

◀ fingermarks along it —except that it hadn't been there the week before.

Ryerson was also off limits, more or less. An article on the history of Ryerson Hall in the Maroon mentioned vaguely that its Physical Laboratory was being used by the army for experimental purposes, and a librarian was quoted as saying she couldn't get near the place to get some books she needed.

In the summer of 1942, while Julius was taking classes, working on an NYA work-study grant and mopping floors at the eating co-op, I took a job in the defense industry, traveling to the Western Electric plant on 22nd and Cermak, which had stopped making telephones and started making radios for the Navy. As an inspector of radio condensers that came off an assembly line, I received the princely wage (almost twice that of the solderers on the line) of 51 cents an hour.

Julius's NYA job turned out to be the instrument that breached the tightest security system on the campus. He was working for Buildings & Grounds at the time, B&G being the department that took care of everything mechanical and nonacademic on the campus, including campus policing. On a day when the head janitor was out of the office, a phone call came through about a fire in one of the dorms. Someone shoved a piece of paper into his hand with the janitor's name on it and told him: "Go find this man, and fast!"

Hurrying from one building to another, Julius entered Eckhart where, after checking through empty halls, he spotted a door off on the side. There was no one about. Facing a stairwell he followed it down into a sub-basement, stepping out into what appeared to be a laboratory, with tables of equipment. At one of the tables, looking at him in shock and horror, stood one of his co-op housemates.

"What are you doing here!" the man said. "Who let you in? Nobody's allowed down here!"

Apparently the unlocked door he had passed through led into the security Holy of Holies, the labyrinth of halls, labs and rooms that ended up under the west stands of Stagg Field where, on December 2, 1942 (as we learned much later), a group of young physicists, including many from the co-op, leaned against the walls sipping lab-distilled grain alcohol from paper cups, toasting each other and the occasion, and shared with Enrico Fermi a quiet celebration of the birth of the first controlled, sustained nuclear reaction.

1943. Once we were married, we moved out of our respective co-op houses and set up housekeeping in what passed for neighborhood student housing, first on Maryland Ave. (communal bath and toilet in the

hall, 2" cockroaches in the kitchen), then on 55th and Blackstone (listening to the one-nighters scream obscenities at each other on the stairs). We continued to eat most of our meals at the Ellis Co-op where we were regularly reminded to turn in our sugar-rationing and meat-rationing food stamps, since food couldn't be bought without them.

That spring, my husband became the co-op's full-time paid manager and spent every minute he could (when not thinking of class work), trying to keep the operation afloat, worrying about how to pay the help and buy food with few funds. The number of paying students plummeted with the shrinkage of men on campus —and by summer the co-op could no longer keep operating. It was Julius's unhappy duty to shut it down: selling the furniture, the kitchen equipment, the #10 cans of tomatoes and carrots that had accumulated in the basement, the lot. What money was finally salvaged was put into a trust fund supervised by willing faculty members (Maynard



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