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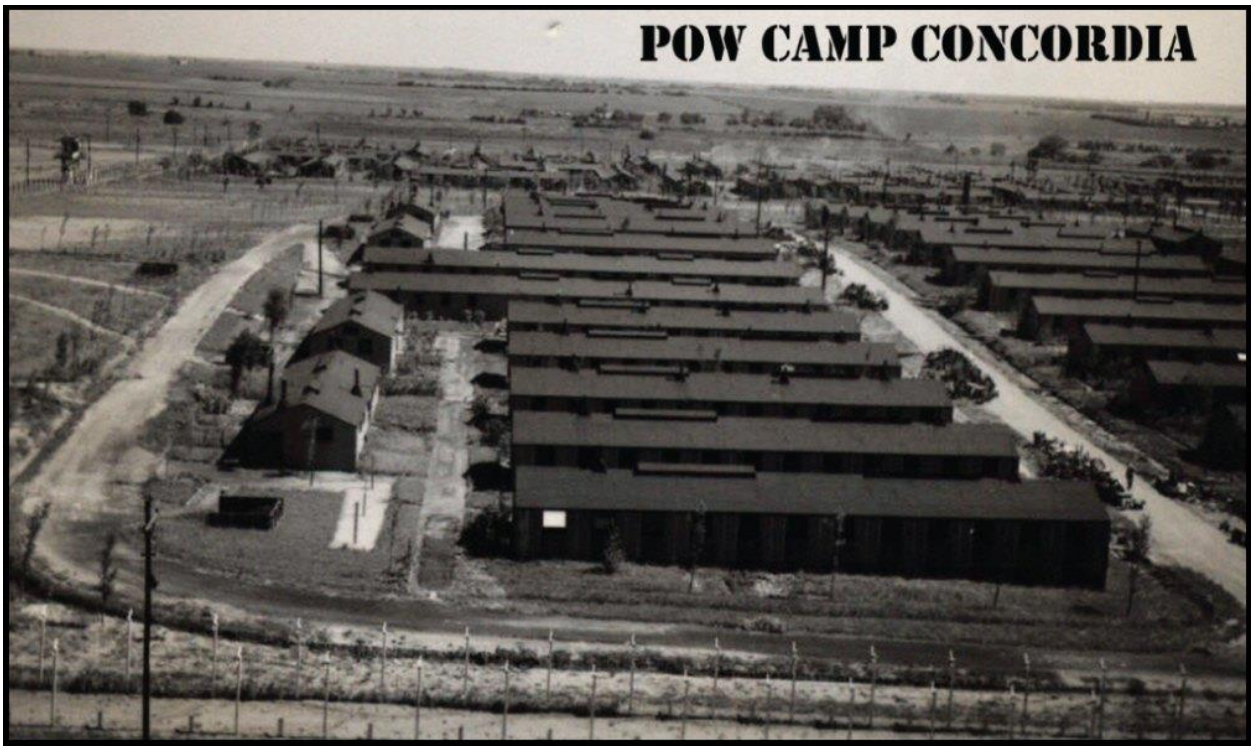

A photograph of Camp Concordia, ca. 1945, taken from the camp's water tower.

If someone in 1944 travelled just two and a half miles northeast of the town of Concordia in rural north-central Kansas, up to the junction of the Chicago Burlington & Quincy, the Union Pacific, and the Missouri Pacific railroads, a gated compound would have come into view against a backdrop of the high, rolling plains. Meticulously landscaped with trees and flowerbeds, the visitor would have discovered that this well-tended community contained amenities like libraries, athletic fields, movie theaters, and dance halls within its high, fenced-in walls. On any given day, the sounds of an orchestra, choir, or theater troop rehearsal might be overheard drifting through the air. A steady stream of young men, carrying folding chairs and armloads of books, walked from building to building throughout the compound, and groups could regularly be spotted

hiking or painting in the surrounding countryside. The compound would have appeared entirely self-sufficient, with rows of communal housing, a hospital, a store, and dining facilities. A visitor surely would have wondered about the scene described above. What exactly was this place doing there? Was it a boarding school? A selective institution of higher learning, perhaps? Anyone from the local area, however, would have known the purpose of the small, square towers located at regular intervals along the perimeter of the compound, equipped with machine guns and sirens. The locals knew that the inhabitants of the compound were not there of their own free will. These men were German prisoners of war, and this was a prison camp.

The history of Camp Concordia stands in stark contrast to the average prisoner of war camp. Indeed, descriptions of the pitiful conditions in many Japanese internment camps from the same period bear no resemblance to the relative luxuries and freedoms enjoyed at this German camp. This discrepancy existed for one primary reason. The United States Government believed it was possible to 're-educate' German soldiers. They believed that the Germans could be disabused of their harmful Nazi ideology and converted to modern American, democratic values. On the eve of Europe's greatest realignment of power in the twentieth century, policy makers saw great potential in crafting a strong, stable, pro-American Germany. Re-education would be the key.

Even before entering the war, the U.S. government anticipated the need for POW camps for captured crews of enemy ships and U-boats. The first mass influx of prisoners came shortly after the defeat of Rommel's Afrika Korps in May of 1943, resulting in 130,000 POWs arriving on American soil by August of that year. These first arrivals would be followed by an additional 200,000 more POWs within the next 12 months, coming from battlefields across Europe as Allied commanding officers struggled to feed, house, and secure the growing number of

prisoners.[1] The number of the POWs quickly exceeded expectations and, by the time the United States stopped accepting new prisoners in May of 1945, there were more than 600 camps spread throughout 45 of the 48 states.[2] In total, the U.S. government accepted 425,871 Axis prisoners, of which 371,683 were German.[3] The United States had never had so many prisoners. In fact, never in the history of modern warfare had so many prisoners of war been evacuated over such great distances for internment on foreign soil.[4]

By 1944, there were 195,000 Kansans serving in the U.S. forces.[5] Consequently, Kansas' agriculturally-based economy was hit hard by labor and food shortages. In April 1943, a Kansas newspaper described how a farm deferment program had recently become available. Officials warned, however, that a worsening in the Allied military situation could likely result in men who were deferred for farm work being called to the service, in which case food production would "inevitably suffer."[6] So when Camp Concordia—the first of sixteen camps to be built in Kansas—was activated on May 1, 1943, it is not surprising that many local farmers took advantage of the arriving POWs as farm laborers.[7]

Although the POW influx was unprecedented, American policy makers had rough guidelines for such a massive undertaking. Section III of the 1929 Geneva Conventions anticipated the future application of a labor program and carefully outlined its specifications. The

[1] Gansberg, Judith M. *Stalag, U.S.A.: The Remarkable Story of German POWs in America*. New York: Crowell, 1977, p. 11-13. With the anticipated surrender of Italy in 1943, the War Department had no way of guessing how many prisoners would arrive in the U.S. Estimates ran as high as 500,000.
[2] May, Lowell A. *Camp Concordia: German POWs in the Midwest*. Manhattan, KS: Sunflower University Press, 1995.
[3] Gansberg, *Stalag*, p. 13.
[4] Speakman, Cummins E. *Re-education of German Prisoners of War in the United States during World War II*. Master's thesis, 1948, 2. Speakman was a former officer-in-charge of the re-education programs.
[5] May, Lowell A., and Mark P. Schock. *Prisoners of War in Kansas, 1943-1946*. Manhattan, KS: KS Publishing, 2007,p. 11.
[6] "Find Food Picture Brighter." *Iola Register* (Iola, Kansas), April 17, 1943.
[7] Heinkel, Robert B., Cpt. C.M.P., Prisoner of War Division. "Inspection Report on Prisoner of War Camp, Concordia Kansas." 23 December 1943. National Archives, College Park, Md. Record Group 389.

Conventions detailed how much prisoners should be paid, what types of duties they could be assigned, and standards for their overall conditions and treatment. Since the Conventions had never before been put into action, their application had to be "tested at every step."[8]

One such test was conducted at Camp Concordia. The camp possessed 640 acres of land designed to contain housing, mess facilities, recreation, and hospitalization for 1000 officer POWs and 3000 enlisted POWs.[9] The details of the Geneva Conventions' farm labor program applied only to the enlisted men at Camp Concordia and provided for only the *voluntary* labor of officer POWs. Not surprisingly, very few officers volunteered for anything other than administrative duties.[10] Concordia's officer population continuously expanded, in the latter half of its existence more than doubling, the enlisted soldier population. Because officers could not be forced to work, this imbalance often left the majority of the camp's population idle.[11]

To exacerbate the problem, POWs at Concordia arrived shortly after capture and before intensive interrogation. As a consequence, a small number of hardcore Nazi idealogues began to intimidate the mass of POWs, who, although patriotic Germans, were unsympathetic to fascism.[12] This quickly became a problem. A December 1943 inspection report noted that "the prisoners were running their own companies with no American officer assigned to any company. Most disciplinary action and company administrative policy was handled by prisoners

[8] Speakman. *Re-education of German Prisoners* p. 2.
[9] Teufel, Carl C., ed. The History of Camp Concordia from Site Survey to Deactivation, 1945. National Archives, College Park, Md. Record Group 389, Box 1612, np.
[10] May and Schock, *Prisoners of War in Kansas*, p. 8.
[11] May, *Camp Concordia*, 106. The first month the camp was open in August of 1943, there were 702 enlisted and 90 officers, but the ratio of enlisted soldiers to officers shifted dramatically throughout the course of Camp Concordia's existence. The total population at the camp peaked in November of 1943 with 3012 enlisted and 1015 officers, and by September of 1945 the numbers were 309 enlisted and 1534 officer. The maximum number of officers in the camp topped out at 1893 in November of 1944.
[12] O'Brien, Patrick G., Thomas D. Isern, and R. Daniel. Lumley. *Stalag Sunflower: German Prisoners of War in Kansas*. Topeka, Kan.: Kansas State Historical Society, 1984, p. 184.

themselves."[13] The Geneva Conventions specified that the most senior POW officer present in the camp would be designated the camp spokesman. This prevented any American participation in the selection process and led to the observation of one reporter that the leadership at Concordia was "completely Nazi in character."[14]

One serious result was a series of mysterious deaths that occurred in the camp during the fall of 1943. Originally deemed suicides, it was later discovered that the victims had expressed anti-Nazi sentiments and in some cases had already received threats from Nazi sympathizers in the camp. One such incident is described by a columnist as follows:

> Captain Felix Tropschuh, 30, suspected by fellow prisoners of giving information concerning a planned escape; Gestapo agents also found in his diary hatred of Nazi ideology; he was therefore "tried" by a Nazi 'court of honor" and expelled from the "German community of fellowship;" he was therefore given a rope and at night Nazis posted themselves outside his door until he hanged himself on October 18, [1943]. Camp Concordia, Kansas.[15]

This type of problem was persistent at camps all over America. It was estimated that roughly 25% of camp prisoners were fanatical Nazis, 15% anti-Nazi, and 60% somewhere in between. At the start of the war, vocal anti-Nazis were separated from the others for their own protection, leaving the fanatical Nazis with the majority of the population.[16] Dedicated Nazis were quick to organize in the camps, and any German prisoner who showed interest in democracy or appeared unsympathetic to Nazi ideals ran the risk of retribution from his fellow prisoners.[17] Anton Kuehmoser, an Afrika Korps POW interned at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri,

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[13] Heinkel, "Inspection Report."
[14] Teufel, History of Camp Concordia. Np.
[15] Fay, Sidney B. "German Prisoners of War: A Suggestion for the Proper Treatment of War Prisoners." *Current History* 8, no. 43 (March 1945), p. 196.
[16] Fiedler, David. *The Enemy among Us: POWs in Missouri during World War II*. St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 2003, p. 42.
[17] Speakman. *Re-education of German Prisoners*, p. 15 -16

recalled a prisoner who had been stabbed to death by another prisoner, a member of the SS. "Even in the camp here, we had Nazi rules. Some of the Nazis forced everyone to gather for an evening every other week for indoctrination. Anyone who skipped got a warning the first time. The second time, he got a visit from 'the Holy Ghost,'" an SS executioner."[18]

The extent of the German POW influx in 1943 presented the U.S. with a number of additional challenges. In the whirlwind of building camps and organizing prisoners, Camp Concordia and the rest of the POW camps were left scrambling to figure out how to negotiate Nazi/anti-Nazi tensions. Especially at Camp Concordia where the majority of the POW population were officers, it was immediately obvious to everyone that all POWs needed to be engaged in some constructive activity.[19]

In accordance with the Geneva Conventions, the government's original policy had been to care for the POWs and utilize their labor in relieving the manpower shortage. At first, there was no attempt to change prisoner attitudes or re-educate them in any way.[20] However, a steady stream of press coverage detailing Nazi atrocities, murders, and forced suicides began to gain the attention of the public. What began as a war to support Britain became, in the minds of the Americans at large, a war of ideologies.[21] Although Americans were fairly assured that democracy would prevail, many people were increasingly concerned about the after-effects of the war on Nazi Germany. Although stateside feelings towards the Germans were mixed, some portion of the American population identified with the regular German draftees as fellow victims of the Nazis.

[18] Fielder, *The Enemy among Us*, p. 43.
[19] Wahl, Richard W. "Camp Concordia Prisoner of War University." Np.
[20] Speakman. *Re-education of German Prisoners*, p. 4.
[21] *Nazi Prisoners of War*, p. 189.

Historian Arnold Krammer noted that, "After so great a struggle, it seemed unthinkable to most Americans that the enemy's Nazi ideology might remain unaltered and its population unrepentant."[22] In order to avoid this outcome, journalists, radio commentators, professors, and politicians alike began advocating re-education.[23] Curt Bondy, professor at the College of William and Mary, wrote for the Harvard Educational Review in early 1944, "If we understand that education is the building up of character, providing a philosophy of life, and forming a certain attitude, then re-education is the attempt to offer new hope, new ideas, new faith, and new values, and to have them accepted."[24]

A July 1944 *Washington Post* article urged, "As many Germans as possible should be won away from Nazi ideas and converted to those of democracy. The psychological and ideological battle which totalitarianism has long waged against democracy is still going on, in the prison camps on American soil. Unfortunately, for the moment, only one side is fighting it."[25] A *New York Times* article published in February 1944 said, "Already the Nazis are organized in the prisoner of war camps throughout America. Any German prisoner of war who shows any interest in democracy or America will be punished by his fellow prisoner. Five German prisoners have been murdered by their colleagues already…the Nazis in our prisons even have organized Gestapo units." The only answer to the problem, according to the article's author, was a program of re-education.[26]

Aside from concerns about ideology and Nazi violence in prison camps, some Americans perceived that German soldiers were themselves victims of Hitler's tyranny. Many had been

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[22] Ibid.
[23] *World War II, a Brief History*, Office of the Provost Marshal General, p. 589.
[24] Bondy, Curt. "Observation and Reeducation of German Prisoners of War." *Harvard Educational Review* 14 (January 1944), p. 15.
[25] *Nazi Prisoners of War, p.* 193. References a *Washington Post* article by Paul Winkler, "Reeducating Germans," July 10 1944.
[26] Speakman. *Re-education of German Prisoners*, p. 15.

drafted and pulled into the war against their will. Unlike their so-called fanatical Japanese counterparts, Americans did not believe that German POWs should bear full responsibility for their deeds, no matter however contemptible their wartime actions might have been.[27] Professor T.V. Smith, recalled in an article for the *Saturday Review of Literature*:

> These prisoners, though Germans, were not Nazis. Of course no German is a Nazi, not now that the vile business has rotted; but these prisoners were never Nazis. Not if our circumspection had half its presumed strength; for we had shifted their records back and forth for many an hour, interviewing them personally and resorting upon occasion to the scientific lie-detector, to make certain that these men were what they claimed to be. Many of them, it appeared, had risked more and suffered more in risk against that wrong than had I.[28]

There was a certain amount of sympathy felt towards Germans on the part of Americans, who identified with their struggles and wanted them kindly treated. A September 1944 article reported an incident at Fort Riley, Kansas, where "local citizens had complained that farmers' wives mended prisoners' clothing, and made them cakes or cookies for work well done. The climax came yesterday when several women unloaded carloads of prisoners at a branch camp here, following a day of work on nearby farms. One woman drove up with a prisoner holding a child on his lap."[29] This was considered a breach of protocol by the camp commander.

It was not just the American public who entertained the idea of a re-education program. Originally, the concept of POW re-education was rejected by the Roosevelt administration and the Provost Marshal General, Major General Allen W. Gullion, who viewed the prospect as unnecessary and a waste of Provost Marshal General funds.[30] However, the government's lack of response to calls for action led columnist Dorothy Thompson and Dorothy Bromley of the *New York Herald* to take the problem directly to Eleanor Roosevelt, who became concerned and

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[27] Robin, *The Barbed-wire College*, p. 8.
[28] Smith, T.V. "Behind the Barbed Wire." *The Saturday Review of Literature*, May 4, 1946, p. 5.
[29] "Nazi Prisoner Coddling Halted By Commander." *The Daily Times* (Salisbury, MD), September 21, 1944.
[30] Robin, Ron Theodore. *The Barbed-wire College: Reeducating German POWs in the United States during World War II*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995, p. 18 and 21-23.

brought the matter directly to the president.[31] President Roosevelt, in turn, discussed the matter with the secretaries of the War and State Departments, who also had growing concerns that "the punitive approach to Germany was not accompanied by positive reinforcement, or a rehabilitation program."[32] Historian Ron Robin noted that up until this point, "the war effort had been concentrated on devising a harsh negative strategy of dismemberment, destruction, and forced de-Nazification; but it was soon realized that alternatives had to be presented lest Germans seek comfort in other totalitarian doctrines."[33]

By 1944, it had become increasingly obvious to the government that the several hundred thousand German soldiers currently in U.S. custody would be repatriated at the end of the war to rejoin the German people with whom the U.S. government and the United Nations would have to deal for years to come. A letter from the Adjutant General, dated November 9, 1944, stated:

> The detention in the United States of ever increasing numbers of German prisoners of war creates an unprecedented opportunity. These men will someday be repatriated, and as a group, will have a powerful voice in future German affairs. Their opinions and feelings concerning America may determine, in a large measure, future relations between Germany and the United States.[34]

An irresistible opportunity emerged to teach prisoners respect for American ideals, democracy, and especially for American institutions which might "provide a nucleus of democratically-inclined men in post-war Germany who could influence their country towards peaceful democratic solutions in the future."[35] A re-education program was an opportunity for the U.S. government to mitigate the risk that Germans would be swayed against the American

[31] Fielder, *The Enemy among Us*, p. 44.
[32] Robin, *The Barbed-wire College*, p. 24.
[33] Robin, *The Barbed-wire College,* p. 24.
[34] Teufel, History of Camp Concordia. Np.
[35] Speakman. *Re-education of German Prisoners*, p. 4.

side of the two great-power system at the end of the war.[36] In his book, *The Barbed-wire College: Reeducating German POWs in the United States during World War II*, Ron Robin well states:

> Driven by a mixture of evangelism and power politics, altruism and imperialism, a series of privately endowed yet government-sanctioned American colleges sprang up in various corners of the globe ranging from Egypt to India. These educational institutions symbolized what the American political establishment viewed as the fundamental difference between American expansionism and old-world imperialism. Americans sought to enlighten rather than conquer, persuade rather than subdue. Even though the government endorsement of international education was never more than a token reminder of American aspirations, it reflected a widely held assumption that moral influences and persuasion could eliminate the need for naked power in the management of global affairs.[37]

Camp Concordia's POW internment on U.S. soil was an opportunity for America to accomplish this task right in its own backyard.

Beyond simply believing that such a program would be beneficial, the U.S. government also believed success was *possible* in the case of the German POWs. A War Department booklet published for supervisors of German POW laborers suggested that German political deviancy was not the result of irredeemable personality or racial defects, as was the perceived case with the Japanese POWs. Presented with American values, it was the popular consensus that German POWs could conceivably be transformed "from adversaries to disciples."[38]

And so, early in 1944, representatives of the War Department and the State Department agreed to take discrete measures toward establishing an understanding of and sympathy for American traditions, institutions, and ways of life and thought among German POWs.[39] With the support of the new Provost Marshal General, Major General Archer Lerch, the idea for a re-education program gained the traction it needed. Intentionally ambiguous in name, the Special

[36] Teufel, History of Camp Concordia. Np.
[37] Robin, *The Barbed-wire College*, p. 17.
[38] Robin, *The Barbed-wire College*, p. 8.
[39] *World War II, a Brief History*, Office of the Provost Marshal General, p. 544.

Projects Division (SPD), was officially established on September 6, 1944 and began as a covert effort. This was partially to avoid being perceived as a blatant attempt at imposing propaganda on prisoners, and partly to guard against the rejection of the program by the POWs themselves, who would surely object to any obvious attempt to reshape their political beliefs.[40]

To support the program, re-education proponents pointed to Article 17 of the Geneva Conventions. This article specified that "belligerents shall encourage as much as possible the organization of intellectual and sporting pursuits by the prisoners of war." The vagueness of the article left much room for interpretation. The basic premise was that instead of discrediting National Socialism, American authorities should simply foster respect for the American alternative. Program staff were warned in a secret memorandum that the plan was not to be "overdone;" POWs were meant to be "democratized" but not "Americanized".[41]

The SPD administrators decided that if selected materials for intellectual diversion were made available to the camps, the curiosity of the prisoners concerning the U.S. and its institutions would provide the primary means for their education.[42] A letter from the Adjutant General specified that the purpose of the program was to "create and foster spontaneous responses on the part of the German prisoners of war towards activities and contacts which will encourage an attitude of respect on their part for American institutions, traditions, and ways of life and thought." In short, the program was designed to encourage self-indoctrination.[43]

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[40] Ibid. The program was initially classified secret because Germany might intentionally misunderstand its scope as a pretext for severe retaliation against American prisoners of war. Army leadership considered it undesirable to give the German prisoners of war any knowledge of such a program at a time when Nazi elements in the camps had sufficient power to sabotage the War Department's efforts.

[41] Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners of War in America*. 303. Endnote references "Memorandum on Reorientation of German Prisoners of War, Secret, typewritten, n.d. Farrand Collection, Hoover Institution.

[42] *World War II, a Brief History*, Office of the Provost Marshal General, p. 544.

[43] Teufel, History of Camp Concordia. Np.

A critical component of the re-education plan was the "Idea Factory," first located at Camp Van Etten, New York and later Fort Kearney, Rhode Island, where carefully screened German POW assistants worked with a cadre of university professors to complete much of the central work of the SPD. This group was responsible for writing and editing a POW newspaper, reviewing books for prison libraries, translating program aids and reading materials, and monitoring the sentiments of their peers.[44] A series of paper-bound books comprised of reprints of classic German literature, including authors who had been banned in Germany, were also made available to prisoners through POW canteens. The curriculum approved and distributed by the Idea Factory was never intended to be forced upon the prisoners. Rather, it was made available through literature, motion pictures, newspapers, music, art, and educational courses.

Additionally, the American Council on Education was asked to select colleges and universities in assisting with the program. In the summer of 1944 these universities began to support the re-education programs by making available books, educational films, slides and other training aids, and by offering advice in the choice of textbooks and in the organization of courses. These institutions varied from the largest national universities down to junior colleges. Fourteen universities were selected to provide correspondence courses for prisoners.[45]

In order to facilitate the programs at individual camps, the SPD set up nine service commands across the U.S., each administered by a field grade officer. A company grade officer, designated the Assistant Executive Officer (AEO), was assigned to each camp locally to oversee the individual programs.[46] Initially the SPD attempted to fill these AEO jobs with 150 personnel possessing a specific set of criteria, but failed when they discovered that intelligence agencies

[44] Robin, *The Barbed-wire College,* p. 60.
[45] *World War II, a Brief History*, Office of the Provost Marshal General, p. 564.
[46] Speakman. *Re-education of German Prisoners*, p. 23.

had already absorbed many of the German-speaking officers. Therefore, instead of handpicking officers to become AEOs, the major commands were instructed to fill quotas, with German language skills listed as a preference rather than a prerequisite. Officers were vetted and sent to a series of training conferences.[47]

These AEOs were critical to the SPD's plan because they were charged with administering the program at the local camp level, monitoring the response of the prisoners, and diffusing tensions between the "military-minded" commanders and the "intellectual-minded" SPD. The architects of the program anticipated the suspicion and resistance the program would arouse among POW camp commanders, many of whom feared that re-education would erode discipline or foster strife among inmates. The SPD hoped the presence of a re-education coordinator would mitigate such fears and protect its investments.[48]

On December 2, 1944, Captain Carl. C. Teufel arrived at Camp Concordia as the SPD-designated AEO. Teufel reported to the camp's commander, Lt. Col. Eggerss, the details of his mission, including the direction of a prisoner of war school, a motion-picture program, encouragement of the use of radios, musical activities, hobbies, physical recreation, dramatics, libraries, the establishment of a prisoner of war camp newspaper, the orientation of American personnel, and other functions of a more minor character.

Cpt. Teufel was met with an unexpected yet pleasant surprise: there was already an education program, entirely independent of the SPD directed re-education program, which existed at Concordia. In his initial report, Cpt. Teufel remarked that "Probably no other camp in the country was so well organized for such work. Colonel Eggerss had long favored keeping the minds and bodies of his wards occupied, not only for reasons of security, but also in order to

[47] Speakman. *Re-education of German Prisoners*, p. 24. Training conferences were held at Ft. Slocom, NY.
[48] Robin, *The Barbed-wire College*, p. 55.

develop their capabilities for later civil life."[49] The morale at Concordia was described as exceptionally high, relatively speaking, largely because the prisoners were permitted from the very beginning to establish ways and means of amusing themselves as well as to train themselves academically for the future.[50] This attitude had resulted not only in an education program, but in a large-scale prisoner of war university.

The school at Concordia had, in fact, begun in the fall of 1943, very soon after activation.[51] Although early education programs existed at other POW camps, it appears that their programs consisted primarily of obligatory re-education lectures. The fact that the post-secondary school at Concordia was not only voluntary, but self-initiated by the German POWs themselves, made the program unique.[52] The German POW population at Concordia, like at most POW camps, was largely comprised of young men whose college education had been interrupted by the war, and many of them wished to resume it as soon as possible.[53]

Another influential, unique reason for the initiation of the program was the fact that Concordia's population, with its heavy preponderance of officer-prisoners was disproportionately well-educated compared to other camps. Cpt. Teufel noted in his report upon arrival at Concordia,

> Anti-Nazis in enlisted men's camps were proverbially known to the CMP (Corps of Military Police) as weak characters, but this group of officer anti-Nazis was composed of extraordinary men. Two of them had travelled extensively and studied in the United States. All were highly educated, lawyers, teachers, ministers, and similar types of professions which are the more susceptible to the mental training leading toward objectivity. As true Germans, their aim was to assist in every possible way in the respectable regeneration of their fatherland through the destruction of National Socialism.

[49] Teufel, History of Camp Concordia. Np.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Curriculum of the Prisoner of War Camp, Concordia, Kansas. MS, RH MS 240, Spencer Library, Kansas University.
[52] Wahl, "Camp Concordia Prisoner of War University." Np.
[53] Ibid.

> A bit fearfully at first, and always secretly, they began to give active assistance to the Assistant Executive Officer.[54]

These educated Germans organized the school at Concordia themselves, and independently selected curriculum that was found by SPD representatives to have thirty percent re-education value.[55] These efforts were pursued so diligently that they succeeded despite ever-present Nazi intimidation. Germans were responsible for volunteering to teach, volunteering to be taught, and requesting materials be available to them to accomplish those objectives.[56] Classes were taught by "whoever believed knew so much about a field, knowledge to lecture at a university level, practice or work related, that he could pass the knowledge on to others."[57] There were approximately 175 instructors, including fifty with doctoral degrees and many others with comparable educational attainments.[58] The curriculum they taught at Concordia included approximately 300 subjects, including English, twelve additional languages, electronics, theology, history, geography, government, engineering, medicine, arts, sciences, and vocational subjects. Within a very short time after their arrival, prisoners had constructed an open-air stage and a great deal of time was dedicated to music, the arts, and theater.

[54] Teufel, History of Camp Concordia. Np.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Edwards, "Inspection Report." Germans POWs frequently even purchased books with their own money.
[57] Wahl, "Camp Concordia Prisoner of War University." Np.
[58] Teufel, History of Camp Concordia. Np.

German POWs from the 47th Grenadier Band, one many such leisure activities establish by and for the POWs at Concordia.

Once the program began to gain traction, the purchase of teaching materials, textbooks, charts, films, etc. were made on behalf of the German Red Cross, the International Red Cross, and the War Prisoners' Aid of the Y.M.C.A. These materials combined to form a scientific library containing more than 7,000 books covering practically all fields of knowledge.[59]

With the authorization of the War Department and in cooperation with the German Red Cross, the Camp Concordia school furthered its legitimacy by creating a partnership with the University of Kansas. Fred S. Montgomery, director of the Kansas University Extension Bureau, was named Education Director for Camp Concordia in 1943.[60] By early 1944, the Third Reich's Ministry of Education had approved the university concept and fifteen German and Austrian universities agreed to honor any courses successfully completed by the POWs, an agreement

[59] Teufel, History of Camp Concordia. Np.
[60] Wahl, "Camp Concordia Prisoner of War University."

which they honored at the completion of the war.[61] The prisoner-instructors would draw up proposed syllabi for their courses and submit them to Kansas University (KU), where they would be reviewed and accepted by the appropriate department head. Robert McNair Davis, Dean of the School of Law at KU during the war years, evaluated the proposed coursework for several classes offered in the 4th, 5th and 6th semesters[62] of the University under the law school as follows:

- Commerce and Trade: Total 70 hours. In America comparable courses are given in schools of business. Only small portions of this subject matter are offered in American Law Schools. This seems very thorough and fully adequate.
- Customs Law: Total 62 Hours. In America would be classed under Economics or Business. This seems to be a very elaborate and thorough course – American Law Schools offer nothing of this kind.
- Criminal Procedure in Taxation: 20 Hours. Nothing comparable to these courses in American Universities so far as I know. Seem very elaborate probably ok in the German procedure.[63]

Prior to the departure of the main body of officer prisoners in September 1945, students with adequate academic attainment were given a certificate bearing the University of Kansas seal and signatures from some of its officials.[64]

When Cpt. Teufel first arrived at Concordia, he concurred with the SPD that all re-education activities would need to be undertaken with subtlety. This was because he himself was the subject of considerable suspicion by all prisoners, and also because any open efforts to control educational measures in the direction of re-education would only result in resistance and even possible danger to those who wished to cooperate. He cautiously sought to gain the confidence of

[61] Ibid.
[62] Although called semesters, the Concordia University's academic year was actually divided up into trimesters. The first semester began in fall 1943; the second on January 10, 1944; the third on April 24 1944; the fourth on October 10 1944; the fifth on January 8 1945, and the sixth and final one April 19, 1945.
[63] Curriculum of the Prisoner of War Camp, Kenneth Spencer Library, RH MS 240.
[64] Teufel, *History of Camp Concordia*. Np.

the prisoners and identify those with whom he could cooperate. Cpt. Teufel recounted in his report that he began to "control by surreptitious means the essential media of his program through the careful cooperation of a small but long-standing group of anti-Nazis with whom a high degree of mutual confidence quickly sprang up." [65]

As it became more and more clear that Germany would likely lose the war, the intimidation tactics employed by the Nazi group became more aggressive. A memo from the Lt. Col. Eggerss to the Provost Marshal General's Office on March 6, 1945 identifying known anti-Nazi allies stated:

> Complete confidence is felt for the altruism and ability of these two officers. A lesser confidence is felt in the following officers, with whom personal relations have been less close. All others on the list are not personally known to the Commanding Officer at this camp. The security of these men has made it necessary that personal contact be maintained only through those who have official capacities which make them innocently accessible for contacts. Any efforts to personally appraise these others could well place their lives in jeopardy, unless attempted on other premises.[66]

Had the cooperation of these men been discovered by their Nazi counterparts, it was a very real possibility that their lives would have been at risk. It was determined that in order for an outright re-education program to be successful, the committed Nazi POWs would need to be removed from the compound.[67] Cpt. Teufel's circle of anti-Nazi allies assisted the Camp leadership by divulging the thoughts and activities of the other POWs on the compound, and by monitoring the Nazis on behalf of the American authorities. This assisted the camp authorities in finding those POWs to be transferred. As a result, more than 100 of the most dedicated SS

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[65] Ibid.

[66] Eggerss, George W., Lt. Col., Commander of Concordia Prisoner of War Camp. "Proposals for American-German Cooperation in Occupied Germany." Memorandum for Provost Marshal General, Attn: Chief Prisoner of War Branch, Security and Intelligence Division. Concordia, KS. March 6, 1945, National Archives, College Park, Md. Record Group 389..

[67] "Field Service Report of a Visit to Prisoner of War Camp, Concordia, Kansas, 17-18 February 1945." Captain Alexander Lakes to Director, Special Projects Division. March 20, 1945, National Archives, College Park, Md. Record Group 389.

leaders were removed to a secure camp at Alva, Oklahoma in the spring of 1945.[68] With their departure, it was possible to begin a planned and open program of re-education.[69]

Following V-E Day, the War Department called for the departure of all military personnel from the camps by March of 1946. In preparation for the imminent repatriation of the POWs, the SPD intensified the revision of their syllabi, timetables, and objectives to devise a new and bolder course for the program.[70] The total German defeat, which dissipated the dangers of potential German retribution for perceived indoctrination of propaganda, meant the re-education program could now be declassified, and on May 28, 1945 the Provost Marshal General released its story to the press.[71]

On July 7, 1945, after nearly two years and six semesters of courses, the university at Camp Concordia was discontinued. Previously offered upper division courses covering a wide range of topics were replaced by a reduced curriculum dedicated to the teaching of English, American History, geography, and civics.[72] The aim of this highly focused new re-education program was to win the prisoners over to a more democratic paradigm and to help them recognize, through their own efforts, the depths to which Nationalist Socialistic doctrine had crippled Germany.[73] This crash course in American democracy was intended to influence post war German society by sending program graduates back to Germany ahead of the remaining POWs to help rebuild their war-torn nation.[74]

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[68] Field Service Report.
[69] Teufel, History of Camp Concordia. Np.
[70] Krammer, Arnold. *Nazi Prisoners of War in America*. New York: Stein and Day, 1979, p. 212. The seven- page article was released by General Bryan.
[71] *World War II, a Brief History*, Office of the Provost Marshal General, p. 588.
[72] Teufel, History of Camp Concordia. Np.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Robin, *The Barbed-wire College*, p. 127.

It is impossible to measure the effects on either the POWs or their home country of Concordia's Prisoner of War University and re-education programs, however there are several strong indicators of their success. Between January and August of 1945, school participation ranged between sixty-four and eighty-seven percent. During the final stages of the new re-education program initiated in the summer of 1945, which remained voluntary, the campus experienced eighty-eight percent participation.[75] In the span of those final few months, the POWs' ability to read and understand English increased from approximately fifty-five percent for officers and one percent for enlisted men to approximately seventy-five percent fluency and twelve percent, respectively.[76] According to Cpt.Teufel, other indications of success included:

- The frank request of the senior German spokesman for guidance in the re-orientation of the younger and more totalitarian-oriented members of the camp
- Voluntary purchase of somewhere between 6000 and 8000 books for re-educational purposes, in addition to between 15000 and 18000 of this type already in possession[77]
- The initiation of a series of lectures on re-educational subjects by the Assistant Executive Officer, the Provost Marshal, and the Post Exchange Officer, at the request of the Germans
- Articles composed for the camp newspaper by the Assistant Executive Officer at the request of the Germans
- The issuance of more than 4000 certificates of credit to POWs for participation in re-education at the urgent request of the Germans[78]

Cpt. Teufel concluded in his report that he believed the programs had encouraged positive change and wrote, "Many…indications of a psychological transformation could be evoked, but space does not permit it. It is sufficient to state that as a result of spontaneous responses on the part of the German prisoners of war and through their own self-indoctrination, Nazism faded out and a growing confidence in America and the democratic way of life began to replace it."[79] Ultimately, as Cpt. Teufel reports, this was the real explanation for Concordia's successful

[75] Teufel, History of Camp Concordia. Np. This figure represented "practically all those mentally capable of attempting such work."
[76] May, *Camp Concordia*, p. 69.
[77] Field Service Report. The Camp Concordia was estimated to be the largest of any prisoner of war camp.
[78] Teufel, May, *Camp Concordia*, 68.
[79] Teufel, History of Camp Concordia. Np.

program: “Re-education was accomplished through natural means from within, by and for Germans, and as it is felt it will have to be done in Germany. The Assistant Executive Officer merely attempted to guide and advise a German-inspired mental movement.”[80]

The story of the re-education programs at Camp Concordia, and at German prisoner of war camps throughout the country, is a little-known slice of American history. Both the conditions at Concordia and the extent to which the re-education program was carried out was radically different from anything experienced by other demographics of prisoners. Although prisoners were originally intended to be used only as supplemental labor, the U.S. government, with the prodding of the American public, was quick to realize the full potential of the situation. The institution of the Special Projects Division and subsequent initiation of re-education programs across the country was a massive undertaking and far exceeded the Geneva Conventions’ stipulations of encouraging the intellectual pursuits of the prisoners. This was ultimately the case because of the United States’ belief in the re-educational potential of the German prisoners and by its increasing interest in participating in the shaping post-war Germany. While the full effects of the re-education programs at Concordia and other POW camps throughout the nation are impossible to measure, it is certain that the United States’ attempted re-education of German combatants was felt for many years.

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[80] Teufel, History of Camp Concordia. Np.

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