



Anti-German Sentiment during World War I

Topic Guide for Chronicling America (<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov>)

Introduction

During World War I, anti-German feeling and activity spread throughout the United States as a way to show support for the American war effort, greatly impacting Ohio's large German-American immigrant population. A statewide Americanization Committee aimed to teach and promote American values and the English language to immigrants, but it was also used to censor "pro-German" reading material. Many schools limited or stopped teaching German language and literature, and some communities, streets, businesses and products were renamed to sound less German. German-Americans were looked upon with suspicion, and at times persecuted. Their businesses lost customers and their cultural activities became increasingly private affairs—some even opted to Americanize their names and reduce the amount of German spoken in public. Although anti-German sentiment died down after the war ended, the impact of this hysteria was long-term, as some businesses did not recover, and German-Americans were further assimilated into American life.

Important Dates

- July 28, 1914-August 30, 1915: A series of war declarations allies the Central Powers (Austria-Hungary, Germany, Ottoman Empire) against the Triple Entente (Russia, France, United Kingdom).
- April 6, 1917: United States declares war against Germany, joining the Triple Entente alliance.
- January 1918: New Berlin, Ohio, changes its name to North Canton.
- August 20, 1918: The last German-language newspapers in Columbus, Ohio, cease publication.
- November 11, 1918: World War I ends.
- 1919: Ake Law passes, making it illegal to teach German in any school below eighth grade.
- June 5, 1919: Ohio's Americanization Committee is created, extending activities previously conducted under the Ohio State Council of Defense.

Suggested Search Strategies

- Try the following terms in combination (as an "all" word search), proximity or as phrases: liberty cabbage, anti-German, German American, Alien Enemies Act, Americanization Committee, hun.
- Limit your search by date range and/or state to find information about specific events.
- Browse by date or use German-language terms to find articles in German-American newspapers.

Sample Articles from Chronicling America

- ["Alien Arms Order Expires Tomorrow"](#) *Evening Star* (Washington, DC), April 22, 1917, Image 9, col. 1-2.
- ["German Instruction in our Schools"](#) *Tägliches Cincinnati Volksblatt* (Cincinnati, OH), May 7, 1917, Image 4, col. 3-5.
- ["A Rose by Another Name—Sauerkraut to be Camouflaged"](#) *Democratic Banner* (Mt. Vernon, OH), April 26, 1918, Image 1, col. 3.
- ["Odor of Skunk is Just the Same"](#) *Celina Democrat* (Celina, OH), May 3, 1918, Image 1, col. 1-2.
- ["Banks Eliminate German"](#) *Democratic Banner* (Mt. Vernon, OH), May 14, 1918, Image 3, col. 1.
- ["Will You Back Me—or back Booze?"](#) (ad) *Mahoning Dispatch*, November 1, 1918, Image 12.
- ["The Ake anti-German school bill..."](#) *Fulton County Tribune* (Wauseon, OH), April 25, 1919, Image 7, col. 1.