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Confino Primary Source Activity Lesson Plan Appropriate for Elementary School

Objective: To use primary sources to tell the story of a young girl and her family. To build an understanding as to how primary sources/documents can be used to piece together stories from the past.

Materials:

- Confino Primary Source Materials packet. The documents can be found at the end of this lesson plan.
- Pencils
- Paper

Procedure:

- Distribute packet to your class
- Ask your students and discuss with your students the following:
 - ❖ Do you know that you can find out a lot of information about a person without ever meeting them? What are some of the ways?
 - ❖ Primary source documents are one of the best ways to find out information about people you've never met. Primary source documents are written records like government reports, diary or journal entries, and letters and postcards.
 - ❖ The Lower East Side Tenement Museum uses primary documents to help them find out information about the people who lived in their tenement building long ago. They are also used by historians to find information about specific people, places, and events.
 - ❖ Today we will have a chance to do the same kind of historical research. You will each receive a packet of primary sources that will help you learn about a young girl named Victoria Confino. She was a resident at 97 Orchard Street, the location of the Lower East Side Tenement Museum.
- Examples of specific questions for each source to help engage your students:
 - ❖ The Post Card
 - Describe the picture on the front of the post card
 - What's the name of the town?
 - Is it similar to or different from New York City?
 - What do you think it would be like to grow up in this town?
 - ❖ Mr. Confino's Passport
 - Does anyone know what the word VISA means? Why is it printed on this passport?
 - What other information can be learned from reading this? When Victoria arrived? How she traveled to America?

- Why might someone write such a note?
- ❖ Victoria's Report Card
 - What information can we gain from this document?
 - How often did Victoria attend school? Was she absent often?
 - What did she get grades for? What grades did she receive?
 - How do you think Victoria felt about going to school?
- ❖ Family Photograph
 - What is this?
 - Who might it be a picture of? How many people are in it? Is it a family? Is one Victoria? Which one?
 - What are they wearing? Is this what you would wear for a family photo today?
- After the students have discussed the primary sources ask them to write about Victoria Confino's life.
- If you are going to the museum and planning to visit Victoria you can inform your students that they will have an opportunity to see what great historians they are as well as meet Victoria and ask her questions they may now have for her.
- Emphasize to your students that they have just done the work of real historians. Historians use primary sources in all of their work. They piece together information about a time, place, event, or person based on recorded information. Primary sources are essential to the work historians do.

Extension: If you are working with a more advanced group of students, like upper elementary students, and are currently studying immigration you can ask your students to compare Victoria Confino's life to what they have learned in general about immigrants from her time period. Things to consider include:

- To what age children are required to attend school?
- What types of places people emigrated from—rural, urban?
- How people entered the United States and how the U.S. kept records of them.
- What types of barriers immigrants would need to overcome—language, finding work, finding a place to live?

Assessment: Assessment should be largely based on the process of learning how to decipher primary source documents. Evaluate students on their ability to engage in the process and draw conclusions from the given information. Ask students questions that expand their thinking about Victoria.

Primary Source Documents



A postcard of Kastoria, the Confino's hometown.



Victoria's father's passport. On it, she wrote, "Victoria Confino came in this country August 19 the year 1913 the ship was Martha Washington."



A photo of the Confino family. Victoria can be seen on the far right.