

Where
the past
is present

DETROIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

TEACHER RESOURCE LESSON PLAN

DETROIT DURING WWII: WHEN TOYS WENT TO WAR



CREATED BY

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INTRODUCTION

Factories and businesses changed during World War II. No more was this evident than in the city of Wyandotte, Michigan. One of Wyandotte's most productive companies was the All Metal Products Co. This company produced some of the most widely used metal toys of the day. With the start of the war the All Metal Products Company had to switch its production because of the use of metal needed to fight in the war.

This lesson will enable high school students to explore the rise of Wyandotte toys into one of the most successful toy companies in the world, its role in WWII, and the adjustments the company had to make after the war was over.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Learn the early history of the Wyandotte Toy Company
- Analyze the role the company had during WWII
- Explore how WWII effected the company's production and distribution
- Look at the impact the war had on the company after the war was over

EDUCATION STANDARDS

7.2.3 Impact of WWII on American Life – Analyze the changes in American life brought about by U.S. participation in World War II including

- mobilization of economic, military, and social resources
- role of women and minorities in the war effort
- role of the home front in supporting the war effort (e.g., rationing, work hours, taxes)

TIME REQUIRED

One class period

MATERIALS USED

- Computer
- White Board
- Handouts (in separate PDF packets)
- Pictures

PREPARATION

- Folders divided into three sections: Pre-WWII, During WWII, After WWII
- Each Resource labeled for each section

LESSON PLAN: WHEN TOYS WENT TO WAR

- There are three resources that will be used for all three sections: Timeline, Santa had a helper in Wyandotte newspaper article, and Financial Review from 1940-1949
- Graphic organizers for each section- Pre, During, and After WWII.

LESSON SEQUENCE

1. Write the following question on the board/ computer: You are the owner of a successful company that produces items made of metal. You have been told by the government that you are not allowed to use metal anymore because of the need for it during the war. How do you adapt?
2. After giving the students time to come up with answers, have the students express their answers by writing a summary of what they say on the board. Keep those answers for the duration of class and they can be used at the end to see if they were right.
3. The class will be divided into groups. Four students will be in each group and they will be given one of the following topics. 1. Wyandotte Toys Pre-WWII 2. Wyandotte Toys during WWII 3. Wyandotte Toys after WWII. Pass out the packets to the groups.
4. The students must create a timeline of what happened to the company during this time. At least 8 but no more than 10 dates can be included. Use the attached graphic organizers.
5. Students must also come up with a one paragraph summary of what happened to the company during this time.
6. Students will then present their findings to the class.
7. Culminating activity will be each student writing a paragraph on how the Wyandotte toy factory adapted to changes in WWII and how it affected the company long term.

EVALUATION

1. Graphic Organizers turned in by each group.
2. One paragraph summary after the groups have

presented each era of the company.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Babson, Steve. *Working Detroit*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1986.
- Bauer, Lt. Col. Eddy. *History of World War II*. New York: Galahad Press, 1966.
- Brown, Arthur Joseph. *The Arsenal of Democracy*. Oxford University Press, 1941.
- Davis, Michael W.R. *Detroit's Wartime Industry: Arsenal of Democracy*. Chicago: Arcadia Publishing, 2007.
- Gervasi, Tom. *Arsenal of Democracy: American Weapons Available for Export*. New York: Grove Press, 1978.
- Herman, Arthur. *Freedom's Forge: How American Business Produced Victory in World War II*. 2012.
- Jeffries, Edward. *Detroit and the "Good War"*. 1996.
- Moranz, John. *Leaders of Wartime Michigan*. 1945.
- Nelson, Donald M. *Arsenal of Democracy: The Story of American War Production*. New York: Harcourt, 1946.
- Staff of the Detroit News. *War in Headlines from The Detroit News 1939-1945*. 1946.
- Wrynn, V. Dennis. *Detroit Goes To War*. Osceola, WI: Motorbooks International Publishing, 1993.

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GRAPHIC ORGANIZER - DURING WWII

When did the company stop using metal for products? _____

What did the company use instead of metal? _____

Products Company produced during WWII

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

What non toy items did company produce during WWII? _____

How were sales during WWII?

1942 _____ 1943 _____

1944 _____ 1945 _____

Timeline of Events during WWII

Summary Paragraph:

GRAPHIC ORGANIZER - AFTER WWII

When did the company start producing metal toys again? _____

What were sales like after WWII?

1946 _____ 1947 _____

1948 _____ 1949 _____

What major development in how toys were produced hurt the company?

List two major events that happened in 1955 that are mentioned in the 1956 letter to stockholders.

Timeline after WWII

Summary Paragraph: