

War Veterans bureau.

The place had been "taken up" by Jake Watson immediately after he had returned from France. It was eight miles from the Merritt farm, and to reach it one was obliged to pass over a winding trail that zigzagged through woods and fields and skirted the far and treacherous edges of the marsh and bog lands.

Jake had no wounds to show for his four years service at the front, no medals and no pensions. The farm, nevertheless, represented the "gift" of a grateful government, and Jake's six months gratuity money went to pay the first installment on a twenty year loan for implements and stock.

Jake was well satisfied with his farm. Its isolation and quietness gave it an especial value to the soldier. Here at least the German guns could never reach. Here the incessant pounding of the four terrible years would not be heard save in sleep or delusion.

He was said to be "queer", and some declared that Jake was "cracked." Bud Morris, for instance, son of the wealthiest farmer in the country. Bud had been exempted from military service because of two missing toes from his left foot, and he had spent a night in the veteran's shack. Bud persisted in the statement that the veteran was "crazy as a bed bug" -- though he was careful to make such statement out of sight and hearing of Jake Watson. The latter, so Bud declared, slept without covers upon his bed, even in winter, his gogs -- six or seven of them, lying across him, and giving not only the necessary warmth, but a protective armor against all possible