

KIRKLAND TOWN LIBRARY



Molly

1944 - Jefferson, Illinois

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A stylized, elegant cursive signature of the name 'Molly' in black ink.

Clinton, N.Y. in the 1940s

Families living in Clinton and the surrounding area during the 1940s were very much like Molly's family. Everything changed when the country went to war after Pearl Harbor was attacked on December 7, 1941. Almost all children had some family member helping in what was called "the War Effort."

Mary Cosgrove of Fountain Street lived on a dairy farm during the war. Mary had two brothers, Tom and John, and two sisters, Eilene and Clare. Mary said it was a treat to go to a store. She remembers O'Brien's Meat Market and McCabe's Store on College Street.



*photo courtesy of Mary Cosgrove
This is Mary Cosgrove and her mother at their farm on Fountain Street;*

Rationing



The point system at work. Meat and other food items had to be purchased with ration points to divide the limited supplies fairly.

Rationing helped people share what was available in limited quantities. Everyone had to use stamps with points on them to buy food in the stores. Families had to have enough “points” to buy what they needed. Different points were required to buy meat, butter or cheese. Sugar was not always available and only one cup of coffee was allowed per day. Mothers had to change the ingredients they used in recipes to make meals during the war. People could not go far in their cars because gasoline, tires, and oil were rationed as well.

Victory Gardens

Molly's housekeeper, Mrs. Gilford, grew a Victory Garden. This was a way to help people have more food so that produce from the farms could feed the soldiers. The American Red Cross reported that "549 persons intended to have gardens in Kirkland."

*Right: Frances Tegart, a mother and homemaker, working in her Victory Garden in Rochester, N.Y.;
Clinton Historical Society*



Scrap Piles

The Village of Clinton created a spot at the end of the Village Green for people to bring metal items like old car parts, metal beds, metal boxes, and metal toys. The metal was made into vehicles and firearms for the troops. Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts helped gather other scrap items such as tin foil, newspapers, rubber, nylons and shoes.

*This car was donated for the Scrap Pile and left
in the Village Green;
Clinton Historical Society*



“ We had fun stomping on and crushing “tin” cans on our kitchen floor. The cans were not really tin but steel. There were no frozen food or plastic containers in those days. All fruit, vegetables, and soups came from the store in cans. Tremendous piles of crushed cans could be seen at the end of the park, waiting for pick up for the war effort ”

— John Burdick, Clinton resident

Air Raids

Molly's friend, Emily, who came from England, helped Molly's brother identify airplanes. She knew the shape and markings for the planes when they flew overhead and could tell if they were enemy planes. There is a spot off Mulberry Street in Clinton called "The Knob" where an observation post was set up. People sat and watched the sky in case they needed to warn the villagers to take cover if an enemy plane was spotted. No one ever reported one in Clinton.



Sketch of "The Knob" on Mulberry Street; volunteers used the building for observing planes; Clinton Historical Society

Air Raids

The town also had air raid drills. When the siren went off at night, no lights could be seen coming from any house or building and even cars had to stop and turn off their lights until the siren rang the “all clear.” More than 1200 people helped in this “civil defence” of Kirkland.

Girl Scouts

Like Molly, girls were involved in Girl Scouting in Clinton. A favorite memory of Janet Collmer, a Girl Scout in Clinton during the war, was going into fields to collect pods from milkweed plants. The fiber-like material was used to make flotation vests for soldiers and sailors.

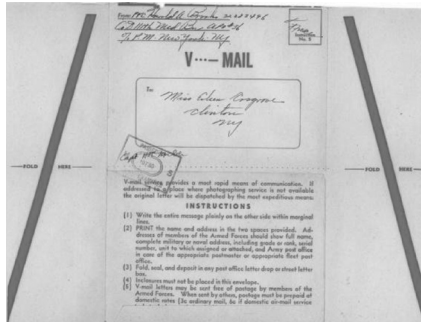


Clinton Girl Scouts with flags gathered around the fountain on the Village Green; Clinton Historical Society

V Mail

Molly's father was not home for two years and she missed him. Families in Clinton and Kirkland had many fathers, uncles, brothers, cousins, sisters and aunts who fought in other countries. No one could use computers or phones to contact their loved ones. They had no television. They listened to the radio, read newspapers and waited for letters in the mail.

Mary Cosgrove's uncle Harold Brooks was gone for 30 months. He fought in five battles in Italy, France, Germany, Austria, and Africa. He sent a Christmas card from France and a letter called "V-mail." Stamps were not needed for V-mail and the words had to be approved to make sure no clues were revealed about the war.



Mary Cosgrove's uncle, Corporal Harold Brooks of the 106th Infantry Division, in his uniform and a copy of a letter he sent home; courtesy of Mary Cosgrove.

Victory



*A portrait of Mary Cosgrove, age 10;
courtesy of Mary Cosgrove*

When the war was over, Mary's Uncle Harold came home. Mary remembers all of Clinton and the surrounding towns celebrating with the ringing of church bells, parades, and a big party with bands in the Village Green. There were many speeches welcoming soldiers back and thanking everyone for supporting the war effort.

Victory



*1946 Homecoming parade on North Park Row;
Clinton Historical Society*

The people of the Town of Kirkland still remember those who served and died in America's wars. The Village Green has several stone memorials that are marked with flags on Memorial Day. The American Legion in Franklin Springs and the VFW in Clinton are named after members of the community who lost their lives in World War I and II.

Everyone was happy the war was over! Thank you to all the men and women who served and continue to serve our country.

Suggested Reading

Juvenile Fiction

The Greatest Skating Race: a WWII Story from the Netherlands by Louise Borden (Dark Blue J Fiction BOR)

Stepping on the Cracks by Mary Downing Hahn (J Fiction HAH)

Aleutian Sparrow by Karen Hesse (J Fiction HES)

Best Friends Forever: a World War II Scrapbook by Beverly Patt (Dark Blue Fiction PAT)

On the Wings of Heroes by Richard Peck (J Fiction PEC)

The Journal of Scott Pendleton Collins: a World War II Soldier by Walter Dean Myers (J Fiction MYE, My Name is America Series)

My Secret War: the World War II diary of Madeline Beck by Mary Pope Osborne (J Fiction OSB, Dear America Series)

Juvenile Nonfiction

The Good Fight: how World War II was Won by Stephen E. Ambrose (J 940.53 AMB)

D-Day by Rick Atkinson (J 940.542 ATK)

Candy Bomber: the story of the Berlin Airlift's "Chocolate Pilot" by Michael O. Tunnell (J 943.155 TUN)

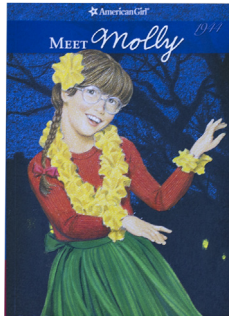
Young Adult

Code Talker: a novel about the Navajo Marines of World War Two by Joseph Bruchac (YA Fiction BRU)

Winter in Wartime by TerLouw, Jan TerLouw (YA Fiction TER)

His Name was Raoul Wallenberg: Courage, Rescue, and Mystery during World War II by Louise Borden (YA B Wallenberg)

Molly's Accessories



Book



Eyeglasses and case



Handkerchief



Purse



Pajamas



Beret

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Molly

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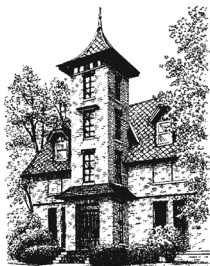
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