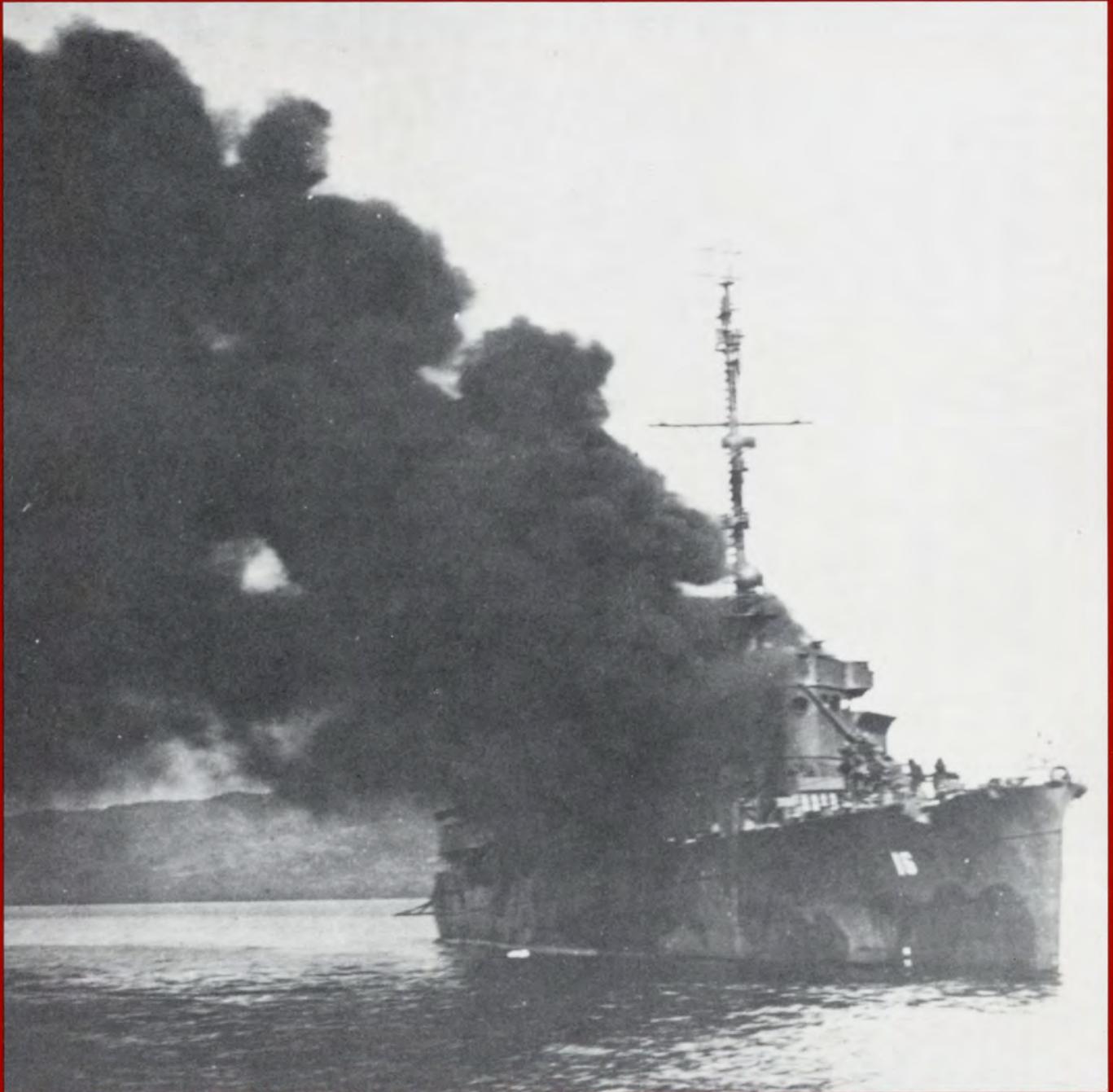


RAMSEY COUNTY
History
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The death of the U.S.S. Ward. The destroyer whose crew made up almost entirely of St. Paul men fired America's first shot of World War II, was sunk by gunfire three years to the day after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. See the article beginning on page 4 about the ship and her crew.

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RAMSEY COUNTY History

Volume 26, Number 4 Winter, 1991

CONTENTS

- 3 Letters
- 4 St. Paul's First Shot Naval Veterans
The U.S.S. *Ward* and the Attack on Pearl Harbor
Jane McClure
- 12 Help, Housing 'Almost Impossible to Find'
A Single Mother and World War II
Hilda Rachuy
- 18 100 Years of Helping People—
Family Service and Its Legacy of Leadership
Thomas J. Kelley
- 30 Books, Etc.
Daniel John Hoisington
- 31 What's Historic About This Site?
St. Paul's Union Depot

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A Message from the Editorial Board

Fifty years ago this month the United States joined the global conflict known as World War II. This issue of *Ramsey County History* focuses on that momentous event with Jane McClure's article about the St. Paul men who served on the U.S.S. *Ward*, which fired the first shot at the Japanese. While men like the sailors of the *Ward* fought the enemy overseas, others, such as Hilda Rachuy, battled different adversaries—hunger, hardship, and poverty—as a single mother with two small children at home in St. Paul. Her article is a first-person account of that truly difficult side of the war. Lastly, Tom Kelley gives us new awareness and insight into Family Service of Greater Saint Paul, a 100-year-old social service organization developed to help those like Hilda Rachuy who need institutional support and comfort in their daily struggle to hold a family together.

—John M. Lindley, chairman, Editorial Board

Books, Etc.

One Woman's War: Letters Home from the Women's Army Corps, 1944-1946

by Anne Bosanko Green
St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1989.
ISBN 0-87351-246-4

Miss You: The World War II Letters of Barbara Woodall Taylor and Charles E. Taylor

ed. by Jody Barrett Litoff, David C. Smith, Barbara Woodall Taylor, and Charles E. Taylor
Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990
ISBN 0-8203-1145-6

I remember the day that our family visited my grandparent's farm in Kishwaukee, Illinois. I was bored with the barn and started exploring the other buildings. On the second floor of the chicken coop, I found a storage area of boxes full of photographs, old Christmas decorations, and dusty papers. I opened up one or two boxes, finding mostly canceled checks, when I saw several neatly tied bundles with my mother's handwriting on them. They were the letters that my mother wrote to my father in the latter days of World War II when he served in the Navy. I felt a little bit like a peeping tom as I read them, although now I recognize that I was only following my instincts as a historian.

As we recognize the fiftieth anniversary of Pearl Harbor, I hear many stories of people who have pulled their letters from the attic. It was history in the making and because of the enforced separations, a enormous tide of correspondence resulted. It might be the last war with



Anne Bosanko Green at Fort Des Moines, Iowa, in October, 1944.

such a full record. As Anne Bosanko Green notes, "Phone calls were to be used only to announce bad news or specific travel plans. Long-distance lines were not to be used for just conversation." In the recent Gulf War, we ran up long distance bills and sent videotapes.

One Woman's War tells the story of Anne Bosanko (who married St. Paul resident Ken Green), who served for two years as a WAC. The letters, written to her parents, give us a nice flavor of the times. She goes to movies regularly and

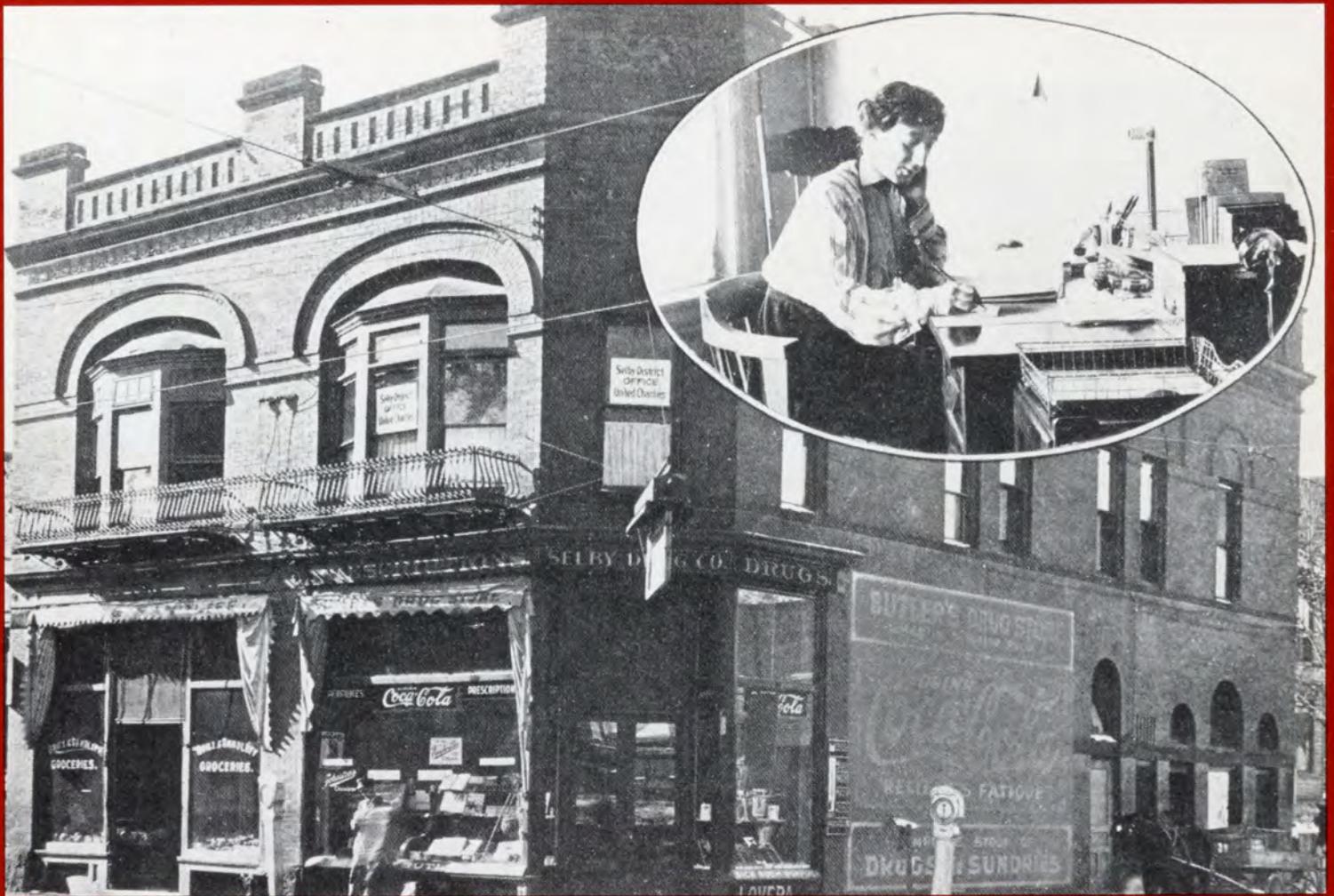
is stationed in Van Nuys, California, where she hears actor Charles Laughton give readings at a local library. In New Orleans, she is shocked at the Jim Crow laws. Her mother worries about Anne and coyly asks about Anne's friend, "By the way, what sex is Dorian? I can't tell from the name if it is a girl or a man?" Anne assures her that it is a woman.

Although the book is fun to read, it doesn't always transcend the source. Anne begins her service in October, 1944, late in the war and certainly after the genuine danger of Axis victory was gone. She spends the war in the United States, so her story misses the drama of a foreign stage. Maybe the message of the book is that war can also be mundane. The book is strengthened by a good foreword by D'Ann Campbell, author of *Women at War with America*.

Miss You has many of the elements of good reading that *One Woman's War* does not. These letters, written between a Georgia couple, cover the whole war from 1941 to 1946. Against the stage of a world war, there are personal stories, even a secret marriage. "Will he survive," we wonder. "Will she be changed," we ask. The best part is that we get to read both sides of the story—the home front and the war zone. Finally, I liked it because it had a happy ending. They are still together and Charles writes in the epilogue, "I remember those days so well and can still feel the flush of passion I got then, and as a matter of fact, still get now, over forty years later."

If you have old letters, save them, transcribe them, share them with the younger generations. They may not tell a story that changed national history, but we each have small stories that make a difference.

—Daniel John Hoisington



Family Service of Greater Saint Paul is marking a century of service to the community. It is an outgrowth of earlier charitable organizations, such as the United Charities, whose Selby District Office is shown here. It was located at 624 Selby Avenue from 1916 to 1919. An article tracing Family Service's history begins on page 18.

R.C.H.S.
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