

PATRIOTISM ON CAMPUS:  
OKLAHOMA AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL  
COLLEGE AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR

By

MATTHEW RAY BATES

Bachelor of Arts

Mid-America Christian University

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

2013

Submitted to the Faculty of the  
Graduate College of the  
Oklahoma State University  
in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for  
the Degree of  
MASTER OF ARTS  
May 2016

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Thesis Approved:

Dr. William S. Bryans

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Thesis Adviser

Dr. L. G. Moses

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Dr. Brian Frehner

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is altogether proper and fitting to acknowledge the people and institutions who supported me in the completion of this work. I would like to thank the Oklahoma State University (OSU) Edmon Low library staff and faculty, and specifically Mr. David Peters and the entire Special Collections and University Archives personnel. Great thanks are due to the Oklahoma State University History Department for the opportunity it afforded me to study history and the funding to accomplish my goals as a graduate student. My lecturers and professors at my undergraduate institution, Mid-America Christian University, deserve invaluable recognition for their noble effort in classroom instruction and the impartation of life lessons. I would additionally like to thank my graduate student colleagues who edited portions of this thesis during research seminars and during editing round-table meetings throughout my tenure at OSU – their names will be remembered as fellow historians. The assistance and academic support Dr. William Bryans, Dr. L. G. Moses, and Dr. Brian Frehner offered during my tenure in the History Department is immense and I am abundantly thankful for their mentorship as prestigious scholars and their friendship as fellow students of history. Dr. Bryans and Dr. Moses deserve special gratitude for their invaluable kindness as academic references for my Fall 2015 Fulbright Grant application and numerous department scholarships – thank you. Dr. Laura Arata deserves equal praise as a scholar-teacher, and it was a privilege to be her Teaching Assistant.

Few words exist to express the profound love and thanks I have for my Dad (John) and Mom (Vicki), and this thesis is dedicated to them both for the years they helped during my academic endeavors and through life's tumultuous trials. Ultimately, this work is for the glory of God, SDG, and He is truly my inherited portion and prize (Psalm 72). I thank the Lord for His provision in leading me to Stillwater, and my beloved friends and fellow saints in the Stillwater Reformed Presbyterian Church congregation. My sister Olivia and brother Luke have been heartfelt friends and deserve the utmost thanks in how they showed loving-kindness and academic support.

Name: MATTHEW RAY BATES

Date of Degree: MAY, 2016

Title of Study: PATRIOTISM ON CAMPUS: OKLAHOMA AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL COLLEGE AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Major Field: HISTORY

Abstract: This study examines the patriotic expressions on the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College (OAMC) campus from 1914 to 1919. This work on OAMC provides insights into the social sentiment of one of Oklahoma's largest public colleges during the First World War, and the home-front environment many students encountered as cadets and patriotic citizens. Through primary source documents gathered from official college publications along with supportive secondary sources, this study places the OAMC into the larger context of the United States home-front throughout World War I (WWI). The work also examines the OAMC campus' wartime sentiment, in relation to United States patriotic wartime mobilization.

Ultimately, United States and Oklahoma war mobilization changed the Oklahoma A. & M. campus. Some transformations manifested in institutional programs while others revealed societal shifts concurrent throughout American society. The Reserve Officer Training Corps' establishment in 1916 increased funds toward military preparedness and drill and thus aided the rise in patriotic sentiment promoted on campus. Oklahoma A. & M. collegiate culture favored the state-wide patriotic wartime spirit and revealed minimal dissent toward the state throughout the First World War. The Oklahoma Council of Defense and Choctaw Nation organized groups who contributed toward the war effort, yet divided on the method in how the state implemented wartime measure.

This study also revealed the complex conflict between religion and civil liberties during the war, and how these social forces developed on the OAMC campus. The sports and college games organized on campus from 1910 to 1919 cultivated the needed physical training used in military on-campus drills. The First World War altered the military sentiment on Oklahoma A. & M. from 1914-1919 and cultivated a new patriotic spirit originated from the old pre-World War I attitude. Oklahoma A. & M.'s wartime sentiment resembled the state-wide efforts council of defense workers and loyal citizens offered Oklahoma's war mobilization. The Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College from 1914-1919 demonstrated its WWI patriotism through mock war-games and student volunteers among a fertile environment for state wartime preparedness.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

First World War literature emerged soon after the 1918 armistice. First World War literature encompasses a century-long compilation among diverse disciplines that make any study reliant on military, economic, social, political, religious, intellectual, and literary secondary sources. This work draws extensive support from the religious, military, and social fields and utilizes evidence relevant to Oklahoma State University. A work on World War I (WWI) Oklahoma domestic life requires some regional and national context to understand the college campus under consideration. The secondary sources noted comprise a portion of the works analyzed for this thesis and provide a needed historiographical context. The literature consulted in this work divides into two camps; the First World War publications focused on national topics; and, those works specific to Oklahoma or historical sub-groups. Secondary sources addressed below represent the material analyzed in this thesis. This historiography places the work on Oklahoma within the World War I literature, and explains its contribution to the field.

An historical context should also encompass the study of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College (OAMC or Oklahoma A. & M.) and its place in early twentieth-century American society in general and the World War I years in particular. This work places such study in a larger wartime American culture well established in the historical

literature, and admits the inevitable exclusion of certain subjects and groups in this limited work. Nonetheless, a proper historiographical analysis provides the needed foundation when examining collegiate opinions during the First World War.

First World War literature spans diverse historic topics and subjects. This work utilizes military, political, and religious secondary sources to provide a wartime context on the OAMC campus from 1914-1919. To understand the Great War, *The First World War* by John Keegan provides a broad military foundation. Keegan's work introduces a new level in twenty-first century WWI scholarship.<sup>1</sup> *The First World War* provides not only military details and political facts, but maintains the human spectrum in a historical narrative. The first edition Summary states, "In this magisterial narrative, the great military historian John Keegan has produced the definitive account of the Great War".<sup>2</sup> John Keegan's other stellar work published in 1976, *The Face of Battle*, marked a seminal contribution to military history.<sup>3</sup> In *The Face of Battle*, the author's first three chapters provided information on three major European battles and offered fundamental military history principles. Chapter four provided a detailed account of the Somme battle in 1916 World War I (WWI) France. This entire book offers the First World War historian invaluable military theory, facts, policy, and perspective to supplement any additional research. These two John Keegan works place any OAMC WWI study, related to the war, in a broader national and international framework.

Military history comprises, to a large degree, facts, names, events, and people.

John Whiteclay Chambers II led a team of editors to publish *The Oxford Companion to*

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<sup>1</sup> John Keegan. *The First World War*. (New York: A. Knopf; Distributed by Random House, 1999).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., Back Cover Summary.

<sup>3</sup> John Keegan. *The Face of Battle*. (New York: Viking Press, 1976).

*American Military History* in 1999.<sup>4</sup> This dictionary companion supplies the researcher with needed information and summarizes concepts in a reliable, organized, and comparable format. Since its publication, *The Oxford Companion* provides the scholar and general public a comprehensive foundation for the military in American culture.

Five pivotal sources represent this author's First World War perspective and provide the military history paradigm throughout this work. The books included: *Bodies of War: World War I and the Politics of Commemoration in America, 1919-1933* by Lisa M. Budreau; *Unknown Soldiers: The Story of the Missing of the First World War* by Neil Hanson; *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States from 1607 to 2012* by Allan R. Millett, Peter Maslowski, and William B. Feis; *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* by Christopher Capozzola; and, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy* by Russell F. Weigley.<sup>5</sup> Each book shaped this thesis and offered a unique contribution to understanding the First World War. Since few works provide a definitive Oklahoma collegiate WWI history, besides Martin Henry Lutter's dissertation "Oklahoma and the World War, 1914-1917: A Study In Public Opinion," in 1961. This present thesis

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<sup>4</sup> John Whiteclay Chambers, and Fred Anderson. *The Oxford Companion to American Military History*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

<sup>5</sup> Lisa M. Budreau. *Bodies of War : World War I and the Politics of Commemoration in America, 1919-1933*. New York: New York University Press, 2010; Hanson, Neil. *Unknown Soldiers : The Story of the Missing of the First World War*. 1st American ed. New York: Knopf, 2006; Millett, Allan Reed., and Peter Maslowski. *For the Common Defense : A Military History of the United States of America*. New York : London: Free Press ; Collier Macmillan, 1984; Capozzola, Christopher Joseph Nicodemus. *Uncle Sam Wants You : World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008; Weigley, Russell Frank. *The American Way of War; a History of United States Military Strategy and Policy*. Wars of the United States (Macmillan & Co.). New York: Macmillan, 1973.

contributes a needed perspective in Oklahoma's WWI involvement and how the state's reaction manifested in part at Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College.<sup>6</sup> The *Chronicles of Oklahoma* article "The Campus Cadets: A History of Collegiate Military Training, 1891-1951" by Philip Reed Rulon in 1979 remains the definitive work on OAMC in the First World War outside the 1990 OSU *Centennial Histories Series*.<sup>7</sup> This thesis fills a gap in Oklahoma State University World War I literature, and notes the important connection between various local, state, and national groups on the OAMC campus from 1914-1919.

The five books analyzed together create a contextual framework for this World War I study. Each work highlights a different subject or offers a broad approach in its war examination of the conflict. Lisa Budreau's *Bodies of War* records the repatriation and remembrance effort United States military personnel undertook after the Great War. The author recounts the colossal work American mothers assumed to organize, commemorate, and travel to the European graves of their sons. Other United States groups embarked on pilgrimages to European cemeteries, and Budreau explains the effort government officials took in war commemoration. Oklahoma colleges engaged in local commemoration projects and Budreau's work offers an insight into the national commission created after World War I. *Bodies of War* utilizes relevant government reports, documents, and personal letters to provide the reader with a clear picture of post-WWI commemoration. Budreau contributes a unique insight into United States military veteran burial policy, post-World War I government bureaucracy, and national verses

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<sup>6</sup> Martin Henry Lutter. "Oklahoma and the World War, 1914-1917: A Study in Public Opinion." Ph.D., The University of Oklahoma, 1961.

<sup>7</sup> Philip Reed Rulon. The Campus Cadets: A History of Collegiate Military Training, 1891-1951. *Chronicles of Oklahoma*. 57, 1, (1979).

citizen commemoration responsibilities. Overall, *Bodies of War* helps the World War I scholar to understand the United States' commemoration and repatriation decisions. *Bodies of War* reflects Budreau's mastery in recounting the effect of the First World War on a nation's commemorative practices and collective memory. As a pupil of noted historian Jay Winter, the author provides her own contribution to the field of memory studies and World War I historiography. *Bodies of War* contributes immensely to our understanding of how complex and multilayered World War I American commemoration became in the 1920s and 1930s, and raises important questions regarding a war's collective and personal memory. Budreau reveals the many ways influential groups, individuals, and modern nation-states remember, commemorate, and regulate the burial of dead soldiers in a democratic society.<sup>8</sup>

Historian Christopher Capozzola provides a clear and diverse perspective of the domestic patriotism and wartime propaganda disseminated by the American government during the war. Capozzola challenges the common narrative in regards to American reactions to the Great War at home. Capozzola's 2008 book includes the diverse sentiments and zealous reactions espoused from government agencies and American minority groups. *Uncle Sam Wants You* explains in vivid detail its subtitle "World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen".<sup>9</sup> The work offers a narrative intimate to the reader, while maintaining a clear theme. This thesis draws immense insight from Capozzola's chapters, and narrows *Uncle Sam Wants You's* geographical sphere to an

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<sup>8</sup> Lisa M. Budreau. *Bodies of War : World War I and the Politics of Commemoration in America, 1919-1933*. (New York: New York University Press, 2010).

<sup>9</sup> Christopher Joseph Nicodemus Capozzola. *Uncle Sam Wants You : World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Oklahoma context. It provides a regional case-study to Capozzola's national perspective by examining Oklahoma A & M.'s response to volunteerism, patriotism, and the nature of "Uncle Sam's" wartime surveillance state. *Uncle Sam Wants You* reexamines the degree to which state and citizen relations during the First World War significantly altered American society.<sup>10</sup>

Christopher Capozzola provides a unique perspective in how the United States federal government, labeled as "Uncle Sam" in his work, affirmed the volunteer passion and created its own surveillance network across the nation to deal with "enemy aliens" who dissented from the nation's culture or challenge even in thought the political wartime narrative. Capozzola's thesis provides a vital piece in the literature of understanding not only how and why Oklahoma citizens prosecuted the war the way they did, but also the powerful psychological and social forces that caused sometimes extreme instances of radical patriotism across the nation. The First World War complicated Theodore Roosevelt's American-centric longing for one unified patriotic voice. As will be demonstrated in this work, the OAMC campus during World War I fostered less an environment for wartime dissent and more a spirit in line with Roosevelt's America.<sup>11</sup>

Neil Hanson's *Unknown Soldiers: The Story of the Missing of the First World War* connects the Oklahoma college to international commemoration efforts and unidentified World War I casualties. Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College recorded all twenty-eight students who died in WWI military service. Still, the national unknown soldiers noted in newspapers pervaded the thoughts of Oklahoma families. Hanson's book focuses on three Unknown Soldier accounts - a German, Englishman, and

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

American - and places their stories in a European war context. The work's appropriateness in this historiography derives from Hanson's ability to convey individual war accounts and still maintain a First World War social context. Nearly a decade after publication, Neil Hanson's *Unknown Soldiers* continues to enlist the reader into his riveting narrative of the anonymous dead produced by the First World War. The dead haunt every chapter in *Unknown Soldiers*. Hanson places the fallen soldiers as a backdrop to the romantic, depressing, brave, and often tried experiences of the three soldiers. The First World War produced unidentified dead soldiers on an unprecedented scale because of artillery bombardments and the modern technologies of war. In contrast to the plethora of World War I literature, *Unknown Soldiers* utilizes the letters and war events in an emotionally connected story that maintains the integrity of scholarly historical work while not presenting bland military history. The author crafts the letters into a manner that forms a continuous communication between the soldiers and their loved ones at home. The reader thus observes the love, pain, fear, and death that connects the multiple story lines throughout the work.<sup>12</sup>

The last two books, *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States from 1607 to 2012* and *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy*, provide the needed American military foundation in this First World War home-front work. The authors offer the military strategy, policy, and theory of First World War battles and American domestic decisions. These two broad histories establish an Oklahoma and international context, and their established reputation

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<sup>12</sup>Neil Hanson. *Unknown Soldiers: The Story of the Missing of the First World War*. (New York: Knopf, 2006).

requires their use in any serious study on American military history or the First World War.<sup>13</sup>

Additional secondary sources consulted for this thesis add a diverse perspective to OAMC's relationship to the United States. These eight works feature this author's intellectual and historical progress during thesis research and include: *The Damned and The Beautiful: American Youth in the 1920* by Paula S. Fass; *Paying with Their Bodies: American War and the Problem of the Disabled Veteran* by John M Kinder; "Extralegal Suppression of Civil Liberties in Oklahoma During The First World War and Its Causes" by James Henry Fowler, II; *Oklahoma's Governors, 1907-1929: Turbulent Politics* edited by LeRoy H. Fischer, *Sense of History: The Place of the Past in American Life* by David Glassberg; *The American Churches in World War I* by John F. Piper Jr.; *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* by George M. Marsden; and *Opponents of War: 1917-1918* by H. C. Peterson and Gilbert C. Fite.<sup>14</sup> This selection provided a foundation that influenced this study on OAMC and the state of Oklahoma's reaction to the First World War. Fass and Marsden's works offer

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<sup>13</sup> Allan Reed Millett, and Peter Maslowski. *For the Common Defense : A Military History of the United States of America*. (New York: Free Press, Collier Macmillan, 1984).

<sup>14</sup> Paula S. Fass. *The Damned and the Beautiful : American Youth in the 1920's*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 1979; Kinder, John M. *Paying with Their Bodies : American War and the Problem of the Disabled Veteran*. 2015; Fowler II, James Henry. "Extralegal Suppression of Civil Liberties in Oklahoma During the First World War and Its Causes." M.A. thesis, Oklahoma State University, 1974; Glassberg, David. *Sense of History : The Place of the past in American Life*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001; Piper, John F.. 1970. "The American Churches in World War I". *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 38 (2). [Oxford University Press, American Academy of Religion]: 147–55. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1461171>; Marsden, George M. *The Soul of the American University : From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

a national collegiate context modeled in many OAMC's decisions. Oklahoma A. & M.'s wartime sentiment emerged after a long social transformation explained in Fass and Marsden's books. The American college campus underwent administrative and policy adoptions on the national level, and OAMC experienced its own change in the midst of a larger change in academia.

Scholarly literature largely agrees that Oklahoma and its college campuses maintained a status of ambivalence to how international affairs might affect their local communities before April 1917. Statewide newspapers and campus publications paint a typical scene of early twenty-first century youth culture. Many of the radical departures excellently noted in Fass' work *The Damned and The Beautiful: American Youth in the 1920's* lay dormant in society and on college campuses until after the war. The OAMC yearbooks, 1910 to 1916, reveal the campus culture fundamental to the college's normal academic social life and societal norms alive on Oklahoma college campuses in the 1910s.<sup>15</sup>

The *Chronicles of Oklahoma* provides an excellent resource to examine World War I's impact on Oklahoma A. & M. and the state. Similar to this study, David W. Levy's 2006 article "'Practically a Military School': The University of Oklahoma and World War I" mirrors the OAMC experience in large part, yet differs in the institution's diverse origins and location.<sup>16</sup> Levy's article offers an insight of another Oklahoma educational institution during WWI, and forms a chronological model on which this thesis partly relies. Two other *Chronicles of Oklahoma* articles supply needed Oklahoma

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<sup>15</sup> Paula S. Fass. *The Damned and the Beautiful : American Youth in the 1920's*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).

<sup>16</sup> David W. Levy. "Practically A Military School": The University of Oklahoma and World War I. *Chronicles of Oklahoma*. 84, 1-4, 2006.

context. Melanie Rich's "'She Would Raise Hens to Aid War': The Contributions of Oklahoma Women During World War I" provides the important role women played in state-wide efforts and on the OAMC campus as students.<sup>17</sup> Rich's work highlights the college's female wartime contribution, yet focuses more on University of Oklahoma female students to the neglect of OAMC female students. Charles W. Smith's 1995 article "The Selling of America in Oklahoma: The First and Second Liberty Bond Drives" connects WWI Oklahoma politics and the state Council of Defense to provide an accurate picture of state-wide patriotic programs.<sup>18</sup> These *Chronicles of Oklahoma* articles utilize state newspapers and government records to support their topics and give historic voices in each narrative.

The Oklahoma State University's 1990 *Centennial Histories Series* project comprises twenty-five volumes that documented the detailed history, stories, and personal narratives of the state's largest Agricultural and Mechanical college. This collaborative centennial work provides a broad overview of diverse OSU events and people. Each book focuses on a specific department or demographic. *The Campus* offers a singular narrative in OSU commemoration. J. Lewie Sanderson, R. Dean McGlamery, and David C. Peters constructed a scholarly work unbiased toward any given campus group.<sup>19</sup> Since the project's publication, additional research warrants continual revisions in the 'official' OSU history. An outsider may judge the *Centennial Histories Series* as an one-sided history, yet future examination reveals the diverse and scholarly collective

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<sup>17</sup> Melanie Rich. "'She Would Raise Hens to Aid War': The Contributions of Oklahoma Women during World War I. *Chronicles of Oklahoma*. 81, 1-4, 2003.

<sup>18</sup> Charles W. Smith. The Selling of America in Oklahoma: The First and Second Liberty Bond Drives. *Chronicles of Oklahoma*. 73, 4, 1995.

<sup>19</sup> Lewie J. Sanderson, R. Dean McGlamery, and David C. Peters. A History of the Oklahoma State University Campus. (Stillwater: Oklahoma State University, 1990).

memory offered in the project. Thus, the twenty-five volumes provided an invaluable resource when the author constructed the college's earliest years and the times during the First World War. *The Campus'* chapter four, "The Day of Small Things Had Passed", notes the "alterations" forced upon OAMC during WWI.<sup>20</sup> It focuses less on detailed military mobilization and more on the integration between the administration and economic growth in the 1910s and 20s. Nonetheless, the authors document an important milestone as the college underwent drastic change in student enrollment, building projects, and new monies infused by wartime mobilization. President James W. Cantwell led the administration to support wartime volunteerism and served himself on the Oklahoma Council of Defense.<sup>21</sup> The *Centennial Histories Series* followed a commemorative heritage in war remembrance at OSU and among state-wide Oklahoma colleges. As with most histories, many omissions discard the role certain groups, people, and movements imparted to an institution's existence. The standard *official* institutional histories indicate the importance authors place on historic accuracy and needed revisions. Oklahoma State University commemorative literature joins the larger collection on wartime memory works to form a needed gap in the field of First World War home-front studies.

There exists a vast historiography relating to the First World War and militarism in the American heartland, but few sources confront the relationship between the sports culture and militarism on Oklahoma's college campuses. Abundant primary sources provide student and administration attitudes toward sporting activities and military service. Regarding Oklahoma, the 1961 thesis by Martin Henry Lutter "Oklahoma and

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

the World War, 1914-1917: A Study In Public Opinion,” in 1961, chronicles Oklahoma’s turbulent social movements in the pre-war years and then later compliance with the Oklahoma Council of Defense and national war effort.<sup>22</sup> Lutter’s lengthy work addresses the statewide social, political, and religious sentiment along with protests for neutrality that occurred in the state. In the end, just as the sources from OAMC reveal Lutter notes the willing support those in power in Oklahoma had toward the war and President Woodrow Wilson’s policies.<sup>23</sup> This source provides additional insight into the state of Oklahoma during the decades before World War I and the political, social, and demographic climate of the state. Examining the primary and secondary OAMC sources relating to the topics of sports and militarism, this paper differs from Lutter’s thesis, and other works, because the focus narrowly discusses military preparation for young people in the state of Oklahoma, during the pre-World War I years at OAMC.

In the United States, the American Civil War continues its academic hegemony as the war’s Sesquicentennial reexamined the causes and affects through historical books and articles. Recent publications coincide as the First World War centennial forces military and early twentieth century historians to reevaluate old paradigms. For Americanist historians, social history connects to a study of World War I religious, diplomatic, and intellectual history sub-fields. The role college campuses played in WWI domestic mobilization often eludes United States home-front narratives. The Oklahoma institutions of higher education in particular formed a key part in state-wide wartime liberty bond drives, soldier recruitment, propaganda, and commemoration. Historians’

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<sup>22</sup> Martin Henry Lutter. "Oklahoma and the World War, 1914-1917: A Study in Public Opinion." Ph.D., The University of Oklahoma, 1961.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

often neglect a major force in United States First World War mobilization as seen in Oklahoma's collegiate wartime efforts.

## CHAPTER II

### OKLAHOMA AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL COLLEGE

On April 29, 1919, young Theodore Johnston affixed his signature to an Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College (OAMC) post-war questionnaire sent from the college administration. United States Navy serviceman T. R. Johnston recounted the decision to join in his words, a war “absolutely necessary for the future security of civilization.”<sup>1</sup> Thus, at age eighteen the Oklahoma City resident volunteered to do his part in the war to end all wars. “I think I made no mistake...,” Johnston noted on the “personal interpretations, impressions and conclusions on the war” questionnaire section.<sup>2</sup> His eloquent penmanship combined with extensive comments attest to a clear pride in his wartime service. Johnston continued his personal testimony “I think I made no mistake; the athletic and military training I received in school has fitted me for military service better than a large number of older men who were called were fitted.”<sup>3</sup> This OAMC preparatory school alum joined over a thousand fellow students, whom at one time attended the Stillwater campus in wartime service. Theodore Johnston ranks

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<sup>1</sup> OAMC World War 1 Veterans, Special Collections and University Archives, Oklahoma State University Libraries. 1970-005. (Theodore R. Johnson questionnaire).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

among the World War I (WWI) Oklahoma A. & M. students who completed the 1919 *Victory Redskin* college yearbook questionnaire.<sup>4</sup>

Nestled among local creeks and rolling hills at the dawn of the twentieth century, a growing institution of higher learning rose to the challenge of preparing for the First World War. Following the opening of Oklahoma and Indian Territories to non-Native American settlement starting in 1889, Oklahoma established land-grant colleges in compliance with the Morrill Act of 1862 signed by Abraham Lincoln. When the Unassigned Lands (of what is today north-central Oklahoma) opened, the Oklahoma Territorial legislature established an agricultural and mechanical institution in Stillwater. Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College's (OAMC) founding charter included the instruction of the military arts and the mandatory drill of all able-bodied male students. The Great War that afflicted Europe and the entire world from August 1914 to November 1918 also changed the colleges of the United States of America. The military presence on college campuses increased in the wake of the First World War. Sports culture and military training intertwined through ROTC cadets playing on the football team and military drill on the campus lawns during the years of United States neutrality (1914-1917) before entering the European war. The college training prepared and readied the students and administrators to support Oklahoma's war effort.

Founded in 1890, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College opened in accordance with the revised Morrill Act originally signed by Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War to establish land-grant colleges in the territories and states of the Union. In the 1990 *Centennial Histories Series*, the publisher's summary describes Oklahoma

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<sup>4</sup> *Redskin Yearbooks*, 1919.

Agricultural and Mechanical College as an institution “on the gently rolling prairie of north-central Oklahoma.”<sup>5</sup> The college grew along-side the original 1889 Stillwater townsite, and the city’s citizens lobbied the Oklahoma Territorial Legislature to first win the institution and second to solicit states funds.<sup>6</sup> The Constitution of the State of Oklahoma outlines, in article eleven, the state colleges function and the land usage associated with the Enabling Act. The twentieth annual catalog (1910-1911) explains the institution’s existence, “the State Agricultural and Mechanical College is a State and Federal institution of higher and broader learning, offering industrial, scientific and liberal education to *white* [emphases added] persons 14 year of age and over.”<sup>7</sup> The college followed Jim Crow orthodoxy in its acceptance policy and unlike some northeast universities, the African American population entered separate state colleges while Native Americans and other ethnic groups studied at Oklahoma A. & M. Black Oklahoma students who met the “requirements for admission” still faced institutional discrimination toward entry into the college.<sup>8</sup> The 1910 academic catalog continues to state that “the College was organized in 1891, and after 20 years of sturdy effort now consists of 61 professors and instructors, 1,848 students attending last year, 11 large brick and stone buildings, and an equipment valued at \$175,000.00 and 1,000 acres of land.”<sup>9</sup>

The *official* college history presented in the annual catalogs and bulletins provide a milder narrative than recent works that reveal a tumultuous legal conflict at the local

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<sup>5</sup> Lewie J. Sanderson. Dean R. McGlamery, and David C. Peters. A History of the Oklahoma State University Campus. Stillwater: Oklahoma State University, 1990, Inside Cover.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Bulletin of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College; Vol. VIII, No. 16; General Series No. 7.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 1.

and state Constitutional Convention levels. In regards to financial costs, Oklahoma A. & M. joined other state colleges “as a part of the free school system,” allowing the administration to note that “tuition is free in all courses and departments.”<sup>10</sup> The United States Congress approved U. S. Senator Morrill’s bill on July 2, 1862 and “gave to each State which accepted its provisions 30,000 acres of Government land for each one of its Representatives in Congress, the proceeds to be applied to the endowment and maintenance of colleges.”<sup>11</sup> Thus on Christmas day 1890, the first legislature of the Territory of Oklahoma “adopted a resolution assenting to and accepting the provisions of Congress and established the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College in Payne County, at Stillwater.”<sup>12</sup> Nearly twenty years later, a panoramic photograph captured the OAMC faculty, student body, and Grand Lodge delegates southeast of the newly constructed Morrill Hall one cloudless day in October 1910.<sup>13</sup> In 1910, the students accepted to OAMC paid room and board and other necessary expenses listed in the catalog, where totaled fifty-seven dollars per term. The catalog’s calculated sum comprised thirty dollars for two months of room and board, six dollars for books (etc.), three dollars and eighty-five cents for incidentals, and seventeen dollars and fifteen cents for a military uniform, hat, coat, shirts, and trousers.<sup>14</sup> Under the title “Athletic, Military Drill and Discipline,” the 1910 catalog dedicates an entire page to sports and military service.<sup>15</sup> This union between a sports culture and required military drill on campus

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., XI.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 22.

reinforce stated links present in 1917 as patriotic rhetoric and college practice united these two physical disciplines.<sup>16</sup>

Stillwater, Oklahoma maintains its status as the county seat, and the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, now Oklahoma State University, continues as the city's cultural center. Established on April 22, 1889, the townsite emerged as the Unassigned Land in Oklahoma Territory opened for settlement. The town resided in a "somewhat isolated," area and future college students faced difficult transportation restrictions until 1900 when a railroad came to Stillwater. Until then, horsepower sufficed as the town remained "some 20 miles east of Alfred (Mulhall) and about 35 miles northeast of Guthrie, the nearest railroad stops, it was a difficult place for both settlers and supplies to go to."<sup>17</sup> After the first Oklahoma Territorial Legislature placed the college in Stillwater, Payne County and town officials compromised to sell bonds "to help pay for the project."<sup>18</sup> The young college struggled numerous times to remain in Stillwater as the Territorial Legislature threatened its removal because the town lacked a railroad. Four years after the college opened, OAMC constructed its first permanent building, Old Central, and the 1894 fall term began with this new academic center. The city continually forged a closer relationship with the college, and "since statehood [1907] Stillwater and Oklahoma A. and M. College (now Oklahoma State University) have progressed together. The college, at first stressing agriculture, helped famers throughout the new state. Such help brought new business and recognition to the town. Stillwater,

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> John W. Morris, and Oklahoma Historical Society. *Cities of Oklahoma*. Oklahoma Series ; v. 11. (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1979, 52).

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

in turn, became the wholesale and retail center for the productive area.”<sup>19</sup> Thus, Stillwater grew as OAMC continued its gradual presence in north-central Oklahoma. Population growth remained stagnant compared to other cities and the college student body averaged fewer than three hundred in the early twentieth century.<sup>20</sup>

In Oklahoma, agricultural success or failure comprised the important issues faced on a share-cropper’s farm or the town’s business status in relation to the state’s economy. As a result, very few residents in Stillwater rallied to President Theodore Roosevelt’s call to patriotism before the outbreak of the First World War. In 1910, the United States urban population reached fifty percent, up from roughly thirty-eight percent in 1900 and twenty percent in 1880<sup>21</sup> Major United States metropolitan cities increased in number at the same time from twelve cities with 100,000 or more residents in 1880 to twenty-six in 1920.<sup>22</sup> This urbanization impacted eastern states more than Oklahoma and other Great Plains states. Oklahoma experienced immigrant groups during this same time-period as economic hardships forced many European families to seek a new home in the agricultural rich Sooner state.

In 1915 Oklahoma, the domestic concerns of agricultural prices, local politics, and twentieth-century modern life occupied many families throughout the state. Over two years later, the United States entered the war on the side of the Allied Powers and thus every citizen garnered certain responsibilities in supporting the war effort. This included the young state of Oklahoma and the rural landscape surrounding the Stillwater

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 52-53.

<sup>21</sup> Katie Hannah, and Oklahoma State University. *Give Me Liberty!* (New York. 2015, 546).

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

township. As a state located in the American southern Great Plains, Oklahoma geographically and socially felt little connection to Europe's wartime crisis or the large population centers of political power in Washington D.C.

## CHAPTER III

### A COLLEGE CHANGED BY WAR

The Great War changed Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College (OAMC), and the students, administration, and local citizenry all played their part in the patriotic spirit vital for national unity. The OAMC campus supported the state and national patriotic sentiment through its administrative organization, military student cadets, collegiate sports, and wartime propaganda. In November 1917, the alumni publication at another university of higher education, the *University of Oklahoma Magazine* issued a prophetic declaration with the title “A War-Wrought Change.”<sup>1</sup> The magazine’s extensive paragraph warrants full notation:

Accustomed as we have become to being told that the world will never be the same after the war is ended, we have perhaps not yet realized that to almost an equal degree will the University [the University of Oklahoma] have been *transformed* by the time the conflict is over. Casual observers may not now see any essential difference between the University of today and the University of last year [1916]. But by subtle unseen movement the change has taken place. For one thing, we now think of the terms of the nation rather than the state. Last year we talked of serving the commonwealth; now we speak of answering the call of country and of democracy and of humanity. Almost without realizing it, we have come to gauge ourselves by what we do for the nation and for the world, rather than by what we do for Oklahoma. We have emerged from a condition of state-mindedness to one of nation- and world-mindedness.

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<sup>1</sup> University of Oklahoma Magazine. November, v 7, no 2, 1917.

That we shall ever go back to the habit of thinking of things only within the narrow limits of state boundaries is virtually beyond belief. Important and pressing as may be the problems of the state, we can never hereafter think of them as as (sic.) things apart and distinct from the life of the nation and the world. When the war is ended we shall have passed out and beyond the pettiness of provincialism.<sup>2</sup>

This prolonged quotation summarizes the sentiment held among most administrators and students at state colleges. On another page, this same magazine published “the Honor Role of Oklahoma’s Sons Now With the Colors in Defense of Liberty.”<sup>3</sup> The honor role comprised almost the entire November issue with the exception of a story by Fred E. Tarman about a Sooner student, Captain Seward R. Sheldon (U. S. R.), who served the war effort with his typewriting skills and thus headlined – “How Busy Nights With a Typewriter Helped Win Commission for Oklahoma Man” (sic.).<sup>4</sup> Similar media headlines appear throughout the University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma A. & M. newspapers, yearbooks, magazines, and government records, and reinforced the change present upon campus.

Wartime production and home-front volunteerism in the United States affected the long-term legacy of Oklahoma institutions in particular. Current centennial commemorations force historians and the general public to consider ideas of “place” and wartime heritage while different narratives about the Great War’s legacy reemerge. Was the 1917 University of Oklahoma Magazine editors correct in their conclusions? Did Oklahoma A. & M. face similar “changes” experienced on the First World War University of Oklahoma campus? The answers remain complex a century after Oklahoma A. & M. college men and women lived in the campus dorms, drilled on

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

college lawns, and enlisted for war service. Thus, for many decades, questions remained unanswered as to the degree World War I influenced OAMC and the larger Oklahoma college community. This work hopes to remedy a part of that uncertainty by focusing on the OAMC wartime experience.

The American public “continues to back U.S. drone attacks,” states a Pew Research Center May 2015 poll.<sup>5</sup> As one examines United States history, the American public’s response to the wartime state differs in historic context and demographic variance. The Pew poll found that “the public continues to support U.S. drone strikes targeting extremists in Pakistan and elsewhere, despite ongoing concerns that drone attacks endanger lives of innocent civilians.”<sup>6</sup> National polls represent limited conclusions, yet Pew did find that fifty-eight percent of 2,002 adults approved of drone strikes while young people, women, and minorities ranked “less supportive” of U.S. strikes in the survey.<sup>7</sup> In 1919, OAMC conducted their own survey as a joint effort between President J. W. Cantwell, the Library, the History Department, and student groups. The *Victory Redskin* represented the collective memory OAMC students offered after wartime service. The college presented this commemorative yearbook in solemn salute to the fallen twenty-eight OAMC students and the 1,441 men and women who served in some wartime capacity while at Oklahoma A. & M. College. On November 23, 1918, the *Orange and Black* newspaper noted the Student Association’s “Victory Book” and stated that “this book, the Victory Redskin, will be dedicated to our College men who

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<sup>5</sup> Carroll Doherty, Alec Tyson, Rachel Weisel. Public Continues to Back U.S. Drone Attacks: Afghanistan Update: Most Say U.S. Has Failed to Achieve Goals. Pew Research Center, May, 2015.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

have taken the long trail to the West.”<sup>8</sup> The war ended days before publication, yet students wasted little time in wartime remembrance. “A unique feature of the book will be the picture of each of the 1,400 men from Aggie land who wore the khaki and O.D.” stated the *Orange and Black* article, and “the S.A.T.C. [Student Army Training Corps] will also have a distinctive section in the book.”<sup>9</sup> The yearbook’s finished product resembled past academic years, yet the *Redskin*’s focus shifted toward a prevalent military theme. In Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College’s unique place in post-war commemoration, the 1919 *Victory Redskin* presented the students, administration, and campus community as wartime heroes to readers.

The First World War aftermath still lingered in student minds as the administration’s veteran questionnaire prompted candid responses from OAMC veterans. *Orange and Black* editors concluded their report on the *Victory Redskin*’s legacy as a wartime record, “It will be a book beautifully made up, a book you ought to have. For it will contain the record of the College for this historymaking year, 1918-19.”<sup>10</sup> To a certain extent, 1919 ushered in a new world divorced from pre-World War I ideas, beliefs, and practices and created the 1920s American college campus.

Under the authority of College President James Cantwell and in conjunction with the History Department, the 1919 *Redskin* sent an interview questionnaire to all the OAMC (1,441) individuals who served in the military during the First World War. The three-page questionnaire, “To faculty, alumni, and students of Oklahoma A. & M. College who entered military service in the war of 1917-18” was signed by President

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<sup>8</sup> *The Orange and Black*, November, 23, 1918, 1.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

Cantwell, editor-in- chief of the *Redskin* Maude Cass, librarian Margaret Walters, and professor Maroney of the History Department.<sup>11</sup> One reason for the survey besides including the information into the 1919 *Redskin* was that “the historical value of this data is of such importance that the College is insistent that you respond to this call as readily as you answered the call of country.”<sup>12</sup> Over four hundred individuals returned the survey which comprised much of the 1919 yearbook information. “Some answers to the questionnaires sent to the boys and girls in service” included statements by individuals discussing their personal interpretations, impressions and conclusions of the war: “War is Hell – but ‘over the top’ is worse,” and another summarized the conflict – “hard labor 90% and fighting 10% won the war.”<sup>13</sup> Male student interpretations regarding the war taken from answers to the questionnaire provide both conclusions on continual patriotism and a change for society: “The war has deepened the love I have for the mother country,” while another stated – “This war is bound to have a great leveling influence because of our changed mental attitude.”<sup>14</sup> The 1919 *Redskin* compiled the survey responses contributing an appropriate military, patriotic, and honorary salute to the OAMC individuals who served in the war.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Oklahoma State University. Request Letter and Blank Questionnaire. Special Collections and University Archives, Oklahoma State University Libraries. Oklahoma A&M College World War I Veterans Collection. 1970-005.

<sup>12</sup>Oklahoma State University. Request Letter and Blank Questionnaire. Special Collections and University Archives, Oklahoma State University Libraries. Oklahoma A&M College World War I Veterans Collection. 1970-005.

<sup>13</sup> Oklahoma State University. *Redskin*. 1919, 33.

<sup>14</sup> Oklahoma State University. *Redskin*. 1919, 46.

<sup>15</sup> Oklahoma State University. *Redskin*. 1919, 1-90. Oklahoma State University. Library. Digital, Collections. "Oklahoma A & M College, World War I. (Stillwater, OK: Oklahoma State University Library, Digital Collections).

The World War I OAMC questionnaire recorded veteran thoughts and allowed the students a platform to share their wartime experiences. The administration asked the “faculty, alumni, and students of Oklahoma A. & M. College who entered military service in the war of 1917-18” to volunteer “in order to make the VICTORY REDSKIN a success,” therefore “we are asking that you assist in the work.”<sup>16</sup> The Oklahoma State University Edmon Low Library’s *World War I Veterans Collection* explains the questionnaire’s origin, “The project was organized by Maude Cass, the editor of the 1919 *Redskin* (the college yearbook), Professor Maroney of the Department of History, Margaret Walters, Librarian, and OAMC President J.W. Cantwell. A letter and a survey was sent out to each person who served in the War to gather information about their wartime experience.”<sup>17</sup> Veterans responded to the requests and filled out the questions. Family members also sent in questionnaires in lieu of a student and attached letters and photographs or provided a letter and no questionnaire. Some former students answered only the biographical information like name, when discharged, if wounded, any decorations, and their time at OAMC. Others provided detailed responses to the three questions that dictated paragraph answers: “If you went overseas, give a condensed account of personal part performed. Incidents, dangers, wounds, observations and experiences will be of interest. Give a straightforward statement of the story.”<sup>18</sup> Most respondents completed this question and recounted their time in Europe, while others left

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<sup>16</sup> Oklahoma State University. Request Letter and Blank Questionnaire. Special Collections and University Archives, Oklahoma State University Libraries. Oklahoma A&M College World War I Veterans Collection. 1970-005. Questionnaire Cover Letter.

<sup>17</sup> Edmon Low, “About the Collection”.

<sup>18</sup> OAMC World War 1 Veterans, Special Collections and University Archives, Oklahoma State University Libraries. 1970-005.

the question blank or explained that they served stateside. The second question asked the veteran if they could attach and describe any objects collected in service: “Historical data, such as published accounts, relics, portraits of self, pictures which tell a story of yourself, etc., should be attached or sent.”<sup>19</sup> The final question provided the veteran a seminal public voice in how they viewed the Great War: “Personal interpretations, impressions and conclusions on the war.”<sup>20</sup> This last question provided the *Redskin* editors and college administration an exclusive window into the thoughts and opinions of OAMC WWI veterans.

The questionnaire’s cover letter described its agenda in the project’s formation. Since the war interrupted student lives and forced the college to change its institutional focus toward military affairs, the “historical value of this data is of such importance that the College is insistent that you respond to this call as readily as you answered that call of country.”<sup>21</sup> OAMC conveyed a clear purpose in their archival commemoration of the college’s war years, student experiences, and patriotic public sentiments. To the project’s credit, human experience triumphed as the questionnaire’s main goal, and the *Victory Redskin* supplied the medium. The project committee declared, “The Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College desires the personal story of every student, alumnus and faculty member who performed military duty of any kind.”<sup>22</sup> Indeed, the answers submitted provided the intimate “personal interpretations” OAMC veterans provided. One William J. Beck, entered the infantry on May 10, 1917 as an Oklahoma A. & M. junior. He arrived in France after a year of training and joined the 87<sup>th</sup> Division as a

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. (Questionnaire Cover Letter).

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

S.O.S. (International Morse Code) operator. The first lieutenant sent his questionnaire from France where he recounted that the “greatest danger that I was in was at Paris.”<sup>23</sup> Even in wartime service, William Beck noted “I hope to finish my course at A. & M. next year” and join the “class of 1918”.<sup>24</sup> Beck’s offered a one sentence conclusion on his war experience, “Never having seen action but having lived 8 months in a foreign country the greatest impression I have of the war is the deepening of the love I have for the mother country.”<sup>25</sup> This infantry soldier repeated a similar wartime sentiment present in the questionnaires as many OAMC veterans recounted a positive time in service. Multiple factors may contribute to this post-war sentiment and one cause comes from a similar connection with OAMC.

Veterans provided their wartime record and interpretations in the questionnaire at various lengths. Edmon Raymond Morrow supplied the *Redskin* an insight into a World War I Tank Corps private. Sent from Prague, Oklahoma on April 25, 1919, Morrow attached a photograph of a “French tank coming out of an old trench.”<sup>26</sup> Edwin R. Morrow attended OAMC as a preparatory school student in the winter 1917-18 term until he enlisted on April 26, 1918. The young private remained in service one year and in that time “my part in the great struggle was more like an adventure, I used to read about.”<sup>27</sup> Morrow’s trained throughout the country from Colorado to Pennsylvania to Washington D. C. before he “landed in England which impressed me very much as to its neatness.”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> OAMC World War 1 Veterans, Special Collections and University Archives, Oklahoma State University Libraries. 1970-005. (Beck, questionnaire).

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., (Morrow’s questionnaire).

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

In contrast, the Tank Corps operator stated a truism of combat, “France is much more war torn,” and recounted that “my Battalion never went over the top but we were to have moved up on Wed. after the Armistice.”<sup>29</sup> On April 14, 1919, Morrow’s “adventure” ended as he was discharged from military service and contemplated in his OAMC questionnaire, “I wonder sometimes what part tanks would play in warfare again *if* there is a war or would they not be used at all. Their casualties of tanks in the last two drives was 110% which shows they were certainly knocking the[m] out but many of them were repaired again.”<sup>30</sup> Twenty years later, World War II answered the OAMC veteran’s question. Edwin Morrow’s First World War tank experience reveals an individual battlefield account unique to the OAMC questionnaire project. This private provided an insight *Redskin* editors desired for publication to represent an OAMC student’s wartime adventure.

Oklahoma A. & M. veterans noted mixed reactions after the Armistice. Some considered their service an honor. First Lieutenant Charles Shelley Jones’ testimony provides an OAMC class of 1910 perspective on the war. As an engineer, Jones experienced an overseas tour less adventurous than Edmon Morrow. On May 8, 1918, the First Lieutenant arrived in France and after he “did general electrical and mechanical work thru the entire Argonne Offensive” noted, “not being in the Infantry my dangers were Air-raids and Artillery – bombardments, and I saw enough of both.”<sup>31</sup> Charles Jones attended OAMC from January 1906 to June 1910, and the college alum supplied

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., (Jones questionnaire).

the *Redskin* yearbook with a typed three paragraph answer to the “personal interpretation(s)” question. Jones’ war conclusions dictate a complete quotation:

The U.S. had to spend an enormous amount of money, which was necessary in order to accomplish what the Army and Navy did in the short time utilized. I am confident that any Nation will think long and seriously before declaring war on The United States, for we have shown the World that we can fight as well as write Notes [sic.]. The one is a hard-headed Criminal and seems to be of the opinion that he was not defeated, however had the Offensive continued one or two months longer The Allies would have given him such a complete trimming that the most stupid of them would have had no doubt but that the Hun was defeated.

The world in general has been benefited by America entering the World War, because The World is not free from German Domination. As for the individual American, I think that every man that went Over Seas and returned or shall return is 100% better off. At least I would not trade my experience for money.

I am strongly in favor for a League of Nations, and think that any restrictions or indemnities placed upon Germany are none too great.<sup>32</sup>

These comments note the loyal, patriotic spirit evident in OAMC veterans. The

First Lieutenant survived the war, thus his “100% better off” wartime

interpretations ignore the American wounded veterans affected in combat.

Charles Jones’s conclusions still offer an OAMC post-war perspective relevant to

1919 current events for Oklahoma and the entire United States. International

affairs affected OAMC students’ opinions after the Armistice and Jones’s

statement confirms the war’s impact on OAMC veterans.

Another OAMC student, Paul V. Beck “never saw action” as an infantry machine gun operator, and he explained his war service in great detail. Beck attended college from 1912 to 1916 and after he joined on May 13, 1917 at Fort Logan H. Roots, the First Lieutenant experienced three months of training during the summer of 1918. Similar to Charles Jones, Paul Beck wrote positively

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

regarding to his service overseas. Beck offered his impressions of the American Expeditionary Forces in Europe, “The American soldiers not only brought life to the armies but by their spirit and jolly good will are electrifying the spirit of France wherever they are billeted... it was more like College days than like a conquering army. They are teaching American songs[,] American ways, and American dancing to Europeans.”<sup>33</sup> This testimony links a veteran’s overseas experience with his OAMC years to provide an insight into the thoughts of college students who served in World War I from Oklahoma A. & M.<sup>34</sup>

The First World War affected the United States - specifically the state of Oklahoma provided its support with diverse degrees of cooperation. In 1914, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College (OAMC) started its twenty-fourth year as an institute of higher learning. The campus population continued its slight growth each year since the college’s establishment, but the coming participation in the global war introduced campus innovations and changed the culture of OAMC. The state colleges maintained their exclusive jurisdiction as institutions of higher education during WWI, yet the students and their Oklahoma relatives participated in the state’s transformation to wartime life.

The First World War influenced how Oklahomans viewed their patriotic service. In 1920, the Oklahoma City based Historical Publishing Company released *The Oklahoma Spirit of '17: Biographical Volume* dedicated to the soldier stories in each county. Some soldier biographies included tenure at Oklahoma A. & M. and Stillwater. The book’s foreword utilizes the patriotic rhetoric still present in post-war communities

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid. (Paul Beck, questionnaire).

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

since the national disillusionment against international conflict remained distant from less populated states. “The volumes in preparation will contain the work of every individual and organization which took an active part in helping to win the great conflict” stated *The Oklahoma Spirit’s* foreword before summarizing in two patriotic paragraphs the state’s commemoration ambitions:

This biographical volume is intended as a reference work regarding the citizenship of the state, and will offer hours of pleasure to the young soldier, when in the closing years of his life he reads these pages and muses over those dim, dead days. To the coming generations it will offer the evidence of their forbears’ sacrifices when the world cried aloud to be saved from destruction.

History’s eternal pages can offer no greater sacrifice than the Oklahoma soldier willingly made in the World War. The records shall be sacredly maintained, so the future generations may turn these pages, while the heart throbs with wondrous pride, and read the names and look upon the faces of those who fought and died that the world might live in freedom and peace.<sup>35</sup>

The editors expressed the predominant national sentiment saturated in wartime programs, the Wilsonian vision, and a mobilization effort built upon volunteerism that made collective wartime service and “sacrifices when the world cried aloud to be saved from destruction.”<sup>36</sup> *The Oklahoma Spirit’s* title itself symbolizes the post-war environment throughout Oklahoma, and the work’s combined authors J. S. Aldridge, W. E. Welch, and L. V. Aldridge started to memorialize and remember the state’s soldiers in their own manner. The ultra patriotic language and sentimental voice reveals a cognitive purpose in state-wide commemoration and recognition. Soon after the armistice, Oklahoma citizens

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<sup>35</sup> W. E. Welch. *The Oklahoma Spirit of '17 : Biographical Volume*. (Oklahoma City: Historical Pub., 1920).

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

faced the reality that the economic boom created in part by wartime demand might waver and the county councils of defense lacked a reason for wartime surveillance. As the reader examines the soldier's faces, each individual photograph represents a human life experienced while the short biography highlights the best aspects in the soldier's career.

Numerous soldiers graduated from Oklahoma A. & M. and then served overseas. One L. D. Harrison, trained as an officer at Fort Root after he entered service in May, 1918. Harrison served overseas from August, 1918 and then the OAMC graduate was discharged as a first lieutenant in March, 1918.<sup>37</sup> Other biographies eluted to "the Stillwater College" as just one education institution attended.<sup>38</sup> Harold P. Cook attended Guthrie high school and then graduated in 1912 from the "A. & M. College of Stillwater" and after he entered the military on May 15, 1918 Cook returned "to A. & M. College to train 8 weeks for Metalurgist [sic.] in the Aviation Corps."<sup>39</sup> Twenty-six year old Walter William Drew, from Ardmore, Okla., never returned home to his parents. The A. & M. College "and *Oklahoma State University*" educated lieutenant lacked the physical qualifications to enter the officer training corps (O. T. C.) because of a "murmuring heart" yet, he "forced his way into Co. E, 111<sup>th</sup> Engineers."<sup>40</sup> *The Oklahoma Spirit* paragraph recounts Drew's fatal battle near St. Etienne-a-Arnes, France on October 8, 1918 many miles distant from Ardmore or Stillwater where his training first started. In Walter Drew's case, the patriotic "Uncle Sam Wants

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 138.

You” poster united with a foreign battle to present a personal account of wartime service. The lofty language used of Drew’s wartime commemoration reflects an Oklahoma spirit proud to remember and, at times, glory in “his [Drew’s] burning patriotism [that] lead him through every obstacle for the comfort and safety of those in his charge, with no thought but the great purpose for which he was fighting,” and “He [Drew] died that a Christian world might live.”<sup>41</sup> These religious word choices weave throughout World War I commemorative publications in state books and OAMC yearbooks. A Great War ‘crusade’ against Axis powers voiced itself, in large degree, from Presidential speeches, obituaries, wartime propaganda, and collegiate volunteerism. The First World War permeated every segment of American society, and Oklahoma in particular demonstrated this influence as college men and women joined in national service. Lieutenant Walter Drew served *his* [emphases added] college, state, and country well. As the record noted, he received the Croix-de-Guerre as “he fell in the lead of his men, yielding up his life to the great cause of Freedom and Mankind... there was no braver and better liked leader of men in the army.”<sup>42</sup> Oklahoma A. & M. College students and alum contributed their time, resources, and lives for various reasons to a state and federal government which *asked* them to serve.

Three names connected to Oklahoma colleges warrant examination as described in *The Oklahoma Spirit of '17*. Each short testimony reveals the contribution the book’s editors deemed important. Fannie Thomas, Cecil R. Secor, and Fay Roy Bennett all attended A. & M. colleges in Oklahoma yet

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

served the state in different capacities – and with different outcomes. Daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Thomas of Holdenville, Okla., Fannie Thomas’ wartime service as a nurse kept her at Camp McArthur, Texas from June 1, 1918 “until her discharge which occurred November 27, 1918.”<sup>43</sup> Thomas’ notation in the book represents one college educated woman, out of hundreds, who served as Oklahoma nurses at military camps “over here”. In contrast, Secor and Bennett died “over there” as Oklahoma corporals. The two men’s college connection at Oklahoma A. & M. College marks the numerous accounts noted in *The Oklahoma Spirit* and post-war publications. Oklahoma honored the men with the same final sentence, “His name will endure forever.”<sup>44</sup> Secor and Bennett’s military careers differed in location and years served, yet their common patriotic ambition propelled the men to volunteer.

One such citizen who answered the flag-draped women’s call, seventeen year old Cecil Sector died later in action at Chateau Thierry, France.<sup>45</sup> *The Oklahoma Spirit of ’17* editors remembered Sector’s sacrifice with *patriotic* [emphases added] language: “entering the flower of manhood, Destiny beckoned him into the smiling future, but the world cry of anguish from tottering Christianity reached his ears and he answered, laying his young life upon the altar of Liberty that the world might be made safe for Peace.”<sup>46</sup> In 1920s Oklahoma, this noted “alter of Liberty” and world “safe for Peace” were part of numerous wartime stories and yet some anti-war citizens questioned the language and

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 401.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 326, 365.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 326.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

ideology of such assumptions. The home-front sentiment fostered on Oklahoma's campuses countered the rural and minority war disapproval contrary to the "patriotic" spirit dominant in state publications.<sup>47</sup>

In comparison to Cecil Sector's military career, Fay Roy Bennett served multiple times from 1911 to 1919. Bennett's life ended after pneumonia inflicted the A. & M. College graduate who traveled to France and suffered the mental scares of war. In 1911, Fay Bennett experienced his first "nervous breakdown," and later discharged in 1917 on account "of disability – a nervous breakdown."<sup>48</sup> The First World War revolutionized modern artillery usage, and Bennett's service in the 55<sup>th</sup> Co. Coast Artillery Corps came at a time when total war inflicted high casualties. His second stint in the military, in the General Service Infantry, never relieved Bennett of mental and physical wounds. *The Oklahoma Spirit of '17* eulogized Fay R. Bennett's death with these words: "Truly a soldier upholding the soldier traditions of his family of a long line of fighters. Destiny had marked him as one of those who would make the *supreme sacrifice* in the cause of Liberty."<sup>49</sup> Over a hundred other OAMC graduates made that sacrifice during their WWI service, yet like Bennett, not all former students died heroic soldiers on foreign battles but suffered accidents or illness. Stillwater offered her sons and daughters to make the world "safe for Democracy", and Oklahoma A. & M. College labored in numerous wartime support roles consistent with the national volunteer spirit. On campus, a true global war impacted the families, students,

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 365.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

and societal instructions in the habits and affections. The Payne County Council of Defense executive committee included prominent family surnames, and the list *The Oklahoma Spirit* indicates a volunteer sentiment keen to serve without compensation.<sup>50</sup> To some degree, societal volunteerism maintains a healthy community as neighbors and citizens demonstrate civil respect and co-exist in a body politic. Civil liberty violations inflicted against Oklahoma residents in the name of wartime support revealed a new state power and modern American mind distinct in kind from nineteenth century ideas.

*The Oklahoma Spirit of '17* includes Payne County and Stillwater soldier biographies that commemorate and remember the “hero’s name[s].”<sup>51</sup> The Selective Service Act of 1917 conscripted thousands into the Army while others volunteered to fight. Sergeant Warren Bentley entered the military at age twenty-six in May, 1918 and “received his military training at Fort Riley and Camp Travis.”<sup>52</sup> The Payne County sergeant died before the war’s end after he contracted pneumonia on duty. Thus ended Bentley’s promising career. Bentley earned two promotions and had an “intense interest” in his military duties, and his time spent in the military aided Oklahoma’s war work. *The Oklahoma Spirit’s* authors recorded a noteworthy paragraph for a soldier who never served overseas in the First World War:

His [Bentley’s] body was brought home and lies in the cemetery at Coyle. He was an enthusiastic spirit and made a host of friends in the short time he was on *duty*. He is another of those brave souls who willingly went to war that his country might be

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 415-416.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 83.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

saved to Peace and Freedom. He died that the whole world might live. There is no greater deed than to lay down your life for humanity's cause, and this hero's name will mark the eternal pages of history as one who made that supreme sacrifice.<sup>53</sup>

This lengthy quote reveals an enormous insight into the social vocabulary and cognitive beliefs Oklahoma collective authors infused throughout their publications.

Contrary to Bentley's fate, Charles Graff served as private in the 90<sup>th</sup> Division, in Co. B, 357<sup>th</sup> Infantry and received his discharge papers April 19, 1919. Graff graduated from Crescent and Stillwater schools and trained at Camp Travis, Texas before he sailed with "other Oklahoma boys in the 90<sup>th</sup> for England and France."<sup>54</sup> Similar to fellow Stillwater educated men, "He [Graff] endured all the hardships and dangers to which the boys at the front were subjected, and participated with the 90<sup>th</sup> in the famous battles of St. Mihiel and the Meuse-Argonne."<sup>55</sup> In its biographical scale, this 1920 Oklahoma post-war publication failed to capture any extensive human emotion beyond patriotic eulogies. As with most war publications, the photographs depict human faces, absent any lofty language and open propaganda. *The Oklahoma Spirit* soldier biographical profiles continue a connection with Stillwater and military education among young men.

Willis F. Whittington attended school at Stillwater and also joined Graff in the 90<sup>th</sup> Division. Whittington, however, sailed overseas with Co. K. of the 357<sup>th</sup> Infantry. The young eighteen year old participated in the "famous offensives" of

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 83.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

St. Mihiel and the Meuse-Argonne. Whittington entered military service nearly a year before Graff, and even though no known evidence links the two soldiers at OAMC during their unique educational experiences the two continued their historic connection in the 90<sup>th</sup> Division at Meuse-Argonne.<sup>56</sup> Glenn Douglas and William LeRoy McGowan also spent time in Stillwater before they entered the military in 1918. Douglas joined the Field Artillery, trained at Camp Grant, Kentucky and the Chicago Officers' Training Camp, but never deployed to Europe. After the Armistice on November 11, 1918, Glen Douglas received his discharge and returned home to Oklahoma in December 1919.<sup>57</sup> McGowan's war record remains limited to the notation that he "trained with the S. A. T. C. at Stillwater, entered service Sept. 4, 1918. Was discharged in Stillwater, December, 1918."<sup>58</sup> McGowan's commemoration in *The Oklahoma Spirit of '17* reflects the numerous soldiers included in the post-war work with little room to elaborate on an individual's personal history.<sup>59</sup>

Finally, Ollie O. Dykes's youthful face confirms his record as one of the youngest Stillwater casualties from WWI. The seventeen year old Stillwater High school graduate entered the Infantry in May 1917 and "underwent an intensive military training at Ft. Sill and Camp Bowie."<sup>60</sup> *The Oklahoma Spirit* notes that Dykes died in action at St. Mihiel September 12, 1918, unlike Stillwater soldiers who survived the battle and lived for many more years in Oklahoma. In a repeat

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 151, 99.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 105, 238.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 238.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 321.

of other soldier biographies, the editors noted Dykes's death in vivid patriotic passion and commemoration:

...he [Dykes] went over the top under terrible shelling which the Huns were sending over. In that terrible advance he was struck by an exploding shell and killed. Killed in the dawn of manhood, giving his life that a suffering world might be saved from the savage rule of tyranny. On history's pages for all time to come that names of these young Oklahoman soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice will shine resplendant [sic.], because of their noble sacrifice.<sup>61</sup>

The sacrifice suffered counted a great loss to Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Dykes in Stillwater. A war promoted nationwide as a democratic crusade to end Europe's destructive total war impacted the Oklahoma A. & M. college and the entire town when Ollie Dykes and other American service men and women never returned. The government's demand required military service, home-front volunteers, and sacrifice on an ever greater scale in Stillwater and throughout the Sooner state.

In retrospect, the Great War also influenced Oklahoma institutions of higher education. The relationship shifted from state authority and more towards federal control. This mindset reflected the post-war philosophy adopted when citizens witnessed the increased power of the U. S. government during wartime mobilization. These plausible alterations in sociopolitical views held during and after 1916 reside in the era of national wartime federal expansion and a reform spirit instigated through the Progressive movement. Oklahoma's history affirms the relationship between socialist, populists, and progressive reforms which mingled in the early twentieth century with common racial conflicts and patriotic zeal expressed on college campuses and in small-town communities.

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER IV

### MOBILIZING A WARTIME STATE

Sometime around the turn of the nineteenth century, President Theodore Roosevelt authored the article “True Americanism” espousing the patriotic duty of citizens to think and act like loyal Americans for a higher mission of political and social unity. Roosevelt’s message conveyed a stern warning to immigrants and potential disloyal citizens that a lack in “true Americanism” should have no place in the country.<sup>1</sup> A war-hero himself, Roosevelt promoted an American spirit that rejected European practice and boasted that “it remains true that no one of our people [Americans] can do any work really worth doing unless he does it primarily as an American.”<sup>2</sup> In contrast, United States residents in the early twentieth century dealt with conflicting loyalties between past social and family ties, and those of an expanding American government. In *True Americanism*, Roosevelt warned against the “spirit of provincial patriotism” verses a national patriotism that encompasses a “broad adhesion to the whole nation.”<sup>3</sup> Even as Theodore Roosevelt promoted national patriotism, Americans from various states and rural counties across the country united over local Progressive era matters. *True Americanism’s* major tenants relate to voting and political participation, and Roosevelt

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<sup>1</sup> Jacob Harris Patton, and John Lord. *The History of the American People*. (Chicago: The L. W. Walter Company, 1910).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vi.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, iv.

noted that “we have no room in any healthy American community for a German-American vote or an Irish-American vote . . . we have no room for any people who do not act and vote simply as Americans, and as nothing else.”<sup>4</sup>

The well-known author and critic Herbert George Wells (H. G. Wells) in his 1914 book *The War That Will End War* appealed to the United States as wartime Europe crumbled.<sup>5</sup> With the passion and lay prophecy Wells often demonstrated, the author opened his chapter to the American people stating, “This appeal comes to you from England at war, and it is addressed to you because upon your nation rests the issue of this conflict. The influence of your States upon its nature and duration must needs be enormous, and at its ending you may play a part such as no nation has ever played since the world began.”<sup>6</sup> Wells openly admitted his work conveyed propaganda as an appeal to the American people. In Theodore Roosevelt’s article “True Americanism,” the former President expressed the common national patriotic sentiment at the time that immigrants, along with all Americans, should demonstrate the characteristics of the American spirit. Roosevelt argued that Americans should utilize the political system to the fullest while conforming to the nation’s corporate patriotic narrative.

These sentiments arose with a malicious zeal during the First World War throughout the nation and particularly in Oklahoma. As if directly addressing European immigrants living in Oklahoma, Roosevelt stated that “it is an immense benefit to the European immigrant to change him into an American citizen. To bear the name of American is to bear the most honorable of titles; and whoever does not so believe has no

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., viii-ix.

<sup>5</sup> H. G. Wells. *The War That Will End War*. (New York: Duffield, 1914).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 73.

business to bear the name at all, and, if he comes from Europe, the sooner he goes back there the better.”<sup>7</sup> Toward the end of Roosevelt’s article, he unknowingly encapsulated the First World War experience for German-Americans living in Oklahoma when stating, “above all, the immigrant must learn to talk and think and *be* United States ... but I wish to be distinctly understood on one point. Americanism is a question of spirit, conviction, and purpose, not of creed or birthplace.”<sup>8</sup>

Roosevelt’s nationalistic sentiments permeated college campuses and American towns during the First World War, and the good of the nation and loyalty to the flag trumpeted community relations between citizens and neighbors. This era represented an American century at its earliest stages and Roosevelt’s comments vocalized the thoughts elites implemented in social reforms. The First World War instigated national reform movements and bolstered others, “furthermore, World War I seemed to demonstrate to friend and foe alike the superiority of the American civilization.”<sup>9</sup> Roosevelt’s national pride ideology nurtured isolationist sentiments against Old World ideas and civilization, and “Europe might have been the cradle of it, but in matters of efficiency, technology, and refinement, Americans and Oklahomans had left their European forebears far behind.”<sup>10</sup> This Americanist spirit blossomed in 1914 as Europe entered the First World War. Oklahomans understood this change and numerous citizens agreed with the former President in regards to Americanism.

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<sup>7</sup> Jacob Harris Patton and John Lord. *The History of the American People*. (Chicago: The L. W. Walter Company, 1910, x).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, xi-xii.

<sup>9</sup> Dirk K. Voss. “Civilization May Be a Hoax”: Oklahomans in the Old World, 1907-1939. *Chronicles of Oklahoma*. 85, 1-4, 2007-2008, 432.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

First World War propaganda created iconic images influential in domestic wartime support and adapted to meet local audiences. Paul Stahr's famed wartime poster "Be Patriotic" with a young American woman, clothed in a patriotic stars and stripes flag dress, symbolized Oklahoma college student sentiments. The Committee on Public Information (C.P.I) approved patriotic woman reaches forward with open arms toward the viewer as a plea for aid. No known records exists to confirm OAMC soldiers viewed Stahr's poster; yet the men mobilized alongside thousands of similar wartime posters that "depicted the ideals for which Americas were fighting."<sup>11</sup> Oklahoma newspapers took Stahr's "patriotic" Miss Columbia and modified her clothes and head piece to fit their wartime message. Artist Frederick W Spiegel's own modification to Paul Stahr's flag-draped women featured in the *Tulsa Daily World's* October 24, 1917 morning edition on page fifteen with the title, "To You Men of America... - Think of Womanhood Buy a Liberty Bond Today."<sup>12</sup> With her hands reached out in plea, Miss Columbia signed her name to the three paragraph *Tulsa Daily World* message, and called on the masculine American man to obey their country's young attractive "Miss" because "it will Protect the Mother, the Sisters and the Little Helpless Children Won't You Do Just This Much for We American Women?."<sup>13</sup> James Montgomery Flagg created a similar lithographic poster in 1917.<sup>14</sup> The woman Flagg painted looks identical to Stahr's woman except

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<sup>11</sup> Paul Stahr. World War I Posters: Be Patriotic. *Herbert Hoover Library, National Archives and Records Administration*.

<sup>12</sup> Tulsa Daily World, October 24, 1917, 15.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Wake Up America! New York: The Hegman Print, 1917.

Flagg's "America" rests asleep in a pillowed chair. Flagg's poster reads, "Wake Up, America! Civilization Calls Every Man Women And Child!"<sup>15</sup>

In contrast to the finger pointing Uncle Sam or the pleading arms of Miss Columbia, "America" sleeps in symbolic neutrality and isolation only awoken after civilization calls.<sup>16</sup> Paul Stahr's poster spread across the United States and the changes other artists made to garb or physical appearance never detracted from the mobilization message imbedded in her appeal. Committee on Public Information head George Creel utilized American artists for wartime propaganda, and Paul Stahr, James Montgomery Flagg, and others offered the needed skills to cultivate a patriotic sentiment among the nation's able bodied citizens in American folk culture.

The American "Uncle Sam" originated prior to Flagg's wartime post, yet World War I resurrected this cultural character and transformed him into a civil government employee to become the face of war mobilization. Uncle Sam references appeared in missionary reports from China and newspaper posters in Ardmore, Oklahoma. First World War state propaganda saturated the American mind. On page five of the January 28, 1918 issue, *The Daily Ardmoreite* published an advertisement "donated" by the Besaw Tire and Rubber Company that featured four American flags in each corner, a star lined frame, and the words "We Were Forced to Fight" along the top and "Now We Must Win" along the bottom.<sup>17</sup> In the page's center, a framed box contains four paragraphs under a

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> The Daily Ardmoreite, January 28, 1918.

scene where a postman kneels down to explain to two small children the impact their single penny might have in “shortening this war.”<sup>18</sup> The scenes’ caption reads, “Uncle Sam’s Postman Has a New Job” and the job to teach the nation’s children as “a recruiting officer to enlist the financial support of the youngsters.”<sup>19</sup> The next sentence reveals the degree Uncle Sam penetrated Oklahomans everyday lives from elementary school to college students, “let him [Uncle Sam’s Postman] be your children’s adviser in the matter of thrift. Let him show what it means to substitute interest-bearing Thrift Stamps for the penny savings bank. Let him be the medium to put your children into actual contact with their country’s government.”<sup>20</sup> In WWI Oklahoma, Uncle Sam’s Federal government and statewide businesses promoted wartime service through means tangible, personal, and necessary to Ardmore, Stillwater, and Oklahoma residents. This newspaper advertisement provides one example in the hundreds published throughout the state from 1917 to 1919. The advertisement continues its appeal to use “Thrift Stamps” and the penny since the “Thrift Stamps make a reality of the children’s patriotism by allowing them to aid the government with money for war purposes,” and in true wartime propaganda hyperbole Uncle Sam’s Postman notes “a child’s savings may be a means to shortening this war by days, and every day means the redemption of colossal waste.”<sup>21</sup>

The war required every American, young and old, to do their part as loyal citizens in Uncle Sam’s home-front force. Later that August, Reformed

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. China missionary Miss Nelle Brownlee wrote in the denominational monthly journal, *Olive Trees*, about the status of her mission schools and thoughts on the European war. Miss Brownlee lamented a “longing to go out to France” and aid those who fought in “defense of country,” yet she took comfort that three family members served in the war. After Brownlee noted this fact, she declared, “so the spirit of patriotism is strong in my heart now, and I feel, since so many from my home are called out, that I am a ‘slacker’ not to offer my self in some way to Uncle Sam.”<sup>22</sup> Ultimately, the Tak Hing school teacher took comfort “since more are volunteering from the States for the Red Cross work than are being accepted,” and Miss Brownlee felt “glad to note the number of Covenanters who are offering themselves in every line of work that will forward the cause for which our country fights.”<sup>23</sup> In the December *Olive Tree* publication, Mrs. M. S. McMillan’s article mixes Christian missions and war propaganda. The war ended a month previous and Mrs. McMillan offered her interpretation on how Christians might learn from the war’s operation. McMillan states in retrospect, “when the United States entered the war she was confronted with indifference on the part of many of her citizens,” yet after education and news reports “patriotic meetings were everywhere held, national songs were sung, the advantages and blessings of democracy... were set forth in patriotic addresses that there might be such a revival of patriotism that millions of citizens would willingly place themselves upon the alter of service.”<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> *Olive Trees*, vol. 32, No. 7, July-August, 1918, 158-159.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Olive Trees*, Vol. 32, No. 11, Dec. 1918, 262-263.

The United States remained at a wartime status in the minds of many Americans, and Mrs. McMillan's comments note one instance in those post-war years that books, articles, and speeches recounted the change inflicted on American life. *Google Books' Ngram Viewer* reveals the sharp increase in the Google books marked with the word "patriotism" from 1915 to 1920 to an all time height between 1800 and 2000.<sup>25</sup> As noted, the patriotic spirit in a Chinese missionary and Ardmore, Oklahoma businessmen conveyed their acceptance and use of the message programmed in Flagg's 1917 poster and the repeated vision the United States Committee on Public Information disseminated. In Oklahoma, the National Council of Defense wartime machine symbolized in the iconic James Montgomery Flagg 'Uncle Sam' poster brought together the rural farmer and urban housewife to form the united support so vital in the post-1917 mobilized United States.<sup>26</sup>

These xenophobic messages prompted the work of historians who recorded the hyphenated Americans in Oklahoma and their statewide dissent during the war. The historian Perry Miller noted the intellectual importance Americanism played in pre-WWI public opinion in his 1956 anthology *American Thought: Civil War to World War I*.<sup>27</sup> Miller ended the anthology with Louis Dembitz Brandeis' July 4, 1915 address "True American". Brandeis' speech echoes the sentiment Roosevelt promoted and continued the nativist rhetoric at a time when bombastic patriotic speech inflamed preparedness groups. No state remained immune as citizens, in diverse ways, symbolized through Flag

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<sup>25</sup> Google Books. "patriotism". Google Books: Ngram Viewer.

<sup>26</sup> Christopher Joseph Nicodemus Capozzola. *Uncle Sam Wants You : World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, 4-7).

<sup>27</sup> Perry Miller. *American Thought: Civil War to World War I*. (New York: Rinehart, 1954).

Day and other patriotic holidays Brandeis' words, "What is Americanization?... to become Americanized the change wrought must be fundamental."<sup>28</sup> These ideas reverberated in Presidential speeches and Sunday sermons as many American communities viewed the European conflict and an increase immigrant population as contrary to American democracy and its founding. This World War I fervor helps explain some of the motivation behind Oklahoma violent acts committed in the name of wartime surveillance and home-front patriotism. Newspaper accounts retell incidents when neighbors coerced fellow neighbors into buying Liberty Bonds or kissing the American flag. Overwhelming patriotic support for the war often outnumbered the "yellow" groups in Oklahoma.<sup>29</sup>

National war measures engulfed the Sooner state as the United States shifted its colossal resources toward war mobilization. Wartime propaganda published throughout the country re-cast Lady Liberty into Uncle Sam who demanded loyal volunteerism in exchange for security. No single organization embodied Oklahoma's First World War home-front support more than the Oklahoma Council of Defense. Under Governor Robert L. Williams, the state constructed a nationally recognized Council of Defense organization with field offices in each county. The Oklahoma Council of Defense started without state authorization since the legislature recessed months before April 1917. Thus, Governor Williams privately funded a percentage of the Council's budget and placed the day-to-day operations onto dozens of Oklahoma businesspersons, college academics, and hundreds of volunteers throughout the state. On the evening of April 2,

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 340.

<sup>29</sup> Christopher Joseph Nicodemus Capozzola. *Uncle Sam Wants You : World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

1917, President Woodrow Wilson delivered his “war message” to the Sixty-fifth Congress that “We [America] are now about to accept the gauge of battle with the Imperial German Government, this natural foe to liberty, and shall, if necessary, spend the whole force of the nation to check and nullify its pretensions and its power...” to the end Wilson’s stated “The world must be made safe for democracy.”<sup>30</sup> The President’s next sentence, less noted than the previous, implied a wartime condition revealed as contradictory, ...“Its peace must be planted upon the trusted foundation of political liberty.”<sup>31</sup> To 1917 America, this foundation’s nature remained an enigma.

Some Oklahoma residents questioned whether democracy, war, and political liberty might coexist in an early twentieth century American experience rooted in the previous century’s oppressive destruction. The wartime measures implemented in Oklahoma through its councils of defense and the federal war legislation denied certain groups a public voice in light of extensive laws suppressing a peaceful opposition. In other states, similar war measures pressured the citizens in how one spent their leisure time and to what extent an individual purchased liberty bonds. An example cited in the *Christian Nation*, a small Reformed Presbyterian weekly, on July 11, 1917 recounted the “war measures” implemented in West Virginia.<sup>32</sup> The front-page paragraph reads:

The participation of our own land in the world-wide war is leading to the adoption of various war measures. Many of the plans devised and adopted are excellent; some of them have no great or evident value. There can be no adverse criticism directed against West Virginia’s go-to-work-or-go-to-jail law. This law requires that every able-bodied male between the ages of sixteen and sixty years shall work at least thirty-six hours every week. It is reported that within twenty-four hours after this law

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<sup>30</sup> Dwight Everett Watkins and Robert Edward Williams. *The Forum of Democracy*. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1917, 109).

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *Christian Nation*, July 11, 1917, vol. 67 number 1699.

went into effect there was a noticeable scarcity of loafers and gamblers in the cities and larger towns of the state.<sup>33</sup>

The editor's views reflect the popular volunteer sentiment prevalent in newspapers and magazines – religious or secular. These comments align with the eras' popular Christian Social Gospel and the increased government oversight after U.S. entry in World War I. In Oklahoma, legal measures forced residents into choices similar to those noted in West Virginia as neighbors and Council of Defense officers “pressured” socialist party members, ethnic German congregations, and pacifist conscientious objectors to buy liberty bonds, ration food, or salute the flag. The patriotic citizen outnumbered the “un-American” groups in Oklahoma who faced persecution and discrimination from national, state, and local powers. Loafers in West Virginia and Socialist party newspapermen in Oklahoma faced a wartime state constructed for home-front surveillance against “yellow” slackers or organized anti-war groups.

OAMC's *The Brown and Blue* newspaper included an article by D. Lynn Holmes, “What of the Future”, delivered at the College Oratorical Contest of 1908. Mr. Holmes represented an elite-minded OAMC student and provided insights that reveal the campus culture in the late 1900s. The “oration” begins as a history lesson to the audience and then shifts toward idealistic themes. Mr. Holmes recounts the difficult past America endured and the question the “patriotic and liberty loving people” ask, “what of the future?”<sup>34</sup> The speech notes the “great money power of our nation” and the opinion that “trusts are the worst evils of today,” yet the beyond the “liquor question,” the

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> *The Brown and Blue*, 8-9.

“prohibition movement,” or the “labor problem” Mr. Holmes emphasized “the requisite keynote of our age, as of every age of grand progress, is individualism.”<sup>35</sup> The OAMC student joined President Roosevelt and H. G. Wells in a campaign to promote Americanism, education, and the “harmonious action of State, Church, and individual.”<sup>36</sup> Mr. Holmes’ thesis diverges to the degree that his view of the “true brotherhood of man” conflicts often with Roosevelt’s immigrant policies. The OAMC students in 1919 might object to Mr. Holmes 1908 remarks when he stated:

What of the future then? Can we believe that the great foundation of national progress and power – the result of two centuries of thought and planning – can be torn down by a few, when eighty-five million souls stand ready to protect it?... The day is not far distant when every man shall be his brother’s keeper – when our swords shall be beaten into plowshares, and the ‘Dove of Peace’ shall fold its wings over a world of common love and common interests, and who shall doubt but that our own beloved country shall be, as ever, the leader in this onward movement of nations toward true Christian Citizenship and true Christian Government.<sup>37</sup>

The First World War inflicted the ‘sword’ upon Oklahoma soldiers and shattered Mr. Holmes’ Progressive era utopian notions. The OAMC students who lived before and after World War I, in the years 1914 through 1919, challenged indoctrinated paradigms two centuries old. Mr. Holmes agreed, in part, with the Reformed Presbyterian publications as to a Christian Government, yet not all the student’s oration repeated its doctrines. This oration in the OAMC *Brown and Blue* demonstrates the optimistic atmosphere present on campus in the pre-war years. The campus operated similarly to other collegiate campuses in Oklahoma

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 8-11.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 11.

and provided discussion in regards to politics, religion, and current affairs reflected a vibrant institution.

In *The Oxford Companion to American Military History*, Melvin Small's first paragraph in the entry "News Media, War, and the Military" declared, "Looking over America's military past, many observers would agree with Senator Hiram Johnson (R-Calif.) who said in 1917 that 'The first casualty when war comes is truth.'"<sup>38</sup> Propaganda existed on college campuses long before World War I, yet the Great War marks a "water-shed" event in the establishment of twentieth-century state-sponsored wartime messages. In the United States, the Woodrow Wilson administration established the "controversial" Committee on Public Information, and signed the Espionage and Sedition Acts in 1917 and 1918. The United States organized the resources needed to censor American citizens and disseminate propaganda. Historical records recount the community efforts organized in all forty-eight states, and Oklahoma's own Council of Defense obeyed the national Defense Council in statewide work. This work often bordered on local hysteria witnessed in newspaper accounts when conscientious objectors refused to sign loyalty cards or kiss the American flag. Historian Richard C. Rohrs' book *The Germans In Oklahoma* provides a documented narrative of German and other hyphenated Oklahomans who suffered persecution during World War I. Rohrs dedicated an entire chapter to "Oklahoma's Germans and World War I," and concluded that "more significant than the threats, inconveniences, and physical and mental scars endured by the German

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<sup>38</sup> John Whiteclay Chambers, and Fred Anderson. *The Oxford Companion to American Military History*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999, 497).

community during the war was the impact of forced assimilation.”<sup>39</sup> Oklahoma’s Anglo-American hegemony over culture resulted in the fact that “many [German-Oklahomans] had assimilated before the war, but those who had not soon learned that their language, customs, and heritage had become a liability.”<sup>40</sup> In contrast, the state’s Native American tribes supported the war effort in large numbers despite many of Oklahoma’s American Indians lacking U.S. citizenship and equal respect in society.

Any serious examination into Oklahoma’s home-front wartime sentiment demands the use of *Sooners in the War: Official Report of the Oklahoma State Council of Defense – From May, 1917 to January 1, 1919 – Containing the War Activities of the State of Oklahoma*.<sup>41</sup> The Oklahoma State Council of Defense formed the embodiment of the new state created during what 1920s Americans often called Mr. Wilson’s war. The state council interacted with the OAMC campus since the college resided in the county seat. Important Defense Council members included the president of “A & M. College” Dr. James. W. Cantwell.<sup>42</sup> The Oklahoma Council board comprised eleven to fourteen members who volunteered their time and resources to serve the war effort as civic leaders and extra-legal administrators. *Sooners in the War* presented a polished organized image represented in the Council’s weekly reports and media proclamations.

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<sup>39</sup> Richard C. Rohrs. *The Germans in Oklahoma: Newcomers to a New Land*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980, 48).

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Oklahoma State Council of, Defense, Administration United States Food and W. S. S. Committee Oklahoma. *Sooners in the War*. 1 v. Oklahoma City: Published by the Food Administration through the Oklahoma State Council of Defense, 1918.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 9.

*Sooners in the War's* "Contents" page lists the many state committees, voluntary organizations, and council activities that comprised the Oklahoma Council of Defense. The work's eighty-six pages outline the council's statewide administration juggernaut and provided early readers a symbol of World War I Oklahoma patriotism. *Sooners in the War's* first sizable document "Oklahoma State Council of Defense Meets Unflinchingly Every Duty Imposed By War" provides a detailed council history and grouped statewide issues under applicable titles.<sup>43</sup> This initial document subtitled "summary of activities outlined in report – backs to the limit those sons who were laid on the altar of sacrifice" denotes the monumental scope of the Oklahoma's council of defense.<sup>44</sup>

The Payne County Council operated similarly to other counties in bond drives and "combatting [sic.] general apathy."<sup>45</sup> Stillwater and OAMC wartime activities encompassed the Payne County work, and council highlights mark the individuals who volunteered oil stock and purchased liberty bonds. In the column entitled "combatting [sic.] general apathy," the Payne County report notes, "when speakers were sent out to organize some of the district or community councils, considerable apathy was found among the people" and after one town's war talks concluded, "the loyalty cards were circulated among about sixty or seventy people and all were returned [-] unsigned by seven."<sup>46</sup> The report's author thus noted, "a campaign of education was seen to be necessary and immediately a bureau of speakers was organized with a separate

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<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

organization of three-minute men.”<sup>47</sup> These measures persisted in Payne County and other counties as the wartime mission required complete submission to the executive committee.<sup>48</sup> According to the June 1, 1918 “Report of the Assistant Secretary,” the Oklahoma Council of Defense financial and agricultural war work proceeded that summer with success, and included a new “Americanization Plan.”<sup>49</sup> The “Plan” comprised a pamphlet and “campaign in the State of Oklahoma.”<sup>50</sup> The Council of Defense stated the purpose of this campaign was “the war work has illustrated that fact that America has failed in the task of educating Americans in patriotism and in the ideals of the country.”<sup>51</sup> Thus, the June meeting proclaimed of the new project, “we call the campaign ‘Americanization of Americans.’”<sup>52</sup> Payne County “apathy” mirrored additional state-wide nonconformist sentiments, as the 1918 summer council reported difficult citizen participation rates in some counties. Overall, the Oklahoma Council of Defense utilized propagandist means on Stillwater and Oklahoma residents as they received an educational pamphlet and attended council meetings to “be given over to this Americanization work.”<sup>53</sup>

America’s entry into World War I cost the lives of Oklahoma’s sons and daughters, and demanded citizens forfeit select civil liberties. Oklahoma’s college campuses after April 6<sup>th</sup> 1917 transformed, in all but name, into military preparedness schools to add this new wartime state. Similar to the experiences at the University of

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 55-57.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

Oklahoma, Stillwater's Oklahoma A. & M. campus drastically bolstered its military drills and wartime support and encouraged students to join the United States military.

Religious and state publications disseminated a message that supported temporary abridgement of some civil liberties during the war. Such propaganda formed a collective wartime message diverse in its content yet unified in the patriotic sentiment toward national mobilization. Ultimately, the American people and Oklahoma citizens formed a receptive audience to the state's wartime propaganda and volunteered to mobilize as civic groups, religious organizations, and on college campuses.

## CHAPTER V

### RELIGION AND WAR

Almost a month after what was to become the Great War in Europe, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson issued a “prayer for peace” to the American citizenry. This proclamation designated Sunday, October 4, 1914 “as a day of prayer and supplication for peace in Europe” and came weeks after the President requested the nation to maintain a “state of neutrality” in regards to the European war. Wilson’s Presbyterian roots manifested as he declared, “Therefore, I, Woodrow Wilson, President of the United State of America, do designate Sunday, the 4<sup>th</sup> day of October next, a day of prayer and supplication and do request all God-fearing persons to repair on that day to their places of worship...”<sup>1</sup> The President’s proclamation echoed the general sentiment in the majority of the states.

American colleges transformed in regards to culture and religion in the pre-World War I 1910s. The twentieth century’s first decade encompassed the final years of the so-called Edwardian and Gilded ages, Progressive morality movements, and extreme institutional changes in colleges and the larger American society. George M. Marsden’s

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<sup>1</sup> William Howard Thompson, Woodrow Wilson, and United States. President. *Prayers for Peace. A Proclamation by the President of the United States Designating Sunday, October 4, 1914, as a Day of Prayer and Supplication for Peace in Europe. Presented by Mr. Thompson. September 9 (legislative Day, September 5), 1914. -- Ordered to Be Printed.* (United States Congressional Serial Set; Serial Set No. 6596. Washington, DC, 1914).

work *The Soul of the American University* presents one narrative of how religiously established U.S. colleges directed the national higher-education conversation for centuries. Published during the 1990s “culture wars”, Marsden’s thesis aids in contextualizing a land-grant college such as Oklahoma A. & M. after the post 1862 Morrill Act. Oklahoma A. & M.’s administration in 1914 maintained a semblance of the Christian religion with chapel services and graduation prayers, yet Stillwater’s campus merely held to the religious vestiges produced at pace-setting Protestant institutions. Marsden highlights that “in the 1890s, for instance, almost all state universities still held compulsory chapel services and some required Sunday church attendance as well. State-sponsored chapel services did not become rare until the World War II era.”<sup>2</sup> Oklahoma A. & M.’s annual student yearbook, the *Redskin*, contains comedic illustrations showing students skipping chapel. Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College provides one such place where patriotic support and wartime volunteerism combined with other forces to permanently change the religious nature of the institution. As with OAMC, Oklahoma colleges underwent similar yet more dramatic changes during the war.

Religious literature disseminated throughout the United States during the First World War revealed the connection between churches and patriotic groups. The historian George Marsden explores these Protestant groups and the complex nature linked to American Christianity. His *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism: 1870-1925* presents an early twentieth century Evangelical Protestant subculture divergent to reformed denominations, such as the

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<sup>2</sup> George M. Marsden. *The Soul of the American University : From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994, 3).

Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA), which shaped American religious history. The American Protestant church's response to the First World War and the larger societal changes in morals prompted Fundamentalists and other mainline denominations to support community organizations around wartime efforts. In the preface to *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, Marsden defines what he means when he uses the word "culture" and this study on OAMC during the First World War ascribes to Marsden's description.<sup>3</sup>

It is fitting to lay the cultural foundations and understand the Oklahoma A. & M. 'world'. This small Oklahoma college did not reside in a vacuum but lived in the larger American social environment where sociopolitical and cultural forces engulfed a post-Gilded age American society, as the social capital of past decades and centuries confronted twentieth century ideas. The religious influence on OAMC in the 1910s requires, at minimum, a preliminary examination into the voices of American Christianity from 1914 to 1919. In the 1910s, Oklahoma's cultural landscape contained diverse histories as Native American, Euro-American heritages conflicted, at times, in violence, and other decades coexisted in an imperfect peace. One societal component evident throughout United States history and community life was religious participation. As not to deny the presence of Native American religious practice in Oklahoma heritage, the Oklahoma and collegiate narrative constructed in this work focuses primarily on Euro-

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<sup>3</sup> George M. Marsden. *Fundamentalism and American Culture : The Shaping of Twentieth Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980, vii). "By 'culture' I usually have in mind the collection of beliefs, values, assumptions, commitments, and ideas expressed in a society through popular literary and artistic forms and embodied in its political, educational, and other institutions."

American Christianity and its relationship, voice, and influence during the early twentieth century.

American Christian denominations joined the national war effort. Oklahoma churches allied with the state and local governments through lay participation of bond drives and Oklahoma defense council enforcement. Contrary to the many German congregations in Oklahoma who suffered discrimination, Anglo Protestant congregations largely supported their community since a majority of Oklahoma citizens interacted, in some way, with churches. Many works already exist concerning the American church during the First World War, yet the centennial of the war demands another examination of Oklahoma and national church denominations.<sup>4</sup>

A single Protestant denomination provides an exclusive case-study largely representative of American Christianity during World War I, yet this does not discount the diverse views within the denomination. This denomination, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA), promoted a patriotic spirit during World War I that represented the wider American Protestant church. Oklahoma lacked a single RPCNA congregation during the early twentieth century yet Kansas contained a historic denominational presence. The RPCNA's World War I experience offers this work a case-study into the Protestant American Church active in wartime mobilization efforts. Oklahoma and Stillwater, in particular, churches formed a fundamental component of community life, and the RPCNA example provides one instance that a

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<sup>4</sup> Oklahoma State Council of Defense, Administration United States Food and W. S. S. Committee Oklahoma. *Sooners in the War. I v. Oklahoma City*: Published by the Food Administration through the Oklahoma State Council of Defense, 1918; Rohrs, Richard C. *The Germans in Oklahoma*. 1st ed. Newcomers to a New Land. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980.

national denomination supported the United States' war efforts – thus, provides a national religious context to OAMC's patriotic sentiments. The *Christian Nation*, the RPCNA weekly publication, provided its readers an optimistic future on January 1, 1919. After four devastating years in Europe, the magazine's editorial proclaimed, "The War is Over" and outlined a plan to compile "a book containing the names and congregational connections of all the Covenanters" who served faithfully during the war.<sup>5</sup> John W. Pritchard, the magazine's editor, also included a thirteen point list authored by Charles M. Sheldon entitled, "A Good Time to Live."<sup>6</sup> Sheldon declared his reasons why "it is a good time to live, because: (1) the boys are coming home. (2) Right has triumphed over might . . . (4) A United States of Europe is within the possibilities. (9) The song of Hate has not been so powerful as the Hymn of Love. (13) The teachings of Jesus Christ are acknowledged to be the basis of the world's happiness. If we follow those teachings there will never be another war as long as the world stands. . ."<sup>7</sup> Charles Sheldon's religious convictions joined the post-Great War optimism that started in 1919 to "make a better world," yet the millions who died in war collapsed much of European Christendom and instituted changes in how United States citizens interacted with their government.<sup>8</sup>

The *Christian Nation's* 1910s and 1920s publications addressed important denominational concerns and spiritual material. Yet after America entered the Great War, denominational focus shifted toward the RPCNA involvement in the national wartime effort through member volunteerism and military service. This shift transcended Christian publications and reflected the nation's focus toward wartime work in college

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<sup>5</sup> *Christian Nation*, January 1, 1919, 3.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

yearbooks, state newspapers, and vast numbers of printed literature. The RPCNA's official publications presented a denomination, in large part, loyal and devoid of slackers during World War I (WWI) as their institution of higher education, Geneva College, "gave 285 men for the war."<sup>9</sup> The Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania college contributed less in number as Oklahoma A. & M.'s Student Army Training Corps (SATC) and other colleges with a similar sized student bodies. Also in 1919, John W. Pritchard edited the publicized book about RPCNA wartime service titled, *Soldiers of the Church: The Story of What the Reformed Presbyterians (Covenanters) of North America, Canada, and the British Isles, Did to Win the World War of 1914-1918*.<sup>10</sup> The page dedicated to Geneva College mentioned that "the patriotic spirit of the College is overwhelmingly demonstrated in that she gave, all told, two hundred and eighty-five men to the service, forty-three of whom became commissioned officers."<sup>11</sup> Similar to the experience at the Oklahoma A. & M. campus, Geneva College "also sustained a Student Army Training Corps of ninety-five members."<sup>12</sup> Pritchard ended the page regarding the college with a quote by the institution's wartime Y. M. C. A. physical instructor Mr. C. B. Metheny: "Geneva's sons to the last man rose when the call came."<sup>13</sup> Colleges across the United States also answered the call as state and national programs, agencies, and new federal bureaucratic organizations permeated campuses from Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania to Stillwater, Oklahoma.

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<sup>9</sup> John Wagner Pritchard. *Soldiers of the Church: The Story of What the Reformed Presbyterians (Covenanters) of North America, Canada, and the British Isles, Did to Win the World War of 1914-1918*. New York: Christian Nation Publishing Co., 1919, 160.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., Title Page.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 160.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

World War I affected not only colleges and U.S. communities but also American churches. National speakers propagated a patriotism mixed with religious fervor, and men like Billy Sunday, George M Cohan, and Teddy Roosevelt promoted the nationalist message combined with common social gospel rhetoric.<sup>14</sup> In major contrast to the Social Gospel and many nineteenth-century religious reform movements, the National Reform Association published in 1918 Richard Cameron Wylie's *Collapse of Christless Civilizations*. Oklahoma in the 1910s comprised well-established religious communities with societal influence, yet Christianity found little influence in the state's and OAMC's reaction to national wartime decisions. Wylie's introduction forecasts an outcome uncertain in 1918 when "thousands of books have already been inspired by the Great War, and many other thousands will doubtless yet be written. Only a few, however, will be given a permanent place because of intrinsic merit."<sup>15</sup> The introduction continues its advocacy for the National Reform Association sponsored work, and noted on July 1, 1918, "While the following discussion is not a war book except in a very general sense, it was directly inspired by the war. . . of all the war books thus far published the writer does not know of one that views the world-problems involved from the standpoint here taken."<sup>16</sup> *Collapse of Christless Civilizations'* chapter titles indicate the message Wylie conveys with chapter three, "Christ Enthroned as Ruler of Nations," chapter six, "Christ's Administration," and chapter eight "The Twentieth Century Collapse."<sup>17</sup> On first observation, the author's ideology mirrors the RPCNA worldview, and while correct in

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 141-145.

<sup>15</sup> Richard Cameron Wylie. *Collapse of Christless Civilizations*. Pittsburgh, Pa.: National Reform Association, 1918, 5.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 5-6.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 9.

theological terms, Wylie parallels the propaganda disseminated through OAMC yearbooks and college publications.<sup>18</sup> The book reads as a sermon or jeremiad in its use of Bible references and religious language. Another voice in American Christianity, Walter Rauschenbusch propagated his idea of the Social Gospel and in 1912 declared, “our business is to *make over* an antiquated and immoral economic system... and thus to lay a social foundation on which modern men individually can live and work in a fashion that will not outrage all the better elements in them. Our inherited Christian faith dealt with individuals; our present tasks deals with society.”<sup>19</sup> President Woodrow Wilson utilized this Social Gospel language in speeches before 1914, and Rauschenbusch influenced the Progressive movement with ideas of “social Christianity” and “if we all loved our neighbor, we should ‘treat him right.’”<sup>20</sup>

In OAMC’s twenty-seventh annual catalog (1917-1918), the “general information” section contained a paragraph entitled “moral influences.” This section provides information to students who desire weekly attendance at local churches. In addition to promoting the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) and Young Women’s Christian Association (WMCA), Oklahoma A. & M. included this paragraph in its 1917 college catalog:

Eight leading churches are represented in Stillwater and the students are encouraged to attend and participate in their services. As a matter of fact, the Sunday schools and the young people’s societies of the several churches in Stillwater are sustained very largely by the students from the A. and M. College.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 122-135.

<sup>19</sup> Walter Rauschenbusch. *Christianizing the Social Order*. New York: Macmillan, 1915, 41-44.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> *Bulletin of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College*; General Series, vol. 15, no. 2 Annual Catalog 1917-1918, 17.

The catalog contained this same paragraph from 1910 to spring 1921 when the administration reworded the admonition under the title “religious organizations.” In 1927, the college implemented a new “religious education” for freshmen in addition to possible church involvement.<sup>22</sup> This administrative change may indicate the OAMC of the 1920s as more religious than previous years or the reversal of prescribed methods in promoting moral instruction. Nonetheless, the paragraph’s inclusion into the college catalog reveals religious influence present on campus throughout the First World War. The OAMC annual catalogs and college bulletins provide enormous resource in navigating the campus during the 1914-1919 academic years. The OAMC student used this publication as the official administration voice on academic and social life. College rules dictated the policy put forward in detail. These catalogs provide the historian with a window into the administration at OAMC in the early twentieth century.

Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College’s early annual catalogues describe the campus environment and regulations which governed students before and during the Great War. The college utilized a tri-term calendar beginning in September and ending in early June. After listing the faculty, departments, short history, photographs, and other necessary resources, the annual catalogue for the academic year 1907-08 provided a “general information” section starkly different from twenty-first century catalogues. At first, the bold titles declared the college’s “moral influence”, “The Honor System”, and over a dozen other titled paragraphs. The college’s use of an honor system was not unique for turn-of-the-century institutions of higher learning in the United

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid. OAMC Catalogs, 1910-1928. (Note: The extent students participated in religious services in Stillwater churches requires a greater study into the church records and local publications and this undertaking goes outside the focus of this work).

States. It was practiced for centuries at other universities, and a close examination may reveal the philosophical motives utilized for WWI volunteerism. The paragraph explaining such system necessitates a full quotation:

All examinations and tests are conducted under the Honor System. While the examinations are always given under the supervision of an instructor, they are relieved, as far as possible, of everything that resembles watching or espionage. The student is placed upon his honor, and signs the following pledge at the end of the examination: "I hereby certify on honor that I have neither received nor given assistance on this examination." This system was established by the faculty in March 1895, in response to a petition signed by practically the entire student body, and both faculty and students have abundant reason for gratification at the success with which it has met in the institution. Students known to have received or given improper aid in examinations, tests, or reviews are promptly dismissed from college.<sup>23</sup>

This explanation reveals a distinct loyalty, under penalty, for breaking one's oath. Later in 1918, the state of Oklahoma and the nation promoted a different loyalty oath from its citizens while those in Stillwater understood the obligations associated with pledging one's honor.<sup>24</sup>

The home-front reaction encountered at OAMC and Oklahoma at large during WWI emerges within an American culture constructed for a new century with new social norms, government agencies, and community reactions to international crises. The religious landscape in Oklahoma and throughout the nation resulted in social change since "the war intensified hopes and fears, and totally upset existing balances in

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<sup>23</sup> *Bulletin of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College*; General Series, 1910-1928, 75-76.

<sup>24</sup> Oklahoma State Council of Defense, Administration United States Food and W. S. S. Committee Oklahoma. *Sooners in the War*. 1 v. Oklahoma City: Published by the Food Administration through the Oklahoma State Council of Defense, 1918.

American culture.”<sup>25</sup> *Fundamentalism and American Culture* contains a chapter entitled “World War I, Premillennialism, and American Fundamentalism: 1917-1918.”<sup>26</sup> In its first sentence, Marsden declares that “between 1917 and the early 1920s American conservative evangelicals underwent a dramatic transformation.”<sup>27</sup> The religious imbalances represented one segment affected in World War I America while other segments such as government involvement in citizen’s daily lives manifested in new ways through the creation of organizations like the Reserve Officer Training Corps (1916), the National Park Service (1916), the National and State Councils of Defense (1917), and many wartime committees and laws.

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<sup>25</sup> George M. Marsden. *Fundamentalism and American Culture : The Shaping of Twentieth Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980, 6).

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

## CHAPTER VI

### THE OAMC NATIVE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE AND WORLD WAR I

Months after the 36th U.S. Infantry Division ended combat operations along the Meuse-Argonne line, the *New York Herald* reported on a football game between the U.S. First Army's 36th Division and the French Army's 109th Field Artillery (Battery C). The 36th Division awaited transport back to Camp Bowie, Texas in March 1919, and in the interim months some members of the 36th won a "hard-earned" football victory against the French Le Mans. Oklahoma and Texas National Guard units formed the 36th Infantry Division in World War I (WWI), and dozens of American Indians served in the Divisional ranks. The Choctaws in Company E and D of the 36th who aided the Allies along the Meuse-Argonne front represent the first instances of Native American code-talking in recorded United States military records. Approximately eighteen Choctaws utilized their Native language to send secure messages between Allied telephone posts – confusing the German enemy. The *New York Herald's* March 18, 1919 article includes no direct mention of Choctaws who participated in the 36th's football match, but one Indian football star represented Oklahoma against the French. Private Carl Mahseet [Mahsett] played as a guard and kicker for the 36th. Mahseet attended Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College in Stillwater, Oklahoma before joining the 36th Division, and while newspapers and college yearbooks failed to mention Mahseet's tribal affiliation the soldier acquired a reputation in college as a competitive athlete with the

nickname - "Chief."<sup>1</sup> The *Herald* article, recording Mahseet's invaluable contribution in the thirteen to zero win over the French, also depicted him as a barbaric native savage dragging an arrow-pierced French player into "camp." Six other cartoons accompanied the caricature of Mahseet, but the racist depictions of Mahseet also degraded the hundreds of Choctaws and other Indian Tribes from Oklahoma and Texas who served in the 36th. Yet, the Choctaw code-talkers and fellow Indians like Mahseet served honorably in the United States military during World War I as representatives of their individual tribes and nations.<sup>2</sup>

The Choctaw people of Oklahoma embody a cultural history rich in military service in the midst of past communal hardships. Choctaws have played a part in all United States wars. Oklahoma Native American tribes have shaped, and continue to shape, the history of Oklahoma through their role in military service and domestic involvement. The Choctaws are no exception. They contributed significantly to the United States' war effort in the First World War. In a 2004 Senate hearing determining the "contributions of Native American code talkers in American military history," Brigadier General [Ret.] John S. Brown submitted before the committee on Indian Affairs that "Native Americans have a long and proud tradition of military service to their several nations and to the United States of America. Our Army archives are replete with tales of their valor, and Army museums feature equipment they have used and medals they have

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<sup>1</sup>The New York Herald (Paris), 18 March 1919.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. (Note: For a digital copy of the newspaper article see Oklahoma A&M College World War I Veterans Collection. 36th Division Eleven Defeat Le Mans 13 to 0 in Hard Fight. 1970-005, Oklahoma State University – Edmon Low Library Digital Collections.)Orange and Black (Stillwater, Oklahoma), 8 November 1915.Ibid., 15 November 1915. Oklahoma State University. Redskin. 1916, 134,143,146. Ibid., 1918, 206. Ibid., 1919, 42.

won under trying circumstances.”<sup>3</sup> Brown’s praiseworthy statement echoes the common consensus among historians and researchers that Native American servicemen in World War I, specifically Choctaws and the famous code-talkers, aided the war effort in military valor and domestic support, creating a lasting impact upon their tribal culture.

Dual narratives between two worlds emerged during the Choctaw support for the war and the service Choctaw code talkers offered. One depicted the dominant non-Indian account and the other the less recorded Native voice. Many valid reasons contribute to the lack of Native American accounts during and after WWI. One explanation for the scarcity of accounts is the secrecy placed on the Choctaw code talkers after the 1918 Armistice. In addition, other records like college newspapers and government documents reveal the stereotypes and prejudices foisted on Choctaws, and other American Indians, during that period of American history. This and other societal hindrances placed on Choctaws after WWI emerged through public awareness in the 1990s – brought to light through governmental and tribal records. Native American students attended Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College and Carl Mahseet represented one popular athlete who emerged on campus. The Choctaw Nation and OAMC joined the state-wide wartime mobilization as citizens and students shares many common patriotic sentiments after the United States declared war in April 1917. In Oklahoma, Native peoples attended state colleges and supported county councils of defense to show their wartime volunteerism. As with the state’s Euro-American population, some Oklahoma Native American tribe members objected to the wartime state and protested the draft, yet Native

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<sup>3</sup>United States Senate. Code Talkers. Hearing Before the Committee on Indian Affairs, United States Senate; One Hundred Eighth Congress, Second Session, on Contributions of Native American Code Talkers in American Military History. S. HRG. 109-693. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington: 2004.

American college students on OAMC joined non-Native groups in ROTC, sports, and campus activities.

On the eve of the centennial commemoration of United States involvement in WWI, Oklahoma Choctaws who participated in the war and the code talkers who contributed to the war's end merit a discussion of WWI history. A 1921 *Times*' article titled, "Red Indian War Heroes: Lord Haig's Tribute," recounted the service of American Indians, notably Choctaws, played in the late war effort.<sup>4</sup> Marshal Foch pronounced: "I cannot forget the brilliant services which the valiant Indian soldiers of the American Army rendered to the common cause."<sup>5</sup> Ultimately, Oklahoma Choctaws demonstrated their patriotism through military service and battlefield code-talking during the First World War.

As one of the first eastern tribes to settle in Indian Territory, the Choctaws brought with them their Americanized practices of religion, farming, government, and education. Stephen Lance Weisend's 1982 thesis on the comparison of Choctaw and Comanche tribes to Anglo-American culture from post-Civil War to 1900 aligns with this period of Choctaw assimilation. Weisend's conclusions revealed the "passive, gradual, and effective process" of Choctaw acculturation into white society through agrarian and trade economies versus the "Wild" Comanche tribal experience.<sup>6</sup> This quantitative study between two differing Indian tribes placed the Choctaws in a high status among Native American tribes in Oklahoma. This high status resulted from the Choctaw's educational

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<sup>4</sup> The Times (London, England), 27 July 1921.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Stephen Lance Weisend. "Acculturation of the Choctaw and Comanche Indians: A Quantitative Study of the Family, 1900." 1982, i.

opportunities and intermarriages with white society.<sup>7</sup> Choctaws maintained their tribal identity while forming a constitutional government in 1838. Since the Choctaw nation sided with the Confederate States of America during the American Civil War, new treaties with the U.S. drastically diminished Choctaw lands to the west allowing for future statehood. During the seventeen years of Indian Territory, Choctaw leaders contributed to the formation of territorial government and secured the tribe's predominance in 1907 Oklahoma statehood. The Choctaw's government dissolved under the Dawes Act, tribal allotment, and the new state of Oklahoma. Choctaws resided in a purgatory between limited tribal sovereignty under the Office of Indian Affairs and a United States government that did not recognize American Indians as citizens. This complicated environment faced the Choctaws on the eve of WWI as a century of removal, boarding schools, and land readjustment shaped the tribe's relationship to Oklahoma and the nation.<sup>8</sup>In Europe, greater cultural, military, and economic changes than those faced by Oklahomans converged to embroil the Old World in a colossal struggle for world power.

Though the United States maintained neutrality in the European conflict, economic and political connections across the Atlantic created a contradiction between neutrality and Allied support. In Oklahoma, the war affected agricultural prices but overall did not largely disturb people's daily lives. In 1914, many Choctaws still felt the complications of land allotment, but for others the years after Oklahoma statehood offered opportunities to prosper in the public and private sectors. Unlike other Oklahoma

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., Patrick J. Hurley. Five Minute History of Oklahoma. *Chronicles of Oklahoma*. Oklahoma Historical Society, vol. 13, no. 4, 1935.

<sup>8</sup>Muriel H. Wright, *A Guide to the Indian Tribes of Oklahoma*, 97-118; Colin G. Calloway, *First Peoples: A Documentary Survey of American Indian History*, 291-2.

“wild” tribes, the Choctaws assimilated decades before into American culture. They welcomed the Christian religion, education, and even military service in the Oklahoma National Guard. This service in the Oklahoma militia had precedent in the Choctaw constitution of 1860 in which the eighth of the twenty-one rights set forth stated that, “every citizen has a right to bear arms in defense of himself and his country.”<sup>9</sup> In addition, in Article 7, Section 12 of the constitution provided for a “mode of declaring war . . . [by] two-thirds of the members,” or individuals can defend themselves if the council is inactive.<sup>10</sup> Thus, Choctaw governmental structural and cultural practices slowly adapted to the U.S. influences on the tribe.<sup>11</sup>

As a whole, Oklahoma supported the neutrality of the United States and aligned its policies with the national trend of cautious preparedness. Four-fifths of Oklahoma’s population lived in rural communities, and the 74,825 Indians, according to the 1910 census comprised “one-twentieth of the Sooner population total.”<sup>12</sup> In 1914, the Oklahoma National Guard headquartered in Guthrie and consisted of seventy-seven officers and 1,330 enlisted men divided into the “infantry, cavalry, hospital corps, signal corps, and engineer corps.”<sup>13</sup> These minuscule forces received invaluable experience in 1916 fighting Pancho Villa in Mexico, and later grew into the tens of thousands during WWI. Martin Henry Lutter’s dissertation in 1961 focused directly on the public opinion

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<sup>9</sup>Choctaw Nation .Constitution of the Choctaw Nation. The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, 1860. p 3.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>11</sup> Wright. *A Guide to the Indian Tribes of Oklahoma*. 97-118.

<sup>12</sup> Martin Henry Lutter. "Oklahoma and the World War, 1914-1917: A Study in Public Opinion." Ph.D., The University of Oklahoma. 1961, 543-4.

<sup>13</sup> Martin, Frederick, John Scott Sir Keltie, Isaac Parker Anderson Renwick, Mortimer Epstein, S. H. Steinberg and John Paxton. *The Statesman's Year-Book*. v. London [etc.]: Palgrave [etc.]. 1915, 580-581.

of Oklahoma in WWI and the social mindset of the people from 1914-1917. Lutter recounts the political, religious, and national influences during Oklahoma's pre-war years, but his work focuses little on Native American involvement in WWI.<sup>14</sup> When President Woodrow Wilson and Congress finally declared war on April 6, 1917, Oklahoma drastically changed their opinion in support of the war effort. Oklahoma "underwent a complete reversal" in its neutrality to the European war by embracing the American war effort that at times "bordered on hysteria."<sup>15</sup>

Newspapers throughout the state published the announcement about the United States' entry into WWI. A day before Congress declared war on Germany, The *Herald-Sentinel* of Cordell, April 5, 1917, accepted the coming conflict stating that "there is no uncertainty about war . . . a call for a half million men for the army has been issued and the navy is being put on war footing."<sup>16</sup> Years earlier on August 6, 1914, the *Choctaw Herald*, in Hugo, Oklahoma, reported the start of belligerence between England and Germany.<sup>17</sup> When the U.S. declared war, Oklahoma answered the call forming the 36<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division with Texas. Oklahoma recruited willing Choctaw young men from boarding schools, such as Chilocco, to join other Choctaws in the 36<sup>th</sup>. The front page of the *Oklahoman* on April 6<sup>th</sup> reported the "long debate" in Congress over declaring war, but early Friday morning the Senate sent to President Wilson the "war bill" declaring war on the Central Powers.<sup>18</sup> Military mobilization effected Oklahoma's need for draftees,

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<sup>14</sup> Lutter, 543.

<sup>15</sup> Jim Bissett. World War I. Oklahoma Historical Society; *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*. Accessed 30 September 2014.  
<http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/W/WO024.html>

<sup>16</sup> Herald-Sentinel (Cordell, Okla.), 5 April 1917.

<sup>17</sup> The Choctaw Herald (Hugo, Okla.), 6 August 1914.

<sup>18</sup> The Oklahoman (Oklahoma City), 6 April 1917.

but Choctaws could exempt themselves from the draft because of their non-citizen status. Nonetheless, Choctaws and other American Indians throughout Oklahoma volunteered in large numbers well beyond the percentage of eligible non-Indian Americans.<sup>19</sup>

In 1917, Oklahoma organized councils of defense in each county of the state. During WWI, Oklahoma Indians and non-Indians alike entered a period in which civil liberties at times succumbed to patriotic excesses. Governor Williams established Oklahoma's own Council of Defense under the National Defense Act while the state's legislature was in recess. Even though not directly mentioned in the Oklahoma Council of Defense's 1919 Official Report – *Sooners in the War*, Choctaws fell under the state's wartime affairs report of the southeast counties.<sup>20</sup>

Accepting this premise of wartime service, Choctaws and American Indians offered their domestic patriotism and sometimes their last full measure of devotion in Europe – demonstrating the Indian was “fully” American. *Sooners in the War* noted that “at least” five thousand Oklahoma Indians “either enlisted or were inducted into the army from this state and it may be said in passing that, in almost every case, the Indian went to war willingly and there were few claims for deferred classification or contests over classification filed by Indian registrants.”<sup>21</sup> The historiography of Choctaw soldiers agree

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<sup>19</sup> William C. Meadows. *Code Talkers*. Oklahoma Historical Society; *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*. Accessed 30 September 2014.  
<http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/C/CO013.html>.

<sup>20</sup> Oklahoma State Council of, Defense, Administration United States Food and W. S. S. Committee Oklahoma. *Sooners in the War*. 1 v. Oklahoma City: Published by the Food Administration through the Oklahoma State Council of Defense, 1918.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

with their willingness to serve, but the “few” Indians who did protest or defer manifested itself in the “supposed” Creek Rebellion of eastern Oklahoma in 1918.<sup>22</sup>

Furthermore, American Indians in Oklahoma largely supported the war effort financially. *Sooners in the War* highlighted “Oklahoma’s wealthiest Indian” Jackson Barnett (\$2,565,000 in Cushing oil fields) who purchased \$907,000 of Liberty Bonds.<sup>23</sup> *Sooners* quoted Barnett stating, “‘Sure, me whip kaiser,’” while speculating that Barnett “probably will also purchase a large block of the Victory Liberty Bonds to help finish the job of whipping the kaiser [sic].”<sup>24</sup> The correlation between the Indian’s war support and the words “whipping” or “whipped” invokes the stereotypical notion of the Indian warrior on the warpath. Non-Indian newspapers quoted Choctaws during WWI referencing Indian warrior heritage both in positive and negative terms. Barnett was not alone in his financial support; *Sooners* noted that Barnett’s purchase did not “represent more than one-seventh of the amount of money the Indians of the various tribes in Oklahoma have invested in these government securities.”<sup>25</sup> *The Bond Bulletin* goes on to state that “‘apparently they [tribes] all wanted to ‘whip kaiser,’ and their investments were

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<sup>22</sup> Thomas A. Britten. The Creek Draft Rebellion of 1918: Wartime Hysteria and Indian-Baiting in WWI Oklahoma. *Chronicles of Oklahoma*. Oklahoma Historical Society, vol. 79, no. 2, 2001; Shannon, David A. *The Socialist Party of America; A History*. 320 p. New York: Macmillan, 1955; Sellars, Nigel Anthony. Green Corn Rebellion. Oklahoma Historical Society; *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*. Accessed 30 September 2014.

<http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/G/GR022.html>.

<sup>23</sup> Oklahoma State Council of, Defense, Administration United States Food and W. S. S. Committee Oklahoma. *Sooners in the War*. 1 v. Oklahoma City: Published by the Food Administration through the Oklahoma State Council of Defense. 1918, 87.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

made without stint. Many of them are wealthy, but the vast majority are plain farmers or herdsman whose purchases of Liberty Bonds cost them sacrifices, even hardships.”<sup>26</sup>

Years before 1917, national Indian groups discussed the issues of military service, patriotism, and war involvement that emerged in the titles of society publications which cultivated the Indian warrior image. The Society of American Indians (1911-1923) provided their readers its quarterly journal *The American Indian Magazine*, with accounts of Indians as military warriors or home front loyal supporters. Along with essays covering Indian citizenship and the problems in the Indian Bureau, the *Magazine* started reminding the reader in 1916 of “American Indians as a Warrior.”<sup>27</sup> By 1917 and 1918, articles and editorial comments included, “America Needs Men,” and “Indians With the Allies” – keeping with the *Magazine’s* motto, “For the Honor of the Race and the Good of the Country.”<sup>28</sup> Large numbers of Oklahoma Choctaws agreed with the *Magazine* as it stated in 1917 - “the American Indian has his share of responsibility; he, too, must respond . . . [and] . . . already the red man are enlisting.”<sup>29</sup> In the same editorial, the author exclaimed, in the context of Indian wartime agricultural support, “Indians of America awaken!”<sup>30</sup> The *Magazine*, in its 1918 and 1919 issues, proudly praised the American Indian for their service, both male and female, in the Red Cross and as “heroes” on the battlefield.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Society of American Indians. *The American Indian Magazine*. Vol. 4, no. 1, Washington D. C. 1916.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., vol. 5, no. 1, Washington D. C. 1917; vol. 6, no. 3, Washington D. C. 1918; vol. 6, no. 3, Washington D. C. 1918.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., vol. 5, no. 1, Washington D. C. 1917, 5.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., vol. 6, no. 3, Washington D. C. 1918; vol. 6, no. 3, Washington D. C. 1918; - Vol. 7, no. 2, Washington D. C. 1919.

The state's Native wartime involvement even permeated into local councils of defense. For Choctaw County's Council of Defense, the early months after its August 1917 formation cultivated little support as "folks seemed passively patriotic," but once citizens were "fully awake to the responsibilities resting upon them," they united as "war workers."<sup>32</sup> Within ninety days, the county "was on a war basis, and practically every citizen a war worker," but Choctaw County was not alone as a "patriotic county."<sup>33</sup> *Sooners'* recorded each county's differing degree of wartime support and in the thirteen counties of the old Choctaw nation there was no lack of support for the war effort. *Sooners'* insinuated potential direct involvement by Choctaws in county councils of defense, while other documents and an established historiography affirm Choctaws as soldiers and Liberty bond purchasers during the war. When representatives of the French Foreign Legion visited Oklahoma City, individuals, presumably Indians, garbed in Native American headdresses stood for a photograph with the French – publicly displaying their patriotic heritage.<sup>34</sup>

The Choctaw people of southeast Oklahoma form an important component of the state's military tradition. From the Choctaw Indian police to the light cavalry scouts of Indian Territory, the Choctaw nation served in the wars, conflicts, and peacekeeping endeavors throughout the state's history. In Fred Daugherty and Pendleton Woods' *Chronicles of Oklahoma* article, they recount the military history of Oklahoma giving due

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<sup>32</sup> Oklahoma State Council of, Defense, Administration United States Food and W. S. S. Committee Oklahoma. *Sooners in the War*. 1 v. Oklahoma City: Published by the Food Administration through the Oklahoma State Council of Defense. 31-32.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

credit to the American Indians who served in World War I and many other wars.<sup>35</sup>The rise in WWI articles after 1970 reflected a growing interest in war commemoration, and an urgent need to record the stories of the diminishing WWI generation. This rich record of secondary sources record the environment in which the Choctaw nation in thirteen southeast Oklahoma counties supported and interacted with state war efforts. For many years, the historiography of Oklahoma and United States' twentieth century military history ignored the Native American contribution. The Choctaw's service as code-talkers, runners, snipers, scouts, and dedicated soldiers and sailors during WWI remained in the shadows from popular commemoration or federal recognition. A quarter century of renewed research has confirmed the long-held knowledge among the Choctaw people of Oklahoma that the Choctaw servicemen and the tribe as a whole supported the nation in WWI as invaluable code-talkers and loyal non-citizens.<sup>36</sup>

By 1916, the Oklahoma National Guard changed its headquarters to Oklahoma City and increased in strength to 70 officers and 966 enlisted men – consisting of Choctaws, other Oklahoma Native tribes, along with other non-Indians.<sup>37</sup> The *Tulsa Daily World* on May 9, 1917 reported that, besides noting the war news and the Red Cross call for more funds and members, the Choctaw's attorney, Tulsa lawyer P. J. Hurley, submitted his resignation to the commissioner of Indian Affairs.<sup>38</sup> Hurley

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<sup>35</sup> Fred A. Daugherty and Pendleton Woods. "Oklahoma's Military Tradition". (*Chronicles of Oklahoma*. 57, 4, 1979).

<sup>36</sup> Carol Welsh, Mary Ann Blochowiak and Society Oklahoma Historical. An Annotated Guide to the Chronicles of Oklahoma 1921-1994. x, 324 p. Oklahoma City, Okla.: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1996.

<sup>37</sup> Martin, Frederick, John Scott Sir Keltie, Isaac Parker Anderson Renwick, Mortimer Epstein, S. H. Steinberg and John Paxton. *The Statesman's Year-Book*. v. London [etc.]: Palgrave [etc.], 1917.

<sup>38</sup> Tulsa Daily World (Tulsa, Okla.), 9 May 1917.

explained that “he intended entering the army,” which left the reporter speculating on Hurley’s replacement between W. L. Crittenden and W. S. Semple.<sup>39</sup> Over a year later on July 12, 1918, the *Daily Ardmoreite* noted the likelihood that Oklahoma Governor Robert L. Williams (1915-1919) planned the appointment of W. S. Semple of Durant “to be chief of the Choctaw nation [1918-1922] and Walter Turnbull, also of Durant to be attorney for the Choctaws” – both to be nominated and approved by President Wilson.<sup>40</sup> In further affirmation of Choctaw support for the war, the *Ardmoreite* stated that “Semple will succeed [Choctaw Chief] Victor M. Locke now in the army, [officer in the 36<sup>th</sup> Division, and former Oklahoma National Guard] and Turnbull will take the place which has been filled by Pat Hurley.”<sup>41</sup>

Colonel Patrick J. Hurley, before serving as U.S. Secretary of War from 1929-1933, left his native Choctaw country where he served as an attorney and entered Tulsa County’s own “D” Company, 111<sup>th</sup> Engineers during the Great War. In the Argonne-Meuse offensive, Hurley served with the 76<sup>th</sup> Regiment Field Artillery and “was twice cited for gallantry.”<sup>42</sup> Hurley’s long and successful career in both the military and diplomatic service marked him as a hometown hero in Oklahoma and around the world. In Tulsa’s compilation of wartime activity – *Tulsa County in the World War* (1919) – Colonel Hurley is represented as a selfless officer who gave up his position as national attorney of the Choctaw Nation to lead Oklahoma soldiers in France.<sup>43</sup> Nearly a decade after the war, then Secretary of War Patrick Hurley addressed the 1931 graduating class

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> *Daily Ardmoreite* (Ardmore, Okla.), 12 July 1918.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> William T. Lampe. *Tulsa County in the World War*. Tulsa, Okla.: Tulsa County Historical Society. 1919, 49.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

at Bacone College. The *Chronicles of Oklahoma* republished Hurley's speech that September with the title, "Why Educate the Indian?"<sup>44</sup> Hurley's commencement remarks reminded the audience of the "civilizing" process Indians achieved through educational opportunities. As a fellow alumnus, Hurley reminded the students of the importance of education and affirmed his connection with the Choctaws:

I know the Indian. I know his characteristics. I was reared among the Indians. I went to school with them [1905]. I served the Choctaws for years as National Attorney. The then Principal Chief of the Choctaw Nation gave me my first opportunity for public life. I have served in the Army with many of them. I am under a debt of gratitude to the Indians.<sup>45</sup>

Hurley's major thesis in the speech centers on the belief that "education will make the Indian a good citizen . . . . education and education alone can prepare the Indian to take advantage of that equality of opportunity which all Americans enjoy."<sup>46</sup> Many Choctaws might disagree with the Secretary's conclusions, in large part because Choctaws, like many Oklahoma tribes, cultivated intellectual and patriotic citizens without American boarding schools or colleges. In analyzing Hurley's 1931 speech, he does address important topics and provides correct correlations in some areas, but his remarks continued to propagate the "noble savage" ideas of nineteenth-century non-Indian crusaders. Hurley rightfully praised the contribution Choctaws, and Indians in general, made in WWI. The Choctaw's war record affirms Hurley's statement that "as warriors, we give the Indians their places among our outstanding soldiers..." [and] ". . .

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<sup>44</sup> Patrick J. Hurley. Why Educate the Indians? *Chronicles of Oklahoma*. Oklahoma Historical Society, vol. 9, no. 3, 1931.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

from a standpoint of patriotism and valor, the Indians have no superiors.”<sup>47</sup> From 1917 through 1918, Oklahoma facilitated this statewide patriotic fervor creating an avenue for Choctaw service both in widespread military service and in domestic support.<sup>48</sup>

During this wartime mobilization, Choctaws provided their support as they had in past United States wars. The Oklahoma National Guard, soon after returning from the Mexico-U.S. border, united with the Texas National Guard to form the 36<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. Many American Indians from throughout Oklahoma served in the Oklahoma Guard, and some Choctaw officers saw active duty in the Spanish-American War. Oklahoma’s total casualties in WWI totaled 1,064 killed, 502 missing, 4,154 wounded, and 710 died from disease out of the roughly 91,000 who actively served from the state. These numbers pale in comparison to other states, but the impact on Oklahoma families reached across tribal and ethnic divisions.<sup>49</sup>

With a different perspective on Indian tribes than Angie Debo, *Caddo Herald* editor G. A. Crossett’s “A Vanishing Race” article in the 1926 *Chronicles of Oklahoma* presents a categorical evolution of the Choctaw tribe from Removal

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Oklahoma State Council of, Defense, Administration United States Food and W. S. S. Committee Oklahoma. *Sooners in the War*. 1 v. Oklahoma City: Published by the Food Administration through the Oklahoma State Council of Defense, 1918; Allen, Phillip. Choctaw Indian Code Talkers of World War I. The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. <http://www.choctawnation.com/history/people/code-talkers/code-talkers-of-wwi/>.

<sup>49</sup> W. David Baird, and Danney Goble. *Oklahoma, A History*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press. 2008., 183).

to assimilation into United States culture.<sup>50</sup> “A Vanishing Race” accepts the nineteenth-century idea of civilization through education. Crossett’s second to last paragraph also noted the Choctaw’s involvement in WWI. In agreement with P. J. Hurley, Crossett praised the “civilized” Choctaw for accepting education and striving to maintain standing “with their white brothers as citizens on an equal footing.”<sup>51</sup> Crossett correctly noted that “many” Choctaws volunteered for the military after registering under the selective service. Choctaws in 1917 remained non-citizens of the United States and thus the American Indian volunteer demonstrated Choctaw assimilation to the larger society. Indian military service provided economic security, adventure, or a way to show one’s support for their tribe and their adopted nation.

When the United States called up millions of men for military service, Choctaws answered by joining the army, navy, and army air service.<sup>52</sup> Conservative estimates place American Indian service between twelve and fourteen thousand during WWI, but this may overlook the Choctaws and other Indians who registered as “white.” Many other Indian tribes aided the United States by serving in the Red Cross and purchasing of war bonds on the home front. Choctaw women and those who remained in Oklahoma suffered the loss of work as family members left for the war.<sup>53</sup> To the American Indian, “many

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<sup>50</sup> G. A. Crossett. *A Vanishing Race*. (*Chronicles of Oklahoma*. 4, 1, 1926).

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

<sup>52</sup> *The Oklahoman* (Oklahoma City), 6 April 1917; *Daily Ardmoreite* (Ardmore, Okla.), 19 September 1918.

<sup>53</sup> Janda Lance. *Women and the World Wars*. Oklahoma Historical Society; *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*. Accessed 30 September 2014. <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/W/WO004.html>

served out of devotion to their homeland more than loyalty to the United States” states author Colin G. Calloway, because for Indians “service in the U.S. armed forces offered young men a chance to win war honors, as their fathers and grandfathers had done.”<sup>54</sup> In July 1917, one hundred Choctaws from the Mississippi tribe volunteered “their services to the army” at Mobile, Alabama.<sup>55</sup> Earlier that year on March 27<sup>th</sup>, the *Tulsa Daily World* reported the promotion of Choctaw Chief Victor M. Locke to “Major” in the U.S. Army. The *World* then recounted the military training and wartime service of Locke back to 1893. The rank of Major, at the time, marked the highest position a citizen-soldier could obtain, and indicates the level Choctaws achieved in military service.<sup>56</sup>

When the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) mobilized for European combat in the fall of 1917, many Choctaws joined the newly formed 36<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division created from the Oklahoma and Texas National Guards. Thus, “Choctaw” Company L merged with the Seventh Texas Infantry Division to form the 142nd Regiment, Company E and the 141st Regiment – all under the 36<sup>th</sup> Division. The 36<sup>th</sup> trained for nearly a year at Camp Bowie in Fort Worth, Texas until crossing the Atlantic. According to author Louis Coleman, “the Thirty-sixth Division had more American Indians than any other unit. Most were assigned to

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<sup>54</sup> Colin G. Calloway, *First Peoples: A Documentary Survey of American Indian History*, 446.

<sup>55</sup> The Patriot (Indiana, Pa.), 14 July 1917; Tulsa Daily World (Tulsa, Okla.), 27 March 1917.

<sup>56</sup> Tulsa Daily World (Tulsa, Okla.), 27 March 1917.

the 142<sup>nd</sup>'s Company E, which was known as the 'Indian Company.'<sup>57</sup> This large number of Indians in Company E and D influenced the 36<sup>th</sup> to adopt an Indian arrowhead with a capital "T" for the Division's insignia. These symbols represented the united Texas and Oklahoma National Guards.<sup>58</sup> The Choctaws in the 36<sup>th</sup> continued their training at Camp Bowie a full year after the United States declared war on the Central Powers. The *Oklahoman* reported on May 5, 1918 that – "Indians at Bowie are ready to go: they are anxious to become real American soldiers," and described their condition as "physically perfect."<sup>59</sup> Verging on self-congratulation for Indian assimilation, the *Oklahoman* affirmed that because 6,000 Indians served in the war and 700 Oklahoma Indians trained at Camp Bowie from fourteen tribes the "idea that [the] Indian can't be disciplined is erroneous."<sup>60</sup> The largest number of Indians trained at Bowie came from the Choctaw, Cherokee, and Creek tribes and were claimed by some as "the best light infantry soldier in the world" – supposedly proving military experts wrong about the "undisciplined" Indian soldier.<sup>61</sup>

While at Camp Bowie, several Choctaws emerged as noteworthy soldiers. Sergeant W. J. McClure of Durant, a full-blood Choctaw and veteran of both the Philippine campaign and the hunt for Pancho Villa, received recognition from the *Oklahoman* as a "famous" soldier in Company E. The *Oklahoman* also reported

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<sup>57</sup> Louis Coleman. *Thirty-Sixth Infantry Division*. Oklahoma Historical Society; *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*. Accessed 30 September 2014. <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/T/TH003.html>

<sup>58</sup> *The Oklahoman* (Oklahoma City), 28 November 1917.

<sup>59</sup> *The Oklahoman* (Oklahoma City), 5 May 1918.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

that nearly all Indians in Company E “are married,” in contrast to most drafted soldiers.<sup>62</sup> Choctaw soldier William Lewis named his two-week-old child after the former commander of the Oklahoma National Guard General Roy Hoffman, then serving in France. The *Oklahoman* later noted that “Company E has been among the healthiest organization at Camp Bowie. Only one member has died. The Indians are not only healthy and strong as a race, but they follow all the sanitary regulations, keeping their tents, mess halls and company streets in apple pie order.”<sup>63</sup> This praise reflects the overall historical character of the Choctaw tribe within military service.

Starting in the fall of 1917, the 36<sup>th</sup> trained at Bowie’s target range as “machine gunners and automatic riflemen.”<sup>64</sup> The Choctaws first used the Springfield rifle for training until, in December 1917, a “shipment of 7,000 new United States Army rifles, Model 1917, arrived and then the troops were instructed in the use of these.”<sup>65</sup> Some in the 36<sup>th</sup> struggled with the new “unwieldy” weapons after long use of the 1903 model, but months of practice familiarized the men to the new arms. For the automatic riflemen and machine gunners in the Division, older models sufficed in training, like the French Cauchat, Lewis gun, and Colt, since they lacked the Browning model. Nonetheless, despite a deficiency in modern weaponry, the 36<sup>th</sup>’s Major General Greble “returned to the division and began training the command in the methods

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Captain Ben H. Chastaine, *Story of the 36<sup>th</sup>*, 18.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

expected to be employed in Europe.”<sup>66</sup> The 36<sup>th</sup> Division finally reached France for more training in August 1918, and soon implemented their new warfare skills on the Meuse-Argonne front.<sup>67</sup>

Months before the 36<sup>th</sup> shipped to France from Camp Bowie, a reward appeared in newspapers offering one thousand dollars to any Choctaw who “scalped” the German Kaiser (Wilhelm II) or his sons. Miah-Mich, an aged Choctaw from Ardmore, offered this reward to any member of his tribe in Company E at Camp Bowie who would complete the task. The article quoted Maih-Mich encouraging his fellow Choctaws to perform military valor and to support the United States by defending tribal women and children in Oklahoma. The *Liberal Democrat* recorded Maih-Mich stating, “...Choctaw boy who take um Kaiser’s scalp, get it \$1,000 . . . use all the old cunning. Try all um tricks to scalp um three sons of hell. You kill um then Choctaw and all world have peace [sic].”<sup>68</sup> The Choctaws in the 36<sup>th</sup> never “scalped” the kaiser, but members of Company E used their language to serve as “code” translators.<sup>69</sup>

In France, the 36<sup>th</sup> Division’s training abruptly stopped as the AEF placed them under the Twenty-first French Army Corps. The 36<sup>th</sup> relieved the Second U.S. Division near St. Etienne along the Meuse-Argonne front. Starting on

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.; Coleman, Louis. *Thirty-Sixth Infantry Division*. Oklahoma Historical Society; Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture. Accessed 30 September 2014. <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/T/TH003.html>.

<sup>68</sup> *The Liberal Democrat* (Liberal, Kan.), 11 April 1918; *The Daily Gate City* (Keokuk, Iowa), 4 February 1918.

<sup>69</sup> Louis Coleman. *Thirty-Sixth Infantry Division*. Oklahoma Historical Society; *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*. Accessed 30 September 2014. <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/T/TH003.html>.

October 8<sup>th</sup>, the 36<sup>th</sup> fought in the war for under a month and the use of Indians within the Division as telephone operators at St. Etienne contributed to the Allied victory at Ferme Forest.<sup>70</sup> During the Meuse-Argonne campaign, German troops tapped the 36<sup>th</sup> Division's communications while they utilized the former telephone wires of the Germans. The 36<sup>th</sup> discovered this when German artillery bombarded a location soon after the Division transmitted a message to headquarters.

After attacks like this, the United States Army realized the vulnerability of their communications and the need for a secure line to transmit messages.

Colonel A. W. Bloor, commander of the 142<sup>nd</sup> Infantry, trained eight Choctaw soldiers to operate command post telephones as code operators using the Indian's Choctaw language. Historian William C. Meadows indicates that two types of code-talking exist; the first develops modern terms and a usable vocabulary of other languages through established military training courses. The second utilizes languages discovered by "accident" without establishing a formal terminology for the language and with little military training. The Choctaw code-talkers of WWI employed the second type when Captain Lawrence overheard two Choctaw soldiers, Solomon Louis and Mitchell Bobb, conversing in their native language. Lawrence then inquired of the Choctaws in the Division who spoke the language and then quickly trained eight Choctaws from the 141<sup>st</sup>, 142<sup>nd</sup>, and 143<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiments since they understood various Native languages in addition to fluent

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid.; Captain Ben H. Chastaine. *Story of the 36th*. Oklahoma City: Harlow Publishing Company, 1920.

English. Colonel Bloor approved the plan to place one Choctaw code-talker in each command post.<sup>71</sup>

The code-talkers in the 36<sup>th</sup> grew in number to nineteen, and by the war's end Indians (Oklahoma Cherokee, Comanche, Cheyenne, and Osage) from other companies served as code-talkers. The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, along with the Federal Government and scholars, confirm that fifteen to nineteen Choctaws served as the first code-talkers in United States history. Historians and the Choctaw Nation concede that other WWI Choctaw code-talkers may exist outside the recorded number. The primary document validating the use of Choctaw code-talkers in WWI comes from a memo by Colonel A. W. Bloor, commander of the 142<sup>nd</sup> Infantry, to the commanding general of the 36<sup>th</sup> Division on January 23, 1919. Bloor recorded a one and a half page account that described the Choctaw's service as code-talkers. The subject heading for the memo entitled, "transmitting message in Choctaw," stated that "Indians from the Choctaw tribe were chosen and one placed in each P. C. [post command]."<sup>72</sup> Bloor stated further that "the first use of the Indians was made in ordering a delicate withdrawal of two companies of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn. from Chufilly to Chardeny on the night of October

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<sup>71</sup> Meadows. Code Talkers.269-284, History of the Choctaw Code-Talkers. *Twin Territories*, vol. 1, no. 8, 1991; Chastaine, Captain Ben H. *Story of the 36th*. Oklahoma City: Harlow Publishing Company, 1920.

<sup>72</sup> War Department. American Expeditionary Forces. *Letter from the Commanding Officer of the 142nd Infantry to the Commanding General of the 36th Division, stating how messages would be transmitted during World War I in Choctaw as the enemy "could not decipher the messages."*, 01/23/1919 - 01/23/1919. National Archives; Series : Records of Divisions, compiled 1917 – 1920. HMS Entry Number(s): NM91 1241. Record Group 120: Records of the American Expeditionary Forces (World War I), 1848 – 1942. National Archives Identifier: 301642.

26<sup>th</sup>.”<sup>73</sup> This document confirmed the Choctaw’s role as invaluable telephone operators at St. Etienne, Vaux-Champagne, and other locations along the Meuse-Argonne front. “Within 24 hours after the Choctaws began code-talking, the Germans were stopped. Within 72 hours, the enemy army was in full retreat, and less than one month later, World War I ended,” said writer Susan Moseley in a 1988 *Oklahoma Today* article.<sup>74</sup> Arguably, the nineteen Choctaw code-talkers who transmitted company messages in their native language at St. Etienne deserve military honors and national gratitude, but Moseley’s connotation that Choctaws tipped the balance of war exaggerates their influence on the war.<sup>75</sup>

Nonetheless, the Choctaw soldiers (from fifteen to nineteen) established a precedent for Native American code-talking in the United States’ military.<sup>76</sup> The

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Susan Moseley. Choctaw Code-Talkers. *Oklahoma Today*. The Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department, vol. 38, no. 4, 1988.

<sup>75</sup> Captain Ben H. Chastaine. *Story of the 36th*. Oklahoma City: Harlow Publishing Company, 1920.

<sup>76</sup> Note: In the 2004 Senate Hearing, Assistant Professor William C. Meadows identified fifteen Choctaws who he classified as “code talking.” Meadows’ research places the fifteen in Company E, 142<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment, 36<sup>th</sup> Division and in the 143<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment, 36<sup>th</sup> Division. The list Meadows presented before the Senate consist of – Solomon Bond Louis, Albert Billy, Mitchell Bobb, James Edwards, Victor Brown Ben Carterby, Joseph Oklahombi, Walter Veach, Calvin Wilson, Robert taylor [sic], Pete Maytubby, Benjamin W. Hampton, Jeff Nelson, Tobias Frazier, and Benjamin Colbert. In conflict with Meadows’ list, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma identifies, in the same Senate report, eighteen Choctaw code talkers who served in WWI. Then Choctaw Chief Gregory E. Pyle, submitted the list of eighteen Choctaws – Victor Brown, James Edwards, Otis Leader, Solomon Louis, Walter Veach, Tobias Frazier, Robert Taylor, Jeff Nelson, Calvin Wilson, Mitchell Bobb, Pete Maytubby, Ben Carterby, Albert Billy, Ben Hampton, Joseph Oklahombi, Joe Davenport, George Davenport, and Noel Johnson. Interestingly, the official Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma website contains an article by Phillip Allen in which Allen identifies nineteen Choctaws as WWI code-talkers. One explanation for these incongruent numbers may result from further research conducted by the Choctaw

U.S. military's battlefield training of the code-talkers in WWI influenced the formation of an established Marine Corps training school before and during WWII. Other tribes contributed as code-talkers in WWI, but records indicate that the Choctaws first utilized their language to transmit "coded" messages by speaking their native tongue. Colonel Bloor reported the "insufficient" vocabulary of military terms in the Choctaw language, so the Choctaw code-talker and their liaison officer, Lieutenant Black, formulated exchange words and phrases to supplement the lack of verbatim translation from Choctaw. In Bloor's memo, he explained the change of terms – "The Indian for 'Big gun' was used to indicate artillery. 'Little gun shoot fast', was substituted for machine gun, and the battalions were indicated by one, two, and three grains of corn.'" <sup>77</sup> Thus, the Choctaws foiled the German radio listeners and safely allowed 36<sup>th</sup> Division messages between the frontlines and command posts – resulting in a military victory at Ferme Forest. <sup>78</sup>

The 36<sup>th</sup> Division ended its frontline service on October 27, 1918 after the Ferme Forest victory, and soon after shipped back to Camp Bowie for demobilization in the spring of 1919. All nineteen Choctaw code-talkers survived

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Nation of Oklahoma on its WWI code-talkers – through Tribal oral histories and family stories.

<sup>77</sup> War Department. American Expeditionary Forces. *Letter from the Commanding Officer of the 142nd Infantry to the Commanding General of the 36th Division, stating how messages would be transmitted during World War I in Choctaw as the enemy "could not decipher the messages."*, 01/23/1919 - 01/23/1919. National Archives; Series : Records of Divisions, compiled 1917 – 1920. HMS Entry Number(s): NM91 1241. Record Group 120: Records of the American Expeditionary Forces (World War I), 1848 – 1942. National Archives Identifier: 301642.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.; Allen, Phillip. Choctaw Indian Code Talkers of World War I. The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. <http://www.choctawnation.com/history/people/code-talkers/code-talkers-of-wwi/>.

the war and returned to their homes in southeast Oklahoma. During the St. Etienne and Ferme Forest engagements, the 36<sup>th</sup> Division suffered 1,412 casualties and received two Congressional Medals of Honor, thirty-nine Distinguished Service Crosses (some to Choctaw code-talkers), one Distinguished Service Medal, seven Medaille Militaire, and four hundred and fifteen Croix de Guerre awards.<sup>79</sup> In August 1919, *The Tomahawk* newspaper reported that the Commissioner of Indian Affairs Cato Sells bestowed 5,000 Oklahoma Indian WWI veterans with United States' citizenship. This offer recognized the veteran's wartime service, while many of the Five Tribe's population of nearly 100,000 had already obtained their citizenship.<sup>80</sup> Finally, on June 2, 1924, the United States issued certificates of citizenship to all American Indians in compliance to the recently passed Indian Citizenship Act.<sup>81</sup>

After nearly a century of neglect by Oklahoma and the nation, the famed nineteen Choctaw code-talkers received posthumously the Congressional Golden Medal for their military service in a 2013 United States congressional ceremony. The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma maintains a long heritage of commemorating their WWI veterans. Choctaws served again in very small numbers during World War II as code-talkers and demonstrated the same WWI wartime support. In addition to the Choctaw Nation's

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<sup>79</sup> Captain Ben H. Chastaine. *Story of the 36th. Thirty-Sixth Infantry Division*. Oklahoma Historical Society; *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*. Accessed 30 September 2014. <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/T/TH003.html>.

<sup>80</sup> *The Tomahawk* (White Earth, Minnesota), 21 August 1919.

<sup>81</sup> U.S. Government. *Act of June 2, 1924, Public Law 68-175, 43 STAT 253, which authorized the Secretary of the Interior to issue certificates of citizenship to Indians*. Enrolled Acts and Resolutions of Congress, 1789 - 1996; General Records of the U.S. Government; Record Group 11; National Archives. <http://www.archives.gov/historical-docs/todays-doc/?dod-date=602>.

plethora of historic primary and secondary sources on their tribal website, the Nation proudly recognized the WWI coder-talkers with a granite war monument on the Choctaw Nation capital grounds, at Tushka Homma, in Durant, Oklahoma.<sup>82</sup> Historians question the motives of why the United States' military neglected, deliberately or by error, the roughly nineteen Choctaw code-takers for medals when Colonel Bloor and others recommended the Indians for valiant service. In the 2004 Senate hearing, Choctaw Chief Gregory E. Pyle stated, "many Choctaw men volunteered in WWI to fight for our great country. Eighteen of these veterans have been documented as the first to use a Native American language as a 'code' to transmit military messages. These men have been honored by their tribe, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, but were never recognized . . . ."<sup>83</sup> Congressional recognition in 2013 merely confirmed the long held heritage of Oklahoma Choctaws as loyal patriots during WWI and heroes as the first code-talkers.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Choctaw Nation. Code Talkers. *The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma*.  
<http://www.choctawnation.com/history/people/code-talkers/>.

<sup>83</sup> Code Talkers. 109-693.

<sup>84</sup> Herman J Viola, *Warriors in Uniform: The Legacy of American Indian Heroism*, 2008.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE RESERVE OFFICER TRAINING CORPS AT OKLAHOMA A. & M.

The United States military strength increased as its twentieth century global influence required the funds and resources necessary for a potential war. As a result, from 1899 to 1917, the government proportioned new funds to raise regular Army and National Guard units. Oklahoma witnessed a gradual move toward an efficient military force and when the Reserve Officer Training Corps arrived on campus in 1916 - OAMC welcomed this new Military department innovation. The United States War Department strength increased from 70,387 in 1904 to 108,399 in 1916, and in the same time period expenditures increased from 165 million to 183 million.<sup>1</sup> The United States experienced an isolationist period in the late nineteenth century, yet after the turn of the century, military policy shifted. The new Chief of Staff, Army War College, and warfare technologies prepared, in part, the armed forces for future mobilization.

Still, the United States Army relied on the National Guard for over half its infantry. The National Guard comprised 132,194 personnel up from an estimated 100,000 in 1899.<sup>2</sup> The Spanish-American War of 1898, the United States' victory in "the splendid little war", revealed the military's unorganized nature; "nevertheless, by 1917

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<sup>1</sup> Allen Reed Millett, and Peter Maslowski. *For the Common Defense : A Military History of the United States of America*. New York : London: Free Press ; Collier Macmillan, 1984, 285.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

the reform movement had worked fundamental changes in American land force policy.”<sup>3</sup> Secretary of War Elihu Root (1899-1904) led the military, with the aid of a group of Army “officer-advisers”, into a reform period that culminated in the General Staff Act of 1903.<sup>4</sup> This new policymaking group suffered constant policy objections from within the War Department as officers challenged the Chief of Staff and the militia reforms from 1903 to 1912. The General Staff’s influence and plans often conflicted with the Wilson administration and Congress, and “when the United States entered World War I, the staff had only twenty-two officers in Washington, mired in routine paperwork and theoretical war plans of limited usefulness.”<sup>5</sup> Secretary Root understood the importance volunteers and reserve units formed within the U.S. Army if war came, thus “the only expression of military voluntarism in peacetime was the National Guard.”<sup>6</sup> Therefore, when Brigadier General John J. Pershing (1860-1948) led an expedition into Mexico to hunt down the revolutionary leader Francisco “Pancho” Villa (1878-1923) in March 1916, Pershing took Regular Army and National Guard units. Oklahoma National Guard citizen-soldiers joined other state units in a support role to protect the border. This Punitive Expedition revealed, to the War Department, National Guard unit’s effectiveness on national war mobilization. By early February 1917, the intervention in Mexico ended and Regular Army and National Guard personnel faced the increased concerns of the European war still ill-prepared and supplied. The United States Preparedness Movement bolstered wartime awareness and lobbied Congress in an attempt to gain funds and favor. The National Defense Act of 1916 enabled the Wilson administration the power to establish

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 292.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 292-293.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 294.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 295.

the Council of National Defense (CND) and Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC). These institutions united the military and civilian spheres through training, funding, and communication. Women's groups, defense councils, and private organizations all utilized the resources administered from the Council of National Defense and later the Committee of Public Information.<sup>7</sup>

The Oklahoma Constitution established a national guard and placed it in the service of the Governor. Years after statehood, Oklahoma elected Governor Robert Lee Williams in 1914 and he would be the "war governor" until 1919. Governor Williams instituted and funded the famed Oklahoma Council of Defense early in 1917 before the United States entered the war. With his responsibility as governor, Williams controlled the state's militia, known as the Oklahoma National Guard with the authority to call out militia "to execute the laws, protect the public health, suppress insurrection, and repel invasion."<sup>8</sup> In 1914, the Oklahoma National Guard located its headquarters in Guthrie, the first state capital, and consisted of infantry, cavalry, hospital corps, signal corps, and engineer corps: "total strength 77 officers and 1,330 enlisted men."<sup>9</sup> These numbers grew exponentially as Oklahoma prepared for the First World War in early 1917, and

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<sup>7</sup> Mitchell Yockelson. Pre-war Military Planning (USA), in: 1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War, ed. by Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, Oliver Janz, Heather Jones, Jennifer Keene, Alan Kramer, and Bill Nasson, issued by Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin 2014-10-08. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15463/ie1418.10340>.

<sup>8</sup> Oklahoma State Legislature. Oklahoma Constitution. [http://www.oklegislature.gov/tsrs\\_os\\_oc.aspx](http://www.oklegislature.gov/tsrs_os_oc.aspx), 39-46.

<sup>9</sup> Frederick Martin, John Scott Sir Keltie, Isaac Parker Anderson Renwick, Mortimer Epstein, S. H. Steinberg and John Paxton. The Statesman's Year-Book, v. London [etc.]: Palgrave [etc.]. 1915, 581.

OAMC enlisted more students into military service than the entire number of National Guard soldiers at the start of the war.<sup>10</sup>

Originally, the campus only had one college building which housed all the departments, but by 1914, twenty years of building created an established campus. In the back of the 1915 yearbook, the Agricultural and Mechanical College placed an advertisement for a “vocational education” with a choice of seven schools, and the best part – it was free.<sup>11</sup> The advertisement stated that the college promoted itself as an “education for service.”<sup>12</sup> The Morrill Act of 1862 required in each state the establishment of “...one college where the leading object shall be . . . military tactics,” along with teaching the agricultural and mechanical arts.<sup>13</sup> OAMC quickly complied with the law, and OAMC’s earliest catalog described the “‘tactics’ and prescribed that ‘Military Science will be brought by lectures, supplemented by three hours drill per day.’”<sup>14</sup> From the start, the college throughout the 1890s maintained drill for students separating the men and women and formatting the instruction more for exercise than for national defense preparedness. Fully established by 1916, the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) merely constructed a culture of military drill and service - not war itself.<sup>15</sup>

The Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) arrived on the Oklahoma A. & M campus soon after President Woodrow Wilson signed the National Defense Act of 1916. The Act strengthened the National Guard and founded the ROTC at colleges and

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 392.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> United States Department of Agriculture. *National Agricultural Library (Morrill Land Grant College Act)*. <http://www.nal.usda.gov/morrill-land-grant-college-act>.

<sup>14</sup> Patrick M. Murphy. *A History of Oklahoma State University Student Life and Services*. Stillwater: Oklahoma State University, 1988, 41.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

universities. United States colonial history records earlier militia units similar in concept to the 1916 ROTC program, and the Civil War expansion increased military school funds under the Morrill Act. As a land-grant agricultural and mechanical college, Oklahoma State adopted military drill in its charter as all eligible male students trained in basic tactical skills (Note Photograph 3). Military drill began months after the college's establishment and the Military department offered lectures in the decades before the First World War. Military training continued with little change until WWI. As Philip Reed Rulon explained in a *Chronicles of Oklahoma* article, "modern military training in Stillwater may be dated from 1914, the year when L. L. Lewis began serving as Acting President."<sup>16</sup> Rulon's article "The Campus Cadets: A History of Collegiate Military Training, 1891-1951" provides context to this present work and clearly stated in Rulon's thesis, "This essay, then, focuses on the development and impact of military instruction at Oklahoma State University, a land-grant institution created under the auspices of the Morrill Act which charged agricultural and mechanical colleges with training students in military science."<sup>17</sup>

OAMC President L. L. Lewis initiated needed Military department improvements and a new officer faculty in light of national preparedness measures. Lewis' short tenure lasted until President Cantwell started his multi-year presidency. The new president contributed enormous personal energy to campus life and as Cantwell's popular approval in *Redskin* yearbooks record he led the wartime effort started under Lewis. Before his departure, Lewis initiated the mock war weekends and allowed the Military department

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<sup>16</sup> Philip Reed Rulon. The Campus Cadets: A History of Collegiate Military Training, 1891-1951. (*Chronicles of Oklahoma*. 57, 1, 1979, 73).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

staff freedom to create an advanced military curriculum. The mock wars simulated potential war scenes students might encounter in Europe. These war games, recorded in yearbook photographs, allowed male cadets practical experience in war tactics and female students a lesson in wartime support services.<sup>18</sup> Philip Reed Rulon's *Chronicles of Oklahoma* article records the *Redskin* yearbook account that "mock wars on weekends usually ended with the losers buying the victors free beer at a tavern located near the fringe of the campus."<sup>19</sup>

The First World War changed the military environment on the Oklahoma A. & M. campus. In contrast to the later dramatic World War II student population decline, "World War I stimulated rather than retarded student and program growth at Stillwater. Since the institution was a developing one, the international conflict forced a more diversified curriculum."<sup>20</sup> The United States home-front witnessed mobilization throughout society and industry, and the college campus provided the state a fertile resource in young students, capable staff, military culture, and an educational infrastructure to disseminate a wartime message. While John Keegan's famous statement "the First World War was a tragic and unnecessary conflict" still holds true, the OAMC campus suffered minor student casualties compared to other institutions and the benefit provided in monetary resources increased during the war from federal programs.<sup>21</sup> In 1918, OAMC Captain Michael McDonald, a retired officer, initiated on campus the national Student Army Training Corps (SATC) in accordance with President James

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<sup>18</sup> *Redskin Yearbooks*, 1910-1919.

<sup>19</sup> Philip Reed Rulon. The Campus Cadets: A History of Collegiate Military Training, 1891-1951. *Chronicles of Oklahoma*. Oklahoma Historical Society. v. 57, n. 1, 1979, 73.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>21</sup> John Keegan. *The First World War*. (New York: Random House, 1999, 3).

Cantwell's wartime policies. The military organization prepared under-classmen and other eligible students with vital skills prerequisite for United States Army enrollment.

The students of OAMC College were not entirely oblivious to the war in Europe that started in early August 1914.<sup>22</sup> As a future executive committee member of the Oklahoma Council of Defense for Payne County, OAMC College President James W. Cantwell knew the war's possible impact on OAMC and its needed military preparedness. On October 3, 1914, the college newspaper, *Orange and Black*, reported various activities such as seasonal festivals and military drill that celebrated student life and its military connection to the campus.<sup>23</sup> A full program comprised the "circus" like Harvest and May Carnivals with outdoor entertainments by the cadet corps that drilled along with other activities (Note Photograph 1).<sup>24</sup> Also on the front page for October third, the headline noted the Philomathean debate over United States entry into the war.

Student concerns over militarism on campus persisted during the early years of the war. The *Orange and Black* stated "that the United States should not enter the present European war was definitely proven at the meeting of the Philomathean Literary Society last Saturday night," but this hypothetical debate over entry did not consume the entire night as "besides the debate, the program consisted of a report of the week's war news by L. Wyant."<sup>25</sup> The same day's news included on the right side of the front page an "exceptional record of M. C. Graham, who is now a member of the sophomore class in the A. and M. College."<sup>26</sup> The article stated the return of Graham to student life after

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> *Orange and Black* (Stillwater), 3 October 1914.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

three years as a soldier in which Graham notes, “Army life, is a good place for a man who has three years to waste.”<sup>27</sup> In addition to noting Mr. Graham’s exit from the army to enroll in college, the *Orange and Black* provided the “military honors” of the week on OAMC students.<sup>28</sup> This shows the diverse persons who comprised the student body and the close relationship military affairs had with campus life.

During WWI, after U.S. entry on the side of the Entente Powers, Oklahoma’s military support intensified on college campuses through a unified patriotic spirit. In OAMC’s newspaper *Orange and Black* (1907-1923), the collegiate rhetoric enhanced student reactions to domestic and international events and amplified the state’s wartime mobilization. Oklahoma A. & M. maintained a collegiate newspaper, under different names, from its first 1895 *The College Mirror* publication to present *O’Colly* issues. The *Brown and Blue* lasted one academic year (1906-1907) and the *Orange and Black* soon replaced the *Brown and Blue* as the college newspaper that reflected the school colors and sports mascot (a tiger). *The Orange and Black* operated akin to other collegiate newspapers and issued college news relevant to a college audience. A typical 1914 *Orange and Black* publication featured the campus news, local advertisements, student gossip, current events, and exclusive sports coverage. Athletic news dominated headlines as football or track teams competed among fellow OAMC students and regional colleges. War news noted the European conflict as a distant threat and many articles focused on United States mobilization and Oklahoma A. & M. campus cadet reports. In his 1999 introduction to *The Oxford Companion to American Military History*, editor-in-chief John Whiteclay Chambers II declared, “war is central to the way the United States has

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

developed as a nation and a society.”<sup>29</sup> The Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College relationship to World War I from 1914-1919 affirms, nearly a century before, Chambers’ truism. In 1917, the First World War over three-thousand miles away in Europe engulfed the United States, and thus the state of Oklahoma and her colleges.

A military spirit permeated the city of Stillwater as well as the college. Earlier in 1914, the town of Stillwater was “decorated all in holiday attire” for the “annual State Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic and of the United Spanish War Veterans.”<sup>30</sup> This culture of patriotic support reveals the positive empathy with military service among the community and campus, while not eliminating student debate over the limits of that support. Nonetheless, the town hosted the visitors and “on Friday afternoon the veterans were officially the guests of the College. The parade held downtown marched up to the College grounds and disbanded in front of the Chapel”... and after a tour of the farm “the old veterans watched the newer College cadets drill on the parade ground.”<sup>31</sup> This parade ground was located on the open grass between Old Central and Morrill Hall, and on this day one generation of veterans watched cadets drill for a future war.<sup>32</sup> By 1914, OAMC cadet drill had greatly improved since the earlier years of mandatory military training. Recorded in a “early history” of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, both girl and boy students fulfilled President R. J. Barker’s, the first president of OAMC, interpretation of the revised 1890 Morrill Act mandating military

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<sup>29</sup> John Whiteclay Chambers, and Fred Anderson. *The Oxford Companion to American Military History*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999, vii).

<sup>30</sup> Orange and Black (Stillwater), 27 May 1914.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Lewie J. Sanderson. Dean R. McGlamery, and David C. Peters. A History of the Oklahoma State University Campus. (Stillwater: Oklahoma State University. 1990, 86).

training to land-grant institutions. According to an early account, an OAMC professor described the corps of male and female students dressed in various attire drilling “in an average Oklahoma April wind.”<sup>33</sup> The professor recounted the disorganized military drill that persisted on campus in early years, but by the time World War I started, the campus changed in its discipline and provided needed supplies to the student cadets.<sup>34</sup> After a few years of female involvement in drill, President Barker removed the female students and formed separate exercise classes for boys and girls in addition to cadet training - for males only. Military garb improved immensely and by 1915, the student yearbook included an advertisement by The Henderson-Ames Co. offering “uniforms for College Cadets, U. S. Army and N. G. Officers, Bands, Police, Fireman – and all who wear uniforms.”<sup>35</sup> Thus, advertisements placed in the yearbook reinforced the promotion by both local business and the student leadership of a cultural of military preparation on campus.

Military service at OAMC increased during the pre-war years in order to facilitate a state of preparedness. Nonetheless, ROTC training coincided with infrequent anti-war thoughts among the student body. The *Orange and Black* reported in September 1917 on the condition of sports on campus that “the effect the war is having on athletics is strikingly illustrated,” the training of student cadets progressed toward well-drilled companies of OAMC “soldiers.”<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Oklahoma State University. Early History of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College. OAMC/OSU History Collection. Special Collections and University Archives, Oklahoma State University Libraries. 2009-056. Box 1, Folder 3, 2009.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Oklahoma State University. *Redskin*. 1915, 384.

<sup>36</sup> *Orange and Black* (Stillwater), 15 September 1917. “The Centenary of the First World War: An Unpopular View”.

By 1916, the Military department solidified its presence on campus led by 1st. Lieutenant Third Infantry George. W. Ewell, Professor of Military Science and Tactics and Commandant of Cadets, and Sergeant-Major (Retired) Michael McDonald Assistant Professor of Military Science and Tactics – the formal head of military training in the early college years before drill passed from the College president to U. S. Army officers.<sup>37</sup> Six other cadet officers comprised the Military Sciences, ROTC, and Military department staff, and the 1916 *Redskin* depicted the stalwart staff in addition to numerous photos of the cadets in review and dress parade.<sup>38</sup> Crisp in their formal uniforms, Companies A through H stood at attention for yearbook photographs along with the citation of names listed by rank.<sup>39</sup> The Rifle Club had grown to over one hundred and twenty members with four officers oversaw the cadets. This growth in numbers conveys the involvement in military groups that coincides with the legacy for loyalty to an organization like sports teams and class fights. The *Orange and Black* published on September 9, 1915 “Military Notes” detailing the status of the military drills and officer appointments. In addition to class competition, the *Orange and Black* reported on February 20, 1915 a “new shooting record” made by an OAMC student, one Guy Postelle.<sup>40</sup> Cadets purchased better quality uniforms from the M. C. Lilly Company according to “United States Army regulation and will hold its shape. Colonel Ewell says

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<sup>37</sup> Oklahoma State University. *Redskin*. 1916, 31.

<sup>38</sup> Oklahoma State University. *Redskin*. 1916, 190-193. Oklahoma State University. *Military Rules of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College*. Military Science Department (ROTC). Special Collections and University Archives, Oklahoma State University Libraries. 1996-101. Box 2, Folder 36, 2010.

<sup>39</sup> Oklahoma State University. *Report on Regulations, Standards and Customs*. OAMC/OSU History Collection. Special Collections and University Archives, Oklahoma State University Libraries. 2009-056. Box 1, Folder 26, 2009.

<sup>40</sup> *Orange and Black* (Stillwater), 20 February 1915.

he has worn one for ten years and it is not worn out yet.”<sup>41</sup> Stories such as these echo the increased supplies the OAMC cadets received during the war years, and reveals the support the campus provided military efforts.

Militaristic language used by sports teams and reports of sham battles on campus fostered an environment in which cadets and athletics intertwined during war preparation. In addition to “the battle with the sooners” on the football field, sham battles, featured in the 1915 *Redskin*, were undertaken as early as 1914 in which drilling, charging, marching, and attacking imaginary enemies or fellow classmates prepared the cadets for potential conflict.<sup>42</sup> Throughout the 1916 *Redskin* yearbook, the word “battle” appeared frequently in reference to opponents in sporting events. Coaches and debating societies evoked this military term at the same time as World War I battles in Europe, while OAMC sports accounts noted that the “Aggies battled with these husky warriors for four full quarters.”<sup>43</sup> Because of OAMC’s small population, the cadets and classmates formed a comradeship around tree fights, tug-of-wars, and sham battles – as they did with sports teams. In the “College Year(s)” section of the *Redskins* from 1914-1919, the tree fights and later tug-of-wars (1918-1919) appear prominently, but only the 1915 *Redskin* dedicated four pages to war preparation by featuring the sham battles.<sup>44</sup>

The sham battles typified years of OAMC military drill and the culture of practicing competitive conflicts. Campus sources are unclear, potentially the 1916 and 1917 *Redskin* omitted the sham battles from campus publications because either the events did not occur or the practice battles ended because students joined the European

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Oklahoma State University. *Redskin*. 1915, 140.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 1916, 132, 136-137.

war. Nonetheless, the prose and photographs featured in the four pages provides the reader with a vivid observation into the major effort needed to undertake the sham battles. The author begins, “It was a bright, crisp day in May when A. & M.’s regiment went forth to war. One would not think that the students of an institution would stand up and calmly shoot each other down – but that’s the way they do at Oklahoma.”<sup>45</sup>

Seemingly, peaceful students practiced war games against their own classmates for a larger objective. Thus, the military culture reached its climax when sports loving students sacrificed a “crisp day in May” to “calmly” shoot, drill, and execute trench warfare. The yearbook reported that this annual event produced weariness, excitement, and later desertion among some participants. The female students assisted in making meals or watched the male cadets dig trenches, march through wooded farms, and fire a rifle under pressure wearing a gas mask. The Military department stimulated battles to the best of their ability, and the policy of OAMC to prepare for war through sham battles reveals their dedication to the military sciences. Officers directed the male students and cadets and after the battle, the thirty participants drank beer at the nearby pub purchased by the losing side. Not all male students participated in the sham battles but these preparatory battle exercises occurred on OAMC in contrast to other neutrality-minded regions of Oklahoma. In early 1915, prior to the start of United States involvement in the war, stimulating war games provided OAMC with a self-imposed sympathy toward the military. OAMC President Cantwell and Oklahoma Governor R. L. Williams’ agreement with President Woodrow Wilson’s preparedness policy during the war assisted the close relationships between the Department of Public Information, the Oklahoma Council of

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<sup>45</sup> Oklahoma State University. Redskin. 1916 132.

Defense, and OAMC programs. The OAMC culture of sports and athletic activities fostered through the tree fights, sham battles, militaristic prose, and increase in the Rifle Club all created support for the war effort. OAMC faced the war prepared and equipped: “the United States was about to enter World War I, and college-aged men were being called to serve their country.”<sup>46</sup>

OAMC provided young men and women eager “to serve their country” an environment to join military exercises.<sup>47</sup> The campus enabled through their encouragement of sports, aggressive tree fights, and reenactment of “practice” battles a physical and militaristic mindset to train the “student-soldiers” for war.<sup>48</sup> OAMC and the Military Department, ROTC, and Cadet Corps had a close relationship and loyal legacy within the institution. The College’s compliance with the 1862 Morrill Act required military training for students at land-grant colleges and resulted in federal funds for equipment and instructors. The College’s Military department started in conjunction with OAMC’s opening on December 14, 1891 and continued under college administration control from 1891 through 1899. During the first years of the college, the president of the institution also acted as the commandant of the military training student companies, but after 1908 - Army officers took charge.<sup>49</sup>

The ROTC cadet program formed a closer relationship with the college. As mentioned, in 1893, military instruction was mandatory requiring “a 24 credit hour

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<sup>46</sup> Oklahoma State University. Redskin. 1915, 140.

<sup>47</sup> Lewie J. Sanderson. Dean R. McGlamery, and David C. Peters. A History of the Oklahoma State University Campus. Stillwater: Oklahoma State University. 1990, 94.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. Oklahoma State University. Redskin. 1915.

lecture course” along with drill.<sup>50</sup> Sometime between 1908 and 1911, the Corps of Cadets established itself on campus and a course consisting of “three hours of drill per week was required for all male students who were physically qualified. The course included instruction in Infantry Drill, Small Arms Firing, Field Service Regulations, Interior Guard Duty, and First Aid.”<sup>51</sup>

Intended for readers in 1991, OAMC Lieutenant Colonel Howard Yost, CE prepared a short chronological history, in conjunction with other officers, entitled “The Military Department, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College: 1891-1941” on December 15, 1941.<sup>52</sup> Yost provided a timeline of significant dates, names, and events that comprises the Military Department’s legacy on campus. “The National Defense Act of 1916,” Yost stated, “enabled the organization of units of the Reserve Officers Training Corps at select schools and colleges,” and OAMC received the location for Oklahoma.<sup>53</sup>

Satellite ROTC units at Cameron University, Conners State Agricultural College, Panhandle A&M College, and Langston University all originated from OAMC’s ROTC when these institutions began.<sup>54</sup> The sham battles conducted by the corps of cadets in early 1915 prepared the college for the requirements of the National Defense Act of 1916 and subsequent establishment of the ROTC. Lieutenant Colonel Yost recorded that “the growth of the Military Department has followed the increases in

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<sup>50</sup> Oklahoma A&M College World War I Veterans Collection. “History of the Army ROTC”, Oklahoma State University, Department of Military Science Collection, Special Collections and University Archives, Oklahoma State University Libraries.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Oklahoma State University. The Military Department, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College 1891-1941. Military Science Department (ROTC). Special Collections and University Archives, Oklahoma State University Libraries. 1996-101. Box 2, Folder 24, 2010.

enrollment of male students of the College. There appears no time when military instruction has been unpopular to any marked degree.”<sup>55</sup> These statements may slightly fabricate the feeling on campus, but the Colonel correctly recorded the increase in the military presence on campus.

The coming involvement of Oklahoma in the First World War quickened the progress in military activity on OAMC. The Military department included a rifle marksmanship course in 1912, a rifle team in 1914, and finally, one of seventeen ROTC programs in the nation in 1916.<sup>56</sup> Governor Williams went so far as to propose replacing sports in public schools in exchange for military training, and the *Guthrie Register* reported on September 23, 1915 that Williams announced, “I am going to propose a measure in the next legislature to abolish football and baseball in all state schools and institute military training instead of athletics.”<sup>57</sup> Critics rejected this idea on the grounds that it “conflict[ed] with the American tradition of liberty, but the 1917 legislature passed a similar bill allowing military training examination in schools.”<sup>58</sup> The Sixty-third United States Congress in the third session of the House of Representatives filed a report (no. 1312) on “Military Training Schools.”<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Oklahoma State University. The Military Department, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College 1891-1941. Military Science Department (ROTC). Special Collections and University Archives, Oklahoma State University Libraries. 1996-101. Box 2, Folder 18 & 24, 2010.

<sup>57</sup> Guthrie Register, 23 September 1915. LeRoy Henry Fischer. Oklahoma's Governors, 1907-1929: Turbulent Politics. v. 16, 208 p. Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society. 1981, 78.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> McKellar. Military Training Schools. January 23, 1915. – Committed to the Committee of the White House on the State of the Union and Ordered to be Printed. Serial Set Vol. No. 6766, Session Vol. No.1, 63rd Congress, 3rd Session, H.Rpt. 1312. 1915, 1.

Mr. McKellar, from the Committee on Military Affairs, submitted a report on January 23, 1915 to the Committee of the Whole House stating, “Your committee is of opinion that we do not need a large standing army in this country. We do need, however, at all times to have a large body of our young men well trained and educated... the great war now going on in Europe shows that intelligence of officers and individual soldiers plays quite as important a part as physical bravery and training.”<sup>60</sup> Mr. McKellar recommended further in *House Report 20246* that the nation should “educate and train 4,800 boys a year, as provided for in this bill, graduating 100 in each State in the Union per year, and in a few years such would be the military spirit created in all parts of the country that a call for volunteers in times of trouble would easily bring forth a million men.”<sup>61</sup> McKellar’s statements reinforced the official government policy to recruit “boys” for military service during time of war and foster a general “military spirit” for the country’s benefit.

War preparations caused much change in Oklahoma and on the OAMC campus. Before ROTC arrived on campus, “Cadets paid for their uniforms which consisted of grey caps, coats, trousers, black ties and shoes.”<sup>62</sup> Government military equipment support increased to OAMC in 1913 from 450 rifles (30 caliber [Krag-Jorgensen]) and “50 sets of Infantry equipment” to 560 U. S. rifles (30 caliber [Krag-Jorgensen]), 40 U. S. rifles (30 caliber [Springfield]), 16 U. S. rifles (22 caliber), and 600 sets of Infantry

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Oklahoma State University. [The Military Department, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College 1891-1941](#). Military Science Department (ROTC). Special Collections and University Archives, Oklahoma State University Libraries. 1996-101. Box 2, Folder 24. 2010, 2.

equipment in 1917.<sup>63</sup> The National Defense Act greatly enhanced the military strength of OAMC cadets “which enabled the expansion of the Army and the organization of Reserve Officers Training Corps units in selected colleges.”<sup>64</sup>

By 1916, OAMC had 71 professors and 1,116 students ranking second behind the University of Oklahoma in student population. From 1916 to 1918, OAMC students and alumni, totaling 1,441, served in the war effort either in the OAMC’s Student Army Training Corps or overseas in Europe. Out of the 1,109 male and female students who served in the war, 28 OAMC men died in service. Most of the fallen students were from Oklahoma, with four men having their residence in Stillwater.

The nation required a large military, and as a result, many students lost their lives in the war. Captain Carter C. Hanner “was the first man from Stillwater to give his life in the world war,” yet the war went on to claim many more lives from Stillwater and the college.<sup>65</sup> In a 1925 Armistice Day speech by then state attorney-general George F. Short in front of the American Legion building dedicated in Hanner’s honor, Short reminded the audience of students and townspeople to “rededicate themselves to service.”<sup>66</sup> The military culture established years before continued to further the promotion of service to one’s country.

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> The Daily O’Collegian (Stillwater), 12 November 1925.

<sup>66</sup> The Daily O’Collegian (Stillwater), 12 November 1925. Martin, Frederick, John Scott Sir Keltie, Isaac Parker Anderson Renwick, Mortimer Epstein, S. H. Steinberg and John Paxton. *The Statesman's Year-Book*. v. London [etc.]: Palgrave [etc.]. 1917, 582-583. Oklahoma State University. Library. Digital, Collections. "Oklahoma A & M College, World War I [Electronic Resource]." 1 online resource. [Stillwater, OK: Oklahoma State University Library, Digital Collections].

Student involvement in the war along with a military atmosphere on campus created a culture of military awareness. The ROTC and Student Army Training Corps drilled in preparation for deadly combat in concurrence with the sham battles. By May of 1917, the *Orange and Black* reported eighty-two A. and M. students “will leave Stillwater in four groups” for training camps in Little Rock.<sup>67</sup> OAMC contributed with such willingness to the call for officers that the War Department ordered Colonel A. J. Davis to temporarily delay recruitment of students for officer training because of full quotas. The newspaper report noted that “mature men” received the first opportunity to attend training camp, stating: “The department’s statement lays great stress on the fact that mature men, schooled for responsible positions, will be sought particularly in selecting the first 10,000.”<sup>68</sup> A list of the student’s names and details regarding training accompanied the article. Nearly a year before the United States declared war on the Central Powers, the *Orange and Black* reported on April 29, 1916 that “National Guard officers will study real war problems here” by constructing “war trenches on campus.”<sup>69</sup> National Guard officer trainees from all over Oklahoma gathered at OAMC to conduct the annual officers’ school of instruction of Oklahoma from May 14<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup>. The article noted that the “cadets in the A. and M. College Military Department will get a good opportunity to see actual work in throwing up trenches, making war maps, building temporary bridges and similar activities of a military campaign.”<sup>70</sup> War Department officers taught the 125 National Guard officer trainees in a campsite located east of the athletic field, and “the City of Stillwater is extending water mains and light wires to the

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<sup>67</sup> *Orange and Black* (Stillwater), 7 May 1917.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> *Orange and Black* (Stillwater), 29 April 1916.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

grounds. The officers will live in tents and will carry out the usual arrangement of a war camp.”<sup>71</sup>

World War I infiltrated into the very lives and sentiment of the OAMC campus. From the president to the student newspaper, the college focused time and resources on military preparedness.<sup>72</sup> That September, the College welcomed a new commandant of the ROTC to campus and introduced the new cadet officers for the coming semester. The *Orange and Black* reported on September 15, 1917 that “Captain Clark M. Dudley, U. S. A. retired, is expected to arrive today to take command of the cadet regiment. The organization of the regiment has been completed, and drill began on schedule time. We now have two battalions of four companies each.”<sup>73</sup>

Military preparation and patriotic support even occurred during the Four Days Payne County Free Fair with military exercises and soldier recognition. The *Orange and Black* headline for the same day in September read, “Patriotic Day At The Free Fair,” as “the biggest dinner ever held on the campus was given in connection with the second day of the ‘Four Days Payne County Free Fair’, Thursday in honor of the men registered for military service.”<sup>74</sup> The fair and patriotic program culminated at the college auditorium where distinguished persons such as college President James W. Cantwell, local pastors, State Treasurer Hon. W. L. Alexander (the keynote speaker), along with “about two thousand people attending the exercises, with the drafted men of Payne County as the honored guest.”<sup>75</sup> Campus celebrations reinforced the military presence that permeated

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> *Orange and Black* (Stillwater). 1914-1919.

<sup>73</sup> *Orange and Black* (Stillwater), 15 September 1917.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

not only the sports teams and yearbook editors, but also the entire community and especially the city and state leadership.

Campus training continued as emotional support promulgated student publications. Volume two number one of the “The Delta Sigma,” an Oklahoma A and M. College fraternity publication, featured patriotic articles in its November 1917 issue. The fraternity included only seven members for the fall semester prompting the lease of a smaller house - “this was due to the fact that eight of the men who were to return this year had entered the service.”<sup>76</sup>

The fraternity brothers who continued their studies reported on the Delta Sigma alumni who left for training camp, and showed the fraternity’s support by hoisting a “service flag” over their house. Delta Sigma “gladly responded to the call” by sending twenty-six members to serve in the war, including eighteen commissioned officers.<sup>77</sup> Besides other campus news, *The Delta Sigma* also featured a photograph, “To The Colors” of three army buglers above the poem “My Pal” which read, “The campus life is not the same, a different spirit fills the air; I miss his face; his shouted name draws no response. He is somewhere in France . . . .”<sup>78</sup> Fraternal emotions connected the students who remained at OAMC and those who left for war, and the language used to communicate such unity and support portrayed the mix of militarism that caused students

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<sup>76</sup> Oklahoma A. & M. College. “The Delta Sigma: A Paper For The Fraternity.” Vol. 1 no. 1. 1917, 1-4. Oklahoma State University. The Delta Sigma: A Paper For The Fraternity. Special Collections and University Archives, Oklahoma State University Libraries. 1996-101. Box 1, Folder 32. 2010.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Oklahoma A. & M. College. “The Delta Sigma: A Paper For The Fraternity.” Vol. 1 no. 1. 1917, 1-4. Oklahoma State University. The Delta Sigma: A Paper For The Fraternity. Special Collections and University Archives, Oklahoma State University Libraries. 1996-101. Box 1, Folder 32. 2010, 1.

to fight and the patriotic symbols such as a flag that reinforced campus and national pride.

War sentiment filled student publications from as early as 1917, well past the 1918 armistice and “Victory” editions of the 1919 *Redskin*. In an era of life-changing technologies such as the automobile and airplane, the First World War thrust OAMC students’ into a new age of responsibilities through military service. Campus activities continued and coincided with military preparation as cadets played football and women’s clubs trained as nurses. Collectively, OAMC created a welcoming culture for military training and recruitment through the ROTC and Student Army Training Corps. This patriotic mindset varied little throughout the decades of military interaction through the Military Department and cadet corps – the war only accelerated the military presence on campus.<sup>79</sup>

Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College student George Price Hays who started his military service on campus acted heroically in the First World War - winning the Congressional Medal of Honor. Hays attended OAMC from 1914-1917 during the height of military preparedness. Consequently, as a student, Hays interacted with classmates and faculty while witnessing and possibly participating in tree fights, sham battles, sports, and other military activities. Born in 1891 in China to missionary parents, George Hays grew up in El Reno, Oklahoma and after high school graduation he attended

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<sup>79</sup> Lewie J. Sanderson, Dean R. McGlamery, and David C. Peters. A History of the Oklahoma State University Campus. Stillwater: Oklahoma State University. 1990, 95-100. Oklahoma State University. *Redskin*. 1919, 47-50, 67-80.

OAMC earning a Bachelor's of Science degree in engineering in 1920.<sup>80</sup> Hays enlisted early in the war on May 25, 1917 and received his commission before assignment in the third Infantry Division.<sup>81</sup> Soon after enlisting, Hays left for France with the third Infantry Division fighting in the battles of Chateau-Thierry, Champagne-Marne, Aisne-Marne, St. Mihiel, Meuse-Argonne, and the second battle of the Marne. The Department of Defense records his notable deed, "In the second battle of the Marne, Hays earned the Nation's highest tribute, the Congressional Medal of Honor. He personally carried vital messages between front line units and their supporting artillery. Seven horses were shot from under him."<sup>82</sup>

While the French 125<sup>th</sup> division "panicked and retreated, exposing the U.S. 3<sup>rd</sup> division's flank," Hays acted as liaison between the third units as "the U.S. 38<sup>th</sup> infantry helped the third division hold its ground."<sup>83</sup> Riding seven horses through enemy crossfire, Hays spent "two days without rest to take messages from command post,

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<sup>80</sup> Oklahoma State University. Department of Defense Office of Public Information Press Branch. OAMC/OSU Biographical Files Collection. Special Collections and University Archives, Oklahoma State University Libraries. 2005-022. Box 56, 2005

<sup>81</sup> Oklahoma A&M College World War I Veterans Collection. Students in Service. Oklahoma State University, Department of Military Science Collection, Special Collections and University Archives, Oklahoma State University Libraries. Note - Three accounts depict the history of Hays' long and prestigious military career – the Oklahoma State University Library Special Collections and University Archives' "OAMC Men in War Service" (taken from David C. Peters' Fall 2004 article "Seven Horses: From OAMC Student to World War Hero" in OSU Magazine), a 1952 account from the Department of Defense, Office of Public Information Press Branch, and the Oklahoma State University News Bureau, Division of Public Information.

<sup>82</sup> Oklahoma State University. Department of Defense Office of Public Information Press Branch. OAMC/OSU Biographical Files Collection. Special Collections and University Archives, Oklahoma State University Libraries. 2005-022. Box 56, 2005.

<sup>83</sup> Oklahoma A&M College World War I Veterans Collection. "Students in Service", Oklahoma State University, Department of Military Science Collection, Special Collections and University Archives, Oklahoma State University Libraries.

artillery batteries, and trench forces.”<sup>84</sup> For his actions in the Second Battle of the Marne and because of his wounds received on July 16, 1918, George Hays “was awarded the distinguished Service Cross, the Monte Negran medal of honor, and the French Croix de Guerre” along with the presentation of the Medal of Honor on March 17, 1919 by commander-in-chief of the U.S. Army General John J. Pershing.<sup>85</sup>

Hays’ heroism was not surprising considering his military preparation at OAMC. Hays, as a student, participated in sports and mechanical engineering activities while serving as a leader in campus groups. The *Orange and Black* reported on September 30, 1916 that Hays presented a mechanical engineering paper entitled “Use of Kerosene in the Internal Combustion Engine” to the Engineering Society on September 26.<sup>86</sup> Hays also excelled in sports. In the “Sport Spots” section of the front page, The *Orange and Black* reported in December of 1916 that “George Hays of the Juniors played a stellar game throughout Friday in the Senior-Junior class tangle. His plunges over center and over short wings were good for gain after gain. He is a fighter all the time, and his line bucks were spectacular.”<sup>87</sup> Hays’ World War I heroic service and later career in the United States Army, obtaining the rank of lieutenant general, testify to his personal character and military fortitude demonstrated in war – as a young man in the Second Battle of the Marne or on D-Day (plus-one) in 1944. George Hays, Oklahoma raised and OAMC educated, served his country by preparing for both world wars first at OAMC and then at numerous military institutions. Hays retired in 1953 with a distinguished military career and inducted into the Oklahoma State University Alumni Association Hall of

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> *Orange and Black* (Stillwater), 30 September 1916.

<sup>87</sup> *Orange and Black* (Stillwater), 9 December 1916.

Fame on May 23, 1965. Started in 1956, the Hall of Fame awards “were set up as a recognition program for OSU graduates ‘who have made the greatest contributions to society and who have distinguished themselves as great Americans,’ said alumni secretary Murl Rogers.”<sup>88</sup>

George Hays truly demonstrated the positive contribution and effort military preparedness made on OAMC students from 1914 through 1917. Published on March 17, 1919 in Oklahoma City, *Sooners In The War* Volume one explains Oklahoma’s contribution in the war, “In the Great World War the State of Oklahoma did its full duty. When the Stars and Stripes was called into action to vindicate those principles of freedom and justice for which it stands, Oklahoma presented a united front to the national enemy.”<sup>89</sup>

The culture and war sentiment at OAMC, expressed through the college newspaper and annual yearbooks, demonstrated the loyalty the land-grant institution placed on patriotic support from 1914 to 1917. Campus preparedness grew steadily in the early years of the war, but around mid-to-late 1915 the campus started a permanent increase in military training with sham battles and drill. This increase depicts the close relationship between OAMC, the National Guard of Oklahoma, and United States Army. Throughout the College’s history, from 1890 to the present, military training continues as international wars engulf the United States calling on students and citizens from Oklahoma to service. OAMC created such a culture of military drill that in times of war

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<sup>88</sup> Oklahoma State University. News Bureau Division of Public Information Oklahoma State University. OAMC/OSU Biographical Files Collection. Special Collections and University Archives, Oklahoma State University Libraries. 2005-022. Box 56, 2005.

<sup>89</sup> Oklahoma State Council of, Defense, Administration United States Food and W. S. S. Committee Oklahoma. Sooners in the War. 1 v. Oklahoma City: Published by the Food Administration through the Oklahoma State Council of Defense. 1918, 2.

the nation could rely on the college to meet the need in supplying troops and instruction. War attitudes progressively grew stronger on the OAMC campus until the 1950s, but as the culture on national college campuses changed in the 1960s, less support resonated from the student body for the military. The World War I *Redskin* yearbooks featured its most patriotic and militaristic publications in its eighty year existence. In the years between the first and second world wars, military classes and training continued on campus in part because the ROTC arrived in 1916 and continues steadfastly to this day.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Orange and Black (Stillwater), 1907-1923, The Daily O'Collegian (Stillwater), 1924-2011, Oklahoma State University. Redskin.1910-1975, Sanderson, Lewie J., Dean R. McGlamery, and David C. Peters. A History of the Oklahoma State University Campus. Stillwater: Oklahoma State University, 1990.

## CHAPTER VIII

### AN ATHLETIC CULTURE

From 1914 to 1919, the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College (OAMC) campus demonstrated a wartime spirit when collegiate sports merged often with regulated military training. Europe's war affected U.S. communities in diverse ways, and the Stillwater college adapted to wartime service. The wartime culture created during World War I at OAMC reverberated loudest in student athletics. Many sports originated before WWI, but the nature of campus sports provided a militaristic foundation for future wartime patriotic participation.

Human warfare and physical agility jointly overlap in the long history of preparing for the face of battle. The First World War is no exception. Months before U.S. President Woodrow Wilson asked Congress for a declaration of war on April 2, 1917, America's colleges and universities possessed the physical and mental capital necessary for wartime preparation. The well-documented sports culture on present college campuses largely came of age in the early twentieth century with athletic events consuming increasing amounts of student time and space in college newspapers. Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College (OAMC) joined hundreds of other academic institutions from 1914-1918 as training camps for war. The state of Oklahoma ranks in WWI literature as a prime example in home-front war service through its efficient and at times controversial state Council of Defense work and overall loyalty as a

state. Oklahoma A. and M. mirrored many wartime efforts implemented at the University of Oklahoma and other state colleges, yet because the state's leading agricultural college possessed a tradition of sports and military drill - the campus contributed significant preparation work toward the war. Numerous student accounts testify to the importance athletic involvement played in military service. The students who participated in a post-war college survey testified to the importance athletics had on military preparedness.

This chapter focuses on the history of how the OAMC campus reacted and prepared for the First World War, specifically the prevailing student sentiment toward militarism on campus.<sup>1</sup> In the years before United States involvement in the war, OAMC did not suffer from human casualties as occurred in Europe, but the college sacrificed time and energy through military training in preparation for the war. World War I military preparedness at Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College from 1914 to 1919 resulted in part from a long tradition of sports culture on campus that reinforced the militarism and military attitudes present on OAMC.<sup>2</sup>

The popularity of military training and sports on campus created a student culture of extracurricular activities that promoted exercise, comradeship, and frivolity, while intentionally or inadvertently preparing the students physically and mentally for war. In the early years of the college, students played the game of football occasionally on festive days, along with other sports; but by the time the United States was involved in World

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<sup>1</sup> Note: Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College changed its name to Oklahoma State University in 1957.

<sup>2</sup> Carolyn G. Hanneman, Carol L. Hiner and University Oklahoma State. Centennial Histories Series. 25 v. Stillwater, Okla.: Oklahoma State University, 1986. Oklahoma State University. Redskin. 1910 – 1991.

War I, football was firmly established and the players posed in their ROTC uniforms.<sup>3</sup> The early history of sports on the OAMC campus revealed the creativity of students in forming track, football, baseball, and basketball teams - playing between classes or after hours in open fields. Fierce class rivalries between freshmen and sophomores resulted in the annual tree-fights and tug-a-wars. The *Redskin* student yearbooks from 1910 to 1918 include a category or section addressing the sporting activities, and later conferences, of the sports teams of OAMC. The popularity of team sports grew on campus; compared to the early years where “except for the annual athletics extravaganza held on Washington’s Birthday, sports activities at OAMC were informal and spontaneous.”<sup>4</sup>

Organizations and clubs on campus reinforced the continual presence of military groups in student life. The three major military groups, outside cadet companies, were the band, rifle club, and rifle team (Note Photograph 2). Surprisingly, the rifle team consisted of only fifteen students in comparison to the eight companies of cadets (companies A-H) comprised of around forty students each. Placed first in the list of clubs in the 1914 yearbook, the rifle club had a much larger number of cadets than the rifle team. Unlike the rifle team, the club of over fifty-to-sixty cadets included a president, vice-president, treasurer, and captain. These militaristic clubs and teams reinforced a culture already present on campus but became even more prominent as the war approached. Inherently, rifle teams and cadets did not endorse war, but the combination

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid. Oklahoma State University. *Redskin*. 1919.

<sup>4</sup> Patrick M. Murphy. *A History of Oklahoma State University Student Life and Services*. Stillwater: Oklahoma State University, 1988, 45.

of tree fights, sports, and later sham battles all created an ideal environment from which the military recruited soldiers for the First World War.<sup>5</sup>

In 1914, Director John Corbett oversaw the athletic department of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College (OAMC) along with an Athletic Board of seven men presided over by President N. O. Booth. Pictured throughout the yearbooks from 1914 to 1917, OAMC's mascot, an orange and black tiger, represented the athletic teams along with the "O" emblem on many sports uniforms and sweaters. Football placed first in the 1914 *Redskin* listing of sports with Coach P. J. Davis in leadership over the varsity squad of eleven to fifteen male students. Football, baseball, basketball, and track (and field) comprised the major male sports with seniors forming the conference teams and a class athletic section in the yearbook describing mostly interclass games.<sup>6</sup>

Sporting participation, for men and women students, increased suddenly in 1914. The 1915 and 1916 *Redskin* yearbooks featured more pictures, updates, and a larger participation by men and women in sporting teams. OAMC's varsity baseball team donned new uniforms and the track, gym, and tennis teams reported success. The yearbook section on women's athletics in 1916 ends by stating that "Women's Athletics in the OAMC College is becoming more active every year. The aim of the College – to be efficient physically, mentally morally – is being realized, as far as the first part at least, through the Women's Athletic Association."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Oklahoma State University, *Redskin*. 1914.

<sup>6</sup> Oklahoma State University, *Redskin*. 1914, 205.

<sup>7</sup> Oklahoma State University, *Redskin*. 1916, 176). The physical preparedness through organized or student-led sports of OAMC men and women assisted students to transition fluently into military service for male students and Red Cross service for female students during the First World War. (Oklahoma State University. *Redskin*. 1910-1919.

In 2016, Oklahoma State University's public image connects its identity with college sports. Recent national scandals revealed how OSU's current reputation, in regards to recent national sports scandals, highlighted the affect athletics had upon the institution, while a century ago these same sports were classified as extra-curricular activities. Throughout the war years from 1914 to 1919, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College (OAMC) fostered the wartime spirit common among home-front institutions of higher learning. The athletics conducted at OAMC before and during the Great War thus demonstrated an interest in sports among students that also transitioned into patriotic, in the case of male students, service.

Student activities facilitated through a promotion for campus unity and propensity toward violence the military spirit necessary for future sham battles on campus and later European trench warfare. The popular class tree fights contributed the most to this combative spirit. The yearbook and later college histories focus on the value the freshmen and sophomore classes placed on these tree fights and tug-of-wars. Before the introduction of the military selective service and the sham battles around the OAMC campus, the students held a tradition of class loyalty that bordered on Spartan preparedness. In a cottonwood tree west of Old Central, students shifted a game of placing their respected class flags on the flagpole of Old Central toward organized, but chaotic, class tree fights. As Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer describes, "the tree provided a new and exciting challenge for group class participation and an unusual way to demonstrate class loyalty at a time when classes were small enough to retain their identity."<sup>8</sup> The tree fights peaked in popularity "at the time of World War I," and for hours in the hundred-

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<sup>8</sup> LeRoy H. Fischer. Oklahoma State University Historic Old Central. (Stillwater: Oklahoma State University. 1988, 131).

degree Oklahoma heat, the freshmen placed their class flags at the top of the cottonwood while the sophomores tried to arrest the flag from the tree while grabbing freshmen students.<sup>9</sup>

Onlookers enjoyed the fights from the windows of Old Central and a crowd of female students, other classes, and spectators observed round after round of punching, scraping, and wrestling. Preparatory (high school) department students got involved in 1913 in assisting the sophomores to win the fight, but in the next year, some of the female students, both freshmen and sophomore, assisted their male classmates in guarding tied-up sophomores or mounting a counterattack.<sup>10</sup> These fights fostered, along with class loyalty, an acceptance for violence in student “games” which repeated itself in the physical contact of football and so easily transitioned into the unit loyalty needed for war.

The unity and class loyalty created by the fighting personified the culture of the modern man prepared for physical combat at any time. Photos remain of fights in progress in which a mass of shirtless male students surround the now lost cottonwood tree, “the tree fights were annual events at Old Central from 1913 to 1919, except for the World War I year of 1918.”<sup>11</sup> Possibly the war discouraged the classes to fight each other when their energy was needed for the enemy. Nonetheless, the culture and sentiment toward fighting unfortunately resulted in many OAMC students fighting for life and death in the First World War. In 1917, some raised questions about the appropriateness of the fighting while the war was occurring as *Orange and Black* staff

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 133.

“dared to speak against it. Perhaps World War I, which the United States entered on April 6, 1917, helped to bring out the sentiment.”<sup>12</sup>

Whatever the feelings toward the war, the fights only occurred one more time in 1918 until the annual pushball and less dangerous pole fights replaced the tree fights.<sup>13</sup> Students abstained from tree fights during the 1918 academic year but could not end them entirely. Dr. Fischer notes that “even President James W. Cantwell approved after witnessing the class fight: ‘There is nothing the student body could do to promote and fix the solidarity of the freshman class like this annual hand to hand, class against class fight.’”<sup>14</sup>

Ultimately, the OAMC leadership agreed with the fighting culture present on campus and even encouraged the notion of class unity through fighting – at the expense of concerns over militarism. Opinions mentioned within the *Orange and Black* staff suggested sports other than the annual fight, and “when September of 1918 came around, the students of the college did not organize the usual fight at Old Central. World War I had left a severe scar on the student body, but the armistice agreement in Europe ending the war on November 11, 1918, settled the student body well enough for another tree fight in September 1919.”<sup>15</sup>

During the war years, upper classmen called their advances on the tree “the Triple Alliance of the World War I era” as athletes filled in the front ranks to lead the fights.<sup>16</sup> Thus, student athletes and militaristic terminology mixed in a psychological and physical

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 131-135.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 135.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 134.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

event that transposed the war mindset onto campus activities. The cottonwood tree died within a year and less enthusiastic fights occurred around a pole on the athletic field as freshmen nailed their flag to the pole. From 1913 through 1919, the tree fights coincided with the popularity of war that continual needed emphasis, and inevitably created a culture of institutional loyalty.<sup>17</sup> With full coverage, the 1915 *Redskin* yearbook dedicated a page to “The Class Fight” describing in robust language the annual event, “A lusty cry quickly swelling into a full throated roar woke the echoes on the hot dusty afternoon of September the seventeenth... and the Annual Class Fight was on!”<sup>18</sup>

This annual fight depicted the culture present on campus and the similar mindset between the violence of sports and militarism. The yearbook provided three photographs depicting male students striving vigorously to climb the cottonwood as a dozen others watch from below, and two other pictures show a group of women spectators watching attentively along with a picture of three statue-looking male students, two without shirts. The last page discussed the tree fights summarizing the annual event, “The fight was over, all remaining before – broken limbs, innumerable parts of cloths, and the memory of a good old fight. Thus ended another of time immemorial customs at OAMC.”<sup>19</sup> This shows the intensity in which students enthusiastically endorsed the practice of fighting. Thus, when the Military department created sham battles in preparation for war, the transition became psychologically fluent between fighting for class loyalty and waging war for one’s country.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Oklahoma State University. *Redskin*. 1915, 146.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

The war finally started to affect the OAMC campus directly in 1917 as students left for the army, while sports programs, tree fights, and increased military training all reminded the campus of a greater awareness of the present war. In contrast to the 1914 *Redskin*, the 1915 yearbook featured the growing time spent by the Military department in training cadets, along with new resources to train the student cadets and volunteers. OAMC male students formed companies and dressed in the army colored green uniforms showing their patriotic support and national duty collectivity. The *Orange and Black* noted on November 13, 1916 that a student had written a story “The Aftermath” that would soon appear in *The Christian Herald*. Ella Wilson, of the class of 1918, received twenty-five dollars from Editor A. H. Holland of *The Christian Herald* for her story. Wilson’s story demonstrated the peace sentiment on the OAMC campus. Her work, written “in the interest of peace” detailing the “probable results of militarism, if once established in the United States, would be – war and desolation.”<sup>20</sup> Even though Miss Wilson’s story predated the war, her seemingly prophetic literary work outlines many of the changes toward militaristic culture the nation and the OAMC campus underwent during the war.<sup>21</sup>

The campus and especially the state of Oklahoma never changed their course toward militarism; ultimately, these published objections rarely influenced the student body during the war. Class tree fights, sham battles, tug-of-wars, and drilling permeated the activities of the campus despite words of peace. Wilson wrote her work possibly before the war started, but the publication of “The Aftermath” appeared at the same time

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<sup>20</sup> *Orange and Black* (Stillwater), 13 November 1916.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

as the height of the tree fights, rise of the ROTC on campus, and annual cadet training battles.<sup>22</sup>

On February 24, 1917, the college still celebrated Washington's Birthday but because OAMC was consumed with war preparation, the *Orange and Black* reported less on sporting events and more on the war. On the same page, "the children of the Stillwater schools celebrated Washington's Birthday at the College Auditorium... the songs, 'America' and 'Our Nation,' by the older children were excellent, but the greatest pleasure was given by the 'Soldier' song of the primary department of the Horace Mann School. . . ."<sup>23</sup> The Centennial Histories Series' *Student Life and Services* states "athletics were primarily concentrated in a day of football, sack races, foot races, potato races, and a tug-of-war on Washington's Birthday. Except for this gala annual event, sports on the campus remained mostly spontaneous, informal and of the student's creation through the college's first decade."<sup>24</sup>

By 1917, athletic teams, both male and female, organized into interclass and inter-university conferences in which they battled for a talisman or another prize.<sup>25</sup> Sports conducted on the OAMC campus received notoriety in the college newspaper and yearbook as extracurricular activities increased and solidified into an institutional culture.<sup>26</sup> Sports contributed to class unity and the social life of the campus but critics warned against a lack of academic focus in part because of these extra-curricular distractions. College culture in the United States changed during this period, "the era

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> *Orange and Black* (Stillwater), 24 February 1917.

<sup>24</sup> Patrick M. Murphy. *A History of Oklahoma State University Student Life and Services*. Stillwater: Oklahoma State University, 1988, 45-46.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 59-64.

from 1900 to the advent of the involvement of the United States in World War I was a time for student initiative, experimentation, and establishment.”<sup>27</sup>

OAMC sports allowed students to exercise their physical talents and show competitive prowess between classes. The 1910-1911 OAMC Annual Catalog provides a paragraph entitled “Care of Health” and promotes a campus where “games and sports are encouraged for their [students] mental relief and the physical relaxation afforded.”<sup>28</sup> An additional section in the Catalog explains the athletic teams and military drill, yet early twentieth century Oklahoma colleges placed physical health and “the health of all students” as “a matter of chief concern to the officers of the College.”<sup>29</sup> Interclass “tree” fights outside Old Central in the late 1910s often promoted the instructional policy that noted, “all students have access to the separate gymnasiums for boys and girls...” and under the noted statement, “moral principles are carefully inculcated in these physical sports taken under the daily supervision of instructors who are specialist in physical training.”<sup>30</sup> The tree-fight tradition mixed genders from 1914 to 1919 and included unorthodox exercise methods. *Redskin* student yearbooks note the prevalent tree-fight tradition as photographs depict male and female students at “war.”<sup>31</sup> The 1917 *Redskin* yearbook provides a page long “class fight” description. A “scarred old cottonwood tree west of the Central Building [now Old Central]” formed the battle-lines as freshman males fought sophomores.<sup>32</sup> The yearbook editors concluded the class fights aroused “class spirit and that feeling of friendly rivalry so essential to the life of every modern

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>28</sup> *Annual Catalog*, 1910-11, 17.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* 17.

<sup>31</sup> *Redskin*, 1917, 274.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

college and university.”<sup>33</sup> Fraternal games and organized sports formed fundamental roles in campus life for OAMC’s small student body. The next three yearbook pages present a photographic collage and depict the class “tree” fights on page 275, the student “tug o’ war” on page 276, and on page 277 five photographs of military drill and troop train transportation.<sup>34</sup> On September 13, 1916, the *Redskin* editors recounted in lofty language, “the Sophomores attacked fiercely and with whoops and yells as the Freshmen fiercely stood their ground. After the first few minutes of *battle* the scene was one of sweaty, torn clothes, bleeding bodies, bruised knees and skinned elbows, giving the scene a tinge of desperation.”<sup>35</sup> The yearbook editors used the word “battle” in their description, and within a year over a hundred fellow class-mates would face the colossal European fight. Collegiate editors presented, in the 1910s, masculine physical games, sports, and exercises using wartime rhetoric. Common word usage pervades yearbooks and newspaper as “fight”, “battle”, “war”, and “attack” intermix articles that depict the current events of 1917 and 1918.<sup>36</sup>

College sports aided the “brotherhood of man” as Oklahoma A. & M. male and female students participated in college athletics. The college yearbook provided an updated report on how each sports team competed during the season. Numerous photographs show various fashion trends and early twentieth century sports logos. The OAMC sports culture began an evident expansion in the early 1900s. In a special 1908 newspaper publication entitled *The Brown and Blue*, the Oklahoma A & M. senior class included a section on the role sports played in campus life. *The Brown and Blue*’s first

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 275-7.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 274.

<sup>36</sup> Redskin, 1910-1922; Orange and Black, 1910-1922.

articles included titles “Does College Training Pay?” and “Wesley the Reformer”, then on page twenty-eight the “Athletics” report noted the 1908 track team’s success and failure. One spring day in 1907, the sophomores and juniors competed and “throughout the entire day the sophomores *fought* for every event with stubborn courage, and were everywhere met just as courageously by the juniors. Gallagher, the idol of the sophomore class, strained every nerve to win the meet, but it was not for him.”<sup>37</sup> In spite of young Gallagher, the juniors prevailed sixty-three over the sophomores’ forty-four.<sup>38</sup>

The students’ time spent conditioning, drilling, fighting sham battles, and playing sports all led directly toward supporting the draftees when the United States entered the First World War. Nearly fifteen hundred OAMC students and alumni participated in the war directly, but many more people involved themselves from 1914 through 1919 as part of the college culture of military preparedness influenced by Oklahoma and national policies. Numerous campus organizations supported the war and the OAMC soldiers. In the 1918 “Military” *Redskin*, the yearbook featured overwhelming support for the troops fighting in Europe, and included drawings depicting the war along with a painting introducing the military section. That year, the order of the yearbook placed the “Military” section first followed by “Athletics” and other campus related categories of “Organizations”, “Beauty”, “College Life”, “Classes”, and finally “Feature.”<sup>39</sup> Published by the Student Association of OAMC, the 1918 *Redskin* yearbook stated, “to our boys who are giving their lives for democracy, the 1918 *Redskin* is dedicated” – also the introduction notes that “Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College now has seven

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<sup>37</sup> Brown and Blue, 28.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Oklahoma State University. Redskin. 1918.

hundred boys in the great war.”<sup>40</sup> *Redskin* opinion toward the sacrifice “for democracy” mirrors President Woodrow Wilson’s January 22, 1917 speech before the Senate in which the president argued that “a league for peace” could not stand without democracy and “peace cannot be had without concession and sacrifice.”<sup>41</sup> On April 2<sup>nd</sup>, Wilson presented his war message before the 65<sup>th</sup> Congress subsequently breaking diplomatic relations with the Imperial German Government, stating, “The world must be made safe for democracy.”<sup>42</sup> Toward the end of the speech, Wilson reaffirmed, “. . . we shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts, - for democracy. . . .”<sup>43</sup> Thus, the *Redskin*’s dedication personalized for the OAMC student soldier the national policy of the President. In the “Forward,” the 1918 *Redskin* emotionally stated its reasons for chronicling the “happenings” of the OAMC students’ who participated in the Great War. The *Redskin*’s use of wording verged on a jingoistic loyalty to militarism that united with OAMC sports coaches’ references to athletic games as “battles.” *Redskin* editors presented their thesis in writing the yearbook so commemoration would “endear” in the “hearts” of the students and the alumni to long “for the days of real sport.” This desire for sport endured through the war years as a reminder of activities which transitioned into military service. Thus, yearbook editors titled their publication in memory of the military heritage the campus possessed. Through the activities undertaken “during the past year,” the student yearbook, for 1918, dedicated their “Military Edition”

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Dwight Everett Watkins, and Robert Edward Williams. The Forum of Democracy. ix, 193 p. Boston, New York [etc.]: Allyn and Bacon. 1917, 96-98.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 111.

to the students who served “in military work” during the war.<sup>44</sup> Such recognition placed the militaristic presence on campus to new heights as student publications repeated the sentiment that many of the student population felt toward military involvement on campus.

Sporting activities fostered for years on campus enabled OAMC students to transition seamlessly between fights, sporting teams, and cadet training to a professional and well-equipped Student Army Training Corps, ROTC, and established Military Department. The end of World War I affected progressive growth during the war years, but OAMC still maintained its obligation to federal law in drilling and teaching military tactics on campus. Any serious study of Oklahoma’s involvement in the First World War must include a close examination of college campuses during the pre-war and war years. OAMC led the state’s higher education institutions in military training in part because of its obligations as a land-grant college and the installment of the ROTC. Applicable to our time, the study of military preparedness on college campuses such as the pre-World War I years at OAMC provide examples of the methods colleges and governments, in the past, undertook to foster militarism. Vietnam anti-war protests on campus illustrate an opposite attitude toward military service in contrast with the pre-World War I years on OAMC. Sports and military training on OAMC was a uniting factor which created a quick transition to a wartime campus. Just as in World War I, OAMC supported the Second World War by providing training facilities for the Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES) program and sending hundreds of OAMC students for military service. No other event in the first quarter of the twenty-first

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<sup>44</sup> Oklahoma State University. Redskin. 1918.

century changed the atmosphere on OAMC more than the actions taken in preparing the campus for the First World War.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Orange and Black (Stillwater), 1907-1923, The Daily O'Collegian (Stillwater), 1924-2011, Oklahoma State University. Redskin.1910-1975, Sanderson, Lewie J., Dean R. McGlamery, and David C. Peters. A History of the Oklahoma State University Campus. Stillwater: Oklahoma State University, 1990.

## CHAPTER IX

### CONCLUSION: COMMEMORATING THE OAMC SOLDIER

The Great War influenced how Oklahomans remembered their war dead and the heroes who returned. Over 90,000 Oklahomans served in the military during the war and thousands lost their lives.<sup>1</sup> The war finally ended in November 1918, and the *Redskin* yearbook celebrated by publishing their “Victory” *Redskin* of 1919. Unlike the “Military” *Redskin* of 1918 which recognized the military service and wartime activities of OAMC, the “Victory” *Redskin* commemorated the twenty-eight male students who died in the war – along with all the students who served throughout the war. According to the *Redskin*, thirteen of the twenty-eight students died in combat (or from battle wounds), twelve died of sickness (mostly pneumonia from influenza), two by unknown causes, and one by accident. The 1919 *Redskin* includes photos and a brief description relating the service of the fallen students and an explanation on how they died. Post war emotion on campus culminated in the “Forward” to the *Redskin*: “Out from ‘Old A and M’ went fourteen hundred and thirty-eight of her sons – yes, and daughters, too – to help fight, twenty-seven of A and M’s manhood have paid the supreme sacrifice that has made the world safe for Democracy. It is to these we have dedicated our 1919 *Redskin*.”<sup>2</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup> Oklahoma State Council of, Defense, Administration United States Food and W. S. S. Committee Oklahoma. Sooners in the War. 1 v. Oklahoma City: Published by the Food Administration through the Oklahoma State Council of Defense. 1918, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Oklahoma State University. Redskin. 1919.

first page depicts golden stars on a white background with the statue of liberty (by Alice Hunter) and the poem “The Golden Stars” by Annie-Garner Thornton. A photograph showing each OAMC student who died (except one) along with their name, rank, home residence, branch, and dates of service and description of military career convey the honor the senior class and editors undertook for the fallen troops. In addition, the list of students who served in the war show a photo, name, rank, dates of entry and exit, and any decoration. The priority the student yearbook placed on commemorating student participation in the war reinforces the importance of student unity, military service, and administrative support all combined to create a culture dedicated to winning the war.

On the fourth page of *The Orange and Black* “Special Edition” college newspaper, an artist’s sketch depicted a “proposed memorial arch to be erected by alumni of O. A. M. C.”<sup>3</sup> The November 26, 1919 special edition honored the college athletic teams and its front page coverage centered on the bedlam football game as the Oklahoma A. & M. “wild cats” battled the University of Oklahoma “sooners”. Page one featured the twelve football players as their photographs covered the first page under the wild cat motto header “Fight! Fight! Fight! Fight! Fight! Fight! F-I-G-H-T-!”<sup>4</sup> In contrast, page four’s shift toward a World War I memorial at the college football stadium reveals the joined space OAMC sports and military projects shared throughout the war years in newspapers. The Memorial Arch Committee included M. J. Otey (’02), Emma Chandler (’07), and O. T. Peck (0’08). All Stillwater residents, the committee served under the alumni officers and worked alongside the *Orange and Black* alumni section editor. The November 26<sup>th</sup> *Orange and Black* noted, at the November 21<sup>st</sup> A. & M. verses Kendall

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<sup>3</sup> *Orange and Black*, November 26, 1919, 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

football game, the Memorial Arch Committee member's succeeded in acquiring new "Memorial Arch Pledge Card" subscribers.<sup>5</sup> The alumni listed on page four signed the pledge card that read, "In order to permanently evidence the honor due those Former Students and Alumni of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College who died in the service of my Country, I, the undersigned, gladly make the following pledge towards the constructions of a fitting Memorial Arch upon the campus of their College and mine."<sup>6</sup> Two additional columns in the November 26<sup>th</sup> *Orange and Black* urged fellow alumni to raise the money needed to constructed the "Memorial Alumni Entrance to Lewis Field."<sup>7</sup>

The Alumni Memorial Arch represented an OAMC initiative seven years before the University of Oklahoma constructed their own Memorial Stadium as a "most outstanding tribute to war dead" subtitle read in the January 20, 1926 OAMC *O'Collegian* newspaper.<sup>8</sup> Oklahoma University's commemoration project engulfed the

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., Note: The description under the Memorial Arch blue-print sketch reads: "Memorial Alumni Entrance to Lewis Field: This entrance gate is proposed to be erected on the southwest corner of Lewis Field, about sixteen feet to the west of the new Armory-Gymnasium Building, and the exterior treated in brick with stone trimming, the roof being covered with green tiles. On both ends are ticket officers, each about 10 feet square. Above the doorways of these offices there will be two large bronze memorial tablets. The two ticket offices are connected by a large arch constructed of brick and stone. Provision is made for two signature tables located in the center of the gate. The total width of this entrance gate is 48 feet: the height is 22 feet. The gate is connected with the Armory-Gymnasium Building by a brick wall of a height of 7 feet. This brick wall will in future be continued from the southwest corner of the gate to the south end of the grandstand. This gate is proposed only as an entrance for pedestrians. On the east side of the Armory-Gymnasium will be a small gate about 20 feet wide for vehicles. It is the desire of the Alumni Association to have this arch completed and dedicated at the least by June [1920], or during the commencement week. The approximate cost is estimated by the architect, F. W. Redlich, at the sum of \$10,000.00. The Board of Regents has agreed to assist financially in the erection of this arch if it is necessary." Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> *O'Collegian*, January 20, 1926.

entire state as “the general public is now being solicited in a new campaign.”<sup>9</sup> These Oklahoma collegiate World War I memorials ascribed to the American Legion policy “to erect only useful memorials, the greater part of the state’s [Oklahoma’s] tributes to her fallen heroes consist of civic buildings, bridges and trees.”<sup>10</sup> Thus, OAMC commemorated her twenty-eight dead veterans with a *Victory Redskin* yearbook, proposed Memorial Arch, and later building, plaque, and campus marker dedications. The 1919 *Victory Redskin* notes the dedication and pride OAMC’s student body possessed in their collective wartime commemoration. The 1926 *O’Collegian* article noted that “Oklahoma’s outstanding memorial to her soldier dead is in course of construction at the University of Oklahoma at Norman – a stadium and a student-union building to cost \$1,000,000. One section of the stadium has been built and was used for the first time at the Kansas-Oklahoma football game.”<sup>11</sup> Oklahoma’s colleges joined the state-wide commemoration project to remember their respected student-veterans. In the end, the OAMC alumni association failed in their mission to construct a memorial arch near Lewis Field. The *Orange and Black* published repeated appeals as M. J. Otey and others requested aid to accomplish their noble plan. Articles appeared in the *Orange and Black* newspapers on September 17<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, and October 8<sup>th</sup> and noted the Memorial Arch’s significance to the dead and the college legacy.<sup>12</sup>

The University of Oklahoma led the state in post-WWI commemoration as OAMC struggled under unsuccessful fundraiser campaigns to constructed the Memorial Arch. After World War II, Oklahoma A. & M., however, dedicated campus dorms and

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Orange and Black, September 17, 24, October 8, 1919.

placed a plaque in Bennett Chapel in the 1950s to commemorate student-soldiers who died in WWI. These later campus projects reveal WWI's lasting legacy on OAMC, and furthered the commemoration efforts started with the 1919 *Redskin* yearbook and service flag to all students who served in the WWI. Former OSU President Robert Kamm's vision as Director of the Centennial Project followed the institution's tradition in remembering their past. The Oklahoma State University Library Digital Collections website page quotes, on the *Centennial Histories Series* home-page, OSU's first woman to graduate in 1897, "that our lives and deeds may not be forgotten."<sup>13</sup> Jessie Thatcher Bost's quote encapsulated the *Centennial Histories Series*' mission in 1990 to record college history as seen through the project author's perspective.<sup>14</sup>

In recent years, international and local World War I commemoration efforts witnessed a revived interest among public historians and nation-states. Community projects joined this memory wave in preparation for the First World War centennial anniversaries from 2014 to 2019. Oklahoma contributed valuable resources in an educational and civic initiative to remember the war's impact on the state, nation, and world. Oklahoma State University offered lectures in particular as part of a four year long Edmon Low Library commemorative series, and a University of Oklahoma Teach-In hosted world-renown scholars on March 7, 2016 to discuss the First World War. Public events, lectures, and centennial ceremonies note the importance placed on war and the

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<sup>13</sup> Oklahoma State University Libraries. [Centennial Histories Series](http://centennial.okstate.edu/index1.htm).  
<http://centennial.okstate.edu/index1.htm>

<sup>14</sup> Trout, Steven: Commemoration and Remembrance (USA), in: 1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War, ed. by Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, Oliver Janz, Heather Jones, Jennifer Keene, Alan Kramer, and Bill Nasson, issued by Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin 2014-10-08. DOI:  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.15463/ie1418.10314>.

affect on all society. The Great War's centennial commemorations differ as nation-states view the war's relationship and importance in various lights. Oklahoma State University's First World War remembrance events centered on the Edmon Low Library lecture series as "the OSU Library will host the first of a four-year series of lectures about the World War I era and its influence 100 year later. 'The Great War and Its Legacy, 1914-1918' series... commemorates WWI's centennial by highlighting the War's impact on life and culture worldwide. Specifically, the talks will focus on the Great War's impression on Oklahoma, Payne County and Oklahoma A&M College."<sup>15</sup> This series shows an institutional concern about the Great War's place at Oklahoma State University and the part the college played in wartime support. The Memorial Arch remains an architect's sketch in the *Orange and Black* and no records indicate a reason the university lacks a World War I veteran arch or monument.

World War I transformed the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College campus. The war's impact shaped student life after 1919 as the Reserve Officers Training Corps established a permanent place and athletic involvement increased to form a vital role on campus. Oklahoma residents challenged old notions in regards to citizenship and community organizations as American ideas conflicted with notions of liberty, volunteerism, state loyalty, and patriotism. Diverse groups joined the state-wide "Uncle Sam" home-front "army" as Native Americans, women, businessmen, and college students participated in various forms to support the war effort. The wartime sentiment prevalent at Oklahoma A. & M. College, from 1914 through 1919, was manifested

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<sup>15</sup> Amanda Jones. Great War Series Honors WWI Centennial. Oklahoma State University Libraries, September 22, 2014. <http://www.library.okstate.edu/news/fall-2014/great-war-series-honors-wwi-centennial>.

through campus newspaper propaganda and increased military role in student's everyday lives. Stillwater and OAMC provided a unified voice and stable wartime community during the war, and fostered a patriotic sentiment present since the institution's establishment and propelled forward after 1917.

In each segment of campus life, the war interposed an international conflict onto the students and administration at OAMC. The students joined the draft or volunteered for military service overseas, while other OAMC students continued academic work on campus. As a result of the First World War, religious influences adapted on campuses and throughout American society. These cultural changes manifested on OAMC as men and women's fashions and social norms evolved toward a campus with a less religious hegemony. Chapel services continued on OAMC for decades, yet the post-WWI 1920s ushered in an increased secularized campus life. Female students' hair shortened as new fashions and sometimes "radical" social behaviors materialized as depicted in the 1920s *Redskin* photographs. The American churches supported the war effort in large numbers and Stillwater's Christian congregations, civic groups, and individual members comprised many staff, faculty, and students at OAMC.<sup>16</sup>

As belligerent nations started the peace process in Paris, the 1919 academic year began similar to years past on the Oklahoma A. & M. campus. Students attended classes and sports events commenced. In everyday life, the college differed from its previous years and the change wrought through wartime measures reshaped the campus. The ROTC established a permanent presence on campus and the student body, administration, and Stillwater community adopted the national patriotic and service message that

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<sup>16</sup> Redskin Yearbooks 1910-1950; Fass, Paula S. *The Damned and the Beautiful : American Youth in the 1920's*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 1979.

transformed the economic and cultural landscape of Oklahoma. Nowhere are the OAMC changes reflected more than in the *Redskin* student yearbooks and questionnaire responses provided in 1919.<sup>17</sup>

This work presents one narrative in the larger history of WWI sentiment at Oklahoma colleges. Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College dedicated its resources from 1917 to 1919 toward home-front war efforts. The Oklahoma wartime programs influenced the OAMC campus as the administration and student body joined the military, domestic groups, and volunteers on state councils of defense. To this degree, Oklahoma A. & M. supported the state's wartime work through the college's home-front preparedness, newspaper propaganda, and student military service. Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College started with less than a hundred students in 1891 as a land-grant college north-west of Stillwater. Over the past one hundred and twenty-five years, the university continues its mission to serve the military needs of the U.S. armed forces. The Oklahoma State University Reserve Officers Training Corps hosts the United States Army and United States Air Force in Thatcher Hall and commissions officers each year into national service. Athletic sports also aided the overall wartime effort through collegiate sponsored and student organized physical exercises that laid the foundation for ROTC's establishment on campus. Most Oklahoma colleges united in a similar home-front support, yet differed in method as to their various institutional histories. This study examined one influential state college and demonstrated the campus-wide patriotic sentiment in favor of United States entry into the First World War.

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<sup>17</sup> Oliver Rafferty. "A World at War." *America* 211, no. 2 (2014): 15-18.

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APPENDICES

PHOTOGRAPH 1



Featured in the 1910 *Redskin* yearbook, these OAMC students, labeled the “Senior Volunteers”, pose in a comic fashion as they wear military uniforms. P11164, OSU Photograph Collection #1996-028, Special Collections and University Archives, Oklahoma State University Libraries.

PHOTOGRAPH 2



The OAMC military band seated for a photograph in front of the Women's dormitory circa 1914. P11191, OSU Photograph Collection #1996-028, Special Collections and University Archives, Oklahoma State University Libraries.

PHOTOGRAGH 3



An early military drill formation on the OAMC campus circa 1890s. P11194, OSU Photograph Collection #1996-028, Special Collections and University Archives, Oklahoma State University Libraries.

VITA

MATTHEW RAY BATES

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Thesis: PATRIOTISM ON CAMPUS: OKLAHOMA AGRICULTURAL AND  
MECHANICAL COLLEGE AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Major Field: HISTORY

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Master of Arts in History at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May, 2016.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences and History at Mid-America Christian University, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, May 2013.

Experience:

Public History Projects:

Exhibit Researcher – 2015-2016  
Sheerar Museum of Stillwater History – “ROTC 100th”

Co-Exhibit Curator - Summer and Fall 2014  
Sheerar Museum of Stillwater History – “Notorious Payne County”

Co-Exhibit Curator - Fall, 2013 – Spring, 2014  
Sheerar Museum of Stillwater History – “Where The College Came From”

Professional Memberships:

National Council on Public History – Member (2013-2016)

Payne County Historical Society – Member (2015)