

HISTORY OF LINCOLN, ONEIDA AND VILAS COUNTIES

Compiled by George O. Jones, Norman S. McVean and Others.

Minneapolis, Minn.: 1924 by H. C. Cooper. Jr. & Co.

The World War.--On May 10, 1917, at the spring session of the county board, it was unanimously resolved to organize a County Council of Defense to co-operate with the State Council of Defense in support of the administration of the government, each member of the county board to appoint in his respective town a council of defense consisting of five or more members, the said town council to co-operate with and report to the County Council of Defense. The resolution was signed by following members of the board, chairman of their respective townships: Charles H. Kamke, Arbor Vitae; Peter Hedeem, Conover; Frank W. Carter, Eagle River; John R. Powell, Farmington; William Selves, Flambeau; Henry Rath, Lincoln; C. M. Christianson, Phelps; John W. Oliver, Plum Lake; Charles A. Backshom, Presque Isle; and Geo. G. Sanborn, Washington.

The home work was well carried out in all departments, as shown in statistical figures. Vilas County's quota for the first Liberty Loan was \$20,000, and it is said that \$25,000 was actually subscribed, but the credit was given Chicago, Ill., Grand Rapids, Mich., and other cities. On the Second Liberty Loan the quota for the count was \$20,000 and the amount subscribed 838,25b. On the Third Liberty Loan the county made a still better record, the quota being \$25,000 and the amount subscribed \$92,050. This was a larger percentage of over-subscription (36SY2 per cent) than any other county on the entire Ninth Federal Reserve District had (comprising northern Wisconsin and Michigan, Minnesota, Montana and North and South Dakota), and in recognition the county was awarded a Liberty Loan flag with one star, Vilas being the only county in the district receiving such recognition. For the Fourth Liberty Loan the quota was \$60,000 and the amount subscribed \$101,950, or 169 per cent, which placed the county fourth in rank among those over-subscribing their quotas. In had 891 subscribers out of a population of 4,375 people. The quota for the Fifth or Victory Loan was \$35,000 and the amount subscribed \$74,250, or 212 per cent, another fine showing, exceeded only by that of the Third Loan.

The contributions in all war funds were as follows: The Five Liberty Loans, \$331,500; War Savings and Thrift Stamps, \$60,000; Armenian Relief Fund, \$413.75; American Red Cross, \$7,215.96; the Young Men's Christian Association, \$1,100; the Knights of Columbus, \$400; the United War Work Fund (quota \$3,000), \$3,907.87; Smokes for Soldier Boys' Fund, \$572.65; Grand Total, \$405,110.23. In the Armenian Relief Fund Vilas was the banner county in Wisconsin, her percentage being 141 as against 135, which was that of the next highest county.

During the war Vilas County had about 700 families of whom 609 signed food pledge checks; some families were not seen, and less than 20 families refused to sign food pledge checks. The Fuel and Food administrators reported all government regulations cheerfully complied with. The county agricultural agent reported that the farmers planted and harvested over 200 war acres of wheat, as compared with from five to ten acres in previous years; the increase in barley and rye was nearly the same as the wheat increase. The women of Vilas County filled every requisition asked by the American Red Cross and measured up to 100 per cent in war work patriotism.

The outstanding feature of Vilas County's contribution to the winning of the war was the response made to all demands by the Indians on the Lac du Flambeau Reservation and by the sawmill workers and lumberjacks in logging camps; on every call and on every occasion they were there to a man. In Vilas County the property representing 75 per cent of the total assessed valuation of

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the entire county is owned and held by non-residents. Such nonresidents contributed very little to the above.

What Vilas County gave in man power: Men enlisted, 270; in navy, 57; marines, 6; national army, 38; volunteers in special branches (foreign armies), 2; total, 373. Of that number at least two met death in action and two or more others died in the service; or as a result of it, as the death of one occurred after the war closed; the number of wounded and gassed were 17. These figures apply to the white population, as some 40 or more Indians from the Lac du Flambeau Reservation got into the service, of whom at least one was killed and another died. In addition to the above several Vilas County boys enlisted outside the county. It is worth mentioning that six boys of the Divine family of Clear Lake served in the war and the seventh tried to enlist, while the family of Otto Flodine sent four sons and a son-in-law to the war.

Wilson Trapp, one of the youths who made the supreme sacrifice, died May 23, 1918, when the British transport Moldavia was torpedoed. He was from the town of Arbor Vitae, and was a member of Company H, 341st Infantry.

Emil Gherkin, also of the town of Arbor Vitae, and a member of the Sixth Regiment, U. S. Marine Corps, was killed April 1, 1918, on the battlefield in France, while helping to stop the German drive against the British lines.

Of those who died in the service whose records are available, Frederick James Walsh, of Eagle River, a second class seaman, died of the "flu" at the Great Lakes Naval Station, Sept. 21, 1918. William T. Davies, of Eagle River, second class U. S. N., R. F., was taken ill while in the service, from which he was released April 30, 1919. He died of tuberculosis at Tucson, Ariz., Jan. 10, 1920.