

WE TOOK CARE OF THE BOYS

The Folk Alliance International invited Joe Crookston, our February 10 Second Saturday artist (see Page 1) to be the Artist in Residence at the 2016 Conference in Kansas City MO. Joe collaborated with the National World War I Museum in Kansas City, digging into their archives of letters, photographs, field recordings and objects from WWI. After reading hundreds of letters, Joe chose to tell the story of Florence Hemphill, a woman. A nurse of Scottish ancestry from Wilson County Kansas. A worker less honored in the history books. Florence was a courageous medical presence in France during some of the most intense fighting. This song is on Joe's newest CD, *Joe Crookston 2017*, or you can listen to it here: <https://youtu.be/fklyHz3osKA?si=6-uZGGIpvKuZV13m>

THE LETTERS OF FLORENCE HEMPHILL

By Joe Crookston

Bm

I came back home to Wilson County

In the gold Kansas Plains

G

From the gutted hills of France

A

And the cold muddy rain

Bm

I still think about the sisters Cigarettes and English tea

G

And the barbed wire and trenches

A

Things we never thought we'd see

G

A

And in the rumbling battle noise

Bm

We took care of the boys.

G

So they wouldn't die alone

A

And we could send them back home

G

A

Bm

When the midnight whistle blew I donned my boots and navy blue

G

A

But anyhow That's all over now

Jimmy Clellan was a piper
They brought him in from No Man's Land
And I fed him the ripest berries
And I saved his one good hand

All the sleepless nights we spent
And all the letters came and went
And all the British girls and I
We lost some but we tried

And that red-head with the photograph
As I wrapped up his eyes
If he got home to West Virginia
I knew he'd never see his bride

We lay down in the bracken fern
To make it through we had to learn
About the broken and the torn
Mending lives and staying warm

And in the rumbling battle noise
We took care of the boys So they wouldn't die
alone
And we could send them back home
When the midnight whistle blew I donned my
boots and navy blue
But anyhow That's all over now

Coming home to the prairie gold
With a story that I told
In the rumbling battle noise
We took care of the boys

I came back home to Wilson County
In the gold Kansas Plains
From the gutted hills of France
And the cold muddy rain