

THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL EFFECTS
OF WORLD WAR II ON
THE CITY OF MACOMB,
AND MCDONOUGH COUNTY, ILLINOIS

An Abstract of
A Thesis
Presented to the
Department of History
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In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Michael T. Bennett

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to examine how America's involvement in World War II affected life in Macomb and McDonough County. Many aspects of wartime life are analyzed to detect changes brought about by the war. The effects of the war fall into three broad categories: economic, social, and participation in the national war effort. This thesis attempts to demonstrate how the unique characteristics of the local area affected the wartime experiences of local residents.

One chapter is devoted to each of these broad categories. Chapter I examines the impact of the war on the local economy and how these effects differed between the local area and the nation as a whole. Attention focuses on changes in the agricultural, industrial, and commercial sectors of the economy brought about by the war. The second chapter focuses on social changes within the community during the war. Changes in population characteristics, housing, crime, race, and education are analyzed and put into the context of changes nationwide. The third chapter centers on local participation in the war effort, and how this participation compared to that of the nation. Included in this chapter are discussions of rationing, scrap drives, military participation, bond sales, and civil defense issues.

By examining historical events from a local perspective, studies such as this point out the differences as well as the similarities in the experiences of different segments of the American population. Such works help provide a richer and more complete understanding of the American experience in World War II.

APPROVAL PAGE

This thesis by Michael T. Bennett is accepted in its present form by the Department of History of Western Illinois University as satisfying the thesis requirement for the degree Master of Arts.



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ii

TABLE OF CONTENTSiii

LIST OF TABLES iv

INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPTER

 I. THE ECONOMIC EFFECTS 3

 II. THE SOCIAL EFFECTS 45

 III. THE EFFECTS OF THE NATIONAL WAR EFFORT 75

CONCLUSION 101

BIBLIOGRAPHY 104

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
1. Deposits in Macomb Banks, 1940-1945	5
2. Percentage Increase in Bank Deposits, 1941-1945	6
3. Number of Retail Outlets, 1939-1948	9
4. Total Sales and Employees in Retail Establishments, 1939-1948	9
5. Percent of Total Illinois R.O.T. Paid by McDonough County Vendors, 1939-1948	12
6. U.S. Unemployment Rates: Civilian Labor Force, 1939-1948	14
7. McDonough County Relief Cases, 1940-1944	18
8. U.S. Farm Population	21
9. Farm Tenancy and Ownership, 1940-1945	24
10. Percentage of Farms with Certain Facilities, 1940-1945	26
11. Value of Farms, 1940-1945	33
12. Percentage Increases in the Value of Farm Machinery and Livestock, 1940-1945	34
13. Production of Three Major Crops, 1940-1945	35
14. Value of Livestock Sold, 1940-1945	37
15. Number of Farm Animals on McDonough County Farms, 1940-1945	38
16. U.S. Population, 1930-1950	46
17. I.D.P.H. Population Estimates for McDonough County, 1940-1949	47
18. Marriage Rates per 1,000 Population, 1939-1949	50
19. Divorce Rates per 1,000 Population, 1941-1946	51

20. Birthrates per 1,000 Population, 1940-194652
21. Number of Fines in Macomb City Courts, 1941-194655
22. Fines for Intoxication in Macomb City Courts, 1941-1946	56
23. Number of Teachers, Average Salaries in McDonough County Schools, 1939-1949	66
24. Emergency Teaching Certificates Issued in Illinois, 1939-1949	67
25. McDonough County School Enrollment, 1939-1949	69
26. McDonough County Bond Purchases during the Eight Bond Drives	91

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is an examination of the effects of World War II on the city of Macomb and McDonough County. These effects can be divided into three categories: economic, social, and participation in the national war effort. This study seeks to demonstrate how the daily lives of local residents were changed by America's involvement in the war.

The importance of this study lies in the examination of this area as a test case for generally held assumptions about the effects of the war on the home front. An important element of this investigation is how the impact of the war and the unique characteristics of this area interacted to shape the wartime experiences of the local populace. The varied effects of the war on individual areas of the nation can be partially explained by local conditions. Unique to the local area was the presence of nearby Camp Ellis, a large Army training camp. Many differences between the wartime experiences at the national and local levels are tied to the effects of this camp.

Many primary and secondary sources were consulted in order to compare life on the home front nationally to life on the home front locally. In many ways life in this area was typical of the nation as a whole; in other ways it was different. Macomb can, to a certain degree, be seen as a

boom town. While the changes thrust upon it were not as dramatic as in many true boom towns, such as Seneca, Illinois, the population of which increased more than five-fold between 1942 and 1945, the influx of large numbers of outsiders connected with the camp did bring an above average level of prosperity to the area.¹

This work is not intended as a comprehensive study of the wartime experience of Macomb and McDonough County. Rather, it is an examination of how the war altered selected aspects of life in the area, and how these changes compare to those of the nation as a whole. Studies such as this are valuable tools in the study of life in this country during World War II; they illustrate the regional differences as well as the similarities of life on the home front.

CHAPTER I

The United States of America underwent profound economic changes as a result of World War II. Generally, the war years were a time of increased prosperity for the American people. This increased prosperity, however, was by no means uniformly distributed across the nation. In his study of the home front, Eric Johnston describes the situation succinctly.

For in this nationwide mobilization there is no chance to maintain the status quo. If strategy and geography do not thrust a community into the maelstrom of war activity, its resources will be drained into other areas where they can better serve the national interest.²

Macomb and McDonough county were thrust into that "maelstrom of war activity" in part by the construction of a huge Army installation in the area and also by a modest amount of war production. This facility, named Camp Ellis, which opened in April 1943, occupied 17,750 acres, included almost 2000 buildings, and had a maximum capacity of 40,000 soldiers. In addition to American servicemen, the camp also held as many as 2,500 German prisoners of war. The presence of the camp affected many aspects of the lives of area residents and had a profound effect on the overall economy

of the area by helping to increase employment. Also, many families received additional income by renting rooms in their home to boarders connected with the camp. The influx of such people, in turn, helped increase the volume of business of local proprietors.³

The business community in McDonough County, as in the rest of the nation, was subjected to changes wrought by the demands of war production and the shortage of civilian goods. This was particularly true for Macomb, the county seat and largest city in the area. Businesses prospered or failed, in part, according to whether or not they obtained government contracts. As bank records reveal, local residents were able to save money as never before due to the new wartime prosperity. Two banks operated in Macomb during the war, Union National Bank and Citizen's National Bank. As Table 1 demonstrates, annual deposits of these banks increased substantially throughout the war years and suggest

a growing prosperity of area residents.

**Table 1.- Deposits in Macomb Banks,
1940-1945**

Year	Deposits
1940	\$ 3,468,132
1941	4,647,643
1942	7,049,759
1943	10,926,630
1944	14,252,822
1945	15,632,546

Source: Macomb Daily Journal, 4 January 1941;
7 January 1943, 2; 15 January 1944, 2; 6
January 1945, 3; 5 January 1946, 8.

The percentage increase in Macomb bank deposits far outstripped the national average for the years 1941-1944. The differential increase for 1942 is especially significant; Macomb deposits rose 51.7 percent while the national increase was only 5.7 percent (see Table 2).

Table 2.- Percentage Increase in Bank Deposits, 1941-1945

Year	Macomb Banks	U.S. Banks
1941	25.4	10.4
1942	51.7	5.7
1943	55.0	29.8
1944	9.7	20.0
1945	1.8	17.4

Sources: Macomb Daily Journal, 4 January 1941, 2; 7 January 1943, 2; 15 January 1944, 2; 6 January 1945, 3; 5 January 1946, 8; Craf, A Survey of the American Economy, 1940-1947, 26.

This disparity between local and national savings rates can be attributed to factors related to Camp Ellis. For example, the presence of more potential depositors, in the form of soldiers, camp workers, and family members who moved with them into the area, virtually assured a greater increase in deposits than could be expected in areas not so affected. Citizen's National Bank even opened a branch at the camp to better serve the needs of those associated with the facility.⁴

Camp Ellis began winding down operations in late 1944, and by January of 1945 almost all camp personnel were gone. This demobilization adversely affected the growth of local bank deposits which rose only 9.7 percent in 1944, compared with the national increase of 20.0 percent. This marked the first year since the war started that the national growth rate surpassed that of Macomb banks. In 1945 deposits

nationally rose 17.4 percent compared to a meager 1.8 percent for Macomb (See Table 2). Citizen's National Bank deposits actually fell during 1945, by slightly more than 4 percent. This decline was undoubtedly due to the demise of the bank's Camp Ellis branch. Overall, deposits in Macomb banks increased by 379.8 percent between 1940 and 1945, compared to a national average total savings increase of 113.5 percent. Obviously, in terms of money earned and saved, Macomb bank depositors did very well during the war years.⁵

Like the banking industry, the nation's business community saw a substantial increase in profits. War-time conditions, however, tended to favor big businesses rather than small ones. Many smaller companies closed down during the war because they were unable to obtain scarce supplies needed to run their operations. This was particularly true for small manufacturers that produced civilian goods, and who lost out to defense contractors because of the priority given them for production materials by wartime agencies.⁶

From 1933 until the beginning of the war, the total number of business concerns in the United States rose slightly. This trend reversed itself during the war when 324,000 businesses ceased operations between 1940 and 1945. This represented fully 10% of the businesses in America in 1940. Hardest hit were the areas of retail trade, service providers, and construction, all areas in which small

business was heavily represented, and which could not convert to war work. Due to demand for defense related goods created by the war, manufacturing fared much better than other sectors. Consequently, the number of firms involved in manufacturing increased throughout the war years.⁷

Nationally, business did well during the war. The failure rate (the number of business failures per 10,000 enterprises) declined steadily throughout the war years. This rate stood at 63 in 1940, had dropped to 16 in 1943, and reached its lowest point, 4, in 1945. At the same time, industrial production rose 96 percent, 17,000,000 new jobs were created, and after-tax corporate profits more than doubled.⁸

The city of Macomb showed a gain of five businesses between 1939 and 1948, in contrast to Illinois and McDonough County, which posted losses. Although detailed data for Macomb for 1940 and 1945 do not exist, detailed information is available for the years 1939 and 1948 from the Census of Business, which makes possible comparisons of national, state, and local business conditions in 1939 and 1948. Data on numbers of retail stores suggest that McDonough County and Illinois both lost about about 5 percent of their stores, while the number of operations in the city of Macomb actually increased (see Table 3).

Table 3.- Number of Retail Outlets, 1939-1948

	1939	1948	% Change
Illinois	109,132	103,405	-5.3
McDonough County	405	403	-5.0
Macomb	165	170	+3.0

Sources: U.S. Census of Business, 1939, vol. I, part 3, 512-13.; U.S. Census of Business, 1948, vol. VII, part 3, 12.02, 12.04.

The total number of stores, however, do not tell the whole story. Increases in total retail sales and average yearly number of employees were greater in both Macomb and McDonough County than in the state of Illinois (see Table 4). Since the census figures extend beyond the war years, however, these data cannot provide conclusive evidence that the impressive growth of local retailers was due to the impact of war-time conditions.

Table 4.- Total Sales and Employees in Retail Establishments, 1939-1948

	1939		1948		% Increase	
	Sales	Empl.	Sales	Empl.	Sales	Empl.
Illinois	2.86 bil.	332,003	8.8 bil.	474,493	208.04	42.92
McDonough County	7.69 mil.	856	28.78 mil.	1,487	274.25	73.71
Macomb	4.89 mil.	558	16.82 mil.	985	243.97	76.52

Sources: U.S. Census of Business, 1939, vol. I, part 3, 512-13.; U.S. Census of Business, 1948, vol. VII, part 3, 12.02, 12.04.

Although the data are also unable to prove that the core of this growth even occurred during the war years, it is highly suggestive. Putting these figures together with other available information about the area, notably the influx of new consumers connected with Camp Ellis, leads to the reasonable conclusion that both Macomb's and McDonough County's retail business flourished, compared to the state as a whole, during the war years. The main reason area retail business showed more growth than the state between 1939-1948 stems, no doubt, from the economic boost given to this area by the location of Camp Ellis in its midst.

Annual state sales tax receipts, which are of course tied directly to total retail sales, offer another measure of the relative prosperity of retail businesses. The Illinois Retailer's Occupation Tax (R.O.T.) was the sales tax paid by Illinois retailers and payment equaled their total sales multiplied by the state sales tax rate. Through fiscal year 1941, this rate was 3 percent; beginning with fiscal year 1942, the rate fell to 2 percent.⁹

The Annual Reports of the Illinois Department of Finance, and later of the Department of Revenue for the war years, list by county the number of business enterprises paying this tax, the amount of tax collected, and what percent of the total tax collected the tax paid represented. These data also indicate the number of Illinois retail businesses declined throughout the war years; the number of

businesses paying the tax increased slightly through fiscal 1942 to 145,720, then declined sharply to a low of 119,465 for fiscal 1944. In 1945, the number of businesses showed only a modest rise of 159, and then rose steadily following the war.¹⁰

The situation in McDonough County basically paralleled that of the state, with the number of local tax-paying businesses rising prior to America's entrance into the war. Once America entered the war, this number began dropping. The county posted a loss of 17 vendors, dropping from 615 to 598 in fiscal 1942 and continued to decline steadily until fiscal 1946. In that year the number of retailers jumped by 32, from a low of 472 in 1945 and continued to rise after the war.¹¹

Although the number of retailers in McDonough County declined as the war progressed, existing evidence suggests that business was good for those who remained in business following 1942. The percentage of the total R.O.T. collected from McDonough County businesses reflected the level of activity at Camp Ellis. As table 5 shows, the percentage collected actually dropped until fiscal year 1943. The next year, when Camp Ellis was operating at its peak, this percentage began to rise significantly, and dropped again only in 1946 as operations at Camp Ellis wound down. Its rise after that point, most likely was due to the rapid expansion of Western Illinois State Teacher's College which

occurred at that time.¹²

**Table 5.- Percent of Total Illinois Retailers
Occupation Tax Paid by McDonough County
Vendors, 1939-1948**

Year	Percent	Year	Percent
1939	.28	1944	.30
1940	.26	1945	.30
1941	.26	1946	.28
1942	.25	1947	.29
1943	.27	1948	.31

Source: Illinois Department of Finance, Annual Reports, 1939-1943; Illinois Department of Revenue, Annual Reports, 1944-1948.

It is obvious from both state and federal reports that the surviving McDonough County retailers did well in relation to other retailers in Illinois after 1942. The rise in the percentage of R.O.T. paid by McDonough County retailers seems even more impressive given McDonough County had 23.3 percent fewer retailers in 1945 than in 1941, while the state as a whole lost only 16.6 percent of its total retailers during this same period.¹³

America's participation in World War II also served to radically reduce the unemployment problem in McDonough County, as it did throughout the nation. In the two year period between December 1940 and December 1942, the number of unemployed workers in the U.S. dropped from 7,000,000 to 1,600,000.¹⁴

The national unemployment rate had begun to drop gradually as early as 1934, after having hit a high of 24.9 percent of the civilian labor force in 1933. It rose again, however, in 1938. When large defense contracts began to be awarded in 1940, the rate decreased steadily to an all-time low of 1.2 percent in 1944. The end of the war brought about a slight rise in unemployment, but the large postwar increase in the number of jobless Americans, envisioned by many, failed to materialize.¹⁵

Since data on unemployment was compiled only for the nation's larger cities, figures for McDonough County and Macomb do not exist for the war years. Several factors, however, indicate that unemployment decreased locally during the war. First, Camp Ellis generated jobs for area workers; many local people were hired to work on the base in civilian positions or worked for businesses which served the base or its personnel.¹⁶

The revitalization of area industry during the war created additional jobs. Two previously closed factories, the Hemp and Dickey plants, were under consideration in June of 1940 as possible war production sites. Local congressman Anton J. Johnson arranged for a survey of the two plants to be conducted by the Ordinance Department. It was noted that the Hemp Manufacturing Company's plant was already equipped for sheet metal work and had previously manufactured bomb casings under federal contract.¹⁷

Table 6.- U.S. Unemployment Rates: Civilian Labor Force, 1938-1949

Year	Percent Unemployment	Year	Percent Unemployment
1938	19.0	1944	1.2
1939	17.2	1945	1.9
1940	14.6	1946	3.9
1941	9.9	1947	3.9
1942	4.7	1948	3.8
1943	1.9	1949	5.9

Source: Historical Statistics of the United States from Colonial Times to 1970, p. 135.

The Hemp plant met a federal need and was reopened with the help of a \$60,000 loan from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. Congressman Johnson was credited with getting the loan cleared in Washington. Employment at the plant was expected to increase within 90 days, from 30 to approximately 200 workers, due to the acquisition of two war contracts by the company. Both contracts were for bomb fins. One, for \$80,000, was awarded to the company directly by the government. The other, for \$300,000, was subcontracted to the Hemp company by the Edward Budd Company of Philadelphia. The Dickey plant, also under consideration by the U.S. Ordnance Department, did not fare as well. It was not awarded any war-related government contracts and, in August of 1940, the company announced that the plant would be demolished.¹⁸

The Illinois Electric Porcelain Company of Macomb, which manufactured porcelain pipe which was used by the chemical warfare division of the War Department, also profited from the war. According to congressman Johnson, this division had been using "tremendous quantities of the pipe." The use of this pipe was also investigated by a Senate Agricultural Sub-Committee as a possible substitute for steel pipe in the construction of grain alcohol plants, which were used for developing America's new synthetic rubber industry.¹⁹

In addition to war related materials, the production of civilian goods also revived somewhat in McDonough County. The Bayne plant, at Bushnell, which formerly manufactured farm implements and automobile supplies and had been idle for years, was purchased for \$10,000 by the Mickelberry Food Products Company in June 1940, and reopened as a meat processing and packing facility.²⁰

The Hemp plant, in addition to its war production contracts, also resumed manufacturing thermos jugs. The company had been producing a small quantity of the jugs since reopening on a limited basis in the spring of 1940. In late November, 1940, it announced the addition of a new section to the plant, including a new \$13,000 furnace to increase and speed production of the jugs.²¹

The winning of a state contract to manufacture Illinois license plates for the years 1942 and 1943 provided

another boon to the fortunes of the reactivated Hemp company. The company, which had not held this contract since 1938, was awarded it because it offered the lowest bid among the companies competing for the job. Company officials believed the new contract would result in the hiring of new employees, especially if their federal government contracts continued at the current rate.²²

More factory jobs were created in Macomb in 1944 when Haeger Potteries initiated a major expansion involving the installation of a second large kiln. Company officials stated that both production and employment at the Macomb plant would be doubled, bringing the total number employed by the factory to approximately two hundred.²³

The increased availability of jobs outside the immediate area further suggests that unemployment became less of a problem for local residents. Residents from Macomb and surrounding towns commuted, for example, to jobs at the Burlington Ordinance plant in Burlington, Iowa. Jobs farther afield were also available. The Macomb Daily Journal regularly ran advertisements of companies seeking war workers for factories in other parts of Illinois, and across the country. One ad, which appeared in the January 10, 1944 edition, announced that the Drave Corporation, an east-coast shipbuilding concern, would be interviewing and hiring qualified workers at the U.S. Employment Office in Galesburg, Illinois, located about forty-five miles north of

Macomb. The ad stated that previous shipbuilding experience was not necessary, and that transportation costs would be advanced to those who were hired. It was noted, however, that "men already employed at the highest level of skill in essential war work" would not be considered.²⁴

This last clause applied to a number of Macomb workers already employed in war production. An article in the Journal stated that ". . . hundreds of Macomb workers come under the recent manpower control order which sets up rules governing their employment."²⁵ A portion of that order read as follows:

A worker engaged or most recently engaged in an essential activity can be employed for work only by an employer for work in another essential activity and only then when the worker has obtained a statement of availability issued to him by his previous employer or a designated representative of the War Manpower Commission²⁶

Another indication of improved economic conditions and decreased unemployment in McDonough County was the sharp wartime decrease in the number of families on county relief, as Table 7 shows. According to an article in the January 19, 1943 edition of the Journal:

The decrease in local relief follows the general trend over the nation. Locally, it means that heads of families and others received employment in defense work, on farms, in shops and in private employment. Many of them are working at the army camp.²⁷

The old age pension rolls (OAA) also declined due to the improved economic conditions, leading to the mobilization of older workers. The local county welfare office in November 1942 reported that an average of about six pensioners a month were leaving the rolls to take employment, primarily in agricultural or common labor positions.²⁸

Table 7.- McDonough County Relief Cases, 1940-1944

AS OF:	RELIEF CASES
January 1, 1938	494
January 1, 1939	465
January 1, 1940	478
January 1, 1941	497
January 1, 1942	356
December 1, 1942	198
March 1, 1943	108
March 1, 1944	75

Source: Macomb Daily Journal, 17 January 1938, p. 2; 6 January 1939, p. 2; 5 January 1940, p. 2.; 6 January 1941, p.2; 19 January 1943, p. 2; 25 April 1944, p. 2.

While war-time changes in business and industry were quite significant, the structure of agriculture in McDonough County and across the nation experienced changes at least as profound. Many aspects of farm life in this country were altered dramatically during World War II. One important change occurred in the relationship between the number of

farms and average farm size.

Since 1920, the number of farms in the U.S. had been declining, except for an increase between 1930 to 1935. Although the number of farms declined by 240,000 between 1940 to 1945, this decrease was actually smaller than in the five-year periods immediately preceding and following the war.²⁹

As the number of farms decreased, the average size of the surviving farms and the total acreage of all U.S. farms rose, consistent with long-term trends. The pace of change, however, accelerated in both cases. After a modest gain in total farm acreage of .6 percent between 1935 and 1940, total farm acreage increased 7.6 percent between 1940 and 1945, to over 1.1 billion acres as farmers were encouraged to go all out to feed the U.S. and her allies. Despite the overall decline, the number of farms of 500 or more acres actually increased. The decrease in the total number of U.S. farms occurred exclusively in farms between 10 and 499 acres. Although farms with fewer than 10 acres did increase in average size, the number of such farms remained quite small.³⁰

The situation in Illinois and McDonough County generally reflected the national picture. Both the state and county registered increases in the number of larger farms, while the number of smaller farms, and the total number of farms, decreased. U.S. Census data for Illinois distinguish

between farms with 179 acres and less, and those with 180 acres or more. In 1945, Illinois had 15,194 fewer farms with 10-179 acres and 5,233 more farms with 180 or more acres than in 1940.³¹

McDonough County registered a decrease of 246 farms in the 10-179 acre range, and an increase of 107 farms with 180 or more acres, for a total in 1945 of 1321 in the former and 778 in the latter category. The average size of a farm in McDonough County rose from 148.9 to 162.5 acres between 1940 and 1945, while the average Illinois farm increased from 145.4 to 154.7 acres.³²

Part of this decrease in farms was due to the construction of Camp Ellis. The federal government purchased approximately 173 individual tracts of land, encompassing almost 18,000 acres, to complete the camp site. The large majority of these land parcels represented individual farm operations forced to make way for the new army facility.³³

Changes in farm population and employment followed long-term trends; the rate of change, however, increased dramatically. U.S. farm population fluctuated in the decade or so before the war, rising between 1930 and 1935, before falling back to about the 1930 level by 1940. Between 1940 and 1945, however, U.S. farm population dropped by 23 percent, or slightly more than 7,000,000 persons, to about 23,500,000. Farm population as a percentage of total U.S.

population also fell drastically, falling from 23.2 percent to just 17.8 percent between 1940 and 1945 (see Table 8).

Table 8.- U.S. Farm Population, 1930-1945

	Number of Persons	Percent of Total U.S. Population
1930	30,445,350	24.8
1935	31,800,907	25.0
1940	30,546,911	23.2
1945	23,558,488	17.8

Sources: U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1950, v.II, p. 17, U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1945, General Report, p. 280.

The decline in farm population did not affect all areas of the country equally. The hardest hit area was the West-South-Central Region, encompassing the states of Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Arkansas. This region lost 25.1 percent of its farm population between 1940 and 1945.³⁴

Although U.S. Census figures on farm population in Illinois and McDonough County for 1940 and 1945 are not comparable, it seems logical to conclude, for several reasons, that both Illinois and McDonough County experienced a significant decrease in farm population. First, as was noted earlier, both had a decrease in their total number of farms. Also, Illinois had a decrease in overall population, most of which occurred in the "downstate" area. Based on

these facts, it is likely that the figure suggested by Walter W. Wilcox for the decrease in farm population in the East-North-Central Region, 12.1 percent, is similar to the actual decreases in Illinois and McDonough County.³⁵

During the war U.S. agriculture tended to move away from tenant farming toward farm ownership. Although the number of farmers declined from 6,100,000 to 5,860,000 between 1940 and 1945, the proportion of full- and part-owners rose. At the same time, the number of tenant farmers dropped considerably (see Table 9). Two developments may account for this. First, farmers as a group enjoyed greater prosperity during the war years than they had previously, undoubtedly making it possible for some to purchase farms. Second, many tenant farmers abandoned farming entirely, in favor of the higher-paying defense jobs which abounded as America's involvement in the war escalated.³⁶

Although wartime changes in farm tenancy vis-a-vis farm ownership in Illinois closely paralleled those of the U.S. as a whole, this was not the case in McDonough County. The proportion of farm operators in this area who were full- or part-owners increased, while the percentage of tenant farmers decreased significantly. Surprisingly, the situation in McDonough County was quite different. The U.S., Illinois, and McDonough County all had fewer farm operators in 1945 than in 1940. In contrast to the other two areas, however, the proportion of full owners in McDonough County actually

declined by almost three percent, from 38.8 percent to 35.9 percent (see Table 9).

The ratio of tenant farmers to full- and part-owners, which was already higher in McDonough County than in either Illinois or the nation in 1940, widened appreciably during the war. In 1940, 48.2 percent of all farm operators in McDonough County were tenants. This exceeded the Illinois and national averages by 5 percent and 10 percent respectively. Although the percentage of tenant farmers in the county dropped to 47.1 percent by 1945, the gap in the proportion of farm tenants between the county, and the state and nation widened from eight and to more than 15 percentage points, respectively (see Table 9).

Table 9.- Farm Tenancy and Ownership, 1940-1945

	1940		1945	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
United States				
Full Owners	3,048,138	50.60	3,301,361	56.34
Part Owners	615,039	10.09	660,502	11.26
Tenants	2,361,271	38.73	1,858,421	31.71
Illinois				
Full Owners	87,004	40.76	87,527	42.86
Part Owners	32,826	15.38	35,266	17.27
Tenants	91,982	43.10	79,766	39.06
McDonough County				
Full Owners	906	38.82	795	35.92
Part Owners	278	11.91	365	16.49
Tenants	1,126	48.24	1,042	47.09

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1945, vol. I, part 5, 142, 145.

Given that McDonough County actively participated in the Farm Security Administration's (FSA) program to provide loans to tenant farmers to assist them in purchasing the farms they ran, the lack of progress toward ownership of farms by county farm operators is all the more surprising. As the Macomb Daily Journal reported on January 31, 1940, McDonough County was "one of the few in the state to take part in the farm tenant loan program." Each year under the FSA plan, tenant farmers deemed capable by the FSA were given 40 year mortgages at 3 percent interest to help them purchase their own farms. These data suggest that McDonough County farmers did not share in the new-found agricultural

prosperity to the same degree as their counterparts in Illinois or the nation; if they did they did not utilize this prosperity to change their status from tenants to owners as frequently as their counterparts elsewhere.³⁷

Another measure of relative prosperity of farms and farm operators is the prevalence or lack of modern home and farm facilities. The U.S. Census of Agriculture of 1945 lists the numbers and percentages of farms with certain facilities for 1940 and 1945. Comparable data are available for only five categories of facilities for the U.S., Illinois, and McDonough County. These are: electricity, telephones, motortrucks, automobiles, and tractors.³⁸

More Illinois farms possessed the above facilities than the national average in 1940. This is not surprising considering that Illinois is a northern, industrial state. What is somewhat surprising, however, is that McDonough County farms had a significantly higher percentage of these facilities than the average Illinois farm, although the relative poverty of the southern Illinois region may partially account for this. In 1940, McDonough County farms had a higher proportion of all these facilities except for electricity. By 1945 the county exceeded state and national averages in all these categories (see Table 10).

What is particularly striking about these figures is the high percentage of farms in McDonough County with telephone service, as compared with the average Illinois

farm. Of all McDonough County farms, 78.4 percent were equipped with phones in 1940, compared with just 46.9 percent of all farms in the state. By 1945, 88.6 percent of McDonough county farms were so equipped, while only 57.3 percent of Illinois farms overall had them. While differences between Illinois and McDonough County farms are not as great in the other four categories, they are still quite significant. It seems inconsistent that an area with fewer farm owners and a higher percentage of tenant farmers should have a significantly higher percentage of farms equipped with modern facilities.³⁹

Table 10.- Percentage of Farms with Certain Facilities, 1940-1945

	Elec.	Phone	Truck	Auto	Tractor
1940					
U.S.	33.3	25.0	15.5	23.1	58.1
Illinois	38.9	46.9	17.3	78.1	49.0
McDonough	37.9	78.4	21.6	88.9	62.0
1945					
U.S.	47.6	31.8	22.2	34.2	62.0
Illinois	55.5	57.3	24.3	79.1	60.1
McDonough	60.1	88.6	34.9	89.8	73.0

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1945, vol. I, Part 5, p. 39; vol. II, p. 306, 311.

One of the biggest problems faced by U.S. agriculture during the war was the increasing shortage of farm labor,

stemming from both the flow of young men into the military and the migration of farm workers to higher-paying war-related jobs in industry. As Wilcox observes in The Farmer in the Second World War, the movement away from farm work by large numbers of farm workers was not wholly undesirable. Agriculture had been harboring much underemployment and unemployment prior to the war and the exit of so many farm laborers had the effect of helping to increase the wages of those who remained.⁴⁰

This increase in wages and the scarcity of labor led to a decline in the proportion of U.S. farms reporting the use of hired help. Between 1940 and 1945, the percentage of farms which reported using hired labor decreased from 14.6 percent to 6.9 percent. It seems reasonable to conclude that smaller, family-run farms were forced to curtail their use of hired labor as competition and costs for such labor skyrocketed. This lack of available labor helped speed the existing trend toward the mechanization of farming, even on these smaller farms.⁴¹

A large proportion of the nation's agricultural workers, particularly hired laborers, exited farm work during the war. Census figures show a net loss of 315,829 family workers and 1,005,070 hired workers between 1940 and 1945. This represented an overall decline of 13.6 percent of the total farm labor force; the decline in family and hired workers was 4.0 and 57.3 percent, respectively. Both

Illinois and McDonough County experienced smaller overall declines, 7.3 percent and 8.4 percent, respectively. The country as a whole lost 57.3 percent of its hired labor, while Illinois lost 53.5 percent. McDonough County fared better in this respect, losing only 38.8 percent of its hired farm labor. Family workers, nationally, declined by 4.0 percent, while Illinois lost 3.3 percent of its family workers. McDonough County lost only one such worker, dropping to 2504 in 1945.⁴²

Concern over the shortage of farm labor prompted the federal government to take steps to soften the blow caused by the loss of these workers by providing needed labor to farms. The most important step was the expansion of the Agricultural Extension Service, created under the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 as an educational and informational resource to the nation's farmers, which grew tremendously during the late 1930's and played a major role in recruiting and placing farm laborers where the needs were greatest. Each county had a "county agent" whose job it was to help advance agriculture and agricultural life in his area. During World War II, the Extension Service recruited and placed huge numbers of farm workers. By 1945, the agency operated over 7,000 placement offices and 2165 Farm Advisory Committees; in 1945 alone, they placed over 2,800,000 workers on over 669,000 farms.⁴³

Although McDonough County's loss of labor did not match

that of some other areas, the county still lost 8.4 percent of its total farm labor force, including 38.8 percent of its hired laborers. The Extension Service and other agencies, including The Illinois Defense Council, the State farm Labor Committee, and agriculture departments at the state universities, worked aggressively to compensate for this loss of labor in both McDonough County and throughout the state. A program to train Illinois high school students, male and female, to work as farm laborers during the upcoming spring and summer months began in January 1942. After attending a series of lectures prepared by the University of Illinois College of Agriculture, students registered for work through the U.S. Employment Service (USES) and were placed on Illinois farms. The city of Macomb participated in this program, with a class of boys from Macomb High School going to various area farms to receive hands-on instruction in farm operations.⁴⁴

Another measure adopted to meet the shortage of agricultural help was the importation of farm workers from areas where labor surpluses existed. Several agencies participated in the task of importing farm workers from southern Illinois to meet the labor needs of the central and northern sections of the state. The actual importation of laborers was handled by the USES and the FSA. Cooperating agencies included the local Farm Bureau and the county Farm Labor Committee. In order to obtain one or more farm hands,

a local farmer had to fill out an order with the USES, who then turned the order over to the FSA. The local FSA office in southern Illinois then sent the farm hand north for an interview. If the farmer decided he wanted to hire the farm hand, the man and his family were moved to McDonough County at FSA expense.⁴⁵

The scarcity of human labor, coupled with its rising costs, made the purchase of agricultural machinery more attractive to many farmers, particularly those with larger operations. Consequently, farm machinery sales increased dramatically during the war. Between 1940 and 1945 over half a million new tractors were in use on American farms. Materials made available for the production of farm machinery by wartime agencies were channeled mainly into the production of tractors and harvesting machinery.⁴⁶

While the percentage of Illinois farms having tractors was below the national average, McDonough County farms surpassed the national average both before and after the war. In 1940, 62.0 percent of all McDonough County farms had tractors, compared with 58.1 percent of all U.S. farms and 49.0 percent of all Illinois farms. By 1945, 73.0 percent of all McDonough County farms had tractors, while 62.0 percent of U.S. farms and 60.1 percent of Illinois farms were so equipped.⁴⁷

As indicated earlier, the dramatic decrease in available farm labor led to greatly increased wages for

agricultural workers. Federal census figures indicate actual farm wages paid jumped 138 percent between 1940 and 1945. Since these wages were distributed to a smaller number of workers, the average wage increase to the typical farm hand was significantly higher than 138 percent. Since census figures on the number of farm workers are for 1940 and 1945, and farm wages paid are for 1939 and 1944, a precise average increase for the U.S. farm worker is impossible to ascertain. We do know, however, that the number of farm workers decreased by 57.3 percent between 1940 and 1945, making an increase of 270 percent in farm wages a reasonable estimate.⁴⁸

Census figures for Illinois show both wages paid and number of workers for 1940 and 1945, making the computation of an average increase for Illinois farm workers possible. The average wage for an Illinois farm worker in 1945 (computed by dividing the total farm wages paid by the total number of farm workers) was \$2,174.01, which represented an increase of 339 percent for this period.⁴⁹

According to U.S. Census figures, farm wages in McDonough County were lower than those for Illinois in 1940. The average wage for a McDonough County hired farm laborer in that year was \$487.70, compared to the state average of \$723.77. By 1945, farm wages had risen 230 percent in McDonough County, as compared to 200 percent in the state. While the increase for local farm laborers surpassed those

for the state, the disparity, measured in actual dollars, widened appreciably. In 1945, the average Illinois farm hand was making \$2,174 per year, while his McDonough County counterpart was making only \$1,611.67. On the whole, though, farm laborers profited handsomely from the wartime shortage of agricultural labor.⁵⁰

Another indication of relative farm prosperity is the change in the value of farms over time. In the United States, in 1940, the average value of a farm, including only the land and the buildings, was \$6,767, and the average value per acre on these units was \$38.39. By contrast, the average Illinois farm had a much higher value than the average U.S. farm, being \$11,887 with an average value per acre of \$81.76. For McDonough County the comparable values, \$14,295 and \$96.03, were even higher.⁵¹ The differentials between the value of McDonough County farms and those of Illinois and the U.S., furthermore, increased during the war years. While the average value of farms in each group increased substantially, this increase was greatest for McDonough County farms (see Table 11).⁵²

Table 11.- Value of Farms, 1940-1945

	1940 Value	1945 Value	Percent Increase
United States			
Farm	\$6,767	\$10,242	51.4
Acre	\$38.89	\$52.56	35.2
Illinois			
Farm	\$11,887	\$17,993	50.1
Acre	\$81.76	\$115.90	29.5
McDonough County			
Farm	\$14,295	\$22,993	60.8
Acre	\$96.03	\$141.54	47.4

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1945,
General Report, p. 13; vol. 1, pt. 5, p. 18,29.

McDonough County farms posted a much larger increase in the value of their livestock than in farm machinery, although increases in both were substantial (see Table 12). The much higher relative increase in value of livestock reflects a tendency during the war for McDonough County farmers to shift toward livestock production as a major source of income.

Table 12.- Percentage Increases in the Value of Farm Machinery, and Livestock, 1940-1945

Farm Machinery and Implements	
United States	68.2
Illinois	72.1
McDonough County	74.8
Livestock	
United States	87.2
Illinois	108.4
McDonough County	137.1

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1945, General Report, p. 13; vol. 1, pt. 5, p. 18, 29.

During World War II farmers in McDonough County increased their production of corn, oats, and soybeans. To determine how production changed during the war, and how these changes compare with those of similar farmers elsewhere, it is useful to compare McDonough County agricultural production to that of Illinois as a whole. Corn was by far the most important crop grown in both Illinois and McDonough County during this time period. Although fewer Illinois farmers reported growing corn during the war, more acres of corn were under cultivation than any other crop during the war years in Illinois. The number of Illinois farmers growing corn dropped from about 184,000 in 1940 to about 170,000 in 1945. The number growing corn in McDonough County dropped from 2,042 in 1940 to 1,903 in 1945. The total number of acres grown, however, increased 17.4 percent

in Illinois, and 23.3 percent in McDonough County for the same period.⁵³

Oats and soybeans were the next two largest crops for both Illinois and McDonough County farmers. Fewer farmers were growing oats by 1945; oat production fell in the county and remained constant in Illinois. More farmers in both the state and the county were growing soybeans, a relatively new crop, by 1945. This resulted in a huge increase in the number of soybean bushels produced (see Table 13).⁵⁴

Table 13.- Production of Three Major Crops, 1940-1945

Illinois			
Crop	1940 Bushels (in thousands)	1945 Bushels (in thousands)	% Increase
Corn	3,824,576	4,000,456	+4.6
Oats	921,087	924,247	+ .3
Soybeans	447,718	733,357	+63.8
McDonough County			
Crop	1940 Bushels (in thousands)	1945 Bushels (in thousands)	% Increase
Corn	55,588	63,950	+15.1
Oats	11,954	7,632	-36.2
Soybeans	7,046	12,626	+79.2

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1945, vol. 1, pt. 5, p. 56, 61, 67, 78.

Others crops grown by state and local farmers, though numerous, accounted for a small proportion of agricultural production. They included potatoes, peas, alfalfa, wheat, and

fruits, to name but a few. As the war progressed, moreover, local farmers grew even smaller amounts of these products in 1945 than they had in 1940.⁵⁵

Livestock production had long been an important part of Illinois farming and this continued to be true during the war years. More livestock and livestock products were produced by fewer farmers in 1945 than by their more numerous counterparts in 1940.⁵⁶

The major forms of livestock on state and local farms were the following: cattle, hogs and pigs, goats, sheep, chickens, and dairy cows. In almost all these cases, while the number of farms raising these animals shrank between 1940 and 1945, the actual number of animals increased. Additionally, both the number of farms reporting sales of livestock and the number of animals sold increased. Table 14 compares the production of livestock and livestock products of Illinois and McDonough County for the years 1940 and 1945. Although the sales figures are not adjusted for inflation, a comparison of the percentage increases for Illinois and McDonough County show that production by local farmers centered increasingly on poultry and away from dairy products. The value of poultry and related products increased by 239.6 percent between 1940 and 1945. Values of livestock sold, while indicating actual increased production, also reflect changes in prices. When the actual number of animals and animal products produced is examined,

however, a large increase in production can still be seen (see Table 15).⁵⁷

Table 14.- Value of Livestock Sold, 1940-1945

	1940	1945	% Increase
Value of all livestock and livestock products sold (excluding dairy and poultry) (in thousands of dollars)			
Illinois	1,344,298	3,798,482	182.6
McDonough	25,487	77,653	204.7
Value of dairy products sold (in thousands of dollars)			
Illinois	484,849	1,157,755	138.8
McDonough	3,159	7,172	127.0
Value of poultry products sold (in thousands of dollars)			
Illinois	229,823	229,823	175.9
McDonough	2,172	7,377	239.6

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1945, vol. 1, pt. 5, p. 109, 120.

Table 15.- Numbers of Farm Animals on McDonough County Farms, 1940-1945

Type of Livestock	1940	1945	Percent Change
Cattle	31,104	45,492	+46.3
Swine	68,155	100,175	+47.0
Sheep	6,554	8,052	+22.9
Chickens	160,603	217,168	+35.2
Horses	6,453	4,216	-34.7
Mules	514	281	-45.3
Cows	13,717	19,929	+45.3

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1945, vol. 1, pt. 5, p. 120.

Thus, there was an increase in the number of income-producing animals on McDonough County farms during the war. These include cattle, calves, cows, hogs and pigs, chickens, and sheep and lambs. Conversely, there was a decrease in horses and mules, which were used mainly as draft animals. This could be expected in light of the increase in farm mechanization in McDonough County during the war years which reduced the need for animal power on farms.⁵⁸

McDonough County farmers did well in increasing their food production during the war. Local increases in crop production outstripped the state average by a significant margin in two of the three major crops, corn and soybeans. These increases more than made up for a 36.2 percent decrease in oat production. It was livestock production, however, on which McDonough County farmers seemed to focus

their efforts. As noted earlier, the value of McDonough County livestock and livestock products sold increased nearly 200 percent from 1940 to 1945, while the actual number of animals on farms increased substantially as well.

As could be expected, both farm owners and tenants profited during the war years. Expanding markets and high prices due the federal government guarantee of 110 percent of parity caused farmers' incomes to rise. How much an individual farm operators' income increased varied by the type of farm and the region of the country.⁵⁹

Although income data for McDonough County farmers are not available, it seems reasonable to conclude, given the increased size of their farms, improvement in facilities, greater numbers of farm machines, better markets, increased prices for produce, and overall increased production, that the income of McDonough County farmers rose substantially.

So, overall, how was the McDonough County farmer affected by World War II? Did he share in the relative prosperity enjoyed by agriculture during this period? In most areas, this seems to be the case. According to various measures which indicate prosperity, McDonough County farms and farmers experienced change for the better. These changes were generally greater for the farmers in the county than either statewide or nationally. Among these areas of improvement were farm size, facilities, machinery, and production. In all these areas, McDonough County farmers

improved as much, and usually more than, their state and national counterparts.

The rate of farm ownership does not fit with this picture of increased prosperity. Despite local participation in a national effort to increase ownership and reduce the number of tenant farmers, the percentage of full owners decreased in McDonough County while it increased statewide and nationally. The explanation for this is unclear. It seems that McDonough County farmers had the resources to purchase farms, at least as much as other farmers in the state or nation. Perhaps fewer owners in this area were willing to part with their property than in other areas.⁶⁰

It is clear that the people of Macomb and McDonough County generally prospered economically during the war. While both the farming and non-farming sectors of the local economy did well, the construction of Camp Ellis particularly benefited commercial operations due to their suddenly enlarged pool of consumers. Local industries flourished, either from direct involvement in war production, or due to the generally improved economic conditions brought on by the war. Overall, Macomb and McDonough County residents experienced a greater than average wartime prosperity.

ENDNOTES

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CHAPTER II

Many social changes accompanied America's entrance into World War II. The changes experienced by residents of the Macomb and McDonough County area in some ways paralleled those of the nation generally, while other changes were unique to the area. For the most part, it was the pressures brought on by the proximity of Camp Ellis which made the war experiences of the local population unique. This chapter covers several aspects of wartime life in the local area, including discussions of population changes, housing, crime, race, and education. As will be seen, the impact of Camp Ellis was felt in all these areas.

As was noted in the previous chapter, the farm population of the United States decreased significantly from 1940 to 1945. During this same period, the total population of the nation grew slightly. Table 16 shows the total U.S. population and percentage increases from 1930 to 1950.

While the figure for 1945 excludes American military personnel stationed overseas, even when they are included the total rise in U.S. population is minor for the period 1940 to 1945. This can be attributed to the dramatic decrease in immigration to the United States during the war years, as well as the separation of spouses caused by the war.

Table 16.- U.S. Population, 1930-1950

Year	Population	% Change
1930	122,775,046	+ 6.0
1935	127,250,046	+ 3.6
1940	131,669,275	+ 3.5
1945	132,137,000	+ .4
1950	150,697,461	+ 14.0

Note: Mid-decade figures are official U.S. Census Bureau estimates. 1945 figures exclude members of U.S. military overseas. Source: Census of Agriculture: 1950, vol. II, p. 17.

Population estimates for Illinois show an overall decline of about 185,000 persons between 1940 and 1945, although this decline is not uniform across the period. There is a large drop in population from 1942 through 1943, followed by a gradual increase throughout the remainder of the war years. By 1946, Illinois had surpassed its 1940 population mark.¹

The Illinois population decline from 1941 to 1943 can be attributed to out-migration to defense jobs in other areas of the country. The great majority of the states experienced similiar losses, while a few states, mainly on the nation's coasts, had population increases. It is estimated that Illinois lost fully 3 percent of its population between April 1, 1940 and March 1, 1943.²

Population changes within McDonough County are not as clear. Illinois Department of Public Health figures show a

gradual decline in population in the county from 1940 through 1943, followed by a modest increase in 1944, as Table 17 demonstrates. The assertions that the population level fell during the period from 1941 through 1943, and increased marginally in 1944, is questionable.

The data in Table 17 represent estimates arrived at by analyzing the ratio of births to deaths and "certain other indicia of population."³ It is not known what other measures were used to determine the population of this county, but they clearly were not able to ascertain the presence of the thousands of persons connected with Camp Ellis who were living in the area. Certainly these figures do not include military personnel and P.O.W.s at Camp Ellis.

Table 17.- I.D.P.H. Population Estimates for McDonough County, 1940-1949

Year	Population	Year	Population
1940	26,840	1945	25,798
1941	26,423	1946	26,684
1942	25,932	1947	27,315
1943	25,414	1948	27,583
1944	25,494	1949	27,845

Source: Illinois Department of Public Health, Health Statistics Bulletin, "Special Release No. 2," 22 December 1949, 7, 3.

The annual record of water consumption by the city of

Macomb supports the theory that the local population level actually increased during the war years. In 1940 and 1941, the Macomb Waterworks plant pumped about 149 million gallons each year. The drop of approximately 3,000,000 gallons in 1942 is consistent with a population decrease in that year. Coinciding with the construction of Camp Ellis, water consumption rose more than 16,000,000 gallons in 1943, to a total of 162 million gallons. By 1945 annual water consumption had reached 180 million gallons. Assuming constant usage, the 31 million gallon increase between 1940 and 1945 indicates a population increase of 5,551 persons for the same period. Although it is possible that the revival of local industry accounted for a portion of the increased water usage, such a large jump in consumption nevertheless indicates a large population increase.⁴

The war brought about many changes in American society. Birth, marriage, and divorce rates were all affected by the war. Generally, these rates all rose, but varied over time and degree. The marriage rate, which had remained fairly constant in the period immediately preceding World War II, rose in the first year of hostilities and then declined sharply (see Table 18). The marriage rate recovered in 1945, as American servicemen overseas began returning home, and jumped dramatically to 16.4 marriages per 1000 population in 1946.⁵

With the exception of 1944, the marriage rate for McDonough County remained consistently below the national level. This is particularly true in the early years of the war. For instance, in 1941 the national rate stood at 12.7 marriages per 1,000 persons, while the McDonough County rate was just 3.0 per 1,000. A possible explanation is that many local residents were married outside the county for one reason or another.⁶

Marriage rates in the county and the nation followed different patterns. While the U.S. rate fell off sharply from 1942 through 1944, just the opposite occurred in McDonough County (see Table 18). A partial explanation of this may lie in the fact that both rates were calculated using 1940 census figures. With the local increase in population due to newcomers connected with the camp, the true local marriage rate must necessarily be lower.⁷

Table 18.- Marriage Rates per 1000 Population, 1940-1946

Year	United States	McDonough County
1940	12.1	2.5
1941	12.7	3.0
1942	13.2	2.3
1943	11.7	6.4
1944	10.9	11.3
1945	12.2	8.4
1946	16.4	13.1

Sources: McDonough County, Marriage Register, 1940-1946, McDonough County Courthouse, Macomb, Illinois; Vatter, The U.S. Economy in World War II, 116.

The divorce rate during World War II in McDonough County deviated somewhat from the national pattern. Nationally, the number of divorces per 1000 population rose throughout the war years, especially 1944 through 1946. The rate for the county declined slightly in the first year of the war, but shot up sharply from 1944 through 1946 (see Table 19). McDonough County's high rate of divorce in 1941 is something of an aberration. The county had 116 divorces that year, almost twice the amount in 1942 and 1943. Otherwise, McDonough County seemed to follow the nationwide pattern of higher divorce rates being recorded coincident with the end of the war and the return of U.S. servicemen.⁸

Table 19.- Divorce Rates per 1000 Population: U.S. and McDonough County, 1941-1946

Year	McDonough County	United States
1941	4.3	2.2
1942	2.5	2.4
1943	2.3	2.6
1944	3.1	2.9
1945	3.9	3.5
1946	3.9	4.3

Source: Vatter, The U.S. Economy in World War II, 116; Macomb Daily Journal, 3 January 1947, 2.

Birthrates were almost identical for the county and the nation during the war years, except for a higher rate in McDonough County in 1943 and 1944 (see Table 20). The increase in birthrates for 1943 and 1944 can be attributed to the impact of Camp Ellis on the local population level. These birthrates were calculated using population figures from 1940 U.S. census. The actual population of this area increased substantially due to the influx of camp personnel, workers, and their families. Therefore, it is likely that the excess increase in the local birthrate was due to the local population level being underestimated. Most probably, the true McDonough County birthrate remained fairly constant during these years as did the national rate.

Table 20.- Birthrates per 1000 Population: U.S. and McDonough County, 1940-1946

Year	McDonough County	United States
1940	19.2	19.4
1941	19.8	20.3
1942	21.6	22.2
1943	24.0	22.7
1944	24.2	21.2
1945	19.5	20.4
1946	24.0	24.1

Sources: Illinois Department of Public Health, Health Statistics Bulletin, "Special Release No. 1," 20 December 1949, 3, 7; Vatter, The U.S. Economy in World War II, 116.

Housing was the single biggest problem faced by local residents during the war. An influx of new people to the area in response to the construction of Camp Ellis led to an acute housing shortage in Macomb. Many families entering the area found suitable housing almost impossible to obtain. While the local housing shortage caused much inconvenience to those looking for living quarters, it was an economic boon to any resident with an available room. Many households took in boarders from the time camp construction workers first invaded the town.⁹

A housing survey, designed to determine the number of housing units available to accommodate potential workers, their families, and the families of soldiers who would soon be stationed at the camp was conducted by the Macomb

Community association at the behest of Lieutenant R.K. Sawyer, the camp area engineer, in January 1942. The survey results indicated that Macomb had only 60 apartments and 15 houses available for families. Additionally, there were almost 200 rooms for individuals available.¹⁰

Once actual construction of the camp began, this supply dwindled quickly. To help deal with the situation, the Macomb Chamber of Commerce established a free rental service which helped match individuals and families with available living space. In late October of 1942, this organization reported that the supply of available apartments in Macomb was nearly exhausted. At that time only 31 apartments were listed as available; most of these were "not in modern homes," and would not be rented until the shortage became even more acute. Sleeping rooms were still reported to be widely available, although many had been rented by workers from the camp. As more and more persons connected with the camp arrived the situation became more serious. Although individual sleeping rooms were always available, vacant houses and apartments became virtually impossible to find.¹¹

A second housing survey, undertaken in early 1943 under the direction of block air raid wardens, indicated an increasingly severe housing shortage. The wardens were responsible for distributing and collecting survey cards to every household on their respective blocks, and returning

them to the U.S.O information center. The air raid wardens reported only 168 sleeping rooms as available, as of April 5, 1943, 104 of which could accomodate two persons. One dollar per night was reported to be the prevailing rent for such accomodations. Only one apartment was reported to be available at that time.¹²

Due to the housing shortage, the rent on available units naturally rose in the area surrounding Camp Ellis. To stabilize rents, the federal government imposed rent control on McDonough and two other Illinois counties on November 1, 1943. By this action, all landlords were required to return the rent on their units to where it had stood on March 1, 1942. Any units rented after March 1, 1942 reverted to the first rent charged for the dwelling, assuming it had been raised.¹³

It is generally accepted that along with wars comes a general increase in crime. This was true for the United States in World War II, as the violent crime rate increased across the country. Certain areas experienced greater increases than others, most notably the Pacific and Mountain regions which saw violent crime jump 107.4 percent and 120.7 percent respectively. The East-North-Central region of the nation, which includes Illinois, tied with the East South Central region for the smallest increase in violent crime with a 19.0 percent increase.¹⁴

Meaningful crime statistics for local areas are often difficult to obtain for the war years. The numbers of people fined for various infractions by the Macomb City Police Department, however, are available. As Table 21 shows, the total number of fines assessed each year rose from 1941 through 1943, after which they declined steadily until after the war.

Table 21.- Number of Fines in Macomb City Courts, 1941-1946

Year	Number of Fines
1941	132
1942	163
1943	182
1944	152
1945	134
1946	196

Source: Macomb Daily Journal, 3 January 1942, 2; 2 January 1947, 2.

The number of fines for intoxication offer an indication of the effects of the proximity of Camp Ellis and the accompanying influx of newcomers to Macomb on the rate of minor offenses. The annual number of arrests for intoxication increased dramatically, coinciding with the arrival of the first camp workers in 1942. As Table 22 shows, such arrests were highest when the activity at Camp Ellis was at its peak. With the bulk of personnel gone by

1945, the number of alcohol arrests reverted to pre-war levels. More serious crimes such as assault and battery remained few in number throughout the war years, although they did show an increase late in the war. In 1944 and 1945, there were 12 such cases, up from 7 in 1943 and 6 in 1942.¹⁵

Table 22.- Fines for Intoxication in Macomb City Courts, 1941-1946

Year	Number of Fines
1941	33
1942	81
1943	98
1944	72
1945	37
1946	49

Source: Macomb Daily Journal, 3 January 1945, 2; 2 January 1947, 2.

The issue of race had a relatively high profile during the war. The attack on Pearl Harbor made persons of Japanese ancestry automatically suspect, especially on the west coast. In the name of national security, 110,000 Japanese men, women, and children were imprisoned in internment camps in the United States. Many of them were U.S. citizens, summarily denied their constitutional and civil rights in one of the most shameful chapters in U.S. history.¹⁶

The public mood in the U.S. required patriotism, or at

least a pretense of it, from everyone in the country. No group was treated with more suspicion than resident aliens, particularly those from the enemy nations of Germany, Italy, and Japan. In June 1940, the Department of Immigration, which had previously been a branch of the Department of Labor, was put under the authority of the Justice Department, rendering aliens a problem for federal law enforcement officials.¹⁷

Responding to national concerns about potential internal subversion, Congress passed the Alien Registration Act in 1940. This new law required the approximately 5,000,000 resident aliens to register with the federal government; this procedure included fingerprinting and interrogation about political beliefs and activities. Another section of the act "made a federal crime of any act or utterance which would incite disaffection among military personnel or promote the forcible overthrow of 'any government in the United States.'"¹⁸ Similarly, membership in any organization deemed subversive by the federal government became a federal crime.¹⁹

Given that McDonough County had relatively few aliens within its borders, this law did not have a major impact locally. Those aliens who did live in the county were instructed to register between February 9 and February 28, 1942, at the post offices in either Macomb or Bushnell,

bringing with them three recent photographs of themselves. Two weeks after the beginning of the registration only nine local aliens had registered at the Macomb Post Office. Once registered, the aliens were issued "certificate of registration" cards which they were required to carry on them at all times and to surrender to any police or government official on demand.²⁰

All aliens were also ordered by federal authorities to turn in to the police any cameras or shortwave radios in their possession. Several days after the order went into effect only one camera and one shortwave radio had been turned in. The order stated that it was the responsibility of the aliens to turn in these items and that local authorities were not expected to search for, or request, these items from local resident aliens, probably to avoid persecution of aliens by overzealous local authorities.²¹

Action against Japanese aliens was not confined to California. Western Illinois State Teachers College (W.I.S.T.C.) and Macomb participated in the persecution of two Asian students enrolled at the college during the war. These two students were Isamu Miyamoto and Kayo Kamitaki. Miyamoto arrived on campus in October, 1943, from the Colorado River War Relocation Camp in Colorado, while his family remained at the camp. The Japanese-American Student Relocation council, headquartered in Philadelphia,

Pennsylvania, was responsible for getting Miyamoto released from the camp and enrolled at the college. Born in Hawaii of Japanese parents, Kayo Kamitaki was an American citizen. He transferred to Western from North Texas State, after negative reaction to his presence by Denton townspeople made his position there untenable. Dean Harris, at North Texas, arranged Kamitaki's enrollment with Dean TerKeurst of Western.²²

Kamitaki's problems had been with the citizens of Denton, not with the students at the university; student reaction had been mainly positive. Kamitaki, unfortunately, found a similar situation awaiting him in Macomb. Louis Randolph, editor of the Macomb Daily Journal, took exception to the presence of Kamitaki and Miyamoto, which he expressed in an editorial, "An Unwise Placement," published on October 7, 1943. This helped raise an awareness of the presence of these two students among the townspeople of Macomb.²³

Sentiment against the students' enrollment arose among local residents, and was particularly vehement among the soldiers stationed at Camp Ellis. Students at the college seem to have been more receptive to the two Japanese students. In fact, the Sigma Tau Gamma fraternity took up Kamitaki's cause, although he was not a member of the organization. On November 23, 1943, representatives of the fraternity pled Kamitaki's case at a meeting called to

explore the possibility of transferring the two Japanese students to other institutions.²⁴

Miyamoto and Kamitaki both left Western at the end of that fall quarter. It is not known what became of Miyamoto. Kamitaki enlisted in the army in 1945 as a Japanese interpreter and eventually graduated from Northern Illinois University which he attended on the G.I.Bill.²⁵

It is clear that the town of Macomb was no more ready to accept Japanese students than was the city of Denton, Texas. What is unclear is why W.I.S.T.C. was seen as a viable option for the two students, particularly given the proximity of American servicemen at Camp Ellis. Perhaps there was no place in this country where Isamu Miyamoto and Kayo Kamitaki could have continued their education in peace during the war.

World War II was also a time of change for Black Americans, although these changes were minor in contrast to the civil rights crusade of the 1950s and 1960s. The most important of these changes was the accelerated urbanization of the blacks. The attraction of high-paying jobs in industrial cities caused many blacks to migrate from their homes. While whites were generally hired before blacks, wartime labor shortages also led to more and better employment opportunities for blacks.²⁶

In 1940, 48.6 percent of all blacks were urban

dwellers. By 1950, this number had risen to 62.4 percent. Many, but not all, black migrants left the South for the industrial cities of the North. Some relocated to southern towns and cities from more rural areas, while others went west. During the war, it is estimated that southern cities gained over 750,000 black residents.²⁷

The major migration, however, was to Northern, industrial cities. Consequently, the proportion of blacks living in the former Confederate states dropped from 77.1 percent to 68.1 percent between 1940 and 1945. Illinois was eighth among all states which had a proportional gain in blacks in their population.²⁸

During the war, then, McDonough County remained the predominantly white, homogenous area it had always been. While the total black population of the United States hovered around 10.0 percent in the 1940s, the black population of McDonough County, always small, remained constant, amounting to less than .5 percent of the population throughout the decade.²⁹

Despite their small numbers, a segment of the black population of Macomb worked to improve the status of blacks in the Macomb community. These persons constituted the Colored Republicans Club of the African Methodist Evangelical Church. In January of 1941, in anticipation of upcoming primary elections, the club invited five Republican

candidates to speak before their group and address their concerns.³⁰

Only two candidates, both running for alderman of the second ward, appeared at the meeting. Neither mayoral candidate accepted the group's invitation. The candidates who did attend each gave a short speech, and attempted to address the platform of the club. This platform called for better roads and sidewalks in the black community, use of the new city pool by blacks, at least one full-time black city employee, and better treatment of blacks in the business district. While the candidates assured the crowd that they would do what they could to help the city's black community, they pointed out that any action would have to be passed by the city council.³¹

The presence of black soldiers at Camp Ellis greatly increased the exposure of Macomb residents to African-Americans which brought forth new racial issues and incidents. The presence of these soldiers raised the question of where they would go for recreation. As it turned out, the bulk of black soldiers stationed at the camp traveled to Peoria on their time off. Unlike Macomb, this city had a sizable black community and more recreational opportunities for black soldiers.³²

The city of Macomb basically had no recreational facilities for black soldiers. In 1943, a Federal Security

Agency plan to open a Negro U.S.O. in the city was scrapped when members of the Macomb Defense Recreation Committee informed the agency that, due to the city's small black population, there would be a lack of available volunteers. Obviously there would be no white volunteers to run the proposed center.³³

The issue resurfaced in April 1944, when the national U.S.O. made a request of the local U.S.O council to endorse a Negro U.S.O. center in Macomb. The regional supervisor of the Chicago U.S.O. travelled to Macomb and spoke to the local council concerning the national organization's policy of treating all soldiers alike, white or black. The local council then agreed to honor the national organization's request and voted unanimously to establish the Negro U.S.O. They did, however, point out that the Negro U.S.O. center would be operated "mainly as a lounging center for the Negro soldiers who are here waiting on trains, etc., since facilities for social entertainment for them . . . are not available."³⁴

While relations between whites and blacks were usually quiet in this area during the war, an incident did occur in November 1943 which raised tensions. A farm woman living near the camp was allegedly raped at gunpoint by a black man in her home while her husband was forced to watch. A black soldier from Camp Ellis was quickly arrested and confessed,

although he later repudiated his confession. He was later turned over to the military authorities at the camp, but was never tried due to a lack of evidence.³⁵

A related incident demonstrates the basic inequality common in the nation during this period. Several nights after the rape, another black soldier entered the same farmhouse, now vacant, and reportedly began making phone calls to women on the five-home party line. While the women kept the soldier on the phone, a group of area farmers armed themselves and converged on the farmhouse. After two warning shots and demands that he surrender, the soldier allegedly ran outside, threw a piece of wood at the men and attempted to escape. When he allegedly tried to throw a fruit jar at a man named John Lane, Lane shot him in the chest, killing him.³⁶

Despite the fact that the man was basically unarmed, none of the men was indicted in his death. A coroner's jury ruled the case a justifiable homicide. In his defense, Lane reportedly stated that he would have shot the culprit whether he had been black or white, soldier or civilian. Whether Lane was justified in shooting the soldier will never be known for sure, but the circumstances surrounding the case, examined almost 50 years later, seem suspicious.³⁷

The economic and social pressures of the war also heavily influenced education in this country. Many changes

occurred in the American educational system during the war years. Most of these changes were driven by the wartime labor shortage, which severely affected the number of available teachers. Large numbers of teachers left their positions for more lucrative defense jobs or to enter the armed services. To make matters worse, enrollment of students in teacher's colleges dropped dramatically for similar reasons. One major result of the loss of teachers was the widespread hiring of persons with inferior credentials as replacements.³⁸

Education in McDonough County was not immune to these problems. During the war, rising salaries, chronic shortages of teachers, and declining teacher qualifications characterized education in the county. As was the case with farm workers, teachers who chose to stay in the field reaped monetary benefits from the labor shortage, both nationally and locally. As the number of available teachers fell, salaries rose for those who remained. Teachers' salaries in McDonough County had fallen significantly during the depression. For the 1929-30 school year, the average salary paid was \$1092. This dropped to a low of \$720 for 1933-34, then rose slowly to \$890 for for the 1938-39 school year.³⁹

Once a substantial number of persons began leaving teaching for other opportunities, local school districts were forced to raise salaries to keep their classrooms

staffed. Table 23 demonstrates the relationship between the change in the number of teachers and the average salary received in McDonough County schools. As Table 23 shows, the pattern did not reverse itself after the war; salaries continued to rise and the number of teachers to fall.

Table 23.- Number of Teachers, Average Salaries in McDonough County Schools, 1939-1949

Year	Teachers	Average Salary
1939	293	\$ 890
1940	290	905
1941	285	937
1942	280	905
1943	270	1,086
1944	269	1,058
1945	258	1,287
1946	268	1,406
1947	256	1,638
1948	251	2,190
1949	230	2,511

Sources: Superintendent of Public Instruction, Illinois School Statistics, 1939-1949.

The teacher shortage also led to a reduction in the overall qualifications of teachers. This was reflected by the dramatic increase in the number of emergency teaching certificates issued. On July 1, 1943, a law streamlining the process of issuing and renewing these certificates went into effect. Consequently, many persons with little or no

training beyond high school were deemed qualified to teach. Applicants had to be at least 20 years old when the law was passed; in 1944, due to the severity of the shortage, the minimum qualifying age was lowered to just 18.⁴⁰

Table 24 shows the increase in the number of emergency certificates issued in Illinois throughout the war years. As can be seen, even the end of the war did not reverse the trend, as a shortage of qualified teachers continued for many years, with the number of emergency certificates issued increasing each year until 1948.

Table 24.- Emergency Teaching Certificates Issued in Illinois, 1939-1949

Year	Certificates Issued
1939	34
1940	10
1941	3
1942	34
1943	759
1944	2,207
1945	3,403
1946	4,278
1947	4,229
1948	4,197
1949	3,077

Source: Illinois Superintendent of Public Instruction, Annual Statistical Report, 1939-1949.

As the qualifications of teachers changed, so did the

student population. High school enrollment dropped during the war as many older students found the lure of good-paying defense jobs irresistible. One-fourth of the approximately 4,000,000 high school students nationwide who took jobs during the summer of 1943 did not return to school in the fall.⁴¹

A similar pattern of declining enrollments existed in Macomb. Enrollment at Macomb High School fell by 20 to 381 from September 1942 to January 1943, the school having lost a number of students to military service and full-time employment. Without the enrollment of 18 new pupils, the children of camp workers new to the area, the drop would have been greater. As of January 14, 1943, 84 such children had enrolled in Macomb public schools, while others enrolled in the private and parochial schools in town.⁴²

The influx of these children was not enough, however, to maintain prewar enrollment levels in local schools. County-wide, enrollment fell significantly in both elementary and high schools throughout the war years (see Table 25). Some of this decline can be attributed to high school pupils leaving school to enter the work force or the service. In 1943, for example, there were 88 fewer high school students than the year before, while total school enrollment fell by only 20 students as elementary school enrollment actually increased.

Table 25.- McDonough County School Enrollment, 1939-1949

Year-Fall	Total Enrollment	H.S. Enrollment
1939	5036	1369
1940	4923	1405
1941	4911	1458
1942	4759	1407
1943	4739	1319
1944	4509	1213
1945	4506	1201
1946	4633	1258
1947	4480	1219
1948	4580	1207
1949	4527	1178

Source: Illinois Superintendent of Public Instruction, Annual Statistical Report, 1939-1949.

Other years also saw significant losses of students, with high school students making up a substantial portion of the loss. That there was a decrease of elementary students as well, however, indicates that some families were leaving the area, most likely to pursue opportunities elsewhere.

While many students left school during the war, both nationally and locally, the vast majority who remained saw their schools changed by the war. For one thing, the curriculum was altered to fit the perceived needs of a society at war. Classes on aviation were added in many schools, and certain subjects, such as physics, math, history, and physical education, received greater

emphasis.⁴³

Students were also involved more directly in the war effort, in the form of the High School Victory Corps. Established in 1942, its mission was to "give high school students certain preinduction training for armed service and war industry and to enroll them in community services."⁴⁴

Participation in this program was voluntary on the part of the schools and no national organization actually administered it. The Illinois Superintendent of Public Instruction and the State Advisory Committee on Education in Wartime recommended the program for inclusion in Illinois schools. Approximately three-fourths of Illinois high schools elected to participate, including Macomb High, where the boys attended drill sessions under direction of the reserve militia company.⁴⁵

Many social changes accompanied American involvement in World War II. In the Macomb area, many of these changes were felt more keenly due to the pressures put upon the area by the proximity of Camp Ellis. For instance, Macomb, unlike most other rural towns, grew in population during the war years. This population growth had an impact on many facets of daily life in Macomb. Issues of race were also pushed to the forefront as black soldiers arrived at Camp Ellis and Japanese students enrolled at W.I.S.T.C. Housing became a major problem for newcomers, but was an economic boon to

established residents. Education underwent change locally, as well as nationally, as teachers and students left the classroom for opportunities created by the war. World War II did indeed bring major social changes to the nation; Macomb and McDonough County in many ways felt the effects more keenly than many other areas, as the proximity of Camp Ellis brought these changes close to home.

ENDNOTES

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⁵Vatter, The U.S. Economy in World War II, 116.

⁶Vatter, U.S. Economy in World War II, 116; McDonough County, Marriage Register, 1940-1946.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Vatter, U.S. Economy in World War II, 116; Macomb Daily Journal, 3 January 1947, 2.

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¹⁰Macomb Daily Journal, 27 January 1942, 2; 2 February 1942, 2.

¹¹Macomb Daily Journal, 28 October 1942, 2; 5 April 1943, 2.

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¹³Macomb Daily Journal, 11 January 1944, 2.

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- ³¹Macomb Daily Journal, 29 January 1941, 2.
- ³²Hartnett, "The City of Macomb, W.I.S.T.C., and Camp Ellis," 7.
- ³³Macomb Daily Journal, 8 April 1943, 2.
- ³⁴Macomb Daily Journal, 28 April 1944, 2.
- ³⁵Macomb Daily Journal, 11 January 1944, 2; 19 January 1944, 2; 24 January 1944, 2.
- ³⁶Macomb Daily Journal, 9 November 1943, 2, 5; 10 November 1943, 2, 8.
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- ³⁸Perrett, Days of Sadness, Years of Triumph, 370.

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⁴³Mary Watters, Illinois in the Second World War (Springfield, Ill.: Illinois State Historical Library, 1952), v. 1, 379, 382.

⁴⁴Ibid., 376.

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CHAPTER III

Most programs to mobilize participation in the war effort in the U.S. were organized by state and by county. Macomb, as the county seat and largest town in McDonough County, served as the focal point for local civilian participation in the war effort. The Illinois War Council (I.W.C.) was an extremely large organization responsible for the coordination of war related programs and activities throughout the state. There were standing committees of the I.W.C. in Springfield which supervised and aided the many programs of the organization through regional, district, and county directors.¹

The people of Macomb and the county saw their lifestyle dramatically altered once America entered World War II. The changes wrought by the war were inescapable. Those which related to the war most directly were the least permanent, yet the most immediate. The wartime experiences of the local populace fall into two categories: those having to do with the war effort and those having to do with civil defense.

There were many facets to civilian participation in the war effort. As Perrett has noted, "the typical American family was one which was donating blood, buying bonds, saving its tin cans and fats, collecting old newspapers and hunting up scrap metal."² Individuals and groups of all

kinds participated in programs and projects across the nation, including everything from Victory gardens, to bond sales, to scrap drives.

One way in which all Americans participated in the war effort was through rationing. The rationing of civilian goods affected virtually everyone, and items long taken for granted were sometimes difficult to obtain. In anticipation of consumer product shortages, the Office of Price Administration (O.P.A.) was converted to the Office of Price Administration and Civilian Supply, by executive order of President Roosevelt, in April 1941. The O.P.A. began rationing in January of 1942, with tires. This office assumed this responsibility on their own initiative, and held onto the function permanently. They proceeded to set up local ration boards in all of the nation's counties, and recruited over thirty thousand volunteers to handle the necessary paperwork involved in issuing ration books to everyone in the country. A large proportion of the goods Americans had taken for granted were rationed to some degree as the federal government attempted to combat wartime scarcity and inflation.³

Since Japanese conquests had eliminated 97 percent of the U.S. crude rubber supply, the O.P.A. began to ration tires a few weeks after Pearl Harbor. The country had only 660,000 tons of rubber stockpiled, while the annual civilian

consumption averaged between 600,000 and 700,000 tons per year. Given the most pressing need for rubber was for tires, the OPA first froze the sale of tires, then quickly followed this order by banning the recapping of old tires.⁴

On December 31, 1941, the OPA announced that only 350,000 tires per month would go to civilians. The state's January 1942 quota was 17,875 tires and tubes; McDonough County was allotted only 178 of these. All tire dealers were ordered to immediately file an inventory of the tires and tubes on hand with Henry Pope, Jr., the state tire-rationing administrator, at the Illinois State Council of Defense office in Chicago. On January 22, the Macomb Daily Journal reported the county would get four less car tires and twenty-five less truck tires the following month. On February 9, a story in the paper revealed that the curtailment was likely to become even more drastic.⁵

Americans had barely begun to feel the effects of wartime shortages; the federal government soon began rationing many items which people used every day. Rationing went into effect on cars on February 2, typewriters on March 13, sugar on April 20, bicycles on May 15, fuel oil on October 12, coffee on November 12, gasoline on December 1 (except the east coast where it had been rationed since May 12), and heating stoves on December 19. Early 1943 brought rationing on three more items: processed foods on February

2, shoes on February 7, and meats and fats on March 29.⁶

The initiation and administration of rationing programs required tremendous amounts of manpower. Local War Councils, under the direction of the Illinois War Council, provided assistance in the form of volunteer clerical workers. These volunteers handled routine but important tasks associated with processing the huge numbers of ration coupons received, as well as issuing new ration books. During registration for ration books in February 1943, the local councils provided ration boards with over 6,000 volunteer workers to meet the demand.⁷

Government announcements of ration dates frequently sparked buying waves both nationally and locally. In the case of sugar and flour, many Macomb housewives did not even wait for an announcement of rationing. The attack on Pearl Harbor set off a buying rush on sugar and flour at the city's grocery stores, many women obviously remembering the rationing and shortages of these items which accompanied World War I.⁸

When it was announced that the rationing of sugar would begin soon, a new run on sugar began. The standard weekly ration was one-half pound of sugar, per person, plus another five pounds per household for canning purposes. Although this did not constitute a serious hardship, the run on sugar was severe enough to prompt the owners of some stores to

institute a policy of refusing to sell sugar without at least one dollar's worth of other merchandise in an effort to check hoarding. They discontinued this practice, however, when the U.S. Justice Department announced that this was in violation of antitrust laws. Sugar ration books were issued to all who registered for them; this registration was done at local schools, with teachers and principals acting as registrars.⁹

On September 20, 1942, the O.P.A. announced that sales of shoes made from rubber, such as rubber boots and workshoes, would be frozen until October 5. At that time, rationing would begin. To purchase a pair of these shoes, one had to apply for a certificate. Sales were limited, however, to "workers essential to the war or to public health or safety."¹⁰ The chairman of the county rationing board stated that county farmers, coal miners, and workers in other essential occupations would be able to purchase such items.¹¹

Coffee rationing began on November 28. The rate was to be only one pound, every five weeks, to all citizens fifteen years old or older; this represented a cutback for many people, as the daily ration worked out to only slightly more than one cup a day, per person. Coffee supplies in Macomb began to dwindle well before November 28, as people bought in quantity, in anticipation of rationing. In response, some

stores began to limit purchases to one pound, per person, per visit.¹²

One of the images of wartime privations planted most firmly in the American consciousness is that of gasoline rationing. Gas rationing began on the east coast on May 1, 1942, seven months before gas began to be rationed nationwide. This was due to a regional shortage of gasoline caused by numerous sinkings of American tankers by German submarines in the Atlantic.¹³

Gasoline rationing went into effect in the remainder of the nation on December 1, 1942, more because of the rubber shortage than any shortage of fuel. A federal commission investigating the rubber situation determined that a significant reduction in the total mileage driven by Americans was necessary to conserve tires. Acting on their report, President Roosevelt issued an executive order rationing gas, banning pleasure driving, and imposing a 35 m.p.h. speed-limit on the nations highways.¹⁴

Gasoline ration cards came in several varieties. Most persons were issued "A" cards and got the lowest ration of gas, three gallons per week. Individuals with "essential" driving to do, such as war workers, got "B" cards which entitled them to more gasoline than the "A" card holders. "C" cards were reserved for persons who performed "vital services," such as physicians, to assure them an adequate

supply of gasoline.¹⁵

Registration for gas cards began in McDonough County on November 14, 1942. To be eligible to receive a gasoline ration, motorists had to register their vehicles at area schools. Each registrant was also required to first sell all tires in excess of five in his possession for the car being registered to the Defense Supplies Corporation.¹⁶

The O.P.A. froze shoe sales on February 3, 1943, and announced that rationing of shoes would begin February 5 at the rate of three pairs, per person, per year. Unlike previous rationing announcements, this order was not announced in advance, catching store owners by surprise. The order also forbade the manufacture of "non-essential" shoes including women's evening slippers, spiked-heel shoes, platform shoes, and men's patent leather shoes. To administer this rationing program, the sugar ration book, already in people's possession, was used, stamp no. 17 being good for one pair of shoes until June 15, 1943, as well as for the weekly sugar allotment.¹⁷

Among the last items to be rationed were meats and fats on March 29, 1943. A run on meat products had hit Macomb stores the previous day. "Macomb residents went on a meat-buying spree Saturday that cleaned nearly every grocery and meat market in town of meat of all kinds" according to the Macomb Daily Journal.¹⁸

A vital part of this area's contribution to the national war effort consisted of the Macomb and other McDonough County men who served in the armed forces during the conflict. Some were drafted, while others enlisted in the various branches of the service. These men served in many different locations all over the world. Besides the main theatres of war, local men served in places such as England, Ireland, Iceland, the Phillipines, India, New Caledonia, India, and Africa. On January 30, 1947, the Macomb Daily Journal published a list of all area men classified as dead or missing. According to this source, 82 McDonough County men gave their lives in the war.¹⁹

A total of 910,448 Illinois men either enlisted, were inducted, or were commissioned into the armed forces. Of this number, 629,516 were inducted through the Selective Service program. McDonough County men registered for the draft in Macomb, at the Gumbart Building. During its tenure, the McDonough County local board of the Selective Service registered 5,972 men and furnished 1,561 to the armed forces.²⁰

The local boards of the Selective Service were composed of men from the jurisdiction of the local board. To serve in such a position, an individual had to satisfy several requirements of the Selective Service and Training Act of 1940. A prospective board member had to be a U.S. citizen,

reside in the county of the local board on which he was to serve, be a civilian, and not be subject to induction by the Selective Service. Men who were deemed "politically active," such as public officeholders and candidates for such offices, were automatically disqualified to preclude any charges of political favoritism on the part of the boards. Veterans were considered the most desirable candidates, and were sought after as members. Consequently, about 70 percent of all local board members in the country were veterans.²¹

There were six separate draft registrations, each one being aimed at a different population of men. The first registration, which took place on October 16, 1940, was for men 21 to 35 years old. The second on July 1, 1941, was for men who had turned 21 since the first registration. Twenty year olds and men 35 to 44 years of age comprised the third registration, on February 16, 1942. April 27 of that year saw the registration of 45 to 64 year olds, and June 30, the registration 18 and 19 year olds. A sixth, continuously run, registration followed the fifth, for the purpose of registering men as they reached their 18th birthday.²²

Classifications were assigned to all registered men by their local board. This classification indicated whether they were acceptable for service or should be deferred for some reason. The prospective draftee first received a questionnaire from his local board regarding such things as

age, occupation, marital status, and financial situation. The questionnaire also had a place where the prospective draftee could request a deferment if he felt he was entitled to one.²³

The local board voted on which classification to give the registrants on the basis of the returned questionnaires. They considered each possible classification individually, for each registrant, in order to be certain they did not misclassify anyone who was entitled to a deferment. If a man did not satisfy the conditions for any type of deferment, he was classified as I-A, fit for service, and was eligible for induction. When the local board received a "manpower call," they sent out induction notices to the I-A men in sequence of their registrant's order numbers.²⁴

Macomb also provided manpower to the Illinois Reserve Militia Unit stationed in the city. This unit was formed after the National Guard unit stationed at Macomb was activated in March 1941. The following December the Reserve Militia Unit was also called to service to guard the Mississippi River bridges at Keokuk and Fort Madison. This order activated only eighteen of the unit's men, assigning eight enlisted men and one officer to each bridge. At this time the unit had only forty-seven men, and it was announced that the men for the detail would be chosen on the basis of how convenient it would be for them to leave their homes and

jobs.²⁵

In early January 1942, the detail at Fort Madison was doubled in strength to protect against any possible sabotage. The detail at Keokuk, however, was not similarly increased. With the loss of these men to active duty, membership in the unit was well below its full strength of 90 men. Shortly after the bridge details were sent off, a drive to increase membership in the unit met with an enthusiastic response and the unit was at close to full strength in a short time. The personnel of the unit thereafter became very fluid, as members either enlisted or were drafted into the regular armed services. To keep up their numbers, the unit liberalized its membership requirements, enabling it to accept for service all men between the ages of 18 and 55.²⁶

Civilians also played a major role in adding to the strength of the nation. One of the most popular aspects of the civilian war effort was the Victory Garden program. The victory gardens numbered almost twenty million and produced 40 percent of the nation's vegetables at the program's peak. Besides individual family gardens, many cities planted communal gardens in parks and vacant lots. Total U.S. food production from victory gardens is estimated at one million tons of food, with an estimated value of \$85 million.²⁷

In February of 1942, a meeting for all persons

interested in the Victory Garden program was held in Macomb. Representatives from various organizations in town worked together to organize and present a series of meetings designed to help potential gardeners with advice and instruction in planting and maintaining their victory gardens. The group also resolved to encourage increased food production throughout the area, on farms as well as in town, in order to help McDonough County do its part in increasing the national food supply. Camp Ellis started its own victory garden in the spring of 1944. The garden covered 200 acres, and produced over 525,000 pounds of vegetables with an estimated value of \$58,000. It also brought many previously unavailable vegetables to the camp's mess halls.²⁸

Salvage or "scrap" drives was another area where all ordinary citizens could get involved. These scrap drives were one of the the major successes of the war effort in this country. The War Production Board initiated campaigns to collect scrap metal, rubber, paper, fats, and other useful materials. One major scrap drive called for four million tons of scrap metal to be collected within two months. This goal was easily surpassed; within three weeks, over five million tons had already been collected.²⁹

Scrap rubber was of critical importance to the war effort. To help alleviate the rubber shortage, President Roosevelt initiated a massive nationwide rubber drive, in an

appeal to the people over the radio in June 1942. The response was overwhelming, with members of Congress even donating 1,700 spittoon mats.³⁰

The great rubber drive netted 335,000 tons of scrap rubber, as citizens turned over everything from old galoshes to hot water bottles to beach balls. The drive was seen as a huge success, although a significant portion of the haul was of limited utility, consisting of already reclaimed rubber items.³¹

The Conservation Committee of the I.W.C., in cooperation with the national War Production Board, directed salvage operations in the state. To coordinate the efforts of the people of Illinois, they established 100 county and 493 local committees statewide. The people of Macomb participated in all the salvage drives with great enthusiasm. During the great rubber drive, quotas were not assigned, but according to the salvage chairman of the local defense council, J. R. Broderick, Macomb's contribution had lived up to all expectations. The scrap metal drive of September 1942 was an unqualified success in the county. When it was over, McDonough County had exceeded its quota of 1,000 tons, with a total of 1,098.³²

In addition to participation in these national drives, in May of 1942 the Boy Scouts of Macomb and Good Hope banded together and conducted a general scrap drive of their own,

collecting anything that might be useful in the war effort. They ended up collecting over 14 tons of various scrap materials, including 2,290 pounds of rubber, over 7,000 pounds of paper, 1,512 pounds of rags, 75 pounds of copper, and 87 pounds of aluminum.³³

One of the most important ways in which the nation supported the war effort was by the purchase of defense bonds and stamps. Promotion and advertising of bonds and stamps was done on a huge scale. Newspapers, radio stations, and other media enterprises donated over \$400 million worth of advertising time and space for the promotion of bond sales throughout the war.³⁴

The U.S. government held seven separate war loan drives to help pay for the war. All passed the goals set for them, although the quotas set for purchases by individuals were often not met, the difference being made up by purchases by banks and other corporations which exceeded their quotas. All together, the seven drives raised approximately \$135 billion.³⁵

The War Bonds and Stamps Committee of the I.W.C. concerned itself with the promotion of bond and stamp sales to the public. In many communities house-to-house canvases were made under the direction of block leaders, many of whom were local air raid wardens. Also, Volunteer Offices were set up to recruit persons to help promote the periodic loan

drives.³⁶

The first bonds and stamps went on sale in Macomb on May 1, 1940. After Pearl Harbor, predictably enough, sales rose dramatically. From the beginning of the program, however, a concerted effort to sell as many stamps and bonds as possible was underway in the Macomb area. All sorts of groups organized to push bond sales. The "Illinois Retailers Division," part of a national group of retailers, appointed men in the towns and cities of Illinois, including Macomb, to promote the sale of these securities. Major Benjamin H. Namm, chairman of the national organization, stated that the nation's retailers were committed to selling one billion dollars worth of stamps and bonds in 1942 alone. One method used to sell defense stamps was to give customers shopping at stores their change in defense stamps, instead of in cash. This was purely voluntary on the part of the customer, but demanding cash instead of stamps undoubtedly made many people uncomfortable.³⁷

Retailers were not the only group committed to promoting the sale of defense bonds. Groups of farmers and factory managers also organized campaigns. The goal in all cases was 100 percent participation, at some level of contribution. This meant that efforts were made to convince every factory worker, farmer, and shop clerk to make a commitment to buy a certain amount of stamps each week. The

amount was left up to the individual, as was the decision not to participate at all, but the pressure to conform must have been enormous. As might be expected, these efforts were largely successful, given the pressure on individuals to conform. On February 13, 1942, the Macomb Daily Journal reported that 37 retail firms and four factories in the county had already secured 100 percent participation among their employees.³⁸

It should be noted that persons who were not subjected to appeals to buy at work were not ignored in this effort. McDonough County had an administrator, a local man named A.J. Fish, whose job it was to coordinate and direct bond sales in the county. He developed a plan to organize each township, and sixteen different occupations, in an effort to secure 100 percent participation in the county.³⁹

The efforts of the persons pushing bond sales in McDonough County were fairly successful. Total sales throughout the war amounted to \$16,248,000, and the quotas set for the county were exceeded in seven out of the eight bond drives.⁴⁰ Table 26 shows these quotas and the county totals for each drive.

The city of Bushnell, the second largest city in the county, had the best bond-buying record. Based on the figures for the last five bond drives, Bushnell exceeded its quotas for these drives by 166 percent. Macomb was second

with 144 percent. The areas with the lowest percentages were the townships of Lamoine, Chalmers, and Prairie City which met, respectively, only 40, 55, and 60 percent of their quotas for the last five drives. Despite these lower figures, the county as a whole exceed its quotas regularly.⁴¹

Table 26.-McDonough County Bond Purchases during the Eight Bond Drives

Drive	Quota	Sales
First	none	\$ 657,000
Second	\$ 960,000	803,000
Third	1,200,900	1,454,575
Fourth	1,301,000	1,622,000
Fifth	1,352,000	1,705,000
Sixth	1,226,000	1,675,131
Seventh	1,510,000	1,952,155
Eighth	933,000	1,708,000

Source: Macomb Daily Journal, January 23, 1946, 2.

Besides major events such as bond drives, area residents participated in other, smaller ways as well. They sent books to soldiers overseas through a program sponsored by the Macomb Library Board, and Macomb High School students sent homemade games such as ping pong and shuffleboard sets.⁴²

Fear and uncertainty, as well as enthusiasm and

patriotism, accompanied America's entrance into the war. The decision to station guards at the Fort Madison and Keokuk bridges was an example of this fear. Civil Defense became a top priority, not only on the nation's coastlines, but all across the country. The Civilian Protection Division of the Office of Civilian War Services concerned itself with all matters pertaining to civil defense. Just before the attack on Pearl Harbor, the nation already had 6,000 local councils of the Office of Civilian Defense, and half a million volunteers. By the summer of 1942, this had increased to 11,000 local councils, and over one million volunteers. A multitude of opportunities for civilians to participate in civil defense emerged once America entered the war. Many cities organized large-scale civil defense programs which included the organization of volunteer fire brigades, first-aid classes, and air-raid survival classes.⁴³

On December 10, 1941, the mayor of Macomb, Wilbur Wetzell, in response to a request from the Illinois State Defense Council, named four local men to form a local council of defense for Macomb. After initial meetings to discuss the course Macomb would take regarding civil defense, the newly formed council decided to limit programs to activities which appeared to have value in a community of Macomb's size. This council felt that many of the activities recommended by the state council of defense, such as classes

in Americanism, practice blackouts, and an elaborate air raid warning system, had little value for a rural town such as Macomb. It was decided that Macomb should concentrate instead on activities such as scrap drives and defense bond and stamp sales.⁴⁴

Another concern of the local authorities was the possibility of sabotage of vital industries. In accordance with a new national policy to prevent sabotage, the heads of the Central Illinois Public Services Company, the Illinois Commercial Telephone Company, and the McDonough County Power Co-op announced that guards would be stationed at their plants. In addition to the placing of guards, visitors were barred from these facilities and citizens were instructed to report anyone seen loitering around the premises of these plants.⁴⁵

Despite the extreme unlikelihood of an air attack on the middle portion of the United States, air raid defense was, at first, taken quite seriously. Many Americans feared enemy attacks on U.S. cities and air raid defense preparations were begun across the nation. McDonough, Hancock, and Fulton counties comprised the 18th Raid Defense District of Region 4. The American Legion was given responsibility for air raid defense, and Captain William F. Waugh, as state commander of the American Legion in Illinois, became chairman of the Civil Protection Division

of the Illinois State Council of Defense. The air raid defense program required each town of 2500 or more to be designated a reporting center, and called for each community to establish one observation post for each six-square-mile area.⁴⁶

By March of 1942, it had become obvious that such an elaborate air raid defense system was totally unnecessary in this part of the country. At a conference in Springfield, Illinois, in mid-March, local air raid wardens and chief air raid observers were informed that the full air raid warning system would be used only on the nation's coasts. From that point on, their organization would be concerned with aiding the authorities in any cases of sabotage. There was, of course, no more sabotage than there were air attacks in Illinois.⁴⁷

Airports were a major concern of civil defense authorities. Only days after Pearl Harbor, the Macomb airport, like many others across the nation, was shut down until all local pilots could be checked out and registered by the government. In late February 1942, the airport was again shut down for a period of two weeks while it was brought up to the standards of the national defense program. New measures were taken to avoid possible sabotage, including three newly assigned armed guards and the installation of a new electric siren on the main hangar.⁴⁸

Another way some area residents participated in the defense of the country, and helped improve their own job skills, was by enrolling in "defense classes" offered through the National Defense Council. The classes were free and open to anyone eighteen years of age or older who was not enrolled in school. These courses were extensive, lasting ten weeks and totaling three hundred hours. They included acetylene and machine shop welding and radio mechanics and were held at local places of business.⁴⁹ The Macomb Daily Journal printed this assessment of the classes: "These classes offer an excellent opportunity for those eligible Already, 76% of the 256 men who have completed the training are employed in private industry."⁵⁰

Despite state and national authorities abandonment of a plan for a complex air raid system in the midwest, practice blackouts were still being held in Illinois. On November 12, 1942, after much anticipation in the local press, Macomb got its turn. On that day, from 10:00 to 10:15 P M., Macomb shut off its lights. The practice was heralded as a success despite the presence of five undimmed lights being reported. The only other problem, insofar as Chief Air Raid Warden Bobbit, was concerned, lay with the state Civil Air Patrol. No airplane was flown over the town to check the effectiveness of the blackout as had originally been planned. Bobbit blamed a lack of cooperation on the part of

this agency for the absence of the airplane.⁵¹

It seems strange that having an available aircraft in the area should have been a problem, as the Macomb airport was the headquarters of the 23rd Squadron of the Civil Air Patrol. The patrol consisted of volunteer civilian pilots whose function was to supplement the air strength of the armed forces. The organization was a branch of the Office of Civil Defense. It was organized into regions, wings, districts, squadrons, and flights. The 23rd squadron consisted of three flights of three planes each, and drew pilots from Hancock, Fulton, and McDonough counties, including a number of women. All members had to be cleared by the Office of Civilian Defense and the F.B.I.⁵²

First aid was another component of civil defense training which was participated in locally, under the jurisdiction of the local Red Cross chapter. Although classes were offered before Pearl Harbor, interest and enrollment increased considerably after the attack. Both beginning and advanced classes were offered, and the Macomb Daily Journal reported on January 23, 1942, that thirty-one men and women had just completed the advanced course, making that the largest graduating class up to that time. While first aid skills are always of value, it is unclear what application to the national war effort training local residents in first aid might have had. Nonetheless, this

project attracted many participants, as did most projects which appealed to people's patriotism.⁵³

There is little doubt that the citizens of this area threw themselves into the war effort enthusiastically, participating in a large variety of war-related programs and activities. The level and types of participation were probably typical of midwestern rural communities. The citizens of Macomb and McDonough County seemed to favor things such as scrap drives and defense bond campaigns, and there seemed to be little dissension about what goals to pursue and how to achieve them. This was, and is, after all, a fairly homogeneous community, conservative, and certainly patriotic in outlook. It could be expected that many wartime problems, such as racial and labor disputes, which sometimes plagued larger cities, would not be encountered in such a community.

ENDNOTES

¹Mary Watters, Illinois in the Second World War (Springfield, Ill.: Illinois State Historical Library, 1952), vol. 1, 260.

²Geoffrey Perrett, Days of Sadness, Years of Triumph, 233.

³Richard R. Lingeman, Don't You Know There's a War On? The American Home Front, 1941-1945 (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1970) 234-35.

⁴Ibid., 235.

⁵Paul D. Casdorff, Let the Good Times Roll: Life at Home in America during World War II (New York: Paragon House, 1989), 15; Macomb Daily Journal, 2 January 1942, p. 2.; 22 January 1942, p. 2.; 9 February 1942, p. 2.

⁶Watters, Illinois in the Second World War, 320.

⁷Illinois War Council, "A Report of the Activities of the Illinois State Council of Defense and the Illinois War Council from April 17, 1941 to December 31, 1943," (n.p.: March 1944), 82.

⁸Macomb Daily Journal, 10 December 1941, 2.

⁹Casdorff, Let the Good Times Roll, 12-13; Macomb Daily Journal, 25 January 1942, 2; 10 December 1941, 2.

¹⁰Macomb Daily Journal, 20 September 1942, 2.

¹¹Macomb Daily Journal, 20 September 1942, 2.

¹²Macomb Daily Journal, 26 October 1942, 2.

¹³Lingeman, Don't You Know There's a War On?, 238.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Casdorff, Let the Good Times Roll, 46.

¹⁶Macomb Daily Journal, 6 November 1942, 2.

¹⁷Macomb Daily Journal, 4 February 1943, 2.

¹⁸Macomb Daily Journal, 29 March 1943, 2.

¹⁹Macomb Daily Journal, 17 July 1942, 2; 30 January 1947, 2.

²⁰Victor Kleber, Selective Service in Illinois: 1940-1947, (Springfield, Ill.: 1948), 239, 439.

²¹Ibid., 59-61.

²²Ibid., 104.

²³Ibid., 111.

²⁴Ibid., 114-115, 235.

²⁵Macomb Daily Journal, 11 December 1941, 2.

²⁶Macomb Daily Journal, 2 January 1942, 2; 8 January 1942, 2; 4 March 1942, 2.

²⁷Lingeman, Don't You Know There's a War On?, 251.

²⁸Macomb Daily Journal, 16 February 1942, 2; The Story of Camp Ellis (Washington, D.C., 1945), 124.

²⁹Perrett, Days of Sadness, Years of Triumph, 234.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Lingeman, Don't You Know There's a War On?, 237.

³²Illinois War Council, "Report of the Activities of the Illinois State Council of Defense," 71; Macomb Daily Journal, 11 July 1942, 2; 23 September 1942, 2.

³³Macomb Daily Journal, 23 May 1942, 2.

³⁴Raymond Rubicam, "Advertising," in America at War: The Home Front, 1941-1945, ed. Richard Polenber (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1968) 18.

³⁵Allan M. Winkler, Home Front U.S.A.: America During World War II (Arlington Heights, Ill: Harlan Davidson, 1986) 32, 19.

³⁶Illinois War Council, "Report of the Activities of the Illinois State Council of Defense," 109-10.

³⁷Macomb Daily Journal, 1 May 1940, 2; 15 December 1941, 2; 5 January 1942, 2; Perrett, Days of Sadness, Years of Triumph, 175.

³⁸Macomb Daily Journal, 14 February 1942, 2; 28 February 1940, 2; 4 March 1942, 2; 5 February 1942, 2.

³⁹Macomb Daily Journal, 5 February 1942, 2.

⁴⁰Macomb Daily Journal, 23 January 1946, 2.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Macomb Daily Journal, 10 January 1942, 2; 24 February 1942, 2.

⁴³Perrett, Days of Sadness, Years of Triumph, 231-32, 142.

⁴⁴Macomb Daily Journal, 11 December 1941, 2; 16 December 1941, 2.

⁴⁵Macomb Daily Journal, 17 December 1941, 2.

⁴⁶Casdorph, Let the Good Times Roll, 8; Macomb Daily Journal, 24 January 1942, 2.

⁴⁷Macomb Daily Journal, 16 March 1942, 2.

⁴⁸Macomb Daily Journal, 9 December 1941, 2; 4 March 1942, 2.

⁴⁹Macomb Daily Journal, 11 December 1941, 2.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Macomb Daily Journal, 13 November 1942, 2.

⁵²Macomb Daily Journal, 12 February 1942, 2; Perrett, Days of Sadness, Years of Triumph, 233.

⁵³Macomb Daily Journal, 23 January 1942, 2.

CONCLUSION

So, how was Macomb affected by the war? One of the most fundamental changes was the greatly increased prosperity experienced by the local populace. This new-found prosperity touched farmers, businessmen, and other local residents in many different ways. With the coming of war, farmers, both nationally and locally, were free to produce at capacity, thanks to government supported prices and virtually unlimited markets. This helped make the war years one of the rare periods of relative contentment for American farmers, which McDonough County farmers shared heavily in.

Local businesses did even better. Here the effect of Camp Ellis on the local economy can be seen most clearly. While local farmers shared in the general wartime prosperity of American agriculture, local business prosperity was well above average for the nation. Sales and profits soared as large numbers of new consumers descended on the small city of Macomb.

Local residents also shared in this prosperity in other ways. Many found jobs directly connected with the camp, while others obtained the additional jobs which naturally accompany increased prosperity. With the increase in local commerce, new jobs in the service sector were created. The participation of local industry in war production provided

additional opportunities.

Another way residents shared in the local prosperity was related to the wartime housing shortage in Macomb. As newcomers poured into town and attempted to obtain housing, many residents with spare rooms were able to supplement their incomes by renting them to new arrivals.

Unfortunately, crowding also became a problem as available living space became virtually impossible to obtain.

Along with economic opportunities came social changes as well. While Macomb and its citizens prospered economically from the influx of newcomers into the area, this influx also brought the social problems which result from sudden changes in the make-up of an area's population. The relatively quiet town of Macomb became a bustling community as it stretched to accommodate both civilian and military newcomers.

Among others things, Macomb was forced to deal with issues arising from changes in education, race, and crime. Many changes which were felt across the nation were intensified by the proximity of Camp Ellis to Macomb. Remaining essentially rural, however, Macomb was spared some of the problems which plagued larger cities during the war.

The people of Macomb also participated enthusiastically in the national war effort. As in most areas of the country, patriotism and participation were the norm. The presence of Camp Ellis and its soldiers, however, provided an additional

reminder that their nation was at war, and that individual effort and sacrifice were necessary if America was to prevail.

This study of Macomb and McDonough County in many ways confirms generally held assumptions about the home front during World War II. In some ways the experiences of the local populace mirrored those of the nation as a whole. This study does point out, however, that not all areas of the country felt the impact of the war in the same way. Unique local conditions sometimes altered local wartime experiences, as was the case in Macomb and McDonough County due to the pressures brought about by the presence of Camp Ellis.

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