

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

Discussion topics from Over the Waves, by Marianne Olson (Mitchell)

1914 Woodrow Wilson was the President.
 A new car cost \$395.
 A new house cost \$3,400.
 A loaf of bread was only 6 cents.
 Average yearly income was only \$1,260.

Houses had electric power. Telephones were common but not everyone had one. Cars were available but many people still relied on a horse and buggy or streetcars. Women still were not allowed to vote.

CAREER CHOICES

Very few women worked outside the home. Men had more career opportunities to choose from. Boys often started to work around the age of twelve with most going into full-time jobs after high school. Often, sons were expected to follow in their father's footsteps. Joel wants to be a newspaper reporter but his father wants him to be an apprentice tailor. To Joel, tailoring is fine for his dad, but for him it's not the career of the future.

1. Was Joel right in his opinion?
2. If Joel were around today, what would be the career he would be most interested in?
3. What jobs were available to women in 1914?
4. What careers are you thinking about for yourself?

TAILOR-MADE VS. STORE-BOUGHT CLOTHES

1. What do those terms mean?
2. Joel's father was a tailor by profession. What does a tailor do?
3. Do we still have tailors today?
4. When you need a new dress or a new coat, where do you get it?
5. Joel's father wanted him to be an apprentice. What does that mean?

STAYING IN TOUCH

It's easy to communicate with our friends and family today. We pick up the phone, send a fax, or send e-mail. In an instant, we are in touch. Not so in 1914. How long did it take for the letter from Annali's father in Sweden to arrive at her home in Omaha, Nebraska?

1. Do you have friends or relatives who live far away?
2. How long does it take for a letter to get there?
3. In what other ways do you communicate?
4. How often do you write someone a letter?

TRANSPORTATION

It took Joel and his mother seventeen days to get from Omaha, Nebraska to the little village in Sweden using several means of transportation.

1. Make up a map showing the route they took, as best you can determine from the story. Remember that the Norwegian city, Christiania, is called Oslo today.
2. How would you get from your town to a small town in Sweden today?
3. What means of transportation would you use?
4. How long would it take?
5. Have you ever made a trip to Europe? If so, tell where you went and how you got there.

NEWS AND INFORMATION

Staying in touch with world and local events was as important then as today. But how did people get the news in 1914? Did they have television? Radios?

In fact, television was only a dream. Radios were still in their infancy. Ship to shore radio transmissions had been in use since early 1900. By 1902 messages were regularly sent across the Atlantic. After World War I, radio developed quickly as a means of communication and home radios were common. But before then, people depended on the newspaper for information. In times of crisis, several editions came out during the day. A bulletin might be posted in a shop window for the public to read. Many communities with high populations from foreign backgrounds had newspapers in several languages. In Omaha, for example, *Omaha Posten* was the local Swedish newspaper. Swedish newspapers published today are *Nordstjernen* in New York City, and *Vestkusten* in California.

1. Are there foreign language newspapers where you live?
2. What is the name of a local non-English newspaper?
3. Can you bring one into class to share? Besides language, how else is it different from the local English language paper?
4. How do you get news of the world today? Give at least four different news sources.

WORLD WAR I

Over the Waves is set at the start of World War I, the summer of 1914. Going off to war was thought of then as a grand adventure. Yet the consequences of that “war to end all wars” are with us even today. The face of Europe and the role of the United States in foreign lands changed forever. Some twenty years later, the world was again at war.

1. How many countries were involved in World War I?
2. What started it? When did it end?
3. When did the United States enter the war?
4. How did warfare change at that time? What new means of fighting were developed?
5. Were more people killed in the war or in the flu epidemic that followed?

READ MORE ABOUT IT:

These books are set during the same time period, 1914-1918.

(fiction)

Eyes Like Willy's, Juanita Havill

Lord of the Nutcracker Men, Iain Lawrence

The Ornament Tree, JeanThesman

A Time of Angles, Karen Hesse

Good-Bye, Billy Radish, Gloria Skurzynski

In Flanders Fields, Linda Granfield (picture book on the famous poem)

Summer Soldiers, Susan Hart Lindquist

Man of the Family, Kathleen Karr

(nonfiction)

Submarines (The History Series), J.J. Tall

An Album of World War I, Dorothy and Thomas Hoobler

Aces and Aircraft, Christopher Campbell

First World War, John D. Clare

World War I, Ken Hills

Learn more about Sweden:

www.si.se The Swedish Institute

www.webcom.com/sis/ Swedish Information Service

www.dn.se/ Sweden's daily newspaper, *Dagens Nyheter*

GLOSSARY OF SWEDISH WORDS AND PHRASES:

Herre Gud = Dear God (HAIR-reh Good)

Tack så mycket = Thank you, or Thanks so much (TOCK so MICK-et)

Mormor = literally, Mother's mother or Grandma. In Sweden grandparents are identified by who they are parent to. Other terms are Farmor (Father's mother), Farfar (Father's father) and Morfar (Mother's father). That way you always know which grandparent you're talking about.

Välkommen/Velkommen = welcome (vel-KOM-men)

Lingon saft = a red juice made from lingon berries, something like cranberries (LING-on sahft)

Trollbacken = the hill where trolls live (TROLL bah-ken)

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