



January 2017, e-Newsletter

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You never know when something of relevance to the history of Belgrade will make its way to the collections of our Society. For example, during this past summer we received from Mary Vogel an old "Pioneer Notebook" with a collection of clippings from the Waterville *Morning Sentinel*. Mary, then an employee of the Town of Belgrade with an acute eye for material with a historical relevance, was able to retrieve this notebook before it was tossed into the trash as the Town was moving to the newly built Town Office. Thank you Mary Vogel!

Now you might ask, "What is so interesting about an old notebook with clippings from the Waterville *Sentinel*?" The reason these clippings are of interest is because they are the letters that Belgrade resident Rossie Reynolds Taylor sent to, and were published in the *Sentinel* between 1937 and 1950. Taylor sent her letters to a popular daily column, '*Seeing and Believing – Being the Purely Personal Observations and Experiences of One Ima Wanderer*', which was written and edited by journalist Caleb Lewis between 1929 and 1963. Lewis' column contained information about what was going on in the greater Waterville area and often featured letters from many people who followed the column. One of the many friends of the column and frequent contributors to it was Belgrade's own, Rossie Reynolds Taylor, a local music teacher who lived in Belgrade Depot. Her husband, Edwin Taylor, was the proprietor of Taylor's General Store in the Depot. Rossie herself may have collected her printed letters in 'Ima Wanderer' and put them in the 'Pioneer Notebook,' which was preserved but forgotten for many years in the old Town Office before being rediscovered and rescued by Mary Vogel this past summer.

What is interesting about these letters is that through Rossie's eyes we have a picture of issues and events that she experienced throughout the period, including her personal observations on events that took place before, during, and after World War II. Her letters are truly an eye into the history of this area throughout this period. We plan to publish some of her letters in our newsletter from time to time. The following is a

letter that was written in January 1942, just after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the event that brought the United States and Maine into World War II. The letter is somewhat lengthy, but provides an interesting insight into the state of the Nation, Maine, and our local community of Belgrade.

Ima Wanderer,

I know I'm a pest; every old person is at times, but they don't care; neither do I. Every times I read or hear anything of a vital nature as far as the war is concerned; I feel the urge to write to your column about it. I think I might have remained silent for a few days longer, had I not listened to Gabriel Heatter's broadcast New Year's nigh. Probably man, if not all my readers heard this program, but for those who didn't, I wish to tell them about it, and say also, that in my estimation, it was one of the finest I've hear on the air since the United states declared war. Of course I cannot repeat it in its entirety, and I wouldn't expect you to print it if I could, but there is one part I can remember, because of the impression it left with me and the sadness and compassion I felt while listening. Mr. Heatter opened his comments with mentioning the Star Spangled Banner, quoting the first line; then he said: "And when the sun rose this morning (which would be Friday morning in Manilla) it shone on the American flag still bravely flying, and Douglas MacArthur and his brave soldiers waging a great battle; a battle for time until his forces can be strengthened; until further help in supplies, tanks, planes and men came to him, which are nearer than any of us know. We shall regain every inch of lost territory, and avenge every one of our dead." There was something very touching in that tribute to MacArthur and his men; the mention of the flag was done in such a reverent and patriotic manner, that any true American could not fail to be awakened to what these brave generals and their troops are doing for us all; standing between us and destruction, even at the almost certain giving of their own lives. To me there seems no sacrifice too great to make, if we can, as individuals, which makes up into a large whole, give them some support, and even though we say be past the age to be there with them in person.

It is Sunday Afternoon as I'm writing this; a snowy, disagreeable day, as far as weather is concerned, but still, friends, how safe and comfortable we all are. We have light, heat, plenty of food; we are not exposed to the elements by force as the soldiers of all the countries are; we can lie down to our rest tonight, in peace and calm, for so far we need not fear air raids or bombs. We face possible shortages of many things, but they will be inanimate objects; we are giving some boys to Uncle Sam who may have to face the guns, but all of us of middle age and older, cannot do any kind of service except to willingly, gladly make any sort of sacrifices the government may call upon us to do. And there is no sort of self-denial we can endure that will in the slightest degree compare with what the men who are "fighting for time" as Mr. Heatter said, are undergoing. Those men, many of them, left a home, mother, father, sisters and brothers; left their dear one all behind, and have gone to fight valiantly for us here at home. Many of them will not come back; their parents and sisters and brothers will be grief-stricken and bereft; it will be a long time before they can lift their heads from the burden of grief and find comfort in the words, "A man is not judged by the victory, so much as by the fight he makes." When they are, in a measure recovered from their grief and sorrow, they will have, to soften the acute anguish they suffer from their loss, a pride in their lost and loved one that will surpass any pride we ever know in peace times. Their boy will have given his life for the country he loved; for his dear ones at home; he will have died in an attempt to preserve peace and democracy for "those back home." Let us pray that not another one than those who have gone down in battle, will be taken, but it is likely that our prayers cannot all be answered. War cannot wage without taking its toll of young, vital manhood. To those mothers who have boys over there fighting for us all back home, I say, "You are as much of a

heroine as your boy is a hero, for you raised him, and have given him to Uncle Sam for one of his brave soldiers." The death of a son, when his mother is privileged to carefully watch over him and nurse him to the end, is a blow from which she never recovers wholly in her lifetime; to have him die in an obscure place, far from her, from home, is a tragedy that only the stoutest mother heart can bear and keep her reason. Many years ago, when my husband conducted the garage in Winslow, he furnished a new car for the Armistice Day parade, and I was requested to drive it and carry four Gold Star Mothers, with me. Saddened, though I was, I shall never be as proud in this life again, as I was on that beautiful November day when I carried those four noble women through the streets in my home city, Waterville. One of them was Mrs. Godding of Fairfield, whose son was accidentally killed on the Waterville fire truck some years ago. His death was more recent than that of the son for which she wore the gold star, but I felt then, and do every time I think of it, that her tears that day when she was an honored passenger in the car I drove, were for the boy who gave his life for his country so many years ago in France. This fine woman has now gone to her sons; she is in the land where all are reunited and there are no tears except of joy; but never shall I forget how wonderfully brave she tried to me, on that day when she rode with me. Her tears flowed freely, but her sobs were muffled. But my rear-view mirror told me how very, very sad the occasion was to her. And so, is there any sacrifice that women who have no sons to give to the cause, can make to aid the country in its fight for freedom, peace and democracy? There is none too great for us to make!

While Mr. Taylor was upstairs to dinner this afternoon, I wrote this poor little poem. Print it or not, Ima Wanderer, you long-suffering friend of mine, just as you see fit to do.

Our Nineteen Forty-Two Victory

Old Nineteen Forty-One has fled,
and with it joy and sorrow,
Alas! We cannot tell just what

awaits us on the 'morrow.
Our U. S. A.'s at wart, and so we
all must try to do
Great service to our country dear,
in Nineteen Forty-Two.
If sugar's not forthcoming in its
usual large supply,
We all must get along with less, and
Not make an outcry.
It's going to serve it purpose, this
sacrifice we make,
For all these self-denials are only
for our sake.
If cars are commandeered from us,
'twill seem a trifle hard,
But not, so inconvenient as a short-
age, say, of lard
Or other cooking ingredients we
Use in daily life,
For then, a substituting course, falls
to each housewife.
They'll need our sugar and our cars,
possibly our home,
But giving them to Uncle Sam will
measurably atone
For inconveniences endured by an-
swering the call
These sacrifices will protect our-
selves and loved ones, all.
So to the wheel our shoulders go,
with courage and with might,
And sometime during Forty-Two we
hope to win this fight
For Peace, and the Democracy we
always have enjoyed,
And keep our Freedom ever sound,
unchallenged, undestroyed!
And when the struggle's over, we all
can truly say
'Twas partly through our sacrifice,
we fought---and won the day!

Rossie Reynolds Taylor,
Belgrade.



The Taylor Store is the first building located on the right of this picture of the Belgrade Depot. It was demolished in the spring of 2016.

Note: We apologize for the delay in get our annual dues notices out to our members. They will be in the mail soon. Thank you for your continued interest in the activities of our society. We hope to see you at the interesting events being scheduled for 2017. Should you have any comments or questions, please e-mail me at keschl@yahoo.com.

