

Ladies Volunteer Aid Society

After Reading sent a company of First Defenders into military service, the women of Reading formed a Ladies Aid Society, later known as the Ladies Volunteer Association. The society was organized for the purpose of providing soldiers with necessities during their terms of service.

Originally, the ladies were called on to provide woolen shirts for soldiers. After the early months of the war passed, government procurement agencies and ordnance supply were able to cope with most of the problems of equipping the men in the field. The Ladies then turned to the tasks of supplying accessory clothing, like stockings, and sending boxes of food to the soldiers.

Another clothing accessory which was in great demand during the winter months of the first years of the war was mittens. The Ladies Volunteer Aid Society also took an active interest in the welfare of the sick and wounded soldiers in hospitals.

As the war wore on the total number of men in uniform, from Berks, rose to over 10,000. In order to meet the expanding needs, Ladies Volunteer Associations were formed in other parts of Berks County, and throughout the state. There were active groups in Amityville, Stouchsburg, Robesonia and Morgantown.