

RUSSELL W. ESTLACK

SHATTERED LIVES SHATTERED DREAMS

THE DISRUPTED LIVES OF FAMILIES IN
AMERICA'S INTERNMENT CAMPS



— RUSSELL W. ESTLACK —

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AMERICA'S INTERNMENT CAMPS

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ONE

HISTORIC REALITY

Most Americans are familiar with the shameful injustices perpetrated against Japanese Americans during the dark days of World War II. The forced relocation and internment of Japanese Americans living on the west coast of the United States has been well documented, and they have received compensation and an apology from the U.S. government.

Less known is the fact that from 1941 to 1948, more than ten thousand German Americans were arrested and interned in sixty camps across the United States and Hawaii. It didn't matter how long they'd lived in the United States or whether they were naturalized American citizens. As long as they retained their social and cultural traits and continued to speak their own language or spoke English with a German accent, the government considered them a threat to the security of the United States.

When Americans are asked about it, they almost always respond, "I didn't know that" or "I've never heard that before." Until recently, the government has done its best to keep the American public in the dark. Government agencies, including the State Department, the Justice Department, and the FBI, masterfully covered their tracks, but under the Freedom of Information Act, they've been forced to grant access to many of the records of wartime activities. Even up to the present day, some records are still classified and not available to the general public.

There is no mention of these events in history books, and public schools, colleges, and universities teach that no Germans or Italians were ever arrested or interned. Newspaper editors write editorials that deny the truth, but their archives are rife with articles that tell the whole story. Under

the circumstances, it's easy to understand why the American public has little knowledge of the terrible injustices done to the nation's German population during World War II.

There is a historical precedent for government action in this matter. During World War I, 2,048 Germans were interned at Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, and Fort Douglas, Utah. It wasn't until a year after the Versailles Treaty was signed that the last two hundred internees were released and the camps closed. Vigilantism, harassment, vandalism, looting, and violence were driven by hate, hysteria, and mob rule. At least one German was accused of being a spy. He was tarred, feathered, and lynched by a frenzied mob at Collinsville, Illinois, for whispering a prayer in German in a dying woman's ear. The press of the day described Germans as anti-American in much the same way as the newspapers of World War II described them as Nazis.

Ethnic hatred is driven by suspicion, innuendo, rumors, and events of historic importance. From 1914 to 1918, hostile actions by the German government continued to sow the seeds of animosity. On May 7, 1915, a German U-boat, the U-20, torpedoed and sank the *Lusitania* on her maiden voyage near the coast of Ireland. Within eighteen minutes, the ship slipped beneath the waves. Of the 1,124 passengers on board, 1,119, including 114 Americans, went down with the ship.

While war raged and armies marched across the face of Europe, America chose to remain neutral. But when America shipped munitions, fuel, and explosives to British, French, and Russian troops, the German government broke its pledge to limit submarine attacks on allied shipping.

In 1916, Woodrow Wilson was elected to a second term largely because of his campaign slogan, "He kept us out of war." Despite Wilson's pledge that America would remain neutral, unrestricted submarine warfare, the Zimmerman telegram, sabotage on American soil, and the Black Tom explosion helped drag the United States into the conflict and intensified anti-German sentiment in America.

Neutrality was the official policy of the United States, but unofficially, the Wilson administration embarked on a program of military preparedness and financial and material support of England and its allies. With this change in U.S. foreign policy, the administration became increasingly

concerned about criticism of its policies and pro-German propaganda. Politicians from both parties stirred the pot of ethnic hatred when they publicly questioned the loyalty of what they called “hyphenate Americans,” especially Irish and German immigrants.

Twenty-six years before the attack on Pearl Harbor, President Wilson fueled the fires of anti-immigrant fervor. On December 7, 1915, in his Third Annual Message to Congress, he proclaimed, “There are citizens of the United States ... born under other flags but welcomed by our generous naturalization laws to the full freedom and opportunity of America, who have poured the poison of disloyalty into the arteries of our national life. Such advocates of disloyalty and anarchy must be crushed out.”¹

Germany was determined to stop what they saw as shipments of contraband weapons to their enemies on the battlefield. They dispatched undercover agents to America with orders to sabotage munitions operations. As the war broke out, German agents were skulking around the United States setting off bombs and incendiary devices. Over fifty acts of sabotage were carried out on American targets, nearly thirty of them in the New York area alone.

Mysterious fires were set at military depots, manufacturing facilities, shipping lines, and railroads. On January 1, 1915, an incendiary fire in the Roebling Steel Foundry in Trenton, New Jersey, was followed in quick succession by fires and explosions in other plants and factories dealing in war contracts for the allies. The Black Tom explosion was the peak act of German sabotage on American soil during World War I, and it had a direct impact on the internment of German Americans during World War II.²

Black Tom Pier was a mile-long pier that jugged out into the harbor from the New Jersey waterfront to Black Tom Island near the Statue of Liberty. A major munitions depot for war materials manufactured in the northeastern United States, the pier housed a complex of warehouses, loading docks, and railroad tracks. Any time, day or night, cargo ships, lighters, barges, and tugs loaded with tons of explosives were tied up at the pier.

At 2:08 a.m. on Sunday, July 30, 1916, two million tons of war materials packed into dozens of railroad cars and barges exploded, sending massive amounts of debris into Lower Manhattan, Jersey City, Ellis Island,

and New York Harbor. The explosion was the equivalent of an earthquake measuring 5.5 on the Richter scale and was felt as far away as Baltimore, Maryland.

Thousands of windows in a twenty-five mile radius were shattered, and people were thrown from their beds. Awakened by the deafening roar, thousands of New Yorkers clad in pajamas and nightgowns poured into the streets. They watched in fascinated horror as munitions exploded across the harbor and lit up the sky with a brilliant saffron hue.

The shock waves shook the Brooklyn Bridge and set off fire alarms in Lower Manhattan and Jersey City. Shrapnel pierced the arm and the torch of the Statue of Liberty, closing the arm to tourists for decades. The concrete vaulted ceiling of Ellis Island's main hall collapsed, and newly arrived immigrants were evacuated from their dormitories while hot cinders rained on them from the sky. More than five hundred people living on houseboats and barges in the harbor and ninety mental patients in a government hospital for the insane were also evacuated.

An unidentified witness in Jersey City described the holocaust as an American Verdun. "Bombs soared into the air and burst a thousand feet above the harbor into terrible yellow. Shrapnel peppered the brick walls of the warehouses, plowed the planks of the pier and rained down upon the hissing waters." After the explosions ceased and the fuel fires were extinguished, the smoke cleared to reveal a path of devastation that was several city blocks wide. Black Tom Pier and most of the island were gone.

Hundreds were injured, but amazingly only four people died as a result of the explosion: a policeman, a guard at the pier, a barge captain, and a ten-month-old infant who was thrown from his crib. Reported property damage was estimated at \$20 million, and the Statue of Liberty sustained \$100,000 in damages (\$377 million and \$1.9 million respectively in today's dollars).

In January 1917, the British Government intercepted and deciphered a telegram from German Foreign Minister Arthur Zimmermann to von Eckhardt, the German Minister to Mexico announcing their intention to employ unrestricted submarine warfare against the allies in effort to force a peace between Germany and England. Zim-mermann also offered generous financial support and agreed to give the southwestern United States to

Mexico if they would join the Germans in their cause. On March 1, 1917, the American press published the news of the telegram:

To the German Minister to Mexico
Berlin, January 19, 1917

We intend to begin on the first of February unrestricted submarine warfare. We shall endeavor in spite of this to keep the United States of America neutral. In the event of this not succeeding, we make Mexico a proposal or alliance on the following basis: make war together, make peace together, generous financial support, and an understanding on our part that Mexico is to reconquer the lost territory in New Mexico, Texas, and Arizona. The settlement of details is left to you. You will inform the President of the above most secretly as soon as war with the United States of America is certain and add the suggestion that he should, on his own initiative, invite Japan to immediate adherence and at the same time, mediate between Japan and ourselves. Please call the President's attention to the fact that the ruthless employment of our submarines now offers the prospect of compelling England in a few months to make peace.

Zimmermann
(Secretary of State)³

The Zimmermann telegram was the last straw. America declared war on Germany in April 1917, and Congress unanimously passed the Espionage Act of 1917 and the Sedition Act of 1918.

The Espionage Act dealt with everything from acts of espionage to protecting shipping, and for the most part wasn't controversial. However, the constitutionality of the act was called into question with the provisions that directly affected the civil liberties of American citizens and limited or prohibited their right to free speech under the First Amendment.

Title 1, section 3: Whoever, when the united States is at war, shall willfully make or convey false reports or false statements

with intent to interfere with the operation or success of the military or naval forces of the United States or to promote the success of its enemies, and whoever when the United States is at war, shall willfully cause or attempt to cause insubordination, disloyalty, mutiny, refusal of duty, in the military or naval forces of the United States, or shall willfully obstruct the recruiting or enlistment service of the United States, to the injury of the service or of the United States, shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$10,000 or imprisonment for not more than twenty years or both.

To insure that inflammatory material or information did not pass through the United State Postal Service, the Wilson Administration added Title 12 to the Espionage Act. It empowered the Postmaster General to declare any material that violated any provision of the Espionage Act that urged treason, insurrection, or forcible resistance to the authority of the United States unmailable. Use of the mail to transmit such materials was punishable by imprisonment, a fine, or both.⁴

As originally introduced, the Espionage Act gave the president power to censor the publication of any material he considered potentially useful to the enemy. This censorship provision received so much opposition from the press as well as politicians from both parties that Congress removed it from the bill. Wilson made a direct appeal to the Congress, but Congress refused to enact it.

On May 16, 1918, Congress enacted the Sedition Act, which amended the Espionage Act to add a variety of prohibitions to Title 1, Section 3. These included writing or uttering any disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive language about the form of government of the United States, the military or naval forces of the United States, the flag of the United States, the uniform of the army or navy of the United States, or any language intended to bring any of the above into contempt, scorn, or disrepute. The Sedition Act further amended the Espionage Act to enhance the powers of the Postmaster General.⁵

As can be expected, the law was brought before the justices of the Supreme Court. In *Schenck v. United States* (1919), the court rejected the First Amendment challenge and ruled that when faced by a clear and

present danger, Congress had the power to enact legislation that under ordinary circumstances might not be acceptable.

In writing the decision for the unanimous court, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes rejected the First Amendment argument:

The most stringent protection of free speech would not protect a man in falsely shouting fire in a theater and causing a panic. It does not even protect a man from an injunction against uttering words that may have the effect of force. The question in every case is whether the words used are used in such circumstances and are of such a nature as to create a clear and present danger that they will bring about the substantive evils that Congress has a right to prevent. It is a question of proximity and degree. When a nation is at war, many things that might be said in time of peace are such a hindrance to its effort that their utterance will not be endured so long as men fight, and that no Court could regard them as protected by any constitutional right.⁶

The war ended in 1919, and even though Wilson wanted to continue the raids, prosecution, and deportation of allegedly disloyal citizens, Congress rejected his request for a peacetime Sedition Act. The government's response to supposed sedition during and after the war concerning free speech and the loss of civil liberties brought about the creation of the American Civil Liberties Union and a broader understanding of First Amendment rights. Congress has amended the Espionage Act over the years, but it still remains a part of federal law and is the basis for the Patriot Act.

NOTES

1. Woodrow Wilson, State of the Union Address, December 7, 1915.

2. *Black Tom Explosion (1916)*, courtesy of The State of New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Parks and Forestry, Liberty State Park Historic Collection.
3. Zimmerman Telegram, 1917; Decimal File, 1910–29, 826.20212/82A (1910–29), General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives.
4. Espionage Act, USC 18, PL 1, CH 37, Stat. 217, June 15, 1917.
5. Sedition Act, Vol. XL, p. 553 ff, May 16, 1918.
6. *Schenck v. United States*, 249 U.S. 47, March 3, 1919.

TWO

ARREST AND DETAINMENT

Prior to World War II and especially during the war, the United States government felt the need to act decisively to protect its citizens from what they considered dangerous individuals in our midst. To justify their actions, the government ignored or suspended certain civil liberties and trampled on the rights of innocent people. Government raids, ransacking of homes, selective internment, exchanges, repatriation, and exclusion were the order of the day. American citizens and legal residents of German, Italian, and Japanese ancestry were rounded up and herded into internment camps for the duration of the war and beyond.

The actions that triggered these events had their beginnings in 1936. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt was concerned with the growing militancy of Nazi Germany and the wave of espionage that had erupted across the United States the previous year. On June 26, 1939, Roosevelt signed a Presidential Directive stating:

It is my desire that the investigation of all espionage, counterespionage, and sabotage matters be controlled and handled by the Federal Bureau of Investigation of the Department of Justice, the Military Intelligence Division [MID] of the War Department, and the Office of Naval Intelligence [ONI] of the Navy Department. The directors of these three agencies are to function as a committee to coordinate their activities.¹

In a telephone conversation with Assistant Secretary of State Adolph Berle, Roosevelt stated, “The FBI should be responsible for foreign-intelligence work in the Western Hemisphere, on the request of the State Department,” while “the existing Military Intelligence and Naval Intelligence branches should cover the rest of the world, as and when necessity arises.”²

Under this directive, Roosevelt ordered J. Edgar Hoover, the head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), to create a secret intelligence service to identify U.S. citizens and legal residents who might pose possible security risks for the United States. Because he was also concerned that the Nazis might establish operations in Central and South America, he authorized Hoover to set up a secret intelligence operation in Latin America. Even though the program was secret and illegal, on July 1, 1940, Hoover officially created the Special Intelligence Service (SIS).³

Heavily influenced by the hysteria of the American people and the excesses of the Justice Department's Enemy Alien Bureau during World War I, Hoover was prejudiced against foreigners. Starting in September 1936, he instituted a secret five-year plan to list all individuals who he believed posed a security risk to the United States. He ordered every agent to gather all information on these people regardless of the source or accuracy of the information.

Appearing before Congress in 1939, Hoover stated that the FBI had more than ten million individuals under surveillance, with a large number of those of foreign extraction. He further stated that the names were organized alphabetically and geographically so that if at any time America should enter into war, the FBI would be able to go into those communities and identify individuals and groups who might be a source of grave danger to the security of the country.

Some members of Congress were alarmed over Hoover's enormous power. Senator Kenneth McKeller of Tennessee tried to force him to disclose information about the FBI's secret activities, but Hoover refused. Instead he combined the list to produce the Custodial Detention Index (CDI). Broken down into three categories, the CDI listed everyone to be apprehended and interned immediately upon the outbreak of hostilities as well as those who were to be watched carefully. This included aliens who

were leaders of non-political cultural organizations, individuals who were members of those organizations, and individuals who donated money to radical pro-Nazi organizations or in any way indicated their support of those organizations.

Realizing that America might be dragged into the war in Europe, on June 29, 1940, Congress passed the Alien Registration Act (also known as the Smith Act).⁴ The Smith Act made it illegal for anyone in the United States to advocate, abet, or teach the desirability of overthrowing the government. The law required all “enemy aliens” in the United States over fourteen years of age to file a comprehensive statement of their personal and occupational status and a record of their political beliefs.

Under the Smith Act, “enemy aliens” were further required to report any change of name, address, or employment to the FBI, and they were not permitted to enter federally designated restricted areas. Should an “enemy alien” violate any of the provisions of the Smith Act, they were subject to arrest, detention, and internment for the duration of the war. Within four months, a total of 4,741,971 aliens were registered.

Roosevelt had served as Assistant Secretary of the Navy under Woodrow Wilson and he was very much aware of the German sabotage campaign on American soil during World War I. There is no question that the sabotage campaign on American soil and the resulting damage fueled Roosevelt's decision to implement the mechanisms of internment and relocation of those he considered to be enemies of the United States. He didn't want to risk sabotage in sensitive areas, especially any more Black Toms, and he ordered his assistant Secretary of War, John McCloy, to implement the internment order.

Even before the bombs stopped falling on Pearl Harbor, the president and the Justice Department implemented the provisions of the Alien Enemies Act of 1798.⁵ This act permitted the apprehension and internment of “aliens of enemy ancestry” by the U.S. government upon declaration of war or threat of invasion. It gave the president blanket authority as to the treatment of “enemy aliens,” and civil liberties could be completely ignored. They were afforded no protections under this law and as a result were subject to government oppression during wartime.

Roosevelt took other actions during the next two days that were to have devastating consequences for those deemed to be “enemy aliens.” On December 7, 1941, he issued Presidential Proclamation 2525⁶ that authorized the arrest and detention as well as travel and property restrictions of individuals of Japanese ancestry presently living in the United States. On December 8, Roosevelt issued proclamation 2526⁷ and 2527⁸ authorizing the arrest and detention of those of German and Italian ancestry. In addition to the proclamations, a blanket presidential warrant authorized U.S. Attorney General Francis Biddle to use the FBI to implement the actions as stated in the proclamations.

A memo went out from FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover to all Special Agents in Charge.

TO ALL SACs:

MOST URGENT. SUPERSEDING AND CLARIFYING PREVIOUS INSTRUCTIONS RE: GERMAN AND ITALIAN ALIENS. IMMEDIATELY TAKE INTO CUSTODY ALL GERMAN AND ITALIAN ALIENS PREVIOUSLY CLASSIFIED IN GROUPS A, B, AND C, IN MATERIAL PREVIOUSLY TRANSMITTED TO YOU. IN ADDITION, YOU ARE AUTHORIZED TO IMMEDIATELY ARREST ANY GERMAN OR ITALIAN ALIENS, NOT PREVIOUSLY CLASSIFIED IN THE ABOVE CATEGORIES. IN THE EVENT YOU POSSESS INFORMATION INDICATING THE ARREST OF SUCH INDIVIDUALS NECESSARY FOR THE INTERNAL SECURITY OF THIS COUNTRY. ABOVE PROCEDURE APPLIES ONLY TO GERMAN AND ITALIAN ALIENS, AND NOT TO CITIZENS. ALL INDIVIDUALS ARRESTED MUST BE TURNED OVER TO NEAREST REPRESENTATIVE OF IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE.

(In Original Caps)

HOOVER⁹

The wholesale arrest of German and Italian civilians began in the early morning hours of December 8, three days before Germany declared war on America.

From New York City to Los Angeles, from Seattle to Miami, from Detroit to New Orleans, and as far west as Honolulu, federal agents knocked on doors to arrest “enemy aliens.”

Fathers, mothers, and sometimes both parents were arrested, disappearing into the maze of government red tape and bureaucracy. Children were left to fend for themselves and ended up in orphanages or in the care of relatives and friends. Homes were ransacked and private property destroyed. Arrests were frequently based on nothing more than uncorroborated, hearsay evidence gathered by the FBI and other intelligence agencies.

In an article published by the German American Internee Coalition, Rudy Dimmling described the invasion of his grandmother's home by agents of the FBI.

As retold to me by my mother and aunt, FBI agents came to their apartment in the middle of the night. They woke them from their beds and ransacked their apartment. The agents proceeded to question my grandfather and without notice, took him away. For several days my grandmother did not know his whereabouts, until she learned that he was being retained at Ellis Island. The irony of this is incredible since Ellis Island, known to twelve million immigrants as the “front door of freedom,” was also a holding place for my grandfather as an “enemy alien” and a threat to the United States.¹⁰

Once the fathers were arrested, daily life for the families became a never-ending nightmare. During the 1940s, men were the primary wage earners and controlled the family finances. While the husbands went out to work, the wives stayed at home to care for the children and do domestic chores. A majority of the internees were immigrants who had resided in the United States for years, but had not yet received their American citizenship.

Suddenly, and without warning, husbands were arrested and taken to unknown destinations.

Families had no idea where their loved ones were being held or what had happened to them. Communication with the prisoners was sporadic at best and they often didn't hear from them for weeks and sometimes months. By law, only “enemy aliens” could be interned, but with the approval of the Department of Justice (DOJ) and other government agencies, some family members joined them in the internment camps. These “voluntaries” typically included the mother who was more than likely a native-born American or a naturalized American citizen and their American-born children.

The Civilian War Assistance Unit of the INS was designated as the agency that would decide if wives and children would be allowed to join their husbands in the family camps. Each case was decided on an individual basis. The case of Hans Rens as shown in official correspondence is typical of how they were handled.¹¹

September 16, 1943

Mr. Hans Rens

c/o Officer in Charge

Fort Lincoln Internment Camp

U.S. Immigration & Naturalization Service

Fort Lincoln, Bismarck, N.D.

Dear Sir:

You are informed that the application for reunion at a family internment facility of this Service with your wife, Johanne Rens, has been approved, and that arrangements will be made for such a reunion at Seagoville, Texas, within the near future. However, it is not known at this time exactly when such reunion will be affected. Mrs. Rens has been informed of the above and has been cautioned to make her arrangements accordingly.

You and your wife will be notified as soon as arrangements are made for your admission to Seagoville. We regret to inform you that your dog will not be admitted to the internment camp.

Very truly yours,

N. D. COLLAER

Acting Assistant Commissioner for Alien Control

Newspapers from coast to coast published articles and stories applauding the raids, and printed incriminating lists of names. Ominous headlines fanned the flames of paranoia, hysteria, and hatred that were spreading across America like a raging forest fire. Even the most popular comic strips of the day, such as *Wash Tubbs* and *Captain Easy*,¹² went out of their way to showcase the violence against these “enemy aliens.”

The government now faced a serious dilemma. Space was at a premium, and housing had to be found for the detainees awaiting their hearings. Prisoners were held in temporary custody in jails, hospitals, schools, hotels, and any other available place until the DOJ agreed to hear their cases.

The proceedings took place before a civilian hearing board. Detainees were subjected to harassment, intimidation, and hostile questioning by U.S. Attorneys and FBI agents. Many of the accused were semi-fluent in English and didn't understand the questions. They had no right to counsel, and they couldn't contest the proceedings or question their accusers.

The ninety hearing boards across the United States were made up of people who worked for a dollar a year. First the board would question an FBI agent as to the prisoner's guilt or innocence. They would then ask the prisoner a series of questions.¹³

- Are you so and so ... ?
- Were you born in Germany?
- Have you any relatives in Germany?
- What year did you come to the United States?

- If you were called to fight in the Armed Forces of the United States, would you be willing to do so?
- If this country was invaded by an enemy, would you be willing to help defend it?
- Would you be willing to defend it even against Germany?
- Do you have a dislike for England?
- Have you ever made application for citizenship?
- Where do you work?
- Has your wife been ill?
- Did you ever send money back to Germany?

Eberhard Fuhr was only seventeen years old when he appeared before the board.

These boards were made up of people at one dollar a year, I believe. Art (Jacobs) thinks his dad was permitted a witness, but in my case and what I know of others, witnesses were not permitted.

I was so shook up at seventeen walking into the hearing room that I am not sure how many people were in the room. I believe it was chaired by the U. of Cincinnati president and that there were about seven people in the room, one of which was an FBI agent who asked most of the questions. There were no witnesses on either side.

Prior to going in, the *Cincinnati Enquirer* stated that two brothers were arrested as dangerous aliens and would be given a hearing and interned. That was my brother Julius and me.

One question was whether I had stated five years previously that Hitler was doing a good job. That would have been in 1938 when I was twelve. Because I was cautioned very pointedly when sworn in about the hazards of untruth, I said that I couldn't verify that, but they kept insisting they wanted an answer, thus after that being restated several times, I was asked **COULD YOU HAVE SAID THAT**, to which I replied that I was capable of saying that.

I was also shown a 10 x 12 glossy of when I was twelve. They asked me if that was me in the center of a group at German

American Day at Cincinnati's Coney Island. The U.S. and German flags were both evident in the picture. I was asked about singing in the Kinderkor conducted by Kappelhoff, and, of course, I did. Incidentally, Doris Day is Kappelhoff's daughter and she was in the Kor with me.

I was asked whether I indoctrinated fellow students, pictures on the wall of the house, fealty to the U.S. Did I also love Germany, my native land, and about cousins and relatives in Germany, one of whom was in the **HITLER JUGEND** to which I stated the fact that it was a Boy Scout troop.

Then I was asked, "If this cousin came up the Ohio River in a U-boat, landing at night, and knocked on my door for asylum, what would I do?" Well I knew geography enough and the famous "by the mark twain" that a U-boat would founder way down south on the Mississippi, much less reach the Ohio at Cairo. When I told them that, they realized how nuts the question was and they all seemed angry. Shortly after that, I was dismissed and returned to the Hamilton County Workhouse. The next day to Chicago and internment.¹⁴

At the conclusion of each hearing, the hearing board forwarded their recommendations to the Alien Enemy Control Unit (AECU) of the DOJ for a final determination that could take weeks or months. Detainees remained in custody waiting for the resolution of their cases: unconditional release, parole, or internment.

Based on the recommendations of the AECU, the U.S. Attorney General issued internment orders to hold the internees for the duration of the war. The orders tore families apart and destroyed lives. Family members who were left behind were shunned by long-time friends and neighbors. They feared that they, too, might be arrested or painted with the same "enemy alien" sentiments. Families became destitute and lost everything they owned. They were forced to apply to the Civilian War Assistance Unit for permission to join their spouses in family camps, apply for welfare, or seek aid from other family members who could afford to support them.

The government covered all the bases when on March 11, 1942, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9095 creating the Office of Alien Property Custodian.¹⁵ This order gave the custodian discretionary and plenary authority over all alien property interest. When he froze their assets, he created an immediate financial catastrophe for affected families. According to the official records, much of the internees' confiscated property was sold for pennies on the dollar.

If the conditions the “enemy aliens” faced weren't bad enough, in the first two months of 1942, the government placed additional restrictions on them. With cooperation of the military, the DOJ established a network of restricted zones. “Enemy aliens” were forbidden to enter or remain in the designated areas, and their movements were closely monitored to ensure that they were in compliance. As can be imagined, such restrictions imposed tremendous hardships on those living and working in these areas.

More restrictions were placed on the prisoners when Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066.¹⁶ It authorized the Secretary of War to define military areas in which the right of any person to enter, remain, or leave should be subject to whatever restrictions were deemed necessary or desirable. This order applied to all “enemy” nationalities.

Congress ratified the order and placed even more stringent restrictions on the internees, authorizing the imposition of sanctions for violations of the order. They established extensive military zones on the East and West Coasts and in certain areas around the Great Lakes, and expanded the areas originally created by the DOJ.

Pursuant to the order, General John DeWitt issued a series of public proclamations creating Western Defense Command military areas.¹⁷ The proclamations outlined curfews, travel restrictions, and exclusion provisions applicable to German, Italian, and Japanese aliens, as well as Japanese American citizens. This led to the exclusion of individuals and groups from military zones comprising over a third of the United States.

The government was particularly suspicious of naturalized citizens from enemy countries. On an individual basis, potentially dangerous U.S. citizens of German ancestry were ordered out of military zones and forced to establish new lives with little or no government assistance. The military

threatened to exclude anyone they thought might pose a threat to the security of the United States. A large number of internees believed it was an exercise in futility to contest the exclusion order and left before they were forced to move.

Unlike group exclusions, the order required hearings for individuals selected for exclusion. In many ways, these hearings resembled the alien internment hearings. The accused were subjected to limited due process protections, clearly violating the rights of American citizens.

If an exclusion order was issued, excludees were given little time to leave the area. Homes were abandoned and families left behind. FBI agents followed them to their new communities and destroyed any chance they might have for a decent life. They advised police and employers as to how dangerous the excludees were. It became impossible for them to find suitable employment or housing.

Some excludees decided to fight. They took the government to court to contest their exclusion orders and to protest the government's violation of their due process rights. Numerous federal courts found the military's actions of questionable constitutionality and the program decreased in popularity. In lieu of exclusion, the government often sought to denaturalize American citizens so they could be interned as enemy aliens or deported back to their country of origin.¹⁸

NOTES

1. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Presidential Directive, Administrative Records, SIS, RGCS, NACP, June 26, 1939.
2. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, telephone directive prepared by Assistant Secretary of State Adolph Berle and approved by the president, 24 June 1940, Section 2, File 64-4104, Administrative Records, SIS, RG 65, NACP,
3. Administrative Records, SIS, RGCS, NACP, June 26, 1939.
4. Alien Registration Act, Statute 670-71; Title I, 2-3, June 28, 1940.

5. Alien Enemies Act, July 6, 1798, 50 USC 21–24, 1918 Codification.
6. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Presidential Proclamation 2525, Alien Enemies—Japanese, 6FR, 6234, 55 Stat 1703, December 7, 1941.
7. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Presidential Proclamation 2526, Alien Enemies—German, 6 FR, 6324, 55 Stat. Part 2, December 8, 1941.
8. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Presidential Proclamation 2527, Alien Enemies—Italian, 6 FR, 6324, Stat. 1707, December 8, 1941.
9. Directive from J. Edgar Hoover to all Special Agents in Charge, December 8, 1941.
10. Rudy Dimmling, *The Reseneder Family Internment Story*, German American Internee Coalition.
11. Family Camp Report, Civilian War Assistance Unit, September 16, 1943, *Freedom of Information Times*.
12. *Washtubs* and *Captain Easy* cartoons, Newspaper Enterprise Association.
13. Arthur Jacobs, email to author, March 19, 2009.
14. Eberhard Fuhr, *My Internment by the U.S. Government*, 2008.
15. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Executive Order 9095, creating the office of Alien Enemy Property Custodian, March 11, 1942, 7 F.R. 1971, as amended by Executive Order 9193, July 6, 1942, F.R. 5205.
16. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Executive Order 9066, authorizing the Secretary of War to prescribe Military Exclusion Areas, Section 4, Act of April 20, 1918, 40 Stat. 533, as amended by Act of November 30, 1940, 54 Stat. 1220, and the Act of August 21, 1941, 55 Stat. 655 (USC, Title 50, Section 104), February 19, 1942.
17. “Evacuation to Be Carried Out Gradually,” *San Francisco News*, March 2, 1942.
18. Memo, War Department, *Suits for Cancellation of Naturalization against Subjects of Individual Exclusion Orders*, December 2, 1942.

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