

This Country of Ours Continued

(The Last 100 Plus Years)

By Rachel Bubb



Preface

A few years ago I read H. E. Marshall's Our Island Story about England and thoroughly enjoyed it. I loved her writing style: how she makes history come to life. There's one problem with the book: she finished the story in 1900 with the death of Queen Victoria. What about the last bit of history- modern history? What about World War I and World War II? Last summer I decided to write a sequel, going from 1900 to 2023 and I really enjoyed it. I loved researching and writing it. I decided to do the same thing with H. E. Marshall's This Country of Ours: to write about the last 100 plus years. I hope this book is an enjoyable read for you and your family and can help modern American history come to life.



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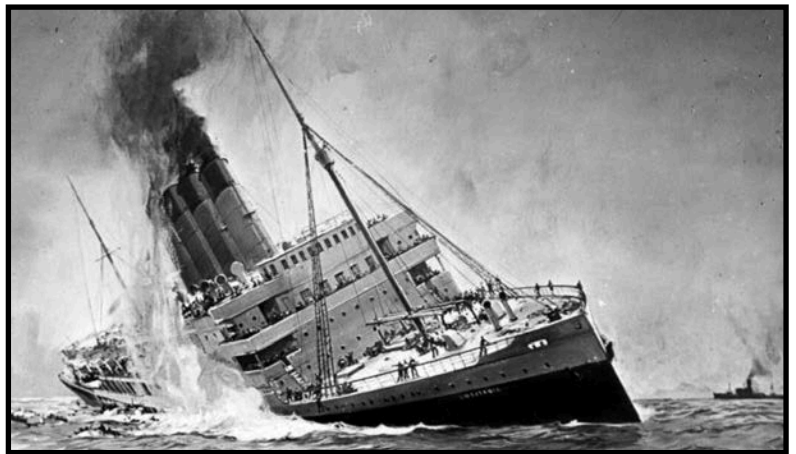
The Lincoln Memorial in Washington DC

I. World War I

This book is a continuation of This Country of Ours. We'll pick up right where it ended: in the middle of World War I. When the author was writing the book, World War I wasn't finished yet. She mentioned how in April 1917 President Woodrow Wilson decided that America should enter the war. Some of the last words of the book were: "Who can say what days of terror and splendor the future may hold? As I write, it lies before us a blacker sea of darkness and adventure than that Columbus crossed."

It was a scary time in the world, a world that was drastically different from the world 100 years before, in the early 1800s. In the late 1800s and early 1900s there were many new inventions, including cars, photography, and airplanes. Everything seemed peaceful and prosperous, until World War I.

When the war broke out in Europe, America had an isolationist policy, meaning that she shouldn't get involved in wars far away from home. However, she supported her friends and allies in the war. One of the things that changed people's opinions in the United



The sinking of the Lusitania

States was the sinking of the Lusitania ship, a ship carrying many American passengers that was attacked by a German submarine. People were outraged that they would attack a ship that wasn't a war ship.

When America officially entered the war, she wasn't completely ready to enter an all out war. As one of the first generals mentioned: "No one in authority had any definite idea how many men might be needed, how they should be organized and equipped, or where the tonnage to transport and supply them was to come from." America also wanted her army to fight alongside but not mixed with soldiers

from other countries. When the soldiers finally made it to Europe and saw the trenches, they weren't so sure that fighting in the trenches was a good plan of attack.

Trenches was something that World War I became famous for. They were miserable and horrible. They were first used by the Germans, who made big trenches to fight from in September 1914. Soon the British and other soldiers started building trenches as well.



Soldiers in the trenches

The trenches were meant to protect the soldiers from gunfire. Some of the trenches were elaborate with support trenches behind the main trenches which were well protected. The men who worked in the trenches had long days and were often bored during the middle of the day.

Trenches often got muddy and smelled horrible. With all the constant mud and water on the ground, many

soldiers' feet got sores called trench foot. There were also lots of rats in the trenches and often very little food for the soldiers.

Even though America joined the war late, they helped in the war effort from the beginning by individuals joining the allied armies and by people giving money to help the war. World War I was fought unlike any other war from before. It was the first time tanks, poisonous gas, airplanes, and many other things were used for a war. In World War I airplanes were used mostly for reconnaissance but not for much more. They couldn't fly very fast and often had accidents. Back in the Civil War, they would sometimes use hot air balloons to get a bird's eye view of the war field. In World War I, they used airplanes for it.

About a year and a half after America joined the war, the war was over. The morning of November 11, 1918, Germany officially surrendered. Some of the German leaders met with leaders of the

Allies in a dining cart on a train early in the morning (just after five in the morning) to sign the armistice treaty to stop the fighting. They decided to make 11:11 in the morning (on November the 11th) the official time for the cease fire to give everyone time to spread the word about it. What was it like that morning to fight and then all of a sudden be told that the war was over? One of the Canadian soldiers in Europe noted that: “There came a second of expectant silence, and then a curious rippling sound, which observers far behind the front likened to the noise of a light wind. It was the sound of men cheering from the Vosges to the sea.”

One of the most horrible things of that day was the many people who died that very morning, after Germany officially surrendered. The news of the surrender after five in the morning was slow to reach some places. Some soldiers knew of the surrender but kept on fighting anyway until eleven in the morning. According to the rules of the armistice, Germany had just over one month to return all of the land they had taken over during the war, and to return all of the POWs (Prisoners of Wars) they had captured.

Life after the war in Europe wasn't that good. There was still little food and many countries continued to have rations for quite some time. As someone commented, “Whatever it was that followed the armistice of November 11th 1918, it was not peace. Something to the order of 9.5 million men were dead... Whatever else it did, the armistice did not end the killing. Life in Europe had become too deranged, too many things remained unsettled, and too many young men who knew nothing but war found that there was nothing to go home to...”

In January 1919 President Woodrow Wilson came up with a plan called the Fourteen Points, which were principles and guidelines



Celebrations at the end of the war

to keep peace after the war. In these Fourteen Points, he mentioned that: "A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike." These fourteen points were the starting point of the League of Nations, a committee of leaders from the main countries around the world that would meet peacefully to discuss problems instead of fighting each other. June 28, 1919, the Treaty of Versailles was signed, starting up the League of Nations. Many countries were part of it, except (notably) Russia and Germany.