

urban tots encounter no problem more painful than dealing with a scraped knee, the Skyline books sensitively portray urban realities for children of different ethnic backgrounds. In "The Hidden Lookout," for example, little Rosita wants a place of her own. "Everywhere she looks, there are millions and millions of people. What can she do?" She builds a box house on the roof of her apartment building.

Macmillan's Bank Street reading series for grades one through three. Two books are now available, six in preparation, by the Bank Street College of Education in New York City. Says Bank Street's president, John H. Niemeyer: "In most school readers, it is a big event when a mitten gets lost under a couch. If an event is charged with any real feeling, it is turned into make-believe by the device of talking animals. We leave talking animals to others. Our stories are about real people."

Benziger Brothers, Inc.'s "Land of the Free," an eighth-grade U.S. history text on the market only two months and already adopted by the Denver schools, approved in Detroit and Washington, D.C. Under a subchapter titled "Unfinished Business," the authors declare: "... There is a long way to go before the constitutional guarantees of equal rights and fair treatment have full effect. The First Amendment freedoms, meanwhile, have been cut back in the supposed interest of better security." Says Negro co-author John Hope Franklin, the distinguished University of Chicago historian: "We didn't write it with some publisher looking over our shoulders and saying, 'Oh, no! You can't write that!'"

But not all of the new integrated texts have been warmly received. One Southern state's textbook-selection committee refused to buy Silver Burdett's "Spell Correctly" series, presumably because Negroes appear frequently in illustrations, not as porters or field hands, but as professional men. And in Los Angeles, during "Negro History Week" no less, school-board member Charles R. Smoot, a conservative Republican, opposed adopting an eighth-grade teaching supplement, "Negro American Heritage," and other interracial texts. He argued the book might just possibly "stir racial antagonisms and [by failing to mention that NAACP founder W. E. B. Du Bois became a Communist in 1961] aid Communist recruitment of our youth." A week later, his proposal to reject the books was voted down, five to two.

*Sunburn:* Encouraging as such a victory may be to civil-rights leaders and urban educators, most texts and juvenile trade books now in circulation still show the effects of white-mindedness. In a recent report to the California State Curriculum Commission, a panel of professors evaluated four fourth-grade history and geography books and found that only one of them gave adequate attention to minority groups. One text, the panel reported, mentions housing as a problem but notes "only that more houses are needed, not that racial discrimination limits the accessibility of existing housing." Another was described as "patronizing and Pollyanna-ish entertainment."

Some educators regard the consistent exclusion of the Negro from standard texts as more of a "cultural conspiracy" than an oversight. "In discussing what America has done for the Negro," complains Prof. Franklin, "the textbook writer has failed to discuss what the Negro has done for America." And this, he adds, "represents a sinister and misleading implication" that the country belongs only to white people. Others insist the omission indirectly perpetuates prejudice, diminishes the Negro's self-esteem and impedes work in school. Says Hortense Jones, expert on early childhood education in New York City schools: "A lot of Negroes don't want to learn to read because they aren't being given an opportunity to read about the kind of people they really know. They can't identify with the images placed before them."

Negroes and other groups have fared little better in the so-called trade (i.e., non-text) book field. Surveying 5,206 children's books published from 1962 through 1964, Nancy Larrick, former president of the International Reading Association, discovered only 349 that had Negro characters in text or illustrations. Many of the illustrations, moreover, left Miss Larrick wondering whether a given character was a Negro or a Caucasian with a sunburn.

Lately, however, Negro biographies (from "Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad" to "Jim Brown: The Running Back") have appeared in school libraries, and a few publishers are introducing Negro heroes and heroines in juvenile fiction. Betty Baum's "Patricia Crosses Town" (Knopf) is the story of a Negro girl in a newly integrated school and, according to the publisher, is selling satisfactorily.

*Double Standard:* But Jean Poindexter Colby, editor of Hastings House, reports that some salesmen objected to Helen Kay's "A Summer to Share," in