

# KIRKLAND TOWN LIBRARY



*Kit*

1930s - Cincinnati, Ohio

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## Clinton, N.Y. in the 1930s

The Depression years were not easy in Clinton, but everyday life here was nowhere near as difficult as it was in many large cities like Buffalo, Rochester or Cincinnati, Ohio, where Kit lived.

There were about 1,500 people living in the Village of Clinton in 1935. A new Junior-Senior High School was built in 1933 on the site of the old Cottage Seminary, a private girls' school. Students from grades 7 through 12 attended classes in the new building and The Marvin Street School was used for elementary students.

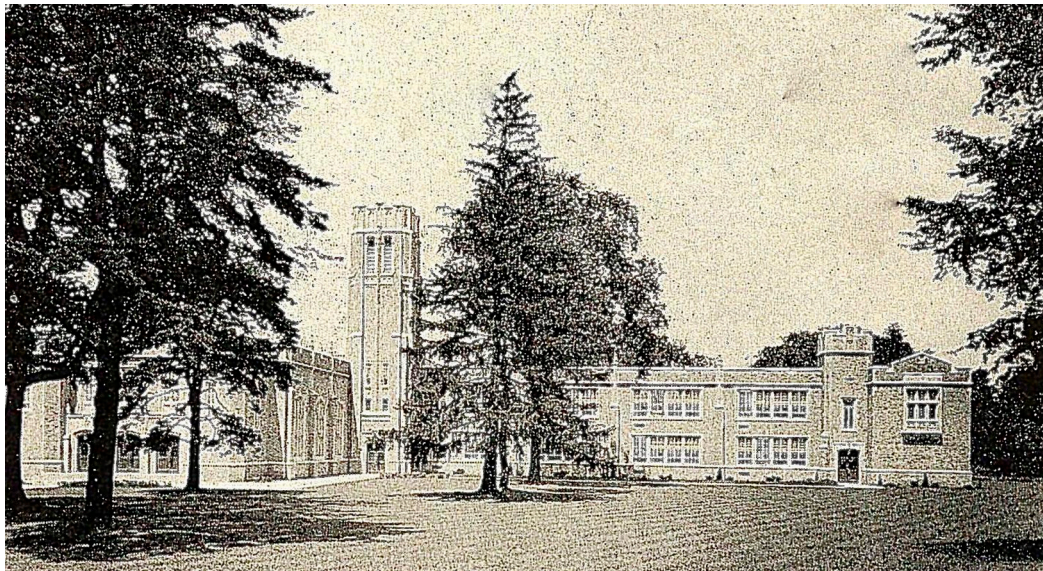
Some new businesses such as a variety store and a candy shop came to town and there were "talkies" movies shown in the theater at the Scollard Opera House on West Park Row and the Grange Theater, where a child's ticket was 15 cents! There were several grocery stores, including the Grand Union Tea Company and Dawes' Market on the Green. A miniature golf course was built on Franklin Avenue in 1930, and in 1936, two buses replaced the old trolley car that ran between Utica and Clinton.



*Clinton Trolley 1935; Clinton Historical Society*

Many people were out of work and in 1933, about 300 men were given jobs on a road project through the Civil Works Administration, which was an organization formed to help the unemployed find work. Homeless people, or hoboes were usually given a meal and allowed to spend the night in the village jail, in the basement of Lumbard Hall.

# School



*Clinton Junior-Senior High School, 1936; Clinton Historical Society*

# Making a Newspaper

Kit loved writing a newspaper everyday for her family on an old typewriter. She filled the paper with neighborhood news, family events and seasonal stories. When she moved to the attic to make room for the boarders, she brought the typewriter with her and even asked her friends Ruthie and Stirling to help write the stories. Some children in Clinton may have used this old typewriter to make their own newspaper. It certainly is quite different from the computers we use today!



*Oliver Printype typewriter, circa 1915; Clinton Historical Society*



# Hungry Families



*Clinton Firemen's Hall, built in 1921; Clinton Historical Society*

When her family had food to share, Kit and her friends often took the extras to the soup kitchen where entire families came to get a meal when they had nothing to eat.

In November, 1931, the Town of Kirkland Relief Committee collected food from family gardens and farmers and stored it in the “firemen’s building,” or next door at Dawes’ Market. Fruit, vegetables and canned goods were then distributed to people who needed help feeding their families.

# Waste Not, Want not

When Kit's Aunt Millie came to live with the family, she showed them lots of frugal ways to save money and use things over and over again. They learned about raising chickens, growing vegetables, darning socks, reversing the collars and cuffs on her father's shirts to make them last longer and even about making bloomers out of flour sacks. Farmers used to sell flour and grains in rather plain fabric sacks, but later in the 30's, the sacks were made from nicely patterned flowered material. Many women used the material from the bags to make



*The Marvin Street School, probably Third Grade, 1937;  
Clinton Historical Society*

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aprons and dresses. In the school picture below, some of the Clinton girls are probably wearing dresses made at home from the pretty, recycled flour sacks.

# Hogan's Corner

Kit and her best friend, Ruthie, had a special treat when they went to the movies to see a newsreel about Amelia Earhart. Girlfriends in Clinton would have probably stopped at Hogan's Confectionery soda fountain for an ice cream float after seeing a movie at the Grange Hall on Fountain Street or Scollard Opera House on West Park Row. This busy corner has been a popular spot for meeting friends and buying treats for more than 80 years!



*Hogan's Confectionery, circa 1945; Clinton Historical Society*



# The Civilian Conservation Corps

Kit's brother, Charlie, gave up going to college since his family could not afford to pay the tuition. Instead, he got a job with the CCC in Montana, at the Glacier National Park, helping to build walls and roads. Just down the road from Clinton, on Route 12-B, in Deansboro, about 200 boys and men worked with the CCC to assist farmers with soil erosion projects. There were 22 buildings constructed there and the United States Army was in charge of the program.



# The Library

In 1933, the Kirkland Town Library requested workers from the Civil Works Administration, another program to create jobs for the unemployed, to work on a project that included outside jobs such as painting the building and fixing the porch roof. Inside jobs were tasks like cleaning and varnishing the library floors and chairs and typing catalog cards for the card catalog, a system of index cards in drawers used to keep track of books owned by the library. Some workers were paid 40 cents an hour.



*The Kirkland Town Library, 1926; Clinton Historical Society*

# Toys for Work and Play

Wagons have been a popular toy for children from the 1900s and right up to the present day. It was fun to take a fast ride down the hill, or coast along a smooth sidewalk, but wagons were also useful for small jobs as well. Kit and Stirling used an old wagon to sell the eggs their new chickens laid, and to carry food and used clothing to the hobo jungle. A child in Clinton, might have delivered eggs in a wagon like this one pictured at right.



1930s Wagon



<http://www.radioflyerlink.com/apps/history/heritage1930.asp>

# Suggested Reading

## Juvenile Fiction

Better to Wish by Ann M. Martin (CD J Fiction MAR) (J Fiction MAR)

The Blue Comet by Rosemary Wells (J Fiction WEL)

Bud, Not Buddy by Christopher Paul Curtis (J Fiction CUR)

Christmas After All: the Diary of Minnie Swift by Kathryn Lasky (Holiday J LAS)

Every Day After by Laura Golden (J Fiction GOL)

Intruders at Rivermead Manor: a Kit's Mystery by Kathryn Reiss (J Fiction REI)

The Journal of C. J. Jackson: a Dust Bowl Migrant by William Durbin (J Fiction DUR)

Kit's Short Story Collection by Valerie Tripp (J Fiction TRI)

A Long Way From Chicago by Richard Peck (J Fiction PEC)

The Luck of the Buttons by Anne Ylvisaker (J Fiction YLV)

The Mighty Miss Malone by Christopher Paul Curtis (J Fiction CUR)

Missing Grace: A Kit Mystery by Elizabeth McDavid Jones (J Fiction JON)

Moon Over Manifest by Clare Vanderpool (J Fiction VAN)

Nothing to Fear by Jackie French Koller (J Fiction KOL)

Out of the Dust by Karen Hesse (J Fiction HES)

Saving Grace by Priscilla Cummings (J Fiction CUM)

Strawberry Hill by Mary Ann Hoberman (J Fiction HOB)

Survival in the Storm: the Dust Bowl Diary of Grace Edwards by Katelan Janke (J Fiction JAN)

Turtle in Paradise by Jennifer L. Holm (J Fiction HOL)

## Juvenile Nonfiction

Born and Bred in the Great Depression by Jonah Winter (J 976.406 WIN)

Children of the Great Depression by Russell Freedman (J 305.23 FRE)

Going to School During the Great Depression by Kerry A. Graves (J 370.973 GRA)

The Great Depression by Melissa McDaniel (J 973.916 MAC)

Headin' for Better Times: the Art of the Great Depression by Duane Damon (J 973.916 DAM)

Life During the Great Depression by Dennis Nishi (J 973.916 NIS)

The 1930's: From the Great Depression to The Wizard of Oz by Stephen Feinstein (J 973.91 FEI)

Welcome to Kit's World, 1934: Growing up During America's Great Depression by Harriet Brown (J 973.917 BRO)

# Kit's Accessories



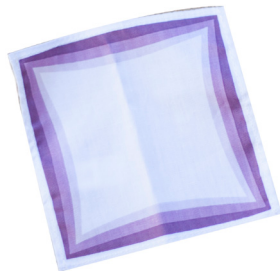
Hat



Book



Nightie



Handkerchief



Purse



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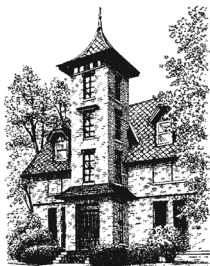
To learn more about the program visit <http://kirklandtownlibrary.org/americangirldolls/>



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