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**GREAT WAR, FLAWED PEACE,
AND THE LASTING LEGACY
OF WORLD WAR I**

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THE UNITED STATES
WORLD WAR ONE
CENTENNIAL COMMISSION

PRITZKER
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NHD
NATIONAL
HISTORY DAY

ALIEN ENEMIES DETAINED

GERMAN AMERICANS

IN WORLD WAR I



GUIDING QUESTION: How did U.S. involvement in World War I impact German Americans?

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WHY?

My grandparents often addressed how the German American communities they grew up in changed because of World War I. German was no longer spoken as widely at home, at church, or in school. I wanted to pursue a lesson based on the German American experience at home during World War I and also address German internment.

OVERVIEW

Students will analyze primary documents and video footage related to German American internment to determine the reasons why the government chose to label citizens as an “alien enemy.” Secondary source articles will provide additional information about internment and the experiences of German Americans.

OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this activity, students will be able to

- › Describe the impact of World War I on German American communities in the United States;
- › Analyze sources relating to German internment; and
- › Compare experiences of German Americans during World War I.

STANDARDS CONNECTIONS

CONNECTIONS TO COMMON CORE

- › CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.3 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.
- › CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.2 Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.
- › CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3.B Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

DOCUMENTS USED

PRIMARY SOURCES

Film, U.S. Army, *Draft Mobilization Activities, 1917-1918*
National Archives and Records Administration (24614)
<https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/draft-mobilization-activities>

Otto E. Radke’s Oath of Enlistment in the National Guard
National Archives and Records Administration
<https://www.archives.gov/files/publications/prologue/2014/summer/germans.pdf>

Photograph, *Mrs. Carl Muck, wife of the former leader of the Boston Symphony Orchestra after registering as an alien enemy*, July 8, 1918
National Archives and Records Administration (165-WW-157A-6)
<https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/carl-muck-arrest>

SECONDARY SOURCES

Mary J. Manning, “Being German, Being American,” 2014 *Prologue*
<https://www.archives.gov/files/publications/prologue/2014/summer/germans.pdf>

Claire Prechtel Kluskens, “Internment of Enemy Aliens During World War I,” 2017
National Genealogical Society Magazine
<https://twelvekey.files.wordpress.com/2017/12/ngsmagazine2017-04.pdf>

MATERIALS

- > Alien Enemies Detained: German Americans in World War I Handout
- > Computer with internet capability to access film clip of *Draft Mobilization Activities, 1917-1918*
- > Projector

ACTIVITY PREPARATION

- > Make one copy of the following for each student:
 - » Alien Enemies Detained: German Americans in World War I Handout;
 - » "Being German, Being American" article; and
 - » "Internment of Enemy Aliens During World War I" article.
- > Set up classroom technology and cue clip of *Draft Mobilization Activities, 1917-1918* to 22:53.
- > Test all online resources before class.

PROCEDURE

ACTIVITY ONE: REGISTERING AS AN ALIEN ENEMY (10 MINUTES)

- > Project the photograph *Mrs. Carl Muck...* in the front of the room. Read the caption at the bottom of the webpage with students.
 - » Ask students what internment is and if they have heard of this term before. Some may have heard of Japanese American internment during World War II.
 - » The federal government registered around half a million "enemy alien" civilians and sent approximately 6,000 men and a few women to internment camps. Mrs. Muck's husband, Dr. Carl Muck, was a renowned musician and leader of the Boston Symphony before he was classified as an enemy alien. He was sent to an internment camp at Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, along with 29 members of his orchestra, and was ultimately deported.
- > Ask the students:
 - > *Why do you think the U.S. government labeled German Americans as enemy aliens and why would they be forced to register?*
 - > *Why would the U.S. government send German American citizens to internment camps? Why do you think men were mainly targeted for internment?*
 - > *What do you think life was like for German Americans in internment camps?*

ACTIVITY TWO: INTERNMENT CAMPS (15 MINUTES)

- > Tell students that they will watch a short film clip showing German internment camps at Fort McPherson and Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia.
- > Explain that after watching the clip, students will answer questions related to what they observed in their student handout.
- > Show students the film clip *Draft and Mobilization Activities, 1917-1918*, from 22:53 to 23:47. The text that flashes says
 - » "Atlanta, GA. Scene at the internment camp at Ft. McPherson. Uncle Sam treats his prisoners humanely. Will Germany do the same?"
 - » "Ample food and supplies are provided for the men."
 - » "The Kaiser's goat is also interned."
 - » "Camp #2 Fort Oglethorpe, where 1500 enemy aliens and prisoners of war will ultimately be interned."
 - » "Five 50 ft. towers hold survey of the entire prison camp. Each is equipped with a machine gun- Sentries within are armed with rifle and shotgun."
 - » "A double line of barbed wire fence, 10 ft. high, is patrolled [sic] by armed sentries at night."
- > Give students five minutes to answer questions related to the video clip in their student handout.
- > Ask students to share answers to the following questions:
 - » *Who do you think produced this video footage?*
 - » *Why do you think it was created and who do you think was the intended audience?*
 - » *What did you observe internees doing?*
 - » *What do you find interesting about the text added to the video footage?*
 - » *What do you think life was like for German Americans in internment camps? Does the video change your previous answer? If so, how?*

ACTIVITY THREE: TWO GERMAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCES DURING WORLD WAR I (25 MINUTES)

- › For this activity, students will compare the experience of a German American internee with that of a German American who volunteered for the U.S. Army.
 - › Divide students in groups of three or four students each.
 - › Pass out a copy of “Internment of Enemy Aliens During World War I” by Claire Prechtel Kluskens and a copy of “Being German, Being American” by Mary J. Manning to each group.
 - › Instruct each group to read an article and then complete the chart in their student handout with information from that article. Students should then repeat the same process with the second article.
 - › Give students 25 minutes to complete reading the articles and answer the questions in their student handbook.
 - › Ask students the following questions as a whole class:
 - › *How did the experiences of John Sattler and Otto Radke differ? How were they similar?*
 - › *Did John Sattler commit a crime or was he exercising his Constitutional right of free speech?*
 - › *Why do you think Otto Radke decide to enlist in the U.S. Army? Could it have protected his family from persecution and possible internment?*

ASSESSMENT

- › Students will write a letter from the point of view of a member of John Sattler’s family petitioning that he be released from his internment camp. Students should use information in the article about Sattler’s situation to argue their case for his release and may also use the petition to Attorney General Palmer as a model.

METHODS FOR EXTENSION

- › Students with more interest in the impact of World War I on German American communities in the United States may research additional examples of changes that took place and find more examples of individual experiences that can be added to the German Americans chart in the student handbook.
- › Students with more interest in the broad history of World War I can explore the World War I Interactive Timeline Experience at <https://abmc.gov>. Students could also visit The National World War I Museum in Kansas City, Missouri, which offers an extensive collection of artifacts and documents related to the war.

ALIEN ENEMIES DETAINED: GERMAN AMERICANS IN WORLD WAR I



National Archives and Records Administration (165-WW-157A-6)

July 18, 1918

Mrs. Carl Muck, wife of the former leader the Boston Symphony Orchestra after registering as an alien enemy. On her right is Chas. A. Ellis who tried to protect her from the cameramen and the crowd which surrounded the police station where she had just registered. Her property was seized by the U.S. Government. Dr. Carl Muck her husband is interned at Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia.

1. What does "internment" mean?

2. Have you heard this term before?

3. Why do you think the U.S. government labeled German Americans as "enemy aliens" and why would they be forced to register?

4. Why would the U.S. government send German American citizens to internment camps? Why do you think men were mainly targeted for internment?

5. What do you think life was like for German Americans in internment camps?

DRAFT AND MOBILIZATION ACTIVITIES, 1917-1918

A short video clip showing German internment camps at Fort McPherson and Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia.

The text that flashes says

- > "Atlanta, GA. Scene at the internment camp at Ft. McPherson. Uncle Sam treats his prisoners humanely. Will Germany do the same?"
- > "Ample food and supplies are provided for the men."
- > "The Kaiser's goat is also interned."
- > "Camp #2 Fort Oglethorpe, where 1500 enemy aliens and prisoners of war will ultimately be interned."
- > "Five 50 ft. towers hold survey of the entire prison camp. Each is equipped with a machine gun- Sentries within are armed with rifle and shotgun."
- > "A double line of barbed wire fence, 10 ft. high, is patrolled [sic] by armed sentries at night."

1. Who do you think produced this video footage?

2. Why do you think it was created and who do you think was the intended audience?

3. What did you observe internees doing?

4. What do you find interesting about the text added to the video footage?

5. What do you think life was like for German Americans in internment camps? Does the video change your previous answer? If so, how?

TWO GERMAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCES DURING WORLD WAR I

Compare the experience of a German American internee (John Sattler) with that of a German American (Otto Radke) who volunteered for the U.S. Army:

	JOHN SATTLER	OTTO RADKE
What connection did these men have to Germany?		
Where did they live at the outbreak of World War I?		
What was their occupation?		
What happened to them after the start of the war?		



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