

Faculti Summary

<https://faculti.net/americans-in-a-world-at-war/>

In this text, the author reflects on their unexpected decade-long journey of researching and writing a book about World War II, a topic they initially had little interest in. They grew up during the World War II Memory Boom of the 1980s and 90s when the war was a prominent part of American culture. The author notes that historical narratives often separate homefront and combat experiences, leading to a narrowed understanding of the American experience during the war.

Upon deciding to explore the subject, the author investigated Pan Am's commercial airline services during the war, particularly focusing on a significant plane crash involving the Yankee Clipper, which carried military personnel traveling incognito. They utilized archival resources to understand the diverse backgrounds and experiences of those on board, seeing them as representatives of broader themes in wartime America.

The narratives of individual plane passengers revealed the multifaceted nature of World War II, showcasing how various Americans perceived their role and the war's significance. Characters like Frank Kiehl and Ben Robertson demonstrate differing perspectives on the conflict, highlighting divisions in American sentiment and political beliefs.

The author aims for readers to appreciate the complexity of American engagements in global affairs before Pearl Harbor, understand the perilous early stages of the war, and recognize the interconnectedness of American efforts with those of other nations and peoples involved in the conflict. They hope to provide a more international perspective on the war, challenging the insular narratives that often dominate popular portrayals of World War II.