

# Maryellen

## Arlington in the 1950s

Arlington underwent dramatic changes in the 1950s. Before the 1950s, farms, open space, and small communities made up Arlington. During World War II in the 1940s, many people moved to Arlington from all over the country to work for the government to help fight the war. Though she did not move to Arlington, Maryellen's mother moved to New York City to work as a line manager in a factory. The factory produced things soldiers needed to fight the war.



*Shirlington Shopping Center in Arlington, ca. 1950.*

### RAPID GROWTH

Many of the people who came to Arlington during the war stayed once it was over. They continued to work for the government, which operated many new services and departments that developed during the war. After soldiers came home, many got married and started their own families. Arlington's population grew quickly in a short amount of time.

New houses, apartment buildings, and shopping centers replaced traditional farms to house and provide for all the new residents. The county created more schools and parks to educate and entertain the growing numbers of children in the area. During the 1950s, Arlington started to become the busy, urban community it is today.



## THE FIGHT TO CURE POLIO

Maryellen became one of many American children in the 1950s to get sick with a serious disease called polio. Some unfortunate patients, like Maryellen, developed paralysis. This meant they could no longer move parts of their bodies, like their arms or legs. Though polio was scary, many brave children made full recoveries. For example, energetic Maryellen loves running and swimming. Though one of her legs remains a little weak, she never lets it slow her down.



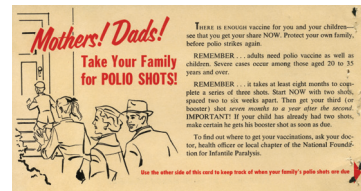
A little girl in Arlington visiting a county health clinic, ca. 1930s. Her leg brace and crutches suggests she may have been sick with polio.



Flyer advertising the Mothers' March on Polio, 1955.

Despite this, Maryellen remembers how frightening it was to be sick, since scientists did not know how to cure or prevent the disease. Americans across the nation did all they could to support scientists and polio patients. In Arlington, local women participated in a nationwide campaign called the Mothers' March on Polio. Thousands of Arlington mothers knocked on doors in their neighborhoods and asked for donations to pay for research and hospital bills. Girl Scouts passed out 7,000 fliers in Arlington to advertise the march.

As a Girl Scout and a polio survivor, it's easy to imagine Maryellen distributing fliers and convincing her mother to collect money. Between 1951 and 1955, the Mothers' March raised \$250 million dollars, funds which led to the creation and distribution of the polio vaccine in the 1950s. The vaccine, given as a shot in the arm, prevented recipients from getting polio.



Polio Shots Record, Front, 1957. Women in the Arlington Mothers' March on Polio passed these out to encourage families to get the polio vaccine.

Record of Our Family's Polio Shots			
	1st SHOT DATE GIVEN	2nd SHOT DATE DUE DATE GIVEN	3rd (Booster) SHOT DATE DUE DATE GIVEN
FATHER	_____	_____	_____
MOTHER	_____	_____	_____
OUR CHILDREN	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
THE NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR INFANTILE PARALYSIS, 301 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y. FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, FOUNDER SUPPORTED BY YOUR MARCH OF DIMES			

Polio Shots Record, Back, 1957. Families kept track of which members received the polio vaccine.