Lesson Title: The Minker Collection: Sacrifice in Delaware during WWII

Designed by: Tara Rodack, Archmere Academy

Sponsored by: The Minker Education Fund

Content Area: Social Studies

Grade Level Options:
- Grades 9-12 History

Summary of Lesson

In this lesson, students will read letters written by the Minkers, a Wilmington family, adjusting to the tribulations of World War II. Students will understand sacrifice from multiple perspectives:

- Ralph “Lee” Minker, a teenage boy who volunteered for the Army Air Corps
- Ralph Minker, a father to a son in the service and Superintendent of Ferris School
- Edna Minker, mother to a son in the service and new to the workforce
- Shirley Minker, sister of a brother in the service and high school senior transitioning to college
- Bernice Minker, sister of a brother in the service, and a high school student

Estimated Time to Complete: 1 period (47 minutes)

- Optional Pre Activity: “Tea Party” with Minker Family 15 minutes
  Complete the day before
- Activity I: Warm up: Gallery Walk/Discussion 10 minutes
- Activity II: Exploration of Letters 25 minutes
- Activity III: Discussion/Debrief 10 minutes
- Activity IV: Post lesson Choice Board  
  Total time: 45 minutes

Resources Needed:

- Printed copies of Propaganda posters
- Printed copies of letters placed in folders
- Copies of graphic organizer
**STAGE 1: DESIRED RESULTS**
What students will know, do, & understand

**Delaware Content Standards**
- History 2b: 9-12: Students will examine and analyze primary and secondary sources in order to differentiate between historical facts and historical interpretations.
- History 4a, 9-12: Students will develop an understanding of modern United States history, its connections to both Delaware and world history including: Great Depression and World War II (1929-1945)

**English/Language Arts Connections**
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.1 and 11-12.1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2 and 11-12.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

**Big Ideas**
- Letter writing, Civic Duty, Sacrifice during WWII

**Lesson Enduring Understandings**
- Historians analyze how perspective as a result of gender, race, age, socioeconomic status and their intersectionality shape experiences. In order to assess a primary source, historians must analyze perspective as well as the agency of the author.

**Lesson Essential Questions**
- How did WWII impact the citizens of Delaware?
- What sacrifices were required from Delawareans? How was the sacrifice for Europeans different?

**Knowledge and Skills: Students will need to know…**
- Context: America’s entrance into WWII
- Academic Vocabulary: rationing, air raids, V-mail

**Students will be able to:**
- Analyze text
- Identify perspective
Lesson

In this lesson, students will read excerpts from the Minker Collection letters to identify how perspective impacted the experience of civilians in Delaware. Students will also examine the sacrifices required of Delawareans.

Essential Questions

- How did WWII impact the citizens of Delaware?
- What sacrifices were required from Delawareans?
- What sacrifices were required from Europeans?

Instructional Strategies

Procedures

OPTIONAL pre-activity: In order to provide context for the students on the Minker family dynamics complete the following activity the day prior to letter reading. Each student will receive Sandra O’Connell’s (Mrs. Ralph Minker) foreword to the collection, along with one biography of a Minker family member. Each student will read their assigned biography and assume the role of that family member highlighting three key facts about themselves (5 minutes). Then students will mingle around the room, introducing themselves and meeting the other four Minker family members. Name tags are helpful for locating “family members” during the “Tea Party”(10 minutes). While students are learning about the lives of the Minkers students can complete the optional organizer to help them keep track of family details.

I. Warm up: place propaganda posters around the room, ideally the posters would be hanging to create a “gallery”. Students will examine the posters through a “gallery walk”( 5 minutes).

   In the discussion facilitators will:
   A. Discuss their interpretations of the propaganda posters
   B. Ask students: What sacrifices were Americans being asked to make? Use the theme of sacrifice to introduce the sacrifices of Lee, Ralph, Edna, Shirley and Bernice Minker. (5 minutes)

II. Exploration of Letters: Divide students into 4 groups (ideally 4-5 students per group). Provide each group with a folder of letters. Have students read the excerpts from the Minker Collection. While reading students should be using their graphic organizer to identify the sacrifices of varying historical characters. After 6 minutes rotate folders, continue rotations until each group has received the four themed folders. (25 minutes)

III. Discussion/Debrief: as a large group facilitate discussion

   A. Discuss the sacrifices made by Delawareans
   B. Address sacrifices made by Europeans
   C. Ask students how age, gender, geographic location (Delaware vs. Europe) played a role in the sacrifices required. Ask students how might these factors influence perspective? (10 minutes)

IV. Post activity: Have students select an option for an extension of the Minker Letter Collection lesson via the choice board provided.