War, Polio, and Family Hardships: Examining Life Stateside during World War II through the Historical Novel *Blue*

Lisa Brown Buchanan, Caroline Kemmerer, Joanne Kaluzny, and Rachael Hill

This article describes a fourth grade project involving elementary students, their teachers, elementary preservice teachers, and university faculty. The project focused on a work of juvenile historical fiction, culminating in social studies lessons that were interdisciplinary. This collaboration between educators was made possible by a school-university partnership that has only grown stronger over the years. (Sidebar, page 23).

**Growing Up in Rural North Carolina, 1940s**

*Blue*, by Joyce Moyer Hostetter, set in the foothills of North Carolina, describes the experiences and steadfast courage of a fictional child, Ann Fay Honeycutt, and her family as they navigated World War II stateside (on the “home front”). The family faced challenges such as the absence of Ann’s father, who is fighting in the European theater, and the death of her younger brother as a polio epidemic hits their small community in the years before vaccines were invented. Strong elementary social studies themes are woven throughout *Blue*, covering the whole range of human relationships from the self to the whole world. These themes include personal loss and personal responsibility, family relationships, friendship, growing up during turbulent times, health care and the public response to diseases, racial segregation and civil rights, and the impact of war on those living on the “home front.” In this article, we describe our experiences using this critically acclaimed historical fiction title in combination with primary and secondary sources to teach historical content in fourth grade.

*Blue* has received at least six book awards including the 2007 International Reading Association Children’s Book Award. It is the middle title in the Bakers Mountain Stories, a series of three related historical fiction titles for young learners. *Aim*, the prequel, focused primarily on the experiences of Ann Faye’s best friend Junior Bledsoe. *Blue* is primarily about Ann Fay’s life during World War II. Last, *Comfort* describes Ann Fay’s experiences after the war.

*Blue* exemplifies the fundamental traits of historical fiction that classroom teachers are most likely to highlight in a genre study of historical fiction (e.g., accurate depictions of people, groups, settings, and events; a balance of fictionalized and historically accurate information) while also providing a well-written cast of characters and engaging plot. In summary, *Blue* is a strong fit for upper elementary teachers whose primary goals include selecting rich literature and maximizing opportunities to teach history through the books they select.

**Preparations for the Elementary Classroom**

As a young reader’s novel, *Blue* offers a plethora of classroom applications, and teachers can prepare in three specific ways. First, as with any text, we strongly urge teachers to read *Blue* carefully before using it in the classroom. It includes content related to death, sickness, and absence of loved ones. Teachers will want to be very familiar with Hostetter’s imagery of these somber themes and as a rule, be knowledgeable about the...
historical events included throughout the book. Next, given the depth and breadth of this book, teachers should decide how to situate it within a larger unit of study, perhaps even improving a current unit of study, with *Blue* serving as the anchor text. For example, a unit on economic priorities and decision making is a great place to include *Blue*, which provides many examples of decisions made by the Honeycutt family, and all of the community of Hickory (a real town in Catawba County, North Carolina), as they adapted their lives when basic resources became scarce.

We placed lessons about *Blue* in fourth grade during a unit on North Carolina history. Hostetter accurately portrays the state with descriptions of the environment (e.g., blue skies, pines, red clay), passages that mention points on the map (e.g., Charlotte and Greensboro), and references to the *Hickory Daily Record*, the actual real regional newspaper. The most notable North Carolina history connection is the Hickory polio camp, where several characters are treated. This facility was dubbed “The Miracle of Hickory” and featured in *Life* magazine in 1944. In the novel, Ann Fay tells Daddy about the camp in her letter (p. 64) and explains how newspapers were reporting about the hospital (p. 66–67). The second half of the book continually mentions the camp, medical staff, and the eventual transfer of all patients to Charlotte Memorial Hospital.

In the social studies classroom, *Blue* offered students a glimpse into North Carolina’s past which provided them with a deeper appreciation for North Carolina history. Other units where *Blue* is a potential good fit include: the history of civil rights in the United States, family, historical fiction as a genre, identifying cause and effect, the technology of communication, and the human body.

Identifying key academic vocabulary is essential with any text. In the sidebar below, we have included vocabulary that we explicitly taught throughout the book as a means of supporting students’ comprehension of the text and general historical knowledge about the time period.

Finally, we prepared a “compelling question” (Sidebar, p.19) that would act as an anchor for various fact-based “supporting questions” that would guide our reading and discussion of each chapter. The compelling question was, “How does a war change society—even for those who never see combat?”

### Historical Fiction as a Vehicle for Learning History

There are several benefits of using historical fiction novels as a vehicle for teaching social studies content. The most common use is to provide purposeful integration of social studies and English Language Arts (ELA). Using titles that provide accurate historical content, teachers can develop a larger study of history (e.g., the World War II era) while simultaneously using the title for ELA aims. This is especially helpful for teachers who are also completing a genre study of historical fiction alongside the social studies content included in *Blue*.

We selected this book because of our goal to foster historical thinking both in the elementary and university classroom. In regards to aims of historical thinking, titles like *Blue* can foster perspective recognition and potentially, opportunities for developing empathy. With the right book, teachers can provide counter-stories of a historical event or period that are more often overlooked in textbooks and widely circulated picture books. Moreover, Ann Fay, the protagonist in *Blue*, is especially relatable for our students. Hostetter does an excellent job describing Ann Fay’s (fictionalized but realistic) experiences within the larger scope of the period in which children of that era grew up.

Finally, historical fiction titles can be used in at least four different reading settings found in the elementary classroom: whole class novel study, teacher reading aloud, small group guided reading, and student-facilitated literature circles. In this project, we used a mix of the teacher reading aloud and small-group, guided reading in this project. The five activities described below can be used in any of these four settings. These activities, which introduce or reinforce social studies content while including grade appropriate ELA, science, or math content, could be adapted for students in grades 3–5 as whole or small group activities, depending on class design, size, and the unit of study chosen.

### Vocabulary for Teaching *Blue*

#### Chapters 1 to 10

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<tr>
<th>Historical fiction</th>
<th>Polio</th>
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<td>Wisteria</td>
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#### Chapters 11 to 21

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<td>Perseverance</td>
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<td>Segregation</td>
<td>Kenny Pack</td>
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<td>Jim Crow</td>
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1. Examining Historical Sources to Understand a Specific Time and Place

This activity works best in heterogeneous small groups with the teacher(s) circulating to facilitate students’ source analysis. While the actual sources used may vary from grade to grade, the focus is on selecting images that build students’ working knowledge of life stateside during World War II. We prioritized the following sources: photographs of women in the workplace, draft cards, ration images, wartime recipes, and propaganda posters. Ann Fay even referenced the variety of propaganda posters during the war, explaining (p. 52),

> It seemed like you couldn’t go anywhere without seeing Victory posters. They used to make me feel proud and helpful...But today, just looking at a picture of a soldier and the words “DO THE JOB HE LEFT BEHIND” drained the last bit of energy right out of me.

To begin this activity, we suggest reading page 52, (Ann’s description of her wait in the sugar ration line) as well as page 19 (Ann reminds Junior that “If they got women building battleships, I’m sure I can run a garden tiller.”).

We have found that using “cropping tools” cut from cardstock invites students to focus intently on one specific part of a graphic. This is a great strategy to use when examining historical sources. Students simply overlay the tool (small cardboard L shapes) to “crop” the image, which helps children concentrate on one aspect of it. A template for cropping tools and more information on using this strategy can be found on Teaching History’s website.

We used the following supporting questions as we examined historical sources: How did life stateside change during World War II? What things stayed the same? For example, what challenges did families face? What do the sources tell us about everyday life stateside during that war? How did gender roles shift during the war? How did Ann Fay’s family change during the war?

To begin, students sorted the sources according to categories that they chose, most often by source type (e.g., posters, news articles, recipes), source level (e.g., primary, secondary, tertiary source),3 or content (e.g., victory gardens, scrap metal drives). Afterwards, we guided students through a discussion of the categories they had chosen. Students then completed a gallery walk where they selected one source, and used it to respond to this question (writing on an adhesive note paper) “How does this source represent a challenge families faced stateside in World War II?”

The teacher prompted students to have discussions with one another about what they noticed in each image, while paying close attention to any similarities with the narrative and descriptions in Blue. Similarities included references to polio, victory gardens, flags, soldiers, President Roosevelt, and how communication traveled. Following the first response, students completed a second walk-through with a partner, during which the pair chose a source that revealed a shift in daily life routines or gender roles during that era. The student pairs compared these descriptions with the gender roles that might be seen and practiced in their homes today. For example, “Who prepares meals in your home? Is it always the same person?” We then held a “debriefing session,” highlighting specific sources as needed as we answered the supporting questions.

Once students had a good understanding of life stateside during World War II, we then moved to a more specific sourcing activity, the picture walk. We printed and displayed 10 relevant images of propaganda, advertisements, and other appeals that were created during World War II. (See Resources, below.) During the walk, students quickly pointed out commonalities among the images, such as how artists used symbols. This activity can also be completed in two parts, with students initially responding to images by sticking a written response to an image and then moving to discussions with peers. If more source analysis support is needed, the activity can begin with the teacher modeling how to read propaganda sources and then asking students to locate an implicit message in a source as they move around the room. Students could also compare and contrast posters from the collections of the Smithsonian with other propaganda messages.

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**C3 Framework**

**Compelling and Supporting Questions**

A “compelling question like ‘Was the American Revolution revolutionary?’ is both intriguing to students and intellectually honest. Such a question can be vigorously explored through the disciplines of civics, economics, geography, and history....

Supporting questions assist students in addressing their compelling questions. For example, questions like “What were the regulations imposed on the colonists under the Townshend Acts?” will help students understand the many dimensions of the war as they form their conclusions....”

See further explanations on page 17 (and the example on page 30) of the C3 Framework, which is a free PDF at www.socialstudies.org/c3.
Teaching World War II (Source Analysis Activity)
FDR signs Declaration of War against Japan: www.archives.gov/files/research/military/ww2/photos/images/ww2-01.jpg
Women assembling a B17 bomber: www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/fsac.1a35337/
Sewing flags for military activities: www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/fsa.8b03053/)
Female welder: time.com/3638649/world-war-ii-photos-we-remember/

War Propaganda (Gallery Walk Activity)
UK National Archives, Propaganda Poster Collection: nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/education/propaganda.pdf
Victory garden poster 1: www.cbsnews.com/pictures/propaganda-art-for-wwii-victory-gardens/10/
Victory garden poster 2: www.cbsnews.com/pictures/propaganda-art-for-wwii-victory-gardens/11/
Victory garden poster 3: www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3g05561/
Share the meat poster 4: www.loc.gov/pictures/item/96507329/
The more women at work labor poster: www.loc.gov/item/95504675/
Our daddy is fighting bond poster: www.loc.gov/item/2002709057/
Liberty bond poster: www.loc.gov/item/2002719776/
Uncle Sam bond poster: www.loc.gov/item/2002712074/
“Are you doing all you can?” poster: www.loc.gov/pictures/item/99400737/

Letters Home in WWII (Letter Writing Activities)
www.pbs.org/thewar/at_home_communication_letters_diaries.htm
www.nww2m.com/2011/12/letters-home-pearl-harbor/postalmuseum.si.edu/letterwriting/lw08.html

Polio Epidemic and the Social Response
“Health and Healing in North Carolina: An Interactive Timeline,” moh.ncdcr.gov/exhibits/healthandhealing/topic/17
Childhood Polio: www.loc.gov/item/2006680160/
Political Cartoon: www.loc.gov/item/2012633379/
The Iron Lung: www.loc.gov/item/2010637071/
FDR Library: fdrlibrary.org/polio

Supplemental Text Set for Blue
Topic: Families’ Experiences with Deployment

Topic: Children’s Experiences with Loss

Topic: Women on the Homefront

Rationing during Wartime
War Ration Book with Coupons: repository.duke.edu/dc/hfc/hfcp01025

Additional Teaching Resources
2. Considering the Science of Disease and the Public Response to an Epidemic
Polio was central to the stories in Blue and to the stories of many stateside during World War II. In this activity, students worked in small groups of 3 to 4 to research polio beyond the information in Blue and then create an infographic about polio from the information collected during their research. We provided a variety of sources for polio research including primary and secondary sources from the Library of Congress, The FDR Library, the Hickory Museum of Art’s website, and CBS News. (See Resources below.) Other resources to consider include March of Dimes posters circa 1940s, Life Magazine images, and news related to polio today. Students used the following passages from Blue to begin their research: news traveling of the local outbreak (throughout Chapter 4); Bobby’s sickness and death (Chapters 5–12); burning Bobby’s toys (Chapter 7) as a precaution (which revealed the current thinking about how polio might spread); a description of the iron lung (p. 65–66); the onset of polio (p. 115–118); Ann Fay’s Kenny pack treatments (p. 122–125); and her letter to Daddy describing polio’s effect on her body (p. 149). Students used chart paper to draft and then complete their infographics. Our focus was on summarizing the research into an easy-to-follow graphic.

The following supporting questions guided students’ research: What is polio? How does polio affect the human body? How did doctors treat polio in the United States during World War II? How did the epidemic impact communities? How have scientific discoveries and public policies reduced the risk of polio today? (The answer involves the development of vaccines against the polio virus and laws requiring vaccination of all children to prevent its spread.)

3. Exploring the Significance of One Word: “Blue”
Using a physical map of the United States, a teacher can point out that the setting of the book, the City of Hickory, North Carolina “is a bridge between Asheville and Charlotte at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains.” Hostetter uses symbolism in Blue, as the word itself represents three items significant to Ann Fay: Daddy’s overalls, Ann Fay’s glass tear bottle, and wisteria flowers. Throughout the text, we discussed how the items are connected to the devastations in the story (e.g., loss of childhood; polio’s effect on the Honeycutts) as well as Ann Fay’s responsibilities. The first reference (p. 1) was when Daddy loaned his blue overalls to Ann Fay as he was leaving for war. The overalls are mentioned repeatedly through the book (e.g., p. 102–03 as Ann Fay harvested crops; as Ann Fay remembered Daddy; and as she wore overalls as she maintained their home in the absence of Daddy, and then Mama. Passages regarding blue wisteria flowers include Ann Fay’s description of the vine (p. 17 and 25); her first letter to Daddy (p. 25); and

The “Miracle of Hickory”


The “Miracle of Hickory” refers to an emergency hospital established in Hickory, North Carolina, during the summer of 1944 to treat infantile paralysis (polio). The descriptive name comes from the title of a pamphlet issued by the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis (March of Dimes) later that year.

The hospital was started in response to a serious epidemic that developed in June and was centered in the Catawba Valley. When the facilities at Charlotte Memorial Hospital and an orthopedic hospital in Gastonia were filled, it became necessary to treat patients at Hickory. The “miracle” was the speed with which the hospital was conceived and put into operation. The decision to open a hospital was made on a Wednesday at noon, and the first patients were admitted on Saturday morning, a mere 48 hours later. The initial building was a stone structure that was already occupied as a summer camp. Army hospital tents were used throughout the summer, and several additional frame structures were built.

Much of the construction and other work at the hospital was accomplished by a massive local volunteer effort. The March of Dimes provided doctors and contributed more than $500,000 for the hospital. The American Red Cross recruited several hundred nurses, most of whom were housed at the Hotel Hickory. Numerous other specialized medical personnel came from throughout the country. Several leading medical schools, including Yale, Johns Hopkins, and Bowman Gray, had research teams at the hospital. Treatments at the facility were a vindication of the methods of Sister Elizabeth Kenny, who had been fighting the medical establishment for several years to substitute heat treatments, massage, and hydrotherapy for the conventional splinting and immobilization.

Over 500 patients received treatment. Almost from the time it was built, the hospital was controversial. It received national publicity, particularly in Life Magazine, and Hickory became known as “the polio city.” Some parents left town with their children, and shoppers and visitors were afraid to enter the area. A quarantine was in effect for several weeks. One faction wanted to keep the hospital and another group wanted to get rid of it. By December, the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis believed that it should be closed. An arrangement was finally made to transfer the remaining patients to Charlotte Memorial Hospital (known today as the Carolinas Medical Center). The last patients were moved from Hickory to Charlotte in a highly publicized motorcade on 5 Mar. 1945.
her thoughtful reflection of wisteria from Daddy’s perspective (p. 100–101). Chapter 19 describes Ann Fay’s blue tear bottle. Ann Fay explains,

> Then Imogene said my bottle had to be blue—like them overlars my daddy give me. Like the sky above. Like the color of truth and faithfulness—because that’s how I was. When she said that, I cried all over again.

We developed two art integration activities for symbolism in Blue: a symbolism watercolor piece and a wisteria process art piece. For the first, we asked students to consider items that symbolize their identity or experiences in their own lives. Students described a text-to-self connection by identifying items from the story or from their own lives that provide symbolism. Then they created a symbolic illustration using watercolors in shades of blue. For example, students may create a replica of the white flag with the blue star in honor of a loved one who is or has served in the military. When finished, students clipped a notecard to each piece of art with their name and a simple description of the item and its significance for display.

A second activity expanded Hostetter’s use of wisteria, an invasive, tenacious plant, known for growing vigorously in tough environments (p. 18) and grape-like clusters of flowers in shades ranging from pale blue to deep purple. Similar to wisteria, Ann Fay persevered despite obstacles. Students examined images of wisteria plants, studying the branches and flowers, and making connections to wisteria references in Blue. They chose to draw either a full wisteria plant or a single cluster in detail, using colored pencils to create the outlines. (We instructed the students to leave plenty of margin space for later additions.) Then, students chose a circular item (like a pencil eraser) to dip into acrylic paint and use as a stamp to create clusters of dots resembling wisteria blooms. Students mixed various shades of blue and purple by mixing simple white, blue, and a small amount of red acrylic paint. While the clusters were drying, students jotted down decisions they face as individuals or with families (e.g., deployment of a parent; moving to a new state) and also the tactics of problem solving that they use as individuals or families to persevere (e.g., video chatting with a deployed parent; finding new friends during after-school activities). In the final process, students surrounded their drawing with images of things or people who help when they persevere through difficult experiences (thus filling in the margins). The finished products symbolized the diversity of our experiences as well as the virtue of perseverance, which we can display by problem solving with our family and friends during difficult times.

4. Writing Letters in Wartime
Letters to and from soldiers have been a longstanding symbol of wartime experiences for families. We observed great conversations when children read the letters between Daddy and Ann Fay as well as the historical letters to and from soldiers during World War II. Before beginning this activity, it is essential to check students’ background knowledge of letter writing and formatting. We asked the following questions: What do friendly letters contain? What format is used for friendly letter writing? The letters in Blue are mostly friendly letters, which seemed to help students as they read letters from other soldiers and learned more about the process of V-Mail. For example, Chapters 2–4 contain some of our favorite early letters between Daddy and Ann Fay. In those first letters, Hostetter carefully included details such as what each correspondent misses and descriptions of everyday experiences. Ann Fay sometimes sends her letter in a package containing some comforts from home (e.g., soap, chewing gum, cookies, cigarettes), and Daddy carefully censors his descriptions of military events and locations.

The websites of both PBS and the World War II Museum offer collections of hand-written letters to and from soldiers during wartime with typed transcripts. We also used the commentary from soldiers about the process of letter writing located with the PBS letter archives, as well as parts of the Postal Museum’s content on V-Mail (a medium that Ann Fay describes on page 67). We read letters first as a whole group (one from stateside and one from the warfront) and identified the types of information families and soldiers shared with one another. We compared this information with the content of letters between Daddy and Ann Fay. Following a whole-class reading, we provided sample letters for students to read and respond to in small groups. Then we discussed the following supporting questions as a class: What did families write about in their letters to loved ones in combat? What did soldiers write about in their letters home? We also raised more speculative or imaginative questions: What challenges do you imagine soldiers faced that were not mentioned? How do you imagine it felt to receive a letter from a loved one? Why are letters important during times of war?

5. Solving a Problem Collaboratively
One stateside experience that challenged Americans’ economic behaviors was the use of rationing. Rationing and victory gardens were central to how families secured food and made ends meet during wartime. Because both practices are described in Blue, we created an activity in which we asked students to identify the complexities of economic choices, and then simulate families’ decision making experiences. The aim of the simulation is to help students consider the perspectives of families during this era and think about methods of problem solving.

Before beginning the rationing activity, we reviewed passages referencing rationing and victory gardens: the description of the man who shared with the Honeycutts and the ration board (p. 14–15); sending surplus garden goods to polio hospitals (p. 71); Ann Fay’s experience with the ration board (p. 52); an update on the garden in her letter (p. 25); harvesting okra and green beans (102–103); and securing sugar from the ration board for canning goods from the victory garden (p. 37).

In this activity, we first arranged students in groups of six,
and then in pairs (formed within the group). We discussed the relationship of rationing to victory gardens and the representations of both in Blue. Students were then given a family scenario (e.g., number of adults and children, any special circumstance), a budget specific to their family, and tickets to simulate ration cards. Students worked in pairs in the group to decide how available funds would be spent, what meals would fit the ration and victory garden allotment, and any cuts that needed to be made to the current budget. We provided sample ration cookbook recipes to help students think about how rationed supplies might be used with items from a garden. Building on the examples of resource sharing in Blue, they were allowed to work with other pairs to “share resources” with their “neighbors.” Following the rationing simulation, Caroline said,

The activity that stood out among the rest was one where the students had to spend a certain amount of ration money on clothes and food for their family during World War II. This was specifically challenging for many of my students. They quickly realized that what they wanted wasn’t necessarily what they needed, or what they could afford for the mock family they were given to support. My students were tasked with problem solving that simulated Ann Fay’s experience. This simulation offered a powerful connection between the story, students’ lives and the activity.

**Conclusion**

In reflecting on our first novel study between fourth grade and elementary preservice teachers, Caroline wrote, “My students gained a wealth of knowledge from reading Blue by sharing how they felt about the story with Lisa’s students, and applying what they learned to various activities. These hands-on learning experiences ... were shared as students’ favorite memory from fourth grade at the end of the school year.” We hope that in reading our experiences, classroom teachers, university faculty, and preservice teachers will be encouraged to collaborate in thinking of ways to expand their teaching, and to integrate subject areas so as to bring both history and literature to life.

**Notes**

1. Standards covered in this lesson include those from NCSS Curriculum Standards and the C3 Framework:
   * NCSS Standards: **TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE:** The use of stories about the past can help children develop their understanding of ethical and moral issues as they learn about important events and developments.
   * C3 Framework: Dimension 2: Applying Disciplinary Concepts and Tools (historical fiction, discipline specific content knowledge in history, investigating for compelling questions);

   - D2.His.2.K-2. Compare life in the past to life today;
   - D2.His.5.3-5. Explain connections among historical contexts and people’s perspectives at the time;
   - D2.His.10.3-5. Compare information provided by different historical sources about the past;
   - Dimension 3: Evaluating Sources and Using Evidence (a focus on historical perspective recognition);
   - D3.3.3-5. Identify evidence that draws information from multiple sources in response to compelling questions.

2. Joyce M. Hostetter, Blue (Honesdale, PA: Calkins Creek, 2010).
3. “Comparative Literature: Primary, Secondary & Tertiary Sources” (Yale University Library), https://guides.library.yale.edu/c.php?g=295913&p=1975839
4. See teaching resource, “Epidemics and Society’s Response (NCSS; The Vaccine Makers Project; CDC),” www.socialstudies.org/resources/teaching-resources/epidemics-and-society-responsenccsvaccine-makers-project-cdc
5. Hickory, North Carolina “is a bridge between Asheville and Charlotte at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains,” www.hickorync.gov/content/employment.

**A School-University Partnership**

Preservice teachers spend time in public schools in New Hanover County not only for their field experience in teaching, but even earlier in their college career—to complete assignments for methods courses at the University of North Carolina Wilmington.

The authors have known one another in various capacities across the last five years. Various literature projects have incorporated three classroom teachers, one university faculty, and preservice teachers working together to use historical fiction titles in fourth grade social studies instruction. We have partnered on several social studies and literacy projects, with Blue as the first full novel chosen for study in the classroom.

Initially, the school purchased classroom sets of books. Recently, we received a grant from UNC Wilmington that funded books so that we could continue this work. In 2017, we adopted a book club format. All three fourth grade classes are reading the same two titles and writing to pen pals who are university preservice teachers. We also have meetings at the school where the students work in small groups to complete activities related to their current reading that extend beyond the classroom period.
When World War II began, the United States government campaigned to call on the American woman to enter the workforce and support the war. Society expected women to endure domestic hardships without question because most of these rules came from religious interpretations. As with any war, casualties of American soldiers left many widows. Hardships: Examining Life Stateside during World War II through the Historical Novel Blue is a journal providing information about a fourth grade project. This project allows teachers, students, and peers to examine life stateside during World War II with the help of the novel, Blue. The article summarizes the novel and how it is about a child and her family and how they, War, Polio and Family with a guide that offers resources, ideas, and supplemental information needed to teach the unit. Intended audience: Teachers, and educators (higher ed.) who may plan on teaching the novel, Blue and might need incorporating the novel to their lesson plan or might need help guiding the novel in their classroom.