

## BETTY SLOWE'S BLOG: May 14, 2018 | One hundred years ago

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Spring trade was exceptionally good, according to some of Tuscaloosa's merchants. Money was easy and plentiful and credit was rarely requested.

Several hundred people attended the brief ceremony of officially raising the "Honor Flag" received in token of the city's oversubscription to the third Liberty loan. There was patriotic music by the city band and a short speech bristling with patriotism by Hon. John McQueen and the flag was pulled to a position immediately below the Stars and Stripes.

The City Commission passed an ordinance banning transient labor agents from Tuscaloosa. For several months various agents had worked the streets and depots enticing labor to other parts and the work reached the stage of hurting because of a labor shortage. Employers had complained. The agents would require a license of \$200 a year and the ordinance made it a misdemeanor to solicit without a license.

Reports reaching Tuscaloosa of a wholesale shooting at Lock 17 and involving Doc Bigham and two or three deserters proved without foundation. It was known that there were some deserters in the upper end of the county and Doc Bigham, noted escaped convict, was also hiding in the woods up there, but no officers were known to be in that section looking for the wanted men.

After nearly a century and a half of delay, the United States seemed about to acquire a national anthem. "The Star-Spangled Banner" would be adopted as the officially recognized hymn of the republic under a resolution then pending in the House. Little opposition was expected. Army and Navy regulations long had designated "The Star-Spangled Banner" as the official anthem and provided that officers and men stand at attention while it was being played or sung, but the country at large had been left to its own tastes in the matter of an appropriate hymn for patriotic occasions. (However, "The Star-Spangled Banner" was not made the national anthem by a congressional resolution until March 3, 1931, which was signed by President Herbert Hoover.)

Surgeon General W.C. Gorgas, U.S. Army, was visiting his four sisters at the old family home at the University. While here, Dr. Gorgas would address the noon assembly of University students and all Tuscaloosa people were invited to attend the gathering at Morgan Hall.



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W.L. Franklin, an employee at the Alabama Insane Hospital, was overcome by gas while attempting to mend a pump in an old mine near the hospital. The mine in which the accident occurred had not been operated for 18 years, but the high price of coal had caused the trustees to decide to open it again for operation. It was filled with

water and a pump was put in to drain the mine. When something went wrong with the pump, Franklin went down to find the trouble. He descended to a depth of about 80 feet and when people at the mouth of the mine could not hear him, they sounded the alarm.

Two hundred Alabama selectmen reported to the University headquarters to begin the two month's mechanical training that would fit them for truck service in the Army. Improvised bunks of straw were provided for the men in the University gymnasium until cots arrived.

Two hundred and twenty white men in class one from Tuscaloosa County were called to report for final instructions before departing for the Camp Sevier at Greenville, S.C.