



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
1991 Volume I: Regions and Regionalism in the United States: Studies in the History and Cultures of the South,  
The Northeast and the American Southwest

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## Carefully Taught: The Effect of Regionalism on Prejudice

Guide for Curriculum Unit 91.01.03

by Jane H. Platt

My unit is an oral history project focused on the topic of regional expression of prejudice. The unit takes its title from the song, "Carefully Taught," in "South Pacific." We learn at an early age "to hate all the people our relatives hate." My project would be to have my class and a class in North Carolina do audiotaped oral histories of older people. The questions asked would focus on regional background and experiences of discrimination based on age, sex, religion, class, or race. Both classes would use the same questions and exchange copies of the tapes in order to compare the results. We can tabulate the answers on charts for comparison.

I expect to find that the region where a person lives tends to determine which groups are discriminated against and the ways in which prejudice is shown. For example, in the North prejudice has been denied and repressed. Its manifestation has therefore been more subtle than in the South. In the South it seems to have been more organized, open, and taken for granted. More recently, dramatic changes have been made in the South, and I think both regions are more open about discussing race relations. It will be interesting to see if the project shows this, and how the expression of prejudice has changed over time.

The children will develop skills in interviewing; critical reading—analysis, comparing and contrasting, and drawing conclusions; communications skills, and social skills. Activities include a simulation exercise on prejudice, researching the northeastern and southern regions and tabulating their characteristics, writing thumbnail autobiographies to exchange with the other class along with pictures of themselves and information about the schools. Also they will watch excerpts of the movie, *Soul Man* and a documentary about a Polish immigrant, comparing the amount of negative and positive newspaper space devoted to teens and children, and preparing ways to share their knowledge (skits, debates, displays or booklets). These will be presented at a reception for the people they interviewed and the students' parents.

(Recommended for Social Studies and Language Arts, Grades 5-8)

### **Key Words**

*Family Life Generational Relations History North Carolina Prejudice Regions Regionalism South American Racial*

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