



‘Will you have a part in Victory?’: World War I and the American Home Front

Ohio Memory Resource Guide—www.ohiomemory.org



Introduction

From 1914 until early 1917, President Woodrow Wilson maintained the United States' neutrality as World War I raged in Europe, despite the war's unprecedented global impact. When Germany disregarded the "Freedom of the Seas" policy and sank five American merchant ships, Wilson could not ignore this purposeful attack. On April 2, 1917, the country declared war on Germany, ending U.S. neutrality.

The U.S. government quickly pulled together its resources and established military training camps across the country, the third largest of which was Camp Sherman near Chillicothe, Ohio. In addition to mobilizing troops, various federal, state, and local committees formed to organize programs and campaigns encouraging nationwide participation in the war effort. Brave soldiers and military personnel serving overseas did not face World War I alone, as Americans on the home front played a crucial role in sustaining and supporting Allied military forces.

Men, women, and even children contributed to the war effort by joining the workforce, conserving food, and buying war bonds. The U.S. Food Administration launched a food conservation campaign which encouraged families and businesses to grow their own produce in war gardens, or "victory gardens," and published free gardening and canning guide books. Women were encouraged to sew and knit clothing and other personal items to send to troops overseas. American industries shifted their focus to manufacturing goods for military units, especially automotive parts and machinery, rubber products, and electrical equipment. Americans could financially support the war through the purchase of bonds, stamps, or Liberty loans. Many non-profit organizations, like the American Red Cross, YMCA/YWCA, and Knights of Columbus educated citizens, fundraised, and organized community donation events.

Suggested Search Strategies

Try the following terms as an "all word" search: home front, war posters, food conservation, war garden, victory garden, Red Cross, or YMCA.

Start your search in the [World War I in Ohio Collection](#) on the collection homepage. Broaden your search to all records on Ohio Memory by searching from the [Ohio Memory homepage](#).

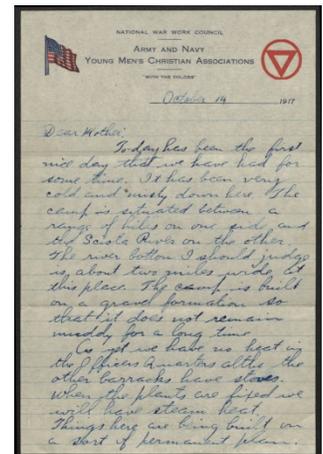




Sample Items on Ohio Memory

War bonds & funds

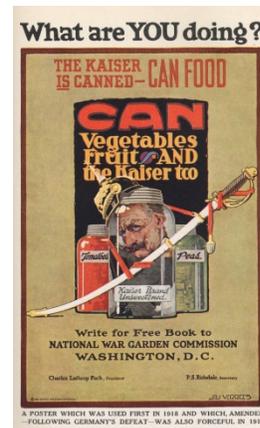
- [‘Over the Top for You’ poster](#): Many WWI posters urging Americans to purchase Liberty loans, like this one, show soldiers on the battlefield serving valiantly. (See right)
- [‘This is a thrift home’ poster](#): Americans who purchased war savings stamps could hang posters like this one in their windows to publically display their support for the war effort, and shame or hold accountable those who did not financially contribute. Each punch-out star inside the “T” represents one \$5 stamp, and each outside the “T” represents one household member who purchased a thrift or war savings stamp.
- [‘Keep the Hun Out!’ poster](#): Some WWI-era posters emphasize the threat of the barbaric, evil Germans reaching America’s shores. This frightening poster shows a “Hun,” or German soldier, climbing into a home through a window, urging Americans to purchase war savings stamps to keep the Germans out.
- [‘Americans All!’ poster](#): Illustrated by artist and Ohio native Howard Chandler Christy, this poster lists an “honor roll” of Americans who have probably purchased a large number of Liberty loans. The woman holding a laurel wreath over their names, a personification of liberty or victory, implies that Americans who purchase Liberty loans are helping win the war.
- [‘Invest in the Victory Liberty Loan’ poster](#): Artist Leon Alaric Shafer provides a vivid image of U.S. naval forces approaching the enemy, reminding Americans at home of the war U.S. soldiers are fighting in Europe.
- [‘It’s Our War Chest Against His’ poster](#): Showing Belgium and France depositing money into Germany’s war chest at the mercy of bayonets, this poster by nationally-acclaimed Ohio artist Billy Ireland reminds civilians to continue to support American troops by buying war bonds, stamps, and Liberty loans.
- [Liberty bond salesmen photograph](#): This photograph shows Defiance County Liberty Bond salesmen gathering for a luncheon at the Masonic Temple in Defiance, Ohio.
- [Harlan W. Johnson letter to his mother, October 14, 1917](#): In this letter to his mother while stationed at Camp Sherman, Harlan W. Johnson writes that he purchased a \$100 Liberty bond, with his company subscribing \$3,000 in Liberty bonds, his company’s motto being “All our money and our lives if necessary.” (See right)





Food conservation

- [‘Will you have a part in Victory?’ poster](#): Published in “War Gardens Victorious,” a book by president of the National War Garden Commission Charles Lathrop Pack, this poster shows Lady Liberty sowing seeds. The slogan “Every Garden a Munition Plant” emphasizes the important role war gardens play in winning the war. (See Introduction)
- [‘Win the Next War Now’ poster](#): This poster advertises a free book from the National War Garden Commission detailing home drying and canning practices in an effort to make resources available to all Americans so that they might grow their own produce.
- [‘War Gardens Over the Top’ poster](#): With the tagline “The Seeds of Victory Insure the Fruits of Peace,” this poster encourages Americans to grow war gardens, suggesting that their efforts will ultimately lead to a peace treaty.
- [‘Little Americans Do Your Bit’ poster](#): Children could support the war effort by eating wheat substitutes like oatmeal and cornmeal, and aspiring to be clean-platers.
- [‘The Kaiser is Canned’ poster](#): Showing Kaiser Wilhelm II stuffed in a canning jar, this 1919 poster announces Germany’s defeat and encourages Americans to continue maintaining their war gardens. (See right)
- [Home drying and canning guide](#): This pamphlet published by the National War Garden Commission describes how to design and organize a war garden, as well as how to use compost, fertilizer, common gardening tools, and planting schedules and instructions.
- [“Seeds for your war garden” brochure](#): Published by the Wagner Park Nursery in Sidney, Ohio, this brochure encourages Americans to fulfill their “patriotic duty” by planting war gardens and lists available seed packets and prices.



Role of American Red Cross and American Manufacturing

- [Greek Gorrell letter to L. Dean Holden, American Red Cross, March 14, 1918](#): In this letter, East Cleveland resident Greek Gorrell writes to the American Red Cross regarding a stenographer position while her older brothers Claude and Joseph were serving on the Western Front. Her Red Cross membership certificate is available [here](#).
- [Inland Steel Company canning photograph](#): Inland Steel Company employees, one of the largest steel producers in the country, proudly stand with their war garden produce. (See right)
- [Red Cross call for tire donation photograph](#): This photograph shows a Red Cross tire donation notice in Hillsboro, Ohio, and an ever-growing mound of used tires. All funds





received for selling the rubber would be used for purchasing items for comfort kits for soldiers. Comfort kits included sewing materials, buttons, postcards, envelopes, pencils, paper and Bibles.

- [Armco bulletins](#): During WWI, the American Rolling Mill Company (Armco) published a monthly newsletter which features articles about Armco employees serving overseas, especially the Armco Ambulance Corps, as well as encouraging the local community to conserve food and to purchase war stamps and bonds.

Ohio's New Learning Standards: Social Studies

American History (AH)

- AH.4: Historians analyze cause, effect, sequence and correlation in historical events, including multiple causation and long and short-term causal reactions.
- AH.15: As a result of overseas expansion, the Spanish-American War and World War I, the United States emerged as a world power

Modern World History (MWH)

- MWH.4: Historians analyze cause, effect, sequence and correlation in historical events, including multiple causation and long- and short-term causal reactions.
- MWH.14: The causes of World War I included militarism, nationalism, and alliances.
- MWH.15: After WWI, the United States pursued efforts to maintain peace in the world. However, as a result of the national debate over the Versailles Treaty ratification and the League of Nations, the United States moved away from the role of world peacekeeper and limited its involvement in international affairs.

Additional Resources

- Chronicling America (<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>)
- Ohio in World War I (<http://www.worldwar1centennial.org/index.php/ohio-in-ww1-home-page.html>)
- World War I Union Bibliography (<http://www.ohiohistoryhost.org/wwibib/>)
- The National World War I Museum and Memorial (<https://www.theworldwar.org>)
- 'Sow the Seeds of Victory!' educator resource, National Archives (<https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/sow-seeds>)

Little Stories of the Great War: Ohioans in World War I has been made possible in part by a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities: Exploring the human endeavor.

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