

Introduction



Overview of Summit County, Ohio and the contributions its citizens made to the American war effort during the First World War (1914-1918). Fifteen segments or chapters (listed below) reveal additional details about their contributions, both overseas as volunteers or military recruits as well as those that supported the war effort “stateside.” Titles, topics and brief descriptions as well as the approximate times of each segment are listed below.

Segment 1

“Poor Me Across the Ocean” (03:03 - 05:24)

- Letter from F.A. Seiberling to his wife, Gertrude, describing the initial outbreak and impact of the war in the summer of 1914.
- Description of industry in Akron, Ohio and how it was affected by the foreign war in 1914

Segment 2

The Red Crosser (05:25 - 07:24)

- American sympathies for the Allies in 1914
- American volunteerism before U.S. involvement (pre-1917)
- Introduction to Mary Gladwin, nurse, International Red Cross
- Excerpt from Gladwin’s memoir detailing her work and conditions in Serbia (1914)

Segment 3

The Men of Battery B (07:25 - 08:27)

- “Battery B” (U.S. National Guard) formed in Akron in July, 1916
- U.S. Mexican campaign
- Excerpt of Fred Seiberling’s letter home from El Paso, Texas (September, 1916)

Segment 4

“This is the Army Though...” (08:28 - 11:38)

- American declaration of war (April, 1917)
- Letter from George Vallen (Co. F) describing basic training and his financial situation
- Ohio National Guard activated as U.S. 37th Division
- U.S. Draft (summer, 1917) and the U.S. 83rd Division
- Military training camps and camp life (Camp Sherman, Chillicothe, Ohio)

Segment 5

Mrs. Stone’s Boys (11:39 - 13:14)

- Gertrude Stone’s three boarders who became soldiers
- Letters from Stone’s boarders describing camp life and military training

- Segment 6 **“The Demands of Neptune”** (13:15 - 16:01)
- War as opportunity for draftees and volunteers to visit Europe
 - Transportation by ship to Europe
 - Letter from Fred Seiberling describing ship accommodations for the average soldier
 - Introduction to and letter from Charles C. Jackson, an African American soldier in the 370th Infantry Regiment of the 93rd Division
 - Army segregation and description of 93rd Division that fought with the French
- Segment 7 **“The Purposes of the War”** (16:02- 19:50)
- Akron population increase and industrial growth
 - Letter from F.A. Seiberling describing changes in the rubber industry
 - Description of Akron-made products: gas masks, tires, observation balloons, blimps, and air ships
 - Construction and operation of Goodyear’s Wingfoot Lake facility
 - Letter from Lester S. Himmelberger, “Balloon Division”
- Segment 8 **The Fighting “Goodyearites”** (19:55 - 22:53)
- Several letters from Goodyear men serving overseas to *Wingfoot Clan* publication
 - Letter from mother of a former “Goodyearite” with four sons serving in the military
- Segment 9 **“Duty Calls Loudly”** (22:54 - 27:18)
- How loss of manpower changed the composition of the workforce
 - Immigration slowed
 - Workers became enlisted men
 - Recruitment of black and white men from the south
 - Employment of the deaf
 - Women’s role in work force and volunteerism with Red Cross, YMCA and YWCA
 - Letter from Grace Goulder, YWCA volunteer
- Segment 10 **“Every Citizen a Soldier”** (27:19 - 30:15)
- “Gasless Sundays” as described by F.A. Seiberling
 - “Liberty Loans” and bond drives to finance the war
 - Contribution by F.A. Seiberling of \$260,000 in 1917 (\$5.5 million in 2018 dollars)
 - Financial contributions made by ordinary citizens and soldiers strongly encouraged
 - Examples of posters encouraging financial support of the war effort

- Segment 11 **The Language of Hate** (30:16 - 33:32)
- Effect of Sedition Act on “free speech”
 - Discrimination against Germans, German-Americans and German culture
 - Anti-German Propaganda/Censorship of German newspapers
 - University of Akron Chorus performance of German music condemned
 - Seiberling family’s efforts to show loyalty to U.S.
- Segment 12 **The Drive** (33:33 – 36:15)
- U.S. troops help change course of war for the Allies (fall, 1918)
 - Descriptions of battle by several soldiers from Summit County
 - Letter from Charles C. Jackson to his father describing his experiences
- Segment 13 **“I Saw Them Fall”** (36:16 - 41:04)
- Fred Seiberling letter describing battle from behind the lines
 - John P. Smith’s letter describing battle from the front line
 - “Shell Shock” description and its effects (2 letters)
 - How war affected civilians, particularly children (Gladwin letter, 1918)
 - Gas attacks and their effects (Fred Seiberling letter, 1918)
 - “Trench Life” of a soldier- sleeplessness, rats, and “cooties”
- Segment 14 **Armistice and Peace** (41:05 - 49:22)
- Summit County war casualties
 - Spanish Influenza outbreak (fall, 1918)
 - Soldiers’ letters regarding war’s impact and thoughts of what awaits them at home
 - Armistice on November 11, 1918; Treaty signed in June, 1919
 - U.S. Occupation of Germany (Otto Glaub letter, 1919)
 - Two letters from Fred Seiberling longing for family and home
 - Post-war summary of men and women featured in the film
- Segment 15 **Finding Lost Voices – The Archivist’s Role** (51:30 - 55:04)
- Summary of archivist’s contribution to the making of a documentary film
 - University of Akron Archives and other local repositories
 - Discovery of “hidden collections” including:
 - “Battery B” Reunion in 1950 (color film digitization)
 - John P. Smith (WWI soldier) Collection
 - VFW Post 209 Collection