

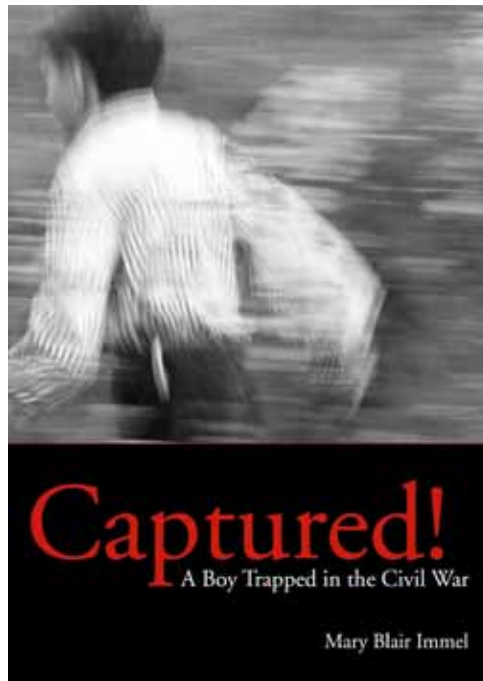
TEACHER RESOURCE

by Michele Brooks

for the Indiana Historical Society Press publication:

Captured! *A Boy Trapped in the Civil War*

by Mary Blair Immel



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Overview/Description

Fourteen-year-old Johnny Ables left his Kentucky farm one morning in 1862 to gather wood for his family. Captured by Confederate soldiers for his wagon and horses, Ables was thrust into danger and forced into battle at Fort Donelson. Following their capture by Union troops, Ables and his Confederate kidnapers were taken to Camp Morton Prison in Indianapolis, where Ables fought the biggest battle of his life—survival.

In this lesson students will read *Captured! A Boy Trapped in the Civil War* by Mary Blair Immel (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society Press, 2005) and complete multi-disciplinary activities that provide cross-curricular options in language arts.

Academic Standards for Social Studies

- **Indiana Standards:** 8.1.27, 8.1.28, 8.1.29, 8.2.4, 8.3.2, 8.3.6; USH.1.2, USH.1.3, USH.1.4, USH.9.1, USH.9.2
- **National Standards (National Council for Social Studies):** II Time, Continuity, and Change, VI Power, Authority, and Governance, X Civic Ideals and Practices

Social Studies/Historical Concepts

Civil War, conflict, dissent, power, authority, freedom, and democracy

Learning/Instructional Objectives

Students will:

- read *Captured! A Boy Trapped in the Civil War*
- analyze and discuss Ables’s experiences as a Civil War prisoner at Camp Morton, and his fight to survive and return home to his family
- write an essay describing what they think happened to Ables after his release from prison camp during the Civil War or create an autobiographical account of Ables’s story following his release
- create a comic strip or storyboard depicting a visual account of what happened to Ables following his release from prison camp

- create a computerized crossword puzzle utilizing vocabulary words from *Captured!*
- identify the Union states and the Confederate states during the Civil War, and map Ables’s journey from his home in Kentucky to Camp Morton in Indianapolis
- locate the students’ own homes on a city map and create a map plotting the route from their homes to Camp Morton and calculate the distance between the two locations
- locate and analyze primary and secondary sources presenting differing perspectives on events and issues of the past
- locate and utilize sources found at archival collections and electronic sites

Time Required

Multiple class periods depending on the classroom needs and the activities selected. Teachers may select from one or more of the following activities described below.

Materials Required

- Copies of *Captured! A Boy Trapped in the Civil War* by Mary Blair Immel (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society Press, 2005)
- Student handout
- Paper and pencils or pens for taking notes
- Computers with Internet access for students to create vocabulary word crossword puzzles and to review images of Camp Morton from the Indiana Historical Society’s Digital Image Collection
- 8.5 x 14 inch paper for comic strips, markers or colored pencils
- United States map
- Indianapolis city map
- Graph paper for mapping activity

Background/Historical Context

The Civil War was the only war fought by Americans on American soil. While there were no decisive battles waged on Indiana soil, about 200,000 men from Indiana fought for the Union. Approximately 95 percent of these men were volunteers. More than 24,400 Hoosiers lost their lives due to injury or illness during the Civil War. Although Indiana had a reputation for its strong support of the Union effort and the antislavery movement, not everyone in the state supported President Abraham Lincoln and Indiana governor Oliver P. Morton, both Republicans.

Soon after the beginning of the Civil War, Indianapolis's new state fairgrounds was converted to a military training camp. It was named Camp Morton after the governor of Indiana. The 36-acre area was located between what are now 19th and 22nd streets, and between Central Avenue and Talbott Street. Early in 1862, facilities were needed to house Confederate prisoners of war. After the Union victory at Fort Donelson in February of that year, approximately 4,000 Confederate prisoners arrived at Camp Morton. From that point until the end of the war, the camp was a prison. The fence around the prison was made of two-inch thick oak planks. A ditch ran through the property to accommodate the overflow from Fall Creek during spring rains. It was called the "State Ditch." The prisoners called it the "Potomac." After the war, the camp reverted to its previous role as the state fairgrounds until 1890, when the area was platted for residential use and home construction began.

By the end of the war, more than 400,000 Union and Confederate soldiers were held as prisoners of war nationwide. Ables was a real prisoner of war, not a fictional character, whose life after his release from prison camp is not documented. The author pursued this real-life mystery through five years of research and visits to Tennessee, Kentucky, and Mississippi.

Procedure

Introduce lesson with background information and discussion. Discuss Indiana's role in the Civil War as a Union state. Explain that while Indiana was not the site of any decisive battles during the war, about 200,000 men from Indiana served in the war, most of them volunteers who wanted to help the Union. Ask students to describe why they think citizens from Indiana and other states volunteered to serve in the army during the Civil War. Why did these Indiana volunteers risk their lives to fight for the Union? Would you have volunteered to fight for your country during the Civil War? Do you know if you had any ancestors that fought in the Civil War?

Next, ask students if they have any relatives serving overseas now? Do they know how old a citizen in the United States must be to serve in the military (the minimum age for enlistment in the military is 17 with parental consent)? Explain to students that even though the draft was discontinued after the Vietnam War, all young men ages 18 to 25 by law must register with Selective Service. The purpose of the Selective Service Agency is to provide manpower to the U.S. armed forces in an emergency by conducting a draft using a list of young men's names gathered through the registration process. Young men are required to register within 30 days of their 18th birthday. Mention to students how Ables, the main character in *Captured!*, was only 14 when he became a prisoner of war and became engaged in battle, about the same age as an 8th grader. Ask students if they think they would be prepared at the age of 14 to fight in the war? Why or why not? At what age do they think young men should be required to register with Selective Service? Do you think young women should be required to register also?

Explain to students that although Ables was a real person, we do not know what actually happened to him following his release from Camp Morton. Do you think he actually made it back to his family in Kentucky? Did he survive the dangers of traveling in wartime, especially for someone

that young and alone? When the book's author researched the plight of Ables, she located an 1870 census record for Tennessee that showed a listing for a man named John Abels. Although the spelling is different, the age was about the same age as Johnny would have been in 1870. In fact, Colonel Richard Owen spelled Johnny's last name as "Abels" on the letter he wrote to Governor Morton.

After reading *Captured!*, students may select one or more of the following activities to complete based on their individual learning styles.

ACTIVITY 1:

What do You Think Happened to Johnny Ables?

Students will write their own account of what they think happened to Ables after he was released from prison camp. Did he actually make it home and reunite with his family, did he live happily ever after, or was he killed trying to get home during wartime, etc.? Students will explain how they think his prison camp experiences changed him.

Or

Students can pretend they are Ables and write an autobiographical essay about what he did after he was released from camp, e.g., school, military, work, family life, adventures, etc. Discuss the adventures and difficulties that Ables encountered on his trip home. Explain what Ables did for a living when he grew up. How do you think Ables's prison experiences might have affected him for the rest of his life (physically, emotionally, etc.)?

Or, for the artistically inclined,

Students can create their own comic strip depicting what they think happened to Ables following his release. Tell Ables's story through pictures. Provide each student with 8.5 x 14 inch paper and either markers or colored pencils. Set a minimum number of panels for the students to draw.

ACTIVITY 2:

Map of the United States during the Civil War

Discuss with students how the Civil War began when many states in the South decided to leave the United States and form their own country called the Confederate States of America, or the Confederacy. Referring to the map of Ables's journey on page 61 of *Captured!*, students will label the cities that are identified using a map of the United States. Students will then identify which states were on the Union side and which states were on the Confederate side during the war.

ACTIVITY 3:

Compare/Contrast Essay

Students will write an essay comparing and contrasting a typical day in their lives to a typical day in Ables's time when he was a prisoner at Camp Morton in 1862. What are the similarities between the students' lives today and Ables's life? What are the primary differences? Discuss any difficulties/hardships students face now compared to the hardships Ables encountered after he was captured by the Confederate soldiers. If you could choose, would you rather be a youth today or Ables in 1862 living with his family *before* his capture? Why? Can you think of any advantages to being Ables? Why might life today be easier than Ables's life with his family?

ACTIVITY 4:

Make Your Own Crossword Puzzle

Using the Internet, students will create their own *Captured!* crossword puzzle using vocabulary words from *Captured!* (A handout is provided.) Refer to pages 135–40 in the book's glossary for vocabulary words. Then proceed to www.variety-games.com/CW/ and select "free crossword puzzle maker."

Students may select their own words from the book's glossary and write the definitions or the teacher may provide the following vocabulary list:

- face off:** two groups in opposition to each other
haversack: a pouch, usually made of canvas, carried by soldiers that holds food
parole: a pass or permission to return home
assemble: to bring together in a particular place for a purpose; to gather
rations: a fixed amount
Hoosiers: a term or nickname for persons from the state of Indiana
certify: to promise that something is true
regiment: a large army made up of several companies
musket: a gun with a smooth bore inside the barrel
comrade: a close companion, usually a member of a group such as an army buddy
menacing: threatening, dangerous
artillery: a branch of the army with heavy weapons
compassionate: kind and caring about other persons
terrain: the land or the earth and the way it is formed
grub: food
petition: a written request signed by one or more persons and presented to someone in authority in order to bring about a desired action
trench: a ditch dug by soldiers used to protect them from enemy fire

ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

Photo Analysis Activity

Students can analyze the 23 images related to Camp Morton on the Indiana Historical Society's Web site in the Digital Images Collection.

- To access the Indiana Historical Society Web site, go to www.indianahistory.org. To view Camp Morton images in the Digital Image Collection, enter "Camp Morton" as the search term.

- Point out to students how before and after the war, Camp Morton served as the state fairgrounds. Discuss the photographs with students. How would they describe the photographs? What details—people, objects, activities—do they notice? What other information—location, season, reason photo was taken—can they gather from the photographs? What questions do they have about the photographs? How might they locate answers to these questions?

- Next, have students review a photo of the Colonel Richard Owen monument from the Indiana Historical Society's Digital Image Collection (Item ID P0130_P_BOX41_FOLDER3_201047-F) and remind students that he was the commandant of Camp Morton, and assisted Ables by writing to Governor Morton about releasing him. Discuss the inscription on the monument: "Tribute by Confederate Prisoners of War and their Friends for his courtesy and kindness." Ask students why they think the former prisoners would have raised money for this monument of a man who held them as prisoners? How do they think Owen was different than other prison camp leaders? Mention the vocabulary word "compassion." Provide students with the Camp Morton handout. Students can read aloud the excerpts regarding Owen's character and camp rules. Inquire what impressions students have about Owen following the reading.

The following is a description of Colonel Richard Owen, from *Camp Morton, 1861–1865: Indianapolis Prison Camp* by Hattie Lou Winslow and Joseph R. H. Moore (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1995):

Combining strength and gentleness, he was a good disciplinarian and at the same time tempered his rulings with sympathy. His whole aim was to treat the prisoners in a way "calculated to make them less restless in their confinement, and likely, when they returned to their homes, to spread among their friends and acquaintances the news that they had been deceived regarding northern men.

At this period no general rules for the supervision of prisoners had been laid down. While Colonel Hoffman pleaded that such matters be delegated exclusively to his department, the generals in the field continued to exercise a good deal of authority over the movements of prisoners, and each camp commandant set up his own disciplinary measures. . . . Owen had to formulate his own rules. He drew up a humane and sensible code, much of which was later incorporated into Hoffman's instructions to all commandants of prisoners' camps.

These rules established virtual self-government among the prisoners. They worked well, with occasional exceptions that necessitated modifications and curtailments of privileges. Sometimes the townspeople were inclined to criticize their latitude, but they earned for Owen the undying gratitude of many prisoners.¹

“If Only I Could Make the Rules” Activity

Groups will discuss Camp Morton's rules and then create their own rules as if they were the commandants of Camp Morton. After students discuss Colonel Owen's rules for Camp Morton in the previous activity (see excerpts, above, from Winslow's and Moore's *Camp Morton, 1861–1865: Indianapolis Prison Camp*), divide class into groups. Groups will present their rules to the class and explain the reason(s) they selected these rules. Are there any of Owen's rules they would want to preserve? Why?

“Do you know the way to Camp Morton?” Activity

Provide students with Indianapolis city maps. Students will locate their homes and create a map plotting the journey from their homes to Camp Morton, and compute the distance.

Herron-Morton Place Research Activity

The land that was once known as Camp Morton later became Herron-Morton Place (HMP), a historical district near downtown Indianapolis. In 1983 HMP was listed on the National Register of Historic Places and became a historical preservation district in 1986. Have students

research HMP on the Internet and write a one-page account of the neighborhood's history.

- In 1859 the state purchased the mostly undeveloped land to be used for what purpose? What happened to the land after the Civil War?
- Who were the two individuals that Herron-Morton Place is named after? What were their contributions to Indiana history? What happened to many of the homes in the neighborhood from 1950 to 1970?
- What are the primary goals of the Herron-Morton Place Neighborhood Association?
- In what year was HMP was designated an historical preservation district?
- What is the name of the well-known art fair that occurs in HMP each year and attracts more than 250 artists from around the country?

Suggested Web site for researching Herron-Morton Place: www.herron-morton.org

1. Winslow, Hattie Lou and Joseph R. H. Moore, *Camp Morton, 1861–1865: Indianapolis Prison Camp* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1995), 26–29.

ACTIVITY 4:

Make Your Own Crossword Puzzle

Student Handout - Vocabulary List

Use the Internet to create your own crossword puzzle using vocabulary words from *Captured!* Refer to pages 135–40 in the book’s glossary for vocabulary words or used the vocabulary list provided. Then proceed to www.variety-games.com/CW/ and select “free crossword puzzle maker.”

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