

Clara Hadley to Chet Parsons

May 22, 1918

Terre Haute, Ind.,  
717 Sycamore St.  
May 22, 1918.

Dear Chester:

Perhaps I owe you a letter and perhaps I do not, but I am going to chance writing you altho' am wondering if you are not in France, and if you haven't been for sometime. It seems as if our correspondence was not very satisfactory when you were in Texas and just whose fault that was I don't know.

Having a woman's curiosity I can't help form wondering where you are and I should like to hear about your roaming and the various experiences you no doubt have had since last fall.

I wanted to go to France when the call came for canteen workers but it seems that woman were wanted to could their own expenses and I did not feel equal to that, so I am trying to do my bit knitting, buying Liberty bonds, thrift stamps and pay m y dues regularly at Red Cross and for our county war fund.

The Elks here are giving entertainments every night this week to buy "smileage" books for the Vigo County boys who are in service. I am going this eve. And am sure it will be good as they always give a play of some kind every year for some good cause.

Next week there will be a large celebration here as the "blue devils" of France are coming. It is an armed force of one hundred men, who have all been wounded and I noticed they wanted to come the T.H. because it is a French name. I should be studying a French grammar so hat I can talk with them but about all I could say is "Parlez vous Francais?" with an answer of this kind "Ich kann auch." Only two of the hundred can speak English.

I have seen something of the country since I wrote you last. I went to Oklahoma at Christmas time where mother has been all winter. She expects to leave for Seattle to-day for a few months. I certainly did enjoy the trip. Have been in Decatur, Ill. twice this year, to Chicago and Ind'p'l's once. I have only been in Ind'p'ls' twice since last Oct. but must try to o next month some time.

Stella Hadley Smith surprised me not long ago by making her appearance in T. H. She had been to Crawfordsville to visit some cousins and then came on here to visit another cousin and me. I was sure glad to see her as I had not seen her for more than a year. They have moved from Richmond since she was here but I don't remember where.

I was in Decatur, Ill. this last week end and had such a splendid time. I do like that city very much altho' people who live there seem to think it is too quiet.

I was fortunate enuf to have an invitation to a country club dinner – dance week before last. We had a good simple Hooverized dinner and a dandy dance. It is a cement floor but very smooth. I have attended several dances this spring but can't see that I improve very rapidly in grace. Evidently I did not begin early enuf to acquire the graceful swing.

You will think I am experimenting all kinds of ink and pens on you but variety is the spice of life you know.

Our boys are having a game of base ball this afternoon that I should like mighty well to see. They have had some good games this year.

Two of my very best friends have left T. H. within the last month – one have gone to Wilmington Delaware and the other to Macon Georgia. I hope no more will leave but when peoples' husbands get better positions I can't expect them to stay in T.H.

If you could see my garden you might think I am overworked. We have such a little yard that you would probably call for a microscope in order to see it. I wish I did have more space for gardening as I enjoy it.

I am hoping to hear from you in the near future. Is Frank in training now too?

As ever, yours sincerely,

Clara Hadley

Chester "Chet" Adrian Parsons (1887 – 1977), son of Adrian Alkanah (1846 – 1929) and Mary Mariah (Fox) Parsons (1850 – 1922), served during WWI in the American Expeditionary Force in France from April 1918 – April 1919

Clara J (Hadley) Bruswick Harp (1891 – 1988) was assistant librarian of Indiana State Normal Library in 1917. In 1920 she became the high school librarian in Decatur, IL.

"Smileage Book" was a coupon book issued by the War Department during WW1 for purchase by the general public. The book would be purchased and sent to a serviceman. He would then use them for a seat at a movie theater or auditorium. Each book had 20 coupons.

During World War I, the Chasseurs Alpins, nicknamed "les Diables Bleus" because of their distinctive blue uniform with flowing cape and jaunty berets, first gained attention

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when their unique training and alpine knowledge was counted upon to break the stalemate of trench warfare in their native region of the French Alps. When the United States entered the war, units of the French Blue Devils toured the country helping raise money in the war effort.