

The St. Lawrence County Historical Association

Quarterly

Volume XLIV- Number 4 - Fall 1999



The St. Lawrence County Historical Association at the Silas Wright House

The St. Lawrence County Historical Association is a private, not-for-profit, membership organization based at the Silas Wright House in Canton, New York. Founded in 1947, the Association is governed by a constitution, by-laws, and Board of Trustees. The Historical Association's membership meets annually to elect its officers and trustees.

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The St. Lawrence County Historical Association is a not-for-profit membership organization and museum which serves as an educational resource for the use and benefit of the citizens of St. Lawrence County and others interested in the County's history and traditions. The Association collects and preserves archival material and artifacts pertinent to the County's history. In cooperation and collaboration with other local organizations, the Association promotes an understanding of and appreciation for the County's rich history through publications, exhibits, and programs. The St. Lawrence County Historical Association operates within museum standards established by the American Association of Museums.

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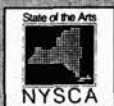
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CONTENTS

Editor's Note	2
<i>Pamela Ouimet</i>	
The Liberation of Women	3
<i>By Matt Bixby</i>	
The Hungarian Immigrants	7
<i>By Justin Joy</i>	
Agriculture: The Core of a Nation	11
<i>By Aaron Reardon</i>	
The Misfortunes of Depression and War	14
<i>By Chris Skeels</i>	
Lisbon Museum Opening at Lisbon Homecoming Day, August 19, 2000	19

Issue Editor:
Pamela Ouimet

Cover Illustration

The Lisbon Museum was opened on August 19, 2000 during the Lisbon Homecoming. There had been previous attempts to start a new museum in Lisbon. A new committee has been working on the Lisbon depot since May of 2000. This depot was rebuilt after the station burned in 1930.

Courtesy of SLCHA

Editor's Note

The stories published in this edition of the *Quarterly* by Matthew Bixby, Justin Joy, Aaron Reardon and Christopher Skeels were written in their English 11 class at Norwood-Norfolk Central High School during the 1999-2000 academic year.

They were all members of Mrs. McCarthy's class.

NNCS Librarian Marcia Eggleston assisted the *Quarterly* staff by taking photos of the students with their interviewees during the 2000-2001 academic year. Due to illness, a photo of Beatrice Reardon was not available to accompany the story by her grandson, Aaron.

The Liberation of Women

By Matt Bixby

During World War II, women made tremendous advancements in social status, something that had not occurred prior to that time. However, they did so with most of the men fighting a war. This then begs the questions, had it not been for World War II, would women have come as far as they have today? With that said, it seems reasonable that, even though every woman's experience was different, World War II was indeed a cause in the liberation of women.

The Depression in the 1920's would have been a perfect time for women to improve their economic standing because there was an enormous demand for jobs. However, most of those jobs were given to men. Now, with men unavailable during World War II, for the first time ever, women were entering the work force to replace the men who had gone off to war. Most women took jobs doing clerical work, they worked in the lower scale factories or as domestics in other people's homes (Hartman, 1). World War II broadened horizons for American women with some 600,000 women entering the work force (Bailey, 684).

World War II brought a tremendous shortage of labor, not just to build war machines, but to replace the men who had left civilian jobs to go fight in the war. To fill this void, society turned to women, since child labor was no longer practical



Matthew Bixby with his grandmother, Frances Hazen.

(Hartman, 2). It was money, independence, companionship and pride that pushed women into the work force (Hartman, 2).

“Women did change. They had gotten the feeling of their own money. Making it themselves. Not asking anybody how to spend it,” said Naomi Craig.

However, enough women were apparently reaching equal

economic status with men, there was still overt discrimination against them, especially in the “better” jobs like teaching, civil service and secretarial work (Hartman, 1).

Even though women made many social advancements, they still did their “civil duty.” They wrote letters to their husbands and friends at war, and they always attended USO dances and

talked to the lonely soldiers. "I would come home from college on weekends and spend the whole time at the USO..." said Catherine Out.

Women also married very young during this time period. Men would marry quickly before being shipped off and expect to come home and get a job and raise a family. "...I got married, and my husband and I had a baby. We just did what was in front of us," remarked Barbara Gwynne.

World War II was not just a time of social advancement for women, but also a time of political advancement. Not only were women needed in the work force for employment, but they were also needed as soldiers. This idea created a lot of concern among men. They worried about the effect on the family and the anxiety about the breakdown of social values (Hartman, 2). War and full employment were incredibly liberating for women, but represented deep and provocative change in their traditional roles (Hartman, 2). Men believed that the war was allowing women to "get out of hand" and that the "liberated woman" might be undermining traditional marriage and family (Hartman, 2).

Despite the protests from men, women became official members of the war. Following the British precedent, on May 14, 1942, the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC), was established (American History, 318). This was followed by the establishment of the Navy WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service) on July 30, 1942, the Marine Corps with Women Marines (WMs) on February 13, 1943, and the Coast

Guard with the SPARs (taking the motto of the Coast Guard "Semper Paratus; Always Ready") on November 23, 1942 (American History, 318). During this time, the Army Air Force also employed women (WASPs, Women Airforce Service Pilots) to pilot ferry aircraft and perform other non-combat flying duties (American History, 318). Now, for the first time in history, women were a part of the armed forces. During this time, some 300,000 women enlisted and served as drivers, radio operators, intelligence officers, personnel specialists, mechanics, link trainer operators, logisticians, nurses, physicians, and clerks (American History, 318).

During World War II, women had now made their most significant military advances, but there were still setbacks. Just like after World War II when a few women enlisted in the military to do clerical work and were dismissed when it was over, no one believed that their freedom during World War II would last, either (Encyclopedia Americana, 1). However, in 1947, women were first granted permanent military status and on June 12, 1947, Congress enacted the Women's Armed Services Integration Act, which provided permanent status for women serving in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and the newly created Air Force (American History, 318). However, women did not receive full military rank until 1944, and were not allowed to hold rank of colonel or captain until 1967 (Encyclopedia Americana, 1).

World War II had vast and far-reaching effects on women. It allowed women to reach near-equal economic standing with men and, eventually, near-equal

military standing. However, most accounts recall "overt discrimination" from men. In contrast, France Hazen's account below shows how every woman's experience was different.

Frances Hazen, my grandmother, sat on her two-person couch, smiling from ear to ear. She turned to face men and asked very gently, "Are you ready?" Satisfied with the answer, she looked distantly out the window and licked her lips. Still looking out she sighed and recalled her interesting events of World War II.

Frances instantly remembered that she had been in college when the war began. At the time, her boyfriend, Heywood Hazen, had been drafted. The two, as many other couples did, eloped, despite the advice of Frances' grandmother. "I don't want you marrying that boy," Frances recalled her saying. Sadly, she also remembered that even from semester to semester, you could see the difference in the number of men. When her husband went to the European theater, Frances did not fear his death, because he was not near the fighting. She did, however, hate the war. "If my husband had to leave, I'd hang from the chandeliers," a friend had told her. France wrote Heywood every week, though he only replied every so often, she added disappointedly.

Without their men around, women of this time had many social gatherings. They met at the bowling alley or at church socials and often, on Friday nights, they would meet in the street and discuss the events of the war. She remembered that Friday was shopping night in

Norfolk, and she would see everybody out.

Before Heywood left, Frances had had many responsibilities to him. Speaking as if it had been a wretched experience, she recalled her travels with him to Camp Abbott in Oregon and Fort Belvoire in Virginia. Her most painful memory was of the train ride to Belvoire where she had ridden on a military train and her "feet had swelled so much." She did remember arriving at Fort Belvoire and seeing the soldiers marching in the field, and that was the moment when she realized, frightfully, that the war was real. Even recalling it, she sounded scared. However, by making these trips, Frances was simply doing her duty of the time, to follow her husband from post to post, as so many other women of that era did.

However, Frances soon realized that things were not perfect and she needed to go home. After her brief stay in Fort Belvoire, she returned to northern New York. "I needed money, you know, to pay bills and all since I was the one at home," she remembered. So, Frances took a job at Alcoa, working as a clerk. However, that job was not for her and she had the option to move to a job at the post office or the bank, but chose the job at the post office because "the government had a much better retirement plan," she said, laughing. As so many jobs of this time were, Frances was now working in a "man's job." When asked about male perspective she said, shaking her head defiantly, "No, no, no. There was no male prejudice. Of course, some of them didn't think that I should be sweeping the floors, but I just figured I was earning my pay," which was the

same amount of money that the man before her had made. "I believe I could have gotten that job regardless of the war," she added, confidently and knowingly.

Breaking into laughter again, she added, "I don't remember my best day but I sure do remember my worst! This farmer came in and, oh god, did he stink of manure. Then," still laughing, she added, "the fire chief came in and he had been eating leeks! Oh, I had to open up the doors after they left..." she added, then seemed to drift off.

Now serious again, Frances continued speaking of her job as a clerk in the post office. She remembered vaguely that the best part of her job was the people she met and that she didn't have to work in a factory. She was also glad and terribly thankful she never was a part of the actual war. When asked if she would have enlisted, she laughed as though I should have known better than to ask. "Never," she said. "That was not what I was needed for." She also added that she didn't know any women who enlisted. (They needed to enlist because they were not eligible for the draft). She also, unfortunately, did not know any women who played professional baseball, though she was a fan of the local baseball league, she remembered with delight. She did, however, find it quite humorous that some of the women she knew were bowlers, and she would sometimes meet them down there and discuss the current events of the war in the European theater.

When the war concluded, Frances returned to her home life. "I was happy to leave," she

said. "I was pregnant at the time, you know." When she left she was, of course, replaced by a man, and a new man came in to work as the post master. Unsure, she said that he probably came because he had worked as a post master in Europe during the war.

Despite the fact that she was no longer a full time employee, Frances did continue to work at vacation time and during holidays for those who left. She still enjoyed the work and believed she did a good job at it.

Without prompting, Frances began to speak of women. As serious as she had been all afternoon, she said that she believed World War II had been the "liberation of women" because it had gotten them out of the house and into the working world. She also felt that women eventually would have achieved economic equality with men, but they simply needed an opportunity, which is what World War II was. It was, however, also an opportunity for the community. The economy of the community boomed during the war time and it allowed for businesses, such as groceries, gas stations, factories, barber shops, banks, and post offices, to grow.

Frances did not seem to remember her husband talking to her about the war, though she did not seem disappointed. He talked only of the friends he made, the ship ride over where everybody got sick. The fact that the water used to boil the hotdogs was also used for making coffee and that he heard the song "Sentimental Journey" so many times that he hated it and never wanted to hear it again. She smiled when she recalled these facts and it seemed that at the moment she truly missed her deceased hus-

band. She looked distant and relaxed, staring out the window.

Frances Hazen had many interesting experiences during the war, but she was not the only one. As a woman, she eloped with her boyfriend before he left for Europe and when he was stationed in the United States, she lived where he was. She also took a government job at the post office, normally a job reserved for the men, but she was needed because of a shortage of men. She truly seemed to enjoy those times while being frightened at the same time as well. She laughed and smiled during most of the interview, but when talk turned to her husband or her role as a woman during the war, she was dead serious. It honestly seemed to mean a lot to her to have been a part of this "liberation for women." I must say, I admire what she did, and how she acted during those difficult times.

In conclusion, World War II was a cause for the "liberation of women." It was a catalyst that allowed women to leave their home and become equal to men, economically and politically. Women made tremendous social and political advancements during World War II. They were now, for the first time ever, holding jobs that were economically equal to men and they also served right beside men in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps and the Coast Guard. Had it not been for World War II, it seems that women in America would not have gotten a chance to advance in society. It probably would have taken another war to cause a shortage of manpower, or a strong uprising from some strong-minded women to create an opportunity, which is all women needed. Though every

woman's experiences during World War II were different, the end result was the same: they were free. It is because of this that I feel that World War II was a cause in the liberation of women.

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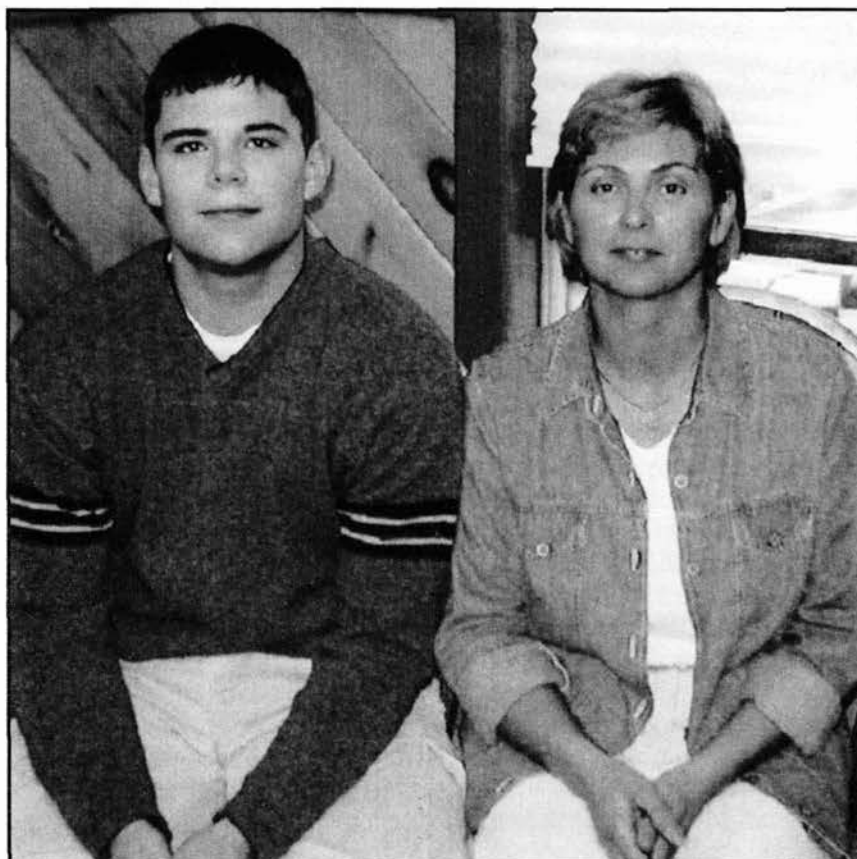
The Hungarian Immigrants

By Justin Joy

I chose to interview my mother, Ilona Joy. She presents an interesting story as an immigrant who struggled to find success in America. Family in America provided the funding and sponsorship that was required for entry into the United States. As a fifteen-year-old girl, my mother started a journey to learn a new culture, a new lifestyle, and a new language that would last a lifetime. This will illustrate my mother's life and provide you with facts about other Hungarian immigrants and the hardships they had to overcome.

My mother was born in a small town in Romania on September 19, 1954. She lived with her parents, Anthony and Margaret Breg, as well as her older sister Eva, and older brother Joseph. The small town in which they lived was called Turterebes. Turterebes is located in Romania, but was a Hungarian-speaking town. This unique situation was created from the re-division of lands resulting from WWII. Turterebes contained a colony of Hungarians living within a country where their language and culture was foreign.

"Growing up in Turterebes was not always easy." My mother's feelings of alienation and disharmony were very evident in this highly diverse town. Life in Turterebes revolved around subsistence farming. Every family worked very hard to cultivate enough crops simply



Justin Joy with his mother, Ilona Joy

to feed their family, not to mention profiting from their produce. The Communist regime, which was still evident in Turterebes, allocated my mother's family a small piece of land. This land was used in addition to the family subsistence plots, and was used mainly to grow corn. The Romanian government would seize a portion of the corn grown on this land. For every one bag of corn that my mother's family was able to keep, the Romanian

government seized five bags. My mother's words were, "It was disheartening because we worked so hard just to have the government take our produce." To help her family economically, my mother went to work in a factory that processed strawberries. This factory dealt mainly in the exportation of barrels of strawberries to other countries. My mother's job was essentially to remove the stems from the strawberries. This was a very tedious

and boring job, for which she only received one dollar per day. This wage doesn't seem like very much, but every little bit was crucial to the well being of my mother's family.

Going to school and getting an education was a fun and enjoyable experience for my mother. "There were no buses or other forms of transportation, so everyday we walked to the schoolhouse. The walk was approximately five kilometers, and was very hilly with much rough terrain." Children went to school from the age of six to about sixth grade. Most children only reached this elementary level of education, but some kids didn't even make it that far because they had to get jobs in order to help support their family. Classes in these schools were much more practical and reality oriented. The classes included material in taxidermy and gymnastics. These kinds of classes are helpful in their everyday lives and are more useful to them than lessons in calculus would ever be. "After school hours, there were still household chores that had to be completed. These chores included feeding the pigs, chickens, sheep, and other farm animals." My mother was also responsible for doing the laundry. This was a rather complicated process, but one that my mother didn't mind doing for her family. After the chores were complete, homework and other tasks still had to be finished before bedtime.

"To earn a supplemental income, my father had to join the Communist party." By joining the party, he was able to obtain a stable and better paying job. He was able to gain a job as the head of exportation. He was respon-

sible for managing the export of various goods that left the country. The exporting was mainly seasonal, and included goods such as strawberries, eggs, bullfrogs, and anything else that would bring in a decent price. This job under the Communist party did not last very long because plans for immigration to the United States became more firm. "Moving to the United States was like an escape from the horrible conditions that we faced, and was a much-anticipated event.

"It took another four years before the paperwork was actually prepared for our passage to the United States." The move to the U.S. only included my mother and her parents. Her brother and sister had to stay behind because they had turned twenty-one by the time the paperwork had been verified. At the age of twenty-one you are no longer considered a minor, and therefore have a military obligation to the government. So, on October 8, 1969, my mother, grandmother, and grandfather immigrated to the United States. They departed from Bucharest, Romania and landed in New York City, where my great-grandfather waited for their arrival.

Upon arriving in the United States, my family settled in Norfolk. This was mainly out of convenience because that was where my great-grandfather lived. My great-grandfather was Elek Schwartzkopf. He had escaped from Romania into Brazil a number of years prior. From Brazil, he moved into Canada and finally ended up in New York. He came to Norfolk because he had work lined up at the paper mill. "He had an apartment ready for

us, and we moved in with a renewed sense of hope and good fortune. Now, all we had to do was put that good fortune to work in finding jobs."

Once settled into their new apartment, they were thrilled to have the simple things that everybody takes for granted. "For instance, indoor plumbing, telephone, running water, and individual bedrooms were all extremely luxurious items." My mother especially enjoyed the unlimited supply of chocolate ice cream that was now available to her. None of these things could be obtained in Romania, and were therefore thoroughly enjoyed.

My mother started school at St. Andrews Catholic School in Norwood. She was fourteen years old and couldn't speak a word of English. She could only count to ten and couldn't read any English at all. She repeated eighth grade in order to learn more of the English language. She had a private tutor that would come to school and to her house to help her learn the language. "The students were nice to me, and were a big help in showing me how things worked in America." The school would assign a student to work with my mother throughout the school day, to help her get acquainted with the school system. After the eighth grade, she went to Holy Family High School in Massena. She finished high school and got her diploma from Holy Family. This was an event that my mom viewed with great pride because it had taken a lot of hard work and dedication to continue her education.

She graduated in 1974, and decided that college just wasn't

for her. Instead, she opted to go to a trade school to get a license in Cosmetology.

My mother went to beauty school in Syracuse, New York. This schooling lasted for one year. She lived in downtown Syracuse in a one-bedroom apartment. "I lived alone, but really enjoyed all that I was learning and experiencing." Her grandfather had even given her a car so she could get back and forth from school to her apartment. After finishing beauty school, she was hired by a salon in Canton, New York. She worked there for one year, and then opened up her own business in downtown Norfolk. At this point, she decided to get married and continue her work as a beautician. In a short time, she had a successful business, as well as a growing family.

Coming to the United States was not as difficult for my mother as it was for her grandfather because she had plenty of relatives to rely upon to help her. "After leaving my brother and sister in Romania, I felt very empty and alone," because it was as if she had become an only child. She missed her siblings very much, and the family started the process to have them immigrate to the United States as well. Her family returned to Romania several times to visit, as well as to work out the details for the immigration of the remainder of the family. Eventually, my Aunt Eva and Uncle Joe were able to immigrate to the United States. They brought with them cousins that I barely knew, and some that I had never even met. The rest of my relatives were eventually naturalized and now are as much American citizens as I consider myself to be. Most of my

mother's family is now in either the United States or Canada, and much better off because conditions in Romania do not seem to have gotten any better.

Although the presence of Hungarians in the United States dates back from the American Revolution, a good portion of them did not come over until the nineteenth Century. From the late 1890's until World War One more than 450,000 Hungarians came to the United States as a result of worsening economic conditions at home (Family Tree 1). These immigrants were followed in the 1920's and 1930's by refugees of the dictatorial regime and, in the 1940's, by persons escaping Nazi control.

Hungary was a very poor country at the turn of the century. In the 1900's, eighty-seven percent of the peasants owned fewer than 1.07 acres of land, some did not even own any.

Many Hungarians came to Norfolk because of the paper mill that opened in 1901. At the same time the canal was dug and ALCOA was built and opened in 1903. Hungarians looked at these new corporations as good job opportunities so many immigrated to Norfolk and other areas in St. Lawrence County. By the year 1910 there were approximately 150 immigrants in Norfolk and there were over 300 in Massena. (Eggleston, 14). Many of these immigrants were working in the paper mill in Norfolk and at ALCOA in Massena. Many immigrants that were already here sent letters back to Hungary to tell others about the jobs that were available.

The second wave of Hungarian immigrants came to the

United States in 1920. With the end of WWI in 1919 Hungary was broken up and pieces of land were given to Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Romania and the Soviet Union (Eggleston, 16). The town of Turtorebes was where a good portion of the immigrants in St. Lawrence County came from. Many young Hungarians emigrated to the United States and other countries because they wanted to avoid the mandatory military service. Many Hungarians entered the country illegally by crossing the St. Lawrence River or just landing in Massena. Many of the immigrants that entered illegally either got married to someone soon or had been there for five years; if not they were deported.

The Hungarian people worked hard to build a life for themselves and their families to come in St. Lawrence County. But when depression hit, ALCOA and the Norfolk paper mill had to lay off workers. They tried to keep the men with families and laid off the single men. Many moved to other Hungarian communities like Detroit, Cleveland, Buffalo and Watertown and returned to Norfolk later in life. They were very talented and resourceful people who believed strongly in their religion.

Many families that came over to the United States had a hard time at first but they did not care because they said anything was better than Hungary. Many more Hungarians would immigrate to the United States for the following years to come. Many families were separated and wanted to one day all meet again so many came to visit relatives and some even decided to stay they liked it so much. The last significant wave of Hungarian immigrants

came to the United States because of the 1956 revolution, with 35,000 Hungarians escaping their country for the United States (Family Tree 1). Historically, the largest Hungarian American communities have been in Cleveland and New York, although large concentrations can be found throughout the Midwest and Northeast.

The Hungarian people have contributed greatly to the history of St. Lawrence County. From the late 1890's they have manned the paper and pulp mills of Norfolk, built the power canal, and helped ALCOA become one of the major industries of the North Country. They have become farmers, teachers, restaurant owners, hairdressers, and priests. Hungarians are in virtually every profession in our area. They have supported the schools and churches. The Hungarian people have become American citizens while still keeping and honoring their rich traditions.

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Agriculture: The Core of a Nation

By Aaron Reardon

Farming is the core of this nation. Anything that any business does can not survive without farming. Farming provides the nation with food and it also provides many people with jobs. Furthermore it is the source of resources that are vital to many businesses, such as food, hay, and fertilizer. Not only was farming a factor in family life but it also improved the work ethics of younger men and women of teenage years (Cayton, 246-249).

For a long time farming has been a job that for the most part was worked at by families. In this North Country, families have been settling and farming since the middle 1700s. One of the big land grabs in the area was in Ogdensburg in 1796. "In 1796 Nathan Ford, land agent for the Ogden family, took possession of Ogdensburg and began to sell land around Ogdensburg and Black Lake. In 1798 some farmers from Connecticut cleared land at Black Lake eight miles west of Ogdensburg" (Davis, 13). Later on the farmer families from Connecticut found better, more prosperous land down by Plattsburgh and many of them moved there. At this point in time the big new tools that were being used were the yoke for the cows, some early wooden plows that were horse drawn, the Grain cradle (used for harvesting crops), the wood rake, and the hoe. All of these were what the average farmer had for tools (Davis, 14).

"Agriculture-related social action is typically organized through such groupings as the following: the family, which is both a producing and consuming unit, as is also the large estate" (Sills, 208). In this little strip it goes on to talk about how the family was very important to farming. In the family the farm was used as a form of education. Not only in the ways of farming, but also in the ways of life. The children were taught respect for their elders, something that is not well stressed in this day. They also taught the children a good work ethic and they would not grumble and complain when it came down to working. All of this had a very big impact on the family as a whole; there was more respect for each other and with that came a bigger sense of love.

The farm family was also very close because of the stress that is put on the whole family for the success of the farm. If the farm did not have a good harvest because of the laziness of a family member, then the whole family could go under because of it. The farm to the family is more than a source of food, it is a source of everything. The lives of the entire family revolve around the crops that they are producing to sell. If the crops do poorly, then they will be poor.

Our culture has not always looked at the farmers with very much respect. But without farm-

ing this nation would have collapsed a long time ago. In the late 1800s the country would not have survived if it hadn't been for the farming. This was because all of our food resources came from the United States, we had no big overseas food companies that could supply us, we needed our farmers to do that. The job of the farmer has not been easy; they have had some big struggles. "While cattle ranchers were struggling, farmers all over the nation in the late 1800s were suffering from a long-term decline in crop prices. New farm machinery and agricultural technologies had increased yields, but overproduction had gutted markets" (Cayton, 249).

The farmers have been working hard to keep this country together and the country has been working against them in some cases. All through the late 1800s the government turned its back on the farmers. The farmers were in deep protest for help from the government so that their farms wouldn't go belly up. But in most cases the farmers were put down for their protests and they didn't help them (Cayton, 249).

Farming has been the main source of all the food in the world. As far as technology, agriculture has made vast improvements since the early 1900s. A large example of this is the Citrus Experiment. "The Citrus Experiment Station began as two

small cottages and a stable on 23 acres of land on the eastern slope of Mt. Rubidoux. The first few years, its two-man staff conducted fertilizer," (Sills, 218). The experiments from there grew and the research team for the Citrus Experiment grew to about three dozen. But those days were just the beginning of great improvements. But no matter how many things they create, farming has always required a lot of work. This accomplished much because many people were able to make better production. Also this made farming easier and less stressful.

Now all of this was in a much bigger proportion back in the early and mid-1900s. Just because now there are a lot of things to keep farmers from going under because of a drop loss. So remember that some of the things I bring to your attention may not have such a great effect on our lives here and now. But a lot of this you can still see on some farms. If you live around an Amish area then you probably can see a lot of this if you just take a second and watch how the Amish work. The unity there is exactly like the way the farmers of the early 19th Century. The farms are depending of the whole family and they use no electricity.

Now farming doesn't provide as many jobs as it used to. But I still believe that it is the core of the nation. Even if we do not need as many individuals working on farms, that has not made them any less important.

Now farms were important in many different views. They were noticed in history and by great writers as the core of society. In general they were always a very

important part of our society. You can move into a more personal level and find out more about the individual's life style. The way things worked in a family situation.

"Days are no longer what they used to be," noted Beatrice Reardon.

Grandma opened with a whisper, her eyes looking deep into nothingness as if she had left the room.

"Nothing was as complicated, it was just life plain and simple."

Her hands shake a little as she begins to think hard and starts to daze off into her own little world.

"In the year 1940, I had just been married and your grandfather and we were not very well off. Back then the whole family lived out on the Reardon Road."

She thinks as if to remember all people out on the old road.

"Farming was not easy. No it kept everyone very busy. While the girls spent most of their days in the kitchen, sewing room, or with a broom and dustpan in their hands; the men were outside working hard to bring in a harvest." She smiled and went on to say that there were a lot of things that you had to do to make a good garden in those days.

She laughed and said, "What a job. First you had to plow the field. At the time our family had a horse driven plow."

She went on to comment that plowing with a horse driven plow was a lot more work than they made it look like in the movies. You had to get the horse all

strapped up. Then you had to keep the plow straight as you at the same time kept the horse pulling so that together you got the work done. You had to go back and forward until the field was ready to be seeded.

"Now that the ground was ready it is time to seed." She was now fully caught up in her world in the past.

"The ladies in the family took little part in the putting in of the garden until it was time to do a little weeding or until it was time to harvest."

The men ordered the seed and handled all the money for the most part in the household.

Once the garden was planted and the sprouts began to spring the weeding began. Everyone in the house would contribute to getting the garden weeded. Also at the same time this was being taken care of, they had to still take care of the animals. So as you can see her family had to work really hard and they had to work together and not fight. There was a lot of work that needed to be done and one thing my grandma said was, "There was no time on the farm for laziness. If someone slacked off then work would not get done and the family would pay as a result. So that thought kept the whole family very close. We depended on each other very much." She rocked back and forward in her old wooden rocker.

The lives of my grandma and her family were very stressful. There was always a lot of pressure for the farm to succeed. And at the same time there was a family to take care of and a life to live.

"I think that life was harder on the women than it was on the men. Not to say that we worked harder than the men; no, the men worked really hard. But life for a woman was mentally tough. Not only did you have the typical women problems, but added stress from the farm, and we were not treated very fairly at the time.

"There always was some big problem coming up on the farm. Which didn't help our lives as far as stress is concerned." A look of seriousness crossed her face.

"In 1945 there was a big sickness that was spreading through the cows on our farm; this disease was making the milk bad. Plus in a couple places the cows were actually dying. The men were going crazy and we couldn't afford a vet. We needed to try and stop the situation ourselves." So they pushed through and tried to help the cows.

"Another big stress was not knowing if you were going to make it."

What she meant was that the family didn't know half the time whether the farm was going to survive or not. There were so many ups and downs.

"The only thing that we could trust in was God and each other." She gave a glance up and kissed her cross around her neck.

"At that time we attended church every week as a family. Since God was the only truth that we had, we needed to focus on Him. Not only for the farm, but to keep us strong." A look of sadness came over her face, but it was almost a look of joy and thanks at the same

time. Thanking God for what He had provided the family with.

She started to come out of her daze and she looked back at me. Her eyes held such comfort and wisdom from the years.

She asked, "Was that fitting for you, love?"

It was. She seemed happy to have had the chance to talk about it. Then she opened up and said thank you.

"Thank you for this time. I really loved talking to you about all of that stuff. It has been a long time and I hope that I helped you."

She tended to wander off subject but that was no bother.

"I think that the times have definitely affected my life to this day." The family isn't doing farming any more.

"Now we are very close to each other—the whole family. Plus the stress of the farm is going. I don't have to deal with that any more. Not to say I didn't enjoy it at the time also but it was too much stress. I don't think that I would choose that life point over this point."

"Well I hope to see you again soon love. It was a great joy to spend this time with you."

She smiled again and it was a smile that just said I love you. She hugged me and kissed me goodbye. Then went over to her counter and started to do dishes.

So as you can see the history and the personal flow together. Some people found lots of joy in farming life and were also a great

help to society. Respect for each other stemmed from their need to work with each other. This respect grew with time. We can learn valuable lessons from history and apply them to our future not only in our farming but also in the way we treat our elders and how we show love to each other. So fit the personal and history together and I think that every one can learn a lesson.

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The Misfortunes of Depression and War

By Chris Skeels



*Chris Skeels and his grandmother,
Kathleen Wilson*

The Great Depression was a trying time for all Americans, young and old. It hurled Americans into deep poverty and caused widespread distress. The economic boom of World War II did much to help the country prosper but did little to help those who were in deepest despair.

There are many theories as to what caused the Great Depression but it is most commonly

linked to the crash of the stock market in October of 1929. Over a period of a couple weeks, the stock market came crashing down and billions of dollars were lost. Days on which the stock market collapsed most fiercely were dubbed "Black." Two of these days were "Black Thursday" on October 24, 1929 and "Black Tuesday" on October 29, 1929. The reality of the crash was harsh and bitter. David M.

Kennedy describes the reaction to the crash:

"Traders abandoned all hope that the frightful shake-out could somehow be averted. For two more ghastly weeks, stock prices continued to plummet freely down the same celestial voids through which they had recently and wondrously ascended." (38)

Although the stock market is most dominantly cited as the main cause of the Depression, it was only one cause of among many according to Kennedy:

"Down to early 1931, the American depression seemed largely to be the product of American causes. A decade of stagnation in agriculture, flattening sales in the automobile and housing markets, the piratical abuses in Wall Street, the hair-raising evaporation of asset values in the Crash, and the woes of the anarchic banking system..." (69)

Regardless of the causes of the Great Depression, it was now an issue that the people of the United States of America had to realize. They were in for the long-haul and some consequences had to be paid. To put it lightly, the horrific reality of the Depression sent the American people into a frenzy.

"By the third winter of the Depression, all hell had broken loose.

"In the long-blighted countryside, unmarketable crops rotted in fields and unsellable livestock died on the hoof...In towns and cities across the country, haggard men in shabby overcoats lined up for handouts at soup kitchens...Tens of thousands of workers took to the roads... Those who stayed hunkered down, took in their jobless relatives, kited the grocery bills at the corner store, patched their old clothes, darned and redarned their socks, tried to shore up some fragments of hope against the ruins of their dreams" (Kennedy, 85-86).

It was clear to see that everybody was affected by the Depression. All seemed hopeless and the American Dream was nowhere in sight.

Much seemed to change with the election of Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1932. The American people were sick of Herbert Hoover and they felt that he had done more harm than good during his tenure as President of the United States. Roosevelt was quick to put his New Deal program into action but it did little to make the economy of the United States climb. Although it was not until the beginning of World War II that the economy began to climb. Notwithstanding, it grew at a sluggish pace and Americans were slow to realize that the Depression would not be mended in a short period of time. As a matter of fact, the end of the Depression and the beginning of World War II were still nine long years away.

As bullets started flying in Europe, America held neutrality during the first few phases of the brutal war. It wasn't until the vicious attack on Pearl Harbor,

which resulted in hasty retaliation and the declaration of war against Germany and Japan, that the pledge of neutrality was disbanded.

Upon entering the war, substantial good was done to help the economy. Initially, this was due to the necessity of war materials and factory workers that were needed to produce equipment for war. This call for workers, as well as soldiers, boosted the economy by offering jobs to millions of people. Though the country was experiencing an expansive economic boom and the Allies were sure of victory, it was not long before the war began to leave a dismal mark on all involved.

The government turned very socialist during the Depression and it tightened its grasp on the economy as the country became more and more deeply involved with World War II. It pushed through one program right after another, which were all aimed at helping Americans. Nonetheless, many Americans remained poor and jobless. While American soldiers were off at battle, fighting for the future of all mankind, Americans at home were scraping everything that they had together just to get by.

The effects of the war were felt throughout the world but more harshly in the rural parts of the country. Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the government regulated the usage of many things through the New Deal Programs. Most felt to all throughout the country, however, was probably rationing. Government-controlled rationing in the U.S. began in December 1941, after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. During the war, "Auto-

mobile tires led the list of items rationed, which by war's end included automobiles, typewriters, bicycles, stoves, leather and rubber footwear, coffee, sugar, canned and processed foods, meats, fats, gasoline, fuel oil for home heating, and coal" ("World War II").

Even newspapers, which were a substantial source of information and news at wartime, were rationed. "The government announced in January 1943 that it would require newspapers to cut newsprint by 10 percent. By October, The Evansville Courier froze its circulation at 50,000 daily, discontinued street sales and began rationing advertising" (War Brought Sacrifice on the Home Front). In rural South Carolina, rationing had great effect.

"Gasoline was closely rationed, as was sugar and dairy products...Since sugar was rationed, we used saccharine as much as possible, and a piece of candy was a rare treat for me as a child...Looking back, I realize how my mother and grandmother stretched items to the limit, such as mixing bread and onions with hamburger meat, then frying it. We ate a lot of farm vegetables and cured meat..." (Anderson).

People had to give up things that are taken for granted every day. In her commentary, Merrill Joan Gerber, who lost her cousin during the war, recollected her memories of the sacrifices made by her family to support the war effort.

"Winning the war was what we had to do in order for Henry to come home safe and be with us again. Fighting the war meant that we had to draw black cur-

tains over our windows when the blackout alarm sounded. Giving up new leather shoes, lamb chops, and sugar to make cakes would mean that there was more for the boys to have. It was all quite simple. If we did those things, Hitler would be destroyed" (52).

The period of war was also hard for those who lost loved ones at war. "Nearly 300,000 Americans were killed in action and another 700,000 were wounded in battle" (Litoff 229). The war was very costly in that matter and many American families felt the traumatic loss of a family member, or the scariness of having one missing in action.

"In 1943, Josephine Keutman, a fifty-three-year-old widow living in the Bronx, New York, reluctantly gave her youngest child and only son, Charles, then eighteen years old, permission to join the Army Air Corps. He received his commission as second lieutenant shortly after his nineteenth birthday... For six weeks Charles was missing in action. The pain and heartache Josephine experienced throughout this very difficult period were poignantly reflected in her letters" (Litoff 257-258).

Merrill Joan Gerber also reflected on the loss of family members in her memoir and how it affected her family's home life.

"Lost boys were now new to our family. I already had lost an uncle who my grandmother felt certain was still alive. Now her daughter had a missing son, too. I imagined that some day I would probably also be required to have a missing son, something I did not look forward to although I recognized that it brought you a

great deal of attention and visitors and allowed you to go to your room to cry because you were having 'a very hard time of it.' Everyone in my house did a great deal of crying" (52).

Gerber's uncle, Henry, was listed as missing in action until his body was recovered in 1989.

Many of the prisoners of war and those missing in action were never heard from again. They go down in infamy with the other 300,000 killed American soldiers. Many families laid their loved ones to rest when their body was recovered but the memories remained burned deep in their hearts and minds.

The lives of many Americans were forever altered by the events that rocked the United States of America from 1929-1945. The Great Depression and World War II were tumultuous events. The Depression was primarily bad, while the aspects of the war were both positive and negative. Although it pulled the economy out of an enormous depression, it changed the course of many lives, while it ended the lives of many others. The "War to End All Wars" ended in victory, but some of the consequences seem far greater than the success.

Americans were hit hard and unexpectedly by the burden of the Great Depression and the tragedies of World War II. Many people were fortunate enough to watch these events from the sideline, so to speak, but those who experienced it close to home and in their hearts had a lifetime of painful memories to consolidate and put in the back of their mind. To some, the events were not as tragic and the memories were not

as severe. Favorably enough, my grandmother was one who had an experience that was full of more happy memories than depressing.

My grandmother, Kathleen Regan Wilson, lived all of her life during the Great Depression and five of her sixty-three years during the "War to End All Wars." The wrinkles on her face portray a hard life of growing up poverty-stricken in rural Northern New York State. Each line and curve is a tale of overcoming the odds and everybody's expectations to be where she stands today. Her words, well-spoken and thought out, tell about her life during hard times.

My grandmother was born Isabel Kathleen Regan on August 16, 1936, five short years before the outbreak of World War II. She was the sixth child born to James J. and Kathleen Mahoney Regan and joined four brothers and a sister at home. When asked about her parents' occupations during the war, there was little hesitation before she replied, "My father was a farmer who shipped vegetables to Saranac Lake, Lake Placid, and Tupper Lake. He also worked part-time on the New York Central Railroad as a brakeman. My mother, with ten children, didn't have to work outside the home."

This was the way most of her life was spent during the Great Depression. While her father brought money into the household, her mother raised the children. Her family lived with little and longed for nothing, yet life was wonderful.

By the time World War II broke out, Isabel was five years old and three new siblings had

joined her family's household. She lived in the house she currently occupies now with her parents and siblings.

With war spreading all over the world, there was a call for men to enlist in the various services. Several male members of her family did much to answer this call and help the war effort. She smoothed the wrinkles out of her white turtleneck and wiped a piece of lint off of her blue slacks. After her appearance was in order, she replied, "My uncle joined the Navy as a pilot," and her cousin, Gerald, was killed in action. "Four of my brothers were in the service, but they were stationed on U.S. soil and never left the country. John and Ed joined the Navy; Patrick joined the Army; and Dan joined the Air Force."

Aside from her brothers, her father also took an active role in the war without leaving the state. After situating herself into a chair at the dining room table, she spoke with enthusiasm and amusement, "I do remember my father having to go out when there were mandatory black-out practices to check for lights on each house on our road." She went on to describe the procedure, pausing every now and then to grasp at the memories and describe them for me in great detail. The black out practices were procedures in which all lights in each house had to be turned off, with the exception of the bathroom light, in case of a bombing raid. "A light was allowed to be left on in one room of the house, and it was usually the bathroom. There were these big black shades called black out screens. These would be put on the window to prevent light from coming through."

The extensive years that the Depression and the war lasted were hard on Isabel and her family. Many aspects of the war hit them all pretty hard. When asked about her worst war memory, Isabel wrinkled her forehead in deep thought. I could almost see the fear in her eyes as she examined the memories in her mind. She was, after all, only a child during the war. She once again talked about the black out practices and the death of her cousin. "My worst memories were when my brothers left to serve in the war, as well as when my nineteen year old cousin, Gerald, was killed. The black out practices drove us to the bathroom where the only black window shade was hung. It was scary for young children because all lights, except for the bathroom, had to be turned off."

Wondering how a family of twelve could get along during the war, I asked her if rationing had a great effect on their lives during the war. Her reply was quicker than on the previous questions, as if our conversation had brought back her war memories and they were vivid and clear in her mind. "Yes, rationing affected our family, most especially shoes. Some children's feet outgrew shoes before they were worn out, so these would be passed on to the next child in age. Mr. Lamana's shoe repair shop in Norwood was a very busy place." She let out a laugh at the memory of having shoes passed down from one child to the next, but her expression quickly turned back to one of seriousness when she continued. "Rationing of sugar and gas were difficult for us, especially with ten kids. We were very fortunate to be farmers and have a garden where we could get vegetables,

and livestock where we could get meat. This was helpful in making sure everybody had enough to eat."

I asked her if she remember war bonds and if any of her family members had purchased any. It was obvious that she had a reply ready, but she hesitated long enough to take a drink of the Sam's Choice Diet Cola that she had in her hand. Her reply was methodical and much explanation was given: "Yes, I remember war bonds. Since we were the only grandchildren, my aunts bought bonds for all of us. They proved very useful years later when many of us cashed them in upon maturity. They were used to help with college and I used my bond as the entrance fee to the Sisters of Mercy when I entered at seventeen."

After having talked with my grandmother for only a short period of time, I began to understand that her family meant a lot to her and that they had to pull together during the war. This helped lead to my next question, in which I asked about her best war memories. She adjusted her seat cushion and took another drink of her soda. There was a short pause before she spoke and it appeared as if she was day dreaming. When her reply finally came, there was a look of amazement, sadness, happiness, and a longing for the past painted all over her face. "Without a television and only one radio in the house, my family shared a tremendous amount of time together. My father was a great storyteller. I have fond memories of finally getting a new pair of shoes with tokens and of my father bringing home 'store cookies' for our school lunches. I also remember Dad bringing

sugar when he came home from working a Montreal trip on the railroad.”

It appeared to me that my grandmother was immensely enjoying this trip down Memory Lane because she was now talking more hurriedly and with greater ease. After the war was over, life began to pick up for Kathleen and her family. “The end of the war was a great time for me because life seemed so happy. The return of my brothers from the service was one of the happiest occasions ever celebrated here at the farm.” Now smiling at the vibrant reminder, she continued, “Since jobs paid good wages and, with limited purchasing when the war was over, most people had money to afford the luxuries of life such as new cars and the ability to build new houses.”

No amount of words could ever perfectly describe Kathleen’s life from 1941-1945. The war was a monstrous event and many people have their own memories and feelings about it. It is apparent that the memories of Kathleen Wilson are both happy and sad, but for the most part the memories of growing up will always be cherished in her mind. Growing up with a family of ten during a war can greatly affect your outlook on life and the way that you see things. For Kathleen Wilson, it just made life much better. Although she now has a lot more than she did back then, she knows the importance of family in your life and making way with what you have.

The times of war and depression were hard on many people. Everybody was affected in one way or another and each indi-

vidual carries his or her own memories. These memories are both happy and sad, but they tell an account of living during hard times and making the best out of what you have.

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**Lisbon Museum Opening at
Lisbon Homecoming Day,
August 19, 2000**



Area residents gather outside the Lisbon Museum



Lisbon Town Historian and Lisbon Museum Committee Co-Chair Terry Fischer is shown at the Lisbon Museum during the Lisbon Homecoming



Co-Chair of the Lisbon Museum Committee Rev. Walter Smith is shown at the Lisbon Museum during the Lisbon Homecoming

More of the Lisbon Museum Open House



*Area residents look over displays at
the Lisbon Museum*



Area residents review artifacts displayed at the Lisbon Museum



*This woman is one of several people who visited the Lisbon Museum
during the Lisbon Homecoming in August 2000*

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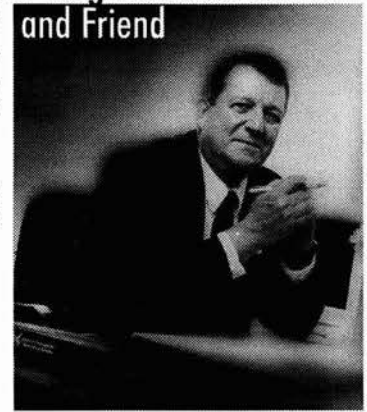
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