

The original Small Town U.S.A. publication below has been preserved in the archives of the Alexandria-Monroe Public Library and is the complete publication that was intended for European distribution only. Included with it are several 1943 articles from the Alexandria Times Tribune, which cover Mr. Eisendrath and Assistant Betsy Emmons arrival in Alexandria. Later articles from 1992 detail former Director Nancy Norris's visit to the National Archives in search of additional photographs taken during his time in Alexandria. The Times Tribune article of January 22, 1992 mentions that several Small Town articles were printed in other news publications. Two of the articles named have been included, the Los Angeles Times and the Chicago Sunday Chronicle Tribune. All though not featured here, the Library of Congress also records several examples of Mr. Eisendrath's photography while working for the OWI. A local photo taken on West Street in front of the Tiger Inn also included here. I believe it is Mr. Eisendrath and Miss. Emmons.

As a final note, the Small Town U.S.A. publication is very fragile and not available for public viewing.



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**ALEXANDRIA IS TO
BE PHOTOGRAPHED**

**This Week For Stories in
OWI Magazine**

Announcement was made today by Lewis Hutchison, of the Indiana division of the Office of War Information in Indianapolis that Miss Betty Emmons, a member of the information staff, will be in Alexandria on Thursday of this week.

Miss Emmons is a staff photographer and will be accompanied by several writers. They will gather information and pictures to be used in a forthcoming issue of the OWI magazine which is sent to the service men in the Navy and overseas, giving Alexandria and its war efforts and war industries publicity all over the world where American troops are stationed.

Mr. Hutchison will be here with the party which will spend several hours in the city obtaining the information which is desired.

Alexandria To Be Photographed,
Alexandria Times-Tribune,
18 May 1943

Clipped By
jlgross
Mar 19, 2019

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ALEXANDRIA IS CHOSEN TYPICAL MIDWEST TOWN

For Exploitation by Office of War Information In State

PEOPLE OTHER LANDS

Will See in Pictures and Story How We Live and Work Here

Miss Betsy Emmons, of the overseas division of the Office of War Information at Indianapolis, arrived in Alexandria today and is laying the groundwork for a literary and pictorial review of Alexandria as a typical midwestern city. She and her assistants will probably be here for two weeks making the study, and doing the photographic and writing work which will make up the review.

The material gathered here is to be used in the overseas magazine of the OWI, and also will be published in book form. It is entirely for overseas distribution, and will not be released in the United States, Miss Emmons said.

The purpose of the project is to correct the many false impressions of American life as it has been given to the peoples of foreign lands through moving pictures. These pictures, Miss Emmons said, have created in the minds of foreign peoples an erroneous impression of the American people, indicating that they are all gangsters, or luxury loving millionaires, with little or no regard for the finer things of life. The OWI seeks to correct this viewpoint, especially among the peoples of the nations which are our allies in the war, and the people of South and Central American republics.

Alexandria was chosen as a representative midwestern small town, and the information gathered here will cover its business, industrial, religious, school and cultural life in a manner which has never before been undertaken. It will seek to show just how the people of the average small city live and work and play, without any glittering ornamentation, and will be as true to life as it is possible to make it.

David Eisendrath, the official photographer for the project, will arrive in Alexandria Saturday, and the work of making the photographs for the magazine articles and book will be started at once. The study will be profusely illustrated, on the theory that pictures do more than many words to create depict real family and community life.

The project will have the assistance of the city authorities, the Civilian Defense Council and many of the other organized groups in the city.

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MANY HUNDREDS PICTURES TAKEN

Miss Betsy Emmons, writer, and David Elsendrath, photographer, representing the overseas division of the Office of War Information, are today finishing their first week of work in Alexandria, gathering material and pictures to be used in magazines and a book which will be sent in great numbers to the civilian population of the United Nations.

Alexandria was selected as a typical American small city and will be portrayed as representative of the way in which the people of the average American small city work and play. The work is really of a propaganda nature, intended to correct many of the wrong impressions which foreigners have of American life.

Hundreds of pictures have been taken already, and the work of Miss Emmons and Mr. Elsendrath will continue here through next week. The material will not be for circulation in the United States.

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MORE PICTURES FOR OWI REVIEW ARE BEING MADE

More and more pictures and news material for the OWI book and magazine articles to be sent to the civilian population of the United Nations later in the year were being made in the city this week. This afternoon, among pictures taken, were several of the Garden club at the E. H. Bailey home on East Berry street. Pictures of the Kiwanis club luncheon will be taken Wednesday evening. Many fine pictures of the schools in action were taken last week.

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OWI PICTURES MADE OF SAILOR WEDDING HERE LAST EVENING

The marriage of Ralph Jones, son of Mr. and Mrs. Sam Jones, of this city, and Miss Ruth Southwick, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Southwick, was celebrated last evening at the First Christian church parsonage by Rev. G. W. Wintrey.

The groom is an aviation machinist's mate in the Navy, and has been home for a few days on furlough. His brother, Harold, also in the Navy, is home on leave and was among the guests at the wedding, which was attended by members of the immediate families and several friends. During the ceremony pictures were made by the OWI representatives who are in the city making pictures of Alexandria people and their activities for circulation among the peoples of United Nations countries as typical of the manner in which Americans in the average small city live.

The groom will shortly return to his duties in the Navy, but his bride will remain here, continuing her work with the Indiana Bell Telephone Co.

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SCHOOL MEN PICTURED AT WORK WAR FACTORY

David Eisendrath, photographer who is taking the pictures for the OWI story of Alexandria as a typical mid-western American city, went to Anderson last evening and took a number of pictures of Alexandria school men who are employed in the Remy plant there during the summer. The pictures will be tied up with those of the school system and its activities.

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OWI WORKERS COMPLETE JOB IN ALEXANDRIA

Express Gratitude For Fine Cooperation Which City Gave Them

Betsy Emmons and David Elsendrath, who have been here for the past three weeks making the pictures and gathering the statistical data which will be used in a book to be issued by the Office of War Information, completed their work yesterday and left last night for the OWI offices in New York, where the pictures will be developed and the material tabulated for the 64-page booklet which will be off the press in a few months and circulated in all of the countries which are allied with the United States in the war.

The purpose of the book is propagandistic, to correct wrong impressions which the residents of many of our allied countries have of the American way of life. Alexandria was chosen as a typical small city in the American midwest, and most every form of family and community life and activity will be pictured in the book. It is not to be circulated in the United States.

In all, about 200 pictures were taken by Mr. Elsendrath, and Miss Emmons gathered reams of text material which will be used in connection with them. Both expressed their very high appreciation of the fine co-operation which was given them by the general public, and they especially appreciated the assistance given by Mayor Harry Delfoss, Chief of Police Arthur Daniels and CIO Director Dahl Stricker.

The family of Ed Williams was used as a typical urban family, while that of Joe Blake will represent the typical farm family in the book. Many different views of these families were made, and scores of other persons gave their time to assist in making the work of the OWI representatives pleasant. Several interesting pictures were made at the swimming pool Saturday afternoon, where there was a large crowd of bathers, on account of the hot weather.

OWI TO FILM MADISON AS TYPICAL SMALL CITY

Another O. W. I. film, to be used in depicting the every day life of average Americans for distribution in foreign countries, is to be made in the next few weeks, and Madison, Ind., has been chosen as a typical small city for the work. Alexandria was used in the same manner earlier this year for an O. W. I. booklet to be circulated among the civilian populations of foreign countries.

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Detective work pays for Norris

by LINDA FERRIS

Months of historical detective work ended last week when library director Nancy Norris located the photographer and writer who made Alexandria "Small Town, U.S.A." during WW II. Unfortunately, the photographer is dead. And the writer, now a New York psychologist, does not have a clue why Alexandria was singled out by the Office of War Information (OWI) for the high-priority project.

Photographer David Eisendrath died four years ago, said Norris. His widow, Barbara, now resides in Manhattan.

On May 11, Norris received a letter from Mrs. Eisendrath. Yes, she wrote, she remembered her husband's files on "Small Town, U.S.A." But those files were discarded last November when she moved from their home to an apartment.

Fortunately, Mrs. Eisendrath had the address of Betsy Emmons, the writer who accompanied her husband to Alexandria in 1943.

Emmons is now Dr. Elizabeth Mintz, 78, of Haslings, N.Y. She spoke with Norris by telephone last Thursday.

"She couldn't shed a lot on why Alexandria was chosen," Norris said. "The decision was already made, and she got the assignment."

The friendliness of Alexandria's people is what Dr. Mintz remembers the most, Norris said. People allowed the writer and Eisendrath in their homes and businesses without asking too many questions. "But she had little information to give them."

After the war, the writer remarried and received her Ph.D. in psychology from the University of New York. When her husband was diagnosed

with Parkinson's disease, she became the main supporter of their family, Norris said. Dr. Mintz closed her office last week.

To track the whereabouts of Eisendrath and Emmons, Norris traveled to the Marion County and state libraries. There she rummaged through biographical indexes dating back to the early 1940s.

A 1966 article in "Popular Photography" mentioned that Eisendrath had worked for the OWI during WWI and that he resided in the Brooklyn, N.Y., area.

Norris then traced Eisendrath's address through the Eastern Indiana Area Library Service Authority, which is based at the Muncie Public Library.

The photographer's widow has offered Norris one "Small Town" keepsake — an copy of the original booklet.

Faces without names



AMERICAN GOTHIC? This photograph of an Alexandria couple was discovered at the National Archives. It was taken for, but never used in the "Small Town, U.S.A." booklet.

Pictures of Smalltown found in National Archives

by LINDA FERRIS

Faces without names
Almost a dozen never seen before photographs of Alexandria people have been discovered in the National Archives. Library director Nancy Norris found them during a research trip to Washington, D.C., in October.

The photos were taken for the Office of War Information (OWI) back in 1943, but were never used in the "Small Town, U.S.A." booklet.

Do you recognize any of these faces? If you do, please contact Norris at 724-2196.

OWI records indicate that over 200 photos were taken in Alexandria for the World War II propaganda piece. Norris has located 52. The remaining ones are buried somewhere among 210,000 other OWI file photos.

Norris was awarded a \$2,493 research grant last spring to investigate why Alexandria was singled out—from all the places across the U.S.A.—to epitomize "Small Town, U.S.A." She uncovered some clues in the OWI's files at the National Archives. However, she cannot release specific details until she makes her report to the Indiana Historical Society on May 31, 1992.

The mystery keeps getting bigger. "My research is far from over," said Norris.

The OWI's secrecy, destroyed records, and the fact that many people involved in the "Small Town" project are dead have been obstacles to Norris' research.

"The OWI was not a popular organization," said Norris. "The people didn't like it. It was a lot of writers. They were considered liberals and very controversial."

News commentator Elmer Davis was picked by FDR to direct the OWI. Davis was a native of Aurora, Ind. "Is that the connection?" Norris has asked herself.

Other OWI officials included director John Houseman, who starred in TV's "Paper Chase," Archibald McClish, and Milton Eisenhower, brother of Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower.

The writer and photographer dispatched to Alexandria in 1943 from the OWI's New York office were very secretive about their mission. Some citizens reportedly feared the pictures they took and information they jotted down would be used against the U.S. and its Allies.

"I've had people call me and say their picture was taken, but they never saw it printed," said Norris. Included in the unseen photos are ones of a Jones' wedding and the Danner's store.

continued on page 8

More photos on page 8.

✓ Pictures

Locals recalled that the photographer, David Eisendrath, spoke with a German accent. That was true, Norris has proven. Eisendrath was a native of Germany. In the National Archives, she saw proof of his draft deferment.

Writer Betsy Emmons accompanied Eisendrath.

"It's interesting how very deliberate they were in what they did," Norris said. Ethnic groups or minorities were never mentioned in OWI materials.

As a policy, Norris continued, the OWI never mentioned Jews in central Europe or blacks in South Africa. "Religion was very delicately handled." And women were portrayed as domestic, only working outside the home to support the war effort.

After "Small Town, U.S.A." was distributed overseas, several articles were written about Alexandria. Reporter Clarence Woodbury was sent to cover the story. His article appears in the Dec. 31, 1944, issue of the Los Angeles Times Mirror's magazine.

Stories also appeared in the Chicago Tribune and Detroit Free Press, Norris has been told. If anyone has a copy of those articles, she definitely wants to see them.

According to her sources, Life also did a story. Norris has yet to see the magazine.

Supposedly a news reel about Alexandria was shown at movie

continued from page 1

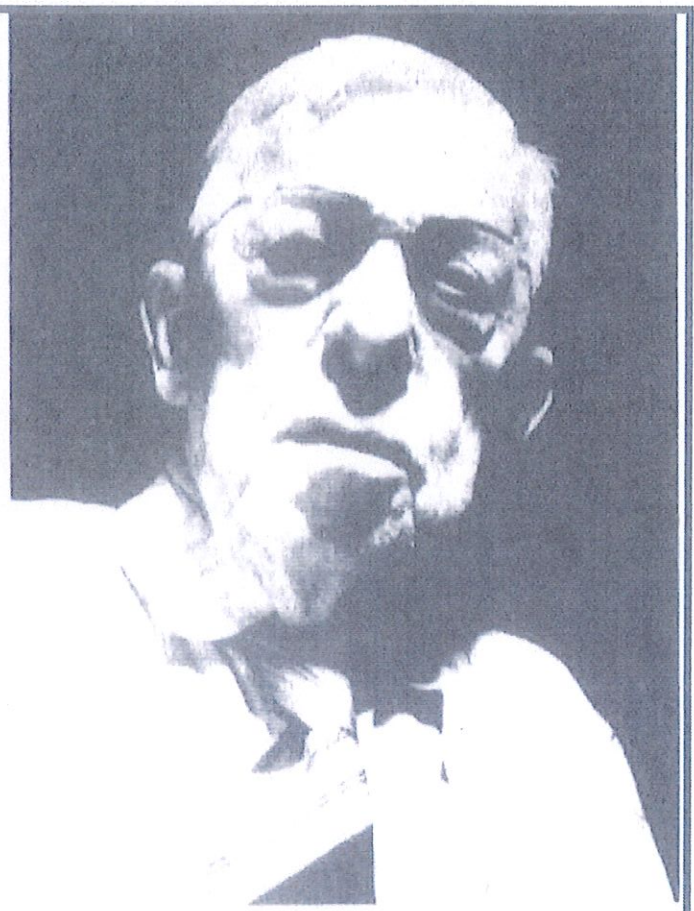
theatres. At the National Archives, Norris was told to contact the University of South Carolina about locating a copy. But she hit a dead end there. News reels still exist of Elwood and Hagerstown, but nothing about Alexandria.

There was supposedly a controversial story about the "Small Town, U.S.A." project. The story appeared in the American Press magazine, November, 1943. When Norris received a copy, she was surprised. The "Small Town" in question was not Alexandria, but San Augustine, Texas, pop. 1,500.

The news copy and the photographs were strongly reminiscent of those used in the booklet about Alexandria. The controversy was perhaps over an unauthorized use of OWI material.

Norris now plans to write the chambers of commerce in San Augustine and the other towns the OWI considered before choosing Alexandria. She wants to know how the OWI narrowed the field. So far, she has found no correspondence in the National Archives directed to either Alexandria or Indiana. But she has found a letter from the OWI to an Illinois town regretfully telling its officials that Alexandria had been chosen.

"I'm really convinced there's more information out there, but I've done absolutely all I could do," said Norris.



These photos were found in the National Archives in Washington, D.C.

PAGE 8 Alexandria Times Tribune, Wednesday, January 22, 1992

Never seen before photos from "Small Town, U.S.A."

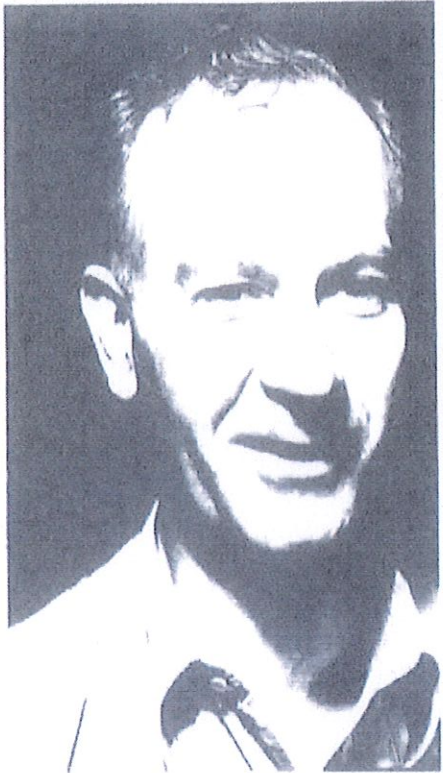


Do you recognize these girls?

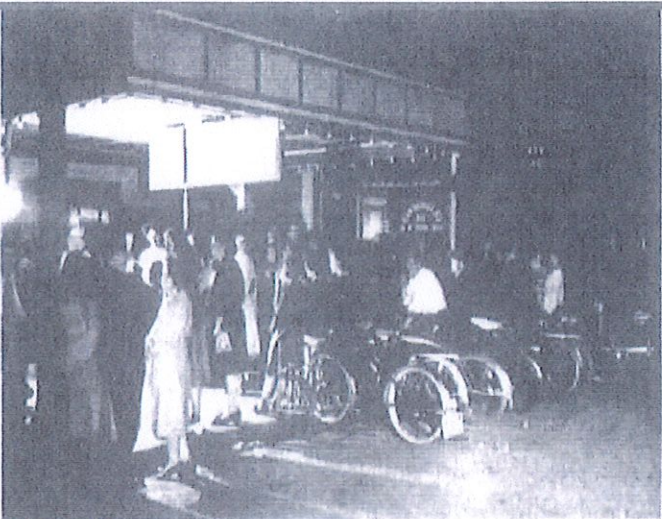


Bowling at Mesalam's

Supposedly a news item about Alexandria was shown at this time. It was absolutely not could do "said" Name.



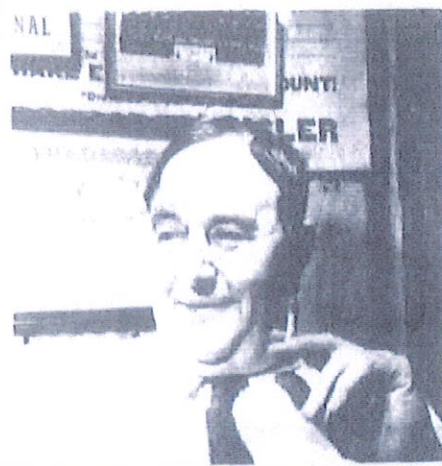
AT THE RITZ THEATRE, Roy Rogers was starring in "The Heart of the Golden West" when this photograph (above) was taken. The certificate behind this gentleman (below, right) reads "Clifford Williamson".



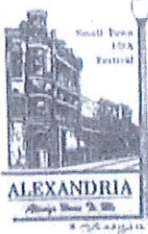

A CLOSER LOOK at the lady who appears on Page 1.



Who is she?



If you recognize a face in these photos, please call the library, 724-2196

BARBARA T. PEENDRATH
135 West #10A
New York 10023

David B Eisendrath
Photographer on SMALL TOWN USA
Personal copy received from
Mrs Eisendrath 5-24-92

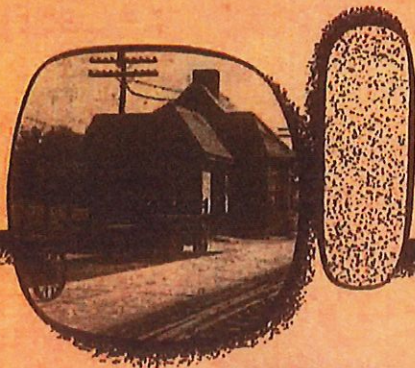
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Nancy L. Norris, Director
Alexandria-Monroe Public Library
117 East Church Street
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TIME GLS

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SMALL TOWN U.S.A. 1885 NOW GROWING UP

SOUVENIR EDITION

ALEXANDRIA, INDIANA

AUGUST 3, 1957

PRICE 10¢

Alexandria Story Over 100 Years Old

Monroe Township is named in honor of our fifth President of the United States. It was organized on Jan. 1, 1836, by order of the board of commissioners.

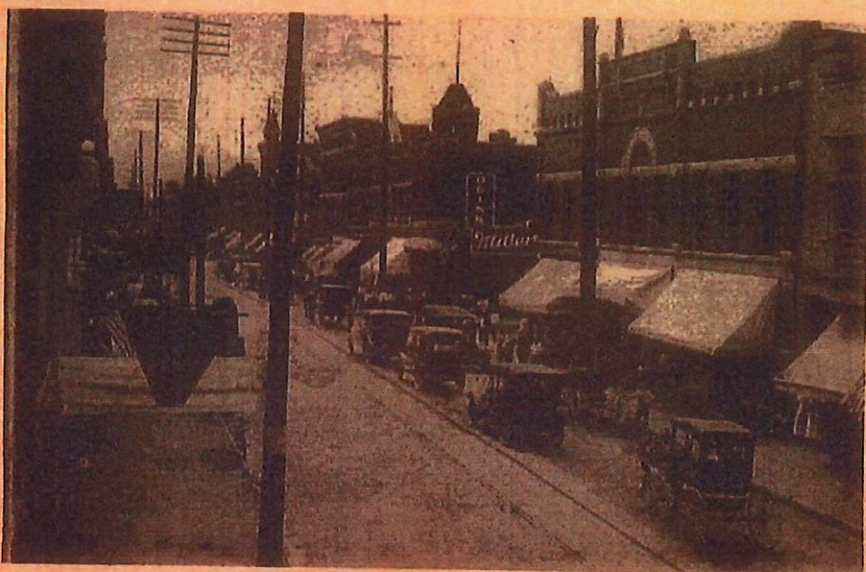
Previous to the year 1831, there was not a white man within the territory. Sometime during the year, however, Macajah Chamness and George Marsh, from North Carolina, settled near the present site of Alexandria.

In 1836, William Conner and John D. Stephenson, of Noblesville, having reason to believe that the Indiana Central Canal would be constructed through the township, purchased land where the city of Alexandria is now situated, from Mr. Chamness. The purchase was made by Colonel N. Berry, who surveyed the land for the purchasers and immediately erected a log house on what is now the southeast corner of Berry and Clinton Streets. A stock of general merchandise was placed in this building by Col. Berry, and thus the first store in the township was established. Articles were sold mostly in exchange for coon skins, tan bark, and other commodities.

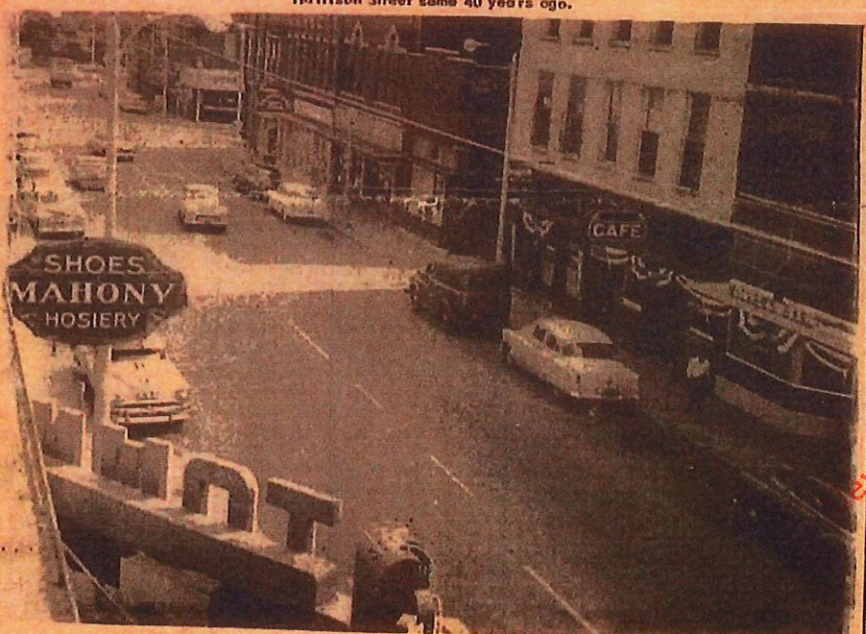
In the summer of 1876, Alexandria was incorporated and the following officers elected: E. B. Chamness, N. E. Tomlinson, and Gideon Klefer, Trustees; Seth B. Henshaw, Treasurer; J. M. Tomlinson, Clerk; and Marion Tuttle, Marshal. Mr. Chamness had the honor of writing the first ordinance of the young corporation.

Natural gas was discovered on March 27, 1887, in well No. 1 of the Alexandria Mining and Exploring Company located near the terminus of East Washington Street. The discovery of this wonderful fuel created greater excitement among the villagers than the discovery of gold in the west. People came by thousands to see the "wonder of the nineteenth century."

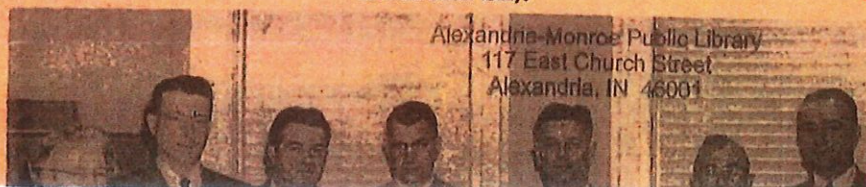
At the time of the discovery of gas, Alexandria was a town of 800 people. It was a beautiful place, having the best streets in the county. Being well located.



Harrison Street some 40 years ago.



Harrison Street today.



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New Lights Put City Ahead of Other Towns

In 1943 the Office of War Information selected Alexandria as "Small Town U.S.A.", typifying the average small town which produced the average G.I. who was fighting in World War II.

A brochure, printed in color, was distributed throughout occupied territories, printed in several different languages. Thus Alexandria gained fame throughout the world as a friendly, progressive community.

Today, with the new street lights being turned on, we proclaim that "Small Town U.S.A. is Growing Up", taking another big step toward modernization which puts our town in a class far ahead of other cities of the same size in Indiana.

Much of the success of today's program, culminating the steps taken almost two years ago toward modernization of the street lighting system, is due to the untiring efforts of the Alexandria Business Association and its former president, Marshal Broyles, who appointed the first committee to work on details of the lighting.

The Business Association under the leadership of Mr. Broyles, has done many creditable things during the past few years. It worked out the new traffic control plan and had it approved by the city council, directed a clean-up campaign, took charge of Christmas lighting and hoped to make it bigger and better this year, and has engaged in many worthy community projects.

The proposed plan to convert the Business Association into a Chamber of Commerce is evidence of the direction in which Alexandria is going today - upward to even greater achievement.

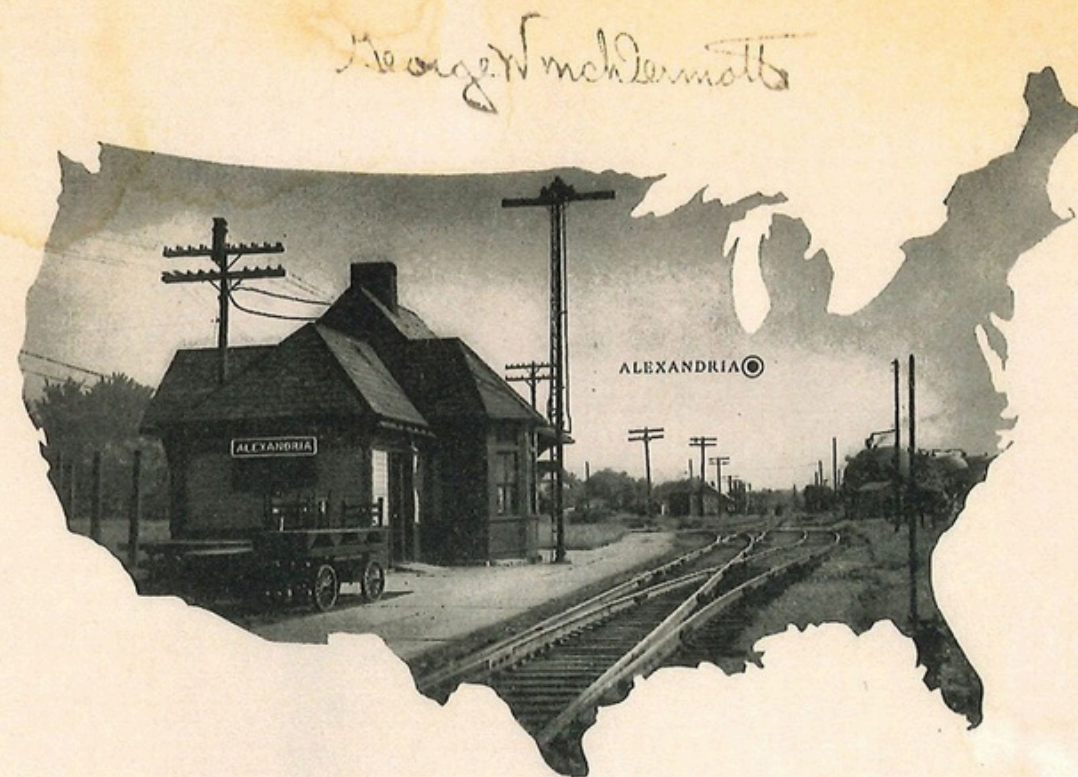
Today's program was engineered by Ed Alvord, current vice president of the Business Association, and his committee: Don Burton, Neal Johnson, Tom Thomas, Barbara Murray, Louise Meyers, Otto Binder, Julius Walker, Berkley Buck, Bill Mathias, Wally VanErman, and Bob Miller.

Small Town, U.S.A.

Restricted

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the United States or to American civilian
or military personnel overseas.

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This is the story of Alexandria,

a town of 4,801 people, lying along the banks of narrow, slow-moving Pipe Creek in the Midwestern state of Indiana, U.S.A. Quiet and unimportant, the town of Alexandria yet has its significance because it can be taken as the symbol of the many thousands of small towns which dot the map of the United States. To know Alexandria is to know the American small town.

Alexandria is different in appearance from the villages of New England, the deep South, or the Far West; but, like them, it represents America's taproots. Here, perhaps more perceptibly than in the great cities, appear certain basic traits of the American character—the friendliness, the informality, the belief in democracy not merely as political theory but as something to be lived and breathed each day.

Many millions of Americans live in small towns like Alexandria. And through these towns pass the riches of the farm lands, grain and meat and dairy products, on their way to help feed the nation and its soldiers and its Allies overseas. With one or more factories apiece, these towns contribute their full share to the nation's armaments. Alexandria, and the towns like it, stand for the democratic way of life for which America is fighting. They are an important part of America's fighting strength.

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*The life of Alexandria,
like that of most small
American towns, centers*

on its main thoroughfare. This is Harrison Street, which runs the two-mile length of town. At each end it is a street of trees and homes, but for about half a mile in the heart of Alexandria it becomes the business district. In the two- and three-story buildings which line Harrison Street are most of the offices and stores where Alexandria does its business and makes its purchases.

Here farmers park their cars when they come to town to sell their produce, do their shopping, and perhaps, if it is Saturday, treat their families to a motion picture and an ice-cream soda. Here housewives come with market baskets to buy the day's supply of food. Here, though the smallness of the stores and the curtailment of civilian goods does not allow wide latitude in choice, Alexandrians may make such major purchases as a suite of furniture or a new cookstove. Here, too, is Alexandria's social center, for the people of small towns know one another well, and no one can walk through the business district without meeting friends. All day long, Harrison Street hums with talk and greetings.

The stationery stores on Harrison Street sell the same magazines that are read in New York and San Francisco. The small clothing stores carry the same fashions as Chicago's great department stores. In its two motion-picture houses, Alexandria sees the new films as soon as the rest of the nation. Competing with locally owned stores are a chain drugstore, grocery, and five-and-dime store identical in appearance with their other branches in cities and small towns throughout the country. The early days of the United States, when towns like Alexandria bore a characteristic rustic stamp and lagged behind in social and economic development, are long past.

*Within a few blocks of
Alexandria's business
center are the library,*

the high school, the post office, most of the town's nine churches, and the City Building, center of the town's government. The factories are located well outside the city limits, and all the rest of Alexandria is a community of homes.

More than half of the town's families own their own homes. These are one-family houses, usually two stories high, set well back on grassy lawns and shaded by tall old elms and maples which arch their branches over the wide streets. Most of them are frame houses, architecturally simple, and painted white. The typical home has a front porch, living room, kitchen, one bathroom, and two or three bedrooms. Nearly every house has electric lights, a radio, and inside plumbing, and about half the houses have telephones. More than half the housewives do their work with the assistance of a modern stove and icebox, an electric washing machine, a vacuum cleaner, and other labor-saving devices which are common in American homes.

Few houses stand out among the others as indicating either poverty or wealth. The home of Fred Wright, who has been a rural mail carrier in Alexandria for the past thirty years, is as attractive in appearance as the home of Glen Houk, purchasing agent for the Johns-Manville rock wool plant. There is no geographical distinction between the homes of the wealthy and the homes of the wage-earners.

When the weather is pleasant, the people of Alexandria spend a great deal of their time outdoors, working on their lawns and gardens and sitting on their front porches. The streets are tranquil. Except for service stars which appear in the windows of more than half the houses, war has brought few external changes to Alexandria. But, beneath the surface of the town, the changes are significant.





For three days a family is reunited, as Ensign Gene Stricler and his cousin Jack, an Army Air Forces captain, come home on leave before they go off for overseas duty.



Alexandria's dinner tables no longer overflow with abundance but there is still enough. Here Mrs. Ed Williams, whose husband



is a war worker and who has two sons and a son-in-law in the armed forces, decides how best to spend her ration coupons.



Military news and stories of their sons in the armed forces are favorite topics of discussion for men who gather on the street corners at lunch and after work.

Fourteen hundred men and women of Alexandria work in war plants



NEARLY EVERY HOUR OF THE DAY AND NIGHT, BUSES LEAVE TO TAKE WORKERS TO THE FOUR WAR PLANTS NEAR THE TOWN

Six hundred young men of Alexandria have entered the armed forces

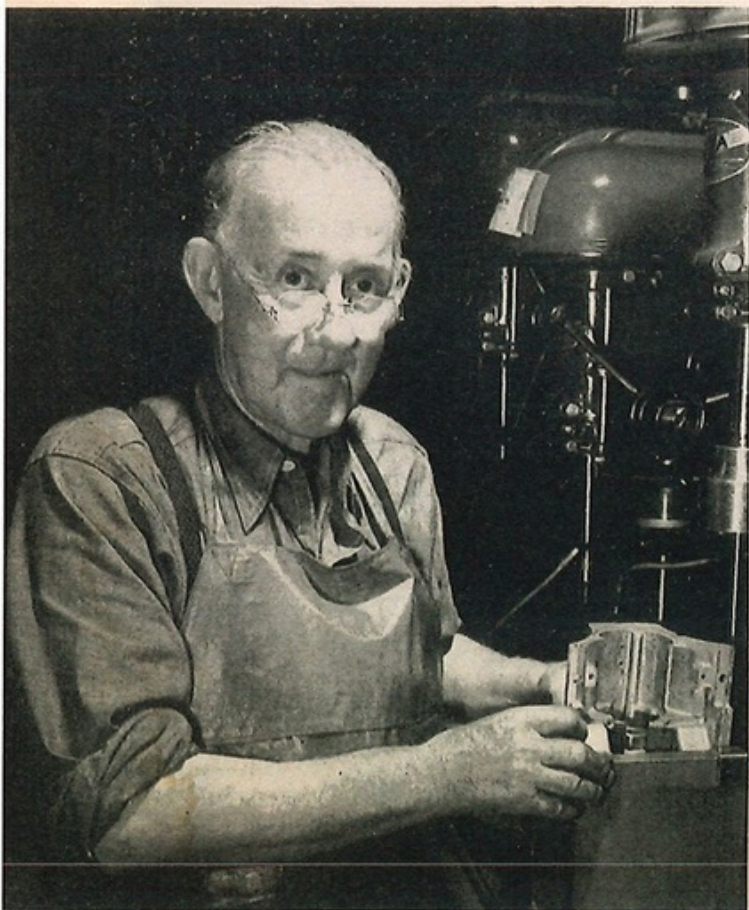


A GROUP OF DRAFTED MEN TELL THEIR FAMILIES GOOD-BY AS THEY LEAVE FOR TRAINING CAMPS. ABOUT HALF ARE MARRIED



Above is the mother of Kenneth Koon, marine who killed thirty-one Japanese in a Guadalcanal battle. She runs an eighty-acre farm near Alexandria, while her husband works in a war plant.

Sixty-eight-year-old Thomas Frazier, a former violin teacher, runs a drill press from four to midnight at a Delco-Remy plant, making magneto housings for bombers. He is of Scotch-Irish descent.



Like most Midwestern small towns, Alexandria retains the stamp of its

pioneer days. In the town today there are people whose grandparents came West in covered wagons to a wilderness where white men had never lived before. Now the appearance of the town is modern, but the pioneer stamp is there.

Loyalty to the land marks the generation whose grandparents fought to make it tillable. The Alexandrian's roots are deeper than those of most city dwellers. Most of the townspeople were born in Alexandria or near-by. Many young men and women, when the war is over, will settle down to raise their children within a few blocks of their parents' homes, or take over their parents' farms.

The informality of frontier days survives in the lack of social pretense and class distinctions. Wives of wealthy businessmen, like wives of workingmen and farmers, do their own housework; if the housewife has a helper, she is usually regarded as one of the family. A banker of the town, who has a half interest in a drugstore, waits on customers himself. The mayor is a toolmaker in a war plant; in the last elections his opponent was the town taxi driver.

There is a strong sense of community cooperation, retained from days when cooperation meant the difference between life and death. Interest in the welfare of other members of the community is a spontaneous, neighborly feeling. When the uninsured house of a widow burned down last year a group of businessmen took a few days off, rolled up their shirt sleeves, and built her another. Not all of them were skilled in manual labor, but the house was built and it is a substantial, comfortable home.

Alexandrians move at a slower tempo than the people of the cities; they talk more slowly, with the soft drawl and salty, straight-faced humor which are characteristic of Indiana. But they are used to hard work, and now they are meeting the requirements of the hardest, most important job they have ever faced.



Alexandria's ration board is composed of businessmen who give several nights a week to its work. Carrying out policies of the U.S. Office of Price Administration, the board acts on requests for rationed commodities.

Notified that his name is on the Army draft list, Aubrey Lee Steiner appears before Alexandria's draft board. Steiner's draft was postponed because he works a 176-acre farm, growing several essential crops.

Typical requests come from a housewife who wants additional sugar for canning; a war worker who drives to work and needs a new tire; a farmer who has rented additional acreage and needs more gasoline for his tractor.

Draft board members are respected citizens who know their community. They are Ray Houston and Joel Jones, farmers, and Edwin Reavis, retired school principal. Betty Burnett, a bookkeeper, acts as clerk.



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MAYOR HARRY DeMOSS, RECENTLY ELECTED FOR A SECOND FOUR-YEAR TERM, PRESIDES OVER WEEKLY COUNCIL MEETINGS

*The democratic pattern
is clear in Alexandria's
town government, which*

is headed by an elected mayor and an elected council of five. Its duties are the same as other American

local governments: it maintains law and order, operates a water system, maintains local roads, and supervises schools, parks, and library. Money for its operations is raised by a general property tax. Anyone may attend council meetings or sessions of the city court, where the mayor tries civil offenders. And when the people elect their mayor and council, they are voting for men whose qualities they know with the thoroughness of small-town acquaintance.



Next door to the City Building is the firehouse, with modern equipment, an up-to-date alarm system, two fire trucks, and a staff of five firemen.



The two-way radio at police headquarters communicates with Alexandria's squad car, other local Indiana police stations, and the state police.



Nearly every afternoon, youngsters gather outside the City Building. Here Police Chief Art Daniels and a state policeman talk with admiring boys.

Art Daniels was born near Alexandria, but his parents came from Wales. In the last war, he served on a subchaser in the English Channel.

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These seventh-graders, youngest class in Alexandria High School, are learning the names, locations, and characteristics of the United Nations in their social science class, which meets for an hour daily.

Each teacher specializes in one or two subjects, which she teaches in her own classroom. Students go from one classroom to another between the one-hour lesson periods into which the school day is divided.



Caring for plants they have grown in a sandbox, these children are learning simple chemistry and botany and the laws of health, as the teacher points out that both human life and plant life need air, sun, and proper food.

The children are in the second grade at Clarke Elementary School, which includes the first six grades and serves children in the northern part of town. Tomlinson Elementary serves the southern part.

Indiana law requires all children from six to sixteen to attend school.

Alexandria, like most towns of over 2,000, has its own free public school system. There are a high school which enrolls 600 pupils and two elementary schools enrolling 250 each. Through a superintendent of schools, they are controlled by the local school board of three non-salaried members, appointed by the mayor and council. These three members cannot all be affiliated with the same political party.

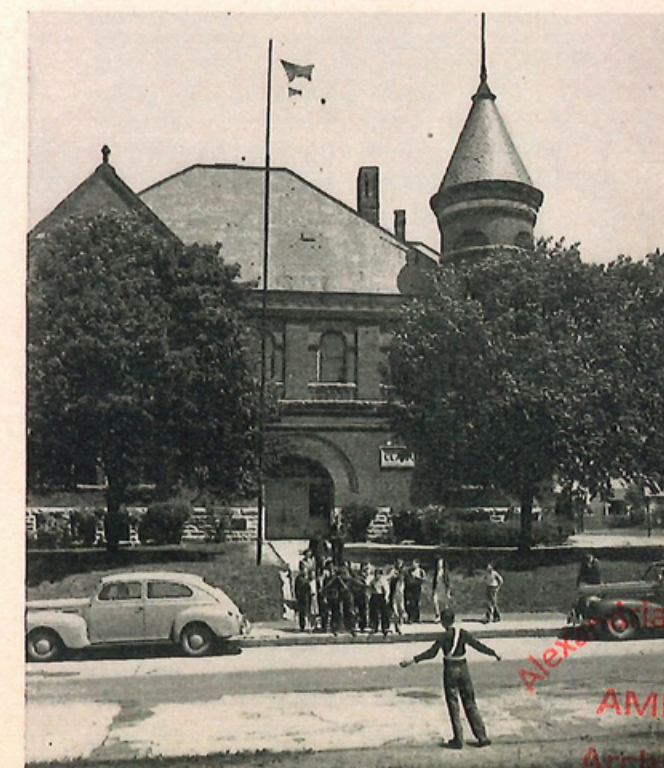
Two-thirds of the school system's cost is met by local taxes. The state of Indiana supplies the other third, inspects and accredits the schools, and issues certificates to teachers, who must have four years of college work that includes special educational training. The state also accredits the Catholic parochial school, which is not controlled by the school board, and maintains two rural elementary schools.



School busses provide free transportation for pupils of the two rural elementary schools, and for students who come from farms to Alexandria High School, which serves an area of forty-two square miles.



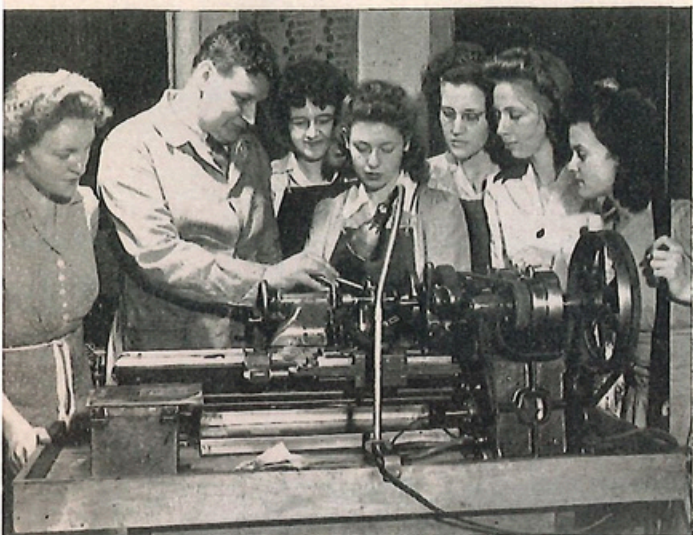
Alexandria High School is run on the junior-senior plan. Grades seven through nine are taught in one building, grades ten through twelve in an adjoining building. The school day lasts from 8:45 to 4.



Each week a child is appointed safety warden at Clarke Elementary. Wearing a white shoulder band to denote his office, he makes sure the street is free of traffic before he signals the other children to cross.



These ten-year-old youngsters tap the beat out with their feet as they play in the forty-piece band at Clarke Elementary. Both elementary schools offer band lessons from the fourth grade on, providing instruments for children whose parents cannot afford them.



High-school students may, if they wish, take four years of shop work, including practical training in operating power machinery. Demand for women factory workers leads many girls to take shop. Girls also like the pre-flight aeronautics course.



Recess at the Catholic parochial school, next to St. Mary's Church. Eighty-six children attend the school, which includes the first eight grades. School Sisters of Notre Dame instruct the classes.



For every high-school class, graduation week is the climax of student life. As in other American high schools, the week's events include a religious service, a class dance and dinner, and presentation of diplomas at the graduation exercises.

With the traditional June ceremonies,



In caps and gowns which symbolize completion of their course, the forty-five graduating seniors sit on the platform of the high-school auditorium, before an audience of proud families from farms and town.

The speaker, Professor George Mather, from a near-by college, discusses youth's responsibility in furthering world cooperation after the war. "Every man now has 1,999,999,999 neighbors," he reminds his audience.

members of the 1943 class are graduated from Alexandria High School



Ralph and Harold Jones, home on furlough, fought in the battles of Midway and the Coral Sea and survived a torpedo attack near the Solomons.

Like many American youngsters, the Jones brothers left high school to join the Navy. They would have been graduated with the class of 1943.

Edwin Reavis has one son and four grandsons in the war. His son Joel, who served in France in the last war, is a Coast Guard lieutenant.

Joel's son, also in the Coast Guard, is a quartermaster. Another grandson is in the Navy, and two more are serving in the Army Air Corps.



War is now shaping the lives of the youngsters who in June of 1943 left

Alexandria High School, as it is shaping the lives of their contemporaries throughout the nation. Few students felt the war's real impact while they were in school. There were changes in the curriculum, increased emphasis on physical fitness, science, and mathematics. The annual scholarship awards were paper certificates, redeemable for the customary medals when metal need no longer be conserved for war. Girls were without partners for the graduation dance because many boys were already in the armed forces. The high-school paper suspended publication because of newsprint shortage, and gasoline rationing stopped American youth's favorite pastime of motoring. But these were trivial changes.

The real differences came after graduation. In normal times, 25 per cent of the graduating students would have gone to college; 30 per cent to work on near-by farms; 35 per cent into the factories; and the rest into clerical and retail work around the town. Now the picture has changed. Nearly all the boys who were graduated in 1943—except for a few physically unfit or deferred because they are needed on their parents' farms—are in the armed forces. Twelve who had already reached the draft age of eighteen by June, but who were deferred to finish high school, were in the Army two weeks after they won their diplomas. At the graduation exercises, the platform bore pictures of eight boys who had completed their high-school course, but who had left school a few weeks early to enter special Army and Navy training courses conducted through the colleges. Thirty boys who would have been graduated with the class of 1943 had already left school, some in their junior year, to volunteer for the armed forces. And girls who, in peacetime, would be married and caring for their homes, or working in Alexandria's stores and offices, are working in the factories instead.

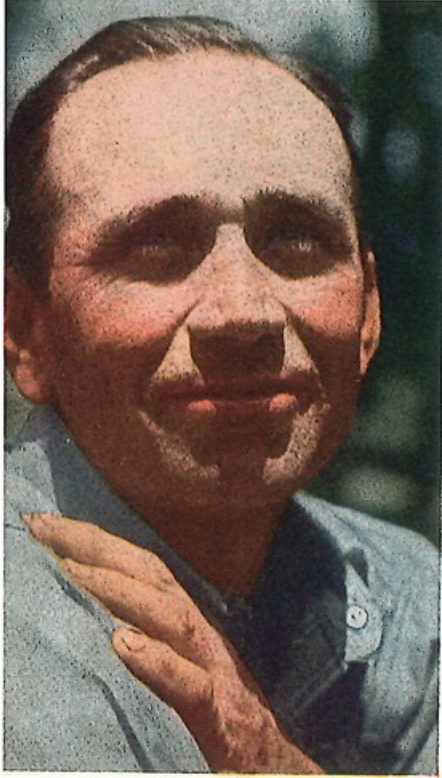


Corporal Opal Meek, one of the recruiters for the Women's Army Corps in Indiana, has enlisted several Alexandria girls. Here she talks with Martha Monroe, who is now working on an assembly line at one of the Delco-Remy war plants near Alexandria.



Here is one of the hundreds of young girls who are steadily replacing drafted men in Alexandria's factories. Below, the flag is carried from the coffin after the burial service of Private Louis Oliver Reason, wounded overseas and sent back home, where he later died.





Joe Blake raises corn, wheat, oats, and soybeans on his 160-acre farm near town.



Laura Lee, wife of the park custodian, at seventy-four does her own housework, washing and ironing included.



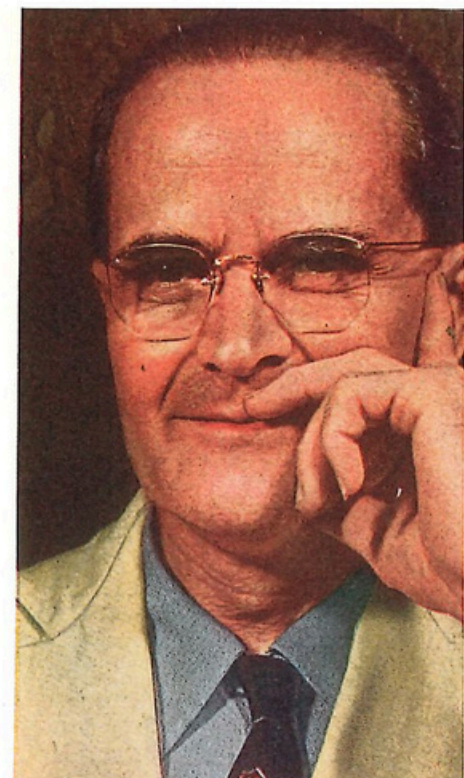
Gene Stricler, the son of the town's funeral director, holds the rank of Ensign in the United States Navy.



Father Leo Sheetz, priest of St. Mary's, writes regularly to seventy parishioners in the armed services.



Twelve-year-old Ann Baker is the daughter of an Alexandria banker. Her brother is in the Air Corps.



Alexandria's Dr. Walter Cary is an elected delegate to the Indiana state legislature.

Here are some of the faces which can be seen on Harrison Street, in

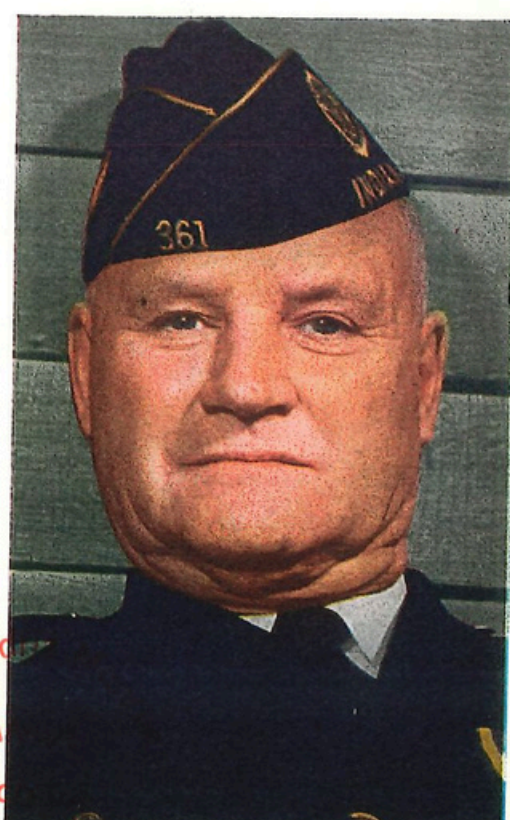
the homes and churches, and in social gatherings around Alexandria



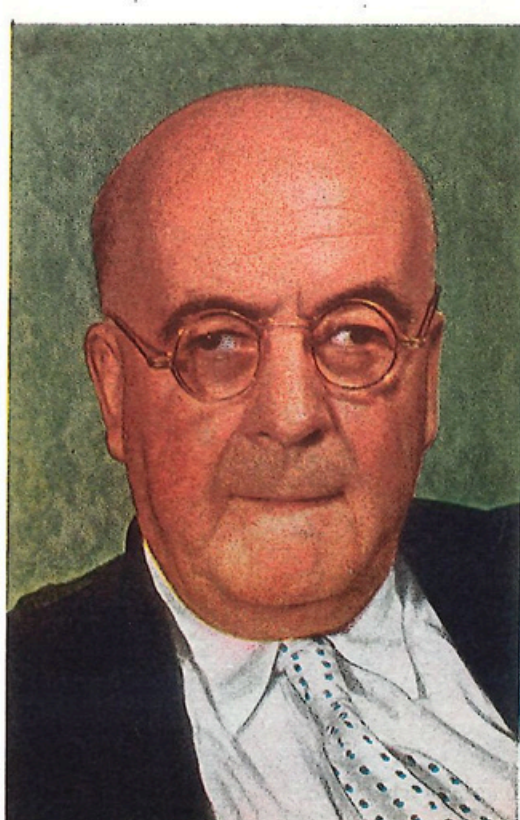
Police Lieutenant James Nevils is a security officer in the Delco-Remy war plant.



Mrs. Joe Blake helps her husband with the farm work, keeps their farmhouse spotless, cares for five children.



Army veteran Matt Harrison saw Verdun, St. Mihiel, and the occupation of Germany. Daughter is a WAC.



Pastor George Winfrey of the First Christian Church, a chaplain in the last war, has two sons in the Navy.



Lillian Orme, first woman manager and lifeguard of the park swimming pool, plans to become a nurse.



Dahl Stricler, the father of Ensign Stricler, is chairman of the Beulah Park Board.



Jacqueline Lindley, daughter of an Alexandrian dentist, entertains seventeen-year-old Claiborne Williams, a high-school student who spends summer vacations as a magneto inspector at one of the Delco-Remy war plants.



Alexandria raises its own vegetables in Victory gardens, but the women still grow their poppies and their purple and yellow iris. Here members of the women's garden club discuss gardening problems over their sewing.



In cooperation with the Indiana State Department of Conservation, the members of the garden club are planting trees and shrubs in Beulah Park; they also take responsibility for the care of park lawns and flower beds.



These townspeople are on their way to a "basket supper" at the First Methodist Church. Each woman brings a different kind of food in a covered basket. The baskets are placed on a table and everyone helps himself.

Alexandria has always been a sociable community, and now that gasoline

restrictions have made it impossible for families to drive on week-end pleasure trips to Chicago, 200 miles to the northwest, or to take one-day jaunts to Indianapolis, fifty miles distant, the townspeople are more than ever dependent for fun and relaxation on neighborhood gatherings and family parties.

The town has an easy friendliness. Most of the churches sponsor picnics, parties, and young people's social groups. There are chapters of the various men's fraternal organizations which are a feature of American life nearly everywhere—the Elks, the Eagles, the Knights of Columbus, the Kiwanis, the Odd Fellows. There are a dozen women's clubs, which meet at the homes of different members in turn to read, sew, and exchange information about gardening and homemaking.

These organizations, in addition to social activities, usually have programs of self-education, social

A SHALLOW PART OF THE PARK SWIMMING POOL, BELOW, IS FENCED



OFF FOR SMALL CHILDREN. A LIFEGUARD IS ALWAYS ON DUTY



welfare work, or civic improvement. They assume responsibility as groups in Civilian Defense work, War Bond drives, scrap collections, and other home-front war activities. The men's and women's clubs sponsor young people's groups, giving financial and advisory assistance to Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops and the local chapter of the Four-H Club, a nation-wide organization of farm boys and girls.

Near enough to the town to be reached on foot or by bicycle is Beulah Park, occupying several wooded acres. The park has a concrete swimming pool, built with the assistance of the Federal Works Progress Administration. Admission to the park is free, admission to the pool costs only a few pennies, with one day free a week. There are picnic grounds with benches and outdoor fireplaces, and playgrounds equipped with swings, sandboxes, and slides. There is a miniature golf course, run by a Girl Scout troop, and a Boy Scout house erected with the help of the Kiwanis Club. There is an emergency hospital, set up by the Civilian Defense organization, which can care for forty patients. There is an auditorium where the Four-H Club holds its annual fair, at which members exhibit farm animals they are raising themselves, and compete for prizes in farm and household work.

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Mrs. Ed Williams packs a Bible to send to her son Ralph, an Army Air Corps instructor now stationed in Arizona, but scheduled to go overseas shortly. Emanuel, another son, is also serving in the Army Air Corps.



Working under the sanitary conditions prescribed for Red Cross workrooms, these women make surgical dressings several nights a week. Other women have prepared for special service by nursing and nutrition classes.

Through the fabric of life in Alexandria run changes brought about

by the war. The four-page daily newspaper headlines war news rather than local news, and in the last few months it has carried, more and more frequently, items about Alexandria boys who have been killed or wounded on the battlefields. The town knows that there will be many more such items before the war is over. Meanwhile, back home, Alexandria does what lies at hand to speed victory.

The mounting wave of Allied victories as well as Alexandria's inland location make it unlikely that the town will suffer air raids, but the people know the danger of unpreparedness, and they are ready. The 330 trained Civilian Defense Volunteer workers, including auxiliary police and fire forces, air-raid wardens, and demolition and decontamination squads, can be mustered on a few minutes' notice.

Except for the few highly skilled workers for whom the war plants are asking deferment, Alexandria's able-bodied men are on the farms or in the armed forces. "I'm going to fight," said one of the high-

school graduates who is now in the Army, and then, jerking his head toward his best friend, deferred because he does most of the work on his grandfather's farm, he added, "Charley's going to stay home and feed me." This is Alexandria's wartime division of labor.

The closing of half-a-dozen non-essential businesses reflects this diversion of manpower. Two gasoline stations, a drugstore, a jewelry store, a barbershop, and a beauty parlor are closed for the duration. Roadside restaurants, which used to cater to the tourists driving along the broad smooth highway to Chicago, have also closed, for gasoline rationing has swept tourists from the roads. Retail businesses on which the farmers around Alexandria depend are now staffed by elderly men, women, and youngsters between fourteen and sixteen, who under Indiana law may not work in factories but may work in stores and offices.

During the summer vacation, after working from 8 A.M. to noon at the high school, Superintendent Earl Wood and Principal Victor Evans change their neat business suits for overalls and work an eight-hour shift on drill presses at a Delco-Remy plant. Six hundred women are in the factories, including many housewives who have never worked before, and who come home after their shifts to wash, cook, and clean. And many elderly farmers who had retired to town to enjoy their last years in leisure are now back tilling the land, or working in the war plants.



Kerosene lamps headed for Australia are loaded by Joe Restler and his wife, who operate a truck transfer business serving Alexandria's war plants. Together the Restlers load and unload thirty trucks a day.



Charles Dillinger, who runs a drill press on the night shift at Delco-Remy, puts the War Bonds he purchases each week in a safe deposit box, while his son Larry watches. Bonds will send Larry to college.



Spring ploughing in the Victory garden of Ernest Phillips, a war worker at the Aladdin plant. Vegetables will be canned for winter use.

Families whose garden plots are not sufficiently large to raise vegetables are renting plots at the edge of town, within walking distance.

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Around Alexandria, the farmers are working in their fertile fields to meet

the need for increased food production. The typical Indiana farmer owns about 150 acres, planted in corn, wheat, oats, soybeans, and tomatoes. He has a herd of twenty to fifty milk cattle, keeps several hundred chickens, and raises about a hundred pigs yearly. A tractor and other farm machinery are supplemented by a team of horses, and electricity helps his wife in the house. Land which his father worked before him and which his sons will inherit is kept productive by crop rotation and scientific farming.

Such a farmer is Joe Blake, who lives with his wife and five children on a 160-acre farm west of town. Blake works his farm alone, except for the help of his eleven-year-old son Phil with the light chores. This year he is increasing his milk production 10 per cent, adding thirty acres of oats to his fields.



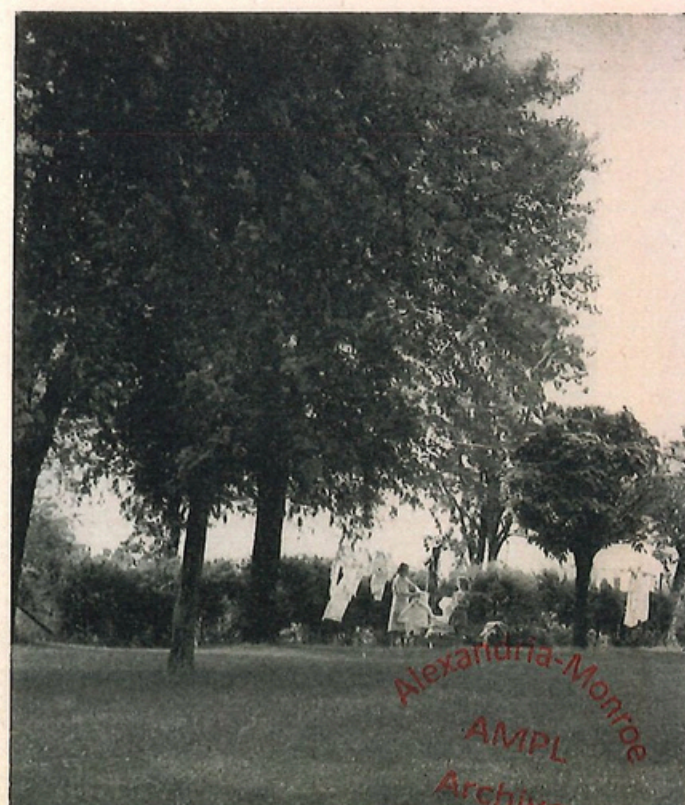
OVER JOE BLAKE'S FIELDS OF SILVERY WINTER WHEAT, SWELLING



NTO FULL RIPENESS, APPEAR THE SILHOUETTES OF FARMHOUSE, BARN, AND SILO WHICH ARE CHARACTERISTIC OF THE PRAIRIE COUNTRY



Here Joe Blake feeds dry corn cobs into a shucking machine. Later the shucked corn will be hammered for chicken feed by another machine. Blake grows all his own feed except for high-protein concentrates.



Like many Midwestern farmhouses the Blake home, above, represents a halfway stage between the modern and the old-fashioned. It has electric lights, radio, electric icebox, and an electric washing machine.



Water from the well, tested regularly for purity, is piped to the kitchen sink, but there is no other inside plumbing. Telephone lines will not be extended to the Blake neighborhood until after the war.



Janelyn Blake helps her mother feed the turkey chicks. Phil, the elder son, already assumes regular responsibilities on the farm. He is raising a hundred Barred Rock chicks in a brooder which he built himself.



Joe Blake and his younger son, Wayne, buying hog concentrate. The Blakes come to town several times a week for farm and household supplies.

They buy little food, living on their own meat, fruit, and vegetables. Mrs. Blake makes soap and butter, but prefers to buy bread and cheese.



Harrowing cornfields for the spring planting. Blake's machinery includes tractor, hammermill, corn planter, corn picker, binder, and harrow.

Like many farmers near Alexandria, Joe Blake delivers his milk to the

Indiana Dairy Marketing Association, a few miles from town, which pasteurizes milk for retail distribution, and produces dehydrated milk and cheese. It is a cooperative, non-profit organization, owned by its 1,650 members. Joe Blake, like the other member-owners, has a voice in electing its officials and receives an annual check for his share of the proceeds.

Last year the Association produced 800,000 pounds of cheese. It sold three-quarters of its output to the government for shipment overseas to Allied nations.



Cheese bought by the government for shipment to other United Nations is checked in the storeroom of the Indiana Dairy Marketing Association.

Indiana farmers are increasing their milk production, and the Association expects to better last year's output of cheese by 7 per cent or more.



Feeding milk into a condenser, the first step in dehydration. The milk is then dried, rolled, and powdered. Dehydration reduces weight 90 per cent.

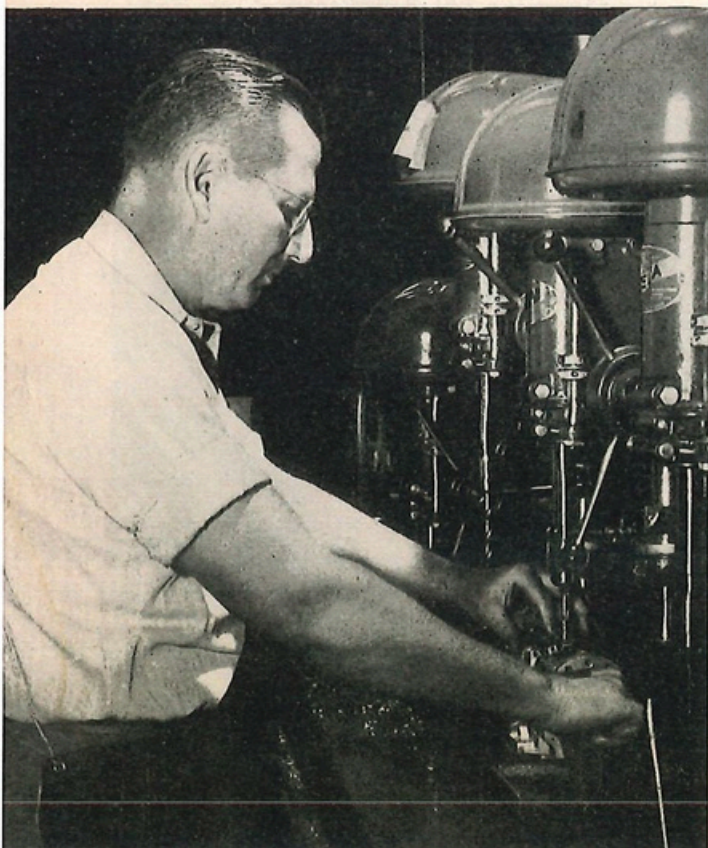


The Association's thirty-five trucks pick up daily 150,000 pounds of milk in ten-gallon cans, which are sterilized and returned to the farmers.



Glass blowing at the Aladdin plant, one of the few places in the United States where the old-fashioned method is still used for certain purposes. Most of these blowers are of Swedish descent.

During school vacation, Superintendent Earl Wood, below, a veteran of the last war, works on parts for bombers at Delco-Remy.



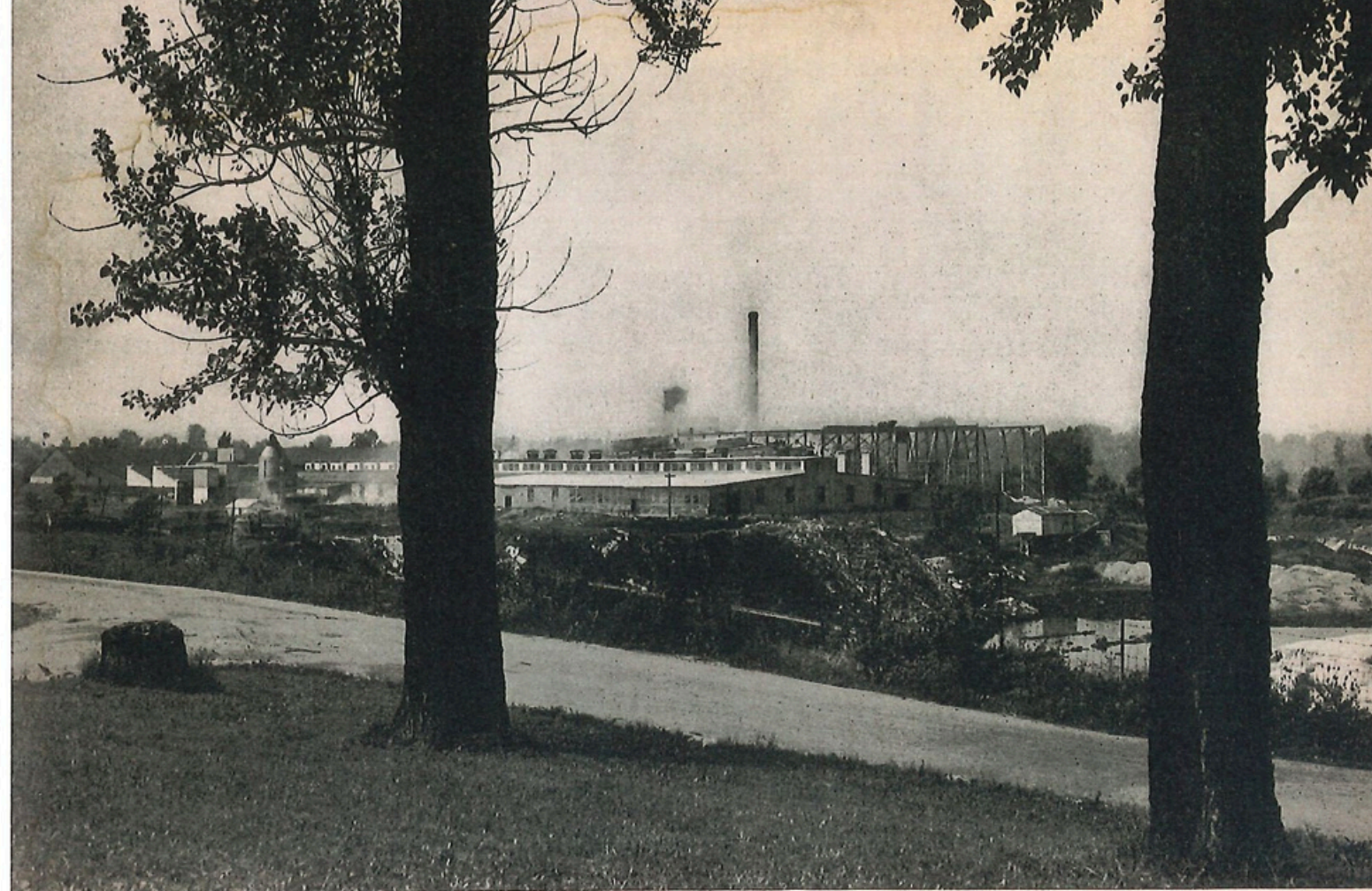
Alexandria's factories are helping to produce the materials of total war.

They do not turn out completed tanks, warships, or airplanes. They make parts for weapons which are assembled elsewhere, or small equipment for American fighting men. But each of them is working seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day, on an expanding production schedule. Each is a single cog in the gigantic, well-synchronized machine of the nation's war industry.

The Aladdin, Johns-Manville, and National Gypsum plants are located just outside Alexandria. Delco-Remy, one of the Titans of Indiana industry, is eleven miles from town, but is the largest single employer of Alexandria people, with 600 Alexandrians on a payroll of 18,000. Here, in ten huge buildings, each a factory in itself, generators, magnetos for air-cooled engines, and parts for the Allison liquid-cooled airplane engine are turned out in close cooperation with Army Air Corps experts.

Rock wool from Alexandria, made at the Johns-Manville and National Gypsum plants, sails on the high seas in hundreds of freight vessels, insulating perishable foods. Much of it goes to the famous Kaiser shipyards. Because it can endure both high and low temperatures, rock wool from Alexandria is used for industrial purposes in other war plants throughout the country. As insulation in houses built for war workers in crowded areas, rock wool helps to conserve the fuel oil needed for military uses.

In peacetime, Aladdin kerosene lamps were sent all over the world, and some are still made for shipment to America's Allies and for field hospitals and lighthouses. Vacuum bottles made at Aladdin fly with the Ferry Command. But the plant's chief contribution to the war is a cookstove, developed by Aladdin engineers, which is being turned out by hundreds of thousands for ski troops and other soldiers fighting at high altitudes. Less than seven inches high, weighing only sixteen ounces, the stove will burn at any altitude, light at 60° below zero, and burn for over two hours on a half pint of gasoline.



The Johns-Manville plant, first factory in the world to make rock wool for insulation purposes. Because rock wool manufacturing processes were developed in Alexandria, the town calls itself "The Home of Rock Wool."

Beside the plant are the abandoned pits from which argillaceous limestone was formerly dug for rock wool manufacture. Now slag, brought by train from the steel mills at Gary, Indiana, is used instead.

Removing burrs from magneto housings at Delco-Remy. This is a simple operation for which girl workers can be trained in a short time.

Before the war, Delco-Remy made ignition equipment for General Motors automobiles. Conversion to war production was effected in a few months.



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Washing up after the daytime shift at Delco-Remy. Each plant has shower rooms, lockers, and a First Aid Room. Two doctors and thirty nurses, employed full time, treat injuries and ailments. Safety precautions reduce accidents to less than two for each million man-hours of work.



Delco-Remy has a contract with the Automobile Workers Union. A shop-management committee settles grievances and helps maintain top efficiency.



A special grievance office is open all night. Here shop committeemen, elected by their fellow-workers, meet with the night shift superintendent.



Two freight lines, one running north and south and the other running east and west, carry the products of Alexandria industry to the seaports or to industrial centers where parts made by the town's factories are assembled into complete weapons of war. Each line runs several freights daily.

The specialized industries of small towns like Alexandria are part

WORKERS LEAVING DELCO-REMY AFTER THE DAY SHIFT. SHIFTS ARE STAGGERED AT THE TEN BUILDINGS TO AVOID CONGESTION



of the nation's great pattern of all-out production for offensive war

FROM ALEXANDRIA AND OTHER NEAR-BY TOWNS, DELCO-REMY DRAWS A STAFF FOUR TIMES THE POPULATION OF ALEXANDRIA



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Here three generations of an Alexandrian family are spending the evening together. Because the young people of the town often live near their parents after they marry, such scenes are common.



During the last few years, bowling has become popular all over the United States. Above is the bowling alley on Harrison Street, a favorite resort of factory workers and farmers on Saturday night.



A worker at the Johns-Manville plant reads the news of current military events to his wife's eighty-year-old father. Below is a Saturday night crowd entering one of the two motion-picture theaters.



Evenings in Alexandria are quiet throughout the week. Most of the towns-

people settle down after dinner to read the newspaper and listen to the radio. The *Alexandria Times Tribune* is read in nearly every home, and many Alexandrians also read one of the metropolitan dailies, which reach the town only a few hours after they are published in Indianapolis and Chicago. News programs, commentators, and music are the radio favorites.

The library is open until nine, and the evening hours are convenient for most borrowers, many of whom are factory workers. They utilize the technical section of the library to acquire knowledge which will fit them for promotion. Farmers, too, read heavily during the winter months, supplementing their reading of publications obtained from the national Department of Agriculture by frequent trips to the library.

In the two drugstores on Harrison Street, the high-school youngsters congregate to chat over their ice-cream sodas. The town has several bars and one night club where dance music is provided by phonograph, but the night club serves no liquor because it caters almost entirely to young boys and girls.

On week nights, lights are out in the homes before midnight, and Harrison Street is silent except when a bus stops to pick up or discharge war workers. But the factories are at work all night long, and Compton's Café is busy from midnight until morning serving factory workers who come in for food and coffee before or after a late shift. And periodically the policemen in the squad car make their rounds.

On Saturday night, Harrison Street takes on a different aspect, an air of carnival, for this is the traditional night for farmers and their families to come to town. Their cars are parked all along Harrison Street, and they crowd the sidewalks, dressed in their best clothes, laughing and talking. The stores stay open late to serve them, and they fill the bowling alley and line up before the motion-picture theaters.



HARRISON STREET AT NIGHT. IT IS LIGHTED ALL NIGHT LONG, BUT EXCEPT ON SATURDAY IT IS DESERTED BY MIDNIGHT

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Alexandria, Missouri

The story of Alexandria, typical American town, is in one sense

the story of small towns in Great Britain, Russia, China, and the other United Nations. For Alexandria is at war, and its people are fighting for precisely the same reasons for which the people of these other towns are fighting—their nation's life, their freedom, and their children's right to happiness.

The battlefronts around the world are far from Alexandria, but in many ways they seem near-by. They are brought closer by the radio and newspapers, by letters from Alexandria boys stationed halfway around the globe, and by the knowledge that the work of Alexandria's hands is flowing to those battlefronts. And they are close, too, in another way. There may have been a time when Alexandria, among the vast reaches of its hundred-mile prairies, felt itself apart from the world's troubles. That time has passed. Now, day by day and in increasing measure, Alexandria is realizing that the destiny of the children for whose happiness it fights is intertwined with the destiny of other children, in other small towns, throughout the world.

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This Week

MAGAZINE

Los Angeles Times

MAGAZINE SECTION • DECEMBER 31 1944



Original
\$ Mrs. J. Roy Smetz
1165 Arden Rd.
Pasadena, CA 91106
N-10708

Sept. 16, 1998

Alexandria Library,

For 54 years I
have postponed mailing
this to you.

I saved it because
my mother, Pulu Hupf,
lived there until
1906 when she moved
to California at age 39.

I am moving at 89, to
a retirement complex in
Pasadena.

Sincerely,

Helen Smetz
(Mrs. J. Roy)

THE SMALL TOWN
KNOWN AROUND
THE WORLD

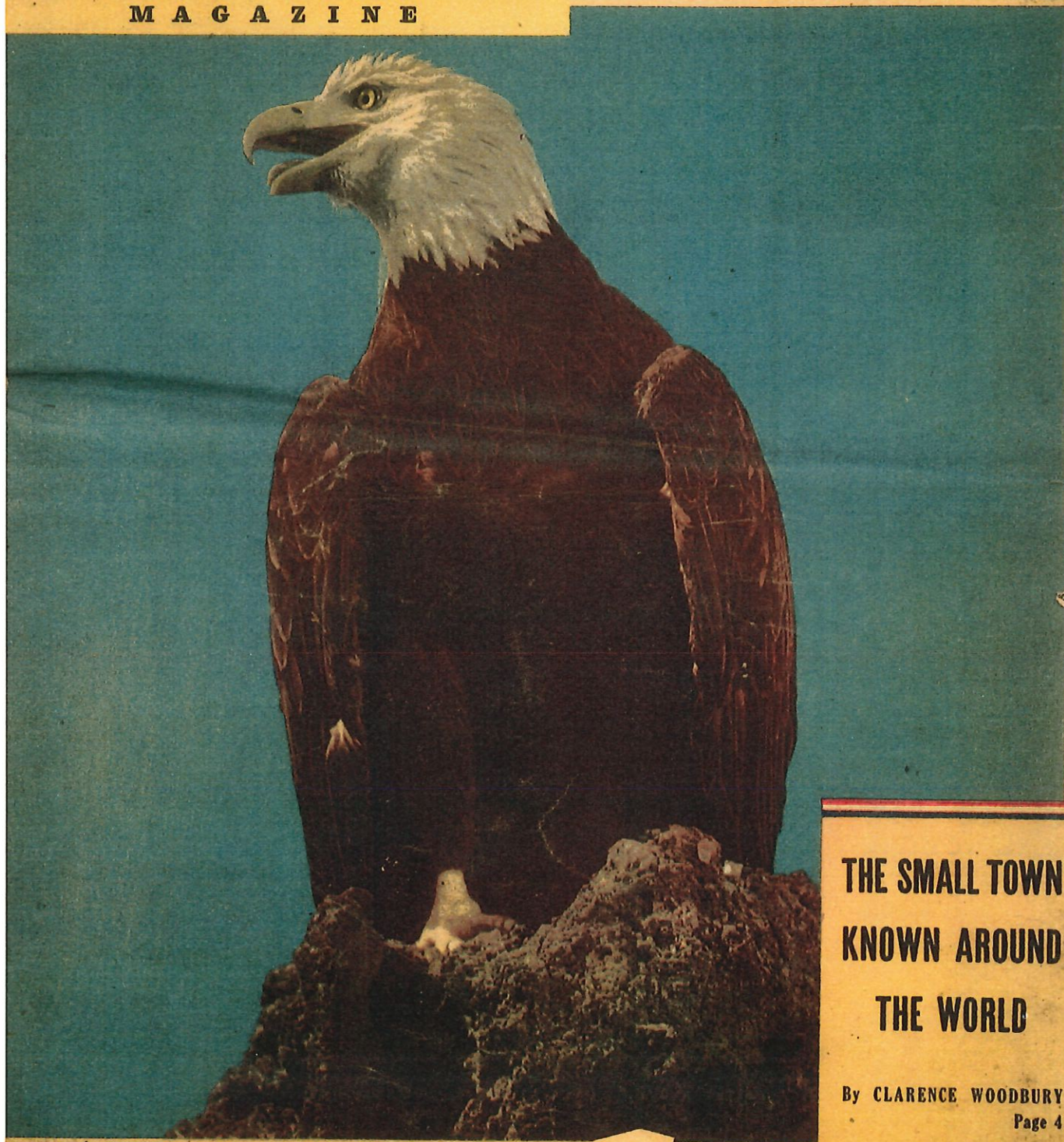
By CLARENCE WOODBURY
Page 4

This Week

MAGAZINE

Los Angeles Times

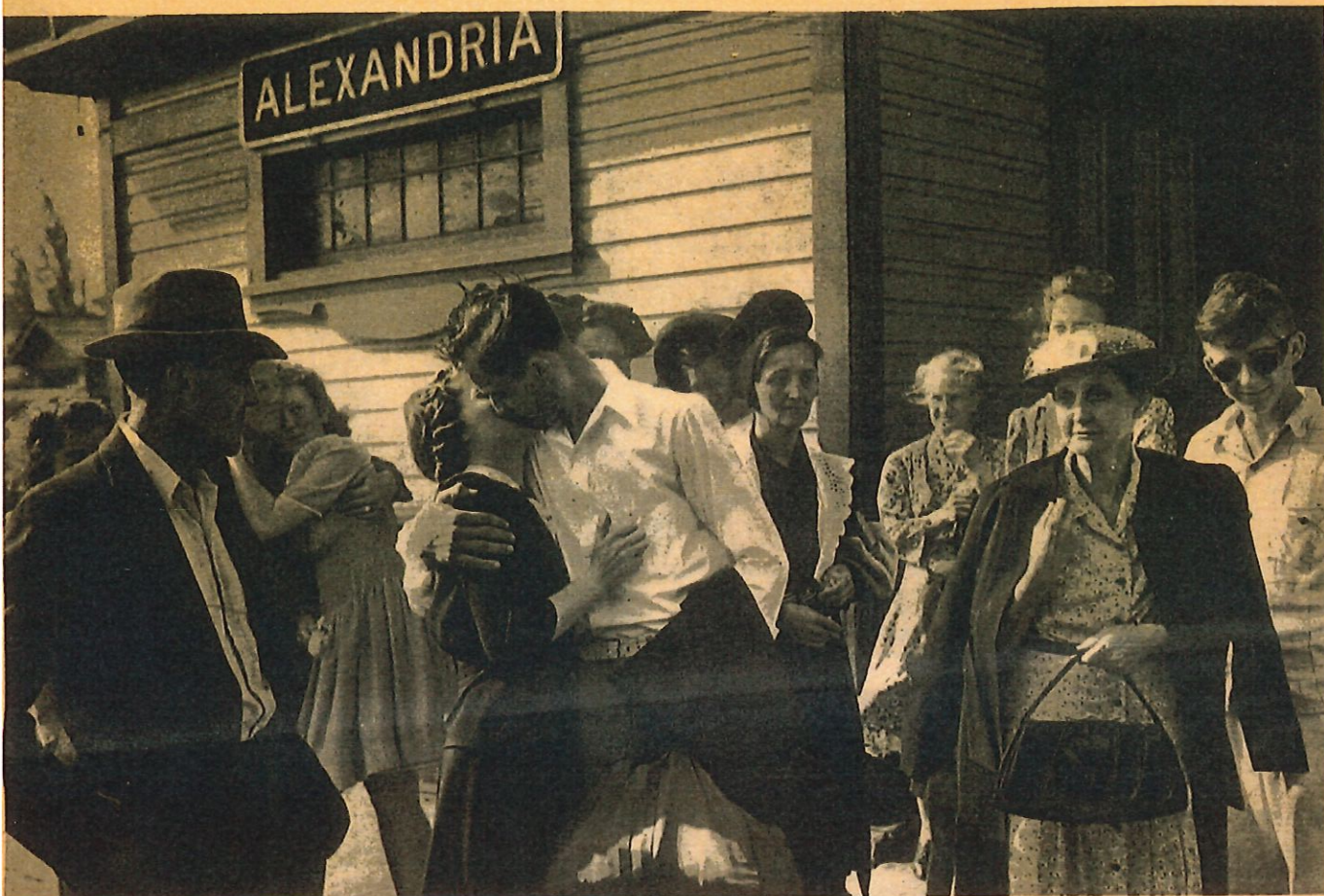
MAGAZINE SECTION • DECEMBER 31 1944



THE SMALL TOWN KNOWN AROUND THE WORLD

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Page 4

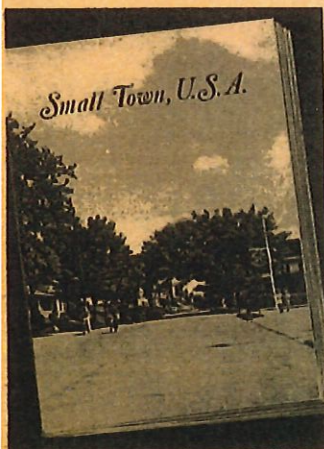
MEET AN AMERICAN: The bird that upset Hollywood. See Page 2



OFF TO BATTLE: Six hundred of the town's best boys have gone to war, while home folks work and wait

WHO EVER HEARD OF ALEXANDRIA?

BY CLARENCE WOODBURY



This pamphlet, printed in many languages by the Office of War Information, went around the world to tell about our folks

Few people in the U. S. — but this Indiana town is known to millions in other lands. Here we introduce it to America . . .

EVERY chamber of commerce in America has tried to put its town on the map. But Alexandria, Ind., got itself plastered all over the globe without even trying.

Alexandria attained global fame when the Office of War Information selected it as the typical American town and told the world about it in a booklet called "Small Town, U.S.A." The idea was to show foreigners what America is really like.

Thanks to the OWI, millions of Europeans and Orientals can now tell you about Alexandria. But the booklet has not been distributed here at home, and many Americans don't know what our most typical town is like. That is why the editor of THIS WEEK sent me to find out.

You can get to Alexandria by train, but if you're in a hurry, you board a bus in Indianapolis and travel 50 miles northward.

When I got off the bus, I asked one of

Alexandria's six policemen, Harry Daugherty, for the address of a hotel. He eyed me sharply, then replied: "There ain't no hotel, Mister. The lady that used to run one got into a fight with the city council and told 'em, 'A town like this don't deserve a hotel.' She sold out to a furniture store to spite 'em."

I left my bag at Mrs. Mary May's tourist home and went out to hunt for Mayor Harry DeMoss.

I found the Mayor, a brisk man of 40, in his hardware store.

Pocket-Sized America

ALEXANDRIA's fame, he assured me, didn't just come out of the grab-bag. The OWI surveyed hundreds of other towns first. But Alexandria is supported equally by agriculture and industry. Nearly all its 5,000 people are American-born. It has 600 men in the services, 1,000 adults in war industry. All this makes Alexandria typical.

Alexandria has a wide main street, pleasant small homes, a fine high school, a dowdy city hall, nine churches, almost as many bars. Most people work hard. Some save, others spend wildly. War has brought the town prosperity and unity. It has also brought loneli-

ness and sorrow. Alexandria is, in fact, America in pocket-size.

All kinds of people are doing jobs they never dreamed of. The superintendent of schools operates a drill press in his spare time. Farm women run tractors while their men work in war plants.

Old Sam Phillips, 87, is releasing a younger man to fight the Japs by keeping books eight hours a day at a bank, and has grown so cocky about it that he won't wear an overcoat except on the coldest days.

Then there is the 13-year-old waitress who brought me my steak at the Cozy Cafe. The steak was thin. But the proprietress, Mrs. Joseph Carruthers, was glad to have both it and the waitress. Her only other help is a woman of 65. Her cook is 64, her baker past 60.

Alexandrians of all ages are on the ball — and they are getting well paid for it.

Harry Adams, president of the Commercial Bank, told me that deposits have tripled in three years. Few workers are cashing in their War Bonds. This indicates that a lot of prudent souls are holding onto their money.

Across the street, however, at Bert Ross's Bar, I got a different picture. The bar was jammed three deep with working men and the

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cash register was jingling like a music box. "A lot of these guys used to make fifteen and twenty bucks a week," Bert explained. "Now they're getting fifty and sixty. Can you blame them if they feel like a little fun?"

The next day I talked with Mrs. Mervil Small, co-owner of the F. and M. Dress Shoppe. She took down a coat tagged \$68.98. "Going like hot cakes," she said significantly. "All the war workers are buying 'em."

Virtually everything else that's for sale is also going like hot cakes. Ernie Rothinghouse, a druggist, is worried. He told me a jewelry salesman had tried to get him to take a line of gold pins to sell for \$120 each. That burned Ernie up.

They Miss the Boys

"Some folks in this town could pay that much and never miss it," he snorted, "but they're not the ones'd buy. The others oughta be savin' for a rainy day."

Most Alexandrians aren't worrying too much about the future, however. They are worrying about those 600 boys scattered from Germany to the Philippines. Ten of the town's service flags already carry gold stars.

But if the families of the boys miss them, the girls miss them, too. Men are scarce in Alexandria. When an Aussie recently wrote to one of the girls whose picture he had seen in "Small Town, U.S.A.," she started a hot correspondence with the digger at once.

An eligible soldier or sailor home on furlough, gets the rush of his life. Jean Arnold, 18, pretty clerk at E. H. Bailey's drugstore, told me of a sailor who boasted over a coke that he intended to remain a bachelor for life. A young lady overheard him, took it as a challenge. Within a week they were married.

One girl even got her man by telephone. When her fiancé was to ship from the West Coast, she got a parson on the line. Ceremony took 14 minutes, cost \$10.

Wartime marriages have resulted in a bumper baby crop for Alexandria, and Dr. H. C. Runyan, the Health Officer, says he has never seen anything like the number of twins being born. He himself ushered six pairs into the world in the last few months.

Although "Small Town, U.S.A." doesn't mention it, Alexandria has had a juvenile delinquency problem. But Herbert Hughes, a farmer who once studied for the ministry, licked it by organizing a Kid Kanteen. It

rocked the town when he commandeered the Masonic Club for teen-age dances. No foot had twinkled on its polished floors in all its 30 years. But Hughes won his point, and as a result, he maintains, comparatively few of the kids now frequent juke joints.

On the whole, the town is united—and more neighborly now than in the past.

Not long ago the house of Mrs. Loraine Pate, a widow with three small children, burned down. The next Sunday morning, the town's businessmen, led by Dahl Stricler, an undertaker, marched out and started to work. With their own tools and building materials they fashioned a new house for Mrs. Pate. By sundown it was finished, equipped with furniture from the Elks' Club.

That's a story they like to tell in Alexandria. Another is what Kenny Koon's mother said when she heard that her marine son had been decorated by the President. Kenny, wounded, had held off a whole company of Japs with only a rifle, killed 31 of them.

When they brought the news to Mrs. Koon, she said, "I'm glad Kenny's safe, but I'm sorry he had to kill so many."

Mrs. Koon's attitude might seem strange to some of the 400,000,000 foreign readers of "Small Town, U.S.A." but it is typical of Alexandria. When the news of Pearl Harbor hit the town, citizens flocked to the churches to pray. They'll do the same thing on V day. Meanwhile they'll go on working.

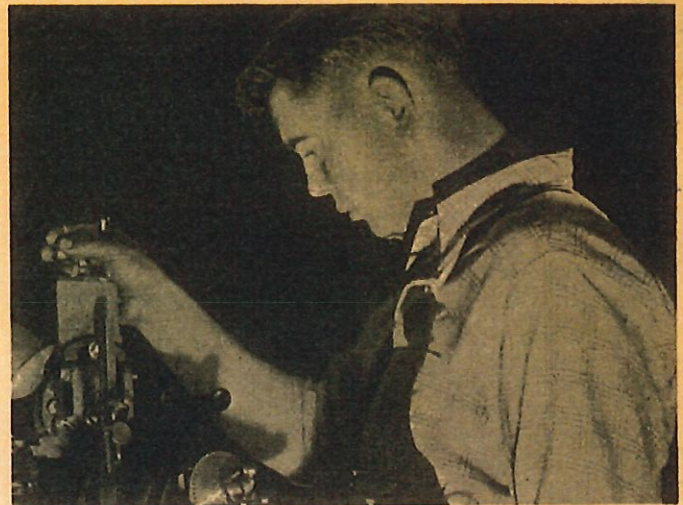
No War Weariness Here

ON MY last night in town I walked back to Mrs. May's along a quiet street, past small homes set well back from the sidewalk. Nobody in Alexandria ever draws the blinds.

In one home, children studied their lessons at a dining-room table. In another, a gray-haired woman knitted beside a stove while her husband wrote a letter. In a third, two girls played a piano duet.

All was well in this town which nobody knows much about—nobody except about 400,000,000 foreigners. Its townspeople were up to their necks in the war, but there was no real war weariness here. For there are deep wells of untapped strength and fortitude in the town. Alexandria can go on fighting for years. Hitler and Hirohito made their greatest mistake when they picked on the people of Alexandria—and their 130,000,000 neighbors.

The End



MACHINIST: Too young to fight, Melvin Carey cuts gears in a tool shop



NEWSWOMAN: Ruth N. Emshwiller, publisher, puts out the "Daily Times"



SNIPER Kenneth Koon got 31 Japs before his wounds sent him back home



POLICEMAN Daugherty helps keep peace at home while the boys are at war

Sunday

Chronicle Tribune

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COLUMN ONE



Ed Breen

Town preserves priceless history

A sparkling little gem of Americana tucked away for a half-century in Alexandria has been polished and put on display for what it is: a

rare and insightful look at who we are and how we live here in central Indiana.

And the credit has to go to a handful of people in Alexandria, particularly David and Nancy Steele, Barbara Ingram and Nancy Norris.

First things first: the gem is a 36-page booklet produced by the U.S. government's Office of War Information in the dark days of World War II, a propaganda piece that focused on Alexandria to tell the story of *Small Town, U.S.A.* to the rest of the world.

Alexandria, a town of 5,000 people, bisected by Ind. 9, is 15 miles south of Marion, and, as we find from the efforts of the Steeles, was and is a slice of Middle America that is worth a second look.

In 1943, as the largest war machine in human history churned out guns and planes and tanks and ships, it also produced mountains of propaganda, books and magazines and pamphlets intended to demoralize the enemy and idealize life in America.

"The book will stress neighborliness, middle-class comfort, religion and morals, and will counteract the impression given by the movies that most Americans are gangsters, cowboys or penthouse-dwelling millionaires," were the marching orders given to government photographer David Eisendrath and writer Betsy Emmons when they headed for Alexandria in 1943.

They did their job well. The 36-page magazine-format booklet rolled off the presses in November 1943. From the faded vantage point of today, it lacks only a snapshot of Ozzie and Harriet. It is filled with photos of people

This column is the opinion of the writer. Your response is encouraged. Public Letterbox and guest columns are available to express your thoughts and ideas.

See Town / Page A-2

FROM THE FRONT

From Town / Page One

going about their business. There is no pain (except for a politically correct photo of the grieving mother of a dead WWII soldier). There is no dissent. No diversity. No class or cultural struggle to be found.

Nancy Norris, Alexandria librarian and historian, has researched the project, and is largely responsible for a reprinting of the book 18 months ago. She found a muddled record of how many copies were handed out around the world. At least 60,000 were printed in at least three languages: English, Spanish and Afrikaans. It was circulated in South Africa, England, India, Iceland, Ireland . . . and maybe other places; the bureaucratic record is fuzzy on this, too.

Enter David and Nancy Steele.

He is an Alexandria dentist and in his youth worked for the Alexandria newspaper. She is a journalism graduate of Ball State University.

Both were familiar with the book, and they jointly agreed it was time to revisit the people and places that Eisendrath and Emmons had visited 50 years before.

They did. They returned, literally, to the very same spots where Eisendrath held his camera a half-century earlier.

They found much had changed . . . and much had not changed.

Indeed, the evidence of that is on the cover: the main street of Alexandria appears to have been visited by an Agent Orange raid at some time over the years.

And, of course, there are the people. Many are dead. Others, only children in 1943, found other homes in their adult lives.

But there is Ann Baker. On page 19 she was identified in 1943:

"Twelve-year-old Ann Baker is the daughter of an Alexandria banker. Her brother is in the Air Corps."

On page 19 in 1994, she is identified:

"Ann Baker Nelson remembers posing as a 12-year-old Girl Scout. She graduated from Alex High School in 1949, worked for the Indiana Employment Security Division, is married with four children and four grandchildren."

Ann Baker Nelson, the photographs tell us, has been treated kindly by the years.

Indeed, Alexandria has been treated fairly kindly by the years. The work of David Eisendrath and Betsy Emmons and David Steele and Nancy Steele tells us that.

(Both books, *Small Town, U.S.A.* and *Small Town, U.S.A., 1993-94* are available for \$12 each at Cox's Gift Shop on Harrison Street in Alexandria. Or, they may be ordered by mail for \$15 each by sending a check to 1112 S. Harrison St., Alexandria, Ind. 46001. Proceeds from the 1943 edition go to the Small Town U.S.A. Festival in Alexandria. Proceeds from the 1994 book will be used to purchase and plant trees in Alexandria.)

Ed Breen is the managing editor of the Chronicle-Tribune.



Alexandria in 1943



Alexandria in 1994



Alexandria-Monroe
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Alexandria-Monroe Public Library
117 East Church Street
Alexandria, IN 46001