

***The Role of Women During WWII* Weekly News July 6, 2001**  
**Lodi History Highlights**  
**By Artie Maglionico, Borough Historian**

For those of you who read last week's column about Lodi's ice skating rink, I found a couple of good looking gals who were among those community members who actually used that Cavallo Stadium facility back in the early 40's or rather they found me!

Their names are Jean Falcone Matala and Evelyn Orsini. They were 16 years old at the time and they still look young enough to do a triple axle. Well, at least a single anyway.

They found me doing my usher duties last Sunday at St. Joseph's Church where both girls remain active members of the parish community.

Just as I suspected, the young gents of that era were being shipped overseas to serve in WW II. It's no wonder then that the guys I spoke with don't recall the ice follies of Cavallo Stadium.

That's not to say that our nation's young women weren't doing their part. In fact by 1944, no less than 17,000,000 of America's gals were involved in the home front war effort. Our girls from Lodi were among them.

Our borough had an organization called the Women's Service Group, which met ever Thursday afternoon at the Lincoln School.

Principal Mrs. Henrietta L. Miller headed the group. Among their many worthwhile projects was the making of utility packs for our hospitalized service men. The group also assembled baby layettes which were given to the wives of the men in the armed services. A complete layette consisted of two dresses, two shirts, six diapers, three flannel bands, a sweater, a pair of booties, two petticoats, a blanket, two receiving blankets, two wash cloths, two towels, six safety pins, a box of talcum powder, a cake of Castile soap (boy does that stuff burn your eyes) and a square yard of muslin. Mrs. Miller made sure that the layettes were displayed in the school before being sent to the hospital.

Meanwhile at Columbus School, Principal Mrs. E. Manfred Matthews received a citation from the United States Treasury Department. The citation was for the school's service to the war savings program. Mrs. Matthews successful completion of her school's "at war" program paid for one \$15,500.00 primary fighter plane and one ten foot sponge rubber boat. All of this through the purchase of war bonds and stamps. By the way, the sale of bonds and stamps at the Columbus School from September to January of 1943 totaled over \$20,000.00

Also during Lodi's war years the Woman's Club located at 27 Main Street sponsored what they called the Victory Thrift and Handcraft Shop. How many of you ladies remember that project?

Mrs. Vincent Sorbello, the general chairperson, assured the community that the sale

was in line with the government's strict conservation policy. Many articles that became scarce because of wartime manufacturing restrictions were being put back into everyday use.

The sale featured children's shoes and clothing as well as handcrafted items which were made by club members. Are any of the latter still around ladies? I'd like to see them.

A group called the Lodi Merchants Associated was also doing its share to help win the war by chipping in on the home front. Realizing that good food was essential for the health of those women who were working to support our men in service, Lodi merchants joined together to help their cause. Their aim was to create better business conditions for good health by selling only the most nutritious food at affordable prices.

This was a unified effort among many of our borough's merchants. Some of them were: Valenza's Live Poultry on East Place, Cavalier's Market on Union Street, Sav-on Fruits and Vegetables on Main Street, Bergen Country Poultry Market on First Street, Alberto Martorano on Summer Street, Joe's Groceries on Autumn Street, Paul's Food Market on Main Street, Irv's Dairy, Peraino Meats, Trippodi's Vegetables. . . all on Main Street. Let's not forget Charle's Poultry Market and Joseph Volpe's Italian American Groceries, both on Church Street.

It's no wonder why our Lodi gals had the strength and energy to work so hard for our boys in services. They ate nothing but the best!

Also for the boys in service, the Esquire Shop at 41 Main Street was selling Military Kits, socks, mufflers, duffle bags and money belts from \$1.00 to \$3.95 each. Does anyone remember who owned that store? I'd like to know.