

Red and Yellow Memory

First job out of high school—1942—wartime—working at New Jersey Bell Telephone in Camden—rating operator recordings of tickets that would dole out profits to Ma Bell—I was a young girl at a job that people said I was lucky to have.

However, the top brass gave the employees rules. One rule, not to be broken, was that no food could be left overnight in desk drawers.

I'd inadvertently left an orange in my drawer and my peers constantly questioned

**MOM.
GRANDMOM.
SHOPAHOLIC.
AUTOBIOGRAPHER.***

me about this forbidden fruit that remained in my drawer. I countered with the excuse that gradually went around the office, “Oh, I’m keeping it until the war is over.”

I knew that someone might have objected to this orange, but the subject of World War II was sacred and heavy on our minds. So, the orange stayed!

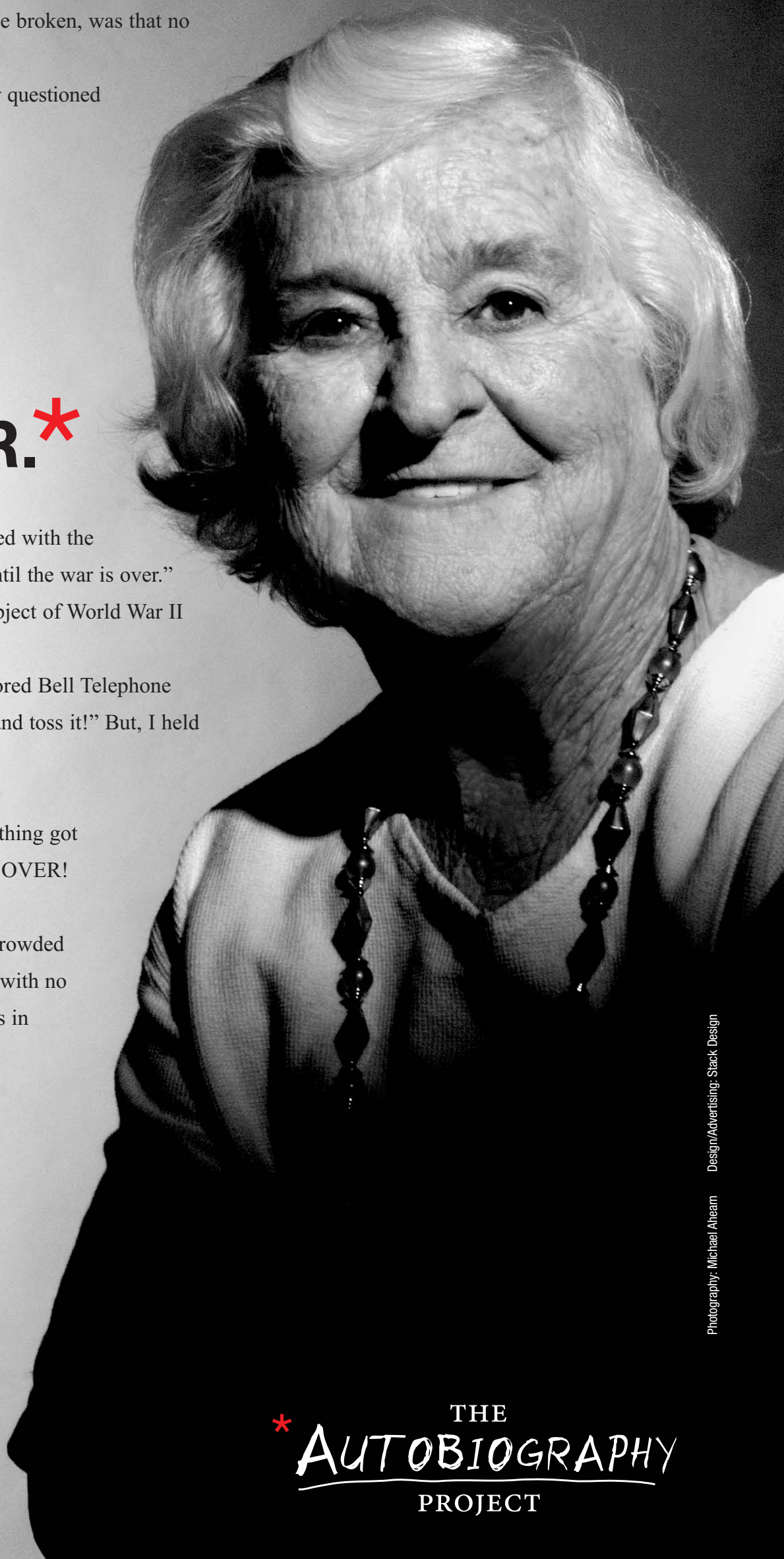
Weeks, months, and, yes, even years seemed like centuries to the bored Bell Telephone lassies whose only goal in life was to get me to “forget the orange and toss it!” But, I held out and held onto my treasure.

August 1945.

Factory whistles and sirens blowing into our open windows—everything got quiet, work ceased. Car horns blowing—it must be—THE WAR IS OVER! Tears and laughter!

“Where’s the orange?” About forty employees ran to my desk and crowded around as I retrieved the very dried up orange. Still orange in color with no mold or loss of color! Just a very thin-skinned orange who joined us in celebration of the end of World War II...

– Marguerite Wunsch



* THE
AUTOBIOGRAPHY
PROJECT

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The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin is the most widely published autobiography of all time. In honor of Franklin’s 300th birthday, the Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary and *One Book, One Philadelphia* invited today’s Philadelphians to submit memoirs of their own, using no more than 300 words. At the end of the project – May 17, 2006 – a panel of judges selected twenty autobiographies to appear on bus shelters throughout the city. Visit www.theautobiographyproject.com for more information about the project, and to read more Philadelphia stories.

The Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary is a non-profit organization established to mark the 300-year anniversary of Benjamin Franklin’s birth. *One Book, One Philadelphia* is a project of the Mayor’s Office and the Free Library of Philadelphia.



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