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Every Week Essays: Interpretive Possibilities

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Homestead, Melissa J., "Every Week Essays: Interpretive Possibilities" (2011). *Faculty Publications -- Department of English.* Paper 129.
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Homestead in Every Week Essays (2011) [no. 6]. Available at: http://everyweek.unl.edu/view?docId=InterpretivePossibilities.html.
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Every Week Essays

Interpretive Possibilities

by Melissa Homestead

The contents of *Every Week* provide a rich resource for those interested in World War I (both the battlefront and the homefront), popular fiction, advertising, and constructions of race and gender in the nineteen-teens. Although Bruce Barton's editorials set the tone for the magazine, the progressive politics of many junior staff members, and particularly the feminism of the female staff, shaped the contents of the magazine in subtle but important ways. For example, these young women were largely responsible for producing the picture-caption section, and they often chose themes foregrounding popular feminism and the status of women in society. One thus finds photospreads devoted to women in unusual jobs (police officers, farmers, judges, artists) or other categories of women who transgressed gendered expectations of conduct (women who wore trousers, women who married but did not take their husbands names, women who were suffrage activists). These contents provide an illuminating new context for reading Susan Glaspell's short story "A Jury of Her Peers," first published in *Every Week* in 1917. Glaspell's story appears in a substantial cluster of issues mounted on this pilot site, http://everyweek.unl.edu.