



WHAT DID YOU DO IN THE WAR? NEBRASKANS IN WORLD WAR II

An Educational Packet Designed for
Secondary Level Students Studying World War II



Prepared By Lori Cox, Research Division

NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1991 - 1995

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Introduction

On December 7, 1991, the Nebraska State Historical Society opened a major exhibit on Nebraska's role during World War II. The exhibit, "What Did You Do in the War?" encompasses activities of Nebraskans on the home front and overseas from the time of the attack on Pearl Harbor to V-J Day. The Society is encouraging all Nebraskans to take time to come and view this exhibit. However, the Society realizes that with the time constraints of secondary level students (the age group that most often studies the Second World War) visiting the exhibit as a classroom activity may not be an option. Therefore the Society has produced this educational packet for teachers to use with their classes in conjunction with their own studies of World War II.

This packet is very focused. It contains primary source documents which relate specifically to Nebraska during the war. The history of World War II is much more than the generals and the battles. The experiences of ordinary men, women, and children in smaller communities across the country also helped shape the history of this important world event. On the surface, the role Nebraska and Nebraskans played in the war may seem small, but actually it was quite important. By spending class time utilizing these local history sources, students will be able to see how this great event affected their state.

Also, many students tend to view history as names, dates, and places in a pre-packaged textbook format. The primary sources used in this packet should introduce them to a new way of looking at history. They will also help students in their development of important analytical skills. Students will undoubtedly have disagreements in interpreting the documents included, much like those amongst historians. We hope they will see the challenge historians have in interpreting the past.

How to Use This Packet

This packet contains ten primary source documents which relate to Nebraska or Nebraskans during World War II. Each document comes with background information for the instructor's benefit and some suggested ways in which the document can be used in the classroom. Each document needs to be reproduced for each student (with the exception of the poster) or enough for students working in groups. We have encouraged the use of a discussion format for each document. However, having students write paragraphs about the documents would be another option. The important thing is to get students looking at primary source documents as one of the tools to interpreting history.

An Advertisement for a Public Sale

Defense Industries in Nebraska

Prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor, rumors were rampant across the state that Nebraska communities would be chosen as sites for government defense plants. Due to the efforts of Nebraska's congressmen and senators, Omaha became the location of an aircraft assembly plant; Mead, Hastings, Grand Island, and Sidney became the homes for ammunition manufacturing and storage facilities. While these defense industries created thousands of jobs for Nebraskans and brought additional persons into the state, they created severe housing shortages. Also, many farm families, whose lands were bought at seemingly unfair prices, were displaced. One hundred and twenty nine thousand acres of Nebraska farmland, valued at nearly five million dollars, was confiscated by the federal government to make way for the defense plants.

Construction for the Sioux Ordnance Depot, located in Sidney, began in 1942. The mission of the depot was the receipt, storage, and issue of ammunition for the U.S. Army. At the peak of employment during the war, 2,161 persons worked at the SOD.

Reproduced here is an advertisement for a public sale which appeared in the *Sidney Telegraph* on March 10, 1942. The Beyer family was one of those farm families who had to sell their land and possessions to make way for the ordnance depot. The *Sidney Telegraph* is one of many newspapers that can be found in the archives of the Nebraska State Historical Society.

Suggestions For Teaching

1. Reproduce the sale bill for each student. Have them read through it very carefully. The following questions can be used to lead a class discussion:
 - a. What can you infer about the Beyer family from the sale bill in terms of their economic condition at the time of the sale and how they made their living?
 - b. What items appear to be more important than others? How did their farm property and equipment differ from farms you might know about?
2. Imagine if you were the Beyer family. What would you have done in their situation? What if this happened to your family today? What would you do?

ADMINISTRATOR AND FORCED EVACUATION PUBLIC SALE

AS OUR FARM IS INCLUDED IN THE AMMUNITION DUMP AREA LOCATED NORTHWEST OF SIDNEY, AND WE WILL HAVE TO LEAVE THE FARM, WE WILL HAVE A GENERAL AUCTION SALE AT THE PLACE LOCATED 7 MILES NORTH AND FIVE WEST OF SIDNEY, OR 5 MILES SOUTH AND 5 MILES WEST OF GURLEY... ALSO INCLUDED IN THIS SALE WILL BE A NUMBER OF ITEMS BELONGING TO THE JOSEPH F. BEYER ESTATE. THE SALE WILL BE HELD ON...

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11th

Starting At 10:00 o'clock in the morning. Lunch will be served on the grounds by the ALTAR SOCIETY of St. Patrick's Church in Sidney.
(IN CASE OF STORM ... SALE WILL BE POSTPONED UNTIL THE FOLLOWING MONDAY, MARCH 16, 1942)

26 HEAD OF CATTLE 26

Nine Milk Cows, all A-1 stock, most to be fresh soon. All T.B. and Abortion Tested.
Four Angus Heifers, to be fresh soon
Two Heifers, 2 years old
One Heifer, 1 year old

Four Bull Calves, 1 year old
One 2 Year Old Angus Bull
One Blue Roan Heifer Calf, 1 year old
One Holstein Heifer Calf, 1 year old
Three Sucking Calves

94 HEAD OF HOGS 94

Twenty-three Spotted Poland China Brood Sows, to farrow April 1
Five Chester White Brood Sows, to farrow around May 1
Fifty-three Fall Pigs

Eleven Brood Sows, to farrow March 17
One Spotted Poland China Boar
One Registered Poland China Boar

TWO HORSES—ONE BLACK MARE, FOUR YEARS OLD, WEIGHT, 1400 POUNDS, ONE BARRAGE GELDING, FIVE YEARS OLD, WEIGHT 1300 POUNDS

FARM MACHINERY & EQUIPMENT

One John Deere Weeder
One John Deere Disk
One Two-Wheel Trailer
One Wagon and Rack
One New John Deere Combine
One 150 Foot Drive Belt
One International Tractor, 22-36, in good running order, good rubber
One Moline Corn Binder
One Manure Spreader
One Bob Sled
One Side Delivery Rake
One 10-Foot Hay Rake
One Deering Mower
One Avery Thresher, 25 Inch
One Avery Separator, 32 Inch, in good running order

One Set Of Harness
One John Deere 4-Row Go-Dig
One International 10-Foot Drill
One Ford Truck, 1929
One Fresno Scraper
One 4 Bottom Grand Detour Plow
One 1927 International Truck
One Feed Cooker
One Wheel Barrow
Twenty-two A Type Hog Houses
Two Stock Tanks
Hog Troughs
Six 20 Rod Rolls New Woven Wire
One 250 Gallon Gas Tank

One McCormick Grader and Trucks, nearly new
Two 2-Row Chase Listers, in good repair
One 500 Gallon Gas Tank and Truck, in good shape
One 12-Foot Deering Binder, in running order
Two Schneide Weeders
One Rumley Pick-Up
One Cream Separator, nearly new
One Slop Cart
One Weed Burner, pressure tank
Five Self Feeders, many panels
One Tank Heater
One Forge
Two Hundred Posts
One Pump Jack
One 4-Row McCormick Go-Dig, in good shape, for Farmall Tractor

FEEDS & MISCELLANEOUS

5,500 lbs.—60 per cent Protein Tankage
About 200 Bushels Ear Corn
300 Bushels Club Marquot Barley
500 Pounds Crested Wheat Grass Seed
150 Bushels Barley

Two Vacuum Sweepers—Two Wash Tubs
One Ice Box—One Oil Stove
About 250 Bushels Shelled Corn
About 700 Bushels Oats
Some Eye Hay

450 Bushels Eye
Two Straw Stacks
Two Rollers—Three Rocking Chairs
One Sunshine Brooder Stove

—THREE DOZEN WHITE ROCK AND TWELVE DOZEN WHITE LEGHORN CHICKENS—

TERMS—CASH—SEE YOUR BANKER BEFORE SALE IF YOU DESIRE CREDIT. ALL PROPERTY MUST BE SETTLED FOR BEFORE REMOVING

P. J. Beyer-F. J. Beyer, Administrator For Joseph Beyer Estate Owners

OOL. A. B. RAPP, Auctioneer

AMERICAN NATIONAL BANK Clerks

A War Bond Poster

Financing The War

The war posed an enormous question. How would the country pay for it? More than half of the costs of the war accumulated as a national debt. However, lots of money was raised in efforts to keep the debt down. In 1942 the Revenue Act was passed establishing America's modern tax structure—the graduated income tax.

Another measure used to finance the war was with war bonds. Nebraskans had been buying savings bonds since the spring of 1941. Following the declaration of war, and the changing of the name to “war bonds,” everyone was encouraged to buy as many bonds as they could afford. A \$25.00 bond cost \$18.75 and would mature in ten years. From the time of Pearl Harbor to 1943, Nebraskans bought \$240,000,000 worth of bonds.

All sorts of different tactics were used to entice people to buy bonds. Celebrities often traveled across the country promoting the purchase of war bonds. Another way was through a public information campaign using posters.

Reproduced here is a poster which was used to persuade Nebraskans to buy war bonds. It and many other posters can be found in the archives of the Nebraska State Historical Society in the collection of Addison E. Sheldon (MS2039).

Suggestions For Teaching

1. Hang the color xerox of the poster in the front of the room so the class can see it.
 - a. Ask the students to identify and describe the symbols they see. Which are propagandistic? Which are patriotic?
 - b. Can you think of ways to change this poster to strengthen its message?
 - c. To what segments of the home front public would this poster most likely appeal to? What group or groups today would be likely to plan a campaign similar to this one to convince people to buy savings bonds today?
 - d. Consider this poster as a historical document. Should it be saved as a historical document? Why or why not?
 - e. What artistic details make this an effective poster?
 - f. Posters are frequently used in citizen participation campaigns. What characteristics do they have that make them effective?
2. You are commissioned to design a poster to encourage Nebraskans to buy war bonds during World War II. Design your own poster.



Don't Let That Shadow Touch Them

Buy **WAR BONDS**

A V-Mail Letter Home

William E. Green

William Earl Green was born May 8, 1925, in Lincoln, Nebraska. He was the third of four children born to Mr. and Mrs. Roy M. Green. Nineteen years and nine months later, on February 26, 1945, Bill died of wounds received while fighting with the U.S. Army (on the Siegfried Line) during World War II. He was buried in an American cemetery in Luxembourg.

Prior to entering the service, William had been a student at the University of Nebraska (1942-1943), studying vertebrate paleontology. He was also an adept artist.

Following his death, the Green family created a scholarship fund at the University of Nebraska in Bill's name to serve as a perpetual memorial to their beloved son and brother. The William E. Green Paleontology Memorial Scholarship has given other young people the opportunity to complete their education.

V-Mail

Mail was the primary means of communication during World War II. In an effort to speed up the delivery time, the government created V-Mail during the war. Letters written on V-Mail sheets were then microfilmed into a condensed size. The small space also allowed for more room in overseas shipping.

Censorship

All mail from military personnel was censored during the war. Officers could censor their own mail; enlisted men had to have their superior officers read their mail for any "sensitive" material—things that if the letter were intercepted by the enemy would give clues as to locations, military strength, and upcoming military engagements.

Reproduced here is a V-Mail letter William Green wrote home. Additional letters written by Green can be found in the Nebraska State Historical Society's archives (MS2025).

Suggestions For Teaching

1. Reproduce William Green's letter for each student. Ask them to read the letter carefully. (A typewritten version is included for the teacher's use in clarifying any words that may be difficult to decipher.) The following questions can be used in class discussion:
 - a. What information in the letter places it in a particular time period?
 - b. Does the letter provide details about the writer's personal situation?
 - c. What is the purpose of the letter?
 - d. What factual information is in the letter?
 - e. What inferences, generalizations, and conclusions might be drawn from the letter?
 - f. Knowing that William Green died only a month after this letter was written, does this change how you react to the letter?
 - g. What clues are in the letter that it has been censored by others or self-censored?

Typescript Copy of William Green's V-Mail Letter Home

Somewhere in France

Jan. 12, 1945

Dear Mom,

It'll probably be some time before you get this, but I want you to know that I'm thinking of you on your birthday today. I hope the other greeting reached you by today.

We've had a pretty rough trip up 'till now, but not as rough as it will be. There's a lot of snow here and it's pretty cold. I hope we get better fighting weather.

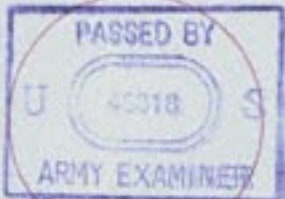
It seems funny to see the people talk and not be able to understand anything. I could kick myself for not taking French instead of Spanish. The people here care little for money, but are more concerned with candy, food, clothing, and tobacco.

I guess we can chalk this up to experience, though I'm all for the life of ease when this is over.

Love,

Bill

Print the complete address in plain letters in the panel below, and your return address in the space provided on the right. Use typewriter, dark ink, or dark pencil. Faint or small writing is not suitable for photographing.



David Bushnell
2 Lt.
(CENSOR'S STAMP)

TO: MRS. ROY M. GREEN
1900 SO 40
LINCOLN 2 NEBRASKA

FROM

CPL. WM. E. GREEN 31485009
CN. CO. 304 INF APO 76
40 PM NEW YORK, N.Y.

SEE INSTRUCTION NO. 2

(Sender's complete address above)

Somewhere in France
Jan 12, 1945.

Dear Mom,

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I guess we can chalk this up to experience, though I'm all for the life of ease when this is over.

Love
Bill.

HAVE YOU FILLED IN COMPLETE ADDRESS AT TOP?

REPLY BY
V...-MAIL

HAVE YOU FILLED IN COMPLETE ADDRESS AT TOP?

FROM: Cpl. Wm E Green 31485009
Co. Co. 304 Inf. APO 96
c/o P.M. New York, N.Y.



V...— MAIL

TO:

Mrs. Roy M. Green
1900 So 40
Lincoln, 2 Nebr.



FOLD HERE

FOLD HERE

V-Mail service provides a most rapid means of communication. If addressed to a place where photographing service is not available the original letter will be dispatched by the most expeditious means.

INSTRUCTIONS

- (1) Write the entire message plainly on the other side within marginal lines.
- (2) Print the name and address in the two spaces provided. Addresses of members of the Armed Forces should show full name, complete military or naval address, including grade or rank, serial number, unit to which assigned or attached and army post office in care of the appropriate postmaster or appropriate fleet post office.
- (3) Fold, seal, and deposit in any post office letter drop or street letter box.
- (4) Enclosures must not be placed in this envelope.
- (5) V-Mail letters may be sent free of postage by members of the Armed Forces. When sent by others postage must be prepaid at domestic rates (3c ordinary mail, 6c if domestic air mail service is desired when mailed in the U. S.)

A Comic Strip from the *Nebraska Ordnance Plant News*

The Nebraska Ordnance Plant

On October 14, 1941, the War Department announced that an ordnance plant would be built near Mead, Nebraska. The plant would take 17,290 acres of land which was being used by farmers. The government contracted with the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company of Akron, Ohio, to run the plant. Construction began on January 1, 1942, and operations began on September 10, 1942.

The purpose of the plant was to make bombs. By the end of the war, the plant had produced over two million bombs. The plant employed some 3,000 people at its peak.

Working with explosives caused great concerns for the safety of the workers. Also, due to the nature of the plant, secrecy was stressed, so that any possible “enemy agents” could not find out how many bombs were being produced and how they were produced. The plant’s employee newspaper, the *Nebraska Ordnance Plant News* used its pages to stress the importance of safety and secrecy. A comic strip entitled “Axis Accidents” was created as a humorous way to get this serious message across.

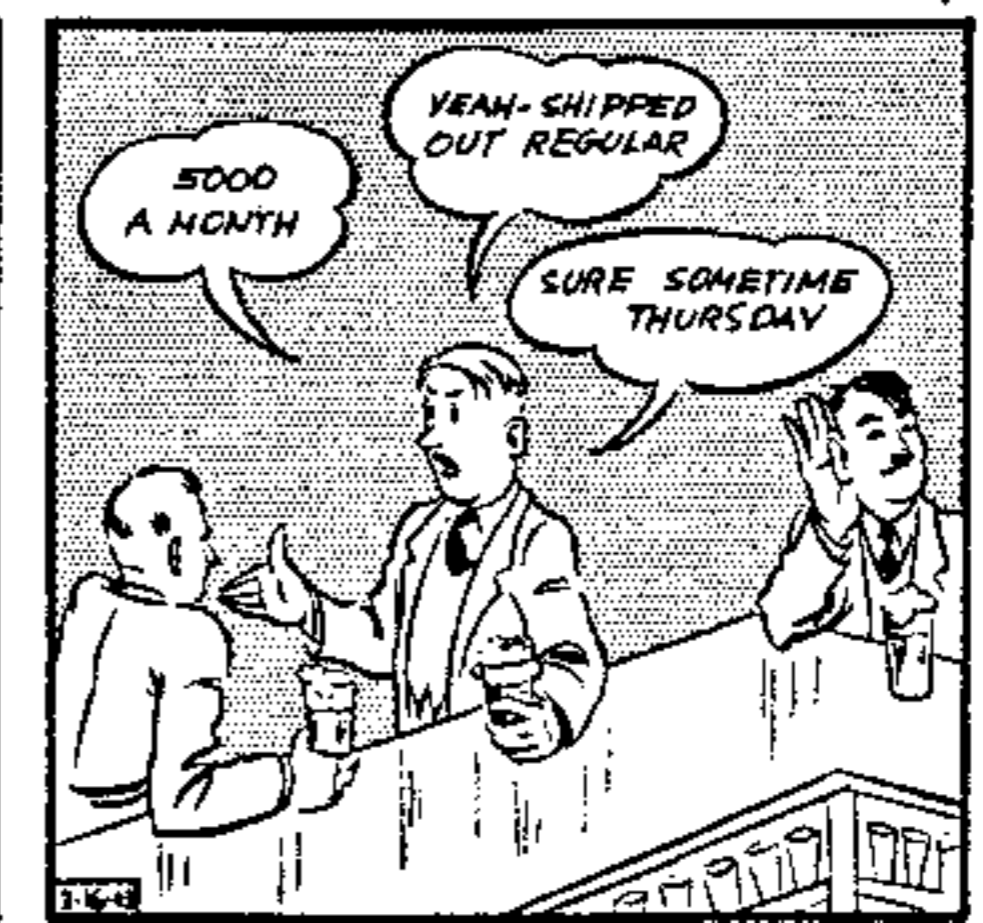
Reproduced here is a comic strip from the *Nebraska Ordnance Plant News*. This newspaper can be found in the Nebraska State Historical Society’s archives.

Suggestions For Teaching

1. Reproduce the comic strip for each student. Have them read through it carefully. Use the following questions as a basis for a class discussion:
 - a. Describe the action taking place in the comic strip.
 - b. In your own words, explain how the words in the comic strip explain or clarify the symbols. (ie. “sixth column,” man who looks strikingly like Adolph Hitler).
 - c. What is the message of the comic strip?
 - d. Which words or phrases in the comic strip appear to be the most significant? Why do you think so?
 - e. List adjectives that describe the emotions portrayed in the comic strip.
 - f. Is this an effective comic strip? Why or why not?
2. Pretend it is your job to draw a comic strip for the *Nebraska Ordnance Plant News* emphasizing safety or secrecy. Design a strip.

AXIS ACCIDENTS

THE AXIS AGENTS ARE FOREVER ON THE ALERT FOR BITS OF INFORMATION. DON'T GIVE THEM A CHANCE TO PERFORM ANY ACTS OF SABOTAGE AS A RESULT OF RUMOR. STOP 6TH COLUMN!



A Letter Home from a WAC

The Women's Army Corps

On May 15, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Public Law 554, "An Act to Establish a Women's Army Auxiliary for Service with the Army of the United States." Originally, women in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) acted as civilians. By 1943, the organization was fully integrated into the United States Army and its name changed to the Women's Army Corps (WAC).

The idea of women in uniform was a new, exciting phenomenon during World War II. Recruitment of Nebraska women relied greatly on the supposed glamour and adventure of service with the armed forces. In reality, most women in the WAC were consigned to stateside secretarial duties. Recruiting efforts were also hindered by a major slander campaign in 1943 which alleged that pregnancy was rampant throughout the Corps and that American women who put on an army uniform were or became degraded morally.

Reproduced here is a portion of a letter written by Frances Overholser, a Nebraska WAC. The letter was written to her mother in Lincoln, Nebraska on November 2, 1943. Other letters of Frances Overholser can be found in the archives of the Nebraska State Historical Society (MS0450).

Suggestions For Teaching

1. Reproduce the letter for each student. Ask them to carefully read the letter. (A typewritten copy has been included to clarify any words that may be confusing.) The following questions can be used as the basis for a class discussion:
 - a. What information in the letter places it in a particular time period?
 - b. Does the letter provide details about the writer's personal situation?
 - c. What is the purpose of the letter?
 - d. What factual information is in the letter?
 - e. What inferences, generalizations, and conclusions might be drawn from the letter?
 - f. In the letter there are several references to [Adolph] Hitler and his agents. Do you think Hitler was responsible for the rumors about the WACs?
2. This letter might spark a class discussion on women in the military today? Have times changed much for women in the military?

Typescript Copy of Frances Overholser's Letter

At present we are fighting an ugly rumor about the WACs and we all feel terrible about it. As you know, the WACs have been doing a wonderful job. We have released, I can't tell you how many Divisions of fighting men, but it is beginning to get into Hitler's hair.

It all started with an order for 40 baby cribs from Ft. Des Moines. They were for officer's wives, of course, but Ft. Des Moines happens to be one of the largest WAC centers in the country and Hitler's agents jumped at the chance. "Smear the WACs! Ruin their reputation. They are there only for the convenience of the soldiers, and all that stuff. Break their morale. Frighten their parents. Do everything in your power to stop recruiting. The WACs must be discredited." Those orders came straight from Berlin, and at present they are succeeding. (Maybe.)

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Wacs! Ruin their reputation.⁶ They are there only for the convenience of the soldiers, and all that stuff. Break their morale. Frighten their parents. Do everything in your power to stop recruiting. The Wacs must be discredited." Those orders came straight from Berlin, and at present they are succeeding. (maybe)

Photograph of Scrap Collecting

Scrap Drives

During World War II, Nebraskans became well-educated in the art of collecting scrap material to be recycled into armaments or other items vital to the war effort. They often saved the tin foil from gum wrappers, making a tin foil ball until it reached a large enough size to be accepted by the scrap collection site. Scrap iron and other metals were obviously of value, but so were such “disposables” as grease, which could be used to manufacture ammunition. Scrap paper was often the easiest to come by. Paper was recycled into packaging for armaments. Caught up in patriotic enthusiasm, scrap collecting sometimes went too far. Many items were sent to the scrap pile which were later regretted, including cannon, monuments, and other historical objects. Recent historical studies indicate that the scrap drives were more important as morale boosters than in providing essential products.

Reproduced here is a photograph of Lincoln Camp Fire Girls with scrap they collected in September 1942. This photograph and others relating to Nebraska and the war can be found in the Photo Collections of the Nebraska State Historical Society.

Suggestions For Teaching

1. Reproduce this photograph for your students on a photocopying machine. Have the original available for closer examination. Use it as the basis for a discussion on using photographs as historical evidence. Consider these questions in your discussion:
 - a. What is happening in the photograph?
 - b. What details in the photograph provide clues about what is happening?
 - c. What details in the photograph reveal the date of the event? How does the photograph reveal the time of day or year? What preceded taking the picture? What followed it? How does the picture reveal the stopping of time? What is caught in motion? What does the picture reveal of the times in which it was taken?
 - d. Is there evidence in the photograph to place it in a particular location?
 - e. Describe the mood of the photograph. (e.g. formal, candid, happy, unhappy etc.)
 - f. If you knew that this photograph recorded the results of a scrap drive, what conclusions could you draw from it?
2. Make a list of all the different types of items these girls collected. Why were they collected? What could they be used for in the future? Recent historical studies indicate that scrap drives were utilized more to promote patriotism and war awareness in citizens and really had little effect on increasing usable resources for the war effort. How can students prove or disprove this contention?
3. How do the scrap drives of the 1940s compare with today's recycling efforts? Is today's recycling an organized, group effort?



Diary of a B-17 Co-Pilot

Willis L. Jones

Willis Lee Jones was a co-pilot on a B-17, the “Vera Mae” during World War II. The plane was shot down on their twenty- sixth mission to Augsburg, Germany, on April 13, 1944. All ten crew members parachuted safely from the stricken plane, and all were taken prisoners. Mr. Jones was sent to Stalag Luft No. 1 at Barth, Germany, and remained as a prisoner of war until May 13, 1945, when he was liberated. Mr. Jones kept a diary of his missions before he was shot down and also a diary while in the prison camp.

Reproduced here is one entry from Mr. Jones’ diary of his missions. It is from the Nebraska State Historical Society’s archives (MS4256).

Suggestions For Teaching

1. Reproduce the diary excerpt for each student in the class. Ask them to carefully read through it. (A typewritten copy of the excerpt has been included to avoid any confusion.) Have them transcribe the diary entry and then go over it using the typewritten copy. Are there any words which are confusing or questionable as to what they are? Discuss why it is important for historians to be able to decipher what the exact words are and how different transcriptions can result in different conclusions.
2. Consider the following questions in a class discussion about his source:
 - a. How is this diary entry different from a letter?
 - b. What kinds of information does it reveal about the situation Mr. Jones was in?
 - c. What information does it reveal about what part Mr. Jones played in the crew?
 - d. What does it reveal about the war?
 - e. Who did Mr. Jones write the diary for? Himself? Historians? His grandchildren?
3. Do you keep a diary about your activities? If you knew it was going to be read later, would that change the kinds of things you write about? Why?

Typescript Copy of Willis L. Jones' Diary Entry

Mission #2 Jan. 5, 1944
BODEAUX [Bordeaux] Air Field

This was one of those tough missions (I guess) They got me up at 02:30 again this morning, as usual we went through briefing etc. We took off at 06:30 and it was very dark. It doesn't become light until after 8 o'clock. We were flying around trying to find our formation when the whole sky was lighted up. A plane had cracked up on take-off with 2700 gals of gasoline and 4800 lbs of bombs on board. It was really an explosion. It was the beginning of a pretty hectic day for us. The trip to Bordeaux was about 600 miles. We didn't have any trouble until we got almost to the target and then one lone fighter hit us. I'm of the opinion that he never got any ships on that pass, but he sure came close to us. I think I could recognize the pilot if I ever met him again. The flack [flak] over the target was very heavy. It was bursting all around us. It seemed like a dream (nightmare) until one burst came close enough to hit us. It just sounded like someone through [threw] a handfull of small stones at us. We found out after we landed thought that it was a little worse than that. We had about 12 holes in the ship including one right over Telefsen's head. I thought he was going to faint when he saw it. After we left the target the fighters really hit us. There must have been 50 of them against some 80 fortresses. We never had any direct attacks at our plane but they were attacking the low squadron and the groups behind us. It sure was a funny feeling to know that someone was shooting at you and intending to kill you. You sure wake up on a hurry. There sure isn't much a co-pilot can do but set there and pray. The fighters stayed with us about 30 minutes and finally they [blank]. I don't know how many fighters were shot down, but we lost 10 bombers. Was sure glad to see the coast of England and better still to get on the ground.

MISSION #2 JAN. 5, 1944

BORDEAUX AIR FIELD.

This was one of those tough missions (I guess) they got me up at 2:30 again this morning, as usual we went through briefing etc. He took off at 6:30 and it was very dark. It doesn't become light until after 8 o'clock. We were flying around trying to find our formation when the whole sky was lighted up. A plane had cracked up on take-off with 2700 gals of gasoline and 4800 lbs of bombs on board. It was really an explosion

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enough to hit us. It
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stones at us. He jumped
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though that it was a
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in the ship including
one right over Telefer's
head. I thought he was
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The target the fighters
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20 fortresses. He never
had any direct attacks at
our plane but they were
attacking the low Squadron

and the groups behind
us. It sure was a
funny feeling to know
that someone was
shooting at you and
intending to kill you.
You sure wake up in
a hurry. There sure isn't
much a Co-pilot can do,
but set there and pray.
The fighters stayed with
us about 30 minutes and
finally they. I don't know
how many fighters were
shot down, but we lost
10 Bombers. It was sure
glad to see the coast of
England, and better still
to get on the ground.

A Propaganda Leaflet

Propaganda

Propaganda according to the *Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language* (Second College Edition, 1976) is "any systematic, widespread dissemination or promotion of particular ideas, doctrines, practices, etc. to further one's own cause or to damage an opposing one."

Propaganda is often used as a weapon of war. The first uses of propaganda as a weapon occurred during the First World War. In fact the U.S. government created an entire organization to head up the creation of propaganda. The Committee on Public Information was responsible for gathering citizen support for the war using patriotic speeches, posters, newspaper stories, films, and pamphlets. The Office of War Information (OWI) continued this during the Second World War. Germany and Japan, of course, had their own propaganda.

One of the more wide-spread uses of propaganda was in leaflets which were dropped on soldiers from the air. These leaflets were intended to demoralize the soldier so that he would lay down his arms and surrender. The United States, Germany, and Japan all used these leaflets.

Reproduced here is a leaflet that was dropped on some Nebraska soldiers during World War II. (Many of the members of the Thirty-fifth Division were Nebraskans.) It and other items relating to the Thirty-fifth Division can be found in the Museum Collections of the Nebraska State Historical Society.

Suggestions For Teaching

1. Reproduce the leaflet for each student. Have them read through it carefully. The following questions should be considered in a class discussion:
 - a. What is propaganda? How is it used?
 - b. To whom is this document addressed?
 - c. Who do you think wrote the document?
 - d. What points are being made by the author(s)?
 - e. What arguments are used to make these points?
 - f. Do you find these arguments convincing? Why or why not?
 - g. Describe the tone of the document.
 - h. What assumptions have the authors made about the people addressed?
 - i. How is the information in the document organized? How does this affect the message?
 - j. Is there information in the document that links it to a particular event in U.S. history?
 - k. Why do you think this document was written?
 - l. Do you consider this document to be an example of propaganda? Why or why not?
 - m. List examples of propaganda techniques used in the period in which these documents were created. How are they similar or different from present day techniques?



Welcome

MEN OF THE 35th DIVISION!

Considering the fact that you are newcomers, we would like to do everything to make you feel at home. We extend to you a cordial greeting and a hearty welcome to the Rur Valley!

We regret that you must come to this unpleasant district, but, as usual, you have to take over this section where the air is heavy with lead. The British have been withdrawn from here, because this same atmosphere didn't suit them very much. As always, under these conditions, the British prefer to let you do the work.

You have tried to veil your arrival here by doing such things as removing your divisional insignias. Nevertheless, a little bird told us all about it.

Before you arrived, there were other divisions here who didn't fare so well; namely: the 84th, the 102nd, the 29th, and, not to be forgotten, the British. They all got knocked about a bit. You can see that you won't have an easy time of it against the Rur defense lines.

As we said before, we shall try to make you feel at home. We hope to make every day here seem like "the glorious Fourth" - there'll be plenty of fireworks.

**We know what you are meant to do.
We know, also, what you want to do.**

*You want to return home as
soon as possible!!!*

**Better across
than a cross**

Governor Griswold's V-J Day Speech

V-J Day

V-J Day (Victory in Japan) was the day which formally marks the end of the war in the Pacific and therefore all of World War II. Atomic bombs had been dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 9 respectively, and on August 14 the Japanese accepted the Allied terms for surrender. V-J Day was celebrated on August 15, 1945. However, September 2, 1945 is also sometimes called V-J Day as this was the day when the Japanese signed the instrument of surrender.

Governor Dwight Griswold

Dwight Palmer Griswold served as Governor of Nebraska from 1941-1947.

Reproduced here is a copy of the speech Governor Dwight Griswold gave on the radio on V-J Day. This speech can be found in the Nebraska State Historical Society's archives (RG1, SG32).

Suggestions For Teaching

1. Reproduce the speech for each student. Have them read through it carefully. Use the following questions as the basis for a class discussion:
 - a. What is the message of this speech?
 - b. What is the tone of the speech (e.g. jubilation, guarded optimism, quiet reflection etc.)?
 - c. Consider carefully the words which have been changed and added. Do they make the message stronger? Weaker?
 - d. Who is the intended audience for the speech?
 - e. What might you have expected the governor to mention that he doesn't? (Hint, he never mentions the state of Nebraska directly.)
 - f. How has the speech been personalized?
 - g. In the final paragraph, he mentions that "fear has no place in our onward march." What is this onward march?

Radio. V-1.

This day dawns upon the graves of thousands, the ~~the~~ blood of millions, and upon the hopes of the entire world. Our emotions are a queer ~~mix~~ ^{it dawned also} mixture of ~~elation~~ ^{gladness - and}, of sadness, and, most of all, ^{of} thanksgiving to ~~the~~ Almighty God.

We are thankful that the ~~terrible~~ terror of war has stopped. We are also thankful for the opportunity to ~~go~~ ^{proceed} ~~forward~~ and with the task of insuring the peace.

Nowhere today is there a father--a parent--who does not find ~~in his heart~~ ^{VIGOR} a certain wholesomeness in the air that was not there yesterday. Those ^{parents} who have sons and daughters in the armed forces discover a prayer ^{of thanksgiving} upon their lips. Mrs. Griswold and I are no exceptions.

~~This day is the day when the world is at peace.~~

The first ~~natural~~ impulse is to hail this day as the end of the war. It is the day when the fighting has stopped officially. But it is also the beginning of a new ~~era~~ era, and an era which may well ~~be~~ be the final examination to determine whether mankind is capable of maintaining his own habitation ^{self} upon this earth.

Until the final days of this war, ~~I suspect~~ talk of permanent peace ~~was heard~~ was heard by many people as the pleasant, well-intentioned voice of the idealist. ~~Within the last few days~~ ^{Within} one day, however, the curtain of secrecy was lifted from the atomic bomb and the awful power of that weapon, coupled with the realization that even more terrifying instruments can be made, shocked us all. It shocked us so much that we ^{MUST} ~~should~~ know now, if ever, that international peace must become a solid, ~~living~~ living, eternal

way of life.

And so, the more we think about it, the more we come to know that this day is ~~important~~ monumental, not only because it marks the end of the war, but because it also marks the beginning of what must be the most glorious, ^{and} the most ~~fatefully~~ fateful political and economic undertaking of all time, if mankind is to survive.

To be more specific, I urge ~~the~~ my fellow Nebraskans to take time to ~~think about~~ evaluate the importance of the immediate years ahead. I urge you all to have patience. I urge ^{you} to have faith.

There are going to be times when bitterness wells up in your hearts because the ones you love are not returned home as quickly as you think they should be returned. There are going to be times when you will be tempted to ~~rise~~ seize upon some small incident and ~~will~~ point to it as indicating the world has gone to pot.

When doubts assail you, I recommend that you pause and think a moment. Here in the United States ~~we~~ we have the best in men, in material wealth; we have the know-how, the facilities of education, and ~~we have in this war~~ this very war has given us proof that our system of government ~~is capable of withstanding~~ is a worthy, a mighty vehicle of a determined ~~race~~ of people. We have come through the storm. We are wiser than we were before. We have a better notion of our responsibilities. With divine guidance, we will go ~~forward~~ ahead-and ~~we need~~ fear has no place in our onward march.

An Oral History Interview Transcript

Oral History

Oral history is the collecting of any individual's spoken memories of his/her life, of people he/she has known, and events in which he/she has witnessed or participated. Oral history is another primary source technique historians use to help them interpret the past. Oral histories can be used to supplement written records, complement those things that have already been written in historical studies, and to provide information that would exist in no other form.

Using oral histories as a source can pose problems. Interviewees are human. They can forget things. Their memories can play tricks on them. You have to be very careful as a historian when you use oral history as a source.

Virginia Koehler Knoll

Reproduced here is a page from the transcript from an interview that was conducted with Virginia Koehler Knoll about her World War II memories. Mrs. Knoll was living in Geneva, Nebraska, during the war and was only eleven years old at the start of the war. Mrs. Knoll's interview can be listened to in its entirety at the Nebraska State Historical Society (AV1.822.55)

Suggestions For Teaching

1. Reproduce the portion of the transcript for each student. Have them read through it carefully. Use the following questions as the basis for a class discussion:
 - a. Should an oral history interview be considered a primary source document? Why or why not?
 - b. Would you describe this document as factual or emotional?
2. Have students conduct oral history interviews of people who lived during World War II. Use the attached instructions to help get them started. Have each student write a brief report about the person they interviewed. Read some of the excerpts from the papers in class.

ready to get a new car when the war came. We just sort of prayed that car through the war. We didn't go anyplace. We drove it to Fairmont hoping it would get there and left it in order to take the train to get into Lincoln.

Originally I just remember the things that were affecting us because of the war being all kind of exciting and fun. The scrap drives came on and my Girl Scout troop got in all of those things.

LC: Explain a little bit about what you would do.

VK: I remember one Saturday morning when we joined with the Boy Scouts, and all of us little girls just thought that was pretty exciting. Someone provided a truck and we drove around and collected the scrap. We all got to ride in the back of the truck with the scrap. I just remember all the tin cans. I'm sure it wasn't very efficient, but that was something that was exciting and fun.

As I've mentioned several times the new people coming to town, the new children in the school and later all of the soldiers--all were unusual. So you see, there was just a kind of general excitement for a child. I certainly understood that it was terrible, but I think I never had any doubt that we were going to win the war. I never had any great fear, but we all did understand that our country was not being overrun or bombed or any of those things. We understood that other people were suffering greatly in other countries, though we weren't. I don't think we felt we could do anything more than what we were doing to help the war effort.

LC: Did you get most of your information from the radio?

VK: Yes. I'm sure my parents read the paper, but I didn't read papers at that time, except for the funnies. As I advanced in grade school, we began to have current events and geography. We talked about what specifically was going on. I do remember when I was in the seventh grade that some of those battles in the Pacific were just terrible and we knew there had been great loss of life. We all felt sad--very sad about that.

We didn't eat dinner until seven because in a little town the

Directions for Conducting an Oral History Interview

- 1. Select a person to interview.** There are many ways to find someone to interview. Ask your family members. Contact veterans organizations, church groups, civic organizations etc. Put a request in your local newspaper. It's a good idea when you find someone to have them complete a brief preliminary questionnaire to give you some background on the person. Some sample questionnaires have been included in this packet.
- 2. Prepare yourself for the interview.** Carefully read the person's completed questionnaire. Make up a list of questions from things on the questionnaire. Do enough preliminary research so that you are able to ask intelligent questions.
- 3. Make sure you are familiar with your tape recorder** before you set out to do the interview. Practice to make sure you can operate. Have an extra tape in case the interview is longer, or in case the tape would break.
- 4. When selecting the location for the interview, ask the interviewee where they would be most comfortable.** Choose a place that is quiet, where there won't be a lot of distractions.
- 5. When you get to the interview, chat briefly with your interviewee to get them feeling relaxed and comfortable with you.** Be sure to let them know how much you appreciate getting the chance to talk with them.
- 6. During the interview, keep things moving.** Have your questions ready, but do not rely totally on them. By listening carefully to what the person is speaking about, you can come up with additional questions.
- 7. Know the physical limitations of the person you are interviewing.** If the person has a hard time hearing, make sure you speak up loudly and clearly. Don't let an interview drag on endlessly. One hour is usually the maximum.

8. Be sensitive. Some subjects may provoke an emotional response. If a person starts to cry, you might turn off the tape recorder for a few minutes.

9. After the interview, thank the person again. Send the person a thank you note.

10. If you transcribe the tape, send your interviewee a copy of the tape, or if you don't transcribe the entire tape, send them the paper you wrote for school.

