

The background is a blurred photograph of a university campus. A tall, brick steeple is visible in the distance, surrounded by green trees. In the foreground, a person is sitting on a bench, looking towards the left. The overall scene is out of focus, creating a sense of depth and atmosphere.

Introduction to

# A Separate Peace

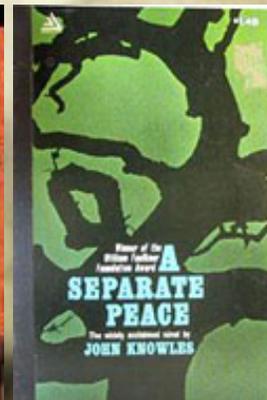
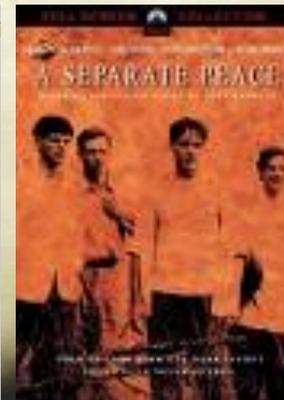
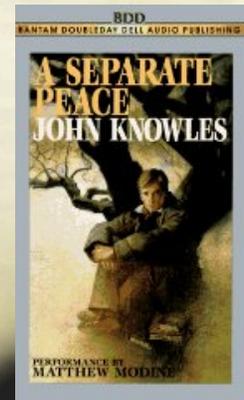
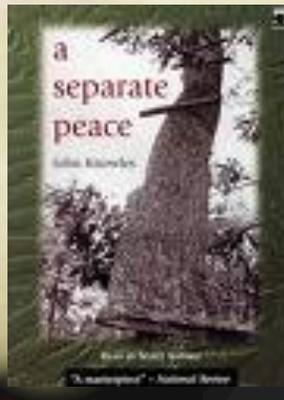
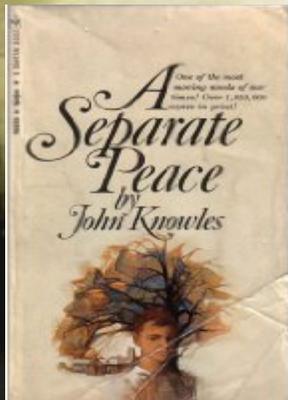
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By John Knowles

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# A Separate Peace

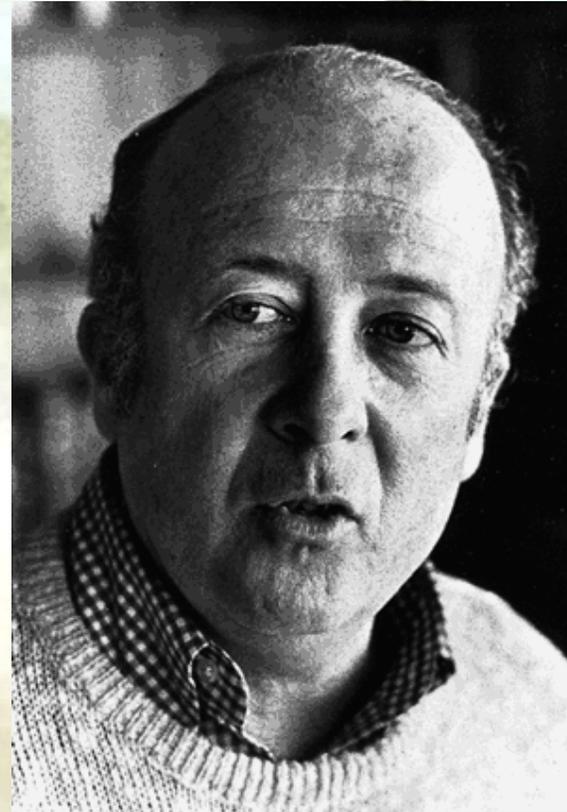
- Today's presentation
  - Author
  - Setting
  - Plot
  - Characters
  - Literary Elements



# About the Author

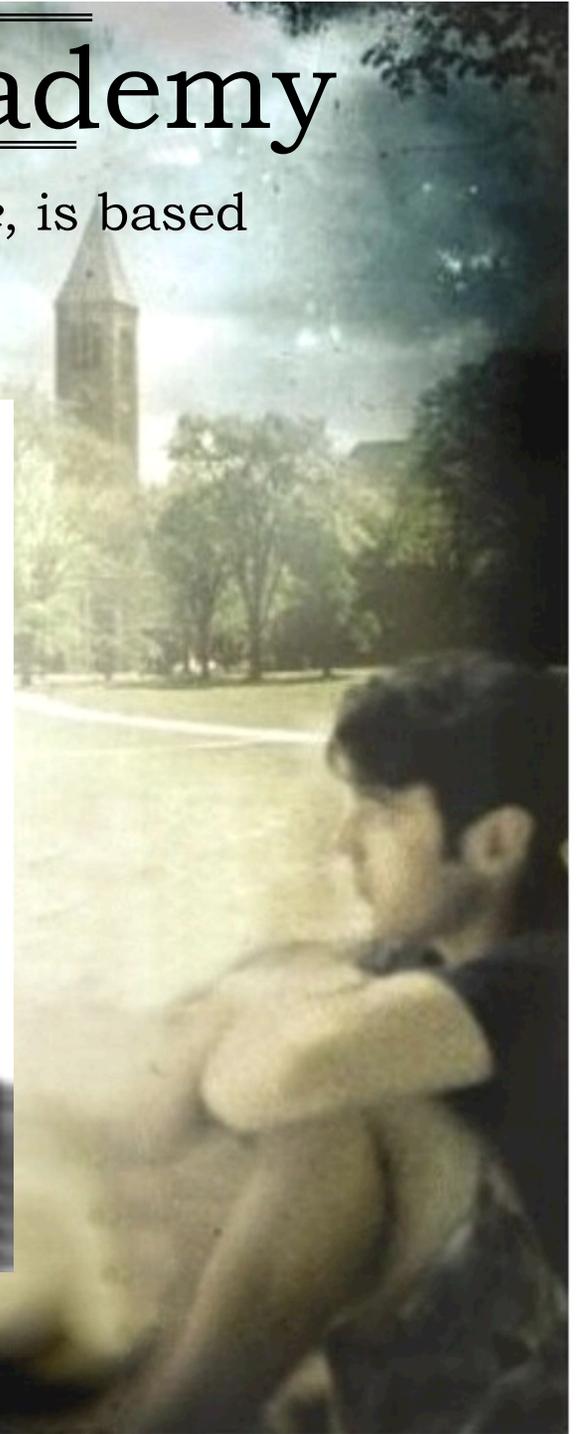
## **John Knowles**

- Born in West Virginia on September 16, 1926
- Knowles was educated at Phillips Exeter Academy, which served as a model for the setting of *A Separate Peace*.
- *A Separate Peace* was Knowles' first work, which earned him the Rosenthal Award of the National Institute of Arts and Letters. This established Knowles as a successful author.



# Phillips Exeter Academy

- Devon School, the setting of *A Separate Peace*, is based heavily on the Phillips Exeter Academy.

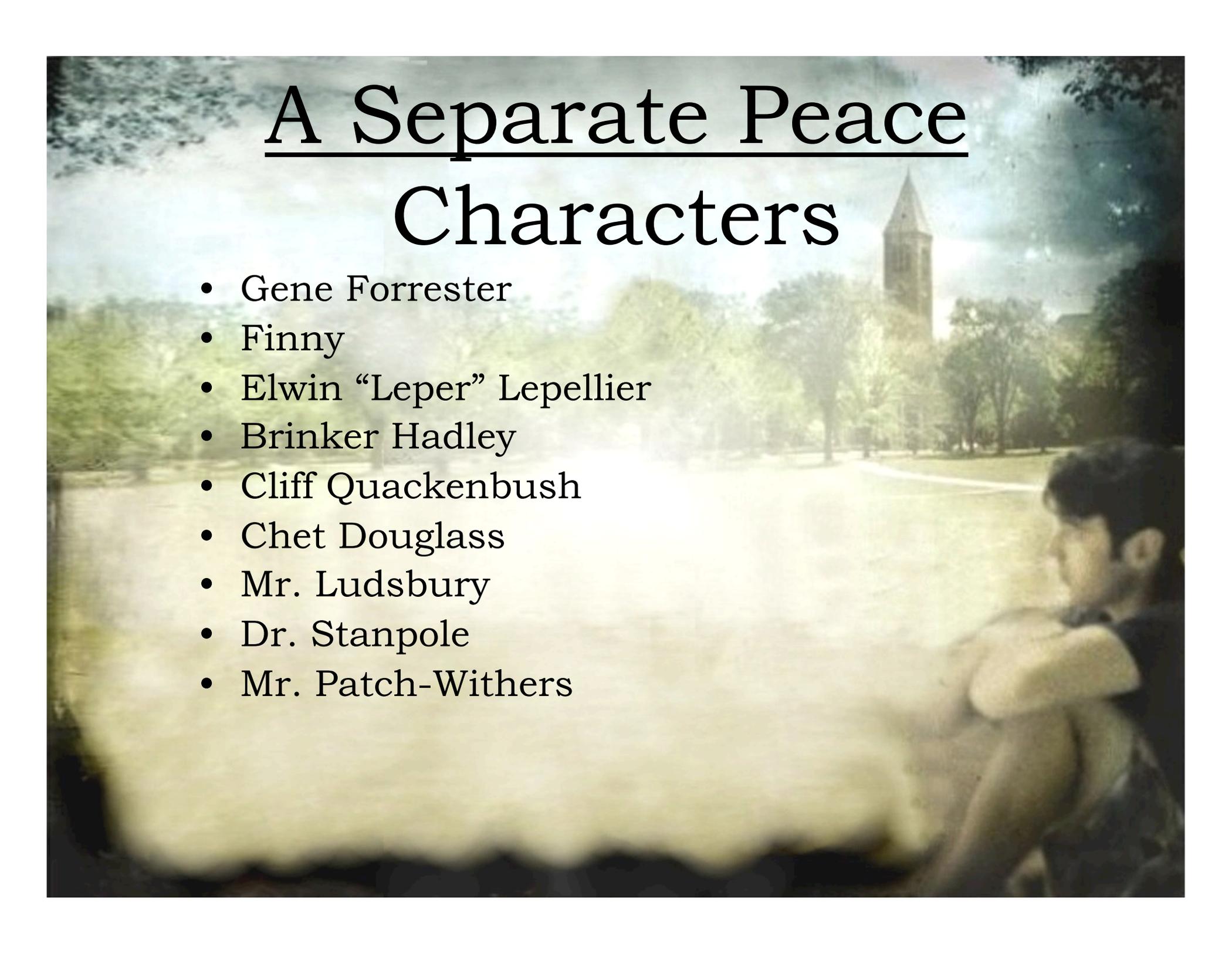


# Phillips Exeter Academy



# Plot Overview

- Story is told as a flashback to 16 years ago from Gene Forrester's perspective
- Gene was a quiet, intellectual student at the Devon School in New Hampshire.
- During the summer session of 1942, Gene becomes close friends with Finny, his daredevil roommate
- Finny prods Gene into making a dangerous jump out of a tree into a river, and the two start a secret society based on this ritual.
- Gene becomes jealous of Finny's athletic accomplishments and convinces himself that Finny is trying to distract Gene from achieving academically. While Gene's jealousy turns into hate, he carefully maintains a relationship with him.
- Gene admittedly watches as Finny falls from the tree, breaking his leg and ending his athletic prowess



# A Separate Peace Characters

- Gene Forrester
- Finny
- Elwin “Leper” Lepellier
- Brinker Hadley
- Cliff Quackenbush
- Chet Douglass
- Mr. Ludsbury
- Dr. Stanpole
- Mr. Patch-Withers

# Gene Forester

- Unreliable Narrator/protagonist
- Gene is in his early thirties, visiting the Devon School for the first time in years.
- Flashbacks to a story of his childhood from the vantage point of adulthood.
- Has love-hate relationship with his best friend Finny
- Gene is also often jealous of Finny because he is good at everything and so carefree



# Finny



- Honest, handsome, energetic, self-confident, best athlete in the school
- Extremely likable – able to talk his way out of any situation
- Gene describes Finny like that of a Greek hero (always excelling physically, always spirited.)
- Finny loves the thrill of competition and does not care about winning/losing
- Always thinks the best of people, counts no one as his enemy, and assumes that the world is a fundamentally friendly place.

# Ellwin Leper Lepellier

- Quiet, peaceful, nature-loving boy
- Shocks his classmates by being 1<sup>st</sup> in Devon to enlist in the army
- Shocks them again by deserting army shortly after joining
- Leper has hallucinations that reflect the fears and angst of adolescence
- He fears transformation of boys into men—and, in wartime, of boys into soldiers, which causes anxiety and inner turmoil.



## Brinker Hadley

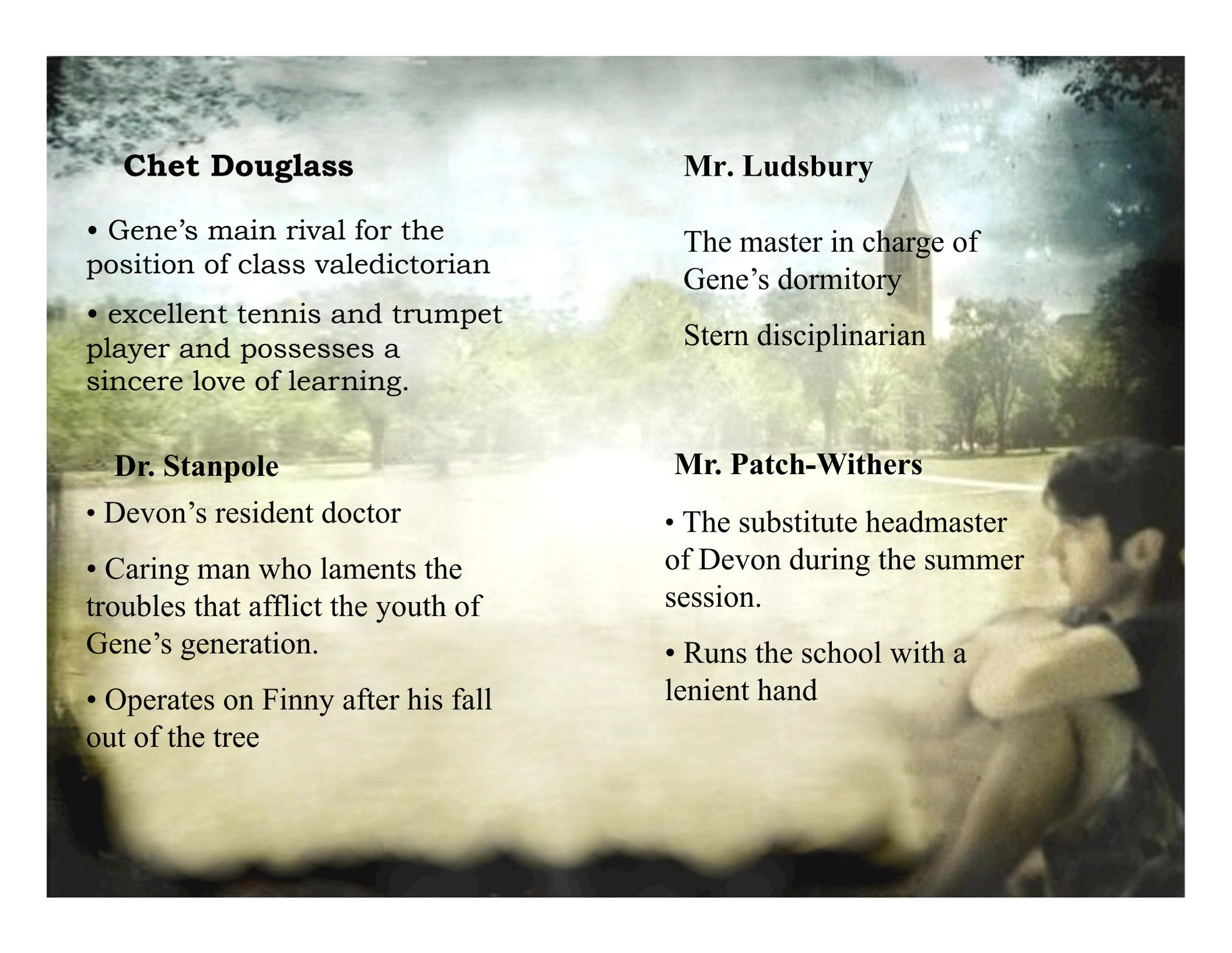


- straight-laced and conservative.
- complete confidence in his own abilities
- believes in justice and order and goes to great lengths to discover the truth when he feels that it is being hidden from him.

## Cliff Quackenbush

- Manager of the crew team
- Boys at Devon have never liked Quackenbush
- frequently takes out his frustrations on anyone whom he considers his inferior





## **Chet Douglass**

- Gene's main rival for the position of class valedictorian
- excellent tennis and trumpet player and possesses a sincere love of learning.

## **Dr. Stanpole**

- Devon's resident doctor
- Caring man who laments the troubles that afflict the youth of Gene's generation.
- Operates on Finny after his fall out of the tree

## **Mr. Ludsbury**

The master in charge of Gene's dormitory

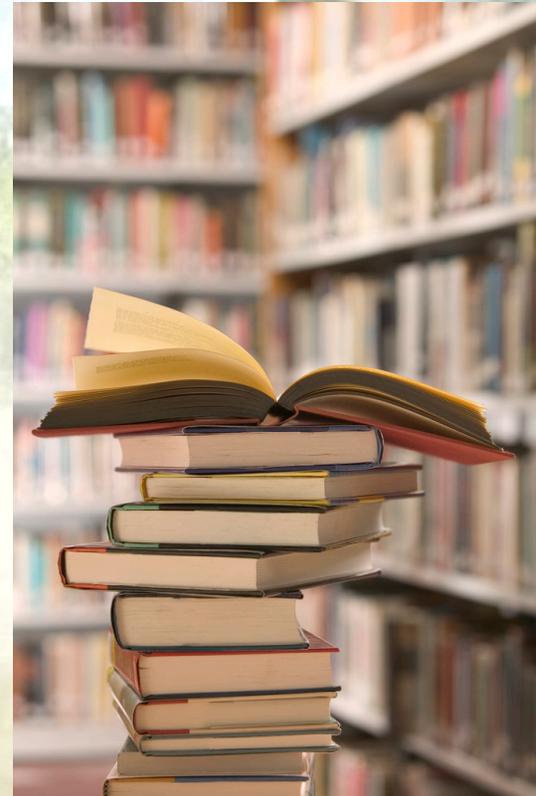
Stern disciplinarian

## **Mr. Patch-Withers**

- The substitute headmaster of Devon during the summer session.
- Runs the school with a lenient hand

# Literary Context

- *A Separate Peace* belongs to a genre of literature called **Bildungsroman**. This is a German term which describes a novel whose main character matures over time, usually from childhood.
- The novel is based on events that happened during Knowles' years at the Phillips Exeter Academy.
- Similar to *Lord of the Flies*, *A Separate Peace* deals with children coming to terms with their identity set against the backdrop of World War.





# Main Themes

## **Loss of Innocence.**

The plot is dominated by Gene's progression toward maturity.

## **The relationship between war and peace.**

The backdrop of the war plays a vital role in the novel.

## **The nature of friendship.**

The relationship between Gene and Finny is the novel's focus.

## **People's ability to change.**

Is change really possible?

## **Biblical allegory.**

Finny = Christlike      Gene = Judas, betrayer

# Historical Context

## World War II

- Began in 1939 when the Germans invaded Poland, and officially ended in August 1945, when the Japanese surrendered.
- *A Separate Peace* takes place during the summer of 1942, directly in the center of World War II.



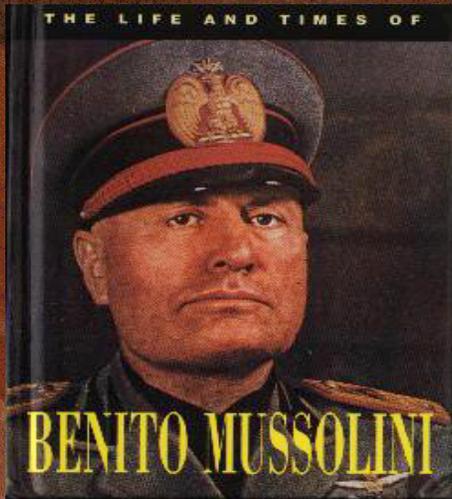
## In America:

In order to cope with the war, America instituted rations on books, sugar, coffee, and other goods.

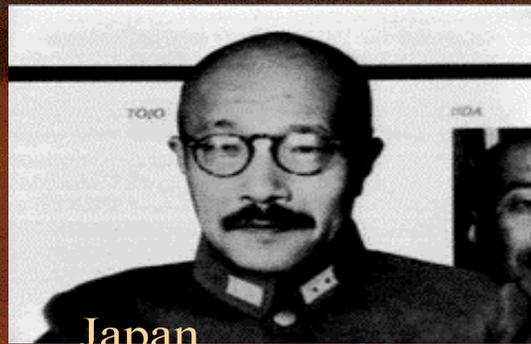
- To conserve gasoline, a national 35 MPH speed limit was implemented, and driving for pleasure was banned.
- Most young women either dated older men, or didn't date at all!
- By the summer of 1942, many Americans realized that the war was far from over.

# The Axis Powers

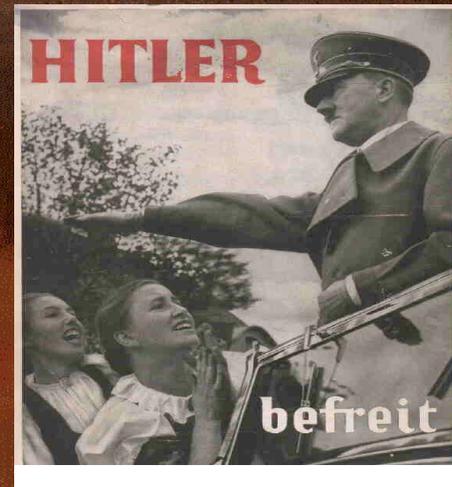
## Four Faces of Aggression:



Italy



Japan



Germany

# FASCIST ITALY: MUSSOLINI

- Extreme nationalism
- Militaristic expansion to restore Roman Empire
- Charismatic leader
- Belief in private property with strong government control
- Anti-communist
- Installed in 1922
- Made a pact with Hitler to exterminate Jews



# NAZI GERMANY:



- **Extreme nationalism and racism**
- Militaristic expansion
- Charismatic leader/ played on fears and pride
- Belief in private property with strong government control
- Anti-communist!
- Gained power in 1933

# Hitler

- He believed that the blond haired, blue eyed Germans were the dominant race. (Aryans)
- He blamed the Jews for Germany's problems and situation
- He ordered the boycott of Jewish shops, the burning of books written by Jewish authors, and the imprisonment of Jews in concentration camps. (beginnings of the Holocaust)

# JAPAN: TOJO AND HIROHITO

- **Tojo became militaristic Prime Minister for Emperor Hirohito**
- **Militarism, Nationalism and Racism**
- **Sought Asian empire for imperialist efforts**



**Prime Minister Hideki Tojo (above) and Emperor Hirohito (below)**



# Pearl Harbor

- Japan was desperate for oil.
- They wanted to dominate the eastern world, and the Pacific, and guess who was standing in their way??
- They launched a secret attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941.
- The attack destroyed 5 battleships, 3 cruisers, and several smaller vessels.
- Nearly 2400 people died.
- Fortunately, the Pacific fleet's aircraft carriers were elsewhere.
- Roosevelt called for Congress to declare war on Japan, they did.



# Pearl Harbor- Dec. 7, 1941

- 2,400 Americans killed when Japanese war planes bomb Pacific Fleet to take out battleships and carriers
- 20 Warships sunk & 150 planes destroyed
- Japan also struck American bases in Pacific
- FDR asks Congress for declaration of war - “Day of Infamy” - the next day
- Germany & Italy declared war on U.S.

# Hitler's acts of aggression

- Hitler was determined to return Germany to a dominant power and invaded the Rhineland- a section of Western Germany lost in the Treaty of Versailles.
- Hitler joins forces with Mussolini and becomes known as the **Axis Powers**
- 1938 Hitler annexed Austria and demanded possession of Sudetenland- a section of Czechoslovakia inhabited by Germanic people

# Japan

- Japanese had lost most of their gains in China at the Washington Conference in 1921
- 1924- U.S. joined other Western nations banning Chinese immigrants
- 1931- Japan invaded and occupied Manchuria in northeastern China
- League of Nations demanded they get out, Japan pulled out of the League
- Continued aggression- seized Shanghai, Nanjing, Beijing, and other Southeast Asian countries.

# Allied Forces- The Big 3



# Hiroshima and Nagasaki

- August 6, 1945 atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima and destroyed 60% of Hiroshima
- Japan still refused to surrender, and 3 days later, a second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. August 9, 1945.
- The 2 attacks took out about 150,000 lives immediately, and more with the after effects of the bombs.

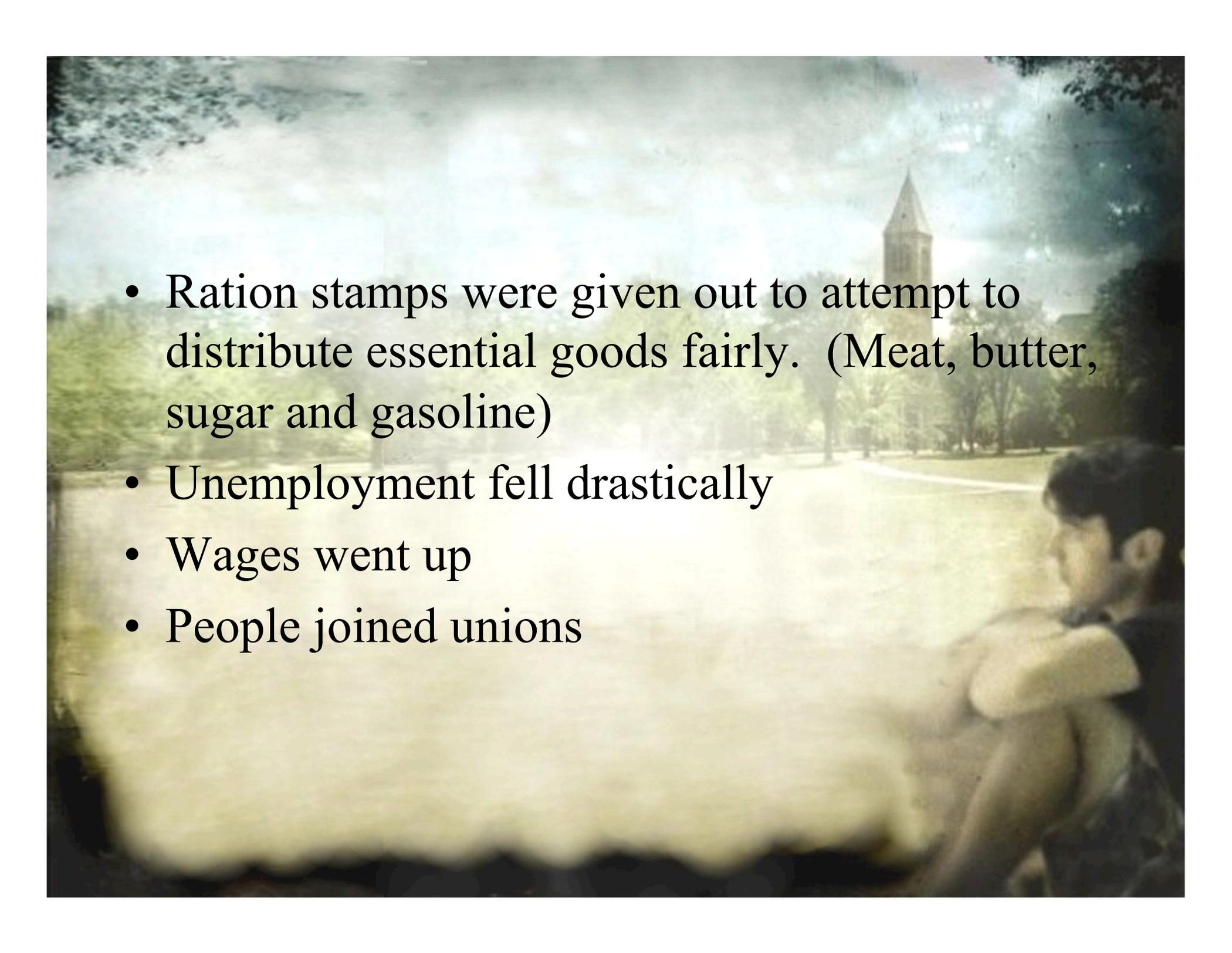


# Home Front Industry

- Many Businesses converted their businesses to war product industries
- Henry Ford turned to making B-24 liberator bombers
- The Government established the cost-plus system in which they paid all development and production costs plus a percentage of those costs as profit on anything a company made for the war.

# Home Front

- Coca-Cola said that every man gets a bottle of coke for 5 cents.
- Henry Kaiser introduced mass production that could assemble a ship in 14 days.
- His ships were called Liberty ships
- The jeep got its name from G.P. for General Purpose vehicle. It was established during WWII and 650,000 of them were produced.

- 
- Ration stamps were given out to attempt to distribute essential goods fairly. (Meat, butter, sugar and gasoline)
  - Unemployment fell drastically
  - Wages went up
  - People joined unions

# Costs of War

- Federal Spending went from 9.4 billion dollars in 1939 to 95.2 billion in 1945
- The GNP more than doubled
- A raise in taxes paid for approx 41% of the cost of the war
- Revenue Act of 1942 increased the number of Americans who paid income taxes.
- It levied a flat 5% tax on all incomes over \$624 per year. The rest of the money to pay for the war came from banks and private investors, and the public