“I have been in the front line trenches under fire in No Man’s Land . . .”:
Washington County During World War One

This exhibit resource book consists of newspaper articles, letters, and pictures that help tell the experience of Washington County citizens during World War One, whether they served their country in the Armed Forces, or worked to support the war effort from home.

Doughboys camped near the First Christian Church in Johnson City, circa 1917. Photo courtesy of the Archives of Appalachia, East Tennessee State University, Burr Harrison Photographs.
The following article appeared in the Herald & Tribune on February 7, 1918. Editor E.S. Depew took an issue with a poem that had appeared in The Johnson City Comet on January 30, 1918. In Mr. Depew’s opinion, even in times of war, civility should be encouraged.
Phelim’s Philosophy was a regular column in the Herald & Tribune. The author was unknown. Despite the passage of the Sedition Act, which greatly censored criticism of the United States’ government, “Phelim” criticized the draft in this edition of his column, which ran in the Herald & Tribune on February 14, 1918.

“What right has the government to draft the flower of the land and send them to the front, and permit a lot of drones, worthless no account barnacles of society who happen to be over the draft age to remain home in perfect security . . . . imposing their worthless presence as a burden upon the efforts of others?”

The column follows on the next page.
About 75 great opera done over 60 per cent business. The committee of these great rts will accept these terms fair measure of their rights. Section 1 further ordinary taxes, nation shall, as now, be paid for revenue; but war taxes the act of October 3, paid by the companies, funds, or charged against return. In other words, railroad security in their own just party. Section I also reg agreement shall contain appropriate provisions to the security holders. This should be an agreement between the president.

SHIPS

restricted by Germany have vessels, mines on vessels. American vessels since added to the seizure and Australia 107 caused American persons. American

It is the duty of the nation to give the farmer a fair chance to raise food the nation has asked him to produce just as it is the duty of the farmer on his part to leave no stone or effort unturned or untrained to succeed in the task. There will soon be another liberty loan offered to the public, and we predict it will be as quickly and speedily taken up as the two previous ones, as the people of the nation better realize the necessity of carrying the war to a successful finish. The farming and country class were unjustly criticized by the unthinking few not rallying and over subscribing for their proportion of the loan. This was unjust and uncalled for, as every thinking farmer will know. This class was not organized and appealed to personally as the cities and villages were. Neither was the educational matter spread in a very large percentage of the rural states. It is much easier to enthuse people when they can be reached in groups or personal contact. There is no more patriotic class of people on earth than the farmers. If the country could be organized like the cities and villages doubtless more money in proportion to wealth and population would come from the rural sections than from cities and towns. Uncle Sam’s bonds are absolutely safe and a fine investment for those who have the whereas and should be taken advantage of to the fullest extent, and will be.

Besides there is a patriotic side to it. If we cannot fight, many of us can “do our bit” by rallying and supporting those who can.

W. H. Jones, candidate for county clerk, is well and favorably known here, having been mostly raised here. He is well qualified for the position and will, if nominated and elected, give general satisfaction to those with whom he has to deal. That he will be heard from in the primary or convention, is a foregone conclusion. It is unnecessary to say he will carry the 4th and 8th, (where he now resides) districts by an overwhelming majority.

Chas. E. Eutiel, on route 2, on account of high water one day recently...
This article appeared in the *Johnson City Comet* on January 31, 1918. During times of war, people from opposing nations are often identified and targeted, however unjustly.

A German alien was described as any male from Germany who was 14 years of age or older and was not a naturalized citizen. As this article suggested, there were probably few in the Johnson City area, and most of them were probably veterans who had retired to the Old Soldiers’ Home.
Red Cross workers Mrs. Lyle, Mrs. W.B. Harrison, Mrs. Jones, and two unidentified ladies with two, local Doughboys pose in front of a Red Cross station in Johnson City. Photo courtesy of the Archives of Appalachia, East Tennessee State University, Burr Harrison Photographs.

During the war, the women of Washington County stepped up and assumed roles that had typically been assigned to men. This included the Pig Club, which girls were allowed to join for the first time in 1918. This advertisement for the club ran on February 14, 1918, in the Herald & Tribune.
Your Bond May Bring Him Home in Safety
Patriotic ads encouraged people to buy war bonds, war savings stamps, and to shop local.

This ad from Shipley’s Hardware (the Antique Store on Main St today) appeared in the Herald & Tribune on May 2, 1918.
FOR THE BENEFIT OF
THE RED CROSS
THE PLAY,
"The Call of the Flag"
Will be presented at the
HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM
Friday Night, Feb. 22,
BY THE
BOONE'S CREEK HIGH SCHOOL

This play is one of the best of modern times, and thrills the audi-
that hears it. It will interest, ent-
tertain and instruct. If you fail to hear it, you will miss a great deal.
Proceeds go Entirely to Red Cross.

THIS SPACE DONATED BY
L. M. BROYLES FURNITURE CO.
FOR THE BOYS AT THE FRONT
Tennessee’s Vagrancy Law had a wide definition of “vagrant,” including “tramps, able bodied persons leading idle, immoral or profligate lives; persons without visible and lawful means of support; habitual loafers, loiters and idlers in towns, cities, or neighborhoods, or about railroad stations or other public places; persons trading in stolen property, or in any alcoholic liquors; every common gambler.” The list went on from there. Under the law, people meeting this description could be placed in work camps for the war effort.
Members of the Rhudy family of Johnson City pictured in their uniforms.

Photo courtesy of the Archives of Appalachia, East Tennessee State University, James Agee Film Project Photographs.

This War Bond advertisement ran in the Herald & Tribune on June 27, 1918.
Our Part in Feeding the Nation

(Special Information Service, United States Department of Agriculture.)

GETTING ALONG WITH LESS SUGAR

The Pulp Left After the Juice Has Been Extracted May Be Made Into Pastes and Sauces.
How the War is Hitting The Newspapers

Steps Taken to Prevent Paper Shortage

Under an order issued by the War Industrial Board all weekly newspapers are required to reduce the amount of paper used 15 per cent, beginning Sept. 15.

To meet this requirement of the government, the Herald and Tribune must either reduce the number of pages or cut its circulation. We do not find it practicable to reduce the size of the paper at this time, so we are forced to accept the alternative of reducing our circulation. We appreciate the large list of readers we have, and would be glad to continue carrying those who do not find it convenient to pay up at the expiration of their subscription, but we must meet the demands of the War Board. In view of this fact, we cannot continue those who are as much as THREE MONTHS BEHIND unless paid up by September 15. Those whose subscription have been due for some time need not be surprised when the Herald and Tribune ceases to reach them after Sept. 15. BETTER PAY UP TODAY BEFORE THE KNIFE IS APPLIED.

We also have a large number of exchanges, practically all of which we are compelled to discontinue. This we regret to do as we get much inspiration and many ideas from our contemporaries, but we must all save, sacrifice, and serve in order to win the war and crush the power of the world's blackest criminal.

EDITOR.
WASHINGTON COUNTY
RANKS SEVENTH

A report compiled in the office of State War Savings Director T. R. Preston, Chattanooga, shows that Washiagton county ranks seventh among the 96 counties of the state in the sale of War Savings Stamps up to Sept. 1. The sales for the county amounted to $360,525.75, or a per capita of $10.73 for each of its 33,611 inhabitants.

Of the upper East Tennessee counties, Washington leads them all, the per capita of some of her sister counties falling as low as $2.75.

The total face value of stamps sold in the State to Sept. 1, amounted to $17,401,587.33.
In the midst of the First World War, Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, and John Burroughs, among others, stopped in Washington County on their way through the area. This article appeared in the Herald & Tribune on August 29, 1918.

To learn more about this moment, check out the exhibit near the front door of the museum under the large painting.
IS HELD FOR MAKING
SEDITIOUS REMARKS

Bill Martin Sent to Federal Court for Abusive Language Against President

United States Deputy Marshall J. D. Brown of Greene county yesterday arrested “Bill” Martin of Claiborn street, this city, on a government warrant charging him with making seditious remarks against President Wilson. Martin was yesterday given a hearing before United States Commissioner E. J. Vaught and bound over to federal court, in the sum of $1,000 for his appearance before Judge Sanford at Greeneville the first Monday in March.

It was brought out in the testimony that Martin had made the statement that he would like to shoot about two gallons of ground glass into President Wilson, and a number of seditious remarks. He was alleged to have made the remarks, adding a number of vile oaths, while discussing the food regulations.

The penalty for the crime with which Martin is charged provides that upon conviction the guilty party shall be fined not exceeding $10,000 and imprisoned not to exceed five years, or both.
This article appeared in the Herald & Tribune on October 17, 1918.

It is odd for us to think of today, but in 1918, a person had to buy war bonds or war savings stamps in order to contribute to the war effort. There really was no other way.

WILL GIVE MONEY
BUT WILL NOT LOAN

Washington County Man Presents
Difficult Problem to War
Savings Committee

One man has been found in Tennessee who is apparently perfectly agreeable to giving of his money to the government to help finance the war, but he is adamant on the principle that he will not collect interest on loans. He seems to have a conscience that revolts at the idea of receiving interest on his money, consequently he does not lend on such terms.

This man is named Artie Isenberg and he lives near Gray's Station, Washington county. He has absolutely refused to purchase war savings stamps and has also probably refused to invest in liberty bonds. He has been classified as a slacker under the standard of the war savings campaign and has been reported to the state director as such.

Mr. Preston caused to be written to him one of the letters that are being sent to all persons reported as either refusing to buy at all or decline to buy as many stamps as their means would justify. And Isenberg answered in the following language:

"I beg to say that I do not loan money at interest. So you see why I have not bought any stamps, they bear interest. But I can give and hereby pledge to give to the United States Treasury $10 a month till the close of the war."

Attached to this letter was a $10 bill.
American citizens had been sending aid to “suffering Belgians” long before the United States officially entered the war in 1917.

School was suspended for many months in late 1918 during the Spanish influenza pandemic.
World War I officially ended on the eleventh hour, of the eleventh day, of the eleventh month in 1918.

Monday, Nov. 11, will never be forgotten by the people of Jonesboro and surrounding country. When the news that Germany had signed the armistice terms, reached the quiet old town, the whole populace became astir. Church bells rang out the glad tidings, whistles blew, guns were fired, boys yelled, strong men wept and loyal women shouted.

Men, women and children from the country left their pigs unfed, their stock untended, and rushed from the busy activities of life to hear details of the good news. By noon several hundred people had gathered in the town, shaking one another's hands and reading one another's hearts as if touched by some magic spell from heights sublime.

The band, directed by J. T. Whitlock played the inspiring strains of the national anthem, S. L. Tucker and J. G. Potter closed their shops, transported their anvils to the summit of the Greene hill, and with powder that had been saved to shoot Huns with, thundered forth to all the world the message that the war was won.

At one o'clock 115 automobiles gaily decorated with flags and bunting formed a line headed with W. P. Shipley's hardware truck carrying the Jonesboro band. The procession marched thru Johnson City and back to the National Soldiers' Home where 1200 veterans of bygone days with a unit of the American Red Cross and Boy Scouts marched to the music of the Soldiers' Home band.

Far into the night the bells chimed on and the celebrities continued, until at last, the weary crowds dispersed to slumber sweetly and to dream of peace.
Another shot at the end of WWI celebration in downtown Johnson City. Photo courtesy of the Archives of Appalachia, East Tennessee State University, James Agee Film Project Photographs.
Sgt Bernie Daniels sent a letter home to his parents in September of 1918. That November, they learned of his death in combat.
WOULDN'T EXCHANGE PLACES
WITH BANK PRESIDENT

A.E.F., Sept. 15th, 1918.
Mr. and Mrs. N. E. Hersey,
Jonesboro, Tenn.
Dear Parents:

Just a few lines today to let you know that I am well and trust you both are the same.

Since I wrote you last, I have been continually on the move, riding some hundred twenty-five miles in a truck. This was one of the largest truck trains I ever saw. In fact there were more trucks in the train than there are people in Jonesboro.

You remember I purchased a large amount of equipment when I left the States, this being required before I sailed, and it is interesting to note that I have now only the amount I am able to carry, the remainder being scattered from Liverpool to——. I will be able to run foot races up mountains. Have hiked thirty miles over mountains with pack. I cannot tell you where I am but I can say that I have seen the beauties of the Rockies surpassing.

I can honestly say that I would not exchange places with the president of the Bank and Trust company, for I have been in the front line trenches under fire and in No Man's land, and I feel good about it because the purpose of my mission over here is that of service, and when I see the terrible havoc wrought by the Germans upon the French people, it gives me new courage to know I am fighting for right against might.

Since writing you last, I have been in the front line trenches under fire and led the first patrol from Company B, across No Man's land and succeeded in cutting the Soche's wire entanglements. I have been appointed Battalion Scout officer and leader of large patrols. This is very nerve-wracking but it is exciting. We operate at night and sleep in day time. Lieutenant Hugh Horn, of Johnson City, is my fellow officer.

I appreciate the job and am willing to make the supreme sacrifice if necessary.

I do hope you are getting along fine and that everything is O.K. Don't worry about me.

With much love and best wishes, I am,

Your son,
WALTER LEE SHERFEY,
Lt. 53rd Inf. U.S. Army.

BOWMANTOWN BOY
DIES ON TRANSPORT

The following letter was received by Frank Phillips, of Bowmantown, relative to the death of his brother William, who died on a transport en route to France on October 3rd.
Mr. Frank Phillips,
Limestone, Tenn.
Dear Mr. Phillips:

I happen to be the Y.M.C.A. Sec. on the transport when your brother, William died. He had good care and put up a game fight, but it was too much for him. I was with him quite a good deal, taking him oranges, candy, etc., while he was able to eat them and he enjoyed them very much. We all liked him and we were sorry to see him go.

Your brother was a good soldier, a fine man and you can well be proud of him. I know there is nothing I can say to help you, but thought a few words from one who knew him and was with him might help you.

Sincerely yours,
R.F. MARSHALL, Sec'y.
Army and Navy Y.M.C.A.
WASHINGTON COUNTY BOYS MAKE SUPREME SACRIFICE

Recent casualty lists contain the names of the following Washington county boys killed in action in France:

Serg. Virgil Mottern, Jonesboro.
Serg. Bernie Daniels, Jonesboro.
Corp. Roby Hendrix, Johnson City.

Prvt. Wm. Holmes, Jonesboro.
Wesley Furchess, Embreeville, died of disease.

Emmet Cole, Johnson City.
Serg. Hobart B. Jones, Johnson City.
This is a snippet from Editor E.S. Depew’s column following the Armistice calling for the swift and irrevocable punishment of Germany and its citizens.

“Phelim” argued that the peace proposed by the Treaty of Versailles was too harsh and tarnished all those who had fought for the cause.
Throughout the war, women would write letters to soldiers overseas, whether they knew them or not. Jonesborough resident Mary Lucy Epps, known by the nickname of “Cute,” had shared several letters with a soldier by the name of Edward Healey out of Chicago. After the war was over, Mrs. V.P. Jensen wrote to Mary hoping against hope that the girl had heard from her son Edward.

Dear Miss Epps,

I am Edward Healey’s mother (Mrs. V.P. Jensen.) I am writing to tell you I have taken the liberty of opening your last letter to him – hoping to learn he had gone south. I received a telegram June 18th saying he had arrived in New York safely and would be home within a week. I have had no other word from him, but Thursday a.m. I received his honorable discharge certificate from the Gov. dated June 20th – Will you kindly let me have the letter he wrote you, you spoke of receiving June 25th? I will consider it a lasting favor, and will return it to you as I have nothing in his writing to verify his being in the States – we have telegraphed and made every inquiry but it’s like working in the dark as we cannot trace him after June 20th. Unless I have something by tomorrow morning, I shall put it in the hands of the Secret Service. Edward was always so thoughtful about my worrying that he never planned a trip no matter how insignificant without telling me where I could reach him, and through this entire war – he has never missed writing from one to 3 times a week, he was so anxious to reach home. I can’t account for this silence unless – the strain has been too much this past year, or foul play – as I’m sure he had quite a large sum of money with him. So girlie if you will send his letter right away I’ll take care of it and return it with several others I am holding intact, hoping against hope for his return. Thanking you in advance. I am his worried mother.

Unfortunately, Edward Healey fell prey to a gang that would rob and sometimes murder returning soldiers as they stepped off the train or boat.
This will was written in France by Lester P. Harris as he was serving overseas. He addressed it to his mother, with strict instructions about what was to happen to his possessions should he perish in the war. Unfortunately, Lester died in July of 1918, a few months after he drafted this will. His family lived at 824 East Myrtle Street in Johnson City in a home known as “Orchard Place.” The Harris family was a very prominent family, and there is a street in Johnson City named in honor of Lester Harris. This will is held in the Washington County, Tennessee, Department of Records Management and Archives.
Army tank at Science Hill Academy in Johnson City in 1919. Photo courtesy of the Archives of Appalachia, East Tennessee State University, Burr Harrison Photographs.