# NEVADA Historical Society Quarterly



# Fall · 1976



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The Nevada Historical Society was founded in 1904 for the purpose of investigating topics pertaining to the early history of Nevada and of collecting relics for a museum. The Society maintains a library and museum at its Reno facility where historical materials of many kinds are on display to the public and are available to students and scholars.

Membership dues are: annual, \$7.50; student, \$3; sustaining, \$25; life, \$100; and patron, \$250. Membership applications and dues should be sent to the director.

Correspondence concerning articles in the *Quarterly* and manuscripts to be considered for publication should be addressed to the editor. The Society assumes no responsibility for statements made by contributors.

## NEVADA INDIANS PLANNING TROUBLE

#### Situation in Eastern Portion of Conrad Koremann, of Sioux the State Serious and Official Action Is Taken

Arthur M. Allen, special agent of the department of justice, wiffed United States Attorney William Woodburn vesterday afternoon from Ely that the situation among the Indians in castern Nevada was serious coint of an emergency call,

In consequence of Allen's message, Woodlarn immediately took steps in disclose just what action he had tuken

It is probable, however, that special agents of the government have been sert to the scene of the trouble and that the situation has been reported to Fort Douglas, Utah, the nearest point from which troops could he sent.

#### Big Uprising Planned

According to a report received from the sheriff of White Pine county yesterday," Paule, Goshute and Shoshone Indians are planning an uprising gver a territory 050 miles in length and extending from Pioche and Elko, Nev., as far east as beer Creek, Utah.

The Indians are said to have been supplied with arms and poison by a white man, suspected of being a German or of having pro-German sympathics, and incuted to attack Indian acents and white settlers.

#### Gathering at Pioche

The flot is said to have been revealed by a gathering of Indians near Poche a few days ago and at which plans for the raid were made.

Feverich excitement is reported in several Indian camps and settlements. Star, of the Trouble

Trouble with the Indians com-Creek, Utah, where a body of Indiana, Bakers Take Drastic Measures showed turbulence on account of the errent of several Indians for evasion of the draft and who are at present being held under indictment.

The present treuble among the Indiars may be a protest against the arrest of the Deep Creek Indians, though in some quarters it is believed to be due to pro-Gorman influnce.

## Falls, S. D., Is Found **Guilty of Treason**

CONVICT GERMAN

SIOUX FALLS, S. D., April 10. wifed Conrad Kornemann, president of the South Dakota branch of the German- Essential Industries American alliance and editor of a Gorman language newspaper here, was convicted by a jury on four counts and asking him to arrange to have of an indictment charging violation of troops ready for dispatch upon re- this espionage act, in the United States district court here tonight.

Letters which Kornemann had written to business associates and friends the matter, though he stated last constituted the evidence presented night that he was not at liberty to against him at the trial. The letters were seized several months ago in raids on a German newspaper in Aberdeen, S. D., and in Kornemann's newspaper office and home here.

#### Makes Seditions Statement

In a letter written to F. W. Sallet, and periodicals, oil, refineries, ( editor of the Aberdeen paper, who al and vegetable), oil wells equi was taken into custody at the time public institutions and building; on a charge of failing to file correctilic utilities, railways, railway translations of articles appearing in ment and supplies, refrigeration his paper, Kornemann declared.

"I have never given any declaration of loyalty and will never do it, supplies and equipment, soap nor subscribe to any Liberty loan (the plants and rolling mills, tanning nome is to me already an enjetic (except for patent leather), t phrase and misleading.)"

later Kornemann purchased \$500 worth of Liberty bonds.

Judge J. D. Elliott deferred passing sentence.



## to Show Prisse He Can't **Boost Kaiser Here**

cause of alleged pro-German utterances, William Praisse, 51 years old, portation of raw materials an a registered German, was thrown head plies required by them in their

## **INDUSTRIES ARE** EDITOR ESPIONAGE CLASSIFIED FOR FIIFI PRIN

(Continued from Page 1) ority. The intention is to tr these alike, and possibly deci dividual cases on merits if need

Plants engaged exclusively in ufacturing aircraft or supplie equipments; an munition for the ed States and the allies: arn navy contonments and compsarms, chemicals coke domestic sumers, electrical equipment, trodes, explosives, farm impli ferro alloys, fertilizers, fire food for human consumption containers, gas, gas producing chinery, guns, hemp, jute and begr, insecticides, fungicides, in steel (blast furnaces and foun laundries, machine tools, mines ing tools and equipment, news (except flowerseeds), bunker co. including pleasure craft), ship extracts, tin plate, twine (binde It was developed at the trial that rope, wire rope and rope wire. Important For War

"It is proper to say," a stat by the board set forth, "the board has not undertaken to c and industry as non-essential this time to limit the quantity which any particular industry of shall receive. The board has, ever, listed certain industries operation is of exceptional it INTO DOUGH BIN save measured by the extent o toward winning the war or promoting the national welfar these industries will be accorde ferential treatment by the fu ministration in the distribution and coke and also in the transpo of such coal and coke by th roads.

"This same plan will be follo" SALT LAKE CITY, Apr. 10 .- Be- according preferential treatm a registered German, was thrown head first into a dough bin at a local bakery ufacturing operations, so that may not be delayed or hampe

A contemporary account of the Indian troubles in eastern Nevada from the Nevada State Journal of April 11, 1918.

## *"Indians at Ibapah in Revolt":* Goshutes, the Draft and the Indian Bureau, 1917–1919

by Richard N. Ellis

IN THE COLD BLACKNESS that preceded dawn the soldiers silently positioned themselves to move against the Indians. Striking swiftly with complete surprise, they charged through the village with rifles at the ready, and frightened Indians were hauled from their homes and collected under guard. It was all over very quickly and without bloodshed, and soon several men were marched off as prisoners. The dramatic raid, complete with a night march across the desert at first glance appears to be part of the Indian-white campaigns of the nineteenth century, but the date was February 22, 1918, and this raid, coming as it did during World War I, is certainly one of the more unusual episodes in the history of Indian-white relations.

Few, if any, Americans in 1917 and 1918 expected Indian revolts, especially from the tiny, widely scattered bands of Goshutes, Paiutes, and Shoshones that struggled to eke out an existence in the hostile environment of the Great Basin. Yet during these two years Bureau of Indian Affairs officials were allegedly seized by Indians, posses were organized, and finally troops were sent. For a time at least there was great excitement, which increased in some circles when investigations revealed that the Indians refused to register for the draft, and as rumors flew that German agents were at work among the Indian tribes. The "uprising" of 1917-18 not only provides an interesting study in wartime hysteria, but also reveals another example of the incompetence of Bureau of Indian Affairs officials and ignorance of the conditions of some Indian groups in the United States. If nothing else, it is a remarkable case of governmental over-reaction.

In 1917 and 1918 the population of the Goshute Reservation on the Nevada-Utah border was less than 150. Like other bands in the Great Basin they had been left alone and had received little government support or attention. Indeed, some of the more isolated bands of the area did not

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belong to any Indian office jurisdiction. Although in 1916 the superintendent at Goshute recommended that the Indians be given schools, health care and assistance in defending land and water rights, the picture that emerges from official correspondence is that of a small group of Indians who had been virtually forgotten by the government.<sup>1</sup> This condition undoubtedly underlay the controversy of 1917–1918. Equally important was the quality of Bureau of Indian Affairs personnel under Commissioner of Indian Affairs Cato Sells, the personality and ability of Amos Frank, superintendent at the Goshute Reservation at Deep Creek, and the bureau practice of defending employees against any and all complaints.

The first sign of trouble at the Goshute Reservation developed on June 7, 1917, when surprised officials in Washington, D.C. received a telegram from western Utah announcing, "Indians at Ibapah in revolt. . . Indians sending messengers over state and Nevada, bringing in other Indians. All have rifles. Would like 40 to 50 soldiers. Will take that many control situation."<sup>2</sup> Commissioner Sells responded by sending one man, Inspector L. A. Dorrington, a career employee and an experienced investigator, although a glance at his reports over the years indicates a strong proclivity to defend the bureau and its employees from criticism.

Conflicting reports, the biases of individuals involved, and the fact that the available documents were recorded exclusively by government bureaucrats, make it impossible to discern exactly what happened. It appears, however, that the trouble grew from a deep and pervasive disenchantment with bureau officials and a basic misunderstanding about the Selective Service Act.

On June 7, 1917, George Knapp, Deputy Special Officer for the Suppression of Liquor Traffic, visited the agency and was ordered to leave by two Indians, Annie's Tommy and Willie Ottogary, the latter a resident of the town of Tremonton, some two hundred miles away in northern Utah. Apparently the agent considered the two men to be troublemakers and wanted them arrested. In the ensuing scuffle Knapp was foiled in his attempt to effect the arrest and was temporarily detained. Sometime thereafter he was released or escaped and went to the nearby town of Gold Hill, Utah, where he organized a posse and sent the telegram calling for troops. He acted, he said later, on instructions from the superintendent, Amos Frank.<sup>3</sup>

When Dorrington arrived at the agency, he found the situation peaceful and the Indians posting notices that they were not on the warpath. However, he also found a strong undercurrent of discontent along with outspoken demands for the removal of the superintendent. This condition was confirmed by George Knapp who reported, "Most of the Indians *hate*, and have *hated* their Superintendent right along."<sup>4</sup>

Dorrington defended the superintendent nevertheless and absolved him of all blame. He accepted Frank's opinions of various Indians without question, and described as "unreliable and not deserving of consideration" those band members who made complaints against the agent. Annie's Tommy, a reservation leader, was described as "the very worst Indian" on the reservation.<sup>5</sup>

Dorrington also learned that the question of registration for the draft was another source of trouble. By law and by presidential proclamation all male Americans between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-one were required to register for the draft; Indians were included even though the majority of them were not citizens and therefore were exempt from military service. Dorrington lectured the Indians on this subject and after great pressure and threats of prosecution convinced eight of the twelve eligible Goshutes to register. The remaining four were working off the reservation at the time. Obviously draft resistence was not an issue of great magnitude, at least in terms of numbers, but Dorrington was concerned about this unpatriotic display and recommended that Annie's Tommy, Willie Ottogary, and Al Steele be arrested and tried for "treasonable conduct" as they "maliciously, deliberately and with premeditation violated the laws of their country through advising, influencing and interfering with the registration" of members of the Goshute band.6

In the months that followed, Amos Frank continued as Goshute superintendent even though he found the Indians "sullen and insolvent" and feared further trouble. Frank was not a particularly sensitive man when the needs and wishes of the Indians were concerned, but in this case he perceived that the Goshutes were still upset, and he wanted his critics arrested.<sup>7</sup>

Indian discontent surfaced again in January 1918. The Indians demanded a new superintendent, and on January 21 they had Amos Frank write a letter for them to the commissioner. They outlined their grievances against the superintendent and against government treatment in general, including the complaint that since Frank had arrived the school had been discontinued and that he had hired only whites and Mexicans rather than Indians. They also listed the names of Indians who had been killed by whites over a period of years and charged that the agent had failed to secure justice. "This agent here says nothing about it and never tries to help," they protested. They further complained about the loss of water, land and timber to whites and concluded with the announcement that Amos Frank would have to leave by the end of February. Frank, of course, sent his own explanation with the letter, asserting that these were the same Indians that had always caused trouble and recommended that they be punished.<sup>8</sup>

Once again Commissioner Sells responded by sending Dorrington to settle matters. The Inspector found that the Indians were indeed determined to remove Frank and to prevent his return by force if necessary. He was surprised by their unity and the intensity of their feelings and warned them of the consequences of using force to remove the superintendent, but they repeatedly indicated their determination to rid themselves of Amos Frank by whatever means necessary.

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Once again Dorrington ignored Indian complaints and asserted that Goshute opposition to military service was the main issue of controversy. Because the Goshutes had not complained about the draft in their letter to the commissioner and because the War Department declined to prosecute Indians for failure to register, it appears simply that Dorrington was trying to protect Amos Frank by shifting attention from real issues. Recognizing that the Indians misunderstood the conscription law and also opposed military service, he exploited that issue for public consumption. When he asked the Indians their attitude toward enlistment and the draft, they replied that "they were absolutely against their men going to war" and declared further that they would die on the spot rather than enlist or submit to the draft. As Annie's Tommy explained, a long time ago the President told them to lay down their arms and fight no more. We told him we would do it, he said, "and now you come and want us to fight, but we won't do it."<sup>9</sup>

Dorrington was sufficiently impressed with the seriousness of the situation to recommend that Annie's Tommy and other leaders be arrested and held without bail until matters were settled at Goshute. It was his firm belief that the government could not afford to let the Indians believe that they were responsible for the superintendent's removal. The immediate answer, he felt, was to provide Frank with protection. Later the superintendent should be replaced, but only on bureau terms.<sup>10</sup>

Washington officials were also concerned, and the Interior Department asked for prompt action in prosecuting the Indians. Dorrington conferred with United States Attorney William Ray and U.S. Marshall Aquila Nebeker in Salt Lake City, and warrants were issued for the arrest of four reservation leaders and for Willie Ottogary, who had not been involved in the controversy since the previous June. Expecting resistance, they asked for a detail of soldiers from Fort Douglas in Salt Lake City. The Interior and Justice Departments supported the request, and a detachment of three officers and fifty-one enlisted men was quickly readied.<sup>11</sup>

As coded messages flashed across the country on the telegraph wires and the Salt Lake City press was sworn to temporary silence to prevent leaks, the command rushed to "the front" by rail and auto. After bucking their way through snowdrifts and suffering from the intense cold, on February 22, 1918, they raced into the sleeping agency in the early morning darkness, and almost immediately seven prisoners were in custody. At the same time Willie Ottogary was arrested in distant Tremonton, Utah.<sup>12</sup>

The affair was not without its comic aspects. The government used coded messages and imposed a news blackout while a contingent of soldiers arrested a few Indians on an isolated reservation and confiscated some twenty-five rifles and shotguns. Newspapers carried stories of the "draft revolt" and the people of Gold Hill gave a dance in honor of the soldiers. One Salt Lake City newspaper announced, "The spectacle of a detachment of United States soldiers armed for business swooping down so suddenly and effectively . . . and removing so effectively and quietly the mutinous Indians, it is believed, will have a far-reaching effect in wiping out opposition to the draft law. . . . <sup>13</sup>

Three of the prisoners had been arrested for failure to register for the draft, and after a severe warning they were released and sent home when they promised to register. The others, all older men beyond draft age, were given a preliminary hearing in March, charged with persuading other Indians not to register, and were held under bond for a future grand jury hearing. They were soon released on their own recognizance, however, after citizens near the reservation offered to pay their bonds. Dorrington wrote, "We could not overlook the opportunity offered for gaining the confidence of these Indians, and making them feel we were really their friends." Had they been released under reduced bond to their neighbors, he explained, they "would have been under no obligation to us." It was also decided to delay bringing the case before the grand jury with the idea of eventually dismissing the case if the Indians caused no further trouble.<sup>14</sup>

When Dorrington wrote his report to the Commissioner on March 26, he commented in a model of understatement that "conditions at Goshute Reservation have been anything but desirable." However, he placed the blame for all the difficulties on the Indians, charging that their resistance to supervision had caused constant trouble from the time the agency had been founded. Willie Ottogary, "an outsider," was also given a portion of the blame. Once again Amos Frank was completely exonerated.

The final portion of Dorrington's report must have astonished bureau officials. Concluding that a superintendency at Goshute was "not now required and wholly unnecessary," he recommended that it be discontinued at an early date. This, he argued, would "remove much of the supervision not now needed besides curtailing the opportunity for the Indians to make constant unnecessary and ridiculous demands upon their superintendent." A teacher-farmer with his wife as housekeeper would suffice.<sup>15</sup>

As news of these events spread across the country, such newspapers as the *New York Evening Mail* began reporting that German agents were tampering with the Indians, including those at the Goshute Reservation. On April 10, Dorrington, who envisioned German agents behind every sagebrush, wired Washington that there was a threatened uprising by Indians in Eastern Nevada and that strange white men were reported to have furnished arms and ammunition to Indians.<sup>16</sup> On the following day the *Nevada State Journal* carried the headline "NEVADA INDIANS PLANNING TROUBLE," and reported that officials believed that Paiute, Goshute, and Shoshone Indians in eastern Nevada and western Utah were planning an uprising.<sup>17</sup> Nothing happened, of course, and the reports were promptly ridiculed by the newspaper in Pioche, Nevada where the center of the revolt was supposedly located. Reporting that a local judge had received a telegram from someone in authority asking if he wanted "troops, gatling guns or submarines" to quell the disturbance, the *Pioche Record* eloquently exclaimed, "Ye Gods and little fishes." The *Record* reported the Indian population in the area consisted of one "squaw" and her two children, while there was an "old buck" sixty miles to the north, but he was about a hundred years old, and "not quite active enough for a German soldier."<sup>18</sup>

Although there was no danger of an Indian uprising, the issue of draft resistance remained important, at least in the minds of Bureau of Indian Affairs officials. The decision was made to prosecute Annie's Tommy and the other prisoners, but charges were soon dismissed for lack of evidence. Meanwhile the conflict between Amos Frank and the Goshutes continued.<sup>19</sup>

In his final report on the Goshute situation Dorrington continued to defend the superintendent although he admitted that the situation would not improve while Frank remained there. The Indians, he reported, "entertain a constant disregard for their superintendent . . . which has become nothing less than disrespect." He concluded, "It simply means that the Indians and superintendent are entirely out of touch with each other," and that while Frank was a faithful, efficient and conscientious employee, "his dignified and unbending nature has not been understood by the Indians." Dorrington believed that if Frank had been a "little more liberal" there probably would have been no trouble. In the end Dorrington went away, Frank remained at his post, Indian grievances continued, and friction remained.<sup>20</sup>

Bureau policy during this period was to defend employees against all complaints, especially from Indians. Superintendents such as Frank, who had lost their effectiveness, were kept at their posts; others who were found guilty of misconduct were most often simply transferred to other posts in the Indian Service. That policy was in effect at the Goshute Reservation where during two years of controversy bureau officials refused to recognize and confront deep-seated discontent and chose instead to emphasize only the issue of registration for the draft, which provided a convenient justification to deal with the most vocal Indian complaintants.

With American involvement in World War I most Indians in the United States quickly registered for the draft. There was slight resistance at some of the more isolated agencies such as Fort Hall in Idaho, Southern Ute in Colorado and Western Navajo in Arizona, but even in these instances matters were quickly settled when it was explained that registration did not mean that all the men would be sent to Europe to fight. At the Southern Ute Reservation, registration was delayed because of the annual Bear Dance.<sup>21</sup>

Commissioner Sells was proud of the Indian record during World War I. Records show that some 17,000 Indians registered for the draft and that approximately 10,000 Indians served in the armed forces. This compares to national figures of 24,234,021 registered and 2,810,296 inducted into the armed forces. Moreover, Sells boasted that Indian response to Liberty Loan drives was unsurpassed, and that they contributed a sum of

\$25,000,000 or about \$75.00 per person. The Commission also boasted of the "civilizing influence" of the war and proudly pointed out that "blanket Indians" serving in the military were learning better English, and some were even learning a little French.<sup>22</sup>

Unfortunately, these impressive figures were due to government influence as well as to Indian patriotism. United States intervention into the world war unleashed a wave of patriotism throughout the nation that frequently erupted in extreme actions. Citizens were beaten, tarred and feathered, shot, and lynched for allegedly disloval statements or actions: the national press and government officials unleashed a propaganda campaign to support the war effort, and people everywhere were on the watch for draft evaders or "slackers." In Utah, for example, two men attacked a German who worked in a bakery, stuffed his head in a large pan of dough and fired several shots at his feet. The Salt Lake City Herald *Republican*, describing the event in a feature story, applauded the patriotism of the men.<sup>23</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, that the regional press approved of the military raid to suppress "mutinous" Goshute Indians. The bureau was concerned with its patriotic image, and the temper of the times undoubtedly encouraged bureau officials throughout the nation to cajole and pressure Indians into military service and enabled them to act quickly to stamp out opposition at Goshute.

In retrospect it is clear that Indians served with distinction during World War I, and if the Goshutes stand out as an exception because of their continued opposition to military service, it must be remembered that their primary concern was the removal of an unpopular superintendent. The military raid to secure the arrest of their leaders may well have been the only time during World War I when the army was used to arrest draft resisters. In effect the government was using this as a pretext to support militarily an Indian superintendent who had become *persona non grata* among his own charges.

#### Notes

1. Frank to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, August 31, 1916, 1916-034-Goshute, Central Classified Files, Record Group 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Archives, Washington, D.C., hereafter cited as RG 75.

2. Telegram, Frank to Sells, June 7, 1917, 66895-17-126-Goshute, RG 75. This was sent by Knapp over Frank's name.

3. Knapp to Chief Special Officer, June 11, 1917, L. A. Dorrington Papers, Record Group 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Federal Records Center, San Francisco, Calif., hereafter cited as Dorrington.

5. Dorrington to Sells, June 20, 1917, Dorrington.

6. Ibid.

7. Frank to Sells, June 20, 1917, Dorrington.

8. Dorrington to Sells, February 6, 1918, 30951-18-125-Goshute, RG 75.

9. Dorrington to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, March 26, 1918, 30951-18-125-Goshute, RG 75.

10. Ibid.

<sup>4.</sup> Ibid.

11. John L. O'Brian (for the Attorney General) to General H. P. McCain, Feb. 15, 1918; S. G. Hopkins (Asst. Secretary of the Interior) to the Attorney General, Feb. 18, 1918; O'Brian to Secretary of the Interior, Feb. 19, 1918, 186233-281, Record Group 60, Records of the Justice Department, National Archives, Washington, D.C., hereafter cited as RG 60.

12. Nebeker to Attorney General, Feb. 26, 1918, RG 60; Dorrington to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, March 26, 1918, 30951-18-125 Goshute, RG 75.

13. Undated newspaper clipping in 30951-18-125-Goshute, RG 75; *Herald-Republican* (Salt Lake City, Utah), Feb. 22, 1918; *Deseret News* (Salt Lake City, Utah), Feb. 21, 1918.

14. Dorrington to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, March 26, 1918, 30951-18-125-Goshute, RG 75.

15. Ibid.

16. Telegram, Dorrington to Sells, April 10, 1918, 30951-18-125-Goshute, RG 75.

17. Nevada State Journal (Reno), April 11, 1918.

18. Pioche Record (Nevada), April 19, 1918.

19. Frank complained that the Indians were "defiant," the situation "looked ugly," and that he thought Mormons might be agitating the Indians; Frank to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Oct. 23 and Oct. 29, 1918, 30951-18-125-Goshute, RG 75. The court case is in Record Group 21, Records of the U.S. District Court, District of Utah, Criminal Case 5166, Federal Records Center, Denver, Colo.

20. Although he defended Frank, Dorrington recommended that he be reassigned because the altitude was bad for his health. Frank also wanted a new assignment. Dorrington to Sells, Sept. 21, 1918 and Frank to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Oct. 23, 1918, *Ibid*.

21. Jacob Browning to Sells, June 5, 1917, 73752-17-125-Fort Hall; E. E. McKean to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, June 6, 1917, 55333-17-125-Southern Ute, RG 75; *Arizona Republican* (Phoenix), June 6, 1917; *Coconino Sun* (Flagstaff, Ariz.), June 18, 1917. The *Sun* reported, "The Indians are laboring under the delusion that if they register they will be compelled to go to France and fight for The United States."

22. Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior, 1918, p. 7; Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior, 1919, p. 14; Second Report of the Provost Marshal General to the Secretary of War on the Operations of the Selective Service System to December 20, 1918 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1919), pp. 190, 198. It should be remembered that opposition to the draft was rather widespread among white Americans. The situation in central Oklahoma provides a point of comparison. It was estimated that there were 3,000 or more draft resisters, and when armed resistance developed in 1917 some 500 people were arrested. It is interesting also that this was handled by civil authorities. See *Muskogee Daily Phoenix* (Okla.), Aug. 4, 1917, Aug. 26, 1917. The government also encouraged Indian investment in Liberty Loans, the Red Cross, etc. and permitted guardians of a Creek girl to buy \$25,000 worth of Liberty bonds. See the *Tulsa Daily World* (Oklahoma), June 16, 1917.

23. Herald-Republican, April 10, 1918.