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The home fronts of Iowa, 1940-1945

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The home fronts of Iowa, 1940-1945

by

Lisa Lynn Ossian

A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Major: Agricultural History and Rural Studies

Major Professor: Dorothy Schwieder

Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

1998

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PREFACE. HOME FRONTS

"By the close study of a place, its people and character, its crops, products, paranoias, dialects, and failures, we come closer to our reality. It is difficult to impose a story and a plot on a place."

--Louise Erdrich, "A Writer's Sense of Place"

"The war changed everything except human needs and desires."

--William O'Neill, *A Democracy at War*

How does one begin to write about the complexities surrounding World War II? As John Keegan has so succinctly stated in the foreword to his study of the Second World War, this war was the largest single event in human history. The war involved six of seven continents and all the oceans; it killed fifty million people and wounded countless others. Within this massive event, historians have examined numerous pieces of the puzzle but not the state of Iowa and its citizens' reactions and contributions. Iowa, as one small portion of the world, did encounter much of the drama and heartache of this war though so physically removed from the areas of combat and destruction.

Most American World War II histories of domestic involvement have been organized chronologically or by topics such as patriotism and discrimination. An unequal depiction of the home front activities has often resulted from this organization with more of a focus on paid, industrial work. My research of the Iowa home front led to an analysis of four separate fronts: farm, production, community, and kitchen. All were historic terms used throughout the war years. This examination of the home front provides a clearer picture of the actual work and rhetoric surrounding citizens' involvement in the war effort as deemed necessary by the federal government. Through this analysis, I have attempted to answer the following question: How was the thinking of Iowans so quickly transformed from a relatively isolationist perspective regarding involvement in this threatening world

conflict to an overwhelmingly enthusiastic attitude which was sustained throughout the national war effort? In other words, how did Iowans so quickly transform from reluctant, skeptical citizens to such energetic soldiers? By answering this question, I hoped to gain a different perspective concerning another more general historical question: Why has World War II been so consistently remembered as "the Good War"?

In essence, American citizens became soldiers in this total world war effort. The concept of a soldier can involve combat, but it also encompasses the ideas of service, sacrifice, risk, and duty. Every American (men, women, and children) was encouraged to remember, at all times, the war effort because every citizen as soldier played a necessary part. America as a nation ill-prepared for world war involvement needed drastic and dramatic contributions from its citizens in war production; yet it also needed to cling to its democratic ideals. Citizens became soldiers, fighting on one or more of the four home fronts, because only by becoming completely involved would they support the war effort. Their work, whether paid or volunteer, needed to be organized with effective leadership, but, above all, it had to be a voluntary commitment as America had to fight differently than did fascist nations. Otherwise, this Second World War, another war based on democracy but now framed by the "Four Freedoms," would be a wasteful sham which was what no American could bear--that war sacrifices had been in vain.

Iowa serves as an interesting area to study this transformation from citizen to soldier for two reasons: 1) as the center of the United States Iowa was removed from the possibly threatened coasts and 2) as the center of the supposed isolationist region which resisted another involvement in European wars. Iowa was also historically Republican. Though Iowa had voted for Franklin Roosevelt in 1932 and 1936, the

state turned against Roosevelt in 1940 and 1944. In short, Iowa hardly seemed like a potentially enthusiastic or committed area for supporting this conflict against Germany and Japan. If Iowans could transform into energetic soldiers for the war effort, other states surely would as well.

My study necessarily takes a less traditional route. I have relied on standard primary sources for factual and numerical information such as census records, state publications, agricultural yearbooks, and industrial reports along with newspaper accounts, but I have also paid particular attention to the advertisements, speeches, editorials, advice columns, oral histories, travelogues, poems, paintings, photographs, posters, songs, recipes, letters, diaries, radio broadcasts, movies, novels, short stories, cartoons, personal scrapbooks, high school yearbooks, memorials, and memoirs from this era. In other words, I have also recorded the ideas, rhetoric, and emotions of this war effort. By trying to capture this emotional content from historical sources, I have strived to better understand why Iowans could so overwhelmingly support this war effort. People's actions are so often based on their feelings surrounding an event; World War II would be no different despite the complexity of its events.

CHAPTER 1. IOWA'S 1940: MORE THAN A POTLUCK, MORE THAN LUCK

"Her heart turned over: how could there be this ridiculous talk of war, when little boys in all countries collected stones, dodged cleaning their teeth, and hated cauliflower?"

--Jan Struther, *Mrs. Miniver*, 1940

"War, war, war. All this talk of war will ruin my picnic!"

--Scarlet in *Gone with the Wind*, 1940

"Iowa," a journalist wrote in early 1940, "is in a piece of pie at the potluck dinner given by the Ladies' Aid Society at Pleasant Hill Methodist Church." Iowans liked to describe themselves this way: fair, helpful, democratic, generous, simple, almost quaint. The writer continued, "There's plenty to eat at the Pleasant Hill Pot-luck Dinners. There are more than 60 people at the dinner this noon. They take their loaded trays, with a cup of dark and steaming coffee, and sit around the room beneath the temperance posters." This was Iowa at its typical best in 1940: comfort, caring, consensus. Phil Stong, in a widely-read Iowa biography that year, *Hawkeyes*, also described the state in terms of food, as "good, rich, Iowa mayonnaise." The people, he wrote, are from "a good and practical land" in an "integrated and sympathetic society."¹ This was the popular image of the greatest food producing spot in the world, yet Iowa was much more than a potluck.

While impressionistic descriptions may aid in understanding Iowans' self-image in 1940, certain economic and social realities confronted Iowa in this year preceding American involvement in World War II. A view of Iowa in 1940 provides a vantage point by which to examine the changes that Iowans would experience during the next four years of war. These changes would be dramatic and lasting. Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Iowans as Americans everywhere would respond to demands made by a government in wartime: farmers would produce higher agricultural yields, industries

¹*Des Moines Register*, 1 March 40, 1 and 4; and Phil Stong, *Hawkeyes. A Biography of the State of Iowa* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1940), vii, 4, and 11.

would convert to wartime production, communities would experience upheavals and shortages, and women would go to work outside the home as well as conserving valuable resources within the home. Agriculture, industries, communities, and kitchens represented the four home fronts of Iowa during World War II.

In 1940, Iowa remained an agricultural state. Since 1870, when all sections of the state were settled, agriculture had been present in every county regardless of location. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) described this land between two rivers as the "great agricultural state of Iowa." The approximate land area for Iowa is 35,831,040 acres with 95.3 percent within farms that year. Over 25 percent of the total United States' Grade A farmland was located in the central region of Iowa. Though Iowa was a homogenous prairie area, its topography varied, and the state was divided into five regional areas: an eastern and a western meat production area, a southern pasture area, a northeastern dairy area, and a north central cash grain area.²

The 1940 census reported 213,318 farms which had been a fairly constant number for the first part of the century, and the average size of an Iowa farm was 160 acres. Only 2,583 Iowa farms were 500 acres or more, and only 127 farms were worked by "nonwhite operators." Farm owners operated 11,607,296 acres while tenants operated the remaining 17,045,376 acres. The average age of farm operators was 47, and this generation had witnessed golden years of agricultural prosperity, a world war, depression, and now the threat of another world war.³

Agricultural prosperity in Iowa was beginning to return after the difficult days of the Great Depression. Its 213,318 farms were valued at \$2,690,744,215, though this figure was lower than the higher 1920 valuation at \$7,601,772,290. The 1940 *Iowa*

²USDA's 1940 Yearbook, 157; 16th Census; Earle D. Ross, *Iowa Agriculture: An Historical Survey* (Ames, Iowa: The Iowa State University Press, 1974), Chapter 1; and John A. Hopkins, *Elements of Farm Management* (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1937), 33.

³16th Census.

Yearbook of Agriculture reported the largest farm income in the past decade with over 70 percent from the sale of livestock, especially cattle. The average value per farm in 1940 was \$12,614.⁴

Along with livestock, Iowa's farm families kept growing corn: 9,330,820 acres on 196,190 farms. Farmers also reported other commercial crops: sorghum, oats, barley, rye, flax, wheat, hay, Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, and popcorn--even tobacco and sugar beets. Still, corn dominated. Vegetables harvested for sale, excluding potatoes, were grown on 4,580 farms at 28,238 acres with a value of \$1,281,868. The value of vegetables grown for home use was estimated at a value of \$6,225,295 on 178,997 farms, 83 percent of Iowa farms. As the *Iowa Farm Economist* proclaimed, "Iowa is indeed a land of plenty in 1940."⁵

The quality of life on Iowa's farms had begun to benefit from added technology. Most farms had automobiles at 90.2 percent, the same percentage as in 1930. Farm trucks had dropped in number from 1930, down from 31,874 to 24,947 or 11 percent. Sixty-six percent of Iowa's farms had telephones (more than any other state), and forty percent had electricity, up from twenty-one percent in 1930. In fact, Iowa's farm families in 1940 had a higher standard of living than any other state.⁶ Still, farming remained a hard life, and most farm families could not personally enjoy the town comforts of electricity and plumbing. As a young doctor's wife wrote to a friend, "Of course, I lived throughout my childhood on an Iowa farm, without a bathroom. . . but Poor Bill--I'm sure he was never in a house without a bathroom until he went to Ridgefield."⁷

⁴16th Census; and 1940 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture*.

⁵1940 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture*; and *Iowa Farm Economist*, January 1940, 13.

⁶This farm survey considered five factors: 1) percentage of radios, 2) percentage of farms with \$600+ income, 3) percentage of 1936 or later model autos, 4) percentage of occupied dwelling units with fewer than 1.51 persons per room, and 5) median grade of school completed by adults over 25. Iowa's score was 131. The next highest score was Illinois at 122. (*Iowa Farm Economist*, December 1943, 8.) *USDA 1940 Report*.

⁷Faye Cashatt Lewis, M.D., *Doc's Wife* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1940), 1-2. The following is a comparison of "conveniences" in farm houses according to the 1940 census: running water,

Most Iowa farms in 1940 were considered general farms: farms based on a mix of crops and animals, a mix of horse and tractor power, and a mix of family and hired labor. General farming was a flexible approach to the risks inherent in commercial farming—its flexibility was its strength through crops, power needs, labor utilization, and soil practices. General farming also represented a philosophical approach to agriculture with Iowa farmers priding themselves on the independence of their farms as family units. Iowa farmers had developed an extremely strong work ethic from this type of farming along with the rewards of a seemingly secure family life as Iowa farms were viewed as good places to raise children. General farms strived to be strong and prosperous yet not exhausting of resources or exceedingly wealthy. General farming was not subsistence farming with its emphasis on almost complete home production and consumption nor was it plantation or bonanza agriculture with its emphasis on large land units and large profits based on cheap hired labor. Rather, general farming was a small business approach with an emphasis on cash crops and animals and a dependence on family labor. Its ideals were continuity, flexibility, and independence, along with modest growth and endurance.

This general farm situation, which perhaps approximated the agrarian ideal, had seemed to exist particularly in the Golden Years of Agriculture—1909 through World War I—with good farm prices and a responsive government. But depression hit many farms soon after World War I and continued through the 1920s and 1930s. Despite the ideal, farming could be a brutal struggle for survival against so many conditions—the weather, the government, the market. So much was out of the farmer's hands, despite all the hard work. Four conditions challenged the role of general farming during the 1930s: government policies, mechanization, tenancy, and corn hybridization. Weather conditions, as always, influenced any form of agriculture.

18% U.S., 22% Iowa; bathrooms, 12% U.S., 15% Iowa; electricity, 31% U.S., 40% Iowa; and radios, 60% U.S., 87% Iowa. (Iowa State College, *A Century of Farming in Iowa*, 298.)

The Agricultural Adjustment Administration was a government agency established in 1933 as a relief and reform agricultural program, part of the collection of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programs to help the country recover from depression conditions. Iowa's Henry A. Wallace, former editor of *Wallaces' Farmer*, was appointed Secretary of Agriculture and administered the farm program. The AAA's purpose was to reduce surplus farm production through voluntary production agreements with farmers who were encouraged by relief checks to withdraw some of their productive acreage. Counties were regulated by local township committees of farmers and Extension leaders. The AAA only alleviated some of the economic desperation farmers experienced since the Great War's economic roller coaster of inflation and then depression.

Though desperate farmers had needed relief, they also resented restrictions on their productive capabilities within the New Deal program. The fear of government involvement encompassed a number of more general farm fears such as external control and dependence. Farmers as small businessmen wanted to feel their profit potential was unlimited, not controlled by government policies. However, a *Wallaces' Farmer* survey in March 1940 found 75 percent of Iowa farm operators would enter the 1940 AAA program while 11 percent said no and 14 percent were still undecided. A Clayton County farmer's response was typical, "I am staying in the AAA program this year, but I certainly don't like the way my acreage has been cut." The Pleasant Grove Township in Marion County had 100 percent AAA sign-up of its 176 farms in 1940, and county AAA committee officials gave three reasons for their success: a naturally cooperative attitude of farmers in the area, an active township committee, and support from local businesses.⁸

Many farmers remained suspicious of government involvement in agriculture. The *Des Moines Tribune* in September questioned Madison County farmers at random for

⁸*Wallaces' Farmer*, March 1940; and *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 7 March 1940, 7-Commercial.

their political opinions which ranged from Roosevelt wanting to be Hitler himself and his increased socialism to praise for Roosevelt's experience and a belief he was "doing a good job." Some felt Henry Wallace had not done anything, that farmers would be better left alone without regimentation while others thought he was doing all that he could. E. F. Howard of St. Charles stated the negative, "I'm not favorably impressed by Wallace. He was born in this county just west of us. We know him and know his people. I figure he's just a satellite of Roosevelt." A forty-two year old farmer renting 180 acres outside of Truro replied, "Wallace is all right. I think he's done us a lot of good. A lot of farmers kick on him--they kick, but they like to get those checks."⁹

Iowa had supported Franklin Roosevelt in his two presidential campaigns, 1932 and 1936, but by 1940 many people throughout the state and nation argued against Roosevelt's defying tradition by running for a third presidential term. Opinions continued to be mixed even in this historically Republican state regarding political representation for 1940. In August, 32 percent of Iowa farmers were undecided with 34 percent apiece favoring Franklin Roosevelt and Wendall Willkie. The Iowa election could be "a landslide in either direction" depending on those undecided farmers. A farm woman in Hardin County referred to Willkie's campaign promises in this way, "And a light in the kitchen is a lot better than a promise over the radio." Or, as her husband summed it up: "But I never trade a good horse I've worked on the farm for a cutter I've never seen pull."¹⁰

Horses were literally still in use in 1940, but the numbers of tractors and other implements was increasing. Mechanization presented the second challenge to general farming, described by the phrase "power farming" in the switch from horse to tractor and gas engine power. Most farms, 184,655 out of the 213,318, reported owning horses or mules for a total of 728,213 animals, but horses had been declining since 1914 with 34,000 fewer each year. Fewer farms had tractors than had horses, only 117,932 or 55.3

⁹*Des Moines Tribune*, September 1940.

¹⁰*Wallaces' Farmer*, August 1940.

percent, but the numbers of machines were increasing. Three counties in the northern and western parts of the state reported over 2,000 tractors: Kossuth, 2,677; Pottawattamie, 2,157; and Webster, 2,026; while the two lowest, with under 300 tractors, were Monroe, 292; and Appanoose, 291; both in the southern tier. Tractors had doubled in the last five years--1 for every 195 cultivated acres. Nationally, 1.6 million tractors were in use, twice the 1930 number. However, not everyone viewed this as positive as the USDA reported these developments in mechanization had increased the vulnerability of farming's dependence on a consistent cash income.¹¹

Tractors, especially in the Midwest, promised to remove a great deal of farming drudgery. The ads promised many advantages with 1940 tractors such as comfortable rides and increased horsepower. Other ads emphasized patriotism:

These are eventful times! The pages of history are being turned with tragic speed before our eyes. The Old World is in the torment of change--but what of the New? What of America, and the great peaceful populations that live out their destinies across the broad reaches of the United States? Harold Jones of Chariton, Iowa, is doing a fine job of deep plowing here in tough sod. His tractor is the plucky new FARMALL-A which is filling all power needs on thousands of small farms today. Harold operates 120 acres, and he has no horses on his farm. He planted 65 acres of corn this year with direct-connected planter, cultivating with this 'Culti-Vision' tractor.¹²

Or, as the copy for America's newest tractor, the Oliver Row Crop "70," simply stated: "It has everything, It does everything, It's a beauty."

Developments associated with mechanization of agriculture included processed oil for better winter starts of tractor engines, self-cleaning rubber tractor tires for better transport between fields, and metal farm buildings for storage of new and larger equipment. Metal buildings promised many advantages over wooden barns: lower initial cost; better resale value; fire and storm resistance; lightning, rat, and termite proofing; and rot-, warp-, or crack-free walls. The romance of the farm with its mules and horses

¹¹1940 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture*, 12-13; and *USDA Yearbook*, 532.

¹²*The Farm Journal*, October 1940, 2.

plodding along to the well-stocked and well-scented barn was disappearing quickly under the advance of progress, the roar and grind of power farming.

Power farming also brought concerns such as occupational hazards and soil erosion. Farming was becoming a dangerous occupation due to mechanization. In 1939, 4,200 American farmers were killed in accidents while at work, comprising 27 percent of all occupational accident fatalities, the largest proportion of any industry.

Increased mechanization of farmland also brought concerns for soil conservation. As environmental historian John Madson has commented, "Unlike a horse, what a tractor takes from the soil it never gives back." Iowa was known for its rich, dark, prairie topsoil, yet much erosion had taken place since white settlement with its farming practices of deep plowing and row crops. Severe drought in the Southern Plains Dust Bowl in the 1930s had stirred soil conservation concerns throughout the country. Otha Wearin, an Iowa farmer, recalled, "Everyone began to realize how much soil was being lost to improper farming methods."¹³ Farm experts and individual farmers saw the need for new soil conserving practices. New patterns were developed and continued in 1940 such as curving rows on sloping land, fields in strips of hay and grain, and raised terraces, especially in southwestern Iowa. Straight corn rows, the pride and joy of most farmers, had only allowed water to rush and create gullies.

Although Iowa farm laborers in 1940 were older (median age 43.5), married, and better paid than in 1936, tenancy was another growing concern and presented the third challenge to the ideal concept of general farming, land ownership. Though many still believed that any good tenant should be able to own a farm in these years of low farm

¹³John Madson, *Where the Sky Began: Land of the Tallgrass Prairie* (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press), 123; and John M. Zielinski, *Unknown Iowa: Farm Security Photos, 1936-1941* (Kalona, Iowa: Photo-Art Gallery Publications, 1977), 106.

prices, Iowa averaged a 56.5 percent tenancy rate by January 1940, the highest in the Midwest.¹⁴

Tenant contracts were usually for one year only, ending by March, and March 1st was declared "Moving Day" for many of Iowa's farm tenants:

In a shed out behind the house, three men were chopping loose from the frozen earth the tractor which will pull the farmer's equipment to a new home seven miles south.

And in the farm kitchen, hard at work in an apron and sweater, Mrs. Woodring was packing and at the same time, trying to make sandwiches and get some baking done, in order that there'll be food ready to eat when they are settled again Friday night.

Smile. Sigh.

With a smile that blunted her words, Mrs. Woodring uttered a sigh which must have been rising in farm kitchens all over Iowa:

"Don't talk to me about moving. I'm disgusted with it."¹⁵

The Woodring family was one of an estimated 20,000 to 25,000 farm families changing homes that week in Iowa. Many farm tenants hoped this move would be their last. And yet, they were the lucky ones. Five thousand Iowa farmers could not find farms to work, especially those in the rich land areas of the cash grain region with its tractor farming and larger farming units.¹⁶ *Wallaces' Farmer* was sympathetic of Iowa tenant farmers in its article "Men Left Without Land":

I have just been looking into the eyes of farmers without land . . . tenants that is, unable to rent a place. There seem to be so many of them this year. . . more, apparently, than ever before.

Their eyes make me a little uneasy. In them, I see something which seems to say calmly now, but nevertheless firmly: "If we don't find farms, one day something inside us is going to snap."¹⁷

In the 1940 USDA yearbook, appropriately titled *Farmers in a Changing World*, the analysis of the tenant problem was framed by the debate over the existence of the

¹⁴*Iowa Farm Economist*, December 1940, 12; and *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 16 June 1940, 4-Iowa News. The peak in tenancy occurred in 1934 at 59 percent.

¹⁵*Des Moines Tribune*, 29 February 1940, 1.

¹⁶*Des Moines Register*, 1 May 40, 1.

¹⁷*Wallaces' Farmer*, 9 March 1940, 20.

traditional agricultural ladder--from farm laborer to tenant to owner. In other words, the status of tenants had changed by 1940 from apprentice farmer to simply wage worker. The national tenancy rate was 42 percent, and 40,000 were added to this group each year. On the national map, Iowa had the highest percentage of farm land operated but not owned by the farmer, caused by the acceleration of "supervised farming in the Corn Belt" meaning that many people who owned the land did not farm it themselves. The USDA acknowledged that the tenancy problem was "complex and deeply-rooted," resulting from land speculation, mechanization, and credit needs. The USDA summarized, "The situation calls for action."¹⁸

One proposal to limit tenancy was to limit the amount of land owned by a single farmer. In April *Wallaces' Farmer* readers were asked about changing present land tenure policies to discourage large scale farming: "Would it help to discourage corporation farming and to preserve family-sized farms if the state of Iowa put a heavy penalty tax on ownership of a farm or string of farms whose total assessed valuation was more than \$50,000?" Sixty-eight percent of Iowa's farmers thought yes, 12 percent no, and 20 percent undecided. In July another article titled, "Iowa Farmers Growl at 'Land Hogs,'" stated 66 percent of Roosevelt voters and 57 percent of Landon voters agreed that "Iowa should have a graduated land tax under which an owner of a big tract of land should be penalized on the holding of all land in excess of that required for the liberal support of a farm family."¹⁹

The fourth challenge to general farming resulted from the dramatic increase in the use of hybrid corn seed, a "hybrid hurricane." Iowa historian Joseph Wall believed hybrid corn created the greatest impact on the Iowa farmer in the 20th Century which "enabled the state to become a granary for the nation and the world." In seven years, hybrid corn had replaced open-pollinated in most of the Corn Belt. Eighty-eight percent of Iowa's

¹⁸1940 *United States Department of Agriculture Yearbook*; and Rasmussen, *Emergency Farm Labor*, 6.

¹⁹*Wallaces' Farmer*, 20 April 1940, 5; and *Wallaces' Farmer*, 13 July 1940, 5.

corn in 1940 was hybrid--7,758,000 acres out of 8,816,000. Iowa had the largest percentage devoted to hybrid corn, even more than Illinois and Indiana. Corn acreage had increased because of high hybrid yields which led to less diversity of production on Iowa farms. Hybridization also upset yield calculations for the AAA, and seed corn was no longer collected on individual farms as a few big producers now sold hybrid seed.²⁰

Corn shows were still held throughout Iowa such as the one by Union State Bank in Winterset to find the "Best Ears and Longest Ears" from open pollinated fields, but the exhibits were now smaller because of the larger percentage of hybrid corn with few farmers saving seed anymore. Open pollination could not give the assurance that the seed would again produce the appearance of the ear. Though the International Hay and Grain show at Chicago had fewer corn entries than ever before, Iowa's State Corn and Small Grain Show did have 10,967 ears of corn entered. Master Corn Grower medals were awarded to growers who produced 100 bushels or more of corn to the acre in a ten acre field. Of 815 entries from 47 Ten Acre Clubs, 135 medals were awarded. However, farmers were rapidly turning to seed companies and away from the pride of their own seed production.²¹

Historian Leland Sage has asked if Iowa farmers were better off in 1940 than in 1920. He believes they were as determined by a standard of living measured by material things such as electricity, tractors, and cars, but, as he states, farming had become more of a business than a way of life. This business of agriculture was already enjoying more prosperity from war markets in 1940 even though the United States was not officially involved.²²

²⁰Joseph Frazier Wall, *Iowa: A Bicentennial History* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1978), 129; *Farm Journal and Farmers' Wife*, April 1940, 28; and *The Winterset News*, 17 October 1940, 7.

²¹*Winterset Madisonian*, 20 November 1940, 9; Wall, *Iowa*, 130; *Winterset Madisonian*, 11 December 1940, 1; and 1940 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture*, 168-171.

²²Leland L. Sage, "Rural Iowa in the 1920s and 1930s: Roots of the Farm Depression," *The Annals of Iowa* 47 (Fall 1983): 101-102.

Nature, always an agricultural challenge, remained so in 1940. The pests to worry about that growing season were grasshoppers and chinch bugs. Officials estimated grasshopper losses at \$104,900, but no "extensive flights" were reported. "Hoppers" were controlled, the *Iowa Yearbook* recommended, with baiting--a combination of bran, sawdust, sodium arsenite solution, and water. (Officials reported no cases of arsenical poisoning in the state, however.) Chinch bugs presented another hazard to small grains with 1940 losses estimated at \$5,032,000. Farmers sometimes planted soybeans because chinch bugs only attacked small grains and corn.²³

The year 1940 ended disastrously for many farmers with an unseasonably early blizzard on November 11th. Remembered as the Armistice Day Blizzard, the storm was extremely destructive. Seven Iowans lost their lives as a result of this storm along with extensive losses to the horticulture and poultry industries of the state. A warm fall had continued until the first killing frost on November 7th, followed by several warmer days. On November 11th, the temperature dropped from 50 degrees to 0 in less than 24 hours. This sharp drop in temperature caused severe damage to fruit trees, especially in the southwestern and western regions. The storm killed the original Delicious apple tree outside of Peru, Iowa, a tree described as "a rickety old grandmother, rotten at the heart, kept up by braces and cement," but it had produced apples in 1940. The next year's apple crop for the state was predicted to be half of the previous year or perhaps even a complete failure; Iowa had averaged 1.3 million bushels of apples a year worth a dollar per bushel. Much of the corn crop was still in the fields, and an estimated 10 to 15 million bushels were lost.²⁴

²³1940 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture*, 107-111. Preventable chinch bug losses were estimated to be \$3,000,000, but \$9,820,000 was actually saved by barriers such as creosote-treated paper fences, a method originally worked out in Iowa in 1934. The *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture* in 1940 reported that 17,406 farmers constructed 2,403,450 rods of barriers and used 1,412,724 gallons of creosote oil to combat chinch bugs.

²⁴Paul J. Waite, State Climatologist, "Outstanding Iowa Storms," *The Annals of Iowa* 40 (Winter 1970): 199. This storm was recorded as the most destructive storm for the century over northern and western Iowa.

Turkey farmers also suffered major losses from the storm. Earlier rains on November 9th and 10th had soaked the birds' feathers, and when the temperatures dropped quickly on the 11th, in some places 30 degrees within two hours as snow drifted up to five feet, over 120,000 turkeys died with an estimated value up to half a million dollars. Ironically, another very damaging blizzard had also occurred on this date in 1911 with a similar record of high and low temperatures. The 1940 storm did not equal it in severity or destructiveness but represented a greater monetary loss.²⁵

This storm's fury would be remembered even forty years later as Frank Heidelbauer of Fort Dodge stated, "I'll *never* forget it." He continued, "In all my days I can't recall such a rapid change in weather. With the wind came an almost unbelievable drop in temperature, and the drizzle changed to heavy wet snow that the wind would slam onto trees and fences in great wet globs that immediately froze." John Madson also clearly remembered forty years later the storm's impact: "It was the cry of winter with all its furies marshaled in one level, sustained force of deepening cold and energy—a weight of heavily frozen, syrup-thick air driven at gale force."²⁶ Nature could always reassert itself on Iowa's prairie land.

Another writer recorded her impression the day of the storm. Bessie Caudle from Winterset was a middle-aged housewife who kept a daily diary starting in 1932, the day her son left home. She never missed a day after that year for forty years. She described this devastating storm for her diary: "Well very cold and snowy something unusual for this time of year. Terrible high wind. Cooking is all I got done. Zero."

Iowa was the state where the tall corn grows with its reputation for corn and hogs, yet the state had always had a substantial industrial sector. And the industrial sector was growing. Farm products had increased 19 times from 1860 to 1924 while manufactured

²⁵1940 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture*, 473-479.

²⁶Madson, *Where the Sky Began: Land of the Tallgrass Prairie*, 174, 173, and 172.

products had increased 49 times, yet this fact was not known to most Iowans. Industry was not concentrated but scattered in at least seventeen counties; therefore, diffusion marked the character of Iowa's manufacturing with a dozen cities as industrial centers. Food and its "kindred products" were ranked first among industries, every year from 1860 through 1925. As Ruth Hoadley summarized in her report "Industrial Growth of Iowa," "the high per capita wealth of the people of Iowa is the result of a happy combination of agriculture and industry."²⁷

Industrial development in Iowa faced a number of challenges. Perhaps its biggest challenge was persuasion, that Iowa offered more than agriculture and provided a good place for management and labor. The Greater Iowa Commission worked to convince industrial and business leaders that Iowa's physical, educational, and social facilities could benefit any industrial operation that located in the state. The Greater Iowa Commission saw six favorable factors as a foundation to build an inland empire in Iowa: people, geographical location, transportation facilities, accessibility of raw materials, an increased use of raw materials, and decentralization of industry in general. Iowa's people were educated, literate, and aggressive. The state's central location aided site location and distribution along with transportation facilities already in place such as paved highways, railroads, and waterways. Iowa had thirteen steam railway systems with 9,482 miles of track, and its roadways were also developing with 3,539 paved miles of primary roads and 1,834 graveled miles. Nine hundred thousand motor vehicles were registered in 1940: 689,307 passenger cars (19,227 more than 1939) and 101,244 residential trucks. Iowa also had resources which lay beneath the ground which included a number of mineral deposits. Iowa had 475 active coal mines (203 shaft, 178 slope, 34 drift, and 60 strip mines) with a production of 3,303,899 tons in 1940.²⁸

²⁷Keach Johnson, "Iowa's Industrial Roots, 1890-1910," *The Annals of Iowa* 44 (Winter 1978): 163-164; and Ruth L. Hoadley, "Industrial Growth in Iowa" *Iowa Studies in Business*, No. 11 (Bureau of Business Research) (Iowa City, Iowa: State University of Iowa, May 1928): 5, 16, and 6.

²⁸*State of Iowa Official Register*, 1941-42, 325, 327, and 298.

Iowa ranked nineteenth among states in factory output in 1940; its 2,670 manufacturing establishments were valued at \$718,418,350. Six cities led the state in value of their manufactured products (in order of monetary value): Waterloo, Sioux City, Cedar Rapids, Des Moines, Davenport, and Mason City. Meat packing led in value of products at \$257,000,000, then butter at \$68,000,000, printing and publishing at \$26,000,000, corn products (syrup, sugar, and oil) at \$25,000,000, and bread and bakery products at \$24,000,000. Iowa supplied more than a third of the nation's "dressed and packed poultry," and Iowa had sixty canning factories with \$2,000,000 in production. The *Iowa Official Register* described the state's industrial potential in the following way: "All over Iowa the smoke rises from factories which are adding millions upon millions of dollars each year to the state's wealth and making it take still higher rank, not alone in agriculture, but in industries of all kinds."²⁹

Iowa wanted to fit into the world's image of America --the most productive country in the world--the one with "productive might." That desire was evident in a publication of the Iowa Development Commission which stated: "Iowa products are shipped to the four corners of the earth and the sun never sets upon the products of this great state." However, Iowa industry needed to do more than proclaim its greatness; it needed to back these claims with facts of Iowa's resources and advantages. The Iowa Development Commission saw Iowa's industrial potential as a "balanced picture" of cultivated land with self-sustaining and evenly distributed cities. It promoted Iowa's government as "usually Republican," as "sound, conservative, and forward looking." The Commission also proclaimed that the state's labor supply was desirable with a constant number of employees from the farms who were "machine wise by instinct" and would present no serious labor trouble. Ideal living in Iowa was also possible. As the

²⁹*State of Iowa Official Register*, 1941-42, 300, 303, 289, and 304.

Commission promised, "Your own garden, your own home, your farm near town; these are normal achievements in Iowa."³⁰

A major prerequisite for enlarging the state's industrial sector was the presence of an adequate labor pool. In 1940, Iowa's population contained 1,959,091 people over the age of 14. Of this number, 957,869 considered themselves in the labor pool with 862,781 employed. Of those employed, 692,431 were men and 170,350 were women. Public relief work was not considered regular employment according to the census. The major occupational group for men was farmers and farm managers at 207,099 plus 63,541 paid farm labor and 34,467 unpaid farm family labor. The other large groups were 75,346 proprietors and managers, 57,145 professionals, and 43,558 laborers. Twenty percent of boys between the years of 14 through 17 in the state were employed while 5.9 percent of girls were employed.³¹

Iowa contained a small percentage of African-Americans in 1940, less than 1 percent of the state's total population. Given their concentration in Iowa's largest communities, African-Americans would be an increasing factor in the state's available labor pool. Faced with a history of employment discrimination, black leaders were raising concerns in 1940 about discrimination in industrial as well as social settings: nationally the percent of black Americans employed in manufacturing was lower than it had been thirty years before. Concern about employment discrimination was often voiced by the editors of *The Iowa Bystander*, a newspaper for Iowa's black population. In February 1940 the editor for this Des Moines-based newspaper addressed the segregated rail car issue in Germany: "Of course, *The Bystander* can never wish to swap the lot of Negroes in this country for that of minority groups in Europe. But it does wish to re-emphasize

³⁰Richard Ketchum, *The Borrowed Years, 1938-1941. America on the Way to War* (New York: Random House, 1989), 370; and *Iowa Development Commission, Iowa . . . Land of Industrial Opportunity* (Des Moines, Iowa: Iowa Development Commission, 1946), E-11 and A-9.

³¹16th Census.

the obvious that American should clean her hands of the stink before it attempts to tell another country what is Christian."³²

While blacks in Iowa had good reason to fear continued discrimination in employment, there were signs of possible change. On August 29th, Henry A. Wallace as a vice-presidential candidate held an informal visit with a number of black Democratic leaders in Des Moines where he stated: "A Negro is just as qualified to operate machinery, whether it be a tractor or an airplane, as anyone else. A person is not inferior because of his race, it is a matter of being given an opportunity."³³

While African-Americans in Iowa had legitimate concerns about their employment future, state and public officials believed that, in general, Iowa desperately needed new industrial plants for everyone's future prosperity. First, plants would help increase employment within the state and would lead to a more balanced economy. Second, officials in Iowa as elsewhere saw new industrial plants as necessary if the country was going to improve its preparedness for war. Although state officials recognized that some "boom towns" would result from the war industries, thus bringing shortages of housing, schools, and other facilities, more importantly officials saw the plants as bringing "economic resurgence" for communities. Those changes would come quickly in 1940 as the *Iowa Business Digest* declared that the "chief impetus" for the resurgence of business in Iowa came from defense program spending. Defense contracts from June 15 to October 15 amounted to \$537,227 and promised to increase dramatically.³⁴

An Iowa ordnance plant was scheduled to be built near West Burlington in Des Moines County, and conflict surrounded the 187 families who were asked to leave their

³²*The Iowa Bystander*, 8 February 1940, 4; and Joel Seidman, *American Labor from Defense to Reconversion* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1953), 165. In 1940 there were approximately 150 black weekly newspapers in the United States. (Buchanan, *Black Americans in World War II*, 8.)

³³*The Iowa Bystander*, 5 September 1940, 5.

³⁴Geoffrey Perrett, *Days of Sadness, Years of Triumph. The American People, 1939-1945*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986),86; *Iowa Business Digest*, September 1940, 1; and *Iowa Business Digest*, October 1940, 2.

land so the plant could be built, then employing 6,000 men. Two areas of concern were if the munitions plants could provide enough jobs in areas of surplus man-power and if the land take-over would be considerate of farmers and tenants with even principles of "compensation for disturbance." In that winter of 1940, plans to construct the ordnance facility were underway. The result, the Iowa Ordnance Plant, like industrial plants across the country, would soon be turning out thousands of bombs and bullets for the approaching war effort.³⁵

Despite the industrial gains made in Iowa during 1940, this was also a period known as "the great defense migration." California's population grew the most rapidly from this economic migration as many workers across the nation were attracted to the large aircraft factories and shipyards on the Pacific Coast. Iowa was one of eleven states which experienced a population shift of workers, and by mid-1941 over 20,000 Iowa men had left the state for national defense work.³⁶

Bessie Caudle's son was part of this outward defense migration as she wrote in early December that Clark was "Still talking Calif." On Wednesday, December 18th, Bessie sadly commented, "Well John and Clark left for Calif this morning. 5:45. I didn't do much all day." Her son later found work at the Douglas Aircraft Company in California.³⁷

"Is it the old hunger for intimacy?" Sherwood Anderson asked about small town life in America. Is that why people remain? Small towns, all at once, are individualistic and neighborly, romantic and boring, democratic and class-oriented, peaceful and tense.

³⁵Dan Bied. *Encore. . . Burlington Revisited* (Burlington, Iowa: Craftsman Press, 1976),54; and Martin Gilbert, *The Second World War. A Complete History*. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1989), 148.

³⁶Ross Gregory, *America in 1941: A Nation at the Crossroads* (New York: The Free Press, 1989), 84 and 86; *Business Week*, 7 August 1943, 42; and *Iowa Legionaire*, 1 August 1941, 7.

³⁷Bessie's son, Clark, was described in the 1930 senior yearbook as "a hopeless victim of radiomania. Will probably be found in the 1940 "Who's Who" as the man who first heard the curfew ring in Mars."

Relationships must be continually re-established as small towns never provide the distance and anonymity of the cities. Small towns are intimate--lovingly, maddeningly, continually--and can give one a sense of identity, place, class, and custom. As Edwin Chase noted about small town life in Iowa, "Main Street is the heart of America. Derided and caricatured, made the butt of much clumsy humor, Main Street still furnishes the strength and remains the real foundation of our institutions." Or, as another writer noted of small town business and politics, "Life is intensely personal."³⁸

In 1940, Iowa, as well as many other parts of the nation, was still a rural and small town society. As a result, the Main Street that Edwin Chase described continued to shape the lives of most Iowans. While the country as a whole was more urban than rural (seventy-four million Americans or 56.5 percent), Iowans had not yet reached an urban majority. Iowa's population in 1940 totaled 2,538,268 (up 2.7 percent from 1930), and 42 percent were urban dwellers (in communities over 2,500). By 1940, the state contained only five cities over 50,000 with Des Moines the largest center at 159,819. As historian Joseph Wall commented in *Iowa*, "all of our cities are in reality small towns grown somewhat larger."³⁹

Lewis Atherton has commented in his classic study, *Main Street on the Middle Border*, that people want to have a sense of belonging despite technology, urbanization, and world politics. Small towns could provide that sense of social identification along with a sense of security and working together. Despite the hopes surrounding small towns, the reality was often an emphasis placed on material progress in what Atherton has called "the cult of the immediately useful and practical." In other words, activities needed to justify themselves financially, and this translated into a "boosterism" in which promotional efforts emphasized industrialization, improved transportation, exploitation

³⁸Carole Rifkind, *Main Street: The Face of Urban America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), xii; Edwin Percy Chase, "Forty Years of Main Street," *The Iowa Journal of History and Politics* 34 (1936): 227-261; and Graham Hutton, *Midwest at Noon* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1946), 80.

³⁹16th Census; and Wall, *Iowa*, 150.

of mineral resources, and trade-at-home, hometown loyalty. The irony of small-town boosterism is that only the trade-at-home portion fostered any sense of an intimate community. Iowa historian Joseph Wall has also elaborated on the paradoxes of small-town life such as townspeople who fear "bigness" yet support this boosterism. Another paradox is the supposed democratic nature of small towns despite the rigid class lines present in which the only mobility is often out. A third paradox is the mutual dependency of town businessmen and farmers with little mutual trust existing.⁴⁰

The biggest technological change in small town living came with the increased use of the automobile. Railroads had served most Iowa communities since the latter nineteenth century but not all small towns were near railroad lines. Automobiles offered opportunities for families to travel more easily than before with a great deal of freedom and flexibility. This freedom brought trouble to one segment of small town society. By the late 1930s, as Iowa's economy began to recover from the Great Depression, town merchants hoped for an improvement in business. With cars, however, customers could travel to larger communities for their shopping needs, especially for durable goods. Small town merchants began to advertise in newspapers, urging local residents to do their shopping at home. In Madison County, local businessmen ran a series of twelve advertisements which emphasized the advantages gained by dealing with Madison County business and professional people. The ads appeared in both the *Winterset News* and the *Madisonian* and carried the following slogan: "It pays to deal with Madison County business and professional men. The MORE you use them, the BETTER they can serve you." Each advertisement--whether for a grocery store, an apparel store, a furniture store, a drug store, a doctor, or a feed dealership--stated that customers "enable or make it easier for these businesses to maintain services you might sorely miss if they

⁴⁰Lewis Atherton, *Main Street on the Middle Border* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1954), 331,332, 355, and 356; and Wall, 150-152.

were not available." Businessmen were saying, in other words, do not drive away and drive local businesses out.⁴¹

In 1940, *Wallaces' Farmer* asked their readership if any remaining town-farm feuds lingered in Iowa: "Do farm men have interests that clash with the interest of town businessmen?" Three farm women addressed that question. One stated that the dividing wall--once as solid as the wall of China--was gone forever: "No bells rang at its passing, no ticker tape fell from haymow windows." What helped, she said, was rural electrification, good roads, and consolidated schools along with better understanding of farm problems from increased publicity. The second farm woman thought the "little country school house" kept farm and town people apart. The third respondent believed that part of the problem stemmed from farm people not understanding labor concerns. *Wallaces' Farmer* concluded the article, "So the old order changeth. The farm woman gets up at five and plugs in the waffle iron. The town woman renders out lard between bridge games . . ." ⁴²

Even though animosities were lessening between town and country residents, they had not disappeared completely. In 1940, two USDA sociologists, Edward Moe and Carl Taylor, conducted a study of Irwin, Iowa, in which they described Irwin's organization and values. The sociologists found that the economic interests of farmers and non-farmers were certainly not identical. The researchers commented on the split, "Some village folk feel that the farmers have been served by the Government and that there has been no similar program to assist them. Farmers on the other hand believe that villagers are dependent on farmers, and what helps them helps the villagers."⁴³

Connections certainly existed between town and farm; perhaps this was a mutual dependence that made both parties uneasy in an era of strong individualism. One group

⁴¹ *Winterset Madisonian*, 15 May 1940, 5; and *Winterset News*, 12 September 1940, 2.

⁴² *Wallaces' Farmer*, 44.

⁴³ Edward O. Moe and Carl C. Taylor, *Culture of a Contemporary Rural Community: Irwin, Iowa* (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Rural Life Studies: 5. December 1942), 46.

that historian Kathleen Nichols Stock has called the old middle class began to lose status during the 1930s. In her study of the Dakotas, Stock argues that town business people experienced considerable change by the late 1930s, and, in fact, found themselves somewhat displaced. Stock writes that as a result of the New Deal with its many relief and recovery programs, rural areas now had many new professionals in their midst. These "outsiders" included county extension agents, relief officials, and social workers. These professionals often took power from the old middle class (the merchant class) thus reducing their power and status within their communities.⁴⁴

While small towns had changed in many governmental and technological aspects since World War I, many physical characteristics had remained the same. Grant Wood's 1941 painting entitled *Spring in Town* provides a view of Iowa small town life in the first warm days of spring. Everyday tasks of ordinary life are presented in detail but with an effort to avoid any sentimentality. The nine figures are busy with gardening, washing, roof-mending, lawn-mowing, and rug beating. Though Grant Wood was criticized because an artist should supposedly concern himself with more worldly topics, especially in a world going mad with war, Wood replied that many Americans needed to be reminded of exactly what we might lose through war. This painting later appeared on the cover of *The Saturday Evening Post* in the spring of 1942, shortly after Wood's untimely death. With what is thought to be his last published comment, he stated the significance of *Spring in Town*, "In making these paintings as you may have guessed, I had in mind something which I hoped to convey to a fairly wide audience in America--the picture of a country rich in the arts of peace; a homely, lovable nation, infinitely worth any sacrifice necessary to its preservation."⁴⁵

⁴⁴Catherine McNicol Stock, *Main Street in Crisis: The Great Depression and the Old Middle Class on the Northern Plains* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 207.

⁴⁵James M. Dennis, *Grant Wood: A Study in American Art and Culture* (New York: The Viking Press, 1975), 196; Darrell Garwood, *Artist in Iowa: A Life of Grant Wood* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1944); and Nan Wood Graham with John Zug and Julie Jensen McDonald, *My Brother, Grant Wood* (Iowa City, Iowa: State Historical Society of Iowa, 1993), 174. Wood had paired this painting

Iowa had lost many small towns since its statehood with 2,205 completely abandoned communities by 1930. Many of these losses resulted from coal mine, saw mill, or river traffic booms which had not lasted. However, most towns had grown such as Irwin with an increase from 295 residents in the early 1900s to 345 in 1940. Irwin had a number of diverse businesses, yet customers were beginning to drive longer distances outside of the community to purchase more expensive or selective merchandise such as furniture and clothes. Still, most farmers now drove their cars or trucks rather than a team of horses to Irwin at least twice a week for shopping and entertainment. "Goin' to town" on Saturday evening remained as a long time custom which not even planting or harvesting interrupted. As an Irwin businessman commented, "They may come into town a little later, but they come."⁴⁶

Small town businessmen remained conservative and Republican even when this conservatism seemed to go against their best financial interests. An editorial by S. J. Galvin, the president of Sheffield Brick and Tile Company, analyzed this continued political stubbornness of many merchants:

Business creates the impression that it feels very superior, intellectually, to either agriculture or labor, but it certainly presents them a pitiful example of narrow partisanship. Even an ostrich will finally get one eye out of the sand to take a peep at what is going on around him, but not Mr. Average Businessman. No sirree, you can't fool him, by cracky! He votes along strict party lines and usually with the Industrial East, not with the Agricultural section of the country in which he lives. He will not vote for agriculture's interests but for the Business Man's Party--the party founded by Abraham Lincoln is plenty good enough for him.⁴⁷

with another titled *Spring in Country*. *Time* stated that "other painters might see and paint again the plain, practical beauty of the Iowa landscape" but that Wood had "discovered it." The magazine also commented on the realism within his paintings: "More than any other U.S. painter, he had expressed the unashamed simplicity and dignified realism that lay behind the complacent, materialistic exterior of rural Midwestern life." (*Time*, 23 February 1942, 65.)

⁴⁶Atherton, *Main Street on the Middle Border*, 336-337 and 351-352; and Gregory, *America in 1941*, 124. Residents in Irwin had identified the radio, the automobile, and movies as the forces changing the youth in town. (Gregory, *America in 1941*, 126.)

⁴⁷*Des Moines Tribune*, 6 February 1940, 4. ("Iowa Industrialist on the City's Stake in Farming")

The Republican Party gained dominance in Iowa in the 1860s and continued to hold power in Iowa except for brief periods. Anthropologist James West found the typical midwestern farming community to be two-thirds Republican and one-third Democrat. Political party membership was an emotional, even religious experience, and essentially a male preoccupation. It was an intense loyalty, often learned from families, often so intense that, in West's words, "a change of party breeds suspicion regarding a man's stability of character." This change of party membership was consistently a strike against both Republican presidential candidate, Wendall Willkie, and Democratic vice-presidential candidate, Henry A. Wallace. Voters wondered if they should vote for someone who just a few years ago had switched parties. In his book *The American Choice* Wallace defended his decision to switch from his father's party: "And I suspect that, more than anything else, it was the heartbreaking experiences of my father in his efforts to get fair play for agriculture from his own party leaders that made me decide to leave the Republican party."⁴⁸

On the last day of the 1940 presidential campaign the leading Republican and former governor of Kansas, Alf Landon, spoke in Winterset at a Republican rally. More than 2,000 people attended (in a town of little more than 3,000), and ten party leaders sat behind him on the platform. The *Winterset News* later reported this event while across the front page were photos of the election winners, Franklin Roosevelt and Henry Wallace. The official election returns in Madison County, however, were 4,477 Republican votes for Willkie and 3,094 Democratic votes for Roosevelt. Wallace's Republican grandfather, "Uncle Henry," had made his start writing agricultural columns for Winterset's *Madisonian* in the late 1800s, but the family history or even winning the vice-presidential position did not matter. What mattered was party loyalty, especially

⁴⁸Dorothy Schwieder, *Iowa--The Middle Land* (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1996), Chapter 5; West, *Plainville U.S.A.*, 85; and Henry A. Wallace, *The American Choice* (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1940), 79.

Republicanism in this and other small towns, and Henry A. Wallace had changed parties in 1932.

Wallace lost not only his hometown but also his home state as Iowa abandoned FDR. Roosevelt had carried Iowa in 1932 and 1936 but with 50,000 fewer in 1936. By 1940 it seemed that Republicanism had been "restored." The twin historians, Edward and Frederick Schapsmeir, described Wallace's feelings about Iowa's voting patterns: "It rankled him to think that Iowa farmers, [and he might have added small town merchants] who owed a great deal of their prosperity to his farm program, spurned their favorite son because of deep-seated isolationist sentiment. He wondered how long it would be before the Midwest concerned itself with affairs beyond its own regional border and overcame its insular attitude."⁴⁹

Perhaps Bessie Caudle summed the campaign up best in her diary of life in Winterset. Wednesday, November 9th--"Roosevelt beat Willkie glad it is over."

"Strong words" were spoken Monday at the United Mine Workers convention when its president John L. Lewis described Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins as "woozy in the head." He tried to soften his remark: "I like her a lot. I think she would make a good housekeeper, but I don't think she knows any more about the economic problems of this country than a Hottentot does about the moral law." Francis Perkins's status and authority as a cabinet member had been completely negated. Instead, she really should be a housewife.⁵⁰

John Lewis's comment about Francis Perkins probably represented the view that most Americans held toward women's work. To most Americans, married women

⁴⁹*Winterset News*, 14 November 1940, 2; Ross, 176; and Edward L. and Frederick H. Schapsmeier, *Henry A. Wallace of Iowa: The Agrarian Years, 1910-1940* (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1968), 278.

⁵⁰*Des Moines Tribune*, 29 January 1940, 1. Not only was this a sexist statement, but it was a racist one as well. (A Hottentot is an African.)

belonged at home, caring for spouses and children. In keeping with that view, most American women in 1940 did marry and most did remain at home performing domestic duties. Historian Susan Hartmann describes the perceived role for women in the 1940s to be one of wives and mothers as married women were considered responsible for the physical and psychological maintenance of the home. Hartman has called this emphasis on the sanctity of the home "the unshaken claim of the family." She writes, "The glorification of the housewife, the stress on femininity, the emphasis on romantic relationships, the warnings about careerism, all indicated ambivalence about or opposition to changes in women's activities and life-styles." This climate of opinion concerning women's roles emphasized that a woman's only place of interest should be her home. If women might or must work, this work must be feminine and supportive. Eleanor Roosevelt as First Lady was paid significant amounts for her newspaper column, radio talks, and public appearances. In fact, she earned more money that year than her husband, but Eleanor was always the wife acting as assistant for her husband, and almost all her earnings were donated to charities with the largest amount going to a Quaker group.⁵¹

Marriage was an even more popular institution in 1940. The number of marriages sharply increased across the nation that year, perhaps signaling a hope and belief in future prosperity. But for a number of young men, it represented a desire to avoid the new draft legislation, and a boom in Iowa marriage licenses had occurred that year with 5,826 couples taking their vows. The *Register* reported in August that 70 percent more marriages had occurred that month in 1940 than for August 1939, and the *Register* commented, "maybe prosperity, maybe draft bill." Iowa was criticized by neighboring states for its "marriage mill" as it had no mandatory waiting period or compulsory health examinations. A Milwaukee editorial cartoon pictured the "Grist from the Iowa Marriage

⁵¹Susan M. Hartman, *Home Front and Beyond. American Women in the 1940s* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982), 204; and *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 12 May 40, 10-Commercial.

Mill": "early divorces, misfit marriages, perjury, and moral decay." Yet Iowa's average age of marriage was higher than the national: 29 for Iowa men and 26 for Iowa women compared to 26 for American men and 23 for American women. The number of marriages dropped 64 percent in 1941, lending support to the theory many marriages occurred in response to the new draft bill of 1940.⁵²

An overwhelming majority of females in 1940 lived within households whether as householder, wife, daughter, granddaughter, or mother: 1,235,353 out of 1,257,774. Only 22,421 females in Iowa lived alone or in any type of group other than a family arrangement. At each Iowa census, the majority of Iowa women were married. In 1940, 593,452 were married, 103,351 were widowed, while 16,002 were divorced and 238,801 were single. The fertility ratio (number of children under age five compared to the number of women between ages 15-49) was the lowest ever in 1940 at 317 compared to 1930's ratio of 352. In other words, Iowa women were having fewer babies after a decade of economic depression.⁵³

Whether married or not, twenty-five percent of all workers in the nation in 1940 were women for whom it was not a question of working or not working, it was an economic necessity. In a contemporary article "How Marriages and Divorces Work Out Today," the author commented:

The percentage of married women who hold down jobs outside the home is increasing--faster, in fact, than the percentage of single women, widows, or divorcees in business. This was true in 1929 as well as now, so presumably it has little to do with the depression. It is impossible to get at an accurate figure on just how many married women work, because of the habit of concealing marriage from the employer in case it would mean being discharged. There are about 10,000,000 women in the country who are gainfully employed, and 3,000,000 of these are known to be married. If there were any way of pinning it on them, the figure

⁵²*Des Moines Sunday Register*, 1 September 1940, 5-Iowa News; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 10 November 1940, 10-General; *Des Moines Tribune*, 4 July 1940, 2; and *Des Moines Register*, 7 September 1941, 4.

⁵³Sandra Charvat Burke and Willis Goudy, *Women in Iowa: 1980 and a Century of Perspective*, 55, 50, and 52. This ratio is computed as in 1940 with 207,117 children under five compared to the number of females aged 15-49 at 653,868.

might be nearer 5,000,000. In the vast majority of these cases, married women are found to be working for the same reason other people work--to help support themselves or their families or other dependents.⁵⁴

Women's labor was shifting from household to factory manufacture as noted in a 1937 summary report by the United States Department of Labor. In Iowa 973,597 women were 14 years or older, and of these, 186,920 considered themselves in the labor force and 170,350 were employed. Of the 186,920 women who considered themselves in the labor force, 106,337 were single, 51,232 married, and 29,351 widowed or divorced.

The largest occupational category for Iowa women was professional worker: teachers, music teachers, nurses, librarians, social workers, and secretaries. Women outnumbered men as professionals--31,823 to 25,322. Teachers were the largest subcategory with 22,096, down from 26,349 in 1930. Of these women, though, only 29 were not white. The *Iowa Bystander* stated that "Negro school teachers once taught in Iowa." Forty years ago black teachers had taught "mixed classes" and "turned out student products that they were proud of." A former black teacher, Mrs. McDowell, commented: "What I would like to see in Iowa is more mixed teachers."⁵⁵

Domestic service work was the next largest occupational category at 29,694 with 19,867 listed as servants, a number also lower than 1930's at 21,447. Women were in some of the male dominated categories with 2,957 as farmers and 1,223 as craftsmen or foremen. Most women, however, who were "gainfully employed" worked in segregated categories.⁵⁶

When women worked, most employed women were called "girls" whether they were young or old, single or married. Ads and articles were consistently condescending such as "These girls have worked for the Iowa Packing Company 7 and 6 1/2 years

⁵⁴*Des Moines Tribune*, 11 June 1940, 12.

⁵⁵Mary Pigeon, *Women in the Economy of the United States of America* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1937), 1; and *The Iowa Bystander*, 19 December 1940, 2. The ratio of black women in Iowa was 1,249,188 white to 8,227 black women along with 359 listed as "other." (Burke and Goudy, *Women in Iowa*, 48)

⁵⁶The 16th Census.

respectively." Or, "40 Girls Working in Machine Shops." This second article began, "Maybe a working girl's place is at a typewriter, or behind a counter selling lingerie, but 40 or more Des Moines girls do not agree. They enjoy working in machine shops. Their manicures may suffer a little, and their noses get shiny with perspiration, but they have jobs--and steady work. A little dirt beats genteel unemployment, they declare." Fred Witter, their foreman, described "the girls" under his direction, "Girls of this age acquire the manual skills of their job more quickly than boys of the same age. They seem to understand the whole idea of working at a job, and apply themselves more diligently."⁵⁷

Women did meet professionally to discuss issues such as the conflict between paid employment and unpaid household work. Three hundred women of the women's department of the Des Moines Chamber of Commerce met in May at the Hotel Savery to hear three local women--a doctor, a lawyer, and a housewife--speak about the status of women in 1940. Mrs. Weitz, the housewife, was most critical of contemporary women. She declared women do too much wishful thinking and hoping and not enough "real striving." She felt women were "not impersonal enough, too fretful, too sensitive, not analytical enough, too intolerant, too competitive, and too hard on each other." Dr. Mary Golden, an osteopathic physician, said women need to take care of themselves and thought that the "speed of the modern day and a lack of relaxation are barriers to individual fitness." She added that "the demon of worry eats up vitality." She also defended working women: "The working wife has saved many a home, and I resent those who talk loosely and go to legislative halls to stop married women from working. A woman employee should be judged on her ability alone." She also thought women spent too much time defending their present positions: "Why, we're already here. What we should do is move forward."⁵⁸

⁵⁷*Des Moines Tribune*, 9 July 1940, 10; and *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 18 August 1940, 12-Commercial.

⁵⁸*Des Moines Register*, 3 May 1940, 1A.

Bessie Caudle knew it was difficult to "move forward" with the continued responsibility of time-demanding housework along with "the unshaken claim of the family." Still, days could be filled with beauty along with the work, and Friday, August 16th, was one such day. "A very pretty day. I washed had it all done at 8:30 then it rained. I took them in & out 3 times such a day. I made another apple goodie for dinner."

The year 1940 was a confusing one for Iowa's citizens as well as for the rest of the world. Farmers were caught within increasing government involvement and dependence along with added mechanization, yet they still embraced an agrarianism of the past. Laborers were caught within a fear of losing status and control in a mechanized world short on resources yet yearned for respectability, stable jobs, and strong unions. Merchants were caught within increased marketing areas and specialization yet longed for the power and simplicity of a nostalgic Main Street. Employed women and housewives were caught within increasing responsibilities and independence along with expanding employment roles yet unsure of their futures because of "the unshaken claim of the family."

In 1940 Iowa's people seemed to be caught within their social and economic circles; they were not yet able to move forward to the complex modern world brought on by the approaching total and technological war nor were they able to move back in time, thought, or action to their more pleasant ideological pasts. As historian Richard Ketchum stated, "What lay ahead was not simply another war." He continued, "It was a global revolution, and when it was over--no matter how it turned out--the possibility existed that there would be no turning back to the tried and true, to the good old days we had known before the Depression." Henry A. Wallace had concluded this in 1940: "The good

old days are not coming back. We are going on into a new world with a determined will to make it a better one."⁵⁹

This world war had started in September 1939 with Adolf Hitler's German invasion of Poland, and the "blitzkriegs"--lightning attacks--raged in Europe. Despite a pause after Poland, the year 1940 would prove to be Adolf Hitler's most successful year, erupting that spring into massive blitzkreigs which overwhelmed Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, and France. Hitler, though once ridiculed by many as "Caesar in Goosestep," was now called the "Messiah of Darkness." His early caricature had become very serious. The British held out miraculously that year against the German assault, providing another year of peace for America. America was still sheltered, now, from the growing war in Europe.⁶⁰

War talk, though, was hard to avoid. The storm of Hitler's domination made even those in the heartland worried. The threatening storm was a frequent symbol for Europe's conflicts, and waiting for the storm, some felt, was almost worse. Iowans could not escape the images of approaching war, real or imagined, but many citizens tried to picture it. Even the State Fair displayed a large pictorial exhibit of the European War to show the "horrors of present war."⁶¹

Still, Iowans were not completely caught in a web of war fear. Despite the distant threats, feelings of optimism and neutrality were especially strong in the Midwest. This isolationism, according to a study by Manfred Jones, resulted from the numerous betrayals of the first world war and the lingering feeling that the United States was protected by two oceans. He theorized that isolationism, though not a fully developed

⁵⁹Richard M. Ketchum, *The Borrowed Years, 1938-1941: America on the Way to War* (New York: Random House, 1993), 369; Wallace, *The American Choice*, 143; and T.A. Larson, *Wyoming's War Years, 1941-1945* (Laramie, Wyoming: The University of Wyoming Press), xiii

⁶⁰William D. Bayles, *Caesars in Goosestep*, (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1940), Chapter 11; and Hanson W. Baldwin, *The Crucial Years, 1939-1941: The World at War* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1976), 77 .

⁶¹Richard Collier, *1940: The World in Flames* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1979), 63; and *Winterset News*, 8 August 1940.

political philosophy, was not based on "ignorance and folly" but a "considered response." Jones felt sympathy for Midwestern isolationists: "In these broad farmlands dotted with tiny townships, isolationists spoke up for the little man, the typical American small townsman and farmer, religious, often poor, hostile to or ignorant of Europe, with a profound distrust of the big city and the big corporation. They were far from being unpatriotic--'America First'--could have been their slogan."⁶²

Not everyone in Iowa, however, expressed isolationist sentiments. Six Iowans sent a telegram to Franklin Roosevelt on Thursday night, June 13th, "urging that the United States Navy go to the aid of the Allies, even if that step means a declaration of war by this nation." Copies of the telegram were sent to Roosevelt's cabinet, Iowa congressmen, and the Committee to Aid France and England. One of those who signed, George Cosson, declared, "This is the most important time in history in the last 2,000 years."⁶³

Some Iowans believed their country should extend help to the Allies; others desired isolation from Europe's conflicts.⁶⁴ International tensions continued to escalate in the political and economic relationships with both Germany and Japan. For all the inward looking of a number of its isolated citizens, the United States moved toward war.

⁶²Manfred Jones, *Isolationism in America, 1935-1941*, p. . viii; Ketchum, *The Borrowed Years*, Chapter 13 (Fortress America & "succer" theories); Manfred Jones, *Isolationism in America, 1935-1941* (Ithica, New York: Cornell University Press, 1966), Ch. 2 (Devil Theory of War). Wayne Cole write in *Roosevelt and the Isolationists* that isolationists were often progressive on social issues concerning farmers, small businessmen, and workers (140); *Des Moines Tribune*, 15 October 1940, 8; and Graham Hutton, *Midwest at Noon* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1946), 18. Some believed America had its own economic difficulties while many others liked the idea of "Fortress America"--safe, secure, strong, alone. Others believed in the "Devil Theory of War"--that a powerful group of men had previously manipulated the nation into war, and some just felt the Yankee aversion to being taken for a "succer."

⁶³*Des Moines Register*, 14 June 1940, 1 and 6. The six men who signed the "plea" were J. N. (Ding) Darling, cartoonist; George Cosson, former Iowa attorney general; Guy Logan, president of Standard Chemical Company, T. Henry Foster, president of John Morrel, B. F. Williams, president of Capital City Commercial College; and Horace Fosket, former president of the Des Moines Chamber of Commerce.

⁶⁴For other interesting Iowa sidelights to the isolationism vs. war debate, see John Doenecke's "Verne Marshall's Leadership of the No Foreign War Committee, 1940," and Clayton Laurie's "Goebbel's Iowan: Frederick W. Kaltenback and Nazi Short-Wave Radio Broadcasts to America, 1939-1945." Both are in *The Annals of Iowa*.

Or, as writer Geoffrey Perrett surmised, "The war came as a surprise that was expected."⁶⁵

General George Marshall commented that "for the first time in our history we are beginning in time of peace to prepare against the possibility of war." The United States began to prepare for conflict, however slowly. On September 16, 1940, Roosevelt signed the Burke-Wadsworth Act instituting the draft in preparation for world war. Some felt it was desperately needed; others thought negatively of conscription. The American system was to be based on democratic principles of decentralization and local-control. In November 1940, Millicent Lincoln of the Iowa Parent-Teacher Organization wrote this plea to parents in her president's address, "We may go into the valley of death—we may lose this democracy. We have sent our sons to register for the draft, to prepare our country's defense. Shall we not consecrate ourselves to a democratic way of life at home?"⁶⁶

Due to the fear of approaching war and the resulting draft legislation, the lives of many Iowa males began to change, forever. On October 16th, 283,449 young men between 21 and 36 years from Iowa registered for possible service in defense of their country. From October 1940 to March 1941, approximately 2,680 men were selected for the draft, receiving that draft letter which began with the salutation "Greetings." In November six brothers from the Patten family of Odebolt, Iowa, volunteered to serve on the Battleship Nevada in the same section, the boiler division. Gilbert, Allen, Ray, Clarence, Marvin, and Merne Patten were assigned to the same ship by special permission, and before their enlistment they playfully posed for a photo spelling their name "Patten" in semaphore figures. Two other Patten boys were waiting to pass age

⁶⁵Baldwin, *The Crucial Years*, 77; and Geoffrey Perrett, *Days of Sadness, Years of Triumph: The American People, 1939-1945* (New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, Inc., 1973), 58.

⁶⁶Thomas Parrish, *Roosevelt and Marshall: Partners in Politics and War* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1989), 152; and *Iowa Parent-Teacher*, November 1940, 2. General Marshall tended to use "Middle West" as a synonym for isolationism. (Parrish, *Roosevelt and Marshall*, 198.)

requirements for enlistment. In late 1940 George and Frank Sullivan, two in another large family of five brothers from Waterloo, were nearing the end of four years in the Navy, stationed on a destroyer in Pearl Harbor.⁶⁷

On October 16th, Bessie Caudle thought of her only son and his future as she wrote: "This is the Day all men from 21 to 35 had to Register in Draft. Clark's No. 45. Wt-190- Race white- Eyes Hazel- Hair Black. Complexion [sic] Light." On the last day of 1940, Bessie wrote, "Another dark and gloomy day. Mrs. Sayer called me at noon about John's letter in regard to Clark getting a job . . . I listened at Midnight Program and we told her [Mildred, his girlfriend] about Clark's job." And so ended Iowa's 1940, with a mother listening to the radio, sadly thinking of her son's leaving for a California defense job, worrying and wishing for him, knowing he would need more than luck in this world fast approaching the most devastating war ever.

⁶⁷The number who registered nationwide approached 16 million men. (Kennett, *G. I. The American Soldier in World War II*, 7.) *State of Iowa Official Register*, 1941-42, 365; Mike Wright, *What They Didn't Teach You About World War II* (Novata, California: Presidio Press, 1998), 2; *Des Moines Tribune*, 11 November 1940, 3; *Odebolt Chronicle*, 1 April 1940, 1; and *Des Moines Tribune*, 3 January 1942, 1.

CHAPTER 2. SOLDIERS OF THE SOIL: THE FARM FRONT

"Country boys, big city lads, home town fellers, they're in the Army now--behind a jeep instead of a plow . . ."

--Carl Sandburg, *Home Front Memo*, 1943

Food is an important weapon of war. During World War I, Food Administrator Herbert Hoover had stated that food would win the war. Before the U. S. entered World War II, Secretary of Agriculture Claude Wickard stated in his "Indiana twang": "Food will win the war and write the peace." The farmer would be the soldier of the soil, fighting on the farm front, producing food for freedom needed to nourish the hungry, ravenous, greedy monster that was modern, total war. "War is a hearty eater," Wickard warned.⁶⁸

Food for Freedom was the urgent, patriotic agricultural campaign to develop and maintain all-out production, and Iowa's farmers, representing a leading agricultural state, would play a significant role in this national battle. The Food for Freedom campaign urged all farmers to grow less of the five basic crops of wheat, corn, cotton, rice, and tobacco, and instead concentrate efforts on producing more pork, beef, eggs, dairy products, fruits, and vegetables which could be concentrated or preserved to fill the dietary needs of the Armed Services and America's allies. On December 9, 1941, the American Farm Bureau pledged its dedication: "Agriculture's part in this war is to supply food for victory--food for victorious armies--our own and those of our allies."⁶⁹

The motivation for Iowa farm families' participation in this campaign throughout the war was "the boys." The 1943 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture* opened with this message:

Boys, who be-grimed and hungry after a long day at hay-making or other field work, and often let the screen door slam as they called out, 'Hey, Mom, what do

⁶⁸*Life*, 11 August 1941, 58-61.

⁶⁹Asher Hobson, "War Adjustments for American Agriculture," *Journal of Farm Economics* 22 (1940): 269-278; John D. Black, "American Agriculture in the New War and Defense Situation," *Journal of Farm Economics* 23 (1941): 28-36; and *Iowa Bureau Farmer*, January 1942, 3.

we have to eat,' were now among the islands of the South Pacific, or were in Africa, Sicily, Italy, Alaska, and in all parts of the world; but the old call of 'what do we have to eat' echoed back to the Iowa farm. Though it was but an echo, 'Mom and Pop' saw to producing enough food that not one of those boys would go hungry.⁷⁰

Food for Freedom was a hard fight for all-out production. Even the United States Treasury Department warned farmers of their needed and increased efforts, "IT'S TRUE that no planes roar down upon your home . . . no shells blow up your fields . . . no armies trample your crops and fields. Yet in this war, *victory begins on the farm*--by producing more Food for Freedom--and by saving more in U.S. Bonds and Stamps!"⁷¹ The Food for Freedom campaign was directly and personally aimed against the Axis enemies: "Bacon is a bullet against Hitler. Lard is a bomb against Japan." Other slogans, in advertisements and articles, were just as direct in their images of farming as a military action: "Farmers . . . Keep 'Em Going In Your Valiant Battle of Production," "Food Begins with the Farmer; He's Passing the Ammunition, Too!," "America's Farmers are Fighting the Good Fight," or "An Army that's Never Been Beaten."

Life magazine told the nation, even before Pearl Harbor, that ten million American workers were "quietly laboring to produce the munition which might have more to do with winning the war than any bomb or shell." The workers were farmers; the munition, food. By July 1942 *Prairie Farmer* summarized the Food for Freedom campaign for its midwestern audience, stating that it was "the biggest agricultural story of all time." Farm families would be doing more as agriculture must break all previous production records for this effort. Because of predicted labor and machinery shortages, farmers would work longer hours, farm women would play a significant role, and boys and girls would do "the work of grown men," especially in the midwestern production of soybeans, hogs, corn, and milk. American farmers supported the best fed army in the world along with its

⁷⁰State of Iowa, 1943 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture* (Des Moines: The State of Iowa, 1944), 9.

⁷¹*Farm Journal*.

industrial workers. As *Prairie Farmer* stated, "Food means victory. And victory means freedom."⁷²

The attitude toward agricultural production had dramatically and rapidly changed from the restricted production of the New Deal and Depression era to all-out production goals based on the sudden increasing demands of war. A. J. Loveland, Iowa's Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA) chairman, stated at a farmer's meeting in Hampton, "In response to the challenge set up in the 1943 crop and livestock goals, Iowa farmers are going all-out for production this year. They have made the shifts in crops asked for and they are going to make a remarkable record in production of livestock and livestock products." Few individuals or institutions questioned at the time the likely social and environmental effects increased war production might have on farm people and their land.⁷³

The first farmer in Iowa to file his Food for Freedom goals as part of the farm defense program was Clarence Howell, described as owner and operator of a 129 acre farm northwest of Winterset in Madison County. *Wallaces' Farmer* described the future farm work required by the government, "The Food-for-Freedom program called for every farmer to put every acre of land, every hour of labor, every bit of farm machinery, fertilizer, and other supplies to the use that would best serve the nation's wartime needs." The objectives of this production plan were devoted to current civilian maintenance, aid to allies in need, and peace table bargaining power. Since less than fifteen percent of the nation's men were farmers in the early 1940s, Food for Freedom was described as "a job for Atlas himself."⁷⁴

⁷² *Life*, 11 August 1941, 58; and *The Prairie Farmer*, 11 July 1942.

⁷³ *Des Moines Register*, 5 May 1943, 6; and Raymond C. Smith, "Social Effects of the War and the Defense Program on American Agriculture," *Journal of Farm Economics* 23 (1941): 15.

⁷⁴ *Wallaces' Farmer*, 6 February 1943; Howard Tolley, *The Farmer Citizen at War*, 272; *Winterset Madisonian*, 22 October 1941; John J. Corson, *Manpower for Victory. Total Mobilization for Total War* (New York: Farrar and Rhinehart, Inc., 1943), 36; John B. Canning, "Foods for Defense" *Journal of Farm Economics* 23 (November 1941): 701; and David Hinshaw, *The Home Front* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1943), 233 and 235.

In a way, the war effort simplified farming. This new concentration on production dominated farmers' thinking and moved them away from the suffering of a "surplus-psychology" in the previous decades. David Hinshaw in his 1943 *The Home Front* drew a farm analogy to illustrate the deliberate, all-out efforts needed after Pearl Harbor despite earlier midwestern isolationist politics: "Men brought up on farms know how to make a balking horse pull his load without beating or cursing him. The simple, never-failing way is to spread a handful of dirt over his tongue, get back in the wagon while the horse is indignantly trying to spit the dirt out, and tell him to 'get-up.' He does. And in a hurry." Hinshaw stated this was an elemental approach because a horse can only think of one thing at a time just like most people, farmers included. "Dirt in his mouth, an unexpected attack from an unsuspected source, switches his mind from balking to his new troubles."⁷⁵ From Pearl Harbor on, war and only war would be the focus, and production seemed to have no bounds.

Although farmers had eagerly awaited the opportunity to produce and perhaps prosper, all-out production under wartime conditions came with the risks of surpluses, inflation, and waste. Some government regulation would still be needed to coordinate agricultural production goals, determine the amount of increased acres, and decide on the proportion of newly introduced crops. The Food for Freedom farm front fight would have to be a coordinated battle. Farmers as soldiers of the soil must follow commands for a victorious farm front. Production and profit were also weighted with war worries, a guilt that this production came at someone else's expense. Farmers also worried about the effects of all-out war production on soil erosion and the post-war economy's inflationary impact on agriculture as they well-remembered the First World War era's cycle of profit and then depression.⁷⁶

⁷⁵Hinshaw, *The Home Front*, 29.

⁷⁶Sherman E. Johnson, "Adapting Agricultural Programs for War Needs," *Journal of Farm Economics* 24 (February 1942): 1.

War planting began in the spring of 1942. *Life* dedicated a May 1942 issue to "Spring Planting" and stated that "this year must bear the richest harvest in the world's troubled history." The magazine offered descriptions of Iowa's beauty and strength as needed in this war production effort: "At the beginning of May, in Iowa, the world's most bountiful soil was rolled over in long black ribbons by tractors that throbbed against its weight, then harrowed smooth for planting by countermarching teams of horses." The key to Iowa's prosperity was its history of a "stabilizing diversity," a combination of animals and plants set on rich land. *Life* continued, "The Iowa landscape has always reflected prosperity. An airplane view shows long, straight roads following the section lines, punctuated at neat intervals by the windbreak of trees that shelters the white farmhouse, the capacious red barn and tall silo. It is a land of proud farm families, whose sons do not migrate to the cities."⁷⁷ The war, however, would change this last factor as many of Iowa's sons and daughters would leave, whether by choice or draft.

The key element of war farm production would be increased mechanization, and advertisements tried to sell this point. *Prairie Farmer* warned its readers of the increasing government demands of farmers: "Farmers must do a better job of farming than ever before--and that means they must make full use of every bit of labor-saving machinery at their command."⁷⁸ To fuel this drive for production, farmers increasingly turned to "power" farming--the use of gas engine tractors and implements.

Horses were still a presence on Iowa farms, especially on smaller units which could not risk the considerable financial commitment for new equipment along with the constant fuel bills. With horses, farmers could literally grow the animal's "fuel." Horses and mules which labored on Iowa's farms were very important in the present wartime emergency, and as the *Iowa Farm Bureau Spokesman* explained in January 1943, "Less new machinery and a call for the greatest food production in history means the 'old hoss'

⁷⁷*Life*, 25 May 1942, 79, 84, and 85.

⁷⁸*The Prairie Farmer*, 23 January 1943, 15.

will be tramping for many Iowa farms this spring." Some horses were dying from what was commonly known as sleeping sickness, and Iowa veterinarians led a vaccination campaign in 1942 and 1943 against this disease, Equine Encephalomyelitis. By 1944, Iowa was still the leading horse state with 612,000 head while Texas was second with 588,000. Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin followed in rank. Forty-five percent of Iowa farms were entirely dependent on animal power, and most farmers with access to mechanical power also used horses for some jobs.⁷⁹

Many farmers did not want to give up their horses for emotional reasons. The editor of *The Iowa Veterinarian* noted in 1944 the sentiment that millions felt for the horse despite, as he stated, "the efforts of certain machinery manufacturers and star-gazing editors who seem intent to eliminate all horses from the work and recreation of our country." This editor felt that they would never succeed in that objective. He was referring to such industrialists as Henry Ford whose company in one tractor advertisement depicted a matched pair of work horses as "14,000,000 Beloved Culprits." Ford called the horse "a waster of land and time, the primary wealth of the farmer." His ads would continue to attack the use of horses throughout the war as misguided, romantic, and unprofitable.⁸⁰

Though horses were a traditional source of farm power, acres were devoted to their upkeep which could be utilized for human consumption, especially in a time of all-out war production needs. Historians Alan Olmstead and Paul Rhode stated that this change from draft power to the internal combustion engine was "one of the most far-reaching technological changes ever to occur in the United States." By the middle of World War II, despite a steel shortage and the rationing of farm machinery, farmers had

⁷⁹*Iowa Veterinarian*, January-February 1945, 30; *Iowa Farm Bureau Spokesman*, 2 January 1943, 7; *Iowa Veterinarian*, November-December 1942, 22; and *Iowa Veterinarian*, September-October 1943, 36. Four hundred and thirty-eight vets vaccinated 61,320 horses and mules in 1942 and 15,648 in 1943, but 632 horses were infected in 1942 with 129 deaths but only 86 were infected in 1943 with 26 deaths.

⁸⁰*Iowa Veterinarian*, November-December 1944, 20; and *Farm Journal and Farmer's Wife*, 5.

adopted mechanization to the point where Iowa farmers averaged one tractor for every 218 acres.⁸¹

Three distinct messages were presented during World War II concerning the need for agricultural mechanization: 1) tractors were a necessary weapon for total warfare, 2) Americans had had a long and successful history of using machines, and 3) machines would provide a better life on the farm along with a future of freedom. The slogans proclaimed by tractor advertisements undeniably made the connection between the war and the farm, the soldier and the farmer, the battle and the harvest, as the following litany suggests:

"1942/the year of the Tractor as well as the TANK--PRODUCE and WIN!"

"This, too, is mechanized warfare!"

"He Drives a Weapon . . . and the FARMALL fights for food!"

"The Man Behind the Plow Backs the Man Behind the Gun!"

"Battle Lines of the Food Front"

"Plowshares are Swords"

"Farm Commando--Ready to Roll"⁸²

Tractors were used during the first World War as the military tank had developed from an early tractor model with crawler wheels. The comparable images of tanks and tractors continued throughout the Second World War, combined as symbols of American defense. When Iowa farmer Robert Leichliter was ill, his neighbors lined their thirty-four tractors across his corn field, and the *Des Moines Register* called it "Zero Hour for Attack

⁸¹ Alan L. Olmstead and Paul W. Rhode, "The Agricultural Mechanization Controversy of the Interwar Years," *Agricultural History* 68 (Summer 1994): 35-53; A. N. Johnson, "The Impact of Farm Machinery on the Farm Economy" *Agricultural History* 24 (January 1950): 59; 1942 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture*, 187; Robert E. Ankli, "Horses vs. Tractors on the Corn Belt" *Agricultural History* 54 (January 1980): 134; Reynold Wik, "The American Farm Tractor as Father of the Military Tank," *Agricultural History* 54 (January 1980): 126; and Arthur Peterson, "Governmental Policy Relating to Farm Machinery in World War I" *Agricultural History* 17 (January 1943): 31-40; *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 17 September 1942, 1; and 1943 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture*, 11. The number of cultivated acres had increased during the war thus somewhat increasing the ratio even though the total number of tractors had increased.

⁸²Repeated farm ads throughout the war years in various farming journals.

on Farm Front, Not Battlefield": "The roar of the 34 tractors as they charged across the fields might be compared with a string of army tanks charging across the country side."⁸³

The second message from popular farm journals compared the strength and imagination of early Americans to present day farmers. Symbols of men fighting against the odds such as Paul Revere, the Minute Men, or westering pioneers developed this theme of American ingenuity and technological competence. Albert J. Loveland, Chairman of the Iowa AAA Committee, saw the image of the founding fathers when he compared the battle on the farm front to Minute Men ancestors in the American Revolution. The *Iowa Agriculturist* told its readers, agriculture students at Iowa State College, a similar message, "The whole life and training of generations of Americans fit us to excel in mechanized warfare. From pioneer days we have been an ingenious people. Starting in a vast, undeveloped country, we have had the inventive skill and the resolution to shorten distances and lighten toil with machinery."⁸⁴

The third message from the tractor ads often contained very emotional promises along with the sharply contrasting military messages. World War II proved to be a war of engines with a belief in their power. Power farming meant freedom and better living for one's family. Many ads claimed that mechanization would create a farm to which sons and daughters would like to return. In a study of World War II advertising, Frank Fox called this message from Madison Avenue "the illusion of omnipotence: an abiding faith that the world's problems could be solved by machines."⁸⁵

⁸³*Red Oak Sun*, 30 January 1941, 7; and *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 25 April 1943, 7-Commercial.

⁸⁴*Des Moines Sunday Register*, 27 December 1942; and *Iowa Agriculturist*, March 1943, back cover page.

⁸⁵*Farm Journal*; and *Successful Farming*, January 1941, 64; Richard Overly, *Why the Allies Won* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1995), Chapter 7: A War of Engines, Technology and Military Power; *Successful Farming*, February 1944, 11; *Successful Farming*, December 1942, 26; *Iowa Agriculturist*, March 1943, 4; *Iowa Agriculturist*, April 1943, 3; *Wallaces' Farmer*, 11 January 1941, 3; and Frank Fox, *Madison Avenue Goes to War. The Strange Military Career of American Advertising, 1941-1945*. (Brigham Young University, Charles E. Merrill Monograph Series in the Humanities and Social Sciences. June 1975, Volume 4, Number 1): 96. Farmers and economists really had no idea how farm machinery costs would escalate by the end of the century. In 1950 A. N. Johnson wrote an essay for *Agricultural History* titled "The Impact of Farm Machinery on the Farm Economy." He ended this on what he believed was a humorous note as he imagined a farmer 50 years from now sitting on his porch

By the end of the war, a British traveler noted the midwestern mechanical speed-up in that "the most mechanized agriculture in the world has been mechanized more rapidly than ever before." Later, some would conclude positively, that mechanized farming offered a better life style, while others perceived the change negatively, believing that machinery separated farmers from the earth they worked.⁸⁶ But during World War II, there appeared to be no choice. All-out production mattered desperately, and machines seemed to be able to fulfill their promises.

The physical dangers of mutilation or even death from accidents involving farm machinery presented a severe drawback to mechanized agriculture . An insurance ad from *Wallaces' Farmer* stated that 50,010 members of the A.E.F. were killed in action and died of wounds during the first World War, yet 95,500 Americans died accidentally in 1940 of whom 4,500 were farmers, making agriculture the most dangerous industry. By 1945, President Harry Truman declared a National Farm Safety Week, July 22 through 28, because across the country "between 40-50 farm dwellers are killed by accidents each day, with an annual rate from 15,000-17,000." Iowa farmers utilized a large number of the three machines which caused the greatest number of farm accidents--the tractor, the combine, and the cornpicker. One out of every ten accidents in Iowa resulted from corn pickers. For example, two Kossuth County farmers were hurt by corn pickers during November harvests. Milton Bebo had been working alone when his belt caught in the machine, and he was found over an hour later, pinned to the machine. George Wempen

operating \$20,000 worth of farm machinery by pushing buttons. Johnson says his ghost would say to that future farmer: "Heck if I had that much money, I would not even push buttons, I would just sit." (62) Just two years away from his futuristic scene, just one average-sized tractor in 1998 can cost well over \$90,000.
⁸⁶Graham Hutton, *Midwest at Noon*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946); Hiram Drache, "Midwest Agriculture: Changing with Technology," *Agricultural History* 50 (January 1976): 302; and E. Bradford Burns, *Kinship with the Land. Regionalist Thought in Iowa, 1894-1942* (Iowa City, Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 1996), 166.

mangled his leg in a new cornpicker when his new unionall pants became caught in a PTO with no safety cover.⁸⁷

Accidents had increased not only from mechanization but from wartime conditions. Iowa State Extension underlined the safety fact that most farmers knew precautions they should follow but hurried and did not follow safety measures. J. B. Davidson, head of the agricultural engineering department at Iowa State College, stated that nearly all farm accidents could be prevented with care and responsibility. *Prairie Farmer* also discussed the issue: "With inexperienced and insufficient help, longer hours with accompanying fatigue, and use of patched up machinery, American farmers have greater need than ever before to adopt safe practices."⁸⁸

Although many accidents were due to human failure, especially with machinery, sometimes livestock were also involved. *Successful Farming* asked its readers, "Are you a Shut-Eye Farmer?" in which a number of scenarios were described that "John (Dead) Doe" performed on a typical farm and how he could have performed these chores safely. *Wallaces' Farmer* portrayed a more realistic and gruesome picture: "No telegram to announce the death of her son came to Mrs. Arthur Ovren, Buena Vista county, Iowa. She stood at her kitchen window and saw her son thrown to the ground and killed instantly." Her eighteen-year-old son Russel was driving a team of horses hitched to a manure spreader. The journal described the fatal accident: "The team became frightened and began to run. Russell's clothing caught on a lever on the spreader, he lost his balance, was thrown to the ground, run over, and dragged for some distance. When they reached him, he was dead."⁸⁹

The National Safety Council reported that farm accidents killed almost as many as war in the 28 months after Pearl Harbor, 40,000 to 42,081. The Moline Power

⁸⁷*Des Moines Register*, 24 November 1943, 34-A; *Kossuth County Advance*, 2 November 1943, 1; and *Kossuth County Advance*, 9 November 1944, 1. (PTO = Power Take Off)

⁸⁸*Better Iowa*, 22 October 1945, 1; and *The Prairie Farmer*, 21 July 1945, 18.

⁸⁹*Successful Farming*, December 1942, 23; and *Wallaces' Farmer*, 1 July 1944, 5.

Implement Company advertised that "power farming is safe if you observe safety rules" such as PTO safety shields and common sense. The ad stated that carelessness caused most accidents so they urged farmers to "think safety, talk safety, and practice safety-- always!"⁹⁰

Farmers had turned more and more to expensive machinery when a labor shortage quickly developed in 1942. This labor shortage was the central concern that farmers on the food front expressed: the loss of sons and young hired men. They had provided the traditional supply of labor on most Iowa farms and now were lost to draft calls and war jobs though a later farm deferment would keep many young men from the armed services or war industries. Agriculture had not been initially classified as an essential industry to make farm boys eligible for deferment, and farm labor had been traditionally underpaid compared with industrial work so many young farm hands and sons left the farm to earn more money or gain new experiences. By 1943, the farm labor situation grew progressively tighter as the farm population in Iowa declined from 776,250 in 1940 to 760,789 in 1943, largely at the expense of farm manpower. This labor problem remained a continuous national concern throughout the war years as a Connecticut dairy farmer summarized quite succinctly, "The war made hell with the help."⁹¹

A central concern of many Iowa farm families was deferment of their sons from military service. "The United States is going to be in a hell of a shape for food if manpower is pulled from the farms at the rate now demanded," Edward O'Neal, president

⁹⁰Wallaces' *Farmer*, 21 July 1945, 3.

⁹¹According to a 1943 Gallup Poll, 77 percent of American farmers considered the shortage of labor to be their biggest problem. (Marshall, "Hired Men: Iowa's Unsung Farm Resource," *The Palimpsest*, 152.) C. Calvin Smith, *War and Wartime Changes. The Transformation of Arkansas, 1940-1945*. (Fayetteville, Arkansas: The University of Arkansas Press, 1986), 122; Albert A. Blum, "The Farmer, the Army and the Draft," *Agricultural History* 38 (October 1964): 41; Sheldon Menefee, *Assignment U.S.A.* (New York, Reynal & Hitchcock, Inc., 1943), 243; 1942 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture*, 10-11; Howard Tolley, *The Farmer Citizen at War*, 164; Richard Polenberg, *America at War: The Home Front, 1941-1945* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), 58-59; Corson, *Manpower for Victory*, 57; 1943 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture*, 10; and Roy Hoopes, *Americans Remember the Home Front: An Oral Narrative* (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1977), 215.

of the National Farm Bureau, told a Des Moines audience of farmers in October 1942. He continued, "They say food is as important for victory as ammunition. If they really mean that they have got to give recognition to the man who serves on the farm, the same as in the army." Brigadier General Charles Grahl, Iowa's director of selective service, had recently notified all draft boards to reclassify farm work into one of two deferred classifications, especially on livestock, dairy, and poultry farms.⁹²

Many young men faced a strong social stigma with deferment status. A great deal of discrimination existed in wartime America against men not "fighting for their country" although farm laborers had legitimate deferrals for agricultural production needs. Writer Archie Satterfield described the context in that patriotism had "tunnel vision": "if you looked young and healthy, you should have been fighting." *Iowa Farm Economist* asked 202 young men if their present job on the farm was "the most important contribution to the war effort." Ninety-three percent said yes, two percent said no while five percent were undecided. When asked if they felt "under community or neighborhood pressure to be in uniform," eighteen percent said yes while twenty percent said no. The journal noted that this pressure was stronger near large communities. The Food for Freedom campaign tried to reassure these young men in various ways such as one poster which depicted an image of an enlisted man placing his hand on a young farmer's shoulder with the caption-- "Those overalls are your UNIFORM, bud."⁹³

Many young farm hands did leave, by choice or draft, for the army or the navy. Hugh Sidney, as a high school student and son of Greenfield's local newspaper editor, remembered many of the local farm boys' departures. "The old Trailways bus would

⁹²*Des Moines Register*, 10 October 1942, 5; and *Des Moines Tribune*, 28 October 1942, 1.

⁹³Archie Satterfield, *The Home Front: An Oral History of the War Years in America: 1941-1945* (New York: Playboy Press, 1981), 117; Robert C. Clark, "Fighting or Farm Front?" *Iowa Farm Economist*, January-February 1943, 14; and Mark Jonathan Harris, Franklin D. Mitchell, and Steven J. Schechter, *The Home Front. America During World War II* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1984), 166. Fifty percent of the young men surveyed by the *Iowa Farm Economist* wanted to continue farming but believed "definite advantages" would go to returning veterans as they remembered the "honor, privileges and prestige bestowed upon the veterans of World War I."

come to the hotel, which was right beside my dad's newspaper, to take the draftees into Des Moines, and Dad insisted on a picture of every guy. Almost every day, it seemed, there would be another ten or fifteen, and they all lined up in their farmer clothes with their cardboard suitcases."⁹⁴

The Selective Training and Service Act of 1940 had forbidden group deferments, yet in the "Teen Age Draft Bill" of late 1942 an amendment was introduced by Senator Tydings of Maryland which provided for the deferment from military service of essential farm workers. Local draft boards were to consider four points before a farm deferment could be granted: importance of farm's products, farm's contribution, worker's skills, and the relative labor shortage in each particular region.⁹⁵

Still, farm deferments represented a form of special consideration for only one group of the population. Hugh Sidney described the perception of some Iowa townspeople: "We did have a little bitterness in our part of the country. They deferred farm boys. A lot went, but some took those agricultural deferments to work on farms. Quite legitimate, but it caused a bitter feeling, no question about it." In May 1944 the War Department considered the food crisis to have passed and wanted to reinstate under new draft regulations a large percentage of the 600,000 men under age 26 nationwide who had been deferred as "essential to agriculture." President Roosevelt ordered the draft boards to re-examine the classifications of all young men as the need for soldiers grew more desperate. Still, farmers continued to be deferred, and by early 1945, three farmers were deferred to every essential industrial worker. However, on May 3, 1945, President Truman, the first president since Ulysses S. Grant to ever have worked as a "dirt farmer," denied the congressional resolution that would have continued draft deferments to

⁹⁴Hoopes, *Americans Remember the Home Front*, 263.

⁹⁵Blum, "The Farmer, the Army and the Draft," 34; Corson, *Manpower for Victory*, 39; and Harry Schwartz, "Hired Farm Labor in World War II," *Journal of Farm Economics* 24 (1942): 831.

agricultural workers regardless of military needs. When he vetoed the so-called "Flannagan bill," he stated, "No group should be given special privileges."⁹⁶

Despite deferments and mechanization, farmers were forced to turn to other sources of labor. Officials told farmers across the nation to "abandon luxurious prejudices" which kept them from hiring "Negroes, Mexicans, and women" as this war should produce a democratic effort from all the home fronts. By 1943 Iowa had 70,000 fewer farm workers, and its farm machinery was older and difficult to repair. The situation was growing desperate. Farmers turned to townspeople, foreign labor, and teenagers as well as their own families to aid in their labor crisis.⁹⁷

Urban citizens who assisted on the farm front were often members of organizations such as civic groups, chambers of commerce, and women's clubs. The communities of Montezuma, Chariton, Marengo, Le Mars, and Jefferson were a few of the communities to win the Merit Award Certificate from the *Des Moines Register* for "outstanding accomplishment in the great home-front Battle of Food" for their "effective cooperation." Governor Hickenlooper issued an official proclamation in May 1943 to the people of Iowa for "their fine spirit and splendid cooperation." The proclamation's intent was to help increase Iowa farmers' war production by increasing cooperative efforts from non-farming citizens. The document proclaimed, "Every youth, every man, every woman, not now engaged in farm work, should now volunteer in a spirit of high patriotism for service, each according to capacity and strength and available time, in the big production job, whether it be full-time, part-time, or an hourly basis." The period from May 18 to June 19, 1943, was therefore declared Labor Registration Period for Food

⁹⁶Alan Clive, "The Michigan Farmer in World War II," *Michigan History* 60 (1976): 303; Hoopes, 263; Blum, 39; *Des Moines Register*, 5 May 1944, 1; Richard Polenberg, *War and Society: The United States, 1941-1945* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1972), 182; *Des Moines Register*, 14 August 1945, 16; and J. Robert Moskin, *Mr. Truman's War. The Final Victories of World War II and the Birth of the Postwar World* (New York: Random House, 1996), 130.

⁹⁷Harry Schwartz, "Hired Farm Labor in World War II," *Journal of Farm Economics* 24 (1942): 328-329; Corson, 39; 1943 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture*, 376; and *Iowa Farm Bureau Spokesman*, 26 February 1944, 11.

Production and Preservation in Iowa. The *Iowa Farm Bureau Spokesman* in the following month praised the contributions of Reverend J. S. Cook and Reverend D. D. Fleichman who replaced hired farmhands along with two businessmen, Robert Miller of Adel and R. B. Stittsworth of Van Meter, who operated tractors in the evenings. Even by August 1945 advertisements were still printed by Younkers Department Store to "Help the Farmer--During Vacation or In your Spare Time--It's Patriotic and Fun, too!"--by volunteering through county extension service centers.⁹⁸

The source of labor which Iowa farmers and their families resisted were those perceived as foreign. *Wallaces' Farmer* asked its readers in 1944, "How do Iowa farm people feel about the bringing in of either Americans of Japanese ancestry or white Americans from the Southern hills?" In both cases, the proposed workers would be outside draft eligibility and within family groups. It is interesting to note, however, that *Wallaces' Farmer* displayed considerable negative emotion in its headline: "Would You Hire Japs!" Farm people were described as "doubtful" about those of Japanese ancestry: only nine percent of the women and thirteen percent of the men liked the alternative source of labor while 74 percent of the women and 72 percent of the men were strongly opposed. Concerning farm laborers from Kentucky, the result was much more positive with 40 percent of the men in favor and 36 percent against. Farmers did not want to import labor but would rather rely on their own family members. *Wallaces' Farmer* noted that almost everyone voiced an opinion. A Dubuque County man's comment was described as typical, "I don't want any labor but my own boy." Others were bitter and even violently opposed such as this Lee County man, "If a Jap came on my farm, I'd kill him the first chance I had." And a Dallas County woman responded, "I wouldn't want Japanese-Americans living next to me. I just wouldn't feel safe." Another Lee County man thought Kentuckians should be in the army: "Kentuckians are good fighters. Let

⁹⁸*Des Moines Register*, 28 July 1943, 6; *Iowa Farm Bureau Spokesman*, 29 May 1943, 1; *Iowa Farm Bureau Spokesman*, 5 June 1943, 3; and *Des Moines Register*, 14 August 1945, 16.

them go in the Army. Keep our own boys at home." Other farmers felt, since the proposed workers were American citizens, they deserved a chance.⁹⁹

A year later in 1945 *Wallaces' Farmer* asked the same labor questions to measure if Iowa farmers had changed their views in light of an even more desperate labor situation. Attitudes had changed little--only 10 percent of farmers would hire Japanese-Americans while 48 percent would hire Kentuckians. Many felt they could relieve their labor struggles by purchasing more machinery or they believed the war was drawing to an end. Many Iowans continued to express anti-Japanese views such as a Chickasaw County man's, "I couldn't trust a Jap now, even if he were American born." Other views were more open such as one from Jones County: "Why not bring in Japanese workers? After all, there are a lot of German families around here, and they work just as hard and are just as true to this country as many American-born people." A woman from Audubon County was very sympathetic based on her own experiences though she still would exclude them: "Don't bring any Japs in here. I can remember the way we were suspected, abused in 1917, because my parents were natives of Germany. This was in spite of the fact that my brother was in the American army. The remembrance rankles even now. If these Japs were brought here, they would be subject to the same treatment. I wouldn't wish that on any one."¹⁰⁰

Earlier plans had been made by Iowa Quakers at the Scattergood Hostel near West Branch to resettle Japanese-Americans but this met with so much local resistance that the plan was abandoned. However, local residents had displayed no resistance to a previous plan to relocate refugees from Nazi Germany. Also, some of the Quakers feared with the relocation plan that "pent-up war hysteria" would be directed at themselves as pacifists. At this same time, however, the War Relocation Authority determined forty-two cities would act as relocation centers for Japanese-Americans, and Des Moines was selected as

⁹⁹*Wallaces' Farmer*, 9 January 1943, 1 and 5.

¹⁰⁰*Wallaces' Farmer*, 15 January 1944, 1 and 21.

one of these centers. By war's end, of the 110,000 Japanese-Americans who had been uprooted from their homes on the West coast to internment camps, almost 30,000 were resettled in the Midwest, 500 in Iowa. Most Japanese-American citizens arrived in Des Moines in mid-1942; most left immediately after January 1945. Only six of the original five hundred remained by 1988.¹⁰¹

One farm woman wrote to the *Register* to persuade others to hire second generation Japanese Americans, Nissei, on Iowa family farms short on labor. Alison Escher from Cumming had hired a Japanese-American worker, Robert Ohki, when her husband finally agreed after working from six in the morning to midnight every day that spring. Her neighbors' reactions to the new farmhand were one of "terror" with the quick comment, "I wouldn't have one on the place!" Despite some of Mrs. Escher's initial stereotypical reactions to Robert's wearing collegiate clothes instead of a kimono and his being able to eat a meal without rice, she gained a great deal of respect for Robert and his family's plight in a concentration camp in the western United States. She concluded her essay by describing a scene between Robert and a local young man, "If I had shut my eyes I would have thought the conversation was between my own nephews."¹⁰²

Discrimination not only existed against Japanese-American workers, but any idea of newcomers moving into farm communities was viewed either with skepticism or outright anger, no matter how much the aid was needed. When 223 men from Barbados Island in the West Indies came to Oelwein, Iowa, to detassel corn for DeKalb, many stereotypical reactions were expressed toward the black men though their behavior was described throughout their stay as "above approach" [sic—reproach]. Although their labor was very much needed, this community of 8,000 was described as "having difficulty

¹⁰¹Des Moines Public Library, WWII vertical file, *Des Moines Register*, 24 May 1988; Cardozier, *The Mobilization of the United States*, 61 and 62; Phillips, *The 1940s*, 113; and Peter H. Curtis, "A Place of Peace in a World of War: The Scattergood Refugee Hostel, 1939-1945," *The Palimpsest* (March/April 1984): 52.

¹⁰²*Des Moines Register*, 11 October 1943, 6.

acclimating itself to the influx," and five "beer shops" posted signs, "colored trade is not solicited," along with barring foreign workers from the local skating rink. One of the men from Barbados stated in an English accent his feelings concerning this discrimination, "Evidently these people do not admire us."¹⁰³

Ironically, a foreign source of labor which was officially welcomed in Iowa was the German prisoners of war. The first "PWs" were brought to the United States in May 1943, but additional facilities needed to be quickly built. The War Department asked the USDA to prepare a list of possible secure sites which could also utilize this labor. The employment of prisoners of war did have some restrictions. Prisoners could not compete with free local labor in compensation, and the work must be easily taught in large supervised groups. A typical work schedule was six days a week, 7:30-4:30. Algona and later Clarinda would be chosen as the two prisoner camp sites in Iowa. In Algona the camp opened on the 27th anniversary of U.S. entrance into World War I (April 1944). Although the labor of these German men was needed by Iowa farmers, it still seemed a risky solution. When the nine carloads of Germans stepped from the train that first day at 5 a.m., three hundred soldiers guarded them with tommy guns against any break into the Iowa countryside.¹⁰⁴

Over ninety percent of all farm labor needs were met by the farm family itself as measured in 1943 and 1944, and greater efficiency and longer hours increased production, twenty percent above the 1909 to 1942 period. The USDA found that the work day of farm operators in all north central states averaged 12.8 hours, an hour longer than in June

¹⁰³*Des Moines Sunday Register*, 23 July 1944, 1-Section 4 and L-5. Other foreign farm workers arrived in Iowa and were also considered an emergency labor source: 1,178 Mexican workers in August 1944 and 1,467 in August 1945 along with 314 Jamaican workers in July 1943 and 429 in 1944 and 766 in 1945. (Rasmussen, *Emergency Farm Labor*, 226 and 261.)

¹⁰⁴Rasmussen, *Emergency Farm Labor*, 98-99; Gansberg, *Stalag U.S.A.*, 5, 13, 20, 26, and 34; *Kossuth County Advance*, 6 April 1944, 1; and *Kossuth County Advance*, 18 September 1945, 1. Clarinda would in 1944 switch to Japanese prisoners. POW camps were located in 44 of the 48 states, and the numbers employed nationally were 41,000 in 1943; 102,000 in 1944; 122,000 in 1945; and 14,000 in 1946. The POW camp which closed in Algona, Iowa, in February 1946 cost \$1,280,668. The Clarinda complex cost \$1,300,000 and held captive 3,000 prisoners with 500 military police.

1940, and this was often every day of the week. As R. C. Meyer, a 51 year old owner of 120 acres outside of Iowa Falls, summed up the labor shortage, "It's pretty hard--one man doing two men's work."¹⁰⁵

Because of their own long hours, farmers continued to ridicule labor's push for the forty-hour week (prior to war conditions) or other labor concerns such as overtime pay during the war. In October 1942 at a meeting of 2,500 Iowa farmers at the Des Moines Shrine Auditorium, the men laughed "uproariously" when Edward O'Neal of the National Economic Stabilization Board jabbed at labor's forty-hour week. Later, on a more serious note, he asked his audience, "How can the farmer compete for labor when these high factory wages are paid, with the country going deeper and deeper into debt to do it? The war is becoming exceedingly serious, and the rate we are paying wages is greatly increasing our difficulties." Dr. C. C. Franks, editor of *The Iowa Veterinarian*, had expressed this same theme in an earlier May 1942 editorial in which he praised Iowa farmers' efforts as compared to industry's demands. He stated that Iowa farmers were equivalent to Iowa sons in the service, "Equally as important but less spectacular is the job of the farmer in stepping up his meat, milk, and poultry production without waiting to bicker or bargain as to wages, time and a half for overtime, 40 hour weeks or closed shops."¹⁰⁶

During the war farmers worked long days, sometimes fourteen to sixteen hours, and it is not difficult to imagine the strained nerves and muscles along with the added stress created by this situation. Conflicts inevitably arose on many family farms, but this fact was omitted from the public record. Sarah Elbert has researched contemporary aspects of family farm labor requirements and dynamics. Unlike industry's continuous

¹⁰⁵*Better Iowa*, 7 February 1944, 1; 1944 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture*, 350; W. H. Stacy, "Holding Their Own," *Iowa Farm Economist*, October 1943, 11; and *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 14 March 1945, 4-Iowa News.

¹⁰⁶*Des Moines Sunday Register*, 11 October 1942, 7-Iowa News; and *Iowa Veterinarian*, May-June 1942, 10

production, agriculture requires "sequential production" in which labor is suspended during some periods but becomes intense at other times, particularly planting and harvesting. The farm family of workers can afford to be "inactive" for periods unlike traditional industrial workers. Families are presumably committed and loyal to the farm-- "a consciousness of commitment"--and will work for other reasons beside financial gain. Yet problems arise, especially with authority, creating within the farm family "a terrain of loving contest." World War II intensified these conditions of production, commitment, and authoritative control as women and children were increasingly called upon to expand their spheres of duties often without formal rewards of money or land. These potential conflicts were never publicly aired during the war, however, because the farm family had to be America's greatest victory team.¹⁰⁷

Some institutions believed farm families were essentially more cooperative than urban families. *Prairie Farmer* proclaimed the farm family's mission: "Because their farms are their business, their security, their very life, farm families always work together like no others. And this 'working together' has made it possible for American farming to overcome all obstacles and accomplish 'miracles' in food production for war." Farm families received certificates from the USDA for outstanding "all-out farm war production" in the Food for Freedom campaign. The *Iowa Farm Economist* believed farm families were more understanding of work pressures because the entire family, children included, "can see, understand and share the work of others" in this war crisis, thus creating greater family unity.¹⁰⁸

Perhaps, though, families felt a sense of guilt if they complained about their amount of work when soldiers were fighting in desperate war conditions, especially

¹⁰⁷Sarah Elbert, "Farmer Takes a Wife: Women in America's Farming Families" in Lourdes Beneria and Catharine R. Stimpson, editors, *Women, Households, and the Economy* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987), 181-182.

¹⁰⁸*The Prairie Farmer*, 13 May 1944, 3; *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 17 March 1943, 10; and *Iowa Farm Economist*, October 1943, 11.

young men from their own families. For example, a headline read "Typical Madison County Family Gives Total Effort to Total War--Father, Mother and Daughters all Work." The Jobsts were trying their best "to see that every acre and every animal on the farm makes a maximum contribution to feeding Carl Jobst and millions of other men like him who are doing the actual fighting." Or, as Walter Hake, owner of 159 acres outside of Radcliffe, described his family labor situation as he reflected on his son in the service: "We'll get along all right here, although I'm alone now. The boy went in the navy, but he plowed most of the night before he left. I've sold all the cows except two. . . If a fellow doesn't have too many chores he can get along."¹⁰⁹

Young people who remained on the farm--boys and girls--were increasingly called upon to work longer hours with greater responsibilities despite the physical risks and time away from school. Often they were quite young, preteen or young teenagers. This idea of "little adults" was deemed acceptable for the all-out production demands of the war effort. Big families were said to pay "extra dividends" such as Mr. and Mrs. James Corrigan's family of eleven sons from Allamakee County. The articles and advertisements romanticized the children's sacrifices. A May 1942 cover of *Life* showed a determined young teen-age boy driving a tractor, his hands gripped in the ten-two position, his eyes focused grimly ahead. Many photographs were printed in the *Des Moines Register* farm section with boys and sometimes girls driving their fathers' tractors. An advertisement called this work, "His Place in the Sun." The copy stated, "He is old enough to sense that something of grave importance is happening in the world. He felt the urgency of it when Dad gripped his arm hard, the day his big brother marched away. When Dad turned to him and said, 'Now it's up to us, Son,' he understood, and he approached the stature of manhood that day."¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹*Winterset Madisonian*, 25 November 1942, 3; and *Des Moines Tribune*, 5 April 1945, 12.

¹¹⁰Barbara M. Tucker, "Agricultural Workers in World War II: The Reserve Army of Children, Black Americans, and Jamaicans," *Agricultural History* 68 (Winter 1994): 63; *Life*, 25 May 1942, cover; *Farm Journal*, September 1942, 14; and *The Prairie Farmer*, 6 February 1943, 9.

The farm club, 4-H, organized Iowa's youth throughout the war, and all 4-H groups had had a war program since Pearl Harbor with an emphasis on production, conservation, and war service. The following year 15,055 4-H boys and girls raised products worth \$2,618,133 with the largest number of members--almost 7,000--raising livestock valued at \$1,350,000. During the 4-H Boys' Short Course and Convention at Iowa State College in December 1942, the boys resolved to direct their efforts to increase the production of food vital to the war effort. In September 1943 the Iowa Dairy Exposition in Waterloo featured the "Farm Youth Food Production Front" with five hundred Iowa farm boys and girls attending and displaying prize animals. In 1944 Iowa's 4-H clubs declared themselves a "Victory Army," and many, aged 12-20, signed Victory Pledge cards with the slogan, "Feed a fighter or more in forty-four." The largest 4-H exposition ever was held that year with one thousand boys and girls attending the program entirely devoted to war production.¹¹¹

Another war effort that utilized child labor was the Victory Farm Volunteers, in which town teenagers, aged 14-18, participated in day haul programs to local farms. The state provided transportation for the children from town to fields and back at day's end. This program had full cooperation from local schools. In 1943, Iowa had 6,869 boys and 3,771 girls participate in day haul programs, and in 1944 the numbers increased to 8,279 boys and 6,178 girls. By 1945 the numbers had also increased to 10,443 boys and 11,012 girls. The total number of Iowa children involved in the day haul program along with a live-in program and a labor camp amounted to 14,385 in 1943; 16,942 in 1944; and 23,404 in 1945.¹¹²

¹¹¹*Iowa Farm Bureau Spokesman*, 9 January 1943, 1; *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 17 March 1943, 10; *Iowa Farm Bureau Spokesman*, 21 August 1943, 1; *Iowa Farm Bureau Spokesman*, 8 April 1944, 1; "News for Homemakers," 10 March 1945; "News for Homemakers," 4 October 1944; and *Iowa Farm Bureau Spokesman*, 2 September 1944, 1.

¹¹²Rasmussen, *Emergency Farm Labor*, 120-130.

Girls were also called upon for the mechanized farm front effort because of traditional labor shortages. Iowa had 12,600 4-H girls, and many of these members took over part of the farm production work by driving tractors, raking hay, and doing other chores. Many of these girls reported more than two thousand hours of such service. Eight thousand members worked in victory gardens along with home economics projects, bond sales, and scrap drives. Phyllis Gough's study of young farm women's labor asked one hundred Iowa State College freshmen women about the tasks they had completed in 1942. Fifty-one percent of the young women drove a tractor in 1942, twenty-one percent for the first time, and more stated that they liked driving compared to any other activity. The top five tasks to which "farm girls" devoted their time and energy throughout the summer were canning fruits and vegetables, gardening, field work (apart from the tractor), running errands, and caring for the chickens. Many daughters did housework to relieve their mothers for other farm chores. International Harvester boasted that young women would join the "Field Artillery" as tractorettes: "A tractorette is a farm girl or woman who wants to help win the battle of the land, to help provide the Food for Freedom. She is the farm model of the girl who is driving an ambulance or running a turret lathe in the city. Like her city sisters, she has had the benefit of special training."¹¹³

The debate over farm girls working in agriculture versus moving to industrial war jobs was aired at the Iowa Farm Bureau convention in November 1942. Maxine Burch, a Madison County farm girl, spoke on the panel: "The place for a farm girl is on the farm if at all possible. She can do best in freeing the hands of her mother and father for the work of boosting farm production." The counterpoint, expressed by Carl Malone, Extension

¹¹³"News for Homemakers," 12 October 1945; Phyllis Elvira Gough, *Tasks Done by 100 Iowa State College Freshmen Women Living on Farms During 1942 in Iowa and Surrounding States* (Thesis: Iowa State College, 1943), 1, 32, 44, and 19; and *Wallaces' Farmer*, 22 August 1942, 15. Two groups of Iowa tractorettes—housewives and school girls—were formed near Burlington upon realization by farmers that women can operate a tractor efficiently with the right training. (*Iowa Bureau Farmer*, May 1943, 8.)

economist, felt girls could perhaps help the war effort more in war industries since "in those industries a girl often is able to produce as much as a man but on the farm she can't do it." An Iowa farm wife, Mrs. Lee Fredericks, believed otherwise when she told the *Des Moines Tribune* that "all our boys are girls" as her five daughters did the necessary work on their family farm. She boasted, "Each one has definite responsibilities and they're doing a swell job. I wouldn't trade them for boys if I could."¹¹⁴

Much of the increase in farm labor came from adult females. Determined, resourceful farm women did the job needed for the war effort with enthusiasm and without complaint. As the *Iowa Bureau Farmer* described farm women's efforts, they were "keeping farmers' powder dry." Yet even when women were alone and in charge, when the men had left for war, they were still considered to be helping, always second despite their production responsibilities. Women were never viewed as the farmers but as "farmerettes" or "ladies of the land." Farm men often delivered a mixed message when they did not want women working in the fields even when their labor was desperately needed. The Iowa State College student publication, *Iowa Agriculturist*, took a slightly more progressive view: "Although Iowans like to think that the days of women working in the fields are practically gone, without a doubt wives and daughters will be in the fields this summer along with husbands and sons when the pinch of the labor shortage is felt."¹¹⁵

Gender appropriate behavior was difficult to define and restrict. Farm women did not question their added roles and responsibilities as one farm woman from Monroe County promised, "I'll be glad to work to the limit of my endurance, if it will only help to bring my boys back home." A meeting in Warren County led by the county home

¹¹⁴*Des Moines Tribune*, 23 November 1942, 7; and *Des Moines Tribune*, 28 June 1943, 11.

¹¹⁵*Iowa Bureau Farmer*, May 1943, 7; and *Iowa Agriculturist*, April 1942, 15. A number of women were placed on farms through the Extension Farm Labor Program: 2,698 seasonal and 47 year-round in 1943; 2,160 seasonal and 43 year-round in 1944; and 1,465 seasonal and 7 year-round in 1945. (Rasmussen, *Emergency Farm Labor*, 148-149.)

economist described the women as "helping fight the battle of food production." This Iowa county served as an example for *Successful Farming* to acknowledge all American farm women's efforts as they faced "the biggest job in history." Many facets made up the farm woman's work; she was not an extra hand but essential hands--"a multitude of tasks for the strong hands that drive the tractor, feed the baby chicks, and push the soft, dark earth around tiny tomato plants. It is these same hands which so patiently tie hair bows, sew on buttons, and fasten jar tops." The article concluded by praising farm women as the busiest women in the U.S.A.¹¹⁶

Suitable clothing was designed for women's increased farm work with such considerations as protection, comfort, and durability in trousered garments, aprons, and work dresses. Few women wore overalls, at least not in public. Mrs. Alvin Weir of Marengo modeled the Women's Land Army uniform, a modified overall, for members of the State Farm Bureau Women's Division meeting in 1943 as an example of progressive clothing. The *Hawk-Eye Gazette* described these clothing changes for women with an historical analogy: "All through history the women have stayed at home to do the work while their men folks went to war."¹¹⁷

Men often recognized and valued women's work, creating a unique respect despite the inequality. Women were to do house work and, if necessary, field work, yet men rarely, if ever, crossed their gender line by working within the home. A reflective yet humorous section of *Wallaces' Farmer*, "Song of the Lazy Farmer," praised the unsung work of farm women. "They rave on labor hour by hour, but no ones talks on woman power." The "poet" continued: "For help I'll never fume nor fret as long as she can

¹¹⁶Deborah Montgomerie, "Men's Jobs and Women's Work: The New Zealand Women's Land Service in World War II," *Agricultural History* 63 (Summer 1989): 1; *Farm Journal and Farmer's Wife*, September 1944, 48; *Successful Farming*, August 1943, 79; *Successful Farming*, July 1944, 59; *The Prairie Farmer*, 1 September 1941, 23; *Wallaces' Farmer*, 17 April 1943, 1; *The Prairie Farmer*, 4 September 1943, 1; *Successful Farming*, May 1943, 70; and Janet M. Labrie, "The Depiction of Women's Field Work in Rural Fiction," *Agricultural History* 67 (Spring 1993): 121.

¹¹⁷*Iowa Farm Bureau Spokesman*, 29 May 1943, 8; *Iowa Farm Bureau Spokesman*, 10 July 1943, 1; and *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 8 July 1942, 2.

wake me yet and have my pancakes sizzling hot, and go with me to pasture lot to milk the cows and slop the wine and drive the planter on the line, and keep the garden plot all hoed and help me spread the barn yard load. And then at noon like it so, a-sittin' by the radio while Mother hustles up the grub and bathes my shirts in the laundry tub." The husband's hands seemed to be able to rest at times, especially during meal preparation and laundry chores, when hers never did. No wonder he ended the clip with the following: "Let's cut out talk of labor dour as long as we have women power!"¹¹⁸

Mechanization on the farms and in the homes brought not leisure to farm women but added time for additional farm work. *Prairie Farmer* reinforced this message: "With modern farm machinery to help them, the women often can turn in as good a job as the men--and still have energy enough left to keep the household running smoothly." Iowa farm wife, Mrs. Leonard Schissel, kept her household running despite the increased farmwork. She described her daily schedule, "I get up at 6:30 a.m. (farm time) and I do a lot of burning of the midnight oil. I always iron at night, and do mending and patching then. Sometimes I do my sewing, making the children's clothes and my house dresses and slacks. Vegetables have to be canned in the morning, when they are fresh, but I can put up fruit at night. That doesn't make so much difference." She planned to can 500 quarts that summer.¹¹⁹

All in all, the labor shortage was filled largely by farmers along with farm women, boys, and girls. Despite the worries over the labor shortage and the rationing of new farm machinery and parts, production climbed, breaking records each year of the war. R. K. Bliss, director of the Iowa State College Cooperative Extension Service, stated in his 1944 essay "Family Farm Wins" that "the job comes first." He praised the hard work of Iowa's farming families devoted to the food front fight. Bliss continued, "And that is the reason

¹¹⁸*Wallaces' Farmer*, 4 March 1944, 6.

¹¹⁹*The Prairie Farmer*, 6 September 1941, 23; and *Des Moines Register*, 29 June 1943, 9. Some farms did not adopt the daylight savings program during the war years.

why Iowa farmers with the handicap of labor shortages, machinery shortages and now very bad weather are still making amazing progress in producing food in support of our armies and our Allies."¹²⁰

Farmers greatly expanded the production of corn in Iowa's fields. By 1944, corn production was up twenty-five percent from 1939. Iowa was described as a ten million acre corn state producing twenty percent of all the corn in the United States, and its average annual production of corn for the years 1941 through 1945 was 552,977,400 bushels. The "hybrid hurricane" of corn was complete by 1945 with 100 percent of the commercial fields planted with hybrid seed. Hybrid seed was called the "king" of King Corn with its uniform plant type, ear height, and ear appearance. The *Des Moines Register* "Corn King" trophy in 1945 went to W. O. Tranbarger of Conrad in Grundy county when he won the 1945 10-acre corn yield contest with 131.8 bushels to the acre. Iowa, war or not, had always meant corn, and writer John Dos Passos recognized this fact in a letter to his wife Kathy. "It's wonderful here. Nobody thinks of anything but corn--not corn liquor but hybrid corn (100 bushels to the acre) standing pale and gaunt in immense fields rising in ranks over the rolling hills . . ."¹²¹

Though Iowa meant corn, the only state in the Union described as all corn, it produced many other crops and animals for war needs. As Homer Croy wrote in his book *Corn Country*, "even a real corn queen has other dresses in the closet." Poultry was traditionally considered farm women's work, and women were often completely responsible for raising chicks and gathering eggs. The money from the flock was considered hers in most farm families. Raising chickens had never been a simple job, and the process became more complex with hybrid chickens, improved hen houses, and commercial feed mixes. Egg production could be even more profitable with a scientific,

¹²⁰*Des Moines Register*, 15 June 1944, 4.

¹²¹Harold Lee, *Roswell Garst--A Biography* (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1984), 133; *Red Oak Sun*, 3 July 1941, 3; *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 30 November 1942, 1; and *Des Moines Register*, 13 February 1946, 15.

systematic approach rather than that used previously when farm women had relied on the exclusive labor of themselves and children. Now, as the *Iowa Agriculturist* stated, "There can be no slackers in a war-time poultry enterprise." Even a "wartime laying mash" was suggested for increased production. An example of this new systematic investment along with increasing men's interest was the two-story hen parlor of the Millers in Winneshiek County. Mr. Miller described the new chicken parlor in a proud tone, "I've eaten in restaurants that didn't smell half as good as this place does."¹²²

Poultry required constant care and attention. By World War II chickens were beginning to be confined in facilities to increase egg production and lower labor requirements, and unprofitable hens were culled or eliminated from the flock. Poultry required considerable labor yet utilized land and feed efficiently. But in the Corn Belt, especially during World War II, the reverse in resources developed with labor and grain shortages. Still, Iowa produced more poultry and eggs than any other state, mostly through farm flocks, not commercial enterprises. Iowa's egg production increased in the first three months of 1942 to 76,000,000 dozen eggs, 30 percent more than the same three month period in 1941. In 1943, the total cash income from chickens was \$55,265,000 and turkeys, \$9,643,000. Iowa had produced the largest number of chickens that year at 62,350,000 with 43,149,000 raised on farms while Minnesota followed in second place with 50,149,000 chickens; then Texas at 46,402,000. Iowa had also produced the largest number of eggs in 1943 at 3,999,000,000 for a cash income of \$104,650,000. Iowa's egg production continued to increase with 40 percent more in January 1944 over the same month in 1943. The president of the Iowa Poultry Improvement Association, Floyd Bloom, stated in his 1943 annual address in Shenandoah that poultry production was a vital part of war food production. He continued, "With a severe shortage of labor,

¹²²Homer Croy, *Corn Country* (New York: Duell, Sloan, and Pearce, 1947), 5; *Iowa Agriculturist*, March 1943, cover and 8-9; and *Iowa Agriculturist*, March 1942, 12, 13, and 16.

equipment, and poultry supplies, it behooves each and every one of us to put forth our every effort, individually, and as an association, to get the job done."¹²³

Another part of the Food for Freedom campaign included the development of new farm products for war demands. Substitutes for oil and fiber were needed when supplies were cut off by Japan's conquests of Pacific countries, and soybeans and hemp met these needs. Soybeans changed from a forage crop like hay in the 1930s to utilizing the bean for oil and flour. Nationally, the soybean average had increased eight times from 1,782,000 acres in 1925 to 14,000,000 acres in 1943. Some farmers felt soybeans could help "even the score" from the past practice of sending farm scrap iron to Japan during the 1930s. A new pamphlet, "Soybeans, Iowa's Key War Crop," was available at county Extension offices, and this pamphlet made recommendations for soybean cultivation such as seedbed preparation, rates of planting, and spacing of rows.¹²⁴

Soybean production experienced a tremendous rate of growth during the war years. Iowa's goal in 1942 was 84 percent more soybeans for seed than the previous year. Harvesting challenged Iowa farmers as the state averaged one combine for every fifteen farms (13,000 total) for the 1,750,000 acres of soybeans. Kossuth County had the largest number of soybean acres but only 270 combines for its 54,510 acres while it needed 500 machines. Farmers were encouraged to cooperate with each other. By 1944, harvested soybeans amounted to 2,129,000 acres with 20 bushels per acre for a value of \$87,289,000. Only corn and oats were worth more, corn at \$631,912,000 and oats at \$102,432,000. By 1945, soybeans (for beans), dropped slightly to 1,936,000 harvested acres at 18 bushels per acre for a value of \$72,135,000. Again, it was the third ranking

¹²³*Farm Scientific Reporter*, July 1944, 14; *Wallaces' Farmer*, 11 July 1942, 16; 1944 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture*, 12; 1945 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture*, 14 and 15; *Better Iowa*, 4 May 1942, 1; *Iowa Poultry Association Annual Year Book*, 1945, back cover; "News for Homemakers," 7 March 1944; William Cavert, "The Technological Revolution in Agriculture, 1910-1955," *Agricultural History* 30 (January 1956), 22; and *Iowa Poultry Association Annual Year Book*, 1943, 7.

¹²⁴Iowa State College, Members of the Staff and the Iowa Agricultural Experiment Station, *Century of Iowa Farming, 1846-1946* (Ames, Iowa: The Iowa State College Press, 1946), 64-65; *Wallaces' Farmer*, 11 July 1942, 9; *Iowa Farm Bureau Spokesman*, 24 July 1943, 1; and *Better Iowa*, 4 September 1944, 1.

crop in Iowa's fields. Soybean crop production had increased from a few thousand acres to almost two million annually by war's end in Iowa. The increase occurred largely in the central, northwest regions with its percentage of highly tillable and level land.¹²⁵

Risks were associated with the growing of new war crops such as hemp, and farmers were hesitant and wanted government protection for crop failures. Hemp never approached the market that soybeans developed, but it was an easy crop to grow with little labor required. John Deere had even developed mechanized hemp cutting machinery. In 1942 it had been a weed, growing in ditches and fence rows, but now it was on a priority list. Approximately 45,786 acres were devoted to hemp by 4,000 Iowa farmers in 1943. The Iowa Agricultural Experiment station recommended planting hemp between April 25th and May 15th, drilling seed if possible, and adding sufficient amounts of nitrogen and phosphate to the soil. For added information and drama, a motion picture by the USDA, "Hemp for Victory," played at the Rialto Theater in Boone on a Friday and Saturday night in February 1943, and the film described how to raise hemp for the war effort along with the harvesting and turning process.¹²⁶

Farmers were told "HEMP is a war crop for Iowa." The government messages for this wartime production combined patriotism along with profit. In other words, a farmer could "save a boy's life" along with making money. The message of destruction was also present such as this government advertisement: "Every acre is a nail in Hitler's coffin. Every acre of HEMP will blow the Jap off this earth."¹²⁷

Iowa had grown hemp a century before in 1843, according to the Iowa State Historical Society, and was growing it again to produce rope for the war effort. The United States had previously imported its hemp but needed to replace this source since

¹²⁵*Farm Scientific Reporter*, July 1942, 3; *Iowa Farm Bureau Spokesman*, 11 March 1944, 6; *Algona Upper Des Moines*, 13 October 1942, 1; 1944 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture*, 8; and 1945 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture*, 8.

¹²⁶*Des Moines Register*, 21 February 1943, 13; *Wallaces' Farmer*, 2 October 1943, 22; *Farm Scientific Reporter*, January 1944, 16-19; and *Iowa Farm Bureau Spokesman*, 23 January 1943, 1.

¹²⁷*Algona Upper Des Moines*, 24 November 1942, 1; and *Algona Upper Des Moines*, 4 February 1943, 6.

the Japanese occupation of the Philippines. Farmers in six states were selected to grow hemp—Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Indiana, and Kentucky--thus shifting 300,000 good "corn-acres" to hemp production. Officials originally selected twenty north central counties in Iowa with its level fertile land along with cool, wet harvest conditions needed to "rot" the hemp for rope production. Later, this number was narrowed to thirteen counties. Fifteen processing plants were scheduled, but only eleven opened due to a hemp seed shortage in 1943.¹²⁸

By 1944, Iowa farmers harvested 16,700 pounds of hemp at 1,000 pounds per acre for a value of \$2,021,000. Hemp production slowed down, however, when enough tonnage of straw was produced in 1943 and 1944 to meet the need for the next two years at 100,000,000 pounds nationally. Iowa farmer Ollie Janssen's field brought him \$4,000 in one season, proving that hemp production could be as profitable as corn or soybeans. Therefore, farmers were not pleased when hemp production was cut back as many farmers had thought hemp might be a permanent, government-subsidized postwar crop.¹²⁹

A traditional farm product but now a leading wartime food was milk. Not only did milk produce healthy American soldiers, but it was shipped to the Allied countries as cheese, butter, and powdered milk. Great Britain needed milk since it had been cut off from Scandinavian sources. Skim milk, which was previously considered waste or animal feed, could now be dried which permitted overseas shipment and sale of a once wasted or perishable commodity. Iowa ranked fourth (Wisconsin, Minnesota, and New York were the first three states) in the nation for milk production with a total of 3,228,000,000 quarts produced in 1942. Iowa's production came from 1,446,000 cows, each producing an average 2,233 quarts of milk a year. The 1942 Iowa farm cash sales from this butter,

¹²⁸*Des Moines Register*, 3 November 1943, 6; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 26 December 1943, 4-S; *Des Moines Tribune*, 17 November 1942, 17; and *Waterloo Daily Courier*, 25 February 1943, 9.

¹²⁹*Des Moines Tribune*, 21 September 1943, 1 and 9; and *Des Moines Register*, 19 December 1943, 6-L. A two day meeting in Ames during June 1944 had featured the post-war possibilities of raising hemp along with the need to produce it even more economically and to improve its quality through a process called controlled retting.

cream, and milk were \$101,023,000. Butter, however, had been on a "downgrade" since 1924, and the 5,500,000 pounds produced in 1941 was the smallest amount in any year of the state's history.¹³⁰

Milk production continued to increase throughout the war years. Iowa's dairy cows produced an even larger amount in 1943 to 7,072,000,000 pounds valued at \$118,000,000. The publication *Iowa Jerseys* found that, based on several studies of dairy farms, significant differences in dairy income were reported throughout the state. Dairy farms which made money were those "properly farmed" with an efficient use of labor and machinery along with high yields per acre of pasture, hay, and grain crops. One war idea to improve dairy stock was a national "Victory Bull Campaign" which was initiated in 1943 by the American Jersey Cattle Club. The program called for a thousand Selective Registered Jersey bull calves to be donated to dairy farmers, and over a dozen Iowa farmers were lucky recipients.¹³¹

Beef cattle production reached a new high with 74,607,000 in 1941, four percent more than in 1940. Part of this trend was marketing cattle at younger ages and lighter weights. Iowa ranked first in cattle production though Texas led Iowa in the number of Herefords. By 1944 a decline in the livestock industry had emerged due to the uncertainty of future world requirements along with a tightened feed situation. Iowa continued to lead surrounding midwestern states in hog production, producing 18 percent of the pork supply in 1942.¹³²

Iowa farmers' cash farm income rose in 1941 to an estimated \$919,515,000 compared to \$718,991,000 in 1940. Iowa's farm income was eight percent of the national

¹³⁰1944 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture*, 8; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 19 December 1943, 6-L; *Business Week*, 23 October 1943, 40; *Business Week*, 22 January 1944, 29; *Iowa Farm Bureau Spokesman*, 18 September 1943, 7; *Iowa Veterinarian*, July-August 1943, 36; *Better Iowa*, 28 February 1944, 1; *Iowa Holstein Herald*, June 1943, no page numbers listed; *Iowa Farm Bureau Spokesman*, 24 June 1944, 1; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 5 December 1943, 4-1A; 1941 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture*, 29-30; and *Life*, 4 May 1942, 63 and 67.

¹³¹*Iowa Jerseys*, 1941, 35; and *Iowa Jerseys*, 1943, 35.

¹³²1941 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture*, 191-192, and 1944 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture*, introduction.

farm income, the largest of any state. California was second with \$868,777,000, or 7.4 percent. Texas, Illinois, and Wisconsin ranked third to fifth, and these five states together produced one-third of the national farm income in 1941. Food consumption that year was the largest on record.¹³³

Production continued to increase. State agricultural officials believed that in the beginning of 1942, Iowa farmers would face their most crucial production season in the history of agriculture. Farm income, again, reached new record highs at \$1,297,972,000 in 1942, up 43 percent from 1941. This was due to an average thirty percent increase in prices and a record increase in production with the heavy demands of war agencies, especially for butter and cheese along with dried milk and eggs. The year 1942 had been the first full year of war which Iowa's Secretary of Agriculture said proudly demonstrated "the wonderful accomplishments of the farmers of Iowa in the production of vital foods."¹³⁴

The year 1943 marked yet another farm income record high: \$1,636,629,000, an increase of 27 percent over 1942. Crops composed eighteen percent, livestock and its products seventy-nine, and government payments three percent of this total income. Once more Iowa farmers had set records, producing more livestock and crop products than ever before, and these records continued into the next year. Iowa harvested 22,439,000 acres in 1944, especially profiting from corn and soybeans. That year had been a more stressful period with crucial shortages in equipment and labor along with poor weather conditions. Still, the farm income in 1944 was also high at \$1,503,176,000.¹³⁵

Production of farm commodities had increased dramatically during the war years, and many involved in agriculture offered only praise for farmers' efforts, yet a few critics

¹³³1941 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture*, 9 and 12; and *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 23 April 1944, 4-S.

¹³⁴*Iowa Farm Economist*, January 1942, cover; and 1942 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture*, 9, 16, 17, and 21.

¹³⁵1943 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture*, 17 and 9; and 1944 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture*, introduction.

were heard. Both sides, however, began to view the farm as a factory. The cover of *Farm Journal's* April 1943 edition announced that "Farming Is a Most Essential Industry." The corporate giant General Motors compared farming with its own factories: "The American farmer's job is a good deal like a manufacturer's. His farm is his factory. His equipment is his machinery. His soil and seed and livestock are his materials. Right now he knows that bumper food production is needed for the war effort--just as we of General Motors know that weapons of war must flow from our plants in huge volume." Even the breakfast cereal, Wheaties, made the connection, calling a farm, "Your Own Munitions Plant!"¹³⁶

Everywhere propaganda promoted the idea that to be successful, to be productive, farms needed to become like factories. Farms were described as "the nation's No. 1 defense 'plants'" even before Pearl Harbor. Awards were presented to various farmers for their production efforts much like E-awards given to war industries. The *Register* and *Tribune* conducted its own award campaign, the "Food for Victory" merit award citations. The first award went to Mr. and Mrs. Harold Schultz of Schleswig for outstanding farm family effort in food production. They solved their labor problems, as did hundreds of other farm families, by Mrs. Schultz taking over the hired hand's work plus gathering from 107 to 110 eggs a day along with a summer's canning of 500 quarts. A national award, the "Superior Achievement in Agriculture" by Skelley Gas Company, presented its first award to the Brady Riddle family of Castana, Iowa, in January 1943 for their outstanding production record. The Riddle family operated 680 acres of "Hawkeye land" and raised 1,040 spring and fall pigs. ("That's 130 tons of pork!") Awards were even given for being "typical." John Oeser, from Westside, Iowa, was chosen as the "typical Midwest farmer" at a five state celebration sponsored by radio station WNAX of Yankton, South Dakota, for Midwest Farmer Day in 1945. Officials

¹³⁶*Farm Journal and Farmer's Wife*, April 1943, cover; and *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 21 February 1943, 15-H.

based the contest on farm production and community activities. Mr. and Mrs. Oeser's prize was a trip to Washington and an invitation to meet President Truman. Contest officials also awarded John Oeser a tractor and war bonds while his wife (not named in the article) received a wristwatch.¹³⁷

The industrial model by the mid-1940s emphasized scientific technology and professional organization. Since the 1890s, the ideas of increased farm size and efficiency along with better organization had progressed in the United States; farmers had both resisted and accepted these ideas. War would transform agriculture, just like industry and labor earlier, into being more mechanized and consolidated. This "Fordism"--capital intensive industry based on the use of the moving assembly line--came to the farm right along with the increased numbers of Fordsons and Farmalls. *Life* described Iowa's agriculture in such terms: "Iowa is a food factory engaged in an operation more complicated than the simple planting and reaping of crops." As historian Richard Polenberg expressed in his book *War and Society*, "the war brought the era of large-scale, mechanized, corporate farming a good deal closer."¹³⁸

A few farmers criticized the factory orientation such as Louis Bromfield, a popular novelist and Ohio farmer, who thought too many midwestern farmers were "mining" the land rather than developing long term soil enhancing goals. To him, mechanization did not simply represent progress. In one of his wartime short stories, a former Iowa woman criticized her Dakota husband's farming methods: "He had made all his land and the animals that lived upon it no more than a factory." Bromfield also

¹³⁷*Red Oak Express*, 30 October 1941, 1; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 8 April 1945, S-3; *The Prairie Farmer*, 20 March 1943, 13; *The Prairie Farmer*, 12 June 1943, 11; and *Des Moines Register*, 4 September 1945, 1.

¹³⁸Gilbert Fite, *American Farmers: The New Minority* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1981), 88 and 238; David B. Danbom, *The Resisted Revolution: Urban America and the Industrialization of Agriculture, 1900-1930* (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1979), vi; Ruth Milkman, *Gender at Work. The Dynamics of Job Segregation by Sex during World War II* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 12; O. R. Johnson, "The Family Farm," (especially the section "Adopting Industrial Methods May be Necessary") *Journal of Farm Economics* 26 (August 1944): 533-535; *Life*, 25 May 1942, 84; and Richard Polenberg, *War and Society*, 242.

expressed his views in *Pleasant Valley*, a series of essays written during the war. He wrote that the new metal farm buildings were a symbol of this turn to industrialization: "Already they appear on any country landscape commonplace and standardized without any beauty or individuality--in fifty years they will simply be eyesores." And, in a speech to Iowa farmers at the Des Moines Hotel Savery, he warned against abandoning soil conservation techniques for factory practices on oversized, mechanized farms. However, as a commercial farmer himself, Bromfield never questioned the importance of the farmers' role in food production for the war effort, and he recommended the establishment of a Department of Food Production to correct any past governmental mistakes which hampered farm production. Bromfield, though, was concerned about soil conservation and overmechanization, but he also felt the farmer was as important as a front line soldier--"Without the farmer, we cannot win the war, and certainly without him, we cannot win the peace."¹³⁹

Other agricultural commentators besides Bromfield criticized this farm factory orientation. Carey McWilliams claimed in *Ill Fares the Land* (1942) that great changes were taking place in American agriculture as the industrial revolution finally hit the farmer. He called this the "vortex of industrialization." He believed that farmers were drawn into this vortex, becoming efficient and powerful but ruthless. He stated, "Modern technology is changing the Corn Belt into a great factory district." Paul Corey, an Iowa writer, joined in the debate with his novel, *Acres for Antaeus* (1946), in which a corporate farm named

¹³⁹Louis Bromfield, *Pleasant Valley* (New York: Aeonian Press, Inc., 1943), 48; and Louis Bromfield, *The World We Live In* ("The Pond") (Philadelphia: The Blakiston Company, 1944), 11; Bromfield, *Pleasant Valley*, 14. Another writer, Ralph Brosodi criticized Iowa farms in a published dialogue with M. L. Wilson before the war. "My wife was raised on an Iowa farm and she ran away from it to the city. I was raised in the city. I am entirely convinced that neither the kind of farm from which my wife ran away nor the city from which I took flight is a decent place to raise human beings." Wilson disagreed that "commercial farming, per se, has ruined farm life--only in those cases where commercialism has gone to what I'd call excesses has it done real damage."--O.E. Baker, Ralph Borsodi, and M. L. Wilson, *Agriculture in Modern Life* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1939) "The Future of Rural Life."--a dialogue, 273. *Des Moines Tribune*, 22 July 1942, 1 and 7; *Collier's*, 12 June 1943, 11, 62, and 64; and *Iowa Farm Bureau Spokesman*, 12 June 1943, 1.

"Mid-West" was interested in Iowa farmland solely for mass production while destroying many farm families in the process.¹⁴⁰

As early as 1941, author Carl Schmidt criticized this changing orientation to farm land as a "springboard to riches, rather than as an irreplaceable resource that must be passed on unimpaired to future generations." Another writer, Curtis Stadtfeld, reflected much later on this World War II transformation: "In short, the farms came to be more industrial, more oriented to a money economy and to efficient production, of selective products--specialized as opposed to general farming--they became less whole, more impersonal, generally more profitable, perhaps less satisfying." He added, "The old way of life was generally relinquished with enthusiasm. It was at its worse, hard and exacting, brutal and narrowing and depressing." Still, he believed, midwestern farmers had thrown the baby out with the bath water: "We seem willing to scrap entire systems if they fail at any point."¹⁴¹

One aspect of farming that most could not yet abandon was government's involvement and direction. The agricultural political turmoil and production limitations of the New Deal and the Depression era had left its mark on Iowa's farmers. In March 1942 George Durand, chairman of Madison County's Agricultural Conservation Association, spoke about the upcoming ninth anniversary of the AAA. He stated, "In meeting wartime demands the full resources of agriculture must be directed toward the production of vital war crops and not wasted in unnecessary production." *Wallaces' Farmer* asked Iowa farmers in 1943 if they still needed an AAA program or if they believed it would be

¹⁴⁰Carey McWilliams, *Ill Fares the Land. Migrants and Migratory Labor in the United States* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1942), 318, 322, and 323. The definition of a vortex is a widening gap or whirlwind with a vacuum at the center. Paul Corey, *Acres of Antaeus* (New York: Henry Holt & Publishers, 1946), 38. His title reflected the growing distance from the land he witnessed in Iowa farming: "According to Greek legend, Antaeus, a Libyan giant, renewed his strength every time he touched the earth, which was his mother, and was unconquerable. At last Hercules discovered the source of his power and overcame him by lifting him off the ground."

¹⁴¹Carl T. Schmidt, *American Farmers in the World Crisis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941), 49 and 13; and Curtis Stadtfeld, *From the Land and Back* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972), 28.

better to let every farmer raise all he could, without limitations or government guidance. Sixty-seven percent replied that they needed AAA in 1943, twenty-two percent did not think so, and eleven percent were not sure. Writer Sheldon Menefee also quoted this poll in his contemporary assessment of America, *Assignment U.S.A.*, as he exposed the irony of the AAA being supported by farmers while the "farm bloc" [politicians] was trying to abolish the AAA, claiming it did not represent "dirt farmers'" interests."¹⁴²

Iowa farmer Don Fish represented average farmers in his essay for *Successful Farming* titled "A Farmer Enlists." He believed he must keep his business "ever attuned to Uncle Sam's needs." "I can only do this thru [sic] the AAA. It is no longer a case of belief in the program, it is an issue of patriotism!" He felt his patriotic conduct and citizenship could be condensed into a creed: practice efficient farming, cooperate with the AAA, accept new labor problems, pay increased taxes cheerfully, keep well informed, and maintain a membership in a farm organization. Other farmers must have recognized the need to organize as Iowa Farm Bureau membership increased each year of the war from 40,275 in 1940 to 90,437 by 1945, the highest since the 1920's record of 100,000.¹⁴³

Two successful areas of government involvement in rural life which stopped during the war but would later resume were rural electrification and soil conservation. Rural electrification was proclaimed a "war casualty," though temporarily. In June 1941 Iowa had 209,737 occupied farm homes of which 86,424 had electric service provided by the REA and private companies, 40 percent of the rural population. Officials of the Iowa Farm Bureau stated at the REA annual meeting in September 1944 that nothing had

¹⁴²Writer John Dos Passos in his travels across the United States made a passing comment about Iowa's political philosophy which still rings true today. "Politics . . . The only time folks worry about politics around here is when times are bad and they can't get a price for their corn. Other times they just naturally vote Republican." (John Dos Passos, *State of the Nation* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1944), 272.) *Winterset Madisonian*, 4 March 1942, 1; *Wallaces' Farmer*, 20 March 1943, 1; and Selden Menefee, *Assignment U.S.A.* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, Inc., 1943), 240-242.

¹⁴³*Successful Farming*, July 1941, 1 and 29; Louis B. Schmidt, "The Farm Bureau," *The Palimpsest* 31 (April 1950): 153; *Iowa Farm Bureau Spokesman*, 22 July 1944, 1; and *Iowa Farm Bureau Spokesman*, 14 July 1945, 1. Benton county had the highest Farm Bureau membership at 2,200; then Buena Vista at 1,604; then Clayton at 1,549.

improved the rural standard of living as did electricity and the REA. Radios and electric irons were the most popular appliances with 93 percent of REA customers owning these along with 87.6 percent with washing machines.¹⁴⁴

Utility companies and farm families alike proclaimed electricity to be "man's cheapest servant." Iowa Power and Light played with the phrase, "Reddy Kilowatt is the farmer's helper—cheapest and most dependable 'hired man.'" Iowa-Nebraska Light and Power Company advertised itself with a drawing of a progressive farmstead as one with electrical wires crossing it. The Ralph Childs' farm was featured in January 1944's *Successful Farming* as a progressive farm. The article noted that back in October of 1939 the Childs' place north of Manchester had experienced a revolution—"bloodless, but as significant future wise as the contest of the Liberals in Spain or the fateful march of the Hitlerites into Poland. If they could have been bothered about an Iowa farm, the fuhrers of '39 would have said simply, 'Piffle!'" The revolution was rural electricity, and the family's records after obtaining electricity were impressive: from 2,500 pounds of butterfat to 9,000 yearly, from 1,270 dozen eggs to 6,750 dozen. The Childs' production of food units had increased 370 percent. Unfortunately, however, the "newly-won efficiency in household tasks" meant no extra leisure for the Childs women but instead gave them "a chance to get out in the fields and feedlots again to help the men with food for freedom."¹⁴⁵

Construction of new electrical lines stopped in 1942, 1943, and 1944 although in 1944 the REA was described as "Rarin' to Go!" when postwar plans were made to install 5,900 more miles of electric line. These cooperatives were able to build 5,000 miles of

¹⁴⁴1942 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture*, 301; 1941 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture*, 382; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 8 February 1942, 13-H; *Iowa Farm Bureau Spokesman*, 30 September 1944, 1; and 1943 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture*, 275.

¹⁴⁵*The Prairie Farmer*, 11 January 1941, 52; *The Prairie Farmer*, 27 January 1940, 5; *Iowa Agriculturist*, March 1943, 2; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 25 February 1945, 19-H; *Red Oak Express*, 11 August 1941, 7; and *Successful Farming*, January 1944, 25, 32, and 33. Westinghouse advertised itself as the "electrical partner of agriculture."

lines in 1945 and extended service to 11,000 more rural customers. By the end of 1945, 49 REA cooperatives served 74,000 farms with 30,000 miles of line, and 1946 plans called for the greatest expansion of rural electrification in Iowa's history.¹⁴⁶

Soil conservation practices could also raise productivity on Iowa's farms in the long run, but required extra labor and time, so conservation efforts continued slowly during the war years. A complete soil conservation program included many facets: specific crop use, rotation patterns, woodlands, pastures, waterways, treatment plans, contour tillage, strip cropping, terracing, and gully structures to keep topsoil in place. All of these activities relied on voluntary farm involvement on private land. Walter Wilcox, Iowa State College economist, stated in 1941 that soil conservation needed to be practiced efficiently to produce bigger harvests from Iowa's fields next summer and fall. Before Pearl Harbor and American entry into war, soil conservation was portrayed as part of the farm battle, as the poster caption proclaimed--"Soil Conservation is a basic part of national defense: Contour tillage, strip cropping, terraces, legume crop rotations, and gully control with trees and dams are among the weapons used in the domestic war against soil waste." The soil conservation practices fell to the sidelines with entry into war and its all-out production goals and labor shortages. J. B. Peterson, a soils expert, reported in 1943 that the AAA had practiced soil conservation measures, but by now any reduction in crop acreages was almost looked upon as "treason."¹⁴⁷

By the end of 1945, peace brought concerns over previous crop expansion at the expense of long-term soil building practices. As Fred Schwob, director of the State Conservation Commission, wrote in April 1942, it was necessary to win the war first yet to remember we depended on soil as a resource for that effort. The *Iowa Conservationist* later stated that one way to destroy the enemy was to destroy their soil, but America

¹⁴⁶*Des Moines Tribune*, 20 September 1944, 9; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 7 October 1945, 29-H; *Successful Farming*, November 1944, 24; and 1945 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture*, 464.

¹⁴⁷*Red Oak Sun*, 6 March 1941, 2; 1941 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture*, 393; and *Iowa Agriculturist*, November 1941, 10.

must try to save her own soil despite the need to win this war. Still, war production efforts ranked first. The *Iowa Conservationist* continued, "This we will do, even if the task necessitates bankruptcy of our soil, timber, man power, and all other resources. After we have beaten the Nazis, the Fascists and the Little Yellow Men, conservation will again rank as America's most important problem."¹⁴⁸

Practices detrimental to long term soil composition involved increased amounts of herbicides and chemical fertilizers because of the demanded heavy crop production. Still, the total amount of nitrogen applied to corn land in Iowa and Illinois was less than one-twentieth of a pound per harvested acre in 1942 while sixteen pounds per acre were used in corn fields in North and South Carolina. Yields were higher in the two midwestern states though the two southern states had used six hundred times as much nitrate fertilizer per bushel of corn produced. As Bela Gold, former U. S. Bureau of Agricultural economist, wrote in her 1949 work, *Wartime Economic Planning in Agriculture*, a country mobilized for defense should plant in areas best adapted for production. Although corn could be grown in all 48 states, it was not a wise use of resources. As Arthur Bunge, assistant professor of economics at Iowa State College, warned in his pamphlet "Using Our Soils for War Production," a unified production and conservation program needed to be developed immediately since we were forced to draw upon some of the reserves of soil fertility during the war. He warned farmers, "Where land is subject to erosion and the soil is destroyed, its productivity cannot be restored after the war."¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸1945 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture*, 17 and introduction; *Iowa Conservationist*, 15 April 1942, 1; and *Iowa Conservationist*, 15 August 1942, 1 and 2.

¹⁴⁹*Iowa Farm Bureau Spokesman*, 17 April 1943, 3; *Better Iowa*, 17 January 1944, 1; *Better Iowa*, 29 January 1945, 1; *Better Iowa*, 18 December 1944, 1; Bela Gold, *Wartime Economic Planning in Agriculture: A Study in the Allocation of Resources* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1949), 249, 250, and 266; *Farm Scientific Reporter*, January 1944, 20; and Arthur C. Bunce, "Using Our Soils for War Production," #7 *Wartime Farm and Food Policy*, 1 and 5. Approximately 1,028,000 pounds of weed killing chemicals were used in 1943, the entire amount allotted by the War Production Board. The same amount was applied in 1944. Iowa farmers had increased their use of commercial fertilizers to an estimated 390,000 tons in 1944, which was almost six times the amount used in 1943. The USDA published research also recognized the loss of Iowa's soil. Records taken near Clarinda, Iowa, from three year rotations of corn-oats-meadow yielded 3.87 times as much as nearby plots which were planted only in corn

Not just conservationists and other officials worried about the wartime loss of topsoil. One foreign traveler commented on midwestern farming practices, "But as men massacred the forests and prairie grass and tilled not wisely but too well, the savage onslaughts of Midwest summer rain and winter blizzard washed much of the finest soil on earth down the great rivers."¹⁵⁰

When the war was nearly over, most of Iowa's farms had become quite prosperous. In 1945 the income for Iowa agriculture was at its highest level ever. The three major factors for this prosperity were the large reserves of feed grains present before the start of war, the large number of acres with high yields, and the increase in livestock and poultry production during the war.¹⁵¹

Farmers used profits to pay off debts rather than make new purchases. Farm mortgage debt in Iowa had decreased to \$606,612,000 by January 1945, less \$46,294,000 from 1944 and \$116,785,000 below January 1942. *Wallaces' Farmer* had warned its readers since June 1941 to pay debts. When pollsters asked Iowa farm men and women what they would do with more money, 48 percent of both men and women would pay debts while 25 percent of the men and 14 percent of the women would buy more stock and land. The *Des Moines Register* reported as early as March 1943 that Iowa's farm mortgage debt had been cut a billion dollars. Officials identified Iowa as the state with the highest farm values and also noted that Iowa farmers had suffered more than farmers in other states from land speculation following the first World War. Iowa farmers, however, had reduced their farm mortgage debt to the lowest point in thirty years. Still, investment rather than debt reduction was tempting as land prices were rising throughout the war years from increased incomes, low cost loans, and "boom psychology." Some agriculturists questioned how long this prosperous period could last. The War

annually since 1932. (R. E. Uhland, "Rotations in Conservation," *The USDA Yearbook of Agriculture, 1943-1947—Science in Farming*, 532.)

¹⁵⁰Hutton, *Midwest at Noon*, 5.

¹⁵¹1945 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture*, 17 and 31.

Advertising Council in a 1945 public service announcement advised farmers, "Keep your farm safe and sound--save--don't speculate." The caption under the overall-clad farmer, pipe in hand, read, "I can't forget what happened after the last war."¹⁵²

The conditions immediately following the war underscored that Iowa had emerged from the Depression. Family savings were thought to be quite large. Nationally, USDA statistics reported farmers had more than sixteen billion dollars in banks and bonds. Many farmers planned to add farm improvements and equipment purchases after the wartime denials. When asked by *Wallaces' Farmer* "What'll You Buy?", farm women responded with several answers: refrigerators, kitchen stoves, vacuum sweepers, and water systems. When asked about farm equipment, farm men gave as their top three responses: tractors, corn pickers, and combines.¹⁵³

Iowa had contributed to the world's food supply with peak production years in 1942, 1943, and 1944 and close to peak, despite the weather and reduced production goals, in 1945.¹⁵⁴ The official reports in 1945 were positive regarding Iowa farmers contributions to the war effort. R. K. Bliss, Extension director, stated, in an echoing of Winston Churchill, "Never in recorded history have so few people produced so much food. Never before have an equal number of people made such an enormous increase in food production as have Iowa farmers during the past five years. And it was accomplished with fewer workers and older machinery. Patriotism was placed above profit as a compelling motive to increase food output." Harry Linn, Iowa's Secretary of Agriculture, agreed, "It means that the Iowa farmer contributed no small share in helping to ease the starvation plight which threatened most of the globe."¹⁵⁵

¹⁵²*Wallaces' Farmer*, 28 June 1941, 3; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 7 March 1943, 7-Commercial; *Wallaces' Farmer*, 6 February 1943, 6; William G. Murray, "Land Boom Controls," *Wartime Farm and Food Policy*, #9 (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State College Press, 1943), 1 and 2; and *Successful Farming*, July 1945, 71.

¹⁵³*Wallaces' Farmer*, 3 November 1945, 1.

¹⁵⁴1945 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture*, 12.

¹⁵⁵*Des Moines Sunday Register*, 25 February 1945, 1-H; and 1945 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture*, 582 and 9. R. K. Bliss had served as director of the Iowa Extension Service from 1914-through 1945. "As a result

What would happen to American farmers after the war? Perhaps a "food for health" program would replace "food for freedom." National Secretary of Agriculture Claude Wickard promised to launch a study of farming for war veterans based on the symbolic rather than practical phrase, "50 Acres and a Jeep" (though some made the serious argument that an Army Jeep could be an all-purpose utility vehicle on small farms, from plowing to trucking). Agricultural historian Gilbert Fite believed that World War II solved several farm problems at once. Production surpluses were no longer a problem; prosperity came from wartime demands and high prices. But, as Fite states, "within a single generation commercial farmers had become a tiny minority in American society." He asked if something basic and meaningful had not been lost forever.¹⁵⁶

Food had been one of the principal munitions of war; now it was the principal munition of peace. Some envisioned great opportunities for wartime agriculture developments such as Roswell Garst, a respected Iowa agriculturalist, who saw the potential for American agriculture with the increasing world demand for food. Garst also realized the difficulty in predicting and regulating production. Many farmers, however, felt the war and international problems could be ignored because of the local prosperity. As historian John Blum has noted, World War II was "a lovely war after all, with the fighting remote and prosperity returned. In that context, for many Americans, it was difficult to remember that the demand for guns had fostered the production and consumption of the butter." Iowa during the war was, at times, a lovely, prosperous, and secure place to live and work. Novelist John Dos Passos painted a romantic word picture as he traveled across Iowa during the war years: "Behind the house the great stretch of country rolled pale ochre towards blue hills along the horizon moving in slow undulations

of his long tenure, Bliss carried over his experience from the first world war into the second." (Dorothy Schwieder, "The Iowa State College Cooperative Extension Service Through Two World Wars," *Agricultural History* 64 (Spring 1990): 225.)

¹⁵⁴Sherman Johnson, "Adapting Agricultural Programs for War," *Journal of Farm Economics* 24 (February 1942): 4; *Des Moines Register*, 6 January 1944, 3; and Gilbert C. Fite, *American Farmers: The New Minority* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1981), 234 and 243.

like an ocean groundswell in a calm. Here and there in a deeper hollow was a scrap of a bright blue pond or the green smudge of a swamp."¹⁵⁷ It was difficult to imagine a war-torn European landscape from this point on the globe.

Another traveler, Hilary St. George Saunders, saw a more conflicting picture when he spoke with Mr. and Mrs. Koons from Swea City, Iowa, whose son was the first United States Army soldier to kill a German in this war. Mr. Koons spoke about the war developments: "The world is getting too old for war and such nonsense. This time it has got to end, and it's boys like my son who will end it. We've learned what peace is like out here but I guess we'll never have it for keeps till you in Europe have learned it too. That's why we're fighting--to help you learn it." Saunders responded in his writing that farmers "view existence as the tillers of soil in all countries have always viewed and most always view it, as a struggle against drought, frost, wind, hail, rain, green-fly, and all the other foes which Nature mobilizes against them." Saunders further reflected, "Why should men take on their own kind as well passes their understanding. 'It's just goddam stupid.' And yet, whatever their attitude may have been in the last war, in this one they are ready to bear their share." He said it may be called isolationism, or it may be the ability to "reduce life to its essentials."¹⁵⁸

Iowa's farmers, however, could no longer afford to be isolationist after this devastating global war when the world's food shortages grew even more severe. American farmers were accused of holding back grain and livestock while a miscalculation of the severity of the European food crisis was also cited. Mistakes had been made in the last half of 1944 with an over optimistic easing of ration controls in the United States along with a "bare shelves" policy in the Army with little food reserved in foreign locations. As

¹⁵⁷*Red Oak Sun*, 15 November 1945, 1; Harold Lee, "The Citizen and the USDA: The Case of Roswell Garst," *Agricultural History* 64 (Spring 1990): 270; John M. Blum, *V was for Victory. Politics and American Culture During World War II* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1976), 116; and Dos Passos, 273.

¹⁵⁸Hilary St. George Saunders, *Pioneers! O Pioneers!* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1944), 106 and 107.

early as March 1943, former President Herbert Hoover had reminded midwestern governors at a meeting in Des Moines that food production was the greatest part of the home front's responsibilities. He warned the audience, "We can have peace or we can have revenge, but we cannot have both."¹⁵⁹

The images of American abundance contrasted sharply with desperate European conditions such as the publicized photographs of American GIs handing candy to Europe's starving children. Iowa's land of farming abundance also contrasted sharply with the German landscape which had once been beautiful with well-cultivated fields but now bore the degraded marks of war such as demolished houses and dead, bloated cattle. Some Allied leaders thought Germany should be perhaps completely transformed to a pastoral country, without its war industries, to avoid the possibility of future wars.¹⁶⁰

World War II was ultimately a war for food and survival. And when the German concentration camps were finally rescued in 1945, the image of survival through deliberate starvation conditions was horrifying. In Dauchau, some German guards tried to escape by disguising themselves as inmates in striped prison clothes, but their "well-fed faces" gave them away. British nurses spoke of former Dauchau prisoners they tried to nourish. The survivors were free to wander, yet "they were always back in the ward at mealtimes, no matter where they strayed, silently converging on the food trolley with their tin plates, eyes riveted on the containers full of meat and vegetables." Despite their regular meals, the nurses would find "while making the beds, a slice of corned beef, a potato or a piece of

¹⁵⁹Hinshaw, *The Home Front*, 238; and *Des Moines Tribune*, 15 March 1943, 1. Herbert Hoover would later be appointed by President Truman as honorary chairman of the Famine Emergency Committee. (J. Robert Moskin, *Mr. Truman's War*, 159); Allen J. Matusow, *Farm Policies and Politics in the Truman Years* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967), 4-5; and Alonzo L. Hamby, *Man of the People. A Life of Harry S. Truman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 370.

¹⁶⁰Barton J. Bernstein, "The Postwar Famine and Price Control, 1946," *Agricultural History* 38 (October 1964): 235, 239-240; State Historical Society of Iowa, WWII Clipping File; *Des Moines Register*, 20 November 1945; *Des Moines Tribune*, 15 March 1943, 1; David Fromkin, *In the Time of the Americans. FDR, Truman, Eisenhower, Marshall, MacArthur--The Generation that Changed America's Role in the World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), 447; *Des Moines Tribune*, 1 January 1945, 1; Ralph Butterfield, editor, *Patton's GI Photographers* (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1992), 79 and 16; and Moskin, *Mr. Truman's War*, 161.

bread hidden under a pillow, for they could not yet be sure that another day would bring more food."¹⁶¹ Donald Willis, a 22-year-old soldier from Swan who had been drafted in the army and served with the 3rd Armored Division in Europe, kept a diary from D-Day, June 6, 1944 through June 6, 1945. On April 11, 1945, at the opening of the death camp at Nordhausen, "Hell Hole!", he described his horror at the slave extermination camp in which the living and the dead were mixed together. He remembered for the rest of his life the eyes of the survivors who were so thankful for the rescue and the food. Willis wrote in his diary, "Black bread and thin soup were their once-a-day meal, which was at the starvation level."¹⁶²

The war had destroyed so many people. Europe's destruction directly contrasted with the United States though the U. S. was not without its losses. Iowa's war dead totaled more than 5,000 by early 1945, a higher per capita record than most states. Many Iowa farmers were well-aware of what war sacrifices had been made even though their agricultural world had prospered. Hilary Saunders watched at the Morris home ten miles north of Des Moines as a farmer and his Iowa State College-educated son argued over contour plowing. Finally the seventy-year-old father said, "Well, if it's going to win the war, son . . ." Saunders, as a visitor, commented on the scene: "All his sweat and labour, all his sons save one, had to be devoted to this end. The word 'war' on his lips was like

¹⁶¹Though 30,000 people had been liberated from Dachau, over 2,466 died in the following six weeks. "Their war had ended, but neither medical care, food nor concern could save their lives. They had gone past the point of physical recovery." Max Hastings, *Victory in Europe. D-Day to V-E Day* (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1985), 170 and 179-180; and Martin Gilbert, *The Day the War Ended: May 8, 1945—Victory in Europe* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1995), 38. On October 3, 1945, photographs were printed in the *Des Moines Register* of prisoner's artwork of the torture inflicted. Earl Beck in *The European Home Fronts* makes the statement that no book "dealing with the trials of civilians during World War II can pass over the monstrous tragedy inflicted on the Jews of Europe." (Earl Beck, *The European Home Fronts, 1939-1945* (Arlington Heights, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1993), 93.) Deborah Lipstadt's book, *Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust, 1933-1945*, concludes with a chapter, "Against Belief," that the news of Nazi Germany's persecution of the Jews was greeted "skeptically" with a "show me" syndrome by many Americans, both the general public and professional journalists. In May 1945 the *Editor and Publisher* "recommended that all newspapers devote as much space as possible to pictures of Nazi atrocities." (243) The *Des Moines Register* and *Tribune* were no exception, and many explicit pictures of the Holocaust were printed in 1945.

¹⁶² Donald J. Willis, *The Incredible Year* (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University, 1988), 136-137.

blasphemy in the mouth of a priest." When Weston Noble, another farmer's son, left to serve overseas, he remembered what his father, Merwin, an Iowa farmer near Riceville, said to him: "Life is so ironical. Everything I'm touching now is turning to money. Everything. And yet, it may cost you your life."¹⁶³

Journalist Studs Terkel, years later in the early 1980s, wrote that prosperity did come with the war, but "boom had a double meaning" as he described another Iowa farmer and father:

For the old Iowa farmer, it was something else. Oh yes, he remembered the Depression and what it did to the farmers: foreclosures the norm; grain burned; corn at minus three cents a bushel; rural despair. Oh yes, it changed with the war. 'That's when the real boost came. The war--' There is a catch in his voice. He slumps in his rocker. His wife stares at the wallpaper. It is a long silence, save for the tick-tock of the grandfather's clock. '--it does something to your country. It does something to the individual. I had a neighbor just as the war was beginning. We had a boy ready to go to service. This neighbor told me what we needed was a damn good war, and we'd solve our agricultural problems. And I said, "Yes, but I'd hate to pay with the price of my son." Which we did.' He weeps. 'It's too much of a price to pay.'¹⁶⁴

War's all-out production of food and Iowa's resulting agricultural prosperity had come with a heavy price for many family farms, with resources which could never be replaced. Iowa had paid with all her wealth, with both her soil and her children.

¹⁶³*Des Moines Register*, 16 March 1945, 7; Saunders, *Pioneers! O Pioneers!*, 102; and Des Moines Public Library, WWII vertical file, *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 18 August 1985, 1-A.

¹⁶⁴Studs Terkel, *The Good War. An Oral History of World War II* (New York: The New Press, 1984), 9-10.

CHAPTER 3. E AWARDS AND WOWS: THE PRODUCTION FRONT

Colonel Styer: "Wheat is still a vital need, but so also are arms and ammunition, those critically essential products of preparedness, which are now beginning to be harvested from the broad and versatile farm lands of the great state of Iowa."

--*Hawk-Eye Gazette*, August 4, 1941

Huddled in a bunker-protected dugout on a wilderness of bullet-strewn stubble, a lone observer sits through the chill November nights while a whistling gale of fiery tracer bullets swishes overhead to a smoldering death on a no-man's-land just north of Des Moines.

--*Des Moines Tribune*, November 25, 1943

As the Reverend Dale Welch, president of the University of Dubuque, spoke to the Seventh Annual Meeting of the Iowa Taxpayers Association in October 1941, he reminded the businessmen that this was "a grand and awful time." He continued, "Yes, these are grand times, at least in the astronomical figures that are used in computing defense needs, lend-lease appropriations, government expenditures and the national debt. And they are awful times in terms of the tragic happenings that occur from day to day and they have terrible meanings for not only ourselves but our posterity. I wonder whether as business and professional men we really are big enough to deal with the grand and awful times we are in." Reverend Welch continued to speak about the defense issue and the corresponding need for efficiency and economy in Iowa. War appeared imminent, and national defense needs were changing the industrial face of America. Iowans did not want to be left behind, whether in grand or awful times, especially if national defense industries should become more decentralized.¹⁶⁵

War production preparations in Iowa started as early as September 1939 when 72 manufacturing firms were ready, as the *Des Moines Sunday Register* stated, to "swing

¹⁶⁵*The Iowa Taxpayer*, November 1941, Supplement, 5A; *American Business*, April 1941, 24; and *Life*, 31 March 1941, 66 and 67.

immediately into war production." Des Moines had eleven such plants; Davenport and Dubuque, seven; and Burlington, Sioux City, Bettendorf, and Waterloo each had five factories ready for war production. By March 1941, defense expenditures equaled \$57,000,000 in Iowa and increased to \$68,000,000 by July, yet the industrial East and Pacific coasts had the highest number of awards. Iowa's awarded defense contracts were only half of one percent of those awarded throughout the nation. Factory employment in defense by August 1941 was 19.4 percent in Iowa but 22.4 percent in the United States. The Midwest had an advantage for future industrial establishments, however, as it was considered safer from attack. Although a *Mason City Globe Gazette* headline announced "Trade Upturn Increasing," some citizens wondered at this "gunpowder prosperity."¹⁶⁶

By the end of 1941 defense industries in Iowa were producing a diverse list of products: machine gun parts, steel buildings, water tanks, airplane hangers, submarine paint, tanks, machine gun cartridges, airplane parts, radio transmitters, tents, helmets, range finders, knap sacks, machine gun covers, holsters, caps, and work clothes. The largest defense contract of \$10,686,000 went to Iowa Transmission Company of Waterloo, a subsidiary of John Deere, for tank transmissions, while the largest number of contracts amounting to \$1,400,503 went to Boyt Harness Company in Des Moines for haversacks, gun covers, and cartridge belts. Many Iowa manufacturers literally did not know what they were producing as they were involved in complicated subcontracts of pieces. By December 1941, Iowa defense contracts totaled more than \$132 million dollars in over 150 factories producing everything from gears to clothes to corrugated boxes to mud lugs for tanks.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶*Des Moines Sunday Register*, 17 September 1939, 1-Section 6; *Iowa Business Digest*, March 1941, 2 and 3; *Iowa Business Digest*, July 1941, 2; *Iowa Business Digest*, April 1941, 3; *Iowa Business Digest*, July 1942, 1; and *Independent Woman*, April 1941, 109. During the two years before December 1941 Congress had authorized \$74.4 billion for defense production. (Phillips, *The 1940s*, 67.)

¹⁶⁷*Des Moines Sunday Register*, 10 May 1942, 3-Section 4; *Des Moines Register*, 8 January 1942, 5; and *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 21 December 1941, 3.

Industrial needs had increased at a rapid rate throughout 1941, and the United States was building defense plants despite the fact America, as *Life* described, was "a peaceable nation lacking the real warrior spirit." As historian V. R. Cardozier pointed out in his work *The Mobilization of United States*, "although the United States was definitely unprepared for war in December 1941, it was not altogether unprepared." Pearl Harbor changed the spirit of production to an all-out effort. The *Iowa Unionist* would be one among many to pledge its full support to the war effort: "Our nation is engaged in a great struggle against the forces of evil, rampant throughout the world; wholly inspired by greed and all-consuming lust for power--forces that seek to deprive all but a small privileged class of their sacred, God-given right to Freedom, Justice, and Equality." This was the mission of the production front as it strived to produce the weapons, ammunition, vehicles, and other materials needed to wage a total, global war.¹⁶⁸

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor had changed the spirit of the production front to one of urgency and ended any arguments about American involvement in war. Isolationists in Iowa, as in the rest of the nation, were left with "no choice" because of the "sneaky" and "treacherous" attack, and the democratic warrior, as any warrior, needed to be armed. Modern wars needed factories. America had the materials and the means; the attack on Pearl Harbor and the declaration of war by Nazi Germany provided the catalyst.¹⁶⁹

Most Americans believed their productive capacity would win the war. In September 1942, Donald Nelson, Director of War Production, stated, "This Nation is beginning to produce as no other nation in the world has ever produced. The soldiers of production, just as truly as the boys at the fronts, are helping to lick the enemies of

¹⁶⁸*Life*, 7 July 1941, 17; V. R. Cardozier, *The Mobilization of the United States in World War II: How the Government, Military, and Industry Prepared for War* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 1995), 72; and *The Iowa Unionist*, 16 July 1943, 1.

¹⁶⁹*Life*, 7 July 1941, 17; Stephen J. Leonard, "Denver at War: The Home Front in World War II," *Colorado Heritage* (1987): 30; and Francis Walton, *Miracle of World War II: How American Industry Made Victory Possible* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1956), Chapter 1.

Democracy." Or, as Lieutenant General William Knudsen told employees at the Burlington defense plant, "American production is going to win this darned war--there isn't any question about it."¹⁷⁰

Others citizens warned Americans not to become overconfident of the production front. Journalist Max Lerner called this "the Superman Dream": "a treacherous confidence in our industries." Ernie Pyle, a noted war correspondent, also warned Americans about their overconfidence as they needed to remember those first war casualties at the African front. He wrote, "We were smug--had got it into our heads that production alone would win the war." As the *Iowa Business Digest* commented, businesses needed to "remember Pearl Harbor" by "remembering the strength, organization, and unity of the Japanese industrial system compared to the haphazard U.S. system of capitalism."¹⁷¹

Iowa suffered from several regional limitations affecting war production: a midwestern location, large number of small businesses, and a rural character. Industrial development was not evenly distributed across the United States, resulting in some areas being "war-swollen" while others were "contract starved." By November 1942, a *Business Week* chart of war business distribution listed Cedar Rapids and Sioux City as areas with adequate labor supplies and Des Moines as an area moderately "overcontracted." No Iowa cities, however, were placed in the third category as "definitely over contracted."¹⁷²

The federal government had attempted to initiate a goal of decentralization for war production because modern warfare tactics discouraged concentrations. If defense

¹⁷⁰*Hawk Eye Gazette*, 5 September 1942, 10; and Burlington Public Library, IAAP vertical file, *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 5 March 1942.

¹⁷¹Max Lerner, *Public Journal: Marginal Notes on Wartime America* (New York: The Viking Press, 1945), 158; Ernie Pyle, *Here Is Your War* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1943), 177; and *Iowa Business Digest*, February 1942, 4.

¹⁷²War Production Board, *Converting Industry*, 3 and 5; *Business Week*, 29 July 1944, 88; *Business Week*, 7 November 1942, 22; and Alan Clive, *State of War: Michigan in World War II* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1979), 52.

industries were concentrated on the East Coast as in World War I, it could now have fatal consequences in a war fought increasingly by bombers and submarines. To meet this decentralization goal, industries were to be located in semi-rural areas with a need for employment, but these were also areas largely unprepared for an influx of war workers. Though unprepared, towns often wanted defense industries, and *Business Week* described the Midwest as "miffed" because of small town frustrations due to the lack of defense contracts.¹⁷³

The new emphasis on "bigness" of production which World War II promoted often left out small businesses. Though hearings were held in the Senate for small business concerns and books recommended small businesses join alliances, overwhelmingly the large corporations received the war contracts. Iowa's Governor George Wilson attended a conference in March 1943 to establish a plan for small midwestern businesses by creating a "pipeline system" for small factories in Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Indiana, and South Dakota. From the very beginning--between June 1940 through December 1941--the one hundred largest manufacturers had received three fourths of the war contracts. Although in July 1941 the Truman Committee criticized the military for giving a disproportionate share to large industries, little would change war contract procedures. As Senator Harry Truman commented, "The little fellow will just be receiving crumbs off the rich man's table."¹⁷⁴

The United States government formed the Defense Plant Corporation on August 22, 1940, to further develop its war production as private businesses were not prepared

¹⁷³Raymond C. Smith, "Social Effects of the War and the Defense Program on American Agriculture," *Journal of Farm Economics* 23 (1941): 24; Howard R. Tolley, *The Farmer Citizen at War* (New York: Macmillan, 1943), 165; and *Business Week*, 25 January 1942, 16.

¹⁷⁴Richard Polenberg, *America at War*, 27 and 28; Hearings before a subcommittee, February 17-19, 24, 26 and March 4, 1942; Hartley W. Barclay, *How Your Business Can Help Win the War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1942), 106; Gerald D. Nash, *The Crucial Era: The Great Depression and World War II, 1929-1945* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 151; Cardozier, *Mobilization of United States*, 145; Gerald D. Nash, *World War II and the West: Reshaping the Economy* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 12 and 13; and *Des Moines Tribune*, 11 March 1943, 15.

to take those financial risks. The proposed plants under this act would be government-owned, contractor-operated (GOCO) plants in which the government financed and ultimately owned the plants, but the construction and operation of the facility were conducted by private contractors on a cost-plus-fixed-fee basis. Construction started in July 1940, and in less than eighteen months by December 1941, seventeen GOCO plants were in production. A Burlington plant would be one of the first of these production facilities, and by the end of the war, 216 such plants existed.¹⁷⁵

Physical characteristics for each potential defense plant site needed to be considered: geographic vulnerability to attack, available transportation facilities, adequate energy sources, available raw materials, and interested potential employees. Plants were constructed as a whole unit, not by reconverting factories, so were often, as one academic researcher commented, "born practically full-grown." This allowed an orderly design for administration and production, but the building of such defense plants was often described as an "eerie experience" due to the rapid development, immense sizes, and strict security measures. The building of the Pentagon symbolized the size and speed of this pre-war construction when the world's largest office building began in the summer of 1941 and received personnel within a year. At the time, the need for defense projects was extremely urgent as the United States needed to "out-Hitler Hitler."¹⁷⁶

Government defense plants created dramatic changes in communities where such plants were built. Most midwestern towns prided themselves on their stability, and

¹⁷⁵Cardozier, 122; Patricia Dooley, "Gopher Ordnance Works: Condemnation, Construction, and Community Response," *Minnesota History* 49 (Summer 1985): 217; Joel Davidson, "Building for War, Preparing for Peace," in Donald Albrecht, editor, *World War II and American Dream: How Wartime Building Changed a Nation* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1995), 209; and Harry C. Thomson and Lida Mayo, *The Ordnance Department: Procurement and Supply* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1960), 43.

¹⁷⁶Dooley, "Gopher Ordnance Works, 218; Robert Hungerford Dodds, *World War II Construction and Construction Problems at the Navy's Continental Ammunition Depots* (Thesis, Civil Engineer: Iowa State College, 1946), 53; Perry R. Duis and Scott LaFrance, *We've Got a Job to Do: Chicagoans and World War II* (Chicago: Chicago Historical Society, 1992), 95; Thomas Parrish, *Roosevelt and Marshall: Partners in Politics and War* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1989), 317; and *American Business*, December 1941, 9.

rapid industrial changes severely affected community services and available housing. Willow Run in Michigan, site of the world's largest industrial factory, symbolized the consequences of rapid change with the extreme differences between technological and social considerations. The plant had some of the most modern features in industrial production, yet new laborers often faced trailer home communities with few if any facilities developed for their living conditions. Other examples of rapid industrial change were two communities in Indiana, the Wabash River Ordnance Plant and the Kingsbury Ordnance Plant, which expressed disappointment when a construction company failed to hire local labor or displayed bitterness about farmland purchasing arrangements.¹⁷⁷ Officials in Iowa's war communities would try to learn from these lessons by controlling rapid development and providing for new employees.

The first federal ordnance plant in Iowa would be located near Burlington, and as a result, the community would be strongly influenced by wartime production. Located along the Mississippi River, Burlington had a population of 26,775 and boasted Iowa's oldest newspaper, the daily *Hawk-Eye Gazette*. In the nineteenth century, Burlington's river location made it an ideal industrial center with the only steamboat landing on the Mississippi River between Fort Madison and Muscatine. In 1940, Burlington was a city ready to commit itself to war production. The Flint Hills above its Mississippi location had been a peaceful place for Native Americans in centuries past to collect flint for arrows and axes. Now these hills would produce modern bombs on land far from the actual battlefields.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷Lowell Juilliard Carr and James Edson Stermer, *Willow Run: A Study of Industrialization and Cultural Inadequacy* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1952), xviii; George A. Larson, "Nebraska's World War II Bomber Plant: The Glenn L. Martin-Nebraska Company," *Nebraska History* 74 (Spring 1993): 32; Francis E. Merrill, *Social Problems on the Home Front: A Study of War-time Influences* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1948), 9; Margaret Crawford, "Daily Life on the Home Front" in Donald Albrect, editor, *World War II and the American Dream*, 119; and Max Parvin Cavnes, *The Hoosier Community at War* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1961), 91-92 and 97.

¹⁷⁸University of Iowa Special Collections, Federal Writers' Project, *A Guide to Burlington, Iowa*, 7 and 8; *Burlington--Then and Now*, no page numbers; and Iowa State Historical Society, Burlington vertical file, *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 1968.

When Colonel Valliant from the United States Army Quartermaster Corp arrived in Burlington on November 5, 1940, initial preparations on the defense plant had already begun. The defense plant would employ over 4,500 people (1,000 skilled, 2,000 "common" labor, and 1,500 women) and cover 4,000 acres with a total land base of 20,000 acres located southwest of the city. One hundred and eighty-three farms were purchased by the federal government for the proposed site, and an angle was placed in the plant's rectangular outline on the north to avoid Middletown, population 126, whose residents were described as not very excited about this new development. A local gas station operator stated, "A lot of those farmers who will have to move were my customers and I guess they are pretty worried about it." The farmers were not the only ones who had to move as the Des Moines County Farm with its 396 acres and two main buildings, valued at \$200,000, was part of the federal purchase.¹⁷⁹

The transition of land from private ownership to the national government appeared to be handled smoothly. The government paid \$3,581,887 for 200 of 206 tracts of land with only six small claims going to court. The largest claim was the county home and the smallest was for \$337.28. The county home eventually received \$298,000 for its property; it later used the money to build a new facility. Of the farmers, 130 were owners and 90 were tenants, but 50 tenants still had not been able to make definite plans for re-location by February 1941. Long-established residents were praised, however, by a War Department representative for agreeing to sell their farmland without any legal arguments. The federal government's purchase of these twenty thousand acres of land in Des Moines County amounted to a tenth of the county's area.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁹*Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 6 November 1940, 1; *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 13 December 1940, 1; Burlington Public Library, Iowa Ordnance Plant Scrapbook (This scrapbook appeared to contain only *Hawk-Eye Gazette* articles; most dates were listed but not page numbers.): 9 November 1940, 10 November 1940, 23 November 1940, and November 1940.

¹⁸⁰Burlington Public Library, IOP Scrapbook: July 1941, 19 March 1941, 1 February 1941, and 12 December 1940; and *Iowa Farm Economist*, August 1941, 16.

Once started, the Burlington munitions plant construction seemed to gain its own momentum in the transformation to the largest detonator plant in the country. The buildings were constructed of steel and concrete for permanence, and the entire area was fenced and policed. The War Department awarded the \$34,451,384 contract in early November 1940 with an additional \$12 to \$15 million for construction costs for a grand total of \$50,000,000. Day & Zimmerman, Inc., of Philadelphia received the operation supervision contract. The construction contract went to two firms, Al Johnson Construction of Minneapolis and A. Guthrie Company of St. Paul, who would bring a combined million dollars of equipment to build the munitions complex.¹⁸¹

Work on the Burlington plant proceeded as quickly as possible, both in locating building materials as well as prospective workers. Major John Lowry, a War Department representative, told a Kiwanis club at Hotel Burlington in December 1940 that nothing should delay construction of the Burlington munitions plant. By the end of the month, over one hundred train carloads of construction material had arrived with many more expected. Munitions plant officials had also started accepting construction worker applications, and all employees were then fingerprinted and photographed for security reasons. By January 1941 the plant construction force exceeded 1,100 with 75 percent Burlington area residents. The Burlington City Council had passed a resolution urging Day & Zimmerman to give preference to local labor as the Chamber of Commerce's mail had tripled that month with job requests from other parts of Iowa, Missouri, and Illinois.¹⁸²

Though the plant was initially to be titled the Burlington Shell Loading Plant, it was unofficially called many different names such as the powder factory, munitions plant, or arsenal. Its official name was changed to the Iowa Ordnance Plant in early

¹⁸¹Burlington Public Library, IOP Scrapbook: 27 November 1940, 18 November 1940, 8 November 1940, and 9 December 1940; and *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 2 December 1940, 2.

¹⁸²Burlington Public Library, IOP Scrapbook: 12 December 1940, 30 December 1940, 31 December 1940, 11 January 1941, 11 February 1941, 4 January 1941, and 27 December 1940.

February 1941. Despite the ordinary name, the rapid construction work fascinated local residents. Roads leading to the plant were officially closed in the latter part of March due to the "jammed" highways as traffic neared 10,000 visitors on one Sunday. Admission to the plant area was then restricted to officials and employees.¹⁸³

The numbers of employees kept increasing in 1941 at the Burlington plant: 2,460 on February 14th; 6,254 on April 25th; and 9,533 on May 24th. By the end of May, the facility was 40 percent complete. By June the payroll was almost \$400,000 a week with 11,052 employees; by mid-June it was \$456,547 with 11,533 employees. Employment peaked on July 12th with 12,217 but declined to 12,014 by mid-August with 80 percent of the plant complete. Shifts worked minimum 48 hour weeks with time and a half pay over forty hours; crews had invested 9,075,615 man-hours for the plant to be 83.5 percent complete by the end of August. The completion date was therefore moved up from November 3 to September 3, 1941.¹⁸⁴

Altogether the Iowa Ordnance Plant had hired 16,620 workers between January and July, including replacements. The vice president of Day and Zimmerman, E. F. Johnstone, Jr., told the Iowa Engineering Society's annual convention that people with farming backgrounds were the "best type" for employment. He continued, "Because World war experience showed farm men and women were more careful and more deft at fine hand work than workers of any other background, Iowa farm people will be sought to work in the plant when it is completed." Another group of sought-after workers were men over forty because they had reached "an age of caution" with better safety habits. Officials expected women to be thirty percent of the labor force, especially for fuse work but also for loading and weighing shells.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³Burlington Public Library, IOP scrapbook: 5 February 1941 and 25 March 1941.

¹⁸⁴Burlington Public Library, IOP scrapbook: June 1941, 7 June 1941, 10 June 1941, 14 June 1941, 12 July 1941, 16 August 1941, 14 August 1941, and 30 August 1941.

¹⁸⁵Burlington Public Library, IAAP (IOP's name was changed after WWII to the Iowa Army Ammunition Plant.) vertical file, *Sunday Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 9 July 1961, 20; and Burlington Public Library, IOP scrapbook, 13 February 1941.

The Iowa Ordnance Plant, when completed, had \$7,000,000 worth of machine shop equipment; its annual operating expenses were \$30,000,000. The materials that went into developing the plant comprised impressive lists. For example, in one peak day, April 29th, over 3,000 tons of concrete were poured. The original contract of \$50,000,000 for 496 structures of which 211 were storage igloos was increased by \$7,200,000 in June 1941 to include 25 more manufacturing buildings and 69 added storage igloos, along with 18 more miles of railroad track. The plant was divided into 20 production and storage areas linked by 75 miles of railway network, 100 miles of roads, 30 miles of water lines, 15 miles of sewer pipe, and 100 miles of electrical line. Its power plant was large enough for a city of 50,000.¹⁸⁶

From the day officials turned over the first spade of dirt on January 17, 1941, to the plant's dedication on July 31, 1941, the ordnance plant had been a story of industrial coordination and enterprise. A journalist described this construction scene in southeast Iowa as one in which "men and machine are winning a major battle in America's all-out defense effort. It's a battle of the production line--the first line of defense." A year after the formal announcement of the proposed plant in November 6, 1940, these 20,000 acres of farmland had been transformed into a \$60 million dollar ordnance plant with 600 buildings. The payroll for that year was estimated at over \$10,000,000. As a journalist for the *Hawk-Eye Gazette* summarized, "The whole landscape has been changed. What was once a placid easy-going farming community is now a bustling industrial area where Uncle Sam is loading shells to be hurled at Hitler or anybody else." The first artillery shell rolled off the melt line in September, just nine months after construction started yet

¹⁸⁶Burlington Public Library, IOP scrapbook: 13 February 1941, 27 February 1941, 18 June 1941, 30 April 1941, 29 May 1941, June 1941, and 19 February 1941; and Burlington Public Library, IAAP vertical file, *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, July 1941 (Defense Day), 2.

months before Pearl Harbor. The Iowa Ordnance Plant was the largest construction project ever in Iowa and was turning out bombs and shells steadily by 1942.¹⁸⁷

Governor George Wilson and Lieutenant Governor B. B. Hickenlooper paid the plant its first official visit on July 9, 1941, and Major Otto Jank coordinated this inspection tour. Governor Wilson officially commented on the plant's progress, "Although I had kept in close touch with the plant through the press, I hadn't realized the extent of the project nor the extensiveness of the construction program." The governor would later write on December 30th to the *Hawk-Eye Gazette* with his congratulations to this enterprising city: "I am sure that we are all gratified by the news we receive from time to time of the healthy strides toward the greater prosperity of Burlington and rejoice with you in the hum of industry and the stir of commerce."¹⁸⁸

The Burlington Chamber of Commerce organized a National Defense Day celebration that July to honor the plant's construction with a visit by vice president Henry A. Wallace. Wallace arrived to a nineteen gun salute in nearby Middletown, then proceeded toward the plant where he was presented with a souvenir shell. From there, a thousand soldiers from Fort Leonard Wood escorted him to the Burlington Hotel where, from the balcony, he reviewed the troops with their full equipment and field guns along with the 20th Infantry Band.¹⁸⁹

The National Defense Day also included a banquet in the Burlington Memorial Auditorium with approximately 500 people attending the dinner with "Preparedness" as its theme. During the after dinner program Major Jank presented the city of Burlington with an 81 millimeter shell (with "all the dangerous elements removed") on behalf of the ordnance department. As Mayor Max Conrad accepted the shell, he said, "On behalf of

¹⁸⁷Burlington Public Library, IOP scrapbook: 31 July 1941, 7 November 1941, and 7 January 1942; and Burlington Public Library, IAAP vertical file, *Hawk-Eye Gazette* (Sunday), 2 June 1991, 1.

¹⁸⁸Burlington Public Library, IOP scrapbook: 9 July 1941, 10 July 1941, and 31 December 1941.

¹⁸⁹*Des Moines Register*, 30 July 1941, 14; and Burlington Public Library, IOP scrapbook: 11 July 1941, 31 July 1941, 25 July 1941, and 1 August 1941.

the people of Burlington I accept with great pride the first shell made in the Iowa Ordnance plant." He stated that it was both symbolic of peace as it was unloaded yet symbolic of something else as this plant was prepared to produce "hundreds of thousands--yea millions of loaded shells if need be." Other officials spoke of their pride in Iowa's production. Brigadier General Ramsey of the Rock Island Arsenal declared, "Something else comes out of Iowa besides tall corn. . . the state is successful in the output of shells." Brigadier General Fleming, a native of Burlington, stated that he had more mixed emotions as he used to ride a pony over what is now the plant area but realized it had to be set aside for war production.¹⁹⁰

Not everyone was enthusiastic about this official celebration. Burlington Republicans called it "a New Deal Affair" as they were not excited about Democrats Vice President Wallace and Senator Herring's presence while Republican Governor Wilson was absent. Lieutenant Governor Hickenlooper, however, did introduce Wallace before his speech. Local Republicans could not complain too much as the plant payroll was \$500,000 a week at this point, double Burlington's "normal times" industrial salary total.¹⁹¹

The text of Wallace's highly patriotic speech, "America--the Mighty," was broadcast worldwide on shortwave radio. Wallace began his dedication speech:

Today we dedicate this great plant to the defense of liberty, to the worship of God, to respect for the dignity of man and to the peaceful pursuit of happiness. Through a oneness of spirit we shall live. As days pass and factory belts move ever faster, as muscles and minds quicken to the task, this great agricultural community will have its part in the oneness of will and work which shall win not only the war, but the peace.

A Cedar Rapids newspaper editor later praised Burlington for its organized celebration and Wallace for his polished elocution. This editor also commented that the speech was probably intended to awaken the people of the Middle West to the current national

¹⁹⁰Burlington Public Library, IOP scrapbook: 29 July 1941, 28 July 1941, and 1 August 1941.

¹⁹¹*Des Moines Tribune*, 31 July 1941, 11.

dangers by stirring them to a more "belligerent" mood. He doubted Iowa's citizens in July of 1941 fully considered war. He concluded, "In any case, shells can be produced as well in Iowa as they can in Connecticut, and the new Burlington plant should prove it."¹⁹²

What the Iowa Ordnance Plant produced were bombs for the Allies. The first load line started production a day earlier than planned on July 30, 1941; the second line started on October 27th; the third line started on November 20th. The first production order was for 155 m. howitzer shells, then 81 mm. trench mortar shells, then 155 mm. GPF (translated French for "grand precise firing"), 75 mm. anti-aircraft shells, then aerial bombs. Most of its production was larger artillery; the aerial bombs were the largest at 2,000 pounds and 5 feet by 24 inches, equivalent to a man-sized bathtub. The assembly lines for the shells equaled mile-long conveyor systems. One journalist pictured the plant as "a giant baby": "Like an elephant's calf, it was born big. It will only produce big projectiles."¹⁹³

Burlington residents were very proud of the community's bomb production. For American Heroes Day on July 17, 1942, thirty 155 mm. shells were displayed in downtown Burlington store windows. In another patriotic gesture, the Burlington American Legion Post No. 52 purchased \$10,000 worth of war bonds for a carload of bombs from the Iowa Ordnance Plant. In an ironic twist of "it's a small world," the 500 pound bombs titled "Kisses for Hitler" were loaded by two overseas Burlingtonians onto Flying Fortresses (bombers) destined for the Italian front. Photographs were sent home of the boys and the bombs for the local newspaper.¹⁹⁴

Bomb plant officials wanted to remain proud of their plant's production record and so continually stressed security and safety measures. The Iowa Ordnance Plant

¹⁹²Burlington Public Library, IOP scrapbook: 1 August 1941 and 2 August 1941.

¹⁹³Burlington Public Library, IAAP vertical file: *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 4 August 1942; and Burlington Public Library, IOP scrapbook: 30 July 1941, 18 October 1941, and 19 October 1941.

¹⁹⁴Burlington Public Library, IAAP vertical file, 17 July 1942; *Iowa Legionaire*, 16 July 1943, 6; and *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 25 June 1943, 1.

initially maintained an excellent safety record.¹⁹⁵ Employees at the lines required two passes—one at the gate and a separate pass to one of the "groups" or production lines, and all matches and lighters were taken at the front gate. In the change rooms, far from the lines, employees switched from civilian clothes and shoes to khaki overalls called "monkey suits" and "powder shoes" with no nails or capped toes. A number of bombproof shelters were located around the plant in case of an explosion. A fireman explained the whistle cord on the production lines, "If anyone sees anything go wrong, he pulls that—and we all skedaddle."¹⁹⁶

This safety record was soon lost, however. During the early months of war, between December 1941 and June 1942, three explosions occurred in the nation's ordnance plants which killed 83 people and damaged a million dollars worth of property. Two of these explosions occurred at the Iowa Ordnance Plant. At 1:05 p.m. on Friday, December 12, 1941, just a few days after Pearl Harbor, a single blast startled the countryside. It was strong enough to rattle windows in West Burlington, twelve miles away. TNT exploded in the No. 1 Melt Unit, a three story building of reinforced concrete, steel, and bricks, and the force of the blast hurled men out of windows and doors. The roof and walls flew several hundred feet in the air, and the debris fell around the injured men. No women worked on that line, but officials estimated that fifty to seventy-five men had been in the building at the time of the explosion. William Pratt of

¹⁹⁵From January 1 to September 1, 1941, only 139 "lost time" accidents occurred within 11,886,478 man-hours. Iowa's first ordnance plant, therefore, had a frequency rate of 11.72 accidents per million man-hours compared to the national average at 28.81. For the entire year of construction with 18,232,007 man-hours, only 164 lost-time accidents occurred with an even lower 8.99 accident rate compared to national average of 33.47. (Burlington Public Library, IOP scrapbook: 7 January 1942, 30 January 1942, and 15 September 1941.) The first ordnance explosion in the nation occurred in late summer of 1940 at the Hercules Powder Company in Kenil, New Jersey. (Thomas, *The Ordnance Department*, 131.)

¹⁹⁶Burlington Public Library, IOP scrapbook: no date marked.

Burlington was one of the injured, and he later described the blast, "The first thing I knew there was a terrific noise and then the roof began falling in."¹⁹⁷

As an immediate result of the explosion, eight men were known dead, but only six bodies could be quickly identified. A hand from one body had to be identified from his employee fingerprint records. Twenty men were taken to local hospitals, and the newspapers pronounced them "casualties of war." Ultimately, thirteen men lost their lives from this explosion. The morale of other IOP employees, however, was reputed to still be good after the accident mostly because of the recent Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor; the number applying for jobs remained high. Three experts from Washington arrived and ruled out any sabotage.¹⁹⁸

The December blast in Burlington was ranked by Associated Press editors in 1941 as the outstanding news story for Iowa. Sadly, a second accident in March would also be the outstanding news story for 1942. At 11:53 p.m. on March 4th, an explosion destroyed another melt unit, the No. 3 Line. A white flash, a huge puff of smoke, and then flames shot high in the air as the explosion shattered and ripped off the top of the concrete, steel, and brick building. The blast could be heard for 25 miles and rattled windows in Burlington. Fortunately, the damaged building was located in the southwest section of the facility and isolated from other buildings. At midnight, just seven minutes after the explosion, the police station was a "madhouse" of people and phone calls. Rescue workers labored throughout the night under floodlights with no reported hysteria or wasted efforts. Fifteen bodies were initially recovered, and fifty injured men were sent

¹⁹⁷Thomson, *The Ordnance Department*, 131; *Des Moines Register*, 14 December 1941, 1 and 6; *Des Moines Tribune*, 12 December 1941, 1; *Des Moines Tribune*, 13 December 1941, 1; and *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 12 December 1941, 1.

¹⁹⁸The first identified fatalities were Lyle M. Teal, 27, Keosauqua; E. C. Schillerstrom, 50, Agency; Pearly J. Pettit, 48, Lansing; John K. Cummings, 36, Bunch; Woodrow Wehrle, 26, Rome; and Wayne P. Hoefle, 36, Fort Madison. Added to the fatalities list were Dwight Strawhacker, Oakville; Tracy A. Perry, West Burlington; Virgil Hopkins, Middletown; Gora Gore, Bloomfield; R. I. McKay, Washington; and L. E. Robbins, Keosauqua. Burlington Public Library, IOP scrapbook: 16 December 1941, 22 December 1941, 28 January 1942, 14 December 1941, 15 December 1941, 13 December 1941, 27 January 1942, and 6 March 1942.

to local hospitals. One employee later described the explosion, "All hell broke loose before you could bat an eye." Another said of the blast, "It looked like pictures of a volcano." The editor of the *Hawk-Eye Gazette* stated the following day that "wholesale death, grim, stark and ghastly" had moved upon Burlington.¹⁹⁹ Twenty men ultimately lost their lives in this second explosion at the Iowa Ordnance Plant.²⁰⁰

While Burlington residents grieved for the victims, the response from local newspapers was predictable for wartime. Since Henry A. Wallace's speech in 1941, the dominant theme regarding almost any event related to war production was to praise workers for their patriotism and to cast them as soldiers who simply served on a different front than those soldiers fighting on the front line. The *Hawkeye-Gazette* responded accordingly the day after the blast. Those who died were "heroes in civilian capacities," the editor wrote, and "gave their lives as gloriously and as freely as if they had fallen at Pearl Harbor, Singapore, or Manilla." Morale still remained high at the ordnance plant following the blast although several workers later quit or transferred. Most employees, displaying "typical Americanism," were determined to "carry on." One employee, Jake Waring, had survived both blasts but then enlisted in the Navy at the end of March: "If I'm bombproof, I suppose I'll have a chance to find it out there too."²⁰¹

An official investigation was quickly initiated by Senator Clyde Herring based on a report by Marc Burbridges, a discharged safety engineer from IOP. Burbridges had

¹⁹⁹No women worked at this melt unit either. Burlington Public Library, IOP scrapbook, 26 December 1942; *Des Moines Register*, 13 December 1941, 1 and 10; *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 5 March 1942, 1; Burlington Public Library, IOP scrapbook: 7 March 1942, 13 March 1942, 6 March 1942, 9 March 1942, 5 March 1942, 27 March 1942; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 8 March 1942, 1-Sect. 4; and *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 5 March 1942, 4.

²⁰⁰Harold Henry Klontz, 22, Packwood; Ralph Robert Carson, 23, West Point; Lawrence Greiner, 29, Keota; Pearl Clifford Carver, 37, Mount Pleasant; Harold R. Wyatt, 27, Keokuk; Archie S. Booth, 42, Colchester, Illinois; Ernest Strausbaugh, 28, Roseville, Illinois; Hartzell Popejoy, 36, Fairfield; Royal L. Murray, 41, East Moline, Illinois; Hershel M. Goddard, 30, Oskaloosa; Grover C. Kieth, 45 Cedar Rapids; Andrew Voorhees, 33, Raritan, Illinois; Bernard L. Melton, 29, London Mills, Illinois; Henry Hummel, 28, Monmouth, Illinois; William Buford England, 23, Colusa, Illinois; Harold Henry Klontz, 22, Ollie; Olyn Claire Rogers, 31, Sparksburg; Clyde Hughes, Cincinatti (Iowa); Clarence Wilson; and Kenneth Van Sickel.

²⁰¹Burlington Public Library, IOP scrapbook: 5 March 1942 and 24 March 1942.

warned officials in December of dangerous practices he had witnessed at the Burlington plant, and he predicted another blast. He was concerned for employees' safety and made specific recommendations such as the need for more safety engineers and better trained employees. The general manager of Zimmerman and Day disputed those claims and stated that housekeeping at the plant was stressed and the plant was "at its peak of perfection." Senator Herring, however, commented, "This explosion should not have happened." He believed Lieutenant General William Knudsen, the United States Chief of War Production, should investigate. Herring stated for the press, "When anything interferes with war production, he ought to know about it." The general flew in from Kansas City, Missouri, and all melt units were closed until after the investigation. One coincidence to be investigated was that both blasts had occurred during shift changes, resulting in higher number of fatalities. No sabotage evidence was found, and the believed cause was "the vigorous manual operation of a valve controlling the flow of TNT."²⁰²

From its opening, despite the two accidents, the Burlington plant had maintained high production levels, and this translated into employment opportunities for area workers with good wages and, at least until the war ended, stable employment. The comment often heard in such situations was "a booming war economy."²⁰³

State officials thought other areas of Iowa could also benefit from a new war plant. A \$50,000 appropriation bill to attract defense industries to the state passed both houses of the Iowa legislature in February 1941, and this bill passed with "absolute consensus" as it "cycloned" through the legislature in just one day. Since a dozen midwestern sites were possibilities in March 1941 for a new powder plant, Iowa wanted to ensure its success in being selected again as one of the potential sites. However, farmers in Lee and

²⁰²*Des Moines Register*, 6 March 1942, 1 and 5; *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 6 March 1942, 1; and Burlington Public Library, IOP scrapbook: 7 March 1942, 5 March 1942; and 27 March 1942. Marc Burbridge was discharged in late January 1942 by Zimmerman and Day. He stated he was unable to find other jobs despite the great need for safety engineers. General Manager Johnstone would not discuss with the press the reasons for Burbridge's discharge. (*Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 6 March 1942, 1.)

²⁰³*Red Oak Sun*, 13 February 1941, 7.

Van Buren County protested; they did not want their area to be considered a proposed site as they did not want to sell their farmland.²⁰⁴

During the last week of May 1941 Governor George Wilson went to Washington, D.C., to try to create federal interest in defense contracts for Iowa. The War Department planned by July 1st to spend a total of \$1,000,000,000 on new and enlarged munitions plants with a potential work force of 4,000,000 men which would be carried out under the fifth supplemental defense and lend-lease appropriations bill. Federal officials stated it was the largest bill for munitions plants ever approved, all in a single day. As part of this legislation, President Roosevelt signed an ordinance expansion program order on July 1st with appropriations for three small arms cartridge plant sites: Des Moines, Iowa; St. Paul, Minnesota, and Salt Lake City, Utah. Similar plants were already being constructed in Denver, Colorado; and St. Louis and Lake City, Missouri, as the demand for .50 caliber machine gun shells in the European war had already exceeded any previous expectations.²⁰⁵

Six to eight sites surrounding Des Moines were originally considered for the small arms cartridge plant, but a signed United States court order on Monday, July 7th, gave the War Department immediate possession of 2,445 acres southwest of Ankeny for the proposed \$30,000,000 small arms ammunition plant. A second area of over 2,000 acres for a rifle range would be added to this site at a later date. The entire site was approximately three miles long and two miles wide with thirty-nine parcels of land owned by seventy-five persons and firms. Although the War Department could take immediate action due to an emergency wartime statute, the land would be appraised and purchased with possible appeals.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁴Burlington Public Library, IOP scrapbook, 20 March 1941.

²⁰⁵*Red Oak Sun*, 29 May 1941, 7; Burlington Public Library, IOP scrapbook, 12 June 1941; and *Des Moines Register*, 12 June 1941, 1.

²⁰⁶*Des Moines Tribune*, 7 July 1941, 1.

This site was just ten miles north of Des Moines on the outskirts of the small town of Ankeny. The original town was established in April 1875 by John F. Ankeny at eighty acres, and the community had grown to 700 people by 1940. Several small towns outside of Ankeny such as Carney and Oralabor had been coal mine centers twenty years earlier, but by 1941 most mines had closed down. Local residents hoped that this industrial boom would last as compared to the previous mining boom.²⁰⁷

The Des Moines area was chosen for its available resources of labor and transportation facilities along with the need for decentralization of war industries. The area's labor potential was significant as 10,000 were jobless in the 25 surrounding communities. Des Moines' mayor, Mark Conkling, wanted local, not migrating, labor to work at the proposed plant: "I'd hate to think the plant would create any boom. We have material and resources here without creating an unbalanced situation." The residents of Ankeny were described as having "an air of bewilderment," and many said they would not believe it until construction actually started while others simply did not want to sell their farm land. One farmer, Elliot Purmort, was very direct: "No, I don't want it. I live over here. I don't want to move. Why should I?" He added, laughing, "I'll just drive my cows right down town. Where'll they put us?"²⁰⁸

Ankeny did not want a transient boom from the ordnance plant because the quiet town feared losing its old and comfortable ways. The city council quickly passed a beer ordinance (it did not have one) to maintain local control of new liquor establishments such as closing at midnight and not allowing dancing. Also, Ankeny businessmen knew from other boom towns' experiences that underestimating or overestimating needs could ruin small businesses as war workers and their needs were hard to predict. The boom,

²⁰⁷State Historical Society of Iowa, Ankeny vertical file, "A History of Ankeny," compiled by Art Hildreth; and *Des Moines Register*, 3 July 1941, 5.

²⁰⁸Des Moines Public Library, DMOP vertical file, *Des Moines Register*, 7 July 1941; and *Des Moines Register*, 3 July 1941, 1 and 5.

however, proved not to be as big as expected. Guy Hall, a druggist, explained, "Des Moines absorbed most of the business from the plant."²⁰⁹

This absorption into Des Moines was partly accomplished by travel arrangements between the two cities. Initially, private buses transported construction workers, but employees arranged car pools of three to six people and charged \$1.25 to \$1.50 a week, depending on the number of days and distances, usually ten miles or more. Parking arrangements were made for more than a thousand cars at the plant, and a new highway was constructed between Des Moines and the plant just outside of Ankeny.²¹⁰

Construction at Iowa's second ordnance plant started in late July 1941. Senator Clyde Herring turned the first shovelful of soil under a "blistering" sun in the clover field of the old Parmenter farm as gentle breezes blew the American flag above the scene with a cornfield in the background. Both Senator Herring and Governor Wilson spoke at the noon-time, hour-long ceremony to a crowd of three hundred. Senator Herring proudly stated, "You'll have no sabotage here--not in Iowa. There will be no labor trouble. The men who will build this plant are just as patriotic as anybody here in America. We're all ready [sic] 100-per-cent Americans in this part of the country." Captain Bell, Jr., spoke for the Army, "The welcome we have received at Des Moines really has been magnificent. I'd like to repeat one idea--this plant is not being built by one person, or two or three persons--it is the combined effort of the whole community."²¹¹

The War Department estimated the plant would cost \$52,500,000 within the first year's operation for maximum production of .30 and .50 caliber ammunition of ball tracer and armor-piercing type ammunition for machine guns. The construction phase needed to be efficient despite the complexity of the production plant. The construction contracts

²⁰⁹Des Moines Public Library, DMOP vertical file: *Des Moines Register*, 9 July 1941; and *Des Moines Register*, 4 July 1941, 5.

²¹⁰*Des Moines Register*, 27 March 1942, 5; and *Des Moines Tribune*, 25 September 1941, 13.

²¹¹Des Moines Public Library, DMOP vertical file, *Des Moines Register*, 26 July 1941; and *Des Moines Register*, 30 July 1941.

went to two Des Moines and two Davenport firms--Weitz Company and J. S. McLaughlin & Sons; and Central Engineering Company and Priester Construction Company. Officials told land owners in early July to prepare to leave the site within ten days. Small grain crops were harvested, but the corn would be destroyed and paid for by the federal government. The largest landowner was F. W. Fitch Company who owned a 750 acre model dairy farm, and their \$8,800 barn would be the only building to remain, used initially as construction headquarters. Workers constructed two hundred and nineteen buildings for the ordnance complex: 70 main manufacturing buildings, 3 administration buildings, 30 magazines for powder storage, and 116 miscellaneous buildings. Costs ranged from \$300,000 apiece for some of the assorted units to \$2,500,000 for some of the manufacturing buildings. The site also required more than buildings: 5 miles of sewers, 300 telephone stations, 300,000 square yards of roads, and 6 miles of steam pipeline.²¹²

Security throughout the construction phase remained strict. The first task was to place a fourteen mile chain link fence around the perimeter, and no one, not even FBI agents, were allowed to enter without a pass. Guards remained on duty twenty-four hours a day, both on foot and horses, as they worked eight and a half hour overlapping shifts throughout the war years. Construction workers were required to sign an affidavit before employment stating they were American citizens and that they did not advocate overthrow of the government. All applicants would also undergo character investigations for un-American and subversive activities.²¹³

Nearly six thousand people registered for employment at the munitions plant during the first four days that applications were being accepted. This was not surprising

²¹²*Des Moines Register*, 31 July 1941, 4; *Des Moines Register*, 30 July 1941, 1; *Des Moines Tribune*, 8 July 1941, 1; and Des Moines Public Library, DMOP vertical file, *Des Moines Register*, 23 July 1941.

²¹³Des Moines Public Library, DMOP vertical file: *Des Moines Tribune*, 13 August 1941, *Des Moines Register*, 18 July 1941, *Des Moines Register*, 28 July 1941; *Ankeny Times*, 14 May 1943, 1; and *Des Moines Tribune*, 4 November 1941, 1A. The Ankeny paper contained very few references to the local ordnance plant.

as many men and women in central Iowa were desperate for work after the long Depression years. One example of a man anxious for steady employment was LeRoy Schoff who was both father and mother to his five children. Schoff had been worrying about money and was "without a dime." He said he "practically slept" at the employment office after word of the munitions plant job openings was released, and his efforts paid off when he received a job at \$.75 an hour. He later told a *Register* reporter that he did not mind "dusty labor": "I don't know how I'd ever got my children back in school if I hadn't got this job. I hope I can work here as long as I live. I never was so tickled to get a job in my life."²¹⁴

Ordnance officials wanted employee and employer relations to be professional and equitable during the construction phase. Workers were paid the prevailing union wages for the surrounding area with a range from \$.75 an hour for building laborers to \$1.60 an hour for brick layers, and hourly wage scales were set for 95 different employee classifications. At first, one hundred, then two hundred, workers started the first week with two shifts from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. Three eight hour shifts soon followed. By mid-August, the construction weekly payroll was \$46,000 for 1,088 employees (350 administrative and 738 hourly workers) with an additional 150 to 200 hired per day. By the first week of September, 3,500 men were employed for a total payroll of \$186,000; employees received their paychecks on Fridays after lining up outside the time shacks.²¹⁵

Construction work at the Ankeny plant continued at a rapid rate after the dedication ceremony in late July. Work was five percent complete within the first three

²¹⁴*Des Moines Register*, 11 July 1941, 1; and *Des Moines Register*, 15 August 1941, 5. The Iowa State Employment Services office in Des Moines had the following number of people register for employment at the plant: Monday, 2,200; Tuesday, 1,900; and Wednesday/Thursday, 1,800.

²¹⁵Des Moines Public Library, DMOP vertical file: *Des Moines Tribune*, 13 August 1941, 2 July 1941, *Des Moines Register*, 5 August 1941, and *Des Moines Register*, 24 August 1941; *Des Moines Tribune*, 28 July 1941, 1; *Des Moines Register*, 29 July 1941, 5; and *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 7 September 1941, 8-Iowa.

weeks with fourteen buildings already under construction. The noises of hammers, trucks, grading equipment, concrete mixing machines, and railroad cars were all transforming these once peaceful clover and corn fields of central Iowa into bomb factories. The buildings were described as unlike anything ever built in Iowa during peacetime. Each manufacturing unit was 400 feet by 1,000 feet, a block wide and three blocks long. By mid-October, night construction took place under floodlights which could be seen for miles around. By November 7, 1941, thirty-two percent of the project was finished with men working on ten hour shifts. By November 28th, construction had passed the half-way mark because of fair weather but was still not quite on schedule. Lieutenant Winget commented, "All in all, everything is progressing very satisfactorily. Now if only this weather holds."²¹⁶

As safety measures, buildings in the small arms ammunition facility were designed to be segregated units. Captain Bell described the intent, "If one should happen to blow up, it would not set off another. However, with all the precautions that will be taken, I do not think any building will explode." Only one accident occurred during the construction phase of the ordnance plant when a temporary warehouse, forty feet by one hundred feet, burned down in September. Thousands of spectators watched the blaze, causing a traffic jam. Five men were slightly injured and treated at the plant's infirmary.²¹⁷

Building construction proceeded even faster the week after Pearl Harbor, and the first manufacturing unit, Building Number 1, was almost complete. Safety was still a concern, especially after the recent Iowa Ordnance Plant explosion in Burlington, and

²¹⁶*Des Moines Sunday Register*, 21 September 1941, 3-Iowa; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 19 October 1941, 12-Commercial; and Des Moines Public Library, DMOP vertical file: *Des Moines Tribune*: 17 October 1941, 7 November 1941, 28 November 1941, and 30 November 1941. Only men were hired for the construction phase.

²¹⁷Des Moines Public Library, DMOP vertical file: *Des Moines Tribune*, 12 September 1941; and *Des Moines Tribune*, 1 September 1941, 1; and *Des Moines Register*, 27 September 1941, 1. The injured men were Roy C. Welch, W. H. Granger, Harold Cunningham, Glen Chenoweth, and James Osborne.

storage houses were surrounded by heavy embankments. By early March 1942, the Des Moines Ordnance Plant operated 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with 3,000 employees, and plans were made to hire 9,000 more workers to produce the needed amounts of .30 and .50 caliber cartridges. The facility had the capacity to produce 2.3 million rounds of ammunition daily. Just seven months earlier, Senator Herring had turned the first spade of dirt; now he could praise the war production efforts. He said, "From a long range point of view, there is no reason for the pessimism about the war situation that is reported to exist in some parts of the Middle West. We've got to take it on the chin for a while; but we are preparing to land a knockout blow."²¹⁸

One blow to DMOP's record, however, was its early resistance to hiring local black workers. The full employment economy of World War II challenged the traditional management "preference" for white male labor, and the most frequent rationale for the prejudice was that white opposition would cause slow downs. Arthur Trotter, president of the Des Moines Negro Chamber of Commerce, urged black men and women to register for war jobs because he wanted "the Negroes of this vicinity to procure their just share of employment in this present emergency." Other ordnance plants had set positive examples such as the St. Louis Cartridge Plant which hired 3,000 blacks in all roles from supervisory to unskilled categories, the Hercules Powder Company in New Jersey which hired 1,000 black workers, and the Wolfe Creek Ordnance Plant in Tennessee which had a ratio of 20 to 25 percent black employees.²¹⁹

An early challenge was presented to DMOP by an eighteen-year-old black woman, Elizabeth Shackelford, who had been recently named by the National Youth Administration after a war training program as "youth worker most valuable for war

²¹⁸*Des Moines Sunday Register*, 14 December 1941, 12-Commercial; and Des Moines Public Library, DMOP vertical file: *Des Moines Register*, 4 March 1942.

²¹⁹Joel Seidman, *American Labor from Defense to Reconversion* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1953), 165, Karen Tucker Anderson, "Last Hired, First Fired: Black Women Workers during World War II," *The Journal of American History* 69 (June 1982): 82-85; *Iowa Bystander*, 17 July 1941, 1; and *Iowa Bystander*, 7 August 1941, 1.

production" for a ten county central Iowa area. However, in April 1942 she brought suit in federal court against the U.S. Rubber Company, the manager of the Des Moines Ordnance Plant, because the company had "refused to employ in the capacity for which they are best qualified" which was a violation of President Roosevelt's June 1941 decision, Executive Order 8802. This alleged discrimination was harmful "in spirit and practice by delaying the defense program." It was the first lawsuit of its kind nationally.²²⁰

This case was intended to draw attention to discriminatory hiring practices and to change these practices for the good of the war effort. John Coleman had made a number of visits for the *Bystander*, the paper serving the black community in Iowa, to training centers and war industries in Des Moines. At first he found wide-spread discrimination, but, as he commented, "present opportunities are improving." The Des Moines Ordnance Plant was improving its hiring practices, and four percent of the plant positions were held by black Iowans which matched the 1940 black population ratio in Des Moines which was also approximately four percent.²²¹

In early 1942, when Americans felt the war effort was not going well for the country, the issue of defense employment discrimination was a national concern. Many Americans felt every effort should be made to improve war production quantity and efficiency while avoiding practices of discrimination. Black leaders also spoke out on the issue. Lucile Bluford, editor of the *Kansas City Call*, spoke at the Maple Street Baptist Church in Des Moines in April 1942 about black Americans in war production. While she believed that blacks were making progress in their war against discrimination and that even non-war industries were opening doors to black workers, she believed there was still major discrimination against hiring blacks. At the same time, however, she thought the

²²⁰*Iowa Bystander*, 9 April 1942, 1.

²²¹*Des Moines Register*, 13 April 1942, 7. The population ratio in Des Moines for 1940 was 159,319 total residents and 6,360 black residents or about 4 percent. (*Iowa Bystander*, 17 June 1943, 4.)

attitude that the war was not going well for Americans should bring further changes. She commented, "We are losing in the war. America has to change in a hurry her attitude toward color." She thought the recent executive order and the resulting agency, the Federal Employment Practices Commission (FEPC), had caused companies to take a "right face."²²²

Increasingly more black Iowans were beginning to be hired at DMOP, and the ordnance plant would advertise in the *Bystander* during subsequent labor shortages. Ironically, by war's end the company did advertise prominently in the black community's newspaper yet prominently displayed the discriminatory wages between the sexes as men were paid \$.68 to \$1.03 an hour while women's wages were between \$.54 to \$.78 an hour.²²³

The numbers of employees at the Ankeny facility fluctuated dramatically during the war based on ammunition requirements of the armed services. Ammunition production output initially tripled within a year by 1943 to ten carloads of ammunition a day despite the fact production operations were complex: sixty-seven operations were needed for every cartridge. The plant employed mostly Iowans, and sixty percent of the plant's employees at that time were women. Major Gialdini proudly stated, "This plant never has failed to meet its production schedule." Employment peaked at 20,000 in 1943 then dropped to less than 15,000 in February 1944, becoming relatively stable around 10,000 by June 1944. By November, the number had dropped to 7,500. A work speed-up was ordered by Chairman Krug of the War Production Board in November 1944 when General Eisenhower reported his forces were using four times the bullets as predicted. This speed-up for .30 caliber cartridges meant hiring 8,500 more employees in

²²²*Iowa Bystander*, 16 April 1942, 1. FEPC was an investigative and relatively ineffectual agency established in June 1941 by President Roosevelt as part of Executive Order 8802 which outlawed discriminatory hiring practices by defense contractors. This committee was part of the negotiations to call off the proposed March on Washington in 1941 by A. Phillip Randolph to protest discrimination and segregation in the armed services and defense industries.

²²³*Iowa Bystander*, 15 February 1945, 3.

Des Moines to increase the total to 16,000 and to resume production in all three manufacturing buildings. By mid-February 1945, over 4,100 new employees were still needed because of the shortages in Europe, and the plant desperately advertised for employees with no experience needed.²²⁴

While the two federal ordnance plants were constructed in Iowa, the state also contained many industries that converted to war production. Maytag provides an example of a successful Iowa business that converted from washing machines to war-time production. Its plant was located in Newton, a town which had grown rapidly along with the Maytag company itself. Newton's population was 3,000 about forty years earlier but had grown to 18,000 by the late 1930s. Although a "one-industry town," it was also described as a typical Iowa town complete with a central business square, wide streets, and medium-sized homes.²²⁵

The founder, Frederick Maytag, was a creative, inventive, and resourceful businessman. He started with the Persons Band Cutter and Self-Feeder Company in 1893, an innovative threshing company with a design to reduce accidents to farmers. By 1909 he bought the sole interest to the company and shifted it from a seasonal product such as threshing equipment to a product needed year-round such as the washing machine. His capital investment of \$2,400 in 1893 had increased to a net worth by 1938 of \$5,452,356 as Maytag produced 2,000 washers a day. Despite the Depression, the record month of production for Maytag was August 1933 with 2,200 washers produced per day. This plant had become the largest washing machine factory in the world with 50,000 people directly dependent on the Maytag industry. The company had also grown physically to 8 acres and 13 main buildings with 600,000 square feet. Maytag's business

²²⁴Des Moines Public Library, DMOP vertical file: *Des Moines Tribune*, 19 August 1943 and *Des Moines Register*, 1 June 1944; *Des Moines Register*, 25 November 1944, 1; and *Iowa Bystander*, 15 February 1945, 3.

²²⁵University of Iowa Special Collections, Albert W. Palmer, Frank W. McCulloch, and Stoddard Lane, *Social Action: Labor Troubles and the Local Church* (January 15, 1939), (New York: Council for Social Action of the Congregational and Christian Churches, 1939), 4.

leadership was sometimes described as an "industrial autocracy"—benevolent, perhaps fatherly, but controlling. When Frederick Maytag died in March 1937, he was eulogized as Iowa's "first citizen," leaving behind a \$7 million estate and a business legacy.²²⁶

Labor politics had affected Maytag employees before the war when the factory workers had struggled in 1938 with a prolonged and bitter labor dispute resulting in "partisanship" and "emotional hysteria" throughout Newton. The workers went on strike for ninety days over a proposed ten percent cut in wages. The National Labor Relations Act of 1935 (or the Wagner Act), which established workers' right to collective bargaining, had been recently declared constitutional, and employees met this action with enthusiasm: "Let's make Newton a model C.I.O. town." Others felt negotiations were selfish and divisive, especially in a small one-industry town. Again, in May 1941, Maytag employees negotiated through their union for a ten percent wage increase to an average rate of \$.90 cents an hour for 1,000 employees. But, at that point, war seemed imminent, and everyone, whether in or out of Maytag's employment, desired cooperation for the approaching war effort.²²⁷

Maytag had always prided itself on its innovative design with its main product--washing machines. Maytag was the first to develop a cast aluminum tub; later by 1940 it advertised a "Gyrafoam Water Action" in the Maytag Commander model at the low price of \$59.95. The other models in their 1941 series were the Maytag Brigadier, Champion, and Major. And Maytag was busy--each day its factory used 30,000 pounds of

²²⁶Fred Maytag had also manufactured a 4 cylinder Mason-Maytag roadster before the 1920s. (Houlette, *Iowa: The Pioneer Heritage*, 203.) *The Iowan*, October-November 1955, 37; Maytag Company, *Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* (Newton, Iowa: The Maytag Company, 1945), 4, 12, 15, 16, and 21; and A. B. Funk, *Frederick L. Maytag: A Biography* (Cedar Rapids, Iowa: The Torch Press, 1936), 54, 68, and 69.

²²⁷*Jasper County Review*, 14 May 1941, 1; Palmer, *Social Action*, 5, 6, 17, and 18; and *Jasper County Review*, 7 August 1941, 1.

aluminum and 160,000 pounds of iron. In May 1941, the four millionth Maytag washer rolled off the assembly line.²²⁸

In August 1941 the Office of Price Administration (OPA) and Civilian Supply (OPACS) initiated a program to drastically reduce the number of domestic washers made in the country because of the country's need to conserve resources for war needs. This cutback resulted in a temporary suspension of 225 Maytag employees, but the company had other continuous factory work available through defense contracts. The last Maytag washer rolled off the assembly line in April 1942, slightly ahead of the War Production Board schedule. This marked a temporary end to thirty-five years of washer production.²²⁹

Because the company could no longer produce washers, it converted to defense production. The company had started defense work as early as March 1941 with an initial \$150,000 contract for tank track pins. Maytag workers were also soon producing shell adapters, machine shafts, and pinions. By September 1941, the company produced an assortment of intricate aircraft parts for Martin bombers, a contract worth \$1.5 million. The entire Maytag company was drastically transformed by this defense production starting with a high wire fence enclosing the plant. The number of employees grew from 1,200 to 3,000, and women were hired for the first time during the war years, eventually reaching one-third of the work force. Ninety-seven percent of Maytag's production was devoted to war needs with only three percent directed to washing machine repair parts.²³⁰

²²⁸Maytag Company, *Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, 10, 12, and 18; Palmer, *Social Action*, 13; *Jasper County News*, 24 October 1940, 6; and *Newton Daily*, 14 May 1941, 6.

²²⁹Lee Kennett, *For the Duration: The United States Goes to War, Pearl Harbor-1942* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1985), 108; and *Des Moines Register*, 15 April 1942, 14.

²³⁰Maytag Company, *Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, 28; and Robert and John Hoover, *An American Quality Legend: How Maytag Saved Our Moms, Vexed the Competition, and Presaged America's Quality Revolution* (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1993), 156. No further announcements of specified parts or dollar amounts were made after Pearl Harbor for security reasons.

Maytag's war production grew throughout the war from \$100,000 in the beginning of 1941 to \$15,000,000 in 1944, but Maytag prided itself on rejecting all offers of cost-plus contracts which it felt contributed to waste and unnecessarily high war profits. Instead, this company initiated savings through redesign with approximately \$1,000,000 saved by 1944. The company was particularly proud of its aircraft hydraulics--hydraulic actuating and lock cylinders along with electric aircraft retraction units. The redesign of the hydraulic actuating cylinders led by Tom Smith, a Maytag engineer, reduced required parts in one unit from 136 to 69 and in another unit from 145 to 28. Maytag's postwar pamphlet boasted that its "continuous improvement ethic" never stopped during the war years.²³¹

Labor issues had been an increasingly important part of factory life during the Depression years, but as Shelton Stromquist has noted in his oral history of Iowa labor, two labor conditions changed with World War II production: 1) unemployment was replaced by labor scarcity, and 2) the federal government desperately needed uninterrupted production. Factories needed to produce without fear of strikes slowing the war effort. As historian William O'Neill has described in *A Democracy at War*, popular opinion during the war was strongly against such previous labor issues as strikes and higher wages because of the desperate need for war production. However, as O'Neill points out, no one at the time seemed to question farm or business profits related to war production. David Hinshaw, in *The Homefront*, stated that although labor was very patriotic, it needed to remain concerned about union member maintenance; recent labor gains should not be placed in jeopardy due to the war effort because, as unions argued, vets needed to return to a fair labor environment.²³²

²³¹Maytag Company, *Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, 30, 34, 36, and 37; and Hoover, *An American Quality Legend*, 157.

²³²Shelton Stromquist, *Solidarity & Survival: An Oral History of Iowa Labor in the Twentieth Century* (Iowa City, Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 1993), 125; William L. O'Neill, *A Democracy at War*:

Unemployment had been replaced by labor scarcity, and this factor changed the composition of the industrial labor force for the war years. Unemployment totals for Iowa dropped considerably during the war years from 95,088 in March 1940 to 17,000 in November 1944. Unemployment benefits were the lowest in 1943 since such benefits started six years before. With increased employment opportunities during the war, the composition of the labor force changed throughout the war effort. By the spring of 1945 the national labor force exceeded the average composition by 7,300,000 of which the largest new groups were 2,800,000 teenagers; 1,900,000 women over 35 years; 1,000,000 retired-aged men; and 600,000 young women with servicemen as husbands.²³³

Teenagers working in factories for the war effort were met with mixed emotions of pride and concern. Between 1940 and 1944, national school enrollment of 15 to 18 year olds fell by 24 percent or 1,200,000, and the number of employed 14 to 17 year olds increased by 2,000,000 or over 200 percent. In November 1942 the federal government lowered the required age from 18 to 16 for girls to be employed at war industries except in hazardous factories such as ordnance plants. During the war years, the employment rate of 14 to 15 year old girls had jumped four times along with heavier work loads and hours as many adolescents had dropped out of school during this period. Accidents were another concern, according to an article in *Collier's* titled "Children for Hire Cheap," as many children, some as young as 10 to 14, were caught up in this youthful craze for earning. Charles Harness, State Labor Commissioner for Iowa, commented in this 1943 article, "the number of minor children working now for pay in Iowa is about five times that of a year ago, and many of them are girls." World War II not only renewed

America's Fight at Home and Abroad in World War II (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993), 214; David Hinshaw, *The Home Front* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1943), 185-186; and Nelson Lichtenstein, *Labor's War at Home: The CIO in World War II* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 5-6.

²³³*Iowa Business*, October 1946, 22; *Des Moines Tribune*, 8 January 1944, 1; and Seidman, *American Labor*, 153. Unemployment numbers started to climb, however, in June 1945 with 22,000 to 52,000 by December 1945.

patriotism but, some felt, placed an emphasis on materialism and youth culture. Two values were in conflict--the traditional work ethic vs. the modern value of education. As Alma Jones, an Extension child development specialist at Iowa State College, believed, some "reconverting" after the war may be needed to get teenagers back to school; otherwise she believed these young people with little formal education would not be able to compete professionally after the war, especially against the GI Bill advantages to veterans.²³⁴

Although teenagers were the largest group of new workers, married women gained the most attention as surplus workers; however, wives were never perceived as full-fledged workers. Writers of the World War II era have found through their research that most women were often described as second class employees. D'Ann Campbell in *Women at War with America* stated unions saw women as "until" workers: "working until they get married, until they have a baby, until the house is paid off, or until they retire." Deborah Fink found in her Iowa study, "World War II and Rural Women," that the established pattern was to use the word "help" with women's work, while Karen Anderson noted in *Wartime Women* that wartime publicity stressed women as aiding soldiers overseas. Ruth Milkman in *Gender at Work* considered the mixed message of war jobs: women could do these jobs but only temporarily as women were considered family members first and workers second. Despite the unfairness that women's employment efforts were always viewed as secondary or temporary, historian William O'Neill states a decisive point in his book *A Democracy at War*: "The failure of democracy to recognize women as equals jeopardized the war effort."²³⁵

²³⁴Natsuki Aruga, "'An' Finish School': Child Labor During World War II," *Labor History* 29 (Fall 1988): 498 and 517; *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 17 November 1942, 2; Richard Polenberg, *War and Society*, 79; *Collier's*, 24 April 1943, 18, 19, and 56; and *Iowa Farm Bureau Spokesman*, 26 August 1944, 4.

²³⁵D'Ann Campbell, *Women at War with America: Private Lives in a Patriotic Era* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1984), 154; Deborah Fink, "World War II and Rural Women," in Marvin Bergman, editor, *Iowa History Reader* (Ames, Iowa: State Historical Society of Iowa in association with Iowa State University Press, 1996), 351; Karen Anderson, *Wartime Women: Sex Roles, Family Relationships and the Status of Women During World War II* (Westport, Connecticut:

Not only were women often viewed as less valuable and capable than male workers, but men often resented any competition, especially when the numbers of employed women for the war effort quickly rose. Nationally, the total number of employed women rose from 13,800,000 in December 1941 to 15,600,000 by December 1942. As Allan Winkler found in *Home Front U.S.A.*, new women employees felt frustrated by the "cold welcome," and Winkler believes the Rosie the Riveter propaganda was mostly intended to persuade resistant men. Another masculine fear was found in depictions of women war workers as the "New Amazons." One mistake in propaganda which did add to men's resentment was the same mistake the military made in emphasizing the concept of each woman "freeing a man to fight." Later the phrase would be changed to "The Women Behind the Man."²³⁶

The character of factory work itself changed during the war effort. When workers became the soldiers of production, it became patriotic, not socially demeaning, to take a factory job. For example, the largest organized group of women in Iowa, the Iowa State Federation of Women's Clubs, declared all members should register with the U.S. Employment Service for industrial and agricultural work. As Mrs. F. W. Weitz, Federation publicity chairman, stated for the press, "We've got to do everything possible on the home front to win this war. We can't be highbrow in wartime." That same year at the fortieth annual meeting of the Iowa Association of Colored Women, Jessie Walker,

Greenwood Press, 1981), 177; Ruth Milkman, *Gender at Work: The Dynamics of Job Segregation by Sex during World War II* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 61, 40, 19, and 13; and William O'Neill, *A Democracy at Work*, 332.

²³⁶*Independant Woman*, June 1943, 166; Allan Winkler, *Home Front U.S.A.* (Arlington Heights, Illinois: H. Davidson, 1986), 49 and 54; Neil Wynn, "The United States," in Jeremy Noake, *The Civilian in War: The Home Front in Europe, Japan, and the USA in World War II* (Exeter, UK: University of Exeter Press, 1992), 86; Maureen Honey, "Remembering Rosie: Advertising Images of Women in World War II," in Kenneth Paul O'Brien and Lynn Hudson Parsons, editors, *The Home Front War: World War II and American Society* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1995), 83; Gulielma Fell Alsop and Mary F. McBride, "Arms & the Girl," in Judy Barrett Litoff and David C. Smith, editors, *American Women in a World at War: Contemporary Accounts from World War II* (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1997), 168; Evelyn Steele, *Wartime Opportunities for Women* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1943), 1; Olga Gruhzt-Hoyt, *They Also Served: American Women in World War II* (New York: Birch Lane Press, 1995), 135; and *Time*, 2 March 1942, 61.

who was involved in war work in Des Moines, spoke about "Club Women in the Fight for Double Victory." She stated that the nation was presently at a critical crossroads, and she urged all women to do some type of war work.²³⁷

Iowa's war factories, like those nationwide, needed "womanpower." Of the 90,000 people employed in Iowa's war production plants in March 1943, approximately 22,500 were women or 25 percent. In Des Moines plants, starting salaries for women ranged from \$20 to \$25 per week, and many women left other jobs for the better paycheck in war plants. By October 1943, two-thirds of the Ankeny Ordnance Plant's employment requirements were specifically for women. Lillie Cordes Landolt was one such example. She had worked previously as a telephone operator in Gilmore City until she married. When the family moved to Des Moines after her husband found training as a riveter, Lillie also decided to work at the new ordnance plant. She described her decision, "Even though we had five small children, I went to work at the ordnance plant, and I really loved it." She thought her work was interesting though the machines were huge and the work dangerous. The Landolt family needed this second paycheck, and so Lillie spent the war years making 55,000 bullets a day.²³⁸

The "feminine motive for work" may have been patriotism, but strong economic incentives also existed within the decision to enlist in paid production work. Two studies of Iowa women's employment during World War II found war workers to be patriotic and committed, yet most women also needed the paycheck. Donna Scianalepore found five of the seven women in her Waterloo sample remembered the appeal to patriotism which initially attracted them to the workplace and kept them motivated, yet work also offered

²³⁷Nelson Lichtenstein, "The Making of the Postwar Working Class: Cultural Pluralism and Social Structure in World War II," *The Historian* 51 (November 1988): 54; *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 9 January 1943, 1; and *Iowa Bystander*, 1 July 1943, 1. The black press had started a national campaign titled "Double V" for victory abroad as well as at home.

²³⁸*Des Moines Register*, 5 March 1943, 1; *Des Moines Tribune*, 2 October 1943, 2; and Nancy Baker Wise, *A Mouthful of Rivets: Women at Work in World War II* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1994), 200-201.

an alternative role for women. Alice Nield, one of the Waterloo war workers, said she took her job to escape housework and "dullsville." In an article "Women on the Home Front: The Iowa WIPes," Jacqueline Smetak studied women working for the North Western Railroad as they cleaned and serviced locomotives in Boone, Council Bluffs, and Clinton. She commented, "Women worked tough jobs in spite of discrimination, unequal pay, notions about what they could and could not do, the difficulties of taking care of children and a house in the days before modern household appliances were common, a lack of help and child care, and the frustrations of chronic shortages and long lines at the grocery store." Despite every hardship and hurdle they faced from employers, other employees, and community businesses, the women workers believed their efforts were valued and needed. As Smetak concluded, "In a very real sense these women--of all ages, races, creeds, and colors--helped spell the difference between victory and defeat."²³⁹

Factory work remained an ongoing struggle for many female employees. Iowa's women factory workers, as did women industrial workers across the country, worked for equal opportunity, adequate training, equal pay for equal work, safer working conditions, equal union participation, child care centers, and adequate housing despite the fact that the official message, repeated endlessly, was that this work would last only for the duration. Women factory workers experienced much loneliness, boredom, fatigue, and depression as underpaid production soldiers at monotonous jobs, day after day, with seemingly no end to the war. Women ordnance workers, for very good reasons, had earned the acronym WOWs.²⁴⁰

²³⁹*Time*, 11 May 1942, 63; Donna Marie Scianalepore, *The Contribution of Working Women of Waterloo During World War II* (Thesis: University of Northern Iowa, 1990), 42 and 44; and Jacqueline Smetak, "Women on the Home Front: The Iowa WIPes," *The Palimpsest* 76 (Winter 1995): 180.

²⁴⁰Women at a Chicago ordnance plant formed the Women Ordnance Workers, Inc., which they hoped would become a national organization, complete with uniform. Eventually, WOW members numbered 33,000 nationally. Chester W. Gregory, *Women in Defense Work during World War II: An Analysis of the Labor Problem and Women's Rights* (New York: Exposition Press, 1974), xvii; Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, *Women in the War*, 23; and Doris Weatherford, *American Women and World War II* (New York: Facts on File, 1990), 158.

One concern many employed mothers faced was finding adequate child care. The lack of any comprehensive children's daycare program also confirmed the temporary and secondary status of married working women, and Iowa women were no exception in their need for child care facilities. In Ames interviews by the *Iowa Farm Economist*, the 297 employed mothers had a total of 537 children under age 18. Of these women, 171 worked 6 days a week, and 145 mothers were away from their homes from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Two-fifths of the children were school age and left alone, another two-fifths were cared for by relatives, and one-fifth were cared for by hired girls. One third of the mothers in Ames stated they would be interested in an approved child care program, and responses were similar in Newton where 147 of the 224 employed mothers surveyed said they would also be interested in child care centers.²⁴¹

One alternative to child care developed by the industrial sector was to adjust shift hours to encourage mothers with school age children. The "victory shifts" started in September 1943 at the Des Moines Ordnance Plant as special day hours for housewives and evening hours for businessmen. The housewife victory shift was from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. while the businessmen's shift was from 7 p.m. to 12 p.m. The victory shift hours were thought to enable housewives to get children to school along with making breakfasts and dinners as well as contributing to the industrial war effort. By the end of the first week, 50 mothers had started on the victory shift, and the Ankeny plant stated it needed an additional 800 to 1,000 such workers. By the second week, the plant had 150 new workers. One such woman was Alice Albers, mother of four, who wanted to join the nation's army of women workers in war plants. Before, she had considered herself "just another housewife," but now she made \$28.80 a week (working 7 days a week) as an inspector at the Des Moines Ordnance Plant. She took the job to "pay back bills." After

²⁴¹Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family, From Slavery to the Present* (New York: Vintage Books, 1985), 254; and *Iowa Farm Economist*, October 1943, 11.

a month, victory shifts at DMOP were employing more than 300 married women, and Dean Price, employment manager, commented, "They are doing their bit and doing a good job, too. The largest share of the money they earn is going into war bonds to help further the cause."²⁴²

Other professionals such as Geneva McKinley, a family case worker for the Iowa Humane Society, felt mothers should not work no matter what the cause. She continued, "There is too much glorification of the working wife in war industry and too little credit to the mother of five to eight children who stays at home." Mothers working in factories were also met with skepticism by such groups as the Iowa Parent-Teacher Association. In 1942 the Board of Iowa Parents-Teachers drafted a resolution concerning industrial employment of mothers with young children. The association stated the first responsibility of mothers was to give "suitable care" to young children, and mothers should therefore be deferred from war work. However, the resolution also stated barriers against hiring mothers should not be set up by employers. The PTA felt if women should work, it should be those day shifts which were least disruptive of family life, and if day care could not be in the home, it should be provided by the community. Its president Nelle Kenison added a note of guilt the following month, "As mothers are engaged in war work, what of the children?"²⁴³

When the Des Moines Ordnance Plant prepared to close on what was declared T-Day (Termination Day) at the end of July 1945, many women (who were fifty percent of the payroll at that time) wondered what to do next: housework, self-employment, unemployment, or another job. Many women returned to housework due to overwhelming responsibilities, but for some, returning home was a sign of success and

²⁴²*Des Moines Tribune*, 10 September 1943, 11; *Des Moines Tribune*, 16 September 1943, 1 and 17; *Iowa Bystander*, 28 October 1943, 2; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 15 March 1942, 1-Section 4; and *Des Moines Tribune*, 2 October 1943, 1.

²⁴³*Des Moines Register*, 21 April 1943, 4; *Iowa Parent-Teacher*, December 1942, 5-6; and *Iowa Parent-Teacher*, January 1943, 3.

security. Janita Smedden commented, "I may get another war job. But I want to get my canning done first. We've got a nice garden." Lillie Cordes Landolt opened a dressmaking shop from her house to also have time for her children: "I wanted to be home with those kids. They were too precious." Virginia Larson planned to use her savings of \$600 to train for her own business in "beauty culture." Unemployment checks offered some Iowa women time to look for other positions. Evelyn Immes, 17, had had experience in factory work, but now she said she was going to sleep for a long time after the work at DMOP ended. Immes described her plans, "Sleep for days. Then I'll look for a job, something essential. And I'll be getting my unemployment insurance till then, anyhow, won't I?" Others like Mary Grund had found factory work far more rewarding financially and socially than domestic work. Grund said, "A girl'd be foolish to go back to that." She immediately applied at Firestone Rubber and Tire Company in Des Moines after hearing about the ordnance plant closing. She stated, "I'm going to get good money while I can." Nellie Griffin was another who applied for further factory work at Newton's Maytag as a machine operator which was considered "a woman's job."²⁴⁴

Soon after the war started, the federal government recognized that it needed some way to reward companies that achieved production levels while maintaining good morale, low absenteeism, and good safety records. The result was the E Awards. The award marked certain factories as the elite of the United States' war industries because only five percent of the nation's 85,000 defense suppliers earned this award. The actual award, along with a public ceremony, was a large pennant to be proudly flown at the factory and pins to be worn by each employee.²⁴⁵

²⁴⁴*Des Moines Tribune*, 4 July 1945, 1 and 3; *Des Moines Register*, 10 November 1945, 4; and Wise, *A Mouthful of Rivets*, 202.

²⁴⁵Duis and LaFrance, *We've Got a Job to Do*, 93; and John Zwicky, *A State at War: The Home Front in Illinois During the Second World War* (Dissertation: Loyola University of Chicago, 1989), 87-88.

The E Award was an old Navy custom to create greater enthusiasm and pride on ships, and the same E Award flag and pin were thought to be effective and necessary in industrial plants where mass production work was often monotonous and repetitive. The joint Army-Navy E awards started on August 10, 1942, and by the first anniversary, the award had been presented to 1,910 plants in the nation. Of this amount, seven percent employed under 100 people and 38 percent under 500 employees; most E awards went to larger companies and factories. *Business Week* announced the government awards which companies received for a six month period. If the business exceeded its previous production record within this time, a service star was awarded and added to the pennant.²⁴⁶

Iowa's record of war production for a diverse array of war products, many of which were subcontracted, was exemplary as demonstrated by the number of firms who won the joint Army-Navy E Award. Forty-five Iowa manufacturing firms in twenty-three cities flew the E Award flag during the last three years of World War II. Cedar Rapids had the most awards with seven; Davenport was second with six; and Des Moines had five. Clarinda, the smallest city on the list, won two awards. Both of the large government arms plants in Des Moines/Ankeny and Burlington won several awards. Two individuals were also awarded honors: Dr. Clovis Meyers for superior research for unraveled nylon processing and Raymond Gilbrech at the Des Moines Ordnance Plant for asking permission to work one hour earlier on his own time after receiving word that one of his three sons was missing in action. Rodney Selby, Secretary of the Iowa Industrial and Defense Commission, praised Iowa's war production record: "The awards have been presented Iowa firms for the manufacture of almost any implement of war from minute

²⁴⁶*American Business*, December 1941, 10; and *Business Week*, 14 August 1943, 59.

aviation instruments to tanks and locomotives. In between are instruments of destruction of graduating sizes."²⁴⁷

Boyt Harness Company won the first award in Des Moines. It was one of the largest contract holders in Iowa for the marine corp pack and the Phillips pack saddle for mules along with haversacks, cartridge belts, and machine gun covers. The ceremony took place in the Des Moines Coliseum on August 26, 1942, with their 1,400 employees present (800 women and 600 men). The ceremony was described as emotionally moving with the award flag fluttering by the breeze of electric fans as the audience concluded the ceremony by singing "America." Colonel Taylor told the employees to consider their pins as military decorations: "You are members of a second front--the production front without which the courageous battle front could not survive." Colonel Jacobsen praised Boyt's main product, the marine corp pack, to a cheering response, because "few Japs ever will see it, because it's carried on a marine's back." The company won a second award in March 1943 with a white star added to its pennant. As Robert Patterson, Undersecretary of War, presented this award, he praised Boyt for its high standard of production. Boyt was also one of the first Des Moines companies to employ black workers as one hundred black women worked for the company of which two were supervisors. Boyt Harness Company eventually earned four E-Awards by September 1944, the only firm in that particular industry to win as many. Since its first war contract in September 1940, it had produced forty different war orders simultaneously for the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, and Treasury's lend-lease.²⁴⁸

On November 11, 1942, the Des Moines Ordnance Plant was one of thirty-six companies in the nation to win the coveted award that particular week. On December

²⁴⁷*Des Moines Tribune*, 5 September 1945, 7; *Des Moines Register*, 8 February 1943, 1; *Des Moines Tribune*, 9 December 1942, 15; and *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 14 May 1944, 8-X.

²⁴⁸*Des Moines Register*, 11 August 1942, 7; *Des Moines Register*, 27 August 1942, 1 and 7; *Iowa Bystander*, 23 December 1943, 1; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 28 March 1943, 8-Commercial; and *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 24 September 1944, 8-X.

15th, at the rear of the administration building, guests stood and shivered along with the employees for the award ceremony amid the American flags; red, white, and blue bunting; and the women's auxiliary corps band. The "Star Spangled Banner" started the ceremony, and the songs "America" and "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition" closed it. The theme of this program was the final six words of the Army-Navy E-Award statement: "ACHIEVING TODAY WHAT YESTERDAY SEEMED IMPOSSIBLE." Fred Knight, president of the plant's CIO union, told the audience that they needed to be able to look returning vets in the eye. He praised his union members, "Maybe we didn't praise the Lord as much as we might have, but when it came to rushing the ammunition, we were in there 100 per cent." Commander Lewis Strauss of the Navy's Bureau of Ordnance described the plant's production to the workers: "Every time you read about the Japanese planes blasted out of the sky by navy or marine fliers, there is at least a good chance that your hands helped make the cartridges that delivered the winning punch."²⁴⁹

Initially, the managing company (U.S. Rubber) for DMOP had had concerns about Iowa's labor supply, but any doubts had disappeared by the E award ceremony. Thomas Needham, a native Iowan who started his career as an office boy in Des Moines but was now in New York as vice president of U. S. Rubber, told the audience of his pride, "I knew your capacity. You pitched into the new work as real Americans, as genuine Iowans, and you did such an outstanding job that you are gathered here to receive this great honor from the Army and Navy."²⁵⁰

On December 28, 1942, the federal government announced that Keokuk Electro-Motors Company won an E Award for its outstanding production record. The ceremony took place in the evening at Keokuk's Grand Theater on January 21, 1943, with Governor

²⁴⁹*Des Moines Register*, 2 November 1942, 1; and *Des Moines Tribune*, 3 December 1942, 14.

²⁵⁰*Des Moines Sunday Register*, 13 December 1942, 5-Iowa; and *Des Moines Register*, 16 December, 1942, 1 and 8. And the awards continued. The first had been on December 15, 1942; the second on August 28, 1943; the third on the third anniversary of ground-breaking, July 20, 1944; and the fourth on January 22, 1945. The first three were celebrated with ceremonies; the fourth was not. (*Des Moines Sunday Register*, 23 July 1944, 8-X; and *Des Moines Tribune*, 22 January 1945, 9.)

Hickenlooper present. It was the sixth such award in Iowa. Keokuk Electro-Metals started just before World War I with thirty-two employees and had since grown to over two thousand; its principal product was pig iron. At the ceremony, the president, G. L. Weissenburger, announced to his employees, "The recognition given us by the army and navy assures us that our government APPRECIATES OUR WORKING DAY AND NIGHT to keep war materials coming." The president of the local No. 21132 division of the Federal Labor Union assured the crowd, "What we have done is only a beginning, for we are going to do even better in the future."²⁵¹

The E award presentation for the Wincharger Plant in Sioux City took place on a Sunday afternoon, March 14, 1943, at the Warrior Hotel. Wincharger produced motor generators for the Armed Forces, and it won the award seventeen months after its new "dynamotor" was said to be on every fighting front. Lieutenant Colonel Bowman reminded the employees of the need for their product, "When you feel you're not doing your part, go out and look at the E pennant flying over your plant in recognition of a good job. You're all soldiers in the production line of freedom." The ceremony had opened with marches played by the Monahan Post Band and closed with "America."²⁵²

The Uchtorff Company in Davenport started eighteen years earlier as a part-time operation and later grew to thirty-six employees, but the *Davenport-Democrat* claimed the company was no "war mushroom." It had manufactured many items from restaurant equipment to tractor parts, but now during war it subcontracted for sixteen other companies. During its E award ceremony in March 1943, the women employees proudly sat in the front row to honor their production record. One third of the work force was women, and the factory owner described them as "soldiers in the production line of freedom." He praised their quick training and harmonious work records. He had first

²⁵¹*Charles City Press*, 29 December 1942, 1; *Des Moines Register*, 21 January 1943, 3; and *Des Moines Register*, 22 January 1943, 8.

²⁵²*Des Moines Register*, 16 March 1943, 1; and *Sioux City Journal-Tribune*, 15 March 1943, 1 and 14.

hired women the previous September, and most women employees were now working a sixty hour week (10 1/2 hour days with 8 hours on Saturday) in positions ranging from punch press operators to welders to riveters. The ceremony was colorful with red, white, and blue decorations and flags while the "Star Spangled Banner" played during the introduction. The commanding general of the Rock Island Arsenal, Brigadier General Norman Ramsey, commended the employees with the refrain, "You are soldiers on the production line in the battle of freedom." Governor Hickenlooper also drew war analogies: "There is no difference in the long run between the vital importance of the home front and the vital importance of the war front."²⁵³

Clarinda, as the smallest town among the recipients, won two E awards for Lisle Corporation and Parris-Dunn Associates. These two companies gained government contracts due to the persistence of two "small town boys who couldn't take no for an answer." The Parris-Dunn Company had almost closed until Cecil Parris negotiated with the War Department and developed training rifles which were wood with reclaimed iron and leather from WWI equipment. Colonel Harry Adamson, the commanding officer at Fort Creek, Nebraska, stated that it was not his job to praise their success: "You know it well in the sweat and toil of your combined efforts day by day."²⁵⁴

Other E award ceremonies continued to develop two consistent themes: unity and victory. When Brigadier General Ramsey spoke at the ceremony for Climax Engineering in Clinton, he stated that these employees were the heart and soul of all America and were in the war as all Americans were since December 7, 1941. The president of this company, E. F. Deacon, simply declared, "Climax and all America's legions of production shall march with your boy or mine to ultimate victory." Lieutenant Commander Alexander told the Zimmerman employees of Bettendorf that they were members of a

²⁵³*Davenport-Democrat Leader*, 30 March 1943, 15, 16, 17, 18, 21, and 16-Section 2; and *Davenport-Democrat Leader*, 1 April 1943, 1 and 6.

²⁵⁴Charles Vernon Lisle's company manufactured a magnetic drain plug. *Des Moines Register*, 24 July 1943, 1 and 5; *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 1 August 1942, 7; and *Clarinda Herald-Journal*, 26 July 1943, 1.

trained army of industrial workers whose efforts spell "victory." John Wood, president of the CIO Local 143, pledged cooperative war work by all Zimmerman employees, especially for their children's future.²⁵⁵

Another pattern during the ceremonies involved comparing the E Awards to military medals for conscientious soldiers. During the ceremony at Fisher Governor Company of Marshalltown, executives and employees alike praised their company as "the picked troops of the production line" and the "top-flight soldiers of production." At the Solar plant in Des Moines, the only aircraft company in the state, Colonel Robert Finkenstaedt compared the industrial award to the Soldier's Distinguished Service Cross: "It is given to you not because you have done your duty--that is expected of you--but because you have accomplished things over and above the call of duty." The Most Reverend Gerald T. Bergan, bishop of Des Moines, praised the Solar war workers who "without benefit of publicity, praise, and glamour of battle have done a good job and remained devoted servants of God."²⁵⁶

During the Mason City Tent Company award ceremony, Governor Hickenlooper praised all of Iowa's home front efforts as it had exceeded other states of comparable population and wealth in its percentage of manpower, war bonds, and production for the war effort. These were the production success stories--those manufacturing plants working for the government's war effort as they met both production and efficiency goals. The ceremonies, like military awards, celebrated a proud moment of formal recognition for the focused energy and talent of Iowa's production front soldiers.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁵*Des Moines Tribune*, 13 April 1943, 15; *Clinton Herald*, 7 May 1943, 1-A, 3-A, and 8-A; *Davenport Democrat*, 23 June 1943, 2; and *Davenport Democrat*, 27 June 1943, 10.

²⁵⁶*Des Moines Register*, 15 July 1943, 3; and *Des Moines Register*, 16 September 1944, 1 and 12.

²⁵⁷*Mason City Globe Gazette*, 13 July 1943, 1; *Mason City Globe Gazette*, 14 July 1943, 18; and *Des Moines Register*, 24 July 1943, 5.

The need for ammunition dramatically increased near the war's end when the machine guns on Normandy Beach in late 1944 had fired tremendous amounts of .50 caliber machine gun bullets. Bombers such as the P-47 added to the production requirements as each plane carried two missiles, 2,500 pounds of bombs, and 6,400 rounds of .50 caliber ammunition. Still, by January 1945, American soldiers had twice the artillery ammunition of the Germans. This was the triumph of American industry as German shells only had to travel a hundred kilometers while American shells, many produced in the Midwest, had to travel thousands of kilometers. The war needs were not over with the surrender of Germany but continued on the Pacific front as a Des Moines Ordnance Plant advertisement proclaimed in May 1945: "Our gallant boys need these bullets and need them urgently."²⁵⁸

Iowa's industries had been a part of this production front triumph. The Des Moines Ordnance Plant had produced more than one bullet for every person on the face of the globe. From its early days as a clover field in July 1941 to the end of World War II, this war plant had cost \$53,113,000 to build--\$31,727,000 for construction and \$21,386,000 for machinery--along with a total operating cost of \$379,000,000 and total payroll of \$86,726,000. With its two .30 caliber and three .50 caliber factories, the production lines had produced a total of 1,710,000,000 .30 caliber bullets and 2,025,000,000 .50 caliber bullets. The Des Moines plant was also noted for producing the first incendiary bullets, saving \$13,000,000 in costs due to proposed operation changes, and having a good safety record ahead of similar plants as no major explosions had occurred. Over 50,000 people had worked at the plant through the war years with peak employment shortly after D-Day in July 1944 at 19,060. Dr. Joss, factory manager for United Rubber, praised the workers of Des Moines and Iowa: "They have done the

²⁵⁸Stephen E. Ambrose, *Citizen Soldiers: The U.S. Army from the Normandy Beaches to the Bulge to the Surrender of Germany, June 7, 1944-May 7, 1945* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), 52, 72, and 371; and *Iowa Bystander*, 17 May 1945, 2.

job. The company has played but a small part." The editors of the *Des Moines Tribune* acknowledged that the quality of production and the safety record kept this plant producing "full blast" after many had already closed. They gave a grateful "well done."²⁵⁹

With the war nearing its end, the United States Rubber Company announced that the plant would close on July 31st with orders for "stand-by" basis until the end of the Japanese war. By August 21, employment was reduced from 10,000 to 2,400 employees and a 48 hour week to 40. Housecleaning had started at the first of August for DMOP which required thorough scrubbing of dismantled equipment along with cleaning, scraping, and polishing all facility surfaces to remove all traces of ammunition powder. Not a "fleck" was to be left. By December 1st, the job was completed. The *Register* honored the Des Moines Ordnance Plant's ending: "The silent buildings which once trembled with the roar of wartime production will be turned over to the army ordnance department."²⁶⁰

The Iowa Ordnance Plant outside of Burlington also ended the war with an impressive production record: 25 million mortar shells, 200,000 medium caliber shells, 5 million major caliber shells, and 2.5 million bombs weighing between 90 and 1,000 pounds each. The plant's average annual payroll during the war was twenty million dollars which gave, as *The Iowan* later described it, "a psychological lift to its depression-jaded business men." The plant had cost \$50,613,000 with 99.3 percent of this amount federally funded. The Iowa Ordnance Plant, however, was not declared a surplus government plant at war's end because Burlington was one of twenty top areas throughout the country whose

²⁵⁹*Des Moines Sunday Register*, 9 September 1945, 1 and 4-Section 4; *Des Moines Register*, 28 June 1945, 4; and *Des Moines Tribune*, 15 February 1944, 6. Daily ammunition production had increased from 2,000,000 .30 caliber and 600,000 .50 caliber bullets to its ending daily productive capacity of 3,800,000 .30 caliber and 3,200,000 .50 caliber bullets

²⁶⁰The Des Moines Ordnance Plant had been one of 262 released by the Army on August 22, 1945. It was the third largest plant nationally to be released with only two larger factories at the Ford Motor Company River Rouge complex. Two other Iowa plants were declared surplus—Quad Cities Tank Arsenal and Ordnance Steel Founding Company, both of Bettendorf. *Des Moines Register*, 28 June 1945, 1; *Des Moines Tribune*, 21 August 1945, 7; *Des Moines Tribune*, 31 July 1945, 1 and 6; *Des Moines Tribune*, 23 August 1945, 1; and *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 5 August 1945, L-3.

development during the war was so dramatic as to now be classified as a "new manufacturing area."²⁶¹

All of this production of bombs and bullets throughout the United States led in many ways, almost inevitably, to the largest bombs--the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima, August 6th, and Nagasaki, August 9, 1945. At 8:15 a.m. in Hiroshima the first atomic bomb was released from a solitary B-29, with a "noiseless flash," then the explosion, then the fire. The bomb's aim was the center of a city of 350,000 residents. This bomb weighed four tons but was equivalent to 20,000 tons of TNT and was 2,000 times more powerful than any other single bomb.²⁶²

Shortly before what Americans would call V-J Day, employees in Japan's war plants stopped to listen to their Emperor declare the end of war, although he never did say the word surrender. Afterwards, as historian Lester Brooks has described the reaction in his work *Behind Japan's Surrender*, "sobs and tears sprang irrepressibly from listeners." He continued, "They were tears as much of relief as of grief. It was the end of 14 years of war. Whatever was to come could scarcely be harsher. As soon as the broadcast ended, factories all over the nation shut down." Millions of conscientious industrial workers in Japan were suddenly without jobs for the immediate post-war period, a time in which their government leaders said they must "endure the unendurable."²⁶³

On August 15th, American citizens were informed that Japan was surrendering. Dramatic times called for dramatic statements such as journalist William Shirer wrote in

²⁶¹ This classification was based on a ratio of dollar value of war expansion to number of wage earners in area for \$25,000 per wage earner in the Burlington area, 20th in the nation. Only four such developed areas were in the Midwest. *The Iowan*, January 1953, 8; State Historical Society, Des Moines, Burlington vertical file, *The Hawk-Eye's History of Burlington, 125th Anniversary* (1962), "Burlington Gave Blood, Sweat, Tears to World War II Effort;" and *Business Week*, 11 August 1945, 44.

²⁶² John Hershey, *Hiroshima* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946), 3; Lester Brooks, *Behind Japan's Surrender: The Secret Struggle that Ended an Empire* (Stamford, Connecticut: Carpe Veritas Books, 1968), 164; *Des Moines Register*, 3 June 1946, 1; and Robert Jay Lifton and Greg Mitchell, *Hiroshima in America: Fifty Years of Denial* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1995), 5.

²⁶³ Brooks, *Behind Japan's Surrender*, 356-357.

An August to Remember. "Now for me, as for no doubt everyone on the globe—friend, enemy or neutral—that mid-August day when the Japanese surrendered, there was an overpowering sense of relief. Peace would settle again on what was left of a stricken world. But our planet would never be the same again."²⁶⁴

Historian Robert Westbrook states that Americans are now sharply divided in their opinions about the atomic bomb but in 1945 they were not. Other historians have agreed. In Richard Rhodes lengthy work, *The Making of the Atomic Bomb*, he states simply, "We were at war." He added that our nation, as others, had been brought to a "psychic numbing" by August 1945. The fears during the war years had accumulated: from the fear of Germany's potential atomic research to the predicted invasion scenario of Japan. As Studs Terkel found in his oral histories of WWII, no one at that time could really grasp the destructive horror of this new bomb.²⁶⁵

Memoirs from Iowans also contain few mixed reactions to the atomic bomb. In Jim Skahill's memoir *Way Back When!*, he reflected that attitudes then were contagious. He continued with a description of the Iowa home front, "If you asked a multitude of old women about the Japanese people ninety percent would answer, 'Bomb the Bastards.' If you asked the younger people what they thought of the war, they would answer, 'Let's go get them.'" Skahill explained the harsh reactions, "World War II was like a Jap or a German holding a Luger to your head. We were all anxious to get it over before they swallowed us. There weren't that many political issues present in 'our' war." Robert

²⁶⁴University of Iowa Special Collections, William L. Shirer, *An August to Remember: A Historian Remembers the Last Days of World War II and the End of the World that Was* (West Stockbridge, New York: Thornwillow Press, 1986), 12 and 13.

²⁶⁵Robert Westbrook, "Horrors—Theirs and Ours: The 'Politics' Circle and the Good War," *Radical History Review* 36 (1986): 10; Richard Rhodes, *The Making of the Atomic Bomb* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1986), 325 and 475; J. Robert Moskin, *Mr. Truman's War: The Final Victories of World War II and the Birth of the Postwar World* (New York: Random House, 1996), 288; Winston S. Churchill, *Memoirs of the Second World War* [An abridgement of the six volumes of *The Second World War*] (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1959 [original volumes]), 582; Lifton and Mitchell, *Hiroshima in America*, 239; and Studs Terkel, *"The Good War": An Oral History of World War II* (New York: The New Press, 1984), 137.

Edson Lee as a soldier in the Pacific distinctly remembered the day the first atomic bomb was dropped. He stated in his memoir *To the War* that he was as physically remote from the bombing as his parents were in Iowa. He added, "We had all been in the war too long and seen too much that we could not comprehend. The bomb meant simply to a generation that we could go home, and that ended our moral concern." Still, in the following days, he remembered living with a lingering depression that something was terribly wrong in the world.²⁶⁶

Iowa had contributed to the atomic bombs in two different ways. One Iowa connection was pilot Paul Tibbets who unexpectedly painted his mother's name, Enola Gay (from Glidden, Iowa) on his airplane which would then drop that first atomic bomb. The second was from Iowa State College which sent six tons of high-purity uranium metal in the form of 2 1/4 inch cylinders to the Manhattan Project. Frank Spedding led this secret process by converting a college laboratory to mass production, and the cylinders were nicknamed "Spedding's eggs." In fact, Spedding had been contacted on December 6, 1941, about participating in a highly-secret government project, and his developing techniques led to the production of pure uranium, thorium, and plutonium necessary for the Manhattan Project. Iowa State College received an E award flag in October 1945 for this contribution to the atomic bomb by developing a quick and inexpensive method for the quality production of uranium metal.²⁶⁷

The production awards, however, cannot hide the results of these atomic bombs, and the contrast between the cities of Japan and the cities of Iowa cannot be forgotten. One Iowan soldier described the aftermath of the atomic-bombed Hiroshima for *The*

²⁶⁶University of Iowa Special Collections [part of Iowa Authors' Collection], Jim Skahill, *Way Back When! 1924-1944: Hundreds of Characters Stumbling through the Great Depression*, 201 and 202; and Robert Edson Lee, *To the War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), 109 and 112.

²⁶⁷Moskin, *Mr. Truman's War*, 299; Ned Disque, "The Atom at Ames," *The Iowan* (September 1956): 11; *Des Moines Register*, 13 October 1945, 10; and Rhodes, *The Making of the Atomic Bomb*, 435. Iowa State College was for this time the major producer of uranium metal. The process dropped production costs from \$22 per pound to \$1 per pound, saving the federal government \$100,000,000.

Bystander when he saw two thirds of this city absolutely destroyed by this single bomb. He wrote that Hiroshima differed from other bombed cities with its continuous charred, ashen heaps instead of crater holes. He further described the devastation, "The atomic explosion had the effect of seemingly flattening everything within the radius affected by it . . . For blocks on end throughout the city not a wall is standing . . ." Shortly after the Hiroshima bombing, the *Tribune* had tried to imagine the explosive force if such a bomb were dropped on Des Moines. The newspaper printed a diagram imposed on the Des Moines' city map which included four square miles of possible devastation, an area equivalent to "east 14th Street to West 18th Street and then University Avenue to the Des Moines River."²⁶⁸

Although the bombed area in Iowa was only an imagined square on a map, the concept of an isolated and protected America, even in the Midwest, was now completely destroyed. Iowans had been extremely productive soldiers of war, producing items from mule packs to airplane parts, from bullets to bombs. And Spedding's eggs and a solitary plane named after an Iowa mother had been part of changing the world's future forever to an atomic age.

²⁶⁸*Iowa Bystander*, 22 November 1945, 1; and *Des Moines Tribune*, 8 August 1945.

CHAPTER 4. BONDS, SCRAP, AND BOYS: THE COMMUNITY FRONT

"In 1941 the world wasn't at peace, and it wasn't running smoothly."

--MacKinlay Kantor, *Happy Land*, 1942

"And the men thought always of home."

--John Steinbeck, *The Moon is Down*, 1942

"Are all the people in your town perfect?"

--*State Fair*, 1945

When Dr. Lutman, a pastor from Sheldon, spoke to the Iowa Retail Hardware Association annual convention in February 1942, he stated that the efforts of men and women on Main Street would win the war and write the peace. He continued, "The nation will become one vast machine shop for the duration of the war, but Main Street will endure long after the war." He believed in farmers and small town folk as the "backbone of America," stating Sinclair Lewis had only captured one side of Main Street, the "shabby side," in his popular 1920 novel and not its "basic simplicity" and strength. Dr. Lutman added, "Main Street has grown the wheat and the corn and the men that have nourished America. Just as the city draws its water supply from the hills beyond, it also draws its leadership."²⁶⁹ But Main Street had always been a rather complex community setting despite the seeming simplicity.

Iowa in 1940 was a state of small communities; no large urban center dominated either business or social life. Des Moines was the largest city as the capital, but its population was only slightly over 150,000. Federal and state governments needed community initiative to organize and even pressure citizens to contribute money for war bonds and to gather scrap for collection drives. The young men sent to war, whether draftees or volunteers, drew communities together through common concern, sacrifice, and grief.

²⁶⁹*Des Moines Register*, 11 February 1942, 13.

Main Street was the memory and the motivation for fighting World War II. The mythology of the small town was perpetuated by the federal government in a wartime pamphlet, *Small Town U.S.A.* The pamphlet emphasized the strength of American communities as contained within their small businesses and small talk. The strong beliefs many townspeople held such as classlessness and cooperation along with a sense of the pioneer heritage added to a community's cohesiveness. Small towns were thought to have a purposeful slower tempo and an easy friendliness. "Main Street" was also an advertising strategy for national ads, relying on the special appeal of one's own hometown yet also the sameness of most small towns. The Motor Bus Lines of America declared "Main Street goes to war!" and Republic Steel ran a series with "Elm Street" as any hometown.²⁷⁰

Iowa developed and strengthened its own mythology throughout the war with a series of pictorial reports on the "old hometown," published in the *Des Moines Sunday Register*. Boone was featured with its main drag, old drugstore, and pretty girls; Oskaloosa with its soldier honor roll, friendly town police, and more pretty girls; Stratford with its bakery, barbershop, an "Inspiring Honor Roll," and "a country boy in town on Saturday night"; Earlham with its town band concerts playing "America the Beautiful"; West Liberty with its return of the horse-drawn milk-wagon, taking "added red tape" in good spirits, and the local barber listening to men discuss the war; and finally Washington with its grassy square and tree-lined streets.²⁷¹ Within this idealized small town picture, war was hard to imagine, but Iowa's citizens would be forced to look beyond state borders to the developing global war.

²⁷⁰U.S. Office of War Information, *Small Town U.S.A.*, 3, 4, 8, 20, and 36; *Saturday Evening Post*, 22 May 1943, 57; and *Saturday Evening Post*, 9 September 1944, 90.

²⁷¹*Des Moines Sunday Register*, 3 June 1945, 2-Section 9; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 13 May 1945, 2-Section 9; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 28 January 1945, 2-Section 9; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 16 July 1944, 1-Section 4; *Des Moines Register*, 14 February 1943, 1; and *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 9 July 1944, 2-Section 9.

The reality behind the community's image of cohesiveness and cooperation depended upon the constant work of individual community organizations. In September 1941 *Iowa Farm Economist* conducted a survey of 439 Iowa small towns to determine the extent of their community organizations. Three-fourths of the towns surveyed had community-minded groups. Even some towns under 500 in population had such groups. In towns less than 500, Farm Bureau ranked first followed by women's clubs, business clubs, and parent-teacher organizations. In larger towns of 1,500 to 2,500, businessmen's clubs grew in number. The danger with commercial clubs leading community activity was that women and lower-income groups were often left out. Special interest groups multiplied as the size of the town increased, but some Iowa towns of 1,000 residents had over 100 different organized groups. The *Iowa Farm Economist* recommended collective community organizations--groups cooperating together for the town itself and not for special interests--in order to "get things done."²⁷²

In October 1941, several informal *Des Moines Tribune* polls asked Iowa residents, "How far should the U. S. go in participating in the present war?" Of the twenty people questioned in Hamilton County, most people believed the need to stop Hitler was the first concern, and several felt sending supplies to Europe was of questionable value. All fifteen citizens of Clarke County expressed little hesitation because the war with Hitler seemed unavoidable, and all of the sixteen people from Green County thought the European war was inevitable as America already seemed committed. Theo Rice, a waitress from Paton, commented, ". . . I don't think it will be very long before we're in it. I wish I were a man so I could get in there and take a couple of shots at the Germans myself." Dr. C. D. Conn, a dentist from Paton, stated, "We are actually in the war now, regardless of the fact that we have not declared war." The possibility of war with Japan, however, was not mentioned once. When residents of Hardin and Adams counties were

²⁷²Ray E. Wakeley and W. H. Stacey, "When the Whole Town Gets Together," *Iowa Farm Economist* (September 1941): 15-16.

asked in November of 1941, "Do you think the United States should stop Japanese expansion in the pacific, [sic] even if it means a shooting war?", only three of the nineteen questioned from Hardin believed Japan was "worth" fighting, and many expressed confusion over the issues. In Adams County, however, only a week later, sixteen people responded with much stronger views that Japan needed to be stopped.²⁷³

For many months, war had edged closer yet in most ways seemed unreal. Pearl Harbor brought that stark reality to Iowa's communities far from the edge of global war. Suddenly the Sabbath calm was shattered by radio announcements that the Japanese had attacked the Hawaiian Islands. When the Japanese struck Pearl Harbor that Sunday on December 7, 1941, isolationism became a moot issue. Davenport's residents, typical of other communities, gathered around the radio for the latest war news. This ordinary Sunday had transformed Iowans' thinking from shock to disbelief to worry. It also brought a sadness to many families with the thought that raising the army had not been a symbolic gesture. Students at the State University of Iowa responded, as did much of the nation, indicating that "disinterest, apathy, remoteness died, suddenly and completely, at Pearl Harbor, and this generation of Iowa students took their solid places with the rest of the nation." Pearl Harbor brought a needed national unity to America and its communities which strongly encouraged the war effort. As Gladys Holmes, a nurse in Honolulu, wrote to her aunt in Winterset, "If you people back home had seen what I saw, you would go to work with all your energy devoted to winning this war."²⁷⁴ The community front would now be armed and ready.

²⁷³*Des Moines Tribune*, 24 October 1941, 6; *Des Moines Tribune*, 17 October 1941, 19; *Des Moines Tribune*, 10 October 1941, 15; *Des Moines Tribune*, 14 November 1941, 6; and *Des Moines Tribune*, 21 November 1941, 3.

²⁷⁴Madison County Historical Library, WWII file, "The Winterset Madisonian, 100th Anniversary Edition, 1856-1956," 1; State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines, World War II Clipping File, No. 1; *Red Oak Sun*, 19 February 1942, 1; George William McDaniel, "World War II Comes to Davenport," *The Palimpsest* (Summer 1992): 92; Ross Gregory, *America in 1941: A Nation at the Crossroads* (New York: The Free Press, 1989), 279; and William J. Petersen, "Remember Pearl Harbor," *The Palimpsest* 23 (February 1942): 35.

The attack on Pearl Harbor occurred during that almost-Christmas time of the year, and in that one day, that one attack, America's communities seemed transformed from a period of hope to one of war. A writer for Iowa's history journal, *The Palimpsest*, believed Pearl Harbor "rocked the very foundations of isolationism in the Hawkeye State." The following Monday morning represented the "beginning of a new era" when at 11:30 a.m., Iowa time, the President addressed Congress with his war message. Meanwhile, more than one hundred Navy applicants kept the Davenport recruiting office open throughout the day until three in the morning. On Tuesday, Roosevelt defined American involvement in a radio speech: "We are all in it together, all the way. Every single man, woman, and child is a partner, in the most tremendous undertaking of our American history."²⁷⁵

Small town papers reacted swiftly with extreme anger toward the Japanese. A short editorial in the *Winterset News* declared this "An Unworthy War": "Those unfortunate peoples of Japan, whether they be descendants of monkeys or bundles from heaven, they'll pay for their unworthy war on this nation. Pay with their lives, their lands, and their dried up leaders who believe in Hitler." Other public responses were not quite so harsh as indicated by the word-play poster message to knitters designed by a Winterset high school girl, Lois Jane Thayer: "Remember, Purl Harder."²⁷⁶

Modern war was total war and involved the entire population. World War II, "the civilians' war," meant sacrifice. The community front was not an undirected group of overworked, striving and sacrificing citizens committed to victory through an unconscious unity. Rather, the resources needed from the community front by a government ill-prepared for war were quite specific: money, salvage, and young men. The first

²⁷⁵George William McDaniel, "World War II Comes to Davenport," *The Palimpsest* (Summer 1992): 94; Eric Larrabee, *Commander in Chief: Franklin Delano Roosevelt, His Lieutenants, and Their War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987), 4; and William J. Petersen, "Remember Pearl Harbor," *The Palimpsest* 23 (February 1942): 46 and 44.

²⁷⁶*Winterset News*, 22 January 1942, 2. (This was the entire editorial.) *Winterset Madisonian*, 21 January 1942, 1; and *Des Moines Tribune*, 13 January 1942, 16. (This poster gained statewide attention.)

resource, money, people believed to be valuable but realized it was not such a sacrifice to make the needed war loans. People generally perceived the second resource, salvage, as waste and needed to be persuaded of its actual worth. The third, their young men, was a resource the community knew was valuable and only later would find out how much they had sacrificed to the machine of total war.

To be successful from the community front, citizens needed to agree with the war effort by understanding expectations, feeling sacrifices equally, and completing definite war jobs. The idea of war sacrifices continued to strengthen people's sense of their significance. Frank Miles, editor of the *Iowa Legionaire*, reminded Iowans in a radio address that the war was "a job for everyone": "This war to save our independence is the war of every man, woman and child in America. Only by the turns of fate are some of us here and others in the armed forces. Every one here should, therefore, strive to serve as if whether the nation is to live or die is upon his or her shoulders."²⁷⁷ This would be a message repeated over and over on the home front.

The civilian's role within the community front would be a vital and active role. Early in 1942 two sociologists from Iowa State College studied the immediate effects of war on the Iowa community. They found that the needed response would be largely a civilian one and called for "thinking and planning now in every Iowa community." Leaders of the Iowa Parent-Teacher Organization, with membership reaching 63,514 by August 1945, tried to encourage their members for the war work ahead. Wylma A. Mumford, First Vice President, wrote in January 1942 that "the only way not to lose faith will be to keep terribly busy doing the things we know are good." In her president's message, Nellie Kenison in April 1942 offered her perspective on the community front's role: "We are in war whether we like war or not, and who is there of us who does not

²⁷⁷*Des Moines Register*, 3 July 1944, 6.

hate war. It is our job to win the war and write the peace. Our men are fighting all over the world and WE must fight on the home front."²⁷⁸

Small town newspapers strengthened this sense of purpose on the community front through articles, editorials, cartoons, and advertisements. The newspapers served another role as they were also effective on the actual battlefield where papers were described as "second only to mail." As historian Geoffrey Perret has noted, overseas soldiers "read and reread small-town papers with an avidity they had never shown before and probably never showed again. Within those bland pages was life in all its sustaining ordinariness, even in the middle of the century's greatest war." Major George Shoemaker, an Iowan home on furlough in September 1942, commented that hometown newspapers are "read until they are worn out," from the political news to the personal items. The soldiers even had "circular routes," starting with the soldier from that town. He explained, "Not only do soldiers read the dailies, but we find ourselves reading the little papers from towns we don't know anything about."²⁷⁹

The first resource the community front needed to devote to the war effort was money. The federal government conducted eight war bond drives during the course of World War II to keep national debt down for war expenses and to control inflation at home. Although the government offered a variety of bonds for investors, the E bond was issued in small denominations and designated the "people's bond." Buying bonds was a patriotic component of the "V-Home" designation awarded for following air warden instructions, conserving, salvaging, refusing to spread rumors, and buying bonds regularly. Kenney, Illinois, population 483, was the first community in the nation to have 100 per

²⁷⁸*Better Iowa*, 9 February 1942, 1; *Iowa Parent-Teacher*, August-September 1945, 8-9; *Iowa Parent-Teacher*, January 1942, 4; and *Iowa Parent-Teacher*, April 1942, 3.

²⁷⁹Geoffrey Perrett, *There's a War to be Won: The United States Army in World War II* (New York: Random House, 1991), 480-81; and *Des Moines Register*, 19 September 1942, 1. Lewis Atherton notes in his work *Main Street on the Middle Border* that Iowa and Illinois ranked first in the number of small town weeklies. In 1940 the Midwest had 43 percent of all the nation's weeklies. (161)

cent V-Homes (those contributing to every phase of the war program). The lieutenant governor of Illinois, Hugh W. Cross, presented the award and commented on other communities' efforts. "If other communities had done as well as Kenney, there would be no further cause to worry about men, money, and scrap to last the war." The V-Home award was a visible reminder of sacrifice and commitment to communities who never saw their enemies, but the blue or gold stars for enlisted men became the noted symbol in home windows.²⁸⁰

Iowans translated fear into concrete images to raise more money for the war effort through bond purchases. The State Automobile Insurance Association of Des Moines did their part to motivate Iowans to buy bonds by purchasing a car for a rather unusual purpose. The car had been "riddled by Jap bullets" in Pearl Harbor and was now put on display as a patriotic gesture in a number of community squares including Red Oak, Clarinda, and Winterset. In Winterset, the car was on display on the southeast corner of the square for five hours on a Saturday morning. Town newspapers did their part to promote the display and did so by associating the riddled display car with its former Iowan owner. One newspaper noted that "the Japs played a dirty trick on Miss Selma Thompson, Des Moines girl, who left her car parked on Hickman field in Honolulu the night before the surprise attack of December 7."²⁸¹

Citizens were suspicious of propaganda because of the manipulation and "rhetorical excesses" of 1917 and 1918. Many Iowans remembered the Committee on Public Information headed by George Creel during World War I and its legacy of hate and hysteria. As Nancy Derr found in her research concerning Iowa's fundraising efforts for

²⁸⁰James Abrahamson, *The American Home Front: Revolutionary War, Civil War, World War I, World War II* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1983), 140; Mary Watters, *Illinois in the Second World War*, 292; Richard Polenberg, *America at War: The Home Front, 1941-1945* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), 11; and Watters, 255 and 256. Each star stood for a family member serving in the Armed Services; a gold star represented a death.

²⁸¹*Red Oak Express*, 13 August 1942, 5; *Winterset Madisonian*, 26 August 1942, 1; and *Clarinda Herald Journal*, 13 August 1942, 4.

World War I, the state lost prestige and self-esteem in the first two Liberty Loan drives by finishing in last place. Half of Iowa's counties had not met even half their quotas as rural people felt remote from the war concerns in Europe. But, with "a new surge of organization, exhortation, and extortion," Iowa placed first in the third and fourth Liberty Loan drives. However, this triumphant first place was met with mixed reactions. The third and fourth loans' success was attributed to a concentration in all ninety-nine counties by local leadership, but others criticized this process as a "public shaming" of citizens, often German immigrants, into purchasing Liberty Loans. Derr concluded that the social consequences of the successful Liberty Loan drives had been costly to Iowa communities. She states, "The extraordinary haste with which a rural state could meet its multi-million dollar quotas indicates the overwhelming coercive power which the threat of ostracism held for Iowans, still heavily dependent on the small town bonds of face-to-face cordiality."²⁸²

In World War II, officials used every means possible to sell war bonds. The four major themes pursued by officials for war bond sales were (1) the need for Americans to sacrifice; (2) the need for all Americans to participate in the war effort; (3) the need to support family members serving in the military; and (4) the need to make the future safe for all Americans. The need for familial support was particularly effective when emphasizing devotion, courage, and death. Kate Smith, a popular singer who served as a national war drive speaker, used this tactic effectively: "Those boys are our own boys and they have the greatest right in the world to our support." She continued, "We've all of us got boys we want back, sons or sweethearts or brothers or husbands or just friends, kids we knew from down the block."²⁸³

²⁸²Richard Polenberg, *War and Society*, 52 and 136; and Nancy Derr, *Iowans During World War I: A Study of Change Under Stress* (Dissertation: George Washington University, 1979), 352-354, 182-183, 374, and 414-415.

²⁸³Perry R. Duis and Scott LaFrance, *We've Got a Job to Do: Chicagoans and World War II* (Chicago: Chicago Historical Society, 1992), 17; and Robert Merton, *Mass Persuasion: The Social Psychology of a War Bond Drive* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1946), 49, 45, 46, 50, 51, and 57.

The challenge, then, was to convince the average citizen to purchase "a piece of the war" in this patriotic campaign. Though some people felt manipulated by sentimental and emotional appeals, others were offended by the idea of private gain from the war. Many preferred to view contributions like church collections, an offering. In the early 1940s, war bond drives had the advantage of selling a popular and dramatic war yet the disadvantage of pulling money from many citizens who had suffered economically during the Great Depression and were only starting to recover financially and emotionally.²⁸⁴

Officials also attempted to instill guilt into citizens to promote bond sales. Uncle Sam pointed his finger and stated, "Your War Job is--Buy War Bonds!" Others asked, "Are you Buying Defense Bonds and Stamps Regularly?" The *Red Oak Express* asked its readers, "Is One Dollar Gift Enough to Pay Them?" as it framed the ad with photos of the thirty Montgomery county "boys" in German prisons. Examples were also made of injured service men such as the *Saturday Evening Post* cover by Norman Rockwell with a serviceman, supported by a crutch, looking sentimentally at his \$100 war bond.²⁸⁵

Along with guilt, war bond purchasing emphasized both power and paranoia. War bonds bought the power needed to defeat an enemy's way of life along with the promise of future prosperity in America. Paranoia in bond advertising was presented through dualisms such as the hatred of "Hitlerism" or the obsession with the "uniquely evil nature of the Japanese" which always contrasted with the pure image of the Allied cause. The words "Nazis" and "Japs" were used to arouse such fear. The racist perception of the Japanese, however, was the stronger and lasted throughout the war years, that is, until the discovery of the Nazi death camps. Japanese soldiers were portrayed as subhuman or little men, primitive and childish people, supermen, or the "Yellow Peril." They were pictured as vermin, rats, or monkeys, and the Battle of Attu was believed to have further

²⁸⁴Alan Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda*, OWI, 2 and 3; and Frank Fox, *Madison Avenue Goes to War*, 15, 55, 62 and Chapter Five: "The Ad Behind the Ad."

²⁸⁵*Red Oak Sun*, 14 January 1942, 2; *Red Oak Express*, 6 April 1942, 2; *Red Oak Express*, 15 June 1942, 8; *Red Oak Express*, 25 October 1943, 6; and *Saturday Evening Post*, 1 July 1944, cover illustration.

increased the Japanese reputation as madmen or animals. Japanese were considered different, and Americans both on the community and battle fronts were vulnerable to this racist portrayal of Japanese servicemen and citizens throughout all the war fund campaigns.²⁸⁶

The federal government organized eight war bond drives after Pearl Harbor. The Secretary of Treasury, Henry Morgenthau, Jr., believed people could be convinced of the need if "properly urged." The Treasury had started selling bonds on May 1, 1941, and had raised \$6,023,707,000 nationally without "overmuch effort." Funding tactics needed to change after Pearl Harbor, however, to raise even more money for the declared war effort. The total sales of defense savings bonds and stamps in Iowa from May 1941 to March 1942 had been \$49,000,000. By July 1, 1942, the federal government needed a billion a month or about ten percent of the national income. The increased drive for funds would be led by "Minute Men" volunteers along with the nation's largest syndicate of cartoonists. Specific war bond quotas were then set for each state. Each county in Iowa had a specific United States Treasury Official War Bond Quota with an overall state quota of \$9,000,000 based on every "earner" in the state contributing ten percent or more of income. In June, for example, Iowa's quota was \$12,000,000 out of a national bond quota of \$800,000,000--almost the "billion a month" which the Treasury quickly planned to work toward.²⁸⁷

A number of Davenport citizens successfully sold war bonds in 1942 in what *Life* magazine called an "inspired campaign." *Life* stated that other cities "might well plagiarize from inventive and patriotic Davenport, Iowa." The article described the process: "On

²⁸⁶Dana Polan, *Power and Paranoia*, 74 and 165; Richard Overy, *Why the Allies Won* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1995), 286; John W. Dower, "Race, Language, and War in Two Cultures: World War II in Asia," in Lewis A. Erenberg and Susan E. Hirsch, editors, *The War in American Consciousness: Society and Consciousness During World War II* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 169, 170, and 173; and Perret, *There's a War to Be Won: The United States Army in World War II*, 272.

²⁸⁷*Newsweek*, 6 July 1942, ?; *Red Oak Sun*, 1 May 1941, 1; *Des Moines Register*, 10 April 1942, 5; *Iowa Business Digest*, 31 July 1942, 2; *Winterset News*, 4 June 1942, 2; and *Winterset News*, 11 June 1942, 4.

May 11 actual selling began. Sixteen hundred minute-men, carefully trained in twenty-six coaching sessions, scoured city and hinterland." The two most inventive ideas were firemen scaling ladders to astonished office workers' windows as they sold hundreds of dollars worth of bonds, or Marilyn Boeck who sold bonds from a wheelbarrow with each new customer taking turns pushing her around the downtown area. Though Davenport was the third largest city in the state with 60,000 residents, it was described as a town with a "comfortable hominess." Its success in community war support activities depended on this perception.²⁸⁸

Des Moines was also a creative community when it held a large two mile parade on a Wednesday afternoon in July 1942 with over 50,000 spectators and 10,000 marchers. Events in the parade included the "Iowa Pattens" (Father Floyd and his eight sons, all in their military uniforms); the Drake University band with two hundred girls in red, white, and blue; and two hundred sailors from the electrician's mate school at Iowa State College. The Drake "girls" sold stamps to the crowd after the parade. Other marchers included troop units, retail store employees, state and federal employees, veterans of the first World War, and Gold Star mothers. Iowa civilian air patrol planes circled overhead and dropped leaflets which fluttered down to remind spectators of the celebration's real purpose to increase the sale of war bonds and stamps. After the parade, an Adolf Hitler effigy was "torn to shreds" in front of the *Register* and *Tribune* building. This was a surprise stunt instead of the scheduled Fireman's Jump when a "hardly humanlike form" of Hitler was hurled from the top of the building. The *Tribune* commented on the mob in front of its building: "Did they catch him? They did not. They dropped the life net, let the Nazi dummy crack his head on Locust Street and then leaped on him with heels--to grind him into the asphalt." This crowd watched with "smiles, cheers, and rapt seriousness." Throughout the entire parade and celebration, flags

²⁸⁸*Life*, 25 May 1942, 37-40; and William J. Petersen, "Beginnings of Davenport: Then and Now," *The Palimpsest* 20 (August 1939): 273-280.

waved, bonds were sold, and young people socialized and even danced the jitterbug.²⁸⁹ Local officials declared the day and the drive a success.

Other events followed. In September, Des Moines kicked off its "Autograph a Bomber" at "American Ranger Square" in which people signed their names on scrolls to be attached to new B-25 bombers. A. H. Blank, one of fifteen leading theater men in the nation chosen as a special "Commando," organized a bond drive in Iowa and Nebraska with his quota set for opening day at \$1.5 million which he more than doubled.²⁹⁰

In the smaller towns, events were less dramatic. Winterset planned to sell a million dollars of war bonds that year, led by Dan Gallery, Defense Bond chairman, with a house-to-house canvass. In Page County, Douglas Township held the first bond rally at which H. T. Pressly, a local attorney, stressed that "all persons, whether in the armed forces, parents or those at home, must sacrifice." He declared, "Modern warfare is not a clash of nations or professional fighters but of peoples with everyone involved in total war. Every day our boys are sacrificing their lives, our job is to back them up." The Page County bond drive chairman told the crowd, "we must put overalls on our dollars and put them to work," as the "cool night air was warmed with familiar wartime airs" along with donations.²⁹¹

Women bought as well as sold many of the war bonds with the saying, "This is My Fight Too." Mrs. Harold H. Newcomb who headed the Iowa State Women's Division of the War Finance Committee and Iowa's "Women at War Week" (November 1942) believed that "as soon as women understand the reasons for buying victory bonds they will see that their men folk purchase them." Newcomb knew women were "instrumental" in 85 percent of household purchases, and she planned to educate many of Iowa's women through 102 county divisions (3 counties were divided in two) and through

²⁸⁹*Des Moines Tribune*, 1 July 1942, 1, 5, 13, and 20; *Des Moines Tribune*, 1 July 1942, 13; and *Des Moines Register*, 2 July 1942, 7.

²⁹⁰*Des Moines Register*, 1 September 1942, 1.

²⁹¹*Winterset Madisonian*, 20 May 1942, 1; and *Clarinda Herald Journal*, 2 July 1942, 3.

88 state women's club organizations made up of 11,000 local clubs. She believed that "bond buying is the democratic way for a democratic country to finance a war as it gives each person an opportunity, VOLUNTARILY, to invest according to his [sic] ability." Madison County's quota for Women at War Week, for example, was \$38,959 in a special eight-day bond selling effort, which honored "the wives, mothers, sisters, and daughters of all service men of World War II."²⁹²

On December 7, 1942, bond ads were directed toward "Pearl Harbor Week" with such slogans as "Make your own declaration of war." Another ad declared, "O.K. Tojo--you asked for it! You dished it out, with a head start by treachery--now we're going to see how you can take it!" By the end of that week, if the fear of Japanese aggression was not enough, another ad ran with a soldier stating, "Don't kid yourself! We could lose this War!" Still, Iowa was over the top by January with war bond purchases as it ranked in the top three states alongside Oregon and Delaware. Iowans had purchased \$180 million dollars worth of bonds in 1942, and eleven counties had raised enough money to purchase a bomber.²⁹³

Fund drives from 1943 to 1945 would be focused into shorter, finite periods of time, twice a year in 1943 and 1945 but with three in 1944. The caption for the Second War Drive by the U. S. Treasury Department was "They Give Their Lives--You Lend Your Money." The Second War Loan campaign opened on April 12th and closed on April 30th with a goal of \$13 billion dollars nationally. The paper serving Iowa's black community, *The Bystander*, took the Second War Loan drive very seriously with advertisements emphasizing soldiers' contributions and sacrifices even in this still segregated service. For example, one ad stated, "America . . . You've got to get tougher! But this war is a hard down-to-reality war. And many of our boys are dying in it." By

²⁹²*Red Oak Sun*, 12 November 1942, 3; *Des Moines Tribune*, 10 November 1942, 12; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 26 September 1943, 4-S; and *Winterset Madsonian*, 18 November 1942, 1

²⁹³*Clarinda Herald Journal*, 7 December 1942, 3; *Clarinda Herald Journal*, 2 July 1942, 6; *Clarinda Herald Journal*, 14 December 1942, 3; and *Des Moines Tribune*, 29 December 1942, 1 and 7.

May 1942 Hawaii (as a territory) outpaced all the 48 states with 603.3 percent of its quota. Utah was the first state with 171.3 percent, and Iowa was second with 154.1 percent or \$13,870,000.²⁹⁴

United States Treasury Secretary Morgenthau traveled to Cedar Rapids in April 1943 to present the very first "T" award, making this presentation over a nationwide radio broadcast. Cedar Rapids was the first community in the nation to win the "T" award in which every local firm with 25 or more employees (including public schools, city employees as well as industrial workers) had to have at least ninety percent of its workers invest ten percent of their earnings in war bonds. Cedar Rapids, with a population of 62,000, had 21,000 people gainfully employed, and the ninety percent participation rate was certainly an accomplishment.²⁹⁵

Children also joined in the adults' efforts. The "Schools for War" program was sponsored nationally by the Treasury, the Office of Education, and the Wartime Commission to coordinate war activities, exhibit information concerning efforts, and give recognition to participating schools. The motto was "Save, Serve, Conserve" with each "V" in bold type. The program's objectives were to educate students for thrift and to purchase war stamps and bonds. By February 1943, Iowa students led the nation in participation, buying a million dollars of war bonds and stamps each month. Five thousand schools participated by buying stamps and bonds while also making scrapbooks on Lincoln's birthday for PTA displays. In Mason City the grade school students bought five Jeeps in twenty-one days by raising a total of \$4,568.40. Several WACS personally drove the purchased jeeps to the school, and at the ceremony one little girl walked up to the jeep and touched it carefully: "Why, it has tires like a real car."²⁹⁶

²⁹⁴*Red Oak Express*, 19 April 1943, 3; *Iowa Bystander*, 15 April 1943, 2, and *Des Moines Register*, 8 June 1942, 1.

²⁹⁵*Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 23 April 1943, 1.

²⁹⁶*Des Moines Tribune*, 29 October 1942, 14; *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 29 September 1942, 7; *Des Moines Tribune*, 12 February 1943, 11; and *Mason City Globe-Gazette*, 22 April 1943, 17.

Throughout the war children were encouraged to behave as "good American citizens." As the editor of *Children's Activities--for Home or School* wrote, "We can all do much to help win this war and bring it to a speedy end." By the end of the war, the nation's schoolchildren had contributed over a billion dollars in war bond sales. The journal, *Iowa Parent-Teacher*, summarized the Schools at War program in June 1945 by stating youngsters had paid for bombers while also financing their future college expenses. As the cartoon caption stated in an issue of *Iowa Farm Bureau Spokesman*, "I'm too little to fight . . . but I do buy bonds."²⁹⁷

Iowa women also contributed many hours and dollars to the war bond effort. In fact, they provided a national example of successful fundraising organization. Harriet Elliott, director of the National War Savings Staff's Women's Division, stated that Iowa's records of war bond sales make "the best rainy-day reading of all" as they "brighten our gloomiest hours." Iowa had consistently achieved beyond its quotas, more than any other state in the union. Elliott's three words of advice to other states were based on Iowa's success: "Form women's divisions." The secret of Iowa's bond selling success had been, she believed, men and women doing "a magnificent, side-by-side job" with women especially reaching small investors with the E bond. Elliott concluded, "The importance of this cannot be overestimated. The Series E bond--the people's bond--is the common weapon of us all in our country's battle." Later that year, she announced, "If every woman in America would pledge herself to do without everything she possibly can, and carry out that pledge faithfully, she would make a genuine contribution to victory."²⁹⁸

On September 9, 1943, the Third War Loan Drive began with a national goal of \$15 billion dollars and the slogan, "Back the Attack." Communities' and citizens'

²⁹⁷Madison County Historical Library, *Children's Activities--for Home or School*, October 1942, 1; Lee Kennett, *For the Duration: The United States Goes to War, Pearl Harbor-1942* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1985), 186; *Iowa Parent-Teacher*, June-July 1945, 15; and *Iowa Farm Bureau Spokesman*, 22 July 1944, 9.

²⁹⁸Des Moines Public Library, WWII vertical file, *Des Moines Tribune*, 19 May 1943; and *Winterset News*, 9 September 1943, 3.

particular job was to scrape together every dollar they could to buy that extra war bond. Des Moines held a three mile bond parade including twenty-three platoons of WACs marching in open ranks (approximately 1,200 women soldiers) for thousands of its citizens. Iowans were asked to double their bond buying in September when an army of 30,000 workers planned to call upon every person in the state to donate not only current income for purchases but also "accumulated wealth." War needs were to be met directly from the people through bonds, not taxation. The *Des Moines Register* stated the mission: "Those men of our fighting forces are giving their lives, their blood. No one can put a price on such sacrifice and courage. You can, however, show these fighting sons of Iowa that you are with them to the limit. You can show them by buying extra bonds this month."²⁹⁹

Montgomery County was "tops" in the state with only two or three other counties close to its final figures. The quota for Montgomery was \$711,000 with total reported sales at \$1,216,885.60. Red Oak did exceedingly well in the Third War Loan Drive with a final figure over \$700,000, exceeding its city quota of \$233,395.63 by 71.15 per cent. Red Oak alone had exceeded the county quota and expressed its competitive spirit: "Over the top and topping the state! That's the way it should be and that's the way it is. Montgomery County always delivers the goods--always finishes in the lead." One organizational effort involved a group of 175 solicitors who met at the Montgomery County courthouse on a Thursday night for final campaign instructions to call on every wage earner in town. Families were urged to fill children's stamp books. An attraction during this bond effort was a two-man Japanese suicide submarine being exhibited across the nation to boost bond sales. Free tickets with every bond purchase were given to tour the submarine displayed on the square.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁹*Iowa Bystander*, 9 September 1943, 2; *Des Moines Tribune*, 15 September 1943, 3; *Des Moines Tribune*, 13 September 1943, 3; and *Des Moines Register*, 10 October 1943, 1.

³⁰⁰*Red Oak Express*, 6 September 1943, 1; *Red Oak Sun*, 7 October 1943, 1; *Red Oak Express*, 27 September 1943, 1; *Red Oak Express*, 20 September 1943, 6; and *Red Oak Express*, 4 October 1943, 1.

Madison County's quota was \$537,000 in this "largest and greatest of all War Loans," the Third War Loan Drive. One local ad published 1,106 Reasons for Buying War Bonds--the number of Madison County boys in Service. ("You Can't Fail Them Now!") Still, officials by mid-month were "alarmed" at what was described as slow progress. A War Bond Rally on September 24th featured three veterans on a national tour from the South Pacific. This rally, "American Heroes Day," netted \$75,000, placing Madison County within \$100,000 of the September goal. The local paper described the rally as "small but apparently every person came prepared to buy bonds." With three days left, an announcement declared that every bond purchaser would also receive a free ticket to see the "Jap submarine."³⁰¹

By the end of this campaign, the Third War Loan nationally had topped thirteen billion dollars, and Iowa had reached \$248 million in total sales, 27 percent over its quota of \$196 million.³⁰²

The "financial offensive," the Fourth War Loan campaign, began with a \$14 billion goal, visualized as "a stack of \$1,000 bills as high as New York's Empire State skyscraper to make ONE billion dollars." This campaign lasted from January 18th to February 15, 1944, with "Let's all" attached to the Third's motto of "Back the Attack." Iowa's quota was \$177 million, and Governor Bourke B. Hickenlooper warned Iowans that there was "a danger that optimism may prompt a slowing up in our effort." He added, "Reports are better, but they will continue to be better only because of a full effort on our part at home." Bond buyers were even offered the chance to ride in tanks as organized by the Youngers Department Store. An ad by the Des Moines Retailers asked, "They [Hitler

³⁰¹*Winterset Madisonian*, 1 September 1943, 1; *Winterset News*, 2 September 1943, 1; *Winterset Madisonian*, 8 September 1943, 1 and 6; *Winterset News*, 16 September 1943, 1; *Winterset Madisonian*, 22 September 1943, 1; *Winterset News*, 23 September 1943, 1-EXTRA; *Winterset Madisonian*, 29 September 1943, 1; and *Winterset News*, 30 September 1943, 1 and 3.

³⁰²*Des Moines Register*, 19 October 1943, 4.

and Tojo] Haven't Quit Yet . . . HAVE YOU?" Perhaps many Iowans had because by the campaign's last day on February 15th, Iowa was 21 percent short of its goal.³⁰³

In the Fourth War Loan Campaign, Montgomery County's bond quota was set at \$708,000. Bond purchases doubled, the *Red Oak Express* noted in a front-page story, when "Jap atrocities" were reported. This type of reaction to war stories was remarkable considering Red Oak had lost many young men, not on the Pacific fighting front, but rather to the Nazis in North Africa. Bond sales for the week of January 24 to 29th did increase and amounted to \$147,196, more than double the total for the preceding week and seven times greater than two weeks ago. Red Oak was still \$112,837 short of its quota by the final fourth week, but Montgomery County did manage an "11th hour buying push" on Monday morning at the local banks, wiping out the \$11,500 shortage of individual E bonds in one morning. Officials declared Stanton, a small town of approximately 500 in Montgomery County, as "Bond Champ" with "the best bond hustlers of the county" as it exceeded its quota in a single day pledge drive.³⁰⁴

Madison County set a "War Bond Holiday" for January 18th to meet its quota of \$532,000 in a concentrated day with bond selling stations set up in each town and township. Schools and businesses closed for the "holiday," and school children were "commissioned to canvass all hours." The timing of this drive coincided with increased farm income from the sale of 1943 crops, and Chairman Fowler urged farmers and rural businessmen to "take into account the extra money they will be receiving for farm produce." He added that "with the help of our minute men and minute women in every walk of life, we know we can do this job." The ads promised to "get it over with in one day" and impress the "boys." V. L. Clark, Executive Manager of the Iowa War Finance Committee, stated this day's accomplishment would be possible with "the close

³⁰³*Des Moines Tribune*, 18 January 1944, 1; *Des Moines Register*, 15 February 1944, 1 and 4; and *Des Moines Tribune*, 10 January 1944, 4.

³⁰⁴*Red Oak Express*, 20 December 1943, 1; *Red Oak Express*, 27 January 1944, 1; *Red Oak Express*, 7 February 1944, 1; and *Red Oak Express*, 14 February 1944, 1.

cooperation of the citizens," and every "patriotic home" was promised a Fourth War Loan Emblem. The one day event in Winterset pledged 75 percent of the bond quota--more than a half million dollars in "a one-day whirlwind campaign." Many of the townships pledged over 75 percent, and Earlham and St. Charles actually went over their quotas. Winterset's citizens, however, reached only 63 percent as many citizens failed to go to the courthouse to make their pledges. The Fourth War Loan then soared "over top" several days later, putting Madison in the lead among Iowa's communities for that particular drive.³⁰⁵

Along with the eight specific war loan campaigns, special drives were conducted as part of the national fundraising effort. This tactic of direct purchase of a war weapon was very successful. In a year and a half, from 1943 to early 1944, Iowa bonds bought one liberty ship, fifty-four planes, and thousands of jeeps. Linn County purchased the liberty ship while Pocahontas and Polk each purchased nine planes. Clark of the Iowa War Finance Committee stated, "We never have a failure in one of these special campaigns. In most cases the amount subscribed totaled more than the cost of the article sold." The Iowa Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW) raised enough money in 1943 to have its Federation name placed on an ambulance plane. In the 1944 4-H campaign, "Bonds Buy Mercy," Iowa 4-H girls raised enough money to finance a C-54, an evacuation plane which carried wounded soldiers. The Iowa Federation of Clubwomen, led by Edith McBeth as chairman of "Buy a Bomber," set a goal of \$300,000, averaging \$10 a member. The enthusiasm of McBeth raised \$687,000, and she congratulated small town clubs especially for their strong spirit. The *Iowa Clubwoman* commented on its success, "Women know it is their war and when they cannot GO

³⁰⁵*Winterset Madisonian*, 5 January 1944, 1; *Winterset News*, 6 January 1944, 1; *Winterset News*, 13 January 1944, 6; *Winterset Madisonian*, 12 January 1944, 9; *Winterset News*, 13 January 1944, 1 and 2; *Winterset News*, 20 January 1944, 1, 2, and 4; and *Winterset Madisonian*, 16 February 1944, 1.

ACROSS to fight it they can COME ACROSS with their money and serve directly behind their loved ones in the ranks on the world's fighting fronts."³⁰⁶

When the Fifth War Loan or the "Big Push" was gearing up, its slogan, "Back the Attack--Buy More than Before," was again not changed significantly from the Third Drive's slogan of simply "Back the Attack." The Fifth campaign ran from June 12th to July 8, 1944. National goals were high as war costs had accelerated, and Iowa's goal was \$202 million as sales from the Fourth had amounted to \$228,000,000. In FDR's fireside chat on June 12th, he made a specific request to all Americans: "I urge all Americans to buy war bonds without stint." The Fifth War Loan drive was addressed to "Mr. and Mrs. America, Everywhere U.S.A."³⁰⁷

In Iowa, women energized the Fifth campaign with bonds for babies, a grandmother's league, bond queen contests along with club and church projects. In almost every county, women planned that unspectacular but important job of house-to-house canvassing to promote the idea that "just one more bond won't hurt anything." Mrs. Frederic Leopold, an immigrant and now block leader in Burlington, was willing to "walk her feet off" for the bond drive because her old country had not given her much: "Hard labor and cucumbers--and no opportunity for an education."³⁰⁸

An Iowa Poll taken during the Fifth War Loan drive revealed that 82 percent of Iowans were buying bonds and of those 91 percent were saving money through bonds. Just slightly more men than women were buying, and higher income groups were the most consistent. By place of residence, purchases ranged from cities at 83 percent, towns at 77

³⁰⁶*Mason City Globe-Gazette*, 17 March 1943, 3; *Creston News Advertiser*, 14 February 1944, 1; Henrietta Zagel, "The Iowa BPW--1919-1970," *The Palimpsest* 52 (March 1971): 136; "News for Homemakers," 12 October 1945; *Iowa Clubwoman*, January-February 1943, 5; and Hazel P. Buffum, "Iowa Federation of Women's Clubs," *The Palimpsest* 34 (May 1953): 249. By war's end, the Iowa Federation of Women's Club had raised over \$1,500,000 worth of bonds.

³⁰⁷*Des Moines Register*, 8 April 1944, 4; *Red Oak Express*, 15 May 1944, 1; Buhite, *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 6/12/44; and *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 11 June 1944, 2-Section 9.

³⁰⁸*Des Moines Sunday Register*, 18 June 1944, 2-E; and *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 11 June 1944, 1-Section 6.

percent, and farms at 82 percent. When divided by income, in the upper 2 percent, 100 percent were buying; the next 12 percent, 96 percent; the middle 54 percent, 89 percent; while the lowest 32 percent, 64 percent. When asked for their future war bond plans, 39 percent had no definite plans, 15 percent were not saving and had no opinion, 12 percent each wanted to buy or repair homes, 7 percent viewed these bonds as life savings, and 3 percent saved for their children's education.³⁰⁹

By campaign's end, Iowa had "fallen down" in individual E bond sales with only \$57 of the \$74 million quota. Random research conducted by the state bond organization blamed the "in between" as "ducking," especially those professional or business owners who only bought an \$18.75 bond to "save their faces" when they should have bought \$75 bonds or more. The other group found slacking was farmers and rural businessmen. The *Red Oak Sun* commented, "The money is there; nobody disputes that. Sheer inertia seems to be preventing it from flowing into bond sales as it ought to." Little more than a week before the drive's concluding date, not a county in the state had gone over the top on its E bond sales. The Iowa Finance Committee could find no "rhyme or reason" except perhaps a false optimism about the battle fronts.³¹⁰

The Sixth War Loan Drive started on November 20th and ran through December 16, 1944. Officials had determined that this campaign would not lag although it was the third drive that year. For that purpose, one of its slogans was "Get Behind the VI War Loan with VIm, VIgor, and VIitality." The official emblem was a bomb with "6th War Loan" printed on it, aimed for the center of the rising sun on the Japanese flag. A Gallup Poll found that nine out of ten Americans thought that war bonds represented a good investment. However, most people wanted to purchase these voluntarily, not on a compulsory basis. Only five percent thought not. With the third anniversary of Pearl

³⁰⁹*Des Moines Sunday Register*, 18 June 1944, 5.

³¹⁰*Des Moines Register*, 15 July 1944, 4; *Red Oak Sun*, 6 July 1944, 1; and *Winterset News*, 6 July 1944, 1.

Harbor, most bond ads focused on fighting the Japanese. As one ad stated, "Yes, only bombs and shells make any impression on Japanese minds."³¹¹

To attract more women, the women's division of the Iowa War Finance Committee created the "Pin Money Bond," bonds purchased from a woman's own earnings. According to *Iowa Parent-Teacher*, this campaign was "a plan to enable every woman in Iowa, by saving now, to buy at least one extra bond in her name during the Sixth War Loan Drive." The "Pin Money Bond" had originated in Iowa but became part of a special national women's promotion drive. The purposes of this campaign, however, were mixed--partly it was to give women a measure of security for their post-war years, but it was also designed to stop women's "inflationary spending."³¹²

At the end of the Sixth War Loan drive, Iowa's total sales had reached \$281,700,000. Iowa exceeded its quota of E bond sales with \$72,111,000 sold, or 116 percent of its quota, though this was \$4,000,000 less than the Fifth War Loan Campaign. Still, Iowa's year-long record was reportedly one of the best in the nation. In total 1944 sales, Iowa ranked second with 10.91 percent after North Dakota's 11.12 percent of income.³¹³

The Seventh War Loan Drive ran from May 14th through June 5, 1945, with the theme "Pour Out Your Might in the Mighty Seventh!" The symbol for the drive was three soldiers raising the flag in front of a "Mighty 7," and the national goal was \$14,000,000,000 with Iowa's quota set at \$189,000,000. One special event involved thirty army planes landing in one minute intervals at the Des Moines Municipal Airport

³¹¹*Red Oak Sun*, 28 December 1944, 8; *Clarinda Herald Journal*, 4 December 1944, 6; *Des Moines Tribune*, 20 November 1944, 1; *Des Moines Register*, 2 December 1944, 6; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 19 November 1944, 8-G; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 26 November 1944, 8-G; *Des Moines Tribune*, 21 November 1944, 12; *Winterset News*, 7 December 1944, 6; *Winterset News*, 23 November 1944, 6; *Red Oak Express*, 4 December 1944, 4; *Winterset Madisonian*, 22 November 1944, 3; and *Winterset Madisonian*, 29 November 1944, 8.

³¹²*Red Oak Express*, 16 November 1944, 1; *Red Oak Sun*, 7 December 1944, 1; and *Iowa Parent-Teacher*, November 1944, 16.

³¹³*Winterset News*, 11 January 1945, 1; and *The Clinton Herald*, 19 February 1945, 1.

with a crowd of 10,000 watching. This Iowa Mother's Day Ceremony included music by the Za-Ga-Zig Band as two hundred and forty veterans from the Texas Navigation School stepped from planes, including 19 Iowans, to "give an extra punch to the war loan drive."³¹⁴

Women again organized in every one of the ninety-nine Iowa counties for the Seventh bond drive, especially with canvassing efforts. The *Register* noted the sacrifices: "If housewifely duties suffer in thousands of Iowa homes this week, if dinner is late and dishes remain in the sink unwashed, it will be all because thousands of Iowa women will be participating in the Seventh War Loan campaign activities." "Bonds for Babies" with Walt Disney Certificates were part of the drive along with a V-Mail war bond gift certificate with the theme--"A War Bond from Dad and Mother to G.I. Joe" with the inscription "Another Bond Between Us--From the Folks Back Home."³¹⁵

The war bond ads tried to express the fighting concerns in the Pacific. One depicted fighting soldiers and sailors with the caption, "Their 'Quota' may be DEATH, Your Quota is Bigger Bonds." Another showed Uncle Sam with notches in his rifle marked Hitler and Musso with the caption, "One more notch to go . . . YOU'RE NEXT TOJO!" Or the soldier home on leave from "fighting bloody battles in the Pacific": "You don't know--you can't know--how much it means to the boys out there when they hear the folks back home have just put another War Bond Drive over the top."³¹⁶

By the third week, sales were lagging in Red Oak, and rains and bad roads were blamed for rural delays. When Montgomery County dropped to 94th place, a Red Oak soldier, Robert F. Cozad, wrote directly to his hometown paper to express his

³¹⁴*Red Oak Sun*, 10 May 1945, 1; *Clarinda Herald Journal*, 10 May 1945, 4; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 13 May 1945, 9-E; and *Des Moines Register*, 14 May 1945, 1.

³¹⁵*Des Moines Sunday Register*, 13 May 1945, 4-L; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 20 May 1945, 1-Section 6; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 13 May 1945, 4-L; *Red Oak Express*, 11 June 1945, 8; and *Winterset Madisonian*, 30 May 1945, 4.

³¹⁶*Red Oak Sun*, 28 June 1945, 8; *Red Oak Express*, 4 June 1945, 4; *Red Oak Express*, 11 June 1945, 3; and *Red Oak Sun*, 31 May 1945, 8.

disappointment. "The *Express* used to make the rounds of this headquarters here at Blanding. Because of the sad news that Montgomery County has sold but 54 per cent of its quota of bonds in the 7th War Bond drive and is 94th of a total of 99 counties in the state, I read the paper myself and shelved it." He continued, "You see the men here have more than doubled their 7th War Loan drive quota and are still going strong. The unusual part of it is that 99 per cent of these men are fifty dollar a month privates and will be overseas, probably, before the end of the drive. I guess they have heard enough to make them want to do anything and everything they can to get this damn war over and get the hell back home."³¹⁷

To impress local people of the war efforts and the need for bonds, displays of war souvenirs were placed in Winterset's shop windows. Though some windows simply displayed hobbies and collections, most had war themes. Miller Drug Store displayed Betty Flack's husband's European souvenirs; Charles Rowe's Store (said to be stopping traffic of boys) held model airplanes, gliders, and ships; Grace's Beauty Shop exhibited a collection of French money from Casablanca; Ritter Insurance had two ship models from Hugh Wright who had been missing in the Japanese theater since last December 20; and the Gamble Store showed Clarence Chase's Japanese souvenirs.³¹⁸

Iowa was off by five million in E bond purchases by June 7th. Audubon County ranked the highest with 110.6 percent of its set goal, followed by Pocahontas, Mitchell, and Franklin, in the 80 percentile range, while the two lowest, in the 20 percentile range, were Butler and Jackson counties. To encourage more sales, V. L. Clark suggested the slogan, "On to Tokyo With War Bonds." By the drive's end, 79 counties went over the top which put Iowa second in the nation, two-tenths of a percent behind Montana. Alabama and Wyoming were third and fourth. State officials said a quarter of a million more in sales would have put Iowa first. Again, last minute buying greatly aided the

³¹⁷*Red Oak Sun*, 31 May 1945, 1; and *Red Oak Express*, 25 June 1945, 1.

³¹⁸*Winterset Madisionian*, 6 June 1945, 1; and *Winterset News*, 19 April 1945, 1.

campaign, with total sales equaling \$339,000,000 at 103 percent of the E bond quota with this sprint finish.³¹⁹

The Eighth War Loan was "rechristened" America's Great Victory Loan after Japan surrendered. The campaign started on October 29th for "Peace and Prosperity" and was originally scheduled to end December 8th but was later extended to December 31st. The national goal was \$11,000,000,000 with a continued emphasis on individual rather than corporate purchases. The slogan of the Victory Loan was "They've finished their job . . . let's finish ours." This drive strived to remind citizens that the price of victory was both blood and money. A *Des Moines Register* editorial titled "Victory Loan" stated that "the people on the home front cannot relax their bond buying yet." World War II had already cost \$336 billion or eleven times the cost of World War I. The *Iowa Bystander* reminded its black audience to look beyond the triumph as "the years ahead are bright with promise." On Armistice Day *Bystander* readers were asked to "pledge an unwavering vigilance against any possible forces of aggression and oppression, both at home and abroad, for a sound America where man can live in dignity . . . free from fear and want."³²⁰

This last campaign carried over four important dates--Armistice Day, Thanksgiving, Pearl Harbor's anniversary, and Christmas. Mrs. Roosevelt, through her syndicated column "My Day," captured the essence of this period, "It should be up to us, not to veterans, to sell bonds." During a New York City Victory Loan Drive, she

³¹⁹*Des Moines Tribune*, 7 June 1945, 17; *Red Oak Sun*, 19 July 1945, 1; *Des Moines Register*, 13 July 1945, 1; and *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 8 July 1945, 1-Section 4--see following:

- 1st drive = no quota, \$50,000--ending December 1942
- 2nd drive = no quota, \$32,090,000--ending May 1, 1943
- 3rd drive = \$64,700,000, 112% of quota--ending October 2, 1943
- 4th drive = \$82,075,000, 124 % of quota--ending February 15, 1944
- 5th drive = \$77,338,000, 105 % of quota--ending July 8, 1944
- 6th drive = \$72,117,000, 118% of quota--ending December 16, 1944

³²⁰*Business Week*, 25 August 1945, 74; *Red Oak Express*, 22 October 1945, 3; *Winterset Madisonian*, 14 November 1945, 1; *Winterset Madisonian*, 31 October 1945, 2; *Business Week*, 1 September 1945, 83; *Red Oak Sun*, 25 October 1945, 1; *Des Moines Register*, 13 November 1945, 5; *Des Moines Register*, 27 August 1945, 10; *Iowa Bystander*, 13 September 1945, 2; and *Iowa Bystander*, 8 November 1945, 3.

spoke with two veterans and wondered how they could be so generous with their assistance in the bond selling campaign after their terrible war experiences. She commented, "One would think they would feel that we were the ones to do this work, and that they had earned the right to take a rest." Later, she emphasized that "Victory Bonds are Thanksgiving Bonds." Parents and relatives could express their gratitude to their "menfolk" in the service through these Victory Bonds, or they could purchase through the Hyde Park post office a special \$200 bond known as the "Roosevelt Bond" with a photograph of FDR.³²¹

V. L. Clark reminded citizens that this was the last drive with the hope that "the people of Iowa will invest to the limit realizing that they will not be asked to participate in another campaign of this type." State officials noted large bond purchases were being made but not the smaller denominations. "Victory Week" started on December 7th, four years after Pearl Harbor, to further encourage bond purchases. Fifty counties, though, were still running behind. Later in the month, a Christmas Bond was introduced with the slogan "The Finest Christmas Gift in the World is a Victory Bond."³²²

In the final count for the Victory Bond, Iowa tied with Alabama for fourth with 148 percent of its quota reached. In this last drive for victory, Iowans had bought \$68,252,000 in E bonds--more than \$22 million over the \$46 million quota, as every county in the state was over quota for the first time.³²³

The end figures for the eight collective war bond drives in Iowa totaled \$2,408,456,163 while its quota was \$1,777,000,000. The war bond campaigns had raised \$1,924,445,847, and the months between drives had raised \$484,010,316. North Dakota, however, had set the record for the combined eight bond drives during World War II.³²⁴

³²¹*Des Moines Tribune*, 1 November 1945, 12; and *Des Moines Tribune*, 12 November 1945, 8.

³²²*Des Moines Tribune*, 7 November 1945, 6.

³²³*The Perry Daily Chief*, 7 January 1946, 1.

³²⁴*Des Moines Tribune*, 9 January 1946, 9; and *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 3 March 1946, 4-Section 4. World War I had raised one-fifth of the Second World War, or \$500,532,500 over a quota of \$462,715,510.

The second resource, besides money, which the United States Armed Services needed from its communities was recycled items to make the raw materials needed for new weaponry, ammunition, and medicine. Mary Watters, in her 1950s history of Illinois' home front battles, called this campaign the "Saga of Scrap" as individuals had to be "re-educated" to save, conserve, and contribute. Scrap collections involved everyone in the community--every man, woman, and child. Though scrap collectors were sometimes eccentric such as Walter Smith from Council Bluffs who had collected 36,288 metal typewriter ribbon spools or "Farmer Bush" from Corning who turned in license plates since 1914 or Anson Rittgers from Polk County who would not sell to the Japanese scrap drive three years ago and now had a 28-year-old accumulation of 4,100 pounds, the scrap campaign was taken very seriously throughout the war years. Each neighborhood had a salvage committee. Many Iowans, at first, thought a great deal of money could be made by selling to the "junkman" because of the government's need, but ceiling prices were in place before the start of the war. Most people, however, were committed to the salvage campaigns for patriotic reasons.³²⁵

Women and children proved to be especially strong soldiers in this campaign. As one of the ads directed toward the feminine population read, "If you're a heartsick wife--mother--or sweetheart . . . you'd do a lot to give that boy a better chance to get back safe. Well then . . . do it! Throw your scrap into the fight. SOMEONE'S LIFE IS IN YOUR HANDS!" A Women's Salvage Army was planned for every state by the War Production Board's conservation unit "to establish in every community a definite and well organized group to spread this information and to see that its requests are complied with 100 per cent everywhere." In other words, women, more often than men, were the "curators." Every county in Iowa established a chairman with assistants for the Women's Salvage

³²⁵Watters, 263; *Life*, 12 January 1942, 96; *Life*, 23 March 1942, 124; *Des Moines Register*, 1 October 1942, 1 and 9; and *Saturday Evening Post*, 27 June 1942, 29 and 80.

Army, creating a total workforce of 99 chairmen and a working force of 835 women. Mrs. Fred Weitz, chairman of the women's division of the state salvage board, issued "A Call to the Women of Iowa for Salvage Army." Mrs. Weitz was an able leader with reporting and writing experience, describing herself as an "ardent feminist." She said of her salvage duties, "It's so easy to do the simple thing, and so hard to sell a simple truth, to arouse interest."³²⁶

Children, unlike many adults, were able to stay focused on the country's need for scrap. Children were the heroes of the scrap drives. These "Children's Crusades" became the "shock troops of salvage" everywhere. As historian Jordan Braverman commented on young Americans' efforts, "They supplied the earnestness that might have been lacking in their elders; they, at least, were not guilty of complacency." Children knew their neighborhoods; they liked to scrounge and get dirty. Often they were organized into semi-military bands in which they could earn rank and insignia, and the U. S. Office of War Information even created a cartoon character, Kid Salvage. The *Saturday Evening Post* called this group of children "30,000,000 soldiers for our New Third Front." This army included school children, organizations such as the Boy and Girl Scouts, and small neighborhood groups. The government described the young people as "the seasoned veterans in the Battle for Scrap," especially since imagination was a necessary criteria.³²⁷

A school scrap army was organized in almost every community in the country, and they started a "locust-like invasion" of American houses on October 7, 1942. Children felt the urgency, as *The Saturday Evening Post* noted, because "grownups lack the imagination their children have to translate an old overshoe the dog has chewed, a broken, discarded lawn mower, a rusty golf club, skid chain or flatiron into hand grenades,

³²⁶*Winterset Madisonian*, 14 October 1942, 2; *Des Moines Register*, 31 October 1942, 4; and *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 27 June 1943, 3-Society.

³²⁷Watters, 271 and 273; Jordan Braverman, *To Hasten the Homecoming: How Americans Fought World War II through the Media* (New York: Madison Books, 1996), 226; and *Saturday Evening Post*, 26 September 1942, 15.

machine guns, shells, bombs, fighting ships and planes." For example, the school children of Winterset gathered twenty-one tons in their first two days of the organized search as they scoured the town. The local paper praised their efforts: "They hauled it in play wagons, baby buggies, and every sort of conveyance. Ponies and a team of goats were pressed into service." Though the children's work efforts were admirable, historian Marc Miller in *The Irony of Victory* raises an important point about their participation: "The question arises why in the midst of an extremely popular war, this nation went to such lengths to indoctrinate its own children."³²⁸

The most dramatic scrap campaign, in sheer volume and direct military use, was the drive for iron. Usually men directed the scrap iron drives because of their access to used equipment, especially on farms. The piles of scrap iron could be quite large which added to the drama along with the competitions between towns and regions. Also, it was not too difficult to connect the transformation of scrap iron into guns for battle; people could easily believe in this process and their needed contributions to the war effort. Still, people questioned salvaging with America's large mines although the production of steel included pig iron, and half of this raw material came from scrap even in peace time. As the *Winterset Madisonian* encouraged, "We must dig--and dig deep--in the 'mine-above-the-ground' the rich reserve of junk which wasteful America has accumulated through the years. Those mining operations may well determine whether--and how soon--we will win the war!" Several slogans for the campaign added guilt-inducing pleas: "Whose Boy will Die because You failed?" and "Can Men call You 'scrap slacker'?"³²⁹

Iowa responded with a three-week newspaper-directed scrap drive from September 28th through October 17, 1942. The quota for each Iowan was set at one hundred pounds of almost anything made even partially of metal. A large electric fan, for

³²⁸*Winterset Madisonian*, 14 October 1942, 1; and Marc Scott Miller, *The Irony of Victory: World War II and Lowell, Massachusetts* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 187.

³²⁹*Winterset Madisonian*, 30 September 1942, 1; *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 23 September 1942, 12; and *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 8 October 1942, 14.

example, could be translated into military use with "enough steel for three .38 caliber revolvers, enough zinc for one military motorcycle, enough copper for 77 machine guns, enough aluminum for seven gas masks." Herbert Plagman, executive secretary of the state salvage committee, cautioned that Iowans might feel guilty: "Lack of cooperation on the home front in the scrap drive might be the cause of the death of an American soldier for lack of arms and equipment."³³⁰

Madison County saw its scrap mission directly tied to the war as revealed in its town paper: "To supply our fighting men with the bombs, bayonets, guns, gas masks, hand grenades and other fighting weapons they need, the American people must gather millions of tons of additional scrap material." But, when its own self-directed drive opened in early September 1942, it "fizzled," partly because farmers were directed to sell to junk dealers whom many resented. The local Future Farmers of America provided a success story for Winterset by the end of the year, however, through their salvage collection. The FFA instructor, S. A. Ossian, described the boys' salvage work in military terms: "They worked like troopers, never giving up until they had combed ditches, junk piles, and other remote places to find scrap metal and rubber." The boys collected 20.8 tons of metal along with 400 pounds of rubber which netted \$155.12 to buy war bonds. Their high school yearbook called it "one big achievement."³³¹

Clarinda decided to treat its initial iron drive as a military operation with a "scrap force" of one hundred business and professional men in a "motorised division of twenty bannered trucks." Their orders were as follows: "The scrap force was to mobilize at 6:30 p.m. on the south side of the square, men being asked to come in work clothes, overalls if available, and ready for work. Upon arrival they will be assigned to trucks and districts and will receive orders to 'move out.'" Local officials asked people in the community to

³³⁰*Winterset Madisonian*, 30 September 1942, 1; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 27 September 1942, 1-Section 4; and *Des Moines Register*, 24 September 1942, 9.

³³¹*Winterset Madisonian*, 2 September 1942, 1; *Winterset Madisonian*, 9 September 1942, 1; *Winterset Madisonian*, 23 December 1942, 6; and *Winterset Boomerang*, 1943, no page numbers.

collect items at curbside as whistles blew throughout the day to remind every person in town to get the scrap metal piled up. Clarinda's citizens gathered twenty-eight tons in their one hour drive on a Tuesday evening. In a second drive the following month, Clarinda's businesses closed for the afternoon as led by "Generalissimo" Ted Pressley. At one of the small rural schools thirteen students piled so much scrap it took three trucks to haul it away. "Scrap, scrap, any old scrap today?" were the words ringing in Clarinda's streets as the city divided itself into a South vs. North civil war contest.³³²

Red Oak also participated in a larger civil war between the northern tier of Mills, Montgomery, and Adams counties against the three southern ones of Freemont, Page, and Taylor. The *Red Oak Sun* rallied support, "Another civil war is on. Not a war of rebellion, nor to free any slaves (although it may help to keep men from becoming slaves), but a war for Scrap!" The campaign continued, "The scrap is for Scrap! Did you get that? Scrap for our Uncle Sam and the boys who are fighting for him--and for us. Scrap to everlastingly whip the Japs and the Germans and to win the war for freedom and liberty and democracy." And the military tone continued: "Scrap! Scrap! Scrap! That's the battle cry. Scrap to give the Japs in small but vital doses!" The 2,550 pound bell was donated from the volunteer fire station as was the courthouse cannon. Other small towns in Montgomery County competed with each other in collection drives. Stanton had a "hustling" scrap chairman, E. E. Wigstone, as it stacked up the biggest scrap pile in the county with the entire town and local farmers working for the effort. In another small town, Villisca's mayor delivered a proclamation, "We cannot leave it for somebody else to do--we must all get in and work: everybody, right here in Villisca, must help."³³³

³³²*Clarinda Herald Journal*, 27 August 1942, 1; *Clarinda Herald Journal*, 3 September 1942, 1; *Clarinda Herald Journal*, 15 October 1942, 1; and *Clarinda Herald Journal*, 19 October 1942, 1.

³³³*Red Oak Sun*, 1 October 1942, 4; *Red Oak Express*, 17 August 1942, 1; *Red Oak Sun*, 28 August 1942, 1; *Red Oak Express*, 31 August 1942, 1; *Red Oak Sun*, 3 September 1942, 1; *Red Oak Sun*, 10 September 1942, 1; and *Red Oak Express*, 14 September 1942, 1.

Iowa initially had an outstanding iron scrap record. Four counties led the state iron scrap drive with each collecting more than 400 pounds per citizen: Cass, 539.8; Emmet, 532.8; Montgomery, 461.6; and Harrison, 407.2. The War Production Board awarded outstanding counties with a WPB salvage pennant. The average citizen contribution for the state was 142.7 pounds for a total of 181,115.5 tons. Iowa ranked twelfth in the scrap metal campaign. But, in 1943, 49 counties reported "no scrap iron or steel collections whatever." Herbert Plagman warned fellow Iowans, "We're slipping. We agreed to back our fighting men with plenty of heavy scrap so they could have all the ships, tanks, guns and planes they need, but we're letting them down. That's not like Iowa." By spring, the scrap metal drive was still lagging, and Plagman described this as "nothing short of shameful" when Iowa fell from 12th place in the fall national ranking (1942) to the bottom of the list.³³⁴

One creative approach to the scrap iron drive was the national jalopy campaign which the War Production Board assigned to the American Legion. The slogan was "Jolt the Japs with Jalopies," and the "Jalopy Recruiting Pledge" read as follows: "I have a jalopy that wants to enlist. It is O.K. with me." Certificates of Recognition were awarded to the posts with the largest number of contributions. Fred Chandler led the Iowa campaign with that "legion spirit." He commented on the needed contributions: "As we read the headlines from North Africa each day, I think we can visualize why more and more steel is needed. We of the last World war are in this battle too! Let's go over the top now." He later added, "Keep scrapping for scrap until the scrap is over over there."³³⁵

³³⁴*Des Moines Register*, 23 September 1942, 12; *Des Moines Tribune*, 10 December 1942; *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 31 December 1942, 2; *Des Moines Tribune*, 20 April 1943, 9; *Des Moines Tribune*, 10 June 1943, 6; and *Red Oak Sun*, 18 February 1943, 6.

³³⁵*Iowa Legionaire*: 16 October 1942, 1; 18 September 1942, 1 and 3; 19 March 1943, 6; 6 November 1942, 1; 18 December 1942, 1; 15 January 1943, 1; 16 April 1943, 1; and 19 November 1943, 1. By April 1945 every Iowa county was over quota in the American Legion with membership at 48,880, and by the end of December 1945 it had further increased to 62,063. (*Iowa Legionaire*: 20 April 1945, 1; and 7 January 1946, 1.)

Iowa tried to go all out for the scrap metal drive, sometimes even donating historical items such as courthouse cannons. Vernon Sietman from Marshall County commented on several civil war cannons donated from the Marshalltown courthouse square and melted down for the war effort. Sietman thought it was quite a sacrifice, but that was how strong the feeling of cooperation was for the war effort. Ironically, the artillery produced by this scrap would later be described as "too big for a courthouse square." By the end of the war, however, efforts were made to compile a list of the many relics of historical significance which had been lost in Iowa's scrap drives. No reliable information had been kept of items scrapped, and only in the post-war period did communities recognize their historical value.³³⁶

Another salvage drive was for waste paper which supported the tremendous packaging and shipping of 700,000 different items needed on the battlefronts. Scrap paper kept supplies intact during overseas shipping. The national drive opened on January 3, 1943, in which every scrap of paper was needed. As one ad directed, "Just a minute Mr. and Mrs. Iowa. Don't throw away that old newspaper or that old sack, or that cardboard carton!" The Iowa salvage division reported thirty-three Iowa counties had collected a total of 5,452,580 pounds of waste paper from July 1st to November 1, 1943. Dubuque County had collected 1,532,000; Des Moines, 950,000; Cerro Gordo, 543,800; and Scott, 384,000. By 1944 each person in the nation needed to salvage seven pounds of paper for a total 8,000,000 ton quota set by the War Production Board. Girl and Boy Scouts at the local level were especially active. In southeastern Iowa, Boy Scouts collected 100,000 pounds of paper for the scrap drive. In the southwestern region the Boy Scouts of Winterset collected 68,283 pounds of waste paper in a one-day paper drive which was enough to load a railroad freight car with some left over. The boys were

³³⁶*Des Moines Tribune*, 1 October 1942, 28; *Des Moines Register*, 22 October 1942, 6; Harris, et al, *The Home Front*, 77; Margaret Bourke-White, "Purple Heart Valley": *A Combat Chronicle of the War in Italy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1944), photo caption after page 168; and *The Washington Evening Journal*, 24 July 1945, 1.

quite resourceful, using a goat-drawn cart, coaster wagons, bicycles, pony carts, dog carts, and wheelbarrows. In 1945 each scout unit which collected 1,000 pounds of scrap paper received a General Eisenhower medal and a genuine shell case used on the European battlefield.³³⁷

The nation also experienced a shortage of rubber during the war. In 1942, Roosevelt called for an all-out, nationwide rubber salvage campaign from June 15th through the 30th. One of the slogans was "Make that rubber s-t-r-e-t-c-h." By the end of 1942, a nationwide total of 454,155 tons of rubber had been collected, enough rubber scrap for the year's essentials. Iowa ranked sixth. Nevada with the lowest population had collected the most per person at 30.13 pounds while New York with the greatest population had collected the least. Iowa collected 9.54 pounds per capita for a total of 12,105 tons. Iowans had responded generously, especially after an extension was made by FDR until July 10th. The Des Moines county chairman of the rubber drive, C. L. Scott, reminded citizens of their needed contributions, "All scrap is worthwhile--a bathing cap, old hot water bottle, unuseable tire or tube, the county needs scrap rubber."³³⁸

Other miscellaneous drives included a copper and brass drive that, for a pound of either, gave one free admission to a Des Moines theater. In yet another drive Iowa clubwomen contributed worn stockings to be manufactured into gunpowder bags. Their newsletter encouraged this unique salvage: "Our county courthouses are our common symbols of democratic government. Let us contribute enough discarded silk and nylon stockings to go many times around the squares upon which they stand."³³⁹

³³⁷*Des Moines Tribune*, 9 December 1943, 10; *Des Moines Tribune*, 9 December 1943, 10; *Life*, 5 June 1944, 67 and 68; *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 8 May 1942, 2; *Winterset News*, 20 January 1943, 1; *Kossuth County Advance*, 20 March 1945, 1; and *Kossuth County Advance*, 10 April 1945, 1.

³³⁸*Winterset Madisonian*, 17 June 1942, 1; *Collier's*, 28 February 1942, 37; *Oelwein Daily Register*, 22 July 1942, 1; *Des Moines Register*, 30 June 1942; and *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 18 June 1942, 2. The United States was completely dependent on foreign imports for rubber and tin. (*Iowa Business*, June 1941.) A synthetic rubber had to be quickly developed and produced for the many essential war needs.

³³⁹*Des Moines Sunday Register*, 31 January 1943, Gen.-5; *Iowa Clubwomen*, November-December 1943, 8; and *Independent Woman*, November 1942, 340.

Even books were a salvage item in a drive sponsored by the American Library Association, the U.S.O., and the Red Cross. The Victory Book Campaign started in December 1941; by the end of 1943 over eighteen million books were collected throughout the nation with ten million distributed to men in the armed forces. Iowa had contributed 187,000 volumes in 1942 and 99,177 in 1943 for a total of 286,177 thus earning a twelfth place finish. New York placed first with over four million donations, and Illinois was second with over two million.³⁴⁰

The milkweed pod collections in the fall of 1944 were memorable hunts for Iowa's schoolchildren. The milkweed pod collection campaign was part of the War Food Administration effort to collect 2,500,000 bushel bags nationally to produce 1,500,000 pounds of floss for a million life jackets. In Kossuth County, for example, schoolchildren collected enough pods to fill half a train car, and they received \$450 for their effort to be donated to their schools' needs. Ellen Witham was a "bag champ," collecting 44 of her rural school's 58 bags. Iowa's children collected between 100,000 to 150,000 bushel bags, but Michigan led the drive with 700,000 bags.³⁴¹

By war's end, many communities were proud of their salvage record, but the patriotic groups disbanded when the work was done. Scrap drives were a success if the need was expressed and explained to citizens, but the United States government literally had to confess its needs for resources to encourage people to donate to this war effort. The scrap drives were structurally well-organized with national, state, and local committees led by appointed chairmen. These drives were not spontaneous but had pre-set, "democratic" quotas, and most were driven by newspaper advertisements and business organizations with men as the generals along with women and children as the support troops. Attention and motivation often fluctuated, but drives and contests were

³⁴⁰*Collier's*, 24 January 1942, 42; and *Iowa Library Quarterly*, January 1944, 205.

³⁴¹*Red Oak Sun*, 28 September 1944, 1; *Iowa Farm Bureau Spokesman*, 13 January 1945, 1; and *Kossuth County Advance*, 14 December 1944, 1.

a way for an entire community to contribute in a process based not on money, education, or position but on perseverance and creativity.

The third resource that communities sent to war, the most valuable by far, was the young men. The boys were the most significant "contribution" from the community front. One of Archie Satterfield's interviews in *The Home Front* noted his driving through the Midwest the day after Pearl Harbor. "We left home on Monday, December 8, and in every town we went through we saw these lines of young boys waiting in front of the courthouse or recruiting office to join up and fight. It was very moving, very reassuring to know we were unified." This patriotic urge continued throughout the war years. Exactly six months later on a Sunday afternoon, June 7, 1942, at 1:25 p.m., on the steps of the Iowa statehouse, 58 "Pearl Harbor Avengers" were sworn into the armed services along with 267 men elsewhere in the state. The ceremony was part of a nationwide observance in which 12,326 took part.³⁴²

The war touched the community front directly through its soldiers. The *Des Moines Tribune* recognized this almost universal fact: "Along the streets and roadways of Iowa, every home has been affected in some way by World War II." In Priscilla Wayne's *Tribune* column, she answered the East Coast charge that "the middlewest scarcely knows that a war is being waged." She countered, "It is true we might see more bombers and be closer to some of the war activities if we lived in the east, but we know there is a war going on, make no mistake about that. Ride through the streets of Des Moines and note the service flags in the windows."³⁴³

National Guard units, often locally organized units of soldiers, were among the first troops sent overseas. A joint resolution by Congress in August 1940 had called the

³⁴²Archie Satterfield, *The Home Front: An Oral History of the War Years in America, 1941-1945* (New York: Playboy Press, 1981), 41; and *Des Moines Register*, 8 June 1942, 1.

³⁴³*Des Moines Tribune*, 20 March 1942, 16.

entire National Guard of the United States to federal service for military training. Red Oak's Company M was one such troop called. The farewell for 123 men of Company M at the train station was emotional with two thousand relatives, friends, and well-wishers present. The local newspaper described the scene as "a great morale builder" which "put that certain something into the hearts of every member of Company M." The *Red Oak Sun* tried to capture the emotional picture: "The crowd remained on the tracks after the red light on the train's caboose had faded around the bend. Only then were the tracks cleared so another westbound freight, which had been waiting down the tracks, could get through." A Red Oak soldier, Robert Corad, later wrote from Camp Claiborne in Louisiana that training seemed to go fairly well after a "swell trip" to this "enormous and new" camp.³⁴⁴

After training, Company M went to Ireland, then to the North African front. A letter from Lauren E. McBride, commander of Company K, commented on Company M's experiences, "If I were to attempt to express an attitude that would indicate a general feeling I think I would say that everyone thinks this travel is very nice but that the best place in the world is back home, and as soon as this job we have is successfully completed we want to come back post haste to the loved ones at home whom we know are enduring hardships and doing just as much to win this war as we in North Africa." A letter from Corporal Dennis J. Smith described the comfortable beginnings of the occupation in northern Africa. "We are issued free of charge a pack of cigarettes [sic] each day. I'm getting plenty to eat. Wine is dirt cheap and I'm having quite a bit of fun

³⁴⁴This company had had a long history, organizing in 1893 and fighting in World War I. Kenny A. Franks, "Goodbye, Dear, I'll Be Back in a Year': The Mobilization of the Oklahoma National Guard for World War II," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 69 (Winter 1992): 347; *Red Oak Sun*, 6 February 1941, 1; *Red Oak Sun*, 27 February 1941, 1; *Red Oak Sun*, 13 March 1941, 1; and *Red Oak Sun*, 6 March 1941, 1. Congress voted the following August in 1941 to continue Guardsmen's terms to eighteen months. (Thomas Parrish, *Roosevelt and Marshall: Partners in Politics and War*, 177.)

learning French."³⁴⁵ This experience, however, would quickly change to one of intense combat.

Company M was tragically involved in the battle with the Nazis at Kasserine Pass on the North African front. Iowa sustained the heaviest blow from this early battle when 311 Iowa soldiers were reported missing from a national list of 814 from 41 states. One half of Iowa's casualties were from the southwestern region. *Life* magazine covered the event, running the headline, "War Hits Red Oak," in their first May 1943 issue. The article stated, "A small prairie town gets word that 23 of its boys are missing in action after a battle in North Africa." *Life* tried to depict the impact of this news on a small community by publishing an aerial photograph with the names of missing men printed above their homes to give a picture of the town and its losses. But as a later reflection in a local history book noted, "For the people in Red Oak, it wasn't just a casualty list."³⁴⁶

The community was devastated at the sheer number of losses. War consciousness increased by the hour as everyone seemed more and more stunned by the flood of telegrams: "Missing in action." Those were the "crisp words" from the telegraphs which were carried to the homes of seventeen Montgomery County homes on March 8, 1943. More telegrams would follow. In her national morning radio program Kate Smith, the popular radio entertainer, commented that Red Oak, Iowa, had cause to go in mourning for her sons missing on the African battlefield. The first soldier to write back to his family from this African front was a Stanton soldier, Phil Swanson: "I have been in action here in Tunisia. I've seen enough to last me a life time, I assure you. Greet everyone for me. Will never have time to write all."³⁴⁷

³⁴⁵*Red Oak Express*, 25 January 1943, 1; and *Red Oak Express*, 14 December 1942, 1.

³⁴⁶*Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 30 March 1943, 1; *Life*, 3 May 1943, 26 and 27; and BPW Club, *Calvacade of a Century* (Red Oak, Iowa: Red Oak, 1953), 53.

³⁴⁷*Red Oak Express*, 11 March 1943, 1; *Red Oak Express*, 8 March 1943, 1; *Red Oak Sun*, 1 April 1943, 1; and *Red Oak Express*, 15 March 1943, 1.

Iowa's communities honored the loss of life in symbolic displays. Clarinda paid tribute to all its WWII soldiers with an archway on the square with 2,000 names. The *Red Oak Express* suggested a similar monument for its courthouse square, "Let's give to the service men the tribute they deserve." The first to be reported dead was Corporal Dale (Swede) McCormick, 25, who had recently been in a hospital but returned to Company M right before its tragic battle at Kasserine. In fact, the total number of Iowa's war dead by July 1943 amounted to 412, placing it eighth in the nation though it was twentieth in population. Governor Hickenlooper felt this fact should answer eastern states' charge that midwestern states lacked "equality of sacrifice": "There is no question that this state is making its share of sacrifices."³⁴⁸

Later, *Life* magazine described Red Oak's mood in the autumn of 1943 as quiet with mostly older people and children waiting for the return of its young adults. The article continued:

'Return to normalcy' is not a suspect phrase there. It means simply when the young men and women are home again, and the stores that the draft and the shortages have closed reopen, and the children go to bed in their parents' new small houses and early evening is a bustle of shopping and young laughter. Evenings are quiet now. The grandparents tend to drift to the green near the courthouse. It is a pleasant place for talk or a game of checkers in summer. And big in the center, much bigger than the plaque which lists the dead of 1917-18, stand the boards that give the names of all the Red Oak men in the service. The dead are marked plainly, but every father and mother in Red Oak can tell you too just who has been wounded or taken prisoner.³⁴⁹

Many families in Red Oak suffered from that deep and lingering pain of grief. In September 1944, Gordon Gammack, a *Des Moines Register* and *Tribune* war correspondent, confidently told a near-capacity audience at a high school auditorium that Red Oak has felt the war. He continued, "You have made a tremendous sacrifice, and no

³⁴⁸*Red Oak Express*, 19 April 1943, 1; *Red Oak Express*, 27 May 1943, 1; *Red Oak Express*, 22 July 1943, 2; and *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 10 July 1943, 7.

³⁴⁹*Life*, 13 September 1943 as quoted in *Red Oak Express*, 13 September 1943, 1; *Red Oak Express*, 6 December 1945, 1; *Red Oak Express*, 13 December 1945, 1; and *Red Oak Express*, 20 December 1945, 1.

one could say that you do not know there is a war on." Little Lana Kay, an infant in Red Oak, could not say anything yet of her sacrifice, not realizing she had a father, Private First Class Joseph McKee, whom she had never seen.³⁵⁰ This infant was only one of hundreds of "Iowa's War Babies" who either never saw their fathers during the first years of life or never saw their fathers at all.

Though Red Oak's number of war casualties gave it a "dubious honor" as veteran Lloyd Dunn from Clarinda would later describe it, many other Iowa communities and families had also sacrificed young men to the war. As the editor of the *Annals of Iowa* stated, "Into every community, town, city, and farm of Iowa the war has already reached its harsh hand." The community of Odebolt had the most boys from a single family serving in the armed services. In September 1941, Clarence F. Patten joined his seven sons as an enlisted man in the U. S. Navy. Chief of Naval Operations Harold Stark stated in a special broadcast from the national capital, "We are proud to salute this typical American father and outstanding citizen, who stands shoulder to shoulder with his sons, ready to defend the fundamental traditions of liberty. This is the kind of men that make this the finest navy in the world." Later, another brother would join his siblings--nine family men in all, the Navy's largest family. Seven brothers were later stationed on the *Lexington* and survived the sinking of this aircraft carrier. Several were part of the engine crew--the "black gang"--yet all escaped injury after the explosion. In the aftermath, the brothers were scattered and separated, not knowing one another's fate for almost a month. Later, all nine toured the country together as a publicity stunt. Reporters described them as the "breezy Patten brothers" who "never stop kidding each other" with a routine of back-slapping and hand-shaking. The *Register* published a photo of their nephew with

³⁵⁰*Red Oak Express*, 28 September 1944, 1; and *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 16 December 1945, 7-Section 9.

his mouth open in amazement, surrounded by "His Heroes--8 Uncles and a Grandfather."³⁵¹

The Pattens were not the only large Iowa family to serve in the military. The second largest family had seven sons in the Navy, the Davis brothers from Davenport. Oscar, Marshall, Ivan, George, Melvin, and Marvel Davis followed their brother Sheldon's example when he enlisted in 1940. In another Iowa family, six sons of Mrs. E. L. Aldrich of Harvarden joined the Army--Joseph, Anthony, Glenn, Eugene, Robert, and Edward. Mrs. Aldrich said her "hobby" was now waiting for the mailman and pacing the floor in her apartment. The Snider family of Williams set a record for Hamilton County with six stars on their service flag for sons Donald, Gilbert, Glen, Marion, Wendell, and Wayne. A Mexican immigrant mother, Virginia Reyes, in Des Moines, also had six sons go to war: David, Ralph, Dan, Robert, Henry, and Richard. The *Register* featured her story with a focus on the endless waiting: "Within the last two years the modest frame Reyes home with its shady, flower-brightened yard which once echoed with the shouts of eleven Reyes children at play, has grown quieter and quieter. Tuesday Mrs. Reyes sat alone in a silence that was almost complete." She missed her sons, terribly. The article continued, "The apple-pie order of the house, and the spicy aroma from the kitchen are signs that Mrs. Reyes is a busy woman. Besides the familiar home tasks she writes to each twice a week and waits for letters from her sons, who 'write often and well.'"³⁵²

Other families had sons serving in different branches of the military. Mr. and Mrs. Emery Dull of Cherokee had five sons--Paul, Max, Glenn, Ivan, and Burton--in the

³⁵¹Lloyd G. Dunn, "We Were in the Infantry, 103rd Division, WWII," Clarinda Public Library, WWII vertical file; *Annals of Iowa* Editor, "That Our Memory May Be Green: The Iowa War Records Commission," *Annals of Iowa* 24 (July 1942): 95; *Des Moines Register*, 10 September 1941, 1; *Des Moines Tribune*, 30 June 1942, 1; *Des Moines Tribune*, 24 June 1942, 1; and *Des Moines Register*, 1 July 1942, 3. The American mother to "give" the most sons (eleven) to the Armed Forces was Mrs. Frances Evans Kyke, 43 years old, of Chicago. (*Collier's*, 21 August 1943, 23.)

³⁵²*The Davenport Democrat and Leader*, 11 March 1945, Sect 3-1; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 21 February 1943, Sect. 4-3; *The Daily Freeman Journal* (Webster City), 17 June 1943, 1; and *Des Moines Tribune*, 5 October 1943, 1 and 7.

armed services (two in the Navy, two in the Army, and one in the Marines). The *Iowa Bureau Farmer* quipped, "The sun doesn't set on this Iowa family." Another family, sons of the late Mr. and Mrs. Herman Hahn, joined the Five Star Service Circle with five brothers serving in the Army, described as "a fighting family" with seven uncles who had served in World War I.³⁵³

While many Iowa families had several members serving in the war, the family who made the greatest sacrifice was the Sullivan family of Waterloo. The five Sullivan brothers--George, Francis, Madison, Eugene, and Albert--were always known as "the Sullivan boys" to the townspeople. The photograph of the five sailor brothers gathered around an open hatch cover of the *U.S.S. Juneau's* fantail would be one of the most widely distributed pictures of World War II.³⁵⁴

The five Sullivans were a unique group because they sought special permission to be shipmates and eventually served together aboard the *U.S.S. Juneau*, despite warnings of what this might do to their parents if tragedy struck. No family should lose all its sons to war. An explosion did sink the ship, and nearly all its crew members died during a complicated sea battle. At first, the brothers had been reported missing, but later the Sullivan brothers received national recognition because of their tragic deaths together after this battle. *Life* reported this tragedy as the heaviest blow ever suffered by any American family. Only George had survived the ship's sinking yet only for a few days. A letter from one of the few survivors, a Nebraska sailor, described the aftermath to Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Sullivan. "It was a sad and pathetic sight to see George looking for his brothers, but all to no avail. George and I made several liberties together and we were always

³⁵³*Des Moines Register*, 27 March 1943, 2; *Iowa Bureau Farmer*, March 1945, 9; and *The Davenport Democrat and Leader*, 10 September 1943, 8.

³⁵⁴See the movie, *The (Fighting) Sullivans* (1944) for development of the theme that America's family produced fighting but loving sons. *Des Moines Tribune*, 3 January 1942, 1; and John R. Satterfield, *We Band of Brothers: The Sullivans and World War II* (Parkersburg, Iowa: Mid-Prairie Books, 1995), 176 and 67.

kidding about going back on the railroad after the war was over. I don't know whether this sort of letter helps or hurts you, but it's the truth."³⁵⁵

Eight months after the loss of the *Juneau*, Navy Secretary Frank Knox sent an official letter to the parents: "This lapse of time, in view of the circumstances surrounding the disaster as officially reported by close witnesses, forces us reluctantly to the conclusion that the personnel missing, as a result of the loss of the JUNEAU, were in fact killed by enemy action." He regreted their "extraordinary loss." When Alleta Sullivan and her husband found out that all five sons were not missing but dead, their grief was profound. She later tried to explain her initial feelings: "Your first temptation when the news comes is to lock your door and retire into your own private grief. You want to sit alone in your room and cry your heart out."³⁵⁶

A mass was held in the brothers' honor at St. Mary's Church in Waterloo on February 9, 1943. The Archbishop Beckman stated that the spirit of that ship would live forever for these five boys who "came from fighting stock." "It was the American spirit, that undeniable (sic), that oh so noble impulse gushing forth from the land of the free, which moved the five boys whom we particularly commemorate this morning, to offer the supreme sacrifice for God and country."³⁵⁷

One of the first public letters to reach the Sullivan parents came from Vice President Henry A. Wallace: "Guy Gillete and I were talking last night about the marvelous spirit which you and your wife have displayed in facing one of the most extraordinary tragedies which has ever been met by any family in the United States. It is the spirit of the Sullivans which will enable the United Nations to gain a complete victory." Eleanor Roosevelt also sent her condolences: "You and your husband have

³⁵⁵*Life*, 25 January 1943, 37; *Life*, 15 February 1943, 4; *Des Moines Tribune*, 3 January 1942, 1; *Des Moines Register*, 15 February 1942, 1; *Des Moines Tribune*, 12 January 1943, 1; and *Des Moines Register*, 15 January 1943, 1.

³⁵⁶*Waterloo Daily Courier*, 6 August 1943, 1; and *The Iowan*, Winter 1988, 28.

³⁵⁷*The Dubuque Telegraph-Herald*, 10 February 1943, 1 and 3.

given a lesson of great courage to the whole country, and in thinking of this war and what it means to all mothers of this country I shall keep the memory of your fortitude always in mind, as I hope other mothers with sons in service will do."³⁵⁸

A Younkers department store ad portrayed the heroic perspective of the brothers' sacrifice. The copy stated, "The *Juneau* went down fighting in the battle of Guadalcanal. It was one of the most brilliant victories in the annals of our Navy: twenty-three Jap ships were sunk and nine of our own were lost. The *Juneau* was one of them and aboard her as she sank, were the five gallant Sullivan boys from Iowa." Though the Sullivans were popularly known throughout the war years as sacrificing themselves in battle, the recently told story is quite different: sailors abandoned for days by the Navy due to communication errors--men left to battle sharks, dehydration, and exposure.³⁵⁹

When the Sullivan parents later visited Washington, experienced newsmen described the event as "a difficult and throat-catching one." Even *Newsweek's* report was emotional: "They might have been any middle-aged American couple. The woman was stout and motherly looking. She wore a plain dress--one of the two she had brought with her on the long trip east. Her husband was equally inconspicuous in a dark suit of depression vintage." They were about to volunteer for a mission to visit a number of shipyards and war plants. "The boys always wrote me to 'keep my chin up,' Mrs. Sullivan said simply. 'After their ship went down I remembered what they said and made up my mind to see what I can do to help win the war--to kind of carry on for their sake.'" The message delivered to industrial workers from the bereaved 49 year-old midwestern housewife and her husband was simple: "Whatever your jobs are do them a little faster than you ever did. Each day you cut the war short means that many more sons will come home to their families." The Sullivan parents would ultimately attend 235 rallies across

³⁵⁸Satterfield, *We Band of Brothers*, 172 and 179.

³⁵⁹*Des Moines Sunday Register*, 11 July 1943, 10-Society. For this more realistic interpretation, see Dan Kurzman's *Left to Die, The Tragedy of the U.S.S. Juneau* (How nearly 700 men--including the five Sullivan brothers--died in torpedo and shark attacks in one of WWII's most secret scandals).

the nation and speak to more than a million war workers. Still, some people later remarked that they felt the Navy used this tragedy in a way that felt both exploitive of the family and offensive to others. For the family, however, the public appearances helped to ease and postpone what writer John Satterfield has described as their "deep, lingering grief."³⁶⁰

Their true story merged into legend. The later Hollywood movie, *The (Fighting) Sullivans* (1944), portrayed the Sullivans as an ideal American family from small-town Iowa. The movie was not so much a war film, but, as film historian Bernard Dick explains, "a film about a family, an exemplary family capable of practicing the art of nobly wrought grief."³⁶¹

Victory in Europe was officially announced on May 8, 1945. V-E Day was quietly observed in Clarinda, as in the rest of the country. Red Oak also celebrated respectfully with a mass meeting at the Methodist Church. Everyone, it seemed, listened to President Truman's radio address. The town paper described the following scene: "The fire whistle and siren sounded a prolonged blast, which also was the signal for the cessation of business activities. People gradually disappeared from the streets and soon the business district was almost completely deserted." Winterset's reacted in a similar fashion as the *Madisonian's 100th Anniversary Issue* recalled: "The news of the war's end was received with restrained rejoicing in Winterset. Whistles blew, and bells rang, but the sacrifices had been too great for any boisterous or unrestrained celebrating here."³⁶²

³⁶⁰*Newsweek*, 15 February 1943, 36; Doris Weatherford, *American Women and World War II* (New York: Facts on File, 1990), 298-299; and Satterfield, 164.

³⁶¹Bernard F. Dick, *The Star-Spangled Screen: The American World War II Film* (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1985), 185.

³⁶²*Red Oak Express*, 10 May 1945, 1; *Clarinda Herald Journal*, 10 May 1945, 1; *Red Oak Express*, 10 May 1945, 1; Madison County Historical Society, *Winterset Madisonian*, 100th Anniversary issue, 5; and Earl R. Beck, *The European Home Fronts, 1939-1945* (Arlington Heights, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1993), xii.

Victory in Europe represented a "Half Victory," as the *Des Moines Register* explained, because the fighting continued on the Pacific front. For that reason, the reaction in Des Moines was extremely quiet on VE Day as compared to the end of World War I. A reporter described the contrast: "People who had expected to sing said prayers. People who had expected to dance in taverns worked in victory gardens. People who expected to tell their boss what to do on VE Day hurried back to a machine at the arms plant."³⁶³

The community front had much to be thankful for, mostly that it did not resemble the devastated European home front. When President Truman toured Berlin by car during the Potsdam Conference, he noted in his diary the absolute destruction and the long lines for essentials; many homeless people were "scavenging to survive" among rubble and trash. Truman later wrote, "The destruction is a terrible thing, but they brought it on themselves. It just demonstrates what Man can do when he overreaches himself." On a more sympathetic note, he later surmised: "I fear that machines are ahead of morals by some centuries."³⁶⁴

Later that summer, after the atomic bombs, President Truman announced on August 14th that the war was over. He declared a two-day holiday. Dorothy Thompson, a nationally syndicated editorialist, tried to describe "the first feeling of peace"—relief, joy, and emptiness—from her small village when "the bell began to toll." She commented, "Only some did not sing; they came, and joined in the celebration, too, but their faces looked drawn, and there were tears in their eyes for the seven gold stars in the banner that flies over Main street. Everyone noticed, but pretended not to, happy that there will be no more gold stars, and sad, too." On that same day, a reporter called

³⁶³Des Moines Public Library, WWII vertical file: *Des Moines Register*, 10 September 1944 and *Des Moines Tribune*, 8 May 1945.

³⁶⁴Robert Kee, *1945: The World We Fought For* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1985), photo captions on 313 and 306; and J. Robert Moskin, *Mr. Truman's War: The Final Victories of World War II and the Birth of the Postwar World* (New York: Random House, 1996), 201.

Mrs. Sullivan in Waterloo for her reaction to the ending of the war. Her daughter replied that her mother could not speak right now. "I think you know what Mom's reaction is. She feels quite bad. She told me she's glad for other boys coming home but hers won't be back."³⁶⁵

Japan's surrender, the complete ending of the global war, was celebrated unlike V-E Day's partial victory. In Winterset, thanksgiving services were held after the radio announcement came at 6 p.m. of Japan's surrender. Whistles also blew and bells rang throughout the community along with car horns and a spontaneous bonfire on the square from earlier tree trimmings. In Red Oak, the sudden end of gas rationing meant a rush for stations to open. ("Fill 'er up.' Sweet words.") Nine hundred people attended a solemn and memorable church service.³⁶⁶

Other celebrations that day in Iowa were described as wild while some people simply wept or prayed. Sibley had an old fashioned fire works display; Spencer had cars bumper to bumper, honking; Waterloo went mad with air raid sirens and factory whistles; Creston had whistles and horns blaring and three men on a roof discharging shotguns in the air; Audubon ran out the fire truck; Fort Dodge had an impromptu snake dance; Marshalltown had a victory dance in its coliseum; Algona burned Tojo in effigy; and Charles City threw toilet paper (though hard to get in most cities) as confetti. Cedar Rapids went "haywire" with thousands of celebrating people, swarming the loop with ticker tape flying; Newton held a parade with Company E Iowa State Guard and Maytag employees; Ottumwa fired its World War One cannon; Grinnell held impromptu parades and a huge bonfire; and Muscatine's business section was filled with "happy, laughing, back-slapping humanity" along with streaming confetti immediately after the announcement.³⁶⁷

³⁶⁵*Des Moines Tribune*, 20 August 1945, 8; and Satterfield, *We Band of Brothers*, 199.

³⁶⁶*Winterset Madisonian*, 15 August 1945, 1; and *Red Oak Express*, 16 August 1945, 1.

³⁶⁷*Des Moines Tribune*, 15 August 1945, 11.

Still, not everyone in Iowa celebrated wildly. As the *Register* pointed out, "The cacophony of auto horns, the town fire siren, church bells, occasional pistol and rifle shots, car backfires and screams and cheers, contrasted with the solemn march of the more devout to church." The ceremony at the Shrine Auditorium in Des Moines was titled "Community Service of Thanksgiving on the Occasion of the Termination of World War II." Despite its formal title, the program included several songs: "My Country 'Tis of Thee" and "America the Beautiful."³⁶⁸

After the praying and the celebrating, many citizens asked themselves about the immediate post-war period. How would peace change their lives? *Life* attempted to describe the national mood: "a mood compounded partly of relaxation after the strenuous war years and partly of uncertain plans for the peace years ahead." It was to be an uneasy peace. Most Americans did not even consider Japan's destruction. James Boyington was an exception when he wrote home to his parents in Red Oak and described Yokohama looking as if it had been "scorched by a raging grass fire." He continued, "Wrecked by bombs dropped from B-29's the city stands as mute evidence of the power of modern aerial warfare, with only a few buildings left standing of a once modern Japanese city."³⁶⁹

The nation remembered its own losses as the *Saturday Evening Post* in August 1946 remembered Red Oak's: "If New York City had lost as many sons as this Iowa town, the dead would have numbered 70,000." It was now "a community despoiled of its finest youth by war, but rich in cherished memories." The article continued, "Red Oak, Iowa, looks like the home town we dreamed of overseas; rich and contented, with chicken and blueberry pie on Sundays, for whose sake some said we were fighting the war. It is the kind of town we wanted to be the same when we came home, at the same time hoping

³⁶⁸State Historical Society, WWII Clippings File, *Des Moines Register*, 15 August 1945; and Des Moines Public Library, WWII vertical file, ceremony program.

³⁶⁹*Life*, 15 October 1945, 29; and *Red Oak Express*, 13 December 1945, 6.

that somehow it would know what the war was about." The article concluded its message:

But now, one year after, Red Oak hasn't forgotten the war, for too many of her sons are gone. On the green grass of the town square, between a Civil War monument and a bronze plaque honoring the dead of World War I, are new honor rolls, as big as billboards. On them, blazoned with gold stars, are the names of fifty Red Oak men who lost their lives in World War II, marking one of the highest mortalities any American town has suffered.³⁷⁰

While many young men would not be coming home, thousands would return. The symbolic soldier's return to the home town was exemplified in a Pulitzer prize-winning photograph taken in Villisca, Montgomery County. The faces were hidden—it could have been anyone—yet the roles were clear and powerfully expressive. *Life* magazine told the story behind the image:

Three years ago Bob Moore was running a corner drugstore in Villisca, Iowa. Then he joined the Army leaving behind his wife and child. In February he led his company to safety through German lines in Fald Pass, winning promotion to lieutenant colonel and the Silver Star. Last week Bob Moore came home, a soldier, officer, and hero. But to the ones who waited for him in Villisca he was still more importantly father and husband. After 16 months at war a hero comes home to Iowa, welcomed by his small daughter's big hug and the joyous sobs of his lonely wife.

Look called it "a hero's reunion." *Time* described the photo as "timeless" when Moore was "greeted by his sobbing wife, ecstatic daughter, and interested young nephew." A *Newsweek* writer believed the image was "a picture that ranks with the war classics, this photo tells its own story more movingly than any words could." Along with Moore's family but not included in the photograph were "a crowd of townsfolk"—mostly parents and relatives of men who had served with Colonel Moore on the North African front.³⁷¹

³⁷⁰*Saturday Evening Post*, 17 August 1946, 14.

³⁷¹Colonel Moore had been scheduled to arrive at the Omaha airport a day earlier, and his wife and daughter waited seven hours for his plane. The plane had complications, and so Colonel Moore arrived the next day by train. *Life*, 26 July 1943, 34 and 35; *Look*, 16 May 1944, 55; *Time*, 26 July 1943, 26; *Newsweek*, 26 July 1943, 42; and *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 15 July 1943, 1.

The post-war period was one of peace but also pain. The money had been an investment, the scrap never missed, but the boys as soldiers and their ultimate sacrifices shaped the immediate and lingering years of the post-war period. Both the soldier and his "Main Street" became symbols of the war's cause. John Blum, in *V was for Victory*, summarized all that the soldier represented in this fighting effort of the "Good War": "The hero of World War II stood for blueberry pie and blond sweethearts, for the family farm and for Main Street, for perseverance and decency--for Americanism as a people's way of being." A war novel by MacKinlay Kantor, *Happy Land*, (later a Hollywood movie in 1943) had portrayed the fighting effort in such terms as Main Street as it described a small-town in Iowa and a father's grief after his son's war death. The *Time* movie review described the story as a "tender, folksy elegy for a typical American Boy who is killed in the war, and for his typical American father, who is thereby killed in spirit." The strong moral message of the story stressed that "the boy's brief easygoing, generous, small-town life was worth dying for because it was worth living."³⁷²

The community front had sacrificed many young soldiers. General Eisenhower knew the value of his young men and their importance to the people "back home." War historian Stephen Ambrose has described Eisenhower's beliefs and expressions as decidedly "Main Street"--he had the common touch. Eisenhower's first question when he met groups of soldiers was to ask, "Where are you from?" During the war, in a letter to his wife Mamie, he reflected on the sacrifices people back home were making for this war: "Mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, wives and friends must have a difficult time preserving any comforting philosophy and retaining any belief in the eternal rightness of

³⁷²John M. Blum, *V was for Victory: Politics and American Culture During World War II* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), 70; and *Time*, 13 December 1943, 92. The movie set for this typical Iowa town was actually set in California.

things. War demands real toughness of fiber—not only in the soldiers that must endure, but in the homes that must sacrifice."³⁷³

This war, like all wars, left behind it so many deaths along with the shattered lives of grieving loved ones. One son's death, Harold L. Smith of Winterset, symbolized many other young lives lost along with the families and communities who tried to cope with the aftermath. Harold Smith entered the service on March 25, 1944, a year after his graduation from Winterset High School as valedictorian, band letter-winner, and basketball co-captain. His nickname was "Smitty"; the class prophecy called him "Professor"; and the yearbook described him "as merry as the day is long." He was sent overseas in October to England, then Luxembourg where he fought in General Patton's Third Army.³⁷⁴

On February 12, 1945, he died of wounds received in battle from leading a machine gun action against the enemy. The official letter to his mother, Harriet L. Smith, stated, "The War Department has informed me that your son, Technician Fifth Grade Harold L. Smith, has given his life in the performance of his duty." He was nineteen years old. A memorial service was held on Sunday, March 25, 1945. The letter to his parents from commanding officer Captain Lamont Pinkston stated, "The loss to our purpose of a man with such character, courage, and ability is great and will be felt for some time." The *Iowa Legionaire* also sent its condolences: "Comrade Smith and your brave wife, all Legionaires mourn with you in the supreme sacrifice paid by your heroic son. There is little we can say or do at this hour to relieve your anguish, but God and

³⁷³Stephen E. Ambrose, *The Supreme Commander: The War Years of General Dwight D. Eisenhower* (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1970), 323; and Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier and President* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990), 130 and 128.

³⁷⁴*Winterset Boomerang*, 1943; and *Iowa Legionaire*, 6 April 1945, 5. This paragraph and the following are from miscellaneous documents in the Harry H. Smith and Harold L. Smith scrapbook in the Madison County Historical Library. Stephen Ambrose in his combat history titled *Citizen Soldiers* comments that in the fall of 1944 and the winter of 1945, "America was throwing her finest young men at the Germans." Many 18 to 19 year olds, barely trained, were fighting on both the German and American sides.

Country are thankful for the service of your soldier." His body was later sent home and buried in the Winterset Cemetary on August 31, 1948.

The Memorial Plaque installed in the Madison County Courthouse on July 11, 1951, replaced the temporary wooden honor roll on the courthouse lawn. This memorial bears Harold Smith's name along with the 1,500 other young men who served from Madison County. The names of men who made the supreme sacrifice are starred on the bronze plaque. A later memorial dedicated in 1984 was also in bronze but across the world in Luxembourg. It too remembers those who served and sacrificed. In a letter to Harold Smith's relatives, a soldier who had served with him on that fatal day described this newly-dedicated memorial. "The people of Luxembourg are very appreciative of what our people did for them--we gave our young men's lives--we returned their country to them--and their way of life. You can be reassured, the Luxembourgers are thankful--they have not forgotten. Forty years later they are still saying thank you to the men of the U.S. Army and they wrote it in bronze!"³⁷⁵

The money raised for bonds or the scrap donated for weapons had never been the community's true war sacrifices; it was the dead sons of the families "back home" who had made the supreme sacrifice. The words are now written in bronze for those who died in this war, the ones communities would remember for a very long time.

³⁷⁵Clipping with photo, dated July 11, 1951; and letter to Mrs. Hughes, dated 10/24/84 on Thunderbird Motor Inn stationery from Washington by George L. from the West Coast. Both were in the Smith Scrapbook, Madison County Historical Library.

CHAPTER 5. MRS. AMERICA'S MISSION: THE KITCHEN FRONT

"You're in the Army, too. We can't all shoulder guns and meet the enemy in the field; most of us have to stay at home."

--*Good Housekeeping*, June 1942

"Faced with the complexities and restrictions of a rationed larder, you may be skeptical about the joys of war-time cooking."

--*Cooking Without Meat*, 1943

A thousand members of the General Federation of Women's Clubs gathered in Washington, D. C., on January 24, 1942, for the National Defense Forum. The Secretary of Agriculture's economic advisor, Mordecai Ezekial, solemnly addressed the Federation and its guest of honor, Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins, about homemakers' future duties for the defense effort. Homemakers would have to watch food supplies and control wastes. "It is quite possible," Ezekial said, "that every housewife will have to keep a can or jar in her kitchen to pour fat drippings into." Giggles rippled through the audience. He seemed surprised and stated that he was not joking. Now laughter filled the room. Mrs. John Whitehurst, president of the Federation, whispered to him, and then he understood. "Oh--," he said. "I'm informed you already do. I'm embarrassed. Well, maybe it will have to be a bigger jar." The audience then "roared."³⁷⁶ This was the beginning of the kitchen front: the combination of government directives and homemakers' efforts.

Every civilian had a responsibility, a patriotic duty, to contribute all possible efforts toward winning the war, and the homemaker was no exception. The wartime housewife had consistent and overwhelming demands from the government placed on her productive and resourceful work in the kitchen. Iowa's housewives, like homemakers across the country, contributed to this war effort through rationing, cooking, salvaging,

³⁷⁶*Des Moines Sunday Register*, 25 January 1942, 1-Section 3.

gardening, and canning. Many homemakers met these demands with patriotism and enthusiasm. The war had moved into the kitchen.³⁷⁷

American housewives, though, had tackled war's food problems before during the Great War. "Food will win the war" was a slogan in both wars. The winter of 1917-18 was a difficult one as many housewives played that grim game of meatless Tuesdays, wheatless Wednesdays, and porkless Saturdays. The recipe juggling and the canning were voluntarily patriotic as women felt their kitchen efforts were needed for the war. The war with Hitler might be like the one with the Kaiser, and it brought back many of those memories and experiences for the generations old enough to remember. They were the ones to encourage the younger women to be cheerfully patriotic and to "keep our aprons on!"³⁷⁸

The historical image of Iowa was one of good food. In an *American Cookery* article titled "Hearty Dishes from the Hawkeye State," Doris Watabaugh described the mix of memories that good Iowa food held for her husband as she tried to replicate these old recipes for him in her modern Des Moines kitchen. She stated, "Each dish he liked in his boyhood makes him think of those glorious days when he lived on a midwestern farm. His father was a thrifty farmer who reaped rich returns from the fertile black soil of Iowa." Her description continued with an almost idyllic, poetic flare:

Always there was huge crocks filled with cream, a tall milk pitcher on the dining table, the fresh-churned butter, the cool buttermilk with chunks of yellow butter floating on top, and great bowls of cottage cheese. There were barrels of ripe apples for making winter pies, applesauce and fried apples to accompany homemade sausages; a smoke-house was filled with home-cured meats, the root cellar with a variety of fine vegetables, the fruit cellar with rows and rows of jars containing jam, jelly, home-canned tomatoes and fruit that Iowans invariably call 'sauce.' The pickle barrel was usually full. The attic was fragrant with dried apples. You can see that good food means something very special to my husband.³⁷⁹

³⁷⁷*Des Moines Tribune*, 30 March 1943, 6.

³⁷⁸*American Cookery*, March 1943, 316 and 317.

³⁷⁹*American Cookery*, March 1943, 292.

Her husband was not alone. Good food and good cooks were highly praised in Iowa as in most rural areas. A well-stocked kitchen from the garden or farm meant security, thriftiness, and pleasure.

The kitchen began a transformation from a family resource to a weapon needed to fight the war. The kitchen became, as *Better Homes and Gardens* stated, "the front line to keep this nation strong." The United States was the best-fed nation in the world, determined to have the best-fed soldiers. The Armed Services demanded an unprecedented amount of food, and the average soldier gained six to ten pounds in the first few months of training. The Army stated that the "V" of a soldier's diet meant both variety and vitamins though C, D, or K rations in combat zones offered little of each. The home front needed to be constantly aware of the Armed Services' and the Allies' needs. This was "our war," to be fought without complaint. The homemaker was now the kitchen soldier.³⁸⁰

The kitchen front represented a strong and numerous force on the home front, even before the war officially began. The Iowa Parent Teacher Convention in November 1941 stated as its first principle that homemaking represented the "cradle of democracy" and the "first line of defense." In 1941 the largest group of workers nationally was the thirty million women who were housewives. *Life* magazine praised the constant work of these women who labored "just for love" to make America's homes the best in the world: "They do most of the wash, make most of the beds, cook most of the meals, and nurse practically all of the babies of this continental nation." After a year of war, the numbers had changed very little: 14 million women were employed (2.5 million in war jobs) while 27.2 million women were homemakers (10 million with children under 10 years).³⁸¹

³⁸⁰*Better Homes and Gardens*, February 1942, 5; *Practical Home Economics*, March 1943, 87; *Life*, 24 November 1941, 66 and 67; "Soldier and His Food;" Wright, *What They Didn't Teach You about World War II*, 26-27; and *Good Housekeeping*, April 1942, 4.

³⁸¹*Iowa Parent-Teacher*, November 1941, 30; *Life*, 21 September 1941, 78; and *Independent Woman*, December 1942, 380.

The war effort from the kitchen was specifically "hers." In Ann Oakley's *Sociology of Housework*, her definition of housewife equals responsibility, the one who is responsible for most of the house duties, yet housework was often "invisible" with little emphasis placed upon it as actual work. The idea that the final responsibility for cooking, cleaning, and childcare remained with women was seldom questioned. The work was viewed as necessary, taxing, yet emotionally rewarding—serving one's family. Now housewives were also serving their country's government. Helen Loudon of *Kitchen-Klatter*, an Iowa-based magazine for homemakers, examined the housewife's role in war: "Have you noticed that sooner or later, in every crisis in National affairs, an appeal for help is made to the housewives of our nation? Why should we care if the assessor lists us as 'housewife--no occupation' when the very wisest men in our country are agreed that our work is very important, indeed!" During the war years, housewives became workers deemed as important as laborers in war plants. The housewife needed to do her war duty in many ways: to conserve, to substitute, to ration cheerfully. She was to plan, create, and salvage as she was the central point of all the home fronts.³⁸²

Although domestic work would be praised throughout the war years as a necessary contribution, housework has been traditionally devalued due to its exclusively feminine and unpaid status. Several historians, however, have started to recognize the value of this work. Historian Ruth Schwartz Cowan in *More Work for Mother* states that America's people have been "victims of a form of cultural obfuscation." She argues that housework can be considered more characteristic of our society than market work because it is "the first form of work which the largest proportion of people do, every day, every week." Historian D'Ann Campbell states that no one has written the history of the housewives in World War II, a third of the American people, despite the fact that "the

³⁸²Ann Oakley, *The Sociology of Housework* (Bath, Britain: The Pittman Press, 1974), 29; *Kitchen-Klatter*, July 1941, 10; *Kitchen-Klatter*, October 1941, 12; *Good Housekeeping*, February 1942, 19; *Ladies' Home Journal*, April 1942, 109; *Red Oak Express*, 8 November 1943, 6; OWI poster #20, *Homemaker's Guide*; and *Red Oak Sun*, 2 July 1942, 3.

entire logic of full war-time mobilization depended heavily on the behavior of housewives." Mary Thomas argues in *Riveting and Rationing in Dixie* that housework was "essential to family life and the economy, but it has often been unnoticed, unrecorded, and unappreciated." She explains, "The conditions of war made the usual tasks of homemaking--buying, cooking, nursing, consuming, washing, cleaning, and childrearing--more difficult."³⁸³

The image of "Mrs. America" for war-effort advertisements was a limited one. She was always portrayed as a married, middle-class white woman, approximately 30 to 50 years old, with children who were young or grown but never small babies. Though working class and black women certainly contributed to the kitchen front, the only public recognition of this fact was an expressed anger at the present inability to find "a good maid." Women who did not fit the narrow "Mrs. America" image were viewed as lost domestic help, not as homemakers and war workers with their own family concerns and patriotic motivations.³⁸⁴

Most Iowa homemakers, whether they considered themselves a "Mrs. America" or not, needed to be prepared to undertake the extra work demanded from their kitchens. The Iowa State College Agricultural Extension Service pamphlet #13, "Food for Defense," gave such advice: "The Iowa's homemaker's defense job is to provide an adequate food supply for her family through home production and storage of food and through wise

³⁸³Ellen Malos, *Politics of Housework* (London: Allison & Busby Limited, 1980), 10 and 29 along with the essay "The History of the Housewife" by Catherine Hull, 44; Ruth Schwartz Cowan, *More Work for Mother: The Ironies of Household Technology from the Open Hearth to the Microwave* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 4, 7 and 8; D'Ann Campbell, *Women at War with America: Private Lives in a Patriotic Era* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1984), 165 and 167; and Mary Martha Thomas, *Riveting and Rationing in Dixie: Alabama Women and the Second World War* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1987), 99 (Chapter 6--Housewives during Wartime).

³⁸⁴*Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 27 July 1943, 5.

buying at the grocery." Along with that responsibility, she was to help her family "keep up its morale."³⁸⁵

Leanna Driftmier, editor of *Kitchen-Klatter*, gave many Iowa women homemaking advice in her editorial letters as well as her daily radio broadcasts. She wrote, "There has never been a time when the home maker has had the opportunity to serve her country as she has now. So much depends on the efforts of each one of us as individuals in our own homes." She commented later that year. "I can't understand anyone doing anything that would hinder the progress of our fight for victory. Every delay means more lives lost. I am sure all *Kitchen-Klatter* mothers are doing what they can on the homefront." Leanna Driftmier had started airing her half-hour radio show in 1939, and "Kitchen Klatter" was the longest running homemaker program in the history of radio. The subsequent *Kitchen-Klatter* magazine at its peak had a subscription list of 90,000. Mrs. Driftmier had four sons in the service and three daughters working on the West Coast; she shared, according to writer Evelyn Birkby's research on radio homemakers, "the concerns, frustrations, fears, and sorrows of parents all across the country." The criteria for all radio homemakers, according to Birkby, was "friendliness, neighborliness, and a willingness to try new things."³⁸⁶

Though housewives and their work have been historically devalued, their productive housework took on a new significance during World War II, one enhanced from the "make do" days of the Depression. Also, Americans placed a stronger emphasis on health and urged women to learn the basics of nutrition to produce strong citizens needed for the war effort. The Director of Health and Welfare Service in the Office of Defense emphasized this point, "to be truly strong, Americans must know and eat the

³⁸⁵State Historical Society of Iowa, WWII Clipping File No. 1, "Food For Defense," Agricultural Extension Service, Iowa State College, August 1941, Pamphlet 13.

³⁸⁶*Kitchen-Klatter*, February 1943, 2; *Kitchen-Klatter*, August 1943, 2; Evelyn Birkby, *Neighboring on the Air with the KMA Radio Homemakers* (Iowa City, Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 1991), 87 and 97; and Susan Puckett, *A Cook's Tour of Iowa* (Iowa City, Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 1990), 11.

right foods." Vice-President Henry A. Wallace echoed this sentiment: "Food is fundamental to the defense of the United States--on a foundation of good food we can build anything. Without it we can build nothing."³⁸⁷

This emphasis on nutrition had been part of the "Homemaker's Creed" during the first World War, and officials in World War II repeated this philosophy in slogans such as "There's a war job in my kitchen--to keep my family fit with well-planned meals!" The National Nutrition Program's slogan was "What every housewife should know about preparing WAR FARE." The *Saturday Evening Post* even published a nutritional series, "a simple course in what every woman needs to know to feed her family well." The Home Economics Department of the American Can Company mailed over 350,000 copies of "Help Make America Strong" to home economists across the country and was still reprinting this free nutrition booklet due to the overwhelming number of requests.³⁸⁸

Iowa home economists and homemakers followed this national emphasis on nutrition. Wilma Phillips Stewart edited a daily food column for the *Des Moines Register*, and in her "1943 Food Picture" she asked her readers to "promise yourself that you will make a study of planning meals." Audree Doudna led the City Nutritional Council in Spencer and coordinated home demonstration agents, domestic science teachers, and women's club members in preparing nutritional guidance to reach over four hundred local community women. Ruth Cessna McDonald served as chairman of the Iowa Nutrition Council which launched a September 1944 campaign, "Make Iowa Strong," by promoting wartime nutrition programs throughout the state.³⁸⁹

³⁸⁷*Saturday Evening Post*, 6 June 1942, 91; ISU Archives--Agricultural Extension Service, ISC pamphlet #23, "Victory Home Food Supply."

³⁸⁸ISU Archives--ISC Home Economics Extension Service Publications, volume 12, pt. 1 (1911-1945) ("Homemaker's Creed" suggested by Mrs. Gale K. Young, Warren County Chairman); *Saturday Evening Post*, 22 August 1942, 77; *Saturday Evening Post*, 13 June 1942, 68; *Saturday Evening Post*, 6 June 1942, 92 and 93; and *Practical Home Economics*, April 1942, 157.

³⁸⁹*Des Moines Register*, 4 January 1943, 7; *Independent Woman*, July 1942, 220; and "News for Homemakers," 14 August 1944.

Though the ideal was perfectly balanced, wonderfully nutritious meals lovingly planned by housewives each and every day, the reality was trying to cook two or three times a day on a limited budget; limited availability of sugar, meat, butter, and canned goods; limited time; and limited patience. Keeping all family members, much less those war workers, happy and healthy was no easy job. It required planning and, most of all, "ingenuity." As Margot Murphy proclaimed in the cookbook *Wartime Meals*, "Pencils and paper are our primary weapons as we wage our kitchen battles." Journalist Studs Terkel complimented the efforts of family women in his oral history of the Second World War: "Housewives during the war were far better cooks than they've ever been since. Can you believe it? We had so little to manage with we became inventive."³⁹⁰

Ingenuity in the kitchen was certainly a talent, but the war conditions demanded it be developed through various educational sources. As Mary Ann Kidd pointed out in her column "Modern Home News," "destructive war does make some constructive contributions." She then described the local "Ingenuity Show," a display of new products for the home despite war shortages. Kidd declared, "American ingenuity is finding the path to Victory!" The *Hawk-Eye Gazette* initiated a number of innovative, educational, and promotional campaigns for the kitchen front. It first published a "Cookbooklet" series of twenty collections of inventive ideas for the wartime homemaker ranging from snacks to leftovers to eggs. Cookbooklet #19, for example, offered two thousand useful facts about food. The *Gazette* sponsored a Wartime Cooking School for the "greatest wartime efficiency." At the free presentation by Katharine Baldrige, a smiling and excited crowd of homemakers "jockeyed" for front row seats. The school lasted four days with "timely topics" and up-to-date cooking methods. One of the newspaper advertisements stated, "Mom's doing her part too!" In 1943 the *Gazette* published a cookbook for twenty-five cents titled "Wartime Cooking and Canning" by Josephine

³⁹⁰Murphy, *Wartime Meals*, 2; and Studs Terkel, *The Good War*, 224.

Gibson with over three hundred recipes and hints which reportedly told "how the food front is as important as the battle front." By the end of its first month, thousands of Iowa housewives had ordered the cookbook which promised "to help you in these unnatural rationed days."³⁹¹

Women received a great deal of advice to organize their kitchens and to plan their meals and shopping trips. The experts believed housewives also needed to organize their time. *Farmer's Wife*, the women's section of *The Farm Journal*, told readers to "Get your 'Plant' in Shape" by organizing, cleaning, and rearranging the work stations in the kitchen. In *Good Housekeeping's* "10 Ways to Help National Defense," a rational study and organization of every kitchen was deemed essential for the war effort.³⁹²

Every day seemed to bring more work for housewives, and time was limited in the kitchen front for grocery shopping and food preservation. As historian Karen Anderson states in *Wartime Women*, "household responsibilities were not significantly lightened by either the family or the community during the war years." Emily Nervell Blair, an associate editor of *Good Housekeeping* and self-described feminist, worked for the Women's Interests Division of the War Department and believed women with full-time jobs should be relieved of household tasks, her "feminist code." She stated as she waved her hand toward officers at the Pentagon, "You don't expect any of these men to go home and do their laundry, do you?" Yet, Emily Blair had the money, education, and status for an occupation in which she could claim her time as valuable, along with hiring two part-time maids. Most women could not. Most organized their work like Odessa Franklin, a housewife from Des Moines. When asked by the *Register* if she "lived systematically," she replied, "I try to." "I usually plan the night before what I'll do the next day. I have a

³⁹¹*Hawk-Eye Gazette* : 4 August 1942, 21; 8 July 1942, 7; 9 June 1942, 6; 16 March 1943, 6; 15 March 1943, 9; 12 March 1943, 9; 13 March 1943, 10; and 7 May 1943, 5 and 7.

³⁹²*Farm Journal*, January 1943, 44; and *Good Housekeeping*, March 1941, 42.

little boy and there's a lot of routine to taking care of him. Having special days to do the washing and ironing every week helps me accomplish all I want to do."³⁹³

The kitchen front, like the other home fronts, utilized military imagery to create and strengthen the connection between the home and fighting fronts. Alice Winn-Smith's introduction to *Thrifty Cooking for Wartime* saluted the American housewives as generals: "American housewives of today are united in one great army, for one noble purpose-- VICTORY. Just as necessary as shouldering a rifle, is the shouldering of our responsibilities in the home." The *Iowa Clubwoman* also encouraged its members in this way. "The life of a Stay-at-home can be dramatic. Even minus the martial music and the uniform one can march in step with a world that is carving a new freedom from the mistakes of the past." Sometimes homemakers were "kitchen commandos" or simply at their "battle stations." American women did feed eighteen times as many men on the production front as were fed by the Army for the fighting front. Some ads such as Sunkist or Easy Washer suggested medals for this conscientious kitchen work.³⁹⁴

The women who actually served in the military had official acronyms such as the WAACs, WAVES, or SPARS. Iowa was particularly exposed to women training for the services with the WAAC national training headquarters at Camp Dodge in Des Moines and a WAVES training center at the Iowa State Teachers' College in Cedar Falls. For the "Victory Homemakers" a number of acronyms were created, but no amount of seriousness was attached to the role. Still, war work needed acronyms. Alka Seltzer portrayed a marching mother and son, complete with a broom for a rifle and a cooking pot for a helmet, singing, "Not a WAAC, Not a WAVE,--just a WAH*--Yes, I'M JUST A

³⁹³Perry R. Duis and Scott LaFrance, *We've Got a Job to Do: Chicagoans and World War II* (Chicago: Chicago Historical Society, 1992), 18; Karen Anderson, *Wartime Women: Sex Roles, Family Relationships, and the Status of Women During World War II* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1981), 155; *American Cookery*, March 1943, 294, and *Des Moines Register*, 5 September 1945, 4.

³⁹⁴Alice B. Winn-Smith, *Thrifty Cooking for Wartime* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1942), ix; *Iowa Clubwomen*, 1942, 4; *Good Housekeeping*, January 1943, 41; *Good Housekeeping*, June 1943, 164; and *Good Housekeeping*, October 1943, 147 and 111.

WAH* (Woman At Home). Cannon Percale Sheets pictured a woman in a ruffled apron holding an iron, "Me--I'm one of the W-I-V-E-S!" Its copy stated, "You know . . . the gals who stay at home and keep things going. Doesn't sound as exciting as the WAACs or the WAVES--but it's every bit as important. It's our job to make everything *last longer*--and not to buy a single thing we don't need." Youngstown Kitchens started an advertising campaign with the WONS--Women's Own Nutrition Service--as those who supplied "the health-giving food that keeps the nation strong." Its copy continued, "Housewives are the WONS* who will still be wearing their uniform, the kitchen-apron, in peace as well as wartime." The *Ladies Home Journal* called its readers the WINS--Women in National Service--and stated that housewives were "the largest army in the nation fighting on the home front." Finally, three women from Port Arthur, Texas, formed their own organization, the MOPS (the Maternal Order of Patriots) and their children were "moppets." Their photo appeared in the *Des Moines Tribune* with the caption--"any woman whose time is devoted to home-making is eligible to membership."³⁹⁵

If this kitchen army had acronyms, it also needed uniforms. The *Journal* even designed for its WINS dirndl-style dresses and functional coveralls, keeping housework's demands in mind. Mrs. Hickenlooper, Iowa's first lady and honorary state WINS chairman, modeled this uniform, an air force blue cotton gabardine dress. The WINS had twenty million housewives involved nationally with one requirement for membership: "Any housewife who is doing a good job in spite of emergency handicaps." The role of homemaking was never portrayed as glamorous, and any efforts at uniforms were meant

³⁹⁵(WAAC, later WAC = Women's Auxiliary Army Corp; WAVES = Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service of the Navy; and SPARS = Coast Guard). Olga Gruhzt-Hoyt, *They Also Served: American Women in World War II* (New York: Birch Lane Press, 1995) chapter titles stated different women's divisions; V. R. Cardozier, *The Mobilization of United States in World War II: How the Government, Military, and Industry Prepared for War* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 1995), 100; *The Palimpsest* 28 (December 1947), 367; *Practical Home Economics*, May 1945, 261; *Good Housekeeping*, April 1943, 165 and 71; *Better Homes and Gardens*, November 1943, 61; *Ladies' Home Journal*, August 1943, 104; William O'Neill, *A Democracy at War: America's Fight at Home and Abroad in World War II* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993), 134; and *Des Moines Tribune*, 5 February 1943, 3.

to add respect to the position. The Iowa State Extension Service pictured homemade kitchen front uniforms as "attractive yet serviceable house dresses" for "all the extra walking, bending, and stretching that her duties on the home front require." A new leaflet was available for Iowa homemakers titled "House Dresses for the Job." Elizabeth Peterson, Extension clothing specialist at Iowa State College, stated on the Iowa radio show "News for Homemakers" that the standard of efficiency should apply to housedresses as it did to military uniforms.³⁹⁶

Despite the cute acronyms and not-so-cute uniforms, a sense of women's toughness and aggressiveness surfaced. As historian Margaret Higonnet, *Behind the Lines*, suggests, there was a paradox to war because violence was needed to contain violence, and women's roles were no exception as they too could be battling soldiers. As M. Joyce Baker in her work *Images of Women in Film during the Early 1940s* has analyzed, women could be compassionate and still not be considered passive or helpless. The woman who defended the traditional domain was viewed as the "housewife-mother heroine" in which *Mrs. Miniver*, a British housewife in the popular 1940 American novel and later 1942 Hollywood movie, was by far the most popular example. In fact, Mrs. Miniver encountered a German soldier in her rural backyard and captured him in her kitchen by offering a cup of tea to this tired and frightened young man. Another image, one of the stereotypical heavy-set housewife with rolling pin in hand who could take on almost anyone, was also on this spectrum of the strong housewife. Everyone believed an angry or threatened mother could be a strong warrior, and during war the fighting trait was admirable in everyone.³⁹⁷

³⁹⁶*Ladies' Home Journal*, March 1943, 106; Helen Burke, *War-Time Kitchen* (London: Hutchinson & Company, 1943), 9; *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 15 May 1943, 7; *Iowa Farm Bureau Spokesman*, 6 February 1943, 4; and "News for Homemakers," 8 December 1943.

³⁹⁷Margaret Randolph Higonnet, Jane Jensen, Sonya Michel, and Margaret Collins Weitz, editors, *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 1; M. Joyce Baker, *Images of Women in Film: The War Years, 1941-1945* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1978), 132, 133, and 43; and *Des Moines Tribune*, 29 April 1943, 19.

Historical images of women, both from the American Revolution and from the westward pioneering era, blended these seemingly contradictory images of nurturance and militarism. World War II, as historian David Fromkin has noted *In the Time of the Americans*, was unusual because Americans, who usually walked away from their past, looked back during this war. During the American Revolution, politics had entered the private sector with home production and rationing in the forms of homespun cloth and tea boycotts. Women, then as now, played an active role in the combined public and private spheres of war with added home labor and shortages.³⁹⁸

The pioneer analogy was frequently used during the Second World War as historian Maureen Honey explains in *Creating Rosie the Riveter*: "The pioneer represented a capable, supportive, and stoic partner who could keep the home going single-handed until things returned to normal." Eleanor Roosevelt, in her syndicated column carried by the *Des Moines Tribune*, praised the role of the pioneer women as a modern day example. She wrote,

I doubt very much whether any of the men could have accomplished what they did without the backing of their staunch and courageous women. These women were very capable and managed a household on a business-like basis which met the needs of their day. We have new needs and different situations to cope with today, but we would do well to study the standards and methods of these successful pioneer women.³⁹⁹

Avon, the cosmetic company, developed an extensive advertising campaign during the war years based on this historical analogy of modern women in wartime with women from the past, especially the American Revolution and the pioneering era. Their list of brave historical women was extensive: Clara Barton, Anne Burras, Martha Washington,

³⁹⁸David Fromkin, *In the Time of the Americans: FDR, Truman, Eisenhower, Marshall, MacArthur--The Generation that Changed America's Role in the World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), 381; and Ellen M. Plante, *The American Kitchen, 1700 to the Present: From Hearth to Highrise* (New York: Facts on File, 1995), 28.

³⁹⁹Maureen Honey, *Creating Rosie the Riveter: Class, Gender, and Propaganda during World War II* (Amherst, Massachusetts: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), 135; and *Des Moines Tribune*, 29 May 1942, 4.

Mary Knight, Louisa May Alcott, Lucy Brewer, Narcissa Whitman, Betsy Ross, Nancy Hanks Lincoln, Abbie Burgess, Lydia Darragh, Dolly Madison, Catherine Schuyler, and Ruth Wylly. Avon dedicated its series "To the Heroines of America," and even awarded the Avon Medallion of Honor, a blue and yellow ribbon holding a cameo of a bonnet-covered woman, to modern "women of achievement."⁴⁰⁰

What seemed ahistorical during the war was the rationing system. Rationing seemed to go against everything American--limitless opportunities and resources--yet it was portrayed as essentially American--democratic opportunity. Those with and those without much money would, in theory, be on an equal footing to compete for scarce consumer resources. Deprivation was an acknowledged condition of wartime, yet not being able to purchase, for Americans, was a "heavy blow to the psyche." Sacrifice as a war effort needed to be the key word for Americans. Still, most U. S. citizens realized their shortages never approached those in Great Britain or Russia. When Britain's Lord Woolton, Minister of Food, announced a strict rationing system in January 1940, this rationing continued well after the war until 1954. Rationing in America, however, was always viewed as a short-term solution to a wartime problem.⁴⁰¹

The concept of rationing involved two key concepts: share scarce resources and control inflation. Because the proposed concepts were accepted by most civilians, criticism was minimal and directed at administration rather than the concept of rationing.

⁴⁰⁰*Ladies' Home Journal*, August 1943, 97; *Ladies' Home Journal*, September 1943, 95; *Ladies' Home Journal*, November 1943, 125; *Ladies' Home Journal*, January 1944, 75; *Ladies' Home Journal*, May 1944, 106; *Good Housekeeping*, May 1944, 167; *Ladies' Home Journal*, August 1944, 97; *Good Housekeeping*, August 1944, 105; *Ladies' Home Journal*, September 1944, 114; *Better Homes and Gardens*, September 1944, 90; *Better Homes and Gardens*, July 1943, 60; *Better Homes and Gardens*, February 1944, 80; *Good Housekeeping*, February 1944, 166; *Better Homes and Gardens*, February 1945, 76; *Good Housekeeping*, June 1943, 105; *Good Housekeeping*, April 1944, 113; *Good Housekeeping*, June 1944, 104; *Good Housekeeping*, November 1944, 167; *Good Housekeeping*, December 1943, 154; and *Good Housekeeping*, April 1944, 139.

⁴⁰¹Baker, *Images of Women in Film*, 4; Mary Watters, *Illinois in the Second World War*, 346; Paul Fussel, *Wartime Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 198 and 195; Richard Collier, *The Road to Pearl Harbor: 1941* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1981), 2 and 3; Rayness Minns, *Bombers & Mash: The Domestic Front, 1939-1945* (London: Virago Limited, 1980), 86; and Robert Kee, *1945: The World We Fought For* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1985), 37.

Families were to sacrifice comforts and conveniences in exchange for the protection of the American family. Winning the war required sacrificing at home as directed by the government; consumerism could no longer remain simply a private choice. The following commodities were rationed for the war effort: automobiles (February 1942), sugar (May 4, 1942), fuel oil (October 12, 1942), coffee (November 21, 1942), gasoline (December 1, 1942), processed food (February 2, 1943), shoes (February 7, 1943), and meats and fats (March 29, 1943).⁴⁰²

Each American home faced the rationing of needs and wants; it was sometimes frustrating but always democratic. Since these shortages were largely part of the kitchen front, most rationing was considered "women's work." Historians Karen Anderson and Doris Weatherford, each in separate works, found that women managed a disproportionate share of the burden of coping with civilian deprivation but also deserved the credit for its success. Women most able to cope with rationing were those from small towns and farms, those with "land and supplies--and foresight--to garden and preserve their own supply." Young families faced the most discrimination, especially those with small children. As Weatherford commented, there was "a sad irony in that the people who were most badly provided for by rationing were the wives and young children of soldiers asked to lay down their lives."⁴⁰³

Rationing equaled patriotism in the new "red-white-and-blue rules of eating." As Mrs. Gerrit Samson, wife of a farmer near Pella, stated, "We might just as well get used to rationing first as last. All of us ought to co-operate and try to get along the best we can. After all, we're doing very little compared to what the soldier boys are doing." Hoarding

⁴⁰²Mary Watters, *Illinois in the Second World War*, 331; Lewis A. Erenberg and Susan E. Hirsch, *The War in American Consciousness: Society and Consciousness During World War II* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 17; and Watters, 320.

⁴⁰³Ann Starett, "Rationing is Women's Job," *Independent Woman* (May 1942), 137-138; Duis and LaFrance, "We've Got a Job to Do, 5; *Des Moines Register*, 4 May 1943, 7; *Time*, 21 June 1943, 64; Karen Anderson, *Wartime Women*, 87; and Doris Weatherford, *American Women and World War II* (New York: Facts on File, 1990), 216, 206, and 215.

was considered unpatriotic, undemocratic, and reactionary; citizens were to trust their government's planning. Mrs. John Dwight, with eight in her Des Moines family, reflected on this point. "Well, we won't enjoy it, but no one enjoys war. Food is scarce and the government is wise in enforcing rationing. It's absolutely essential. We have a farm out here, and so will have plenty of garden produce. However, the fruit situation is bad because of the 'freeze' two years ago." Mrs. Phillip Crowlie, as the Office of Price Administration's "official housewife," spoke to Iowa housewives on WHO and KSO about "sharing." She commented, "Generally I have found that the American housewife has become very well accustomed to the rationing program, understands it and appreciates its need. The feeling many had at the beginning--that they were having something taken away from them--has disappeared. Now the housewife knows that through rationing she is able to have many things she otherwise would not have--that the program is one of sharing."⁴⁰⁴

Though rationing seemed an ahistorical act, it was also presented in pioneering terms as a way for citizens to prove they could do without, just like their ancestors. This belief proclaimed that rationing would be "good for us" as American citizens who once again needed hardship and sacrifice to develop character. And, rationing was also viewed as a way to enforce a diet of self-control for middle-aged, overweight men and women. As statisticians for a large life insurance company stated, "Wartime rationing of foods may prove a blessing in disguise to American women" as overweight women were considered a national health problem.⁴⁰⁵ Not only were women to be the most responsible for the smooth flow of goods to individual homes, they were also the ones

⁴⁰⁴*Life*, 7 February 1944, 22; *Des Moines Tribune*, 15 May 1942, 17; *Des Moines Tribune*, 22 February 1943, 7; and *Des Moines Tribune*, 23 February 1944, 9.

⁴⁰⁵Lee Kennett, *For the Duration: The United States Goes to War, Pearl Harbor-1942* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1985), 183; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 21 February 1943, 1-Section 3; men's weight reduction was viewed as comic rather than serious as in the following editorial or advertising cartoons--*Des Moines Register*, 25 March 1943, 1; *Des Moines Register*, 10 April 1943, 1; *Des Moines Tribune*, 1 April 1943, 4; and *Des Moines Tribune*, 25 November 1942, 35A.

most likely targeted to internalize the guilt and to feel that they were the least deserving of any extra food.

The distribution of ration books was described by historian Mary Martha Thomas as "the biggest job ever undertaken by our government--the issuance of a food ration book for every citizen." Paul Casdorff, even in a book titled *Let the Good Times Roll*, remembered rationing in 1943 as difficult, when approximately "thirty-five million housewives trudged to thousands of schoolhouses in late February to get the books." Ration books with their limitations, registrations, and regulations did not seem quite American even during war. And civilians, even though they consciously understood the need and never wanted to be considered soft, resented limitations, especially when they had the money after a long economic depression. As historian Cabell Phillips states in his work *The 1940s*, rationing was considered the most common social irritant of the home front war as rationing equaled regimentation. However, ration books ultimately became a part of war life.⁴⁰⁶

Sugar rationing started with the first war ration book, but the second book became more comprehensive and more complicated as over two hundred foods were placed on the ration list, "from applesauce to soup." By this time most canned, frozen, and dried fruits and vegetables along with canned soups required ration book stamps and points. Women volunteered to act as "explainers" in local grocery stores, and they were to be trained in this operation, wearing arm bands for easy recognition. The books were valuable as Red Oak stored its in a vault upon arrival from the federal government. Housewives were

⁴⁰⁶Mary Martha Thomas, *Riveting and Rationing in Dixie: Alabama Women and the Second World War* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1987), 96; Paul Casdorff, *Let the Good Times Roll: Life at Home in America during World War II* (New York: Paragon House, 1989), 81; *Des Moines Tribune*, 1 January 1943, 1; and Cabell Phillips, *The 1940s: Decade of Triumph and Trouble* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1975), 87 and 104.

warned from Washington, "Don't lose your ration books! They're worth more than money for they can buy things money can't--food, gas, shoes, and eventually clothes."⁴⁰⁷

Rationing was presented in military terms as food was needed by the fighting forces and Allied countries. The first ration book's stamps were plainly numbered, but the second book had four types of greenish stamps with drawings of artillery guns, tanks, warships, and bombers. War Ration Book No. 3 also had these military symbols, but Ration Book No. 4 had such symbols as a cornucopia, ripened wheat, and torch of liberty. On the back of the books, consumers were warned never to buy without ration stamps and never to pay more than legal price. On Books 2 and 3 consumers were warned not to lose this valuable book or even throw it away, stating, "If you don't need it, DON'T BUY IT!"⁴⁰⁸

The four shortages which affected home front consumers the most, four items many Iowans dearly loved, were sugar, meat, butter, and coffee. Sugar was officially registered in May 1942 for War Ration Book Number 1--"the Sugar Book"--a simple sheet with twenty-eight stamps, folded twice into a slim booklet. One hundred and thirty million copies were printed for the nation. Half a million Iowans registered in schoolhouses on May 4th, the first of four days scheduled for national registration. Crates of ration books were guarded when delivered, and sales of sugar were usually stopped a week to ten days before official rationing began. One member of a family could register for everyone, giving name, age, and address along with height, weight, color of eyes and hair for each family member (meaning they shared a common family table). Each stamp represented a two-week allotment, ranging from a pound to a pound and a half.⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁷*Des Moines Register*, 28 December 1942, 1; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 21 February 1943, 5-Iowa News; *Winterset News*, 18 February 1943, 1; *Red Oak Express*, 21 January 1943, 1; and *Winterset News*, 22 April 1943, 4.

⁴⁰⁸*Winterset News*, 18 February 1943, 3; Montgomery County Historical Society, ration book issued to Mrs. Lena Moore; Madison County Historical Society Library, collection of Number 2, 3, and 4 ration books; and Nodaway Valley Historical Museum, Military Box, ration book issued to Lois J. Fitch.

⁴⁰⁹Lee Kennett, *For the Duration*, 137; *Red Oak Express*, 26 March 1942, 1; *Winterset Madisonian*, 29 April 1942, 1; and *Red Oak Express*, 16 April 1942, 1.

Not every applicant was issued a ration book if his or her sugar supply at home was in excess of the specified amount. For example, in Polk County, 47,466 applied but 45,101 books were issued; in Montgomery County, 13,709 applied but 12,034 were issued; and in Madison County, 14,165 registered but 13,222 were issued. In Des Moines County (site of the Iowa Ordnance Plant), 43,006 registered but 39,089 were issued; and an estimated one to three thousand people failed to register because these residents either ate most meals out or did not want to publicly state stored sugar supplies. Each booklet was issued for three months, and those who did not receive one had to wait until their sugar supply at home was used. Grocery stores placed the stamps collected from consumers on "sugar cards" to purchase additional supplies.⁴¹⁰

Sugar was valuable as both food and ammunition. The stamps on the sugar ration book were informative as to the cause: Americans were to consume less sugar because military needs were high; ships now hauled supplies to battlefronts; manpower was scarce at sugar refineries; and sugar beet production was 500,000 tons short. *Collier's* magazine explained to its readers in an article, "Your Sugar Bowl Blows Up," that sugar was now needed to produce a smokeless powder to shoot at our enemies. Consumers were reminded in another way of the military need for sugar. "If ever you catch yourself chafing over the empty sugarbowl, remember this: Every time a 16-inch gun is fired, it eats up the distilled product of a fifth of an acre of sugar cane." Sugar rationing was considered a serious wartime necessity; in fact, the nation's first convicted sugar hoarder, William Tanley of Mankato, Minnesota, received a six month prison term and a \$2,100 fine for two violations of sugar rationing regulations. Most people, however, faced

⁴¹⁰*Des Moines Tribune*, 5 May 1942, 9; *Red Oak Express*, 7 May 1942, 1; *Winterset Madisonian*, 13 May 1942, 1; *Winterset News*, 14 May 1942, 1; and *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 8 May 1942, 3.

rationing restrictions "on the level," but some "chiseling" did occur despite the proclaimed military needs.⁴¹¹

Nutritionists tried to be creative despite the serious shortage such as a "Don't Pass the Sugar, Please" article in which Dr. Louise Stanley, Chief of the Bureau of Home Economics, stated that most people could get along on less sugar and still enjoy meals that were nutritious and not bland. The average sugar consumption per person from 1936 to 1941 had been 106 pounds per year, but the present ration called for 26 pounds for May through December of 1942. Rationing consumption was set at half a pound per week for each person in the country. Consumers were reminded that the rationed amount was still much more than the less than a pound of sugar a month our ancestors had.⁴¹²

Dietitians offered sugar substitutes such as honey for baked goods or corn syrup for canned fruits. Iowa ranked second nationally in honey production so both sources of liquid sugar were locally available. Mary Rissinger, Extension nutritionist at Iowa State College, recommended honey butter (equal parts) on bread as a way to stretch both butter and sugar supplies. New tricks were offered for sweets such as sugarless recipes for homemade ice cream, pies, puddings, and cakes. Even the infamous Toll House Cookie Recipe could be made without processed sugar. The "furlough bride" was to keep her reception simple in such ways as having a small wedding cake, if any, and serving a sparkling tea punch with no sugar.⁴¹³

Despite the switches and tricks, America was a land of many sweet teeth, and it especially prized its pies. A popular 1942 song was "Ma, I Miss Your Apple Pie," and baking a good pie in the 1940s could still be a woman's claim to fame. When Mrs. C. H.

⁴¹¹Madison County Historical Library, File WWII-Korea, sugar purchase certificate; *Collier's*, 11 April 1942, 21; *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 4 February 1942, 1; *The Prairie Farmer*, 21 February 1942, 21; and *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 10 June 1942, 1 and 2.

⁴¹²*Practical Home Economics*, May 1942, 188; and *Independent Woman*, May 1942, 137.

⁴¹³*The Prairie Farmer*, 5 April 1941, 39; "News for Homemakers, 28 October 1944; *Farmer's Journal*, August 1945, 50; and *Winterset News*, 23 April 1942, 4. (Toll House cookie recipe alteration: 3/4 cup honey, 3/4 cup maple syrup, and 1/4 cup more flour.)

Taylor of Earlham won the title of "Queen of the Madison County Pie Baking Contest," she earned a front-page photograph in both county newspapers. The author of *Sweets Without Sugar* reminded cooks to be grateful for the small sugar supply that was available and to remember what a little sugar could still do. "The quicker we learn that we can get along quite well without it, the quicker will we enjoy the good things it provides--the rich dessert that finishes dinner so satisfactorily, the cakes and cookies that make afternoon tea an occasion, and the pies that keep American men in good spirit."⁴¹⁴

Even after Germany surrendered, the United States was still short on sugar. "Why?" asked Martha Duncan, radio editor of "On the Home Front" from WOI in Ames: "Because we in this country don't fill our own National Sugar Bowl. Only a fourth is grown in the U. S. The sugar situation can be summed up in two words, short and sweet, we'll have less of it, right through this year."⁴¹⁵

Meat, especially good cuts of beef, was also rationed throughout the war. Though meat was at record production, record amounts were consumed by the military. This rationing on the home front was also to be taken in stride, but some people, especially men, were thought to feel a certain desperation for meat. The meatless and meat-stretching dishes were never truly satisfying to some if accustomed to basing their meals around meat. Some citizens tried to be optimistic, comparing the meat shortage to past American circumstances. An insurance publication, *News from Home*, tried to compare present-day meat rationing to those of "the original Americans on Uncle Sam's reservations." In other words, "let no meat-scrimped American citizen of today think

⁴¹⁴Frank E. Huggett, *"Goodnight Sweetheart": Songs and Memories of the Second World War* (London: W. H. Allen, 1979), 128; *Winterset News*, 11 March 1943, 7; *Red Oak Sun*, 12 July 1945, 8; *Winterset Madisonian*, 15 April 1942, 5; *Winterset News*, 11 September 1941, 1; *Winterset Madisonian*, 10 September 1941; and Marion White, *Sweets without Sugar* (New York: M. S. Mill Company, 1942), 9.

⁴¹⁵Mary Elizabeth, *War Time Recipes* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1918), vi; and Iowa State University Archives, Martha Duncan, "On the Home Front," Script No. 275, (Saturday, April 26, 1945).

that ration tickets are a novelty in this country.”⁴¹⁶ Of course, most Americans in the early 1940s had a few meat choices unlike those of Native Americans on 19th century reservations. The analogy was not fair.

Iowans had better access to meat than many Americans due to the large number of farms, but most non-farm citizens had to make do. Still, the average amount of meat consumed was the same as that consumed in the previous ten years, two and a half pounds per person per week. With improved economic conditions, however, people wanted to increase their meat consumption as good cuts of meat, especially beef, had traditionally implied wealth and status.⁴¹⁷

"Mrs. America's" job not only included serving nourishing food but also conserving food as a wartime necessity. There were three ways to do this: make meat cuts go further, use stretched or variety meats, or serve meatless dishes. Nutritionists recommended that one way to make a cut of meat go further was to stretch it into three meals. Small town papers in Iowa ran continuous recipe columns with ideas for the war effort. For example, a beef brisket could be, as the first meal, beef with beans, the second meal as broiled toastwiches, and the third meal as stuffed green peppers. Another example was for the blade end of a pork loin to be the first meal as roast pork with dressing, the second as barbequed pork slices, and the third as pork shortcake. A four pound pot roast was a patriotic dish if served as a meal in itself, then a meat and vegetable pie, and then as a creamed meat dish. Stretching meat could also help make a "Wash Day Oven Meal" by saving both fuel and time since modern ovens, with controlled temperatures, also saved on the housewife's energy.⁴¹⁸

⁴¹⁶Sims, *Meat Production*, 11; Barbara Rae, *Cooking Without Meat: A Supplementary Kitchen Guide for War-time Cookery* (New York: M. S. Mill Company, 1943), 11; and Madison County Historical Society, *News from Home* (The Home Insurance Company), Holiday 1943 issue, 4 and 5.

⁴¹⁷*Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 1 September 1942, 1; and *Winterset News*, 4 March 1943, 4.

⁴¹⁸*Red Oak Sun*, 4 March 1943, 6; *Winterset News*, 4 March 1943, 7; and *Red Oak Sun*, 27 April 1944, 6.

Another way to conserve meat was the stretched meats such as canned Spam or Treat. Spam, the most popular nationally, is still associated with the war through jokes, yet few ads for the product appeared in Iowa newspapers. Another conserving effort was to stretch "variety meats" such as livers, kidneys, hearts, tongue, tripe, sweatbreads, and even brains. Variety meats saved on ration totals as pork variety meats had very low values ranging from one to four points per pound with beef variety cuts at slightly higher point values from three to six. The highest point values, ten to twelve, were assigned to T-bones, sirloin, and round steaks. Mid-range meats were bacon and roasts at seven to eight points. The *Iowa Farm Bureau Spokesman* reminded "Mrs. America" to again use her "ingenuity" in such dishes as fricasseed heart or liver patties. Other suggestions for the "Share the Meat" campaign were lamb pie, ox joints, spiced tongue, and veal waffle shortcake.⁴¹⁹

The most radical idea was to cook without meat altogether or to practice vegetarianism though it was seldom called that. One author disguised her views under the title *Cooking Without Meat*. She believed the American diet required re-education to place the emphasis on vegetables, beans, or eggs instead of meat as the central focus. Her views were not disguised, however, in her preface: "And when the world has finally rejected violence for the kindly state of cooperation and peace, you may wish to take some of these recipes with you into a new era of plenty which lies ahead, somewhere."⁴²⁰

Vegetarianism was never a very public or popular view in Iowa with its large production of both pork and beef.

Butter was not officially rationed but was often unavailable, and the precious butter supply was to be stretched as far as possible. Even by June 1945 butter pats were

⁴¹⁹Duis and LaFrance, *We've Got a Job to Do*, 23; Archie Satterfield, *The Home Front: An Oral History of the War Years in America: 1941-1945* (New York: Playboy Press, 1981), 177; *Winterset News*, 1 April 1943, 4; *Winterset News*, 3 June 1943, 6; and *Iowa Farm Bureau Spokesman* : 16 January 1943, 1; 9 January 1943, 7; 23 January 1943, 7 and 9; 6 March 1943, 8; 27 February 1943, 8; and 30 January 1943, 10.

⁴²⁰Rae, *Cooking Without Meat*, x.

still almost nonexistent at Des Moines restaurants, and substitutions such as apple butter, cottage cheese, marmalade, and jelly were recommended. The fat deficiency was regarded by nutritionists as not "medically serious," but fat in the diet was considered a wartime necessity for a satisfying feeling of being full. The Nutrition Committee of the *Iowa Farm Bureau Spokesman* reminded its readers that though butter as a fat was the smallest of the seven food groups, it was still considered of prime importance for vitamin A. Butter also provided "staying power" and reduced snacking between meals. *American Cookery* stated its belief in the wartime importance of butter in the diet: "Edible fats cushion the nerves. People who lack butter, or lard, or margarine, or oil, may be healthy but will be nasty." One "first aid for the butter budget" was a "magic spread": unflavored gelatine, water, good butter, and a can of irradiated evaporated milk. This new recipe would "put your sighs away in mothballs" and "make your day dreams come true."⁴²¹

Housewives in Iowa were told to be "grateful" by the Iowa Dairy Industry Commission for the amount of butter that was available to consumers. The copy in one of their many ads read, "Planning wartime meals isn't easy, but it's a lot easier than I expected. It's hard to hold back on butter, but by careful managing, using less in the kitchen, I still keep butter on the table right along . . . and how we enjoy it!" The Commission interviewed thousands of Iowa families to learn the mealtime effect of wartime conditions for its promotional efforts. The Iowa Dairy Commission believed in its home front contributions, "Food is strength, strength for our fighters, strength for our entire nation. To the women of America, capably surmounting wartime handicaps, dairy farmers pledge their continued all-out effort to maintain America's record milk-production until Victory, and beyond."⁴²²

⁴²¹Des Moines Public Library, WWII vertical file, *Des Moines Register*, 18 June 1945; Iowa State University Archives, Martha Duncan, "On The Home Front," "Stretching Fats and Oils," Transcript No. 279; *Iowa Farm Bureau Spokesman*, 18 November 1944, 1; *American Cookery*, April 1945, 16 and 17; and *Winterset News*, 13 August 1942, 2.

⁴²²*Red Oak Sun*, 3 February 1944, 6; and *Red Oak Sun*, 19 August 1943, 3.

Milk production was high, but any butter left after processing went to the armed services. Iowa's radio program, "News for Homemakers," explained to listeners that annual butter production was at sixteen pounds per person, only half a pound less than prewar years, but three and a half pounds went to the Armed Forces and Allied countries and one and a half pounds went to hotels and restaurants, leaving eleven pounds per person per year. Citizens were to have some but not much. As the Dairy Commission reminded Iowans, "Use it wisely, of course--but enjoy some at every meal--Nature's golden gift to your table--BUTTER."⁴²³

The decades-old oleo wars continued in Iowa when the pamphlet, "Putting Dairying on a War Footing," by O. H. Brownlee stated margarine was as palatable and nutritious as butter. His pamphlet also stated margarine was more sensible to produce in wartime because it required less manpower. Brownlee was essentially advocating U. S. government policy, but the Iowa Farm Bureau protested this view as "disloyal in a cow college." As a result, Iowa State College's president, Charles Friley, had the pamphlet revised by the author. *Time* magazine asked if perhaps college officials had been "cowed" by Iowa dairy farmers. In northern Iowa, the *Kossuth County Advance* thought it was simply an overreaction to "Iowa dairy hotheads," especially when a recent Iowa Poll stated 70 percent of Iowans preferred the taste of butter to margarine. No war pamphlet, however it was worded, would change that opinion.⁴²⁴

Most citizens did try to make the best of rationing though some resorted to "meatlegging" or "butterlegging." Elizabeth Clarkson Swart, a writer for the *Des Moines Tribune* during the war years, remembered thirty years later the advantages Iowa's farm economy had had for her dinner table. Iowans lived in "a land of plenty" compared to people in more industrialized states, and, as Swart wrote, "many visitors from Detroit

⁴²³"News for Homemakers," December 23, 1942; and *Winterset News*, 24 June 1943, 2.

⁴²⁴O. H. Brownlee, "Putting Dairying on a War Footing," *Wartime Farm and Food Policy*, No. 5; *Time*, 11 October 1943, 40; and *Kossuth County Advance*, 10 February 1944, 2-A.

and Denver went home with ham and butter in their luggage--and almost empty ration books."⁴²⁵

Coffee, however, had a limited availability across the country. Coffee rationing started with Stamp No. 27 in the first Sugar War Ration Book in 1942. Coffee was rationed due to the shortage of ships from Latin America to carry green coffee. A freeze was placed on the sale of coffee from November 21 to the 28th, and after midnight on November 28 through January 2, 1943, one pound of coffee could be sold per ration stamp to those over fifteen years old. After January 2nd, the rationed amount was one pound every five weeks.⁴²⁶

This fourth shortage, coffee, did not affect quite as many people as the first three, but those who were coffee drinkers dearly loved their coffee. Afternoon coffee was described by the *Register* as "an old Swedish custom in Iowa--coffee at 3:30." Everyone in the towns of Stratford and Stanhope stopped for this coffee break, which became an excuse early in 1942 to avoid "war nerves." During rationing coffee lovers were advised to make the most of what they had and not to try blends with fillers such as cereal grains, chick peas, or nuts. The second cup of coffee was considered a forgotten luxury though the Hotel Burlington offered a second cup of coffee free with a purchase of a twenty-five dollar war bond. *Business Week* advised "holding the second cup" but did suggest such coffee fillers as chicory and roasted acorns for historical reasons as both were utilized in the American Revolution and the Civil War.⁴²⁷

When the OPA announced a larger coffee ration at the end of June 1943, from one pound every six weeks to two pounds for the same length of time, leftover coffee was still considered "precious." Good cooks saved leftover coffee for such recipes as plum

⁴²⁵ Watters, *Illinois in the Second World War*, 334 and 338; and Des Moines Public Library, WWII vertical file, "The Front Row" by Elizabeth Clarkson Swart, *Des Moines Tribune*, 23 August 1974, 13.

⁴²⁶ *Des Moines Tribune*, 20 November 1942, 4; and *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 30 November 1942, 3.

⁴²⁷ *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 12 April 1942, 2-Section 9; *Winterset News*, 21 January 1943, 5; *Red Oak Express*, 28 June 1943, 1; *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 24 November 1942, 14; *Business Week*, 5 December 1942, 32; and *Business Week*, 28 November 1942, 62.

pudding and coffee bars, "if the sugar allowance permits." The Hills Brothers' coffee slogan was "'Waste' is a fighting word today." Butternut and Folgers sold coffee in what doubled as canning jars which Folgers called "double duty in the housewife's arsenal." Coffee rationing was eventually lifted seven months after it started when shipbuilding and anti-submarine efforts proved successful.⁴²⁸

Rationing required continual rethinking and retraining. It was also complicated: forty-eight points per month per person with individual point values assigned per food item. Only a few packaged foods were not rationed such as olives, mincemeat, and popcorn. Some Americans thought rationing might provide a "leveling" of American diets since upper income families could no longer consume as much meat. *Kitchen-Klatter* reminded its Iowa readers that rationing was always better than directly facing war: "When you have time to fret over the things we can't have like coffee, sugar and tires, remember the other things we don't have like bombings, invasions, starvations, etc."⁴²⁹

One arena of the kitchen front for which there was no lack of enthusiasm was the victory garden. Though people did complain about the physical labor, a great deal of pride was associated with this type of kitchen gardening, whether it was the very first gardening year or the seventy-fifth. The folk survival of this practical skill involved frugality and scarcity as well as hope for the future. Iowa's gardeners were prepared as four thousand men and women belonged to the Federated Garden Clubs of Iowa with its 1941 motto, "A Forward Looking Program for Victory Gardens." The state president of Iowa's Garden Clubs, Ada Swalwell, proclaimed at the end of 1941 that "Iowa Garden Clubs are ready and willing to be leaders in this extensive garden movement for the production of food."⁴³⁰

⁴²⁸*Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 18 June 1942, 9; *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 17 June 1942, 11; *Winterset News*, 4 February 1943, 3; *Red Oak Sun*, 21 December 1944, 6; and *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 29 July 1943, 2.

⁴²⁹*Kitchen-Klatter*, January 1943, 1; and *Time*, 8 March 1943, 18.

⁴³⁰David M. Tucker, *Kitchen Gardening in America: A History* (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1993), 175 and 177; and *Iowa Gardens*, 1941, 3.

War gardens had been officially encouraged during the Civil War and the Great War for the strength of both civilians and soldiers. At the beginning of World War II, however, the USDA reacted differently. Claude Wickard, Secretary of Agriculture, told an audience of 175 delegates at a two-day conference in Washington, D.C., shortly after Pearl Harbor, that "it's different now from 1917." The conference adopted Wickard's slogan, "Vegetables for Vitality for Victory" and called itself the National Victory Garden Program which would continue to recognize the conservation of lawns and flowers, the development of community and school gardens, and the need to grow "right things." The USDA, however, wanted to guard against the "misguided garden zeal of 1917-1918," and beginning gardeners were to be discouraged because they might waste seeds, fertilizer, chemicals, or tools needed during wartime. The goal was to have 5,760,000 farm gardens nationally, an increase of thirty percent, to meet nutritional needs and ease transportation costs but not because of food shortages which the USDA did not want to admit. City, suburban, and small town gardeners were not to be encouraged unless experienced.⁴³¹

Gardeners, though, can be difficult to discourage as people in America do control their small household plots. *Life* predicted 1,300,000 new gardeners for a total of "6 million amateurs" who would work their soil in 1942. A model vegetable garden, 20' by 40', with rows of corn, tomatoes, squash, beans, peas, beets, carrots, Swiss chard, lettuce, and radishes was recommended to provide enough food and not too much work for a backyard gardener. Iowa State College specialists distributed a column to small town newspapers titled "Better Iowa Victory Gardens" which offered technical and specific garden advice with each informative paragraph separated by a "--V--." In Council Bluffs during the summer of 1942, over 2,100 children as part of the Junior Victory Gardeners harvested 11,500 bushels of food.⁴³²

⁴³¹*The Prairie Farmer*, 21 February 1942, 5; and *Farm Journal*, February 1942, 26.

⁴³²*Life*, 30 March 1942, 81; *Winterset News*, 24 May 1942, 2; and *Iowa Gardens*, 1942, 46.

Despite the warnings from the USDA about "imprudent gardeners," at year's end ten million victory gardens were grown in cities and suburbs which produced eight million tons of food. Seed sales went up over 300 percent in 1942. Secretary Wickard commented at year's end that the amateurs had "surprised a lot of people." In Des Moines alone about 2,000 gardens were planted with a majority of them by residents who did not have gardens last year. Des Moines was not unusual. People recognized not only the physical health benefits but also the mental; gardening eased war anxiety. As garden historian David Tucker found in the World War II era, "Victory gardening came from private rather than government desire." The negativism from the USDA continued until early 1943 when even they admitted the real need for amateur growers. By 1944 the USDA joined the campaign and distributed a five-cent Victory Garden pamphlet titled "Growing Vegetables in Town and City."⁴³³

In January 1943, a State Victory Garden Conference was held to discuss Iowa's gardens. By the end of 1943, Iowans had planted more than 455,000 victory gardens, amounting to over 70,000 acres. In Polk County alone there were over 40,000 gardens. The 1943 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture* announced that Iowa had produced "more garden food than ever before in its history." Nationally, gardeners had produced 8,000,000 tons of food valued at \$500,000,000. The reasons given for victory gardening were to help the war effort, to save ration points, to save money, and to help the food situation. The three favorite vegetables grown were tomatoes (94%), lettuce (71%), and carrots (62%).⁴³⁴

A factor in the dramatic 1943 increase in gardening was to accommodate the shortages and formal rationing plans. As *The Prairie Farmer* announced, "this year, it's 'grow your own, brother, if you want to eat.' Every bit of garden stuff you raise and can this year will be a direct blow for Victory." Gardeners were especially encouraged to

⁴³³Lee Kennett, *For the Duration*, 185; *Farm Journal*, January 1943, 19; *Des Moines Register*, 8 May 1942, 7; Tucker, *Kitchen Gardening*, 134, 139, and 136; and *Independent Woman*, April 1944, 121.

⁴³⁴1943 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture*, 187; *Newsweek*, 14 February 1944, 39; and *Iowa Farm Bureau Spokesman*, 9 December 1944, 6.

grow tomatoes, considered the most important soldier of the whole victory vegetable garden as each can of tomatoes (or lima beans) required 13 points from an individual's 48 point per month ration total.⁴³⁵

For those who did not own gardening space, group victory garden plots also proved successful as well as motivational. At the Iowa Ordnance Plant, between 500 to 600 vegetable gardens were neatly arranged around Gate 2. Plant employees usually worked in their lots in the evenings after the regular shift. Iowa State College's faculty even joined the national efforts with their garden, divided into 40' by 100' lots, with more than two hundred people tending these "Friley Lots." Eleanor Wilkins, known as Martha Duncan on her "On the Home Front" radio homemaker series, planted one plot. One of the college magazines commented on the gardening activity, "Only Hitler and his cohorts fail to see the benefits accruing from the Iowa State College faculty garden program."⁴³⁶

The first week of April 1944 was designated by the federal government as "Grow more in '44," and two million gardeners joined the food production effort to bring the national total to twenty million victory gardeners. The Iowa Garden Clubs' goal for 1944 was to increase Iowa gardens by 45,000. Mrs. Gordon Elliot, state president of Iowa Garden Clubs, stated for the summer, "Plan and plant your garden wisely, waste nothing, preserve the surplus." Approximately 476,680 of the 701,000 Iowa families planted victory gardens that year. According to an Iowa Poll, one garden was planted for every five people in the state, and ninety percent of 1944 gardeners were planning 1945 plots with an average size of 8,400 square feet or .2 acres, creating a total state garden acreage of 90,987. Fifteen-year-old Margaret Yeggy won the 1944 4-H Victory Gardener award with her fifty foot by one hundred foot garden from which she canned three hundred quarts of food. She, along with seventeen other winners, claimed a \$25 war bond.

⁴³⁵*The Prairie Farmer*, 6 March 1943, 1; and *Winterset News*, 1 April 1943, 1.

⁴³⁶*Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 8 June 1943, 2; and *Iowa Agriculturist*, April 1943, 8 and 9.

Governor Robert Blue was himself a gardener and commended the "splendid work" within the state: "Gardening in Iowa offers great opportunity."⁴³⁷

Victory gardens in the nation had collectively amounted to seven million acres, an area the size of Rhode Island, and Illinois ranked first in overall victory gardening efforts. Iowa went "all out" for its gardening activities during the war years. Gardening may have been separated from government support initially, but it was not an activity separated by gender or age. As the *Iowa Homemaker* told its readers, women should not be alone in this project as it could involve the whole family. Men especially helped with the plowing, spading, planting, and harvesting while the weeding was often assigned to the children.⁴³⁸

The canning of the garden produce, however, was specifically a woman's job. This was the job that extended the garden's harvest to year-round consumption. Canning was often hot, tiring, messy, and detailed work, and carefully planned instructions needed to be followed to avoid spoilage or even food poisoning. And August was its busiest month. Occasionally, a man might be interested in the process but only from a scientific, chemical viewpoint or if "pressed into helping." The president of the Iowa Parent-Teacher Association suggested one summer that Iowa mothers could, again, use their "ingenuity" to create productive recreational activities for their children such as victory gardening and canning. She promised it would not be drudgery.⁴³⁹ For most families, however, canning the victory garden produce was solely the housewife's responsibility.

Hermetical sealing, the process of canning as preserving food in glass jars, had been invented by a Frenchman in 1809 for the Napoleonic Wars. After 1900, machines made glass jars more affordable and available for home canning use, and the high cost of

⁴³⁷*Independent Woman*, April 1944, 102; *Iowa Gardens*, 1943, 5; 1944 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture*, 344; Des Moines Public Library, WWII vertical file, *Des Moines Tribune*, 4 January 1945; "News for Homemakers," 1 December 1944; and *Iowa Gardens*, 1944, 3.

⁴³⁸William O'Neill, *A Democracy at War*, 137; Mary Watters, *Illinois in the Second World War*, 278; and *Iowa Homemaker*, May 1942, 24.

⁴³⁹*Des Moines Register*, 22 August 1944, 3; and *Iowa Parent-Teacher*, July-August 1943, 1.

sugar in the 1800s which had prohibited much fruit preserving had dropped by the 1900s. Canning was regarded as a patriotic activity during the Great War with such slogans from the Committee on Public Information as "Can the Kaiser in the Kitchen" and "We Can Can Vegetables and the Kaiser Too." The patriotism increased during the Second World War as housewives were told to "fill the shelves with jars of victory." A patriot was to be in every kitchen. The alternative was portrayed quite simply: "fruit cellars vs. bomb cellars."⁴⁴⁰

The seasonal work of canning was needed work. The Ball jar ad professed: "My heart is over there, That's why my HANDS are busy here!" The copy stated, "Millions of American women are applying their hands over here, answering Uncle Sam's call to help with our national food crisis." The canning calendar intensified from July 4th to Labor Day, and Halloween to Easter was the "pay-off" time. Summers were described as busy but productive for housewives who made a sincere effort to fill their shelves. Some instructional books were "streamlined" for wartime canning, but there was really no way to get around the hot, sticky work. The "stars" of canning were portrayed in newspapers and magazines as those who had managed to can over a thousand quarts in a summer's time. In the photos they stood peacefully next to their neatly lined shelves. That was the ultimate goal.⁴⁴¹

⁴⁴⁰*Kerr Canning Book*, introduction; Steve M. Barkin, "Fighting the Cartoon War: Information Strategies in World War II," *Journal of American Culture* 7 (Spring/Summer 1984): 113; Susan Strasser, *Never Done: A History of American Housework* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982), 22 and 23; *American Cookery*, August/September 1942, 46; *Better Homes and Gardens*, May 1943, 111; *Ladies' Home Journal*, August 1945, 64; and *Farm Journal*, May 1944, 99.

⁴⁴¹*House and Garden Wartime Manual for the Home*, 94; *Des Moines Register*, 12 July 1943, 6; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 7 November 1943, 8-Iowa; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 26 September 1943, 19-H; and *Better Homes and Gardens*, July 1944, 68. The Extension Service recommended the following goals for canned fruits and vegetables: 100 quarts of fruits and vegetables per person--30 quarts tomatoes, 20 quarts green vegetables, 10 quarts other vegetables, and 40 quarts fruit. As estimated by the *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture*, the average amount canned before the war in 1937 and 1938 was 48 quarts of fruits and vegetables per person, 68 quarts in 1940, and 61 quarts in 1941. The decrease in 1941 resulted from the storm in November 1940 which ruined so many fruit trees. By 1942, the Iowa fruit canning average alone was 58 per person, slightly over the national average of 36 quarts, and Iowa ranked among the first five states in canning sugar allotments. (Extension Service Publications, Food and Nutrition, 1911-1946, volume 12, part 1, "Canning Fruits and Vegetables," 2; 1941 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture*, 321; and *Winterset News*, 22 April 1943, 1.)

The resources needed for canning such as glass jars, rubber lids, pressure cookers, canning baths, spices, and sugar were limited during the war years. Canning sugar was restricted to fifteen pounds per person by 1943 and increased to twenty-five pounds in 1944 with application forms for special stamps required. Wartime rubber rings were produced from reclaimed rubber but were not to be reused. Strict cleanliness was required during the canning process to prevent any food spoilage, a waste of both time and materials. Demetria Taylor in *The Complete Book of Home Canning* stated that the best rule was "not to undertake too much in any one day." She added, "Many jars hastily prepared by a tired, nerve-wracked homemaker are not apt to prove a good investment. Carelessness, haste, and overwrought nerves were enemies of the home canner."⁴⁴²

Good Housekeeping, among other publications, recommended sharing canning equipment, especially pressure cookers which were in short supply, or forming community canning centers. Iowa's first community canning center was established in Iowa City, and on the first day, five Iowa City homemakers canned more than forty-eight jars of peas, beans, and beets. Mrs. George Glocker, chairman of the Iowa City food preservation committee, developed the center which was later directed by "master canners" who acted as consultants in their neighborhoods. This community canning center was declared a success by the end of the season: seventy-two people had used the center (thirty-five with no experience) and had canned thirty different kinds of fruits and vegetables (especially green beans, corn, tomatoes, peaches, apricots, beets, and vegetable soup) for a total of four thousand quarts with only fifty broken jars and no spoiled ones.⁴⁴³

⁴⁴²*Winterset News*, 20 May 1943, 1; *Winterset News*, 3 June 1943, 7; "News for Homemakers," 17 May 1944; and "News for Homemakers," 28 May 1944; *Prairie Farmer*, 31 May 1941, 13; and Demetria M. Taylor, *Complete Book of Home Canning* (New York: Greenberg, Publishers, 1943), 1 and 2.

⁴⁴³*Good Housekeeping*, June 1942, 111; *Iowa Bureau Farmer*, August 1943, 8; and "News for Homemakers," 1 October 1943.

Canning schools were initiated by Iowa State College Cooperative Extension home demonstration agents. Iowa's Cooperative Extension Service educated farm people in war food production by having 14,000 volunteer women leaders lead discussion groups to coordinate the efforts of homemakers. In Madison County, for example, one agent conducted sixteen sessions reaching 577 homemakers, and participants were then declared official "Volunteer Cooperators" for the Food for Freedom campaign and could encourage accurate canning information to other canners in the community. Films and skits were sometimes added for entertainment at these educational canning meetings. At a canning clinic in Spring Creek Township in Mahaska County in May 1944, the film, "Canning Your Victory Crop," (in technicolor) was shown. At the canning demonstration in Charles City, along with that film, the skit "Mrs. America Preserves Her Future" was performed. An Iowa County food preservation meeting presented the film "You Can, Too." As the *Iowa Homemaker* stated, "Iowa women, realizing that they must do their part if food is to win the war, have gone all out for defense with their plans for victory gardens and home canning projects."⁴⁴⁴

Home canning provided a significant part of the home front's food supply. Nationally in 1943, the USDA estimated that 4,400,000,000 jars of home-canned foods were prepared. Though canning was considered an unglamorous task, in 1943 nearly 25 million housewives had each canned an average of 165 jars of food in their own or community kitchens.⁴⁴⁵ By 1944, the national numbers dropped to three and a half

⁴⁴⁴*Winterset News*, 28 May 1942, 1; *Farm Journal*, August 1944, 42; "News for Homemakers": 6 May 1944; 10 May 1944; and 5 August 1944; and *The Iowa Homemaker*, May 1942, 24.

⁴⁴⁵In 1943, the commercial supply of canned vegetables was 13 percent smaller than the previous year. For that year Iowa State College and the State Nutrition Council estimated in the *Farm Science Reporter* that between 143 and 160 million quarts of fruits and vegetables were canned in the state. The *Iowa Homemaker*, commenting on the same survey, stated that nearly 95 percent of the 692 families interviewed had processed food in 1943. Iowa homemakers, however, threw away an estimated two million quarts of home processed food from the previous season, and Iowa State College home economists recommended the following steps to stop such spoilage: follow canning directions, use good equipment, handle small amounts of food, and only process "perfect" fruits and vegetables. (*Winterset News*, 29 July 1943, 1; *Farm Scientific Reporter*, April 1944, 8; *The Iowa Homemaker*, March 1944, 14; *Better Iowa Homes*, 3 May 1943, 1; "News for Homemakers," 16 August 1943; and "News for Homemakers," 2 May 1944.)

billion quarts of home canned fruits and vegetables although the government had depended on civilians for more home-canned food when Army requirements were increased that year. In Iowa sixty-two percent of its families had excess garden produce to can, and the average number of quarts canned was 120 per family. More than 80 million quarts of fruits and vegetables were canned by Iowa women with a market value of \$23,000,000. Nationally, home canners had canned half of all canned vegetables and two-thirds of all canned fruit consumed by civilians, and the government expected this amount to be matched in 1945. Jewell Graham, an Iowa State College Extension nutritionist, stated that home canning was "the nation's most important of wartime programs on the home front in 1945."⁴⁴⁶

Canning had been an important home front process across the nation. Robert Heide, in an essay about his childhood titled "Hometown U.S.A.," remembered that his mother regarded her "Victory canning" as serious work. As *House and Garden's Wartime Manual for the Home* stated, "home canning not only helps feed your own family but it helps relieve the shortage for other people. It's a very real form of war work." Another publication, *Home Canning for Victory*, encouraged homemakers, "Victory for your efforts; imagination as to what you are doing and its importance will give you endurance. Multiply your little pack by millions and remember you are helping to feed our fighting men and the devastated regions of the whole wide world--children who will die or grow up only half alive without 'you all.' Let's go!"⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴⁶*American Cookery*, March 1944, 30; William A. Lydgate, *What Our People Think* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1944), 69; Iowa State University Archives, Martha Duncan, "On the Home Front," "A General Talk on Home Food Preservation," Transcript No. 287; Des Moines Public Library, WWII vertical file, *Des Moines Register*, 31 December 1944; *Business Week*, 4 March 1944, 24; and Iowa State University Archives, Martha Duncan, "On the Home Front," "1945 Food Picture," Transcript No. 257. American homemakers canned three and a half billion quart jars of fruits and vegetables in 1945, preserving eight million tons of food. (*Des Moines Register*, 17 July 1946, 10.)

⁴⁴⁷Robert Heide and John Gilman, *Home Front America: Popular Culture of the World War II Era* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1995), 26; Iowa State University Archives, *House and Garden's Wartime Manual for the Home*, 91; Anne Pierce, editor, *Home Canning for Victory* (New York: M. Barrows and Company, 1942), xii.

Patriotism added to the otherwise sheer sense of pride at the end of the gardening season. Leona Driftmeir, editor of *Kitchen-Klatter*, described the season's finish: "'The 'Last of the Garden' relish has been made and jars are labeled and tucked away on the cellar shelves. I can't see how anyone can dislike the job of canning. Every time I screw a band on a fruit jar I have that satisfied feeling--money saved, points saved--food for my family when they need it." That feeling continued, years after the war, across the nation. Some American homemakers remembered this feeling years later as one wartime homemaker reflected, "To see the beautiful canned goods that's on the shelf, and say, 'Well, I grew it, and I preserved it, and now we're eating it.' It's great."⁴⁴⁸

Canning was one necessary contribution to the war effort; conserving resources was another. *Kitchen-Klatter* prompted midwestern housewives, "Have you asked yourself lately if you are doing all you can to help win this war?" The refrain heard all over the nation during the war years reminded housewives of the constant attention necessary for conservation efforts:

Make it over,
Wear it out.
Make it do,
Or do without.

In other words, "Be a Waste Warden." Conservation, though, was considered an endless task. Fifteen percent of spoilage came from not checking supplies, especially brown sugar, maple syrup, bread, whole wheat flour, cornmeal, onions, lettuce, and fats. Homemakers were the "backbone" of the conservation effort, and the movement preached what the depression had already taught--the need for substitution and economy. This attack on waste had actually started before the war with a declared "War Against Waste Day" in November 1941 for which Wilma Phillips Stewart of the *Register* offered thirty

⁴⁴⁸*Farm Journal*, August 1945, cover; *Des Moines Tribune*, 14 July 1944, 6; Demetria M. Taylor, *Complete Book of Home Canning* (New York: Greenberg Publishers, 1943), v; *Kitchen-Klatter*, October 1944, 2; and Eleanor Arnold, editor and project director, *Voices of American Homemakers* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1985), 145.

suggestions to waste less food. At least one small town paper encouraged resilience, "The patriot in the kitchen, who wants to serve her country as well as her family, may do both by caring (sic) on her own campaign against waste."⁴⁴⁹

A variation of the conserving efforts by housewives were the salvage drives. "War Hits the Kitchen," a county newspaper proclaimed, as the homemaker contributed to the many scrap collection drives. "By making her old kitchenware, utensils and appliances last, Mrs. America will be making a sturdy contribution to the war effort in vital metals such as iron, steel, copper, zinc, nickel and aluminum."⁴⁵⁰ Scrap contributions were yet another area of the kitchen front, starting with aluminum.

Aluminum cookware had first been introduced in the 1890s but was costly compared to graniteware. By 1910, prices were lower. Aluminum was a nice cooking medium as well as attractive, so the contributions to the initial aluminum drives during WWII were a sacrifice. *American Cookery* recognized that fact, "Patriot that you are, you've given your metal utensils to the scrap drive." Alcoa Aluminum also recognized the contribution: "It all started in your kitchen. Women have a right to feel pretty proud about their part in the importance of aluminum in this war, because women were the first people in all the world to really appreciate its good qualities." The Iowa Legionaires conducted an aluminum drive sponsored by the Office of Civilian Defense as early as July 1941 with cooperation from all ninety-nine counties. The collection was stored at twelve Iowa cities, then sent to the smelters.⁴⁵¹

⁴⁴⁹*Kitchen-Klatter*, October 1943, 8; Campbell, *Women's War with America*, 181; *Kitchen-Klatter*, August 1943, 11; *Winterset News*, 6 August 1942, 8; *Des Moines Register*, 8 February 1942, 1; *Des Moines Tribune*, 13 June 1942, 5; Duis and LaFrance, *We've Got a Job to Do*, 48; *Des Moines Register*, 12 November 1941, 10; and *Winterset News*, 30 April 1942, 6.

⁴⁵⁰*Winterset News*, 14 May 1942, 2.

⁴⁵¹Plante, *The American Kitchen*, 178; *American Cookery*, January 1943, 222; *Ladies' Home Journal*, September 1942, 60; *Iowa Legionaire*, 1 August 1941, 3; and Stan Cohen, *V for Victory: America's Home Front During World War II* (Missoula, Montana: Pictorial Histories Publishing Company, 1991), 125.

Tin, the second drive, was called the neglected stepchild of the metal family in the scrap drives because its sources were not as attractive as aluminum or dramatic as iron. Its main source was also the American kitchen, and everyone was encouraged to be "tin-can-minded." Leslie Merrell, deputy chief of the tin unit from the War Production Board, arrived in Des Moines to explain the new drive for Iowa's five major cities--Des Moines, Sioux City, Davenport, Waterloo, and Cedar Rapids. Merrell called Iowa's housewives the "kitchen commandos on the home front" as he outlined the steps needed to save tin cans--1) wash cans, 2) open tops and bottoms, 3) flatten (Figuratively, you were trodding on Hitler and the "Japs" as you stepped on the cans), and 4) save prepared cans. The process could be condensed to the phrase "Save 'Em--Wash 'Em--Clean 'Em--Squash 'Em."⁴⁵²

Iowans were educated as to what their efforts in the tin drive could mean. The "detining" process had improved since the last war with one and a half percent of pure tin per can in the reclamation process so 100 pounds of tin cans equaled 98 1/2 pounds No. 2 steel and 1 1/2 pounds tin. An estimated average of 36 cans each month from every family of four in Des Moines would reclaim 55 tons a month--enough for four 27-ton armored tanks a month from Des Moines' tin cans. With 625,000 families in Iowa, each turning in 16 cans every two weeks, this collected amount would equal 10,000,000 cans every fourteen days, and 9,000 tin cans equaled enough tin for a light army tank. Therefore, Iowa families could have supplied enough tin for more than 1,000 such tanks every two weeks. In a more minute but vital example, Iowa clubwomen were told that two tin cans made one syrette, an "Angel of Mercy," a term applied to individual morphine hyperdermic syringes.⁴⁵³

⁴⁵²*Des Moines Tribune*, 6 August 1942, 1 and 5; *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 12 October 1942, 2; *Des Moines Tribune*, 7 August 1942, 1; and *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 10 May 1943, 2.

⁴⁵³*Red Oak Sun*, 7 January 1943, 7; and *Iowa Clubwoman*, November-December 1944, 7.

"Win with Tin" and "Tie a Can to the Axis" were the new slogans. In just one collection, the Burlington Boy Scouts collected nineteen tons of tin cans on a Saturday as they made seven trips in the rain. Unfortunately, some of the collected tin in the state went to brewers and bottlers when they bid the price up on collected community scrap to three times as much as the War Production Board. As Drew Pearson editorialized in the *Des Moines Register*, "local salvage committees, which have accomplished a tough, patriotic job, are beginning to get sore. And the tragedy is that the next time a call comes to collect and save a vital war material, it may not be so easy."⁴⁵⁴

Though cans had counted, Red Oak was not alone in experiencing relief when the scrap drives were over. One of its town papers commented at war's end, "The city hall has been cluttered up all through the war with boxes, sacks, and loose tin cans. It is now clean, and city workers wish to keep it that way for awhile. In fact, if anyone forgets and brings in any more tin cans, they will be respectfully asked to take them away, for the city has no place to send them now." The commentary continued, "Hereafter, the garbage man will have more work, and most householders heave a sigh of relief that the days of patriotic necessity are over."⁴⁵⁵

Kitchen fats, though a seemingly insignificant waste material, were a vital resource for war which came directly from America's kitchen front and were needed to manufacture everything from soap to explosives. The United States normally imported 2.5 billion pounds of fats, half from areas now under Japanese control, plus the Allies now required an additional 1.5 billion pounds. The estimated waste in American kitchens was set at two billion pounds of which experts predicted a fourth could be recovered. Officials hopes to gain the rest of the fat supply from soybeans, cottonseed, and peanuts.⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵⁴*Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 17 May 1943, 2; and *Des Moines Register*, 7 August 1942, 8.

⁴⁵⁵*Red Oak Express*, 22 October 1945, 1.

⁴⁵⁶David Hinshaw, *The Homefront* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1943), 41.

Eleanor Roosevelt declared that "a call has gone out from the government to every housewife in this nation" to collect fat. The government needed to receive a minimum of 200,000,000 pounds annually. The Army salvaged 60,000,000 pounds, and the Navy contributed 11,400,000. But, as the First Lady continued in her column "My Day," the federal government received only 90,000,000 pounds from household fat salvage collections. Mrs. Roosevelt's message then became urgent:

A recent consumer study made by the Office of War Information reveals the astounding fact that 9 out of 10 women know that the country has a fat salvage program, but only 6 out of 10 are saving their kitchen fat. Only 3 out of 10 have turned over any of these fats to be made into glycerin. I have heard many a woman ask how she could do her bit when her days were filled to overflowing with housework and the care of the family. Here is one very important way, and don't let's forget it.⁴⁵⁷

Over and over, housewives were reminded to save at least one tablespoon of fat a day for the war effort. Government advertisements told women that fats were needed, desperately, for thousands of essential products from munitions to medicines. Just one spoonful of fat could do almost everything: make bullets, sulfa salve, or even synthetic rubber for jeep tires. Chester Bowles, OPA administrator, stated, "If all the 31,000,000 American housewives living in private dwellings saved even one tablespoon of used fat every day, this would add up to 353 million pounds in a year." In "The Home Front," an Iowa column, readers were told a pound of waste kitchen fats contained enough glycerine to make one and a third pounds of gunpowder. The column almost demanded participation: "That's why we want every Iowa housewife to save every spoonful of grease, strain it into a wide-mouthed can, keep it in the refrigerator, and sell it to her meat market when she has collected a pound or more."⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵⁷*Des Moines Tribune*, 24 April 1943, 4.

⁴⁵⁸*Des Moines Tribune*, 11 May 1943, 2; *Des Moines Tribune*, 17 January 1944, 3; *Des Moines Tribune*, 19 February 1945, 2; *Red Oak Express*, 19 June 1944, 6; *Red Oak Express*, 3 March 1944, 5; *Red Oak Express*, 7 February 1944, 4; *Red Oak Sun*, 3 May 1945, 6; and *Red Oak Sun*, 21 January 1943, 4.

The steps were relatively easy. Housewives should save bits of fat from cuts of meat and melt this fat down; scrape the roaster, fryer, and broiling pan; skim soups, stews, and gravies; or even save the water from boiled hotdogs, chilling and scooping off the fat left in the cooking water. Fat could even be saved from fried fish or onions. Other tricks were using smaller amounts of fat in milk gravy, saving deep fat frying grease, and chilling chicken soup before serving while scooping off the hardened grease. All of this salvaged fat should be kept in a tin can for the butcher and redeemed for two free red points and two cents for every pound. The collected grease then went to a rendering plant where the grease was boiled for several hours, filtered, then mixed with lye, to create its end products of soap and glycerine.⁴⁵⁹

Information concerning fat salvaging ranged from the technical to the glitzy. The technical displayed the listed chemical formulas when fats were converted to glycerine. The glitzy pictured glamorous stars eagerly working at this unglamorous task. For example, Helen Hayes poured fat from her skillet while two sailors smiled approvingly, "Bullets for Berlin--TNT for Tokio." Guy Lombardo smiled lovingly at "the sizzling sound of the used cooking fat his wife pours into the salvage container--Sweet music!" Kate Smith practically sang the words, "The help of every woman is needed in saving used fats for hundreds of battle field and homefront essentials. If you save every bit of fat you possibly can, you're doing a job to be proud of."⁴⁶⁰

Home economists provided the most reliable information and motivation concerning fat salvaging. A Madison County home extension agent added to the promotion: "It's not only big sacrifices but little savings and denials that, all added together, help in a united nation's effort in wartime." She concluded, "If every homemaker cooperates in this fat and oil saving campaign, she will be directly

⁴⁵⁹*Des Moines Tribune*, 29 May 1944, 2; *Des Moines Tribune*, 5 April 1944, 7; *Red Oak Sun*, 23 August 1945, 3; and *Hawk-Eye Gazette*, 2 July 1942, 5.

⁴⁶⁰*Winterset News*, 6 August 1942, 3; *Red Oak Sun*, 5 April 1945, 3; *Red Oak Express*, 26 March 1945, 3; and *Red Oak Sun*, 29 March 1944, 2.

contributing to America's part in the war." Marie Budolfson, an Iowa Extension home management specialist, stated in 1945 that women were beginning to "heed not" with fat salvage. She suggested simply abandoning the patriotic note and calling it the sensible thing to do, to save fats instead of making soap at home.⁴⁶¹

Fat salvage collections dropped when the need grew even greater to win the war against the Japanese. The United States needed to recover over 250,000,000 pounds of used fats in 1945, or 80,000,000 to 100,000,000 more pounds than in 1944. Each housewife's collection may have seemed small, but the government advertisements continually pointed out the cumulative contribution of millions of pounds by millions of homemakers who were all enlisted in the campaign.⁴⁶²

Though the kitchen felt the war more than any other part of the American home, traditional family roles and duties did not change to meet the old needs of the kitchen let alone the new war demands. Men resisted most work within the home, seeing it solely as a woman's realm. Excuses were numerous: women were better at the work, or women could better survive the boring, tedious work. For example a series ran in *Business Week* for *McCall's* magazine which illustrated a booklet for business or advertising executives titled "This woman needs help!" The ad did not imply that she needed help in running the house, but that she needed help in recognizing her natural role as a homemaker. In each illustration, a dismayed man returned from his employment to find a neglected house and an absent wife. The recommendation in the *Business Week* ads was not to remove this burden of imposed work from women by sharing it within the family but rather for industry or education to improve women's performance and efficiency. Cartoons repeatedly acknowledged masculine fears of being coerced or even forced into housework

⁴⁶¹ *Winterset News*, 23 April 1942, 6; and ISU Archives, Martha Duncan's "On the Home Front," #235, "Fat Salvage."

⁴⁶² *Des Moines Register*, 6 November 1944, 7; *Red Oak Sun*, 2 August 1945, 7; *Red Oak Sun*, 21 June 1945, 3; *Red Oak Sun*, 17 May 1945, 6; and *Red Oak Sun*, 26 April 1945, 6.

(complete with frilly apron) along with the more subtle idea that house work was too trivial even to discuss.⁴⁶³ Housework was appeared in the comics, never editorials.

If married women considered jobs in industry, they were reminded that their first job was in the home. Although the War Manpower Commission found that the strongest barrier to recruiting women for industrial war jobs was the husband's reluctance to give up his "cook and bottle-washer," no national propaganda was ever developed to encourage men to take over their fair share of house and child work to enable the overall war effort. Historian Annette Chambers Noble found that women were never excused from home duties: "National and local propaganda throughout the war, even when luring women into the workplace, reminded women that their household and family responsibilities could not be neglected." *Good Housekeeping* offered such an example in an article titled "Join up. . . but Don't let your family down." The journalist reminded women of their double duties: "Nobody expects you to be on the sidelines these days, when so many defense jobs are begging to be done. So get in there and pitch! But don't forget that a big part of the job of winning the war is keeping the nation's morale and health at grade-A levels. Reorganize your 'family front' so that it will run smoothly despite time out for defense activities." The article completed the message that a married woman's first responsibility was cooking for the family with a photo of a husband and two children waiting at a set table with no food as the children cried, "Goodness, Dinner is late" and "I'm hungry, where's Mom?"⁴⁶⁴

⁴⁶³*American Cookery*, October 1942, 108; *Business Week*, 11 April 1942, 37; *Business Week*, 12 December 1942, 56 and 57. Unlike *Business Week*, the United States Army proclaimed in their home front handbooks that they were producing "husband material," men with new domestic skills. However, these were men absent from the home front. ("The Soldier and His Housekeeping," 6.) The idea that housework was too "trivial" to even discuss much less write about was recognized in Pat Mainardi's classic essay, "The Politics of Housework." [in Ellen Malos, editor, *The Politics of Housework* (London: Allison & Busby Limited, 1980), 99-104.]

⁴⁶⁴Susan B. Anthony II, *Out of the Kitchen--Into the War: Women's Winning Role in the Nation's Drama* (New York: Stephen Daye, Inc., 1943), 206; Annette Chambers Noble, "Utah's Rosies: Women in the Utah War Industries during World War II," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 59 (Spring 1991): 130; and *Good Housekeeping*, June 1942, 107.

The war years were stressful for homemakers who not only tried to cook, create, economize, and salvage but who also tried to, somehow, remain cheerful, motivated, and efficient. The kitchen front, as homemakers were often reminded, was the front every other war worker depended on. As Wilma Phillips Stewart advised her Iowa readers in "Resolutions for Homemakers of '44," "Let us smile as we do prepare those three meals a day, and make cooking a pleasure and not something that has to be done." In "The Mother's Round Table," a column written by mothers for mothers in *Kitchen Klatter*, one essay, "Live Calmly" by Mrs. Eli Espe of Radcliffe, offered a kitchen solution for wartime stress and depression. "There may be times when you feel in order to retain your sanity you must do one of two things--either smash dishes or scream!" Since most could not afford the first and worried about the neighbors with the second, the author advised that one could "always compromise by taking one's spite out on the tinware in the kitchen and the glorious hullabaloo that can be raised with that should be enough to relieve even the nerve tension of the Axis Powers these days!" The Madison County home extension agent reminded homemakers of their constant duties, "It's a busy future the farm homemaker faces but her contributions are essential for victory. The feeling of accomplishment that she will have at the end of a long day and the knowledge that she's aiding in the war effort will make her work worthwhile."⁴⁶⁵

The dream of a designed post-war kitchen was the motivation for all the war work through war bond savings. "Homemakers have had lots of time to think about what they want in postwar kitchen equipment," the editors of *American Cookery* stated. In Susan Plante's study, *The American Kitchen*, she states that by the 1930s the kitchen had become "the darling" of the middle-class home with considerable thought invested in its form and function. By the 1940s, kitchens were designed in "L" or "U" shapes with standardized built-ins, transforming this area from a work room into the "kitchens of

⁴⁶⁵*Des Moines Register*, 1 January 1944, 5; *Kitchen-Klatter*, October 1942, 11; and *Winterset News*, 10 September 1942, 1.

today." Kitchens were becoming a measure of success--the "kitchen as place of honor." Three ideal qualities for kitchen designs and appliances led the list: quality with little service required, convenience, and economy of effort. As *American Cookery* commented, "For many women their accelerated duties in war time have made awkward and inconvenient kitchens a bad headache." Kitchen planning meetings were sponsored by Extension across the state in Webster, Cedar, and Story counties among others, and these programs continued into 1946.⁴⁶⁶

Economy of effort within the kitchen would be the major change for the post-war decades. The United States never considered community kitchens an option as Great Britain had; the American focus remained on the privacy of family homes. The post-war emphasis for new kitchens focused on freedom. What many American homemakers wanted out of the post-war years was to be able to finally leave the kitchen and focus on other areas of the home and family. If extensive planning could make kitchen work much more efficient, perhaps this reallocation of work and energy in the home could finally be accomplished. Many homemakers had finally saved the money to purchase planned kitchen cupboards and appliances, and as writer Gertrude Dieken promised homemakers, "Today's work hours are leisure hours tomorrow."⁴⁶⁷

New kitchen appliances were the most dramatic and seductive of post-war promises of less time to be spent on kitchen work. Along with garbage disposals and dishwashers, the appliance that promised the most freedom was a new range. The company American Kitchens promised "Less Work for Housewives in American

⁴⁶⁶*Farm Journal*, May 1944, 77; Plante, *The American Kitchen*, 240, 260, and 292; *American Cookery*, February 1944, 27; *Good Housekeeping*, April 1943, 149; *Better Homes and Gardens*, June 1944, 51; *Saturday Evening Post*, 6 May 1944, 94; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 11 March 1945, 8-X; *Winterset News*, 8 July 1943, 6; and "News for Homemakers," 8 November 1945.

⁴⁶⁷*Farm Journal*, July 1943, 49; and *Successful Farmer*, April 1943, 75.

Kitchens." And the American Gas Association joined in, "More fun, more freedom for every woman who cooks!"⁴⁶⁸

The other promise in post-war dreaming involved remodeling for efficiency and step-saving. A small town paper noted the postwar plans, "With an eye to postwar remodeling, the average Mrs. Homemaker casts the other eye upon her kitchen as the first room for improvements." Large country kitchens were no longer fashionable. To "streamline" and lessen "stepping" (the amount of walking while preparing meals), Hotpoint Electric Kitchens had numerous models for kitchens planned around three work centers--cooking, dishwashing, and food storage. This planning for better organization and efficiency would shorten the time needed for cooking meals and washing dishes thus somewhat removing women from the kitchen in the post-war years. War homemakers, writers, and advertisers never expressed the idea that women wanted to return to the kitchen for the post-war years but rather that modern postwar kitchens would lessen the amount of time involved for family meal preparation.⁴⁶⁹

The boys in the armed services also dreamed about kitchens, but their kitchens stayed essentially the same with the memories of food and comfort that home represented. It was this--the homeward gaze--to the American woman, whom historian John Blum has described as one who "embodied the virtues of American civilization and the personal obligation to defend them." From G.I. surveys, it was not Rosie the Riveter that soldiers and sailors dreamed of but rather a woman like Mrs. Miniver, Hollywood's idealized middle-class housewife. What veterans wanted in a wife, according to the pollsters, was "a young, only slightly updated version of Mom" whose specialty was

⁴⁶⁸*Successful Farmer*, March 1944, 85; *Successful Farmer*, December 1943, 69; *Better Homes and Gardens*, April 1944, 3; *Better Homes and Gardens*, February 1944, 3; *Saturday Evening Post*, 27 May 1944, 75; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 11 March 1945, 6-Section 9; and *Life*, 11 June 1945, 105.

⁴⁶⁹*Red Oak Sun*, 11 January 1945, 7; *Farm Scientific Reporter*, April 1945, 11; *Life*, 19 February 1945, 15; and *Life*, 11 June 1945, 15.

homemaking. As war correspondent Ernie Pyle found in his discussions with numerous soldiers, the one profound goal of all GIs was home.⁴⁷⁰

And it was "blueberry pie" which became that material symbol of home. Kodak Photography was one such company to develop the theme: "Home . . . a maple-bordered street . . . a girl's laughter . . . Mom in her kitchen, baking a blueberry pie--snapshots can bring it all back." Nestle's advertised the importance of home-baked food to all soldier and sailor sons with its slogan, "Send C-Mail to the Wounded Over Here!" C-Mail was Cheer Mail: cookies, cakes, chocolate. Pie, a favorite dessert which could not be sent through the mail, was among other foods longed for by home-starved young men. George Sullivan, of the famed Sullivan brothers, wrote to his mother at one point in the war: "The chow is nothing like home though. Your five wandering boys would sure like to tie into one of your pot roasts." Don Thomas of Winterset wrote several postcards from a Philippine prison camp to his mother. Although these postcards had a fifty word limit, he mentioned his longed-for foods: "I think of you all and those pancakes," and "Think of your pancakes, Mother."⁴⁷¹

An Iowa woman felt a certain desperation for her son to be safely home when she wrote anonymously to the *Farmer's Wife* about his captivity by the Japanese.

We have not had direct word from our son since March, 1942, when he was on Bataan, but I have his prison address and write to him at least once each week. What do I write about? . . . Do I write about food? Hardly, when I know he probably doesn't get enough to eat. I'll certainly not remind him of the good things

⁴⁷⁰John M. Blum, *V was for Victory: Politics and American Culture During World War II* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), 301; *Better Homes and Gardens*, June 1943, 11; Maureen Honey, *Creating Rosie the Riveter*, 87; Lewis A. Erenberg and Susan E. Hirsch, *The War in American Consciousness: Society and Consciousness During World War II* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 155; Frank W. Fox, *Madison Avenue Goes to War: The Strongest Military Career of American Advertising, 1941-1945*, Charles E. Merrill Monograph Series in the Humanities and Social Sciences, Brigham Young University, June 1975, Volume 4, Number 1, 78; Michael C. C. Adams, *The Best War Ever: America and World War II* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1994), 70; *Saturday Evening Post*, 13 January 1945, 65; and Ernie Pyle, *Here is Your War* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1943), 15 and 298.

⁴⁷¹Fox, *Madison Avenue Goes to War*, 75; *Good Housekeeping*, May 1945, 129; *American Cookery*, October 1944, 13; and Madison County Historical Library, "The Wrigley Peace Pact of August 17, 1945," 3.

we still have back home. Neither do I dwell upon deaths, accidents or sickness. I write as often as I can, for I know that some of these letters will go to the bottom of the sea. I only hope that precious Christmas box gets through!

She signed her letter simply--*Iowa Mother*.⁴⁷²

The actual reunions often centered on the emotional importance of the kitchen, sometimes the first room a returning soldier went to when he was finally home.

Hospitality and love were found at last in a chaotic world finished with war, for now. In the Driftmier's book about their southwestern Iowa family, Lucile described her brother's initial homecoming. She wrote, "I heard later that he ate mince pie and drank a gallon of milk when he finally reached home--he told Mother that those were the two things he'd thought about the most while he was in the Pacific."⁴⁷³

Finally, home.

⁴⁷²*Farm Journal and Farmer's Wife*. Eric Larrabee makes the point in *Commander in Chief* that the shortage of food from the earliest days in Bataan demanded almost as much attention as the advancing Japanese (319).

⁴⁷³Lucile Driftmier Verness, *The Story of an American Family* (Shenandoah, Iowa: Kitchen-Klatter, 1950), 70.

CHAPTER 6. THE CIVILIAN AS SOLDIER: "THE GOOD WAR"?

"It's still a story without an ending. What about now?
--Humphrey Bogart in *Casablanca*, 1941

"War hurts everybody."
--John Wayne in *Back to Bataan*, 1945

On January 20, 1945, President Franklin Roosevelt delivered his fourth inaugural speech on a cold and overcast winter day in Washington, D.C. Roosevelt's speech was only one of three inaugural addresses delivered in America during a war, and his would be the shortest ever. To some Americans, it seemed almost a prayer: "We have learned lessons at a painful cost, and we shall profit by them. We have learned that we cannot live alone, at peace; that our well-being is dependent on the well-being of other nations, far away. We have learned to be citizens of the world." A few hours later the president departed for the Yalta Conference. In one of the sad ironies of World War II, Roosevelt never lived to see an end to this terrible conflict, but in a draft for an April 11th speech, he called for an end to all wars: "The work, my friends, is peace."⁴⁷⁴

Franklin Delano Roosevelt suffered a massive stroke on April 12, 1945. America's greatest soldier of the war was dead. A ten-year-old Iowa boy with the same birthday as President Roosevelt constructed a scrapbook of newspaper clippings after the president's death. Roosevelt had served as president for this young boy's entire life. The newspaper photos with their ragged edges were carefully arranged and pasted, telling the story of a grieving nation in the following days. One photo captured some of Iowa's grief: "Sober faced women pause before *The Register* and *Tribune* bulletin board Thursday afternoon to read the news of the president's death, which shocked a nation already

⁴⁷⁴James MacGregor Burns, *Roosevelt: The Soldier of Freedom* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1970), 597.

burdened by war." One woman blankly stared at the bulletin; the other dabbed her eyes with a handkerchief; and the third clutched her little boy's hand.⁴⁷⁵

Bessie Caudle, a middle-aged woman from Winterset, recorded her thoughts the day Roosevelt died: "At 5 P.M. the News came over Radio Roosevelt's death in Warm Springs Georgia at 4:35. Such a shock." The following day she wrote, "I just listened at radio All day." She listened the third day to his funeral, and her words, "very sad," seemed to capture the immediate sentiment of so many Americans. President Roosevelt had defined American citizens' involvement in World War II since he stated in a radio address two days after Pearl Harbor that all citizens should "cheerfully give up" for the war effort as he called on every single citizen's commitment. He continued, "I am sure that the people in every part of the nation are prepared in their individual living to win this war."⁴⁷⁶

Three patterns emerge which explain the remembrance of World War II as the "Good War": the constant and strong emotions associated with the war years, the sense of urgency and purpose associated with the democratic version of war, and the sheer distance and thus romanticism associated with most Americans' roles for the war effort. As Archie Satterfield writes in the introduction to his history *The Home Front, World War II* was almost like a popular short story: "a dramatic beginning, a middle fraught with conflict, and a happy ending." It was never a war, Satterfield surmises, "fogged by gray areas of morality." Journalist Studs Terkel, who purposefully gave his oral history the ironic title "The Good War," later wrote that most people were profoundly affected by World War II yet never understood it: "The obscenity of war itself had never really

⁴⁷⁵Author's personal collection. Scrapbook purchased at the William F. and Blanche Easter Estate auction, Winterset, Iowa, January 11, 1997. Their mutual birthdays were January 30.

⁴⁷⁶Annie Laurie Mohair and Doris Benardete, editors, *American Expressions on the War and Peace* (New York: American Book Company, 1943), 10.

been visited upon us."⁴⁷⁷ Perhaps Geoffrey Perret's title *Days of Sadness, Years of Triumph* most accurately depicts the continuing nostalgia of the war years as the personal days of grief have faded in memory while the political triumphs have remained.

Historians have disagreed on the following point: Did this nostalgic view of World War II help Americans heal their war wounds or did it fatally predispose this country to future wars? The personal and political fears were present throughout the war years: the deep fear of social change after a decade-long depression, the racial and cultural fears of Eastern civilizations and European governments, the fears concerning the condition and survival of American democracy, and the constant fear of death--whether abstract or extremely personal. Fears had heightened the intensity of the war years for everybody at home--children, youth, adults, elderly. For Iowans the war was all around and yet not around as war conditions were never immediate, only imagined. This too had an emotional toll. Afterward, in the confusing immediate post-war period, many public officials and private citizens did not want to admit those fears and vulnerabilities. We had won the war, and the war memories immediately turned to nostalgia. It seemed to be a way to heal. The war seemed just; the war effort, united and prosperous.⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁷⁷ Archie Satterfield, *The Home Front: An Oral History of the War Years in America: 1941-1945* (New York: Playboy Press, 1981), 3; and Mark Jonathan Harris, Franklin D. Mitchell, and Steven J. Schechter, *The Home Front: America During World War II* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1984), 12.

⁴⁷⁸ Richard Polenber, "The Good War? A Reappraisal of How World War II Affected American Society," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 100 (July 1992): 295, 296, and 297. For other insights, see Paul Fussel's *Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War* (59, 142, and 268); Donald Albrecht's *World War II and the American Dream* (250); Warren Kimball's *Forged in War* (9) and *The Juggler: Franklin Roosevelt as Wartime Statesman* (13); Norman Longmate's *The Home Front* (xiii); Robert Key's *1945: The World We Fought For* (xxvii); Marc Miller's *The Irony of Victory* (43); Lewis Erenberg and Susan Hirsch's *The War in American Culture: Society and Consciousness During World War II* (105); Earl Beck's *The European Home Fronts* (133); J. Robert Moskin's *Mr. Truman's War* (128); Eric Larrabee's *Commander in Chief: Franklin Delano Roosevelt, His Lieutenants, and Their War* (625 and 627); William O'Neill's *A Democracy at War* (241); Martin Gilbert's *The Second World War* (744); Allan Winkler's *Home Front USA* (2 and 47); Paul Casdorff's *Let the Good Times Roll* (257); David Fromkin's *In the Time of the Americans: The Generation that Changed America's Role in the World* (313); Frank Fox's *Madison Avenue Goes to War* (3); Gerald Linderman's *The World Within War: America's Combat Experience in World War II* (302); Neil Wynn's "The United States" in Jeremy Noakes' *The Civilian in War* (89); and Clayton James and Anne Sharp Wells' *From Pearl Harbor to V-J Day: The American Armed Forces in World War II* (201).

But World War II was the most devastating total war ever; it was never "the Good War." Iowans as Americans were proud of their soldierly efforts on the farm, production, community, and kitchen fronts. The United States government desperately needed this wartime participation, production, and conservation to win the war on its battlefronts. The government's desperate military needs transformed the war into an all-out effort. Each citizen felt needed as a soldier; this war became the people's war. Because of this almost direct participation, the war seemed good. It had to because everyone had battled and sacrificed.

Combat veterans, however, deeply remembered the actual war. Lives were changed forever for soldiers such as Luellen Hastie, 20, who had a shattered right leg; Martin Hintz, 29, who lost both legs; Everett Hagerdorn, 30, left paralyzed; Wally Martin, 25, wounded in both legs and arms; Walter Dunlop, 26, who lost both legs; and Maynard Hugen, 32, who had a smashed ankle. All six veterans certainly remembered Pearl Harbor on its anniversary in 1946. Maynard Hugen's statement was described as typical: "Yes, I remember December 7, 1941. We were eating Sunday dinner at home and listening to a radio program called the Sunday afternoon serenade." Their futures had changed from that moment on.⁴⁷⁹

Soldiers and soldierly citizens in Iowa had contributed to this war, and many Iowans had sacrificed their lives. A total of 7,213 Iowa servicemen died in this war, twice the number killed in the first World War. (A later estimate placed the number of deaths at 8,398 of the 286,000 men who had served. Ten percent of Iowa's prewar population served in the military.) Melvin Laskowski, 19, of Sheffield was the first Iowan killed on duty at Pearl Harbor. In the first four months of war, 98 Iowa men had died, one thirtieth of the men killed in the war so far. By the end of World War II, approximately three soldiers gave their lives for every 1,000 Iowa citizens. Nine Iowa servicemen were

⁴⁷⁹*Des Moines Sunday Register*, 8 December 1946, 1-Section 4 and 3-L.

ultimately awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. Yet accidents on the home fronts had taken a larger number than on the battle fronts: from December 7, 1941, to October 31, 1945, the number of Iowans who lost their lives in accidents totaled 8,639. Farming accidents accounted for half of these deaths.⁴⁸⁰

The old Hawkeye Delicious apple tree, which was thought to have been killed in the Armistice Blizzard of 1940, came back to life with a renewed sprout in 1946 on Raymond Tracy's farm. This renewed growth perhaps symbolized all of Iowa's agriculture, springing back to life during the war years after the near-killing storm of the Depression. In 1946 Iowa celebrated its 100th anniversary of statehood, and agriculture, according to the 1946 *Year Book of Agriculture*, "climaxed the century of development by adding to the world's supply a record tonnage of essential food products." The total production of feed grains, hay, and forage in 1946 amounted to nearly 30 million tons which exceeded the previous production record in 1942 by one million tons. Corn acres in 1946 totaled 11.3 million acres, slightly more than 1945 and 1.5 million over the pre-war average, and the crop was above the average for the last ten years at approximately 3,500,000,000 bushels.⁴⁸¹

The oat crop was also above average, and soybeans were now considered the third most important field crop in Iowa. Soybean production dramatically increased during the war by replacing the loss of traditional vegetable oil supplies. Production in 1945 amounted to 43 million bushels which was triple the 1940 production. Processing plants also increased capacity from an 8 million bushel capacity in 1940 to 32 million in 1946.

⁴⁸⁰*Des Moines Register*, 2 January 1946, 3; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 23 June 1946, G-9; *Iowa Legionaire*, 19 December 1941, 5; *Iowa Legionaire*, 15 May 1942, 8; State Historical Society, World War II Clippings File #2, list of statistics; "War, Conflict, or Campaign," *The Palimpsest* 53 (April 1972): 185-224; Ankeny Public Library, WWII vertical file, *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 25 May 1997; and *Farm Bureau Spokesman*, 16 November 1946, 1.

⁴⁸¹*Des Moines Tribune*, 14 June 1946, 5; 1946 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture*, 9; *Des Moines Register*, 10 October 1946, 3; *Wallaces' Farmer*, 5 January 1946, 1 and 33; J. Brownlee Davidson, "Influence of Farm Machinery," *The Palimpsest* 31 (March 1950): 114; and *Iowa Farm Science*, August 1946, 14.

Hemp as the other new war crop peaked in 1943 but never regained any early wartime market.⁴⁸²

The high wartime production of row crops such as corn and soybeans damaged the quality and quantity of Iowa's topsoil. Officials such as Extension director R. K. Bliss stated that Iowa farmers needed to take a more aggressive and farsighted stance regarding soil conservation since the war was now over. M. L. Wilson, director of the federal Extension Service, spoke at Iowa State College's 46th Annual Farm and Home Week in February 1946. He stated that "the soil must be rebuilt along with the bodies of Europe's starving millions to insure peace." *Wallaces' Farmer* also expressed concerns to its readers, "If you had most of your farm in corn the last few years, were you a patriot or a soil-miner?" In an editorial for this Iowa farm journal, Henry A. Wallace asked what Iowa would be like in 2046 if we continued to grow so much corn. He stated that corn had provided our wealth, but it was also "a robber when grown on hilly land." Wallace, though a significant developer and marketer of hybrid corn, now wanted Iowa farmers to grow more clover and less corn: "If we grow eleven or more million acres of corn annually, we shall have an impoverished state." One hundred percent of Iowa's corn acreage was planted with hybrid seed corn by war's end, increasing the general yield level at least 25 percent but also increasing the soil's depletion with added mechanization.⁴⁸³

Henry A. Wallace and other agricultural experts certainly had reason to be concerned about the war production's effect on Iowa's valuable topsoil. For example, the Maquoketa River had carried 264,000 tons of topsoil in a single day on June 26, 1944. Researchers at *Iowa Farm Science* studied 105 farms in Pocahontas County, a level area in north central Iowa with substantial amount of cash grain farming. Sixty-eight percent

⁴⁸²*Iowa Farm Science*, September 1946, 3 and 8. Egg production also increased as the national 1946 production was 40 percent higher than in 1940. In Iowa it was 55 percent higher in 1946 than 1940 with an average of 700 dozen eggs per farm.

⁴⁸³*Farm Bureau Spokesman*, 22 June 1944, 10; *Des Moines Tribune*, 12 February 1946, 6; *Wallaces' Farmer*, 16 March 1946, 13; *Wallaces' Farmer*, 20 July 1946, 6; and 1945 *Iowa Year Book of Agriculture*, 11.

of the 1946 corn acreage had been in corn, oats, or soybeans for five years or longer. Only ten percent of this land was first-year corn following hay or pasture rotation; therefore nitrogen had not been added to ninety percent of the soil by previous rotations. In the entire state, the acres of intertilled crops (cultivated rows of corn and soybeans) had increased by 2.5 million acres during the war while the acres of small grains had decreased 1.2 million acres. One million acres of hay or pasture rotation acreage had also decreased along with the plowing up of 260,000 acres of permanent pasture. Two problems besides the demanding war production effort affected these decisions to reduce soil conservation efforts: 1) farmers needed money from cash crops to meet increasing debts, and 2) many farmers rented rather than owned land. Clyde Spry, secretary of Iowa's Soil Conservation Commission, stated Iowa was worse off from a conservation standpoint in 1946 than in 1940.⁴⁸⁴

Soil conservation was a local concern while Europe's starvation conditions seemed a distant concern. Because Iowa's farms were so removed from Europe's devastation, most Iowans had difficulty imagining the hunger there. Britain had even less available food after the war than during those stressed years, and most of Western Europe lived on a third of what Americans were eating. *Wallaces' Farmer* polled rural Iowans in January 1946 with the following question: "What do Iowa farm people think should be done?" Twenty-two percent thought food should be given to Western Europe, 41 percent said to ship food but have governments pay half, and 23 percent said not to send any food at all. The comments ranged from "country's should not expect free rides" to "we need to help those hungry people." As one farm wife from Linn County replied, "By all means, let's help the hungry people of Europe. We do not know what hunger is here in Iowa."⁴⁸⁵

A month later, when President Truman called for public action such as limiting food consumption by civilians to provide more food to Europe, a greater number of

⁴⁸⁴*Iowa Farm Science*, October 1946, 8 and 9; and *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 3 March 1946, 24-H.

⁴⁸⁵*Wallaces' Farmer*, 19 January 1946, 1 and 28.

citizens responded sympathetically. When the National Gallup poll asked, "Would you eat less meat and use less flour in order to send more food to the people of Europe?" approximately 67 percent said yes. According to an Iowa Poll, 82 percent of Iowans thought Truman did the right thing, and 89 percent favored a thirty percent cut to brewers to provide the grain needed for Truman's plan.⁴⁸⁶

The quality of life started to improve in Iowa's farmhouses after the war. For example, farmers installed 51,687 telephones from VJ Day (August 15) to October 1946. Many farm families were finally in a financial position to be able to remodel or rebuild, and many farm houses needed such immediate work as plumbing for new bathrooms and kitchens or repaired foundations. In 1940, 80 percent of Iowa's farmhouses had had outside toilets and 65 percent had no refrigeration. Next to debts, farm tenancy was cited as one of the biggest barriers to improving housing. By 1946 the home improvement needs were apparent: sixty-three percent of Iowa farm homes needed major plumbing repairs compared to 44 percent in towns and 14 percent in cities. Only 27 percent of Iowa's farmhouses had central heating while 42 percent of town and 72 percent of city homes had such heating. After the war, many farmers no longer viewed modernizing their farmhouses as an unaffordable luxury.⁴⁸⁷

Technology and mechanization had increased on the farmstead rather than in the farmhouse throughout the war years. Farm fields were now proudly called factories, and little debate existed over the consequences of farm mechanization as most farmers believed mechanization simply removed drudgery and increased efficiency. The number of tractors on Iowa farms increased during the war from 117,932 in 1940 to 177,431 tractors by January 1946. This amounted to 1 tractor for every 1.2 farms. In 1945 alone, tractors had increased by 7,459. By 1946 other forms of farm mechanization also increased with added numbers of corn pickers, grain combines, and hay balers. North

⁴⁸⁶*Des Moines Sunday Register*, 10 March 1946, 8-X and 9-X.

⁴⁸⁷*Des Moines Sunday Register*, 27 October 1946, 4-X; and *Iowa Farm Science*, October 1946, 10-11.

central Iowa had the most highly mechanized farms with 1.1 tractors per farm and 1 corn picker for every 163 acres, while south central Iowa remained the least mechanized with 1 tractor for every 341 farm acres. Forty percent of the state's farmers, according to an Iowa Poll, felt they were "handicapped" by not being able to buy sufficient farm equipment, and tractors topped the list for necessary mechanical purchases.⁴⁸⁸

Agricultural prices in 1946, though not as good as mid-war years, were tapering, not crashing. Still, Iowa's farmers were uneasy about their futures as many remembered the last world war's postwar collapse of agriculture, those "perils of prosperity." Farm acreage averaged \$88 an acre in 1941 but was up over 50 percent to \$140 an acre by the end of World War II. Many farmers were afraid of another land boom then bust such as the 1920 land boom price of \$255 to \$265 an acre. When asked about land prices, 70 percent of Iowa's farm people wanted to keep land prices down. Many farm owners were conscious of land boom risks, and some showed concern for beginning farmers who were often unable to purchase land. "Keep prices down, so war vets can start farming. It is difficult for them right now," said one Ida County farmer. A Monroe County farmer added, "The returning service men are being asked to pay too high a price for land."⁴⁸⁹

Farmers, sensing security in numbers, joined the Farm Bureau in almost record numbers. In 1946, the Farm Bureau claimed 106,022 Iowa members, the highest number since its original record in 1920 with 109,543. The number of Iowa's farms, however, decreased after the war but increased in size, a trend that has continued through the decades. The average size of all farms in the state was 169 acres in 1945 while the average

⁴⁸⁸*Winterset Madisonian*, 28 August 1946, 4; *The Palimpsest* 31 (March 1950): 116; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 30 June 1946, 10-X; and *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 7 July 1946, 21-H. In 1946 Iowa farms had 7,409 corn pickers (1 for every 228 acres), 24,122 grain combines (3,204 more in just one year), and 3,929 hay balers (714 added in just one year).

⁴⁸⁹William E. Leuchtenburg, *The Perils of Prosperity, 1914-1932* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), 9; *Wallaces' Farmer*, 19 October 1946, 8; *The Palimpsest* 48 (October 1967): 481 and 486; and Theodore W. Scultz, *Agriculture in an Unstable Economy* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1945), 1. Total farm income did continue to increase: \$1,518,153,000 in 1944 to \$2,356,759,000 in 1954. (*The Palimpsest* 36 (July 1955): 285.)

size in 1941 had been 164.4 acres. The total number of all farms had decreased from 213,318 in 1940 to 205,399 by January 1946. Tenancy had also declined to 42.2 percent by 1945 from 56.5 percent in 1940. By 1950, Iowa farms had increased ten acres each and the total had decreased by 10,000 from the previous decade. By 1966 Iowa had 149,277 farms with an average acreage of 224. The chief restrictions on farm ownership were the shortage of land available at reasonable cost and the increasing investment needed for machinery and improved livestock.⁴⁹⁰

World War II had squelched much of the debate concerning the future of family farms because the need for production was so great. The following war years had transformed the general commercial farms with their small business emphasis on diversified products and reliance on family labor to an agricultural enterprise with an emphasis on select cash crops and a desire for mechanical power.

In 1940 sufficient war production for the United States to fight a global and total war seemed impossible. Many Americans refused to believe industries could meet much less surpass such goals as the President's 50,000 airplanes a year. Iowa's industrial production by the end of 1945 was certainly higher than in 1940; in fact, Iowa's 1946 industrial output was even greater than during the war. The future appeared to be bright, especially for such cities as Cedar Rapids. Some companies such as Collins Radio and Iowa Steel & Iron Works were producing at record rates. Companies across the nation, however, were warned not to be overly optimistic after the war. As *American Business* stated, the destruction of seven billion dollars of the world's wealth had to inevitably result in "a morning after."⁴⁹¹

⁴⁹⁰*Des Moines Tribune*, 19 November 1946, 1; William G. Murray, "Iowa Land Values, 1803-1967--War, Technology, Farm Values," *The Palimpsest* 48 (October 1967): 484; and Earl D. Ross, "Farm Tenancy in Iowa," *The Annals of Iowa* 31 (July 1951): 39-40. The census definition of farm was 3+ acres used for agricultural purposes.

⁴⁹¹*Business Week*, 5 May 1945, 21; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 4 August 1946, 7-L; and *American Business*, September 1945, 56.

Iowa's business leaders hoped to be part of this post-war increased industrial output. Rodney Selby, director of the Iowa Development Commission, wanted to carry on a theme of increasing industrial production for Iowa's new centennial: "We not only want to tell Iowans and people out of the state what Iowa has done--we want to show them what Iowa can do." Part of the Commission's effort included publishing a new promotional book, *Iowa--Land of Industrial Opportunity*, to attract new industry to the state along with encouraging Iowa's youth to find employment within the state.⁴⁹²

New industrial developments in Iowa happened quite quickly after the war with 100 new industries established in the 18 months after VE Day. A significant number of these new developments were relocations or branch plants of corporations of which the largest was the Rolling Mill established in Davenport as part of the Aluminum Company of America. This new plant cost \$30 million and would employ 2,000 to 3,000 workers. The second largest was Deere and Company established in Dubuque which would employ 1,000 workers. Other newly established plants in the state included a variety of industries: corn, popcorn, fertilizer, and soybean processing as well as the production of such items as ball point pens and fishing tackle.⁴⁹³

Many companies after the war faced the challenge of reconversion although Iowa's industries would not face the complicated reconversion of Detroit's auto industry. For some companies, this merely involved changing the destination of products from the army or navy back to the businesses of Main Street. The New Monarch Machine and Stamping Company, for example, converted to peace production within a day. The reconversion of labor was another concern with 200,000 service men and women returning to Iowa. Agriculture would be employing fewer men which added to industrial demands.

⁴⁹²*Iowa Business*, October 1946, 8 and 9.

⁴⁹³*Des Moines Sunday Register*, 13 October 1946, 4-X.

Still, Iowa's labor record immediately following the war was one of relative stability as Iowa ranked 45th among the 48 states in number of days lost due to strike.⁴⁹⁴

Few industrial positions remained for women by mid-July 1945, and women were told to consider maid service again. By August 1, a thousand women were unemployed in Des Moines while 1,131 job openings were available for men but with no excess men available. Some employers had decided arbitrarily, before the war had officially ended, to replace their women with men even when men were not a present, viable option. Yet women had been valuable workers throughout the war, and according to an Iowa Poll immediately after the war, 84 percent of Iowans said women should receive the same pay as men. The Poll stated the following conclusion: "Iowans are generally agreed that 'Rosie the Riveter' should have equality with men at the pay window." Sadly, however, "Rosie" never found such equality. Employment options for women can perhaps be summarized by a Northwestern Bell Telephone ad: "Girls! Looking for a Good Job?" Employment was again segregated though wages had increased somewhat. Gone were the victory shifts and the ads for hundreds of available defense positions at the local ordnance plants.⁴⁹⁵

After two and a half years of "all-out war work," Maytag began to manufacture washers again. The Maytag plant would be one Iowa business to not only reestablish itself but to have even greater post-war success than before. Maytag resumed with the Model E in 1945 and advertised its washing machine models as "worth waiting for" with such improvements as gyrafoam action, sediment zone, and square one-piece tubs. Every Maytag dealer in the nation was supposed to have the new machines by October 1945 despite initial problems of material bottlenecks, labor shortages, and uncertain OPA

⁴⁹⁴*Des Moines Sunday Register*, 23 September 1945, 6-L; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 19 August 1945, 6-L; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 12 August 1945, 1-Section 4; and *Iowa Business*, October 1946, 10.

⁴⁹⁵*Des Moines Tribune*, 18 July 1945, 1; *Des Moines Register*, 1 August 1945, 1; *Red Oak Sun*, 29 November 1945, 3; and *Winterset Madisonian*, 4 September 1946, 4. Labor union members also answered similarly with 84 percent saying yes—women employees deserved equal pay.

regulations. By 1949 the company had introduced automatic models and during the 1950s offered such products as dishwashers. Quality as measured by superior performance and reliability remained as company goals for all Maytag products. "Old Lonely," the bored Maytag repairman who never had any machines to repair, later became a 25 year advertising campaign. By 1967, Maytag was Iowa's eighth leading company with 3,405 employees.⁴⁹⁶

The ordnance plant at Ankeny would have a much different post-war story due to its surplus property status. In January 1946, the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) purchased the \$53 million dollar facility. At a farewell dinner, Brigadier General James Kirk, chief of the small arms division of the Ordnance Department, praised the plant's record as "one of the country's most outstanding from the standpoint of efficiency, economy, and safety." The John Deere Company purchased a large portion of the facility (the buildings and 528 acres) in late 1946 for \$415 million dollars and started production of corn pickers and cultivators in February 1948. In a sense, the land turned away from war's destructive production and returned, not entirely to the clover and corn fields of 1940, but to farm implement production.⁴⁹⁷

The Iowa Ordnance Plant outside of Burlington initially started to produce nitrate fertilizer after the war, but it would return to the production of war weapons, even larger and more destructive bombs than during World War II. In a 1951 article by George Mills for the *Des Moines Sunday Register*, he described Burlington as having "a serious post-

⁴⁹⁶*Winterset Madisonian*, 14 November 1945, 12; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 27 January 1946, 4-L; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 23 September 1945, 6-L; Robert and John Hoover, *An American Quality Legend: How Maytag Saved Our Moms, Vexed the Competition, and Presaged America's Quality Revolution* (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1993), 1; and L. O. Cheever, "Industries of Iowa: Comments on Eleven Years," *The Palimpsest* 48 (March 1967): 96. Almost 1,300 more workers were needed to fill the washing machine demands, and recruiters were trying to encourage unemployed men drawing compensation to work for Maytag.

⁴⁹⁷Des Moines Public Library, DMOP vertical file, *Des Moines Tribune*, 15 January 1946 and 17 December 1945; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 13 January 1946, L-5; Des Moines Public Library, DMOP vertical file, advertisement for *U.S. News*, 10 January 1947; Ankeny Public Library, WWII vertical file, list of DMOP statistics; and *Ankeny: First 100 Years*, 89.

war headache" when the shell loading production stopped and over a million dollars in unemployment checks were issued. The Atomic Energy Commission, established in 1946 to oversee the use of atomic energy, selected the Iowa Ordnance Plant in 1947 as the first of two plants in the nation to produce atomic weapons. The explosive components to be manufactured at IOP were designed after the original implosion bomb nicknamed "Fat Man" which had been dropped on Nagasaki. However, acknowledgment of this new bomb production was not public until 1951. The Atomic Energy Commission enlarged the plant, increased the number of employees, but continued strict security measures in the remodeled and renamed facility, now the Iowa Army Ammunition Plant. Local residents gossiped about the mysterious "Division B," commenting that it was "harder to find out anything about the plant now than it was during the war." This plant later manufactured 175 millimeter shells for the Vietnam war.⁴⁹⁸

The small lab at Iowa State College which produced highly purified uranium also transformed after the war to a center for the Atomic Energy Commission but conducted atomic research rather than production. In other words, the former "backyard laboratory" was transformed to a physical facility of four buildings worth \$6 million dollars and a payroll listing 550 people which included many scientists and highly trained technicians. Much of the old wartime secrecy disappeared, but the facility was still a heavily guarded operation. Major General Leslie Groves, who headed the atomic bomb's development project since 1943, spoke at the Iowa Bankers Association in September 1946 and paid "high tribute" to the Iowa State College scientists. He told the convention members, "The solution of the first and basic difficulty--that of obtaining a hitherto unheard of degree of purity in uranium--was substantially arrived at here in Iowa."⁴⁹⁹

⁴⁹⁸*The Iowan*, January 1953, 8; Iowa State Historical Society Library, Burlington vertical file, *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 4 November 1951; Ann Lemert, *First You Take a Pick and Shovel--The Story of the Mason Companies* (Lexington, Kentucky: The John Bradford Press, 1979), 160-167; and Burlington Public Library, IAAP vertical file, *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 9 June 1968.

⁴⁹⁹*Des Moines Tribune*, 11 September 1946, 11; and Ned Disque, "The Atom at Ames," *The Iowan* (September 1956): 12.

The fact of atomic devastation never left Iowa's citizens or the rest of the world. This new concept now isolated no one from the absolute devastation of war. Historian Michael Adams concludes in his book *The Best War Ever* that Americans had had a "cheerful, naive pride" in their war production, and advertisements had encouraged "warm feelings, even affection, for terrible weapons." Adams states that Americans had to take responsibility in the postwar era for what their military machine did to its civilian targets. Historian Richard Polenberg also concludes that the legacy of WWII was not confidence but uncertainty. In August 1946 the *Des Moines Sunday Register* published four photographs titled "Hiroshima--One Year Later" in which the paper stated, "Today, as science continues experimenting with atomic bombs, Hiroshima still sprawls a flat and battered monument to this new fury man has put to work." The photo titles captured the personal aspects of this destruction: "Main Street of Hiroshima," "A Flattened Block," "The Forlorn City," and "This Child will Remember." In an Iowa Poll that summer, 62 percent of Iowans supported world atomic control, wanting civilian or scientific rather than military controls.⁵⁰⁰

Iowa's companies had certainly been successful in wartime efforts for the production front, producing such varied items as mule packs, airplane parts, machine gun bullets, bombs, and highly purified uranium. Its industrial output, however, remained decentralized throughout the state and heavily concentrated in sub-contracts. In the post-war era Iowa would not enjoy the continued government contracts that benefited other regions.

Iowa celebrated its centennial of statehood in 1946, marking a new era for the state's citizens. Another celebration that year, the State Fair, had not been held during the

⁵⁰⁰Michael C. C. Adams, *The Best War Ever: America and World War II* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1994), 73-74; Richard Polenberg, *War and Society*, 244; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 11 August 1946, 5-Section 9; and *Des Moines Tribune*, 17 June 1946, 1.

war years because of gasoline rationing and the focus on the war work. The State Fair celebrated Iowa's sense of community, and that August it advertised such attractions as horse races and rodeos, championship auto races, America's biggest livestock show, and forty acres of displayed farm equipment. Now, with the end of war and the start of a new century of statehood, Iowa wanted to celebrate its people and its strengths. Plus, as George Mills wrote in 1946, Iowans had more "folding money" in both their pockets and their savings accounts than ever before. Iowans truly wanted to move beyond the wartime shortages, restrictions, and sacrifices.⁵⁰¹

Iowa community members had made significant financial contributions to the war effort. War bonds for World War II created impressive records as sales were four times greater than World War I. Total war bond sales in Iowa for World War II totaled \$2,408,456,163 by January 1, 1946, of which Iowans purchased \$1,924,445,847 in drives and \$484,010,316 between campaigns. The amounts contributed were well over Iowa's official quota of \$1,177,000,000. "The people of each county in the state can well be proud of the sale performance," stated R. F. Warin, director of the Iowa savings bond drives. Most citizens considered bonds a good investment based on return, and Iowans were encouraged to continue buying bonds after the war. Bond sales for April 1946, for example, totaled \$16,907,000 with Winneshiek County purchasing the most during the first half of 1946. Sixty regional and county chairmen attended the Iowa Alumni Association of War Bond Workers meeting in Des Moines on October 2, 1946. Vernon Clark, now national director of the United States Savings Bond Division, congratulated the members with the fact that more E bonds were being sold in Iowa after the war than were being cashed.⁵⁰²

⁵⁰¹*Winterset Madisonian*, 21 August 1946, 4; and *Des Moines Register*, 1 April 1946, 1.

⁵⁰²World War I bond amounts totaled \$500,532,500 with a quota set at \$462,715,510.

Des Moines Tribune, 13 March 1946, 6; *Des Moines Tribune*, 22 May 1946, 6; *Des Moines Tribune*, 7 August 1946, 10; *Des Moines Tribune*, 18 September 1946, 12; *Des Moines Tribune*, 16 October 1946, 12; and *Des Moines Register*, 3 October 1946, 5.

The war had had a lasting impact on the young war workers, those energetic and imaginative scrap scavengers and war stamp collectors. When interviewed in the 1980s, Jerry Wade from Jefferson stated that he considered himself part of a generation based on his wartime childhood experiences though this was a fact not often discussed. He commented, "I do not know what the war did to others of my generation." Some children long remembered a sadness and a helplessness such as Mary Maloney when she was a grade school student in Davenport. One day she saw a woman sitting on the front porch of a house with a gold star hanging in the window. Mary remembered how she felt that day: "I stopped and looked at her. I wanted to say I was sorry . . . I stood there for what seemed a long time and finally gave a little wave."⁵⁰³

One gold star mother whose sadness was magnified by five was Alleta Sullivan. After the deaths of their five sons, she and her husband toured defense plants to encourage war production. They even received a letter from President Roosevelt who praised the couple's efforts. He wrote, "Your unselfishness and courage serves (sic) as a real inspiration to me as I am sure it will for all Americans. Such faith and fortitude in the face of tragedy convinces me of the indomitable spirit and will of our people." Unfortunately, not everyone viewed the Sullivans' war work in the same light. Writer John Satterfield concludes his research on the Sullivan brothers with the comment that a number of people from Waterloo resented the Sullivans' fame and believed Alleta had sought the publicity. Satterfield considers the response: "Local hostility dampened the acceptance and support they sought and needed in later years. For the rest of their lives, Tom and Alleta were less than completely welcome in Waterloo." Obviously not all of Waterloo's residents felt this way as the town dedicated an eight-acre park in 1967 as the Sullivan Memorial Park.⁵⁰⁴

⁵⁰³William M. Tuttle, Jr., *"Daddy's Gone to War": The Second World War in the Lives of America's Children* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 245 and 45.

⁵⁰⁴John R. Satterfield, *We Band of Brothers: The Sullivans and World War II* (Parkersburg, Iowa: Mid-Prairie Books, 1995), 184 and 185; and *The Iowan*, Spring Issue 1967, 8.

For other Iowa families, the end of the war brought long-awaited reunions such as the Cooper brothers from Des Moines when four of the five brothers were able to make it home for Christmas. The following month, when all five were finally gathered, the brothers posed in uniform for a *Des Moines Tribune* photographer. Their mother, however, was "too busy" to pose with her sons: "doing dishes, gathering uniforms and civilian clothes to be sent to the cleaners, and doing a hundred other household tasks." "Pop" would not pose unless "Ma" did. The newspaper depicted a happy and busy Iowa family, together again.⁵⁰⁵

Other veterans also tried to maintain a cheerful outlook on life though their futures had perhaps changed forever. One such man was Sergeant Ralph Neppel, a farmer's son from Glidden, who had won the Medal of Honor but lost both legs in combat against the Nazis. Neppel and his fiancée Jean planned to marry after he worked two or three years as a rural route carrier, saving and planning for their married life. He felt optimistic and even cheerful about their future. Letters from Jean "back home" had kept him going throughout the war: "She said and wrote things that made me feel better. That is, most of the time." Another optimistic veteran was Herbert Ehm, owner of the Ben Franklin Store in Winterset. He ran an advertisement in the local newspaper complete with uniformed picture of himself in which he declared, "My Own Personal Victory Day Arrives this Week when I Resume Active Management."⁵⁰⁶

The G. I. Bill was a significant part of many veterans' optimism for the future. As historian Alan Cline concludes in his state history of Michigan, "Never before in American history had state or nation done so much to secure the future well-being of a particular group of citizens." In Iowa 130,000 veterans were utilizing benefits in 1946 such as \$30 million dollars in guaranteed loans from the government's readjustment act. As early as that 1946 summer 58,106 Iowa veterans were attending high schools or

⁵⁰⁵*Des Moines Tribune*, 7 January 1946, 9.

⁵⁰⁶*Des Moines Tribune*, 30 October 1945, 9; and *Winterset Madisonian*, 26 June 1946, 10.

colleges. In addition to GI benefits such as college tuition, business loans, or home mortgages, Iowans also favored bonuses such as the WWI veterans received. Eighty-one percent of the state's residents, according to an Iowa Poll, were "unmistakenably" in favor of a bonus for World War II veterans. Of those who answered yes, most were even willing to support this bonus with higher taxes. Those who answered no, however, stated that "more has been done for the veteran of this war and therefore he doesn't need it."⁵⁰⁷

Most citizens were determined not to forget the war sacrifices made by the soldiers and sailors. The *Iowa Conservationist* recommended that citizens "plan memorials that live" such as lakes, forests, or even public shooting grounds. The author Louis Bromfield commented in the *Conservationist* article that traditional statues and plaques were "dead, inanimate objects" which did little to help communities remember those veterans, while active and life-affirming memorials were a better tribute to those service men's sacrifices. Three representatives in the Iowa Legislature proposed a Memorial Building which would serve both as tribute and archives for future generations. An editorial in *The Annals of Iowa* supported that particular proposal: "It would relieve the heart strain upon mothers and wives and children who would find comfort in a shrine dedicated to the sacrifices of their dear ones; not a shaft of cold stone or a bronze symbol of victory, but something that will serve to link together all parts of the story of war and peace." No memorial building, however, was ever built. The Iowa World War II Memorial was erected fifty years after the war and dedicated to both veterans and civilians. It is titled "The Freedom Flame" so present-day Iowans can remember that freedom was "purchased at a price."⁵⁰⁸

⁵⁰⁷Alan Clive, *State of War: Michigan in World War II* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1979), 217; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 1 September 1946, 1-Section 9; *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 23 June 1946, 4-L; and *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 20 January 1946, L-5.

⁵⁰⁸*Iowa Conservationist*, 15 July 1945, 1; Editorial Department, "War Memorial and Archives Building," *The Annals of Iowa* 26 (April 1945): 308-309; and Iowa World War II Monument Memorial Pledge Handout which is available at the Memorial in Des Moines.

In 1993 Lois Bryson of southwestern Iowa still had her telegram that announced her husband Fred as missing in action. She remembered not only her pain but the community's. She commented, "We all hung together. Everybody had somebody who left. Like rural areas today, a lot of people befriended you and helped you out." Red Oak's post-war recovery, like other communities, was not easy or quick as a home town journalist commented decades later: "The 1940s had told Red Oak something. Shouted it into its face, actually. War is never kind, but sometimes it can be down right cruel. And World War II was cruel to Red Oak. So when the Korean War flared up in the early 1950s, the town wasn't all that easy to convince Korea was the place to be."⁵⁰⁹

Alan Spitzer, a World War II veteran from Iowa, wrote in 1995 that people should honor "all of those truncated lives, those lives that were never lived." He also remembered that returning veterans were not expected to speak about any of the consequences of the war. Wounds were expected to heal, Spitzer wrote, and veterans were "supposed to get on with life." In 1998 Jim Johnson still recalled the veterans, many wounded or prisoners of war, who returned to Red Oak: "They came back and went on with their lives. They never talked about what happened to them. It was something they did as young men and they paid a terrible price."⁵¹⁰ The cost of World War II for many communities has been an extended silence about war's true sacrifices.

The prescriptive advice for married women after the war centered on restoring the family, especially for the returning soldier. The country desperately wanted some sense of "normalcy" or status quo after a decade of depression and half a decade of world war. "Rosie the Riveter" was never the new woman but a historical model of the American Revolution or the pioneer woman. After the crisis, she returned to her family's needs, and

⁵⁰⁹Montgomery County Historical Society, World War II miscellaneous papers; and Red Oak Public Library, World War II vertical file.

⁵¹⁰Alan B. Spitzer, "A Historian's Memory of the Second World War," *The Palimpsest* 76 (Winter 1995): 170; and *Des Moines Register*, 14 October 1998, 1M.

guilt was also added to this historic role after World War II. "Civilians could never compensate veterans for their sacrifice," writes historian Susan Hartman. The result for the demobilization period and the following post-war years would be a public stress on femininity and "secure" families. Women were not to compete, especially with returning veterans, for any employment opportunities.⁵¹¹

The early 1940s had celebrated and honored traditional women's work within the home, and the industrial production front had not challenged basic beliefs about women's employment or domestic roles. "Rosie" never completely left the kitchen as someone had to cook the meals. Instead, the kitchen front had infused traditional domestic roles with a strong sense of patriotism and duty, strong enough to carry into the next decade.

Attitudes toward women's domestic roles are difficult to quantify. Weddings can perhaps be one marker, and a large number did occur in Iowa as in the rest of the nation during 1945. In Iowa 21,264 weddings took place that year, far above the "boom" in 1940 of 5,826. The average age of brides by the end of the war was 19 with grooms approximately 22 years old. Although marriages were increasing at an ever younger age, the 1945 divorce rate was at an all-time high in Iowa as in the rest of the nation. Iowa's courts witnessed 7,606 divorces that year with 72 percent of these divorces granted to the wives.⁵¹²

Attitudes toward domestic work are also difficult to quantify. One shift did occur during the war: few women wanted employment as maids. When several Des Moines women were asked if they would return to domestic work for wages, only one of the six even considered that an option and only if wages were higher. As Darlene Rosenberry

⁵¹¹*Independent Woman*, October 1945, 279; *Farmers' Journal*, December 1945, 73; Susan Hartman, "Prescriptions for Penelope: Literature on Women's Obligations to Returning World War II Veterans," *Women's Studies* 5 (1978): 226, 224, and 229; Amy Kesselman, *Fleeting Opportunities: Women Shipyard Workers in Portland and Vancouver During World War II and Reconversion* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1990), 8; and Leila J. Rupp, *Mobilizing Women for War: German and American Propaganda, 1939-1945* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1978), 156, 177-181.

⁵¹²*Des Moines Register*, 25 September 1946, 1.

surmised, "I wouldn't mind doing my own housekeeping, but I don't like doing it for other people." The other women besides Rosenberry also did not have rosy views of this type of work, citing the isolation, drudgery, and low wages as deterrents. An Iowa Poll raised another housekeeping question, finding most Iowans viewed skilled domestic work as a necessary role for young women. Eighty-one percent of Iowa women favored every girl taking a required course on housekeeping in high school while only 69 percent of men favored this domestic training.⁵¹³

Much of the production and conservation efforts remained in the kitchen front after the war despite the official ending of rationing. On January 1, 1946, the county war price and ration offices ceased to exist, and records were either burned or shipped to the state office. Volunteers and workers were congratulated by government officials with "expressions of gratitude for jobs well done under trying circumstances." Civilian consumption of meat did go up in 1946 because the military's went down, but a number of meat-packing strikes nationwide raised many concerns about the continued availability of choice cuts of beef. Recipes continued to be offered in the papers for such dishes as leftover lamb or "savory vegetable pie" as a way to economize.⁵¹⁴

The government pleas for fat salvage carried on after the war, but the pleas now called for soap rather than ammunition production. Butchers continued to give four cents a pound for this salvage although no added ration points could be offered. Even the national Secretary of Agriculture joined in with his request which added respectability to the salvaging, but some ads started calling women such names as Suspicious Sarah, Worrying Winnie, and Flighty Flo if they did not contribute. The advertisements had lost

⁵¹³*Des Moines Register*, 5 March 1946, 4; and *Des Moines Sunday Register*, 14 April 1946, 4-Magazine Section.

⁵¹⁴Iowa had 18,000 meat-packing strikers in 1946. *Red Oak Express*, 31 December 1945, 1; Grover J. Sims, *Meat and Meat Animals in World War II* [Agricultural Monograph No. 9.] (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Agriculture, February 1951), 13; *Des Moines Register*, 17 January 1946, 1; *Des Moines Register*, 7 January 1946, 4; and *Des Moines Register*, 25 January 1946, 7.

not only their patriotic tone but also the catchy wartime slogans: "Where there's fat, there's soap."⁵¹⁵

The Secretary of Agriculture also pleaded with Americans to consume less food at home: "Produced, preserved, and conserved at home, food will stretch farther around the world today." This was part of President Truman's formal urging of the American people to eat less food as they remembered the hungry. Though the world situation was extremely desperate, American citizens had not witnessed this post-war starvation. The food situation in the United States improved during the immediate post-war years, over both war and Depression conditions.⁵¹⁶

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, despite their beginning-of-the-war jitters over victory gardens, tried to keep this amateur gardening spirit alive after the war because of the overseas food shortages. In their 1946 National Garden Conference, the USDA stated a national goal of 20 million gardens (1.6 million over 1945) to meet the world food crisis. Gardeners planned to continue in Iowa, according to general chairman William Kidder of the gardening program in Des Moines, but much of the garden space in vacant lots was disappearing for new home construction. The Federated Garden Clubs of Iowa adopted several goals that year such as promoting gardening to the masses along with rewarding young gardeners' efforts. Members believed victory gardeners could be reconverted to continue with peacetime efforts. Howard Mill, vice president of the Iowa Farm Bureau, and Herb Plambeck, farm editor of WHO, both tried to persuade Iowans to garden because of the starvation conditions witnessed in Europe and Asia. Still, the wartime urgency was fading along with the catchy slogans. The new garden motto seemed rather flat: "There's a Need for Food--Have a Garden."⁵¹⁷

⁵¹⁵*Winterset Madisonian*, 3 April 1946, 11; *Winterset Madisonian*, 8 May 1946, 3; *Des Moines Register*, 1 January 1946, 6; and *Des Moines Tribune*, 4 March 1946, 4.

⁵¹⁶*Des Moines Tribune*, 27 February 1946, 1; and *Farm Bureau Spokesman*, 13 July 1946, 10.

⁵¹⁷*Farm Bureau Spokesman*, 13 April 1946, 9; *Des Moines Register*, 2 March 1946, 7; *Des Moines Tribune*, 14 November 1946, 17; *Des Moines Tribune*, 16 March 1946, 1; and *Winterset Madisonian*, 24 April 1946, 11.

The need for home-canned produce continued after the war, but this urgency too was beginning to fade although *Wallaces' Farmer* declared canning was still "the patriotic thing to do." Martha Duncan carried on with her radio show "On the Home Front" (using the same title) into the next decade. She reminded her listeners in September 1945 that "winning the war didn't end the task we have before us." She continued with her urgent food-saving plea: "A hungry people, whole nations of hungry people won't be friendly people--especially when they know we throw away the food here that might save their lives and the lives of their children." Duncan advised her listeners to can everything available from their gardens despite the fact canned vegetables could now be purchased without ration points. Local grocery stores also tried to encourage a continued canning effort, but the slogans, without the wartime urgency of rationing's limited supplies, only sounded dull and perhaps "canned": "There's plenty for everyone if you can your own" or "Can more . . . Store more."⁵¹⁸

No longer was the kitchen and all its work based on production and preservation with a sharp concern for shortages. Instead, the domestic concern of the post-war era placed an emphasis on freedom from drudgery--being able to place energy on a family's psychological needs rather than sheer material concerns. The promise of remodeled kitchens and new appliances now seemed a possibility for many homemakers after the war. The new model kitchen promised to eliminate the drudgery in what was considered the most neglected room in the American home. Well-planned kitchens should be white and bright with perhaps small desks and children's nooks included, and pre-fabricated steel or wooden cabinets helped to keep some of the remodeling costs down. A stove headed the list of desired new appliances as 43 percent of Iowa housewives wanted a stove as soon as this appliance returned on the market. Home freezers were one of the new conveniences which promised to relieve some of the canning work or trips to the

⁵¹⁸*Wallaces' Farmer*, 17 August 1946, 28; "On the Home Front," Script No. 311, 29 September 1945; *Winterset Madisonian*, 31 July 1946, 4; and *Winterset Madisonian*, 31 July 1946, 5.

meat locker, and 32 percent of farm housewives planned to buy freezers. Utility companies, of course, encouraged these purchases, and perhaps the catchiest post-war slogan was Iowa Power and Light's: "Bring on the Pie!"⁵¹⁹

The kitchen front with its emphasis on home canning, gardening, recycling, and conserving had created an extremely successful environmentalist consciousness. Sadly, this "green" movement could not last without the "red" reasons of war which had created the incentives to produce, preserve, and conserve America's food resources.

During a ride to see the new Ankeny ordnance plant construction, Bessie Caudle's life changed on December 7th, 1941, when news of Pearl Harbor came over the car radio. At home, she listened until midnight about war news, and the next day President Roosevelt declared war on Japan. Bessie was now a soldier on Iowa's home fronts. On December 10th, she received a letter from her son and his fiancée in California stating they were safe, and this lightened her mood. She bought a \$5.90 sack of sugar that day, perhaps in preparation for war shortages. Although Bessie spent the rest of the month doing the routine tasks of shopping, ironing, cooking, and cleaning with occasional outings to movies starring Bob Hope or Jack Benny, her daily routine began to change. She bought a flashlight for her son and sent it to him for the blackouts in California; she gave the Red Cross a dollar donation; and she saw the site of a military plane accident outside of Winterset that Christmas morning. On New Year's Eve she wrote, "There has been the most happenings in this year for our Family. And hope everything works out for the best."⁵²⁰

⁵¹⁹*Des Moines Sunday Register*, 25 August 1946, 6-Section 9; *Winterset Madisonian*, 24 April 1946, 10; *Wallaces' Farmer*, 18 May 1946, 30; *Wallaces' Farmer*, 16 March 1946, 32, *Wallaces' Farmer*, 20 July 1946, 22; *Wallaces' Farmer*, 3 August 1946, 44; and *Winterset Madisonian*, 25 September 1946, 9.

⁵²⁰Author's collection: 1940, 1941, 1942, 1943, and 1945 volumes of Bessie Caudle's diary. The volume for 1944 is missing from the collection.

Although Bessie's participation was tied most directly to the kitchen front, she was not isolated from either the agricultural or production fronts. She visited a neighboring farm for eggs, cream, butter, milk, peas, pork chops, sausage, and even a beef heart. She also gathered gooseberries and strawberries, and she also collected "a lot of points" (ration points) from the farm wife. Bessie expressed concern in her diary when that farmer's son was injured by a cow.

Bessie and her husband Gean visited the Ankeny ordnance plant site again several months later on May 31, 1942. She wrote, "Well we took dinner and went to Camp Dodge and Ankeny defense plant." When the Caudles traveled to Kentucky to visit their son's training base, they also visited the nearby airplane plant. Though Bessie seemed interested in American war production, it is surprising that she did not note the bombing of either Hiroshima or Nagasaki. On August 9th, however, she stated, "Heard about Japan considering surrendering." She waited each day after that for "good war news" which finally came on August 14th: "And at six oclock the news came Japan had surrendered. We went uptown and stopped at Sawyers till 9:30." The next day she wrote that gas was no longer rationed.

Bessie also participated in some of the community front activities. She purchased at least ten war bonds. Although she did not state each amount, Bessie and her husband accumulated at least \$800 worth of bonds. Her husband Gean "hailed our junk away" two days in April 1943 but no other activities were mentioned regarding scrap drives, perhaps because this couple had no young children at home to encourage these efforts. Rationing affected such items for Bessie as tires, gas, and silk hose. She continuously mentioned ration points and costs throughout her diary along with the number of letters exchanged with her son working at a California defense job.

As a middle-aged, small-town housewife, Bessie was most active in the kitchen front activities. Of the items rationed, meat rationing captured the most space in her

diary with such comments as a friend visiting with a "nice Swiss steak" or "having a nice mess of liver for supper." Shopping was sometimes a noteworthy accomplishment: "I was lucky and got lb. of Bacon" or "\$.70 for Beefsteak." She even mentioned, briefly, trading for meat points, an action not endorsed by the ration board.

Bessie and Gean worked together on their victory garden, but they had traditionally planted large gardens with such vegetables as potatoes, onions, beets, tomatoes, corn, peas, and beans. Sometimes she wrote that she was very tired after a day of planting. Canning, however, was her most noted accomplishment. In 1942 she canned 47 pints and 79 quarts of such produce as apples, mulberries, beans, beets, pickles, tomatoes, and even grape juice. In 1943 she canned 70 quarts, adding such items as plums and dill pickles. In the last year of the war she canned 49 pints and 103 quarts of food, adding such items to her canning list as peaches, corn, catsup, and green tomato relish. Often the days in the kitchen were hot, but she still canned, even on days when her mother-in-law visited. A July 1945 entry was typical: "I done ironing and canned 4 qts.. beet pickles. A terrible hot day."

Bessie Caudle, as one individual soldier citizen, performed her war duties on the home fronts of Iowa without hesitation or complaint. She worried about the effects of war on her son's life, but she never questioned the country's participation in the Second World War.

Despite the changes Iowans had witnessed during the war years, not everything had changed in what was, after all, slightly less than four years. Iowans still worked and celebrated together in their own particular style. On December 7, 1945, Bessie Caudle entertained friends: "Well I had a waffle supper and had Carl Parkers in. We all had a nice visit." And a year later, on December 7, 1946 (the fifth anniversary of Pearl Harbor), members of the Evangelical United Brethren Church at Lundgren, Iowa, gathered for their

traditional "God's Acre" contribution. Rural members brought in the produce from each farm's donated acre as a church contribution. After shelling corn for most of the afternoon with fellow church members and other community people, the congregation and guests gathered for the Ladies' Aid Society dinner in the church basement. The menu consisted of chicken, potatoes, cole slaw, beans, and, of course, pie.⁵²¹

⁵²¹*Des Moines Sunday Register*, 8 December 1946, 2-Section 9.

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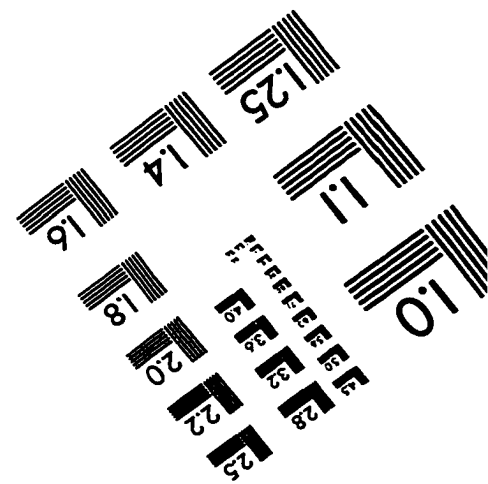
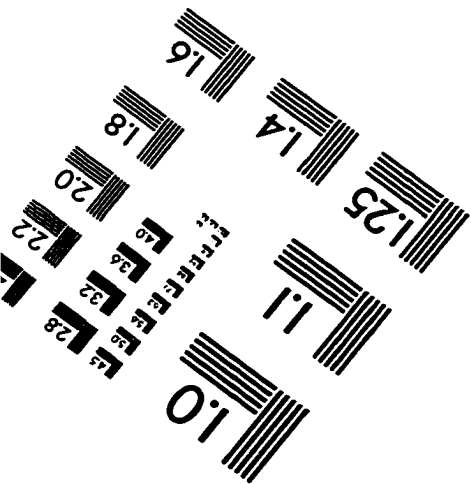
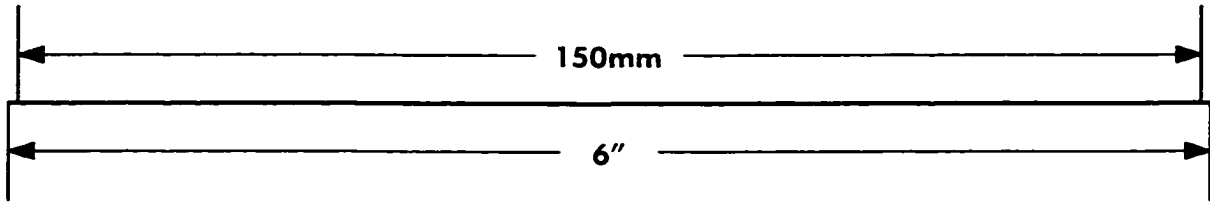
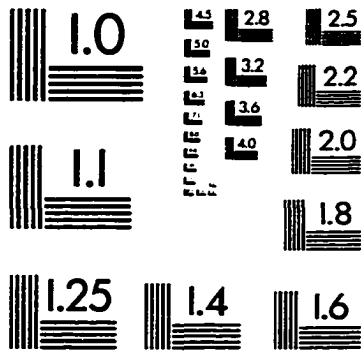
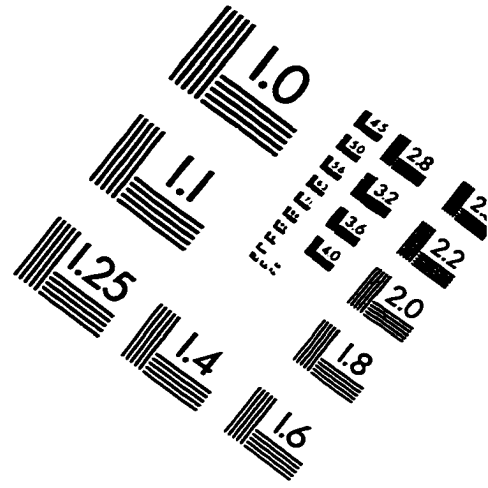
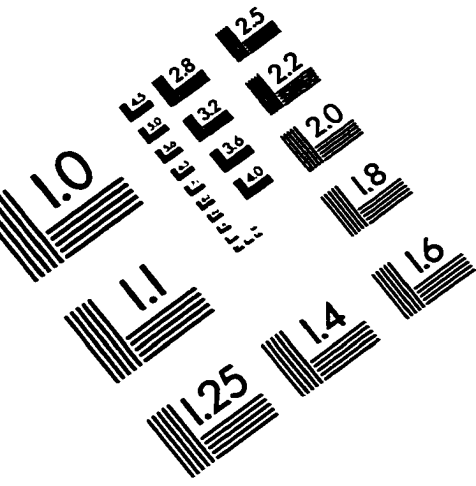
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