

MOUNT PROSPECT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MUSEUM JOURNAL

VOLUME VI, ISSUE 1 SPRING 2015

COMMUNITY WAR EFFORTS LEAD TO VICTORY

Seventy years ago, on May 8, 1945, joy spread across the world with the news that Nazi Germany had surrendered to the Allies. People all over the world stopped in their tracks to celebrate. This day was named “VE Day”, which stood for “Victory in Europe Day.” Everyone joined in the celebration.

The majority of the war was fought in Europe, but other participants of the war outside of Europe still joined in the celebration. There were many factors that led to the end of the war and ultimate defeat of the Third Reich. Much of it had to do with the final thrust of Allied strength. But below the surface, the victory was also made possible by support at the local level all over the world. The war affected everyone, not just those who were fighting overseas. The military relied heavily on citizen support. People were required to consume less and produce more to support the war effort. Women were asked to give up their nylon stockings so that the military could manufacture parachutes. In towns across America, citizens answered the cry. Everyone helped.

War bonds, victory gardens, scrap drives, Civil Defense



Ration line stretching from the National Food Store on Main Street to Northwest Highway, 1944.

Committees, rationing and community support were all ways in which people helped to fight the war from home. Mount Prospect was one of the many communities that participated.

War Bonds were initiated by the government to help finance the war. Citizens were encouraged to invest 10% of their income into bonds. They were able to redeem the bonds after the war when the cost of living went down. People who lived in Mount Prospect during the war remembered the way that buying war bonds was encouraged. In an oral history, Lucia Robinson recalls children selling war stamps and bonds through a school program. It was set up as a competition between students and those who sold

stamps and bonds received a small prize, like a pin.

The Village of Mount Prospect was very supportive of the war effort. It was ranked as one of only three northern suburbs that consistently met its annual Community War Fund quotas to support the USO. Some community organizations sent care packages to the men and women who were overseas, much like they had done during WWI.

The United States and the European Allies were limited when it came to supplies and resources. Just as during WWI, governments turned to their citizens for help. For instance, there was a shortage of food.

(SEE “WAR EFFORTS,” PG. 3)

SAVE THESE DATES...

March 23-April 10, 2015:

Dutch Mill Bulb Sale
From March 23 to April 10, help raise funds for MPHS by purchasing your spring bulbs through Dutch Mill Bulbs. We received many enthusiastic reports from those who purchased Dutch Mill Bulbs last year. Don't miss out!

April 18, 2015:

4th Annual History in the Headlines: “Celebrate the End of the War in Europe” at Rob Roy Country Club, 505 E. Camp McDonald Rd., Prospect Heights, 6 p.m.

May 15-16, 2015:

Mount Prospect Community Wide Garage Sale

June 18, 2015:

Mount Prospect Stories: A Peek in Mount Prospect's Attic at the Mount Prospect Public Library, 7 p.m.

June 27, 2015:

Totally Tools Auction at St. Paul Lutheran School gymnasium, 18 South School Street.

For more information contact the Historical Society, 847/392-9006.

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FROM THE DESK OF THE DIRECTOR



Lindsay Rice
Executive Director

Starting this July, citizens all over Illinois will have the opportunity to view artifacts from the collection of the Mount Prospect Historical Society on Illinois Digital Archives, thanks to a grant that the Mount Prospect Public Library

recently received from the Illinois State Library.

Illinois Digital Archives (IDA) is an online resource created by the Illinois State Library in 2000 as an archive for digital collections of libraries, archives and historical societies.

This grant provides libraries with funding to digitize materials from their archives. Under the terms of the grant, the materials digitized have to be original source (i.e., no copies or reproductions) and the digitized materials must be exclusively uploaded onto IDA. Illinois Digital Archives will then be the permanent and exclusive location for the digitized

materials but the Society and the Library will each have a backup drive to store the original files.

I have been working closely with project leader Anne Shaughnessy of the Library to choose 50 objects to digitize, objects that tell the story of Mount Prospect. Some of the objects that we have selected are: the National Cash Register used in the William Busse Jr. Dry Goods Store, Meta Bittner's wedding dress, a pencil from George L. Busse & Co., and the pigeon-hole cabinet from Moehling's General Store. The objects will be professionally photographed by local photographer Skip Peterson Photography.

When the digitized objects are uploaded onto IDA, Anne will enter extensive metadata for each object. Metadata is the detailed information that is attached to a file. It describes things such as: file size, file type, title of object, date of object, dimensions, format, description, etc. Providing these details is very important because it enables the users of IDA to easily search for objects using keywords. We purposely chose objects from the collection that have extensive documentation so that we can provide as much metadata as possible.

Anne and I will be presenting on this project on June 18 at the Library. Mark your calendars!

FROM THE COLLECTION



One of the objects chosen for the Illinois State Library Digital Grant is Herman Meyn's cornet.

Herman Meyn was one of the Village's first trustees, the second mayor, the owner of a farm implement dealership, and he was the fire chief for a number of years. He was also a member of the Mount Prospect Citizen's Band, which was founded in 1927.

His fellow band mates included, the Oehlerking brothers, Henry Haberkamp, Martin Hasz, William Genrich, Frank Gerkin Jr. and William Mulso.

The band was initially started as a way to further the members' interest in music and to provide entertainment for the community. Among the requirements for being a member of the band was that

you had to be a male and couldn't affiliate with another band. People interested in joining the band had to apply for membership and be voted in.

Photographed and digitized along with the cornet, which was manufactured by R. Wunderlich Maker in Chicago, is its case and valve attachments. This is just one of the many unique historic objects that we will be digitizing under the Illinois State Library Digital Grant.

In the meantime, be sure to check out the Illinois Digital Archives website for more Mount Prospect History!

www.idaillinois.org



Herman Meyn with his cornet in the Mount Prospect Citizen's Band, 1927.

*“WAR EFFORTS”,
CON’T FROM PAGE 1*

**Mt. Prospect wins praise
for its victory gardens**

The Mount Prospect Herald, Oct. 9, 1942.

The U. S. government encouraged citizens to grow “victory gardens” to meet the demand. By growing and canning their own food, citizens would be less dependent on the food grown by farmers that could be sent overseas to feed the troops. By May of 1943, there were an estimated 18 million victory gardens in the United States, many of which were right here in Mount Prospect. Robinson remembered living on Hi-Lusi where the “ladies” of the neighborhood grew a communal victory garden. She remembered that they grew tomatoes and beans, which were gathered and canned for the winter. Her husband, Clarke, who also grew up on Hi-Lusi, remembered that Mrs. Gerringer had planted a victory garden that took up an entire lot on Hi-Lusi. Service clubs like the Campfire Girls and Cub

Scouts also planted and maintained victory gardens throughout Mount Prospect.

Not only were citizens of Mount Prospect producing food for the war, they were also required to consume less. Nation-wide rationing was in effect from 1940 to 1946. Sugar, coffee, meat, butter and gasoline were all under strict rationing. Families were issued ration stamps to purchase these items so that no one ignored the rules.

The number and types of stamps given to each family depended on the family size, ages of the children and income. Robinson was asked during her interview what effect WWII had on her life, and she quickly replied, “rationing.” Her father was Rev. Edwin Stevens, the first pastor of South Baptist Church. During WWII, he enlisted in the U.S. Army as a chaplain.



Sara Lou Ackley and Ruth Ann Fascik participating in a scrap drive that was held at 25 S. Main Street.

His chaplain cap and stoles are in the collection of the Mount Prospect Historical Society. Because he was a pastor, he was given a “C” ration stamp which allowed him to consume more gasoline. Lines of people would stretch down Main Street to Northwest Highway in the hopes of purchasing rationed items with their stamps. A mandatory rationing of what many consider to be essential commodities is not something a person is likely to forget.

Citizens also helped fight the war by recycling their garbage and hosting scrap drives.

Recyclable materials such as rubber, tin, lumber, steel and newspaper were needed by the military to build tanks, ships, planes and weapons.

**Mount Prospect
sends 11 tons iron
to fight Axis**
**600 lbs. tin cans
in first drive;
more coming**

*The Mount Prospect Herald,
Sept. 4, 1942.*

A popular slogan at the time was “Get some cash for your trash!” This was an easy way for people to help with the war effort and make a little money.

Another war effort that was taken very seriously was the

Mount Prospect Civil Defense Committee. It was essentially a neighborhood watch which was on the look out for foreign enemies. Members familiarized themselves with enemy aircraft, so that they could report them if they were sighted. They held dances, flea markets and other events to help purchase supplies such as stretchers, blankets, ropes and whistles. Among their goals was to make sure citizens



The Mount Prospect Civil Defense Committee, 1945.

would be prepared in case of an invasion. They are responsible for the phrase, “duck and cover!”

Many of Europe’s towns and cities were decimated during battle. In Europe, the war was fought with tanks, aircraft and guns. On the home front, it was fought with gardens, recycling and community support. May 8, 1945 was celebrated with such fervor because there was so much to commemorate. The victory in Europe belonged to everyone because it was earned by everyone.

Join the MPHS on Saturday, April 18 to celebrate the 70th Anniversary of VE Day. See back for details.



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NEWSLETTER

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CELEBRATE THE END OF THE WAR IN EUROPE

The war against Adolf Hitler's Third Reich ended 70 years ago, on May 8, 1945. There were wild celebrations in the streets of America, Britain, France and even Australia as the lengthy war, finally ended – at least in Europe. VE Day was even an official holiday in most of those countries as families and neighborhoods gathered for elaborate meals to celebrate the victory.

Join us on Saturday, April 18, at Rob Roy Country Club for our fourth annual "History in the Headlines" fundraiser. This year we will re-imagine the day that folks heard that the war was over!

As with our three previous dinners, patrons can choose from two meal options: the \$25 "Returning Hero" meal of thin-crust pizza and salad (GIs returning from Italy brought this delight back to the States in a big way!) or the \$75 "Officers' Mess" meal of prime rib, salad, au gratin potatoes, glazed carrots and green beans. There will be a cash bar for everyone with signature cocktails of the era offered.

Party-goers, who are welcome to wear period-appropriate clothing, will be entertained after dinner by professional dancers provided by the Mt. Prospect Park District. They will demonstrate the dances that were popular during the War and the years that followed. After the demonstration, the professionals will be happy to teach a 1940s dance to anyone who is interested.



Reservations are necessary, and guests will be accommodated on a first-come, first-served basis. *No tickets will be sold at the door.*

To purchase tickets, phone 847/392-9006 or visit www.mtphist.org. All of the proceeds from this event will benefit the Mount Prospect Historical Society's Operating Fund.