

---

## Springfield and Sangamon County in the Great War, 1917-1919

James Bishop

*James Bishop, from Springfield, Illinois, wrote "Springfield and Sangamon County in the Great War, 1917-1919" during my third semester as a graduate student for Dr. Roger Beck's World War I class. He earned a BA in History and is just now finishing an MA in History, both at Eastern Illinois University. He is currently researching eighteenth century American educational history and will, in the fall, be working on a Ph.D. at Louisiana State University.*

---

### Introduction

The Great War broke out in Europe on July 28, 1914 after the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Serbia. The tangled network of alliances established between the great European powers led to Germany, France, Great Britain, Russia, and Austria-Hungary being dragged into a war that would last for over four years and cost millions of lives. The United States, desiring to maintain their neutrality in European affairs, stayed out of the war until 1917 when they too were pulled into the war on the side of the Allies. Once the U.S. decisively entered the fray, American men volunteered for service overseas while women and those not fighting in Europe volunteered on the home front through local, state, and national organizations.



This paper will focus on the contributions of Springfield, Illinois as well as Sangamon County (the greater Springfield area) in World War I from 1917 until 1919. This paper is divided into three parts: the war front, the home front, and the aftermath of the war. The first part will look at soldiers on the war front from Springfield and Sangamon County including those from the Thirty-Third Division (or Illinois/Prairie Division); the medical units of Tuttle and Otis; Otis B. Duncan and the 370<sup>th</sup> Colored Infantry; and Kent Dunlap Hagler and the American Field Service (AFS).

The second part will look at the home front in Springfield and Sangamon County especially the American Red Cross; the sale of Liberty/War Bonds; and Women's Committee Activities. The third part will examine the Homecoming Celebration in Sangamon County, the influenza epidemic, and sum up Sangamon County and Springfield's contributions to the Great War.

## Part I: Sangamon County and The War Front, 1917-1919

### America Enters the War, 1915-1917

By the time the United States entered World War I, the war had been raging for three bloody years with no end in sight. America maintained her neutrality from the outbreak of the war but as the months flew by it became increasingly more difficult to do so. The chief threat to American neutrality was "the refusal of the German government to abandon or even modify her program of submarine warfare as affecting neutral powers."<sup>18</sup> On May 7, 1915, the "Lusitania" was torpedoed and sunk by a German U-boat costing one hundred American lives. This act served to turn national sentiment against Germany and ultimately led to the United States going to war on the side of the Allies. By 1916, Germany was willing to make a gesture of peace but this effort came to nothing and soon thereafter German decided to resume unconditional submarine warfare. This fateful decision would ultimately prove fatal to Germany as her resumption of the sinking of American merchant ships brought America into the war on the side of the Allies. In order to afford more protection against possible interference with postal, commercial, and military channels, fourteen National Guard regiments throughout the United States were called to federal service in March 1917, among them the First, Fifth, and Sixth Illinois Regiments of Infantry.<sup>19</sup>

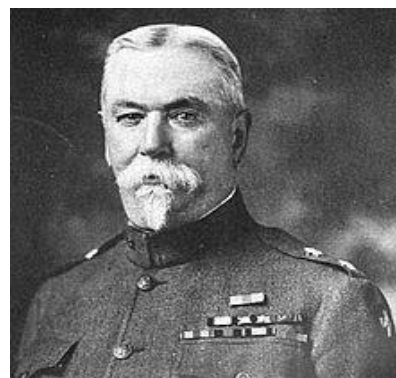
The United States declared war on Germany on April 6, 1917 and began the slow and difficult process of raising and training a much larger army than the U.S. had ever had in its short history.<sup>20</sup> With this declaration of war, the Illinois Naval Militia, numbering approximately 600 officers and men, was immediately mobilized and sent via train to the Philadelphia Naval Yard. On June 30, 1917, the Illinois National Guard numbered 16,766 officers and men.<sup>21</sup>

### The Thirty-Third Division, 1917-1918

After the president's call to arms, men from the Illinois National Guard were placed under Federal authority with many soldiers, especially from the Springfield area, making up the Thirty-Third Division under Major General George E. Bell, Jr. Because most of the Thirty-Third Division was from Illinois, it came to be known as the Illinois or "Prairie" Division. The organization and much of the training of the Thirty-Third took place at Camp Logan in Houston, Texas from September 1917 until May 1918 when the division crossed the Atlantic to fight on the western front in France.<sup>22</sup>

The units within the Thirty-Third Division that are focused on in this paper are Company C and Battery A. The majority of men in Company C were Sangamon County men who joined between March and April 1917, after the Illinois National Guard was federalized.

Figure 1 Major General George E. Bell, Jr.  
Commander of the Thirty-Third Division



<sup>18</sup> Adjutant General's Report, *Roster of the Illinois National Guard and Illinois Naval Militia, 1917*, vii. Published under provision of House Bill No. 410, approved June 1, 1925. Quote taken from the Historical Introduction section of the book which is based on information from Simonds' *History of the World War* and Huidekoper-Jenison's *Illinois in the World War*.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, vii.

<sup>20</sup> 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.

<sup>21</sup> Adjutant General's Report, *Roster of the Illinois National Guard and Illinois Naval Militia, 1917*, viii.

<sup>22</sup> Duff, 35.

Company C was deployed to France aboard the U.S.S. Mt Vernon on May 16, 1918 and landed in France ten days later. On September 6, 1918, Company C was transferred to Boise-des-Sartelles, near Ballycourt, and “from that time on took part in operations which lasted through the Meuse-Argonne Offensive which began September 26, and the operations in the Troyon Sector, which ended with the Armistice on November 11, 1918.”<sup>23</sup>

Battery A (124<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery), composed largely of Springfield and Sangamon County men, first saw action September 13, 1918, at Mon Sec, and was in action constantly until the signing of the armistice. The men provided artillery support to seven American divisions: the First, Second, Thirty-second, Thirty-fifth, Forty-second, Eighty-ninth, and Ninety-first. Battery A made a total advance of sixty kilometers and fired 16,470 rounds of ammunition.<sup>24</sup> Battery A’s artillery fire aided in the capture of several French towns held by the Germans, including Very, Beauclair, Beaufort, Cesse, and Martincourt. Battery A participated in the closing battle of Verdun and in the entire engagement of the Meus-Argonne Offensive from October 26 until November 11, 1918. Overall, the story of Battery A is one of valiant heroism. Nineteen of the officers and men received citations for gallantry and bravery in action, and several others received Distinguished Service Crosses.<sup>25</sup>

#### Ottis’ and Tuttle’s Units: Illinois Medical Units Overseas

Illinois, in addition to the 351,153 soldiers posted overseas during the war, also contributed to the federalized medical units that were sent to Europe. One of these, Unit W, which was organized and commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Daniel Mortimer Ottis, consisted of twelve doctors, twenty-one registered nurses, and fifty orderlies. Unit W was first organized under the American Red Cross, but was federalized when the organization was completed. All members of Ottis’ unit were from Springfield or the Sangamon County area with the exception of a few orderlies who were from neighboring counties. On January 22, 1918, Unit W was called to Ft. McPherson, Georgia, where it went into training in military service. The entire Unit W was posted to England on May 11, 1918. There they opened a camp hospital in Plymouth, but were then transferred to Liverpool and assigned to Camp Hospital No. 40 at Camp Knotty Ash where they were stationed from June 4, 1918 to May 1, 1919. While at Camp Knotty Ash, Unit W contended with the global flu epidemic, which took the lives of three members of Ottis’ Unit. They remained in England for one year until returning to the United States where they were then mustered out.<sup>26</sup>

The Medical Detachment of the 130<sup>th</sup> Infantry, Thirty-third Division, generally known as “Tuttle’s Unit,” was organized and trained by Colonel H.H. Tuttle of Springfield, Illinois. The men in the unit were recruited in April 1917, and came primarily from Springfield and the vicinity “They received training in anatomy, first aid, hospital nursing, litter bearing, dispensary work, and X-Ray work at St. John’s Hospital in Springfield.”<sup>27</sup> Following Colonel Tuttle’s summoning to Camp Logan, Major Frank P. Hauld assumed command of the unit. In September 1917, Tuttle’s Unit was transferred to Camp Logan and attached to the Thirty-third Division when they sailed overseas. The Medical Detachment served with their regiment all the time it was in action, working up to the front lines. The Unit was divided, with some members in each battalion, and cared for the wounded of their regiment. After the Armistice, Tuttle’s Unit served with the Army of Occupation where some members were cited for bravery in action during the war.<sup>28</sup> Overall, the medical units from Illinois served with distinction in World War I, braving the fighting alongside those from the Thirty-

---

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 37.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 38-39.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 45.

Third Division as well as French and British wounded and other nationalities. Their actions overseas were invaluable to the war effort as they worked tirelessly to treat those wounded in battle.

### Otis B. Duncan and the Colored 370<sup>th</sup> Infantry

Lieutenant Colonel Otis B. Duncan was perhaps the most important soldier from Springfield, Illinois to fight in World War I, but yet he receives so little attention because almost no one knows his story. Lt. Col. Duncan was the highest-ranking black officer to serve in the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) in Europe in World War I. Duncan came from a prominent black family in Springfield—his grandfather was William Fleurville, Abraham Lincoln’s barber and friend—and joined the Illinois National Guard’s all-black Eighth Infantry Regiment in 1902. In 1916, Duncan served with the regiment during the United States’ Mexican expedition against Mexican revolutionary general Pancho Villa.<sup>29</sup> When the Eighty Infantry Regiment was called up for federal service in World War I, it was renamed the 370<sup>th</sup> Regiment. Duncan, who at the time was only a major, was put in charge of the Third Battalion of the 370<sup>th</sup> Regiment. Upon deployment in France in 1918, Duncan was promoted to lieutenant colonel. Unlike most other African-American units during the war, the 370<sup>th</sup> Regiment’s enlisted men were all black, including officers. However, the 370<sup>th</sup>’s black colonel, Franklin Dennison, was replaced in France by a white officer, Colonel T.A. Roberts—who, like Duncan, was also from Springfield—leaving Duncan as the AEF’s senior black officer.<sup>30</sup> Given race relations at the time, especially in the AEF and the American military in general, this was quite an accomplishment for Duncan. Duncan and the 370<sup>th</sup> saw their first action in the war in the Argonne Forest, near Soissons, and then along the Ois-Aine Canal in September 1918. The unit’s most significant engagement occurred on September 30, 1918, when Duncan’s Third Battalion captured Ferme-de-la-Riviere in France. By the time the Armistice was signed on November 11, 1918, the 370<sup>th</sup> Regiment had pursued the Germans all the way back to the Belgian border.<sup>31</sup>



Figure 2 Lt. Col. Otis B. Duncan  
370<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 93rd Division

In a letter sent by Duncan to his family back in Springfield in December, 1919, he tells them of his receiving the French Croix de Guerre:

Monday the general decorated six officers of our regiment for distinguished services in battle. I was awarded a Croix de Guerre with a division citation of which I am very proud. What it was given to me for is written in French and if I find that I am not to return soon, I will send you a copy in English. I cannot write this information to all my friends. I have not the time, but I want them to know it. You show “Doc” this letter and have him tell them. I should also like to have Mr. Blair know it. There is no strict censorship now and you may make all this public. A large number of brigade citations are to be made in this regiment, to both officers and men, for deeds of bravery on the battlefields, and we are justly proud. We want the people over there to know that we have given our full contribution to this war, that we have fought, bled and died for the grand and noble principles of the war, and the sadness is, that upon returning, we must meet those whose loved ones have lost their lives in this far-off land.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>29</sup> “Col. Otis B. Duncan,” *SangamonLink*, Sangamon County Historical Society, accessed November 18, 2015, <http://sangamoncountyhistory.org/wp/?p=2333>.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> “Lieut. Duncan Awarded Honors,” *Daily Illinois State Journal Register*, January 6, 1919, 2.

The language Duncan uses in this letter is proof that he was just as devoted to the “noble principles of war” as his white counterparts. He wanted his family and friends at home to know of the brave deeds that he and his soldiers performed in the war and that his hometown should be proud of their accomplishments. In a time of racial inequality, both at home and on the war front, Duncan’s achievements as well as his military rank meant everything. As the highest ranking African-American officer in the AEF, Duncan’s achievements in World War I were even more praise-worthy as he helped to disprove all of those back home who thought blacks inferior to whites. To the city of Springfield, only a decade removed from the Race Riots of 1908, Duncan was a hero of World War I. In tribute to Duncan, the Springfield American Legion Post 809 is named after him and he is interred at Camp Butler National Cemetery right outside the city of Springfield.

### Kent Dunlap Hagler and the American Field Service

While Duncan is perhaps the most powerful and inspiring of all the central Illinois World War I figures, Kent Dunlap Hagler is definitely the most peculiar. Unlike Duncan and the 351,153 soldiers who fought overseas from Illinois, Hagler took a more roundabout way of ending up in Europe. Professor Chris McDonald’s book *“Three Lying or Four Sitting”: From the Front in a Ford*, details the Hagler’s journey through letters and photographs. In 1917, while a student at Harvard, Hagler applied for, but was denied, entry into the United States military forces. He then left his home in Springfield, and his place at Harvard, to become a volunteer ambulance driver with the American Field Service (AFS).

Kent Hagler was born on December 31, 1897 in Springfield, Illinois to Dr. Elmer Hagler and Kent Rolla Dunlap Hagler, both of whom were embedded in the upper echelons of Springfield society. Kent had a relatively comfortable upbringing and attended Howe School in Indiana, a Harvard preparatory, quasi-military school. In 1914 and 1915, Kent attended the University of Illinois at Champaign, where he completed one academic year before transferring to Harvard in September 1915.<sup>33</sup>

At the same time Kent was attending school at both Illinois and Harvard, Europe was “plunged into the catastrophe of the Great War” in the late summer of 1914.<sup>34</sup> Prior to the entry of the United States into World War I, several American organizations were active in France in a number of different ways, but the American Ambulance Field Service (AFS) was to become the largest and most sophisticated operation in the medical field. According to Chris McDonald, “this fact was tacitly recognized in 1917 when the AFS was militarized and absorbed wholesale into the American Expeditionary Force (AEF).”<sup>35</sup> By 1917, the AFS had a very active recruitment effort in the United States and was particularly active on the Ivy League college campuses. Hagler, who was denied entry into the United States military forces due to a childhood injury, saw the AFS as his only chance to be in the war. In a letter to the family priest, Father Houghton in Springfield, Hagler expresses his reasons for volunteering:



Figure 3 Kent Dunlap Hagler  
Ambulance Driver for AFS

I least of all know what they were. I should like to be able to say honestly that I acted only through an unadulterated spirit of service, but more or less quiet introspection tells me that the composition of the complex which constituted the moving spirit in this case was chiefly

<sup>33</sup> Chris McDonald, *“Three Lying or Four Sitting” From the Front in a Ford: The WWI Letters of Kent Dunlap Hagler* (Springfield, IL: Lincoln Land Community College Press, 2015), 6-11.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

an admixture of childish curiosity and a certain discontent with the abstracted, workaday life of the student.<sup>36</sup>

This letter shows that there was an element of excitement and adventure to Kent Hagler's reasons for volunteering with the AFS. According to James Thomas Lapsley III, "the volunteer ambulance services were an extension of a conservative and upper class ideology of duty and service that found expression in the major universities and colleges of pre-war America."<sup>37</sup> In addition to duty and service, there was also concern for a particular set of values of civilization, a preoccupation with the notion of strength of character and a commitment to democracy.<sup>38</sup> Whether or not these ideals lined up with Hagler's reason for joining is debatable, but they do seem to coincide with elite American values, like those of President Woodrow Wilson, and America's reasons for declaring war on Germany even though Wilson had pledged for three long years that he was going to keep America out of European affairs and wars.

Hagler headed off to France "excited and venturesome, very much a volunteer off on the adventure of a lifetime."<sup>39</sup> Upon landing in France, Hagler and many other American AFS volunteers were well received. He noted in a letter that "cabbies lifted their toppers, the children sang 'The Star-Spangled Banner', the women smiled, and even the cops saluted."<sup>40</sup> Hagler's early experiences in the war were that of a naïve and exuberant volunteer who loved the attention he received from his welcomers in France. "After ten days of traveling, sight-seeing, and loafing," Hagler was sent off to the front with the last of the Ford sections to be formed by the American Ambulance—Section 31 (or S.S.U. 31, American Field Service).<sup>41</sup> Between August 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, 1917 Section 31 operated continuously in and around Bois d'Avocourt. It was not long before over half of the section were suffering from exposure to poison gas and many of the ambulances were damaged and in need of repair. This was to be Hagler's baptism of fire. In one letter he recounts his first experience of war:

Never shall I forget that first afternoon when I went to the outpost for my virgin look at war. I had heard a great deal about the horror of war and yet somehow I couldn't think of it seriously on my way out. The noise of the guns was deafening, invisible as they are at ten yards' distance, even when firing, for they are camouflaged with paint and covered with branches to hide them from the sausages and avions, and the powder is absolutely smokeless.<sup>42</sup>

Hagler seems to realize here that he is in a war zone, but there is a sense that he does not fully understand what war entails.



Figure 4 AFS Recruitment Poster c. 1917

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 13-14.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 56-57. Quote taken from a letter to Hagler's mother and father but the date is not known.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 80.

Hagler also described the interactions the ambulance corps volunteers had with the soldiers. He mentions the theatrical performances and French football [soccer] games being played. He even tells in one letter of how “we in turn invited the [French] players and officers to come up to our barracks that evening to discuss the possibilities of a baseball game—which we would teach them—when the next attack was over.”<sup>43</sup> Hagler’s reference to “when the next attack is over” makes it seem as though they were merely over in Europe to fraternize with their fellow soldiers and not to fight a bloody war.

In just a short amount of time after his arrival on the front, Kent is “rapidly transformed from this exuberant, somewhat callow youth into a seasoned veteran of the front-line.”<sup>44</sup> In a letter



**Figure 5 American Ambulance Service Vehicle and Soldier taken just outside Verdun**

to his brother, Elmer, Kent notes: “The bravery of the moment—to do a half-desperate act—is all very well, but that’s the least of it, for the things that get you are the things that last for days...The gas; the cold; the rain and mud; no food for a couple of days sometimes for a week; bad sleeping quarters, at best in a dripping, muddy rat-and-flea-infested abri; and ‘last but not least’ the rather disconcerting sight of your comrades suffocating or mused over the lot.”<sup>45</sup> After only a few weeks on the front, Hagler seemed tired of war and disillusioned with the reasons he originally had for joining the AFS.

Kent spent the next several months on the front lines with the AFS, tending to the wounded and praying for a swift end to the war. On November 11, 1918, Kent got his wish, communicating in a letter to his mother and father:

The war is done. All firing has ceased; this morning came by wireless the news that the armistice is signed. There is no comment to make on such news. I am half unable to realize its import, half incredulous of its truth, wandering desultorily about shaking hands with old friends and reiterating “C’est fini” as if expecting a contradiction. The victory is received by most with a great silent joy, superficially apathetic because too deep to be articulate. Rather than a shout of triumph men breathe a sigh of relief. The price of the victory is too well known.<sup>46</sup>

Kent, though happy that the war is over and that the Allies won, understood the price that had been paid for victory. Too many men died for this to be a happy occasion for the survivors on the front. Though this was the end of the fighting, it would not be a quick return home for Kent. Hagler’s section remained on the front for four more months until they received their orders to return to Paris, where they were demobilized on March 13, 1919.<sup>47</sup> By the end of his stay in Europe, Kent was frustrated with the “bureaucratization of the process of return” and with the United States military in general. For men like Kent, the frustration was even greater considering that he had volunteered for this mission and once the job was done found that “un-volunteering” would not be quite so simple.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 200.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 205.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 29.

## Part II: Sangamon County and the Home Front, 1917-1919

### American Red Cross in Sangamon County

Crucial to the home front during World War I was the work of the American Red Cross. In August 1916, a small group of women met at the home of Mrs. William T. Lewis in Springfield to further the call of the National Red Cross Membership campaign. The group was successful in adding 1,300 new names and sent a check for \$1,300 to Washington D.C. Today, \$1,300 seems like a mere pittance, but at the time this was a decent sum of money, so much so that those in Washington sent a personal letter of thanks and urged Springfield to form a chapter. In February 1917, a petition was sent to the National Red Cross Society in Washington asking permission to organize a local chapter. On March 30, 1917, the Springfield Chapter, having complied with all specifications from Washington, was declared duly organized, having for its jurisdictions all of Sangamon County, Illinois. After the close of the first membership campaign in April 1917, the campaign had brought in about 7,000 members. Requests from other areas and towns of the county and from surrounding counties soon arrived inquiring as to how they might organize and help in the great work.<sup>49</sup> In total, the local chapter of the Red Cross in Springfield organized 25 branches and 43 auxiliaries with permanent headquarters and offices established in Springfield.<sup>50</sup>

The Sangamon County Red Cross provided much needed services both at home and abroad. Following America's official declaration of war against the Central Powers, entirely new conditions confronted the Chapter. On May 14, 1917 several new committees were created to take care of impending needs including: Finance Committee, Purchasing Committee, Supplies and Distribution of Work, Organization of Branches and Auxiliaries, and Chairman of Woman's Work.<sup>51</sup> Another new, and subsequently very important, committee was the Red Cross Canteen Committee, which served troop trains both during the war and after the Armistice was signed. The American Red Cross Bureau of Canteen Service furnished free supplies including: coffee, newspaper, magazines, soap, matches, paper towels, cigarettes, candy, post cards, sandwiches, and ice.<sup>52</sup> Prior to the Armistice, when the movement of troops was secret, only the Canteen Committee received information regarding the passage of troop trains through the city. Following the Armistice in November 1918, returning troop movements made the work of the Canteen service especially heavy.<sup>53</sup>

In addition to volunteer recruitment, the Canteen service, and those who had been sent overseas to either work at hospitals or oversee supplies distribution, the Red Cross also made and shipped to the Front miscellaneous clothing items. From May 1917 to February 1919, the Sangamon County Chapter of the Red Cross sent 768,670 total articles to the front lines.<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, the Red Cross also sent over thread, yarn, gauze, gingham, cotton, and flannel totaling approximately \$52,476 in value. In the Red Cross chairman's report in October 1918, it is noted that "In April 1918 the first collection of clothing for relief of the people in Belgium was carried out at which time we shipped twenty-seven boxes and crates of clothing, amounting to gross weight of 3900 lbs."<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> Report of Mr. Barnes, Chair Membership Committee at annual meeting for election of directors November 20, 1918, 1. Sangamon County Chapter American Red Cross.

<sup>50</sup> Duff, 1125-1128. For a full list of all the branches and auxiliaries of the Sangamon County Red Cross see Appendix B.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 1126.

<sup>52</sup> American Red Cross Bureau of Canteen Service Semi-Monthly Report, July 31, 1917.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 1132.

<sup>54</sup> American Red Cross, Articles Made By Sangamon County Chapter Red Cross, From May 1917 to February 1919.

<sup>55</sup> Sangamon County Chapter American Red Cross. Report of Chairman for the Year Ending October 1, 1918, 1.



Five months later, the Sangamon County Red Cross shipped 121 large boxes weighing 14,400 lbs. to Belgium, nearly four times the amount shipped in April.<sup>56</sup>

The Sangamon County Red Cross Society was also called upon during the influenza epidemic to assist in opening two emergency hospitals. The first hospital opened October 10, 1918, while the second opened on December 15, 1918. In total, the hospital cared for 318 patients with total expenditures equaling \$8,299.52. Much of the equipment for the hospitals was loaned by the State Board of Agriculture from the Domestic Science School and many of the local hospitals furnished whatever else was needed.<sup>57</sup>

The work of the Sangamon County Red Cross, and indeed all chapters of the Red Cross both foreign and domestic, contributed greatly to the war cause both at home and on the front. From the gathering of supplies, to recruitment at home, and dealing with the influenza epidemic of 1918-19, the Sangamon County Red Cross did whatever needed to be done to win the war. By May 1, 1919 the Sangamon County Red Cross had dealt with 1,067 families, sent relief to 152 families, and expended money on relief totaling \$5,402.93.<sup>58</sup> The Red Cross also started two War Funds; the first totaling \$90,979.71, while the second totaled \$132,962.37. Both of these funds brought in more money than were the quotas assigned to Sangamon County.<sup>59</sup>

Article	# Sent
Surgical Dressings	680,499
Pajamas	7,996
Hospital Shirts	13,332
Convalescent Suits	418
Socks	30,890
Sweaters	12,750
Wristlets and Mufflers	5,307
Helmets	6,446
Misc. (pillows, kits, handkerchiefs, etc.)	9,402
Refugee Garments	1,300
Paper Lined Vests	260
Aviator's Jackets	70

Table 1 Articles Made By Sangamon Co. Chapter Red Cross, From May 1917 to February 1919

### Liberty Loans and War Saving Stamps

In order to finance the war effort and build patriotism, the United States Treasury issued securities termed “Liberty Bonds” in June and October 1917 and in May and October 1918. Because the promised rate of interest on the first Liberty Bond was only 3.5%, which was too low for market conditions, the government put on a massive bond sales campaign replete with celebrity endorsements, air shows, sensationalistic posters (like one showing Manhattan ablaze and German bombers overhead), window stickers, and buttons.<sup>60</sup> The Liberty Loan organization in Sangamon County was started in May 1917 and lasted until May 1919 when it went successfully “over the top.”<sup>61</sup>

	Quota	# Subscribers	Amount
First Liberty Loan	\$1,640,000	1,800	\$1,802,800
Second Liberty Loan	\$2,638,800	8,000	\$4,471,700
Third Liberty Loan	\$2,579,280	19,125	\$3,631,100
Fourth Liberty Loan	\$5,424,276	20,282	\$6,213,100
Victory Loan	\$4,099,750	N/A	\$4,258,950

Table 2 Liberty Loan Results for Sangamon County

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>57</sup> Duff, 1129.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 1128.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 1129.

<sup>60</sup> “Liberty Bond,” Museum of American Finance, accessed November 20, 2015, [http://www.moaf.org/exhibits/checks\\_balances/woodrow-wilson/liberty-bond](http://www.moaf.org/exhibits/checks_balances/woodrow-wilson/liberty-bond).

<sup>61</sup> Duff, 1139.

The First and Second Liberty loan quotas were exceeded in Sangamon County. The quota for the Third Liberty Loan for Sangamon County was \$2,579,800. Actual investments in Government Bonds were made to the amount of \$3,716,100, an oversubscription that had few equals in the United States. The quota assigned to Sangamon County for the Fifth, or Victory Loan, in May, 1919, was originally \$3,377,500, but this quota was voluntarily raised to \$4,099,750 by the Federal Reserve and other outside banks. The quota was exceeded as Sangamon County raised \$4,258,950 in subscriptions.

The estimated cost for World War I for the United States was approximately \$32 billion. In late 1917, in order to help pay for the costs incurred during the war, the United States Treasury Department also issued war savings stamps.<sup>62</sup> The sale of War Savings Stamps, or “Baby Bonds” as they were more commonly referred to, was conducted in Sangamon County under the supervision of the postal authorities. The city and rural mail carriers were the largest salesman for these “Baby Bonds.”<sup>63</sup> The war stamp quota for each person in the school districts of Sangamon County was \$20. War savings “pledge days” were held to raise funds. In every one of the meeting, to which the entire community was invited, each man, woman, and child present was given the opportunity to sign a war-savings pledge, to give what



Figure 6 War Savings Stamps Poster

they believed was their part in supporting the nations’ war-savings plan. William M. Conklin, chairman of the War Savings Stamps Committee in Sangamon County, observed that the “Success of the national war-savings pledge day meeting means carrying out one of the most gigantic schemes of the kind ever attempted.”<sup>64</sup> Between December 1917 and December 1918, Conklin reported that \$1,250,000 was invested in Thrift and War Savings Stamps in Sangamon County alone.<sup>65</sup>

#### “Woman’s Committee” Activities in Springfield

During World War I, women throughout Illinois actively supported the nation’s war effort. Around the state, women’s support for the war effort was organized through their communities’ units of the Illinois Woman’s Committee (IWC), the statewide organization jointly created by the state and national governments to mobilize and coordinate women’s war-related volunteer activities on the home front.<sup>66</sup> The women of the IWC, through their county and local branches, participated in a variety of local activities designed to help their nation win its war, which included “disseminating information from the government about the war effort, increasing food production, and conserving food.”<sup>67</sup>

The Illinois Women’s Committee had a commanding presence in Sangamon County and, in particular, in the city of Springfield. At its headquarters the Springfield Woman’s Committee kept printed instructions on gardening as well as exhibits of garden tools available. Seeds were also sold (given free to the poor), and experts were on hand to provide advice on coping with garden insect

<sup>62</sup> “War Savings Stamps of the United States,” *Wikipedia*, accessed November 25, 2015, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War\\_savings\\_stamps\\_of\\_the\\_United\\_States#World\\_War\\_I\\_Era](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_savings_stamps_of_the_United_States#World_War_I_Era).

<sup>63</sup> Duff, 1141.

<sup>64</sup> “146 Districts Ready for Push,” *Daily Illinois State Journal Register*, June 25, 1918, 3.

<sup>65</sup> Duff, 1145.

<sup>66</sup> Virginia R. Boynton, “Even in the remotest parts of the state’: Downstate “Woman’s Committee” Activities on the Illinois Home Front during World War I,” *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 96, no. 4 (Winter 2003/2004): 318.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

pests.<sup>68</sup> Local food production committees also worked more directly to increase the number of fruit and vegetable gardens, sometimes by forming “war gardens clubs.” The Springfield Woman’s Committee headquarters hung a city map on the wall showing “vacant lots for war gardens; the state capital’s women also arranged for plow manufactures to demonstrate plows on vacant lots and incidentally cultivate the land.”<sup>69</sup> Overall, Illinois had 102 county Women’s Committees, more than 2,000 local Women’s Committees, more than 7,000 local Women’s Committee department leaders, almost 700,000 women registered for wartime service, and more than 325,000 active volunteers. “As the nation’s most quickly and most thoroughly organized state, Illinois was undoubtedly the shining star of the national Woman’s Committee; when the national Woman’s Committee later grouped its forty-eight State Divisions into three classes based on their levels of wartime activity and their accomplishments, the first state listed in “class A” was Illinois.”<sup>70</sup>

### Part III: The Aftermath of World War I, 1918-1919

#### Influenza Pandemic, 1918-1919

Although the Great War was terrifying in and of itself, it was the Influenza Pandemic that first appeared in early 1918 that was the most frightening. Recent research demonstrates that the “first comparatively nonlethal wave of the great influenza pandemic of 1918-1919 began not in China, South Africa, Spain, or France, as variously claimed in the literature, but rather in rural Haskell County, Kansas.”<sup>71</sup> From rural Kansas in late February 1918 the flu spread quickly to nearby Camp Funston, infecting 1,100 of 56,000 soldiers stationed there. Over the next few months it “rampaged through two-thirds of the army’s new cantonments; scores of adjacent towns and cities; hundreds of troopships; and via these transports to Brest, France.”<sup>72</sup> Roughly 400,000 soldiers of all nations —every seventh man in Germany’s 2.8 million man force on the western front—lay in bed or hospital. In harder-to-supply front line divisions in the middle of exhausting combat, every third man suffered from the flu.<sup>73</sup>

As American troops came home from European battlefronts in 1918, they brought more than battle wounds. Americans’ war against the Spanish flu began at military camps, where vets were the first to become ill. The flu was first reported in Illinois at the Great Lakes Naval Training Center, north of Chicago. Springfield had boys at that training center and its first encounter with the pandemic came on September 22, 1918 when one of them, Charles Pritzlaff, died. By October 9, Sangamon County had 40 reported cases and the city of Springfield had its first flu death – Lubertl Campbell.<sup>74</sup> When the virus struck Springfield, it overwhelmed officials and residents. Dr. Albert A. Campbell, Springfield’s Board of Health Superintendent, and his aides traveled throughout the city placing “keep out” signs on homes of those infected with the flu. On October 15, 1918, as local flu cases rose, the state Department of Health ordered Springfield’s theaters, pool halls and other entertainment venues closed to stem the flu’s spread. In the middle of Springfield’s quarantine, news came that Springfield’s health care professionals would be given a recently tested flu vaccine. However, the vaccine seemed too little, too late, as the flu virus had already done its job. On November 8, 1918, the quarantine on Springfield was lifted and the epidemic itself would die out completely by the summer of 1919. Overall, the 1918 flu epidemic killed between an estimated 20 to 50 million people (the numbers go as high as 100 million). That number included at

---

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 326.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 337.

<sup>71</sup> Brose, 337-338.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 338.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Terra McClellan McAndrew, “Killer Flu Hits Springfield October 1918: Death Rules the Capital City,” *Illinois Times*, December 3, 2009. <http://illinoistimes.com/article-6658-killer-flu-hits-springfield.html>.

least 240 Springfieldians (some estimates suggest possibly as many as 300 or 350) according to the Illinois Department of Public Health statistics.<sup>75</sup> Overall, the flu epidemic of 1918 was even more deadly than World War I itself as those who died in the war total an estimated 16 million compared to the 20-50 million who died from the flu epidemic.

### Homecoming Celebration in Sangamon County, June 1919

On June 24, 1919, Sangamon County welcomed home all of the men and women who served their country overseas during the Great War. The celebration was for both men and women, for white and black, for those in every branch of the service. There were more than 3,000 soldiers, sailors, and Marines in the great parade, though only a few of the nurses and women in other lines of War Service had returned before the celebration.<sup>76</sup> Among those present at the Homecoming Celebration were Governor Frank O. Lowden, General George E. Bell, Jr. (commander of the Thirty-Third Division), and Brigadier General H.D. Todd. Business was suspended, all work ceased, and everyone in the county flocked to Springfield, the center of the celebration, to pay tribute to the men who had fought overseas. Bronze medals were presented to the families of the Gold Star men, each medal giving the name and service of the man who made the ultimate sacrifice for his country.<sup>77</sup> In the words of Governor Lowden: “We have not forgotten the comrades who will come back no more. The memories of those brave men who fell upon the greatest battlefields of history will be tenderly cherished in the heart of Illinois and in the heart of our common country. For the living, our gratitude, our love; for those silent comrades, our gratitude, our pride, our tears.”<sup>78</sup> The Homecoming Celebration was a day unlike any other. Indeed, it was a time of great joy as people celebrated the end of one of the most horrifying wars in human history. But let us not forget those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

### Conclusion

Overall, hundreds of men and women from Sangamon County fought in, or participated in through other means, the Great War. In total, Illinois sent 351,153 soldiers into Federal service. To put that into perspective, one out of every twelve men in the United States Army was from Illinois. Illinois furnished more men to the army and navy than any other state in the Union, with the exception of New York and Pennsylvania, both of which had larger populations. By the time the war had concluded in November 1918, more than 5,000 Illinois men had given their lives in defense of world freedom and liberty. Of those 5,000 men, approximately 200 of them came from Springfield or Sangamon County.<sup>79</sup> Those men made the ultimate sacrifice on the battlefield in order to keep their loved ones at home safe and, in the words of President Woodrow Wilson, to “make the world safe for democracy.” For Illinois Governor Frank O. Lowden:

Those who spent months in camps in the United States and had none of the excitement and dangers of battle, but who nevertheless served their country to the best of their ability, also are entitled to our praise and gratitude. Home is Illinois—America—the best country in the world. It has always been worth fighting for. The men now sleeping on foreign battlefields have proven that it is worth dying for.<sup>80</sup>

---

<sup>75</sup> Ibid. The numbers of those who died in the flu epidemic both in Springfield and in total are based on best estimates as it is hard to pin down precisely how many died.

<sup>76</sup> Duff, 47.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 48. For a full list of those who were either KIA or died in the influenza epidemic see Appendix A.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>79</sup> “World War I – Documents,” Illinois Digital Archives, accessed November 29, 2015, <http://www.idaillinois.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/isl8>.

<sup>80</sup> Duff, 7.

Though America only fought in World War I for about a year, it too endured hardships and pain just like everyone else involved in the bloodiest conflict in history to that point. Springfield, and Sangamon County as a whole, supported the war effort both in terms of soldiers sent and spent as well as those who were willing to take up the cause on the home front. Their contributions will never be forgotten nor will those who gave it all for a just cause have died in vain.

Appendix A: Sangamon County Casualty List

Orville B. Alexander	John Burley Hill	Lloyd Alva Staley
Wade Haskell Allen	Floyd Newton Hitchcock	William G. Storey
George Julius Allman	Oakle Andrew Jackson	Roy Hubert Sumpter
Joseph William Austin	Vernon Marion Johnson	Harold E. Sweet
Charles J. Ballweg	John Edmund Kelly	Dana Elery Swift
William Hazelys Barnes	Joseph Bryan Kelly	Barney M. Warden
John Clyde Barratt	Raymond Joseph Kinsella	Charles H. Willhite
Charles Bennett	William Carl Kremitzki	Abraham Winakor
William Leo Benson	John H. Laffey	Frank Battan
William Frederick Blanke	Louis J. Lehmann	Edward Robert Craig
Rheuna L. Boynton	Harry Thomas Lenhart	David B. Custin
Arthur Essex Bundy	Farley Lafore Lock	John Henry Davis
William Arthur Burke	Dwight Earl Lowry	Herbert E. Elliott
Geneva Casstevens	Richard P. Ludtke	Thomas Foggarty
William F. Collier	Paul V. McGuire	Harry L. Fogle
Werner J. Bergschneider	Harry McIntyre	James A. Gillespie
Malcolm Cunningham	Claud James Masterson	Isaac V. Goltra
Orville DeWitt Cusac	Charles Bryan Morgan	Thomas J. Gudgell
Louis Edward De Souza	Roy Hellesen Mull	William J. Haugh
Otto Harrison Evans	John Joseph Murphy	Dean Parker Lanham
Henry John Ferrari	Thomas Sylvester Powell	Walter T. Mannix
Francis Drennan Fletcher	Tony Pranchewicz	William A. Peifer
John Chester Foster	Charles P. Pritzlaff	Stephen Shvagzdis
Allyn Jason Gard	James A. Quick	Charles Henry Simon
Phineas C. Gates	John Rees	Joseph C. Sommers
Frank Daniel Graves	John Andrew Reilly	Culmer T. Towner
Basil Francis Greenwood	James J. Rollman	James C. Wade
John Thomas Hall	Paul F. Rubley	Harvey C. Wayne
Joseph M. Hall	Herbert Dickens Ryman	John W. White
Joseph Mathas Harney	Allyn B. Schaber	Carie D. Beasley
Harry Dean Harris	Otto Schorle	Samuel A. Belden
George Dewey Harrison	Remmer Harm Schroeder	Abraham Lewis Bock
Frank George Hein	John Louis Schuman	George W. Dunlap
George Fay Henwood	Joseph L. Sment	Curtis Lyman Hodgen
Calvin William Hesse	Leslie Edwin Smith	Benjamin F. Kincaid
Edward A. Kniery	Amos McDevitt	Joseph C. Patterson
George Edward Alexander	William Anderson	Albert Clawson
Arthur H. Corson	William Leo Davis	Captain T. Enright
Timothy Halley	Lester Holt	John Kedis

Appendix B: Red Cross Branches and Auxiliaries in Sangamon County During WWI<sup>81</sup>

Springfield Area

Bergen Park House  
Bettie Stuart Institute  
Clementine Memorial Chapel  
Converse School  
Douglas Avenue  
Douglas School  
Eastern Star  
Edwards Place  
Enos School  
Feitshan's School  
First Christian Church  
First Congregationalist Church  
First Methodist Church  
George W Reed Circle #74 Ladies of the GAR  
Girl's Auxiliary of the YWCA  
Grace Lutheran Church  
Harvard Park  
Lawrence School  
Liberty Community  
Masonic Temple, Daughters of Isabella  
Masonic Temple, Flower City Chapter  
Masonic Temple Stephenson Women's Relief Corp No 17  
McClernand Training School  
National Women's Relief Society Auxiliary  
North Grand Place  
Oak Hill  
Odd Fellows Temple, Triple Link Rebekah Lodge  
Odd Fellows Temple, Lilla Rebekah Lodge #633  
Park Avenue  
Sacred Heart Church  
South 7<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church  
St. John's German Lutheran Church  
Saints Peter & Paul Church  
The Lincoln School  
Ursuline  
West Side #3/West Side Christian Church/West Side Junior

Rest of Sangamon County

Auburn  
Bissell  
Buffalo  
Buffalo Hart  
Cantrall  
Chatham  
Curran  
Curran Township  
Dawson  
Divernon  
Farmingdale  
Glenarm  
Illioopolis  
Island Grove  
Loami  
Lowder  
Lowder-Talkington Township  
Mechanicsburg  
New Berlin  
New City  
Pawnee  
Pleasant Plains  
Riverton  
Rochester  
Salisbury  
Sherman  
Thayer  
Williamsville

---

<sup>81</sup> American Red Cross Charter of Branches and Auxiliary in Sangamon County 1917/1918.

Appendix C: Other Images from World War I



Springfield, IL



Figure 7 German Soldier in WWI Reenactment

Figure 8 WWI Reenactment Springfield IL

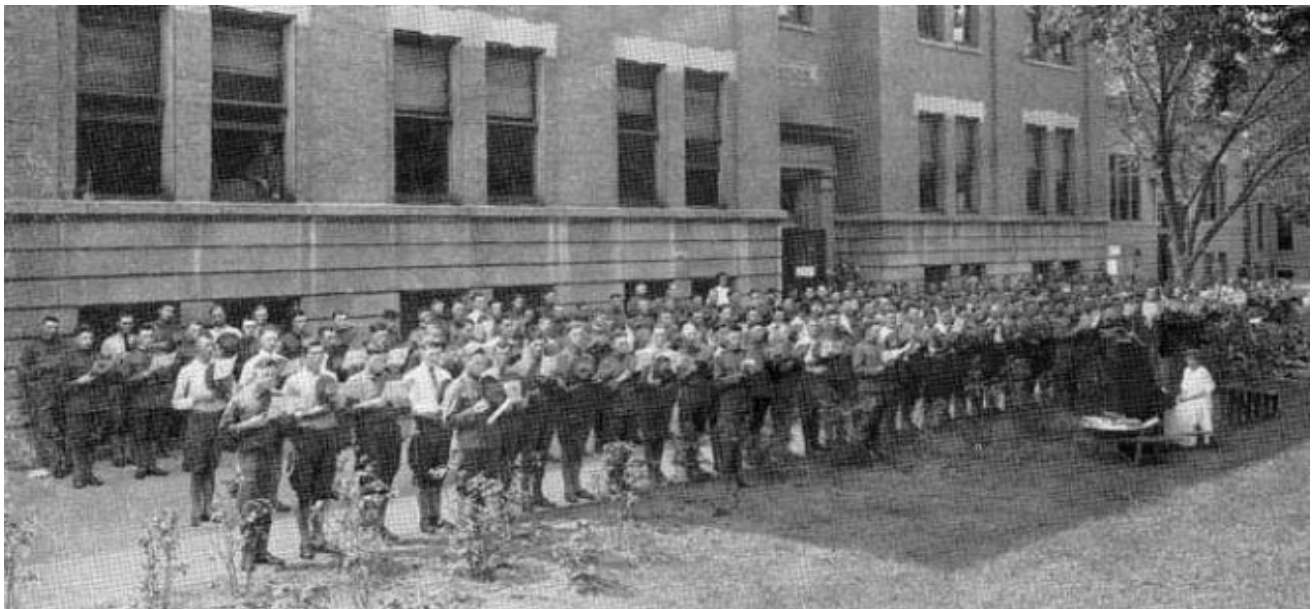


Figure 9 WWI Army unit temporarily housed at Hay-Edwards School in Springfield, IL



Appendix D: Family Members in WWI

Lee Roy Pryor (maternal great grandfather): Born on February 5, 1893. Farmer from Greene County, IL. Enlisted on September 20, 1917 in Carrollton, Illinois as a Private First Class (PFC). Arrived at Camp Taylor in Kentucky later that month. Part of the 333 Sanitary Training Class. On September 8, 1918 sailed from U.S. to France via England. Drove an ambulance in France as part of the Evacuation Ambulance 72. He returned to the U.S. on June 19, 1919 and was discharged from Camp Grant in Illinois on July 1, 1919.

Fred Varnes (maternal great great uncle): Born in Canova, South Dakota on February 22, 1893. Moved to Mott, North Dakota where he enlisted in the Army during World War I. Awarded the Silver Star for bravery in World War I. Saved the life of Teddy Roosevelt, Jr., son of the former president, after Roosevelt Jr. was shot in the leg and gassed. Varnes risked his own life to carry Roosevelt Jr. to safety.



**Figure 10 Lee with his Army buddies at Camp Taylor in Louisville, KY**

John P. Rocklein (paternal great grandfather): Enlisted on October 13, 1915 from New York City as a Private First Class (PFC) in the 165<sup>th</sup> Infantry. Fought in the Champagne Marne Defensive from July 15-18, 1918; Aisne Marne Offensive July 18-August 6, 1918; St. Mihiel Offensive from September 12-16, 1918; Meuse Argonne Offensive from September 26-November 11, 1918. Part of Army of Occupation from December 1918 to April 1919. Discharged May 7, 1919.