

Unionville in WWI

Our 80th exhibit focuses on Unionville's response to the United States' entry into the 1914-1918 World War.

Surprisingly, Unionville, a center of manufacturing, was not highly involved in producing goods for the war. But it was able to supply other wartime needs.

First and foremost, it supplied over 100 young men willing and able to fight. Although less than half of them served overseas, all were necessary to allow the U.S. to fight an overseas war and to protect both its shipping and its harbors and coastlines.

Second, it supplied money to finance the war. The village of Unionville in 1917-1918 had in the neighborhood of 1500-2000 people (women, children and men) and a very mixed population of working people with a few factory managers and other higher-income families. Yet it was able to raise much more than its share of the money required to pay for the war.

Finally, Unionville's people worked hard for the Red Cross and other support organizations while cutting back on materials such as coal, wheat and beef, all needed to support the army directly or the war materials industries



This 1960s photograph of four Unionville "Senior Citizens" includes two WWI veterans—Fred Bauer on the middle left and Fred Anderson on the middle right. They are seated in Unionville Center in front of the Congregational Church.

Fred Bauer and Fred Anderson were both members of F Co., 102nd Infantry.

Both returned to Unionville after the war. Fred Bauer was owner of a local printing business and Fred Anderson served as a constable for many years.



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OVER THERE & BACK HERE

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OUR 80TH EXHIBIT

AUGUST 26 – NOVEMBER 11, 2018



Over There—Soldiers All

The “Over There” section begins with the picture shown above—our earliest one of Unionville’s WWI Honor Roll. Right from the start, the community found ways to support its soldiers.

This 1917 version contains 47 names. More names were added as the war (and the draft) went on. An updated version from mid-1918 with 95 names is also shown. The final count, based on the information we have so far, is around 103 men.

Most of the “Over There” section looks at the men who went to war, four of whom died in France with the American Expeditionary Force (AEF), and their experiences on the Western Front, on the Atlantic and elsewhere in the U.S.

One of the first groups to arrive in France after war was declared in April was the 102nd Infantry, a CT group that was part of the Yankee Division (made up of former New England units). The 102nd reached Europe in

September, 1917 and fought in most of the final battles of the war.



Pvt. Phillip Bergin

Louis Hanrahan and Phillip Bergin, two of the four Unionville soldiers who died, served in this unit.

Other groups, such as the 301st Trench Mortar Battery, never made it to the front though they were among the millions of men sent to Europe for the final push.

And, for every Unionville man who went overseas as a part of the AEF, there was a man who served on the transport ships that got them there or at the hundreds of installations in the U.S. that prepared them for battle or provided their food or guarded the country from German attacks.



Pvt. Bill Prout, 151st Depot Brigade

Back Home—For Our Boys

Meanwhile, back in Unionville, people, especially women, were busy working for the Red Cross and other organizations who provided aid and support to the soldiers overseas and to the refugees and others directly impacted by the war.



Miss Clover Pinney



In addition, despite its relatively low-earning population of immigrants and factory workers, Unionville made a huge effort to purchase as many war bonds as they could possibly afford. And the village excelled throughout all four bond issues.

Another area where Unionville made sacrifices was by “self-rationing” their consumption of beef, wheat, sugar and other items needed overseas and coal and electricity, needed for the factories producing war materials.