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US anti-German propaganda during WWI. "The new intensive Kultur" W.A. Rogers. New York Herald, November 12, 1915, p. 4. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2010717739/>. (Accessed July 11, 2016.) "Kultur" was the German term for their civilization and culture, but was often used during the First World War as a derogatory term among Germany's adversaries. Here is being used as a term in biology, in this case, the growth of weeds in the form of German military spiked helmets.

Spies and Slackers: The Bureau of Investigation's Search for Enemy Aliens and Draft Dodgers in Alexandria County, 1917-1919

BY MARK BENBOW

The reports came pouring in from concerned citizens: a car with an unusual hood was seen cruising through the area, someone was taking photos of the Great Falls from the Virginia side, men and women were walking into the woods carrying a wooden box, a man kept bottles of chemicals. The reports of the Bureau of Investigation (not yet the Federal Bureau of Investigation)¹ from 1917-1919 are filled with reports ranging from the serious to the ludicrous from DC-area residents fearful of German spies and saboteurs. The Bureau of Investigation (BOI) took the reports seriously and investigated each report to make sure the Imperial German government was not operating agents in the American capital. The reports, of which there were thousands,² were part of an anti-German hysteria that swept the United States in 1917 and 1918 after the nation entered the First World War against Germany. While most reports involved activities within the boundaries of the District of Columbia, some came from nearby Alexandria County, home to Fort Myer and the new suburbs housing government workers. Today they illustrate what worried Arlingtonians³ during the Great War, and the difficulties that arise when authorities stir up fear and hatred of an enemy at home.

The investigations began even before the United States entered the war against Germany. The Woodrow Wilson administration (1913-1921) declared American neutrally as soon as the war broke out in Europe, July-August 1914. While many of the American people supported neutrality, a sizable portion favored the Allies—Britain, France, Belgium, Russia, and Italy. However, a significant number of Americans applauded the Allies' enemies, the Central Powers—especially Germany and Austro-Hungary. This division reflected the United States' history of immigration, accepting immigrants from all over Europe. German-speaking residents were one of the largest immigrant groups in the United States. Out of a total population of over 92,000,000, the 1910-census counted eight million who were either born in Germany or had at least one German-born parent.⁴ Many cities had a *Kleindeutschland*, a 'Little Germany.' Baltimore had a large German population, as did Philadelphia, not

to mention New York and Midwestern cities such as Milwaukee, Cincinnati, and St Louis. In Washington, DC the 1910 census found 5,179 German-born residents with another 13,000 with at least one German-born parent.⁵ This was a small percentage of the total population of 330,000, but it still made Germans the second-largest foreign-born group in Washington, only a bit behind the Irish (5347).⁶ Alexandria County had only 123 residents born in Germany as well as twenty born in Austria-Hungary and one in Turkey.⁷

With significant numbers of foreign-born residents and citizens, the United States was divided over the war and tensions between the pro-Allied and the pro-German groups often ran high, such as in May 1915 when the German submarine U-20 sank the British passenger liner Lusitania, killing over 1,200 including 128 Americans. Increasingly, however, the American public began to turn towards favoring Britain and its cohorts, and those who continued to support Germany became increasingly isolated. The German government in Berlin made the situation worse. Their efforts to sway American opinion to favor Germany were underfunded, clumsy, and often incompetent, especially compared to British efforts, and probably alienated many more Americans than they convinced. Brutal treatment by the German Army of occupied Belgium and actions such as sinking the Lusitania only made matters worse.⁸

Moreover, the intelligence agencies of Germany and Austria-Hungary were active in the United States trying to not only spread propaganda, but to hinder their enemies' efforts to buy American arms and other war supplies. The British Navy's blockade prevented Germany from importing American-made weapons and ammunition. As a result, German and Austrian agents were active in the United States trying to prevent the Allies from benefiting from the strength of American industries. Their actions included operating sabotage rings which were successful in starting fires in American munitions factories and on allied cargo ships carrying supplies to Europe. German agents turned interned German ships in Baltimore into bomb factories using German sailors as labor to make incendiary devices. Sympathetic dock workers along the East

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Coast would smuggle the small bombs into the holds of allied cargo ships. One German-American agent, working out of Front Royal, Virginia, spread anthrax and glanders among horses being shipped from Virginia to the Allies in an early form of germ warfare.⁹ Many of these activities became public knowledge in late 1915, when a sleepy German diplomat dozed off on a New York City elevated train and lost his briefcase full of files detailing his actions. An outraged Wilson administration leaked the files to the press. So as the United States grew closer to entering the war in February and March 1917, much of the American populace was already prepared to expect to find German-speaking spies and saboteurs in great numbers in their midst.

Violations of American neutrality were investigated by either the Secret Service, which fell under the authority of Secretary of the Treasury, William McAdoo, or to the Justice Department's Bureau of Investigation (BOI), under Attorney General Thomas Gregory. Locally the BOI took the lead in investigating reports. They were more reactive than active. Instead of starting investigations on their own initiative they tended to rely on tips from concerned, suspicious, and sometimes paranoid citizens. Never numbering more than 300 agents nationwide, the BOI was overwhelmed by thousands of tips and by the crushing responsibilities laid on them by Congress: maintaining records on all "enemy aliens," searching for men who did not register for the draft ("slackers,") investigating bank fraud, and any other cases that seemed to fit under their somewhat ambiguous if lengthy list of responsibilities. As a result the Bureau turned to a private organization, the American Protective League (APL), for additional investigators. Founded in Chicago in March 1917, the APL provided a quarter-million volunteers. Unfortunately, while eager, they were untrained and often went without supervision. The APL's zeal to find subversives, slackers, and spies often resulted in wholesale civil rights violations.¹⁰

The District of Columbia was of special interest to the BOI because of its status as the nation's capital, as well as the presence of military installations such as the Navy Yard that lay within its boundaries. Alexandria County was not immune either. The county's population was about 15,000, a small fraction of DC's 300,000.¹¹ It was still mostly farmland at the time, although its population was growing, and several suburbs had already been established. However, Fort Myer was located in the county. It held Quarters One, the home of the U.S. Army Chief of Staff, and housed several engineering, artillery, and chemical warfare units, as well as a trench-system training grounds where French officers taught the Americans about trench warfare. Finally, the "Three Sisters," a trio of US Navy radio towers that allowed radio communication across the Atlantic, towered over the area. As such, there were targets that would be of interest to any genuine enemy spies or saboteurs in the county.

The surviving records of the Bureau contain the reports made by their investigators, as well as some of the letters they received by would-be tipsters. These files illustrate the types of behaviors that were regarded as suspicious during the First World War and what type of activities could make one a target of an investigation. It was not difficult to come under official scrutiny under wartime conditions. After the United States entered the war in April 1917, President Wilson issued two executive orders barring "enemy aliens," defined at first as male German citizens fourteen years or older, from the District. By the end of 1917, citizens of Germany were forbidden to enter the District of Columbia or from being within one hundred yards of any canal, dock, or pier used for shipping anywhere in the country. There were additional restrictions as well. They could not possess a wireless radio. No enemy aliens, the proclamation ruled, "shall ascend into the air in any airplane, balloon, airship, or flying machine." Enemy aliens had to register with the US Attorney General and receive permission to move or to travel. Even local moves were illegal without permission.¹² The restrictions exempted men who were physically or mentally incapacitated as well as some residents of Washington's Veteran's Home.¹³

In addition, the Espionage and Sedition Acts made criticism of the war, of the US government, or of the draft, a felony punishable by jail time and a hefty fine. The first military draft since the Civil War required young men to resist, and trying to avoid the draft was a crime as well as encouraging others to do so. Finally, the Committee on Public Information (the Creel Committee) produced a plethora of articles, movies, songs, cartoons, pamphlets, editorials, anything they could think of, to convince Americans that Germany was a threat to the very existence of the United States and that anything other than 100% support for the war was un-American. As a result, with some exceptions, the American people were whipped into a patriotic frenzy and tolerance for even the smallest sign of dissent disappeared. In this heated atmosphere, it did not take much to spark an investigation into someone by the Bureau.

In January 1918 for example, Arlington resident Adolph Bahr, accused by another county resident of being a "German enemy," came under the Bureau's scrutiny. The initial reports on Bahr were mixed. The investigator questioned local postmaster Mrs. Cora MacIntosh first. This was a common practice, as in many small communities the postmaster was assumed to know everyone in the area. Mrs. MacIntosh thought Bahr a bit of a "grouch." Other residents were more positive, and none thought he was dangerous although at least one witness claimed that Bahr had told them he had served in the German Army. Some of Bahr's neighbors took the opportunity to report two other local men they felt were German enemy aliens. However, in his report the agent noted that these men had already been investigated. One was a naturalized citizen and the sec-

ond was a Civil War veteran. In the end the Bureau received confirmation from immigration authorities that Bahr was a Swiss citizen, not an “enemy alien.”¹⁴

What prompted the investigation into Bahr in the first place? Joseph Sweeney, who lived near Columbia Pike, had seen Bahr entering DC from Arlington. Taking him to be German, Sweeney asked Bahr if he was a naturalized citizen. Bahr replied that he was not, and was happy he was not as he could not fight against Germany.¹⁵ Aside from the statement about the war, why was Sweeney so concerned that Bahr was going into DC? If Bahr, or any other resident of the county were a German citizen, then just walking onto a bridge connecting Arlington with DC was a federal crime.¹⁶ Because Bahr was a Swiss citizen he was exempt from this restriction.

Unfortunately, some records are missing, so we cannot always know what triggered a specific investigation. For example, in September 1918 a northern Virginia gardener named Joseph Nohlens was placed in custody by agents from “Naval Intelligence” and the BOI. He was held by police overnight until he could be questioned. The report detailing why he was arrested is lost, but it may be as simple as someone heard him speaking German, or making what someone thought was a “pro-German” remark.

Under questioning Nohlens insisted he was Swiss and not German. He had been in the United States for twelve years but did not own a passport to prove it. He was detained until the Swiss Legation sent a representative to affirm that he was indeed a Swiss citizen, not a German.¹⁷

If Nohlens was reported simply because he was heard speaking German, he was not alone. Throughout the United States the German language itself was under attack. A few states tried to ban its use in public. German language newspapers had to provide English translations of their articles to the government. Many schools stopped teaching it. In the DC schools, which were attended by many Arlington students, enrollment in German language classes dropped while attendance in French and Spanish classes correspondingly increased.¹⁸

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Sometimes an investigation was sparked by what might be considered suspicious activity even under normal circumstances. For example, in April 1917, only days after the United States declared war on Germany, Bureau agent Jessie Wilson investigated reports that a car was regularly stopping along the Alexandria Pike, what is now South Arlington Ridge Road, and two men would then carry a “suspicious-looking box” into the nearby woods. Agent Wilson walked up to the spot where the car reportedly stopped to interview the teachers and students at the nearby Hume School.¹⁹ The school was closed for Easter, but Wilson talked to some of the neighbors. Miss Matilda Gardner, who lived next door, told Wilson that she had not seen the car in question, but that there were “bad conditions” along that route, including bootleggers, and a “disreputable house” (i.e. a brothel) had operated the previous summer in a nearby home. Wilson questioned another neighbor, Mrs. Frank Campbell, whose grandchildren attended the school. Mrs. Campbell told Wilson that every day a man and woman parked nearby and went into the woods together. The man always carried a wooden box and they always headed to the nearby Aurora Hills Water Tower. Another neighbor, a chicken farmer named Mrs. F. B. Clark, told the agent “a great many automobiles stopped along the woods above her house all times of the day and night, their occupants going into the woods.” She also told Wilson that a couple weeks previously her son had “met a man and a woman in the woods, and was driven away by the man.”²⁰

Wilson went into the woods and found the water tower. He noted that while there was no evidence of wires attached to the tower, “there was an iron ladder leading to the top, and it appeared to me to be an advantageous place for a wireless station.” Wireless was a new technology, increasingly popular with hobbyists. In the coming months individual owners of wireless sets would be required to have them inspected, and Germans living in the United States were forbidden to own one at all. Wilson’s concern over the water tower fit the fears of the period. What, however, about the man and woman carrying a box into the woods near the Hume School? The Arlington Ridge overlooks DC and it was an advantageous spot to see the whole city. Indeed, in 1920 “The Little Tea House” restaurant opened just a third of a mile north from the Hume School and was popular with courting couples wishing for a romantic candle-lit dinner overlooking the night lights of the capital. Later, Miss Gardner called Agent Wilson to report that the man seen going into the woods with a black box was a news photographer trying to get photos of President Wilson playing golf at a nearby course. The spy was actually a member of the paparazzi.²¹

To be swept up in an investigation often meant having potentially embarrassing information come to light. For example, an inquiry into a man with a foreign wife in DC revealed a hidden identity used by a Ballston man to hide

a possibly illicit relationship. The investigation began in June 1917 for reasons that remain unclear.²² A man going by the name Dave Gardener was living in the 1100 block of P Street NW in Washington with a “foreign woman, supposedly his wife.” They had arrived in March 1917, and claimed to have come from Florida. Searching Gardener’s room, BOI Agent J. B. Wolverton “saw pictures in their room” which seemed to verify the Florida story. Wolverton noted that the couple’s luggage was limited to a large, cheaply made, beat-up suitcase. Because they seemed to have few possessions it was likely assumed they had little money. A few weeks before, however, the couple had purchased an automobile, which raised suspicions. Gardner and the woman left the house every morning about 9:00 am, and were at home at night “when not automobile riding.” Every weekend they were gone, “saying they go camping.” The agent described Gardner as about forty-five years old, about 5’ 11” with light brown hair that was “going gray.” He had a “slight build, prominent nose, scar, or dimple on chin,” and a “broad and pleasing smile which seems to be characteristic.” As for his wife, who is unnamed in the report, “she is Swedish, not at all good looking, has a large mouth.” Her name, they soon discovered, was Clare Stalder, and she was the daughter of a wealthy Swiss, not Swedish, industrialist.²³

The investigation turned up a suspicious detail. One DC neighbor reported that he knew Gardner as a Clyde Gideon, that they had grown up together, but that when he called out to him by that name, the man had turned away and hurried inside.²⁴ Finding a letter in Gardener’s apartment addressed to a “Clyde Gideon” in Ballston, the Bureau questioned the assistant postmaster in Ballston, a Mrs. White. She reported that a man named Frank Clyde Gideon was a local, and was related to the “best people” in the area. Was Gideon also Gardner? On July 21 a Post Office inspector issued a report on Gideon that seemed to indicate that Gideon and Gardner were the same man. The inspector reported that the suspect drove a Studebaker with both DC and Virginia license plates. The “woman living with him as his wife” rented a mailbox at the Eleventh Street Station and claimed to be a schoolteacher in Ballston. The BOI investigators could find no evidence that there was a local teacher named either Gideon or Gardner. She provided references, a Doctor R. H. Sutton in Clarendon (Gideon’s brother-in-law) and F.C. Gideon of Ballston, her husband. However, the suspicious agent reported, they had just gotten back from a trip and Mrs. Gideon was overheard to say that they had “secured a good harbor scene.”²⁵ Confusingly, one of the Gideon’s Ballston neighbors reported that when she asked Mrs. Gideon who she used as a governess to care for their children, Mrs. Gideon told her the governess was a Mrs. Gardner.²⁶

Several Bureau agents searched Gideon’s apartment in DC on July 25, 1917. Two different agents submitted reports about the search, but the reports

contradict each other. One report, by J.B. Wolverton, noted that they found numerous pamphlets in German, but that they were only Swiss Christian religious tracts and Wolverton considered the investigation closed.²⁷

Agent J.E. Elliott's report from the same date noted that the agents found plans and maps which had nothing to do with the war, but were for a new bank being built. Gideon was an architect so this was not necessarily suspicious. However, Elliott reported that the couple were taken into custody and charged with violation of the "Kenyon Law." The Kenyon Red Light Law was designed to close "disorderly houses" and the couple was probably charged on suspicion that they were living together without being married.²⁸ There is, however, no notice of a court appearance or conviction in the Washington newspapers, suggesting the case never went to trial. Gideon was known in Ballston and, as the Postmaster said, was related to the "best people" there. Another witness described Gideon's "people" as "quite well to do."²⁹ Perhaps the charges were dropped rather than embarrass a local influential family. That might also explain why one agent's report made no mention of the arrest.

Why was Gideon using a false name to rent an apartment in Washington? His family was from Ballston, but lived in Florida at this time. He had married Mehitabel "Hetty" Ann Crary in 1900 and they had three children. Hetty died in 1915³⁰ and the children were apparently living in Florida. Perhaps Gideon was living with Clare and only claiming to be married, hiding it from family. The Bureau's files contain a copy of a 1916 letter the man received from an old flame informing him that she was getting a divorce and that she would like to see him sometime;³¹ although it's not certain if this letter was sent by Clare, but it seems likely.³² In any event the investigation uncovered not a spy ring, but a complicated romantic relationship.

The Gideon's were not the only romantic couple to attract the attentions of BOI investigators looking for suspicious activities. They received a complaint from a Mr. Butterfield that he travelled down a road on US military land between the Arlington Experimental Station and Arlington National Cemetery with his wife and children at night and that cars were always parked along the route in the dark. The Alexandria County Sheriff, Howard Fields, refused to act noting that the land was a military reservation and not under his jurisdiction. In July 1917 several BOI investigators patrolled the "military road." It was, the report notes, a "dark and stormy night" and they "saw about a dozen or more automobiles parked with the side curtains drawn, and in some cases the lights were extinguished." They roused several couples in disheveled clothing, telling them to leave. In one case they questioned the couple and found the woman was a married nurse from a local hospital and the man was not her husband, but her date. Both claimed that no money had changed hands, but the man offered the

agent \$5.00 to let them go. Instead the agents took the couple into temporary custody until their names and places of employment could be verified. The report concluded "The writer believes that some action should be taken in cases of this kind as it seems to be a frequent occurrence for Washington joy riders to use this particular road for such purposes."³³

The Bureau in this case was probably not expecting to find German spies, but prostitutes. There was a nationwide concerted campaign in 1917 to close red light districts that might tempt young American soldiers. All "disorderly houses" or places serving alcohol within five miles of any US military facility, which would have included Fort Myer and the Navy Yard, were closed. The 1918 Chamberlain-Kahn Act allowed officials to intern women suspected of having a venereal disease. These restrictions were the culmination of an existing anti "white slavery" movement in the United States which closed brothels throughout the country, such as Randall Mackey's "cleaning up" Rosslyn in 1904. They did not, however, end prostitution, instead forcing the women underground and onto the streets. Questioning the nurse and her date about the possible exchange of money suggests the agents were concerned that the couple was a prostitute and her client.³⁴

Other investigations were not nearly so dramatic. The BOI was also responsible for tracking down draft dodgers, known at the time as "slackers." The initial draft law, passed in June 1917, required all men who were US citizens between the ages of 21 and 31 to register for the draft. Some exemptions were reluctantly granted, including a provision for religious objections to war. In practice the government was loath to grant these exceptions, expecting all those eligible to register. The BOI received an average of 1,500 tips a day,³⁵ most of which concerned "slackers." Overwhelmed by the volume, the BOI increasingly relied on its eager amateur volunteers in the ADL, who looked into even the scantest of charges. Moreover, the investigations assumed the guilt of the accused unless they could prove their innocence. Woe to the man who did not carry his draft registration card when confronted by a duly-appointed agent of the BOI or the ADL.

Special attention was paid to African-American men as rumors spread that the Germans were trying to instigate a race war with blacks attacking whites. In June 1917 the Birmingham, Alabama office of the BOI reported that "labor agents were telling blacks that if they went north they would not be drafted." The Cincinnati office was concerned that the arrival of seven hundred black workers was a sign that Germans in the city were recruiting them.³⁶ The African-American community itself was divided over the war. Some black leaders, such as WEB DuBois, argued that African-Americans should support the war, thus making it harder for whites to deny black citizens their rights. Others argued

that the Germans had done nothing to hurt African-Americans, and that the European powers with colonies in Africa deserved no sympathy. For many African-Americans their attitude towards the draft was not so much hostility as apathy. Nonetheless, over 350,000 African-Americans served in the American Army and Navy between 1917 and 1919.³⁷

In June 1918 BOI investigators showed up in Roanoke, Virginia looking for an African-American man from Arlington's Nauck neighborhood,³⁸ William F. Powell, who was suspected of having failed to register for the draft. The agents found Powell working in the railway yards. He was carrying a registration card, but the last name "Powell" had been added in "strange, poor, handwriting." The card showed he had registered at "Four Mile Run, Alexandria, Virginia, South Washington Town." Powell claimed to be exempt because he was supporting his mother and siblings. He'd also only been married about three months, so he had a wife to support. The agents were suspicious that the card had been altered and followed Powell to his apartment where he claimed to have his exemption documents. Unable to find them, Powell was taken into custody and the Bureau investigators telegraphed Arlington for confirmation.³⁹ They did not get corroboration that Powell was exempt. Instead Arlington Selective Service officials sent not an exemption, but induction papers. Powell passed his physical that afternoon and was sent to basic training the next day.⁴⁰ His treatment was not atypical. In southern cities black men arrested for draft-dodging could expect to spend time in jail before being inducted. In northern cities they were more likely to be inducted into the military immediately. Cities in the upper south, such as Roanoke and Norfolk, fell somewhere between the two, jailing the suspected slacker briefly before induction.⁴¹

The accused could provide other evidence besides the draft registration card: he could present documentation proving he was not liable to register. In June 1917, only days after the registration law went into effect, county resident W.H. Johnson was taken for questioning by the BOI. Claiming he was too old to have to register, Johnson proved his innocence by showing the investigators a tax record from 1906 and a family Bible showing his birthday as July 19, 1884. The tax record was probably the more convincing of the two. You had to be at least 21 years of age in 1906 to pay Virginia taxes, so Johnson had to be at least 32 years old in 1917 when the draft started, thus he was exempt as the age limit stopped at 31. His case was dismissed.⁴²

Even after the war was over, men were still liable to prove they had registered for the draft. In September 1919, acting on an anonymous tip, two BOI investigators went to the Southern Railway offices at 13th and Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, to confront Clarendon resident James Dorsey. The matter was quickly resolved as Dorsey was still carrying his draft registration card. The

fact that the BOI followed up on such information ten months after the fighting had ended and three months after the peace treaty was signed shows how seriously the Bureau took such charges. The fact that Dorsey was still carrying his card suggests that men were aware they might still be asked to produce it.⁴³

The initial panic over German spies and saboteurs subsided by 1918, but the hatred of anything German and the hunt for slackers and dissidents continued. No actual spy rings were uncovered in Arlington, nor were German saboteurs thwarted. The Bureau of Investigation did find at least one man who may have been trying to avoid the draft—Mr. Powell working in Roanoke—but that was it. At most they uncovered some questionable marital relationships and some possible rum-running along the Arlington Ridge. The investigations were, however, a symptom of a larger problem. The fear and anger stirred up by the US government towards Germany in order to unify the country during the war ended up turning many Americans against German residents in the United States and even against American citizens of German descent. Rousting necking couples parked along the military road is amusing in hindsight, but elsewhere in the country people lost their jobs, were physically attacked, and in one case, even lynched because they were German, spoke German, or someone thought they “looked German.” How terrified and humiliated was the young nurse confronted by BOI agents along a dark road that night in 1917? How many Arlington residents found themselves facing rumors spread by their neighbors that they were being investigated for being disloyal? Moreover, in the end, not a single German spy or saboteur was convicted under the Espionage and Sedition Acts.⁴⁴

The emotions stirred by the war did not disappear once the war was over. They found new outlets in anti-immigrant laws and the explosive growth of the Ku Klux Klan.⁴⁵ Existing even in Arlington, the Klan considered themselves to be a morality police and like the APL investigated those who were reported to be “un-American”, those who were violating liquor laws, or were caught parking in the dark along a country road to make-out with their date. Relying on rumors and amateur tips the anti-German campaign turned from a legitimate concern over German spies and saboteurs into a campaign against those who did not fit the majority’s idea of what was “normal.” It’s a reminder of what can happen when fear drives policy, the difficulty in channeling heated emotions towards genuine threats, and how hard it can be to stem those passions once they’ve been awakened.

Footnotes/Bibliography

- ¹ Created in 1908, it became the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) in 1935.
- ² Mark Ellis, *Race, War, and Surveillance: African-Americans and the United States Government during World War I* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), xvii.
- ³ What is now Arlington County was known as Alexandria County until 1920. I will occasionally use the term “Arlington” to avoid confusion with Alexandria City when necessary.
- ⁴ US Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States* (1910), vol. I.
- ⁵ ‘The District of Columbia’ *1910 Census Report*, Chapter 1, Table 5 ‘Foreign White Stock by Nationality’ p. 291.
- ⁶ *Abstract of the Thirteenth Census, 1910* (Washington, 1913), p. 210.
- ⁷ *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910: Statistics for Virginia*, (Washington, 1913), Table L, 590. There were no Alexandria County residents born in the remaining Central Power, Bulgaria.
- ⁸ See Chad R. Fulwider, *German Propaganda and U.S. Neutrality in World War I*, (University of Missouri, 2016)
- ⁹ Robert Koenig, *The Four Horsemen: One Man’s Mission to Wage The Great War in America*, (New York, 2006), pp. 201-203.; Theodore Kornweibel, Jr., *Investigate Everything: Federal Efforts to Compel Black Loyalty during World War I* (Bloomington, IN, 2002), p. 200.
- ¹⁰ James S. Pula, “Bruce Bielaski and the Origin of the FBI” *Polish American Studies* 68/1 (2011) 49, 54-56.
- ¹¹ C. B. Rose, Jr. *Arlington County, Virginia: A History*, (Baltimore: Port City Press, 1976), 156. The 1917 population is estimated using the official census counts of 6,430 in 1910 and 16,040 in 1920.
- ¹² ‘By the President of the United States of America A Proclamation’ *The Washington Post*, 20 November 1917, p. 4.; Annual Report of the Attorney General, p. 30.; Women were added in 1918, which affected American-born wives of German citizens, but not German-born wives of American citizens.
- ¹³ William Barnes Glidden, ‘Causalities of Caution: Alien Enemies in America, 1917-1919’ (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1970), 104.
- ¹⁴ G.L. Wallace, “In RE: Adolph Bahr, (alleged German Enemy) 11 January 1918, RG 65.2.2 ‘Old German Files’ NARA.; G.L. Wallace, no title, 11 January 1918, RG 65.2.2 ‘Old German Files’ NARA.; They did not resolve the question of whether Bahr had been a member of the German Army, which was possible for a Swiss citizen. Note: the acronym NARA refers to the National Archives and Research Administration.
- ¹⁵ George W. Lillard “RE: One Bahr (Alien Enemy Visiting the District) 7 January 1918, RG 65.2.2 ‘Old German Files’ NARA.
- ¹⁶ The District’s boundary with Virginia extends to the low water line on the Virginia side. As a result most of the span of the bridges connecting the two lie within DC.
- ¹⁷ W.W. Wright ‘Joseph Nohlens (Alleged Enemy Alien)’ 27 September 1918, RG 65.2.2 ‘Old German Files’ NARA. The fact that he did not have a passport was not that unusual. Formal passports were just coming into common usage in the early Twentieth Century, and immigrants often did not have one.
- ¹⁸ “Classes in German Drop off at High Schools” *Evening Star*, 28 December 1917, 10.; Arlington did not yet have its own high school, so many Arlington students attended DC high schools instead.
- ¹⁹ The Hume School is now home to the Arlington Historical Society.
- ²⁰ Jesse H. Wilson “RE: General Neutrality Matter” 9 April 1917, RG 65.2.2 ‘Old German Files’ NARA.
- ²¹ Ibid.
- ²² The information that lead the BOI to open the case is not in the surviving files. The man, whose real name was Francis Clyde Gideon, was not German, but his wife was Swiss and if she spoke German that

may well have been sufficient.

²³ J.B. Wolverton, "RE: Dave Gardner" alias Clyde Gideon-Suspect" 30 June 1917, RG 65.2.2 'Old German Files' NARA. The BOI agents misspelled his name, adding an extra "d" in every report.

²⁴ J.B. Wolverton, "RE: Dave Gardner" alias Clyde Gideon-Suspect" 30 June 1917, RG 65.2.2 'Old German Files' NARA.

²⁵ "Memorandum for Mr. Lillard" 21 July 1917, RG 65.2.2 'Old German Files' NARA.

²⁶ J.B. Wolverton "RE: F. Clyde Gideon (Suspect)" 24 July 1917, RG 65.2.2 'Old German Files' NARA.

²⁷ J.B. Wolverton "RE: F. Clyde Gideon, Alias Dave Gardner and C.D. Stalder (Suspects)" 27 July 1917, RG 65.2.2 'Old German Files' NARA.; J.B. Wolverton "RE: Clyde Gideon and Claire Doris Stalder (Suspects)" 17 September 1917, , RG 65.2.2 'Old German Files' NARA.; D.B. Clark "RE: F. Clyde Gideon, Alias Dave Gardner and C.D. Stalder (Suspects)" 27 July 1917, RG 65.2.2 'Old German Files' NARA

²⁸ J.E. Elliott "RE: Clyde F. Gideon (Alias Dave Gardner) and Clare Doris Stalder 24 July 1917.

²⁹ J.B. Wolverton "RE: F. Clyde Gideon (Suspect)" 24 July 1917, RG 65.2.2 'Old German Files' NARA.

³⁰ <http://person.ancestry.com/tree/74038875/person/40287954811/facts> (accessed 19 May, 2016).

³¹ J.B. Wolverton "RE: Dave Gardner-Alias Clyde Gideon - (Suspect)" 2 July 1917, RG 65.2.2 'Old German Files' NARA.

³² The fact that Gideon kept the letter suggests it was from Stalder. Unfortunately it's signed with a nickname, possibly "Dodie" or "Dorie" which could be a nickname for "Doris," Stalder's middle name. The letter notes that "Papa" is getting her a divorce. Since the letter is dated September 1916 it's possible that it was written by Clare, and that her divorce was not yet final. His draft registration card from September 1918 lists his father as his nearest relative suggesting he was not married even then.

³³ J.E. Elliott "Conditions on Military Road, Roslyn, VA" 16 July 1917, RG 65.2.2 'Old German Files' NARA. The nurse told the investigators that her husband had earlier abandoned her.

³⁴ Mara Laura Keire, *For Business and Pleasure: Red-Light Districts and the Regulation of Vice in the United States, 1890-1933*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 2010) 105.

³⁵ Ellis, xvii.

³⁶ Ellis, 21-22.

³⁷ Kornweibel, 80-81.

³⁸ He had registered at a station listed as "Four Mile Run." Arlington neighborhoods were segregated, and Nauck was next to Four Mile Run. Founded in 1844, Nauck was the county's oldest black neighborhood.

³⁹ T.S. Marshall "In Re: William F. Powell, Colored, Roanoke, VA, Vic. Sec, 6, S.S.R." 24 July 1918, RG 65.2.2 'Old German Files' NARA.

⁴⁰ T.S. Marshall "In Re: William F. Powell, Colored, Roanoke, VA, Vic. Sec, 6, S.S.R." 28 July, 1918, RG 65.2.2 'Old German Files' NARA. The information was dated 5 June and 18 June respectively, but the reports were typed and submitted in July.

⁴¹ Kornweibel, 103.

⁴² Manuel de Agüero, "RE: W.H. Johnson (alleged Attempt to Evade Registration)," 9 June 1917, RG 65.2.2 'Old German Files' NARA.

⁴³ G.L. Wallace, "In Re: James W. Dorsey, An Alleged Slacker" 27 September 1919, RG 65.2.2 'Old German Files' NARA.

⁴⁴ Jörg Nagler, "Victims of the Home Front: Enemy Aliens in the United States during the First World War" in *Minorities in Wartime* Panayi, ed. (Oxford: Berg, 1993), 200.

⁴⁵ Janet Wamsley, "The Ku Klux Klan in Arlington" *The Arlington History Magazine* 10/1 (1993) 55-59.

About the author

Mark Benbow is Assistant Professor of American History at Marymount University, and has been the AHS Museum Director since 2011. This is the third article he has published in the AHS Magazine.



Courtesy of Marshall Meyers

The Meyers family owned the property, (that is now the Gulf Branch Nature Center) from 1937-44.