

*Prepared by Meg, Fairfield Library*

## **ATTACK OF THE TURTLE** BY Drew Carlson

### Summary

It's 1776 and the Revolutionary War is raging in the New York Harbor. Fourteen year old Nathan Wade is a patriot, but he's too young to join the fight. And it's a good thing because in his tiny hometown of Saybrook, Connecticut, Nate worries about how to fight his own battles. An early childhood incident has left him terrified of water, he dreads encounters with the neighborhood bully, and he feels rejected when his father leaves to join the Continental Army.

But when his cousin, David Bushnell comes to Saybrook with a secret, Nate is drawn to the intrigue. David has designed a water machine, a submarine, that can explode bombs underwater. And his mission is to launch it against British warships.

As war clouds gather over the colonies, Nate reluctantly agrees to help David build the weapon of war—the American turtle. He worries about getting caught, but when unlikely circumstances put Nate at the center of the action, he must face the murky waters of his fears head on.

This story, based on actual historical events, captures the drama of the first submarines used in naval warfare and the adventures and struggles of a teenager overcoming self doubt.

### Discussion

Discuss the main character's personality traits and how they change over time and affect his social life.

Use a copy of **Bushnell's submarine: the best kept secret of the American Revolution** by Lefkowitz. A book of nonfiction telling the same story. Compare some of the facts with the novel.

Why do you think the author included battle scenes and camp scenes in the story when they aren't directly connected to the "Turtle's" work?

Were you disappointed that the Turtle wasn't successful? Is this the ending you expected?

What other strategies could you think of to sink the British ships? If they had been successful, how do you think it could have changed the war?

What question would you like to ask David Bushnell?

Do you think you would be brave enough to get into the Turtle?

Did you notice there was no mention of actions for the war by women in the story, is that historically correct?

Look at a map of CT/NY and trace the route of the turtle.

Where do you think the author got his information to write the book? What kind of documents were available and where do you go to use them?

What were the exciting parts of the story? How did the author build the excitement?