

An excerpt from  
**The History of Stacyville, Iowa: 1856-2006<sup>1</sup>**  
By Cheryl Mullenbach, 2006

**1941-1950**

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Another tumultuous time interrupted life in Stacyville. Young people from Stacyville joined others from around the country to fight in a second world war. Some families had several members in the military—stationed all over the world. Occasionally Stacyville natives ran into one another in far-off places. Stacyville natives took part in major battles of the war. One Stacyville girl cared for patients who had been liberated from a concentration camp. Some Stacyville natives were wounded and recovered. Others were killed.

Page | 1

Those who survived the war settled into peacetime living back home in Stacyville or on farms in the area. The post-war years generally were considered good years by most historians. And most Stacyville residents enjoyed peacetime living. The Methodist Church building was for sale. The ice hockey team competed with neighboring towns. Baseball was still a favorite Sunday afternoon pastime. But an era came to an end when the Opera House lot and equipment were sold. And the public school closed its doors for the final time.

And just about the time Stacyville residents were getting used to the idea of peace, another world conflict intervened. By 1950 America was again involved in a military skirmish, this time in Korea. And again life in Stacyville was affected as young people left to fight in Asia. But between World War II and the Korean War, farmers, business owners and children in Stacyville enjoyed the usual pursuits.

In May 1941 graduation exercises for 15 seniors were held at Visitation High School. Those receiving diplomas were Catherine Weisensel, Mary Spartz, Ramona Hatten, Esther Halbach, Helen Mullenbach, Marcella Kreber, Helen Mayer, Kathryn Simon, Cletus Hatten, Robert Beland, Daniel Gilles, Ralph Michels, Ralph Brumm, Albert Diedrich and Raphael Durben. The seniors presented the play “Coming through the Rye.”

The news of war dominated in 1942—worldwide and in Stacyville. In March Dr. T.E. Blong conducted a planning meeting for a Red Cross first aid class. The class would consist of 10 sessions, each two hours long. These classes were organized in every county in the country. “Quite a large number” of people signed up for the Stacyville class. In March 1942 several Stacyville area men joined the Armed Forces. Frederick Klapperich and Gerald Weber of Stacyville left for Des Moines where they were inducted into the U.S. Army. Albert A. May was accepted for enlistment in the Navy. In May Ralph Mayer, Albert Brumm and Jerome Mayer were called up to serve in the Army.

The annual meeting of the shareholders of the Stacyville Opera House Company was held in January 1943 at the Gerbig Hardware, according to secretary Hardy Stehn. The Stacyville Grain & Coal Company reported a “good business year.” Officers were: James Reding, John P. May, Henry Smith, John Hemann, and Carl Blake. Joe Pitzen was manager and his assistant was Sy Pitzen.

In the spring of 1943 the Visitation senior class presented the play “Double Trouble.” The cast included Helen Simon, Clarence Brumm, Angela Wagner, Alverna Blake, Sylvia Adams, Ralph Beland, Stephen Duren, Marvin Krebsbach, Adeline Gilles, Eileen Spartz, Willard Blaser, Robert Schrandt, Edwin Mayer, Gertrude Falk, and Rosemary Kreber.

Late in 1943 Mr. and Mrs. C.E. Rex, who operated the Stacyville Telephone Exchange for 15 years, sold to the Iowa Central Telephone Exchange Company. They sold their residence to Louis Ethen, who operated the creamery. The Rexes purchased a farm north of Osage.

In the spring of 1944 the Stacyville Theater was obliged to increase admission prices for adults to 35 cents and for children under age 12 to 12 cents. Manager Tyler regretted the move, but was forced to do so because of “higher federal amusement taxes.” He promised to continue to give his patrons the “best shows possible.”

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Births in 1944 included Nicholas Hatten, Kathleen Lambaere, Robert Thome, Joyce Blaser, Sharon Halbach, Grant Gerhart, Dorothy Durben, and Dorothy Retterath.

Ernie Adams and his crew harvested the 1944 ice crop during the final week of 1944. It was reported that the weather was “perfect” and the ice was “crystal clear and sixteen inches thick.”

Page | 2

The juniors and seniors of Visitation High enjoyed a potluck and bunco party at the William Weis home in early January 1945. Irmarose Weis was the hostess and was assisted by Edna Ginder. Prizes for high in bunco were given to Rita Heimerman and William Halbach.

Stacyville was described as “a noisy place” following the announcement by President Truman that Japan had surrendered. Stacyville’s fire siren and the bells at the public school, fire station, Methodist Church and Visitation Church were “put to real sound tests” for a half hour. Some of the kids put on a street parade and “many of our town and countryside people reduced the energy of their car battery.” A special prayer service was held at Visitation Church. It was reported there was “a grand feeling of joy and happiness that the war has ceased.”

Early in 1946 Carl Brown opened “an electric store” in “the Wageman block.” The new business would be called “Brown’s Electric.” The new firm planned to do inside and outside wiring. Matt Stammeyer severed his connections with the Co-op Oil Company and purchased the Standard Service Station. He also purchased the residence in the back of the station from Steve Blaser. He planned to build an addition to the station where he would offer “greasing and oiling of cars.” Al Halbach took over as manager of the Coop Service Station. Ralph Mayer was in charge of the truck service.

In the spring of 1946 the interior of the Visitation Church was redecorated. The work was done by “expert painters and frescoing artists.” Services continued throughout the work.

The soybean crop in 1947 “swamped” the Stacyville Elevator bins. The bean storage tanks were reported full and 56 trucks were lined up one Saturday for a distance of four blocks waiting to unload. The price held “around \$3 a bushel” with an annual yield of “20 bushels to the acre.”

Jerry Hackenmiller completed his training at the Cedar Rapids Barber School and started work at the Metz Barber Shop in the summer of 1948. The Stacyville Grain & Coal Co. changed its name to the Stacyville Co-op Company. Jerome Adams sold his DX Tank Wagon to F.J. Brown.

Stacyville voters in the 1948 presidential election gave Thomas E. Dewey 130 votes and Harry S. Truman 371 votes. The Stacyville Commercial Club was organized in 1948. Officers were: F.J. Brown, president; Dr. C.E. Staudt, vice president; Clem Pitzen, secretary/treasurer. Young people in town were pleased to learn that a skating pond was planned on the “lots west of Sy Stolzenberg’s residence.”

A shipment of 2,000 bass and 3,000 bluegills was placed in the Little Cedar River. A new business opened in town in late 1949 when Mrs. Verla Young from St. Ansgar opened a ladies’ ready-to-wear shop in the “Wolf Block.” The shop had been operated as a beauty shop by Mrs. Wayne Schuhart, who moved her business to Little Cedar. Mrs. Jerry Hackenmiller sold Avon products. Larry Huemann joined his dad, Paul, in the milk and cream hauling business.

Births during 1950 included: Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Wolf, a son; Mr. and Mrs. Fred Bissen, a son; Mr. and Mrs. Barney Retterath, a son; Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Hemann, a son; Mr. and Mrs. W.J. Schrandt, a son; and Mr. and Mrs. Roy Wageman, a girl.

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Twenty children received their First Communion at Visitation Church in the spring of 1950: Veronica Adams, James Bawek, Richard Gerk, Janice Halbach, Herman Krebsbach, Kevin Loecher, Howard Mauer, Gary Mauer, Dennis Meek, Margaret Meyer, Stephen Pitzen, James Retterath, David Schilling, Daniel Smith, Mary Schmidt, Kathryn Schmidt, Robert Wagner, James Wageman, and Terrance Weber.

The '40s were over and the '50s were off to a good start. It would be a couple of years before those serving in the Korean War would return to town. But Stacyville had entered the decade of the '50s much like other small towns—sock hops in the gym and an ice cream shop on Main Street, cars with fins, boys with ducktails and girls with pony tails.

Page | 3

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