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The German Hun in The Georgia Sun: German Prisoners Of War In Georgia

Leisa N. Vaughn

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Studies of prisoners of war in America have received renewed attention since the opening of the prisoner facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. However, this is not a new field of scholarship. Since the 1970s, with Arnold Krammer’s *Nazi Prisoners of War in America*, American treatment of prisoners, especially during WWII, has flourished as a field. Increasingly popular in the 1980s were statewide studies of prisoner of war camps and the captive experience. Despite this focus, Georgia’s role in prisoner of war administration and the captive’s experiences have been overlooked. This thesis seeks to remedy this gap.

Georgia housed prisoners of war and enemy aliens in World War I, with two of the three containment facilities residing within the state’s borders. In World War II, the state boasted five major prisoner of war camps with several accompanying branch camps. The labor garnered from prisoner labor programs supplemented the draft-drained labor pool, especially in the agricultural industry in rural Georgia. The impact of the labor programs was undeniable, and prisoner of war labor prevented an economic downturn throughout the state. The prisoners oftentimes developed relationships with their employers, blurring the lines between enemy and captor.

The following study offers a comparative view of WWI and WWII programs, arguing that WWI prisoner of war plans provided the prototype for the successful administration of POWs in WWII.
INDEX WORDS: PRISONER OF WAR; POW; TREATMENT OF PRISONERS OF WAR; GEORGIA; TWENTIETH CENTURY; WWI; WWII; FORT OGLETHORPE; FORT MCPHERSON; FORT GORDON; CAMP BENNING; CAMP STEWART; CAMP WHEELER.
THE GERMAN HUN IN THE GEORGIA SUN: GERMAN PRISONERS OF WAR IN
GEORGIA

by

LEISA N. VAUGHN

B.A., Middle Georgia State University, 2014

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of Georgia Southern University in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF HISTORY

STATESBORO, GEORGIA
THE GERMAN HUN IN THE GEORGIA SUN: GERMAN PRISONERS OF WAR IN GEORGIA

by

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my family. Thank you for teaching me the value of a good education, encouraging me to pursue a graduate degree, and always reminding me that I could do anything I put my mind to. I hope this thesis is worthy of all the faith you have in me.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis would not have been possible without the help and guidance of a number of people. I would like to thank Dr. Brian K. Feltman for bringing my attention to the presence of the WWII prisoner of war branch camp in Statesboro, Georgia—the camp that started this inquiry—and for fostering my interest in WWII enemy alien internment. Thank you for helping me to bring some direction to this project.

I would also like to thank my sister, Megan Vaughn, for all of the hours she put in as my unpaid research assistant. She spent days in archives with me, stayed up countless nights helping me proofread and fine-tune this project at its various stages, and never tired of listening to me talk about German prisoners of war.

The staff of the National Archives and Records Administration at College Park, Maryland also provided invaluable assistance during my brief trip to their collections in July 2015. Though I was only there a few days, they tried to make sure I saw the records that would be most beneficial to my research. This thesis is better because of them.

Finally, I would like to thank the family of Sam Neville for allowing me to use the letters he exchanged with the prisoners of war that worked his farm during WWII. These letters portray the relationships formed between men that work together, and helped me to understand the blurring of the lines between enemy and captor.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Brief History of American Prisoner of War Administration</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confined by Countrymen</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PART ONE: WORLD WAR I PRISONER OF WAR AND INTERRED ENEMY ALIEN ADMINISTRATION</strong></td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 GERMAN SAILORS WITH AMERICAN JAILORS</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Port to Prison</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 APPREHENDED ENEMY ALIENS</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Friend to Foe</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 THE WAR PRISONER’S DILEMMA—INDEFINITE INTERNMENT</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Disease of Desperation</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWI—Southern Hospitality?</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PART TWO: WORLD WAR II PRISONER OF WAR ADMINISTRATION</strong></td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 FASCISTS FROM THE FRONT LINES</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rules and Regulations</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captive Camp Life</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure in the Lager</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A POW Workforce</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working for Wages</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camp Canteens and Prisoner Post</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POWs in American Society</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeward Bound</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 CONCLUSION</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legacy</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BIBLIOGRAPHY</strong></td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>APPENDICES</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A TREATY OF AMITY AND COMMERCE</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B HAGUE CONVENTION OF 1907</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C GENEVA CONVENTION OF 1929</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D WWI PHOTOGRAPHS</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E ART FROM OGLETHORPE</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F WWII PHOTOGRAPHS</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: WWII Pay Scale for German Officers ......................................................... 72
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“I will always remember the wonderful time I had there, which I will never forget.”¹ 

Former prisoner of war Johannes Ruschke wrote these words to Sam Neville, the farmer he worked for during his time in a Georgia POW camp during the Second World War. His words illustrate the relationships formed between American captors, German prisoners of war, and the farmers and other private sector industries that purchased prisoner labor between 1943-1946. The Second World War necessitated a large prisoner of war presence throughout the state in order to supplement the draft-drained labor pool. However, it is not the only occurrence of war prisoner programs in the state’s past. Throughout Georgia history, prisoner of war policy played a significant role, but it is often overlooked. The German prisoners held in Georgia in the twentieth century played an important part in the state’s narrative regarding the wartime economy and captor/captive relations.

Since the opening of the military prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and all of the accompanying scandal and issues, the history of prisoners of war in America has received increased focus. Scholars seek to examine the past practices of prisoner treatment in American history, often hoping that these examinations will shed light on current practices or expose a tradition of conduct towards prisoners throughout history. Though there has been a resurgence of interest in this topic in the twenty-first century, it is certainly not a new field of scholarship.

¹ Johannes Ruschke to Sam Neville, 7 January 1947, Sam Neville letter collection, Georgia Southern University Museum.
Arnold Krammer’s *Nazi Prisoners of War in America* was one of the first comprehensive studies in this field. Krammer examines the treatment of prisoners of war in the United States during the Second World War and argues that German POW labor was a lifesaver for the war-torn country.\(^2\) Though his work provides an overview of prisoner experience and camp administration, it does not focus on any camp in particular or the varying experiences of prisoners that labored in different industries. Krammer asserts that the prisoner program was successful and that it provided the necessary labor for industries struggling with wartime labor shortages. Though possibly the best work on the subject, and certainly it is considered the most authoritative, it does not highlight the contributions of the program to any one state or industry, overlooking the role that prisoners played in the Georgia economy.

More recent volumes such as Paul J. Springer’s *America’s Captives: Treatment of POWs from the Revolutionary War to the War on Terror* and Robert C. Doyle’s *The Enemy in Our Hands: America’s Treatment of Enemy Prisoners of War from the Revolution to the War on Terror* investigate the historical trajectory of American practices of wartime captivity. Doyle’s *The Enemy in Our Hands* seeks to fill in the blanks still present in the history of prisoners of war in America.\(^3\) Springer’s *America’s Captives* strives to link the realities of prisoner of war programs with the policies that drive them.\(^4\) Both of these studies reflect the renewed interest in

\(^2\) Arnold Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners of War in America* (Lanham, MD: Scarborough House Publisher, 1979), xiii.


the field and offer comprehensive accounts of the history of prisoner of war administration. Neither work focuses on the impact of prisoner of war programs, especially in the twentieth century, on the local and state economies in which the prisoners participated.

One of the more recent works written about U.S. administration of prisoners of war is Derek R. Mallett’s 2013 *Hitler’s Generals in America: Nazi POWs and Allied Military Intelligence*. In this work, Mallett provides a comparative analysis of British and American approaches to the treatment of high-ranking Wehrmacht officials in Allied custody and their varying views of their value, especially in regards to intelligence gathering.\(^5\) The author argues, in agreement with Krammer, that the camps established during WWII in America were highly regimented—I argue the same. However, Paul J. Springer, in a review of Mallett’s book, refers to the American POW system as, “a hastily assembled, poorly conceived nightmare of improvisational solutions to major problems.”\(^6\) The World War II prisoner of war administration plans were far from hastily assembled, and strived to adhere to Geneva Convention parameters regarding the imprisonment of foreign prisoners of war, including providing various outlets for religious, scholarly, and artistic expression. The nature of these programs suggests the opposite of Springer’s assertion.

Additionally, there are several studies that explore captivity in certain states, including Robert D. Billinger Jr.’s *Hitler’s Soldiers in the Sunshine State: German POWs in Florida*, Anita Buck’s *Behind Barbed Wire: German Prisoners of War Camps in Minnesota*, and Michael A.  

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Waters’ *Lone Star Stalag*. Further studies of Civil War confinement, such as William Marvel’s *Andersonville: The Last Depot* and Roger Pickenpaugh’s *Captives in Blue: The Civil War Prisons of the Confederacy*, evaluate the role Georgia prisons played in the treatment of Civil War prisoners. Yet, despite the excellent scholarship, these studies have failed to provide an in-depth analysis of the role Georgia played in prisoner of war confinement in both the First and Second World Wars—this is my goal. I propose to remedy this gap in the literature by providing a comprehensive study of prisoners of war during the World Wars, with a particular focus on German prisoners in Georgia from 1917-1946. This analysis will further elucidate the importance of prisoner of war labor in Georgia during this period.

Another well-regarded approach to the study of prisoners of war in America is cultural. This technique is best exemplified by Matthias Reiß’s “*Die Schwarzen waren unsere Freunde:*” *Deutsche Kriegsgefangene in der amerikanischen Gesellschaft, 1942-1946*. In this 2002 study, Reiß argues that German prisoners of war in America bonded with African Americans on the basis of similar work duties—POWs labored as agricultural workers, jobs usually reserved for African Americans in American society—and their status as “outsiders.” However, the author contends that German POWs, enemy prisoners from a fascist country considered evil and racist, received preferential treatment over black American citizens and soldiers. Americans regarded

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7 See also Betty Cowley’s *Stalag Wisconsin: Inside WWII Prisoner of War Camps*, Jeffrey Geiger’s *German Prisoners of War at Camp Cook, California: Personal Accounts of 14 Soldiers, 1944-1946*, Jeffery L. Littlejohn and Charles H. Ford’s *The Enemy Within Never Did Without: German and Japanese Prisoners of War at Camp Huntsville, Texas, 1942-1945*, and Antonio Thompson’s *German Jackboots on Kentucky Bluegrass: Housing German Prisoners of War in Kentucky*. See also the complete bibliography to this thesis.

Germans as white, and allowed them the privileges of their race, despite confinement. This is due to the lack of ideological drive towards Germans in World War Two; Americans focused prejudicial treatment towards the Japanese. Reiß provides strong evidence for his claims of preferential treatment for German prisoners, but as Krammer argues, he does not sufficiently prove his thesis of friendship between African Americans and the imprisoned Germans. Despite this perceived weakness of the work, Reiß provides a deeper and better understanding of the struggles of the American home front.

The following study closely follows the example of Allan Kent Powell’s 1989 *Splinters of a Nation: German Prisoners of War in Utah*. Powell examined newspapers, diaries, archival records, and performed oral interviews with Americans and German prisoners of war to construct a study of POWs confined in Utah during World War II. He also explores the imprisonment of enemy aliens and prisoners of war in Utah during World War I, drawing historical comparisons between the two systems of war captivity. This thesis in many ways mirrors Powell’s approach, using similar source bases to construct a comparative study of World War I and II prisoner of war and enemy alien internment in Georgia. In crafting this study, I utilized a variety of primary and secondary sources. The Records of the Provost Marshal General’s Office, located at the National Archives and Records Administration in College Park, MD, proved to be a valuable collection and these records supplied much-needed detail, especially in the chapters on WWI. I also relied heavily on Georgia newspapers, especially ones from Bulloch County, Rome, and

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9 Showalter, 1072.

10 Krammer Review, 278.

11 Reiß’s work is only available in German. I relied on English reviews of the work by well-respected scholars for understanding of his study and its importance to the field.
Augusta. I strived to include examples from all regions of the state in an effort to show that prisoner of war and enemy alien reception varied little throughout Georgia. Towards the end of my research, a member of the faculty of Georgia Southern University alerted me to an invaluable resource owned by a local resident of Statesboro, Georgia. The letters exchanged between Sam Neville, a farmer from Register, Georgia, and five of the German prisoners of war that labored on his farm illuminate the blurring of lines between the prisoners and their employers that Reiß hints at—a bond formed between white men with little consideration for titles such as “enemy” and “captor.”

Existing prisoner of war studies concerning Georgia focus on the Civil War due to the presence of the infamous Camp Sumter (Andersonville) in Southwest Georgia. While these studies are worthwhile, a study of prisoners of war in later wars, especially the First and Second World Wars, is necessary. By 1917 and America’s entry into World War I, American perceptions of prisoners of war and their value had changed dramatically since the Civil War. The Civil War provided the United States Army with its first experience in the custody and administration of a large number of prisoners of war.12 As both sides expected a quick conflict—few expected it to last longer than a couple weeks—neither the Confederates nor the United States planned for the administration of prisoners.13 The labor potential of the captives was not realized in this conflict, with most prisoners sitting the war out in idle confinement and in varying degrees of comfort or hardship, despite Union attempts to institute a labor program.14


13 Springer, America’s Captives, 81.

14 Lewis and Mewha, History of Prisoner of War Utilization, 27.
By 1917, and especially by 1942, the United States Army understood the value of prisoner of war labor. Within days after the declaration of war with Imperial Germany, hundreds of German sailors and merchant marines were interned as prisoners of war in Georgia. Their American jailors put them to work, mostly on public works projects and in the textiles industry. In November 1917, the government approved a motion allowing POWs to work on highways and for private parties and corporations, especially in the agricultural industry.\footnote{Lewis and Mewha, \textit{History of Prisoner of War Utilization}, 54.}

The U.S. government also found another labor source during World War One—enemy aliens. German and Austro-Hungarian nationals were subject to increased surveillance in the U.S. after the outbreak of the war in Europe. With the opening of hostilities in April 1917, these immigrants faced the possibility of indefinite imprisonment in one of the two centers of captivity in the United States.\footnote{Tammy M. Proctor, "‘Patriotic Enemies:’ Germans in the Americas, 1914-1920,” in \textit{Germans as Minorities during the First World War: A Global Comparative Perspective}, ed. Panikos Panayi (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2014), 217-219.} One of those centers for enemy aliens was located in Georgia at Fort Oglethorpe. While the American government did decide that enemy aliens could not be compelled to labor for the United States or local and state governments, the imprisoned civilians were provided the opportunity to work outside of the barbed wire for pay.\footnote{International Committee, Young Men’s Christian Association to Colonel A. Pickering, Fort McPherson, Ga. On the Educational Work Conducted at Compound, 17 May 1919, Box 2, Record Group 407, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD. (NARA).}

According to Article 27 of the 1929 Geneva Convention, captured soldiers could be used as a labor force for their captor. In the Second World War, the military first utilized prisoner labor for essential tasks on military installations. However, by March 1943, essential industries
felt the labor shortage created by the war effort. Farmers needed laborers in order to continue to produce at the expected levels. In 1943, the War Department announced the utilization of prisoners of war for agriculture, food processing, and clothing plants. More than 100,000 prisoners worked outside their camp across the country. Many of those prisoners lived and labored in Georgia. Was their experience different from that of the nation at large? How did the experience of prisoners of war differ from World War I to World War II in Georgia? In what ways did the plans for prisoner administration in World War I influence the management of captives in the Second World War? These are the questions that I aim to answer in this work.

German prisoners had a major impact on industry, especially the agricultural industry, in Georgia. Yet, their role has been left unexamined by current scholarship of prisoners of war in American history. I aim to rectify that with an analysis of the importance of the prisoners in Georgia. These captives prevented crops from rotting in the fields and allowed the agricultural industry in the South to maintain output necessary for the war effort. The utilization of these prisoners also allowed Georgia to avoid an economic downturn due to a labor shortage. These prisoners and the work they performed are an important part of the history of Georgia from 1917-1946.

A Brief History of American Prisoner of War Administration

With the beginning of hostilities between Great Britain and her North American colonies, the British enlisted the help of German princes of the Holy Roman Empire. The British were in

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need of able-bodied soldiers to fill the ranks of their force in the colonies. Along with their British counterparts, these auxiliary forces were the first prisoners of war (POWs) in American history. Due to the fact that this was the Americans’ first experience administering a prisoner of war program, the policy for these captives constantly changed throughout the war. Over the course of the eight-year conflict, it is estimated that the American Continental Army, various state militias, and naval forces captured more than 14,000 prisoners of war. Of that number, close to 6,000 remained in America after 1783.

In early American wars, the focus of prisoner of war plans was exchange, voluntary enlistments, retaliation, and parole. Governments preferred these methods over the labor programs adopted later. Prisoners were first taken in the Revolutionary War at the Battle at Lexington in 1775. At this time, prisoners were only taken as a “restraint of honor,” which referred to preventing them from completing their duty to their nation. Later, after George Washington took command of the American Continental Army, the government decreed that all POWs be treated humanely and by the customs of war. Yet, Washington had no way of enforcing this order. In May 1776, Congress created a set of general guidelines for the

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treatment of POWs. Most of the regulations were similar to their traditional British counterparts. American regulations stipulated that all prisoners receive rations equal to those issued to American soldiers on garrison duty. This departed from the British policy of a two-thirds ration, a portion believed sufficient for a captive not performing labor duties.27

Americans taken prisoner by the British were usually not afforded the same courtesy as those taken prisoner by the Americans. Instead of behaving as if American prisoners were those of an enemy nation, the British opted to treat them as subjects involved in a domestic disturbance. Often, combatant colonists were dealt with like common criminals.28 As a result, the Americans changed their policy towards prisoners. Washington, in an August 1775 letter to Lieutenant General Thomas Gage, threatened to treat British prisoners in a like manner.29 The British treatment of American captives set the tone for the American treatment of British prisoners. However, Paul J. Springer asserts that, at no time, did American behavior towards British prisoners match the horror of British prison hulks.30 This illustrates one of the concentrations of early POW programs in America: retaliation.

Despite the harsh treatment of Americans in British custody, the main emphasis of the Revolutionary War prisoner of war policy was exchange. This was especially true after Americans began taking large numbers of prisoners. In 1777, at the Battle of Saratoga, the

27 Ibid., 19.


29 Ibid., 2.

30 Springer, America’s Captives, 19-20.
Americans took close to 6,000 more prisoners: 2,600 British regulars, 2,400 Hessians, and 800 Canadian troops.\(^{31}\) The Americans needed to decide how to deal with this large volume of prisoners. Exchange was the preferred way to handle an influx of prisoners—if the American government could exchange British captives for American prisoners, they relieved themselves of the burden of maintaining prisoners.\(^{32}\)

A system of exchange proved difficult to develop. Congress wanted to establish an exchange cartel. However, Great Britain refused to form these agreements with Congress—to do so would mean that the British government recognized Congress as a sovereign body. As a result, states performed exchanges with the British. States were especially concerned with freeing their influential citizens, those that usually commanded militia units, from British captivity. Washington also performed exchanges on the field. The American Army was concerned with releasing battle-seasoned veterans from internment, and putting them back in the field.\(^{33}\)

Washington finally arranged a system of exchange in which prisoners would be exchanged rank-for-rank and man-for-man. This arrangement favored the British—the British would get back trained regulars, while the Americans would get back volunteers with a short service term which was usually about to expire. This situation made Americans reluctant to arrange exchanges. Also, there was the added fear that exchanged British soldiers would serve on


\(^{33}\) Ibid., 15-16.
the North American continent again. American officers did not have service limits, so Congress and Washington focused the exchanges on officers, instead of privates. Washington also insisted on exchange based on date of capture— the longest held would be exchanged first. This also prevented Washington from being inundated with letters requesting certain people be released. The first exchange occurred on June 16, 1775. By November 1780, all but fifty officers and all privates had been exchanged in New York, a British stronghold. Exchanges were a successful method of dealing with a large prisoner population during the American Revolutionary War.

For the most part, prisoners were placed in barracks to await exchange, and Congress permitted enlisted men to exercise their trades and to perform labor to support themselves. Officers were usually paroled and not employed. Paroled officers would find housing for themselves in towns in private homes or inns. This was done at the expense of the officer, though the British government was supposed to provide the necessary funds. The officers were also allowed to wander around the towns in which they were paroled, allowing them some measure of freedom. The Americans intended this process of parole to save a considerable amount of time, as they would not have to provide for the maintenance of officers.

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34 Ibid., America’s Captives, 18.
36 Lewis and Mewha, History of Prisoner of War Utilization, 3.
37 Ibid., 15.
38 Ibid., 2.
39 Springer, America’s Captives, 14.
The troops captured at Trenton experienced a different fate. At Trenton, American forces captured approximately 1,000 prisoners, mostly German auxiliaries. After their capture, the army marched the prisoners to Pennsylvania. Once there, Congress instructed Washington not to release or exchange POWs, instead opting to put the prisoners to work. The decision to establish a labor program was made for three reasons: the existing barracks housing POWs were overcrowded and rations were low, the Americans believed that the Hessian soldiers were not a security risk, and Congress received countless civilian requests for POW labor. So, in 1777, the Hessians from Trenton were paroled to trustworthy employers and put to work. Congress agreed to pay the Hessians the value of their rations. Additionally, the farmers and other employers fed the prisoners and paid them $7.50 a month.\footnote{Lewis and Mewha, *History of Prisoner of War Utilization*, 16-17.}

The British and German auxiliaries taken prisoner at Saratoga experienced an odd situation. With the American victory at Saratoga, General Horatio Gates allowed General John Burgoyne to draft “The Articles of Convention,” and not surrender. This document outlined terms for the treatment of captured soldiers and officers. The agreement stipulated that the captive British and Germans be marched to Boston, where they would board a ship to Great Britain. The Continental Army agreed to pay the cost to maintain the soldiers and officers on the march to Boston, but the British government would reimburse the Americans before the ships disembarked. Once the troops arrived in Europe, they would be ineligible for service in North America again, unless exchanged for American POWs. Congress disapproved of this agreement. They claimed that the British did not meet all parts of the agreement, and that Great Britain did not send notification that they ratified the agreement. Great Britain refused to notify Congress of
its ratification of the “Articles of Convention” because that would signal their recognition of Congress as a sovereign body. This provided the justification Congress needed to keep the POWs in America until 1783.\textsuperscript{41} These British and German troops were housed in Virginia, at the first prisoner of war camp constructed in America.\textsuperscript{42}

Finally, Americans viewed German prisoners differently than British regulars. Prisoners of war were segregated based on nationality, so Germans lived separately from the British.\textsuperscript{43} Germans were viewed as submissive and unbothered by their captivity—after all, the British had to pay the Germans regardless if they were captured or fighting.\textsuperscript{44} Due to this, the Americans paroled a large number of Hessians. According to Robert C. Doyle, most of the Germans captured at Trenton simply blended into German-American communities in Pennsylvania. However, they did gather at war’s end to receive a formal release.\textsuperscript{45}

German troops were also treated differently than the British. From the moment that German soldiers set foot on the North American continent, Congress attempted to persuade them to switch sides, offering land, among other things.\textsuperscript{46} By 1776, recruitment efforts were increased due to a particularly harsh campaign season for the Americans. In 1778, Congress decided to form an independent corps under Polish count Casimir Pulaski. The corps was comprised solely

\textsuperscript{41} Springer, \textit{America’s Captives}, 21-22.

\textsuperscript{42} Doyle, \textit{Enemy in Our Hands}, 16.

\textsuperscript{43} Lewis and Mewha, \textit{History of Prisoner of War Utilization}, 2.

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 10-12.

\textsuperscript{45} Doyle, \textit{Enemy in Our Hands}, 24-25.

\textsuperscript{46} Krebs, \textit{A Generous and Merciful Enemy}, 7.
of German soldiers. By 1782, even George Washington, supported the active recruitment of German prisoners. He believed that the Germans would be a strong addition to the American force. Beginning in May 1782, Washington gave permission for the American Army to sign German POWs for a three-year service contract in exchange for $100. This was especially beneficial to Germans that expressed interest in staying in America after the end of the war.

When the conflict was nearing its end, Congress and the American army began to post ads in newspapers to recall paroled POWs. The Hessians who responded were offered a way to remain free residents of the U.S.—they either indentured themselves to someone, they agreed to work for ironmongers to aid the American government in paying off a debt, or joined the Continental Army. If the Germans agreed to stay, they were required to take an oath of allegiance. The Hessian High Command listed 2,949 deserters during the expedition to the British North American colonies. This number does not include the Germans that chose to stay, and settled into American life prior to the end of the conflict. Edward J. Lowell stresses that Hessians did not desert en masse from the British army. Yet, he acknowledges that the desertion rate was proportionally large among the German prisoners of war.

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47 Ibid., 140-143.


By September 1783, all prisoners of war had left America, except those that chose to stay behind.\(^53\) Approximately 5,000 Hessian soldiers and officers defected to the Americans and lived the rest of their lives in America.\(^54\) In 1785, the Prussians and the Americans signed a treaty, the Treaty of Amity and Commerce of 1785, which laid out the terms of captivity for prisoners during wartime. In 1799, the parties restructured the agreement and renamed it the Treaty of Berlin; it was reaffirmed in 1828. This was the only mutually effective agreement between the two powers regarding POW treatment during World War One.\(^55\)

Confined by Countrymen

The Civil War provided the United States Army with its first experience in the custody and administration of a large number of prisoners of war.\(^56\) Both sides expected a speedy end to the conflict, neither believed POW programs were required.\(^57\) The labor potential of the captives was still not realized in this conflict, with most prisoners sitting the war out in idle confinement and in varying degrees of comfort or hardship. This occurred despite Union suggestions of the adoption of a labor program.\(^58\) The Union was reluctant to trust labor programs to POWs, although the Quartermaster General, General Meigs, insisted that requiring the prisoners to work


\(^{55}\) Lewis and Mewha, *History of Prisoner of War Utilization*, 21. The full text of this treaty is available in the appendix.

\(^{56}\) Ibid., 27.

\(^{57}\) Springer, America’s Captives, 81.

\(^{58}\) Lewis and Mewha, *History of Prisoner of War Utilization*, 27.
would offset some of the burden of their maintenance. Meigs was particularly interested in the utilization of captives on public works projects. By 1864, the Union authorized POWs to work on public works projects within prisons, such as the sewage system at Elmira Prison. The prisoners were paid between 5 and 10 cents, depending on whether or not they provided skilled or unskilled labor. Still, this was not a widespread program, nor one that was viewed favorably.

In the Confederacy, a lack of manpower led to the employment of prisoners for labor. They first contemplated POW employment in 1861. For example, the prisoners at Andersonville prison were used to expand their own stockade because there was not Confederate labor to perform the task. Also, some captives chose to take an oath of allegiance to the Confederacy in exchange for jobs in factories and other industries. Furthermore, by 1864, private citizens could apply for laborers from the ranks of those interned at Andersonville.59

Similar to the American Revolution, the principle utilization of prisoners of war was in their exchange. Also similar to the American Revolution, the United States government was wary of negotiating an exchange cartel with the Confederacy because that would signal a de facto recognition of the Confederate government. Thus, the Union was inclined to treat Confederates as rebelling countrymen, and therefore, as traitors.60 The situation in the first months of the war persuaded the Union to change its stance. Due to Confederate victories, a large amount of United States soldiers found themselves in rebel prisons. The Union feared retaliation on their imprisoned troops if they did not recognize Confederate captives as POWs,

59 Ibid., 38–40.

60 Ibid., 27.
and treat them as such.⁶¹ As a result, a plan for exchange was developed. The plan for the exchange cartel was called the Dix-Hill Cartel after the names of the representatives that negotiated it. The agreement was carefully worded so that the Union did not officially recognize the Confederacy as a sovereign nation. This agreement, signed July 22, 1862, laid out the terms of exchange and developed a system for ensuring exchanges were equal. For example, a commanding general was rated as the equivalent of sixty privates.⁶² From July 1862 to May 1863, approximately 20,000 Confederates and 12,000 Union soldiers were exchanged.⁶³ However, this system did not last long. In 1863, exchanges ceased.⁶⁴ This was a result of Confederate behavior regarding black soldiers in the Union army.⁶⁵ The Confederates vowed to enslave any black soldier that they captured, as well as to execute the white commander. This led to many Union retaliation threats, including the threat to sentence one soldier to hard labor for every black soldier enslaved.⁶⁶ In 1863, Grant also let slip that there was a grain of truth in the accusation that exchanges were halted in order to deprive the south of manpower.⁶⁷

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⁶¹ Springer, America’s Captives, 82-83.
⁶² Lewis and Mewha, History of Prisoner of War Utilization, 29.
⁶³ Springer, America’s Captives, 87.
⁶⁴ Ibid., 81.
⁶⁵ Doyle, Enemy in Our Hands, 96.
⁶⁶ Springer, America’s Captives, 87.
The system of prisoner exchange was not the first program adopted to handle the influx of prisoners. Initially, both the Union and Confederacy continued the tradition of paroling prisoners. In the first years of the war, the Confederates, especially, were content to parole all prisoners. This was due, in large part, to the Union’s hesitance to establish an exchange cartel. But, after 1862 and large U.S. victories, the Union could not delay any more; they had taken large quantities of prisoners and did not want to maintain them.

The most infamous of the Civil War prisons was Camp Sumter in Andersonville, Georgia. In 1863, the Provost Marshal was charged with finding a site for a new camp in Georgia. The Confederacy preferred a location near Americus or Fort Valley, along the Southwestern Railroad. Overcrowding in prisons in Richmond made it necessary to establish another prison. It was also important to establish a new prison complex in an area not susceptible to Yankee raids. Some 41,000 men arrived at the prison stockade from February 1864 to April 1865. Only 26,000 prisoners left Andersonville alive. Prisoners began to arrive in Andersonville in February 1864, before the stockade was even complete. The troops that arrived to construct the enclosure and to guard the incoming captives were the remaining members of a destroyed regiment, and most were not even armed when they arrived in February.

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68 Doyle, *Enemy in Our Hands*, 89.
71 Ibid., 22.
72 Ibid., ix.
1864. By April 1, there were 7,000 prisoners at Andersonville, and by May 8, the camp had a population exceeding 12,000 POWs. Finally, on June 1, 1864, the prison had 18,454 prisoners, with over 1,000 were hospitalized.\textsuperscript{74} In August, the population peaked at 33,000 POWs.\textsuperscript{75} In the same month, reports showed that over 100 people died a day.\textsuperscript{76} Diarrhea and dysentery were common ailments at the prisons, combined with extreme hunger.\textsuperscript{77} It is important to note that there were Northern prisons with similar conditions, such as Elmira prison in New York.\textsuperscript{78} The conditions of these prisons showed Americans what happened when policies for Prisoners of War were considered afterthoughts. In future conflicts, POW programs were thought of prior to the time the first captive was taken. Additionally, American diplomats sought to establish rights of POWs and responsibilities of capturing powers.\textsuperscript{79}

Conclusion:

An understanding of previous prisoner of war programs is necessary to understand the important changes undertaken in the twentieth century. I choose to focus on the Revolutionary War and the Civil War for many reasons, such as that these conflicts illustrate the prevailing trends in prisoner of war maintenance programs in U.S. history. Also, the Revolutionary War

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., 125.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., 144.
\textsuperscript{76} Springer, \textit{America’s Captives}, 96.
\textsuperscript{77} Pickenpaugh, \textit{Captives in Blue}, 140; 145.
\textsuperscript{78} Springer, \textit{America’s Captives}, 96.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., 102.
provides a historical example of the treatment of German POWs, while Georgia’s past experience with prisoner of war programs is best seen during the Civil War.

As will be seen, the plans instituted for prisoner of war maintenance during WWI and WWII represented a sharp departure from the historical administration of war captives in American history. Georgia factored into these new policies for prisoners of war, and the Georgia economy and infrastructure benefitted from the institution of prisoner of war labor programs.
Part One: World War I Prisoner of War and Interned Enemy Alien Administration
CHAPTER 2

GERMAN SAILORS WITH AMERICAN JAILORS

Introduction

In 1914, war erupted in Europe between the Central Powers and the Triple Entente nations. America remained neutral. Many German naval and merchant marine vessels sought refuge in America’s neutral ports after British naval supremacy in the Atlantic made the risk of capture too high to continue operations. In American ports, sailors lived on their boats, and often sought employment on land or on other ships. With the entry of America into the war in April 1917, the treatment of these sailors changed. The presence of these sailors called for a change to past prisoner of war programs.

From Port to Prison

On April 6, 1917, the United States of America declared war on Imperial Germany. During World War I, only 1,346 enemy prisoners of war, including officers and crews of German auxiliary cruisers that were in United States ports at the opening of hostilities, were imprisoned in the continental United States. By war’s end, 1,800 German Merchant Marines


81 “The Full Text of the President’s Declaration of War,” *The Banner* (Athens, Georgia), April 7, 1917.

and 500 Merchant crewmen transported from Panama and the Philippines joined those numbers. The War Department invited the Committee on Internment, a subset of the National Committee on Prisons and Prison Labor, to plan for the internment of enemy aliens and prisoners of war. Upon outbreak of war, they enacted plans to establish war prison barracks: Forts Oglethorpe and McPherson in Georgia and Fort Douglas in Utah. Later, a former resort in Hot Springs, North Carolina, near Asheville, opened to house prisoners captured in Panama and the Philippines under the supervision of the Labor Department. The State Department, after urging by General John Pershing, the commander of American forces, agreed to keep all prisoners of war in Europe for use as a labor force. Pershing requested transfer of all officers, but the war was over before the transfer was completed.

War Department plans for administration of prisoners were put into place so quickly that nearly 800 German sailors were interned in Georgia only eight days after the start of the war. Fort Oglethorpe received 383 sailors and Fort McPherson received 411. They were put to work, including as laborers on public works projects and as cobblers, tailors, etc. In November 1917,

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87 Ibid., 54.
the United States government approved policies allowing POWs to work on highways and to be leased to private parties and corporations, especially to prevent crops from rotting in the fields.\textsuperscript{89}

In January 1918, Pershing requested that enlisted prisoners of war captured on the continent remain there. This was an attempt to help with the massive labor shortages in France as a result of the war. Also, German POWs from the battlefield were kept in Europe because the U.S. government fear reprisals against any Americans in German custody.\textsuperscript{90} Pershing requested that all officers be sent to the United States, since they could not be used in labor programs in France. However, the war ended before these plans could come to fruition.\textsuperscript{91}

In 1899, over twenty-four nations had gathered, including the United States, and signed the “Hague Convention of 1899 Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land.” This established the duties of both the captor and the prisoner. In 1907, the nations gathered to reaffirm this document and to update it. However, Article 2 of the treaty made the treaty not valid between the United States and Germany. Therefore, the Treaty of Berlin signed in 1828 between the United States and Prussia was the agreement in place during World War I regarding POWs.\textsuperscript{92}

After March 1918, the U.S. government housed prisoners of war at Fort McPherson. There, prisoners labored in a variety of different areas. In 1918, the mayor of Kissimmee,

\textsuperscript{89} Lewis and Mewha, \textit{History of Prisoner of War Utilization}, 52-54.

\textsuperscript{90} Springer, \textit{America’s Captives}, 132.

\textsuperscript{91} Doyle, \textit{Enemy in Our Hands}, 169.

\textsuperscript{92} Lewis and Mewha, \textit{History of Prisoner of War Utilization}, 47-48. The full text of this treaty is available in the appendix.
Florida, requested information on the process to obtain prisoners from Fort McPherson to work on the highways in his city. The mayor noted that these prisoners were utilized for work on Georgia highways and in construction projects. In March 1918, the commandant of the camp, Colonel Pickering, requested an estimate for labor to extend roads from the fort to the prison camp. In May 1918, Fulton County requested prisoners of war to work on Fulton County roads around Atlanta. The county offered to pay each prisoner $1.00 a day. However, this was not the prevailing rate of pay for the prisoners. The rate was .25 cents an hour, or .35 cents for skilled labor. Also in May, Captain Goodale requested 500 prisoners for Fort Gordon to work in its gardens. In June, Fulton County, Georgia, requested prisoners for a public works project in Atlanta. The sewers and streets of the city were in disrepair—prisoner labor was utilized for this task. Later that same year, a local business, Fuller Lumber Company, requested prisoner labor to assist with business. Also, in October 1918, a local Atlanta farmer requested twenty

93 Mayor of Kissimmee City, Florida to the Secretary of War, on Prisoner of War Labor, 4 September 1918., B1, E60, RG 407, NARA.

94 Comdt. Col. Pickering to Adjunct General Office, on Estimate to Extend Roads, 13 March 1918, B1, E60, RG 407, NARA.

95 Adjunct General Office to Comdt. Col. Pickering, on Labor of Prisoners local, 21 May 1918, B1, E60, RG 407, NARA.

96 Adjunct General Office to Comdt. Col. Pickering, on Pay for Work Performed by Prisoners, 9 July 1918, B1, E60, RG407, NARA.

97 Captain Goodale to Adjunct General’s Office, on 500 Prisoners for Fort Gordon, 5 May 1918, B3, E60, RG407, NARA.

98 Comdt. Col. Pickering to Adjunct General Office, on Labor of Prisoners, done locally, 1 June 1918, B1, E60, RG 407, NARA.

99 Fuller Lumber Company to Adjunct General Office, Labor of Prisoners at W.C. #1., 10 December 1918, B3, E60, RG 407, NARA.
prisoners to pick cotton on his farm. Government convoys transported the prisoners the twelve miles to the farm. The farmer offered to feed the prisoners dinner while they were in his employ.100 Prisoners housed at Fort McPherson, Georgia, were needed for labor in a variety of industries, and the conditions of the prevailing treaty did not prevent this.

Non-commissioned officers could not be compelled to work, except for their personal comfort. Fort McPherson furnished a list to the Adjunct General’s Office listing tasks completed at the camp by petty officers. These tasks included fetching ashes to plane the floor of a newly constructed officer’s building, removing furnishings for Colonel Van Orsdale, cleaning and fetching for the W.P. guard, digging a garden for Major Benteen, Q.M.C., and clearing the grounds of woods and chopping wood for the purpose of building a Y.M.C.A. building. While all privates received pay for their work, petty officers were not immediately given payment.101

Prisoners of war were valuable for more than one reason. First, their imprisonment removed them from the conflict, theoretically weakening the opposing force. Additionally, policies required prisoners to perform labor on the American home front. While America did not house many prisoners of war during World War I, the work performed by the captives in the U.S. was valuable.102 This is especially true of the prisoners that aided farmers with harvests. Labor shortages were not exceedingly evident during World War I, but the program established for prisoner labor during that period laid the groundwork for the extremely necessary and successful agricultural programs for prisoners of World War II.

100 Comdt. Col. Pickering to Adjunct General Office, on Farmer Desires Twenty Prisoners to Pick Cotton., 8 October 1918., B1, E60, RG 407, NARA.

101 Work executed by the non-commissioned officers of this camp, B5, E60, RG407, NARA.

102 George G. Lewis and John Mewha, History of Prisoner of War Utilization, 52.
Conclusion

With the onset of World War I and the presence of prisoners of war already on American soil, American authorities required changes to prisoner of war plans. In a sharp departure from previous policies, the War Department embraced labor programs. These labor programs provided the prototype for the labor programs of WWII prisoner camps.

German prisoners of war were present in America during World War I and provided essential labor, especially in Georgia. However, these prisoners were not the focus of the plans for the administration of war captives. Thanks to General Pershing’s insistence that prisoners captured on the battlefield in Europe remain there, enemy aliens became the focus of anti-German sentiment in the United States.
CHAPTER 3
APPREHENDED ENEMY ALIENS

Introduction

America remained neutral in World War I until April 1917. By that point, unsavory German practices, such as unrestricted submarine warfare, reports of atrocities, and the 1915 sinking of the Lusitania, created strong anti-German sentiment in the United States. These activities encouraged the American government to increase surveillance of German nationals and German-Americans. With the declaration of war in 1917, the surveillance was again increased and the government instituted policies against these enemy aliens.\(^{103}\)

According to a 1910 census, Germans were the largest group of immigrants living in the U.S., and German was the second most-spoken language in the country. Germans carved a place for themselves in American society, but they kept their cultural traditions and primarily lived in German communities throughout the country. Germans and German-Americans tended to educate their children in German and they read German language newspapers, of which there were more than 500 available. However, prior to the outbreak of war in Europe in 1914, most Americans did not find this suspicious, and Americans regarded Germans as patriotic and hardworking people.\(^{104}\)

These views of Germans changed as the war in Europe raged, leading to a destruction of German culture in the United States, especially after 1917. Germans were forced to choose sides


\(^{104}\) Ibid., 214-216.
after the sinking of the *Lusitania*, a situation that only got worse after American entry into the war.\(^{105}\) Groups like the American Protective League (APL) believed vigilante justice was needed against Germans in the U.S., and the Attorney General sanctioned them to spy on their neighbors.\(^{106}\) Negative feelings toward Germans led to the imprisonment of thousands of enemy aliens from 1917-1920.

From Friend to Foe

On the same day that the U.S. declared war on Germany, President Wilson gave a speech outlining plans for German and Austro-Hungarian nationals living in the U.S.\(^{107}\) Wilson’s Proclamation 1364, issued on April 16, 1917, made Germans and Austro-Hungarian citizen vulnerable to arrest.\(^{108}\)

> All natives, citizens, denizens, or subjects of a hostile nation or government, being males of the age of fourteen years and upwards, who shall be within the United States, and not actually naturalized, shall be liable to be apprehended, restrained, secured, and removed as alien enemies.\(^{109}\)

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\(^{105}\) Ibid., 216-218.

\(^{106}\) Davis, “Orgelsdorf,” 252.

\(^{107}\) “The Full Text of the President’s Declaration of War,” *The Banner* (Athens, Georgia), April 7, 1917.


Article 12 provided the justification for arrest. Essentially, any and all persons of German or Austro-Hungarian nationality that behaved in any suspicious way or who led others to believe that their sympathies lay with the enemy were subject to arrest and possible internment.\textsuperscript{110} An enemy alien census conducted in 1917 estimated 4,662,000 enemy aliens lived throughout the U.S., 964,000 of which were males over 21. Furthermore, they estimated 2,349,000 Germans and 1,376,000 Austro-Hungarians.\textsuperscript{111} Despite the classification of Austro-Hungarians as enemy aliens, Wilson believed that this population had already proved their loyalty to America through their strong work and ordered limited restrictions for them. Austro-Hungarians could not enter or leave the country without express permission from the government, the only limitation they experienced.\textsuperscript{112} Therefore, the only enemy aliens to face extreme restrictions were Germans, illustrating the ideological war Americans declared against Germans within their borders.

On November 14, 1917, \textit{The Athens Daily Herald} reported that President Wilson was expected to make an announcement about restrictions for enemy aliens.\textsuperscript{113} The Proclamation prohibited German-born males from owning guns, radios, or explosives or from living within a half mile of munitions factories, aircraft stations, forts, arsenals, or naval installations.\textsuperscript{114} \textit{The Augusta Chronicle} printed an article in July 1917 stating that Germans must obtain a permit in

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{110} Doyle, \textit{Enemy in Our Hands}, 171.
\textsuperscript{111} “Enemy Alien Census,” \textit{The Augusta Chronicle} (Augusta, Georgia), June 12, 1917.
\textsuperscript{112} “Austro-Hungarians Not Subject to Restrictions Like Germans,” \textit{The Augusta Chronicle} (Augusta, Georgia), December 13, 1917.
\textsuperscript{113} “Will List Aliens as Enemies To End Espionage,” \textit{The Athens Daily Herald} (Athens, Georgia), November 14, 1917.
\textsuperscript{114} Doyle, \textit{Enemy in Our Hands}, 171.
\end{flushleft}
order to live or work within a half-mile of government installations. Those who lived in these areas prior to the Presidential order were forced to relocate. The government offered to help those enemy aliens affected by this sanction to find new homes and new jobs. Those who refused to abide by the new regulations that fixed zones for enemy aliens were promptly arrested. After November 16, 1917, male enemy aliens had to register at U.S. Post Offices and it was illegal for them not to have their registration cards on them at all times. These restrictions were extended to female enemy aliens in January 1918.

Upon arrest, enemy aliens that lived east of the Mississippi went to Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia. Fort Oglethorpe was divided into three separate camps: Camp A, B, and C. Camp A housed internees who could afford to pay for their own care. Cultural icons such as Karl Muck, the German-born conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, lived in this section of the camp. Also, transferred Merchant Marines officers from Hot Springs, North Carolina, lived in this portion of the camp. This part of the camp had two barracks with individual rooms and a separate washhouse. These internees were able to hire their own cooks and domestic help from among other imprisoned enemy aliens. The only residents of Camp A required to work were the hired

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domestic servants. Camp B was not as luxurious. Over 600 men lived in standard barracks with no partitions. There were thirteen 100-man barracks erected in the camp, but half were reserved for incoming prisoners from Hot Springs, North Carolina. By June 1918, the men from Hot Springs and newly arrested enemy aliens caused the camp population to soar. These conditions created an uncomfortable situation. Men living in Camp B were offered the opportunity to work outside of the camp to earn money. They could use the money to purchase extra food at the camp canteen. Finally, Camp C was for punishment. Those prisoners assigned to this camp were placed on half-rations and could not volunteer for employment.\textsuperscript{120} The prevailing treaty from 1829 did not sufficiently dictate enemy alien or prisoner of war care. The U.S. government, along with most belligerent countries, decided to adhere to the Hague Convention.\textsuperscript{121} According to the Hague Convention of 1907, enemy aliens could not be forced to work except of their own comfort and maintenance.\textsuperscript{122}

In March 1918, policy change dictated all sailors relocate to Fort McPherson, with the exception of the camp in Hot Springs, North Carolina. This left Fort Oglethorpe for the internment of enemy alien prisoners, most of whom were intellectual elites.\textsuperscript{123} These icons of German culture within the United States were targeted for imprisonment. American officials worried that these people were too influential to remain free, leading to their arrest and

\textsuperscript{120} Davis, “Orgelsdorf,” 254.

\textsuperscript{121} Springer, \textit{America’s Captives}, 132.; \textit{Annual Reports}, 1917, 182.

\textsuperscript{122} William B. Glidden, “Internment Camps in America,” \textit{Military Affairs} 37, no. 4: 138.

\textsuperscript{123} Doyle, \textit{Enemy in Our Hands}, 169.
internment at the camps.\textsuperscript{124} For example, Karl Muck was interned after he was accused of refusing to play the Star Spangled Banner.\textsuperscript{125} It appears that this accusation was false, but that did not warrant Muck’s release from custody. He remained interned at Fort Oglethorpe until 1920.\textsuperscript{126}

Americans also launched an attack on German culture after 1917. German language, in 1910 the second most spoken language in the country, was eliminated from curriculum in most school districts in America, leading to the termination of many German teachers. Also, professors at universities throughout the country were subject to termination. One example of this was the firing of Eduard Prokosch, the head of the German department at the University of Texas after he was targeted as a German propagandist. Some Americans considered it to be impossible to be both American and German and to prove loyalty to America, Germans had to repudiate German cultural traditions and customs. Many Germans agreed to this and sought to prove their loyalty by changing their names or participating in public displays of patriotism.\textsuperscript{127} Some Americans also chose to torture and humiliate Germans living in the United States, with incidences of tar and featherings and the firebombing of German churches occurring all over the country.\textsuperscript{128} This paranoia extended to religious organizations as well, notably the Episcopal

\textsuperscript{124} Davis, “Orgelsdorf,” 259.

\textsuperscript{125} Proctor, “Patriotic Enemies,” 218.

\textsuperscript{126} Davis, “Orgelsdorf,” 259-261.

\textsuperscript{127} Proctor, “Patriotic Enemies,” 220-222.

\textsuperscript{128} Ibid., 228.
Church adopted a decree promoting the death penalty for propaganda.\textsuperscript{129} This destruction of German culture is also seen in the way that Americans treated German foods in the war year. For example, hamburgers became known as “liberty steaks,” sauerkraut was “liberty cabbage,” and frankfurters became “hot dogs.”\textsuperscript{130}

American newspapers throughout the country were littered with advertisements, jokes, and articles about enemy aliens from 1917-1918. These illustrate the American attitude towards enemy aliens, especially those of German nationality. Newspapers printed and distributed in Augusta, Georgia, Athens, Georgia, and Dalton, Georgia, printed several of these articles and advertisements throughout the conflict. For example, \textit{The Athens Herald} printed an article in November 1917 discussing the lack of monitoring of enemy aliens and the danger they posed. This article called for the internment of all enemy aliens, specifically German citizens, in America.\textsuperscript{131} Another example is an article in \textit{The Augusta Chronicle} from January 1918 detailing an explosion in Norfolk, Virginia. An enemy alien was arrested in connection with the blast.\textsuperscript{132} Other articles detailed possible espionage activity and sabotage attempts by German nationals within the U.S.\textsuperscript{133} A sensationalist article from \textit{The Augusta Chronicle} reported a Georgia

\textsuperscript{129} Davis, “Orgelsdorf,” 258.

\textsuperscript{130} Doyle, The Enemy in Our Hands, 171.


\textsuperscript{132} “Tries to Blow Up An Aviation Camp,” \textit{The Augusta Chronicle} (Augusta, Georgia) January 15, 1918.

\textsuperscript{133} “Spy or a Traitor is Getting in His Work,” \textit{The Augusta Chronicle} (Augusta, Georgia) June 12, 1917; “Federal Agents Arrest Another Enemy Alien,” \textit{The Augusta Chronicle} (Augusta, Georgia) December 22, 1917; “German Spy Plot in U.S. Unearthed,” \textit{The Augusta Chronicle}
woman attempting to divorce her husband, who was interned at Fort Oglethorpe on charges of possible espionage.\textsuperscript{134} Another article in The Augusta Chronicle explained that many Germans in the U.S. were “behaving nicely” since the outbreak of war, quoting a Department of Justice official as saying that most Germans were well-behaved, but there were some suspicions of espionage in the government.\textsuperscript{135} These articles demonstrate the fear and hostility directed towards enemy aliens in the U.S. after the outbreak of war in 1917. The antagonism is also evident in advertisements placed in these papers. In North Georgia newspapers, ads for movies declaring that “enemy aliens stay away,” were common, along with jokes that compared enemy aliens to the serpent in the Garden of Eden.\textsuperscript{136}

Conclusion

In total, the U.S. government interned 2,300 enemy aliens during World War I.\textsuperscript{137} The war for these internees did not end with the armistice in November 1918—they had to wait on the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, the accompanying repatriation agreement, and the war’s...

\textsuperscript{134} “Georgia Girl Is Seeking Divorce from German Spy,” The Augusta Chronicle (Augusta, Georgia) March 26, 1919.

\textsuperscript{135} “Germans in U.S. Behaving Nicely,” The August Chronicle (Augusta, Georgia) April 9, 1917.

\textsuperscript{136} Gainesville News (Gainesville, Georgia) January 23, 1918; Alantian (Atlanta, Georgia) November 1918.

\textsuperscript{137} Doyle, Enemy in Our Hands, 169.
official end, in 1919.\textsuperscript{138} Some of these enemy aliens were repatriated to Germany at the end of the war.\textsuperscript{139} For those left in America, restrictions were finally lifted in April 1919.\textsuperscript{140}

Anti-German sentiment is usually explained as hysteria or paranoia, since most of the negative feeling was rooted in a fear of espionage and sabotage. However, historian Gerald Davis argues that the concept of total war is certainly to blame for some of the instances of violence and negativity towards Germans in the U.S. Total war draws all of society into the cause and blurs the lines between civilian and combatant. The concept of total war also calls for all members of society to be equally committed to annihilating the enemy. Ideology like this transformed the conflict into one of clashing cultures.\textsuperscript{141} This also explains the destruction of German culture in America. Violence and paranoia regarding Germans in the U.S. forced assimilation after 1917, and suggested that a patriotic American could not be sympathetic to Germans.\textsuperscript{142}

World War I prisoner programs also highlighted the weaknesses of the Hague Convention—it did not sufficiently outline treatment of prisoners of war and enemy aliens. Also problematic was the article that declared the treaty null and void if one belligerent did not sign the document. This was the case in WWI; since Germany did not sign the treaty, no powers were


\textsuperscript{139} Doyle, \textit{Enemy in Our Hands}, 172; “Enemy Aliens are to be Deported,” \textit{The Augusta Chronicle} (Augusta, Georgia) December 31, 1918.

\textsuperscript{140} “Lift Restrictions on Enemy Aliens,” \textit{The Augusta Chronicle} (Augusta, Georgia) April 12, 1919.

\textsuperscript{141} Davis, “Orgelsdorf,” 257-258.

\textsuperscript{142} Proctor, “Patriotic Enemies,” 233.
obligated to adhere to its dictates about prisoner of war treatment. Though most belligerent
nations observed the policies of the treaty, experiences in the First World War emphasized the
need for a stronger agreement.\textsuperscript{143}

\textsuperscript{143} Springer, \textit{America’s Captives}, 140-141.
CHAPTER 4
THE WAR PRISONER’S DILEMMA—INDEFINITE INTERNMENT

Introduction

The administration of prisoners of war has been an important facet of the American war experience since the Revolutionary War. However, the planning for World War I prisoners marked a change in United States prisoner of war policy. Those changes affected the prisoners and their guards in the First World War. Furthermore, the realities of world war changed prisoner of war administration world-wide, especially regarding the imprisonment of enemy aliens, or a person residing in a country with which their native country is at war with. The late entry of America into the war allowed the country to learn from the mistakes of the European powers with regards to prisoner administration and to take advantage of the lessons that the British, French, and Germans learned about long-term prisoner maintenance.

Changing realities of captivity in the modern age also allowed for a deeper and better understanding of the experiences of captivity. Chief among these changing perceptions was Swiss surgeon Dr. A.L. Vischer’s theory of the mental state of confined war prisoners. His observations and conversations with prisoners provided insight into the psyche of the detained soldiers and civilians. These insights made it possible for belligerent governments to institute

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144 Glidden, “Internment Camps in America,” 138.
146 Glidden, “Internment Camps in America,” 138.
different, and healthier, policies for prisoner administration and maintenance.\textsuperscript{147} For example, in May 1917, representatives from Great Britain and Germany met to discuss POW and enemy alien internee treatment, and one of their paramount concerns was the treatment of prisoners suffering from “barbed wire disease.”\textsuperscript{148} America, prior to entering the war, utilized the lessons learned from both the European experience and Vischer’s observations to plan for the organization of enemy alien internees and prisoners of war.\textsuperscript{149}

A Disease of Desperation

Published in 1919, Dr. A.L. Vischer’s volume on prisoners of war, \textit{Barbed Wire Disease: A Psychological Study of the Prisoner of War}, garnered attention from both the medical community and authorities.\textsuperscript{150} Vischer, a Swiss surgeon employed in Europe’s prison camps, observed and spoke with the prisoners he treated. From this, he came to some startling conclusions. While usually a neglected topic, and one that had been declared inconsequential by authorities, Vischer argued that the mental state of military captives was slowly deteriorating. He stated that the prisoners, even those in captivity for as little as six months, showed signs of mental strain created by their confinement. Symptoms of this malady included irritability, suspicion or paranoia, the development of a persecuted attitude, trouble concentrating and/or remembering, restlessness, and depression. While these symptoms do not include psychosis, a condition thought to only affect

\textsuperscript{147} Ibid., 138.


\textsuperscript{149} Glidden, “Internment Camps in America,” 138.

\textsuperscript{150} “Barbed Wire Disease,” \textit{The British Medical Journal} 2, no. 3056: 107.
degenerate members of the population, they were serious and a number of the conditions of confinement caused them. Chief among those conditions that caused the disease was the uncertainty of the length of time of captivity.\textsuperscript{151} Another primary reason for these feelings of depression and unease was the barbed wire itself. The containment structure had such an extreme impact on the soldiers held in the compound that Vischer named the illness after it.\textsuperscript{152} Untreated, depression can lead to suicide, and suicide was a concern for those that commented on the mental conditions of the soldiers held in these camps during the First World War.\textsuperscript{153}

“Barbed Wire Disease” is often discussed in regards to prisoners of war and enemy alien internees in Great Britain and Germany. The massive body of scholarship available, with contributions by academics such as Matthew Stibbe, John Yarnall, and Panikos Panayi, is evidence of this.\textsuperscript{154} Even A.L. Vischer, the founder of the theory of a mental disorder in the camps, based all his conclusions on circumstances found in the camps in Britain—most notably Knockaloe, a camp located on the Isle of Man.\textsuperscript{155} However, the same conditions applied to those imprisoned in

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\textsuperscript{151} Ibid.
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\textsuperscript{155} Panikos Panayi, “‘Barbed Wire Disease’ or a ‘Prison Camp Society,’” 102.
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the U.S. after April 1917. The German prisoners of war and enemy alien internees held in America suffered the same symptoms and effects of “Barbed Wire Disease” as did those imprisoned in Britain and Germany.

WWI—Southern Hospitality?

America’s entry into the war in April 1917 and President Woodrow Wilson’s Proclamation 1364 created the conditions that German and Austro-Hungarian nationals experienced for the entirety of the war. For those interned, the reality of their experience continued to decline. Though the U.S. government could imprison citizens of a belligerent nation, they could not do anything else with them. The treaty in place with Germany at the time of World War I was a treaty from 1785 between the United States of America and the King of Prussia, the Treaty of Amity and Commerce, though the U.S. government agreed to adhere to the guidelines of the Hague Convention. Wilson’s Proclamation 1364, just cause for arrest was determined for all enemy aliens in America.

Also, America’s Enemy Alien Act of 1798 allowed for the surveillance and control of resident enemy aliens.\textsuperscript{156} In order for this act to take effect, the U.S. had to be in a declared war with a foreign government, or have experienced an invasion or predatory incursion attempt by a foreign nation, and the President of the U.S. must acknowledge that action. If such circumstances occurred, then any male citizens of the hostile nation or government, aged fourteen or older,

\textsuperscript{156} Glidden, “Internment Camps in America,” 138.
were subject to deportation or imprisonment. This only applied to immigrants that had not been naturalized. These people were regarded as alien enemies.157

After March 1918, Fort Oglethorpe became a camp almost exclusively for the internment of alien enemies.158 This resulted in several changes for the administration of the camp. According to the Hague Convention, enemy aliens could not be forced to work.159 This was later reaffirmed by the War Department, who ruled that only prisoners of war could be compelled to work at any task other than for their own upkeep.160 As was the case in Britain, interned enemy aliens were left with time to kill.161

As a result of all the time that enemy aliens were forced to fill, the symptoms of “Barbed Wire Disease” set in. This was especially true of civilians interned for long periods of time. For example, Dr. Albrecht Weber was interned early on in the conflict, first at Hot Springs, North Carolina, and then transferred to Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia. Dr. Albrecht, by all accounts, was a joyful man prior to the war. However, his time in the camps changed that. Other internees that knew him described a change in his demeanor that developed over the period of his detention. On April 28, 1919, Weber was found in a pool of his own blood in the bathroom of his barracks—his throat had been cut with a razor. As a result of his death, the camp authorities convened a panel to investigate the death—was it suicide or foul play? The board was composed


158 Doyle, The Enemy in Our Hands, 169.

159 Glidden, “Internment Camps in America,” 138.

160 Lewis and Mewha, History of Prisoner of War Utilization, 54; Colonel Penrose to John Lord O’Brien, 26 October 1918, B26, E59, RG 407, NARA.

161 Panikos Panayi, “‘Barbed Wire Disease’ or a ‘Prison Camp Society,’” 102-103.
of a lieutenant colonel, a captain, and a second lieutenant stationed at Fort Oglethorpe. These officers brought in several witnesses to the events prior to and immediately following Weber’s death, including the officer that responded to the prisoners’ call for help. All those that gave testimony described a man that was happy prior to the war, but who was beaten down by his time in the American internment camps. Weber became increasingly agitated and depressed. Weber was even quoted as making comments about suicide being the best option for him. Furthermore, the doctor had no apparent enemies in the camps. The panel ruled that Albrecht Weber died as a “result of injuries, self-inflicted with a razor with suicidal intent, that he was mentally responsible at the time of his death. The board has not reached any conclusion as to the reason for his act.” 162

In a similar case, Robert Meissner jumped from his hospital window on April 14, 1919. Meissner had been hospitalized since his transfer to Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, in 1918. While the prisoner had some significant health issues, he also suffered from depression and other mental problems as a result of his internment. According to A.L. Vischer’s theory of “barbed wire disease,” a lack of physical activity was a cause of the malady. Meissner waited until the ward was empty of personnel, used a pen knife to cut a hole in the window screen, and then jumped from the sill. The window was only around fourteen feet high, and so the internee did not die upon impact. In fact, according to the responding doctor, the patient complained of pain, but was responsive and was moved back into the ward. However, approximately fifteen minutes later, the patient died from his injuries. A panel was convened to investigate the death of the enemy alien prisoner, composed of a lieutenant colonel, first lieutenant, and second lieutenant. The board

162 Proceedings of a board of Officers Convened at War Prison Barracks No. 2, Fort Oglethorpe, Ga., 29 April 1919, B18, E59, RG 407, NARA.
invited several medical officers and witnesses to testify in the case. One of the medical officers stated that Meissner often commented on the location of his window and his desire to jump from it, if only it were higher. This officer also commented on the timing of Meissner’s action, making it clear that he believed that the patient chose a time when the ward was clear of personnel and that he was mentally aware of his actions. The panel ruled that Meissner’s medical condition led to his suicide.\textsuperscript{163} While his physical illnesses was certainly a contributing factor to the internee’s mental state, it is likely that his psychological status was equally attributable to his confinement and all the conditions included in Vischer’s concept. The above-described instances are evidence of the presence of “barbed wire disease” in American internment camps—it was not a phenomena particular only to European containment facilities.

According to the treaties in place, American authorities could not require enemy alien internees to labor at any task, except for those necessary for their own upkeep. While work could not be forced upon the prisoners, it could be completed voluntarily. In November 1918, the Adjunct General’s office gave permission for 100 interned enemy aliens to work with the Quartermaster’s Corp at Camp Forrest, Georgia. This work was strictly voluntary, and those who chose to participate were required to sign documentation to that effect. In addition to this opportunity to fill their days, the detainees could also earn money. The Adjunct General’s office ordered that all the men be paid the same rate that prevailed in the work and prisoner of war camps. The rate in November 1918 was $1.25 a day.\textsuperscript{164} This provided those jailed at Fort

\textsuperscript{163} Proceedings of a board of Officers Convened at War Prison Barracks No. 2, Fort Oglethorpe, Ga., 17 April 1919, B18, E59, RG 407, NARA.

\textsuperscript{164} International Committee, Young Men’s Christian Association to Colonel A. Pickering, Fort McPherson, Ga. On the Educational Work Conducted at Compound, 17 May 1919, B2, RG 407, NARA.
Oglethorpe with an opportunity to lessen the mental strain that often accompanied long-term confinement.

In addition to the availability of work to alleviate the symptoms of “barbed wire disease,” the camps also allowed for educational pursuits and artistic outlets. For those enemy aliens and prisoners of war confined at Fort McPherson, Georgia, the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) offered classes to help the prisoners learn English, mathematics, and other subjects. In March and April 1919, the YMCA offered thirty-four classes with 278 sessions and a total attendance of 4,130— an increase of over 2,000 prisoners from December, January, and February 1919. The men confined to Fort McPherson could also write poetry, draw, and engage in other forms of expression. At Fort Oglethorpe, the internees created three orchestras, a theatrical group, a comedy production company, sports clubs, and a literary group. Fort McPherson also offered movie showings twice a week, according to an article in Munsey’s Magazine in 1918. Stars such as Charlie Chaplin and Roscoe Arbuckle were favorites in the camp. Camp Oglethorpe also had a German language camp magazine, Orgelsdorfer Eulenspiegel. This magazine printed literary columns, music reviews, and other forms of news.

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165 Proceedings of a board of Officers Convened at War Prison Barracks No. 2, Fort Oglethorpe, Ga., 17 April 1919, B18, E59, RG 407, NARA. Also, for an account of similar programs in Britain, see Brian K. Feltman’s The Stigma of Surrender: German Prisoners, British Captors, and Manhood in The Great War and Beyond.


that the internees found interesting. This publication was, of course, censored by the camp officials, but was allowed to publish until 1919.\(^\text{168}\)

Furthermore, entertainment outlets were provided to those imprisoned in Georgia during the First World War. For example, at Fort McPherson prisoners were encouraged to read to fill the time. The Chief of Military Intelligence even sent out orders to the camp commandants to order, directly from booksellers and publishers, books and periodicals for the prisoners housed in the United States.\(^\text{169}\) Authorities also motivated prisoners to engage in other forms of entertainment. Communications between the Adjunct General’s office and the individual camps illustrate this. At Fort McPherson, Commandant Colonel Pickering regularly received orders and requests for amusement for the prisoners. The Atlanta Music Study Club, in November 1918, invited the staff and prisoners of Fort McPherson to their recital—all those interested were issued a ticket.\(^\text{170}\) Also, the prisoners developed diversions of their own, including directing plays. Some considered the camp theater the amusement center of the camps. At Fort McPherson, the theater boasted a twenty-foot stage and two sets of scenery.\(^\text{171}\) Theaters groups at Fort McPherson included \textit{Theaterbarade}. Plays performed at the facility included, “\textit{Der Rehbod},” “\textit{Ein toller Einfall},” “\textit{Lottdiens Geburtstag},” “\textit{Benfion Gdjöller},” “\textit{Der Biberpelz},” along with

\(^{168}\) Davis, “Orgelsdorf,” 256.


\(^{171}\) Lewis, “How the United States Takes Care of German Prisoners,” 144.
several others. In December 1918, a member of the prisoner theatrical company sent an invitation to Commandant Colonel Pickering for the prisoners’ Christmas play. Additionally, Fort McPherson allotted the prisoners money to get Christmas trees in 1918. Internees at Fort Oglethorpe also produced plays. Theater companies such as Theater der Civilinternierten, Gitterpalatstheater, and Deutsche Bühne performed plays including, “Night at an Inn,” “The Glittering Gate,” and “Stein unter Steinen.” Finally, those interned in Georgia were also allowed religious services. Lutheran Church publication in 1918 details a pastor’s visit to Fort McPherson, where authorities sought a minister for the imprisoned sailors. The pastor described the prisoners as “happy and contented.” Authorities were aware of the threat of “Barbed Wire Disease” and sought to prevent it. In order to do so, the War Department implemented provisions for work and entertainment in efforts to prevent prisoners from suffering the effects of Vischer’s ailment.


173 Ernst Clemens to Comdt. Col. Pickering, Fort McPherson, Ga., on Invitation for Commandant and staff to attend Prisoner Christmas play, 13 December 1918, B1, E60, RG 407, NARA.


175 Pörzgen, Theater ohne frau, 219.

176 Rev. Walter A. Maier to Adj. Gen. Office, Fort McPherson, Ga., on Religious Services to be conducted at W.C. #1, 9 December 1918, B3, E60, RG 407, NARA.


During World War I, America housed more than 2,000 enemy aliens and 1,000 POWs. Enemy alien internees were not freed with the armistice in November 1918. They remained in captivity until the signing of a repatriation agreement in 1919.¹⁷⁹ Many of these enemy aliens were repatriated to Germany at the end of the war.¹⁸⁰ However, there were numerous requests from prisoners and internees to stay in America and become naturalized citizens of the United States—few of those requests were granted.¹⁸¹ For those that stayed, restrictions finally ended in April 1919.¹⁸²

The American World War I prisoner of war program was instructive. The War Department learned many lessons from the experiences of the European powers. However, more importantly, American authorities were able to fine-tune their programs for the World War II plan for prisoner of war administration.¹⁸³

Conclusion

The beginning of World War I for the Americans came in April 1917. This also marked the beginning of prisoner of war maintenance programs. These programs benefitted from the experiences of the European powers from 1914 to 1917 and the theories put forth by medical professionals such as A.L. Vischer. With this knowledge, the American War Department


¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 172; “Enemy Aliens are to be Deported,” *The Augusta Chronicle* (Augusta, Georgia) December 31, 1918.

¹⁸¹ Applications for Naturalization, B2, E60, RG 407, NARA.


¹⁸³ See Richard B. Speed’s *Prisoners, Diplomats, and the Great War: A Study in the Diplomacy of Captivity*, 155-166.
instituted leisure programs to aid in alleviating the mental strain caused by long-term captivity. Furthermore, the importance of these programs lies in the lessons learned for future war prisoner programs in the United States, notably the programs instituted in 1942, when the U.S. once again found itself at war with Germany.
Part Two: World War II Prisoner of War Administration
CHAPTER 5
FASCISTS FROM THE FRONT LINES

Introduction

In 1942, with the start of hostilities between the U.S. and Germany, American authorities began to discuss their plans for prisoner of war maintenance. What followed was America’s first large scale prisoner of war program.\textsuperscript{184} The American authorities administering these camps rigorously adhered to or exceeded the Geneva Convention of 1929 that set out regulations for prisoner of war treatment and handling.\textsuperscript{185} Due to this, life in these camps strived to not be dull or monotonous. Policies allowed prisoners considerable freedoms and they offered various forms of recreation to avoid boredom. This system of camps was strictly managed by the War Department, making life in the camps similar, regardless of location. Along with a variety of leisure activities, enlisted prisoners were expected to work. Most of this work was performed on military installations and by contract in the private sector. To fill the gap in labor created by wartime draft programs, prisoners of war were utilized in numerous industries. Five major camps were located in Georgia: Camp Benning, Camp Stewart, Camp Wheeler, Fort Oglethorpe, and Fort Gordon. All of these prisoner containment facilities supplied labor for essential labor throughout the state.

\textsuperscript{184} Robert D. Billinger, Jr., \textit{Hitler’s Soldiers in the Sunshine State: German POWs in Florida} (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2000), 1.

\textsuperscript{185} Krammer, \textit{Nazi Prisoners of War}, 48.
Rules and Regulations

In July 1929, the President of the Weimar Republic, the President of the U.S., the leader of Austria, the King of Great Britain, and other world leaders met to discuss the terms of prisoner of war administration in the case of war. They determined that it was the duty of every country to diminish, as much as possible, the severity of imprisonment. This was intended to ascertain that, if war ever occurred again, prisoners of war would be treated with respect. Articles of particular note are Articles 3, 6, 10-13, 17, 21, 23, 26-31, 34, 36, 39, 40, 43, and 50. The provisions outlined in those articles were vital to the treatment of the prisoners of war held in the United States from 1941-1945.

Captive Camp Life

Prisoner of war camps in the U.S. were considered Class I installations, placing them under the control of the commanding general of the Service Command of the region. Most camps were located in the seventh, eighth, and fourth Service Commands, in the South and Southwest United States. The camps were established in these areas because the regions met all of the War Department criteria for camp location. For security reasons, camps were not located within the blackout areas along the coast, approximately 150-miles from the Mexican or

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187 Full treaty is available in the appendix.

188 Krammer, Nazi Prisoners of War, 36.

189 Billinger, Hitler’s Soldiers in the Sunshine State, 8.
Canadian borders, or near vital industry. Americans feared the possibility of mass escapes and worried that camps within easy distance of vital industry provided an opportunity for sabotage. These locations were also more cost-effective due to their temperate climates. In May 1942, there were only thirty-one German prisoners of war in the U.S. In April 1943 that number increased to 5,007 POWs. That number continued to climb due to the success of the campaigns in North Africa, culminating in the surrender of the Afrika Korp in May 1943. By September 1943, the number of German POWs in America was 163,706. In addition to the massive amount of prisoners taken by American forces, the Americans also agreed to accept POWs that British troops captured. In August 1942, Great Britain asked America to accept 150,000 prisoners—50,000 on one-month’s notice and 100,000 on three-months’ notice. The U.S. agreed. In fact, by late 1944, the German POWs in the United States outnumbered the

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190 Krammer, Nazi Prisoners of War, 27-28.


192 Antonio Thompson, Men in German Uniform: POWs in America During World War II (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2010), 9.

193 Billinger, Hitler’s Soldiers in the Sunshine State, 7.

194 Krammer, Nazi Prisoners of War, 43.

195 Billinger, Hitler’s Soldiers in the Sunshine State, 7.

196 Krammer, Nazi Prisoners of War in America, 43.

197 Lewis and Mewha, History of Prisoner of War Utilization, 83.
amount of men in the pre-war armed forces.\textsuperscript{198} In February 1945, America housed 12,619 German officers, 67,154 NCOs, and 226,413 enlisted soldiers.\textsuperscript{199}

This massive influx of soldiers required the formation of branch camps, or camps that were small subsidiaries of larger base camps. Only prisoners that were considered to not be a threat were sent to branch camps.\textsuperscript{200} Many of the prisoner installations in Georgia required branch camps to supply prisoners to required areas around the state.\textsuperscript{201} By the end of the war in 1945, there were 490 base and branch camps throughout the United States and Hawaii. By that same year, forty temporary and permanent camps were in Georgia.\textsuperscript{202} For example, there was a camp located in Statesboro, Georgia, a branch camps from Camp Stewart (later, Fort Stewart). According to \textit{The Bulloch Times}, in 1944, the prisoners’ camp was erected in Statesboro to allow for a closer supply of labor to supplement the drained labor force.\textsuperscript{203}

Due to the strict administration of the POW camps in the U.S., schedules in the facilities varied little. Reveille sounded at 5:30 a.m., waking the captives.\textsuperscript{204} The prisoners dressed in their

\textsuperscript{198} Ibid., 3.

\textsuperscript{199} John Brown Mason, “German Prisoners of War in the United States,” \textit{The American Journal of International Law} 39, no. 2 (1945), 203.


\textsuperscript{201} Billinger, \textit{Hitler’s Soldiers in the Sunshine State}, 19.


\textsuperscript{203} “Prisoners’ Camp is Being Erected,” \textit{Bulloch Times}, August 10, 1944.

\textsuperscript{204} Krammer, \textit{Nazi Prisoners of War}, 47.
navy blue fatigues with a white “PW” stamped on them. Breakfast was served promptly at 6 a.m. and finished by 6:30, when the soldiers returned to their barracks to shower and clean their areas. Officers were allocated 120 square feet of living space, while enlisted soldiers were only afforded forty square feet. Camp officials held inspections daily to ensure the tidiness of the barracks. At 7:30 a.m., work began. Soldiers engaged in labor projects in the camp started at this time, while prisoners assigned to projects outside the camps were transported to the work site. The prisoners ate lunch at noon, which was often brought to them in the fields if they were engaged in agricultural work. They were given exactly one hour for lunch. At one o’clock, work resumed and lasted until 4:30, when the workday ended. After work, the POWs returned to camp and showered, before eating dinner around 6:00 or 7:00. Their German uniforms were reserved for this time, when they would not be leaving the camps. Lights out was at 9:30 and prisoners were not allowed outside their barracks after 11:00 p.m. The strict schedule enforced in the camps is an example of the U.S. government’s attempt to ensure that they adhered to the Geneva Convention. Additionally, the German prisoners were guaranteed a six-day work

205 Billinger, Hitler’s Soldiers in the Sunshine State, 14.

206 Krammer, Nazi Prisoners of War, 47.

207 Ibid., 33.

208 Ibid., 47.

209 Billinger, Hitler’s Soldiers in the Sunshine State, 14.

210 Michael R. Waters, Lone Star Stalag: German Prisoners of War at Camp Hearne (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004), 23.

211 Krammer, Nazi Prisoners of War, 48.
week under the Geneva Convention. Any time that the prisoners were not engaged in work was their own time; they were allowed to participate in many forms of leisure activities to avoid monotony.

Leisure in the Lager

World War II required America’s first large scale prisoner of war program. Due to the rigorous application of the standards of the Geneva Convention of 1929, American authorities created a camp system that provided numerous outlets for diversion. Prisoners were allowed considerable freedoms and were offered various forms of recreation to avoid boredom. Many of the opportunities for leisure were founded in the programs begun during the First World War. Some of the more popular activities were theater performances, film viewings, concerts by the camp orchestra, choral recitals, and a well-stocked camp library. Prisoners were allowed to form theater troupes and to put on elaborate performances. Productions such as *The Merry Widow*, *The Flying Dutchman*, and *The Student Prince* were shown at Camp Hearne in Texas. Camp performances were very well done and were often open to the American servicemen and civilian employees at the camps. On occasion, members of nearby communities were allowed to attend. Films were also popular in the camps. Larger camps had extensive film libraries.

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213 Ibid., 1.


However, prisoners did not always enjoy the newsreels and cartoons that they were shown, according to the accounts of prisoners from Camp Hearne.²¹⁷ At Branch Camp Blakely in Georgia, the prisoners asked for and received, films. The captain in command of the camp procured two American films for the prisoners, along with a German film featuring trapeze artists. According to Heinz Gaertner, a prisoner of war at the camp, the prisoners welcomed the distraction and enjoyed the films, especially the German one.²¹⁸

Also popular among the prisoners were the extensive camp libraries. Libraries in base camps were, naturally, larger than at branch camps. Due to this, the base camps could ship volumes to the branch camp libraries.²¹⁹ The branch camp at Blakely also had a library. The captain in charge requested a variety of books from Camp Benning, its base camp, and the prisoners appreciated his effort.²²⁰ The size of these libraries varied from camp to camp, but all camps subscribed to at least three newspapers. A prisoner from a camp in Albany, Georgia, Erberhard Ladwig, an interpreter in the camp, recalled that the camp received The New York Times daily.²²¹ The newspapers were so popular that, by 1944, the War Department authorized subscriptions to the German-language newspaper Neue Volkszeitung, a newspaper that tended to

²¹⁹ Clark, “Farm Work and Friendship,” 17.
²²⁰ Gaertner, “My Experiences as a Kriegsgefangen,” 247.
be critical of American politics and policies.\textsuperscript{222} However, John Brown Mason asserts that German-language newspapers were in less demand than their English-language counterparts.\textsuperscript{223} The libraries also offered printed copies of the works of Bonhoeffer and Niemoller, ideas suppressed in the Third Reich.\textsuperscript{224} Prisoners were also allowed to publish their own newspapers for the camp.\textsuperscript{225} Prisoners at Camp Benning in Georgia published their own newspaper.\textsuperscript{226} The prisoners at Camp Gordon in Georgia also published their own weekly, later monthly, bulletin.\textsuperscript{227} This is another example of the ways that the Americans sought to uphold the Geneva Convention as Article 39 states that libraries should be made available to the prisoners.

At Camp Hearne in Texas, the orchestra was considered to be professional because of the quality of musicians that were involved, many of whom were classically trained. Also, concerts were offered every Sunday for the prisoners and Americans stationed at Hearne. The singers mostly performed German music, but the prisoners loved American music as well. In fact, prisoners were allowed to listen to the radio and they spent hours listening to American music and opera.\textsuperscript{228} War Department policies dictated that prisoners have a variety of leisure activities to occupy their time.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{222} Krammer, \textit{Nazi Prisoners of War}, 51-53.
\item \textsuperscript{223} Mason, “German Prisoners of War in the United States,” 204.
\item \textsuperscript{224} Waters, \textit{Lone Star Stalag}, 38.
\item \textsuperscript{225} Krammer, \textit{Nazi Prisoners of War}, 54.
\item \textsuperscript{226} Gaertner, “My Experiences as a Kriegsgefangen,” 252.
\item \textsuperscript{227} Coker, “World War II Prisoners of War in Georgia,” 847.
\item \textsuperscript{228} Waters, \textit{Lone Star Stalag}, 31-34.
\end{itemize}
Prisoners also spent their free time engaging in religious activities. Religion became important to German prisoners of war while they were in the camps.\footnote{Krammer, \textit{Nazi Prisoners of War}, 72-73.} At Camp Hearne, Texas, about forty-five percent of prisoners were Protestant, forty-five percent Catholic, and ten percent had no religious affiliations. Due to the high percentages of Protestants and Catholics, services for both denominations were offered in the camp. However, all of the POWs from all of the compounds were not allowed to attend services together. Approximately thirty-five men attended church on a regular basis at Camp Hearne, but this is thought to be the result of Nazi intimidation.\footnote{Waters, \textit{Lone Star Stalag}, 38-39.} Nazis at Camp Gordon also targeted church members for intimidation.\footnote{Coker, “World War II Prisoners of War in Georgia,” 852.}

Prisoners of war also indulged in other forms of leisure activities to pass the time behind the barbed wire. Activities such as painting, drawing, sculpting, model building, woodcarving, leather working, and wood burning were popular among the prisoners. At Camp Hearne, the prisoners built an outdoor beer garden containing sculptures, handmade furniture, and gardens.\footnote{Waters, \textit{Lone Star Stalag}, 46-47.} Officers were particularly fond of gardening. Prisoners near Staten Island spent their free time planting and maintaining a sizable victory garden, which produced enough to feed 650 POWs for an entire year.\footnote{Krammer, \textit{Nazi Prisoners of War}, 64.} At Camp Wabaunsee, Kansas, prisoners were encouraged to plant flowers and to decorate their rooms with artwork to create a home-like atmosphere.\footnote{Clark, “Farm Work and Friendship,” 16.} Most camps, large and
small, would allocate rooms to be used as craft centers for the prisoners. Prisoners were even permitted to sell their crafts and artwork at the Post Exchange and the men would organize exhibitions for their pieces. Some of the prisoners decided to paint murals on the walls of the chapels and theaters, or to paint the scenery for the elaborate performances. Prisoners at Camp Grant, Illinois, painted intricate oil paintings of famous German leaders like Frederick the Great, Field Marshal Rommel, Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, and President Paul von Hindenburg. Guards and members of the nearby community often purchased these paintings.  

Expanding on World War I programs, camps offered educational courses. By the beginning of 1944, every large camp offered a wide variety of courses. Classes in English, Spanish, German Literature, Shorthand, Commerce, Chemistry, and Mathematics were offered in most camps. In Camp Clinton, Mississippi, courses in American Indian history, Chinese culture, and flora in the United States were available to the prisoners. At a camp in Kentucky, the prisoners were offered a class in symbolism in American comics. At Camp Wabaunsee in Kansas, prisoners took courses in Hebrew in surprising numbers. The most popular course offered at Camp Hearne was a class in professional soldiering, with 126 prisoners enrolled in October 1944. Prisoners in the camps with some expertise in an academic area taught these courses. These courses were considered advanced and, in May of 1944, the Reich Ministry of Education announced that they would offer full high school diplomas and college credit for

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235 Krammer, Nazi Prisoners of War, 61-64.

236 Waters, Lone Star Stalag, 62.


238 Waters, Lone Star Stalag, 41.
prisoners that took classes in camps in the U.S.\textsuperscript{239} Educational courses offered at Camp Gordon in Georgia included Spanish, history, electricity, and architecture. POWs could even earn Bachelor degrees in the camps. A camp inspector considered the educational program at Camp Gordon to be “one of the most ambitious educational programs along modern lines, both in lower and higher grades,” that he had seen in any POW camp in America.\textsuperscript{240} These courses were important to the prisoners because they were seen as an opportunity for success after the war.\textsuperscript{241} This was another example of the government’s attempt to abide by the Geneva Convention, as Article 17 calls for intellectual discussion.

Also important in Article 17 is the availability of sports programs to prisoners. Camps in the United States offered many different sports programs, the most popular being soccer.\textsuperscript{242} Other popular sports were faustball (fistball), handball, bowling, cricket, horseshoes, croquet, ping-pong, and track and field events. Prisoners, at least at Camp Hearne, never showed interest in popular American sports like baseball and basketball.\textsuperscript{243} Faustball, or fistball, is a form of Italian volleyball that was introduced into Germany in the 1890s.\textsuperscript{244} Camps in Texas were very successful in establishing these sports programs. They were so successful that commanders of other camps wrote to the Texas camps seeking advice on starting the programs. Officers from

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{239} Krammer, \textit{Nazi Prisoners of War}, 62.
\item \textsuperscript{240} Coker, “World War II Prisoners of War in Georgia,” 847.
\item \textsuperscript{241} Waters, \textit{Lone Star Stalag}, 40.
\item \textsuperscript{242} Krammer, \textit{Nazi Prisoners of War}, 51.
\item \textsuperscript{243} Waters, \textit{Lone Star Stalag}, 35-37.
\item \textsuperscript{244} John Hammond Moore, \textit{Faustball Tunnel: German POWs in America and Their Great Escape} (New York: Random House, 1978), Preface.
\end{itemize}
Camp Chaffee in Arkansas wrote to the Eighth Service Command requesting a list of suggested equipment to purchase for the camp.\textsuperscript{245} These activities were popular among the soldiers interned at prisoner of war camps around the U.S.

Prisoners in some camps were also permitted to have pets or animal enclosures. At Camp Wabaunsee, prisoners claimed they were allowed pets.\textsuperscript{246} However, no other prisoners made the same claim. Instead, POWs at camps in Florida would collect animals such as snakes, lizards, and turtles. On one occasion, these prisoners brought a six-foot alligator back to camp from a work detail. The alligator bit another prisoner’s leg and the commander demanded the reptile removed from the camp. The soldiers located at camps throughout Florida were also known for catching snakes in order to make souvenirs out of them.\textsuperscript{247} Prisoners at Camp Hearne included a turtle pond and petting zoo in their beer garden.\textsuperscript{248}

A POW Workforce

According to Article 27 of the Geneva Convention, captured soldiers could be used as a labor force for their captor. Military installations first utilized prisoner labor for essential tasks. However, by March 1943, essential industries felt the labor shortage resulting from the war effort. In March 1943, the government implemented a draft exemption for essential farm and factory workers. But, it was too late. Labor was needed in order to continue to produce at the

\textsuperscript{245} Athletic and Recreational Equipment for Internment Camps, B 406 RG 389, NARA.

\textsuperscript{246} Clark, “Farmwork and Friendship,” 17.

\textsuperscript{247} Billinger, \textit{Hitler’s Soldiers in the Sunshine State,} 22-24.

\textsuperscript{248} Waters, \textit{Lone Star Stalag,} 47.
expected levels. In 1943, the War Department announced the utilization of POWs for agriculture, food processing, and clothing plants. More than 100,000 prisoners worked outside of the camp. In Camp Wabaunsee, Kansas, prisoners were needed to fix fences and to cut hedges and brush. At Camp Gordon, prisoners worked in the logging industry and in the agricultural industry harvesting peanuts. Prisoners could work in these industries because they did not directly support the war effort, a right protected by the Geneva Convention Article 31. The use of these prisoners allowed more military personnel and civilians to dedicate themselves to the war effort.

In Georgia, the agriculture industry was especially vulnerable to labor shortages. Camps such as the one in Statesboro aided farmers throughout the war. Prisoners of war arrived in Statesboro, Georgia in 1943 to aid local farmers in harvesting the peanut crop. An article in the Bulloch Times from that year paraphrased Colonel J.E. Hatch of the Fourth Service Command in his discussion of the proper use of prisoners. Hatch emphasized that the prisoners could not be used in the war effort, but that they would be helpful in harvesting the crops. Another Bulloch Times article addressed the feelings of the community about the use of POW labor, “the people of Bulloch county—especially those who are engaged in agriculture—are finding themselves


growing more tolerant of those foreign elements whom we may have heretofore regarded merely as monsters…”

These prisoners of war were essential to the harvest in Bulloch County in 1943, 1944, and 1945. In 1944, approximately 125 POWs were able to stack, on average, 1,500 stacks of peanuts every thirty-eight days. This led to a grand total of 57,000 stacks of peanuts in 1944. It is important to note that these POWs harvested peanuts that would have otherwise rotted in the fields. In 1945, after the camp was constructed in 1944, the prisoners were available to help harvest more crops and to complete other jobs. The Bulloch Times announced that prisoners were available in September 1945 to “pull corn, pick up pecans, cut cane, and many other general farm jobs.” According to the Geneva Convention, the prisoners were paid for their work and only enlisted soldiers were forced to work. NCOs (non-commissioned officers) and officers could volunteer to work, but it was not common that they did so.

The lumber industry also utilized prisoner labor. The industry first employed prisoners of war in 1943. However, it was difficult to get firms to hire the prisoners. In June 1943, a Georgia lumber firm hired fifty prisoners to work making pulpwood. This was considered hazardous work, especially for the inexperienced Germans. However, the Americans were able to circumvent the Geneva Convention and the articles that state that the prisoners cannot be involved in hazardous working environments. They accomplished this by explaining the work that the POWs were assigned was not more dangerous than the work Americans performed. James Fickle and Donald Ellis argue in their article, “POWs in the Piney Woods: German Prisoners of War in the Southern Lumber Industry, 1943-1945,” that the Americans knowingly


256 “War Prisoners Gave Much Help,” Bulloch Times, October 19, 1944.

257 “To Use Prisoners For General Jobs,” Bulloch Times, September 27, 1945.
violated the Geneva Convention in three major ways: by assigning POWs to dangerous work, by assigning POWs to work related to the war effort (pulpwood was used for munitions productions), and by assigning unqualified prisoners to this work. However, the authors note that the prisoners were paid adequately for their work in the industry.

Working for Wages

According to the Geneva Convention, prisoners must be paid for the work performed for their captors. In 1942, the U.S. had no agreement with enemy nations about the rate of POW pay. As a result, the U.S. War Department set a standard rate of $21.00 a month, or .80 cents a day. At the War Department’s request, the Department of State suggested that enemy nations set the same wage rate. Germany was not able to afford such a high of a wage, so American POWs in Germany received pay at much lower rates. Prisoners of war were paid in canteen coupons instead of hard currency. These coupons were used at the camp canteen to purchase all manner of goods. POWs were also paid a flat rate of .10 cents per day for toiletries. Individual counties set their own wage rates for POW labor. In Bulloch County, Georgia, the method of harvesting peanuts determined the pay scale. For stacks stacked by hand, the rate was .22 cents


259 Ibid., 722.


per stack.\textsuperscript{262} When private industry required labor, the U.S. government collected the wages from the company and paid the prisoners the standard rate of .80 cents a day.\textsuperscript{263} This allowed the U.S. government to make a hefty profit from the utilization of prisoner labor. In fact, in January 1945, the U.S. government made a profit of $10 million through this program.

According to the Geneva Convention Article 23, officers and NCOs must receive payment according to their rank. Despite the fact that they did not work, they received these salaries, in addition to their stipend for toiletries:

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|}
\hline
Lieutenant & $20$ per month \\
\hline
Captain & $30$ per month \\
\hline
Major-General & $40$ per month\textsuperscript{264} \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Figure 1}
\end{table}

The officers could spend their salaries on items at the canteen. Camps issued officers canteen coupons rather than currency, just like the enlisted men.

Camp Canteens and Prisoner Post

Article 12 of the Geneva Convention required that all prisoners have access to a canteen. Prisoners operated the canteens in the camps. A canteen was a store where prisoners could purchase personal items (toothpaste, soap, and clothing), fresh produce, and other items. POWs

\textsuperscript{262} “War Prisoners Now Available,” \textit{Bulloch Times}, August 31, 1944.

\textsuperscript{263} Krammer, \textit{Nazi Prisoners of War}, 107.

\textsuperscript{264} Ibid., 83-84.
could even order things from the Sears catalog. Prisoners could also purchase cold drinks, beer, and ice cream at the canteens. Camps such as Camp Hearne allowed prisoners to have one beer a day. Other camps, such as Camp Blanding, located in Florida, allowed prisoners to have up to two beers per day. The canteen at Camp Wheeler in Georgia offered soft drinks and other everyday items. The profits from the canteens went to benefit the prisoners. Prisoners used the profits to purchase instruments for the camp orchestras and fund construction projects like the beer garden at Camp Hearne.

Writing implements could also be purchased at the canteen. These were important because the POWs were allowed to send correspondence to their families every month. Prior to the summer of 1943, prisoners could write two letters and one postcard per week. However, all correspondence was subject to censoring. The Office of Censorship became extremely backlogged by the summer of 1943 and NCOs and enlisted men were reduced to one of each per week, while the officers were still permitted five letters and postcards. Eventually, the censorship office began to read only every twentieth letter to allow prisoners to receive their mail in a timely manner. Under the Geneva Convention, captors had to allow prisoners to contact their families.

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266 Billinger, *Hitler’s Soldiers in the Sunshine State*, 15.

267 Report on Visit to Camp Wheeler Internment Camp, B 421 RG 389, NARA.


269 Ibid., 61-62.
Life in American POW camps provided a relatively high standard of living. The Geneva Convention dictated that food rations for POWs be the equivalent of rations for the captor’s troops at base camp. This meant that the food quality and quantity was surprisingly high in the prisoner camps. On July 1, 1944, the War Department decided that the menu in camps could be tailored to the tastes of the inmates, one of the few complaints that the prisoners had. These complaints stemmed from the camp’s use of white bread over the traditional German dark bread. Also, Germans preferred potatoes to beans, which were common fare in the camps. After July 1, 1944, German POWs had more freedom over their diet. Surprisingly, the good food and treatment of the prisoners was one thing that Fritz Haus, an NCO imprisoned at Camp Hearne, recalled was censored by the Americans from his letters home. This censorship could be an attempt to prevent American resentment regarding the perceived freedoms of the prisoners. Additionally, prisoners received high-quality medical care in the camps. At Camp Gordon, Georgia, American and German doctors provided treatment in the camp hospital. Serious health concerns requiring prolonged treatment were sent to local hospitals in the Augusta area, and the most serious of those cases were scheduled for repatriation. Illnesses at Camp Wheeler were

270 Krammer, Nazi Prisoners of War, 49.

271 Waters, Lone Star Stalag, 24.


treated at the base hospital since no medical facility was available at the internment camp. Yet, Camp Benning did not have a hospital.

Prisoners in American camps experienced various opportunities for leisure, but they were prisoners nonetheless. Some German POWs in America still attempted to escape from their captors. At the end of the war, the ratio of guards to prisoners averaged 1:9. This low ratio allowed soldiers to be sent overseas with only a slight risk of escapes. There were a few factors that worked in the Americans’ favor regarding the risk of escape: the Germans were from a tightly controlled military, the Germans were mostly content, and they had no place to go. Most escapes of German POWs lasted two to three days. A case at the Aiken branch camp of Fort Gordon illustrates this. In 1944, four prisoners walked away from a work detail, stole a car, and headed in the direction of Columbia, South Carolina. Railway workers apprehended them a few days later. A similar case occurred at the Aiken branch camp in 1945, when two prisoners disappeared from a work detail. Local authorities located the escapees later that day. In both cases, prisoners willingly surrendered. The Geneva Convention stated that no escaped POW could be punished for escaping if they reached their army or they escaped the area their captor’s controlled. German prisoners of war in America had no chance of meeting either of these terms.

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274 Report on Visit to Camp Wheeler Internment Camp, B 421 RG 389, NARA.

275 Construction Prisoner of War Camp, B 422, RG 389, NARA.

276 Krammer, Nazi Prisoners of War, 39.

277 Ibid., 114-115.

278 Hamer, “Barbeque, Farming, and Friendship,” 64.

The Fourth Service Command maintained eighteen percent of all POWs located on American soil during WWII and they experienced only eight percent of escapes. In total, only 1,073 prisoners escaped from November 1942 to February 1945, a very small percentage of the total amount of POWs held on American soil.\textsuperscript{280}

Another problem in German POW camps was the influence of hardened Nazis. Unfortunately, attempts to segregate ardent Nazis from other prisoners began too late and regulations were too lax.\textsuperscript{281} Nazis still felt powerful, even after their imprisonment. This power, combined with the U.S.’s failure to separate branches of the armed forces, allowed Nazis to slip by unnoticed and to intimidate non-Nazis. Also, the highest-ranking individual in the camps tended to be Nazis, guaranteeing them a source of power over the other inmates.\textsuperscript{282} Identifying Nazis and anti-Nazis in the camps proved difficult at Camp Gordon. A prisoner recalled the issues encountered with distinguishing the Nazis from other Germans in both Camp Gordon and Branch Camp Aiken.\textsuperscript{283} These high-ranking officials usually acted as the liaison for the prisoners, a position guaranteed by the Geneva Convention.\textsuperscript{284} Nazis in the camps also exacted revenge against the German soldiers reluctant to return to Germany. Radbert Kohlhaas, a German interned at Camp Gordon, recalled an incident involving intimidation by Nazi prisoners. Kohlhaas did not want to be repatriated, and when the Nazis in camp learned this, they attempted

\textsuperscript{280} Krammer, \textit{Nazi Prisoners of War}, 130.

\textsuperscript{281} Ibid., 13.

\textsuperscript{282} Waters, \textit{Lone Star Stalag}, 110-111.

\textsuperscript{283} Coker, “World War II Prisoners of War in Georgia,” 840.

\textsuperscript{284} Billinger, \textit{Hitler’s Soldiers in the Sunshine State}, 11.
to intimate him by threatening the safety of his family in Germany. The Nazis did not face consequences for this action.  

The presence of Nazis and anti-Nazis in American camps set the stage for a clash. These clashes occurred often in camps, mostly in the form of riots. During these riots, the prisoners went into the latrines, tore them apart, and beat each other with the boards. These clashes led to the transfer of Nazis to Camp Alva, Oklahoma. Kohlhaas recalled another incident of violence between Nazi and German prisoners of war at Camp Gordon in which Nazis plotted to murder a camp priest. While this attempt was not successful, another prisoner was hanged at the Aiken, South Carolina, branch camp.

POWs in American Society

One of the fears Americans had about housing enemy prisoners on American soil was the threat of German men forming bonds with American women, most of whom were without male companionship. Regulations prevented the employment of German POWs with companies that would bring them into contact with American women. In reality, many American women pursued German men. Women went to the POW camps in order to see the enemy prisoners.

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286 Waters, *Lone Star Stalag*., 111.

287 Ibid., 65.


These women found the German men attractive and made efforts to get close to the prisoners. Newspapers reported the shameless gawking that women engaged in around the camps. Most notably, a camp in Minnesota constructed a ten-foot high fence to, “protect the prisoners from predatory females and other wild animals.”\(^\text{290}\) American women exchanged gifts and romantic letters with prisoners and the women encouraged men to escape.\(^\text{291}\) Many of these fears of American female impropriety were created by men in positions of power, such as the newspapermen writing the sensationalized articles mentioned above. As a result, very few female accounts of these relationships exist. Many accounts allude more to passing friendships than romantic connections. Audrey Peters, a resident of Valdosta, Georgia, worked at Moody Field during the war and had contact with POWs in the area. One of these prisoners carved her a wooden jewelry box in 1945. Peters refers to the Germans as “nice,” but made it clear that she did not fraternize with the prisoners.\(^\text{292}\) Some men escaped and were often found in the company of American women.\(^\text{293}\) According to German-born historian Renate Miller, American women found the POWs good-looking, and liked that they did not chew tobacco or spit.\(^\text{294}\) A few German prisoners married their American girlfriends, but there are not many documented cases

\(^{290}\) Ibid., 495-496.

\(^{291}\) Ibid., 496.


\(^{293}\) Reiß, “Bronzed Bodies”, 496.

\(^{294}\) Elliot Minor, “On ‘enemy’ land: Though prisoners, German POWs regard stay in U.S. ‘the best time of their lives,’” *Ocala Star Banner* (Ocala, Florida), May 9, 2002.
of this.\textsuperscript{295} It seems that American fears of German POWs and American women were not unfounded, though it was not a widespread problem.

German POWs also wished to marry their girlfriends that they left behind in Germany or other territories. There was a way for this to happen—through long-distance marriage ceremonies. These ceremonies were not considered religious ceremonies and were conducted after the woman obtained paperwork in Germany, signed it in front of witnesses, and mailed it to her fiancé in the U.S. The process could also be reversed. One example of this occurred at Camp Hearne. Fritz Haus, after the bombing of his hometown and his doubts about his fiancée’s survival, decided he wanted to marry her. So, he requested the paperwork and began the process. This was not an uncommon occurrence in the camps, especially not at Camp Hearne.\textsuperscript{296} These marriages illustrate that most German prisoners were not chasing American women from behind the barbed wire.

Most local populations surrounding prisoner of war camps in Georgia regarded them with mixed feelings. Newspaper articles were often published praising the behavior of the POWs and the benefit their presence had on the local community, especially in filling gaps in the workforce. However, several articles also expressed annoyance and distrust towards the POWs. According to historian Kathy Roe Coker, many of these feelings were a result of escape attempts. These attempts scared women and children. Also, prisoners near roadways were known to wave and shout at passing vehicles. The nearby local communities were not accepting of these

\textsuperscript{295} Reiß, “Bronzed Bodies”, 496.

\textsuperscript{296} Waters, \textit{Lone Star Stalag}, 69-70.
behaviors. Despite these reports, many farmers that worked directly with the prisoners were pleased with their work and their behavior and described the POWs as “winning them over.”

According to historian Lewis H. Carlson, the prisoners working outside the camps interacted with normal Americans, and the result was almost always a positive experience. Heinz Gaertner recounted the behavior of the farmer he worked for outside of Camp Blakely, Mr. Christiansen. This farmer was so pleased with the work completed by the prisoners that he approached Gaertner, a fluent English speaker, and asked if the prisoners were willing to increase their daily quotas. The POWs were willing, but requested whiskey and cigarettes. Though Christiansen had to drive to Florida to purchase the extra cigarettes (they were rationed in Georgia), he agreed to the deal in order to keep the German POWs content. This farmer also allowed the prisoners to go swimming after they completed their work during the summer.

Another example of the bonds formed between the prisoners and their American employers comes from Statesboro, Georgia. Farmer Sam Neville of Register, Georgia, a small community outside of Statesboro, employed nine prisoners of war on his land to help with the harvest. Five of those prisoners wrote to Neville after their return to Germany. Bernhard Erbelding, a prisoner that worked for Neville harvesting peanuts, wrote to the farmer in February 1947, “Last—not least—I have the occasion to accomplish my promise and to write you a letter

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299 Lewis, We Were Each Other’s Prisoners, 60.

300 Gaertner, “My Experiences as a Kriegsgefangen,” 247-249.
from Germany.” Erbelding closed his letter with, “I am convicted that you like to remember
one of your old prisoners of war and I hope to have made you a little pleasure by writing you this
letter.” Another former prisoner of war, Werner Götze, wrote to Neville, “I like to think of you
and the good time I had when I had the privilege to stay with you and therefore I thank you very
much for the good you have done to me.” These letters express gratitude and friendship. All of
the letters also send regards to both Neville’s wife and his two little children, indicating at least
some interaction with the family. Bernhard also shared memories of Mrs. Neville in his letters
to her husband, “I remember very well the delicate fishes that Mrs. Neville roast for us at the
open fire…” Both authors believed their time spent as a POW with the Neville family was
“wonderful.” These letters illustrate the relationships that Matthias Reiß hints at, that German

301 Bernhard Erbelding to Sam Neville, 12 February 1947, Sam Neville letter collection, Georgia Southern University Museum.

302 Bernhard Erbelding to Sam Neville, 12 February 1947, Sam Neville letter collection, Georgia Southern University Museum.

303 Werner Götze to Sam Neville, 1947, Sam Neville letter collection, Georgia Southern University Museum.

304 Bernhard Erbelding to Sam Neville, 12 February 1947, Sam Neville letter collection, Georgia Southern University Museum; Bernhard Erbelding to Sam Neville, 16 June 1947, Sam Neville letter collection, Georgia Southern University Museum; Werner Götze to Sam Neville, 1947, Sam Neville letter collection, Georgia Southern University Museum; Johannes Ruschke to Sam Neville, 7 January 1947, Sam Neville letter collection, Georgia Southern University Museum; Otto Gollmer to Sam Neville, 1947, Sam Neville letter collection, Georgia Southern University Museum; Günter Hoppe to Sam Neville, 26 May 1946, Sam Neville letter collection, Georgia Southern University Museum; Günter Hoppe to Sam Neville, 17 November 1946, Sam Neville letter collection, Georgia Southern University Museum; Günter Hoppe to Sam Neville, 10 April 1947, Sam Neville letter collection, Georgia Southern University Museum.

305 Bernhard Erbelding to Sam Neville, 6 June 1947, Sam Neville letter collection, Georgia Southern University Museum.

306 Johannes Ruschke to Sam Neville, 7 January 1947, Sam Neville letter collection, Georgia Southern University Museum.
prisoners of war and their white American employers were able to bond on the basis of “whiteness” and its inherent privileges.

However, after Germany’s surrender on May 8, 1945, the treatment of prisoners changed and conditions declined. The conditions discovered in Nazi concentration camps in Eastern Europe caused a desire for retaliation among members of local communities. 307 Heinz Gaertner remembered the only threat he ever received in America occurred when he was transported back to Camp Benning for reeducation. As the convoy arrived at the gates, members of the local community stood alongside the road and made gestures symbolizing a slashed throat. This occurred in mid-October 1945. 308

Homeward Bound

Internment ended on July 23, 1946, after V-J (Victory in Japan) Day, and plans for demobilization of the prisoners went into effect. 309 The War Department announced plans to send all of the German prisoners of war back to Europe by April 1946. These plans for repatriation instilled fear in many of the prisoners. For example, Radbert Kohlhaas recollected the uncertainty felt by the prisoners at war’s end. Most Germans lived better lives within the American camps than they did in Germany. The conditions in the camp, coupled with the programs instituted for leisure, created a sense of liberation for Germans accustomed to war and


308 Gaertner, “My Experiences as a Kriegsgefangen,” 252.

309 Krammer, Nazi Prisoners of War, 256.
Nazism. As Kohlhaas stated, “the freedom we had behind barbed wire was the only freedom we’d known.”

Most American troops remained overseas in 1946. In order to give the armed forces time to demobilize, the U.S. government retained prisoners to deal with the labor shortages still present in the country. Prisoners of war began their journey to Europe in 1946, usually on liberty ships. Bernhard Erbelding described the return trip in favorable terms, “I’ll never forget the view of that beautiful bay.” Günter Hoppe also described the journey as a good one, was proud of a job he received on board, and boasted about the quality of food, “the food was excellent.” Others, like Heinz Gaertner said the journey was poor—no one received enough food and the sanitary conditions on poor were substandard. Very few prisoners returned directly to Germany. Most were sent to France, Great Britain, Holland, and Belgium to provide labor. Several of the letters Sam Neville received documented these experiences of deprivation, reduced supplies, and hard labor. These prisoners often wrote to their American

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311 Waters, Lone Star Stalag, 143.
312 Bernhard Erbelding to Sam Neville, 12 February 1947, Sam Neville letter collection, Georgia Southern University Museum.
313 Günter Hoppe to Sam Neville, 26 May 1946, Sam Neville letter collection, Georgia Southern University Museum.
314 Gaertner, “My Experiences as a Kriegsgefangen,” 255.
315 Waters, Lone Star Stalag, 145.
316 Bernhard Erbelding to Sam Neville, 12 February 1947, Sam Neville letter collection, Georgia Southern University Museum; Werner Götze to Sam Neville, 1947, Sam Neville letter collection, Georgia Southern University Museum; Günter Hoppe to Sam Neville, 26 May 1946, Sam Neville letter collection, Georgia Southern University Museum.
employers from the French camps requesting supplies, “I would be much obliged to you and very happy, if you could find the possibility to make a great pleasure to one of your old P.Ws. Here we have nothing.” Günter Hoppe also requested supplies of tobacco, cigarettes, and trousers. Neville sent supplies to Erbelding, but appears to have never replied to Hoppe. Germans faced a dire situation upon returning to Germany—bombed out cities, few supplies, and the process of rebuilding a broken political system. In these times, they turned to their American “friends,” the farmers that employed prisoner of war labor.

Also, before the prisoners were repatriated, the War Department required them to take reeducation courses. Heinz Gaertner recalled that the courses consisted of lessons in American government and American history. Instructors denigrated Nazi Germany, allowing Gaertner to draw parallels between racism in America with racism in the Third Reich. Despite these connections, he passed his reeducation exam and was allowed to return to Germany. He mentions several POWs in his class did not pass the exam, and were not permitted to return home.

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317 Bernhard Erbelding to Sam Neville, 12 February 1947, Sam Neville letter collection, Georgia Southern University Museum.

318 Günter Hoppe to Sam Neville, 26 May 1946, Sam Neville letter collection, Georgia Southern University Museum.

319 Bernhard Erbelding to Sam Neville, 16 June 1947, Sam Neville letter collection, Georgia Southern University Museum; Günter Hoppe to Sam Neville, 10 April 1947, Sam Neville letter collection, Georgia Southern University Museum.

Conclusion

Prior to the beginning of the Second World War, there were no prisoner of war housing facilities in the United States. By the end of the war, America held more prisoners inside its own territory than it had or would have in any conflict before or since. There were more than 400 camps throughout the country in 1945, several of which were located in Georgia. Most camp residents indulged in various recreational activities, sporting events, stage and choral performances, and other means of passing the time during their imprisonment. Enlisted prisoners also engaged in labor programs, assisting with jobs on military installations and with essential industry in the private sector. Most prisoners housed in Georgia engaged in agricultural labor or labored in the logging industry, essential tasks. These labor programs provided a source of income for the prisoners and allowed Americans to focus on the war effort without suffering an economic downturn.

However, America’s strict adherence to the Geneva Convention caused problems within American society. Allegations of “coddling” the prisoners ran rampant throughout areas with camps and reports made by radio personalities only compounded these tensions. Another source of societal tension was in American women’s apparent interest in the German prisoners of war. This interesting dynamic between the women, the prisoners, and the government caused a range of problems for all those involved. Prisoners of war found that life could be pleasurable in America and they could still have some control over their lives, despite their imprisoned status. This was especially true for NCOs and officers, who had the choice to participate in

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321 Thompson, *Men in German Uniform*, 1.


labor programs. The regimented nature of the camps ensured that the prisoners’ rights guaranteed in the Geneva Convention were protected. The camps throughout Georgia were normal POW camps, similar in their daily operation to camps such as Hearne and Wabaunsee.

Prisoner of war programs throughout the U.S. during World War II represented a large-scale expansion of the programs enacted during World War I. American authorities learned valuable lessons about labor policies and the need for entertainment outlets during their involvement in WWI, ensuring the camp system built during WWII was successful. Memories such as those imparted to Sam Neville in the letters from former prisoners of war were possible because of the instructive experience of the program developed in 1917-1919. Also, the labor provided by prisoners such as those that wrote to Neville supported the U.S. economy and infrastructure, Georgia’s in particular, and prevented the loss of crops and economic stability during wartime.
CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

Prisoner of war and enemy alien administration plans and maintenance programs changed dramatically with the onset of World War I. Government officials, despite attempts at programs in prior conflicts, finally understood the labor potential of prisoners of war. Also, popular sentiment towards Germans in America led to a plan for the long-term internment of enemy aliens. These internees could not be compelled to work, but they could volunteer. Those that did provided valuable labor, supported Georgia infrastructure, and filled gaps left by wartime labor shortages.

Due to America’s late entry into the war, officials observed and learned from European experiments with prisoner of war maintenance and enemy alien internment. The American programs benefitted from the experiences of the European powers from 1914-1917, and the theories put forth by medical professionals such as A.L. Vischer. With this knowledge, the American War Department instituted leisure programs to aid in alleviating the mental strain caused by long-term captivity. Furthermore, the importance of these programs lies in the lessons learned for future war prisoner programs. These lessons were of the utmost importance when, twenty-two years later, America found itself once again at war.

The camp system of World War I was successful with its labor programs, as well as its entertainment ventures. This camp system was updated and expanded for the administration of World War II prisoners.

World War II prison camps represented the largest prisoner of war program in American history. By the end of the war, more than 400,000 Germans were imprisoned in America. Several of the camps and branch camps were located in Georgia. These camps provided essential labor to
the state, oftentimes preventing crops from rotting in the field. These prisoners filled the gaps in the labor force left by the war and the resultant draft. Also, their labor allowed the Georgia economy to continue with little change throughout the war. The majority of prisoners in Georgia were employed in the agricultural industry, harvesting cotton, peanuts, and other crops. The agricultural industry employed most prisoners throughout the United States. That, combined with the regimented nature of imprisonment, made the experiences of prisoners similar regardless of location in the U.S.

World War II prisoner programs differed from World War I plans due to the advantages of a current treaty in place stipulating the exact treatment of prisoners of war. Also, the scale of the program was much larger; while only a few thousand German prisoners were interned during WWI, over 400,000 German prisoners were interned in WWII. Despite these differences, the platforms instituted in the First World War proved invaluable to the plans for prisoner management in the Second World War—without the lessons learned from the first experience with World War, the camps would not have run as smoothly as they did from 1941-1946.

Legacy

Americans often forget about the German prisoners of war that labored in the wartime economies throughout the country. In Georgia, POW labor kept the agricultural industry afloat throughout labor shortages and increased wartime demand. But, average citizens often overlook their role in wartime history. Despite this, the installations that housed these prisoners honor them. At Fort Gordon, there is a POW cemetery located near the post’s Gate 2. 324 This cemetery stands as a reminder of the presence of prisoners of war in Georgia. Every year, Fort Gordon

holds a ceremony on the German holiday, Volkstrauer Tag, to honor the prisoners of war from WWII. Similarly, Fort Benning honors the prisoners of war on the German holiday every year. Fort Oglethorpe also recognizes their history with prisoner of war administration in both World War I and World War II. There is a monument in the Chattanooga National Cemetery dedicated to the German prisoners of war that died in this country. Every year on the German holiday for mourning, the German Consulate places a wreath to commemorate the prisoners of war from both World Wars that lost their lives at Fort Oglethorpe, the only place in America with graves from WWI and WWII prisoners. Public acknowledgement of the German POW impact on Georgia, in particular, and the U.S., in general, is growing.

325 “Fort Gordon commemorates German POWs,” The Augusta Chronicle (Augusta, Georgia), November 18, 1999.


327 Gerry Depken and Julie Powell, Fort Oglethorpe (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2009), 44.
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Sam Neville Letters Collection. Georgia Southern University Museum.

This is the full text of Article 24 of the treaty discussed in the text, the section of the document dealing with prisoners of war. This information comes from an online source, The Avalon Project. Please use the following link to see information in original format:

http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/prus1785.asp.
Article. 24.

And to prevent the destruction of prisoners of war, by sending them into distant & inclement countries, or by crowding them into close & noxious places, the two contracting parties solemnly pledge themselves to each other, & to the world, that they will not adopt any such practice; that neither will send the prisoners whom they may take from the other into the East-Indies, or any other parts of Asia or Africa, but that they shall be placed in some part of their dominions in Europe or America, in wholesome situations, that they shall not be confined in dungeons, prison-ships, nor prisons, nor be put into irons, nor bound, nor otherwise restrained in the use of their limbs; that the officers shall be enlarged on their paroles within convenient districts, & have comfortable quarters, & the common men be disposed in cantonments, open & extensive enough for air & exercise, and lodged in barracks as roomy & good as are provided by the party in whose power they are for their own troops; that the officers shall also be daily furnished by the party in whose power they are, with as many rations; & of the same articles & quality as are allowed by them, either in kind or by commutation, to officers of equal rank in their own army; & all others shall be daily furnished by them with such ration as they allow to a common soldier in their own service; the value whereof shall be paid by the other party on a mutual adjustment of accounts for the subsistence of prisoners at the close of the war; & the said accounts shall not be mingled with, or set off against any others, nor the balances due on them, be withheld as a satisfaction or reprisal for any other article, or for any other cause, real or pretended, whatever: that each party shall be allowed to keep a commissary of prisoners of their own appointment, with every separate cantonment of prisoners in possession of the other, which commissary shall see the prisoners as often as he pleases, shall be allowed to receive & distribute whatever comforts may be sent to them by their friends, & shall be free to make his reports in open letters
to those who employ him; but if any officer shall break his parole, or any other prisoner shall
escape from the limits of his cantonment, after they shall have been designated to him, such
individual officer or other prisoner, shall forfeit so much of the benefit of this article as provides
for his enlargement on parole or cantonment. & it is declared, that neither the pretence that war
dissolves all treaties, nor any other whatever, shall be considered as annulling or suspending this
& the next preceding article, but on the contrary, that the state of war is precisely that for which
they are provided, & during which they are to be as sacredly observed as the most acknowledged
articles in the law of nature or nations.
APPENDIX B

LAWS AND CUSTOMS OF WAR ON LAND (HAGUE IV)

This is the full text of Chapter II of the treaty, the portion regarding prisoners of war, discussed in the text. This information comes from an online source, The Avalon Project. Please use the following link to see information in original format:

http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/hague04.asp.
CHAPTER II
Prisoners of War

Art. 4.
Prisoners of war are in the power of the hostile Government, but not of the individuals or corps who capture them.
They must be humanely treated.
All their personal belongings, except arms, horses, and military papers, remain their property.

Art. 5.
Prisoners of war may be interned in a town, fortress, camp, or other place, and bound not to go beyond certain fixed limits, but they cannot be confined except as in indispensable measure of safety and only while the circumstances which necessitate the measure continue to exist.

Art. 6.
The State may utilize the labour of prisoners of war according to their rank and aptitude, officers excepted. The tasks shall not be excessive and shall have no connection with the operations of the war.
Prisoners may be authorized to work for the public service, for private persons, or on their own account.
Work done for the State is paid for at the rates in force for work of a similar kind done by soldiers of the national army, or, if there are none in force, at a rate according to the work executed.
When the work is for other branches of the public service or for private persons the conditions are settled in agreement with the military authorities.
The wages of the prisoners shall go towards improving their position, and the balance shall be paid them on their release, after deducting the cost of their maintenance.

Art. 7.
The Government into whose hands prisoners of war have fallen is charged with their maintenance.
In the absence of a special agreement between the belligerents, prisoners of war shall be treated as regards board, lodging, and clothing on the same footing as the troops of the Government who captured them.

Art. 8.
Prisoners of war shall be subject to the laws, regulations, and orders in force in the army of the State in whose power they are. Any act of insubordination justifies the adoption towards them of such measures of severity as may be considered necessary.
Escaped prisoners who are retaken before being able to rejoin their own army or before leaving the territory occupied by the army which captured them are liable to disciplinary punishment.
Prisoners who, after succeeding in escaping, are again taken prisoners, are not liable to any punishment on account of the previous flight.
Art. 9.
Every prisoner of war is bound to give, if he is questioned on the subject, his true name and rank, and if he infringes this rule, he is liable to have the advantages given to prisoners of his class curtailed.

Art. 10.
Prisoners of war may be set at liberty on parole if the laws of their country allow, and, in such cases, they are bound, on their personal honour, scrupulously to fulfil, both towards their own Government and the Government by whom they were made prisoners, the engagements they have contracted.

In such cases their own Government is bound neither to require of nor accept from them any service incompatible with the parole given.

Art. 11.
A prisoner of war cannot be compelled to accept his liberty on parole; similarly the hostile Government is not obliged to accede to the request of the prisoner to be set at liberty on parole.

Art. 12.
Prisoners of war liberated on parole and recaptured bearing arms against the Government to whom they had pledged their honour, or against the allies of that Government, forfeit their right to be treated as prisoners of war, and can be brought before the courts.

Art. 13.
Individuals who follow an army without directly belonging to it, such as newspaper correspondents and reporters, sutlers and contractors, who fall into the enemy’s hands and whom the latter thinks expedient to detain, are entitled to be treated as prisoners of war, provided they are in possession of a certificate from the military authorities of the army which they were accompanying.

Art. 14.
An inquiry office for prisoners of war is instituted on the commencement of hostilities in each of the belligerent States, and, when necessary, in neutral countries which have received belligerents in their territory. It is the function of this office to reply to all inquiries about the prisoners. It receives from the various services concerned full information respecting internments and transfers. releases on parole, exchanges, escapes, admissions into hospital, deaths, as well as other information necessary to enable it to make out and keep up to date an individual return for each prisoner of war. The office must state in this return the regimental number, name and surname, age, place of origin, rank, unit, wounds, date and place of capture, internment, wounding, and death, as well as any observations of a special character. The individual return shall be sent to the Government of the other belligerent after the conclusion of peace.

It is likewise the function of the inquiry office to receive and collect all objects of personal use, valuables, letters, etc., found on the field of battle or left by prisoners who have been released on parole, or exchanged, or who have escaped, or died in hospitals or ambulances, and to forward them to those concerned.
Art. 15.
Relief societies for prisoners of war, which are properly constituted in accordance with the laws of their country and with the object of serving as the channel for charitable effort shall receive from the belligerents, for themselves and their duly accredited agents every facility for the efficient performance of their humane task within the bounds imposed by military necessities and administrative regulations. Agents of these societies may be admitted to the places of internment for the purpose of distributing relief, as also to the halting places of repatriated prisoners, if furnished with a personal permit by the military authorities, and on giving an undertaking in writing to comply with all measures of order and police which the latter may issue.

Art. 16.
Inquiry offices enjoy the privilege of free postage. Letters, money orders, and valuables, as well as parcels by post, intended for prisoners of war, or dispatched by them, shall be exempt from all postal duties in the countries of origin and destination, as well as in the countries they pass through.

Presents and relief in kind for prisoners of war shall be admitted free of all import or other duties, as well as of payments for carriage by the State railways.

Art. 17.
Officers taken prisoners shall receive the same rate of pay as of officers of corresponding rank in the country where they are detained, the amount to be ultimately refunded by their own Government.

Art. 18.
Prisoners of war shall enjoy complete liberty in the exercise of their religion, including attendance at the services of whatever church they may belong to, on the sole condition that they comply with the measures of order and police issued by the military authorities.

Art. 19.
The wills of prisoners of war are received or drawn up in the same way as for soldiers of the national army.
The same rules shall be observed regarding death certificates as well as for the burial of prisoners of war, due regard being paid to their grade and rank.

Art. 20.
After the conclusion of peace, the repatriation of prisoners of war shall be carried out as quickly as possible.
APPENDIX C

CONVENTION BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND OTHER POWERS, RELATING TO PRISONERS OF WAR

This is the full text of the articles of the treaty discussed in the text. This information comes from an online source, The Avalon Project. Please use the following link to see information in original format: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/geneva02.asp.
ARTICLE 3
Prisoners of war have the right to have their person and their honor respected. Women shall be treated with all the regard due to their sex.
Prisoners retain their full civil status.

ARTICLE 6.
All effects and objects of personal use except arms, horses, military equipment and military papers shall remain in the possession of prisoners of war, as well as metal helmets and gas masks.
Money in the possession of prisoners may not be taken away from them except by order of an officer and after the amount is determined. A receipt shall be given. Money thus taken away shall be entered to the amount of each prisoner.
Identification documents, insignia of rank, decorations and objects of value may not be taken from prisoners.

ARTICLE 10.
Prisoners of war shall be lodged in buildings or in barracks affording all possible guarantees of hygiene and healthfulness.
The quarters must be fully protected from dampness, sufficiently heated and lighted. All precautions must be taken against danger of fire.
With regard to dormitories the total surface, minimum cubic amount of air, arrangement and material of bedding - the conditions shall be the same as for the troops at base camps of the detaining Power.

ARTICLE 11.
The food ration of prisoners of war shall be equal in quantity and quality to that of troops at base camps.
Furthermore, prisoners shall receive facilities for preparing, themselves, additional food which they might have.
Sufficiency of potable water shall be furnished them. The use of tobacco shall be permitted.
Prisoners may be employed in the kitchens.
All collective disciplinary measures affecting the food are prohibited.

ARTICLE 12.
Clothing, linen and footwear shall be furnished prisoners of war by the detaining Power.
Replacement and repairing of these effects must be assured regularly. In addition, laborers must receive work clothes wherever the nature of the work requires it.
Canteens shall be installed in all camps where prisoners may obtain, at the local market price, food products and ordinary objects.
Profits made by the canteens for camp administrations shall be used for the benefit of prisoners.

ARTICLE 13.
Belligerents shall be bound to take all sanitary measures necessary to assure the cleanliness and healthfulness of camps and to prevent epidemics.
Prisoners of war shall have at their disposal, day and night, installations conforming to sanitary rules and constantly maintained in a state of cleanliness. Furthermore, and without Prejudice to baths and showers of which the camp shall be as well provided as possible, prisoners shall be furnished a sufficient quantity of water for the care of their own bodily cleanliness. It shall be possible for them to take physical exercise and enjoy the open air.

ARTICLE 17.
So far as possible belligerents shall encourage intellectual diversions and sports organized by prisoners of war.

ARTICLE 21.
Upon the beginning of hostilities, belligerents shall be bound to communicate to one another the titles and ranks in use in their respective armies, with a view to assuring equality of treatment between corresponding ranks of officers and persons of equivalent status. Officers and persons of equivalent status who are prisoners of war shall be treated with the regard due their rank and age.

ARTICLE 23.
Subject to private arrangements between belligerent Powers, and particularly those provided in Article 24, officers and persons of equivalent status who are prisoners of war shall receive from the detaining Power the same pay as officers of corresponding rank in the armies of that Power, on the condition, however, that this pay does not exceed that to which they are entitled in the armies of the country which they have Served. This pay shall be granted them in full, once a month if possible, and without being liable to any deduction for expenses incumbent on the detaining Power, even when they are in favor of the prisoners. An agreement between the belligerents shall fix the rate of exchange applicable to this payment; in the absence of such an agreement, the rate adopted shall be that in force at the opening of hostilities.
All payments made to prisoners of war as pay must be reimbursed, at the end of hostilities, by the Power which they have served.

ARTICLE 26.
In case of transfer, prisoners of war shall be officially notified of their new destination in advance; they shall, be allowed to take with them their personal effects, their correspondence and packages which have arrived for them. All due measures shall be taken that Correspondence and packages addressed to their former camp may be forwarded to them without delay. Money deposited to the account Of transferred prisoners shall be transmitted to the competent authority of their new place of residence. The expenses occasioned by the transfer shall be charged to the detaining Power.

ARTICLE 27.
Belligerents May Utilize the labor of able prisoners of war, according to their rank and aptitude, officers and persons of equivalent status excepted.
However, if officers or persons of equivalent status request suitable work, it shall be secured for them so far as is possible,

Noncommissioned officers who are prisoners of war shall only be required to do supervisory work, unless they expressly request a remunerative occupation.

Belligerents shall be bound, during the whole period of captivity, to allow to prisoners of war who are victims of accidents in connection with their work the enjoyment of the benefit of the provisions applicable to laborers of the same class according to the legislation of the detaining Power. With regard to prisoners of war to whom these legal provisions might not be applied by reason of the legislation of that Power, the latter undertakes to recommend to its legislative body all proper measures equitably to indemnify the victims.

ARTICLE 28.
The detaining Power shall assume entire responsibility for the maintenance, care, treatment and payment of wages of prisoners of war working for the account of private persons.

ARTICLE 29.
No prisoner of war may be employed at labors for which he is physically unfit.

ARTICLE 30.
The length of the day's work of prisoners of war, including therein the trip going and returning, shall not be excessive and must not, in any case, exceed that allowed for the civil workers in the region employed at the same work. Every prisoner shall be allowed a rest of twenty-four consecutive hours every week, preferably on Sunday.

ARTICLE 31.
Labor furnished by prisoners of war shall have no direct relation with war operations. It is especially prohibited to use prisoners for manufacturing and transporting arms or munitions of any kind or for transporting material intended for combatant units.

In case of violation of the provisions of the preceding paragraph, prisoners, after executing or beginning to execute the order, shall be free to have their protests presented through the mediation of the agents whose functions are set forth in Articles 43 and 44, or, in the absence of an agent, through the mediation of representatives of the protecting Power.

ARTICLE 34.
Prisoners of war shall not receive wages for work connected with the administration, management and maintenance of the camps.
Prisoners utilized for other work shall be entitled to wages to be fixed by agreements between the belligerents.
These agreements shall also specify the part which the camp administration may retain, the amount which shall belong to the prisoner of war and the manner in that amount shall be put at his disposal during the period of his captivity.
While awaiting the conclusion of the said agreements, payment for labor of prisoners shall be settled according to the rules given below:
a) Work done for the State shall be paid for in accordance with the rates in force for soldiers of the national army doing the same work, or, if none exists, according to a rate in harmony with the work performed.
b) When the work is done for the account of other public administrations or for private persons, conditions shall be regulated by agreement with the military authority.

The pay remaining to the credit of the prisoner shall be delivered to him at the end of his captivity. In case of death, it shall be forwarded through the diplomatic channel to the heirs of the deceased.

ARTICLE 36.
Each of the belligerents shall periodically determine the number of letters and postal cards per month which prisoners of war of the various classes shall be allowed to send, and shall inform the other belligerent of this number. These letters and cards shall be transmitted by post by the shortest route. They may not be delayed or retained for disciplinary reasons.

Within a period of not more than one week after his arrival at the camp, and likewise in case of sickness, every prisoner shall be enabled to write his family a postal card informing it of his capture and of the state of his health. The said postal cards shall be forwarded as rapidly as possible and may not be delayed in any manner.

As a general rule, correspondence of prisoners shall be written in their native language.
Belligerents may allow correspondence in other languages.

ARTICLE 39.
Prisoners of war shall be allowed to receive shipments of books individually, which may be subject to censorship.

Representatives of the protecting Powers and duly recognized and authorized aid societies may send books and collections of books to the libraries of prisoners' camps. The transmission of these shipments to libraries may not be delayed under the pretext of censorship difficulties.

ARTICLE 40.
Censorship of correspondence must be effected within the shortest possible time. Furthermore, inspection of parcels post must be effected under proper conditions to guarantee the preservation of the products which they may contain and, if possible, in the presence of the addressee or an agent duly recognized by him.

Prohibitions of correspondence promulgated by the belligerents for military or political reasons, must be transient in character and as short as possible.

ARTICLE 43.
In every place where there are prisoners of war, they shall be allowed to appoint agents entrusted with representing them directly with military authorities and protecting Powers. This appointment shall be subject to the approval of the military authority.
The agents shall be entrusted with the reception and distribution of collective shipments. Likewise, in case the prisoners should decide to organize a mutual assistance system among
themselves, this organization would be in the sphere of the agents. Further, they may lend their offices to prisoners to facilitate their relations with the aid societies mentioned in Article 78. In camps of officers and persons of equivalent status, the senior officer prisoner of the highest rank shall be recognized as intermediary between the camp authorities and the officers and persons of equivalent status who are prisoners. For this purpose, he shall have the power to appoint a prisoner officer to assist him as an interpreter during the conferences with the camp authorities.

ARTICLE 50.
Escaped prisoners of war who are retaken before being able to rejoin their own army or to leave the territory occupied by the army which captured them shall be liable only to disciplinary punishment.
Prisoners who, after having succeeded in rejoining their army or in leaving the territory occupied by the army which captured them, may again be taken prisoners, shall not be liable to any punishment on account of their previous flight.
APPENDIX D

Several photos from World War I with captions.
Picturing depicting the transfer of enemy aliens to Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia. Image courtesy of historicalfindings.
Postcard with images of Fort McPherson 1917-1920. Image courtesy of Paul Wright.
Print of Enemy Aliens before transfer to Fort Oglethorpe in 1918 and imprisoned sailors at Fort McPherson. Image courtesy of Troy Ylitalo.
Sailor from the Kronprinz Wilhelm while interned at Fort McPherson. Image courtesy of historicalfindings.
Sailors from U58 while imprisoned at Fort McPherson during WWI. All images courtesy of John Malam and [www.brothersatwar.co.uk](http://www.brothersatwar.co.uk).
APPENDIX E

ART FROM OGLETHORPE

Found on a family website, these photos are of art created at Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, during a period of internment. Please follow this link to see photos in original format: 
APPENDIX F

Photos, with captions, of prisoners of war in America during World War II.
German Prisoners Study Democracy In Georgia

A German prisoner of war (standing), a former lawyer from Cassel, Germany, lectures to a class of fellow German prisoners enrolled in studying American Democracy at Fort Benning, Ga. More than 7,500 prisoners are enrolled in the school which teaches only democracy. All volunteered for the study, which has lectures twice weekly. They have spent $12,000 out of their earnings to buy text books. During the day, the "students" work on Georgia and Alabama farms.

Newspaper clipping of classroom in prisoner of war camps. Image courtesy of the Spartanburg Herald.
German prisoner of war in the canteen at Camp Wheeler, Tracy O’Neal Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University.
Prisoner quarters at Camp Wheeler, Tracy O’Neal Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University.
Prisoner of war at Camp Wheeler, Tracy O’Neal Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University.
Prisoner of war at Camp Wheeler, Tracy O’Neal Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University.
Prisoner of war at Camp Wheeler, Tracy O’Neal Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University.
Prisoner of war at Camp Wheeler, Tracy O’Neal Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University.
Monument in Chattanooga National Cemetery honoring German prisoners of war. Chattanooga National Cemetery, as printed in Gerry Depken and Julie Powell’s *Fort Oglethorpe*. 