WORLD WAR II AND CAMP HOWZE: THE IMPACT UPON GAINESVILLE AND COOKE COUNTY, TEXAS

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We hereby recommend that the thesis prepared under our supervision by Barbara Kay Nickell Burns entitled "World War II and Camp Howze: The Impact Upon Gainesville and Cooke County, Texas"

be accepted as fulfilling this part of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

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When I first entered graduate school, at the back of my mind I knew that one day I would have to select a topic for a thesis. Always loving world history, I thought my research would incorporate that interest. Then I took a course in family history with Dr. Ingrid Winther Scobie. As part of my assignment, I wrote a research paper on my parents and their lives during World War II. From that research I knew I wanted to do a community study concerning that time. Discussing my idea with Mr. Alonzo Jamison, Chairman of the Department of History and Government, he suggested that I write about Camp Howze, the military base at Gainesville, Texas, during World War II. At his suggestion I contacted Margaret Parx Hays, Director of the Cooke County Heritage Society. With her invaluable assistance, I contacted local residents who answered my many questions about their experiences and whose anecdotes give life to my study. I also thank Warren Flowers, owner of the Gainesville Daily Register, for allowing me to borrow the microfilm of the Register. Without his generosity, I would never have received all the necessary information to complete my research.

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CHAPTER I

WAR: SETTING AND OUTBREAK

"Scarcely a dozen towns with a population of 10,000 or more . . . do not have a military installation of some sort."[1] Although an exaggeration, this statement, made by a journalist in 1943, corroborated the emergence of Gainesville, Texas, with a population of 9,651 into a bustling community because of the recent building of Camp Howze. The camp, a temporary base constructed northwest of Gainesville and covering almost 60,000 acres in Cooke County, influenced the economic and social structure of both the town and the county throughout World War II.[2]

With the rapid growth in population throughout the war years, the people of Gainesville and Cooke County experienced tremendous economic and social modifications in their life styles. While some problems represented concerns shared by many Americans, other hardships occurred as a result of a large military base located in the midst of a small, rural community. As the war unfolded, various concerns of citizens in Cooke County typified Americans in general, yet some events were unique because of Camp Howze. During the post-war period, citizens realized most changes which occurred

because of World War II were temporary; few permanent alterations survived.

Because of its geographical setting, Cooke County stood as an agricultural area. Its rolling prairies situated between two great soil belts--red alluvial and black loam--and sustained by about thirty-five inches of rainfall annually nurtured a variety of crops. Its location near tributaries of the Trinity River further enhanced farm production.[3]

In spite of favorable natural advantages, the county experienced severe setbacks during the Depression of the 1930s. Although the stock market crash of October 29, 1929, failed to affect county residents immediately, citizens eventually felt the shock. Over the next four years wages fell sharply, retail sales declined, unemployment more than doubled, the construction industry collapsed, farm prices fell drastically, area banks reduced or recalled loans and raised interest rates, and many businesses failed, including one of the Gainesville banks.[4]

As conditions worsened, people sought relief. Churches, civic organizations, and the County Board of Welfare and Employment aided Depression victims. The greatest assistance, however, came through the New Deal programs: the Public Works Administration, the Works Progress Administration, the Civilian Conservation Corps, and the Agricultural

Adjustment Administration (AAA). Of all the federal programs the AAA proved to be the most important to local economic recovery. Established in 1934, its allotment program, which controlled crop production and restored commodity prices, paid over $250 million to county residents in 1937 alone.[5]

Paradoxically living standards actually improved during the Depression years. Because of the AAA farm income rose sharply. Tenant farming declined as sharecroppers moved to town. By 1945 almost half of the county farms had electricity through the Rural Electrification Administration, compared to about four percent in 1930. Federal assistance had proved beneficial to area residents during the Depression years.[6]

Prior to the war Cooke County subsisted mainly as an agricultural center supported by a number of small businesses. The county's important agricultural industries included dairy farming and the production of oats, wheat, peanuts, poultry, corn, and sorghum. By 1940 the county had 495,874 acres--or eighty-five percent of the county--in farm land. The oil business comprised another important economic activity with many of the thirty-six wholesale establishments in the county related to that enterprise. Manufacturing establishments numbered seventeen and employed

a total of 121. More than 200 retail establishments conducted business in Gainesville alone, including fifty-nine food-related stores, twenty-four restaurants, thirteen apparel stores, ten furniture stores, forty-one service stations, nine lumber stores, thirteen auto-related shops, and six drugstores. These merchants realized over $4,890,000 in sales and employed 554 people. To serve both workers and their employers, there existed five banks and one savings and loan association. As evidenced by statistics, the economy of Cooke County conformed to the patterns and needs of a rural populace in 1940.[7]

The United States had not yet fully recovered from the Depression of the 1930s, and the living standards of people in Cooke County and Gainesville reflected that fact. In 1940 primary cooking fuels used by the people of the county included wood, kerosene, natural gas, and gasoline. Of 4,756 residences in the county, 905 homes contained no running water within fifty feet of the house, but fifty-one percent of the homes benefited from electricity, although only about twenty-two percent of rural dwellings did. One-third of all homes, however, needed major repairs. In spite of the lack of running water and electricity in many dwellings, seventy-five percent of all households possessed radios.[8]

Residents of Gainesville enjoyed a higher standard of living than did people throughout the county in general. Of 2,809 homes in Gainesville, 2,302 had electricity and 962 had mechanical refrigeration, 2,039 used gas for cooking, 2,084 owned radios, 2,337 contained running water, and 1,762 possessed telephones. Only 680 residences needed major repairs. Although Gainesville managed to surpass the county, citizens could not possibly have prepared themselves for the high expectations associated with the construction of Camp Howze and the subsequent increase in inhabitants.[9]

Before World War II the population of Gainesville remained fairly stable. The most dramatic increase occurred between 1880 and 1890 when the number of city residents soared from 2,667 to 6,594--a 147% growth. After that the pouplation rose slowly yet steadily to 9,651 in 1940. As the war progressed and as the population of the county increased, however, that record underwent change.[10]

Even before the United States entered World War II, Congress passed a selective service act, effective October 16, 1940. This draft law required all males between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-six to register for military service. By the end of 1940, 16,500,000 had registered at one of the 5,500 local draft boards nationwide. To be eligible to serve a man had to meet certain

minimum requirements: be at least five feet tall; weigh no less than 105 pounds; have correctable vision; have at least half of his natural teeth; and not suffer from flat feet, hernias, or a venereal disease.[11]

In spite of such liberal requirements, the military rejected an average of fifty percent of all applicants nationwide. The Selective Service refused many potential inductees because of bad teeth or poor vision. Local draft boards also disqualified many because of illiteracy, examiners declaring one adult in five as functionally illiterate. In Cooke County, however, men averaged 8.3 years of education, although 281 over the age of twenty-five had never attended school as of 1940.[12]

Besides physical and educational reasons for military exclusion, the Selective Service also rejected men with certain jobs or family obligations. For example, the Tydings Amendment of 1942 authorized local draft boards to defer farm workers and employees in vital defense industries, such as munitions or shipbuilding. To show the military's commitment to the importance of family life, draft boards granted deferments to men with dependents. By the summer of 1943, eight million men received deferments based on dependency. Congress even went so far as to prohibit the drafting of a father, however unimportant his job, before a man without children, no matter how vital his work.[13]

In spite of the government's concern for the importance of agriculture, war industries, and family life, the prolonged fighting necessitated changes in selective service requirements. By February, 1942 the government extended the draft age to include men twenty to forty-four years of age. By January, 1943 draft boards no longer granted deferments to men with children in cases where the work was not considered essential. By 1945 the military no longer kept eighteen-year-old soldiers on the home front since they were needed overseas as replacements in infantry and armor units.[14]

Although some draft requirements changed, one, notification by mail, remained constant. W. H. Campbell, Chairman of the Cooke County Draft Board, reiterated this policy when he learned of one young man's unfortunate ignorance of the law. At midnight the man received a telephone call from a practical joker who told him he had been reclassified and should report to the board at 5:00 A.M. the following morning. Not knowing the law, but wanting to obey it, the man reported--only to find the office closed at that early hour.[15]

Notwithstanding some pranks, Cooke County men responded admirably to the nation's call for servicemen. Even before the United States officially entered the war, seventy-five

men from Gainesville organized Company B, 111th Medical Regiment, Texas National Guard. Then in December, 1941 the company trained as a defense unit at Camp Bowie in Tarrant County. By October, 1942, 1,000 men from Cooke County had joined the army, navy, or marines. At the end of World War II, Cooke County's draft board had screened almost 5,000 men, and more than 3,500 men and women had served in the armed forces. When the draft board closed in 1947, the board had processed 6,165 men.[16]

Of those who served, over 100 lost their lives. The first casualty from Cooke County, Ensign Robert Weinzapfel of Muenster, died in the Pacific on December 9, 1941. As a naval pilot on the Lexington, he left Pearl Harbor on December 5. After the Japanese attack on December 7, the fun-loving yet dedicated Weinzapfel questioned his ability to take another man's life, although he never wavered in loyalty to his country or in his sense of duty. The day after Weinzapfel expressed this concern, he left on a routine mission, ran out of gas, and went down with his plane, and was lost at sea--never having to face his dilemma.[17]

Unofficial news of Weinzapfel's death reached his family a few days before Christmas. While out looking at Christmas lights, the family stopped at the post office,

and J. M. Weinzapfel, Robert's father, went in. Excitedly waving a letter, he came out. Not looking closely at the air mail letter, he thought it was from his son. Instead, the letter came from his son's best friend and expressed deep sympathy for the family's loss. With that letter, the family confirmed its worst fears and Mrs. Weinzapfel's haunting premonition. At the exact time of Weinzapfel's death, his mother awoke from a dream in which she had seen her oldest son's plane crash into the water. Although official notification, slowed by the chaos in the Pacific, did not reach the family for several more weeks, the Weinzapfels had a military funeral with full honors for their son and changed the blue star on their service flag to a gold star, representing the number of sons either in the military or who died in the war.[18]

Even though the body was not recovered, the Weinzapfel family received comfort that many other families did not. Their son's best friend packed and returned many of his belongings, including his cowboy boots, diary, and flight record. Through his log Mr. and Mrs. Weinzapfel later contacted their son's radio man, who survived the crash. Talking with the last person to see their son alive and finding out more details about the tragedy comforted the grief-stricken parents.[19]

The bombing of Pearl Harbor compounded by the subsequent death of Robert Weinzapfel caused Cooke County residents to view the beginning of World War II not just as a conflict far away but also as a fight closer to home. Within a few months this fight appeared even closer when word reached citizens of the building of an army base within the county. While the war affected most Americans in some way, for the residents of Cooke County it took on a special form and meaning as most demonstrated their patriotism by accepting and even supporting the vast changes which would occur over the war years.

NOTES

[1]Geoffrey Perrett, Days of Sadness, Years of Triumph: The American People, 1939-1945 (New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, Inc., 1973), p. 351. Herafter cited as Perrett, Days of Sadness.

[2]Ibid.; U.S. Department of Commerce, Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940, Population, Volume I (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1942), p. 420. Hereafter cited as 1940 Population; Camp Howze Howitzer, August 20, 1943, p. 6.

[3]A. Morton Smith, The First 100 Years in Cooke County (San Antonio, Texas: The Naylor Company, 1955), p. 216. Hereafter cited as Smith, Cooke County.

[4]Michael Collins, Cooke County, Texas: Where the South and the West Meet (Gainesville, Texas: Cooke County Heritage Society and Texas Committee for the Humanities, 1981), p. 57. Hereafter cited as Cooke County, Texas; Smith, Cooke County, p. 200.

[5]Collins, Cooke County, Texas, p. 57; Smith, Cooke County, pp. 197-199.

[6]Collins, Cooke County, Texas, pp. 57-58.

[7]Smith, Cooke County, p. 214; The University of Texas, Bureau of Business Research, College of Business Administration, An Economic Survey of Cooke County (1949), pp. 4.0101, 4.0102, 4.06, 4.0801, 4.1301, 4.1302, 4.8002. Hereafter cited as Economic Survey of Cooke County.

[8]Economic Survey of Cooke County, p. 4.1706.

[9]Ibid., pp. 4.1201, 4.1706.

[10]U.S. Department of Commerce, Census of Population, 1950 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1952), p. 43-11. Hereafter cited as 1950 Population.

[11]Perrett, Days of Sadness, pp. 39, 40, 330.

[12]Ibid., pp. 137, 330; Economic Survey of Cooke County, p. 3.0102.

[13]Alan Clive, State of War: Michigan in World War II (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1979), p. 44. Hereafter cited as Clive, State of War; Richard Polenberg, War and Society: The United States, 1941-1945 (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1972, pp. 21, 145. Hereafter cited as Polenberg, War and Society.

[14]Gainesville Daily Register, January 5, 1942, p. 1; Polenberg, War and Society, p. 21; Camp Howze Howitzer, January 5, 1945, p. 1.

[15]Gainesville Daily Register, January 2, 1942, sec. 1, p. 6.

[16]Gainesville Daily Register, October 14, 1942, sec. 3, p. 1; Smith, Cooke County, pp. 217-218.

[17]Gainesville Daily Register, June 27, 1946, p. 5; Interview with Juanita Weinzapfel Bright, Muenster, Texas, January 27, 1984.

[18]Interview with Bright.

[19]Ibid.

CHAPTER II

THE ECONOMY: EXPANSION AND RENEWAL

In the fall of 1940 Manager Clifford McMahon of the Gainesville Chamber of Commerce wrote the War Department and suggested the county as a possible site for a military facility of some kind. That same autumn Colonel J. A. Finch of the Eighth Service Command visited Gainesville and promised to consider the town as a possible location for an army installation. In January, 1941 the United States Quartermaster Corps at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio sent a questionnaire to Gainesville city officials concerning its interest in an army camp. The following month many of Gainesville's businessmen responded by endorsing the idea of such an installation, even though area farmers had voiced disapproval of the project. In spite of the farmers' opposition, on December 18, just eleven days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the War Department designated Gainesville as one of five sites being considered for a new army facility. The camp, therefore, became one of approximately one hundred army bases soon to be constructed throughout the United States to train over 1,250,000 recruits and draftees added to its ranks since May, 1940.[1]

After the December announcement, the army began preliminary planning. In January, 1942 the army awarded the $30,000,000 project to the Dallas construction firm of Rollins and Forrest. After army engineers finished their survey, Rollins and Forrest began its initial work in February. The following month Congressman Ed Gossett who represented the Gainesville area telegraphed the Gainesville Daily Register with the news that the county had been selected as the site of an army base. By April the contracting firm had begun building a railroad spur from Gainesville to the camp site, approximately three miles northwest of the city.[2]

Throughout the first phase of the project, the camp had no designated name. Although Gainesville citizens submitted various suggestions, the War Department chose none of them. Included on the list were the names of Robert Weinzapfel, the county's first war casualty, and several others who had also lost their lives in the conflict. In a survey done by the Gainesville Daily Register, the most popular choice was to honor the late United States Senator Joseph W. Bailey from Gainesville. In spite of local opinion, however, War Department officials informed town leaders that the army usually selected the name of a distinguished officer or enlisted man. For that reason, the site under construction

was designated as Camp Howze for twice cited Congressional Medal of Honor recipient Major General Robert E. Lee Howze, a native of Rusk County, Texas who had served in World War I, in Mexico under General John J. Pershing, the Sioux campaigns, and in the Philippine Insurrection.[3]

Meantime, the army was busy acquiring land for the camp. The area surveyed encompassed 59,194.16 acres plus six easement tracts of 25.04 acres--totaling 59,219.2 acres. By late spring, 1942 the government informed the first fifteen property owners that they needed to vacate their land. Before long about three hundred farm families would lose their land to Camp Howze construction.[4]

In order to obtain the needed land with the fewest problems, the Department of Agriculture established a Land Use Planning Committee in Cooke County, consisting of twenty-one men and eleven women. While most people from the area supported government policies throughout the war, those who had to give up property for the camp appeared the most distraught. Even though they could support the government in other wartime measures, they had a difficult time accepting the right of the government to seize private property for public use by virtue of eminent domain. Many displaced families eventually bought other farms in the

county. Some moved to other areas while others simply retired. Still others moved into Gainesville.[5]

One family forced to give up land to make way for Camp Howze was that of Paul Yarbrough. Since his family lived at Era and did not have a home on the property, they did not harbor the bitterness that some did, even though they felt the price they received for the land was below the current market price.[6]

On the other hand, some families, such as the Henry Fuhrmans, did not feel as fortunate. Relieved at first that their farm was not taken for the army camp, the Fuhrmans suffered even more acutely when they learned that their land would be needed for a proposed air base adjacent to Camp Howze. Although upset, the Fuhrmans believed that they had no choice but to sign over their 121.3 acres to the government. Before they lost their land in July, 1942, they managed to sell their house, barn, and a double garage but kept the chicken coop, about one hundred chickens, and four cows. To increase their frustration, the Fuhrmans lost their peach crop to thieves. Still worse, the government took their land before they could harvest their corn and cotton crops. As some measure of compensation for their loss, the family went back later and harvested what corn and cotton they could haul away from their former land.[7]

Having lost both valuable, productive land and a well-built house, the Fuhrmans faced the challenge of finding a new home. After relinquishing their holdings, they lived in Lindsay with Mrs. Fuhrman's mother for five months while they looked for a new home. The search took them throughout Cooke and several other counties. Finally they bought the John Yosten farm in Muenster. Although they improved the new farm and lived there until 1964, the Fuhrmans felt bitter about the loss and betrayed by their own government. Having worked hard to buy the land, build on it, and improve it, the Fuhrmans resented the methods employed to deprive them of the products of years of hard work. No amount of money nor feeling of patriotism could remove the bitterness--a typical response of others caught in similar circumstances.[8]

Even after the camp was built, farmers remained hostile. For example, a lone displaced farmer caused a group of infantry to abandon training. One day the disgruntled man appeared brandishing a double-barrel shotgun and ordered the soldiers off "his" property. Regardless of the maps, he said the land belonged to him and no soldier would "dig it up." Since the angry farmer seemed ready to carry out his threat, the captain in command ordered his men to retreat.[9]

In spite of such antagonism, other groups, especially businessmen, welcomed the camp and the prosperity it promised. The camp provided many jobs for local citizens. New businesses opened to meet the demands of the increased population. And established businesses increased both personnel and profits.

The first economic boost to the county came with construction of the camp. By June, 1942 about two thousand people were employed there--500 carpenters, 1,094 common laborers, and 261 Rollins and Forrest personnel. Within a matter of weeks, twenty-five hundred more joined the payroll. Throughout that hot summer plumbers, electricians, carpenters, and painters labored long hours to prepare for the incoming troops. By August 17, most of the barracks, mess halls, and office buildings had been completed for the arrival of camp commander Colonel John P. Wheeler.[10]

Once major construction ended, other jobs became available at Camp Howze. One of the largest employers of civilians was the camp laundry, which opened in the spring of 1943. Beginning as a limited operation with three hundred civilian employees--mostly women--the laundry by 1944 would become one of the largest in the United States, the payroll for that year alone being $329,266.13.[11]

In addition to the laundry business, civilians assumed a variety of other jobs at the camp. Some became office workers. Other worked at the camp post office. Still others, such as Norma Jane Estes, a high school student employed by the telephone company, worked weekends on the switchboard to relieve camp personnel. By the end of 1944, Camp Howze employed 1,430 civilians, five percent of the total civilian population of Cooke County, and had a monthly payroll of $286.731.88.[12]

One of the busiest civilians at Camp Howze became Jo Gilbert, a teacher turned photographer. Hired with her sister, Mary Block, the two ran the camp's studio throughout the war. As the camp photographer, Miss Gilbert had to make all the identification photos for both army and civilian personnel, division corps pictures, portraits of individual soldiers, and--if time permitted--civilian photographs. To help with the studio, the sisters hired wives of soldiers and teacher friends for after school hours, and they also received help from relatives on weekends. In order to process pictures before the soldiers were shipped overseas, the sisters worked until late in the night. On one of the busiest days, Miss Gilbert had eighty-four sittings. In spite of the exhausting schedule and the volume of work, Miss Gilbert remembered only one soldier

who was dissatisfied because his pictures had been misplaced and could not be redone before he was transferred overseas. Because of the tremendous amount of work and the fair treatment of the men throughout the camp years, Miss Gilbert received a letter from the Camp Howze commander who promised to highly recommend her work if she wanted to open another studio after the war.[13]

The camp also spurred business activity in Gainesville. In order to serve camp personnel, many service-related businesses either started or expanded operations during the war. One of the first new businesses was a bus line which was authorized by the Gainesville City Council on the same day Camp Howze construction began, March 23, 1942. Businessman R. D. Clack and well-known former Texas Ranger Tom R. Hickman received permission to operate the service from Camp Howze to Gainesville and within the city at a cost of five cents per person. Within the next few months, however, the city council and county commissioners court transferred the line to businessmen Merle Gruver and R. W. McKissick. By 1943 two competing lines, Dixie Motor Coach Corporation and Gainesville Bus Lines, served the camp. At the end of the year one million passengers had ridden the buses, a much needed service, especially because of rationing. Many used the system because they had no tires for their own

automobiles and because many merchants had discontinued delivery service. Trying to meet the needs of both the camp and the city, the bus lines periodically rescheduled times and routes during the war.[14]

Other transportation-related businesses likewise flourished during the war. Although Gainesville had two railroads--the Santa Fe on a north-south route and the Missouri, Kansas, Texas ("Katy") on an east-west line--business increased tremendously during the war. For example, in 1944 Gainesville ranked eighth in ticket sales among all cities served by the Santa Fe system. In fact, the trains and buses carried so many passengers that many often had to stand in the aisles all the way to Fort Worth or Dallas.[15]

Still, other forms of transportation prospered during the war. Soldiers, desperate for rides to the recreation offered in larger urban areas, would pay up to $5 each to be loaded in the back of a truck and taken to Dallas or Fort Worth. For those less adventuresome, the city offered a taxi service. After the war began, the city council, to protect cab operators, limited to ten the number of vehicles each company could operate without a special permit. Of course, the most widely used means of transportation, in spite of war-time controls, remained the automobile.

To solve the parking problem created by the increased population, city officials ordered the purchase of three hundred parking meters in 1942. Despite the various means of transportation available, many soldiers resorted to hitchhiking. For instance, Thelma Atkins, a Gainesville resident, often picked up four or five soldiers on her way to Oklahoma; and Miss Gilbert, often going to Eastman in Dallas for photographic supplies, offered rides to Camp Howze trainees. Either to make a profit or just to help military personnel, or both, businessmen and citizens did what they could to shuttle soldiers to and from Camp Howze.[16]

Nontransportation-related businesses thrived as well. To acquaint businessmen with military procedures, requirements, and adjustments, the city conducted a two-day merchants clinic in March, 1942. Because of the camp, merchants had to increase personnel during the busiest times of the day. Some businesses, such as Austin's Drug Store, even opened a second store. Many small family-operated grocery stores as well as large chain markets enjoyed more business than ever before. Some of those markets included Safeway, Helpy-Selfy, Trasher's Grocery and Market, Temple Food Market, and Tyler and Simpson Company, a wholesale supplier. The larger department stores, such as Penneys, Teague Company, and Montgomery

Ward, tried to meet the growing demands of a growing population. Area merchants had little difficulty selling merchandise in stock, even managing to sell articles that had been on the shelves for years.[17]

The restaurants also flourished, most of them small family-operated businesses, such as Hocker's Eat-Well Cafe managed by J. R. Hocker and Chat and Chew owned by Royce Dean ("Pud") Albert. Since many proprietors promoted high health standards and cooperated with army officials, most owners and patrons had only one major complaint--the crowds. The owners could not easily expand because of the shortage of building materials and the rationing of food items. They and their customers generally tried to deal with the problem--the owner by serving people as quickly as possible and the customer by waiting patiently. According to Mr. Hocker, most soldiers remained polite in spite of crowds everywhere.[18]

Local movie houses likewise experienced longer lines at the box office. Although Camp Howze had several theaters, many soldiers chose to venture into Gainesville to escape, even if only for a few hours. Most popular for servicemen were the State Theater, the Plaza, the Ritz, and the Texan. Experiencing growing crowds, theater operators, therefore, advertised little in the local newspaper.[19]

For that matter, few businesses needed to advertise in the Gainesville Daily Register. To make up the loss in revenue, the newspaper personnel had to be more imaginative and creative than ever before. Elizabeth Graham, an employee, promoted the idea of a full page advertisement with names of businesses listed at the end. For example, one announcement promoted the sale of war bonds, another encouraged salvage drives, still another supported rationing. In this way the paper gained badly needed revenue, and businesses advertised their support for patriotic causes.[20]

Although the Register worked diligently to sell advertisements, there was no need to promote circulation. Most townspeople subscribed to the paper to keep abreast of the war news and rationing changes, and servicemen subscribed to hear the news from the area. To appeal to servicemen and their families and to learn camp news of concern to the community, the Gainesville newspaper assigned a full-time staff member to Camp Howze. Of still further assistance, the Register also printed the Camp Howze Howitzer, a four-page weekly newspaper.[21]

The presence of Camp Howze meant an economic windfall for Cooke County. Business activity rose to an all-time high. Gainesville's retail sales rose from $4,100,000 in 1939 to $7,677,000 in 1944. In spite of restrictions and

a shortage of building materials, building permits increased from $127,853 in 1942 to $569,732 in 1946. In addition to home renovations, some major construction projects included the Cooke County Fair Grounds, school improvements, a new sanctuary for the First Baptist Church, an addition to the Whaley Methodist Church, and numerous new store fronts.[22]

The post office also showed a marked increase in activity. Postal receipts soared from $66,611.77 in 1942 to an all-time high of $192,979.34 in 1944 because of increased population in Gainesville and the addition of Camp Howze as well as the decrease in travel due to gasoline rationing. As a comparison, Sherman and Denison, nearby towns with larger populations, had less postal receipts combined than Gainesville in 1943. Postal receipts in Gainesville dropped from 1944 to 1945 with the opening of a new post office at Camp Howze to relieve congestion at the main post office.[23]

Bank deposits also evidenced economic growth during the war years. Deposits in Gainesville swelled from $3,761,779.87 in 1942, before the completion of Camp Howze, to a high of $11,425,645.00 in 1945. They gained an average of forty-one percent in 1944, compared to an average gain of thirty-seven percent for twenty-eight banks in Grayson, Hunt, Lamar, Denton, Collin, Fannin, and Cooke Counties. Even the small town of Muenster documented a one hundred percent gain

in deposits in 1944, netting over one million dollars for the first time in its history.[24]

Camp Howze not only created jobs on the base and for nearby businesses, but the facility also indirectly provided employers with a much-needed, though unlikely, source of labor. Since so many young men had left to serve in the military, employers faced the almost impossible task of finding replacements, even if the job required no special skills. The Depression trend reversed itself as the war created a surplus of jobs and a scarcity of men. To alleviate the shortage of labor, some businesses, such as the Gainesville Daily Register, hired women who often learned their duties simply by training themselves. Other proprietors employed high school students. Although helpful, neither source met the demand. Once again, however, Camp Howze furnished another boost to the county economy--prisoners of war.[25]

By 1944 about fifty-six temporary camps sheltered almost 200,000 German, Italian, and Japanese prisoners throughout the United States. All army camps in Texas, except Fort McIntosh at Laredo, housed prisoners of war. Camp Howze received German prisoners, numbering 2,976 at its height. One reason for the diffusion of POWs was as a labor supply. Jobs vital to the war effort, including farming, received

priority. In the South, POWs picked cotton and fruits, cut sugar cane, harvested peanuts, rice, and tobacco, and worked at army bases. Those assigned to civilians even received about eighty cents a day, most of which was paid in coupons to be redeemed at army posts. The remainder--$22 million by 1944--the army deposited in the United States treasury.[26]

For Cooke County farmers the POW labor came at a most opportune time. Prior to their use, farmers relied upon women and children. According to Juanita Weinzapfel Bright, a student at the time, many of them took the time off from school as more of a holiday than as a job. She remembered eating a big breakfast, working awhile, stopping to eat a lavish lunch, and then picking more cotton. Because the farmers needed help desperately during harvest time, they took whatever help they could get--however unreliable. Fortunately, prisoners of war gave farmers a dependable yet inexpensive source of labor.[27]

Although army personnel guarded the POWs, most seemed as content as possible under the circumstances, especially with the German communities of Lindsay and Muenster nearby. Bertha Pick, a farmer's wife, recollected baking bread or other pastries for the prisoners even though they brought their own lunch. While they ate, her German-born husband enjoyed talking to them. Norma Jane Estes, a student,

remembered another act of kindness which the Germans misinterpreted. As a treat, the community served corn-on-the-cob to the POWs, who in turn claimed that it was food fit "only for swine." After trying it, however, some admitted that it was a different, even better variety than they were accustomed to harvesting.[28]

Not only did civilians treat the prisoners courteously but some POWs returned the kindness. For example, one who was befriended by a man from Ardmore, Oklahoma, expressed his appreciation by working at nights by candlelight to make a doll house from matches for the man's young daughter. As a gesture of good will, the last German POWs to leave Camp Howze, after spending only a portion of their allowance for cigarettes, candy, and assorted personal items, contributed the balance of $7,142 to the Gainesville Red Cross.[29]

Another incident revealed at least one German's sense of humor and knowledge--even if limited--of some American history. All German prisoners wore clothing with the letters PW imprinted on them. One, however, decided to change his lettering to read PWA. Even for non-Americans, the impact of federal programs from the Depression era lingered.[30]

While most prisoners of war at Camp Howze seemed content, some tried to escape. Whether the plan was to escape and return to Germany or to remain in the United States was

not clear, however. Teacher and landlady Thelma Atkins remembered the experience of one boarder who spoke German and, therefore, received assignment as a guard to some of the prisoners of war. Not knowing he spoke German, several prisoners plotted to escape. Hearing the plan while pretending to rest, the guard slowly picked up his gun without letting anyone know he heard the conversation, quickly foiling the escape attempt. Another incident, published in the Register, told of thirteen POWs who escaped from the camp but who were later recaptured.[31]

In spite of some incidents of unrest by POWs and bitterness of farmers who lost their land to Camp Howze, the military base represented a tremendous economic boost to Cooke County. The camp provided jobs for many, led to business expansion in surrounding towns, and became a source for cheap labor. Because of Camp Howze, the people of Cooke County thus experienced prosperity as never before in their history. To them during World War II the words Camp Howze and prosperity became synonymous.

NOTES

[1]Camp Howze Howitzer, August 20, 1943, p. 6; A Camera Trip Through Camp Howze: Picture Book of the Camp and Its Activities, p. 1. Hereafter cited as Camera Trip Through Camp Howze; Perrett, Days of Sadness, p. 194.

[2]Gainesville Weekly Register, January 8, 1942, p. 1; October 14, 1942, p. 6; Camp Howze Howitzer, August 20, 1943, p. 6.

[3]Gainesville Daily Register, April 16, 1942, p. 1; April 27, 1942, p. 6; May 6, 1942, p. 1; Interview with Bright; Camera Trip Through Camp Howze, p. 1; Who Was Who in American History--The Military (Chicago: Marquis, 1975), p. 272; Camp Howze Howitzer, August 20, 1943, p. 6.

[4]Mariann E. Alexander to Barbara K. Burns, December 23, 1983, in possession of author; Camp Howze Howitzer, August 20, 1943, p. 6; Smith, Cooke County, p. 216.

[5]Gainesville Weekly Register, January 1, 1942, p. 4; Smith, Cooke County, p. 216.

[6]Interview with Paul and Frances Yarbrough, Gainesville, Texas, January 25, 1984.

[7]Interview with Elsie Fuhrman, Muenster, Texas, January 27, 1984; Cooke County, Texas, County Clerk's Office, Cooke County Deeds, Cooke County Courthouse, Gainesville, Texas, vol. 267, p. 604.

[8]Interview with Fuhrman; Cooke County Deeds, vol. 267, p. 604; Cooke County Deeds, vol. 315, p. 592.

[9]Camp Howze Howitzer, August 27, 1942, p. 2.

[10]Gainesville Daily Register, June 3, 1942, p. 1; June 11, 1942, p. 1; Collins, Cooke County, Texas, p. 59; Interview with Norma Jane Estes, Gainesville, Texas, January 25, 1984.

[11]Gainesville Daily Register, April 3, 1943, p. 2; July 25, 1945, p. 2.

[12]Interview with Jo Gilbert, Gainesville, Texas, February 1, 1984; Interview with Estes; Gainesville Daily Register, July 25, 1945, p. 2.

[13]Interview with Gilbert; Gainesville Weekly Register, March 28, 1946, p. 8.

[14]Smith, Cooke County, p. 209; Gainesville Weekly Register, July 23, 1942, p. 8; Cooke County, Texas, County Clerk's Office, Commissioner's Court Minutes, Cooke County Courthouse, Gainesville, Texas, vol. 13, pp. 43, 70; Gainesville Daily Register, January 19, 1944, p. 2; November 20, 1944, p. 6; December 22, 1944, p. 1; Camp Howze Howitzer, December 22, 1944, p. 1; Interview with Elizabeth Graham, Gainesville, Texas, February 17, 1984.

[15]Interview with Julian Smith, Gainesville, Texas, January 11, 1984; Interview with Estes; Gainesville Daily Register, January 1, 1946, pp. 1, 3; Interview with Marie Cannon, Gainesville, Texas, February 8, 1984.

[16]Interview with Yarbroughs; Interview with Estes; Gainesville Daily Register, August 13, 1942, p. 3; October 14, 1942, sec. 3, p. 1; Interview with Bright; Interview with Thelma Atkins, Gainesville, Texas, February 1, 1984; Interview with Gilbert.

[17]Gainesville Daily Register, February 27, 1942, pp. 3, 6; March 6, 1942, p. 3; March 10, 1942, p. 6; March 27, 1942, pp. 5, 6; April 9, 1942, p. 8; Gainesville Weekly Register, November 26, 1942, p. 5; Interview with Atkins; Interview with Graham.

[18]Interview with J. R. Hocker, Gainesville, Texas, February 8, 1984; Gainesville Daily Register, January 21, 1944, p. 4; October 1, 1945, p. 3.

[19]Gainesville Daily Register, February 10, 1945, p. 6; Interview with Graham.

[20]Interview with Graham; Gainesville Daily Register, July 4, 1945, pp. 5, 6.

[21]Gainesville Daily Register, November 25, 1944, p. 2; Camp Howze Howitzer, August 20, 1943, p. 1; Interview with Graham.

[22]Gainesville Daily Register, January 1, 1944, p. 2; January 2, 1945, p. 6; June 11, 1945, p. 2; January 2, 1946, p. 3; April 1, 1946, p. 2; December 28, 1946, p. 2; Gainesville Weekly Register, January 6, 1944, p. 2; January 9, 1947, p. 1.

[23]Gainesville Weekly Register, January 9, 1947, p. 1; Gainesville Daily Register, January 4, 1943, p. 2; January 5, 1944, p. 3; January 8, 1944, p. 2; January 3, 1945, p. 4; January 29, 1945, p. 3; January 1, 1946, p. 4.

[24]Gainesville Daily Register, January 12, 1945, p. 3; January 25, 1945, p. 2; July 9, 1945, p. 6; July 10, 1946, p. 8; Gainesville Weekly Register, January 9, 1947, p. 1.

[25]Interview with Graham; Interview with Bright.

[26]Texas Almanac and State Industrial Guide, 1945-1946 (Dallas: A. H. Belo Corporation, 1945), p. 78. Hereafter cited as Texas Almanac 1945-1946; Camp Howze Howitzer, January 14, 1944, p. 2; B. C. Mossman to Barbara K. Burns, September 13, 1983, in possession of author; Edwin R. Coffee to Barbara K. Burns, October 21, 1983, in possession of author; Captain Eugene N. DuBerry, Camp Howze, Texas to Morrison Milling Company, Denton, Texas, July 28, 1945, North Texas State University Archives, Denton, Texas; Gainesville Daily Register, October 19, 1945, p. 5; Denton Record-Chronicle, October 12, 1983, p. 2D.

[27]Interview with Bright.

[28]Interview with Atkins; Interview with Bertha Pick, Muenster, Texas, January 27, 1984; Interview with Estes.

[29]Interview with Graham; Gainesville Daily Register, March 29, 1946, p. 4.

[30]Gainesville Daily Register, November 15, 1944, p. 2.

[31]Interview with Atkins; Gainesville Daily Register, January 1, 1945, p. 3.

CHAPTER III

HOUSING: SHORTAGES AND SOLUTIONS

The economic growth of Cooke County centered around a phenomenal increase in population. Not only did Camp Howze increase the county's population by at least 35,000 men, but it also added a large number of service wives and children. Women flocked to the area to be with their husbands for as long as possible before their divisions departed for Europe.[1]

During the camp's brief history, three major units trained in Cooke County. By August 20, 1942, the first officers for the 84th "Railsplitters" Infantry Division had arrived. Four months later the 86th "Black Hawk" Division had also been activiated. In preparation for overseas duty, the men learned marksmanship, hand-to-hand combat, and survival procedures. As further instruction, engineers built pontoon bridges, infantrymen performed tactical maneuvers, artillerymen learned gunnery skills, armor units received training in tank deployment, and reconnaissance aircraft pilots flew mock missions. Not long after both divisions disembarked in 1943, they were replaced by the 103rd "Cactus" Division.[2]

Since the camp accommodated such a large number of servicemen with families, the city of Gainesville doubled its population by October, 1942. Having few public facilities, Gainesville and surrounding communities attempted to find adequate housing for this overflowing population. To find dwellings servicemen and their families appealed to local residents.[3]

To locate housing, to supervise fair prices, and to curb the possibility of slums as well as to insure health, local and federal officials worked together. As a preliminary measure in preparing for the expected 15,000 construction workers to build Camp Howze, the Gainesville Chamber of Commerce planned a house-to-house canvass to determine the number of vacant houses, furnished and unfurnished apartments, and rooms for rent. In other action, the city council passed an ordinance regulating trailer parks and soon required people to obtain permits to move, remodel, or rebuild structures. Not only to prevent slums but also to insure proper health measures, the county came under the jurisdiction of a sanitation district. Anyone with a tent or trailer had to have showers with proper water disposal and pit-type toilets which were subject to inspection by the Cooke County Health Unit headed by Dr. H. H. Terry. The guidelines required Camp Howze to have its drinking

water analyzed, to keep garbage in metal containers, and to operate a satisfactory sewage disposal unit. In these ways city and county officials attempted to meet housing demands and health requirements for a rapidly increasing population.[4]

Federal authorities also enforced measures which aided the county in its search for adequate housing. Declared one of fifty-seven rural defense areas in Texas, Cooke County came under the jurisdiction of the Office of Emergency Management (OEM). As one of its first actions, the OEM froze rent rates at the March 1, 1942, level. Since few local residents had listed dwelling units, Lt. Thomas A. Arnold, billeting officer at Camp Howze, appealed to citizens to rent apartments, houses, and rooms to camp personnel. By fall, 1942 the Office of Price Administration (OPA) imposed rent controls in Gainesville and Cooke County, requiring landlords of dwelling units, such as houses and apartments, but not hotels or rooming houses, to register with area OPA Rent Director Ray Winder. As early as that November, 2,611 residences and 110 hotels and rooming houses had complied with registration requests. By March, 1945, 6,500 local rental units had registered. Unlike many areas where landlords refused to place property on the market in order to avoid OPA rules, Cooke County residents responded patriotically to the appeals of servicemen.[5]

To satisfy the desperate need for housing, some servicemen lived in whatever became available--from apartments and rooms to makeshift dwellings. Some local residents managed to find building materials to convert an upstairs into an apartment. For example, Mr. and Mrs. Jasper Estes converted an attic into a five room apartment and rented it to officers from Camp Howze for $100 a month. Others rented extra bedrooms, sharing their kitchens and bathrooms with the tenants. School teacher Thelma Atkins rented two bedrooms--one an extra bedroom, the other a converted dining area--for $10 a week, including room and board. Marie Cannon's family had converted two of their six rooms into an apartment for friends who had married before the war. Since the rooms were no longer used, they rented them to Camp Howze soldiers for $12.50 a week. Others, mainly families with husbands in war-related jobs and wives at home with children, built two-room dwellings throughout southeast, northeast, and northwest Gainesville. Although most of these residences contained no water, gas, or electricity, they nevertheless provided shelter for families who could not afford the high rent. Still others lived in mobile homes or trailers. Because the need for housing exceeded the supply, some even lived in remodeled sheds, and the story was told of one man who even fixed up a chicken coop for habitation. Others,

such as Thelma Atkins, set up beds and cots outside, hanging blankets, quilts, or sheets on clotheslines around them to afford some privacy for those who had no place else to stay.[6]

Travelers Aid, a division of the USO, helped to locate lodging for wives of servicemen, especially those with children. Even when a critical housing shortage no longer existed in 1945, the wives and children of servicemen had a difficult time finding someone willing to rent to them. But appealing to Travelers Aid, they could locate either temporary or permanent lodging. For those wives who came for short visits or for holidays and needed a place for just a few days, Travelers Aid, through its list of available housing, could offer assistance.[7]

If servicemen failed to locate housing in Gainesville, they searched elsewhere. Many lived in nearby towns, such as Muenster, Lindsay, Era, and Woodbine. Others commuted from Denton, about thirty miles south, and some commuted from as far north as Marietta and Ardmore, Oklahoma. Paul and Frances Yarbrough, who farmed at Era, rented a room to a lieutenant and his wife for $2 a day including meals. Another family, the J. M. Weinzapfels of Muenster, became landlords quite by accident. Their teenage daughter Juanita met a young soldier's wife with a baby. The wife

asked the young girl if she knew of amy rooms available in town. Without thinking, the teenager said no and proceeded home. Still thinking about the request, however, and fascinated with the woman, who reminded her of Audrey Hepburn, she began telling her mother about the incident. Shortly thereafter, she saw the young mother on the street and told her to speak to Mrs. Weinzapfel. Since the entire Weinzapfel family also became charmed by the young woman, they converted two of five upstairs bedrooms into a small apartment, consisting of a bedroom and kitchen. Soon others who also were having difficulty finding rooms begged the Weinzapfels to rent out rooms. Without hearing complaints about the crowded space and shared kitchen and bathroom, the Weinzapfels occasionally rented the two rooms to two couples, each with a baby.[8]

Because a critical housing shortage existed in spite of support from Cooke and surrounding counties, the federal government approved building projects for both Camp Howze and Gainesville. The United States Army constructed thirty-five family units and twenty single dormitory units on post. The National Housing Administration (NHA), created in 1942, provided funds to construct decent housing nationwide for congested production and defense areas. In all, the NHA supervised construction of over two million dwelling units.

Through this agency Gainesville built fifty new houses and fifty-six private conversion projects, with the stipulation that the housing be rented to Camp Howze military personnel who had moved to Gainesville since February, 1943. W. E. Woods, a local contractor, constructed the first government funded housing project on North Clements Street. Known as the Ernwood Addition, it became Gainesville's first subdivision in 1945, the same year that the second government housing project, not awarded as a unit, began. The five- to six-room houses on Clements Street cost a maximum of $6500 and rented for $55. In 1946 the NHA approved an additional 535 housing units to accommodate 1700 people.[9]

In spite of federal and local efforts, those still searching for housing placed their appeals in the local newspaper. Many simply requested a room. Some, either with more money to spare or through desperation, placed advertisements offering $5, $10, $25, $35, even $50 rewards. One apartment hunter could only offer a pair of nylon hose as a bonus. Others relied on emotional appeal. For example, one listing, placed by the men under an army lieutenant, praised their platoon leader for twenty-six lines--at the rate of four cents per word--in the hopes of finding a home for him, his wife, and baby.[10] Still another request read:

I know it's hopeless,
But thought I'd try
To find a small house or apartment
For my wife and I.
For 31 months I have been overseas
And am a permanent cadreman.
So won't you please
Write Register, Box K2.[11]

Even though most citizens opened their homes to renters and the government approved additional housing, people crowded the foyer of the Register daily in their search for a place to live.[12]

Most servicemen fortunate enough to locate a place off post to be with their families made the best of the often cramped and less than comfortable quarters. Landlords, wanting to be patriotic, also tried to make life as pleasant as possible under the circumstances. Since many families shared kitchen and bathroom privileges with their boarders, each person had to be willing to adjust to the others' routines and to the limitations caused by the war. Renters customarily gave their ration coupons to the landlady since she usually bought the groceries and cooked the meals. They even willingly slept on the floor to share their one-room with guests of the landlord when necessary. Many landlords helped servicemen by entertaining their army friends with homemade ice cream, fish fries, and other home-cooked meals. Others, like Thelma Atkins, sometimes loaned the family car to a boarder so he and his wife could drive

to Sherman or another nearby town for an evening by themselves. One local resident went so far as to write to the Gainesville Daily Register complaining about a neighbor's roosters that crowed at four o'clock each morning and requesting that something be done because it was not patriotic to awaken the two soldiers who lived with her; after all, they needed their sleep before reporting to duty. Another unique experience occurred at Mrs. Atkins' home. One of her renters, a sleepwalker, tied a cup to his ankles at night in an attempt to wake himself up, but he could still be heard at nights wandering through the house. One morning he awoke to find himself in the second rented room which belonged to a major and his wife. Luckily for the private, the other boarders had spent the night elsewhere.[13]

While most landlords and tenants attempted to minimize the hardships, a few renter-boarder relationships appeared strained. One serviceman habitually mailed his rent so he would not have to see his landlord. Given human nature, all people could not possibly like each other, especially considering the crowded conditions and the often inadequate housing. No doubt, in some instances the soldiers were to blame, in other cases, the landlord.[14]

When problems arose between boarders and owners, the Office of Price Administration followed certain guidelines

to hear complaints and insure fairness to concerned parties. Other than personality conflicts, the major area of disagreement involved rental rates. According to guidelines, landlords could not charge prices above those of March 1, 1942. But landlords often considered the allowable rent rate unfair, weighing the cost of remodeling. Even though against OPA regulations, some charged extra for such services as providing linens and disposing of the garbage. A number of soldiers even cooperated with the landlords by paying more while saying nothing--making an added hardship for a private who could not afford the increased cost for housing. In spite of numerous petitions to OPA requesting an end to rent control in the area, ceilings remained in effect throughout the war years.[15]

To insure that the ceilings remained in force, the OPA investigated rental properties in Gainesville and Cooke County and advised military personnel to check the price guidelines before signing a lease. In 1943 OPA checked 1300 homes, apartments, and rooms in Gainesville, resulting in numerous violations. The following year twenty-one OPA officials investigated rental properties as well as stores for possible violations. In about one hundred cases, renters received refunds ranging from $1.50 to $145. In 1945 Camp Howze established an Office of Price Control to handle cases

of excessive rent. While OPA officials had no intentions of making hardships for those landlords who violated minor technicalities, they did target those wartime profiteers who knowingly and flagrantly violated OPA regulations, for which violators could be sued for as much as $50,000 for every rent overcharge. In spite of stringent regulations, violations continued until the OPA closed its Gainesville office December 1, 1946.[16]

Although some landlords attempted to extract the largest possible profit, most local residents opened their homes to Camp Howze soldiers from a sense of duty and patriotism--not with the intention of making a quick dollar. Citizens rented their homes because of appeals from servicemen and their families--not because of pressure from local and federal authorities. While many benefited financially, others considered monetary rewards as a secondary concern. Besides, the sacrifices--cooking for others, living in cramped quarters, and sharing kitchens and bathrooms--hardly seemed worth the profit earned. To make the hardships worthwhile, most had to be willing to see through their humdrum existence and view the larger picture--getting to talk to people from various places with different attitudes, habits, accents, and ways of life. Those who benefited most from the wartime experience were those people who gave

of themselves, learning to adjust to other customs and, in the process, acquiring new friends.[17]

NOTES

[1]Camp Howze Howitzer, August 20, 1943, p. 6; Interview with Atkins.

[2]Gainesville Weekly Register, September 17, 1942, p. 1; Gainesville Daily Register, September 9, 1942, p. 1; September 17, 1942, p. 1; October 14, 1942, sec. 3, p. 1; December 15, 1942, p. 1; November 24, 1943, p. 1; January 1, 1944, p. 1; Texas Almanac and State Industrial Guide, 1943-1944 (Dallas: A. H. Belo Corporation, 1943), p. 208. Hereafter cited as Texas Almanac 1943-1944; Smith, Cooke County, p. 211; Camp Howze Howitzer, November 25, 1943, p. 1; Camera Trip Through Camp Howze, p. 2; Texas Almanac 1945-1946, p. 76; Collins, Cooke County, Texas, p. 59.

[3]Gainesville Daily Register, October 14, 1942, sec. 3, p. 1; Elaine Schad, "The Great Ice Storm of 1945," All Around Gainesville, IV(January, 1984):7.

[4]Gainesville Daily Register, April 16, 1942, sec. 2, p. 1; July 6, 1942, p. 6; October 14, 1942, sec. 3, p. 1; March 29, 1944, p. 4; Smith, Cooke County, p. 209.

[5]Gainesville Daily Register, April 30, 1942, p. 5; August 15, 1942, p. 6; October 14, 1942, sec. 1, p. 1; November 26, 1942, p. 1; November 1, 1944, p. 2; Smith, Cooke County, p. 209; Gainesville Weekly Register, March 1, 1945, p. 4; Clive, State of War, p. 104. According to the Gainesville Daily Register, November 1, 1944, p. 2, an estimated three of every five Gainesville residents had become landlords.

[6]Interview with Estes; Interview with Atkins; Interview with Cannon; Gainesville Daily Register, February 22, 1943, p. 5; Interview with Graham; Interview with Yarbroughs.

[7]Gainesville Daily Register, December 22, 1944, p. 6; March 17, 1945, p. 3; May 25, 1945, p. 3; Interview with Cannon.

[8]Interview with Graham; Gainesville Weekly Register, August 13, 1942, p. 4; Interview with Yarbroughs; Interview with Bright.

[9]Gainesville Daily Register, February 23, 1943, p. 6; January 1, 1944, p. 4; January 6, 1945, p. 5; July 27, 1945, p. 6; August 11, 1945, p. 1; July 19, 1946, p. 6; Polenberg, War and Society, p. 95; Philip J. Funigiello, The Challenge to Urban Liberalism: Federal-City Relations during World War II (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1978), pp. 106, 109, 110. Hereafter cited as Funigiello, Challenge to Urban Liberalism; Clive, State of War, p. 105; Gainesville Weekly Register, May 6, 1943, p. 1; Interview with Graham.

[10]Gainesville Daily Register, January 1, 1944, p. 5; January 5, 1944, p. 5; March 8, 1944, p. 5; June 17, 1944, p. 5; July 3, 1944, p. 5; December 5, 1944, p. 5; January 5, 1945, p. 5; February 23, 1945, p. 6; March 27, 1945, p. 5; May 7, 1945, p. 7; January 1, 1946, p. 7.

[11]Gainesville Daily Register, March 30, 1945, p. 5.

[12]Interview with Graham.

[13]Interview with Atkins; Interview with Cannon; Interview with Melissa Keel, Gainesville, Texas, February 24, 1984.

[14]Gainesville Daily Register, March 27, 1943, p. 2; Interview with Atkins.

[15]Polenberg, War and Society, p. 95; Gainesville Weekly Register, June 14, 1945, p. 1; Camp Howze Howitzer, March 24, 1946, p. 1; Gainesville Daily Register, January 1, 1944, p. 2; January 15, 1945, p. 6.

[16]Camp Howze Howitzer, October 29, 1943, p. 1; Gainesville Weekly Register, September 28, 1944, p. 6; November 8, 1945, p. 1; November 28, 1946, p. 6; Gainesville Daily Register, January 12, 1944, p. 5; September 27, 1944, p. 2; January 6, 1945, p. 3; July 19, 1945, p. 6.

[17]Interview with Yarbroughs; Interview with Smith; Interview with Atkins; Interview with Graham; Interview with Cannon.

CHAPTER IV

COMMUNITY CONCERNS: HOSPITALITY AND PATRIOTISM

While Camp Howze dominated the events, policies, and activities of Cooke County during World War II, area residents experienced some changes attributed to the war itself, not just the close proximity of an army base. At the same time, however, the presence of the camp accentuated many of those developments. With the war so close to home, patriotic citizens tried to do their part for both the servicemen abroad and for the soldiers at Camp Howze. Not only did they volunteer time and money to fight the war in Europe and the Pacific, but they also willingly gave of themselves to help make life more pleasant for soldiers at home.

As one of the first of many voluntary acts of the wartime period, Cooke County residents organized a civil defense unit. At the first meeting in January, 1942 thirty volunteered for such jobs as air raid wardens, emergency fire fighters, first aid and hospital workers, ambulance drivers, and typists. Following the example set by women in Denton, that February Gainesville females organized a Woman's Motor Corporation to instruct themselves on how to replace men in home defense activities if the need arose.

As part of their training, women attended weekly drills and took courses in first aid, mechanics, map reading, radio operations, fire fighting, and ambulance and truck driving.[1]

In addition to civil defense work, residents also enrolled in first aid classes and nurse's aide programs through the Red Cross. At the end of 1942 over two hundred people had successfully completed a first aid course. In February, 1944 nineteen Cooke County housewives graduated from a rigorous eighty-hour, six-week course to become the first Red Cross volunteer nurse's aides in an army hospital in Texas. As the war progressed, however, fewer Cooke County women took the course. Most volunteers came from Camp Howze, which helped the local situation only temporarily because most service wives did not stay long at the camp.[2]

Even though few volunteered for the nurse's aides program, many area residents worked diligently in other Red Cross services. Workers organized a canteen to serve military personnel. Some volunteered at the local bus station to assist army wives in locating their husbands. If buses had halted service for the night, workers found the women a place to stay overnight. Others, including servicemen's wives, sewed such items as pot holders, bandages, operating sheets, hospital gowns, scrub caps, and

x-ray room curtains. Red Cross volunteers--one thousand strong by 1945--demonstrated a cooperative spirit in serving the needs of the community.[3]

Without belonging to any organization, many citizens responded to the war effort, contributing in a variety of ways. Many gave blood, including 300 Gainesville residents and 307 Camp Howze soldiers in 1943, and 547 Gainesville citizens, 100 from Muenster, and 150 from Camp Howze in 1944. Others donated books, phonograph records, and playing cards to be used by servicemen. Some at Christmas time gave gifts to the men at the Camp Howze hospital. One enthusiastic young girl even contributed her best dresses to a clothing collection--without her mother's knowledge. Upon discovering this, however, the mother managed to retrieve the clothes.[4]

As another demonstration of community concern for the servicemen, county residents attempted to provide recreation for soldiers from the camp. Knowing that many were homesick, that some had limited finances, and that most needed a place to relax and forget the routine, local residents devised various activities--a must in the midst of the large number of servicemen and the few commercial recreational facilities available.

To entertain soldiers in their free time, Camp Howze provided recreational facilities. The camp organized two service clubs which contained an 8500-volume library, a soda fountain, cafeteria, dance floor, lounge, and twelve individual telephone booths. Each night Lieutenant W. N. Petre, service club director, planned a different activity. Diversions included the weekly radio broadcast of "Here's Howze" on Friday, games, songs, wiener roasts, taffy pulls, bingo, and free movies. The base also provided recreational buildings for such sports as basketball and boxing. Neighboring towns provided programs such as the Dallas Little Theater and the A Cappella Choir from Texas State College for Women in Denton.[5]

Although the camp had its own recreational facilities, many servicemen preferred to spend their free time away from the base. While the camp was still in the planning stages, Raymond Forsburg, Field Representative of the Recreational Division of the Federal Security Agency, met with the Gainesville recreational committee and stressed the responsibility of citizens in providing activities for the soldiers. He suggested three areas: music and drama, including concerts, storytelling, puppet theaters, and dancing dramatics; crafts, such as building of model airplanes, craft rooms, and Junior Red Cross activities;

and athletics. He also emphasized the need of USOs, church functions, dances, separate recreational facilities and activities for blacks, and recreation committees in surrounding towns.[6]

To comply with the suggestions, the Gainesville War Recreation Council worked diligently to establish a USO in the city. When the first USO at 207½ W. Elm opened in the fall of 1942, servicemen from forty-six states, Canada, England, and Ireland registered. By the following fall, the city had provided two new USO buildings. At a cost of $8,000 the city remodeled a former church building to house the first new USO on Lindsay Street. The two-story structure contained a music room, a shower room, a dressing room, and ping pong and other indoor games. The federal government provided the second new USO. The Fair Park USO on California Street replaced the Elm Street Club. The $80,000 structure contained five club rooms, a theater or recreation hall, a shower room, and a snack bar. Reflecting segregationist attitudes of the times, Gainesville civic leaders then established the Travelers Aid and the Muller Street Negro Club.[7]

The USO facilities sponsored many activities for servicemen. One popular activity was dances. To make some of them more festive, hostesses decorated for special

occasions. For example, one spring the women used bluebonnets for favors and decorations and called the affair the Bluebonnet Dance. Camp Howze soldiers often supplied the music for such occasions. Other pastimes included variety shows, dance routines, comedy skits, and vocalists with talent from both the hostesses and the servicemen. For another activity the clubs furnished cake and ice cream at a monthly birthday party for the soldiers and their wives. On special occasions, particularly Christmas, the USOs served refreshments and provided carols and presents for thousands of servicemen, their wives, and children. The USOs attempted to organize events daily and to plan special events to help servicemen enjoy their free time.[8]

Churches also planned activities to help soldiers and their families feel less isolated. Church groups organized Sunday night suppers, games, youth meetings, and other functions to involve the men in the life of the community. Many families invited servicemen to their homes for picnics, fish fries, or Sunday dinner. Most churches experienced a tremendous increase in attendance during the war years. Feeling a need to be part of the community, even if only for a short time, servicemen, particularly those with families, established their ties through church congregations.[9]

As another example of community involvement, performers from the Gainesville Community Circus sometimes entertained at Camp Howze. The circus, begun in 1930 as an effort to raise money for the local drama club, expanded into an attraction which boasted of trapeze artists, tumblers, jugglers, ballet dancers, acrobats, clowns, and much more. By 1941 the non-profit venture had emerged as the third largest circus in the United States and had entertained over 400,000 people in thirty-three cities in Texas and Oklahoma. But because many members of the circus either joined the military or were drafted, the operation was suspended following the 1942 season. During the war, however, those performers who remained at home entertained camp personnel on special occasions.[10]

Not only did local residents entertain servicemen, but many talented soldiers and their wives, in turn, also took part in activities. For example, the Railsplitters of the 84th Division performed in a variety show dressed as chorus girls. Men in the group had performed with some of the popular bands of the time. In another instance, the wife of one serviceman played the piano before a large audience in Dallas. The woman, an Italian musician, received a standing ovation and repeated encores to continue her performance. Not wanting to disappoint her audience, she

played--sometimes composing as she went--for three hours. Each time she paused, the appreciative listeners answered with a thunderous applause.[11]

Gainesville also welcomed many famous entertainers during World War II. The First United Methodist Church hosted the nationally renowned singer Miriam Anderson. Camp Howze received such notables as actor Guy Kibbee and heavyweight boxing champion Joe Louis. Other celebrities who visited the area included Frank "Bring 'Em Back Alive" Buck, Gainesville native and internationally famous big game hunter and wildlife conservationist; Marvin Jones, War Food Administrator; Congressman Ed Gossett; and Edith B. Joynes, president of the National Education Association.[12]

In addition to the activities of the USOs and churches, businesses catered to servicemen, often increasing personnel to handle the demand. Although Texas forbade the operation of public pool halls, owners circumvented the law by calling their establishments "private" clubs and having them sponsored by some organization. Other forms of entertainment for soldiers included roller skating, miniature golf, horseback riding, and bowling. While Gainesville provided various forms of entertainment, some pastimes remained unavailable. At the time the town had no swimming pools and no nearby lakes; Lake Texoma did not yet exist nor did

Moss Lake. As a "dry" community, Gainesville had no places to buy liquor.[13]

While enlisted men preferred the social life of the service clubs on the base, the Gainesville USOs, the churches, and the theaters, officers usually had homes in town and could, therefore, entertain and become part of the social life in Gainesville. Since Gainesville had no country club then, people entertained at the Flower Garden of the Turner Hotel. Officers also joined many of the civic and service clubs in the community, taking an active part in the Rotary Club, Kiwanis, and other organizations, often appearing as guest speakers at club functions.[14]

Not only did county residents and servicemen search for amusement, but they, like other Americans, also worked diligently to contribute to the success of the eight war bond drives sponsored between 1941 and 1945. Even before the United States officially entered World War II, the government encouraged citizens to purchase bonds. Once Pearl Harbor was attacked, however, sales soared nationwide. After the United States declared war on Japan, the government set bond quotas for each community. Although banks, insurance companies, and corporations bought $135 billion worth of the securities, individuals purchased one-fourth of the total. Americans bought bonds for many reasons:

to show their patriotism, help a family member in the armed forces to invest money safely, preserve the American way of life, combat inflation, and save for postwar purchases.[15]

Like Americans nationwide, Cooke County residents responded to the call and purchased bonds to finance the war. As an example, Austin's Pharmacy in Gainesville sponsored a "Slap the Jap" sale where the drugstore gave defense stamps with each cash purchase and stressed that every stamp would help to defeat the Japanese. Schools also encouraged students to purchase stamps weekly until they had the $18.75 needed for a bond. To promote bond purchases by adults, city officials obtained an honor roll on the courthouse square, and people paid to have the names of Gainesville and Cooke County servicemen listed on it. Another promotional idea involved the purchase of $21,000 worth of war bonds to buy a fighting plane and have the War Department name it "The City of Gainesville, Texas."[16]

Not only did civilians purchase bonds, but the men at Camp Howze also promoted their sale and bought many. Before the 84th Division left, its men had spent $45,581.25 for bonds, and the 86th Division purchased over $30,000 worth. As a way of showing their support for the sale of bonds, one thousand Camp Howze soldiers participated in a parade in Gainesville to begin the fourth war loan campaign. The

265th Army Band also performed at rallies at both the junior and senior high schools. To help with the fifth drive, the army, using tanks and jeeps, closed off the business district to demonstrate the importance of fast training and war production. Other servicemen, who were members of the Army Ground Forces Band-Orchestra, boarded a truck with a sign that read, "Climb aboard the band wagon; buy more war bonds; it's smart to save."[17]

Both area residents and servicemen purchased enough bonds to allow Cooke County to meet--and often exceed--its eight war bond quotas. The county surpassed its first goal of $928,600 for 1942, passed its third quota of $3,790,900, and the fourth one of $1,110,000, as well as all subsequent goals. After the first month of the fourth campaign, forty-four percent of the national $14 billion quota had been achieved while Cooke County had reached sixty percent. Although many areas nationwide fell far short of their quotas of E-Bonds--which could only be bought by individuals--Cooke County exceeded that requirement in all war bond drives.[18]

In addition to providing recreation for soldiers and buying bonds to demonstrate their patriotism, area residents--like most Americans--faced shortages of items considered vital to the war effort. Since winning the war became the

first priority, in 1942 the Office of Price Administration (OPA) instituted ten major rationing programs, issuing coupons for the purchase of designated goods, including meat, shoes, fats, sugar, and coffee. The OPA also required merchants to accept as a ceiling the highest price they had charged in March, 1942. When price ceilings went into effect, the quality of goods usually suffered. Shirts were manufactured mainly of low-grade percale instead of cotton; suits of rayon rather than wool; leather shoes became soggy like paper; the size of cereal boxes decreased by one or two ounces. In every community local rationing boards set quotas for each family, with some board members being more lenient towards their neighbors, friends, and relatives.[19]

Although many Cooke County residents fared better than Americans in general, both because of the agricultural setting and the proximity of an army base, they still were forced to contend with food shortages. When coffee rationing started at the rate of one pound per person for five weeks, an individual averaged only about one cup a day. Another item often in short supply was sugar. As rationing began, the OPA asked that anyone with more than two pounds of sugar per person return the excess to the grocer for a refund. Even though the OPA granted an extra five pound allowance for each individual for canning purposes, County

Home Agent Nette Shultz urged housewives to use corn syrup and honey when possible in order to conserve sugar. Special recipes with reduced sugar appeared in the local newspaper. Despite such conservation measures, by 1945 sugar supplies had greatly diminished because of the liberal allowances in earlier years. Since the population of Cooke County decreased after August, 1945, the OPA cut the sugar allotment for the area even further. Housewives also experienced a scarcity of oleo. In one instance a local grocer placed a sign advertising the sale of margarine in his store window. Before the store opened, a long line formed along the front entrance, another one at the back. Consumers also faced meat rationing, as early as 1943 individuals receiving an allowance of two pounds--or sixteen points--of steak a week. By the spring of 1944 the OPA removed all meats except beef from the ration list, but citizens continued to experience meat shortages anyway. Numerous advertisements appeared in the Gainesville newspaper requesting chickens to sell. One grocer even asked farmers to sell non-laying hens to his store so that, in turn, people could have meat. On November 24, 1945, the rationing of all foods except sugar ended. Although the war was over, meat supplies had decreased twenty-five to fifty percent because store owners could not purchase enough beef to fill the quota.[20]

While most area residents believed food shortages to be an inconvenience during the war, many Cooke County inhabitants considered the gasoline shortage even more troublesome. When gas rationing began in December, 1942, only 3,927 of 6,595 automobiles in Cooke County--not including army vehicles--registered for ration coupons. As one precaution against unscrupulous car dealers who reported less gasoline than they received, the OPA required that people who sold cars report ration cards to their office and sign a joint certificate with the dealer testifying to the amount of gas still allotted on the coupon. Because too many people refused to conserve by sharing rides, in 1944 the OPA required local boards to prove that gas recipients belonged to a car pool. If they did not, they received enough gas for thirty days of home-to-work driving instead of the usual three-month allowance. In spite of rigid controls, in November, 1944 the Fort Worth District, which included Cooke County, issued more gasoline in proportion to the amount allotted than any other district in Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas, or Missouri. While Cooke County residents--typifying most Americans--generally used more than their quota, Camp Howze received a military commendation for leading in the conservation of both gas and tires in a five-state area.[21]

Tire rationing caused many area residents to make sacrifices and experience hardships. Even though people applied to the rationing board for new tires, they sometimes received old ones, oftentimes none at all. One farmer requested an odd sized tire for his farm equipment, only to find that the OPA had declared it obsolete. In order to conserve tires as well as gas, several Gainesville businessmen were forced either to reduce or eliminate delivery service.[22]

To conserve rubber, steel, and copper--all vital materials for the production of tanks and airplanes--in 1942 the War Production Board outlawed the manufacture of cars and light trucks. Although auto sales increased dramatically in 1940 and 1941, the average number of cars per person decreased from one for every four people in 1943 to a one to five ratio by 1944. With the discontinuing of the manufacture of automobiles, used car advertisements by both individuals and dealers soared. The OPA advised potential buyers to be wary of unscrupulous car promoters who charged extra for clocks, seat covers, horns, foglights, spotlights, or mirrors--although dealers could charge more for heaters, radios, warranties, and taxes.[23]

The car shortage caused some inconveniences for agencies within the county. The city of Gainesville managed

to purchase a new 1942 Ford police car--increasing to two the number of patrol cars on duty twenty-four hours a day. From 1944 to 1946 county commissioners authorized the purchase of several used vehicles: a maintainer for $5,000; a dump truck; a $1,000 Chevrolet truck; a $1,400 bulldozer; a $900 truck; and another maintainer for $7,400.[24]

While food and transportation-related shortages created the most hardships for Cooke County residents, rationing of clothing, shoes, and personal items also caused numerous inconveniences. Clothing styles reflected material deficiencies, such as the men's so-called "victory suit" which had no cuffs, slimmer trousers than normal, and more narrow lapels. The government even asked ex-soldiers to return their clothing for use by other servicemen. For women, the shortage of nylon hose caused them to take extra precautions. More carefully now ladies hand washed their stockings so as not to snag them. To make them last longer, one women even kept them in the freezer. Because of the decrease in supply, some women bought leg paint in lieu of nylons, although the results left much to be desired. The OPA also rationed shoes made of rubber. Toiletries manufacturers encouraged women to switch to perfume because it contained less alcohol--a critical war material--than cologne. The government reduced razor blade output to one

per week for each man. Until 1944 regulations required consumers to return the old toothpaste tube before receiving a new one.[25]

Since rationing began about the same time that production of consumer goods was curtailed by twenty-nine percent, government agencies urged citizens to decrease purchases. As part of its anti-inflation campaign, the Office of Civil Defense reminded people that every time they decided not to buy something they helped to win the war. The Home Service Advisors of the Texas Power and Light Company encouraged consumers not to waste precious food, clothing, or energy, specifically advising customers to keep refrigerator doors closed as much as possible and to defrost often.[26]

As another way of promoting conservation, the Office of Production Management encouraged salvage campaigns. Following the example of other Americans who collected rubber, fats, paper, and scrap metals, Cooke County organized a salvage committee to coordinate scrap drives. Committee members asked farmers to save burlap, scrap metal, paper, and rags. They cooperated with Camp Howze, the school system, and Gainesville to sponsor scrap metal drives. Even before the first salvage campaign began, the committee had collected more than 750,000 pounds. In one instance county officials, aware of the importance of steel to the

war effort, authorized that four bridges soon to be dismantled to make way for the Denison Dam Project--amounting to almost nineteen tons of steel--be classified as scrap and sold. Then a few months later, the commissioners court had to authorize the purchase of a $35 second-hand, seventy-foot, steel bridge from nearby Grayson County.[27]

Area groups sponsored the collection of paper--a badly needed commodity which sold for as much as $21 a ton for corrugated board. Cooke County residents, however, lagged behind other towns in paper collection for several reasons. After one paper drive, mischievous children vandalized the building, scattering paper everywhere, causing city officials to pay for it to be gathered, baled, and disposed of, which cost more than the receipts for the paper. Besides that, people often set out paper which was never collected. In an attempt to solve the problems, the city encouraged residents to set out waste paper separate from their trash so that the garbage collector would carry it to the dump site and place it in a storage warehouse; when the building reached capacity, Camp Howze soldiers removed the paper. In spite of some problems, during one collection people gathered more than could be crammed into a boxcar capable of holding fifty thousand pounds. Being patriotic and civic-minded, citizens gathered waste paper for drives

sponsored by the Boy Scouts, the Federated Business and Professional Women's Club, and other civic organizations.[28]

In addition to metal and paper collection, residents also conserved fats needed to manufacture medicines, parachutes, synthetic rubber, munitions, paints, varnishes, soaps, stockings, electrical appliances, insecticides, telephones, tires, and automobiles. As an incentive, OPA either paid up to four cents a pound in cash or gave two red ration points for each pound. Housewives continued to save fats even after the war ended until the United States could once again import products from the South Pacific.[29]

During World War II, Cooke County residents took an active part by conserving items essential to the war. While some people faced critical food shortages, others managed to conserve and learned to adjust to rationing. Many Cooke County residents fished, planted victory gardens, raised chickens, pigs, and cows for butchering, and shared food, canning supplies, and rationing stamps with friends and neighbors. Although some complained about shortages, rationing, and the strains of wartime existence, they nevertheless maintained a higher standard of living than most people in the world and experienced greater prosperity than during the Great Depression.[30]

Area residents also contributed to the war effort in other ways--some good, some bad. Many volunteered time to various organizations, while some planned recreation for the soldiers at Camp Howze and purchased savings bonds. But in spite of a general attitude of patriotism and congeniality between citizens and soldiers, the county experienced an increase in both crime and disease--not surprising considering the large increase in the number of inhabitants.

Some incidents of crime related directly to the war and to the increase in population. Tire and automobile thefts were too common. At least one incident involved several soldiers from Camp Howze who confessed to stealing twenty-three tires from the Townsley Motor Company of Gainesville. Congressman Ed Gossett informed the Chamber of Commerce that thieves stole new tires, slashed them, and then sold them to salvage dealers. In one thirty-six hour period eight automobiles were stolen, seven of the owners having carelessly left their keys in the ignition.[31]

Alcohol-related crimes also escalated during the war despite the fact that Cooke County had not legalized the sale of beer and liquor. In one case, the sheriff, constable, liquor board members, and a Texas Ranger destroyed over one hundred bottles of berry wine during a raid east of Gainesville. In another incident, a drunk serviceman

knocked at the door of a man he thought sold liquor. Instead, he went to the wrong house, and the man who opened the door held a gun on the soldier until the military police arrived. Other violations included the sale of liquor and countless charges of drunkenness.[32]

"Window peepers" and prowlers likewise became a public nuisance during the war years. Elementary teacher Thelma Atkins remembered waking early one morning to set out her milk bottle. Seeing a soldier at a window, she threw the bottle at the man as he jumped up and ran away. In another incident, the wife of the Methodist preacher, returning home from a meeting, saw someone in the bushes by her daughter's bedroom window. Thinking it was her husband, she grabbed the man by the collar, only to realize that he was a stranger. She then began slapping him. Later when a parishoner asked her minister husband why he had not pressed charges, he said that the beating the peeper received from his wife was punishment enough. Other women reported episodes of being molested in their homes and accosted on local streets, especially in poorly lighted areas.[33]

Traffic violations rose too. Overparking, failing to stop at traffic lights, and omitting hand signals became common occurrences. Petty thievery also increased. Every week women reported purses stolen. One angry resident even

notified the local newspaper that someone had stolen onions from her garden, adding that if the culprit were that hungry, she would gladly give him more so that he would not be forced to steal from others. Due to burglaries in some county departments, officials began closing the courthouse at 5:00 P.M. daily. Hardly a day went by that a business or an individual did not report the theft of meat, sugar, canned goods, cigars, money, lawn mowers, tools, or other items.[34]

The rapid growth in population logically contributed to a natural increase in the crime rate. Camp Howze soldiers, therefore, could not be blamed for all incidents. In fact, servicemen caused few disturbances of any consequence in Gainesville during the war. As a rule citizens and soldiers developed a pleasant, harmonious relationship.[35]

An additional area of concern involved public health. To serve the needs of so many people, the Gainesville City Council created a county-wide sanitary district and a Board of Health chaired by Dr. H. H. Terry. As another precaution, the council passed a meat inspection ordinance which required that veterinarians inspect all animals before and after slaughter. The city further stressed the need to dispose of trash properly to prevent the spread of flies and the breeding of vermin and insects. Health officials urged

that school children receive immunizations for diphtheria, typhoid, and small pox. They also suggested the use of paper cups, which were more sanitary and more economical.[36]

Since Cooke County housed a large army base as well as an airfield, civic and military officials concerned themselves with the threat of venereal disease, which affected three million people a year in peacetime and for which Cooke County health officials administered 5,517 treatments in 1941, even before Camp Howze. In an effort to control cases of VD after the base opened, the army, navy, and United States Public Health Service presented a conference in Gainesville, stressing the need to deal with the problem as a disease, not the people as criminals. In spite of efforts to curb VD, the commanding officer at Camp Howze informed the city of a startling increase in the number of cases at the camp that were traceable to Gainesville. He suggested an increase in the budget of the county health unit, an effective measure in nearby Paris, Texas, and Ardmore, Oklahoma.[37]

Officials also concerned themselves with other illnesses. Influenza attacked the largest number of people. At one time the health unit reported seven hundred cases in just one weekend. A dysentery outbreak among children occurred in 1945. When officials traced contamination to one of the

city wells, the city closed the well and chlorinated the entire water system. Officials also diagnosed several cases of polio, a disease of special emphasis since President Franklin Roosevelt had been afflicted. Other common health problems included three-day measles, impetigo, and head lice. Since most diseases occurred without regard to Camp Howze--except for the number of cases involved--the county continued to experience the same illnesses after the war.[38]

Even though most developments would have occurred simply because of World War II itself, Cooke County residents experienced a broader scope, being given the opportunity to aid servicemen--and themselves--directly. As one USO volunteer aptly stated, her only problem with shoes came, not from rationing, but from "dancing the soles off." Wartime measures tended to create only minor hardships, difficulties which most overcame. Accustomed to a lack of both goods and money during the Great Depression, most people actually experienced greater prosperity in spite of government controls. Rather than associating Camp Howze with increased problems, most women saw the base as a social outlet--an opportunity to go to dances, parties, concerts, and benefits, most of which would have been either dull or nonexistent without male companionship. Even bond campaigns and salvage

drives became pleasurable events because of the involvement of Camp Howze soldiers. At the same time that Cooke County residents entertained servicemen and supported wartime policies, they provided themselves with a patriotic escape for diversion in the midst of a national crisis.[39]

NOTES

[1]Gainesville Daily Register, January 3, 1942, sec. 1, p. 1; January 5, 1942, pp. 1, 8; October 14, 1942, sec. 3, pp. 1, 3; Gainesville Weekly Register, January 1, 1942, p. 1.

[2]Camp Howze Howitzer, February 4, 1944, p. 4; Gainesville Daily Register, January 18, 1945, p. 2.

[3]Gainesville Daily Register, October 14, 1942, sec. 3, p. 3; January 11, 1945, p. 4; Interview with Graham; Interview with Cannon; Gainesville Weekly Register, March 25, 1943, p. 4.

[4]Gainesville Daily Register, February 7, 1942, p. 6; February 25, 1942, p. 6; July 18, 1942, p. 5; January 1, 1944, p. 2; December 16, 1944, p. 2; April 3, 1945, p. 2; Gainesville Weekly Register, January 22, 1942, p. 6; June 22, 1944, p. 4.

[5]Gainesville Daily Register, October 14, 1942, sec. 3, p. 3; Camp Howze Howitzer, October 22, 1944, p. 6; Camera Trip Through Camp Howze, pp. 4, 27.

[6]Gainesville Daily Register, March 26, 1942, p. 1; June 1, 1942, p. 6.

[7]Gainesville Daily Register, October 14, 1942, sec. 3, p. 3; November 7, 1942, p. 6; September 15, 1945, p. 2; Camp Howze Howitzer, August 27, 1943, p. 1; September 24, 1943, p. 1; November 19, 1943, p. 3; Interview with Estes.

[8]Gainesville Daily Register, May 2, 1944, p. 3; September 1, 1944, p. 3; September 5, 1944, p. 6; December 27, 1944, p. 3; January 29, 1945, p. 6; Camp Howze Howitzer, May 12, 1944, p. 1.

[9]Interview with Gilbert; Interview with Cannon; Interview with Atkins; Interview with Bright; Interview with Keel; Interview with Estes; Interview with Graham.

[10]Collins, Cooke County, Texas, pp. 60-63.

[11]Interview with Estes; Interview with Atkins.

[12]Interview with Atkins; Gainesville Daily Register, January 1, 1944, p. 2.

[13]Interview with Estes; Interview with Graham; Camp Howze Howitzer, May 26, 1944, p. 1; Gainesville Daily Register, May 29, 1944, p. 2; January 16, 1945, p. 2; April 7, 1945, p. 5.

[14]Gainesville Daily Register, October 14, 1942, sec. 3, p. 1; November 16, 1944, p. 3.

[15]Gainesville Weekly Register, January 1, 1942, p. 1; Gainesville Daily Register, January 1, 1942, sec. 1, p. 1; Polenberg, War and Society, p. 30; John Morton Blum, V Was for Victory: Politics and American Culture During World War II (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), p. 20. Hereafter cited as Blum, V for Victory.

[16]Polenberg, War and Society, p. 29; Blum, V for Victory, p. 17; Gainesville Daily Register, January 17, 1942, p. 4; March 11, 1942, p. 6; August 19, 1942, p. 1; Camp Howze Howitzer, September 24, 1943, p. 1; Interview with Graham.

[17]Camp Howze Howitzer, September 24, 1943, p. 1; June 9, 1944, p. 1; Gainesville Daily Register, May 20, 1944, p. 3; June 12, 1944, p. 2; January 1, 1945, p. 3.

[18]Gainesville Daily Register, January 9, 1942, p. 1; November 7, 1942, p. 6; October 4, 1943, p. 1; January 1, 1944, p. 1; February 3, 1944, p. 2; February 17, 1944, p. 1; July 8, 1944, p. 6; December 21, 1944, p. 2; June 15, 1945, p. 2; July 13, 1945, p. 3; October 24, 1945, p. 7; Camp Howze Howitzer, January 14, 1944, p. 1; Gainesville Weekly Register, June 7, 1945, p. 6; December 13, 1945, p. 1.

[19]Blum, V for Victory, pp. 227, 229; Polenberg, War and Society, p. 31; Perrett, Days of Sadness, p. 132.

[20]Gainesville Daily Register, March 12, 1942, p. 5; May 7, 1942, p. 3; October 26, 1942, p. 1; March 29, 1943, p. 1; March 15, 1944, p. 6; May 3, 1944, p. 1; March 23, 1945, p. 4; June 5, 1945, p. 3; November 23, 1945, p. 1; May 30, 1946, p. 2; September 12, 1946, p. 8; Gainesville Weekly Register, March 29, 1945, p. 6; May 31, 1945, p. 1; August 1, 1946, p. 1; Karen Anderson, Wartime Women: Sex Roles, Family Relations, and the Status of Women During World War II (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1981), p. 87. Hereafter cited as Anderson, Wartime Women.

[21]Robert J. Havighurst and H. Gerthon Morgan, The Social History of a War Boom Community (New York: Longman, Green and Co., Inc., 1951), p. 129. Hereafter cited as Havighurst, War-Boom Community; Polenberg, War and Society, pp. 16, 18; Gainesville Daily Register, November 25, 1942, p. 5; July 14, 1944, p. 2; August 2, 1944, p. 6; Gainesville Weekly Register, July 20, 1944, p. 4; January 25, 1945, p. 1.

[22]Interview with Yarbroughs; Gainesville Daily Register, January 10, 1942, sec. 1, p. 6; January 12, 1942, p. 3; May 13, 1942, p. 6; Interview with Estes.

[23]Polenberg, War and Society, p. 11; Perrett, Days of Sadness, pp. 23, 86; Gainesville Daily Register, January 9, 1945, p. 4; February 7, 1945, p. 2; February 16, 1945, pp. 4, 5.

[24]Gainesville Daily Register, April 20, 1944, p. 2; Commissioner's Court Minutes, vol. XIII, pp. 188, 189, 213, 249, 310.

[25]Havighurst, War-Boom Community, p. 129; Perrett, Days of Sadness, pp. 135, 246; Camp Howze Howitzer, November 19, 1943, p. 1; Interview with Graham; Interview with Atkins; Gainesville Daily Register, March 25, 1942, p. 1; August 11, 1942, p. 3; September 29, 1942, p. 5; January 10, 1944, p. 2.

[26]Gainesville Weekly Register, April 30, 1942, p. 1; Polenberg, War and Society, pp. 11, 133; Gainesville Daily Register, May 22, 1942, p. 5.

[27]Funigiello, Challenge to Urban Liberalism, p. 46; Perrett, Days of Sadness, p. 233; Gainesville Daily Register, January 13, 1942, p. 6; August 29, 1942, p. 6; October 14, 1942, sec. 3, p. 1; Commissioner's Court Minutes, vol. XIII, p. 112.

[28]Gainesville Daily Register, January 1, 1942, sec. 1, p. 2; January 30, 1942, p. 8; January 17, 1944, p. 6; January 28, 1944, p. 2; September 2, 1944, p. 2; March 29, 1945, p. 6; May 8, 1945, p. 1; July 11, 1945, p. 2; March 13, 1946, p. 6; Gainesville Weekly Register, October 22, 1942, p. 1; March 22, 1945, p. 5; April 12, 1945, p. 1.

[29]Gainesville Daily Register, February 5, 1945, p. 3; May 24, 1945, p. 2; October 8, 1945, p. 3; Gainesville Weekly Register, December 6, 1945, p. 6.

[30]Interview with Estes; Interview with Cannon; Gainesville Weekly Register, May 21, 1942, p. 6; Blum, V for Victory, p. 94.

[31]Gainesville Daily Register, January 3, 1945, p. 3; January 30, 1945, p. 3; April 22, 1945, p. 2.

[32]Gainesville Daily Register, March 29, 1945, p. 6; March 30, 1945, p. 3; June 4, 1945, p. 3; June 22, 1945, p. 3; Interview with Estes.

[33]Interview with Estes; Interview with Atkins; Gainesville Daily Register, February 9, 1945, p. 2; Interview with Graham.

[34]Gainesville Daily Register, February 5, 1943, p. 2; April 4, 1944, p. 3; April 7, 1944, p. 2; August 8, 1944, p. 2; November 23, 1944, p. 2; December 22, 1944, p. 1; April 19, 1945, p. 3; July 9, 1945, p. 6; Gainesville Weekly Register, January 4, 1945, p. 6; March 29, 1945, p. 4.

[35]Gainesville Daily Register, July 10, 1945, p. 2.

[36]Gainesville Daily Register, March 7, 1942, p. 5; May 14, 1942, p. 3; August 24, 1942, p. 3; October 14, 1942, sec. 3, p. 1; February 17, 1944, p. 3.

[37]Perrett, Days of Sadness, p. 332; Gainesville Weekly Register, November 5, 1942, p. 5; Gainesville Daily Register, July 11, 1944, p. 6.

[38]Gainesville Weekly Register, December 30, 1942, p. 1; September 13, 1945, p. 1; Gainesville Daily Register, January 2, 1942, sec. 1, p. 5; July 8, 1943, pp. 1, 3; January 1, 1944, p. 2; January 13, 1945, p. 2; September 25, 1945, p. 3; Interview with Cannon; Interview with Atkins; Economic Survey of Cooke County, p. 4.1711.

[39]Interview with Cannon.

CHAPTER V

POST-WAR: AFTERMATH AND ADJUSTMENTS

In February, 1946, almost four years after the announcement of the building of Camp Howze, the government declared the base surplus--in spite of local efforts to retain the site as a permanent facility.[1] During that time the county experienced tremendous economic growth and expansion. But while the camp brought prosperity, it also created problems: a loss of property, lack of housing, overcrowded conditions, and inadequate recreational facilities. The proximity of Camp Howze sometimes magnified the hardships caused by wartime measures, such as food, gas, and tire rationing. At other times, the nearness of the camp stirred a patriotic desire in residents to help the war effort through the buying of bonds, the sponsoring of scrap drives, and the volunteering of time to the Red Cross, USO, and other war-related activities. While some local citizens disliked the camp because of problems either real or imagined, most residents heralded its construction, the prosperity it brought, and the chance it afforded to associate with people from diverse backgrounds and distant places. The deactivation of Camp Howze in 1946 ended a prosperous and energetic period in the history of Cooke County.

After Japan surrendered in August of 1945 ending World War II, many Cooke County citizens, aware that prosperity had stemmed from Camp Howze, wrote to the War Department and asked that the base remain as a permanent facility. In September the army conducted a survey of the camp to determine the need and practicality of retaining the post. In the study army personnel noted that all housing, except for the hospital, had been constructed for temporary use; the sewage disposal system required major renovation; the cost of permanent housing was estimated to be $51 million--two and a half times the cost of operating the camp to date; maintenance for both cantonment and access roads and for the two railroad lines would be costly; and the quality of city milk and city water was questionable. On the other hand, the study observed that the relatively dry climate afforded ample training time, that the area maintained an effective mosquito control program, that the six water wells on the base were constructed of permanent materials, and that the Texas Power and Light Company supplied adequate and dependable electrical power.[2]

During the final stages of the war and through the first few months afterwards, the future of Camp Howze remained unsettled. Just a few weeks before the Japanese surrendered, the army tentatively scheduled the assignment

of another division, the 91st, but later rescinded the order. By October the War Department placed the camp on the inactive list and retained only a small number of men to protect the base. On February 19, 1946, the army declared Camp Howze surplus. Two months later, the War Department transferred the camp from army control to the office of the District Engineer. By August, 1946 the post was deserted, a virtual ghost town.[3]

Although business-minded residents unhappily accepted the deactivation of Camp Howze, Congressman Ed Gossett at a Gainesville Chamber of Commerce meeting informed residents of the future possibilities of the site. Even though former owners received priority on land sales, the site contained other possibilities, such as for oil development or industrial expansion, especially considering the warehouses, artesian water wells, and unlimited electrical power. Instead, previous landowners reclaimed most of the land.[4]

Before the government gave property owners the chance to buy back their land, however, the War Assets Administration authorized the sale of surplus property. After the army deactivated the camp, officials began selling surplus property--vehicles, equipment, and buildings. The law listed the order of priority for the purchase of the items: first, federal agencies; second, veterans; third, Gainesville

businesses; fourth, state and local government; fifth, non-profit organizations; and last, the public. At the first sale, veterans--numbering about one thousand from six different states--bought 352 jeeps for a total of $283,777. In another transaction the Boy Scouts bought five former prisoner of war buildings which were to be moved to a scout camp on Lake Texoma. Later the Cooke County Fair Board bought a building for a 4-H Club, and the community circus purchased one for its use. Dallas contractors and former landowners wanted materials for building purposes. Southern Methodist University in Dallas purchased six barracks for classrooms. By August, 1946 the army approved the dismantling of approximately 2,200 camp buildings. In September agents began selling plumbing, electrical, and sewer supplies, tools, and miscellaneous property at cost, giving ex-servicemen the opportunity to build their own homes. While selling the surplus property, the government also transferred Camp Howze to the War Assets Administration in three separate parcels between August 5, 1946 and March 10, 1947.[5]

The Surplus War Property Administration (SWPA) also enacted guidelines for the disposal of army camp sites. Agency administrators wanted the land sold in family-sized parcels as quickly as possible at current market values.

They also sought to avoid selling for speculative purposes, preferring that former owners be given the first right of refusal.[6]

In keeping with agency desires, many former owners reacquired their lands, repurchasing the acreage either at present values or at the price paid by the government less any damages. Because of the misuse of much of the property, many bought their land back in 1947 for less than the government had paid them in 1942. For example, Laura Josephine Jones had sold 4,646 acres for $141,175; she reclaimed it for $103,000. In another instance, John Blanton had sold sixty acres for $2,900; he bought it back for $1,350. H. G. Perry also paid less for his property, giving $2,100 for 375 acres after having sold it for $12,700 five years earlier. Likewise, Lester Embry repurchased 320 acres for $10,200 which he had sold for $24,400 in 1942. To assist further, the War Assets Administration reallocated 253 barracks for purchase by former landowners. In an effort to be as fair as possible, government officials attempted to make amends for the previous hardships encountered by the many farmers and ranchers who had been forced to sell their land.[7]

Not all of the approximately 59,000 acres, however, reverted to the former holders. If original landowners did

not want to buy the property, the government extended the option to former tenants, then to veterans, and finally to the highest bidder.[8]

But the government did not offer all land for resale. The major site kept off the market was the 1500-acre air base built 3½ miles west of Gainesville on U.S. Highway 82 in July, 1942. Once the airfield was declared surplus, county commissioners waived the right to purchase it in favor of the city of Gainesville. On February 24, 1948, the city thus gained control of one of the largest and best equipped airports in the Southwest.[9]

The closing of Camp Howze allowed many property owners to regain control of their land and gave the city of Gainesville the opportunity to purchase a modern airport. On the other hand, the deactivation of the base exacerbated the problem of high unemployment. With the return home of many ex-servicemen and the loss of a major employer at the same time, Cooke County experienced increased joblessness. By September, 1945 the United States Employment Service (USES) in Gainesville saw a thirty-five percent rise in job applications. In March, 1946 alone the USES had 1,209 applicants in Cooke County, 847 of whom were veterans. By the end of that year, the employment service had placed

2,645 people, although many of those jobs--such as the demolition of Camp Howze--were temporary.[10]

Businesses in the county also experienced a temporary decline in activity following the war. While most boasted of more customers than they could manage during the war, afterward many were forced once again to begin advertising in order to sell their products. For example, many restaurants placed advertisements in the Gainesville Daily Register. Jack Heslop, Sr., owner of "Jack's," listed lower prices for meals--from twenty cents for chili to $1.25 for steak--and announced that his cafe had even begun to open for breakfast. Other business establishments also began placing advertisements, such as Acme Cleaners, Gainesville Laundry, Loper's Bowl Lanes, and the various movie theaters. Clothing stores also announced their new items--from fall coats to fuller skirts, longer jackets, and lower necklines--at discount prices. In an effort to stimulate sales, appliance dealers who had experienced shortages because of wartime rationing once again advertised automatic washers, dryers, ranges, frozen food lockers, and refrigerators.[11]

Even though Cooke County experienced rising unemployment and decreasing business activity following World War II, the economic situation gradually improved. In 1946

Gainesville lost several prospective businesses because of the housing shortage and inadequate office space. Later, however, the county experienced a major expansion in the oil industry. One petroleum company opened a district office in Gainesville, and another began operating a supply house. Planned highway construction also improved the county's economic outlook. State and county agencies approved the building of several farm to market roads in 1948. Local builders likewise boosted the sagging economy. Because of the post-war boom in housing construction, area home builders numbered sixty by 1947--fifteen more than seven years earlier. In 1946 Cooke County residents spent over $800 million on home repairs and improvements, and many merchants also renovated and remodeled their businesses. While the economy failed to regain the vitality and profits of the Camp Howze period, the county experienced a return to prosperity after a period of post-war economic dislocation, reaching a new bank deposit high of $11,324,228.26 on September 30, 1947, again indicating a brighter economic future.[12]

Even after the war had ended and most of the personnel at Camp Howze had departed, the housing shortage still existed in Gainesville as in other places--but for a different reason. Now instead of soldiers creating the

shortage, 1,300 returning veterans compounded the problem. Even with the building of the Ernwood addition in northern Gainesville and the planned construction of fifty-two new homes in 1946, dozens of people still searched for housing. Ex-servicemen, half of whom were married, wanted a decent place to start civilian life with their families. Finally, the government offered dwellings that cost less than $10,000 to veterans at a maximum rent of $80 per month. In other action, federal agencies, in spite of building restraints, allowed returning soldiers the opportunity to construct homes in Gainesville and Cooke County. Still, suitable housing remained in short supply, as returning veteran and circulation manager for the Gainesville Daily Register, Warren Flowers, discovered. Like so many others, he experienced a difficult time trying to find living accomodations for his family.[13]

Realizing the critical situation, Congressman Ed Gossett suggested that the city of Gainesville acquire "Howzeville," a 312-unit housing project at Camp Howze which consisted of dwellings averaging from one to three bedrooms, more than half of them vacant. In February, 1946 the Gainesville City Council voted to obtain the housing project, with the stipulation that the city would receive the profits and abide by the rent regulations of the Federal Public Housing

Administration (FPHA). The agreement also required tenants to be veterans, except for the seventy-five families already there. The FPHA allowed the city to maintain the housing units only for "the duration of the emergency and for two years thereafter" before requiring that the dwellings be town down. By April, 1946 almost 150 families lived at Howzeville. Many preferred to live there because of low rent rates--varying from $20 for an unfurnished living room/bedroom combination to $44.50 for a three bedroom furnished apartment. Although many women whose husbands were overseas enjoyed the companionship available at Howzeville, other residents experienced a transportation hardship because the bus line no longer operated between the camp and the city.[14]

Because Gainesville continued to face a critical lack of housing in 1947, the city council, listing several reasons for its request, urged the FPHA to open the Howzeville Housing Project to non-veterans for a one-year period. First, highway construction and the expanding oil business had created an influx of people into the area. Secondly, since of the 321 apartments, tenants occupied only 172 units, the council resolution emphasized the urgent need for opening the vacant apartments to non-veterans.[15]

The Howzeville project continued to serve area residents for several years. In 1950 the city requested the

purchase of the project under the Lanham Act, which made the apartments available to eligible parties. Two years later Gainesville withdrew its petition, the city no longer needing the units. By then the deteriorated condition of the buildings rendered them unsafe for occupancy. In 1952, therefore, the projects were scheduled for demolition--thus becoming the last section of Camp Howze to be razed.[16]

To make the transition from military to civilian life as stress-free as possible, both federal and county agencies attempted to help veterans in various ways. The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 provided educational benefits, readjustment allowances, low-interest loans, and unemployment compensation. To take advantage of government programs, in the fall of 1946 thirty-nine ex-servicemen--of a total of 114 students--enrolled at Gainesville Junior College. In 1948 the county maintained eight agricultural schools for 172 veterans and operated the North Texas Vocational School for Negroes. The 162 black students learned such skills as tailoring, automobile mechanics, radio repair, and carpentry.[17]

The GI Bill also gave veterans the opportunity to obtain loans for homes or businesses. Veterans' loans accounted for twenty percent of all new homes built nationwide in the decade following the war. In Cooke County, as

elsewhere, GIs applied for and received loans to construct homes. Many also purchased Camp Howze surplus for building purposes--thus benefiting from both low interest, long-term loans and through the acquisition of less expensive building materials. Through the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, veterans could obtain small business loans if they had to liquidate a business upon entering the military, could show business experience, possessed the proper amount of capital, or could demonstrate a legitimate economic need for the business.[18]

When returning servicemen failed to opt for education or housing loans, agencies endeavored to locate suitable jobs for them or to find companies willing to offer on-the-job training. Some county veterans returned to their former jobs. Many, however, looked to the USES for help. By January, 1946, 1,864 servicemen had returned home to Cooke County, and by June almost 1,200 had registered with the USES for employment. Of 158 county firms approved for on-the-job training, about 120 actually participated in assisting veterans. For those who failed to find work, the Servicemen's Readjustment Act offered unemployment benefits of up to $20 a week for a year.[19]

While the county faced problems caused by the lack of housing, a decrease in business activity, and returning

veterans, area residents also welcomed many acitvities which had been either nonexistent before the war or had ceased after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Once the war ended, Gainesville once again concentrated on new recreational programs and facilities. The city started a new park, began a playground program for children, and purchased the USO Building as a community center. For the first time in several years, in 1945 city officials planned to place Christmas lights along town streets. In 1946 the Gainesville Community Circus resumed its performances, the first in five years. That same year the Cooke County Fair was held for the first time since the war began. Once again families also returned to a semblance of normal activity by holding reunions at city parks.[20]

Even though the population of the county and of Gainesville in particular increased dramatically during the war years, by 1950 the census actually revealed a slight decline over the entire decade. By 1950 the census showed that the population of Cooke County had changed little--from 24,909 in 1940 to 24,100 ten years later. The 11,246 residents also reflected only a sixteen percent growth for the city--compared to fifty percent during the time of Camp Howze. One reason the overall population for the county remained stable while the rate for the city increased was the

tendency of people to move from farms to towns. In the South alone five million persons set the pattern for this migration.[21]

Also consistent with the national patterns, the birth rate for Gainesville soared during and after the war. The birth rate climbed noticeably throughout the 1940s, reaching its height in 1947 but remaining unusually high for the remainder of the decade. The large increase in population during the war, the return of many veterans ready to marry and raise families, and the sixteen percent growth rate for Gainesville attributed to the increased birth rate--varying from about 250 births per year in 1940 and 1941 to over 550 in 1947.[22]

Camp Howze scarcely affected school enrollment in Gainesville. Although some army officers had wives and children, few enlisted men could afford to relocate their families because finding living accommodations proved almost impossible for soldiers with children. School enrollment thus fluctuated from a low of 1,776 in 1943 to a high of 2,010 in 1947. The influx of families from rural areas to the city contributed to the increase in the last half of the decade.[23]

While the death rate in Gainesville remained fairly stable throughout the 1940s, violent deaths in the county

rose sharply, due mostly to traffic accidents, the number ranging from a low of twelve in 1942 and 1943 to a high of twenty-three in 1945. Other types of violent deaths also occurred from plane crashes, suicides, an occasional homicide, burns, drownings, and oil well accidents.[24]

Many deaths of Cooke County residents occurred as a direct result of World War II. Those who lost a son, father, or brother tried to accept the tragedy. Of 3,310 Cooke County inductees, almost 120 young men lost their lives in combat between 1941 and 1945.[25] In commemoration, Gainesville citizens constructed a twenty-three foot monument with the inscription, "In memory of those who made the supreme sacrifice for their country in World War II."[26] Instead of reflecting upon the number of casualties, however, most rejoiced at the return of the servicemen--even those who had lost a family member--the arrival home of the men in uniform symbolizing to them a return to normalcy.[27]

Still another dramatic change resulted because of the war and Camp Howze--a variation from past marriage trends and tendencies. Nationally the marriage rate rose before and during the early months of the war. Then the rate of marriages declined during the war years but increased during the first two years afterward. Cooke County, however, varied from the general pattern, experiencing a tremendous

increase in the number of marriages during the war. While the county clerk issued less than 400 licenses per year from 1940 to 1943, marriages averaged over 900 annually during the next three years. Since the county contained a military base, this addition of available men contributed to an increase in the number of weddings, although most Cooke County brides subsequently settled in other parts of the United States. Others, who could have married during the 1930s, waited until the economic picture improved in the 1940s. Marriages also increased because in 1946 Oklahoma enacted a three-day waiting period for marriages while Texas revoked the stipulation. By 1950 marriages had begun to decrease in number, although still remaining above normal.[28]

Not only did Cooke County differ from the norm regarding marriage patterns, but along with the rest of the nation, the area also varied from the expected wartime divorce rate. Typically the number of divorces declined during war and increased afterwards. During World War II, however, divorces nationwide rose steadily, peaked in 1945, and then began to decrease. Cooke County also experienced a growth in divorces during the war years and then a decline afterwards. From 1940 to 1943 divorces averaged about ninety per year, then growing to over 150 per year on the

average until 1947. Then for the next three years the number of broken marriages returned to less than 100 annually.[29]

The number of divorces during the war increased for several apparent reasons. Although the Civil Relief Act of 1940 stated that a serviceman did not have to answer a divorce summons, many occurred anyway. Some veterans divorced because they had only married in hopes of obtaining a deferment or receiving an allotment; others married too young or were separated from their spouses for long periods of time while both experienced new roles; still others just met someone else; a few no doubt experienced tensions due to overcrowded wartime housing conditions. Logically too, the increase in the number of wartime marriages naturally increased the probability of subsequent divorces. While many marriages ended, no conclusive data supported the hypothesis that veterans divorced more frequently than non-veterans.[30]

While Camp Howze reshaped the economic and social life of Cooke County between 1942 and 1946, few enduring changes resulted from the experience. Other than the men stationed at the post and those civilians involved in wartime employment and activities, few people vividly remember the bustle of activity caused by Camp Howze. Today on the rolling

prairie northwest of Gainesville, only a few mute reminders have withstood the weathering of time. Once used as platforms for barracks, concrete blocks, although barely visible above the tall grass, dot the countryside. Several other structures also stand as mere hints of the past. The Fair Park USO, built with federal money and purchased by the city in 1946 for $15,400, became the Gainesville Community Center on California Street. A few surplus barracks converted into remodeled homes can be seen around the county. Of eleven chapels at Camp Howze, only one has survived, having been moved to the corner of Denton and Scott Streets in Gainesville as part of the Westminister Presbyterian Church. The Southern-style church with its colonial decor deceives visitors until they view the interior which retains the open-beam rafters, the lighting fixtures, and the original floor and windows. Camp water wells purchased by the city of Gainesville are still utilized. The airport west of Gainesville remains in operation to this day. And many roads built through the camp are still in use.[31]

Although many people from Cooke County tended to accept wartime conditions and to appreciate the learning experiences, others saw only the problems. Some disliked the crowded conditions, others resented the loss of their land, while a few even considered the military presence as

detrimental to the morals of the young. While some of the problems were no doubt real, many were only imagined. Even though crowds existed, most servicemen waited patiently and courteously along with area residents. Many had to sell their land for the construction of the base, but most regained their property after the war. And few soldiers committed major disturbances or crimes of any consequence.[32]

Inasmuch as area residents disliked some situations caused by the camp, soldiers also voiced complaints about their hosts in Cooke County. Gainesville failed to provide enough recreation. Businessmen overpriced merchandise. Landlords charged excessive rent rates. Buses, restaurants, and movie theaters were always too crowded. The town was dull and uninteresting. But in no instances did the soldiers accuse the citizens of being unfriendly. In fact, Colonel J. P. Wheeler, the first camp commander, once commented that he had never found people anywhere to be more cooperative than the residents of Gainesville.[33]

While the material effects and disadvantages from Camp Howze were evident, other influences--perhaps even more substantial--remain less noticeable. Because of the closeness experienced from having boarders, entertaining servicemen, and helping in many other ways, area residents formed lasting friendships with service families, many of whom

still occasionally write and visit. For example, Marie Cannon, a Red Cross and USO volunteer who also rented out rooms, communicates with friends in five different states. When her mother died, the five families jointly purchased the floral arrangement that covered the casket for their "service mom." In another situation, a mother of a Camp Howze soldier wrote a letter to a local pastor, thanking him and the congregation for helping her son forget his homesickness.[34]

In addition to lasting friendships, people gained an awareness of and an appreciation for cultural differences. This insight occurred when one of the first groups at the camp arrived. Many of them from Brooklyn, New York, felt contempt for Texans, and area residents returned the sentiment. Finally realizing that the men had arrived at the newly constructed base in a rain storm, causing horrendously muddy conditions, communities opened their doors to welcome the soldiers. As more servicemen arrived at the camp, people became aware of customs in other states, particularly in the North. Also, area residents met talented musicians, singers, and others from various backgrounds and countries. Perhaps even more important than the economic benefits derived from Camp Howze was the social and cultural impact--

a chance to broaden the experiences of people who had neither journeyed extensively nor met travelers.[35]

Besides cultural differences, both groups gained an awareness of language variations. For example, first-grade teacher Thelma Atkins taught a student, whose father was stationed at Camp Howze, that words have many meanings. While explaining about cowboys and cattle on the range--a favorite topic of many non-Texas service families who thought all natives wore cowboy hats and boots and rode horses--the bewildered young fellow finally summoned enough courage to ask how a cow could "sit on a stove." In another instance, Marie Cannon invited friends to "go out to eat"--and they came dressed for a picnic rather than dinner at a restaurant. The situation at times reversed itself. Non-Texans laughed about Southern words, such as you all, and about accents, imitating such words as oil ("all"), corn fritters, four ("foah"), and other words with the letter "R."[36]

While reactions among military personnel and civilians varied, most retained fond memories of those wartime years. Although some labeled the Camp Howze experience a nightmare, others considered it an interesting period and a financial life saver. A few of the men stationed at the post liked Gainesville enough to return after the war and make it their home.[37]

Having relied upon federal money to ease the hardships incurred during the Great Depression and having further depended upon assistance during World War II, the people of Gainesville now resolved to subsidize their own post-war endeavors. New Deal programs, especially the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, brought prosperity to the county. Then during World War II, the economic assistance came in the form of a military base. The camp employed hundreds of civilians and pumpprimed business activity in nearby communities. In addition, the federal government granted $5,000 to Gainesville to finance a garbage collection system and provided other funds for housing projects to relieve the overcrowded conditions.[38]

Once the deactivation of the camp became a reality, many people feared a subsequent business slump. Yet the Gainesville post-war planning committee still refused federal assistance, claiming citizens could finance their own projects and preferring economic individualism to reliance upon the state. In some instances, the city managed to recover from the high unemployment and economic stagnation. Several industries spurred that revivification in the form of oil industry expansion, highway construction, and residential building. But because of some of these very developments, the city profited indirectly from

federal assistance. Loans made to veterans stimulated residential construction and business development. The lease of the Howzeville housing project, purchase of the USO building for a community center, and acquisition of the military air base saved the city thousands of dollars in construction costs. Although Gainesville perhaps directly avoided federal assistance, the presence of Camp Howze during the war years proved advantageous to the area in the post-war period.[39]

In spite of the economic advantages realized by the county both during and after the war, most people recognized that the real riches reaped were those not measured solely in terms of dollars and cents. The only ones who truly suffered during the war were the servicemen who returned home wounded or the anguished families who had lost loved ones. Other than those heartaches, most sacrifices seemed trivial because people derived satisfaction from contributing to the common good. People converted inconveniences into challenges--often fun challenges. They learned to accept minor deprivations--secondary compared to the adversities endured by those in the war-torn areas of Europe and the Pacific. Because of the proximity of Camp Howze, Cooke County residents saw that the world was much bigger than their own backyards and that the war was not so far away.

By bringing global events closer and by reaching out to others, those who profited the most from wartime experiences were those who took the time to get involved, to help others, to care. By putting themselves into the center of activity, many transformed minor hardships into lasting friendships and unpleasant circumstances into fond memories.[40]

NOTES

[1]Gainesville Daily Register, August 28, 1945, p. 1; January 1, 1947, p. 1.

[2]Gainesville Daily Register, July 17, 1945, p. 2; U.S. Department of War, Office of the Chief of Engineers, Post-War Utilization Studies (Camp Howze, Texas: September, 1945), pp. 1-3.

[3]Gainesville Weekly Register, July 26, 1945, p. 6; August 30, 1945, p. 1; March 14, 1946, p. 1; Gainesville Daily Register, October 9, 1945, pp. 1, 6; February 21, 1946, p. 2; August 15, 1946, p. 1; January 1, 1947, p. 1.

[4]Gainesville Daily Register, February 21, 1946, p. 3; Smith, Cooke County, p. 216.

[5]Gainesville Daily Register, March 26, 1946, p. 3; April 4, 1946, p. 1; Mary 29, 1946, p. 1; June 25, 1946, p. 1; July 25, 1946, p. 1; August 1, 1946, p. 4; September 18, 1946, p. 3; September 26, 1946, p. 1; October 4, 1946, p. 2; January 1, 1946, p. 1; August 22, 1946, p. 6; November 14, 1946, p. 1; Smith, Cooke County, p. 224; Mossman to Burns; Alexander to Burns.

[6]Gainesville Weekly Register, August 17, 1944, p. 1.

[7]Smith, Cooke County, p. 216; Gainesville Weekly Register, February 28, 1946, p. 1; September 9, 1946, p. 8; October 17, 1946, p. 8; Cooke County Deeds, vol. 265, pp. 269, 271; Cooke County Deeds, vol. 267, pp. 318, 337; Cooke County Deeds, vol. 324, p. 624; Cooke County Deeds, vol. 325, pp. 105, 220.

[8]Gainesville Daily Register, February 28, 1946, p. 1.

[9]Gainesville Daily Register, July 9, 1942, p. 1; July 13, 1942, p. 6; January 4, 1946, p. 3; June 4, 1946, p. 1; Smith, Cooke County, pp. 218-219; Commissioner's Court Minutes, vol. XIII, February 2, 1948, p. 468; Interview with Smith.

[10]Gainesville Daily Register, September 18, 1945, p. 2; December 6, 1946, p. 2; January 18, 1947, p. 6; Gainesville Weekly Register, March 21, 1946, p. 1.

[11]Gainesville Daily Register, September 15, 1945, p. 3; September 18, 1945, p. 6; September 24, 1945, pp. 1, 3; September 27, 1945, p. 6; October 1, 1945, p. 3; October 12, 1945, p. 2; January 11, 1946, p. 3; February 23, 1946, p. 3; March 6, 1946, sec. 2, p. 5.

[12]Gainesville Daily Register, January 2, 1946, p. 6; January 29, 1946, p. 3; February 5, 1946, p. 2; September 6, 1946, p. 2; Economic Survey of Cooke County, pp. 4.07, 4.1002; Smith, Cooke County, p. 218.

[13]Gainesville Daily Register, January 6, 1945, p. 5; December 11, 1945, p. 2; December 21, 1945, p. 1; February 1, 1946, p. 1; February 28, 1946, p. 7; January 1, 1947, p. 2; Clive, State of War, p. 125; Interview with Graham.

[14]Gainesville Daily Register, January 17, 1946, p. 6; March 5, 1946, pp. 1, 6; March 13, 1946, p. 8; April 24, 1946, p. 5; Smith, Cooke County, p. 218; Gainesville, Texas, Municipal Department, City Council Minutes, February 20, 1946; Gainesville Weekly Register, February 28, 1946, p. 1.

[15]Gainesville Daily Register, May 3, 1944, p. 2; City Council Minutes, December 15, 1947, pp. 1894-1895.

[16]City Council Minutes, July 5, 1950; City Council Minutes, July 15, 1952, p. 2293; Smith, Cooke County, p. 218.

[17]Polenberg, War and Society, p. 96; Clive, State of War, p. 216; Camp Howze Howitzer, September 22, 1944, p. 3; Perrett, Days of Sadness, p. 341; Gainesville Daily Register, September 19, 1946, p. 3; Economic Survey of Cooke County, pp. 3.0210, 3.0213.

[18]Perrett, Days of Sadness, p. 341; Gainesville Weekly Register, September 26, 1946, p. 1; Gainesville Daily Register, October 4, 1946, p. 2; Camp Howze Howitzer, March 17, 1944, p. 1.

[19]Blum, V for Victory, pp. 336, 338; Interview with Graham; Economic Survey of Cooke County, pp. 3.0201, 3.0204, 3.0206, 3.0210, 2.0213; Gainesville Daily Register, July 3, 1946, p. 3.

[20]Gainesville Daily Register, November 2, 1945, p. 8; December 12, 1945, p. 8; January 1, 1946, p. 1; May 27, 1946, p. 2; September 3, 1946, p. 1; January 1, 1947, p. 2; Smithe, Cooke County, p. 224.

[21]Smith, Cooke County, pp. 207, 210; 1950 Population, p. 43-11; Economic Survey of Cooke County, p. 3.0201; Merrill, Wartime Influences, p. 17.

[22]Gainesville Daily Register, October 24, 1945, p. 8; Merrill, Wartime Influences, p. 51; Elizabeth Janeway, ed., Women: Their Changing Roles, in The Great Contemporary Issues Series, Set I (New York: Arno Press, 1978), p. 228; Gainesville, Texas, County Clerk's Office, Cooke County Courthouse, City Birth Records, 1938-1953.

[23]Interview with Atkins; Dr. W. C. Vincent, Jr. to Barbara K. Burns, January 19, 1984, in possession of author; Gainesville Daily Register, May 2, 1942, p. 3; September 9, 1942, p. 1; September 13, 1943, p. 5; January 1, 1944, p. 4; September 12, 1944, p. 6; April 6, 1945, p. 2; April 12, 1945, p. 3; April 10, 1946, p. 2.

[24]Gainesville, Texas, County Clerk's Office, Cooke County Courthouse, City Death Records, 1932-1953; Gainesville Daily Register, January 1, 1944, p. 2; January 1, 1945, p. 7; January 1, 1946, p. 6; June 27, 1946, p. 1; January 1, 1947, p. 8; Gainesville Weekly Register, April 4, 1946, p. 1; Interview with Keel.

[25]Smith, Cooke County, pp. 217-218; Economic Survey of Cooke County, pp. 3.0201, 2.0204, 2.0206; Gainesville Daily Register, June 27, 1946, p. 5.

[26]Gainesville Daily Register, September 7, 1946, p. 1.

[27]Interview with Bright.

[28]Anderson, Wartime Women, pp. 76-77; William Fielding Ogburn, ed., American Society in Wartime (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1943); pp. 6-7, 23; J. Lipman-Blumen, "Crisis Framework Applied to Macrosociological Changes: Marriage, Divorce, and Occupational Trends Associated with World War II," Journal of Marriage and the Family, XXXVII (November, 1975): 893, 895. Hereafter cited as Lipman-Blumen, "Marriage, Divorce, and Occupational Trends;" Gainesville Daily Register, January 4, 1944, p. 3; January 3,

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[29]Merrill, Wartime Influences, p. 26; Ogburn, American Society in Wartime, p. 25; Cooke County, Texas, District Clerk's Office, Divorce Minutes, vols. 14-15, Cooke County Courthouse, Gainesville, Texas; Gainesville Daily Register, January 6, 1942, p. 5; December 31, 1946, p. 3; Sandra Stencel, "The Changing American Family," Editorial Research Reports, I(June 3, 1977): 417; Anderson, Wartime Women, p. 83.

[30]Merrill, Wartime Influences, pp. 28, 42, 44-45; Gainesville Daily Register, May 5, 1944, p. 4; Lipman-Blumen, "Marriage, Divorce, and Occupational Trends," pp. 896-897; Anderson, Wartime Women, p. 80; Divorce Minutes, vols. 14-15; Marriage Records, vols. 18-24.

[31]Gainesville Daily Register, January 1, 1946, p. 1; June 7, 1946, p. 8; July 18, 1946, p. 1; October 26, 1946, p. 5; Interview with Smith; Interview with Estes; Gainesville Weekly Register, July 8, 1946, p. 1; Smith, Cooke County, p. 223; Interview with Kyle Thurman, Gainesville, Texas, January 25, 1984; Interview with Graham; Interview with Yarbroughs.

[32]Interview with Fuhrman; Interview with Graham; Interview with Keel; Interview with Cannon.

[33]Gainesville Daily Register, October 14, 1942, sec. 3, p. 1; September 14, 1944, p. 5.

[34]Interview with Cannon; Gainesville Daily Register, April 29, 1944, p. 2.

[35]Interview with Bright; Interview with Graham; Interview with Cannon; Interview with Atkins.

[36]Interview with Atkins; Interview with Cannon; Interview with Graham.

[37]Gainesville Daily Register, September 24, 1944, p. 5; September 21, 1945, p. 6; September 24, 1945, p. 2; September 21, 1946, p. 2; Interview with Smith.

[38]Collins, Cooke County, Texas, pp. 57-58; Gainesville Daily Register, November 19, 1942, p. 6; February 26, 1943, p. 3; January 1, 1944, p. 2.

[39]Gainesville Daily Register, January 1, 1944, p. 2; March 1, 1946, p. 2.

[40]Polenberg, War and Society, p. 132; Interview with Bright; Interview with Graham.

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