

Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher:	Lesley Wolf	School:	Hyatts
Book Title:	My Brother Sam is Dead	Genre:	Historical Fiction
Author:	James Lincoln Collier, Christopher Collier	Pages:	224
Publisher:	Scholastic, Inc.	Copyright:	1974

In a brief rationale, please provide the following information relative to the book you would like added to the school's book collection for classroom use. You may attach additional pages as needed.

Book Summary and summary citation: (suggested resources include book flap summaries, review summaries from publisher, book vendors, etc.)

This book describes the fictional adventures of the Meeker family of Redding, Connecticut, though much of the context of the story -- including setting, characters and situations -- is true. The action takes place between April 1775 and February 1779. Tim Meeker begins as an 11-year old boy; his father runs the town's tavern and general store and remains loyal to the English king, while his beloved older brother Sam has just run off to join the Rebels and fight for freedom from the British. The narrative voice of Sam is effective and well-written. A lot of choices are made and many changes take place for anyone between the ages of eleven and fifteen, but just imagine if you were also going through those important times while the American Revolution was happening around you! Sam is confused. He doesn't understand all the issues and has seen acts of good and bad from both sides. He loves his father and his brother. He cannot decide where his loyalties lie. Sam's dilemma makes clear that the Revolution was really America's first civil war -- neighbors fought neighbors, people were right and wrong on both sides, and everyone suffered.

This is a realistic book with no struggles or acts beyond the believable abilities of the characters involved. There is no explicit violence but the narrator sees a beheading and an execution, so this book would be inappropriate for young readers; but it captures the dilemmas of growing up and the difficulties of the Revolution in a way that would make it interesting and valuable to pre-teens and teenagers.

Provide an instructional rationale for the use of this title, including specific reference to the OLSD curriculum map(s): (Curriculum maps may be referenced by grade/course and indicator number or curriculum maps with indicators highlighted may be attached to this form)

10. Examine author's purpose and style.

13. Analyze plot, character, theme, point of view and setting in varied genres.

6. Write responses to literature that organize an insightful interpretation around several clear ideas, premises or images that support judgments with specific references to the original text, to other texts, authors and/or to prior knowledge.

Include two professional reviews of this title: (a suggested list of resources for identifying professional reviews is shown below. Reviews may be "cut and pasted" (with citation) into the form or printed reviews may be attached to the form)

Review #1

Common Sense Media Review

At a distance, war looks glorious to ten-year-old Tim, but as it intrudes on his own life, it forces him to grow up. "Ever since I had got the wagon home by myself," he says, "I hadn't felt like a boy anymore."

Tim witnesses the capture of his father, and patriots falsely accuse his brother of stealing his own family's cattle--and Tim can do nothing to help them. By the time he is fourteen years old, he knows, as his mother says, that "war turns men into animals."

The realistic action that pervades this fact-based book mesmerizes kids, who enjoy this often required-for-school title. By reading it, young readers get a glimpse into eighteenth-century America and begin to understand the realities of the Revolution.

The authors--one a well-known children's writer and the other a professor of American history--include an afterword explaining how much of the book is true and telling readers where they can go to see the Meeker tavern, which still exists, as well as other sites in the book.

Other exciting historical novels by the Collier brothers are *The Bloody Country* and *War Comes to Willy Freeman*. Scott O'Dell's *Sarah Bishop* makes a good companion piece.

Review #2

What alternate text(s) could also fulfill the instructional requirements?

Title: **The Fighting Ground**

Author: **Avi**

Title: **Johnny Tremain**

Author: **Esther Forbes, Lynd Ward**

Title: **The Witch of Blackbird Pond**

Author: **Elizabeth George Speare**

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Document any potentially controversial content:

References to the American Revolution.

Keeping in mind the age, academic level, and maturity of the intended reader, what is the suggested classroom use: (check all that apply)

Gifted/Accelerated Regular At Risk

GRADE LEVEL(S): 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Reading level of this title (if applicable): Grade 5

Date Submitted to Department Chair: 11-27-07

Suggested Professional Literary Review Sources:

School Library Journal

Horn Book

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)

Library Journal

Book Links

Publisher's Weekly

Booklist

Kirkus Review

Wilson Library Catalog

English Journal (and other resources of the National Council of Teachers of English)

The Reading Teacher (International Reading Association)

Literature for Today's Young Adults