

## World War Two

The following documents and audio excerpts describe events and issues in St. Lawrence County in December 1941. The country was somewhat taken by surprise but nevertheless resolutely determined to win the war. Roosevelt's declaration of war and the advertisement that appeared in the Canton Plaindealer illustrates that determination in the face of deprivation.

The article on the local Defense Council volunteer registration along with the DeKalb Town Board minutes of Dec. 27, 1941 show how real the threat of invasion was to local residents.

The audio letter sent by a family in Britain to their refugee daughters in the USA along with a news item about the "Bundles for Britain" program in DeKalb illustrate the devastating effects of the war on children. These items show American's willingness to help out others in a time of need. The local campaign to assist British civilians is a long forgotten chapter in local history.

The articles on children and air raids from the Gouverneur Tribune press illustrate the types of preparedness that even children went through in a time of war.

The Town Board minutes are from the DeKalb Town Clerk's office. The newspaper clippings and audio recordings are part of the DeKalb Town Historian's collection. The draft of Franklin Roosevelt's Declaration of War is from the national Archives and Records Administration web sight.

### Suggested Lessons:

Disciplines: Social Studies, and Language Arts

Grade Levels: 4-8

Time Frame: 4 class periods (Each lesson in this group could be taught as a stand alone lesson)

Materials Needed:

- Copy of Town Board Minutes of Dec. 27, 1941(provided)
- 4 Scrapbook pages (provided)
- 4 worksheets provided
- 2 audio recordings in MP3 format
- external speakers for your computer

Learning Objectives: The students will:

1.Gather information about the local reactions to the declaration of war in December 1941 from meeting notes and scrapbook pages.

2.Define pertinent vocabulary including infamy, civilian, and defense.

3.Gather information about steps to implement civilian defense in the North Country.

4. Write a paragraph about the things that they would have to do without during WW2 rationing.
5. Listen to a recorded birthday message from the parents of two child refugees in America to escape the bombing of Britain.
6. Answer questions about local aid programs for British civilians after reading scrapbook entries.
7. Write an imaginary letter to their parents back in Britain using the information they have gathered from the recording and the scrapbook.
8. Read about school air raid evacuation plans for Gouverneur and answer questions about the preparations.
9. Interview their grandparents, neighbors or others about their memories of blackouts and prepare a written report of what they have learned.

Procedures:

**Lesson one**

1. Distribute copies of the worksheet, The War Begins, and the scrapbook page 'Food and the War'.
2. Play the recording of "Roosevelt's Declaration of War". Make sure the students have previewed the questions before you play the speech. (You may wish to distribute copies of Roosevelt's draft of the speech as well.)
3. Identify and define any unfamiliar terminology such as infamy.
4. Direct the students to complete worksheet by analyzing the scrapbook document and remembering the speech. You may have to repeat the speech for some.
5. Discuss with the class how it would feel to have to do with out many things because of the war rationing.

**Lesson two**

1. Distribute copies of the worksheet 'Civilian Defense', the scrapbook page "Defense Council " and 'Town Board Meeting Dec. 27, 1941' minutes.
2. Have the students read the two documents and answer the questions on the worksheet.
3. Discuss with the students why there was a felt need for civilian defense. How did these preparations for defense differ from those after 9/11? And why?

### **Lesson three**

1. Distribute scrapbook page 'British Aid' and worksheet 'Bundles For Britain'.
2. Before playing the recording, "Birthdays at Northhampton" give the students some background on the recording. "The original is recorded on a 78 RPM record. Such messages could easily be made at a local department store in the 1920's and 30's. This particular recording was found at a garage sale in Richville, NY. The exact location where the children were living is unknown but was probably Northhampton, MA.
3. Play the recording.
4. Have the students answer the first three questions.
5. The students should read the scrapbook page before answering questions four and five.
6. Discuss with the students what it would be like to be separated from your parents for possible years at a time. Would they want to tell their parents everything that was going on or would they tell only the positive and uplifting things?
7. Have the students write an imaginary letter to their parents pretending they are the two children in the recording.

### **Lesson Four**

1. Distribute copies of the worksheet, 'Children and Air Raids', and the scrapbook page 'Gouverneur Tribune Press December 1941'.
2. Have the students read the document and answer the questions on the worksheet.
3. Have the students do question six for homework. If the students have trouble finding someone to interview identify a local citizen who remembers the blackouts and invite them as a guest speaker to your class.

### Further Research and Discussion of World War Two:

Invite a senior citizen to your class to discuss the war and its effects in your town.

Visit your local public library. Use their microfilm of the local newspapers to do further research about the war and your community.

Read a book such as:

Foreman, Michael. *War Boy*. New York: Arcade Publishing.

This is a boy's first hand account of surviving the bombing of Britain. Wonderful illustrations holds the interest of all.

Gallaz, Christophe, and Innocenti, Roberto. *Rose Blanche*. Mankato, Minnesota: Creative Education, Inc., c 1985.

This is an autobiographical story as seen through the eyes of a young child in Germany, during World War II. It is a beautifully illustrated picture book.

Greene, Bette. *The Summer of My German Soldier*. New York: Dial Press, 1973.

Twelve-year-old Patty Bergen, in struggling to become a mature and likeable human being, befriends a German soldier during the war and discovers her own worth as a person.

Hahn, Mary Downing. *Stepping on the Cracks*. New York: Clarion Books, 1991.

This is an autobiographical picture of two young girls in a small town in the United States during World War II. War is only a background to their every day lives.

Kodama, Tatsuhara. *Shin's Tricycle*. New York: Walker and Company, c 1995.

A poignant story of atomic bomb victims of Hiroshima unfolds in Japan.

Lowry, Lois. *Number the Stars*. Houghton Mifflin Company, 1989.

Ten-year-old Anne Marie Johansen helps to save her best friend, who is a Jew, and family from relocation in occupied Copenhagen, in 1943.

Orlev, Uri. *The Man from the Other Side*. Houghton Mifflin Company, 1991.

Fourteen-year-old Marek and his grandparents, who live on the outskirts of the Warsaw ghetto during World War II, shelter a Jewish man in the days before the Jewish uprising. The book is a translation from the Hebrew.

Salisbury, Graham. *Under the Blood Red Sun*. New York: Delacorte Press, c 1994.

This is the story of a young Japanese boy whose ordinary life with his family in Hawaii changes drastically after the

bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941.

Taylor, Theodore. *The Cay*. New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1969.

This is the story of eleven-year-old Phillip who, after the ship that was taking him back to Virginia was torpedoed, finds himself washed ashore on a tiny cay with only Timothy, a huge, black West Indian and Stew Cat as companions. Their struggle for survival is poignantly told.

Uchida, Yoshiko. *Journey to Topaz*. New York: Scribner, 1971. California: Creative Arts, 1985.

Yuki, an eleven-year-old Japanese-American boy living in California when Pearl Harbor is bombed, has his life drastically changed. The family is evacuated to a camp in Topaz where they endure their bleak stay with dignity, courage and loyalty.

**NYS Social Studies Standards correlation:**

**Standard 1: Key Idea 4**

- Consider different interpretations of key events and /or issues in history and understand the differences in these accounts.
- Explore different experiences, beliefs, motives, and traditions of people living in their neighborhoods, communities, and State.
- View historic events through the eyes of those who were there, as shown in their art, writings, music and artifacts.

Intermediate

- Consider the sources of historic documents, narratives, or artifacts and evaluate their reliability
- Describe historic events through the eyes and experiences of those who were there.

**Standard 5: Key Idea 4**

- Explain the role that civility plays in promoting effective citizenship in preserving democracy.