## ARKANSAS WOMEN AND WORLD WAR I



#### Arkansas Women and World War I

#### Introduction

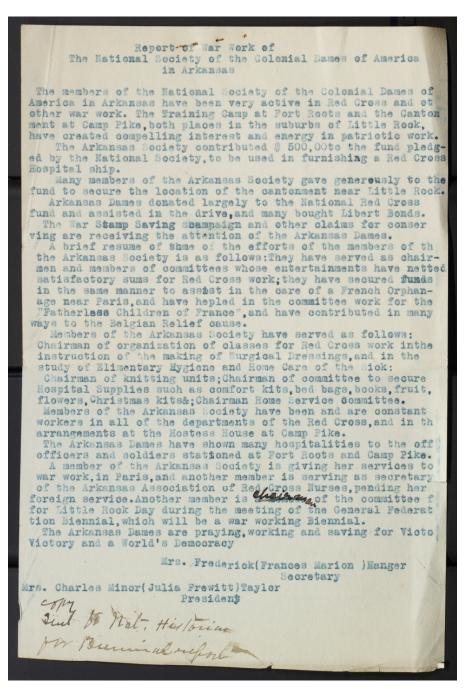
When World War I broke out in Europe in 1914, American women immediately organized to assist with the war effort. After the United States officially entered the war in 1917, the women-led organization worked even harder. While women did not fight directly on frontlines, some participated in military 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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"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?