



MEMORIAL

Day

GOING FROM OVER HERE TO 'OVER THERE': DOUGLAS COUNTY AND THE WWI DRAFT

Hannah is a fifteen year old homeschooled 9th grader. She became interested in the draft cards after attending a monthly homeschool program at the National Archives. It took her several months to collect the data on all Douglas County's 1,887 WWI draft cards. Her hobbies include writing, reading, tennis, and singing.

What do Robert Frost, Babe Ruth, Louis Armstrong, Al Capone, and Fred Astaire have in common with 1,887 men from Douglas County? They all filled out World War One draft cards which are now in the holdings of the National Archives in Atlanta, Georgia. Also known as The Great War, WWI lasted from 1914 to 1918,

though America did not get involved until 1917 when the first draft took place.

To supply the demand for American troops in Europe, three draft registrations occurred. These drafts were for men ages eighteen to forty-five. The first was on June 5th, 1917, the second on August 24th, 1918, and the third on September 12th, 1918. Three drafts were necessary because many men died

and were seriously injured during the war making it also known as 'The Meat Grinder'. The Governor at the time of the first draft, Nathaniel Edwin Harris, suggested that the draft day be made a holiday and that everyone should come out to show their patriotism and encourage the men who were registering. Obviously the public responded well for the Douglas County Sentinel reported on June 8th, 1917 that young ladies were at the registrations to put a badge of honor on the registrants.

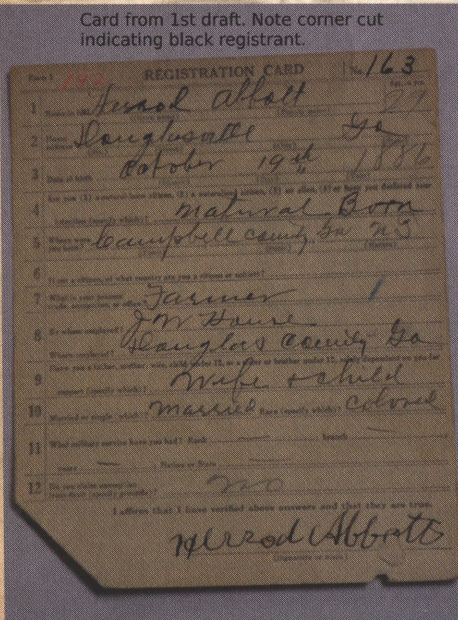
The drafts were taken seriously. Another article appeared after the first draft in the Sentinel on June 15th, 1917 by A.S. Baggett, the Sheriff of Douglas County. The heading was: 'We are not going to have any slackers in Douglas County'; the article said, 'Hope you will help me check them up [the men who were supposed to have registered]. The list of those who registered will be published soon.'

Today, one can glean a lot of historic information from the draft cards the men filled out during the conscription. Every registrant was asked to list their occupation, and this gives one an interesting view of the time period. Some of the jobs listed on the Douglas County cards are still common today: teachers, bankers, post men, and grocers. But many of the jobs are not done today, and some are unknown. Today we find few, if any, workers involved in milling, livestock dealing, farming, draying, and wagon building. A



By Hannah Page

Card from 1st draft. Note corner cut indicating black registrant.





vice defending our country.

A wide range of men, including some of the ones mentioned above, filled out draft cards, a government form with several choices with which to categorize the registrants. One thing that the government and military were interested in were the physical characteristics of the men. The categories were Tall, Medium, or Stout; they were also interested in their race: Negro, Caucasian, or Indian, meaning Native American. Not until the third draft did they stop cutting a corner to show that the registrant was black. They also asked for hair and eye color, as well, and whether or not the person had any disadvantages/disabilities.

But, not all of the men who registered were drafted into the United States Armed Services. Some had major physical and mental problems, making them unable to serve. Of course, there were exams for those men who were drafted, and nationally, 20% of draft-age men were unfit for war service. Issues such as paralysis, kidney trouble, and missing limbs were written on some of the draft cards as reasons they would not be able to serve. Some also claimed 'ruptured' which meant that an organ had burst, or that they had a hernia. Many also claimed exemption from being drafted because they had to support their families, or just simply stated 'Don't want to fight'.

Another thing I noticed in looking at the cards was that some men had marked two boxes for their nationality: 'Caucasian', and 'Indian'. So, I calculated and found that two percent of registrants from Douglas County were both white and Indian. These Native Americans were most likely descended from the Cherokee or

dray man, for example, was someone who would haul items in a wagon with removable sides. Two dray men filled out draft cards.

Some men listed that they worked in textile mills. There were two textile mills in Douglas County: Lois Cotton Mill, and Douglas Hosiery Mill. People who worked at these mills were often rudely called 'Lint heads', a derogatory term for textile workers. Being a textile operator was not considered a 'good job' due to the poor pay. Mill workers lived in a community of small houses called mill towns; amazingly, many of these houses are still standing and are lived in today. A combined total of one hundred ten (5.8%) of the men who filled out draft cards in Douglas County worked at these mills. Interestingly, two were farmers specifically working for Lois Cotton Mill.

Approximately 80% of Douglas County draft registrants listed they worked in farming. One hundred eighty-three (9.6%) black farmers worked for themselves, while one hundred ninety-four (10.2%) worked for someone else. Working for 'someone else' could have meant that they did share-cropping which some people looked upon as one step away from slavery. Whites might also have joined in on this idea of share-cropping. Nine hundred twenty-two (49%) white men worked as farmers for themselves and two hundred seventeen (11.5%) worked for someone else.

Other registrants include eleven men who were mechanics, two who worked at a machine shop, and one who was an auto dealer in Douglas County. At the time of the first draft, the Sentinel listed advertisements for a \$665 Touring Car, and \$650 Roadster. There were four physicians, one named 'Turner' which just happens to be the name of my dentist (I'm not sure if they are related). Ten men worked as miners at the Villa Rica Sulfur Mine. Six blacksmiths filled out draft cards. Conveniently, each community within the county would have had at least one blacksmith. These men were, Larkin Hartwell Baldwin, John Herchel Brown, Lane Mo Camp, Hugh Downs, Irby Jefferson Sewell, and Wiley Lasseter.

Of the twenty-four million men registered in the United States, two million were drafted. More information on the WWI draft cards can be found out by a visit to The National Archives: Southeast Region.

Arlington National Cemetery is filled with men who fought for our country. The last remaining WWI veteran, Frank Buckles, was recently buried there. Several hundred Douglas County men served this country during WWI, and eight died either directly or indirectly from the war: Aulton Kennedy Brittain, Frank Parks Dorris, Theodore Farmer, Ben D. Head, James Martin, Thomas Norton, Owen Standridge, and Leonard Palmer. On this Memorial Day, let's remember these men, and all others who have died in Military Ser-

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Creek tribes since they once populated this region of Georgia. I actually happen to know many people who are part Cherokee Indian. As a point of interest, Anneewakee Road was named after a Cherokee Chief's daughter, Princess Anneewakee.

Besides looking at what the registrants marked on the draft cards, I looked at the different ways in which they were completed. Some were sloppy, typed, slightly neat, and a few were even written in purple or green ink. If a person couldn't fill out their card, the registrar would fill it out for them, but if the person could not even sign their own name, the registrar would sign the registrant's name for them and the registrant would make an 'X' in the space provided, captioned as 'His Mark'.

Just like today, not everyone had a job, including some of the Douglas County registrants. Ten men were unemployed – one half of one percent. The reason for most unemployment during that time was physical and mental problems. Also, fifteen students registered; one black student was attending Tuskegee. Convicts, as well, were made to fill out draft cards, although these cards are kept in separate boxes at the National Archives at Atlanta.

The June 21st, 1918 issue of the Douglas County Sentinel featured a letter from Frank P. Dorris. It was a heartfelt letter to his Mother in honor of Mother's Day that he wrote from the trenches in France. On the front page of the very next issue of the Sentinel, an article said that Frank P. Dorris had become the first Douglas County casualty on June 6th. Remember not only the soldiers who fought and are fighting but also their mothers.

Names of Men Who Served

The Eternal Flame is located in front of the Douglas County Courthouse in the Court of Honor. It exists to honor the Veterans of Douglas County who gave the Supreme Sacrifice in defense of our Country, and its inscription states that it is "dedicated to the Glory of God and to the Veterans of all Wars".

The Eternal Flame is a natural gas flame that is kept lit by an automatic ignitor. It is lit 24 hours per day, 365 days a year, and is known as the "Flame of Freedom".

At the base of the Eternal Flame are bronze plaques that list the names of Douglas County citizens who gave their lives in the defense of freedom.



World War II

Dennis Aderhold
Dennis Barfield
Donald Barrett
Gerald Bullock
Oliver Brown
Henley Camp
Francis Collins
Quinton Collins
Ralph Daniell
Edward O. Ergle
Arnold Evans
Alton Feltman
William Fowler
Velvin Holland
Leonard Hudson
Sam S. Johnston
James E. Lee
Pat McGuirk
Ralph Morris
William Morris
Milliard Price
Isaac Rainwater
Frank Tyson

Korea

James D. Bishop
Robert A. Marks
Thomas L. Parker
Herbert L. Roberts
Charlie V. Smith
Wesley F. Smith
Monroe B. Willoughby

Vietnam

Gene Thomas Bailey
Herbert Eugene Belcher
Leon G. Holton
Robert Gerald Hunter
Brian Edward Jay
Melvin Johnson
Thurlo McClure
Raymond Simpson
Robert Paul Tidwell
David Beavers Wood
Nathan Bedford Simmons
Johnny Delbert Swann

Operation Iraqi Freedom

Sgt. Thomas Strickland

Draft Cards

REGISTRATION CARD 174
1. Name: South, Peter Barris
2. Address: Douglasville Ga
3. Date of Birth: April 5 1894
4. Place of Birth: Douglasville Ga U.S.A.
5. Occupation: Merchant
6. Education: J.P. Barris & Co
7. Physical Condition: Good
8. No other military service
9. No other military service
10. Married or single (check one): Single
11. When military service here or had? None
12. I affirm that I have filled out this statement and that they are true
Signature: Peter Barris

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5. Occupation: Merchant
6. Education: J.P. Barris & Co
7. Physical Condition: Good
8. No other military service
9. No other military service
10. Married or single (check one): Single
11. When military service here or had? None
12. I affirm that I have filled out this statement and that they are true
Signature: Peter Barris

REGISTRATION CARD 10
1. Name: Ford, Leo Camp
2. Address: Douglasville Ga
3. Date of Birth: September 14 1888
4. Place of Birth: Douglasville Ga U.S.A.
5. Occupation: self
6. Education: self
7. Physical Condition: self
8. No other military service
9. No other military service
10. Married or single (check one): Single
11. When military service here or had? None
12. I affirm that I have filled out this statement and that they are true
Signature: Leo Camp

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