

War Chapter

My auxiliary Com  
Mrs. Wheeler

Mrs. Mathews -  
wife of principal  
of <sup>colored</sup> Local High School

---

Soldiers - entertain-  
ment -

Sunday Dinner

The Filson Historical Society

~~guaranty~~ World War Number I

Nat. Fed Report 1916 - p 43 -

Loyalty of immigrants

P 49 - Henry Maschowitz's definition

Social

Mothers groups -

American Mothers Club -

hostess to Italian, Syrian  
and Jewish groups.

Educational ~~Society~~ speak one language

More classes - in citizenship

Board of Ed - asked H. H. to

take over Citizenship class -

War Kitchen / Health & Amn  
for men

Soldiers Dances - Sat Aft.

Sat. Night -

2 soldiers to dinner either Sat

night or Sunday -

The spirit was fine -

The immigrants in Amer - 10 A

I, about 1861  
- 1861 - 1861  
...

Soldiers to meals

The Filson Historical Society

1914-1918

## World War I Chapter for book.

"Which of us are enemies?" Demanded a bright eyed youngster of twelve as he dashed into the lobby one evening where the boys were assembling for the evening's activities. There were many facetious replies to this pally from members of the various nationalities represented in the group. This was the time of the lining up of the Allied and Central Powers of Europe.

The War was on. It brought with it a time of doubt and distrust. Neighborhood House guided its sword and rededicated itself to its task. Its program was much intensified and expanded, but its neighbors rose as a man to the staggering job ahead. Many rushed in from other neighborhood to work with us. The settlement was a veritable Citadel of Democracy working for the national defense program laid out by President Wilson.

Americanization was in the air but that was the all year round work of Neighborhood House. Its program was the promotion of the American standards of living. The settlement considered that Americanization was the uniting of the newcomers with the native born in common understanding and appreciation

and to secure by means of self-

government the highest welfare of all.

Americanization meant entering into

2.  
the spirit of America - that spirit which stands for liberty and democracy.

In the early stages of ~~the~~ <sup>world</sup> war when the country at large was much distraught over the misunderstandings growing out of the foreigners' ignorance of English, Louisville had little reason for concern because of the comparatively few non-English speaking foreigners in ~~its~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~midst~~ <sup>city</sup>. It was soon learned that certain of our foreign neighbors were sending their young men into the training camps in America, and that numbers of their relatives and friends were engaged in fighting the Hun in defense of the home country. Who in Louisville sustained such tremendous loss of family and friends as the Syrian among us or who had so many men of the family incarcerated in German prisons during the war as the Italians?

The settlement included much more than naturalization papers and English classes in its program. (It requires more than these to make real American citizens.) Any consideration of Americanization based wholly on the preparation of the immigrant for naturalization and the taking out of these papers is inadequate and unsatisfactory.

It is necessary to acquire a certain knowledge of the English language in order to secure naturalization papers, but the new American with his new

knowledge of English and his new papers is as sounding brass without that spirit, that American spirit which stands for brotherhood and democracy. At one time in the enthusiasm to Americanize a foreigner every fiber, warp and wool, it was thought that it was absolutely necessary for him to know English to make a good American citizen. But later it was discovered that whereas it was desirable for him to know English, it was possible for him to be a good citizen in America without that knowledge.

The American Library Association co-operated with the Government in getting out special publications for the immigrant in his native tongue. These publications endeavored to convey the American spirit to the foreigner who was not yet able to read English. The Louisville Free Public Library had only some Yiddish books and a few Italian Classics. But our friends came to the rescue and soon we had all the books we needed. - Well I remember an American History printed in Arabic. It was passed from Syrian to Syrian. They simply devoured it." Now, I have a clearer understanding of American history than I had when I read it in English," one delighted Syrian exclaimed.

Neighborhood House was much indebted to the Colonial Daughters, The Council of Jewish Women, the Finca Castle Chapter and the John Marshall Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution for their valuable assistance with its War time program for the foreign born.

The Women's Clubs of Neighborhood House to hold their meetings in common ever so often, the native born group acting as hosts to their foreign born sisters, Jewish, Italian and Syrian.

Because the settlement was such a friendly place, the Immigration Department issued citizenship papers there one night to fifty men.

The wheatless and the meatless days were upon us. Soon after the food administration order went into effect that with each purchase of wheat some other cereal should be bought, we learned that some of our neighbors were making little <sup>not</sup> of the unfamiliar cereals so bought. One had thrown hers away another had given hers away, and still another more provident than the others, had stored hers away. An Italian woman said "me make da corn bread, it come no good."

There was a problem. The neighbors were American born, Italian, Syrian and Jewish from various countries. The immigrant cooked each in the fashion of her own people in the old country. Their food and their methods of preparing it were as distinctive as their manners. Each nationality had a decided preference for the dishes peculiar to that nationality. It seemed reasonable to conjecture that if a study were made of the flavorings and seasonings peculiar to each group that the wheat savers and the meat savers or substitutes might be used

with these flavorings and seasonings with a result gratifying to each particular group. Rice, for instance, which has no flavor of its own might be combined satisfactorily with any native seasoning. The neighbors were asked whether they would come to a community kitchen to learn to use these strange cereals. The response was eager, and plans for a community kitchen at Neighborhood House were begun.

But just about this time the Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense and the Demonstration Committee of the State Department of Agriculture were considering the establishment of a central war kitchen for Louisville, where house-keepers might learn the principles of the preparation of food and the use of the substitutes recommended by the Food Administration. As no funds were forthcoming for the equipment of such a war kitchen, they cast about in the city for centers already equipped where they might send trained instructors.

Neighborhood House had a domestic <sup>science</sup> department where all the previous year it had conducted demonstrations in conservation and canning of foods. The women in the neighborhood had come throughout the summer to do their



6.

canning at the settlement by the cold pack method of the government. Though we were planning to can the following summer and do much work in drying fruits and vegetables, we thought it wise to enlarge the scope of our work at once. So we asked for the service of one of the trained domestic science instructors in the employ of the committee.

The neighbors were invited. A different time was assigned to each national group. The Council of Jewish Women gave valuable assistance in helping to work out the kitchen with proper care for the dietary laws for the Jewish group coming to the settlement which was Orthodox and mainly Russian. The rabbi from his pulpit urged the women to do all in their power not only for the boys "over there" but for their families over here by assisting the government in learning to prepare properly the wheat and meat substitutes. To help advertise the community kitchen bill heads were printed stating the time of the meeting and also stating for the benefit of the Jewish clientele, that dietary laws would be observed in all cooking lessons. The dodgers were left at Kosher Butcher shops and grocery stores frequented by Jewish women. Both

the shop keeper and the grocer were glad to distribute these bill heads, because the women had been coming to them for advice about their food problems. We found all the grocery keepers most <sup>co-operative</sup> helpful because they were the first to hear the complaints if the substitutes did not work out well.

Although the idea of a community kitchen is that the demonstration should be followed by practice in the kitchen afterwards under supervision, the work at Neighborhood House was mainly that of demonstration, the housewife carrying away with her the government leaflet containing the receipt. At the demonstration the receipt was written in native language along side the receipt in the English language.

We collected receipts from the women of the various groups - Jewish, Italian Syrian in order to adapt the substitutes to their receipts. The women responded enthusiastically. There was an exchange of dishes. A Jewish woman quite distinguished herself with her Russian "strudel" made of a substitute flour. This she served with coffee at a Mother's Club meeting. When the receipts were collected, they were turned over to food experts for suggestions as to the best methods of adaptation to the war program. Mrs. Sarah Webb Maury and Mrs. E. S. Tachau who were

introducing the penny lunch department into the Louisville public schools, were the experts called ~~upon~~ for advice. They were delighted with the receipts. It was thrilling to discover that our foreign neighbors could make such a marvelous contribution to the dishes of America. They had a real knowledge of cookery. They were especially interested in breads and out did themselves in experimenting with the cereals. One woman who made noodles out of barley flour and boiled them in milk had unconsciously gotten the highest food value by combining milk with noodles. Noodles are usually boiled in water. From the scientific standpoint, the Kosher food of the Orthodox Jew is an ideally balanced ration in that it does not accumulate the tissue building foods. Milk or butter is never combined with meat. Milk is used with cereals and meat with vegetables or cereals.

The Syrians we found were natural "Hooverites". They had much to show for the long centuries behind them. Due doubtless to the hardships of ages, they had ~~had~~ eliminated the frills from their cookery and had ~~had~~ gotten down to the nutritional value of feeding, so that a single dish contains all the elements of a well-balanced meal. "Loubie" is a typical dish: onions, green beans, potatoes, tomatoes, olive oil. Here are represented protein, carbohydrates, minerals, cellulose and condiments.

Among our Syrian neighbors "cubie" is the favorite dish. No Sunday passes without "cubie" if the Syrian is able to prepare it. Cubie contains a number of ingredients strange to American Cooks, such as kernel of pine, green peppermint, sweet majorem, sweet mazadam combined with the quite familiar leg of mutton, grits, mixed spices, peppers, chopped onions, butter and olive oil. The Syrian receipts required less adaptation than those of the other groups, because they used rice and mutton mainly with many condiments. As the government encouraged the use of rice and mutton and asked the curtailment of beef and pork only, the Syrians were in line with government requirements since they use mutton in preference to other meats. In their own country they were able only to get mutton because sheep were the only animals that grazed on their hills. For their favorite wheat grits, corn grits were a fair substitute. One Syrian woman said she<sup>was</sup> anxious to learn to cook as the Americans do, because they use milk and eggs which are so good for the children, while we, very early give our children fried foods and mutton to eat. The fact that the Syrians in their native land do their cooking over a single brazier because of a scarcity of fuel probably has caused them to combine many ingredients in one dish.

The Italian has developed many single, one-meal dishes. Spaghetti with its meat balls and tomato sauce is an excellent example of a well balanced meal in a dish. The polenta, mush with grated cheese and butter, corresponds to our mush and milk. Both the Italian and the Syrian were wont to use olive oil in their cooking to the exclusion of other fats. Because of the high price of olive oil during the war, they experimented with different American oils and fats. The Italian accepted any food substitute more cheerfully than the American cheese. This he preferred to do without rather than use it. I conjectured that that some day America would be able to emulate the Italian cheeses.

Enthusiasm grew over the inexpensive meat and wheat substitutes. Especially did the foreign-born women sing the praises of the new corn breads they learned to prepare. Spoon bread was singled out for special favor.

The Community Kitchen was attended not only by the foreign-born but by the American-born as well. Never was there such an exemplification of the settlement ideal of sharing what was best in the lives of the neighbors. The exchange of receipts led to a finer appreciation of their foreign-born sisters on the part of the native-born women. They gained much

from the frugal methods of the foreign housewife.

But this was a rich experience for Neighborhood House. Later it served these delicious foreign dishes to the many groups of citizens holding luncheon meetings there in behalf of specific causes. There were so many requests for a certain spaghetti meat ball receipt that later it was printed in a yearly <sup>report</sup> receipt that was sent out to the friends of the settlement.

Happy as we were to help these women in their desire to co-operate with the Food Administration there was greater gratification in the thought that in helping them to adapt their traditional receipts to the war program we were helping them in preserving the best in the old background as a basis for the new American life. They were proud of being American and not ashamed of having been European.

#### War Recreation Board

During the summer of 1917 the Board of the War Camp Community Service was organized in Louisville and it was during the following winter that an effort was made, through this Board, to standardize the public dance halls of Louisville. This effort was made possible through the assistance of the Law Enforcement Division of the <sup>Raymond</sup> Fawcett Commission. It was my privilege to serve as a member of the Board of the War Camp Community Service and to bring to this Board

a knowledge of the dance hall situation in Louisville. Through the Neighborhood House dance hall, I had gained an intimate knowledge of the dance halls of the city. Our dance hall was the only one competing in any way with the public halls of the city.

The Neighborhood House dance hall was planned originally for the pleasure of the young men and young women living in the neighborhood. The young men paid an admission fee of ten cents to the dances, while the young women came free. A custom prevailed at that time in the city of admitting all girls to public dance halls free of charge. This custom, inaugurated at one time by an enterprising proprietor to induce girls to attend the dances in his hall was followed later by every dance hall proprietor in the city. Although in the beginning the Neighborhood House dance hall was opened primarily for the use of young people of the neighborhood, in time it came to be patronized by young people from all parts of the city. At that time there were no dance halls open continuously every night in the week, but a number were open either one or two nights during the week. This led to the practice on the part of young people desiring frequent opportunities of going from hall to hall. Consequently, Neighborhood House was often patronized by these young people when no other dance hall was open. Many of these young people naturally attempted the irregular dancing in vogue in the commercial halls. Through

neighborhood house ruled out improper dancing in its own hall the situation was difficult and those interested in bettering it sought in vain for a solution until they found it through the War Camp Community Service. See page 18.

The first step in improving the dance hall situation was to bring our facts up to date. For this purpose a hall was selected for a visit. I made the visit accompanied by a young man engaged in social work. On our entering the hall, I ran into a girl and a boy from my own neighborhood. The girl said, "Miss Ingram! what are you doing here? You know you have come to investigate this place. This is the first time I have ever come here and to think you should catch me."

In the dance hall lobby, where young men were standing around gossiping, my escort learned that there were fifteen professional prostitutes present and that a number of the girls present were "loose characters."

Following this visit a survey was made, which proved conclusively that the dance halls of the city were a menace to the soldiers on account of the opportunities they offered for vice.

A committee waited on the chief of police and revealed to him the facts gathered in the dance hall survey. He was urged to take hold of the situation himself, rather than have the Federal authorities do so. He was asked to endorse a plan, embodying the following provisions:



1. That every hall pay a chaperon representing the War Camp Community Service.

2. That a supervisor, paid by the War Camp Community Service, go into the different halls and show the correct method of dancing

3. That there be no breaking.

4. That no dance hall admit children under sixteen years of age unless accompanied by an adult.

The first provision, that every hall pay a chaperon representing the War Camp Community Service, would insure maintaining a proper standard in each hall.

The second provision, that a demonstrator, paid by the War Camp Community Service Board, go into the different halls and show the correct method of dancing was considered necessary on account of the generally bad dancing prevalent in the halls. Many of the holds were not only grotesque but vulgar in their significance. Many of dances grew out of a desire for a variety of dancing.

Although the work in demonstration was continued only a comparatively short time, it was justified in that it corrected the general tone of dancing in the Louisville halls.

The third provisions, in reference to no breaking relates to an old Southern custom (I believe) in which a man steps up to a couple who is dancing, touches the man on the shoulder to gain his permission to take the girl away from him and thence dances away with her himself. At a ball, where the guests were invited and are acquainted, a girl's popularity is often evidenced by the number of partners she has during the dance.

In the public dance hall, breaking is quite another matter. The committee disapproved of it because it was used a method of becoming acquainted. They also disapproved of it because it afforded nice girls no protection on the dance hall floor from men by whom they were broken and with whom they did not dare to dance. They must either endure a man until the end of the dance or run the risk of precipitating a quarrel by refusing.

The chief of police needed no urging to prohibit breaking in because breaking was the chief source of fights in public dance halls. This was especially true where either man had been drinking - the one man resented having his girl taken from him and the other resented not having her turned over to him at his suggestion - the outcome of which was a fight. Every dance hall manager abominates a fight. A fight means not only giving his hall a bad name, but probably having it closed on the spot. I believe the only crime in the eyes of a dance hall manager is a fight. No matter how low the standard of the hall, the manager would blandly assert: "My hall is all right, because I never have a fight." Such a claim was made by a manager whose hall was frequented mainly by denizens of the underworld, and the walls of whose hall were well dotted with policeman late in the evening, these policemen serving as a safe escort to the street car when necessary.

The fourth provision, which prohibited children under sixteen from being admitted to dance halls unless accompanied by an adult, was specially

aimed at young girls between fourteen and sixteen who drift into the dance hall world.

The chief of police approved these recommendations himself and submitted them to the Board of Public Safety, who also approved them. About this time the fall election took place bringing about a complete change in the city administration. The new administration was in sympathy with the movement for bettering the dance halls of the city and gave the War Camp Community Service Board the support it needed for the accomplishment of this project.

Not only did the new chief of police endorse the recommendations for the public dance halls, but he turned over to the War Camp Community Service Board all applications for permits to give dances in the city. This meant the supervision by the War Camp Community Service of all the dances in the city for which a permit was issued.

It was soon discovered that the committee was not coming in touch with one-tenth of the dance halls in the city. Every time a hall was visited, the young man in the party came away with his pocket full of cards bearing an invitation to a dance for which no application had been made. On looking into the matter, it was found that the license for conducting a dance hall in Louisville was a flat rate of \$250. This was a state law for cities of the first class. From investigating licenses for dance halls in other cities, it would seem that \$250. was a very heavy license to pay unless the dance hall was a large and flourishing one.

17.  
For this reason, the ingenious contrived many methods of evading the law. One method was the formation of a club of three or four young men who called the club by some such entrancing name as the "Good Time Club" or the "Jolly Good Fellows." Such a club issued an invitation to its dances on a small card, which was scattered broadcast in all the dance halls of the city, up and down the streets, in stores and factories and amongst groups of any kind where patrons might be found. By calling such a dance "private" and "strictly invitational," the club was able to conduct dances without paying for a permit.

The committee then made a list of every hall in the city available for a dance. This list was sent to the chief of police, who notified each owner of a hall that no dance could be given until a permit was secured.

Under the new ruling, the so-called clubs were forced to hold permits issued by the War Camp Community Service Board. When this permit was issued the representative of the club was asked to furnish the names and addresses of all the club members, and if it was found not to be a club in good standing, a chaperon was placed in charge by the War Camp Community Service Board at the expense of the so-called club. Where the clubs were in good standing, they were permitted to furnish the names of older people of good repute whom they asked to chaperon at their dances.

Before placing a regular dance hall under supervision, the manager was interviewed and the name of the chaperon, who was to represent the War Camp Community Service

Board, was submitted to him. He agreed to pay her two dollars an evening. A number of prominent women in Louisville gave their support to the movement by serving as volunteer chaperons in the various dance halls.

Moonlight dances which had been in vogue at one time, had been prohibited by the chief of police. In lieu of the moonlight dance, halls were darkened and announcements were flashed again and again on a screen. One such announcement to be so flashed was "This hall is open every Tuesday and Saturday nights. Gentlemen 35 cents, ladies free. A good time assured to all." - the flashing continuing over a period of ten minutes - giving an opportunity for much love making. When the manager was told he must give up flashing his announcement, he reluctantly promised but protested by saying, "If I am forced to take this privilege away from the patrons of my hall, they will go to the Hawaiian Gardens because it is so much more beautiful than my hall." I often wondered on entering a new hall what the special privilege of that hall was.

Conditions were particularly bad in this hall. The attendance went down under supervision. The young people said if they couldn't dance as they pleased they would not go to a dance hall. This terrorized this manager, who, in order to evade the supervision in Louisville, opened a hall in Jeffersonville, Indiana, across the river from Louisville. He scattered cards broadcast announcing the change. In the upper left hand corner of the card was inscribed "Over there". In the

upper right-hand corner was inscribed, "Over where?" Below was the answer, "In the K. of P. Hall in Jeffersonville, where you can break, break, break." The new hall was visited and found to worse than the old. The very worst element of this manager's clientele had rallied to his support in this other city in the other State.

The matter was taken up first with the city authorities of Jeffersonville, who insisted they always had lovely dances in their K. of P. Hall. Then the Woman's Club of Jeffersonville was appealed to by the War Camp Community Service Board in behalf of their girls. The Jeffersonville Board of Trade was appealed to by the Board of Trade of Louisville with the result that a bad dance hall could not survive the interest and presence of the best citizens of Jeffersonville any more than it could in Louisville.

If the good people in a community are interested enough to see for themselves some of the methods commerce is using in supplying recreation to the young of the community, many of these bad conditions would not exist.

In supervising the dance halls of the city, exactly the same attention was given to the negro balls as to the white. The chairman of the negro dance hall committee under the War Camp Community Service Board was a woman of rare tact and discrimination. As soon as her committee was organized she announced that the negro halls were given to dancing a very bad dance, called the "Pythian Pet." The usual formality attended our taking under supervision the first

negro hall. The manager stepped on to the floor and in the hushed room, announced, "Ladies and gentlemen this hall is under the Waration Board of Louisville."

Later he said, "I understand you want to see the 'Pythian Pet' danced." The Pythian Pet was a dance that had been originated by the patrons of that hall and named after the hall. "The negroes originate many dances. Where a white hall had a repertoire of four or five dances, the negro had twenty-five."

The name of each dance was announced by placing a placard on the wall. The music began and the dancers fell in line in beautiful rhythmic dancing. The dancing in the negro halls in Louisville was much more dignified and beautiful than in the white halls. Although never as ordinary and common as in the white halls, the two most sensual dances I ever saw were in negro halls.

In response to my request to see the Pythian Pet, the placard went up, the music began and a hundred couples fell into line, with outstretched arms, they danced face to face, then with outstretched arms, they danced back to back, the tips of the fingers touching in both positions. The back to back part made it an exceedingly vulgar, sensual dance. When the manager returned after this dance, I said, "I don't think this dance should ever be danced again in this hall." He stepped onto the floor and said, "Ladies and gentlemen, the Pythian Pet must go. It has been condemned by the War Board."

When the War Camp Community Service Board undertook the supervision of the dance halls, a dance

hall was opened at the request of the Board, the management co-operating in every way. This hall was decidedly the most successful in the city from the financial standpoint. Because this hall was large and beautiful, it presented many problems. Women of doubtful character came in numbers. The next step was to remove these undesirable women from the hall. This was done through close co-operation with the city police, and the Law Enforcement Division. The well known women were dismissed from the halls. The young girls about whom there was a question, were placed under the care of the girls protective officers of the Law Enforcement Division, who solved their problems in many ways. The solution of this problem came finally through the installation of a carefully worked out, complete registration system.

One instance is most significant in this dance hall story, and that is of a manager who had a change of heart when he found that it paid better to run a good hall than a bad one. His hall was so bad that it was one of the first to go out of existence under supervision. He applied to open a bigger hall under supervision, and there is every reason to believe that he co-operated in every way. Dance hall managers are in the business for the sake of the money they get out of it, and if it pays to conduct decent dance halls, they will conduct decent halls.

There is every reason to believe from the Louisville experience that a municipality may have as good dance halls as it wants. The dance hall is a



big problem and it has come to stay. But  
may I say in concluding that what was worth doing  
to save the soldiers of our country during the  
war is worth including in a constructive  
program to save the civilians after the war.

The Filson Historical Society