Clarion Review

Autobiography & Memoir

Peggy's Wartime Memories
Enid E. Haag
BookSurge
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Five Stars (out of Five)

As more time passes between us and World War II, collective memories of the spirit and sacrifice of that time grow dimmer. For some individuals, however, such as author Enid "Peggy" Haag, life during the Second World War remains vivid. In *Peggy's Wartime Memories*, Haag recalls life as a young girl during the Great Depression and World War II.

More than just a home front chronicle, *Peggy's Wartime Memories* follows the journey of Peggy, her older brother John, and her mother as the family followed her father's appointments at military bases throughout the country. Leaving their home in rural Roundup, Montana, the family traveled to places including California and Arizona, where they sampled many different rental houses, school districts, and styles of living before settling with Peggy's mother's family in Idaho for the last few years of the war. At each stop along the way, Haag's anecdotes sparkle with detail and transmit the excitement and wonder of being an army brat frequently on the road.

Peggy's Wartime Memories is simply written, with short sentences that make it accessible to readers as young as fourth or fifth grade. At the same time, older readers will appreciate the wealth of information about each home the family lived in, the meals they ate, black-out preparations, and the spectacular scenery that Haag experienced. These details provide a sense of immediacy to Haag's narrative.

Also drawing readers into the book is the tone. Some children might have disliked moving so frequently, but Haag describes the changes in her life as sequences in a big adventure. Whether riding in an open-air truckbed while going to school, discovering the joy of shaved ice on a sweltering Arizona day, scanning V-Mail for coded messages about the ship her father might come home on, or having her portrait drawn by an anti-fascist Italian POW, little Peggy takes everything in stride. Through Haag's eyes, her family's itinerant lifestyle has an

appealing patina of nostalgia that adds to the book's charm, but never descends into sentimentality.

Though she struggled with learning disabilities and an inability to read for a long time in her youth, Peggy grew up to be a professor at Western Washington University in Bellingham, Washington, and she is now retired. Haag has written academic material before; this is her first book for a general audience.

This charming, detailed, and easy-to-read memoir is appropriate for all ages, from older adults who lived through World War II to children wondering what life was like "back then."