

ARKANSAS WOMEN AND WORLD WAR I



Arkansas Women and World War I

Introduction

When World War I broke out in Europe in 1914, American women immediately organized to assist with the war effort. After the United States officially entered the war in 1917, the women-led organization worked even harder. While women did not fight directly on frontlines, some participated in military operations, most notably as nurses. Most, however, engaged in a variety of civilian activities that supported the country's involvement in the war. For example, they took up jobs in factories that produced military equipment and supplies, organized charity events that raised funds to help troops, volunteered to take care of wounded and disabled veterans returning from battlefields, and even tended to war gardens, known also as victory gardens, where they cultivated vegetables and fruit to be able to feed their families in the time of food shortages.

One women's organization that supported the war effort through a variety of volunteer activities was the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America (est. 1891). Its Arkansas chapter was established in 1898 in Little Rock. In this activity, you will analyze a document that highlights what the Arkansas Colonial Dames did to assist with the war effort.

The National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in the State of Arkansas was one of the thousands of civilian organizations that supported troops overseas and veterans at home. Their activities were part of mass national mobilization known as the home front and had not only regional but also national and global impact.

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CENTER FOR ARKANSAS
HISTORY AND CULTURE
UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT LITTLE ROCK

Report of War Work of The National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in Arkansas

The members of the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in Arkansas have been very active in Red Cross and other war work. The Training Camp at Fort Roots and the Cantonment at Camp Pike, both places in the suburbs of Little Rock, have created compelling interest and energy in patriotic work.

The Arkansas Society contributed \$ 500.00 to the fund pledged by the National Society, to be used in furnishing a Red Cross Hospital ship.

Many members of the Arkansas Society gave generously to the fund to secure the location of the cantonment near Little Rock.

Arkansas Dames donated largely to the National Red Cross fund and assisted in the drive, and many bought Libert Bonds.

The War Stamp Saving Campaign and other claims for conserving are receiving the attention of the Arkansas Dames.

A brief resume of some of the efforts of the members of the Arkansas Society is as follows: They have served as chairmen and members of committees whose entertainments have netted satisfactory sums for Red Cross work; they have secured funds in the same manner to assist in the care of a French Orphanage near Paris, and have helped in the committee work for the "Fatherless Children of France", and have contributed in many ways to the Belgian Relief cause.

Members of the Arkansas Society have served as follows:
Chairman of organization of classes for Red Cross work in the instruction of the making of Surgical Dressings, and in the study of Elementary Hygiene and Home Care of the Sick:

Chairman of knitting units; Chairman of committee to secure Hospital Supplies such as comfort kits, bed bags, books, fruit, flowers, Christmas Kits; Chairman Home Service Committee.

Members of the Arkansas Society have been and are constant workers in all of the departments of the Red Cross, and in the arrangements at the Hostess House at Camp Pike.

The Arkansas Dames have shown many hospitalities to the officers and soldiers stationed at Fort Roots and Camp Pike.

A member of the Arkansas Society is giving her services to war work, in Paris, and another member is serving as secretary of the Arkansas Association of Red Cross Nurses, pending her foreign service. Another member is ^{chairman} of the committee for Little Rock Day during the meeting of the General Federation Biennial, which will be a war working Biennial.

The Arkansas Dames are praying, working and saving for Victory and a World's Democracy

Mrs. Frederick (Frances Marion) Hanger
Secretary

Mrs. Charles Minor (Julia Frewitt) Taylor
President

*copy
sent to Nat. Historian
for Biennial report*

"Report of War Work" by the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in the State of Arkansas Records, ca. May 1918 (National Society of The Colonial Dames of America in the State of Arkansas Records)

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Questions:

1. In what war-related activities did members of the Colonial Dames engage?
 - a. What was “Liberty Bonds”?
 - b. What was “the War Stamp Saving campaign” (or *war savings stamps*)?
2. Based on this report, what could civilians do to support the war effort?
3. Based on this report, in what ways could Arkansas civilians help troops fighting in World War I?
4. Why do you think these women engaged in all the activities?