

In April 1917 the United States declared war on Germany, thereby becoming a direct participant in the horrendous conflict raging on two fronts in Europe. The people of Washburn were soon caught up in a wave of super-patriotism that engulfed the nation. Everyone enthusiastically supported the war, encouraged by the demand for loyalty, and conformity, and rewarded by the prosperity that the war generated. Loyalty was to be demonstrated by contributing to the war effort and by enthusiastic public displays of patriotism.

According to the Times, the first occasion for "Washburn people who are just teeming over with patriotism . . . to show that patriotic spirit" was held a couple of weeks after war was declared. A "monster parade" almost a mile long was headed by the city band, followed by "school children to the number of hundreds all carrying flags, Boy Scouts, and decorated automobiles to the number of nearly one hundred." After the parade a "monster meeting" was held in the opera hall, which was "packed to the doors, the seating space was filled and standing room was fairly jammed, many were turned away from the doors." The program included several addresses, interspersed with musical selections by the band and singing by

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**Lars  
Larson**  
Guest  
columnist

the audience. Resolutions were unanimously adopted, pledging the "faith, support and fealty" of the people of the city "to the flag of our country, to the cause of liberty and to the arms of the nation;" also to refrain from "incendiary remarks that may bring reproach upon the stars and stripes, or which may arouse internecine strife among our neighbors;" and finally to "do our utmost as good citizens to support the constitution of the United States and its defenders at home and abroad." A message conveying the resolutions was sent to President Wilson and the people of Washburn were soon rewarded for these expressions of their patriotic dedication by a response from the President, thanking them for their "kind message, which has helped to reassure him and keep him in heart."

Similar exercises on a smaller scale were held throughout the war years, occasionally in the public schools. Rousing speeches were a feature of these events, the famous evan-

gelist Billy Sunday giving "a sizzling patriotic address" at one such gathering. Patriotic ardor was also expressed by flag raising ceremonies. The Commercial Club purchased "a handsome, large regulation army flag," which was "formally dedicated and flung to the breeze" during a ceremony, that included band and vocal music and public speaking. Those of a more activist temper could join the Four Minute Men, the Council of Defense or the Wisconsin Loyalty Legion. The Four Minute Men were local men of unimpeachable loyalty with a flair for public speaking, who were "turned loose for four minute stints before any available audience to whip up enthusiasm for the war." The county Council of Defense, part of the state Council of Defense, coordinated various war activities at the county level. The principal achievements of the council seem to have been to exhort grocers to stop home deliveries to save gasoline, to deny a building permit to a Washburn merchant because he would have used scarce materials, and to criticize a Bayfield County assemblyman who had opposed a resolution in the state legislature to censure United States Senator Robert M. La Follette "for his manifested lack of sympathy with his own country and its purposes." The Wisconsin Loyalty

Legion was formed by men who wanted to deal directly and forcefully with those who had opposed or continued to oppose the war, or at least appeared to do so, by not displaying sufficient public enthusiasm for it.

But there was a darker side to this fever of super-patriotism. People who said or did something that could be construed as disloyal were hounded and humiliated, lost their jobs, were jailed, or even became the "honored guest" at a "tar and feather party." Ashland became particularly notorious for these "parties." Men were abducted from their homes, taken to a lonely spot in the country where they were stripped of their clothing and a mixture of tar and feathers poured on them. One victim of this treatment was a Northland College professor, whose only "crime" seems to have been that he was born in Germany. Another victim was a man who had lost his job as the state income tax assessor because he had made "disloyal statements against the United States government" and whose signature was found on a petition to embargo the shipment of munitions to the Allied Powers. Another way that people were humiliated and brought into line was to paint their automobiles, houses or even the people themselves with yellow paint.