Internal Affairs: Untold Case Studies of World War I German Internment

Jacob L. Wasserman
Yale University

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Internal Affairs:
Untold Case Studies of World War I German Internment

By Jacob L. Wasserman
Yale College, Saybrook College, Class of 2016

Department of History
Yale University

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Advisor: Beverly Gage
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“I Do Not Think That a Symphony Ever Created a More Profound Impression”: Introduction

Richard Goldschmidt poised the bow above his violin. The scientist had only played before at an amateur level; now, three thousand rapt spectators packed the concert venue. Drawn worldwide from Cincinnati to Tsingtao, an orchestra of accomplished musicians sat around him. Before them, one of the world’s foremost conductors, Karl Muck, lightly lifted his baton into the still air of a Georgia December. The first notes of Beethoven’s Third resounded off the bandstand, echoing in the ears of the silent audience. “I do not think that a symphony ever created a more profound impression than this upon thousands who had probably never before heard classical music,” Goldschmidt reflected years later. But such a virtuosic performance hardly matched its unlikely setting. Goldschmidt played from a handwritten score on an instrument that had weathered rough transport, as the smell of the audience’s unwashed overalls wafted over the temporarily constructed stage. Goldschmidt had given his concert debut in a World War I German-American internment camp.

The orchestra’s rendition of the Eroica, a symphony written for the ideals of freedom, must have struck the audience of prisoners. Nearly all were German Americans interned by the United States government during World War I at the main East-Coast camp, Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia. Newspaper publishers, federal spokesmen, and local officials nationwide polemized against or outright banned the music of German composers. But within the barbed wire and spotlights of Fort Oglethorpe—the place that most epitomized the government’s centralized anti-German policies—the crescendos of Beethoven reverberated off barracks and guard posts. As his friends fought for his release and his employers distanced themselves from him, Goldschmidt offered his own form of protest with each stroke of the bow across the strings.

The next day, the hundreds in the audience woke up before dawn for camp labor. Such a
routine typified German internment, a program that pitted an expanding state against the German-alien self-assertion that it inadvertently created. German-American incarceration sat at the apex of the American home front and epitomized a pattern of total war from above. From an extensive count of thousands of never-before-analyzed Department of Justice records, I estimate internment swept up over ten thousand aliens from 1917 to 1920, saboteurs and bystanders alike. For these Germans, internment upended lives and reshaped identities. However, the program has hardly been studied, catalogued largely in classified archives and scattered accounts.

Of unprecedented size and scope, the top-down, bureaucratic internment apparatus acted on the targeted political, diplomatic, and reputational aims of the government and other major institutions. While organic xenophobia and paranoia caused their share of anti-German discrimination, a program of internment’s reach operated above the realm of neighbor turning against neighbor. In turn, because of internment’s institutional basis, internees developed a varied set of resistance mechanisms and often embraced the very behaviors that caused their arrests. World-War America not only failed to stop German self-assertion, but exacerbated it amongst those it targeted most.

Internment marked a turn in the relationship between America’s governing institutions, its citizens, and its non-citizen aliens. The power and reach of the American state inflected upwards during World War I. Internment was the most drastic facet of a new state involvement in the makeup and dynamics of communities and the liberties and perceptions of minorities. Aside from whether such an effort was justified, internment lies at a crucial point in a sustained American history of powerful state (and state-like) actors interacting with newcomers and outsiders. Indeed, despite its lack of scholarship and popular knowledge, German internment left a lasting legacy. Just one world war later, it provided the logistics, personnel, and messaging for
expanded successor programs, which in turn created similar types of backlash. To understand German internment is to understand a long trend of state expansion into the lives of disempowered and non-citizen residents—and an equally long history of resistance to it.

Instead of looking at the program from the top down, I instead examine it from the bottom up: from the perspectives of internees themselves. Of the varied experiences of thousands of internees, I have selected three never-before-told case studies, whose idiosyncrasies and commonalities shed light on German Americans’ response to internment: Richard Goldschmidt and Rhoda Erdmann, Adolphe Henri, and Frida Bartel. A pair of Yale scientists, a Providence faith healer, and a Panama City barkeep perhaps seem more like the opening line of a joke than a portrait of internment. Despite their divergent backgrounds, each was put—or put themselves—at the center of a seminal American interplay: the interaction of an expanding state and its immigrant population, of a war an ocean away and threats real and imagined at home. These case studies, while admittedly not a perfectly representative sample, span the spectrum of class, gender, occupation, location, religion, assimilation, and perceived respectability. With the exception of some writings on Goldschmidt’s life, their stories have, to my knowledge, never before been told or analyzed; their voices have heretofore remained hidden in previously classified files.

Each study offers a different angle on the same themes. Professors Goldschmidt and Erdmann demonstrate that large institutions cooperated with the elite-driven internment program. The case of Dr. Henri shows how the mass mobilization and voluntarist spirit of the home front could in fact lead native-born communities to oppose internment. Finally, the saga of Frida Bartel and her son, the most extreme example of the program’s top-down nature, reveals internment as a tool of international diplomacy, even in the case of a lowly barkeep. In turn,
whether passionately or stubbornly, each internee resisted captivity by further expressing some of the very traits that first got them interned, from Goldschmidt’s prideful solidarity to Erdmann’s scientific endeavors, from Henri’s social-networking to Bartel’s romantic relationships. In each case, internment produced the opposite effect its administrators desired, making vocal Germans more vocal, social-climbing Germans more social-climbing, and disreputable Germans more disreputable.

Considering its scale, scholars have written very little on World War I internment. The home front overall, though, has been studied widely, through two general approaches. As exemplified by David Kennedy’s 1980 book *Over Here*, one school analyzes the home front as a series of governmental and institutional decisions, whose effects reverberated across the nation. Kennedy does cover popular society and mass paranoia, but through the lens of geopolitics and economics. Christopher Capozzola’s more recent book, *Uncle Sam Wants You*, typifies a partially divergent view, in which a coercive form of “voluntarism” developed from an evolving sense of national duty. Capozzola portrays area vigilantes who often outpaced their government in anti-German spirit and actions, nearly crushing German-American civic life. Federal processes do factor into his account, but in a synergistic, rather than guiding, role. The differences between these lines of analysis lie both in the content and the style of their argument: Kennedy takes a deductive approach to make a top-down claim; Capozzola uses inductive evidence towards a bottom-up conclusion. A few scholars of German America, like Frederick Luebke and Clifton Child, have, respectively, mixed such styles or come to heterodox conclusions like disagreeing that Germans were successfully silenced. Internment, however, does not inform their works.5

The literature on internment itself gives glimpses into a still largely unexamined program. Perhaps the most comprehensive work, William Glidden’s 1970 dissertation “Casualties of
Caution,” offers a rich examination of the logistics and conditions of internment. His is the sole work I could find to substantially utilize the same previously classified Department of Justice archive I did, though not the particular files that document my case studies. In a more critical vein, Capozzola’s section on internment claims that more local efforts dwarfed it: “From the perspective of ambitious state-builders, wartime federal enemy alien policy was a dismal failure.” Historians Jörg Nagler and Richard Speed push back: Nagler treats federal internment as insulated from public opinion; Speed sees it as a bargaining chip in a broader game of international diplomacy. Finally, while few comprehensive accounts of internment exist, a number of works cover famous internees or internment camp conditions. Gerald Davis’s study of Fort Oglethorpe and the many accounts of conductor Karl Muck’s internment offer particularly helpful examples. Even so, for a program whose scope is far disproportionate to its public awareness, internment remains a wide field for further research. This account adds both personal studies and institutional analysis of internment to an otherwise scant historiography.

“The Hand of Our Power Should Close over Them at Once”: Background to Internment

“Obey the law. Keep your mouth shut.” So advised Attorney General Thomas Gregory on April 7, 1917, the day after the U.S. entered World War I, to the nation’s 8.6 million German immigrants and descendants. German Americans comprised over nine percent of the 1910 U.S. population, and the German-born were America’s largest immigrant community. Early-twentieth-century German America had built a vibrant civil society, earned political clout, and established a niche deep enough to withstand the early years of the war in Europe. On the other hand, a surprisingly developed German espionage network had begun conducting sabotage well before the U.S. entered the war, like the 1916 Black Tom munitions depot explosion. When the U.S. declared war on April 6, 1917, all non-citizen Germans earned a new identity: enemy aliens.
In an address to Congress, President Woodrow Wilson decried unassimilated immigrants who “poured the poison of disloyalty into the very arteries of our national life.”9 “The hand of our power should close over them at once,” he promised, adding cryptically, “…I need not suggest the terms in which they may be dealt with.”10 Pre-war, Germans had earned a positive reputation as an industrious minority racially and religiously close to native-born Americans. Now, decisions at the highest levels of government instantly changed their place on what was now the home front. While, as Luebke argues, Germans may have merely become the latest target of a longstanding general xenophobia, the federal government stoked such fears for its own aims. The wartime state expanded in new directions, including the Committee on Public Information, a publicity and propaganda agency that strongly pressed Germans toward assimilation and quietude.11 In order to build support for a war abroad, the federal government ostracized a minority at home.

Home-front anti-Germanism escalated as the war progressed. As the CPI and opinion-leaders encouraged “one hundred percent Americanism,” communities across the nation burned German books, banned German music, renamed German foods, ceased German-language education, and intimidated German churches and civic organizations into closing. Universities and school boards expunged “Teutonic” influence from curricula; railroad companies and munitions plants supported vigilante organizations to patrol their property and break strikes. Attacks on life followed those on liberty and property. Confiscations, lootings, and beatings occurred from Connecticut to Wyoming to Hawaii, culminating in the widely publicized lynching of Illinois miner Robert Prager, hanged draped in an American flag. Antiradicalism among civic leaders dovetailed with anti-Germanism; Prager’s socialist labor agitation counted against him as much as his ethnicity. And while lynching earned official condemnation, Wilson’s
speech after Prager’s killing focused as much on its value to German propaganda as its violation of the rule of law. The federal government was not yet large enough to account for much of the home front’s voluntarist activity, but on the whole, major institutions like the government often led the way on anti-German tactics.12

Registration and internment sat at the height of such top-down efforts. In the years before America entered the war, academics and the Department of Justice laid the groundwork for an internment program of an impressive scale. Internment was not unique to the U.S.: over 400,000 Europeans were detained on the basis of nationality during World War I, many through larger and earlier programs than America’s. Following such leads, the Columbia-University-based National Committee on Prisons and Prison Labor published a detailed internment plan at the start of 1917, likely in development for some time beforehand. It included everything from the design of registration forms to the amount of silverware needed for the camps. “The Government is in a position to embark on a policy of drastic internment,” stated the Committee’s explanatory pamphlet. “…Complete plans, specifications, regulations, and experts…are ready for immediate service.”13 The Bureau of Investigation, meanwhile, compiled a list of immediate targets for internment should war break out.14 America’s wartime internment was planned well before America’s wartime.

The enemy-alien apparatus activated immediately upon the declaration of war. That day, President Wilson issued a proclamation curtailing the liberties of Germans. The government evicted and barred enemy aliens from D.C. and other zones near war plants and military bases. Enemy aliens could no longer bear weapons, use a radio, publicly criticize any U.S. policy, nor leave the country without permission. Registration followed restrictions. On November 6, 1917, seven months after the declaration of war, Wilson ordered all German alien males fourteen and
older to register with the government. Austro-Hungarian men followed on December 11th, when Congress declared war on their homeland, and women from both countries faced registration beginning April 19, 1918. Around 482,000 Germans filled out forms, which joined other surveillance findings in the Department of Justice’s files. On orders from the Cabinet, officials selected the most dangerous, disruptive, or unlucky aliens for internment, starting in the war’s first days and accelerating in late 1917 and early 1918 as administrative and logistical hurdles were surmounted. At first, internees were held in a patchwork of local jails and army bases; later, three major camps for men—Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia; Fort McPherson, Georgia; and Fort Douglas, Utah—were established. The President hired John Lord O’Brien, a Buffalo sedition prosecutor, to start the Department of Justice’s War Emergency Division, which handled case work, logistics, and legal support for registration and internment. Under him served a small corps of young assistants, including future F.B.I. director J. Edgar Hoover. While O’Brien centralized much of the detention operation, he delegated surveillance and targeting to a network of local U.S. attorneys with broad powers of discretion. The War, Labor, Treasury, State, and even Agriculture Departments lent support, not always without friction, to O’Brien’s office.15 This structure did not approach the scale of its World War II successors, but its meticulous development and voluminous case files represent a profound institutional achievement.

Officials tried to make arrests for targeted reasons, though those reasons did not always hold up under deeper scrutiny. German merchant marine crews in the U.S. became the first internees, but they were soon joined by a few classes of people. On the pretext of performing disloyal acts or expressing too much homeland pride, the leaders of German-American politics, science, and the arts faced internment to force their communities into quietude. Officially because they spoke against the war or disrupted war production, German labor agitators, strikers,
and radicals were also detained, in greater numbers, in order to suppress their unrelated political dissent. A few poor or mentally disabled aliens were held to keep them from being a public nuisance. Finally, some people happened to be at the wrong place at the wrong time, like Germans near the strategically important Panama Canal. In fairness, some internees were part of the genuine sabotage network. The case files show, though, that most internees either committed non-espionage crimes or just stood in the way of some other government aim. Most internees were German, though some came from Austria or other parts of its multiethnic empire, and every internee lacked citizenship, though some had begun the naturalization process. Total internee estimates vary: Capozzola and J. Edgar Hoover-biographer Richard Gid Powers give around 4,000; Hoover himself in 1943 offered 6,300, agreed upon by Nagler and 1930’s Attorney General Homer Cummings; and historian Thomas Adam estimates 8,500 to 10,000. From my count of Department of Justice index records, the total rises to around 10,700, including all aliens arrested and detained, however briefly. Regardless of the exact numbers, American internment drew international attention. The Swiss Legation to the U.S. took formal responsibility for handling internee affairs, aided later by relief societies run by Quakers or well-off German-American citizens. Internees encountered a well-developed government apparatus built to keep them detained, in some cases long after the war.¹

¹ I arrived at this calculation by counting the total number of index cards and the number of index cards coded 9-16-12 (the code for internment) in Box 1 of Alien Enemy Index, 1917-1919, Central Files and Related Records, 1917-1919, Department of Justice (Entry 98), Boxes 1-23, Shelves 2-3, Compartment 50, Row 5, Stack Area 230, Record Group 60, National Archives II, College Park, MD (hereafter Alien Enemy Index). I calculated a percentage of 9-16-12 cards per box, subtracting out likely duplicates, and then used that result to estimate the total over 22.5 boxes. This number is subject to the inaccuracies of the Alien Enemy Index filing system. For further calculation details, see author.
“A Growing Suspicion of Disloyalty”: The Arrests

Richard Goldschmidt and Rhoda Erdmann

Professor Richard Goldschmidt’s laboratory did not face the harbor. According to rumor, the visiting geneticist had nonetheless signaled German ships from Yale’s campus in early 1917. In reality, although the U.S. had not yet entered the war, a Military Intelligence officer monitoring Osborn Lab had added an innocuous light from Goldschmidt’s window to a growing list of offenses. Just over a year later, Goldschmidt and fellow scientist Rhoda Erdmann began months of detention. Goldschmidt and Erdmann, who viewed their work breeding moths and studying immunization as apolitical, had drawn suspicion from both the Department of Justice and Yale. Their cases demonstrate how the government and large institutions cooperated to facilitate internment. At the intersection of science and politics, the interests of a powerful university sealed their interment.

Richard Benedict Goldschmidt reacted to anti-Germanism in the same way he treated other obstacles: self-awareness and wry pride. Born in 1878 to a prosperous family of Frankfurt Jews, Goldschmidt studied evolutionary biology and soon became a professor known for his contrarian positions. His idea of “hopeful monsters”—significant, discontinuous mutations that drove evolution in place of gradual natural selection—earned decades of ridicule, until Stephen Jay Gould’s punctuated equilibrium theory somewhat rehabilitated him in the 1980’s. Writing in the 1950’s, Goldschmidt dismissed his critics with witty one-liners. In his personal life, Goldschmidt showed the same traits. To friends, the roundly bald, sharp-nosed scientist appeared charming, “interesting[,] and attractive,” a man as comfortable at a social club as in the laboratory. To other peers, though, the professor’s ego and ease in American society came across gratingly. Goldschmidt keenly picked up on the dangers he faced and the way those in
power perceived him. While he could never completely suppress his pride and propensity to mock, Goldschmidt recognized the prudent course for a German in wartime America.

In 1914, Goldschmidt traveled to Japan to study the gypsy moth. Returning home via the U.S. in late July, Goldschmidt learned of the war’s beginnings on a boat midway across the Pacific. The professor soon discovered that the American government had banned Germans from repatriating, given the British blockade and the fear of Germans returning to enlist. Relying on the hospitality of fellow academics, Goldschmidt travelled across the country, eventually ending up at Yale. There, he received lab privileges, though no formal appointment. In order to conduct gypsy moth research, the Department of Agriculture required him to spend summers at Woods Hole, Massachusetts, where the moth was already endemic. Goldschmidt adapted and integrated as best he could, arranging for his wife and children to join him in 1915.20

At Yale, Goldschmidt found a colleague who could hardly have been more different. In the eyes of their peers, Dr. Anna Maria Rhoda Erdmann was as awkward as Goldschmidt was charming, as withdrawn as Goldschmidt was self-confident. Suffering a limp from a stiff knee, the steely-eyed, dark-haired scientist had “certain unfortunate external traits of character which at times antagonize people,” as her friend and superior, Dr. Ross Harrison, wrote in implicitly gendered language.21 Born in Hersfeld, Germany in 1870, Erdmann travelled around Europe researching pathology and cell biology before applying to come to Yale in 1914. At first, she met skepticism as a woman in science; a female Columbia professor complained on her behalf, “Why should Yale preserve the old-fashioned custom of not giving appointments to women?”22 With the backing of Harrison and two fellowships, Erdmann was hired as Yale’s first-ever female lecturer, in any field. In a sign of trouble to come, British authorities detained Erdmann briefly in August 1914 as she passed through en route to America. Like Goldschmidt, Erdmann settled into
a routine, working school years in New Haven and summers at the Rockefeller Institute at Princeton.  

On April 6, 1917, Goldschmidt and Erdmann’s host country declared war on their home country. Initially, their routine kept stable, thanks to their patron, Professor Ross Granville Harrison. Described by *Fortune* as “America’s most famous unknown scientist,” Harrison invented the tissue culture process, whereby cells can grow outside an organism. He had arranged Erdmann’s hiring and Goldschmidt’s visitor status and corresponded with each frequently over subsequent decades of friendship. The war’s disruptions to the cosmopolitan scientific community politicized Harrison: after writing to President Wilson in 1916 and early 1917 urging neutrality, he now asked Senator Robert La Follette and other notables to defend wartime civil liberties. La Follette’s late-1917 reply that “intolerance, misrepresentation, and injustice are inevitable in these times” inadvertently described Harrison’s own situation.  

Educated in Bonn, fluent in the language, married to a German, and boss of aliens, Harrison drew suspicion from Yale higher-ups and the Department of Justice. “There is rather a widespread perception,” a friend cautioned, “that you are…not a cordial friend of the Allies. So take warning from an old man.” Harrison protected himself by joining a patriotic booster society, buying Liberty Bonds, and moderating his tone. His defense of Erdmann and Goldschmidt proved strong but ultimately limited, hampered by the same institutional pressures that led to their internment.  

Harrison, Goldschmidt, and Erdmann all encountered a hostile atmosphere in wartime New Haven. In late 1917 and early 1918, Goldschmidt faced neighbors who reported his activities and preachers who denounced everything German. Even so, Goldschmidt recognized that the greatest pressures were institutional. For example, an acquaintance of the professor who...
tried to bait him into expressing pro-German sentiments turned out to have been a desperate job-seeker likely hired by federal authorities. Goldschmidt experienced far more taunts and threats from important professors than from neighbors; Harrison’s papers only record insults from university administrators and members of the Graduate Club. As such experiences suggest, anti-Germanism often sprang from the elite. New Haven’s previously vibrant German community, to be sure, faced mass groundswells of intimidation and violence.²⁸ Yet the city’s big institutions ultimately guided attitudes towards their own ends.

Goldschmidt and Erdmann survived the daily persecutions of the home front, but increasing institutional suspicion in early 1918 worried them. The duo and Harrison all saw their work as above politics; Goldschmidt called himself “completely homo apoliticus.”²⁹ Even so, Goldschmidt’s work with an invasive species drew the Department of Justice’s attention, while his travel documents to Japan were misinterpreted as a “Kaiser pass” to conduct espionage.³⁰ The Department and Yale investigated money he borrowed and stray remarks fellow professors alleged him to have made. Erdmann, meanwhile, had been developing an immunization to the South American virus cyanolophia by infecting chickens with it. In doing so, she inadvertently violated the Virus Serum Toxin Act against importing pathogens. Back when the U.S. entered the war, Yale administrators had ignored her well-cited safety assurances and forced her to kill her chickens (The professors who ate her birds “are still very much alive,” an investigator wryly commented.³¹). But either maliciously or though misunderstanding, the professor secretly kept one jar of cyanolophia, discovered in February 1918. She claimed that her summer boss at Princeton, protecting his own lab, prevented her from reporting the virus. Suspicion still deepened.³²

Authorities targeted Harrison’s laboratory as a hive of enemy aliens. Erdmann,
Goldschmidt, and a third German all worked for Harrison, who managed to protect them until almost a year into the U.S. war effort. Goldschmidt, as a Jew, faced special scrutiny from Yale’s patrician powers, while Erdmann drew distrust for her gender. One federal agent called her “a little wizened German woman”; Goldschmidt claimed she attracted suspicion as an “aggressive spinster type.” False rumors grew that Goldschmidt served in the German reserves, that he signaled German ships, and that Erdmann kept her specimen on the Kaiser’s orders. Suspicion, though, did not extend far beyond university administrators and influential professors. The circle of people who knew enough about gypsy moths and cyanolophia to even be mistrustful was limited indeed. While Goldschmidt and Erdmann’s monitoring may not have been justified, it certainly was targeted—the honed act of a government apparatus.

Yale leadership and the Department of Justice collaborated extensively in the lead-up to the scientists’ arrest. University president Arthur Hadley and the Department agreed to share surveillance duties. Federal agents watched Harrison’s lab and read Goldschmidt’s mail. When Erdmann’s specimen was discovered in February 1918, the powerful alumni magazine editor and a committee chaired by Harrison himself each recommended firing her. The committee admitted that Erdmann’s work posed no real danger but sought to protect “the reputation of the University…against a growing suspicion of disloyalty.” Abandoned even by Harrison for the sake of the university’s image, Erdmann resigned in March 1918. The Department continued to gather evidence against her, aided chiefly by President Hadley himself. With rich unrecognized irony, a man unquestioningly following his own government accused Erdmann of blindly obeying the Kaiser: “I regard her as a dangerous person, just because of her own innocence.” Hadley, in fact, knew of the scientists’ impending detention before it happened. In all fairness, Hadley admitted that Erdmann was “more sinned against than sinning” and would later help
secure her and Goldschmidt’s release. Hadley’s outsized influence, for good or ill, demonstrates how the internment program catered to powerful institutions.

On May 1, 1918, Goldschmidt found two federal agents in his laboratory, who had already arrested Erdmann. As Harrison looked away nervously, the agents escorted their two newest internees to a nearby hotel for questioning. Harrison’s protection likely postponed their arrest until well into the war, but incidents like Erdmann’s resignation catalyzed the government to act. The Department of Justice released a triumphal statement, which Hadley himself had edited days before to exculpate Yale. The scientists’ arrests earned coverage nationwide, like the gendered headline “Fear Woman Scientist.” Yet, as Goldschmidt recalled, the city marshal who brought him to the Hartford County jail “disliked his job, knowing injustice was being done.”

Adolphe Henri

A state over and a social stratum down from Goldschmidt and Erdmann, Adolphe Henri lived under an alias even to his fiancée. The Providence doctor’s less documented but more typical case exemplifies how the government implemented internment outside of the ivory tower. Born Adolphe Henri Englehardt in 1873, the émigré faith healer dropped his last name as war broke out. But a mere change in name did not deter internment. Arrested on the report of a spurned secretary in late 1917 and kept in confinement until 1920, Henri railed against his captivity in dozens of letters and telegrams. Despite his long internment, Henri possessed an advantage that Goldschmidt and Erdmann lacked: a wide network of native-born American

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friends that rallied to his defense. His medical-religious position and his compelling personality earned him special community ties that other internees did not enjoy. However, if his example is any guide, voluntarist Americans could just as easily use civic engagement to object to internment as support it. Though major institutions collaborated with the internment state, some native-born communities like Henri’s played little role in arrests and would later oppose long-term detention.

In Henri, foes saw a sleazy huckster, friends a worldly healer. Born to a Jewish family in Bremen, he won an Iron Cross in the German Army in the Boxer Rebellion. According to a young J. Edgar Hoover—later the powerful director of the F.B.I. for half a century—Henri often showed off this medal. While agents like Hoover cataloged these signs of attachment to the homeland, Henri self-consciously strove to assimilate when he immigrated to America in 1907. “[Breaking] every and all connections with Germany,” as he later wrote, Henri enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1909 out of claimed patriotic duty. Henri’s streak as a model immigrant ended just two years later. Per Department of Justice reports, he deserted, blackmailed a married woman, and fled with her to Quebec. Overall, the Department focused far more on his immoralities than his German connections. As a memo repeatedly noted, Henri contracted gonorrhea, fled from debts after he moved to Massachusetts, and launched a fraudulent personal-injury lawsuit against a railway company. This “religious and medical quack of loose morals” would corrupt good American citizens, authorities feared.

Those very same native-born neighbors flocked to Henri in spite of his checkered past. In 1915, he settled down in Providence, Rhode Island and quickly integrated. Variously described in the case files as a doctor, church leader, and “Divine Healer,” Henri established a congregation-cum-medical-practice in the Spiritualist Science Church. He gained a following,
particularly among the bourgeois women of the town. Reports of his abilities reached mythic proportions: one man claimed Henri cured his children’s blindness, and a U.S. marshal described Henri’s reputation for “supernatural powers.” What drew the authorities’ ire, however, was not his mysticism, but his social-climbing. Hoover cited “lying about his social standing and connections” as the ultimate in a list of reasons for Henri’s internment. The officials behind the internment program feared sympathy for Germans as much as actual sabotage threats.

Henri’s dogged development of a social network proved both his salvation and his downfall. While Henri developed relationships with some of Rhode Island’s leading citizens, he was also alleged to have pursued less reputable liaisons around town. In January 1916, some ex-lovers reported Henri to the military for his past desertion, leading to his brief arrest. “Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned,” a friend commented. An associate in Pawtucket secured the doctor’s release on a deserter’s discharge—only for him to be immediately arrested by civil authorities for practicing medicine without a license. Again, friends bailed him out and got the charge dropped. Nevertheless, Henri realized his vulnerability. Around that time, the doctor started the naturalization process and began encouraging donations, enlistment, and bond purchases at American Red Cross meetings. He claimed to have preached against the Lusitania’s sinking, and many acquaintances reported him damning the Kaiser to Hell in conversation. In 1917, Henri took an even bigger step toward Americanization, getting engaged to Minnie Colwell—“a young lady of old American ancestry,” he stressed in a letter to the Attorney General. Yet the Department of Justice monitored him after his 1916 arrest. His desertion, unlicensed practice, permit-less travels, and “degenerate morals” all counted against him.

One report determined Henri’s fate. By December 1917, the Department of Justice had solidified the logistics behind internment and moved against Henri. The Department acted on a
tip from Belle Miller, Henri’s secretary, who accused him of contacting known German agents and spying. “These statements have not been able to be substantiated by evidence,” wrote Hoover, “although they have not been disproved.”55 Faced with such a burden of proof, Henri put up his best defense. According to him, he fired his incompetent secretary after rejecting her amorous advances; her accusations were jealous retribution. While Hoover admitted skepticism of the espionage charge, an affair with a married woman like Miller fit the profile of a womanizer like Henri. A letter not itself included in the files, in which the doctor either admitted to spying or merely boasted of his connections and travels, further hurt his case. Hoover and a U.S. marshal recommended internment, though a note in an unknown hand on Hoover’s memo doubted Henri’s danger. On December 11, 1917, Henri was arrested; he was transported a month later to Fort Oglethorpe. Overall, Miller’s specific charge had been less important to the Department than the doctor’s other lurid traits. In fact, in an interview, a federal agent talked as much about Henri and his fiancée’s goodbye kiss as his alleged espionage.56 While a “neighbor turning against neighbor” proximately caused Henri’s internment, the wider story of his arrest instead shows a government apparatus acting on its own biases, not caring either way about the wishes of a native-born community. Henri’s friends had saved him from arrest once before, and during his time in confinement, they would show more and more openly their opposition to internment.

*Frida Bartel*

Frida Bartel received two hours to pack.iii While Goldschmidt, Erdmann, and Henri underwent months of suspicion, the Panama City barroom proprietor experienced the most

iii. Bartel signed her name thus, but she is also referred to as “Frieda Bartel,” “Frieda Bartels,” and “Frieda Barthels” in her case files.
distilled form of America’s internment program: indiscriminate, international, and immediate. Arrested just days after the U.S. entered the war, she and her twelve-year-old son Otto were detained by Panamanian police and sent to the American army camp on Taboga Island. Joining much of the total German-Panamanian population there, the Bartels exemplified the reach of the internment program. On the surface, Bartel’s story is as much interpersonal drama as government policy: the internment program upended her romances and imprisoned her son. However, despite her dramatic personal story, her captivity also played a role in a much wider game of international diplomacy. Even for someone as seemingly inconsequential to the war effort as a tavern-owner in Panama, internment was driven from the start by top-down government efforts.57

Bartel’s milieu was everything that Goldschmidt and Erdmann’s was not. Bartel, her common-law husband, and their son moved to Panama in 1914. Far from the high-minded world of laboratory work, the short-haired, stylish woman ran taverns, a lifestyle that American officers feared could have “corrupted” young Otto.58 Indeed, the names of Bartel’s two bars, frequented by off-duty soldiers and sailors, summed up the uneasy interstitial place of enemy aliens near the Canal Zone: The German American Bar and The American Flag. Making few friends, Bartel nevertheless settled down comfortably, sending Otto to a private academy. Around 1916, Bartel fell in love with Bernhard Dombrowsky, a fellow German immigrant. iv She soon separated from her husband and split their bar holdings.59 With her personal life in flux, Bartel likely had little idea of the larger forces that would soon intrude on her own local drama.

Given the strategic importance of the Canal Zone, the U.S. government obtained Panama’s support for all war measures, including German internment. The Secretary of State’s

iv. Dombrowsky signed his name thus, but he is also referred to as “Bernhard Dombrowski” in his case files.
nephew, the young lawyer and future Secretary himself John Foster Dulles, arranged this cooperation. Panama obliged by arresting forty-one Germans—including Frida Bartel, her son, her husband, and her lover Dombrowsky—on April 12, 1917, the very day Panama cut diplomatic ties with Germany. Bartel did not even live in the Canal Zone and thus was taken by the Panamanians before being turned over to the U.S. military.\(^6^0\) The internment program not only detained Germans Americans but induced other nations to export their Germans for detention as well.

According to a State Department report written a year after her arrest, Bartel represented “one of the most dangerous of our interns.”\(^6^1\) She allegedly passed along information from soldiers at her seedy bars to a cadre of other Germans. Yet such post-facto accusations about a “woman of loose character” like Bartel mattered less than her nationality alone.\(^6^2\) Recently independent and prosperous thanks to the U.S., a beholden Panama arrested over 35% of its German and Austrian alien population at once in April 1917, in the name of protecting America’s canal. Unlike the Yale scientists or Dr. Henri, internment officials arrested the Bartels first and created individual justification afterwards. A catch-all sweep orchestrated at high levels of international relations had caught the barkeep. Indeed, young Otto, a studious, well-mannered boy, had never incited trouble. Yet he too entered captivity.\(^6^3\)

Bartel complained vociferously of her arrest—and drew notice in higher quarters. Initially, she claimed to be a Russian citizen, then a Swiss, to no avail. Without her business or time to sell her possessions, Bartel was rendered “penniless and destitute,” as she wrote to the commanding general at Taboga.\(^6^4\) The Alien Relief Committee of the Society of Friends, a Quaker immigrant-aid group, took note, writing with special concern to Attorney General Thomas Gregory. The Bartels’ imprisonment, however, became entangled with international
forces above even Gregory. In a confidential missive to the Secretary of State, Minister to Panama William Jennings Price recounted a meeting with President Ramón Maximiliano Valdés, who owed his fraudulent election to U.S. support. American authorities had considered transferring the Bartels to the U.S., but Price gave the president the option of keeping them to use as a bargaining chip with Germany, which held at least six Panamanians in captivity. Valdés declined the offer, doubting whether just two internees could secure the release of all his citizens. Nonetheless, a tavern-owner and her son had merited high-level discussion in a complex game of diplomacy. Internment was carefully and strongly crafted around the geopolitical aims of the U.S. government and its allies.

Bartel, meanwhile, concerned herself more with affairs of the heart than affairs of state. Two months after her arrest, Bartel met Ernest van Muenchow, another Panamanian internee who was soon released in the United States (a cost-saving measure to remove Germans from Panama without interment). Seemingly ignoring her lover Dombrowsky, she told authorities that she wished to marry van Muenchow and be paroled to join him. Bartel memorized consoling messages from him to stave off her growing despair. Despite her internment, she wrote to him, “I hold my nose high and expect the same from you.” Tauntingly, she also wrote her ex-husband a mock love letter informing him of her new relationship with van Muenchow. Whether genuine or just a means to escape, Bartel’s plans with van Muenchow quickly fell apart, as his failure to respond to her letters earned ridicule in the camp. In a second letter that she unsuccessfully attempted to mail uncensored, she wrote with frustration, “should you not think it necessary to write…then, my child, it is your fault, not mine.” Faced with the potentially humiliating conditions of both a prolonged detention and a jilted engagement, Bartel paradoxically expressed self-pride. If authorities expected internment to end her romances, they instead found her more

v. Also spelled “Ernst von Muenchow” in the case files.
dedicated to them than ever. The gendered pretext used to intern her morphed into the means by which she hoped to escape and the medium through which she rationalized away indignities. As a sudden arrest turned into long-term captivity, Bartel hinted at the strategies many internees employed against the well-orchestrated internment machine.

**“Shook Us to the Very Depths of Our Being”: Life under Internment**

Before their arrests, Goldschmidt and Erdmann, Henri, and Bartel had only their homeland in common. But under the eyes of a new government in a new hemisphere, each became the target of suspicion from above, whether for their science, their threat to social stability, or simply their location. Pressured by institutions, pawned by geopolitics, and irretrievable by friends, the four Germans faced the shared fate of internment. Despite their seeming lack of agency, each of these internees continued and even heightened the very activities which spurred their internment in the first place. This mode of defiance challenges the narrative of a German population intimidated into quiescence by a hostile home front. To be sure, each fared roughly in their months and years of confinement—physically, mentally, and emotionally. Still, their internment demonstrates how top-down pressures created bottom-up resistance among America’s first systematically persecuted wartime minority.

**Goldschmidt at Fort Oglethorpe**

For a man as proud as Richard Goldschmidt, internment was humiliating. Goldschmidt immediately entered solitary confinement, which, he recalled, drove him near-mad. Exaggerated descriptions like “overwhelmingly horrible,” “simply ghastly,” and “certainly crushing” pepper his memoir.69 Falling back on classist and racist language, Goldschmidt asserted that “the feelings of a cultured man suddenly locked into a cage can hardly be described”70 and
complained to a visiting Swiss diplomat of being kept “in a dirty cage among negro criminals.” Internment officials denied any mistreatment and rightly pointed out that Goldschmidt was soon moved to a state prison, where he had library access and tablecloth dinners with the warden. Yale president Hadley and another professor who knew the state governor arranged this transfer, making the Yale administration de facto internment officials. In a frank letter, Hadley made clear his motivations: Goldschmidt’s good treatment would both ensure the loyalty of the scientists’ upper-crust American relatives and give the Germans no excuse to mistreat well-off Americans they held captive. Again, internment became a vehicle for elite horse-trading and geopolitical maneuvering. Goldschmidt himself appreciated as much, recognizing “that the real American spirit was still alive in spite of the ravings of a rotten press and the war dances of the Department of Justice.” At the end of May 1918, a month after his arrest, Goldschmidt was brought through New York City by overprotective armed guards and sent off to Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia.

Now numbered P.O.W. No. 1207, the professor paradoxically found at Oglethorpe a German community more defiant and vibrant than perhaps anywhere else in the country. “Orgelsdorf”—the internees’ derisive yet self-possessive nickname—became the nation’s most significant internment camp, home to around four thousand civilian internees at its peak. There, Goldschmidt sat behind barbed wire at the same time as Henri, Bartel’s lover Dombrowsky, and hundreds of other Germans, from leading musicians, authors, and academics to labor agitators, dock workers, and merchant sailors. This combination of intellectual talent and socio-political radicalism produced striking defiance, German pride, and cultural flourishing. Oglethorpe, created to suppress targeted vocal aliens, produced the opposite effect.

Half a century after the Civil War battle on its site, Fort Oglethorpe had progressed little. The camp, a few miles from Chattanooga, Tennessee, contained sixty acres of treeless fields and
twenty-two prisoner-made barracks, arranged on a main street so muddy it earned the nickname “Rio Grande de Orgelsdorf.” The heavily guarded complex, which internees complained alternated between stifling summers and damp winters, originally held approximately four hundred German sailors before conversion to a ten-times-larger all-civilian camp. Opinion of conditions, predictably, varied by source. Reporters who visited Oglethorpe and its sister camp, Fort McPherson, wrote of humane, even pampered treatment, including lavish dinners, few regulations, and visiting privileges for relatives. Looking back in memoirs, Goldschmidt and interned poet Erich Posselt readily acknowledged that their conditions met at least basic standards. “If it had not been for the barbed wire and the separation from my family,” reflected Goldschmidt, “life in camp might have been called an extremely interesting experience.” Rather than outright abuse, Goldschmidt, Henri, and Posselt agreed that heavy censorship and uncertainty over release took the largest psychological toll. Internees could only send two letters per month, each examined thoroughly, and censors often rejected letters deemed not urgent. Internees chafed under these restrictions.

Within Oglethorpe, treatment differed along class lines. Internees were sorted into Camp A, the “millionaires’ camp”; Camp B, the general barracks; and Camp C, the punishment quarters. The inhabitants of Camp A were not necessarily all wealthy: the Swiss Legation provided the twenty-dollar monthly fee to Goldschmidt and others of sufficient credit. For this sum, Camp A’s residents received better cuisine, slept in separate, more spacious quarters, avoided the others’ regimented schedules and semi-obligatory labor, and could even hire other internees as servants. The denizens of Camp B awoke at 5:45 A.M., worked full days, ate mess-hall food, and fit one hundred each into a barracks. Still, its internees could earn money to spend at the camp store, though they faced periodic bans on coffee and sugar. The commandant
reserved Camp C for alien troublemakers—mostly members of the radically-viewed I.W.W. union and those who refused camp work. These ten percent of all internees received half-rations of bread and water, with some placed in solitary confinement. Safe in Camp A, Goldschmidt discerned the reason for this segregation: not class discrimination per se, but rather a calculated move to sow discord and deprive Camps B and C of potential rebellion leaders. The plan worked, as Camps A, B, and C all habitually mistrusted and undermined each other. One writer in the internee newspaper sarcastically equated Camp A’s monetary costs with physical pain; another lamented that “only livestock lives in B / In A, the crème of Germany.” Nevertheless, internees from A and B spent hours each day together and participated collectively in the camp’s many cultural activities. But from the start, the reams of information the Department of Justice collected allowed them to carefully sort their main targets: the cultural elite (like Goldschmidt), the agitators (like Henri), and those accidentally caught up in other government aims (like Bartel’s lover Dombrowsky). As Oglethorpe’s class distinctions show, the internment program was targeted and planned meticulously from the top.

Oglethorpe’s “concentration of talent,” writes scholar Gerald Davis, “created [an] extraordinarily sophisticated cultural community.” The leaders of many fields of German-American society, who might otherwise never have met, came together behind barbed wire. Goldschmidt soon had the company of literary critics and physicists, journalists and conductors. Out of their synergy, resentment, and tedium came an incredible array of cultural institutions. Internees held a chess tournament, ran a sports league, grew a vegetable garden, made art, constructed a swimming pool, played piano, showed movies, and formed a comedy troop. Beyond these diversions, they also trumpeted German culture. Vocal concerts, a theater festival,
and orchestral performances all presented patriotic pieces that bridged Oglethorpe’s class divide.

Witnessing virtuoso Karl Muck conducting Beethoven, the poet Posselt wrote:

An electric current [ran] through all that unkempt audience in overalls and shirtsleeves, in heavy camp-boots and with unshaven faces. Then, jubilantly and overpoweringly, the ‘Eroica’ rushed over us, welded us into one, scorched us and purged us, and shook us to the very depths of our being.81

“One of the greatest events in the history of music in America,” as Posselt claimed, was a performance critical of America itself.82 Likewise, Goldschmidt proudly taught biology to four hundred men from all camps as part of the “Universität Oglethorpe,” a series of courses in language, history, science, and crafts. On top of this prodigious cultural output, internees produced the profit-sharing magazine Orgelsdorfer Eulenspiegel. Replete with opinion pieces, poetry, humor, and illustrations, the paper contrasted German culture with American backwardness and offered as scathing a critique of camp life as could be snuck by the censor. If Oglethorpe were not ringed with guard posts, an observer might have mistaken it for a thriving German immigrant town. Of course, prisoners of all eras have created coping mechanisms and sought solidarity. Yet an exceptional mode of resistance grew from the Georgia mud. As the expanding state silenced German expression in almost every other corner, at Oglethorpe of all places—the theoretical epitome of government power over aliens—Germans defied their captors’ aims spectacularly.83

As the war dragged on, the “Orgelsdorfer” resisted in more overt ways. Despite tensions between Camps A and B, the internees established a coordinating committee that protested the commandant’s increasingly harsh treatment. In mid-1918, the internees and the Swiss Legation negotiated more self-regulation and the release of many agitators out of Camp C, though they
later failed to stop guards from denying aid to a group of overheated prisoners in the punishment barracks. A few captives succeeded in escaping Oglethorpe, but others were shot dead before reaching the fence. Undeterred, the “Orgelsdorfer” organized a letter-writing campaign to every official, diplomat, and representative they could reach, mostly to no response. Henri inspired at least one other internee to join the drive; Goldschmidt contributed his own scathing invectives. Was it truly “in the best interests of the U.S. to have outraged a distinguished scholar,…whose reputation and standing are high above low suspicions and ought to protect him against petty intrigues?” Goldschmidt queried indignantly. The war in Europe ended without his release, for reasons never explained to him. When Spanish Influenza then struck the camp lethally, internees redoubled their nationalist spirit. Facing “the icy breath of death,” memorialized Posselt, “[the victims] died as Germans….One would be a scoundrel if unwilling to give his life for that!” Goldschmidt contracted flu and retreated from public camp life, burning with the fever of resistance.

Henri at Oglethorpe

Dr. Henri did not experience even Goldschmidt’s small pleasures of music and teaching. Since his December 1917 arrest, Henri had languished at Oglethorpe. On November 11, 1918, the actual fighting of World War I ceased. Still, the government operated as if war raged and deemed Henri a corrosive influence worthy of further captivity. While camp officers rated his conduct excellent, Henri detested his confinement. Three months in, he fell ill and spent days in the camp hospital. By August 1919, nine months after the war’s end, he wrote the Attorney General, “My health has deteriorated to such an extent that, if my freedom is withheld much longer from me, I doubt of ever becoming a free man alive.” When he tried to inform his
friends and family back home of his illnesses, Henri ran afoul of the censors. Frustrated, Henri chafed at the slow pace that clothes, toiletries, and money could be sent; he closed otherwise flowery love letters to his fiancée, Minnie Colwell, with terse requests to write more. When he arranged for Colwell and her mother to come visit him at Oglethorpe, they faced delays once they arrived. Henri did try to seek redress for his grievances but was given only limited access to a lawyer. While the files do not indicate whether Henri was housed in Camp A or B, he also picked up on Oglethorpe’s class stratification. “Internees who were really connected with Imperial German interests,” he remonstrated, “have regained their liberty long ago as they were in a position to engage high priced lawyers which I, unfortunately, am not.”

To Henri’s mind, forces from all sides colluded to keep him miserably interned.

Despite this treatment, Henri appropriated the language of patriotism and loyalty to protest his confinement. The same internment that caused a proud man like Goldschmidt to flaunt German culture spurred a chameleon like Henri to repurpose American ideals. Though he likely tailored his letters to his government audience, his firm embrace of the values of his captors shows how internees like Henri conceptualized their own resistance. Instead of internalizing guilt or siding with Germany, Henri tried to outdo his American jailers on their own terms, by arguing that his case was more in line with American values than theirs. In a number of letters to the Attorney General, Henri first attempted to prove himself a loyal citizen. The doctor saw helping the war effort as his solemn duty, mentioning his U.S. Army service and Red Cross speeches. He would never question the political decisions of a government that was leading the “great fight for human freedom,” he claimed. Further echoing Wilson, he pledged to “uphold the ideals proclaimed by the President in his endeavor to make the world a Democratic world fit to live in.”
The swindler and philanderer of old now wrote with an impassioned, eloquent air, espousing respectability and rule of law. “My trust that you will grant my request,” his parole appeal stated, “is based upon the firm belief in the sense of Justice and Righteousness which always prevailed in the U.S.A.”93 Blunting the impact with nationalistic praise, Henri accused the Department of Justice of failing to uphold the very American ideals that he himself practiced. To be sure, the shrewd doctor wrote with his readers in mind, but his less composed statements took similar tacks. Nearly two years into his captivity, while his tone grew angrier, his appeal to patriotism remained steady. “Is this [internment] in accordance with the ideas of humanity and justice…for which this country has fought?” he pointedly asked in a July 1919 letter.94 Whether rhetorical strategy or heartfelt belief, Henri’s commitment to American values only strengthened with his confinement.95

If Henri could turn the nationalistic sentiments of the home front against internment, so too could his friends and associates back home. While enemy aliens on the whole faced a hostile climate from their neighbors, in Henri’s case, this surge in civic participation actually provided support for an Americanized German. During Henri’s two years of internment, scores of letters and petitions poured into the Department of Justice, seeking the doctor’s release. While the majority, though far from all, arrived after the war had ended, speaking up for an internee amidst postwar antiradical crackdowns was still remarkable. A February 1919 package of missives expressed deep loss at Henri’s internment. “To all of us,” stated one letter, “Dr. Henri Englehardt was more than an intimate friend[;] he was our Councilor, Comforter, and Healer.”96 Beyond these personal touches, Henri’s neighbors, landlords, congregants, and business contacts all stressed his allegiance and patriotism. The word “gentleman” appears alongside “loyal” in nearly every letter, linking bourgeois status to trustworthiness. And while Henri’s friends lavished
praise on the doctor’s loyalty, they also took care to bolster their own credibility. Self-descriptions like “thoroughly American” and “one hundred per cent. American born and bred” peppered letters written even before the war had ceased; one man signed off “All for America.” “The testimonials submitted are all from Loyal Americans,” emphasized Henri’s fiancée’s mother, “so Loyal that if we were not assured…the charges…can be disproved, we would accept the present conditions without a single word of protest.” Henri himself underscored that many of his supporters were “Americans of old stock.” Not every letter backed the doctor’s release: one member of the American Protective League, a large, government-supported vigilante group, sought repeatedly to link Henri to known German agents. On the whole though, the voluntarist spirit of the home front came down strongly in Henri’s favor.

Support for Henri grew as his internment dragged on. Impressively, Rhode Island’s governor signed a petition for Henri’s release, while the doctor’s congressman promised to intervene with the new attorney general, A. Mitchell Palmer. Palmer’s expanding department, however, dismissed even these high-placed backers. As 1918 passed into 1919 and war passed into peace, internment chief John Lord O’Brien sent rejection after rejection to Henri’s supporters. Just as initial detainee selection bore little correlation to actual threat, the government did not keep people interned based on home community sentiment. In Henri’s case, the internment apparatus worked despite homegrown fervor, not because of it.

\textit{Erdmann at Waverly House}

Men like Goldschmidt and Henri at least enjoyed facilities designed for internment. Lacking a women’s barracks at Oglethorpe, officials placed Erdmann in May 1918 at
Manhattan’s Waverly House on 10th Street, a home for “wayward girls.” Sharing a grimy bathroom with the house’s rotating group of prostitutes, Erdmann and six other Germans spent day and night in a single room designed for, at most, five occupants. Exercise outside was near-impossible. Erdmann lacked even a change of clothes until Agathe Richrath, an interned Vassar professor, loaned her some. Erdmann persistently protested the makeshift accommodations, both in letters to Harrison and in person to Department of Justice agents. Though she ignored Richrath’s advice not to cooperate at all, she grew more vocal to her superiors during internment than before.104

The official response to her complaints further reveals the broader remit of the program. Hadley worried in June 1918 that if word of Waverly House’s state reached Germany, American women held there would be ill-treated as a result. O’Brien, too, feared this eventuality and barred reporters from seeing the house. As with Bartel, larger international aims dictated the course of internment. Despite dreading the eyes of the world, Department officials still failed to secure alternate accommodations, even if they internally admitted the house’s faults. Hadley professed to want to help but claimed he had expended his sway improving Goldschmidt’s situation.105 Thus, even if the program treated some local concerns with geopolitical importance, its bureaucratic nature prevented them from being acted upon.

Erdmann wrote more than complaints. Ever the scientist, Erdmann worked on a paper on cyanolophia while interned. She enlisted Harrison’s aid in securing its publication, but potential publishers balked. Hadley objected to the German word “Hühnerpest” in the paper’s title, noting that while he knew better, others might “consider the article a dangerous piece of Teutonic propaganda.”106 Still, Hadley vouched for Erdmann, writing to one journal in August 1918, “[P]ublication…should depend upon the value of the article rather than upon the nationality of
the author.” Her paper does not appear to have been printed during internment. Nonetheless, her determination to publish demonstrates how internment not only failed to stop, but encouraged the traits and activities for which she was interned in the first place.

As time passed, Erdmann’s complaints grew more desperate and more pointed. At first, she remained optimistic that a sober review of the facts would end her “splendid isolation”; she thus naïvely asked a group of Yale higher-ups to meet with President Wilson personally to free her. When that failed to happen, she turned her ire on the institutions that conspired against her. “My case is absolutely clear,” she wrote Harrison. “The Bureau of Agriculture and partly the Laboratory Committee [are] then just as guilty as I am.” These powers had not only interned her, she believed, but also had given control of her lab and review of her publications to biased rival scientists out to diminish her standing. Underlying such grievances lurked a nascent recognition of sexism. Misconceived, she complained, “All men at the outbreak of the war, ’17, who were in positions at Universities were allowed to return [to Germany].” While Erdmann’s claim was incorrect, she nonetheless saw institutional gender bias in her internment. Cooped up with little to do but write, Erdmann developed a severe skin infection—“my last souvenir of the prison,” she ruefully noted. All the while, Department agents filed away her protests without comment.

_Bartel at Taboga Island and Gloucester City_

Conditions proved no better for Frida and Otto Bartel. Initially, the U.S. Army held the Bartels on Taboga Island in the Gulf of Panama, where Bartel was the only woman prisoner. The Army had repurposed part of idyllic volcanic resort island for a base and internment camp. Unlike other internees, authorities did not allow Bartel to visit the mainland. In October 1917,
she fell and pained her ankle—or so she claimed, wrote a dubious camp physician. By January 1918, she wrote to the Spanish consul, in charge of German-Panamanian affairs, “Presently I am resourceless, with a broken health and spiritually discouraged.”115 Outwardly worn, she nonetheless sought the consul’s aid to sue for taken property, lost income, and personal suffering.116 As with Erdmann’s science or Henri’s networking, internment only intensified the very perceived factors—deviousness and petty entrepreneurship—that Bartel’s arresters wanted to stop.

Bartel spoke most vocally for her son’s wellbeing. Bartel could no longer pay for his education, even if he had been allowed to return to Panama City. At first, military command allowed German children to attend the local island school, but when some children were caught sneaking their parents’ letters past censors, the privilege ceased. To Bartel’s complaints, the general in charge rebutted that she could hire a private tutor. Overall, he maintained, “the treatment of the Germans at Taboga has been humane to the last degree.”117 This dispute deepened when Otto suffered a toothache: the military provided treatment on the mainland, but put him under heavy guard to get there. Bartel and army authorities were not the only ones debating Otto’s treatment. Olof von Gagern, Frida’s ex-husband and Otto’s father, sought access to his son and lamented the closing of his business in a strongly-worded letter. Bartel refused to reply at all, and authorities declined to intervene. Von Gagern had been temporarily freed from internment, yet both the military and Bartel deemed it better to keep Otto on Taboga than free him to live with von Gagern near the canal.118 The internment program had overlaid geopolitical strategy onto a personal drama.

In April 1918, a year after their arrest, the Bartels were transferred to detainment in America. Military brass desired to return Taboga to a resort by emptying it of internees. Thus,
the Bartels boarded a ship for Ellis Island, where they were interrogated and sent on to the Gloucester City Immigration Center near Philadelphia. As with Erdmann, authorities lacked a central location for women internees and placed the Bartels in makeshift lodgings. In the immigration center, Bartel and her son shared cramped quarters with thirty-five other women, mostly Italians detained for other reasons like mental illness. She complained bitterly about the “terrible noise and quarreling” to Department of Justice officials, who largely ignored her.

Bartel again tried to use gender and romance to improve her conditions. Sometime before coming to America, she rekindled her relationship with Bernhard Dombrowsky, her first lover. They applied to authorities on Taboga to marry, but were told to wait until their transfer stateside. At Ellis Island, interrogators probed if Bartel had consummated her relationship with Dombrowsky, which she denied. After this invasive examination, Dombrowsky was placed hundreds of miles away at Fort Oglethorpe. They wrote each other frequently, and both petitioned for Bartel to be transferred. Indeed, the fact that Bartel sought out a full-fledged internment camp speaks volumes about the conditions at Gloucester City. Bartel tried a number of tacks to convince officials, including turning gendered language to her benefit. “I therefore appeal to you,” she wrote the Swiss Legation, “trusting in your fair and just thoughts for us German women.” The Department of Justice, however, found her request impractical, especially with Otto in tow. One official melodramatically wrote, “I believe it is a question of internment or marriage for Mrs. Bartel.” While ultimately unsuccessful, Bartel tried to subvert the gendered tropes that had occasioned her internment and treatment thereafter.
“Further Detention Is Not Warranted”: Release and Repatriation

Frida Bartel

Frida Bartel left internment the way she entered it: unannounced, unsupported, and for reasons beyond the specifics of her case. By December 1918, a month after the Armistice, Department of Justice officials remained puzzled what to do with Bartel and her son. Admitting that the circumstances of her arrest were “peculiar” and that her international residency did not fall under the Department of Justice’s purview, a flummoxed internment chief John Lord O’Brian ceded responsibility for Bartel to other departments.125 Stuck in this limbo, Bartel remained confined at Gloucester City into 1919. Her fiancé Dombrowsky continued writing her from Oglethorpe, but a number of his letters got lost in transit. Dombrowsky’s communication problems worsened in February: he first requested repatriation to Germany with the Bartels, but two days later asked to stay in America with them. His about-face was initially ignored, leaving him to fear he would be tried as a deserter if returned to Germany.126

A fairy-tale ending proved elusive. The Bartels finally received parole in June 1919 when no department desired to keep them, but only on the condition that they return to Panama. Dombrowsky frantically wrote the Attorney General and the Swiss Legation to allow Bartel remain at Gloucester City until his own parole. His requests arrived too late. In an oddly oblivious response, the Swiss Legation replied, “we…have the honor to inform you that Mrs. Frieda Barthels [sic] has returned to Panama.”127 Unfortunately, the case files end here, and I could find no record of the Bartels or Dombrowsky thereafter.128

Bartel’s defiance reveals much about the operations of the internment program and its effect on internees. Not only was Bartel caught up in high-level discussions of international diplomacy, but she also lacked the support structures of Goldschmidt, Erdmann, or Henri to cope
with such ensnarement. Because of this necessary self-reliance, Bartel used romantic relationships, gender perceptions, and whatever else she could to her own advantage. While her case differs in class and geography from the others profiled, her story shows the extremes of the same trends present throughout the program. Absent from the hyper-patriotism of the mainland, Bartel entered captivity due mainly to her proximity to the Panama Canal, though her low social status and seedy occupation became pretexts. The impersonal scope of an international internment agenda heightened the best or worst aspects of Bartel’s prewar personality and relationships. While the State Department cited Bartel’s romances and disreputability to intern her, she employed them herself in captivity.

Adolphe Henri

By the summer of 1919, troops had long since returned home, but Adolphe Henri had not. In the doctor’s judgment, conditions at Oglethorpe had not improved with the cessation of hostilities. “Nothing short of torture,” he described his continued internment.129 With apparently not much to do but fall sicker, Henri grew more irate. Claiming to speak for the cause of the other internees still remaining, he bristled, “the promise that my case ‘will have careful attention’ is as old as this internment camp.”130 Yet the end of the war did bring Henri some benefits. With overt enmity towards Germany over, organizations like the Central Committee of German Internees could more openly advocate for better treatment and parole. Still, Henri’s requests for a trial, let alone release, received denials as late as December 1919.131 No one provided him reason, but his role as a social agitator perhaps mattered just as much in the antiradical postwar climate as during the war.

The Department did contemplate releasing Henri early—for deportation to Germany. In
early 1919, Congress debated allowing the Attorney General to deport the remaining internees. A perceived corrupter of public morals like Henri was exactly the type whom the Department wanted repatriated. One Massachusetts lawyer, who seems to have known Henri from the doctor’s earlier years swindling loans and breaking hearts, inquired how he could help “make [Henri’s] journey to the Fatherland sure and permanent.”132 Still, the Department recognized the power of community support for Henri. For instance, an officer at Oglethorpe asked the agent in Providence to conceal Henri’s possible deportation from the doctor’s friends at home.133 Even as the Red Scare permeated postwar discourse, officials recognized that public opposition still existed to internee deportation.

Over two years after his arrest, the Department eventually paroled Henri on January 9, 1920. From beginning to end, internal memos acknowledged the falsity of the espionage claims against him. As early as September 1917, Tom Howick, the local agent in charge, concluded that Henri had no connection to the German Secret Service. Yet inertia and fear of letting Henri further corrupt his peers kept him at Oglethorpe. Henri’s continued confinement did have internal dissenters; Howick, for one, expressed misgivings that “the evidence on which the Doctor is held is so technical that further detention is not warranted.”134 Henri only received parole about two months before the alien internment program closed for good. Congress passed the deportation bill in May 1920, but by then, the Department had stopped monitoring the doctor. Thereafter, the files do not reveal Henri’s fate. He expressed many times a desire to return to Providence and marry Colwell, though the scant evidence—a 1930’s census record listing Colwell under her maiden name—may indicate he reneged.135 Nevertheless, from the copious records of his detainment, Henri’s case offers a potent exception to the wartime xenophobia that otherwise overcame America. Henri certainly faced his share of anti-Germanism, but ultimately,
top-down decisions caused his long internment, in spite of what his neighbors wanted.

Richard Goldschmidt and Rhoda Erdmann

Rhoda Erdmann became too irksome for the Department of Justice. Such was the opinion of Rufus Sprague, a Department assistant, who wrote that “her complaints relative to her parole and her proposed activities are annoying to say the least.”136 Meanwhile, Yale president Hadley’s close relationship with the Department finally came to Erdmann’s aid. While he did not want her at Yale, Hadley suggested that Erdmann would spread good opinions of America if she could return to Germany. Through Hadley’s influence and her own resistance, Erdmann was paroled on September 14, 1918, four and a half months after her arrest. Like the others, she received no reason for her release’s timing. She may have earned parole before war’s end due to Hadley’s pull, her respectable job, or her gendered innocuousness. Roughly a month following the November Armistice, she was joined by Richard Goldschmidt. Both Hadley and the Department had concluded by then that he “was interned for very flimsy reasons”; unlike a rabble-rouser like Henri, his internment served no purpose after the war.137 Goldschmidt left Fort Oglethorpe by guarded truck on December 27th. The scientists returned to New Haven, wary but free.138

Their hardships did not cease after release. Like other internees, Goldschmidt and Erdmann had to put up a few thousand dollars in bonds and find a native-born “supervisor” to ensure their good conduct. Neither scientist regained lab access, nor could Erdmann attend a conference where she might present herself as a martyr. Both had to remain in the U.S. until conditions stabilized enough for trans-Atlantic civilian transport. Goldschmidt lived off monthly funds from the Swiss Legation and did little but write, but police still paid him the occasional check-in. Finally, with a last bit of sway from President Hadley, the scientists received
permission to return home. Even on her voyage back in March 1919, Erdmann felt the mental press of internment. “The time has not come for my speaking freely,” she wrote Hadley from the deck of her liner.\(^{139}\) Goldschmidt and his family travelled back a year later on a crowded transport filled with paroled German sailors.\(^{140}\) Despite the hardships of internment, the departing scientist refused to bear a grudge against his American neighbors. “Many dear friends…stood by us in hard times, actually to the point of endangering themselves,” he reflected in his memoir. “We shall never forget what these real Americans did.”\(^{141}\) While four decades’ distance may have tempered his interpretation, Goldschmidt did not blame his peers. Rather, a coordinated anti-German operation orchestrated from above detained and then exiled him and Erdmann.

The sorry state of postwar Germany dashed the scientists’ hopes for personal and intellectual freedom. Both professors regained university jobs, but they soon faced restrictions and scrutiny from the increasingly powerful Nazis. In prose that would make Hannah Arendt proud, Goldschmidt described the Nazis in strikingly similar language as he did his American captors: more dullards than masterminds, more brutes than schemers.\(^{vi}\) With clear parallelism, Goldschmidt recounted how the Gestapo jailed Erdmann in 1934 for employing Jewish researchers. Erdmann served over a month in prison before her old friend Ross Harrison travelled to Germany to secure her release. While her name was cleared, the broken and ill survivor of one incarceration did not live long after her second.\(^{142}\)

Erdmann’s death and other colleagues’ persecutions shook Goldschmidt—if she lost everything for hiring Jews, what would he face for being one? Goldschmidt luckily secured a job at Berkeley and left Germany for good with his family in 1936. America—the country that once

\(^{vi}\) Cf. Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, rev. and enlarged ed. (1963; New York: Viking, 1964), 55 (“Everybody could see that this man was not a ‘monster,’ but it was difficult indeed not to suspect that he was a clown.”).
interned him and paraded him through the streets—now offered him refuge from what he considered a far worse version of the same persecution. Goldschmidt complained about restrictions again placed on enemy aliens during World War II, but he certainly preferred America to the Reich. Goldschmidt became a U.S. citizen and spent the next two decades researching and writing his magnum opus, *The Material Basis of Evolution*. He and Harrison corresponded regularly; he even returned in 1942 to Yale, the university that once disowned him, to deliver a widely received lecture. Goldschmidt died in 1958, having survived the beginnings of the American security state and the climaxing of the German one.143

“From Our Mistakes of That Other War, We Learned”: Conclusion

In 1942, Goldschmidt decried “what is euphemistically called a Reception Center—in fact a concentration camp.”144 He was not referring to his own internment, though. Rather, one of his graduate students, Masuo Kodani, had just been sent off to Manzanar Relocation Center. Kodani was one of thousands of Japanese caught up in World War I German internment’s heir—a more developed, less selective program that employed many of the same methods, architects, and motivations. Goldschmidt, who had clung to his scientific endeavors, ethnic identity, and moral indignation through two nations’ maltreatments, identified with his protégé’s plight. When he wrote of Kodani as someone “who has gone through all the iniquities and unconstitutional persecution of the last years,” he could just as easily have been describing his younger self.145

Goldschmidt led a group of émigré Berkeley professors and students who raised funds and offered protest for Kodani, to no avail. Like Goldschmidt, Kodani wrote for an internee newspaper; like Erdmann, he worked to publish research from confinement. Kodani’s troubles also did not end with release: Goldschmidt helped ensure Kodani’s wife would not be deported
after the war. Amazingly, Goldschmidt sought aid for Kodani from none other than Ross Harrison, who declined because he was busy trying to resolve a similar case of his own.146 While Goldschmidt and Kodani’s relationship may have been exceptional, the commonality of the internee experience remains striking. If the institutional framework of top-down internment developed directly from one world war to the next, so too did the response of its victims.

The mechanics of American internment—and indeed of the whole wartime state—were prototyped on Germans during World War I. When Germans, Japanese, and Italians faced evacuation and internment during World War II, the government borrowed and expanded legal precedents, logistical know-how, and bureaucratic structures from the original program. Many World War I camps, including Gloucester City and Fort Oglethorpe, again held prisoners and civilian internees. J. Edgar Hoover, once the enthusiastic assistant who helped condemn Henri, now ran the F.B.I. Under his leadership, the Bureau drew up a “Custodial Detention List” of aliens and subversives to intern and actively participated in the multi-agency detention apparatus. The F.B.I.’s selective internment differed from concurrent mass Japanese internment, but both drew from the same precedent.147

If the successes of World War I detention inspired later programs, its failures became a cautionary tale. World War II Attorney General Francis Biddle claimed to be “determined to avoid mass internment, and the persecution of aliens that had characterized the First World War.”148 For Hoover, however, World War I internment was not a flawed model to avoid, but a flawed model to improve. In a nationally published 1943 story, he looked back a quarter century:

For much of that confusion, we may perhaps blame our own inexperience…. [H]ow to deal with alien [enemies] had never troubled us before. The lack [of] organization to handle such emergencies was evident within our own governmental machinery.149
Hoover combined overlapping departments, prepared longer in advance, further consolidated detention under his control, and near-doubled internee numbers. The last internment failed, he argued, because it was not centralized enough.150 “From our mistakes of that other war,” he concluded, “we learned.”151

From World War I onward, the possibility that a whole class of Americans could lose its fundamental liberties—and that such a class would revel in, rather than succumb to, its ostracism—stemmed from the original German internment. A federal wartime operation once overrode public opinion to imprison Adolphe Henri, partnered with a major university to arrest Richard Goldschmidt and Rhoda Erdmann, and invoked international diplomacy to detain Frida Bartel—only to repeat their stories in the decades following. Since then, the expanding state has further enmeshed war, politics, civil liberties, and ethnicity. A succeeding century of wartime government-immigrant interaction began with concerts behind barbed wire in World War I Georgia.

Main body word count: 12,460 words
Bibliographic Essay

“Wasserman, Louis – S.N.Y. – 189796-429 – Nat’l.” Now faded, these words had been typed on the pale blue index card in front of me at the National Archives II. Amid the roughly 60,000 files on German and Austro-Hungarian immigrants, my family name stared back at me. To the federal officials in charge of enemy-alien registration and internment during World War I, my great-grandfather Louis meant little more than a name, number, and location. In fact, Louis likely should not have been included in the index at all—unluckily bearing a German last name, he actually hailed from Zhytomyr, Ukraine. Such niceties did not prevent immigrants from all over Eastern Europe from being registered with the U.S. government and, in several thousand cases, sent to an internment camp. Louis fared relatively well, becoming a U.S. citizen and fighting on the Western Front. For many other German and Austrian Americans on those cards, registration proved the first step towards years of imprisonment.

Three generations and almost a century later, I first discovered the German internment program, via never-before-seen files, as a research assistant to Professor Beverly Gage. In the process of writing a new biography of longtime F.B.I. director J. Edgar Hoover, she hired me in the summer of 2014 to research primarily in Hoover’s personal files. As a side project, she offered me the chance to look into the internment of German Americans for the World War I centennial. I had never heard of the program—nor, it turns out, had almost anyone else. Despite its scope and impact, the program has remained hidden and largely untouched by home-front scholarship. Hoover’s first job with the Department of Justice, coordinating alien registration, had pointed Professor Gage towards the program. But my investigations quickly revealed the extent of German internment went far beyond Hoover.

Being the first person to view the internment files since their declassification proved both
an unexpected challenge and an incredible opportunity. The files I examined that summer, the
Department of Justice’s “European War Matters: Litigation Case Files” at the National Archives
II, College Park, had never before been comprehensively studied.\textsuperscript{vii} No secondary sources existed
to guide my search through the hundreds of boxes of material. With limited time, I had to select
files to examine arbitrarily—some famous internees, other internees with last names early in the
alphabet. The files’ recent declassification also complicated my ability to work with them. While
the World War I cases are no longer classified, the same run of files includes still-classified
boxes up to the 1950’s as well. Though I came to an arrangement with the archivists to avoid a
potentially years-long FOIA process, the staff who pulled the boxes from storage each day had a
50-50 chance of accidentally denying them to me. To even get access to the files was almost like
an exercise in espionage.

The structure of this archive shaped and delineated my essay. About 17\% of the blue
registration index cards corresponded to an internment case file, which tracks the arrest,
detention, and release record of one internee or a small group of internees. A good fraction of the
files contain limited information, and many of the documents inside are form letters. However, a
few files hold copious letters, statements, and memos, from officials, neighbors, and internees
themselves. At first, I had planned to write my essay on the overall logistics and scope of the
program, but these facets could be only broadly induced from the files. Even if I had attempted
this approach, the sheer volume of documents would hardly have fit in 12,500 words or two
semesters. Instead, my primary sources molded my paper into a case-study-based analysis
focused on a sample of the voices of the interned, an angle which proved more manageable,
more revealing, and more compelling. Some gaps emerged, I soon found, in trying to use
individual-focused sources to argue for an institutional conclusion. Even so, these files offer rich

\textsuperscript{vii} Referred to in notes as “European War Matters.”
detail on both individual stories and the program as a whole, the latter of which I buttressed with evidence from non-archival sources.

Other primary sources from the National Archives and elsewhere fleshed out my research. Returning to the National Archives over fall break, I searched through the Records of the Adjutant General’s Office of the War Department, another set of internee case files. viii These documents generally hold fewer details on each internee, though they contain a number of personal telegrams and a few reports from Swiss Legation camp inspectors. ix The “Old German Files” of the Bureau of Investigation, helpfully pointed out to me by David Gary, also supplemented my research on internees Frida Bartel, a Panama City barkeep, and Adolphe Henri, a Providence faith doctor. x In addition, the Ross Harrison and Arthur Hadley Papers at Yale gave highly detailed background on interned scientists Rhoda Erdmann and Richard Goldschmidt, while Goldschmidt’s autobiography, the Orgelsdorfer Eulenspiegel internee newspaper, and a few other firsthand accounts painted a vivid picture of life under internment. While I do not speak or read German, a vast majority of my case-study internees’ correspondence is in English, as are all official records and published accounts. Only Orgelsdorfer Eulenspiegel is in German, but I understood most of it via translations in secondary sources and the aid of my German-speaking suitemate, Myron Zhang.

The sheer lack of secondary sources on World War I interment, especially compared to the volume of material on the overall home front, motivated me to pursue the topic. While each of my case studies could have been a senior essay unto itself, I included more than one case in

viii. Referred to in notes as “AGO Records.”
ix. Finding these files in the National Archives filing system, based on a few citations with outdated call numbering, proved rather difficult. Indeed, among the few authors who do cite National Archives internment files, nearly all frustratingly leave out key pieces of information needed to locate specific documents. All authors whom I read either cite by box or by folder—which each box contains thousands of documents and each folder tens or hundreds. For this reason, I have cited individual documents and given the necessary call information on each, even if this makes my endnotes quite large.
x. Referred to in notes as “Old German Files.”
order to more fully cover the understudied program. Nevertheless, a few key secondary works on
the home front offered me direction. The first book I read for background, David Kennedy’s
*Over Here*, introduced me to two major currents in World War I historiography: the expansion of
state power and the rise of mass voluntarism. While both certainly coexisted, Kennedy’s
evidence for the increased role of the federal government in anti-Germanism proved persuasive.
Kennedy does not mention German internment at all, but in putting together my own essay, I
envision it very much in line with Kennedy’s work. All in all, Kennedy’s broad narrative helped
frame my thoughts in a larger context.

On the other hand, Christopher Capozzola’s *Uncle Sam Wants You* argues that the
paranoia and xenophobia of the home front were bottom-up (or at least diffuse) processes of
coercive voluntarism and civic boosterism, undergirded by a growing sense of duty. These
developments in turn forged the role of the modern American citizen in relation to his or her
government and peers. Capozzola discusses internment for a chapter, directly placing the
program within his larger framework for the war. Capozzola’s work very much influenced my
methods of case-study analysis—he provided me a model for using the most telling individual
incidents to generalize about a historical trend. In other ways, *Uncle Sam Wants You* became my
historiographical foil, given its account of internment as a small-scale, largely failed, and locally-
driven program. Capozzola gave me historical tools like inductive case studies, but I utilized
them to a different end.

If Kennedy and Capozzola delivered high-level accounts of the war and internment,
Gerald Davis gave a more focused picture of daily life at a single camp. His 1991 article in the
*Yearbook of German-American Studies*, “‘Orgelsdorf’: A World War I Internment Camp in
America,” described camp conditions, inmate interactions, and class tensions to a degree I found
nowhere else. Most of my exploration of life at Fort Oglethorpe builds directly upon Davis’s study. From Davis’s footnotes, for instance, I first learned of the inmate-produced Orgelsdorfer Eulenspiegel newspaper, which I subsequently had photographed and sent my way from Stanford University’s Hoover Institution. Overall, Davis’s paper oriented my essay toward Fort Oglethorpe, where internees created the most well-documented and cohesive internal community. Davis’s account both introduced me to the class dynamics among the internees and gave a unity to my case studies and to the internee experience overall.

These three works most influenced my thinking on internment, but others honed my thoughts as my research proceeded. I was thrilled to find at least one comprehensive work solely focused on internment: William Glidden’s 1970 dissertation “Casualties of Caution.” Glidden’s account emphasizes logistics and generalized conditions, hardly touching on individual experiences of internees in their own words. Nonetheless, Glidden gave me a framework in which to place my account and staved off a sense of complete exceptionality in my thesis. As exciting as creating original research can be, writing into the unknown is a daunting task that Glidden helped mitigate. I felt both relieved and disappointed to find that Glidden also drew upon some of the European War Matters case files, though not the particular files I used. Beyond Glidden, Davis, a chapter in Capozzola, and a few other articles, the only substantial accounts of internment I could find are stories of particular internees, especially German-American musicians and conductors.

After orienting the direction of my essay with these secondary sources, I still needed to choose specific case studies. I picked my subjects to encompass a fair cross-section of the internee experience, especially trying to span class and gender lines. Somewhat by coincidence and somewhat through the guidance of Davis’s paper, two of the internees I chose interacted at
Fort Oglethorpe, allowing me to create a coherent narrative from very different experiences. For some of the cases, winnowing down the wealth of material was my main task. For example, I gained a deep understanding of the internment of Drs. Erdmann and Goldschmidt through the Hadley and Harrison Papers at Yale Manuscripts and Archives. Each scientist’s story could have been an essay itself with such an abundance of materials. Indeed, putting these archives in conversation with the files at the National Archives proved fascinating. I viewed an event like Erdmann’s firing from a multiplicity of perspectives, and I could even arrange timelines neatly by matching up sent copies of a letter in one archive with received copies in the other. On the other hand, a story like Frida Bartel’s relied solely on documents from the National Archives. Living outside the United States, having few correspondents, and lacking celebrity status, Bartel provided me a materially limited case to study—but a story therefore all the more amazing to tell. Dr. Henri’s case lay in between Bartel’s and the Yale scientists’ in terms of sourcing and social status. I almost passed over Henri in favor of conductor Karl Muck, perhaps the most famous and well-studied German internee. The fascinating social dynamics of Henri’s milieu, however, offered a valuable look at how non-immigrants opposed internment, while Muck’s story shared too many structural similarities with Goldschmidt’s. At times, my diversity of primary sources and cases left me lost, as if I were writing three or four different papers at once. Yet it also allowed me to draw on the varied historical research skills I picked up at Yale.

The very idea of this essay, much less guidance on its argument and structure, I owe to Professor Beverly Gage. From her seminar to the 2015 Freshman Address to the pages of *The New York Times*, I am incredibly lucky to have had her as an advisor and mentor throughout my time at Yale. I also remain indebted to the many others who have helped me through the research and writing process: Christina Jones, Richard Peuser, Mark Murphy, and the whole staff at
National Archives II for their invaluable aid—and patience with me—over months of research; David Gary, Bill Landis, and the rest of the Yale Libraries and Manuscripts and Archives staff for their help not only on this essay, but on all my research at Yale; Stephanie Stewart and Jenny Fichmann at the Hoover Institution for transmitting the *Orgelsdorfer Eulenspiegel* newspapers; Micah Luce, Ann Marie Gilmore, and the Saybrook Master’s and Dean’s Offices for funding my Mellon Research Grant; and David Huyssen, David Spatz, Glenda Gilmore, and Bill Rankin for honing my historical writing and thinking in their seminars. Nor could I have conducted this research without grounding back home: thank you to Marvin Russell and Judy Barnes for introducing me to the National Archives from an early age and, of course, to my parents, to whom I owe my love of history.
Richard Goldschmidt poses for a photograph soon after returning to Germany.152

A more haggard Goldschmidt sits in his laboratory in Germany in 1931, on the eve of his persecution and exile back to the country that once interned him.153
The piercing eyes of Rhoda Erdmann stare out from a face lined by years of persecution, in this 1930 photograph taken on her sixtieth birthday.
Stories on Erdmann’s arrest, many employing gendered language, reached as widely as this report from Spokane, Washington.155

A print of Goldschmidt in the late October/early November issue of *Orgelsdorfer Eulenspiegel*.156
Frida Bartel poses amidst the tropical foliage of Panama in this only extant photograph of her, submitted with her parole application.¹⁵⁷
A print of the barbed wire and barracks at Fort Oglethorpe in Orgelsdorfer Eulenspiegel.\textsuperscript{158}

Oglethorpe’s muddy main street was derisively dubbed the “Rio Grande de Orgelsdorf.”\textsuperscript{159}

Goldschmidt (third from left) and his fellow Camp A internees at Fort Oglethorpe.\textsuperscript{160}
Notes


10. Ibid., 151.

11. Ibid., 150-1; “Wars Enemy Aliens”; Capozzola, Uncle Sam Wants You, 176-7, 179-81; Kennedy, Over Here, 24-5, 57-68; Tracie L. Provost, “The Great Game: Imperial German Sabotage and Espionage against the United States, 1914-1917” (PhD diss., Univ. of Toledo, 2003), iii-iv; Luebke, Bonds of Loyalty, xiii; and William


25. THM to [Ross Harrison], [1918], Folder 395, Box 41, Series III, in Harrison Papers.


29. Richard Goldschmidt to U.S. Department of Justice, Jan. 23, 1919, 9-16-12-4220-70, Folder 9-16-12-4220, Part 2, Box 405, Shelf 6, Compartment 15, in European War Matters, 3 (emphasis added).

30. Randall Henderson to John Lord O’Brien, May 10, 1918, 9-16-12-4220-20, Folder 9-16-12-4220, Part 1, Box 404, Shelf 4-, Compartment 15, in European War Matters.


33. William Wallace, Jr. to John Lord O’Brien, May 17, 1918, 9-16-12-4220-18, Folder 9-16-12-4220, Part 1, Box 404, Shelf 4-, Compartment 15, in European War Matters.

34. Goldschmidt, In and Out, 164.


36. Harrison et al. to Hadley, Feb. 23, 1918, in Hadley Papers.

37. Hadley to Franklin, Dec. 24, 1918, 80, in Hadley Papers.


39. [Arthur Hadley] to Thomas J. Spellacy, May 6, 1918, 609, Part 1, Box 130, Series II, in Hadley Papers; [Arthur Hadley] to Wallace, Jun. 12, 1918, 232, Part 1, Box 130, Series II, in Hadley Papers; [Arthur Hadley] to W. M. Mann, Apr. 25, 1918, 7, Part 1, Box 130, Series II, in Hadley Papers; Harrison to Hadley, Oct. 2, 1917, in Hadley Papers, 2-3; Grim to D. J., May 2, 1918, in European War Matters, 1; Harrison et al. to Hadley, Feb. 23, 1918, in Hadley Papers; Acting Secretary, Yale University to Ross G. Harrison, Mar. 4, 1918, Folder 578, Box 8, Series I, in Harrison Papers; and John P. Begley to [Thomas Gregory], May 31, 1918, 9-16-12-4220-24, Folder 9-16-12-4220, Part 1, Box 404, Shelf 4-, Compartment 15, in European War Matters, 2.

40. Goldschmidt, In and Out, 166; “Educators Held as Enemy Aliens: Anna Maria Rhode Erdmann, Ph.D., and Prof. Goldschmidt Arrested...,” Hartford Courant, May 2, 1918; “Two More Arrests Reported,” Christian Science Monitor, May 2, 1918; “Yale Lecturer Held as Alien,” Washington Post, May 2, 1918; “Woman Professor at Yale Held as Enemy,” Bridgeport Telegram, May 2, 1918; and [Thomas] Spellacy to [Thomas Gregory], Apr. 25, 1918, 9-16-12-4220-1, Folder 9-16-12-4220, Part 1, Box 404, Shelf 4-, Compartment 15, in European War Matters.

41. “Fear Woman Scientist,” Spokane, WA J Spokesman-Review, May 26, 1918, Folder 9-16-12-4220, Part 1, Box 404, Shelf 4-, Compartment 15, in World War I Prisons and Prisoners: Prisoners of War and Alien Files (Entry 37), Shelf 6, Compartment 5, in World War I Prisons and Prisoners: Prisoners of War and Alien...
Enemies in the United States, War Department, Records of the Adjutant General’s Office, Row 26, Stack Area 370, Record Group 407, National Archives II, College Park, MD (hereafter AGO Records); Henry H. Morgan, “Adolphe E. Henri,” examination report, Sept. 27, 1918, Folder 9-16-12-1954, Box 331, Shelf 2, Compartment 14, in European War Matters, 1-2; and War Department to [A. Mitchell Palmer], Jan. 6, 1920, 9-16-12-1954-27, Folder 9-16-12-1954, Box 331, Shelf 2, Compartment 14, in European War Matters.

44. Adolphe E. Henri to [A. Mitchell Palmer], Mar. 22, 1919, 9-16-12-1954-15, Folder 9-16-12-1954, Box 331, Shelf 2, Compartment 14, in European War Matters, 1.


47. Richards to Gregory, Dec. 12, 1917, 9-16-12-1954-3, in European War Matters.

48. Ibid.


50. Ibid., 1-2; “Itemized History,” 57-60, in Old German Files, 3; Morgan, “Adolphe E. Henri,” in European War Matters, 1; Richards to Gregory, Dec. 12, 1917, 9-16-12-1954-3, in European War Matters; Harriet J. Brayton to [Thomas Gregory], Feb. 28, 1919, Folder 9-16-12-1954, Box 331, Shelf 2, Compartment 14, in European War Matters; and J. J. Heggelund to [Thomas Gregory], Feb. 27, 1919, Folder 9-16-12-1954, Box 331, Shelf 2, Compartment 14, in European War Matters.

51. Matthew D. Ripon to Leon S. Colwell, [Jul.] 22, [1919], quoted in Tom Howick to James P. Finley, Jul. 25, 1919, Folder 9-16-12-1954, Box 331, Shelf 2, Compartment 14, in European War Matters, 2.


55. Ibid., 2.


57. Frida Bartel to Commanding General, U.S. Troops, [Apr. 1917], 501, “Bartel, Frida Bertha Elise” Folder, Box 1, 201 Files (Entry 37), Shelf 5, Compartment 5, in World War I Prisons and Prisoners: Prisoners of War and Alien Enemies in the United States, War Department, Records of the Adjutant General’s Office, Row 26, Stack Area 370, Record Group 407, National Archives II, College Park, MD (hereafter AGO Records); Frida Bartel


59. Ibid.; [Frida] Bartel, testimony to Eppler, Burke, and Dobler, transcript, 9-16-12-4690-1, Folder 9-16-12-4690, Box 420, Shelf 1, Compartment 16, in European War Matters, 1-2; Frida Bartel to Commanding Officer, German Detention Camp, Taboga Island, R.P., Sept. 1, 1917, 507, “Bartel, Frida Bertha Elise” Folder, Box 1, 201 Files (Entry 37), Shelf 5, Compartment 5, in AGO Records, 1; Bartel to Commanding General, Apr. 1917, 501, in AGO Records; and Frida Bartel to American Red Cross, Oct. 7, 1917, 511, “Bartel, Frida Bertha Elise” Folder, Box 1, 201 Files (Entry 37), Shelf 5, Compartment 5, in AGO Records.

60. Glidden, “Casualties of Caution,” 78-9 and Bartel, testimony to Eppler, Burke, and Dobler, 9-16-12-4690-1, in European War Matters, 1.


62. Ibid.


64. Bartel to Commanding General, Apr. 1917, 501, in AGO Records.


66. Bartel to van Muenchow, Jun. 26, 1917, 504, in AGO Records


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69. Goldschmidt, In and Out, 167.

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71. Legation of Switzerland, Department of German Interests to Department of State, Jun. 27, 1918, 9-16-12-4220-36, Folder 9-16-12-4220, Part 1, Box 404, Shelf 4-, Compartment 15, in European War Matters.

72. Goldschmidt, In and Out, 169.

73. Ibid., 166-74; Legation of Switzerland to Department of State, Jun. 27, 1918, 9-16-12-4220-36, in European War Matters; Chesterfield C. Middlebrooks to [Thomas Gregory], Aug. 21, 1918, 9-16-12-4220-47, Folder 9-16-12-4220, Part 1, Box 404, Shelf 4-, Compartment 15, in European War Matters, 1-2; Chesterfield C. Middlebrooks to [Thomas Gregory], Jul. 19, 1918, 9-16-12-4220-41, Folder 9-16-12-4220, Part 1, Box 404, Shelf 4-, Compartment 15, in European War Matters, 1-2; [Arthur Hadley] to [Thomas] J. Spellacy, May 3, 1918, 54, Part 1, Box 130, Series II, in Hadley Papers; [Thomas] Spellacy to [Thomas Gregory], May 4, 1918, Folder 9-16-12-4220, Part 1, Box 404, Shelf 4-, Compartment 15, in European War Matters; [john] L[ord] O’B[rian] to Storey, May 8, 1918, Folder 9-16-12-4220, Part 1, Box 404, Shelf 4-, Compartment 15, in European War Matters; John Lord O’Brien to [Newton Baker], May 9, 1918, 9-16-12-4220-10, Folder 9-16-12-4220, Part 1, Box 404, Shelf 4-, Compartment 15, in European War Matters; “Dr. Goldschmidt Removed: German Scholar Taken to Prison at Wethersfield, Conn.,” New York Times, May 7, 1918; and “Two Munich Professors Are Detained Here: Dr. Anna [Erdmann] and Dr. R. Goldschmidt Brought to New York from New Haven,” New York Tribune, May 2, 1918.


76. Goldschmidt, In and Out, 175.

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93. Ibid., 4.


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119. Frida Bartel to Department of Justice, Oct. 5, 1918, 9-16-12-4690-7, Folder 9-16-12-4690, Box 420, Shelf 1, Compartment 16, in European War Matters.
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130. Ibid.


136. [Rufus] W. Sprague, Jr. to [Thomas Gregory], Nov. 29, 1918, 9-16-12-4220-59, Folder 9-16-12-4220, Part 2, Box 405, Shelf 6, Compartment 15, in European War Matters.

137. FC/DHS to [John Lord] O’Brien, Nov. 19, 1918, Folder 9-16-12-4220, Part 2, Box 405, Shelf 6, Compartment 15, in European War Matters.


140. Ibid.; Goldschmidt, In and Out, 179-84; Erdmann to O’Brien, Oct. 21, 1918, 9-16-12-4220-50, in European War Matters; Rhoda Erdmann to J[ohn] Lord O’Brien, Dec. 22, 1918, 9-16-12-4220-65, Folder 9-16-12-4220, Part 2, Box 405, Shelf 6, Compartment 15, in European War Matters; [Thomas] Sprague to [Thomas Gregory], Dec. 24, 1918, 9-16-12-4220-64, Folder 9-16-12-4220, Part 2, Box 405, Shelf 6, Compartment 15, in European War Matters; Rhoda Erdmann to [Rufus] W. Sprague, Dec. 10, 1918, Folder 9-16-12-4220, Part 2, Box 405, Shelf 6, Compartment 15, in European War Matters; [Arthur Hadley] to Frank L. Polk, Jan. 9, 1919, 144, Part 1, Box 131, Series II, in Hadley Papers; [Rufus] W. Sprague, Jr. to Ross [G.] Harrison, Sept. 10, 1918, Folder 599, Box 8, Series I, in Harrison Papers; and Rhoda [Erdmann] to Ross Granville Harrison, Aug. 29, 1918, Folder 597, Box 8, Series I, in Harrison Papers.
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