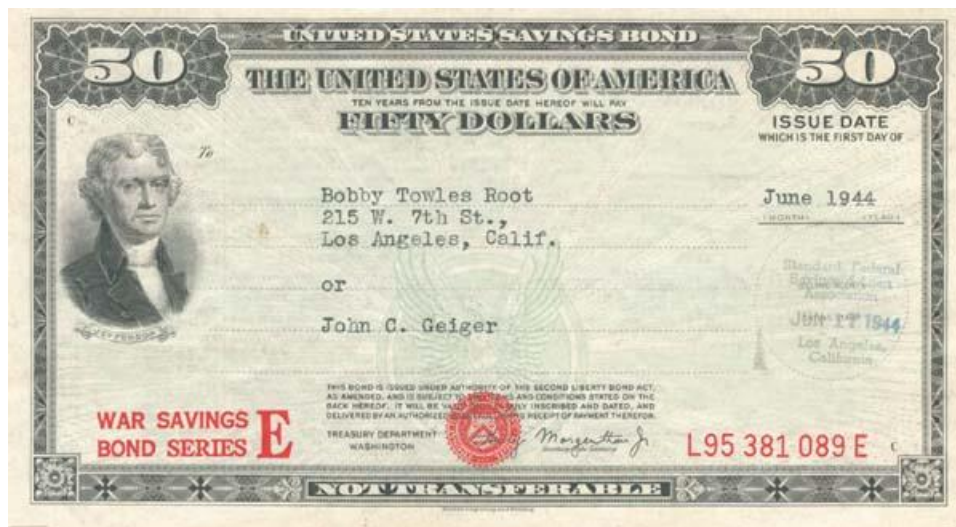


1945 July 23-29

Investment in Winning a War

To pay for the tremendous numbers of service personnel and war material needed to win World War II (estimated at more than \$330 billion), the United States government sold war bonds to raise capital.¹ In the late spring of 1945, the country started its seventh bond drive of the war.

President Franklin Roosevelt established the war bond program in 1941. Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau insisted from the start that the program be voluntary so people could believe they were doing something on their own volition to help the war effort. The denominations of the bonds ranged from \$25 to \$10,000. Series E bonds were the lower denominations purchased by regular citizens, and these amounted to \$36 billion during the war. Banks, insurance companies, and large corporations bought larger bonds.²



(LaBarre Galleries)

War stamps were a fundraising avenue for those with less cash. Sales of bonds and stamps in city of La Crosse public schools amounted to \$56,526.51 in the 1944-1945 school year. The previous school year total in the city was \$56,526.83. It was reported that 4,500 students out of 5,800 in La Crosse schools took part.³ Hazel Leicht, the county supervisor of schools, reported that the 49 one-room rural schools, six grade schools, and four high schools in La Crosse County raised \$4,549.50 in bonds and \$8,147.85 in war stamps in 1944-1945.⁴ Norma (Huber) Anderson remembers that all the children in her grade school at Bangor would bring a dime to school every Monday. The money was pooled to buy war bonds.⁵



War stamps album
(13thDimension.com)

Beginning in 1942, employees had the option of participating in a Payroll Savings Plan with automatic paycheck deductions going to buy war bonds.⁶

In the May 20, 1945, edition of the *La Crosse Tribune*, five workers at the La Crosse Ordnance Shop were featured because they each purchased \$100 in war bonds every month. They were: Dorothy Solberg, Raymond Cepek, Arnold Le Febre, Mabel Bakken, and Mike Johnson. Another 82 workers at the shop bought \$50 war bonds every month. In April 1945, 16.63 percent of the shop payroll was earmarked for bond purchases.⁷

at the beach of that Pacific atoll showed Americans how tough this war was going to be, and war bond sales increased dramatically.¹²

Besides appealing to a sense of patriotic duty, all sorts of fundraising techniques were used to promote war bond sales. Propaganda posters often used fear to instill urgency. Celebrities auctioned off items, such as Betty Grable's stockings and Jack Benny's violin, in exchange for pledges to buy war bonds. Actress Hedy Lamarr offered to kiss anyone who bought \$25,000 worth of bonds. Radio personalities, movie stars, athletes, and returned war heroes toured the country to star in war bond rallies.¹³ In September 1943, singer Kate Smith held an eighteen-hour radio marathon by herself that raised \$39 million in bond pledges.¹⁴

For the Fifth War Loan Drive, the Inter-State Fairgrounds was the site of a "Combat Show" on July 2-4, 1944. The 76th Infantry Division displayed over \$1,000,000 worth of combat equipment so citizens could see what their war bond purchases made possible.¹⁵



(National World War II Museum)

The Seventh War Loan Drive began May 14, 1945, and it was billed as "The Mighty Seventh." Each community had a chairman, and they were supported by appointed block workers. B. A. Mau was the chairman of the village of West Salem, and B. H. Meyer was the co-chairman.¹⁶ Adolph Nuttleman

The Wisconsin State Statistician established the quotas for townships at five percent of net farm income in the township.²²

Local companies supported the bond campaign in various ways. Doerflinger's,²³ Barron's,²⁴ Northern States Power Company,²⁵ Hughes,²⁶ and Coca-Cola²⁷ were among the businesses that devoted full advertisements promoting the bond campaign. Penney's not only advertised for the bond campaign but also sold bonds in their store.²⁸ Other businesses inserted bond promos into their regular advertising.²⁹

La Crosse theaters held special bond sales nights at the movies. There was an "Ernie Pyle Day" on June 6, to honor the famous war correspondent who had recently been killed at Okinawa, which brought in more than \$15,000 in war bond sales. The Rivoli, Wisconsin, and Riviera theaters accounted for more than \$10,000 of that total. The Hollywood theater sold more than \$5,000 in war bonds to 47 people on the same day.³⁰ The Rivoli followed up with another event on June 27 with the showing of "Roughly Speaking" called the "story of a courageous woman and the family she reared and loved." The price of admission was purchase of a war bond.³¹ The Trane Glee Club also performed at the Rivoli that night.³² That event netted \$70,400 in bond sales.³³ The Hollywood theater pulled in almost \$30,000 for its bond night showing of the musical "Nob Hill."³⁴

The *La Crosse Tribune* joined in the exhortation to buy bonds.

Time For Extras

READE the American casualties list and think of the more to come!

Our fighters are facing days of greater danger and hours of greater agony than at any time since the war began. The remaining half, in many ways, will be tougher, more terrible, heavier in losses than the half which has been ended.

The valor with which all this is faced by those who are out there makes anything we do seem trifling by comparison.

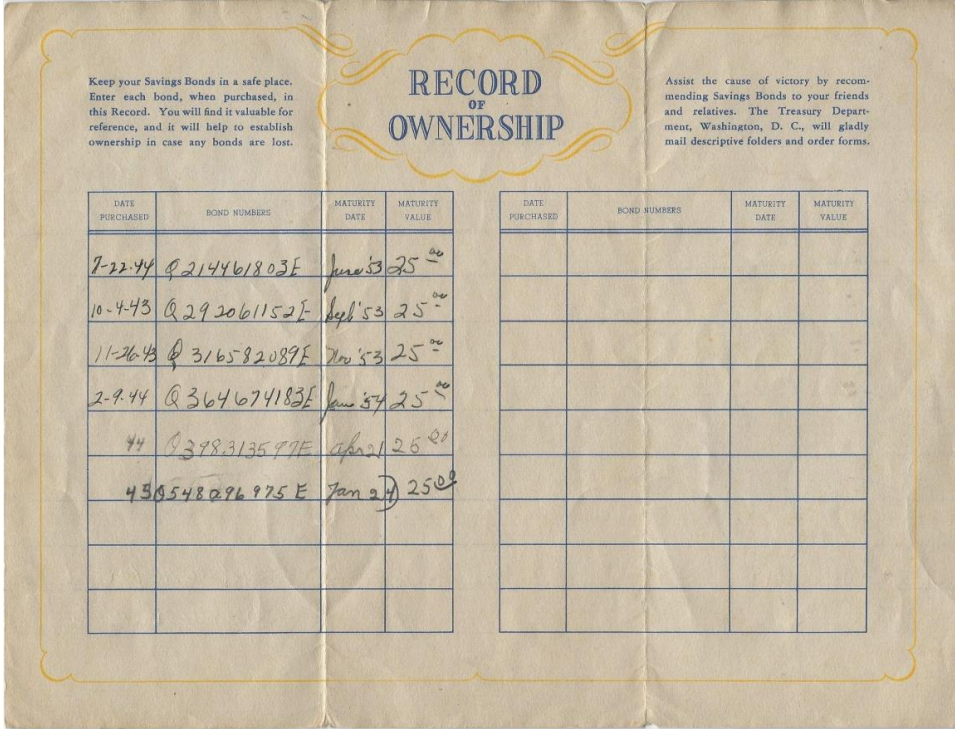
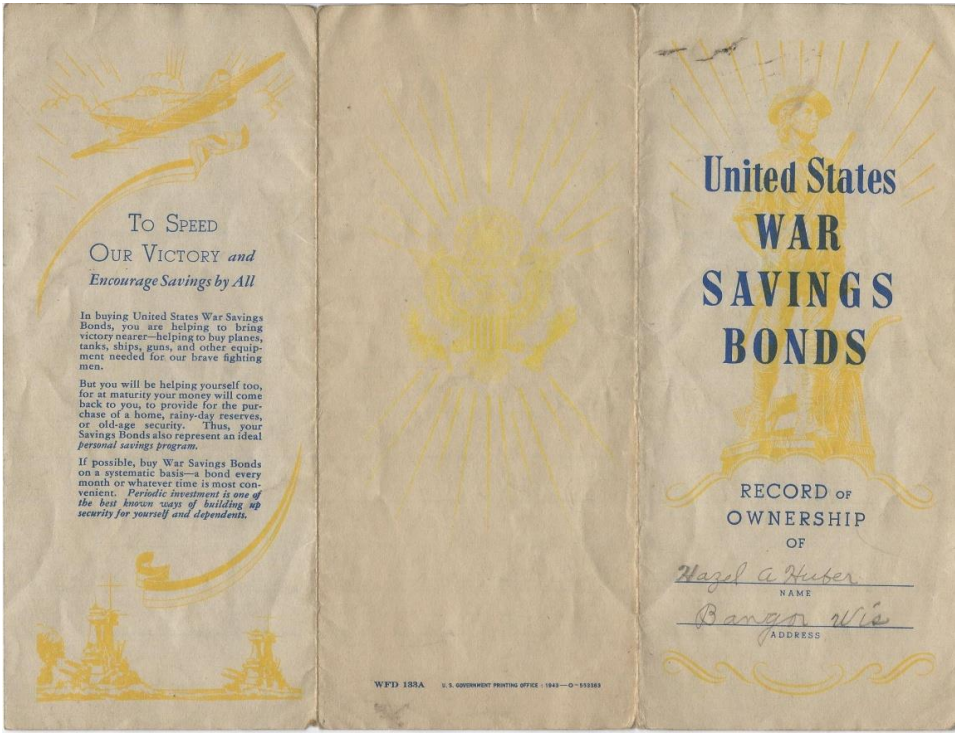
What we can do, we must do well. That means buying bonds up to and beyond our limit. Now is the time to give the winning of the war extra strength, extra courage and extra financial support.

(La Crosse Tribune, 1945 June 8, page 6)

The annual Flag Day parade on June 14, from the county courthouse to Riverside Park, became a war bond event with the guest appearance of five Army, Navy, and Marine Corps veterans speaking about their battle experiences.³⁵ The veterans, who also showed combat films, were sponsored by the International Association of Machinists, Local No. 1109, at Allis-Chalmers.³⁶

The Chicago and Northwestern Railway purchased \$15,000,000 in war bonds, and La Crosse County, as one of the areas served by the railway, was credited with \$45,000 of that.³⁷

Bangor was the first place in La Crosse County to meet its quota. Their total by the middle of June was \$72,490; their quota had been \$62,800.³⁸



(Author's collection)

The big push to get the whole county over its quota was set for Saturday, June 23. Bonds and entertainment dominated the day at Doerflingers in downtown La Crosse. Every \$25 worth of war bonds purchased was good for an entry in a contest with 18 prizes in what else---more war bonds.³⁹ The whole main floor of the store was devoted to sales of "E" war bonds from 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Entertainment included the W.K.B.H. Kiddies Show, the Hay Shakers Round-Up, and the W.K.B.H. Barn Dance entertainers.⁴⁰ With all merchandise removed from the shelves, store clerks did nothing but sell war bonds. Boy Scouts acted as runners to the balcony where a clerical crew of 25 people typed the paperwork for each sale. Besides the contest, another incentive for bond buyers were free airplane rides on Sunday for anyone buying a bond of \$500 or more.⁴¹ The day was a resounding success with local citizens purchasing \$250,000 in war bonds at Doerflinger's.⁴²

Louis G. Nelson, chairman of the special events committee of the county war finance committee, arranged for an 8:00 p.m. program at Riverside Park that evening, which featured Gysbert Van Steenwyk as master of ceremonies and a welcome by Mayor J. J. Verchota. Lt. Colonel Stanley J. Eaton, executive officer of Camp McCoy, drew the winners of the bond contest. Ferdinand A. Poncelet of 1345 George Street was the first entry drawn and received a \$2,000 bond. The second entry drawn was Dan C. Mesoloras of 419 North 24th Street and was good for a \$1,000 bond. Edward A. Funk of 1407 Main Street won a \$500 bond. Fifteen other people received \$100 bonds. Lt. Col. Eaton then presented a presidential unit citation to Private Clarence Ekern, of 925 Jackson Street, representing the 316th Troop Carrier Group that flew 118 sorties in three days during the Normandy invasion in June 1944.⁴³ The Central High School Band performed before the announcement of the winners of the War Bond contest.⁴⁴ The park program also included rides for kids by Heileman's mule team and a display of three Army vehicles.⁴⁵

Even with the big boost from the Doerflinger's event, the county was still below quota with just a week left in the bond drive.⁴⁶ Residents had until July 9 to buy bonds that would count toward the county's total.⁴⁷

The village of West Salem was a bright exception to generally lagging sales for most of the campaign. West Salem was \$4,000 over its quota by Independence Day.⁴⁸ When all the figures were compiled, the village of West Salem exceeded its quota by over \$24,000 with \$115,375 in war bonds sold.⁴⁹

With just four days left in the campaign, Gysbert Van Steenwyk made a special plea to farmers to take a break from their fields and buy "E" war bonds because the county was only at 76 percent of its quota for those.⁵⁰

County Meets Quota In Bonds Sales During Drive Given As \$9 Million

La Crosse county more than doubled its quota in the recently completed Seventh War Loan campaign, it was announced Tuesday by Gysbert Van Steenwyk, chairman of the county war finance committee.

County sales of all bonds in the campaign were \$9,072,980, or 201 per cent of the quota, it was stated. The quota in "E" bonds was the only one not met, for sales amounted to \$1,729,740, or 98 per cent of the figure set.

Sales of individual bonds, which include "E" securities as well as investment types, were \$4,214,094, or 114 per cent of the quota. Corporations purchased \$4,858,886, or 596 per cent of the assigned figure, it was stated.

La Crosse county, compared well with the state figures, it was added. Wisconsin was one of few states that met its quota of "E" bonds.

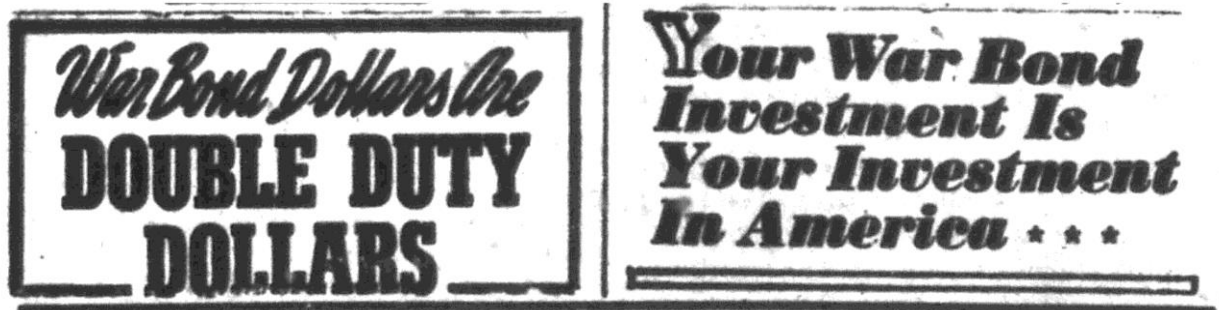
State sales of "E" bonds were \$91,334,000 or 102.6 per cent of the quota. Sales of all bonds to individuals amounted to \$164,132,000 or 109.4, while corporations bought \$360,878,000 in bonds, or 308 per cent of their quota. The total state sales amounted to \$525,010,000, or 196.6 per cent.

(*La Crosse Tribune*, 1945 July 24, page 2)

Although La Crosse County fell two percent short on "E" bond sales, the other categories of sales were well over quotas.

As a state, Wisconsin, twelfth in population in 1945, was first in percentage of "E" bonds sold against its quota for the seventh war loan drive. Of the 14 highest-population states, only five met their quotas.⁵¹

Other countries had bond programs to help pay for war expenses, but it was most successful in the United States. There was a total of eight war bond campaigns during the war, and six million volunteers sold \$157 billion in war bonds during these, surpassing sales goals by more than \$50 billion. An astounding 85 million Americans invested in war bonds to help win the war.⁵² La Crosse County counted itself among them.



(Bangor Independent, 1945 July 12, page 3)

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- ⁶ David M. Kennedy, *The Library of Congress World War II Companion* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007), 150.
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- ²⁵ *La Crosse Tribune*, La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1945 May 15, page 10.
- ²⁶ *La Crosse Tribune*, La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1945 May 13, page 3.
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