

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN – EAU CLAIRE

SUBTLE LOYALTY:  
GERMANS AND GERMAN-AMERICANS IN WISCONSIN  
DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO  
THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF BACHELORS OF EDUCATION

BY

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## *Abstract*

This paper discusses the social climate in Wisconsin during the Second World War. Many of Wisconsin's residents had been born in Germany, but then were naturalized as United States citizens. Most of these German-Americans were quick to assimilate to American standards. However, after the war in Europe began, considerable suspicion brewed over any of the residents with German ethnicity found throughout the state. Examples of anti-German sentiment in Wisconsin presented in this paper include German language book burnings, removal of the German language from school curriculum, and intimidation through governmental agencies and the media. The personal papers of Alexander Rudolf Hohlfeld, a professor in the German Department at the University of Wisconsin, attest to the scrutiny that German-Americans in Wisconsin faced during the war. The overarching theme of this paper is that the incidents aimed at quashing German culture in Wisconsin during the First World War were erratic and unfounded because no serious threat existed of any serious uprising or revolt in support of *die Vaterland*.

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## *Preface*

As I struggled to maneuver my wheelbarrow, overflowing with research materials, to my workstation I needed to take a moment to catch my breath. It was during that brief pause that I experienced a slightly warm and touching feeling in my soul; the time had finally come to begin writing my paper. Not to break tradition, an idea burst forth in my brain and I discovered something to distract me from my important work. My idea was to review the initial spark that ignited the guiding torch of my intellectual journey. The following summarizes how I became interested in the topic that would become this paper.

A few semesters ago I was expressing to my family with overzealous joy my excitement in beginning my research project. I knew I wanted to do something about the First World War. After discovering the lack of any known military participation in the war among my heritage, I learned of a possible lead for an interesting topic from a family member. Years ago, a family member had been employed in an occupation working closely with the elderly. One elderly patient had told my family member a story about living in Milwaukee during The First World War. The story was about being a young child and watching the United States Army forcibly rounding up a large number of Wisconsin residents near the location of a present day Army installation in Milwaukee. I was intrigued at the possibility of a story about German-American internment during the First World War that had really never been told. As it turned out, I might have been given some inaccurate information! After turning up little information on this lead I shifted my focus.

My next great idea came about while searching an electronic data base of old newspapers. I was shocked to discover a headline about a book burning being organized in the area. This juicy nugget was the focus of many hours of further headline searching with the hope

of discovering enough about book burnings in Wisconsin to fuel an entire paper. Again, my tractor beam proved to have been misaligned. Although there certainly were numerous book burnings in Wisconsin during the First World War, the depth for an entire paper was not there. Finally my search landed on a topic that would not be devastatingly narrow.

With the help of some professional guidance I discovered that an appropriate subject would be the anti-German sentiment in Wisconsin during the First World War. With this topic I began to discover many primary source documents and I have enjoyed investigating their contents. Especially intoxicating to my interest were any documents involving schools and education. Admittedly, as a teacher in training, I found some of what I read particularly disheartening; especially addresses given on the problems with education that were amazingly similar to the problems with education still being discussed today!

In general, performing the research for this paper helped me learn much about myself as an amateur historian. Procrastination, frustration, and consternation describe my experiences with secondary sources. Motivation, elation, and excitement describe my experiences with primary sources. In closing, relating not only to this paper, but to life in general I would like to remind readers to heed the following words: *life's a journey... not a destination!*

## *Introduction*

The entire audience of the 1918 graduating class of the German American Teachers Seminary in Milwaukee, Wisconsin listened eagerly as Dr. Alexander Rudolf Hohlfeld continued his address:

This has brought me to that second element which, as I have said before, has tended to produce so great a change between conditions as they were a year ago, and as they are now: The unjust and often fanatic attacks against loyal citizens merely because it is German blood flowing through their veins, as well as against the German language and everything German, no matter how remote it may be from the war policies of the German government against which we are fighting.<sup>1</sup>

The pain evident in Hohlfeld's speech was the product of enduring the explosion of anti-German sentiment during the previous year. The behavior of other Wisconsinites illustrated the high level of opposition to the war.

On March 1, 1918 Louie Krueger was ordered to report for a physical by the draft board of the United States Army. The location of the physical examination was in Neillsville, Wisconsin. Louie never went to Neillsville. Rumors about the young man's whereabouts began to surface. Neighbors in the town of Withee, Wisconsin believed Louie to be hiding in the barn on the family farm. This was "common practice among farm boys who had never been away from home and who didn't want to go to war."<sup>2</sup> The speculation about Louie's location proved to be inaccurate. Louie had fled west.

The First World War exacted a host of responses from different groups of Americans. The large number of German-Americans in Wisconsin amplified the intensity of the war's effect on the homefront. It is no coincidence that, as the Prussian state was bursting forth during the late nineteenth century in Europe; a German Renaissance was flourishing domestically in

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander Hohlfeld, *Address to the Graduating Class*, Hohlfeld Papers, WHS.

<sup>2</sup> Jerry Buss, *A War of Their Own* (Oregon, WI: Badger Books, 1998), 30 – 36.

Milwaukee. By the onset of the First World War the once concentrated German-American cultural influence had spread throughout the state. This example of cultural diffusion was not seen as good thing.

### *Literature Review*

Through deep analysis of many sources, the interpretation expressed in this paper is that German-Americans in Wisconsin during the First World War were often the victims of excessive and unwarranted harassment. Several recent secondary works offered perspectives on the subject of German-Americans during the First World War. One example was *Perilous Times: Free Speech in Wartime from the Sedition Act of 1798 to the War on Terrorism* by Geoffrey R. Stone. Stone examined home front issues with a focus on several of the United States' major military endeavors. The First World War was given significant attention. Stone expressed in his conclusion that administrative heavy-handedness toward domestic opposition during the First World War was of little value.<sup>3</sup> Another recent work was *Becoming Old Stock* by Russell A. Kazal. Kazal's book explained how German ethnic identity declined during the twentieth century in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Although war was not the guiding paradigm of Kazal's work, a lengthy amount was dedicated to the First World War. Despite the geographic focus of *Becoming Old Stock*, the author stated "German Philadelphia's story has its own peculiarities, but aspects of it echo the German experience in other large American cities."<sup>4</sup> A third contemporary source was *Unsafe for Democracy: World War I and the U.S. Justice Department's Covert Campaign to Suppress Dissent* by William H. Thomas, Jr. Thomas wrote

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<sup>3</sup> Geoffrey R. Stone, *Perilous Times: Free Speech in Wartime from the Sedition Act of 1798 to the War on Terrorism* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2004), 529.

<sup>4</sup> Russell A. Kazal, *Becoming Old Stock* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004), 261.



about the First World War with a unique focus on the role Federal Investigators played in manipulating society to encourage patriotic support for the war. Thomas gave Wisconsin a sizable amount of interest: “The Justice Department conducted a sweeping campaign to silence dissent in Wisconsin.”<sup>5</sup> The three previous historians, along with other secondary authors, provided a large amount of background information and comparable examples that helped with interpretation of the primary sources used in this paper.

The primary sources used to create this paper included three collections from the Wisconsin Historical Society. The personal papers Alexander Rudolf Hohlfeld, a professor of German at the University of Wisconsin in Madison during the First World War, served as the greatest ally in providing support for this paper. Although the collection was very large, two very detailed folders contributed greatly to this research. The labels of the two folders used were “Correspondence World War I (Personal Materials – special file)” and “Correspondence World War I (“Personal Aspects of the War”).” Another collection that information was drawn from was the General Correspondence of the State Council of Defense during World War I. The folder titled “aliens” helped strengthen the aims of this paper. Other volumes referenced in the creation of this paper were the Records of the Superintendent of Eau Claire County Schools and General Correspondence of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction as well as items from the digital collection titled Public Documents of the State of Wisconsin.

In this paper I will explain the experiences of German-Wisconsinites during the First World War. Specifically, I will address the following questions: What did the anti-German sentiment during the First World War look like in Wisconsin? Was this anti-German sentiment well founded? This paper will cover events that occurred between the assassination of Austrian

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<sup>5</sup> William H. Thomas, Jr., *Unsafe for Democracy: World War I and the U.S. Justice Department's Covert Campaign to Suppress Dissent* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), 110.

Archduke Franz Ferdinand on June 29, 1914 and the surrender of Germany on November 11, 1918. The paper begins with the period during which the United States followed a policy of isolationism.

Before the United States entered the First World War, there was a respect for the moral high ground on which the neutral nation stood. Progressive Wisconsin boasted several individuals whose actions were particularly pious. One of these individuals was Julia Grace Wales. Wales's efforts during the peace movement of 1914-1917 were ignited by her short publication titled *Continuous Mediation without Armistice*. Pacifistic cohorts of Wales worked to produce The Wisconsin Plan that was delivered to President Woodrow Wilson in 1915. Working with a stronghold of peace seeking Americans, such as Wales and other Wisconsinites, Wilson was reelected in 1916 as the man who kept us out of war. However, after reelection Wilson quickly deviated from the slogan that had secured many of his votes.<sup>6</sup>

Quickly after Wilson was reelected, his attitude changed. Attached to the change was the unwritten code of unwavering followership from any Americans who considered themselves decent and loyal. Although many Wisconsinites had desired a continued stance of separatism from the conflict in Europe, only some would be punished for their beliefs. For example, Wales did not receive excessive scrutiny for her work during the days of the peace movement. Even before the United States entered the war, German-Americans were a targeted group. In *Becoming Old Stock*, Kazal explained that, "...the neutrality period also saw a reaction among Anglo-Americans and other non-Germans... a backlash expressed in attacks on the national loyalty of "hyphenated Americans" and, eventually, demands that they be "100 percent American."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Victoria Brown, *Uncommon Lives of Common Women: The Missing Half of Wisconsin History* (Madison, Wisconsin: Feminists Project Fund, Inc., 1975), 50-51.

<sup>7</sup> Kazal, *Becoming Old Stock*, 9.

One of the general reasons that German-Americans were viewed critically was for their strong penchant for organization and labor unions. Because of this, German-Americans did not win favor among business elites. Further noted in Paul Finkelman's *The War on German Language and Culture*, "The position of German-Americans was further undermined by the vast majority of German-Americans who, while not supporters of the Kaiser, nevertheless wanted the United States to remain neutral and not enter the war against Germany."<sup>8</sup> President Wilson saw disloyal any ethnic group that desired to be acknowledged with their country of origin preceding the word America. Although the attack on "hyphenated-Americans" guided by Wilson was directed at all Americans, there was one ethnic group that was singled out more than any other. Wilson said, "You cannot become thorough Americans if you think of yourselves in groups."<sup>9</sup> In *America's Great War: World War I and the American Experience*, author Robert H. Zieger wrote, "As early as 1915 he [Wilson] had singled out German-Americans as likely fomenters of disloyalty."<sup>10</sup> Locales with a strong German presence, such as Madison, Wisconsin, were primary targets of the suspicious minds of the masses.

### *The University of Wisconsin & Wisconsin's Council of Defense*

During the United States' isolation from the war raging in Europe there was tension among domestic ethnic groups. However, as the United States grew closer to joining the war,

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<sup>8</sup> 9. Paul Finkelman, "The War on German Language and Culture," in *Confrontation and Cooperation: Germany and the United States in the era of World War I, 1900-1924*, vol. 2 of *Germany and the United States of America: The Krefeld Historical Symposia*, ed. Hans-Jürgen Schröder (Providence, RI: Berg Publishers, 1993), 178-183.

<sup>9</sup> Kazal, *Becoming Old Stock*, 164.

<sup>10</sup> Robert H. Zieger, *America's Great War: World War I and the American Experience* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000), 52.

the tension swelled rapidly. Particularly telling of this tension are the details recorded in the personal papers of Dr. Alexander Rudolf Hohlfeld.

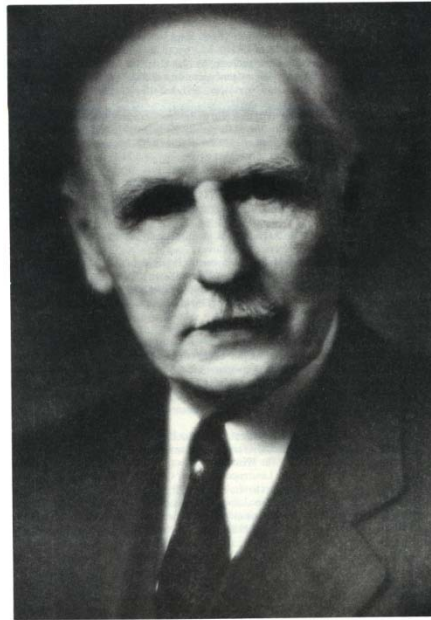


Figure 1. Professor Alexander Rudolf Hohlfeld.  
*Source:* Max Kade Institute Friends Newsletter, Spring 2010.

Hohlfeld emigrated from Germany to the United States in 1889. After two years as a professor at Vanderbilt University he moved to Wisconsin. Hohlfeld became the chair of the German department at the University of Wisconsin in Madison in 1904 and held this position until he retired in 1936.<sup>11</sup> Because of his status as a professional, Hohlfeld's vociferous defense of German-Americans often became a matter of public record. One example grew from his son's shocking Sunday school experience.

On February 5, 1917 Hohlfeld's son Rudy had attended Sunday school at the Unitarian Church. Rudy's teacher was Richard Lloyd Jones. Jones's lesson was at best inappropriate and at worst vile and inciting. Hohlfeld recorded his son's testimony of Jones's words from the morning's lesson:

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<sup>11</sup> *Dictionary of Wisconsin History*, s.v. "Hohlfeld, Alexander Rudolf," [http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/dictionary/index.asp?action=view&term\\_id=1371&search\\_term=Hohlfeld%2C+alexander+rudolf](http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/dictionary/index.asp?action=view&term_id=1371&search_term=Hohlfeld%2C+alexander+rudolf) (accessed April 9, 2010).

German – Americans a most dangerous element. They swear an oath to be loyal to this country, but don't keep it and remain loyal to the Kaiser, Hyphenates must go. Example: Leak about the President's note thru the German embassy. Some G.-A. [German – Americans] in a position of trust, no doubt, did not work for this country, but for the Kaiser and stole the secret and betrayed it for money...They are all around us and a treacherous lot. (Shaking his finger at Rudi): The only way to remedy this would be to call them out and we shall do it.<sup>12</sup>

When Rudi had initially returned home from the lesson “terribly excited” Hohlfeld had aired on the side of caution that perhaps his son had been exaggerating or misinterpreting the teacher's lesson. According to Hohlfeld, “I tried to argue in favor of Mr. Jones, that he had meant only a few individuals, etc.; but Rudi stuck to this story that the attack had been directed against G.-A. as a class...”<sup>13</sup> As both a loving father and a man proud of his ethnicity, Hohlfeld did not allow such an atrocious event to expire unchecked.

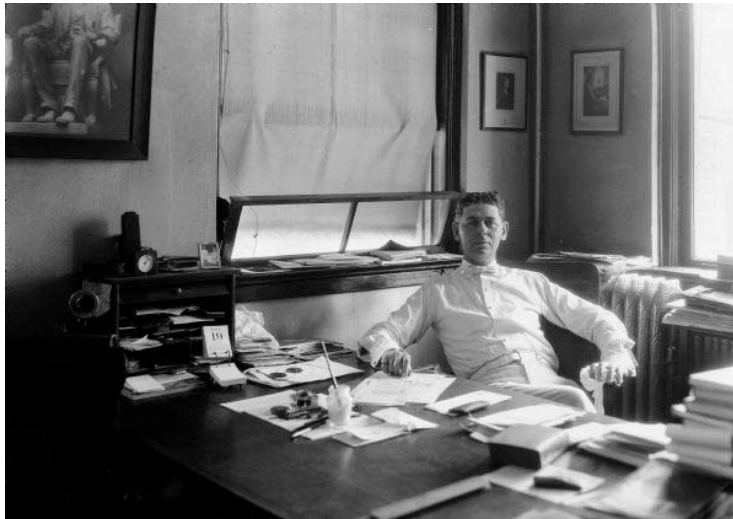


Figure 2. Richard Lloyd Jones, editor of the *Wisconsin State Journal*.  
Source: Wisconsin Historical Society Image ID #3879.

Not only was Hohlfeld a professional in the community, but so was Rudi's Sunday school teacher. Richard Lloyd Jones was the editor of the *Wisconsin State Journal* in Madison, Wisconsin. Jones received a letter from Hohlfeld stating his disgust over the education his son

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<sup>12</sup> Alexander Hohlfeld, Notes, Feb. 5, 1917, Alexander Hohlfeld Papers, 1888-1956. Wisconsin Historical Society Archives. Madison, Wisconsin.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

had received in the most recent Sunday school lesson. Hohlfeld wrote, “I am reliably informed that last Sunday, in your Sunday school class in the Unitarian Church you used your privileges as Sunday school teacher by sowing in the minds and hearts of your young listeners not the seeds of lofty and devoted patriotism – which, under the circumstances, should have been natural and proper – but of blind partisanship and racial antagonism.”<sup>14</sup> Continuing in the letter Hohlfeld expressed his distaste of Jones’s “editorial utterances” that appeared daily in the *Wisconsin State Journal*. Eventually, in a tone depictive of the author’s calm and resolved professional tongue he postulated:

It goes without saying that, in accordance with Rudolph’s own wishes, I shall withdraw him from the Sunday school class to which he has been going for years – unless I could have the definitive assurance not only that the church as such frankly disavows – as I confidently expect it will – such an abuse of its Sunday school classes as you have been guilty of, but that the recurrence of such a similar happening is not within the realm of reasonable probability.<sup>15</sup>

Hohlfeld also sent copies of his letter to the pastor of the Unitarian Church and to the chairman of its Board of Trustees. Jones rebuttal arrived the following day.

Jones letter began with a clear expression of his understanding of the events which unfolded in the infamous Sunday school lesson of two days past:

In answer to your astonishing letter I beg to say that your conclusions are wrong in so many particulars that I will not attempt to engage in a letter controversy with you. ... You misunderstood your son or your son is inaccurate in his report. ... So you were entirely wrong in saying that I gave the entire “lesson” to the discussion to which you demur. You are as wrong in your inferences as you are in this fact.<sup>16</sup>

Clearly, Jones thought that Hohlfeld was wrong. Further in his letter Jones retorted Hohlfeld’s criticism about his violating the Unitarian Church’s principle of teaching the “brotherhood of man.” Jones wrote:

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<sup>14</sup> Alexander Hohlfeld to Richard Jones, Feb. 6, 1917, Alexander Hohlfeld Papers, 1888-1956, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison, Wisconsin.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Lloyd Jones to Alexander Hohlfeld, Feb. 7, 1917, Hohlfeld Papers, WHS.

I am infinitely for the brotherhood of man. But the Kaiser's kultur represents no brotherhood of man and when he tells my country and the country that supports you, sir, to get off of the map to suit his convenience I will plead for an undivided loyalty to the stars and stripes and without apology to you, to the pastor or to the trustees of your church.

I should be exceedingly sorry to see your son who is a bright boy and a fine boy drop out of my class but I cannot modify my Americanism to accommodate either you or your son.<sup>17</sup>

An air of contention between Hohlfeld and Jones continued to circulate. Although the two butted heads on many future issues, the Sunday school debate was finally put to rest: "...I should not only withdraw my sons from Sunday school but likewise resign my membership [with the Unitarian Church]. May I also add that this is my last communication to you in this matter."<sup>18</sup> However intense the previous example illustrated the scrutiny of which German-Americans were suspect pales in comparison to future events.

After the United States declared war on Germany, German-Americans received additional prejudice through legislature such as the Espionage Act of 1917. In *Perilous Times*, Stone described, "...as the war progressed, and the nation was whipped into a fever pitch of patriotism, the Wilson administration and the federal courts distorted the Espionage Act in order to suppress a broad range of political dissent."<sup>19</sup> Along with the Espionage Act grew the importance of pre-war governmental preparedness organizations such as the National Council of Defense. The National Council of Defense initiated an "elaborate state and local network of advisory and information gathering bodies..."<sup>20</sup> Following the pattern of the national organization, states established their own councils of defense. State councils of defense were

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Alexander Hohlfeld to Lloyd Jones, Feb. 18, 1917, Hohlfeld Papers, WHS.

<sup>19</sup> Stone, *Perilous Times*, 146.

<sup>20</sup> Ziger, *America's Great War*, 67-68.

created “to generate enthusiasm for the war and ferret out disloyalty.”<sup>21</sup> On one occasion Hohlfeld was contacted by the Wisconsin State Council of Defense to address the concern that German born citizens were behaving disloyally.



Figure 3. Magnus Swenson, Chairman, Wisconsin State Council of Defense.  
Source: Wisconsin Historical Society Image ID # 5109.

Magnus Swenson, the Chairman of the Wisconsin State Council of Defense, wrote,

We are receiving from some County Councils and citizens of Wisconsin, complaints relative to the attitude of certain German born citizens. Although American citizens they talk and act as if they were still subjects of the Kaiser. We regret to say that this attitude is largely due to the advice and influence of their ministers. ...the situation would be entirely changed if some of our leading German born citizens would advise these persons as to their duties and responsibilities to the country that is now their home and to which they owe complete loyalty and allegiance.<sup>22</sup>

The general vagueness exhibited in the letter was eerily reminiscent of many other witch hunts and inquisitions that have occurred throughout history. Figure 4 presents the dubious letter.

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<sup>21</sup> Stone, *Perilous Times*, 182.

<sup>22</sup> Magnus Swenson to Alexander Hohlfeld, June 23, 1917, Hohlfeld Papers, WHS.



Quick as always to reply in written communication, Hohlfeld responded in a beautifully defiant fashion:

As a person who travels but very little, I am not at all in touch with German-American sentiment in the different parts of the state, and I have no knowledge of the actual situations inducing your correspondents to complain of American citizens of German birth...

On the contrary, from what sources of information I have, I had been led to think that the German-born population of our state were meeting their responsibilities as citizens manfully and readily.<sup>23</sup>

Hohlfeld continued, explaining how German-Americans in Wisconsin were “meeting their responsibilities” with examples of their volunteering, registration, and support of the Liberty Loan and the Red Cross.

The Liberty Loan was a bond drive created by the United States Treasury to raise additional funds for the war effort. The first Liberty Loan began on May 14, 1917 and raised \$2 billion. During the war, additional Liberty Loans were launched: October 1, 1917 - \$3 billion; April 5, 1918 - \$3 billion; September 28, 1918 - \$6 billion. Ironically, the Liberty Loan, “hurt savings banks... and to keep banks going the government created the War Finance Corporation.”<sup>24</sup>

After his brief dismissal of the anonymous attitudes of concern given voice in Swenson’s letter, Hohlfeld detailed what he saw as the real social threat. The source of the threat was Hohlfeld’s long time adversary and editor of the *Wisconsin State Journal* Richard Lloyd Jones. Referring to the *Wisconsin State Journal* Hohlfeld wrote,

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<sup>23</sup> Alexander Hohlfeld to Magnus Swenson, June 25, 1917, Hohlfeld Papers, WHS.

<sup>24</sup> Robert H. Ferrell, *Woodrow Wilson And World War I, 1917 - 1921* (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), 86.



GOVERNOR EMANUEL L. PHILIPP  
MAGNUS SWENSON, CHAIRMAN

STATE OF WISCONSIN  
STATE COUNCIL OF DEFENSE

Authorized by Act of the Legislature, Chapter 82, Laws of 1917

STATE CAPITOL  
Madison, Wisconsin

22  
JOHN G. D. MACK, VICE-CHAIRMAN  
FRED BROCKHAUSEN, MILWAUKEE  
GEORGE CARPENTER, BARABOO  
P. C. ELDREDGE, MILWAUKEE  
DR. J. S. EVANS, MADISON  
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A. T. VAN SCOY, MILWAUKEE  
J. R. WHEELER, COLUMBUS  
ANDREW H. MELVILLE,  
SECRETARY, MADISON

June 23, 1917.

DANE COUNTY.

Prof. A.R. Hohlfeld,  
Madison, Wis.

Dear Prof. Hohlfeld:

We are receiving from some County Councils and citizens of Wisconsin, complaints relative to the attitude of certain German born citizens. Although American citizens they talk and act as if they were still subjects of the Kaiser. We regret to say that this attitude is largely due to the advice and influence of their ministers.

The State Council of Defense is very reluctant to inaugurate any drastic steps to correct this trouble, as it feels that the situation would be entirely changed if some of our leading German born citizens would advise these persons as to their duties and responsibilities to the country that is now their home and to which they owe complete loyalty and allegiance.

We therefore ask you to prepare a letter on this subject so that the State Council of Defense may send it to these people. We feel that by doing so you will greatly aid all persons concerned and besides render a real service to your country.

A prompt answer will be greatly appreciated.

Very truly yours,

STATE COUNCIL OF DEFENSE,

By Magnus Swenson  
Chairman.

MS:EW

Figure 4. Letter from Magnus Swenson to Alexander Hohlfeld.

Source: Alexander Hohlfeld Papers, 1888-1956. Wisconsin Historical Society Archives. Madison, Wisconsin.

The editorial attitude of not a few of our newspapers has been so arrogantly dictatorial, so offensive in aggeration [*sic*] and incorrectness that I fear it has done untold harm in estranging the sentiments of otherwise loyal and patriotic Americans. ...Had some of our newspapers from the beginning shown more understanding for the difficult mental situation of our German born citizens and their immediate descendants, many difficulties could have been avoided...<sup>25</sup>

Unfortunately, the wisdom of Hohlfeld's observation about the accusatory nature of the media's "blind campaign against everything German" was not to be heeded. This invitation from Swenson was not the only time that Hohlfeld was pressured to speak on the behalf those with German ethnicity.

A letter from the national publication called *The Chronicle* asked Hohlfeld to give a statement of loyalty to the United States. The letter dated August 15, 1917 said, "We are addressing the leading persons of German birth in this country with the request that they take this opportunity of affirming or re-affirming their allegiance to the United States. Therefore, without wishing to inconvenience you, we do ask that you write in the space below whatever sentiments you may care to express."<sup>26</sup> If the letter's opening paragraph had not been enough of an imposition, it continued with a libelous threat, "In the absence of a response from you, we shall conclude that your attitude toward the entrance of the United States into the war is one of negation or disapproval."<sup>27</sup> Hohlfeld's bold reply on August 17, 1917 stated, "...whenever I shall deem it desirable to use the press for expressing myself on any of the subjects to which you refer I shall choose my own opportunity as to time and place, but you may be quite certain that I shall never choose for such a purpose a journal the subscription price of which (\$12.00 a year) indicates clearly that it cannot possibly be in touch with the great democracy of our country with

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Chronicle to Hohlfeld, August 15, 1917, Hohlfeld papers, WHS.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

which I feel identified.”<sup>28</sup> Hohlfeld had a certain way with words that allowed him to remain slightly aloof about aspects of patriotism. Unfortunately, one of Hohlfeld’s colleagues did not speak so eloquently and was dismissed over an issue pertaining to his national loyalty. The colleague was an alien enemy.

Alien enemies were defined by President Wilson’s April 6, 1917 Proclamation:

Whenever there is declared a war between the United States and any foreign nation or government... and the President makes public proclamation of the event, all natives, citizens, denizens, or subjects of the hostile nation or government, being males of the age of fourteen years and upwards, who shall be within the United States, and not actually naturalized, shall be liable to be apprehended, restrained, secured, and removed, as alien enemies.<sup>29</sup>

In *Woodrow Wilson and World War I, 1917 – 1921*, Ferrell added, “Against German aliens, of whom there were a half million, Wilson invoked the power of the federal government, the Alien Enemies Act of 1798, which gave him authority to imprison dangerous enemy aliens without trial.” Additionally, “There were undoubtedly many coercive acts against German aliens on the state and local levels...”<sup>30</sup> A German alien at the University of Wisconsin was the recipient of this type of coercive behavior.

Dr. Ernst Feise was an associate professor of German at the University of Wisconsin. He had been a professor at the university since 1908. Because he was a German citizen, Feise was an enemy alien. The incident that prompted his resignation on October 27, 1917 illustrated the zero tolerance attitude toward criticism of wartime patriotic endeavors. Three days after the resignation of the professor an article told the public of the news in the *Madison State Journal*. The article used the incident as a springboard for a lengthy attack on the dangers of anything German in Wisconsin. The article stated that, “The University of Wisconsin, the most

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<sup>28</sup> Hohlfeld to *The Chronicle*, August 17, 1917, Hohlfeld Papers, WHS.

<sup>29</sup> Woodrow Wilson, *Proclamation*, April 6, 1917. Hohlfeld Papers, WHS.

<sup>30</sup> Ferrell, *Woodrow Wilson and World War I*, 206.

Germanized university in America, still carries such a disproportion of German language instructors as compared to the French language and as compared to all other modern languages combined.” The strength of the German language department was described as “OBVIOUS PROPAGANDA” and that “Prussian propaganda has ‘slipped it over on them.’ Their ‘academic’ minds have not been equal to grasping the game.” In response to the defense of Feise’s “scurrilous” remarks that university faculty members had elicited, the editorial quipped, “Here we find the governing forces of the University pleading academic latitude to ... ..a German citizen who, after living here nine years, still thinks so much better of the Kaiser’s government than the government of George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and Woodrow Wilson...”<sup>31</sup> This editorial took great liberties in its interpretation of a brief press bulletin prepared by the university on the incident of Feise’s resignation.

According to a press bulletin prepared on the incident,

During the recent Liberty Loan campaign, however in a conversation with another member of the German department, he made a remark about the Liberty button which university authorities characterize as “offensive and scurrilous.” After conferring with Prof. A. R. Hohlfeld, chairman of the German department, regarding the situation created by his remark, Professor Feise offered his resignation.<sup>32</sup>

The degree of pain and suffering caused by Feise’s damning remark seemed debatable at the time among the German department faculty. In an undated letter, “To the members of the German Department,” three of Feise’s colleagues expressed their upset over his resignation. Interestingly, in the opening of the letter, the authors introduced themselves as “American citizens of American birth.” The letter concluded that, “we feel that the procedure leading to Mr. Feise’s resignation was not based on the highest conception of professional ethics, and we venture to express the hope that it may not serve as a precedent for the treatment of future cases

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<sup>31</sup> “FEISE FIRED,” Madison State Journal, October, 30, 1917.

<sup>32</sup> “Professor of German Resigns after Remark,” November 7, 1917, Hohlfeld Papers, WHS.

of alleged disloyalty concurring in this or other universities of the United States.” The three authors were: B.Q. Morgan, Assistant Professor; L.M. Hollander, Instructor; and J.D. Deihl, Assistant Professor.<sup>33</sup>

A memo provided further defense for Professor Feise. In this undated and unsigned message to President Van Hise the authors wrote in support of reviewing the incident that was the cause of alarm. The horrendous comment finally appeared in print: “Professor Feise was asked to resign because— Professor Feise in a private office and as a jest said to Professor Kind: ‘Kind when you turn to the blackboard how are your students to know that you have bought a Liberty Bond? You ought to wear another Liberty Loan button on the seat of your pants.’”<sup>34</sup>

Despite any hard feelings about his dismissal, Dr. Feise accepted the consequences of his actions without incident and left the university. It seemed that Feise may have been expecting his departure and simply grew tired of the constant surveillance. The press release about his resignation stated, “Since America’s entrance into the war, he has been on parole to President Van Hise,” and “Immediately after the declaration of war, he offered to resign at once, or in the future, if at any time his presence in the faculty would be an embarrassment to the university.”<sup>35</sup> As an alien enemy, Feise had been under parole of President Van Hise. Across the state, other enemy aliens were the recipients of special conditions.

The Hackley-Phelps-Bonnell lumber company in Phelps, Wisconsin wrote to the Wisconsin State Council of Defense about the proper procedures for dealing with enemy aliens. The company wrote, “We again write for information as to what procedure is necessary, if any, in the employing of [a]lien enemies at this time. We do not know as we have any, but we want to investigate this matter upon receipt of the proper instructions, and those men who are right

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<sup>33</sup> “To the members of the German Department,” Hohlfeld Papers, WHS.

<sup>34</sup> “TO PRESIDENT VAN HISE,” Hohlfeld Papers, WHS.

<sup>35</sup> “Professor of German Resigns after Remark, November 7, 1917, Hohlfeld Papers, WHS.

although not citizens, we want to protect ourselves. Will you not let us hear from you on the subject?”<sup>36</sup> Apparently there was a lack of clarity on just what the proper instructions were. Eight days later a letter was sent from E. J. B. Schubring, Attorney for the Wisconsin State Council of Defense to Magnus Swenson, Chairman of the Wisconsin State Council of Defense, that explained the proper procedures.

The letter stated details of the President’s Proclamation of April 6, 1917 regarding enemy aliens. The decision of what action needed to be taken by companies such as the Hackley-Phelps-Bonnell lumber company needed to be made by their executives. Schubring chose to forward the following section of the Proclamation in his letter:

All enemy aliens citizens of Germany who desire to reside within, come within, pass through, be employed within, or conduct a business within an area of one-half mile radius from any fort, camp, arsenal, air craft station, government or naval vessel, navy yard, factory or work shop for the manufacture of munitions of war, must register with and secure a permit from the United States Marshall of their district.<sup>37</sup>

The letter continued with a detailed paragraph about the application photos required for getting enemy aliens registered. Ironically, according to the next paragraph, “The time for making application for permits expired in July this year.” A paragraph of general instructions followed: “Every employer should of course ascertain whether he is employing alien enemies... ..and see if they have a permit if one is required, and should also keep some supervision over them to ascertain whether they are obeying the laws of this country and as to whether they are guiltily of conduct interfering with or hampering the prosecution of the war.” The letter summarized, “There is no limitation on the employment of alien enemies and no registration or permit necessary except as above indicated.” The information in the letter was certainly less than helpful for northern logging companies like Hackley-Phelps-Bonnell who had expressed their

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<sup>36</sup> Hackley-Phelps-Bonnell Co. to State Council of Defense, December 20, 1917, Hohlfeld Papers, WHS.

<sup>37</sup> E.J.B. Schubring to Magnus Swenson, December 28, 1917, Hohlfeld Papers, WHS.

own uncertainty about the status of their own employees. At the same time Magnus Swenson was deciphering the words of the President's Proclamation in order to act as an information disseminator for industry leaders, Professor Hohlfeld was tied up in another conflict with the local media.

Hohlfeld had an essay expressing his sentiments about proposed legislation published. The essay was published in the July 11, 1917 issue of *Viereck's The-American Weekly*. The newsletter had focused on the topic of German-Americans potentially being conscripted and having to fight their own family members on the European battlefields. A resolution introduced by Representative Britten from Illinois proposed that American men of German origin be spared from conscription and ultimately from having to fight in Europe. In "Optional Service for German Americans," Hohlfeld expressed an interest in certain aspects of Congressman Britten's resolution. Perhaps due to a heightened awareness of the media's penchant for the twisting of words, Hohlfeld gave a clear warning about the use of his writing. He said, "In case you wish to publish the statement I should only have to insist that it be published in *toto*. I do not authorize the use of any selected part or parts."<sup>38</sup> Over five months later the editors of *The Madison Democrat* chose to selectively use Hohlfeld's words against him as a personal attack and as a more general criticism of all things German in Wisconsin.

In the article "The German-American Press and German-American Teachers," the instigating author described the reception of Congressman Britten's resolution. He wrote, "It was this amazing proposition that received hearty endorsement even from our own Professor A. R. Hoh[l]feld, head of the gigantic, top-heavy inflated German department in the University of

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<sup>38</sup> "Optional Service for German Americans," *Viereck's The American Weekly*, July 11, 1917. Hohlfeld Papers, WHS.



Wisconsin!”<sup>39</sup> Against Hohlfeld’s specific request, the author quoted one small section from his contribution in the *Viereck’s* article. The crafty author relayed, “‘I heartily endorse the general spirit and purpose of the resolution of Congressman Britten, as well as your efforts in its behalf.’ So wrote Professor Hoh[l]feld some three months AFTER we had been forced to declare war against Germany!”<sup>40</sup> The attitude inherent in the description of the University of Wisconsin’s German department as “gigantic, top heavy” and “inflated” was comparable to the earlier criticism of it being the “most Germanized university in America.”<sup>41</sup> Hohlfeld quickly discovered the unflattering article and was prompt in his reply.

Although not printed until January 1, 1918, Hohlfeld’s reply to *The Madison Democrat* was dated December 31, 1917. Hohlfeld stated his purpose for writing. He said, “...in yesterday’s issue of your paper you make a personal attack on my reputation as a citizen which, if unrefuted must discredit me with my students, with my colleagues and superiors, and with my fellow citizens.” Hohlfeld continued with a criticism of how they “quoted just the one sentence in which I endorse ‘the general spirit and purpose’ of the Britten resolution.” In further defense Hohlfeld explained with quotations how his words printed in *Viereck’s* had been misconstrued by the editor of the *Madison Democrat* article. The fact was that Hohlfeld had never been a radical supporter for the passage of the Britten Resolution: “...I have long shared the views of those who expressed themselves as opposed to its passage.”<sup>42</sup> The bias of the editorial staff at *The Madison Democrat* was further evidence by the words of their reply.

In the same issue that printed Hohlfeld’s letter appeared the editorial reply. In an article titled “PROFESSOR HOH[L]FELD “EXPLAINS” the author described how “Professor A. R.

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<sup>39</sup> “The German-American Press and German-American Teachers,” *The Madison Democrat*, December, 30, 1917. Hohlfeld Papers, WHS.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> “FEISE FIRED,” *Madison State Journal*, October, 30, 1917.

<sup>42</sup> “Professor Hoh[l]feld’s Explanation,” *The Madison Democrat*, January 1, 1918. Hohlfeld Papers, WHS.

Hoh[l]feld, head of the German department at the University of Wisconsin, seeks to defend an astounding letter published in *Vierecks Weekly*.” Unfortunately, *The Madison Democrat* did not take the opportunity to engage in an open-minded dialogue. Instead the article continued the personal attack on Hohlfeld, questioning, “the quality of Professor Hoh[l]feld’s patriotic predisposition.” About his standing up and defending himself the editors wrote, “The truth is, Professor Hoh[l]feld made a lamentable mistake, or worse, and The Democrat has pleasure in printing an explanation which might better never have been offered.”<sup>43</sup> Perhaps even more interesting than the discourse between Hohlfeld and the editor of *The Madison Democrat* was the letter between Hohlfeld and President Van Hise of the University of Wisconsin.

When Hohlfeld became involved with the editor of *The Madison Democrat*, only slightly longer than two months had passed since the infamous release of Dr. Feise from the University of Wisconsin. Although Feise was an enemy alien and undoubtedly needed to be cautious in his public statements, Hohlfeld too felt a certain degree of wariness. On December 30, 1917, the same day that he sent his letter to *The Madison Democrat*, Hohlfeld wrote to the President of the University of Wisconsin. The letter acted as a small amount of insurance against receiving any fate similar to Feise. The letter to Van Hise said:

In his issue of December 30, the editor of the Madison Democrat has made upon me a most unwarranted and unfair attack. Altho (sic) the attack is directed against me personally, it is indirectly aimed, without doubt, at the Department of German and the University.

In view of your absence from the city I consulted with Dean Birge, fortunately just before he went to attend a regents’ meeting in Milwaukee, and with his approval have sent the editor a reply of which I enclose a copy. ...

Regretting that I should be the innocent cause of annoyance to the University, I remain, with the best wishes of the season...”<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> “Professor Hoh[l]feld ‘EXPLAINS’,” *The Madison Democrat*, January 1, 1918. Hohlfeld Papers, WHS.

<sup>44</sup> Alexander Hohlfeld to Van Hise, December 31, 1917. Hohlfeld Papers, WHS.

Certainly the reply Hohlfeld sent to *The Madison Democrat* contained nothing as offensive and scurrilous as Feise's Liberty Button comment, but his writing to President Van Hise demonstrated his heightened wartime sensitivity and awareness. Conscription was not the only issue that had fueled the attack on Hohlfeld in the December 30, 1917 issue of *The Madison Democrat*.

### *German-Language in the Schools*

In the December 30, 1917 issue of *The Madison Democrat*, the editor said about Hohlfeld, "And was it not this same Professor Hoh[l]feld who, at an annual meeting of the Wisconsin German Teachers' association a year or so ago, declared with the emphasis of a zealous propagandist that 'we must get German into the grades?'"<sup>45</sup> Among his other distinctions, Hohlfeld was a Trustee of the German Teachers' Seminary and his expertise on the teaching of foreign languages had previously been called upon by the State Superintendent. Hohlfeld replied that his sentiment about the study of foreign language was, "...in agreement with educators all over the country, I have indeed advocated the beginning of language study... but I have never restricted such a plan to German, always pleading merely for a foreign language, either ancient or modern."<sup>46</sup> The attitude of the editor from *The Madison Democrat* was enigmatic of the national attitude toward the German language.

Carl Wittke, author of *American Germans in Two Wars*, wrote about the difficulties that German language faced during the "furor Americanus" of the First World War. Wittike wrote, "When German was put out of the schools and German books out of the public libraries, the

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<sup>45</sup> "The German-American Press and German-American Teachers," *The Madison Democrat*, December, 30, 1917. Hohlfeld Papers, WHS.

<sup>46</sup> "Professor Hoh[l]feld's Explanation," *The Madison Democrat*, January 1, 1918. Hohlfeld Papers, WHS.

United States witnessed its ‘burning of the books.’ In some communities, high school students, happy to be relieved of a stiff, mental discipline, tossed their German textbooks into public bonfires, to the accompaniment of patriotic airs by the village band.”<sup>47</sup> Ohio, a state with a large German-American population, was host to a large amount of backlash against the German language. Robert H. Ferrell, author of *Woodrow Wilson and World War I, 1917 – 1921*, stated:

In Lima, Ohio, the superintendent of schools, board members, and city officials attended a ceremony to burn German works. Communities allowed superintendents to apply the match to accompaniment of band music, songs by children, [and] speeches by elders. The school board of Columbus sold German publications to a wastepaper company for fifty cents a hundred pounds. The Cincinnati public library hid its volumes.<sup>48</sup>

Another book burning occurred closer to home. Menominee, Michigan, a city directly across the Menominee River from Marinette, Wisconsin was the place. The *Daily Leader* in Grand Rapids, Wisconsin announced the event:

When the school board voted to abolish teaching German in the Menominee High school, which included a full four year course, the resolution provided that at the close of the school term the books should be destroyed by fire. A huge bon fire will be made of the books and all persons having German books which they wish to dispose of have been invited to attend the celebration and cast the books into the patriotic blaze. The celebration will be under the auspices of the American [C]lub.<sup>49</sup>

The American Club was created by the Kohler Improvement Company. Kohler aimed to ensure that their employees, many of who were immigrants to the United States, quickly assimilated to the correct American ways of life. The *Sheboygan Press* in Sheboygan, Wisconsin described the formal unveiling of the organization’s new building:

Thousands of people went to Kohler yesterday to attend the formal [opening] of the “American Club” [formed] by the Kohler Improvement Company for the benefit of the men employed by the Kohler Company. ...The program opened with “On Wisconsin”... The idea of the American Club was conceived at a time [while] the United States was at peace although a great conflict was raging in Europe. Since then our country has been

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<sup>47</sup> Carl Wittke, “American Germans in two World Wars,” *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, September, 1943, 11-12.

<sup>48</sup> Ferrell, *Woodrow Wilson and World War I*, 205.

<sup>49</sup> “O-Oh Skinnay Come to the Big Bonfire,” *Daily Leader* (Grand Rapids, WI), June 10, 1918.

drawn into the world war and many men who it was expected, would be with us today are in the service either in this country or overseas.<sup>50</sup>

The article continued describing that the American Club was thought up as a way to stimulate in the men who were “of foreign decedents a desire for Americanization” a “love for their adopted country.”<sup>51</sup>

In the same publication that reported of the book burning scheduled in Menominee, Michigan for June 10, 1918, it had placed in its reader’s minds an idea of what to do with its own town’s newfound excess of unwanted German language literature: “There will be no more ‘Deutch sprechen’ in the schools of Grand Rapids at least for the period of the present war. Such was the unanimous verdict, at the regular meeting of the School Board last evening. It was determined to keep Latin in the curriculum and add either French or Spanish or both to take the place of the displaced Hun lingo.”<sup>52</sup> The tone of the article was intentionally critical toward the German language. The article hinted that perhaps the interruption of providing Wisconsin’s students with a well rounded education including strong foreign language skills would only be temporary, noting that the removal was for “at least for the period of the present war.” It is doubtful that this was the intention and data from one Wisconsin locale provided proof to this claim.

Using data from Annual Reports to the County Superintendent of Common Schools, table 1 shows the decline and elimination of teachers of the German language in Eau Claire County schools. If there was any truth about the halt of German language in schools being temporary, data from Eau Claire did support that claim. The reality was a permanent elimination of German from the schools.

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<sup>50</sup> “Thousands Witness Formal Dedication of “American Club” Sunday Afternoon at Kohler,” *Sheboygan Press* (Sheboygan, WI), June 24, 1918.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> “School Board Ousts German from Course,” *Daily Leader*, June 11, 1918.

**Table 1. German Language Teachers, Eau Claire County, Wisconsin Schools 1914 – 1921**

Year	Number of Teachers
1914	5
1915	6
1916	5
1917	5
1918	3
1919	0
1920	0
1921	0

*Source:* Annual Report of the County Superintendent of Common Schools – Eau Claire Country, 1914 – 1921.

Whatever the decisions were that led to the elimination of the German language from public schools in Eau Claire County, they echoed the activities that unfolded in the rest of the state. Puzzlingly, the destructive effect of patriotism toward education ran completely counter to what teachers during the period considered a quality education.

As previous Hohlfeld examples have shown, the call for the elimination of German from Wisconsin's public schools most certainly did not come from teachers. The positions of top educators were voiced at the *Annual Session of the Wisconsin Teachers' Association*. The proceedings were recorded annually as public documents of the state of Wisconsin. During the sixty-first session the importance of foreign language study was heralded by one presenter.

Laura S. Stark wrote,

...the study of modern languages is profitable in three ways:

1. First, as an introduction to the life and literature of France and Germany.
2. as a preparation for intellectual pursuits that require the ability to read French and German for information.
3. As a foundation for an accomplishment that may become useful in business and travel.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Laura Stark, "The Place of Translation from English into the Foreign Tongue in the First Year of High School Language Study," *Proceedings of the Sixty-First Annual Session of the Wisconsin Teachers' Association held at Milwaukee, November 6 to 8, 1913*, 155.

Unfortunately, pupils in Wisconsin's public schools lost the previously mentioned benefits during the war years. At the sixty-second *Annual Session of the Wisconsin Teachers' Association*, further evidence indicated that what was needed was an elimination of the German language from schools, but an increase in its prevalence! Figure 5 presents the growing national interest of students in studying foreign languages – especially German. Additionally, the importance of foreign language in public education was exemplified in

PER CENT OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ENROLLED IN VARIOUS STUDIES.					
	1890	1895	1900	1905	1910
Latin .....	34%	43%	50%	50%	49%
German .....	10	11	14	20	23
French .....	5	6	8	9	10
Rhetoric .....	..	32	38	48	57
Eng. Lit.....	..	36 (est)	42	49	57
For'n Hist. ....	27	34	38	40	55
Algebra .....	45	54	56	57	57
Geometry .....	21	25	27	28	30
					<u>338%</u>

Figure 5. Percent of American High School Students Enrolled in Various Studies.  
Source: *Proceedings of the Sixty-Second Annual Session of the Wisconsin Teachers' Association held at Milwaukee, November 5 to 7, 1914.*

the presentation by W.F. Rucker in which the merits of the scientific study in a German High School were compared with what was available in the United States.<sup>54</sup> Exemplary of the level at which Wisconsin's pupils grasped the German language in their public education were in the words by Marie Keller: "In the third year German in our high school course, we may expect that the pupils have mastered the most important principles of grammar and syntax, can read easy German texts intelligently, and with a certain fluency, can understand simple German when spoken, and can express themselves more or less accurately..." Keller continued, "No other

<sup>54</sup> W.F. Roecker, "An Elementary Course in General Science; Content and Method," *Proceedings of the Sixty-Second Annual Session of the Wisconsin Teachers' Association held at Milwaukee, November 5 to 7, 1914*, 164.

nation of the world has a modern prose literature that can surpass in educational and artistic value the German prose fiction of the last fifty to sixty years.”<sup>55</sup> Returning to the sixty-first session, there was one presenter who summed up the attitude of educators toward the teaching of German in public schools. About the expansion of the teaching of German to younger students in public schools John Eiselmeiell wrote, “No one will deny the great advantage of such a study of German in the grades...”<sup>56</sup> Unfortunately, the cries of educators such as Eiselmeiell, Keller, Stark, Roecker, and of course Professor Hohlfeld, were denied and any of the advantages of studying German in the grades did not come to fruition.

### *Conclusion*

As Professor Hohlfeld concluded his address to the graduating class of the German American Teachers Seminary at Milwaukee on Thursday, June 20, 1918 he described the anti-German world that the new graduates were about to face. He prophesized, “This is not the place nor the hour to attempt an analysis of the bewildering phenomenon, although to the future historian it will be an interesting to examine into all of its causes and impartially distribute blame and responsibility.”<sup>57</sup> Professor Hohlfeld was very accurate in his prediction of future interest by historians. German-Americans in Wisconsin during The First World War were the recipients of unfair and undue badgering and intimidation that came in many forms. The effects of the anti-German sentiment that grew during the First World War were felt by future generations of Wisconsinites who came to know only one culture: American.

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<sup>55</sup> Marie Keller, “Reading Material for the Third Year in German and How to Present it,” *Sixty-Second Session*, 214-215.

<sup>56</sup> John Eiselmeiell, “The Teaching of Modern Languages in the United States,” *Sixty-First Session*, 160-163.

<sup>57</sup> Alexander Hohlfeld, *Address to the Graduating Class*, Hohlfeld Papers, WHS.



### *Further Research*

Although this project represents a great deal of my time and effort, there are still many improving enhancements that could be made. For example, folders 21 and 22 of the *Alexander Hohlfeld Papers* contain many more examples of anti-German sentiment during World War One. This collection itself could serve as the entire focus of a separate research project – perhaps with a comparison of a similar subject from another United States city that had a strong German-American presence during the early twentieth century.

Another angle at which further research could be aimed is the impact of anti-German sentiment in Wisconsin's public education. Through the *Wisconsin Historical Society* many records are available of superintendents' inspections that provide numerical data of the prevalence of foreign language in public schools. With the aggrandizement of electronically available versions of primary sources, such as the *State of Wisconsin Collection* accessible through *University of Wisconsin Digital Collections*, I am very optimistic that previously untold stories will continue to transpire as a wider audience gains access to information previously relegated to dark and obscure archival locations.

## Appendix

### Americanization through Language Unification

S-3

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF EDUCATION  
Washington

SLOGANS FOR THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN OF AMERICANIZATION

(These slogans have been adopted officially, and for the sake of uniformity, all agencies, official and unofficial, which are cooperating or participating in the campaign, are urged to use these slogans exactly as given.)

I. For the Nation:  
"ENGLISH THE LANGUAGE OF THE UNITED STATES"

II. For Each State:  
"ENGLISH THE LANGUAGE OF -----"  
(Insert the name of your State)

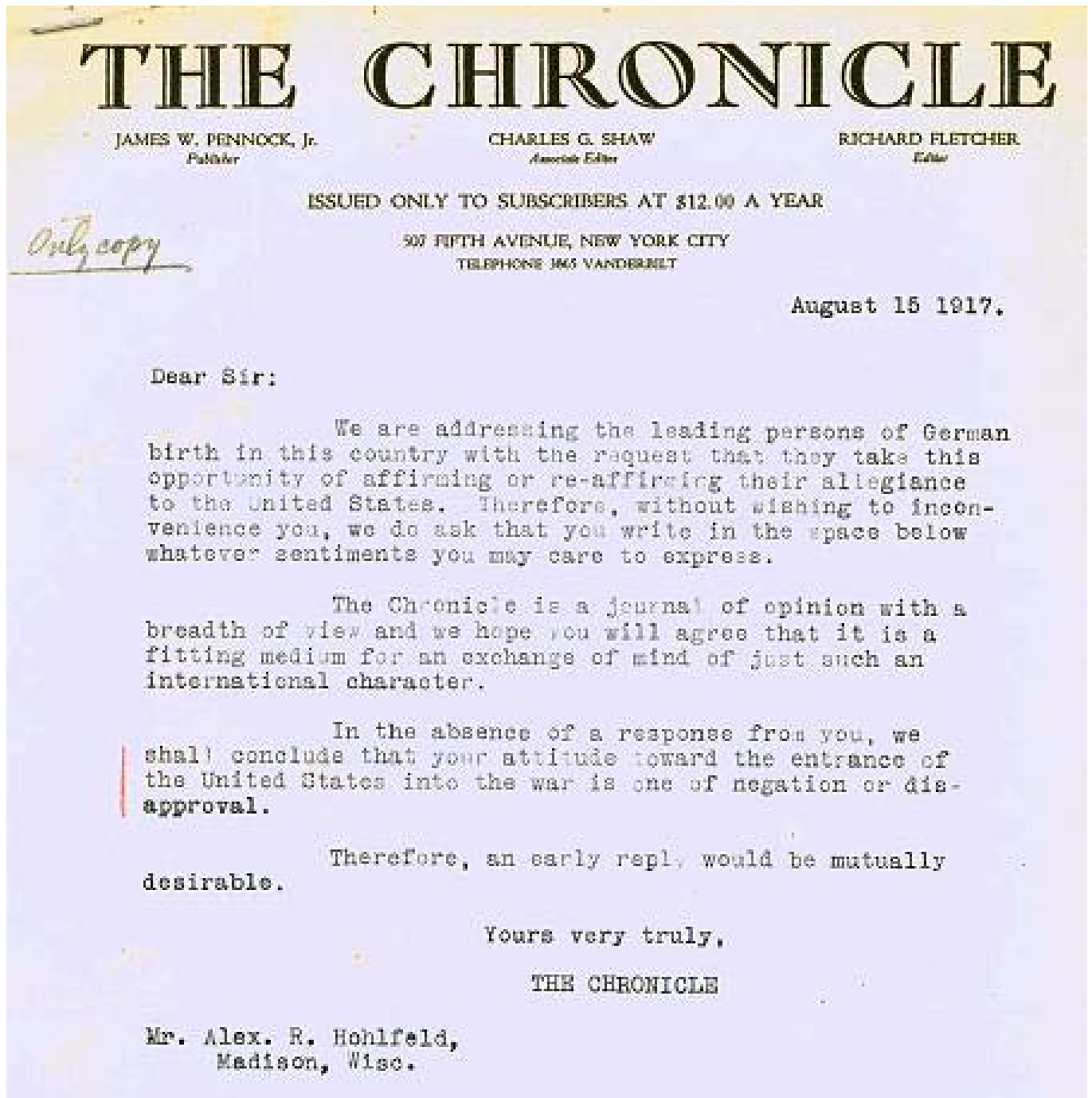
III. For Each City:  
"ENGLISH THE LANGUAGE OF -----"  
(Insert the name of your city)

IV. For Each Industry:  
"ENGLISH THE LANGUAGE OF THE PLANT"  
"EVERY MAN SPEAK ENGLISH"

V. For Each Home:  
"ENGLISH THE LANGUAGE OF THE HOME"

Source: Wisconsin Council of Defense, Wisconsin Historical Society.

Pressure to Prove Loyalty



Source: Alexander Hohlfeld Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society.

## President Wilson's Proclamation

[ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS PRESCRIBING THE CONDUCT OF ALIEN ENEMIES.]

### By the President of the United States of America A Proclamation.

WHEREAS the Congress of the United States in the exercise of the constitutional authority vested in them have resolved, by joint resolution of the Senate and House of Representatives bearing date of April 6th, 1917, "That the state of war between the United States and the Imperial German Government which has been thrust upon the United States is hereby formally declared";

WHEREAS it is provided by Section four thousand and sixty-seven of the Revised Statutes, as follows;

Whenever there is declared a war between the United States and any foreign nation or government, or any invasion or predatory incursion is perpetrated, attempted or threatened against the territory of the United States, by any foreign nation or government, and the President makes public proclamation of the event, all natives, citizens, denizens, or subjects of the hostile nation or government, being males of the age of fourteen years and upwards, who shall be within the United States, and not actually naturalized, shall be liable to be apprehended, restrained, secured, and removed, as alien enemies. The President is authorized, in any such event, by his proclamation thereof, or other public act, to direct the conduct to be observed, on the part of the United States, toward the aliens who become so liable; the manner and degree of the restraint to which they shall be subject, and in what cases, and upon what security their residence shall be permitted, and to provide for the removal of those who, not being permitted to reside within the United States, refuse or neglect to depart therefrom; and to establish any other regulations which are found necessary in the premises and for the public safety;

WHEREAS, by Section four thousand and sixty-eight, four thousand and sixty-nine, and four thousand and seventy, of the Revised Statutes, further provision is made relative to alien enemies;

AND WHEREAS, by a proclamation dated April 6th, 1917, I declared and established certain regulations prescribing the conduct of alien enemies;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WOODROW WILSON, President of the United States of America, pursuant to the authority vested in me, hereby declare and establish the following regulations, additional and supplemental to those declared and established by said proclamation of April 6th, 1917, which additional and supplemental regulations I find necessary in the premises and for the public safety:

13. An alien enemy shall not approach or be found within one hundred yards of any canal; nor within one hundred yards of any wharf, pier or dock used directly by or by means of lighters by any vessel or vessels of over five hundred (500) tons gross engaged in foreign or domestic trade other than fishing; nor within one hundred yards of any warehouse, shed, elevator, railroad terminal or other terminal, storage or transfer facility adjacent to or operated in connection with any such wharf, pier or dock; and wherever the distance between any two of such wharves, piers or docks, measured along the shore line connecting them, is less than eight hundred and eighty yards, an alien enemy shall not approach or be found within one hundred yards of such shore line.

14. Whenever the Attorney General of the United States deems it to be necessary, for the public safety and the protection of transportation, to exclude alien enemies from the vicinity of any warehouse, elevator or railroad depot, yard or terminal which is not located within any prohibited area designated by this proclamation or the proclamation of April 6th, 1917, then an alien enemy shall not approach or be found within such distance of any such warehouse elevator, depot, yard or

does not  
apply to  
Austrians  
no prohibition  
employing  
genuine -  
especially, not  
Austrians

Source: Wisconsin Council of Defense, Wisconsin Historical Society.



terminal as may be specified by the Attorney General by regulation duly made and declared by him; and the Attorney General is hereby authorized to fix, by regulations to be made and declared from time to time, the area surrounding any such warehouse, elevator, depot, yard or terminal from which he deems it necessary, for the public safety and the protection of transportation to exclude alien enemies.

15. An alien enemy shall not, except on public ferries, be found on any ocean, bay, river or other waters within three miles of the shore line of the United States or its territorial possessions; said shore line for the purpose of this proclamation being hereby defined as the line of sea coast and the shores of all waters of the United States and its territorial possessions connected with the high seas and navigable by ocean going vessels; nor on any of the Great Lakes, their connecting waters or harbors, within the boundaries of the United States.

16. No alien enemy shall ascend into the air in any airplane, balloon, airship, or flying machine.

17. An alien enemy shall not enter or be found within the District of Columbia.

18. An alien enemy shall not enter or be found within the Panama Canal Zone.

19. All alien enemies are hereby required to register at such times and places and in such manner as may be fixed by the Attorney General of the United States and the Attorney General is hereby authorized and directed to provide, as speedily as may be practicable, for registration of all alien enemies and for the issuance of registration cards to alien enemies and to make and declare such rules and regulations as he may deem necessary for effecting such registration; and all alien enemies and all other persons are hereby required to comply with such rules and regulations; and the Attorney General in carrying out such registration, is hereby authorized to utilize such agents, agencies, officers and departments of the United States and of the several states, territories, dependencies and municipalities thereof and of the District of Columbia as he may select for the purpose, and all such agents, agencies, officers and departments are hereby granted full authority for all acts done by them in the execution of this regulation when acting by the direction of the Attorney General. After the date fixed by the Attorney General for such registration, an alien enemy shall not be found within the limits of the United States, its territories or possessions, without having his registration card on his person.

20. An alien enemy shall not change his place of abode or occupation or otherwise travel or move from place to place without full compliance with any such regulations as the Attorney General of the United States may, from time to time, make and declare; and the Attorney General is hereby authorized to make and declare, from time to time, such regulations concerning the movements of alien enemies as he may deem necessary in the premises and for the public safety, and to provide in such regulations for monthly, weekly or other periodical report by alien enemies to federal, state or local authorities; and all alien enemies shall report at the times and places and to the authorities specified in such regulations.

This proclamation and the regulations herein contained shall extend and apply to all land and water, continental or insular, in any way within the jurisdiction of the United States.

**In Witness Whereof**, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

DONE in the District of Columbia, this sixteenth day of November, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and seventeen, and of the independence of the United States the one hundred and forty-second.

By the President:

FRANK L. POLK  
*Acting Secretary of State.*

**WOODROW WILSON**

[No. 1408.]



## German Professors Profess their Protest

*Milwaukee Journal*  
3-14-17

### ONLY TWO SDN LOYAL PLEDGE GERMAN TEACHERS AT U.W. CAUSE COMMENT SHARP CONTRAST WITH THE WHOLE FACULTY (by a staff correspondent)

Madison, Wis.- Only two out of the twenty-seven professors, associate professors, assistant professors, instructors and assistants in the German department of the University of Wisconsin signed the faculty message pledging support and loyalty to the national government in its efforts to protect and defend American rights and American lives.

When, a few days ago, this message was sent to Washington, it was announced in behalf of those who circulated it at the university that it contained the names of between 80 and 85 percent of the members of the faculty. Comparison of the names of the members of the German department with the names that appear upon a copy of the message sent to Washington shows that only one assistant professor and one assistant in the German department, two in all, signed the message. The members of the German department number twenty-seven.

In other words, only about 7 per cent of the members of the German department signed this message as contrasted with the estimated percentage of between 80 and 90 of the whole faculty which did sign the message.

The names and rank of the members of the German department are as follows, with the names of the two signers of the message being designated in capital letters.

#### PROFESSORS

A. R. Hohlfield E.K.J.H. Voss

#### ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS

Ernst Feise Charles M. Purin  
S.H. Goodnight E.C.W.C. Roedder

#### ASSISTANT PROFESSORS

Fredrick Brune John L. Kind  
Joseph D. Deihl B.Q. MORGAN  
A.B. Ernst Susan A. Sterling  
Martin H. Haertel

#### INSTRUCTORS

A.W. Aron Kate W. Jameson  
S.C. Cast Grace H. Keller  
O.W. Greubel Rudolf Rieder  
J.F. Hausmann Elebeth Veerhusen  
L.M. Hollander

#### ASSISTANTS

Sarah M. Beach Anna Essinger  
William H. Eller A.P. MARTIN  
C.J. Eppels

#### Active in German Course

A great deal of comment is heard here regarding the pro-German activities of German exchange professors and of some of the members of the university faculty, both inside and outside the German department.

In a recent editorial note published in the Wisconsin State Journal, Richard Lloyd Jones, editor of that paper, said:

"...The mere fact that according to his own statement there are ~~thirt~~ thirty teachers of German and only forty teachers of all other languages combined clearly shows that the University of Wisconsin is over Germanized. It always has been over-Germanized. Every student who comes to the University of Wisconsin is not seeking German Scientific literature

Source: Alexander Hohlfield Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society.

and it is arrogant presumption to tell him he has got to take it whether he wants it or not. Until most recently it was almost a physical impossibility for a student to escape taking German. It was the one language that the university made every student take whether the student wanted it or not. If that is not an evidence of a Germanized university what is? The student might want to take French. He could take French if he wanted to but he could not substitute French for German which was required. Perhaps the student was looking forward to South American commercial affiliations- would that make any difference?- not at all, he had to take German just the same. The study of the German language in the University of Wisconsin has always been a requisite above the study of English".

#### Going on for Years

The charge is now being made that German influences have been exerted to the utmost in management and instruction at the University of Wisconsin. This has been quietly going on for years, it is asserted, but pro-German activities within the ranks of the university faculty have resulted in making the situation plainer than it has ever been before. The fact that only two members of the German department signed the faculty's message of loyalty to the government of the country is pronounced very significant. It is a fact not generally known as yet, but those who know it state that it will open the eyes of the people of the state, and that it necessitates serious consideration by alumni and others who believe in an independent, American university.

Copy of article in Milwaukee Journal  
3-14-17

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