

MARIE MCLAUGHLIN ARCHIVAL DOCUMENT

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ABSTRACT

Biography

Marie Zanoni McLaughlin was born in Brooklyn in 1929 to the Aragiusto family. During the war years, she lived in a multifamily house with her grandparents upstairs and her aunt's family downstairs. Marie's father was a beautician and her mother a seamstress. During World War II, she contributed to war drives and worked with the Red Cross. Marie also routinely helped decorate the block for returning soldiers, including the young man a few houses down, whom she later married in 1948.

Summary

In this interview, Marie relates life on her Brooklyn block during the war years. She describes her neighbors and group activities, such as making bandages for the Red Cross and decorating houses. Marie also remembers neighbors bringing Italian prisoners of war over from New Jersey for weekend visits. She further recounts the challenges of food rationing and air raid drills during World War II.

Keywords

teenager, Brooklyn, New York City, air raid drills, rationing, radio, prisoners of war, music, Pearl Harbor, movies

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STORY TRANSCRIPTS

Story 1: Hosting Italian Prisoners of War [9:49 – 10:16]

We had a neighbor next door, who—we were at war with Italy at the time. But they had prisoners of war here in New Jersey, at one of the camps. I can't remember the name. And they were allowed to take the prisoners of war home for dinner on a Sunday. So, this Italian family would go there and take maybe three or four fellas and bring them home, and then bring them back. So, it was that kind of a time.

Story 2: Following Air Raid Orders [26:58 – 27:58]

I remember my mom and dad [following] orders from the air raid warden. They closed the shades; no light [was allowed] at a certain time. For the little children: “Turn your sofas upside down and put the little ones under there.” And we did it. Because your mother said you had to gotta under there, you got under there and followed the rules.

They were so efficient, the air raid wardens. If we needed anything, we had to keep the first aid kits filled with everything that was necessary. You had places in emergency that we had to go to. And there weren't too many places, but you had the church school. And we used that as examples in school, they would say, “This is a shelter.”

Story 3: Learning About Pearl Harbor
[30:39 – 31:32]

My aunt downstairs had the radio on. And she screamed from the backyard, “Rosie, put the radio on. Something happened!” And it was Pearl Harbor; the bombing of Pearl Harbor. And everybody then gathered together talking about, “What's that mean? What's going to happen?”

And that's when they started to draft for the boys. And everybody was very concerned about if they're going to be called because who was eighteen. The [draft] age was eighteen, nineteen. They were worried about my Uncle Mike. He had just gotten married; he was young. But because he had a baby, they didn't take him. Everybody was involved with that part of it.

Story 4: Silk Stocking Day
[47:56 – 48:25]

Every Friday, you were allowed to buy three pairs of silk stockings. And you went to a certain store—I will never forget; it was Sill Tanner [*phonetic*] on Pitkin Avenue. And they sold the silk stockings with the seams in the back. And my mother would go because you had to keep them on hand. She'd come home, and she'd give a pair to the sister downstairs and to the grandma upstairs. So, everything was rationed.

PHOTO CAPTIONS

Current 1

Marie McLaughlin being interviewed at the Sayville Library (Photo Credit: Chris Kretz)

Current 2

Narrator Marie McLaughlin with interviewer Chris Kretz (Photo Credit: Stephanie DiChiara)

Artifact 1

Marie McLaughlin holding a document appointing her future husband Terry Zanoni to the rank of corporal (Photo Credit: Chris Kretz)

Artifact 2

Army discharge paper for Marie McLaughlin's husband, Terry Zanoni (Photo Credit: Chris Kretz)