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Preface

Dr. Roger Beck

In 2014 the world will commence the centenary remembrance of the Great War. It will not be a celebration – there is really nothing to celebrate about the madness that engulfed the world for more than four years. Nor the peace, which, as it turned out, was only a truce that allowed twenty years for the same combatants to build more powerful and deadlier weapons, and begin killing each other again.

The Great War will be remembered because it still retains a special place in national and individual memories, even in the United States, which only entered the war near the end. Hardly had the cease-fire been declared – at 11 o'clock on the 11th day in the 11th month, 1918 -- then communities began constructing small memorials, like the one on our cover, on town squares or in city parks. Some memorials were on a grander scale, like Memorial Stadium (1923), where the University of Illinois plays football, and Soldier Field (1925) further north where the Chicago Bears play their games. All of them, large and small, were dedicated to those men and women who sacrificed their lives in the Great War.

Historians speak of the long nineteenth century – from the French Revolution in 1789 to the beginning of the Great War in 1914. The twentieth century began with the war to end all wars. We know now, and the people alive even then knew, the world changed with the outbreak of the Great War, and life would never be the same again. Some great empires fell, others, for a time, grew larger; political boundaries were redrawn as some countries disappeared and new countries were born; communism claimed it first nation; and the United States and Japan became world powers. Many people abandoned their trust in the Enlightenment ideals of science and progress as this war unleashed a technologically advanced, industrial strength, killing machine that used the wonders of science to destroy and slaughter. Not for nothing was the deadliest weapon in the war called a "machine" gun. Faith in an all-powerful, benevolent God declined as well, as survivors tried to comprehend the often unspeakable and hellish deaths of nine million husbands, brothers, and sons on far-away battlefields, of millions more who returned home horribly disfigured in mind and body, and for the unknown millions of women, children and the elderly who suffered death and destruction both on the "Battle Front," and the "Home Front." And if all this was not enough to question both God and science, a great influenza epidemic, for which neither ministers nor scientists had any answers, spread around the globe between 1917 and 1919, killing a further how many? 40 million? 100 million?

By 1925, as a result of changes brought about by the war, the world was as different from 1900 in every way -- socially, philosophically, economically, politically, culturally, technologically – as any equivalent 25- year period in world history. Women -- bomb assemblers, taxi drivers, nurses, spies – had left the home, earned salaries, and now demanded and received the vote. Farm boys, like my father from Indiana, would never be the same, after they'd "seen Paree'." One need only compare the Roaring Twenties' bobbed-hair "flapper," in her short, revealing dress, a whiskey in one hand, a cigarette in the other, dancing the Charleston, with the corseted (literally "strait-laced") "Gibson Girl" of 1900 in her full dress brushing the floor, climbing to her neck, reaching to her wrists. By 1925, airplanes and cars had replaced horses, radios the phonograph, electric lights the gas light.

For the past three years I have taught a graduate class on World War I and its consequences. Believing that all history is local, I ask my students first to find out if any of their ancestors played a part in the Great War. If so, they are to learn everything they can about that person, see if there are any letters or other mementos of the war that survived, and write a history. If they find none, or have very little information, than they are to write about their hometown or county during the war. As none of my students so far has lived in a community where such a history already exists, they have had to carry out primary research: in libraries, historical societies, local memorials, graveyards, military records, newspapers, American Legion posts, local schools, and anywhere else they can dig up information about the war. Some have conducted oral interviews, gone on-line to genealogical and World War I sites, and written to war offices, regimental historians, and battlefields, in the United States and beyond. The 17 essays in this collection are the products of that assignment.

In the papers they turned in for the class I encouraged my students to give me everything they found – lists of draftees, lists of dead and wounded, lists of conscious objectors, contributors to war bond drives, members of military units, photos – along with their narrative. These complete essays with full lists of names, photos, photocopies and other information I had them deposit in local libraries and historical society archives for future researchers to build on and not have to duplicate research. As such long lists can bring the general reader to tears, the essays contained here have been edited, both by me, and by members of Professor Michael Shirley's "Historical Research and Writing" class. Each year this class produces an award-winning issue of *Historia* plus the department's newsletter. This is a special edition of *Historia*.

I come to this project through my own father who served in France during the Great War. I have about 75 letters he sent home, plus a number of other items from his experience. A few of my students discovered relatives who had served in the war, and some, such as Tristain Sodergren-Baar, whose grandfather who served with the American Expeditionary Forces in Siberia fighting the Bolsheviks, also uncovered letters and other objects of historical interest. Similarly, Patrick Vonesh grew up believing his family came from Wales, but discovered while researching this paper that they originally came from Ireland, and lived in England for a while before finally settling in Wales. It was from central England that Patrick's three great, great, great-uncles went to war. One of them, William, was ironically first sent to Dublin to put down the Irish rebellion of 1916 and then to France. Laura Mondt's grandfather laid the communication lines between headquarters and the front lines in France, while working for Bell Telephone. Her essay goes beyond that individual history, however, to tell the larger story of communications technology in the war.

Most of the students had to turn to local history, but here they consistently discovered exciting and fascinating histories. In this collection we have an account of Eastern's own role in the war by Derek Shidler, who tells how, among other fascinating bits, Eastern's most popular football player, and president of the class of 1917, Martin "Otto" Schahrer, was killed in September 1918, and that our library is named after Mary Booth, who served in the American Red Cross and worked at General Pershing's headquarters. Several students discuss the tension between patriotism and German-American citizenship, particularly Jon Burkhardt's history of Pana during the war. James Buckwalter's essay provides a history of Blue Island, an old community in Cook County, Illinois, as well as its involvement in the war, which reflected the community's ethnic conflicts between Italians, Poles, and Germans. Amanda Evans turned in a highly original essay on the Army Nurse Corps, Red Cross Volunteers and the volunteers from Illinois State (Normal) University in the Great War. Margaret Hawkins was able to interview her grandmother about Margaret's paternal great grandfather's service in World War I and also build on an extensive family genealogy to tell this one family's story in Mattoon, Illinois during

the war. Noah Sangster grew up in Decatur, and he describes Decatur's participation in the war, but Noah's family came from the British Isles and Eastern Europe, and there were intriguing stories here waiting to be uncovered as well. Kevin Green also grew up in Decatur and he tells Decatur's story primarily through a single newspaper, *The Decatur Herald.*

Nicholas Walsh comes from the rural community of Bement, Illinois, and he turned up a surprising amount of information on this town's activities during the war and its citizens who went off to serve. Ryan Herdes went above and beyond to track down all the information he could on Clay County, Illinois. We could not include all the records and lists he uncovered but the essay provides some indication of how future researchers will be forever grateful to him. Pesotum and Tolono are located about a twenty-minutes drive south of Champaign-Urbana and Jason Miller's family has lived in the area for five generations. Both his great-grandfather and great-great uncle were drafted but never had to serve. Jason tells the rich history of how the war affected these small communities, and includes a poem written about the war by a Pesotum fourteen-year old boy. Chaddy Hosen researched the men of Company G, from Effingham County, Illinois and the history of the county itself. Here again, there was a tension over patriotism and the large German community in the county, especially in the heavily German town of Teutopolis. Christopher Kernc studied the small coal-mining communities of Coal City and Diamond, Illinois, and offered another angle to the assignment – the role of coal in the war effort, as well as the activities of the American Red Cross. Ryan D'Arcy is the world's authority on his hometown of Westfield, Illinois, so this assignment just offered him an opportunity to do more research on his favorite topic. Among other interesting bits of information he uncovered was the competition and cooperation among communities in Clark County to outdo each other in contributions for war savings, thrift stamps, Liberty Loans, and Red Cross activities. Jon Matthews also wrote about Clark County, but about his hometown of Marshall, Illinois. Patriotism and the large German-American community are again discussed here, as well as the contributions Marshall made to the war effort, as through Liberty Bonds, the Red Cross, Victory Gardens, and women going to serve in France as nurses. Finally, Nichole Garbrough's conducted an extraordinary amount of primary research on another Clark County, this one in Southeastern Indiana, and, much to her, and my, delighted surprise, uncovered an amazing wealth of fascinating details about the county, which included the Quarter Master Depot, located in Jeffersonville, and the Ohio Falls Car Manufacturing Company (also called the American Car Foundry). This factory played a critical roll in the war effort – it was the U.S. government's largest contractor -- produced escort wagons, wagon wheels, nose forgings for shells, rolling kitchens, packsaddles, and a variety of other metal equipment. The military depot, which procured, manufactured, and shipped huge quantities of war materials, employed around 18,000 women who, like many women around the world, found themselves out of work when the war ended.

I want to think Dr. Michael Shirley and his class for all the time and effort they put in to produce this beautiful collection of essays. My thanks also to our History Department Chair, Dr. Anita Shelton, for supporting this special edition of *Historia.*

Pana in World War I: Loyalty, Patriotism, and the Perils of Prussianism

Jon Burkhardt

Historian Stephen J. Gross has noted that scholars recognize World War I as a time of crisis for German-Americans. "The government's campaign against the "hyphen" and for 100 percent Americanism threatened all ethnic Americans," he argues, "but especially those of German descent."[1] When the war broke out in 1914, the United States successfully maintained a policy of non-intervention, staying out of the battle while trying to negotiate a peace with the combatants.[2] This policy began to change on May 7, 1915, when a German U-boat sank the British passenger ship, *Lusitania*, killing 128 American citizens along with the rest of the passengers and crew. President Woodrow Wilson warned Germany that attacks on passenger ships would not be tolerated. Germany complied at first, however, in January of 1917, they resumed unrestricted submarine warfare. When rumors surfaced that Germany was conspiring with Mexico against the United States, the Americans saw it as a legitimate cause for war. Wilson asked for, and on April 6, 1917 was granted, a declaration of war against Germany.

The army of the United States was small, but after Congress passed the Selective Service Act, nearly 3 million men were drafted as soldiers. "By autumn," states Brose, "the better part of 1.7 million draftees and volunteers had assembled in thirty-six newly constructed army cantonments."[3] Within a year, the United States was sending thousands of soldiers to France on a daily basis. "In 1918," notes Jennifer Keene, "more than two million 'doughboys' journeyed to France, and almost half of these men experienced combat during their stint 'over there.'"[4]

As America entered the war, communities debated questions of loyalty and dissent and the demands of patriotism. German-Americans residents found their allegiance to their homeland, Germany, and their new home, America, tested as they struggled to maintain this "dual sense of allegiance."[5] As the shadow cast by World War I slowly crept towards the rural town of Pana, Illinois, the people living there showed themselves to be a fiercely loyal and patriotic community.

Pana before World War I

Pana, Illinois, is located in Christian County, near the geographical center of the state. Pana's origin dates back to 1853 and is attributed to the construction of the Illinois Central Railroad. According to Tom (T.J.) Phillips, the territory was surveyed in 1821, before the coming of the railroad, and was uninhabited except for hunters and the occasional Native-American.[6] At that time, the territory was known as the "Black Hawk Hunting ground," and

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[1] Gross, Stephen J. ""Perils of Prussianism": Main Street German America, Local Autonomy, and the Great War." *Agricultural History*, Vol. 78, No. 1 (Winter, 2004), p. 78.

[2] There are many surveys of World War I currently available. For a good recent look, see Eric Dorn Brose, *A History of the Great War: World War One and the International Crisis of the Early Twentieth Century*. New York. Oxford University Press. 2010.

[3] Brose, p. 336.

[4] Keene, Jennifer D. "Americans as Warriors: "Doughboys" in Battle during the First World War. *OAH Magazine of History*, Vol. 17, No. 1, World War I (Oct., 2002), p. 15.

[5] Gross, 81.

[6] Phillips, Tom. *Pana, Illinois, City of Roses, Centennial, 1856-1956, July 1-4.*, p. 1. The foreword gives credit to Tom (T.J.) Phillips, a native of Pana who came to the News-Palladium staff after his stint in the Navy, for most of the historical research and writing the bulk of the copy for the booklet. As no one else is mentioned in this manner, I will assume that Phillips wrote the entire booklet, and attribute the facts of my paper to him. For convenience, as I

was a part of Shelby County until Christian County was organized in 1839. In 1853 the township was surveyed and platted, along with the Illinois Central Railroad. The city was laid out at the intersection of the Indianapolis & St. Louis Railroad and the Illinois Central tracks.[7] Finally, on September 2, 1856, the name of the township was officially changed to Pana.[8] Once the railroads were completed and the town was laid out, a steady stream of immigrants flowed into the area.

As the new century dawned, the wheels of progress rolled through Pana, and many improvements were made to the city. Pana's telephone exchange began operation around the year 1900, with Warren Pennwell as one of the original incorporators.[9] On July 9, 1900, an ordinance providing for the building of sidewalks was passed by the City Council.[10] On May 12, 1902, the City Council authorized a volunteer fire department. Pana's sewer system was started in 1908 with the laying of the Locust street pipe.[11] On July 15, 1908, Capt. and Mrs. John W. Kitchell donated a 40 acre plot of land to the city, the resulting Kitchell Park being added to Pana. The Deaconess Hospital, Pana's first "refuge for the sick," opened to the public that same year on West Orange Street.[12] In 1910, through the efforts of Congressman Ben F. Caldwell and Ex-Congressman James M. Graham, along with a group of interested citizens, construction of a new post office began. The building was finished and opened to the public on September 14, 1912, with W. H. Alexander as postmaster. CIPS began to furnish electric light and power for the city in 1912, and later, in 1917, gas.[13] Pana's Carnegie-Schuyler Library was completed in late 1912 and opened in January of 1913. On May 12, 1913, construction began on a new, modern hospital. Huber Memorial Hospital opened the following year.[14] Also in 1914, Pana was known as "one of the most beautiful and enterprising cities in Central Illinois," this according to a "publication of the times."[15]

Pana during World War I

The shadow cast by World War I slowly crept towards Pana, ultimately reaching it in April 1917, Pana showed itself to be a fiercely loyal, patriotic community. As the war effort brought the town together to support their "boys" through various fund-raising drives and volunteer relief efforts, the extreme patriotism shown by some threatened the peace of others.

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used Phillip's early history of Pana exclusively in my background research on Pana, I will make notes sparingly, and use them only to steer the reader to the correct page in Phillip's work. All facts should be assumed to have come from Phillips unless otherwise noted.

[7] Ibid, 5. The plat was recorded in January of 1855 and was executed by C. A. Manners, surveyor, for David Neal, then president of the Illinois Central.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid, 22. The above information was obtained from the records of the Illinois Consolidated Telephone Co. presently serving Pana. However, in an unofficial history of the city written by a retired local journalist the following was reported: "The first telephone exchange installed in Pana was about 1895, when Dr. J. H. Miller and Robert Johns formed a company, obtained a city franchise and established a system for the city. Previously a private phone line was maintained from the office of the Pana Coal Company to the Union Station and to the North Mine of the company." In the year 1915 Pana served less than 900 phones.

[10] Ibid, 13. Up to this time in the business district had been constructed of wood and slightly elevated. Paving of the city streets began prior to 1907.

[11] Ibid, 17. Pana's sewer system continued to be built at intervals beginning from one year later, 1909, when the southwest portion was laid; to 1912, the Kitchell addition; and 1913, Kitchell avenue.

[12] Ibid, 47. The hospital was established by the churches of Pana and social clubs.

[13] Ibid, 52. The original CIPS office was located on the site of the present sub-station on Oak street.

[14] Ibid, 47. Named after Dr. Jacob Huber, a physician who practiced in the city of Pana for a period of 50 years, also during that time serving as a surgeon in the Civil War. Upon his death Dr. Huber's will provided $20,000 for the construction of a modern hospital for the city of Pana.

[15] Ibid, 13.

With anti-German propaganda seeping into all aspects of American life, Pana's large German immigrant population soon found themselves under increasing suspicion. Often their loyalty was called into question and tested, sometimes violently. Indeed, "our efficiency in the first year of war has been impaired," one anti-German writer argued, "by…a romantic humanitarianism."[16] The author of this article believed that our "ginger tenderness" in dealing with alien spies and domestic traitors was leading us down a dangerous path. He railed against the fact that, long after the declaration of war, "enemy aliens were as free to go and come, to see and to hear, as were our own most loyal citizens. Even after the adult males of the tribe were subjected to some slight degree of surveillance and restraint, "the female of the species" remained as free as ever."[17]

That the majority of Pana's German-American citizens proclaimed their allegiance to the United States is not surprising considering the history of the area. As more and more Germans began to settle in the area, a missionary from Germany was sent to Pana. Rev. Matthias Galster organized the first German Evangelical congregation just northeast of Pana in 1865. Soon after, the German Evangelical Lutheran congregation established itself within the city limits.[18] In 1915, the church was renovated and the congregation celebrated its 50th anniversary in Pana on November 14.[19] With America entering the war a little over two years later, in 1917, the German-American citizens of Pana, celebrating their new life in their new home, found themselves looked at with intense suspicion. "Ultimately," as Gross points out, despite 50 years of peaceful, happy life in the community, "the maintenance of alternative customs and institutions could be used . . . to expose residents to outside scrutiny."[20]

On April 1, 1918, the following article appeared in the *Pana Daily Palladium*, the town's main newspaper service:

> GERMAN ALIENS MUST NOT MOVE
>
> United States Marshal Vincent Y. Dallman, has notified Pana police that changes of residence by German aliens from one judicial district to another or from one place to another in the same judicial district makes them subject to arrest and internment during the war unless they first secure permission from Federal authorities to make the change.
>
> "A German alien enemy who desires to change his place of residence to a place of residence within another registration district must first obtain a permit. He must present himself to the registration officer of the district in which he then resides and make application for the permit on a form, supplied by the registration officer, and his registration card to the registration officer for the purpose of having the permit of change of residence, if granted, indorsed on the registration card.
>
> "A change of residence in violation of the regulation subjects an alien enemy among other penalties to arrest and detention for the duration of the war."

The article concludes with this note: *"As there were many German aliens registered in this territory, the* warning issued is of particular interest."[21]

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[16] *Anonymous.* "Victory: Peace: Justice: Our First Year in the Great War." *The North American Review*, Vol. 207, No. 749 (Apr., 1918), p. 485.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Phillips, 27.
[19] Ibid, 29.
[20] Gross, 89.
[21] *Pana (Illinois) Daily Palladium*, April 1, 1918.

After nearly a year of war, the German-Americans in the city of Pana were now forbidden to move freely.

Over the next several months, anti-German sentiment was expressed in a variety of ways throughout the community of Pana. The German-American citizens found their allegiance called into question, sometimes by members of their own families. They were subjected to being spied on. They were told to get out of the country, watched their language be eliminated from the schools, and saw their religion mocked. Finally, the German-American women were subjected to the same scrutiny as the men. The following newspaper articles highlight these stories:

ASK LEGISLATION AGAINST SPIES

More drastic legislation dealing with German spies was demanded this afternoon by Governors or their representatives of nearly every state in the union at a conference with members of the Council of National Defense.

It was of the general opinion vigorously expressed by all of the speakers that the government has been too lenient in dealing with the army of German spies believed to have invaded the United States and with "persons giving aid and comfort to the enemy."[22]

GERMAN ALIENS IN ILLIOIS

There are a total of 2,103 German alien enemies in the southern Federal district of Illinois, according to a report compiled by United States Marshal Vincent Y. Dallman.[23]

'SEND KAISER'S SUBJECTS BACK'

Robert A. Smith, the Pana manufacturing pharmacist, is anxious that Uncle Sam deport every German of Germans [sic] birth back to the land from whence he came.

Smith is up in arms about the recent Collinsville lynching of Robert T. Praege and claims that it was due to the failure of the United States Government to properly prosecute or interne or deport the Kaiser's subjects in this country.

The article quotes Smith as saying:

Shut off these Kaiserites so that they cannot boost for the Kaiser –the brute that is doing his damndest to cut our throats, and the Collinsville affair will not be repeated.

"Send them back to Germany. This is our country. Traitors beware!"[24]

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[22] *Pana (Illinois) Daily Palladium*, April 4, 1918.

[23] *Pana (Illinois) Daily Palladium*, April 5, 1918. Pana is listed as having 16 German alien enemies in its population at this time.

[24] *Pana (Illinois) Daily Palladium*, April 8, 1918.

MAY TEACH FRENCH HERE

This year may be the last year that German will be taught in the Pana Township High School, according to a member of the school board. It is thought that next year French may be substituted in place of the "schonste langgevitch."

Action is being taken by many school boards throughout the state in eliminating German from the schools. At present there are about thirty-five students in the Pana Township High School studying German. German has been taught in the local high school for the past five years.[25]

ZUM TEUFEL MIT DEUTSCH

As a study in the Pana Township High School, German has ended. That is the decision that the Pana Township High School Board has reached. The action is in common with measures taken by school boards throughout the country.[26]

SAYS HUSBAND IS PRO-GERMAN

Because he is unpatriotic and made pro-German statements and would not allow her to buy a Liberty Bond, Mrs. Florence Wiegle of this city has filed suit in the city court for a divorce from her husband, Emil Wiegle.

"During the present war," her bill reads, "he has made numerous unpatriotic statements concerning the government of the United States and in favor of its enemies; that he refused to buy Liberty Bonds, and when she urged him to do so, he struck and beat her and used vile and approbrious epithets, both as to herself and the government of the United States."

Wiegle is an Austrian by birth and is a miner at Springside. Mr. and Mrs. Wielge were married February 13, 1911.[27]

ALIEN ENEMY FEMALES REGISTER JUNE 17-26

All German alien enemy females, fourteen years old or older, must register between 6 a.m., June 17th and 8 p.m. June 26th, Sunday excepted.

All alien enemy females in Pana must register with the Chief of Police on the above dates. Those residing outside of the co-operate limits of the city of Pana Must register with the Postmaster in this city.

Persons eligible to this registration should be sufficiently forewarned, for failure on your part to register is punishable by severe penalties including interment for the duration of the war. Austrian females do Not have to register.[28]

Poems and songs like this one appeared regularly:

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[25] Ibid.

[26] *Pana (Illinois) Daily Palladium*, May 6, 1918.

[27] *Pana (Illinois) Daily Palladium*, May 21, 1918.

[28] *Pana (Illinois) Daily Palladium*, June 12, 1918. This notice was first made on April 28, and again on June 10, prior to this article.

GOD AND GOTT
By Wilbur D. Nesbit

Who soothes the sighs of sorrow
And heals the hurts of pain?
Who gives us for the morrow
The songs we sing again?
Who taught us love for others?
Who guards us as we roam?
Who links our hands as brothers
And sanctifies the home?

Who girds our souls with sureness
That we may cast out fear?
Who blesses woman's pureness
And bids us hold it dear?
Oh, whispered in our praying
From cradle to the sod
Our name our faith displaying
The hallowed name of God!

Who teaches torture's terror
And laughs at lies and loot?
Who holds no faith is fairer
Than one to shame a brute?
To whom are women shrieking
And sobs of children maimed
As sweet as some one speaking
Of those both loved and tamed?

Who spurns the ill and lowly
That falter at his gate?
Who holds supremely holy
The hoarsest curse of hate?
Oh, bestial, hellish being
On God's great name a blot!
Unthinking and unseeing
The Prussians call it Gott! [29]

In an article that called for all Americans to fight against German Propaganda, German-Americans were presented with this profile of themselves:

> The German, generally speaking, is a sort of cut-and-dried fellow. He is a man of precedents, and not big on taking the initiative. He is a most thorough developer of somebody else's ideas; but, save for subterfuges, excuses, "diplomatic" trickery, and

[29] *Pana (Illinois) Daily Palladium*, June 24, 1918.

> underhand and shameless methods of waging war, he is not much of an inventor….[30]

The article goes on to discuss Germany's vast "secret army," an army of propagandists and spies, and its plans to use this army to conquer America. It calls on the readers, the citizens of Pana, to do their part to fight this menace. It asks that they report "anything that looks like German work" immediately to the authorities.

The plea for vigilance became a formal request nearly two months later, when Warren Penwell and J. W. Preihs of Pana, were appointed as Chief and Assistant Chief of the Christian County Division of the American Protective League. The League is described as a volunteer, patriotic association, organized under the supervision of the Department of Justice. The League enlisted local representatives to be on the lookout for subversives and to listen for evidence of sedition. As Gross points out, "Patriots sold liberty bonds, put together Red Cross drives, and organized parades and demonstrations. They also looked out for violations of the commission's liquor laws and sniffed out hoarders, slackers, and draft evaders."[31] Its members are said to be men of "unquestionable loyalty" who are required to take an oath of allegiance. The League is reported to have proved itself effective at detecting and preventing acts of sedition and disloyalty. Its work is described as covering all violations of Federal Laws, but being principally devoted to investigations under the Espionage and Alien Enemy Proclamations, the Selective Service Act, the National Red Cross Act, as well as investigations under the Food and Fuel Administration Regulations, desecration of the Flag and other, "general" matters of National Protection and Defense. They were, in short, "the state government's eyes and ears."[32] The article ends with the formal request to the citizens of Pana, asking that all "loyal citizens . . . if they know of any violation of the above laws, to report same to the above named parties for investigation."[33]

Some of the citizens of Pana drawn to the League demanded total loyalty and 100 percent Aericanism. This helped to promote, as Gross points out, "a spirit of vigilantism."[34] This spirit of vigilantism reached its peak in Pana in July, 1918, when the Knobs German Evangelical Church was vandalized. The article appeared as follows:

KNOBS GERMAN EVANGELICAL CHURCH IS VANDALIZED

> Unknown vandals desecrated the Knobs German Evangelical church building and property sometime Sunday night in a most shameful manner. The party or parties, evidently inflamed with a false idea of patriotism and instilled with pure and malignant enmity towards the good German people of the Knobs German settlement, wrought despoliation to the house of God with unstinted hand.
>
> The entire church building was given a coat of yellow paint from the ground up to the height of a man's head, and as high up as the vandals could reach, while on each door of the beautiful church building was labled the skull and cross bones with the words "Warning, use no more German lingo."
>
> The sidewalks of the church were labeled with the skull and cross bones and similar lettering, and other very shameful damage was wrought.
>
> Why any one should thus desecrate the Knobs church building is beyond the conception of any of the membership of the citizenship of that and this vicinity. The

[30] "Secret Army Is Greatest Menace." *Pana (Illinois) Daily Palladium*, April 12, 1918.
[31] Gross, 90.
[32] Ibid, 91.
[33] "Two Pana Men Head League." *Pana (Illinois) Daily Palladium*, June 6, 1918.
[34] Gross, 90.

> good German people of that congregation, of which Rev. Carl Mueller is the faithful and loyal partner, is more than any one acquainted with all the conditions and sentiments of the people of Knobs settlement.[35]

This article shows that not all residents of Pana were swept up in the anti-German sentiment. Indeed, many residents continued their relationships with their German-American neighbors, no doubt owing to the half-century of living – and intermarrying – side by side. Adding to this was the fact that many German-American residents had willingly signed up for the draft, and some had already gone off to Europe to fight against their former homeland in support of American ideas of freedom. Some did patriotic work back home in Pana as well, sometimes putting themselves at odds with their fellow immigrants.

The following article discusses one German-American minister's contribution:

KANZLER DOES THE GOOD WORK

> Rev. W. A. Kanzler, until two months ago, pastor of the German Lutheran church here, was in Pana Tuesday visiting his family and on his way to Paxton, in Ford County, where he is to do loyalty work during the latter part of this week. Rev. Kanzler is working under the neighborhood committee of the State Council of Defense.
>
> Mr. Kanzler secured his present position through the efforts of friends, after he had resigned his pastorate here because of attacks made by members of his congregation because he was solidly behind the president and the war. His entire time is devoted to organizing the Germans in Illinois into loyalty forces. He has been traveling thru the state addressing gatherings in the German language and preparing meetings for Karl Mathis, secretary of the Friends of German Democracy, who is assisting Mr. Kanzler in the work.
>
> In the past Rev. Kanzler has been making addresses at public buildings, but from now on he will address German congregations the majority of the time. After his work the latter part of this week in Paxton, he will go to Chicago, where he is scheduled to make several addresses at German churches. Next week he will go to Bensenville to do organization work.

The article concludes with a clipping from the Chicago Journal of March 15, explaining:

> Dissatisfaction is greatest among German Americans where they are physically isolated. This is the case with farmers and dwellers in German communities in small towns. They will not attend English meetings, but are easily won over to the American cause when addressed by fellow German Americans. The draft law is reported as being most effective in converting German sympathizers, especially where they have relatives and friends who have been taken into the army.[36]

Pana after World War I

The German-American population in Pana, showed themselves to be, at least to the majority of the other citizens, loyal Americans. They lived out the remainder of the war relatively

[35] *Pana (Illinois) Daily Palladium*, July 22, 1918.
[36] *Pana (Illinois) Daily Palladium*, April 3, 1918.

peacefully. A little over a month after the war ended, the government lifted the restrictions on German-Americans. The Pana newspaper related the story in this manner:
BAN AGAINST ENEMY ALIENS IS LIFTED

> All the restrictions against enemy aliens entering the barred zones throughout the country and regulating their presence in certain prohibited districts were today lifted, effective on Christmas Day, it was announced at the Department of Justice today.
>
> The order was issued at the recommendation of the Attorney General and was approved by President Wilson by wireless.
>
> The restrictions against the enemy aliens were promulgated to safeguard the war resources of the country from sabotage and barred enemy aliens in the District of Columbia, all water front areas, munition zones and other places.[37]

With the end of the war, the citizens of Pana, German and non-German alike, went back to daily life much as was experienced before the war. The German-Americans settled back fully into the community that they had for so long called home. In all, 426 young men of Pana answered the call of duty. Ten of these brave men never returned, giving the ultimate sacrifice to their country. In honor of those who served, a monument was erected in Kitchell Park. A fund drive for this was put on, sponsored by the Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic. Phillips notes that Mrs. J. W. Kitchell and Mrs. Lindsay Reese collected the funds.[38] The inscription on the monument erected in Kitchell Park for the men who served during World War I reads: "In honor of those who gave much more and in memory of those who gave all in the Great World War conflict." Those killed from Pana in the Great War were: Forrest Goffinet, Homer Mize (first Pana overseas fatality), Herman Bruns, Michael Serockey, John McDonald, Bernard T. Beyers, Arthur O. Turner, Joseph Kowlowsky, John Meri Kerr (first Pana man killed Stateside), and Edward Virden.[39]

Pana, Illinois displayed the problems that many towns throughout America were forced to deal with as German-Americans were faced with the challenges of dual allegiances for their mother country and their home now in America. German-Americans were placed under large amounts of scrutiny as many Anglo-American citizens worried and wondered where loyalties laid. Limitations on citizenship rights of these German-Americans were put into place as well as measures of conformity to create a more American identity rather than a "hyphen" identity. Scare tactics were even used in order to push American loyalties and conformity. Pana, Illinois is one such study of German-American relations, during World War One, as many citizens throughout the country questioned the loyalties of its "alien" neighbors. It can be seen through the actions of this town that a war of sorts was brought over to the home front as citizens rallied against citizens of the enemy in America.

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[37] *Pana (Illinois) Daily Palladium*, December 23, 1918.
[38] Phillips, 15.
[39] Ibid, 50.

"Ma Bell," the Signal Corps and the Great War

Laura Mondt

World War I was known for major technological advances in modern weapons. Weaponry was not the only technology that was crucial to the fighting, however. New advances in technology for communications played an important role in allowing the battalions to relay messages in an efficient and reliable manner. Once the trenches were dug and the soldiers settled down for a long battle, devising ways to communicate up and down the trench lines was vital to coordinating attacks. Telephone and telegraph lines needed to be erected so that military headquarters could communicate with those on the front.

My great-grandfather, Fred Frank Mondt, was one of those men responsible for laying the lines. Before the war began, he had been a lineman with the Chicago Telephone Company, which was a local branch of the Bell Telephone Company. Due to America's quick entry into the war, men already trained in telephone and telegraph installation and service were critical to ensuring that American troops would have access to reliable communication technologies during the war. This paper will explain how the Bell Telephone Company became involved in the war service and follow the movements of Mondt's unit over an eighteen month period as the men progressed from the training camp to the countryside of France. Most of the information comes from articles and letters published in issues of *Bell Telephone News*, which was a company magazine issued monthly by the Bell Telephone Company.

Bell Telephone Company History

The National Bell Telephone Company was created on February 17, 1879 by merging Bell with the New England Telephone Company.[1] Theodore N. Vail, the new company's general manager, had a vision to take the company to a national level and was vital in the incorporation of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company (AT&T) on February 28, 1885. From the main AT&T companies, twenty-one operating companies branched out to provide direct service to customers in distinct geographic regions.[2] The company took a big leap forward in 1908 when it set out to become a monopoly. Many small telephone companies were absorbed into the Bell branch system.[3]

The original Bell Telephone Company of Illinois was founded in 1878 and three years later became part of the Chicago Telephone Company, which was part of the Bell network of the American Telephone & Telegraph Company. By 1905, the Chicago Telephone Company was operating 100,000 telephones in the city. A 1912 additional of a second building gave Chicago Telephone Company the distinction of having the largest telephone company building in the world.[4]

War Recruitment

The men of the Chicago Telephone Company were recruited to serve in a branch of the United States Army called the Signal Reserve Corps. The U.S. Signal Corps was a small group, comprising less than 4% of the total Army population. As of April 6, 1917, the Signal Corps

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[1] George P. Oslin, *The Story of Telecommunications*, (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1992), 228.
[2] Ibid., 231.
[3] Ibid., 259.
[4] "Central Engineering Department," *Bell Telephone News*, June 1916, 3.

only had fifty-five officers and 1,570 men, which were not nearly enough men for active war service in Europe. As it became apparent that the United States would be entering the war, the Signal Corps needed to find an efficient way to get a large amount of men trained in the shortest time possible. The most obvious solution was to recruit men who were already trained in the telephone, telegraph and electrical industries.[5] The United States learned from Britain's mistake of sending skilled men to the trenches. The U.S. Army would avoid this by interviewing the men who were joining the service to determine if they had any special skills or prior training that could be of use behind the trench lines.[6]

In order to expedite this process, the Chief Signal Officer met with Theodore N. Vail and John J. Carty of AT&T and Newcomb Carleton of Western Union Telegraph Company to discuss how to get men already trained in telephone and telegraph equipment operation and maintenance into the war. Preparations had to be made in the event of war so that trained men could be recruited without crippling the telephone and telegraph service in the United States.[7] Men working for telephone and telegraph companies were exempted from the draft due to the critical nature of maintaining the nation's communications infrastructure so only a select number of men could be sent abroad.[8] The Bell men who voluntarily joined the service went almost exclusively into the Signal Reserve Corps. The S.R.C. Telegraph Battalions were "charged with the duty of providing the semi-permanent telephone or telegraph systems from brigade or division headquarters to higher headquarters, or to the base of operations."[9] A term of enlistment in the Signal Reserve Corps was four years. In peacetime, the men would be expected to perform fifteen days of training each summer, for which Bell would grant them leave.[10]

Once war was officially declared, five of the leading engineers and executives from the largest telephone and telegraph companies across the United States were commissioned by the Signal Corps. Their task was to select trained company personnel that could be sent abroad immediately to start communications work while the army trained new men in the United States. Commissioned men included John J. Carty, Chief Engineer of AT&T, Frank B. Jewett, Chief Engineer of Western Electric Company, Charles P. Bruch, Vice-President of the Postal Telegraph Company, G. M. Yorke, Vice-President of the Western Union Telegraph Company and Dr. Robert A. Millikan, Professor of Physics at Chicago University. Due to their quick work, the Army was able to organize twelve battalions of telephone and telegraph men to send to Europe within the first few months of the U.S. involvement in the war.[11]

While training schools prepared men to use specialized equipment, research schools were set up to develop and improve existing technologies for the war environment. Col. Robert A. Millikan led the Science and Research Division of the Signal Corps. Recruits who were studying at the university level in fields such as electricity, chemistry and mechanics were sent to research labs both in the U.S. and Europe to improve signaling methods.[12]

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[5] Joseph M. Smith, *History of the 412th Battalion, U. S. Signal Corps: A Story of the Valiant Telephone and Telegraph Unit which was Recruited from the Southwestern Bell Telephone Company*, (St. Louis: Southwestern Bell Telephone Co., 1930), 3.
[6] W. V. Bingham, "Army Always on Lookout for Specialists," *New York Times*, April 14, 1918, Accessed April 4, 2011, http://proquest.umi.com.
[7] Smith, *412th Battalion*, 3.
[8] "Signal Corps Organization Completed," *Bell Telephone News*, July 1917, 21.
[9] "Facts About the Signal Corps," *Bell Telephone News*, May 1917, 13.
[10] "Facts About the Signal Corps," 14.
[11] Smith, *412th Battalion*, 4.
[12] Ibid., 6.

As the initial troops were deployed, training schools were set up to prepare more men for the service. The technical schools that were developed during this time focused on training men on the various types of electrical communications equipment that were to be used in war. The Army needed men that had specialized training. Such training included, but was not limited to, telephone and telegraph engineers, traffic and plant experts, optical experts, linemen, switchboard repairmen, and operators that spoke foreign languages including French, English, and German.[13] The training schools were set up as a combination of Army training and thirteen weeks of technical training. There were five training camps: Camp S.F.B. Morse in Massachusetts, Fort Leavenworth in Kansas, Camp Alfred Vail in New Jersey, and Franklin Cantonment and College Park both in Maryland.

Company E, 11th Telegraph Battalion

My great-grandfather was originally commissioned to Company E of the Eleventh Telegraph Battalion. By August 1917, the 11th Telegraph Battalion was fully recruited and composed entirely of Bell employees from the Central Group, which was based in the Midwest. The war department approved of all the men and appointed officers.[14] The formation of the battalion marked the culmination of the war plan that had been developed in the spring. The plan called on the Central Group of the Bell Company to contribute two companies (which were D and E) to the U.S. Signal Corps.[15] Lieutenant Colonel L. D. Wildman, department signal officer of the Central Department of the War Department of the United States, sent a letter of thanks to W. R. McGovern, who was the chief engineer of the Central Group of the Bell Telephone Company. The letter shows the sense of appreciation the War Department felt for the service Bell was providing. It reads, "I feel that personal thanks would be out of place, as we have all been doing simply our patriotic duty; that they have been prompted by the desire to do everything possible to assist the Government.[16]

Company E was initially composed entirely of men from the Chicago Telephone Company, with the exception of the two lieutenants. As the men prepared to ship out, they still lacked a major, but it was expected that someone already established in the Signal Corps would take that role.[17] The Captain of the Eleventh was Virgil E. Code. The two first lieutenants were Walter E. Cole and Frank M. Litter, the sergeant was Lorenz J. Hausheer and the corporals were William W. Fry and Stuart G. McIntosh.[18] Pvt. Mondt was one of 97 privates.[19]

On August 20, 1917, Company E mobilized. For a period of two days, the men of Company E reported to the Municipal Pier in Chicago to be equipped. The men had their first battalion bonding experience, spending two nights together in the makeshift camp at the pier. On August 22, the men of the 11th Telegraph Battalion marched through downtown Chicago amid cheers to the Baltimore and Ohio train station, leaving the Municipal Pier to head east. According to *Bell Telephone News*, "they found a large crowd of friends and relatives to bid them good-bye and wish them a safe and speedy return."[20] Additionally, a number of Chicago telephone officials were present. Chief Engineer W. R. McGovern returned from a vacation early to send off the battalion that he had been instrumental in organizing.[21]

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[13] Smith, *412th Battalion*, 4-6.
[14] "Eleventh Battalion Organized," *Bell Telephone News*, August 1917, 14.
[15] "Eleventh Telegraph Battalion Enters Training for Active Service," *Bell Telephone News*, September 1917, 13.
[16] "Eleventh Telegraph Battalion Enters Training," 14.
[17] "Eleventh Battalion Organized," 14.
[18] Ibid., 15.
[19] A complete list of the privates is available in Appendix I.
[20] "Eleventh Telegraph Battalion Enters Training," 13.
[21] Ibid., 13.

Along the way, the train picked up an additional forty-seven men from Detroit and forty-six men from Cleveland to add to the original battalion. The now expanded battalion arrived at Camp Alfred Vail in Monmouth Park, New Jersey. The 11th battalion was joined by many other battalions composed of men from the eastern branches of the Bell Telephone Company. The men were to remain at the camp to train until being called for active duty in northern France.[22]

Life at Camp Alfred Vail

Camp Alfred Vail was the official training camp of the Eastern Division of the Signal Corps. Previously known as Camp Little Silver, it was renamed after Alfred Vail, who built steam propulsion engines that fostered intercontinental communications. Vail, who was also the uncle of AT&T President Theodore N. Vail, was an associate of S. F. B. Morse, who is well known for his invention of the electromagnetic telegraph.[23]

When Company E of the 11th Telegraph Battalion arrived at Camp Alfred Vail, they were under the command of Major Russell. Major Russell was a consulting engineer from Boston who had been assigned to lead the 11th by the War Department. Life in Camp Alfred Vail was described by Sergeant E. N. Thilmont, who was the Company E correspondent to the *Bell Telephone News*. In a letter dated September 29, 1917, Thilmont describes what life had been like for the men of Company E in the month that they had been in camp. The men had received all of the equipment and were lacking in nothing for their health and comfort. The Rumson Road Club, a ladies' group, had provided them with comfort kits and sweaters.[24]

Camp life involved more than training. The men regularly went for long hikes, many of which took them past some interesting sites. On September 6th, the hike ended near the Pullman summer home near Asbury, New Jersey. Upon arrival, the men received coffee, cookies and Pall Mall cigarettes. On the return hike to camp, the men went past President Wilson's summer home, 'Shadow Lawn.' Another hike on the 13th resulted in their first overnight experience, which involved pitching dog tents.[25]

Thilmont reported that the Company E boys, under the direction of Sergeant Phil Stockhausen, defeated Company D thirty-two to six in a football game. During the game, the battalion jazz band escorted the players to and from the field and played during breaks in the action. The football game and band entertained a crowd of 1,000 spectators. Thilmont ended his letter by reflecting on the spirit of the men, saying, "In conclusion, you can be sure of one thing from us boys, and that is that we are going to do our duty and do it manfully in a manner characteristic of Bell Telephone men."[26]

The Camp Vail football games were big news and the *Bell Telephone News* kept those at home well informed of the results of important games. In the November 1917 issue, an entire column detailed a recent game between Company E of the 11th Telegraph Battalion and Company D of the Second Field Battalion. Company E "fought tooth and nail" to achieve a six to nothing victory over Company D.[27] Despite the imminent war, participating in recreational activities was still important. Reporting on the games gave friends and relatives insight into what their loved ones were experiencing at camp.

Life at Camp Alfred Vail was not all about scenic hikes and football games, however. John Robertson, also of Company E, 11th Telegraph Battalion, wrote in a September 11, 1917 letter

[22] "Eleventh Telegraph Battalion Enters Training," 13.
[23] "Camp Alfred Vail," *Bell Telephone News*, December 1917, 17.
[24] Elmer H. Thilmont, "Another Letter from Company E," October 1917, 16.
[25] Thilmont, "Letter," 16.
[26] Ibid., 17.
[27] "Exciting Gridiron Battle at Camp Vail," *Bell Telephone News*, November 1917, 10.

to his former coworkers, who submitted the letter to the *Bell Telephone News*, that there was always plenty of work to be done in camp. He gives a very descriptive account of the daily routine, which was as follows:

> We are up in the morning at 5:15 and have setting-up exercises until 5:45, breakfast at 6, assemble for drill at 6:45, drill until 8:30; one-half hour rest; drill until 10:30, and a fifteen-minute rest, and then another drill until 11:30. Off for the rest of the morning. Mess at noon. The afternoon is taken up with construction work of telephone and telegraph lines.[28]

Robertson reported that while the work was interesting, it was also very demanding because they were being taught a six-month course in a three-week time frame. Men had to learn basic Army lessons such personal hygiene, first aid, camp sanitation and general orders for guards. Additionally, the men learned various signals using flags and mirrors as well as telegraph code. The Signal Corps men practiced using convoys of trucks and motorcycles to lay up to twenty miles of wire a day.[29]

One thing that John Robertson missed from back home was sleep. He said, "Uncle Sam's day consists of twenty-four hours if he needs you."[30] Robertson reported that he knew that once training was complete things would only get worse as expectations of their abilities were raised. He also could tell from the amount of equipment arriving daily that it would only be a matter of time before the men left Camp Alfred Vail to serve their country in France.[31]

Off to France

On September 21, 1917, prominent leaders of the Central Group of the Bell Telephone Company visited Camp Alfred Vail, including Central Group President B. E. Sunny, Vice President H. F. Hill, Chief Engineer W. R. McGovern, General Manager W. R. Abbott of the Chicago Telephone Company, General Manager Allard Smith of the Cleveland Telephone Company and General Manager George M. Welch of the Michigan State Telephone Company. Once the group arrived, they were accompanied around the camp by Major Russell, the commander of the 11th Telegraph Battalion.[32] The telephone company officials were able to get a sense of the training that the men were receiving and admired the fact that camp was being run in an efficient manner.

Throughout the visit, the closeness that the officials felt to their former employees was evident. They saw the enlisted men as "their Signal Corps" due to the fact that all of the men were Bell employees. An article in the *Bell Telephone News* reported on the event and noted in several places that the officials were there in part to make sure that the men were well cared for. The officials were able to watch the men do their drill and they were extremely impressed in the transformation they saw in the men "who but a few short weeks ago were accountants, clerks, linemen, engineers, etc., engaged in the business of rendering telephone service, but now engaged in the serious business of war."[33]

The telephone officials were also there to offer inspiring words to the men who were about to ship off to France. President Sunny presented a speech in which he congratulated the

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[28] John Robertson, "Plenty of Work for the Signal Corps," October 1917, 17.
[29] Robertson, "Plenty of Work," 17.
[30] Ibid., 17.
[31] Ibid., 19.
[32] "Central Group Officers Bid Goodbye to Boys of Eleventh Battalion," *Bell Telephone News*, October 1917, 14.
[33] "Central Group Officers Bid Goodbye," 14.

men on their achievements in camp and hoped that they would use the energy and dedication they put into their work for Bell into the war effort. Mr. McGovern wished the men well, saying:

> I know that in the great field before you will give as good an account of yourselves as you have in the past in our business, for I see today that in selecting you from many volunteers we have made no mistake. In saying good-bye to you for the short time you will be away from us, I can voice my sentiments no better than to say, GOD SPEED you to a safe return.[34]

Sergeant Thilmont mentioned the visit from the company officials in his September 29th letter. He noted that the visit went well and that the speeches from the officials were impressive. For Thilmont and the men, though, the most exciting part of the visit was learning that President Sunny had donated $1,000 towards the company fund, which caused the men to shout his name all over camp. President Sunny's sentiments towards his men were clearly more than just words.[35]

Further evidence of the company's commitment to its men can be seen in its policy towards the families of those in the Signal Corps. While those who joined the service were entitled to benefits for their family members from the government, the company acknowledged that these benefits were often not enough. In a letter published in the August 1917 *Bell Telephone News*, President B. E. Sunny wrote that the Employes' (sic) Benefit Fund Committee was "authorized to make allowances to dependents of such employes (sic) in such amounts and for such periods as it may determine…."[36] Bell would continue to take care of its employees' families despite the fact that they were no longer on the company payroll.

Life "Over There"

Company E, 11th Telegraph Battalion left Camp Alfred Vail on October 17, 1918 and boarded the U.S. Transport *Covington* the next day.[37] Private Mondt's discharge papers show that he went with the 11th Telegraph Battalion to France on October 18, 1917.[38] The ship arrived at St. Nazaire, France on November 1, 1918.[39] A letter to Mr. Irwin, the *Bell Telephone News* editor, from Sergeant Thilmont dated November 5, 1917 relates the battalion's journey overseas. Thilmont wrote that the trip was relatively pleasant but a few men fell seasick. While Thilmont was obviously unable to detail much about where the men had been since their arrival in France, he did mention the difference in telephone lines. In France, the lines in some places were not attached to poles like in the United States but strung over the tops of buildings.[40] Besides getting used to their new surroundings, the men of the 11th had to get used to a new identification. After their arrival in France, they became Company E of the 409th Telegraph Battalion and gained a new captain, Forrest E. Brooks. While research did not reveal the exact date of the switch, a letter from Sergeant Thilmont dated January 13, 1918 reflected the change.[41]

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[34] Ibid., 15.
[35] Thilmont, "Letter," 16.
[36] B. E. Sunny, "War Service Dependents," *Bell Telephone News*, August 1917, 12.
[37] "They Left Their Imprint on the Map of Europe," *Bell Telephone News*, June 1919, 20.
[38] Fred F. Mondt, U.S. Army Service Record, 1919.
[39] "Their Left Their Imprint," 20.
[40] Elmer H. Thilmont, "Signal Corps Men in France," *Bell Telephone News*, December 1917, 19.
[41] Elmer H. Thilmont, "A Line from Sergeant Thilmont," *Bell Telephone News*, March 1918, 12.

Subsequent letters written to the *Bell Telephone News* reflect the amount of change that the men experienced once in France. First Lieutenant Fred Norwood noted in a letter dated January 1, 1918 that the men were slowly coming around to living the lifestyle of a soldier. One major change was their level of hygiene. The men wore the same clothes every day and seldom had clean clothes to change into. Norwood also mentioned the fact that the troops had learned to economize and make do with what they had.[42] On March 18, 1918, Sergeant Thilmont wrote that despite their busy schedule, the men still found time to have some entertainment. When not on duty, the most popular way to stave off boredom was to read letters from home as well as the European editions of American newspapers such as the *Chicago Tribune* and *New York Times*.[43]

One change that was most difficult to get used to was that of a shortage of supplies. Thilmont's March 18 letter thanked former co-workers for sending packages containing cigarettes. On April 16, 1918, Lieutenant Charles F. Moran said that while cigarette prices were slightly lower in France, the men were only allowed to buy two packages at a time. Moran hoped that those back home would be able to help out with the shortage by sending packages of cigarettes overseas. Moran described other shortages as well, such as "shaving cream, tooth powder and paste, talcum powder, toilet soap and shoe paste (red)."[44] Moran also wanted those back home to send more reading material. While the letters and newspapers that Thilmont mentioned in his letters were available, Moran said that the men would also like magazines and fiction books to help pass the time. The men also missed reading *Bell Telephone News* and requested extra copies.

Lieutenant Norwood described the relationship between the soldiers and the French countryside residents as good. He said that they were well cared for and the French were treating them well. Norwood lamented the fact that the French did not seem to share the same types of entertainment as the Americans. "They do not seem to have any games here that we can attend, not even a horse race, nor have we seen anyone in this town following the ponies."[45] The American soldiers had to find or make their own entertainment, which was why reading was popular.

409th on the Move

Around June 1918, the American soldiers who were behind the front lines were given permission to write about the various towns and places where they were located. Prior to this, letters home only described stopping in nameless towns or regions. On June 9, 1918, Thilmont revealed that after finishing the installation of 100 miles of line in Cote d'Ore, the battalion moved to Anton Saone-et-Loire. By this point in the war, only forty of the original 100 members of Company E remained, the rest being sent to various places around France to perform maintenance work. On June 1, Company E had set out to construct more telephone line circuits. After three days of travel, the company was in the valley of the Loire, which was near Tours. Once there, the men set up tents and explored their new surroundings. When not at work, the men went into Tours to ride the street car or visit the local Y.M.C.A.[46]

Some of the locations where soldiers were stationed remained unknown until after the war. Letters from soldiers in June 1918 revealed many of these locations. The June 1919 issue of the *Bell Telephone News* helps to fill in some of the gaps and explained what the men of

[42] Thilmont, "A Line from Sergeant Thilmont," 13.
[43] Elmer H. Thilmont, "With Our Signal Corps Boys in France," *Bell Telephone News*, May 1918, 16.
[44] Charles F. Moran, "Signal Corps Boys Thank Mr. Hill," *Bell Telephone News*, May 1918, 17.
[45] Thilmont, "A Line from Sergeant Thilmont," 13.
[46] Elmer H. Thilmont, "Sergeant Thilmont Writes from Tours," *Bell Telephone News*, July 1918, 15.

Company E experienced during their time in France. On November 9, the company arrived at Nevers and received "motor trucks, motorcycles, automobiles, tools and materials."[47] They began to work on a line that would connect St. Nazaire to the general headquarters located in Chaumont.

On December 15th, Company E was split in half, with one half of the men going to Longy, where the other half met up with them again right before New Year's Eve. Company E kept busy moving all over France to aid in the construction of telephone and telegraph lines: on February 3 the company was in Mersault and on April 20 the company was in Autun. On June 25, the company was split yet again, with half the men in Geivres and the other half in Nerondes by July 11.[48]

On October 8, 1918, the men of Company E were reunited and moved to the front lines to join the Second Army in battle. The men were assigned to the 28th Division, which was largely made up of men from Pennsylvania. The new division was stationed at Hamonville, which had been largely destroyed by bombings. The men spent their days laying lines and spent their nights in the ruins of the bombed houses. By the time the armistice was called, the men were in yet another location, Vevil.[49]

After the armistice, the entire 409th was assigned to the Fifth Army Corps to aid in the construction of lines for the occupation. A signal office was set up at Longwy, Lorraine with the men running lines to Luxembourg, Arlon, Belgium and Montemedy. On December 27, the battalion moved to Toul and by January 15, 1919 was headed to Mont de Vignoble. On March 24, the men arrived at Brest and remained until they sailed for home on April 5 on the *Plattsburg*.[50]

The 409th arrived in New York on April 14 and was sent to Camp Merritt, New Jersey. The men departed from New Jersey on April 23, at which time they were sent to camps close to their hometowns. The Chicago men of the 409th were discharged from Camp Grant, Illinois on April 28. Most of the men went back to work immediately and resumed their old jobs within the Bell system.[51]

While over 200 men went off to France as part of the 409th, only sixty-seven returned aboard the *Plattsburg*. Most of the rest were transferred to other Signal Corps units during their time in France. Pvt. Mondt was one such person. According to the *Chicago Tribune*, Mondt did not return home until May 8th, when his ship docked in New York.[52] Additionally, the 409th lost six men in France. Edward Caldwell Field died in an automobile accident and Charles E. Galavan, Robert Cline, Jr., Stephen M. O'Brien, Warden D. Miller and James M. West died from disease.[53]

Bell on the Home Front

The Bell employees that had joined the Signal Corps were far from the only members of the Bell family that were involved in the war effort. Besides providing updates from the various battalions filled with former Bell men, the *Bell Telephone News* encouraged participation from those still in the United States. As early as August 1917, the magazine was urging its

[47] "They Left Their Imprint," 20.
[48] Ibid., 20.
[49] Ibid., 20.
[50] Ibid., 20.
[51] "They Left Their Imprint," 18.
[52] "Chicago Troops Reach New York," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 9, 1919, Accessed April 4, 2011, http://proquest.umi.com.
[53] "They Left Their Imprint," 18.

subscribers to write to soldiers. A page long supplement went over the various rules for writing to those who were in service.[54]

Bell also urged its employees to support the war through Liberty Bond drives, an effort which was often depicted in the cover art of *Bell Telephone News*. The company offered to set up various payment plans so that employees could buy bonds directly out of their paychecks.[55] In order to encourage a high participation rate, it was noted that the money from the Liberty Bonds would go to fund officer training, the building of barracks, and the general maintenance of the training camps.[56]

About 4,600 Bell employees volunteered for the service by the time the September 1917 *Bell Telephone News* was published. Those 4,600 men were equivalent to ten percent of the total male employee population between the ages of twenty-one and thirty.[57] Men that did not join the Signal Corps still had an important role to play in the war, however. With the United States at war, maintaining and expanding the telephone and telegraph infrastructure of the nation was a critical task. During the course of the war, the number of telephone lines connecting to Washington, D.C. doubled. Lines were improved so that they could handle a higher volume of traffic so that any possible war emergencies could be handled efficiently. Bell employees were also partnered with the U.S. Army and Navy to complete inspections of their communication systems in training camps all across the nation.[58] In 1917 alone, Bell strung over two million miles of telephone wire throughout the country.[59]

Conclusion

Whether on the home front or in France, the Bell Telephone Company employees were very involved in the war effort. Modern warfare required highly specialized training in order to provide adequate communications. During the war, the *Bell Telephone News* became more than just a company magazine. It was a vital way to disseminate information about the company's involvement in the war effort as well as a place for soldiers to communicate with a large audience about their war experiences. Since no letters from my great-grandfather survive today, this source has been invaluable in tracing at least part of his troop movements during his time in France. Prior to this, my family has relied on second-hand stories from my grandfather telling about his father riding a motorcycle to relay messages during the war. While research failed to uncover how long Pvt. Mondt was with the 409th, no doubt he experienced many of the same events and problems such as those that Thilmont, Robertson and Moran recorded in their letters.

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[54] "Supplement," *Bell Telephone News*, August 1917.
[55] "Second Liberty Loan," *Bell Telephone News*, October 1917, 12.
[56] "Back America's Bullets with Liberty Bonds," *Bell Telephone News*, October 1917, 13.
[57] "War Activities of the Bell System," *Bell Telephone News*, September 1917, 9.
[58] "War Activities of the Bell System," 9.
[59] "$118,000,000 in Year for Wire Extension," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 12, 1918, Accessed April 4, 2011, http://proquest.umi.com.

"To See the Principles we're Fighting for Upheld:" Blue Island and the Great War

James Buckwalter

The First World War holds a peculiar position in America's modern historical memory. While many Europeans point to the years 1914-1918 as the formative years of modern history—indeed, many attribute these years as the beginning of modernity, or, the beginning of the twentieth century—most Americans look instead to the Second World War as the seminal event in modern history. To be sure, America's limited military involvement and distanced economic contributions, along with the formation of a post-war world where London still reigned over New York in economic and political world power, all but ensured that Americans would have to look elsewhere for their defining moment. Despite these historical circumstances, America did indeed impact the fate of the war (although not to the degree as some other belligerent nations) and, in turn, the war had a noteworthy impression on America. Blue Island, Illinois, situated just outside the southern border of Chicago, masterfully displayed both of these concepts: young men from Blue Island fought and died in France as part of America's notable campaigns and the war exhibited a profound effect on both the world-views of Blue Islanders as well as the vision they had for the future of their own locality.

Blue Island: a Short History

Blue Island gets its name from an ancient "island" situated within glacial Lake Chicago, the antecedent of today's Lake Michigan. When the glaciers receded, a bluff formed resembling an island. From afar, nineteenth-century American trailblazers caught a glimpse of blue wildflowers, which covered the bluff. Thus, the namesake "Blue Island" was born. Unlike many other localities on the American frontier, relations between natives of Blue Island (the Ottawa, Chippewa, and Potawatomi tribes) and Yankee newcomers resulted in little violence. In 1795, the Treaty of Greenville purchased the land where Chicago now stands from various bands of native Americans, including the Potawatomi and Ottawa—an event that sent relations between European Americans and Native Americans into deterioration. During the War of 1812, groups of Potawatomi Native Americans joined with the British cause and helped sack Fort Dearborn located in present-day Chicago. By the end of the conflict, however, most Native Americans achieved peace with the Americans, which came at the cost of accepting annuities from Chicago—an act that ultimately led to economic dependence. In the decade and a half following the war, Native Americans signed seven treaties relinquishing land to the Americans. In 1832, Potawatomi tribes rejected Black Hawk's invitation to attack American settlements in western Illinois and instead assisted the U.S. Army in the resulting Black Hawk War. Following this conflict, the remaining tribes were escorted west of the Mississippi.[1] Thus, by 1835, the ancient glacial ridge—to some, destined to become the next "city on a hill"—was covered with blue wildflowers, and little else.

Notwithstanding Blue Island's early history, most look to 1835, when Americans first considered a permanent settlement on the ancient ridge, as its inaugural year. The following year, Blue Island's first inn was established along the Vincennes Trail, one of the primary roads in the old American West. In the early years, the Vincennes Trail brought a trickling of Yankees who sought to create an agricultural community. The 1850s—a pivotal decade—altered the course of Blue Island's economic and social development considerably. The

[1] James R Grossman, Ann Durkin Keating, & Janice L Reiff, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 83.

simultaneous developments of industrialization and immigration brought Blue Island from a small, agricultural community of "transplanted Yankees" to a burgeoning immigrant town subsisting on wage labor in railroads and factories. In 1852, the Rock Island & Pacific Railroad came to Blue Island and has remained one of the bastions of the town's heritage to this day. Similarly, demand for wage labor at the Rock Island freight yards attracted German laborers while the remaining farmland attracted German farm hands.[2]

Much like the 1850s, the 1890s represented another crucial decade in the town's history. By this time, German immigrants had seized political and economic power from their Anglo-American predecessors. Moreover, the Knights of Labor attracted considerable support from Rock Island laborers and in 1893 the United Brick and Clay Workers Union was established. The following year, Eugene V. Debs sought support from Blue Island's railway workers during the Pullman Strike. A few of Blue Island's laborers rose to his call, derailing a train, toppling cars, and assaulting strikebreakers. As a result, the U.S. army was called in, imposing martial law.[3]

After the tumultuous 1890s, Blue Island emerged as a working class, immigrant town. In 1900, 7 out of every 10 of the 6,000 inhabitants were either foreign born or native with foreign parentage. Three decades later the ratio dropped to 5 out of every 10, and in 1960 the ratio plummeted to 3 out of 10. Similarly, the first two decades of the twentieth-century saw an influx of Italian, Polish, and Slovak immigrants that again forced Blue Island to reconsider its identity. These first two decades likewise represent the largest period of growth in Blue Island's history. Concurrently, Blue Island began to reassert its local autonomy, vehemently resisting annexation by Chicago in 1915.[4]

While over the course of the twentieth century fewer inhabitants hailed from outside the U.S., Blue Island's diversity managed to increase. In 1900, 99.9% of Blue Islanders were considered white, a figure which was cut nearly in half a century later. In fact, the influx of individuals from African-American or Hispanic origin followed a town culture in the early twentieth century that forbade their settlement (In 1917, Robbins, which included African-Americans excluded from Blue Island, was incorporated in the lands adjacent to Blue Island).[5]

Thus, the decades preceding the Great War were times of incredible change for Blue Island. Blue Islanders, having already witnessed the failure of their "agricultural community" in the second half of the nineteenth-century, were faced with yet another difficult question: what would the future of Blue Island look like? The years 1914-1918 would answer some of these questions of identity, but they would raise more. Therefore, while 1914 saw countless Europeans embarking on a quest for nationalism and autonomy over the fate of European society, Blue Islanders joined them, courageously fighting for their nation, their locality, and their identity.

Blue Island and the Great War: an Overview

Blue Island's service in the war, like many other American towns, began in April, 1917. Prior to this, as will be discussed later, Blue Island experienced only a detached interest in the European war. A month after Wilson implored Congress to declare war on Germany, Draft Board No. 7 was created, encompassing Blue Island and the surrounding localities. In total, the

[2] Ibid., 83.
[3] Ibid., 83.
[4] Ibid., 83, 1008-9.
[5] Ibid., pp. 83, 1008-9.

board registered 6,154 individuals, 588 of which were inducted into military service.[6] Along with drafting men for service, Blue Island undertook numerous initiatives aimed at supporting America's war effort, most notably the Liberty Loan drives. Furthermore, the women of Blue Island served "loyally and whole heartedly," in the Red Cross, which operated for a time in vacant rooms of the high school, as well as in various other aid societies, some of which included knitting clothes and preparing "comfort bags" for soldiers. Additionally, Blue Islanders "rounded up" forty-one "slackers" in October, 1917, and forced them to register for the draft.[7] Blue Island's two papers, the *Sun* and the *Standard*, were combined in October, 1918, in an effort to reduce paper waste and conserve materials for the war.[8] Moreover, in conjunction with a Presidential order given in November, 1917, Blue Island required all German aliens to register with the police chief—an effort which uncovered sixty-six aliens living within Blue Island and the surrounding rural districts.[9]

In total, thirteen Blue Islanders gave their lives in service of the United States during the course of the war: Raymond Eames, Stanley Fay, Ernest Fischer, Albert Hecht, Herman Klopp, Antonio Louis, George Ruff, Walter Schoenenberger, Frank Steffes, Charles Weimar, Leo Wolshon, Homer Woods, and Walter Wykoff.[10] The divergent nature of their contributions, however, speaks to the myriad roles in which Blue Islanders played during the war.

Raymond Eames, arguably the most well-known Blue Island soldier, was a "profitable and promising" businessman in April, 1917.[11] In a display of patriotic sacrifice, Eames left his business to enlist in the U.S. Marine Corps on June 17, 1917 and by August was training at Quantico. In February of the following year, he landed at St. Nazaire in France. From March 17th to May 12th, Eames trained in the trenches of the Verdun sector before going into battle at Chateau-Thierry. On May 10th, reflecting on his training in the Verdun sector and the prospect of soon experiencing battle, Eames declared, "My ambition is to come through whole and with honor (I don't care for glory), to see the principles we're fighting for upheld."[12] On June 6th, Eames got his first chance to defend those principles and plunged into no man's land at Chateau-Thierry, eventually making it to the town of Bourches, where he continued to fight for six days until his next assignment at Belleau Wood on the 13th. The Germans, acknowledging the importance of Bellau Wood, "severely shelled and gassed" the Americans, hitting the 96th company of the 6th regiment especially hard.[13] During the course of these attacks, Eames was burned by mustard gas and died on June 29th.

On November 8, 1918, Blue Islanders read of another casualty: Herman Klopp. Klopp, a private first class, was killed by a shell on Hill 281, Bethancourt on Forges Creek in France. As the *Sun-Standard* notes, it is uncertain whether he was killed while participating in an assault or by supplying his "comrades;" either way, however, his death brought honor to Blue Island.[14] Likewise, Antonio Louis was another battle casualty. A Sergeant in the 47th infantry, Louis participated in the attempt to drive back the Germans at the Aisne-Marne salient near the

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[6] John H Volp, *The First Hundred Years, 1835-1935: Historical Review of Blue Island, Illinois* (Salem: Higginson Book Co., 1998), p. 321.
[7] Ibid., 323, 329.
[8] H. A. A. Jebsen, Jr., "Blue Island, Illinois: History of a Working Class Suburb," Ph.D. diss., University of Cincinnati, 1971, 70.
[9] *Blue Island Sun*, January 18, 1918, 1; Volp, *First Hundred Years*, 322.
[10] Volp, *First Hundred Years*, 328.
[11] *Blue Island Sun*, July 19, 1918, 1.
[12] *Blue Island Sun*, July 19, 1918, 4.
[13] American Battle Monuments Commission, *American Armies and Battlefields in Europe: a History, Guide, and Reference Book* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Print Office, 1938), p. 49; Volp, *First Hundred Years*, 328.
[14] *American Armies and Battlefields in Europe*, p. 197; *Blue Island Sun-Standard*, November 8, 1918, 1.

Vesle River. After capturing the small town of Fismes on August 4th, the 4th division repeatedly made unsuccessful attempts to cross the Vesle on August 6th-9th. On the final day of American attempts to cross the river, Louis died.[15] Charles L Weimar, too, died in France; however, the nature of his death is unknown.[16] Louis D Holmes, corporal of the 149th field artillery, survived his duration of service and received the Legion of Honor, the highest honor given to heroes by the French, on July 16, 1923.[17]

Numerous other Blue Islanders died in service to their country before reaching France. Private Arthur Harker died in December, 1917 in Ford Casey, Washington. Although Harker lived in Washington at the time of his enlistment, his parents were "formerly well-known and popular among Blue Island's younger set." Adding to his popularity in Blue Island, Harker was reportedly only fourteen years old when he enlisted. He was accepted by the military because of his "manly appearance." [18] Another Blue Island legend, Frank Steffes, was killed by a military prisoner in Hachita, New Mexico in February, 1918. Steffes was ordered to guard over two prisoners who were assigned to clean up the camp. Once they reached a safe distance, one of the prisoners, Fred Vogle, drew a revolver and ordered Steffes to place his hands in the air. Steffes refused to comply, instead lunging at the prisoner. In the ensuing skirmish, Steffes was shot in the knee and then fatally in the heart.[19] Additional Blue Island servicemen died in camp, mostly of pneumonia or influenza.

As we have seen, Blue Islanders served their country in a myriad of ways. Some chose—or were chosen for—military service. Of these men, 3 died in battle, while the remaining 10 died at camp, mostly of Spanish influenza, which ravaged young men and women worldwide during the final year of the war. In addition to these servicemen, men and women in Blue Island donated to the Liberty Loan drives and other campaigns to support the war effort—efforts which will be discussed in more detail later. From this picture, it is easy to overlook the fact that Blue Island in 1917 faced myriad issues, each possessing implications for the future of the town. Moreover, its inhabitants fought, as Raymond Eames reminds us, "to see the principles we're fighting for upheld."[20]

Political Identity

In 1915, the "giant that loomed over Blue Island's horizon"[21] was not war in Europe, but war with Chicago—an assertion which illustrates the town's detached observation of the war in the years leading to 1917. In the 1850s, when the Rock Island railroad began employing Blue Island laborers, some Blue Islanders harbored ambitious designs of their town overtaking Chicago as the premier city in the Midwest.[22] To today's reader, these ambitions appear ill-founded and absurd, but to individuals living in the nineteenth-century, these dreams were more reasonable. Despite this, the post-Civil War years shattered dreams of creating a big city and Blue Islanders settled instead to "combine the best of two worlds" by capitalizing on urban services provided by Chicago while preserving local autonomy.[23]

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[15] *American Armies and Battlefields in Europe*, pp. 41, 80; Volp, *First Hundred Years*, 328.
[16] Volp, *First Hundred Years*, 328.
[17] Ibid., 336.
[18] *Blue Island Sun*, January 25th, 1918, 1.
[19] Volp, *First Hundred Years*, 322.
[20] *Blue Island Sun*, July 19, 1918, 4.
[21] Jebsen, *History of a Working Class Suburb*, 188.
[22] Harry Jebsen, Jr., "The South Side: Blue Island," transcript of a speech delivered June 5, 1974 at the Blue Island Public Library, p. 2. Chicago's importance commenced with the introduction of the railroad and its rapid geographic expansion only began after the Great Fire of 1871.
[23] Jebsen, *History of a Working Class Suburb*, 189.

The first critical years in this transformation from village to suburb were 1891-1893, when Chicago officials decided to construct Rock Island Railroad yards on the edge of the city. Blue Islanders, eager to add an economic asset to their burgeoning industrial town, cunningly procured a tract of land and donated it to the railroad.[24] As in the 1850s, Blue Islanders had high hopes. They anticipated the expanded yards bringing "prosperity without ruining the gracious living environment," "added affluence," and "big salaried men," all while excluding the "cheap men" commonly associated with the yards.[25] In short, Blue Islanders envisioned their locality as a living space for the influential businessmen who ran Rock Island operations, not for their working-class laborers. Unfortunately, only one of the "big salaried men" moved to Blue Island. To complement him, the population increased 83% during the rest of the decade as laborers flooded Blue Island.[26]

These changes, coupled with Chicago's recent expansion, increased the threat of annexation. In 1914, the neighboring village of Morgan Park succumbed to Chicago rule. Then, in 1915, Chicago pushed further, attempting to annex Blue Island. While passing by a wide margin in Chicago, the vote for annexation failed in Blue Island by a nearly 3-to-1 margin.[27] Accordingly, during the campaign the *Blue Island Sun* and *Blue Island Standard* became consumed with the issue. Blue Islanders, too, shared in the interest of their future, pushing topics of war in Europe to the side. In 1915, therefore, Blue Island clearly reiterated the secondary status of news from the war; in doing so, they drew on the precedent set by the *Blue Island Sun* just two weeks after the war's outbreak, which articulated that "notwithstanding the European war, great interest is being manifested…in the primary campaign now in progress" and that "the present upheaval in Europe has fostered…a deeper love, a greater respect for the Stars and Stripes and a more insistent demand for the purity of the ballot."[28]

Advertisements in the *Sun*, likewise, illustrated Blue Island's detached relationship with the war. On September 3, 1914, an advertisement for Goodyear tires boasted cheap tires which they obtained from London and Singapore in the early days of the war, before prices skyrocketed. Thus, Blue Islanders had a "new, compelling reason for buying Goodyear tires," which "results from War conditions." Furthermore, the advertisement used battle metaphors to sell their product: "We were first on the ground. We were quickest in action."[29] Two weeks later, images of the war were again evoked by the Duntley Sweeper Company. According to the advertisement, "the war in Europe" was "tame" in comparison with Duntley's "Price-Slashing Demonstration."[30] As pre-1917 advertisements and concern for local politics make clear, Blue Island's initial relationship with the war was one of detached observation.

After American entry into the war in April, 1917, Blue Islanders shifted from detached observation of the war to complete consumption in the conflict. As before 1917, Blue Islanders continued their concern for control over their town and identity, yet now they ensured their autonomy with patriotism and patriotic drives, such as the Liberty Loan drives. In an attempt to avoid the apprehensions to the war effort that occurred during the Civil War (most notably the Draft Riots), President Wilson sought to prosecute the war as a "contractual agreement"

[24] Jebsen, "The South Side: Blue Island," 3.
[25] Ibid., p. 4.
[26] Ibid., p. 4.
[27] Jebsen, *History of a Working Class Suburb*, 193.
[28] *Blue Island Sun*, August 14, 1914, 6.
[29] *Blue Island Sun*, September 3, 1914, 3.
[30] *Blue Island Sun*, September 18, 1914, 5.

with the American people.[31] In theory, local draft boards and Liberty Loan drives would cultivate a friendlier and less coercive home front wartime experience. As a side effect, Blue Island, attempting to stave off encroachment from Chicago, used their Draft Board (Draft Board No. 7) and the Liberty Loan drives to exert local autonomy through their patriotism.

Draft Board No. 7 extended over a number of communities, including Mount Greenwood, Worth, Oak Lawn, Lemont, Chicago Ridge, Burr Oak, and Riverdale.[32] However, these communities represented autonomous villages and towns unaffiliated with Chicago. Moreover, it is important to note that no areas of Chicago were included in the jurisdiction of Draft Board No. 7; the Draft Board thus reflected the local administration that Wilson—and Blue Islanders who rejected authority from Chicago—desired. Moreover, in an attempt to preserve the identity of Blue Island's soldiers, men who were accepted for service were questioned about their family history by the Draft Board.[33] Clearly, the Draft Board expressed interest in the identity of their soldiers and, by extension, the identity of their localities.

Liberty Loans, donations from ordinary citizens to the government for the purpose of funding the war, additionally played a pivotal role in Blue Island's assertion of autonomy. In each of the five Liberty Loan drives, Blue Island exceeded the required allotments, including the final drive, much of which occurred after the armistice.[34] Blue Islanders, naturally, were extremely proud of their accomplishments. During the third drive, the $276,000 pledged by Blue Islanders was singled out from the remaining communities in District 7 and the city was awarded the "honor flag."[35] An editorial by Cora Rigby in the *Blue Island Sun* on January 25, 1918 demonstrated Blue Island's pride in their Liberty Loan subscriptions. According to the author, the Liberty Loans were "oversubscribed, not only willingly but joyously, and with the utmost enthusiasm."[36]

Encouragement from William Frasor, chairman of the final Liberty Loan drive, assisted in fostering Blue Islander's desire to "prove" their patriotism and, by extension, their political autonomy. In April, 1918, an advertisement provided by Frasor asked "What does 'war time' mean to you?" Furthermore, he articulated that the Liberty Loans represented an "opportunity to *prove* the patriotism that is in your heart and on your lips," and to "show yourself worthy."[37] Later that year, the *Sun* announced that Blue Island "has proven herself 100 percent loyal," and later asserted that "Blue Island is a sovereign community in the most democratic nation in the world."[38] In proving herself loyal, Blue Island, therefore, was also proving herself sovereign and democratic. Thus for many Blue Islanders, the Liberty Loan drives symbolized a struggle for control over local matters as well as the town's political identity.

Aiding the district's Liberty Loan drives were organizations and drives which similarly attempted to prove Blue Island's autonomy and establish its identity through acts of patriotism. On September 13, 1918, the *Sun* reported that the local freemason chapter would pledge money for the Liberty Loans by eliminating officer salaries and all "unnecessary entertainment and expense thereof."[39] Moreover, on February 18th, 1918, an editorial indicated that the railroads

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[31] David M Kennedy, *Over There: the First World War and American Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 143.
[32] Volp, *First Hundred Years*, 321.
[33] Volp, *First Hundred Years*, 321.
[34] Ibid, 331.
[35] Ibid.
[36] *Blue Island Sun*, January 25, 1918, 6.
[37] *Blue Island Sun*, April 19, 1918, 4.
[38] *Blue Island Sun*, October 25, 1918, 5.
[39] *Blue Island Sun*, September 13, 1918, p. 1.

"have eliminated all individual interest and competitive rivalries" in response to the war.[40] Furthermore, an article entitled "Wake Up!" publicized "wheatless" and "meatless" days while accompanying recipes to conserve those ingredients.[41] A month later, the *Sun* published an article accosting parents for allowing their children to skip mandatory high school military training.[42] Finally, the *Sun* preached "daily action," "a good rotation of crops," and "plowing a deep furrow" as methods of resisting attacks from the Hessian Fly and the Cinch Bug, both of which were "pro-German."[43] In all, Liberty Loan drives, "wheatless" and "meatless" days, and the prevention of crop damage signified attempts by Blue Island to prove her patriotism and assert her identity.

Ethnic Identity

Like Blue Island's political identity, its ethnic identity underwent significant challenges during the first decades of the twentieth century. In the early nineteenth-century, Blue Island was mainly comprised of Anglo-Americans. In the 1850s, the Rock Island attracted German immigrants, many of whom labored in the rail yards. German agricultural laborers likewise flocked to the surrounding areas under Blue Island's jurisdiction so that by the last decade of the nineteenth-century, Germans or individuals of German decent had enjoyed economic and political power in the town. After 1910, new groups of immigrants, namely Italians, began inhabiting Blue Island. Like their predecessors half a century earlier, native Blue Islanders "had many misgivings about the Italians."[44] By the outbreak of war, stereotypes of Italians became common in Blue Island; Italian immigrants were criticized for failing to renounce their "native tongue" and increased violence became a frequently-evoked stereotype for the east side of the town, where many of the new immigrants lived.[45] Thus by 1914, Blue Island's German community was well-integrated into the town's culture while Italians struggled to achieve such a status. The Great War, therefore, both reflected these ethnic differences as well as helped transform them.

As historian Harry Jebsen notes, "Participation of both the Poles and Italians in World War I undoubtedly lowered some of the barriers" which existed in Blue Island's pre-war society.[46] As detailed previously, the death of Antonio Louis—Sergeant of Company C, 47th infantry and Blue Island man of Italian decent—was well-publicized in the town. Louis, who fought as part of the American offensives near the Vesle River in early August, 1918, arrived with his division on the 3rd of August and fought until the 9th, when he was killed. The campaign was a bloody one; in the 9 days that the division remained at the Vesle River it incurred some 3,500 casualties.[47] In the four days prior to Louis' death, the Americans attempted to cross the Vesle and establish a stronghold on the other side, before pushing farther north. The Americans, however, were hampered with difficulties in establishing suitable footbridges for reinforcements. A few men made it across—perhaps Louis—but were mauled by German fire.[48] Louis' military contributions, accompanied by immigrant participation in the Liberty Loan Campaigns, provided a foundation for greater acceptance of Italian immigrants in Blue Island. In 1919, termed "the turning point in inter-group relations," an Italian immigrant

[40] *Blue Island Sun*, February 18, 1918, p. 3.
[41] *Blue Island Sun*, February 8, 1918, p. 8.
[42] *Blue Island Sun*, March 15, 1918, p. 1.
[43] *Blue Island Sun*, May 3, 1918, p. 3.
[44] Jebsen, "History of a Working Class Suburb," p. 208.
[45] Jebsen, "History of a Working Class Suburb," p. 208.
[46] Ibid., p. 209.
[47] *American Armies and Battlefields in Europe*, p. 41.
[48] Ibid.

was elected alderman and a year later, the city began "to encourage the assimilation of these people [immigrants]."[49] Blue Islanders of Italian decent, therefore, used the war to increase their acceptance within the community.

Individuals of German decent, on the other hand, underwent myriad experiences during the war, both challenging and reaffirming their ethnicity. Prior to American entry into the war, while Blue Island displayed distanced interest in European affairs, anti-German sentiment was almost nonexistent. During the initial analysis of the events of the summer of 1914, the *Sun* placed blame on numerous nations involved, rather than chastising the Germans alone. Speaking of the French, the *Sun* emphasized their imperial designs to mobilize and "Recover Alsace-Lorraine!"[50] Similarly, the paper discussed "the mobilization of the entire Russian army and navy," which was done "in spite of his [the German ambassador to Russia] appeal to the Kaiser and the fact that he was in constant communication with him."[51] From the onset, at least, Germany was spared much of the blame in Blue Island newspapers, a trend which reflected the ethnic composition of the town.

By January, 1918, the situation changed drastically. In discussing the German occupation of parts of France, the *Sun* exclaimed that "no words can express the barbarity of this proceeding nor describe the heartrending scenes which occurred."[52] Later that month, the *Sun* included a notice obliging all "German alien enemies" to register with the police chief and political cartoons containing images of children crying out, "I want to lick the Kaiser."[53] Moreover, upon conclusion of the war, numerous effigies of the Kaiser were burned or destroyed. As the *Sun-Standard* relates, Blue Island experienced scenes of the Kaiser "hung in effigy…buried or otherwise disposed of fully twenty different ways." In one particularly grotesque incident, the Kaiser was "dragged across the Rock Island tracks in front of an approaching train." Naturally, the train conductor hastened to slow the train, however, "when he realized it was a stuffed dummy representing the most despised man in the world, he shifted his levers and the effigy quite speedily was ground under the wheels of the train."[54]

Another example of ethnic strife in Blue Island occurred after the destruction of an influential building. Prior to the war, singing groups comprised of individuals of German decent were a common feature of Blue Island society, participating in national competitions and even performing at the Columbian Expedition in 1893. On Wednesday, January 9, 1918, the Liederkranz, home of the German singing group, burned and was not rebuilt due to "war conditions." Moreover, as Jebsen suggests, "war spirit, temporarily ruined the organization."[55] Many individuals, likewise, suspected that prejudice toward German culture influenced this decision.[56]

In light of these various incidents, it is easy to make the assumption that Blue Islanders of German decent were persecuted to a significant degree during the war. This assumption, however, fails to take into consideration certain aspects of the cultural shift occurring within Blue Island's society. To begin, prejudice against those of German decent failed to reach the level of violence seen elsewhere, most notably in Collinsville, Illinois, where a German

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[49] Jebsen, "History of a Working Class Suburb," p. 209-211.
[50] *Blue Island Sun*, July 31, 1914, p. 2.
[51] *Blue Island Sun*, August 7, 1914, p. 2.
[52] *Blue Island Sun*, January 11, 1918, p. 3.
[53] *Blue Island Sun*, January 18, 1918, p. 1; *Blue Island Sun*, January 25, 1918, p. 1.
[54] *Blue Island Sun-Standard*, November 15, 1918, pp. 1, 8.
[55] Jebsen, "History of a Working Class Suburb," p. 113.
[56] Volp, *First Hundred Years*, p. 276.

immigrant was brutally lynched on February 5, 1918.[57] Instead, German culture and heritage—as well as the individuals who practiced it—was already ingrained in the fabric of Blue Island society by the 1890s. Blue Islanders of German decent, additionally, were given a method to evade persecution: patriotism.

As discussed earlier, patriotism allowed Blue Islanders to stake a claim for their own political independence from Chicago; however, patriotism also provided a method for escaping suspicion and, as a result, transformed the ethnic culture of Blue Island. To conclude, here is an article about a man who enlisted out of "hatred of the Teuton race." The *Sun* clarified that the individual "had no quarrel with individual Germans," which included "scores of them in," and presumably around, "Chicago."[58] On March 1, 1918, the *Sun* reported the extensive efforts of a local Lutheran church, which raised a "big fund" in the recent Liberty Loan drive.[59] Moreover, as an editorial on October 25, 1918 made clear, many immigrants came to America to "escape German and Hungarian autocratic rule," and that "it is safe to assert that 99 per cent of those now living in this community from Germany…have been 100 per cent backers of the last two Liberty Loans."[60] In other words, by supporting the war in some way—the Liberty Loans, for instance—Blue Islanders of German descent could prove their loyalty and escape suspicion.

Additional proof of the acceptance of individuals of German descent in Blue Island can be seen in the Honor Roll or Liberty Loan subscription postings in the *Sun.* The Honor Roll, for example, reminded Blue Islanders each week that individuals of German descent were fighting and dying for American principles. Similarly, Liberty Loan subscribers, which were published after each drive along with their amount of contribution, conveyed similar ideas. [61] Finally, the *Sun-Standard* clarified that despite the "grotesque" burning of effigies during the victory parade, the proceedings were "orderly," without "drunkenness on the streets and few 'hang-overs.'"[62]

Ethnic relationships within Blue Island, therefore, experienced some tension, but never broke. By the end of the war, individuals of German descent, already fully-integrated into Blue Island society before 1914, could preserve remnants of their former culture providing they were concurrently patriotic and supportive of the American effort. On the other hand, Italian descendants, who had not enjoyed a position similar to that of German descendants in 1914, benefited from their service to the war effort.

Conclusion

When news of the armistice arrived, Blue Island responded in a "spontaneous outburst of patriotic relief." The "best ordered celebration in Cook County at least; perhaps in any of the adjoining counties" came in the form of several parades as well as the closure of all businesses and schools.[63] The message was clear: as the war had seen the coming together of various European ethnicities within Blue Island (albeit with some tension), so the victory celebration would similarly involve all Blue Islanders. In fact, the nuanced planning of such an enormous and orderly event—the "greatest day in Blue Island's long history," as it was remembered in

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[57] Frederick C. Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty: German-Americans and World War I* (DeKalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974), p. 10.

[58] *Blue Island Sun*, January 11, 1918, p. 6.
[59] *Blue Island Sun*, March 1, 1918, p. 1.
[60] *Blue Island Sun*, October 25, 1918, p. 5.
[61] *Blue Island Sun*, January 25, 1918, p. 8; *Blue Island Sun*, January 14, 1918, p. 5.
[62] *Blue Island Sun-Standard*, November 15, 1918, p. 8.
[63] *Blue Island Sun-Standard*, November 15, 1918, p.1.

1935—in just a few days speaks to the newfound political and ethnic unity experienced by Blue Islanders during the war. Thus, in 1919 Blue Island was ready to begin a new era in its history—a period in which political tensions with Chicago and ethnic tensions between European immigrants eased.[64] In a message to Blue Island, the *Sun-Standard* in October, 1919 appealed to "members of different…groups" to be "remade into American citizens" and to "understand American traditions and customs and the rights and privileges of American citizenship."[65] The changes requested by the *Sun-Standard*, however, began in 1914. However, as the quote suggests, some scrutiny remained for Blue Island's European immigrants. Yet, through their shared wartime experience, as well as their service to the war effort, Blue Island's European ethnic community was incorporated into the new vision of Blue Island—one that would cherish its American, rather than ethnic, qualities.

[64] Tension between European descendents and African-Americans and Mexicans, however, continued. Any casual glance at the *Sun-Standard* in 1918 would have revealed numerous prejudice remarks as well as stereotypes against African-Americans. Moreover, the 1920s saw small-scale violence against African-Americans and some influences from the KKK. However, what the war *did* represent was a coming together of various *European* ethnicities within Blue Island.

[65] *Blue Island Sun-Standard*, October 9, 1919, p. 1.

American Women in World War I: Army Nurse Corps, Red Cross Volunteers, and Civilian Aides from Illinois State Normal University

Amanda Evans

World War I was a global conflict involving men and women of all nationalities, races, and creeds in a long, bitter, and bloody campaign that lasted four years. President Woodrow Wilson resisted United States involvement in the fight and maintained a policy of isolation and peace until 1917; however, with the sinking of the *Lusitania* and the release of the Zimmerman Telegram, President Wilson "grudgingly accepted the necessity of war."[1] On 6 April 1917, the United States officially declared war on Germany. With the declaration of war came a call to arms and thousands of men registered for military service. Women too answered the call by enlisting in the military, by joining the Red Cross as nurses, and by dedicating themselves to the war effort. Many alumni, faculty, staff, and former students associated with Illinois State Normal University, joined the fight as soldiers or nurses.

Ange Milner, a librarian at Illinois State Normal University (ISNU) during World War I undertook a letter writing campaign with those who were affiliated with the school and serving overseas. The letters and various other documents collected over the years and are now available at the Illinois State University Archives in the War Service Records Collection. The project's goal is to focus on the thirty-one women whose "wartime activities are documented in the collection."[2] Four of the women were faculty members, one graduated in 1890, five graduated between 1900 and 1910, six graduated after 1910, seven did not graduate, and three were graduates of the University High School. These women served as nurses, Red Cross workers, and civilian aids; roughly half served in Europe. Although each of these women are fascinating examples of the roles women played during World War I, there is not enough information available to dedicate an entire paper to one individual. Therefore, this paper will focus on five of these women—two military nurses and three Red Cross workers/ civilian aides.

Nursing Corps

The Army Nurse Corps was founded in 1901. From its inception, the corps lacked a defined military rank and structure. It was comprised of just over 100 female nurses "who lacked appropriate titles, military status, or even uniforms."[3] By the end of World War I, 21,000 women either served in France or at home as members of the Army Nurse Corps.[4] It was the distinguished actions of these women that expanded the Nursing Corps and led to the development of an early rank structure, as well as a system to allocate money for retirement.[5]

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[1] Eric Dorn Brose, *A History of the Great War: World War One and the International Crisis of the Early Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 249.

[2] Jo Rayfield, "Women of World War I," *Illinois State University* (14 December 2001) http://www.isuarchives.org/women.php (accessed 10 October 2009). Updated URL: http://www.mlb.ilstu.edu/women/archive/women.htm (accessed 28 February 2013).

[3] Lisa M. Bureau and Richard M. Prior, ed., *Answering the Call: The U.S. Army Nurse Corps, 1917-1919: A Commemorative Tribute to Military Nursing in World War I* (Washington D.C.: Office of The Surgeon General, Department of the Army, United States of America Borden Institute, Walter Reed Army Medical Center, 2008), xii.

[4] Ross F. Collins, ed., *World War I: Primary Documents on Events from 1914-1919* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2008), 285-286.

[5] Bureau and Prior, xii.

Elizabeth Taylor Cleveland, an 1898 graduate of University High School, joined the Army Nursing Corps in May 1917, serving in France and Germany. During her time in France, she worked with U. S. Hospital Unit Number 12, more commonly known as the Northwestern Unit.[6] The unit was established in October 1916 by Dr. Frederick A. Besly, a surgeon from Northwestern University Medical School. The medical officers were primarily from Northwestern University, Rush University, and the University of Illinois; the majority of the nurses came from Cook County, Mercy, Augustana, and Evanston hospitals. [7] The hospital was posted at the Dannes-Camier area in France on 11 June 1917 to take the place of the British Expeditionary Force's (BEF) Base Hospital Number 18.[8] While stationed there, Cleveland wrote a long letter to Milner, discussing the diversity of the patients she treated. The BEF was comprised of British subjects as well as subjects from her colonies. Cleveland specifically mentioned meeting Canadian, Australian, New Zealand, and South African soldiers. Due to the language barrier, they could not "understand each other at all."[9] Cleveland also mentioned that the patients she saw typically had chest wounds, fractured bones, or had suffered gassings.[10] She pointed out that the men who were gassed recovered rather quickly, stating that, "in a few days they [soldiers] are able to be about and we can put them to work."[11] Although she was not on the front lines, it is interesting to note that Cleveland did not mention any cases of amputees. Since she was on the coast, one can imagine the possibility that severely wounded men, who were evacuated, went through this area on their way to England. Cleveland may have censored her letters to protect those back home from the horrors of war. It was not all work for Cleveland and her fellow nurses though. The women were able to take a short vacation to Paris in February 1918.[12] Cleveland sent Milner a postcard briefly stating how wonderful the city was.

The Northwestern Unit treated roughly 60,000 patients over a twenty-two month stint.[13] After the war was over, Cleveland transferred from U. S. Hospital Unit Number 12 to Evacuation Hospital Number 26 in Germany. She stayed there until the end of her enlistment and was honorably discharged in September 1919. Unfortunately, information concerning Cleveland and her life after the war is not available. A search of the Illinois Statewide Death Index shows one Elizabeth Cleveland who died in 1935, and whom may be the same Ms. Cleveland as the one under discussion.[14] Since her family could not be reached, this is an uncertainty.

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[6] *The Daily Bulletin* (Bloomington), 20 December 1917.

[7] All information concerning U.S. Hospital Unit No. 12 was taken from Northwestern University Archives, "History," *United States Army Base Hospital Number 12 World War I and II, Records, 1917-2006: Series 0/20/7* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Archives, 2008), 1.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Elizabeth Taylor Cleveland, France, to Agne Milner, Normal, 5 November 1918, transcript in the hand of Illinois State University Archives, War Service Records Collection, Milner Library, Illinois State University, Bloomington.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Elizabeth Taylor Cleveland, Paris, to Agne Milner, Normal, 12 February 1918, transcript in the hand of Illinois State University Archives, War Service Records Collection, Milner Library, Illinois State University, Bloomington.

[13] *United States Army Base Hospital Number 12 World War I and II, Records, 1917-2006*, 1.

[14] Since Ms. Elizabeth Taylor Cleveland graduated from University High School in 1898 and graduated at the presumable age of 18, we can deduce that she was roughly born in 1880. In 1935, Cleveland would have been around the age of 55 (give or take a few years since we do not truly know what year she was born in). The death record indicates this woman died at the age of 53. The index does not list cause of death. *Illinois Statewide Death*

Like Cleveland, Alice Orme Smith also served in France, entering the Army Nursing Corps in May 1917.[15] She spent her entire enlistment period in several hospitals throughout France.[16] While in Paris, she survived nighttime enemy air raids, although, this was not her last brush with death.

In July 1918, the high command expected a German offensive; therefore, Smith and her unit were moved to Reims for preparation. On 14 July, the Germans began shelling near the hospital.[17] Smith and the rest of the medical staff manned the operating rooms through the barrage- their helmets on and gas masks within reaching distance. After the operating room took a direct hit, an evacuation was ordered.[18] For bravery in the face of an enemy, Smith and her regiment were awarded the Croix de Guerre in August 1918.[19] The final post Smith mentioned was St. Mihiel, the first American offensive in World War I. The battle took place in mid-September 1918. Smith noted that this battle was strange for the medical staff since they did not receive many wounded. She also mentioned that the soldiers did not want to talk about their experiences. [20] This is a particularly interesting section of her notes. Although we do not know exactly what happened to the soldiers simply from Smith's description, we can surmise that it must have been an awful experience. Since this was the first American offensive, it is not surprising that the battle was so shocking to American troops that they did not want to discuss it. Smith was discharged in February 1919.[21] Unfortunately, there is no information available concerning Smith after her service in the Army Nursing Corps ended.

Red Cross and Civilian Aides

In addition to the brave women who served in the Army Nurse Corps, thousands of women supported the war effort through their work with the Red Cross. The American Red Cross was founded on 21 May 1881 by Clara Barton. Barton and her associates were first inspired to create the organization after hearing of the "Swiss-inspired International Red Cross Movement while visiting Europe following the Civil War."[22] The organization received its first congressional charter in 1900. Its second charter, received in 1905, remains in effect today. It outlines the purpose of the organization— to provide relief for American armed forces, serve as a communication channel between the soldiers and their families, and provide national/international disaster relief. Prior to World War I, the Red Cross initiated its water safety, first aid, and public health nursing programs. After 1914, the organization staffed hospitals and ambulance companies and recruited 20,000 certified nurses to serve the military. When the war ended, the Red Cross focused on taking care of the veterans.[23]

Ellen Babbitt, a former student of Illinois State University, lived in Washington, D.C. during World War I. She was called to service with the Red Cross in March 1918 and was

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Index, 1916-1950 (2009) http://www.ilsos.gov/GenealogyMWeb/idphdeathsrch.html (accessed 17 November 2009).

[15] Jo Rayfield, "Alice Orme Smith," *Illinois State University* (14 December 2001) http://www.isuarchives.org/women.php (accessed 28 October 2009).

[16] Alice Smith, *The Index*, 1919, transcript in the hand of Illinois State University Archives, War Service Records Collection, Milner Library, Illinois State University, Bloomington.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Commendation Awarded to Alice Smith's Unit, 14 August 1918, transcript in the hand of Illinois State University Archives, War Service Records Collection, Milner Library, Illinois State University, Bloomington.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Jo Rayfield, "Alice Orme Smith."

[22] "A Brief History of the American Red Cross," *American Red Cross Museum* (2009) http://www.redcross.org/museum/history/brief.asp (accessed 28 November 2009).

[23] This paragraph is a summation of the information available on the website cited in footnote #25.

assigned to the Children's Bureau in France, Scotland, and England.[24] The Bureau was founded by Dr. William Palmer Lucas, a well-known and respected physician, who had previously "[w]orked with Mr. Hoover for the children of Belgium…."[25] Babbitt discussed the role of the Children's Bureau in an interview:

> The first demand was for food and clothing for the refugees. Along with these supplies went the doctors and nurses to staff and equip hospitals, dispensaries, and convalescent homes. So large a percentage of the medical men of France and Belgium were in service that large areas had long been left without medical supervision of any kind. Obviously, where there were no physicians to cure the sick, it was necessary to teach the mothers how to keep the children well.[26]

Because all available resources were sent to the front to assist the soldiers, there was a desperate need for assistance on the home front throughout Europe. Babbitt briefly commented that there was a noticeable amount of appreciation from the visiting or returning soldiers, grateful that someone was taking care of the women and children in their absence.[27] This is an aspect of war which is usually glossed over in the traditional history textbooks, but it is an important aspect, nonetheless. If there was no home to return to, what was there to fight for? The work of Babbitt and the other Red Cross members provided a great morale boost since the men knew their loved ones were cared for. During her last few months of service, Babbitt outlined plans for the British and French government for the health, education, and supervision of children once the Red Cross left.[28] After leaving the organization in May 1919, Babbitt devoted her life to educating people about childcare.[29] She worked as a specialist in exhibits to promote knowledge for infant welfare.[30]

Ida Frances Foote, more commonly known as Frances Foote, was a former ISNU faculty member who joined the Red Cross in June 1918.[31] She was stationed at Base Hospital Camp Pike in Arkansas. In a letter between Foote and David Felmley, President of ISNU, Foote described that after being offered two positions, she finally received one with a salary she desired. Foote noted how excited she was to serve, even if it was "only in a small way."[32]

After a year of service, Foote once again wrote to Felmley. This letter was quite different though. While the official peace talks were taking place at Versailles, there were rumors spreading around Camp Pike which made Foote apprehensive. She worried about finding a job after her term of service ended and directly asked Felmley if she would be able to return to her position.[33] She noted that with her experience in the Red Cross at Camp Pike, she qualified for a deanship. Her job at the camp was to supervise the 250 nurses and "their officer friends" during

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[24] Jo Rayfield, "Ellen Babbitt," *Illinois State University* (14 December 2001) http://www.isuarchives.org/women-display-one.php?id=11 (accessed 28 November 2009).

[25] Interview of Ellen Babbitt, transcript in the hand of Illinois State University Archives, War Service Records Collection, Milner Library, Illinois State University, Bloomington. The date of the interview as well as the name of the stenographer is unknown.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Jo Rayfield, "Ellen Babbitt."

[30] *The Bloomington Pantagraph* (Bloomington), 19 October 1920.

[31] Frances Foote, Carbondale, to David Felmley, Normal, 2 June 1918, transcript in the hand of Illinois State University Archives, War Service Records Collection, Milner Library, Illinois State University, Bloomington.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Frances Foote, Arkansas, to David Felmley, Normal, 22 March 1919, transcript in the hand of Illinois State University Archives, War Service Records Collection, Milner Library, Illinois State University, Bloomington.

evening outings.[34] Although Foote's letters do not directly speak of working with wounded, children, or returning soldiers, or of participating in any major battles, her letters are valuable in the fact that they address a common concern over employment issues after the war. After her term of service, Foote was expected to take a position as the teacher of Expression at Stephen College for Women in Columbia, Missouri; however, she did not.[35] The last record of Foote is found in an article from November 1919, which stated that she was "keeping house for an invalid brother and his two daughters" in Colorado Springs, Colorado.[36]

Working for the Red Cross was not the only avenue in which women could help the war effort. Ruth M. Cook, a former junior high school teacher in Decatur, Illinois joined thousands of women in supporting the war effort at home by working as a civilian aide.[37] Cook, an ISNU alumnus from the class of 1915, was a stenographer in Washington D.C. for the Adjutant General's Office from July to October 1918.[38] Her application to serve as a Reconstruction Aide in Occupational Therapy was accepted and her job was to instruct wounded soldiers at the base hospital in France in arts and crafts.[39]

Although scheduled to work overseas, when the Armistice was signed in November, Cook was reassigned to Base General Hospital Number 10 in Boston, Massachusetts.[40] In a letter to "The Index," an autobiographical record dedicated to keeping track of alumni, Cook described her job at the hospital. Her responsibilities included caring for amputee soldiers and helping them learn new job skills. Cook aided in reintegrating soldiers back into society. She taught workshops on typing and other necessary skills needed to succeed in the business world.[41] The majority of the patients at the hospital were amputees., as evident in Cook's statement that "one gets used to seeing the boys with empty sleeve and trouser legs pinned up with safety pins, or hobbling around on crutches, or getting about in a wheel chair with legs in splints or casts, or trying on a new arm or new leg."[42] It is not surprising that she mentioned this; however, what is surprising is the passing tone her letter takes in regards to working with amputees. Cook mentions this as a side thought, as opposed to being a shocking aspect to her job. This sentiment is reflected time and again in letters from nurses, as well as soldiers. People adjusted rather quickly to deformities, as it was a common presence in their everyday lives. It is also interesting to note that the letter from Cook resonates with bitterness over her lost chance at going "over there."[43] In 1919, Cook was transferred to General Hospital Number 41 in Staten, Island, New York.[44] She served until her discharge in August 1920. In 1927, Cook moved to California and worked as a library clerk at UCLA.[45]

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[34] Ibid.
[35] *The Daily Pantagraph* (Bloomington), 19 July 1919.
[36] *The Daily Pantagraph* (Bloomington), 13 November 1919.
[37] *The Bloomington Pantagraph* (Bloomington), 24 October 1918.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ruth Cook, *ISNU Military Service Survey*, date unknown, transcript in the hand of Illinois State University Archives, War Service Records Collection, Milner Library, Illinois State University, Bloomington.
[41] Ruth Cook, Boston, to "The Index," Normal, 17 April 1919, transcript in the hand of Illinois State University Archives, War Service Records Collection, Milner Library, Illinois State University, Bloomington.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Handwritten note card of Ruth Cook's Mailing Address, 1919, transcript in the hand of Illinois State University Archives, War Service Records Collection, Milner Library, Illinois State University, Bloomington.
[45] Jo Rayfield, "Ruth Cook," *Illinois State University* (14 December 2001) http://www.isuarchives.org/women-display-one.php?id=27 (accessed 22 November 2009).

Conclusion

After the Armistice on 11 November 1918, the firing stopped on the battlefields of World War I. The need for nurses, however, did not end. Thousands of women answered the call to serve during the war. Those same women finished out their enlistment caring for the veterans they had bandaged during the war. The Army Nursing Corps, the Red Cross, and the civilian aides all worked to protect the lives of soldiers, the families of the armed forces, and those on the home front in Europe. The women discussed in this paper worked in the highest levels of danger, but also helped veterans recover at home. Each of them reflect in their letters the pride they felt in contributing to the cause—even if it was in just the smallest way. These women show us that there is still much to discover about World War I and its effects on each person who served. It is through these local studies that we can further our understanding of World War I and its legacy.

"And here's a line to mother:" Eastern Illinois State Normal School and the *Charleston-Courier*'s Involvement in World War I

Derek Shidler

While Europe was entangled in alliances, war, and an assassination, the United States remained neutral in the First World War until April 6, 1917. As a result of desperation and war-weariness, Germany reinstated its disastrous policy of unrestricted submarine warfare, which eventually helped push America into war against Germany. Almost a century later, World War I continues to produce scholarly literature and uncover new evidence. However, soldiers' stories are quickly vanishing, as letters and journals are stored away in shoeboxes and shoved into dusty attics, only to be thrown away years later. Charleston, Illinois, has a rich history regarding its involvement in the First World War and offers unique insight on those who served and died for our country. This research delves into Eastern Illinois State Normal School and the *Charleston-Courier's* involvement in the war. Although Charleston's history in the war was sporadic and, at times, ambiguous, there is a unique story within this little farm town.

The first direct effect of the war on Eastern was the postponement of an entertainment program scheduled for the summer of 1915. The Ben Greet English Players, who had appeared on Eastern's campus in 1914, were unable to return a year later, as the war caused the suspension of their American tour for 1915. As far as printed records show, the school took little notice of the war in Europe in 1915 and 1916. Even the school catalogue for 1915 contains no references to the war. However, on June 30, 1916, the school's newspaper, *Normal School News*, made a passing reference to the "war" in Mexico. As the war in Europe progressed, Eastern began to take notice of the dire situation. In December 1916, the school's Young Men's Christian Association (Y.M.C.A.) raised $142.68 in order to aid prisoners of war in Europe. This national campaign boosted the school's reputation, as Eastern stood fifth among Illinois state schools in raising money, surpassed only by Chicago, Northwestern, Monmouth, and Knox; but surpassing both Illinois State Normal University and Southern Illinois Normal College.[1]

America's entrance into the war on April 6, 1917, shifted interest from military training to direct enlistment in the armed forces. On April 18, 1917, Captain Gravenhorse of the 4th Illinois Infantry, National Guard, made a recruiting speech at the school. Afterward, ten students volunteered. Two days after signing up, the volunteers were given their first military drill in the school's gymnasium. During the military training, the *Normal School News* reported that "nothing definite is known as to when the boys will be called to camp, but Captain Gravenhorse advised them to be ready to answer the call at any time."[2]

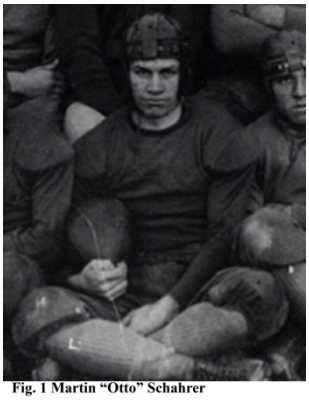
Fig. 1 Martin "Otto" Schahrer

In the class of 1917, eleven men entered into the military. Eventually, 251 former students and five faculty members served during America's involvement in the war. The names of these former students and teachers are listed in the "Roll of Honor" printed in the Normal School annual for 1919.[3] The first two faculty members to enlist were Emet N. Hopson, (agricultural professor) and Mary Josephine Booth (Librarian). After the close of the

[1] *Normal School News*, 19 December 1916; 6 February 1917.
[2] *Normal School News*, 24 April 1917.
[3] *Warbler Yearbook 1919*, 52-53.

school year in 1917-1918, three other faculty members entered the armed services: Lewis Albert Moore (agricultural professor), C. Alvin Johnson (Manual Arts professor), and Earl R. K. Daniels (English professor).[4] Sadly, of the 256 volunteers, nine of these men were killed, including Martin "Otto" Schahrer (Fig. 1). Arguably the most popular football player and student at Eastern, Schahrer was captain of the 1916 Eastern football team and President of the 1917 Class. Schahrer was a member of Company I, 6th Infantry Division, and died in the St. Mihiel offensive. In his honor, the football field and track was named after him on September 15, 1918. Since then, Schahrer Field has been demolished and new buildings have been erected in its place (Ford, Weller, and McKinney resident halls, the tennis courts, and Booth Library). Today, the Schahrer memorial plaque, which marked the field, hangs in the University Union's Schahrer Room.[5]

The first former student killed in action was Corporal Fred Dunn. He was killed by a mortar shell, which also led to the death of three other men, on July 15, 1918 in the Battle of Chateau Thierry. Dunn's body was returned to the United States. In addition, four former students died of illness while in service—Private Fred Elbert Pearcy, marine, and three sailors, Burt Bodwell Chenoweth, Ralph Carlis Winkleblack, and James Arlar Walling.[6]

During the war years, Livingston Chester Lord, Eastern's first president, mourned the death of soldiers who were former Eastern students. Plagued with his own sorrowful memories- his father died fighting for the Union during the Civil War- Lord understood the hardships of war on friends and families. Lord was able to protect the school against the onslaught of prejudice, hate, and protest which accompanied the war. In one instance, he deflected a rising dilemma in regards to changing the school's song. Anti-German sentiments raced across the United States during this time, and Charleston was no different. Eastern's school song, written by Isabel McKinney, was sung to the tune of the German anthem, "The Watch on The Rhine." The song was seen as inappropriate since the United States was at war with Germany, and ultimately a new melody was written to the tune of "For Us Arose Thy Walls and Towers," which is still sung today. The person behind this new melody was Friederick Koch. Oddly enough, Koch was a native of Germany and had several relatives in the German Army. Although an American citizen, he suffered various indignities by reckless "patriots," many of whom believed he was pro-German and even a spy. On one particular occasion a brick was thrown through his home window. Another instance involved a group of "patriots" carrying an American flag, intended for Koch to kiss in order to prove his patriotism. However, after arriving at Koch's home and bursting into his living room without knocking, the "patriots" were greeted by Koch and an Army officer. It is said that "the abashed culprits slunk away to abodes more fitting to their characters."[7] Circumstances like this pressured Eastern to drop its German curriculum, but Lord would not see to it, saying, "Not from knowledge of German, but from ignorance of it, do we get into trouble."[8] Years later, Koch told of a day when Lord called him into his office and asked if he had bought any Liberty Bonds. When Koch said no, Lord immediately handed over 50 dollars for Koch to buy his first bond. A

[4] Report of President to Normal School Board, 9 July 1918.

[5] Keith R. Steele, *Eastern Illinois University Centennial* (Paducah, KY: Turner Publishing Company, 1995), 20-22.
[6] Charles H. Coleman, *Eastern Illinois State College: Fifty Years of Public Service* (Charleston: Eastern Illinois University, 1950), 173-174.
[7] Ibid, 21.
[8] Ibid.

few days later, Koch was unexpectedly visited by a Secret Service man who asked, "Have you bought any Liberty Bonds?"[9] Thanks to Lord, Koch was spared harassment and humiliation.

When researching Eastern's involvement in World War I, one person cannot be forgotten- Mary Josephine Booth (Fig. 2). Booth was one of five faculty members engaged in active war overseas. In the fall of 1917, she joined the Red Cross and was sent to France as a canteen worker. After several months, Booth was sent to Paris under the auspices of the American Library Association. Weeks later, she transferred to General John Joseph Pershing's headquarters at Chaumont, France. After the armistice was signed on November 11, 1918, she worked at the Festhalle Library in Coblenz, Germany, and remained there until her return to Eastern.[10]

In 1918, due to the influenza pandemic and the war, Eastern's homecoming was cancelled. However, the following year, the homecoming ceremonies continued. The 1919 homecoming was dedicated to Eastern soldiers who served and died in the armed forces during the World War. The opening ceremony of the football game dedicated the field to Schahrer, who had been killed in France the previous year. The faculty, alumni, and students also placed a memorial plaque at the base of Old Main's flag pole to honor the over 200 former students who served in the war. This homecoming remembrance continued until the early 1930s, with Lord speaking at the chapel ceremony accompanied by music from Koch. In addition, in 1919, the first Warbler yearbook was created. A four-page section in the first Warbler called "In Memoriam" was a tribute to the nine former Eastern students who died during the war (Fig. 3).

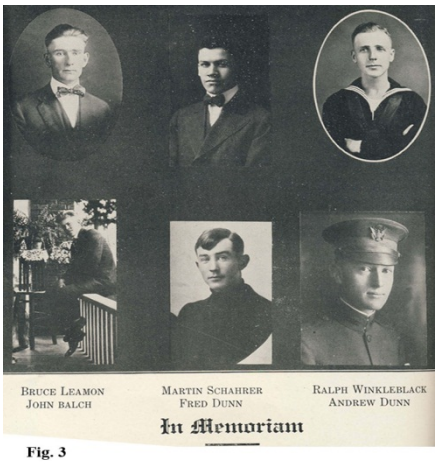

Fig. 3


CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 1918.

AMERICANS ARE IRRESISTIBLE IN THEIR VICTORIOUS ADVANCE

Great Victory Grows In Magnitude Each Hour; The Germans Officially Admit Their "Withdrawal" Before Yankees

Although 256 students and faculty volunteered for the United States armed forces, Eastern was a small school that lacked substantial publicity and literature regarding the First World War. As a result, all resources have been exhausted regarding Eastern's role in the war. However, delving further into Charleston's involvement in World War I brought me to the Charleston-Courier. Since America's involvement began at the latter stages of the war, the Courier was unable to fully publish topics regarding local soldiers. Nevertheless, headlines such as "Americans Are Irresistible in Their Victorious Advance" and "The Austro-German Troops Are Evacuating the Balkans," were plastered throughout the newspaper."[11] However, in August 1918, the newspaper began publishing a section called "Soldier's Letter." Although the Courier sporadically published this section due to a lack of letters and America's late entrance into the war, "Soldier's Letter" is vital to this research. The first "Soldier's Letter" was published in August 16, 1918 and submitted by Joe Golladay's mother. In this article, Golladay was not fully engaged in the war yet, but was enrolled in a polytechnic school in Clacksburg, Virginia, studying


Fig. 2 Mary Josephine Booth

[9] Ibid.
[10] *Warbler* 1919, 54.
[11] *Charleston-Courier*, 13 September 1918; 18 October 1918.

blacksmithing.[12] A month later, a letter from Romo White reminisced about his unique experiences. White, writing to his mother, explained how he and other American soldiers, riding on horses, galloped into different towns and cities within France. White wrote, "[The French] ran into their stone houses and shut themselves in, peeping out at us. We soon learned, however, that we were the first Americans they had seen and they thought we were Germans."[13] He goes on to say, on an unknown day, his battalion met two men in French uniform. However, these two men called to the battalion in English—they were not French but Americans. These men were Americans serving for the French Foreign Legion, one from Chicago and the other from New York City. These two men had been serving the French for two years and repeatedly asked White about the "dear old U.S.A."[14] When men asked White and his battalion to visit a French hospital, the Americans, without hesitation, agreed. Within seconds after entering the hospital, the American soldiers were greeted with cheers and roses. White continued, "They had not seen any Americans as they had been here so long…. They sure spoiled us over here."[15]

The following day, the Courier published another "Soldier's Letter." This time the letter was from Henry (Boney) Crim. While portraying the splendor of France, he could not help but compare the scenery to Charleston's, saying, "France is certainly a pretty country, except in the places where the Germans have been. It is just like being around the Normal School. Trees are growing all over the country."[16] Crim's letter then asked his mother, "Do you watch the war news very much? I do and I hope this war will end soon over here…I hope the Kaiser gets wiped clear off the earth. Believe me the Americans will do it, too."[17] Sixteen days later, another "Soldier's Letter" appeared in the newspaper from Howard Emery, a member of the Headquarters Company F, 139th Infantry, American Expeditionary Force. Emery wrote to his parents, telling his fortunate survival from a sniper's bullet:

> On the evening of August 18, I was slightly wounded by a Boche sniper, and was nicked in two places. Both wounds are very slight, the one across my stomach being sorest. The bullet was arrested before it struck the inner lining of the stomach. The speed and force of the bullet was broken when it struck a packet of letters from home, which I carried in a pocket of my uniform, and also struck my gas mask. In this way the bullet was turned. The second bullet struck my left forearm, and lifted a small piece of flesh out.[18]

Emery's story is unique and intriguing. No matter how beguiling this seems, Emery was rather lucky. Moreover, the last paragraph of "Soldier's Letter" ended with a heartfelt request from his mother, saying, "[I] would welcome letters from…friends in Charleston."[19]

In a letter received by the Courier from a Charleston native, Orion Reason, a copy of "Plane News" was enclosed. "Plane News" was a camp newsletter published by the American Expeditionary Forces that included witticisms and articles. The editor of the Courier revealed how a sergeant found a young homeless French child hiding behind a haystack. The editor

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[12] *Charleston-Courier*, 16 August 1918.
[13] *Charleston-Courier*, 10 September 1918.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.
[16] *Charleston-Courier*, 11 September 1918.
[17] Ibid.
[18] *Charleston-Courier*, 26 September 1918
[19] Ibid.

went on to say, "The camp has taken charge of him and is going to make a little soldier of him."[20] In this same article, Sergeant Summer Easton, stationed in France, sent a letter home to his family before his battalion embarked on a major offensive strike against the Germans. Before Easton set out on this offensive attack, he wrote a beautiful poem to his mother:

Mother
And here's a line to mother
The best of all the lot
With a simple little message
Just a sweet for-get-me-not
Its sent to her from some one
Sealed with a kiss of love
To wish her joy and comfort
And blessings from above

May it find her and happy
As the morn I went away
May it make her burden lighter
As she works from day to day
May it chase away the wrinkles
From her apt to worry brow
And keep that smile asmiling
Till we've finished up this row

There's a brighter day coming
For us, and those back home
There's ships of joy and happness
To sail us o'er the foam
And sight will be most wonderful
As loved ones greet each each
But non will be so tenderly
When Sonny meets his Mother[21]

Private Oural H. Lee of the 114th Moblie Ord., Repair Shop, American Expeditionary Force, wrote to his mother: "I sure do feel sorry for these poor people [the French]. You don't see any one but children and very old people, all the able-bodied men and women are gone doing their bit in this war."[22] Similar to White's letter, Lee explained, "The French people are sure glad the Americans have come over here, they say we are their salvation, they sure do praise us and say they cannot thank us enough."[23] Lee continued to depict the terrible conditions that accompanied war, "You cannot realize the condition of things here without seeing them. Anyone as poor as we are would be rich compared with a lot of these people…No one in America should ever grumble again. Most all of the civilians wear wooden shoes, there are leather shoes here and cheaper than in the U.S.A. but they are too poor to buy them." After

[20] *Charleston-Courier*, 18 October 1918.
[21] Ibid.
[22] *Charleston-Courier*, 30 October 1918.
[23] Ibid.

witnessing the terrible conditions in Europe, Lee asked his mother not to throw any old clothes away, but to give them to an organization that would help war ridden countries.[24]

While searching through the *Courier* for information regarding the war, Chester Brooks, a local Charleston teen serving on the frontline in France, made a gruesome, but seemingly fictional discovery. Brooks, who wrote to his mother, like most soldiers who were published in "Soldier's Letter," said, "We found a fellow here from Charleston, the other day. He was dead, poor chap, but I do not know him." He was uncertain whether he was allowed to tell the local soldier's name. As a result, Brooks says, "I will put it on the back of the letter so that incase the censor cuts it out he will not destroy the rest of the letter."[25] What makes Brooks' story so interesting is that the dead local soldier was Martin Schahrer—arguably the most popular student at Eastern during this time.

In the midst of a horrifying war, the *Courier* gave the citizens of Charleston confidence regarding the war. Although not local stories, detailed pictures of "gassed Yankees" and blind soldiers appeared in the *Courier*. However, these images were not gruesome, as one would expect, but seemingly jovial. As the caption explained, a motorbus with American soldiers, who had been injured in a gas attack on the western front, arrived at an American Red Cross hospital in France (Fig. 4). Moreover, the *Courier* explained, "Had these same soldiers arrived a day sooner they might have been among the victims of the 'Huns latest victory' over another Red Cross hospital."[26] Despite being injured from a gas attack, these "Yankees" were alive and obviously healthy—an optimistic outlook during a pessimistic war. In addition, a photo called "Occupation for Blinded Soldiers" depicted two blind soldiers, wounded during combat, and their continuous war effort (Fig. 5). Although unable to see, soldiers and sailors who were blinded during the war were learning various trades in London, England. Unfortunately, the captions offered little information regarding these various trades.

Fig. 4

Fig. 5

However, after close analysis, one can see the blind soldiers were diligently working on a London farm, picking vegetables and sorting them in various containers.

While the Second World War continues to overshadow the First World War, World War I cannot be ignored or forgotten. Searching through that dusty shoebox in the attic could potentially open new insights on the First World War. Although there will never be a Hollywood movie regarding Eastern's involvement in the

[24] Ibid.
[25] *Charleston-Courier*, 8 November 1918.
[26] *Charleston-Courier*, 15 October 1918.

war, the sacrifices these men and women made were incredible. In addition, the *Charleston-Courier's* "Soldier's Letter" reveals a unique side of the American soldier—heartfelt letters with a splash of patriotism. There is something special about a personal letter from a soldier. These letters reveal a three-dimensional emotion on a one-dimensional piece of paper. Summer Easton's poem, "Mother," is a perfect example of this emotion. Before going into battle, while unaware of his future, he wrote a beautiful poem to this mother. Easton probably would have never poured out his heart quite like this, but the uncertainties of war displayed a different side of men.

Eastern's World War I Service List:
Names starred are those who died in service.

Students

Adams, Hugh
Adams, Ralph
Allison, John
Alison, William
Anderson, Earl
Anderson, Julian
Anderson. Russel
Ankenbrandt. Leo
Ash by, Orla
Ashworth, Forrest
Bails, Clifford
Baker, Charles
Baker, James
Baker, Glenn
Baker, Marvel
* Balch, John
Barger, Joseph
Barkley, Doyt
Barkley, Durward
Beardsley, Frank
Bell, James
Belting, John
Bigler, Harry
Bigler, Walter
Black, Paul
Boulware, Maryon
Bowser, Alva
Boyer, Brent
Boyle, Willard
Briggs, Alexander
Briggs, Robert
Brown, Guy
Bryant, Maurice
Buker, Cuyler

Davis, Henry
Davis, John
Dora, James
* Dunn, Andrew
* Dunn, Fred
Edgington, Austin
Emery, William
Endsley, Fred
Ewald, Ralph
Fearheile, Otto
Ferguson. Fred
Fitch, Ralph
Fleming, Denna
Forster, Arthur
Frazier, Arthur
Freeland, Donovan
Freeland, Vale
Freeman, Charles
French, Guy
Funkhouser. James
Funkhouser, Taylor
Fye, Paul
Gabel, Victor
Geffs, George
Giffin, Palmer
Giffin, Earl
Ginther, Richard
Givens, Harry
Gordon, Eugene
Gordon, Homer
Gore, Olin
Gray, Horace
Gray, Howard
Greeson, Ralph

Hughes, John
Hut ton, Eugene
Ivy, Torney
Jenkins, Charles
Jenkins, Hubert
Jenkins, Lawrence
Johnson, Donald
Johnston, Donald
Johnston, Howell
Jones, John
Keene, Varden
Kelly, Forrest
Kern, Vernon
Kibler, Virgil
King, Bazil
King, Chester
King, Ivan
King, Raymond
King, Robert
Kisner, Edgar
Kisner, Roy
Kruse, Herbert
Lanman, Leo
* Leamon, Bruce
Lee, Randall
Lindhorst, Frank
Linthicum, Cecil
List, Floyd
Long, Charles
Long, William
Loving, Russell
Lyons, La Vearl
MacGilligan, Stanley
Markle, Byron

Byers, Vere
Cadle, Shester
Capen, William
Carothers, Charles
Carrell, Elwood
* Chenoweth, Burth
Chronic, George
Clossen, Albert
Coffey, William
Colvin, Leland
Comer, Eric
Connell, Harry
Conrad, Charles
Conrad, Clarence
Conrad, John
Cooper, Herman
Corlew, Joseph
Corzine, Bruce
Corzine, Harland
Cox, Gerald
Coyle, Dale
Crim, Harry
Crowe, Stanley
Mussett, Ralph
Nichols, Raymond
Noakes, Levi
Norfolk, Harold
Norton, Berne
Parks, Norton
Parks, William
* Pearcy, Fred
Peck, Ben
Pendergast, Thomas
Pennell, Horace
Percival, Andrew
Perisho, Charles
Phillips, Andrew
PhIpps, Thomas
Porter, Jesse
Prather, Charles
Pyatt, Roy
Pyle, Harry
Randolph, Glenn
Rankin, Merle
Rardin, Bruce
Rardin, Loyal
Reed, Robert
Rennels, Howard
Grponiger, Harlan
Hackett, Glenn
Hall, Paul
Hardin. Louis
Hargis, Elbert
Harris, Frank
Harris, Fred
Harris, Edgar
Harry, J. Roscoe
Harwood, Otto
Hawkins, John
Heinlein, James
Helm, Malcolm
Henderson, Frank
High, Lennie
Highsmith, Lester
Hill, James
Hilsabeck, Hugh
Holsapple, Coen
Hood, Harold
Hood, James
Houser, William
Huber, Edgar
Hitter, Lyman
Rucker, William
Ryder, Hal
* Schahrer, Martin
Schernekau, William
Schmaelzle, Carl
Schmaelzle, Otto
Scott, Earl
Scranton, Laurell
Serviss, Robert
Serviss, Trevor
Shoemaker, James
Shrader. Mark
Shroyer, David
Smith, Fred
Smysor, John
Snapp, Carl
Snapp, Roscoe
Snider, Howard
Staley, Ora
Stanberry, Lawrence
Starr, Norman
Stokes, Joel
Story, Floyd
Tarble, Newton
Marshall, Thomas
Mason, Carl
McAlister, Clair
McCabe, Merrell
McChandlish, Fred
McDonald, Elmer
McGahey, Harold
McGahey, Emmet
McGurty, Frank
McKee, Luther
McKenzie, Hubert
Milburn, Elmer
Milholland, Paul
Miller, Floyd
Mitchel, Byron
Mitchell, Daniel
Moats, Homer
Monfort, Warren
Montgomery, John
Montgomery, Walter
Moran, Bernard
Morrison, Eugene
Mulliken, Paul
Thompson, Earl
Tiffany, Hanford
Tittle, FelIx
Taylor, Ross
Tremble, Ronald
Turner, Stephen
Turner: McKInley
Vernon, Paul
Waibel, John
* Walling, James
Weger, Clarence
Whalen, Thomas
Whalin, Oren
White, Clifford
White, Rono
Wieland, Carl
Wieland, John
Wilcox, Ira
Wilkinson, Cecil
Wilson, Harry
Wiman, Raymond
* Winkleblack, Ralph
Winkleblack, Muriel
Winkleblack, Walter
Wood, Lorin

Rich, Ciney
Richars, Glen
Richmond, Raymond
Tarble, Van
Taubeneck, Earl
Terry, Clem
Zehner, Ralph
Zimmerman, Dwight

Faculty

Daniels, E. R. K.
Mary Josephine Booth
Hopson, E. N.
Moore, L. A.
Johnson, C. A.

A Soldier's Letters: Delos Ellis Brown and WWI

Tristan Sodergren-Baar

Time has a funny way of playing with one's memories. After a few days, weeks, months, even years, the finer edges of the photographic memory begin to blur and segments of the movie camera in the mind's eye begin to skip scenes. If you are speaking of a grandfather who died nearly forty-five years ago, the memories are even harder to define. This paper is about memory and trying to recount it from a long dead past. To give this lofty goal scope, the paper will focus on one individual, Delos Ellis Brown, of Prophetstown, Illinois, over the span of one year. At the age of twenty-one, Brown went off to serve in the army in the 27th Infantry, and after training was deployed to Siberia. To historians, his great contribution was not war medals or published biographies, but rather a collection of over thirty letters he wrote to his mother, Florentha Bowen Brown.

This work is one of great personal love and affection. To understand Delos Brown, there is only one source beyond the sometimes-vague letters that were locked away in a trunk. This one other source that remains is his granddaughter, Sandra Sodergren-Baar. Aged fifty-four, Sodergren-Baar is the great keeper of her family's history. It is to her that this author owes a great deal of gratitude. However, it also further complicates this story.

Only ten when her grandfather died, Sodergren-Baar is left with a large collection of personal memories of "Grandpa Brown." That being said, time is a threat to these memories. Since Sodergren-Baar had not yet been born when he went off to war, her knowledge of his life between May 1918 to August 1919 is second hand from her maternal grandmother, and Delos's widow, Caroline "Edith" Brown. This tension between physical documents and childhood memories is at the center of this unique study.

"A Soldier's Letters" is hence a story between what can be documented and what one person can remember. To lay out this story, the paper will first focus on a brief history of the events leading up to American intervention in Siberia, which gives background to Brown's story. Here the reader will understand how the American Expeditionary Forces came to be and what it attempted to accomplish. The second part of this paper will focus on the thirty-seven letters left to this historian to capture little over a year of Delos Brown's life in the armed services. The paper will focus on the day-to-day observations of a man who came from Midwest America and saw the world. The last part of the paper will focus on memory. These memories belong largely to Delos's second granddaughter and current teacher of history. Hopefully, this paper will give a unique experience to a little understood history of a man who served in the American Expeditionary Forces, and of a great-grandfather.

The American Expeditionary Force

Historian Betty Miller Unterberger, is convinced President Woodrow Wilson was not impressed with the idea to intervene in Siberia; Unterberger noted, "During the first six months of 1918 President Wilson was besieged with appeals for military intervention in Siberia."[1] The Triple Entente, consisting of Great Britain, France, and the U.S., feared the movement of German troops off the eastern borders. Russia, through the Treaty of Brest-

[1] Betty Miller Unterberger, "Wilson and the Decision to Send American Troops to Siberia," *The Pacific Historical Review* 24, no. 1 (Feb 1955): 63, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3635232 (accessed November 29, 2009).

Litvosk, had recently dropped out of the war and had made a separate peace (under the Bolshevik state), with Germany.[2] The allies were frantic to avoid Germany diverting all resources to the western front.

Author Robert J. Maddox writes of the critical situation of German troops from the eastern front attacking French and British troops, "the fact that German divisions formerly stationed on the Russian front had taken part in the assault and that more were in transit dramatized the pleas of the British and French that some action be taken in the East."[3] The Entente powers wanted Wilson to send troops to Siberia to force the Germans back to the eastern front. Futhermore, one of the Entente's many allies, Japan, also had interest in pushing further into Manchuria, toward Siberia.

The president was convinced the Japanese were only interested in Siberia for profit. According to Betty Miller Unterberger in her article "Wilson and the Decision to Send American Troops to Siberia," "[Wilson] had reason to believe that it was the Japanese who had originated the plan for invading Siberia, and that they wished the expedition to be exclusively Japanese in order to secure control of the maritime provinces."[4] Slow to trust the intentions of the Japanese, Wilson resisted sending in forces. While the president went back and forth on the matter, events were quickly unfolding.

The Japanese and the Chinese, under the direction of Admiral Aleksander Kolchak (leader of anti-Bolshevik government) were formalizing a plan for the Japanese to sweep into Manchuria to maintain authority.[5] The Czechs, in Russia, had fought along with the Tsarist government until the fall of the provisional government. Now they wished to secure assurances from the allies that an independent Czech nation would be formed from the ruins of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire.[6] However, the Czechs and Bolsheviks were at odds with each other and fighting erupted. Maddox states, "By late May, after a number of incidents and with the legion strung out along the railway, a small war erupted all across Siberia."[7] The author concludes, "The outbreak of fighting between Czechs and Bolsheviks seemed a boon to advocates of intervention, particularly the British and French."[8] It was true; the Czech problem had opened an opportunity for intervention to become possible. With pressure from the allies, and from his advisors, Wilson could not hold out any longer.

On July 6, 1918, Woodrow Wilson committed U.S. troops to Siberia to bolster the Czechs, along with the Japanese, convinced that the expedition was for the Czechs. Unterberger writes, "Military action in Russia was admissible only to help the "Czecho-slovaks consolidate their forces and get into successful cooperation with their Slavic kinsmen and to steady any efforts at self-government or self-defense in which the Russians themselves may be willing to accept assistance."[9] Major General William S. Graves led the command. Graves, head

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[2] Christopher Dobson and John Miller, *The Day They Almost Bombed Moscow: The Allied War in Russia 1918-1920* (New York: Atheneum, 1986), 37.
[3] Robert J. Maddox, *The Unknown War With Russia: Wilson's Siberian Intervention* (San Rafael CA, Presidio Press, 1977), 45.
[4] Betty Miller Unterberger, "Wilson and the Decision to Send American Troops to Siberia," *The Pacific Historical Review* 24, no. 1 (Feb 1955): 65, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3635232 (accessed November 29, 2009).
[5] Ibid., 70.
[6] Robert J. Maddox, *The Unknown War With Russia: Wilson's Siberian Intervention* (San Rafael CA, Presidio Press, 1977), 46-7.
[7] Ibid., 47.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Betty Miller Unterberger, "Wilson and the Decision to Send American Troops to Siberia," *The Pacific Historical Review* 24, no. 1 (Feb 1955): 72-3, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3635232 (accessed November 29, 2009).

of the Eighth Division, left Camp Fremont in California, and lead his men to Siberia.[10] It was here that Private Delos E. Brown arrived, for he too would follow Graves to Siberia as part of the American Expeditionary Forces.

The Soldier's Letters

"That's it," was my reply to seeing the handful of letters. My first response was excitement and joy. My great-grandfather's letters, often spoken of at family gatherings or on occasional summer evenings, were now sitting before me in a simple manila envelope. Slightly tattered from overuse, the envelope contained no less than thirty letters. Many of the tattered envelopes were no larger than five by three inches. Many of the envelopes, containing the original date and stamp, were in fairly good shape considering they were over ninety-years old.
Sandra Sodergren-Baar is the keeper of these letters. However, as their guardian, she was rather forgetful of their importance. The thirty-seven letters (several envelopes contained two or three extra letters placed inside) were stashed in a tattered manila envelope and placed rather haphazardly in a cardboard box and un-ceremoniously shoved in the back of her upstairs crawlspace. It can be inferred they have been in this crawlspace since Sodergren-Baar's mother, Bette Jane Sodergren, had left them to her after her death in 1999. For a brief sojourn out of 921 North Dixon Ave, Dixon IL, where they were kept, they were returned to the house and have sat mostly undisturbed for almost ten years. The knowledge of their location, what the letters looked like, and how many there were was unknown to anyone except Mrs. Sodergren-Baar.
"This isn't it,"[11] Sodergren-Baar said upon emptying the letters onto her dining room table. I was astonished. Delos Brown sent over thirty letters home from Siberia; it seemed impossible that there was more. Upon further inquiring, it was discovered that after Sodergren-Baar's mother died, the letters were split between the three children of Bette Sodergren. Mrs. Sodergren-Baar kept a handful of the letters, while her sisters, Mrs. Kristine Florczak and Mrs. Sara Wohrley, took what was left over. Sadly, this author was unable to acquire the letters from either sister. "We simply don't know how many letters there actually were."[12] With Sodergren-Baar being the only living decedent with extensive knowledge of her grandfather, this question may never be answered.
Delos Ellis Brown was born on April 4, 1896 to Samuel and Florentha Brown. He was the youngest of seven children. He had six elder brothers and one sister. Samuel "Grover" Brown is mentioned most often in the letters, as he was closet to his brother in age. His letters often contain mentions of well wishes to his family and there is a sense of closeness in his speaking of them.
Returning to the letters that do exist, they range from May 8th (post marked May 10th), 1918 and end with August 8, 1919. Much of the correspondence is best wishes to family in the states, and hoping to return before major holidays. Delos Brown does not mention how he came to join the army, but due to his rank as Private First Class, he is likely to have enlisted. Brown also does not mention how he came to return to the states. For nearly seventeen months, Delos Brown corresponded with his mother Florentha and father Samuel. It is thus appropriate to begin with Delos's first letter to his mother:

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[10] Robert J. Maddox, *The Unknown War With Russia: Wilson's Siberian Intervention* (San Rafael CA, Presidio Press, 1977), 56.
[11] Sandra Sodergren-Baar, interviewed by Tristan Sodergren-Baar, Dixon , IL, October 03, 2009.
[12] Ibid.

May 8, 1918

Dear Mother! I have arrived at my camp and l will be under a 10 day quarantine, so my address will be Camp Causal, Camp Fremont Cal. [California]. *So write to as often as you can, for I sure will be glad to hear from home. Our camp is at the foot of small mountain. I think I will like it fine. You use this address until you hear different. I thought they told me Cal. was a warm state. It is as cold hear as it was at home when I left. It is cold enough that they have a little stove in every tent. Well mother I will have to tell you a little about my trip out hear. We left Sterling May first, got into St. Louis Mo. Until 8:30 that night. Got out to Jefferson Barracks about 10. It is only ten miles from Saint Louis, so we stay there until Sat. afternoon until about 2 o'clock in the afternoon when we left for Cal. We went [through] eight states. Ill, Mississippi, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, N. Mexico, Arizona, Cal. Went clear through Mo, Kansas, [and] Oklahoma. Across the upper handle of Texas, across N. Mexico, Arizona, and almost across Cal. We crossed a small chain of Rockies. Through tunnels and deserts and a little of everything. I saw my first jack rabbit in N. Mexico. Well mother it is get to work to see to write will write when I have more to time. I am well and hope this finds you the same.*

With love, your Sammie boy.
Delos B.

Camp Causal
Camp Fremont
Cal.

P.S. I send love to all the folks and give them my best regards. D.B. [13]

Delos continued to close each letter with the same regards to his family. At the time this letter was written his father was already dying. Samuel Brown was in many of the letters, at one time seeming close to death. Even through this, Delos Brown always addressed his letters to his mother. His granddaughter, Sandra, asserted that he had a very close relationship with his mother, "He was her last child…her baby."[14] The letters indicated a strong bond between mother and child, which comes out more as Delos Brown faced further hardships:

June 12, 1918
Camp Fremont Cal.

Dear father and mother:
I am feeling fine now. Drilling every day, and eating three square meals a day. The boys here say I am getting fat. I haven't weighed since I came through J.B. [Jefferson Barracks]. *The weather is awful hot. It stood 96 in the shade yesterday. This is Wed. afternoon and it is a holiday for us and also Sat. afternoon until Sunday eve. 12 p.m. I like the army much better since I supper attached to my co. I sure do like to be with the boys. This training is sure going to make a man of us.* [Listen] *mother. I am a Regular*

[13] Delos E. Brown, Letter home to his mother, May 8, 1918. The letter is filled with spelling mistakes and fragmented sentences. It has been left largely in its original form.
[14] Sandra Sodergren-Baar, interviewed by Tristan Sodergren-Baar, Dixon, IL, October 03, 2009.

this 13th Inf. Is the only Regular soldiers left in the U.S.A. and when we get trained up we will be counted as Regular and they tell us that they can't leave to go a across under ten months. I don't know how much truth there is to it. I also heard that Germany has ten thousand soldiers in Mexico. If that is so we may stay right here or be held here for defense. Mother I am [sending] you and dad a book of post cards of scenes of Camp Fremont. I had a bunch of pictures taken and if they are good I will send you some of them, they are small. I had one taken with my best that I carry shells in and canteen and bayonets, and my rifle. Then I and another fellow had one or two taken, one with my bayonet on the end of my riffle. Did I send you one of my pictures that I had taken at J.B. Tomorrow is pay day for the older men of co. L, but poor Brownie don't get any. It tough but I can't help it. Well mother dear, don't forget you have son in the army that would like to hear from you at least once a week. It seems like ages since I heard from you. Tell Grover and sis to write for when I write I have to write to you all. Well mother I will have to close for it is get close to supper time.

Your son,
Delos E. Brown
Co. L. 13th Inf.[15]

The letters continue in this way. Brown spoke of the food, the heat, and the soldiers. On July 17th, he spoke kindly of his commanding officer, whom he felt was a nice guy who was very easy on his men. On July 17th, Brown went into detail about rifle training, and July 24th he spoke of using his gas mask. All the time he was stationed at Camp Fremont. By the 31st of July he was made a runner for his company commander and declared he was fighting this war for his parents. August 9th is an important letter because it is the first time he had some idea where he may be going. Brown was convinced they were not going to France, but rather Russia. By September 1, 1918, he was on a ship bound for Siberia. He then made a stop in Japan for coal. Here we see Brown's observations of the "funny Japanese." He was amazed at their hut like houses and cable cars:

Outari, Japan
September 25, 1918

Dear Mother,

This makes the sec. City that I have been in. The first one I was in was over 87,000, this place must be about 30,000…These Japs are sure funny people. They do all or most all the work themselves. I saw a Jap pull a load on a cart that I thought no man could move and he walked right off with it. Then the loads they carry on [their] backs is awful I don't see how they can do it. I saw a fellow with a load that looked like a house to me that he was carrying on his back.

And when you go in their houses you have to take your shoes off, did you ever hear the best of it. They have the funniest little two wheeled carts or buggies they ride in, they called Jinnie rickshaws and are pulled by the Japs.

I was surprised when I got up on there main st. and saw street cars running, they are very much like ours in the states.

[15] Delos E. Brown, Letter home to his mother, June 12, 1918. The letter is filled with spelling mistakes and fragmented sentences. It has been left largely in its original form.

There buildings are hardly over two stories high, they look more like huts then houses. I had to laugh at what they call their modern hotels. They have electric light but there beds are a couple of blankets on the floor and a block of wood under the head of it for a pillow. I was in hakadote, that was something I didn't think of seeing…

I am feeling fine and I am alright so don't worry mother. Will close for now, with love to all.

Your loving son,
Delos E. Brown.[16]

It is likely, from the fact that they were sailing to Siberia, "Outari" and "hakadote" were actually Otaru and Hakodate Japan. In these letters one can glimpse Brown's view of the Japanese and his astonishment that they had electricity and street cars. His racist views came to the surface when he spoke of their homes and their beds. He was amused at taking off his shoes and gave the "Japs" credit for being able to carry such burdens on their backs. This letter is significant because it captures his travels to Siberia. His letters from there are less than favorable. It is sufficient to say he largely hated the place from the moment he landed.

Verkhni Udinak, Siberia
May 11, [1919]
Private Delos E. Brown
Hqs Co. 27 Inf.
A.E.F. Siberia
To Depot Q.M.
San Francisco Calf.

Dearest Mother and Father!

We have all been asked by Co. Commander's to write home to our mothers, being mother's day, so I will and write a few lines to let you known I am well and feeling just fine. It took us ten and one half days to make our trip 2250 miles. We crossed the Shan-alin Mts., seen many little mts. Streams and went through several tunnels one was two miles long, and took 16 mins to go through it.

And from the mountains we [saw] *down on the plans, there we seen great herds of cattle and flocks of sheep, and places where the ground had been tilled. The country looks much better then that around Khabarovsk.*

We crossed through Manchuria China. We stopped about 6 hours Fin Harbiu China, was on train, guard that day so didn't get to see much of it, but what I did see of it was quite interesting. Everything is much cheaper that then any place I have been yet.

We crossed Gobi or Shamo Desert, it took two days to cross it. I saw several bunches of camels and some hitched up to wagon and carts pulling loads, they sure were a sight. I was in Manchuria City, Manchuria from there about three hours, Verkhni Udinak is about 80 miles east of Baikal Lake Siberia and about 250 miles from west of Chita. So if you want to know just where I am located look at the maps and find Baikal Lake and I am 80 miles east of there.

[16] Delos E. Brown, Letter home to his mother, September 25, 1918. The letter is filled with spelling mistakes and fragmented sentences. It has been left largely in its original form.

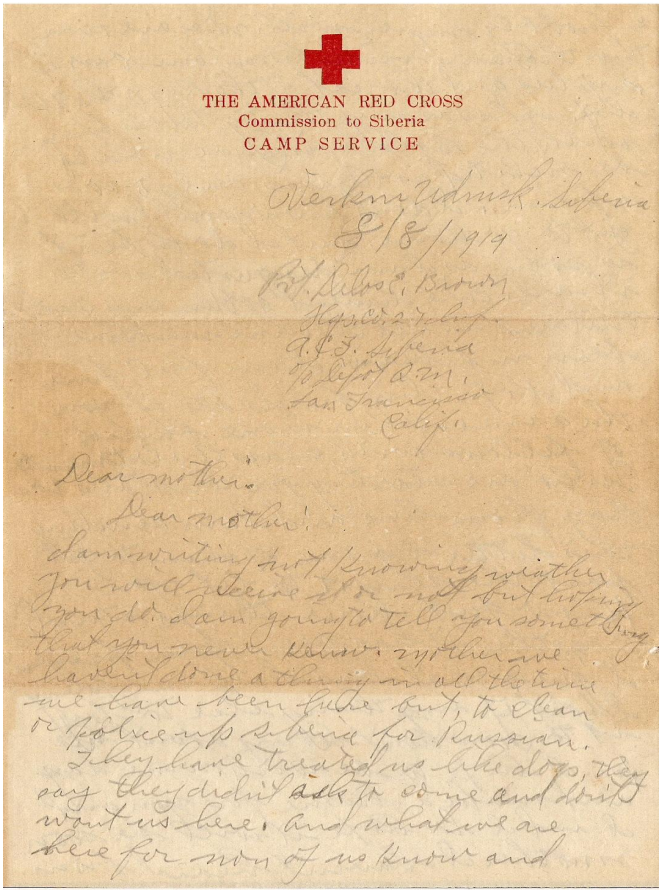
We are in camps and located in a pine timber, it is going to be a very pretty camp when it is completed.

Well mother will close with love and best regards to all

Your loving son
Pvt Delos E. Brown.[17]

One of the most important letters found among his correspondence, this letter allows historians to know exactly where he traveled once leaving Khabarovsk, Siberia. The detail, like his letter from Japan, creates a tiny window into which a student of the First World War can examine what a soldier lived through and might have thought.

By September 8, 1919, Brown was disenchanted with Siberia. He complained to his mother, "They have treated us like dogs, they say they didn't ask [us] to come here and don't want us here."[18] Delos hated being away from his home and family. It is unclear whether he wrote after this point, since the known letters stop here. By 1921 he was home again, much thinner then when he went into the army. His granddaughter tells of him contracting dysentery, which would plague him the rest of his life.[19] She is uncertain when exactly he came back to the U.S.


THE AMERICAN RED CROSS
Commission to Siberia
CAMP SERVICE

Dear mother.

Left: Delos Brown's last known letter from Siberia.

[17] Delos E. Brown, Letter home to his mother, May 11, 1919. The letter is filled with spelling mistakes and fragmented sentences. It has been left largely in its original form.

[18] Delos E. Brown, Letter home to his mother, August 08, 1919. The letter is filled with spelling mistakes and fragmented sentences. It has been left largely in its original form.

[19] Sandra Sodergren-Baar, interviewed by Tristan Sodergren-Baar, Dixon , IL, October 03, 2009.


Above left: Mr. Samuel Brown and Mrs. Florentha Brown (Bowen).
Above right: Private Delos Ellis Brown. Brown mentioned this photograph in his June 8, 1918 letter to his mother.

Below left: Mr. and Mrs. Delos Brown's first home in Sterling, IL.
Bellow right: Mrs. Samuel Brown stands center. On her right are Delos Brown, and his wife "Edith" Brown.



Above left: Delos's three children (left to right: Lois, Bette, and Richard).
Above right: A younger Delos with his wife Edith.

Below left: His eldest daughter's wedding day. His son in law is on leave from his base in California before he is sent to the Philippines.
Bellow right: An older couple. Delos and Edith would not have a happy marriage.


Above left: The Brown Family circa 1953.
Above right: Delos with his grandchildren. Left to right: Delos, Kristine, Sandra, and Sara. Sandra is the grandchild to whom this study is made possible.

Below left: Delos with his granddaughter Kristine. Delos would love to sit in his gardens and tell his grandchildren stories.
Below right: Delos, Edith, and Kristin

The Problem of Memory

Delos Ellis Brown died on February 22, 1965. His granddaughter Sandra, known as "Sandi" to her family, was only ten when her grandfather died of esophageal cancer.[20] The memory of her grandfather was thus captured in a few short years before his death and then stories told to her, by her maternal grandmother, Edith, after he was gone. "She was not a very nice woman,"[21] Sodergren-Baar said, looking at her pictures of her grandmother. Looking down

[20] Sandra Sodergren-Baar, interviewed by Tristan Sodergren-Baar, Dixon, IL, October 03, 2009.
[21] Ibid.

on the table, a rather severe looking woman stared back. Her round, dumpy face and dark eyes are captured in only a handful of color photos, none of which feature her husband.

After Delos's death, Edith Brown remained in her home, looked after by her daughter, Lois. Sodergren-Baar's grandparents lived right next door to her parents' home. Only a thin patch of earth separated the two buildings. In her youth, she said that she would spend time passing between the two houses, trying to capture the stories the older generation was always telling. "My grandmother would sit in her room and sew," Sodergren-Baar said, again looking at her grandmother, "She really was a great seamstress."[22] It was here she learned a lot about her grandfather and the life he led after he came home from the war.

According to Sodergren-Baar, Delos returned home with a ring for a girl who had jilted him. "The ring was a simple band, fourteen karat gold…a rosy color."[23] The ring, set with a turquoise colored diamond, suspended on a high setting, was an engagement ring. The ring was instead given to another woman. Caroline Elizabeth Ida Witzleb was the woman Delos married on August 3, 1921.[24] Known as "Edith," the two would not have a happy marriage. Their personalities were not suited for each other. "He was a gentle man," Sodergren-Baar said, "he was artistic, and handy, always making toys and telling us jokes and riddles."[25] She was less boastful of her grandmother. "She could make beautiful clothes that fit like a glove; but she was a slob and not very nice."[26] Sodergren-Baar confided that her grandmother really never liked her, and would watch her play from her bedroom window. "She would sit there and scowl," Sodergren-Baar said expressionless, "Imagine scowling at your own grandchild."[27] Years after she died, she said sometimes looks at that back window and can still see her looking back at her.

Delos Brown is very different for Sodergren-Baar. "I have two clear memories of my grandfather,"[28] she said, smiling. The first memory, she said, was of her grandfather's green recliner. Placed in Brown's dining room, it faced his garden. "He loved his gardens…you could probably call him a master gardener."[29] From that chair, Sandi, her two sisters, and her cousin Mike (son of Lois), would play checkers while her grandfather would tell jokes or read bible verses to them. "I can still see that perfectly combed white hair, and those wire framed glasses,"[30] Sodergren-Baar recalled. The second memory was shorter and less detailed. She remembered him sitting under his apple tree, and the grandchildren would again listen to him, as he would tell stories.

Sodergren-Baar dug deeper into her memory. "Grandpa Brown left the First World War with nothing…he didn't come home to a hero's welcome."[31] She insisted that men who came home from WWI did not receive the attention and respect of their fellow countryman like those who fought in WWII. "He came home, got married and had two daughters."[32] She then confided that Richard Brown was not Delos's biological son. "Everyone knew of course," she said, "It was a small town, people talked."[33] When asked what her grandfather thought of

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[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Obituary of Delos Ellis Brown, Dixon Telegraph, February 1965.
[25] Sandra Sodergren-Baar, interviewed by Tristan Sodergren-Baar, Dixon, IL, October 03, 2009.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.

Richard living with them, "My grandfather was a proud Southern gentleman, and where he came from that wasn't respectable."[34] She pressed further; "Richard was my great-aunt's bastard child she had in Chicago, and then dumped him on her parents…the Witzlebs."[35] The Witzlebs, Edith's parents, Sodergren-Baar confided, were well off and capable of taking in Richard. It seemed Richard could have lived quite nicely with any of the other Witzlebs, but he ended up with Delos and Edith. Grandpa Brown spent the rest of his adult life floating between jobs. "He worked as a night watchman and a janitor at the theater at one time."[36] It is insisted that his hatred for Richard went deeper than his birth. "He now had an extra mouth to feed, with no job, and a wife who worked all day as a seamstress."[37]

"He became an alcoholic…a terrible alcoholic."[38] According to Sodergren-Baar, Delos Brown, who made his own wine, would sit in the basement and drink during the day and then go to work at night. "My mother was always afraid to bring friends around…she never knew what state he would be in."[39] Sodergren-Baar is quick to defend her grandfather. "He was a loving man, but his wife was a bully, and she was bullied by her family…she was really a weak woman."[40] As for the children, Sodergren-Baar called them the "first latchkey kids,"[41] due to the fact that both parents were either working or would be gone during most days.

"He was a loving grandfather who loved his grandchildren…he would play with us and joke with us…never dirty jokes…but clever ones."[42] She insisted her grandfather was a clever man. She remembered how he was always telling jokes and riddles that made one think. "He was also always clean and tidy."[43] She told of him always being spotless. "His hair was always combed and he either wore a sport's coat or a suit."[44] Sodergren-Baar compared her grandfather with her grandmother. "She was always messy…food always down her front, no makeup, her hair wild."[45] She concluded her discussion of her grandfather by saying, "I miss him."[46]

Sandra Sodergren-Baar, as previously stated above is fifty-four years old. She was ten when cancer took her Grandpa Brown. However, her personal memories, those of which she witnessed, seem clear as day. She never had a problem coming up with the larger details of his life, of which she knew of and what was told to her. Her grandmother, Edith, she confided, told her of the ring and her hatred of it. "It was brought back for another woman…I don't think I ever saw her wear it."[47] Grandma Edith was always the one who explained who Grandpa Brown's family was. Sandra Sodergren-Baar was the only one who listened to the stories. It was because of this, Sodergren-Baar claimed, that she knows so much about Delos Brown and the rest of her family. "I was the only one who listened…my sisters would be off playing and I stayed and listened to my grandmother talk."[48] She admitted, "It's ironic that I listened to that woman and I don't think she even liked me."[49]

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[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.

This comes to the central problem of this paper. In delivering this information, there has been one essential issue to discuss; memory. Sodergren-Baar knows so much about her grandfather because she was "told" that is what happened. To a discerning historian, this seems problematic. The first problem is there is no way to check her stories. Her grandmother has been dead for twenty-five years. Her Aunt Lois died sixteen-years ago. As for her mother, she too is gone. Who is left of the older generation to verifying these events? "Richard didn't stay around very much," Sodergren-Baar said, "their relationship was ruined."[50] As soon as he could he left his parents' home, so his memory of his father is only half the story. The second problem being that nothing is written down. Sodergren-Baar recalls all of this information from the recesses of her mind. She alone is able to recall all these events by sheer memory, unlike the letters, which match dates of movements and are tangible pieces of evidence. Sodergren-Baar, it seems, must be left at her word.

How then does one piece this story together? It is clear that Delos Brown was literate and was able to make frank observations of his surroundings. He was present when his troops moved about, but did not write of specific details of what his fellow men were doing. In his last letter he confided that he himself did not know why he was in Siberia. What is clear and can be taken from the letters is what kind of man he was. He loved his mother, which is obvious from the way he wrote to her. However, the letters are only half the story. They are also only half of the correspondence. What of Florentha's letters to her son? What of the other relatives who wrote to Delos Brown when he was overseas? Sandra Sodergren-Baar has no idea where they could be. This leaves only Delos's word on the matter. Again, the historian is given only a fragment. How, then, is this important? Brown's letters home are important because they give the view of a man who served in war. While no battles were recalled, and no medals were won, his personal observations of Camp Fremont, Japan and Siberia give the reader a glimpse of army life between 1918 and 1919. He captured the scenery of the many places he visited and perhaps allowed the twenty-first century to see into the mind of a mid-western boy.

Conclusion

This paper was emotional to write. I never personally knew Delos Brown, and he exists for me only in a handful of dusty letters and black and white photographs. To me, he is a name among many that dot my family tree. He is not alive to me like he is to my mother. Yet, he is important to me. His life is my life and his blood is my blood. We are kin, even though we never met and he never knew of me. His first letter was postmarked May 10, 1918, sixty-six years to the day before I was born. The stories my mother told, the letters I read, the photographs we shared, all affected me more than I could possibly imagine.

Delos Ellis Brown was a Private First Class from the 27th Infantry who served in Siberia during the last days of World War One. His letters are a constant reminder of the soldier's life. Contained in this correspondence are the memories of a man who loved his mother and loved his country. At times the letters tell of a man who is bored and lonely for home. On the other hand, many finish with great patriotism and determination to push through and crush the enemy. While these letters only give a glimpse of the larger world and the people who dominate its politics, it is yet another angle in which to examine the human spirit. They also leave behind unanswered questions of Delos Brown's life. What is known today, largely about his life, comes from his wife Edith who told her granddaughter Sandra. One person telling about a life that has long since left the world is difficult. There is no way to know if it's right or wrong; true or false. It is a constant work that evolves every day and it is the hope of this

[50] Ibid.

author to continue delving further into his great-grandfather's letters and life to retrieve more of the son, the soldier, and the grandfather.

List of Letters by Date:

May 08, 1918
May 15, 1918
May 20, 1918
May 25, 1918
June 03, 1918
June 08, 1918
June 12, 1918
June 16, 1918
June 22, 1918
July 04, 1918
July 17, 1918
July 23, 1918
July 24, 1918
July 31, 1918
August 09, 1918
August 10, 1918
August 12, 1918
August 18, 1918
*September 01, 1918
September 21, 1918
September 25, 1918
September 29, 1918
November 07, 1918
November 17, 1918
December 05, 1918
January 03, 1919
January 11, 1919
January 14, 1919
March 11, 1919
April 13, 1919
April 17, 1919
May 11, 1919
June 07, 1919
June 13, 1919
June 24, 1919
*June 30, 1919
August, 08, 1919

* Denotes two letters with similar dates

World War One and Its Affects Upon a Family in Mattoon, Illinois

Margaret E. Hawkins

The Great War, after its commencement in 1914, became known as World War I, quite frankly, because it affected almost every continent. All over the world, lives were touched either directly or indirectly. Nations gave millions upon millions of their men to the war cause. Even women and children participated in the war effort. As all attention turned to the war, the economies of the leading nations became war-time economies. Such changes included the factories which began to produce ammunitions and families suffering through food rationing.

Though statistical sources vary widely, one estimate of the Allied Powers states that of 42,188,810 mobilized troops, there was a rate of 52.3% lost, including 5,142,631 killed, 12,800,706 wounded, and 4,121,090 listed as prisoners of war or missing. These estimates are comprised only of France, the British Empire, the United States, Russia, Italy, Japan, Romania, Serbia, Belgium, Greece, Portugal and Montenegro. Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria show that of 22,850,000 mobilized troops, 3,386,200 were killed, 8,388,448 were wounded, and 3,629,829 were counted as prisoners of war or missing, making the total casualty rate 67.4% (See Table I).[1]

My own life has been affected by World War I, though it happened over ninety years ago. My paternal grandmother's father, Russell Julius Mouser, served during WWI. Born in 1893 in Missouri, he enlisted voluntarily. After training in Fort Riley, Kansas, he went to Toul, France to help set up a field hospital and a field kitchen, where he worked as a cook for the duration of the war. His first cousin, Alvie Gladdish, went with him, and they remained together until the war's end. Both returned safely. Mouser later set up a bakery, where he worked for a further 23 years.

My paternal grandmother's ancestry is completely German. Both sides of her family, the Mouser side and the Eaker side, came over to the United States sometime in the eighteenth century. One interesting observation that my grandmother, Jacquinot Mouser-Hawkins, makes about the remnants of her German ancestry is that "the family always stood very erect…always at attention…and they took great pride in appearing like that."

Despite his German ancestry, Hawkins remembers her father as being very patriotic. He was 42 when she was born some twenty years after WWI, and he did not speak often of the war, but he spoke enough that my grandmother could garner some of his opinions. He was "very glad for our country," and he always flew the American flag at his bakery. At a young age, he taught my grandmother to care for that flag, talking to her about all the people who have died for it. As a cook in the field hospital, he did not see actual combat, but he was nevertheless glad to return home. He disliked France, thinking it to be "a dirty country," and in his opinion, not only was America cleaner, it was also "a better country." As far as support for the war, Mouser did not see the war as useless, but instead "it had to be."[2]

His patriotic views, even his unwavering support for America's involvement in war, have filtered down through the generations. My grandfather, Hawkins' spouse, served in the Korean War with the full support of my grandmother. Their patriotism has affected me greatly. When my sister and I would visit them as children, we would travel all over Illinois and Missouri to historical sites, instilling within me an early interest in history that has carried on to the

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[1] "WWI Casualty and Death Tables," available from http://www.pbs.org/greatwar/resources/casdeath_pop.html; Internet; accessed 7 Dec 2009.

[2] Jacquinot Mouser-Hawkins, interview by author, 29 November 2009.

present. My grandmother also sparked my interest in genealogy as she taught me to take pride in my ancestors. The values of her father exist even today in our family.


Walter Gacek I, b. 1898, d. 1965

My maternal grandmother's grandfather also served during World War I. Walter Gacek, born 1898, came from Bochnia, Poland to Chicago, Illinois, sometime before 1917. My grandmother, Carole Gacek-Kuzmickas, has no knowledge of his participation in World War I, but she has found a photo of him in a military uniform. His age appears to be in the late teens, which puts the time at approximately World War I. We think that at this time, he most likely was in America, and so it is possible that he served during World War I for the United States. However, we can find no records to confirm this, and it remains a family mystery. The only certainty we hold is that this photo is indeed of Walter Gacek I.[3]

My maternal grandfather's ancestors also came from Poland in the same generation. My grandfather's maternal grandfather came from Poland in the early 1900's, and his surname was Antczak. He served during WWI as a United States Army messenger, and at some point during the war, he died. His daughter, my great-grandmother, was very young, and as a result, did not remember much about her father. The repercussions of his death were severe for my grandfather cannot even recall his own grandfather's first name. He knows nothing about "Grandfather Antzcak," except that he died during the Great War, and as a result, I do not even know my great-great-grandfather's name. We have no pictures, no records and no memorabilia of any kind. My great-great-grandfather and his memory were completely lost during the Great War.[4]

World War I had repercussions not only for my family, but the area I grew up in as well. I was born in Mattoon, Illinois, and I have lived in Coles and neighboring Cumberland County all of my life. In the early years of my childhood, my parents bounced back and forth several times between Mattoon and Charleston. When I was in my early teens, my mother moved my sister and me to Toledo, Illinois, in Cumberland County, and I returned to Charleston in my early twenties.

It is a testimony to the scope of WWI that its fire could be felt all the way in the rural Midwest, and there are indeed small reminders of the war still in Coles County. I have found little information on Mattoon during the span of WWI, and indeed, there is more information available on Mattoon during the Civil War. The reason for this, I believe, is the devastating tornado that swept through Coles County on 26 May 1917, just days after the draft was announced. The tornado, at ½ mile wide with hail 7 ½ inches across, killed 64 people, injured 467, destroyed 496 homes, 4 industrial plants, 3 churches, 4 schools, and partially destroyed 143 more homes and damaged 200.[5] Throughout all U.S. involvement in WWI, the City Council Committee Minutes make no mention of the war, the draft, the war effort, or the soldiers. Once the tornado hit, recovery and rebuilding dominated the conversation of the City Council. Only once, on 1 October 1918, do the minutes make reference to the war, merely noting that the Legal Advisory Board of the Selective Service Dept. of the U.S. Army was using

[3] Carole Gacek-Kuzmickas, interview by author, 9 October 2009.
[4] Ronald Schon, interview by author, 13 October 2009.
[5] "Mattoon Memories," Souvenir Program from Mattoon Sesquicentennial 1855-2005, 29 September-2 October 2005, Timeline compiled by Chris Rankin and Joyce St. Michael (Mattoon: Spectrum Printing) found in Carnegie Library, Charleston, IL.

the City Council room to transact "official business," so the City Council meeting had been moved to another room.[6]

Other random tidbits of information can be found concerning Mattoon during WWI. For instance, the railroad station in Mattoon brought the war home. In May 1915, trains carrying 100,000 horses destined for the battlefields of Europe passed though Mattoon. When the Mattoon Theater was destroyed by fire in 1916, a WWI army tank was used to demolish the remaining structure as a war bond raising stunt. On May 25, 1917, the day before the tornado struck, the Red Cross was organized in Mattoon, and 18 year old Ruth Easton was one of the first volunteers. She served 85 years. The Spanish influenza struck Mattoon in 1918, forcing the city to close all schools, theaters and churches during its October peak. That month alone saw 374 patients inflicted with the influenza and 13 dead from it.[7]

In the December 1919 issue[8] of the Mattoon High School yearbook, the name had changed from "Green and Gold" to "The Riddle," in honor of Sgt. Lawrence Riddle, a Mattoon High School alumni who died in the war. The dedication reads:

> When the call came for men to aid the country, many of the pupils and alumni of our High School answered, but the only alumnus who did not return was Sgt. Lawrence Riddle. He paid the supreme sacrifice. We, as a school body, wish to honor him in some way, so we call our magazine 'The Riddle."[9]

To this day, the Mattoon High School yearbook retains that title.

An extensive search through *Soldiers of the Great War*, a compilation of soldiers who became casualties from death, wounds or disappearance with or without explanation during WWI, yielded the names of ten soldiers from Mattoon, IL. There were five killed in action – Sgt. Lawrence Scott Riddle, Pvt. Elmer E. Hamilton, Pvt. Lawrence C. Reed, Pvt. Loy Whalen, and Pvt. Samuel F. Leitch. Four men, Sgt. Ray A. Wilson, Cpl. Roy Matthews, Mechanic Arthur W. Vann, and Pvt. Charles R. Hicks, died of disease, and Pvt. Frank J. Fitzgerald died from his wounds.[10]

I also found a Mattoon resident who had a family member that served during WWI. Butch Ealy's great-uncle, Charles Miller, had ancestors that came here from Germany. According to Ealy, his grandparents put Miller's father on a ship bound for America "because he couldn't kill people." Miller

Charles Miller, courtesy of Butch Ealy.

[6] City Council Committee Minutes, Mattoon, found in Mattoon Public Library.
[7] "Mattoon Memories," Souvenir Program from Mattoon Sesquicentennial 1855-2005, 29 September-2 October 2005, Timeline compiled by Chris Rankin and Joyce St. Michael (Mattoon: Spectrum Printing) found in Carnegie Library, Charleston, IL.
[8] The 1917 issue makes no mention of the war, and the 1918 issue could not be found by the author.
[9] *The Riddle Yearbook*, Mattoon High School, Mattoon, IL, Dec 1919.
[10] *Soldiers of the Great War*, vol. I, compiled by W.M. Haulsee, F.G. Howe and A. C. Doyle (Washington, D.C.: Soldiers Record Publishing Association, 1920).

WWI Memorial, Charleston, IL

served in France, and when he returned, refused to speak about the war. Ealy recalls that Miller suffered from shell shock, the most notable effect being constant tremors, but Ealy comments that "behind the wheel he was as steady as can be."[11]

Charleston, Mattoon's neighboring city as well as the county seat, provided a great deal more information on the intrusion of the war than Mattoon, despite the fact that the same tornado that devastated Mattoon and stole its complete concentration for two years also ripped through Charleston. The prevailing public opinion of WWI in Charleston centered against the war; on the belief that the U.S. had no business getting involved. On 18 May 1917, the announcement of the draft was in the Charleston Courier, and just eight days later, the tornado swept through Coles County. Just like in Mattoon, the Red Cross had been organized prior to the tornado, and it became instrumental in the weeks following. The Charleston war effort coincided with the tornado clean-up effort, and women knitted woolen sweaters, rolled bandages, held book drives to donate to soldiers' camp libraries, and saved fruit pits, which were burned and used to provide charcoal filters for gas masks. Businessmen devoted portions of their advertisements to slogans such as "Be Prepared," "Your Country Calls," and "America Must Feed the World."[12]

On 29 August 1917, festivities were held for the first group of Coles County soldiers to leave for the war. Days later, 5 September 1917, the first farewell demonstration was held, and hundreds showed up to bid farewell to the 12 departing soldiers.[13]

Patriotic Community Sings were held during the summer of 1918, where songs like "Rally 'round the Flag," "Pack Up Your Troubles," and "Over There" filled Charleston's town square. To assist the war effort, women served special meals on meatless days, wheatless days and sugarless days, concocting inventive recipes for conservation. Farmers in the area worked diligently to produce more food, and L.C. Lord, wife of Eastern Illinois University president Livingston Lord, announced free classes for area women where they could learn practical bandaging, first aid, telegraphy, typewriting, stenography, making war bread and canning.[14]

When Armistice Day arrived, public schools were dismissed, and two peace parades were held. The Charleston Courier stated, "Charleston was jubiliant all day long and the celebration was remarkable. Never in the history of Charleston was there enacted a scene as was in those early hours before dawn, when the courier's bulletins were fresh and people gave themselves up to joy spontaneous and unrestrained."[15]

A large board was erected on the courthouse lawn of the square, bearing the names of all soldiers and sailors of Coles County with a star to indicate their safe return. Today, a WWI monument stands on the southwest corner of the square, bearing twenty-one names. The

[11] Butch Ealy, interview by author, 22 October 2009.
[12] Nancy Easter-Shick and Bonnie Brooks Clark, *'Round the Square: Life in Downtown Charleston, Illinois 1830-1998* (Charleston, IL: Easter Chick Publishing, 1999), 209-212.
[13] Ibid, 212-215.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid, 216.

Close-up of WWI Memorial, Charleston

inscription reads, "The American Legion has erected this memorial in commemoration of the patriotism, love of country, and devotion to duty of our comrades who gave their lives in the service of humanity in the World War, 1914-1918." Of all the names listed on this memorial, only Cpl. Fred R. Dunn, Pvt. Adolphus B. Curtis and Pvt. James E. Rauch are listed in *Soldiers of the Great War*.[16]

The 1917 issue of the Charleston High School yearbook contains nothing on the war. However, the 1918 yearbook was entitled, "War Annual," and had quite a deal of war-time material within. The dedication of the yearbook reads, "To those members of the Faculty, Alumni and Undergraduates of Charleston High School, who, for the love of our country and the democracy it represents, have so nobly offered themselves for military service during the present national crisis, we respectfully dedicate this war annual."[17] The yearbook begins with an eloquent, patriotic speech from Woodrow Wilson, who says, "It is a fearful thing to lead this great, peaceful people into war, into the most terrible and disastrous of all wars, civilization itself seeming to be in the balance." Wilson advocates the protection of democracy, explaining how the United States was fighting for "the things which we have always carried nearest to our hearts," democracy, rights and liberties. He concludes by saying:

> To such a task we can dedicate our lives and our fortunes, everything that we are and everything that we have, with the pride of those who know that the day has come when America is privileged to spend her blood and her might for the principles that gave her birth and happiness and the peace which she has treasured. God helping her, she can do no other.[18]

This speech, beginning the *War Annual*, reflects the pro-war and pro-America sentiment held throughout the yearbook.

The *War Annual* contained an article on democracy, reminding readers of the values on which America had been built. It emphasized 'mutual responsibility,' maintaining that "each member contributes to the welfare of each and recieves all that it can give." The article also declared that schools were vital to the sustenance of democracy, and that they should be kept as intact as possible during the war, because after the war "will be needed men of trained minds and faculties, able to do their share in the great work of the reorganization and rebuilding of our social fabric." The author recognized democracy as a spirit, a human force that "has the power to overcome Czars and Kaisers."[19]

Further influence of the war can be seen in the senior and junior class poems. The senior class poem contains a stanza reading, "Some will go forth to battle/For freedom and for

[16] *Soldiers of the Great War*, vol. I.
[17] *War Annual*, Charleston High School 1918 Yearbook, Charleston, IL (Charleston, IL: Prather the Printer, 1918), found in Carnegie Library, Charleston, IL.
[18] Ibid, 5.
[19] Ibid, 14.

right;/Others will do their bit at home/Each helping with his might." The entire junior class poem took on a brilliant military theme throughout, using military terminology to describe their school life. For example, the opening stanza reads, "The Juniors started, one and all,/To fight their battles large and small/Their armor thick consisted of/Intentions all the best/As, "Study Hard" and "Whisper Not,"/And "Pass on every test."[20]

The 1917 tornado is also mentioned in the yearbook, citing 35 dead in Charleston and 104 in Coles County, and it recalls the invaluable help of the Red Cross.[21] A later article spoke of the departure of the Red Cross for Europe, stating, "Near the close of the last semester of their senior year, the entire class, both boys and girls, had resolved to enter the service of Uncle Sam, which decision, I think, was highly commendable, in these troublous times when our beloved country was in need of all the help that was available." The article mentions the girls, in their Red Cross uniforms, leaving Norfolk, Virginia bound for the American hospital at Neuilly, France. Only male names are mentioned by the author, 9 of the 17 boys in the senior class of Charleston High School. According to the author, Herbert Anderson, Frank Moffett, and "Doc" (student unknown) were three seniors who enlisted in the U.S. Navy and had a brush with a submarine, but survived. Raymond Goodwin and Trevor K. Serviss worked in Nieuport scouting aeroplanes. Allie Sanderson became a Major-General, and Harold Cavins, author of the senior class poem, a radio operator. Chester E. Faust and Paul Bailey had the 'hazardous duties' of balloon observers, and "Tripp," who could be either Charles Tripp or Leo Tripp, was in the army band. The author alludes that the others not mentioned by name were machine gun operators and ambulence drivers.[22]

A long article in the *War Annual*, written by senior John Conrad, explains why he thinks America is at war. He asked students and elders that very question, and received varied responses such as, "Because they murdered American citizens," "To make the world safe for Democracy," "Because we sold supplies to the Allies," and, my personal favorite, "Because the Germans thought they could whip the whole world." Conrad insists that the people, who "abhor war," should shoulder the responsibility for America's unpreparedness upon our entrance into WWI. Interestingly, Conrad's own explanation of why America entered the war focuses on German atrocities. He tells of the German soldier who "drove his bayonet into a child's stomach, lifted the child into the air and carried it away on his bayonet," along with other reports of the merciless slaughter of children. He also speaks of the actions of Germany, who had always been our 'friend and neighbor,' against the United States, such as the sinking of neutral American ships.[23]

The most note-worthy aspect of not only this article, but the entire *War Annual* itself, is the avid patriotism of the students. If Charleston's public opinion was, as mentioned earlier, against the war, it really speaks to the effectiveness of the United States propaganda campaign that the students held such a radically different opinion of the war.

Mary J. Booth, photo courtesy of 'Round the Square.

Eastern Illinois University, then known as the Eastern Illinois State Normal School, also caught the war spirit that infected Charleston High School. On 18 April 1917, the first of Eastern's volunteers enlisted, and eventually, 11 of the 17 boys of the 1917 class entered military service. Eastern's librarian, Mary Josephine Booth, took a leave of absence to work for the Red Cross in France and Germany. She was the only faculty

[20] Ibid, 24, 35.
[21] Ibid, 38.
[22] Ibid, 50.
[23] Ibid, 42-3.

member to serve during WWI, but over 200 former students and 4 former faculty members took their turn to fight for America.[24]

Anti-German sentiment at this time forcibly changed the school song, which had been previously sung to the tune of "The Watch on the Rhine." The music was rewritten by Friederick Koch, a native of Germany and the Music Master at Eastern. Koch was repeatedly harrassed, though he had U.S. citizenship and remained loyal to America.[25] While falsely believed to be a German sympathizer, it was true that nearly all of his family was fighting for Germany.[26] There exists a story of Eastern's president, Livingston Lord, giving Koch fifty dollars to buy his first war bond, and luckily, when later asked by the Secret Service if he had bought any, he was able to say yes.[27]

According to Isabel McKinney, a biographer of Lord, "He did his best to hold the school steady against the tidal wave of prejudice, hate, distorted values, disordered morals which war always heaves over the land." When faced with a clamor to drop the German language from the curriculum, Lord is said to have replied, "Not from knowledge of German, but from ignorance of it, do we get into trouble."[28]

The German language was indeed omitted from the curriculum during the 1918-1919 school year, and it did not reappear until the 1926-1927 school year. The German teacher, Ruth Carmen, taught Latin during this time.[29] However, the discontinuation of German did not result from the pressure of the community, but because of unpopularity. It was kept in the school until the class size fell to two students, and was restored as quickly as possible with a class of five.[30]

The 1919 yearbook of Eastern, the*Warbler*, holds within its pages some of the influences of WWI; more so than Mattoon High School, but less than Charleston High School. The yearbook dedication reads, "To the memory of those of our former students and alumni who gave their lives in the service of their country, we respectfully dedicate this annual."[31]

Mary J. Booth received her own page in the yearbook, along with a short summary of her war-time work. She was sent to France as a canteen worker after she enlisted in the Red Cross in the fall of 1917. From there, she was sent to Paris under the auspices of the American Library Association, and at the time of the yearbook's publication, she was sent to Cobelnz, Germany by the ALA after the Armistice.[32]

The yearbook also speaks of a Better Speech Carnival, held November 10-17, 1918. The carnival was intended to help the war effort by the "Americanizing of the Americans," and promoting better English. Furthermore, it contains a lengthy poem by Cpl. Maurice A. Bryant about the war. The poem is mostly about the journey of the soldiers to Europe, emphasizing the effort, if not the actions of the United States soldiers. The last three stanzas exemplify his meaning:

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[24] *Eastern Illinois University Centennial*, (Paducah, KY: Turner Publishing Company, 1995), 20.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Isabel McKinney, *Mr. Lord: The Life and Words of Livingston C. Lord* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1937), 274.
[27] *Eastern Illinois University Centennial*, 21.
[28] McKinney, *Mr. Lord*, 273.
[29] "A History of the Department of Foreign Languages, Eastern Illinois University," Elizabeth Michael, Martin M. Miess, Paul Kirby and Gerald F. Carr (Eastern Illinois University May 1974), 4-5.
[30] McKinney, *Mr. Lord*, 274.
[31] *Warbler*, 1919 Eastern Illinois State Normal School yearbook (Charleston, IL: Prather the Printer, 1919).
[32] Ibid, 54.

When we land at a port cross the ocean
And each of us goes to our homes,
We may not have wounds from the bullets
But many will have broken bones [from the hard journey to Europe].

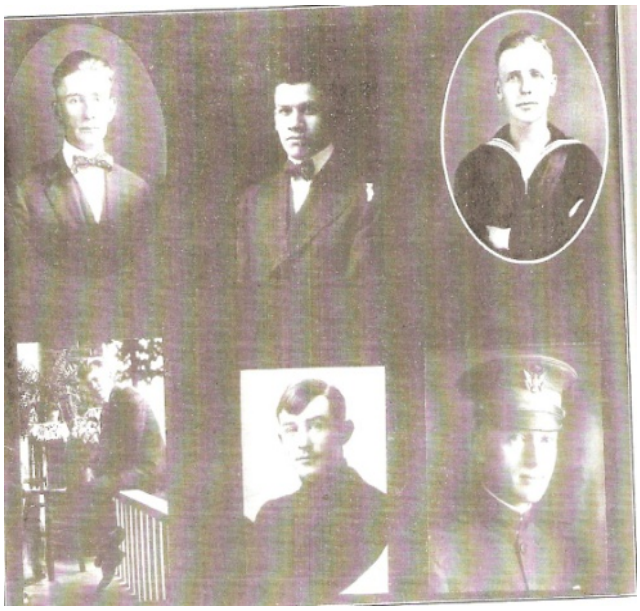
We may not have handled the rifle,
But the combatants' battles are won,
While we in the remounts are fighting
The war for us guys is still on.

But wait till some fine sunny morning
We'll go back o'er the sea just like you,
And the folks back at home will receive us
And call us real soldiers true blue.[33]

His poem is interesting, focusing on the contributions of those who did not make it to Europe in time to see combat. It seems to reflect the spirit on the homefront, showing that regardless of the individual contributions of the men and women in WWI, everyone was considered important to the war effort.

Even the Athletics section of the yearbook bore traces of the war, lamenting that the war came as a jolt to the Athletic department when 5 of the best athletes enlisted in 1918. Stephen Turner, Merrell McCabe, Ralph Adams, Dale Coyle and Horace Gray all left their comfortable lives at Eastern to fight in WWI.[34] It appears that all 5 survived, for none are mentioned in the School War Record page of the *Warbler*.

The War Record article claims 249 blue stars (soldiers on active duty) and 8 gold stars (soldiers deceased during service) on Eastern's service flag. The article does not boast of this fact, stating, "These boys who went into the service did only what hundreds of thousands of loyal Americans did…But they made the greatest sacrifice that human beings can, and it is of these, and of the others that went willingly to make that sacrifice, that we are rightfully proud." The article remembers the eight that perished, and though three died of disease in America, it maintains that "every one died like a true American, with courage unshaken by fear." The article announces that none died in vain, for they are recognized as giving their lives for their country and therefore earn the respect, admiration and love of Eastern and the United States citizenry. It also praises the soldiers who returned home, declaring that not one of Eastern's service stars were soiled by 'a disloyal act or shirking of responsibility.' The homefront is



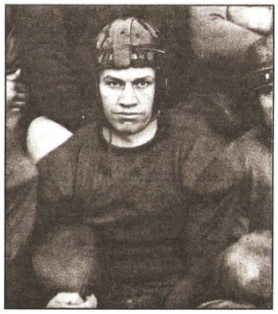
Eight stars of the fallen. 1919 Warbler.

[33] Ibid, 71, 93.
[34] Ibid, 79.

also mentioned, those who bought Liberty Bonds, gave to war-relief and helped out in any way possible, but the article reminds that the soldiers "were the ones who really won this war, no matter how much the rest of us helped, and it is to them that the honor belongs."[35]

The eight stars of the fallen belong to Bruce Leamon, Cpl. Martin Schahrer, Ralph Winkleblack, Cpl. John Balch, Cpl. Fred Dunn and Lt. Andrew Dunn, from top left to bottom right in the picture. Fred Pearcy and Burt Chenoweth (both not pictured), along with Winkleblack, died of disease in the United States, all in 1918. Fred Dunn, Andrew Dunn, Balch, Leamon and Schahrer were all killed in action in 1918.[36]

Martin "Otto" Schahrer was a particularly regretable loss for Eastern. Schahrer was 1916 football captain and 1917 class president. When he enlisted, he became a corporal in the Co. I, 6th Inf. Division. He died on 15 September 1918, during the St. Mihiel Offensive, and the football field and track were named Schahrer Field.[37]


Martin "Otto" Schahrer

An accurate, complete number of causalties from WWI does not exist. Nancy Easter-Schick and Bonnie Brooks Clark cite 24 deaths from Coles County.[38] *Soldiers of the Great War* totals the casualties of just Mattoon and Charleston at 13, with only 3 from Charleston. The Charleston WWI Memorial claims 21 deaths, including the 3 cited in *Soldiers of the Great War*. However, it also claims Martin Schahrer and 6 others from Eastern's lists, however, no records of their hometowns could be found.

The Charleston memorial also excludes Paul McVey, the first WWI casualty from Coles County. Pvt. Paul Rutherford McVey was employed as a blacksmith in Charleston, but enlisted in November 1916 via Canada. He was killed in action on 26 August 1917, and his remains are buried on French soil in a French national cemetary. His obituary reads, "The death of Paul McVey brings to the people of this community a closer realization of what our entrance into the great struggle may mean to a number of our people."[39]

Like my great-great-grandfather, some may have simply been lost, completely consumed from memory by the Great War. Others may be simply forgotten. Either way, I would never claim this paper as a complete list of WWI casualties from Mattoon and Charleston. So many were lost, from every nation that fought in the war, that there probably will never be a fully complete, accurate account of the millions of soldiers that fought during World War I. The lost, including my great-great-grandfather, are the true victims of the Great War, those erased from memory by that horrible event.

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[35] Ibid, 51.
[36] Ibid, 50.
[37] *Eastern Illinois University Centennial*, 20.
[38] Easter-Schick and Clark, *'Round the Square*, 195.
[39] "Paul McVey Obituary" *Charleston Courier* 8 September 1917.

Table I.

Country	Total Mobilized Forces	Killed	Wounded	Prisoners and Missing	Total Casualties	Casualties as % of Forces
ALLIED AND ASSOCIATED POWERS						
Russia	12,000,000	1,700,000	4,950,000	2,500,000	9,150,000	76.3
British Empire	8,904,467	908,371	2,090,212	191,652	3,190,235	35.8
France	8,410,000	1,357,800	4,266,000	537,000	6,160,800	73.3
Italy	5,615,000	650,000	947,000	600,000	2,197,000	39.1
United States	4,355,000	116,516	204,002	4,500	323,018	7.1
Japan	800,000	300	907	3	1,210	0.2
Romania	750,000	335,706	120,000	80,000	535,706	71.4
Serbia	707,343	45,000	133,148	152,958	331,106	46.8
Belgium	267,000	13,716	44,686	34,659	93,061	34.9
Greece	230,000	5,000	21,000	1,000	27,000	11.7
Portugal	100,000	7,222	13,751	12,318	33,291	33.3
Montenegro	50,000	3,000	10,000	7,000	20,000	40.0
TOTAL	**42,188,810**	**5,142,631**	**12,800,706**	**4,121,090**	**22,062,427**	**52.3**
ALLIED AND ASSOCIATED POWERS						
Germany	11,000,000	1,773,700	4,216,058	1,152,800	7,142,558	64.9
Austria-Hungary	7,800,000	1,200,000	3,620,000	2,200,000	7,020,000	90.0
Turkey	2,850,000	325,000	400,000	250,000	975,000	34.2
Bulgaria	1,200,000	87,500	152,390	27,029	266,919	22.2
TOTAL	**22,850,000**	**3,386,200**	**8,388,448**	**3,629,829**	**15,404,477**	**67.4**
GRAND TOTAL	**65,038,810**	**8,528,831**	**21,189,154**	**7,750,919**	**37,466,904**	**57.5**

The Saga of the Great War

Noah Sangster

The First World War began in the summer of 1914, following the assassination of the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary in Sarajevo. The conflict sparked between Austria-Hungary and the small Balkan nation of Serbia escalated quickly as Russia, Germany, France, and Britain entered into the largest-scale war since the defeat of Napoleon. In addition to the major European powers, the war also encompassed their colonies and allies around the world, and saw battles on three continents, at sea, and in the air. By the time that the United States entered the war in April of 1917, the belligerent powers had already drenched the battlefields of Europe in blood, and thousands of soldiers and civilians had perished.

Although the United States fought in the war for less than two years, the war left a lasting impact on a nation that had become increasingly active on the world stage. Although isolated from Eurasia by two oceans and many miles, the United States asserted its power globally as the nineteenth century drew to a close. Expansion into the Caribbean and the Pacific followed war with Spain in 1898, and even the most ardent isolationist could not deny that American interests now extended far beyond her shores. The American people, long suspicious of European wars and diplomacy, nonetheless joined in the fight against Germany and her allies. Not only soldiers, but entire towns and cities became deeply involved in the war. Although the conflict is often overshadowed in American popular memory by the next war with Germany some two decades later, the American men and women who lived through the uncertain years of 1917-1918 were often gripped by profound emotions of hope and fear. It was a time when the ideals of righteousness and freedom mingled with the horrors of death and destruction in the popular imagination of the war, when apocalyptic visions of civilizations descending into chaos and destruction were accompanied by dreams of a new and better world rising from the ashes of dead empires. This paper's main purpose is to follow the saga as it played out in Decatur, Illinois, a railroad hub and major urban center for downstate Illinois that gave significant contributions to the American war effort. I will also recount my own family's connection to the war.

The Old World

My own family did not live in Decatur during the war, and only one served in uniform during those years. Their stories all began across the Atlantic, in the same Europe that descended into chaos and madness after the assassination in Sarajevo. My father's grandparents were all British, and lived through the Edwardian period that began the twentieth century. One of his grandmothers came from the small northern Welsh town of Llanystumdwy, the same town where wartime Prime Minister David Lloyd George spent part of his youth. She claimed to have known the future Minister when they were children, and according to my father did not hold him in high regard. Her husband, Frederick May, came from the Hampstead area of London. Already married and in his thirties by the time that war broke out in 1914, he was not conscripted until at least the winter of 1916 (when the draft was expanded to include married men)[1] and did not see combat. My father's other grandfather, Guy H. Sangster of Brighton, had served in uniform overseas as part of the British Empire's forces in the Gambia in West Africa. He did not live to fight in the First World War, however, and died in the Gambia in 1912, supposedly the victim of a local shaman's curse after shooting a sacred crocodile.

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[1] Millman, Brock. "HMG and the War against Dissent." *Journal of Contemporary History* 40 No. 3 (2005): 429.

My mother's family, Eastern European Jews, emigrated from Prussian and Russian territory to the United States before the war. Her grandfather, Samuel Weinstein, had been working as a teacher in Minsk when he was inducted into the staff of Russian Grand Duke Sergei Mikhailovich as a clerk. He was informed that to keep this position he would have to convert to Christianity. Fearing persecution as a Jew, he fled Russia in the 1890's and joined a brother already living in Chicago, where he became involved in the garment industry and later married one of his workers, a Jewish woman from the Prussian part of what would become a re-constituted Poland after the war.[2] Due to his advanced age (he was at least 40 by 1917) he was not drafted into the American army, but his old benefactor the Grand Duke served on the Russian military staff (*Stavka*) as an artillery officer during the war. After the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II, Sergei would leave active military service, and he was with his Romanov relatives when they were held captive by the Bolsheviks following their coup in November 1917. Along with the Romanov royal family, he was executed (as was his secretary) in July of the following year.[3] Had my great-grandfather kept his job with the Grand Duke, he possibly would have ended up as another casualty of the Bolshevik Revolution that brought Russia out of the war and into years of animosity and conflict with the West.

In Memoriam

My family did not come to Decatur until after the Second World War, but in researching this paper I came to understand that the First World War, although now often overshadowed by the second, profoundly impacted the lives of both the soldiers who left Decatur to fight in France, at sea, or to serve in the Illinois Army National Guard, and the civilians who stayed behind. A memorial was erected to the World War II generation in Decatur during the summer of 2012, and is on display outside of the Civic Center. By comparison, the First World War has faded from public memory. One old monument listed in the local history has disappeared entirely, a bronze "honor roll" plaque that was probably melted down for scrap during World War II.[4] The remaining World War I monument stands atop a quiet hill overlooking Lake Decatur, scratched but still readable, it lists the names of those from Macon County, of which Decatur is the largest city and county seat, who gave the "Supreme Sacrifice" during the war. It was erected by members of the Castle Williams Post No. 105 of the American Legion. The post was named for Sgt. Castle Williams, the first Decatur soldier killed in the war, and is located at the southwest end of Decatur off of Illinois Route 48.[5]

The plaque lists 56 names, including Castle Williams, and at the bottom quotes a well-known bible verse, "Greater love hath no man than this, that he laid down his life for his friend." At the crest of the hill, a flagpole continues to bear the waving tricolored banner not so different from the flag that those men and women died to serve, but the old flower beds surrounding it have gone, and the bronze plaque memorializing the dead now shares the hill with a number of other monuments, donated benches with plaques dedicated to loved ones. Rather than a distinct monument, the plaque has become the oldest and most weathered attraction on what bears the vague name of "Memorial Hill." I had passed by the spot many times growing up without ever giving it a second glance.

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[2] I never met my great-grandparents, but my aunt transcribed this part of the family history while interviewing her grandmother, Samuel Weinstein's wife Jean, between 1974 and 1980 at her home in Miami, Florida.
[3] Maylunas, Andrei and Mironenko, Sergei. *A Life Long Passion.* New York: Doubleday, 1997 (638-39).
[4] Banton, O.T. ed. *History of Macon County*, 393.
[5] Guillory, Dan. *Images of America, Wartime Decatur: 1832-1945*, 63-64.

Decatur in Wartime: Food and Speculation

The First World War left a profound impact on the city and its people. During this time, Decatur served as a major railroad hub for downstate Illinois, situated between the larger urban centers of Chicago and St. Louis. Goods and people traveled through the area, and made use of the Wabash depot, with its train station, mechanics, and variety of shops. The Midwestern city, hundreds of miles from the nearest ocean, might not be expected to have much of an international outlook. However, its situation among some of the most productive farmland in the country, coupled with the railroads and a thriving industrial sector (A. E. Staley, a major processor of corn and other foodstuffs now a part of Tate & Lyle, was founded in 1906),[6] made the city and surrounding regions of great importance during the war.

With the major exchange of agricultural commodities only a few hours north in Chicago, and with food processing key to Decatur's industrial output, the ebb and flow of agricultural prices held a devoted following among industrialists and farmers in Macon County. To that end, the *Decatur Herald*, one of the city's main newspapers, kept close track of the exchange to the north. Even before the entrance of the United States into the war in April of 1917, those involved in the exchange had good reason to monitor closely the events unfolding in Europe. With millions of men put into active military service, the agricultural production of belligerent countries declined. With increasing food needs for both soldiers and civilians, the importation of foodstuffs formed a critical part of war efforts in Europe. As a neutral nation, the United States profited from the freedom of merchant ships to enter ports of hungry nations, and with vast tracts of land suitable for food production, American farmers and traders sometimes saw in the turmoil a chance to increase their profits, both the British and German navies attempted to divert this trade away from the enemy by use of a naval blockade and submarine warfare, respectively.[7]

Rising demand in belligerent nations led to an increase in the price of key foodstuffs, and the *Decatur Herald* kept close watch on wheat and corn especially. The speculation over food prices and demand during the final months of official neutrality in early 1917 followed the events in Europe closely. Before Chicago had its well-known sports franchises, the *Herald* monitored the progress of the city's "Bulls" and "Bears" on the commodities exchange, traders making risky bets on rising or falling prices. News in early January of deadlock on the Western Front, of German advances along the Danube, and what was seen as a 'warlike response' by the Allies to President Wilson's appeal for a statement of peace goals led to a spike in the price of corn and wheat especially on January 4.[8] However, over the next two days, when news arrived from Washington of a renewed peace effort by the President, the prices began to fall again.[9] The trend again reversed itself after January 7, and the *Herald* credited the new rise to Kaiser Wilhelm's message to his troops that the war would continue, coupled with growing demand in Europe and a shrinking supply on the domestic markets.[10]

The failure of Wilson's efforts to negotiate peace between the belligerent powers of Europe continued to impact the practice of food speculation in the following months leading up to the entry of the United States into the war. However, another factor began to take a toll on the markets as well, when Germany resumed its campaign of submarine warfare in the

[6] http://www.tateandlyle.com/AboutUs/history/Pages/History.aspx.
[7] Brose, Eric Dorn. *A History of the Great War*, 227.
[8] *Decatur Herald*, "Wheat Exports Rise," 01-04-1917.
[9] *Decatur Herald*, "Dread of Re-selling by Foreigners in Event of Peace Brings About Decline," 01-06-1917.
[10] *Decatur Herald*, "Corn Reaches Highest Price since 1892," 01-07-1917, "Wheat Prices Highest Since Civil War Time," 01-09-1917, and "Wheat Market Lifted by Reply of Entente," 01-12-1917.

Atlantic.[11] Although the primary effect on commodity prices was negative due to fears of unreliable shipping to European ports, even for traditionally non-contraband items such as foodstuffs, this was not always the case. German activity was not only directed against shipping from the United States but also from the neutral nations of Latin America as well. The loss of shipping there served to strengthen the hand of speculators in the United States betting both on rising food prices and the ability of the United States to provide for shortfalls in the European food supply.[12] Although Wilson's peace and mediation efforts continued, exerting downward pressure on the prices (along with the curious incidence of German-sounding "Hessian Fly" afflictions on Midwestern crop yields),[13] the Germans resumed a campaign of unrestricted submarine warfare in February of 1917. The move would lead to a formal break of diplomatic relations between Germany and the United States, and when a formal declaration of war came in April, the government and public increased efforts to end or at least mitigate speculation in the interest of regulating an increasingly vital food supply, with stricter controls and voluntary conservation efforts.

Food conservation became a major part of the Home Front effort in the United States, and Decatur was no exception. In the section for "church news" in the *Herald* on July 2, 1917, the words of local clergy challenged the citizens of Decatur to do their part in promoting thrift and ensuring the steady supply of food to troops being mobilized for war. Reverend Frank Fox of the First Congregational Church denounced the "wickedness of waste." Reverend F. A. Havighurst of the First Methodist church preached the connection between food security and military security in starker terms, stating that "the war will be won on our farms and in our kitchens as surely as on the battlefields of Europe."[14] Local restaurants got on board with the move to conserve food as well, acting on the popular slogans of "meatless" Mondays and "wheatless" Wednesdays, moves that reduced consumption of these key food products locally. The campaign was pronounced a great success by the restaurant owners as well as Decatur mayor Dan Dinneen, and broadly supported by the public.[15] Women often took the lead in promoting food conservation, such as those of the First Presbyterian Church who organized to distribute pamphlets and give lectures on how to stretch food resources.[16] In an advice column, the *Herald* ran a Mrs. Parr's suggestions for incorporating food conservation into Thanksgiving meal preparations. These included recipes for "War Bread," that could be made with less wheat, and using corn syrup and shortening rather than sugar and fat or lard in cooking.[17]

Of course, when it came to promoting food security during wartime, the desire to provide profits and ensure the flow of money into the local economy was not entirely supplanted by patriotic action for the war effort. A.O. Bolen, a local entrepreneur with an office in the Millikin building downtown, used the war as an opportunity to sell farmland that he held in Canada. With so many Canadians already fighting in Europe and elsewhere, Bolen stated that the war had created opportunities for cheap land up north, and implored prospective buyers to act "before the war is over."[18] An ad run in the *Herald* in July of 1917, signed by members of local

[11] *Decatur Herald*, "Wheat Prices Drop," 01-11-1917, "German Sea Rovers Stop Wheat Export," 01-20-1917, and "Rising Rates of Vessel Insurance on the Atlantic Depress Wheat Market," 01-20-1917.
[12] *Decatur Herald*, "Wheat Market Sags but is Lifted After Loss of Merchant Ships," 01-17-1917.
[13] *Decatur Herald*, "Wheat Prices Drop after Wilson's Address," 01-24-1917, "Possible Peace Move by Wilson Lowers Wheat Prices," 02-01-1917.
[14] *Decatur Herald*, "Churches Speak on Food Conservation," 07-02-1917.
[15] *Decatur Herald*, "Food Conservation Efforts Pronounced Success," 11-02-1917.
[16] *Decatur Herald*, "Church Women Organize for Food Conservation Effort," 11-02-1917.
[17] *Decatur Herald*, "Suggestions for a Simple Thanksgiving," 11-04-1917.
[18] *Decatur Herald*, "Buy Land in Canada," 01-20-1917.

dry goods companies, promising that with high yields expected for the year, "several million" bushels of corn would be sold "at top price to our allies across the sea." It also encouraged any able-bodied men available for agricultural work to sign up, promising better wages with so many men entering military service and a shortage of agricultural laborers.[19] Another ad from the McClelland Grocer Company, sporting an illustration of a spread-winged eagle and a uniformed soldier underneath the word "Loyalty," encouraged Decatur residents to "buy your goods in your own town, from your own merchants," and stating that loyalty to one's community is just as important as loyalty to the nation.[20] Clearly, the goals of patriotic action and profit motivation were not always considered mutually exclusive.

Decatur in Wartime: Preparing for Preparedness

Mobilization of the city and its resources, both human and material, went well beyond the agricultural industry. Some members of the German high command, when conducting their risk assessment on the choice to reboot unrestricted submarine warfare in 1917, scoffed at the American military potential and amateurism of its forces.[21] While the Americans had not seen combat on the scale it had been waged in Europe since 1914, the notion that Americans of the generation that fought the First World War were completely unaccustomed to military service was not well-founded.

It is true that Decatur residents largely did not clamor for war against Germany during the first years of conflict in Europe. New Year's celebrations of 1917 at St. Paul's Church featured a sermon on peace as the 'salvation of the white race,' and condemned the conflagration in Europe.[22] Peace rallies were held in Decatur before the war, such as one by the National Peace Association in January of 1917 that drew at least four hundred to the auditorium of the Decatur high school, and featured the release of white doves by local children.[23] Decatur man T.B. Jack, along with representatives of the German Methodist and Lutheran churches, met at the YWCA to advocate for peace and declared that the U.S. must keep out of war in Europe.[24] However, with the renewal of the German campaign of unrestricted submarine warfare and the infamous "Zimmerman" note to Mexico from the German ambassador encouraging Mexico to attack the United States, public opinion grimly turned in favor of war as a necessary measure. Editorials in the *Herald* condemned the German actions in no uncertain terms. "Nothing furnishes more convincing evidence of Germany's desperation, not even the food shortage, than the yielding to the Von Tirpitz-Von Hindenburg cabal," went one, denouncing leaders in the German army and navy for the renewed submarine campaign, while another lamented Germany's loss of "the friendship of the greatest neutral nation," and that the Kaiser "now seeks victory by the inhuman submarine."[25] The full Zimmerman telegram was published with great indignation in March, adding to fears of German belligerence and the potential for an escalation of the conflict to the South.[26]

After the Mexican Revolution began in 1910, the United States' southern neighbor descended into chaos and violence for the better part of a decade. Americans did not simply read about the fighting and turmoil in their local newspapers, many participated directly.

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[19] *Decatur Herald*, "Three Billion Bushels of Corn!" 07-01-1917.
[20] *Decatur Herald*, "Loyalty," 07-01-1917.
[21] Brose, Eric Dorn, *A History of the Great War*, 199-200.
[22] *Decatur Herald*, "Watch New Year Come at St. Paul's," 01-01-1917.
[23] *Decatur Herald*, "National Peace Association Rally Draws 400," 01-06-1917.
[24] *Decatur Herald*, "Peace Advocates Meet at YWCA," 03-10-1917.
[25] *Decatur Herald*, "German Folly," 02-02-1917, and "Unrestricted Submarine Warfare," 02-14-1917.
[26] *Decatur Herald*, "Zimmerman Note," 03-01-1917.

General Jack Pershing, who would later lead the American expeditionary forces in Europe, led a punitive campaign into northern Mexico to hunt down the Mexican revolutionary Francisco "Pancho" Villa after the latter conducted a raid into United States territory and killed a number of American citizens. The anticipation of war heightened the sense among some in Decatur that more preparedness was needed, leading to the creation of a local gun club, although interest had waned by 1917.[27] The conflict might have escalated into a full-scale war with Mexico if the events in Europe had not drawn the United States into war with Germany. Indeed, although the Mexican government's response to the Zimmerman was tepid, the *Herald* editorial staff warned its readers that it might have had more success if Villa had succeeded in gaining power in Mexico.[28]

Even as violence continued across the southern border, the formal break with Germany came in February of 1917. Decatur's reaction was largely in support of Wilson's policy, viewing it as a necessary measure directed against a belligerent and enemy nation. Covering the reaction of Decatur residents to the break of diplomatic relations, the *Herald* interviewed a number of Decatur residents, including an A. Siegfried. Siegfried had come from Germany, but became a U.S. citizen and declared that he would remain one "all the way through."[29] Although he did not believe that war would break out, the staff editorial for the same day was not so optimistic, asking the rhetorical question, "What recourse will we have? ...none but war."[30] Local churches weighed in on the matter as well, with Reverend Frank Fox of the First Congregational Church declaring that "diplomacy has failed where united prayer may have won," and this sentiment was echoed by Reverend C. E. Jenney of the East Park Baptist Congregation, stating that if "Christian forces had been working as the Lord commanded them…there would be peace instead of war." The Reverend William Heyne of St. John's German Lutheran Church described Wilson's break of diplomatic ties as necessary, but insisted that war with the Germans was not.[31]

As relations with Germany were breaking down, the soldiers who had served with Pershing in Mexico began to return back to the United States, and many of them passed through Decatur's train station at the Wabash depot. In January, a letter from a Decatur soldier stationed at the Mexican border was published in the *Decatur Herald*. H. J. Heinz wrote to his family in Decatur that his unit of the 4th Infantry of the Illinois National Guard was expected back by February 1st.[32] However, the 4th did not return until March, arriving at the Wabash depot along with a New York regiment passing through on the way back home.[33] There was no indication in his letter that he expected the unit to be called up again, but the large numbers of troops continued to pass through the Wabash station in the coming months as relations with Germany continued to sour, and preparing for possible war with the Central Powers was most likely a factor in the withdrawal from Mexico. Troops from a Michigan Cavalry unit returning from the border stopped at the station on January 23, and an impromptu military parade sprang up as the soldiers marched through downtown to the sound of military music.[34]

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[27] *Decatur Herald*, "Decatur Rifle Club Closes," 01-14-1917.
[28] *Decatur Herald*, "Why Zimmerman Failed," 03-03-1917.
[29] *Decatur Herald*, "Shock, Regret over Wilson's 'Necessary Action,'" 02-04-1917.
[30] *Decatur Herald*, "What Next?" 02-04-1917.
[31] *Decatur Herald*, "Decatur Churches React to Break," 02-05-1917.
[32] *Decatur Herald*, "4th Infantry to Return from Mexican Border," 01-07-1917.
[33] *Decatur Herald*, "Decatur Man meets Friends in NY Regiment," 03-17-1917.
[34] *Decatur Herald*, "Michigan Troops at the Wabash Station," 01-23-1917.

Some of Decatur's men had already been involved in military service. Of these, perhaps the most well-known was Rear Admiral C.B.T. Moore. Moore had come from a long military tradition in his family, as his father General Jesse Moore fought in the Civil War, and a great-grandfather had been present at the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown in 1781.[35] Admiral Moore had served with Commodore Dewey at the Battle of Manila Bay in the war with Spain in 1898, and during the war commanded the United States' naval station in Hawaii until 1915, helping organize an ultimately futile attempt to rescue the crew of submarine F-4 that exploded near the naval station.[36] He was back in Decatur by 1917, and headed a patriotic parade through downtown Decatur at the beginning of April that saw Decatur residents invoke the "Spirit of Stephen Decatur" and the "Spirit of (18)64" while calls were made outside of the Lincoln Square Theater for universal military training, at the same time as Wilson was pushing Congress for a formal declaration of war against Germany.[37] His wife was also involved in the war effort, helping to organize local women for Red Cross work.[38]

Mobilization went through both official and unofficial channels. The railroads continued to be of vital importance, and the Wabash station bosses and employees pledged early and lasting support to the war effort. Outlining Illinois' potential for the war effort, the *Herald*'s interview with representatives of the Wabash station pointed to the presence of powder and cartridge/shrapnel manufacture in the state, as well as a central location secure from foreign attack and located at the nexus of grain, coal, alcohol-producing districts as well, with "unequaled transportation facilities by rail" that could forward these supplies to either coast.[39] By July, Wabash employees had donated $1,501 to the war effort. The *Herald* praised these efforts as indicative that "Uncle Sam has the backing of the men and women who work hard for their money…to help win this war for liberty and democracy, and not for personal gain."[40] Other contributors to local commerce and industry gave material and moral support to the cause as well. Local photographers donated high speed lenses for use in airplane scouting missions.[41] Col. J. M. Clokey of the City Club of Decatur wrote a letter to the editor declaring that "the time for preparedness is now," and encouraging especially any men with military experience to enlist. He also organized the arrival of Adj. General Frank Dickson for a city-wide campaign on preparedness, also backed by mayor Dinneen and meant to coincide with rallies in Chicago and other cities.[42]

The paper itself became involved in the war effort. Several editorials stressed universal loyalty to the nation, and especially the failure of Germany to play off of internal divisions of the United States. Most interesting perhaps was the insistence on the loyalty of German-Americans from an editorial in February, just as the renewed German submarine campaign was fast turning public opinion against the German government. The staff of the *Herald* declared that "The hyphen is being wiped out," and encouraged all patriotic Americans to tolerate no persecution of the German community in the United States.[43] The paper ran an ad for the 1916 film *War Brides* to play at the Bijou Theater in both English and German.[44] The *Herald* also

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[35] Johns, Jane Martin, *Personal Recollections of Early Decatur*, 136.
[36] Castle, William Richard, *Hawaii, past and Present*, 98. The story of the submarine's recovery can be found on the Arlington Cemetery web page, http://www.arlingtoncemetery.net/sub-f4.htm.
[37] *Decatur Herald*, "Decatur's Loyalty is pledged to President," 04-01-1917.
[38] *Decatur Herald*, "Mrs. C.B.T. Moore Plans Red Cross Work," 02-28-1917.
[39] *Decatur Herald*, "Wabash Station Prepared for War," 02-19-1917.
[40] *Decatur Herald*, "Wabash Employees Donate $1,501 to War Effort," 07-23-1917.
[41] *Decatur Herald*, "High-speed Lenses Needed," 11-02-1917.
[42] *Decatur Herald*, "Letter to the Editor," 03-28-1917.
[43] *Decatur Herald*, "German-Americans are Loyal," 02-13-1917.
[44] *Decatur Herald*, "War Brides at the Bijou," 01-07-1917.

represented Decatur in the "Our Boys in France Tobacco Fund," a program approved by the Secretaries of the War and Navy that worked to purchase cigarettes at discounted prices in order to send a pack of cigarettes and a postcard to "every American soldier in France."[45]

Decatur was also a focal point for Illinois Red Cross work, spearheaded by the local Women's Club. Workers created care packages for soldiers, issued recommendations for Christmas parcels to troops overseas, and engaged in a wide-scale campaign selling Red Cross Seals to raise funds for wartime work. By January 7 of 1917, over 78,000 seals had been sold in Decatur. Half of the proceeds went to the Decatur Women's Club, deeply involved in Red Cross work, and the sales also entitled Decatur to complimentary service for one month from a renowned medical expert.[46] The Women's Club also operated a canteen hut at the Wabash station to provide friendly company and refreshments to soldiers leaving or passing through Decatur for military service.[47]

Religious and secular organizations also became involved in relief efforts directed at reducing the human and societal costs of the war. The local Jewish congregation, at the direction of Rabbi Kaplan, donated about $50 per month to the needy in war zones.[48] Professor Thomas Oliver came from the University of Illinois in Urbana to give a free lecture at Millikin University on his work with the Belgian Relief Commission, encouraging Decatur residents to give charitably to the victims of the German invasion, and asking the city to adopt 100 Belgian children to prevent them falling victim to disease and malnutrition.[49] The local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution adopted a French war orphan, André Richard, donating money to provide for his housing and welfare.[50] The Association Allied Relief of Decatur had sent 4,000 garments to the war effort in less than a year by the war's end.[51]

The churchgoers of Decatur also became subject to increasingly-militant language from their pulpits during the war. Reverend D. C. Beatty of St. John's Episcopal Church declared that "the Christian peace is that of the warrior…for Christ holds out both hands to you--in one hand he holds a sword, in the other peace. You cannot take one without the other and be a Christian."[52] In a later sermon, Beatty declared that Jesus himself had provided the ideological basis for the Red Cross, and that killing in a righteous cause was justified in the bible, describing the German soldiers as "innocent tools of a gang of murderers…stricken with moral blindness," going on to state that "their injury and death cannot be avoided."[53] He described the Great War as "the beginning of the great Battle of Armageddon."[54] Reverend Hurley of the First Baptist Congregation issued his "Mobilization Sermon" in March, stating that "whether we like it or not we are coming to think in military terms…the church is not an institution for taking life but saving it. Yet, its object is conquest."[55] He would also give a sermon to members of L Co. of the Illinois National Guard, stating that he "cannot find anywhere in the scriptures

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[45] *Decatur Herald*, "Herald to Represent Decatur in Tobacco Fund," 11-04-1917.
[46] *Decatur Herald*, "82,386 Red Cross Seals sold in Macon County," 01-07-1917.
[47] Banton, O.T. ed. *History of Macon County*, 388.
[48] Due to a misunderstanding, the *Herald* had originally reported that the Decatur Jews were unwilling to make donations during Passover, but this was retracted the next day. The mistake came from the unwillingness of the congregation to celebrate and lend support to the Revolution in Russia. *Decatur Herald*, "Correction," 03-25-1917.
[49] *Decatur Herald*, "Illinois Professor to Give Lecture on Belgian Relief," 03-05-1917.
[50] *Decatur Herald*, "DAR Chapter hears from E. B. Hitchcock on return from Paris," 11-02-1917.
[51] *Decatur Herald*, "Allied Relief of Decatur," 11-01-1918.
[52] *Decatur Herald*, "Christian Peace," 01-15-1917.
[53] *Decatur Herald*, "Jesus Founded Red Cross," 07-09-1917.
[54] *Decatur Herald*, "Rev. Beatty gives sermon on the Great War," 07-02-1917.
[55] *Decatur Herald*, "Mobilization Sermon," 03-05-1917.

where Jesus advocates peace at the price of compromise with evil."[56] Preachers also weighed in on the dangers of domestic dissent, such as Reverend Frank Fox, who warned that those who take a long-distance view of the war ignore the fact that "our most dangerous foes are in our own country."[57]

In addition to churches, schools also became involved in the militarization of Decatur during wartime. Millikin students as well as those in the Decatur high school organized for drilling practice in conjunction with L Co. of the National Guard, around 300 students throughout the city. Captain J.P. Barricklow published a request in the *Herald* for old Springfield Rifles to help with the effort to train young men for enlistment.[58] Drilling took place on the grounds of the Millikin campus, so that the young men of Decatur could "prepare for preparedness."[59] Even the younger generation became enamored with the spirit of mobilization. In the summer of 1917, children turned out on West Prairie Avenue to drill. The *Herald* reported, with somewhat militaristic fashion, that "if the boys keep their present pace until they are grown up, they will be ready to join Pershing in ten years, providing the war is still going on."[60]

The Soldiers

By war's end, Macon County had 3,960 veterans of the First World War, of whom 1,558 were inductees into the draft. 56 of them died, the first being Orville Moyer on November 3, 1917.[61] Many enlisted voluntarily, often from the desire to contribute their own special skills to the war effort. Ira V. Maffet, formerly a cashier and credit man at the Danzeisen Packing Company, became the first Decatur man to receive a commission in the Army Reserve's Quartermasters Department, a job that entailed the managing of supplies and logistical support for army units, not so different from his peacetime role of keeping track of company inventory and expenses.[62] Bert Hill was sent to Fort Kelly, Texas, to train for the fledgling Army Air Force (at that time a branch of the Signal Corps). He had worked on cars before the war and his experience as a mechanic and driver suited him well in his new occupation.[63]

Captain Krigbaum headed the L Company of Illinois' National Guard, stationed in Decatur, and saw his position as an ideal one to promote enlistment among fellow Decatur residents. He was a frequent source for the *Herald*, keeping the paper up to date on the progress of L Co. and encouraging patriotic young men to sign up for the militia rather than entertain dreams of enlisting as an officer by enrolling in a formal military academy. He also used the newspaper to assure parents that he would turn away any recruit who was not of age, if and "when parents object."[64] During the war, L Co was sent to guard bridges and munitions plants in Kentucky, and was officially drafted into war service by President Wilson the day before Draft Registration numbers began appearing in the *Herald* in the summer of 1917.[65]

Experiences in war sent back to families via letters were sometimes published in the *Herald*. Captain Charles Sweeny's experiences were published in serial fashion during the summer of 1917. He described in vivid detail the transformation of a raw and untested recruit

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[56] *Decatur Herald*, "Members of L Co. Attend Sermon," 04-02-1917.
[57] *Decatur Herald*, "Church News," 11-05-1917.
[58] *Decatur Herald*, "Millikin Students Turn Out to Drill," 03-30-1917.
[59] *Decatur Herald*, "Military Training to take place at Millikin," 03-23-1917.
[60] *Decatur Herald*, "Children of West Prairie in Drilling Practice," 07-01-1917.
[61] Banton, O.T. ed. *History of Macon County*, 388.
[62] *Decatur Herald*, "Decatur Man to receive Commission," 02-14-1917.
[63] *Decatur Herald*, "Bert Hill in Fort Kelly," 07-01-1917.
[64] *Decatur Herald*, "L Co. will Turn Away Underage Recruits," 03-31-1917.
[65] *Decatur Herald*, "First Installment of Registration Numbers," 07-10-1917.

into a modern warrior of the trenches, with all of their peculiar horrors. Describing the rush for cover during one of the frequent artillery barrages, he says of his first night under fire in the trenches, "We felt cheap, humiliated. It was as though we were doing an unsoldierly thing. Later we learned taking cover is good common sense."[66] Rudy Sleeter's one word reply to his father back in Decatur upon his arrival in France was also published: "Safe."[67] Billy Shellabarger, serving in an ambulance unit on the Western Front, recounted his first experience of near death on the battlefield as something of an understatement, "Our last trip to the Front proved to be the most exciting of all. We had a good scare when a shell hit in front of our car…and cut up the head of a horseman whom we were just getting ready to pass."[68]

Lt. Arthur Alexander's story was one that even brought the attention of General Pershing. While on a bombing raid across the German lines, his plane was ambushed and had to make a fighting escape, outnumbered, back to safety. Wounded in the abdomen and nearly blacked out, he continued to pilot the plane even as his observer fainted from shock after being hit in both legs. Landing safely back behind friendly lines, he collapsed. He would later be awarded the Distinguished Service Cross by General Pershing for valor and steadfastness in combat.[69]

Some families gave tremendously to the war in terms on enlistment and military service. Alexander Von Praag's family sent five sons into the service, and all returned home safely.[70] Other families were not as lucky. Castle Williams, the namesake of American Legion Post 105, had enlisted into L Co. and was stationed in Kentucky, but would be sent over to France and gain the dubious distinction of the first Decatur man killed in war, dying under German fire near Verdun in 1917. His brother Okey D. Williams also enlisted into the Navy, and was killed later in the war.[71] Castle Williams' name was chosen for the American Legion post to honor his sacrifice six years later when the Legion gained its permanent home near Illinois route 48. [72]

Victory and La Grippe

When the ceasefire took effect on November 11 of 1918, the mood in Decatur was one of jubilation. A twenty-two hour long celebration took over the city, centered around the office of the *Herald*, as the first source for international news. The flag fluttered down from the office window to the cheers of the crowd gathering below. Singing and "religious sublimity" characterized the celebration, and the Reverend Frank Fox as well as mayor Dinneen squeezed out onto the building's fire escape to address the ecstatic crowd. Church bells rang nearly nonstop with news of the armistice, with Father Murphy of St. Patrick's Cathedral ringing the bell himself for nearly a half hour after being too impatient to wait for the custodian to arrive at the building.[73]

The most surprising thing about the victory celebration is that it occurred in the midst of an epidemic of influenza. Having already wreaked havoc among European armies and cities, the "Spanish Flu" brought many American cities to a near standstill. The *Herald* reported seven

[66] *Decatur Herald*, "First Night in the Trenches," 07-09-1917.
[67] *Decatur Herald*, "Rudy Sleeter arrives in France," 11-02-1917.
[68] *Decatur Herald*, "One Night at the Front," 11-04-1917.
[69] *Decatur Herald*, "Decatur Man Receives Distinguished Service Cross," 11-01-1918.
[70] *Decatur Herald*, "Service Flag with Five Stars for Von Praag Home," 11-02-1917.
[71] *Decatur Herald*, "Castle Williams and Okey D., brothers enlist for war," 07-01-1917. Both names can be found on the memorial in Nelson Park overlooking Lake Decatur.
[72] http://castlewilliamspost105.org/History.htm

[73] *Decatur Herald*, "22 Hours of Celebration," 11-12-1918.

cases on the last day of October, 1918, bringing the total up to 710. The same day had also seen two deaths, for a total of 66 (including 19 local soldiers). A strict quarantine was placed on the city, closing down Sunday Schools, theaters, and schools. While churches and libraries remained open, they operated under intensive restrictions designed to prevent the spread of infection. City Commissioner J.F. Mattes and mayor Dinneen traveled to Springfield to ask for an ease of these restrictions, but the plea was rejected.[74] Mattes himself would fall ill with the grippe only a week later, the same day that the *Herald* reported on the death of one of its own employees, Willis Walker, who had already lost two sons to the epidemic.[75]

The influenza epidemic was not the only dampening of high spirits around the time of the armistice. Men working for the Wabash station began a strike immediately after the declaration of ceasefire, protesting pay cuts from $3.60 down to $2.88 per day. The paper went on to report that "only a few years ago the trackmen were getting 85 cents to $1.10 a day for their work," an indication of the labor shortage during war contributing to a changing of the relationship between workers and employers."[76] Manufacturers saw opportunities in the postwar era and the rebuilding of Europe, but the question of labor disputes and the need to keep troops in Europe would lessen the sense of jubilation brought by the end of the war.

Conclusion

This paper brought me a new understanding of the First World War. Growing up, it was always hard to view the conflict without the context of the Second World War, a much more well-known conflict. But for those living, fighting, and dying in the years up to 1918, it was truly the "Great War." The impending sense of apocalyptic disaster gave way to hopes that a new world order would arise from European ruins, hopes that would seem increasingly futile in the years afterwards as war again loomed on the horizon. And yet, the idealism that brought many to war stands in its own right as a testament to its profound impact on the human experience, its nuanced meanings in the minds of both soldiers and civilians. Decatur native Will Westerman, who helped draft the Versailles Treaty that sought to create a lasting peace between former enemies, recalled the lofty spirit of the time, and the perception that it was a chance to truly impact the world.[77] Even though the United States was only in the war for a short time, the conflict transformed an entire generation that saw the most advanced peoples in the world spend years fighting and killing one another. When hostilities ended, many could scarcely understand what the fighting had been for. In the stories of both my family and my hometown, I found tales of cruelty and compassion, heroism and greed, and a whole spectrum in between. Even if the war has lost its intensity and emotional power in popular memory as the centennial of 1914 approaches, the stories of war and the people trying to cope with its horrors, its myths, and its sacrifices will never lose their power for me.

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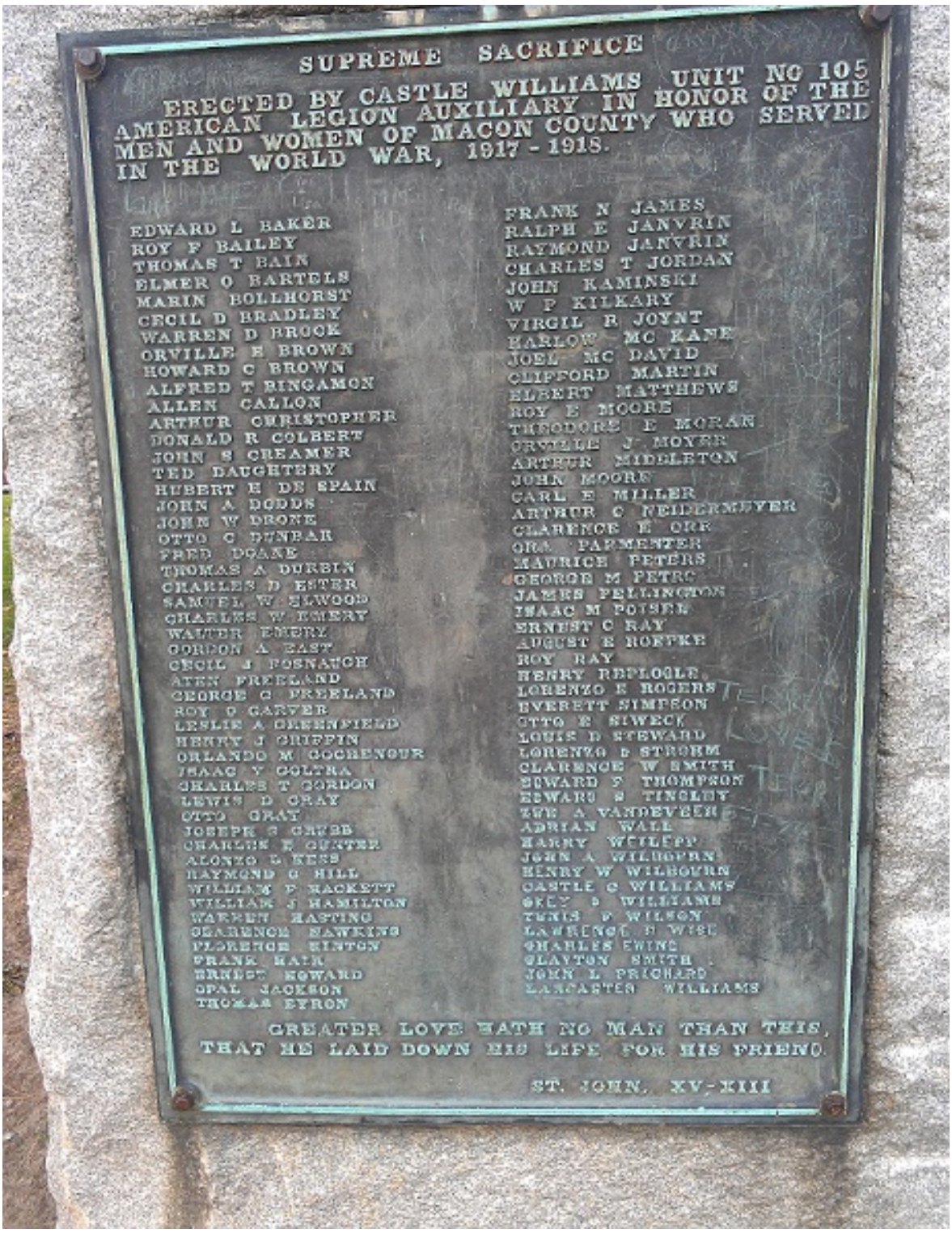
[74] *Decatur Herald*, "Influenza Victims, Quarantine Remains in Effect," 11-01-1918.
[75] *Decatur Herald*, "Mattes ill with Influenza," 11-10-1918, and "Herald Employee Victim of Flu Epidemic," 11-10-1918.
[76] *Decatur Herald*, "Wabash Section Men on Strike," 11-11-1918.
[77] *Herald & Review*, "Decatur native Will Westerman Helped Draft Versailles Treaty," 3-27-1977.



World War I Memorial plaque commemorating the dead of Macon County, located in Nelson Park on the northeast shore of Lake Decatur.

The Patriotism of Decatur, Illinois: As Shown By *The Decatur Review*

Kevin Green

Decatur, Illinois shows how not only the soldiers were involved in the war effort, but the people of the town as well. Using *The Decatur Review*, one is able to learn about the life and activities of the people in the town of Decatur and surrounding areas during World War One. It was one of two papers printed daily in the town of Decatur, Illinois. The name of the second paper was *The Decatur Herald.* The layout of *The Decatur Review* during the war was a traditional format. The first page usually covered news reports from outside Decatur and the surrounding areas concerning the war. Associated Press news articles from Washington, Chicago, and countries from around the world were usually featured here. Local stories did not regularly make the first page, unless it was something that was incredibly tragic or newsworthy enough to be placed next to events of the war. *The Decatur Review* had other sections that were similar to something you would see in a paper of the 21st century. A sports column, society page, advertisements, business news, and classified area were all common sights in this paper. Other common sights in the paper were marriages, church notices, and local news.

The Decatur Review added a new section when the men went off to fight in the war. This section usually involved soldiers and different aspects of their life. The content of this section changed over the period of the war. At one point the majority of paper was about the draft, and later shifted to letters home or stories of individuals going off or coming home from war. Many times pictures of the soldiers going off to fight were featured in this area of the paper.

Flag Raising

Decatur, like many towns in America, sprang into action to show their patriotism when the war started. One way to show support and something that became a popular event around the first month of the war was flag raising. Flag raising was when a business, school, private citizen, or a an area of city municipals like a fire station paid for a large flag to be placed in whatever location the sponsoring entity wished. There was usually some kind of ceremony involving music, maybe a special guest or guests to raise the flag, and a speaker.

Flag raising was one of the top local new stories covered by *The Decatur Review* early in the war. Most of the coverage came about in the first month and a half after the signing of the declaration of war. Coverage of the event diminished greatly until very little was written about it. Without counting the end of the war celebrations, it was also the most widely attended public event covered by the paper during the entirety of the war. Large numbers of people always came out in support of the events. It was estimated at a new car department flag raising, for example, that between 700 or 800 people who came out to see the event. The description by the writer about this raising seems to indicate a high level of intensity and excitement that seemed to surround the people. He wrote, "there was something about it that set every one's nerves a tingle."[1] "Between 400 and 600 people came out to see the flag raising at the Fairies Manufacturing plant."[2] Crowds also arrived to see the flag raising at the No.1 firehouse in Decatur on Monday, April 9. Hundreds of people were reported to be at the event. [3]

1"Inspiring sight at Flag Raising," *The Decatur Review*, 5 April 1917.
2"400 men cheer American Flag," *The Decatur Review*, 4, April 1917.
3"Crowds Cheer Firehouse Flag," *The Decatur Review*, April 9 1917.

Flag raising also brought together tribute to other wars or veterans from the past for a showing of unity and patriotism. Veterans of the civil war played a part in the flag raising in one case. At a car department flag raising both civil war veterans and employees hoisted the flag.[4] In a second case, at the "Decatur Lumber and Manufacturing Plant, they celebrated both the surrender of Lee to Grant and loyalty to the upcoming war" by having a flag raising. The flag purchased by the employees was supposed to inspire loyalty and patriotism.[5]

Announcements were placed in the paper to let people know ahead of time of all the flag raisings. The Wabash Road House flag raising notice was placed in the paper and gave a description of the flag and the pole. It was typical to see in the description of a notice to know how large the flag and pole would be. It was also usual for clubs to announce their presence before the flag raising. The Mother's club, for example, placed a notice of their intentions to be at the flag raising at the Wabash.[6] A flag raising event was announced at Mueller Plant with yet a description of the flag to be placed there. Flags raisings were also announced to occur at people's homes. The home of Mrs. Charles Pope was announced to be a place where a flag raising was to occur.[7] This event could occur at any level of society and not restricted to one group or organization.

Flags were sold fast and could not be replaced quickly. By April 8 a large article had been placed in the paper about the coming unavailability of flags. The prices were going up and the flags were flying out the door. Telegrams were sent across the country to manufactures requesting flags because of the decreasing supply. It was estimated by this time "5,000 flags had been sold in Decatur in one week." The flags sold in all different sizes, so it was not the case of a one size flag simply going fast.

Place of residence or type of business mattered very little when trying to order flags at this time. New York even had difficult time acquiring flags. It was difficult to order flags because they were being sold to everyone across the country at an unheard of pace. People who were fortunate enough to have the opportunity to order a flag would have to wait up to 60 days, and there was a possibility they may have not received it that soon.[8] A major firm in Decatur had difficulty getting flags. They put in a rush order for 3,000 flags and only got half that amount. Even their flag stickers were selling fast. Many people used them on stationary. They became a more popular decoration than that of the Red Cross stickers, which had been the previous choice before everyone was buying flags.[9]

It was only a short matter of time before the city ran out of flags. By April 1, the flags all across town had been sold out. Business and organizations who wanted to have flag raising events may have run against two walls. Either they could not find a flag or they could not find a pole. In the case of the Illinois Central company they could not locate either easily. The pole, they found, had to be special order and had to be made in Vandalia. The flag on the other hand was a lot more difficult to locate. The employees of the company went as far as Chicago to look for a large flag with little luck to be had.[10]

People determined to show their patriotism was not deterred by the fact that there were no flags available. People got creative when they found out they could not buy a flag. In one instance women employed at Schudel Bros. got creative and made their own. They wanted a

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4"Inspiring sight at Flag raising," *The Decatur Review*, 5 April 1917.
5"D. L. and M. Flag Raising," *The Decatur Review", 9 April 1917.*
6 " Crowds cheer the flag," *The Decatur Review", 9 April 1917*
7 "Flags Raising at City Yard," *The Decatur Review", 12 April 1917*
8 "Take Any Flag that is offered," *The Decatur Review",8 April 1917.*
9" American Flags in Great Demand," *The Decatur Review", 14 April 1917.*
10"Can find no flag," *The Decatur Review"*, 11 April 1917.

flag raising and were able to raise at least 20 dollars for the supplies they needed to make one. Some of them were dressmakers who helped in the creation and design of the flags.11

It seems as if there was competition to see who had the biggest and best flag. Flag raising showed your loyalty and patriotism. Whomever had a large flag or pole showed more loyalty then some who did not. Frank Torrence spliced the flag pole at Nelson Park so it would be twice its size. There was no reason to do this unless he felt he had to show it was better. Staleys had the "biggest and highest flag" to date and had a flag raising with 600 employees present to witness it. Flag raising was seen as a "patriotic renaissance" in Decatur.12

Women's Groups, Women's Patriotism, and the Red Cross

Women's groups did their part to help in the war. On April 6, 1917 a women's club quickly pledged its loyalty to the actions of the president and to support this country. It is important to note that the article also went on to say, "the women of the nation have been an important factor in all great events connected with its history."[13] This was a direct quote from Mrs. Mary B. Hankins, who read the resolution for the women's group. This seems to indicate that the women of the time felt a longtime sense of duty and responsibility to the nation.

The Red Cross membership exploded during the early period of the war in Decatur. On April 4, they were at 180 members.[14] On April 12 they had 316 members.[15] By April 24 it had reached 649 People. You could see increase every week of people joining. As the war progressed, in the later months, less and less information on the Red Cross and its activities were found, especially when comparing it to the first couple months of the war when there was more coverage. Red Cross was still mentioned throughout the war, but information about their local activities was more sporadic and put in smaller articles. It is questionable whether this was an editorial choice by the paper to not talk as much about the Red Cross or if people had lost their initial motivation to be active after the war had started.

Motivation and patriotism were definitely strong in some women. The Red Cross in Decatur began to grow and many women came to ask what they could do to help in the war. There was a unique story printed in the paper about an unnamed female teacher and her determination to go overseas. The woman went to the Red Cross because she felt they could help her get on a warship. The woman was fully aware that only men could fight, but wanted to offer some other service to her country. She came to the office of the secretary of the Red Cross, Mrs. Bender. It was here that the woman asked if she could joined the navy and work on a warship by being a stenographer. Mrs. Bender informed the young lady that women were not allowed on warships. Mrs. Bender then told her perhaps there was another option at home. She could be of use in some government positions were her talents could be put to service for the country. The young woman still insisted on being on a warship. "It wasn't about the money", she simply wanted to show her patriotic duty and serve her country.[16] After that article, there was no other information on what happened to the unnamed woman.

Women did make it overseas, albeit not to serve on a warship. Decatur's first nurse, Florence Hinton, went to France in May of 1917. She was with 200 others from across the United States to offer medical attention to soldiers in France. She was in a group known as the

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11" Couldn't buy Flag Made one," *The Decatur Review"*, 14 April 1917.
12"Biggest and Highest Flag," *The Decatur Review"*, 11 April 1917.
13" Woman's Club Pledges Loyalty, " *The Decatur Review*, 6 April 1917.
14"Boom Membership in Red cross," *The Decatur Review", 4 April 1917.*
15"Decatur Red cross Members," *The Decatur Review", 12 April 1917*
16"Young woman wanted to work on Warship," *The Decatur Review*, 6 April 1917.

"Red Cross Base hospital unit No. 12." This was a collection of medical personnel sent overseas.17

Women's contribution to the war through patriotism can be seen in different areas as well. Mrs. Frank Oren, for example, was written about on November 11, 1918. One of her remarkable accomplishments is that she had handmade over 600 service flags since the ideas started in Decatur. She was seen as a Decatur version of Betsy Ross. It was not simply American flags she was making, but British and Italian ones also. **S**ome of her flags of the allies ended up in Staley Park and the Lincoln square theatre.[18]

Gender played a huge part in what you could do for the Red Cross. Men could be mechanics, cooks, plumbers, electricians, and carpenters. A woman could be a masseuse, housekeeper, and waitress. These were only just a few options of many available to be offered by the Red Cross. There were some duties that both men and women could apply for, like cooks or telephone operators. To help determine a position they sent out cards requiring people to write out their personal information. Questions that were asked were things which established who you were and how you could help out the organization. These questions included, family name, given name, date of birth, place of birth, when and where did you acquire citizenship, single or married, what foreign language do you speak, and a variety of other personal questions.[19]

The Ethnic Group Response To The War

The Decatur Review did not print many stories on the German presence in the city. There was no news reported in any situation in which he Germans in the area were harassed because of their ethnic background. One story was more of a misunderstanding than a form of harassment. Principals and teachers were walking around their districts so they could both "get more acquainted with their area and get a more complete count of the persons of school age" by collecting a census. They came across a German house where the woman thought they were government spies. She shouted, "Get out of here!" Her daughter, who spoke better English than the woman, managed to straighten out the misunderstanding. Apparently the woman thought they were taking a military census. A son offered his commentary on the war and if he would go over. He was hoping, if he was called to service, that he would be able to stay in the states. He would go over to fight, but the idea of fighting his German brothers was not a pleasant thought. The daughter also said she loved the Kaiser, and "hoped that Germany would one day be a republic and he the president.[20]

There were instances of patriotism being shown by the Germans. A committee of German residents helped to sell liberty bonds. This committee was not simply one organization. There were different committees for the German Jew and German gentile who had no church connection, "and other residents." They did have some difficulty finding people to buy bonds because many at this time had already purchased them at banks or regular areas of purchase. The German committee, however, did feel it "was having success and progress." These ideas were reflected in the words of Chairman Anthon Spaeth. The paper continued to say, it "shows that the German residents are showing that they are real Americans."[21]

German also participated in flag raising. About 1,500 people were estimated to be at the flag raising of Marietta and Wood street in Decatur and most of them were believed to be

17" Decatur Nurse off to France" *The Decatur Review*, 15 May 1917

18"She Has Made Nearly 600 Flags," *The Decatur Review, 11*, November 1918

19"Supplies arrive for Red cross" *The Decatur Review* 24 April 1917.

[20] "Government Spies," *The Decatur Review*, 26 June 1917.

21 "Germans make fine progress," *The Decatur Review*, 17 April 1918.

German. This event was created by a naturalized citizen and grocer named Frank Skugina. The flag was placed in front of his store. The German band that was present at the event played patriotic music. This incredible event was the first to be put on by a "private individual with such ceremonies."[22]

There was very little on the black response to the war in the paper, except of the instance of Elder Higgins. Higgins was seen as one of the most respected colored men in town. He was always well dressed and was seen as a hard worker. There was as full length article concerning Higgins and seeing if he was going to war. The article also mentioned that many of the black men in the area were wondering that too, because Higgins held three job titles. If he had left for war there would be job openings for blacks looking for work. He does not give a definite answer to what he will do in this article He merely states that if his employer goes to war, he will.[23] What was most interesting about his article is how he talks about his own people.[24] In part of the article it tells how other blacks are encouraging him to go to war. Telling him it is his responsibility as a black role model to be an inspiration to his race. While at the same time they want him to recommend the three jobs he had at the time to other black workers. The afternoon of the same day he talks to Mr. Harry, his employer and says, "is that gambling nigger Joe asking you for my job?" Mr. Harry responded, "part of your job Elder." Elder responded back, "Mr. Harry you have nothing to do with that nigger while I am around here."[25] It would be interesting to see how he was actually viewed by the black community in town. More research should be done on him if possible in order to determine this better.

Small Town Patriotic Response To The War

The Decatur Review not only printed stories about events in the city, but other smaller towns around the area. Tuscola, for example, had over 600 people participate in a parade. The parade consisted of bikes and cars decorated with flags and patriotic symbols. It was their way of proving that they were loyal to their country and its efforts. Other participants in the parade included the Knights of Pythias Lodge.[26]

In a remarkable show of patriotism the township of Bement had over 700 Red Cross members, which was approximately one third of the entire population. At home women gave all their time for work "to support the country." This is a case where small towns managed to outshine their bigger neighbors. Bement had also raised 50,000 dollars in bond when 40,000 were expected. This shows the extraordinary amount of patriotism going on.[27]

Lovington showed its patriotism by merchants putting flags around their business. Auto sellers joined in the showing of patriotism by putting flags on their cars. A church was decorated with a "large flag over the pulpit." There is something to note about this article, it is called "Show Patriotism in Lovington." And a quote from it says, "patriotically Lovington is waking up." It is inferred from that statement and title that up to April 17 Lovington had not been showing its support for the country.[28]

22"1500 People at Flag Raising," *The Decatur Review, 16* April 1917.

23 I am not sure if he ever did or not, but I was able to find out on findagrave.com that he died in 1931

24 I do not know how blacks referred to each other back then or if it is similar to today.

25" Elder will go to War if Mr. Harry does," *The Decatur Review*, 8 April 1917.

26"Tuscola has big Patriotic Meeting ," *The Decatur Review*,14 April 1917.

27"Piat County is Proud of Bements Record," *The Decatur Review, 18* July 1917.

28"Show Patriotism in Lovington," *The Decatur Review*, 18 April 1917.

Local War Coverage in the Paper

Local war coverage about the home front efforts in *The Decatur Review* after the signing of the declaration of war by Congress was very strong in the beginning. Patriotic actions, women's groups, and displays of other forms of loyalty could be seen through a lot of the paper. As time went on, however, it is noticed a drastic decrease in the amount of coverage of local news or support of the war efforts in town and the surrounding areas. Again, it cannot say be distinguished by the evidence if the lack of coverage was an editorial choice by the newspaper or if the people of the town had simply decreased their activities. The local coverage did however pick up once the draft had begun and men began to be sent out for training. As the war progressed there was more coverage but nothing compared the amount of loyalty demonstrated by the community in the early weeks after the signing of the declaration of war.

Patriotic Church Sermons

The churches of Decatur had a strong sense of patriotism too. *The Decatur Review* occasionally printed Sermons from pastors and some of them preached about the war. The rev, N.M. Riggs addressed his congregation at Grace Methodist Church in Decatur and spoke of what they could to help in the war. He called for them to all enlist in something that would help in the war, whether it be canning, or conserving food. Things like tea parties were trivial things that could be put off to a later date. He is quoted as saying "If we can't all go to the front we can all get in the front by doing a supporting work that can be done nowhere else than right here at home."[29] Sin was associated with loss and virtue with winning. The Reverend Frank Fox stressed at his congregation at the First Congregational Church that waste was a major sin that American participated in. In order for the country to win the war the people should be less wasteful.

Pastors were not the only one to speak at churches. Former governor of Illinois Richard Yates also came to Decatur to speak to the congregation at First Presbyterian Church. He stressed that whatever your occupation, each person had his place in supporting the war effort.30

The Life Of Soldiers and the Draft

One of the major local stories that had reached the first page of the paper was the death of the first Decatur soldier in the war. Orvill Moyer died in action on November 3, 1917. At the time of his death he was battling alongside a Canadian battalion. Where he died was not given. The news was first received by his mother, Mrs. Mary Wilkerson, by telegram. Another sad note about the article is that his enlistment would have been up in February. He was to come back and be married.[31]

The draft signaled the coming of a new section in the paper. The first men called up for duty were Ralph J. McClure, George W. Wallace, William E. Knodle and Thomas B. Scanlon. Within that article that day was a list of those who were called up for duty. This roster included men from both Macon and Piat County.32 The paper was also a place where you could see if you had been called up for active service. After the draft came about and men began going to war, the section was mainly about their life at home and on the front.

The draft affected the community in different ways. Many people in the public school system both teachers and student had to leave for the war. On July 21 of 1917 six teachers from

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29" Everyone Can do His Part" ," *The Decatur Review*, 30 April 1917.
30"Dick Yates Speaks," *The Decatur Review*, 2 July 1917.
31 "Orville Moyer Dies in action" *The Decatur Review*, 17 November 1917
32 "Decatur's First Men Called by the Draft" *The Decatur Review*, 20 July 1917.

the public school system were taken. It was not known if some of the teachers would be exempt and more information regarding this could not be found. There may have been more enlisted men who were going to war they just applied in their hometown. No one was immune from the draft in Decatur. Both professional and business residents along with the educators were taken.33 The article does show that men were taken from all aspects of society and people did not know what the long term affects would be.

Letters from soldiers were printed along with letters from the soldier's friends if they had been killed in combat. In an article called, "Letters from the Training Camps" you can see, not all soldiers were eager to serve their county. In one example Mr. Richardson describes his experience with the examination board. He tells how quickly they were done with him and went on to the next victim. Richardson also lets the reader know that in a week's time he "would know his fate, the worst or the best." He spoke in context of either having the chance to go on the reserve list or going into active duty.[34]

Letters from soldiers who served with the deceased were also printed. One such letter was from a French soldier the mother of a dead American soldier, a Mrs. Lena Hamilton of Decatur. He felt it was his responsibility to tell her of her son's passage, because he would be the only one to understand the loss and put it into words. The letter was in French because he believed his native tongue was best in sharing his grief. The French soldier wrote of the fallen Decatur man's courage and how he was never to be forgotten.[35]

Child Patriotism

Photos of children were often placed in the paper, with it was written they had signed up and bought liberty bonds. Of course most of the time they did not buy the bonds themselves but it showed that children were doing their part to help in the war. [36] The photos also were an excellent use of children to advertise the bonds.

In the early part of the war, children were seen showing their patriotic spirit. In one example, a pair of boys came to the Red Cross and wanted to know what they could do to help their country. Instead of playing, they wanted to donate their time. These two boys, who were brothers donated one dollar each to the Red Cross.

Girls showed their patriotic sprit as well. A girl wanted to put a quarter in a comfort bag, but didn't have the money. Comfort bags are something that woman made to send to soldiers. She was then told how to earn it and then went out to make the money.[37] Whether or not she was successful is unknown. In many of these stories, not just the ones about children's roles, there was no follow up, so it is hard to determine what happened after.

The Broom and Flags parade was a popular event in Decatur. This event was inspired by a Dutch admiral who tied a broom to the mast head of his ship when sailed out to meet the enemy over 800 years ago. Boys who enlisted as members of the cleanup brigade showed their patriotism by tying flags on tops of brooms. This symbolized how America was going to clean up overseas. The amount of boys involved directly with the parade was estimated to be between 800 and 900. These boys were urged by teachers to join the parade and members of the committee who ran the cleanup brigade went to every school trying to get boys to join.38

33"Decatur Schools Hit by Draft," *The Decatur Review*, 21 July 1917.
34"Letters from the Training Camps," *The Decatur Review*,5 August 1917
35"Letter From French Officer," *The Decatur Review*, 16 June 1918.
36"Some of Decatur Young Patriots," *The Decatur Review*, 17 June 1917.
37" Boys do Good Work," *The Decatur Review*, 6 April 1917l
38"Brooms and Flags in Big Parade," *The Decatur Review*, 26 April 1917.

Child patriotism was not always welcomed with open arms. In one case a boy put a small flag he found on a stick and stuck it in the "bridle of a harness in a barn where a local store keeps it teams." When the driver who uses that harness came in he found the flag and threw it down. Police looked at it as an alleged assault on a flag. He was believed to have said "he didn't want that dam thing on his harness." 39

End of the War Celebrations

Decatur and other small towns had their celebrations when Germany finally signed the Armistice. The city of Decatur closed at noon while over 20,000 people came downtown to celebrate. There was singing and music all around.[40]

Small towns all around Decatur each had their own celebrations. In the town of Macon for example bells rung for 4 hours. One of the residents, "Miss Despres, rang a bell for an hour and half all by herself." Maroa had a big bonfire with large parades all over town. In the town of Cisco people got up at 2 in the morning and shot off fireworks and made tons of noise. There was no parade in Argenta, although the bells did ring. Many of their residents came to Decatur for the celebration. Warrensburg also didn't have much of a celebration, but they did make a lot noise when the news was heard that the war was over, "They made plenty of racket." Mt.Zion made a lot of noise, in which the paper states, "was necessary to properly observe the occasion." About 300 people came out to celebrate in this town. At Niantic the celebration festivities included a parade and music by the town's band. Dalton City had most of its residents celebrating with fireworks and paraded around a big truck. It was viewed as an "occasion to remember."[41]

The parades celebrating the peace in some of these small towns were also unique. Bethany for example had brought a big coffin for a parade symbolizing the end of the Kaiser. There were a bunch of boys around and on top of it. One boy played the Star Bangled Banner. A bonfire was started here too and apparently every loose scrap piece of wood that the hundreds of residents could lay their hands on was used in its creation. The town of Cerro Gordo put on several parades instead of just one. The town of Illiopolis threw "75 to 100 good hats" into a fire to celebrate the peace. This was not a planned event, but something that happened on the spot. While celebrating, someone caught up in the excitement grabbed another person's hat to throw into a bonfire. Others saw what had happened and in a spur of the moment reaction joined in.[42]

Conclusion

The Decatur Review provided and excellent perspective on how people showed their patriotism. There were always stories from different perspectives and activities from many levels of society. The paper showed it was not just about soldiers, but also what people did on the home front. I was not able to obtain any census data at this time. It would have been interesting to see how many Germans or blacks were living in the area. The Review did not have many stories concerning the black population and Germans.

There is much more research to do about how people in Decatur and the surrounding areas saw the war and how accurate the newspaper was in reflecting their feelings. A major question that needs to be asked is why did all the flag raising celebrations end? Was it because

39"Alleged Assault to U.S. Flag," *The Decatur Review*, 24 April 1917.
40*The Decatur Review*, 11 November 1918.

41"Nearby towns observe occasion" *The Decatur Review*, 11 November 1918
42"Threw Hats into the fire," *The Decatur Review*, 11 November 11 1918.

there was such a massive amount of displayed patriotism early on that places to put flags ran out? That idea may be a possibility. I only wrote about some of the flag raisings in this paper. There was so much more occurring all over town every day. It seems that every business had one. Another question that needs to be raised is why was there such a gap between local coverage of local war efforts before the draft in *The Decatur Review*? After the end of flag raising it seemed local participation on a massive scale decreased significantly. Coverage of Red Cross efforts also decreased during this time. It may be a good idea to compare the type of coverage *The Decatur Review* and *The Decatur Herald* had in common to see what the differences were. Perhaps by looking at both papers a better picture can be produced of what a World War I, Decatur, and its surrounding areas looked like.

Liberty Loans, Red Cross Women, and the Bement Boys: A Study of a Rural America Village and the First World War

Nicholas Walsh

Crowned by large concrete grain silos as tall as the ancient glaciers that flattened this land, the tree-covered streets of Bement are similar to any number of small central Illinois towns. In the 1850s, many rural communities such as Bement were laid out in seven-mile increments along the path of the then newly constructed railroads. With most of its streets aligned in a north-east and south-west orientation corresponding with the railroad right-of-way, the progression of Bement, Illinois has been inextricably linked to the trains.[1] Another vein of history found in Bement comes from the state's most legendary resident, Abraham Lincoln. In 1858, Bryant Cottage was the scene of a brief exchange between Lincoln and his opponent in that year's Senate election, Stephen Douglas. Now a designated state historical site, Bryant Cottage is a little less than a block away from the village's veteran's memorial, located in the city park.

Constructed in 1998, the aesthetically arranged stones bear solemn testimony to the service and sacrifice of the town's residents through the history of the country. Organized by conflict, each rock is inscribed with the names of servicemen from the township. To note an individual's death whilst in military service, a star is engraved next to that person's name. At a glance, World War Two was obviously the town's most significant and consequential military endeavor. The iconic Iwo Jima flag raising picture is one of the monument's focal points. A little over a generation before, however, America's entry into the Great War also had a remarkable impact on citizens of Bement.

Like many rural Illinois residents during the First World War, Bementonians organized a local chapter of the American Red Cross, exceeded their quota of Liberty Bonds purchases, and of course, conscripted and enlisted their young men into America's armed forces. The majority of material used in this study comes from *The Bement Register*, the town's only newspaper. The sentiments expressed in this publication are always patriotic and contain not a single instance of dissent. Additionally the study uses, *The Piatt County Journal Republican*, a more widely circulated publication, printed in the nearby county seat of Monticello, which also reveals no opposition to the war by those in these local areas. While opinions would likely have never been published, there was clearly near universal support for the war in Piatt County, which surpassed nearly all of the quotas related to war-time activity. Thus in the brief twenty months of American involvement, criticism of the war or expressions of its burdens were rarely voiced.

Using Sanborn Insurance maps made of the town in 1915 and the U.S. Census of 1920, one can see that the village of Bement had much more industry and commerce than is present today. Supported by a township population of nearly 2,600 residents, early twentieth-century Bement could boast of three grain elevators, two hotels, two banks, one pharmacy, extensive lumber and livestock yards, farm implement and automobile dealers, as well as an assortment of workshops and small mercantile operations.

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[1] Stanley Changnon, *America's Rural Hub: Railroading in Central Illinois in the Late Twentieth Century* (Mahomet: Mayhaven Publishing, 1991) 10.

In 1915, four denominations of Christianity were being practiced in buildings just recently constructed. Bement's homogenously Anglo-Saxon population likely attended either the Presbyterian, Methodist, or Christian churches. The eastern half of Bement Township borders the smaller village of Ivesdale, a predominately Irish-Catholic community.[2] Depending on their proximity to Bement, a contingent of these Catholics belonged to St. Michael's Parish. While German surnames are present among the residents, their numbers in Bement were too small to necessitate a Lutheran Church. The village men participated in fraternal organizations such as the Knights of Pythias and the Freemasons, both of which had permanent lodges in the business district. Catholic men more than likely belonged to the Ancient Order of Hibernians and the Knights of Columbus, both located in Ivesdale. Women's groups, albeit informally, appear to have been organized along denominational lines as well.

The era of World War One witnessed the height of Bement's railroad activity. The Wabash Railroad sent over one-hundred and twenty freight and passenger trains through the town every twenty-four hours.[3] In fact, the double track running west between Bement and the large industrial town of Decatur was the most densely traveled stretch in the entire Wabash Railroad system for a number of years.[4] Additionally, passenger and freight runs bound for Chicago veered off onto a northbound curve located on the west end of the village. It was here that Bement's Wabash depot was located. Passengers could stay the night in a small hotel located close by. An extensive number of coal chutes, the largest that the Wabash railroad had yet built, could also be found.[5] Another small local rail line that ran from the south formed a junction with the Wabash mainline. Bisecting these facilities by way of a trestle bridge was the Illinois Terminal Railroad. Known as the "interurban," these electrified trolley cars provided residents with transportation to Monticello as well as the nearby cities of Champaign and Decatur fifteen times a day in either direction.[6]

It was at the Wabash Depot where Bement's residents came into direct physical contact with the geo-political events from outside of the local region. On Sunday May 14th, 1916, a small force of U.S. Infantry stopped there and was greeted by a large crowd. Traveling from Plattsburg, New York, the 13th Infantry was heading to the southwest, "fully equipped to protect the border."[7] Traveling on three separate trains consisting of sixteen cars each, 852 men passed through town. The men on the second and third trains appear to have spent several minutes mingling with the villagers.[8] One of the troop cars caught fire, but, the flames were quickly extinguished. One of the soldiers reported to the *Register* that "a hot wiener had rolled on the floor" of the car and had smoldered on the floor.[9]

As the village's sole newspaper, the *Bement Register* was another way for residents to keep up on current events. Published every Thursday, the *Register* was typically had eight to a dozen pages. International news, dominated mostly by headlines concerning the Great War and news from the Illinois state government were generally found on the third or fourth page of the newspaper. Throughout the months of April and May 1916, many of these nationally syndicated headlines were about the battle raging at Verdun. The May 11th *Register* headline told of "Sublime Courage as it is Seen in the Hospitals Behind Verdun."[10] Another story on the

[2] The village of Ivesdale is located 6 miles east of Bement and is located in Champaign County, IL.
[3] *Bement Register* 23 February 1905.
[4] David Sweetland, *Wabash: In Color* (Edison: Morning Sun Books, Inc., 1991) 72.
[5] *The Bement Sesquicentennial*, 2005.
[6] Ibid.
[7] *Bement Register*, 18 May 1916.
[8] *Bement Register*, 18 May 1916.
[9] Ibid.
[10] *Bement Register*, 11 May 1916.

same page declared "Trench Warfare Shatters Nerves: Horror of It All Has Lasting Effect on Victims of Titanic Conflict."[11]

The *Bement Register* generally printed local news on the front page. Topics generally concerned church activities, the Bement school system, athletic contests, and brief write ups about individuals traveling to and from the area. Such "visitors' information," reads almost like a modern-day post that one can make on internet sites such as Twitter or Facebook. They could also be of benefit to the genealogist. Unfortunately, the 1914-1915 records of the *Bement Register* are currently unavailable. Two or three pages of the newspaper were also devoted to the weekly installment of a running novel or short story, with such titles as "The Red Mist," and "The Turmoil." When America entered the war, these stories became primarily military themed. As the majority of its readers were involved in agriculture, the *Register* also devoted an entire page to news from that industry. These reports generally concerned grain and dairy farming.

There is much written about farming in western Canada, both before and after April 1917. "Tractors to Replace Men" told about the serious man power shortages that were caused by the war.[12] Eventually, advertisements were taken out by the Canadian Government, which offered free acreage as an incentive to encourage people to move to western Canada. While these offers were national and therefore not aimed specifically at Bement residents, there had already been a few people from the community who had headed to the north.

Andrew Swick and his brother Charles had moved to western Canada in the years before the war. Born and raised in Bement, the two brothers enlisted in the Canadian Army in December of 1915. Five years older than his brother, Charles had married a Canadian girl and started a family.[13] The twenty-four year old Andrew was wounded in battle on December 14th 1916, making him Bement's first casualty of the Great War.[14]*

The headline, "Big Guns and More News from Verdun," thundered across the state and international news section of the *Register* that fall as did pictures from the European Front.[15] The November 9th issue reprinted a picture with the caption "happy British soldiers trying on their helmet caps and gas masks south of Ypres."[16] Also that week, the newspaper reported that troops from the 9th Massachusetts had passed through on the Wabash the morning of Saturday the 4th. These men were returning home after service on the Mexican border.[17]

Ominous national headlines began appearing in early February 1917. A report filed from Washington D.C. related that the "German government said [their] U-Boat program will be carried out regardless of America."[18] The main issue of local concern, however, was the special election that was to take place the 1st of March to decide if the village was to decide on a water works improvement bond.[19] The month of February did see the nearby University of Illinois

[11] Ibid .
[12] *Bement Register*, 18 May 1916.
[13] *The Bement World War One Veterans Album* has Charles Swick born 5-18-1887 and Andrew Swick born 11-9-1892.
[14] *Bement Register* 26 April 1917. *The date of Andrew Swick's wounding is conflicted in newspapers. *The Decatur Herald* (4-24-17) reports that Andrew was wounded on Dec. 16, 1916. *The Decatur Review* (4-24-17) reports that Andrew was in a London hospital due to serious wounds sustained in the Battle of Arras on April 14, 1917. The *Bement Register* (4-26-17) reported that Andrew was wounded on Dec. 14, 1916. Further research is needed to establish the exact date of Andrew's wounding.
[15] *Bement Register*, 26 April 1917 .
[16] *Bement Register*, 9 November 1916.
[17] *Bement Register*, 9 November 1916 .
[18] *Bement Register*, 8 February 1917.
[19] Ibid .

offer its facilities to the U.S. government if war with Germany did occur.[20] The *Register*'s March issues dealt with international news such as Czar Nicholas II's abdication in Russia and the continued sinking of American ships by Germany submarines. The front page of the March 29th edition of the paper saw an article written by W.R. Camp, a local insurance salesman. Entitled "Does Your Life Insurance Remain in Force Without Payment of Extra Premiums in Case We Engage in War?" Camp's piece reassured people that their life insurance rates would not rise in the event of hostilities.[21]

There is no available copy of the following issue of the weekly *Register* published on April 5th. The entire front page of the April 12th edition is filled with war news, however. The Methodists reported that the meeting of the "Men's Forward Movement," had an interesting meeting the previous Monday. On the night of the 8th, the Methodists felt that "the state of the country necessitated a patriotic occasion."[22] Homer Goddard addressed the meeting with a speech entitled "Our Country's Patriots," while the male quartet sang "Tenting Tonight."[23] Church member John Lamb then spoke about "Different Kinds of Patriotism." The evening program concluded with the singing of the song "America."[24]

Across the city park from the Methodists, the Presbyterian Church also began to address the war. The Presbyterian leader, Reverend N.C. Shirey reported to the *Register* that the following Sunday he would begin a series of sermons on the different phases of the war.[25] The sermons were organized into five individual topics, each to be discussed by the pastor over the next five Sundays. They were as follows:

1. American and the War
2. France and the War: The Champion of Liberty
3. Germany's Death Struggle
4. England and the War: The Anglo-Saxon Task
5. Belgium and the War: Civilization and its Effects.

The "Church News" article for the Presbyterian Church also contended that "during every great war in our history the churches have spoken fearlessly and strongly. No other force did more than the churches during the Revolution to help prepare for the victory over England. During the Civil War the churches of the north thundered out the messages of patriotism."[26] Out of the four communities of faith in Bement, the Presbyterian Church was the epicenter of most war-related preaching. The Methodists and Christian Churches conducted patriotic meetings as well, but their frequency was not as great as their Protestant kin. St. Michael's parish, never a regular contributor to the "Church News" section, held prayer vigils for servicemen. While not reported in the *Register*, but apparent from the list of names on the modern war memorial, two Catholic priests associated with the village served in the war; Fr. Daniel F. Monaghan and Fr. Terrance O'Conner.

Bement was quick to establish a recruiting center during that first week of war. U.S. Post Master Mr. Cloyd told the *Register* that he was ready to take measurements for interested

[20] *Bement Register*, 22 February 1917.
[21] *Bement Register*, 29 March 1917.
[22] *Bement Register*, 12 April 1917.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.

men.[27] The article stated that "[I]f you feel a spell coming on and want to show up some of the real 'patriotism,' drop around at his place and get your papers to lick Old Bill Kaiser and then too our P.M. will get a "five-spot" out of every application for enrollment."[28] Accordingly, eight local men had enlisted before the month of April was out.[29]

Bement's State Bank began to run advertisements during the first month of the war. Their message, a frequent one during the war, encouraged people to open up a savings account. Tying their product to the war, the State Bank's blurb read "Financial strength is to nations as important as military strength. No nation can survive a war if it cannot finance itself. The man who fortifies himself with an account in a savings bank does more than prepare himself – he contributes to the preparedness of the country."[30]

As mentioned, young men from the village began to join up in the first month of the war. The April 26th *Register* reported that Boynton Conkey, Bus Martin, and William Dye had entered the Navy, while Richard Newbanks and Ed Foran were in the Coast Artillery. Harold Fisher, Will Neil, and Thomas Cole joined the newly formed Aviation Corps.[31] Sadly the month of April 1917 also witnessed the first Bementonian to fall in battle. Mrs. H.W. Mills of Decatur, received a British Government Telegram informing her that her brother Charles Swick, the older half of the two brothers who had joined the Canadian Army, had been mortally wounded while attacking Vimy Ridge on April 13th 1917.[32] The story, entitled, "Bement Man Dies on Arras Front," also mentioned that the fallen Charles left behind his younger brother Andrew, still dangerously ill from a wound he had received, a sister Mary Swick, who still resided in Bement, and his wife and son in Red Deer, Alberta.[33]

Local land owners were caught up in enthusiasm for the cause during the first months of the war. William Dighton, a land owner associated with the First National Bank of Monticello had been approached by the Federal government to sell 640 acres of land for use as an airfield. Robert Allerton, the son of Chicago millionaire Samuel Allerton, had established a sprawling complex of farms around the Sangamon River, just over seven miles north of Bement. During the first month of the war, Robert Allerton wrote President Wilson to offer the "proceeds above the cost of raising crops to be used by the government during the war."[34] Allerton contended that "this is the time for every good citizen to do his duty. This is the time for practical manifestation of loyalty and patriotism."[35] While the government's plans with Dighton later fell through, Allerton Farms significantly contributed agricultural materials to the war effort. The exact arrangement of the exchange, however, is unknown. At the close of May, the Presbyterian Church took charge of leading what today would be called an "interfaith" Memorial Day service. The event, entitled the "Union Memorial Service," was to be attended by members of all churches following a program at the Presbyterian Church. The services would then conclude in the respective buildings of the attending denominations.[36]

The last week in May 1917 also saw the first printing of a servicemen's letter home. At Aviation School in San Antonio, Texas, recruit Harold Fisher shared a large tent with men from Washington, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Illinois. He thanked the folks back home for their

[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid.
[29] *Bement Register*, 26 April 1917.
Bement Register 19 April 1917.
[31] *Bement Register*, 26 April 1917.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid .
[34] *Bement Register*, 10 May 1917.
[35] *Bement Register*, 17 May 1917.
[36] *Bement Register*, 24 May 1917.

letters and packages and said that he would like to take pictures, but that he had "no kodak."[37] Fisher also closed by saying that he and the men had not been able to take a bath after going on a "rattlesnake" hike because of the fact "that four thousand men are serviced by one well."[38]

This particular issue of the *Register* also explained the procedures that men were expected to follow when they began to register for the draft. Twelve questions were provided to readers with a brief description of what information was to be given by the inductee. Draftees were asked for their date of birth, their citizenship, their trade or occupation, their marital status, and whether they wished to claim an exemption.[39] The registration day was set for Tuesday, June 5th. Using the east to west alignment of the Wabash railroad tracks, Bement Township was divided up into a northern and a southern precinct for the affair. All males who were born between June 6th, 1886 and June 5th, 1896 were required to register.[40] "For the next two weeks," the *Register* reported, "this [draft registration] will be the chief topic of interest among citizens of all classes."[41]*

March 31st's *Register* ran a large story on the storms that had recently devastated Charleston and Mattoon in Coles County that week. Liberty Loan bonds were made available for purchase at the local banks. The children of Mr. and Mrs. W.W. Bower purchased $100 worth of Liberty Loan bonds that week. Dewey Long, another Bement serviceman in San Antonio, Texas, described his new job. He wrote, "I carry gas to the machines. They take 22 gallons of gas per hour. I got to fly with Ed Stinson. I only rode about 5 miles at the rate of 60 to 95 miles per hour. We have good feed now. The first week we lived off hash and water."[42] In the same letter, it becomes apparent that some of Long's information has been censored. He related that "there were several men called to **** for a couple of weeks training and then to France. **** carpenters and electricians but no men from Bement."[43]

In June 1917, published letters written to those back home in Bement became quite common on the front pages of the *Register*. In a letter addressed to the *Register*'s editor Mr. R.R. Lane, the Air Corps recruits down in San Antonio, Texas related some details of camp life to the people of Bement. The author of the letter declared "as far as army life is concerned, we all are in love with it." Demonstrating some of the regional differences between Texas and Illinois, the author wrote that "[T]he main trouble is the girls. The girls down here powder and paint. We boys think this is awful because the Northern girls don't do that." The letter's author then gave everyone back home a brief update on the men from the town. He wrote:

> Harold Fisher gets along fine with them (the girls). He has a cute little mustache. They are all in love with him. Tom Cole does fine in all the drill and exceptionally well when they call 'rear march'. Believe us, he's right there. Elmer Kelley is a regular dare devil with his new Curtis aeroplane. He went up yesterday and turned white four times. John Carlin is getting along fine only he always gets so much to eat that he always has pains in the stomach. Ray Slevin is one of the boys alright. We all believe he will be a general someday. Jasper Pervis has got a snap. He gets to go to bed early and gets up early. Tell all hello for us and have them write. We

[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid * The *Piatt County Republican* (6-14-17) contains an extensive list of all males in the county eligible for the draft.
[42] *Bement Register*, 31 May 1917.
[43] Ibid.

still eat candy and cake. Well we are all 'rearing' to get to go to drill so better close.
– A Bement Boy

While it is unclear who the author of the letter was, the term Bement Boy was from then on, used to identify the village's men in uniform.[44]

The Bement Boys were not just to be found in Texas. Carl Eaton, a seventeen-year-old Bement resident had joined the Navy and was completing training in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. In his letter home, published in the same edition as the Bement Boys from Texas, Eaton described how he had been vaccinated for small pox and typhoid. "It don't hurt very much," the teenager claimed. Relating some new military jargon, Eaton wrote that "bread is called punk and coffee is call java."[45] Although his phrasing is more than likely misinterpreted, Eaton related how during shore leave in Portsmouth, where "they have a dance every night. I got acquainted with some swell chickens. I took one home." Being so far away from home could certainly be an exciting time for these Bement Boys.

By the 14th of June, Bement had organized a local chapter of the American Red Cross. This executive committee met at the National Bank and was led by president William Hughes, secretary Mrs. Katherine Fisher, treasurer R.M. Fleming, and assistant treasurer J.W.B. Stewart.[46] The article called on people in the community to serve and contribute their time and work to the organization. The local chapter declared that "all of us cannot serve our nation in the trenches or on the sea, and it will be the duty of those remaining to assist in every way possible to provide comfort to those who go."[47] While the Red Cross executive committee met every Monday at the National Bank, meetings held for the rank and file members had been held in Opera Hall on Wednesday evenings.[48] The Red Cross's permanent quarters in the village were set to be opened on Monday June 18th, in the first floor of the Masonic Building, located across the street from the Opera Hall.[49]

Another article related to the local Red Cross chapter reported that 1,000 members were needed to fulfill Bement's obligation. Individual residents could become members of the local chapter for one dollar.[50] One-hundred and thirty three names appeared on the *Register*'s "Roll of Honor," that week for having joined.[51] The newspaper reported that starting Saturday the 16th, fifty women of the Red Cross chapter would be soliciting "every person appearing on Bement streets," during the membership drive. Additionally, the organization would began a systematic canvassing of the city and countryside the following Tuesday. "Do not wait until the shells begin to whistle and our boys begin to fall," the Red Cross implored, "- get in now. Many men will be saved by a through preparation behind the line."[52]

War news from around the world took up an entire page of the *Register* that week. This would be a standard practice throughout the war, although certain editions would have sparser coverage. On page four of the *Register* there was a large advertisement for the "Great National Movement to Swat the Rat." Because of the fact that rats ate the grain and killed small livestock such as pigs, Bement citizens were encouraged to buy rat poison. The advertisement

[44] *Bement Register*, 7 June 1917.
[45] *Bement Register*, 31 May 1917 .
[46] *Bement Register*, 14 June 1917.
[47] *Bement Register*, 31 May 1917 .
[48] Ibid .
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid.

carried a coupon that was good for five cents towards the purchase of a fifteen cent cake of the toxin at the local Bodman's Drug Store.[53]

On page four of the June 14th *Register*, the names of 179 men who had registered for the draft from Bement Township were printed. While not all the men who registered would be called up, the possibility of the draft meant that many men of military age began to enlist on their own accord. Throughout the war, the *Register* printed the names of local men who had joined the colors. No effort was made to distinguish who had been drafted and who had volunteered. Taking part in registering for military service was a part of the public life of men in the community at this time. During the draft period, few men are ever publically listed in the newspaper as being absent from the registration or from being unable to serve. It is worthy of consideration, perhaps, that it was the intimate nature of personal relationships within the town that encouraged young men to willingly serve.

According to the June 21st *Register*, the efforts of the Bement Red Cross to register were mostly successful. Some people refused to join because they did not understand the purpose of the organization. The newspaper article assured the reader that the organization was one "in which no salaries are paid."[54] Additionally, the local chapter was quick to point out that "not a cent of Red Cross contributions are going to Germany."[55] Regardless of some confusion, there were enough Bementonians who had registered for membership in the organization to fill up an entire page of the *Register*. Under the headline "This is Red Cross Week. Let Everybody Get Busy," the *Register* related how members of the local chapter had made a trip up to the county seat of Monticello to become familiar with some of the different articles that were to be made by the organization. These articles included a wide variety of bandages and hospital clothing.[56] Pictures of the tornado damage suffered by Coles County were also published that week. A story accompanied these photos that explained how the organization was helping to cope with this nearby disaster.

Bement's citizens were busy buying Liberty Loans during the month of June as well. The *Register* reported that Piatt County, with twenty thousand dollars' worth, had oversubscribed its quota for Liberty Loan purchases by one-third.[57] While it is unclear how much the village of Bement contributed to the effort, both of the local banks reported that there had been a great turnout for the Loan drive. The local news section also related that the construction of an Army Aviation camp in the nearby city of Rantoul was nearly complete.[58] In the coming year, the residents would form a hospitable relationship with the pilots who were training there.

The Presbyterian Church announced that their pastor was going to give a sermon for the young men of the town entitled, "Should I go to College This Fall or Should I Go to War."[59] From the *Register*'s Roll of Honor that week, it appeared that many of Bement's young men had already decided on the former. Bement enlistments for the week of June 21st, 1917 are as follows:

Albert Parker	Roy Adams	Eugene Evans
Leland Brawner	Orville Green	Richard Scott
Bus Martin	Carl Eaton	William Dye

[53] Ibid.
[54] *Bement Register*, 21 June 1917.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid.

Chas Dove	Richard Newbanks	John Carlin
Ed Foran	Clarence Burns	Harold Fisher J.A.
Purvis	Will Neil	Lester Alexander
Thomas Cole	Raymond Slevin	Boyton Conkey
Henry Shipman	Dewey Long	Ed Newbanks

The following week's edition of the *Register* proudly declared that the people of the community were ahead in both their Liberty Loan and Army enlistment quotas.[60] With nearly 800 members of the community now in the local Red Cross chapter, Bement's next goal, the paper declared, was to "now strive for a record in food conservation."[61] The June 28th *Register* brought the readers up to date on the happenings of the Bement Boys, who were still training in San Antonio, Texas. Printed on the first page of the paper the letter described how the men were tanned and well fed. Mr. Ray Slevin, Jasper Purvis, and Harold Fisher has "gained a lot of weight," in their new job as soldiers. Additionally, John Carlin, Thomas Cole, and Earl "Dewey" Long had all grown mustaches. [62]

Another Bement Boy, Albert Parker, who had enlisted in the U.S. Army before the war at the age of fifteen, arrived back home in Bement on a ten-day furlough. This would be Albert Parker's last visit to Bement before his unit shipped out for France. Albert reported to the *Register* that at his base near Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, the Army was "working hard to whip new recruits into shape."[63]

People from Bement often submitted stories or updates about their male relatives in the service. Miss Luella Bingham brought the town up to speed on her nephew, "former Bement Boy" Ernest Bingham, who had recently received his commission as a second lieutenant.[64] Bingham's name, as well the names of several other "former Bement Boys" mentioned in the *Register* are not included on the modern war memorial.

Also found in the June 29th edition of the *Register* was a reprint of the local Presbyterian minister Revered N.C. Shirey's sermon entitled "Belgium and the War." The lengthy address concerned itself primarily with the Roman Catholic nature of the Belgian people. Reverend Shirey proclaimed "I am not a Roman Catholic. I never can be. But I take my hat off to these people who laid down their lives for us." The Reverend went on to justify the war as being not a test of manhood, but rather a "struggle that was necessary for the welfare of the race."[65]

The month of July saw an increased amount of involvement in the local Red Cross chapter. Local youth groups such as the Camp Fire Girls and the Presbyterian Sunday School contributed $5.00 and $22.42 respectively to the Red Cross.[66] The Red Cross chapter was now headquartered in the Masonic Hall. Ten to fifteen women usually worked each day from the hours of 2 to 6 PM making "sixty dozens of gauze sponges, several dozens of muslin, twenty dozen bed socks," and numerous bandages.[67] The *Register* would often print the weekly tally of Red Cross work done by the local chapter. Sometimes, explicit instructions concerning the number of stitches needed to complete an article of clothing were included as well. Red Cross

[60] *Bement Register*, 28 June 1917.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid.
[66] *Bement Register*, 5 July 1917.
[67] Ibid.

lapel pins had also arrived in town by early July 1917. Members of the Red Cross, who up to that time had worn buttons, could now exchange these for one of the new pins.[68]

Letters were also published from Bement Boys, who by the summer of 1917, were stationed throughout the United States. L.S. Brawner, a man whose name does not appear in either the list of servicemen that was compiled shortly after the war or on the modern war memorial, wrote to *Register* editor R.R. Lane. Stationed in Fort Moultrie, South Carolina, Brawner wrote that "the people here in South Carolina are not as patriotic as they are in Illinois. They hardly notice a soldier. Everyone here talks very funny to you. I can hardly understand them."[69] It must be remembered that while nearly fifty years had passed since the Civil War, the memories of that conflict were alive in the memories of many people at the time of the Great War. One notice in the *Register* from this time period invited members of the 25th Illinois Infantry to their reunion, which was to be held at the local Grand Army of the Republic Hall in Danville, Illinois on September 20th, 1917. The brief article stated that "this may be our last reunion."[70]

Roy Adams wrote home to Bement from Bremerton, Washington. Roy stated that "I receive the paper often and am sure glad to get it. I like it better now than when I was at home."[71] Concerning life at camp, Adams reported "we don't do much but drill a little, wash clothes, have inspection, and eat."[72] Dewey Long, a member of the Bement Boys of San Antonio, wrote to his folks that he had left Texas and was now one-hundred yards from Lake Erie at a new base outside of Detroit. He liked it much better than San Antonio as he was able to "look out the window at the good old Illinois land," as his train made its way across the country.[73]

By the end of July, the dramatic vignettes of fiction such as "The Red Mist," and "The Turmoil," had now been replaced by more militant fare. A nationally syndicated column, written by Captain Roland E. Andrews, was printed weekly. This article was generally about a factual battle and the historical narrative surrounding the events. However, the approach to the historical event was often colored by contemporary interpretation. For example, Captain Andrews' piece "The Defense of Syracuse," was subtitled with "the siege raising which made possible the Roman Empire and wrecked the early exponents of *kultur* on their own ambitions."[74]

Concerning local news, the *Register* reported that while the draft had identified men eligible for service, there had been "no official information as to who will be called from this township to help supply the Piatt County quota which is 93."[75] For the first draft levee, 186 men from the county were called up in August 1917.[76] To be called did not necessarily mean that one would have to leave immediately for military service. In fact, many of the men listed at the Township level did not leave for service until the summer of 1918.

Throughout the month of August 1917, the Bement chapter of the Red Cross continued their war work. The local chapter reached their goal of having 800 paying members.[77] In fact, according to the *Register*, the village of Bement was in the running to win a silk flag for having

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[68] Ibid.
[69] *Bement Register*, 12 July 1917.
[70] *Bement Register*, 9 August 1917.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid.
[74] *Bement Register*, 26 July 1917.
[75] Ibid.
[76] *Bement Register*, 2 August 1917.
[77] Bement Register, 9 August 1917.

the largest membership in proportion to its population.[78] On Tuesday August 7th, as residents settled down to their evening meals, the church bells of Bement rang out in synchronization with other communities across Illinois to remind people to donate to the Red Cross.[79]

Those Bement residents who were not in the service were encouraged to donate books and other reading materials to the war effort. With the Bement Public Library as the collection point, the article encouraged residents to "write in each book your name and address, the soldier who reads it will know that someone in Bement is his friend and stands ready to help him."[80] It is not known if the donated books were intended solely for Bement Boys or for servicemen throughout the country. Foreign language books, mainly those for learning French, were considered to be the most vital.[81]

In what was to be the pinnacle of Bement's war enthusiasm, Patriotic Day occurred on Tuesday, Sepetember 4th, 1917. The events themselves were centered on ceremonial flag raisings at both the post office and the town's school.[82] The *Register* proclaimed that "every person of the community is urged to be present at these Post Office exercises. Let us do our part to make these boys who have gone and who may go feel that we appreciate their service for us."[83]

Over one-thousand five hundred people attended the ceremonies.[84] Civil War and Spanish-American War veterans were encouraged to attend, as were all young men who had registered for the draft back in June.[85] In the school yard, a nine by eighteen foot American flag was ran up onto a new sixty-five foot flag pole by Daniel Hall.[86] The crowd joined in the singing of the song "America" and took part in a prayer led by Reverend Dawson. Following an "interesting address on the issues of the day," by the Honorable Judge Adkins, the people of the village paraded one block north to the Post Office.[87] There Postmaster Cloyd raised another American flag. The Honorable Judge Shonkwiler gave a stirring speech "that was appreciated by all."[88]

The Red Cross chapter continued to crank out dozens of assorted items for the war. The same week as the flag raising ceremonies, the Red Cross put on the play "Miss George Washington," as a fundraiser. Held at the Lyric Theatre, a small venue located on the western end of Bement's business district, the play was a great success for the organization. The Lyric would begin showing war-related films in 1918.

On the morning of September 21st, 1917, over thirty seven Piatt County men left Monticello for the armed forces. Bement men would generally take either the Illinois Terminal trolley or the Wabash railroad to the county seat. It is difficult to determine whether or not the village held a sendoff for their men as they headed for Monticello, or if the people of Bement followed their boys north to support them in the county-wide event. On the night before they were to leave, a reception was held at the Piatt County Courthouse, located in Monticello's public square. While the Bement draftees were only seven miles from home, one must speculate as to how many actually ventured south to sleep in their beds one last time, given the 6:30 AM

[78] Ibid.
[79] *Bement Register*, 2 August 1917.
[80] *Bement Register*, 23 August 1917.
[81] Ibid.
[82] *Bement Register*, 30 August 1917.
[83] Ibid.
[84] *Bement Register*, 6 September 1917.
[85] Ibid.
[86] *Bement Register*, 6 September 1917.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid.

departure time of their Illinois Central train from Monticello. The *Cerro Gordo News* reported admiringly that the Bement Township currently had thirty three men in all branches of the service. This was more than any other township in the area at this time.[89] The same week as the Piatt County event, the *Bement Register* mirrored this enthusiasm when it encouraged residents to "show your colors – put the flag in the window of your home. They fight for Americanism."[90]

Sunday October 7th, 1917 was "Go to Church Sunday," in Bement. The Presbyterian-led program was entitled "The Flag Calls for Service."[91] The Methodist and Christian Church goers were encouraged to attend. From reading the program bill, one can gather that the participants portrayed various immigrant groups throughout American history. The Scotch-Irish, French Huguenots, and Italian peoples were all represented. Ironically, very few, if any Italians were present in Bement at this time. Later that month, the Methodist Church provided patriotic entertainment with their production of "Die Mutter: A True War Story."[92] The same week that the Methodists hosted their program, the Presbyterians were treated to a presentation entitled, "Life in the American Navy."[93] Religious communities continued to focus on the war as the weather grew colder. The ladies of St. Michaels met in the home R.H. Smith and made several Christmas bags for the boys, while the Christian Church usually conducted a short review of the war before the Sunday sermon.[94]

The autumn of 1917 saw the commencement of the Second Liberty Loan sales drive. Children were encouraged to buy loans. Piatt County's quota for this loan was $81,000.[95] The Register declared "there's no 'if' and 'ands' about it, the bonds must be sold and we are going to buy them."[96] Addressing the Presbyterian Church, a Mr. Camp spoke that the war may cost one billion dollars per month. To emphasize the mind-numbing sum, Mr. Camp declared that "there haven't been one billion seconds since Christ was born."[97] Friday October 26th was Patriotic Children's Day in Bement. Topped off by a parade around the town, the students and faculty of the high school raised fifty cents apiece to buy a fifty dollar Liberty Bond in the school's name.[98] Younger school children submitted essays to the Register that described "why everyone should buy liberty bonds."[99]

Leland Brawner, still stationed in South Carolina, wrote to the *Register* that "the only way we can win the war is by going over [and beating] the Kaiser and I hope the war is not over until the U.S. gets there and shows that we are to be feared."[100] By this point in the war's progress, most of the Bement Boys of San Antonio had been split up to various assignments. Harold Fisher telegraphed home to Bement to inform his family that he was leaving Dayton, Ohio.[101] Dewey Long left Michigan for another post, while Ed Foran wrote to his aunt back in Bement.[102] Regarding Jack Carlin, another San Antonio Bement Boy, who was leaving for Italy,

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[89] *Bement Register*, 20 September 1917.
[90] Ibid.
[91] *Bement Register*, 4 October 1917.
[92] *Bement Register*, 11 October 1917.
[93] Ibid.
[94] *Bement Register*, 15 November 1917.
[95] *Bement Register*, 1 November 1917.
[96] *Bement Register*, 4 October 1917.
[97] *Bement Register*, 1 November 1917.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid.
[102] *Bement Register* 29, November 1917.

Foran wrote "You know God is everywhere and probably he (Jack) will see parts of the world he never would have had a chance to see."[103]

By December 13th, 1917 over fifty Bement Boys were in uniform. Brothers Russell and Lloyd Hill, William Ditty, Harry Lamb, and Peter Peterson all left for the service that month.[104] Young love had a moment to flourish in war time. That December, Miss Adelia Carlin traveled to Houston, Texas to marry her fiancé, Mr. Charles Lambert of Ivesdale. Mr. Lambert was serving in the Army.[105] After the ceremony, attended by another Ivesdale serviceman Corporal Frank Boland, Mrs. Charles Lambert arrived back in Bement before the start of the New Year.[106]

As New Year's Day approached, the Knights of Columbus and the YMCA started to actively raise funds for the war in Bement as well. Bementonians donated $172.50 to the K of C War Fund.[107] Both of these organizations encouraged people to donate items that could be sold for the purpose of raising funds. "You may have already given your time, but the war may last a long time" a joint advertisement claimed.[108]

In the first edition of 1918, the *Bement Register* printed a letter saying that Seamen Carl Eaton had written to his mother. An eighteen-year-old, Carl had made a brief stop back home in Bement the previous fall to visit his mother who was gravely ill.[109] In his December letter, Eaton related how his ship had been caught in a terrible storm in the north Atlantic.[110] Even though he was unable to sleep for three days, Carl reassured his mother that she wasn't to worry and that he would be all right. He closed by saying that it was unlikely for him to be home anytime in the next year.[111] A week later in the Bement Register, another Bement Boy, Earl "Dewey" Long wrote home to say that he had been in England since December 14th. However, he was unsure of his exact location.[112]

1918 was certainly the year where the war's impact was felt the most in Bement. In the area of commerce, local farm implement dealer Bodman and Company held a large sale of equipment that January. While the home front would not experience the shortages felt during the Second World War, the Bodman sale bill warned those shopping for a new automobile in 1918 that they needed to act quickly.[113] In the same edition of the *Register*, George L. Clark, a young Bement businessman and owner of the men's shoe and clothing store announced a close out sale on all his stock. This sale was the direct result of his being drafted into military service.[114] Women's shoes which had been on sale for $8 could now be had for $6.15. Men's silk dress shirts that that ran for $5 were now available for $3.75. Stetson cowboy hats, a popular fashion statement judging from period photographs, were now selling for $3.50 as opposed to the usual $5.[115] R.R. Lane, the *Register*'s owner and editor praised Clark by writing that "he has

[103] Ibid.
[104] *Bement Register*, 13 December 1917.
[105] *Bement Register*, 20 December 1917.
[106] *Bement Register* 3 January 1917.
[107] *Bement Register* 20 December 1917.
[108] *Bement Register*, 3 January 1917.
[109] *Bement Register*, 13 September 1917.
[110] *Bement Register*, 3 January 1918.
[111] Ibid.
[112] *Bement Register* 10, January 1918.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid.

placed a price on his stock and it means great sacrifice. Clark will enter a preparatory school for aviators as soon as his stock is sold."[116]

On January 21st, 1918, Bement observed a "heatless" Monday whereby all businesses, with the exception of grocery stores, restraints, meat markets, and the drug store, were closed down.[117] Ironically, the week before, Bement had experienced a severe blizzard which saw the temperature drop to 26 degrees below freezing. All rail traffic for both the Illinois Terminal and the Wabash Railroad was cancelled. The night of Saturday, January 12th saw two houses catch fire as residents tried to cope with the bitter weather.[118]

The perils of the winter season did little to dampen the patriotic spirit of the village. Bement was commended in the *Decatur Herald* for raising $2,005 in an auction held on the afternoon of Saturday February 23rd. Nearly two-thousand people from all over Piatt County were present at the event. Auctioneers Fred Lux of Monticello and Everett Heitz of Cerro Gordo donated their services as citizens bought turkeys, roosters, hogs, and calves. Red Cross Women served pie, doughnuts, and coffee while the Campfire Girls sold crackerjacks and cakes. A silk quilt was purchased by a young man for $12.00. The young man suggested to the auctioneers that at a previous auction that bills and coins be tossed onto the quilt as its corners were held by four men. This arrangement was commenced and over $25.00 was donated in a wave of "excitement and merriment."[119] Mrs. G.B. Alvard contributed a tatting flag measuring 15 by 17 inches. The patriotic craft was purchased by A.E. Moore of Monticello for $27.08.[120]

War news from the Bement Boys continued to be printed in the *Register*. F.C. Fisher, a sailor aboard the USS North Dakota thanked a "certain lady" in the Christian Church for the "cheer kit" that he had received.[121] Ralph Moery and Lennie High both enlisted in the Officers Reserve of the Aviation Corps whereupon they were called to active duty in nearby Urbana, Illinois.[122] The community was commended in the *Decatur Herald*

Sadly, Andrew Swick, the first Bement man to be injured during the war, died of an infection from the wound that he received upon his return to the front. It is unclear whether or not Andrew was wounded on two separate incidents. The *Bement Register* reported on February 21st that Andrew was wounded in France and that he had served in the same company as his fallen brother Charles.[123] The next week's *Register* reported that the Canadian soldier died of his wounds on February 24th, 1918.[124]*

The two fallen brothers were honored by a special memorial service conducted at the newly built Methodist Church on Sunday, March 10th.[125] With the national flags of the United States, France, and Great Britain displayed along the church "was beautifully decorated with flags, bunting, and ferns, and carnations."[126] The service was attended by their father James Swick, sister Mary (Swick) Mills, both of Decatur. Their brother, James Swick of Bement, also attended with his wife and daughter. The *Piatt County Republican* also related that Pastor Rev.

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[116] Ibid.
[117] *Bement Register*, 24 January 1918.
[118] *Bement Register*, 17 January 1918.
[119] *Decatur Herald*, 24 February 1918.
[120] Ibid.
[121] *Bement Register*, 24 January 1918.
[122] *Bement Register*, 7 February 1918.
[123] *Bement Register*, 21 February 1918.
[124] *Bement Register*, 28 February 1918. * Research of Canadian military records finds that Andrew Swick (Military ID #183766) served in the 25th BN. Can. Inf. while Charles Swick (Military ID #184246) served in the 10th BN. Can. Inf.
[125] *The Piatt County Republican*, 14 March 1918.
[126] Ibid.

Wilber Dowson preached an impressive sermon titled "Greater Love Hath No Man Than This, that He Lay Down His Life For His Friend." The service included patriotic hymns such as "My County 'Tis of Thee," "When the Freemen's Flag Goes By," and was concluded by the song "Keep the Homes Fires Burning."[127] Reporting on the day following the memorial service, the *Decatur Herald* commended Dowson's sermon and added that M.H. Benson sang the song "The Old Flag That Has Never Suffered Defeat." The emotional nature of the event must have been greatly apparent as the entire congregation joined the choir in singing the final song.[128] While the Swick brothers are both commemorated on the Bement memorial, only Charles is identified as having died in the Great War.

During the month of March, the residents of Piatt County were treated to performances given by the Great Lakes Naval Training Station Band in Monticello. These patriotic programs were attended by many residents of Bement who rode the Illinois Terminal trolleys.[129] On the Wabash Railroad, a steam locomotive blew up two miles east of Cerro Gordo. The explosion could be heard in Bement and attracted much attention from residents all over the area. Miraculously, the four crew members were able to safely jump off the stricken engine in time. Because of the enforcement of government censorship at the time, no photos of the accident were allowed to be made public.[130]*

The spring of 1918 also witnessed the implementation of Daylight Savings Time. The Register explained that the trains would run on their regular schedule. By March 21st, nearly $13,000 had been raised by Piatt County for the American Red Cross. Bement contributed $2,247.22 of this amount.[131] Early April saw the Federal Government lifting its "meatless Tuesday" order.[132] Seven Bement men were called for service at this time as well. Ross Taylor, Ben Adkins, Cecil Leroy Davis, Emory Arnold, Elmer Hill, Everett Ditty, and Thomas Stone left Monticello on Wednesday, April 3rd.[133] The Register also reported that "Bement Boys" Dewey Long and Jack Carlin had seen each other while the two were in England. Dewey Long would soon be sent to France.[134] In a letter that says as much about the experiences of Bement's sons as the town itself, John High related how he was able to catch a fleeting glimpse of his hometown as he traveled from one military base to another. After leaving the Wabash Depot in Decatur, High realized that his route to Massachusetts would take him through Bement. As the train went through Bement at 11:00 PM on Saturday March 30th, High wrote, "I had my head out the window, but I didn't see anyone stirring on the streets."[135]

The *Bement Register* of April 18th, 1918 informed readers that they would no longer be able to ship care packages to the boys in France as per the new guidelines.[136] Letters from Bement Boys began to flood the front page. Tony Ryan wrote about camp life in Fort Dupont Delware, while Private Paul M. Cornelious was allowed to come home from Kelly Field in San Antonio for his grandmother's funeral.[137] Ray Slevin, one of the original San Antonio boys was now with the 28th Aero Squadron in France as a truck driver. In a letter written to his father,

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[127] Ibid.
[128] *Decatur Herald*, 12 March 1918.
[129] *Bement Register*, 28 February 1918.
[130] *Bement Register*, 7 March 1918.* The 4 March 1918 *Decatur Herald* ran an extensive story (along with a photograph) reporting the details of the train wreck.
[131] *Bement Register*, 21 March 1918.
[132] *Bement Register*, 4 April 1918.
[133] Ibid.
[134] *Bement Register*, 11 April 1918.
[135] *Bement Register*, 18 April 1918.
[136] Ibid.
[137] *Bement Register*, 25 April 1918.

Slevin related that the squadron had lost three men since arriving in France. He implored his father to send tobacco as all of his had been lost in a recent retreat.[138]

The *Bement Register* of May 2nd pondered the notion that a heroic machine gunner from the 5th U.S. Machine Gun Battalion may have been local Bement Boy, Albert Parker. According to the report, "machine gun Parker" was asked by a superior officer at one stage of an engagement whether he could hold the line. He replied that he could unless he was killed."[139] Carl Eaton, the sailor who had been through the nasty weather earlier, wrote to his mother in a letter dated April 21st, 1918. From the USS Florida, Eaton told her that "if you hear of any great naval battles, you know that I have been in them."[140] Albert Parker wrote a similarly reassuring letter to his mother in that "they [the soldiers] were safer in the trenches than in the villages because they get bombed constantly."[141]

Citizens of Bement kept the war effort moving on the home front that spring as well. St. Michael Church dedicated a silk service flag with seven blue stars for each of the parish servicemen.[142] The names and locations of six of these servicemen were printed as:

John Carlin in England	Raymond Slevin in France
Elmer Kelly in Florida	Edward Foran at Great Lakes Naval Training Facility
Anthony Ryan in Ft. Dupont, Iowa	M. Loughran on Submarine Duty

Farmers began to buy war stamps at Piatt County grain elevators that spring. The Bement Elevator sold $1742 worth, the highest in the county.[143] At the First National Bank, residents of Bement could keep up to speed on the progress of the war by means of bulletins, illustrations, and maps that were updated every Friday.[144]

On May 23rd, Bement businesses closed their doors and hundreds of the town's residents headed to the Wabash Depot to visit some of the Bement Boys who were delayed there by a late train. Leo Warren, Paul Flowers, Ray Arnold, Stanley Hammond, Chas. Gillespie, Francis Morrow, John Lee, and George Lass were greeted by the crowd as they waited for their train.[145] That same week, the Masonic Temple dedicated two service flags that were made by the women of the local Red Cross chapter.[146]

More news from the Bement Boys was printed in the June 6th *Registe*r. Ben Adkins was busy in Fort Dupont, Delaware guarding fifty prisoners, most of whom Adkins related were "slackers, spies, and German sympathizers."[147] Albert Parker sent a letter to Bement dated May 1st, 1918. He wrote that "we have it easy compared to the British and French at the Cambrai Front. Spring is just opening up here."[148] Earl Roan, another Bement Boy in France, wrote to "tell all the girls at the post office that I was happy to have received their books."[149] Carl Eaton wrote to his mother about his plans for his five day leave in London. He related that "I am

[138] Ibid.
[139] *Bement Register*, 2 May 1918.
[140] *Bement Register*, 16 May 1918.
[141] Ibid.
[142] *Bement Register*, 23 May 1918.
[143] *Bement Register*, 8 May 1918.
[144] Ibid.
[145] *Bement Register*, 30 May 1918.
[146] Ibid.
[147] *Bement Register*, 6 June 1918.
[148] Ibid.
[149] Ibid.

planning a fine time. I am going sightseeing and get all the pictures I can."[150] Russell Hill wrote to folks in Bement about the good treatment that the Red Cross and the YMCA provided for the boys behind the lines. He was serving with the 183rd Aero Squadron in France.[151] Carl Standler had similar praises for both the YMCA and Knight of Columbus. Neither organization, however, could do much to change his opinion about "the Godforsaken Country of Alabama."[152] Percy Hill, a serviceman in the same state as Stadler, requested that he be sent a copy of the *Bement Register*.[153]

Perhaps an immigrant to the United States, Bement Boy Tony Gunich wrote to his friends back home, that the people in France "wear funny wooden shoes like we used to wear in Russia. I wouldn't want to live that way again."[154] Russell Hill told his folks in Bement that he had been taking French lessons from a nice old French lady.[155] Although Russell couldn't speak very well, he wrote of how he went up to a little girl "the size of Dorthy Jane and asked her if she liked Americans. She put her sweet little arms around my neck and kissed my cheek."[156] Elmer Hill, Russel's brother, wrote to his father that he was very happy because he "finally gets to go overseas." Elmer comforted his dad by writing "don't worry about me because I'm real lucky in getting to go with this bunch. I know quite a few of the boys and they are dandy fellows."[157]

As previously mentioned, the nearby community of Rantoul had seen the construction of an Army Air Corps training field in the summer of 1917. By the summer of 1918, the field was now known as Chanute Field. Sometime in early June, planes began to fly around Bement and land in the nearby pastures as part of their training.[158] Usually traveling in groups of eight, the planes made their way from Rantoul to Bement in about forty-five minutes, sometimes landing at the Fisher Farm two miles west of Bement or at Totten Pasture. The newspaper made much about the good behavior of the local crowds that went out to greet the flyers. Lieutenant Ritchie was quoted after leading a flight of eleven planes to the village that "if the crowd lives up to its reputation of being well behaved, Bement can expect more flights."[159] Later that summer, E. E. Cheshire was treated to dinner in the home of W.A. Strohl after making an emergency landing in the latter's field.[160]

At the Wabash Depot that June, the town gathered to send another group of young men off to the military.[161] With music furnished by the Callahan Dramatics, the following men boarded the 1:43 PM train to Camp Wheeler Georgia:

John Edward Foran	Earl Proctor	Frank Sebens	Frank Flavin
Cecil Warren	Ray Hawkins	Melvin Arthur	Clarence Funk
Earl Hardin	Ben Patterson	John Ray	

[150] Ibid.
[151] *Bement Register*, 27 May 1918.
[152] Ibid.
[153] Ibid.
[154] Ibid.
[155] *Bement Register*, 27 June 1918.
[156] Ibid.
[157] Ibid.
[158] *Bement Register*, 6 June 1918.
[159] *Bement Register*, 20 June 1918.
[160] *Bement Register*, 4 July 1918.
[161] *Bement Register*, 27 June 1918.

Shortly after arriving in Camp Wheeler, Clarence Funk wrote home to the Register to "tell the folks they can't go wrong giving to the Army YMCA or the Red Cross."[162] According to the July 18th, 1918 *Bement Register*, 155 men from the township were now in military service.[163]

Peter Peterson of the 182nd Aero Squadron wrote to his parents in Bement that he was now within the sound of the guns in France.[164] In early August, word came through that two Bement Boys had been wounded in the line of service. Harry Shipman of the 3rd Artillery Trench Battalion had been wounded in France, but was coming along alright.[165] George Dove, a sailor on the USS Connecticut was also wounded.[166] Dewey Long, along with another Bement Boy, Hershel Baker, still had not left England.[167] Walter B. Cornelius, a Bement Boy who had recently moved to Morrisonville, Illinois was training at Camp Sherman in Chillicothe, Ohio.[168] The *Register* of August 8th related how a Mr. Robert Long of Toledo, Ohio was recognized by Mrs. Charles Gillespie and Miss Margaret Carlin while he waited on his troop train at the Wabash Depot. The women treated Mr. Long and his friend Mr. Johnson from Mississippi to a quick chicken dinner, along with fruit and cigarettes.[169] That same week, Bement resident Mary Edna Burgess submitted a letter to the *Register* telling of her recent work as a nurse in Persia. Perhaps more insightfully than she realized at the time, Ms. Burgress wrote that when taking care of the "Moslem women – it surely makes one wonder who will be the next ones to seek shelter under the folds of Old Glory."[170]

While "Pershing's Crusaders" was scheduled to start playing at the Lyric Theatre on August 31st, Bement residents could also opt to hear firsthand accounts. On August 17th, 1918, Bement was visited by C.I. Thompson, an American citizen and native of Springfield, Illinois who had been wounded during the Battle of Somme. Thompson later took part in the Novemeber 14th, 1917 Battle of Ypres, also known as Passchendaele.[171] It was in this action that Thompson lost his right arm. "I'm out doing what I can to do good to the great cause by telling my experience of the war," Thompson related. There in the city park that Saturday night, Thompson told the Bement crowd of his experience.

In the next installment of the *Bement Registry*, the village residents learned that one of their own boys, Henry Shipman, joined the ranks of the war amputees.[172] In a letter dated July 22nd, Shipman wrote:

> I still have my life, health, and strength, but have lost my left leg just above the knee. It was caused by a bomb dropped from an airplane. My sergeant who was next to me was killed so you can see I am very lucky. There has been a lot doing up front lately and I was with the boys awhile, but I caught mine early in the game. The Germans are getting a few of us and we are slaughtering them.[173]

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[162] *Bement Register*, 4 July 1918.
[163] *Bement Register*, 18 July 1918.
[164] *Bement Register*, 4 July 1918.
[165] *Bement Register*, 8 August 1918.
[166] Ibid.
[167] *Bement Register*, 15 August 1918.
[168] Ibid.
[169] *Bement Register*, 8 August 1918.
[170] Ibid.
[171] *Bement Register*, 15 August 1918.
[172] *Bement Register*, 22 August 1918.
[173] Ibid.

Another former resident of Bement was an aviator. H.H. Strauch, a former Bement High School instructor had a series of letters printed that week. In the first letter, dated on June 22nd, Strauch stated:

> On the front, yet I have experienced no elements of thrill or excitement. I have absolutely lost all elements of fear. I say that this is a very moderate sort of war. In fact, I even have all the different kind of drinks at my disposal beer, French wines, champaign (sic), rum, etc.[174]

His July 16th letter had a more excited tone as Strauch claimed:

> Got my first Boche machine today. Boy! It's the greatest sport I've ever had but dangerous to say the least. One of the fellows on formation was shot down. There were 3 German Albatrosses on my tail. His machine fell east of Chateau Thierry.[175]

Readers of the *Register* would later learn that the local teacher turned flyboy won the French *Croix de Guerre*. Bement Boy John Carlin wrote how he met Strauch while in France in his September 3rd letter.[176]

In the August 22nd *Bement Register*, R.R. Lane explained how the newspaper was going to be forced to reduced its print circulation by 15% in the coming months because of government regulations.[177] To encourage people of the village to subscribe to the newspaper in advance, the Register planned to provide a photo album of area servicemen to people free of charge. Residents were encouraged to submit pictures of their loved ones in their military uniform and to provide information on their whereabouts.[178]

Mitch Loughran, a former mechanic at the Bodman Garage, probably had the most adventurous story of all the Bement Boys. His submarine was sunk 800 miles of the coast of France by a German U-Boat. Surviving off of six crackers, Mitch and fourteen of his fellow sailors drifted nearly 170 miles before being rescued by a British ship.[179] Loughran wrote that upon arriving back in England, he received word that his brother had been killed in battle on July 17th.

In the same issue as Loughran's tale, a letter from wounded Bement Boy Harry Shipman was printed. Recovering from his wounds at Ellis Island in New York City, Shipman wrote "I saw some real active service and got some of those Huns. I was there for five days and they were too thick to miss many shots. I was wounded at Chateau Thierry.[180] A month later, Shipman would submit another letter to the *Register* about his experiences at the front. Now resting in Reed Hospital in Washington D.C., Henry wrote:

> about 12'o clock the Germans decided to warm things up and they began by sending a machine gun barrage across the river. No man could stand up and keep his health. They decided to mix some big shells and some gas. Two rifle

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[174] Ibid.
[175] Ibid.
[176] *Bement Register*, 10 October 1918.
[177] Ibid.
[178] Ibid.
[179] *Bement Register* 26 September 1918.
[180] Ibid.

> pits were taken out. I said to my friend, 'Jack we are in a bad place and only the Lord can save us now.' Well, we got back to a ditch with a captain in it. The rest of the boys didn't make it back.[181]

The *Bement Register* also printed a brief letter from local war hero Albert Parker. In a letter dated September 17, 1918, Parker wrote about his latest combat against the Germans:

> We slipped up on them in a rainy battle along occupied France. Prisoners were 14-15 years old at the youngest and 55-60 at the oldest. In many places whole companies were taken without firing a shot while others would use a machine gun on us until we got within a few yards of them and then they would throw up their hands and yell 'kamerad.' The real mud beating the Germans is the Liberty Loan Bond.[182]

Like many places across the United States, Bement was hit by the influenza virus in October of 1918. The headline "Four Bement Boys Die of Influenza," appeared ominously on the front page of October 10th's *Register*. Cleo Reeder died at Great Lakes Naval Station, while Walter Clarkson and Gust Larson passed away at Camp Grant, Illinois. Clarkson's parents were able to make the trip up to Chicago to be with their ill son before he died. Another boy, Edmund Lumsden of Monticello, also perished at Camp Grant.[183]

The residents of Bement were also succumbing to the pandemic. Cecil Clyde Warren, Dr. Havery M. Vance, Mrs. Julia McIntosh, and Mart Ellars all died before the end of October.[184] With over three-hundred people infected by the virus, all public gatherings were banned. The public school briefly suspended classes and the burning of leaves was prohibited.[185] Only immediate family members and close friends were allowed to attend the funerals of influenza victims out of the fear that the illness could be spread.[186]

In the November 7th Bement Register, the last paper printed before the end of the war, two letters from Charles Lambert were printed. In the first letter, dated September 17th, 1918, Lambert described how he had taken part in the drive on St. Miheil. After a fourteen hour bombardment, he was able to get into the German trench network. He was amazed at the fact that the Germans had knickknacks and electrical lighting down in their bunkers. October 4th's letter described how the Bement Boy made his way through the Verdun sector. Lambert was now the proud owner of a German belt buckle bearing the inscription "Gott Mit Uns," that the soldier "got off a dead German the other day."[187]

The "War to End All Wars," came to a conclusion on Monday, November 11th, 1918. Bement residents received word of the armistice around 2:00 AM that morning. Large crowds gathered in the streets as whistles and church bells were blown and rang until daylight came.[188] Bonfires were lit in many places around town. All the town's businesses were closed on Monday.[189] A "Funeral Service for the Kaiser," was celebrated on Tuesday by a parade led by

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[181] *Bement Register*, 24 October 1918.
[182] Ibid.
[183] *Bement Register*, 10 October 1918.
[184] *Bement Register*, 24 October 1918.
[185] *Bement Register*, 10 October 1918.
[186] Ibid.
[187] *Bement Register*, 7 November 1918.
[188] *Bement Register*, 14 November 1918.
[189] Ibid.

John W. Smith, an eighty-eight year old veteran of the Union Army. The local Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) flag, as well the 5th Illinois Cavalry colors were carried at the front of the march.[190]

Bement residents, whilst basking in the light of the armistice, still felt compelled to thank God for the triumph of their nation. "Victory Services" were held at an unmentioned location; however, the venue must have been large enough to hold hundreds of the town's residents. Prayers were given by Reverend Father Selk, Reverend W.E. Olmsted, and Reverend D.M. Durham.[191] After the ceremony, a memorial service was held in the Christian Church for fallen Bement Boy John L. Ditty.[192] John was killed in France while serving in the U.S. Army on September 13, 1918.[193] John Concannon, an Ivesdale soldier serving in the same unit as Ditty, later wrote how the fallen soldier's grave was located on top of a pretty hill in the French countryside.[194] Miss Betty Ditty, John's sister, died of influenza before the end of November.[195]

Given the communications technology that was available in the early twentieth century, Bementonians learned about the last of their fallen Boys in the month of December 1918. Albert Parker, the teenage war hero, had not written his parents for several weeks.[196] His parent's fears were confirmed in the first week of December when they were informed of his October 15th death, by way of a government telegram.[197] Posthumously promoted to sergeant, Albert left behind his parents, six sisters and two brothers.[198] Herbert Halterman, another Bement Boy fighting in France was confirmed to be missing in action. Halterman went missing sometime between October 4th and the 12th.[199] Harry Strauch, the brave and somewhat cocky fighter pilot was shot down and killed on October 8th.[200]

As the year 1918 ended, there was little mention of the war in the *Bement Register*. There were still periodic updates on the whereabouts of local servicemen, but the residents of the township concerned themselves with the issue of providing full stime electrical service to both Bement and Ivesdale. Wounded Bement Boy, Henry Shipman made it back to town by February 6th.[201] On February 27th, 1919, a large number of returning Piatt County veterans were greeted at Monticello.[202] Carl Eaton continued to write letters to his mother, although they were no longer published in the *Register*. Eaton would go on to make a career of the Navy. He was killed while battling the Japanese Navy on December 17th, 1942. Henry Shipman, the wounded Bement Boy who wrote to his hometown while recovering in East Coast hospital, was the town's last World War One battle death. While he went on to have six children with his wife, the effects of the mustard gas that he had been exposed to, made him susceptible to pneumonia. He died of that condition on December 30th, 1927.[203]

Bement continued to be a railroad and agricultural hub for the area after the war. The sons and daughters of the Bement Boys would grow up to fight in the larger conflagration of

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[190] Ibid.
[191] Ibid.
[192] Ibid.
[193] *Bement Township World War One Veterans Album.*
[194] *Bement Register*, 28 November 1918.
[195] Ibid.
[196] *Bement Register*, 5 December 1918.
[197] Ibid.
[198] Ibid.
[199] Ibid.
[200] *Bement Register*, 28 November 1918.
[201] *Bement Register*, 6 February 1919.
[202] *Bement Register*, 27 February 1919.
[203] *Piatt County World War One Veterans Obituary Record Book*

the Second World War. For both generations, military service was no doubt an eye-opening and horizon-widening event. The Great War was an opportunity for the citizens of Bement to demonstrate their patriotism and loyalty to the country. While the war was chronologically short, the impact of the conflict was no doubt greatly felt by those who lived through it. Today, the local chapter of the American Legion bears Albert Parker's name. As of 2011, a new generation of Bement Boys and Girls are no doubt proudly serving their country just as their fore-fathers did nearly a century ago.

Clay County and the Great War: A Narrative History of the Contributive and Sacrificial Involvement of Clay County, Illinois in World War I

Ryan Herdes

The purpose of the project undertaken within these pages was to conduct an original research project in a local community. The research was to focus on the World War I years, particularly 1917 and 1918, in which the United States had declared war on Germany and had joined the fighting in Europe. The exact dates for the time frame for which this project ranged were from April 4, 1917 through June 30, 1919. The overall goal of the research was to produce a collective narrative of the involvement- both the contributions and the sacrifices- of a specific county within Illinois to the war effort. Such an analysis had to take into account not only the involvement of the soldiers from that county while serving abroad on the foreign front, but also that of the county as a whole on the domestic front.

The county I chose to focus on for my research was Clay County. Clay County was established by being merged from portions of Wayne, Crawford, and Fayette Counties. The county was named in honor of Henry Clay, who was a member of the U. S. House of Representatives and U. S. Senate for the State of Kentucky. He also served as the U. S. Secretary of State in the 1820s.[1] In addition, Henry Clay served three times as the Speaker of the U. S. House of Representatives, authored the Missouri Compromise, and was a prominent candidate for the U. S. Presidency, which coincided with the year in which the county was established- December 23, 1824.[2]

The county consists of three main communities, which possess local high schools- Flora, Louisville, and Clay City. The county also consists of several other smaller communities that do not bolster high schools of their own, which include Hord, Ingraham, Iola, Oskaloosa, Sailor Springs, Wendelin, and Xenia. The U.S. Census Bureau claimed, in its 2000 Census report, that Clay County supported a total population of 14,560 people. The Illinois Census 2000 website listed the populations for six communities within Clay County. Flora was the largest community in the county with a population of 5,086 people. The other five communities followed as such: Louisville- 1,242 people; Clay City- 1,000 people; Xenia- 407 people; Iola- 171 people; and Sailor Springs- 128 people.[3]

In both 1910 and 1920, the population of Clay County was somewhat larger. The Real Estate Center at Texas A & M University reported on their website that, according to the U. S. Bureau of the Census, Clay County, Illinois had a population of 18,661 people in 1910, with a decline of a population of 17,684 people in 1920.[4] The Flora *Journal-Record*, a newspaper issued twice a week on Tuesdays and Fridays, reported on the census figures of the county by township for 1920. The results were as follows: Bible Grove Township- 980 people; Blair Township- 984 people; Clay City Township- 1,322 people; Harter Township- 4,811 people; Hoosier Township- 1,022 people; Larkinsburg Township- 1,400 people; Louisville Township-

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[1] Clay County. "General Information." http://claycountyillinois.org/index.aspx?page=72, 2008. (accessed December4, 2009).
[2] Illinois Regional Archives Depository. "Clay County Fact Sheet." http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/archives/irad/clay.html. (accessed December 4, 2009).
[3] State of Illinois. "Illinois Census 2000: Clay County." http://illinoisgis.ito.state.il.us/census2000/dplace_census.asp?theSelCnty=025&towns=147, 2005. (accessed December 3, 2009).
[4] Real Estate Center at Texas A & M University. "Clay County, IL Population by Decades." http://recenter.tamu.edu/Data/popcd/pc17025.htm, 2002. (accessed May 8, 2006).

1,776 people; Oskaloosa Township- 944 people; Pixley Township- 1,458 people; Songer Township- 790 people; Stanford Township- 1,161 people; and Xenia Township- 1,036 people.[5]

The majority of the sources used within this project originated within and were collected from the boundaries of Clay County. They are limited mainly to newspaper articles and local history publications. A couple of other sources such as the *Honor Roll*, published by the Illinois Veteran's Commission, and the *Soldier's of the Great War* record, published by the Soldiers Record Publishing Association, were also consulted. The bulk of the information within this project was gathered from the *Southern Illinois Record*, the local Flora newspaper that was in print during the war years. The Flora Public Library received a grant a few years ago to place the newspaper on the internet. Still, certain editions of this newspaper are missing or incomplete. Local papers also existed within a minute number of the other communities within the county, unfortunately, they have not been preserved, and few references to them have been unearthed. It also should be noted that certain components of the information contained within this project are products of the time frame in which they originated, and are therefore solely contingent upon the accuracy and factual research of those who produced them at that time.

Part One: Gearing Up for War

Securing Patriotic Support

"War," stated the title of the article printed in the weekly Thursday edition of the *Southern Illinois Record*. On Wednesday, April 4, 1917, the U.S. Senate, by a vote of eighty-two to six, passed a resolution that placed the nation in a state of war with Germany. President Woodrow Wilson took immediate steps to put the country in a state of defense and to carry on war against Germany.[6]

It can be argued that almost immediately following the resolution from the U.S. Senate, Clay County began its involvement in the Great War. The Woman's Club and the Commercial Club of Flora jointly scheduled a meeting that requested all patriotic citizens to attend. The meeting, held at the Casino Theatre on Friday, April 6th, was called for the purpose of garnering volunteers for a Loyalty Meeting in the community. The Loyalty Meeting was scheduled to be held on the evening of Monday, April 9th.[7]

At the first public meeting on Friday, April 6th, the room was crowded. National airs were sung and short talks were given by a number of those present. An invitation to the public was extended by the Baltimore and Ohio railway boys to attend a flag raising ceremony that they put on in the round house at four o' clock the following evening. The meeting continued on until a late hour.[8]

The flag raising ceremony in Flora, which was held on Saturday, April 7th, was well attended. North Avenue, from the public square to the round house, was filled with people. The round house boys had erected a pole fifty-six feet high, upon which they raised an eight by twelve foot flag, while a band played *The Star Spangled Banner*. Hats were removed and, as the flag was unfurled, a mighty shout arose from those present. This was followed by a flag salute led by the master of ceremonies, W. D. Scudamore. It was reported that more than three thousand men, women, and children, waving flags, shouting, and singing, had made a scene that was inspiring and would not be forgotten.[9]

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[5] "Clay County's Census Returns." (*Journal - Record*: May 27, 1930), 1.
[6] "War." (*Southern Illinois Record*: April 5, 1917), 4.
[7] "Mass Meeting." (*Southern Illinois Record*: April 5, 1917), 1.
[8] "5000 Attend Patriotic Meeting---Big Parade." (*Southern Illinois Record*: April 12, 1917), 1.
[9] Ibid.

The big demonstration, referred to as the Loyalty Meeting, that was scheduled to take place on the evening of Monday, April 9th, was postponed on account of unfavorable weather until the following night. The night began with the raising of the American flag and a public program filled with speeches and singing. It was said that every speech was good, short, to the point, and breathed the true spirit of loyalty. This program was followed by a parade, and it was estimated that at least five thousand people had gathered in the streets for this event.[10]

Flora was not the only community in the county that showed its patriotism. According to Beryl Rinehart, who constructed a blended historical and fictitious narrative of Sailor Springs history:

> While the boys were away fighting the war, the people who were left at home went all out for patriotism, and with the exception of maybe a slacker here and there, the majority were eager to do their bit. There were many members of the society who donated freely towards the cause.[11]

Enlisting for Service

The purpose of the patriotic community meetings and events was twofold. First, was to increase favorable support for the war in the community. Secondly, was to propel individuals to action. It was not long until it became evident that these events were starting to have their desired effect. Men from the county began to enlist for service. It was reported in the April 26th edition of the *Southern Illinois Record* that the following Clay County men went to Olney and enlisted in Company L for service: Reed H. O'Haver, Gerald McKnight, Lloyd C. McCulley, and Ivan H. High of Flora; Joseph L. Wood and James R. Blair of Louisville; and Chester W. Cisne and Byron B. Caudle of Xenia. They were accompanied by Earl A. Rickets of Flora, who had flight experience and went to Evansville to enlist in the aviation service.[12]

In the following edition of the newspaper, it was noted that Eugene Mitchell, James Higgins, and Joe Southwick, all of Flora, had reported for examination for the Officers' Reserve Training Camp in Fort Sheridan in Illinois. All three had been recommended by the examining board for entrance to the camp and were awaiting orders from the Central Department in Chicago to report. It was added that several other Flora boys were also interested in entering the camp, but had not as yet received instructions to report to an examining board.[13] Less than a week later, Joe Southwick and Eugene Mitchell received notice to report to the Officers Citizens Training Camp at Fort Sheridan for service.[14] Upon passing the examination at Fort Sheridan, both men were assigned to service in the regular army. Southwick was awarded the rank of captain and Mitchell the rank of second lieutenant.[15]

On April 30th, recruiting officer Fuqua of the U.S. station in Vincennes, Indiana paid a visit to Flora. While there, Fuqua secured the enlistment of George Bass, Fred Steel, John Lauderback, Cyrel Senters, and Lyal Prather. Also, Postmaster Wineland, of the Flora community, was sworn in as a recruiting officer. Wineland was quoted as stating that, "Those enlisting before the new selective conscription law takes effect will obligate themselves to service during the war only; after that seven years service will be the term."[16] Following this

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[10] Ibid.
[11] Rinehart, Beryl. *Sailor Springs Story.* (Olney: Earl C. Taylor & Marie Reynolds. 1956), 139.
[12] "Clay County Boys Enlist." (*Southern Illinois Record*: April 26, 1917), 1.
[13] "Flora Boys Are Ready For War." (*Southern Illinois Record*: May 3, 1917), 1.
[14] "Go to the Training Camp." (*Southern Illinois Record*: May 10, 1917), 8.
[15] "Flora Boys Honored." (*Southern Illinois Record*: July 26, 1917), 1.
[16] "Recruiting in Flora." (*Southern Illinois Record*: May 3, 1917), 8.

visit to Flora, several men then went to Vincennes on May 8th to enlist in the U.S. Army. Of these men who went, only three individuals- Merrell Charleston, Henry C. Prather, and Leo P. Reed- passed the examination and were accepted.[17]

During the last week of May of that same year, another recruiter came to visit Flora. This time it was Lieutenant Lawrey of Morrisonville, Illinois. Accompanied by Acting Orderly Reed O'Haver, the two were recruiting for the Sixth Regiment, which was stationed at Camp Lowden in Springfield, Illinois. A total of three regiments of the Illinois National Guard were in the federal service- the First, Fifth, and Sixth Regiments. From these regiments, Flora had one man serving in the Fifth Regiment- Leslie Jones- and three men serving in the Sixth Regiment- Lloyd McCulley, Jack McKnight, and Reed O'Haver. The Sixth Regiment was expected to be ordered to a training camp in Texas and then to be sent to France with the First Division in the coming fall.[18]

Flora Organizes a Red Cross Unit

In the May 10th edition of the *Southern Illinois Record*, the Woman's Club of Flora announced its intention to organize a Red Cross Unit. It was desired that every man, woman, and child in the area should become a member. This was so all would do one's bit for the country by providing comforts for the soldiers. A membership fee of one dollar was required to join, while for a two dollar membership fee, new members could also receive the American Red Cross Magazine. Potential members, and the community as a whole, were informed that there would be work to do and probably materials to be donated with which to make garments.[19]

Clay County Fails to Raise a Company

In the early days of June 1917, an effort was undertaken to organize a company of sixty-five men for the Ninth Illinois Regiment. This was conceded as a failure. If successful, Flora would have become the location of an armory. However, Flora was only able to secure twenty-seven enlistments. As a result of its failure to organize a company, Clay County was passed up for Harrisburg in Saline County. Harrisburg was immediately able to enlist eighty-five men and received the armory that had been promised to Flora upon organizing a company.[20]

Registering for the Draft

May 18, 1917 marked an important date in the history of the involvement of the United States in World War I. On this date President Woodrow Wilson signed the draft bill, calling up all men between twenty-one and thirty-one years of age to register for selective service.[21] The date set for registration for the national draft within Clay County was June 5, 1917. This occurred as scheduled without any problems. A total of 1,350 men registered. The registration could be broken down by township as follows: Bible Grove- 78; Blair- 89; Clay City- 98; Harter #1- 156; Harter #2- 188; Hoosier- 85; Larkinsburg- 100; Louisville #1- 64; Louisville #2- 79; Oskaloosa- 74; Pixley #1- 60; Pixley # 2- 45; Songer- 77; Stanford- 93; and. Xenia- 62.[22]

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[17] "Gone to the Front." (*Southern Illinois Record*: May 10, 1917), 1.
[18] "Recruiting for the War." (*Southern Illinois Record*: May 31, 1917), 8.
[19] "Red Cross Unit to be Organized." (*Southern Illinois Record*: May 10, 1917), 4.
[20] "Clay County Fails To Raise Company." (*Southern Illinois Record*: June 7, 1917), 8.
[21] Haulsee, W. M., Howe, F.G., & Doyle, A.C. *Soldiers of the Great War: Volume 1.* (Washington, D.C.: Soldiers Record Publishing Association. 1920), 40.
[22] "Registration Day." (*Southern Illinois Record*: June 7, 1917), 1.

The Draft in Clay County

On July 10, 1917, President Wilson called the National Guard into federal service. Exactly three days later, Washington formally issued the first draft call for 687,000 men.[23] On July 12, 1917, the draft was conducted for Clay County. Of the 1,350 men who registered within the county on June 5th, the names of 214 of those men were drawn to represent the county in the national draft. Ultimately, out of those 214 men, only 107 were actually conscripted from Clay County. A complete listing of those individuals called in the county draft appeared in the final July edition of the *Southern Illinois Record*. Charles Leroy McGrew, who resided three miles north of Flora, was the first man drawn in the county.[24]

The Ninth Illinois Infantry Regiment and Company L

By July 20th, the national draft was completed and nearly ten million men had enlisted nationwide.[25] The Ninth Illinois Infantry Regiment, commanded by Colonel C. F. Ryman of Effingham, was made up largely of companies in Southern Illinois. The companies comprising the Ninth Regiment were made up of the following towns: A of Duquoin, B of McLeansboro, C of Golconda, D of West Frankfort, E of Harrisburg, F of Mt. Carmel, G of Lawrenceville, H of Carmi, I of Centralia, K of Mt. Vernon, L of Salem, and M of Fairfield.[26]

Company L of the Ninth Regiment of the Illinois National Guard was mustered into service on Friday, June 22, 1917, when Major Claud E. Smith of Flora arrived in Salem in Marion County. At that time the men underwent the necessary physical examinations, which were performed by Assistant Surgeon J.W. Wells, who served as the medical examiner.[27] After visiting Salem, Major Smith also visited Fairfield, McLeansboro, and Harrisburg to muster in the companies organized in those places.[28] The July 19th edition of the *Southern Illinois Record* reported that the Ninth Regiment had been ordered to mobilize at Camp Lowden in Springfield at once. It also listed the following men as having been recently recruited with Company L: Gerald J. McKnight, Ivan H. High, and Earl A. Rickett of Flora; Orville R. Able, Victor A. Cleveland, Joseph L. Woods, James R. Blair, Archie Green, and Oliver Hord of Louisville; and Hazle I. Caudle, Jesse A. Holloway, Oscar Anderson, Chester W. Cisne, Bryan B. Caudle, Ernest B. Shadden, and Cecil C. Young of Xenia. All of these new recruits were ordered to report to Sergeant Lester in Olney on July 25, 1917.[29] It was likewise noted that the boys from Xenia, who were serving with the Fourth Regiment, were also to report. They were expected to soon be moved to the Mexican border.[30]

The following month, Sergeant Harry Keith of the Ninth Illinois Infantry spent some time in Flora for a brief visit with his father. Keith was a sergeant-major with the Third Battalion of the Ninth Infantry. This battalion was comprised of companies from Salem, Centralia, Fairfield, and Mt. Vernon, and had been placed under the command of Major Claude

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[23] Haulsee, W. M., Howe, F.G., & Doyle, A.C. *Soldiers of the Great War: Volume 1.* (Washington, D.C.: Soldiers Record Publishing Association. 1920), 40.
[24] "How Draft Frawing Passed Off." (*Southern Illinois Record*: July 26, 1917), 8.
[25] Haulsee, W. M., Howe, F.G., & Doyle, A.C. *Soldiers of the Great War: Volume 1.* (Washington, D.C.: Soldiers Record Publishing Association. 1920), 40.
[26] "Ninth Illinois Infantry Ordered to Mobilize." (*Southern Illinois Record*: July 19, 1917), 3.
[27] "Co. L To Be Mustered In By Major Smith Of Flora." (*Southern Illinois Record*: June 21, 1917), 1.
[28] "Purely Personal." (*Southern Illinois Record*: June 28, 1917), 5.
[29] "Some of Our Boys Who Are Going to the Front as Volunteers." (*Southern Illinois Record*: July 19, 1917), 3.
[30] "Xenia." (*Southern Illinois Record*: July 26, 1917), 2.

E. Smith of Flora. During his visit to Flora, Keith observed that, "The regiment is standing up to the strenuous work of army drill like old veterans, and making fine progress."[31]

The Work of the Local Federal Board

With the completion of the draft in Clay County, the work of readying the soldiers began. The 214 individuals whose names were drawn were ordered to report for a physical examination on the 6th, 7th, and 8th of August at nine o' clock in the morning. Order numbers one to seventy-one were to report on the 6th. Order numbers seventy-two to one hundred forty-two were to report on the 7th. Order numbers one hundred forty-three to two hundred fourteen were to report on the 8th.[32]

The Local Federal Board for Clay County began examining these men on Monday August 6, 1917, as scheduled, with the goal of securing 107 able-bodied men, between twenty-one and thirty-one years of age, to fill Clay County's quota. The physical examinations were conducted by Dr. E. C. Park Jr. and Dr. George W. Campbell. Dr. W. F. Fairchild served as the re-examining physician. Up to Wednesday evening of that same week, 145 physical examinations had been completed. Of those examined, 105 men had passed, leaving forty disqualified. From the 105 men who passed the examination, twenty made no claim for exemption and entered service. The eighty-five who claimed exemptions had ten days to file affidavits to substantiate their claims. All but a few of these exemptions made were claimed on account of dependents. The Board hoped to complete the examination of the 214 men notified to appear, by noon on Friday of that week at the latest. [33]

On August 13th, the Exemption Board for Clay County undertook the task of examining the proofs filed by 122 men who, in the first call, passed the physical examination, but claimed exemption on account of dependents. After the proofs had been considered, the Board certified, from the proofs, the following men for service: from Clay City- John W. Duff, Frank Dugan, George F. Hardy, Harry Nugent, Harry Powell, and Charles E. Lindsey; from Flora- William Lewis Devore, R. G. Gibson, Harold M. Hogan, Wayne V. McVeigh, James McCommons, William F. Malinsky, and Arthur Craft; from Ingraham- Walter G. Murvin; from Iola- Roy Krutsinger, G. H. Colclasure, and Thomas E. Williams; from Louisville- William H. Burton, Benjamin H. Crouse, John R. Fry, Jacob V. Bryan, Earl Nettleton, Robert Holaday, and Oscar E. Rogers; from Wakefield- Adolph I. Disch; and from Xenia- Cyrus L. Howard, John W. Lawson, James Corbett Anderson, Reuben B. Woomer, and Hoda Smith. On August 15th, the Board issued its second call for 125 additional men for examination in order to obtain the county's quota. This included those men with order numbers running from 215 to 339.[34]

The new call for additional men also produced mixed results. Of the 125 men that were examined by the Local Exemption Board, eighteen were physically disqualified and another sixty-eight men claimed exemptions. Six of the men that were called had previously enlisted and two men failed to appear all together. Thirty-one men from the list were certified for service.[35]

The Local Exemption Board was once again in session on August 27th and 28th, passing on claims for dependents. At the end of that time, all proofs were in, with the exception of seven cases. In order to provide ample time for the filing of proofs, the Board adjourned until the 30th. However, Mrs. E. C. Park and Mr. Cressy Russell, who were acting as clerk and stenographer,

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[31] "Ninth Infantry Making Good." (*Southern Illinois Record*: August 16, 1917), 1.
[32] "Notice of Call and To Appear For Physical Examination." (*Southern Illinois Record*: August 2, 1917), 1.
[33] "Clay County Soldier Contingent." (*Southern Illinois Record*: August 9, 1917), 1.
[34] "Thirty More Men Added to the Roll. New Call Issued." (*Southern Illinois Record*: August 16, 1917), 1.
[35] "Soldiers Of The Republic." (*Southern Illinois Record*: August 23, 1917), 1.

remained at the office each day to meet anyone wishing information. The *Southern Illinois Record* published a breakdown of the official results of both the first and second call for men in its August 30th edition. Concerning the breakdown for the first 214 men called: three were exempted as municipal and county officers; fifty-four were discharged for physical disability; sixty-six were passed and exempt on dependent claims; eleven enlisted or failed to appear for examination; twenty-three were passed and then appealed to the District Board; four filed a claim but made no proof; fifteen filed a claim and made proof; one had or made a claim for discharge on military service; and thirty-seven were passed and claimed no exemptions. Concerning the breakdown for the second 125 men called: forty-six men passed and claimed exemptions that were granted; twenty-three were physically disqualified; eleven passed and claimed exemptions that were denied; thirty-one passed and claimed no exemptions; two failed to appear for examination; two were examined by other boards; one was previously enlisted; and nine were continued for proof.[36]

The *Southern Illinois Record* also explained that the government had appealed all cases to the District Board that had been discharged by the Local Exemption Board. It was anticipated that the Local Board would receive, by September 1st, final orders relative to the assembling of the first five percent that were now ordered to entrain for Fort Taylor. Also, the following names of those men who had been examined and accepted since the last report were given: from Bible Grove- Charles J. Farris, Otto Schneipp, Richard F. Webster, and John Fred William Stork; from Clay City- George E. King and William Hopkins; from Farina- Robert F. Turberville; from Flora- Earl Elmer Slade, Luke E. Pixley, and G. E. Halterman; from Ingraham- William W. Knowles, Curtis A. Lewis, and John A. Nix; from Mason (not in Clay County)- George C. Poehler; and from Xenia- William E. Jones and Frank E. Randall.[37]

Off to Camp Taylor

On Saturday, September 1, 1917, a farewell banquet was held in Louisville to honor the men of the county who were soon to be transported to one of the various training camps. There they were drilled, hardened, and prepared for active and serious fighting. It proved to be both a joyful and a sad day for many in the county.[38] The men were sent to Camp Taylor, located near Louisville, Kentucky. It had been determined that Camp Taylor would be the training ground to which all Southern Illinois soldiers were to be sent.[39]

The date for the second increment of soldiers to leave for Camp Taylor came on Wednesday, September 19th of that year. (Information on the first increment of soldiers to leave for Camp Taylor has yet to be obtained.) Forty-three men, representing all sections of the county, were marshaled in Louisville for the last time as civilians. They marched from the County Court House to the railroad, where they entrained for Flora. At about eleven o' clock that morning the men reached Flora. Waiting to welcome them were thousands of people crowding the platforms and all of the vacant places surrounding the depot. From there the men joined up with others arriving from Marion, Clinton, and St. Clair Counties, and boarded a train to Camp Taylor. While in Flora, the men were given a patriotic reception. There, each of the soldiers was presented with a basket of lunch and served with fresh apple cider and Jonathan apples by uniformed members of the Red Cross. The apples were a gift from Colonel Tanner and Senator Dunlap. The following individuals composed the county's second offering of forty-three soldiers: from Clay City- James Mitchell, Albert R. Glascoe, William Holman,

[36] "Work of the Exemption Board." (*Southern Illinois Record*: August 30, 1917), 4.
[37] "Work of the Exemption Board." (*Southern Illinois Record*: August 30, 1917), 4.
[38] "Farewell Banquet To Soldier Boys." (*Southern Illinois Record*: September 6, 1917), 1.
[39] [No Title] (*Southern Illinois Record*: August 30, 1917), 4.

William A. Dean, Fritz Schnautz, Alvin R. Tucker, and Thomas J. Dougherty; from Flora- Raymon G. Gibson, Clarence L. Boyd, George O. Crabtree, L. E. Kellums, Robley V. Stephens, Harry W. Gill, Cletus Campbell, Silas Shriner, and Earl Hall; from Iola- Orin C. Colclasure, Glenn Taylor, John Sphinner, Virgil C. Smith, and Glenn Gullett; from Louisville-Sewell Smith, Clifford C. Cannon, Earl Nettleton, Clarence R. Howard, Clover Landreth, Charles T. Gabbert, Andrew H. Speaks, Benjamin H. Britton, Ocie Tolliver, and David Dillman; from Mason- Theodore Bartles and Charles L. Snyder; from Noble (in Richland County)- Joe Buerster; from Sailor Springs- Harry Fleener; and from Xenia- James G. Weaver, Mark Middleton, Aaron M. Kagy, Carl O. Leathers, Forest J. Anderson, Elmer E. Clinton, Arthur Craft, and William J. Smith.[40]

Two weeks later, on October 3rd, the third increment of men from Clay County's selective soldiery left Louisville and passed through Flora, bound for Camp Taylor. Twenty-three men were entrained in Louisville at 10:24 a.m. and reached Flora at 10:45 a.m. Once there, they switched trains, and, in less than thirty minutes, were on their way to Camp Taylor. Sergeants William Floy Malinski of Flora and Jacob V. Bryan of Louisville were selected to take charge of the squad until they had reached their destination. The following are the names of the soldiers who entrained in the third increment: from Bible Grove- Otto Wyatt and Fred Faeder; from Clay City- William B. Hopkins, Frank Dugan, and Charles L. Lindsey; from Edgewood- Floyd R. Dyer; from Flora- Winfield Koontz, James McCommons, William Floy Malinski, Earl Elmer Slade, and Harry B. Wright; from Iola- Norris Pickle, Olsie R. Fitzgerald, Roy Eckle, and Seth T. Devore; from Louisville- Jacob V. Bryan, Murvin Crouse, and Arvin R. Cotterell; from Noble- Owen L. Hasler; from Sailor Springs- Rudolph Hilderbrand; from Wakefield (not in Clay County)- Adolph Rudolph; and from Xenia- Ruben B. Woomer. It is worth noting that while the *Southern Illinois Record* stated that twenty-three individuals were entrained from Louisville, only twenty-two names were recorded.[41]

An enormous crowd of people attended both the assembly and departure of the third increment in Louisville. A short program was held at the Clay County Courthouse prior to the departure, which was directed by Captain Culbertson. The program featured stirring patriotic speeches by Colonel Randolph Smith and Judge A. M. Rose. In addition to the program, the Louisville chapter of the Red Cross presented each of the soldiers with a pillow. At Flora, hundreds of men, women, and children waited to greet the soldiers. The soldiers were given a generous basket of lunch, which had been prepared by the ladies of St. Stephen's Church.[42]

On October 13, 1917, a letter written by William Floy Malinsky of the Medical Department of the 334th Infantry Regiment, stationed at Camp Taylor, was printed in the *Southern Illinois Record*:

> All of our boys are enjoying camp life and are in good health. We are drilling every day for a few hours. Our officers are kind to us and our eats are good.
> Transferring has caught all but Charles Lindsey. His address is the same as it was. The boys who transferred to the Medical Department of the 333rd Infantry Regiment are Jacob V. Bryan, Murvin Crouse, Seth Devore, Henry Dougherty, Frank Dugan, Alvin Cotterell, S. Pickle, and Floyd R. Dyer. Those transferred to the 334th Infantry Regiment, Medical Department, are Roy Eckle, William B. Hopkins, Olsa Fitzgerald, Fred Fader, Winfield Koontz, Owen Hasler, Rudolph Hilderbrand, and Floy Malinsky. Those transferred to the 335th Infantry

[40] "Great Day At Louisville & Flora." (*Southern Illinois Record*: September 20, 1917), 1.
[41] "Preparing For Grim Business Of War." (*Southern Illinois Record*: October 4, 1917), 1.
[42] Ibid.

> [Regiment], Medical Department, are Harry Wright, Earl E. Slade, James McCommons, Adolph Rudolph, Otto Wyatt, and R. Woomer. All mail will reach these boys at these addresses, and friends, news is welcome.
> We are about one-half mile from the other Clay County boys. We all spend our leisure hours at the Y.M.C.A., a place where we get real rest, and there is a good entertainment at each Y.M.C.A. every evening, a moving picture show two nights each week, and church services on Sunday. Some of the boys are planning on seeing the sights in Louisville [Kentucky] next Wednesday afternoon.
> Richland County men here are worked up over the report that they may be transferred to either Camp Pike at Little Rock or Camp Shelby at Hattiesburg, Mississippi. According to the understanding published here, a transfer of troops will be made, [with] 6,000 men going to Camp Shelby and 2,000 [men going] to Camp Pike. Best wishes for all our friends and the Record.[43]

Another letter written by William Floy Malinsky, and published in the November 8th edition of the *Southern Illinois Record*, related the events that took place during Illinois Day in Camp Taylor:

> Today is Illinois Day in the camp. Governor Frank O. Lowden addressed about five thousand Illinois soldiers Saturday morning at 10:30 a.m. in one of the Y.M.C.A.'s buildings. Harve Shriner, of Flora, is visiting his son, Silas, today. Frank Smith, who is well known in Flora, is in Company L of the 334th Regiment, and Walter Pourchot is in the 333rd Regiment, Machine Gun Company. We drill a few hours each day and also study first aid work, which is very interesting. We will take up litter drilling soon. All the boys send their best wishes to their friends and the Record.[44]

The Local Federal Board Continues Its Work

A sufficient number of men had yet to be accepted out of the 389 originally called to complete Clay County's quota of 107 men. (Information has yet to be obtained on the calling of order numbers 215-389.) On Monday, the 8th of October, notices were mailed to 100 additional men to appear for examination. The list began with order number 390 and ended with order number 489. Fifty of the men were examined on Saturday, the 13th October, the remaining fifty men were examined on Monday, the 15th.[45]

When the Local Board completed most of its classification of registrants from Clay County, it released the findings to the *Southern Illinois Record*. According to the Board, 811 married men had registered for the draft. Of these men, 293 were called, but only twenty-four were accepted for service. There were a total of 557 single men who had registered for the draft. Of these men, 108 were accepted for service and eighty-eight were rejected. Additionally, five immigrants were called, but none of them were accepted. Of these, one was English, two were Greek, one was Russian, and one gave Central America as his home.[46]

The findings added that there were 843 farmers who registered for the draft. From these 523 were not called; 233 were called, but not accepted; and eighty-seven farmers were accepted. The number engaged in other occupations such as forestry, animal husbandry, mining,

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[43] "From Camp Taylor." (*Southern Illinois Record*: October 18, 1917), 3.
[44] "Camp Taylor." (*Southern Illinois Record*: November 8, 1917), 8.
[45] "Local Exemption Board News." (*Southern Illinois Record*: October 11, 1917), 4.
[46] "Draft Disclosures In Clay County." (*Southern Illinois Record*: November 22, 1917), 1.

manufacturing, food industry, steam railways, telegraph and telephone companies, transportation, trade and merchandise, professional, and domestic and manual service and labor numbered 525 men.[47]

A Clay City Doctor Gets Commissioned

In its October 25th edition, the *Southern Illinois Record* ran an article that had originally been printed in the *Clay City Advocate*. It explained that while in Chicago, Dr. E. W. Chrisman, of Clay City, received a telegraph wire from the war department, stating that he had been commissioned as a first lieutenant in the dental reserve corps.[48]

Part Two: Soldiers of the Western Front

Overview

The purpose within this part is to highlight the lives of those soldiers from Clay County who fought on the Western Front. Unfortunately, it is not possible to discuss each and every solider that served from Clay County. Those that are chosen for discussion are done so due to the availability of resource materials concerning their involvement in the Great War.

Elias Barker

The October 10th edition of the *Southern Illinois Record* printed a story which had first been printed in the *Louisville Republican*. The *Southern Illinois Record* was honored to learn that Elias Barker, who was born and raised in Ingraham, was the first Clay County soldier to receive a medal for bravery while in action. Elias' father, Tobe Barker, had received a letter the week prior from his son, who was stationed in France, stating that he had been in several engagements and had just been decorated for distinguished services in battle. Although it was not known at the time just what Elias had done, the newspaper that Elias Barker had made his mark and was deemed worthy of decoration for some brave act at a time of great peril. The letter had stated, that Prime Minister Lloyd George, had personally pinned the medal on Elias, and that, during the ceremonial, Elias had shaken the hand of General Pershing and other distinguished officers of the allied forces.[49]

Carmichael

Early in 1917, Carmichael enlisted in Battery E of the 124th Field Artillery. On July 23rd he was made second lieutenant. Later, at Camp Logan in December of that same year, Carmichael was promoted to first lieutenant and placed in charge of calisthenics for the entire 124th. He held that position until being transferred to France to the 108th Ammunition Train. He remained in that service until the last great drive, in which he was wounded. On September 28, 1918, a German shell busted his left ear drum and rendered him with shell shock. He developed influenza, which induced cerebro-spinal meningitis. The meningitis caused his death on November 4th, just twenty-three days prior to his twentieth birthday. At the time that his death was reported, Carmichael was believed to be the only commissioned officer that Clay County had lost in the war.[50]

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[47] Ibid.
[48] "Clay City Advocate." (*Southern Illinois Record*: October 25, 1917), 8.
[49] "First to be Decorated for Bravery." (*Southern Illinois Record*: October 10, 1918), 4.
[50] "Only Commissioned Officer Clay County Lost In War." (*Southern Illinois Record*: December 26, 1918), 8.

Victor Arkell Cleveland

On November 23, 1918, Mrs. Silas Steele received notification from the war department that her son, Victor Arkell Cleveland had been killed in action in France on October 12th. No word of the safety of Bob Abell, Jim B. Blair, Arch Green or other Louisville boys in Company L had been received at the time of the notification of Cleveland's death.[51]

The December 5th edition of the *Southern Illinois Record*, which printed the above story that had originally come out of Louisville, went on to add that several letters had been recently received in Flora from Clay County soldiers who were in the battle in which Victor Arkell Cleveland had been killed. It was reported that the balance of the soldiers had come out without a scratch. In fact, Archie Green, who lived north of Flora, was said to have been at the side of Cleveland when he fell. According to Green, Cleveland had received two wounds, one in the arm and the other in the stomach. The latter proved to be fatal, from which Cleveland died in about two hours' time.[52]

Raymond Gauger

On September 26, 1918, the *Southern Illinois Record* reported that Raymond Gauger had been seriously wounded in France. Raymond had been among the early volunteers to offer his services to his country and had been stationed in France in active service as a member of the Ambulance Corps for more than a year. Word of Raymond's injury had been received by his uncle, B. M. Maxey, and his wife.[53]

Charles Grimes

Charles Grimes enlisted in Flora on May 29, 1918. The *Southern Illinois Record* reported that Mr. and Mrs. John Grimes of Flora received official notification in January of 1919 that their son, Charles Grimes, had been killed in the Argonne battle on November 11, 1918; the day that the armistice had been signed. On March 3rd of that year, Charles' mother wrote a letter requesting information about her son's death. A letter of reply crafted on March 23, 1919, by Hal C. Head, a chaplain with the 111th Infantry, was sent in response to Mrs. Grimes' letter. It was printed in the May 1st edition of the *Southern Illinois Record*:

> Your letter of March 3rd, asking about your son's death came to me yesterday.
> Corporal Charley S. Grimes, formerly of Company C of the 111th Infantry, was killed November 4th on the Thiancourt front. He was on a patrol with one platoon of his company, when some machine guns fired on them and killed about twenty of them. Your son was killed instantly by German machine gun bullets. We buried him there with the others in neat graves with crosses at each head. We had what ceremony we could under the circumstances. It wasn't much, because the Germans were still pretty active with shells and machine guns. My heart was heavy and sad for the mothers at home who had given their noble sons in the war.
> Your son was a fine man and a good soldier. He was well liked by his company and by all who knew him. He was noble and gave everything, even his life, for what he knew was right.[54]

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[51] "Co. L Boy Killed in France." (*Southern Illinois Record*: December 5, 1918), 2.
[52] "Louisville." (*Southern Illinois Record*: December 5, 1918), 4.
[53] "Raymond Gauger Wounded." (*Southern Illinois Record*: September 26, 1918), 1.
[54] "Chaplain Head Confirms News of Private Grimes' Death." (*Southern Illinois Record*: May 1, 1919), 1.

It is worth noting that there seems to be a discrepancy in the date that Charles Grimes was killed. According to the chaplain, Grimes died on November 4, 1918, while the *Southern Illinois Record* had reported that he had died on November 11, 1918. According to the *Honor Roll*, from the State of Illinois, Charles Grimes was killed on November 11, 1918, the last day of the Great War.[55]

Clarence H. Grimes

A letter from October 24th of 1918 was received from Clarence Grimes, written from somewhere in France. It was previously reported that Clarence had lost a hand from a shrapnel shell wound. According to the letter, this seemed to be a mistake. Clarence explained that he was in a hospital and would soon be out. He went on to add that he and his brother, Charley, had been over the top four times and had hand-to-hand encounters with the Huns, "whipping them like the pups they were."[56] It was later reported that Clarence had been severely wounded on October 17th in the fight at Chateau Thierry and was still convalescing in a French Hospital.[57]

Mason P. Harbin

Mason P. Harbin, whom settled in Clay City some years after the conclusion of the Great War, was a private with Battery D of the 185th F. A. A. E. He wrote a letter to his parents recounting his journey from Camp Upton in New York to Liverpool Harbor in England. This letter, along with a photograph of Harbin, was published in the *Clay City Sesquicentennial*. It began with the title phrase, *On our way across June 26, 1918*:

> We are leaving Camp Upton this a.m. June 26th. We left there at 9:30 a.m. on the Long Island railroad. When we got to New York [City], we took the boat down the Hudson River, and on the way down on the ferry boat, we went under the Brooklyn Bridge, saw the Singer Building, the Statue of Liberty, and a lot of the skyscrapers.
>
> When we got to the dock we got on our transport. The Red Cross women of New York gave us ice cream and cake. It sure tasted good, for we knew it would be the last we would get in the good old U.S.A. until we came back.
>
> Well, when it was time to go to bed, you ought to have seen the bunch swinging in their hammocks. There was not room for all of them on the hooks, so, of course, some of them had to hang theirs on the floor. But any how, they all slept some way.
>
> On the morning of the 27th, we pulled out of New York Harbor. There were about eight or nine transport ships of soldiers and U.S. submarine chasers and destroyers who went with us for safety.
>
> On the same night, the 27th, we got behind the rest. We couldn't keep up with them, so we had to go by ourselves. The reason we could not keep up was [that] the coal we had wasn't any good. It wouldn't make any steam, so the only thing we could do was to go to shore.

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[55] Illinois Veterans' Commission. *Honor Roll*. (Illinois Veterans' Commission. 1956).

[56] "Baltimore & Ohio News: Happenings Among the Railroad Boys." (*Southern Illinois Record*: December 5, 1918), 1.

[57] "One Brother Killed- the Other Wounded." (*Southern Illinois Record*: January 23, 1919), 1.

> On Monday morning we pulled into Halifax, New Brunswick Harbor. We took on coal here and fresh water to drink.
> It is now Wednesday, July 3rd. It is raining, and what time it isn't raining, there is always a heavy fog.
> They say they haven't seen [the] sun shine bright since March. But I couldn't swear to it. But [we] haven't seen any sun ourselves on one day since we left New York City. That was the first day out at sea.
> It is now 8:00 p.m., [and] time for us to go off deck and go to bed.
> Thursday, July 4th, [we are] still in Halifax Harbor.
> To pass the time away, we have boxing bouts at 9:30 a.m. and biscuit eating contests.
> The morning passed very merrily. In the afternoon at 3:30 p.m. we pulled out of [the] harbor with about four other ships. One of them was an English cruiser.
> On the second day out we saw some fish out ahead of one of the other boats, jumping up. They were dolphins. They looked like little fish jumping through the fence.
> It is Sunday, July 7th. We had services on the boat this morning at 10:30 a.m.
> Well, it is Saturday, July 13th, at 6:00 p.m. The submarine chasers that are with us dropped some depth bombs and got a submarine that had been following us all day; but they finally got it. We are in Liverpool Harbor. We came this a.m. at six o' clock. We are on the boat, but I don't know when we will get off. It was a tiresome trip. [We were] on the boat eighteen days, but we got here okay.
> Well, I will write you again when we get to our barracks, so answer soon. Love to all. I remain your son.[58]

Harlin Henson

Harlin Henson, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Lynch Henson, died on October 20, 1918, from spinal meningitis while serving in France. He had grown up six miles south of Xenia.[59]

Homer S. Jarvis

Homer S. Jarvis, the son of Mrs. Young, enlisted in Boise, Idaho and trained at the Boise Barracks. He was stationed in Bordeaux, France. While in France he was gassed and wounded twice. Jarvis was promoted from corporal, to sergeant, and then to second lieutenant. Finally, he was promoted to first lieutenant. He was even personally honored by General Pershing and recommended for the position of captain.[60]

According to the *Southern Illinois Record*, Lieutenant Jarvis was born and raised at Xenia, and was the brother of Mrs. N. T. Peirce, also of Xenia. A story from the *Payette Independent*, out of Idaho, was printed in the February 13, 1919 edition of the *Southern Illinois Record*:

> Among the names of the soldiers honored by General Pershing for heroism, appears the name of First Lieutenant H. S. Jarvis, [of the] 11th Machine Gun Battalion, for extraordinary heroism in action near Vantillois, France, on September 26th [1918]. Lieutenant Jarvis captured Maxim guns, pushed forward to a heavily shelled area from which the infantry had withdrawn, and by their accurate fire kept groups of

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[58] Bissey, Doris. *Clay City - Our Hometown: Sesquicentennial, 1855-2005*. (Effingham: Ad Works Publishing, Inc. 2006), 101.
[59] "Xenia." (*Southern Illinois Record*: November 28, 1918), 8.
[60] "Clay County in the War." (*Southern Illinois Record*: February 20, 1919), 1.

> the enemy from occupying advantageous positions. He withdrew when it became too dark to see. Lieutenant Jarvis is well known in this city, having lived here before he went to France.[61]

Glen E. Leathers

Glen E. Leathers wrote the following letter home to his mother from a hospital in France on August 12, 1918:

> Will endeavor to write you a few lines again this afternoon to let you know I am still among the living, but just a little out of commission. Trust this finds you all [as] well as when I last heard from you. Well, Mother, I met with a little accident Wednesday, August 7th, and as the result, I am now lying in the hospital taking life easy. On that morning, we went after the Dutch at four o'clock, and at seven o' clock, I got a bullet through my knee. I got medical attention at once and am getting along fine. Of course I will be out of commission for quite awhile, for the bone was broken, so it will take quite a while to heal up. But Mother, don't worry about me for one minute, for I am getting along the finest on earth, and consider [that] I am a lucky boy to get off so well as that, for some of them do not.
>
> And Mother, the best part of it is [that] the Huns could not stop our advance. The boys drove them back a long way, and believe me, "Old Jerry" is beginning to realize now where he is. I only wish I might be with the boys when they hit Berlin, which is not far off, I hope.
>
> Mother, I just got your letter and picture the day before I was wounded, and believe me, I am proud of it. And a man never realized the real worth of the Red Cross until he gets in the hospital. Believe me, they are sure a God send to us over here. Now Mother, I would write more this time if I could, but can't. So you will have to excuse me this time. But I do hope and pray this finds you all well and happy, and let me beg of you once more not to worry about me, for I am getting along just fine, and am glad that I had one opportunity to go to the front. My only regret is [that] I didn't get to stay longer.
>
> Address my letters to Glen E. Leathers, Base Hospital #17, A. E. F. [American Expeditionary Force], and don't use my old company and regiment.
>
> Now good bye, good luck, and God bless you all is my prayer. Your loving son, Glen E. Leathers.[62]

E. E. "Bud" Lee

E. E. "Bud" Lee arrived in Clay County, back from France, on Wednesday, January 22, 1919. He served with Company L of the 130th Infantry. Lee had been both gassed and wounded during the great battle at Chepilly Ridge, and was in poor health upon arrival. He was met at the depot by a reception committee and welcomed home. His Illinois Division had been decorated by the British, French, and Belgians for bravery. Lee was the first wounded Flora soldier to return home.[63]

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[61] "Another Clay County Hero." (*Southern Illinois Record*: February 13, 1919), 1.
[62] "News from the Soldier Boys." (*Southern Illinois Record*: September 26, 1918), 2.
[63] "First Wounded Flora Soldier Arrives Home." (*Southern Illinois Record*: January 23, 1919), 1.

Leslie M. Marshall

On September 26, 1918, the *Southern Illinois Record* reported that a Clay County soldier might be lost at sea. Leslie Marshall, the son of Charles Marshall of Flora, was a radio operator on board the *Buena Centura*. The vessel was torpedoed off the Spanish coast on September 20, 1918. It was reported that twenty-one individuals lost their lives in the attack. The parents were said to be greatly distressed and feared the worst.[64]

Perley Roscoe Marshall

> The following is a paraphrase of an obituary that appeared in the *Southern Illinois Record*: Perley Roscoe Marshall, the son of Charles S. and Belle A. Marshall, was born near Rinard, Illinois on March 16, 1888. He departed this life on September 27, 1918, at the age of thirty, after an illness lasting nine days. He was thirty years old. He enlisted in the service of his country as a wireless operator. He was placed in the radio school at Minneapolis, Minnesota before being transferred to Cambridge, Massachusetts. He was there only a short time before he was taken sick with influenza, which developed into pneumonia.[65]

Glen Miller

On Tuesday, September 24, 1918, the father and mother of Glen Miller of Xenia received a message notifying them that Glen had been killed in an air raid in France on August 13th.[66]

Roy Lyle Pearce

Roy Lyle Pearce, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Allison Pearce of Stanford Township, died of pneumonia, which was induced by influenza. Roy was the eldest of three Pearce children, there being two sons and one daughter. He died in France on September 21, 1918, at the age of twenty-eight.[67]

Bert Pruitt

On January 9, 1919, the *Southern Illinois Record* announced that Bert Pruitt was coming home from the war in France. Pruitt heralded from the community of Iola in Larkinsburg Township. He had been decorated with the French Medal of Honor, the Croix de Guerre. However, it was not known for what action he had received the medal. Pruitt was a member of the famous Rainbow Division, principally made up of soldiers from the southern states. He had been the commander of this division, who had wired his superior officer during the Argonne fight, exclaiming that his boys would not understand an order to retreat.[68]

Virgil D. Smith

Sergeant Virgil D. Smith of Flora was killed in action on the battle front in France. He was a nephew of Mrs. Etta Perine of Flora.[69]

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[64] "May Be Lost At Sea." (*Southern Illinois Record*: September 26, 1918), 1.
[65] "Obituary." (*Southern Illinois Record*: October 10, 1918), 4.
[66] "Killed in Action." (*Southern Illinois Record*: September 26, 1918), 1.
[67] "Buried in France With Military Honors." (*Southern Illinois Record*: October 31, 1918), 1.
[68] "Iola Has a War Hero." (*Southern Illinois Record*: January 9, 1919), 1.
[69] "Killed in Action." (*Southern Illinois Record*: November 21, 1918), 1.

Todd Whitney Snyder

Private Todd Snyder, of the H.D.O. Company of the 147th Infantry, wrote the following letter home to his sister, Rosemond Snyder, from somewhere in Belgium on November 29, 1918:

> As I have not written to you for so long, I thought I would drop you a line.
> The armistice was signed on John Lloyd's birthday. I sure will have many things to tell you when I return. The morning before the armistice was signed; we moved our stakes by motor to the front, while the machine gun bullets were falling thick as hail.
> It was on Sunday night, and I sure did think of church and home. I have not been able to attend church since I left home, like I would have liked to.
> The Sunday you were at the association, I was dodging shells that, when they struck the ground, made a hole large enough to bury a horse in. They fell close to me. Then, dear sister, is when you think of home and how to pray. So many boys have come to me since and have said they prayed there that day and were going to continue to do so.
> But do not worry about me now, for I am fine. Like the poem I sent to you, 'when guns are stilled and strife is past,' I am living to be the boy you and mother expect to see.
> We were in the trenches several nights in water and slept right in it, and had only a can of corned beef and two boxes of hard tack in seven days. I think I will not be so choicy about my food when I get back.
> All of this may not pass the censor. What was so bad [was that] you could hear and see boys, with their arms and legs blown off by these large shells, and they would be calling for their mothers and God.
> What makes me feel bad [is that] a boy in Company L, by the name of Amos McDevitt, was wounded and died. The other boys told me [that] he called for me in his last hours.
> I received a fine letter from C. C. Markham. He surely is a man of God. From what Mr. Markham says, Clyde McGrew has been able to put more of what he has been doing in his letters than I have ever been.
> I received a letter from Charles dated November 11th, the day the armistice was signed. Rose, that was the happiest day of my life.
> I have been in 'No Man's Land' many times. There have been times since I came across that I did not know one hour if I would be living the next. But all is safe now.
> Rose, I used to think it was bad to see a dead man, but I have gotten over that.
> Rose, I know you folks read of the drive of the American troops, led by Colonel Galbraith, through the Argonne Forest. I was one of them. We had to use our gas masks pretty often then.
> Hoping this finds you as well as this leaves me, I am, as ever, your loving brother.[70]

Leo Stanford

Leo Stanford left Clay County with a contingent of soldiers on May 29th of 1918 for Fort Thomas, Kentucky. Later he was transferred to Camp Custer, Michigan. On October 8th, his

[70] "Clay County Boy in the Argonne Fight ." (*Southern Illinois Record*: January 9, 1919), 3.

parents, Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Stanford of Clay City, received a message stating that Leo was dangerously ill. He had contracted influenza, which had resulted in double pneumonia. They left that day to visit their son at Camp Custer, but Leo passed away prior to their arrival. Leo died early Wednesday morning at the age of twenty-one. His remains were taken to the home of his parents on the evening of October 10th.[71]

Charles Workman

Charles E. Workman was the son of Mr. and Mrs. James E. Workman of Flora. He enlisted in Flora and was in the ammunition train service in France. He trained at Camp Taylor, Kentucky and in Shelby, Mississippi. He escaped without injury when a shell fired at his train caused a great explosion and the loss of life. Charles was honorably discharged January 3, 1919.[72]

On January 10th, Charles' parents received a telegram from New York, containing the news that Charles had arrived safely within the city after having crossed on the *U.S.S. North Carolina* from overseas. They also learned that while with the army in France, Charles had narrowly escaped death. According to the telegram, he had been caught in a wreck in which thirty of his comrades had been instantly killed and about twice that many had been severely wounded. Charles had escaped without a scratch or bruise. Upon returning, it was expected that Charles resumed his job as machinist foreman in the Baltimore & Ohio shops in Washington, Indiana.[73]

Clarence Workman

Clarence A. Workman was another son of Mr. and Mrs. James E. Workman of Flora. He enlisted November 27, 1912, as a storekeeper in the U.S. Navy and was trained in Chicago. He died on board the *U.S.S. Princess Matoika*, while near the French coast, on October 5, 1918. Clarence was twenty-five years of age at his time of death.[74]

A message was received on Sunday, October 13th to Mr. and Mrs. James Workman, informing them that Clarence, one of their three sons in the service, had died of bronchial pneumonia while in foreign-service as a marine. The following day they received a telegram, stating that Clarence's body was en route to the United States, and that a letter would follow. The last time that the parents had received word from Clarence was in August, at which time he was in Norfolk, Virginia, waiting to embark.[75]

The remains of Clarence Workman arrived in Flora on Saturday, October 26th. The next day his remains were interred at Elmwood Cemetery in Flora. He was reported to be Flora's first gold star in the Navy's Honor Roll.[76]

Ollie Woods

The March 27th edition of the *Southern Illinois Record* proclaimed that Private Ollie Woods, of Flora, had returned from France. He had reached his home in Flora on Tuesday of that week. Woods had been in some of the serious fighting of September and October of 1918.

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[71] "Victims of Spanish Influenza: Leo Stanford, Also a Victim, Brought Home Today." (*Southern Illinois Record*: October 10, 1918), 1.
[72] "Clay County in the War." (*Southern Illinois Record*: February 20, 1919), 1.
[73] "Flora Boy's Natrrow Escape." (*Southern Illinois Record*: January 16, 1919), 1.
[74] "Clay County in the War." (*Southern Illinois Record*: February 20, 1919), 1.
[75] "Gave His Life for His Country." (*Southern Illinois Record*: October 17, 1918), 1.
[76] "Died in Foreign Service." (*Southern Illinois Record*: October 31, 1918), 1.

He had been gassed, but otherwise had escaped without a scratch. He was reported to be well and hearty upon his return.[77]

Part Three: Soldiers of the Eastern Front

Overview

In this part, I highlight the lives of those soldiers from Clay County who fought on the Eastern Front. The involvement of Clay County soldiers on the Eastern Front differed quite dramatically from that of the Western Front. According to information obtained from the Clay County Genealogical Society, there may have only been two soldiers from Clay County to have fought on the Eastern Front: Norris Pickel and Otto Wyatt.

Both Pickel and Wyatt served in medical support and fought on Russian soil against the Bolsheviks in the war. The 339th Infantry Regiment, with support from the 337th Ambulance Company and Field Hospital, arrived in Northern Russia on September 5, 1918, and were back in the United States on June 30, 1919.[78]

Part Four: The Great War Draws to a Close

Armistice

On November 7, 1918, the *Southern Illinois Record* stated that General March had announced that the 33rd Illinois Division was in action east of the Meuse River, northwest of Verdun, and close to the Belgian border. Approximately ten or twelve Clay County soldiers were in Company L of Olney, a unit within the 33rd Division.[79]

On that same day, Germany sent for armistice terms. The following day, a great sensation in the United States, caused by an unfounded report that the armistice had been signed, led to wild peace celebrations held all over the country. However, the armistice was not signed until November 11th, when Germany accepted the terms of the armistice. On that day, President Wilson read the terms of the German armistice to the U.S. Congress in a joint session which announced the end of the war. Similar declarations were made to the British Parliament, the French National Assembly, and at other Allied capitals.[80]

The November 14th edition of the *Southern Illinois Record* captured the reaction of the Flora community and of Clay County:

> We thought it a big jubilee- an enthusiastic overflow of joy in Flora last Thursday night [7th] when our people let themselves go in their gladness over the good news that peace had come to the world, but it was only a mild breeze before the storm compared with what happened in Flora Monday night [11th], when all doubt as to peace being declared was assured. With unanimous accord everybody joined in the jubilee and rejoiced that the end of the war had been reached in a complete and overwhelming victory for the forces of right and justice.
>
> At three o' clock a.m., mill and factory whistles begun blowing forth the glad tidings, the church bells joining, and thus everybody in Flora was awakened with the news of peace and victory. There was no more sleep in Flora that morning, and we doubt if any one wanted to sleep any more. The news brought so much of gladness and joy to us and all the world that no one wanted to miss one moment of the glorious thrill.

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[77] "Local Street Echoes." (*Southern Illinois Record*: March 27, 1919), 5.

[78] Clay County Geological Society. [No Title] *Clay County Geological Society Quarterly*, Fall 1999: 38.

[79] "Clay County Boys at Front." (*Southern Illinois Record*: November 7, 1918), 1.

[80] Haulsee, W. M., Howe, F.G., & Doyle, A.C. *Soldiers of the Great War: Volume 1.* (Washington, D.C.: Soldiers Record Publishing Association. 1920), 56-59.

> Early in the forenoon a meeting was called at the Prince Drug Store and a program was arranged to have all the people in Flora and the surrounding country join in one big parade and jubilee of victory that night- and they came by thousands, and at seven o' clock, North Avenue was packed with the largest and happiest crowd of one hundred percent Americans ever brought to this city at any one time.[81]

Part Five: Clay County Bound

Welcoming the Soldiers Home

In a December 1918, edition of the *Southern Illinois Record*, it was announced that a Welcome Home Committee was created in Flora to give a suitable welcome to soldiers returning home from service. The cooperation of the Commercial Club and the local churches was requested. The intent of the committee was to have an organizational body to initiate plans and arrangements for Home Coming events. A meeting was to be held for Friday, the 6th, at 7:30 p.m. at the Red Cross room in the City Hall. A full attendance by the committee members was stressed. All interested citizens were invited to attend and participate.[82]

On New Year's Day, the Welcome Home Committee gave its first celebration for the soldiers who had returned from service. The event took place at the library, in the reading room, and opened with a reception and entertainment.[83]

The Return of Company L

On Tuesday, May 20, 1919, the *Sibony* arrived in New York, which carried thousands of returning soldiers. Among these soldiers was the 33rd "Prairie" Division, which contained the 130th Regiment, all Southern Illinois soldiers including those of Company L. Sixteen Clay County soldiers returned with Company L.

Upon arriving, the Division was first taken to Camp Mills in New York, which was then transported to Chicago. While in Chicago, a grand parade was held. The Division was finally sent to Camp Grant and was honorably discharged. On Sunday, June 1, 1919, the area soldiers from Company L reached their homes in Flora, Olney, and Sumner. They were joyfully welcomed by hundreds of relatives, friends, and admirers. The sentiment of the event was captured and expressed a few days later in the *Southern Illinois Record*, "Back from France, praised by the governor, the Prairie Division of Illinois, with Company L, is home at last!"[84]

Conclusion

In this project, I sought to produce a collective narrative of the involvement- both the contributions and the sacrifices- of Clay County, Illinois to the American World War I effort. Under no circumstance was this project ever claimed to be a complete history. It is with regret that I must concede that a more thorough examination was not, and could not, be prepared. Rather, it is my hope that this project may serve as a foundation to be consulted when future research of Clay County, Illinois and its involvement in World War I is undertaken.

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[81] "Another Independence Day." (*Southern Illinois Record*: November 14, 1918), 1.
[82] "Welcome Home." (*Southern Illinois Record*: December 5, 1918), 1.
[83] "First Welcome Hom,e Entertainment." (*Southern Illinois Record*: January 2, 1919), 1.
[84] "Company L Arrives Home." (*Southern Illinois Record*: June 5, 1919), 1.

Pesotum and Tolono, Illinois During the Great War

Jason Miller

When the United States entered the Great War in April of 1917, entire communities throughout the nation went to war. Men and women, at the warfront and at home, did their part to sustain their nation during what seemed a time of international crisis as the entirety of Europe seemed, from the American perspective, to be collapsing in upon itself. From urban sprawls to the smallest of rural communities, neighbors gathered to honor their men about to march in the ranks of the army and to provide whatever materials they could to the war effort. Nestled in some forgotten corner of the world were two towns of special significance to me, Tolono and, most particularly, Pesotum.

The prairies surrounding Pesotum were the final destination for my German-Catholic ancestors during the final decades of the nineteenth-century. I grew up within the town as the fifth generation to be raised within that township's limits. Pesotum was not quite as inconsequential then as it is today, but it certainly had not grown much since it had been formed from another township in the early 1860s. Five miles north sat the township of Tolono, a larger town that, like Pesotum, sat along the Illinois Central Railroad. For the past three years I have called this town home and have but little familial ties to this place. When the war broke out, these communities largely rallied to the flag to provide money, material, and, most importantly, men to fight against the Hun and his allies. Both communities seemingly activated the communal spirit that had been almost a necessity then, but hardly exists now, to actively pursue the community good. Women joined the Red Cross while men donated to the Y.M.C.A., school children donated what few pennies they had, editors of local newspapers shamed and encouraged their neighbors, and still others put their talents with literature, song, and vaudeville to raise funds for the war. Others, however, expressed their dissent and refused to be drafted, donate to the Red Cross, or buy Liberty Bonds, while a smaller group actually voiced their disapproval of the war.

No one in my family from Pesotum, or anywhere else for that matter, served in the Great War. My great-grandfather and his brother were enrolled for the draft, but likely because of the birth of my grandfather in late 1917 and the fact that they were farmers, these men had been exempted from the draft. Yet, wartime Pesotum and Tolono are truly interesting miniature studies of the home front. Both towns had an active press that was so pressed for things to print that they published as many letters as they could from the boys in khaki in camp or in Europe. The editors also used their columns to discuss the war spirit in their towns while local groups and organizations used it to post needs and wants for their organizations. Local papers were also sent to the front and many of the soldier's letters expressed thanks for such charity and a connection to home. From these newspapers an image emerges of communities at war interconnected between the home front and warfront. What follows is a tentative exploration of those interconnections.

Home Front

"To Our Boys"
I am thinking today of the lads far way,
Who are fighting for you and for me.
They are fighting the Kaiser,

You'd better be wiser and do your bit today,
For the time is coming when you can't be
lumping along the same old way.
Are you writing today to the lads far away?
Who are anxiously waiting to hear from
The old home town and all they hold dear.
Are you doing your bit today?
Are you deserting our boys today?
For just a few dollars will bring lots of joy to the Kaiser
just over the way.
Would you sacrifice our lads to make the Kaiser glad?
Would you live in bonds and slavery for just a little bravery
in sacrificing each day?
For the lads in France who are giving their all for you and me.[1]

Written by Orville Moore, a fourteen-year-old boy from Pesotum, this poem, "To Our Boys," is illustrative of the importance placed upon the community in supporting local men going off to war. The nature of this poem is not at all surprising given the context in which it was written. By March of 1918, when this poem was published, Pesotum and Tolono residents had been visited by federal agents investigating the recent failure of a war bond drive and reports of dissident utterances by men in the area. The questions young Moore asked throughout his poem were, as we shall see, the same as pro-war townsmen were beginning to ask their antiwar and Pro-German neighbors who were seemingly bringing shame to their town by not voluntarily supporting the war. The other, larger target of this poem was citizens who were not against the war, but not so ardently for it to donate a large amount of their time and money to the war effort. It sought to remind them of the greatness of their country and to shame them into supporting the young men that they probably knew on a first name basis. Coming less than a year after the United States entered the war, this poem provides a glimpse into the divisiveness of the war, but more importantly, given that it was published in the local paper, the ardent support that the majority of the towns' men and women had given to the war effort and, more importantly, their hometown heroes.

The response to war had been largely positive in Pesotum and Tolono. Both towns' newspapers adopted an uncompromising pro-war disposition and proudly printed the names of every recruit who had volunteered or was drafted to serve the country. As the first volunteers left their homes for camp, local groups dedicated to the troops' comfort and the prosecution of the war began to spring up in the area. Probably the most recognized group was the local chapters of the Red Cross in Pesotum and Tolono. Barely over a month after the United States entered the war, the Red Cross already had members in Pesotum and Tolono. Mrs. Hoffman, a resident of Pesotum whose son had been the first from the community to volunteer for the war, had already become a member of the Red Cross. On the day before a formal meeting encouraging the establishment of a Red Cross chapter in Pesotum, Hoffman used the town's newspaper to request combs, mirrors, needles, cloth, tooth brushes, tooth paste, and other creature comfort necessities from local residents to put into eighteen comfort bags for soldiers from the area. The next day, May 19, 1917, Mr. Huckins the county organizer of the Red Cross came to Pesotum to "explain the organization, its purpose and the duty of every man, woman and child to join" and to help formally establish the chapter.[2] Packages such as those put

[1] *The Pesotum Chief*, "Pesotum Boy Writes War Poem," 3-29-1918.
[2] *The Pesotum Chief*, "Red Cross Branch to be Organized Here," 5-18-1917.

together by Hoffman for the soldiers would become one of the chief activities of these local chapters of the Red Cross. Other activities included a sewing circle where the group's members sewed hospital garments, articles of clothing, and flags. One such flag, a service flag, was presented to the Sunday school class at the Methodist Church[3] from which several boys had volunteered. "The flag," sewn by Mrs. Hoffman, had "a red back ground with a white field and contains seven stars, each star representing one young man of that class who is serving his country."[4] By February of 1918, the Red Cross in Pesotum had enough volunteers for an instructor from the Champaign Chapter to come to Pesotum and instruct a seven class course on sewing surgical dressings to eighteen local women. More ladies were always welcomed, however. To encourage greater participation, the local Red Cross wished to inform "Ladies who have not as yet taken any of the lessons" could "join the class at any time" as "They will receive their instructions from the members of the class who qualify for this purpose. The only requirement necessary for new candidates is that they be provided with a white coif and long sleeved white apron or long sleeved white dress."[5] When this sales pitch failed, the chapter used the newspaper to publicly shame and encourage women into helping by appealing to their motherly instincts and familial ties stating that:

> Your boy may go to France; if he should be wounded the Red Cross will care for him. Will you women who are mothers and sisters of soldiers come and help us make the garments he may need. We have plenty of material but we need more workers. We meet every Tuesday and Friday afternoon at the home of Mrs. Chas. Clark. If you can't possibly attend the meetings. Call and take some sewing home. Your baby has plenty of warm clothing this cold weather. Won't you make some little garments for the refugee babies that have nothing but rags? We furnish material and patterns.[6]

Probably the most public demonstration of their contributions to the war effort was the involvement of the local Red Cross in war bond drives and holding banquets for soon-to-be shipped out soldiers. On December 14, 1917, the Tolono chapter of the Red Cross held "a sumptuous banquet…in honor of the young men who will soon represent Tolono at the front in the present great world conflict." Laying out the food on tables that had been setup in the shape of a cross, the banquet held about seventy-five guests with eleven guests of honor. After dinner, prayers were said and speeches given to honor the young men.[7] Five months later, the Tolono Red Cross Chapter held a similar banquet for eight drafted men about to leave for training. This time the meeting drew some 250 to 300 residents of the town. After opening the meeting with a prayer and the singing of "America," twenty to twenty-five men of the community were called up to make short speeches in support of the war and praising the men. Three members of the local clergy soon thereafter gave speeches and "Orville Moore sang three beautiful songs and was applauded loudly by those present." For lunch, the men and all those attending were treated to "Coffee, sandwiches, and cigars" and were soon "presented with comfort kits from the local Red Cross. They were also given a package of gifts to be opened only when on their way

[3] This Church is located on Locust street a little south and west of the home in which I grew up.
[4] *The Pesotum Chief*, "Present Class Service Flag," 11-16-1917.
[5] *The Pesotum Chief*, "What the Red Cross is Doing," 2-22-1918.
[6] *The Pesotum Chief*, "Red Cross Notes," 1-25-1918 .
[7] *Tolono Weekly Herald*, "Red Cross Set a Sumptious banquet," 12-14-1917.

to the training camp." At the close of the meeting, the entire assembly finished the banquet by singing "The Star Spangled Banner."[8]

Other groups unaffiliated with the Red Cross also sprung up. While the Red Cross was busy with their sewing, knitting, and cutting committees, The Pesotum Patriotic Girls Club was organized in November of 1917 "to look after the tastes of the boys regarding sweets, that is, they are going to supply them with candy and confections just as some clubs furnish them with Tobacco." They had already sent a box of "4 1-2 pounds to our boys at Camp Logan" and vowed, that no matter where the boys were, as long as they had their address, no son of Pesotum would be without his sweets.[9] The Good Fellows' Club of Pesotum, a club apparently active before the war, also did its part to help and honor the men going off to fight in the war. Dr. J.F. Hilgenberg, a local doctor on his way to serve at the front, was inducted into the Good Fellows' Club and presented with a "fine golden watch" as George Hoffman told him as a "souvenir of the esteem in which you are held in this community" and to remind him "that there a bunch of fellows back home that are in perfect accord to the action you have taken in the defense of our Country."[10] The Good Fellows' Club, like the Pesotum Patriotic Girls Club, also made sure the men did not do without some creature comforts from home. Two weeks before Thanksgiving the club put a notice in the Pesotum paper requesting "all the good things a soldier boy likes, except turkey or any kind of fowl or fresh meat" that could spoil to be put into boxes to be sent to Pesotum men at Camp Logan in Houston. People were requested specifically to bring canned fruit, canned pickles, cake, cookies, candy, ginger bread, cigars, fresh butter, tobacco, nuts, apples, cocoa, chocolate, and condensed milk to a local store as the box would have to be shipped by November twenty-second to reach the men in time for Thanksgiving.

Other groups and activities sought to raise funds for the local Red Cross Chapters. School children in the third and fourth grade in Tolono began saving pennies to donate to the Red Cross and had donated no less than sixty-one pennies in a single week.[11] The Pesotum Camp of Woodmen contributed their entertainment talents to fundraising for the Red Cross at one dollar a seat fundraisers in Tolono, Pesotum, and Ivesdale. They put on a vaudeville show complete with seven acts of comedy and singing sometimes backed by an orchestra.[12] During a controversial and rousing speech by a man only referred to in the Pesotum press as "ex-chief Gunner Waite" from Britain on a speaking tour to rally the U.S. into full-fledged support of the war, the local citizenry promised the local chapter of the Red Cross some $750 dollars in funds to buy materials for their endeavors.[13] A few weeks later, the same man spoke in Tolono and succeeded in raising some $1,000 dollars for the Red Cross there.[14]

For all this community activism and expressions of public unity, dissent amongst the populace in both towns was extant. Ex-Gunner Richard Waite's speech had touched a nerve with some of the local populace that came to hear him speak. His reputation had preceded him to Pesotum. Businessmen of the town had heard him speak and were so impressed by him that they immediately set about persuading him to come to Pesotum. In Peoria, Waite had "shaken the city of Peoria and other large cities to their very foundations by his great description of the war." He spoke from his experiences of being on a battleship sunk in the Dardanelles and his

[8] *Tolono Weekly Herald*, "Drafted Boys Given Farewell," 4-5-1918.
[9] *Tolono Weekly Herald*, "New Club Organized," 11-16-1917.
[10] *The Pesotum Chief*, "Show Their Esteem," 8-10-1917.
[11] *Tolono Weekly Herald*, 11-9-1917.
[12] *The Pesotum Chief*, "Benefit Red Cross Entertainment," 12-11-1918.
[13] *The Pesotum Chief*, "Red Cross Notes," 1-25-1918 .
[14] *Tolono Weekly Herald*, "Waite Makes Them Come Across," 2-22-1918.

fighting in the trenches where he learned "what it means to take the bayonet thrust. Twice he has been sent back torn with wounds and yet he is full of the war spirit. Everybody should hear him." So graphic was his speech reputed to be that absolutely no women and no boys under sixteen years of age could attend.[15]

It appears that there was good reason for this prohibition. Writing a few days after Waite had given his speech, C.W. Meneley of Pesotum wrote a review of Waite's presentation. Meneley, after spending considerable time laying out his contributions to the war effort—donations to the YMCA and his son in the army—and the fact that he was neither a man of German ancestry nor sympathy, but "a man of science" spent considerable amount of time lambasting Waite's remarks. Meneley took offence when Waite had boasted to the crowd that he had drank all sorts of liquors at the front and that "a cigarette and a glass of rum are essential in giving courage to 'go over top,'" stating that Waite's remarks were "a slam at the clean manly Christian boy who scorns all these vices." Meneley was also perturbed that Waite had given "advice on the platform to send only cigarettes, not candy, to the soldier boys" believing this advice "an insult to every father and mother who has a boy in the army who has not formed the habit." Obviously, Meneley expressed a certain naivety when it came to conditions at the front, but he was not solely offended by Waite's remarks about soldiering. Probably the second most perturbing aspect of Waite's speech to Meneley was his discussion of the German mind. Waite had apparently expressed "that the German brain is inferior to the Anglo-Saxon brain either in quantity or quality which he asserted was true of quality." It was not only as a man of science that Meneley protested these qualities, however. He believed this speech "an injustice to our German-American patriots who are our neighbors…I can't help it but I stand ready during this war to take off my hat to any German-American patriot before I will do so to an American born citizens who is an ardent patriot."[16] Meneley's stand against Waite's anti-Germanism undoubtedly stemmed from the immigration of German Catholics, including my direct and indirect ancestors, into the Pesotum Township over the preceding decades. When he said "German-American neighbors," he literally meant his neighbors. Not all citizens, however, shared Meneley's disdain for Waite's remarks. Though noting the criticism leveled at Waite's remarks "in some localities for the rough-shod manner in which he has handled some of his topics" the editor of the *Tolono Weekly Herald* further remarked that "soft words have accomplished little or nothing as far as the pro-German question is concerned. If the Gunner's words can raise $1,000 per day for the Red Cross then he is, in our opinion, accomplishing far more each day than some of his critics will be able to accomplish in a life time."[17] Despite this remonstrance and the pride of over $1,000 pledged after Waite's speech, J.J. Ryan, the *Herald's* editor, still had to grasp with noteworthy dissent and complacency. "We have many citizens," Ryan reported, "who are well able to give a substantial sum each month for carrying on the work. Their names are conspicuous in the appended list, by their absence…There are those among us who should hang their heads in shame for refusing to support the Red Cross substantially during the war."[18] In spite of Waite's best efforts not all men had heeded his call or listened to his speech. Those who had, like the businessmen of Pesotum who originally enticed him to their town after hearing him speak, knew what was going to be the message of Waite's remarks and even relished in them enough to bring Waite to their own town because they thought it would do some good in curbing antiwar and bolstering pro-war sentiments and voluntarism. Although both towns posted large sums of

[15] *The Pesotum Chief*, "British Army Officer to be in Pesotum," 1-11-1918.
[16] *The Pesotum Chief*, "Ex-Chief Gunner Waite and His Speech," 1-25-1918.
[17] *Tolono Weekly Herald*, "Waite Makes them Come Across,"
[18] *Tolono Weekly Herald*, "Waite Makes them Come Across,"

money after his appearance, it is evident that the war had bred a notable divisiveness on the home front.

By the early months of 1918 reports of dissent from the war in Tolono, Pesotum, and the surrounding area had already began to surface. Although Tolono and Pesotum would both hold banquets on the eve of the departure of drafted men, communities throughout the area nonetheless judged men for their hesitance to volunteer. In July of 1917, as the eighty-one men who had been enrolled to be drafted in Pesotum nervously awaited their fate, a fake report circulated that a number of men from the community had been drafted. One of the "prominent businessmen" of Pesotum reportedly had called one of the supposed draftees a "slacker" resulting in a fight between the two men. Similar fights broke out throughout the county.[19] It is apparent that failure to report or "slacking" after being drafted was indeed a problem during the war. By October, the Adjutant General had instructed the Urbana exemption board to take "drastic measures against deserters who refuse to report when called to service." The board was to secure the cooperation of the police and the public to apprehend any deserter.[20] Though it certainly was a problem in some areas, it does not appear to have been so in Pesotum or Tolono, despite how many "slackers" may have been around.

Nonetheless, it appears that dissent in these communities was real. In November of 1917, after recent reports from the Department of Justice warning "of a widespread plot to burn farm property" by antiwar/Pro-German men, the corn crib, barn, tool shed, and the garage at the Reat Baker farm three miles north of Tolono was fired by an incendiary. Less than a week earlier "a similar fire" that was supposedly the work of the I.W.W. "broke out at the home of Rodney Smith" just northeast of Urbana. Together, these two fires, whether accidental or wanton acts of political violence, led many to fear the attacks from local terrorist organizations.[21] Whether or not there was any veracity to these reports, it is certain that enough pro-German and anti-war feelings existed in the area to warrant an investigation by the federal government. After the failure of Pesotum, Tolono, and, in fact, the entirety of Champaign County to meet its Liberty Loan quota in November of 1917, the federal government sent in agents to conduct an investigation. "Champaign County is in for a federal investigation," reported J.J. Ryan, "and when Uncle Sam's agents are on the ground a number, it is said, will have reason to shake in their boots." In fact, it had become known only a few days before that "the government [men] have been at work in this county getting a line on all persons who…have been heard to make disloyal utterances. They had no trouble in getting a list of these and they are being warned personally by the federal agents."[22] Despite these warnings, it appears that many of the dissidents continued expressing their antiwar opinions. A few months later, in February and March of 1918, opinion pieces appearing in both the Tolono and Pesotum papers lambasted the antiwar men of their respective communities. The editor of the *Tolono Weekly Herald* warned that "These men should understand that we are in the war to stay and the time for argument is past. The people who have listened to these anti-American sentiments have been patient, hoping that the authors would eventually come to their senses and look at the war from the American standpoint. But there will come a time when patience ceases to be a virtue." The worst of those who had berated the government and even humanitarian organizations such as the American Red Cross were not even "German born subjects, but men who were born and reared under the protecting folds of the Stars and Stripes, men who should be willing to sacrifice their all in the defence of country they make the target

[19] *The Pesotum Chief*, "Fake Report Causes Fight," 7-16-1917.
[20] *Tolono Weekly Herald*, "To Deal With Draft Deserters," 10-5-1917.
[21] *Tolono Weekly Herald*, "IWW is Suspected of Incendiarism," 11-23-1917.
[22] *Tolono Weekly Herald*, "Tolono Failed to Go 'Over the Top,'" 11-2-1917.

for their vile insinuations. And in some instances they are not even of German extraction." The article ended with a call for every "true blue American" to help stamp out the "menace at home."[23] As early as September of 1917, A.F. Albinger, editor of *The Pesotum Chief*, was reporting that "we hear some people say that it is a shame to have soldiers of German birth in this country fighting Germans in France, because it might be their relatives."[24] By February Albinger was so concerned with German participation that he sought to encourage a greater effort in support of war by the Germans living in the vicinity of Pesotum. Attempting to put their immigration to the United States and their participation in the war into a greater, worldly perspective, Albinger addressed the German population directly.

> You of German blood why did you leave Germany? Because you wanted to be free, you wanted to be independent, you wanted to escape the tyranny of that government. You are faithful to the United States. You have shown this by your enlistments, you have shown this by your labor, you have shown this by your donations to the war camp funds, you have shown this by your subscriptions to the liberty loans. Show this again by encouraging more of our boys to go to the front, show this by holding in contempt that man who wishes to shirk his burden to leave another bear his load. Show this again when the next liberty loan comes so that as usual we will see an American, with a German name, at the head of the list, thereby proving to the Kaiser and his proud advisors that you have a real love for your Vaterland, but that Vaterland is not Germany, but America.[25]

By the first of March, however, one citizen of Pesotum had become so disgusted with antiwar sentiment in the community that he wrote a vitriolic letter to the editor. "A Loyal Citizen" wrote in reference to the "men in our nearby community who seem determined to get themselves into trouble by uttering disloyal and insulting remarks against the United States." He reported to have heard men threatening to kill any man who would report them to the authorities, threatening to desert to the German army if they were sent to France, and hoping that "Germany would whip the United States." "A Loyal Citizen" was so disgusted by these men that he suggested that a "positive and speedy remedy" to curbing such sentiments would be to confiscate every disloyal citizens' money they had earned in the United States "and give them a passport to Berlin with no protections from the American army or navy, simply leaving them at the mercy of their angel of hell, the Kaiser, in their trip across the sea."[26] A few days after these sentiments were published in the paper W.H. Kerrick of the Department of Justice came into town "to put a stop to some of that pro-Germanism or disloyalty that exists here." He interviewed four citizens in the town and it was "understood that the federal agent is to return here again to call on several of our farmers, residing east and west of town."[27] In the end, Alblinger closed by stating that "men who attempt to breed sedition and make unpatriotic utterances lose the respect of their fellowmen and in the end will be ashamed of their conduct."[28] Commenting on the federal agents visit to Pesotum, "Editor Wilson of the Tuscola Review" was far less measured in his criticism. He believed that "The right brand of patriotism

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[23] *Tolono Weekly Herald*, "Pro-Germanism in Tolono," 2-22-1918.
[24] *The Pesotum Chief*, "Fighting Relatives," 9-14-1917.
[25] *The Pesotum Chief*, " Our Position on the Great War," 2-8-1918.
[26] *The Pesotum Chief*, "What Do You Think of These Men?", 3-1-1918.
[27] These farming families included significant numbers of my direct and indirect relatives. Unfortunately, nearly everyone of the generation who could have at least heard the stories of Kerrick's visit is dead and no stories survive to my knowledge.
[28] *The Pesotum Chief*, "Federal Officer Here," 3-8-1918.

and loyalty is spontaneous and comes from the heart. The kind these slackers and traitors profess isn't worth a d—. There is a day of reckoning for them and it isn't far off."[29] This day of reckoning for dissidents, however, never occurred in Pesotum or Tolono. What may have happened in these towns, had the wrong thing been said at the wrong time can be illustrated by what befell a German farmer in Sidney who, though having moved to Illinois decades before, had always been "a Hun at heart." This farmer, while eating at a local diner, had made a "remark…that he would kill his son before he would let him go to war." Many others from Sidney had heard enough and attempted to lynch him. The German farmer was saved from the "hotheads" only by the timely intervention of more coolheaded members of the town. Nevertheless, he was banished from the town and his farm and told to never come back. The town also went the extra step of reporting him to the federal authorities.[30]

Clearly while most of the inhabitants of Pesotum and Tolono ardently supported the war others did not. Despite the failure of their Liberty Bond drives, pro-war citizens of both Pesotum and Tolono could still take pride in what was probably the biggest contribution to the war effort to emanate from any community—manpower. Residents of Pesotum believed that "Pesotum has more enlisted men than any other town of equal size in the state."[31] This contribution, as demonstrated by C.W. Meneley's naivety about "going over the top," was a far greater contribution than any person who stayed on the home front could appreciate. Leaving the safety of their homes, many of these young men marching off to war would experience places, people, and events that would leave an indelible mark on their post-war lives, if they were lucky enough to survive. Travelling further than they ever had and seeing things their family probably never would, these men wrote scores of letters home trying to explain the sometimes strange, sometimes wonderful, and sometimes terrible experiences the war put them through.

Soldiers' Letters

"The Boys Far Away"
I am dreaming today of the boys far away,
The boys in khaki, blue and gray.
They belong to different nations,
Their flags are different colors too.
I hope the dear Lord will protect them,
The way He does me and you.
They are fighting to save our country,
And the glorious flag too.
There's many a million fighting,
To save the red, white, and blue.
The Kaiser has very many men,
Yet Uncle Sam has still more,
But oh! How the Kaiser will jump
When the Yankees knock at his door.
Some Day the Yankees will beat him,
That he will fight with us no more.
Let's go over and see the Kaiser jump
When the Yankees knock at his door.[32]

[29] *The Pesotum Chie*f," Comments on Federal Officer's Visit Here," 3-22-1918.
[30] *Tolono Weekly Herald*, "Sidney Farmer Near Lynching," 3-29-1918.
[31] *The Pesotum Chief*, "Federal Officer Here," 3-8-1918.
[32] *The Pesotum Chief*, "The Boys Far Away," 4-5-1918.

Written by thirteen-year-old Margaret Samulowitz of Pesotum, this poem, like much of the pro-war sentiment at home, is ripe with the overconfidence of patriotism and home front ignorance of the carnage of war. The soldiers marched off with this same ignorance. A shocked Guy L. Bauman of Tolono wrote his wife soon after his arrival in France after a stint in Britain. "The people over there," he said referring to Americans, "can't realize what this war is without seeing France. Nearly every man you see is a cripple in some way. The women do nearly all of the work." Continuing Bauman believed that "England shows the effects of war lots worse than the part of France I have seen" as the food shortages in Britain did not exist in France.[33] As for depictions of actual battle, of the letters published, only two letters written by William Holl of Pesotum even attempts to broach the topic. "All sorts of funny things happen around here," stated Holl:

> though they are really serious if one wants to take them that way. Whenever those big guns go off it shakes the country for miles and the billets we are in just tremble for fear. The other night our guns started a sweeping barrage fire and of course Mr. Boche was coming back with some of his big stuff and a shell burst near enough to shake the billets, and a piece of plaster or tile shook loose and fell down on a fellow's head who was sleeping. He jumped up and starting yelling "I'm hit," "I'm hit!" He really thought he was shot. It was some time before he was calm.[34]

In another letter published two weeks later, Holl came the closest to describing the horrors of the battlefield without inciting the wrath of the censor. All Holl could tell his brother was that his regiment's batteries were "making it d— hot for them…At night it looks like a great display of fireworks." Knowing that he could not say much else Holl used the Pesotum and Tolono area as a model to describe to his brother the vantage point he occupied with the artillery behind the lines.

> Picture Yourself where you are with the battle line at Tolono. Every house and building in "Podunk" is full of soldiers with camouflaged roads, etc, and trucks and supply wagons moving day and night. Holl's Hall would be a first aid hospital. The bank would be the sector post office. Huff's drug store would be an army canteen. Siefken's store would be a store room for supplies. The school might be a Y.M.C.A. In the streets would be the field kitchens making hot coffee and hash. Davis' pasture would be an aviation field. Riemke's elevator might be an observation tower until the Boches got the range on it. I'd like to use Dave Mix's store for something but the Boches probably burnt it on their retreat.[35]

Holl's letter, though certainly playful must have made an impact on the reader. These were local reference points he destroyed or requisitioned for the military in passing with his pen. Even for this reader nearly eighty-two years later, and with only some of these buildings still standing, the imagery it invokes is shuttering. The record for *The Pesotum Chief* disappears soon after this, leaving whatever letters were published in its papers during the fateful summer months of 1918 lost to the public record. Nevertheless, the soldiers who ventured forth to fight in France had experiences that are worthy of note. Like Holl who had used his home as a

[33] *Tolono Weekly Herald*, "Letters From the Boys in Khacki," 3-15-1918.
[34] *The Pesotum Chief*, "We Are Up and At 'Em Says William B. Holl," 4-5-1918.
[35] *The Pesotum Chief*, "WM. Holl Describes Battle Front," 4-19-1918.

reference point to describe what it was like at the front, other soldiers compared their experiences in camp and in different countries to their lives in southern Champaign County.

Yet, even before this, those who had stayed behind were learning the more mundane horrors of warfare from firsthand accounts. Everett Hunter's first experience in a trench had not been particularly pleasant. After arriving at the frontline trench at his training camp around 8 p.m., a couple of hours later "it started to rain and by morning the water was about six inches deep all over the trenches. It made us believe that Sherman defined war right. I saw lots of men lying in two or three inches of mud and water sleeping." The rain continued all through Saturday "so by night it was almost impossible to get any place at all." Luckily, his unit was going to be relieved, and it was his duty as a courier to deliver the message. Though he made his "first trip in the trenches part of the time in water hip deep" the second time, his commanding officer gave him a breather and let him go over the top to deliver the messages. He also reported that during the training exercise they had three gas attacks that, he reported with the naivety of a fresh recruit, were not all that bad except the masks were a little uncomfortable to wear.[36] Other men stationed at Camp Logan with Hunter, Charles Bloom and Algert Robbins, reported similar experiences.[37]

Besides discomfort in the trenches, men also found other facets of military life uncomfortable. Men found discomfort in their army issue uniforms, particularly their boots. Several men reported in a group letter that their hob nail shoes were cumbersome and made their feet look "twice as large as they really are. It is a hard job to keep in ranks with them on."[38] Charles Bloom, the first man to be drafted from Pesotum, echoed these sentiments when he said "Our shoes are big enough to put both feet in one shoe."[39] Besides the horrors of the trenches and ill-fitting uniforms, camp life had also brought about threats from illness. While some soldiers had to deal with the discomfort of the inoculations side effects many others had to deal with quarantines that lasted for several weeks. Weather, too, could also be a source of discomfort. While some went to camps as close as Rantoul, many others traversed the country to camps in Washington State, Wyoming, Iowa, Texas, and onwards to the eastern seaboard in preparation to be shipped out. The resulting, sudden shift in climates, army procedure, and army inefficiency often left the men bewildered and in discomfort. Writing from Kelly Field in San Antonio, Charles Murray admitted that "The first few days down here I had some difficulty in getting myself acclimated to the climate, which is almost destructive to a person who is not acclimated to it." Murray's ignorance of the local ecology had also led him to sit "upon a cactus leaf by mistake," a mistake, he realized "rather quickly" as it "wasn't anything like a cushion" he had been expecting and he had "been picking thorns ever since."[40] Others during January of 1918, in Houston of all places, were dealing with blistering cold due to military inefficiency and ill preparations. "Some of the tents were without…stoves" meaning the only way to keep warm was to stay bundled and wrapped up in bed. This is certainly not the way recruits wished to spend their time off duty."[41] For at least one local man the trip to camp had not been all that comfortable, owing largely to army discipline. Everett Hunter and a train load of men embarked from Champaign at eleven in the morning on a Tuesday and arrived at Camp Logan in Houston, Texas at five in the morning on Friday. During that entire trip they "were allowed to get off of the train only twice, one hour in Memphis and three hours in New Orleans. We

[36] *The Pesotum Chief*, "A Letter From Everett Hunter," 2-15-1918.
[37] *The Pesotum Chief*, "Algert Robbins Letter," 3-15-1918 & Pesotum Chief "Chas. Bloom's Letter," 3-8-1918.
[38] *The Pesotum Chief*, "Letter of Thanks," 12-4-1917.
[39] *The Pesotum Chief*, "First Drafted Boy Writes Back," 9-14-1917.
[40] *The Pesotum Chief*, "Charles Murray in Texas," 3-29-1918.
[41] *The Pesotum Chief*, "Letter of Thanks," 12-14-1917.

kept guards at the doors of the cars all the time, with orders to allow no one off…Our chief amusement was when we stopped to talk to all the pretty ones we could see and there was always plenty of them."[42]

Despite drill, discipline, and some discomfort, most recruits from southern Champaign County greeted their new life with optimism. Although he slept on cots that had a penchant for turning over while a man slept and had received a shot for typhoid fever that made "every one of us sick," Russel Baker told his mother that he enjoyed "this life very much."[43] "We are getting drilled about four hours each day now," reported J.J. Ryan, "I am learning what right-about-face, right-squad and all those mysteries mean. This is the life! And say, old boy, we are not in the infantry. This is the coastal artillery. Our company has a big 12 inch baby to play with."[44] The novelty of the experience exhibited in Ryan's letter certainly played a large role in bolstering the excitement within the recruits from southern Champaign County. Like Ryan's gleeful depiction of his "12 inch baby," Samuel Murray found "a job that suit me just to a 't'—am with a machine gun company—learning to shoot a 1000 pound rapid fire gun."[45] The sight of the submergence of a submarine was worthy enough to have been noted in several letters and for at least one man, Herbert Smith stationed at the airfield in Rantoul, his letter writing stopped altogether to watch a plane take off despite having been at the airfield for a significant period at that point.[46] Though it seems rather mundane, these men, living in an age without buffets on every street corner, also relished in the seeming novelty that they could eat all the food they wanted and relished even more, it would seem, in their weight gain.[47]

Such novelty was not relegated to army life; it was also in the towns, cities, and villages surroundings their camps. Lafayette Woodworth was astonished to find farmers in Georgia "plowing the fields for cotton but corn and other grain is very scarce around here. I guess it is too hot and dry for it."[48] Paul Hoffman in training at Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia described how he and two other men daily went out and took a lot of photographs of the area. He had gone up "on Lookout Mt. the other day" and believed it to be "a wonderful sight."[49] Other soldiers took in other wonderful sights. Writing from Camp Pike in Little Rock, Arkansas, Sam Murray told his friend to believe all the stories about "razor-back hogs and two-toed mules" because "believe me they've got them down here in Arkansas." Further commenting on his surroundings Murray thought "they had made a mistake when they called this place Little Rock, they should have called it 'All Rock,' as that is all I have since I've been here." Like other soldiers' letters, Murray and his squad mates had fun talking to "all the pretty ones." "We are having lots of fun with the Arkansas girls," Murray told his friend Gus, "they just go 'nuts' when they see a soldier boy in khaki."[50] It is impossible to know whether Murray knew this letter would be published, but the attitude of "boys will be boys" does not seem to have prevailed amongst their parents.

Home front concerns over the men's moral behavior are evident in a number of letters written back home to Tolono and Pesotum. Several letters reassuring soldiers' parents and neighbors of their good behavior appear in the columns of both towns' newspapers.[51] This is

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[42] *The Pesotum Chief*, "Pesotum Boys O.K. at Camp Logan," 10-26-1917.
[43] *Tolono Weekly Herald*, "From Soldiers in Camp," 4-26-1918.
[44] *Tolono Weekly Herald*, "From Soliders in Camp," 4-19-1918.
[45] *The Pesotum Chief*, "News From The Soldier Boys," 9-28-1917.
[46] *The Pesotum Chief*, 2-26-18.
[47] A couple of examples can be found in *The Pesotum Chief*, 10-2-1917, & *The Pesotum Chief*, 11-22-1917.
[48] *The Pesotum Chief*, "Fay Woodworth's Letter," 3-15-1918.
[49] *The Pesotum Chief*, "Paul Hoffman O.K.," 3-8-1918.
[50] *The Pesotum Chief*, "Private Same Murray Writes," 11-22-1917.
[51] *The Pesotum Chief*, 3-18-1918 & *The Tolono Weekly Herald*, 2-22-1918.

illustrative of the interconnection of communities, as no matter what military community these men joined, they were, to those back home, first and foremost members of their respective towns and expected to represent them well. Their hometowns never let them forget their home and the soldiers were glad for it. Besides worries about the effect of the army on soldiers moral bearings, the Red Cross and other groups had, as illustrated earlier, made sure the men would not do without their creature comforts from home. Though the packages thrown together in Pesotum by the Good Fellows' Club for the soldiers' Thanksgiving festivities at Camp Logan had arrived a little late, the soldiers nevertheless saw fit "to thank each and every one of our Pesotum friends for the box of eats and smokes sent us. They sure did taste good to us." In fact, they had arrived just as the men had recovered from the Thanksgiving meal they had partook in a few days before, making it a must welcome and unexpected gift.[52] William Holl was delighted when he received a box from Pesotum containing tobacco, chocolate, and other items including butterscotch that was, in Holl's estimation, "18 karat."[53] When they were not receiving packages and reading papers from home the men were trying to find some sense of normalcy at Soldiers and Sailors Clubs, the halls of the Knights of Columbus, or at the local chapter of the Y.M.C.A., all of which were set up with all the amenities of comfort. Otto Heischmidt reported that the Knights of Columbus building in Louisville "has every convenience for the entertainment of the boys, victrolas, places to write letters, in fact almost anything one could wish for."[54]

Yet, despite all of these efforts to keep the men comfortable and the novelty of their experiences, "the boys far away" nevertheless, and probably inevitably, became homesick. Possibly as a sign of the transformation their experiences had wrought or, more probably, homesickness, many soldiers' letters referred to their hometown as "old Pesotum," "old Tolono," or "the old town." Some of these sentiments revolved around the creature comforts of the town. Writing from a camp in Rockford, Illinois, Ralph Robbins told the editor of *The Pesotum Chief* "To tell Geo. Hoffman he had better bring his [soda] fountain up here."[55] For his part Sam Murray longed for the chance to "spend a night behind the wheel of the Maxwell[56]" before he was shipped off to the frontlines.[57] Probably the most frank admission to affinity towards home came from William Holl while he was on the frontlines in France. "They all kid me" Holl said of his fellow soldiers "to the effect that Pesotum is only a whistling post on the I.C. but nevertheless it suits me quite well."[58] Certainly, as many of the boys from Pesotum and Tolono boarded their ships to go across the pond, similar thoughts crossed their minds. Though they had encountered people and places far removed and far different than their home while still within the states, they were about to enter a completely alien world with strange people and strange towns with no other means to judge them than their previous life experiences.

First, however, they had to make it across the Atlantic. For many of these men, this trip seems to have been one of the most uncomfortable experiences in their lives since entering the military. Philip O'Brien of Pesotum was one of the lucky ones. He reported that although he "was quite sick for the first two days" he had a great trip as he soon got over it and "felt fine for

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[52] *The Pesotum Chief*, "Letter of Thanks," 12-14-1917.
[53] *The Pesotum Chief*, "WM. Holl Describes Battle Front," 4-19-1918.
[54] *The Pesotum Chief*, "Letter From Camp Logan, Louisville," 3-18-1918.
[55] *The Pesotum Chief*, "Soldier Boys Write Letters," 10-5-1917.
[56] The Maxwell he refers to was a model of touring car that had recently set a record for crossing the United States in ten days.
[57] *The Pesotum Chief*, "News From The Soldier Boys," 9-28-1917.
[58] *The Pesotum Chief*, "Wm. Holl Writes From France," 1-9-1918.

the rest of the trip."[59] William Holl's depiction is an exercise in contrasts. He reported that the passage to Europe had been a safe one with a "couple of storms on sea." These storms were nothing to worry about, he reassured his parents, as "our ship being a big one we rode the waves for fair." Despite the ships ability to ride through the waves, he told his folks "I wish you could have seen this bunch when they were all sea-sick. Believe me, it was some disgusted bunch. The fish were fed well as long as the boys couldn't hold down their lunch, and some of them were sick for days." Needless to say Holl was glad to set his feet on land at the end of his voyage. As he told his parents, "I never realized that the ocean was so big. It's too wide to suit me."[60] Guy Bauman described his trip across the ocean to his wife at home. Bauman told his wife "I was sea sick for three days. The first day I felt like I was going to die and the second I wished I was dead, and the third I thought I was sure gone. It was the worst feeling I ever had."[61] In a sense, this was the American soldiers' middle passage. Leaving their homes they embarked across the ocean and endured physical ailments that, frankly, seemed like hell. When they emerged on the other side they were in different world, living a completely different existence than they had even in camp at home in a world that seemed strange and curious.

The first sign of this transformation was in the dating and placing of these letters written right after disembarking. Without exception all of these men signed their letters with some variation on William Holl's description of "somewhere, sometime" that became a trademark of his letters from France. The censor would now be an ever more vigilant and active force in determining what could and could not be stated in letters to loved ones, hence, the reason why Holl's description of a battlefield in France earlier in this section took on its characteristics. The battlefield, however, was not the only new experience these men were about to encounter. Like in their travels in the United States, they found strange and novel people and experiences awaiting them in their new world. As Holl told his parents, "Believe me" landing in Europe, "will seem like going from one world into another."[62]

Wherever the men ended up overseas, they were struck by the seemingly strange world of which they were now a part. One man, Jay Marten ended up in Cuba in a camp near San Juan Hill. He had went to Santiago and believed it to be "a queerly built city, a mixture of old and new, all jumbled together with wide streets and narrow ones, all 'as crooked as a dog's hind leg.'"[63] Only two men, one a sailor and the other a soldier, appear to have spent any significant time in Britain. As a sailor, Joseph Rund of Pesotum came to port in a variety of places. While he was in London he saw, among many other famous sites, the Tower of London, St. Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey, the Parliament Building, Buckingham Palace, and the King's residence. From London he went to Liverpool where he was struck by how "a sailor is sure 'ace high' in England." Given the treatment he apparently received, it is probably not that much of a surprise that he found "the English are the grandest people I have ever met."[64] Philip O'Brien's account was a little more descriptive. O'Brien fancied "the small streams and the beautiful hills" of that "beautiful country." "The farms are small but in good condition," O'Brien reported, "Everyone who is not at war is working. Women are helping with the spring work." Despite the natural beauty of the place he found the people to be "so much different than we Americans"

[59] *The Pesotum Chief*, "Corporal Phillip O'Brien Tells of Trip Across," 4-5-1918.
[60] *The Pesotum Chief*,"WM. Holl's Letter," 12-7-1917.
[61] *Tolono Weekly Herald*, "Letters From Boys in Khaki," 3-15-1918.
[62] *The Pesotum Chief*, "WM. Holl's Letter," 12-7-1917.
[63] *Tolono Weekly Herald*, "Marten Brothers, Widely-Separated, Write Home," 2-22-1918.
[64] *The Pesotum Chief*, "Sees Historic Places," 1-11-1918.

and neither disparaged or held them up on a pedestal. It was as if he still did not know quite what to think of them.[65]

Like those in England, the men who disembarked in France could not help but notice the differences in people and places. Probably the richest set of correspondence published was William Holl's correspondence with his family. "Over here," he told his brother Harry "every other door in any town is a café but not what we term café. A café here is a wine room with tables to sit down, and from which French wines are served, but nothing only the non-alcoholic kind is sold…I have tried it all, but it is worse than vinegar. I can't see it." Holl was also thrown for a loop by the odd fact that he had not "seen a single soda fountain in all the country I have been in. In America, you know, we would not think much of a burg where we could not find a soft drink joint."[66] It was not all bad though, in another letter Holl described how he "ate a dinner in a French café which was quite a dream to me. I had my dictionary with me and for dinner I had soup, fried rabbit, French fried potatoes, brussel sprouts which is a French dish similar to cabbage sprouts, bran bread and cider at the price of four francs, 50 centimes or 90 cents in our money." Deciding to see the city whose name he could not or simply did not divulge Holl hopped onto a street car as a means for a relaxing tour. The sight of a "woman conductress and woman motoress" who knew "how to handle the cars" was such a novel sight that Holl had to relate it to his brother. [67]

Another local man also noted major differences between his position in France and his hometown. Redick Marten of the same 149th Field Artillery as William Holl, told his mother that "In walking about [France] one is struck by the difference between the modes of farming here and at home. There are no large fields, most of them less than an acre. A great deal of the ground is taken up in hedges." He further reported that "while two-horse teams are common" unlike at home they "are generally placed one in front of the other instead of abreast. The drivers walk and lead the horses instead of riding." Marten was further impressed that the roads these teams traveled did not have a single dirt road. [68] William Holl noted a more confusing difference in the roads."The roads here," Holl told his brother, "are not so square with the world as ours and a person is liable to come back to where he started unless he is familiar with the country." The houses were also strange as they were built "wholly of stone" with "no lumber being used unless absolutely necessary." Like Marten, Holl reported that the "Farms are small" and further noted that "villages like Pesotum can be found in any direction and at an average of about a mile apart. Stoves here are as rare as snowballs in Hades. The fireplace answers all purposes."[69]

Such differences served to remind these men of home. At the same time, care packages, newspapers, and letters all served to break up the excitement and monotony of their lives in camp and Europe. The mail system was a tangible link to a place they well understood and to those they loved. Undoubtedly, at one point or another on their travels in Europe, men wished they were back home. At least one man, Guy Gauman, would have taken the first boat back immediately after arrival his in France and a horrible experience of sea-sickness. Gauman noted that "Everyone seems to think the war will end this summer, but I don't know, I hope it does." "I am ready," he told his wife, "to go back any time."[70]

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[65] *The Pesotum Chief*, "Corp. P.T. O'Brien Likes England," 4-19-1918.
[66] *The Pesotum Chief*, "WM. Holl Describes Battle Front," 4-19-1918.
[67] *The Pesotum Chief*, "WM. Holl Writes From France," 2-22-1918.
[68] *Tolono Weekly Herald*, "Marten Brothers, Widely-Separated, Write Home," 2-22-1918.
[69] *The Pesotum Chief*, "WM. Holl Writes From France," 2-22-1918.
[70] *Tolono Weekly Herald*, "Letters From Boys in Khaki," 3-15-1918.

Closing Remarks

Most of these men did make it back home. Throughout my life I have been cognizant of who the older families were in Pesotum. This project has only expanded those horizons and, at the same time, retracted them as I realize recent moves were the last of a line of descent to call Pesotum home. The men who went off to war invariably, if they survived, came back. Some made their lives in the area while others moved away. Many of the soldiers discussed in this essay must have moved away as their family, to my knowledge, no longer exists in Pesotum. Others, though, it is quite evident they are still around and that the apple does not fall too far from the proverbial tree. One example should suffice. Recall C.W. Meneley's editorial about ex-Gunner Waite's speech in which he basically called him reprehensible to the morally upright Christian man. Well, when I found that and read those same passages to my mother her response was "That's certainly a Meneley for you!" Many of the names I ran across whether they be Meneley, Dalton, Miller, Schweighart, Eisenmenger, Hettinger, Gilles, Rund, Zwilling, or many others are all familiar and, even in some cases, family to me. Their descendants have been a number of things to me in my life: cousin, teacher, friend, and girlfriend.[71] Humorously, the most common of these is cousin though cousin and friend overlap nicely; I was the fifth generation after all. All joking aside, investigating the wartime home front of Pesotum and Tolono has brought what I once thought a sleepy town basically doubling as a retirement community to life.

Eighty years ago the present insular community where everybody keeps to themselves was nonexistent. From the home front to the warfront, the residents of Pesotum and Tolono, confronted new challenges that changed their conceptions of the world in which they lived. Those people at home rallied together and called each other out for not coming to the aid of "The Boys Far Away." They joined community and extra-community organizations to support the war effort and their neighborhood boys who were marching off into the unknown. The soldiers flung out far and wide for training in the U.S. and deployment overseas could not help but compare the new world they were experiencing to that of the world from which they came. They missed the creature comforts of their town and marveled at the strange people, climate, and animals around them. And, often struggling with censorship, found it difficult to relate the full details of their many adventures, whether at the frontline or not. Nevertheless the two sides of the war effort coalesced to form extended communities of reciprocation where the soldiers went forth to fight and those who stayed behind made sure they did not do without. Such interconnections between the home front and warfront created extended communities of Pesotum and Tolono that reached as far as the green, and the not so green, fields of France.

[71] Yes, I checked the family tree before we started dating and no we were not related.

World War I and Effingham County, Illinois

Chaddy Hosen

Introduction

The First World War has a unique place in American history. Far from the forgotten war, World War I is remembered as a precursor to World War II, even an interesting prelude, but nothing compared to its more famous sequel. Asking high school students what they know about something is almost always a good indicator of popular perception on a topic; answers often come in a string resembling this: "We won, right? That's the first time we beat the Germans."[1] In essence, the students are correct; the United States allied itself with the Triple Entente and Germany was on the losing side. The war and its aftermath led to great changes in Europe, America, and the wider world, arguably leading to World War II, but many Americans seem relatively unfamiliar with how World War I impacted the country, from its largest cities to its small towns.

Perhaps it is the fact that America entered late in the war or the stigma resulting from the failure of the League of Nations. Whatever the reason, World War I is becoming an increasingly forgotten war. What is startling about this revelation is the prevalence, the sheer thickness of the history all around us and waiting to be reopened. Hidden in family collections and public libraries across America is the physical evidence of a past that is quickly disappearing. If we are to keep World War I from becoming the forgotten war, historians, both amateur and professional, must turn to the area around them—to preserve and sustain the past for ourselves and posterity. That is the purpose of this paper: to piece together, if only in part, a small story from among the many in Effingham County Illinois. What this project seeks is to demonstrate how German-Americans in Effingham County responded and adapted to challenges to their self-identity during the First World War. Before delving too heavily into the subject of the paper, a little background on America's involvement in the First World War, Effingham County itself, and a write-up on the research methods employed, would be appropriate.

As already alluded to, the United States did not enter the fray immediately. Despite calls from within the country and without to join, President Woodrow Wilson maintained an isolationist policy through his first term; he even ran for and won a second term under the slogan, "He kept us out of war." War raged between the Allied and Central powers for three years when the interception of the infamous Zimmerman Telegram, proposing an alliance between Germany and Mexico, prompted Wilson to ask for and Congress to declare war on Germany on April 6, 1917. Compared to the major powers of Europe, the U.S. Army was relatively small, but by the summer of 1918 millions of men had been drafted, trained, and sent "over there" to fight. Historiography on the effect American entry had on the outcome of the war is variously contested; whether Germany was already on the ropes and the sight of fresh soldiers hammered home the reality of an eventual defeat, or its heavy losses in combat against American soldiers necessitated an armistice, can never be known for sure.

Whatever the cause, Germany signed an armistice agreement with the Allied powers that effectively ended the war at 11 a.m. on November 11, 1918. Major leaders from the Allied

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[1] This vignette is derived from my experience teaching World War I at Neoga High School as a student teacher in Spring 2009.

powers, most notably George Clemenceau of France, Woodrow Wilson of the United States, and Lloyd George of Britain met in Paris after the war to draft the official peace agreement and draw out the plans for a League of Nations—an extra-governmental body that would ensure no more such conflicts would ever occur. The high hopes of the League of Nations would ultimately end in failure. Without the means to enforce its own authority and keep the peace, and without the support of the United States, whose Congress refused to sign off on the charter, the League of Nations would do little to stop the onset of the Second World War. It is this legacy that leaves World War I in a precarious position historically speaking. Possibly, the failure to prevent this second war, which ended in a more decisive victory, is part of the reason behind America's fading memory of the war.

Located in south-central Illinois, Effingham County was established in 1831. Legends regarding the origin of the county's unique name abound; credit has been attributed to the individual who first surveyed the region, a British General, and even a mysterious Lord Effingham—Lord of what and where is never specified. Though the county seat resides in the city of Effingham, largest by population and area, many of the villages and towns in the county have retained their own distinct identity. The overwhelmingly German composition of the county, especially evident in the village of Teutopolis where many residents were first generation American citizens at the outbreak of the war, makes Effingham an interesting case study. As we will see, loyalty became a matter of serious contention, particularly in Teutopolis.

Most of the research was conducted at the Helen Mathes Effingham Public Library, with generous assistance and resources provided by the Effingham Genealogical and Historical Society. A majority of the information for the paper came from examining microfilm of the weekly Effingham Republican between 1917-1918 and several local history publications of the Effingham Genealogical Society. Invaluable direction from Eleanor Bounds of the Genealogical Society and Bill Grimes of the Effingham Daily News pointed this research toward two main topics: Company G of the Illinois National Guard and the government's suspicions of a German plot in Teutopolis. Unfortunately, there are far too many stories that will be left untold by this paper, but in picking up on just a few we can see, if only in part, the impacts of an immense, international conflict on one small county in Illinois.

Company G

Effingham County's quota for servicemen was 56, but by the end of the war the county far exceeded that number through draftees and volunteer units.[2] The most well-known elements were Company G and the Dietrich Machine Gun Company,[3] both units of the Illinois National Guard originally formed by W.W. Austin. Leadership of the Company would pass on to Captain Albert Gravenhorst before the unit set off for Camp Logan in Texas.[4] Updates on the movement and doings of the company came largely from the letters of Clem J. Weidman. Information on the Dietrich Machine Gun Company was more sparse and came only occasionally in the *Effingham Republic*. What made the Machine Gun Company famous was that 76 young men, out of a town of only 600, voluntarily formed their own company.[5] Both groups would eventually merge with the 133rd Illinois Infantry per Presidential order, which made

[2] "Board of Exemption Receives Master List," *Effingham Republican*, 2 August 1917. (There are no page numbers in the Effingham Republican, but the majority of the stories used were found on the first page.)
[3] There seems to be some confusion in the sources as to the independence of the Dietrich Machine Gun Company. Initially the Company is treated separately, but eventually it is mentioned synonymously with Co G.
[4] Clifford Stevens, "Effingham County's War Records," *Effingham County Illinois—Past & Present*, ed. Hilda Feldhake, (Effingham: Effingham Regional Historical Society, 1968), no page number.
[5] "Machine Gun Company," *Effingham Republican*, 24 May, 1917.

them official members of the United States Army.[6] As new letters from Clem Weidman come in, readers are treated to tales of life in military camp, training drills in barracks, and harrowing combat experiences when Company G arrives in France near the conclusion of the war.

What is perhaps most fascinating about Co. G, beside the various stories related through published letters and dispatches, is its prominence in the collective memory of the county, especially in comparison to draftees from the town. While researching for this paper, Co. G was the most frequently mentioned regarding the war in Effingham County. The Effingham Genealogical Society's folder on World War I contained mostly information about Co. G, with especial attention paid to the Dietrich Machine Gun Company. While asking around and trying to find any information at all about the war, Co. G was generally the lone item mentioned. Even within its own time Co. G was handled quite differently than other groups of soldiers serving from the town.

The *Effingham Republican's* articles concerning Co. G refer to the troops as "our boys" and other such endearing terms. By comparison, articles referring to new draftees shipped off to camp and a weekly occurrence by the latter half of the war are delivered in a curt, official manner. The titles to these articles are simple, almost business-like, "Left for Camp Taylor"[7] "12 Leave for Camp Taylor,"[8] etc. In contrast to the somber nature of the draftee announcements, we find an enormous crowd turning out to greet a single member of Co. G passing through Effingham, separate from the unit as a whole on the way to telegraph training school. First Sergeant Ivar Knowles received a grand welcome, with food, well-wishers, and music from the people of Effingham.[9] The story is nice and implies the love and support of the people for their soldiers, but it seems a bit overblown for only one soldier passing through, certainly not an out-of-the-ordinary event for a town with a major railroad running through it. As we have seen, one group is treated as family, the collective sons of the town, while accounts of the other read more like numbers from a stock ticker. Surely it is not mere coincidence, but this begs the question, what is the difference between one group of soldiers and the other?

Two potential explanations came to mind during the research. For the first explanation we might look at the author of the majority of letters from Co. G, Clem J. Weidman. Examining each printed letter we find that a majority of them are addressed to one Herman R. Schlebarth, none other than the editor and publisher of the *Effingham Republican.* It is entirely possible that Schlebarth paid more attention to Co. G because one of his best friends was serving in the unit and he could count on consistent information coming in through his letters. Given this, it should be no surprise that Co. G would receive more attention, but there are problems with this hypothesis. Several of the publications of the Effingham Genealogical Society indicate that Clem J. Weidman's letters were also reprinted in the *Effingham Register* and the *Effingham Democrat* simultaneously.[10] What we can draw from this is that news of Co. G was valuable to Effingham County readers; stories about Co. G were generally very popular with readers of Effingham newspapers. This tells us little, however, about the enthusiasm with which the people of the county regarded Co. G. This dead end brings us to the second postulation, which reveals the underlying apprehension over the racial and national identity of the people in Effingham County.

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[6] "Co. G Now Mobilizing," *Effingham Republican*, 26 July 1917.
[7] "Left for Camp Taylor," *Effingham Republican*, 20 September 1917.
[8] "12 Leave for Camp Taylor," *Effingham Republican*, 4 October 1917.
[9] "We are Patriotic People," *Effingham Republican*, 24 January 1918.
[10] Unfortunately, neither of these newspapers was available for examination at the time of this research, the microfilms and originals have apparently been lost since they were used by the Effingham Genealogical and Historical Society.

Loyalty and Patriotism

The 2000 Census indicated that 39.5% of the population in the city of Effingham was of German descent.[11] That number might have been considerably higher in 1917 at the outset of American involvement in the war, when larger numbers of first and second-generation German immigrants lived in this country. The number would have been even higher in the village of Teutopolis, which boasts strong ties to German culture even to this day. Other studies have paid considerable attention to the persecution of Americans of German descent throughout the United States, but Effingham County offers a unique case to study. Its high density of German immigrants and German descendants meant that there was not a great deal of ethnic distinction within the county. Simply put, fewer citizens in Effingham County would have conflated German culture and habits, more or less shared by the majority of the population, with disloyalty than in other communities. Despite this, the evidence shows that there was a great deal of concern paid to representations of patriotism and loyalty on the part of the people of Effingham County themselves. Through public performance and proclamation the people of Effingham County, particularly in the heavily Germanic community of Teutopolis, sought to present themselves as loyal Americans and combat suspicions of deceit from those outside the community.

Suspicion of German aliens within Effingham County seemed to come from both federal and local authorities not directly tied to members of the community. Given the large population of Germans in the county, it is entirely possible that there were unregistered aliens living in the community. Those who lived in the community knew who could be trusted and who could not, but this was not the case for lawmakers who were only vaguely aware of the community's demography and character through census information and related reports. As such, there was apparently some concern over these "enemy aliens". David L. Wright, Assistant Registrant/Postmaster, issued a call for registration of these individuals in the February 7, 1918 edition of the *Effingham Republican*. The article instructs enemy aliens, obviously Germans in this context, to report to the post office between February 4th and the 9thto provide four unframed photographs for registration. The article warns of penalties for non-registration, but does not mention what those penalties entail.[12]

Language became a matter of contention and patriotism during the war. To this day there are several residents in Effingham County who primarily speak German and that number is likely to be substantially greater during World War I. The State Utilities Commission heard complaints by residents who questioned the legality of the Watson and Gelmare Telephone Company's injunction to its customers banning the speaking of German over its telephone wires.[13] Though a verdict was not printed in any of the available papers, we can assume that the Commission ruled in favor of the citizens. In the greater war narrative this dispute was ultimately inconsequential, but as a part of the extreme suspicion regarding anything that might be subversive to the United States government, the dispute over spoken language was a key indicator of what exactly laid at the heart of this German-American identity crisis in Effingham County.

The German language spoken by many residents of Effingham County connected them more with the enemy in Europe than their English-speaking neighbors in America. Although

[11] U.S. Census Bureau, "62401 Fact Sheet: Profile of Selected Social Characteristics-2000," available from http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/QTTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=86000US62401&-qr_name=DEC_2000_SF3_U_DP2&-ds_name=DEC_2000_SF3_U&-_lang=en&-redoLog=false&-_sse=on, accessed 12 November 2009.
[12] "Notice to Alien Enemies," *Effingham Republican*, 7 February 1918.
[13] "Wants Ban on German Talk," *Effingham Republican*, 4 April 1918.

the majority of German-Americans remained loyal, many Americans remained suspicious of their cultural ties to Germany. German-Americans in Effingham County needed to find ways to prove their loyalty; they did this by drawing on traditional constructs of patriotism and adapting them to suit the specific need or opportunity as it arose.

We now come back to the second explanation for the fascination with Co. G that seemed to engulf Effingham County during the war. In an article titled "Letter from France," readers are offered correspondence from George E. Borries, serving "somewhere in France."Borries' brief remark that he cannot really write anything of worth or send pictures for fear of censorship has the potential to disappoint the historian, but his discussion of pride in service to country is the truly valuable aspect of the letter. He tells his family that he is proud that he signed up with the regular army and did not have to be drafted against his will to serve. He derides the young draftees from back home, even going so far as to question their courage.[14] The men of Co. G and Borries have in common that they signed up of their own volition to join in the fight to protect their country. No one forced them to do it; they heard the call and answered. The men of Co. G, despite their largely suspect German background, could prove their unswerving loyalty on the battlefield, with real, tangible actions. By supporting Co G in every way possible, German-Americans back home in Effingham could further assert their own American identity. In this way, the young soldiers as well as their family and friends could mutually provide a means for the performance and reification of each other's patriotism; in this way Co G was an outward manifestation of loyalty for everyone to see and supporting them became a duty.

Supporting Co G could only partly help to present their community in a patriotic light. German Americans in Effingham County needed to put on a show, to perform, as it were, for those outside of their community who might become suspicious of their customs and culture. A story that seems at first to be nothing more than a novelty piece becomes important when viewed in the context of national identity and provides an excellent jumping off point for an analysis of self-representation and defense. On Thursday, February 1, 1917, the *Effingham Republican* reprinted a story from the Chicago Tribune about an Effingham resident named Fred Stahl. A merchant by trade, the article describes Stahl as a respected, upstanding member of society, but it is not his community work or business that set Stahl apart, but his relation as a 2nd cousin to Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany. The fact that an Effingham man could be so closely related to one of the most powerful men on Earth was startling enough but the story of his lineage is the fascinating part. His grandfather, George Powell Stahl, was a gargantuan man of nearly 7 feet tall and weighing 475 pounds. The elder Stahl's stature drew the attention of King Frederick,[15] who made him a general and eventually offered his own sister in marriage to him. Family history holds that George's son, George Jr., tired of the "distasteful" life in the German army and moved to the United States, eventually settling in Effingham County.

At the time of publication the United States remained neutral in the conflict, but there is evidence, in the story, criticism of German culture and praise for America. George Jr.'s dislike for the German army represents not only his general aversion to military life, but also for German culture, which was, by this time, heavily conflated with militarism. George's escape to the United States demonstrates the superiority of one country's progressive culture over another country's backward, Spartan values.An accompanying story in the same article, hardly believable, describes how the Kaiser (which one, we are not told) offered George Jr. the fabulous sum of $100,000 to return to the fatherland, only to be turned down. We can imagine

[14] "Letter from France," *Effingham Republican*, 6 December 1917.

[15] The article simply describes the German King as "Frederick." It may be Frederick William IV or Frederick III, though Frederick William IV is more likely given the rough timeline offered.

that anyone would brag about such a story and their relation to a figure as illustrious as the Kaiser, but the newspaper informs us that Fred Stahl, a "leading citizen," never mentioned his heritage, preferring instead to be judged on his own merits. However preposterous, the story allows the reader to reaffirm the difference between German aristocratic culture, where wealth and respect are built on heritage, and American culture, where every man is equal and is respected only for what he has done. In this case, Fred Stahl has earned respect through his good citizenship and business savvy. What the story also does is present a picture to the outside world, increasingly wary of enemy aliens in their midst, of a loyal German-American.[16]

Loyalty meetings were an important milieu of patriotic representation. The celebration served as an affirmation of commonly held values, a collective experience of release and celebration, and a stage on which to play the part of the loyal American. The *Effingham Republican* makes regular mention of upcoming meetings and summaries of the events afterward. One particularly large loyalty meeting on March 15, 1918 acted as a war fundraiser, with speeches by the heads of the local Red Cross, Knights of Columbus, and the State Council of Defense.[17] As with any social performance, the many displayed acts of the loyalty meeting operated on the basis of distinction and separation. The announcements were forceful, demanding, and rebuking; those who did not attend without good reason was noted by the community. Everyone would know who did not do their part to keep morale high and rallied support for the cause. At the same time, attendees to the loyalty meeting were given a chance to distinguish themselves, to create shades of difference among one's peers. In this way, the loyalty meeting was a public arena; a field of possibility where German Americans, or any individual for that matter, could fashion for themselves a socially approved identity.

Representation in Teutopolis

The heavily German town of Teutopolis appropriated the imagery of the loyalty meeting to counter suspicions of disloyalty and claims to a German conspiracy. Questions of their allegiance came as early, in an April 12, 1917 article in the *Newton Democrat*entitled "Loyalty of Teutopolis." The author of the article, one Dr. Johnson, questioned the conspicuous lack of American flags hanging in Teutopolis. Dr. Johnson wondered whether the dearth of patriotic support could be attributed to mixed feelings or, even worse, conflicting loyalties. Dr. Johnson's claims, in the scope of historical criticism, read comical, but during a time of tremendous social and emotional upheaval, contemporary readers could never be too careful. The *Teutopolis Press* was quick to issue a rebuttal to the *Newton Democrat*, criticizing it for poor fact gathering regarding the history of the town and its hypocrisy, considering that in the same issue that attacked Teutopolis of its lack of flags another article complained of few flags in Newton. The Teutopolis response went on to claim that its young men had volunteered to over and above the town's quota, here we return to the motif of voluntary service as a display of loyalty, proving its commitment to the American cause.[18]

The human mind is difficult to control, once a notion such as doubt has crept in, it is often impossible to eliminate; it remains in the recesses or our consciousness, informing our actions and feelings in subtle, incomprehensible ways. Such was the case with the doubt surrounding Teutopolis' allegiance. Reverend Theodosius Plassmeyer of Teutopolis preached rousing, patriotic sermons, such as "Our Allegiance to Civil Authority," but criticism from without the community continued to persist. As had been done in countless towns across America, the

[16] "Related to the Kaiser," *Effingham Republican*, 1 February, 1917.

[17] "Big Loyalty Meeting," *Effingham Republican*, 14 March, 1918.

[18] "Teutopolis—A Dangerous Town?" in *Teutopolis Sesquicentennial 1839-1989* (Effingham: Kingery Printing Company, 1989), 52.

loyalty meeting operated as a display of commitment to the United States for the people of Teutopolis. Under the direction of Rev. Theodosius, the town held a large and impressive loyalty meeting at the Society Hall on April 14th at 2:30 in the afternoon. Other prominent speakers, at the well-attended rally, included Edward Schneider, who represented the State Council of Defense. In the lawn outside the Society Hall, Rev Theodosius blessed the "Service Flag" in honor of the young men serving in the town.[19] The *Effingham Republican* was effusing in its praise for Teutopolis' loyalty meeting, affording it more space than any of the articles on similar meetings in other towns.[20]

Despite the immensity and seeming success of the loyalty meeting in Teutopolis, distrust lingered. It was later discovered after the war that a plain clothes government agent remained in the town throughout the remainder of the conflict, attempting to investigate hidden munitions factories and enemy training grounds in the Teutopolis area—the searches came up empty.[21] Putting aside these doubts, the people of Effingham County continued to do their part throughout the war to give aid in any way possible. The mask of death passed over Effingham County, as with many other places throughout the world, when the "Spanish Influenza" epidemic arrived in 1918. Starting in late summer, the *Effingham Republican* reported, with increasing frequency, deaths related to influenza. On October 24th the *Effingham Republican* front page was filled with the obituaries of sixteen young men and women, most in their late teens and early twenties, who had succumbed to influenza-related pneumonia within the past week.[22] For a series of communities so readily engaged in public activity, the ban on congregation in public spaces in early October 1918 by the health board was difficult to live with, but a necessary action. Finally as the deaths began to subside and the threat lessened, the ban was lifted in late November, though citizens were still ordered to take extreme precaution to protect themselves from contamination.[23] Influenza, though it exacted a severe toll on the county, served as only one more obstacle for the communities to collectively overcome, forging ahead with a unique cultural and social identity fostered by communal obligation and cooperation.

Victory and relief came at last to Effingham County with the end of the war on November 11, 1918. When the Armistice was signed, at 2 a.m. local time, sirens and whistles blew to announce it in Effingham, setting off a town-wide celebration that lasted until morning.[24] Upon the return of their boys from combat, the town commemorated a functioning clock, in the place of a dummy face, on top of the courthouse.[25] The experiences of tribulation and celebration in each small community forged a bond and a collective memory that remains strong, if covered by the dusts of time.

Conclusion

[19] "Loyalty Meeting at Teutopolis," *Effingham Republican*, 11 April, 1918; Eugene Hagedon, *Historical Sketch of Teutopolis & of St. Francis Parish, 1851-1926, (Effingham: E.W. Petty Company, 1976), 65.*
[20] "Patriotic Teutopolis," *Effingham Republican*, 18 April, 1918.
[21] *Teutopolis Quascicentennnial Celebration: Historical Booklet 1839-1964*, (No publication information provided and no page numbers, booklet is property of the Effingham Genealogical Society and can be found in the Helen Mathes Library in Effingham Illinois.)
[22] "Harvest of the Grim Reaper," *Effingham Republican*, 24 October, 1918.
[23] "Influenza Ban has been Raised," *Effingham Republican*, 21 November, 1918.
[24] "World's War is Over," *Effingham Republican*, 14 November, 1918.
[25] "Court House Clock," *Effingham Republican*, 19 December, 1918.

This paper, on the history of Effingham County during World War I, has been woefully brief. Too much has been left out to even qualify it as a complete history of the county during the war. It is merely a snapshot of one set of experiences during the war, and how these experiences were shaped in part by their interactions with various material and cultural factors. For a collection of communities so proud of their German heritage, particularly Teutopolis, it must have been difficult, not so much to alter their means of representation, as it was to understand why they should need to express loyalty or patriotism. They had always been able to understand themselves as both German and American, why should now, during the war, be any different? It was a question and a task that individuals as well as whole communities needed to answer.

In examining these sets of interactions between German-Americans and those from outside and inside the community who criticized their cultural mores, we are given a glimpse of the process of meaning-construction. It was not a clear-cut process of call and response. There was certainly frustration and contestation over who had the right to define self-identity; the citizens of Teutopolis were placed in an odd predicament, not of their own doing, when their traditional way of life was questioned. To combat these encroachments, while still remaining loyal to government and country, members of the various communities took proactive roles in organizing loyalty meetings and fund-raising drives. Their actions helped to legitimate their identity and alleviate some suspicions, if only partially.

Histories of this sort, local ones that address both the typical social historical model and cultural approach, must become the trend and not the exception. New avenues and forgotten paths can and should be uncovered. Doing the research for this paper, it became evident that there is so much work already done by local volunteers and amateur historians, and that the professional historian needs only to extend his hand in cooperation. We cannot forget local history and must take care to preserve it in whatever form it is left, this is certainly true of the First World War. Too many stories are being lost in the mix, left in old cupboards or roll-top desks to decay. Historians of all sorts should take up this challenge. The material—the history—is out there; it has only to be searched for and freed.

Coal City & Diamond, Illinois During The Great War

Christopher Kernc

The American public often relegates World War I to the periphery of American popular memory, as Americans tend to remember and assign more importance to the United States' participation in the Second World War. This selective memory is readily understandable to some extent. For the United States, World War II was longer, bloodier, and more destructive than its predecessor. In fact, most Americans agreed with why the nation took up arms, as World War II was referred to as "The Good War." World War I received no such moniker; the soldiers who fought were referred to as "The Lost Generation."

World War I is mostly given secondary attention because it was seen as a failure in the long term. It was not, after all, the "war to end all wars," with World War II beginning only twenty years later, returning American troops to Europe to fight the Germans. Although the United States came out on the winning side, it was a shallow victory. Yet, this in no way means that U.S. participation in World War I should be overlooked. Indeed, World War I had a profound impact on the United States, on both national and local levels
Cities and towns across the nation were transformed by World War I, as the departure of military-aged men to fight in Europe was notable. Lives were placed on hold due to the onset of the war. Many households either lost their primary breadwinner, or in the case of farming families, their main source of labor. Citizens across the nation enlisted in war, joined the Red Cross, went to work in war related industries, invested their hard-earned money in war bonds, or spent their time putting together comfort packages for the boys overseas.

There was no shortage of ways in which a family or community could participate in the war effort. In the small towns that dotted the nation, one likely knew someone who served during the war—be it a family member, friend, or neighbor. If not, everyday Americans were usually indirectly affected in the home or workplace as World War I influenced consumption patterns, the prices of commodities and goods, and business in general. The villages of Coal City, Illinois and Diamond, Illinois were no exception, and in fact serve as a microcosm for small communities throughout the U.S. during World War I. The citizens banded together, overcoming the ethnic and labor tensions of their mining communities in order to give to the war effort and bring the troops home victorious.

Coal City and Diamond Prior to the War

The villages of Coal City and Diamond are located in Grundy County in northeastern Illinois. Although the villages constitute two distinct municipal entities, they are compounded in this study. Many residents in either village may find fault in my doing so, especially due to a long-standing rivalry between the residents of the two villages. Yet, the close proximity of the towns makes it difficult to know where one town ends and the other begins. Even long-time residents of both villages may find it difficult to distinguish whether certain businesses or homes are in Coal City or Diamond. Besides sheer proximity, the two villages also have a shared history.

Both Coal City and Diamond came into being as a result of the coal industry—hence their names. The coal industry was a major historical force for both communities, and the same can be said of the industry during World War I. The coal vein in this region was relatively small in comparison to coal seams in other localities; however, the boom coincided with the expansion of

railroads in Illinois and the industrial emergence of nearby Chicago. In reference to a mine located in Diamond, a report by the Illinois Bureau of Labor Statistics stated:

> The seam of coal is thin, and near the surface, and one of the chief sources of expense in mining it is the handling of the great quantities of water which continually accumulate in the workings. Its proximity to Chicago, alone, gives to this coal field its special value, and it is doubtful if the necessary capital would be found to develop it were it not the nearest coal to the largest market in the West.[1]

This report suggests that proximity played a fundamental role in the birth of the coal industry in both Coal City and Diamond, Illinois. Chicago provided a market, as well as financiers, and the railroad provided the link to the Chicago and regional markets. According to M.J. Donna, the first major railroad line near Coal City and Diamond passed through Braidwood, Illinois, located just a few miles from Cold City and Diamond, and its construction was completed in 1853. Braidwood's forested areas were used as a source of wood to power railroad engines. The discovery of coal in the area corresponded with the shift toward coal-powered locomotives; thus, the growth of the mining industry in the area was no coincidence.[2] Because of the railroad, the area became an important part of the transportation network of the region, and coal mining became a lucrative enterprise. Mining operations began sprouting up all over the area. Many more miles of railroad track and spur lines through the northern Illinois coalfield followed.

Several local mining communities were directly founded by railroad companies, or sprang to life as the result of railroad companies sinking mines in the area. According to Jim Ridings, neighboring Braceville boomed when the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railroad purchased a large tract of land and began mining operations in the 1880s. The population of the township swelled from a small village with few inhabitants to a bustling community of over 3,500 residents within a decade.[3] Likewise, the founding of Coal City and its organization was plotted in relation to the Chicago, Pekin and Southwestern Railway.[4]James MacFarlane stated that the northern Illinois coalfield, "on account of its vicinity to the great market afforded by the city of Chicago, is for obvious reasons destined to be one of the most productive districts in the state."[5] By 1870, mines in nearby Will County ranked second in the state for coal production, producing 228,000 tons, and the mines in Grundy County were producing 51,375 tons of coal.[6] Likewise, the Chicago and Alton Railroad had increased its coal shipments from 12,281 tons in 1865, to 176,876 tons in 1870.[7] Proximity to Chicago and the railroad's dependency on coal made mining in Coal City and Diamond economically feasible.

As is the case with any area dependent on a single staple industry, the fate of the people who lived among the coalfields of Coal City and Diamond rested on the fortune of "king coal."

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[1] Illinois Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Statistics of Coal Production in Illinois: A Supplemental Report of the State Bureau of Labor Statistics* (Springfield, IL: H.W. Rokker, 1883), 97-98.
[2] Modesto Joseph Donna, *The Braidwood Story* (Braidwood, IL: Braidwood History Bureau, 1957), 310, 59.
[3] Jim Ridings, *Cardiff 2:A Second Volume of History from the Lost Coal Mining Town on the Prairie and More History from Clark City, Tracy, Torino, and Campus* (Herscher, IL: Side Show Books, 2008), 287.
[4] Helen Stine Ullrich, *This is Grundy County: Its History from Beginning to 1968* (Dixon, IL: Rogers Printing Co., 1968), 173.
[5] James MacFarlane, *The Coal Regions of America: Their Topography, Geology, and Development* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1875), 426.
[6] Richard Joyce, "Mines of the Prairie: Life and Labor in the Wilmington, Illinois, Coal Fields, 1866-1897" (Masters Thesis, Illinois State University, 1980) 15.
[7] Ibid.

Coal production in the area hit its peak in the late nineteenth century, but began to wane into the early twentieth century. Coal City was mapped in 1875 and incorporated in 1871, and Diamond was organized in 1873 and established as a municipality in 1895.[8] According to population statistics compiled by local historian Richard Joyce, the population of Coal City in 1890 (the first census since its founding) was 1,672 and the population of Diamond in 1900 (again the first census from its founding) was 672.[9] The population of Diamond may have been larger in the 1870s and 1880s; however, a disaster in the Diamond Mine in 1883 and the mine's subsequent closure caused a mass exodus of local inhabitants. The closure forced Diamond miners and their families to relocate in order to find employment. A local resident reported that prior to the disaster, the town consisted of "about fifteen hundred inhabitants," but she continued:

> Today Diamond is but a shadow of its former self. The coal around town is nearly all worked out. The company sank a new mine, Number Six about seven miles south of Diamond where a little village by the name of Torino is springing up. Many people from Diamond have gone there. Some have moved their houses; other their business places…. Yet most leave with genuine regret the little village that has so long been their home but is now on the decline.[10]

Prior to World War I, the populations of Coal City and Diamond in 1910 were 2,667 and 255, yet, by 1920 the towns' populations dwindled to 1,744 and 85 inhabitants respectively.[11] This pattern of outward migration somewhat slowed during World War I, as wartime demand led to a temporary revitalization of the local coal industry.

The quest for coal not only altered the area's economy, landscape, and environment, but also its political, demographic, social, and cultural makeup. For innumerable reasons, thousands of individuals from all parts of the globe descended upon Coal City and Diamond to try their luck in its burgeoning new industry. As a result Coal City and Diamond were fairly diverse communities by the time the United States became embroiled in the First World War. This heterogeneous mix of peoples created an interesting wartime dynamic. The loyalty of the newly arrived immigrants was often questioned, and "One Hundred Percent American" campaigns exacerbated community tensions, which were already at an all-time high. Citizens often wondered if immigrant workers would assimilate and support the war or if they would be potential saboteurs and dissenters who would impede the war effort. These inquires played hand-in-hand with the long history of labor strife and militancy that had existed in the area since the 1870s. Many Anglo-Americans, capitalists, and politicians were undoubtedly leery of where immigrants' loyalties remained. The war either afforded recent immigrants an opportunity to prove their loyalty, or it obligated them to prove it.

Because the populations of both Coal City and Diamond consisted of working-age males, many inhabitants of the towns enlisted in World War I. Downturns in the local coal industry prior to the war, as well as the coal industry's drudgeries, likely influenced many to join the

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[8]Coal City Public Library District, "Coal Mining in Illinois," Coal City Public Library, http://www.coalcity.lib.il.us/coalmining/coalcity/coalcity.html(accessed April 8, 2011).

[9]Richard Joyce, "Coal Mining Towns Population Statistics," prepared by Richard Joyce, Coal City Public Library District Collections, Coal City, Illinois.

[10]Flossie Strickland, "The Rise and Fall of Diamond," Unknown Newspaper (May 1907), courtesy Coal City Public Library District, http://www.coalcity.lib.il.us/coalmining/diamond/diamond_riseandfall.html (accessed April 8, 2011).

[11] Joyce, "Coal Mining Towns Population Statistics."

military. First, second, and third generation immigrants joined the services, as well, in order to prove their loyalty to their native-born neighbors. According to a local newspaper published after the war, a total of 234 local men, as well as four nurses and one Y.M.C.A. worker, served during the war.[12] Of those, eight men lost their lives during the war.[13]

Coal City and Diamond During the War

The Coal City Courant, reveals that the residents of Coal City and Diamond heeded the call to service during World War I. During the war, the paper was saturated with advertisements for the Red Cross, war bond drives, recruitment drives, tips for conserving resources during the war, and general wartime propaganda. The local newspaper also reported the names of drafted community members who were expected to "be ready for service within forty-eight hours."[14] A key feature of these articles was the list of names they provided. These lists not only showed who contributed to the war effort, but were also not-so-subtle hints to everyone else in the community to do their part. Perhaps some residents performed their part in order to be featured in these patriotic lists, which were also conveyors of social status; the publicity surrounding war-related work put additional pressure on members of the community to contribute to the war effort.

Announcements for community gatherings pertaining to the war were a key feature of the newspaper during the war years. In *The Coal City Courant* , one such headline proclaimed: "Community Gathering," and reported that a "beautiful silk service flag, the gift of Frank Hejna, and made by his mother, Mrs. Rose Hejna and Miss Nelle Owens, [would be] formally presented to the village..." Those present at the gathering included the mayor, a quartette of local notables, and a marine band. After a speech by Reverend A.C. Ramsay, Miss Constance Somerville, dressed as Liberty, placed a red carnation on a table after the name of each local man in the service was read.[15] A carnation was also placed for Miss Fannie Campbell, a Red Cross nurse, as she was "truly in the service as if she were on the battlefield of France."[16] What is significant about this event, and others like it during the war, was its public and ceremonial nature. Just like the patriotic lists in the newspaper, one wanted to be seen as doing their part for the war, and their displays were often a mixture of patriotic festivities and solemnity. Community members celebrated the war, but at the same time remained cognizant of the danger faced by fellow community members fighting overseas.

Public displays of patriotism abounded. The local Home Guards—commanded by Scottish emigrant, former Coal City mayor, and pioneering airplane designer and manufacturer, Captain William E. Somerville—met every Sunday during the war for drills at the high school campus.[17] The Coal City Home Guards also competed in sporting events against other nearby chapters. The newspaper reported on one such spectacle in which the Coal City Home Guard defeated the Morris Reserve Militia in a "ball game" in front of a "fair sized crowd" by a score of eighteen to two; the proceeds of the game ($82.76) were donated to the local Red Cross unit.[18]

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[12]Coal City Public Library Scrapbook Collections, unknown compiler, Coal City Public Library District, Coal City, Illinois. For a full list of those from the community who served during World War I see Appendix One.

[13] Ibid.; The source listed those "men who made the supreme sacrifice" during their service as: William Bridel, John Dececco, Rudolph Hajek, Benjamin Kaplan, Corp. John Pavlis, Frank Schwab, Joseph Sestak, and Andrew Tallman. Accounts of their deaths are provided later in this study.

[14]*The Coal City Courant* (Coal City, IL.), 17 May 1918.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Coal City Public Library District, "Somerville," Coal City Public Library, http://www.ccpld.org/coalmining/coalcity/coalcity_Somerville.html (accessed April 13, 2011).

[18]*The Coal City Courant* (Coal City, IL.), 10 May 1918.

Local residents also held thrift campaign drives and competitions. *The Coal City Courant* reported that "the local branch of the War Savings Club…completed its house to house canvas. Members of the committee were kindly and cordially received by all. The response on the part of the public for pledges was general and productive of excellent results. It furnished much evidence of the patriotism, zeal and generosity of [the] community."[19]

Patriotic parades were also common occurrences. One such parade was held in honor of local men who had recently been called into the service. They were "honored by [the] citizens in a mighty patriotic demonstration that outrivaled by far any like affair in the history of Coal City."[20] The report on the parade stated that all business was suspended and "a big parade with over a thousand in line opened the program."[21] The procession was made up of a band, the Home Guards; all the local children from surrounding schools; and the twenty-two young men drafted into the military. The report stated that, "the entire community assembled as one big, loyal family, [and that] there was a vain [sic] of sadness… but…the boys were so earnest, so keen for service that the going was made comparatively easy."[22] The procession was followed with a speech given by local clergyman, Reverend A.C. Ramsay, who did "valiant service in the thrift campaign, liberty loan and as food administrator."[23] In an attempt to drum up support for the third Liberty Loan drive, Reverend Ramsay declared, "We can trust our boys—but can they trust you?"[24] Local religious leaders and institutions were usually involved in public displays during the war, and they utilized their pulpits for advocating patriotism and sacrifice. Following the affair, several hundred citizens, as well as the band, accompanied the men all the way to Morris where they had been ordered to report.[25]

The Red Cross and Red Cross News were also prominently featured in the *Coal City Courant*. Every week, the newspaper informed the community of the activities of the local chapter of the Red Cross, and listed local citizens' monetary and material contributions to the organization. The newspaper also informed the public of items needed by the boys in the service. For example, one article asked that Red Cross volunteers concentrate their present efforts on knitting, as the Department of Military Relief had asked "to increase the supply of sweaters, socks, and wristlets" since these items were necessary for soldiers overseas.[26] The Red Cross worked in coordination with the military to see that the needs of the men in the field were met. What is striking is that the government and military were unable to adequately supply such items. The necessity of work and materials provided by organized citizens demonstrates the scale of the war and the government's need to utilize private donations to provide for American soldiers overseas. In a sermon at the Opera House, Reverend Father Griffin preached, "Modern warfare is 75 percent industrial effort…for without it an army cannot be satisfactorily equipped, fed, maintained, and transported…this is not the U.S. government's war. It is everybody's war. All must fight one way or the other. The obligation is individual and not merely official."[27]

The Red Cross Commission in France informed the local chapter that, "The Red Cross ha[d] direct responsibility for supplying [American soldiers] with surgical dressings … standard dressings in millions must be sent over with all possible speed. If this [was] not done

[19] *The Coal City Courant* (Coal City, IL.), 17 May 1918.
[20] *The Coal City Courant* (Coal City, IL.), 5 April 1918.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] *The Coal City Courant* (Coal City, IL.), 7 December 1917.
[27] *The Coal City Courant* (Coal City, IL.), 18 January 1918.

and done immediately a serious calamity and national disgrace [was] inevitable." The announcement continued, "the Red Cross Chapters should prepare with all the enthusiasm and speed possible the dressings which mean life and death to our own men. This whole question deals with the most vital thing that the women of America do for the soldiers in this war."[28]

The December 14, 1917 edition of the newspaper reported typical items donated to the Red Cross. Local citizens knitted or sent thirty-five sweaters, four mufflers, thirty-three pairs of wristlets, seventeen pairs of socks, eight petticoats, 105 head bandages, sixty-five abdominal bandages, and so forth.[29] Likewise, one woman gave the Red Cross "16 skeins of bright colored yarn to be used in making afghans or other knitted articles for Belgian children," and another woman donated an electric iron "for the use of the surgical dressing department."[30] Articles and advertisements pertaining to the Red Cross pulled on the community's heartstrings by pointing out biblical quotes related to charity, which were followed by illustrations of wounded and ragged soldiers, complete with captions like "Help Save This Lad's Life."[31] Evidently, their campaign was quite successful given the volume of contributions that were reported in the weekly lists of donations.

Comfort packages, which saw to the needs of men in the field, were also prepared by the local chapter of the Red Cross. The local Home Service Committee was established to ensure that local boys received their care packages by asking all men in service in addition to their next of kin to promptly provide their addresses so that community could correspond with them and see to any material requests they had.[32] Considering the soldiers' responses to the program, printed in the paper,this system must have worked fairly well. Angelo Deluckie, who was stationed with the 345th Infantry in Camp Pike, Arkansas, wrote to the Coal City Red Cross that the Christmas box and socks he received "were very welcome, especially as [they were] having cold weather..."[33] Corporal P. Francis Boetto, who was stationed at Camp Grant in Rockford, Illinois, wrote:

> I wish to express to you and the kind people of Coal City my most sincere thanks and appreciation for the Christmas box and wristlets which you sent me. It certainly cheers a soldier up, even though he has the blues, to know the ones back home have not forgotten him. I want to assure you that these courtesies will not easily be erased from our memory.[34]

Francis Boetto's correspondence reveals that these care packages served not only to satisfy local soldiers' material needs, but their psychological ones as well.

Of course, certain ethnic tensions and dissent remained; although, perhaps, less vocally than before the war. Much of this ethnic tension likely stemmed from the media's glorification of America's allies and its demonization of America's foes during the war. A few examples from the newspaper highlight this contrast. The mayor and commissioners of Coal City in an official notice declared that:

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[28] *The Coal City Courant* (Coal City, IL.), 7 December 1917.
[29] *The Coal City Courant* (Coal City, IL.), 14 December 1917.
[30] Ibid.
[31] *The Coal City Courant* (Coal City, IL.), 21 December 1917.
[32] *The Coal City Courant* (Coal City, IL.), 4 January 1918.
[33] *The Coal City Courant* (Coal City, IL.), 18 January 1918.
[34] Ibid.

> Whereas, Sunday, July 14th is the great National holiday of France ... it is fitting that the people of the United States and their allies should show our appreciation of their participation and in some proper manner commemorate their national holiday which has meant so much to them. It is therefore requested that the people of Coal City, wherever possible, display the flag of France ... and that in all our churches or other gatherings reference be made of our imperishable debt to France and of our determination to stand by her until peace shall have been achieved by victory.[35]

This stands in stark contrast to the ways in which the Germans were depicted by the media. An article from the *Providence Journal* and reprinted in the *Courant* stated that:

> Every German or Austrian in the United States, unless known by years of association to be absolutely loyal should be treated as a potential spy. Keep your eyes and ears open. Whenever any suspicious act or disloyal word comes to your notice communicate at once with the Bureau of Investigation ... We are at war with the most merciless and inhuman nation in the world. Hundreds of thousands of its people in this country want to see America humiliated and brought to her knees, and they are [determined?] and will do everything in their power to bring this about.[36]

Another example can be found in a Red Cross advertisement:

> Fathers: Suppose that three years ago a powerful and savage enemy had invaded our nation suddenly and you had been called into the army to defend the country. Suppose that our country had been captured by the invaders; your home burned, your wife and half-grown daughter carried away into slavery worse than death and your son mutilated and put to work behind enemy lines ... Well, just those horrors were visited upon thousands of fathers in France and Belgium by the kaiser's savages.[37]

In light of this fiery rhetoric, it was no wonder that clashes between German and non-German community members ensued. In nearby South Wilmington, a coal miner was nearly lynched and had to be rescued by federal agents for allegedly making "unpatriotic statements."[38] According to the report, August Gewer, "who [was] of German parentage, narrowly escaped violence… at the South Wilmington coal mines after he [allegedly]…said 'the h—l with the Tuscania—it had no business on the water anyway."[39] The SS Tuscania, a former luxury liner, sank while ferrying American troops to Europe in early 1918, the victim of a torpedo attack by a German submarine.Word of Gewer's statement spread among the community, and talk among locals spoke of forming a lynch mob. Gewer was "rescued from an angry crowd of miners by officials of the Chicago, Wilmington and Franklin Coal company," and rushed to Chicago "under protection of United States secret service agents," where he was incarcerated for the duration of the war."[40] In the hearing on the charge, Gewer stated, "I am

[35] *The Coal City Courant* (Coal City, IL.), 12 July 1918.
[36] *The Coal City Courant* (Coal City, IL.), 14 December 1917.
[37] *The Coal City Courant* (Coal City, IL.), 21 December 1917.
[38] Coal City Public Library Scrapbook Collections, "Threaten to Lynch Miner as Disloyal," 26.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.

with the United States all of the way ... this country is my home. I have made my living under the stars and stripes and why shouldn't I be for America. Charges that I am disloyal are false and I can prove it."[41] He denied ever making the statement, and attempted to demonstrate his loyalty by showing that he had purchased liberty bonds and "contributed to different organizations for help of the soldiers and sailors."[42] Ultimately, the charges against Gewer were dropped and he returned to work.[43]

Another incident of wartime patriotism and anti-communist fervor concerning a local resident occurred in Butte, Montana, involving Frank Little who "had worked as a coal miner in Coal City and Diamond."[44] Little's father, Captain William Little, was a Civil War veteran and longtime Grundy County collier.[45] Frank was a member of the Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.), an organization widely known for its labor militancy and commitment to worker socialism. The coal mines around Coal City and Diamond were a hotbed of labor activism and produced a number of notable labor advocates. Frank Little was no exception. On August 2, 1917, after giving an anti-war speech in Butte, in which he referred to American troops as "Uncle Sam's scabs in uniform," he was abducted from his residence by "masked vigilantes" and "hanged from a railroad trestle."[46] This, perhaps, is an extreme example, but an example nonetheless, of Americans fervent patriotism and the widespread hysteria aimed against ideas that were deemed foreign and radical.

Individuals like Gewer and Little seemed to be more of an exception than the rule during the war. Many other residents may have been against the war, or perhaps ambivalent about it, but wartime patriotism and hysteria served to silence them, for the most part. Patriotism, whether feigned or not, seemed to be the local population's response to World War I. Given that residents in Coal City and Diamond had family members, friends, or neighbors in the service, it made sense that the communities came together to support the war. Many immigrants in the area also found an opportunity to gain acceptance, or a sense of belonging, through public displays of patriotism during the war. Parades, celebrations, gatherings, sacrifices, and donation drives allowed the inhabitants of Coal City and Diamond to participate in World War I patriotism. The Hejna family was recognized by the local press for being a stellar example of both patriotism and successful assimilation. The newspaper reported that:

> The Hejna family of Coal City, are of Bohemian nationality. The parents came to America about thirty-five years ago…. The father was accidentally killed by a fall of stone in the Coal City company No. 7 mine, July 3, 1917. Since then Frank has been practically the head of the family…. What makes the family conspicuous at present is found in a little talk given by Frank two weeks ago when he was called to service. 'You young folks should invest in War Savings stamps,' he said, 'and show you are true Americans. How about you older folks, have you purchased Liberty Bonds? Buy until it hurts, as the saying goes ... My mother (as most of you know), is a widow with ten children, and she purchased a bond for every child and one for herself, and furthermore, she has given two sons to fight for Old Glory. I say my mother is 100 percent loyal and patriotic to the American flag.'[47]

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[41]Coal City Public Library Scrapbook Collections, "Miner Proves He is Loyal to America."
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.
[44]Ridings, 289.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47]Coal City Public Library Scrapbook Collections, "She is 100 Per-Cent Patriotic," 27.

Those Who Served

Many Coal City and Diamond residents contributed to the war effort beyond the home front. As previously mentioned, 234 local male residents served in the military during the war, as did five women as nurses and Y.M.C.A. workers. Although none of these veterans remain alive today for interviews, they have left behind artifacts, writings, and pictures that can help shed light on the individual experiences of Coal City and Diamond citizens serving in World War I. Again the *Courant* proves a valuable source. During the war, the *Courant* reprinted letters that local men in the service sent to their family and friends. It also reported on any notable occurrences involving local servicemen such as promotions, injuries, or in the worst case, deaths. These letters were censored and gave only cursory information that lacked substantial details. Likewise, many were watered-down by their writers in order to alleviate their loved one's fears. However cursory, much information on an individual's tour of duty can be gained by looking at when the letters were dated, from where the letters originated, and what unit the individual was serving in. It is also worth noting that the letters sent home after the war ended provide a rich account of what these soldiers experienced, and these did not have to deal with wartime censorship or constraints on information. For the sake of this study, I picked out a sampling of some of the more notable examples that detailed Coal City and Diamond residents' experiences in the service during the First World War.

One article noted that, "Coal City is very proud of its war record. According to population this place ranks first in the country with number of men in service."[48] The highest ranking individual from the area was Major F.A. Stockdale, the "first Medical man in Grundy County to volunteer for service."[49] Charles Warren Campbell also advanced in title during World War I; after volunteering, he rose to the rank of 1st Lieutenant.[50] Private Nelson Campbell, who was under age at his time of enlistment, was "cited for bravery under shell fire" for which he was awarded the Croix-de-Guerre, a French medal given to both French and allied soldiers during World War I.[51] According to another account, Nelson Campbell was "recommended for bravery by the Medical Division of the French Army."[52] In the French account, Campbell was an ambulance driver with the "French army S.S.U. 553 ... He…contributed greatly to the success of rapidly conveying the wounded to safety under most difficult and perilous conditions; and particularly distinguished himself on the 20th of August 1918, when he drove his ambulance continuously during a most terrific bombardment."[53]

Sergeants and Corporals received media attention, as well,[54] and their stories were revealed in the letters they wrote. In one letter, John Strejeck recounted how he received a citation for bravery. According to Strejeck, the 6th U.S. Engineer Train was being shelled not far from where he was positioned. He volunteered to carry letters and blankets to them while under heavy fire.[55] John Fleming of Diamond was also honored for his bravery. As part of the 5th Division, Fleming was cited for "forcing against the enemy in position, a crossing of the River Meuse near Dan[?] and near Brieulles, building bridges and swimming the river in the face of machine gun and artillery fire and in advancing some nine kilometers in the enemy's

[48]Coal City Public Library Scrapbook Collections.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Coal City Public Library Scrapbook Collections, "Cited for Bravery," 29.
[53] Ibid.
[54]Coal City Public Library Scrapbook Collections.
[55]*The Coal City Courant* (Coal City, IL.), 14 February 1919.

territory…in spite of fatigue and shortage of rations."[56] The report continued that this action not only secured the left flank of the XVII French Corps, allowing it to advance, but broke the German army's line of resistance on the east bank of the Meuse.[57]

Marshall Matthews also recounted his service overseas in a letter home. According to Matthews, he was assigned to the 113th Field Hospital. Many of the men in his company were from Baltimore and together they sailed to Europe aboard the Acquitania, which had about 10,000 soldiers aboard. After a short stint in England he arrived in France on July 16th.[58] Matthew wrote:

> From that time until the signing of the armistice we have been on several different sectors of the western front and under shell fire practically all the time. We have participated in fighting in the Alsace, Argonne, and Meuse sectors of the western front. We have been cited for the excellent work and accomplishments made by our division in the Argonne forests north of Verdun. You are no doubt familiar with the condition which existed in this sector. It consisted of hills and ravines with forests and woods every few hundred feet. The enemy had thousands of machine guns in these forests which made our advancement very difficult…. While we were in Combles I met several of the Coal City boys.[59]

Private Joseph Boggio also served on the Verdun Front. Recounting the devastation he witnessed, he wrote:

> I intended to write oftener but as we have been in the front lines since the 26th of September it was impossible for us to do so but I will try to make up for it now. We went over the top several times and if you ever heard or read about Dead Man's Hell or Dead Man's Valley, you will know just where we were at and in … I wish you could see these towns that we have gone through. Only a picture could give you any idea of how they are shot to pieces. There is nothing but a rock pile left and the woods which were a dense forest are just swept to ground from artillery fire. I think the same thing will happen to Germany if the Kaiser don't wake up soon.[60]

The plight and everyday experiences of soldiers on the front are also gleaned through their correspondences home. Domenic Baudino wrote about his time in the service to his local clergyman, Reverend Father Griffin. Baudino explained that he had been transferred from the 1st Division to a new regiment, the Railway Operating Troops, on account of his familiarity with the railroad.[61] This spoke to the importance of the railroad and transportation in modern warfare. Baudino stated:

> I have been at the front since October 1, training with the French…. Our division was the first in the trenches and we have already taught the huns something about how the Americans fight…. It was rather hard to leave some good pals that had been with me since I enlisted. I am now in St. Pierre des Corps close to Tours. Here

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[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid.
[58] *The Coal City Courant* (Coal City, IL.), 31 January 1919.
[59] Ibid.
[60] *The Coal City Courant* (Coal City, IL.), 13 December 1918.
[61] *The Coal City Courant* (Coal City, IL.), 2 August 1918.

> we have beds with springs in them instead of sleeping in a hole in the ground and we take our clothes off when we go to bed. We are also able to take a bath any time we want to instead of going two and three days without even washing your face…. I wasn't a bit sorry about getting rid of the crumbs (lice)…. The huns used to shell us and on clear nights they would come over in airplanes and drop bombs so we had to sleep in dugouts. About a week before I left the 1st Division I was going for rations and a British airplane flew over me at a height of about one hundred feet and opened up his machine gun on me and loosened the dirt around me some but never done any harm, then he went a little ways and dropped a few bombs on a French camp. He was brought to the ground and it was a hun that was running the plane ... I haven't yet seen any of the coalfield boys while in France. I was glad to hear of the star on the church flag in my honor and hope you get many more. Tobacco is scarce for the French for there are about as many with a pipe or cigarette as there are with a mustache. We can buy all the tobacco we can use. We will never forget the work done by the Red Cross near the lines and way back here. I don't need anything and thank you. With best wishes to my friends
> I am
>
> Sincerely yours,
> Domenic Baudino
> Co. B, 59th Battalion
> R.O.T. A.P.O. 717 [62]

Many wrote home anxiously inquiring about other friends or family members in the service, as was the case with three brothers—Privates James, Peter, and Charles Peretti, all whom wrote to their mother. James Peretti, in a letter addressed "Somewhere in France," wrote "I have been over the top three times and came out safe and sound every time. I consider that I have been very fortunate ... I haven't heard from brother Charles since he left New Jersey so I don't know where he is but I expect to hear from him soon."[63] A letter from Peter Peretti was received about the same time. After detailing his whereabouts he wrote, "I am enjoying myself the best I know how and anxiously waiting to hear from brothers Charles and James. I am so afraid that something has happened to them. If I could only hear from them I would be so relieved."[64] Simultaneously, Mrs. Peretti received a third letter from her son Charles. He wrote:

> Just a short note to let you know that I am all right ... Have you ever heard from James or Peter? I wrote both of them two months ago but haven't heard from either one of them up to the present time. I heard several weeks ago that the division James is with were holding the line when the war ended. We went through No Man's Land a few days ago and it was an awful sight. We passed through some villages that were nothing but piles of rubbish. The fields and buildings are simply blown to pieces. You can't imagine how badly it is torn up."[65]

News and letters to and from the war and home front were greatly welcomed. This was especially true for those who knew someone in the service. Intervals between correspondences often created a great deal of concern.

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[62] Ibid.
[63] *The Coal City Courant* (Coal City, IL.), 10 January 1919.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid.

A number of local men were captured, wounded, or killed during the First World War. John Wesley of Coal City served in Company G., 131st Infantry, 33rd Illinois Division.[66] It was reported that:

> He was in the heavy fighting in the Argonne Forest. On October 8 by a flank movement of the enemy he and twelve other Americans were taken prisoners. He was officially reported missing in action and it was feared that he had been killed. He was returned through Switzerland to American lines at Vichy, France, on November 9. Mr. Wesley says that during the first two weeks the food was vile but after reaching German territory they were fed by the Red Cross and were well treated ... John Pavlis who was killed in action November 9, left Coal City with Mr. Wesley. They were in training together at Camp Gordon, sailed for overseas at the same time and drilled together in France. They met for the last time October 7.[67]

Corporal Albert Pohl, in a letter to his father, recounted being gassed. According to Pohl, his battalion started moving on July 15th and was situated in the rear of the French First Army just outside of Chateau Thierry. Once the Germans started to fall back, his battalion "had to ride on trucks to catch up with the Boches [Germans]. It was a lot of fun for [the] Yanks but they finally stopped and put their rear guards on the heights of the Veale River." After being held in check for a few weeks by machine gun fire, they were taken off the front lines "on account of…heavy casualties." After resting and receiving replacements, Pohl's unit returned to the front near Metz where they captured "so many prisoners we didn't know what to do with them." Then his company was sent to the "trenches at Verdun." Pohl continued:

> Well dad this is where we started our last drive into the Argonne forest. This was the hardest struggle of all. On the morning of Sept. 6 at 5:30 o'clock we went over the top…. I was in battle from the 26th of September until the 15th of October when I was gassed. My division was there until the finish and is now marching toward Berlin. Say dad but I'd like to be with them. Wouldn't it be great sport to see those Germans turn over all of their equipment?
> I had a funny experience while in the Argonne forest that I must tell you about. I received a letter from mother one day and in it she gave me August Gross' address and to my surprise he was in the same division as I. That night we were making an attack and August's regiment was in the lines ready to go over the top and I ran right into him. We were mighty glad to see one another.[68]

James Zambion was also gassed while in the service. The *Courant* reported that he was "the first Coal City boy to be reported injured in France. His mother Mrs. Mary Zambion received official notice that he has been gassed."[69]

A number of local soldiers never returned home. According to a local newspaper, Corporal John Pavlis of Coal City "was killed in action while going 'over the top' October 8, 1918." Pavlis was born in Coal City on August 17, 1891. He went to France as part of the 330th Infantry. "He grew to manhood here and had many friends who [were] deeply grieved over his death ... His letters from overseas, which [had] been published in The Courant from time to

[66]Coal City Public Library Scrapbook Collections, 47.
[67] Ibid.
[68]*The Coal City Courant* (Coal City, IL.), 7 February 1919.
[69]*The Coal City Courant* (Coal City, IL.), 3 May 1918.

time, were very interesting and always cheerful. His last letter contained the statement that he expected to be home Christmas and hoped his mother would have a turkey for dinner."[70]

Frank Schwab, born in Diamond, Illinois on October 16, 1895, was with Company A of the 31st Infantry and was killed in Romanooka [sic], Siberia on June 25, 1919.[71] "Accompanying him was Walter Yates, of Coal City and Joseph Pratto, of Carbon Hill."[72] Prior to entering the service Schwab was employed with the Big Four Coal Company, Coal City Clothing Factory, and Santa Fe Railway.[73] Partial information about his death was received by Reverend James A. Griffin who had requested details about the facts surrounding Schwab's demise. The Adjutant General of the Army replied that it was not "possible to furnish details; many men were killed during darkness, or on a smoky, dusty battlefield, and no witnesses were available."[74] He went on to reassure Reverend Griffin that "everything possible is being done to relieve the anxiety of the relatives of our soldiers, who have made the supreme sacrifice in the great cause of liberty."[75] From what the adjutant general knew, "the latest reports from Siberia indicate only six American soldiers interred there, and twenty-seven bodies have been returned to the United States. It is expected that all of them will be returned before evacuation of the troops."[76] A follow-up message from a zone supply officer informed the Schwabs that their son was buried in a national cemetery in San Francisco.[77] Ultimately, Frank Schwab's family received closure and in regards to what transpired in their son's final hours. John R. Gibbs, a man who served with Schwab, wrote to Schwab's mother:

> My Dear Mrs. Schuab[sic]: I wish to extend to you the deepest sympathy of the members of this company in the death of your son. Frank was a clean cut boy, always cheerful, which made it easy for him to play the army game uncomplainingly. A most agreeable companion at all times. Almost without knowing it, he had won the deepest respect, friendship and love of every member of his company. He will be sadly missed and reverently remembered by us all.
>
> Your son was a member of a unit post of 72 men. Early on the morning of June 25, without warning, we were attacked by the enemy of four or five times our number. It was only through the coolness displayed by your son, along with every other member. The determination to fight them to the finish, that we were not completely annihilated, and that we were able to hold them off until reinforcements could reach us.
>
> The end for your son came instantly; there was no suffering. He fought a good fight, and died as a soldier should, who holds up his country's honor—and was a soldier and a son to be proud of.
>
> Very Sincerely,
> PVT. John R. Gibb[78]

The skirmish in which Schwab was killed came to be known as the "Romanovka Massacre," and was the bloodiest day for Americans during their participation in the Russian Intervention by

[70]Coal City Public Library Scrapbook Collections, 40.
[71]Coal City Public Library Scrapbook Collections, 7.
[72]Coal City Public Library Scrapbook Collections, 53.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid.

the Allies following the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917.[79] The newspaper reported that the Americans guarding the Trans-Siberian Railroad were attacked by an Anti-Kolchak band of Bolshevik forces.[80] The seventy-four men in Schwab's unit suffered forty-three casualties (twenty-three killed and twenty wounded).[81] It was reported that American forces reciprocated by committing atrocities against civilians in the nearby town of Kazanka.[82]

John Dececco of Diamond served with the 15th Machine Gun Company. He was wounded October 16, 1918, and succumbed to those wounds November 11, 1918.[83]Dececco was born in Italy on November 15, 1895, and migrated with his parents to Diamond in 1898.[84] A newspaper article stated: "it is hoped that our people will demonstrate the same wonderful spirit of patriotism and reverence in receiving this dead body that was a living boy when we sent him to a strange land, far from kindred and friends, to fight and die for his country."[85] There was a large contingent of over one hundred and fifty ex-servicemen at Dececco's funeral, including John Herron, whose blue uniform from the Spanish-American War stood "in sharp contrast to the khaki clad ex-soldiers of the world war."[86] During the service, Father Parker "mentioned the fact that, according to population, a greater per cent of men were called from the coalfields than any other part of the country."[87]

Both Rudolph Hajek and William Bridal were also killed in action. Hajek immigrated to Coal City from Bohemia in 1909. He went overseas to serve his new country with the 101st Infantry and was killed in action on October 25, 1918. Nineteen year old William Bridal was sent overseas after only three weeks of training, and he was killed in action in France on September 1918.

Two local soldiers died from influenza rather than combat, along with many other soldiers and civilians during the widespread "Spanish Flu" pandemic of the fall of 1918. Joseph Sistek enlisted on July 28, 1918, and died of pneumonia "following an attack of influenza" in New Cumberland, Pennsylvania on October 22, 1918. Benjamin Kaplan met a similar fate. Kaplan enlisted on October 1, 1918 and died as a result of pneumonia in his barracks in Missouri before the month was through.

Corporal Andrew Tallman of Coal City sailed for France as part of the 58th Infantry of the 4th Division in May, landed in June, was wounded in July, and died on August 9, 1918.[88] Prior to his death, Tallman wrote to his brother:

> Was wounded and entered the hospital July 19, and have undergone several operations. They have finally cut off my right leg above the knee. It was a machine gun bullet that did all the damage—it struck me below the knee and passed up into my thigh. I was wounded just as the day's fight was over, and hope and believe that I did my share of damage to the Hun to pay for his damage to me ... It looks now as

[79] "The Russian Intervention, 1918-1920," Kolchak.org, http://www.kolchak.org/history/Siberia/Russian_intervention.htm (accessed April 16, 2011).
[80] Coal City Public Library Scrapbook Collections, "18 Americans Die in Battle with Russians," 53.
[81]"The Russian Intervention, 1918-1920," Kolchak.org.
[82]Ibid.
[83]Coal City Public Library Scrapbook Collections, 7.
[84]Coal City Public Library Scrapbook Collections, "Military Funeral."
[85]Coal City Public Library Scrapbook Collections, "The Last Home Coming."
[86]Coal City Public Library Scrapbook Collections, "Gold Star Hero."
[87] Ibid.
[88]Coal City Public Library Scrapbook Collections, 7.

> if I could do little for Uncle Sam over here, so pick out the best turkey you can find and I'll eat it for Thanksgiving.[89]

In another letter, he wrote:

> Am in the hospital now and having a pretty hard time writing. Came in a week ago and guess I am due to stay awhile. Was told to write to keep my mind off my body, but it's pretty hard. I can't write anymore. You will have to wait till later, when I will tell you how I am coming.[90]

Unfortunately, Tallman was unable to fulfill his promises, as he died shortly afterward. According to another newspaper article, Tallman came from a "family of patriots."[91] He had another brother, Henry Tallman, who fought in the same battle that Andrew was wounded in, and also had twin brothers scheduled to be shipped overseas.[92] Andrew was initially rejected twice for service by recruiting officers, but was able to pass his physical exam on his third attempt.[93]

A number of local women also volunteered their services. Coal City's Fannie Campbell was selected for Y.M.C.A. service in Europe.[94] Campbell was the Secretary Treasurer of the local chapter of the Red Cross.[95] Locals sent her off to France with the same celebration afforded to local men. A large crowd gathered, songs and speeches were provided, and Campbell was presented with a wristwatch as a "concrete expression of the esteem in which she [was] held by her co workers and the people of the community."[96] While stationed in Tours, France she wrote home about the conditions there:

> ...comforts and conveniences the common people know not. I have seen women eating food from a can which she had picked up on a heap of garbage—I'm sure an Americans must have been living in the house otherwise there would have been nothing left in the can; an old man comes regularly to the café to pick up stubs of cigars and cigarettes which he finds on the floor; for a long time we were besieged with requests for empty cigar boxes, which were to be used as firewood. I could go on indefinitely with incidents of this type.[97]

Elizabeth Tessiatore was a Red Cross nurse who served eleven months in France, six months on the East Coast, and seven months in California, working and caring for convalescing soldiers.[98] In two letters home, Tessiatore recounted her travels in France and Italy.[99] She reveled in the freedom of movement that her service in the Red Cross provided. In one letter, she noted, "I received a letter from Theresa telling…about the terrible epidemic Coal City has

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[89]Coal City Public Library Scrapbook Collections, 29.
[90] Coal City Public Library Scrapbook Collections, "Taps Eternal: Letter Comes From Hero Who Gave His Life For His Country," 29.
[91] Coal City Public Library Scrapbook Collections, "Is Wounded in Thick of Fighting," 33.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Coal City Public Library Scrapbook Collections, "Will Serve Overseas," 29.
[95] Ibid.
[96]Coal City Public Library Scrapbook Collections, 39.
[97]Coal City Public Library Scrapbook Collections, 49.
[98] Coal City Public Library Scrapbook Collections, "Nurse to Care for U.S. Army Convalescents," 2.
[99]Coal City Public Library Scrapbook Collections, 47.

had and the fatal results. We have been very fortunate and lost very few men considering they had been gassed more or less but we did lose three nurses and one corps boy from pneumonia following influenza."[100] Overall, five local women—Jessie Jiskra, June Ryan, Margaret Ryan, Elizabeth Tessiatore, and Fannie Campbell—joined their male compatriots in the services. As the newspaper explained, "Every woman in the United States, young and old, rich and poor, [was] going to tell her Uncle Sam what she going to do to help him win the war. If you are an aviatrix, or would like to be one, register…and tell your Uncle Sam about it."[101] These local women were prime examples of women who did just that.

Conclusion

Residents of both towns celebrated the war's conclusion, in spite of some acute hardships remaining. Word of the armistice was received just a few days after Coal City's emergency influenza hospital closed. The hospital had received fifty-seven patients and reported eleven deaths.[102] During the epidemic, residents were scared to congregate or even go outside. Even services at the Assumption church were suspended—the first time Sunday services were not held since the church's founding in 1892.[103] However, the paranoia over the Spanish Flu was quickly forgotten in the early hours of November 11, 1918. The newspaper reported:

> When the news that Peace terms had been signed flashed over the wires in the early hours last Monday morning the honor of imparting the glad tidings to the people of Coal City fell to Miss Ethel Suffern, night operator at the central office. Within a few moments after the word was passed out hundreds of people gathered on Broadway and joined in a great victory jubilee. A line of march was formed and the principal streets were paraded ... At 6:30 o'clock the crowd dispersed to prepare for another parade at 10 o'clock. Never in the history of Coal City has there been such a demonstration.[104]

Miss Edith Smith, who was in France when the end of the war was announced, wrote to her relatives:

> My dear folks:--'La guerre est finie!' Thank God! Thank God! My heart is so full of praise and thanksgiving that I can't write!
>
> Later 7:30 p.m.
>
> Perhaps I can write intelligently now. I'll try to any way. I know how you are all rejoicing tonight, and Ann and I are rejoicing with you in our little lonesome hut in far away Lury-sur-Arnon. And how we long to be with our boys! But we are thankful to know that now they will never reach the front ... We were on a hill just out of town and had turned to come back. We stood there, looking at the quiet, quaint, sleepy little town and admiring the beautiful view, for it is beautiful here—when suddenly the church bells began to peal forth jubilantly and we could see the women rushing excitedly into the streets and waiving their hands. I looked at my watch and when I saw that it was 3 p. m. I

[100] Ibid.
[101]Coal City Public Library Scrapbook Collections, "Call Women to Register For War Aid," 27.
[102] Coal City Public Library Scrapbook Collections, "Hospital Closed," 36.
[103]Coal City Public Library Scrapbook Collections, 37.
[104]Coal City Public Library Scrapbook Collections, "Big Victory Jubilee," 40.

> said: "Ann, it's over!" Oh! how the faces of those French women shown, as we passed them on our way back, and "Finie Madame, finie! La guerre finie! Vive L' Amerik!"greeted us on all sides, and we with eyes that shown with tears of joy, gave back in response, our "Tres bon! Finie! Vive la France!"[105]

Longtime local resident, Charles Girot,was a young boy when World War I ended. He recalled picking walnuts as a child for the war effort; the walnuts were turned into charcoal used in gas masks.[106] He also remembered the large funeral procession when John Dececco's body was returned from overseas.[107] One of his fondest childhood memories was the celebration that took place when World War I ended. According to Girot, an effigy of the Kaiser was suspended on a wire at the intersection of the two main streets in Coal City, and to celebrate the victory over Germany a group of local residents armed with shotguns used it for target practice.[108]

Celebrations recurred over the next several months, as residents filtered home from overseas. The newspaper commented on one such event:

> …an excellent banquet was served to Coal City lads in uniform, under the auspices of the local Red Cross. Castle Hall was gaily decorated and festooned ... Thirty soldier boys and one sailor lad, each accompanied by one friend, honored the festive board and participated in the hospitality of the Red Cross. As the evening wore on, much hilarity and good fellowship, characterized the gathering ... After the banquet, all repaired to New Opera House, for the entertainment. Probably the largest audience, ever congregated within its walls, greeted the boys ... But the spirit was different [from when they left for overseas]—then it was one of encouragement, tinged with a few tears, now it was one of joy, on the safe return of beloved ones.[109]

At the meeting, community members proposed that a permanent monument be erected and dedicated to the heroes, and they declared "that the returned soldiers [should] be the leaders in our community and… a powerful asset in making [the] community a better place to live in." A number of local men remained overseas as members of the Army of Occupation, but the war was over for Coal City and Diamond residents. As a tribute to the communities' involvement in the war, a German helmet, sent by John Strejeck, who remained in France, was put "on display in the window at the First National Bank."[110]

Unfortunately, the end of the war also spelled difficult times for the communities. The First World War had temporarily revitalized the coal industry. With wartime demand for coal diminished, coal production waned. Many underground mines in the area closed in the 1920s, as s decrease in government spending fueled a post-World War I economic slump in an industry that had enjoyed high demand by the military during the war.[111] The lack of industrial

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[105]Coal City Public Library Scrapbook Collections, "Items of General Interest to the Coal City Branch," 40.
[106] Charles Girot, interview by Michele Micetich and Christopher Kernc, 15 February 2008, World War II: From Home Front to Warfront History Collection, Coal City Public Library District, Coal City, IL, available at http://www.coalcity.lib.il.us/wwii/collections/girot_chuck/girot_audio.html (accessed April 17, 2011).
[107] Ibid.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Coal City Public Library Scrapbook Collections, "Soldiers Entertained," 42.
[110]*The Coal City Courant* (Coal City, IL.), 3 January 1919.
[111] Eric Jarvis, "Toward a New Deal for Coal?: The United States Coal Commission of 1922," *Journal of the Historical Society* 8, no. 3 (2008): 438.

demand combined with the resurgence of European coal production spelled hard times for Illinois coal producers and, consequently, their workers. As time progressed, technology provided more cost-effective alternative energy sources to coal. This was another significant factor in the demise of coal production in northern Illinois. Oil and natural gas began to compete with coal as the primary source of energy. In the mid-1920s industries around the world were shifting away from coal and turning to oil and natural gas for energy resources. The coal industry in Coal City, Diamond, and surrounding towns suffered greatly as Chicago followed this movement.

The residents of Coal City and Diamond vigorously responded to the nation's call to serve during World War I. Men were drafter or volunteered for military service, women joined the Y.M.C.A. or Red Cross, industrial workers churned out coal for the war, community members volunteered their time and labor to produce needed items and compile care packages, and others conserved and sacrificed so that the war's demands could be met. In the process, the war transformed the community. Disparate groups, through their sacrifices and patriotism, were brought together by the World War I, and although some ethnic and labor tensions existed, the number of protests or violent incidents remained low. In a sense, war helped forge the towns into a community, although many of the details of the war itself and the struggles of towns like Coal City and Diamond, Illinois, have gone from popular memory, especially with their postwar decline. These stories form a part of a fascinating, although often-overlooked, story of the United States in World War I.

APPENDIX

According to an article in the Coal City Public Library District's scrapbook collections, the local residents who served during World War I were:

William Adams
John Albrecht
Paul Ardisone
Stephen Ayersman
Bernard Ayersman
Angelo Balbinot
John Bates
James Bell
William Bennett
John Boero
Harry H. Bittner
Bernard Born
Fred Born
EzioBottari
Steven Bracco
Robert Bridel
William Bridel
George Brown
Norman R. Brown
Frank Busaytis
Sergeant Major Francis P. Boetta
Alexander Balin
Domenic Baudino
John Bell
Domenic Biami
Joseph F. Boero
Joseph Boggio
Christopher Born Nicholas Born
Carl Bottari
Frank Bridel
Louis Briemer
John Fletcher Brown
Charles Burt
W.L. Blake
James Cabodi
Byron Campbell
Lieut. Warren Campbell
Louis Ceretto
Joseph H. Chvatal Andrew Cairns
Nelson Campbell
Thomas Campbell
James Chada
John Dagon
Ray Dagon
Basil Davis
Victor Davis
Domenic D. Davito
Domenic M. Davito
Samuel Davy
John Dececco
Angelo Delucki
Stephen Delucki
John Deprat
Benjamin Deprat
Edward Dite
Emil Dite
John Domas
Hubert Draznik
Henry Dwyer
John Davis
Paul Enrietto
Frank Facinelli
Louis Fanchi
Domenic Favero
John Fleming
Daniel Franklin
James Galligan
John Geitz
Frank Giato
James Giordono
Peter Giordono
John B. Girot
John Girot
John Gladders
Felix Gomora
John Greenan
Zacharia Galbraith
Arco Guizzetti
Alex Gilmour
Fred L. Haake
Rudolph Hajek
John Haldorson
James Hamilton
Wilfred Hartley
James Hasal
Joseph Hejda
Louis Hejda
Frank Hejna
Joseph Hejna
Anton Helling
William Helling
Bernard Herdes
Fred Herron
Joseph Heylik
Joseph Huml
Anton Jaicomo
Pete Jiacomo
Frank Jiskra
Joseph B. Jiskra
Benjamin Kaplan
Frank Kasik
Edward Kastl
Henry Kessler
Charles Kniepkamp
William Kniepkamp
Otis Knudtson
Emil Krahl
Carl Kramer
William Kramer
Herman Krause
James W. Kodat
John Lafferty
James F. Lamie
Thomas W. Lamie
William Lohmar
John Luck
Henry E. Lyons
Anton Marchello
Charles Margaron
Martin Marsaglia
Edward Martin
Edward Martinec
Joseph Martinec
Marshall Matthews
William Matthews
Tipton McCawley

Gibson McDermott
James McLuckie
James M. McLuckie
John McLuckie
John Micona
Clyde Miller
Leslie H. Miller
Benjamin Mollie
Lloyd Moore
William Morrison
Frank Motta
Adam Murphy
Adolph Nail
Russell Palmer
Peter Pastore
James Pavlis
Corp. John Pavlis
Cuthbert Peart
Joseph B. Pele[Pelc?]
John Perella
Charles Peretti
James Peretti
Peter Peretti, Jr.
Anton Perino
Joseph R. Perry
William Phillips
Joseph Piagno
Domenic Piagno
James S. Planeta
Joseph Planeta
Frank Planeta
Fred Planeta
James Planeta
John Planeta
Albert Pohl
Eric Pohl
Joseph Pratto
James Procarione
Frank Raiman
Martin Reano
Peter Reano
Donald Reeves
Irl Richardson
Joseph Rigaldo
Frank Robak
John Rogers
John B. Ross
Leslie M. Ross
Thomas Ross
Joseph Rossio
Frank Rolando
Torval Rosendahl
Frank Rudow
Peter Ruffatti
Thomas Sayers
Michael Jos. Sheridan
Anton Savant
Albert Schwab
Albert Schimmel
Frank Schwab
Joseph Schwatz
James Sestak
Joseph Sestak
Isaac Smith
Charles Spellman
John Stellon
Major F.A. Stockdale
James Strejeck
John Strejeck
James Strickland
Joseph Sistek
Charles Stulik
Charles Swartz
Andrew Sharpe
Andrew Tallman
John Tessiatore
Otto Toberman
Michael Tenn
Robert Thom
George Edward Trotter
Thomas Turigliatti
James Vosyka
William J. Veronda
Emil J. Vilt
Rudolph Viac
Anton Vota
Edward Vosyka
Frank Vyskocil
Joseph Yates
Samuel Yates
Walter Yates
F.C. Yeshia
Fred Wakeman
Emil Wallace
Egnatz Wallace
Matthew Wanless
Walter Watson
James Wesley
Thomas F. Wharrie
James Wiggins
Henry Wilke
Jesse Wills
Thomas Wilson
William P. Wilson
August Zambon
James Zambon

The Nurses were listed as:
Jessie Jiskra
June Ryan
Margaret Ryan
Elizabeth Tessiatore

The YMCA worker was listed as Fannie Campbell.
The source listed those "men who made the supreme sacrifice" during their service as: William Bridel, John Dececco, Rudolph Hajek, Benjamin Kaplan, Corp. John Pavlis, Frank Schwab, Joseph Sestak, and Andrew Tallman.

The Great War in Westfield, Illinois

Ryan M. D'Arcy

The sleepy town of Westfield, situated in Clark County in central Illinois, was not a town one would expect to be touched by war; however the inhabitants of Westfield participated in World War I. Some of the inhabitants served as soldiers in the war, with two giving their lives, while many others, often forgotten, served on the home front trying to ensure that the soldiers received everything they needed to win the war.

It will be easiest to understand the actions of the people of not only Westfield, but of all of Clark County if we look at what happened to the 130th Infantry, made up of soldiers from central Illinois. While the 130th was not the only regiment that soldiers from central Illinois, or even Clark County, served in, it is the one I found most greatly represented in Westfield. However, at the beginning of World War I, the 130th did not exist.

The United States declared war on Germany on April 4, 1917. In May 1917, the 4th Infantry of the Illinois National Guard assisted tornado victims in Mattoon, Illinois and shortly after that was sent to aid in riot control in East St. Louis. On July 25th, the 4th Infantry was mobilized at its home station in Casey, Illinois, the home station for Company A, the only home station in Clark County. In October, the regiment was ordered to Camp Logan where it became a part of the 33rd Division. The Fourth Infantry became the 130th Infantry, a part of the Sixty-fifth Infantry Brigade. After a couple more brief moves, the 130th boarded the steamship Agamemnon for Brest on May 16, 1918. They disembarked on May 26th and spent a short time back from the front before moving up to the British front. They arrived at Maigneville on June 1st and 2nd. They continued to train until July 17th when they first served within the reach of the German artillery.[1]

The first real combat the 130th met as an independent fighting force was in the Meuse Argonne offensive, which began on September 26, 1918. On September 28th, the 130th moved to the front lines and remained there for over two weeks. When this period at the front was over, "Twenty-seven men were killed and nine officers and 135 men were wounded". They were relieved on October 15th and relocated to another trench where they served until October 21st. At this location they "lost twenty-three men killed and three officers and sixty-six men wounded". After a brief respite, the 130th was back in action again on October 25th at Rupt-en-Woevre. While in this position, Companies A (Clark County) and C attacked Chateau d'Aulnois which was being used as a headquarters by the Germans.[2]

Illinois in the World War provides an example of what going over the top was like for Companies A and C, though it seems to have been cleaned up and romanticized. It definitely does not provide an adequate picture of the gore and hardships these soldier endured:

> The American artillery followed the prearranged schedule, and at 5:45 o'clock the infantry went over. Company C moved forward rapidly on the left, where obstacles were not numerous, but Company A, on the right, had to flounder through mud and wire. Not withstanding these difficulties, Company A reached the chateau on time

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[1]Eric Dorn Brose, *A History of the Great War: World War One and the International Crisis of the Early Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 249; *Illinois in the World War: An Illustrated History of the Thirty-Third Division*, vol. 2, (Chicago: States Publication Society, 1921), 444-454.

[2] "1918 Timeline." WorldWar-1.net. Available from http://www.worldwar-1.net/world-war-1-timelines/world-war-1-1918/world-war-1-1918-index.htm . Internet; accessed 3 December 2009. and *Illinois*, 454-456.

> and charged beside Company C against the many machine gun emplacements. The gunners were bombed or bayoneted until all resistance had been stamped out and the garrison overwhelmed. Prisoners were quickly lined up; arms, ammunition, and supplies were destroyed, and in fifteen minutes the attacking force was on its way back. One German officer and twenty-two men were delivered behind the American lines. They were forced to carry the eight Illinois men who had been wounded and the bodies of two who had been killed in the fight.[3]

The last major offense of the war for the 130th Infantry was an attack on Marcheville on November 10th, 1918, the day before the armistice was signed. The attack was successful early on thanks to the cover of fog, but quickly devolved into a bloodbath. The Americans took Marcheville, but were not able to hold it long because the Germans quickly counterattacked. The Americans, however, managed to maintain their position and, with the assistance of artillery, drove the Germans back. The late hour of this attack made it one of the last engagements of the war. *Illinois in the World War* does not, however, make it clear how many casualties the 130th suffered hours before the armistice, only vaguely stating, "American losses had been severe." In consideration of what some of the fighting had been, the 130th Infantry ended the war remarkably intact. Their list of casualties numbered 25 officers and 640 soldiers from July 12th to November 11th.[4][5]

The 130th finally returned to the United States on May 20th, 1919, where they visited Chicago and participated in a great parade and celebration before going to Camp Grant in Rockford. All of the men were discharged by May 31, 1919. The men served approximately two years from the first drafts to the end of the war.[6]

The official history represented in *Illinois in the Great War* does not present a good view of how individual soldiers felt about the war. For that, it is necessary to turn to letters from Herbert Huey, who served in Company A of the 125th Infantry. Huey, though somewhat linguistically challenged, presents a great insight into the hopes, fears, and realities of a soldier's life. For instance, Huey stated, in a letter dated July 7, 1918, that he missed his family but that he was having a great time in the army. In his own words, he said "I am sure getting [sic] plenty to eat down here and I am having a good time we go to the show every night and prize fight." However, this optimistic sounding letter was quickly followed by another, the first in a stream of letters asking his wife to write him. On July 15th he wrote, telling his wife Bess, "I have not got only one letter sence I bin down here I would like to get a letter or two you right and tell me all the news in town." He also showed the wonder of a man coming from Marshall, Illinois, a sundown town, at seeing large numbers of blacks. He noted that "this is some town down here there is a lot of nigers down here."[7]

It sounds as though Huey had a rough start to his term of service. In a letter on July 7th he stated that he was going to the doctor so he could "lucke at my lungs they are bad." This was followed by an undated letter from Camp Taylor, Kentucky in which he repeated that his "lungs is [sic] bad" and added that "next Saturday we get out of corntine [quarantine]." Although it is difficult to tell from his bare description, it seems that Huey caught the "Spanish

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[3] *Illinois*, 457.
[4] Ibid., 158-161.
[5] Ibid., 463.
[6] Ibid., 466.
[7] Herbert Huey, Unknown, to Bess Huey, Marshall, IL, 7 July 1918, transcript in the hand of unknown, Clark County Genealogical Library, Marshall, Illinois. and Herbert Huey, Unknown, to Bess Huey, Marshall, IL, 15 July 1918, transcript in the hand of unknown, Clark County Genealogical Library, Marshall, Illinois

Influenza", the great pandemic that was in its early stages of ravaging the world. John Barry, throughout his book *The Great Influenza*, made the case that the highly overcrowded army camps were places where the influenza virus could spread and do the most harm.[8]

Huey's mood seemed to grow bleaker the longer he was away from his family. He noted the great July heat at Camp Beauregard, Louisiana. He also asked that his wife write again soon because he was "some lomcen [lonesome]." He also noted his wonderment at strange sights like "a creak that was about five miles long" in New Orleans, presumably the Mississippi River, further presenting his estrangement from his situation.[9]

Huey's first description of combat was in a letter dated only "1918" and continued with his usual lack of punctuation. He described his situation:

> I just got back from the lines and it [is] bad but the dutch [presumably Germans] are sure going back we went over the top several time and the dutch do run when they see us coming over but we got some of them I have got the bad feet so I can't hardly walk on them but I go just the same…. I wish I was back home so I could get a good nigh sleep[.][10]

His description of combat, and even more, trench life, creates a bleak picture. However, Huey ended this letter with a request for candy from home to help raise his spirits. As will be noted later, this is one of the many roles performed by the people back home. His description of life on the front apparently was enough that he did not want to mention his injuries until later. In a letter dated December 29, 1918 he said that two bullets struck him, one in his finger and the other in his foot.[11]

Huey had another letter dated Thursday November 28, 1918, Thanksgiving Day. In this letter to his mother, he noted that he was separated from his company, but not how. This is another example of how the "official" version of the war glosses over some facts, including that some soldiers got separated from their companies. This separation, however, makes it curious that Huey should question why he had not been receiving mail from his wife. For example, he complained in his letter to his mother dated January 22, 1919 that "I got a letter from Bess it was mailed Dec 21 and I did get the 18 of Jan and that is all I have got since I have been over here." This lack of mail was obviously having a negative effect on him. He noted his suspicions when he asked that his mother write him and tell him if Bess, his wife, and his children "are living at the same place or not she dont tell me noting […] I dont think Bess thinks any thing of me any more but I would like to see them all any way."[12]

Huey also described some of the difficulties he faced after the armistice. A letter he wrote in January 1919 stated that he was sleeping in a bed for the first time since he was in Europe.

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[8] Huey, 7 July 1918. and Herbert Huey, Camp Taylor, to Bess Huey, Marshall, IL, unknown date, transcript in the hand of unknown, Clark County Genealogical Library, Marshall, Illinois. and John M. Barry, *The Great Influenza: The Epic Story of the Deadliest Plague in History* (New York: Viking, 2004).

[9] Herbert Huey, Camp Beauregard, to Bess Huey, Marshall, IL, 20 July 1918, transcript in the hand of unknown, Clark County Genealogical Library, Marshall, Illinois. and Herbert Huey, Unknown, to Bess Huey, Marshall, IL, July 1918, transcript in the hand of unknown, Clark County Genealogical Library, Marshall, Illinois.

[10] Herbert Huey, Unknown, to Bess Huey, Marshall, IL, 1918, transcript in the hand of unknown, Clark County Genealogical Library, Marshall, Illinois. and Herbert Huey, Unknown, to Paul Huey, Lucile Huey, Very Huey, and Bess Huey, Marshall, IL, 29 December 1918, transcript in the hand of unknown, Clark County Genealogical Library, Marshall, Illinois.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Herbert Huey, Gullurt Farm, to mother Huey, Marshall, IL, 22 January 1919, transcript in the hand of unknown, Clark County Genealogical Library, Marshall, Illinois.

He also noted that he was having a hard time understanding "this frog talk", which generally meant French, but probably meant German in this instance considering his location in Gullerhein (Gullesheim?), Germany. He also noted that he had "lots of cudies," or lice. In essence, this letter described a bad situation, but one that was improving.[13]

Huey mailed a letter from Gulliem (still probably Gullesheim), Germany dated March 10, 1919; well after the war was over. Apparently the mail system was working better as he received three letters in one day. He noted that "I got one [letter] from my mother and she gave me hell to the same as you" which I understand to mean they both responded to his accusations that his wife did not care for him anymore simply because he did not receive mail. He also made a casual remark about the censorship on the mail, noting that "I cant right what I want to for you know that It would not come home but I can tell it when I get there."[14]

Although Huey spent so much time abroad in Europe, it apparently did not change him, as a small town person. He noted in a letter dated May 14, 1919, his first back in the United States, that he had gone to New York City the night before, but that "the town is to [sic] big for me but we had a good time." It is clear looking at this letter that the joviality of his first letters during his service is long gone and that his attitude is one of much greater reserve. His final post card of May 17, 1919 noted that he was on his way to Camp Grant in Rockford to be discharged and that he would be on his way home soon, which would allow him to return home well before the 130th Infantry.[15]

As noted earlier in Huey's letters, an important aspect of the war was the activity that occurred on the home front. This activity is exceedingly difficult to document. Westfield has no surviving newspapers from the World War I period and I only found copies of the *Clark County Democrat*, a newspaper focused on Marshall, Clark County's seat. This newspaper is problematic because it is very politically biased toward the Democratic Party. It does not present an unbiased view of the political atmosphere during WWI, nor does was I able to find a corresponding newspaper to balance out the biases present within.

I quickly realized while studying the *Clark County Democrat* that the major focus was on the activities of the Red Cross. For instance, an ad on December 19, 1917 stated, "The Man Who is Not For The Red Cross is Against Humanity." This language shows the strong attitudes towards about the supporting the Red Cross and the war effort in general. Another ad on April 24, 1918, *Clark County Democrat* wrote, "Blood or Bread. Others are giving their blood. You will shorten the war – save life if you eat only what you need and waste nothing." Unlike the other ad, this one requested that Americans conserve food so that as much as possible may go to the soldiers, a trend often noted during World War I. It also became readily apparent that there was a competition within the community to see which could provide the most aid to the soldiers. An example of this occurred in the January 2, 1918 edition of the *Clark County Democrat*. The first sentence of an article entitled "Post Office News" stated that "Westfield is running Marshall a close race in the sale of War saving and Thrift stamps." First, it shows evolution in the times, that any news about happenings at the post office should become front page news. Second, this statement shows inherent competition. However, the competition here should hardly be considered to be such if rendered on a per capita basis. Marshall is now, and was in 1918, a significantly larger community than Westfield, therefore making this

[13] Herbert Huey, Gullerhein, to mother and father Huey, Marshall, IL, January 1919, transcript in the hand of unknown, Clark County Genealogical Library, Marshall, Illinois.
[14] Herbert Huey, Gulliem, to Bess Huey, Marshall, IL, 10 March 1919, transcript in the hand of unknown, Clark County Genealogical Library, Marshall, Illinois.
[15] Herbert Huey, Camp Mills, to Bess Huey, Marshall, IL, 14 May 1919, transcript in the hand of unknown, Clark County Genealogical Library, Marshall, Illinois.

competition unsound, but productive nonetheless. This same article made note of the efforts of the post office to collect magazines for the soldiers, yet another home front effort. Another interesting note from the *Clark County Democrat* was that they found the "German-Americans in this county very patriotic." This should not have been difficult to do as most of the families in Clark County can trace their ancestry to Germany.[16]

The competition in Clark County began to separate as the war proceeded. Westfield, the fourth largest town in Clark County, was clearly in the lead selling war savings and thrift stamps on January 16, 1918. However, it is also apparent that the effort was collaborative county-wide. The Liberty Loan drives and the Red Cross activities were conducted by the joint efforts of the communities in Clark County as evidenced by the commendations given to the various workers from the multiple communities. Also, as expected, the small village of Westfield could not keep up with its competitors for long. Marshall, Casey, and Martinsville each outsold Westfield in the 3rd Liberty Loan Drive. Each of these towns is larger than Westfield and is listed in order of dollars sold, which, coincidentally parallels the population size of each community. The county continually raised money above its quotas for the Liberty Loans or the Red Cross.[17]

The front page of the *Clark County Democrat* was increasingly consumed by two major items or topics. First, the paper tried to get people to conserve or cut their use of everything from oil to sugar and to donate things they already have, such as metals or peach pits (used to make carbon for gas masks). Second, the paper increasingly published letters from soldiers. This undoubtedly caused people to see a purpose for what they were sacrificing. If they could imagine that their sacrifices were saving the lives of people they know, then one could assume they would be that much more likely to conserve. It is possible that this effect was achieved by the newspaper staffs' design rather than by coincidence.[18]

Not everyone was enthusiastic about sacrificing for the good of the soldiers. The January 9, 1918 edition of the *Clark County Democrat* noted an amusing story about Christmas treats at Richwoods School, a one-room school outside of Westfield. The teacher and the school board decided to spend the money, usually spent on Christmas treats for the students, by donating to the Red Cross. This upset the students and they accordingly locked the teacher out of the school from Monday through Friday. "On Friday, she was seized, bound with rope, placed in a buggy and driven about the community." One of the students was injured when the teacher hit him/her over the head with a club trying to defend herself. However, the situation was calmed by "a sharp lecture by the State's Attorney and County Superintendent, administered to the directors, pupils and teacher".[19]

Another concern during World War I, as noted earlier by Herbert Huey, was the Great Influenza. The first wave of the influenza pandemic crashed across the United States in the late spring and summer of 1918. In the 2008 edition of *Historia*, Krystal Rose, a graduate student in History, said, "Newspapers hinted at a problem with influenza overseas, but for the most part it was ignored by the general public. However, what the general public overlooked, local authorities did not fail to recognize."[21] This was the case with Clark County as well. The newspaper did not report on influenza in Clark County until after the authorities had already taken preemptive measures. Clark County was not the only county in the area to aggressively

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[16] *Marshall (Illinois) Clark County Democrat*, 19 December 1917, 2 January 1918, 13 March 1918, and 24 April 1918.
[17] *Marshall (Illinois) Clark County Democrat*, 16 January 1918, 27 March 1918, 1 May 1918, 29 May 1918.
[18] *Marshall (Illinois) Clark County Democrat*, 4 September 1918, 14 August 1918, and 25 September 1918.
[19] *Marshall (Illinois) Clark County Democrat*, 9 January 1918.
[21] Krystal Rose, "Called to Death: A Case Study on the 1918 Influenza Pandemic in Coles County, Illinois." *Historia* 17 (2008), 3-4.

try to prevent the spread of the flu. For example, "Hiring a school nurse and increasing expenditures on things such as health supplies were actions implemented to prevent the spread of the disease throughout Coles County", Clark County's neighbor.[22]

The second wave was more lethal. According to Rose, in Coles County, "By October, the height of public disruption occurred with the closings for Coles County rapidly accumulating; schools, beauty shops, churches, movie theaters, and Red Cross meetings were not spared."[23] Much as Rose noted in her study on Coles County, the *Clark County Democrat* showed a definite increase in the number of obituaries, especially for people who died of influenza. An article in the *Clark County Democrat* entitled "The Influenza Situation Here" had this to say in October 1918:

> Many cases of influenza have developed here in the past week, but the situation is not alarming. Generally the cases are of a mild nature but there are a few developing pneumonia, which is very serious. So far only one death has been caused by the epidemic here. However, it behooves our people to take every precaution to avoid the disease. The Board of Health at a meeting Sunday, decided that all schools, churches and theatres should be closed during the week.

John Barry noted that often fundraising for the war was considered more important than avoiding other people in order to prevent the spread of the flu. Rose's nearby comparison may offer a model by which we can understand the last days of World War I in Clark County. According to her, the number of influenza deaths in Coles County nearly equaled deaths from all other causes during the month of October. An examination of the *Clark County Democrat* presents the same results.[24]

According to Rose, Coles County suffered from a third wave of the influenza in which "influenza-related deaths did outnumber the 'other' causes of death."[25] Likely, the same occurred in Clark County, its neighbor, and especially in Westfield, which is situated right on the county line. There is evidence that there was a third wave of influenza in Clark County besides that in the local newspapers. In this instance, Herbert Huey received a letter while in Europe that stated, "Howard and the kid had the flu" back in Marshall in January 1919.[26]

Doubtless, influenza affected the ability of the citizens of Clark County to assist its soldiers during the last month and a half of combat and on into the occupation that followed. However, this again falls into the category of problems on the home front which is no more present in the collective memories of the people of Clark County than are recollections of the intercommunity competitions to sell the most war bonds for the Liberty Loan drives or to raise the most money for the Red Cross. The communities' collective memories seem focused on the sacrifices of the soldiers of World War I to a much greater, and arguably justified, extent than they do on the sacrifices and lived realities of people on the home front.

I have examined the realities of war for the soldiers as well as the efforts and obstructions to those efforts, of people on the home front to assist in the war effort. Herbert Huey presented a good case study of how it affected the soldier, but what were the affects at home?

The village of Westfield had 95 men serving out of a population that numbered a little over 900 in 1920, so about 10 percent. Many of these men were brothers or cousins, related by

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[22] Barry, 208-209.
[23] Rose, "Called to Death", 3-4.
[24] *Marshall (Illinois) Clark County Democrat*, 2 October 1918 and 16 October 1918. and Rose, "Called to Death", 10.
[25] Rose, "Called to Death", 11.
[26] Huey, 22 January 1919

marriage or blood. Of the 95 soldiers, 60 served overseas and the other 35 never made it out of camp. The vast majority of the soldiers who served overseas were in the army. Three served in the navy and only one in the marines. Of the few soldiers for whom I have been able to locate information, they served in Company A of the 130th Regiment of the 33rd Division. This was determined by walking around the local cemetery, Maple Hill Cemetery, and noting what was marked on the headstones.[27]

Two soldiers died in Europe, making the combat deaths for Westfield residents just over two percent. Corporal Ralph Weeden died on October 8, 1918 (Image 1) and John H. Zellers's stone placed his death at a vaguer 1918 (Image 2). Therefore, Weeden most likely would have died in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive and Zellers most likely would have also. Thus, the people of Westfield had a great shock. They lost two soldiers shortly after their regiment entered combat. There is no doubt that these wounds were still fresh when their comrades returned home in May, especially considering that there were no more combat deaths after them.

Image 1: Ralph Weeden headstone

Image 2: John Zellers headstone

After returning home, the soldiers, as noted earlier, were treated to parades and celebrations in big cities. Not to be outdone, the soldiers of Westfield returned home to the same. A photograph in *The History of Westfield, Illinois* shows the returned soldiers marching in full uniform through downtown Westfield. They would arrive at the village park where a fundraiser was being held in their honor to raise money to start an American Legion Post in Westfield (Image 3), which is today the Weeden-Zellers Post.

Little can be concluded from this study of World War I in Clark County, and more specifically Westfield, Illinois. The topics covered are broad and far reaching. The material at hand is also scarce. Much more extensive research, especially archival research is necessary to come to meaningful conclusions about the history of Clark County in World War I. However, there are generalities that can be made from the sources presented in this work. The first generality is that Clark County largely fit into the national model. A significant number of men responded to their nation's call and served in the war. Second, while the soldiers fought in the war they sometimes became disillusioned about the war as evidenced in Herbert Huey's letters home. Third, the home front was very active in competitively trying to provide for all of the needs of the soldiers and not permitting "slackers." Fourth, the influenza pandemic of 1918 created major problems both for soldiers overseas and for workers on the home front. Neither

[27] Hurst Kesler, ed., *History of Westfield, Illinois and Northwest Clark County 1981* (Shawnee Mission, Kansas: Inter-Collegiate Press, 1981), 24.

group could effectively perform their jobs. Fifth, there was a negative political response to the United States' involvement in the war resulting in Republican victories over Wilson's Democratic Party. And finally, the soldiers returned home to an appreciative country, too much pomp and circumstance. The most that can be concluded from this effort is that the citizens of Clark County took up responsibility when it was thrust upon them and performed to the best of their abilities and their actions during wartime perpetuated the existing master narrative.

Clark County in WWI

Jon Matthews

During WWI, Clark County, Illinois supplied a vast number of soldiers to the American cause. Although the United States did not get involved in the global conflict until April 2, 1917, a high percentage of able bodied young men in the county served their country. Most of these men joined the basic infantry units that went to Belgium and the Eastern Front. There were a few officers and many men who were drafted but never went to Europe. In total over 800 men and women represented Clark County in the Great War and fourteen men gave their lives serving their country. A few of these men are buried in cemeteries overseas near the battlefields.

After President Wilson convinced Congress to declare war on Germany, the men of Clark County were immediately called into action to serve their country. Soon after the declaration of war, Clark County citizens felt a sudden surge of patriotism to answer the call to duty. The students at Marshall High School took a vote after Wilson's declaration to replace their spring sports with military training. This measure was decided on entirely by the students, passed unanimously, and the school complied with their requests. A man by the name of Prof. L. S. Reiner, who was a commissioned Lieutenant, was brought in to train the group of young men, which numbered 68.[1]

The act of the Marshall High School students was something similar to the wider community's reaction to the war. In the same issue of the *Marshall Herald* a massive parade was held to display the county's patriotism. That parade was held in Marshall on April 19th to coincide with the 132nd anniversary of the Battle of Lexington and Concord. It included many patriotic acts, such as a flag raising by the Daughters of the American Revolution as well as a march of soldiers and fraternal societies. Of course, at this display of patriotism a recruitment officer was available to register any Clark County man who felt compelled to enlist in either the Army or the Navy.[2]

The citizens of Clark County's patriotism were evident in the local newspaper stories. A school essay contest on the importance of buying Liberty Bonds (also called Liberty Loans) offered prizes such as a spiked German helmet.[3] The buying of Liberty Bonds was heavily promoted in Clark County, as a parade in the fall of 1917 illustrates. In this parade the schools entered floats with the theme of patriotism in buying War Bonds.

During the period between the declaration of war and the actual shipping of men overseas the Liberty Bond drive was well documented in the county newspapers. Every so often in the fall of 1917 the *Marshall Herald* would update the amount of dollars raised through Liberty Bond sales. An order form was printed in the newspaper, stating the amount of funds raised up to that point, as well as a place to fill out one's name and amount of Liberty Bonds requested. In nearly every issue of the *Marshall Herald* this advertisement appeared and always stated how much had been raised and much more was needed for Clark County to match the amount required for the county.

The *Marshall Herald* notes that by late June of 1917 Clark County was well behind what was expected of them in regards to the sale of Liberty Bonds. The article notes that the county

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[1] "Boys Show Patriotism: High School Lads will Organize Military Company," *The Marshall Herald*, April 11, 1917.
[2] "Patriotic Demonstration!" *The Marshall Herald*, April 11, 1917.
[3] "Great War Memories," Undated binder entitled *Marshall History* at Marshall, Illinois Public Library, Marshall Illinois.

was expected to buy 600,000 dollars in Liberty Bonds but had only purchased collectively as a county a little over 100,000.[4] This was a major concern for the county papers that wanted to display the patriotism of the local citizens. In future articles the editors were highly critical of the county's residents for not doing enough. They showed how much Edgar County had raised in comparison to Clark and also noted that Douglas County was leading the state in the Liberty Bond drive based on percentage. The editors tried to shame their own citizens by pointing out that Douglas County was seen as the "most patriotic spot in Illinois."[5]

Despite the apparent failure of the County to meet its Liberty Loan goals, the government set a new goal of 730,800 dollars in October of 1917 for Clark County. "The expectations for Clark County were so high," said the head of the War Bond Drive in Illinois, Mr. White, because "there was good representation present from Marshall, Martinsville, and Casey" the three hubs of the county.[6] Westfield was not mentioned despite the continued praise for their soldiers and numerous rallies held there.

Despite the failure of the first Liberty Loan drive in the county, the second Loan drive was much more successful. Within two weeks the amount of Liberty Loans purchased in the county exceeded 300,000 dollars.[7] By the end of the loan period Clark County finished just under 400,000 dollars, still far below the goal.[8]Nationally, however, the second Liberty Loan was over-subscribed, and the papers did mention Clark County's improvement as a whole compared to the first Liberty Loan Bond campaign.

Along with the Liberty Loan drives the *Clark County Democrat* tells of the students of the county joining the cause. The students were persuaded by their teachers to save money to buy Thrift Stamps to help with the war effort. The introduction of Thrift Stamps in the Post Offices across the country allowed an inexpensive way for American citizens to contribute to the American cause. A story from Clark County mentions that one girl "hunted up all the old papers and worn-out clothing at her home and sold them to secure money to buy Thrift Stamps."[9] The Marshall Elementary schools set a goal in one drive for every student in the school to buy Thrift Stamps to help with the war effort.[10]

Prior to the outbreak of WWI a sense of national pride had already been instilled in the minds of the people of Clark County. En-route to the World's Fair in San Francisco the Liberty Bell passed through Clark County, making a stop in Marshall on November 21, 1915.[11] This rare glimpse of a symbol of freedom allowed county residents to relish in the liberties they enjoyed and to reflect on what it meant to be an American. When the US entered WWI the glimpses and stories of the Liberty Bell must have still been fresh in the minds of Clark County's residents.

Besides Liberty Loan Bonds much of the monies donated to the war effort by residents of Clark County were given to the local Red Cross chapter. Soon after the declaration of war and after the Red Cross became associated with the war effort, Clark County sought to create a local chapter of the Red Cross. Starting in June 1917 donations were taken at meetings for what would be the precursor to the forming of the county chapter. The first meeting, which

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[4] "Slackers? Clark County Makes Poor Record on Liberty Loan," *Marshall Herald*, June 20, 1917.
[5] "What's Wrong with Clark County?" *Marshall Herald*, June 27, 1917
[6] "730,800.00; That's Clark County's Quota in the New Liberty Loan," *Marshall Herald*, October 10, 1917.
[7] "All Must Help: Have You Done Your Bit in the Second Liberty Loan?" *Marshall Herald*, October 25, 1917.
[8] "Over the Top: Second Liberty Loan is Over-Subscribed," *Marshall Herald*, October 31, 1917.
[9] "Some Interesting News of Post Office Activities," *Clark County Democrat*, March 13, 1918.
[10] "Results of Thrift Stamp Drive," *Clark County Democrat*, March 20, 1918.
[11] Joann Strange "Letter to the Editor," located in *Marshall History*. (Multiple accounts of this exist and the writer of this editorial notes that historian Dorothy Clark of Terre Haute commented on the stop.)

was attended by people from all across the county, netted $752.50. It was noted that during the "drive" for the week the county had taken in 8,000 dollars.[12]

Besides the county meetings held at Marshall, local meetings supporting the establishment of the Red Cross chapter were held across the county. At the same time as the late June 1917 meeting in Marshall was held another local meeting in West Union. This meeting was vital to the establishment of a Clark County Red Cross chapter in Marshall due to the remoteness of several towns in the Southeast corner of Clark County. The West Union meeting attracted residents not only from West Union but York, West York, and Walnut Prairie.[13]Involving communities away from the county seat allowed for the cause to be county wide instead of being only a local Marshall venture.

By July of 1917 the Red Cross's membership in the county had reached 1,194, still far short of the quota of 3,527. In order to help achieve the quota established by the Red Cross's drive for one million members, the first week in August was designated as "Humanity Week." Marshall organized many events to recruit members. During the week, church bells as well as the county courthouse bell rang constantly to remind the community of the men overseas. The Marshall chapter of the Red Cross sought to compel community members to make donations or more importantly join as members to try and meet the county quota.[14]

The great success of the Red Cross in Clark County, and across the nation as a whole, it naturally led to some criticism. Stories of clothes donated to the Red Cross being seen worn by collectors flooded the newspapers and may have made some people wary to donate time and money to the cause. Local newspapers picked up stories from the national press concerning the problem, which was blamed on German propaganda to try and inhibit the local war effort at home.[15] Despite these accusations against the Red Cross, membership continued to rise and the membership in Clark County by Christmas of 1917 numbered nearly 2,000.[16] In July of 1918 Dr. I. W. Lee of Casey volunteered his services for the Red Cross and left for France.[17]

Local funds from the Red Cross were needed in May of 1918 to help with a local natural disaster. The famed tornado of 1918 ravaged most of neighboring Coles County and left 88 dead.[18] Donations and relief from the local communities as well as aid from the Red Cross helped to rebuild the shattered lives of those in Charleston and Mattoon. It was lucky that the Red Cross had become as popular and successful as it had so that people were in a "giving" mood, as this horrible natural disaster greatly affected neighboring counties and people were ready to give and help those affected.

The patriotism of the county toward the war effort also had a potential dark side. Although the majority of the county's citizens were of German descent, there is virtually no information available concerning anti-German sentiments in the county during WWI. There are, however, a few interesting aspects of the county's German population.

Throughout Clark County there were several pockets of residents of German descent. There were several churches, such as the Zion Church, near present day Mill Creek, that preached their sermons completely in German up until nearly the turn of the century. However, despite discontinuing German sermons, Sunday Schools were still conducted in

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[12] "The Red Cross Drive," *Marshall Herald*, June 27, 1917.
[13] "Red Cross at West Union," *Marshall Herald, June 27, 1917.*
[14] "Red Cross in New Drive: Humanity Week in Progress to make Membership a Million," *Marshall Herald*, August 1, 1917.
[15] "Knocking Red Cross, the Institution whose Sole Relief Work," *Marshall Herald*, October 31, 1917.
[16] "Over the Top: Christmas Red Cross Drive is a Great Success," *Marshall Herald*, December 26, 1917.
[17] "Will Do Red Cross Work," *Marshall Herald*, July 17, 1918.
[18] "Dead in Tornado Number 88," *Marshall Herald*, May 30, 1918.

German up until WWI. Zion Church was not the only German speaking church in the county. The Trinity United Brethren Church in downtown Marshall was also German speaking.[19]

In many communities across Illinois and America there was widespread prejudice against German Americans. Sometimes this prejudice turned angry and violent. Local newspapers from this time period show no such resentment towards Clark County's large German population. It was even noted in one newspaper article that in Oliver Township a man of German descent came in and bought $1,000 worth of Thrift Stamps. After this purchase the Post Master is quoted as saying he wants "to be put on record as finding the German-Americans in the country very patriotic."[20] One man of German descent, George A. Shotts, gave his life on the battlefields of France and is recognized as one of the fallen on the veteran's memorial on the county courthouse lawn.

Despite the acceptance of Germans in Clark County national prejudices did sometimes seep their way into the local area. Once in a while the local newspapers would publish articles that included governmental anti-German sentiments. In January of 1918 the *Clark County Democrat* published an article informing residents that non-US citizens of German descent were required to register as "German alien enemies" of the United States if they were not already naturalized citizens. However, it was noted in this article that the Germans would be allowed to file naturalization paperwork, but the process would not start until after the war was over.[21]

In June of 1918 another notice was published in the *Clark County Democrat* which once again called for the German people to register if they had not already done so. This article stated at the top that the Eastern Judicial District of Illinois required the paper to publish this article. This particular notice was concerned with German females over the age of 14 having to register in the local Post Office if they were not natural citizens of the United States.[22] This law itself, although making sense from the standpoint of registering illegal aliens, did buy into the German war hysteria and the anti-German sentiments in the country. Officials in Clark County where there was a large German population were forced to adhere to this law and register their people, despite the lack of animosity towards their German residents.

The most obvious way to display one's patriotism, of course, was to join up to fight. Some men, who were exempt from service, felt compelled to serve their country and requested that despite their deferment they be sent overseas. One example was a young man from West Union named McKinley Grubb who was given a deferment without his knowledge because he was needed to work on the family farm. Once he found out that he had been deferred he personally contacted the Exemption Board. Grubb walked all the way from West Union to Marshall, "a distance of almost twenty miles," to demand his chance to fight the Kaiser[23]

Men of all types enlisted in the cause. The local State's Attorney, Olen R. Clements, volunteered his services and was sent to officers' training school in Atlanta.[24] Many men who enlisted in the armed services were farmers by occupation or hard laborers. As the Clark County men volunteered to serve, they were sent in groups to various locations. In 1917 many men were sent to Camp Taylor in Kentucky. In 1918 most of the men were sent to Camp Dix in New Jersey. These included men who had volunteered or were drafted early in the

[19] Joann Strange, "Little Germany," *Marshall Independent*, in notebook at Marshall Public Library entitled "Marshall History."
[20] "Some Interesting News of Post Office Activities," *Clark County Democrat*, March 13, 1918.
[21] "Post Office News," *Clark County Democrat*, January 23, 1918.
[22] "Alien Registration Notice," *Clark County Democrat*, June 5, 1918.
[23] "Tell it to the Kaiser," *Clark County Democrat*, May 1, 1918.
[24] 'Will Go September 1," *Clark County Democrat*, August 21, 1918.

year.[25]One of the men drafted soon after America entered the war in 1917 was Harry H. Kuhn of Casey. Kuhn immediately set about to write his will before being deployed. In his will Kuhn stated that he would leave all his belongings and effects to the Red Cross, including money obtained from his patented invention which was some type of picture hanging device.[26] Later on as more men volunteered they were sent to Fort Thomas in Kentucky, Camp Gordon in Georgia, and Jefferson Barracks Missouri.[27]

Reflecting decades later on his time in the war Martinsville resident Harry L. Downey vividly recalled his experiences upon arriving in Europe. Downey told how as a member of the replacement division he came to the battlefields and was instructed before going to the front, to take all his extra clothing and allow the soldiers leaving to have them. Downey said, "The replacements were instructed to place all their extra clothing and change of underwear on a bed in a nearby old French castle…the battle veterans then exchanged the clean underwear for their lice-infected clothing."[28] Downey's reflection on the conditions of WWI allows one to appreciate the dirtiness of life in the trenches and the unsanitary conditions faced by the enlisted men.

Another man who reflected on the unsanitary conditions was Okla Lindley. Lindley left Camp Merritt, New Jersey in June of 1918 to fight in France. On the way to France Lindley stated that the boat he was on was "a regular hell hole" due to the cramped quarters and the fact that the soldiers were not allowed to leave the bowels of the ship because of German submarines in the area. Lindley also said that on the way there one soldier died of pneumonia and "was thrown overboard in the Irish Sea" because the ship's crew was unable to preserve his body to be sent back to the States.[29]

There are many other letters from Clark County soldiers describing their war experiences that provide much valuable information. One such letter came from Everett Spivey of West York who was aboard the USS President Lincoln. After the ship was torpedoed, Spivey's description of his escape is reminiscent of a Hollywood movie. Spivey wrote, "While going up on deck the water was shooting past out one of the hatches and it nearly drowned me when I passed. The steam popping off made it difficult to hear orders and they were given by hand."[30] Spivey's mad dash started from the bowels of the ship and he was very lucky to escape. From his account 24 men drowned on the ship. Most of the soldiers that did escape with their lives did so by leaving behind most of their possessions such as their shoes and parts of their uniforms. Spivey explains that he was fortunate to escape with his uniform as well as his money.[31]

One of the most notable men who served his country was Herbert Huey. Huey was a private in Company A of the 125th Infantry. He was ordered to report to Georgia for training and consistently sent letters to his wife in Marshall, as well to his father. Huey was deployed very late in the war but still saw much action. In one letter he tells how he "took two[sic] bullet one in my finger and the other in my foot."[32] In January of 1919 Huey said that he "got a bed to sleep in the first bed I have slept [sic] in since I have been over here."[33] Again in his

[25] "Untitled Article," *The Marshall Herald*, April, 24, 1918.
[26] 'Soldier Boy Makes Will to Red Cross: Also Assigns Patent," *Clark County Democrat*, February 27, 1918.
[27] "Untitled Article," *The Marshall Herald*, May 29, 1918.
[28] "Doc Downey Remembers WWI," *Daily Reporter*, November 11, 1982.
[29] "Complete War Experiences of One Clark County Boy," *Clark County Democrat*, March 12, 1918.
[30] "Everett Spivey Ship Torpedoed," *The Marshall Herald*, July 10, 1918.
[31] "Everett Spivey Ship Torpedoed."
[32] Personal Letter, Herbert Huey to wife, Clark County Genealogical Library, December 29, 1918.
[33] Personal Letter, Herbert Huey to mother, father and all, Clark County Genealogical Library, Jan 1919, Gellerhein, Germany.

next letter home Huey complained about his sleeping arrangements stating "I have slept in a bed but three night[s] since I been over here."[34] Huey eventually came back from Germany, to Camp Grant, in May of 1919 and his experiences were later described by his daughter.[35]

Herbert's daughter, Vera, recounted some of the stories that Herbert told the family through his letters. One instance states that while on the ship to Germany "when it was really cold, his troop[s] had to sleep out in the freezing cold, and Herbert couldn't feel his feet. By morning they turned blue from frostbite." Vera also stated that upon returning from war Herbert brought back with him a medical problem and could not work. Besides this problem, Vera also stated that Huey was reluctant to talk about the war and would often have nightmares, sometimes "screaming and yelling someone's name that he knew in war."[36]

Another man who sent letters home was Otho Downey of Martinsville. In one letter Downey tells of some of the horrors he saw on the battlefield. His letters were published in the *Clark County Democrat*. Downey wrote, "It is a great sight to see the smoke from a battlefield with the dead and wounded lying about. When the bodies lie in No Man's Land for about a week, it is an awful task to bring them back for burial."[37]

In regard to how this affected the soldiers psychologically, Downey's attitude or mental state seemed to contrast a little from Huey's, at least in his letters. In commenting on life in the trenches Downey states that "you may think you have seen some awful sights, but you have not seen what I have seen. We get used to it and it doesn't seem to bother anyone."[38] Downey's account offers some insight into the lives of the soldiers in battle but also sadly illustrates how the soldiers adapted to the horrors going on around them. Downey's letter to his parents at least showed that mentally he was doing fine in war. Unfortunately this would be his last letter. Downey was shot and killed July 19th 1918, after serving in the trenches for almost eighteen months.[39]

It should come as no surprise that the enlisted men who were sent overseas became heroes in the local communities, especially those who died. Westfield, for example, was well known at the time for holding numerous rallies promoting patriotism and Liberty Bond and Red Cross drives. In all, despite being a small community of a few hundred, Westfield sent 62 men overseas to fight the war. There were also 36 more men who were in service but never left for war.[40]One soldier that represented Westfield in the war effort was Ralph Weeden. Weeden was killed in the battlefields of France on October 6, 1918. It was noted that twenty other Westfield men served in the same Company and because of "their close association for the last eighteen months" the knowledge of his death "cast a shadow of gloom, sorrow[sic] and foreboding over the community."[41] Weeden's loss brought great sadness to the small community. Not only was he just 19 years of age, but was also known by everyone in Westfield. This sense of loss was experienced throughout the war in communities all over the world. It

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[34] Personal Letter, Herbert Huey to wife and children,Clark County Genealogical Library, March 10, 1919, Gulliem, Germany.
[35] Personal Letter, Herbert Huey to wife and children,Clark County Genealogical Library, May 1919.
[36] Vera Huey Interview, "Voices from Marshall's Past: Oral Histories collected from Residents of Marshall Illinois and the Surrounding Area Compiled by Friends of Marshall Public Library," Marshall Public Library, Marshall Illinois.
[37] "Is in France," *Clark County Democrat*, August 14, 1918.
[38]"Is in France."
[39] "First to Fall in Action," *Clark County Democrat*, September 4, 1918.
[40] "History of Westfield Illinois and Northwest Clark County," *Marshall Public Library*, 1981.
[41] "Corporal Ralph H. Weeden Killed in Action: Westfield's First Loss on the Battlefield," binder in Clark County Geneology Library entitled *Honor Rolls and Memories WWI*.

was felt more so in Europe, where millions of males were killed. The feeling never got old and the loss of a young man from a small town was always felt by the community as a whole.

Despite the small size of Clark County, over 800 men served their country in WW1. Of these men who served their country at least 14 lost their lives. For some of there have been documented accounts of their deaths but for are a few there are not. One man that lost his life to the horrors of the war and never returned home was Robert Monk, who is buried in Flanders Field Cemetery in Belgium.

Robert Monk, who was from West Union, went overseas to Belgium and was soon transferred from the 84th Lincoln Division to the 362nd Infantry Regiment, 91st Wild West Division. On his first day of his first battle, the Battle for the Spitaal Wood near Waregem, he was hit by machine gun fire in no man's land. Due to the heavy fire, the medics were not able to tend to him until hours later when the fighting had dissipated. Sadly, by the time the medics were able to reach him he had succumbed to his wounds. He was buried in the local American cemetery at Flanders Field, near the entrance.[42]

Monk was not the only Clark County resident who never returned home. Other men who were killed in action and never returned home included Jesse O. Burns and Harry Haddix. Burns served in the 39th Infantry, 4th Division and was killed in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. Burns died during the Second Phase of the Offensive and was probably killed during the Battle of Montfaucon, as he was killed on October 14th, the height of that battle. Burns is buried in the Meuse Argonne American Cemetery.[43]

Harry Haddix served in the 58th Infantry, also in the 4th Division, and was killed during the Allied counter offensive, probably at the Battle of Soissons in France.[44] This major counter-offensive created massive casualties for both sides amounting to nearly 300,000 combined. Haddix was one of the men who died the first day and his body was never returned home. He too, just as Burns, is buried in the local American Cemetery. Two other Clark County casualties were Harry Clem and Fred Cormican, both of whom died of the Spanish Flu.[45]

A great account from the battlefield was given in 1982 by then 88 year old veteran Harry L. Downey from Martinsville. Downey describes how, during a charge to take out a machine gun nest, he was shot in the leg, shattering his femur. Downey explained that he was so sick while in the hospital that for a time he lay "blind and paralyzed." He even said that the doctors gave up on him after an operation that bloodied his mattress to the point that it "formed a puddle on the floor." Downey told how he was very weak and was only saved by the kindness of the nurses who would "walk into the countryside and [purchase] eggs at $5 to $6 a dozen with their own money." Downey described the conditions in the hospitals as outrageous and said that many men died of malnutrition. To combat this Downey observed that the nurses would steal rations from the officer's mess to help save the sick and wounded.[46]

It should be noted that due to the close proximity of Clark County to Terre Haute, Indiana, many Clark County men who served their country did so after enlisting at Terre Haute.William E. Bohn, a Martinsville resident, chose to enlist at Terre Haute to serve his country. Although he was from Clark County he was recognized elsewhere for his sacrifices.

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[42] Research compiled by Patrick Lernout, Ypres Belgium.

[43] Research compiled by Patrick Lernout, Ypres Belgium

[44] Haddix's death coincides with the Battle of Soissons. He was killed in action during an offensive attack and the timing of this attack and his place in the area make it highly probable that he was killed in this battle although no mention of which battle he was killed in exists.

[45] *Certificate of Death: Fred Cormican.* Filed October, 5, 1918. State of Kentucky, State Board of Health: Bureau of Vital Statistics, Reg. Dist. No. 50, File No. 2215.

[46] "Doc Downey Remembers WWI," *Daily Reporter*, November 11, 1982.

After landing at Brest, France he died October 5, 1918 of Spanish Flu,which he contracted while aboard a transport ship. His body was shipped home and he was buried in the local cemetery in Darwin.[47]

The Spanish Flu, as well as other diseases, was a major threat to the US servicemen. In many of the letters from soldiers representing Clark County the flu, pneumonia, and small pox are brought up quite often in their descriptions. One soldier, Ora L. Bohn, wrote a letter home saying that his arm was hurting from all the inoculations he was receiving for small pox because of the contamination of the unit by one soldier. Bohn noted, regarding his company, that "we have had spinal meningitis, pneumonia, measles, mumps, and smallpox." He also stated in that "we were tested for germs the other day by running a swab about two feet long down our nose." Bohn's letter, which included some humor, does make clear, however, his frustration with his part in the war. He complains about the food and the fact that the soldiers had yet to be paid and were forced, due to the quarantine, to constantly sleep in tents with the other infected troops.[48]

While Bohn was under quarantine, the 1918 Influenza epidemic was in full force back on the Home Front as well. In Clark County the *Marshall Herald* noted that "67 cases were reported among high school pupils" in Marshall.[49] Because of the influx and frequency of this epidemic schools were closed in the county, sometimes for weeks at a time to prevent the spread of the disease that was ravaging the world.

With the outbreak of war an agricultural area such as Clark County had a unique duty to fulfill. Clark County's large farming structure made it possible for the area to help meet the demand for food needed in Europe. A problem with the draft was that most young men of the county were farmers and were needed in the fields in order to fulfill the large amount of work required to help feed Europe. Because of this problem many men claimed exemptions to the draft. Many were granted, but the fields were still consistently short-handed during the war, despite the governments' demand for increased agricultural output.

Throughout the course of the war various articles appeared in the county newspapers concerning the efforts of local farmers to produce crops for the war effort. It was not unusual for the newspapers to request that farmers try to plant some crops that were unusual for their fields. Thus, the term "Potato Patriots" was created, which referred to farmers who planted potato crops alongside whatever other crops they had.[50] Another notice appeared that contained warnings concerning the slaughter of animals, and how farmers needed to let the animals mature before slaughtering them.[51]

Farmers in places such as Clark County played an important role in combating starvation in Europe and giving the Allies an edge over Germany. By using the United States as the provider of food for the armies the Allies had a huge advantage over the tiny Axis powers, despite the power of the German military. For this reason, areas such as Clark County became essential for the war effort once the United States entered the war. However, the issue of what was more important to the war effort for men of Clark County farming or fighting was always a topic of discussion and concern.

With the heavy emphasis on the war effort placed in the hands of farmers, the local farmers of Clark County began to organize themselves to improve their farms and livelihoods.

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[47] "Obituary- William E. Buhn," *Clark County Democrat* August 4, 1920.
[48] Ora L. Bohn, "Letters for Our Boys," *Clark County Democrat*, February 13, 1918, p. 29.
[49] "The Influ is Here: Epidemic has Many Victims in Town and Vicinity," *Marshall Herald*, October 9, 1918.
[50] "Potato Patriots Needed," *Marshall Herald*, May 30, 1918.

[51] "Farmers Warned of German Error," *Marshall Herald*, May 23, 1917

When Clark County men began shipping off to war in early 1918, the farmers of Clark County began organizing themselves into a chapter of the Farm Bureau. After a few months of meetings and discussions the chapter officially joined the organization in February of 1918 with 600 members representing the county.[52]

Quite often there were stories in the local papers urging farmers to help out the Allied Cause. Titles of articles included captions such as "Europe Needs Food" and "War Bread Costly to British Government." These types of articles were placed side by side with instructions such as "How to make Oatmeal Bread" so as not to use up the wheat needed for the war effort. The most common caption that came with these notices included the phrase "Food Will Win the War." These notices concerning ways to save food to be used for the war effort ran in nearly every issue of the *Marshall Herald* in 1918. Always included were articles concerning how farmers should tend to their fields and the importance of the farmer.

Despite the call for all able-bodied men in Clark County to serve their country, there was also the need to have farm laborers to work the fields. Every so often when the *Marshall Herald* would publish letters home soldiers would subtly address this issue. Ora L. Bohn wrote in one of his letters home that he would try and get a furlough to come home and help with the harvest due to the lack of "hired help" available in the community but he did not believe it would be granted.[53] Bohn was not alone, as many other soldiers wrote home inquiring as to how the harvest would be in the upcoming year.[54]

The pressures placed on American farmers to produce were directly related to the agricultural problems in the fields of Europe during the war. Many of the Clark County enlisted men in France wrote about the agricultural deficiencies there compared to back home. Sergeant Harry Dahl in his letters said that he noticed only young boys and elderly men working the fields in France and saw absolutely no young men in the rural communities of France. Of course this is reflective of the number of young men serving their country in Europe at the time.

Dahl later noted that he saw the French people as a bit backwards. He wrote that he slept in a barn built in 1774 that was new compared to other buildings in the area and that the farm equipment used in the fields, which had very poor soil, was ancient.[55] Other soldiers from Clark County mentioned the differences they perceived between France and the United States. Sidney Cox noted:

> I believe Germany would have been all over France by now if it hadn't been for the good old U.S.A. France is a good country all right but they are a hundred years behind time. They devote too much time to wine and women. They have many acres of ground which are uncultivated when they might be raising useful farm products.[56]

Cox's perception of the French coincided with the common view the American troops had of the French as being a dirty, backwards type of people who needed to be bailed out by the Americans. Despite these negative views many Clark County boys had of the French they did sympathize with the people there.

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[52] "The Farm Bureau," *Marshall Herald*, February 13, 1918.
[53] "Letters from Ft. Baker California," *Marshall Herald*, April 3, 1918.
[54] Various letters published in the Clark County Democrat throughout 1918. Located in Clark County Democrat Binder at Geneology Library, Marshall Illinois.
[55] "An Interesting Letter From a Soldier Boy in France," *Clark County Democrat*, October 30, 1918.
[56] "Somewhere in France," *Clark County Democrat*, October 2, 1918.

Dahl acknowledged to his parents that "you cannot at home realize what these people have and are going through."[57]Cox also sympathized and helped to rebuild houses in France by cutting down forests to harvest the timber needed for re-building. Although he notes that "their houses are very old and all built of stone and roofed with tile," lumber was still needed for beams and floors.[58] The American soldiers of that area, being far behind the firing lines, were helping to harvest the timber, due to the lack of young men in the area, who were off in the trenches. It appears in Cox's letter that the timber was being used to simply help rebuild the old houses, but it is unclear whether this was due to age of the structures or if they were damaged by the war.

Some soldiers wrote of the different experiences felt they had as they found themselves in a foreign land for the first time. These soldiers were sent overseas to fight but were often enthralled by this new, strange, and exotic world of the area they were in. Thomas Livsley noted that while stationed in France he saw people of many races working together. According to the *Casey Banner Times* Livsley saw that "the French have employed negroes, Arabs, Turks, Chinese, and peoples of Europe in all labor of this kind and the American skilled labor was all that was necessary to bring into existence the modern construction work that now transforms France into an awakened country."[59]

Livsley was also one of many who mentioned the work ethics of the French. Livsley said "the French are slow. Their methods of doing daily tasks are so primitive that to the energetic Americans who strive for new things constantly quiet the persistence with which this nation clings to the past is unsatisfactory.[60] Livsley, like so many other American soldiers, felt that France would be lost in the war if it was not for the American presence in Europe. The apparently backwards nature of the French in the eyes of the Americans led them to believe that they were in fact saving the primitive French people instead of fighting alongside them. Despite the contempt that some of the men had for the French the war did open up experiences to the men of Clark County who would have never seen the world outside of their hometown.

Grendel Bennett described how he was given orders while stationed in Hoboken, New Jersey to drive a "Liberty truck" filled with ammunition down Broadway Street in New York City across the new Manhattan Bridge to see how it handled.[61] An experience such as this must have seemed like a dream to these men who had never seen a city bigger than Marshall or Terre Haute. Some of these rural boys who went overseas commented on how different the countryside was. Dennis Pendleton noted how he saw the Argonne Forest and wondered how it would have been before the war, and also noted the mountainous areas that were quite different than the land in Illinois.[62]

When the men were sent off to European battlefields, some Clark County women went along too, serving as nurses. One of these nurses, Amy Smith, is recognized as being the first female member of the American Legion in Illinois, receiving her membership after the war.[63] Some other nurses that served from Clark County included Jessie Spaugh and Blanche Liffick. After leaving the county for Ellis Island in late February of 1918, they arrived in France in mid April 1918 to help care for the wounded.[64]

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[57] "Two Interesting Letters From Boys in France," *Clark County Democrat*, October 2, 1918.
[58] "Busy Behind Front Line," *Clark County Democrat*, August 7, 1918.
[59] "Tells Interesting Experiences Overseas," *Casey Banner Times*, 1918.
[60] "The French Are Slow," *Casey Banner Times*, 1918
[61] "Letters From Training Camps," *Clark County Democrat*, July 31, 1918.
[62] "A Bunch of Letters From Boys in France," *Clark County Democrat*, December 18, 1918.
[63]Ortmann, L. K. "Clark County Hall of Honor" Last Modified 2005.
http://genealogytrails.com/ill/clark/military/ww1/ww1_vets.html
[64] "Nurses Leave for War Service," *Clark County Democrat*, February 27, 1918 and

One letter from Clark County nurse Beulah Prust recalled her experiences in the war up to that point. Prust described how explosions and air raids were something they lived with every day and she often had to put the gas masks on the patients herself. One time, to her horror, she saw a giant unexploded bomb left from the air raid the night before. In her letter Prust notes with pride how her sense of duty keeps her at post even when the healthy soldiers take cover in the cellar during air raids. She was adamant about caring for the wounded soldiers, at the hospital unit, as she states, about five miles behind enemy lines. Prust also made fun of her dress, that included a British gas mask and iron helmet. She also joked, "I know Vogue would like to put me in their magazine" wearing her uniform.[65]

The contributions of Clark County to the Great War were probably similar to most small rural counties across the nation in 1918. Clark County sent many men as well as women overseas to fight for the Allied cause. Many of these residents had never left the county before, let alone set foot on foreign soil. As the war came to a close, Clark County residents were able to experience the horrors of the war that had been going on in Europe for several years.

In this total war, the home front in Clark County contributed in any way it could to the war effort. Bond drives, Patriot rallies, and collections for the Red Cross were held across the county, so those not fighting could contribute to the war cause. Many soldiers were aware of these contributions and mentioned how important they were in helping the boys overseas and to help win the war.[66]

Through Victory Gardens and accelerated crops, Clark County also made a significant contribution to the war effort and helped to feed the Allied troops. Being a small, yet agriculturally rich, area, Clark County was able to exploit its fertile soil and contribute to the war effort to a degree that many places in the country could not. Clark County through the simple act of feeding the troops gave the Allies a huge advantage over the Axis powers.

As the 100th anniversary of the Great War approaches, it remains a war that, although remembered, is somewhat overlooked compared with WWII and Vietnam. America's role in the war only lasted about a year and a half, but its impact on small communities was felt for decades after. Fourteen men gave their lives representing Clark County and the Honor Roll of those who served is displayed triumphantly in the Clark County Courthouse.

Although nearly forgotten, the men who served overseas in WWI never forgot the experiences they had, or the impact America had on the war effort. Without places such as Clark County the war may have been prolonged several years and the contributions of men and women from Clark County is something to be proud of. Although not as well documented as the Civil War and WWII, WWI had a significant impact on Clark County. This war, the first to which Clark County sent men and women to foreign lands, was an integral part of the county's history and should be studied further.

"Nurse Arrive in France," *Clark County Democrat*, April 17, 1918.

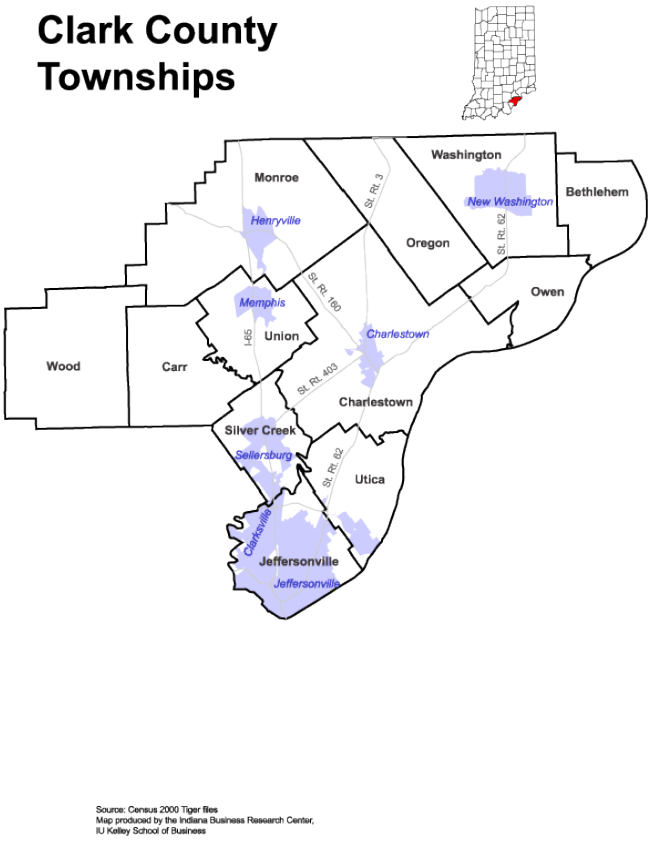
[65] "Letters from Nurse and Soldiers in France," *Clark County Democrat*, August 21, 1918.

[66] "Two Interesting Letters From Boys in France," *Clark County Democrat*, October 2, 1918.

Clark County, Indiana During World War One

Nichole Garbrough

Clark County, Indiana was just like many other regions in America during the early Twentieth Century- isolationist and agricultural. The First World War thrust America into events pertaining to the rest of the world. Clark County, Indiana perhaps made the biggest contributions toward the war effort in all of America because of its Quarter Master Depot located in Jeffersonville, as well as the Ohio Falls Car Manufacturing Company, also known as the American Car Foundry; the competitiveness of the residents towards Liberty Bond Sales; and the farming of the area that supplied the war effort, as well as the citizens of America, with many of its crops. Additionally, hundreds of men from the county entered into military service while those at home planted gardens and watched the newspaper daily for instructions on how to better the war effort.[1] The war provided ample opportunities for the residents of Clark County, Indiana, bringing them out of their isolation and into the forefront of America's war effort.[2] This paper, while discussing all of Clark County, will mostly focus on Jeffersonville and Clarksville, Indiana when it comes to the specific places mentioned.



On July 29, 1914 the first shots of the war rang as Austro-Hungary opened fire on Belgrade.[3] As countries all over eastern and western Europe and Japan, in addition to European colonies from Australia, New Zealand, and Africa joined in the conflict, America remained neutral until finally declaring war on April 6, 1917.[4] According to Eric Dorn Brose in *A History of the Great War*, America joined the fighting in Europe due to populism by the American people who were becoming more and more agitated by the actions of Germany.[5] After the sinking of the *Lusitania* on May 7, 1915, the American people still had no desire to enter the war, according to ballots cast in November 1916.[6] The publishing of the "Zimmermann

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[1] Kramer, Carl. *This Place We Call Home: A History of Clark County, Indiana.* Indiana University Press: Bloomington, IN, 2007, 291; *The Evening News* 1914-1918.

[2] Phillips, Clifton J. *Indiana in Transition: 1880-1920 The History of Indiana Vol. IV.* Indiana Historical Society, 1968, 586.

[3] Brose, Eric Dorn, *A History of the Great War: World War One and the International Crisis of the Early Twentieth Century.* Oxford University Press: New York, 2010, 75.

[4] Brose, 249.

[5] Ibid, 248-249.

[6] Ibid, 114-115, 248.

Telegram" on March 1, 1917, which stated that U-Boat warfare would begin once more, in addition to attacks on American ships that cost lives throughout March, outraged citizens who heralded support for American involvement in World War One.[7]

From 1914 to 1916, Clark County, Indiana was fighting a war of its own against tuberculosis and influenza.[8] While many areas were quarantined in order to efficiently prevent the disease, many were also sent to tuberculosis hospitals throughout Indiana and across the Ohio River to Louisville, Kentucky.[9] One such hospital was Waverly Hills Sanitarium, the largest tuberculosis hospital in Louisville.[10] Waverly Hills Sanitarium in 1911, when the photo on the previous page was taken, only held eight patients.[11] These patients were given plenty of room and fresh air, which was thought necessary to cure them of this ailment.[12] By 1924, this small hospital could no longer cope with the amount of patients needing treatment and was soon replaced by the larger structure still seen and visited today as one of the most haunted places in America.[13]

In addition to the efforts being made toward disease prevention in Clark County during 1914-1916, *The Evening News*, from Jeffersonville, and *The Jeffersonville Star* wrote constantly about divorce seekers, bigamy trials, escapes from the nearby prison in Jeffersonville, deaths of citizens, infrastructure plans such as bridges to cross the Ohio River and new highways, prohibition, teacher examinations, the upcoming bicentennial celebrations of Indiana becoming a state in 1916, and charities for the needy in Jeffersonville during cold weather.[14] Indiana, as a whole, was a conservative state which caused problems of progression during this reform era.[15] As seen in the contents of the local newspapers above, progressive reforms in Clark County, that also affected the rest of America at this time, tended to be moderate and only focused on welfare for the needy, public health, and prohibition.[16] Clark County was more worried about what was occurring within their own region, than the rest of America, let alone the world. As a matter of fact, from 1914 to 1916, the only information one would get on the war was through advertisements for *The Literary Digest*.[17] All of Indiana was largely isolationist during 1914.[18] The state, which had been very active during the Civil War and the War of 1812 was, by 1914, suffering a severe decline in militia enrollment, morale, and public support.[19] With very little exception, the people of Clark County, Indiana were simply not concerned with the war until America's direct involvement in 1917.

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[7] Ibid, 248-249.
[8] *The Evening News* 1914-1916, 1918.
[9] *The Evening News* 1914-1916.
[10] "Patients and nurses on porch, Louisville, Kentucky, 1922. *U of L University Libraries Digital Collections.* http://digital.library.louisville.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/cs/id/909/rec/7. Retrieved on November 22, 2012.
[11] "Waverly Hills Sanitarium". *U of L University Libraries Digital Collections.* http://digital.library.louisville.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/kyimages/id/130/rec/15. Retrieved on November 22, 2012.
[12] "Waverly Hills Sanitarium". *U of L University Libraries Digital Collections.* http://digital.library.louisville.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/kyimages/id/130/rec/15. Retrieved on November 22, 2012.
[13] "Waverly Hills History". *WaverlyHills.net.* http://www.waverlyhills.net/history.php. Retrieved on November 22, 2012.
[14] *The Evening News* 1914-1916; *The Jeffersonville Star*, 1916.
[15] Madison, James H. *The Indiana Way: A State History.* Indiana University Press and the Indiana Historical Society, Bloomington, IN, 1986, 222.
[16] Ibid, 222-223.
[17] *The Evening News* 1914-1916.
[18] Phillips, 591.
[19] Ibid.

With the outbreak of war in Europe, American newspapers immediately damned Germany for their harsh treatment of the Belgian people.[20] However, Clark County, Indiana had a large population of German immigrants in which German language newspapers still frequented the area and German church services were held on Sundays.[21] On September 24, 1914, *The Evening News* published a letter shared by Mrs. Glover L. Coots, a prominent funeral home director in Jeffersonville since the family began the business in the 1860s.[22] The letter was written by the aunt of Mrs. Coots, who lived in Bentheim Enlicheim, Hanover Germany.[23] Inside, Mrs. Coots' aunt describes the anxiety felt by the German people.[24] Her forty year old son had been called to arms and "the demand for men is universal and that men of all ages ranks and conditions are called to the colors. Even a hunch back, it is said, would not be exempt but any man with a head, two arms and two legs [are needed] for service."[25] Additionally, Mrs. Coots' aunt stated, "they were glad to know that at the time thing[s] were going favorably for the Germans but how long such a condition would continue she could not dare say."[26]

It is safe to say that at this time, persecution against German-Americans was not a problem in Clark County, Indiana. However, once America's involvement in the war caused the people to look more deeply into Germany's actions, Anti-German sentiment spread into Clark County.[27] Indiana began an intense drive for conformity during the war and looked for any signs of disloyalty.[28] In 1918, Jeffersonville High School stopped teaching German and St. Luke's Reformed Church ended their German speaking services.[29] As early as January 3, 1918 a specific story was detailed in *The Evening News* in which Carl Horst was arrested by U.S. Marshals for insulting remarks he had allegedly made against the United States.[30] Horst supposedly advised a young man to go to Mexico to escape the draft and even went so far as to agree to supply said man with maps or other conveniences that would allow him to reach Mexico.[31] According to this report, Horst also requested a few weeks earlier for permission to place a notice which stated that he was a German and requested that people not discuss the war with him.[32] Surely this request did not help his case, as even though he had lived in the United States for several years, he still identified himself as a German.[33] On January 29, 1918, "Notice of Registering of Aliens" was announced in *The Evening News* in which "German born men, who were not naturalized, were required to present themselves.[34] The article stated, "All Natives, Citizens, Denizens, or subjects of a Foreign Nation or Government, with which war has been declared, being Males of the age of 14 years and upward…to register as Alien Enemies."[35]

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[20] Ibid, 586-587.
[21] Kramer, 292.
[22] *The Evening News* "Letters From War Zone" September 24, 1914; "Serving Families Since 1860" *E. M. Coots' Sons Funeral Home.* http://www.cootsfuneralhome.com/history.htm. Retrieved on November 22, 2012.
[23] *The Evening News* "Letters From War Zone" September 24, 1914.
[24] Ibid
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Kramer, 292.
[28] Phillips, 600-601.
[29] Kramer, 292.
[30] *The Evening News* "German is Interned" January 3, 1918.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.
[34] *The Evening News* "Notice of Registering of Aliens" January 29, 1918.
[35] Ibid.

The penalty for not doing so was arrest.[36] Next on June 1, 1918, German women were called to register.[37] Some German immigrants were arrested; however, this occurred when they were found too close to the Jeffersonville Quarter Master Depot, as they were suspected of being spies.[38] One individual, who had been applying for a job but failed to have his registration card on hand, was arrested for vagrancy.[39]

The Baird Dairy in 1905 in Clarksville, Indiana
Printed with the permission of Jane Sarles

America's involvement in the First World War brought Clark County, Indiana, as well as the rest of the United States, out of it isolation and into curiosity about the events occurring in Europe. In 1918, Jeffersonville's newspaper *The Evening News* began running more information about the war, but still only in regards to how the community could help, what the community was doing for the home front, who was going off to war, who had been wounded or killed, and letters published from loved ones on the front lines. The opportunities that came out of the war for the citizens of Clark County were astounding and many took advantage of them while also feeling like they were doing their part for the war effort.

Clark County, Indiana was very agricultural in the early part of the Twentieth Century, especially when the war broke out. During the war, the farmers of Clark County saw an increase in their livelihoods. According to *Agricultural Development of Southeastern Indiana, 1840-1940*, Clark County saw a decrease in the number of farms in 1910 by 8.42% but an increase in the number of improved acres by 36.7%.[40] Clark County was the only county in the region to experience an improved acreage increase during this period.[41] The cash value of farms increased 46.7% and livestock value increased 76.3%.[42] World War I led to an increase in wheat production for Clark County farms of 45.8% while corn decreased only 7.9% and oats decreased 20.2%.[43] In addition, the value of farm machinery rose 170.9%.[44] After the war, in the 1920s, according to this same study, a retrenchment followed.[45] The number of improved acres decreased by 24% and the value of farmland, machinery, livestock, and market-garden also declined.[46] Grain decreased 35.3%, back to its pre-war levels.[47] Farmers had been encouraged to

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[36] Ibid.
[37] *The Evening News* "Alien German Women Next" June 1, 1918.
[38] *The Evening News* "Was Snooping at Q. M. Depot" March 28, 1918; "Aged German is Held for Inquiry" May 8, 1918.
[39] *The Evening News* "Aged German is Held for Inquiry" May 8, 1918.
[40] *Agricultural Development of Southeastern Indiana: 1840-1940.* Lead Agency: Indiana Department of Transportation. Prepared for: Community Transportation Solutions Louisville, KY. Prepared by: Gray & Pape, Inc. Project manager, Michael J. Matts: Cincinnati, OH, January 13, 2009, 8.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid, 9.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.

plant and had borrowed heavily in order to buy more land and equipment.[48] After the war, the government cancelled their food contracts and prices plummeted, leaving farmers in financial straits.[49] Farmers were hurt by the collapse of prices but the percentage of farm decreases were not mentioned in the 1920 census.[50] However, it can be seen by these statistics that the farmers of Clark County helped the war effort in their increased production of wheat, which was much needed during the war as often portrayed in *The Evening News*, when daily orders were sounded out to conserve flour and eggs, and "Save the Wheat".[51]

The Evening News and *The Jeffersonville Star* gave daily accounts of the war effort and what the citizens on the home front were to do to preserve the country while the men on the front lines fought for the country. Both papers gave information on the nation's news, the local news, and society news; however, international news was highly absent. *The Jeffersonville Star* gave information on the bicentennial celebrations in 1916 for the state of Indiana, including the events in Indianapolis, as well as the parade in Clark County.[52] However, *The Jeffersonville Star* also gave the first information I came across about the United States' call to arms on July 25, 1916, nine months before America declared war.[53] Unfortunately, the only microfilm left of *The Jeffersonville Star*, pertaining to this period, is that of 1916. *The Evening News* was much more helpful in this research as its records had been saved in the Jeffersonville Public Library from 1914 until mid-1916, in which both this half period of 1916 and all of 1917 have been obviously stolen from the collection. The box, which should contain the microfilm, is there and clearly labeled, but is tattered, torn, and empty inside.


SCHEDULE,
DAY BY DAY
FOR
HOOVERIZED
WEEK

MONDAY
Wheatess
Breakfast is meatless

TUESDAY
Meatless
Breakfast is wheatless

WEDNESDAY
Wheatless
Breakfast is meatless

THURSDAY
Fat Saving
Breakfast is wheatless and meatless

FRIDAY
Breakfast is wheatles and meatless

SATURDAY
Porkless
Breakfast is wheatless and meatless

SUNDAY
Wheat saving day
Breakfast is wheatless and meatless

Eat mixed cereal breads and economize in the use of sugar and fuel every day.

(Paste this schedule on on a card and hang it in the kitchen)

The Evening News in 1918 gave daily accounts of how to help the war effort, those going off to war, letters from men on the front lines, men wounded, and men who had died. The newspaper tended to care more about the effects the war had on the local region rather than a worldly perspective. Much of the information written in *The Evening News* is obviously that which was sent to all local newspapers from the national arena in order to help the war effort. An example is, "Join the U.S Army or Navy Now. Your Country Needs You!" This advertisement was visible almost every day in the first half of the 1918 papers.[54] It was located in the upper left hand corner of the news and was at times followed with information regarding the local war effort, such as "Schedule Day by Day for Hooverized Week" (meaning the meal plans Herbert Hoover had specified as national food administrator, in which he planned out proposed rations of daily meals in order to save food to send off to the

[48] Kramer, 291.
[49] Kramer, 291.
[50] *Agricultural Development of Southeastern Indiana: 1840-1940.* Lead Agency: Indiana Department of Transportation. Prepared for: Community Transportation Solutions Louisville, KY. Prepared by: Gray & Pape, Inc. Project manager, Michael J. Matts: Cincinnati, OH, January 13, 2009; Kramer, 293.
[51] *The Evening News* June 10, 1918.
[52] *The Jeffersonville Star* 1916.
[53] *The Jeffersonville Star.* "Answering Call to Join Colors" July 25, 1916.
[54] *The Evening News* "Join the U.S. Army or Navy Now" January 5, 1918.

Allies relief efforts) or "War Garden Committee Director Named for each Ward in City."[55] This information was intended to give the citizens of Clark County a rule guide, if you will, to assist in the war effort. In addition to wheat, meat, and fat restrictions, residents were often asked to lessen their flour, sugar, bread, and egg intake.[56] No information was found regarding if the people heeded these proposed regulations, however the pride the newspaper took in relaying the actions the population did take for the war effort seems to allude to the possibility that the people were indeed taking these proposed actions seriously.

The Evening News proudly displayed the many ways in which the people of Clark County, Indiana supported the war effort. Remembering that *The Evening News* for 1917 is missing, the earliest papers we have cataloged at the Jeffersonville Public Library show daily the many ways in which people could and were helping the war effort. On January 3, 1918, *The Evening News* detailed the many drives chartered by the Red Cross including a membership and knitting drive.[57] *The Evening News* would also, practically daily, announce the activities of the Red Cross within the county. The many actions of women, especially at this time, were popular in order to show their pride and to continue to get other women involved in the war effort. Articles relayed events such as food canning drives, gardening (in order to feed your own family off of your own produce rather than the government supplies), sending books to the soldiers, and training for women to be in charge of big registration drives for voluntary service.[58] These drives were huge affairs as women were often pressured to register:

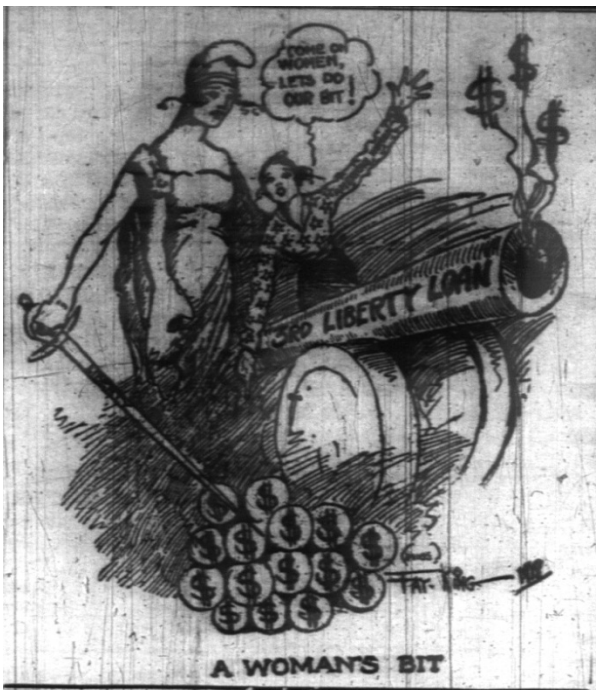
> …no loyal Indiana woman, understanding the situation would refuse to register for service, and that they women who refused to register after the matter had been made clear should not be permitted to do so, as her registration under duress would be of small value and would constitute an insult to the United States government which has asked the women to register as a patriotic act made necessary by the demands of the war and the needs of the hour.[59]

[55] *The Evening News* "Schedule Day by Day for Hooverized Week" February 11, 1918; "War Garden Committee" April 1, 1918; "Herbert Hoover" *Spartacus Educational* http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAhoover.htm. Retrieved on November 23, 2012.
[56] *The Evening News* 1918.
[57] *The Evening News* "Awaiting Reports From Chairman" January 3, 1918.
[58] *The Evening News* "Big Drive For Indiana Starts April 19" February 28, 1918; "Girls Canning Club" July 2, 1918; "We Want More Books For Soldiers" July 30, 1918.
[59] *The Evening News* "Big Drive For Indiana Starts April 19" February 28, 1918.

Children were also involved in the war effort, as seen in *The Evening News*. Children were organized in the Juniors Red Cross.[60] This organization was added to the school curriculum and would include "learning the lessons of 'true' patriotism" as girls sewed and knit and boys would do various work.[61] Additionally the Boy Scouts passed out pamphlets giving official information on the war to the residents.[62] These pamphlets included information on "How the War Came to America", "The Government of Germany", "The War of Self-Defense" and "American Interest in Popular Government Abroad", among others.[63] All these actions showed the pride of the people, the pressure of the people, the enforcement as well as the encouragement of all, including the young and especially the females to help the war effort.

Sellersburg, Indiana	
Bath towels	6
Hand towels	15
Handkerchiefs	65
Napkins	44
Sheets	17
Ladies' of St. Luke's Church, Jeffersonville	
Bath towels	2
Napkins	1
Sheets	19
Hand Towels	2
Total Number of articles collected	
Bath towels	822
Hand towels	768
Handkerchiefs	1065
Napkins	668
Sheets	275
Pillow Slips	38
Wash Cloths	12
Tray Covers	3
Pillow	1
Cash $625.61	
Respectfully submitted,	

The calls for patriotism was a highly motivating factor to join the service even on the home front, because, as seen in the case of women volunteers, one could be ostracized for not partaking in the war effort. Articles such as, "Appeal to Patriotism is Issued" which was only asking that the citizens "Do Without Wheat As Nearly As Possible"[64] as well as "An Appeal to the Patriotism of Students" calling for the "young people of America . . . to aid in the defense of Democracy and Civilization . . . to volunteer in all lines of service"[65] could obviously have been an influential technique in recruiting people of all ages to join in the home front efforts. The need to show your patriotism or rather disprove any unpatriotic perceptions placed upon you seemed to be a highly motivating factor behind the war effort in Clark County, Indiana.



***The Evening News* May 6, 1918**

Another interesting motivating factor that is seen quite often in these 1918 newspapers is the competitiveness of the residents. This competitiveness was also seen when advertising the sale of Liberty Bonds and War Stamps. On April 23, 1918 *The Evening News* announced the progress Indiana had made thus far in the Liberty Bond subscriptions stating that "Indiana is Well Up in Front", evening announcing that Clark County was "over the top" and "still going strong" in their state quotas

[60] *The Evening News* "Children's Red Cross Organized" February 21, 1918.
[61] *The Evening News* "Children's Red Cross Organized" February 21, 1918.
[62] *The Evening News* "Boy Scouts On Boosting Expedition" January 30, 1918.
[63] Ibid.
[64] *The Evening News* "Appeal to Patriotism is Issued" April 1, 1918.
[65] *The Evening News* "An Appeal to the Patriotism of Students" March 28, 1918.

however, if you read on it is specified that while some townships in Clark County were over their respective quotas, the entire county as a whole was behind.[66] As seen previously the newspaper took competition to a more local level between counties. Yet there was always a prize to be had and aspire to for the citizens of Clark County, as well as the rest of the state. The Honor Flag was one such prize that was given to those districts that met their quotas.[67] An April 17, 1918 article stated, "To win an Honor Flag the county must not only subscribe its quota of Bonds but must report a number of individual subscriptions equal to seven and one half per cent of its population."[68] While Clark County residents seemed eager to help in the war effort, competitiveness was a great strategy to keep the citizens involved and active.

The Evening News often announced how much had been collected and what these collections would be used for. This was another great strategy for keeping people involved, interested, and knowing that their work was going to good use. One such example of this is pictured to the right, in which items that had been collected for the Red Cross were posted as well as descriptions of how they would go to use.[69] This strategy was also used to purchase Liberty Bonds as seen on March 28, 1918 in an article entitled, "What Your Bond Purchase Will Accomplish".[70] This article went on to state: that, "One fifty dollar bond will buy trench knives for a rifle company, or 23 hand grenades, or 14 rifle grenades, or 37 cases of surgical instruments for enlisted men's belts, or 10 cases of surgical instruments for officers belt."[71] The article continued by describing what a hundred dollar bond will do for the war effort and so on and so forth.[72] This strategy was very helpful not only to keep people interested but to keep the donations coming effectively.

Yet another strategy, often times used during times of conflict universally, was propaganda. *The Evening News* was no exception. In the April 23rd issue, one such propaganda was printed, "Loan Now, Or Give Your All To Kaiserism Later" which declared "If we withhold our dollars…we are nurturing the curse of kaiserism."[73] While I was unable to obtain any of the Boy Scout pamphlets distributed, mentioned previously, I am sure those as well contained propaganda to show the benevolence of the United States and the wickedness of Germany.

The Evening News frequently included information regarding men being drafted and soldiers sent off to the front lines. Indiana's drafted men mobilized at Camp Zachary Taylor, near Louisville, KY.[74] Beginning on January 3, 1918 the headlines stated "National Guard Off To France" in which "Movement of the national guard in the United States toward Europe may be expected at any time."[75] May 30, 1918 headlines stated, "Leave For Over There Very Soon" in which

> The friends of many Jeffersonville and Clark County young men who have been sent to Camp Zachary Taylor for training will be interested in the following Washington Special:

[66] *The Evening News* "Indiana is Well Up in Front" April 23, 1918.
[67] Ibid..
[68] *The Evening News* "Liberty Loan Subscriptions" April 17, 1918.
[69] *The Evening News* "Red Cross" October 28, 1918.
[70] *The Evening News* "What Your Bond Purchase Will Accomplish" March 28, 1918.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid.
[73] *The Evening News* "Loan Now, Or Give Your All To Kaiserism Later" April 23, 1918.
[74] Phillips, 607.
[75] *The Evening News* "National Guard Off To France" January 3, 1918.

> The Lincoln (84th) Division that will soon be transferred from Camp Zachary aylor (sic.) to Camp Sherman is hraded (sic.) for France.[76]

Information regarding specific individuals from the area also donned the society pages, if not the front page, such as on January 4, 1918 "Will Soon Go To Europe" about Milton B. Campbell, from the Aviation Corps.[77] The society section of this same paper also mentioned Finley Dunevy from Jeffersonville who "has passed an examination for the aviation corps and has been sent to the Great Lakes, Illinois training station."[78] On June 1, 1918 the society pages in *The Evening News* discussed:

> Miss Bernadine Wolpert formerly of this city but more recently of Louisville departed this morning for Camp Meade, Maryland, where she will remain for a few weaks (sic.) training and then she will sail for France. Miss Wolpert was graduated from the city hospital as a trained nurse May the 18th, 1917. She has since that time been on cases in Louisville and surrounding country of a serious nature and has proved herself an exceptionally good nurse, especially in cases where operations were necessary.
>
> Miss Wolpert is a full fledged registered Red Cross nurse. She will go tao (sic.) France with Dr. Irwin Abell Unit of 100 nurses; Miss Rosa Rapp also of this city but now at Camp Lewis, Washington, D. C. will be in the party when the sail and about half the nurses who were graduated from thea (sic.) city hospital this month will go….[79]

Letters from the front line were often recorded in *The Evening News*. February 28, 1918 included a letter from Capt. Daniel Glossbrenner that told of the conditions in Flanders.[80] The letter was written on January 27, 1918 and did not disclose any information relative to the American troops but rather on the British Isles to get some ideas about the artillery in action.[81] Glossbrenner wrote:

> …the recreation and eating rendezvous for the officers in the Battery. It is a little steel culvert in the ruins of an old building. It is 'most extraordinary' . . . how men can exist and make themselves cosy and cheerful in such ruins.
>
> We were sitting at the table day before yesterday and heard the familiar whirr of "Fritz's" shell overhead. He was only shelling the remains of a railway station which was about a hundred and fifty yards in the rear of our dining room. He dropped only twelve shells. In the afternoon I went over to the see the effects and investigate the shell holes.
>
> You have been told and still hear of 'Flanders mud' but you can't appreciate how nice old Indiana dust is until you see this sea. One can hardly realize the devastation and havoc wrought in the battle zones.
>
> I had the pleasure of sending my 'compliments' by shell route to the Hun the other day. I also made a trip to the line under fire . . . One has to recall all of his

[76] *The Evening News* "Leave For Over There Very Soon" May 30, 1918.
[77] *The Evening News* "Will Soon Go To Europe" January 4, 1918.
[78] *The Evening News* "Accepted For Aviation Corps" January 4, 1918.
[79] The Evening News "Will Help Boys Over There" June 1, 1918.
[80] *The Evening News* "Letter From Capt. Daniel Glossbrenner" February 28, 1918.
[81] Ibid.

athletic training in order to enjoy the dives, rolls and twists which are necessary to 'good health' in shelled area. We finally landed at our observation station from where I reviewed the Hun lines, some two to five hundred yards away. He is quite a worker but he does it most at night. The same out methodical German mind sticks out in all his lines and action . . .

One of the Battery officers went to a [observation] balloon the other day and went up. Of course the Hun got a direct hit on the cable and the occupants found themselves going upwards; they both jumped from 4200 feet and 5400 feet respectively, and landed in out lines safely . . .

We enjoyed (?) a whiff of gas the other night and if you want to imagine one with a gas helmet on take a good look at the next rail welder working on some of the crossings downtown.

I've been traveling in rather high army society, such as it is Yesterday I visited tawo (sic.) Infantry Generals in the front line, each of which was comfortably located in old Hun 'pill boxes'. A pill box is a concrete Hun dug out which is generally of shell proof construction. These pill boxes when in the Hun's hands were electrically lighted and and elaborately furnished. Of course they move without their household belongings as in the above cases . . .

We play bridge quite a good deal and some of the English officers can play too by the way….

I am feeling fine and getting lots of exercise.[82]

On July 18, 1918 *The Evening News* posted a letter by Capt. Lee Sparks who was with the 24th Engineers Corps in France.[83]

We are settled down to work at last in one of the nginned (sic.) Depots but a little too far back of the lines to suit me…. I also landed in another city of considerable size in the early morning and could find no one at all who could speak English. Results-I could not get in a hotel and had to sleep in a chair in a railroad station with some French soldiers. In the morning I had a hard time getting washed, breakfast, etc. While they had a buffet and wash room at the station, nothing opened until 8 o'clock and my train left at 8:23. The French don't know how to get up early and don't seem to worry much about work.

All I have seen of France has been very orderly however, the farms and villages ver yneat (sic.) with no rubbish piles at all. The whole country is very beautiful with vivid colorings and flowers. Houses are all of stone and fences of stone, hedge or earth.

My health is excellent. We are in a very beautiful section and now it is warm and balmy although at first it was very cold and wet.

We have good food but plain and very comfortable quarters alongside of which Camp Dix was palatial. I am in a wooden hut with two Lieutenants and a Medical Lieutenant. We have a stove and electric light, also a home made bath tub made of a larbe (sic.) tobacco box lined with tin. Wood and good water are scarce but we get by.

[82] Ibid.

[83] *The Evening News* "From One of Our Boys Over Seas" July 18, 1918.

> Some of the old towns that I have seen are very interesting and the people are very cordial but rarely do we find any one speak English. We are quite away from a city with only little villages around. We are quite away from a city with only little villages around. We are handling great stores of equipment and I judge may be here for some time. You could not comprehend the enormity of this depot only by contact with it.
>
> Life in a depot on lines of communication is rather hum drum and monotonous but I am getting along nicely and am well. Once day it is hot and the next is cold and damp. The rye has headed and we are getting good vegetables and cauliflower, lettuce, etc.
>
> If the doubtful ones at home could see the many women here in mourning and know as we are beginning to know how the French have and are now offering and using their man power in our cause, could know what it means to be rationed and how terribly inflicting the wages of war are, they would not hesitate to give all of their assistance towad (sic.) bringing this business to an early ending.
>
> We are far enough back to be fairly safe from air raids. aHve (sic.) a big German prison camp here, but they are the most harmless things when captive. They are well treated and take to prison life like a duck to water. No danger of them strolling off. They would not go far for fear of not being able to find their way back.
>
> Sunday night two other officers and myself were royally entertained at dinner by a peasant family. The French do take life lightly and enjoy themselves excepting when the war is mentioned, then become serious. The grandmother in this home has lost three of her four sons in the war, and the fourth has been in a hospital for nine months, being gassed. The husbands of two of her daughters ae (sic.) at the front also.
>
> Has a good swim yesterday in the Cher, the first of the season. The American boys swim in the river a good deal but have never sen (sic.) any French do that, so I asked one of the interpreters the other day why the Frtnch (sic.) did not take to swimming. He replied that they did before the war, but now the old men do not care to swim, and there are no young men here to go swimming.
>
> We have two sure enough American women at the Y. M. C. A. and it is good to see them after seeing so much of the peasant type.
>
> This stevedore work is bringing our men out. They are getting to be a husky lot and as tan and brown as leather. I weighed 145 pounds this past week which is 22 more than when I went into service.
>
> There is a French training camp near where they make fit the physicallp (sic.) unfit. The French are not wasting anything, and we may have to do the same.[84]

This paper, of the same date, had another letter from the front lines by Pvt. John G. Schimpff "of this city, written 'somewhere in Fance (sic.) …it will be seen that Mr. Schimpff is fully imbued with the conquering spirit of America."[85]

> One could write a very interesting lette (sic.) were it not for the rigid prohibition of the names of ships, places, countries and movements.

[84] Ibid.

[85] *The Evening News"*Letter Says Kaiser Will 'Get His'" July 18, 1918.

> The one most perceptible observation 'over here' is the very remarkable and wonderful symmetry and uniformity of land plotting, construction and materials used.
>
> I must conform to regulation by giving address within body of letter: Pvt. John G. Schimpff. Co., F., 112th Infantry, American E. F. via New York. The beauty and grandeur of landscape in 'certain countries' over here actually defy description!
>
> I have been over here some time. The weather has been and ideal (sic.). The American boys are easily acclimated to this climate and all are happy, but those who are not yet in action are eager to do their bit to crush the Kaiser and his coterie.
>
> Have conversed with many of the British, Scotch, Belgians, and French troops and the facts they relate regarding the inhuman diabolical, atrocious and un-natural crimes committed by the Kaiser and his 'Boches' are fully corroborated and verified by the peasants, whose veracity and integrity are unquestioned! The most skeptical who hesitate to accept the terrible crimes committed by the German butchers as published and otherwise disseminated as facts, or give credence to their source, would be firmly convinced beyond any doubt if they were 'over here'.
>
> The American boys will never retun (sic.) home satisfied and contented with the mere 'hauling down of Hindenburg's flag' and the subjugation of the Kaiseh (sic.) and his coterie of out-laws, but their objective is to mete out that 'what the Kaiser has bought for himself' and personally, in my opinion, he will eventually get it!
>
> The 'Yanks' are giving a good account of themselves and when the last page of the history of this conflict is written it will be found that Uncle Sam's 'Sammies' decided the issue![86]

September 10, 1918's edition of *The Evening News* had a letter from Sergt. Fred B. Vawter.[87] Vawter's letter was written on August 17th from Italy and at this time was the only Clark County boy in Italy with the American Expeditionary Force.[88]

> There are a great many very interesting things in this country but I haven'e (sic.) seen anything yet that was so awfully wonderful, that we could not beat it in the U. S. any time almost anywhere.
>
> I saw quite a bit Tlps (sic.) [Alps] Mountains and some of the most prominent of them and they aren't one, two, three with our Rockies or even the hills and bluffs along the upper Mississippi, as far as scenery is concerned.
>
> I made a little visit a couple of weeks ago to one of the larger cities and saw one of those old arenas, where in ancient times old Nero used to celebrate on some of his sprees. They claim it was built about 400 B. C. and it sure looks like it. It was where Romeo and Juliet put on their famous show, and the place that they used for the killing of Christians and prisoners by turning the lions in on them.
>
> Some of the old fairy tales (?), I read in ancient history seem a little more real after viewing the place where the stuff was pulled off . . .
>
> As to the war, I have nothing to offer; you get the news as quick as we do and sometimes I guess a little bit quicker.

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[86] Ibid.
[87] *The Evening News* "Hun Sees That There's A Difference" September 10, 1918.
[88] Ibid.

> The Americans are very much admired over here as fighters, even the Huns are beginning to realize the difference between the real Yank and the ones they were told about.
>
> Don't forget to boose (sic.) [boost] the Red Cross and Y. M. C. A. all you can, for they are certainly a great benefit to us over here. I really do not know what we would without them. On our moves all along the line when we would be tired out and about ready to crowd a little, the train would stop some place, and there would be a real American lady ready with hot coffee, a little bit of candy or a smoke or something that would fix us up for a few more hours. In one place we arriver (sic.) later than we expected, and it was about 4 o'clock when everybody unloaded, about half asleep and half mad, and there at the station were the Red Cross women, who has been waiting all night, with hot soup, cakes and coffee. They have a place where we can go and get a lemonade or a cup of coffee most anytime….[89]

Sergt. Fred B. Vawter was a member of the Infantry and was awarded the Italian Medal of Valor for an exploit at Tagliamento River on November 3, 1918.[90] Vawter also spent some time in the Commons, Austria and Cattaro Dalmatia and Mandres, France, a rural village in the High Department of the Marne near Chaumont.[91]

On September 14, 1918, Ernest F. Righthouse wrote of his experience in France as a Private in Company G., Ammunition Train, American Expeditionary Forces.[92]

> We left Camp Upton just a month after the day that I went to Camp Taylor. The trip across the water was rather manotous (sic.) [monotonous]. It was just eat, sleep read and play cards. We slept in hammocks.
>
> We ran into one of the largest cities in England one morning, unloaded in the afternoon, then walked seven miles to a rest camp. The walk was rather exerting after loafing on the ship so long. It also rained all the way out and all night, and when we left the camp in the morning it was pouring down rain. We were put in a yotrain (sic.) [toy train] and went to another rest camp, riding eight hours and hiking four miles to the final destination, where we arrived about 3 a. m. We stayed there that night and the next night, but at noon following left and boarded a ship around 5 p. m.. were on board about 5 hours and then unloaded on French soil. There we hiked to a rest camp for the night and next morning got on board another toy train, which took us to as pretty a spot as you would care to see.
>
> We are living in 'pup' tents and the weather is ideal for tentlife. The days are a little warm, but the nights are fine. In England it was nothing but rain but here there has been only a light sprinkle, in fact the corps are burning up for want of rain.
>
> In England I did not see a field of ground that was idle, even the right of way along the railroads was planted in the potatoes. Everything was green there. The place where we now are, is practically a private park with shrubbery and trees everywhere.
>
> From the papers we are getting it looks as if the Germans were going back pretty fast, but I think we will see some of the fun before winter. At least I hope so.

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[89] Ibid.

[90] "The Infantry in WWI" *WorldWar1Vets.com.* http://www.wwvets.com/Infantry.html. Retrieved on November 24, 2012.

[91] Ibid.

[92] *The Evening News* "Will Handle Munitions" September 14, 1918.

> We are breaking camp now and have a hike before us. I think we will get some real training then at a large camp. Believe me, I am making my pack as small as I can! I have seen some wounded merican (sic.) boys, who say, that the slogan is the front is: "H----, Heaven or Hoboken by Christmas." (sic.)[93]

A second letter is also placed in this issue from Pvt. Rigthhouse dated August 14, 1918.

> I am eating every chance I get…. When I think of home, once or a dozen times a day, the first thing that comes to my mind is: Eats! Believe me, you will have to have a cellar full. I think all the fellows think the same way about it as I do.
>
> We have moved from the camp from which I wrote last. This camp is not so good. There is about 5 inches of dirty sand covering the place, very hard to walk in. Our foot drill is about over and we have a few of our mules and some horses and more coming….[94]

On November 28, 1918, *The Evening News* discussed the events of the war in France through a Jeffersonville soldier.[95] Robert Perkins offered a realistic description of the war by firstly offering his apologizes to his mother for not having the time to write as his corps had "been in the hottest battle along the front."[96] The article continued:

> He says he does not like to write of what he saw to his mother and thinks it is better unwritten, and even if he did write, he thinks, it would not give a true picture of what really happened.
>
> As to relics, he says: "I do not take any great interest in them.
>
> What I really want, is to set my feet once more on good United States soil, but not until we are quite through here."
>
> He is feeling fine, and in spite of warfare is getting fat….[97]

On November 26, 1918, fifteen days after the war was pronounced over, a letter from Pvt. Raymond Doherty, from the 29th Division Infantry, was discussed in the paper as his parents had been worried and had attempted to get news from him after hearing he had been wounded.[98] The letter was mailed on October 21, 1918 but was written on October 7, 1918.[99] A postscript was added to the letter to explain this time in between the writing of the letter and it being mailed, "I have been in the thick aof (sic.) it and got maine (sic.) but I am out again now."[100] A previous letter had been written on Doherty's behalf on October 14, 1918 and only said that he had been wounded and was in a hospital and hoped to get along alright.[101] It did not indicate the nature of the wounds beyond expressing a hope that they would not be

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[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid.
[95] *The Evening News* "Bunch of Letters Tell The Story" November 28, 1918.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid.
[98] *The Evening News* "In Thick And Got His; Out Again" November 26, 1918; "Raymond F. Doherty" *Find A Grave.* http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GSmid=47519998&GRid=71657272&. Created by: Chris Brady, June 20, 2011. Retrieved on November 24, 2012.
[99] *The Evening News* "In Thick And Got His; Out Again" November 26, 1918.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid.

serious.[102] The definite word, from Doherty himself, a week later had set their minds at rest. A third letter and postcard by Doherty was discussed on November 27, 1918 in which the postcard had been written on October 1, 1918 and the letter mailed on November 6, 1918.[103] The letter told more of his wound which consisted of an injury to the knee.[104] The letter stated that Doherty had been bedridden for nineteen days in an evacuation hospital but was soon to leave for a base hospital.[105] Doherty wrote that he felt all right except that he had to keep his knee moving which hurt him a good deal.[106]

Another letter was discussed in the November 26th issue from Capt. David Cohen, from the medical corps, who was reported sick with pneumonia.[107] The letter stated that he had recovered.[108] Earlier attempts to find more on his status was futile and rumors were even being spread of that he had died but this newest letter proved that false.[109]

Throughout the war, news of the wounded and casualties of Clark County soldiers had made their way to the front pages of *The Evening News*, this was most especially true in the weeks following the end of the war on November 11, 1918. Capt. Stephen B. Elrod wrote a letter regarding his wounds that was printed on December 4, 1918.[110] Elrod's letter was written on November 11, 1918 stating that he was still confined in Base Hospital No. 26 where he had been since the first of October.[111] Capt. Elrod wrote, "There is nothing whatever the matter with my head, my nerves nor my appetite the trouble is purely one of physical exhaustion."[112] The article continues:

> From the time of his arrival in France in June, he has been at the front with the Field Hospital of the 26th Division which has been in the hardest fighting in the Chateau Thierry drive, later at St. Mihiel and still later in the Argonne Forest where he broke down completely.
>
> Dr. Elrod is greatly disappointed at not being able to stay at the front until the end of the war. At the time he wrote the last letter it was then presumed that he would be able to travel to southern France on sick leave about the middle of November. He was supposed to return to the Base Hospital about the first of December for examination and further assignment to duty if able. 'But who knows' he writes 'but they may be sending the convalescents home by that time….'[113]

The Evening News on November 26, 1918 also wrote about Jeffersonville's Clarence I. Sparks who had been on the slightly wounded list, "It is probable he is recovered and discharged by this time as his wounds are described as slight and the lists are some weeks in time behind the casualties listed."[114]

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[102] Ibid.
[103] *The Evening News* "Another Letter From Doherty" November 27, 1918.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid.
[107] *The Evening News* "In Thick And Got His; Out Again" November 26, 1918.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid.
[110] *The Evening News* "Capt. Elrod Still In Base Hospital" December 4, 1918.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid.
[114] *The Evening News* "In Thick And Got His; Out Again" November 26, 1918.

Gerald O. Haffner, included in his *A Brief, Informal History of Clark County, Indiana* a letter from Pvt. John Joseph Kerberg written on August 17, 1918.[115] Kerberg entered the service on September 19, 1917 and was sent to Camp Taylor, Kentucky. He was assigned to Company F, 163rd Infantry. He went overseas in January 1918 and was placed in Company L, 168th Infantry, Forty-second (Rainbow) Division. Kerberg fought in the battles of Lorraine, Chateau-Thierry, and St. Mihiel. The letter was received by his parents on September 30, 1918. *The Evening News* printed the letter on October 3, 1918.[116]

> I received your letter about a month, [ago] but have been too busy to answer it until now. It would make a book if I were to write everything in detail that happened last month.
>
> The night of the Third of July we started for the front. We were to go over the top and take a hill, but orders were changed, and we moved to another front. We hiked all night and slept on the Fourth of July, and that night we started out again.
>
> We sure had some noises for our Fourth, for the French were putting over a barrage on the front, wither we were going. It could be heard for miles. They kept this up until about 9:00 o'clock and then the French went over the top and took a number of prisoners. We landed about three miles from the front at about 11:00 o'clock in a woods and put up our tents.
>
> We could see the front lines from the edge of the woods. We stayed there for about ten days. We dug our trench in a day. We could not do much sleeping because there were guns all around us and when they would shoot they would make our clothes shake on your back. The sounded as if they were inside of your tent.
>
> The night of the nineteenth of July I did not go to bed because we knew the Germans intended to start the drive. The French appeared to know just to the minute when it was to start. I went out to the edge of the woods to watch the plain and the signals at the front lines.
>
> About 11:45 the boys were all awakened and we got into the trench to wait for what might be coming.
>
> About 12:10 the drive started. The skyline looked as if it were on fire with the flashes of the guns far and near. They all started at once and it was some roar. It was heard fifteen miles away. It was not long before it was raining iron around us. They had their gunner direct it so that it covered the entire front with shell fire. They shot as far to our rear as their range would reach. This was kept up for about five [?] hours and in the meantime we went into the dugout, if we had not, we should all have been killed.
>
> About daybreak the Germans started over the top, but they were pretty well shot up by this time because the French had started their barrage a half an hour before the Germans. The Germans were shoulder to shoulder in the trenches. They did not make any gains along the front. We were on the second line of defense.
>
> We remained there for five days, starting then for another front, making several hikes at night, one day a truck ride and several days and several nights. On one of those marches we passed through a village which the Germans were as big as a man. The next day we arrived at what had been No Man's Land the day before

[115] Haffner, Gerald O. *A Brief, Informal History of Clark County, Indiana.* Indiana University Southeast Bookstore: New Albany, IN, 1985, 155.
[116] Ibid.

and then we went into a woods where we were only a short time before the Germans dropped shells so close to us that we had to move.

The next day we began our advance under German artillery fire. Shells were bursting on all sides cutting down the tops of trees and often the trees themselves. There was nothing to do but to keep right on. The boys would say 'If they have your number they will get you that' all.'

There were troops ahead of us driving the Germans.

The next day was our time to go to the front. We rose at 3:00 a.m. to find the Germans and we did not go far before we found them. It was not a brief time before the air was full of machine gun bullets as thick as rain. The artillery shells were bursting all around us.

Our charge worked like clockwork. Hundreds of men advancing, all dropping to the ground when the machine gun spoke or when a big shell dropped close to us. Then we would get up and run about ten yards and drop again. We kept this up until we got to the machine guns, shooting as we went. We took several prisoners. This was kept up until 9:00 p.m. After dark we dug in, burrowing a hole sufficient to lay down in. This was our frontal line. Several big shells hit so close to us that they threw dirt over us; airplanes flew over us and shot at us. We stayed there a couple of days.

The artillery would bombard us from about 3:00 p.m. until midnight and once in a while would send a shell during the night to remind us that they were still there. But this did not keep us from sleeping.

I slept just as soundly as if at home in bed. When you are in a fight like this, you cease to care for anything, because you feel that at any time you may meet your Maker.

After a few more men came to the front, we dropped back along a little hill or ledge along the road about three feet high, and there we remained a couple a days. But the artillery kept on shelling us, but it was hard for them to hit us for we were on the slope of a hill.

There was a machine gun and its crew between another fellow and myself sitting up on the ledge. A shell hit it and knocked it about ten feet and the bar holding the gun's ammunition dropped on me. I thought I was gone for a minute. I thought my arm was knocked off.

The man next to me asked 'Did it get you?'

I answered 'No!'

It blew my helmet about ten feel.

If it had been about ten inches higher, I should have been wearing my asbestos gloves by now. A piece of shell went through my gun strap and other pieces came near getting me on close calls.

We captured thousands of dollars worth of ammunition from rifle cartridges to ten inch shells and all kinds of equipment; helmets by the hundreds, which Germans had run from in under.

I should have sent you one, but did not have enough stamps. The ground was covered with souvenirs.

We fell back into a woods and remained there for a week. We could hear the dropping of bombs every night and a few dropped in our neighborhood, but they missed us.

> We saw airplanes fight every day and several falling to earth crippled or in flames. We saw one observatory balloon come down burning. We saw three tanks. I think they were German, and we saw three big ten inch guns taken from them.
>
> We are at a rest camp now. Our Division drove the enemy back about 12 miles and our company took hill 212. Our Battaalion (sic.) took the city of Sargie [Sergy].[117]

Pvt. John J. Kerberg was killed in action on September 12, 1918 during the Western Allied forces' drive on St. Mihiel, eighteen days before this letter was delivered to his parents.[118]

On August 21, 1918 a letter from Pvt. Lawrence Capehart was posted, which was written on August 1, 1918, from a Paris hospital six days before his death from wounds received in action.[119] Caphart was the first Clark County man to die on foreign soil. He was buried in Suresnes, France and the American Legion Post in Jeffersonville, Indiana is named in his honor. *The Evening News* described this letter as, "a voice from the grave, for it is brimful of a noble and quiet courage and a tender thoughtfulness that throw a flood of light on the sterling character of the writer who has thus been called upon to make the last great sacrifice in the early prime of his manhood."[120]

> My dear, dear Mother: Have been looking forward to the day when I could write you a real long letter and tell you the news. And now, thank goodness, I can do it with my own hands too. In others words I am improved to such an extent that I can sit up a little and write. And it sure feels good too.
>
> I am sure that you are wondering just how and when I was injured so am going to relieve your mind and tell you. You doubtless know of the big battle that began on July 18. My regiment got into the game on the 19th and it was inevitable that some of us get it. I was lucky, might lucky, compared with some of the men. I got back to a dressing station after a while and was transported to a field hospital. A machine gun bullet entered my left thigh….[121]

The news of Clark County casualties often times donned the front pages of *The Evening News*. "Influenza Gets Clark County Boy" emblazoned the front page of October 9, 1918.[122] Otto Kallembach was the first Clark County boy to fall victim to Spanish influenza at Camp Zachary Taylor where it was reported that the disease was still raging.[123] Kallembach's death was one of fifty which had occurred there the day before. The article stated,

> While there are fifty deaths at Camp Taylor during the 24 hours up to 8 o'clock Tuesday night the general situation is regarded by the doctors there as improved.

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[117] Ibid, 157-162.
[118] Ibid, 162.
[119] *Gold Star Honor Roll 1914-1918: Indiana World War Records.* Fort Wayne Printing Company and Indiana Historical Commission: Indianapolis, IN, 1921, 75; *The Evening News* "Letter From Lawrence Capehart" August 21, 1918.
[120] *The Evening News* "Letter From Lawrence Capehart" August 21, 1918.

[121] Ibid.
[122] *The Evening News* "Influenza Gets Clark County Boy" October 9, 1918.
[123] *The Evening News* "Influenza Gets Clark County Boy" October 9, 1918.

> During the same period the admissions of new patients numbered 495 and the discharges from quarantine as cured totaled six hundred.[124]

On October 22, 1918 "Death of Soldier at Camp" detailed Noble Colvin who was a victim of influenza the day before at the base hospital at Camp Zachary Taylor.[125] Colvin's brother, William, had just recently died as well from influenza ten days earlier.[126] Colvin entered the service on August 9, 1918 and was sent to Camp Gordon, GA and assigned to the 3rd Company, Development Battalion.[127] Colvin had returned to Jeffersonville for the funeral of his brother and was stricken with influenza at that time.[128]

Clark County, Indiana businesses perhaps made the greatest contribution and in doing so gave its residents many opportunities to support the war effort while better supporting themselves. Businesses in Clark County boomed during the Great War and many were put under government contract to produce a plethora of items for the war effort at home and across the Atlantic. The Reformatory, the Ohio Falls Car and Locomotive Company, and the Jeffersonville Quarter Master Depot all contributed to the war. The last section of this paper is going to discuss these companies' individual impacts on the war at home and abroad.

The Indiana Reformatory had two prisons in Clark County in the nineteenth century. nIndiana Prison North was located in Jeffersonville while Indiana Prison South was in Clarksville. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, prison reforms closed the Jeffersonville prison because of the poor conditions and treatment of the prisoners.

Photos of the Indiana Reformatory printed with the permission of Jane Sarles

[124] Ibid.
[125] *The Evening News* "Death of Soldier at Camp" October 22, 1918.
[126] Ibid.
[127] *Gold Star Honor Roll 1914-1918: Indiana World War Records.* Fort Wayne Printing Company and Indiana Historical Commission: Indianapolis, IN, 1921, 75.
[128] Ibid.

The inmates were moved to the Clarksville prison and the Jeffersonville location was abandoned. In 1918, the abandoned prison was rumored to be turned into a munitions plant and was even discussed among Democratic delegates at a state convention in Indianapolis in June. However, it seems nothing came of these discussions. Inmates at Indiana Prison South were suggested to help thresh wheat, as there was a large amount of wheat to be harvested and not enough men to help with such work, in 1918. I was unable to find if these inmates did actually help in the harvesting of wheat. An article in *The Evening News* stated that equipment was being requested, in addition to the men, for assistance in this work, but at the time the news regarding the Reformatory was spent discussing the plans to improve the jail after a fire had devastated much of it in February. However, it is known that the prison never fully recovered after the fire and was sold to the Colgate Company in 1923 where it remained a working factory until 2008.[129]

The Ohio Falls Car and Locomotive Company (Car Foundry) was built in 1864 to produce railway cars and equipment. After a fire in 1876, it was rebuilt and became the Ohio Falls Car Company, also often called the American Car Foundry. In 1899, the foundry was producing at a rate of one railway car daily. The Foundry specialized in freight cars, passenger cars, and associated parts while an adjacent plant produced castings and chilled iron wheels. During World War I, the American Car Foundry was the government's largest contractor and made a variety of metal equipment. The Jeffersonville plant produced escort wagons, wagon wheels, and nose forgings for shells for the U.S. Army. The first rolling kitchens and the

[129] Sarles, Jane. *Images of America*: *Clarksville, Indiana.* Arcadia Publishing: Charleston, SC, 2001, 103.

Phillips packsaddle, designed to let mules carry howitzer components or other heavy loads, were produced at the American Car Foundry.[130]

The largest contributor, providing the most opportunities as well for the citizens of Clark County, Indiana, was the Jeffersonville Quarter Master Depot. The primary mission of the Depot was to procure, manufacture, and ship huge quantities of harnesses, pack saddles, water bags, tarpaulins, wagon covers, and other supplies that had been part of its duties since its conception in 1864. Another prime function of the Quartermaster during the Civil War was the production of shirts. During this time, the garments were cut out by hand, issued in bundles of four to eight for widows, mothers, and sisters of Union soldiers and made up in their homes to then be returned to the Depot a few days later for inspection. This function continued during the Great War and gave many opportunities to the women who became seamstresses.

The Jeffersonville Quartermaster Depot was confronted with the necessity of an enormous expansion during the First World War in order to meet demands. On August 1917, Congress passed legislation allowing the army to requisition land in Jeffersonville. The government then acquired fifty parcels of land and by 1919 had built, or contracted for construction, seventy permanent and two-hundred and eleven temporary buildings, added 5.8 miles of railroad switches, a pumping station, and electric plant, encompassing two-hundred and sixteen acres. By World War I, the Depot was self-contained with its own fire station, homes, and even a branch of the Secret Service. The Harness Shop, at the beginning of the First World War, employed about 35 men and turned out approximately 100 sets of ambulance harness weekly. By the spring of 1918, the workforce was increased to 100 men and the production to 500 sets weekly.[131] The Clothing and Manufacturing Branch and home operatives were increased from approximately two thousand to twenty thousand workers which produced six-hundred thousand to eight and a half million garments a year, making it the world's largest shirt factory. Uniforms were also manufactured at the Depot with the output being 750 service coats and 1,000 pairs of pants a day. Women were given ample opportunities because of this expansion in garment making. The sewing was done as piecework, which, just as during the Civil War, would be inspected at the Depot afterwards and treated for lice. In addition to the employment opportunity this gave women, seamstresses would often sew their name and address in the pockets in the hopes that she may become pen pals with the soldier who received the garment. One soldier, on a Kansas fort, received one such shirt. The soldier and the seamstress wrote to each other for two years until his service was completed and he came to Indiana. The soldier and the seamstress were married, however divorced only two years later.[132]

The plight of the sewing women was often a topic of discussion in *The Evening News*. On August 14, 1918 an article stated that more pay was necessary for the seamstresses in order to keep up with the demands.[133] At the time, the women were paid $4.45 a week for their work

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[130]Sarles, 9; "Ohio Falls Car & Locomotive Company" *Ohio Falls Car Manufacturing Company* http://www.midcontinent.org/rollingstock/builders/ohiofalls.htm. Updated in January 18, 2007. Retrieved on November 25, 2012.

[131] Hamiton, C.S. Lieut. Colonel, Q.M.C. "Jeffersonville Quartermaster Intermediate Depot; History and Function." *The Quartermaster Review*. July-August 1927. http://www.qmfound.com/jeffersonville.htm. Updated October 9, 2000. Retrieved on November 25, 2012, Jeanne Burke, interview with the Clark County museum curator, Jeffersonville, Indiana, 20 November 2012, Kramer 291-292.

[132] Hamiton, C.S. Lieut. Colonel, Q.M.C. "Jeffersonville Quartermaster Intermediate Depot; History and Function." *The Quartermaster Review*. July-August 1927. http://www.qmfound.com/jeffersonville.htm. Updated October 9, 2000. Retrieved on November 25, 2012; Jeanne Burke, interview with the Clark County museum curator, Jeffersonville, Indiana, 20 November 2012.

[133] *The Evening News* "Plight of the Sewing Women" August 14, 1918.

while the men who work at the Jeffersonville Depot itself were due for another pay raise: "Everybody gets a raise (except those most deserving, the sewing women, they receiving no more for shirts that before the war began, notwithstanding railroad fares are higher, living is higher and everything." On September 6, 1918, women were threatening to quit working as seamstresses if a pay increase was not given.[134] A letter was written from a resident of the county to the editor of *The Evening News*, and published:

> The sewing women who make government shirts for soldiers are getting discouraged over the small pay they get for the amount of work done and time spent. Many are giving it up and more will have to do so, if the cost of living advances. Country women pay so much more for car fare and have to lose so much time in coming, they think the Government should furnish them free passes. Many are helping with this work in order to help win the war, and in doing so are neglecting their families and injuring their own health with over work; while men or boys are paid as much for one week's work as any women can earn in a month, and work all day and half of the night.[135]

I was unable to find any information regarding whether these women were able to receive their pay raise; however, another article on November 15, 1918, only four days after the end of the war, announced that the making of shirts were to be reduced and were quickly back to its pre-war levels of production in which obviously approximately 18,000 women were suddenly out of a job.[136]

The end of the war was celebrated in Clark County, Indiana by a huge victory parade on Saturday, November 16, 1918. All residents were requested to decorate their houses and automobiles with red, white, and blue bunting. Floats were requested and each township sent out delegations of wagons and autos. Everyone was to fall in the line of march starting at East Court Avenue and travelling throughout downtown Jeffersonville. School children were to ride in trucks made available by the U.S. government and two white and two "colored" bands played martial music.[137] On November 28, 1918, a letter from a local soldier, Dan D. Zollinger, was discussed in *The Evening News*, which described the celebration at the Bay Ridge Barracks in New York.[138] The letter was dated November 22 and gave "a vivid description of the celebration in the big burg of Manhattan."[139] Cigars were passed around and discharge papers were expected by June.[140] Zollinger ended his letter by thanking the Navy and debated on whether he should enlist for a full four years, "if I can get a first class gunners rating."[141]

After the parade, the conversion from wartime to peacetime began immediately. People were laid off from the many employment opportunities that had grown out of the First World War in Clark County. Yet Clark County, Indiana's contribution to the First World War was quite impressive while most of these events pertained only to them and their boys across the Atlantic, their patriotism was competitive and based clearly off of the news offered to them by

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[134] *The Evening News* "Women's Wages and Suffrage" September 6, 1918.
[135][135] Ibid.
[136] Kramer, 292; *The Evening News* "Making of Shirts Will Be Reduced" November 15, 1918.
[137] Haffner, 163.
[138] *The Evening News* "Bunch of Letters Tell the Story" November 28, 1918.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Ibid.
[141] Ibid.

The Evening News and *The Jeffersonville Star*. The Great War offered many opportunities to the citizens of Clark County while also taking many lives and livelihoods away with its end.