



*Nebraska History* posts materials online for your personal use. Please remember that the contents of *Nebraska History* are copyrighted by the Nebraska State Historical Society (except for materials credited to other institutions). The NSHS retains its copyrights even to materials it posts on the web.

For permission to re-use materials or for photo ordering information, please see:

<http://www.nebraskahistory.org/magazine/permission.htm>

Nebraska State Historical Society members receive four issues of *Nebraska History* and four issues of *Nebraska History News* annually. For membership information, see:

<http://nebraskahistory.org/admin/members/index.htm>

## Article Title: Wahoo in World War I: The Photographs of Arthur L Anderson

Full Citation: Andrea I Paul and R Eli Paul, "Wahoo in World War I: The Photographs of Arthur L Anderson," *Nebraska History* 68 (1987): 10-19.

(Article begins on second page below.)

Date: 4/4/2012

---

Article Summary: This article presents the photographs of a Saunders County, Nebraska, photographer Arthur Leonard Anderson of Wahoo. N J Anderson and Son specialized in both studio and exterior action photography. The article contains a portion of the over 250 photographs taken in Wahoo during World War I.

### Cataloging Information:

Names: Nels J Anderson, Arthur Leonard Anderson, Herbert Beaver, Ellen E Sutton, Charles Way, Carl B "Titanic" Johnson

Photographs / Images: Advertisement from the *Wahoo Democrat*, August, 1917; Arthur L Anderson; Inductees bound for Camp Dodge, Iowa; a big send-off on September 23, 1917, when the first contingent of recruits boarded the train for Camp Funston, Kansas; First Red Cross class in surgical dressings, July 1917; Saunders County Medical Board; Ellen E Sutton, Red Cross nurse in 1918; Lt Charles Way, MD; Carl B "Titanic" Johnson; August Handley; children's war garden; a tank brought to Wahoo for a liberty loan drive; July 4, 1918, Red Cross Day, parade highlighted by a large red cross and a float entitled, "The Greatest Mother in the World;" Camp Funston's 355th Infantry regimental band in April 1918; Procession led by the GAR, Boy Scouts, Red Cross...; a Wahoo mother on Mother's Day reading a letter from her son [posed photograph]; the all-girl Walla Walla Band, celebrating Armistice Day; June 1918 Home Guards in Wahoo; Wahoo Home Guard Band; Herbert Beaver of the Sixth Field Artillery's belated memorial services [3 photos]

# WAHOO IN WORLD WAR I:

## The Photographs of Arthur L. Anderson

*By Andrea I. Paul and R. Eli Paul*

World War I was a global conflict of unprecedented scope. But “the war to make the world safe for democracy,” “the war to end all wars,” did neither, and its impact on the nation has been overshadowed by the legacies of more recent wars and the threat of nuclear confrontation. When the United States entered the European war on April 6, 1917, most Americans stood ready to make an all-out effort to defeat the militaristic, anti-democratic German Empire. The declaration of war sparked massive mobilization on the home front to provide armaments, manpower, and food to support the country’s war effort.<sup>1</sup>

Saunders County, Nebraska, like localities elsewhere, contributed its share to the cause. By Armistice Day, November 11, 1918, the county had registered 4,500 men from a total population of approximately 20,000 and organized local chapters of the Red Cross, home guard, and a council of defense. Residents formed groups to make surgical dressings, and the

county reached or exceeded its quotas in four Liberty Loan campaigns. Eighteen Saunders County men lost their lives in military service.<sup>2</sup>

This outpouring of patriotism was not unique. What was unusual was the fact that Wahoo photographer Arthur L. Anderson compiled a detailed visual record of the wartime activities of the residents of the Saunders County seat.

Arthur Leonard Anderson was born on February 1, 1877, in Omaha. His father, Nels J. Anderson (1851-1922), moved the family to Wahoo in 1879, opening a photography studio on Linden Street. By 1900 Anderson, with son Arthur as his assistant, was considered to be the leading photographer in Wahoo. Their studio was located at Fifth and Broadway. At the end of the decade the studio had been moved a block north to Sixth and Broadway.<sup>3</sup>

By 1915 Arthur had become his father’s partner, and the studio was renamed N.J. Anderson and Son, Photographers.<sup>4</sup> As Nels Anderson was in his sixties by this time, it is likely that Arthur did the majority of the work. He specialized in both studio and exterior action photography. When his father died in 1922, Arthur Anderson continued to operate the studio until his own retirement about 1937. He died in Omaha on August 9, 1946.<sup>5</sup>

The Arthur L. Anderson collection at the Nebraska State Historical Society consists of over 250 photographs taken in Wahoo and Saunders County during World War I. Anderson’s work provides a broad visual record of home front activity in a small Nebraska community: draft registration, recruits leaving for service, liberty loan drives, and patriotic demonstrations.

Modern wars are fought by entire nations, not just by armies. The following photographs — some taken in the studio and others at special events — remind us that the consequences of the country’s involvement in World War I were felt deep in the American heartland.

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>James C. Olson, *History of Nebraska* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1955), 276-81.

<sup>2</sup>*In the World War, 1917-1918-1919, Saunders County, Nebraska* (*Wahoo Democrat*, 1919).

<sup>3</sup>*Biographical Record of Saunders and Sarpy Counties* (Chicago: Biographical Publishing Co., 1900); Sanborn Insurance Map of Wahoo, January 1907.

<sup>4</sup>*Nebraska State Gazetteer and Business Directory* (Omaha: Polk-McAvoy Publicity Co., 1915), 780.

<sup>5</sup>*Wahoo Wasp*, August 15, 1946, 7:6-8; *Wahoo Democrat*, August 15, 1946, 1:1, 4:5.

---

*Andrea I. Paul, Nebraska State Historical Society Archivist, is currently researching the Sheldon Manufacturing Company of Nehawka, Nebraska. R. Eli Paul, Society Curator of Exhibits, is now preparing new Indian Hall exhibits for the State Museum of History.*

## Arthur Anderson

Advertisement from the Wahoo Democrat, August 16, 1917. Anderson displayed samples of his work in his studio windows.

### A Little Thing-Your Photograph

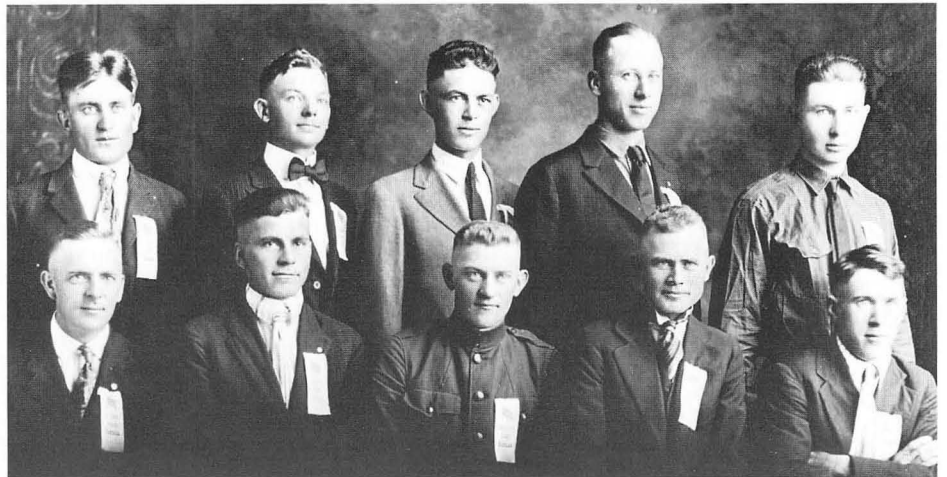
Means much to those at home. Before you go, we especially invite you to have a Photograph Taken.

**ANDERSON**  
The Photographer  
Wahoo, Neb.



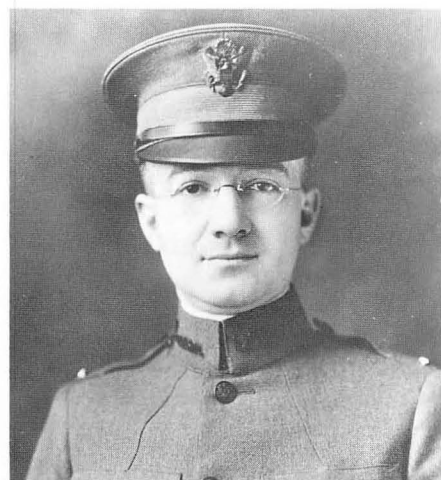
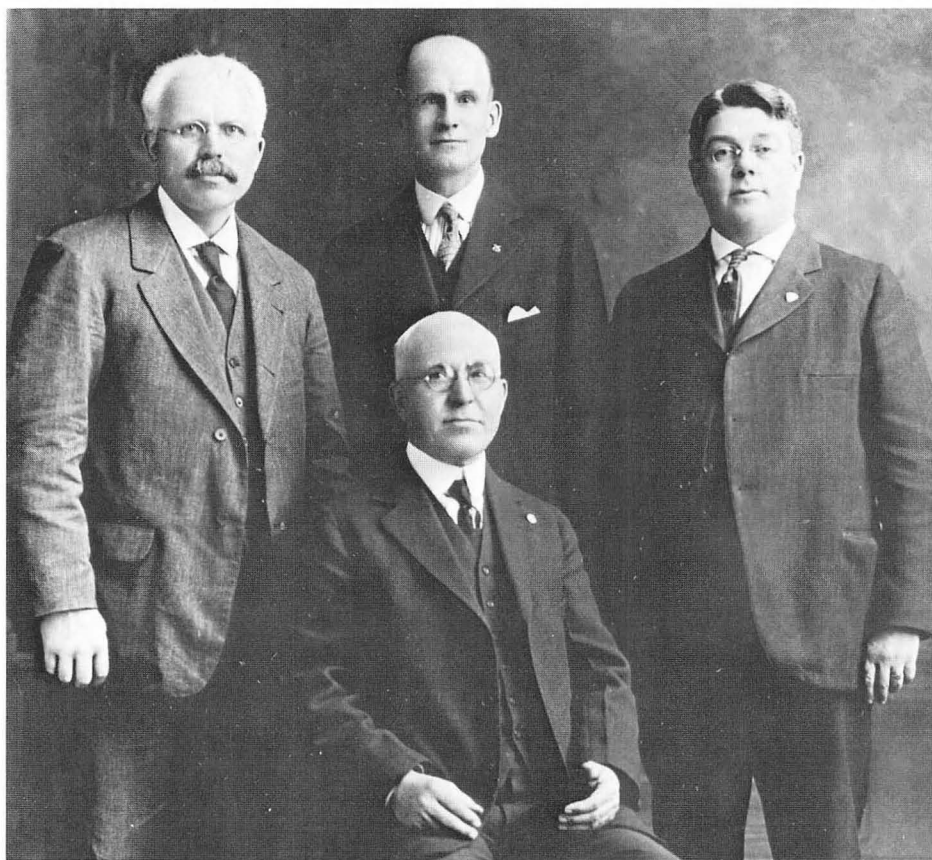
Inductees bound for Camp Dodge, Iowa.

Arthur L. Anderson. Courtesy of Saunders County Historical Society.



A big send-off was held on September 23, 1917, when the first contingent of recruits boarded the train for Camp Funston, Kansas. The evening before Wahoo held a banquet for them and their relatives at the high school auditorium. On another occasion inductees paraded to the depot escorted by members of the Grand Army of the Republic and the Boy Scouts, where a flag was presented to them. The Wahoo Wasp somberly noted after a March 1918 departure, "[As the train] slowly crept from the depot, the many relatives and friends turned toward home with the sad feeling that we are in war."

## Nebraska History



*First Red Cross class in surgical dressings, July 1917. Over 169,000 dressings were prepared by the women of Saunders County . . . (Below) Saunders County Medical Board. All men between the ages of twenty-one and thirty were required to register for the draft by June 5, 1917. In Saunders County 1,947 men registered by the deadline. The medical board conducted physical examinations of volunteers and draftees.*

*Ellen E. Sutton, Red Cross nurse, was sent to Camp Meade, Maryland, in 1918 . . . (Below) Lt. Charles Way, M.D., was stationed at the Fort Riley, Kansas, base hospital.*

Arthur Anderson



Carl B. "Titanic" Johnson, a Swedish-born Nebraskan, left his native country to avoid conscription. En route to America he survived the sinking of the Titanic and settled in Saunders County in time to be drafted into the U.S. Army.



August Handley was described by Anderson as the "only color boy [sic] from Saunders Co." He was presented with a wrist watch and a purse of money by the Wahoo citizenry when he left for Camp Pike, Arkansas, to join other black troops. Handley was honorably discharged on June 2, 1919.

## Nebraska History



*A children's war garden. As the popular poem went, "Eat the potatoes, save the wheat, drive the Kaiser to defeat."*



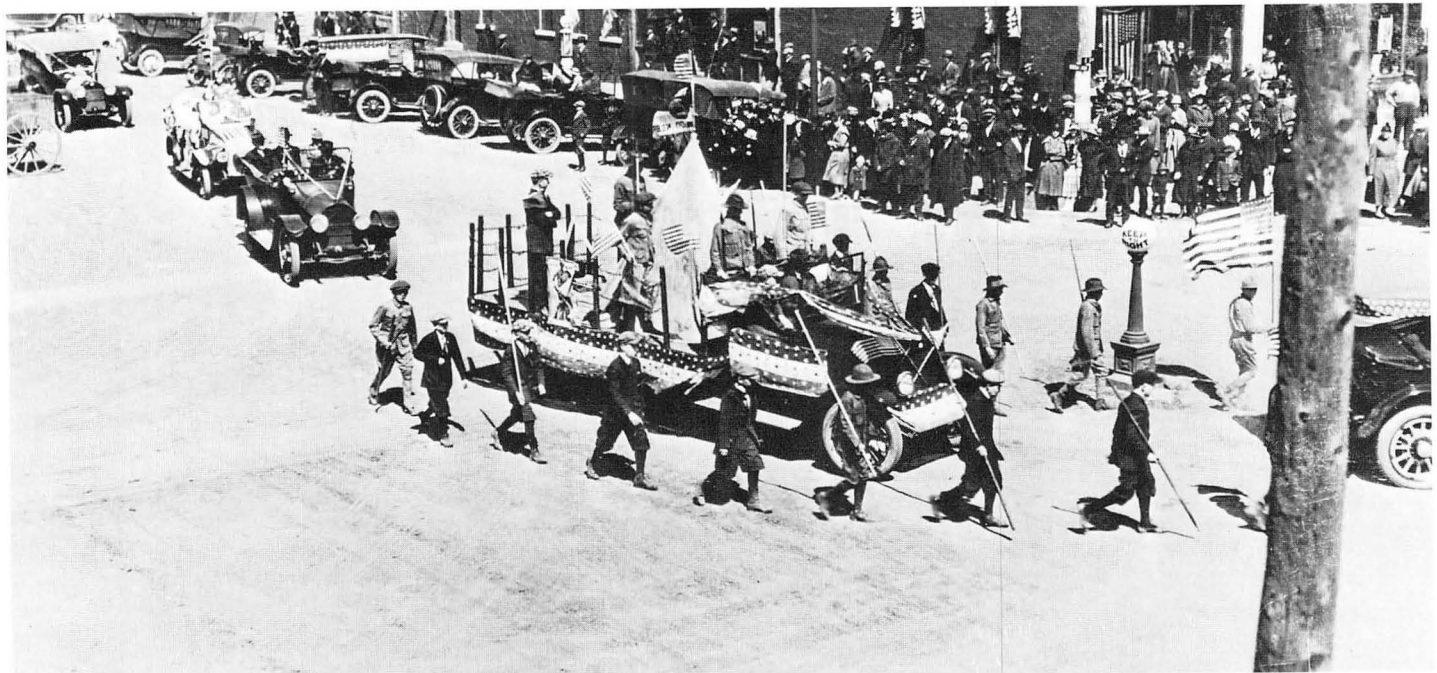
*A tank that had seen action in France was brought to Wahoo to help stimulate enthusiasm for a liberty loan drive. Residents were strongly encouraged to "donate" to war fund campaigns. Detailed records were kept by the county clerk on individual contributions. Slackers were threatened with the publication of their names in the local newspaper "in order that their neighbors may ascertain the reason for their unpatriotic attitude."*

Arthur Anderson



July 4, 1918, was recognized as Red Cross Day. "At a celebration that can be heard in Berlin" \$60,000 was raised through an auction and other fund drives. The inevitable parade was highlighted by a large red cross carried by twelve men and a float entitled, "The Greatest Mother in the World."

## Nebraska History



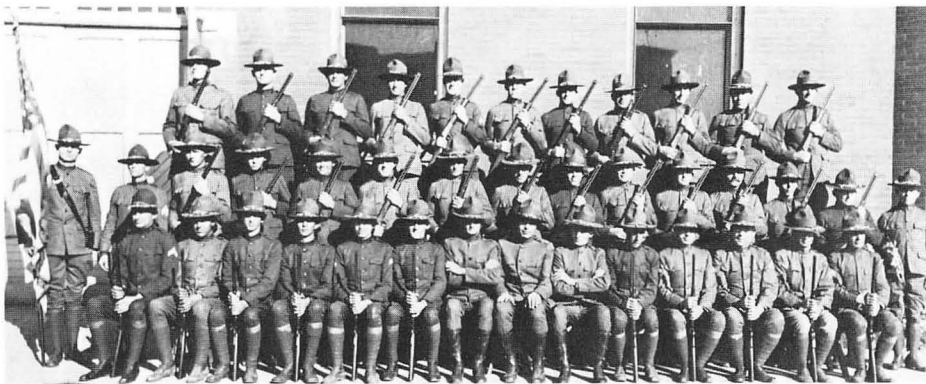
*Camp Funston's 355th Infantry regimental band – made up of Nebraska soldiers – performed in Wahoo in April 1918. A grand parade was quickly organized to coincide with the band's visit. Leading the procession was the GAR, followed by the Boy Scouts, the Red Cross, students from local schools and Luther College, fire trucks, decorated cars, a float with Uncle Sam and the Kaiser (the latter in a cage), the band, the city council, and the Red Cross executive committee . . . (Right) Anderson posed this Wahoo mother on Mother's Day reading a letter from her son who was leaving for France.*







The all-girl Walla Walla Band, along with the entire town, celebrated Armistice Day. A number of young women with tin pans and horns paraded through the streets at 4 a.m. and awoke the slumbering inhabitants. Whistles were blown, bells were rung, and guns were fired. A parade, bonfire, band concert, and dance were part of this memorable Monday's events. Over 100 men were due to leave that day for the Army. Traveling by rail they reached Fremont before word came to return home. "The weather was delightful," noted the Wahoo Wasp, "and the thought that the war was in fact over brought happiness to everyone."



Efforts to organize a company of home guards in Wahoo were realized in June 1918. In the absence of national guard units the home guard was empowered to protect property, maintain the peace, and if necessary, suppress disloyalty. Members provided their own uniforms; the county supplied arms and ammunition . . . (Below) Wahoo Home Guard Band.



## Arthur Anderson



*Herbert Beaver of the Sixth Field Artillery was wounded October 4, 1918, in action in the Argonne Forest. He died the following day. Beaver's body was not returned to Wahoo until September 1921. His belated memorial services produced a great outpouring of emotion. Hundreds attended the military funeral, which was held on the high school lawn. Many young veterans in uniform from all over the county formed the core of the procession. Wrote the Wahoo Wasp, "Sleep, brave soldier, and peace be with you."*

