Connecting Children with Children, Past and Present
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Motivating Students for Inquiry and Action

Eula T. Fresch

Foreword by Keith C. Barton

HEINEMANN
Portsmouth, NH
To my husband, Glenn, my son, David, 
and my social studies methods students 
at Salve Regina University
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Educators continually face the challenging of moving from theory to practice. No matter how much we know about principles of learning, the nature of historical inquiry, and the need to prepare students for active citizenship, we still have to translate these into practical classroom activities. In fact, the more we know about teaching, the harder it may seem to put our ideas into practice: How can we engage students in inquiry, build on their prior knowledge, expose them to multiple perspectives, and meet state and national standards, all at the same time? This is a daunting task, yet many teachers accomplish it, often with energy, enthusiasm, and creativity. With a little guidance, many more teachers might be able to do so.

Eula Fresch’s *Connecting Children with Children, Past and Present: Motivating Students for Inquiry and Action* helps provide this guidance. This work is based on key elements of current theory and research in social studies and history education, but rather than simply telling readers about these principles, Fresch illustrates how they can be applied in effective and motivating ways. Teachers will come away from this book with a wealth of resources for the classroom, as well as numerous practical strategies for helping students connect with historical materials. They should also come away with one more thing, perhaps the most important of all: A vision of what history education could be, one that will motivate them to seek out new resources and develop engaging activities throughout their careers.

One of the book’s most distinctive features is its focus on the historical experiences of children. As Fresch points out, elementary and middle school students are interested in other children, and this can motivate them to learn about historical topics that might not otherwise be so captivating. But just as important, emphasizing children in history is a way of building on students’ prior knowledge. Teachers often wonder how they can activate mental schemas on topics that students don’t know much about yet. Sometimes it seems like there’s nothing to build on, and many teachers have begun KWL charts only to find that students can’t come up with anything to put in the “Know” category! The prior knowledge of children and young adolescents, however, usually revolves not around specific people or
events in history, but around day-to-day experiences—how people live and how their lives are influenced by their social context. By focusing on the experience of children in the past, teachers stand a better chance of making connections to their students’ own lives. They can then extend that knowledge by helping students see how children’s experiences have differed in other times and places.

Another important feature of this book is its organization into units. It’s tempting to teach history in sequential order, moving from one event to the next in lockstep fashion, particularly when most textbooks are organized this way—despite the fact that there is not a shred of evidence that this is necessary for students to make sense of the past. On the other hand, with the increasing importance of state standards, many teachers feel compelled to teach individual objectives as though they were a checklist, with no relationships among lessons. Neither of these approaches helps students understand the connections that are at the heart of history and social studies. The chapters in this book, though, tie together a variety of topics on the basis of important thematic elements, such as experiences of war, movement, labor, and rights. This can help students see connections between topics they might otherwise consider separate and unrelated, such as slavery and child labor. It also enables teachers to address the historical experiences of a wider variety of people. Organizing a unit around “movement” rather than “the Westward movement of pioneers” makes it possible to highlight topics like the seasonal migration of Native Americans, as well as their forced relocation. This kind of thematic organization also makes connections with the present more obvious, because people today still struggle with war, migration, forced labor, and the quest for human rights.

This focus on the present is one of the most exciting features of the book. If the study of history does not help us understand the world of today, then it is just trivia, and there is no reason to study it. Moreover, if the subject does not contribute to citizenship, then it fails to live up to the goals of social education. Most history educators claim that the subject fulfills these roles, but rarely do they explain how. They often seem to believe that if students simply know more about the past, they will magically become better people. This book, however, draws out these links clearly and directly, and it provides suggestions on how students can become more active citizens. When children learn about injustices in history, they often feel frustrated by their inability to go back in time and make things better. Eula Fresch shows how they can make things better, not in the past but today, and for that reason alone this book should be a treasured part of every teacher’s library.

Keith C. Barton, Professor
Division of Teacher Education
University of Cincinnati
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Children Living During War, Children Working for Peace

When the families fled from Salem in 1777, Father had only a span of horses to aid in our flight. Mother and the youngest child rode one of these. Some of our goods and Samuel—who was sick at the time and but a small boy—was taken on the other. . . .

We went down to Sancoick. . . . Word was brought us that the British army was coming that way. About a dozen Salem families were there. Everything was packed up in haste and we were ready to start the next morning, the army being encamped this night at Cambridge. . . . I went out in the morning to salt the sheep [provide salt for the animals. . . .]. Running to the top of the knoll and looking towards the house I saw . . . the soldiers . . . all about the house and neighborhood like a swarm of bees. I had but one thought—to run and join Father. . . . I got into the house in safety. The soldiers were plundering it of whatever they could find. One of them told Father to open the oven door, in which was an ovenful of bread just baked. Father did so, but one of the officers said, “Will you take the bread away from these children?” So they let it remain.

Simon Nelson of Salem
(Adler 1998, 67–68)

When I read Jeanne Adler’s In the Path of War: Children of the American Revolution Tell Their Stories (1998), I was reminded of the importance of viewing history from different perspectives and not just as a listing of events and facts. I had just read the above account of a young boy from Salem; a few pages later I came across the following:

While we were at Fort Edward, the Whigs tore down our fences and let the cattle into our grain fields, whereby it was nearly destroyed. Father had two horses which he took to Fort Edward. . . . “Mad” [James] More came with some men from Shushan, to drive off our cows. They threw down the fence and went to driving them out of the
Children Living During War, Children Working for Peace

field, when Father got around them and drove them back. More then came up to him, and putting the muzzle of his loaded gun to Father's breast said, “Stand still, you . . . Tory or I’ll shoot you through!” And the other men then drove the cattle away, while More kept Father away from them. They took them to Shushan and cast lots for them. One of them fell to Bill Smith, who the next day, drove her back home to us saying he could not take the milk from motherless children.

Caty Campbell of Greenwich (86–87)

I was amazed. Here were two accounts from the American Revolution that were strikingly similar even though the children were on opposite sides. Both expressed the terror that comes with war. One child's family feared the Tory militia; the other's feared the Whig militia. In both cases, soldiers raided the family's farm to get supplies—but at least one soldier showed concern for the children. Accounts of young people during wartime help illustrate the impact that war has on peoples' lives. Comparing such accounts can be an enlightening experience for today's students.

Teachers know that history is not just about events and facts; it also involves perspective. When we teach the American Revolution, the Civil War, or World War II, a major challenge is helping our students understand these events from the perspectives of the people involved. The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) standards emphasize including real people's experiences in instruction so that the students can “compare and contrast different stories or accounts about past events, people, places, or situations, identifying how they contribute to our understanding of the past” (NCSS 1994, 51). Helping students discover the perspectives of children who were caught up in war gives them a meaningful learning experience.

The American Revolution

There are a number of primary sources by or about children that teachers can use to give our students different perspectives on the American Revolution. The account of Sally (Sarah) Wister, a girl from a prominent Quaker family in Philadelphia, makes an interesting contrast to those of Simon Nelson and Caty Campbell, who lived on farms. When British troops were about to capture Philadelphia, Sally fled with her family to North Wales, Pennsylvania, to live with her aunt. She kept a diary, written as a letter to her cousin, that helps us understand what life was like for a wealthy Quaker family when Continental army officers stayed in their home.

Your students may be surprised to learn that young people near their age served as soldiers. Joseph Plumb Martin enlisted in the Continental army in 1776,
when he was fifteen. His diary describes his experiences and hardships in camp, in battle, and marching.

The British took possession of a hill overlooking us. . . . During the night we remained in our trenches. . . . The water was nearly over my shoes by morning. Many of us took violent colds. . . . I had nothing to eat or drink, not even water. In the evening a messmate found me & brought me boiled hog’s flesh and turnips.

(Martin 2001, 30)

Selections from the journals of John Greenwood and Ebenezer Fox provide students with the experiences of other boys in the war. John was thirteen when he began playing the fife for his uncle’s company of militia (Coggins 1967) and fifteen when he enlisted as fifer in the Twelfth Massachusetts Bay Regiment, commanded by Colonel John Patterson. Ebenezer joined the Continental navy in Providence, Rhode Island, and served on the warship Protector. These boys’ firsthand accounts provide students with fascinating reading of their views on different aspects of the war—including major battles, naval engagements, winters in General Washington’s campaigns, hunger, illness, and even the surrender at Yorktown.

Young people who acted with courage demonstrated that they valued the American struggle. In Philadelphia, fourteen-year-old James Forten, of African ancestry, joined the crew of a privateer, which was one of the many private ships the American government allowed to capture British ships. His job was to bring gunpowder to the cannons on deck during battles. On his first voyage, his ship captured a British ship. On his second voyage it was captured. Although a prisoner, James became friends with the British captain’s son. The captain offered to take James to England and pay for his education if he would renounce his allegiance to America. Refusing might mean that James would be sold as a slave in the West Indies or sent to prison. When the captain saw his hesitation he told him he certainly wouldn’t be so foolish as to turn down his offer. James replied, “I’m afraid I must, Sir. I am here as a prisoner for the liberties of my country. I cannot prove a traitor to her interest” (Douty 1968, 44). Students can read about Forten in Esther Douty’s Forten the Sailmaker or in We Were There, Too! by Phillip Hoose.

An important role for boys in the Revolutionary War was drummer for a military unit, some of whom were as young as nine. The drummers and fifers set the cadence for marching, signaled changes in strategy, and summoned the troops to battle. William Diamond signaled the troops with his drum when the British army was heading to Lexington and the American Revolution began (Collett 1989). He and other drummers served throughout the war.

Some girls were involved in the fighting, too. Deborah Sampson disguised herself as a boy called Robert Shirtliffe and fought in a regiment of the Continental army (Hoose 2001). Elizabeth Zane saved the colonists in Fort Henry by rac-
ing out of the fort—braving arrows and bullets—to fetch gunpowder from a nearby house (Etkin and Willoughby 1992). Many students know about the midnight ride of Paul Revere, but they may not know about a sixteen-year-old girl who also rode courageously. Her name was Sybil Ludington, and she rode thirty miles in the rain during the night to tell Colonel Ludington’s soldiers to meet the British. Later General George Washington visited Sybil to personally thank her for her bravery (Amstel 2000).

Students will find accounts of children and young people braving danger while serving as spies to be exciting reading. In We Were There, Too! Young People in U.S. History (2001), Phillip Hoose describes the adventures of Mary Redmond, John Darragh, and Dicey Langston, who discovered British secrets and delivered them to the patriots.

In the years leading up to the Revolutionary War, many girls became active in patriotic sewing circles to protest British taxes. They met to spin and weave their own cloth, rather than import cloth from England. The girls had fun racing each other to spin the most yarn. They also used local herbs to make “liberty tea” instead of drinking British imports. One twelve-year-old girl, Anna Green Winslow, staying in Boston with her aunt, wrote to her father who happened to be a British military officer. “As I am (as we say) a daughter of liberty I chuse to wear as much of my own manufactory as pocible” (Carle, 1984, 32 in Hoose 2001, 49). Students wishing to find out more about Anna’s life can read her diary, which is one of the few children’s diaries surviving from this period (Earle 1974).

The Civil War

Resources by and about children in the Civil War era are also readily available. Girls and boys served in battle and at home. The role of the drummer boy continued to be important. Boys too young to be accepted as soldiers joined the army as drummer boys. They sometimes were involved in actual fighting or other duties if they were needed. One drummer boy described how he stayed at his position during battle in order to signal orders to the troops:

A cannon ball came bouncing across the corn field kicking up dirt and dust each time it struck the earth. Many of the men in our company took shelter behind a stone wall, but I stood where I was and never stopped drumming. An officer came by on horseback and chastised the men, saying, “This boy puts you all to shame. Get up and move forward.” We all began moving across the cornfield. . . . Even when the fighting was at its fiercest and I was frightened, I stood straight and did as I was ordered . . . I felt I had to be a good example for the others. (Murphy 1990, 43)

William Bircher wrote in his diary:
January 1, 1863 Vandyke and I were the only ones left out of the eleven drummers . . . and . . . we had to do the entire guard duty. . . . November 15, 1864 . . . Marched nine miles to Atlanta, and at night we destroyed the city by fire. . . . (Bircher 2000, 15, 25)

Charles Miles Moore was a courageous member of the famous Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts black regiment. He and other young drummers helped soldiers move out of the line of fire as they became wounded. Willie Johnston was under twelve when he joined the third Vermont Infantry. When President Lincoln appeared for the Vermont brigade's grand review after seven days of battle in 1862, Willie was the only drummer who had been able to hold on to his drum throughout the battles; he played for Lincoln. In 1863, Willie was presented with the Medal of Honor, the youngest soldier ever to receive this honor (Wisler 2001). These stories of courage stimulate student discussions about why and how young drummers were involved in the war. What was so important to them about this war that they would risk their lives?

Confederate and Union soldiers included boys sixteen and younger. Although recruitment rules banned boys from fighting, they were able to slip in. In the introduction to his book The Boys’ War (1990), Jim Murphy gives an estimate done by an army statistician after the war. Students are amazed to learn that 10 to 20 percent of soldiers were underage, which means that from 250,000 to 420,000 boys may have fought in the Civil War. Many sent letters home. Figure 3–1 shows parts of letters that sixteen-year-old Private Charles Goddard wrote to his mother from Camp Stone in 1861. Some young soldiers kept diaries or journals.

Everything seemed to fascinate them . . . the long marches, the people they met along the way, the fighting, the practical jokes they played on one another. Even the making of bread was an event worth noting. . . . It is this directness and eye for everyday details that make the voices of these boys so fresh and believable and eloquent. And it is their ability to create active, vivid scenes that brings the war, in all its excitement and horror, alive after more than one hundred years. (Murphy 1990, 3)

The Jackdaw collection Civil War: Young Soldiers contains seventeen-twenty-two-inch photographs of boys involved in the war and a teacher’s guide for using them. Two of the preservice teachers in my social studies methods course used this set in teaching fifth graders. When I came to observe, small groups of students were scattered around the room, intently examining the photos. The preservice teachers rotated the photos among the groups so that everyone had the opportunity to study all twelve of them. The students seemed particularly fascinated by a photo of drummer boys in camp (Figure 3–2), and most groups noted every detail of the scene. After the students had examined all the photographs,
Figure 3–1. Excerpts from letters written in 1861 by Private Charles Goddard, age sixteen (courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society).
the preservice teachers engaged them in a discussion about what they had learned and what they thought it would be like to be one of the young soldiers pictured.

Diaries and letters written by both girls and boys reveal how the war affected those who remained at home. Alonzo Jefferies, a sixteen-year-old boy in Pennsylvania, kept a diary. In addition to daily occurrences, he wrote about news of the day and described troops arriving in his town:

July 4th, 1863 — . . . At 10 P.M. fifteen hundred paroled men (Union) arrived lately from the battle-field at Chamberburg. Alger and I were in bed, when we heard the deep-toned whistle of a locomotive of the Penna. Central Rail Road. . . . In a few moments we heard a great tramping of feet, and we bolted on our clothes and rushed down stairs and were soon out. Dirty, ragged, savage looking men were pouring by the house. From side to side the street was filled with them. I realized for the first time what an invasion was like.

*Jefferies Diary at the Chester County Historical Society*

![Figure 3–2. Ninety-third New York Infantry Drum Corps (courtesy of the Library of Congress, LC-B8171–7514).](image)
A Confederate Girl: The Diary of Carrie Berry, 1864, is a juvenile book containing excerpts from the diary Carrie wrote as battles raged around and in Atlanta. On August 3 she wrote, “This was my birthday. I was ten years old, But I did not have a cake times were too hard so I celebrated with ironing. I hope by my next birthday we will have peace in our land so that I can have a nice dinner” (Berry 2000, 8). On August 4 she recorded, “The shells have ben flying all day and we have stayed in the cellar” (8). On November 16 she described the burning of Atlanta: “Oh, what a night we had. They came burning the store house and about night it looked like the whole town was on fire. We all set up all night. If we had not set up our house would have ben burnt up for the fire was very near and the soldiers were going around setting houses on fire where they were not watched” (23). A photograph of Carrie is in Figure 3–3.

In We Were There, Too! Young People in U.S. History (2001), Phillip Hoose describes contributions of girls during the Civil War. Fourteen-year-old Susie King Taylor was one of many African Americans in the South who escaped to the Union camps. Susie had learned to read and write, so a Union officer asked her to teach children and adults in the camp on St. Simons Island, Georgia. She began by teaching about forty children and a number of adults to read. Sixteen-year-old Emma Sansom helped her mother and sister run the family farm when her brothers joined the Confederate army. When the Union army blew up a bridge near her farm to keep the Confederate army from crossing, Emma guided Confederate General Nathan Forrest’s troops to a place that was shallow enough to cross so that they could intercept the Yankee forces. The Confederate Congress gave Emma a gold medal for her help.

Two excellent adult books have excerpts by or about children in the Civil War era. In Reluctant Witnesses: Children’s Voices from the Civil War, Emmy Werner uses the eyewitness accounts of 120 children, ages four to sixteen, to tell their stories, including the eyewitness accounts of emancipated slave children who joined the Union forces as “contraband soldiers” or enrolled in schools. Her primary sources are letters, journals, diaries, and the reminiscences of boys and girls from the Confederacy and the Union, both soldiers and civilians. The book also includes family members’ and adult soldiers’ impressions of children’s experiences. Teachers can use this book to get a thorough overview of children’s involvement in the Civil War, and can use sections of the book with their students. In the following interview, an African American woman recalls her childhood during the war years:

I was a young gal, about ten years old, and . . . we hear that Lincoln gonna turn us free. Ol’ Missus say there wasn’t nothin to it. Then a Yankee soldier told someone . . . that Lincoln done signed the ’Mancipation. Was wintertime and mighty cold
Figure 3–3. Ten-year-old Carrie Berry, who lived in Atlanta, kept a diary in 1864 (Atlanta History Center).
that night, but everybody commenced getting ready to leave. Didn’t care nothin’ ’bout Missus—was going to the Union lines. (Werner 1998, 39)

When your students read accounts of these and other children, they may be astounded at the responsibilities they assumed. For example, when Atlanta was under siege, ten-year-old Carrie Berry took care of her pregnant mother and sick younger sister. When the baby arrived, she cared for it and also cooked, cleaned, and sewed clothing for the family. After Atlanta was burned, Carrie and other children searched through the ruins looking for nails and lead to trade for food. Werner writes, “Yet she never lost a child’s enthusiasm and joy of life! She was grateful for a lull in the shelling, for the large cellar in which she could romp about and her family could secretly hide, and for a little Christmas tree that she could decorate in the ruins of her burned-out city” (154).

Northern children took on adult responsibilities, too. Maria Lewis from Ebensburg, Pennsylvania, helped take care of younger siblings and the family farm when her father left to fight for the Union. At Gettysburg, young people went out during battle to help injured soldiers. “I never thought I could do anything about a wounded man,” wrote Jeannie McCreary after the battle was over, “but find that I had a little bit more nerve than I thought I had” (154).

Here are the voices of children on opposing sides of the war. Their experiences can stimulate classroom discussion about how young people on both sides faced hardships and new responsibilities. They might also lead your students to talk about times that they were able to do things that they had thought they couldn’t do.

Modern-day students find it interesting to read about how teachers offered emotional support and how books became a refuge for children who stayed at home. Many girls wrote about favorite teachers who encouraged them to continue with schoolwork in spite of the war. Werner describes how Celine Fremaux of Baton Rouge walked to school hearing gunfire from riverboats and seeing decaying bodies. Children sat for days in dark cellars, listening to bombs and shells, often reading to pass the time. Emma LeConte wrote in her diary:

If it had not been for my books [the war] would, indeed, have been hard to bear. But in them I have lived and found my chief source of pleasure. I would take refuge in them from the sadness all around. (155)

The Children’s Civil War, by James Marten, is another valuable resource for teachers. Marten describes how the war affected children’s literature, schoolbooks, and schools. One New Orleans school used recess time to produce lint to pack into wounds. This process was called scraping or picking.
When nine year old Maurice Egan and his Philadelphia friends failed to get into the army as drummers, he complained that they “were reduced to making lint for the army” with girls. (Marten 1998, 177)

Marten quotes Clara Lenroot’s reflections about her role in the Soldier’s Aid Society meetings at her church:

Very important we children felt . . . as we scraped away at the linen making fluffy piles of the soft lint “for the soldiers.” (177)

They comforted each other and read aloud letters from loved ones describing battles, camps, and even prison escapes.

World War II

Students studying World War II can create their own primary sources by interviewing senior citizens who were young during the war. Recording interviews and sharing them with their classmates give children an excellent inquiry experience. Chapter 2 includes some guidelines for preparing students to conduct interviews. They can ask questions like How did your life change during the war? How did you contribute to the war effort? How did the war affect your school experiences? Some students might be lucky enough to interview a person who kept a diary or received letters from a soldier.

The Diary of Anne Frank is perhaps the best-known primary source created by a young person during World War II, but a number of other juvenile books include memoirs of wartime childhoods. The Hidden Children, by Howard Greenfield, is the result of his interviews with thirteen Jewish men and women who as children went into hiding to survive the Holocaust. Unlike Anne Frank, who was among the 1.5 million young Jews who died (Greenfield), these thirteen lived to tell their stories. Zelda Polofsky described how her family hid with a farmer:

He had a house, like a barn, for hay. Before he put the hay in, he put in a structure, and we would climb through the hay on our knees, all the way to the structure, unable to see there. And that is when my mother died. . . . The man couldn’t give us too much food. He didn’t have enough for himself. (Greenfield 1992, 82)

My mother, whatever food she had . . . maybe it would have kept her alive—she gave it to me. And I took it, never questioning. (81)

People from around the world and from every walk of life contributed their recollections of growing up during World War II to Children of the Storm: Childhood Memories of World War II, by Charles Perkins. The book contains many fascinating and moving photographs, including one of children in Butte, Montana,
on top of a mountain of scrap metal that they collected to be recycled as planes, ships, and tanks; one of Russian schoolchildren studying at desks in the bombed ruins of their Leningrad school; and one of children wearing gas masks in a classroom in England. It is organized along broad-based themes such as rationing, school, food, and the home front. A group of students that chose one of the themes would find enough information in the book to create posters or displays on the theme. The book is especially interesting because people of many different nationalities shared their memories with Perkins. Erwin Perrot, born in Germany in 1934, recalled:

Early in the war, we had prisoners of war as labor for our family's commercial truck farm. We had French and Russian prisoners who lived with my grandparents. They were all good people. We could see that they were people just like us. One of the Russians—Alex—used to take me riding on the bicycle. My grandparents would let us go everywhere together and no one worried about it. (Perkins 1998, 121)

Jean Holder recalled her experiences at a school in London when she was ten:

When the air raids started, all the children felt a great deal of stress. We were taken to the downstairs cloakrooms, which had bricked-up windows, and older girls would read poetry and prose to us while the raid was going on. . . . Paper was very scarce. To save paper, we had to write on the covers of our exercise books, inside and out. In the wide margins at the top of the page we had to draw extra lines. At home, if you received an envelope, you sliced it open, reversed it, and made it into scrap paper. We also used to have a map of the war on the wall. . . . The children in the class used to take it in turns to move the pins indicating the front lines and the places that Allied troops had captured. Everyone liked being in charge of the Russian map because their front had started moving earlier and it was moving faster! (48)

In the December 1985 issue of *Cobblestone*, Priscilla Harding describes how as an eight-year-old she helped the war effort by collecting scrap metal and how her family coped with food rationing and the shortages of goods. In the January 1994 issue, Elizabeth Irvine recalls what it was like being an American teenage prisoner of war in the Philippines when the Japanese occupied Manila.

*Echoes of World War II*, by Trish Marx (1994), is based on interviews with six people who spent parts of their childhoods involved in World War II. One of the people was from a Jewish family in Germany. Another, who was born in Normandy, France, lived in Hungary and Sweden during the war because her father was a diplomat. The others lived in England, Japan, Germany, and the Philippines. Students who read this book will get an in-depth view of these children’s lives.

A study of World War II would not be complete without including the internment of Japanese Americans following the attack on Pearl Harbor. Books such as
I Am an American, by Jerry Stanley (1994), and the Jackdaw collection of photographs of families in the camps can help students understand what these children and their families experienced. Canadian families of Japanese origin were also placed in internment camps for three years. Shizuye Takashima, who was a child in one of these prison camps, wrote and drew about what it was like in her book A Child in Prison Camp (1989).

The Children of Topaz: The Story of a Japanese-American Internment Camp (Tunnell and Chilcoat 1996) is based on a diary kept by a third-grade class in this camp in Utah (Figure 3–4). The teacher, Miss Yamauchi, recorded what the children wanted to put in their diary, and the children illustrated each of the seventy-three pages. The entries are fascinating because they reveal not only the injustices in the camp, but also the children’s ability to find some joy in their new desert world. As I read this book, I marveled at the teacher’s ability to create as normal a school life as possible for these children in spite of the harsh environment and unfair treatment. It is interesting to note that the children in this camp supported the war effort through collecting nails and working in a victory garden (Figure 3–5), just as many children on the outside did. Modern-day students reading diary

Figure 3–4. Pages from a diary kept by a third-grade class in an internment camp in 1943 (photographs of diary pages courtesy of Michael O. Tunnell; diary pages used by permission of the Utah State Historical Society). Continued on next page.
Today is Japanese Baseball Day. We have many corps flying high on the roofs of barracks and dining halls. May 6th and 7th will be our Spring Vacation. The teachers are going to have a conference. This Sunday is Mother's Day.

As residents of Block 29 must not leave their block because of the case of Infusible Ruditis.

May 1969,

Today Miss Hushida's class and our class played baseball.

Kei received a new sweater and two books from his grandmother.

Last night Don and Robert helped the people of their block. They stacked fire wood until 10:00 PM. They are very tired today.

Today Miss Imauchi told us a story about snakes.

A man at Block 29 was running and he suddenly fell forward in a faint.

Betty's sister was lost but she was found wandering around in another block. Each block is so much alike that it is easy to get lost.

Figure 3–4. Continued.
entries like this one can look for sentences that reveal injustices and statements that reflect efforts to lead a normal life.

When President Roosevelt signed the order for the imprisonment of people of Japanese descent, seventh-grade teacher Ella Evanson received farewell letters from her students who had to go to the camps. She preserved those letters. Yoon Pak includes typed copies of some of the letters along with teaching suggestions in an article in Middle Level Learning (Pak 2001). Pak suggests having students discuss what the letters reveal about these young people’s thoughts and feelings about their teacher, school, and country.

Children Working for Peace

Through sharing their experiences living in war, children have increased other people’s awareness of the need to work for peace. As these children served as drummer boys, collected scrap metal, joined patriotic sewing circles, and made other contributions they were working for peace in their own ways. They describe their lives immersed in war, but the children also express their desire for peace.

Figure 3–5. Children in the Topaz internment camp planting a victory garden (courtesy of the Utah State Historical Society).
At age eleven, Zlata Filipović of Sarajevo began writing in her diary about the war surrounding her (Figure 3–6).

I keep wanting to explain these stupid politics to myself, because it seems to me that politics caused this war. . . . It looks to me as though these politics mean Serbs, Croats and Muslims. But they are all people. They are all the same. . . . But now there’s “something” that wants to make them different. . . . Among my girl friends . . . there are Serbs and Croats and Muslims . . . but I never knew who was a Serb, a Croat or a Muslim. Now politics has started meddling around. . . . Why is politics making us unhappy, separating us . . . ? I simply don’t understand it. Of course, I’m “young,” and politics are conducted by “grown ups.” But I think we “young” would do it better. We certainly wouldn’t have chosen war. (Filipović 1994, 102–103)

In 1982, Samantha Smith, a ten-year-old American girl, was so concerned about world peace that she wrote to Yuri Andropov, the new leader of what was then the Soviet Union. He wanted her to see that the Soviet Union desired peace so he invited her to visit him. Samantha suggested that getting to know others better was a way to work for peace.

Figure 3–6. Zlata Filipović, at her home in Sarajevo, kept a diary as war surrounded her (Alexandra Boulat/SIPA Press).
It seemed strange to even talk about war when we all got along so well together. I guess that's what I came to find out. I mean, if we could be friends by just getting to know each other better, then what are our countries really arguing about? Nothing could be more important than not having a war. (Belcher-Hamilton 1989, 9)

Students may be interested in reading the book Samantha wrote, *Samantha Smith: Journey of the Soviet Union*.

Recently, a colleague gave me a copy of an article in the May 2, 2003, issue of the *Christian Science Monitor* that included the diary of a fourteen-year-old Iraqi girl, Amal Hussein, pictured in Figure 3–7. She writes about praying for peace, preparing for the invasion of Baghdad, her fears during the bombing, and the arrival of the American soldiers.

Monday, March 17: . . . War is torment. . . . War takes away people we love. . . . We prepare by filling water buckets in case there is no water or electricity. Duha and Hibba pray God Almighty that there will be no war. At 8:30, my mother made bread. Bakeries close during the war.

Friday, March 21: Today is Baghdad's turn. At 8:10 p.m., the siren was heard. [Friend] Omar was talking about war when a missile flew just over the building. Then at 9, the bombing was louder; [we] were crying . . . for God to bring the morning.

*Figure 3–7.* Amal Hussein, age fourteen, who lives in Bagdad, writes in her diary about the war as her mother and a sister watch (Scott Peterson/Getty Images).
Monday April 14: At 1:55 p.m., the twins come home and say Americans are walking on the street, and writing their names on children's hands. Hibba's hands have soldiers' names written on them. [The twins] say the soldiers were nice. . . . Are they really nice? Nobody knows but God. (8–9)

Our students can be inspired to work for peace through the examples of the children in this chapter. One class of third- and fourth-grade students in Albuquerque, New Mexico, was motivated by the actions of children in Hiroshima. They heard the story *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes* (Coer 1977), which tells of Sadako's effort to fold a thousand paper cranes in an attempt to recover from the effects of the dropping of the bomb. When they found out that children in Hiroshima raised money to build a peace statue of Sadako there, they decided to build one in Los Alamos, New Mexico. Why there? Because the bomb dropped on Hiroshima had been built in Los Alamos. The children formed a Kids' Committee to Build a Peace Statue, held a press conference, and attracted supporters. The day after the press conference, an editorial supporting them appeared in the *Albuquerque Journal*. The editorial said:

These students, ages 5 to 17, are learning, organizing, planning, assuming responsibility, working toward a goal and making commitments. Keep it up, keep it growing and this world will more likely see further generations of peace. (Hoose 1993, 121)

Students can increase other students' awareness of the need to work for peace by telling them about young people like Zlata, Amal, Samantha, and the fourth-grade children in Albuquerque. For example, they might do this by creating a power point presentation on these or other inspiring young people to show to other classes. Following the presentation, they can ask for ideas about how to get involved and then share some of their own ideas. In addition, they could ask if anyone is already taking action and what they are doing.

Key questions that we teachers can ask our students to guide them in working for peace include:

What would young people living in a past time of war want us to do about conflict and wars today?
How many ways can we think of that we can work for peace?
Which one of these ways do we want to start working on now?

Students may choose to work on ways of handling conflict in their own classroom, school, home, and local community, or they may decide to do it on a more global basis. Students can start a fund for peace and raise money to donate to organizations working for peace. They can march for peace or write letters to the local newspaper giving their opinions. They can contact their senators and
representatives and encourage them to work for peace. Talking to people who are involved in peace issues can help students learn about approaches they can take. Hearing about what other students have done and are doing today will give them ideas.

Once students decide what they want to do to work for peace, whether it's participating in conflict management in their school, creating public awareness of peace issues, or some other activity, they need to determine what steps to take to accomplish their goals. If there is a person, a group, or an agency already involved in doing what the students want to do, a first step would be to make contact. If there isn't, they might begin by brainstorming about what strategies they could use or researching strategies that others have used successfully. Books like *The Kid's Guide to Social Action* by Barbara Lewis (1998) or *It's Our World, Too!* by Phillip Hoose (1993) are written for students and can provide guidance about ways of working for peace. Empowered by the examples of children in the past and children today, our students too can be successful in working for peace. In doing so, they demonstrate their ability to “practice forms of civic discussion and participation consistent with the ideals of citizens in a democratic society” (NCSS 1994, 44).

A Vietnamese woman, Phan Thi Kim Phue, wrote in her memoirs about being injured in an air attack when she was a child said, “I have suffered a lot... But God saved my life and gave me faith and hope... We cannot change history, but we should try to do good things for the present and the future” (Werner 1998, 159). As teachers, we all hope that our students will “do good things for the present and the future.”

Using the Resources

There are a number of ways of incorporating these sources by or about real children into a study of any of these periods of war. Introducing a study by reading and discussing selections from diaries and showing photographs of the children motivates students to want to find out more about these historical children and what happened then. For example, after hearing the accounts of a Tory child and a Whig child quoted at the beginning of this chapter, students would have many questions about the Tories and the Whigs, such as why they were fighting and how the children were involved. The account in Jim Murphy's book *The Boys’ War* (1990), describing a Civil War battle in which the drummer boy kept drumming while cannon balls bounced across the cornfield and the men hid would certainly be a motivating beginning to a lesson. It might also stimulate students' feelings of pride that someone near their age showed such incredible bravery.
Diary selections can be used as examples of effects of war. The girls who were active in patriotic sewing circles where they made their own cloth and used their own herbal teas illustrate the American protest of British taxes. The photographs of the Japanese American families in internment camps during World War II and the photographs and stories of those who hid to survive the Holocaust illustrate the suffering and mistreatment of innocent people.

Students can conduct an inquiry into any aspect of these wars. For example, when learning about what happened on the home front, they could research ways that children helped. Their results could be presented in creative ways, such as staging an awards ceremony and presenting certificates or medals. Students pretending to be children who collected the most scrap metal for World War II or elementary school children during the Civil War who produced the most lint for use in the hospitals would receive the awards. Students could create posters or flyers announcing the ceremony, including pictures of those to be honored and descriptions of what they did. For information about how to engage students in inquiry, refer to Chapter 2.

**Analyzing Primary Sources**

Teachers know that before we study any event, it is necessary to establish the historical context with our students. A meaningful way to do this is to guide your students in analyzing the writings and photographs of children who lived during the period you are studying. They can search for clues about what children’s lives were like then. Students can work in pairs or individually to look at a variety of resources and list their findings, which can then be combined into a composite list for the class. You can then help connect the historical children with your students’ ways of living today by creating a Venn diagram or another graphic comparing similarities and differences in their lives.

For example, in a study of the Civil War, students can analyze the diaries of the Confederate girl Carrie Berry and the Union drummer boy William Bircher, using the guide sheets in Figures 3–8 and 3–9. To examine photographs of young soldiers such as those in *The Boys’ War* by Jim Murphy or in the Jackdaw Civil War photo collection and draw inferences from these photographs, students can use the guide in Figure 3–10.

**Comparing Sources**

A way of using these resources that encourages higher-level thinking is for students to compare their findings from analyzing primary sources with an analysis of secondary sources. For example, a composite class list about the way children lived
Guide to Analyzing the Writings of Young Soldiers, Drummers, or Fifers

1. Read a diary, journal, memoir, or the letters of a soldier, drummer, or fifer.

2. Write your reaction to what you read. How did you feel as you read? What did you think?

3. Why do you think the writer wrote this?

4. On which side is this person serving? Where is he from? Find it on a map.

5. Read the writing a second time. Fill in this chart as you read.

| Jobs and Responsibilities | Dangers | Hardships | Food, Clothing, and Shelter | Ways of Keeping Safe |

6. What do you have in common with this person? In what ways are you like him? How are you different?

7. Choose one of the following activities:
   a. Create an illustrated time line showing what is happening in this person’s life.
   b. Write letters responding to what he wrote, asking questions and telling about your life on the home front. You might pretend to be a brother, sister, cousin, or friend of the person.

Figure 3–8. Guide to Analyzing the Writings of Young Soldiers, Drummers, or Fifers.
Guide to Analyzing the Writings of Young People on the Home Front

1. Read a diary, journal, memoir, or the letters of a young person on the home front.

2. On a sheet of drawing paper, using different colors of markers or crayons, list words that describe your feelings and reactions to what the person wrote. Select colors that express your feelings as you write.

3. On which side of the war is this person? Where does he or she live? Find the place on a map.

4. Who is in the person’s family? Who lives with him or her and who in the family is serving in the military?

5. Read the writing of this person a second time. As you read, fill in the chart below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
<th>How Person Helped War</th>
<th>Ways of Schoolwork</th>
<th>Food, Clothes, and Dangers, Ways of Keeping Safe, Feelings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>at Home</td>
<td>Effort</td>
<td>Fun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped War</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the War</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having Effort</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping Safe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. What do you have in common with this young civilian? In what ways are you different?

7. Choose one of the following activities:
   a. Create an illustrated time line showing what is happening in this person’s life.
   b. Write a letter to this person responding to what they wrote, telling what you are doing, and asking questions. You might pretend to be a soldier, another civilian, a family member, or a friend.

Figure 3–9. Guide to Analyzing the Writings of Young People on the Home Front.
Guide to Analyzing Photographs of Young Soldiers

1. Choose a photograph of young soldiers.

2. Look closely at the photograph for several minutes.

3. List all the words, phrases, and ideas that come to your mind as you look at it.

4. Look closely again at the photograph. On a large sheet of drawing paper, sketch an outline map of the photograph. Label each part that you sketched. Then write words describing the scene, soldiers, objects, and activities inside or near what you sketched.

5. Pretend that you can step into the photograph and talk to the soldiers.
   a. What are they saying to you?
   b. What questions do you ask them?
   c. What are they thinking, feeling, and wishing?
   d. How old do you think each soldier is?
   e. What sounds do you hear?
   f. What do you smell? Touch?
   g. How do you feel about being there with them?

6. What have you learned about the soldiers and their lives just by looking at the photograph?

7. List what you have in common with any of the soldiers. For example, if one of them is playing a drum or fife, maybe you have also played one of those instruments.

8. Choose one of the following activities to do:
   a. Write a caption for this photograph that shows what you have learned.
   b. Find a picture of modern-day soldiers. List what is alike between the two photographs, then list what is different.

Figure 3–10. Guide to Analyzing Photographs of Young Soldiers.
during the Civil War can be compared with the content of such children’s books as *If You Lived at the Time of the Civil War* by Kay Moore (1994) or the American Kids in History series book *Civil War Days*. A list related to World War II can be compared with *World War II Days* by David King (2000). This comparison helps students understand the value of using primary sources, which lets them use the processes that real historians use, as well as the differences between the two kinds of resources.

A third kind of comparison is to look at primary sources in relation to each other. For example, the interviews students collect of people who grew up in World War II can be compared with interviews recorded by others, such as Priscilla Harding’s description of collecting scrap metal and coping with food rationing when she was eight years old. The recollections of people who survived the Holocaust in *The Hidden Children* (Greenfield 1993) can be compared with primary sources created during the Holocaust, such as the diary of Anne Frank. The writings of children on the Union and Confederate sides of the Civil War or who were from Whig and Tory families during the American Revolution are fascinating to compare. Students can use guides like those in Figures 3–11 and 3–12 to make these kinds of comparisons.

These in-depth approaches to analyzing and comparing are based on a view of teaching that develops historical understanding. Spending more time on fewer topics during the school year is important because it lets students become immersed in a subject or time period. “Proponents of this view contend that in-depth approaches give students better opportunities to construct knowledge in ways that form lasting historical schemas that connect to their everyday lives” (Brophy and VanSledright 1997, 28).

**Creating from Different Perspectives**

Perhaps one of the most valuable uses of these sources is to engage students in activities that help them understand the variety of perspectives of the children living in the time period they’re studying. Each student in a class can take on the role of a real child living during the war that’s being studied and be interviewed by the class. The student studies the writings and photograph of the real child so as to pretend to be that child. On the day of the interviews, each student dresses as a real child, tells that child’s story, and answers questions. The different roles and perspectives can then be recorded on a chart. For example, if you are studying the Civil War, students can be drummer boys, Union soldiers, Confederate soldiers, spies, or children living at home in the South and in the North.

Some students, like fourteen-year-old Justin Harris, pursue perspective-taking outside the classroom. Justin joined the Ninth Texas Infantry reenactors as a
Guide for Comparing Young Soldiers’ Writings on Opposite Sides of the War

1. Read the writings of a soldier on each side of the war.

2. Complete the chart in the “Guide to Analyzing the Writings of Young Soldiers, Drummers, or Fifers” for each writing you read.

3. Record the information from each guide on the chart below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soldier X</th>
<th>Soldier Y</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jobs and Responsibilities

Hardships

Dangers

Food, Clothing, and Shelter

Location

Feelings

Ways of Keeping Safe

4. Look at the information you recorded on the chart. What do these two people have in common? What is different? Do they have more things in common than differences? Why or why not?

Figure 3–11. Guide for Comparing Young Soldiers’ Writings on Opposite Sides of the War.
Guide for Comparing Young Soldiers’ Writings with Writings of Young People on the Home Front

1. Read the writings of a soldier, drummer, or fifer.
2. Complete the chart in the “Guide to Analyzing the Writings of Young Soldiers, Drummers, or Fifers.”
3. Read the writings of a person on the home front.
4. Complete the chart in the “Guide to Analyzing the Writings of Young People on the Home Front.”
5. Record the information from each guide on the chart below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Military Person</th>
<th>Home Front Person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jobs and Responsibilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dangers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food, Clothing, and Shelter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ways of Keeping Safe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Look at the information you recorded. What do these two people have in common? What is different? Do they have more things in common than differences? Why or why not?

Figure 3–12. Guide for Comparing Young Soldiers’ Writings with the Writings of Young People on the Home Front.
drummer and has experienced some of what the young drummers in the Civil War did. He wants to be as historically accurate as possible in his portrayal. He and the other young people in his infantry believe it is important for people to remember the contributions made by the Civil War drummers. Wisler (2001), who wrote about Justin in his book on young people in the Civil War, states, “So long as young people remain interested in the stories of the youngest soldiers of the Civil War and living historians such as Justin portray their lives, they will not be forgotten” (98).

Another way to help students understand events from the point of view of historical children is for them to pretend to be living back then and create journals, diaries, or letters similar to the primary sources they are reading. In order to do this, students have to really immerse themselves in the time period through research. Students enjoy perspective-taking activities. Levstik and Barton (1997) describe the experiences of two teachers who used perspective-taking assignments. The students wrote poems, journals, letters, and editorials and did other activities from the perspective of the historical people. “In both classrooms students consistently pointed to these kinds of perspective-taking activities as one of the primary reasons they enjoyed studying history” (131). Some students reported not liking history until they started pretending to be the historical people they were studying.

Students can make history come alive when they engage in drama. Creating scenes from Carrie Berry’s Civil War diary, The Boys’ War, James Forten’s experience on a privateer during the Revolutionary War, Children of the Storm, or any of the other resources described here, makes these children’s lives in the wars seem real. Acting can be spontaneous, with just a few props, or the students can develop a play with costumes and scenery.

**Using Simulations**

Simulations offer the opportunity for students to put themselves in the roles of these children, face the problems they faced, and make decisions about what they would do if they were actually there. When I am planning a simulation, I look through the resources to find situations with problem-solving opportunities that would be appropriate to use. For example, in a study of World War II a simulation could involve deciding whether or not to hide Jewish children in your home.

For a simulation to be effective, the students should not know what decisions the actual person made until the simulation is over. The teacher sets the scene and the problem. For the American Revolutionary period, James Forten’s experiences described in Hoose (2001) could be worked into a simulation. Forten is faced with the decision of whether to stay and help his family, who lived in
poverty since his father had died, or to be a privateer. He knows that his family needs his help, but he also knows that a privateer's wages are good. He is aware of the risks involved in being a privateer, including the possibility of being captured by the British. Students can weigh all of these facts and decide what they would do. When James does become a privateer and is captured, he must decide whether to renounce his allegiance to America and accept the British captain's offer of a paid education in England, or risk the alternatives of either being shipped to the West Indies to be a slave or going to a British prison ship. What would your students do if they were James? Why? What do they need to consider in order to decide?

Asking questions like the following will help direct students' thinking as they engage in simulations:

- What would you do? Why?
- What are your choices? Are there any other possible alternatives?
- What are the advantages, disadvantages, and consequences of each choice?

After the simulation, help students make connections to their own lives by asking them to tell about similar situations they have faced, such as standing up for what they believe is right even though it means not being popular with their peers. Participating in simulations where they face situations that real people near their own age faced in the past makes history come alive for students and helps them make connections with their lives today.

**Making Connections Today**

Another way of making connections with students' lives today is to help them become acquainted with modern-day children who recently experienced or currently are experiencing wars. Students can look for newspaper and magazine articles on areas where wars, conflicts, and violence are occurring now. They can clip out pictures and articles to place in a class scrapbook or on a bulletin board or poster. Unfortunately, such articles are not hard to find. After writing this paragraph I looked at the first page of the *New York Times* on my kitchen table. I saw a picture of a young boy and his father who were victims of riots in India. The next day there was an article about a fourteen-year-old Palestinian girl killed in fighting between Jewish settlers and Palestinians.

Children in the latter part of the twentieth century and the first part of the twenty-first have written about their experiences living in war-torn areas. Your students can compare these writings with the experiences of the young people in history they are studying. They might also be motivated to keep journals of their feelings and thoughts about the wars and conflicts in different parts of the world today.
Perhaps the best known war diary written by a modern-day young person is the one by Zlata Filipović. She wrote her diary in Sarajevo, Bosnia, from about age eleven through age thirteen. Students may find it interesting to hear that Zlata was influenced by another girl in history: Before war came to Sarajevo, Zlata had read Anne Frank’s diary. Like Anne Frank, Zlata wrote to an imaginary friend. Zlata said in an interview, “In a way we were in the same position . . . writing a diary, lonely, can’t go outside, losing our childhood. The difference is she was in an attic and I was in a cellar” (Riding 1994, 16). I wonder if Amal Hussein had read either Anne’s or Zlata’s diary and might have been motivated by one of them to write her own diary during the war in Iraq?

As part of a closure to a study of any war, students can examine the writings and stories of the children living then, focusing on questions such as the following:

- What did the children who survived the war have in common?
- What can we learn from them?
- What is going on in my life that is somewhat similar to what they experienced?
- What helped them get through those difficult times?
- What helps us get through difficult times today?

As your students discuss these questions, they may find that they have a lot in common with these children. They also may come to value the contributions of both historical and contemporary young people, and find inspiration for their own lives. Emmy Werner says,

They were children who loved life. They were not bitter; they did not hate. The wars that shaped their lives were fought in the name of causes that adults believed in and were willing to kill for . . . [They] survived, hoping, against all odds, that some day there might be the possibility of peace. (1998, 159)

Carrie Berry showed this desire for peace when she wrote in her diary, “I hope that by my next birthday we will have peace in our land so that I can have a nice dinner” (Berry 2000, 8).
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