

### If I Ever Did Need You, It Is Now!: Letters From Savanna, Illinois To A WWI Doughboy While Serving At Jefferson Barracks, Camp Custer, And Taliaferro ... Of The Mississippi Palisade State Park

Lyn Terese Miller Smith

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It had barely been a week since Grandpa left his father's five-hundred acre farm to enlist into the army when his sister Florence wrote him on December 21, 1917 that, "You surely are needed at home now." She was right, as the eldest son, the entire family depended on him to help manage all aspects of their farm and they expressed their need of him over and over again in their many letters; he was sorely missed. When I first chose the above quote from one of my great grandfather's letters to be the title for my book, I thought that his urgent plea pertained only to our family. But as I researched, I was surprised to discover that this was the same predicament that many farmers were facing, not just in Savanna, but throughout Illinois and the country as a whole. I soon came to the realization that what his family and friends wrote in their letters to him was relevant to a larger audience than merely my relatives. Simply put, during World War I American farmers needed their sons home, not just my great grandfather.



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