

PERSECUTION OF GERMAN-AMERICANS IN CENTRAL TEXAS
DURING WORLD WAR I

THESIS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
PROLOGUE	1
I. THE UNITED STATES.	3
II. WOODROW WILSON AND THEODORE ROOSEVELT.	28
III. TEXAS.	46
IV. SAN ANTONIO.	68
V. NEW BRAUNFELS.	91
VI. SEGUIN	109
EPILOGUE	132
BIBLIOGRAPHY	134

PROLOGUE

On June 22, 1914, Franz Ferdinand, Archduke of Austria-Hungary, was shot by a young Serbian zealot. One month later, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia and World War I had begun. President Woodrow Wilson, in a speech delivered on August 19, urged all citizens of the United States to remain totally neutral and impartial, regardless of past loyalties. This neutrality became insupportable and on April 2, 1917, President Wilson asked Congress to declare war on Germany. He further exhorted all Americans to be loyal to the nation and warned, "If there should be disloyalty, it will be dealt with with a firm hand of stern repression."¹ These latter statements were directed to the friends of the German people, particularly to Germans living in the United States, either as aliens or American citizens of German heritage.

The irony is that Germans were among the first settlers in the original thirteen colonies. Germans arrived in Jamestown in 1607 so they were not a new ingredient to the melting pot.² They were the "right" color, they practiced an acceptable religion, and they represented the largest minority group within the United

¹Woodrow Wilson, War and Peace, Vol. II of The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson, edited by Ray Stannard Baker and William E. Dodd (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1926), p. 109.

²John Smith, Historie of Virginia (London: Michael Sparkes, 1624), pp. 66-94.

States at the time of the war which began in 1914.³ Why then were they discriminated against and how serious was the discrimination?

The purpose of this paper is to describe and evaluate the conditions of persecution of the German-Americans on the national, state and local levels. Chapter One gives an overview of the persecution as it existed throughout the United States. The next chapter presents the views of two prominent national leaders during the war and the role each played in contributing to the persecution. The third chapter provides evidence that there was discrimination against German-Americans in the state of Texas. The final three chapters are an in-depth study of this persecution in specific localities in Texas, i.e. San Antonio, New Braunfels and Seguin. These last chapters are largely a composition of information obtained from interviews with German-Americans who were living in the state during World War I.

San Antonio was the largest city in Texas at that time; it was the county seat of Bexar, and it had a sizable and respected German minority. New Braunfels was chosen because it was one of the original German settlements in Texas, it was the county seat of Comal, and it was still predominantly German in its heritage and population. Seguin, on the other hand, was of mixed heritage. It had been settled originally by non-Germans but had, by the beginning of the war, become half-German and

³United States, Bureau of the Census, Population, 1910, Vol. I (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1913), p. 787.

half-non-German, with slightly more of the former. These towns form an irregular triangle in the south-central part of Texas.

There was not much written about the conditions of discrimination, except for newspaper reports of specific incidents. The major source of information included the newspapers and the people themselves, through personal interviews. Some of those interviewed indicated reluctance to comment, some had simply forgotten what did occur over fifty years ago, some were too young to have been involved or remember, and the rest were dead.

CHAPTER I

THE UNITED STATES

Preceding the American Revolution, some quarter of a million Germans had come to America. They were, for the most part, uneducated and poor and America was a land of opportunity. They became loyal Americans. Nativist opposition to those of German extraction first came with the flood of immigrants in the nineteenth century, many of whom were educated and liberal Germans who had failed in their effort to democratize Germany. They wanted to come to the United States, according to a writing in 1834, for the purpose of founding a new state where German customs would be established and protected by law.¹ There were other immigrants from Germany at that time who were not opposed to assimilation, but many of them believed that Americans were philosophically and intellectually inferior. These newcomers were products of a new German nationalism that had induced great pride in country following the Napoleonic wars. The effort to preserve their native kultur in America led to a convention in Pittsburg in 1837, where an attempt was made to coordinate efforts to perpetuate the German language and to provide a normal school to negate attempts at Americanization.²

¹Richard O'Connor, The German-Americans (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1968), p. 71. (Hereinafter referred to as O'Connor, The German Americans.)

²Ibid., p. 74.

This attempt to organize failed because the Germans had scattered across the United States so that they lacked centralization and autonomy.

Despite the absence of cooperation, the German culture survived in the United States and was strengthened by immigration from Germany in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The superiority complex exhibited by many Germans was intensified by the victory of Germany over the French in 1871, and by scientific, industrial and philosophical achievements. Prior to World War I, the German-Americans were known as a separate group, one that had not been assimilated, but, even so, surveys indicated their acceptability over other immigrant nationalities. They had established themselves as one of the most respected minorities in the country through their ability and perserverance and because of their contributions in finance, industry, education, science, and agriculture.³ This pride of the German-Americans fostered the belief that they were such a vital factor and influence in this country that they could at least keep the United States neutral and out of the European War which began in 1914. Their efforts became part of a bitter and hopeless fight against the views of the majority of the American people and from this failure the German-Americans are just now recovering.⁴

³Ibid., pp. 365-366.

⁴Ibid., p. 375.

While criticizing other Americans for not remaining neutral, some German-Americans were guilty of an equally biased position. The best example of such bias was the German-American Alliance, which between 1914 and 1917 raised \$886,670.18 to give to the German and Austrian ambassadors to use for relief work, although the ultimate use of the money remains in doubt.⁵ Such collections of money, coupled with increased discoveries of German sabotage, created grave concern within the country. Early in the war, Wilson had become disturbed about the German-American influence and its support of the Central Powers, and he even feared the possibility of a civil war. His fear of the German sympathizers proved erroneous, but there was a need for concern about German sabotage, and in 1915 he began urging legislation against conspiracy and began to speak against hyphenated Americans.⁶ The term hyphenism was used to refer to the German-American sentiment, and hyphenates the people themselves, whom Wilson felt were largely to blame for the lack of neutrality and for opposition to the government.

President Wilson, following his request for neutrality in 1914, is generally considered to have gone to extremes to maintain that position or at least to keep the country out of the war. In 1916, though, Wilson signed the National Defense

⁵Carl Wittke, German-Americans and the World War (Columbus: The Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 1936), p. 32. (Hereinafter referred to as Wittke, German-Americans.)

⁶Ibid., p. 42.

Act, intended to prepare the nation for war by strengthening the military forces. This act climaxed the German-American fight to keep the United States neutral, because the German-Americans felt that military preparation was intended for possible use against Germany. The criticism that the German-Americans had previously directed against the English and their violations of American neutral rights at sea was now directed against Wilson and his requests for military preparation.

The United States in November of 1916, following the June passage of the National Defense Act, re-elected Wilson on the premise that he had kept us out of war. German-Americans campaigned openly and vigorously against Wilson because of his pro-English attitude, and they reportedly defected from the Democratic Party in massive numbers. Many German-language newspapers looked confidently to election day and President Wilson's defeat at the hands of the German-American voters.⁷ Charles Evans Hughes' inability as a campaigner, Wilson's promise to keep out of the war, the electoral weakness of the German-Americans, and other factors which contributed to Wilson's victory led metropolitan American journals to conclude that the hyphen vote had suffered a fatal blow.⁸

The German-Americans saw their hopes for neutrality crumble following Wilson's re-election. Their desires for neutrality were not helped by the German renewal of unrestricted submarine

⁷Ibid., p. 109.

⁸Ibid., p. 111.

warfare in the winter of 1917. Possibly the greatest blow to the German-American hopes was the publication of the Zimmermann Note of March 1, in which the German ambassador offered to Mexico a return of her lost provinces north of the border if she would attack the United States in the event the latter entered the war. The German-language papers attacked Wilson for permitting the publication of the note and declared it was a subterfuge to embarrass Germany and coerce the United States into war. When Ambassador Zimmermann announced to the press in Berlin that his telegram to Mexico was accurately reported, the German-Americans were totally disconcerted and demoralized. The consequences were inevitable and the German-Americans were about to face their most traumatic moment as citizens of the United States.⁹

The role of those German-Americans who had previously denounced the English, criticized Wilson and been associated with sabotage, caused many other citizens to question the loyalty of the German element, even though the majority of them were unwavering patriots. The prejudice was evident from the day the President asked Congress for a declaration of war. An incident occurred in Washington, D. C., which, although pacifist-led, would be related to a German-American. Early that day the pacifists gathered at the Capitol, but they were repulsed and broken up. Six of them went into the Senate Office Building

⁹C' Connor, The German-Americans, p. 405.

and encountered Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts, a proponent of preparedness. The Senator later related, "the German [italics mine] member of their party said 'You are a damned liar,' and he hit me and I hit him." By that evening the scuffle had become a battle royal, Senator Lodge was a national hero, and Alexander Bannawort was in jail for assaulting a man twice his age.¹⁰ Other Americans would discover that hitting a German, by whatever means available, physical, social or psychological, would bring respect and heroism. German-Americans found themselves struggling to regain their position among the most preferred nationalities in America.¹¹

Between April 2, 1917, when President Wilson asked for the war declaration, and April 6, when Congress voted to declare war, rigorous efforts were made to prevent the inevitable. The German-language newspapers carried front-page articles, in English, pleading for peace and beseeching their readers to telegraph their congressmen to that effect. Twenty-five prominent German-Americans formed a delegation and went to Washington to petition the President to maintain peace, but their efforts were futile.¹² With the declaration of war, the German-language press and the German-Americans faced a need for

¹⁰O'Connor, The German-Americans, p. 407.

¹¹Wittke, German-Americans, p. 22.

¹²Carl Wittke, The German-Language Press in America (n.p.: University of Kentucky Press, 1957), p. 261. (Hereinafter referred to as Wittke, German-Language Press.)

a complete change in attitude. The change took time. For two years the German-Americans had defended the fatherland; now they were expected to support their old enemies, the English and the French. There was to be little time given the German-Americans for mourning, as the "huneaters" demanded they become fanatical nationalists. The suspicion and criticism of all things German increased as nationalistic fervor replaced reason in the war hysteria of 1917 and 1918, a situation that was incomprehensible to many German-Americans.¹³

The German-American Alliance that had helped Germany financially, now called for support of the American war effort. It warned German-Americans to remove the German flag and pictures of German leaders from their offices and club buildings.¹⁴ As early as February 7, 1917, when the United States broke diplomatic relations with Germany, the Alliance publicly announced its backing of the country's action. Nevertheless, despite its declared loyalty, it fell under heavy suspicion and persecution. The Alliance, organized in 1901, was the largest organization of its kind, and had been approved by Congress as an "educational and patriotic" organization, as had many such organizations of immigrant groups. The Alliance was criticized by many German-Americans for its attempts to Germanize the world; however, the German-language press still

¹³Wittke, German-Americans, p. 132.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 13.

supported it and claimed its program had always been American.¹⁵ This support was questionable since the Alliance had supported legislation for the teaching of German, encouraged German singing societies, backed German-language newspapers, and sponsored historical studies on the contributions of the German element to the United States. Such programs encouraged the continuance and the aggrandizement of the German culture in this country and did not further the process of naturalization for immigrants nor the assimilation of German-Americans.¹⁶ Most of the German-language press continued to defend the Alliance throughout the war, even during an investigation of the organization in 1918 by a sub-committee of the Senate Judiciary Committee. The investigation led to the voluntary dissolution of the Alliance three months before its congressional approval was repealed. The thirty thousand dollars which remained in the Alliance's treasury was given, with a show of genuine patriotism, to the American Red Cross.¹⁷

Other German-American organizations also suffered as their memberships decreased and some suspended their activities for the remainder of the war.¹⁸ Some of the groups were

¹⁵Ibid., p. 164.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 171.

¹⁸Ibid.

discontinued as a result of the recommendations of the German-Americans themselves. The recommendations encouraged a greater mixing with other Americans to further understanding between the German and non-German elements and in order for the German descendants to learn the American point of view.¹⁹ Other groups were the victims of suspicion and threat and were unable to do those things for which they had been organized.

Singing societies, frequently not permitted to sing in German, cancelled their Saengerfeste celebrations. The singing or playing of German music was forbidden in some schools and discontinued by some organizations. The wedding marches of Wagner and Mendelssohn were reportedly to be replaced by a new one by John Phillip Sousa. The New York Metropolitan Opera and the Chicago Opera Company banned German music from their programs.²⁰ It became customary that musical programs open with the "Star-Spangled Banner," even if the group performing was of foreign citizenship. In some cases alien enemy symphony conductors and performers were interned.

Other areas of the arts, such as theater groups that used the German language and performed German plays, were treated similarly and had to close down. German productions were not allowed in many cities, and in others they were not attended well enough to stay in business. The popular plays presented

¹⁹Ibid., p. 142.

²⁰Ibid., p. 183.

patriotic themes which ridiculed and ostracized the Huns. The same was true of the movies, which were often better propaganda than entertainment. Certainly the movie industry was partially responsible for the hysteria and persecution of the German-Americans in 1917 and 1918.²¹

Another German pursuit that suffered was the German-language press, the most prolific and influential of the foreign-language presses, and a dangerous foe to the United States, according to some Americans.²² Certainly, before United States' entry into the war, the German element had known mainly the pro-German point of view as presented by the German-language press. This media had opposed the war, the war profiteers, and the Allies. When the United States entered the war, however, the editorial policy of the German-language press underwent a complete reversal. The Trading with the Enemy Act of 1917 required the foreign-language papers to turn in English translations before printing. Also, the very use of the language of the enemy for criticizing the government appeared much worse and more disloyal than the same criticism written in English.²³ American patriots, many of them German descendants, tried to put the newspapers out of business. They refused to buy or subscribe to them, businesses cancelled their advertisements,

²¹H. C. Peterson and Gilbert C. Fite, Opponents of War (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1957), p. 93. (Hereinafter referred to as Peterson, Opponents of War.)

²²Ibid., p. 97.

²³Ibid.

and boycotts were used against those businesses that continued advertising. The cost and time of translating the issues for the government caused many of them to close.

The German-language newspapers fought for survival by providing free space to the government for official notices and to various patriotic causes.²⁴ Fourth of July issues printed the "Star-Spangled Banner," other issues were decorated with the American flag, and editorials supported the war and pleaded with readers to be good citizens.²⁵ Such patriotic support of the government earned many of the papers permits to print without having to submit translations for approval. Still the German-language press was hampered and attacked by state and local governments, by organizations and by individuals. In Iowa, county officials attempted to ban German-language papers from the mails, in Kentucky signs warned against the purchase of such papers, in Cleveland Boy Scouts burned these newspapers, and in many cities official notices were no longer published in them.²⁶ The German-language newspapers were at least able to meet the demands of the national government. Few of the papers were closed down by the national government nor were their editors severely punished.²⁷ Acts of violence

²⁴Wittke, German-Americans, p. 172.

²⁵Wittke, German-Language Press, p. 270.

²⁶Wittke, German-Americans, pp. 174-175.

²⁷Ibid., pp. 176-177.

were prevalent, nevertheless, and the governments responsible took minimal actions against those at fault.

Persecution also occurred in the German churches, or those churches which had German names and German-language services. Much of the nationalistic fervor was directed against them, and in some places they were forbidden to use the German language. As a result, many of these churches lost part of their congregations in those areas where there were large elements of German descendants who did not know the English language or were too old to learn it. The Lutheran, Evangelical and Reformed and German-Methodist were among the churches that suffered the greatest abuse because of their direct German heritage. Such churches were under constant attack, although they attempted to refute charges of disloyalty. The Lutherans counteracted by pointing out that over 165,000 of their members were in the United States Army and by launching a drive in February of 1918 to raise \$750,000.00 for these servicemen. The German Conferences of the Methodists took formal action to support the war.²⁸ Clergymen that had spoken against the war now vigorously supported it and became impassioned patriots, preaching about the holy war as a matter of religious duty. Exhortations to destroy the infidel came to include not just the enemy soldiers in Europe but any one of German descent in the United States.

²⁸Ibid., p. 142.

Some German descendants were guilty of treason against the United States' government. These deserved to be dealt with firmly, but there was no excuse for the harsh treatment dealt many innocent people. Twice during Wilson's war address to Congress, he reiterated that the United States was declaring war on the German government, not the German people, and he reminded Americans not to be hostile to the German people in this country. The President stated shortly thereafter, "Once lead this people into war, and they'll forget there ever was such a thing as tolerance."²⁹ The incidences of intolerance were numerous, but a few will serve to illustrate the general policy and climate of opinion.

The individuals of German descent who were first dealt with were the aliens. With the United States' declaration of war, citizens of enemy countries, alien enemies, could no longer be naturalized and laws were passed restricting their activities and responsibilities. The treatment of loyal residents was made the more difficult by those aliens whose first loyalty went to their native country. An example was an unidentified man in Wyoming, probably a German, who reportedly exclaimed, "Hoch der Kaiser." His punishment, after the town marshall rescued him from a hanging, was to kneel and kiss the American flag.³⁰ Many reports claimed that the general

²⁹Ray Stannard Baker, Woodrow Wilson, Life and Letters, 1915-1917 (New York: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1968), p. 506. (Hereinafter referred to as Baker, Wilson, Life and Letters.)

³⁰Peterson, Opponents of War, p. 84.

treatment of enemy aliens in the United States was mild in comparison to the treatment of American residents in Germany. During the war, of the four million enemy aliens, less than six thousand were interned or had their property taken by the Alien Property Custodian.³¹ Furthermore, some of the aliens were justly punished.

There were many organizations, other than the legal officers of the law, searching for the disloyal. With such extra-legal groups as the Security League, the Protective League, the Loyalty League, or the Citizens' Patriotic League, it is remarkable that more German-Americans were not arrested or convicted of disloyalty.³² The types and degrees of punishment varied with the locality and its intensity of loyalty and patriotism. In St. Louis a German-Methodist pastor was arrested for returning a Liberty bond circular with a denunciation of Wilson written on it. In Missouri an official of the German-American Alliance was arrested when he privately stated Germany would win the war in six months. In Hamilton County, Ohio, an attorney was reprimanded by the court for appealing the case of his client, a saloon-keeper, who had been sentenced to twenty years imprisonment for sedition.³³

³¹John Bach McMaster, The U. S. and the World War (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1920), p. 67.

³²Wittke, German-Americans, p. 143.

³³Ibid., p. 144.

The sentiments and punishments tended to be more harsh as the war progressed. An example of one period of harshness occurred in March of 1918, when the Germans were gaining victories in Europe. To retaliate in the United States, Chicago police made a multitude of arrests of German descendants for exulting over the German successes. One of those arrested, Charles G. Schulze, was sentenced to fifteen years in the penitentiary for favorable remarks about the Germans.³⁴ Such severe sentences were normally appealed and reversed either because of irregularities in the process, insufficient evidence or unreasonable bias. One Supreme Court ruling ordered the decision of a lower court dismissed because of a statement made by the judge, K. M. Landis, who said, "One must have a very judicial mind, indeed, not to be prejudiced against the German-Americans. . . . Their hearts are reeking of disloyalty."³⁵ The decision of another judge was reversed because, in announcing sentence, he claimed that regardless of the length of residence within the United States, Germans still had "Made in Germany" written on them. "We urged you Germans to come; we welcomed you; we gave you opportunity; we gave you land; we conferred on you the diadem of American citizenship--and then we left you. We paid no attention to what you have been doing."³⁶ In the

³⁴Peterson, Opponents of War, p. 183.

³⁵Berger et al v. U. S., 255 U. S. 22 (1921).

³⁶Peterson, Opponents of War, p. 153.

latter case the defendant was a minister accused of disloyal prayers and refusal to subscribe to Liberty loans.

Frequently those suspected of disloyalty were not brought to court but tried by mob rule. The usual punishments included kissing the flag, singing the national anthem, wrapping the suspect in a flag, subscribing to Liberty bonds, or some other patriotic display. Some areas used more originality and took advantage of available facilities. In Salt Lake City a German descendant was almost suffocated in a bin of dough, and in La Salle, Illinois, another was ducked in a canal.³⁷

The most severe penalties were inflicted by fanatical mobs, an example being the punishment of Robert Paul Prager, a young German alien living near St. Louis. He was hanged by a mob of drunks on April 4, 1918, for supposed socialist remarks on one occasion. Some of the leaders of the mob were tried but found not guilty. The whole incident brought widespread condemnation of mob rule and lynchings. The German government officially protested and offered to pay the funeral expenses. The offer was refused, but Wilson was criticized for indecisiveness and refusal to deal directly with the affair until after the trial of the mob members, almost four months after the hanging.³⁸

The attitude towards the German-Americans was not altered

³⁷ Ibid., p. 197.

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 202-205.

significantly by the Frager lynching, nor were the accusations of disloyalty. Among the places where loyalty was vital and any questionable statement or act was readily suspect were the schools and teachers. German-American teachers were frequently dismissed, even if they showed evidence of sincere patriotism. A German-born principal and history teacher in Peoria, Illinois, was sentenced to three years in Ft. Leavenworth and fined \$5,000.00 for comments he made in a history class. The sentence was reversed by the Circuit Court of Appeals because the statements he was accused of making were taken out of context and had not hindered the war effort. The only safe course for a teacher was to use the text and to avoid controversial issues. The Los Angeles Board of Education banned intramural debates on subjects related to the war and prohibited teachers from criticizing the government. The most extreme example occurred in Maine where a teacher was discharged because of taking driving lessons from a German alien.³⁹ To prevent loyalty questions from arising, most states required school teachers to be citizens and some demanded loyalty oaths and pledges to teach patriotism. There were loyalty trials and dismissals at all levels of education throughout the country. At the University of Vermont the head of the German Department was acquitted of all charges against him, but he went back

³⁹Ibid., p. 111.

to Germany, anyway.⁴⁰ The language teachers lost their jobs almost everywhere, usually because German was banned from the curriculum.

There was a greater fear of disloyalty in the armed services, especially in regard to conscription. The fear of German-Americans becoming traitors on the battlefield or of their inability to kill their own kind led to suggestions to use them in non-combat capacities. The fear was abated by the number of German-American enlistments and by the German-language newspapers policies of urging 100 per cent registration and publishing pertinent information regarding the law. About 500,000 aliens registered under the draft and about ten to fifteen per cent of the American Expeditionary Force ultimately consisted of German-Americans who compiled excellent records. There was some opposition to conscription among the German element and petitions were sent to Congress, but these objectors were usually Mennonites and their objections were based on religious rather than nationalistic principles. As George Creel said, "No belligerent country, not even those invaded, made as good a record of unity and loyalty."⁴¹ The most famous German-American exception to the acceptance of conscription was the case of the Bergdoll brothers. The sons of a wealthy Philadelphia brewing family, they would not serve because, they

⁴⁰Wittke, German-Americans, pp. 147-148.

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 160-162.

asserted, "we do not fight our own kind."⁴² They became fugitives-at-large and front page news with their narrow escapes and taunting postcards to the Justice Department. Edwin was caught first and served two years of a four year prison sentence. His younger brother, Grover Cleveland, escaped to Germany after the war, but when he later returned to the United States, he was sent to prison.⁴³

The treatment of the German-Americans who did enlist or were drafted varied. One of the most severe punishments involved Captain D. A. Henkes, who tried to resign when the United States declared war. His father had been born in Germany, and his family had many friends and relatives there. When Captain Henkes was ordered to Europe, he sent a second letter pleading for a change in assignment or acceptance of his resignation. The result was a court-martial and a twenty-five year sentence at Ft. Leavenworth.⁴⁴ Another case involved two German-American flyers, Joseph Wehner and Frank Luke, Jr. Wehner had paid his way from Massachusetts to Kelly Field, Texas, to enlist in the 27th Squadron, which required much effort and made him a strong suspect for treason throughout his period of training. In France he met Luke, who had suffered similar,

⁴²O'Connor, The German-Americans, p. 417.

⁴³Ibid., pp. 417-418.

⁴⁴Peterson, Opponents of War, pp. 82-83.

unreasonable scrutiny by intelligence officers. In spite of their mistreatment, or because of it, they became well-known as a team for fighting the Germans, and Luke became the first American airman to win the Congressional Medal of Honor. They were both killed in combat.⁴⁵

Another famous and popular German-American was the mother of five soldiers, one an Austrian and four who were Americans. Madame Schumann-Heink was a great contralto with the Metropolitan Opera. She refused to disown her eldest son for fighting with Austria, but showed her patriotism to America by performing for the soldiers.⁴⁶ There were other famous German-Americans who suffered no discrimination. Eddie Rickenbacker, formerly Richenbacher, was America's air ace, and General John J. Pershing, whose father changed his name from Pfoerschin when he came to the United States, was the head of the American Expeditionary Force.⁴⁷

Many others tried to escape the prejudice of native Americans by changing their names, and many Americans changed German names as an act of bias. During the war the name changes included changing Schmidt to Smith, Braun to Brown, and Fritz to Fox. Names of towns and streets that were changed were

⁴⁵O'Connor, The German-Americans, pp. 422-425.

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 420-421.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 421.

Berlin, Iowa, to Lincoln; East Germantown, Indiana, to Pershing, ironically; and Kaiser Street to Marne Way. The Bismarck School of Chicago became the General Frederick Funston School. All facilities or businesses, such as hotels and banks, with German names were encouraged to choose more appropriate American names. Stores with German names on the front suffered paint splatterings and broken glass until the names were changed or removed. German symbols were replaced with American symbols--- the flag business boomed during the war. Such excessive demands of nationalism included not only people but animals as well. Dachshunds, schnauzers, weimeraners, and German shepherds (temporarily renamed Alsations) were sometimes mistreated and even killed by superpatriotic boys. Even food was frequently renamed: hamburgers became liberty sandwiches; sauerkraut was renamed liberty cabbage; weiners and frankfurters were called hot dogs. Food which had originated or been made in Germany now came from other areas: pretzels from Italy and limburger cheese from Belgium. In many restaurants and hotels German foods were either renamed or not served.⁴⁸

Not all German things were merely renamed or changed. Some, such as books, were occasionally destroyed. In Lewiston, Montana, a delegation burned all the German textbooks in the local high school. In Shawnee, Oklahoma, a book-burning was a feature event on the Fourth of July. In a small town in

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 414.

Indiana, German books were flung into a muddy ditch.⁴⁹ Other examples were the selling of school books to a waste paper company, the removing of books from libraries, and the cancelling of subscriptions to German-language newspapers. Some of the steps were less drastic, but the public pressure forced steps to be taken.

Montana prohibited the use of German in the churches and schools, and the governor of Iowa forbid the speaking of German in public. Various newspaper headlines included among others the following: "German Barred from Spokane's Public Schools," "Speech of Hun Forbidden," and "German Deader than Latin Now."⁵⁰ German teachers who were not dismissed taught classes in Americanism and Citizenship. The teaching of German was discontinued despite the urging of the United States Commissioner of Education, the pleas of German-language newspapers, and the objections of German-Americans. The United States Supreme Court, in Meyer v. Nebraska, on June 4, 1923, overruled the Nebraska law barring the use and teaching of German in private and parochial schools below the eighth grade on the basis that it was in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution.⁵¹

⁴⁹Peterson, Opponents of War, p. 196.

⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 195-196.

⁵¹Meyer v. Nebraska, 262 U. S. 390, 1923.

In Texas, however, the law prohibiting the teaching of German was not repealed until 1927.⁵²

Such hysteria was derided by some writers and authors, especially stories of German-Americans grinding up glass to put in sugar and bandages and the poisoning of food and drinking water. The criticism of H. L. Mencken of "the New York Tribune liar who invented the story about the German plant for converting the corpses of the slain into soap," would bear ironic implications for World War II.⁵³ Such tales of German atrocities in this country and in Europe, coupled with the patriotic fervor, created irrational bias and acts of discrimination in many parts of the United States.

The German-Americans did not improve conditions by the refusal of some to take a stand supporting the United States. A book published in 1918, Where Do You Stand?, took such German-Americans to task for their lack of loyalty. The author, Hermann Hagedorn, was a German descendant who had a family living in Germany during the war. His book was directed to all German descendants in the United States and called upon them to declare their loyalty for America. "Not only loyalty to the government to which we owe our allegiance, but loyalty to the spirit and high traditions of our German [American] revolutionary heroes,

⁵²Texas, Acts 1927, 40th Legislature, p. 267.

⁵³H. L. Mencken, Prejudice: Third Series (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1922), p. 142. (Hereinafter referred to as Mencken, Third Series.)

demand that today we stand unmistakably with and for America."⁵⁴
Hagedorn admitted that the decision to oppose the fatherland was not easy, but to a large extent it was the delay of some German-Americans in declaring their allegiance that caused the persecution against them. There was persecution, some caused by the German-Americans themselves, but most of it by the hysteria of war. Another major cause was the attitude of American leaders who contributed to the discrimination against German descendants.

⁵⁴Hermann Hagedorn, Where Do You Stand? (New York: Macmillan Company, 1918), pp. 101-102.

CHAPTER II

WOODROW WILSON AND THEODORE ROOSEVELT

There was persecution of German-Americans during World War I, and it existed throughout the United States. The persecution was prompted partially by the actions of some German-Americans and by the behavior of some of the leaders in the country. The European War brought a startling realization to Americans that the population was not yet homogeneous and that the melting pot was breaking into incongruous groups.¹ As these groups took sides for one or the other of the warring nations, feelings of animosity intensified. Humorist Peter Finley Dunne used his Irish-American character, Mr. Dooley, to reflect upon the feelings of non-German-Americans towards the German descendants.

I'm not prejudiced against thim, mind ye. They made good beer an' good citizens an' mod-rate policeman, an' they are fond iv their families an' cheese. But wanst a German, always Dutch. Ye cudden't make Americans iv them if ye called them all Perkins an' brought thim up in Worchester. A German niver ra-aly laves Germany. He takes it with him wherever he goes. Whin an Irishman is four miles out to sea he is as much an American as Presarved Fish. But a German is never an American excipt whin he goes back to Germany to see his rilatives. He keeps his own language, his food is sthrange an' he only votes f'r Germans f'r office, or if he can't get a German, f'r somewhan who's again' the Irish. I bet ye, if ye was suddenly to ask Schwarzmeister where he is, he'd say: "At Hockheimer in Schwabia." He don't ra-aly know he iver came over to this counthry. I've heard him talkin' to himsilf. He always counts in German.²

¹Wittke, German-Language Press, p. 236.

²O'Connor, The German-Americans, pp. 275-276.

An anti-German writer for the Saturday Evening Post referred to the German-Americans as "the scum of the melting pot" that ought to be "scoured from the national life."³ Such sentiments helped to further hostile feelings among non-Germans and to cause doubt in the loyalty of the German element.

Newspapers, during the war years, oftentimes contained articles about glass in bandages and food, poison in food, fires and bombings in various places, and other vicious crimes, with implications that the pro-German element was the source of such infamy. There were many Americans who opposed these implications, but they were hesitant to speak in behalf of the German-Americans and against the government. Even the normally outspoken H. L. Mencken waited until 1922, four years after the war was over, to publish a book concerning such persecution by various individuals, super-patriots or "Star-Spangled men," as he referred to them. He proposed special medals for the super-patriotic civilian who had served his government so well at home during the war. The deeds that he felt deserved such awards illustrated some of the conditions that existed.

[A] Distinguished Service Medal . . . for the university president who prohibited the teaching of the enemy language in his learned grove, heaved the works of Goethe out of the university library, cashiered every professor unwilling to support Woodrow for the first vacancy in the Trinity . . . [Medals, also,] for the patriotic chemists who discovered arsenic in dill pickles, ground glass in pumpernickel, biochloride tablets in Bismarck herring, pathogenic organisms in aniline dyes . . . [for the] Methodist pulpit pornographers who switched

³Ibid., p. 414.

so facilely from vice-crusading to German atrocities . . . [, and, finally, Alien Property Custodian] Palmer deserves to be rolled in malleable gold from head to foot, and polished until he blinds the cosmos-- then [Postmaster-General] Burleson must be hung with diamonds⁴

That such charges could have been made certainly indicated a degree of persecution and suspicion not soon to be forgotten.

But tales such as these and comments of individuals like Peter Finley Dunne could not influence the temper of the United States, or the people, as much as could President Woodrow Wilson or former President Theodore Roosevelt, the leaders of the Democratic and Republican Parties, respectively, during the war. Wilson spoke of peace, of the loyalty of the great majority of Americans, and of hyphenism. Roosevelt expounded on patriotism, called for the involvement in the war against Germany, and attacked the disloyalty of the hyphenates. The attitudes of Wilson and Roosevelt were accentuated as the war progressed, and their feelings became more extensively known, and more popularly accepted by many Americans.

As early as May 16, 1914, Wilson defined the "genuine American" as one whose heart was brought with him to the United States, and the "other American" was the one who left his heart in the country of his origin and used a hyphen in his name.⁵

⁴H. L. Mencken, Third Series, pp. 140-145.

⁵Woodrow Wilson, The New Democracy, Vol. I of The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson, edited by Ray Stannard Baker and William E. Dodd (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1926), p. 109. (Hereinafter referred to as Wilson, New Democracy, Vol. I or II.)

Most Americans, or their forefathers, had come from the major nations of Europe, such as England, Germany, or France. On August 4, 1914, with these European nations in the process of going to war, Woodrow Wilson issued a proclamation of neutrality for the United States. From the moment that England entered the war, there was a likelihood that Wilson himself could not be totally impartial. John Morton Blum, in Woodrow Wilson, and Richard Hofstadter, in The American Political Tradition, described Wilson as being sympathetic to England⁶ and as a thorough Anglophile.⁷ The fact that Wilson had sympathies, as did others, could be seen in his note to the Senate on August 19, 1914.

The people of the United States are drawn from many nations, and chiefly from the nations now at war. It is natural and inevitable that there should be the utmost variety of sympathy and desire among them with regard to the issues and circumstances of the conflict. Some will wish one nation, others another, to succeed in the momentous struggle. It will be easy to excite passion and difficult to allay it The United States must be neutral in fact as well as in name during these days that are to try men's souls.⁸

Neutrality evidently was a nice ideal but an impossibility, as even Wilson and his most important advisers were partial to England.⁹ Wilson naturally looked with favor on the nation

⁶John Morton Blum, Woodrow Wilson (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1956), p. 10. (Hereinafter referred to as Blum, Wilson.)

⁷Richard Hofstadter, The American Political Tradition (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948), p. 257. (Hereinafter referred to as Hofstadter, American Political Tradition.)

⁸Wilson, New Democracy, Vol. I, pp. 157-158.

⁹Hofstadter, American Political Tradition, p. 257.

which shared our same language and institutions and whose history formed the beginnings of American history.¹⁰ His pro-English sentiment was noted again in December, 1915, when the United States ambassador to Belgium, Brand Whitlock, divulged his own lack of neutrality and his pro-Allied feelings. Wilson's reply was that he felt the same: "No decent man, knowing the situation and Germany, could be anything else."¹¹

The year 1917 brought increased violations of United States neutrality by both Germany and England. The German violations were the more offensive to the majority of Americans because the use of U-boats entailed surprise attack, sinking of ships, and loss of American lives. Such results were repugnant under the current but anachronistic rules of war. The hostilities toward Germany and German descendants were intensified further by various exploits in sabotage. These conditions existed in a Presidential election year and were, thus, issues of importance. In the early months of the year, Wilson toured the Midwest speaking in behalf of preparedness and condemning the irresponsible voices of a minority. These voices, in large part, were those of the foreign born, according to the President, whose passions were linked to the countries of their birth.¹² In his

¹⁰Blum, Wilson, p. 95.

¹¹Baker, Woodrow Wilson, Vol. 5, p. 376.

¹²Wilson, New Democracy, Vol. II, pp. 83-85.

speeches the President recognized the "infinite prejudice and passion" aroused by the war, but he requested the nation to keep cool and prepare for any possibility. He also reiterated, "I want the record of the conduct of this administration to be a record of genuine neutrality and not of pretended neutrality."¹³ Wilson's position throughout the tour was that preparedness was a necessity if the United States was to maintain its dignity and safety, and that whatever displeasure and hatred that did exist merely existed on the surface.¹⁴

In the summer of 1916, the President became more hostile to the disloyal minority, stating, "it must be absolutely crushed" and "that loyalty to this flag [was] the first test of tolerance in the United States."¹⁵ Another theme that recurred in his speeches was that the needs of the nation took precedence over those of the individual citizen or any other nation.¹⁶ Then in September Wilson accepted the nomination of his political party and asserted, "I seek neither the favour nor fear the displeasure of that small alien element amongst us which puts loyalty to any foreign power before loyalty to the

¹³Ibid., pp. 110-111.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 112, 116.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 209.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 213.

United States."¹⁷ While Wilson condemned the hyphenates for involvement in sabotage and for opposition to his doctrines of neutrality, his most popular campaign slogan was that he kept us out of the war, and the credit for his re-election is most commonly given to it.¹⁸ His condemnation of the disloyal hyphenates publicized his antagonism towards them and their un-Americanism, and his promise to keep the nation out of the war built false hopes which he admitted he could not do.¹⁹

Early in 1917, Wilson broke relations with Germany and appealed to Congress to arm merchant ships as the United States was just months away from war. In his inaugural address he defended our armed neutrality and warned against any disloyal intrigue.²⁰ A month after the inauguration, Wilson asked Congress to declare war on Germany. A portion of his war declaration consisted of statements pertaining to United States' friendship to the German people.

We are let me say again, the sincere friends of the German people We shall, happily, still have an opportunity to prove that friendship in our daily attitude and actions towards the millions of men and

¹⁷Ibid., p. 283.

¹⁸Blum, Wilson, p. 119.

¹⁹Baker, Woodrow Wilson, Vol. 6, p. 258.

²⁰Woodrow Wilson, War and Peace, Vol. I of The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson, edited by Ray Stannard Baker and William E. Dodd (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1926), pp. 1-5. (Hereinafter referred to as Wilson, War and Peace, Vol. I.)

women of German birth and sympathy who live amongst us and share our life, and we shall be proud to prove it towards all who are in fact loyal to their neighbors and to the Government in the hour of test. They are most of them as true and loyal Americans as if they had never known any other fealty or allegiance If there should be disloyalty, it will be dealt with with a firm hand of stern repression; but, if it lifts its head at all, it will lift it only here and there and without countenance except from a lawless and malignant few.²¹

Wilson's speech affirmed some conspicuous ideas which would dominate his programs the next couple of years. These points were that most of the German-Americans were loyal and that the few disloyal ones would be severely punished. The threat of severe punishment for the few disloyal German-Americans encouraged the use of repression. Also, the proof of American friendship to German descendants in this country all too often consisted of hostility, discrimination, and bodily harm. That Wilson did believe in a loyal majority was restated by him in August, 1917, in a letter to Representative I. C. Nyer of Missouri.

I have been made aware from various sources of the unfortunate situation in which a very large number of our loyal fellow-citizens are placed because of their German origin or affiliations.

I am sure that they need no further assurance from me of my confidence in their entire integrity and loyalty of the great body of our citizens of German blood.²²

Wilson stated and wrote of his confidence in the loyal majority of German-Americans, but he never took action for the protection

²¹Ibid., pp. 15-16.

²²New York Times, August 4, 1917, p. 2.

of that majority. As far as the record shows, Wilson took positive action only against disloyalty.

To deal with the disloyal, the government, at President Wilson's request, passed several laws to punish disloyalty and sedition. The President played upon the emotions of the people to gain their support for the war effort, and he was successful in promoting patriotism for the United States and hatred for the Huns. At the same time, though, Americans became super-patriotic and were unable to distinguish between the Hun in Germany and the loyal German-American at home.²³ The program for the support of the war effort was placed under the control of George Creel and the Committee on Public Information. The purpose of the Committee on Public Information was to win support of the war effort through a massive, unprecedented propaganda effort. The program was based upon Wilson's theories that the war was being fought in the name of democracy, and upon Creel's theory that the Germans were Huns and were guilty of fiendish atrocities in their attempt to conquer the world.²⁴

In October of 1917, Congress passed a law, the Trading-with-the-Enemy Act, designed to insure loyalty. This law was the first in American history to provide restrictions on the foreign-language press. It required translations of all war news,

²³Blum, Wilson, p. 141.

²⁴Ibid., p. 142.

which postmasters had to approve, until the fealty of the particular paper was established. Obviously, from the day the law went into effect, if a paper wanted to continue publication, it had to support Wilson, the United States, and the war.²⁵ The act also censored foreign communications, regulated exports and imports, and permitted seizure of German-owned properties in the United States. In a letter written on November 16, to the Northwest Loyalty Meetings in St. Paul, Minnesota, Wilson described the war as being one for true Americans regardless of their birth, race, economic basis, or whatever distinguishing traits they might have. The nation must be protected and the people must act with one common purpose and with a firm determination to end the war.²⁶ To accomplish victory, Wilson favored nationalization of the railroads, regulation of consumption, and censorship of the press.

Even these laws did not bring the complete unity and loyalty desired; therefore in May of 1918, the Sedition Act was passed which gave the federal government the power to punish any statements that were, according to the act, "disloyal, profane, scurrilous or abusive" towards the United States or any of its symbols. The outcome spoke for itself, as over fifteen hundred arrests were made, of which only ten were for actual sabotage.²⁷

²⁵Wittke, German-Language Press, p. 264.

²⁶Wilson, War and Peace, Vol. I, p. 127.

²⁷Blum, Wilson, pp. 143-144.

How could Wilson permit such conditions to develop? He permitted the violations of civil liberties in order to end the war as quickly as possible.²⁸ In asking for a declaration of war, Wilson was forced to go against his deepest values of peace,²⁹ and now his neglect of civil liberties would be a factor for some people, the German-Americans certainly, to mistrust him and to oppose his dream of peace as envisioned in the Fourteen Points. After the armistice, the German-Americans expressed their resentment for the treatment they had received during the war in the polling booth and by turning toward isolationism.³⁰ If it were these people that played a role in defeating participation in the League of Nations, then they did help avenge the bigotry Wilson had displayed towards them. In the end, Wilson alienated the German-Americans, failed to get his just peace based on the Fourteen Points, did not gain United States' participation in the League of Nations, and destroyed his health in the endeavor.

If Wilson lost the support of the German element through his own failure to be neutral in thought and deed, Theodore Roosevelt lost it because of his persistent demands for preparedness and protection of American rights against the dangers

²⁸Ibid., p. 144.

²⁹Hofstadter, American Political Tradition, p. 267.

³⁰O'Connor, The German-Americans, p. 432.

of Germany. As the war progressed, Wilson had become more antagonistic towards disloyalty and more aggressive towards suppression of the vagaries of civil liberties. Roosevelt appears to have moved in the same direction. From the beginning of the war in Europe, his speeches and letters stated his feelings towards the war and the Germans, both the Germans in Europe and in the United States. In one letter, written in the latter part of 1914, Roosevelt stated he had some German heritage himself and in another he admitted that he admired "Germany more than any other nation and most certainly [as] the nation from which . . . the United States [had] the most to learn." Even so, he opposed hyphenates, their organizations and their attempts to promote alliance with Germany. His opposition to Germany became stronger after her invasion of Belgium on August 4, 1914, which he described as "the greatest wrong one nation can inflict upon another." He felt strongly that the United States should have taken a stand for Belgium and against Germany immediately.³¹

Roosevelt had been in Germany in 1910 and had been impressed with the Kaiser's armies; thus he was aware in 1915, after the sinking of the Lusitania, of the danger of a war against the Germans. He became a staunch advocate for preparedness, speaking more against Germany, and becoming a major target for the attacks

³¹Theodore Roosevelt, The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, edited by Elting M. Morison (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954), pp. 824-963. (Hereinafter referred to as Roosevelt, The Letters.)

of the German-language editors.³² The vilification by Roosevelt was consistently directed against the "professional hyphenated German-Americans," whom, he stated, he would "sink with the sword of the Lord and of Gideon whenever [he got] the chance"³³; but he always defended the majority of German-Americans as loyal citizens. These views he had held for twenty years.

Our citizens must act as Americans; not as Americans with a prefix and qualifications; . . . It is an outrage for a man to drag foreign politics into our contests and vote as an Irishman or German, or as other foreigners. It is no less an outrage to discriminate against one who has become an American in good faith because of his creed or birthplace.³⁴

Roosevelt's speeches antagonized German-Americans and Republicans as well. He did not get the extensive preparedness he felt was vital nor did he get the nomination of his party in 1916 (which he did not actively seek). He did receive the nomination of the Progressive Party, but he turned it down in order to support Charles Evans Hughes and improve the latter's chances for victory through the unity of the Republican Party. Throughout the campaign, Roosevelt spoke for war and against Wilson and the hyphenates.³⁵ His speeches against disloyalty evidently

³²Theodore Huebener, The Germans in America (Philadelphia: Chilton Company, 1962), p. 149. (Hereinafter referred to as Huebener, The Germans in America.)

³³Roosevelt, The Letters, p. 998.

³⁴Ibid., p. 1040.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 1070-1071.

hurt the political position of the Republicans as he assured Hughes that he would avoid the future use of "hyphen" since the word was frequently misunderstood and might lose votes.³⁶ Wilson's victory was a personal blow to Roosevelt as he had campaigned so vigorously against him, and his re-election, Roosevelt felt, "would be a damage to the moral fibre of the American people."³⁷ He blamed Hughes for Wilson's victory in that Hughes had not attacked Wilson directly and had avoided the issues.³⁸

In 1917, Theodore Roosevelt wrote a book, The Foes of Our Own Household, in which he expounded his theories on treason, loyalty and other personally pertinent matters adversely affecting the United States. In the introduction, he stated his thesis: "In the long run we have less to fear from foes without than from foes within; for the former will be formidable only as the latter break our strength."³⁹ He first attacked the hyphenates, their voting power and their allegiance. He stated that too many politicians were concerned about the German vote and were subordinating the needs of the nation to the desires of the German electorate. He then demanded that all

³⁶Ibid., p. 1099.

³⁷Ibid., p. 1136.

³⁸ibid., p. 1139.

³⁹Theodore Roosevelt, The Foes of Our Own Household (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1917), p. ix.

German descendants drop their dual allegiance and become either Germans or Americans in their citizenship.⁴⁰

There was no question as to how Roosevelt felt, and the German-Americans and other Americans knew these feelings. He also made it clear there should be only "one speech"--English. "It would be not merely a misfortune but a crime to perpetuate differences of language in this country, for it would mean failure on our part to become a nation." He attacked German-American organizations, especially the German-American Alliance, and the German-language newspapers. "They have kept within the law, but they have been guilty of moral treason against the Republic." Roosevelt had frequently spoken against sabotage that Germans had allegedly instigated in this country. He declared in his book that the actions of the German government and pro-Germans in this country has "been so flagrantly evil that to be ignorant of them was impossible, and to fail to denounce them was explicable only on the ground of folly, cowardice or moral obliquity."⁴¹

At the end of the book, in a letter, Roosevelt insisted on harshness where disloyalty was involved, but he also made it clear that there definitely were loyal German descendants in the United States, and these he defended. He even named personal friends and outstanding Americans of German descent, including

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 59-60.

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 73-77.

one of his former cabinet members as well as author Hermann Hagedorn. He again stressed his hope that the government would prevent any discrimination among the loyal Americans of German birth or parentage.⁴²

He wrote numerous letters throughout the war in which he condoned the dismissal of any teacher who refused to sign a loyalty oath or who displayed disloyalty.⁴³ In a letter dated June 26, 1917, he expressed displeasure over articles in the New York Times on June 22 and 23 in which it was stated that the government would not permit Americans of German or Austro-Hungarian birth or descent to serve in Red Cross hospitals overseas.⁴⁴ He attacked William Randolph Hearst and Robert La Follette and, what he considered to be, their disloyal newspapers.⁴⁵ During these last two years of the war, his letters indicate his belief that he did not have the support of the Wilson administration or of his countrymen,⁴⁶ and that the only role he then had was to attack the Hun within the

⁴²Ibid., pp. 277-278.

⁴³Roosevelt, The Letters, p. 1252.

⁴⁴New York Times, June 27, 1917, p. 5.

⁴⁵Roosevelt, The Letters, p. 1299.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 1280.

United States⁴⁷ and to expose the disloyalty of the hyphenates.

Theodore Roosevelt died on January 6, 1919; his purported last message, written on January 3 and read to the American Defense Society in New York on January 5, was concerned entirely with Americanism and the necessity for the complete assimilation of all Americans under one allegiance, one flag, one language, and one loyalty. But he condemned any discrimination based solely on a man's creed, birth, or origin.⁴⁸ From his days as Police Commissioner in New York City in the mid-1890's until his death, Theodore Roosevelt preached the same doctrines concerning hyphenism and loyalty. He never hesitated to let the American people know his beliefs and his clear-cut lines of distinction: the harshest measures against the disloyal and a total lack of discrimination towards the loyal. The problems arose over the numerous cases where German-Americans were not disloyal but only partially loyal, such as the German-American that was loyal to the United States but that opposed the war or was antagonistic towards its allies.

Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt played major roles during the war which affected the lives of German-Americans throughout the country. Wilson's pro-British, anti-hyphen attitude appeared to have been detrimental to the civil liberties of German descendants, although they were designed to promote

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 1230.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 1422.

victory. Theodore Roosevelt was so pro-American, pro-protectionist, pro-war, and anti-German that he sacrificed some of the rights of a minority he greatly admired in order to defend his country. The views of these prominent men were felt in every community, large and small, throughout the nation. The American people found it very difficult to differentiate between the gray areas of loyalty and disloyalty, and many developed the super-patriotism demanded by both Wilson and Roosevelt. Thus they became the dupes of war hysteria and the German descendants became the victims.

CHAPTER III

TEXAS

To understand the conditions of persecution of the German-Americans, a study of a specific area in the United States perhaps is required. For this purpose the state of Texas, the fifth most populous state and one with a large German population, was chosen. Newspapers, books and other materials published or written during the war indicate that the people of Texas were deeply concerned about patriotism and about Germany's war aims. The concern became most apparent with the Zimmermann Note and the threat that neighboring Mexico might become an ally of Germany to regain Texas. With Mexico close geographically and with large German and Mexican populations, citizens of the state began to require proof of patriotism to allay suspicion of pro-German sentiments.

The Mexican population was composed of the native Indians who intermarried with the Spanish, the first settlers of Texas. The Anglo-Americans did not begin immigrating in significant numbers until 1819 under Moses Austin, over one hundred years after the Spanish established their first colony. The first German settlement was located at Bastrop, in east Texas, in 1823. In the Texas War for Independence, most of the able-bodied, qualified Germans volunteered and helped to gain victory over Mexico and Santa Anna in 1836.

Between 1836 and 1845, Texas was an independent nation and became an area of intense interest to German nationalists who were frustrated at home and were seeking a place for a new Germany in America. Numerous German organizations attempted to establish settlements in Texas, such as the New York Germania society in 1839, the Austin Teutonia Orden in 1841, and the Association for the Protection of German Immigrants, better known as the Adelsverein or Verein, in 1844. The Germania immigrants of the Teutonia Orden attempted to preserve their culture and create interest in Texas through letters, reports and books. The Adelsverein bought land in central Texas, but legal problems arose over the title. They immediately acquired another plot of land and the immigrants began coming to New Braunfels in 1845. Many of the Germans died because of the difficult trip to New Braunfels and the inferior conditions of living in the settlement. Somehow, enough survived and multiplied to establish communities at New Braunfels and nearby Fredericksburg. The economic problems of the Verein and the admission of Texas into the Union led to the decline of the association and its dissolution in 1853. These organizations had succeeded in encouraging immigration and settlement so that by 1850, 20 per cent of the population in Texas was German, whereas in Wisconsin and Missouri the German populations were just 16 per cent and 7.5 per cent respectively.¹

¹Huebener, The Germans in America, pp. 70-74.

Numerous German immigrants had settled in other areas of Texas, such as Industry and Cummins in east Texas and Castroville in southwest Texas. Some of them spread to other areas and towns, but most of them settled in compact and remote areas so that those places in the state were quite Teutonic.² One German traveler in the 1840's, though, complained of the uneducated Germans, "It is unfortunately true that Germans in Texas . . . renounce their German origin and think it more honorable to pass as native Americans."³ This same traveler commented that the educated Germans in the United States were different from the uneducated ones. "Conscious of the peculiar intellectual worth of their nation, at the same time also properly valuing the praiseworthy traits of the American character, they have never concealed the superiority of latter, nor denied their German parentage."⁴ In Texas the German culture was usually preserved and the German influence became potent. The potency of their influence could be seen by an act, passed as early as 1846 by the Texas legislature, that required the translation of the state constitution and important laws into the German language, as well as into Spanish.⁵

²Ibid., p. 74.

³Ferdinand Roemer, Texas, trans. by Oswald Mueller (San Antonio: Standard Printing Company, 1935), p. 85.

⁴Ibid., p. 86.

⁵Laws of the State of Texas, p. 1391.

The German-Americans in Texas continued to multiply and additional German immigrants came during the 1880's. Settlers in the original German communities went into other towns and cities and non-Germans began moving into the German towns. German organizations were established to preserve the kultur in Texas, just as they had been established nation-wide; and numerous singing groups were organized throughout the state. There were over eleven singing societies in Texas in such cities as San Antonio, Dallas, and Houston, besides those in smaller German communities.⁶ The Texas Grand Lodge of the Sons of Hermann was formed in 1890 with 242 members, and by 1910, there were 14,196 members.⁷

The war did affect the German organizations as they strove to prove their loyalty and aid in the struggle for victory. Two months before the United States entered the war, the German-American Alliance, meeting in Austin, asserted the patriotism of its members and protested the usage of the hyphen.⁸ Once the country entered the war, greater pressure was exerted on these organizations and most of them appeared to cooperate with

⁶ Beethoven Maennerchor Centennial Program, February 25 and 26, 1967, pp. 27-37. (Hereinafter referred to as Beethoven Maennerchor Program.)

⁷ The Order of the Sons of Hermann in Texas, pamphlet for new members, p. 9. (Hereinafter referred to as Sons of Hermann Pamphlet.)

⁸ Dallas Morning News, February 4, 1917, cited in Ralph W. Steen, Twentieth Century Texas (Austin: The Steck Company, 1942), p. 204.

whatever demands were placed on them. In April of 1918, the Germania Mutual Aid Association affirmed its pledge of loyalty at a special session meeting in Austin, and pledged the purchase of \$5,000 in Liberty Bonds.⁹ As the war progressed, the demands placed on the German organizations intensified. In June of 1918, twenty German clubs in Dallas, at a meeting of their representatives with the Dallas County Council of Defense, agreed to suspend their meetings for the rest of the war. At the same Dallas meeting, the Sons of Hermann consented to use the English language in their ritual.¹⁰

The German-language newspapers in Texas were required by the national government to translate war news into the English language for the approval of the local postmasters. The restriction was a burden on the German-language press and their newspapers suffered during the war. In 1914, there were twenty-four such newspapers in Texas listed in the Ayers directory.¹¹ In 1919, there were only sixteen listed, a decline during the war years of 50 per cent.¹²

The German-American churches, or those churches that conducted their services in the German language, also declined

⁹San Antonio Express, April 5, 1918, p. 16.

¹⁰San Antonio Express, June 8, 1918, p. 10.

¹¹N. W. Ayer and Sons, Directory of Newspapers and Periodicals (Philadelphia: Ayer Press, 1914), p. 1257. (Hereinafter referred to as Ayer and Sons, Directory.)

¹²Ibid., 1917, p. 1287.

during the war. That there was concern over these churches and their ministers could be deduced by the frequent articles in the newspapers about them. There were reports about loyal and disloyal German-American pastors. An article in 1918, on the front page of the newspaper, reported that a German-American pastor, Theodore Hersig, was making a tour of central Texas giving speeches in German against Germany.¹³ Another newspaper article later that year reported on a German-American pastor in Bishop, a town southwest of Corpus Christi, who was flogged for disloyal and caustic remarks about the town's Council of Defense.¹⁴ Acts of loyalty or disloyalty by German-American ministers were considered newsworthy events.

A popular criticism of the German churches was their use of the German language. During the war these churches began changing to the use of the English language. The German-Methodist annual convention of the Southwest Texas Federation voted unanimously, in 1918, to conduct their meetings in the English language.¹⁵ Those churches that did not voluntarily change to the English language were sometimes forced to by local sentiment. An example of this occurred in Knippa, a town in Uvalde County in southwest Texas. The Immanuel's Lutheran Church, about 1912 under the Rev. G. Langner, had begun conducting one service a month in English and teaching one of the three Sunday

¹³San Antonio Express, March 18, 1918, p. 1.

¹⁴San Antonio Express, June 16, 1918, p. 10.

¹⁵San Antonio Express, October 2, 1918, p. 14.

school classes in English. The decision to have limited use of English was because the young people requested the change. In 1918, though, the Uvalde County Council of Defense voted to prohibit all public use of the German language. The public sentiment in the county attempted to force the Lutheran church to comply with its wishes.

The Immanuel's Lutheran Congregation and Pastor Langner refused to be forced into abandoning their services in the German language because it was the first language of most of its members. A committee of the church, in response to the Uvalde Council of Defense, petitioned the Council to withdraw its language resolution in regard to churches. When the Council refused, Pastor Langner proceeded to write the United States Supreme Court concerning the legality of the Council's actions. His letter to the court included the resolution of the Council of Defense, a copy of the First Amendment to the Constitution concerning freedom of religion, a membership list of the congregation, a letter from the Secretary of Treasury commending war loan contributions by the church members, and a couple of other statements to prove the loyalty of the church. The Supreme Court replied: "No congregation can be compelled to hold its services exclusively in the language of this country; this is a matter that the congregation has to decide. The Supreme Court advises that everybody who lives in this country shall learn to understand and to speak the language of this country."

The issue was settled; German services were continued, but at the congregation's request English services were used alternately in the 1920's. Pastor Langner predicted, at that time, that German services would probably cease in the 1930's.¹⁶

Another Lutheran pastor faced evidently greater problems in Brenham, the county seat of Washington, in central Texas. Brenham encountered numerous problems involving German-American persecution throughout the war. One newspaper story of persecution reported the daytime flogging, by a group of prominent citizens, of six German descendants who had refused to join the Red Cross. The article referred to Washington County as being dominated by German descendants, and described the Red Cross campaign as a failure until the floggings occurred, after which the county surpassed its quota.¹⁷ The story was denied days later by some of the citizens of Brenham who claimed there had been, at the most, only three personal encounters (fist fights).¹⁸ Other articles appeared in the newspapers telling of arrests and trials for disloyalty of German-Americans in Washington County. The Rev. E. A. Sagebiel, pastor of the largest Lutheran church in the town, remembered that two members of his congregation, one a doctor and the other a lawyer, were tarred and feathered for no sound reason. He also related the tale of a German farmer

¹⁶G. Langner, "History of the Immanuel's Lutheran Congregation of Knippa, Uvalde County, Texas," 1929, trans. by A. G. Wiederaenders. (Typewritten.)

¹⁷San Antonio Express, December 17, 1917, p. 4.

¹⁸San Antonio Express, December 30, 1917, p. 2

who lived near Brenham that could only speak German. The farmer was told not to come to town until he could speak English, and when he came in and spoke German, he was painted yellow and run around the town square to the popping of whips.

Pastor Sagebiel's personal experience of German-American persecution took place with the end of the war and the rise to power of the local Ku Klux Klan. The Klan was able to take over the control of the town by appealing to the super-patriotic elements and by the use of terror to instill loyalty in all citizens. The Klan placed decrees on church doors declaring no more German services. The Klansmen met in secrecy, and they spied on anybody in the town whose patriotism they considered suspect. Conditions reached such a critical point that Pastor Sagebiel went to the sheriff to request steps to be taken to abolish the Klan and re-establish legal government. The result was the calling of a town meeting to discuss the problem and the subsequent appointment of a committee of select citizens to offer a solution. In the ensuing days, Pastor Sagebiel received a threatening note telling him to move immediately, or else. He met with his church council and told them he was going to continue his fight against the Klan, but that he would leave as soon as he received a call to go to another church. He also talked with a group of the town's leading citizens about his actions in regard to the Klan, stating he could not live without the government or the church. The latter statement was given in answer to a question as to whether Pastor Sagebiel would cooperate with the Klansmen or would take "hot lead." The Rev. Sagebiel's

actions were courageous and convinced the leading citizens of the town to stop the Klan and re-establish legalized government. Pastor Sagebiel stated he never was afraid, although his wife said she was, especially because of their small sons.¹⁹

Pastor Sagebiel maintained that before the war the local laws had favored the large German element in Brenham. Favorable laws were in existence throughout the state and were the source for trouble in those areas. The state legislature did not take any significant legal actions concerning patriotism or hyphenism during the 1917 sessions because of other pressing matters, such as the impeachment of Governor James E. Ferguson in a special called session in August, and the ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment for national prohibition in February, 1918. It was not until the Fourth Called Session of the Thirty-fifth Legislature, in 1918, that the German-Americans and German aliens were directly affected by state laws.

One of the more acceptable of the state laws, the Faust Bill, required the teaching of patriotism in the public schools. It also required the school district to purchase an American flag and a flag pole for each school for the "proper display" of the flag.²⁰ The law, which is still in the School Law Bulletin, required a minimum of ten minutes each day "for the teaching of intelligent patriotism." The punishment for failure to abide by

¹⁹Rev. E. A. Sagebiel, taped interview at his home in Seguin, Texas, February 2, 1972.

²⁰Texas, Senate, Teaching of Patriotism in the Public Schools of the State, S. B. No. 20, 35th Legislature, 4th C. S., 1918, pp. 67-68.

the law was set at a minimum of \$500 and/or loss of the teacher's or administrator's position.²¹ According to the bill's author, Senator Martin Faust of New Braunfels, the bill was passed unanimously, with no objections, and was approved on March 20.²² The following summer, the State Board of Education asked local school boards to require their teachers to take a loyalty oath in an attempt to insure the patriotism of all teachers.²³

The state law which received the most criticisms and objections, at the time of enactment and after passage, was the Disloyalty Act, sometimes referred to as the Sedition Bill. The governor, W. F. Hobby, had submitted a request to the legislature on February 27, 1918, to make disloyalty a felony.²⁴ The law that was passed forbid any disloyal language, written or spoken, or disloyal action against the United States or its armed forces, or any flag, standard, color, or ensign of either of the above. Anyone guilty of committing such an act could be arrested without a warrant and sentenced to the state penitentiary for from two to twenty-five years. The bill was passed by the legislature and became law on March 11, 1918, after some degree

²¹Texas, School Law Bulletin, art. 289, p. 564.

²²Martin Faust, taped interview at his office in New Braunfels, Texas, February 9, 1972. (Hereinafter referred to as Faust, interview.)

²³San Antonio Express, June 14, 1918, p. 6.

²⁴W. F. Hobby, Message to Texas Legislature, February 27, 1918, House Journal, 35th Legislature, 4th C. S., 1918, pp. 31-32.

of controversy.²⁵

Senator Faust claimed he could not remember any conflict, but he added that controversial problems were normally discussed and handled in committee.²⁶ The state legislature has never kept proceedings on committee sessions, and the House and Senate journals contain only the basic facts of legislation. That there was conflict could be traced to two sources, one of which was an article in Robert Penniger's German-language newspaper, the Fredericksburg Wochenblatt, of April 4, 1918. The article was an acknowledgement to Representative Sam E. Johnson, who represented the district which included Fredericksburg and which had many German constituents. The Wochenblatt indicated that a group of representatives had taken part in a demonstration against intolerance and in favor of German-Americans, and had succeeded in keeping out the most intolerable amendments in the Disloyalty Act. As a result of his involvement in these actions Sam Johnson was reportedly placed under secret surveillance during the session.²⁷

The other source which indicated there was conflict was the House Journal, which reported the various votes, meetings and time required before final passage was obtained. On the first

²⁵Texas, House, Prescribing Penalty for the Use of any Disloyal Language or any Disloyal Conduct by any Person of or Toward the United States of America during the Period of the War with Germany, H. B. No. 15, 35th Legislature, 4th C. S., 1918, pp. 12-15.

²⁶Faust, interview.

²⁷Chester Kielman, letter to Oscar Haas, April 30, 1965.

vote for passage in the House, seventeen representatives voted against the bill. The Senate, however, passed the bill unanimously on first reading, but with amendments. The amendments were rejected by the House; consequently, a Free Conference Committee was formed to attempt to reach an agreement. Even after the Free Conference Committee, of which Sam Johnson was a member, placed the bill in its final form, seven members of the House still voted against it. Sam Johnson voted against the bill the first time and was absent on the final vote.²⁸ The Disloyalty Act did encounter some persistent opposition and was not passed into law as easily as the other bills related to the discrimination of the German-Americans.

The controversy of the Disloyalty Act became more intense when the government began enforcing it. There was a large number of arrests for disloyalty; one page of the San Antonio Express, on March 28, contains seven articles concerning arrests in seven different towns throughout the state.²⁹ Of the trials that were held, several were appealed to the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, where five were heard and decided between 1919 and 1920. The first three cases, in 1919, upheld the constitutionality of the Disloyalty Act. The first case, Meyer v. State, was heard on April 2 and again on May 21. On both dates

²⁸H. B. No. 15, House Journal, 35th Legislature, 4th C. S., 1918, passim.

²⁹San Antonio Express, March 28, 1918, p. 12.

the court confirmed a two-year imprisonment for disloyal language.³⁰ Also on May 21, in Ex parte Meckel, the court ruled against Meckel's appeal for an application of habeas corpus, stating, "States may pass laws to prevent disloyal statements during war."³¹ On May 28 the court again upheld the validity of the Disloyalty Act in Ex parte Acker, which case originated in Brenham.³²

In 1920 the Court of Criminal Appeals appeared to have modified its views. In the two disloyalty cases decided, one on a rehearing, portions of the Disloyalty Act were declared unconstitutional. In March the court granted a motion for a rehearing in the Meckel case and ruled that the right to prohibit disloyal language was an exclusive matter for the Congress of the United States and that the Disloyalty Act was in violation of the First Amendment to the Constitution.³³ This view was upheld in May when the court reversed a lower court's decision and dismissed the sentence in Schellenger v. State.³⁴ The Penal Code of Texas still contains those portions of the act that were

³⁰Meyer v. State, 212 SW 504 (Tex. 1919).

³¹Ex parte Meckel, 220 SW 81 (Tex. 1919).

³²Ex parte Acker, 212 SW 500 (Tex. 1919).

³³Ex parte Meckel, 220 SW 81 (Tex. 1920).

³⁴Schellenger v. State, 222 SW 246 (Tex. 1920).

not declared unconstitutional.³⁵ All the cases heard in the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals involved German descendants and supported the claims that the Disloyalty Act was directed against the German-Americans in Texas.

Another law passed by the state legislature which was unpopular among German-Americans required the exclusive use of the English language in the public schools. The law also required the exclusive use of English language textbooks in the elementary grades; permitted the teaching of foreign languages, including German, in the high schools; and provided a punishment for violation of the law of \$25 to \$100 fine and/or loss of position.³⁶ Senator Faust stated when asked about the bill, "I know damn well I didn't have anything to do with that one"³⁷; and Representative Sam Johnson attempted to defer action on the bill in committee but was outvoted.³⁸ The law has now been altered so that languages may be taught in the elementary grades.³⁹

Other less significant, but discriminatory, laws were passed in Texas. One was the House Concurrent Resolution that required

³⁵Texas, Penal Code, art. 153-155, pp. 245-246.

³⁶Texas, House, Requiring Teachers in Public Schools to Conduct School Work in English Language Exclusively, H. B. No. 128, 35th Legislature, 4th C. S., 1918, p. 202.

³⁷Faust, interview.

³⁸Daily Texan (Austin), March 7, 1918, p. 1.

³⁹Texas, School Law Bulletin, art. 288, p. 564.

the filing of the names and pertinent information about all alien enemies employed by the state. The reason given for the requirement was that state money "should better be paid to citizens of undoubted loyalty" rather than to alien enemies. The information was required to determine the number of alien enemies employed by the state and to verify their loyalty to the United States.⁴⁰ Another law passed by the House in the Fourth Called Session, as a proof of Texas patriotism to the war effort and to the United States, concerned alien voting rights. On February 9, 1918, a front page article, "Texas Alien Election Law Shocking to Iowa Senator," criticized Texas and the six to eight other states that permitted aliens to vote. The Iowa senator introduced a constitutional amendment requiring that only American citizens could vote for national congressmen and presidential electors.⁴¹ On April 2, the Texas legislature passed a law to limit suffrage in the state to citizens; the legislature even suspended rules to gain passage of the law as quickly as possible.⁴²

While aliens, including alien enemies, had been granted perhaps more liberal rights in Texas, they were still subject to federal jurisdiction. There was an internment camp at

⁴⁰Texas, House, Alien Enemies in Employ of the State, H. C. R. No. 2, 35th Legislature, 4th C. S., 1918, p. 202.

⁴¹San Antonio Express, February 9, 1918, p. 1.

⁴²Texas, House, Limiting Right of Suffrage to Citizens of the U. S., H. B. No. 107, 35th Legislature, 4th C. S., pp. 137-138.

Beaumont under the control of the Department of Justice. Conditions in Texas were evidently secure enough that by January of 1918, interned Germans were permitted to leave the camp to work on area farms, so long as they reported their whereabouts on a monthly basis.⁴³ There were state restrictions placed on enemy aliens other than those of legislative law. The state Attorney-General barred all alien enemies from all political rights, except those specifically granted by law. Most significantly, alien enemies were denied the rights to serve as notaries public and attorneys at law. Such action was expected to have noticeable effects in central portions of Texas where there were large German populations.⁴⁴

Generally those actions taken by the state of Texas were acceptable to the majority, but the actions were discriminatory against the German element. Some citizens of the state felt the legal actions did not go far enough; therefore individuals in towns and cities throughout the state took it upon themselves to determine and establish loyalty. Some of the actions were noteworthy and gave an indication of the conditions.

In Austin, the state capital, the incidents ranged from the mayor's barring of German music from municipal concerts⁴⁵

⁴³San Antonio Express, January 26, 1918, p. 12.

⁴⁴San Antonio Express, February 7, 1918, p. 11.

⁴⁵San Antonio Express, November 19, 1917, p. 7.

to the banning of the use of the German language in public. The language ban was in the form of a resolution passed by the Travis County District of the State Council of Defense, which comprised Austin's Travis County and six other counties. The same group also requested the state legislature to prohibit the teaching of German in all public schools.⁴⁶ The same language ban was also recommended by a legislative subcommittee in charge of probing the state library system. The subcommittee further proposed the destruction or internment of all German literature in the state library system and the dismissal of the state librarian.⁴⁷ The latter proposal was accomplished when the librarian, C. Klaerner, a German by birth, resigned from the position he had held for three years following criticism by the legislative probers that he lacked library experience.⁴⁸

Dallas had similar problems with the public library and a demand that all German books be discarded, a demand refused by the library's board of trustees.⁴⁹ Elsewhere in Texas, German books did not fare as well. In El Campo, a town in southeast Texas, a group of students burned all the German textbooks they could find while the school military band played patriotic music.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ San Antonio Express, August 30, 1918, p. 6.

⁴⁷ San Antonio Express, January 26, 1918, p. 4.

⁴⁸ San Antonio Express, February 10, 1918, p. 6.

⁴⁹ San Antonio Express, June 22, 1918, p. 6.

⁵⁰ San Antonio Express, April 24, 1918, p. 7.

A less destructive incident, but a humiliating and a more deserved one, occurred in the northwest corner of the Panhandle in Dalhart. In Dalhart, supposedly the first occurrence of a pro-German nature was caused by a stranger who cursed the United States. Two hundred to three hundred citizens gave him a public reprimand and required him to kiss the flag, after he had been tried in the justice court and fined forty dollars.⁵¹ Other individuals who were critical of United States' policy received more harsh treatment. In Houston, a barber cursed the government because of an order by the Division Sanitary Department of Camp Logan requiring the inoculation of barbers before soldiers could patronize their shops. The barber, R. F. Ludwig, was arrested and held under \$1,000 bond for violating the state's Disloyalty Act.⁵² Another man arrested and held under bond of \$1,000 was a German alien, Frank Jurgens of the south Texas town of Gonzales, who was charged with preventing his son from registering to fight against Germany.⁵³ In Fayetteville, in east Texas, eleven citizens were arrested for flying the German flag with the Kaiser's emblem. The flag pole, which was in front of the Germania Club by the public square and in easy view of all townspeople, was chopped down by federal agents, flag and all,

⁵¹San Antonio Express, December 14, 1917, p. 14.

⁵²San Antonio Express, March 31, 1918, p. 20.

⁵³San Antonio Express, June 19, 1917, p. 1.

in front of a gathered crowd.⁵⁴

There were many German-Americans that were persecuted without any apparent cause, among whom were the university and college professors. At the University of Texas eight German faculty members requested that a probe be made to investigate alleged reports of their being pro-German.⁵⁵ Dr. Vinson, president of the university, appointed a committee to perform the probe but later decided to send the information to the Attorney-General of the United States to let the national government determine whether there was any evidence of disloyalty.⁵⁶ At the Sam Houston Normal School, now Sam Houston State University, C. W. Feuge was ousted in 1918, according to his daughter, "because he was of German extraction." His daughter, Mrs. Edna Feuge Faust, further declared that his dismissal was instigated by his fellow associates and friends.⁵⁷ Mr. Feuge's main duties at Sam Houston Normal had been teaching German and chemistry. His educational career before and after his dismissal was one of local distinction.⁵⁸

⁵⁴San Antonio Express, February 13, 1918, p. 2.

⁵⁵San Antonio Express, May 1, 1918, p. 6.

⁵⁶Daily Texan (Austin), May 16, 1918, p. 1.

⁵⁷Mrs. Edna Feuge Faust, taped interview at her home in New Braunfels, Texas, February 9, 1972.

⁵⁸Papers, Conrad William Feuge, Sophienburg Museum, New Braunfels, Texas.

The German settlement at Fredericksburg also felt the persecution during the war. The community reportedly surpassed its quota in men in service, in the Liberty Bond drives, and in the purchase of war savings stamps. One of the local German descendants, Lieutenant Louis J. Jordan, was the first American officer to be killed overseas during the war. The war conditions in Fredericksburg were vividly described by Don H. Biggers, one of the residents. Mr. Biggers' language was unique, but his feelings were obviously deeply involved, especially over the language issue.

This language bugaboo was the crowning farce of humbuggery and pitiable ignorance, plus considerable pure cussedness The German citizens were hounded and harrassed and libeled enough to justify them in hostile actions and resentment, but be it said to their credit they "considered the source," smiled at the nonsense and humbuggery of it, and let it go at that During the war they were subjected to the most unjust and cowardly insults, not by real soldiers, real patriots and real men, but by a flock of howling blatherskites, most of whom were frequently shooting hot air, when, for the good of humanity, they should have been in Europe getting shot.⁵⁹

Similar conditions existed throughout Texas as German-Americans were flogged by mobs, fired from their jobs, and denied the use of the German language. Texas had been fair and tolerant towards German descendants and aliens before the war, but once the United States entered the conflict, the legislature, state officials, and some individuals felt that loyalty required a degree of action against all things German. Some of the actions

⁵⁹Don H. Biggers, German Pioneers in Texas (Fredericksburg: Press of the Fredericksburg Publishing Company, 1925), pp. 180-181.

taken were supposedly warranted because of the times. The fair enforcement of laws and the attempts to guarantee patriotism, however, were thwarted because of the extremes of war hysteria.

Texas evidently did not go to the extremes of persecution that some states did. There were no famous lynchings such as the one of Robert Paul Frager in Missouri, nor were there the number of instances of flag kissing and physical punishments. Most of the incidents of physical punishments appeared to have occurred towards the end of and after the war when the Ku Klux Klan became more dominant. Probably the most extreme example of the persecution of German-Americans was in the passage of laws by the state legislature, especially the Disloyalty Act, preventing criticism of the United States, and the language law, restricting the use of German in the public schools. Some of the municipal governments proved to be even more harsh than the state government was. Persecution varied among the towns according to the particular conditions of each, as seen in San Antonio, New Braunfels, and Seguin.

CHAPTER IV

SAN ANTONIO

San Antonio was founded in 1718 by the Spanish in Mexico and became the seat of the Spanish governors of Texas. The first officially approved Anglo-American settlers of Moses Austin began coming into Texas in 1821. In the 1840's, one visitor to San Antonio, Ferdinand Roemer, estimated the population of the settlement at seven to eight hundred, of which half were Anglo-Americans and the other half were Mexicans. Roemer made no mention of any German residents and described San Antonio as a decaying city with a declining population.¹ German settlers began moving into San Antonio in noticeable numbers in the late 1840's or early 1850's. These Germans moved into the generally deserted and decaying houses of La Villita on the eastern side of San Antonio, and the area became known as the German part of the city. By 1856 one estimate set the German population at a third of the total population of the city,² an indication of an immense influx of Germans in a short period of time. The estimate by the city assessor in 1876 indicated a total population of 17,314 which included 5,630 Germans and Alsatians; 5,475 Americans, English and Irish; 3,750 Mexicans, and 2,459 other

¹Roemer, Texas, p. 120.

²Boyce House, City of Flaming Adventure (San Antonio, Texas: The Naylor Company, 1949), pp. 118-120.

nationalities. These latter figures were presented to support a statement in a book that "by 1870 the Germans dominated the town."³ According to the census of 1910, the population of San Antonio was 96,614 and the city was the largest in Texas.

As the United States approached a declaration of war against Germany, San Antonio felt no threat to its tolerance and personal liberty, at least not according to the editor of the San Antonio Express, the paper with the largest circulation in San Antonio.⁴ The editorial of March 2, 1917, concerned an appeal by the Council of National Defense for all Americans to remain tolerant and fair towards all aliens and to treat all citizens as loyal Americans. The editor agreed with the plea but wrote, "There is hardly any need for such an appeal so far as this part of the country is concerned."⁵ The editor proved to be wrong as tolerance was ignored on numerous occasions, sometimes with justification but often times as a result of the fear or hysteria associated with the war.

The Germans in San Antonio were a well-established minority by the turn of the century, and their homes and businesses were evidence of prosperity and success. One author has stated, "It was the Germans who gave the plaza a more respectable

³Charles Ramsdell, San Antonio (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1959), p. 154. (Hereinafter referred to as Ramsdell, San Antonio.)

⁴Ayer and Sons, Directory, p. 950.

⁵San Antonio Express, March 2, 1917, p. 6.

appearance, with the opening of the Menger Hotel in 1859.⁶ The preservation of the German culture went back to at least 1851, when the first German singing society was organized. The society was forced to disband when the Civil War began when the German-Americans of San Antonio, as they did elsewhere in the South, remained treue der Union⁷ and opposed secession and slavery. The German singers reorganized in 1866 as the Beethoven Maennerchor, and a Saengerfest was held in San Antonio in 1870 as other singing societies began.⁸ The most illustrious of the German clubs, the Order of the Sons of Hermann, was organized in 1861.⁹ By the time of World War I there were several German organizations, including the Hermann Sons, the Turnverein and the Casino Club.

The pride and prestige of the German-Americans could be seen through their numerous organizations that were in existence when the war began. One of the first persons contacted for an interview on German-American persecution was a woman who had served for several years as the president of the women's group

⁶Ramsdell, San Antonio, p. 147.

⁷"loyal to the Union"

⁸Henry Riemer, "The Beethoven Maennerchor," Beethoven Maennerchor Centennial Program (San Antonio, 1967), pp. 6-7. (Hereinafter referred to as Riemer, "The Beethoven Maennerchor.")

⁹"When?", The Order of the Sons of Hermann in the State of Texas Invites You to Join the Ranks of Its New Members (San Antonio), p. 4. (Hereinafter referred to as The Sons of Hermann.)

of the Beethoven Maennerchor. Her reply, even after contacting a friend whom she described as "well-versed in German-American backgrounds," was that there was no persecution.¹⁰ The next person contacted in San Antonio was a German-American who was a member of the Beethoven Maennerchor and the San Antonio Lieder-kranz, another singing society, and who enlisted in the army during World War I, even though he could have gotten a medical exemption because of a previously injured leg. He stated that he knew of no persecution, although after some extensive questioning he finally admitted that there were instances of persecution but none with which he was personally concerned.¹¹ Both should have known that there was persecution because of their connections with the Maennerchor. While the various singing societies did continue to perform throughout the war, with only the expectation that they open and close their programs with patriotic songs, they did suffer persecution. The best example is with the Maennerchor: "World War I retarded the activities of the Beethoven Maennerchor, which due to circumstances was finally compelled to relinquish ownership of its magnificent concert hall."¹² There was a substantial drop in membership during the war because German-Americans did not want

¹⁰Letter from Mrs. Virginia Alberti, January 9, 1972.

¹¹Frank Gittinger, personal interview held at his office in San Antonio, Texas, February 2, 1972.

¹²Riemer, "The Beethoven Maennerchor," p. 7.

to be associated with the organization.¹³ The concert hall that was given up was one of the landmarks in San Antonio at that time. The replacement for the hall was a smaller, single-story, indistinguishable rock-veneer building. The Maennerchor suffered financially, but it continued its activities and in February, 1967, celebrated its one-hundredth anniversary.

Among other clubs, the Turnverein also suffered a decline in membership, even though it used the English language before the war. The club, an athletic oriented one, had to move to smaller quarters after the war and became known as the Turners. The Casino Club survived the war, but the loss in membership and interest brought a change in location and eventual discontinuance.¹⁴ The Grand Lodge of the Sons of Hermann, however, grew in membership between 1910 and 1930 and in assets, from \$1,000,000 in 1915 to \$3,095,135 in 1925.¹⁵

The Sons of Hermann and other German-American organizations continued meeting, and they made numerous efforts to prove their loyalty in order to insure their existence. In May, 1917, a meeting was held in the Hermann Sons hall by members and other German descendants to organize an auxiliary to the Red

¹³Henry Riemer, personal interview held at his office in San Antonio, Texas, February 9, 1972.

¹⁴Mr. and Mrs. H. H. Hummert, taped interview held at their home on Lake Flacid, Texas, February 4, 1972. (Hereinafter referred to as Hummert's interview.)

¹⁵The Sons of Hermann, p. 9.

Cross which would show their loyalty.¹⁶ In March of 1918, the Hermann Sons unfurled a large flag in honor of the 152 members of their association serving in the armed services.¹⁷

San Antonio not only had many German-oriented clubs, but it also had several German-language newspapers. In 1914 there were twenty-four German-language papers in Texas, four of which were in San Antonio.¹⁸ These four included the three weekly newspapers, the Freie Presse fur Texas, the Katholische Rundschau and the Texas Staats-Zeitung, and one monthly publication by the Sons of Hermann, Hermanns-Sohn in Texas. The San Antonio Express had a Sunday circulation of 27,563 in comparison to the German-language newspapers' total reported circulation of over 27,000. San Antonio also had various newspapers publishing in Spanish, Polish and Italian.¹⁹ All these foreign-language newspapers suffered from the federal law requiring the filing of English translations with the local Postmaster, George Armistead.²⁰ In December of 1917, the explanation of the requirements of the law was sent to a reported twenty foreign-language newspapers

¹⁶San Antonio Express, May 4, 1917, p. 4.

¹⁷San Antonio Express, March 3, 1918, p. 2A.

¹⁸Ayer and Sons, Directory, 1914, pp. 1257-1258.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 950-951.

²⁰San Antonio Express, October 16, 1917, p. 2.

in the city.²¹ The law, aimed at the German-language papers, was at least non-discriminatory in requiring all the foreign-language newspapers to submit English translations.

The fact that the foreign-language press needed regulation perhaps could be defended on the basis that some of them were criticizing the entrance of the United States into the war. With the entry the foreign-language press had to be loyal, according to one editor. The editor concluded, "If they are against us, the safety of the country demands that they be regarded as enemies and treated as enemies."²²

That the German-language press suffered from the restrictions of translations and the question of their loyalty can be seen by their decline. After the end of the war in 1919, San Antonio had just two German-language newspapers in operation. One of them was the Sons of Hermann's monthly publication and the other was the Freie Presse, which, interestingly, was still publishing a weekly but was also publishing a daily.²³ The number of German-language newspapers in Texas was reduced from twenty-four to sixteen,²⁴ and by 1971 no German-language newspapers were in print.²⁵

²¹San Antonio Express, December 20, 1917, p. 20.

²²San Antonio Express, October 14, 1917, p. 22.

²³Ayer and Sons, Directory, 1919, p. 961.

²⁴Ibid., p. 1287.

²⁵Ibid., 1971, p. 1421.

Another popular use of the German language before the war was in the German churches. The policy of the Council of National Defense, however, was to oppose the use of the German language in public for the duration of the war. A letter to a San Antonio newspaper opposed this policy as directed against the Lutheran churches. The reply to the letter probably showed the general feeling of the non-German public; it stated that "it was not a question of purposes and loyalty of your church that we have under consideration, but rather the question of expediency of permitting the use of the language of the enemy in our own country."²⁶ Expediency was a paramount reason for the persecution of any and all things German, because Germany was the enemy.

Shortly afterwards, the members of one of the San Antonio churches decided to discontinue their German services and to eliminate "German" from the name of the church. The German Methodist Church on Hackberry changed its name to the Hackberry Street Methodist Episcopal Church, and also voted to cancel its one German service and retain only services in the English language.²⁷ Another church that changed to the use of English services was St. John's Catholic Church, one of the largest churches in San Antonio and one that was organized and attended by German-Americans. During the war, the church board voted to

²⁶San Antonio Express, July 21, 1918, p. 7.

²⁷San Antonio Express, August 10, 1918, p. 9.

use all English services except for special occasions, such as Good Friday and Christmas, when German would be used.²⁸

The German churches underwent changes but, in most cases, as a result of their own decision. The group that suffered the most immediate persecution, and not of their own making, was the alien enemies. Within a few months after the United States entered the war, the San Antonio School Board unanimously voted to dismiss all alien enemies in school employ, regardless of their position.²⁹ With the declaration of war, aliens were barred from naturalization, and an article in the newspaper cited the existence of seventy-seven Germans in San Antonio seeking citizenship.³⁰ By early 1918, German aliens were given registration cards and were required to keep officials informed as to their whereabouts.³¹ One San Antonian of German birth, H. H. Hummert, expressed the severity of the problem for alien enemies who were trying to gain citizenship during the war. Mr. Hummert credited a friend for advising him to get his papers shortly after he came to San Antonio, otherwise he probably would not have done it and he might have encountered more problems during the war over his German background.³²

²⁸Hummert's interview.

²⁹San Antonio Express, August 29, 1917, p. 4.

³⁰San Antonio Express, December 13, 1917, p. 7.

³¹San Antonio Express, February 15, 1918, p. 14.

³²Hummert's interview.

German aliens were subject to special restrictions set by federal law. The restrictions included appearing for local registration, furnishing certain personal information, filling out an affidavit in triplicate, supplying four small photographs of the alien (one for each affidavit and one for the registration card), and being fingerprinted. The registration card had to be carried at all times.³³ Such requirements were bothersome but Congress evidently felt they were necessary for the safety of the country. Numerous arrests of unfriendly aliens were made throughout the war for violation of the national law regarding disloyalty by aliens. Deputy United States Marshall John Dibrell of San Antonio reported as early as September of 1917 that he was making an increasing number of arrests in the city and surrounding area.³⁴

Before the Texas Disloyalty Act was passed, there were numerous arrests by federal officials for disloyalty, other than those of aliens. On March 14, 1917, Fred Meister was questioned for remarks he made against President Wilson to a clerk in the Post Office. Meister and two other witnesses were questioned by the federal commissioner, and the decision was that although the language was offensive the intent was not. Meister's written apology was accepted, the case was dismissed, and Meister's apology was printed in the newspapers.³⁵ The case indicated that

³³San Antonio Express, December 31, 1917, p. 1.

³⁴San Antonio Express, September 8, 1917, p. 4.

³⁵San Antonio Express, March 15, 1917, p. 16.

any disloyalty was suspect, even though the officials dismissed the case.

The first charge for treason took place in June. A street-car motorman, Richard Walters, was arrested for distributing German literature to his passengers.³⁶ Another man accused of treason and arrested the same month was Herman Kraemer, a saloon-keeper whose saloon was located close to the aviation field. The charge against him was conspiracy, and was based on the allegation of giving information about Fort Sam Houston and the aviation field to "persons whom he believed were German spies."³⁷ Throughout the remainder of 1917 and 1918, agents of the Department of Justice made many arrests for disloyalty and treason.³⁸ The arrests became common enough that they were no longer front page news, as the Walters and Kraemer arrests were.

The Disloyalty Act, passed by the legislature, provided that arrests of persons suspected of disloyalty, including aliens, could now be made by either the national or state government. There was at least one case in San Antonio of an alien enemy being tried and sentenced for disloyalty under the state law. The alien was Conrad Kroschewski, and he was sentenced to twenty years in the state penitentiary. Most of the witnesses against

³⁶ San Antonio Express, June 5, 1917, p. 1.

³⁷ San Antonio Express, June 17, 1917, p. 1.

³⁸ San Antonio Express, October 17, 1918, p. 11.

Kroschewski were neighboring farmers and fellow Germans. Kroschewski stated he was loyal to the United States and that at the time of his remarks he had been under the influence of alcohol. The remarks he made were "God damn the American _____! God damn _____ American flag and all who live under it are _____! Germany is the only country."³⁹ Such remarks were certainly seditious according to the Texas law. The Kroschewski case was the first one in Bexar County to be tried under the Disloyalty Act, but by the time of the trial a number of disloyalty cases were awaiting hearing in the San Antonio court.⁴⁰

One trial that indicated the extremes of fear and mistrust was that of a seventeen-year-old boy, the first minor arrested under the state law. He was turned in for disloyalty and failure to buy Liberty bonds by a fellow railroad shop employee, who had two sons in the army. Witnesses for the accused pointed out that the boy was loyal and had "begged his father to let him join the navy." The boy stated that he could not afford to buy bonds on his meager salary of fifteen cents an hour. The youth was released because of a lack of evidence; the newspaper article reporting on the trial also noted that the boy's father was a county official.⁴¹ The episode demonstrated the extremes of the

³⁹San Antonio Express, May 9, 1918, p. 1.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹San Antonio Express, April 25, 1918, p. 18.

accusations and the evident calm with which the officials handled such cases.

Those who were sent to prison were proven in court to have made treasonous comments in violation of the state or national sedition laws. An example of a man who made disloyal remarks, but whose case was handled with sober judgment by the officials, was a man arrested for statements he made to three soldiers on Houston Street, one of the main streets in San Antonio. His remarks included calling the war a "rich man's war and a poor man's fight," ridiculing the brief training of the American soldiers in fighting the well-trained Germans, and accusing Wilson of going to war to protect the Morgan bank loans to England. The statements were critical of the government, but friends of the defendant substantiated the accused's loyalty. As a result, he received the minimum sentence.⁴²

According to the interviews, there were many reports of disloyalty. Most of those interviewed said they did not personally know anyone that had been arrested, although some knew of people who had been questioned. During World War I criticism of the government was not tolerated, especially criticism by enemy aliens, German descendants or radical political leaders. Editorials commenting on the Sedition Act, the state's Disloyalty Act, and treasonable activities indicated the feelings of the period. One editorial in 1917 stated, "Treason calls for extreme

⁴²San Antonio Express, June 15, 1918, p. 16.

penalties in time of war" and "Those who are not for us are against us, and those who are against us should be disposed that they can do us no harm."⁴³ A year later, the same editor wrote that "it rests with us who remain behind to look after the enemy at home," an enemy known to exist "in considerable numbers." The point had been reached, he continued, "when forbearance has ceased to be a virtue and persons who are at heart disloyal and not discreet enough to hold their tongues would better get out of the way of trouble while the getting out is good."⁴⁴ By the time the second editorial was written, the state Disloyalty Act had been passed and sentiment regarding disloyalty appeared to be high. The duty of every citizen, according to the later editorial, was to report any act or statement of treason regardless of its magnitude and pro-Germans were warned to be silent.

The sentiment against anything German became most apparent when American casualty lists began coming in. The prejudice was expressed against German descendants and aliens because of the times, but also because some pro-Germans were so vocal about their feelings that they prejudiced the loyal German descendants. One of the best ways to determine a pro-German was by his language, and for this reason German was best not spoken in public. Feelings towards using German were mixed. Some individuals, like Mr. Hummert, learned English at an early

⁴³ San Antonio Express, August 19, 1917, p. 24.

⁴⁴ San Antonio Express, March 25, 1918, p. 4.

age, used it in public throughout their lives, and spoke it without an accent. Others, like Mr. Loehman, could speak English without an accent, but felt sympathetic towards those German descendants, especially the older ones, who had never learned English and were incapable of learning it in a limited time. Some, like Mr. Gittinger, whose German accent remained, felt that English should be spoken as a proof of one's patriotism, regardless of the difficulty of learning the language. Mr. Riemer, who came to the United States as a young man, stated that a major result of the war was the decline of the German language. He said that when old timers were asked why German was not spoken as much anymore, they said it was because of "the war."

The major cause for the disappearance of the German language was probably its elimination in the elementary grades. The state law requiring the use of the English language in the public schools went into effect in the fall of 1918. That summer in San Antonio the Rotary Club passed a resolution against the teaching of German, even in the high schools.⁴⁵ Several days afterwards the school board voted unanimously to discontinue the teaching of German in those schools. The resolution of the Rotary Club and one by the Salesmanship Club were read prior to the vote. After the decision the school board denounced "the teaching of German as one of the most effectual mediums of the spreading of the German kultur and propaganda in this country." A measure of the hysteria of World War I was that the first

⁴⁵San Antonio Express, June 15, 1918, p. 16.

public school in San Antonio was the German-English School and that German had been taught in the public schools for fifty years.⁴⁶

The regulations forbidding the teaching of German were more inclusive in San Antonio than required by Texas law, and were just one of the discriminatory decisions made by the local school board. One decision made in the spring of 1918, established an exacting ultimatum that all public school students salute the flag every morning. A member of the school board, in an address to the Scottish Rite Masonry, explained the new ruling and warned parents to make their children abide by it or take them out of school.⁴⁷ The San Antonio School Board again went beyond the state law on patriotism and required a greater display of loyalty from its students and their parents than other cities.

Perhaps the need for patriotism in San Antonio was demanded because of the large German population and the number of military complexes. A newspaper article, "Pride That is Founded in Patriotism," made the necessity clear if San Antonio was to maintain its army bases and aviation training fields. The military development of the city was a tribute to the community and a source of pride to the citizens, "a pride that is sound and true because it has the very best and truest of all foundations;

⁴⁶San Antonio Express, June 19, 1918, p. 10.

⁴⁷San Antonio Express, March 29, 1918, p. 8.

It is founded in Patriotism."⁴⁸

The necessity for loyalty in a military area placed special demands on the citizens of the city, just as special demands were placed on the military. Of the numerous arrests of soldiers for treason and conspiracy, a few will serve to illustrate the situation. Private Paul Scharfenberg was sentenced to five years in Fort Leavenworth for a letter he wrote to his mother in Germany, which contained "derogatory references" to the President and Army, intimidated that he would help Germany gain information on the United States, and "asserted that ten million Germans in this country were ready to rise against the Government in event of war with Germany."⁴⁹ Another private, Otto R. Ludwig, was sentenced to seven years at Fort Leavenworth for attempting to supply military information to Germany. Ludwig also spoke disrespectfully of President Wilson and the government, threatened desertion if sent to France to fight against Germany, and declared a majority of the soldiers were of German descent and they would "either desert or refuse to fight Germany."⁵⁰ The trial of band leader and Sergeant Oscar Biermann was of particular interest in San Antonio because Biermann, with eighteen years service, had spent a long period in the city and was one of the outstanding musicians. Biermann was sentenced to thirty years at Fort Leavenworth for alleged disloyal remarks made on

⁴⁸San Antonio Express, November 27, 1917, p. 6.

⁴⁹San Antonio Express, March 7, 1917, p. 4.

⁵⁰San Antonio Express, July 27, 1917, p. 4.

various occasions. These remarks included questioning the ability of the United States to get a sufficient number of troops to France, defending the sinking of the Lusitania, upholding the Kaiser's divine right to rule, ordering the band to play German music and refusing to play the "Star-Spangled Banner," being disrespectful and cursing in front of the ladies of the Red Cross, predicting a German victory in the war, and contributing money to the German army.⁵¹ The most severe sentence went to Corporal John Kramer, who was confined to ninety-nine years at Fort Leavenworth. He was found guilty of sentiments expressed in a letter that he was wholeheartedly for Germany and hoped that Germany would win the war.⁵² These soldiers were German-Americans, and their actions and sentiments were possibly detrimental to loyal German-Americans, soldiers or ordinary citizens.

The detrimental effects to a loyal German-American could be seen in the treatment given the Rev. William F. Kraushaar, the Lutheran pastor named to Camp Travis in 1918.⁵³ Pastor Kraushaar, a German-American from South Dakota, spoke fluent German and was proud of his heritage, the cultural and educational aspects. He had earlier helped to organize the first German-American society in South Dakota and due to circumstances served as the secretary of the society at its first meeting. He served as secretary

⁵¹San Antonio Express, July 14, 1918, p. 12.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³San Antonio Express, March 15, 1918, p. 9.

only the one time because he became disillusioned with the beer-drinking at the first meeting, but he was later turned in as the head of it, a fact that was used against him and was the basis for questioning his loyalty. The other reason for questioning his loyalty concerned an occurrence while he was serving in San Antonio. He went to a camp outside the city in order to hold services and to meet and talk with the Lutheran soldiers. The colonel in charge of the base told Kraushaar he could not hold services in the camp because the Lutheran Church was the "damn Kaiser's church." Kraushaar, furious at such an accusation and at the camp commander for his attitude, refused to hold services except in the adjoining town. The minister at the Episcopal Church arranged for a Lutheran service at a later date. Kraushaar was unable to attend, so another Lutheran pastor came in his place. The camp officials were most disappointed because they had planned a banquet in honor of Kraushaar. The unpopular camp commander had been replaced following the incident with Kraushaar, and the young pastor was credited with getting the colonel removed. For Kraushaar, however, the consequences were severe: his loyalty became suspect, he was followed, his mail was intercepted by the government and read, and even his dentist made an attempt to lure Kraushaar into making disloyal remarks. The matter was settled at a camp meeting when the young pastor was called upon to speak, when the announced speaker was unable to come. He began by asking if there was anybody in the audience that had anything to thank

the Kaiser for, to which the soldiers expressed the negative. Kraushaar then stated that he did, to which there was absolute silence. He then gave his reasons for thanking the Kaiser, based on his family history. If it had not been for the Kaiser and all the militarism in Germany, his father and mother's family would not have come to the United States and its democratic form of government. He had indeed a great deal to thank the Kaiser for. The sleuth that had been following Kraushaar for the past six or seven months was in the audience, heard the speech, and from then on Kraushaar had no further problems. Not only had the government spied on him, but his national church had warned him that if he caused any more trouble he would be sent home.⁵⁴

The problem of disloyalty became intense enough in the summer of 1918 that a mass raid was conducted to arrest draft evaders. Eight thousand were captured, and of them a reported 325 were indicted as slackers. The raid was the largest ever held in the city. Those arrested were of various nationalities and political sympathies. One group of interest was composed of German sympathizers, who reportedly stated that they had never registered for the draft and they never would.⁵⁵ German sympathizers were not necessarily of German descent, but such talk by them was injurious to German-Americans.

⁵⁴The Rev. William F. Kraushaar, taped interview held at his home in Seguin, Texas, February 9, 1972.

⁵⁵San Antonio Express, June 18, 1918, pp. 1-2.

The effect of such disloyal talk on the German descendants could be seen by the minor events that transpired. Generally the German-Americans interviewed professed that feelings towards them were not bad, and that as long as they kept quiet, nothing happened. There were reports of insignificant name-calling of these Germans, such as "damn Dutchmen," and the refusal to speak anything but English. One incident of the latter type involved a German family that had just moved to San Antonio from a small German community. The family had some vital business to attend to at the Post Office, but the family could not speak English. The postal officials would not speak German, even though some knew how. The matter was peaceably settled when the Postmaster went to the family's home and settled the affair in private.⁵⁶ There were signs in stores prohibiting the speaking of German and there were arguments and fights on the streetcars between German-Americans and non-Germans.⁵⁷ Such was evidently the extent of persecution to loyal German-Americans in San Antonio.

The German-Americans found that the best policy was to keep their feelings to themselves. Mr. Hummert was trusted to enter the military bases and the top security naval station at Corpus Christi. Mr. Loehman, who was with the telephone company and was a telegrapher was frequently responsible for receiving, sending, and relaying secret government information across

⁵⁶Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Loehman, taped interview at their home in San Antonio, Texas, February 9, 1972. (Hereinafter referred to as Loehman's interview.)

⁵⁷Ibid.

the wires. These men were loyal, they were of German descent, and they were trusted by government officials.

Near the end of the war an interesting incident took place in which some San Antonio citizens tried to display their patriotism. The incident involved the main street in the German area of the city, King William Street, and the attempts made to change its name to Pershing Avenue. Several newspapers had mentioned the possibilities and the problems. The most unusual problem involved some merchants who had stated they would not deliver goods to unpatriotic customers who gave King William Street as their address and some who would not come unless the proper name was given. The writer of a letter to the newspaper proposed that Bismarck Street also be changed and renamed for a San Antonio soldier who had lost his life in the war.⁵⁸ Evidently nothing came of the demands.

San Antonio was a loyal and patriotic city based on the amount of Liberty bonds and War Savings Stamps purchased. San Antonio passed the test by oversubscribing every time. On the first Liberty loan drive Bexar County oversubscribed by \$250,000,⁵⁹ and on the third drive, in 1918, the city went over the top and received a Liberty flag to fly over the City Hall.⁶⁰

⁵⁸Watt Feagin, letter to the San Antonio Express, October 22, 1918, p. 6.

⁵⁹San Antonio Express, June 16, 1917, p. 5.

⁶⁰San Antonio Express, April 28, 1918, p. 1.

In San Antonio there was the patriotism required in a major military center and as seen in the oversubscription to the bond drives. The large German minority was loyal and tried to cooperate with the demands required by a nation at war by using the English language more and by participating in various programs connected with the war, such as the buying of government bonds. Despite these outward signs, or because of the demands of patriotism in a military center and in an area with a large German population, there was persecution of the German element. The amount of persecution is difficult to assess because in a city the size of San Antonio, there should have been more instances of persecution there than anywhere in Texas. There were no reported floggings, tar-and-featherings, book-burnings, or flag-kissings as there were in other cities. There were numerous arrests and imprisonments for disloyalty, but the more severe penalties were levied by the federal government against military personnel, while the several San Antonio and Bexar County cases were handled with calm judgment and good sense.

Was the situation in San Antonio the same in the surrounding area? The small, adjacent, German community of New Braunfels is good for comparison.

CHAPTER V

NEW BRAUNFELS

In San Antonio the German-Americans were influential and respected but they were a minority, while in New Braunfels they were the dominant influence. They had established the town and they were the majority. The settlement of New Braunfels has been described previously except for some additional points of interest, especially the problems of maintaining the young community in its early days. Prince Solms-Braunfels was responsible for some of the dissatisfaction among the new immigrants because he was a weak administrator and a poor financial manager. After a few months in New Braunfels he was replaced and returned to Germany. His successor, Baron von Meusebach, had popularity problems also, but because he was a strong administrator and an excellent financial manager. Dissatisfaction in New Braunfels over his administration caused him to leave and found a new settlement ninety miles to the northwest, which he named Fredericksburg.¹

In spite of administrative and economic problems, and sickness, New Braunfels survived and prospered, as did Fredericksburg.

¹Randolph Leopold Biesele, The History of the German Settlements in Texas, 1831-1861 (n.p., 1930), pp. 123-124. (Hereinafter referred to as Biesele, German Settlements in Texas.)

A traveler, Ferdinand Roemer, wrote of New Braunfels in the 1840's and described the location of the hamlet "as a most fortunate one and as the one bright spot among the blunders and mistakes found in the history of German colonization in Texas." Roemer thought that the site for the settlement was the best in the western part of Texas and he predicted that New Braunfels would form the nucleus for future German settlements. As a traveler in Texas, Roemer expressed pleasure on arriving in New Braunfels and hearing the German language and seeing evidence of Germany in the peoples' faces, dress and manner of living.²

New Braunfels, after its early difficulties, began showing signs of success and survival in the 1850's. In that decade the first German singing society in Texas, the Germania Gesangverein, was organized, and in 1853 the first Texas State German Singing Societies Festival was held in the young settlement. Within ten years another singing club, the Liedertafel, and a mixed voices chorus, the Concordia, were organized.³ In the 1890's, the New Braunfels Maennerchor⁴ and Gesangverein Echo⁵ were the noted singing societies, and they were still performing during World

²Roemer, Texas, pp. 17, 90.

³Biesele, German Settlements in Texas, pp. 222-223.

⁴Haas, History of New Braunfels, p. 211.

⁵"Beethoven Maennerchor," pp. 35-37.

War I. Their performances during the war were one sign of a lack of discrimination in New Braunfels during those years. Both the Maennerchor and the Echo continued holding their meetings over the bank, across from the square, and visiting soldiers would often join with the groups in singing German songs.⁶

Numerous other organizations were begun in the early years of the settlement, and these were usually interest-oriented groups like farmers, marksmen and volunteer firemen. The most popular of the early organizations was probably the athletic club, the New Braunfels Turnverein. The first Turnverein was begun in 1855 and a second club was organized in 1870.⁷ Of the groups active during the war, the Order of the Sons of Hermann seemed the most prominent and made a definite contribution in trying to preserve the German language. After the use of the German language in the schools was restricted by state law, the Sons of Hermann held summer classes for several years after the war in an attempt to maintain its usage.⁸

The German language was the first language in New Braunfels for many years, as seen by its almost exclusive use in the press, churches and schools. The first newspaper in New Braunfels was the Neu Braunfelser Zeitung, which first went to press in

⁶Fred Oheim, taped interview at his home in New Braunfels, Texas, January 26, 1972. (Hereinafter referred to as Oheim, interview.)

⁷Haas, History of New Braunfels, p. 104.

⁸Oheim, interview.

in 1852 under Dr. Ferdinand Jacob Lindheimer⁹ and was the only newspaper in the town for forty years. In 1892 the first English-language newspaper, the New Braunfels Herald, began publication.¹⁰ During the war both newspapers were cautious in their writings, loyal to the United States, but faithful to their German heritage.¹¹ The editor of the Zeitung, G. F. Oheim, was German-born but suffered no significant persecution. Oheim complied with the government's requirement for translation of all war news and had no difficulty from the national authorities.¹²

The German-language newspaper editors were a competent and well-educated group of individuals, according to Fred Oheim. G. F. Oheim had received an excellent education in Germany before coming to Texas, and he was able by World War I to speak English without a trace of an accent. According to Fred Oheim, there was no major difficulty regarding any of the German-language newspapers in Texas; they usually stopped publication because of the death of the editor.¹³ The fact that between 1914 and 1919 the number of German-language newspapers decreased by

⁹Bieseles, German Settlements in Texas, p. 224.

¹⁰Haas, History of New Braunfels, pp. 208-209.

¹¹Oscar Haas, taped interview at his home in New Braunfels, Texas, January 26, 1972. (Hereinafter referred to as Haas, interview.)

¹²Oheim, interview.

¹³Ibid.

fifty per cent indicates otherwise. In New Braunfels the Zeitung was continued by G. F. Oheim until 1941 and then it was continued by his son, Fred Oheim, until 1954, when it ceased publication.¹⁴

In New Braunfels during the war, the German-language newspapers continued publishing in German and the churches continued services in German. As early as 1915 the First Protestant Church, which was established in 1845 as the first church in New Braunfels and had the largest congregation for years, experienced a decline in the use of the German language. Some of the confirmation students of that year were found to lack sufficient knowledge in the language to learn the catechisms, which were taught in German. In an attempt to solve the problem, Rev. Gottlob Mornhinweg began holding German language classes in the summer of 1916.¹⁵ The decline in the German language was significant because the churches of New Braunfels were German churches. The First Protestant Church was the Evangelical and Reformed Church. The Catholic Church used the German language in all its non-religious activities and in its school. The Methodist and Baptist churches were German-Methodist and German-Baptist.

¹⁴Karl J. Arndt and May E. Olson, German-American Newspapers and Periodicals, 1732-1955 (New York: Johnson Reprinting Corporation, 1965), pp. 628-629. (Hereinafter referred to as Arndt and Olson, German-American Newspapers.)

¹⁵Oscar Haas, ed., The First Protestant Church, Its History and Its People, 1845-1953 (New Braunfels: Zeitung, 1955), p. 33. (Hereinafter referred to as Haas, First Protestant Church.)

The Baptists had difficulties organizing a church in New Braunsfels for many years because they were unable to find a German-speaking minister.¹⁶

The churches continued to use the German language throughout the war, a practice which appeared to have been acceptable to most of the townspeople. There were some objections to this, however, and most of the churches began holding at least some of their services in English during the 1920's. The First Protestant Church, at a congregational meeting in 1925, voted 59-54 in favor of English services. Until that time, for eighty years all the services and records of the church had been in German.¹⁷

For over ten years the First Protestant Church had one minister to preach the German service and another to preach the English service. Finally the church decided, in 1837, to have only one minister who would conduct services in both languages. Pastor Mornhinweg, who had been at the church since 1899 and had preached the German service, was asked to resign.¹⁸ In 1971 the First Protestant Church had only one service at Christmas in German.¹⁹

Pastor Mornhinweg had been diligent in his efforts to maintain the German language in his church. He had been born in Germany and, at the age of sixteen, had come to the United

¹⁶Oheim, interview.

¹⁷Haas, First Protestant Church, pp. 33-34.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 65.

¹⁹Haas, interview.

States.²⁰ Because of his German birth, his efforts to maintain his native language, and his recent return from a trip to the fatherland, Pastor Mornhinweg was one of the citizens of New Braunfels under suspicion of disloyalty during World War I.²¹ Others suspected were German-born or alien enemies. Most were placed under suspicion because of remarks they allegedly had made. Such remarks were usually made innocently but included such things as stating willingness to fight to keep German services in the churches, asserting that Germany would win the war because of her superior armies, or claiming no son of theirs would fight against the fatherland. The few who made such remarks were picked up, questioned and warned to keep quiet by the officials.²² Of the individuals interviewed about New Braunfels, none knew of anyone there who had been fined or jailed. None of the articles in the San Antonio Express reported such happenings either.

Disloyalty was suspect and a local Council of Defense was formed to discourage disloyalty and promote patriotism. Some of those who spied on others were German descendants who were trying to prove their Americanism.²³ Most of the town's citizens were reasonable and tolerant and did not believe it was necessary

²⁰Haas, First Protestant Church, p. 65.

²¹Loehman's, interview.

²²Haas, interview.

²³Mrs. Edna Feuge Faust, interview.

"to put a flag on the mule you were using to plow the field."²⁴ Oscar Haas stated, "A large percentage of Comal County citizens, being of German descent, . . . were watched 'to beat the band' from all corners and sections." He concluded, though, that those who were questioned were treated fairly by the officials and simply told to be careful of what they said.²⁵

Oscar Haas was spied on during World War I, although the spying did not occur in New Braunfels but in Galveston, where he had gone for his honeymoon. Mr. Haas was married on June 5, 1918, and he and his wife took the train to Galveston. In the large port city, they stayed in a boarding house on the beach and toured the town and bay. On their walks they took numerous pictures with their Kodak box camera but they were not permitted to take the camera on the bay tour. When they returned to their boarding house, after the bay trip, they noticed that the camera, which had been kept at the tour office, had been tampered with and the film was gone. The Haas' determined that the authorities, suspicious of the Haas' German heritage, had taken the film and developed it to make certain no pictures had been taken of important facilities in the city.²⁶ This was an example of the suspicion under which German-Americans were held during the war.

One of the better ways to prove loyalty to the United States

²⁴Oheim, interview.

²⁵Haas, interview.

²⁶Ibid.

was to be an American citizen. Many German immigrants to Texas went to New Braunfels and Comal County, and when the government required the registration of aliens, sixty-one registered in Comal County the first five days. The ages of these men ranged from sixteen to seventy-five, and many were reported as having spent almost their entire lives in the United States under the impression they were American citizens.²⁷ Since records were poorly kept in the early years, and as doctors and churches failed to record some information, there were some German descendants that were unable to prove they were citizens or had a difficult time proving they were.²⁸

Evidence that disloyalty was a serious and pertinent matter to the people of New Braunfels was the publication of the state's Disloyalty Act. Both newspapers published the complete act on their respective front pages. The Zeitung printed the act on March 21, 1918, under the title, "Das Staatsgesetz gegen Illoyales Reden und Handeln," with a brief introduction about the law in German and with all seven paragraphs of the act translated into English.²⁹ The Herald published the entire act, under the title "The New Loyalty Law," on March 22, 1918.³⁰ Neither paper had comments on the law by the editors or any other persons.³¹ The

²⁷ San Antonio Express, February 11, 1918, p. 1.

²⁸ Loehman's interview.

²⁹ Neu Braunfelser Zeitung, trans. by Oscar Haas, March 21, 1918, p. 1. (Hereinafter referred to as Neu Braunfelser Zeitung.)

³⁰ New Braunfels Herald, March 22, 1918, p. 2.

³¹ Letter, Oscar Haas to Chester Kielman, May 8, 1968.

German community was given complete information about the law and it appeared to have abided by it.

That New Braunfels was a German community was definitely evident in the schools. The instruction seemed to have been half in German and half in English, judging from old report cards from the local elementary school. The first grade subjects in the late 1890's included the English subjects of arithmetic, reading, spelling, declamation, writing, and drawing. The German subjects were Leben, Rechtschreiben, Deklamieren, Anschaungsumerricht, Uebersetzen, and Schoenschreiben.³² With the outbreak of World War I and the subsequent restrictions by the Texas Legislature of the use of German, the school system in New Braunfels had to undergo radical changes. According to Oscar Haas and Fred Oheim, the language restrictions had the greatest and most significant effect of the war on the German-Americans. These two men and Martin Faust had learned to speak German before they learned English and, in addition, they had studied German since the first grade. Because the law was not changed until 1927, the chain was broken for learning German from young childhood in the elementary grades.³³ Germany became the second country and German the second language in New Braunfels because of the discrimination against all things German during World War I, and today it is probably the third language, behind

³²Report cards of C. B. Holzmann, Sophienburg Museum, New Braunfels, Texas, 1896-1897.

³³Oheim, interview.

English and Spanish.

The German-Americans in New Braunfels, despite the discrimination against them and their language, proved their loyalty to the United States. Approximately 500 Comal County men served in the American Expeditionary Force, which surpassed the quota.³⁴ The Zeitung indicated the loyal support of the people of Comal County towards the draft and the aid given the local men in registering.³⁵ The Zeitung supplied ample space in their newspapers for informing the townspeople about registration, and the county officials provided twenty-two places for the men to register.³⁶ The official list of all registrants was run in the newspaper for both the first³⁷ and second registration periods.³⁸ New Braunfels men served in the service with honor, and some, like Leopold Scheel, fought against the Germans in such battles as Chateau-Thierry and the Argonne Forest.³⁹ Yet Leopold Scheel's late grandfather, one of the early settlers, would probably have opposed his grandson's fighting against Germany. The general feeling in New Braunfels was that Germany had a better army, certainly a better trained one, than the English or French, but

³⁴Haas, History of New Braunfels, p. 217.

³⁵Neu Braunfelser Zeitung, May 24, 1917.

³⁶Neu Braunfelser Zeitung, May 31, 1917.

³⁷Neu Braunfelser Zeitung, July 26 and August 2, 1917.

³⁸Neu Braunfelser Zeitung, September 26, 1918.

³⁹New Braunfels Herald, January 27, 1972, p. 5B.

that the American army was well-trained and as good or better than Germany's.⁴⁰

New Braunfels did not have the military significance that San Antonio had with all its military bases, nor as Seguin had with a landing field. New Braunfels was often visited by the San Antonio soldiers on leave. As previously mentioned, some joined in singing with the German singing clubs. Others sought the rest and relaxation available along the Guadalupe and Comal rivers that flow through the town and at Landa Park.⁴¹ The newspapers carried mention of these visits, which appeared to have been well accepted by the townspeople and greatly enjoyed by the soldiers.

New Braunfels proved its loyalty through its kindness to visiting soldiers, and, probably most significantly, through the government loan drives. Comal County oversubscribed on all the Liberty loan drives,⁴² and was among the highest of the Texas counties in the pledge and purchase of War Savings Stamps.⁴³ In the Liberty loan drive in the spring of 1918, the San Antonio Express reported New Braunfels as the first county to oversubscribe with a purchase of \$125,000.⁴⁴ Comal County received the first Texas honor flag, in that drive, from Washington, D. C.,

⁴⁰Haas, interview.

⁴¹Neu Braunfelser Zeitung, June 17, 1917.

⁴²Haas, History of New Braunfels, p. 217.

⁴³New Braunfels Herald, July 19, 1918, p. 8.

⁴⁴San Antonio Express, April 6, 1918, p. 8.

as the first county in the entire country to subscribe its quota. The flag from the national government was flown "proudly over the Court House,"⁴⁵ as the German settlement had received definite recognition for its loyalty. The purchase of Liberty bonds was certainly important; equally significant were the Loyalty parades held throughout the United States. New Braunfels had its first Loyalty Parade in May, 1917, to show its support of the country in its declaration of war. Businesses were prompt in their show of support for such parades, closing early and advertising their support in the local newspapers.⁴⁶ Publicity was also given to the work done by the local chapter of the Red Cross, especially the collection and sending of supplies to the soldiers.⁴⁷

New Braunfels supposedly was the scene of another parade, but this one was to protest the use of the German language. The parade was led by citizens from the nearby community of Seguin, who marched around the town square carrying signs with messages to "speak American" and "if you don't like this country, go back to where you came from."⁴⁸ This demonstration appeared to have been the biggest single example of persecution against the German-Americans in New Braunfels.

⁴⁵San Antonio Express, April 6, 1918, p. 5.

⁴⁶Neu Braunfelser Zeitung, April 26, 1917.

⁴⁷San Antonio Express, February 13, 1918, p. 8.

⁴⁸Oheim, interview.

The Seguin-led parade was to express opposition to the use of the German language. The opposition to the use of German appeared to have increased as the war progressed. Early in the war a book had been published by the government, How the War Came to America, which purported that America had no quarrel, as such, with the German language.⁴⁹ As the war progressed, though, feelings against German descendants reached their height and the German language began to be outlawed in many different localities. As the language became more unpopular, New Braunfels also reacted. The German language was not supposed to be used in public.⁵⁰ The use of German was not as restricted as in some other communities. It continued to be used in the Zeitung, the churches, and in some public places, such as saloons.⁵¹ Some stores did put up signs requiring their customers to speak English, but not as frequently as stores in other places, nor as maliciously stated.⁵² Such acts of discrimination were noticed in New Braunfels, as could be seen by a front page article in the Herald regarding a San Marcos merchant whose son had been killed in Europe. Because of this, he placed a sign

⁴⁹Neu Braunfelser Zeitung, October 11, 1917, p. 1.

⁵⁰Haas, interview.

⁵¹Faust, interview.

⁵²Oheim, interview.

in his store, "The German Language Cannot Be Used Around This Store."⁵³

One German-American who claimed he suffered no persecution was Martin Faust. Proof of this could be based on the fact that despite his German heritage, he was elected to fill the unexpired term of James Harley in the state senate, early in 1918. Faust ran against Mr. Midkiff from Gonzales of possibly English or Welsh descent, and yet he defeated him. That there may have been some discrimination against Faust's German background might be deduced from the fact he only won by a majority of fifty-three votes in a very closely contested election.⁵⁴ A similar situation occurred after the war ended. Feelings against German-Americans still persisted, but the young senator was elected President Pro Tempore over a non-German senator.⁵⁵ Again the German descendant had been elected over a non-German, but again the vote had been extremely close with Faust receiving a one-vote majority.⁵⁶

Senator Faust stated that the conditions in New Braunfels were reasonably good for the German-Americans, but that he was not in town all the time because of the fourth-called session of

⁵³New Braunfels Herald, August 2, 1918, p. 1.

⁵⁴San Antonio Express, February 26, 1918, p. 9.

⁵⁵Texas, Records of the Legislature, 4th Called Interim, Texas State Archives, p. 4.

⁵⁶Faust, interview.

the state legislature. He did believe, though, that the German descendants were better American citizens than some of the non-Germans. He also knew that several German-Americans were watched. He probably did know of hostile feelings towards the German-Americans in the Democratic primary in 1918. One of the candidates, A. P. Barrett, called the German descendants in the counties of Comal, Blanco, Kendall, and Guadalupe pro-German. Such tactics were highly criticized in New Braunfels,⁵⁷ and Mr. Barrett did not win election to the United States House of Representatives. Faust also described conditions in Austin as being non-discriminatory towards him and claimed, "Those people were darn nice to me up there."⁵⁸

Senator Faust was informed on the general conditions in New Braunfels and Austin and also on the political situation concerning Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt. He said that feelings towards the two leaders were not violent, but that local people were not too favorable towards them. In the election of 1916, Faust declared that he voted for Wilson and even spoke for him at the courthouse because Wilson was a Democrat and had campaigned on the basis of keeping the country out of the war, both of which appealed to Senator Faust.⁵⁹

⁵⁷New Braunfels Herald, July 26, 1918, p. 2.

⁵⁸Faust, interview.

⁵⁹Ibid.

Comal County voted against Wilson and for Charles Evans Hughes by a vote of 423 to 743.⁶⁰ This vote seemed to support the anti-Wilson feelings among the German-Americans and the fact that they were also anti-British and anti-French. This feeling extended to the end of the war and the struggle over the League of Nations. The basic idea of a league to unite the world had many believers in the New Braunfels area, but these same believers did not appear to believe that Wilson, the British and the French were the best ones to carry it out, because they were not trustworthy.⁶¹

Generally the attitude in New Braunfels was that the people were loyal to the United States but that they had always attempted to preserve their German heritage. They were not so much pro-German as anti-English and anti-French. New Braunfels was a small community that was many miles away from Washington, D. C., and it had only two weekly newspapers, both of which were primarily concerned with local affairs. Perhaps, as Fred Cheim said, the people were more interested in Texas than in a remote national government; and they were basically not very political minded anyway, which was typical of their German heritage.⁶² The facts showed, regardless of the German heritage, that New Braunfels was loyal in its purchase of Liberty bonds and war-savings

⁶⁰McKay, Texas Politics, p. 72.

⁶¹Cheim, interview.

⁶²Ibid.

stamps and in its support of the armed services. There was little persecution of a major scope, except for the Seguin-led parade protesting the use of the German language, and the signs favoring the use of the English language in the stores. The most notable result of the persecution during World War I in New Braunfels was the decline of the German language. This loss of the German language was a blow to the educational development of the youth of the town. The German element was disillusioned by President Wilson and his idealistic justification for going to war and with the American concept of non-militarism. Most of their parents and grandparents had come to this country to escape the militarism and continuous fighting in Germany only to have the United States become involved in a European war.

The German-Americans of New Braunfels did not suffer as much persecution as those in San Antonio, but they underwent a momentous change because of the impact of World War I on their German heritage. The conditions in Seguin proved to be quite different; persecution appeared to have been more severe but the results did not alter the character of the community as much as they did in New Braunfels, which had been very Teutonic prior to the war.

CHAPTER VI

SEGUIN

The site for Seguin, along the Guadalupe River, was chosen by Humphreys Branch, from Missouri. In 1831 he petitioned the Mexican Land Commissioner for the area, Jose Antonio Navarro, for title to the territory. The petition was approved and an attempt was made to settle the area in 1832 by Humphreys Branch and his wife's family, the John Sowells, who had title to the neighboring land. The elements of the wilderness and the war with Mexico for Texas' independence caused the original settlers to leave Walnut Springs, as the settlement was originally known. In 1838, under the leadership of Joseph Martin, a partnership was formed; and shares were sold to establish a town on the Branch and Sowell properties. Thirty-three shareholders met on September 22, 1838, in Walnut Springs for the purpose of organizing and naming the town and to distribute the lots. On February 25, 1839, the name was changed from Walnut Springs to Seguin.¹

The early settlers in Seguin were Anglo-Americans. They brought with them their slaves, acquired more through the years, and the slaves became a noticeable part of the population. An

¹C. J. Fitzimon, "History of Seguin," City Directory, Centennial Edition (San Antonio: C. H. Jackson Directory Company, 1938), pp. 3-13. (Hereinafter referred to as Fitzimon, "History of Seguin.")

estimate of the population in 1854 was 680 whites and 301 blacks.² The Mexicans had settled in the surrounding areas and towns, and, as the years passed, large numbers came to settle in the town of Seguin and throughout Guadalupe County.

In March, 1845, the German immigrants under Prince Solms-Braunfels first came through Seguin on the road to New Braunfels. One report states that as early as 1846 some of the German travelers who could not resist the Guadalupe River stayed in Seguin.³ Another report declares that one of the first of the German settlers was Louis Hipp, who was operating his mercantile store as early as 1846.⁴ Ferdinand Roemer, who visited Seguin in the late 1840's, described the town as completely American.⁵ Roemer made no mention of meeting or hearing of any Germans in the town; therefore, if there were any Germans there, they were in very small numbers. The first German immigrants to become citizens in Seguin were naturalized in November of 1849.⁶ The Germans supposedly settled on farms and did not move into Seguin in large numbers until later in the century.⁷ In the area

²Ibid., p. 21.

³Willie Mae Weinert, An Authentic History of Guadalupe County (Seguin: Seguin Enterprise, 1951), p. 59. (Hereinafter referred to as Weinert, Authentic History.)

⁴Fitzimon, "History of Seguin," p. 13.

⁵Roemer, Texas, p. 293.

⁶Weinert, Authentic History, p. 59.

⁷Ibid., p. 86.

north and west of Seguin numerous German settlements were begun in the late 1840's and 1850's.

The dominant influence in the 1800's was that of the Anglo-Americans. The German influence was first seen on January 30, 1870, when some Germans organized a Lutheran church, Deutsche Evangelisch Lutherische Emanuel's Gemeinde, today known as Emanuel's Lutheran Church.⁹ That same year the Germans organized a school for their children, run by the Lutheran church, because there were no public schools in the town.¹⁰ The German-English school admitted non-Germans who could not afford to attend one of the private schools.¹¹ The city of Seguin paid the Lutherans for the non-German students until 1892 when the first public school was built. The beginnings of public schools caused the Germans to close their school in 1904 because of a lack of sufficient enrollment.¹²

The number of German inhabitants continued to increase towards the close of the nineteenth century. In 1875 the German-Methodist Church was organized and at the turn of the century an Evangelical and Reformed Church was established. In 1886

⁸ Ibid., pp. 32-53.

⁹ "The Centennial Story of Emanuel's Lutheran Church," 1970, p. 12. (Printed)

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 18.

¹¹ Weinert, Authentic History, p. 71.

¹² "The Centennial Story of Emanuel's Lutheran Church," 1970, p. 18.

an attempt was made to publish a German-language newspaper, the Waechter, but its existence was short-lived.¹³ In 1891 the Seguiner Zeitung began publication and proved to be relatively successful. The Zeitung had competition with at least two English-language newspapers, the Seguin Enterprise and the Guadalupe Gazette, from 1898 to the present.¹⁴ The Zeitung survived World War I, although not without some controversy. There is an excellent index to the Seguiner Zeitung but the newspapers have disappeared. The only information about its articles has had to come from other sources. The German-language newspaper was comparatively successful according to the estimated circulation figures in 1914. The Zeitung had 1,200 subscribers, while the Enterprise and Gazette had 1,325 and 1,050 respectively.¹⁵ The figures for 1919 are incomplete.

That there was controversy over the Zeitung during the war could be concluded by two editorials in the Enterprise, one in May and the other in June of 1918. The first controversy arose over the numbers of German and English descendants who had enlisted and bought Liberty bonds. The Zeitung noted the predominance of Germans on the enlistment roles and bond purchase lists that had been run in the newspapers. The editor of the

¹³Fitzimon, "History of Seguin," p. 38.

¹⁴N. W. Ayer and Sons, Directory, 1914, p. 952.

¹⁵Ibid.

Enterprise objected and pointed out that the reasons for the predominance was that the Germans constituted a majority in Guadalupe County and that the boys of English extraction had volunteered immediately; therefore, their names did not appear on the lists. The Enterprise editor also asserted that the editor of the Zeitung classed as Germans all those with German names, and that the Enterprise claimed them as Americans.¹⁶

The other controversy between the two papers involved the publication of the Guadalupe County delinquent list. The delinquent list in 1918 was printed in the Zeitung, because the printing was alternated yearly between the papers, which the editor of the Enterprise claimed was an inconvenience to a majority of the people in Seguin since only the German-speaking residents could read it. The editor concluded his charge against the Zeitung that the Americans in Seguin could not read the article because they spoke only the language of their country.¹⁷

This latter article was interesting because the Enterprise editor had no real foundation for his argument that the list could not be read since the names appeared the same in English or German. The article was probably more of a groundless attack against the Zeitung and the German-language press. Despite such attacks the Zeitung continued publication until 1932.¹⁸

The length of publication of the Zeitung was impressive

¹⁶Seguin Enterprise, May 10, 1918, p. 4.

¹⁷Seguin Enterprise, June 28, 1918, p. 4.

¹⁸Arndt and Olson, German-American Newspapers, p. 634.

because German was not the main language of the town and the schools taught in English, although German was available as a foreign language in the elementary and secondary schools.¹⁹

The reason that the schools were not as German oriented as the ones of New Braunfels was that the first schools in Seguin were begun by non-Germans. Many of the German-American children had learned German first and did not learn English until they entered the first grade.²⁰ With English as the language of the settled community, as the German descendants moved to Seguin the tendency was for them to learn the existent language rather than to impose a new language on the inhabitants. The towns-children probably did not have as difficult a time with English as the farm children did, because the latter were more isolated from English-speaking experiences.²¹

Most of the school teachers in the Seguin schools were of English descent,²² and there seemed to be no problems when the state law was passed restricting the use of German in the public schools. The Seguin School Board went a step further than the state by voting unanimously to discontinue the teaching of

¹⁹Mrs. Helen Pluenneke Burger, taped interview at her home in Seguin, Texas, January 22, 1972. (Hereinafter referred to as Burger, interview.)

²⁰Benno DuMenil, taped interview at his daughter's office in Seguin, Texas, February 23, 1972. (Hereinafter referred to as DuMenil, interview.)

²¹Sam Blumberg, taped interview at his apartment in Seguin, Texas, January 21, 1972. (Hereinafter referred to as Blumberg, interview.)

²²Burger, interview.

German in the high school.²³

The German-speaking churches in Seguin and Guadalupe County were encouraged to use the English language. The county Council of Defense met with the German-speaking ministers and the latter pledged to use the English language in their churches on all possible occasions.²⁴ The Lutheran minister, the Rev. W. Steinmann, wrote a letter to the newspapers to announce his congregation's cooperation in the pledge to the Council of Defense. Pastor Steinmann noted that only the divine services would continue to be conducted in the German language.²⁵

Seguin, like San Antonio and New Braunfels, had a number of German aliens and many who did not realize they were not citizens. The most famous example of the latter was Rudolph Tschoepe, who represented Guadalupe County in the Texas House of Representatives. Because of the war and the passage of the national law requiring all aliens to register, it was discovered that Mr. Tschoepe had never been naturalized. He was a highly respected individual who had come to the United States when he was four years old. At the time he discovered he was not a citizen, he was seventy-five years old, which was a little too old to begin the naturalization process. Mr. Tschoepe, who had been a resident of Guadalupe County for over sixty years, had

²³Seguin Enterprise, August 30, 1918, p. 1.

²⁴Seguin Enterprise, August 16, 1918, p. 1.

²⁵Ibid.

to give up his seat in the House of Representatives.²⁶

There were other aliens in Seguin and Guadalupe County who were not as highly respected as Rudolph Tschoepe and whose loyalty was suspect. Under federal jurisdiction, the Alien Act of June 15, 1917, required enemy aliens to be absolutely loyal to the United States. Frequent arrests were made in the federal district that included Seguin. On September 7, 1917, the United States Marshall John Dibrell arrested two unfriendly aliens in the Seguin vicinity. One was Charles Whoeler, who was charged with interfering with the draft and with threatening the President. The other was Joe Froehlick, who was accused of disloyal comments that German aliens would not fight against Germany.²⁷ These men faced sentences of up to twenty years in prison and/or \$10,000.00 fines for their disloyal actions.

In Seguin not just German aliens but citizens of German descent were highly suspect of disloyalty. One resident stated, "I really think that the people of German descent were crucified" and "had a very hard time." He went on to tell how self-righteous individuals went around checking on others to make sure they were loyal.²⁸ Another resident referred to those that mistrusted the German descendants and went around spying

²⁶Seguin Enterprise, February 5, 1918, p. 8.

²⁷San Antonio Express, September 8, 1917, p. 14.

²⁸Blumberg, interview.

on them as "fire-eaters."²⁹ Another Seguinte told how some of the fire-eaters used to stand on the street corners on every Saturday when the farmers came to town. They would spy on the farmers and try to hear them say something disloyal so they could get credit for turning the traitors in.³⁰ Another one of those interviewed was Charles Bruns, the son of the mayor of Seguin and a soldier during the war. He refused to admit, on a tape recorder, that there were any major problems, although he had discussed examples of persecution earlier. He evidently was afraid to discuss the persecution on tape and after the interview he stated that the person asking him the questions was trying to get him into trouble.³¹

The Seguin Enterprise had numerous editorials during the war concerning loyalty. In April, 1917, the editorial contained comments against pro-Germans in the country.³² In August, 1917, the editor called for "prompt punishment, sure and just" for those disloyal to the United States.³³ On October 12 of the same year, the Anglo-American editor claimed a man did not need an English-sounding name to be an American.³⁴ The next month

²⁹DuMenil, interview.

³⁰Burger, interview.

³¹Charles Bruns, interview at his home in Seguin, Texas, January 24, 1972. (Hereinafter referred to as Bruns, interview.)

³²Seguin Enterprise, April 20, 1917, p. 5.

³³Seguin Enterprise, August 10, 1917, p. 5.

³⁴Seguin Enterprise, October 12, 1917, p. 4.

he wrote indignantly against a pro-German being beaten or tarred and feathered asserting, "No man should be mistreated because of his beliefs." The editor opposed physical punishment but suggested that the names of pro-Germans be registered by the government; and when the war ended, those named should be sent to Germany.³⁵

Hostile feelings towards the German element were apparent in the elections of 1918. One issue of the Seguin Enterprise carried four front page articles on the election and the charges for or against the German-Americans. State Senator A. P. Barrett claimed he had not said that he did not want the vote of German descendants, but that he had actually said he wanted the votes only of loyal Americans, regardless of their ancestry. W. A. Wurzbach made a speech in Seguin pleading with the German-Americans to be loyal. Congressman James Slayden, in his speech, declared that there was no disloyalty in Guadalupe County. J. A. Wolters, the Brigadier General of the Texas National Guard, in a letter to the voters of Guadalupe County, exposed Ferguson's campaign tactics concerning the German-American voters. Wolters asserted that Ferguson, in a speech in East Texas, criticized Governor Hobby for appointing Wolters as Brigadier General and for having State Senator F. C. Weinert introduce him to South Texans in his campaign speeches, because Wolters and Weinert were "full-blooded Germans." Wolters was critical of Ferguson

³⁵Seguin Enterprise, November 9, 1917, p. 4.

because he did not make the same criticism of German-Americans in South Texas where there were numerous German-American voters supporting the ex-governor in his bid for re-election.³⁶ The elections in 1918 were hotly contested, but there were no hostile remarks in the Seguin newspaper over the election returns.

The most ludicrous incident appeared to have involved an anonymous letter written to the Postmaster of Seguin, George Lillard.

This comes to tell you that you have said nuf about the German people. You understand once if you don't let up you will get your a__ whipped.

There is enough Dutch, as you call us, to fix you.

The Dutch is going to run the country and then some German will have your office before you know it once. We want a German boys in the Post Office and let those you have go and fight for their country.

If we hear any more of your big talk, we will get you alright.

Take a warning or we will get you once[sic].

The letter was signed by the German Alliance Society and was a source of excitement in Seguin and was investigated by the Council of Defense. The newspaper article that accompanied the letter declared that the writer had used a cowardly method and had threatened a loyal American; therefore, he must be found and punished.³⁷ The next week the Enterprise reported that the Council had informed the Department of Justice about the letter and had determined that there was no German Alliance Society.³⁸

³⁶Seguin Enterprise, July 26, 1918, p. 1.

³⁷Seguin Enterprise, August 9, 1918, p. 5.

³⁸Seguin Enterprise, August 16, 1918, p. 1.

There were no further accounts in the Enterprise, but the letter had to have been detrimental to the German-Americans in Seguin. One Seguinite claimed that the letter was probably written by Lillard. Lillard was evidently not too popular among the German-Americans in Seguin, largely because of a zealous patriotism and the fact that none of his sons had to serve in the army.³⁹

Benno DuMenil, a County Commissioner during the war, also knew several instances of persecution. He had been under suspicion of disloyalty at least twice. The first occasion involved a survey he had made for the government prior to the war, while he was studying surveying. The lieutenant in charge of the survey had sent Mr. DuMenil a copy of the map, a fact only the mail carrier knew. After the United States entered the war, a man who represented the Justice Department came to the courthouse looking for Commissioner DuMenil. He wanted to know about the map that DuMenil had. DuMenil explained how he had gotten the map and County Judge J. B. Williams verified the explanation. The matter was dropped but DuMenil remembered the terrible feeling he had when he saw the man's credentials.

On another occasion, a group from two towns in the county came to the Commissioner's Court with a petition for guns. The group consisted of non-Germans who wanted the guns for protection against a possible German uprising in the county. DuMenil stood up and said he could not vote for such a request because the guns were unnecessary since there was not going to be any

³⁹Bruns, interview.

uprising and the county could not afford to buy them anyway. The request was turned down and the group became hostile to DuMenil, although some later thanked him for his courage and honesty in stating his opinion.⁴⁰

Commissioner DuMenil continued to state his opinion throughout the war and to use reason in dealing with persecution. An example of his dealings before the United States entered the war involved a German descendant who liked to drive around town with a German flag flying from his car. Instead of using force to get the flag off his car, DuMenil and some others formed a committee and went to see the man. The man was talked to reasonably and he agreed to remove the flag. The use of reason prevented any hostile feelings that would have arisen if force had been used. On another occasion, after United States' entry, the commissioner prevented a gathered crowd from going to the farm of an old German and harrassing him. The crowd had just burned the Kaiser in effigy and they were seeking more excitement. One of the leaders of the crowd had once been given bail by DuMenil and because DuMenil told them not to go, he agreed. As DuMenil pointed out, their appearance en masse would have frightened the old farmer; and he would have grabbed his shotgun for protection and violence would have ensued. A final example of the young commissioner's outspokenness involved a young German-American who was accused of maiming himself to avoid the draft so that he would not have to fight against Germany.

⁴⁰DuMenil, interview.

DuMenil defended the boy to some of the townspeople by stating that no one knew definitely that the boy had intentionally maimed himself and they should leave him alone.⁴¹

The boy, Frank Zimmermann, was arrested and charged with cutting off two fingers of his right hand in order to avoid the draft.⁴² The story was that Zimmermann would not fight against Germany because his father had been born in Germany, he had many relatives there, and he had visited Germany with his family a few years before the war. They had left Germany when war began in Europe because they opposed the war and did not want to fight with Germany. Zimmermann was placed in jail in San Antonio for failure to pay his bond, but was later released to serve in the military in a non-combat position.⁴³

The draft board in Seguin was heavily criticized for its actions, but there were no major confrontations. About fifty affidavits had to be signed by suspected registrants swearing loyalty to the United States.⁴⁴ The criticisms were that the draft board was prone to draft German-Americans over the non-Germans. One example was a local German-American family in which all the qualified males were drafted and none were left

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²San Antonio Express, April 9, 1918, p. 11.

⁴³Bruns, interview.

⁴⁴Harvey Dibrell, interview at the Guadalupe County Courthouse in Seguin, Texas, June 25, 1970.

at home to help with the farm.⁴⁵ By the end of the war it was reported that over 900 men from Guadalupe County had served in the military.⁴⁶

The most famous incident of disloyalty involved the German-Methodist minister, the Rev. John Fluenneke. He had come to Seguin in December of 1916 from Blinn Memorial College in Brenham, where he had served with distinction as a professor for twenty years.⁴⁷ Pastor Fluenneke was surprised that the church in Seguin conducted all its services and activities in German, and he immediately began to change the policy. He began by holding the Sunday evening services and the Sunday school classes in English. The policy was not overly popular, as could be determined by a rather amusing incident that occurred after the English services were begun. The German-Methodist Church had a steeple with the angel Gabriel on top blowing his trumpet. One evening, in an electrical storm, lightning struck the statue and the horn was bent downward. The story was that "one of the older ladies said that she knew that was God destroying the church because [Fluenneke] had put English in."⁴⁸ The story was related by the minister's daughter, Helen Fluenneke Burger.

Pastor Fluenneke became involved in the affairs of Seguin

⁴⁵Bruns, interview.

⁴⁶Seguin Enterprise, December 20, 1918, p. 4.

⁴⁷Seguin Enterprise, December 8, 1916, p. 1.

⁴⁸Burger, interview.

during the war and proved to be a very patriotic citizen. He campaigned vigorously for the Liberty Loan campaigns and made frequent speeches around the county. His daughter also reported that he spent a substantial amount of his meager salary on Liberty Bonds and that he had always taught his children patriotism.⁴⁹ Pastor Pluenneke was apparently the chairman of the German-speaking minister's group that pledged to begin using the English language in their churches. His active and actual participation in the Liberty Loan drives, his stress on patriotism to his children, and his introduction of English services and efforts to encourage the other German churches to introduce the English language all indicate that Pastor Pluenneke was a loyal American and a supporter of his government during the war.

His loyalty was not questioned until the fighting in Europe was ended. On November 11, 1918, in honor of the armistice, he spoke at an assembly for the school children. He made a similar address to a Union Thanksgiving Service, involving all the churches in Seguin, on November 29. He criticized America's entry into the war as "part of the chase for the almighty dollar," and declared that, rather than celebrating the United States' victory in war, Americans "should hang their heads in shame." He also wrote several letters to the Houston Chronicle in which he expounded on the American concern in the war over the almighty dollar.⁵⁰ The congregation of the German-Methodist Church

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Seguin Enterprise, December 13, 1918, p. 4.

unanimously voted to ask Pastor Pluenneke for his resignation. He was arrested by the United States Marshall and taken to San Antonio, where his bond was set at \$5,000.⁵¹

Pastor Pluenneke paid his bond and returned to his home that same day. During the week he visited with several of the local ministers and the bishop of his church. They all reportedly told him that he had said nothing disloyal and that he should not worry. He did worry, because having been in Brenham, he knew what could happen to him or to his family.⁵² Benno DuMenil said that from what he heard about the speech, Pastor Pluenneke had said nothing more than what people say today against the war in Viet Nam. According to DuMenil, "When your loyalty is questioned, you feel hurt He was that type of man; he could not stand that investigation they were going to have."⁵³ After his arrest, Pastor Pluenneke was ostracized by the people of Seguin. Very few people came to see him or anyone in his family. He considered moving to San Antonio to live with some friends until he was told that he might implicate the friends.⁵⁴ Despondent with the ostracism by former friends and fear for

⁵¹San Antonio Express, December 11, 1918, p. 7.

⁵²Burger, interview.

⁵³DuMenil, interview.

⁵⁴Burger, interview.

his family resulted in drastic action by the Rev. Pluenneke. On December 16, 1918, he shot himself.⁵⁵

His wife and six children decided to stay in Seguin. They did not want to run away and the people in the town knew the circumstances of Pastor Pluenneke's death and knew he was not disloyal.⁵⁶ The family supposedly had a very difficult time as people were afraid to talk to them or to help them. The help the family received was usually done in secret.⁵⁷ According to Pluenneke's daughter, the family was given food by the farmers and her mother was given a discount for the lumber for their house. The irony of their plight was that they were left with almost nothing except the Liberty Bonds the pastor had bought to prove his loyalty, and they could not be cashed in immediately.⁵⁸

Seguin had many self-righteous citizens so concerned about their patriotic images that John Pluenneke had been inadvertently rejected by them. The same patriotic image was apparent in the controversy over the location of an aviation landing field in Seguin. Several Texas newspapers reported that Seguin citizens preferred saloons to a landing field. This report resulted from a visit to San Antonio by Seguin officials to discuss the

⁵⁵Seguin Enterprise, December 20, 1918, p. 5.

⁵⁶Burger, interview.

⁵⁷DuMenil, interview.

⁵⁸Burger, interview.

base with federal authorities. The Seguin delegation requested that the idea of a base be abolished. Reaction in Seguin was strong.⁵⁹ Ultimately, an aviation landing station was built⁶⁰ and Seguin was proud of its new military role in the war effort.

The use of the German language continued to be controversial during the war. The stores generally put up signs prohibiting the speaking of German, and the salespeople and customers were watched to insure that German was not spoken. One incident occurred in Blumberg's general store where Mr. Blumberg was speaking to a customer in German. During the conversation, a man came up to Mr. Blumberg and pointed to the sign prohibiting the speaking of German. Mr. Blumberg's reply was that he and his customer were not violating the sign because they were speaking Polish.⁶¹ Of course, the man did not know the difference so nothing could be done.

Mr. DuMenil was involved in an attempt to prohibit the German language from being used on the telephone. The thirteen families on his telephone line had a meeting and one of the men proposed that no more German should be used on their common line. Of the thirteen families only two were of German descent, including Mr. DuMenil; and neither one used German except when necessary. In reaction to the proposal, Mr. DuMenil stated, "I got

⁵⁹San Antonio Express, April 7, 1918, p. 10.

⁶⁰San Antonio Express, April 11, 1918, p. 6.

⁶¹Blumberg, interview.

up and said that would be an injustice. We are not in war with the German language." The result was that the motion was changed to request that German not be used, which was acceptable to the two German-Americans.⁶²

The German language was spoken in Seguin, more in private than in public, except in the German churches. Another place where it was commonly used was in the Sons of Hermann, evidently the only major German organization in Seguin. During the war, the members voted to use the English language and their declining membership grew rapidly.⁶³ They are still active as an organization today. German is still used in Seguin, but it is declining rapidly as the older generation dies.

There was, apparently, a basic hostility between the German element and the non-Germans. The Germans referred to the non-Germans as "raggedies," which was a derogatory term implying they were lazy, worthless individuals.⁶⁴ One older non-German recalled that the Anglo-Americans called themselves "whites" and the German descendants "Germans." The term "raggedy" is still heard in Seguin in referring to those residents not of German descent.

Among those interviewed there were no strong hostile feelings towards Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt. Wilson was not too popular in Guadalupe County because in the election

⁶²DuMenil, interview.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Bruns, interview.

of 1916 he lost to Hughes by a vote of 830 to 1,812.⁶⁵ The sentiment before the United States entered the war was probably pro-German because of the majority of German descendants.⁶⁶ The German element had held a Red Cross drive in 1914 to raise money for the wounded German and Austrian soldiers. In October of that year the money, a total of \$1,750.00, was sent to the German Red Cross Society.⁶⁷ Once the United States entered the war, the same German-Americans raised money for the American Red Cross, celebrated Loyalty Day with a big parade, and sent woollen articles and hospital supplies to the soldiers overseas, to show their support of President Wilson and the United States.⁶⁸

Regardless of this support, County Commissioner DuMenil believed that "the majority of the Germans were against the war . . . because they didn't like war," but the educated people did not blame Wilson for getting the United States into the war.⁶⁹ The latter statement indicates that there were some hostile feelings towards Wilson. Generally, though, in spite of the feelings against war, Seguin proved its loyalty. The town and county oversubscribed on all the Liberty Loan drives. In one

⁶⁵McKay, Texas Politics, p. 72.

⁶⁶Bruns, interview.

⁶⁷Seguin Enterprise, October 16, 1914, p. 1.

⁶⁸Fitzimon, "History of Seguin," p. 44.

⁶⁹DuMenil, interview.

German area of the county, over \$80,000.00 in bonds were supposedly sold in one day.⁷⁰ The figure was an estimate and was probably stated too high, but the significance of the statement is that the German-Americans bought more than their share of bonds. The San Antonio Express reported that eighty-five per cent of the subscribers in Guadalupe County, during one of the drives, was of German descent.⁷¹

The town was patriotic and there were no reported acts of mob violence or physical punishment. The Pluenneke tragedy was the most infamous action resulting from the people of Seguin. The other incidents were minor and temporary, most of which have been forgotten; but the circumstances behind the Pluenneke suicide were remembered vividly by all those interviewed. Evidently Seguin had more persecution than New Braunfels. It is difficult to evaluate the comparative amounts of persecution of the German-Americans between Seguin and San Antonio. In Seguin at least two citizens were arrested for disloyal conduct while the larger San Antonio had many more arrests and imprisonments. Also, the people interviewed in Seguin were more willing to discuss the persecution than those interviewed in San Antonio, a fact which might indicate that the persecution was much greater in the larger city and the German-Americans there want to forget it.

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹San Antonio Express, April 20, 1918, p. 8.

The changes brought about by the war did not seem to have as deep an effect upon the German-Americans in Seguin or in San Antonio as they did in New Braunfels. The major reason was that the basic language in New Braunfels, which had been German, was lost because of the war. There was no such similar change in the character of the other two cities. The First German Methodist Church in Seguin did change its name in the fall of 1918 to the Austin Street Methodist Church,⁷² and the churches did begin to use English services. The same things occurred in San Antonio and New Braunfels. Probably because the German elements were respected and influential in each of these three cities, the persecution in them was not as severe as that in other areas of Texas or the United States.

⁷²Willie Mae Weinert, Methodism in Seguin (Seguin: South Texas Printing Company, 1951), p. 51.

EPILOGUE

Discrimination, of which one example was herein discussed, has been a national issue since the United States Supreme Court handed down its decision in the Brown case in 1954. In view of the present interest in discrimination, the persecution of the German-Americans during World War I seems especially relevant.

First, the German-Americans were persecuted during the war, but the persecution could have been worse. During World War II, persecution was directed primarily against the Japanese-Americans. These people were interned by the federal government and placed in camps under armed guard. Very few German-Americans received similar treatment in World War I. The reason probably was not because the country was against interning them. There were 8,828,618 people in the United States who gave Germany as the country of their origin.¹ The preponderance of German-Americans and the impotence of Japanese-Americans were factors in the extent of persecution. Also, to intern eight million Americans would have taken too many soldiers, would have cost too much money, and would have been too great a loss in manpower. To have interned the German-Americans would have been, for all practical purposes, impossible. Furthermore, Americans, such as Woodrow

¹United States, Bureau of the Census, Population, 1910, Vol. I (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1913), p. 876.

Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt, seemed to consider the vast majority of German-Americans as loyal and patriotic.

After the end of World War I, the German-Americans seemed to have become more fully assimilated, unhyphenated, and more like the majority. The hyphen was generally dropped and the interest in German-oriented societies and clubs decreased. As a result the consensus appears to be that the German-Americans and their descendants did not suffer from a significant amount of persecution during World War II even though the Nazis of Germany were committing terrible atrocities.

The German-Americans during World War I were to a large extent found guilty by association because they represented the enemy in the United States. They were persecuted regardless of their race, educational training, religious beliefs, or social or economic background. Their experience showed that discrimination is not always based on the usual reasoning, much less on sound reasoning, but is often an emotional reaction that is not justifiable.

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