this table.

Table 19 was designed to show the title of books and the different animals and animal care elements that were featured in the various books. The last column in Table 19 displayed the animal product that was illustrated in the books by both the textual and visual information.

Table 19

Animal Care, Animal Housing, and Animal Products

Title/Author/Publication	Animal	Animal Care Animal Housing	Agricultural Involved Animal Product
<i>Lorraine: The Girl Who Sang the Storm Away</i> (Secor, 2018)	3 Pigs 1 Horse 1 chicken	Barn, pig pen Grain-fed	Cooked eggs and bacon on a plate
<i>Bread Lab</i> (Binczewski, 2018)	5 chickens	fed	Cooked Egg on a plate
<i>Who Put the Cookie in the Cookie Jar</i> (Shannon, 2013)	1 cow 1 mule 3 hens 1 rooster 7 chicks	Cow fed Hen house constructed Chicks fed	Raw eggs on a table/store Milk on a table/store Wheat harvested/store Butter on a table
<i>The Old Truck</i> (Pumphrey, 2020)	8 chickens	Chickens fed Hen house	
<i>A Place Called Freedom</i> (Sanders, 1997)	1 mule 1 horse	stable	Grain/corn harvested
<i>The Chicken-Chasing Queen of Lamar County</i> (Harrington, 2007)	15 hens 12 chicks	Chicken coop Chickens fed corn, bread, and worms Chickens chased Chickens grabbed	Eggs

Table 19 (cont.)

Title/Author/Publication	Animal	Animal Care Animal Housing	Agricultural Involved Animal Product
<i>We Keep a Store</i> (Shelby, 1989)	1 chicken	Chicken chased Chicken scared	
<i>Our People</i> (Medearis, 1994)	1 horse 5 cows	Stable/barn	
<i>Flossie & The Fox</i> (McKissack, 1986)	chickens	Chickens scared by the fox	eggs
<i>George Washington Carver: An Innovative Life</i> (MacLeod, 2007)	2 horses		
<i>George Washington Carver: Journey to Freedom</i> (Carey, 1999)	Horse Cows chickens	He cared for the sick animals	
<i>The Secret Garden of George Washington Carver</i> (Barretta, 2019)	Cow	He taught how to raise a strong cow	
<i>A Weed is a Flower: The Life of George Washington Carver</i> (Brandenberg, 1965)	horse	Sold to purchase GWC back after he was kidnapped	
<i>George Washington Carver</i> (Rau, 2014)	horse	Slave masters rode them in the field	
<i>The Legend Of Freedom Hill</i> (Altman, 2000)	13 horses	Traveling; road by slave catchers	
<i>Sweet Clara And The Freedom Quilt</i> (Hopkinson, 1993)	10 cows 3 chickens	Image used on freedom map Grazing on grass near a pond roaming	
<i>It Jes' Happened</i> (Tate, 2012)	Horse 6 chickens 1 mule	Chickens fed Mule working Animals burned/killed Mule scolded	
<i>Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table</i> (Martin, 2019)	4 goats 5 chickens Fish	City farm	Fish waste helped grow the sprouts eggs
<i>Daddy Played the Blues</i> (Garland, 2017)	Mule Rooster	plowing	

Table 19 (cont.)

Title/Author/Publication	Animal	Animal Care Animal Housing	Agricultural Involved Animal Product
<i>John Lewis in the Lead</i> (Haskins & Benson, 2006)	60 chickens horse	Fed them Henhouse Cleaned after them Named them Preached to them Used by police	
<i>Picking Peas for a Penny</i> (Medearis, 1990)	9 chickens horse	Fed traveling	
<i>Overground Railroad</i> (Cline-Ransome, 2020)	5 chickens	roaming	Boiled eggs Fried chicken
<i>Calvin's Christmas Wish</i> (Miles, 1993)	2 mules 1 pig 1 cow 4 chickens	Decorate the barn for Christmas Animals don't have to work on Christmas Barn	Eggs Milk
<i>Granddaddy's Turn: A Journey to The Ballot Box</i> (Bandy & Stein, 2015)	2 roosters cows	Fed the animals Named Pet Rooster	Milk
<i>Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement</i> (Weatherford, 2015)	3 mules 2 cows	Named them poisoned	Milk "I sure did miss Della's milk"
<i>The Wagon</i> (Johnston, 1996)	3 roosters 2 mules horse	Mules named Given to characters after slavery ended Farm animals compared to slaves Soldiers use the horse	
<i>My Name Is James Madison Hemings</i> (Winter, 2016)	Sheep Hogs	Farms animals compared to people	
<i>The Hard-Times Jar</i> (Smothers, 2003)	horse	Used for transporting goods	

Table 19 (cont.)

Title/Author/Publication	Animal	Animal Care Animal Housing	Agricultural Involved Animal Product
<i>Once Upon a Farm</i> (Bradby, 2002)	1 Pony	Piglets nursing	Cream
	2 Goats	Pigpen	Ham
	14 Cows	Pony groomed	Milk
	3 Chickens	Chickens fed	Cake
	2 mules	corn	
	1 pig	Cows fed clover	
	9 piglets	Stable	
	10 chicks	Barn	
<i>Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom</i> (Weatherford, 2006)	Horse	Wagon carries	
	Hogs	Harriet led by horse	
		Harriet fought hogs for food	
<i>Down the Winding Road</i> (Johnson, 2000)	10 cows	Pig pen used for hiding	
		Slave master rides a horse	
<i>Friend on Freedom River</i> (Whelan, 2004)	Cow	Pasture	
	horse	Eating grass	
<i>Dance Y'all</i> (Stroud, 2001)	Cow	Farms animals compared to slaves	
	1 goose	Hay packed for animal feeding	
	3 chickens	Barn for animals	
	4 horses		

Table 19 showed that the farms with the most animals depicted in the literature were found in *John Lewis in the Lead* (Haskins & Benson, 2006) and *Once Upon a Farm* (Bradby, 2002). In *John Lewis in the Lead* (Haskins & Benson, 2006) the literature revealed that John Lewis was placed in charge of caring for around 60 farm animals: specifically, the chickens. He took the job very seriously and would often preach to them. Haskins and Benson (2006) wrote:

John was happy and proud to have his job. He liked chickens and took his responsibility very seriously. He carried buckets of feed to the henhouse. He kept it clean. He named each chicken. Two of his favorites were Big Belle and L'il Pullet. At night, to quiet the

chickens, John preached to them. He wanted to be a minister...giving sermons in the chicken coop earned him the nickname Preacher. (p. 6)

In *Once Upon a Farm* (Bradby, 2002), the animals were fed, groomed, and housed properly. The children, like in *John Lewis in the Lead* (Haskins & Benson, 2006), oversaw the chores associated with the farm animals. The main character in *Once Upon a Farm* (Bradby, 2002), described the experience of milking the cow and churning cream in an ice cream churner in the following quote: “A clover a field cow’s daily meal. A pail a light milk day and night. I cranked the churn till my arm was sore. Thought of Mama’s ice cream and cake, and cranked it some more” (p. 14).

In *John Lewis in the Lead* (Haskins & Benson, 2006), *The Wagon* (Johnston, 1996), and *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement* (Weatherford, 2015) the livestock were named. In *The Wagon* (Johnston, 1996), the two mules were named Swing and Low after a chariot from a spiritual often sang in reference to a chariot taking enslaved people from slavery to freedom. Johnston (1996) wrote:

Master put Papa in charge of it [the wagon]. Gave us the use of his mules. In our room, cramped as a cracker box, my family whooped at those slave names. We pondered a change. At sunup, the mules had been Robert and James. By sundown, they were Swing and Low, from a song we sang about a band of angels and a better place. I thought, any place is better than this. (p. 10)

The wagon was compared to a chariot. During the story, the wagon was used to transport both goods and enslaved people back and forth to the plantation. The protagonist’s father explained the definition of a chariot during one of the supply runs while he had been singing the spiritual. At the conclusion of the story, the two mules, Swing and Low were given to the newly freed

characters along with the wagon, called “my sweet chariot”. These mules are hitched to wagons and transported the characters to Abraham Lincoln’s funeral and their new lives in the North.

In *It Jes’ Happened* (Tate, 2012) and *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement* (Weatherford, 2015) the livestock was killed out of malice as a way of hurting the farmer’s agricultural production. In *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement* (Weatherford, 2015), the allocation of farm animals suggested that the family would have a greater agricultural advantage; an advantage that was not achieved when the livestock was poisoned. These were the only two examples where the livestock was killed out of malice.

The literature that most effectively connected animal care with agricultural production was *Who Put the Cookie in the Cookie Jar* (Shannon, 2013). On each of the pages, a character performed a caring act on an animal and then the animal produced an agricultural product. For example, in one illustration, a farm girl is feeding a cow and then the cow provides milk. The milk is then churned into butter. In another illustration, a mule is plowing a field of wheat, and then on the next page, the wheat is harvested and then turned into flour. As the story continues, in another illustration a male character and his daughter are building a henhouse. Another female character is feeding the hens and baby chicks. Then another character is gathering eggs. These products are then transported by a semi-truck and then stocked on the shelves of a grocery store. This story meets the core concepts that learners should know about the relationship between livestock care and agricultural production.

The National Research Council (2015) wrote about the future of animal agricultural research. “In the future, animal product research in the United States needs to focus on the quality of animal products” (p. 153). Animal product quality is mostly influenced by the

animal's genetic makeup, the animal's nutritional characteristics, and the way that animal products are managed before and after harvesting (p. 153).

At its core animal agriculture is about converting natural resources of lower human value (e.g. forages and grains) to food and fiber products of higher human value (e.g., meat, milk, eggs, and wool). Although animal agriculture is essential for human civilization it can also contribute to environmental degradation and change, natural resource depletion, and biodiversity loss. (p. 159)

While the findings in Table 19 indicated how the children's literature featured various methods of animal housing and care, there were only three literature examples that indicated how pre- and post-harvest animal product quality or safety is impacted by the animal care and management systems. In addition to *Who Put the Cookie in the Cookie Jar* (Shannon, 2013), two other stories portrayed a connection between animal care and the quality of animal products. These stories were *Flossie & The Fox* (McKissack, 1986) and *The Chicken-Chasing Queen of Lamar County* (Harrington, 2007) because in both stories the chicken's egg production was attributed to the chicken's care. In *The Chicken-Chasing Queen of Lamar County* (Harrington, 2007), the author wrote "Don't you chase those chickens. If you make those girls crazy, they won't lay eggs" (p. 2). Additionally, in *Flossie & The Fox* (McKissack, 1986), the author wrote, "Seem like they been troubled by a fox. Miz Viola's chickens be so scared, they can't even lay a stone" (p. 4).

Pillar #4: The relationship between agriculture and lifestyle. The secondary descriptors for this agricultural pillar are as follows: Food Cost, Nutrition, Processing, and Healthy Living. Roughly 18% of the books featured components related to this category. There are many similarities between the pillars but particularly pillars two and four. Both pillars focused on the process and production of food from farm to table. Additionally, both pillars

referenced a healthy diet. The two distinctions between the pillars seemed to be an emphasis on farms being an essential source of healthy food choices and the impact that farming has on the cost of food.

The relationship between agriculture and lifestyle is illustrated by various food items displayed in the literature. In the Early through 3rd grade awareness components in pillar two and pillar four, the understanding of a healthy diet and healthy food choices with guidance from the “my plate” initiative is a key component of the instructional framework. The edited and evolved version of the MyPlate initiative was established in 2020 by the USDA to provide a roadmap that would promote healthy eating habits (Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025). The food access varied by the character’s status and agricultural space.

In Table 20, food items depicted in the illustrations and the text were categorized into the five food groups established by the USDA. Only food consumed by the characters is included in Table 20. Food that was used as a cash crop can be found in the chart in pillar two. Additionally, the character’s agricultural role and space are also identified.

Table 20

Five Food Groups Representations

Title/Author/ Publication	Fruits	Vegetable	Grain	Protein	Dairy	Other	AG Space
<i>Baby Blessings</i> (Jordan, 2010)	oranges						garden
<i>Miss Tizzy</i> (Gray, 1993)	raisin					cookies	garden
<i>Ruby Finds a Worry</i> (Percival, 2019)						cake	garden
<i>Lorraine: The Girl Who Sang the Storm Away</i> (Secor, 2018)		corn tomato		bacon Eggs			farm
<i>Down Home at Miss Dessa’s</i> (Stroud, 1996)	Plum peach						farm
<i>I Believe I Can</i> (Byers, 2020)			flour		milk	cake	garden
<i>Bread Lab</i> (Binczewski, 2018)	Apple Black berry jam		Flour crackers	Peanut	butter	chocolate	farm

Table 20 (cont.)

Title/Author/ Publication	Fruits	Vegetable	Grain	Protein	Dairy	Other	AG Space
<i>Grandpa Cacao</i> (Zunon, 2019)	Cacao fruit	Tomato		Eggs	Milk butter		farm
<i>Grandma Lena's Big Ol' Turnip</i> (Hester, 2015)	Peach jam	Turnip Onions Peas carrots	cornbread	bacon		Apple cider Lemon cakes	garden
<i>Who Put the Cookie in the Cookie Jar</i> (Shannon, 2013)			flour	Eggs	Butter		farm
<i>A Place Called Freedom</i> (Sanders, 1997)	melon, apples	Corn, beans potatoes	grain, wheat	nuts			
<i>Two Old Potatoes and Me</i> (Coy, 2003)		potatoes			butter		garden
<i>How a Seed Grows</i> (Jordan, 2015)	Apples water-melon	Carrots corn beans	Wheat bun	beef			garden
<i>Plant a Little Seed</i> (Christensen, 2012)	melon	Pumpkins corn radish peas, carrots, tomato					garden
<i>The Chicken-Chasing Queen of Lamar County</i> (Harrington, 2007)				eggs			farm
<i>I Love My Family</i> (Hudson, 1993)	peaches						farm
<i>Flossie & The Fox</i> (McKissack, 1986)				eggs			farm
<i>Rainbow Stew</i> (Falwell, 2013)		Spinach kale cucumber zucchini peas beans peppers cabbage radish potato tomatoes carrots eggplants					garden
<i>Tailypo: A Newfangled Tall Tale</i> (Medearis, 1999)		Beans greens					farm
<i>Family</i> (Monk, 2001)		corn, potatoes tomatoes cucumber greens		Fish chicken crab cakes	cream	lemonade	farm

Table 20 (cont.)

Title/Author/ Publication	Fruits	Vegetable	Grain	Protein	Dairy	Other	AG Space
<i>The Legend Of Freedom Hill</i> (Altman, 2000)		Greens Beans vegetables	Biscuits Challah	Chicken soup			garden
<i>Sweet Clara And The Freedom Quilt</i> (Hopkinson, 1993)		corn	cornbread	eggs			farm
<i>It Jes' Happened</i> (Tate, 2012)		Sweet potatoes					farm
<i>Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table</i> (Martin, 2019)		Carrots Greens Tomatoes Potatoes Lima beans Black eyed peas Spinach lettuce		Ham turkey			Green- house
<i>Daddy Played the Blues</i> (Garland, 2017)				Catfish			farm
<i>Picking Peas for a Penny</i> (Medearis, 1990)				peanuts		Carmel corn Candy gum	farm
<i>Overground Railroad</i> (Cline-Ransome, 2020)				Fried chicken Boiled eggs		Lemon Pound cake	farm
<i>The Moon Over Star</i> (Aston, 2008)	Water- melon	corn	popcorn				farm
<i>Calvin's Christmas Wish</i> (Miles, 1993)	Oranges Apples Tanger- ines			Eggs Pecans		Apple Pie	farm
<i>Granddaddy's Turn: A Journey to The Ballot Box</i> (Bandy & Stein, 2015)			cereal	fish			farm
<i>Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement</i> (Weatherford, 2015)		Greens onion	cornmeal	Rabbit Squirrel Catfish Perch Hog head Chitlins Pig feet			farm
<i>The Underground Railroad</i> (Allen, 2015)	berries						farm
<i>The Hard-Times Jar</i> (Smothers, 2003)	apples	Red beans	Rice cornbread				farm

Table 20 (cont.)

Title/Author/ Publication	Fruits	Vegetable	Grain	Protein	Dairy	Other	AG Space
<i>Once Upon a Farm</i> (Bradby, 2002)		greens	Biscuits Corn cakes	ham	Ice cream	jelly	farm
<i>Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom</i> (Weatherford, 2006)	berries	potatoes Butter- beans	biscuits			roots	farm
<i>Down the Winding Road</i> (Johnson, 2000)	Pears Grapes apples	salad	Biscuits Muffins bread	turkey		pies	farm
<i>Working Cotton</i> (Williams, 1992)		greens	cornbread	meat			farm
<i>Freedom's School</i> (Cline-Ransome, 2015)		Radish Tomato Greens carrot		Salt pork			farm
<i>Friend on Freedom River</i> (Whelan, 2004)	Pear tree			White fish Perch Herring Sturgeon catfish		chocolate	farm
<i>Michelle Obama</i> (Raatma, 2010)		carrots					Garden
<i>Dance Y'all</i> (Stroud, 2001)	apples	Greens Turnips Sweet potatoes corn		ham	butter	pie	farm

The connection between agriculture and a healthy lifestyle is an important component to this pillar. From Table 20, the literature showed that agriculture provided diverse access to all the five major food groups as established by the USDA. Some of the most frequently appearing, eaten, and referenced fruits from the literature were apples, peaches, and melon. In *The Hard-Times Jar* (Smothers, 2003), the characters harvested the crop to sell, but the characters also ate the apples that fell on the ground and that were too soft to sell. Smothers (2003) wrote “Emma had already picked herself one. It tasted of morning, cool and crisp. Emma licked the sweetness dripping down her chin”. In *Calvin's Christmas Wish* (Miles, 1993), apples were a food item that the protagonist looked forward to receiving from his parents as a Christmas gift. “At least there

would be the special boxes for each of us that Momma made every year. They would be filled with apples and pecans, and the oranges I loved so much” (p. 24).

Vegetables were the most depicted food item in all of the children’s literature. It was grown as both a cash crop and for family consumption. The two most text referenced and illustrated appearing vegetable items were greens and beans. Different types of greens appeared in the literature in both farm and garden settings. In *Rainbow Stew* (Falwell, 2013) there were three types of green vegetables grown in the garden and eaten by the characters in the vegetable stew: spinach, kale, and cabbage. Evidence of the other elements in this pillar such as food cost and nutritional labels were not depicted in the literature. However, most of the crops presented in the children’s literature were relatively low maintenance and low cost crops, and could be produced continuously.

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2021) wrote about the transformation of food systems to develop systems that are sustainable, equitable, and nourishing. Included was an assertion for how the environment impacts healthy food choices:

Prabhala asserted that the context or environment in which people eat greatly influences their food choices...because food is one of the intimate choices that people make on a daily basis, influencing behavior change requires understanding the roles of environments, emotions, and psychology in individual food choices. (pp. 49-50)

Other policies that could change behaviors to motivate healthy lifestyles could be information exposure, positive incentives, and nutritional labels. One health incentive being piloted in South Africa promotes healthy body weight with reduced health insurance premiums. Through education and positive health incentives, people are encouraged to make healthy food choices (p.

50). Another aspect that impacts environmental decision making for healthy food choices is food access. Cohen (2021) explained food access as:

a wide range of conditions involving diverse social movements, focused on food sovereignty, food system control, and environmental justice activism. He asserted that a legacy of racism in the United States has led to spatial disparities in housing, economic development, and food deserts, and that great wealth disparities caused by racism, gender oppression, and other discrimination have contributed to large numbers of Americans living in poverty and experiencing food insecurity as a result. (p. 77)

Understanding the relationship between agriculture and lifestyle could potentially transform environments which would have an impact on healthy food decisions. Cohen (2021) suggested community food systems that place low cost, free, and donated food systems near public schools so that families and children have increased access to affordable healthy food options.

While the children's literature took place in farms, gardens, and greenhouses, other unconventional agricultural spaces are also being used to increase access to healthy food options. Brown (2021) explained how churches are using church land and church parking lots to impact food inequitable.

Brown described several historical church leaders who led initiatives to use the church's land and assets to cultivate and provide food for their congregation and further food sovereignty in their community. For example, UNIA President James R. Stewart established a farm in Ohio based on the ideology that food, liberation, and freedom go together, and Reverend Vernon Johns was a farmer as well as a pastor, preacher, scholar,

and seminary president. Brown explained how he integrated farming into his preaching and regularly sold crops in front of the church on Sunday. (p. 82)

Brown developed a system called the Black Church Food Security Network that brought agricultural markets to churches, creating intersectionality between “spirituality and food systems” (p. 83).

Pillar #5: The connection between agriculture and technology. The secondary descriptors for this agricultural pillar are as follows: new developments, impact of technology, biotechnology, and environmental impact. Approximately 9% of the books featured a component that would fit in this category. The key principles in this pillar are that technology makes farming faster and more efficient which, as a result, increases the amount of food that farmers produce and provide.

Table 21 was designed to show the evidence that agriculture and technology were present in the children’s literature. As technology representations surfaced from the readers, the evidence was recorded.

Table 21

Agriculture and Technology

Book Title/Author	Text Example
<i>Benjamin Banneker</i> (Martin, 2014)	Published an almanac in 1792; used astronomy to help farmers
<i>George Washington Carver: An Innovative Life</i> (MacLeod, 2007)	Crop Rotation, Hybrid Cotton Crops
<i>George Washington Carver: Journey to Freedom</i> (Carey, 1999)	Crop Rotation, Hybrid Cotton Crops
<i>The Secret Garden of George Washington Carver</i> (Barretta, 2019)	Crop Rotation, Hybrid Cotton Crops
<i>A Weed is a Flower: The Life of George Washington Carver</i> (Brandenberg, 1965)	Crop Rotation, Hybrid Cotton Crops
<i>George Washington Carver</i> (Rau, 2014)	Crop Rotation, Hybrid Cotton Crops
<i>Lorraine: The Girl Who Sang the Storm Away</i> (Secor, 2018)	Tractors

Table 21 (cont.)

Book Title/Author	Text Example
<i>Who Put the Cookie in the Cookie Jar</i> (Shannon, 2013)	Tractors; Semi Trucks
<i>The Old Truck</i> (Pumphrey, 2020)	Truck and tractor
<i>We're Going To The Farm</i> (Streza, 2012)	Tractor
<i>Granddaddy's Turn: A Journey To The Ballot Box</i> (Bandy & Stein, 2015)	Tractor
<i>Once Upon a Farm</i> (Bradby, 2002)	Combine, tractor
<i>Picking Peas for a Penny</i> (Medearis, 1990)	Tractor, Pickup Truck
<i>Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table</i> (Martin, 2019)	Greenhouse systems
<i>Bread Lab</i> (Binczewski, 2018)	Biotechnology; yeast
<i>Two Old Potatoes and Me</i> (Coy, 2003)	Biotechnology; soapy water as insecticide

Table 21 showed that tractors and pickup trucks were the most prevalent farm equipment featured in the literature. Pickup trucks were often depicted transporting food crops like in *Once Upon a Farm* (Bradby, 2002), *Picking Peas for a Penny* (Medearis, 1990), and *The Old Truck* (Pumphrey, 2020). Pickup trucks made it easier for food to be transported from farms to consumers. In *Who Put the Cookie in the Cookie Jar* (Shannon, 2013), farm equipment and semi-trucks were useful technology to farmers. The importance of technology was demonstrated most significantly in *The Old Truck* (Pumphrey, 2020) as the entire plot surrounded the function and maintenance of the pickup truck on the Family-Owned Farm. In several illustrations, the father is repairing the pickup truck or a tractor. The daughter is observing the father in the illustrations, and as the farmer's father gets older, she begins to take on the responsibilities and duties on the farm, including the upkeep of the farm equipment. Pumphrey (2020) wrote in *The Old Truck* that "the new farmer worked long. The new farmer grew weary and tired (in this illustration the parts of the pickup truck were taken apart and were scattered in different places on the page) But she dreamed and persisted. Vroooooom!! On a small farm, an old truck worked hard" (p. 15-20).

Tractors were mainly depicted unoccupied in the background illustrations. One exception was in *Granddaddy's Turn: A Journey to The Ballot Box* (Bandy & Stein, 2015), when the grandfather was riding on the tractor, but as stated previously, it was unclear what crop was being cultivated. A combine was depicted in the illustration and the text in *Once Upon a Farm* (Bradby, 2002). “Daddy drives the combine. We ride along. I hope we never leave this place – especially the swim pond”.

Two of the books provided examples of biotechnology: *Bread Lab* (Binczewski, 2018) and *Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table* (Martin, 2019). According to Brinson and Brinson (2020), there are many branches of agricultural biotechnology. A color system was developed by Pawel Kafarski in order to better understand the differences between the categories. White biotechnology focuses on utilizing plants, yeast, bacteria, and other living cells that come from natural resources. The concept around White biotechnology was one of the main ideas in *Bread Lab* (Binczewski, 2018) when Aunt Mary, brings a jar of yeast with her that she has named *Flora*. Binczewski (2018) wrote in the author’s notes that “the secret to making sourdough bread is the tiny microbes of bacteria and yeast – including lactic acid bacteria such as *Lactobacillus* and wild yeast *Saccharomyces* and *Candida*”. In the text, the protagonist imagines the microbes coming to life when Binczewski (2018) wrote “Iris imagined the tiny microbes in *Flora* happily goggling up the food...and burping up bubbles” (p. 12). The “food” for the microbes, as described in the text, are the ingredients that when combined interact with the yeast and turn into the “special home-baked whole wheat sourdough bread” that they are making. Another example of biotechnology, green biotechnology, is depicted in *Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table* (Martin, 2019). According to Brinson and Brinson (2020), green biotechnology focuses on the use of plants to reduce toxins and contaminants from the

environment. In *Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table*, Martin (2019) wrote “He added vats of water and fish to his greenhouses. Fish wastewater grows the sprouts. The sprouts clean the water for the fish. Fish, water, sprouts work together like a three-part farm machine” (p. 17).

While science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) specifically is absent from The Pillars of Agricultural Literacy, it is present in the National Agricultural Literacy Outcomes (2013) benchmarks that were developed in collaboration with the agricultural literacy pillars. The National Agricultural Literacy Outcomes (2013) asserted that “Agriculture is the ‘other’ major health science – applying science, engineering, technology, and mathematics to improve the health of plants and animals, of people, and our environment...understanding the [STEM] of agriculture, food, and natural resources is crucial for the future of all humanity. (Spielmaker & Leising, 2013, p. 10). A future study could analyze the collection of children’s literature examples from this study to determine how STEM concepts are portrayed.

Pillar #6: The connection between agriculture and economy. The secondary descriptors for this agricultural pillar are as follows: careers, impact on the U.S. economy, hunger, and role in global economy. The key principles in this pillar focused on jobs and career opportunities in agriculture and the importance of the agricultural industry to the U.S. Additionally, students should understand that food could be the result of globalization and trade agreements; and they should understand the terms “import and export”. Roughly 62% of the books featured a component that would fit in this category. Many of the stories that described slavery fit into this category because the use of enslaved African people for hundreds of years as agricultural labor had a tremendous and valuable economic impact on the agricultural industry in the South. Additionally, Black farm workers were further exploited for the benefit of the Southern economy in sharecropping agreements that resulted in economic benefits that had a

significant impact on the past and present agricultural landscape of White American farmers and agriculturalists in the U.S. Examples of labor exploitation by way of slavery and sharecropping systems were illustrated, interpreted, and presented from the literature in Chapter 4. In Table 22, I will primarily focus on the literature that depicted ways that agriculture contributed an economic value to Black life in farming. Also included in Table 22 are examples in the children's literature that positioned African Americans in professional agricultural roles or depicted a professional agricultural career in general.

Table 22

Agricultural and Economy

Book Title/Author	Text Example
<i>Seeds</i> (Shannon, 1994)	Agricultural experiences inspired a book publication for a Black horticulturalist
<i>Grandpa Cacao</i> (Zunon, 2019)	Agriculture was sold and money was used to buy school supplies and other goods Agricultural products come from other countries - chocolate
<i>We Keep a Store</i> (Shelby, 1989)	Food product was canned and the implication is that it was sold in the store
<i>George Washington Carver: An Innovative Life</i> (MacLeod, 2007)	GWC chose agriculture as a career in order to impact the economic return for Black farmers in the South
<i>George Washington Carver: Journey to Freedom</i> (Carey, 1999)	GWC chose agriculture as a career in order to impact the economic return for Black farmers in the South
<i>The Secret Garden of George Washington Carver</i> (Barretta, 2019)	GWC chose agriculture as a career in order to impact the economic return for Black farmers in the South
<i>A Weed is a Flower: The Life of George Washington Carver</i> (Brandenberg, 1965)	GWC chose agriculture as a career in order to impact the economic return for Black farmers in the South
<i>George Washington Carver</i> (Rau, 2014)	GWC chose agriculture as a career in order to impact the economic return for Black farmers in the South
<i>Bread Lab</i> (Binczewski, 2018)	Plant scientist as a career
<i>A Place Called Freedom</i> (Sanders, 1997)	An entire community was developed from agricultural economy

Table 22 (cont.)

Book Title/Author	Text Example
<i>Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table</i> (Martin, 2019)	Food was sold in order to purchase more products for the greenhouses
<i>Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement</i> (Weatherford, 2015)	Raised money to improve farming in the South to reduce hunger
<i>Picking Peas for a Penny</i> (Medearis, 1990)	Farming as a family agricultural career
<i>Once Upon a Farm</i> (Bradby, 2002)	Farming as a family agricultural career
<i>The Moon Over Star</i> (Aston, 2008)	Farming as a family agricultural career
<i>The Old Truck</i> (Pumphrey, 2020)	Farming as a family agricultural career
<i>Dance Y'all</i> (Stroud, 2001)	Farming as a family agricultural career
<i>Who Put the Cookie in the Cookie Jar</i> (Shannon, 2013)	Various agricultural careers

Table 22 revealed the many examples that depicted the relationship between agriculture and the economy. Table 22 showed that four of the most meaningful examples came from *Who Put the Cookie in the Cookie Jar* (Shannon, 2013), *Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table* (Martin, 2019), *A Place Called Freedom* (Sanders, 1997), and *Picking Peas for a Penny* (Medearis, 1990).

In *Who Put the Cookie in the Cookie Jar* (Shannon, 2013), the illustrations help to describe the many career paths that are connected to agriculture such as food processing, animal care, and food transporting. Additionally, the food is transported by way of semi-truck and train and then the products are shelved inside of grocery. This is one of the comprehensive depictions of the significance that farming has on the U.S. economy.

In *Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table* (Martin, 2019), food from his greenhouses is sold to the local community. Martin (2019) wrote that “neighbors who live in high-rises far off the growing ground, came – and still come – to Will’s farm to buy fresh vegetables, fish, or eggs. People have gone – and still go – to fancy restaurants to eat Will’s food” (p. 20). Additionally, in the author’s notes we learn that agriculture can be a resource to supplement income in

underemployed urban communities; “And he has shown that urban farms can be the source of good jobs for underemployed urban residents” (Martin, 2019, “From the author”).

A Place Called Freedom (Sanders, 1997) also revealed a relationship between agriculture and the economy since the development of the entire African American community launched from agricultural labor and resources. Sanders (1995) wrote in *A Place Called Freedom* “soon we had a church, then a store, then a stable, then a mill to grind our grain. For the first time in our lives, we had money, just enough to get by, and we watched every penny”. In one of the illustrations is a family of three harvesting and gathering corn. There is a sense of calm determination among the characters as they are working to prepare the corn for trade.

In *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement* (Weatherford, 2015), Fannie Lou Hamer raised money for farms in the South in order to address the issues of food insecurity. Weatherford (2015) wrote in *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement* that “no child should know what hunger is. So I started a Freedom Farm, a pig bank, and Head Start program, and I helped folks living in shacks get ‘hold of government housing loans”.

Summary

The literature addressed agricultural literacy in various ways through the illustrations and textual depictions recorded in this chapter. Each of the pillars was addressed through the literature that represented Black life in agriculture and the key instructional components from the agricultural literacy pillars. The literature examples could provide an instructional resource to enrich the curriculum and increase racial representation in the classroom. However, I propose an updated definition for agricultural literacy to include the social context of agriculture – namely,

the role that agriculture plays currently and historically in terms of food sovereignty, race, class, and place.

The children's literature provided examples to aid in the understanding of how agriculture impacted Black life and the relationships to agriculture that exist in the larger society. African American agriculturalists, like others, made important environmental decisions that impact the ecological life cycle of entire communities. Every environmental decision could have lasting impacts on the health of the soil, and as a result, the agricultural production outcomes. In *Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table* (Martin, 2019), for example, the community's pollution issues resulted in a five-year period where Farmer Will Allen had to focus solely on improving the health of the soil. This seemingly small issue significantly delayed food access to a community that was living in a food desert for five years longer than it would have if the soil had been healthy at the start.

The children's literature illustrated the primary purposes of crop production on Family-Owned Farms, and these were family food crops and cash crops. Corn and cotton were the two most heavily depicted crops in the literature. Harvest time was established as a time of celebration because it brought both economic resources and food to the family and local community, which would then have an impact on hunger in the community. Hunger is indicated in many of the literature examples and while only referenced in the 6th pillar, is shown to be a significant factor in all of the agricultural pillars. For example, the relationship between hunger and agriculture was revealed in *Tailypo: A Newfangled Tall Tale* (Medearis, 1999), *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement* (Weatherford, 2015), and *It Jes' Happened* (Tate, 2012) when the protagonists and people were working in their agricultural spaces with hunger as a constant reminder of the importance of the labor. Harvest was indeed a

time of celebration because it often countered the ever-lurking tenets of hunger and signaled a time to reap both financial and nutritional benefits such as displayed in *Dance Y'all* (Stroud, 2001).

In the literature, animal care served not only as an important component to agricultural production but also as a food resource. Many of the literature examples depicted ways that animals improved the agricultural production and products on Black farms. In fact, there were illustrations of animal products on many of the pages; such examples include butter, milk, eggs, ham, and poultry. Unfortunately, the literature also described ways that animals were abused, often poisoned, in retaliation for adverse race relationships in Black farming communities as evidenced by *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement* (Weatherford, 2015) and *It Jes' Happened* (Tate, 2012).

The relationship between food and agriculture is also depicted in the literature by the quantity of vegetables that were presented in the text. Greens and beans, relatively low in maintenance, were often the vegetables that were depicted on the dinner tables and prepared at the family meals. In *Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table* (Martin, 2019) and *Plant a Little Seed* (Christensen, 2012) the people and protagonists would consume raw and freshly harvested vegetables and fruits such as green peas, bright red cherry tomatoes, and other brightly colored fruit. In fact, one of Farmer Will Allen's aspirations was that children in food deserts eat raw vegetables because of his community greenhouses. Food was also given as Christmas gifts as in *Calvin's Christmas Wish* (Miles, 1993) and as payment for farm labor as in *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement* (Weatherford, 2015).

The literature also revealed how technology played a critical role in the efficiency of food production and distribution by way of farm equipment. Trucks, tractors, and combines were the

most frequently featured farm equipment in the literature, often depicted with food in the hatch ready to transport to community markets and grocery facilities. In the literature that was set before modern technology, animals such as mules and horses were depicted transporting food. Again, these examples illustrated the significance of animals in agricultural spaces and for agricultural production methods.

Components of pillar six, such as hunger and agricultural careers, were articulated in all of the other pillars, and were the two most illustrated elements. George Washington Carver originally set out to major in art but was encouraged to pursue a career in an area that he loved - plant science. While there are many other agricultural careers that exist in society, both George Washington Carver and the protagonist in *Bread Lab* (Binczewski, 2018) were plant scientists. The ideologies about plant science projected in the literature surfaced around caring for nature and natural resources. Additionally, there was an underlying message around the importance of plant science and food production.

Discussion

Hunger plagues many children in African American communities and abroad. In the media, hunger has been called the silent epidemic (Sharma, 2014) and the silent crisis (Bello, 2014) as many families and communities are suffering in silence from a lack of food and the ability to access healthy foods in their communities. Reese (2019) wrote about the importance of theorizing the issue of food injustice in Black communities and encourages people living in the communities and affected by the food injustice systems to break the silence. Reese (2019) wrote:

Theorizing racism in the food system deepens our understanding of the extent to which food institutions are implicated in continued disinvestment in Black neighborhoods. Yet, the everyday lives of people who are neither explicitly calling out racism in the food

system nor connected to organizations that attempt to produce change are often rendered silent, running the risk of reifying the very violence scholars and activists seek to eradicate. (p. 6)

Food injustice and food insecurity have been erupting in the news as families are dealing with issues of employment and the health crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic.

White (2018) acknowledged how hunger was used as a political tool in the South when she quoted Fannie Lou Hamer's words:

Down where we are, food is used as a political weapon. But if you have a pig in your backyard, if you have some vegetables in your garden, you can feed yourself and your family, and nobody can push you around. If we have something like some pigs and some gardens and a few things like that, even if we have no jobs, we can eat and we can look after our families. (p. 65)

When African American communities were able to grow their own food, they could also exercise their voting rights in the way that would most benefit their neighborhoods.

In the last couple of years, local school districts have responded to food insecurity through federal food grant programs that provide two meals free-of-cost to all students. This initiative began in the surrounding communities in the 2017-2018 school year and has been a useful resource to combat the effects of starvation in both rural and urban communities. In fact, I was an administrator when the program, Breakfast in the Classroom (BIC) was initially piloted (Rise & Shine Illinois, 2021). This program, and others like it, make essential meals, like breakfast, a part of the child's daily school life. Gottlieb and Joshi (2013) wrote about the evolution of food school programs and their transition from solely providing to providing quality healthy food. Gottlieb and Joshi (2013) wrote, "What we wanted to do [in the past] was get more

calories to people. Now we find it isn't more calories. It's more of the right calories" (p. 253).

These programs move organizations in a direction that positions everyone to address the community racism that exists in Black neighborhoods around food injustice and food sovereignty.

On the opposite end of the hunger spectrum are the ever-growing issues of obesity that plague many African American communities and communities of color. Not only do families lack access to food, but they also lack access to healthy food options. According to the Office of Minority Health (2020), African American women are more likely than any other race of women to be overweight or obese. According to statistics, 75% of African American women are at risk for heart disease and stroke.

Penniman (2018) wrote:

Structural racism decreases Black people's access to nature, which increase their chances for depression, learning disabilities, obesity, diabetes, heart diseases, academic underperformance, stress and social anxiety. (p. 272)

Michelle Obama used her political influence to promote food growth among African Americans and others to address issues of obesity that surround children of color in our communities.

Again, throughout the children's literature examples are many of the issues that exist in communities of color today – hunger, food access, food-related diseases, lack of green spaces, and others. The definition of agricultural literacy must include an understanding of the social and racial structures that surround agricultural knowledge and agricultural access.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

This study examined 65 picture books to present key demographics, genres, and formats that depict Black life in agriculture. I selected 65 picture books because picture books provide both a visual and textual representation of experiences and events. Upon examination of the Pillars of Agricultural Literacy standards, it was determined that Black life in agriculture was a critical missing component. This study examined children's literature through a representative sampling of picture books to determine how African American farmers, agriculturalists, and their experiences could fit within the framework of the Pillars of Agricultural Literacy. Additionally, this study sought to determine if children's literature would provide a counternarrative to the master narrative of Black life in agriculture – a master narrative that primarily associates Black life in agriculture with oppression, slavery, and illiteracy. This study served to validate the significance of African American farmers to society and to provide a space for African American farmers in the instructional framework of agriculture. It is important to note that while this study focused primarily on children's literature presented through picture books, the results, nonetheless, lay the groundwork for various future studies. The results and implications for future studies will be discussed in this chapter, but first I want to provide a brief overview of what this study comprised.

In Chapter 1, I presented the evidence that determined the importance of agriculture to K-12 classrooms. Despite the importance, however, the Next Generation Science Standards and the National Science Education Standards had given agriculture very little attention in the curriculum standards. As a result, the USDA had partnered with other agricultural education organizations to develop a set of agricultural literacy objectives that teachers have been using to create a curriculum for K-12 classrooms. Unfortunately, the contributions of African American

farmers and other farmers of color were absent from the key agricultural literacy objectives. Children's literature is one way to address agricultural literacy and provide a space for African American farmers in the agricultural literacy curriculum.

In Chapter 2, I presented a review of the scholarship around the topics of curriculum neutrality, and I laid the groundwork for this study with a historical overview of Black life in agriculture. Additionally in this chapter, I presented the narrative that exists for Black people who currently and historically engage with agriculture – one of slavery, oppression, and illiteracy. The literature, however, suggests that there is a counternarrative that could expose food justice issues. As a result, I selected children's literature as a place to examine the existence of such counternarratives to determine their place in the agricultural literacy curriculum.

In Chapter 3, I discussed how a qualitative content analysis provides a tool for examining literature through a critical lens. A critical lens is crucially important to revealing ideas, themes, critical perspectives, and imagery. In this chapter, I gave a brief synopsis of other studies, such as Harris (1986) and Hughes-Hassell, Barkley, and Koehler (2009), which also utilized a critical content analysis to accomplish similar goals and to provide a path for studies such as this one. A critical content analysis was used to challenge the master narrative and to present a space for a new narrative to be constructed. Critical Theory was employed in order to deliberately expose social powers within the literature and to open a discussion about where African American agriculturalists could fit within the agricultural curriculum.

In Chapter 4, I presented findings for the following research questions: (1) What are the key demographics, genres, and formats featured in the collection of agriculturally themed children's books that present Black life in farming? (2) How do these books provide a counternarrative to the master narrative of Black life in farming? In this chapter, I found that

83% of the literature in the fantasy category featured a female protagonist. In fact, the female protagonists lead in all the genre categories except biography. The biography category featured 73% male figures. White (2018) wrote about the absence of women in the biographies of W.E.B DuBois, George Washington Carver, and Booker T. Washington:

Nowhere in their frameworks did they mention women's agricultural vision, labor, or strategies. Like the world around them, they ignored the contributions of women to a distinctively Black agricultural tradition. The archives reveal women farming, attending the farmers conferences, and participating in the moveable school demonstrations, among other examples. (p. 60)

Also presented in Chapter 4, were the findings on language publications and language variation. The study revealed a limited number of books published outside of the English language. Looking back at the larger sampling of books (n=314), I discovered that the two stories that had been published in the most languages were Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987), which was published in Spanish, Chinese, German, Japanese, and Korean languages, and *12 Years a Slave* (1853) by Solomon Northup which was published in Spanish, Chinese, German, Japanese, Korean, French, and Dutch languages. These two titles, while extremely popular, present Black life in agriculture through the lens of the oppressed; and therefore, contribute to the master oppressive narrative for both English speakers and non-English speakers. On the other hand, titles like *Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table* (Martin, 2019), which depict the ingenuity of an urban farm initiative, have only been published in English.

Next, I reported findings on the ways that oppression and resistance emerged in the children's literature. Oppression was demonstrated through the withholding of literacy access and the systems that tied voting rights to literacy performance. Examples of this were found

throughout the literature but presented most explicitly in *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement* (Weatherford, 2015) and *Granddaddy's Turn: A Journey To The Ballot Box* (Bandy, 2015). Oppression was also demonstrated through acts of violence and labor exploitation. The findings reveal that 54% of the literature examples featured a textual reference or a depiction of labor exploitation by way of slavery, sharecropping, or migrant farm work.

Likewise, the literature provided examples of resistance to the indicated oppressive systems through educational attainment, civic disobedience, and collective activism. Collective activism and agency were represented in how demonstrations of community, political, and economic systems emerged from the literature. The chapter includes numerous examples of how collective actions were illustrated in the literature.

Additionally, Chapter 4 revealed how agriculturalists are featured in agricultural spaces. The findings reveal that 68% of the book titles were placed in farm or garden settings. Out of those featured farm spaces, 88% of the literature depicted an African American agriculturalist set outside of plantation farming environments. Further, the majority of the titles, 55% in fact, featured African Americans in Family-Owned Farm spaces. Additionally, 16% of the children's literature featured African Americans on Large-Scale Family-Owned Farms.

In the final sections of Chapter 4, I created a table with textual evidence that depicted literacy events. Literacy events were depicted through textual and illustrated reading events, learning events, music lyrics, and writing events. In the same table, I indicated the agricultural spaces where the literacy events occurred in order to determine what types of literacy existed in the various agricultural spaces. I found a heavy presence of literacy indicators across agricultural spaces. This evidence suggests that agricultural spaces contain numerous opportunities for

interactions with text. Future studies could explore this topic further. Lastly, I created a table to indicate the literary quality, visual quality, and agricultural content in order to help readers identify the most authentic and agriculturally significant representations of Black agriculturalists.

In Chapter 5, I analyzed the Pillars of Agricultural Literacy and used the literature to reveal how books that featured Black life in agriculture fit within the framework. The tables and the descriptions presented the findings that connected the literature examples to the key learning components within the framework. The findings revealed that 62% of the books contained a feature found within the 6th pillar: the relationship between agriculture and the economy. The primary reason is that many of the books dealt with the issue of slavery which was a labor system that greatly impacted the economic structure of agriculture, particularly in the South. Eliminate the literature on the slavery labor systems, and a very small percentage of the books featured a professional African American farmer which is an important objective for Pillar 6.

Even so, the findings suggest that none of the pillars truly addressed all of the agricultural relationships that surfaced in the literature. One such relationship is the relationship between agriculture and social and racial systems. None of the pillars addressed the magnitude of sacrifice that many families made and continue to make currently and historically to order to maintain their agricultural status and food sovereignty in their communities. In many of the literature examples were evidence of perseverance, problem-solving, conflict, and sacrifice. There were interpersonal conflicts that existed solely in agricultural spaces that were not fully compatible with the key learning descriptors in any of the Agricultural Literacy Pillars. The pillars omit key socio-political and racial agricultural events. In order for a person to truly be agriculturally literate, they must have an understanding beyond that of food and fiber to include the social, political, and racial structures that impact food production and food access.

Additionally, the findings show that many of the ideas in the Agricultural Literacy Pillars were not addressed in the literature examples. Specifically again, from pillar six, were two key objectives on the connection between the world's population and the quantity of food required to feed the given population. While there were examples that depicted the transportation of food away from agricultural spaces, the broader issues related to community food systems, such as food banks, and community hunger were not addressed in the children's literature. Another area from the Agricultural Literacy Pillars that had limited exposure in the children's literature was the principles behind the impact that agriculture has on the cost of food. All of these issues are important components of the U.S. agricultural system.

Discussion of the Findings

There are many reasons that African American children do not grow food and choose agriculture as a profession. One of those reasons is the lack of representation in agricultural standards and subsequently the curriculum and instruction. Representation matters to children as they are developing identities through the experiences they process from the classroom. Teachers may be reluctant to discuss agriculture with children because the master narrative around Black life in agriculture is filled with traumatic experiences. White (2018) wrote:

The terror that our people faced in the past when working the land was real. We need to address the stigma that impacts descendants of those who were enslaved and the cultural memory of the oppression, exploitation, and trauma of the sharecropping system...the land holds our healing...our relationship to the land is not just a story of oppression, but one of liberation (p. xvi).

When Black people left the South and migrated to the North, the soul food and music were not the only things that migrated with them, but the trauma that had occurred in those agricultural spaces influenced mindsets around agricultural professions.

Pinderhughes, Davis, and Williams (2015) wrote about the dynamics of race-based school and community trauma. Additionally, they developed a framework for identifying, addressing, and preventing trauma in social, physical, and economic environments in order to promote community healing. Pinderhughes, Davis, and Williams (2015) wrote:

Trauma and its associated symptoms of mental and psychological illness are more prevalent in the U.S. than in most other countries in the world. What's more, trauma can be a barrier to the most successful implementation of healing and well-being strategies, including those to prevent violence. (p. 3)

Teachers need to be prepared to address the traumatic realities that existed in many agricultural spaces and that currently resonate in the minds of young people about Black life in agriculture.

Urban farming initiatives are working to erase the trauma that has been associated with agricultural spaces and transform them into community healing spaces. Additionally, urban farming initiatives connect Black people with agricultural spaces in order to reframe the issues in Black communities away from past trauma and move them towards addressing issues of food justice in their communities. The fact that even 2% of the farmers in the U.S. are Black is a celebration of how agriculture has survived in Black life and Black families despite the turbulent obstacles of the past and present. More agricultural children's literature examples like *Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table* (Martin, 2019) are needed to promote urban farming initiatives in urban and rural communities. Agriculture can provide solutions to many of the problems that exist in urban spaces such as food insecurities and underemployment.

Additionally, the results from studies about green spaces in urban environments have found that green spaces lessen stress, increase social interactions, and have a substantial impact on reducing crime (Shepley, et al., 2019).

Likewise, the pillars of agricultural literacy and agricultural curriculum, in general, should be reflective of the community in which it seeks to serve. If the goal, as seen in the background of multiple agricultural curriculum advocacy initiatives, is to increase diverse representation in farming then the children's books used in classrooms should demonstrate the counternarratives that exist in the relationships between Black life and agriculture. Vasquez (2005) wrote about the tenets of a critical literacy curriculum. It is a curriculum that is lived and experienced and co-constructed to address social justice issues around injustice and inequities. This pedagogical philosophy mirrors that of the Jeanes teachers in that the environment should contribute to the instructional framework in order to produce an authentic learning experience.

Additionally, discriminatory practices in lending have also greatly impacted the number of Black farmers in the U.S. today (Newsy, 2022). In March (2021), President Biden approved 4 billion dollars in federal aid for Black farmers, but as of 2022, the funding has not been dispersed due to legal actions that contend that current laws, that historically (and currently) favored White wealth and White farmers, prohibit race-based federal funding. White farmers in this country have benefited tremendously from discriminatory lending practices from federal funds that only funded White schools and White farms. Now that the U.S. government is attempting to right the wrong in discriminatory lending with federal funding, it is illegal. More disheartening, the Biden administration missed the 60-day court appeals window to litigate the matter. Gerstein and Bustillo (2021) wrote:

While the Justice Department has filed appeals within hours to defend the administration's high-profile priorities in areas like immigration, this time federal government lawyers let the 60-day appeal period run — and then run out. "It's very unusual not to defend a statute that you support," said Neal Devins, a professor of law and government at William & Mary Law School. "Maybe they fear a more consequential loss." (para 3 & 4).

Even worse, three lenders, the American Bankers Association, the National Rural Lenders Association, and the Independent Community Bankers of America complained that the early repayment of farm loans would result in the loss of interest payments. Yates (2021) wrote:

In a letter sent to agriculture secretary, Tom Vilsack, the banks reveal that they will be more reluctant to extend credit if the loans are quickly repaid, which will reportedly not be beneficial for Black farmers in the long run. 'If U.S.D.A. does not compensate lenders for such disruptions or avoid sudden loan payoffs, the likely result will be less access to credit for those seeking U.S.D.A. guaranteed loans in the future, including U.S.D.A. farmers/ranchers,' reads the letter. (para. 9 & 10)

So not only do African American farmers receive less money from lending sources but they are threatened to receive even less funding if they repay their loans at a faster pace.

Future Studies

While this study primarily examined children's literature examples in picture books, there are many opportunities for future studies in many areas; but the following section will discuss a number of future research paths. First, this study focused primarily on children's literature representations of Black life in agriculture depicted in picture books. While the research provided a significant value, future studies should consider the research opportunities available

in chapter books, novels, and adult literature that feature Black life in agriculture. Chapter books could provide a wider lens into the issues that Black agriculturalists face in more diverse agricultural spaces than those presented in this study. In chapter books, characters and plots are often more fully developed and provide a space for a more in-depth analysis of events to occur. *White Lilac* (Meyer, 1993) and *The Land* (Taylor, 1976) are two such chapter books featured on the combined list that could be used in future studies to further position Black farmers in the agricultural curriculum. For example, in *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* (1976), Mildred Taylor wrote:

I asked him once why the land was so important. He took my hand and said in his quiet way. "Look out there, Cassie girl. All that belongs to you". You ain't never had to live on nobody's place but your own and long as I live and the family survives, you'll never have to. That's important" (p. 7).

This quote is an example of how land ownership was presented among African American farmers. This concept emerged as significant in many of the chapter books but had only a minor presence in the picture books. Young adult literature could identify perspectives and voices for farmers and of farmers who are currently working to recover land in the South.

Another opportunity for future research could be to identify the impact that Black farmers have had on other Black social achievements such as The Green Book series. The Green Book was a series of publications that listed safe places that African Americans identified and recommended in travel guides called The Green Book. Taylor (2020) described in *Overground Railroad* the urgency for such a publication during the Jim Crow era when lynching was often thought of as a celebratory occasion. Throughout Taylor's (2020) book are descriptions of the restaurants, hotels, gas stations, and national parks that were friendly towards African American

travelers, but there is very little reference to Black farmers who undoubtedly helped supply food and other essentials to restaurants and hotels. There were several places in *Overground Railroad* (Taylor, 2020) where it was clear that restaurant owners were also food growers. Taylor (2020) wrote:

Alberta Ellis purchased a defunct hospital at auction for ten thousand dollars...She turned the hospital into a hotel, beauty salon, barbershop, and a nightclub called the Rumpus Room. One year before Alberta's appeared in the Green Book, Ellis purchased ten acres of land just west of the city to grow produce for the hotel's restaurant. (p. 208)

In another section, Taylor (2020) wrote about another restaurant, a Creole restaurant called Dooky Chase's Restaurant, in which the owner planted a Sassafras tree in order to season their famous gumbo recipe (p. 175). Outside of those references, very little is mentioned of Black farmers in *The Green Books* or in the literature around *The Green Books*. Two of the children's literature examples in this study, depict African American characters leaving the South and migrating to the North. A future study could look more closely at children's literature that deals specifically with migration and Black travel to determine if any themes emerge in the areas of music, geography, and agricultural spaces outside of the South.

Future researchers could gather data from teachers and students regarding Black farmers and agricultural fields. This study primarily focused on the literature that depicted Black life in agriculture, but a future study could collect data from multiple perspectives. A future study, for example, could measure student interest in agriculture before and after exposure to children's literature that depicts Black life in agriculture. Additionally, teachers and students could examine the literature to determine the themes that connect the past to current food justice issues in their local communities. Exposure to children's literature that depicts Black life in agriculture could

encourage future generations to explore agriculture as a potential resource for community improvement initiatives. Educators could utilize the booklist presented in this study in their classrooms with students in order to engage students with diverse children's literature that depicts Black life in agriculture in ways that extend beyond the master narrative.

Additionally, a future study could also examine the linguistic variances that were presented in Chapter 4. Upon brief analysis this study could provide a pathway to examine African American vernacular, regional dialect, and language attributions to occupational spaces. The agricultural language community shares a political, cultural, geographic, economic, and linguistic identity. In fact, Bower (2019) found that farmers produced linguistic utterances differently because of their dieting habits which changed the way their jaw structure produced sounds. Bower (2019) wrote:

Over the last 6,000 years or so, farming societies increasingly have replaced tougher-to-chew game meat and wild plants common in hunter-gather diets with processed dairy and grain products. Switching to softer foods altered people's jaw structure over time, rendering certain sounds like "f" and "v" easier to utter and changing language world-wide. (p. 7)

In this study, I examined the foods that African Americans ate, as presented from the children's literature, and a future study could extend these ideologies to determine to what extent language and food are attributed to speech sounds in African American agricultural communities.

Another future study could combine primary documents and children's literature that feature African American agriculturalists in order to create a more robust historical narrative of the experiences of Black farmers. Fairchild (2022) wrote:

Primary sources are the raw materials of historical research - they are the documents or artifacts closest to the topic of investigation. Often they are created during the time period which is being studied (correspondence, diaries, newspapers, government documents, art) but they can also be produced later by eyewitnesses or participants (memoirs, oral histories). (para. 1)

An interpretation of primary documents coupled with children's literature could be useful for the creation of a more complete history of the struggles and successes of Black farmers in the U.S. Students and teachers could compare the illustrations in children's books to the photographs from the primary resources in order to visualize the people and the histories that have worked tirelessly in the field of agriculture for their families and their communities.

Additionally, a future study could examine children's literature that focuses on the issue of food insecurity. *Maddi's Fridge* (Brandt, 2014) is an inspiring award-winning eBook about a friendship between two young girls – one friend has plenty of food choices in their refrigerator and the other only has bread and milk. Examining children's books that deal with the issue of food insecurity could give a voice to the communities of people who are often suffering in silence (Sharma, 2014; Bello, 2014; Reese, 2019). Hartline-Grafton & Hassink (2020) wrote about the policies needed to address the issue of food insecurity that impacts roughly 15% (11 million) of children living in the U.S. as of 2018. Using children's literature as a voice for food insecurity could be the first step to disrupting the social and political systems that have impacted food systems and food access in this country (Bleich et al., (2020).

Lastly, a future study could look beyond the contribution of Black farmers and delve into the generational contributions that all persons of color have provided to the land care and food production systems in this country. Books written for and about African Americans communities

have had a complex history in the U.S. In truth, every minority group has a history of struggle in the efforts to publish authentic stories reflective of their value systems and cultural significances (Ho, 2016). Seale and Slapin (2005) summarized a collection of children's books written for Native American children and in the introduction, was a discussion on the importance of authentic, well-researched Native American authorship in order to avoid "misconceptions and stereotypes" (p. 69). In 2005, Nilsson wrote about the need for more children's books with Hispanic characters in leadership roles and professional occupations (p. 546). Additionally, Mann-Boykins (2016) revealed that in 1997, only 1% of books published that year were written by or about Asian Americans. Like books written for and by African Americans, other groups, deal with a similar struggle for authenticity and identity in their stories. A future study could continue the work presented in the findings of this study and develop a narrative of agricultural inclusivity for all.

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APPENDIX A: CRITICAL CONTENT AND VISUAL ANALYSIS SAMPLE

In this sample, an analysis was conducted of the text and the illustrations. This sample provides an example of how an eye gaze analysis can position the reader and either invite or disinvite the reader. Johnson (2019) wrote, “According to Painter et al. (2013), readers are positioned as ‘invited’ or ‘distance’ by the character’s gaze of lack thereof” (p. 118). An eye gaze analysis could also be a useful strategy for locating agency (Johnson, 2019), however, for the purposes of this study, an eye gaze analysis would not be an important research design factor for the research questions.

Part 1	<i>Lorraine: The Girl Who Sang Away the Storm</i>	
Guiding Questions	Text	Illustrations
Ideational: Who is doing what to whom; where, when, how, and why? What people, objects, actions, and settings can be described by looking at the picture (Johnson et al., 2019)	Tennessee Farm; Lorraine is running through a cornfield with her GP. The text says that she has courage. Blue pickup truck is in the background. They play instruments; the storms are rolling in. They are playing Harmonica, and a harp. There is rhyming and music in the text. Sheet music overlays the background scenery.	Grandpa is wearing overalls. <u>Power proximity</u> , the characters are side by side at the readers eye level. The character Lorraine is running towards the reader/viewer as if to engage the reader by closing the proximity of distance between the reader and the character. They characters (L and GP) <u>maintain proximity</u> to each other. Although the eye gaze is equal to the readers. Lorraine's <u>eye gaze never fully mets</u> the readers, but it gets close later in the story. Her eye gaze is towards the environmental setting, which keeps the reader wondering about the setting and what events are taking place. In the fourth image <u>Lorraine is by herself for the first time</u> . She is center the page, but her eye gaze is confused and concerned with things outside of the focal point. Which again signals the reader to wonder.
Focalization: Whose story is told? From whose point of view? (Johnson et al., 2017)	Breakfast was bacon, toast, eggs, and there was a bowl of tomatoes. The story is told by a narrator, but Lorraine is the primary focus. Dinner bell is missing. Things are coming up missing. Storm hits. It's a tornado. There's lightning. They try to play music, but the harmonica is missing too. Grandpa hugged her.	Lorraine is the person who has the power. But does she know that she has the power? The print is also large with words and new font sizes.
Interpersonal: What is the positioning of the images and what feelings do they display? (Johnson et al., 2019)	Grandpa hold her and tells her that music and “singing the songs away” Tornado knocks over the tree. In the truck they found all of the things they were missing. Then they started playing music. They sang a song with the instruments.	While Lorraine's <u>eye gaze often wonders</u> , the grandfather maintains his line of sight to Lorraine. On one page the tornado takes up the enter page. The house looks small compared to the size of the storm. Immediately afterward, the distance between the grandfather and granddaughter is <u>completely closed for the first time</u> . They maintain this proximity until Lorraine is brave enough to use her voice to chase away the storm. The grandfather's farmer hat is off to the side, as if to say that his farming duties don't matter. The only thing that matters is Lorraine. In this image <u>Lorraine closes her eyes</u> releasing her power completely to the grandfather's embrace. After the storm, the characters again share an equal proximal distance to each other and the reader again. There is action through music and movement (dancing).
Social processes of characters: Who has power? Who has agency? (Johnson et al., 2017)	There are rhyming sentences.	Summary: Grandpa and Lorraine are together for the first three pages. Then Lorraine is having breakfast by herself. Then grandpa and Lorraine are together again. Then Grandpa and Lorraine are together again on the next three pages. Then Lorraine is singing the storm away. Then Grandpa and Lorraine are together (after a picture of the tree (inside the tree is there things)
Textual: How are images grouped, focused, staged, and sequenced? What is the reader made to focus attention to? (Johnson et al., 2019)		
Closure—How is the story resolved? What are the assumptions in the story closure?	The story is resolved when they are playing music and the storm is over and the sun is shining. The bird (presumably) took all of their metal things and instruments and hid them in the tree. The story is resolved after the storm when the tree is knocked over and they retrieve their thing	

The text reveals that Lorraine is fearless. She notices things before her grandfather. She possesses the most power in the book except when the tornado hits. The power shifts to the. She uses her voice/song to overcome her fear of tornadoes.

Eye Gaze invites the reader to wonder.

Close Proximity power shifts to grandfather. More distant proximity, power shifts to Lorraine

APPENDIX B: CRITICAL CONTENT AND VISUAL ANALYSIS SAMPLE P. 2

Part 2	
Title	
<p>Oppression and Resistance: Is there evidence of oppression? Is the farmer enslaved? Is the farmer a sharecropper? Does black life in farming include exploitation, oppressions, or trauma? Is there evidence of resistance to oppression?</p> <p>Agency indicators in Agricultural Spaces (White, 2018)</p>	No oppression aside from that of natural disaster
<p>Agricultural Community: Is there evidence of an agricultural community? Are there systems of community in place? How does the farm act as a community? How does the farm engage with other farmers and other black farming communities?</p>	Agricultural community is not present.
<p>Political Systems: Does the agricultural space provide access to others? Does the agricultural land provide a space for African American people to exchange ideas?</p>	The farm space is where the author uses the words "courage" and fearless. There is singing and music in the agricultural spaces.
<p>Economic Systems: Does the agriculturalist own the land? Are there economic systems in place? Does the farmer have economic autonomy? What is the economic system? Is there an alternative economic system? Does the farmer depend solely on the oppressor? Do agricultural activities or community move the agriculturalist from dependence to independence? Does the agriculturalist grow their own food?</p>	Yes, the agriculturalist has tomatoes on the table. Eggs and bacon are on the table. There are chickens and pigs on the farm. Yes, the story suggests he owns the land when they re-plant the seeds to the tree that was knocked over in the storm which suggests land ownership and decision-making.
<p>Geographical Location: Where does the story take place? In what part of the United States is the agricultural setting? How is the setting significant to black life in agriculture?</p>	Tennessee Farm - the fact they are in the south shows some resilience.
<p>Approximate age of the protagonist: What is the approximate age of the character? At what age is the character involved with agricultural roles?</p>	7 year old girl; African American girl 60 year old AA male (Paw Pa- grandfather)
<p>Ethnic Identity: How does the author present the protagonists ethnic identity? What other ethnic identities are present in the story?</p>	African American female and grandpa

APPENDIX C: CRITICAL CONTENT AND VISUAL ANALYSIS SAMPLE P. 3

<p>Farmer's Agricultural Role: What type of work is depicted on the farm? Is the farmer in the field, the kitchen, or a laboratory?</p>	<p>The grandpa was in the field and the barn. There are pigs and chickens around.</p>
<p>Genre: What genre is the story? How is the genre significant to the agricultural depictions of black life in farming?</p>	<p>Realistic Fiction</p>
<p>Formats: What formats are the books available? How is the format significant to the reader's interpretation of black life in agriculture?</p>	<p>Youtube/Others See Worldcat.org</p>
<p>Languages: What languages are the books available? How does the language availability widen or limit diverse audiences?</p>	<p>See Worldcat.org</p>
<p>Agricultural Literacy: How does the book approach tenets of agricultural literacy? Where on the Pillars of Agricultural Literacy would the text best fit?</p>	<p>Farm animals; corn fields; They live on a farm; The grandfather is harvesting. Pillar #1: Replants the tree that was destroyed; Stewart of the land.</p>

APPENDIX D: COMBINED BOOKLIST

Table 23 contains the original list of books that was generated from the described search parameters. This list is included here as a resource for future studies as includes the book title, publication year, and the book's page numbers.

Table 23

Combined Booklist with Number Of Book Pages

Book Title N=314	Publication Year	Number of Pages
Juicy Peach	2000	8
Twister's Tricks	2004	16
Benjamin Banneker	2014	24
Michelle Obama	2010	24
Pop Pop And Grandpa	2005	24
Rosa Parks	2005	24
Sadie's Seed Adventures	2013	24
Once Upon a Farm	2002	26
The Grandad Tree	1999	26
Baby Animals	1941	28
The Duck in The Hole	2007	28
We're Going to The Farm	2012	28
Lola Plants A Garden	2014	30
A Man For All Seasons: The Life Of George Wash	2004	32
A Picture Book of George Washington Carver	2008	32
A Place Called Freedom	1995	32
A Slave Family	2002	32
A Strawbeater's Thanksgiving	1998	32
A Visit to The Country	1989	32
A Weed Is a Flower: The Life Of George Washington Carver	1965	32
Baby Blessings	2010	32
Bark & Tim	2003	32
Big Jabe	2000	32
Big Wind Coming!	1996	32
Bree Finds a Friend	2014	32
Callie Ann And Mistah Bear	1996	32
Calvin's Christmas Wish	1993	32
Chickens Chickens	1995	32
City Green	1994	32

Table 23 (cont.)

Book Title N=314	Publication Year	Number of Pages
Come On Rain	1924	32
Dance Y'all	2009	32
Danitra Brown Leaves Town	2002	32
Dear Benjamin Banneker	1994	32
Down Home at Miss Dessa's	1996	32
Down The Winding Road	2000	32
Family	2001	32
Farmer Will Allen and The Growing Table	2019	32
Flossie & The Fox	1986	32
Flower Garden	1994	32
Follow Me Down to Nicodemus Town	2019	32
Freedom Bird: A Tale of Hope And Courage	2020	32
Freedom's School	2015	32
Friend On Freedom River	2004	32
Friends And Flowers	2008	32
George Crum And the Saratoga Chip	2006	32
George Washington Carver	1999	32
George Washington Carver	2014	32
George Washington Carver: An Innovative Life	2007	32
George Washington Carver: Agricultural Pioneer	2006	32
George Washington Carver: Ingenious Inventor	2006	32
Going Back Home	2004	32
Going Down Home with Daddy	2019	32
Granddaddy's Gift	1996	32
Granddaddy's Turn: A Journey To The Ballot Box	2015	32
Grandma Lena's Big Ol' Turnip	2015	32
Harvey Potter's Balloon Farm	1989	32
Hey, Charleston!: The True Story Of The Jenkins	2013	32
Hot Day on Abbott Avenue	2004	32
How A Seed Grows,	2015	32
I Believe I Can	2020	32
I Dream of Trains	2003	32
I Love My Family	1993	32
In Daddy's Arms	1997	32
In The Garden with Dr. Carver	2012	32
Irene's Wish	2000	32
It Is the Wind	2003	32
It Jes' Happened	2012	32
Joe Louis, My Champion	2004	32
John Lewis In the Lead	2006	32
Kinda Blue	1993	32

Table 23 (cont.)

Book Title N=314	Publication Year	Number of Pages
Knockin' On Wood	2004	32
Lorraine	2018	32
Love Twelve Miles Long	2011	32
Miss Geneva's Lantern	1997	32
Mississippi Morning	2004	32
Momma Where Are You From	2000	32
Moon Over Star	2008	32
Mr. Williams	2005	32
My Hair Is My Garden	2017	32
Nanny Paws	2018	32
Off To School	1995	32
Our People	1994	32
Pappy's Handkerchief	2007	32
Pickin Peas	1998	32
Plant A Little Seed	2012	32
Preaching To The Chickens	2016	32
Rainbow Stew	2013	32
Red Dancing Shoes	1993	32
Right This Very Minute	2019	32
Ruby Finds A Worry	2019	32
Seeds	1994	32
Slavery In Early America	2011	32
Some Kind Of Love : A Family Reunion In Poems	2015	32
Summer Sun Risin'	2002	32
Sweet Potato Pie	2003	32
Sweet Sweet Memory	2000	32
Tailypo : A Newfangled Tall Tale	1996	32
The Extraordinary Gardner	2018	32
The Hard-Times Jar	2003	32
The Legend Of Freedom Hill	2000	32
The Life And Times Of The Peanut	1997	32
The Sunday Outing	1994	32
The Thing About Bees: A Love Letter	2019	32
The Underground Railroad	2015	32
Ticktock Banneker's Clock	2016	32
Touch The Sky: Alice Coachman	2012	32
Two Old Potatoes And Me	2003	32
Under The Freedom Tree	2013	32
Virgie Goes To School With Us Boys	1999	32
We Keep A Store	1989	32
When Grandma Gives You A Lemon Tree	2019	32
Who Put The Cookies In The Cookie Jar?	2013	32
Working Cotton	1992	32

Table 23 (cont.)

Book Title N=314	Publication Year	Number of Pages
I Lay My Stiches Down: Poems Of American Slav	2012	34
Picking Peas For A Penny	1990	34
Voice Of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit Of	2015	34
The Chicken Cat	2000	39
Always My Dad	1985	40
Back Home	1992	40
Bea's Bees	2019	40
Bigmama's	1991	40
Bread Lab	2018	40
Grandpa Cacao	2019	40
Miss Tizzy	1993	40
My Name Is James Madison Hemings	2016	40
No Small Potatoes : Junius G. Groves And His Kingdom In Kansas	2018	40
Philip Reid Saves The Statue Of Freedom	2013	40
Raising Dragons	1996	40
She Was The First! : The Trailblazing Life Of Shirley	2020	40
Sister Anne's Hands	1998	40
Sweet Clara And The Freedom Quilt	1993	40
The Boy And The Ghost	1989	40
The Chicken-Chasing Queen Of Lamar County	2007	40
The Last Black King Of The Kentucky Derby	2007	40
The Seasons Sewn : A Year In Patchwork	1996	40
The Secret Garden Of George Washington Carve	2019	40
The Strength Of These Arms : Life In The Slave Quarters	1997	40
The Unstoppable Garret Morgan	2019	40
The Wagon	1996	40
Uncle Jed's Barbershop	1985	40
Under The Quilt Of Night	1998	40
Unspoken : A Story From The Underground Railroad	2012	40
What Is Given From The Heart	2019	40
When Grandmama Sings	2012	40
George Washington Carver	2008	41
Moses : When Harriet Tubman Led Her People To	2006	42
Aquila's Drinking Gourd	2002	47
Benjamin Banneker: A Pioneering Scientist	2003	48
Bring Me Some Apples And I'll Make You A Pie	2009	48
By And By : Charles Albert Tindley, The Father O	2020	48
Daddy Played The Blues	2017	48
Exploring The Virginia Colony	2016	48
George Washington Carver : Teacher And Enviro	2017	48
George Washington Carver (On My Own Biogra	2000	48
Holes In The Sky	2018	48

Table 23 (cont.)

Book Title N=314	Publication Year	Number of Pages
Overground Railroad	2020	48
Ruby Bridges	2009	48
Slavery	2008	48
Slavery In America	2011	48
The Great Migration: An American Story	1993	48
The Old Truck	2020	48
Vision Of Beauty: The Story Of Sarah Breedlove	2000	48
Drylongso	1992	56
Dare To Dream : Coretta Scott King And The Civil	1994	60
A History Of The Civil Rights Movement	2012	62
Osceola : Memories Of A Sharecropper's Daughter	2000	63
A Pocketful Of Goobers: A Story Of George Washington Carver	2014	64
George Washington Carver	2003	64
Mary Mcleod Bethune	2003	64
Medgar Evers	2004	64
Sadiq And The Green Thumb	2019	64
Whale Port : A History Of Tuckanucket	2007	64
A New Life For Toby	1997	72
Little Shaq	2015	80
Searching For Sarah Rector	2014	80
The Stories Julian Tells	1981	80
Mama's Window	2005	89
Cowboys	1993	91
Secret Of The Old Red Barn : A Story About Our Ch	2010	95
Growing Up In Slavery	2001	96
Starring Grace	2000	96
The Songs Of Stones River: A Civil War Novel	2015	96
F Is For Freedom	2000	102
Message In The Sky	2003	102
Leon's Story	1997	107
Benjamin Banneker: American Scientific Pioneer	2006	112
Carver: A Life In Poems	2001	112
Flying Free	2002	112
Frederick Douglass	2011	112
Frederick Douglass: Young Defender Of Human	2007	112
Fredrick Douglass: Slave, Writer, Abolitionist	2005	112
George Washington Carver: Scientist, Inventor,	2007	112
Great African-American Lawyers	2002	112
Oprah Winfrey	2001	112
Sarah Journeys West: An Oregon Trail Survival	2020	112
Seedfolks	1997	112
Who Is Oprah Winfrey?	2019	112
Jackson Jones And The Puddle Of Thorns	1994	113

Table 23 (cont.)

Book Title N=314	Publication Year	Number of Pages
Life Under Slavery	2006	113
Alice Walker Freedom Writers	1999	115
More Stories Huey Tells	1997	118
The Children Of The Great Depression	2005	118
Here We Go Round	2002	119
Come Morning	1995	120
Away West	2006	121
Frederick Douglass : A Powerful Voice For Freed	2008	124
Journey To Freedom, 1838	2020	124
Pathfinders: The Journeys Of 16 Extraordinary B	2017	124
David's Search	1998	127
Bull Run	1993	128
Jesse Owens : "I Always Loved Running"	2011	128
Shai & Emmie Star In The Rescue	2018	128
Slave Life On The Plantation : Prisons Beneath Th	2004	128
Best Shot In The West	2008	129
Zellie Blake Massachusetts, 1834	2002	133
Where Do You Stay	2011	136
Bird	2004	144
Dance, Kayla!	1998	144
Darnell Rock Reporting	1994	144
Dear Austin: Letters From The Underground Rai	1998	144
Forty Acres & A Mule	2000	144
George Washington Carver For Kids	2007	144
Justin And The Best Biscuits In The World	1986	144
Trouble Next Door	2016	144
Bright Freedom's Song	1998	145
Stealing Home	1992	153
Eliza's Freedom Road: An Underground Diary	2011	160
Gabriel's Horses	2007	160
Gabriel's Journey	2007	160
Gabriel's Triumph	2007	160
Melitte	1990	160
Run Away Home	2001	160
The Story Of Jonas	2007	160
Tulsa Burning	2002	160
Send One Angel Down	2000	163
Special Delivery	2010	164
Cry Of Courage	1998	169
South Town	1958	174
Risking The Dream	2000	175
African American Inventors	1997	176
Sang Spell	1998	176

Table 23 (cont.)

Book Title N=314	Publication Year	Number of Pages
Journey To Galveston	2014	179
Jip: His Story	1996	180
Calico Girl	2017	192
Kizzy Ann Stamps	2012	192
Leaving Gee's Bend	2010	192
Lost Goat Lane	2004	192
12 Years A Slave	1853	198
Running For Our Lives	1994	198
Time Pieces : The Book Of Times	2002	199
A Piece Of Heaven (Dirt Garden Place Of Healing)	2001	208
Francie	1994	208
Leaving Lymon	2020	208
Maniac Monkeys On Magnolia Street	1999	208
Ruby's Imagine	2008	208
The Floating Circus	2008	208
Willie Bea And The Time The Martians Landed	1983	208
Mile's Song	2000	213
Lizzie Bright And Buckminster Boy	2004	216
Lavender Green Magic	1974	219
One Brave Summer	2016	224
Ruby Lee & Me	2016	224
Steal Away	1991	224
Zack	1998	224
Zoe In Wonderland	2016	224
Hoodoo	2015	226
The Letter Writer	2008	229
Dangerous Skies	1996	240
Starting At Seneca Falls	2020	240
Time's Memory	2006	240
With Every Drop Of Blood	1994	240
White Lilac	1993	242
The Bicycle Man	1982	249
The Education Of Mary: A Little Miss Of Color:	2000	254
Across A War-Tossed Sea	2014	256
Come August, Come Freedom: The Bellows, The	2012	256
Stella Stands Alone	2008	256
The Heart Calls Home	1999	256
The Journey Of Little Charlie	2018	256
Trouble Don't Last	2002	256
Uncle Tom's Cabin	1956	266
47	2005	272
Devil On My Heels	2004	272
Jakarta Missing	2001	272
Small Steps	2006	272

Table 23 (cont.)

Book Title N=314	Publication Year	Number of Pages
Stealing Freedom	1998	272
The Wonder Of Charlie Anne	2010	272
Roll Of Thunder, Hear My Cry	1976	276
Cezanne Pinto: A Memoir	1994	279
Honey Bea	2003	288
Sugar	2013	288
The Revisioners	2019	288
Running Out Of Night	2014	304
Girl In Blue	2001	310
Ashes	2016	320
Gone Crazy In Alabama	2015	320
Stella By Starlight	2015	320
The Harlem Charade	2014	320
How High The Moon?	2019	321
A Thousand Never Evers	2008	322
Beloved	1987	326
Chains	2008	336
The Vanderbeekers And The Hidden Garden	2018	336
Mare's War	2009	341
Brown Girl Dreaming	2014	349
The Laura Line	2013	352
The Mirk And Midnight Hour	2014	384
Willow	2014	384
Burn	2020	400
Let The Circle Be Unbroken	1981	400
Tristan Strong Destroys The World	2020	400
The Land	2001	416
As Brave As You	2016	432
Tristan Strong Punches A Hole In The Sky	2019	482
Total N=314		