



Ted Alejandre, County Superintendent

San Bernardino County

Superintendent of Schools

*Transforming lives through education*

**Thursday, May 14**

12:00pm

**History Detectives – 4<sup>th</sup> thru 8<sup>th</sup> grade**

**After watching this episode, choose from the following questions and/or tasks to extend your learning**

*WPA Mural Studies* - When a Bend, Oregon, woman inherited six large paintings created by her aunt, Thelma Johnson Streat, she believed she'd been given a special window into American history. She believes they were mural studies commissioned by the WPA in the 1930s or 1940s. The color illustrations depict contributions of African Americans in the fields of medicine, transportation and industry. The contributor thinks they could have been intended for school walls. HISTORY DETECTIVES host Elyse Luray travels to Oregon, San Francisco and Chicago to find out whether any of these studies became murals and if any of Streat's murals still exist.

*George Washington Miniature* - A Greenville, Ohio, man was sorting through documents stored above one of Manhattan's first taverns when he stumbled across a miniature color painting of a man in profile labeled "G. Washington." On the back of the portrait, he found the inscription, "Property of White Matlack. New York, 1790." HISTORY DETECTIVES host Wes Cowan sets out to discover whether the artist painted this portrait of Washington from life, and to uncover its surprising connection to the little-known abolitionists and patriot White Matlack.

*Japanese Balloon Bomb* - The granddaughter of a World War II veteran from Austin, Texas, has a wartime memento with a note claiming it's a piece of Japanese balloon that floated across the Pacific Ocean in 1945. The alleged balloon scrap could be evidence of a unique weapon in modern warfare: the Japanese balloon bomb. HISTORY DETECTIVES host Tukufu Zuberi travels to Austin, Texas and to the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum in Washington, DC, to learn whether this souvenir is a missing piece of a secret weapon.

### **Question Box 1**

- Why were the murals of African Americans depicted in fields of medicine, transportation and history important in the 1930s or 1940s?
- What was the WPA and why would the organization have commissioned the murals to be created?
- Who was White Matlack and why was he important to the segment about George Washington?
- What is significant about the location of the Manhattan tavern?
- What was the Japanese balloon bomb and why was it important in the discussion about modern warfare? What was the purpose of this balloon bomb?
- How many of these incendiary weapons were launched from Japan during the war via the jet stream?
- Were the Japanese balloon bombs effective? What type of problems did they cause during World War II?

***Continued on the next page...***



## **Question Box 2**

- What was one section of the text (video) that stood out for you and why?
- What was your favorite segment and why?
- What do you think you learned from this program?
- What was most challenging or least interesting about this program?
- What feelings are conjured up when you see art that depicts people from our nation's past such as the African Americans in murals and the drawing of George Washington?
- Do you think old artwork such as those reviewed in the episode are important pieces of our nation's history? Why or why not?
- What would you do if you found a painting that you thought had historical significance?

## **Box 3 (Tasks)**

- Research WPA art in your area? What art is near your area? Had you ever seen it before?
- Research the Smithsonian Institute. What are the 19 different museums? Where are they located? Which one do you want to visit most and why? How much will it cost you to visit the Smithsonian Institute? *(ELD) Create a PowerPoint of your 5 favorite museums out of the 19. Present it orally to someone.*
- Visit Smithsonian museums virtually [here](#) .

## **Box 4 (Enrichment)**

- Artists, writers, dancers, graphic artists, muralists, actors were all part of the WPA. Pick an art medium that interests you and research how the WPA affected that WPA program. Create your own art.
- Miniatures were the way that we got images circulated in the mail to the American people. How do most people get their news today? How do you get your news? What's the difference in how you stay connected vs how Mr. White stayed connected?

## **Box 5 (Extend/Real-Life)**

- How do the historical items in this episode help the viewer develop a better understanding of historical events?
- Do you think this episode would have made the same impact on you if there were no physical items to present and the investigations were completely dependent on oral storytelling? Why or why not?
- Why is it important to preserve historical items? How can our understanding of past events affect our future? Discuss your answers with a family member.
- Create your own historical item by keeping a journal during this pandemic. This will be a primary source document in the future.