

PRESS KIT

BOOK INFORMATION

“Both Sides of the Pond” [Title]

“My Family’s War, 1933–1946” [Subtitle]

Barbara Kent Lawrence Author Website: bkl@barbaralawrence.com

ISBN: 979-8-218-69692-4 — paperback ISBN: 979-8-218-69693-1/ebook ISBN:

Hardcover and paperback 6" x 9"

Pages: 396, matte cover, white paper 70#, B/W

Publication Date: September 15, 2025

Imprint (Publisher): Sweet Fern Press

SHORT BOOK DESCRIPTION

In 1939, British actress Barbara Greene met Joe Kennedy, Jr., which would lead to her emigrating to America and learning to fly. Her brother, Kent, endured the bitter retreat from Dunkirk and service in WWII.

LONG BOOK DESCRIPTION

In January of 1939 when Barbara Greene, a beautiful and successful young British actress, met Joe Kennedy Jr., son of the American Ambassador, she could not have expected that their relationship would lead to her emigrating to America and piloting a plane around the eastern states to publicize Bundles for Britain. Nor could her brother, Kent, have foreseen his bitter retreat from Dunkirk when he left England in January 1940 to fight in France, or his subsequent service in Cornwall, North Africa, Sicily, and Burma. Their stories portray the war on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, and on the home front and battlefield.

In this intensively researched and highly readable story of war and love, we also hear the stories of other ordinary people who survived extraordinary circumstances. In the words of **Evan Thomas**, a *New York Times* best-selling author, “*Both Sides of the Pond* captures how awful and hard it was for this family to be caught up in the war, but also how it was, at moments, thrilling, meaningful, and romantic... For anyone who wants to know what it is really like to have your world turned upside down, read this book and be shocked, thrilled and moved. From heady and improbable love affairs amidst the falling bombs to the gritty deprivations of daily life, it’s all here in a timeless, well-told tale.”

ENDORSEMENTS:

Barbara Lawrence has given us an intimate, harrowing, and vivid portrait of two young people engulfed by a world war. Her mother and uncle might have led decent but unremarkable lives coming of age in Great Britain in the late 1930s. Instead, they were forced to show the grit and steadfastness that gave Britain its finest hour. For anyone who wants to know what it is really like to have your world turned upside down, read this book and be shocked, thrilled and moved. From heady and improbable love affairs amidst the falling bombs to the gritty deprivations of daily life, it's all here in a timeless well-told tale.

—**Evan Thomas**, author of two *New York Times* best-selling books, including *Road to Surrender*.

What a wonderful book! The description of the humiliating retreat through Dunkirk is the best I have ever read. Lawrence has gone to great lengths to ensure that her facts and dates are correct and explain the background to events. A worthwhile read, on either side of The Pond.

—**Roy V. Martin**, Master Mariner and author of *Ebb and Flow: evacuations and landings by merchant ships in World War Two*, *Suffolk Golding Mission: A Considerable Service*, and other books.

This is a first-rate account of the build-up to World War II, a most descriptive account of the attack on Croydon, and generally of the Blitz, that also includes a delightful passage on *Warwick Castle*. The characters come to life in this book that has a warm feel to it even amid the chaos of war. An excellent piece of writing!

—**Brian Ingpen** is the author of twelve books on maritime history, including *Mailships of the Union Castle Line*.

I loved this book and couldn't put it down. History and the complexity of human relationships unfold with uncommon grace.

—**Barbara Lazear Ascher**, winner, most recently, of Pushcart's Editors Award for *Ghosting: A Widow's Voyage Out*.

Thinking of World War II as "a good war" risks neglecting the realities of broken, or partly broken, lives. The war experienced by young actress Barbara Greene and her brother, Kent, revealed in this deeply researched and impressive family history will draw you in and keep you engaged.

—**Robert Malcolmson**, Professor Emeritus at Queen's University Ontario and author and co-editor of many books and articles, including *The Diaries of Nella Last: Writing in War and Peace*.

An intimate and beautifully researched story of one young British woman's life as she finds love and a career on the stage and screen. When World War II destroys those

dreams, she and her brother are called upon to serve their country in different but equally perilous ways. The author views historic events through this very personal lens in a way that brings Barbara's and Kent's compelling stories vividly to life for the reader.

—**Elizabeth Winthrop Alsop**, author of *Daughter of Spies: Wartime Secrets, Family Lies*.

With a poet's incisive eye, Lawrence conveys the cost of war, whether to men in the field, women in the air, refugee children at sea, and even mules parachuted into Burma. Her meticulous work tells the story of war's weight on families and brings to light immense courage in the face of great risk.

—**Sharon Cregier, Ph.D.**, Adjunct Professor (Ret.) at University of Prince Edward Island, historian of animal transport, and author of books and articles, including *Noncommercial Horse Transport: The Need for Standards*.

I was immersed and riveted by this, a moving and beautiful narrative. A gifted young sister and brother navigate the darkness of World War II, both together and alone. Their indomitable spirit and resilience could serve as a beacon in our own darkening time.

—**William Carpenter**, author of *The Wooden Nickel* and the award-winning military novel *Silence*.

There must be rooms full of books concerning the Kennedy family and libraries full of books about the Second World War. Despite this, the author offers new perspectives on both subjects. She tells the extraordinary story of her mother's exploits and she sheds light on her uncle's war service in a field that is seldom recognised or recorded. The author is to be congratulated on illuminating the activities of her family during their wartime lives, which helps to throw new light on the desperate times they lived through and the challenges that so many people faced.

—**George Vaughan** Colonel (Ret.), Late Royal Army Service Corps and Royal Corps of Transport.

For anyone doubting that fact and fiction can combine creatively, this book is a must-read. Lawrence has caringly pieced together her mother's and uncle's lives and contacts as they are drawn into one of the past century's most violent episodes. Her work deftly weaves together extremes like hope and fear, amity and enmity, safety and peril. Concerns like careers and celebrity come and go as we test the bonds of kinship and marriage while feeling wartime's horrors, hardships, and unknowns. Will people ever stop sending others into combat, or suffering what comes back?

—**Parker Shipton, Ph.D.**, is a professor of anthropology at Boston University and author of many books, including *The Nature of Entrustment*, published by Yale University, which received the Melville J. Herskovits Award of the African Studies Association.

Haunted by a 1939 photograph, Lawrence assembles an exquisitely researched and intimate history of her mother's and uncle's vigorous lives, from the lead-up to World

War II to its eventual end. In her skilled telling, we feel the terrible impact of rising fascism, making it a clear and bold read for today.

—**Gretchen Cherington**, award-winning author of the memoirs *Poetic License* and *The Butcher, the Embezzler and the Fall Guy— A Family Memoir of Scandal and Greed in the Meat Industry*.

Richly illustrated with photographs and documents, *Both Sides of the Pond, My Family's War: 1933-1945* is a captivating book that brings new insight into the lives of men and women who fought to defend our liberty.

KEYWORDS

WWII; World War Two; historical novel; war romance; true story; Kennedys; Battle of Britain; D-Day; home front; battlefield; U-boats; paratroops; loss and courage; Dunkirk; Blitz; British cinema; trauma; aftermath of war; class distinctions; marriage; divorce

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Why did you need to write this book?

Why are your mother and uncle's last names spelled differently?

What were some of the surprising moments you experienced doing the research?

What were some of the frustrations you overcame and how?

What help did you find in doing this research?

Why did you decide to write this story as an historical novel?

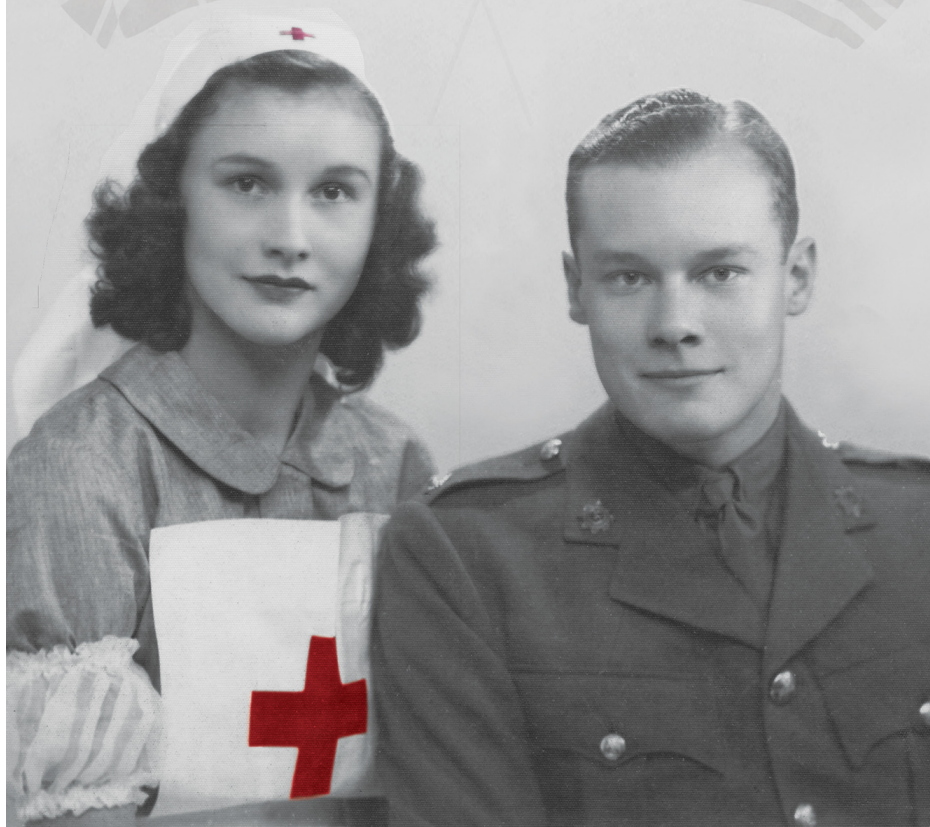
What experience and experiences helped you research and write this book?

BOOK COVER

“...an intimate, harrowing, and vivid portrait of two young people engulfed by a world war...”
—Evan Thomas, author of two *New York Times* best-selling books, including *Road to Surrender*.

BARBARA KENT LAWRENCE
**BOTH SIDES
OF THE POND**

MY FAMILY'S WAR: 1933–1946





Credit photos to:

Kayte Churchill
Ledgehill Photography

Photos available in black and white on request

AUTHOR BIO: Barbara Kent Lawrence, Ed.D.

Barbara Kent Lawrence is the author of many articles and nine books, including an award-winning dissertation on the influence of culture on aspirations in Maine. A former professor, she has taught courses in anthropology and sociology, research, and writing non-fiction and memoir. Lawrence grew up in New York City and Washington D.C., then earned a BA in anthropology from Bennington College, an MA in sociology from New York University, and an Ed.D. in Administration, Policy and Planning from Boston University.

In addition to teaching, Lawrence has worked for the Department of Social Services and the Housing Development Administration in New York, directed a small museum in Maine, co-run a brokerage and construction company, consulted for The Rural School and Community Trust and for KnowledgeWorks and started four non-profit organizations supporting the environment and students. She lives in Maine and is working on the third novel in her *Islands* series.

AUTHOR PRIOR WORK

Working Memory: The Influence of Culture on Aspirations

Bitter Ice: a memoir of love, food, and obsession

The Hermit Crab Solution: Creative Alternatives for Improving Rural School Facilities & Keeping Them Close to Home

Dollars and Sense: The Cost-Effectiveness of Small Schools

Dollars and Sense II: Lessons from Good, Cost-Effective Small Schools

The Hungry i: a workbook for partners of men with eating disorders

Islands of Time: a novel

The Other Island: Ben's Story

MEDIA HISTORY

Barbara Kent Lawrence's work has taken her from Maine to California. She has appeared on television and radio shows, given keynote addresses in education and eating disorders, and spoken at conferences on a variety of topics. In addition, she has met with book groups in person and virtually, taught courses in writing and memoir in libraries, and done many readings and book signings in book stores.

Outreach for *Bitter Ice*, a memoir of love, food, and obsession

TALKS

"The Hungry i: love, food, and families," Grand Rounds, Brookdale University Hospital and Medical Center, Brooklyn, New York, October 10, 2000

"Behind the book: On Food and Happiness," Lesley University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, April 29, 2000

A day of classes and talks, New England School of Acupuncture, Watertown, Massachusetts, July 11, 2000

Keynote address, International Association of Eating Disorders Professionals, Orlando, Florida, August 4, 2000
“Body and Soul: Observations on Physical Faith,” Cambridge Congregational Church, Cambridge, Massachusetts, May 2000
Workshop with the Family Support Network of the International Association of Eating Disorders Professionals (IAEDP), Orlando, Florida, August 5, 2000
Helping to End Eating Disorders (HEED) Gala dinner and fundraiser, October 11, 2000
“The Tyranny of the Table,” Framingham State College, Framingham, Massachusetts November 5, 2000
Discussion: Arizona chapter of IAEDP, Phoenix, Arizona, 2000

BOOK READINGS and SIGNINGS

New Dominion Books, Charlottesville, Virginia, Winter 1999
Wordsworth, Cambridge, Massachusetts, December 6, 1999
Barnes and Noble, Astor Place, New York, New York, December 7, 1999
A Clean Well Lighted Place, San Francisco, California, December 8, 1999
Barnes and Noble, Burlington, Massachusetts, May 4, 2000
Changing Hands Bookstore, Tempe, Arizona, July 22, 2000
The Harvard COOP, Cambridge, Massachusetts, October 4, 2000
The Academy of Eating Disorders Annual Meeting, New York, New York, May 5, 2000
Bookstar, New Orleans, Louisiana, June 18, 2000
International Women Writers Guild, New York, New York, October 2001
Dire Reader, Cambridge, Massachusetts, December 4, 2002

ARTICLES about *Bitter Ice*

SELF: “How One Eating Disorder Destroyed Several Lives: A memoir of a family consumed by starvation,” Sara Nelson, Winter 2000
RedBook, “My husband had anorexia:,” A gripping memoir looks at a man’s obsessions – and a woman’s struggle to help him,” Jennifer Soong.
Metrowest Daily News “Obsessed with self-image: Barbara Kent Lawrence’s memoir focuses on male eating disorders,” Chris Bergeron, Boston, Massachusetts, November 27, 2001.
Boston Globe, “Sprung from ex’s food prison, writer relishes her new life,” Bella English, February 8, 2000.
The Hamilton-Wenham Chronicle, Review, Lucy R. Frederiksen, Hamilton, Massachusetts, 2006
Cambridge TAB, “The Boys who Binge,” Tim Lemire, April 7, 2000
Charlottesville Weekly, article, Winter, 2000
The Arizona Republic, ‘Bitter Ice’ recounts husband’s destructive eating disorder,” Diana Marrero, July 17, 2000:

RADIO/TV INTERVIEWS

KALYX Radio, “Straightjacket,” San Francisco, California, December 9, 1999,
WCVB-TV, “Anorexia in Men,” February 17, 2000
WBZ, Channel 4, “Men and Eating Disorders: Bitter Ice,” Boston, May 4, 2000

New England Cable News, interview with Davita Wright, June 2, 2000
The TAB Community Newspapers, Books online chat with Tim Lemire, June 20, 2000
South West Radio show, Spring, 2003
WHDH, Boston Common, Boston, February 17, 2000
Boston: Mental Health Update, Spring 2003
Transformation Chats starting March 9, 2000

OUTREACH: 2013 - 2020 *Islands of Time* and *The Other Island: Ben's Story*

TALKS Haverhill Public Library, Haverhill, Massachusetts
The Jesup Library, Bar Harbor, Maine
Camden Memorial Library, Camden, Maine,
Rockland Library, Rockland, Maine
Rockport Public Library, Rockport, Maine
Sherman's Books, Bar Harbor, Maine
Blue Hill Library, Blue Hill, Maine,
Maine Coast Books, Damariscotta, Maine
Ellsworth Public Library, Ellsworth, Maine
Louis T. Graves Memorial Public Library, Kennebunkport
Left Bank Books, Belfast, Maine
Bass Harbor Memorial Library, Tremont, Maine
Isleford Library, Isleford, Maine
Bookstacks, Bucksport, Maine
Hamilton-Wenham Tea House, Council on Aging, and Hamilton-Wenham Library
Manchester-by-the Book, Manchester-by-the-Sea, MA
Beverly Public Library, Beverly, Massachusetts

RADIO/TV INTERVIEWS

The Chris Wolfe Show, Rockland, Maine, March 29, 2017
WERU, Coastal Connections, Natalie Springuel, 2019
Write Now, Gayle Heney, Haverhill Community Television, Haverhill, Massachusetts, 2014 and 2019
Read Aloud, Joseph Côté, Camden Public Library, Camden, Maine

BOOK SIGNINGS Over 45 signings at:

Fairs, book stores, book events, conventions, farmers markets, and other venues.

ARTICLES

The Portland Press, "Feast on These Lobster Novels," Scott R. Candage, August 1, 2021
Bangor Daily News, "Ten new Marine books to read before summer's out," Aislinn Sarnacki, August 6, 2013
The Mount Desert Islander, review, date unavailable
The Working Waterfront, The Island Institute, review, Barbara Fernald, date unavailable

BOOK EXCERPT: from the Prologue

In 2007, I found a photograph of my mother, Barbara Mary Kent Green, and my uncle, Ralph Kent Green, that haunted me. I now know it was taken in December 1939, just after she joined the Voluntary Aid Detachment as a nurse, and just before he would leave for France with the British Expeditionary Forces. My mother was twenty, Kent twenty-four, and in the photograph they are beautiful, young, and unscarred by war. It was hard to think about the experiences ahead of them – she in hospitals caring for the rescued and wounded, he in battle. I saw courage behind their smiles, and I began to wonder who they were before I entered their lives.

The little I knew about my mother and uncle came from fragments of conversations, clouded memories, misperceptions, and family stories too often told by my grandmothers. As a result, this book is a weft of imagined feelings, thoughts, conversations and interpretations woven across a warp of facts.

Decades ago I worked at the Peabody Museum in Cambridge, Massachusetts, piecing together shards carted off from digs in Central and South America to be stored in stained bags in a dusty room. I didn't know much about what I was supposed to do, but it was soon apparent that those who preceded me had known less. The shards were grouped by color in squares on long wooden tables, but I knew the colors of pots changed with use, as well as time. Cooking pots, for example, would exhibit pale mouths and charred bottoms.

I spent weeks fumbling until I began to find some pieces that belonged together. I worked as if doing a puzzle, picking those that seemed to share kinship from different squares on the tables. When they matched, I exulted. Finally, after months of communion with the shards, I began to know them, to remember, like a child playing Concentration, which pile had a piece like the piece in my hand. I began to assemble the blackened bottom of a very heavy cooking pot. I worked my way up the sides, lighter in color, gently centering assemblages of pieces in sand, bending strips of lead to hold new matches, gluing them with Alvar and, if I made a mistake, ungluing them with acetone. Finally, after almost a year, I had assembled a Late Oaxacan pot, and it greeted me every morning.

For many years now, I've been sitting in front of my own fragments, trying to put together pieces long shattered. I think about how little I knew, how much there was to learn, how many questions I wish I'd asked when the people in this story could have answered my questions themselves. What kind of man was my uncle? How did he survive Dunkirk? What happened to him after the war? How did my mother have the courage to act in films when she was sixteen, on the London stage at eighteen, and then, when war ended that career, to work in a hospital caring for wounded men? How did she survive seventy-eight bombing raids? Why did she come to the United States? Did she ever love my father? Did she still love Joe Kennedy, Jr.? I've glued, unglued and re-glued too many pieces too many times. I have after all these years rebuilt many

pots now arrayed before me, though there are still piles of shards in the shadows of this large room.

from the Introduction

BARBARA GREENE IN LONDON

January 1941

Everything I love is in this room – this tiny, light-grey room with two small windows overlooking the communal garden, or what is left of it. I remember majestic delphiniums and dancing daffodils, but this summer there were just little plots of vegetables – carrots so we see well at night, turnips and cabbages for the long winter. No flowers, except for Mrs. May's Bleeding Hearts to remind her of her son, and the ugly humps of a few Anderson shelters. At dusk, I pull down the blackout curtains.

Around me, photographs of Kent and Mummy, Father, and our Scottie, Mac. Photographs of my darling Joe – one on my bureau, the others tucked in drawers. The designer's sketch of the wedding dress for the first movie in which I had a starring role, *Wedding Group*. When will I wear my own wedding dress and walk down an aisle to meet the man I love? Will I love? Someone else, I mean.

Tomorrow, I will leave everything and everyone except for him. I'll run away to a new world. If I survive the journey, will he be there?

KENT GREEN IN CORNWALL

January 1941

We are stationed in what is now the front: Cornwall. I look across the ribbon of ocean towards the French coast and see the enemy in my mind's eye. I hear the sounds as we fled through Belgium and France – children screaming and bellowing cows, their udders straining to hold milk no one will ever drink, farmers and their families diving under lorries or into ditches as the planes swoop like hawks. We expected invasion after Dunkirk. Now winter blocks invaders from crossing the Channel, but I fear the spring.

Mother, Father, myself I can bear to lose, but not my sister. Not my little sister. I can't think of her in some goddamned German brothel. No! I was right to tell her she must go to America because she out of thousands, no, tens of thousands, can escape to find a new life there. But it will be a life without me.

Chin up you old sot. You have your men to look after. And perhaps Flora. Who knows where we will be when this ends – together or alone – or dust in a field of poppies?

SELL SHEET/ONE SHEET

"Barbara Lawrence has given us an intimate, harrowing, and vivid portrait of two young people engulfed by a world war....From heady and improbable love affairs amidst the falling bombs to the gritty deprivations of daily life, it's all here in a timeless well-told tale."

—**Evan Thomas**, author of two *New York Times* best-selling books, including *Road to Surrender*.

"I loved this book and couldn't put it down. History and the complexity of human relationships unfold with uncommon grace."

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"What a wonderful book! The description of the humiliating retreat through Dunkirk is the best I have ever read. A worthwhile read, on either side of The Pond."

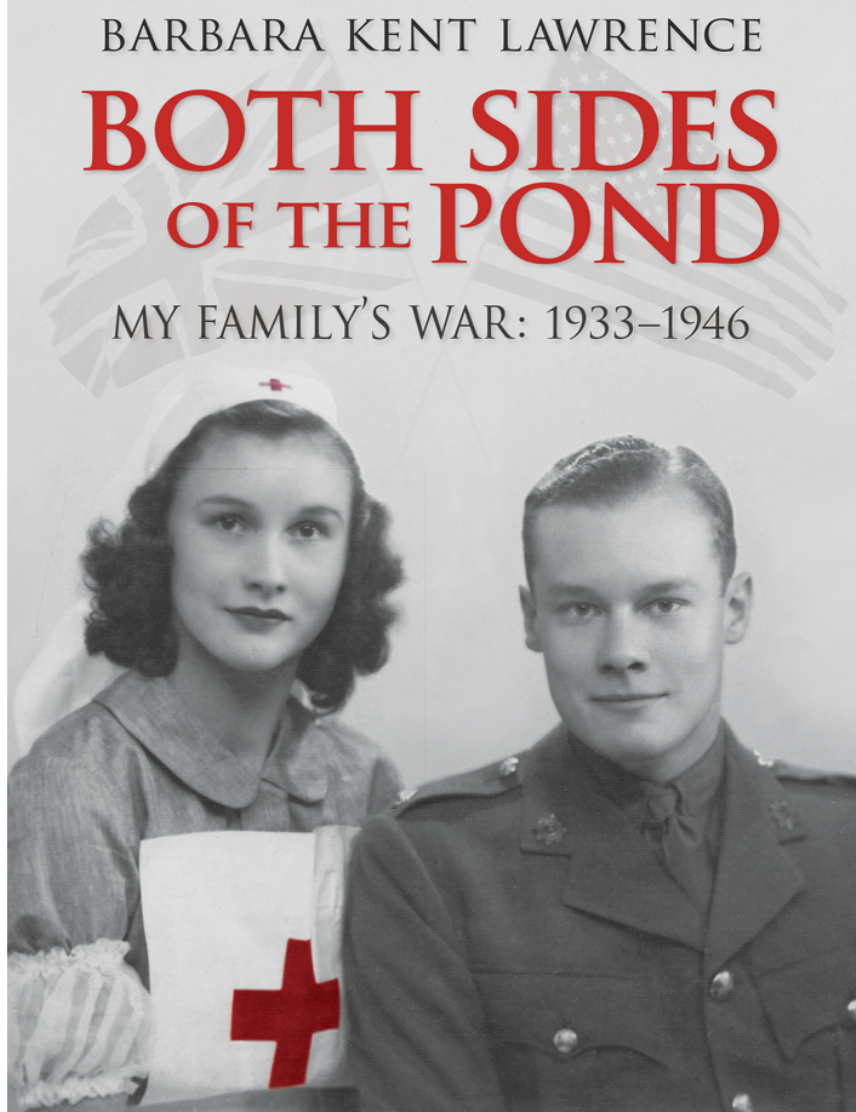
—**Roy V. Martin**, Master Mariner and author of *Ebb and Flow: evacuations and landings by merchant ships in World War*



Barbara Kent Lawrence
Photo by Kayte Churchill,
Ledgehill Photography

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WHEN BRITISH ACTRESS BARBARA GREENE MET JOSEPH KENNEDY, JR. SON OF THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR, SHE COULD NOT HAVE IMAGINED EMIGRATING TO THE US OR LEARNING TO FLY. NOR COULD HER BROTHER KENT HAVE FORESEEN BEING EVACUATED FROM DUNKIRK OR SERVING IN CORNWALL, NORTH AFRICA, ITALY and BURMA.

Available in fine book stores and on [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

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PRESS RELEASE

DATELINE: September 15, 2025, Brunswick, Maine

In 1939 when British Actress Barbara Greene meets Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr., son of the American ambassador, her world transforms.

INTRODUCTION:

In January of 1939 when Barbara Greene, a beautiful and successful young British actress, met Joe Kennedy Jr., son of the American Ambassador, she could not have expected that their relationship would lead to her emigrating to America sponsored by Ambassador and Mrs. Kennedy. Nor could her brother, Kent, have foreseen his bitter retreat from Dunkirk when he left England in January 1940 to fight in France, or his subsequent service in Cornwall, North Africa, Sicily, and Burma. Their stories portray the war on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, and on the home and battle fronts.

AUTHOR QUOTATION: When I found the photograph of my mother and uncle that now graces the cover of this book, I was astounded by their good looks and innocence, but saddened because they were both going to war, a war they rarely talked about. They both died before I was interested in who they were before I was born, but I realized suddenly that I needed to understand them to understand myself. I started the research for this book in 2007 by following family stories that too often were wrong. Fortunately, I taught research methods to university students and those skills helped me navigate the murky waters of my own family history.

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In January of 1939 when Barbara Greene, a beautiful young British actress, met Joe Kennedy, Jr., son of the American Ambassador, she could not have expected that their relationship would lead to her emigrating to the United States and learning to pilot a plane. Neither could her brother, Kent, have foreseen his bitter retreat from Dunkirk when he left England in January 1940 to fight in France, or his subsequent service on the frontlines in Cornwall, North Africa, Sicily, and Burma.

In this intensively researched story of their war, we also hear the stories of other ordinary people who survived extraordinary circumstances. Richly illustrated with photographs and documents, *Both Sides of the Pond, My Family's War* is a captivating book.



I loved this book and couldn't put it down. History and the complexity of human relationships unfold with uncommon grace.

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BOTH SIDES OF THE POND



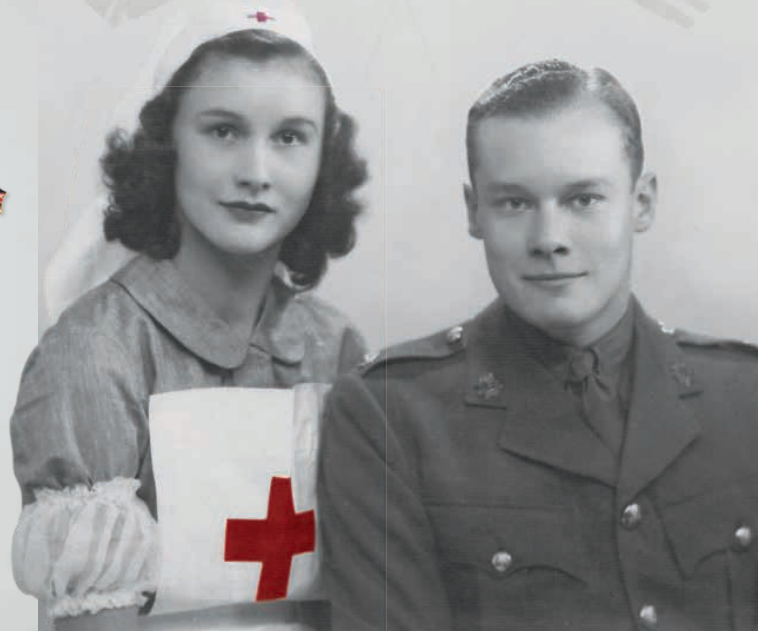
BARBARA KENT LAWRENCE

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BARBARA KENT LAWRENCE BOTH SIDES OF THE POND

MY FAMILY'S WAR: 1933–1946



Author photo by Kayte Churchill,
Ledge Hill Photography