THE RISE AND IMPACT OF ANTI-GERMAN SENTIMENT
IN IOWA 1917-1921

An abstract of a Thesis by
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Drake University

The problem. This thesis attempts to find out exactly what happened to the German-Americans in Iowa in 1917-1921 and suggests reasons for the difficulties they experienced.

The procedure. The Des Moines Register served as a starting point as did many secondary works dealing with the period. Scanning the paper provided an overall view of life at the time. Bibliographies provided additional sources. Most local and church histories used are in the author's personal collection of such items and are available from the institutions themselves. The government propaganda items quoted are in the collection of Cowles library, Drake University.

The findings. During this period, everyone lived under a great deal of pressure from federal and local government. In Iowa, the Governor, by proclamation, forbade the use of any foreign language in school, church, or any public place. There was pressure to purchase Liberty Bonds and on the local level matters were often handled by "extra-legal" courts. Government propaganda was plentiful and did little to discourage anti-German feeling. Iowans of German birth or ancestry lived in every county of Iowa which insured their visibility in the state and their contact with other segments of the population. In some areas, competition between the groups existed and these factors added to the difficulties when war came. The indications are that the Germans were not disloyal and few cases involving them ever reached court.
THE RISE AND IMPACT OF ANTI-GERMAN SENTIMENT
IN IOWA, 1917-1921

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IN IOWA, 1917-1921

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Chapter 1

Introduction

At the mention of World War I most people picture an intense and rather lengthy military struggle that took place on the distant European continent. But war is not simply and totally a military action and World War I involved all the people of the United States as no conflict before had ever done. 1 The war lasted longer and called for efforts and materials greater than anticipated. 2 When war came, America was almost totally unprepared for the necessary military and industrial effort. Passage of a selective service act came almost immediately after the declaration. In order to finance the war, the tax burden increased tremendously with large incomes, profits, and estates bearing most of the load. A war industries board came into being which exercised control over the use of materials in industry, especially those in short supply. The director of this board, Bernard M. Baruch, became practically an "economic dictator" for the nation. A Good

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1Harvey Fish, Society and Thought in Modern America, A Social and Intellectual History of the American People from 1865 (2d ed., New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1962), Ch. IV.

administration, headed by Herbert Hoover, controlled production, manufacture, and distribution of foodstuffs, fuel, fertilizer and farm equipment. Railroads and shipping came under the control of the Shipping Board and Railroad Administration. Vessels were bought, seized, or requisitioned and the railroads operated with the nation's war needs as the top priority. A federal espionage act was passed in June, 1917, which forbade reports to aid the enemy, inciting rebellion among the armed forces or any attempt to obstruct operation of the draft. An additional section provided that the Postmaster General could deny use of the mail to publications he felt advocated treason, insurrection or forcible resistance to the law. The Federal government's power over thought and speech enlarged as the war continued. The Trading-with-the Enemy Act of October, 1917, gave the President power to censor international communications and the Postmaster General received broad powers of censorship over the foreign language press in America. A national Sedition Act, signed in May, 1918, forbade disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive remarks about the American form of government, flag, or military uniform and any statements intended to hinder the war effort. The Postmaster General received the power to deny the use of the mail to anyone he felt employed it to violate this Act.¹

Particularly concerned with America's entry into the war were the citizens of German birth and descent for it meant fighting their homeland and, in some cases, close relatives. At the same time they endured the distrust and fear of their neighbors here in America.

On the part of the native American there was often a firm conviction that our declaration of war carried an instant knowledge of English with it, and that all who persisted in speaking any other tongue after April 6, 1917 were either actual or potential "dis-loyalists" objects of merited suspicion and distrust; on the part of the overwhelming majority of aliens there was an almost passionate desire to serve America that was impeded at every turn by the meanness of chauvinism and the brutalities of prejudice, as well as the short-sightedness of ignorance.1

Although many German-Americans took pride in American citizenship, they kept a soft spot in their hearts for the land that gave them birth. "Loyalties are not necessarily exclusive"2 and so the retaining of some of the ways, social customs, religious practices, and the use of the German language did not diminish the loyalty of the German-Americans to the United States. Prior to the war, they had been described as "good men" who were "industrious, intelligent, honest, frugal, patriotic, and God-fearing" possessing qualities for good citizenship.3


In Iowa, as elsewhere, fears for the loyalty of those identified as German became apparent almost immediately, as did the desire to wipe out any vestiges of German culture or heritage that remained. The prevailing mood manifested itself in various ways, ranging from taunts, use of yellow paint, the changing of names, to actual attempts at lynching. Climaxing the hysteria of the time in Iowa, Governor W. L. Harding issued a proclamation on May 23, 1918, which forbade the use of any foreign language in schools, churches, on public transportation and over the telephone.¹

Beginning with the declaration of war on April 6, 1917, the German-Americans were viewed with distrust and suspicion. Examining the reasons for this sentiment necessitates first looking closely at the German-Americans residing in Iowa. Where they lived, why they came, and what they did once they were established in Iowa provides some insight into their difficulties during the war.

In 1917, the total population of the state was 2,358,066. Although all of the ninety-nine counties were classified as agricultural, 54.1 percent of the population lived in cities and towns. The foreign born numbered 364,169 or 11.2 percent of the population and 654,255 white

The native born population dominated the southern half of the state, while the northern tiers of counties contained a larger percentage of foreign born. The northern counties had opened for settlement about the time large numbers of German immigrants were arriving, thus the difference. Sioux County had the largest percentage of foreign born, followed by Lyon County. Large numbers of foreign born also resided in Audubon, Winnebago, Woodbury, Crawford, Buena Vista, Ida, Scott, and Shelby Counties. The largest group of foreign born came from Germany with 33.48 percent or 38,450 Iowans listing Germany as the place of their birth.\footnote{Ora Williams, ed., Census of Iowa 1815 (Des Moines: The Executive Council of the State of Iowa, 1815), pp. xv, xlii, xlv, xlvii, xlviii, lv.} Actually, while there was a significant number of German-Americans compared to other groups of foreign birth, they made up a small minority in the state. The maps on the following pages show the distribution of foreign-born in Iowa.\footnote{Ibid., pp. xlvii, xlv.}

Germans were among the first settlers in Iowa and continued to immigrate in large numbers throughout the nineteenth century. They came because of religious persecution, destructive wars, and oppressive governments in the homeland. In addition, revolutionary upheavals in Germany such as those
Figure 1. Part I. Nativity of population, native born persons of foreign or mixed parentage in each county of Iowa. (Cra Williams, ed., Census of Iowa 1915 (Des Moines: The Executive Council of the State of Iowa, 1915), p. xlvii).
Figure 1. Part II. Nativity of population, foreign born persons percent of total in each county of Iowa. (Ora Williams, ed., Census of Iowa 1915 (Des Moines: The Executive Council of the State of Iowa, 1915), p. xliii).
of 1830 and 1848, crop failures, and the transition from hand industry to machine production also encouraged Germans to immigrate. Since rivers provided the main avenues of transportation for the early settlers, Des Moines, Dubuque, and Davenport soon had large numbers of German immigrants. Then railroads opened Iowa for settlement during the mid-nineteenth century and the lure of land and opportunity brought many more German immigrants to Iowa.¹

Precisely associating Iowans with the German community is difficult because the third generation of German extraction is listed as native born. Furthermore some developed ties to the German community through marriage and the census did not indicate it.

Among the occupations of Iowans, agriculture contained the largest number with 236,473 thus employed.² Yet because of their patterns of settlement in both rural and urban areas, there is no way of knowing exactly how many Germans farmed or exactly what occupations the Germans engaged in.

German-Americans flourished before the war as did their organizations. A German-American Press Association existed in Iowa along with nine Landsmannschaftliche Verein (farmer's organizations), seventeen Turner, seventeen mutual

²Census, p. lxxvi.
aid, 120 cultural, twenty-five musical, twenty military, twenty-two fraternal, eighteen social, one journalistic, and one printers organization. Two daily papers and thirty-eight weekly papers were printed in German.¹

German-Americans retained their national identity partially through exclusive educational institutions. Private school enrollment in Iowa totaled 23,620 including children attending German schools. One private school, Dubuque German College, was definitely German.²

Certain religious denominations had a decidedly German character. The German Evangelical Synod had a membership of 3,034; Lutherans numbered 107,523; the Reformed Church in the United States counted 4,973; and Catholic totaled 206,701.³

These denominations claimed many of the Germans although Germans belonged to Methodist, Presbyterian and other groups, too. These religious groups and their ministers often served as focal points for the problems that resulted from the war.

A seemingly natural human tendency of people to stay with those whose language and customs were the same led to charges of clannishness. However, before the war examples of cooperation and mutual good will may be found. In one

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small town with no German language paper, but a number of German residents, the editor of the local paper frequently carried programs and items of interest to the Germans in their language on the front page alongside reports in English.¹

One group of Germans in Iowa merits special mention and that is the Amana Society. This communal society of approximately 1,500 members located fifteen miles west of Iowa City on 25,000 acres along the Iowa River sought almost total isolation from the outside world and spoke the German language almost exclusively. Furthermore, as religious pacifists they stood apart from society. Their ethnic origin and pacifism placed them in a particularly awkward position in 1917 since it was not legal for them to pay for a substitute to avoid the draft as they had during the Civil War.²

German-Americans were so much a part of life in Iowa that in many cases they cannot be separated from other residents. Only the broadest generalities can be drawn about them in some categories. Obviously, a largely rural county with many German residents would have many of them involved in farming. After April, 1917, intense hatred, abuse, and even physical violence was directed against

¹Baxter New Era, various issues prior to 1917.

German-Americans that continued throughout the war years and beyond. It cut people off from their heritage and failed to understand that they found it difficult, if not impossible, to believe their kinfolk in Germany had become "inhuman monsters" overnight.¹

On May 1, 1917, the Iowa legislature enacted a law designed to protect against subversion during the war. Section Two, which the German-Americans were frequently accused of violating, stated:

Any person who shall, in public or private, by speech, writing, printing, or any other mode or means, advocate the subversion or destruction by force of the government of the State of Iowa or the United States or attempt by speech, writing, or printing, or any other way whatever, to incite, abet, promote, or encourage hostility or opposition to the government of the State of Iowa or the United States, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.²

Before America entered the war a Council of National Defense was organized to prepare for the "exigencies" of war. After April, 1917, the council expanded to the state and local level. In Iowa, Governor Harding created a twenty-one member body. Liberty Loan Campaigns, Red Cross fund drives,


Army YMCA, and nearly every phase of work relating to the war effort received support from the council. The council's state committees and local bodies reached into each township in every county and enabled the council to perfect "an organization of tremendous power as a publicity and directing" agency throughout the state.

A certain amount of local prestige went with serving on the committees of the Council for Defense and it provided people in each community to keep an eye on, and an ear open to, what was being said and done there. This vigilance resulted in immediate and sometimes violent action if America's entry into the war or a war-related activity like the Red Cross received criticism, especially from a citizen with a German name and accent.

The German-Americans residing in Iowa were caught in a time of frantic activity directed toward winning the war and received much abuse both individually and collectively as a result. The feverish mood of the era heightened as, "Liberal ministers preached the jehad with full accompaniment of

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1. Marcus L. Hansen, Welfare Campaigns in Iowa (Iowa City: State Historical Society of Iowa, 1926), pp. 77-78. (The YMCA, nationally and in Iowa, created a special body with some of its own leaders and including officials associated with other groups to supervise their work with the army and navy. Funds and activities were separate from the regular organization.)

promised salvation to killers of the infidel, and this increased the awareness of the German-Americans as a distinct and separate group. Inoffensive people found gates and porches painted yellow because their names were German; patriotic night-riders inhabited the countryside; and a prevailing theory that the German language served to inculcate un-American ideas added to the chaos of the time.

Americans, including Iowans, responded to propaganda appeals and began hating the Germans. Dissent became dangerous to the safety and freedom of the dissenter and almost overnight everything German was stigmatized.

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4 Peterson, pp. 325-30.

Chapter 2

Changing Attitudes Toward the Germans in Iowa

Iowans reacted quickly to the declaration of war. On April 24, 1917, the Iowa legislature approved a law setting forth penalties for "exciting insurrection or sedition" or advocating the subversion ... of the government of the state or nation. This was considered so important immediate enactment took place and it came into effect May 1, 1917. The law called for a penitentiary term of not more than twenty years in addition to a fine for any attempt to incite insurrection or sedition. Any attempt to encourage opposition to the state or national government constituted a misdemeanor. Joining or attending meetings of any organization for the purpose of aiding opposition to the government was also a misdemeanor.¹ The tension of the times and the fears for the loyalty of Iowans are apparent in the rapid passage of the bill without a dissenting vote.²

This law placed the legal force of the state behind

¹Acts and Joint Resolutions Passed at the Regular Session of the 87th General Assembly of the State of Iowa, prepared for publication by W. R. Whitney (Des Moines: State of Iowa, 1917), p. 1405.

the drive to assure the loyalty of all Iowans. Now there was something to charge a person with if his speech or conduct could be considered detrimental to the unity deemed necessary for the war effort. The wartime interpretation of the law placed even reasonable and mild questioning of government aims or policy in the category of encouraging hostility or opposition to the government. While the law does not single out the German-Americans for any special consideration, since it applied to all equally, it seems likely the Germans, because of their birth and ancestry, felt its weight most of all.

Another early evidence of the change in attitude among Iowans toward anything German concerned the Des Moines Women's Club. The group had a German motto which was written and spoken at meetings in the German language. With the outbreak of the war much "spirited criticism and controversy" resulted and at the meeting of May 10, 1917, the decision was made to change it. In August, 1917, the club voted to accept the Anglicized version of the motto, "Discussion stimulated thought."

Incidents involving the war and the loyalties of Iowans whether German-Americans or not multiplied in the months after April, 1917. On May 11, Federal officials...

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1The Des Moines Register, May 10, 1917, p. 12; and personal letter to the author from Mrs. R. C. Richards, Historian, Des Moines Women's Club, October 24, 1972.
arrested Arthur Hartung, a former employee of the city railway, and Herman Kirch, a jeweler, and interned them at Fort Leavenworth. Both men were born in Germany and Kirch did not have American citizenship. No charges against them were revealed but their foreign birth received much emphasis in the press with the implication of disloyalty to the United States. 1

On May 15, 1917, a foreign laborer employed at the railroad yards in Des Moines was shot and killed by a soldier. According to the newspaper account, suspicion existed that the railroad employee had been involved in activities detrimental to the war effort. Three days later the soldier who pulled the trigger received exoneration from blame regarding the incident. 2 No further information about this case appeared in print leaving the impression it was not wise nor safe to be suspected of hindering war activities.

On May 31, 1917, a Creston area farmer, William Underwood, was arrested for remarks about President Wilson. 3 During the July 4 celebration at Earlham, someone discovered dynamite sticks under the bandstand resulting in the suggestion the Germans living in the area were responsible. 4 The statement President Wilson had been "bought" to declare war

2 Ibid., May 16, 1917, p. 1; and May 18, 1917, p. 1.
on Germany resulted in the detention of Fritz Scherer in Marshalltown on July 15.\footnote{\textit{Ibid}., July 15, 1917, p. 1.} Throughout the summer of 1917 similar incidents were reported from around the state ranging from towns as widely separated as Dubuque, Cherokee, Davenport and Hubbard.

Compelling anyone who criticized the government or failed to show proper respect for the flag to kiss the flag became common practice through these years. One of the first occurrences of this type involved a man, Leonard Kress of Dubuque, who was arrested by "militiamen" after making insulting remarks about the flag. Mr. Kress found it necessary to apologize and kiss the flag.\footnote{\textit{Ibid}., July 17, 1917, p. 10.}

Most of these incidents were dropped with no further mention of them. Typically, a man from Marshalltown was jailed and subsequently released because the Federal authorities failed to investigate.\footnote{\textit{Ibid}., August 1, 1917, p. 3.}

Alta, Iowa, was the scene of more serious trouble when a riot nearly took place there. Henry Blatzer, a naturalized German, expressed "treasonable sentiments." Allegedly he said should he be drafted into the service he would fight for the Kaiser. Mr. Blatzer's subsequent arrest and jailing at Storm Lake prevented violence.\footnote{\textit{Ibid}.}
The small Hardin County community of Hubbard with a number of German residents and a German Evangelical Church had "several near riots" caused by nailing flags on the homes of "known pro-Germans" and men were forced to kiss the flag. An effort to organize a "People's Council for Democracy and Peace" added to the tension in the community as it was evidently considered a pro-German organization.¹ The county newspaper there took a calm view of the situation in the town and the attempt to form the "People's Council." The editor stated that, "There are only a few real trouble makers at Hubbard but some who are really loyal at heart have been innocently drawn into this movement without knowing the gravity of what they were doing."²

A State Council for Defense was organized early in 1917 with the members appointed by the Governor. Lafayette County of Des Moines served as chairman.³ Governor Harding called a meeting February 11, 1917 to organize the County Councils for Defense throughout the state. County Chairman were named by him and they in turn selected township chairman. A local source claimed Jasper County led the way by organizing its county council in May, 1917.⁴ County sheriffs, county

¹ Ibid., August 22, 1917, p. 1.
⁴ Honor Roll, Jasper County, Iowa, 1917, 1918, 1919 (Boston: James J. Rhodes, 1926), p. 113-3.
attorneys, mayors and other local officials attended a Council meeting in Des Moines where Senator Cummins and Governor Harding outlined Iowa's policy regarding people who would make careless remarks about "Uncle Sam."¹

Governor Harding told the assembled officials, "The state government will be back of you in any move you may make to stop the mouths of disloyal citizens," and he also advocated the exclusive use of the American language in school, pulpit, and press. "There was a time when there could be a difference of opinion regarding Germany, but that time is passed," Senator Cummins told the group and references to "treasonable utterances" abounded.² On October 3, the Iowa Council for Defense stated they wanted a representative in every organization in the state including religious, patriotic, benevolent, and secret societies.³ As the Councils became better organized and more active, pressure on the Germans increased.

At Dunlap, Iowa, Nick Hoffman, a citizen of German descent was forced by a group of local citizens to march into town carrying the American flag, and to retract allegedly disrespectful remarks about the United States and the flag.⁴

¹The Des Moines Register, September 3, 1917, p. 2.
⁴Ibid., September 19, 1917, p. 4.
Several valuable business signs in German were torn down at Charter Oak during a celebration raising money for the Red Cross.\textsuperscript{1} Lisbon, a small town located near Cedar Rapids, advertised its annual sauerkraut festival by declaring it "American made" so no one would have to hesitate about eating it.\textsuperscript{2} Generally, for the duration of the war sauerkraut was referred to as "Liberty Cabbage."\textsuperscript{3}

In Black Hawk County difficulty arose with the Red Cross fund drive. Some kind of warning "branding the Red Cross solicitors as fakes" circulated particularly in the eastern section of the county. Many Germans lived in that area and refused to contribute\textsuperscript{4} which led others to believe the problem resulted from pro-German sentiments rather than a misunderstanding. A speech that was described only as "pro-German, anti-draft" given at the Davenport Opera House by Daniel Wallace on July 25, 1917, led to his arrest along with those who had arranged for the lecture.\textsuperscript{5}

Most of the incidents cited appeared in The Des Moines Register although undoubtedly more trouble spots arose around

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid., September 29, 1917, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., September 28, 1917, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{3}Cole, History of the People of Iowa, p. 151.
\textsuperscript{4}The Des Moines Register, October 1, 1917, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{5}Ibid., October 2, 1917, p. 1.
the state than came to the attention of this capitol-city paper or did not seem important enough for a paper of statewide circulation to print. While these items illustrate the mood of wartime, everyone in Iowa did not join in the hysterical anti-German feeling and The Des Moines Register's editorial for October 5, 1917, underscored this fact by stating, "We are one people in America when it comes to Americanism. That is what the test of ninety-nine of every hundred people of German ancestry is proving to us, and we ought to recognize it frankly and be fair about it."\(^1\)

However, charges continued. The Reverend John Reichert, pastor of the German Lutheran Church at Lowden and a citizen, Ernest Hier, were accused of making treasonable statements.\(^2\) At Audubon, a German preacher and school teacher, who had made several appearances before the County Council for Defense for alleged pro-German preaching and teaching, preached again in German. Members of his congregation delivered an ultimatum to him never to do so again.\(^3\) A charge of treasonable, contemptuous and disloyal utterances about government and Liberty Bonds was lodged against Joseph Jones of Cedar Rapids.\(^4\) The name is not German and the paper made no mention of his ancestry.

\(^{1}\)ibid., October 5, 1917, p. 6.
\(^{2}\)ibid., October 6, 1917, p. 4.
\(^{3}\)ibid., October 19, 1917, p. 4.
\(^{4}\)ibid., October 25, 1917, p. 4.
Tama County took upon itself the task of determining the loyalty or lack of it for each resident of the county with a patriotic census. Historical information for each individual was included, obviously to discover people either born in or with ancestors from Germany. The procedure announced included:

A complete card catalog or census of all inhabitants of Tama County, male and female, over 18 years of age, will be taken at once, the defense council decided yesterday. This catalog will contain various historical information including valuation of property of each individual, and also a complete record of each individual regarding his or her loyalty toward the war as manifested by their response to the Liberty Loan, Red Cross, and YMCA, and similar campaigns. . . . The object is to determine who are loyal Americans and who are not.

From Manchester came a report that Sam von Talge, a school teacher at Oak Grove, appeared before the justice of the peace for allegedly inciting hostilities against the United States government. At the hearing on September 25, State Superintendent of Schools, F. P. Walker warned von Talge the American flag should be flying over the school. At that time von Talge stated there was no rope to hoist it but after this was remedied the flag still did not fly. Testimony from some of von Talge's pupils alleged he had made the statement, "the President is a nobody or he wouldn't have allowed the war with Germany and the United States ought not to take property

belonging to those who stood up for Germany."\(^1\) Students also testified their instructor seemed to oppose the United States.\(^2\)

Violence nearly occurred at a Waterloo factory, the Galloway Spreader Works, when a worker there, Charles Herodson, made some alleged pro-German remarks. Supposedly Herodson said he would be satisfied if all American transports carrying soldiers across the sea would be sunk.\(^3\)

In Calhoun County, under the guise of friendly, helpful advice, the sheriff issued the following proclamation.

\[\ldots\] I (Sheriff R. H. Babcock) take this formal means of declaring to all foreign born residents that they will be protected in the ownership of their property and money and will be free from personal molestation, so long as they obey the laws of the state and nation.\[\ldots\] Let it be understood that every citizen owes undivided allegiance to the American flag. That each one is expected to loyally fulfill all obligations which citizenship and residence impose upon them and that any act however slight tending to give aid or comfort to the enemy is treason, for which severe penalties are provided in addition to that punishment which public opinion inflicts upon the memory of all traitors in all lands.\(^4\)

For all practical purposes, any possibility of trouble would be avoided by thus intimidating a segment of the population there.

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\(^1\)The Des Moines Register, October 31, 1917, p. 7.
\(^2\)Ibid., November 19, 1917, p. 7.
\(^3\)Ibid.
\(^4\)Pomroy Herald, April 12, 1917, F. 1.
A Pomeroy paper reported on November 29, that Guy
Harschbarger of Lake City paid a $100 fine on a charge of
casting contempt on the United States flag. In Sioux City,
the foyer of a theater got a coat of yellow paint because
the owner was charged with disloyalty. In Elliot, the home
of W. W. Adams was painted yellow because allegedly he felt
too much was being done for the soldiers and not enough for
the elderly so he had refused to buy war bonds.¹

The pastor of a German Evangelical Church at Pomeroy
was arrested on charges of violating the Federal Espionage
Act. The Reverend William Schumann was bound over to the
Federal grand jury and released on bond. The charges grew
out of some allegedly disloyal remarks attributed to him in
recent sermons preached to his congregation.²

A week or so later about 150 school children and citi-
zens of Pomeroy held a patriotic rally and demonstration.
This group marched to the German Evangelical Church where the
Reverend Schumann, who taught the parochial school, was
"called on" to salute the flag. It was reported he did so in
a "reluctant" manner. A flag was then placed at his residence
with an order to keep it there. He also received advice, pre-
sumably about his alleged "pro-German" attitudes, from one
leader of the group. In a speech to the assembled citizens

²Ibid., December 1, 1917, p. 1.
another leader, a veteran of the Civil War, placed emphasis on the display of the flag. "Let every loyal American citizen in Pomeroy display the flag at some visible place. In this manner, if another occasion of this kind is necessary, loyal Americans will be saved the humiliation of being called on by the assembly."1

The anti-German hysteria which prevailed in Iowa reached one of its peaks in Pomeroy on New Year's Eve, 1917, when the German Evangelical Church building, valued at $3,000, burned to the ground. First newspaper reports suggested the fire could have originated from the furnace since it had been fired to heat the building for services earlier that evening and might not have been properly banked later.2 Subsequent articles simply state Schumann's pro-German remarks angered people and as a result the building was destroyed.3 Thirty-five years later in commemorating the 75th anniversary of the congregation the view persisted that,

The years of World War I were very unkind to the congregation and trouble occurred . . . because the use of the German language was considered to be unAmerican. The hysteria reached the point that the church building was destroyed by fire on the night of December 31, 1917.4

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1Ibid., December 6, 1917, p. 1.
2Ibid., January 3, 1917, p. 5.
4Seventy-Fifth Anniversary, 1st L. E. R. Church, Pomeroy, 1873-1948 (n.r., no page), 1948.
Agitation pertaining to the use of the German language continued to grow stronger. Talk of a special session of the Iowa legislature to legally grant authority to the State Council for Defense to ban the German language circulated. The Des Moines Register responded with an editorial opposing such action. Again on January 3, 1918, The Des Moines Register's editorial page advocated the continued teaching of German.

"To quit the study of the German language in the high schools and colleges would be merely to close one door to the sort of training that is going to be demanded more after the war is over than ever before."¹ Despite the editorial plea, the feeling that the German language was somehow evil within itself persisted. In Keokuk, the Unity club passed a resolution to have German removed from the local schools.² The Polk County Council of Defense requested no language except English be used in Polk County public schools, Sunday schools, and religious services until after the war.³

At the same time incidents involving allegations of pro-German sentiment and disloyalty continued. In Muscatine, the president of the advertising club, J. Adam Reinemund, resigned as the result of accusations of disloyalty.⁴

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¹The Des Moines Register, January 3, 1918, p. 4.
²Ibid., February 1, 1918, p. 3.
³Ibid. ⁴Ibid., January 21, 1918, p. 3.
"Keep your mouth shut" appeared on the home of the Odebolt postmaster, John Mattes.\(^1\) J. T. Lauer, Secretary of the Bremer County Council for Defense found it necessary to defend the county as loyal even if it were 90 percent German. Lauer accused neighboring newspapers of exaggerations, thus causing most of the trouble.\(^2\) However, Lauer himself may have been exaggerating too as the 1915 Census shows 37.5 percent of the residents of Bremer County with one or both parents born in a foreign country; 1,515 had been born in Germany.\(^3\)

A local vigilante committee in Waterloo signed and presented to the school board a petition for the removal of the manual training teacher. Although he had made no seditious remarks, it was alleged he refused to donate to war causes and would not support the government. His parents, originally from Germany, lived in Ackley.\(^4\)

At Dubuque College and Seminary, Professor Albert John lost his job because his statements about the war did not agree with the views of the school administration.\(^5\)

Residents of Marengo circulated a petition demanding that the young men of Amana be subject to the draft regardless of their pacifist beliefs. At the same time, the Amana

\(^{1}\)Ibid., February 9, 1918, p. 7.
\(^{2}\)Ibid., February 11, 1918, p. 5.
\(^{3}\)Census, p. lv.
\(^{4}\)The Des Moines Register, April 6, 1918, p. 12.
\(^{5}\)Ibid., May 6, 1918, p. 7.
Society petitioned the government for an exemption from the
draft.\(^1\) The Society's trustees petitioned their local draft
board in an attempt to get their people exempted from carrying
arms "as it was against our religious belief to kill
anyone."\(^2\) The draft board ignored the request and drafted
nineteen young men from Amana. After more visits from the
Amana church president, the soldiers from Amana received
assignment to commissary or hospital duty. Each was given
an affidavit stating the church tenets and the fact that they
did not wish to carry arms. Several died in the influenza
epidemic of 1918 while at camp and were returned to Amana for
burial.\(^3\)

The people of Amana demonstrated their loyalty by pur-
chasing Liberty bonds worth tens of thousands of dollars.
The Amana woolen mills were offered to the government and
army cloth and blankets were manufactured there. Ladies and
school children knitted sweaters and mittens to donate to the
United States Army.\(^4\)

As the war continued with increased ferocity so did
the episodes of domestic violence at home. Chronicling each
instance of mob action, yellow paint, alleged pro-German
remarks, would be an endless task. Waukon, Council Bluffs,

\(^1\)Ibid., February 28, 1919, p. 1.

\(^2\)Personal letter to the author from Charles L. Selzer,
President, Amana Church Society, May 9, 1973.

\(^3\)Ibid.

\(^4\)Ibid.
Dunlap, Mason City, Atlantic, Waterloo, Des Moines, all had incidents severe enough to be reported during March, 1918.\(^1\) Measuring the pressure, abuse, and scorn heaped on German-Americans that did not rate coverage in the newspapers is, of course, impossible.

The temper of the time may be judged from the following newspaper statement: "Coincident with the news of the great German offensive in the European zone the local (Des Moines) office of the United States department of justice is being fairly swamped with reports of disloyal people in Des Moines. More than fifty of these reports were filed yesterday with the secret service agents."\(^2\) "Many Talk Too Much" was the item's headline; a most accurate description of the situation, it would seem.

In response to the pressures of the times, the United Evangelical Church, during a statewide conference in Des Moines, passed several resolutions giving their whole-hearted support to the American cause.\(^3\)

Censorship and book burning were used, too. All German books were gathered from the Newton Schools by brothers and sisters of servicemen and burned on the high school campus.\(^4\) Librarians removed pro-German books from

\(^1\) *The Des Moines Register*, March 2, 3, 6, 10, 17, 19, 1918.

\(^2\) *Ibid.*, March 26, 1918, p. 5.


\(^4\) *Ibid.*, May 1, 1918, p. 4.
the library shelves at the request of the Council for Defense which ordered that all such literature should be destroyed.¹

By April, 1918, the editorial position of The Des Moines Register regarding the use of German had changed. Now it stated that the use of the German language in schools, both public and parochial, should end. Church services, at least occasionally for the benefit of the elderly, should continue as the use of the language would die out gradually anyway;² presumably, as the first generation immigrants one-by-one went to their eternal rest.

German was banned at North High School in Des Moines and the students substituted gardening.³ The Cedar Rapids school board banned the teaching of German in its schools, also.⁴ The Soldiers' Fathers League requested the use of the German language be ended simply because it was German. In their opinion, other foreign languages were acceptable. They believed banning German was essential to end all pro-German propaganda.⁵ On April 30, it was reported every school in the state had discontinued German or would do so

¹Ibid., April 2, 1918, p. 12.
²Ibid., April 12, 1918, p. 4.
³Ibid., April 16, 1918, p. 10.
⁴Ibid., April 17, 1918, p. 4.
⁵Ibid., April 27, 1918, p. 5.
at the end of the term.  

Students at Morningside College in Sioux City requested the trustees end the use of German in the German Methodist church on the campus. German hymnals were burned and a sign in yellow appeared in the chapel announcing that, "If you are an American at heart, speak our language. If you don't know it, learn it. If you don't like it, move."  

Changing the names of banks, insurance companies, and even towns came next. Germania Hall in Dubuque found its sign removed one night.  

By the fifteenth of May, 1918, eleven banks in Iowa dropped the word German from their names. A small town named Berlin, located in Tama County found it necessary to change the name to Lincoln. Another town in Kossuth County called Germania changed its name to Lakota.  

Federal agents confiscated $5,000 worth of German war bonds from a farmer, August Tieman, who lived north of Newton in Jasper County. No further information as to his suspected

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1 Ibid., April 30, 1918, p. 10.  
2 Ibid., May 3, 1918, p. 2.  
3 Ibid., May 6, 1918, p. 7.  
7 The Des Moines Register, May 6, 1918, p. 2.
loyalty or lack of it was available nor any indication of how his possession of the bonds came to the attention of federal officials. The county auditor's office had no record of the bonds.¹

The Jasper County Council of Defense ordered the Christian School at Sully closed, probably not to reopen until after the war. This was a "Holland" school, not German at all, which makes the order to close it quite puzzling, but no explanation was offered.²

An indictment was returned against W. G. Mauch, former president of the Traer school board and a prominent German. He was accused of speech to incite hostility to the United States government.³

"... never in the history of Iowa have the words 'treason' and 'disloyalty' been used so indiscriminately and with so little warrant," vowed The Des Moines Register.⁴ The situation was not to improve immediately. To the contrary the German-Americans endured increased suspicion and hatred as the war continued.

¹Personal letter to the author from Howard Snook, Jasper County auditor, February 6, 1970.
²The Des Moines Register, May 9, 1918, p. 5.
³Ibid., May 25, 1918, p. 7.
⁴Ibid., May 9, 1918, p. 6.
Chapter 3

Governor Harding's Language Proclamation and Beyond

William L. Harding, a Republican born in Osceola on October 3, 1875, was Iowa's war-time governor. He practiced law in Sioux City and became involved in politics by campaigning for a Republican reform candidate for mayor there. The man lost but Harding's oratory was not forgotten. In 1907 he was elected representative from Woodbury County to the 32nd General Assembly where he earned a reputation as a moderate willing to work hard in drafting legislation. He remained a member of the legislature until elected Lieutenant Governor in 1911, serving two terms in that office and then was elected governor in 1916. Harding has been described as a professional politician who "adapted his politics to suit needs of the hour."¹

Harding, while not outwardly questioning the loyalty of German-Americans, felt the various nationalities living in Iowa could and should become more thoroughly Americanized. The governor believed that "misunderstandings" resulted from

the use of foreign languages. Believing that, he felt justified in employing executive power to ban them.¹

On May 22, 1918, Governor Harding issued a proclamation with the following provisions,

(1) English should and must be the only medium of instruction in public, private, denominational or other similar schools, (2) conversation in public places, on trains and over the telephone should be in the English language, (3) all public addresses should be in the English language, and (4) let those who cannot speak or understand the English language conduct their religious worship in their homes.²

Harding stated further that he did not believe this violated the free exercise of religion.³

The most immediate reaction was a vigorous protest from the Bohemians at Cedar Rapids. Governor Harding received telegrams from them protesting the scope of the proclamation.⁴ Dutch, Danes, Swedes and others soon added their protests.

Yet one German-American and presumably the organization he represented applauded the governor's stand. Reverend John C. Orth, president of the German-American Patriotic Association of Iowa stated, "It is impossible to have complete loyalty in this state so long as there is a great faction

¹Ibid., op. 231-2.

²W. L. Harding, Iowa War Proclamations, Iowa and War No. 17, ed. S. W. Shambaugh (Iowa City: State Historical Society of Iowa, July, 1919), op. 45-6.

³Ibid., p. 46.

⁴The Des Moines Register, May 26, 1918, op. 10-10.
fighting to preserve the German language. . . . The German language is not needed for anybody's convenience. . . . "1

Editorially The Des Moines Register maintained that the order was "ill-considered" and should be withdrawn immediately. Lawyers they had consulted felt it was an illegal order that unnecessarily upset many good people.2 Earlier, The Des Moines Register seemed to favor ending the use of German so perhaps including all other foreign languages caused its opposition to the proclamation.

Questions about the legality of the order further confused the issue as ministers at Cedar Falls and Fredsville ignored the language proclamation and continued to conduct services in Danish. They received advice to do so from the Black Hawk and Grundy County attorneys.3 Debate over whether or not the order was legal and had to be obeyed arose in other areas of the state, too. In Tama County, the Traer Mutual Telephone Association consulted with their Advisory Board about the problem. The Board advised them that the governor's proclamation should be obeyed and was legal.4

1The Des Moines Capital, May 30, 1918, #n.n.7.
2The Des Moines Register, June 1, 1918, p. 4.
3Ibid., June 10, 1918, p. 1.
4The Traer Star-Clipper, June 28, 1918, p. 1.
It was reported that the Reverend Henry Prokel, pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Waterloo, planned to continue preaching in German 50 percent of the time. Reverend Baushoff, pastor of a German Evangelical Church at Denver in Bremer County continued to preach in German, also. Then state agents visited him and he signed a statement indicating he would comply with the proclamation. The main service would be conducted in English and the gospel repeated in German at an "after-meeting." Earlier reports had stated that the Reverend Baushoff said he would take up arms to defend his right to preach in German. The German community at Schleswig objected to the posting of the governor's language order reported The Des Moines Register. At Alta, Iowa, a Reverend Mennoich, the Lutheran pastor was unable to preach in English and he refused a leave of absence in order to study the language. Consequently he found himself appearing before a board of military affairs and promised to be "good."

On its editorial page, The Des Moines Register continued to oppose the governor's order emphasizing it created
confusion and unnecessary hardship. The proclamation would have an adverse effect on the population of the state by restricting immigration stated in The Des Moines Register. Also, the paper continued to plead for the appreciation of all citizens as Americans regardless of birth or ancestry.\(^1\)

Governor Harding traveled to several foreign language areas in the state to explain the necessity of the proclamation. He said he had knowledge that pro-German propaganda and plots against the federal government were spread through Iowa by the use of all foreign languages, not just German. Harding contended that discontinuing the use of any foreign language was a patriotic service necessary to get at those few among the foreign language groups who were disloyal.\(^2\)

However, the governor's public statements were not always conciliatory in tone. On one occasion speaking before a Chamber of Commerce group he was quoted:

... neither the federal nor state constitutions guarantee to them the right to speak or pray in any other language. I am telling those who insist upon praying in some other language that they are wasting their time, for the good Lord up above is now listening for the voice in English.\(^3\)

Cyrenus Cole, a Cedar Rapids newspaper editor who was later to represent Iowa in Congress, said his reaction to the

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\(^1\) Ibid., July 17, p. 7; July 19, p. 1; July 22, p. 1; and July 27, p. 1.

\(^2\) Visser, p. 734.

\(^3\) Ibid.
governor's action was:

... to tell him (Governor Harding) that if my mother were still living I would call her up on the telephone and in his hearing talk with her in a foreign language, and if he had me arrested for doing that, I would announce myself as a candidate for his office and defeat him.1

In Cole's view, the proclamation was one of the "foolish" things done for the cause of patriotism. Somehow the fear reigned that the sound of foreign speech would decrease patriotism. Cole claimed that American soldiers "comforted each other in the trenches and in dying in foreign languages and in the German language most of all."2

Adding irony to the situation, President Woodrow Wilson requested citizens of foreign birth to plan Fourth of July celebrations in 1918 and one item of the recommended program was a patriotic speech in their native tongue.3 While the president seemed to realize it was easier to reach a person in the language he understood best, Governor Harding had made that procedure illegal in Iowa.

During the months after the governor's proclamation appeared charges of pro-German sentiments continued. Incidents of yellow paint, appearances before extra-legal courts,


2Cole, History of the People of Iowa, pp. 450-1.

3Iowa Tarlitcho Demokrat, Davenport, Iowa, July 3, 1918, located in ARS.
and threats to those who did not support the war effort, vocally, financially, and wholeheartedly went on. Now even a few words spoken in German on a street corner, over a telephone, or in church, led to fines, threats, and grief for the German-Americans. In Scott County, four women were fined $225 for speaking German on the telephone. Just how it was established they spoke German is not revealed but with the party lines of the time probably the conversations were overheard. The County council for defense donated the fines to the Red Cross.¹

One of the first things required to fight a war is money and in order to meet this need Congress passed a bill authorizing the sale of Liberty bonds. There were five campaigns in all. Each federal reserve district received a quota and residents of the district were expected to subscribe that amount as a minimum. Individual quotas were based on various factors including property, income, and total net worth. These quotas were established by local quota committees.²

The First Liberty Loan Campaign in May and June of 1917, and the Second in October, 1917, received little publicity and the public demonstrated little interest. Many

¹War Tagliche Demokrat, June 15, 1919, quoted by Carl Wittke, German-Americans and the World War (Columbus: Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 1936), p. 167.

predominantly rural counties and some with large numbers of German-American residents failed to reach their assigned quotas. The Third Campaign in the spring of 1918, the Fourth in the fall of the same year, and the Fifth in 1919 succeeded in reaching their quotas and not solely because Iowans were better informed or more aware of the war issues. "Certain methods of pressure and coercion were devised which could not help but bring results."1

The method used in Marshall County was quite typical and with variations appeared in other counties as well.

There:

All war funds were allotted to its citizens according to their ability to pay. Liberty loans were allotted among the precincts upon the basis of assessed values of property; war stamps upon the basis of population; Red Cross and all welfare funds one-half upon the basis of property values and one-half upon the basis of population. Every citizen's assessable property was listed from the tax books, his income estimated by competent committees and each precinct quota in every drive was then allotted to its citizens as fairly in proportion to their ability to pay as committees of neighbors could distribute the war burden.2

Jasper and Chickasaw Counties used a property assessment method of setting quotas for the bond campaign.3 The patriotic census which Tama County took in November, 1918,

1Carl Wittke, German-Americans and the World War (Columbus: The Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 1936), p. 157.
3Whitney, p. 62.
included a valuation of property. This catalog also included a record of the citizens’ Liberty bond purchases and contributions to the various fund drives. Certainly such a list made it easier to apply pressure to those who had not purchased bonds when the Third Campaign began in April, 1918. The object of the survey was to determine who were loyal Americans and who were not.¹ Probably those whose loyalty might be questioned because of a failure to contribute generously enough in the past saw the Third bond drive and other later fund raising campaigns as opportunities to alter that impression. If they did not see it that way voluntarily then the opportunity for coercion came to the fore.

In some communities, Liberty Loan committees gave each citizen a card telling him how many bonds to purchase. Frequently warnings of the consequences which would follow a refusal were also given. Assessments amounting to approximately 2 percent of the value of an individual’s property were levied in some rural areas.² In other areas, the person’s share was determined by income, bank accounts, investments, and occasionally even his borrowing capacity was considered.³

Citizens who failed to cooperate with these “quasi-official” orders were often compelled to appear before

¹The Trane Star-Clipper, November 3, 1917, p. 1.
²Crittke, loc. cit.
³Whitney, pp. 32-3.
"slacker courts." Cedar Rapids, had a "Loyalty Court," Sioux City an "Incognito Military Court," while Johnson County organized a "Loyalty League." Four hundred people answered summonses to appear before the court at Council Bluffs. This organization dealt with alleged disloyal remarks and failure of some citizens to contribute the correct amount to the war campaigns. "Not one dared to ignore the summons of this entirely extra-legal body."¹ In Black Hawk County, the sheriff brought in those who failed to come before the "court" of their own free will and no one questioned his right to do so even though it was an extra-legal body.²

These "slacker courts" made their appearance at different times during and after the war. Jasper County experienced one in April and May of 1919 which is typical, except since it occurred after the war, returned service-men participated.

The Jasper County Council for Defense called on the returned soldiers and sailors for help when by April 25, 1919, the county was $150,000 below its quota in bond sales. This led to the following front page notice in the Newton Daily News.

"Resolved, that the Patriotic Investigation Council of Jasper County be it resolved that we proceed at once

¹Kittka, p. 158. ²Ibid.
to the investigation of reason for a number of wealthy citizens of Jasper County declining to subscribe to their share of Victory Loan and now be it resolved that we ask each and every person in Jasper County whose allotment was more than $100 and who failed to take at least 80% of their subscription to Fourth Liberty Loan that they appear before our Organization at Court House in Newton, Iowa and that no one be let off with a Subscription of less than 100% of their Fourth Liberty Loan. Signed 30 Returned Soldiers.

The bond slackers in the county were notified by telephone by members of this Patriotic Investigation Council to appear and explain why they had failed to purchase their share of bonds. Citizens were afforded the opportunity to come before the court voluntarily and if they did not, other measures could be used.

In Jasper County, the court met under the direction and with the advice of the County Council for Defense. Meetings were in the west corridor and a former Red Cross room in the county courthouse. Sessions were to be conducted with dignity and fairness.

Eighteen citizens appeared before the court at its first meeting on April 26, 1919 and all except one purchased their share of bonds. Peter Brahm, a farmer from north of Newton, did not. His allotment was $1,350. Evidently he bought the bonds shortly afterward as his name does not appear again.

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2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
However, a Newton resident, W. G. Mann told the soldiers who called and requested his presence before the court to "go to hell." Later the same day Mr. Mann felt it necessary to call the sheriff's office and demand protection. Presumably his safety and that of his family had been threatened as a result of his refusal to cooperate with the soldiers' court.¹

Three days later another front page notice asked all returned servicemen to come to the courthouse for another meeting of the court where more bond slackers were to be present. Whether any alleged slackers appeared or not is not clear, but Mr. Mann ignored this meeting just as he had the first time. Since he had not chosen to appear voluntarily, guards waited for his appearance downtown the next morning and took him to the courthouse to await the arrival of members of the court. A large crowd gathered with sentiment on the soldiers' side and Mann was taken out into the courthouse corridor so all could get a good look at him.²

Mann maintained he could not afford any more than the 1700 worth of bonds he had purchased the day before, but a banker was located who was willing to make him a loan so Mann had to sign for an additional 14,500, making his investment an even 15,000. "Mann hesitated but it was made so plain to him that it would be to his best interest in every way that he

¹Ibid. ²Ibid., April 30, 1919, p. 1.
reconsidered and signed... He had gone through one of the most grueling ordeals and cross examinations ever experienced by mortal man."1

The court was a very effective way of raising money as five days after its first session in Jasper County, $35,000 was received in bond subscriptions.2

The Soldiers' and Sailors' Court did not meet again but letters signed "By Authority of Returned Soldiers and Sailors' Council Committee" were sent to all alleged bond slackers on May 6 saying "We must have your subscription or your personal appearance before the committee."3 As a result, The Newton Daily News reported on May 29 that Jasper County had over-subscribed the Victory Loan.4

Although the details of operation varied across the state, as well as what these courts were called, the resulting pressure compelled citizens to buy bonds, contribute to the Red Cross, and become outwardly and vocally patriotic.

Methods of this kind led to violations of the law and the forces of personal influence and spite received a perfect opportunity to raise. These organizations frequently enjoyed the support of some of the communities' leading citizens serving on local Councils for Defense.5 The use of such

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1Ibid.
2Ibid., May 6, 1919, p. 1.
3Ibid.
5Ibid., loc. cit.
methods was justified by arguing that "the American people have a power higher and greater than the Constitution or law, ... to save the Government, to save the Flag, and to save the law itself from destruction at home as well as abroad."¹

James W. Pierce, editor of Iowa Homestead and member of the State Council for Defense, referred to the intense Liberty bond campaign period during the spring and summer of 1918 as a "reign of terror."²

In most cases the pressure to subscribe was so heavy and the fear of the public temper, already set on a hair trigger, became so great that during the last three campaigns in Iowa virtually all that was necessary was to announce to each person the amount of his quota and he subscribed without hesitation.³

Pierce devoted a major portion of the August 22, 1918, issue of the Iowa Homestead to the pressures citizens, especially those in rural areas, were enduring. "More harm is resulting from this assumption of authority by private individuals, without the shadow of moral or legal right, than by all the pro-German propaganda or real disloyalty in the state," avowed Pierce in a front page article and, "our boasted freedom and liberty and love of fair play are being made the victims of methods no better than those of the despoilers of Belgium, from which they differ not in quality

²Iowa Homestead (Des Moines, Iowa), August 22, 1918, p. 1.
³Whitney, p. 12."
but only in degree. Several incidents of uncalled for violence, at least in Pierce's view, unfounded accusations of disloyalty, and violations of the constitutional rights of Iowans were described with considerable detail. "Never in this commonwealth . . . has lawlessness been so rampant, . . . [more] the constitutional rights of citizens so outraged," thundered Pierce.

These articles received front-page attention from The Des Moines Register and the State Council for Defense "fired" Pierce. Pierce maintained that the council could not fire him since he had been appointed by the Governor. However, Pierce resigned from the Council for Defense stating no further articles would be printed at that time. He gave as the reason for his resignation that all the furor surrounding his writings might detract from the Fourth Liberty Bond Campaign that was just getting underway.

Although none of these pressures and tactics were designed specifically to coerce the German-Americans, yet obviously they felt the weight of public opinion more than the average citizen simply because of their birth and ancestry. District chairman in the Fourth Liberty Loan

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1Iowa Homestead, loc. cit.
2Ibid., p. 3.
3The Des Moines Register, August 26, 1913, p. 1.
Campaign received these instructions, "Watch for disloyal remarks and report every instance since derogatory rumor or report was inspired by German propaganda and that German money was paying for the starting of these rumors."  

Charges of seditious remarks, failure to buy bonds, or donate generously enough to various fund drives continued and "slacker" courts operated regardless of their legality or lack of it. The Soldiers' Father's League appointed a committee to demand removal of all school books containing German songs.  

One of the few cases emerging from this time that actually reached court was heard in June, 1918. At that time, the Reverend William Schumann of Pomeroy, Calhoun County, was convicted, in federal court, of violating the Espionage Act of June 15, 1917. It may be recalled that he served as pastor of the church which burned under unusual circumstances in December, 1917. The government charged Schumann did, "... willfully obstruct the recruiting and enlistment service of the United States, by delivering a sermon in a church of which he was then and there pastor."  

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1 The Des Moines Register, September 10, 1918, p. 10.  
2 Ibid., November 9, 1918, p. 6.  
Court records of the case indicate that in the sermon, Schumann said:

That this war in which America is engaged is for the capitalists only and the Liberty Bond is a great humbug; by buying Liberty Bonds you buy yourself deeper into slavery; America went into this war to help England; and our boys should not go over and shed their blood to help England. 1

Schumann's conviction was upheld by the Circuit Court of Appeals, April 28, 1919, and he served a term in the Federal Prison at Leavenworth. 2

The case received much notoriety because Governor Harding tried in a telephone conversation and later in private conversation to persuade Schumann to leave Pomeroy at least until his trial. 3 Public sentiment was so aroused, the Governor feared for Schumann's physical safety. Schumann could not be persuaded to leave and the local paper made reference to his trusting in the "Kaiser's God" for safety. His church, German Evangelical, was referred to as the "Kaiser's church--the Prussian Church" in the newspaper. 4

In an attempt to explain the Reverend Schumann's character and actions the paper said:

1 The Federal Reporter, Vol. 258, p. 233. This report of what the Reverend Schumann said appears in official records of the case. The sermon actually was preached in German.

2 Schumann was in prison from 1920-22. Upon his release he returned to Pomeroy and again served as pastor of the German church until 1932.


4 Ibid.
... he is intensely grounded in his religious convictions, which, with his love for his mother country warps his judgment and makes him fanatical, fearing nothing because his faith that his God will protect him and that as a true disciple of his faith he must have the courage of his conviction like a Peter or a Paul.

The minister's faith and courage, right or wrong, led to a clash and resulted in his imprisonment.

Another case came to court in Union County in February, 1918. The case did not involve a citizen of German birth or ancestry, however. The charge was a violation of Section 2, Chapter 372, Acts of the General Assembly forbidding the encouragement by any means, hostility or opposition to the government of the State of Iowa or the United States. Among the charges, there was testimony that the defendant doubted the value of the Red Cross and though financially able, refused to contribute to its support. German-Americans also were involved with charges of failure to support the Red Cross. Such failure was usually considered part of alleged pro-German sentiment, but no cases involving them reached court. This case received mention because the Courts' opinion as to the value of the Red Cross helps explain why any questioning of its worth could not be permitted during the war years.

The records show, and indeed it is a matter of common knowledge of which we may take notice, that these organizations [Red Cross, V.F.W.] were, in effect, auxiliaries

1Ibid.
in the task which this government and this state undertook after declaration of war on the part of the United States. Whosoever by act or speech crippled efforts of these associations in some degree made victory less sure, less easy, and increased the chances of defeat, and so put himself in opposition to the nation. ¹

Problems with the German-Americans and others too, who questioned actions of both state and federal government continued on through the summer and fall of 1918. On the surface, it would appear that with the signing of the Armistice on November 11, 1918, domestic violence would cease. This was not the case, at least not completely, for human emotion cannot be turned off so easily. At Lowden, Iowa, the pastor of the German Church was given forty-eight hours to leave town. The same crowd of victory celebrators rounded up other leading "pro-Germans," forced them to parade through town, salute the flag, and make cash contributions to the Red Cross. ²

On Victory Day, a Maquoketa farmer was nearly lynched for a rash remark comparing the Kaiser and a local deputy marshal. ³

The Fifth Liberty Loan Campaign took place in April and May of 1918. Young men who had served in the expeditionary forces often were used by the organizers of the bond


²The Des Moines Register, November 12, 1918, p. 10.

³Ibid., November 24, 1918, Newsletter for Iowa Boys in France.
campaigns to influence bond purchases. Black Hawk County sent groups of wounded veterans to visit citizens who did not buy their quotas. In Jasper County, the County Council for Defense used some veterans to organize a court to investigate alleged bond slackers as described earlier. A group of soldiers from Council Bluffs received a great deal of publicity because they attempted to arrange an interview with James W. Pierce, the Iowa Homestead editor, and force him to explain his attitude as expressed in that paper.1

The end of the fighting in Europe did not bring an end to the fear and distrust of the use of foreign languages. On April 10, 1919, the thirty-eighth General Assembly enacted a law requiring that instruction in secular subjects in all schools in Iowa, public or private, had to be in the English language. Foreign languages could be taught above the eighth grade only.2 To further the Americanization of all Iowans, the Assembly also passed a law requiring citizenship instruction be given in the schools.3

The war had its impact on the make-up of the Iowa General Assembly, too. When the 36th General Assembly met

1Whitney, pp. 19, 41-2.

2Acts and Joint Resolutions Passed at the Regular Session of the 38th General Assembly of the State of Iowa, 1919, p. 217.

3Ibid., pp. 535-36.
in 1915, there were eight senators and twelve representatives with German names. Four representatives listed Germany as their birthplace, three were born in Norway, two in Sweden, two in England, and one in Canada with the remainder being native born. ¹

In 1919, when the 38th General Assembly convened, two senators and six representatives had German names. None had been born in Germany while four members listed places in the British Isles as their birthplaces.² Evidently, a foreign birthplace or at least one in Germany had become a political liability.

A new organization, the American Legion, became important in Iowa after the war. Its emphasis on Americanism and patriotism did not allow for Americans using another language. At Davenport, American Legion Post #26 adopted a resolution condemning the use of foreign languages in churches, schools, theaters, on public conveyances and in public places. The resolution was deemed necessary because once a month the local Lutheran Church held a German service for the benefit of older members who did not understand English. No German had been used by the church during the war.³

¹Official Register, 1915-16, op. 130-5. The matter of the German names is the author's personal judgment as there is no way to be absolutely certain in all cases.
³Davenport Daily Times, November 4, 1919, located in IV C.
Although pressure to use English abated after the war, it did not completely end there. Americans had been encouraged during the war to view anything German with distrust, and some of this feeling lingered, fading only slowly as time passed. Those German-Americans who lived through the war years would never again feel quite the same about their heritage or, perhaps, about America either for loyalty to the one had necessitated severing all ties with the other.
Chapter 4

War-time Propaganda and Anti-German Attitudes

When war came to Europe in the summer of 1914, America remained neutral. Many Americans believed the United States should not get involved in what they considered Europe's battle. Furthermore, public opinion indicated no single-minded support for the American declaration of war in April of 1917. The mobilization of men, money, resources, and emotions required total support by the people. To aid in achieving this backing, the Committee on Public Information was created. "Through every known channel of communication the Committee carried straight to the people its message of Wilson's idealism, a war to end war, and America to the rescue of civilization."\(^1\)

During the early months of 1918, the Committee conducted an Americanization survey in which mayors of most towns in the nation received letters from the Committee requesting information on German organizations in their towns and residents of German birth or ancestry.\(^2\) Forty-four replies from...

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Iowa communities remain among the files of the Committee.\(^1\) of these only one, from J. A. Voorhees, Mayor of Monticello, Jones County, casts any doubt on the loyalty of any Iowan, German or not. Voorhees said, "We have 5 German churches here & close a round. The ministers /sic/ names are S. T. Ede, R. P. Kuntzel, B. T. Balcar, S. H. L. Schultz & C. Mardorf, Mardorf & Kuntzel are ably /sic/ loyal but the others are doubtful."\(^2\) Most of the letters indicate no German organizations and no problems of anti-American sentiment. Officials in Hawarden, Sioux County, and Denison, Crawford County, expressed mild reservations about the loyalty of the Germans living in those two towns.\(^3\) Eldon, Wapello County, reported, "All good Americans here." A. C. Whalen from Decorah, Winneshiek County, reported, "There are quite a few foreign born here... I should not think that there was any

\(^1\) C.P. No. 1-A2 and 1-A3, Records of the Committee on Public Information (hereafter referred to as CPI), National Archives, Washington, D.C. These records are not complete probably as a result of lack of direction and funds when the Committee ceased operations as is discussed by George Creel in How We Advertised America (New York: Harper & Bros., 1917), pp. 127-32.

\(^2\) J. A. Voorhees, Mayor of Monticello, letter to CPI, April 19, 1919.

\(^3\) J. A. Frey, City Clerk, Hawarden letter to CPI, February 12, 1919; and A. C. Connor, Chairman of County Council of Defense, letter to CPI, February 13, 1919.
particular need to work to promote Americanization, as they take on our ways as soon as they come: learn to speak our language . . . are our best citizens."1

Quite a number of mayors considered the survey unimportant as evidenced by those who penciled replies of one or two lines on the bottom of the letter they received. Several responded only after a second or third request arrived from Washington. The general tone of the replies indicates the Iowans got along fine and did not need nor welcome advice from the Committee on Public Information.

In his answer to the survey, J. H. Mills, Mayor of Mt. Pleasant, Henry County, observed, "We have a very small foreign population, and the Germans who are here are from the Alsace-Lorraine district, so that their sympathies are with the Allies. Our worst cases have been native Americans."2 Presumably the reference is to anti-American feeling and talk. No instances of pro-German feeling came to light as a result of this survey.

Another of the Committee's activities involved the dissemination of news which resulted in the publication of the Official Bulletin. This daily newspaper gave reports of all government activities in a straightforward fashion. The

1. H. Baker, Mayor of Eldon, letter to CPI, February 12, 1919; and C. V. Whalen, Decorah, letter to CPI, March 1, 1919.

Official Bulletin had as one of its purposes the circulation of government news throughout the country. In order to achieve the goal every post office received a free copy and under orders from the Postmaster General posted it for the public to read. Libraries, Chambers of Commerce and other similar institutions were requested to display it daily in a conspicuous place in their buildings. No complaints about non-compliance with these requests received publicity, therefore, presumably every citizen had access, in his post office, if nowhere else, to the official government news about the war. Surely this effort on the part of the government to reach every citizen enhanced each individual's importance in the war effort.

A division of the Committee known as the Four-Minute Men recruited 75,000 volunteer speakers across the nation. Records remain showing 310 speakers active in Iowa. The speakers, usually young lawyers and businessmen, spoke for four minutes on topics pertaining to the war. Public places like theaters and movie houses provided the site and audiences for the speaker. "Four Minutes may seem short; but

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1Larsen and Nock, p. 68.
2Official Bulletin, (Washington, D.C.: CPI), July 1, 1918, op. 4, N.
3Larsen and Nock, p. 72.
4Ibid No. 11A-B1, CPI Records.
5Larsen and Nock, p. 117.
remember the profound impression created by Lincoln's Gettysburg Address which took less than three minutes,¹ reasoned those who set the time limit. All speakers received a bulletin outlining the topic to be discussed and providing background material, facts, statistics, and sample speeches.² This enabled all to discuss the same material during the same week or weeks. Four-Minute Men Bulletin No. 33 for June and July, 1918, entitled, The Meaning of America, discussed the foreign-born in America very calmly and matter-of-factly and never permitted the suggestion that any of them could be disloyal. The speakers' instruction suggested, "... while speaking before audiences in which there may be many foreign born or their immediate descendants, to call attention to the Fourth of July celebrations arranged by societies of the foreign-born."³ Seemingly anti-German, anti-foreign feeling needed subduing. Iowa Four-Minute Men delivered 514 separate speeches from this bulletin to 368,867 citizens in theaters and other public places.⁴

By November 1, 1918, 3,400 copies of various Bulletins had been mailed to Iowa Four-Minute Men.⁵ Forty-two of the

²Ibid., p. 2.
³Ibid.
⁴File No. 11A-41, CPI Records.
speakers in Iowa were ministers, thirteen were doctors and five professors. The remaining names offer no clue to occupation. The existing records show mainly speeches beginning with "The Income Tax," March 11-16, 1918. Most of the records end with the "Fire Prevention" campaign October 27-November 2, 1918, and carry the notation "Stopped by Influenza," as the result of the flu epidemic that swept the Midwest. The records show that in Amana, with Doctor C. F. Noe as speaker, 1,500 people heard about the War Savings Campaign. It will be remembered these people were of German descent and some question existed as to their loyalty resulting from their ancestry and pacifist religious belief.

Directions to the Four-Minute Men included the use of mass social pressure tactics such as having everyone who had purchased a Liberty Bond raise his hand. Then the speaker asked those who intended buying a bond the next day to raise their hands. Few people wanted to be singled out, so usually every hand went up without hesitation. Actually, a patriotic pop rally took place, the difference being instead of "Rah, Rah, Rah" in a relatively harmless ball game, the deadly game of war received the cheers. If a few innocent citizens felt harassed because of birth or ancestry that had to be taken in

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1File No. 11A-61, CFI Records.
2Ibid.
stride. While none of these speeches specifically aimed to arouse anti-German feeling in the state, the fever pitch of emotion thus stimulated often led to hating anyone or anything German anyway.

The Division of Civic and Education Cooperation of the Committee on Public Information issued a number of pamphlets. The "War Information Series" and "Red, White, and Blue Series," were the most important. Published simultaneously, both covered a wide range of material with the only real difference being the covers. No records remain to indicate how many copies of any of these booklets reached Iowa.

If a pamphlet titled Why America Fights Germany by Professor of English John S. P. Tatlock of Stanford University circulated in Iowa, hatred of anything German received justification. Seven hundred and fifty thousand copies received distribution across the nation. This essay discussed what would happen if Germans invaded the United States. The booklet contains a detailed description of "Robbery, murder, and outrage, run riot." Tatlock then insists, "This is not just a sappy story. . . . The general plan of campaign against America has been announced repeatedly by German military men. And every horrible detail is just

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what the German troops have done in Belgium and France.\textsuperscript{1}

While the publication cannot be connected with any specific incident in Iowa, reports of alleged disloyalty reached a peak in the spring of 1918.

The division issued many similar publications written by presumably reputable scholars. It seemed that the way to solidify public opinion and unite all citizens in the war effort made it necessary to give everyone something to hate and fear while dignifying the propaganda effort by employing noted scholars and public officials. The effort involved many American scholars and highly respected universities.

Andrew C. McLaughlin, Professor of History at the University of Chicago authored a booklet, \textit{The Great War from Spectator to Participant}. Ernest B. Greene, Professor of History, University of Illinois, wrote \textit{American Interest in Popular Government Abroad}. \textit{Conquest and Kultur} was edited by Wallace Notestein and Elmer B. Stell from the University of Minnesota. Charles B. "Yazoo of Columbia University and Carl Becker of Cornell were also involved and the division had as its head Guy Stanton Ford, Dean of the Graduate School of the University of Minnesota.\textsuperscript{2}

First in the "Red, White, and Blue Series," titled \textit{How the War Came to America} had 6,227,912 copies.

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., pp. 46-7.
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circulated. At least some Iowans were aware of this publication because the Davenport Der Tagliche Demokrat told its readers about this booklet and provided the address for them so they could request a copy. Readers of the Davenport Der Tagliche Demokrat probably asked for one of the 292,610 copies printed in German since the Davenport Der Tagliche Demokrat was a German language newspaper. This leaflet included among other items a discussion of "our belief in the peaceful settlement of international disputes," a theme which occurred again and again in these propaganda publications.

Over six million copies of the popular pamphlet, The President's Flag Day Address with Evidence of Germany's Plans, containing President Wilson's speech on June 14, 1917, were circulated. It is so heavily annotated, setting forth Germany's plan for world conquest that on many pages footnotes take up most of the page. Germany received full blame for the war beyond any doubt.

...we were forced into the war. The extraordinary insults and aggressions of the Imperial German government left us no self-respecting choice but to take up

1 Larson and Mook, p. 170.
2 Der Tagliche Demokrat, October 5, 1917, p. 3.
3 Larson and Mook, loc. cit.
4 Ibid., p. 17.
arms as a sovereign government. The military masters of Germany denied us the right to be neutral.1

The most misleading of the propaganda publications, Conquest and Kultur: Aims of the Germans in Their Own Words, had a circulation of over one million. Wallace Notestein and Elmer Stoll of the University of Minnesota compiled this booklet, published November 15, 1917. The work consisted of excerpts from public speeches and writings of prominent Germans. These cuttings supposedly revealed German goals. In the first place, the average American citizen was compelled to accept them as totally accurate because he could not read the original item in German even if available. Secondly, almost any point can be proved by the technique of selecting isolated sentences. The editors made no allowance for the differences in training, education, and occupation of the various people quoted and seems to assume that everyone spoke with equal authority for the entire German nation.

The booklet contains many quotations from German sources such as: "If you ask me, 'How shall I build up the kingdom of God?' my answer is: Be a good German, Stand fast by the fatherland. Do your duty and fulfill your mission."2

A chapter dealt with "Pan-Germanism and America" and the statement appeared:

"In a hundred years the American people will be conquered by the victorious German spirit... it is therefore the duty of everyone who loves languages to see that the future language spoken in America shall be German.

The isolated groups of Germans abroad greatly benefit our trade... they may also be useful to us politically."

Since this was printed in the fall of 1917, there was ample time for these writings to circulate and influence actions like the Governor's proclamation in the spring of 1918.

America's traveling salesmen received copies of The Kaiser's in America. Five million were distributed so that traveling men could be enlisted in the fight against what the Committee on Public Information called the repetition of German propaganda. Organizations like the Travelers National Patriotic League, which commercial travelers in Des Moines were asked to join2 would have had a natural interest in using the booklet. Its introduction did nothing to dampen anti-German feeling. "Throughout the land the Kaiser's paid agents and unscrupulous sympathizers are spreading by word of mouth rumors, criticisms, and lies..."3


"The Des Moines Register, August 17, 1917, p. 2.

This division issued 75,000,000 publications of one type or another during the war. In addition, most of the nation's newspapers published releases from the Committee's News Division and Iowa newspapers were no exception.

While none of the materials advocated the hysterical anti-German feeling that arose in Iowa and the Midwest, they certainly helped create the climate that made such hatred possible. As an example, the War Cyclopedia which actually contained much factual material, listing and identifying places, people, and events involved in the war. It included as a heading "Frightfulness" and then continued for half a page describing the German method of waging war. It made use of such terms as autocracy, intrigues, and moral bankruptcy in referring to Germany and even German attempts at peace were labeled "poise intrigues." The repetition of terms like "enemy language" and constant references to America fighting a defensive war after being attacked had an effect like water dripping steadily on a rock; after awhile it made an impression on American minds. When the Committee on Public Information reported on its activities December 31,

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1917, this statement was part of the report, "Forces of dis­
sension and disloyalty are steadily at work and particularly
is this true among the foreign population." The citizen
who read this received, in his mind at least, official jus­
tification from the government for suspicion and dislike of
his neighbors of German birth or ancestry.

The Committee on Public Information called on approxi­
mately 150,000 lecturers, writers, artists, actors, and
scholars in "perhaps the most gigantic propaganda campaign
in American history." Official publications conveyed ideas
and their official backing made these ideas convincing to
Americans. "Talk doesn't explain to him [ordinary citizen]—
not authoritatively, to his mind, But if he reads a pamphlet
'put out by the United States governiment,' he is
impressed." 

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1 The Activities of the Committee on Public Information
2 Arthur A. Link, American Epoch: A History of the Uni­
ted States Since the 1890's (3rd ed.: New York: Alfred A.
3 Booth Turkington in a letter to Guy Stanton Ford,
quoting in Lutten and Mock, p. 173.
Chapter 5

Baxter, Iowa - A Case Study in Anti-German Hysteria

Baxter, located in Independence Township, Northwest Jasper County, had a population of approximately five hundred during World War I. Established January 20, 1870, 1½ miles south and west of the present location, the town moved to its present site in 1882 in order to be on the railroad going through the vicinity. The ethnic origins of the earliest settlers remain rather unclear although some came from the British Isles. Few German immigrants were among the very early settlers in the area. Most of the first settlers selected the hillier, more wooded lands near the first town site believing the open prairie to the east undesirable as farm land. The town had the usual businesses, a Congregational Church, Christian Church and a Methodist Church located two miles west of town.1

Anti-German sentiment rose in this typical rural community and led to a flag-kissing incident and the threat of mob violence. Studying the factors involved in Baxter's difficulties during the war years provides insight into the problems experienced across the state.

When the German immigrants arrived in the area, they settled east of town on the prairie. Many came just before and after the Civil War and more immigrated during the 1870's. While many were craftsmen in Germany--stonemasons, bricklayers, carpenters--they turned to farming in Iowa because land could be acquired cheaply.

Most came from the province of Lippe Detmold in northwest Germany. Principally of Protestant Calvinist background, they searched for a land of freedom and greater economic opportunity. At the time many of them immigrated, Iowa was opening for settlement offering cheap land and room to settle. Religion held a major place in their lives and so on November 27, 1869, they organized their church, Der Deutsch Reformierte Bethania Gemeinde, that is The German Reformed Bethany Congregation. Soon they called a pastor and erected a building one mile east of town.¹ Their members studied the Heidelberg Catechism and confessed faith by repeating the Apostle's Creed. Bethany observed two sacraments, infant baptism and the Holy Communion, closed to non-members. Full membership in the church was granted with the laying on of hands in the Rite of Confirmation after lengthy instruction in church doctrine and examination by the elders. The congregation observed special customs such as men sitting on

¹D. K. Osma, Seventieth Anniversary Bethany Reformed Church (m.n.7, 1939), available at Bethany United Church of Christ, Saxtor, Iowa.
one side of the sanctuary and women on the other, and a
casket was never taken in the church for a funeral. Family
and friends accompanied the body to the cemetery for burial
and then returned to the church for a service because of the
belief that preaching the Word could only benefit the living,
not the dead. The majority of those of German birth and
descent centered their lives in the church. This remained
true through the war years and beyond. The fact that some
customs of the congregation differed from those observed by
the community's other churches, along with use of the German
language in worship services, set them apart. Actually any­
one who wished to learn the Reformed doctrine would have been
permitted to join the congregation according to its ordi­
nances. The language prevented others from taking part and
thus learning about the Germans' faith and customs. As a
rule, the denomination kept strictly to itself, ministers
of other denominations did not preach in the church and mem­
berships from other denominations were not accepted in trans­
fer. Members were to lead a God-fearing, law-abiding, and
useful life and remain true to Christ's church following the
laws of God as recorded in the Scriptures. 2

1 Gemeinde-Ordung und Inkorporations-Artikel der Deutsch
Reformierten Bethania Gemeinde bei Baxter, Iowa (Cleveland:

2 Ibid., p. 11.
In 1908, the Reverend Paul Traeger became the pastor of the congregation, a position he held until September, 1921. As such he became the center of controversy during the war and after, and the chief recipient of the hatred and mistrust of anyone German that permeated those years. Born in Germany, Traeger received his education at the gymnasium in Leipzig and at Mission House College and Seminary, Plymouth, Wisconsin. He was a brilliant scholar, later receiving a Doctorate in Philosophy from Mission House, a polished speaker, especially in the German language, and an accomplished musician. Some who knew him also described him as impatient, arrogant, and over-bearing; having taken a stand on an issue he did not give in easily. These traits, combined with his German birth, made the war years difficult for him and his congregation.

Until the events in Europe began to involve Americans, peace and prosperity prevailed in Baxter and the surrounding rural areas. No real problems existed between the German-speaking segment of the population and the rest of the community even if some German customs differed. There was no German language paper in the community but the local weekly newspaper, the Baxter New Era, printed items in German occasionally. Usually items announced or reported services and activities at the German church such as one presenting the entire Christmas Eve program of 1916 which

appeared on the front page and in German.¹

When the United States declared war in April, 1917, the peaceful relationship in the community changed. In a frenzy of patriotic enthusiasm two hundred Baxter residents gathered to see the first local boy off to the service. Clarence Rose enlisted in the Navy.²

A wave of patriotic rallies swept across the county and received front page attention in the county newspaper, The Newton Daily News. The paper had many subscribers in the Baxter area because of proximity—thirteen and one-half miles—and because it carried legal notices and other general interest items. Baxter residents were alerted to difficulties in other parts of the county through the newspaper. For example, the mayor of Colfax, located south of Baxter was accused of being unpatriotic because he refused to assist in the organization of a patriotic rally there.³

Local representatives of the County Council of Defense, Phil Hill, a Tulaha Township farmer, and Carl Webb, an insurance agent from Independence Township, Baxter, also kept people informed of happenings in the county.

The rapid change in feeling is demonstrated by an editorial on the front page of the paper:

¹Ibid., December 12, 1916, p. 1.
"Old Glory" has been raised and floats over every town in the country. . . . Our county contains many in whose veins flows the blood of foreign parents and a still larger number of foreign birth but be it said to their everlasting credit they have--with very few exceptions--cast their lot with the land of Freedom. . . . Their families have been raised and educated here and they have become an integral part of our government. They perchance dislike to see war but when the question of loyalty is before them they can be depended upon to do their bit. In these long anxious days before the conflict is begun let no man judge another harshly. Let us be sure of what we repeat for in the end it might strip a neighbor of his property, his honor, and his freedom--if not his life. . . .

Naturally, the paper ceased printing anything in the German language immediately because the use of any foreign language became controversial both locally and state-wide. Lafayette Young of Des Moines, serving as Chairman of the State Council of Defense, in a speech at Newton condemned the teaching of foreign language and downgraded all German contributions to civilization with one exception, music. Many Baxter citizens either heard the speech or read about it in the paper, and thus received encouragement to view their German neighbors with suspicion.

After April, 1917, the Baxter paper ran numerous letters from local boys in the service, reports about the Liberty Loan and drives, Red Cross activities and campaigns, and the efforts to sell savings stamps. The ordinary affairs
of life, births, marriages, and deaths received much less attention, while three-fourths of the news covered the war and war-related activities.

Nineteen of the servicemen from the community were of German descent confirmed as teenagers in the German church. A service flag with stars representing each member in uniform hung at the front of the sanctuary even though the church members disapproved of displaying any flag in church.

Public pressure caused the display and the Germans tried to show they were loyal American citizens. The Newton Daily News applauded the German-Americans living in the Baxter area for conducting their own Red Cross campaign in July, 1917, and collecting almost double the requested amount.

They had dropped the hyphen and proved themselves Americans with a capital "A" stated the editorial.1 The Reverend Treager, as the German's pastor, twice preached on the necessity of supporting the Red Cross in order to aid the campaigns.2 Another editorial lauded Baxter for exceeding allotments in YMCA and Red Cross campaigns, and underscored again the fact that many Germans lived in the community. It stated that "Germans there are proving their loyalty."3

While all the community, Germans included, raised the

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contributions, a patriotic rally took place in Baxter during which the speaker characterized some Jasper County citizens as traitors and verbally flayed people with pro-German sentiments. This type of rhetoric inflamed emotions and helped reinforce any tendency to regard the Germans with distrust.

The applause for Baxter's war efforts ended quite abruptly during the Second Liberty Loan Campaign when the town and surrounding rural areas experienced problems in raising the assigned quota. The Newton Daily News headline asked, "What's the matter with Baxter?" and every taxpayer in Independence, Malaka, and Mariposa townships received notice to attend a meeting at the town hall to be informed of his duty. Twelve extra deputies were appointed by the sheriff in case of trouble, while fifteen or twenty cars brought seventy-five prominent men from Newton to attend the meeting arranged by Governor Harding and the Council of Defense to see that Independence reached the quota. After the uproar, the town succeeded in reaching the goal, although the surrounding rural areas did not. Editorially, The Newton Daily News asserted Baxter should have lent support in getting the rural areas to purchase bonds.

Because many of the Germans farmed and farmers had done well due to high prices and bumper crops since 1914,
the difficulty with the bond sale could easily be blamed on them. However, before World War I "there were only about 300,000 holders of United States bonds," and so the reluctance to purchase may be partly attributed to a basic unfamiliarity with this type of investment rather than a pervasive pro-German feeling on the part of the German-Americans. The Germans along with other Americans had to be educated for this sort of financial dealing.

By the time of the Third Liberty Loan Campaign, no problem arose regarding these townships making their quotas. The Township Council in charge of the bond drive passed a resolution thanking the Reverend Trager for his efforts in putting the loan across. If he took part in either of the previous Campaigns, no record of participation remains. Since the Council of Defense found it necessary to call a mass meeting during the Second Campaign and the rural area still did not reach the quota possibly Trager felt it necessary to use his influence to see that this did not happen again. This drive took place in the spring of 1918 at the same time Governor Harding issued his proclamation banning foreign languages. Perhaps,


2 Ibid., p. 3.

3 Ibid., op. cit.

the increasing anti-German sentiment led the Reverend Traeger to act believing the Germans must counteract this feeling with a show of support for the government. As their minister the Germans respected him and because of his education he could explain the bonds and why it was necessary to buy them.

Of course, Governor Harding's language proclamation of May, 1918, complicated life for the Germans and their pastor as they dutifully, if not happily, switched to using English. Editorially The Newton Daily News stated:

... the communities kicking against the one language plan because it deprives them of religious worship and instruction are using their alleged religion as camouflage to cover up their real attitude toward the discontinuance of their native tongue.

Those who doubted the Germans' loyalty applauded the editorial while the Germans themselves seethed with anger at the editor.

Despite the efforts of the Baxter newspaper editor and other calmer citizens, tension continued to increase and early in July of 1918, Baxter got its first taste of mob violence. According to the newspaper account, a citizen of the German community, 'Red' Cholett, came to town on Saturday night and discussed Liberty Bonds and other war-related activities in what was described as a "loose, abusive" fashion. Mr. Cholett formed south of town and did not hold any official position with the Council for Defense so just

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how he came to discuss these topics is not clear. A mob formed, Mr. Cholett was assaulted and compelled to kiss the flag. After the attack on her father, Mr. Cholett's small daughter, age six or seven, recited a patriotic piece entitled "Your Flag and Mine."\(^1\) It is said the crowd was in an ugly mood and real concern arose for the physical safety of Mr. Cholett and his daughter.\(^2\) Mr. Cholett had been reported to the County Council of Defense several times before this incident took place.\(^3\) Further adding to the tension in the community, Baxter Council of Defense members took another local citizen, a non-German, to Newton for failing to buy his share of bonds.\(^4\)

During the latter months of 1918, in a burst of patriotism and desire to demonstrate their loyalty to America, the citizens of Baxter decided to erect a flagpole. They selected the intersection of Main and State Streets, right in the middle of town as the ideal location. The pole rose one hundred ten feet in the air with red, white, and blue lights on top. It remained in place until blown down

\(^1\)Baxter News Era, July 4, 1918, p. 1.

\(^2\)This information comes from interviews with local citizens who remember the incident. Due to the reluctance of people to discuss any of these events, it was necessary to promise not to reveal any names.

\(^3\)The Newton Daily News, July 1, 1918, p. 1.

\(^4\)Ibid.
by a storm in 1943 and the cement base stayed until the
street was resurfaced in 1956.1

The harsh reality of war reached Baxter in the fall of
1918 when three local servicemen died overseas. These deaths
seemed, in view of the anti-German feeling at home, particu-
larly ironic for all three had been confirmed in the German
church. All other servicemen from Baxter returned home
safely.2 The fact irritated the Germans who felt that sac-
ificing their young men provided more than sufficient proof
of their loyalty to America.

Patriotism in the county received support from the
local Four-Minute Men, too. Attorney Ross Mowry headed a
group of fifteen speakers who spoke regularly in three
theaters and five other locations. Existing records show
81,366 people heard one or more of the 101 speeches delivered
in Jasper County beginning with the Second Liberty Loan Cam-
ampaign in October, 1917.3 Records do not show whether any of
the speakers came to the theater in Baxter.

No letter from Baxter's mayor remains among the records
of the Committee on Public Information, but replies from

1Cross and others, p. 24.

2Honor Roll Jasper County, Iowa, 1917, 1918, 1919
(Newton: James H. Henders, 1920), p. 10; and also One
Hundredth Anniversary Bethany United Church of Christ
from Bethany UCC, Baxter, Iowa.

3Ibid loc. 11A-31, Records of CPI.
Colfax and Newton exist. The Newton Mayor just scribbled a across one corner of the second letter he received from the Committee while Colfax's mayor wrote a short note. Neither indicated any difficulty with the foreign born in their towns.\(^1\) However, newspaper accounts show this complacent view not completely accurate.\(^2\)

The war ended and outwardly the community was peaceful. The German church changed the stars on its flag to red, the community mourned the dead and welcomed the returning servicemen home. In March, 1919, the German church held a reception for its members who returned from the service with their pastor as speaker for the occasion.\(^3\) Problems about the use of the German language continued but outwardly all remained calm. The only reminders of the war occurred as local residents carefully drove around the flagpole and nearly everyone campaigning for political office found it necessary to have his picture in the paper wearing full uniform.

In 1919, the German church celebrated its Fiftieth Anniversary. The local newspaper covered the event as though there had never been any difficulty and the congregation commemorated the occasion with a booklet of its history, written by the Reverend Trager, and printed entirely in German.

\(^1\) Tape Recs. 1-A2 and 1-A3, Records of GPI.

\(^2\) Letters indicate the mayors did not welcome questions or interference from Washington.

\(^3\) Boston News Item, March 6, 1919, p. 1.
In describing the recent past, the war years, he wrote:

The congregation was dealt a hard blow in 1918 as by blind hate the use of the German language was forbidden in the church school, Sunday school, and worship services. Now surely we are in a land where the English language is the language of the land, and it appears quite natural that the German Congregation, little by little, would introduce the English language when the necessity demanded it. This was not yet the case of this congregation because of a large percentage of older members who had not received their schooling in the English language. . . . Inconvenience to our congregation resulted from times that have nothing to do with our congregation or . . . any congregation. There was a force of authority used which had never happened before in the history of the United States although our constitution guaranteed religious freedom. A person could not do anything but yield to the rudeness or brutality, therefore the Word of God was taken from the elderly, we were told by the scornful wise that we need not be concerned about them for they were already taken care of. [Presumably already saved]. . . . These were hard times which our congregation had to go through. . . . The persecution and slander of the times affected everyone in the German community.

The Reverend Traeger went on to place the blame for the flu epidemic which swept across the nation in 1918 on the war itself. In his view, Almighty God punished the nation for the evil of war and the other evils brought by war in this fashion.

His views on the language question were shared by most of his congregation. Quite a number of first-generation immigrants still attended church regularly and wanted the services conducted in German. Many other churches across the state and

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2Ibid., p. 10.
nation had similar circumstances regarding their elderly members. Although they spoke passable English, they found it difficult to really understand or appreciate a sermon in English. The second and third generations spoke both languages although they too learned their religion in German at the church school. Some elderly members ceased making the effort to attend church because they found English very hard to comprehend. This deprived aging individuals of the comfort and solace of their religion in their native tongue whether or not their salvation had already been assured.

The outward calm that settled over the community after the Armistice proved to be short-lived. The community experienced a poignant reminder of war's sorrow as the body of Leo Beebe, who died in England on November 27, 1918, of wounds suffered in France, arrived home for burial. His funeral took place August 22, 1920, at the family home with burial following in the German church's cemetery. Although evidently the soldier's father resented the Reverend Traeger's behavior regarding this service his complaints did not come to light until the spring of 1921. The May 2, 1921, issue of The Newton Daily News printed a letter written by Leo

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1Carl Witth, German-Americans and the World War (Columbus: The Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 1936), p. 197.

2In the cemetery, owned by the German church, lots were sold only to members for their burial and that of members of their immediate family.
Goeke's father in which he makes various charges about
Traeger's attitude and behavior about the funeral and burial of his son.

Mr. Goeke charged the Reverend Traeger did not wish speak at the Goeke home with the Army Chaplain and the English speaking minister from the Congregational Church present.

Traeger allegedly stated military honors were not necessary here since the deceased had been buried with them in England.

Also, the question arose of who should be first in the funeral procession, the minister or the Legion Honor Guard. Since

funeral took place in August of the previous year, why Mr. Goeke waited so long to make public his complaints about the minister's behavior remains a mystery. A partial explanation may be that by April, 1921, Mr. Goeke and his family had been removed from membership in the German church as a result of his expressed attitude toward the pastor and the Church.

Some who knew the people involved suggest Mr. Goeke's behavior resulted from extreme grief over the death of his son.

At the Goeke funeral, Pastor Traeger presided at the graveside committing the body to its final resting place.


2Auszahnen von die Kirchenrat 1900-1921. (Minutes of the church board meetings). All details regarding this are not available even in these minutes of the church board.

3Personal interviews.
using the German language. Just exactly what he said or did not say provided more fuel for trouble. The statement in question being, "Leo Cooke, I bury thee not as an American soldier (only) but as the son of your father." The question arose whether he included the word only or not and those who believed he omitted it were furious.

The Reverend Traeger believed religion took precedence over everything else, thus obviously he would be first in a funeral procession and burying a person as a soldier would be unimportant. Those Baxter residents who remember the wartime and who were and are members of the church believe this is, at least, part of the explanation for the difficulties of those years. Some of the more outspoken among them suggest during this time people placed more faith in the flag than in religion itself. One sarcastic local resident summed up the attitude as "salvation by the flag."²

Adding to the emotional strain and further heightening tension, the body of a second serviceman Elmer Krueger, who died on the Belgium front November 4, 1918, returned home. Pastor Traeger took charge of the funeral sharing the pulpit with the Reverend Irwin Frother, pastor of a neighboring Reformed congregation. Pastor Frother could preach easily in English and both languages were used at this funeral. For the first time, the German church permitted a casket to be

² Personal interviews.
taken into the sanctuary. The reason given for this departure from tradition was to permit more people to attend the funeral. Actually, the Germans bowed to pressure from the community and those who felt a serviceman's funeral should be a community event, not a religious service.

A few days after this funeral, a mob of approximately 150 people gathered and descended on the parsonage located one mile east of town. This threat of violence resulted from the length of time the Reverend Traeger spoke in German at the Krueger funeral. Both English and German were used at the service but this group felt the German predominated. Local papers reported this group action and the accompanying demand that "We [Reverend Traeger] abolish the use of the Hun tongue."2

Although not reported in the newspapers, reports circulated of circumstances in the crowd and threats to tar the minister and drag him into town behind a car. Fortunately, word leaked to some of the German citizens and they reached the parsonage just ahead of the mob. Once the onrush was slowed, cooler heads prevailed and no violence took place.

As a result, the German church called a congregational meeting and the membership voted to stop using the German

language in church services.\textsuperscript{1} The local American Legion Commander attended and signed the minutes, too, since he and the Legion found the use of a foreign language particularly offensive. Shortly after this development a delegation from the church visited Newton, the county seat, and the county paper quoted them as saying they and the congregation still preferred the German language especially for the benefit of their elderly members but they abandoned it because they feared violence. They emphasized that the minister followed the desires of his people when he preached in German. The paper also printed the minutes of the meeting during which the German church voted to end the use of the German language in its activities.\textsuperscript{2}

The County Attorney and a representative from the office of the Attorney General spent a few days visiting with citizens in the community and attempting to calm the people before someone actually got hurt.\textsuperscript{3} The Reverend Traeger and his congregation were not breaking the law and no real reason for violence existed. However, emotion ran so high that the officials feared the situation would get completely out of hand. Their efforts to quiet the people

\textsuperscript{1}Baxter News Era, May 26, 1921, p. 1; and also The Newton Daily News, May 31, 1921, p. 1. No records of congregational meetings can be found.

\textsuperscript{2}The Newton Daily News, June 4, 1921, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{3}Ibid., July 15, 1921, p. 1.
succeeded and there were no further attempts to harm the minister.

However, the forces opposing Pastor Traeger and keeping his congregation from using the language they preferred succeeded in driving him away. On August 23, 1921, Traeger resigned to accept a position as a professor at Mission House College and Seminary in Wisconsin.1 No doubt undercurrents of tension remained, but after his resignation the community returned to tranquility.

1 Ibid., August 23, 1921, n. 1.
Chapter 6

Reasons for the Anti-German Sentiment

The most puzzling question of all is why. Why did such strong anti-German sentiment arise in Iowa and primarily in small towns and rural areas? Many factors in varying degrees of importance come into view in the search for reasons.

Frequently domestic conflicts increase when a country goes to war. While a common enemy serves to unite a nation, at the same time a war brings other burdens for the people to endure. Taxes increase, shortages in food, fuel, and other items may occur, and the citizens live in a state of apprehension as casualty lists grow longer and bringing more friction between people at home.¹

In order to wage war successfully in 1917, the government had to gain the total backing of the American people. The nation had to believe it was absolutely essential so that the unprecedented numbers of men and amounts of material would be forthcoming. To help in achieving this end the Committee on Public Information came into being. The Committee advertised America and advertised it well. Pamphlets, posters,

cartoons, released to the press, Four-Minute Men, all were
utilized to bring Americans to hate the enemy at home and
abroad. Oftentimes the enemy and citizens of German birth
or descent came to be regarded as identical. "People gen-
erally . . . were keyed up to a high pitch . . . and a per-
centage of editors and politicians were eager for a campaign
of 'hate' at home."¹ In Iowa, the German-Americans received
abuse partly because they provided a convenient target since
every county had residents of German ancestry.

There is a simplicity about hate that makes it
attractive to a certain type of mind. It makes no
demand on the mental processes, it does not require
reading or thinking, estimate or analysis, and by
reason of its instant removal of every doubt it gives
an effect of decision, a sense of well-being.²

This hatred increased along with the cost of the war, espe-
cially the cost in lives although many people failed to
realize "that from ten to fifteen percent of the American
Expeditionary Force were men of German birth or origin."³

Fables of atrocities committed by the German army
circulated widely and stirred up hatred. The German-Ameri-
cans found it difficult if not impossible to believe their
relatives and friends had overnight changed into monsters.⁴

¹George Crad, How We Advertised America (New York:  
²Ibid., p. 171.
³Ibid.
⁴J. L. Viereck, Spreading Fears of Hate (London:  
No understanding of this natural feeling for family and friends was permitted during the war.

Because the German language was often used by the Germans, it was easier to accuse them of disloyalty simply as a result of the fact that everyone could not understand them when they spoke. Most of the German-Americans spoke both languages, but the older immigrants, especially women who spent most of their time at home, found English difficult. The question of the use of the German language for worship services and religious instructions became involved with the free exercise of religion as guaranteed under the Constitution. Some German-Americans tended to regard this as a purely religious matter while certain other segments of society felt they were hiding behind religion and this misusing it.

In order for conflict to result between the majority group of English-speaking Americans and the minority of citizens of German birth and ancestry the prerequisites of competition, visibility, and contact had to be present.¹ The Germans, in most instances, were identifiable because of language, customs, or religious beliefs.² There were

²Ibid., p. 13.
not enough of them on any one area to establish completely self-sufficient communities and thus contact between them and the other residents of an area inevitably resulted.

By the time of the first World War, some of the Germans had become highly visible. In the Jasper County History, published in 1912, fourteen members of the German Reformed Church at Baxter were included. Most farmed for their livelihood but two were well-known and prosperous businessmen doing business with the entire community.

One, Peter Burkey, was born in Wisconsin of Swiss parentage. However, he was strongly identified with the German community as the result of his marriage to Henrietta Deppe whose parents had been born in Germany. Mr. Burkey owned a furniture and hardware business in Baxter from about 1890 until he retired in 1911, "having by his diligence and fair dealing accumulated a competency. He owns two hundred acres, well improved land, in Independence Township and has a large, modernly furnished home in Baxter." Mr. Burkey also was the community's first and only undertaker until his retirement. Calvin Noah became a partner in the hardware store and later its sole owner. Mr. Noah's father had farmed although he was a carpenter by trade. The Noah

family all belonged to the German Church.\(^1\)

The visibility of the Baxter Germans was enhanced by their church although the fact it was outside of town and the German language was used for services tended to lessen contact between Germans and others. The Baxter German Church was the only church pictured in the county history of 1912,\(^2\) probably because it was new, having been dedicated October 29, 1911.\(^3\) The church's location, on a main road into town, added to its visibility in the community, also. It was a large, 40' by 78', brick building with stained glass windows, and an 80' steeple and had cost $15,640.25 to build.\(^4\) The interior was dominated by the pipe organ with ranks of exposed pipes. Frescoes and Bible verses decorated the front wall. The pulpit stood directly in front of the organ with a communion table just below it.\(^5\) There was a mortgage on the building for a time but existing records do not show how much or when it was completely paid. No church history mentions any financial struggle, however. A parsonage, schoolhouse and

\(^{1}\) Weaver, p. 1081.

\(^{2}\) Ibid., p. 184.

\(^{3}\) Paul Traeger, Gedenkschrift für Feier des Fünfzigjahrigen Jubiläums (Zn.n., 1919), p. 7.

\(^{4}\) Financial records of German Reformed Church 1911 located in Bethany UCC, Baxter, Iowa.

\(^{5}\) Picture in the personal collection of the author.
assorted other buildings, the 2½ acres of land they were
located on and the church owned 2½ acre cemetery were valued
at $20,000.¹ This was the only church in the county where
regular school was held in the German language and that also
held all services in German. The congregation had an adult
communicant; membership of about 250 in 1912.² In 1919, 99
families which included 237 individuals remained on the church
roll.³

The German Church was located one mile east of Baxter
while Congregational and Christian churches existed in town.
The Christian Church evidently had a rather tenuous exist-
ence as it never had a resident pastor and disbanded during
the 1920's. In 1903, the Congregational Church had a member-
ship of approximately 100.⁴ Exactly what either building
cost could not be ascertained. However, the author of the
Congregation Church history states, "The financial struggle
is very a parent in the early records," and "the debt
Incurrued in building the Congregational church⁷ held heavily
for a number of years."⁵ There is no mention of a musical
instrument before 1913 at the Congregational Church.⁶

¹Ibid., pp. 106-6. ²Ibid. ³Ibid., pp. 11-6.
⁴Ibid., pp. 11-6.
⁵Believe City History, Background and History of the
Community Congregational-Christian Church Baxter, Iowa,
1841-1966 (M.D., 1966), pp. 23-1. (Available at the Con-
gregational Church, Baxter, Iowa.)
⁶Ibid., p. 11. ⁷Ibid., n. 37.
Some of the German-Americans were visible in the community because they had impressive land holdings. In Independence Township, Jasper County, Simon Klemme owned 455 acres of land with a taxable valuation of $11,980 or $35,940 actual value. A neighboring farmer, Herman Waterman, had 192 acres of land with $4,285 assessed value or approximately $12,345 actual value. Henry Krueger's 314 acres was valued at $23,685 while Gustave Kranz's 197 acres in Malakia Township showed a value of $12,075. These were members of the German Church and identified with the German community.

Quite a number of the Germans lived comfortably, usually in large frame houses, often with gingerbread trim and sometimes accented with small fancy windows. Climbing roses and other shrubbery decorated the yards. Interiors often had platform rockers, large framed pictures, and the mode of dress gave the impression of prosperity.

The factors, contact, visibility, and competition, were all present in the Jester area before the war began. Perhaps, the pressures brought upon the American people by the war might be regarded as a catalyst. Since any feelings of hostility toward the draft, higher taxes, the need to purchase bonds, could not be freely expressed, the German-Americans, at least to a degree, served as "scapegoats" for

1. "citizens 1917, Independence, Malakia Townships, located at Newton, Iowa, County courthouse.

2. Pictures in the personal collection of the author.
feelings of frustration and hostility. ¹

Problems involving the right of the Germans to use their language did not end with the Armistice. The 38th General Assembly in Iowa prohibited teaching secular subjects in any school in Iowa in any foreign language. On February 12, 1921, in the case of Iowa v. Bartels, a parochial school teacher was convicted of violating this act because he taught students to read in both English and German so that they might learn their Catechism in German. The Iowa Supreme Court upheld this conviction maintaining that reading was a secular subject. ² The decision was overturned by the United States Supreme Court. Later all state laws prohibiting the teaching and use of German in private or parochial schools were declared unconstitutional by the United States Supreme Court as a violation of the Fourteenth Amendment. ³ However, court decisions take time and the German-Americans wished to worship and educate their children in their language all through the years under discussion. This made things very hard for all involved.

¹Huck and Dotter, p. 32.


The desire on the part of the Germans to continue using their language contributed to the difficulties. On the other hand, attempting to end its use by proclamation did not help much to end domestic violence in Iowa. Some of the Germans became angry and resolved even more firmly to continue using their language while those who opposed its use found in the proclamation a vindication of their stand and additional backing for the distrust of their German speaking neighbors. The proclamation placed a stamp of approval on the distrust and violence.

Not only did the Germans speak a different language in their churches but they also observed some different customs. Quite a few German ministers were singled out as recipients of violence resulting, at least in part, from the fact they believed religion to be so important. They were frequently the leaders in the German communities as a result of their education and position. Thus, it seemed necessary to convince them, by force if not by persuasion, that America was fighting a necessary war for a noble cause and deserved wholehearted support. They in turn could sell the war to their people.

Another example of the conflict between religious values and defense involved a Swedish Lutheran church at Albert City and its pastor, Rev. Benson who refused to allow the U.S. flag to be displayed in church. His house, the church, and his car received a lot of paint and he left town.

Register, May 11, 1917, p. 12.
The variety of religious expression in Iowa might well have encouraged some of the German-Americans to settle here. At least those who read *Iowa: The Home for Immigrants* were given the impression that all religious faiths could find a home here as nine Protestant denominations and the Catholic Church were listed as already established in Iowa. All who wanted independence and were willing to contribute to building Iowa would be welcome according to the Guide with no mention of language or religion as a barrier.

Charges have been made that the Germans tended to be clannish and that this led to much of the trouble. It is true they often lived quite near to one another and usually not too far from their church yet every county in the state had German-American residents so they were rather widely dispersed throughout Iowa. It must also be remembered that many of the Germans identified themselves with the individual German states from which they or their ancestors had come rather than with the German Empire. They did not necessarily feel close to every other German. Many had a strong sense of family loyalty and stayed close but some people of nearly all ethnic backgrounds settled close together here in Iowa while others did not.

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2 Ibid., p. 67.
Economic factors apparently played a part in the distrust of the Germans in Iowa. James W. Pierce, Iowa Home-
stead editor, alleged that much of what he called a "reign of terror" resulted from interests that did not wish the
Iowa farmers to organize to improve their lot. The Non-
Partisan League which organized in South Dakota in 1915 had
swept that state in the elections of 1916 and did so again
in 1918 and 1920 and its strength was expanding into
neighboring states including Iowa. While each state program
was modified to take advantage of local conditions, state
ownership of marketing facilities remained the main point
in each platform. If the Non-Partisan League achieved the
political leverage it had in South Dakota those who profited
from owning the marketing facilities needed by the farmers
stood an excellent chance of being hurt. In part then the
conflict of rural and urban interests took place on a field
labeled patriotism during these years.

Newspaper accounts of incidents involving Germans
during these years often include a reference to the citizen's
wealth. Such references occur frequently enough to suggest
jealousy as a possible motive for some of the yellow paint

1 \textit{Iowa Homestead}, August 22, 1915, et passim.

and threats to life and property. Personal jealousies and "pure vindictiveness" played a part in the anti-German sentiment which arose across Iowa as well as elsewhere.1

An Ames citizen who had refused to purchase Liberty Bonds or contribute to other war-related fund drives received a visit from a group of patriotic local citizens. He was described as wealthy and after the visit anxious to purchase bonds.2 A "wealthy banker," A. H. Schaffer of New Hampton had his house painted yellow.3 A Cedar Rapids resident, A. T. Stout, was forced to donate to the YMCA, Red Cross, and buy savings stamps because, "He is wealthy."4 There were reports from Sioux City that wealthy families arranged to be out of town during fund drives and three prominent men supposedly well able to meet their quota in the Fourth Liberty Bond drive failed to do so.5 After the Armistice, a wealthy Maquoketa farmer, W. M. Holtz, was nearly lynched for remarks, presumably favorable, about the Kaiser.6

1Witte, pp. 187-8.
2The Des Moines Register, November 18, 1917, p. 6.
3Ibid., May 21, 1918, p. 4.
4Ibid., July 1, 1918, p. 10.
5Ibid., October 26, 1918, p. 3.
6The Des Moines Register, November 24, 1918, News-
letter to Iowa Boys in France.
Economic conflict involving some of the Germans in Iowa had arisen even before the war. The Amana Society found it necessary to defend its way of life as the result of a lawsuit brought by a "resident and taxpayer of Iowa County" in which he attempted to prove that the Society had exceeded its corporate power as a religious organization. The charge grew from the fact the Society owned real estate and had established several secular industries. The District Court ruled in favor of the Society and the decision was upheld by the Supreme Court in November, 1906.

The court decision stated:

... they have a right to believe in community of property as a religious doctrine and to organize in order to live in conformity to that doctrine, any employment devoted to their support would be accomplishing the purpose of the Society's existence.

Newspaper editors tended to favor activities with the backing of public opinion. Usually, they advocated decency and restraint. The papers needed both advertisers and subscribers and thus keeping the peace in their respective communities was important to them.

1 Bertha Shambaugh, Amana That Was and Amana That Is (Iowa City: State Historical Society of Iowa, 1932), p. 78.

2 Ibid., p. 79.

3 Lewis Atherton, Main Street on the Middle Border (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1941), pp. 163-4.
The editor of the Davenport Der Tasliche Demokrat advised his readers not to speak about the war evidently believing discretion was necessary for the German-speaking Iowans. Advertisements for the Liberty Bonds appeared in the Der Tasliche Demokrat and the editor dutifully noted that the translations required were filed with the postmaster. After the Governor's language proclamation, the editor commented that the language in which things are spoken does not really matter; the spirit in which things are said is what really counts. This paper printed a great deal of syndicated war news and quite a bit of advertising for the war bonds with no evidence of real disloyalty anywhere.

Every paper surveyed printed some material supplied by the Committee on Public Information but how much and what varied from editor to editor. Letters from local residents in the service appeared frequently, too. Some editors tended to use emotive language designed to keep emotions and fear at a high pitch while others exercised extreme care trying to keep their communities calm. In almost all cases the enemy was referred to as a Hun, occasionally a Prussian but almost never simply a German.

1 Der Tasliche Demokrat, April 16, 1917, p. 3.
2 Ibid., July 7, 1918, p. 3.
No one factor can be singled out as the sole cause of the anti-German feeling. As the American involvement increased in Europe, casualty lists lengthened placing an emotional strain on families and communities. Propaganda appeals bombarded citizens and more and more appeared as the war continued. Many citizens purchased bonds, savings stamps, contributed to the Red Cross, YMCA, and other campaigns and felt a personal stake in the war. Constant references to the Hun made all the Germans somehow less than human. Personalities, jealousy, vindictiveness all played a part in individual instances of trouble. Overall the American people looked to the ideal: a world safe for democracy where there would never be another war. With all of these factors at work, it is difficult to attribute any incident of violence to a specific newspaper article or bit of propaganda for frequently several reasons might be involved.

The original intention of the government, both State and Federal, to rally Americans for all-out effort was necessary once the United States went to war. However on local levels the situation often got out-of-hand. Vigilante groups, extra-legal courts, threats to life and property, and acts of violence resulted. German-Americans often found themselves in situations where no matter what they did they were the recipients of abuse. As late as April, 1919, the Patriotic Investigation Council of Jasper County came into
existence to discover why some allegedly wealthy people had not purchased their share of bonds. 1

Whether these measures prevented disloyalty or whether such disloyalty existed cannot be answered. At least little evidence of real disloyalty can be found in Iowa. Most reported incidents of trouble appear once and are never mentioned again, however Baxter and Pomeroy are two obvious exceptions. So few cases ever got into court, the sound and fury must have outweighed the reality and most accusations of disloyalty remained just that--accusations.

A warm spot for the land of their birth may have remained in the hearts of the German-Americans but it must be remembered they came to Iowa of their free will searching for something better for themselves and their children. Naturally, these people loved their kinfolk in Germany and could not believe them to be monsters. Probably most of them mourned when the United States declared war on Germany but most mourned for the sorrow of war. Certainly a fondness for customs learned in Germany lingered along with the language, but other customs and the English language were being used more and more as the older generation died. The majority of Americans of German background were just that: Americans of German background, and so they remained despite the hysteria of the war years.

1 The Newton Daily News (Newton, Iowa), April 25, 1919, p. 1.
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