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Mothers of World War II, Unit 19
Records, 1942-1982

Collection 109

Champaign County Historical Archives

Compiled by: Marie Liang, September 2025

Creator/Corporate Name: Mothers of World War II, Unit 19

Inclusive Dates: 1942-1982

Physical Description: 6 boxes, (5.65 linear ft.)

Language: English

Provenance:

The Mothers of World War II records were donated to the Champaign County Historical Archives.

Access:

These records are accessible to the public within applicable copyright restrictions and limited to use at the Champaign County Historical Archives of The Urbana Free Library.

Harmful Language in Archives:

The Champaign County Historical Archives at The Urbana Free Library is committed to developing inclusive collections that capture the diverse history of our communities. However, some language used in our collections and collection descriptions may be outdated or harmful. Please refer to our statement on [Harmful Language in Archives](#) to learn how we are addressing language concerns in our collections.

Historical Note:

Mothers of World War II was a national organization founded in March 1942 to unite all mothers who had sons or daughters in the service of the United States military or its Allies. The organization aimed to bolster their children in service by supporting the local, state, and national war effort. They held annual district conventions where members would report on their charitable efforts, install officers, and coordinate statewide service initiatives. These conventions helped link national advocacy with local acts of care. The organization also published a monthly newspaper, War Mothers' Voice, which kept members informed and connected.

Urbana's Surrell's Unit no. 19 was formed in July 1943 and remained active until at least 1982. Mrs. Robert M. (Ruth) Neely was the first elected president. The Urbana unit supported troops with fund drives, sewing projects, letter writing and package campaigns, hospital visits to the wounded, and updating Champaign County's Honor Roll of men and women who served in the military. The Urbana unit was named after Leroy Surrell, Champaign County's first WWII casualty.

Scope and Content Note:

The Mothers of World War II records document the activities and experiences of mothers who supported soldiers during World War II and continued their involvement in veteran and community efforts after the war. The collection includes letters, photographs, certificates, programs, and other materials related to the organization's work and the personal experiences of its members. The Urbana unit kept annual records by scrapbooking their meetings and activities using newspaper clippings,



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certificates, programs, photographs, and miscellaneous materials. There are also some annual summaries of their year's work, correspondence from other organizations, and copies of the national "War Mothers Voice."

Arrangement:

The collection is arranged into three series.

Series 1: Records, 1942-1982

Series 2: Ephemera, undated

Series 3: Scrapbooks, 1943-1969

Related Material:

[Collection 64: World War II Ephemera Collection, 1940-1958, bulk 1940-1945](#)

Subject Terms:

World War, 1939-1945

Women—Societies and Clubs

Scrapbooks

Name Terms:

Grein, Edna

Grein, Jewell

Mothers of World War II

Neely, Ruth

Container List

Box 1

Series 1: Records, 1942-1982

Folder 1: Certificates, 1946-1982

Folder 2: Champaign County Home and War Chest, 1942-1943

Folder 3: Clippings, 1955-1968

Folder 4: Letters and Envelopes to Jewell and Edna Grein, 1942-1945 (from men in service)

Folder 5: Letters from the Red Cross and Veterans Administration

Folder 6: Loose Materials from Scrapbook 1943

Folder 7: Loose Materials from Scrapbook 1949-1951

Folder 8: Loose Program from Scrapbook 1952-1953

Folder 9: Loose Picture from Scrapbook 1953

Folder 10: Loose Materials from Scrapbook 1954

Folder 11: Loose Materials from Scrapbook 1963, 25th Anniversary Program for Mothers of World War II

Folder 12: Loose Materials from Scrapbook 1968

Folder 13: Photographs, 1954-1973

Folder 14: Programs and Meetings, 1964-1970

Folder 15: War Mothers Voice, 1946-1949, 1951-1952



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Box 2

Series 2: Ephemera, undated

Item 1: Gavel

Item 2: Mother of World War II Branded Table Cloth

Box 3

Series 3: Scrapbooks, 1943-1969

Scrapbook 1943-1948

Scrapbook 1949-1951

Scrapbook 1952

Box 4

Series 3: Scrapbooks, 1943-1969 (continued)

Scrapbook, 1953

Scrapbook, 1954

Scrapbook, 1955

Scrapbook, 1955

Box 5

Series 3: Scrapbooks, 1943-1969 (continued)

Scrapbook, 1955-1957

Scrapbook, 1956

Scrapbook, 1963

Box 6

Series 3: Scrapbooks, 1943-1969 (continued)

Scrapbook, State of Illinois Scrapbook, 1968-1969