

The Fifteenth Decade

Overview

This was a decade largely shaped by war. The decade began with World War II and ended with the start of the Korean War. It was a time of rationing. It was a time of shortages. For those who had suffered through the Great Depression of the previous decade, new challenges took the place of economic trials and tribulations. For many, it became a time of mourning as fathers, husbands, and sons lost their lives in warfare.

However, this decade was not all bad. The economy grew again, in part as a result of the economic stimulation produced by World War II. The United States emerged from World War II as the undisputed superpower among nations. And the City of Batavia resumed its growth, reaching a population of 17,799 in 1950 (“Genesee County Information,” *Richmond Memorial Library*, online, accessed 3 January 2014), an increase of 532 residents since 1940.

1: Infrastructure

Disposal of trash and garbage by means of a landfill was still well into the future. Instead, open sites, usually located within the City, remained the principal method for disposing of trash. For example, in 1941, *The Daily News* reported that a dump site on the Stroh property, located on the east side of River Street and under the supervision of the Department of Public Works, was now open to the public (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 February 1941). The author of this book can personally testify to the use of this location for a dump, having purchased the property 60 years later and being puzzled over the trash he found there among the undergrowth.

In September of 1948, a similar site on Oak Street was closed (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 21 September 1948). However, that was easily compensated for a month later when the City leased from the New York Central Railroad a large area on the east side of Cedar Street specifically for trash disposal (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 October 1948).

In February of 1949, Common Council approved an arrangement that allowed contractors “tin mining rights” at the Cedar Street dump. At the time, a “booming” market had made scrap dealers interested in salvaging metal. Under the arrangement, any approved contractor was

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also to be responsible for supervising the daily operation of the dump. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 February 1949)

There are no parking meters in Batavia as this book is being written. However, in the past, they were a popular means of controlling and profiting from parking. The use of meters appears to have begun in 1941 when Common Council authorized the purchase of a number of them for use on Batavia's streets (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 May 1941).

In 1947, City residents approved, by a vote of 3,734 to 931, the installation of equipment to soften the water. However, for a variety of reasons, the actual work was delayed for several years. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 October 1949) Finally, in the fall of 1950, the installation was completed (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 21 April 1950). This had the effect of extending the life of plumbing fixtures, reducing the amount of soap needed in doing laundry, and improving the experience of bathing. Batavia was the first community in the State with automatic water softening and many officials from around the State came to observe its operation (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y., Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 8).

Sumner Street was extended from Osterhout Avenue to Otis Street in 1946 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 June 1946). This resulted in moving at least one house to a new location (Larry Barnes, *Batavia's "Mobile Homes"* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2009] p. 34).

In 1948, the State proposed a roadway "arterial" project that ultimately would bring many changes to Batavia's main streets. Among the proposed changes was construction of a bridge connecting Pearl and Oak streets. Also proposed was the widening of Main, Clinton, Pearl, and Oak streets. The project proposals anticipated the still unbuilt New York State Thruway, referring to it as the "Ontario Thruway." None of these proposed changes took place in the current decade, but all of them were undertaken in the 1950s. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 July 1948)

2: Transportation

The Batavia area's first airstrip was Bogue's 40 acres off West Main Street. Later, an airstrip was built on Bank Street Road. Then, in 1944, the Burt Welch farm on State Street Road was chosen for an airport. By July 29th work was starting on the runways. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 July 1944) In late summer, the work evidently having been completed, over 3,000 people visited the new airport (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 September 1944).

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Beginning in October of 1945, the Batavia Motor Coach Line offered bus service to the Veterans Administration Hospital, including trips along Oak Street and Richmond Avenue. Then, the company bought two new buses in August of 1946, making it possible to serve a long loop along Main, Oak, North, Ross, Ellicott, and Buell streets. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 23)

According to a news item in *The Daily News* of May 21, 1946, some traffic lights were, for the first time, being operated all night (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 21 May 1946). Apparently there was the sense that insufficient traffic occurred to ordinarily warrant traffic signals in the middle of the night.

Remaining trolley tracks, unused for 20 years, were paved over in 1947 as East Main, Main, and West Main streets were resurfaced from Clinton Street to River Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 June 1947).

Fatal crashes at Batavia's many railroad crossings were, for decades, an unfortunate fact of life. Another such occurrence took place on February 25th, 1950 when four people were killed at the Swan Street crossing (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 25 February 1950). Because of these ongoing accidents, a campaign to move the railroad tracks to the periphery of the City had been underway for years. Nevertheless, the tracks continued to run through the central area of Batavia.

3: Housing

In 1941, just before the United States entered into World War II, Common Council lifted restrictions on multiple dwellings. Previously, there had been a limit of two families to a house. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 4 November 1941) It appears that this was a response to an influx of workers employed in defense-related manufacturing.

As direct U.S. involvement in World War II got underway, there soon was a shortage of construction material resulting in part from restrictions imposed by rationing. As a result, despite the more liberal policy adopted by Common Council in 1941, there was little or no new housing actually being developed in Batavia. In the face of a growing shortage of places to live, in September of 1944, the National Housing Agency lifted restrictions on Batavia property owners so they could more readily proceed with re-modeling of existing buildings for the purpose of providing additional apartments. Such work was to be free of the limitations heretofore imposed by wartime rationing. This action, long sought by the Batavia Chamber of Commerce, was described as the first step to providing needed housing for an estimated 30 to 50 families. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 28 September 1944) A month later, *The Daily News*

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reported that many property owners were getting permits to change their houses to multiple family dwellings (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 26 October 1944).

The return of servicemen at the end of World War II, their marriages, and the resulting “baby boom” resulted in a still greater need for housing. A survey conducted near the end of 1945 showed a need for an additional 250 to 300 houses in the City (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 17 November 1945).

The Daily News, in August of 1946, reported on plans for 40 new houses on Vine Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 19 August 1946). Two years later, the newspaper announced excavations on Grandview Terrace for 50 more homes (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 October 1948). Not all of the new housing was of conventional design. For example, a prefabricated house was erected at 17 Union Street in 1946 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 October 1946). And in 1948, a Vincent Schlum received a permit to build the smallest house ever in Batavia—a one story, 10 x 16 ft. cinderblock structure, at 332 Bank Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 17 June 1948). The building that Schlum built is still standing as this book is being written. However, the windows have been covered, the exterior now has white siding, and the structure appears to be used for storage. There are concrete steps to a front door, a flag stone path to the rear, and a rear door to a basement area.

Right after World War II, the pressure for housing, especially for veterans, was so great that extraordinary responses were made. In January of 1946, Common Council approved a “trailer colony” for veterans and their families in the area of the current MacArthur Park. It was to consist of 25 trailers supplied by the Federal Government. The City was to provide a building with laundry and toilet facilities. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 30 January 1946) It’s not clear whether such an installation was ever built. From all indications, it was not.

In April of 1946, Common Council approved a second form of veterans housing in the MacArthur Park area. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 April 1946). This housing was to consist of barracks brought from Niagara Falls. In this case, the housing definitely materialized. The first barracks arrived in early June. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 June 1946) The first family for this housing was chosen in October (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 October 1946). In December, the second barracks arrived, ready for occupancy on the 19th (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13 December 1946). In January of 1947, families were approved for a third set of barracks (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 29 January 1947). The barracks remained in place until the next decade.

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4: Energy sources

Batavians experienced energy shortages in 1946 and again in 1950. *The Daily News* reported a coal shortage in May of 1946. The mayor ordered certain actions by businesses to conserve electricity and appealed to the public for voluntary conservation in general. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 27 May 1946) Then, a natural gas shortage occurred in December of the same year. The gas supply to the Doehler-Jarvis plant was totally cut off for a short period. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 December 1946) In February of 1950, there again was a coal shortage. In this instance, rationing of local supplies became necessary. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 13, 24 February 1950) According to the sources cited above, both of the coal shortages were the result of strikes by coal miners with the one in 1946 exacerbated by a railroad walkout. The natural gas shortage supposedly was the result of excessive demand, but Common Council questioned that explanation and sought an investigation by the Public Service Commission. Whether such an investigation ever took place is not known.

5: Communication

Batavia's first and only commercial radio station, WBTA, began broadcasting on February 6th, 1941. It was initially on the air just from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. Broadcasting at 1490 megacycles then and now, it currently refers to itself as "one of America's two great radio stations."

Television was the newest form of communication. Batavia has never had a commercial television station, but several stations have broadcast from Buffalo and Rochester. The first station that Batavians could receive appears to have been WBEN-TV, Channel 4, Buffalo, N.Y. It went on the air ca. 1947. (*Buffalohistoryworks.com*, online, accessed 20 August 2014)

The first local television set was in the Cottage Restaurant on State Street. Installed in January of 1948, it reportedly cost \$2,500. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 January 1948) The first television set in a private home was acquired less than two months later by Elmer Adelman (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 March 1948). Both sets were black and white units. Color television was still many years into the future.

Long-distance telephone calls continued to require an operator to put the call through. In 1946, the Bell Telephone Company in Batavia employed 96 operators (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 December 1946).

Readers may recall that the first Batavia Post Office sign was painted in 1804 by Mary Stevens. Over the years, it disappeared only to be discovered ca. 1910. Then it disappeared

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again before reappearing ca. 1931. Apparently, the sign was lost a third time before surfacing in 1941 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 19 July 1941).

6: County, village, city boundaries

There were no changes in this decade.

7: Government, governing structure

There were no changes in this decade.

8: Crime, crime control, law enforcement

Efforts to discourage gambling remained a focus of the police department. In 1944, according to *The Daily News*, the police were starting to “clean up” punchboards, a lottery-like gambling device (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 June 1944). Local churches asked City leaders for a continued ban on slot machines (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 June 1946). Presumably they were pleased when, in March of 1948, *The Daily News* reported that the police had destroyed six tons of the machines (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 March 1948).

As of late 1946, there were 20 officers on the police force (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 December 1946)

Apparently for a variety of reasons, there was a high turnover of police chiefs. After having eight chiefs in only 19 years, in 1948 a search was underway to find yet another one. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 19 January 1948)

In this decade, the practice of running individuals out of town if they were deemed undesirable seems to have continued. On August 3rd, 1950, *The Daily News* reported that the police had escorted a “band of gypsies” from the City (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y. 3 August 1950).

For many decades, tramps had been lodged in the jail. In 1950, there was discussion about ending this practice. Some argued that the City was simply running a “free hotel.” (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 6 February 1950)

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9: Retail establishments/other commercial enterprises

Readers will recall from an earlier chapter a reference to City merchants establishing closing hours of 6 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays and a closing hour of 12:30 p.m. on Wednesdays. In 1948, the Merchants Council decided to permit Friday night shopping (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 4 May 1948).

10: Factories/industries

The Graham Manufacturing Company, a manufacturer of heat exchangers and surface condensers, began operations in New York City ca. 1936. The company moved the manufacturing part of its business to Batavia in 1942. Initially situated just on Howard Avenue, it eventually expanded to Florence Avenue as well. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 190)

11: Banking/financial services

There appear not to have been any significant local developments in banking or financial services in this decade.

12: Education

The first step toward the creation of a regional Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) was taken in 1948. Representatives of several area schools voted to request the State Commissioner of Education to authorize the establishment of such a board in the County. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 June 1948)

13: Religion

The Beth El Society, which had been organized in 1939, purchased a house at 124 Bank Street in 1945. The house was then rebuilt to serve as a temple. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 121 and *The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 August 1945)

The Rev. Jasper A. Myers had been pastor of the Emmanuel Baptist Church, but was asked to leave because of differences over doctrine. In 1946, Rev. Myers started the Grace Evangelical Church. In 1948, this new congregation acquired a building at 104 Bank Street that had been

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used by Adventists. In the same year, the name of the congregation was changed to “Grace Baptist Church.” (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 125)

14: Libraries/archives/museums

In 1941, the Holland Land Office Museum closed and the property was given to the Batavia Board of Education. The closing was largely the result of financial and heating problems. During World War II, the building was used by the local chapter of the American Red Cross. Then, in 1948, Genesee County assumed ownership and on September 7th, 1950, the museum was reopened to the public with the County Historian serving as the Director. (Virginia M. Barons, “100,000 Settlers In Western N.Y. By 1821,” *Tri-State Trader*, 20 January 1979, p. 29).

15: Cemeteries

There appear to have been no significant developments among the cemeteries in this decade.

16: Firefighting

In this decade, Batavia’s two existing fire stations were replaced with two new facilities. Station 2, located at 307 Ellicott Street, was replaced with a new building at 443 Ellicott Street. It began service on January 10th, 1948. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 17-18)

Also in 1948, Station 1 was moved from its Court Street location to the Municipal Building at 3 West Main Street (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 April 1948). The Municipal Building had a 175 ft. tall smoke stack that had been erected early in the century under the administration of Mayor Louis Wiard. Since the water works were no longer a part of the building and since there was no longer a municipal power plant there, either, this stack no longer served a purpose. Consequently, the top 100 ft. was removed (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 6 April 1948) and the remaining section was converted into a hose dryer (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 May 1948).

After the completion of the above relocations, as reported in *The Daily News* of November 16th, 1948, the old Court Street fire station was razed to the ground (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16 November 1948).

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At the end of this decade, the City Fire Department, along with volunteer fire companies across the County, entered into a mutual aid agreement (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 20 January 1949). Under this agreement, the fire companies provided coordinated assistance and shared coverage in instances of major fires.

17: Healthcare

In 1939, a polio outbreak had resulted in delayed opening of Batavia's schools. This occurred again in 1944 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 30 August 1944).

For over 30 years, Batavia had always had two hospitals serving the community. Periodically the need for more than one was brought into question. However, when the matter came up for discussion in 1943, the on-going obstacle to any possible consolidation was again revealed when St. Jerome stated, as it had in 1920, that a merged hospital in Batavia was acceptable only if it were run by the Sisters of Mercy (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 October 1943; Larry Barnes, *A Brief History of Batavia's Public Hospitals* [Batavia, N.Y.: self-published, 2013] p. 9). Thus, the two hospitals continued in competition with one another.

In 1944, the Board of the Batavia Hospital voted to replace the old main building with a new one. Construction started in 1949. Similarly, the Board of St. Jerome Hospital voted to replace the original two houses with a 6-story main building and to add a 4-story wing to balance the structure erected in 1922. Ground was broken in 1947. Batavia Hospital received a Federal grant of \$563,141 and St. Jerome Hospital received a nearly identical Federal grant of \$556,766. Construction in both cases continued into the next decade.

In 1946, Common Council abolished the City Doctor position. Since the City Welfare Department was being eliminated, there was no longer a need for a physician to care for welfare recipients. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 October 1946)

18: Care of the handicapped, aged, poor, and young

In 1944, one of Batavia's oldest residents, Mrs. Josephine P. Rupprecht, died and left in her will provisions for an orphanage. The orphanage, to be erected on property at 14 and 16 Ellicott Street, was to be for girls under 16 years of age. The intention was to limit the number of residents to four or five and to create a home-like atmosphere in contrast to an institutional type setting. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 June 1944) For unknown reasons, the orphanage was never built.

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Also in 1944, plans to develop a child care center were dropped. The center would have provided wartime working mothers with a place for their children while the mothers were at work. The Genesee County War Council recommended dropping the idea when it was determined that only nine children would actually be served. Most parents were obtaining satisfactory care for their children by other means. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 June 1944)

On August 7th, 1946, the County took over all welfare cases previously the responsibility of the City (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 7 August 1946).

19: Disasters

Batavia has experienced flooding conditions on a number of occasions. However, the flood of 1942 is generally regarded as the worst by far. In March of that year, there was already a significant amount of snow on the ground when a big storm dropped heavy snow on the 15th. Then the temperatures began to rise on the 16th and rain started to fall. The result was flooding on the Tonawanda that spread throughout the south side. Flood waters also entered West Main Street, beginning at the Walnut Street bridge, and moved up side streets to the north. As residents were flooded out of their homes, the Red Cross found temporary lodging for 225 families. The YMCA and school buildings provided shelter for many. When the water subsided, as people returned to their homes, they found basements full of water and first floor interiors ruined. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 243) Fortunately, one of Batavia's chief industries, Doehler-Jarvis, escaped flood damage although only narrowly (*The Daily News*, 24 November 1944).

20: Entertainment and recreation

Readers will recall from earlier chapters that boating on the Tonawanda was once a major form of recreation. However, by the 1940s, that was no longer the case and hadn't been for some time. In 1942, *The Daily News* reported that the City was removing old, unused boat houses along the creek (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 10 September 1942).

Also in 1942, another reminder of times past was razed, this time the bandstand in Ellicott Square (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 26 May 1942).

In earlier times, the State Park south of the State School for the Blind, today called "Centennial Park," had carriage paths, among other features. In 1947, the State School closed

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the paths “below Richmond Avenue.” They were dug up and the ground seeded. However, paths in the eastern “wing” of the Park and around the “natural amphitheater,” along with the bridle path, remained in place. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 26, 27 July 1947)

The Batavia Symphony Orchestra, later the Genesee Symphony Orchestra, was organized in 1947 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 14 June 1947; Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 151-152).

Also in 1947, the Genesee-Monroe Racing Association purchased the Fairgrounds (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 February 1947). The Association then built a new grandstand, added a clubhouse and more stables, and renamed the track, “Batavia Downs,” (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 161).

21: War, impact of war

In the last chapter, note was made of the first military draft in Batavia, an action which led to 25 young men receiving draft notices in November of 1940. By February of 1941, departing World War II draftees were regularly being given patriotic escorts to the train station in what became a standard practice in the City (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 February 1941). The next year, according to a report in *The Daily News*, Elizabeth Harper became the first woman from the City to go into the Army (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 July 1942). Before World War II was over, hundreds of local residents saw service in the armed forces.

Captured German and Italian soldiers were both interned in the Genesee County area. However, perhaps because of the large population of Batavians with Italian ancestry, the newspaper seemed to carry more information about Italian prisoners of war. In September of 1943, *The Daily News* reported that Italian soldiers were being housed at the County Fairgrounds (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 17 September 1943). The next month, according to a newspaper account, the prisoners were put to work in the canning factory and were said to be happy to be working outside their stockade (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 4 October 1943). Then, in January, *The Daily News* reported that Italian prisoners of war had been sent to work at U.S. Gypsum (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 January 1944). The only record of the German prisoners found in newspaper accounts was one from early 1946 stating that all such men had left the area, having worked on farms, and, for the most part, having been quartered at a prisoner of war camp in Attica (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 February 1946).

Civilians were affected in many different ways in World War II. One example was periodic blackouts. During blackouts, residents were directed to turn off or shade lights in a manner

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that would make it difficult for enemy aircraft to identify populated areas. The City's first blackout test was conducted on January 4th of 1942 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 5 January 1942). The last blackout test was in mid-1944 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 6 June 1944).

Scrap drives were conducted during the war (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 July 1941). As mentioned in the last chapter, the W.C.T.U. fountain that had been at Main and Jackson streets may have disappeared in one such drive.

During World War II, many people cultivated what were termed "Victory Gardens," either in their own backyards or on land offered for that purpose by Common Council. Such gardens were intended to supplement the rationed supplies sold in grocery stores. There were Victory Garden shows at the Farm-Home Center in 1944 and 1945. They were sponsored by Melvin Merton, a 4-H Club leader. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] P. 349)

Rationing of both food and gasoline occurred. On May 1st of 1942, *The Daily News* reported that ration cards for gasoline had arrived and that rationing of fuel was about to start (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 1 May 1942). Shortly afterwards, sugar ration regulations were published (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 2 May 1942). Meat, butter, and cheese rationing began on March 29th of 1943. When some drivers appeared to be engaging in pure pleasure driving, the Ration Board warned that violators of the decree against such driving would lose some of their coupons (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 18 June 1943). The positive side of gasoline rationing was a 50 to 75% reduction in traffic and a drop of one-third in the number of accidents (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 8 September 1942). Rationing generally ended in 1945 with, for example, rationing of gasoline ending in August (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 August 1945) and rationing of meat and butter ending in November (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 23 November 1945).

During the war, rent controls were imposed in the County (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 16, 18 September 1942). They weren't lifted until January of 1950 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y. 5 January 1950).

Civilian volunteers served as aircraft spotters who watched for enemy aircraft. The first spotters were organized in October of 1941 (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 October 1941). An observation post was set up at the baseball park on Denio Street near Bank (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 103). When the aircraft spotters ended their service in 1944, they had devoted a total of 25,734 hours to their duties (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 22 June 1944).

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Local industry, as was true of industry across the country, turned much of its production to the war effort. For example, Doehler-Jarvis manufactured incendiary bombs, some of which were dropped on Tokyo (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 March 1945).

Near the end of World War II, the City received three shelters for hitch-hiking servicemen who were “thumbing” for rides (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 30 March 1945).

Germany surrendered on May 7th, 1945. Then, when word came on August 14, 1945 that Japan had also surrendered, a great spontaneous celebration broke out in Batavia. The streets filled with cheering residents, church bells rang, vehicle horns blew, and, in the words of one onlooker, it was like “New Year’s Eve times one-thousand.” An official celebration followed the next day when stores, manufacturing plants, banks, and City Hall closed down. Festivities began at 5:00 p.m. in MacArthur Park following a parade from City Hall. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 15 August 1915) In many respects, the response was almost identical to that marking the end of World War I.

By the end of World War II, 170 men from Genesee County had lost their lives, nearly three times the figure from World War I (Deaths listed on the War Memorial at the corner of Bank Street and Washington Avenue, viewed 22 August 2014).

Peace for Americans lasted only briefly. In 1950, the United States was at war again, this time in Korea. The first group of men leaving for service in the Army departed Batavia in August of 1950. In contrast to World Wars I and II, no ceremony or parade marked their departure. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 12 September 1950) More information about this conflict, in which another 28 Genesee County residents lost their lives, will follow in the next chapter.

22: Families, persons of note

Throughout most of its history, Batavia has been a virtually all-White community. Ruth McEvoy pointed out that there were no Black families here before the 1940s with apparently just one exception. That exception was the family of Anderson Washington. A daughter, Catherine Washington Wallace, graduated from Batavia High School in 1930. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] pp. 254-255) Beginning in the 1940s, Batavia’s racial make-up began a gradual change.

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23: Private clubs/social organizations/service organizations/non-profit groups providing services

In 1945, Batavia had 26 Girl Scout troops with a total of 442 members (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 3 March 1945).

The Batavia Branch of the American Association of University Women received its charter in December of 1945 (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 154).

The Batavia Lions Club was formed in the spring of 1946. Its chief service was to the blind and handicapped. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 158).

In July of 1948, the local Optimist Club was formed. Its chief aim was service to boys. (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 159).

The Batavia Society of Artists organized in January of 1950 (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 152). The St. Nicholas Club also started about 1950 (Ruth M. McEvoy, *History of the City of Batavia* [Batavia, N.Y.: Hodgins Printing Co., Inc., 1993] p. 162)

24: Sex/sexual services/sexual entertainment

In previous decades, police concern about sexual conduct was focused on local prostitutes and houses of prostitution. In this decade, a new concern seemed to emerge—something called “sexual delinquency.” After an apparent assault in April of 1944, thirty young people were interrogated according to District Attorney Wallace J. Stakel. The individuals involved were males and females ranging in age from 13 to 28. Stakel said the “conditions...uncovered...remind one of stories appearing in national magazines about victory girls, cuddle bunnies and other young unfortunates.” Ten cases were sent to Children’s Court and five individuals were committed as wayward minors. Blame was placed on parents for failing to keep their young people off the streets at night and under close supervision. The “sexual delinquency” was said to be throughout the County and, contrary to rumors, not limited to any one particular school. The District Attorney called upon parents to act at once. (*The Daily News*, Batavia, N.Y., 24 April 1944)

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The specific behaviors encompassed by the “sexual delinquency” in question were never spelled out in the newspaper accounts, but they presumably included sexual intercourse and/or other types of sexual activity between unmarried individuals, some of whom were minors. This interpretation is suggested by Stakel’s reference to being reminded of victory girls. According to the *Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood in History and Society*, a “victory girl” was generally a teenaged girl or young woman who exhibited her patriotism by offering companionship, and often sex, to servicemen during World War II (“Victory Girls,” *Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood in History and Society*, online, accessed 25 August 2014). In any event, Batavians evidently had a new worry, at least in the eyes of the District Attorney.

25: Urban renewal

There was no urban renewal in this decade.