

WORLD WAR I



MS: ... World War I. And at that time there was Camp Merrit over by Englewood.

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MS: My mother drove the boys to take them out just for the day and brought them home. So I was involved as a little girl with the soldiers who were being shipped to Europe. That was their last American post.

IN: Tell me about what—how your mother got involved with that.

MS: Well, she was—a lot of the women were involved then helping the boys.

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IN: What did she drive the boys to Camp Merrit with? Do you know?

MS: A Page.

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IN: So she'd go over and fetch the boys from Camp Merrit and bring them back to your home. And then what?

MS: Give them dinner. Whenever they could get off. She also drove them around the area. ...a lot—see, they came from all over—



DW: Oh, another community event I remember well was the big Liberty Bazaar at the station plaza when the entire town turned out to raise money for war bonds during World War I. ... Oh, that was beautiful. That—each one of our allies had a booth. There was English, British booth, and the French booth and the different ones. And we children were allowed to help. We were so thrilled. And at the French booth we served French ice cream, I remember. And it was a beautiful sight. The whole plaza was surrounded with these colorful, decorated booths, and it was very popular, a beautiful day.

DP: What did you do, particularly?

DW: Well, we had big things of ice cream and I scooped out ice cream and put it on dishes or a plate and ice cream cones and things. ... But that was fun. The banners were flying and there was a lot of patriotic fervor. We

were all excited. [laughs] But when you're children and you're given a responsibility, you're so serious, you don't notice much else

DP: ... Can you tell me what the town was like during World War I?

DW: That's right. I remember a church. When the first news came of the war casualties and Peter Ebben of Glen Rock, a member of our congregation, was the first soldier from this area that was killed. And I remember how sad we all felt and we all prayed for him. And of course, there were many patriotic rallies. I remember all the little parades ... The churches would have—there were benefits for war bonds and there were canvasses and pledges. My father joined the Home Guard. [laughs]

DP: And what was that? What did that entail?

DW: That was in case the Germans came over and bombed us the men—the older men would be on hand, all trained. They all trained. They all had to know how to shoot. [laughs]

DP: Where did they train?

DW: In—I think in Saddle River somewhere.

DP: Was it like a camp that they went to?

DW: Probably a camp but only like on a day. They wouldn't stay there. But we were so proud of my father because he was given a sharp shooter medal. [laughs]

DP: Grand.

DW: And he was all set for the enemy if the enemy came. [laughs] Oh, it was cute though.



MC: Oh, let me go back to World War I.

DP: All right, fine.

MC: [chuckles] Because this reminds me of it. We had a Home Guard in World War I because there seemed to be an idea that there were spies all around. I remember that was the first time that my mother said, "Never eat anything that anybody offers you without bringing it to me and showing it first," because they thought the Germans were going to kill off the children one by one, apparently. But the activity that I remember best was

when the men, my father's contemporaries, who all had Home Guard uniforms—

DP: Oh, my.

MC: —you know, that would—that funny hat, like the one that Pershing is always pictured in, and cocky uniforms. The Home Guard had them. And they guarded the water tower on Valley View. Do you know that water tower on Valley View? ... It's probably the highest one in Ridgewood. If there are others, I don't know where the other water towers are. ... Well, anyway, the men used to go up there and march around that stupid water tower [laughter] with their—and they had rifles—

DP: Oh, boy.

MC: —and wore those silly hats and I imagine drank beer.