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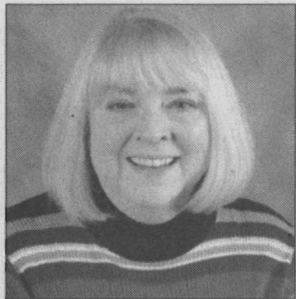
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Daylight Saving Time introduced a century ago



By Wendy Richter
For the Siftings

Last weekend marked the annual change from Standard Time to Daylight Saving Time. One hundred years ago Arkadelphia's Southern Standard newspaper reported on the then-new concept, implemented in the United States during World War I to give people more time to spend in their gardens after their workday was over.

During the Great War, the German empire and its World War I ally Austria-Hungary employed Daylight Saving Time in 1916 for the purpose of conserving coal. Great

Britain and other European countries soon followed. The United States made the change in 1918.

However, in Arkadelphia, business owners had already taken action of their own in support of the war effort. The March 7, 1918, edition of the Southern Standard made this observation: "As a war measure, and to assist in the food productions, most of the merchants of our city signed an agreement to close their stores at 5 o'clock each afternoon, except Saturday, in order that they and their clerks may have the time to devote to their gardens. The closing at 5 o'clock was begun on last Monday and will be in effect through the summer months."

After that time, a number of articles appeared in the local paper supporting the time change. On March 21, the new concept was explained to all: "The daylight saving bill, which puts all clocks in America forward an

hour on the last Sunday in March and turns them back again the last Sunday in October, has been passed by Congress and signed by the president, and will go into effect Saturday night, March 30. Before retiring on the last Saturday night of this month, all housewives in America will set their clock an hour ahead."

The next week, April 4, the paper opined, "Daylight Saving a Good Plan." The report explained the rationale behind the move and its positive impact: "Very little inconvenience was occasioned by the setting of the clocks forward one hour on last Saturday night and those who set their clocks forward the one hour in accord with the recognized American time arose Sunday morning on the usual clock time though it was really one hour earlier than they had been in the habit of arising. The idea of saving an hour of daylight each day is working out fine, and



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE CLARK COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION/FOR THE SIFTINGS
Downtown Arkadelphia in the years just prior to World War I.

now the people in town especially have a long time between work quitting time and dark to devote to the cultivating of their war gardens. Food will win the war, don't forget that."

After the war ended later in 1918, officials decided to not implement Daylight

Saving Time on a comprehensive or widespread basis. Its use increased again during World War II, and was put into action on a broader scale in the United States during the 1970s as an energy-saving measure during that decade's energy crisis.

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tion about Clark County history, visit or contact the Clark County Historical Museum (www.clarkcountyhistory.org or (870) 230-1360) or the Clark County Historical Association's Archives at the Ouachita Baptist University Library (www.obu.edu/archives or (870) 245-5332).