

War Era Story Project 2012

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Current home town: Dayton, Ohio

Age: 89

I graduated from Columbus North High School in June, 1941. In September, I began classes at Ohio State. Many of my high school class mates also attended OSU, and we lived at home. On Sunday, Dec. 7, my sister and I returned home from a movie to find our parents listening to the radio about the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

My freshman year was a good experience with lots of social activities, new friends, etc. But the second year saw the campus almost wiped clean of boys. Our classes were much smaller and mostly all girls. My French teacher, a native French man, left at the end of the Quarter to return home to join the Free French Movement. By junior year, the Army sent soldiers (ASTP) to OSU to take classes.

They marched across the oval in formation and their classes were separate from ours. The professors informed us that the soldiers were better students than "us girls." We were glad to have them around, and we held U.S.O. dances for them.

My sister and I worked every Saturday at a Thom McAnn shoe store, where customers had to have a shoe "stamp," as shoes were rationed. Gasoline, tires, coffee, sugar and butter also were rationed. Everyone was very conservative and frugal due to the shortages. Also, a strong feeling of patriotism and anti-German and anti-Japanese sentiments prevailed. People bought War Bonds (U.S. Savings Bonds) to support the war effort. Buying U.S. Savings Bonds has been a habit of mine thru the years, and it has been a good way of saving with a small investment.

I graduated in March, 1945, and in August, the war was over. Then the boys returned and, in 1946, there were many, many marriages, followed by many divorces in the next couple of years. For those that succeeded, the babies came. There was a shortage of new cars, apartments and houses to rent and in some cases, jobs were hard to find.

A large number of returning G.I.s took advantage of the G.I. Bill to help pay their education. Lots of older students filled the classrooms. A G.I. village was built at OSU from re-converted Army barracks for married students and children. We lived there in one of the apartments; there were eight apartments to a building. Everyone was in the same boat, so it was an interesting experience. A lifelong friendship was begun there, and over 50 years ago, circumstances brought us both to live in Dayton with our families.

As I think back, all these life experiences did not seem like a sacrifice for those of us at home. It was taken in stride and we were glad to do anything to help the boys.