

★

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

★



THE UNITED STATES
WORLD WAR ONE
CENTENNIAL COMMISSION

PRITZKER
MILITARY
FOUNDATION

NHD
NATIONAL
HISTORY DAY

ENGLISH ONLY

A WARTIME NECESSITY OR AN ACT OF INTOLERANCE?



GUIDING QUESTION: Was Iowa's 1918 Babel Proclamation necessary to promote national security during World War I or was it an unjustified act of intolerance?

AUTHOR

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Nashua-Plainfield High School
Nashua, Iowa

WHY?

This lesson plan addresses an ongoing historical controversy concerning English language requirements in the United States. During times of conflict, national security concerns have inspired the establishment of government restrictions toward foreign-born residents. This lesson promotes a thoughtful, evidence-based examination of this issue, its effects on immigrants, and its appropriateness during World War I and today.

OVERVIEW

Using primary source documents from the University of Iowa, the Ding Darling Foundation, and the State Historical Society of Iowa, students will gather evidence to determine whether requiring the use of English language only during wartime is a justified act needed to promote national security and unity or an unjustified act of intolerance.

OBJECTIVES

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

- > Identify arguments for and against requiring the use of English language only during times of war; and
- > Take and defend a position concerning English language requirements during wartime.

STANDARDS CONNECTIONS

CONNECTIONS TO COMMON CORE

- > CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2 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.RH.9-10.6 Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

DOCUMENTS USED

PRIMARY SOURCES

Cartoon, Ding Darling, "Where he can be kept out of mischief?," November 21, 1917

Jay N. 'Ding' Darling Wildlife Society, University of Iowa
<http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm/ref/collection/ding/id/730>

Letter, Bernice Nicoll to John H. Winterbottom, April 12, 1918
Spirit Lake Public Library Correspondence, State Historical Society of Iowa (Ms 74, box 7)

Letter, Federal State Director, to Frank Hanson, April 26, 1918
Metcalf - C.N.D. Correspondence, State Historical Society of Iowa (Ms 74, box 7, folder 10)

Letter, H.E. Morrow to Mr. Metcalf, January 31, 1918
Metcalf - C.N.D. General Correspondence, State Historical Society of Iowa (Ms 74, box 7, folder 3)

Letter, L.D. Inman to H.J. Metcalf, February 14, 1918
Metcalf - C.N.D. Correspondence, State Historical Society of Iowa (Ms 74, box 7, folder 4)

Letter, Pastor Orthner to the State Council of Defense, April 22, 1918
Metcalf - C.N.D. Correspondence, State Historical Society of Iowa (Ms 74, box 7, folder 9)

Letter, Secretary Iowa Council National Defense to Sam T. White, April 22, 1918
Metcalf - C.N.D. Correspondence, State Historical Society of Iowa (Ms 74, box 7, folder 9)

Letter, Secretary Iowa Council National Defense to Superintendent Crozier, April 3, 1918
Metcalf - C.N.D. Correspondence, State Historical Society of Iowa (Ms 74, box 7, folder 7)

William Harding, The Babel Proclamation, May 23, 1918
State Historical Society of Iowa
<https://iowaculture.gov/sites/default/files/history-education-pss-immigration-babelproclamation-pdf.pdf>

SECONDARY SOURCES

Nancy Derr, "The Babel Proclamation," *Iowa Heritage Illustrated*, Summer & Fall 2004
State Historical Society of Iowa
<https://germansiniowa.files.wordpress.com/2016/09/derr-babel-proclamation-iowa-heritage-illustrated2004.pdf>

MATERIALS

- > Document Analysis Worksheet
- > Writing Assessment Rubric
- > Computer with internet capability
- > Whiteboard and markers or projection system

ACTIVITY PREPARATION

- > Divide the class into groups of three to four students each.
- > Make one copy of each primary source document for each group of students or upload documents to an online classroom.
- > Make one copy of the Document Analysis Worksheet for each student or upload document to online classroom.
- > Teachers can familiarize themselves with the events being discussed by reading Nancy Derr's article, "The Babel Proclamation."
- > Set up classroom technology, if necessary.

PROCEDURE

ACTIVITY ONE: INTRODUCTION (20 MINUTES)

- > Ask students to turn to a partner and discuss the following question for two minutes: *Should people who live in the United States be required to speak English? Why or why not?*
- > Debrief the question prompt as a whole class by doing a whip-around, asking each student to share his/her position and one supporting reason. List reasons on a T-chart posted on a whiteboard or projection screen.
- > Distribute a Document Analysis Worksheet to each student.
- > Project the Ding Darling cartoon, "Where he can be kept out of mischief?"

- > Explain to students that cartoonist Ding Darling drew and published this cartoon in 1918. Ask students, *What major world event was going on in 1918?* (World War I). Tell students to keep this information in mind when analyzing the cartoon.
- > Ask students, *Who can you identify in the cartoon? What visual clues helped you reach that determination?*
- > Examine the words in the conversation bubble and on the bench. *What is being implied by the spoken words and labels?*
- > Ask students to predict, *On the basis of this cartoon, how do you think German immigrants were treated during World War I? Explain your answer.*
- > Direct students to fill out the Document Analysis Worksheet for each document they will examine.
- > Instruct students to fill out the Document Analysis Worksheet for the Ding Darling cartoon and compare and contrast their information with a partner.

ACTIVITY TWO: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS (45-60 MINUTES)

- > Organize students into small groups of three to four students each.
- > Explain to students that they will be examining nine additional primary source documents pertaining to the social climate during World War I, beginning with the Babel Proclamation.
 - > Direct each group to designate one student to read the Babel Proclamation aloud and then discuss and record as a group.
- > Instruct students to follow the same procedure to carefully read each of the remaining eight documents in order to identify document type, date, and author and determine the nature of the document's message. Students should summarize each document's argument in the appropriately labeled columns on the worksheet.

ASSESSMENT

- > Assign the Written Assessment found on the last page of the Document Analysis Worksheet. Students should complete this individually.
- > Explain to students that their letter to the editor assignment should help the reader to understand the central arguments for and against foreign language restrictions during wartime, while putting forth the logic of their own evidence-based position on this issue.
- > The Writing Assessment Rubric can be used to score the essay.

METHODS FOR EXTENSION

- > Students with more interest in this topic can research other states to learn about their laws and actions concerning foreign language during wartime or students can research other wars in history and their associated foreign language protocols.
- > Students who want to learn more about this debate in Iowa can read Nancy Derr's article, "The Babel Proclamation."

CARTOON

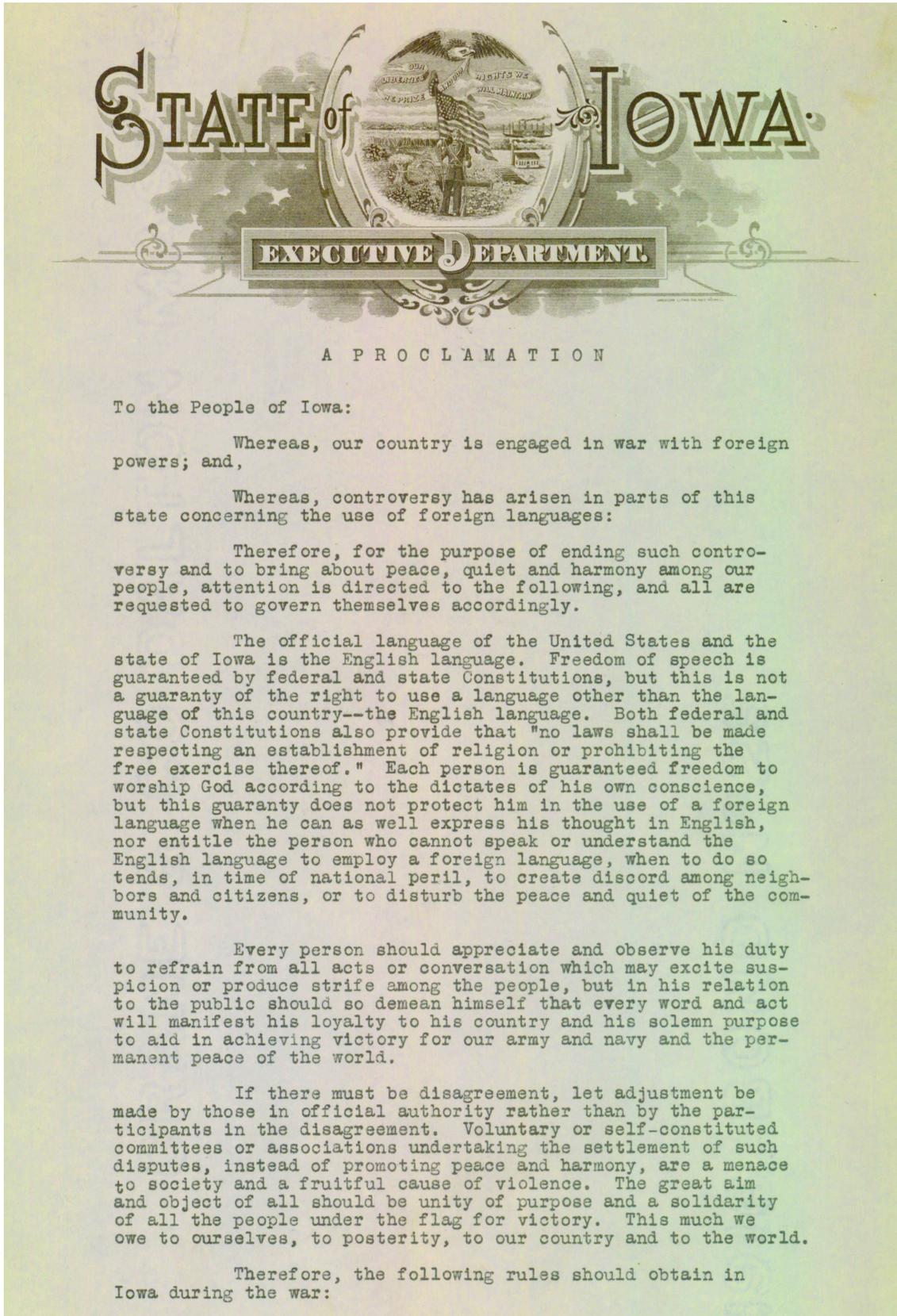
DING DARLING, "WHERE HE CAN BE KEPT OUT OF MISCHIEF?," NOVEMBER 21, 1917
JAY N. 'DING' DARLING WILDLIFE SOCIETY, UNIVERSITY OF IOWA



Courtesy of the Jay N. 'Ding' Darling Wildlife Society

PROCLAMATION

WILLIAM HARDING, THE BABEL PROCLAMATION, MAY 23, 1918
STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA



To the People of Iowa:

Whereas, our country is engaged in war with foreign powers; and,

Whereas, controversy has arisen in parts of this state concerning the use of foreign languages:

Therefore, for the purpose of ending such controversy and to bring about peace, quiet and harmony among our people, attention is directed to the following, and all are requested to govern themselves accordingly.

The official language of the United States and the state of Iowa is the English language. Freedom of speech is guaranteed by federal and state Constitutions, but this is not a guaranty of the right to use a language other than the language of this country--the English language. Both federal and state Constitutions also provide that "no laws shall be made respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Each person is guaranteed freedom to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience, but this guaranty does not protect him in the use of a foreign language when he can as well express his thought in English, nor entitle the person who cannot speak or understand the English language to employ a foreign language, when to do so tends, in time of national peril, to create discord among neighbors and citizens, or to disturb the peace and quiet of the community.

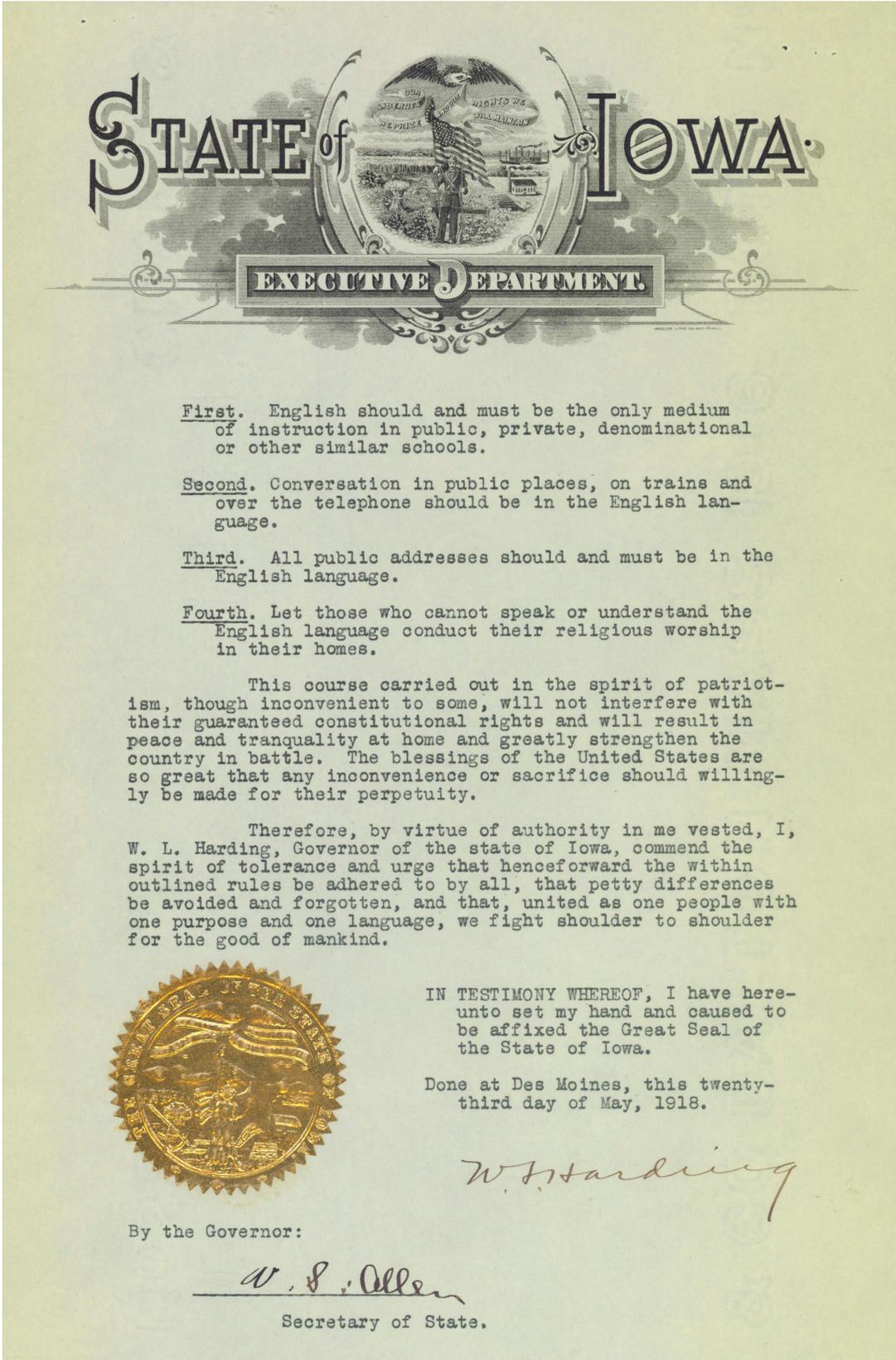
Every person should appreciate and observe his duty to refrain from all acts or conversation which may excite suspicion or produce strife among the people, but in his relation to the public should so demean himself that every word and act will manifest his loyalty to his country and his solemn purpose to aid in achieving victory for our army and navy and the permanent peace of the world.

If there must be disagreement, let adjustment be made by those in official authority rather than by the participants in the disagreement. Voluntary or self-constituted committees or associations undertaking the settlement of such disputes, instead of promoting peace and harmony, are a menace to society and a fruitful cause of violence. The great aim and object of all should be unity of purpose and a solidarity of all the people under the flag for victory. This much we owe to ourselves, to posterity, to our country and to the world.

Therefore, the following rules should obtain in Iowa during the war:

PROCLAMATION

WILLIAM HARDING, THE BABEL PROCLAMATION, MAY 23, 1918
STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA



LETTER

H.E. MORROW TO MR. METCALF, JANUARY 31, 1918
HERBERT J. METCALF PAPERS, 1910-1919, STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

HARRY EARL MORROW
PASTOR METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
STATE CENTER, IOWA

1 31 18

Dear Mr Metcalf:

I wish a little advice or light as you may see fit to give. I am pastor of a Methodist Church here in State Center. About five miles north of town there is a German Lutheran Church, and the pastor of that Church has for some years come to town every second Sunday afternoon and held services in the German tongue in our Church building for the people of his congregation who live in town. There is now a little kick by a few about this, and insist that if we are good Americans and patriotic Americans we will stop them holding services in the German language. The complainers, however, are not in our Church nor any other Church, and never go to Church, and I do not care about ~~them~~ their notions very much, but it caused me to wonder if it is the right and patriotic thing for a good American Church to allow its building used by people who hold service in the German language. I would like to know what is the principle that should govern a Church in such a case. I have noticed in the dailies where several Churches under similar circumstances have forbidden the use of the German language in their building. Hoping this is not imposing too much on your other duties,

I remain yours cordially,

H. E. Morrow

Mr H. J. Metcalf,
Des Moines Ia.
State House.

LETTER

L.D. INMAN TO H.J. METCALF, FEBRUARY 14, 1918

HERBERT J. METCALF PAPERS, 1910-1919, STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

Marble Rock, Iowa. February , 14 th. 1918.

Hon H.J. Metcalf .
Chairman State Council Defense .
Des Moines .

Dear Mr. Metcalf :- The activity of the " Pro German " element in this part of Floyd County has caused the loyal Americans to take preliminary steps toward the organization of a " Union League " .

The Men of suitable age would like to organize a company of " Home Guards " , - They have asked me as the local member of the " Council of Defense " , to secure the necessary instructions for such organization , and would like you to kindly cause such to be sent , also to tell their duties , powers and limitations .

When we have the witnesses against traitorous and Pro-German talk , what are the officers , locally , and in County who have power to arrest him . Must information first be sworn against him and the warrant for arrest first be secured ?

Please cause reply to be sent so we may have it by the 19th. inst .

*Very cordially,
L.D. Inman.*

LETTER

V.M. DIXON TO JOHN H. WINTERBOTTOM, APRIL 5, 1918
HERBERT J. METCALF PAPERS, 1910-1919, STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

C. O. P. Y.

Iowa State College Library,
Ames, Iowa.

Ames, Iowa.
April 5th.
1918.

Mr. John H. Winterbottom,
120 W. Adams St.,
Chicago, Illinois.

My dear Mr. Winterbottom:-

At the request of Mr. H. J. Metcalf,
Secretary of the State Council for National
Defense, I am sending you the following list of
books which we have withdrawn from our shelves
because in our opinion they are pro-German.

Harris, Frank - England or Germany?
Hinschberg - The War and America.
Kiddaway, Julius - Whose Sin is the World War?
Reventlow - Vampires of the Continent.
Bernardi - Germany and the Next War.

Yours very truly,

Signed: V. M. Dixon.

Assistant Librarian.

D/c

LETTER

SECRETARY IOWA COUNCIL NATIONAL DEFENSE TO SUPERINTENDENT CROZIER, APRIL 3, 1918
HERBERT J. METCALF PAPERS, 1910-1919, STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

April 3, 1918

Superintendent Crozier,
Public Schools,
Ogden, Iowa.

Dear Mr. Crozier:

We are in receipt of complaint from your city regarding the teaching of German in the public schools of Ogden.

My informant tells me that in defiance of orders to the contrary, you have instituted a new class in German in the schools.

The State Council of Defense at a recent meeting went on record as opposed to this. Public opinion, as you know, is violently opposed to this idea. State Superintendent of Public Instruction Dayas is very much against the teaching of German in the public schools.

It is not the intention to work a hardship on pupils who are in their second year of the study of German, but we do insist that no new classes be started.

I would ask that you kindly write me at your very early convenience as to where you stand in this respect. Thanking you for this courtesy, I am,

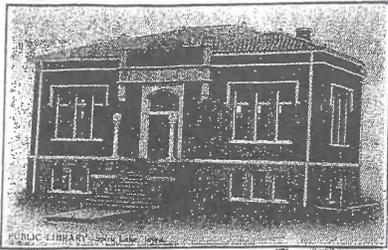
Cordially yours,

Sec'y Iowa Council Nat'l Defense

HJM:ED

LETTER

BERNICE NICOLL TO JOHN H. WINTERBOTTOM, APRIL 12, 1918
HERBERT J. METCALF PAPERS, 1910-1919, STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA



F. T. TOMPKINS
President

MRS. T. E. BURT
Secretary

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Spirit Lake Public Library

BERNICE NICOLL, Librarian

Spirit Lake, Iowa, Ap. 12 1918

Mr. John H. Winterbottom,
120 W. Adams St.,
Chicago, Ill.,

Dear Sir,

In reply to yours of the Ap. 1st will say
we do not have any books favoring Germany
interest in the present war. Also I have not
seen any.

Very truly yours,
Bernice Nicoll Librarian
Spirit Lake, Iowa.

Mr Metcalf sounds
Bernice was bit
a little more
pro-German to me.
HJ

LETTER

PASTOR ORTHNER TO THE STATE COUNCIL OF DEFENSE, APRIL 22, 1918
HERBERT J. METCALF PAPERS, 1910-1919, STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

Sheffield Iowa April 22nd 1918. 8

Secretary of the State Council of Defense
Des Moines Iowa

Dear Sir:-

According a resolution of the Franklin Council of Defense we are requested to discontinue the use of the German language in our church.

The German Baptist Church of Sheffield Iowa has many members who can not understand sufficient American language to have the spiritual benefit of the service as they should have. Some parts of the service and prayer meetings are rendered impossible.

The members of the church are loyal and supported the Government in every way and all subscribed the large sums for the Third Liberty Loan. They will be thankful and do even more if the use of the German language is allowed to them in public worship.

It is not the question of preserving the German language in our church for we have long ago discontinued to teach German to our children as it was done previous our entry into war with Germany. The children and young people are getting fast away from the use of the German language but the aged people should not be deprived of the benefit of worship.

The undersigned are requested by the order of the church to appeal to the State Council of Defense and secure if possible permission to have at least one service in the German language on Sunday or partly English and German.

U. Orthner Pastor.

O. Kitchin Secretary

LETTER

SECRETARY IOWA COUNCIL NATIONAL DEFENSE TO SAM T. WHITE, APRIL 22, 1918
HERBERT J. METCALF PAPERS, 1910-1919, STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

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April 22, 1918

Mr. Sam T. White,
Chairman County Defense Council,
Davenport, Iowa.

Dear Mr. White:

With reference to your letter of some days ago, regarding bank draft sent us from German Savings Bank at Tripoli this state.

I am today in receipt of a letter from these people, in which they profess surprise that the German coat of arms appeared on their paper; they say that they never noticed this coat of arms on this draft until it was called to their attention by this Department. They tell us that since the receipt of my letter that they have cancelled a large order for these drafts in St. Louis and are having the coat of arms removed; they also say that they are thinking of changing the name of their bank.

So it seems that our little campaign may result in some good.

I thank you sincerely for calling my attention to this matter, and will keep you posted as to further developments. Wish you would also keep your eye open and see that this bank changes the form of draft.

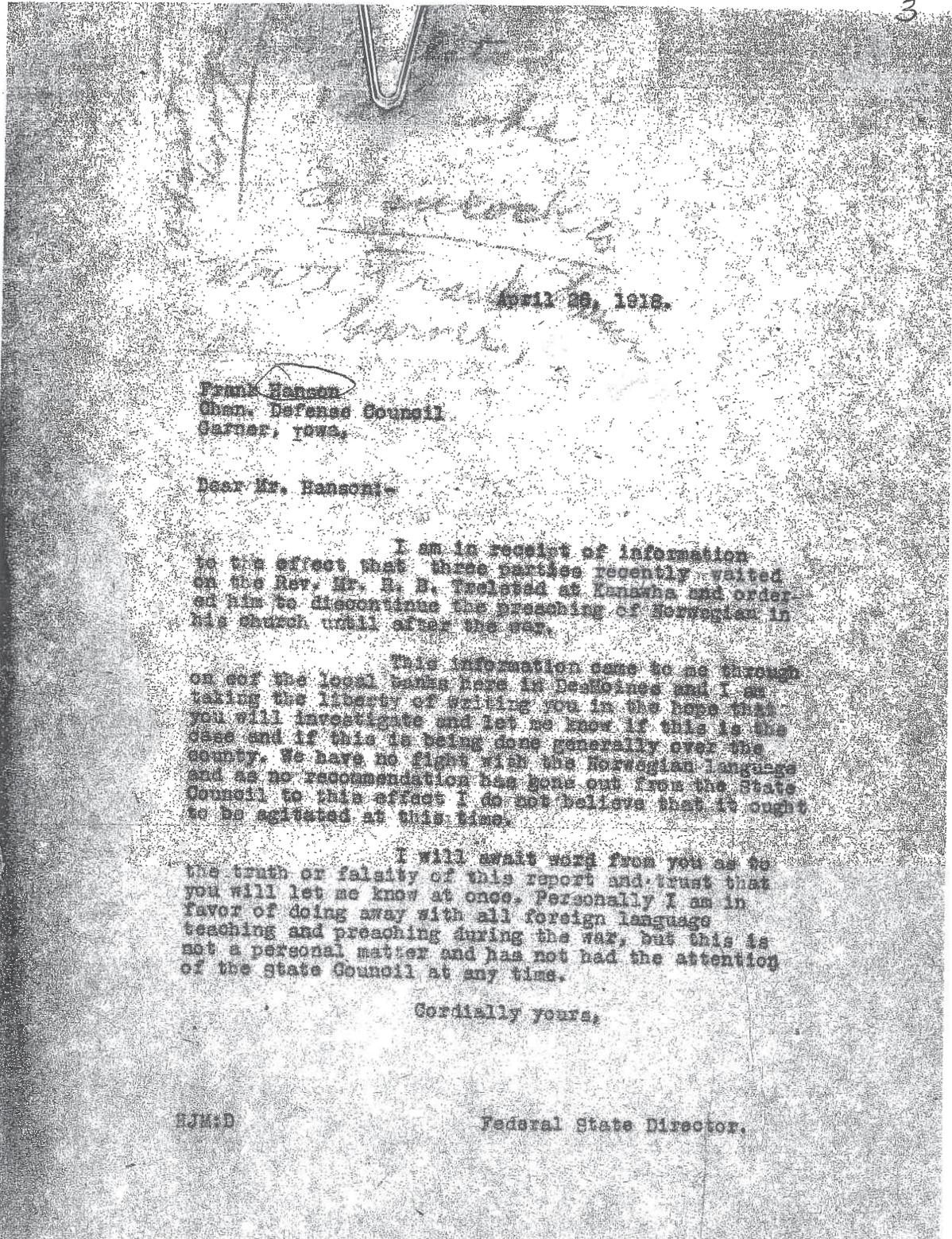
Cordially yours,

Sec'y Iowa Council Nat'l Defense

HJM ED

LETTER

FEDERAL STATE DIRECTOR, TO FRANK HANSON, APRIL 26, 1918
HERBERT J. METCALF PAPERS, 1910-1919, STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA



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Frank Hanson
Chairman, Defense Council
Garner, Iowa.

Dear Mr. Hanson:-

I am in receipt of information to the effect that three parties recently visited on the Rev. Mr. B. B. Inghelstad at Kanawha and ordered him to discontinue the preaching of Norwegian in his church until after the war.

This information came to me through one of the local banks here in Des Moines and I am taking the liberty of writing you in the hope that you will investigate and let me know if this is the case and if this is being done generally over the county. We have no fight with the Norwegian language and as no recommendation has gone out from the State Council to this effect I do not believe that it ought to be agitated at this time.

I will await word from you as to the truth or falsity of this report and trust that you will let me know at once. Personally I am in favor of doing away with all foreign language teaching and preaching during the war, but this is not a personal matter and has not had the attention of the state Council at any time.

Cordially yours,

HJM:D

Federal State Director.

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

Directions: You have access to ten sources (one cartoon, one proclamation, and eight letters). All originated in Iowa in 1918. Your job is to examine each document, discuss it as a group, and then identify and explain the message of the document.

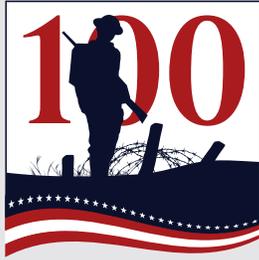
AUTHOR	DATE AND TYPE OF DOCUMENT (CARTOON, LETTER, PROCLAMATION)	AUTHOR'S MESSAGE CONCERNING USE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE DURING WARTIME
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DOCUMENT ANALYSIS WORKSHEET (CON'T)

AUTHOR	DATE AND TYPE OF DOCUMENT (CARTOON, LETTER, PROCLAMATION)	AUTHOR'S MESSAGE CONCERNING USE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE DURING WARTIME
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WRITING ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

	Advanced	Proficient	Basic	Emerging
Evidence	Cites evidence from three or more documents.	Cites evidence from two documents.	Cites evidence from one document.	Writing is based in generalities, not evidence.
Argumentation	Well-developed response that considers three or more perspectives on the issue of English-only laws.	Well-developed response that considers two perspectives on the issue of English-only laws.	Response is standard, includes minimal reference to more than one perspective on the issue of English-only laws.	Basic response that is limited to one perspective on the issue of English-only laws.



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