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Shifting Loyalties: Military Service, German-American Identity, and Photography in the First World War¹

The one-hundredth anniversary of the Great War is generating renewed interest in the U.S. and its citizens in the conflict. The war years were particularly difficult for people of German descent who found their culture condemned and their loyalty questioned, and scholars have written volumes on the subject. It is clear from these works that German culture—language, religion, and social practices in particular—lost many practitioners as a result of overzealous American patriots who attacked them as un-American.¹ But the anniversary of the First World War offers an opportunity to reconsider these conclusions and how different sources and approaches might add new dimensions to the existing story of German-Americans during the war.

While some scholars assess information from different areas of the country as a way to articulate a general German-American experience, others acknowledge that no singular story can attest to the diversity of responses to the war with Germany. Studies of places including Philadelphia, Chicago, and, more recently, several counties in Missouri find that local circumstances influenced rates of persecution and the fate of German culture and ethnic identity in these particular locales.² They point out the need for scholars to focus on one particular city or area in order to more accurately assess German-Americans' experiences and the fate of German culture and identity.

What these studies fail to consider, however, are photographs. During the war it became difficult and even dangerous for German-Americans to maintain their German cultural practices, for they risked incurring accusations of disloyalty. Several scholars claim that the decline in the number of German-language publications, churches, schools, businesses, and social organizations

indicates that German-Americans abandoned their German cultural identities and assimilated fully into American society.³ But photographs, a seemingly benign medium that purported to record reality, were not typically scrutinized as sites of identity expression. However, photographers could manipulate their images' contents to convey particular messages about their cultural and national belonging.⁴ Photographs therefore served as a safe space in which German-Americans could express their identities without fear of repercussions in a hyper-patriotic U.S. While newspapers, letters, and the other textual materials scholars have traditionally relied upon are important sources of information on German culture, they are unable to articulate the visual elements of German-American identity. At a time when cameras were readily available to members of the American public, photographs, like documents, warrant examination as sites of identity expression.

The constructed meaning in photographs can be discerned by reading each image in the context of its creation. Or, as cultural historian Martha Sandweiss so eloquently states, an image, as a primary source, is "tangled in the dense time-bound web" formed by the "circumstances of its making, the photographer's intent, the public function of the image, [and] the ways in which it was received and understood by contemporary audiences."⁵ Photographs taken by and of German-Americans during the First World War are therefore not merely benign pictures of people and places; rather, they are products of the discourse on German-American culture and American patriotism in particular places and at particular moments. During the hostile, anti-German climate of the war years, photographs became important sites of German-American identity formation, yet they have not been given serious scholarly attention as sources of important knowledge about war and ethnic identity.

Consider the photographs taken by German-Americans Emil Osiek and John Philip Hoehn. Osiek snapped pictures of his Navy transport ship and his visits to French ports, Paris, and the battlefields at Soissons, France. After his service ended, he mounted his 271 photographs in an album he entitled "U.S. Navy Treasures" and wrote captions detailing the places and people he encountered during his time as a Navy musician.⁶ Hoehn likewise recorded his service through photographs. As a Private in the U.S. Army of Occupation, he took artistic photographs of the German Rhineland where he was stationed. He wrote captions directly on the faces of his images and used thirteen of the thirty-nine as illustrations on homemade postcards. The remaining photographs were compiled in a box with no discernable order.⁷ Through these personal photographs and their captions, Osiek and Hoehn created narratives of their particular experiences in the First World War as German-American servicemen.

Military service put these German-Americans in contact with places, people, and cultures they were previously isolated from by geography. By recording their interactions abroad, Osiek and Hoehn's photographs resemble the travel writings of European subjects who wrote about their encounters with foreign people and cultures in their nations' colonies. The interactions between these European travelers and the institutions, cultures, and governments of colonized nations helped them to foster an identity in relation to these foreign places they then shared with their imperial nations through their writing.⁸ Osiek and Hoehn, like the European travel writers, also defined themselves in opposition to their foreign environments. Each time Osiek and Hoehn took a photograph, they reformulated their identities in response to their locations and experiences in the dynamic context of their war service.

Osiek and Hoehn's photographs offer an interesting case study because of the photographers' hyphenated German-American identities. Both men were lifetime residents of St. Charles, a small, majority-German-American city located about twenty miles west of St. Louis in Missouri. Like many of their community members, Osiek and Hoehn were hyphenated Americans, meaning that they were loyal American citizens who maintained cultural ties to Germany through their use of the German language, their membership in ethnic German churches, and their education at German parochial schools.⁹ The war between the U.S. and Germany pitted their political homeland against their cultural fatherland and led to the persecution of German culture and its practitioners throughout the U.S. In St. Charles, however, German-Americans experienced little pressure to give up their German practices because of the city's German-American majority. But the Selective Service Act forced many residents to fight against German citizens, which challenged their abilities to maintain their dual loyalties and hyphenated identities. Osiek and Hoehn's photographic narratives present an opportunity to examine their memories of their war service and the ideas about the war, their actions in the fight against Germany, and their identities that these pictures convey.

One would think that fighting for the U.S. against Germany in the Great War would have forced German-Americans to assimilate, but Osiek and Hoehn's photographs counter this assumption. Instead, their photographs convey carefully-constructed American *and* German components of their identities that do not conflict with or negate one another. Both German-Americans took some photographs whose subjects were typical of American G.I. images. But others conveyed particular ideas about their American and German identities. Osiek defined himself in opposition to the defeated Germans he encountered in France, which emphasized his identity as an American serviceman. Yet his images also allowed him to distinguish his ethnic

Germanness from the German government and its military agents that he opposed as a loyal American citizen. Hoehn's photographs of the Rhineland region of Germany where his ancestors once lived express his German cultural and familial roots. The picturesque views of villages and landmarks capture the beauty of this area that remained untouched by the war and convey a sense of pride in being German that remained despite his participation in the fight against Germany. These German-Americans did not abandon their ethnic identities during their service in the U.S. military; instead, their photographs reveal elements of both loyalty to the U.S. and preservation of their German cultural practices. One element of their identities was at times emphasized over the other, but they did so without violating the suppressed component. These German-Americans' identities not only survived the First World War, but they were formed and expressed in response to circumstances created by the war.

Osiek and Hoehn, though both German-Americans from St. Charles, had very different experiences during the Great War. Osiek enlisted in the U.S. Navy in July 1918 at the age of twenty-one and passed an examination to become a Musician First Class. The Navy assigned him to Goat Island Naval Training Station in San Francisco, California, where he remained until after the armistice. Between January and September of 1919, Osiek made six round-trip voyages to France aboard the *U.S.S. Mercury*, transporting American soldiers and Marines back home to the U.S. after the fighting ended. As a musician, Osiek spent the majority of his time on duty playing his clarinet in small concerts for officers and as part of big bands for ship-wide dances to entertain the crew and servicemen during the twelve-day, transatlantic voyages. Osiek documented seemingly every aspect of his service, including the *Mercury* crew, the ships and docks he saw from on board the ship, and the cities, monuments, and museums he visited while on shore leave in France.¹⁰ His neat and orderly album embodied the safety and calm of his post-war service.

Hoehn, on the other hand, was the first man drafted from St. Charles. He requested an exemption from military service, claiming that his small build made him physically unfit for the Army, a weak excuse that suggests he was trying to avoid serving in the U.S. military. His exemption was of course denied, and he left for training camp in October 1917 at the age of twenty-two. Ironically, his excellent shooting abilities earned him a transfer into a regular Army unit, and he fought in all five major U.S. offensives in the war. During the heavy fighting in the Argonne Forest, Hoehn was separated from his unit and listed as Missing in Action for nearly a month. Despite his lengthy service on the front lines, his archive of images does not include any of the fighting; instead, his photographs are limited to his Army training at Camp

Funston, Kansas, and his post-armistice service in the German Rhineland.¹¹ Hoehn's unorganized box of photographs reflected the disorder and chaos that characterized his military service on the front lines. The two German-Americans served in different branches of the military and in different locales, and the form and content of their visual narratives embodied the different contexts and circumstances of their war service.

Despite the differences in Osiek and Hoehn's Great War military service, their photographs shared a few characteristics that marked them in part as typical American G.I. war narratives. First, both Osiek and Hoehn took photographs at their U.S. camps that documented their new surroundings in the military. Historian Mark Meigs argues that soldiers recorded their adventures during the war as a way to both participate in the mass event and preserve their individuality.¹² Drafted servicemen from St. Charles exemplified this trend by describing their new living quarters and jobs in letters they sent home in the fall of 1917. Osiek and Hoehn similarly documented their training camps through photographs.¹³ In one image, Hoehn captured a semi-birds-eye view of Camp Funston from atop an adjacent hill. Long, two-story buildings nearly filled the image, starting at the base of the hill and fading into the distance. The buildings were interrupted only by square open spaces, presumably used for drilling and training soldiers. Likewise, Osiek photographed the neat, uniform rows of white tents arranged around a central three-story building at Goat Island.¹⁴ Both of these images depicted Hoehn and Osiek's living quarters and training facilities, surroundings that were foreign to them and therefore warranted photographic documentation as part of their new experiences in the military.

At the same time, the way in which the camps are portrayed in the photographs seemed to negate Osiek and Hoehn's individuality. The uniform buildings and tents filled the frames of both photographs and seemed to extend far into the distance, which captured the enormity of the camps and depicted the U.S. military as a large, organized machine from which these two new recruits would emerge trained, unified, and ready to fight. These photographs absorbed Hoehn and Osiek into the mass of American servicemen produced by the military despite the differences in their personal experiences conveyed by their photographic narratives.

Hoehn and Osiek reasserted their individual presence at these training facilities by inserting themselves into the camps' landscapes. Hoehn posed for a photograph outside of his barracks with his back hunched, his hands dangling lifelessly at his sides, and a sheepish half-smile on his face. He seemed weak, uncomfortable, and even a little embarrassed in this image. Osiek, who included a photograph of himself in an undershirt and shorts washing clothes at the camp laundry, similarly represented himself as weak as well as feminine

by picturing himself in his underwear doing women's work.¹⁵ These images allowed Hoehn and Osiek to add their own particular experiences at camp to the discourse on military training and countered the perceived effectiveness of the large, orderly military in the previous images.

Both men later took pictures of the places where they were stationed and those that they visited during their military service abroad. These images fit a second trope typical of G.I. war narratives in which servicemen wrote accounts of their travels, accommodations, and the sites around them during their service abroad.¹⁶ Osiek seemed to document every aspect of his service: his fellow band members on board the *Mercury*; the American ships he passed in port; and street cafes he frequented while on shore leave in France. Hoehn, however, limited his remaining photographs to the period of his service after the armistice, and he did not photograph any scenes from the five months he spent fighting in the trenches.¹⁷ Instead, Hoehn primarily recorded towns, landscapes, and landmarks in the German Rhineland. The variations in their photographs may be partially explained by their different branches of the military, duties, and locations. However, each man made conscious decisions to photograph certain scenes and not others. Cultural historian Martha Sandweiss claims that the subjects a photographer omits from an image as well as those that he includes can be analyzed as evidence of the discursive work the photograph attempts to perform.¹⁸ The photographs Hoehn and Osiek chose to include in their personal remembrances of the war and what they left out, as I will show, created specific memories of the Great War and their part in it.

Some of Osiek's photographs of his overseas military service resembled his images from Goat Island Naval Training Station. Images of his post on board the *Mercury* that depicted band concerts, crew members at work, and his living quarters equated his life on board the ship to his time in training camp. A new subject he included was himself and his crewmates at leisure, reading books and doing handstands on the deck.¹⁹ Despite the men's recreational activities, these photographs were formal images whose subjects were posed and framed by the photographer. In other words, Osiek purposefully captured carefully-crafted scenes that represented the sailors as playful and relaxed (Figure 1). By doing so, Osiek chose to remember himself and his fellow sailors as children on an adventure, rather than as the heroic defenders of democracy they were typically championed as by the local press.²⁰

Osiek also included many photographs of his leisure activities off the ship while on shore leave in Europe. The *Mercury* docked in France at Saint-Nazaire, Brest, and another unidentified port on the Bay of Biscay. The Navy granted Osiek shore leave at all three ports, during which he toured Saint-Nazaire and the nearby cities of Bordeaux and Nantes.²¹ During these day

trips, Osiek photographed public squares, houses, street scenes, castles, and other places of historical interest as well as unusual sites, such as a funeral procession in Saint-Nazaire. He toured these cities with other sailors, and his photographs depicted his traveling companions relaxing in street cafes and parks.²² The juxtaposition of uniformed U.S. sailors and the French built landscape in these images emphasized Osiek's American identity in contrast to the historic French buildings in the background. Although Osiek did not directly comment on these places, his choice to photograph U.S. sailors in French villages and include them in his photo album communicated the importance of these scenes to his personal narrative of the war.

Because Osiek's service abroad was confined to the post-war period and a naval vessel, most of his photographs represented him as a non-soldier. His images lacked portrayals of armed combat, confessions of fear, and descriptions of heroism that were typical in soldiers' letters sent from Europe during the war.²³ Yet photographs taken by Osiek while on shore leave asserted his membership in the military through visual cues. Encounters with German prisoners of war, famous French landmarks, and recently-deserted battlefields helped Osiek to define himself as a victor and an American in opposition to the defeated Germans.

Osiek's photo album included photographs of German prisoners of war mounted alongside images of his travels in and near French ports. In one taken in Saint-Nazaire, Osiek's companion posed beside four German prisoners as they paused from shoveling a pile of debris (Figure 2). The men still wore their German Army uniforms, though they were now wrinkled and dirty from their work. Osiek's companion looked pristine in his navy blue fatigues standing at attention next to the slouching German prisoners propped on their shovels as they took a momentary respite from their work to look at the camera. Osiek's image of a Navy sailor posing next to German prisoners of war captured the power that he, as the photographer, and his companion exerted over the defeated soldiers. Osiek had not served abroad during wartime and had not contributed to the military's defeat of Germany, but he attempted to claim a part in that victory through this photograph. Further, the placement of these images among his tourist photographs of French cities emphasized his freedom because, unlike the German prisoners, he moved about without restraint in France. His ability to visit and photograph Saint-Nazaire, Bordeaux, Nantes, and these German prisoners constructed Osiek's identity as victorious Ally in the war.

Osiek also attempted to distinguish himself from Germany and German soldiers in other ways. Like German-American soldiers in battle, Osiek "othered" the Germans he encountered in France. In the context of battle there were two sides: us and them, the Allies and the Central powers, or, in

this particular war, Americans and Germans. Osiek's photograph of German prisoners of war identified them as the enemy, though here they were not the hostile enemy encountered on the battlefield, but the conquered and tamed former adversary. His image labeled those people loyal to Germany's government, in this case German soldiers, as his enemy. By doing so, Osiek identified himself as a loyal American. St. Charles German-Americans repeatedly insisted that they maintained no loyalty to the German government despite their continued German cultural practices. This photograph conveyed Osiek's perception that his German church membership, schooling, and language usage did not conflict with his political loyalty to the U.S., nor did his participation in a war against Germany violate his German cultural belonging.²⁴

Osiek's travels in France also afforded him opportunities to articulate a particular understanding of the First World War's purpose. In addition to his day excursions, Osiek also took a six-day sightseeing trip to Paris that was organized by the U.S. military. He traveled to the French capital in July 1919 with hundreds of other sailors from his ship aboard a train he dubbed the "Mercury Special" because so many of its passengers served aboard his ship.²⁵ The trip included stops at sites significant to French culture and history, including the Louvre, the Eiffel Tower, and Napoleon's tomb as well as Versailles, the former palace of Louis XIV and the site where the Versailles Peace Treaty was signed one month earlier to end the war between Germany and the Allied powers.²⁶ Historian Jennifer Keene noted that the Army gave soldiers passes to visit France after the armistice to raise their opinions of their ally and strengthen the bond between the two nations in case the peace talks failed and fighting resumed.²⁷ Osiek's tour of France, conducted from the back of an Army truck, exposed him to many important French cultural and historic sites that he would have otherwise not seen as a post-war Navy musician. At the same time, these trips legitimized U.S. participation in the Great War as the defense of France and its history and culture from destruction by Germany. This justification offered a way for German-Americans like Osiek to remember the war as a defensive act to save a culture, which would have appealed to them following the attacks their own culture faced in the U.S.

Osiek's trip also gave him opportunities to insert himself into battle. For instance, he visited Soissons, a town about sixty miles northeast of Paris that had experienced heavy fighting throughout the war because it stood between the German Army and the French capital. The Germans took Soissons for the last time in May 1918 during a major offensive in which it intended to capture Paris. American troops helped to regain control of the town in a massive counterattack in July that General John Pershing, the leader of

the American Expeditionary Force in France, and many historians consider to be the turning point of the war.²⁸ Photographs of church ruins, craters made by artillery, dead German soldiers, French soldiers' graves, and an American cemetery recorded the losses—in lives and property—inflicted by the war.²⁹ Here Osiek also photographed scenes of the battlefield and the Hindenburg line, the notoriously impenetrable German front. Mud trenches, trees stripped bare by artillery, and the remnants of a German machine gun evidenced the destruction and desolation that had surrounded Allied and German soldiers during the war.³⁰ Osiek witnessed the war and its toll while at Soissons even though he had not participated in the actual fighting, and he recorded his presence on the important battlefield in his photo album. He even posed to have his picture taken in front of a dugout in the German trenches that enemy soldiers once used for protection against Allied artillery attacks (Figure 3).³¹ Here Osiek literally inserted himself into the front lines of the war and remembered himself as part of an important American victory.

Photographs of the German and Allied dead Osiek took in and around Soissons also contributed to his American identity formation. Unlike the neat, marked graves of French soldiers buried on the battlefield and American soldiers interred in a nearby cemetery, the Germans lay in the trenches and on the battlefield where they had died, rotting from exposure to the elements.³² Great care had been exerted to identify the Allied dead and honor their sacrifice in the war by providing them with burials and grave markers. The dead Germans, on the other hand, received no such honorable treatment from the Allies, who left the bodies of their defeated enemy unidentified and decaying in the sun. One photograph showed that further humiliation occurred at the hands of Osiek's travel companion, C. L. Gilroy, who Osiek photographed poking a dead German soldier's body with a stick (Figure 4). The uniformed U.S. sailor defiled the corpse of the German soldier and ensured that he was deprived of the honor normally associated with wartime service and death in battle. Osiek's disgust for German soldiers, expressed by his complicity in the act, conveyed his loyalty to the U.S. government as an American citizen and member of the U.S. Navy. Yet again, though, his Americanness in this moment was articulated as disrespect for the German government and its representatives, which did not compromise his ethnic German identity.

The literature on black lynching in the U.S. provides another way to think about the meaning of Osiek's photographs of dead German soldiers. Much of the wartime propaganda in the U.S. identified Germans as rapists and barbarians, deploying fears of the violation of innocent women in an attempt to motivate Americans to fight.³³ This language mimicked that used by white mobs who attempted to use the violence and fear inspired

by the act of lynching to exert control over blacks and maintain their superior place in American society.³⁴ Photographs of black lynching victims and their white perpetrators functioned to uphold white power over black bodies and further solidify cross-class white alliances. Picture postcards of lynchings sent from white witnesses to their families allowed these individuals to assert their presence at the lynchings and identify themselves as part of the white racial alliance.³⁵ Osiek's images of dead German bodies similarly aligned him with the perpetrators of the violence against these soldiers, in this case the Allied militaries. His photographs, as part of his memories of the Great War, performed actions similar to those of lynching picture postcards: Osiek informed viewers of his responsibility for German soldiers' deaths to assert his identity as a non-German ally. Osiek distanced himself from the German victims in his images, both literally and figuratively, and then used the photographs to assert and reassert an American political identity in his photo album.

Osiek perhaps emphasized an American military identity because of his German ethnic identity and the suspicion it cast upon his loyalty in St. Charles. At the time he enlisted in the Navy in August 1918, he and his church were facing prosecution for their continued use of the German language at the hands of Missouri Governor Frederick Gardner and the Missouri State Council of Defense.³⁶ Osiek's enlistment and his subsequent photographs of Europe can be read as a reaction to the persecution on the homefront that challenged his loyalty to the American nation.

Osiek's photographs, as part of his memories of the Great War, enabled him to claim responsibility for American military victories and German soldiers' deaths to convey a non-German political identity. He aligned himself with the Allied military in his images, which he then used to convey his American identity in his photo album. Yet he also placed his photographs of Soissons among images of surviving places of cultural and historical significance in Paris, including Notre Dame Cathedral and the Eiffel Tower. By doing so, he linked the destruction and death at Soissons to the defense of Paris and positioned U.S. participation in the Great War as the defense of France and its history and culture. This justification offered a way for Osiek to protect his cultural sensibilities by remembering the war and his military service as a defensive act to save France and not as an act of aggression against his cultural fatherland. Osiek's photographic narrative of the Great War conveyed his Americanness in ways that did not violate his German cultural affiliations and allowed him to maintain a hyphenated identity during and after his Navy service.

Despite Osiek and Hoehn's very different experiences in the military, Hoehn photographed similar subjects that documented the countryside and

towns he traveled through during his post-war service in Germany. The U.S. Army stationed Hoehn temporarily in several places in the Rhineland after the armistice, including Sankt Goar, Montreal, and Mayen. Finally, he settled in the town of Welling in March 1919, where he remained until returning to the U.S. the following August.³⁷ Unlike Osiek, Hoehn had fought in Europe and contributed to the Allied victory, and his photographs did not have the same emphasis on his American military identity. Instead, his images depicted the region where his ancestors once lived, for his grandfather had emigrated from Nassau, a town less than twenty-two miles from Hoehn's posting.³⁸ The meaning of Hoehn's photographs is embedded in the complex intertwining of his German cultural identity, his ancestral roots in the region, and his residence in St. Charles that motivated him to take pictures and send postcards of the Rhineland to his family at home.³⁹

Hoehn posed for a photograph when he first encountered the iconic Rhine River in Sankt Goar that acknowledged and celebrated his German roots. He penned a message to his family on the back of a postcard featuring a scenic, black-and-white photograph of the town, telling them, "We are now upon the famous Rhein River in Germany, and it sure is a beautiful spot."⁴⁰ The photograph documented Hoehn's presence in Germany as a member of the U.S. Army, yet he posed next to the waterway that served as a symbol of the German nation.⁴¹ He even used the German spelling of the river's name as opposed to the English version. While many servicemen may have thought that the river was beautiful, it held special significance to German-Americans like Hoehn whose ancestors originated in that area of the country. Despite fighting against German soldiers in the war, Hoehn's connection to his fatherland remained, and he took the opportunity his service in the German Rhineland afforded him to express his cultural identity.

Hoehn's images of the German Rhineland otherwise excluded references to the U.S. and Allied militaries. For instance, Hoehn thoroughly documented the town of Welling where he was posted, including the countryside around it and even its electrical plant. He noted on the reverse of one photograph of Welling taken from a distance that he stayed with Mr. Schafer in the second house from the right in his image, and he photographed the Schafer family with whom he stayed. The U.S. Army billeted Hoehn and other American soldiers stationed in the German Rhineland with German civilians.⁴² Forcing Germans to house American soldiers was a form of power that the U.S. Army exerted over its defeated foes. But Hoehn failed to convey this power in his photographs by excluding American soldiers and focusing in German subjects—the town, the house, and even the family who hosted him. He omitted the American military presence from his photographs of Welling and disconnected himself from the rhetoric of defeat and superiority attached to

American servicemen in Germany.

Hoehn's photograph of the Schafer family and the caption he gave it instead recorded his illegal friendship with German civilians. Hoehn depicted the family in an informal portrait staged outside in front of a stone wall (Figure 5). The women, seated in chairs with their arms either crossed or resting gently in their laps, had relaxed poses and expressions. The man and boy standing behind them also seemed at ease, even smiling for their picture. The relaxed poses evidenced their complicity in the photograph taken by their American guest. Hoehn captioned the image, "Schafer Family, Germany. They grew friendly with [me], gave bread. We sent tobacco, wrote letters in Ger."⁴³ The photograph of a German family who had shown Hoehn kindness during his time in the Rhineland violated General Pershing's order prohibiting social contact between American soldiers and enemy civilians. Yet Hoehn risked arrest to cultivate a friendship with the Schafers, and he maintained their relationship after returning to St. Charles by writing letters to them and sending them tobacco, a scarce and expensive item in post-war Germany. The friendship, formed because of the war, helped to revitalize and strengthen Hoehn's relationship with Germany. Cultural historian Jay Winter, in his discussion of an Austrian Jewish Army doctor's photographs taken on the eastern front during World War II, says that the photographer's Jewishness was visible in his images by his choice to photograph Jewish subjects.⁴⁴ Hoehn's fascination with German subjects and his decision to omit U.S. soldiers and France was a way in which he expressed his German identity in his photographs.

Yet Hoehn was also an outsider in his pictures, a U.S. soldier photographing the area where his ancestors once lived. His images narrated his movements through the Rhineland as he literally marched from Sankt Goar to Welling and documented the American soldier's encounters with his German fatherland. While Hoehn actively maintained a German identity in St. Charles as a member of a local ethnic German church, his encounters with civilians in Germany would have exposed differences between their Germanness. Their accents and German dialects would have differed from one another because Hoehn lived in St. Charles rather than in Welling. These differences did not negate or erase Hoehn's German identity; instead, they identified his Germanness as a particular strain shaped by his residence in the U.S. Hoehn's photographs of his encounters with Germany therefore emphasized his American identity as a foreign German in opposition to the inhabitants of the Rhineland.

Hoehn also employed photographic techniques to create artistic images of his surroundings in Germany. In "Welling to East," for instance, Hoehn photographed several houses nestled in the rolling hills. He chose to

photograph the scene from up high on the side of hill, allowing the scene to fill the frame and draw the viewer's eye along the valley running diagonally across the image to the seemingly endless countryside in the background (Figure 6). The techniques he employed conveyed a sense of vastness, beauty, and motion absent from Osiek's fairly straightforward, documentary images. These pastoral scenes—which were the subjects of twenty-four of his thirty-nine photographs—recorded an area that hosted no battles and retained its pristine, rural beauty that had made it a vacation destination before the war.⁴⁵ Hoehn would have had numerous opportunities to photograph evidence of Germany's defeat—such as abandoned weapons, dead bodies, and prisoners of war—on the long march to the Rhineland through France and Luxembourg. Yet he omitted any references to Germany's loss, instead opting to depict his fatherland as a beautiful and peaceful nation. This positive image of Germany countered typical representations of war and reinforced Hoehn's pre-war connection to Germany that remained intact despite his role in its military defeat.⁴⁶

Hoehn used several of his photographs after returning to St. Charles to help residents remember and celebrate their cultural and ancestral connections to Germany. Hoehn was known locally as an amateur photographer, and he printed thirteen of his Germany photographs on postcard stock that he likely sold to shops in the city (Figure 7, for example).⁴⁷ The scenic images that included Brohl Castle, riverside dwellings along the Rhine, and the towns of Mayen and Brohl were perhaps motivated by his intentions to sell them to St. Charles residents, whose German cultural sensibilities would have been upset by negative representations of their fatherland.⁴⁸ At a time when few people from St. Charles had the means to travel abroad, his beautiful photographs stood in for all of Germany and gave German-Americans a way to see the area from which their ancestors had emigrated. Hoehn's postcards countered the negative images of Germans in the national press during the war and offered residents depictions of a Germany that they could be proud of. His photographs point to a revitalization of German-Americans' relationships with Germany enabled by community members' war service and their political loyalty to the U.S.

Great War photographs by German-American servicemen are informative yet ignored sites of identity expression. Osiek and Hoehn constructed identities through their photographs that were sufficiently limited in scope so as to allow them to be loyal American citizens as well as cultural Germans. They emerged from the war with their hyphenated identities intact and, in the case of Hoehn, with renewed connections to Germany. Rather than serving as an assimilating force, military service provided Osiek and Hoehn with opportunities to formulate and express identities that fit within the terms

of both their American political citizenship and their German heritage and culture.

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Notes

¹ See, for example Frederick C. Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty: German-Americans and World War I* (De Kalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974); Wolfgang Helbich and Walter D. Kamphoefner, eds., *German-American Immigration and Ethnicity in Comparative Perspective* (Madison: Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies, 2004); David Detjen, *The Germans in Missouri, 1900-1918: Prohibition, Neutrality, and Assimilation* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1985); LaVerne J. Rippley, *The German-Americans* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1976).

² See, for example, Petra DeWitt, *Degrees of Allegiance: Harassment and Loyalty in Missouri's German-American Community during World War I* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2012); Russell A. Kazal, *Becoming Old Stock: The Paradox of German-American Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); Leslie Tischauser, *The Burden of Ethnicity: The German Question in Chicago, 1914-1941* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1990); Robyn Burnett and Ken Luebbering, *German Settlement in Missouri: New Land, Old Ways* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1996).

³ See, for example, Frederick C. Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty: German-Americans and World War I* (De Kalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974); David Detjen, *The Germans in Missouri, 1900-1918: Prohibition, Neutrality, and Assimilation* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1985); LaVerne J. Rippley, *The German-Americans* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1976); Sarah Emery-Hall, "Faith and Loyalty Under Fire," *Yearbook of German-American Studies* 41 (2006): 87-102; Erik Kirschbaum, *The Eradication of German Culture in the United States, 1917-1918* (Stuttgart: Academic Publishing House, 1986); Carl Wittke, *German-Americans and the World War* (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 1936).

⁴ Roland Barthes and W. J. T. Mitchell showed that images were imbued with meaning by their creators through the use of signs, or visual representations of an idea or concept, that communicated a specific ideology. Roland Barthes, "Rhetoric of the Image," in *Visual Culture: The Reader*, ed. Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall (London: Sage Publications, 1999); W. J. T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

⁵ Martha A. Sandweiss, *Print the Legend: Photography and the American West* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 9.

⁶ Emil H. Osiek, "U.S. Navy Treasures," 1918-1919, Osiek Collection, MSS 232, St. Charles County Historical Society, St. Charles, Missouri (hereafter referred to as SCCHS).

⁷ John P. Hoehn Collection, PHO 216, SCCHS.

⁸ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 4-7; Caren Kaplan, *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), 4-9.

⁹ Osiek was a member of *Der Evangelische Lutherische Immanuelsgemeinde*, or Evangelical Immanuel Lutheran Church, and his father and maternal grandparents were born in Germany. "Lutheran service flag dedicated last evening," *St. Charles [MO] Weekly Banner*

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News, November 14, 1918; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1910 Census, State of Missouri, St. Charles County, St. Charles City (National Archives Microfilm Publication T624, roll 808), 233 (hereafter cited as U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1910 Census). Hoehn was a member of St. John's German Evangelical Church in St. Charles, and his paternal grandfather and maternal grandparents were born in Germany. "St. John's Church—Births, Deaths, Baptisms, and Marriages," Church Records, SCCHS; John P. Hoehn *Taufschein*, July 28, 1895, in JPH Collection, MSS 216, SCCHS; "Golden jubilee of Miss Bertha Haertel's," 1908, Church—Immanuel Lutheran—Pageant/100th Anniversary file, Topics Files Collection, SCCHS; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1910 Census, 226.

¹⁰ Emil H. Osiek, "Complete Diary of my life in the Navy," 1918-1919, Osiek Collection, MSS 232, SCCHS; Albert L. Wallenbrock, Earle A. Meyer, and Edna McElhiney Meyer, eds., *St. Charles County's Participation in the World War: A Record of the men in military and Naval Service; A History of war Activities at home, and a brief chronology of the Great War* (St. Charles, MO: Honor Roll Association of St. Charles County, 1919), 43.

¹¹ Hoehn's service record from "Honorable Discharge from the United States Army," JPH Collection, MSS 216, SCCHS.

¹² Mark Meigs, *Optimism at Armageddon: Voices of American Participants in the First World War* (Washington Square, NY: New York University Press, 1997), 27.

¹³ See, for instance, "Letter from a soldier boy," *St. Charles [MO] Daily Cosmos-Monitor*, September 13, 1917; "Letter from Sergt. Meyer," *St. Charles [MO] Weekly Cosmos-Monitor*, August 29, 1918; "Dalgo Boettler pleased with life in Army," *St. Charles [MO] Weekly Banner-News*, November 8, 1917; "A letter from 'Unck' Wyhs," *St. Charles [MO] Weekly Cosmos-Monitor*, March 13, 1918.

¹⁴ John P. Hoehn, "General View of Camp Funston, Kansas," PHO 216.075, in JPH Collection, PHO 216, SCCHS; Emil Osiek, "Our Sleeping and Living Quarters," Photograph 262, in Osiek, "U.S. Navy Treasures," 1918-1919, SCCHS.

¹⁵ John P. Hoehn, "J. P. Hoehn, Camp Funston, Kans.," PHO 216.071, in JPH Collection, PHO 216, SCCHS; Emil Osiek, "Washday," Photograph 257, in Osiek, "U.S. Navy Treasures," 1918-1919, SCCHS.

¹⁶ Meigs, *Optimism at Armageddon*, 82.

¹⁷ Hoehn's service record from "Honorable Discharge from the United States Army," JPH Collection, MSS 216, SCCHS.

¹⁸ Sandweiss, *Print the Legend*, 176-177.

¹⁹ See, for example, Emil Osiek, "An Interesting Book," Photograph 153; "Lawrence Woods, Snare Drummer," Photograph 73, in Osiek, "U.S. Navy Treasures," 1918-1919, SCCHS.

²⁰ See, for example, "Picnic was a big success," *St. Charles [MO] Weekly Cosmos-Monitor*, September 3, 1919; "Celebration of war's end full of formal pomp," *St. Charles [MO] Weekly Banner-News*, November 21, 1918.

²¹ Osiek, "Diary of my life," 1918-1919, SCCHS.

²² See, for example, Emil Osiek, "Wine Peddler," Photograph 108; "French Residence," Photograph 10; "Side View of Old Cathedral," Photograph 118; "French Funeral Procession," Photograph 39; "Group in Park," Photograph 57, in Osiek, "U.S. Navy Treasures," 1918-1919, SCCHS.

²³ See, for example, Letter from Emil D. Ochs," *St. Charles [MO] Weekly Cosmos-Monitor*, August 28, 1918; "Planes thick as flies, writes St. Charles boy," *St. Louis [MO] Post-Dispatch*, September 19, 1918; "A soldier boy writes letter home," *St. Charles [MO] Weekly Cosmos-Monitor*, November 6, 1918; "Some badly used up, but all happy, says wounded soldier," *St. Louis [MO] Post-Dispatch*, August 21, 1918.

²⁴ See, for example, "R. Goebel not arrested for pro-Germanism," *St. Charles [MO] Weekly Banner-News*, April 19, 1917; "Patriotic day held here Wednesday," *St. Charles [MO]*

Daily Cosmos-Monitor, May 24, 1917; "Conditions in Germany exposed," *St. Charles [MO] Weekly Cosmos-Monitor*, February 6, 1918; "Our Honor Roll," *Immanuel Lutheran Messenger*, November 1918, 275, Immanuel Messenger, 1907-1932, Evangelical Immanuel Lutheran Church Archives, St. Charles, Missouri.

²⁵ Emil Osiek, "Mercury Special on way to Paris," Photograph 158, "U.S. Navy Treasures," Osiek Collection, SCCHS.

²⁶ Emil Osiek, "Louvre Art Galleries," Photograph 119; "Eiffel Tower," Photograph 137; "Napoleon's Tomb," Photograph 183; "Hall of Mirrors (Where Peace Treaty was Signed)," Photograph 166, "U.S. Navy Treasures," Osiek Collection, SCCHS.

²⁷ Jennifer D. Keene, *Doughboys, the Great War, and the Remaking of America* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 125.

²⁸ Byron Farwell, *Over There: The United States in the Great War, 1917-1918* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000), 163-166, 181, 184.

²⁹ Emil Osiek, "Ruins of Church," Photograph 160; "Dead German (Lying in Dugout)," Photograph 140; "Dead German (Lying in Dugout)," Photograph 141; "French Soldier's Grave," Photograph 161; "American Graveyard," Photograph 219, in Osiek, "U.S. Navy Treasures," 1918-1919, SCCHS.

³⁰ Farwell, *Over There*, 217-218; Emil Osiek, "German Trench (Along the Hindenburg Line)," Photograph 210; "Shattered Trees (Along the Hindenburg Line)," Photograph 214; "Machine Gun Belt (Along the Hindenburg Line)," Photograph 212, in Osiek, "U.S. Navy Treasures," 1918-1919, SCCHS.

³¹ Emil Osiek, "German Dugout (on Hindenburg Line)," Photograph 220, in Osiek, "U.S. Navy Treasures," 1918-1919, SCCHS.

³² Emil Osiek, "French Soldier's Grave," Photograph 161; "American Graveyard," Photograph 219, "U.S. Navy Treasures," Osiek Collection, SCCHS.

³³ For example, a Liberty Bond poster depicted an ape-like German dragging a woman from a village engulfed in flames under the title "Remember Belgium." This poster reminded Americans of German atrocities against Belgian women at the start of the war in order to motivate Liberty Bond sales. Ellsworth Young, "Remember Belgium," 1918, Reference Number 96507603, World War I and II Posters Collection, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³⁴ Leon F. Litwack, "Hellhounds," in *Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America*, ed. James Allen et al. (Santa Fe, NM: Twin Palms, 2000), 24; Shawn Michelle Smith, "The Evidence of Lynching Photographs," in *Lynching Photographs*, Shawn Michelle Smith and Dora Apel (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007), 15; Shawn Michelle Smith, *Photography on the Color Line: W. E. B. DuBois, Race, and Visual Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 115-116.

³⁵ Dora Apel, "Lynching Photographs and the Politics of Public Shaming," in *Lynching Photographs*, 46; Smith, "The Evidence of Lynching Photographs," 25; Smith, *Photography on the Color Line*, 118.

³⁶ "Will not teach German language," *St. Charles [MO] Weekly Cosmos-Monitor*, April 17, 1918; "Language and Loyalty," *The Lutheran Witness* 37, no. 11 (May 28, 1918): 164; William F. Saunders to the Council of National Defense, May 8, 1918, RG 62, Council of National Defense, Abstracts of State Council Activities and Organization, PI 2 375, Box 1, Archives II, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD; Frederick B. Mumford and William F. Saunders to Missouri County Councils of Defense, July 16, 1918, Folder 2, Western Historical Manuscript Collection, State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri; "From proceedings of regular business meeting, August 25, 1918," *Immanuel Lutheran Messenger*, September 1918, 262, Immanuel Messenger, 1907-1932, Evangelical Immanuel Lutheran Church Archives, St. Charles, Missouri; "Defense Council replies to pastor on resolutions," *St. Charles [MO] Weekly Banner-News*, September 5, 1918.

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³⁷ Hoehn revealed his locations in postcards to his family. John P. Hoehn to George Hoehn, December 13, 1918, PHO 216.053, JPH Collection, PHO 216, SCCHS; John P. Hoehn to George Hoehn, December 19, 1918, PHO 216.058, JPH Collection, PHO 216, SCCHS; John P. Hoehn to George Hoehn, January 11, 1919, PHO 216.048, in JPH Collection, PHO 216, SCCHS.

³⁸ Philip Hoehn, St. Charles, Missouri, Naturalization Records, June 2, 1857, Book 11, Page 88, SCCHS.

³⁹ Hoehn sent fourteen postcards to his parents from Germany from November 1918 to May 1919. John P. Hoehn to George and Amanda Hoehn, various dates, JPH Collection, PHO 216, SCCHS.

⁴⁰ Photographer unknown, "1919 Army Oc., J. P. Hoehn," PHO 216.066, in JPH Collection, PHO 216, SCCHS; John Philip Hoehn, St. Goar, Germany, to George Hoehn, St. Charles, Missouri, December 13, 1918, John P. Hoehn Collection, SCCHS.

⁴¹ Germans considered the Rhine River to be a symbol of their nation because of the significant role it played in the nation's economic development. "Upper Middle Rhine Valley," UNESCO World Heritage List, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1066> accessed August 28, 2013.

⁴² John P. Hoehn, "Schafer Family, Germany," PHO 216.045, in JPH Collection, PHO 216, SCCHS; Keith L. Nelson, *Victors Divided: America and the Allies in Germany, 1918-1923* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1975), 48-51.

⁴³ John P. Hoehn, "Schafer Family, Germany," PHO 216.045, in JPH Collection, PHO 216, SCCHS.

⁴⁴ Jay Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War Between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 87-102.

⁴⁵ Keene, *Doughboys*, 120.

⁴⁶ Historian Omer Bartov claimed that throughout history, war had been portrayed by two sets of images: acts of heroism by soldiers and civilians and the grim circumstances of fighting. Omer Bartov, *Mirrors of Destruction: War, Genocide, and Modern Identity* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 10.

⁴⁷ Edna McElhiney Olson, "Historical: Rare Historical Pictures," *St. Charles [MO] Journal*, September 30, 1965.

⁴⁸ John P. Hoehn, "Brohl, Germany, Castle Brohl," PHO 216.020; "Germany 1919," PHO 216.018; "Mahen, Germany, 1919," PHO 216.042; "Brohl, Germany, 1919," PHO 216.021, in JPH Collection, PHO 216, SCCHS.

Illustrations



Fig. 1. “An Interesting Book,” At Sea, 1919. Photograph by Emil Osiek. Photograph 153, “U.S. Navy Treasures,” part of MSS 232. From the Collection of St. Charles County Historical Society (SCCHS).



Fig. 2. “German Prisoners (with Raleigh Colclasure),” Saint-Nazaire, France, 1919. Photograph by Emil Osiek. Photograph 104, “U.S. Navy Treasures,” part of MSS 232. From the Collection of SCCHS.



Fig. 3. “German Dugout (on Hindenburg Line),” Soissons, France, 1919. Photographer Unknown. Photograph 220, “U.S. Navy Treasures,” part of MSS 232. From the Collection of SCCHS.



Fig. 4. “C. L. Gilroy (Amongst Bones of Dead German),” Soissons, France, 1919. Photograph by Emil Osiek. Photograph 145, “U.S. Navy Treasures,” part of MSS 232. From the Collection of SCCHS.



Fig. 5. "Schafer Family, Germany," Welling, Germany, 1919. Photograph by John "Phil" Hoehn. Accession Number PHO 216.045. From the Collection of SCCHS.



Fig. 6. "Welling to East," Welling, Germany, 1919. Photograph by John "Phil" Hoehn. Accession Number PHO 216.039. From the Collection of SCCHS.



Fig. 7. Untitled Postcard, Germany, 1919. Photograph by John “Phil” Hoehn. Accession Number PHO 216.018. From the Collection of SCCHS

