

Distrust and Uncertainty

Time

2 class periods (30 minutes per period)

Overview

Lesson 2 covers Chapters 5 through 8 (28 pages) in *Weedflower*. Chapters 5 through 8 cover the bombing of Pearl Harbor and its effect on those within Sumiko's community. The community endured arrests, encountered distrust, and faced uncertainty about the future.

Objectives

- Students will understand that Japanese American citizens lost many civil rights in the aftermath of the bombing of Pearl Harbor and that their citizenship became largely meaningless because of their race.
- Students will understand the actions of Colorado's Governor Ralph Carr during World War II.

Essential Question

- Why is it important to treat everybody—including those who may seem different from me—fairly?

Guiding Question(s)

- How did Colorado's Governor Ralph Carr try to help the Japanese Americans during World War II?

Colorado Model Content Standards (2008)

- History 3: Students understand that societies are diverse and have changed over time.
- History 5.3: Students know how political power has been acquired, maintained, used, and/or lost throughout history.

Materials

- A copy of the young adult novel *Weedflower* by Cynthia Kadohata
- *Handout 2-1: Colorado Governor Ralph Carr*

- Charts started in Lesson 1 comparing similarities and differences
- Vocabulary chart
- Markers

Background

This lesson deals with reaction to the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Shortly thereafter, on February 29, 1942, Colorado Governor Ralph Carr declared that his state would provide temporary shelter for law-abiding Japanese, Germans, and Italians ordered removed from the West Coast. He also said that “They are as loyal to American institutions as you and I. Many of them have been born here and are American citizens with no connection with or feeling of loyalty toward the customs and philosophies of Italy, Germany, and Japan” (Bill Hosokawa, *Colorado's Japanese Americans from 1886 to the Present*, page 87).

Later, on April 7, 1942, Governor Carr again came to the defense of Japanese Americans when governors from 14 Western states met in Salt Lake City with Dr. Milton Eisenhower of the War Relocation Authority. Carr took a politically unpopular stand and declared that Japanese Americans had every right to live in his state and that Colorado would welcome them. This stand contributed to his loss in the race for the U.S. Senate later that year.

Opening

- Discuss student writing from Lesson 1, review what was read in the previous chapters, and have students speculate on what they think will happen next.

Activities

- Continue to chart vocabulary words introduced in the text.
 - *Isoginasai* (Chapter 5, page 49): hurry up
 - *Hakujin* (Chapter 5, page 52): European Americans
 - *Issei* (Chapter 6, page 56): the first generation of

Japanese Americans who were born in Japan and immigrated to the United States

- *Haji* (Chapter 6, page 59): shame
- Read aloud Chapter 5.
- Continue to chart ways in which Sumiko’s life is similar to students’ lives and things in her life that reflect her Japanese heritage.
- Discuss the following:
 - Why couldn’t Sumiko keep the picture of her parents?
 - How did the bombing of Pearl Harbor directly affect those in the Japanese community where Sumiko lived?
 - What measures did people take to try to protect themselves?
- Read aloud Chapters 6, 7, and 8; continue charting activities and discuss the following:
 - Chapter 6:
 - In the days and weeks after Pearl Harbor, what things happened that made the Japanese American community very nervous?
 - Why were Jiichan and Uncle arrested? What were their crimes?
 - After war is declared, what were the reactions of governors to Japanese Americans? Why do you think they felt that way?
 - Chapter 8:
 - Discuss the second paragraph of Chapter 8, which begins with “Sumiko would sit at her window . . .” Note the last sentence: “Either way, they were doomed.” Ask students what they think will happen, then call attention to Sumiko’s American citizenship.
 - As Japanese American communities were told they had to evacuate the areas where they lived, what happened to those who tried to move to other states?
 - Why did Ichiro think that Colorado would be a good place to live if the family abandoned the farm and moved?
 - Focus on Colorado Governor Ralph Carr, who led

the state from 1939 to 1943. Distribute *Handout 2-1: Colorado Governor Ralph Carr*. Read aloud an excerpt from one of his speeches:

- “If you harm them, you must harm me. I was brought up in a small town where I knew the shame and dishonor of race hatred. I grew to despise it because it threatened the happiness of you and you and you.”
- Discuss the following questions:
 - How did Governor Carr try to help Japanese Americans?
 - Governor Carr ran for U.S. Senate in 1942 and lost in one of the closest elections in state history. Why do you think this is so?

Closing

- Divide students into groups of four. Have them discuss what was read in Lesson 2 and list two examples that show how people distrusted each other and two examples of things that people did to protect themselves. Discuss answers.

References

- Asian American Curriculum Project, Inc. “The Japanese American Journey: The Story of a People.” Appendix in *A Lesson in American History: The Japanese Experience*. N.p.: Japanese American Citizens League, 1996.
- “Governor Ralph L. Carr Collection.” Colorado State Archives. <http://www.colorado.gov/dpa/doit/archives/govs/carr.html#bio> (accessed July 24, 2009).
- Hosokawa, Bill. *Colorado’s Japanese Americans from 1886 to the Present*. Boulder, Colo.: University Press of Colorado, 2005.
- Kadohata, Cynthia. *Weedflower*. New York: Atheneum Books, 2006.
- Schrager, Adam. *The Principled Politician: The Ralph Carr Story*. Golden, Colo.: Fulcrum Publishing, 2008.



Colorado Governor Ralph Carr

Handout 2-1



Courtesy of the Colorado State Archives and Public Records

If you harm them, you must harm me. I was brought up in a small town where I knew the shame and dishonor of race hatred. I grew to despise it because it threatened the happiness of you and you and you.

—Ralph L. Carr, Governor of Colorado (1939–1943)