

Volume 41, number 3

Autumn 2018

Thomas F. Jorsch. "Reluctant Nationalism: Lindsborg during the Great War."

When World War I began in summer 1914, the people of Lindsborg embraced neutrality and called for peace. Many in the predominantly Swedish population blamed Sweden's historical enemy, Russia, for the war and showed some sympathy for Germany. Unlike many other Americans who drifted from neutrality to contempt for German provocations in 1915 and 1916, the people of Lindsborg generally maintained their views. Even after the US declared war on the Central Powers in April 1917, significant anti-war attitudes existed in the city, despite the efforts of city leaders to squelch this dissent and protect the community and its institutions like Bethany College from bad publicity. Dr. Thomas F. Jorsch, Instructor of American Studies at Oklahoma State University, writes that "reluctant nationalism" describes the attitudes of many in the city regarding the war, as their political, ethnic, and religious convictions made it difficult for them to equate Americanism with the type of loyalty espoused by hyper-nationalistic war supporters.

James H. Ducker, "'The Wailing Place': 1920s Emporians Speak for Themselves."

William Allen White has been called the "Spokesman for the Grass Roots," but in his *Emporia Gazette* the "grass roots" residents of his town spoke for themselves in "The Wailing Place," the newspaper's letters to the editor section. They argued over how morality, religion, science, and the Constitution bore on the pressing cultural and class issues of the time. The letters reflected class and racial resentments and the clash between moral interventionists seeking individual and societal improvement on the one hand and those who supported tolerance and the possibility for greater freedom in the modern pluralistic society on the other. They articulately expressed sincerely held beliefs of what it means to be a good person and how to form better individuals and a better society. Examination of letters of these ordinary citizens brings us closer to understanding the views of the everyday Americans.

Geoffrey Newman, "Forgetting Strength: Coffeyville, The Black Freedom Struggle, and Vanished Memory."

The Coffeyville race riot of 1927, triggered by the allegations of two white high school girls that they had been raped by "negroes," caused a white lynch mob to attack the jail and city hall and shatter every window. The mob was repelled by deputies and later, by armed men who defended black homes and stores, in a remarkable demonstration of racial agency. The subsequent race-charged criminal trial had defendants and a verdict that shocked everyone. "Forgetting Strength" examines the events and history behind the black activism. While African Americans contested the restrictions of Jim Crow customs in Kansas, the emerging youth culture of the 1920s contested social norms that upheld prohibition and placed restrictions on young women. Curiously, today's popular culture remembers

the Roaring Twenties, but Coffeyville's black activism has been almost totally forgotten.