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The National German-American Alliance, 1901-1918: Cultural Politics and Ethnicity in Peace and War

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THE NATIONAL GERMAN-AMERICAN ALLIANCE, 1901-1918: CULTURAL POLITICS AND ETHNICITY IN PEACE AND WAR

by

Charles Thomas Johnson

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of The Graduate College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy Department of History

Western Michigan University
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THE NATIONAL GERMAN-AMERICAN ALLIANCE, 1901-1918: CULTURAL POLITICS AND ETHNICITY IN PEACE AND WAR

Charles Thomas Johnson, Ph.D.
Western Michigan University, 1997

The purpose of this dissertation is to tell the story of the National German-American Alliance, an organization of middle to upper-middle class well-educated professionals formed in 1901 to promote and preserve aspects of German culture in the United States. Increasingly, however, it found itself drawn into controversial political and diplomatic issues in the rapid political, social and international change that marked the first two decades of the twentieth century.

The dissertation begins with a review of German-America from colonial times to 1899 and serves as a background for the founding of the Alliance within the context of the growth of the German-American community. From its founding in 1901 to 1905 the Alliance concerned itself primarily with the preservation of German culture. By 1906, however, the group expanded its agenda to include the delicate issues of prohibition of alcohol and foreign affairs, while simultaneously attempting to garner the support of other major ethnic organizations. Additional forays into the questions of woman suffrage and immigration restriction, by 1911 transformed the Alliance from a group concerned primarily with the preservation of German culture to one that attempted to exercise influence on a wide range of national and international issues.
With the outbreak of World War One in Europe the organization came out in favor of absolute American neutrality and fair-play for Germany—the later an unenviable position in a nation that increasingly came to sympathize with the Allied cause. American entry into the conflict against Germany in 1917, coupled with the subsequent anti-German hysteria, led to the rapid decline and eventual end of the Alliance in 1918.

The seventeen year history of the Alliance serves as an example of the problems faced by ethnic organizations which seek to preserve their cultural heritage in the volatile environment that can be American democracy. Little, however, has been written on the Alliance. What exists has focused on either activities of the state chapters or the work of the national organization during World War One. This study represents the first attempt to chronicle and critically analyze the history of the organization.
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Charles Thomas Johnson
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PREFACE

By 1900 German-Americans constituted the single largest ethnic group in the United States as more than twenty-three percent of the nation’s population could trace its roots back to Germany. Large German communities existed in such cities as Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Chicago, New York, Milwaukee, St. Louis, and San Francisco. In these urban areas, and in other cities and states, German-Americans maintained traditional ethnic ties through churches, social and political organizations, as well as through the German language press which could claim over six hundred weeklies and dailies across the nation.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, German-Americans also enjoyed the position of being the nation’s most respected non-English ethnic group. Journalist Josiah Flynt summed up this sentiment in an article written for the November 1896 issue of Atlantic Monthly. Flynt wrote that German-Americans were a patient people, whose perseverance and industriousness, coupled with their love of liberty and freedom contributed greatly to the growth of America and its democratic institutions. German-Americans indeed could look back proudly to the contributions of Baron Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben, Carl Schurz, Heinrich Steinweg, and others to the founding of the nation and the growth of its political, cultural, and economic institutions.
Less than twenty years later this position will have changed beginning with declaration of war by the United States against Germany in April 1917. From April 1917 to November 1918, Americans of German descent found themselves and their culture under direct assault by "patriotic" Americans who viewed anything German as a threat to the United States and its institutions. In only nineteen short months a once-flourishing German-American culture in the United States was reduced to little more than a memory.

Thus, the first two decades of the century were a time of transition and change for the German-American community. Sharing, and involving itself in the events of the era—the high times and also the low points—was the National German-American Alliance. Founded in 1901, the Alliance sought to promote and preserve German culture in America. As the organization grew in size—eventually claiming over 2.5 million members and chapters in forty-four states—it began to involve itself in some of the major issues of the day including prohibition, relations between the United States and Germany, immigration, and woman's suffrage. With the onset of World War I the Alliance shifted its attention to preserving American neutrality and advocating fair play for Germany in the war. By late 1917 its actions, coupled with the ongoing anti-German hysteria, had left it a discredited organization—condemned by the public and government as a potential threat to American security.

Little has been written on the Alliance. What exists focuses on either activities of the state chapters or the work of the national organization during World War One. To this date no study has attempted to chronicle the entire history of the organization.
The purpose of this study is to tell the story of the National German-American Alliance within the context of the times in which it existed. It also seeks to show how the Alliance attempted to preserve and protect German-American culture during a time of rapid political and social change in the United States. Thus, it is a story of an ethnic organization that believed deeply in what it was doing but in the end fell victim to its own passion.
CHAPTER I

GERMAN-AMERICA PRIOR TO 1899

Americans of German descent have been a part of this nation's history since the early part of the seventeenth century. The first three Germans arrived with Captain John Smith on April 26, 1607 and helped to found the colony of Jamestown.¹ Fifty-six years later in May 1663 forty-one German Mennonites established a small community in Delaware. Founded as a communal settlement, this colony was the first in North America to prohibit slavery or involuntary servitude in any form.

On March 4, 1681, in repayment for money owed to his father, the English government granted a royal charter to William Penn for lands that became known as Pennsylvania.² Two years later Francis Daniel Pastorius, a Frankfurt attorney influenced by the teachings of Penn, headed a Frankfurt Company which purchased twenty-five thousand acres of land in Pennsylvania. Pastorius arrived in Philadelphia on August 20, 1683 to pave the way for the first group of immigrants from Germany. Less than two months later on October 6, 1683 thirteen Quaker families from Krefeld on the Rhine arrived outside of Philadelphia and named their settlement "Germantown."³ To this day October 6, 1683 marks the beginning of German settlement in America and is officially celebrated as "German-American Day."
As with many early settlers to the New World, this small group of Germans emigrated to the Americas for religious reasons. The colony of Pennsylvania was especially known for its toleration of pietistic and other Protestant religious minorities. Besides Quakers and Mennonites, Germans representing a wide range of denominations and sects, including Lutherans, Dunkers, Schwenkfelders and Catholics settled in North America during this period.

The next great "wave" of German immigration began around 1709 when more than ten thousand people from the Palatinate region risked the voyage to the New World. These people came primarily for economic reasons prompted by the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1713) and its aftereffects. They also were enticed by an offer made by Queen Anne of England in 1709. Seeking to increase immigration to British North America, especially in the Carolinas and Georgia, the English government circulated a pamphlet throughout the Rhine Valley which offered free passage and support upon arrival to all who would risk the voyage across the Atlantic. The British purposely targeted this area of Germany, knowing that the recent wars and agriculture disaster would make such an offer attractive. The response was overwhelming as more than 30,000 Germans swelled the port of Rotterdam, an amount well beyond the ability of the British authorities to handle. Eventually only 2,400 made the voyage overseas, of which 650 actually settled in the Carolinas. The remainder arrived in New York and settled in the Hudson River Valley, while some moved on to established German settlements in Pennsylvania. By 1714 the majority of Germans in British North America lived in New York.
Between 1720 and 1760 over 62,000 Germans arrived in Britain's North American colonies. Emigration from the German lands was not confined to any one particular region, but occurred throughout a majority of the German states, although the largest number came from the western and southwestern areas. While they settled in all thirteen colonies, the largest German communities were in New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. It was also during this time that a German political culture began to evolve in the New World—shaped in large part by life in the Old World coupled with recent experiences as immigrants to the New World. After risking the dangerous overseas voyage in an effort to escape the religious, political, and economic hardships of Germany, the immigrants were less willing to accept similar circumstances in the colonies. One means by which they hoped to overcome adversity in the New World was to gain naturalization as quickly as possible. Of the total number of immigrants naturalized in colonial America more than 94% were from the German states. In colonies such as Pennsylvania and New York, where they existed in large numbers, Germans played an important role in local elections. Their main issues of concern were defense of the frontier against Indian attacks, ownership of land, taxation, and to a lesser extent religious matters.

An excellent example of a unified German voting block occurred in the election for the Pennsylvania Assembly in 1764. Pontiac’s war on the frontier made the Indian question a key issue for Germans, along with attempts by Benjamin Franklin to turn Pennsylvania into a royal colony. Both sides realized that in order to win they would
have to gain the German vote. In the end the desire to remain a proprietary colony caused the majority of Germans to side against Franklin and his party, costing him and many of his followers their seats in the Pennsylvania Assembly. The example of Pennsylvania was not an isolated incident. Germans throughout the colonies acted collectively at various times as they quickly realized that, as outsiders in a land dominated by the English, they would have to stick together to preserve what they had worked so hard to attain. To this end, German political behavior was guided by whom they thought could best help them achieve their goal of land, prosperity, and security.

By involving themselves in politics the Germans exposed themselves to attacks by the non-German majority. Franklin did not take his defeat in 1764 lightly, choosing to vent his frustration on the German population. A one-time supporter of the ethnic group, he now concluded that Germans represented a potential threat to the existing Anglo culture. In Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind, he called Germans "boors" who were attempting to establish their language and customs at the expense of traditional English ways. Franklin's attack, while not overtly hostile, set the stage for future criticism of Germans along similar lines. During the colonial period, whether rightly so or not, Germans were looked upon as a group that maintained a distinct culture outside the English speaking norm, who held church services in German, spoke German at home and in public, and rarely married outside the community. Finally, they held on strongly to customs of the Old World. Thus, even before the creation of the United States, a foundation for "hyphenated" America had been put into place.
For Germans in the colonies the outbreak of revolution in 1775 brought the same questions and concerns being asked by English colonists. Although the majority of Germans came to the New World for reasons of religious, political and economic freedom, they did feel a "bond" as citizens of the British Empire. The Germans reacted to the revolution, not as a united body, but in diverse ways dependent upon geography, status and prevailing local opinion. In Pennsylvania and New York, where support was high for the revolution, Germans generally supported the cause of the colonies. In Georgia most of them became Loyalists, thus mirroring popular opinion in that colony.\(^1\)\(^2\)

The average American probably perceives German participation in the American Revolution in British hiring of German mercenaries called "Hessians." The British would use 30,000 of these soldiers in the conflict. After the war 5,000 of them chose to remain in the United States.\(^1\)\(^3\) There also of course was the familiar case of General Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben, a former Prussian military officer who joined the colonists and was credited with turning George Washington's Continental Army into an effective fighting force. Few Americans realize that one of the enduring "legends" of the war, Molly Pitcher, was actually a German immigrant named Maria Ludwig.\(^1\)\(^4\)

German participation went beyond traditional school boy stories. Germans took part in all aspects of the conflict from common soldiers all the way up to commanders in the field. Baron John De Kalb, from Bayreuth, Prussia, appointed a Major General by Washington, became commander of an army in South Carolina.
DeKalb fell mortally wounded in the Battle of Camden while leading an undermanned Continental force against British troops commanded by General Horatio Gates. The Continental Congress, on the recommendation of General Washington, authorized a monument commemorating DeKalb's service to the nation. General Peter Muhlenberg led a German regiment in the colonial army that turned the tide at the Battle of Germantown in 1777. In popular culture the participation of German settlers is glorified in such films as 20th Century Fox's 1939 production, *Drums Along the Mohawk*. In one scene General Nicholas Herkimer, a German immigrant, leads settlers of the Mohawk Valley in the Battle of Oriskany. The general was mortally wounded, but his efforts resulted in victory over the British and cutting off supplies to General John Burgoyne, action that helped bring about defeat of the British in the West.

The German press in the colonies also participated heavily in the conflict. Henry Miller trumpeted the cause of independence in his *Philadelphia Staatsboote* and for his efforts was named printer for the Continental Congress. Miller issued the first German translation of the Declaration of Independence on July 7, 1776. From humble beginnings during the colonial period, the German-American press grew to become the nation's largest ethnic press by the end of the nineteenth century.

By the end of the war German settlers, now known as German-Americans, could look proudly upon their contributions to the founding of the new nation. When the United States conducted its first census in 1790 Germans made up nine percent of the population. The task for them, and every other "American," turned to creating a new nation out of thirteen colonies. The German contribution to the subsequent
growth of the United States has been told many times. German work habits and efficiency, their foods, beverages, dances, and place-names became no less a legitimate part of the American landscape than the more populous Anglo ways. By 1901, a people once labeled by Benjamin Franklin with the derogatory name "Dutch" had become the dominant ethnic group in the United States that did not have English, or a variation of English, as a mother tongue.18

During the late eighteenth and on through the nineteenth century German-Americans participated fully in the growth and development of the nation. Their numbers swelled in the mid-nineteenth century when large-scale emigration from the German states to America began in earnest. As German-Americans settled in new areas they established their culture and traditions, in essence creating a series of individual "kleines Deutschland" across the United States.

During the fifty years after the outbreak of the American Revolution (through the mid-1820’s) emigration to America from the German states was virtually nonexistent. Wars on both continents were among the forces that discouraged trans-Atlantic migration. The end of the 1820’s produced the start of a steady stream of German immigration that would last almost the rest of the century. The high point came in the 1880’s when over 1.4 million Germans, 28% of all immigrants that decade, came to America. This "golden age" of German immigration reached its end by 1900. During the next ten years only 175,000 Germans, 3% of the immigrant population, reached American shores.19 Table 1 gives a break-down of German immigration to the United States, by decade, during the period 1820-1920.
Table 1

German Immigration, 1820-1920

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade</th>
<th>Total Immigration</th>
<th>German</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1820-29</td>
<td>128,502</td>
<td>5,753</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830-39</td>
<td>538,381</td>
<td>124,726</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840-49</td>
<td>1,427,337</td>
<td>385,434</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850-59</td>
<td>2,814,554</td>
<td>976,072</td>
<td>34.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860-69</td>
<td>2,081,261</td>
<td>723,734</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870-79</td>
<td>2,742,137</td>
<td>751,769</td>
<td>27.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880-89</td>
<td>5,248,568</td>
<td>1,445,181</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890-99</td>
<td>3,694,294</td>
<td>579,072</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900-09</td>
<td>8,202,388</td>
<td>328,722</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910-19</td>
<td>6,347,380</td>
<td>174,227</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 1 illustrates, German immigration to the United States was at its lowest point of the one-hundred year period during the first two decades of the 20th century, the period in which the National German-American Alliance (hereafter referred to as NGAA or Alliance) was operating. Needless to say, one of its objectives was to prevent immigrant restriction at a time when German immigration, both in absolute numbers and proportionate to total immigration, was the lowest in nearly a century.
The Germans who began to arrive in large numbers in the late 1820's came largely through such eastern ports as New York and Baltimore. The vast majority of these people emigrated from west and southwestern Germany, although some did come from the northern and eastern regions. A number of factors after 1820 altered the patterns of immigration to the United States. The redemption system, which gave free passage in exchange for several years of work without pay, came to an end. In its place potential immigrants had three options. They could pay the passage themselves. Someone in America could pay for them. Finally, as in the case of Wurttemberg, Baden, and Hesse, individual German states sponsored immigrants during bad economic times as a means of taking the pressure off an already-strained economy. For the most part, however, the poor did not migrate to the United States. For this reason a majority of Germans arriving in America were able to move inland from the East Coast and purchase land in the Midwest and Plains states. Thus the example of German immigration stands in sharp contrast to that of Southern and Eastern Europeans who would arrive later in the century; mostly poor people who became stuck in eastern cities, often New York. Other factors that influenced emigration patterns included improved transportation and communications systems, as well as the creation of the business of emigration in German port cities.

The reasons for coming varied, but prior to 1848 the major factors were political, social and economic, in large part due to devastation wrought on German states during the Napoleonic Wars and their aftermath. Young German nationalists, seeing their dream of a united German state destroyed by these wars and the Congress
of Vienna which further divided the land, saw in the United States a chance to establish a “New Germany.” Economic factors such as inheritance laws motivated many to emigrate. In southwestern Germany the practice of dividing land between the children reduced the financial opportunities for all involved since the small plots of land could not sustain large families. In northwestern Germany the practice of passing the farm on to the firstborn caused many younger sons to leave.

Religion still played a large part in the immigration process. Even before 1820 German Pietists and Zoarists founded communal societies in America. The Pietists established Harmony (1804) and Economy (1825) in Pennsylvania and New Harmony in Indiana in 1814. The Zoarists established Zoar, Ohio in 1817. These communities eventually failed in their goal to create a communal society, but they remain important as examples of the first large scale German immigration to the United States during the first twenty years of the nineteenth century.

Other German religious groups migrated in search for a better life in the United States. In 1839 one thousand Old Lutherans left to escape forced unification of the Lutheran and Reformed churches in Prussia. They settled in Buffalo, Milwaukee, and St. Louis, laying the foundation for the large German-American communities that would develop in these cities by the end of the century. In 1843 the Amanites founded the city of Amana in Iowa, which today remains one of the few surviving communities established by Germans for religious reasons.

While the vast majority of Germans arriving in the United States during the period were Protestant, a sizable number of Catholic Germans also immigrated, some
165,000 over the twenty years before 1850. As with their Protestant counterparts they arrived for religious as well as social, economic and political reasons.

Upon arrival Germans tended to follow the canals and rivers inland, eventually settling in the farmlands of the Midwest and Plains areas. By 1850 a German belt had developed stretching from Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland through Pennsylvania to Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, and Wisconsin. Many cities in this region began to take on a distinct German flavor, most notable being Cincinnati which became the hub of German immigration westward. As early as 1807 the city elected its first German-American mayor, a man named Martin Baum.

The most interesting example of German settlement during this period, however, occurred in Texas. After the failure of establishing a “New Germany” in Illinois and Missouri some German immigrants turned to Texas. Baron von Bastrop established the first German settlement in 1823 on the Colorado River outside of present day Austin. German immigrants were also attracted to the region by the writings of men like Karl Postl (penname, Charles Sealsfield) who traveled and wrote extensively about Louisiana and Texas. His 1827 publication, *Die Vereinigten Staaten von Nord-Amerika* gave a detailed description of Texas, including information on the quality of life, climate and soil.

Other Germans took advantage of the Mexican government’s program to attract settlers to sparsely-populated areas. In 1831 Friedrich Ernst of Oldenburg received a sizable grant of land from the Mexican government outside of Austin. Soon large numbers of German immigrants began arriving from Oldenburg, Westphalia, and
Holstein. In 1844 German officials founded the Verein zum Schutze deutscher Einwanderer in Texas to promote immigration to the region. It became the only example of German immigration to the United States that was planned and supported by the authorities in several German states including Nassau, Saxony-Coburg, Prussia, and Solms-Braunfels. The program proved so successful that by 1850 over 30,000 Germans had settled in Texas.

The second wave of German immigration occurred between 1850 and 1890. During this time 4.5 million Germans came to America, with the peak decade being the 1880’s when 1.5 million arrived. The motivating forces included social and economic as well as political and religious factors. During this time many Germans fled political persecution in the aftermath of the failed Revolution of 1848. One “48er,” Carl Schurz, later became a prominent politician, leader of a liberal Republican movement in the 1870’s. Another individual was Ernst Hexamer from Baden who became the father of Dr. Charles J. Hexamer, founder and president of the NGAA. After 1871 many German Catholics emigrated to the United States as a response to Chancellor Otto von Bismarck’s Kulturkampf against the Catholic church.

Demographically this phase of German immigration sees the immigrants branching out from established communities east of the Mississippi to the Great Plains region as far west as Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, and California. The German community in Texas grew to over 20% of the population by the time Texas joined the union. In fact, during the Mexican-American war Germans were some of the first to volunteer, coming from all over the nation to serve in the United States Army.
Germans also began to settle in the region around San Francisco. The California gold rush in 1848 began when gold turned up at the mill of John Sutter, an immigrant from Baden. Germans, not to mention other people, were attracted to the region, not necessarily to find gold, but to exploit the commercial opportunities in San Francisco and the rich farmlands of the surrounding valleys. Germans became prominent in the birth of the California wine industry, most notably Charles Krug, who established his winery in 1858. A group of other Germans established the Rhine Farm, known today as the Gundlach-Bunschu Winery.

While many German immigrants relocated to the farmlands of the Plains and West, the vast majority during this time settled in cities in the East and Midwest. By 1880 large German communities existed in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, St. Louis and Milwaukee. Ten years later, in 1890, 40% of all German-Americans lived in cities.

The last phase of German immigration extended from 1890 to approximately 1920. During this thirty year period only 1.1 million Germans came to the United States, ½ million less than in the decade of the 1880's alone. As in the second phase these immigrants moved mainly into urban areas, primarily in Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Missouri.

No single factor accounted for this decline in German immigration. Political stability and economic prosperity of Germany made emigrating to the United States, or any part of the globe, less attractive. Germany’s rise to a status of world power also increased the pride of Germans in a nation that possessed, among other claims to
prominence, the world’s most powerful army. For Catholics, the end of the
*Kulturkampf* and a general acceptance of the faith in Germany made moving to
America less desirable. At the end of this period World War One brought about a
virtual end of German emigration to the United States until the early 1920's.

By 1900 the German population had firmly established itself as an integral part
of American society with communities in all the states, territories, and in the nation’s
thirty-five largest urban areas. According to the census of 1900 Americans of German
descent comprised 26% of the population, the largest ethnic group in the country.38
The vast majority lived in the North Central region of the United States, with the
second largest concentration living in the North Atlantic states. Almost 50% of all
German-Americans lived in urban centers. Numerically, the five largest concentrations
were in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, St. Louis, and Milwaukee. As a percentage
of the population Germans were most numerous in Milwaukee (52%), Cincinnati
(42%), Buffalo (32%), and Cleveland (28%).39 Needless to say, German-American
culture and institutions left their mark across both rural and urban America.

Even though all German-Americans could look back upon a common ancestry
they still were a people with a diverse culture. Many stereotypes of Germans have
existed over the years. The “jack-booted” Prussian with his rigid discipline surfaced in
the early twentieth century, especially after the Kaiser urged his troops to “fight like
Huns” as they departed for Peking to help put down the Boxer Rebellion of 1900.
The Bavarian, a happy-go-lucky man who drank beer and wore *lederhosen*
represented a different sort of stereotype. Many people equated Germans with
Oktoberfest. The culture and institutions of German-Americans depended upon the region of Germany from which they or their ancestors came. This fact helped explain why there had been no national organization to represent the interests of German-Americans during the nineteenth century, and no effort to establish one. Of course, for most of the nineteenth century there was no "Germany." German-Americans thought of themselves, not as Germans, but as Bavarians, Swabians, Prussians, Mecklenburgers, etc. It was not until 1871 that Chancellor Otto von Bismarck forged a united Germany, and even afterward many immigrants, though joyous over a united fatherland, still considered themselves from a region rather than a nation. Not until after Germany’s rise to global power status in the late 1880’s did German-Americans think of themselves as a product of a united land and common culture.40

The way native Americans and German-Americans had viewed each other also fluctuated with political and economic circumstances. In times of prosperity and peace German-Americans were generally looked upon in a positive light. When economic or political tensions arose, as in the case of the 1764 Pennsylvania Assembly election previously mentioned, the image of Germans—and other ethnic groups—changed. The beginnings of large scale German immigration in the 1830’s produced an emerging, and all-encompassing, stereotype of the German-American. In his visit to the United States in 1831, Alexis de Tocqueville penned what became the typical representation of the German in America:

Round them is all the agitation of a nomadic population, with whom the desire to get rich knows no limits, who are attached to no place, held back by no tie, but go off everywhere the prospect of fortune beckons.
Immobile in the midst of this general movement, the German limits his desires to bettering his position and that of his family little by little. He works unendingly, but leaves nothing to chance. He gets rich surely, but slowly; he sticks to his domestic hearth, encloses his happiness within his horizon and shows no curiosity to know what there is beyond his last furrow.

Thus the image of the hard working, prudent German came into being. De Tocqueville's description also suggested that many Americans viewed Germans as clannish, a perception seemingly verified by Germans in America quickly establishing their own schools, churches and social organizations.

German immigrants, in turn, developed their opinion of native-born Americans. In 1832 Frances Trollope, an English immigrant who arrived in America in 1827, published a book entitled, *Domestic Manners of the Americans* based upon her travels through the United States. While on her journey she had a chance to talk with a young woman newly-arrived from Germany who commented:

> They don't love music, Oh no! and they never amuse themselves — no; and their hearts are not warm, at least they seem not so to strangers; and they have no ease, no forgetfulness of business and of care — no, not for a moment.

Ironically, this German immigrant painted the picture of the American as hard working and prudent while the German possessed a love of life sorely lacking in the United States.

Letters of German-Americans also revealed much about the way they perceived their new homeland. German women found their American counterparts "dull and indolent." Others viewed American women as modest and possessing of good practical sense who take charge of their homes. Wilhelm Stille, a young
immigrant from Westphalia, had nothing put praise for the “high wages and easy work” available in America. Yet another immigrant, writing in 1848, tells of his ten years of hard work in America and how he is getting ahead. He encouraged his relatives to join him in Canton, Ohio. For the most part German immigrants during the period 1820-1850 maintained a positive view of their new homeland.

During this time the native born reacted in no pronounced way to the influx of immigrants from Germany and other European nations. This situation changed in the 1850’s when the nation experienced a surge in new immigration. During this decade Germans passed the Irish as the largest immigrant group. The rapidly increasing numbers caused the native-born population to stand up and take notice. By 1850 nativism and the Know Nothing movement produced new views of Germans in the minds of many Anglo-Americans. Remarks in a local newspaper in 1857 that the German district of Buffalo constituted “the duchy of Hesse” reflected suspicion that the new immigrants desired to establish “little Germanys” throughout the nation. The perception by other Americans would fluctuate over the next fifty years depending upon economic and political conditions in the nation. It would also be influenced by efforts of German-Americans to maintain their culture and traditions and still assimilate into American society.

One component of that culture was language. During the colonial period religion had been the driving force behind the preservation of the German language in British North America. Catholics and Lutherans both used the language in religious services, which included teaching German in church schools. Ironically, however,
the first school to teach German had been a public institution. In 1702 settlers in Germantown established a school which taught German. The institution was supported by donations from the local citizens, was co-educational and even held night classes for adults.\(^{47}\) The first public institution to offer German language instruction to non-German speakers, in Philadelphia in 1743, catered to children of English-speaking parents who desired that their children understand a second language.\(^{48}\) The Public Academy of the City of Pennsylvania, founded in 1749 under the influence of Benjamin Franklin, aspired to teach German at a higher level—a goal achieved when the institution became the University of Pennsylvania. Language instruction expanded in 1753 and the first full-time professor of German in North America, William Creamer, assumed the position which he held until 1775.\(^{49}\)

Germans in North America endeavored to keep their language alive, but during the period from 1775 to 1820 interest in German declined in the United States.\(^{50}\) The main reason was the sharp drop in immigration due to the American War of Independence, French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars.

A revival in the teaching of German—primarily in regions with a large German population—in American schools after 1820 corresponded with renewal of German immigration to the United States. While the major focus was on language instruction at the elementary level, there was a strong effort to utilize German at the secondary and higher education levels. The teaching of German became part of the curriculum in such colleges such as Harvard, Bowdoin College in Maine, Amherst in Massachusetts and the University of Virginia.\(^{51}\) One of the major motivating factors behind this was

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not the German immigrant, but the revived interest in German literature due to the influence of such German writers as Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Heinrich Heine, and Friedrich Schiller on the Romantic and Transcendentalist movements in American Literature.

German language instruction also continued at many non-denominational private institutions, such as the Round Hill School established in 1823 in Northhampton, Massachusetts by a group of German intellectuals. By 1849 German-Americans constituted a large enough block in various communities to pressure local school districts to teach certain core subjects in German. The best example of this move came in Cincinnati where instruction in German was introduced in 1836 after the school board adopted many reforms based upon the Prussian school system.

Even so, German language instruction produced opposition, even within the German-American community. By the late 1840’s many second and third generation German-Americans no longer utilized the language at home. Fearing that speaking German would prevent them from getting ahead in English-speaking America, many parents discouraged their children from learning the language. The growing tide of nativism at the time also hindered foreign language instruction. Some states even mandated English as the only language of instruction. Pennsylvania in 1837 rejected the idea of bilingual education in its public schools. Two years later however the legislature would change its mind and reinstate German language instruction. For the remainder of the century the popularity of the German language would rise and fall in direct relation to the waves of American nativism.
In states with large German voting blocks, laws passed the legislatures mandating teaching basic subjects in German in areas that had a high concentration of German-Americans. The first such law appeared in Pennsylvania in 1839, and by the 1880’s Ohio, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Indiana, Maryland, and Michigan had followed suit.\(^5\) This resurgence in the German language, brought about to a large extent by the large numbers of Germans living in those regions, also fostered a renaissance in teaching German to English-speaking students. The first major city to adopt German instruction in the public schools was St. Louis in 1864, followed by Chicago (1865), Cleveland (1869), and Baltimore (1874).\(^6\)

A resurgence of nativism in the 1890’s resulted in a movement to ban teaching basic courses in public schools in any language but English. As the primary foreign language being taught in the public schools, German came under direct assault. By the mid-1890’s Illinois and Wisconsin passed laws requiring exclusive use of English in teaching reading, writing, arithmetic, and United States history. This movement spread throughout the East and parts of the Mid-West. By 1900 the teaching of core subjects in the German language had all but ceased in many of the nation’s metropolitan school systems—due primarily to nativism which viewed instruction in any language other than English as retarding the assimilation process, and to declining interest within the German-American community itself—while the teaching of German as a foreign language remained popular at the higher education level.

Use of the German language in education had been a part of a “blending” of German educational institutions with those of the United States. This combination
occurred at two levels, the first being the elementary/secondary schools and the second the colleges/universities. In the 1830's and 1840's several American scholars visited Prussia to examine the system of public education where the government supported the schools and education was compulsory at the elementary level. Their findings and recommendations helped to influence the growth of public education in the United States at a time when Americans began to see the advantages of a more educated populace. The most famous example of German influence on the elementary level was the *kindergarten* created by Friedrich Froebel in Blankenburg, Germany, an idea that found its way to the United States through the efforts of Margaretha Schurz, wife of Carl Schurz, (both immigrants) who established the first kindergarten in Watertown, Wisconsin in 1855. Since that time kindergarten has been an integral part in acclimating young people to the educational process in the United States. The introduction of physical education in the public schools on a wide-spread basis began around 1870, due in large part to the German *Turnverein* or gymnastic clubs which existed in many of the nation's cities.

The most profound example of German influence on American education came at the highest academic level. American students began to study at German universities beginning around 1815 and by the end of the nineteenth century more than 100,000 Americans had a German education. Notable amongst this group were George Bancroft, Herbert Baxter Adams, James Harvey Robinson, and W.E.B. DuBois. Their exposure to German methods of classroom instruction resulted in a transfer of "educational culture" at a time when the United States was undergoing an
expansion in its system of higher education. One result of this transfer was the adoption of the German seminar method of graduate instruction that first appeared in the United States at the Johns Hopkins University in 1876. The seminar method became the dominant teaching method by the end of the nineteenth century.61

Not surprisingly, German influence on higher education sparked growth of German language programs. By 1884 over two hundred colleges and universities offered German as an area of concentration. The largest department in the nation was at Harvard which had five faculty members teaching German.62 Johns Hopkins University in 1887 awarded the first Ph.D. in German language to Marion Dexter Learned who would later become a member of the NGAA and assist in that organization's campaign to promote German language instruction in America. By the end of the century German and French formed the core languages for modern language departments across the nation.

Popularity of the German language and educational system combined with German work in science and literature to produce respect and admiration among higher intellectual circles in the United States. The general American population perceived Germans—and thus German-Americans—as trustworthy, hard-working, and industrious. There were, however, other aspects of German culture that did not set as well with the American population, or segments of it.

By the start of the twentieth century beer commonly had become equated with German in the American populace. Such was not always the case. Prior to 1840 the brewing industry in this nation had been largely British. The majority of brewed
beverages in this country, called “common beer,” were top-fermented brews including ale, porter, and stout. With the large influx of German immigrants a new style of beer came to America. This lager beer, a bottom-fermented brew with a distinctive clean, sharp taste, was originally developed by the Spaten brewery in Munich in the 1830’s. Lager beer gained such quick acceptance in the United States outside the German community that the British influence on brewing had all but died by the 1850’s.

Germans introduced lager beer throughout the nation in the 1840’s—first in New York by George Gillig, later in St. Louis by Adam Lemp. In Cincinnati Fortmann and Company began their business in the “Over the Rhine” section of the city. The Kaltenhaeusser Brewery introduced the product to Pittsburgh. In Chicago Lill & Diversey dominated the industry and became one of the first breweries to ship their products to other states. In Milwaukee, a city soon to become synonymous with beer, the largest brewer of ale (Milwaukee Brewery) ironically was owned by three Welshmen who were quick to capitalize on the popularity of the German brew. By the mid nineteenth century these regional brewers, along with others across the country, helped to make the brewing industry synonymous with German-America.

It would not be until the 1880’s and 1890’s that large scale brewing and distribution would begin in earnest. Advances in production techniques, coupled with the ever-growing transportation network across the nation made it easier for brewers to market their product outside a small region. In Milwaukee the Joseph Pabst brewery sold over one million barrels of beer in 1893, while his competition, Adolph Schlitz, reached that number by the end of the century. In St. Louis Anheuser-Busch,
a company formed when Adolphus Busch married Lilly Anheuser in 1861, reached the 900,000 barrel mark by the decade's end. The Mid-West was not the only area in which Germans established a reputation in brewing. By the end of the nineteenth century German-American brewers practiced their craft in the western states, primarily California, Colorado and Texas.

The 1890's also produced a resurgence of the temperance movement as reform-minded citizens sought to cure the evils of society by making the manufacture, sale, and consumption of alcohol illegal. These people, primarily middle to upper middle class professionals, targeted the brewers and distillers and an institution that was at the heart of every German-American community, the corner bar, which they viewed as a source of evil in urban neighborhoods. Ornately decorated with German memorabilia, the typical German-American bar catered almost exclusively to men. At the large wooden bar the men could partake of a free lunch that included roast beef, fish, potato salad, olives, bread, and blood pudding if they purchased a beer for a nickel. A large group could buy beer at the discount rate of twenty one glasses for a dollar. Heavy saltation of food encouraged greater consumption of beer. These institutions served as an important social outlet for men in the community, a place to catch up on the local news, or find a job. In many instances the saloon owner was also the local ward boss. Reformers targeted these institutions as a threat to the community. They pointed to the widespread growth of local bars in the last years of the nineteenth century as evidence—in Milwaukee alone there was one bar for every thirty homes. These progressive-minded citizens connected the bar with domestic
violence and poverty, as men would drink away their earnings and return home, only
to physically abuse their spouse, while their children went hungry.

The saloon was not the only German institution associated with beer that came
under attack. The German tradition of the Sunday beer garden, introduced in the
United States during the 1830's, came under assault by reformers who viewed such
activities as a threat to the social well being and to an already-established lifestyle.
This Sunday tradition, brought over from the old country, clashed with the established
Yankee tradition of Sunday as a day of rest, church and prayer.

Unlike the saloon, however, the beer garden was more of a family event, an
important social outlet for entire working class families. The gardens could be indoors
or out—with indoor gardens decorated to look like outdoor ones. The largest of
these, found in New York’s Bowery district, accommodated up to twelve hundred
people. Admission was free and men brought their wives and children. As the lager
breweries grew in size they installed beer gardens for the comfort and convenience of
their patrons. Food would be served, music played, and the afternoon spent in lively
conversation with friends, both old and new.

While reformers attacked these institutions as a source of vice and decadence
other groups used the beer garden as a means of stereotyping German-Americans. As
early as 1850 newspapers had begun to characterize German men and women with
beer bellies, rosy cheeks and silly grins on their faces. The Milwaukee Daily Sentinel
seemed to characterize an entire ethnic group when it ran a lithograph of a large,
drunk German saying to a policeman, “I trinks Lager, and I have only trunk tirty
glasses, so you shust go away.”

Thus a clash of cultures traceable back to the displacement of the Anglo-
dominated beer industry by German immigrants, had begun in earnest by the end of the
nineteenth century. German-Americans interpreted reformist efforts as attacks on
their culture and personal liberties granted to them by the Constitution. Reformers
looked at the brewing industry as a source of German-American corruption of Anglo-
Saxon America during a time when alcohol in general was viewed as the heart of such
social problems as prostitution, spousal abuse, child neglect, and poverty. The stage
was set for a battle that would last through the First World War.

German-American social life in the nineteenth century did not revolve solely
around beer gardens and drinking. Midway through the century most communities
had singing societies which would regularly host Sangerfests (musical festivals). The
largest gathering, in Cincinnati in 1899, attracted 120 societies and 2757 singers.70
These meetings produced a wide variety of German music ranging from traditional
folk songs sung by individuals to full scale symphonies playing Beethoven, Mozart,
and Wagner.

The constitutions of the various singing societies outlined their objectives.
While they utilized both English and German, the main goal was the preservation and
promotion of German cultural institutions in the United States.71 As a rule the press
and the general public greeted the Sangerfests with much enthusiasm. The Chicago
Tribune, in commenting on a production of *The Magic Flute* in 1870 had nothing but praise:

That there should exist in the midst of all the din of trade and in this seething, restless struggle for wealth and place, an organization, or rather, two organizations, possessing such a high degree of musical culture, and the disposition and enthusiasm to exhibit that culture in such a successful manner, is in every way creditable to the city, and especially to the German element of our citizens, which has done so much for good music in Chicago.  

The Tribune's review indicates the acceptance that many in America had for German contributions to the American cultural landscape. The Chicago example is no isolated incident. Similar events in San Francisco, St. Louis, New York and other cities across United States during the last half of the nineteenth century received an equally warm response. Americans who accepted German music into their lives did not react similarly to other aspects of German culture, especially in the area of "radical" political ideas.

Another important social outlet for the German-American community were the Turner societies, the origins of which date back to 1811 when Friedrich Ludwig Jahn founded a *Turnerei* (gymnastics) society near Berlin. Jahn extolled the benefits of a healthy mind and body—a blending of physical fitness and political discussion. These societies rapidly spread throughout the German states as young idealist Germans reacted to the message of political freedom and German unification expounded by Jahn and his followers. The Prussian government did not agree with that message, threw Jahn in jail in 1819, and banned *Turnerei* until 1842 when Frederick William IV revived the idea. Jahn was eventually released from prison but was kept
under close watch by the authorities until 1840 when Frederick granted him unrestricted freedom.  

The first attempt at creating a Turnerei in the United States, at Round Hill School in Northampton, Massachusetts in 1824, focused on physical fitness with little in the way of politics. The first of the Turner halls appeared in Cincinnati in 1850, the work of the “48ers.” In that year the Turners formed a national body known as the Vereinigte Turnvereine Nordamerikas.

Starting as fitness clubs, the Turner halls gradually developed into multi-functional societies designed to ease newly-arrived immigrants into their new environment. They also quickly became a source of political radicalism in the German-American community, a development reflected in the decision to change the name of the national body to Sozialistischer Turnerbund in 1851. By the end of the decade there were over 150 Turnvereine across the United States. The political nature of the societies, guided to a large extent by socialist thinking, brought them into direct conflict with native Americans who viewed such beliefs as a threat to democratic institutions. The Know-Nothing movement of the 1850’s targeted the Turners, and in such cities as New York, Cincinnati, and Baltimore mob violence broke out between the two groups. The physical training and rigid discipline usually allowed the Turners to win these encounters, but in doing so they added another element to the growing stereotype of the iron-willed German. While the Know-Nothing movement died down before Civil War the impact of this initial political clash between German-Americans and native elements was important. The Turners linked German-Americans
to radical politics in the United States until the end of the nineteenth century, the high-
point being the anarchist movements of the 1870's and 1880's in which German-
Americans would play a major role.

Turner societies otherwise played an integral part in the social and cultural life of German-Americans. They helped newly-arrived immigrants find housing, work, and assisted them in assimilating into American society. Their halls served as gathering places for festivals and celebrations.78 Turner societies lasted well into the twentieth century by which time they had abandoned politics to focus on social and cultural concerns within the German-American community.79 Their significance lies in the fact that they represented the first attempts to create a national German-American organization. They established an example of German-Americans banding together to preserve their culture while helping newly arrived immigrants adjust to life in the United States. It also set the precedent for the NGAA which in the first seventeen years of the twentieth century would attempt to carry on and extend the political and cultural work begun by the Turners.

Yet another major cultural institution of the German-American community was the German-American press.80 While Benjamin Franklin established the first German language newspaper in America, *The Philadelphia Zeitung* in 1732, the recognized pioneer of German-American journalism was Christopher Sauer who established *The Pennsylvanische Berichte* in 1739.81

From 1787 to 1830, the German language press in the United States remained small, confined to Maryland, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. For the most part the
individual papers catered to issues of local concern rather than national and international events. This began to change around 1830 as an increase in German immigration caused the press to take on new character and size. With the influx of “48ers” a new source of editorial talent broadened the scope of the German-American press to include national and international issues. From 1848 to 1861 the press doubled from 70 newspapers to 144. Some of the most influential German-American dailies appeared during this time, notably the Illinois Staats-Zeitung, New Yorker Staats-Zeitung, and the St. Louis Westliche Post. All three papers would remain influential in their regions, with the New Yorker Staats-Zeitung gaining national prominence.

At this time there also emerged a radical German-American press that acted as a voice for socialism and labor unrest. Prior to the Civil War it had been dominated by “48ers” who extolled the concepts of free labor and antislavery. Franz Schmidt’s Freie Blatter, published in St. Louis during the 1850’s, extolled the virtue of individual liberty and the belief that history constituted a continuous struggle to free man from the forces of oppression. After the Civil War the radical press shifted. Many of the “48ers” had become part of mainstream society, selecting to enjoy the benefits of American capitalism rather than continually criticizing it. The radical papers now became associated with labor radicalism, often acting as a lightning rod for labor agitation. The Arbeiter-Zeitung published in Chicago and Die Freiheit published in New York stood as prominent examples of a radical press that reached its peak in April 1886. With the Haymarket bombing of May 4, and the subsequent trial of the
German-Americans involved, the German-American radical press began a slow decline that corresponded directly with a decline in German-American participation in radical politics. Even though the vast majority of Americans of German descent did not participate in or condone the actions of these few radicals, the radical press, as with the Turner movement caused many Americans to connect radical politics with the German-American community.

By 1894, the high-water mark for the German language press, there were over 800 dailies and weeklies across the nation. Even though this number dropped to 613 by 1901, the German-American press remained the largest among ethnic groups and exerted a strong influence both within and outside the German community. With American involvement in the First World War, the German-American press came under attack as a source of pro-German propaganda in the United States. It also become a victim of that war, along with many other aspects of German culture, as by 1920 only 278 publications remained and of that total only twenty-nine were dailies.

As the new century began, German-American culture, while firmly established throughout the nation, had begun to yield to pressures of the new environment. The decline in immigration from Germany deprived local communities of new blood. The booming American nation, with its continental expansion, growing cities, and technological miracles offered compelling enticements to individuals willing to take the step. Many German-Americans did, and so assimilation, especially of people once or twice removed from the old country, reached near crisis proportion in the minds of those individuals entrusted with keeping German ways alive.
Prior to 1901, one could see evidence of a united German political movement only on local and state levels. A major stumbling block had been the fragmentary nature of the German community. Unlike the Irish, German-Americans hardly ever voted in a united block. Their political splintering mirrored the political fragmentation of their homeland where local issues took precedent over state or "national" ones. From almost the beginning of the nation's history German-Americans earned the reputation as being one of the most politically apathetic of ethnic groups. Only when they faced a threat to their leisure time consumption of alcohol or to German language instruction did Germans vote as a block.86

This is not to say that Americans of German descent did not participate in the political system. It does mean that Germans at no time exercised political power on any level of government commensurate with their numbers. Several distinguished German-Americans did serve the nation in high office. Most notable were Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg, the first Speaker of the House of Representatives; Carl Schurz, United States Senator from Missouri and later Secretary of the Interior under President Rutherford B. Hayes; and John P. Atgeld, governor of Illinois from 1893-1897.87 As a group the most politically active German-Americans were the "48ers," many of whom would take part in the emerging socialist and anarchist movements of the nineteenth century.88 The most famous example of this activity was the bombing at Haymarket Square in 1886 and the subsequent trial and execution of four German-American "anarchists," the most notable being August Spies, a "48er."89
German-Americans participated in great numbers in the Civil War, primarily on the Union side. A major reason of course was that the vast majority of them lived in the North. The German-American press also stood solidly behind the cause of the North. Of the 265 German language newspapers published in 1861 only three supported secession. Even in the South where they existed in large numbers the majority chose not to support the Confederacy, as in the case of German militia units in Texas which were disbanded when they refused to give up the Union flag. A plan was even proposed, though never carried out, to raise an all-German army to wrest Texas from the Confederacy.

A number of factors account for German-American support of the Union. Many “48ers,” along with the vast majority of other Germans in America, embraced the Union cause as a fight to set men free. The North was sympathetic to the immigrant and most immigration came into northern ports while the South discouraged immigration. Germans viewed the plantation system of the South as similar to the European nobility system, especially the Prussian Junkers, from which they had fled. The Southern economy was a closed system in which the wealthy owned their source of labor. While this was not necessarily the norm in the region, perceptions held sway and German immigrants saw little chance of employment and upward mobility in the South.

German-Americans enlisted in the Union army in proportionally large numbers. While it is difficult to ascertain the number of soldiers of German descent, we do know that over 200,000 German-born fought for the Union. Roughly 36,000 served in all
German units commanded by German-American officers. The state that contributed
the most was New York (36,680). Pennsylvania also contributed large numbers, but
the vast majority of German recruits came from the Midwest states of Illinois, Indiana,
Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin. During the four year conflict more Germans fought
for the Union cause than any other immigrant group, including the Irish.\textsuperscript{92}

German soldiers received both condemnation and praise for their efforts in
battle. At Gettysburg the Eleventh Corps, under the command of Carl Schurz, was
labeled a “band of cowardly Dutchmen” when they were forced to retreat on second
day of the battle.\textsuperscript{93} For the most part, however, Northern commanders praised the
efforts of the German component of the Union army. In Missouri, where they made
up the bulk of the Union forces, German-Americans played a significant role in
keeping that state in the Union. At the Battle of Shiloh in April 1862, a regiment
under Colonel August Willich helped turn the battle in favor of Ulysses S. Grant’s
Northern forces, thus assisting in saving the future president’s career.\textsuperscript{94}

Americans of German descent also participated in the political battles of the
conflict, especially the hotly contested election of 1864. Four years earlier the German
vote had played a key role in Lincoln’s victory, especially in the states of the
Midwest.\textsuperscript{95} Many of the same reasons that caused the Germans to join the Union
Army motivated them to support the Republican party. Although most Germans
remained in the Republican camp, some individuals disenchanted with Lincoln’s
conservative policies, gathered in Cleveland, Ohio to seek an alternative candidate.
They called for unconditional surrender, a radical program of reconstruction, and
refusing to support "a weak-headed unprincipled log-splitter," they voted to support John C. Fremont's candidacy for the presidency. Lincoln feared that German support of Fremont would split the Republican vote in the crucial state of New York and in the Midwest.

Military events helped to bring about the collapse of the Fremont movement. William T. Sherman's capture of Atlanta in September 1864 greatly increased the popularity of Lincoln's conduct of the war. Later in that month Fremont announced the end of his campaign for the presidency. His German-American supporters, who in no way trusted George B. McClellan, the Democratic candidate, then returned to the Republican fold and played a key role in Lincoln's re-election.

In general the experience of the Civil War was a positive one for German-Americans. They fought with valor on the right side. The German press often would point to these contributions to remind the nation of the loyalty of the German component. The vast majority of German voters backed Lincoln and the Republican party, thus aligning themselves with the group that would shape the post-Civil War nation. Finally, German-American military contributions, coupled with Prussia's diplomatic support of the Union cause, placed Americans of German descent in the forefront of immigrant groups in the minds of many Americans.

After the Civil War the Republican party maintained the support of German-American farmers, Catholics, conservative Lutherans, and second or third generation people established in business. But beginning with the resurgence of the temperance movement in the 1880's the Democratic party, with its opposition to the Prohibition...
movement, began to win the support of German-American Lutherans, first generation immigrants, and members of labor unions. From this point on Democrats could usually count on the majority of German-American votes in large cities. During the 1870's and 1880's a small segment joined the anarchist and socialist movements of the times. Few remained at the end of the century, however, and radicals of the era mostly came from the ranks of Southern and Eastern European immigrant groups who were more likely to stand at the bottom of the economic ladder. By 1900 most Americans of German descent, whatever generation they represented, were content with working within the system to achieve their goals.

German-Americans banded together when they felt strongly about an issue, but during the nineteenth century there had been no attempt to organize Germans on a broad national basis, with the possible exception of the Turners. The Catholic Central Verein, founded in 1855 by representatives from German-American Catholic organizations in four states and the District of Columbia, had grown out of the nativist movements of the 1850's which targeted the Roman church. During this decade the Know-Nothing movement had targeted German Catholics for abuse, the worst case being the Louisville riots of 1855 in which a number of German immigrants were murdered by an angry mob. By the late 1890's, however, the Verein shifted its focus away from culture to one emphasizing social reform as a means of attracting the progressive-minded elements in the community, thus alienating a large segment of the German-American community.
By the end of the nineteenth century German-Americans had gained a reputation for political apathy. The vast majority had assimilated into American society and participated in the political process through voting rather than agitation. H.L. Mencken commented that the lack of political involvement on the part of German-Americans at the end of the nineteenth was based upon the fact that “the Melting Pot had devoured German-Americans as it has no group, not even the Irish.”

This loss of ethnic identity concerned some individuals within the community who did not wish to see their heritage forgotten. By 1900 some German-Americans also began to voice concern over a number of issues that could potentially have an impact on the ethnic group. These included the movement for the prohibition of alcohol, the immigrant restriction movement, the general decline in German cultural institutions, and a growing estrangement between the United States and Germany over economic and diplomatic issues as both nations sought global influence by the end of the century. In combination, these issues would produce a movement to preserve German culture during the first years of the twentieth century.

American diplomatic relations with Germany, or at least with Germans, began during the American Revolution. Prussia chose to remain neutral in the war and in 1776 Emperor Frederick the Great went so far as to deny a British request for 20,000 Prussian soldiers to assist the British army in the colonies. Two years later, while fighting the War of Bavarian Succession, Frederick allowed Britain to hire Hessian mercenaries to fight in North America. Instead of reacting negatively, the Continental
Congress was grateful to the Prussian king for keeping the Hessians out for as long as he did.\textsuperscript{100}

In the years immediately after the war United States relations with the German states centered almost exclusively on Prussia. The United States had little to do with the smaller German principalities. On September 10, 1785, Prussia and the United States signed a Treaty of Amity and Commerce. Negotiated by John Adams and Benjamin Franklin, this document served as the cornerstone for a century of peaceful relations between the two countries. It also served as a model treaty in its provisions to protect private property and innocent persons during times of conflict.

In November 1797 John Quincy Adams arrived in Berlin to serve as the first United States Minister to Prussia. In this time of upheaval on the continent and of chilly, almost hostile relations between the United States and France due to the Quasi War, Adams maintained friendly relations with the Prussian monarchy, renegotiating a treaty and generally building upon the existing foundation of good will between the two countries. One historian, Manfred Jonas, labeled the period from 1797 to 1877 the "era of good feelings" between the two nations.\textsuperscript{101} During this period large scale German emigration to the United States began, the two countries became trading partners, and American students and teachers traveled to Prussia and other German states to study at various universities.

The outbreak of the Civil War in the United States held potential ramifications for Prussian-American relations. King William I quickly announced his nation's support for the Union cause. William insisted that Prussia was opposed to all
revolutionary movements and that it would never recognize any government representing the states that left the Union. The German states proved to be the heaviest subscribers to United States government bonds, buying over $800,000 worth of securities to help fund the Northern war effort. The United States would not forget these moves when Prussia went to war with France in 1870.

After the Civil War relations between Prussia and the United States remained friendly. The American public and government supported Prussia during its war against Denmark in 1864 and against Austria in 1866. Prussian-American relations reached their zenith with the appointment of George Bancroft as Minister to Prussia in 1867. Bancroft, an historian trained in Germany, worked hard at promoting friendly relations between the two nations. He managed to soothe over the one sore spot in Prussian-American relations by negotiating a series of treaties in 1868 which recognized five years as the time needed to acquire American citizenship. Prior to this move, the Prussian government had considered German-Americans returning to Prussia—or any state in the North German Confederation—for a visit as still being under military obligation. Bancroft's efforts put an end to this practice. When war broke out between Prussia and France in August 1870 the United States government announced a policy of neutrality, but it was clear that public opinion and the government favored Prussia. In a letter to the Secretary of State Bancroft made his case for dealing with the new Germany:

If we need the solid, trusty good will of any government in Europe, we can have it best with Germany: because German institutions and ours most nearly resemble each other; and because so many millions of

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Germans have become our countrymen. This war will leave Germany the most powerful state in Europe, and the most free; its friendship is, therefore, most important to us; and has its foundations in history and nature.  

Bancroft's words reflected the opinion of a country that at the time looked upon Germany as a nation of universities, with a kindred culture whose war for national unity mirrored America's own war of independence. The *New York Times* labeled France an aggressor and Prussia the victim of an audacious crime. The *Chicago Daily Tribune* reminded Americans of Prussia's support of the Union in the Civil War and added that it now was time for the United States to believe in the goal of German unity.  

Americans in general welcomed German unification and looked forward to continued good relations with that country.

Before German unification, Prussia and the United States had had little contact around the world. Both were powers confined to spheres separate from the other, with small navies and little chance for an incident between them. This situation began to change in the 1880's as both nations underwent a dramatic economic transformation. The rapid industrialization of both nations brought with it greater chances for economic competition and diplomatic incidents as in the 1880's both nations began their expansion as global powers.

The first such incidents were the passage of the tariff in Germany, and the "Pork Controversy," both in 1879. The former was an attempt by the German government to protect domestic wheat production against an influx of cheaper American wheat. The latter was aimed at keeping out American pork products on
grounds that it was not safe for consumption.\textsuperscript{107} The controversy subsided for a time during the mid-1880’s but it remained the first example of a rift in economic issues. Others would follow in the years to come.

By the 1880’s German and American power had begun to reach into Asia – on a small scale, to be sure, but occasionally in places where interests of the two nations collided. The Samoan Crisis of 1887-89 brought the two nations to the brink of war as both, along with Great Britain, vied for control over the strategic Asian islands. In the end it was possible to avoid a military confrontation.\textsuperscript{108} The Samoan Crisis was significant for a number of reasons. First, it was the first “imperial” action on the part of the United States. Second, it marked the beginning of a transformation in relations between the United States and Great Britain. Prior to this time America and Germany were content to periodically “twist the British lion’s tail.” Beginning with the Samoan Crisis, Great Britain actively sought out the friendship of the United States in the face of a perceived German threat to British global hegemony.

Disputes over trade issues dominated relations between Germany and the United States from 1890 to 1897. The pork dispute resurfaced in 1890. For the next seven years the two countries threatened each other with higher tariffs and import restrictions. In the end cooler heads prevailed as by 1897 agreements were reached on all outstanding trade issues. The controversy, however, inflamed public opinion in both nations. Americans began to perceive Germany as a threat to United States economic expansion around the globe.
Germany and the United States soon encountered difficulty over China. In November 1897 two German missionaries were murdered in Shantung province. The German government landed forces at Kiaochow Bay and occupied the area, an action that the United States viewed as “bullying” and an effort to gain an upper hand in China. Three years later when the Boxer Rebellion broke out the Kaiser viewed the action as the beginnings of a “yellow peril” that threatened the white race. In a famous speech William II exhorted his troops as they prepared to depart for China:

You will give no quarter! You will take no prisoners! Whoever falls into your hands will be your victim! Just as the Huns under their King Attila made a name for themselves a thousand years ago which still, in saga and tradition, makes them appear powerful, so may the name German be impressed by you on China for a thousand years, that no Chinese will ever dare again look askance at a German.

Widely reprinted around the world, these words affected the image of Germany in the eyes many Americans—though the United States also sent troops to put down the uprising. This nation once regarded as a land of freedom, universities and a kindred spirit now threatened brutality in China. The Boston Evening Transcript labeled the emperor’s rantings as, “breathing forth threatening and slaughter,” from a man intent upon “wreaking vengeance upon the Chinese.”

The United States also quarreled with Germany during the Spanish-American War of 1898. Although the Kaiser’s government had been officially neutral, the German press had been openly pro-Spanish and German military moves in Asia had cast suspicions on its true motives. A question arose concerning the fate of the Philippine Islands, in the aftermath of the American occupation of Manila. The Kaiser
and the head of the German navy, Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz, thought that Manila Bay would make an excellent naval base and the Germans had on hand a more powerful force than the American squadron that had defeated the Spanish. The Germans further complicated matters by opening direct communications with the Spanish on the island.\textsuperscript{112}

The American government objected to these moves and the press in the United States fueled suspicion by projecting Germany as an aggressor, seeking to claim lands won by the United States. The \textit{New York Herald} claimed that Germany was “on the grab” and desired a foothold in the Philippines. The \textit{New York Times} questioned why Germany felt the need to place a naval force, superior to that of the United States, near the Philippines if it was there only to protect German interests.\textsuperscript{113}

In the end of course Germany did not attempt to take the Philippines. Yet the actions outside Manila Bay, coupled with past incidents in Samoa and China and differences over trade issues caused Americans to begin to change their opinion of Germany. This transformation was also assisted by a growing friendship between the United States and Great Britain, as the latter nation began to capitalize on Germany’s bellicose foreign policy to slowly drive a wedge between that country and the United States. By 1901 this transformation was well underway. The signing of the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty of 1901 symbolized England’s recognition of the United States as a global power with hemispheric and world interests.\textsuperscript{114} America’s drift into the British sphere gradually pulled it away from ties with Germany.
German-Americans could not fully comprehend the implications of this rift at the time. They had for the most part remained quiet during these controversies. Some were embarrassed by the Kaiser's actions and viewed his policies as a threat to peace. Others, while sympathetic with Germany's desire to achieve its place in the sun, steadfastly supported the policies of the American government. A smaller group looked with pride on Germany's accomplishments since unification, choosing to ignore the growing strain in German-American relations.¹¹⁵ This group looked at Great Britain as a main instigator in the transformation in Germany's relations with the United States. Others acutely aware of their status as "German" Americans, and concerned about trouble between their adopted land and the fatherland, pledged themselves to making the new century also a new era in German-American relations.

By the beginning of the twentieth century the German-American community was well established in the United States. It was also a community that, while maintaining much of its cultural heritage, viewed itself as American in every sense of the word. By 1900 the vast majority of German-Americans were assimilated into American society. The large majority had English-speaking neighbors, while many lived in predominantly English-speaking parts of the nation's cities. Their children attended public schools where English was the primary language of instruction, and the majority of the books in use had a decided Anglo-American focus in terms of literature, culture, and history. Within this community, however, were those who viewed themselves as Americans but who also sought to maintain Old World institutions and ties with the fatherland.
For some Germans then, assimilation mingled with a desire to maintain their heritage resulted in, as one writer put it, "a cultural schizophrenia within the German-American community." Taking this point further, the phenomenon existed, not in the group which had discarded its ethnicity, but within the middle-to-upper-class elite of German-America that had adopted American ways yet now sought to maintain a sense of *Deutschtum*—a sense of community—by preserving the culture and traditions of Germany. The words of a prominent German-American in Cincinnati, Carl Ruemelin, summed up this feeling:

> We did not wish to establish here a mere New Germany, nor on the other hand did we wish simply to disappear into America. It is necessary for us to declare, with a bold consciousness of fact, that we have succeeded in remaining honorably German without at the same time being untrue to our new Fatherland.

Such individuals probably felt secure in their status, both economically and patriotically, as Americans. They had created a comfort zone of confidence and acceptance which allowed them to pursue efforts at maintaining their ethnicity. The dawn of the new century brought new concerns regarding German-America in the rapidly changing social and cultural landscape of the United States. By 1900 the flow of immigrants from Germany had declined precipitously. During the first decade of the twentieth century Germans accounted for only four percent of the total immigrant population, down from twenty-seven percent in the 1880's. The German-Americans most interested in maintaining traditional culture understood that new immigration would best preserve the ties to ethnicity.
Ethnic institutions within America were increasingly coming under attack by nativist and progressive movements that called for the complete assimilation of the nation's ethnic components. It was the age of Progressivism, a movement that accepted a belief in the continued ability of mankind to improve the environment and the conditions of life. One of the driving forces behind the movement, evangelical Protestantism, had little or no tolerance for institutions or attitudes that, in their view, hindered progress in the United States. America's love of alcohol, and beer in particular, was one of these. By 1900 the per capita consumption of beer alone was twenty-four gallons a year, far and away the alcohol of choice in the United States.

As prohibition became a national issue it threatened not only the livelihood of many Americans of German descent, but also challenged an important social and cultural aspect of the ethnic community. German-Americans dominated the brewing industry by 1900. Prominent citizens in their communities, owners of the breweries in many cases also were strong advocates of German culture in America, notable examples being Adolphus Busch in St. Louis and Joseph Pabst in Milwaukee.

The increasing strain in United States relations with Germany held the potential for future problems for German-American community. As both nations reached for global influence they also expanded the potential for confrontation. In the worst-case scenario, war between the two countries, German institutions, already under siege in America, could face virtual destruction in a nation consumed by war fever.

In combination, these issues created a sense of urgency within a segment of German-America, individuals who concluded that the only way to meet the challenges,
preserve their culture and traditions, would be to organize at the national level. Such actions had precedent as German-Americans since colonial times had banded together when they felt aspects of their livelihood threatened. The building blocks for a national organization were already in place at the state and local levels by the end of the nineteenth century. A sense of *Deutschum* already existed within the German-American community. The German-American press, German language instruction, various local German clubs, Catholic Verein and Turner societies stood as manifestations of a commonality of interest in ethnicity. What was needed was a unifying force to give outlet to these impulses and consolidate local organizations into a national group. It was to this end that prominent Germans in Pennsylvania, sharing the concerns of many fellow German-Americans, gathered in Philadelphia in 1899 to explore the concept of an organization that would promote the interests of German-Americans throughout the United States.

End Notes


5 Aaron Spencer Fogleman, *Hopeful Journeys: German Immigration, Settlement, and Political Culture in Colonial America, 1717-1775* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 5. The pamphlet circulated in 1709 was written by Joshua...

7 Ibid., 2.
9 Ibid., 143.
10 Benjamin Franklin, *Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind* (Tarrytown, NY, 1755), 7.
14 Faust, *The German Element in the United States*, 341-342. Ludwig received the name Molly Pitcher from soldiers in her husband's gunnery battalion. After he was severely wounded in battle she nursed him back to health and stayed with him for the next seven years of the war. Her husband's comrades nicknamed her "Molly" when she came to the front lines with water. The soldiers responded with the cry "Here comes Molly with her Pitcher."
18 Roger Daniels, *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life* (New York: Harper-Collins, 1990), 110. The term “Dutch” is in itself not derogatory. But when used to describe Germans it is. For Germans “Dutch” is a slang term for “Deutsch,” the German spelling of German.
20 Ibid., 105-106.


30 Ibid., 68.


36 Rippley, *The German-Americans*, 47.


38 This takes into account that the population of the British Isles is broken down into its English, Irish, Scottish and Welsh components.


Frances Trollope, *Domestic Manners of the Americans*, Donald Smalley, ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), 266.


Viereck, *German Instruction in American Schools*, 543.

Ibid., 547.


Rippley, *The German-Americans*, 118.

Zeydel, *The Teaching of German in the United States from Colonial Times to the Present*, 293.

Kloss, "German-American Language Maintenance Efforts," 218.

Rippley, *The German-Americans*, 120.

Zeydel, *The Teaching of German in the United States from Colonial Times to the Present*, 293.


59 Viereck, *German Instruction in American Schools*, 576.


61 *Guide to the German Educational Exhibition in St. Louis in 1904*, (Berlin: W. Buxenstein, 1904), 1-33.


63 Timothy J. Holian, “Cincinnati and Its Brewing Industry: Their Parallel Development Through the German Community,” *Yearbook of German-American Studies*, vol. 29 (Lawrence, KS: Society for German-American Studies, 1994), 70.


65 Ibid., 258-259.

66 Holian, “Cincinnati and Its Brewing Industry: Their Parallel Development Through the German Community,” 76-77.


69 Milwaukee *Daily Sentinel*, 17 June 1861, 5.


71 Ibid., 159.


77 Ibid., 393-394.

78 One of the most magnificent Turner halls still exists in Indianapolis and is run by the Athenaeum Foundation, an organization dedicated to the preservation of German culture in America.


Willich rose to the rank of Major-General. Eight other German-Americans reached that rank including Carl Schurz. On the Confederate side two more notable Germans were General Lowe Armistead and General James Kemper, both of whom fell during Pickett’s charge at Gettysburg. Armistead died of his wounds, while Kemper survived and went on to become the governor of Virginia from 1873-1878.
96 Levine, The Spirit of 1848, 261.  
97 Forty-three years later the contributions of German-Americans to the Union cause were still being recognized as President Theodore Roosevelt praised the ethnic group in a 1903 speech.  
98 Ibid., 19.  
103 Jonas, The United States and Germany: A Diplomatic History, 23.  
104 Adams, Prussian-American Relations, 1775-1871, 102-103.  
108 The most detailed account of this chapter in United States relations with Germany is Paul Kennedy's The Samoan Tangle: A Study in Anglo-German Relations (New York, 1974).  
110 Jonas, The United States and Germany: A Diplomatic History, 63.  
111 Schieber, The Transformation of American Sentiment Toward Germany, 1870-1914, 98.  
112 Ibid., 112; and Jonas, The United States and Germany: A Diplomatic History, 57.  
117 John A. Hawgood, *The Tragedy of German-America*, 274, quoting from “Rede des Herrn Carl Ruemlin” in *Deutsche Pioneer*, I (1869-1870), 22. Ruemlin was the first president of the *Pioneer Verein von Cincinnati* an organization founded in 1868 to preserve German culture in America.


119 W.J. Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic: An American Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 239. The figures for distilled spirits and wine were two gallons and one-half gallon respectively.

120 Detjens, *The Germans in Missouri*, 11. Busch even went so far as to endow a chair in German at Washington University in St. Louis.
The representatives who gathered in Philadelphia in April 1899 visualized establishing a state organization that could serve as a nucleus for a national association. Delegates came from various local German-American organizations such as the Pittsburgh Turnverein, Altoona Deutsche Verein, and the Philadelphia Deutsche Verein. They represented a cross-section of middle to upper-middle class German-Americans, many of whom were established professionals: engineers, lawyers, doctors, educators, and businessmen. An observer would search in vain for representatives of the farming and working classes. Accounting for this situation was the fact that delegates came from German-American organizations, made up primarily of middle and upper middle class citizens, in Pennsylvania's cities. Workers and farmers as a rule had neither the time, money, means of communication, nor an intellectual or emotional interest in something as abstract as a quest for German culture. The convention mentioned nothing concerning labor or agriculture and the organizers had no intent to address such concerns.

On April 16, 1899 the delegates created the Deutsch-Amerikanischen Zentral-Bundes von Pennsylvanien (the German-American Central Alliance of Pennsylvania). For its president they elected Dr. Charles J. Hexamer. Born in Philadelphia on May 6, 1862, Hexamer was one of five children of Ernst and Marie Hexamer. Ernst Hexamer,
a "48er," had emigrated to the United States in 1856 where he pursued his career as a civil engineer. In 1859 he married Marie Klingel and moved into a house at 716 Wallace Street in Philadelphia.²

The Hexamers, while assimilating well into middle-class American society, also maintained their German traditions. Ernst and Marie spoke English, but German remained the primary language of the house. From the beginning his parents fostered the love of German culture in young Charles through language instruction, exposure to German art, music, literature, theater, and science. His father insisted that while he was an American, Charles should never forget his German heritage.³ As he grew older Charles took up the charge, committing himself to a wide range of organizations and projects designed to preserve German ways of thought and behavior.

Hexamer's education was extensive. He spent grade school years at the Schule der Deutschen Freien Gemeinde (Free German Public School), and later attended the Eastburn Academy. In 1882 he took a degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Pennsylvania. Four years later he received both a Ph.D. in Civil Engineering from the University of Pennsylvania and L.L. D. from the National University in Philadelphia. At the age of twenty-four he had achieved a level of education possessed by very few individuals of the time and made the list of "Prominent Successful Americans of Our Day," published by the United Press Service Bureau in 1886.⁴ Yet his education was not confined to books. In 1886 he left for Europe where he visited every nation except Spain and Portugal.
Upon his return to America, Hexamer pursued his career in civil engineering. In 1891 he married Anna Josephine Hauptner and that same year began involvement in organizations dedicated to the preservation of German culture. In 1896 he was elected to the board of directors of the Deutschen Gesellschaft von Pennsylvanien (German Society of Pennsylvania). Founded on December 26, 1764, the Society remains the oldest German organization in America. Its original purpose was to protect German immigrants from unethical shipping agents and assure their fair treatment upon arrival in the colonies. One year later the colony of Pennsylvania formally recognized the Society by passing legislation protecting the rights of German immigrants entering the port of Philadelphia. During the period from 1764 to 1896 the Society, while still providing assistance to newly-arrived immigrants, expanded its areas of interest to include preservation of the German language and culture. As its motto it adopted a quotation from Johann Wolfgang Goethe: “Whatever you have inherited from your forefathers, earn it so that it will be truly yours.” The Society worked diligently to live up to the words of the famous German writer. Throughout the nineteenth century it sponsored contests for high school students studying German and in mid-century began to provide scholarships to assist German majors in local colleges and universities. It sponsored concerts, plays in the German language, and lectures in German on a wide range of issues including science, the arts, literature, and politics. By 1896, with immigration from Germany on a sharp decline, the Society began to focus its attention on preserving the memory of German and German-American contributions to the United States.5
Hexamer was the most active member of the board of directors. In a speech given in October 1898 at Washington Park, Philadelphia he praised past accomplishments of German-Americans to the growth of the United States and called upon all German-Americans to maintain and preserve their culture. According to his biographer, Georg von Bosse, this speech placed Hexamer among the leading voices within the German-American community who sought to uphold the traditions of the fatherland. It seemed only fitting that in 1900 he became president of the German Society of Pennsylvania, a position he held until 1917.

Another individual in the Zentral-Bund who would later figure prominently in the NGAA was Adolph Timm. Born in Germany in 1861, Timm left the homeland to settle in Philadelphia in 1881. Like Hexamer, Timm's work in the area of German cultural preservation began with election to the board of directors of the Deutschen Gesellschaft von Pennsylvaniien. He was elected Secretary of the Zentral-Bundes in April 1899 and in 1901 became Secretary of the NGAA, a position he held until breakup of the organization in 1918.

From 1899 to 1918 the lives of Hexamer and Timm remained intertwined as recognized leaders of a united German-American movement in the United States. The goal for both men, and all the delegates at the initial meeting of the Zentral-Bund, was to establish a state organization that would eventually expand and unite other state and local societies into a national German-American organization. To that extent the constitution of the Zentral-Bundes contained many principles that would later be incorporated into the NGAA.
The constitution had two major parts. The first established general governing principles of the organization. The *Zentral-Bundes* pledged to not involve itself directly in politics through the support of a political party or to become involved with any religious affiliation. While any German-American was free to participate in the organization, only individuals possessing American citizenship could become members. The rules banned from the organization any known anarchists or criminals. The last two points are significant. In its citizenship clause the *Zentral-Bundes* sought to prevent any suspicion that the organization would adopt a “pan-German” orientation. By forbidding anarchist or criminal participation it established itself from the beginning as a law-abiding democratic organization at a time of heightened fear regarding radical political activity in the United States, especially by people of foreign origin.

The second part of the constitution listed goals and objectives of the *Zentral-Bundes*. First and foremost of course was the preservation and promotion of traditional German culture. To this end the group pledged to promote the teaching of the German language in public schools, pointing to the cultural and scientific achievements of the German people, and to the position of German as the second (English was first) language of science. Participants also planned to establish a series of lectures throughout the United States on German art, language, literature and science. The organization viewed active participation in the political process as key to the preservation of democracy. The group actively pursued citizenship for all newly-arrived immigrants, especially those from Germany. It also advocated political
freedom for everyone, that is, except for anarchists who sought violent overthrow of the government.

The Zentral-Bundes viewed any restriction on personal liberties, such as the prohibition of alcohol, as a direct violation of the Constitution of the United States. The participants considered the German tradition of the Sunday "beer garden" an integral part of German lifestyle and laws restricting alcohol a direct attack on that culture. Consequently the group opposed any attempt at prohibition on grounds that it would restrict the free-choice of an individual to regulate his or her personal life.

Three other components of the constitution suggested that the Zentral-Bundes was a progressive organization concerned with global issues and the future of the world. The group sought to preserve good relations between the United States and Germany as a stepping stone in efforts to prevent a global conflict. By the end of the nineteenth century a number of international incidents, such as disputes in Samoa, Venezuela, the Spanish-American war, and the beginning of an arms race between the European powers threatened the delicate balance of power between the Western nations. Members of the Zentral-Bundes believed that close cooperation between the United States and Germany would go a long way in preventing the Great Power conflict that many people feared and predicted.11

The Zentral-Bundes advocated a healthy mind and body through higher education and regular exercise. The delegates agreed that they lived in a time of progress and discovery and that continued progress depended upon an educated and healthy populace. The organization realized that continued development also rested
upon conservation and protection of the nation's valuable resources and endorsed national legislation to this end. In doing so the Zentral-Bundes foreshadowed emergence of an activist federal government, especially under Theodore Roosevelt, which would guard against the excesses of corporate America.

Delegates at the Pennsylvania convention saw their primary goal as the preservation of German culture, but they also attempted to position themselves as a progressive group, in step with social and political issues emerging at the end of the nineteenth century. Consistent with the spirit of that time, they also realized that they could not accomplish what they wanted through a state organization. In their last order of business members of the Zentral-Bundes voted to host a meeting of other German-American organizations with similar interests and goals.

It was the last piece of business that would receive the most attention. For the next fourteen months Hexamer, Timm and other members of the Zentral-Bundes worked to set up a meeting for the establishment of a national organization. During this time German-American organizations in such states as California, Maryland, Minnesota, Ohio, and the District of Columbia had formed state alliances along lines similar to that of the Zentral-Bundes. On June 19, 1900 representatives from German-American organizations in Maryland, Minnesota, Ohio, and Pennsylvania met in Philadelphia for a one day meeting which, under the chairmanship of Hexamer, created an executive committee to organize a larger gathering to be held in Philadelphia. The committee accomplished its task over a year later when, on October 6, 1901, representatives from twelve states and the District of Columbia gathered in
Philadelphia at der Halle der Deutschen Gesellschaft von Pennsylvanien (Hall of the German Society of Pennsylvania). The day for the initial gathering was not a random selection. Ever since 1883 October 6 had been celebrated as “German Day,” commemorating the founding of the first German community at Germantown, Pennsylvania on October 6, 1683.

Thirty-nine delegates, selected by German-American organizations at the state and local levels attended the gathering. As with the formative meeting of the Zentral-Bundes, representatives at this gathering were middle to upper middle class professionals who represented various German organizations at the local and state levels. These included men like Simon Wolf who served as a delegate for the Zentral-Verein of the District of Columbia, and Professor of German Carl Brede, who represented Idaho. The Turnvereins of New Jersey sent Jakob Muller, a businessman. Professors C. O. Schonrich and Marion Dexter Learned of the University of Pennsylvania represented the Deutsch-Amerikanischer Lehrer-Bund. Finally, the only woman among the delegates, Frau Fernande Richter, represented the state of Missouri. The gathering carried elements of both sameness and diversity. The sameness came from class, educational and organizational background, the diversity in widely different professional orientation, to include education, business, the art, and language.

As if to set a tone for the new organization the meeting started off on a note of patriotism and loyalty to the nation. For their first order of business the delegates passed a resolution expressing indignation, horror and deepest regret at the
assassination of President William McKinley, which had taken place on September 6, 1901. The gathering sent a letter of condolence to Mrs. McKinley. The delegates next elected officers and a board of directors. As expected, Hexamer was elected president; William Eltereich of Washington D.C., first vice-president; H.C. Bloedel of Pittsburgh, second vice-president; and Timm, secretary. The elections of Hexamer and Timm were unanimous, not surprising considering their previous efforts over the past year. The selection of Eltereich and Bloedel produced some partisan debate. The convention minutes did not offer detail regarding the controversy, but the New Yorker Staats Zeitung hinted that delegates from the Midwest and West objected to an executive committee dominated by officers from the East coast chapters. One year later Eltereich and Bloedel stepped down. Eltereich’s replacement, Dr. Marion Dexter Learned, a German language professor at the University of Pennsylvania, stayed in office from 1902 to 1906. Bloedel’s replacement, Joseph Keller, president of the Indiana branch, served as Second Vice-President from 1902 to 1906 and First Vice-President from 1906 to 1918. His appointment appeased the Midwest chapters for the time being. It would not be until the convention of 1903, however that the executive committee was enlarged to include officers from the western states.

After the election of officers the delegates went about the task of adopting the constitution drafted by the delegates at the June 19, 1900 meeting in Philadelphia. The primary mission of the organization was stated in the document’s preamble:

The German-American Alliance aims to awaken and strengthen the sense of unity among the people of German origin in America with a view to promote the useful and healthy development of the power
inherent in them as a united body for the mutual energetic protection of such legitimate desires and interests not inconsistent with the common good of the country, and the rights and duties of good citizens; to check nativistic encroachments; to maintain and safeguard the good friendly relations existing between America and the old German fatherland.20

The group was careful to indicate that it sought a commonality of interests of German-Americans only if it did not conflict with the welfare of the nation and could be done within the parameters of the existing legal system. A sense of “community” among German-Americans thus required a need to remain American first and German second. The preamble stated that since colonial times German-Americans had contributed to the spiritual and economic development of the nation, and stood by their adopted land in peace and war. The founders of the Alliance believed strongly that German-Americans deserved national recognition and promised to oppose any attempt to belittle their contributions and the culture that stood behind them.

The constitution of the NGAA contained the same basic principles as the constitution of the Zentral-Bundes. The Alliance pledged to remain above partisan politics, yet affirmed its right to work within the political system to accomplish its goals and defend its principles. The Constitution promised to avoid any involvement in issues of religion—this clause in deference, at least partly, to the Catholic Central Verein. While the Alliance was dominated by Protestants, the leadership recognized that it might want the support of the Verein on future issues. By removing the question of religion, the Alliance sought to defuse any potential conflict that might hinder the advancement of German-American interests in the United States.
In fact the two organizations consistently viewed each other with cautious regard for several reasons. The Verein viewed itself as Catholic first, American second, and German third — with its primary focus on the interests of the nation’s German-American Catholics. The Alliance on the other hand was American first, and German second with its focus on the interests of all German-Americans. The second factor was the traditional antipathy between the Vereinsdeutsch and the Kirchendeutsch, in essence the traditional battle between church and state brought over from the fatherland. The Verein viewed the Alliance as an organization that was secular and free thinking. On the other hand local chapters of the Alliance, notably the Ohio chapter, were down-right hostile to the church, referring to priests by the derogatory term Pfaffen (the “Pope’s nose”). The third factor preventing cooperation was that the Verein focused on social reform, while the Alliance was a political-cultural organization that showed little interest in the social legislation championed by the Verein. The Verein advocated reform based upon the progressive model — yet never clearly defined its stance on prohibition and immigration restriction. The Alliance, while agreeing with some aspects of progressive reform, such as ending poverty, conservation of natural resources, and cleaning up the nation’s cities, came out solidly against the prohibition of alcohol and immigration restriction. Finally, there was the economic and intellectual factor. The Alliance was made up of middle to upper-middle class, well-educated German-Americans — in essence an intellectual elite. The Central Verein, being a religious organization first, drew its
membership from all economic classes, many of whom did not possess the educational level of Alliance members.

While the two groups remained on friendly terms—Hexamer would send greetings to the CCV at its annual meetings—the two groups never cooperated to any large extent at the national level. What little collaboration that did exist remained confined to the local level where some German-Americans maintained membership in both organizations.

The next section of the constitution dealt with the preservation of German culture, the most important aspect of which was maintenance of German language instruction. The NGAA recommended the teaching of the German language in the public school system on a widespread basis as both a means of preserving the language within the German-American community and to expand its usage within the non-German population.25 The organization considered German to be the equal of English as a language of world civilization, trade, commerce and science. A knowledge of both languages would assist the individual in gaining a clearer understanding of the world as well as promoting closer relations between nations.

The second aspect of the NGAA’s plan to preserve German culture involved the creation of educational societies to teach all aspects of German language, history, science, literature and the arts. To assist in accomplishing this objective, as well as heightening an awareness of contributions made by German-Americans to the United States, the Alliance sanctioned the creation of The German-American Historical Society.26 The Alliance adopted Americana Germanica (later known as German-
American Annals) as the organization's official journal for the promotion of German art, music, theater, and literature. Edited by Professor Marion Dexter Learned of the University of Pennsylvania, Americana Germanica contained the Alliance's Mitteilungen (Bulletin) until 1909 when it began to be published as a separate monthly.

The last principles set forth in the constitution dealt with questions of immigrant restriction and personal liberty. The Alliance called upon all Germans in America to acquire citizenship as soon as possible, and to take an active part in the nation's political system. Only through exercising the vote could German-Americans hope to protect their individual liberties. The group condemned any laws or actions on the part of government that placed unnecessary barriers to aliens seeking citizenship – a reference to citizenship tests that contained questions designed to confuse the applicant. The NGAA came out against restriction of healthy immigrants from Europe, but it approved established qualitative measures that prohibited entry of convicted criminals, anarchists, and individuals with contagious diseases.

The position on immigrant restriction is traceable to 1898 when 150 German societies across the nation joined with other nationalities to form the Immigration Protective League, the purpose of which was to counter efforts by the Immigration Restriction League to reduce immigration from Eastern and Southern Europe as well as Asia. Founded in 1894 by young Harvard graduates, the Immigration Restriction League welcomed immigration from England, Germany, and Scandinavia while seeking to keep the nation free of other peoples that were "historically down-trodden,
atavistic, and stagnant." Nonetheless, by the end of the nineteenth century immigration from Germany had been on a sharp decline and while the Restriction League had had no objections to German immigrants, German-American leaders viewed any attempts at restriction as a move that might carry over to Germans and thus hasten the decline of German culture in America. From 1901 until the outbreak of World War One opposition to quantitative restriction would form the cornerstone of the Alliance position on immigration.

The group's position on personal liberties was of special interest. The NGAA came out against any law that attempted to "check the free intercourse and restrict the personal freedom of the citizen." While the document did not go into detail on this issue one may assume that this principle was aimed, in part, at the growing movement for the prohibition of alcohol, though it was not mentioned by name at the time.

The remaining sections of the NGAA's constitution concerned matters of organizational structure. These included the official name of the organization (Deutsch-Amerikanischer National-Bund der Ver. Staaten von Amerika—The National German-American Alliance of the United States of America); criteria for group membership (open to all local and state German-American organizations); criteria for individual membership (all German-Americans possessing citizenship); national meetings (every other year); representation at these meetings (all dues paying local chapters and individuals); administrative structure (president, vice-president, second-vice president, treasurer, financial secretary, and an executive council of all state chapter presidents); voting for officers (every other year at the national
convention); dues, which were collected by local chapters and passed on to the national organization; publication of convention business; a series of general operating conditions; and a concluding clause which stated that this constitution could only be altered at the national convention by a vote of the representatives present.

Despite the precise organizational structure in the constitution, the NGAA would function primarily as a loose confederation of German-American organizations that agreed on many issues that had an impact on German-Americans in the United States. Evidence of this appears in the way in which the organization functioned. The Alliance met only every two years and in between meetings it conducted much of its business through the mail or by telegraph. Each local chapter could suggest legislation to the executive committee, after which the executive committee would vote, by mail, on the proposal. If the majority voted in favor the legislation became official. At the convention of 1903, the delegates voted to expand the executive council of the Alliance. It became the job of the vice-presidents to first sound out local branches in their region prior to casting their ballots. It is important to note, however, that the local and state chapters were autonomous. As a consequence they were not bound to follow the orders of the executive committee, and the national leadership did not have the power to enforce its decisions on the local chapters.

It is impossible to gauge the reaction within the German-American community to the formation of the Alliance. The first announcement in the national media appeared in the Philadelphia Inquirer on October 7, 1901 in a short statement that appeared below an advertisement for cemetery plots. The reaction of local and state
German-American organizations and in the German-American press is fairly clear.
The Catholic Verein, at the time occupied with its own reorganization, reacted
"cautiously" favorable to the news. Local and state organizations representing
German-America welcomed the creation of a national organization. Several German
language dailies such as the New Yorker Staats-Zeitung, Illinois Staats Zeitung, and
the Cincinnati Freie Presse reacted positively. The New Yorker Staats-Zeitung,
which would remain a long-time supporter of the organization, said that the group
would be a "positive force in promoting German-American culture in the United
States." The Deutsch-Amerikanische Geschichtsblatter also applauded the goal of
enhancing German culture in America.

What is impossible to gauge is the reaction of the individual German-American
during a time when most were content to be Americans and not necessarily concern
themselves with the maintenance of German ways. Interest was surely stronger within
the intellectual elite than among farmers, craftsmen, or factory workers. A larger
percentage of original delegates came from higher social and educational classes.
Albert Faust, a distinguished professor of Germanic Languages at Cornell University,
considered creation of the Alliance as an example of "the patriotic and progressive
attitude taken by the German element in regards to the nation's best interests." At
the same time, evidence of a considerable following seemed to be suggested in the fact
that between 1901 and 1916 the Alliance grew to roughly 2.5 million members, at least
on paper, with chapters in forty-five states and the District of Columbia. These
numbers, however, would always be in dispute owing to the way the Alliance counted
its membership, which depended upon reports from state and local organizations. An individual might be a member of more than one German organization in a community, and as a consequence could be counted more than once. The national organization leveled a tax of five cents per member on local and state branches, yet individual memberships never appeared in the minutes of the national meetings.

Was there a need for such an organization at the beginning of the Twentieth century? The founders certainly thought so. To these men German culture in the United States was on the decline and unless they took steps it might disappear altogether. Immigration from Germany had decreased markedly; by 1901 Germans only four percent of the total immigration to America, whereas fifteen years earlier it had been twenty-seven percent. Reduced immigration of course deprived the community of fresh new blood, people with close ties to the fatherland. It created a situation in which most German-Americans were of the second generation or older, far along in the Americanization process, which while necessary and in some respects desirable, caused many Germans to forget their roots. Assimilation thus was the second motivating factor behind the formation of the Alliance. The group did feel that German-Americans as a whole had become "apathetic" towards their culture and traditions, and that cracks had appeared in the once solid German-American community. The German-American press also reflected this trend.

While still the nation's largest ethnic press in 1900, subscription levels began to decline as first generation German-Americans died off. The second generation, for the most part, let the subscriptions run out. Another problem was the German-American
church, which before the late 1890's had used German almost exclusively. By 1900 more and more churches utilized English, if only because many second and third generation German-Americans did not understand the German language well enough to follow the service.44

A revival of interest in German culture amongst the German community necessitated the need to expand the teaching of the German language, promote German cultural activities, and foster a renewed interest in German and German-American history. At the first convention the delegates agreed to support the German Historical Society, *Americana Germanica* and to help establish a German-American Teachers Seminary in Milwaukee, the purpose of which was to train educators in the German language, culture, and history who could go into the community and instruct second and third generation students about their heritage.45

A third reason for the group's founding was that many in the German community found their institutions coming under attack in the rising tide of progressivism. Prohibition of alcohol threatened to undermine an aspect of German culture—and to members of the Alliance prohibition meant more than taking away the right to have a drink, it threatened to undermine fundamental individual liberties. For Hexamer, the son of a "48er" who had fought for democratic rule in Germany, such an action could lead to further curtailment of civil liberties. While skeptics would later decry this attitude as an attempt to mask the Alliance's true motives on the issue, their policy remained consistent—though broadened in scope as the years progressed—on the topic through 1916.
A fourth reason involved the growing tensions between Germany and Great Britain. The Alliance hoped to foster closer relations between the United States and Germany as a means to counterbalance the rising Anglo-German antagonism. Again, as with the prohibition question, the Alliance stance on this issue remained consistent until the outbreak of war between the United States and Germany in April 1917.

The final reason for the group’s founding, or so some people suggested, was an existing chauvinism amongst certain segments of the German-American population. Critics of the group, both at the time and in historical retrospect, suggested that the Alliance represented nothing more than an elitist organization attempting to mask a personal agenda of elitist German culture—and later lobbying against prohibition—under a cover of patriotism. It is true that the leadership of the organization came from the intellectual and professional elite of the German-American community. Yet these individuals sincerely believed that what they were undertaking was necessary given what they viewed as the status of the German community in America at the turn of the century. As with all special interest groups the NGAA’s actions would be motivated, to a degree, by a private agenda. Yet the key to understanding the group’s conduct over the next seventeen years is that, at all times, the members considered themselves first and foremost an “American” organization working within the accepted system to achieve their goals and objectives.

The Alliance wasted little time in going ahead with its program. In the months following formation it focused on the preservation of German culture in the United States. The first foray involved efforts by the German Publication Fund of America
and the Zentral-Bundes von Pennsylvanien to create a national organization to promote the history of German-Americans. On December 10, 1901 this new organization became the German Historical Society. Of the elected officials, three were prominent members in the NGAA. Hexamer was elected chairman, Timm became secretary, and Marion D. Learned joined the board of directors. Organized to collect, record and publish material relating to the German-American experience in America, the Society also encouraged existing local, county, or state organizations to become members of the national organization and to create societies in areas where they did not exist. Americana Germanica became its official organ.

Creation of the German Historical Society was significant in two ways. First the Alliance, in sanctioning its creation, quickly demonstrated that it truly intended to act and that it would adhere to its primary goal of fostering German culture. Second, the Society became the storehouse of German-Americana, and thus a vital resource in understanding the contribution of German-Americans to the growth of the United States.

Next the Alliance turned to fostering the German language. In 1902 it began its campaign for German instruction in the nation’s public schools. In that year Louis Viereck published German Instruction in American Schools, a component of the Bureau of Education’s report on language instruction in American schools, which analyzed the history of the German language in the United States. Viereck’s study concluded that by 1900 the position of the German language and recognition of
German methods of instruction were assured in higher education. The goal now was to assure German language instruction at the elementary and secondary levels.  

Impressed with Viereck’s report, the NGAA justified instruction in German in public schools by pointing to the position of German in academic and especially scientific studies. As a rule the Alliance worked through its state chapters in this campaign. It also viewed instruction in German as a means of promoting closer ties between the United States and Germany. To bolster its campaign the Alliance joined forces with the German Publication Fund of America. Under the leadership of Hexamer, the Fund endeavored to promote the publication, in German, of works that focused on the contribution of German-Americans to the founding and growth of the United States. Language remained a prominent part of the lobbying activities until the start of the First World War.

During the early part of 1903 the Alliance moved to recruit membership and expand its network of state and local branches. In the *German American Annals*, Timm appealed to German-Americans to become part of the effort to promote German culture. He discussed the contributions of German-Americans in such areas as music, education, government, business, and labor. Timm classified German-Americans into three groups. The first he called the “Vollblut-Amerikanern” (full-blooded Americans)—people who had been in the United States for generations, and for the most part had become fully Americanized. While he welcomed support from this group, Timm believed that only a few at best would join the Alliance. The second group encompassed the “Nachkommen der Eingewanderten” (descendants of
immigrants), and finally the "Eingewanderten" (immigrants). While Timm did not provide figures, he concluded that the last two groups made up the majority of the German-American population and should be targeted for membership since they were not yet far removed from the fatherland. Timm reiterated that members should be Americans first and Germans second. The Alliance called upon these people to become citizens, if they had not done so, for German-Americans could best promote German culture if they exercised their right to vote in all elections.

The efforts seemed to pay off. By the summer of 1903 state organizations increased from twelve states and the District of Columbia to eighteen states. Georgia and Texas became the first southern states to come aboard. Local chapters also appeared in Delaware, Illinois, Iowa, and Massachusetts. While the core support remained in the states of the Mid-Atlantic region the Alliance by mid-1903 had truly established itself as a national organization.

At the fourth convention of the Pennsylvania branch in Johnstown Hexamer optimistically predicted that expansion would continue in the years to come. He also spoke of immigration legislation pending in Congress, especially the bill that would eventually become the Immigration Law of 1903—an act which, while aimed primarily at anarchists, would become the first law since the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798 to penalize newcomers for exercising their right to voice a different opinion. Hexamer argued that while the Alliance supported attempts to prevent anarchists from entering the country, and deportation of those already here, he worried that this law might allow the government to keep out anyone it deemed to possess improper political
opinions. The law violated the First Amendment, he said, and urged the NGAA to petition Congress and the President to reconsider the measure.

Hexamer's speech indicated a shift in the focus of the NGAA. While still concerned primarily with German culture, the Alliance was now prepared to enter the political realm. Opposition to immigrant restriction of course had been one of the goals in the organization's constitution. By 1903 the leadership of the NGAA felt that it had grown strong enough to move into more controversial political issues—in this case the restriction of civil liberties. By openly criticizing the Immigration Law of 1903 the Alliance set the precedent for further involvement in the political issues of the times. Even in this expanded realm, however, the NGAA concerned itself only with issues that seemed to threaten German-Americans, thus maintaining the group's primary mission.

The second national convention of the NGAA took place in the Hall of Turnverein Vorwaerts in Baltimore, Maryland from September 12-15, 1903. Chapters in eighteen states and the District of Columbia sent delegates. In his opening address Hexamer reiterated that while the Alliance would continue to remain out of party politics it would work within the political system to achieve its goals and that the time had come to take an active position on issues that affected the German community. Hexamer referred particularly to immigration restriction and the movement to prevent production and sale of alcohol. Insisting that the prohibition movement represented a threat to the personal freedoms of all Americans, he called
upon local chapters to lobby their representatives in Washington against such a
move.61

Hexamer’s call met with mixed reaction from the delegates. The majority of
the state delegations favored taking positions on political issues. The Pennsylvania
branch had already done so in 1902 when it utilized a questionnaire to determine the
position on issues by candidates seeking legislative seats at the state and national
levels. Questions included how candidates stood on German language instruction in
the public schools, immigration restriction, and the prohibition of alcohol.62 The
information was compiled in Harrisburg and then distributed throughout the state
during the state and federal elections.

Iowa, Maryland, Missouri, and Nebraska adopted the “Pennsylvania Model” in
1904.63 By 1914 almost all of the state branches had become similarly involved in
politics, due primarily to the heated debate over the prohibition of alcohol. The
branches carefully avoided endorsing any candidate, and instead provided the
information to allow the voting public to become more “educated” on the issues. One
did not have to read far between the lines to realize that this form of education was an
overt attempt to influence the outcome of elections.

Not all state branches favored such activism in 1903. Indiana and Minnesota
labeled political conditions in their states as “first rate, with nothing to complain
about,” and argued that by following the Pennsylvania example the Alliance would be
drifting away from its original focus.64 As a compromise to these delegations the
The debate over culture and politics ballooned in a forceful speech given on the first day by Frau Fernande Richter from Missouri. The only female delegate at the gathering, Frau Richter chastised the Germans of Missouri by declaring that:

...they had lost spirit in the municipal matters in St. Louis; that as politicians they were utter failures and that they were lacking in spirit and interest to a lamentable degree. The large enthusiastic celebrations held under the auspices of Germans in that city years ago are but memories of the past.

Richter criticized the Missouri branch for what she viewed as faltering efforts at promoting German culture and at working within the political system to achieve organizational goals. Her words had a strong influence upon the convention, carrying over to an event planned for the next day when the delegates, along with twenty thousand other German-Americans in Baltimore, turned out for a "Volksfest" at Darley Park. The event was a family gathering designed to herald German-American culture and its contributions to the United States. Local Turnverein, as well as various German-American singing societies entertained the festival goers. The highlight of the event was a speech given by Hexamer in which in which he lauded, not only the contributions of German-Americans, but Germans in general:

The characteristic qualities of the German-American are industry, frugality, thrift, domesticity, conservatism, honesty in public and private life, and a strong individualism. The German-American is justly proud of his ancestry as his race defeated the Romans and crushed the old-world empire and for centuries filled the throne of the Caesars with its tribal chiefs, and explored the far ends of the then known world. Through the German race the world received the art of printing; it
produced a Kant, a Fichte, a Hegel, a Schelling, a Schopenhauer, and other men who passed their lives pondering over the profound and abstruse problems of human existence and gave to the world the most exalted results of modern thought — German philosophy; it gave humanity a Bach, a Hayden, a Mozart, a Beethoven, and that “Shakespeare of music drama,” Richard Wagner.

Hexamer’s forceful acclamation of German contributions to civilization evoked an equally forceful response in his audience. The English language press of Baltimore also reacted favorably. The *Baltimore Sun* reported that while the gathering was not as large as in previous years, “Volksfest” produced far more enthusiasm in demonstrating “just how much German-Americans had contributed to the United States.”

While celebrations of German culture enlivened the convention it soon developed that the top priority of the gathering was the campaign against prohibition. For the next three days the delegates worked on a series of resolutions and a petition against the Hepburn-Dolliver Bill, which sought to restrict movement in interstate commerce of alcohol, and to a lesser extent the importation of fermented, distilled, or other intoxicating liquors. The resolutions called the Hepburn-Dolliver Bill and all “Blue Laws” antiquated and out of date, reflective of a medieval mindset that sought to restrict the individual liberties of American citizens and to use the sanctity of Sunday to control the population. The result, so the convention had concluded, was a rise in illegal drinking establishments and wide-spread corruption in many small towns and urban centers that already had adopted such measures. The attempt to end alcohol consumption throughout the nation would in effect create a “forbidden fruit”
that tempted people to try at all costs. The best means of reducing alcohol consumption was through education in the home where children could be taught that moderate consumption of such beverages was proper in an enlightened society. They would also learn that consumption of alcohol did not necessarily lead to social ills, as claimed by temperance advocates, if consumed in a proper manner. In sum the Alliance argued that restricting alcohol would worsen not solve social problems, that it would turn drinking into a daring exercise, tempting people who otherwise would not drink, opening up a new and lucrative area for criminal activity.

In drafting a petition to Congress opposing the Hepburn-Doliver Bill the Alliance took the high ground by supporting a reduction in consumption of alcohol, but not at the price of individual liberties. Citizens of a free society had the right to regulate their homes and lives as long as they did not harm other people; the Hepburn-Doliver Bill would bring the government into the homes, violating the Constitution.

For the next thirteen years the Alliance maintained this line of attack: always careful to assert its loyalty, condemning prohibition laws not solely for selfish reasons, so it said, but to protect the rights of all Americans. The Baltimore convention voted to have the resolutions and petition delivered to Congress early in 1904 when members of the Alliance would testify at the hearings on the Hepburn-Doliver Bill. By taking this action the Alliance fired its first shot in the war against what it viewed as an attempt to undermine the legal foundation of the nation and a legitimate segment of German-American culture. The prohibition issue also provided a first reason for the
NGAA to attract controversy. Temperance forces attacked this stance as socially and morally degrading, an outcome of heavy German-American involvement in the brewing industry, and to what might be perceived as a flaw in an ethnic lifestyle.

At first glance it would appear that the critics had a case. By 1900 German-Americans owned thirteen of the sixteen largest breweries in the United States, including the three largest: Pabst, Anheuser-Busch, and Joseph Schlitz. German-American brewers accounted for 84% of the approximately 7.4 million gallons of beer produced in America.\textsuperscript{74} No connection between the brewers and NGAA existed in 1903, yet as the Alliance grew in size, and became more involved in the prohibition debate, it attracted the attention of the brewers who viewed the Alliance as a weapon in their battle against the dry forces—although it still remained to be seen what the brewers would do about it.

While the prohibition question dominated proceedings, other issues surfaced at the convention of 1903. The members voted to fund a statue commemorating the contribution of Baron von Steuben to the founding of the United States. They discussed the Alliance’s sponsorship of a Germanic Congress planned for St. Louis in September 1904, and the establishment of a Ladies Auxiliary of the NGAA. The national executive committee expanded to include officers from all sections of the country, partly a response to delegates from the South and West who felt they had little voice in the national organization.\textsuperscript{75}

Of the reports by individual state chapters, most significant were those from New Jersey, New York, and Ohio which focused on the rise in membership.
Membership in New Jersey had reached 20,000. In New York more than 148 German-American societies joined the national organization, bringing in 30,000 members. In Ohio, sixty-six societies in the Cleveland area alone joined the national organization. Reports such as these gave the delegates reason to be optimistic concerning the future of the young organization and the convention closed in a spirit of confidence.76

It is difficult to overstate the significance of the Baltimore convention in shaping the future direction of the NGAA. Some state branches made it clear at the outset that they wished to become far more involved in politics than others. The fact that the Alliance operated as a loose confederation rather than a highly centralized body allowed for this independent action to happen with minimal friction between the chapters. Expanding the size of the executive committee helped to ease tensions arising over distribution of power, although for the remainder of its existence some state branches continued to exercise more influence than others.

Another issue that surfaced was the question of exactly what constituted German culture in America. For some members it was all encompassing, ranging from intellectual contributions to beer-drinking. This group, the more radical wing of the organization best exemplified by the Pennsylvania branch, viewed it as the mission of the NGAA to act as guardian and watchdog over all aspects of German culture in America, and to accomplish this task the Alliance should utilize every weapon possible so long as it remained within the law—even going so far as to influence elections. The moderate element viewed some aspects of German culture as more important than
others and argued that the "extreme" measures of the Pennsylvania branch would draw unfavorable attention to the organization. The national executive committee tended to lean more toward the extreme wing, as exhibited in Hexamer's Volksfest speech, in its willingness to employ a wide range of tactics to achieve the organization's goals. Consequently, as the Alliance grew in size after 1903 and involved itself in a wide range of issues, the radical element came to dominate the national agenda.

Finally, the convention of 1903 was significant because the NGAA began to tackle the alcohol question at the national level. From this point on the fight against laws prohibiting the manufacture, sale, and consumption of alcoholic beverages remained a key issue, and by late 1908 it was the main topic of concern until the onset of World War One in 1914 forced the Alliance to concentrate on international events.

The year 1904 began with a surprising turn of events that caused the NGAA to involve itself in foreign affairs for the first time. The incident that sparked this episode began with Major General Arthur MacArthur's remarks in Honolulu regarding the state of affairs between the United States and Germany. MacArthur announced that war between the United States and Germany was inevitable and that Americans needed to be wary of German-Americans in the United States attempting to spread the doctrine of Pan-Germanism:

The Pan-German doctrine which is being spread throughout the world, is being fostered and propagated by the imperial Government in every possible way. It is strong and getting stronger wherever German people settle, even among Germans who have been citizens of the United States for years.
The response was swift on the part of the Alliance. In an open letter to the General the executive council labeled his comments absurd and an insult to German-Americans. Pointing to the strong commercial and cultural ties between the two countries, the letter stressed patriotism and loyalty by Americans of German descent, referring specifically to the contributions during the Civil War and more recently the Spanish-American War. Under the signature of Hexamer and Timm, the letter concluded with a scarcely veiled reprimand:

Trusting that these few lines may enlighten you somewhat on a subject of which, judging from your remarks, you are totally ignorant, and believing that, as an officer and a gentleman, your insult to a very important element in our population was not intentional we are, Sir....

Letters of protest were not confined to the national organization. The state branch in Minnesota drafted a separate message which it forwarded directly to President Theodore Roosevelt. The two letters demonstrated that the Alliance not only considered itself to be a major spokesman for the German-American community, but also the guardian of the heritage of German-America – even if it meant crossing swords with a prominent military leader.

MacArthur’s comments did suggest troubling developments in German-American relations: The Venezuelan Crisis of 1902 threatened peaceful relations as the United States viewed German military action against Venezuela as a violation of the Monroe Doctrine. MacArthur’s comments regarding the Pan-German League echoed a growing fear in western nations that the goal of German militarism was the expansion of German culture around the world. This fear was not as great in the
United States as in Europe, but it would grow until the outbreak of the World War
One which of course would produce even more trouble.\footnote{79}

Small as it was, the episode demonstrated, possibly for the first time, the
group’s willingness to take seriously another of the principles spelled out in its
constitution. Maintenance of friendly relations between Germany and the United
States was a vital part of its objectives. The action also reconfirmed a willingness to
get involved in controversial political and international issues. The incident might even
have constituted a minor first test of the significance of the German-American
Alliance. Neither MacArthur nor the English language press commented on the
NGAA’s rebuke, a hint that the organization had some distance to go before becoming
a force in affairs of the day.

This situation would begin to change in 1904 as the NGAA took a more active
role in national issues. Between January 20 and March 4, 1904 the House of
Representatives conducted hearings on the Hepburn-Dolliver Bill. Fourteen
individuals from the state branches and the executive council of the NGAA testified
before the committee. Chief among this group were Hexamer, Timm and Jacob Bieler
from the Indiana branch. The testimonies of other Alliance members largely mirrored
the positions of these three leaders.

Prior to giving his statement, Hexamer distributed copies of the resolutions and
petition passed during the convention of 1903, explaining that the documents had the
backing of the full membership now set at 1.5 million, 6,000 German-American
societies across the nation, and the German language press.\footnote{80} Hexamer largely
covered familiar territory: arguing that the bills represented an attack on personal freedoms and a fanatical outcry of an intolerant minority attempting to force its will on the American people. He reviewed the failure of prohibition in United States history, that it had been tried and abolished in eight states and rejected at the polls by overwhelming numbers in thirteen other states. Hexamer requested that due to the short notice of the hearings, additional hearings be set for a later date so that representatives from other chapters could appear. The committee agreed to his request.

When the hearings resumed Bieler testified on behalf of the Indiana branch of the NGAA. Echoing the sentiment of the other state branches, he reported that he did not intend to argue legislative merits of the bill, but to discuss questions of morality and individual liberty. He argued that moral reform developed best through education, not by removing personal liberties. Pointing to the sacrifices made by Americans of German descent to the growth of the nation, he insisted that such sacrifices should not be rewarded by the curtailment of individual rights. Beiler insisted that even if the measure passed, public sentiment would not allow it to remain law for long.

The last person to testify, Timm reported that since the Alliance had come out against the pending measures it had received numerous telegrams of support from individuals and organizations around the nation, not all of them German-American. Besides endorsing the arguments put forth by Hexamer and Bieler, Timm argued that the true danger came from mixing prohibition and politics. Prohibition would create
a state of lawlessness by allowing organized crime to take over the production and
distribution of alcohol. Instead of solving the drinking problem in America it well
could exacerbate it.

It is impossible to gauge just how much influence the Alliance had on
deliberations over the Hepburn-Dolliver Bill. What is significant is that it again
demonstrated willingness by the Alliance to enter into the political realm in order to
fight a perceived threat to its interests, which it equated with curtailment of individual
liberties. The hearings left the organization convinced that it could be effective in
influencing public and private opinion on issues that concerned the group. The
Alliance now became a force on the political scene in America.

The new interest in politics in 1904 did not mean that the group had abandoned
matters of German culture, if indeed one could separate the two. It helped organize
and sponsor the Germanic Congress that took place from September 16-17, 1905 in
St. Louis, concurrently with the World’s Fair, also in that city. Bringing together
scholars, writers, poets, teachers, musicians, artists and representatives from other
fields of German culture, the Congress met to stimulate interest in history, language,
and literature while simultaneously advancing the interests of all German-speaking
people.84 In his opening remarks, Hexamer stressed the need for gatherings that
promoted an awareness of German-American contributions to the nation’s culture.85
The St. Louis Post-Dispatch had a different view. While acknowledging the
intellectual importance of the gathering, it sarcastically remarked that the Congress
was merely a chance for Germans and German-Americans to "give three cheers for the Kaiser."\(^{86}\)

The Congress featured twenty-five papers on a wide variety of topics ranging from Professor A.B. Faust's (University of Wisconsin) paper on "Schools Founded By the Forty-Eighters," Professor Herman Schoenfeld's (Columbia University) work "Bismarck, Man of Blood and Iron and Prince of Peace," to Frau Fernande Richter's topic, "The German Woman in America."\(^{87}\) Besides being significant as a scholarly gathering, the event demonstrated that the Alliance was willing to take a leadership role in promoting German culture. It represented a "high water mark" in this area. While the Alliance would continue to take an active role in the promotion of German culture, by 1905 it found itself increasingly drawn to political and international issues.

The first half of 1905 was dominated by preparations for the third national convention and the construction of the German Theatre in Philadelphia. Designed to promote a stronger interest in the stage and arts, especially in the German language, Hexamer heralded this step as a way to promote the "intellectual improvement of our people," and help make the United States a world leader in culture and education.\(^{88}\) Needless to say, Hexamer had in mind a strong emphasis on German culture. In itself this position was not objectionable, but in combination with other recent activities in promoting German issues, and the recent stand on immigration restriction and prohibition, the Alliance left itself open to charges that it was more German than American.
From October 4 to 7, 1905 ninety five delegates, including many women, gathered at the Deutschen Haus in Indianapolis for the NGAA’s third national convention. As with the first two gatherings, the state chapters chose the delegates to represent them. By this time the organization had grown from chapters in 18 states to 33 and the District of Columbia. Reported total membership now approached 1.5 million.

The featured speaker of the gathering was Vice President of the United States Charles W. Fairbanks who had nothing but praise for the German people:

They are a conservative people, ever ready to do those things that make stronger and better a people; that make stronger and better a home; that make stronger and better a republic. They build not only for today, but they build for the future.

The Vice President’s speech lended an air of status and credibility to the Alliance, suggesting at least at this time, that the organization had contributed, not merely to German-Americans, but to the nation in general and was generally looked upon with favor by the government.

Hexamer’s opening speech generously thanked the vice-president and then went on to discuss what one might consider an agenda for the future: such issues as membership, a proposed Steuben monument, German schools, German churches, immigration, Germany’s relationship with the United States, and of course prohibition. Despite its general optimism the speech contained a hint of concern: “The question is, how can we best preserve and spread our beloved and valuable German culture – that we ourselves are so indebted to – throughout this entire
land?" If Hexamer considered the issue legitimate—indeed the original reason for forming the Alliance—an outside observer not familiar with the organization's goals and objectives might have found in the statement an overt expression of German cultural nationalism. There is no evidence that Hexamer meant to promote "pan-Germanism," but the casual observer, taking the words out of context might have reached that conclusion. Other Alliance speakers followed the same pattern—all were optimistic about the future of the organization, but concerned that more needed to be done.

What was driving this deep concern? For the most part Americans of German descent were held in high esteem by their fellow citizens in 1905. Germans had a reputation as being hard working contributors to the growth and development of the nation. Earlier fears of a German menace, to a large degree brought on by anarchist agitation of the 1880's, had vanished. Nativist attacks focused mostly on immigrants from eastern and southern Europe and the Far East.

The best prospect for trouble probably had to do with foreign affairs. Despite the Kaiser's overt attempts at courting the Roosevelt administration, German foreign policy decisions had placed a strain on relations between the two nations. During the Venezuelan dispute of 1903, Roosevelt became convinced that Germany had designs in the Caribbean. In a letter to Secretary of State John Hay the President stated that Germany would always desire the Danish and Dutch possessions in the Caribbean unless "we take them first." The first Moroccan Crisis of 1905 also made Roosevelt begin to question the true motives of Germany's global foreign policy. He began to
suspect that Germany sought war with France. A German victory would upset the global balance of power. Roosevelt in fact became involved in the Moroccan question, not to assist Germany as the Germans had thought but to preserve peace. Such incidents, added to the Kaiser's numerous public statements, began to convince Roosevelt and other Americans that Germany needed to be watched.

Even so the minutes of the Indianapolis convention made little mention of foreign affairs—a fact that suggested not ignorance of world affairs, but that the focus still was directed towards domestic concerns involving German-Americans. The Alliance was content to believe that all was well between Germany and the United States, when in reality the basis for future trouble was beginning to surface under their noses.

Another explanation for concern about German culture in America had to do with the German community itself. While Americans of German descent made up the nation's largest ethnic group, less than 10% were dues-paying members of the Alliance. Were German-Americans truly concerned about preserving ways of the fatherland? By 1905 Americans of German descent were by far the most "assimilated" of all the non-English ethnic groups. Perhaps the threat to German culture was not external but within the German-American community itself. For this reason the Alliance placed heavy emphasis on membership drives, and in stirring up enthusiasm through celebrations of German-Americana at the local, state and national levels.
The question of prohibition once again surfaced at the convention in Indianapolis. Speakers, such as Timm, sharply criticized the temperance movement for its efforts to force the opinion of the few upon the many:

The reasons for our opposition to prohibitive and repressive temperance legislation from the standpoint of civil and individual liberty are so well known that we deem their repetition unnecessary. We cannot, however, refrain from giving expression to our sorrow and regret at the renewed, ill-advised efforts of temperance reformers towards forcing their peculiar views on the people of the country. With a feeling of shame do we behold the humiliating spectacle of submissiveness of politicians and legislators, and the willingness with which, for political reasons and against their better knowledge and convictions, they come to aid such would-be reformers by reprehensible and injurious legislation.97

This scathing attack on both the temperance movement and its supporters in government would not endear the group to either faction. The harsh tone suggests that the group felt confident in its strength of purpose, and was now willing meet the dry forces head on. As it had done before, the NGAA challenged would-be reformers to strike at the heart of the liquor problem in America, not through legislation but with education, and passed resolutions to this purpose.98 The nation needed to look to the family and the example set by parents, as a means of bringing an end to the problems caused by excessive drink.99 The Alliance’s argument also contained a clear social and economic component: that the causes of alcohol abuse included poverty, poor living conditions, and unemployment. By broadening the scope of its argument the NGAA sought to place itself in step with progressive changes underway at the time and to classify prohibition—and thus alcohol—as an American, not simply a German issue. As with progressive reformers, the Alliance acknowledged the social problems brought

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about by rapid industrialization and the need to solve them for the good of the country. Unlike the progressives, however, the NGAA did not see the prohibition of alcohol as a means of bringing about social reform in the United States.

The delegates best expressed their unity and growing confidence on the last day when they raised their voices in unison regarding the future of the organization. The Alliance looked back upon accomplishments of its first four years in increasing membership, promoting German culture and other issues. As 1906 approached, membership continued to grow as did the potential for more state branches; interest in the organization seemed stronger than ever. Yet one had to wonder how in touch the group was with popular sentiment in the nation both inside and outside the German community, as well as the rapidly changing international scene. During the next nine years the Alliance would become the single largest German organization outside of Germany, willing and able to become even more in domestic and international issues. Its actions would bring it to national attention and not in all cases in a positive way.

End Notes

3 Ibid., 5.
4 Ibid., 6.
5 The Society is still active today from its location at 611 Spring Garden Street in Philadelphia. The Joseph Homer Memorial Library is the largest private German library in the United States. I am indebted to the organization, especially Dr.
Margarethe Castrogiovanni the Society’s librarian for her kind assistance in securing materials on the Alliance that were not available elsewhere.

6 Von Bosse, Dr. C. J. Hexamer: Sein Leben und Wirken, 8.
8 Ibid., 581.
10 Ibid., 5.
12 Ibid., 6.
13 Albert Godsho, Chronological History of the National German-American Alliance of the United States (Philadelphia: National German-American Alliance, 1911), 7.
14 “Rechte der Deutschen: Konvention des Deutsch-Amerikanische National-Bundes der Vereinigten Staaten, New Yorker Staats-Zeitung, 7 October, 1901, p. 1. The twelve states represented were California, Idaho, Indiana, Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. By 1916 every state in the union (and the territory of Hawaii) would be represented in the organization with the exception of Arizona, Nevada and New Mexico. At its height in January 1916 the Alliance claimed 2.5 million members. See “The National-German American Alliance,” German-American Annals, vol. 15 (January 1917), c. 3.
17 Ibid., 3. Only Hexamer and Timm would remain with the organization in their original capacity through 1917. Other elected officers of note over the years were Marion Dexter Learned (Pennsylvania), Vice-President from 1902-1906; Joseph Keller (Indiana), Vice-President from 1906-1918; John Tjarks (Maryland), Second Vice-President, 1908-1918; Hans Weniger (Pennsylvania), Treasurer, 1902-1913; and Max Heinrici (Pennsylvania) who served as editor of the organization’s monthly bulletin Mitteilungen from 1909-1918.


22 Heinrici, *Das Buch der Deutschen in Amerika*, 782.

23 Congress, Senate, Subcommittee on the Judiciary, *The National German-American Alliance: Hearings on Senate Bill 3529, 65th Cong., 2nd Sess.*, 23 February to 13 April 1918, 70.


26 Ibid., 3; and “Das Deutsch-Amerikanische Lehrerseminar,” *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung*, 7 October 1901, sec. 1, p. 2.


28 The Alliance came out openly against the suffrage movement. Giving women the right to vote, in the eyes of the group, would help usher in prohibition. From 1902 to 1914 the issues of the vote for women and prohibition would become one in the eyes of the group’s leadership.


32 After August 1914 many of the issues championed by the Alliance during the pre-war years such as the preservation of German culture, fight against the prohibition of alcohol and the right to vote for women, as well as immigrant restriction would take a back seat. With the outbreak of war the Alliance would concentrate almost exclusively on the maintenance of American neutrality.

33 *Grundsätze und Verfassung*, 3.

34 No direct mention is made of prohibition in the convention minutes, nor is the issue addressed in Godsho’s, *Chronological History*, and Heinrici’s “Der Deutsch-Amerikanische Nationalbundes…..,” both of which covered the 1901 convention.


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"Allgemeine Bemerkungen," *Deutsch-Amerikanische Geschichtsblatter* vol. 1, no. 4 (1901), 81-82.


Hawgood, *The Tragedy of German-America*, 290.


Frederick Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty: German-Americans and World War I* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974), 68 and 137.


Ibid., 211.


Louis Viereck, "German Instruction in American Schools" in *Bureau of Education Report, 1900-1901* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1902). Louis Viereck was the father of George Sylvester Viereck, the pro-German propagandist and editor of *The Fatherland*, a pro-German newspaper published from 1914-1917. After the United States declaration of war against Germany the publication was renamed *Viereck's American Monthly*.

Viereck, "German Instruction in American Schools," 532.

This was especially true in states with a high percentage of German-Americans such as Nebraska, Wisconsin, Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Pennsylvania.

Ibid., 685.

The German Publication Fund of America focused on a wide range of issues similar to those of the German Historical Society.

56 Godsho, *Chronological History of the National German-American Alliance of the United States*, 7.


60 Ibid., 629.


62 *Mitteilungen des Deutsch Amerikanische National Bund der Vereinigten Staaten Von Amerika*, 4 (October 1912), 3. This publication was the monthly bulletin of the NGAA from 1909-1918. Hereafter it will be referred to as *Mitteilungen*. Prior to 1909 the bulletin was included in the *German-American Annals*.

63 The *National German-American Alliance: Hearings*, 240 and 641.

64 “She Criticizes Germans,” *Baltimore Sun*, 14 September 1903, p. 12.

65 “Politicians to be Barred,” *Baltimore Sun*, 16 September 1908, p. 8.

66 Ibid., 12.


68 Ibid., 8.

69 “20,000 at Volksfest,” *Baltimore Sun*, 15 September 1903, p. 8.


73 DANB, “Mitteilungen des Deutsch-Amerikanischen National-Bundes,” *German American Annals*, n.s., vol. 1 (December 1903), 750-751. The petition was endorsed by the Alliance and over 6000 German-American societies across the nation.


der Vereinigten Staaten,” *Deutsch-Amerikanische Geschichtsblatter*, vol. 3, no. 4 (1903), 64.


81 Ibid., 95.

82 Ibid., 221.


85 DANB, “Protokoll des Germanischen Kongresses,” in *German American Annals*, n.s., 2 (October 1904), 652.


87 “Germanischer Kongress,” *German-American Annals*, n.s., 2 (August 1904), 504.

88 Charles J. Hexamer, “Address of Dr. C.J. Hexamer at the Laying of the Cornerstone of the German Theatre, July 4, 1905,” in *German American Annals*, n.s., vol. 3 (July 1905), 295.

89 “Many Arrive For National Meeting,” *Indianapolis Morning Star*, 5 October 1905, p. 3.


93 Ibid., 425. Translated from the original German.


97 “Cheers Ring Out as Meeting Ends,” *Indianapolis Morning Star*, 8 October 1905, p. 3.


99 Ibid., 44.
CHAPTER III

"HOCH DER DANB!" 1906-1910

The four year period between 1906 and 1910 was a time of consolidation for the National German-American Alliance. After a year-long debate the group received a national charter from Congress. The NGAA continued to grow and expand and by the end of 1909 it claimed more than two million members in forty states and the District of Columbia. During this time the executive committee was enlarged to meet the demands of the growing organization. While the state and local branches still acted autonomously, more and more the national officers, through a hierarchy of committees, came to formulate policy for the national organization as the Alliance moved into a wide range of issues. These activities included the by-now familiar battle against the prohibition of alcohol, continued efforts at maintaining German culture in the United States, as well as attempts to promote close ties between German-Americans and the fatherland. The Alliance also made overtures to such other ethnic organizations as the Catholic Central Verein and the Ancient Order of Hiberians, an Irish-American organization. By the end of the period the NGAA had positioned itself to act on a number of issues, although the battle against prohibition would remain its top priority.

During the convention at Indianapolis in 1905 the executive committee had discussed the possibility of obtaining a national charter from the United States.
Congress. The idea grew out of a belief that a charter would provide a greater sense of legitimacy in the eyes of the nation and within the German-American community. Congressional recognition also would affirm that the goals and objectives of the Alliance were patriotic and motivated by a sense of national pride and loyalty to the principles laid down in the Constitution. The NGAA would achieve its goal, but only after a debate that would last more than a year.

The first step occurred on January 10, 1906 when Representative Richard Bartholdt of Missouri—a German-American—introduced into the House of Representatives a bill calling for the incorporation of the NGAA. One month later Senator Boies Penrose of Pennsylvania introduced a similar resolution in the Senate. Both bills were referred to the respective Committees on the Judiciary for further review. On March 28 Representative Henry Palmer of Pennsylvania brought the report of the House Judiciary Committee to the floor. The document explained the purpose of the organization as follows:

That this corporation, composed of the individuals aforesaid and their associates, under the name and style aforesaid, is formed for the purposes as follows: The conservation of the principles of representative government and the protection and maintenance of all civil and political rights; the protection of German immigrants against imposition and deception and to assist in their naturalization; the study of American institutions and the publication of American history; the cultivation of the German language, literature, and drama and the perpetuation of the memory and deeds of those early German pioneers whose influence has been of incalculable benefit to the intellectual and economic development of this country, and whose loyalty in times of stress and strife is a matter of history.
The report proposed incorporation of the NGAA only as an educational and patriotic organization. These purposes differed somewhat from the guidelines set forth in the NGAA's constitution of 1901, which had emphasized "Germanness" through its desire to unite the German element in America, preserve German culture and foster better relations between the United States and Germany. The Congressional statement emphasized "Americanness" through the conservation of representative government and protection of civil and political rights.3 The preservation of German culture became a secondary purpose, while there was no mention of relations between the United States and Germany.

To understand this shift in emphasis, it is necessary to place the debates over incorporation within the context of domestic and world events. By 1906 the Alliance was a national organization already taking an active part in domestic issues of the day.4 The leadership felt compelled to portray the Alliance as an organization that had only the best interests of all Americans in mind. The emphasis on conservative government, protection of political and civil liberties, and patriotism would help to accomplish this goal and, of course, help move the charter through Congress.

Another factor could have been recent nativism in the land and immigration legislation, most notably the Immigration Act of 1903, which for the first time since the Alien & Sedition Acts of 1798 penalized immigrants for voicing their political opinions.5 While the law targeted anarchists, it gave the federal government the right to deport any alien — within a three year period after arrival — who publicly condemned the government or sought its overthrow.6 The Alliance supported government
attempts to keep out undesirables, but it feared that such acts, which also doubled the head tax on immigrants to four dollars, would have an adverse affect on desirable immigrants. The NGAA feared that it would further reduce German immigration to the United States which had been on a steady decline since the beginning of the twentieth century. The Alliance wanted immigrants as potential new recruits and for keeping alive and fresh the linkage with the fatherland.

A strain in relations between the United States and Germany due to the Venezeulan Affair of 1902 and the growing crisis in Morocco probably influenced the Alliance leadership to leave out any statement that might infer involvement in foreign policy. Fostering better relations between the two countries, no small objective of the group, would have to wait until it secured a charter. Whatever the strategy, it worked, for the charter passed the House Subcommittee and on March 28, 1906 the Committee on the Judiciary favorably reported the measure to the House floor for final approval.

Debate began on April 4 when Bartholdt brought the bill to the floor. Representative William Hepburn of Iowa voiced the strongest objections. Opposed to the precedent of incorporating a national organization based on nationality, he argued that the rights of immigrants were not being violated, and even if they were such matters fell within the jurisdiction of Congress and the courts. His greatest objection was that the Alliance was in reality a political group acting under the guise of a social organization. Hepburn surely had in mind the Alliance's recent lobbying efforts against his own Hepburn-Dolliver bill. While he might be using the opportunity
to "get-back" at the NGAA, his observations did have some justification. Although
the Alliance had carefully avoided identification with a party, its involvement at the
hearings did constitute pursuing a special interest on a political issue. Charles
Grosvenor of Ohio then brought up the "hyphen" question. While he praised
Americans of German descent for their contributions to the United States, he objected
to a hyphenated American in any form on grounds that it constituted a qualification to
an individual's Americanism.

The leading spokesman for the Alliance and the charter, Bartholdt, replied that
the NGAA was an American organization open only to individuals possessing United
States citizenship, a major goal of which was to assist German immigrants in becoming
Americans by helping them understand the laws and institutions of the nation. He
insisted that the term German-American had no political connotations but referred to
an ethnological designation. Noting that another immigration bill had required
applicants for naturalization to read and write in English, he argued that German
immigrants could learn English only from individuals who could speak the language.
Thus one of the main goals of the Alliance was to turn Germans into Americans.9 The
debate ended with Hepburn still objecting to the measure and commenting that the
House had more pressing matters to attend to.

The House tabled the question of incorporation until December 5, 1906 when
it renewed debate on the issue. As in the previous session, opposition continued to
focus on chartering an ethnic organization, and the need for such a charter in general.
Hepburn, joined by James Mann of Illinois, asked if the Alliance participated in any
activities that required incorporation. They also asked that the word “German” be
removed from the name on grounds that it was not needed if the NGAA was a
patriotic organization. Bartholdt replied that incorporation under the laws of the
District of Columbia would give the group prestige and the opportunity to set up a
headquarters and conduct business in the District. As to the group’s title, he
explained that the organization had requested that name and he had no authority to
alter it.

The debate then shifted to the question of patriotism. Mann asked if the group
existed for purely patriotic reasons. Representative William Stafford of Wisconsin
replied that both the national organization and its branches in Wisconsin were patriotic
in nature and that the uplifting of American citizenship was one of their main goals. Listing the contributions of German-Americans to the nation’s development, he argued
that preserving the memory of this activity represented a preservation of United States
history. Stafford concluded by stating that there existed in America no ethnic group
more loyal than the German-Americans. The speech ended the debate and the
resolution passed.

In the Senate the bill provoked little debate. Philander Knox of Pennsylvania
brought the measure to the floor on February 18, 1907 and the only objections—from
Eugene Hale of Maine and Porter McCumber of North Dakota – had nothing to do
with content, but were based on other more pressing business in the Senate. The
motion to incorporate the NGAA passed on that same day.
The bill became law on February 21, 1907. The final act of incorporation contained the group's rights and obligations. The Alliance had the right to amend its Constitution at any time. It could hold meetings anywhere in the United States. The NGAA must not take part in any activities that were not of a purely patriotic and educational nature. Finally, Congress had the authority to revoke the group's charter at any time if it found that the Alliance had gone beyond the scope of its activities as outlined in the charter.13

With the granting of a national charter the Alliance had achieved national recognition, one of its main goals. It made possible a headquarters in the District of Columbia that would facilitate the group's lobbying efforts. Yet the debate and the charter itself suggested the potential for trouble in the future. Supporters in Congress came from states with high concentrations of German-Americans and active Alliance chapters, most notably Missouri, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. Ironically the sharpest critics also came from states with large German-American populations such as Illinois, Iowa, and Ohio; of course, they could have represented areas that had low concentrations of German-Americans. These critics suggested that the Alliance was merely a political organization masking itself in the guise of culture and ethnicity. Such charges, of course, were not based upon fact since the Alliance had focused almost exclusively on cultural issues prior to 1907—the only exception being efforts against the Hepburn-Dolliver bill. Despite Congressional critics, the debate over incorporation gained little attention outside Washington. Neither the English or
German language press gave much attention to the matter, suggesting that it seemed
to be of no consequence for national issues.

Objections to the charter did, however, reflect continuing nativist sentiment in
the nation. German-Americans in the early twentieth century usually were not direct
targets of these views. But the voice of nativism called also for one-hundred percent
Americanism, at least in some quarters. Any organization based upon ethnicity with a
hyphen suggested something less and thus invited suspicion. Thus in gaining national
recognition the Alliance would also find itself quickly under the national microscope.
The fact is the charter contained clauses restricting activities to certain areas as well as
giving Congress the right to revoke the charter at any time are evidence of this.

During the years 1907-1914 the Alliance participated in many activities technically
beyond those outlined in the charter, with little, if any, objection. The onset of war in
1914 and the difficult years that followed would place the Alliance in a different, albeit
difficult, situation.

Efforts for a national charter notwithstanding, the Alliance focused its main
efforts in 1906 on the fight against the prohibition of alcohol. During the
Congressional hearings that year, and in subsequent years on the prohibition question,
the Alliance was the most prominent voice of objection from within the German-
American community. It was not alone in articulating its disapproval of any legislation
that regulated the manufacture, sale and consumption of alcohol. On various
occasions representatives from the brewing and liquor interests, bottle manufacturers,
and private citizens would testify. On the other side at these hearings, representatives
from the Anti-Saloon League, Women’s Christian Temperance Union, various church
groups, and private citizens spoke of the need to pass prohibition legislation. Both
sides represented a cross-section of upper-to-middle class America. Their arguments,
both for and against, demonstrated the complex nature of the debate as they raised the
moral, social, cultural, economic, and constitutional issues involved—with each side
steadfastly believing that it was right.

From February to March 1906 Alliance members from the national executive
council and eight state organizations testified before the House Judiciary Committee
against the Hepburn-Dolliver Bill. Hexamer, who spoke first, restated early
arguments that such a bill would be a blow to individual liberties and likely would
promote intemperance, encourage organized crime and political corruption in the
nation’s cities. Hexamer concluded with a veiled threat: his organization possessed
1.5 million members, each of which was opposed to this measure and was willing to:

stand together as one man, and do everything in their power to crush
every Congressman and to prevent his return who will vote for this bill.
I do not say this as a threat. I say it because I, as an American citizen,
American born, deeply deplore it. But I think it would be an
exceedingly unwise measure for even this committee to allow this
measure to get before Congress.

Hexamer’s assurances to the contrary, Congressmen present easily could have
interpreted this passage as a threat. It could help explain objections raised later in
Congress to granting the NGAA a national charter.

Each witness from the NGAA echoed its president—that passage of the
Hepburn-Dolliver would curtail individual freedom and set a precedent for further
government intervention in the liberties of its citizens. Some members added other points. Edward Tamsen of New York viewed prohibition of alcohol as a matter best left up to the individual states, and that federal government should not involve itself in such matters. George Richter of Missouri testified that government could not legislate the moral behavior of its citizens. Alcohol played a part in the daily lives of a large segment of the population and the government's fiat that it was illegal would not cause people to suddenly refrain from its consumption. He added that the Alliance acted strictly out of patriotism and good sense, in no way influenced by brewers and liquor distillers. Richter's wife, Fernande, also testified. Instead of helping the family, she said, prohibition would help break it down. Adults would find themselves visiting clubs rather than drinking at home. Children would come to view alcohol as a forbidden fruit they would want to obtain. She agreed that consumption of alcohol in excess was a vice and danger to the family, but to completely outlaw it would not solve the problem, for in the end "the public good and morality largely rests in the hands of the citizens themselves." After other testimony Hexamer asked that the committee meet again in one month to hear from other Alliance branches further west.

On reconvening in March the committee heard more Alliance members repeat the arguments put forth earlier. Reverend Carl August Voss of Pennsylvania, a non-drinker, reminded the committee of the principles for which the founders of the United States had fought. Wherever prohibition had been tried, he said, the result had been increased crime and violence. William Vocke of Illinois, who reiterated that private
liquor interests had no influence on the Alliance, called upon the committee to consider the economic hardships such a bill would cause for many average citizens who made their living in the brewing and liquor industry, as well as farmers who supplied the raw materials. At the conclusion of the session Timm submitted letters from western branches of the NGAA protesting the Hepburn-Dolliver Bills.

During the next few years the Alliance continued to speak against any legislation calling for prohibition. Early in 1907 Phoebe Couzins, representing the District of Columbia branch, testified against such a measure in the District. Couzins explained that she had been an advocate of prohibition until she moved to Kansas and had a chance to see the policy in action. The experience left her convinced that any attempt to regulate the manufacture and sale of alcohol in the states and large cities was impracticable, that instead of preventing consumption of alcohol, prohibition encouraged it, while giving rise to seedy "speakeasies" and bootlegging operations by organized crime. Besides, she concluded, German-Americans were a loyal and law abiding component of the American population and they "...demand their beer, and they demand their beer on Sunday. They feel they have a right to it."

Participation of the NGAA in 1906 and February 1907 in the debate over prohibition was significant for many reasons. It demonstrated the growing strength of the Alliance on the national scene after only four years of existence. Claiming membership of over 1.5 million it viewed itself as a force to be reckoned with. The fact that the Committee on the Judiciary allowed members to appear in a private hearing is evidence of that power. The statements of Alliance members established
unanimity in their condemnation of prohibition, indicating that the group was highly organized at the national and state levels. Testimony by many members suggested that at least in 1906 the NGAA reached its opposition independently, without support or pressure from the brewing and liquor interests. Instead cultural behavior motivated these individuals—the German Sunday beer garden and simply the traditional attachment to beer—as well as the deep-seeded belief that laws prohibiting alcohol would lead to greater social problems and set a precedent for further inroads by government into private lives. The experience of the Alliance in lobbying Congress helped to bring it into contact with the various brewing and liquor interests since Robert Crain, general counsel for the United States Brewing Association was present (and testified) at the 1906 hearings. The Alliance, realizing that its struggle against prohibition could be a long one, would benefit from any assistance in its lobbying efforts, while the brewers could gain from the efforts of a well-organized coalition. The fact that women testified on behalf of the Alliance demonstrated that they had some influence in the organization. Finally, the experience might have attracted the attention of some members of Congress already suspicious of the Alliance’s claim to be solely a “patriotic and educational organization.” To them the open and vigorous lobbying for beer and the beer garden sounded more German than American.

The seventh convention of the Zentral-Bundes of Pennsylvania in Pittsburgh on June 23 and 24, 1906 gave surprisingly little attention to the fight against prohibition. Instead, discussion concentrated on continuing the cultural exchanges between Germany and the United States and the need to continue work in preservation of
German culture in America. Hexamer in his opening speech cited the German historian Karl Lamprecht to show that to understand the history of a people one must understand the culture of that people.\textsuperscript{24} He thanked those individuals who had worked tirelessly in promoting German theater, music, and the efforts of the German Historical Society in preserving the memory of past contributions of German-Americans.\textsuperscript{25} The various committees also focused on the work in preserving German culture. Even the Committee on Personal Freedom made no mention of the prohibition question. Secretary Henry Arnold only went so far as to say that the committee endorsed the continued work of the NGAA in this area.\textsuperscript{26}

One must wonder the reason for this attitude at a time when the national organization was preoccupied with prohibition. The officers of the Zentral-Bundes also served on the executive council of the NGAA and, as with the national organization they controlled the agenda of the state chapter. The Alliance relied on state branches to implement the decisions of the national executive council. One can only hypothesize that while prohibition was a major concern, the organization viewed it as a part of the larger goal of preserving German culture in America, and thus more a national than a state concern.

The emphasis on culture dominated the efforts of the NGAA throughout 1906. In a German Day speech Hexamer extolled the contributions of Germans during the colonial and revolutionary eras, ranging from the establishment of the first paper mill in the colonies by Wilhelm Rittenhaus in 1690 to von Steuben's training of the Continental Army.\textsuperscript{27} One gains a sense of urgency from Hexamer's words, a fear that
the German contribution was in danger of being forgotten. By the end of 1906 the NGAA had decided to take a much more aggressive stance on the national level. How was this position received? The debates in Congress over the national charter might give one indication. But the English language press, for the most part ignored the organization, mentioning it only during a national convention. The *New York Times* did not discuss the Alliance until it met in New York for its 1907 convention.

What did membership and organizational operations suggest about the Alliance at this time? The group claimed to have 1.5 million dues paying members, seemingly a strong base of support. Yet these numbers were very unreliable, and the exact number of members was never known— with numbers ranging from 1.5 to 2.5 million by the start of the First World War. The reason for this wide discrepancy has to do with the organization's structure. At the state and local levels the Alliance drew their membership from various German-American organizations such as *Turnverein* and *Gesangverein*. For membership purposes the NGAA counted every member of every organization. Many individuals belonged to more than one local German-American organization, thus they would be counted two or more times. Another factor difficult to determine is how many actively participated in the organization. Ninety-five delegates attended the 1905 convention in Indianapolis. For an organization claiming to have over one million members at the time this number suggests that only a hard-core few took an active part. The Alliance was an organization in which a small group of individuals determined policy. There was little contact between national officers and the membership at state and local levels. Contact with the local level
was generally left to the officers of the state branches who communicated with the executive council of the national organization—which, after 1909 included the president of each state chapter. Only at the national conventions did the elected delegates intermingle with Alliance leaders to any meaningful degree. How large a voice did the membership have? An examination of the convention minutes reveals that the elected delegates voiced the concerns of the state chapters, as well as voted for national officers—in essence then the bi-annual conventions of the Alliance were modeled after those of the Democrat and Republican parties.

The German-American press generally treated the Alliance favorably. The *Illinois Staats Zeitung*, *Cincinnati Freie Presse*, *St. Louis Westliche Post*, *Philadelphia Tagblatt*, *Milwaukee Herold*, and the *New Yorker Staats Zeitung* covered the activities of the national organization and gave special attention when the group was in town for a local or national meeting.30 The *Westliche Post*, for example, lauded the local branch's efforts to combat prohibition:

> The State Alliance of Missouri and Southern Illinois has through its resolutions given notice that the Germans of the state are not willing to let a single particle of their personal freedom be stolen away, and that they will make every effort to win back at the very next opportunity what has been lost.31

The NGAA also received favorable reviews from journalists in German-American magazines. Don Mannhardt in *Die Glocke* offered praise for the efforts to preserve German culture in America.32

The largest critic within the German-American community was its rival, the Catholic Central Verein. In 1904 Hexamer had begun a custom of sending greetings
to the Verein during its annual conventions. The Verein treated these messages with caution. It welcomed attempts to preserve German language and culture, but it did not support the Alliance's involvement in such issues as prohibition and fostering better relations with Germany since the Verein considered these political issues and did not engage in political activity to any large degree. The Verein also wanted the NGAA to respect, if not endorse, its religious activities, which included promoting the Catholic faith in America, parochial over public education, and combating the anti-Catholic tendencies of nativism. Largely a secular organization, more Protestant than Catholic—to the extent there was any religious attitude at all—the Alliance did not condemn the religious identification of the Catholic organization, but it did nothing to support the goal of promoting the Catholic faith in America. At its 1907 convention the Central Verein rejected a motion to directly affiliate itself with the NGAA, although it did create a committee to look into cooperation on specific projects of mutual concern. The committee did not even bother to make a recommendation to the leadership of the Verein.

While the Verein disagreed with the Alliance over the liquor question, its position on the issue was not well defined. The Verein considered alcoholism as "a very grave danger to the welfare of our people," and sought to use "those means for combating this evil which our holy religion provides." Despite this concern the organization never publicly called for the complete prohibition of alcohol, nor did it oppose it—remaining content to help those of its members with alcohol problems through education and counseling in the church. While many in the organization were
against prohibition, they did not share the view of the NGAA that it was a threat to German culture or a curtailment of civil liberties. Consequently, even those in the organization who may have sympathized with the Alliance on the liquor issue found it hard to accept the line of attack adopted by the NGAA.

The Verein also had little interest in Germany prior to 1914. This position had to do, in large part, with Bismarck’s Kulturkampf in the 1870’s. Fear that Bismarck sought to undermine the Catholic faith induced large numbers of German Catholics to immigrate to the United States. This persecution left a bitter taste in the mouths of many, the result being that they paid little attention to Germany’s role in international events and did not seem to care if Germany and the United States became friends. Only on issues involving the Catholic Center Party did German Catholics in America pay any attention to political developments in Germany.37

The differences between the two groups made cooperation impossible. The separation broadened more after 1907 when some pro-Catholic German-American newspapers and journals began to openly criticize the NGAA’s efforts to prevent prohibition. The Herold des Glaubens referred to the Alliance as “a hold-over from the liberal German-American movements of the nineteenth century.” The Central-Blatt, the Verein’s official magazine, in 1908 criticized the NGAA for attempting to identify anti-prohibition with German culture stating that “the two were not necessarily connected.”38

Such comments produced little response from Alliance leaders who still desired some degree of cooperation. In 1909 Hexamer invited the Central Verein to send a
delegation to the NGAA convention in Cincinnati to work on issues of common concern. This overture, coupled with the decision by the Central Verein in New York to enter into cooperation with the New York branch of the Alliance, caused leadership of the Verein in 1909 to call for a resolution to clarify the relationship between the two organizations.\textsuperscript{39} The major obstacle to unity, as stated in the resolution, was a different Weltanschauung (world view). The Central-Verein view was Christian-Catholic based, while that of the Alliance was humanistic and void of religious affiliation. Even in areas of mutual concern, such as preservation of the German language, the two groups had little common ground. The Verein sought to promote the language through the parochial school, while the Alliance was a staunch supporter of public education and the public school system. In the end the Verein decided to leave the issue of cooperation up to local groups, after they had first received the permission of state executive committees.\textsuperscript{40}

The desire for some degree of cooperation was not without its supporters in the Central Verein. Joseph Frey, president of the New York chapter, called for the two organizations to focus on similarities rather than differences and work together for the good of all German-Americans.\textsuperscript{41} Such words fell on deaf ears. The hard-line stance of the executive committee of the Catholic Central Verein, coupled with the actions of local NGAA chapters made any hope of cooperation between the two groups impossible. Even Frey's ascension to the presidency of the Central Verein in 1911 could not overturn the policy. Only with the outbreak of war in Europe in 1914 did the Verein and the Alliance begin to cooperate at any meaningful level. Until then:
time the relationship between the two largest German-American organizations remained distant with little significant interaction at the national level.\textsuperscript{42}

Hexamer, speaking on behalf of the Alliance's executive committee, denied that the organization was anti-religious. He argued that the NGAA, as an ethnic organization, welcomed the participation of all German-Americans.\textsuperscript{43} He wanted a broad base of support for the campaign against prohibition and the program to preserve German culture in the United States. Hexamer was also correct in denying accusations that the Alliance was anti-religious. While certain incidents had occurred at the local level, the executive committee of the NGAA never condemned the religious orientation of the Central Verein. The Alliance's constitution only prevented it from entertaining matters of religion; it did not reject religion or groups of a religious nature.\textsuperscript{44} In the end however it would be the religious question, and to a lesser extent other issues, that kept the two largest German-American organizations from cooperating prior to the war.

Another organization that attracted the interest of the Alliance in 1907 was the Ancient Order of Hiberians (hereafter referred to as Hiberians or AOH), the largest Irish organization in the United States. Hexamer had proposed a meeting of the two groups to Matthew Cummings, AOH president in October 1906. Hexamer had voiced concern over an immigration bill in Congress and a possible alliance between the United States and Great Britain.\textsuperscript{45} In a meeting in January, 1907, Hexamer, Cummings and other representatives of the two groups pledged themselves to the following resolutions:
Resolved. That the joint conference committee of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in America, and of the National German-American Alliance unanimously declare an alliance between the people of both organizations for the good of this Republic, on the following basis:

1. Any measure of mutual interest passed by the executive committee or by a national convention of either organization shall be transmitted by its national officers to the national officers of the allied associations for approval and action.

2. To oppose an alliance of any kind, secret or otherwise, with any foreign power on the part of the Government of the United States.

3. To oppose the enactment, by the Congress of the United States or the legislatures of the various States, of any sumptuary or any other law or laws abridging the personal liberties of citizens.

4. To oppose any and every restriction of immigration of healthy persons from Europe, exclusive of convicted criminals, anarchists, and those of immoral character.

5. To recommend a systematic investigation of the share all races have had in the development of our country, in war and in peace, from the earliest days, as the basis for the founding and continuance of unprejudiced and unbiased American history.

6. This agreement to be effective immediately upon the ratification of the same by the executive boards of both organizations, and to continue in force until abrogated by a majority vote of a national convention of either organization.46

The alliance between the two groups thus focused on a wide variety of diplomatic, political, and cultural issues. The second resolution obviously was aimed primarily at Great Britain, the most likely ally of the United States. Both the AOH and NGAA viewed England as a common enemy. For the former it was for long-standing historical reasons, especially British subjugation of Ireland and the Irish people – a hotly contested issue at the time. For the latter it came from the belief that England would attempt to utilize America as a counter-weight to Germany in the event of war.47 Item three was an indirect reference to the prohibition of alcohol which both groups opposed. Number five had to do with preserving the memory of not only the
German and Irish contributions, but all races, to the development of the United States.

In tune with linguistic usage of the time, the reference to race most likely meant European ethnic groups, not African-Americans, Native Americans, and Asians. The Alliance of course opposed immigrant restriction as it applied to Europeans. It remained silent on restriction of immigration from Asia. It is highly doubtful that the Alliance, and Hiberians, desired to see the contributions of all races (as opposed to ethnic groups) included in American history textbooks. The resolutions were passed by both organizations at their national conventions of 1907 and 1908.48

It is difficult to assess the extent of cooperation between organizations from the nation's two largest ethnic groups prior to World War One. The Hiberians were not present when Alliance leaders testified before Congress between 1908 and 1914 about prohibition and immigration restriction. Mention of either group rarely appeared in the other's convention minutes. At the Hiberian convention of 1912 President James Regan did mention in passing that the organizations had maintained friendly relations and that Hexamer had invited him on many occasions to assist in German Day celebrations.49 One can only surmise that the two groups went about their business independent of each other, while maintaining channels of communication.

On eve of the NGAA's fourth convention in 1907 the leadership could look back on the past two years with a high degree of satisfaction. They had received a national charter, testified at Congressional hearings on prohibition, and allied
themselves with the AOH. The only failure had been the inability to come to an agreement with the Central Verein.

The convention of 1907 in New York City in October brought together delegates representing state chapters and affiliated groups in forty states and the District of Columbia. In his opening address Hexamer spoke on familiar issues: continued growth of the NGAA, the teaching of the German language in public schools, expanding interest in German theater, music and literature and relations with Germany, and the collection of funds for a monument to Francis Daniel Pastorious, founder of Germantown, Pennsylvania. The remarks differed little from past conventions with the exception of reference to a letter from publisher William Randolph Hearst. Hearst, an ardent Anglophobe, advocated the creation of an international society of Germans and Americans for the purpose of fostering better relations between the two countries. He suggested exchange programs between universities in both nations and other forms of cooperation. He congratulated the Alliance for its efforts in this area and stated that the organization could be a catalyst in a stronger relationship between Americans and Germans. He also offered to pay the expenses of ten delegates to the convention of 1909. The delegates received Hearst’s remarks with satisfaction and applause. They accepted the offer to pay the expenses of ten delegates.

Other speakers discussed relations between the United States and Germany. Joseph Keller of Indiana, Dr. Julius Goebel of Harvard University, and Professor Leo Stern all stressed the involvement of Germans in the growth of the United States and
the need to work towards strengthening ties between Germany and America. The German ambassador, Baron Speck von Sternberg, sent a telegram expressing his good wishes for continued success of the Alliance. Kaiser Wilhelm even sent a message personally thanking Hexamer and the NGAA for helping to establish the German Museum at Harvard University.

The Alliance voted to endorse immigration laws that targeted (by forbidding entry of) undesirables such as anarchists, convicted felons, and individuals possessing an immoral character, in essence a restatement of the principles in the organization’s constitution. Specifically, the NGAA supported the Immigration Bill of 1907, a law that gave the federal government the right to deny entry to anarchists and deport people who displayed anarchist tendencies within three years of arrival.

Another matter of importance was the state of German-American studies. The Committee on Historical Research, led by Dr. Albert Kern, recommended that each delegate help create historical societies at the state, county and city levels to research the influence of German-Americans. The committee proposed that the NGAA fund the publication of a history that examined the role of Germans, as compared to other ethnic groups, in the development of America. The Alliance should then work to place the book in the public schools as a supplement in American history classes. The final recommendation called for Richard E. Helbig of the New York Public Library to serve as a collector of Alliance-related materials.

The recommendations passed unanimously. The call for a multiethnic history of the United States coincided with the agreement with the Hiberians in January, and

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of course enhanced a long-standing goal of the Alliance. Finally, the convention again
turned to the effect that waning German immigration would have on maintaining
German culture in America, but the delegates could see that there was not much they
could do about the problem. They could work to head off restriction on a mere
quantitative basis on the American side, but over the reasons Germans were declining
to leave—attitude of the German government, a strong German economy and growing
nationalism—they had no control.

As a part of a report of the Committee on Personal Liberty, the delegates
received the following resolution:

Our position toward the movement for prohibitive and improperly
restricted legislation, and our standpoint of opposition to every
infringement of the personal liberty of the citizens of this Republic and
all attempts to enforce not universally recognized moral maxims by the
force of law, are so well known that repetition is perfectly
needless...We recommend to all state and local organizations to cause
the German-American citizens of their respective States and
communities to oppose legislation violating the principle of personal
liberty, in a proper manner and in accordance with local conditions, on
the field of party politics.55

This resolution stemmed from an appeal by the Governor of Indiana to the Methodist
Conference to help bring about passage of temperance legislation and to protest Vice-
President Charles W. Fairbanks' (himself a Hoosier) serving liquor during a dinner for
President Theodore Roosevelt.56 The Alliance passed the resolution, roundly
condemned the actions as a violation of separation of church and state, and warned
that the state can never "form any kind of an alliance with the Church without
endangering civil liberty."57 In doing so the Alliance departed from a past policy of
phrasing positions on social issues in constitutional and ideological terms. The fact that it had condemned both an elected high official and major established Church demonstrated the extent to which it would go to prevent passage of a prohibition amendment.

In fact, the Alliance had reason for concern. The temperance forces had picked up strength in the preceding years. Fueled by the progressives seeking to cure the nation's social ills, and various other objectives, prohibition became the rallying cry for a wide range of groups in the United States. American Protestantism by this time was firmly committed to temperance. Besides the traditional argument based upon moral reform, religious leaders in America looked upon alcohol in a manner similar to many progressives – that it was the source of many social ills, primarily domestic violence and the breakdown of family life.

The Anti-Saloon League and Women's Christian Temperance Union had joined forces in an effort to bring about the prohibition of liquor. Ending the social ills of society was the prime motivating factor for these groups. Like the NGAA, these organizations understood that the issue had become a part of politics and so they worked within the political realm to achieve their goals. They also utilized tactics similar to the Alliance by creating lists of candidates for public office based upon their position on the issue. They then distributed the information to voters in hopes that they would vote for dry candidates. From 1907 to 1908 the League and the WCTU battled with the Ohio Alliance over local option laws which gave towns and cities the right to decide the issue for themselves. The contest produced no clear cut winner as
both sides claimed victories and suffered defeats. The activities of the Ohio Alliance, coupled with similar actions by chapters in Iowa and Nebraska, gained the ire of dry organizations, but also attracted the attention of local brewers, which indeed did have a vested interest in the outcome.

The Alliance also found an adversary in modern science that increasingly pointed to alcohol as the root of many diseases. By the end of the nineteenth century researchers had determined that alcohol, at one time thought to be a stimulant, was in actuality a depressant that paralyzed the nerves controlling the flow of blood through the body. Excessive use of alcohol not only damaged the liver, but also was suspected to cause heart disease. One study, done in early 1908 at Long Island asylum, even linked alcoholism to insanity.

By 1907 the NGAA found itself in a battle that in many ways it was not prepared to fight. Its traditional argument against prohibition as an attack on personal liberties and German culture needed modification to counter an opposition argument increasingly grounded in moral, social, economic, and scientific factors. The NGAA needed to find allies, both philosophically and financially, in order to combat such organizations as the Anti-Saloon League and the WCTU and their attempt to elect candidates favoring prohibition.

The delegates concluded their business by choosing officers; not surprisingly they reelected Hexamer and Timm. To adjust for the organization's growth three new members joined the executive committee, bringing the total to twelve directors along with six officers. The Alliance voted to hold the 1909 meeting in Cincinnati. Actions
taken at the New York gathering demonstrated that the organization continued to be a
centralized group that allowed for autonomous action on the part of the state
branches. The executive committee under the direction of Hexamer controlled the
agenda and protocol. Twenty-two subcommittees, each concerned with a specific
issue, existed under the executive council. These committees, in consultation with the
national officers, decided policy, strategy, and the issues of concern over the next two
years. The job of the state and local branches was to carry out the decisions of the
national committees in their respective communities—though they were still free to
propose legislation to the national leadership, and they were free to pursue a localized
agenda on their own.63

The convention of 1907 had made strikingly clear how much the organization
had grown, its interests expanded, in recent years. It was not a single-issue group, but
an organization involved in many projects, ostensibly concerned with German culture,
many of which affected broader segments of the population in controversial ways.
The expansion of activities brought the Alliance into contact with individuals and
organizations that viewed the NGAA’s actions as threatening. With each passing year
it seemed that the list of enemies, or potential enemies, grew longer.

Nonetheless, first things came first, and so the year 1908 saw the Alliance
refocus its efforts on the fight against the movement against alcoholic beverages.
Between January and February nine Alliance members, including Hexamer, other
members of the executive committee, and leaders the state branches, testified on
various prohibition bills under review of the Senate Judiciary Committee.64 Hexamer
presented resolutions adopted by the national executive committee and endorsed by the various state committees that viewed any attempt at prohibition to be a violation of any “sane” person’s personal liberty granted by the Constitution. They called upon the Congress to not adopt any prohibition legislation, and committed the Alliance to do all in its power to prevent such action.65

The Alliance agreed that abuse of alcohol was a problem, but did not agree that prohibition was the way to stop that abuse. The solution could come only through education. Hexamer again warned about letting the voices of a few affect the lives of the many and reminded the body of what happened at Salem, Massachusetts in the late seventeenth century when a community fell prey to accusations of a small group of attention-seeking individuals wishing to promote a private agenda.66

Following Hexamer, Ernest Stahl, third vice-president of the NGAA, told the committee of his experiences in Germany prior to unification, how the various kingdoms and principalities with their own laws made it difficult for Germans to move from place to place, how at each border they were searched for items that might be illegal in a different land. Passage of a measure, such as the Hepburn-Dolliver Bill, that allowed states to prevent the importation of a legal product would place the United States in the same “ridiculous condition which existed in the old country years ago in feudal times.”67 Curiously, the group was against giving the states power to restrict interstate commerce in liquor, but supported letting the states decide—through local option laws—whether or not alcohol could be legally consumed. This argument suggests that the NGAA felt more confident in defeating local prohibition ordinances.
as opposed to a national law. Such a conclusion supports the fact that, other than testimony at Congressional hearings, the bulk of the Alliance's efforts in this area occurred at state and local levels.

The most forceful arguments of other Alliance members came from P.A. Wildermuth, who reminded the committee that only the federal government had the right to regulate interstate commerce and that it did not possess the right to transfer that power to the states. If the states received such power they could confiscate liquor at the border, thus breaking a legally-binding contract between individuals from two states. In so doing Congress will have annulled or regulated private contracts beyond the scope of the Constitution. Wildermuth's complicated and technical argument suggested that the Alliance would use any part of the Constitution or any other device to attack what it clearly had identified as a dangerous beast.

While many members of the Alliance lobbied the Senate, others worked against similar measures in the House. In February, 1908 representatives from the NGAA testified at a House hearing on the Littlefield Bill, which would allow states to confiscate alcoholic beverages coming from other states. Wildermuth and Theodore Sutro, chief legal counsel for the New York branch sharply criticized the bill as unconstitutional and an infringement on personal liberties. Both men repeated what had been stated before the Senate—that in passing such a measure, Congress would assume powers not granted by the Constitution. Wildermuth, in a statement that was more emotional than technical, warned about paid lobbyists of special interest groups who descended on Washington with each new session of Congress bringing new bills
to prohibit the manufacture, sale and consumption of alcohol. First it had been the Hepburn-Dolliver Bill of 1904, now it was the Littlefield Bill. He pleaded that Congress not heed the false doctrine of "misguided religious enthusiasts and make this obnoxious measure a law." As if to anticipate future criticism Sutro insisted that the position of the NGAA did not represent influence of the brewing or liquor interests.

He then proceeded to relate the story of a recent visit to Germany, France and England. On Sundays in Germany and France, where the sale of alcohol was allowed, Sutro saw no examples of public drunkenness, but on Sundays in London, where the sale of alcohol was prohibited, he saw more drunken men on the streets than he ever had in New York City. He was against public drunkenness, said Sutro, but regulation of such behavior should be left up to state and local government as long as they could not seize or absolutely halt distribution of liquor. By passing any law prohibiting the sale and consumption of alcohol, Congress would only be contributing to their growth.

Two months later Phoebe Couzins appeared before a House Committee to testify again against a measure to ban the manufacture and sale of alcohol in the District of Columbia. Couzins condemned the hypocrisy of religious groups that sought the prohibition of alcohol while simultaneously doing little to find solutions to the major causes of alcohol abuse. The answer, she said, was for these groups and Congress to work towards ending poverty—the despair of the ill-fed, ill-housed, and ill-paid. Couzins reported that she had taken a tour of the nation and found scenes of men out of work and driven to despair who sought their only solace in a saloon,
leaving their families to survive by any means possible. Young boys turned to crime, young girls and even wives turned to prostitution. The way to end problems associated with drink was for government to put an end to poverty and deprivation, the reason most people turned to alcohol in the first place.

The NGAA’s fight was not confined to lobbying Washington. All over the country local Alliance chapters engaged in attempts to repeal or prevent the passage of “Blue Laws.” The origins of these laws dated back to the New Haven colony which in 1665 established the first restrictions on Sunday drinking in British North America. New Haven posted the ordinances on blue paper. Sunday, of course, was to be devoted to the Lord and not human vices. By the end of the nineteenth century the degree to which states enforced such laws varied. Some states, such as California, had few laws. Other states, such as Georgia, enforced a complete ban on the sale and consumption of alcohol.

These regulations struck directly at one of German-America’s favorite social outlets—the Sunday “Beer Garden.” Local chapters of the Alliance took it upon themselves to bring about repeal of these laws. Delegates at the state convention of the New York chapter condemned attempts by the state or federal government to interfere in the personal liberties of its citizens and authorized the legislative committee to begin work to repeal the state’s blue laws.

By the end of 1908 the Alliance had succeeded in organizing a campaign against prohibition at the local, state and national levels. In Philadelphia, the Reverend Georg von Bosse applauded the efforts of the state Alliance in continuing the work of
such past German-Americans as Carl Schurz in the fight to preserve the personal liberties of all Americans. In a German Day speech on October 6 in Chicago, Hexamer congratulated the Chicago branch and the entire NGAA for their continued efforts against any legislation that restricted the rights of law-abiding American citizens. The fight against prohibition was not the concern of only German-Americans, he said, but of Americans in general.

By the end of 1908—if not sooner—the NGAA had attracted the attention of the brewing industry and its primary organization, the United States Brewing Association (hereafter referred to as the USBA). The organization had been founded on August 21, 1862 in New York City by local brewers concerned over a law that placed a tax of one dollar on all barrels of beer sold, as well as creating—for the first time—a license fee for individual brewers. From the outset the organization lobbied extensively against any efforts on any level of government to tax or restrict the manufacture, sale and consumption of alcohol. German brewers of lager beer had founded the organization and German-Americans continued to dominate in the twentieth century. Given these two factors one can see why an alliance between the USBA and NGAA would be natural. Why it did not occur earlier probably was due to the USBA's waiting to see if the Alliance would become a force of any consequence.

During the first few years of its existence, the Alliance had spread its efforts among several issues, although the prohibition question always remained near the forefront.

Efforts of Alliance state chapters to elect candidates who were against prohibition impressed USBA affiliates in Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin. Beginning in
late 1908 local chapters began to receive subsidies from regional brewers—at this time the USBA did not contribute directly to the national Alliance—to assist in petition drives and help "get out the vote" on election days. In early 1909, for example, the St. Louis branch received a portion of $300,000 set aside by the Anheuser-Busch Brewery for promoting a pro-beer educational campaign. There was as yet no evidence of a direct link between the USBA and the NGAA at the national level. The association had developed by 1911, but did not become public until the Senate conducted its hearings into the brewing and liquor interests and German propaganda in 1918.

The prohibition debate resurfaced in 1909 when a joint Congressional committee met to consider a motion to create a Commission on the Alcoholic Liquor Traffic which would examine all aspects of the liquor question. The body was comprised of five House members and five Senators. Sutro and Timm appeared on behalf of the NGAA.

Sutro argued that such a commission would be a waste of taxpayer funds since Congress did not possess the power to transfer regulation of interstate commerce to the states. Any recommendations by the committee, or Congressional action would be unconstitutional. In addition the Supreme Court repeatedly had ruled that liquor traffic was a legitimate form of business enterprise. The debate grew heated when Sutro accused Congress of attempting to be the moral judge of society, seeking to tell the population what was good for it. Congressmen Nehemiah Sperry from Connecticut and Ezekial Chandler from Mississippi shot back that Congress had a duty
to pass legislation that promoted the general welfare of the population. Sutro then asked why Congress did nothing to help the poor. Timm added that the conditions the commission proposed to investigate already were common knowledge, and that the hearing was an example of Congress caving in to prohibition forces which sought to revive interest in a weak cause. 85

On this one aspect of this issue at least, the NGAA could claim victory. The House decided to forego a special liquor commission and leave all matters regarding alcohol in the hands of the Committee on the Judiciary. The Alliance also could take satisfaction in the fact that Congress had passed no national legislation regarding the manufacture, sale, transportation, and consumption of alcohol. The NGAA's main argument continued to focus on prohibition as a violation of personal liberties. By this time, however, the Alliance attacked the temperance movement from all angles: that it represented a futile effort to legislate morality and that it offered a band-aid solution to existing social problems such as poverty, want and need amongst the majority of the population. In maintaining this line of reasoning the Alliance based its attack upon progressive thought—a reflection of the organization's ability to adjust its position to the national mood.

Not surprisingly, prohibition was a major item on the agenda at the fifth annual convention of the Alliance held at the Nord Cincinnati Turnhalle in Cincinnati from October 2-6, 1909. Hexamer put it directly: "As free and sovereign people we believe we have the right to regulate our lives as we see fit. The right to drink our wine and our beer we consider an absolute attribute of human liberty as is the right to buy any
other food." He called upon the delegates to return to their states and strengthen efforts against the prohibition of alcohol.

Hexamer also reemphasized the need to do more to promote teaching German in public schools. He reminded his listeners of Carl Schurz's reply to a member of Congress who had chided him for speaking German on occasion and not "United States." Schurz stated that "there was no better patriotism than that which in this land utters itself in German speech." Hexamer also encouraged the delegates to work on behalf of United States involvement in a world peace organization that would assist in preventing a future conflict.

In the coming months both of these items would become major issues on the Alliance's agenda. The language question reflected increasing fear that even the German-American community did not promote the language forcefully. Dr. Julius Goebel of Harvard reported that while the German language had a good status at the college and university level, the Alliance needed to do more on behalf of German in the public elementary and secondary schools.

The concern for a world peace organization grew out of a general tension in relations between the European powers, especially between England and Germany which had prompted a growing Anglo-American rapprochement, and a fear within the Alliance that in a European conflict the United States would find itself hard pressed to maintain neutrality. The NGAA voted in favor of a federation of all nations to work for peace based upon the principle of mutual guarantee of each nation's borders. Not insignificant for this gathering of upper-to-middle class gentlemen was the attachment
of a rider that called upon all nations to improve the social, economic and working conditions of the laboring classes.\textsuperscript{90}

The delegates also voted not to contribute to German private schools, the official rationale being that the Alliance already supported the public school system through its taxes. The vote also reflected an understanding that German schools were probably Catholic schools, to which few members sent children and that Catholics generally, especially the Catholic Central Verein, had shown little inclination to work with the Alliance. Other matters of importance included the creation of a Junior Order of the National German-American Alliance—a move partly to promote growth of the organization in the future—but also to promote German culture and language.\textsuperscript{91} In a mere formality, Hexamer and Timm were re-elected to new terms in office. The executive committee of the organization now expanded to twenty-five directors and seven officers, reflecting the continued growth of the Alliance around the country.

The reports of all the individual states were positive, suggesting a growing unity and sense of purpose within the organization. Each state reported continued success at enlisting new members, as well as in their respective efforts at promoting the agenda put forth by the national leadership. The focus remained so squarely on prohibition that it had become a rallying point for German-Americans who by the turn of the century had assimilated into American society and were for the most part considered a "quiet" ethnic group. The revival of the prohibition debate during the Progressive era served to awaken a segment of that quiet group which viewed attempts at prohibition as an attack on their culture. In 1900 twenty-four percent of
the nation’s population lived in dry regions. By 1906 this number had grown to forty percent.92

To fend off this trend many German-Americans turned to the NGAA and its local affiliates to combat the efforts of such temperance organizations as the Anti-Saloon League and the WCTU. It is possible to trace the growth, but not the creation, of the Alliance during the first years of the twentieth century directly to the rising concern regarding prohibition. The group became a last line of defense to many German-Americans, or as Timm called it in 1903—a Schutz und Trutz Bund (“protective alliance in the face of adversity”).93 As Clifton Childs states in The German-Americans in Politics one wonders if the Alliance would have been heard outside German-speaking academic groups if it had not been for prohibition.94 After the convention of 1909, however, this attitude would change. Funding by brewers and later the USBA would not only assist the NGAA in its campaign against the forces of prohibition, but it also helped free up its own resources to pursue other facets of its agenda during a time of increasing tensions abroad. It also presented the possibility of the Alliance appearing to be a lobbying group for the brewers, rather than an independent, principled organization with the welfare of society in mind, relegating its defense of civil liberties and constitutionality to mere window-dressing.

But these problems belonged to the future, scarcely on the horizon at the convention in 1909. The four-day meeting had carried a tone of optimism throughout and the final session ended with a resounding “Hoch der DANB!” (“Three Cheers for the National German-American Alliance!”)."
End Notes


2 Congress, House, Committee on the Judiciary, To Incorporate the National German-American Alliance, 59th Cong., 1st sess., 28 March 1906, 1.

3 In a letter from Timm to Representative Henry Palmer, Chair of the Subcommittee of the Committee on the Judiciary dated March 13, 1906. Timm focused on the group’s aims of being a true American organization with the best interests of the nation in mind. See Adolph Timm to Henry Palmer, as reprinted in Congress, House, Committee on the Judiciary, To Incorporate the National German American Alliance, 2.

4 In another letter to Palmer dated March 16, 1906 Timm stated that the Alliance consisted of 6,000 organizations in 33 states. See Adolph Timm to Henry Palmer as reprinted in Congress, House, Committee on the Judiciary, To Incorporate the National German American Alliance, 1.


7 This is the same William Hepburn who co-sponsored the Hepburn-Dolliver Bill of 1904 that the Alliance had so strongly opposed.


9 Ibid., H4737-4739. The act referred to here is the Immigration Act of 1907. President Roosevelt objected to the literacy component of the bill and it was not included in the final act. Bartholdt’s reference to teaching English included the fact that the Alliance sponsored night schools for teaching English to German immigrants.


11 Ibid., 66.

12 Congress, Senate, 59th Cong., 2nd sess., Congressional Record, Vol. 41, pt. 4 (18-19 February 1907), S3180 and S3323.


14 The Hepburn-Dolliver Bill originally came before the Committee in 1903. Hexamer and other Alliance members testified at the first hearing in 1904. Members present at these hearings included Charles Hexamer, president; Adolph Timm, secretary; Edward Tamsen, New York; P.A. Wildermuth, Pennsylvania; George Richter, Missouri;
William Vocke, Illinois; Frank Siebelick, Massachusetts; Max Henning, Ohio; Joseph Keller, Indiana; and Joseph Adams, Delaware.


16 Ibid., 86.

17 Congress, House, Committee on the Judiciary, *Foreign and Domestic Commerce in Alcoholic Beverages, Regulations Revision*, 93 & 100.

18 Ibid., 108.


20 Ibid., 126.


22 Ibid., 31.


25 Ibid., 199.


30 These papers also offered some of the more activist positions regarding such issues as prohibition, immigration and the preservation of German-American culture. David Detjens in his work *The Germans in Missouri*, points out that the *St. Louis Westliche Post* welcomed the Alliance as a means of preserving superior German-American values and was a consistent supporter of both the state branch and national organization.
St. Louis Westliche Post, 7 September 1907, p. 10. The resolutions were in reference to the passage of local "Blue Laws" prohibiting consumption of alcohol on Sunday.


Catholic Central Verein, 52. General-Versammlung des Deutschen Roemisch-Katholischen Central-Verein (1907), 38, 47.

Heinz Klos, Um die Einigung des Deutschamerikanertums: Die Geschichte Einerunvollendeten Volksgruppe (Berlin: Volt und Reich Verlag, 1937), 267-268.

Gleason, The Conservative Reformers, 159-160.

Herold de Glaubens (St. Louis), 27 November 1907, 6. Joseph Matt, Der Wanderer, reprinted in Central-Blatt I (May 1908), 6-8. The Central-Blatt was the official magazine of the Catholic Central Verein.

Ibid., 156.

54. General-Versammlung (1909), 34, 67, 81-82.

Ibid., The Conservative Reformers, 157.

Ibid., 157. The reference regarding the treatment of the Central Verein by Alliance members was in regards to the "shabby" treatment of the Central Verein at a German Day celebration sponsored by the St. Louis branch of the NGAA.


The resolution was first printed in the Boston Daily Globe, January 25, 1907. It appeared as evidence against the Alliance during the Congressional hearings of 1918. Reprinted in National German-American Alliance: Hearings, 645.


The NGAA voted in favor of the alliance at their 1907 convention in New York. The AOH passed a similar motion at its 1908 convention in Indianapolis. See DANB, Protokoll der Vierten Konvention des Deutsch-Amerikanischen National-Bundes der


50 DANB, Protokoll der Vierten Konvention, 1-14. Pastorious was one of the founders of Germantown, PA.


54 “Berichte der Ausschusse für Historische Forschungen,” in Protokoll der Vierten Konvention, 85-86, and “Report of the Committee on Historical Research to the 4th Convention of the National German-American Alliance,” German-American Annals, n.s. vol. 6, no. 2 (1908), 115-117.


57 Protokoll der Vierten Konvention, 89.


59 By 1914 only six states had full prohibition: Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, and West Virginia.


61 Ibid., 111-114, 176.

62 Timberlake, Prohibition and the Progressive Movement, 1900-1920, 41.

63 The committees were National Organization, Resolutions, Alliance Business, German Theatre, German Newspapers, German Language and Schools, Standardized Writing, Immigration, Educational Endeavors, Women, Peace Endeavors, Legal, Relations Between Germany and the United States, German Museum, Historical Research, University Teaching, Degrees, Ways and Means, Personal Freedom, Propaganda, Audit, and Gymnastics.

64 Besides Hexamer the witness list included Ernst Stahl, third vice-president; P.A. Wildermuth, NGAA legal counsel; Professor Julius Goebel, president New England branch; Carl Ruehrmund, president Virginia branch; George Grimme, president New Jersey branch; John Tjark, president Maryland branch; and Adolph Timm, national secretary.
Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, *To Regulate Interstate Commerce in Intoxicating Liquors*, 60th Cong., 1st sess., (18, 15 January; 1, 8, 15, 22 February; 7, 14 March 1908), 56.

Ibid., 57.

Ibid., 60.

Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, *To Regulate Interstate Commerce in Intoxicating Liquors*, 63.

Wildermuth was referring to the Supreme Court decision of May 13, 1907 in the case of *Express Companies vs. Kentucky*. The Court stated that the state of Kentucky had no right to confiscate a shipment of whiskey coming from Ohio since the transaction fell within the parameters of interstate commerce.

Ibid., 15. The special interest groups referred to here included the Anti-Saloon League and the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, both of which paid lobbyists to promote their cause on Capital Hill. According to Wildermuth the Alliance had no paid lobbyists, nor did anyone associated with the Alliance receive a salary for their services.

Ibid., 16.

Ibid., 30-32.


Even in Georgia there was an exception, that being the city of Savannah.


81 Herman Ronnenberg, _The Politics of Assimilation: The Effects of Prohibition on the German-Americans_ (New York: Carlton Press, 1975) 68; and Detjens, _The Germans in Missouri_, 47.

82 Congress, Senate, Subcommittee of the Committee of the Judiciary, _Brewing and Liquor Interests and German Propaganda, 65th Cong., 2nd and 3rd sess._ (27 September 1918 to 11 February 1919), 305.

83 Congress, House, Committee on Alcoholic Liquor Traffic, _Hearings on H.R. 22007, 60th Cong., 2nd sess._, (3 February 1909), 2.

84 Ibid., 6.

85 Ibid., 15.


87 Ibid., 5, 6; and “Deutsch-Tag,” _New Yorker Staats-Zeitung_, 4 October 1909, p. 1.

88 DANB, _Protokoll der Funften Konvention_, 104-106.


91 Albert Godsho, _Chronological History of the National German-American Alliance of the United States_ (Philadelphia: NGAA, 1911), 17.


93 _German-American Annals_, n.s., vol. 1, no.1 (1903), 54.

CHAPTER IV

HIGH TIDE OF THE NGAA, 1910-1914

The last years of peace permitted the German-American Alliance to maintain a focus on domestic concerns in the United States and broaden the scope of its activities beyond the question of prohibition. During this time the group involved itself in such familiar issues as immigration restriction, women's suffrage, teaching of the German language in public schools, German-American history, and world peace during a time of increasing international tension. It was also a period in which the Alliance came into direct contact with the brewing and liquor interests which viewed the NGAA as a powerful ally in the attempt to prevent the prohibition of alcohol. By August 1914 funding from the brewers assisted in establishing the Alliance as one of the most visible opponents of prohibition. This financial assistance also freed up the group's own funds, allowing it to target issues besides the anti-prohibition campaign—although the main focus would remain on the liquor question.

The first issue the NGAA confronted during this period was women's suffrage. By 1910 women could vote in five states. While this was not a large number, the National American Women's Suffrage Association had given the movement new and effective leadership. Formed in 1890 by the union of the American Woman Suffrage Association and the National Woman Suffrage Association, the NAWSA sought out
victories in state after state. From its inception the main goal of the NAWSA was the passage of an amendment giving women the right to vote.¹

Not all women shared the views of the NAWSA. A majority of German and Irish women in America viewed suffrage as a threat to their traditional customs.² For these women the role of the female was to bear and raise future leaders, not elect them to office. This notion of the female role in society was similar to the concept of “Republican Motherhood” that existed during much of the nineteenth century. A basic tenant of this belief was that only women could instill morality and proper virtues in children, this unique talent coming, at least partly, from women’s remaining free from the “evils” of the world of business and politics.³ Giving women the right to vote could threaten this traditional role.

If it was difficult to determine how many women thought about getting the suffrage, the women of the NGAA, or at least their leaders, made their position clear. In April 1910 Phoebe Couzins, representing the Ladies Auxiliary of the NGAA, appeared before the House Judiciary Committee to testify against women’s suffrage. A part of the Alliance since 1905, the Auxiliary had attempted to organize German-American women in support of the goals of the NGAA.⁴ Although the two main areas of concern were family issues and promotion of German culture, the Ladies Auxiliary did play a part in the battle against prohibition and women’s suffrage.⁵ Despite being encouraged to participate in the NGAA’s program the Auxiliary’s actual influence in the decision-making process at the national level is questionable. From 1905 until the Alliance disbanded in 1918 no woman sat on the executive council. The
only mention of their work was by the Women’s Committee at the bi-annual conferences.

The Ladies Auxiliary came out against the right of women to vote. In testimony before the committee, Couzins repeated a familiar argument at that time: the place of the women was in the home; participation in politics would not only distract them from natural duties, but place women in an activity for which they were physically unsuited. Couzins insisted that the harsh and corrupt political world would harden women, destroying their natural emotions and feelings and damaging their ability to raise children and care for the family. A woman’s purpose in the political process was to bear and raise future leaders, not elect them into office. At the end of her testimony, Couzins eloquently summarized her case for denying women the vote:

The conclusion of the whole matter is not the entrance of woman into the political world for the reformation of man’s methods, but the regeneration of woman herself that those whom she sends forth into the maelstrom of life’s greatest battle shall be so equipped mentally, morally, physically as to require no added force from her to hold mankind to paths of righteousness and peace.

Couzins’ words reflected the moral high ground on the issue—a line of attack the Alliance had utilized in the past on the prohibition question. Yet it did not represent the only reason why the NGAA opposed suffrage for women. Alliance leaders—and perhaps the Auxiliary—had concluded that given the right to vote, most women would vote for prohibition. Knowing that such a stance would produce sharp criticism from pro-suffrage forces and prohibition people as well, the Alliance phrased its position in terms of what later would be called “family values.”
"woman's sphere" as being the home was not only commonplace, but widely accepted. In such a role she served as an example to her children and could teach them to become good citizens. Part of this task included educating them about alcohol and the need to drink in moderation but evidently, not to abstain entirely. But the NGAA did not pursue the suffrage issue with the same intensity as it did prohibition, instead it remained content to work against suffrage at the local level. Even so, the fact that the Alliance came out as it did against suffrage did not endear them to organizations such as the National American Women's Suffrage Association, or other women working to get the vote.

In May 1910 the Alliance took part in hearings concerning United States participation in a proposed International Federation for the Maintenance of Peace. The idea originated with the World's Federation League of the New York Peace Society. The suggestion for American participation came from Representative Richard Bartholdt of Missouri in a speech given to the Second National Peace Congress at Chicago on May 4, 1909. Bartholdt commented that while a majority of the world's population desired peace, such a goal could be possible only through an organization that had the support of the world powers—the same nations that at present seemed more interested in increasing the size of their armies and navies to dangerous levels. Bartholdt believed that the United States had a key, almost Messianic, role in this mission:

In this onward march the United States should lead. It will be the fulfillment of our country’s sublime mission. It will lend a new
significance to the flag and will cause all mankind to bless the Stars and Stripes as the emblem of their salvation as well as ours.\textsuperscript{10}

Many in the United States echoed Bartholdt's sentiments—most notably Andrew Carnegie who looked upon the naval arms race between Germany and Great Britain as a threat to world peace. In a speech given in April 1909 the industrialist commented that:

Under such a strain a mere spark will suffice. A few marines ashore from two of the ships, British and German, would be enough; a few words pass between them; an encounter between two begins, both probably under the influence of liquor; one is wounded, blood is shed, and the pent-up passions of the people of both countries sweep all to the winds. The governments are too weak to withstand the whirlwind; or, being men of like passions with their fellows, probably are in part swept away themselves after years of jealous rivalry into the thirst for revenge.\textsuperscript{11}

The NGAA shared a concern about the potential for war between England and Germany and the need for the United States to participate in a world peace federation. Alliance leaders especially worried that a war between Britain and Germany—a calamity in itself—would create a possibility for the United States to become involved, probably against Germany. As a consequence the Alliance supported efforts at preventing a conflict that could escalate into a general European war. The pact between the Alliance and the Hiberians had called for both groups to do everything in their power to prevent the United States from entering an alliance with any nation (again, both groups feared an Anglo-American alliance). American participation in an organization designed to achieve world peace hopefully could help prevent a European war and also preclude the United States from entering into an alliance with anyone.
To this end Ernst Richards, a lecturer at Columbia University and a member of the New York branch of the NGAA testified before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs in support of an International Federation for the Maintenance of Peace.

Richards outlined the position of the Alliance, endorsed by the national conventions in 1907 and 1909, as being in principle in favor of a world federation. The United States, he said, had an opportunity to support an organization committed to the abolition of war, continued progress of humanity, and promoting the principles laid down in the Declaration of Independence.

In the end the Federation never became a reality, of course, since neither the United States nor any other Western nation supported the idea, but the position of the Alliance on this issue, and on American foreign policy in general, attracted isolated criticism. The American Review of Reviews accused the NGAA of attempting to manipulate United States foreign policy in favor of Germany. Other than fighting prohibition, the article continued, the only reason the Alliance existed was to promote the German cause in America. This criticism represented a reaction to an article published by Dr. William Weber, a member of the Pennsylvania branch, in a leading Berlin journal, the Preussiche Jahrbucher. Weber had warned the Republican party that any attempt to draw the United States into the British sphere would invite quick retribution from the NGAA in the polls:

Its two million voters, belong almost entirely to the Republican party. Should these two million German electors, dissatisfied with the attitude of that party toward Germany, break away from it at any time, it would mean the defeat of the Republican Presidential candidate. This calculation is so clear and convincing that the dominant Republican
party would never initiate an inimical policy to Germany to please England—at least as long as the German-American National Alliance remains a solidly organized body.\textsuperscript{15}

These comments seem to suggest direct involvement of the NGAA in party politics and a clear violation of the Alliance's charter. Weber's statement did not represent the official position of the NGAA but it did suggest a sentiment within the organization and a concern over increasing strains in Anglo-German relations and the potential for United States involvement in a future war between the two countries. There is at least a remote possibility that Weber's excessively flattering assessment of his organization could have led Germans, even people in government, to a similar conclusion: that in the event of war with Britain Germany could count on the NGAA to keep the United States out of the conflict—or even better, assist in gaining American support. In the end Weber's comments went virtually unnoticed by the Alliance, which was concerned with other issues at the time—and other than the \textit{American Review}—the article provoked no reaction in the United States.

The NGAA in 1910 continued to concern itself with the promotion of German culture in America. One year earlier Representative J. Hampton Moore of Pennsylvania had introduced legislation on behalf of the NGAA that asked Congress to appropriate $30,000 towards construction of a monument at Germantown, Pennsylvania to commemorate the founding of the first German settlement in the colonies.\textsuperscript{16} In May 1910 several Alliance leaders, including Hexamer, appeared before the House Committee on Library to testify in favor of such a monument. Hexamer argued that a monument at Germantown would remind citizens of the United States of
the numerous contributions of Americans of German descent. A monument honoring
the Pilgrims in Plymouth, Massachusetts constituted a clear precedent. In answer to
questions, Hexamer stated that support for such a monument in the German-American
community could be seen in resolutions passed in various states. The Alliance had
begun the process of raising $30,000 and Hexamer hoped Congress would match that
amount. The bill received the vigorous support of Representative Bartholdt, who had
become the group's most ardent backer in Congress. As with past issues involving the
NGAA he viewed the organization's efforts for the Germantown monument as an
expression of patriotism, "I am heartily in favor of this bill," he said. "It is not a
clannish project, but an American project."

The debate over the legislation did not begin until January 1911. Even though
the bill presented on the House floor called for an appropriation of $25,000 rather than
the requested $30,000, various members questioned why Congress should give out
funds commemorating the contributions of an individual ethnic group and then
probably face similar requests from other ethnic groups. Representative J. Hampton
Moore answered that Congress had supported similar monuments in the past and that
the NGAA was not asking the governemnt to pay for the entire project, only match to
funds raised within the German-American community.

On February 7 the amended bill came before the House. Besides reducing the
amount of funds to $25,000 the legislation contained stipulations. The Alliance had to
supply proof that it raised the matching amount before receiving the funds. The
Secretary of War, governor of Pennsylvania, and the president of the NGAA needed to
approve the design of the monument. Finally, care of the monument would rest in the hands of the city of Philadelphia, and the federal government would not be responsible for its maintenance. The bill passed by a two-thirds majority.

The Senate took action the next day. The Committee on Library, which had considered the measure, approved the bill and returned it to the Senate floor where it passed on March 3. The next day President William Howard Taft signed the measure—another victory in the Alliance's campaign to preserve German culture in America. The victory unfortunately was not complete. A German Memorial Monument Commission, charged with the task of seeing the project to completion, in 1913 chose Albert Jaegers to design and build the structure. One year later in May 1914 Kaiser Wilhelm, in an attempt to promote continued good-will between the United States and Germany, offered to provide funds for the project. The outbreak of war of the European war in August made acceptance of the Kaiser's offer unwise. Further complications, both in terms of funding and building the work, resulted in the monument not being finished until April 1917. With American entry into the war the mayor of Philadelphia thought it best not to dedicate a memorial to German-Americans. In the end the monument was not unveiled until 1920, two years after the NGAA disbanded. Officially called “The German-American National Monument,” the monument stood in Vernon Park in the heart of Germantown, Pennsylvania. The centerpiece of the memorial, which is still there, is a statue depicting two German immigrants, a man and a woman, created by Jaegers.
Later in 1911 another project sponsored by the Alliance came to fruition when a statue of Baron von Steuben was unveiled in Washington D.C. on December 7. On hand at the ceremony were a number of dignitaries including President Taft, Representative Bartholdt, Ambassador Count Johann Heinrich von Bernstorff of Germany, and Hexamer, all of whom spoke. The United States government paid $50,000 for the memorial that commemorated Steuben’s contributions to American victory in the War of Independence—and, in a token of friendship, gave a copy of the statue to Kaiser Wilhelm as a gift from the American people.27

Each speaker talked of von Steuben’s contributions to the American victory in the Revolutionary War. Hexamer went so far as to call him the “Father of the American Army” for his training of the Continental forces at Valley Forge.28 Ambassador Bernstorff and President Taft gave the most interesting speeches—each speaking of the how the monument would remind both countries of their long-standing and unbroken friendship. The President added that the statue not only represented past United States-German cooperation, but also served as a testimonial to all Americans of German descent for their contributions to the growth of the United States.29

One can only imagine the sense of accomplishment Hexamer and other Alliance officials felt at the gathering. The support of the United States government for two monuments in the same year commemorating German contributions to America stood as a tribute to German-Americans in general. The memorials helped signify the traditional friendship between Germany and the United States. The presence of Taft
and von Bernstorff gave the NGAA’s efforts prestige and a degree of influence both inside, and outside, the German-American community—thus fomenting the belief that it did indeed represent the opinion of German-America.

Armed with this sense of purpose the Alliance further expanded its efforts outside the realm of cultural preservation. In May 1911 it resumed its campaign against restrictive immigration laws when Alliance members appeared before Congressional hearings investigating the practices of immigration commissioners at the various points of entry into the United States. The NGAA questioned whether the commissioners were following Congressional guidelines in determining which immigrants should be admitted and which sent back. Ernest Stahl, a vice-president of the NGAA, charged that port commissioners were “randomly” enforcing the 1907 Immigration Act, causing in some cases, divided families. Stahl cited the case of a German family, a member of which was refused admission by Commissioner William Williams on Ellis Island because the boy stuttered and was deemed a potential ward of the state. Stahl claimed that the clause which called for a four dollar head tax would result in the rejection of many people who could have become good citizens. He cited his own experience of coming to America fifty-one years earlier with only seventy-five cents in his pocket. If such a law had been in force then he never would have been admitted. The Alliance was not asking Congress to change the immigration laws, he insisted, but to enforce them in a more consistent and humane manner, taking each individual case into consideration.
Additional hearings in July produced more testimony from Alliance members. Alphonse Koeble of the New York branch asked for a commission to look into current immigration policies for being too nativist—a sentiment which focused, in terms of European immigration, on Italian and Eastern Europeans who constituted sixty-nine percent of immigrants between 1900 and 1909 and at whom the head tax and education clauses were targeted. Theodore Sutro, also from the New York branch, reminded the committee that the nation was built upon immigrants and their contributions and that restricting their influx could damage the nation's vitality.

As with the argument against prohibition, the Alliance cloaked its case against restrictive immigration laws in the flag of patriotism. It is highly doubtful that the NGAA had much interest in the admission of Italians and Russians into the United States, yet the testimony of Alliance members suggested at least indirect concern about their treatment. Stahl and Sutro admitted that German immigration had dwindled to almost nothing by 1911. Between 1900 and 1909 German immigrants accounted for only four percent of the total. The objections of the Alliance, thus, represented a point of principle—restriction of one ethnic group meant the restriction of all. Their objections to a policy that had little impact on German-Americans served as yet another example of the Alliance's willingness to involve itself in national issues.

Delegates representing chapters in forty states gathered in Washington D.C. at the Willard Hotel from October 6-9, 1911 for the sixth national conference. The body focused on familiar issues: prohibition, immigration, foreign affairs, the alliance with the AOH, and German culture and education. Hexamer congratulated the group for
its efforts in upholding German ideals, but said that they needed to do more work to “rescue the memory of illustrious German-Americans everywhere.”\textsuperscript{36} He called upon parents to assure that their children grew up learning the German language and emphasized the need to do more to promote such other cultural issues as German theater, music, and history. The aim of the Alliance, he concluded, should be to maintain the highest standards of culture and ideals.\textsuperscript{37}

Other speakers echoed the same sentiments. Professor Marion Dexter Learned of the University of Pennsylvania suggested that German values, after all, were superior to American:

\begin{quote}
You come from the greatest stock on earth. The American people would make much greater progress were they to imitate your mode and manner of life. The Germans know how to get all there is out of life. They know how to give face value for money received, and that is what is lacking in this country. Take our American restaurants. One of the abominations of the country is the restaurant. Here you cannot get a decent meal for a decent price. Over in Germany, what a difference!\textsuperscript{38}
\end{quote}

Learned went on to criticize the United States economy, its poetry, and other aspects of American culture. Such harsh criticism of American culture is difficult to understand; it suggests considerable ethnic chauvinism, if not an organization that felt itself immune from retribution. The enthusiasm with which delegates received the remarks indicated that Learned was not alone in his opinion. Needless to say, the speech did not receive the same response from the outside. \textit{The Washington Post} called the Alliance “America’s Critic” and suggested that the group not only wanted to preserve German institutions, but thrust them upon the rest of the nation.\textsuperscript{39} \textit{The Post} stopped short of condemning the gathering, passing off Learned’s comments as
unrepresentative of the Alliance and German-Americans in general. The *New Yorker* Staats-Zeitung chose not to mention Learned’s speech at all—a further indication that it did not reflect the opinion of the German-American community.

The critical tone visible at the start carried over to the second and third days of the gathering. Hexamer and other speakers roundly attacked recent arbitration treaties signed by Great Britain and the United States as well as a pro-British bias in the American press. Speakers charged that the English press was altering news from Germany before it reached the American people. They denounced American ties with Russia because of Russia’s treatment of Jews. Simon Wolf, president of B’nai Brith, addressed the group about the difficulty Jews with United States passports had while traveling in Russia—a violation of the treaty between the two nations. The Alliance unanimously adopted a resolution calling for the United States to abrogate its treaty with Russia and insist upon Russia’s improving its treatment of Jews inside the nation and those wishing to visit the country. The speakers then called upon the United States to work with Germany in helping to reduce expenditures on armaments and settling disputes through international courts of arbitration.

The convention also sharply criticized Secretary of Commerce and Labor Charles Nagel regarding the behavior of Commissioner Williams on Ellis Island. Henry Weismann, president of the Brooklyn NGAA called upon Nagel to remove Williams for his arbitrary deportation of German immigrants. Weismann said that he would never vote for a Republican president until Williams was removed, and that the Alliance should act to see that the removal took place immediately.
Prohibition came up in a resolution condemning societies which sought an amendment outlawing the manufacture, sale, and consumption of alcohol, and in a demand that Congress not cave in to special interest groups that wanted to impose their will upon the nation. The fact that the prohibition question did not appear until the second day indicated not that the issue was less important than it had been, but that the group wished to present itself as a political force concerned with more than one issue. On other issues, however, the NGAA would be content to pass resolutions and publicize its position without pursuing them with the same intensity as it did the prohibition of alcohol.

The delegates also handled other matters of concern. They agreed to promote German Day (October 6) at the local, state and national levels so that all Americans would become aware of the contributions of German Americans. They listened to Patrick Moran, a national director of the AOH, who congratulated the Alliance on its efforts to stem the tide of nativism, and advocated continued cooperation between the two organizations. During a visit of delegates to Mount Vernon, Ernest Stahl of New Jersey spoke of George Washington's shining example of patriotism and Mount Vernon as a Mecca for every patriotic citizen. The convention concluded on an upbeat tone with the re-election of all national officers.

The positive tone at the end could not hide the fact that some dissent did exist within the organization over policy matters. The attacks on Anglo-American cooperation, United States-Russian cooperation, resolutions on immigration policy and prohibition had provoked opposition from the floor. Several delegates objected to
the call for a peace pact between the United States and Germany on grounds that the
convention should not interfere in diplomatic relations between the two countries.
Theodore Sutro attempted to stop the resolution condemning all prohibition societies.
Such an action was too harsh, he claimed, and could cast a negative light on the
Alliance throughout the country. Sutro suggested that the convention ignore
individual agitators while continuing to lobby Congress. He pointed out that direct
entry into politics violated the Alliance’s constitution and advised keeping the focus on
good feelings and promoting German culture. Sutro’s position suggested the
existence of a faction that had become uncomfortable the Alliance’s increased
involvement in political issues and its implications for the original mission of
preserving the heritage of German-Americans.

The gathering also provoked criticism outside the convention. The
Washington Post accused the Alliance of trying to foment a split in United States-
British relations that would favor Germany. The Post twisted Hexamer’s reference to
United States-German cooperation for world peace into an assertion that under the
leadership of the Teutons the world would abolish war. The New York Times
characterized the stand against Secretary Nagel regarding the situation on Ellis Island
as a “severe chastisement of the Secretary’s career,” and twisted Weismann’s remark
about voting into a pledge that the Alliance would never support a Republican
president until Williams was removed. Such comments constituted a veiled
accusation that the Alliance was in violation of its charter.
The Washington meeting had left its mark. It revealed an organization that had enlarged its scope. The harsh tone of many of the speeches suggested confidence that it safely could be disagreeable, and that it was prepared to take a more activist position on controversial issues. Such activity had produced division within the group, criticism in the non-German press and possibly led interested observers to wonder about the NGAA's true motives. The delegates left for home on October 9 feeling good about what they accomplished, perhaps unaware that they also had laid groundwork for future troubles.

The NGAA resumed its lobbying against prohibition in January 1912 when representatives testified at two hearings in Congress. By this time the group was receiving contributions from the United States Brewing Association (hereafter known as the USBA). In the late summer of 1911 members of the USBA had approached John Tjarks, NGAA second-vice president, to offer help in the fight against prohibition. In September Tjarks received the first quarterly payment of $2500 and payments would continue until 1913 when the USBA began funneling funds through a group called the National Association of Commerce and Labor. The brewers' decision to support the NGAA seemed wise and altogether logical. German-Americans dominated the brewing industry and many of them were either members of or sympathetic to the Alliance's programs. The USBA preferred to have other groups do their lobbying for them while they remained a "silent partner." The NGAA already had established itself as an enemy of prohibition at the local, state, and national level for reasons other than financial profit. It was a natural and valuable ally.
Between January and March 1912 Hexamer, Timm, E.J. Dornhoefer (president of the Ladies Auxiliaries), and various other members testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee against a bill that focused on interstate shipment of alcoholic beverages into dry territories. While claiming to be in support of temperance, Dornhoefer viewed absolute prohibition as all but impossible. Such laws would do nothing more than shift the consumption of alcohol to speakeasies and other illegal places. They would take away a freedom from the majority of people who practiced moderation in their drinking. Dornhoefer insisted that her position, and that of the Ladies Auxiliaries, was based upon their loyalty to the country and its principles: all were of German descent, but they were first and foremost citizens of the United States.49 Hexamer's testimony varied little from past appearances. He presented a copy of the resolutions passed during the 1911 convention in Washington, placing the NGAA solidly against any legislation that stopped the use of alcohol.50

In February members testified before the House Committee on the Judiciary. Except for Hexamer, they were the same people who had testified before the Senate and the arguments were identical. The women emphasized patriotism and love of the family, agreed that alcohol posed a threat to the family, and insisted that the threat could not be removed by legislation, but through education, a proper home environment, and individual voluntary abstinence.51

What was unique about these two hearings was the degree of involvement by women. Of the seventeen witnesses appearing on behalf of the Alliance, twelve were women—in sharp contrast to past appearances at Congressional hearings when the
Alliance was represented almost exclusively by men. One might explain this change in strategy as a reaction to the fact that women had been the most vocal supporters of prohibition, perhaps lending the movement a tone of moral supremacy. The leadership of the NGAA hoped to demonstrate that not all women viewed prohibition as good, thereby offering a counterweight to the Women’s Christian Temperance Union and other women’s groups.52

The Alliance was also active in battles at the state and local levels. In Colorado, Missouri, and Massachusetts local branches passed resolutions condemning local blue laws and efforts by Congress and state legislatures to vote prohibition legislation into law. The Missouri branch condemned such legislation as destructive of personal property and individual liberties. The Colorado chapter was even harsher in its criticism of Congress:

... we condemn these attempts to hamper freedom as undemocratic, tyrannous, and fraught with the direct consequences; ...any law of this nature, like every other sumptuary law, lacking the support of public option leads inevitably to a disregard of all laws, in consequence of which a state of conditions is created which can only be deplored by all sincere adherents of law and order.53

A state convention in New York passed a resolution condemning the pending legislation in Congress as well as antiquated local blue laws.54 The branch in Nebraska campaigned heavily against “dry” forces under the leadership of Governor Chester Aldrich whom the Alliance viewed as leader of the fanatical faction of the Republican party.55 Nebraska’s Alliance applauded the election of John Morehead, a Democrat and a “wet,” as governor and rejoiced when both houses of the legislature fell into the
hands of "friends of personal liberty." In all cases the state branches actively pursued
the agenda of the national organization.

In 1912 the Alliance again turned its attention to immigration. Several
members testified at hearings on Senator William P. Dillingham's immigration bill that
called for a literacy test as the best way to restrict undesirable immigration. The
literacy test, which required immigrants to demonstrate the ability to read and write
their native language, and first introduced in 1887, was a response to the shift in
immigration patterns from northern and western to southern and eastern Europe.56
The Dillingham Bill also represented the first attempt to base immigration restriction
upon a percentage plan. It limited the number of immigrants of each race—that is, a
recognized ethnic group—to a percentage of numbers of that race arriving during a
given period.57

Speaking for the Alliance Alphonse Koelble did not object to the literacy
requirement or the percentage plan. He opposed the provision that gave an
immigration commissioner discriminatory powers to detain whomever they pleased for
whatever reason. Consistent with past NGAA witnesses, he labeled the bill restrictive,
an effort to deny fair treatment to people attempting to enter the United States.58
Otherwise, the New York state branch came out against the literacy portion of the bill.
Weisman argued that even though the literacy portion did not affect Germans—the
overwhelming majority could read and write German—it would keep out "vigorous
and healthy immigrants" from other nations.59 The New York Alliance then called for
all branches to condemn the bill.
The bill passed both the House and Senate, but President Taft vetoed it because of the literacy clause. The Senate then re-passed it by a vote of 72-18, but the override vote in the House of 213-114, stopped five votes short of the necessary two-thirds majority. When the bill passed again a year later, President Woodrow Wilson vetoed it on grounds that the literacy provision violated America's tradition of being an asylum to people seeking refuge from other countries—essentially, it would seem, a restatement of the Alliance's position. The attempt to override the veto met the same fate as in the previous year; the House failed to override Wilson's veto by four votes. It would take almost ten years for the nation to accept a law that used percentages imposing quantitative restrictions—the quota system—as a basis for immigration when in May 1922 Congress finally passed the Dillingham Bill.

While prohibition and immigration occupied the largest efforts in the first years of the new decade the Alliance did have time for other issues. In 1913 the NGAA sponsored publication of Marion Dexter Learned's *German in the Public Schools* as part of the campaign to support teaching German in the public schools. Learned's pamphlet identified language instruction as the cornerstone of education. It condemned the dismal teaching of English in public schools and sought to elevate German to the level of Latin and Greek. Learned pointed to German as the preeminent language of literature and the sciences after English. He argued that knowledge of not only German, but also other foreign languages could best equip the student to succeed in the modern world and encouraged public school systems around the country to begin foreign language education at the elementary level.
By 1913 Alliance efforts in this area met with some success. There existed already German language instruction at the elementary level in Philadelphia, Cincinnati, St. Louis and Milwaukee, cities with a sizable German population. The state chapter in Nebraska succeeded in getting the Mockett Law passed on July 17, 1913. Similar to measures passed in Kansas, Indiana and other states, it required public schools to inaugurate foreign language instruction on an elective basis beginning in the fourth grade if the parents of fifty or more pupils requested it. With German-Americans constituting the single largest ethnic group in the state the law resulted in German becoming the unofficial second language in Nebraska. Similar developments took place in other states with large German populations, and on the eve of World War I German was one of the most popular foreign languages taught at the elementary, secondary, and higher education levels.

In October, 1913 delegates gathered at the Planters Hotel in St. Louis for the NGAA's seventh convention. Hexamer's introductory remarks focused on German ideals and culture. He praised the work of local chapters for their efforts at teaching German in the public schools, stating that a knowledge of German was indispensable in the modern world, but reminded listeners that the Alliance also encouraged instruction in French, Italian, Spanish and Swedish.

The business of the convention included old issues and some new ones. The body passed a resolution calling for an eight hour work day. Up until this time the Alliance had not involved itself in issues concerning organized labor. By its stand the group might have been seeking support from working-class German-Americans. The
group also hoped to demonstrate that in some areas it was in line with progressive reform. In other areas however, one is not so sure. In a remarkable, but perhaps revealing, move the convention rejected by only a single vote (17 states to 16) a motion to require all women members of the Alliance in states that had woman suffrage to vote according to the NGAA's principles. Several women from the Ladies Auxiliaries argued vehemently that such a stand would violate the Alliance's own position on protection of personal liberties. The closeness of the vote suggested either that many believed that personal freedom of the vote should take a back seat when it came to promoting organizational goals, or that the NGAA had a very traditional view when it came to relations between the sexes. Previous testimony at Congressional hearings on woman suffrage had revealed a conservative interpretation of the woman's role. It seems that in the area of politics, at least, in which women were new, the wife's opinion should remain in line with the husband's or put more bluntly: women should do as they were told and not voice their own feelings.

Other resolutions condemned the mainstream press for distorting Germany's image in the public eye. The resolution accused American newspapers of being Anglophile, of seeking to enhance the image of England at the expense of Germany. The prohibition question inevitably came up as the delegates called upon Congress to ignore the voices of "dry" America who encouraged the government to pass narrow-minded and dangerous laws. As in previous instances they encouraged treating the alcohol problem through moderation, education, and raising the standard of living for all Americans.
The last day of the convention culminated in a torch light parade in which fifteen thousand marchers, including the German and Austrian counsuls, paraded through the streets of St. Louis to the courthouse to hear the speeches of various dignitaries. The purpose was to demonstrate the unity of the Alliance, as well express satisfaction from achieving its goals and confidence for the future. Charles Weinsberg, president of the Missouri chapter, summed up the mood of the assembled body:

> It is a special honor for me to be able to greet here today the representatives of the German Vereine in Missouri: people for whom the preservation of German customs and use in the new homeland is a solemn goal, men who with all their strength stood up for personal freedom and the rights granted by the Constitution.

> What German power, energy, knowledge, and sacrifice has accomplished for this land, our current Fatherland, is engraved with the iron stylus of history for eternity.

> Even though often nativism seeks to minimize and cover up the deeds of our fellow immigrants, the German pioneers of past times and the present, we are not only proud of their deeds and service, we know that we must assure recognition for those deeds.

> This last point was the cause and purpose of the founding of the DANB. Through the closing of ranks of all citizens of German origin in this land, regardless of where one’s cradle stood, it will be possible, and it is already possible, for us to earn respect and recognition in the widest circles of the land.

> Even if the National Alliance has accomplished much in the short time since its creation, there is still much, very much, to accomplish, and therefore we should not slacken our efforts, but on the contrary, true to the principles of the National Alliance, we should work further, with the exclusions of all party politics and respecting the religious tendencies of every person.67

Weinsberg’s tone suggested that the Alliance was unified and that it had united German-Americans behind the goal of preserving their culture and heritage. Yet disputes over policy issues at the St. Louis convention, such as the close vote on
women's vote, and Sutro's protest regarding the group's position on prohibition at the 1911 convention suggest differently. While the national leadership continued to promote the organization's agenda, it seemed in some cases to disregard feelings of the local chapters—adding to dissension within the body. The North Carolina chapter felt that the position on women's suffrage was too harsh and New York had criticized an earlier resolution condemning radical temperance organizations. Many people in the organization had begun to feel that the Alliance had become too involved in party politics.

Critics also existed within the German-American community, especially those people who viewed the Alliance as an organization controlled by a middle class elite that extolled liberal and secular values, thus alienating Catholic Germans, as well as many in the working class. By 1913 chapters of the CCV in many states were warning German-Americans to avoid the NGAA, since it did not support the values of the Verein. German-Americans in St. Louis criticized the local chapter for being aggressive in attempting to control affairs within the community.

A growing criticism within the German community was the charge that the Alliance had become more an organization that battled prohibition rather than one intent on preserving German culture—in doing so labeling the group as the ring-leader of the anti-temperance forces. Hugo Muensterberg, a professor at Harvard, had the Alliance in mind as he summed up the opinion of many within the German-American community:
The battle against temperance, which could be important to all classes of society, has become almost exclusively a concern of Germans, and what is much more lamentable, the concern of the Germans became almost exclusively the battle against the temperance movement.\textsuperscript{70}

This accusation was grounded somewhat in fact, for the Alliance had long been preoccupied with prohibition and the association with the brewers made the connection stronger. As early as 1908 brewing companies recognized the potential power of the Alliance and starting donating to local chapters. By 1911 the group's efforts had attracted the attention of the USBA, which subsequently provided quarterly subsidies to support the NGAA's efforts against prohibition. Beginning in 1913 the brewers' support of Alliance activities—in combination with the heightened campaign on all fronts to prevent prohibition—increased beyond the previous quarterly subsidies of $2500.

In order to distance itself from direct contact with the Alliance, and other anti-prohibition groups, the USBA found it necessary to create a separate organization through which it could funnel funds to these groups. The result was the creation in 1913 of the National Association of Commerce and Labor (hereafter known as the NACL) under the direction of Percy Andreae. One of his first tasks was to contact the leadership of the Alliance. In late 1913 Andreae met with Hexamer, John Tjarks, second vice-president; Joseph Keller, first vice president, and president of the Indiana NGAA, Adolph Timm, and Julius Moersch, third vice-president, regarding the possibility of his organization's funding the NGAA's fight against prohibition.\textsuperscript{71} At the meeting Hexamer stated that he did not want anything to do with the funding of such a
project and that any such matters should be taken up with Keller.\textsuperscript{72} The vice-president told Andreae that any donations to the NGAA would have to be made through a private fund, not through the organization's treasury, due in part to the charter that prevented an active role in party politics. Knowledge that the group was openly accepting funds from a special interest group would open the Alliance up to the charge of violating its charter. Andrea and Keller then arranged to direct money to a "separate" fund under Tjarks, chairman of the finance committee, who would disperse the money to local chapters to use in their campaign against prohibition. The funds would also be used to create a special group, the task of which would be to lobby Congress. Under the direction of Simon Wolf, this organization was to focus on efforts by "dry" forces to secure a prohibition amendment.\textsuperscript{73} Between August and December 1913 Andreae corresponded with both Hexamer and Keller regarding the project. In January 1914 Andreae began payments of fifty dollars a month to Wolf. He also forwarded $5000, to Tjarks as the first of what would be many payments to assist in the battle against prohibition.

By the end of the year the total disbursement had reached $20,000. Andreae continued to supply funds to the NGAA through 1916, at which time he stepped down as president of the NACL.\textsuperscript{74} Senate investigation in 1918-1919 into the brewing and liquor interests and German propaganda produced a series of letters between Andreae, Keller, and Hexamer that revealed the close cooperation that existed between the NGAA and Andreae. The Alliance used the funds in its lobbying efforts, and also distributed money to state branches for use in their campaigns. In many states the
local chapters took an active role in elections. A letter from Andreae to Keller in May 1914 suggested that one of the local chapters used funds to help pay the poll tax for some voters. This direct involvement in politics was perhaps a violation of the Alliance’s charter, although the Alliance always took the position that the charter affected only the national organization, and in several cases the local chapters did operate independently. On such issues as prohibition, the national leadership often turned a blind eye to how local chapters went about their business.

The letters also revealed how the money came to the NGAA and its state affiliates. In most instances Tjarks made a payment from the separate fund to a local chapter. Andreae would then reimburse the national organization after receiving an itemized account of the expenditures. These stipends including printing costs, and monetary reimbursement for individuals in states with prohibition whose task it was to gauge public opinion, rally the local German-American population, and help influence the outcome of local elections. Thus Andrea’s funds made it possible for the Alliance to intensify its campaign at both the state and national level to a degree unreachable prior to 1914. One could say that the Alliance “used” the brewers by accepting funds that allowed them to free up organizational money for other purposes—a situation that helped the group continue its efforts on behalf of German culture, but in the long-run would have much greater implications.

In April and May 1914 five members of the Alliance testified at Senate hearings regarding a prohibition amendment to the Constitution. Arno Mowitz, chairman of the NGAA’s national legislative committee, headed the delegation. In his
opening statement Mowitz repeated familiar charges. An amendment prohibiting manufacture, sale and consumption of alcohol would outlaw a business that had always been recognized as legal, substantially altering the federal system of government. Prohibition at the state and local level had been a dismal failure. People who wanted to drink still managed to find sources. How then could the government expect to enforce such a measure on the national level? Prohibition would destroy a multi-million dollar industry and force many people out of work.77

Morwitz focused primarily on the fundamental question that had perplexed framers of the Constitution: how much power should they grant to the federal government? He took the side of the old Republican party under Thomas Jefferson who had believed that too much power could curtail the rights of both the states and the individual. This argument was based upon the Bill of Rights which limited national power and especially Article Ten which granted the states and the people all powers otherwise not granted to the Congress, or prohibited to them, by the Constitution. The great fear of the Alliance was that the federal government would undermine the efforts at the local level where the NGAA had a much better chance of defeating prohibition measures. This line of argument drew a fine line between the inability of states to regulate interstate commerce—a task granted solely to the federal government by the Constitution—and the federal government allowing voters in individual states to decide the prohibition question for themselves. For the Alliance then, the right to drink was a state concern—best left to the voters, while the right to
regulate the liquor traffic between states was a federal prerogative. In neither case, however, could alcohol be forbidden absolutely.

Simon Wolf, who headed the lobbying organization created from Andrea’s funds, argued that the best solution was the “local option” favored by President Wilson. Congress should not legislate on an issue that provoked such strong feelings and diverse opinions across the nation, and was clearly a state and local matter.7 8

Timm, the last to speak, submitted the official position the NGAA delegates passed at the convention in St. Louis:

Resolved. That the constitutional right of the individual citizen of this country to freedom from this tyranny of sumptuary legislation and temporary majorities is the most precious characteristic of our liberty and that we most emphatically condemn any attack upon it, especially through the Federal Government.

That we denounce as utterly unworthy of the proud title “American citizen” those who are attempting to coerce the Members of the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States into lending their sanction to any scheme of pseudoreligious bigots and zealots to control the personal sanction of law abiding citizens.

That we respectfully petition the Members of Congress to consider no proposed legislation tending to refrain from adopting any national prohibition measure, being warned by the increasing use of strong, adulterated, and inferior liquors and deadly drug, cotemporaneous with the adoption of so-called prohibition statutes by several states in the Union.7 9

This strongly worded summation of previous arguments targeted a small minority of individuals and religious groups that sought to impose their will upon the nation. By contrast, the NGAA claimed to represent the interests of all patriotic citizens, not only German-Americans, who opposed the measure.
Interestingly, two of the Alliance's witnesses, Wolf and Albert Fankhanel, testified that they did not represent brewing or liquor interests at a time when Wolf's lobbying efforts were being funded by Andreae’s NACL. Fankhanel, president of the Maryland branch of the NGAA and a member of the national executive council, represented an organization that was accepting funds from the brewing and liquor interests. His statement probably could be blamed on ignorance. The correspondence between Andreae, Hexamer, Keller, and Tjarks that took place between December 1913 and May 1914 made no mention of Fankhanel and everyone present agreed to keep the issue of funding as secret as possible. For a chapter president to not be aware of this issue, if indeed he was, suggests that there either was a lack of coordination between the national officers and the state officials or that the national organization truly kept this issue quiet for as long as possible. Given the close cooperation between the officers and state officials on past issues it is doubtful that the first option is the answer. Thus the desire for secrecy seems the likely answer, given that the Alliance had been accepting money from the NACL for only four months. Of course a third option is that Fankhanel lied.80

With the backing of brewing and liquor interests, the Alliance continued its campaign against prohibition through 1916. The Senate hearings in April and May 1914, however, would be the last time the group testified before Congress. After that time the NGAA confined its efforts to speeches by national officers and the continued campaign at local and state levels.
After the May hearings the connection between the Alliance and the NACL grew even stronger. Both groups feared that the federal government was moving closer to national prohibition. Correspondence between Andreae, Keller, and Hexamer during the rest of 1914 show a rapid expansion of activities at the local level—examples being chapters in Iowa, Texas, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Missouri, Maryland and Ohio which fought prohibition and received subsidies from the NACL fund. By the end of the year Tjarks had dispersed $17,500 of the $20,000 the NACL had contributed, most of the funds going to campaigns against blue laws in those states. In all instances this support assisted the Alliance in defeating these measures.81

On the national level prohibition went down to defeat on December 22 when the House voted 197-189 in favor of the Hobson resolution, a measure calling for the absolute prohibition of alcohol. The legislation won a majority, but it failed to muster the two-thirds support needed to submit it to the states for ratification.82 This victory encouraged the Alliance to continue its campaign, and of course continuing to accept funding from the brewing and liquor interests helped make the program possible.

In 1915 Andreae sent more than $14,000 to the NGAA and again Keller distributed most of the money to the states. The states targeted in 1915 were Iowa, Illinois, Ohio, and Texas with the largest amount going to Ohio for state and local elections.83 The efforts met with limited success; the number of “wet” counties in Ohio increased by only eight over the 1914 elections.84 The Ohio experience suggests that the Alliance could do little to sway popular opinion regarding the liquor question. In other states with active Alliance chapters a similar story unfolded. Two factors
probably account for this lack of success. First, the NGAA selected as its targets states which already had blue laws. From the beginning they found themselves in an uphill battle with little chance of winning. Voting patterns within these states indicates that the influence of the organization remained mostly within the German-American community.\(^8\) Second, at a time when the NGAA was poised to launch an even stronger fight against prohibition other issues came to the forefront which would distract the organization.

During 1913-1914 the NACL and the Alliance worked together to prevent prohibition—with mixed results. Nonetheless both sides benefited from the effort. The NACL obtained the support of an organization that was well established throughout the nation, even though the Alliance's influence was not as great as the brewers hoped it would be. The NGAA claimed victory in preventing the passage of the Hobson resolution, yet it is highly doubtful that the group had much influence over Congress. The funding the Alliance received for its most persistent and important campaign freed up the group's own funds for other projects. One could surmise then that each group attempted to utilize the other to achieve its own goals. In the end the relationship was a losing proposition for both organizations. The brewing and liquor interests gained little for the amount of money spent. The NGAA—while gaining financially—gained little materially, but more importantly the publicity brought about by the association damaged the Alliance's image as an "educational and patriotic organization" as called for in its charter. But at the time the relationship seemed to be working and so the organizations continued to work with each other through 1916. In
the end, of course, both sides would lose during a time when public opinion would be
swayed more by emotion than reason.

From 1910 to 1914 the NGAA enjoyed “High Tide” in its work to promote
German culture in the United States, and to preserve the memory of past contributions
by Germans in America—the issues which had brought about creation of the German-
American Alliance. Unfortunately the year 1914 also would present an enormous
challenge. The start of the war in Europe created a condition far-removed from the
original purposes of the organization, with which it was ill-equipped to deal. The
World War One turned the Alliance into a full-time political interest group, aligned
with an unpopular cause.

End Notes

1 Ross Evans Paulson, Women’s Suffrage and Prohibition: A Comparative Study of
Equality and Social Control (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1973),
120. The five states that had granted women the right to vote by 1910 were
2 Sherry J. Katz, “A Politics of Coalition: Socialist Women and the California
Suffrage Movement, 1900-1911,” in One Woman, One Vote: Rediscovering the
Suffrage Movement, Marjorie Spruill Wheeler, ed. (Troutdale, OR: NewSage Press,
1995), 259.
3 Glenda Riley, Inventing the American Woman: An Inclusive History, Volume One
to 1877 (Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan-Davidson, 1995), 50.
4 DANB, Protokoll der Dritten Konvention des Deutsch-Amerikanischen National-
Bundes der Ver. Staaten von Amerika (Baltimore: DANB, 1905), 459; and Heinrici,
“Die Frau im Deutsch-Amerikanischen National-Bund,” in Das Buch der Deutschen in
5 Max Heinrici, “Die Frau im Deutsch Amerikanischen National-Bund,” in Das Buch
6 Congress, House, Committee on Judiciary, Woman Suffrage, 61st Cong., 2nd sess. (19
April, 1910), 31.
7 Ibid., 40-41.
8 Ibid., 43.
10 Congress, House, 61st Congl, 1st sess., “Speech of the Honorable Richard Bartholdt of Missouri,” *Congressional Record*, Vol. 44, pt. 5 (14 June 1909), 61. The speech was originally given on May 4, 1909. Bartoldt’s comments concerning military buildup was in direct reference to the naval arms race between Great Britain and Germany, as well as the European alliance system which threatened peace in his eyes.
13 Ibid., 17.
14 “Do the German-Americans Dictate Our Foreign Policy?” *American Review of Reviews*, vol. 41 (March 1910), 349.
15 Ibid., 349.
18 Ibid., 15.
19 Ibid., 22.

28 “Addresses at the Unveiling of the Steuben Statue,” German American Annals, n.s. Vol. 8, nos. 5-6 (1910), 282.

29 Ibid., 283 and 287.

30 The members present were Dr. Julius Hoffman, Ernest Stahl, Alphonse Koelble, and Maurice Propping. Stahl was a national vice-president while the other gentlemen were members of the New York state branch of the NGAA.

31 President Theodore Roosevelt appointed Williams, a Wall Street attorney, in 1901 after it was discovered that fraudulent naturalization papers were issued to those who could afford the then five dollar fee, thus allowing them to land directly and bypass Ellis Island. Williams discovered those responsible by dressing his own agents as immigrants and having them go through the inspection procedure.

32 Congress, House, Committee on Rules, Hearings on House Resolution No. 166, Authorizing the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization to Investigate the Office of Immigration Commissioner at the Port of New York and Other Places, 62nd Cong., 1st sess., (29 May 1911), 12-13.


34 Sutro’s comment on the founding of the nation referred to the original settlers in the colonies, such as the Pilgrims and those who founded Jamestown. He was not referring to the “founding fathers” of the American revolution.


37 Ibid., 5-8, and “D. A. Nationalbund tagt in der Bundeshauptstadt,” New Yorker Staats Zeitung, 7 October 1911, p. 2.

38 DANB, Protokoll des Sechsten Konvents, 286.


40 The treaties were the 1909 London Naval Convention and the 1909 treaty concerning the question of fisheries off of Canada. See Samuel Flagg Bemis, A Diplomatic History of the United States (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Wilson, 1955), 428-431.


42 DANB, Protokoll des Sechsten Konvents, 197-200.
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43 Ibid., 159-160.
45 DANB, Protokoll des Sechsten Konvents, 281-286; and Godsho, Chronological History of the National German American Alliance of the United States, 32-35.
48 Congress, Senate, Subcommittee of the Committee on Judiciary, Brewing and Liquor Interests and German Propaganda, 305-306. While many suspected that the Alliance was being supported by the USBA after 1911 the truth did not come out until the Senate hearings in 1918.
49 Congress, Senate, Committee on Judiciary, Interstate Shipments of Intoxicating Liquors into “Dry” Territory, 62nd Cong., 2nd sess., (17 February 1912), 45-47. Other representatives of the Ladies Auxiliaries to testify were Henrietta Grunebaum, Margaret Kermes, Marie Werneth, Matilde Herzog, and Carrie Fischer.
50 Congress, Senate, Committee on Judiciary, Interstate Shipments of Intoxicating Liquors into “Dry” Territory, 62nd Cong., 2nd sess., (9 March 1912), 98-99.
51 Congress, House, Committee on Judiciary, Interstate Traffic in Intoxicating Liquors, 62nd Cong., 2nd sess., (17 February 1912), 82-87.
52 The exact membership in the Ladies Auxiliaries is not listed. In her testimony Domhoefer stated that she represented 50,000 women of German-American descent.
53 Congress, Senate, Committee on Judiciary, Interstate Shipments of Intoxicating Liquors into “Dry” Territory, 102-104.
“German-Americans in Convention Here,” *The New York Times*, 27 May 1912, p. 10. According to Weisman the reason that the literacy test would not apply to Germans was because no illiteracy existed.


The Dillingham Bill came before Congress during the last days of the Wilson administration. The president vetoed it again, but the bill was reintroduced under Harding and promptly passed. See Thomas J. Curran, *Xenophobia and Immigration, 1820-1930* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1975), 138-39; and Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 311.


Luebke, “The German-American Alliance in Nebraska, 1910-1917,” 177. In 1918 the Mockett Law, like similar laws around the country, was repealed by the Nebraska legislature.

Staats-Verbandes Missouri, “Der Siebente National-Konvent des Deutsch-Amerikanische Nationalbundes,” *Monatliche Mittheilungen des Staats-Verbandes Missouri*, no. 18 (November 1918), 2; and “German-Alliance Convenes: Mayor Speaks in English,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 6 October 1913, p. 2.

Staats-Verbandes Missouri, “Der Siebente National-Konvent des Deutsch-Amerikanische National-Bundes,” 4. Ironically a motion was never introduced requiring men to vote along the lines of Alliance principles.

Ibid., 4, 5; and “News of Germany Distorted in Press Alliance Asserts,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 8 October 1913, p. 5.


Ibid., 80.

Percy Andreae to Joseph Keller, 27 October 1913, Congress, Senate, *Brewing and Liquor Interests and German Propaganda*, 839. The National Association of Commerce and Labor was actually a front for funneling money from the USBA to anti-prohibition forces, including the NGAA.

In their testimony before the Senate committee investigating the Alliance in 1918 both Tjarks and Keller stated that Hexamer did not want to handle any of the money himself. See, Congress, Senate, *The National German-American Alliance: Hearings Before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Judiciary*, 257 and 283.
Congress, Senate, *National German American Alliance, Hearings Before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Judiciary*, 209; Percy Andreae to Joseph Keller, 26 January 1914, Congress, Senate, *Brewing and Liquor Interests and German Propaganda*, 841; Percy Andreae to Charles Hexamer, January 2, 1914, *Brewing and Liquor Interests and German Propaganda*, 901.

Congress, Senate, *National German-American Alliance: Hearings Before the Subcommittee of the Committee on the Judiciary*, 211-212. In 1915 the Alliance received $14,600, and in 1916 $15,000.

Percy Andreae to Joseph Keller, May 16, 1914 in *Brewing and Liquor Interests and German Propaganda*, 848.

The majority of these efforts occurred in the Plains states, Texas, and the South. Besides the money being given by Andreae, local Alliance chapters were still receiving direct funding from regional brewers and liquor distillers.

Ibid., 68.

Congress, Senate, *Amendment to the Constitution Prohibiting Intoxicating Liquors*, 73.

Ibid., 115; and *Resolution Adopted by the St. Louis Convention of the National German American Alliance*, St. Louis, Missouri, October 6-10, 1913.

The correspondence between Andreae, Hexamer, Keller, and Tjarks indicates that besides funding Simon Wolf's lobbying efforts in Washington D.C., only Iowa and Texas had received any funding. The letters however do not indicate how the first $5000 given to Tjarks in January was distributed.

Congress, Senate, *Brewing and Liquor Interests and German Propaganda*, 847-870.


Congress, Senate, *Brewing and Liquor Interests and German Propaganda*, 892-893.

Ibid., 885.

Congress, Senate, *Brewing and Liquor Interests and German Propaganda*, 886-890.
CHAPTER V

AMERICANS OR GERMANS? THE NGAA AND AMERICAN NEUTRALITY, 1914-1917

The outbreak of the First World War touched off a period of approximately two and one-half years during which the United States found itself a nation in the middle. Legally neutral and a non-belligerent, rich and powerful, the nation affected—and was affected by—the war in many important ways. During this period of neutrality the German-American Alliance confronted as never before the dichotomy of being American and also being German. In the shift of focus to war-related issues, the Alliance almost invariably found itself taking the side of Germany in the war in combating British propaganda that portrayed Germany as a threat to the civilized world. It also involved itself in the neutrality debate, including efforts to prevent arms shipments and loans to the Britain and France and ultimately, in keeping the United States out of the conflict (if only because it probably would be a war with Germany). The more the Alliance spoke on behalf of the fatherland, or attacked tactics of its enemies, the more it fostered an accusation of being German and not American, especially from a populace—if not a government—that sympathized with the British and French. Involvement in the presidential election of 1916—on the losing side, as it turned out—worsened a rapidly deteriorating situation. The difficult period of
American neutrality ended with the Alliance facing the worst case scenario: war between the United States and Germany.

On June 28, 1914 Archduke Francis Ferdinand of Austria and his wife Sophie were assassinated in the streets of Sarajevo, Bosnia by a Serbian nationalist. For the next four weeks the world held its breath as the European powers drifted toward war. On August 1 Germany declared war on Russia after that nation had refused to stop mobilization of its armies. In less than one week the major European powers were at war. In the United States, public sentiment was overwhelmingly against American involvement. As United States Ambassador to England, Walter Hines Page, put it, "I thank Heaven for many things – first the Atlantic Ocean." In response to the national mood Woodrow Wilson issued a Proclamation of Neutrality on August 4. This action placed the United States in the role of most powerful neutral. In a later address, the president called upon Americans to be neutral in thought as well as action as the nations of Europe set upon a course that would change the map of the world forever.

The war would also drastically affect the German-American community in the United States. Even before the outbreak of the war the British began to project the Alliance as a pro-German group. British Ambassador to the United States, Sir Cecil Spring Rice, wrote in January 1914:

Now at last it is clearly visible that inside the American organization there is a foreign one, carefully & systematically organized, spreading to every department of politics, finance, journalism, education, administration, and business: that this has its own ends & its own means—that it is far the best & most powerful of all the organizations and is supported by one or two of the strongest of the others.
Although he does not mention the Alliance by name, one may imply—given the growing estrangement between England and Germany—that the ambassador was referring to the NGAA. Actions by the Alliance during the period of American neutrality lend an air of credence to Spring Rice's charges, primarily within circles that would support the allied cause, and, in the end, helped create a perception that the Alliance was a pro-German organization.

Other factors fostered this connection even before the war broke out. In the years prior to the conflict a number of Alliance members had traveled to Germany for personal visits and other various reasons including educational exchange programs. The Kaiser had taken notice of the NGAA's work in promoting German culture by sending greetings to the 1909 convention and offering financial assistance for the Germantown monument project. In late summer 1914, he bestowed the Order of the Eagle Fourth Class on Hexamer as a friend of the German people. This action, seemingly innocent at the time, eventually helped foster the belief that the Alliance was nothing less than an extension of the Pan-German movement, despite the fact that it had refused membership in the Pan-German League at the convention of 1909. At that time the group proclaimed itself an American organization, concerned that association with a movement based in Germany might hinder efforts at promoting German culture in America.

The Alliance responded quickly to Germany's declaration of war against Russia on August 1. The Cincinnati chapter began its prohibition campaign with a mass rally, during which John Schwab, president of the chapter, gave an address in
which he portrayed Germany as the defender of Germans around the world. He attempted to identify prohibition as a nativist attack on German culture in America and thus a fight against Germans. A prohibition victory would constitute a German defeat and mark a return to American nativism. Schwab’s comments, surely expressed in the passion of the moment, offered an extreme viewpoint since the Alliance had never considered Germany the “defenders” of all people of German descent. News a few moments later that Germany had declared war on Russia further heightened emotions and caused the gathering to break out in a chorus of Die Wacht am Rhein. An editorial in the Cincinnati Freie Presse the next day stated that it was ironic that at the moment the Germans of Cincinnati gathered to begin their battle against their oppressors, the Fatherland was initiating its own.\(^5\)

The New York chapter held a ceremony on August 4 to unveil a statue of von Steuben in Utica. Ambassador von Bernstorff and President Wilson were supposed to attend but the European war kept them in Washington. Very little was mentioned concerning the conflict except that all hoped it would end soon, and that the statue of von Steuben should remind Americans of the long standing ties between the United States and Germany.\(^6\)

German-American Catholics also voiced their support for Germany. The war altered slightly the attitude of the Catholic Central Verein toward the NGAA. Verein president Joseph Frey called upon German-American Catholics to work with other German-Americans. He announced that he had sent Hexamer a letter commending the Alliance’s work in combating the distortions of the Anglo-American press.\(^7\)
Frey had always wished for closer cooperation between the two groups. The problem had been that other high ranking officers, notably Joseph Matt and Frederick Kenkel, wished to remain at a distance from "liberal" German-American organizations. The war afforded Frey the opportunity to pursue closer relations with the NGAA on a state and local, if not national level. Hexamer welcomed the initiative and as the war progressed many German Catholics began to work with the local and state Alliance chapters to combat British propaganda and prevent United States entry into the war. The NGAA tried to utilize this relationship to bring German-American Catholics into the fight against prohibition and even into the Alliance. This strategy paid some small dividends, in that local Alliance representatives were able to gain the membership of Catholic organizations in Iowa, Illinois and Indiana by the summer of 1916. For the most part, however, the two largest German-American organizations kept a distance from each other and prohibition remained a major point of contention. As the Alliance came under close scrutiny in the American press the Verein once again pulled away, hoping to avoid becoming a victim of the growing anti-German sentiment in the United States.

Thus the Alliance and the CCV represented two distinct reactions to the outbreak of war. The NGAA from the beginning came out in support of the German cause—assuming a leadership role within the German-American community—while the CCV was content to take a much more cautious, "wait and see approach." Such responses were not surprising given the fact that prior to the war the Alliance had been outspoken on many national issues while the CCV usually remained subdued.
For its part, the German-American community was divided over the issue. One German-American, writing in the *New York Times*, encouraged his kinsmen to maintain a low profile and avoid displays that could be construed as pro-German. Many Protestants, especially ministers, supported the German cause out of fear that a German defeat would mean the defeat of culture and institutions to which the Lutheran church in America was strongly attached. Other German-American Lutherans, however, believed that Germany was receiving its due. One minister, reacting to what he perceived as the growing arrogance of Germany, commented that “the German people should accept the war as punishment from God, repent, and return to God and his word.” German-American socialists labeled the war as the consequence of ruling-class arrogance and greed. They held no sympathy for Germany since they viewed it equally as guilty as France and Great Britain in exploiting the masses. Eventually America also would be drawn into the conflict and for the same reasons—sending its people to the slaughter in the defense of capitalism and profits. Such conflicting viewpoints, which would continue throughout the period of American neutrality, gave insight into the difficulty of the Alliance in rallying large-scale support for its war-time agenda.

Between August and November the position of the Alliance on the war took shape. As American neutrality policy evolved and the American press took on an increasingly pro-British attitude, the Alliance increasingly voiced strong objections to the actions by the American government and press—suggesting that the NGAA viewed itself as the spokesperson for German-Americans and, to a lesser extent, other
groups advocating absolute American neutrality. What started out as a plea for
German-Americans to contribute to German war relief rapidly became, by November,
an outright condemnation of the American press and the policy of the United States
government regarding the war. Hexamer outlined the initial position in a letter to state
chapters and reproduced in *The Fatherland*, a pro-German newspaper published by
George Sylvester Viereck in New York, on August 10:

> At the recent serious time the duty of Germans and Americans of
> German ancestors in the United States is clearly defined. In the first
> place we must stand firmly united to safeguard the good German name
> against maliciousness and ignorance. I appeal to everyone of German
> birth or descent, high or low, rich or poor, capitalists, artisans, or
> workingmen to take an interest in the agitation of the National German
> American Alliance to create a two million dollar fund with which to aid
> the wounded and suffering.\(^{13}\)

Hexamer asked that donations be forwarded to the German Red Cross to assist in
aiding victims of the war. The letter also made reference to attempts of British
propaganda to paint a picture of Germany as a barbarous nation out to crush tiny
Belgium and extinguish democracy from Europe. All German-Americans should work
to prevent such falsehoods from influencing public opinion in the United States.

The Alliance began raising money for German war relief in August. Every
state branch participated in the campaign that continued between 1914 and October
1917, with Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and Wisconsin contributing the most. The
money was turned over on a regular basis to the German and Austrian ambassadors
for distribution to wounded, widowed and orphaned people in Germany and Austria.\(^{14}\)
Local branches utilized various means to raise money. In larger cities such as New
York and Philadelphia they formed “Quarter Clubs” in which an individual pledged to donate a quarter per week. The Wisconsin chapter sold pictures of Kaiser Wilhelm and Emperor Franz Joseph of Austria. Units in other states sold Iron Cross certificates. Some methods on the other hand were deceiving, such as the individual who raised money by promising titles of nobility from the Kaiser once Germany won the war. The campaigns demonstrated the strong attachment many German-Americans still held to Germany. By March 1917 the Alliance had raised $886,670.18 for German war relief and had distributed all but $185. After the American declaration of war in April the fund ceased soliciting contributions. No evidence exists that the money went to anything other than humanitarian purposes. Even so, this gesture of goodwill would come to haunt the organization when a Congressional committee began investigating the Alliance.

By the end of August events in Europe and the United States caused the NGAA to take a more active role regarding the war. On August 20 the British Cabinet voted not to abide by the Declaration of London of 1909—a previous agreement signed by the major powers giving neutral nations greater freedom of trade during times of war, as well as exempting certain items such as copper ore and cotton from the list of contraband goods. Such action ran the risk of straining Anglo-American relations, and proved to be a sensitive issue between the two nations during the period of American neutrality. In November England declared the North Sea a war zone and began to lay mines in the region. For its part, the United States issued a protest regarding Britain’s rejection of the Declaration of London. British Foreign
Minister Sir Edward Grey, encouraged by Ambassador Walter H. Page who informed him that many "influential" Americans saw the British viewpoint, decided to stand firm and by the end of October the United States seemingly dropped the matter. America also failed to pursue the issue of British mining of the North Sea. This outcome left the British encouraged that they could move aggressively—in some measure, make their own rules—to prevent goods from reaching the enemy.

The United States was willing to trade with both sides in the conflict, but British maritime policy, and the Royal Navy's control of the seas, prevented such action. Thus, from the beginning, American trade was almost exclusively with the Allies, as producers and businessmen began to sell huge shipments of war material, including cotton, copper ore, arms, and munitions to Britain and France. To many people, including NGAA leaders, this one-sided trade represented a violation of Wilson's neutrality policy. If it was in large measure legally neutral, in the minds of men like Hexamer it had a decidedly unneutral effect. If the United States was not free to trade with the Central Powers (Germany and Austria-Hungary) it should not trade with the Entente Powers, especially not in arms and munitions. In essence America had become an unneutral neutral.

The Alliance responded quickly to what it viewed as a rapidly developing pro-British policy in Washington. On August 26, 1914 Hexamer forwarded a letter to Wilson regarding arms shipments by the Colt Manufacturing Company to Canada. The letter charged that such actions were a violation of the neutrality set down in the President's statement on August 20 which called for all Americans to be neutral in
thought as well as action. By the autumn of 1914 the government (which included Wilson) had based its policy upon international law. The Commerce Department stated that international law did not prevent restrictions on the shipment of arms to belligerent nations under specific conditions, and that the sale of arms to nations at war did not constitute a violation of American neutrality. With the British navy in firm control of the seas the Alliance knew full well that such a policy favored the allies.

In an address given on October 14, later published in *The Fatherland*, Hexamer attacked the American press:

> Should a stranger visiting our country read some of our Anglo-American newspapers of the present day he would come to the conclusion that the American nation should burn the Declaration of Independence, tear up its Constitution and declare its people good and loyal subjects of King George.

Hexamer insisted that the press did not represent the true opinion of the majority of Americans who could see through the lies of English propaganda and who understood that Germany was defending itself from aggression from the east and west.

Hexamer hoped to counter a British propaganda campaign that increasingly portrayed Germany as barbaric, a threat to democracy and civilization in general. British efforts had been bolstered by the fact that the Royal Navy cut the only trans-Atlantic cable linking the United States and Germany. From that point on the only means of direct communication between the America and Germany was through a wireless station on the northeast coast, a sporadic source at best. Hexamer realized that the battle was uphill, that the Alliance had to deal with descriptions of the war which were at best one-sided and at worst sharply anti-German.
In a speech on November 24 at the Academy of Music in Philadelphia, Hexamer adopted an even more virulent tone. He portrayed the United States as a nation which prayed for peace on Sunday while supplying England and its allies with every conceivable contraband of war on every other day of the week. By the end of the speech, the Alliance president was engaged in a full-scale assault on American policy:

I must confess that as a native American who fervently loves this land of liberty, I am nauseated by the lick-spittle policy of our country, which allows England to pull our nose, slap our face, and then licks the hand that smites us. English ships patrol our waters, England forbids us to buy ships and to trade with neutral nations as we would like, England cuts the cables leading from our shores to a friendly nation, and England decides for our Secretary of State what news he may impart to us American citizens, who employ and pay him.22

Hexamer charged that if it had not been for the NGAA and the AOH lobbying Congress, the United States already would have allied itself with Britain.

Through such speeches, the Alliance announced that it had taken sides in the war and in the debate in the United States over foreign policy. It emerged as perhaps the leading spokesman for Germany in this country and on most issues relating to the European war, Wilson's sharpest critic. Reverend Newell Hillis, a prominent East coast clergyman, said that the NGAA should utilize its influence with Germany to assist in the peace process. The New York Times also condemned the Alliance.

Instead of wasting its efforts on combating British propaganda and criticizing the American government, the Times insisted, the NGAA should use its influence on the German government to end the conflict. The Alliance responded immediately. Henry
Weismann, president of the Brooklyn branch, condemned the *Times* as a pro-British organ and challenged Hillis to a debate. Weismann stated that neither the Alliance nor German-Americans had any influence with the German government since events in Europe had escalated beyond anyone’s control.23

In its campaign for absolute American neutrality and promoting fair-play for Germany, the Alliance had allies in the German-American press and in German-America. Hexamer had expressed pleasure with the way German-American newspapers such as *The New Yorker Staats-Zeitung* and *The Fatherland* were attempting to tell Germany’s side of the story.24 The latter paper was especially important since it was published in the English language. Reaction to the war among those German-Americans who favored Germany became increasingly vocal—almost to the point of unbounded carelessness and defiance in the face of growing pro-Allied opinion. In St. Louis, an August rally sponsored by the local NGAA chapter drew thousands. The *Westliche-Post* declared:

> Who will ever forget that moment, when thousands—as if moved by a single will—as one rose to join in singing that powerful battle song, *Die Wacht am Rhein*! It was no trained choir—it was untrained voices which were heard over the sound of the music—but never has *Die Wacht am Rhein* so deeply touched every heart as in that sacred moment. And then when out of thousands of throats the vow *Deutschland, Deutschland uber Alles* rose to the heavens—there were only a few eyes left dry.25

The rally in St. Louis was not an isolated incident. In cities around the nation with large German populations such as Chicago, Milwaukee, New York, and Philadelphia, German-Americans voiced their support for the cause of the Central Powers. For
these people the fatherland was fighting for its survival. Simultaneously professing their love of democracy and the United States, they chose to forget that they were supporting two of the most autocratic regimes in Europe.

While many people in the German-American community found themselves caught up in the “war hysteria,” others who took the opportunity to express their patriotism, nonetheless expressed concern over the policies of the Wilson administration. Hugo Munsterberg, the eminent Harvard psychologist, warned the president that the Germans and Irish were turning against him because of what they viewed as his pro-British policies. Wilson replied that he was surprised to learn such information:

Certainly no administration ever tried more diligently or watchfully to preserve an attitude and pursue a line of conduct absolutely neutral. I would consider it a favor if you would point out to us what are considered the un-neutral acts of which this administration is thought to have been guilty of.26

Even so, the president in no way chastised German or Irish-Americans for their attack on America’s neutrality policy—in fact the president would never mention the Alliance by name. Much of the criticism leveled against the Alliance was due to its condemnation of United States policy, and to a belief that it was fostering a pro-German attitude within the German-American community.

In early November an event happened that would come back to haunt the NGAA. Speaking before the Prussian Diet in Berlin, Louis Viereck, special correspondent for The Fatherland, spoke of the support that Germany could expect from Germans-Americans. He claimed that the NGAA was the largest German
organization outside the fatherland and that Germany could count on it to shape
opinion within the United States. Viereck explained that an initial predisposition
towards England and France had been replaced by a decidedly neutral position and
that the NGAA would assist in the maintenance of this sentiment.27

Viereck’s speech had three immediate consequences. First, it directly involved
the NGAA in German-American relations, if not in the larger issue of the war.
Second, it created an illusion in the minds of German leaders regarding the Alliance’s
influence on United States policy. German leaders incorrectly thought that the NGAA
could serve as a counter weight to British propaganda in America—at best able to
shift American policy toward a pro-German position and, at worst, to assist in bringing
about a policy of absolute American neutrality. In reality the majority of German-
Americans, while possibly harboring a desire for a German victory—or at least the
avoidance of a defeat—kept quiet in regards to the actions of the United States
government. Third, the speech fueled an allied propaganda campaign to identify a pro-
German conspiracy operating within the United States. Viereck’s comments attracted
little attention from the American press at the time. They later would be dredged up
as evidence of German-American disloyalty.

By December 1914 the debate over United States policy had taken shape. On
December 7 Congressmen Richard Bartholdt of Missouri and Henry Volmer of Iowa
introduced legislation calling for the prohibition of the export of arms, ammunition and
munitions of war from the territory or any seaport of the United States.28 Bartholdt
had long been a supporter of the Alliance and its efforts to combat prohibition, while
Volmer was president of the German-American Central Verein of Scott County, Iowa. The resolutions themselves did not prohibit the traffic outright, but instead gave the President the power to embargo arms and munitions if he saw fit.29

The Alliance was quick to support the measures. Besides not wishing to see Great Britain benefit from United States exports of war material, the organization worried that continued trade would eventually draw the United States into the war—most likely against Germany—as a means of preserving the nation's financial interests. The harsh rhetoric of Hexamer—especially his speech at the Academy of Music—and others within the German-American community, suggested that the true enemy of the United States was England and that war with that nation was more justifiable than a conflict with Germany. Since the latter scenario was all but impossible, the Alliance lobbied heavily for complete American neutrality to prevent the former scenario from occurring. To this end, local chapters passed resolutions in favor of the Bartholdt and Volmer bills. In Missouri, at the urging of Bartholdt, the state branch joined with the AOH to form the American Neutrality League on December 16, the purpose of which was to garner support for the Bartholdt-Volmer resolutions and for continued American neutrality.30

Congressional hearings into the measures took place on January 4 and 5, 1915. Speaking for the Alliance were Hexamer, Sutro, Fankhanel, and Charles Weinsberg (president of the Missouri branch). Hexamer submitted a copy of a letter forwarded—with the endorsement of the state affiliates—to President Wilson which asked that he take measures to assure that the United States remain neutral in name and action.
Hexamer charged that current policy was not only decidedly one-sided, but by selling arms to belligerent nations the United States was prolonging the conflict and the misery of millions of people. He also asked the president how he could watch England violate American neutrality without taking action.\(^{31}\)

Hexamer pointed to the contradiction that tolerated shipment of arms to the Allies and allowed Great Britain to halt trade between the United States and the Central Powers, even in goods that were not war material. He then presented a series of resolutions endorsed by the national executive committee and state branches that called upon Congress to act to ensure strict American neutrality and he called upon all Americans, in the name of peace, to adhere to strict neutrality.\(^{32}\) Other Alliance representatives argued from similar points of view. Sutro testified that in allowing shipment of arms to belligerent nations, the United States was running the risk of being drawn into the war.\(^{33}\) Weinsberg said that the United States should set an example of a civilized nation by adhering to principles proposed at the Hague which called for an end to the international sale of arms and ammunition.\(^{34}\)

Meanwhile, local and state branches had undertaken petition campaigns. By the middle of January petitions from all over the nation began arriving in Washington. Each document called for an end to the arms trade and the maintenance of strict American neutrality. The majority of the signatories were German-American. Local NGAA chapters organized mass demonstrations in favor of the embargo measures in Los Angeles, St. Louis, New Orleans, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Madison (where Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan was the featured speaker).\(^{35}\) The
Fatherland demanded that the power of England over the American government be broken once and for all and that the United States should stop furthering the cause of war. The activities of the Alliance reflected that it had become a highly centralized and structured organization that was more than willing to assume a leading role in the neutrality debate. The campaign on behalf of the Bartholdt-Volmer bills benefited from an organizational structure at the local, state, and national level that had been put into place for the purpose of combating prohibition. The national leadership of the NGAA employed similar strategies in both campaigns—lobbying Congress, petition drives, and mass demonstrations at the local and state levels, all these activities enshrouded in the flag of patriotism. While both issues were of special concern to German-Americans, the NGAA tried to avoid making them appear as German-American issues, but waged the battle in the name of all law-abiding, patriotic Americans. Their efforts bore fruit as they attracted support from outside the German-American community. The New Republic came out in favor of embargo legislation stating that:

There is a reasonableness about the German-American argument that our neutrality is unreal unless, we forbid the export of arms. Germany having lost command of the sea, American traffic in war supplies helps the Allies. Partisans aside, there is, we believe, a growing body of pacifist opinion which insists that American manufacturers are “capitalizing on carnage,” making profits out of murder, and that in decency and in humanity this nation ought to have nothing to do with the European crime.
There was good reason for the *New Republic* to accuse American manufacturers of "capitalizing on carnage." By the end of 1914 United States trade with the Allies amounted to $825 million. By the end of 1916 that amount would reach 3.3 billion. Between 1914 and 1916 United States trade with Germany and Austria only amounted to $172 million. Representative Bartholdt invited supporters of the embargo to meet at the New Willard Hotel in Washington D.C. on January 30, 1915. Attending were fifty-eight representatives from major German-American groups as well as from academia, and Congress. The list of attendees included Hexamer, Weismann, Reverend Gottlieb Berkemeier of the Lutheran Church of North America, Joseph Frey of the Catholic Central Verein, Professor A.B. Faust of Cornell University, Bernard Ritter of the *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung*, George Sylvester Viereck, and Congressman Henry Volmer. Besides promoting embargo legislation, the group met to create an organization that would promote and secure absolute American neutrality as they defined it. The one-day meeting resulted in the passage of a series of resolutions:

1. In order to assume the possession of an independent news service we favor an American cable, controlled by the Government of the United States.
2. We demand a free and open sea for the commerce of the United States, and unrestricted traffic in non-contraband goods as defined by international law.
3. We favor as a strictly American policy the immediate enactment of legislation prohibiting the export of arms, ammunition, and munitions of war.
4. We favor the establishment of an American merchant marine, and:
5. We pledge ourselves individually and collectively to support only such candidates for public office, irrespective of party, who will place American interests above those of any other country and who will aid in eliminating all undue foreign influence from American life.
In drafting these resolutions the delegates believed that they were adhering to Wilson’s neutrality proclamation of August 20, 1914. The fact that the majority of the delegates at the meeting were German-American coupled with the veiled threat of only backing “true American” candidates produced an immediate reaction. Instead of being viewed as a body with the interests of the United States in mind, the New Willard gathering came to be viewed as a tool of German interests in America.

The American press led the reaction. The Literary Digest accused the gathering of using patriotism to hide its true purpose: to coerce the American government into a pro-German stand. The Washington Herald exclaimed that the meeting was, “a Teutonic gathering.” Newspapers such as the New York Herald, Philadelphia Public Ledger and New York Times condemned the meeting as a pawn of German propaganda efforts. The Times went so far as to accuse the delegates of attempting to embroil the United States in the conflict on the side of Germany.

Suspicion grew even more when local NGAA chapters sponsored petition drives and mass rallies in support of the resolutions in major cities throughout the United States. Also labeling the gathering “a meeting of Teutons,” the Washington Post accused the New Willard Hotel gathering of acting in Germany’s cause while hiding under the cover of patriotism.

Predictably, the German-American press rallied behind the New Willard conference. The St. Louis Westliche-Post, Illinois Staats-Zeitung, New Yorker Staats-Zeitung, and The Fatherland all denounced the English language press as proponents of British propaganda in the United States. The New Yorker Staats-Zeitung
insisted that the New Willard proposals represented an attempt to keep the United States out of the war, free the press from foreign control, and end British interference with the commerce of the United States. In *The Fatherland* Viereck argued that such newspapers as *The New York Times* demonstrated the extent to which the allies controlled the popular press in America. The foreign policy of the United States, he charged, was being held hostage by the British navy.45

On February 3 Hexamer sent to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee an open letter which focused on the Royal Navy's controls on American shipping. He railed against an American press that was referring to Germany as the "War-Lord," while ignoring the fact that there was a "Sea-Lord" that dictated when, where, and with whom the United States could trade. He called upon the Senate to support the embargo legislation, thus freeing America from the yoke of British tyranny while also taking a step towards finding an end to a conflict that was causing millions to suffer.46

German-Americans were not alone in their condemnation of United States policy. An editorial published in the *Open Court*, a quarterly journal of the day, denounced the neutrality policy of the American government, supported the embargo proposals, and commended the loyalty of German-Americans, stating that they could not be expected to sit by while their nation became the pawn of Great Britain.47

With the nation so divided on the issue the fate of the embargo measures rested, to a large degree, upon the actions of the president. As his biographer Arthur S. Link pointed out, "Wilson struggled hard, one might even say prayerfully, during the late autumn of 1914 for the right answer."48 Even by December he had still not
fully reconciled the issue in his own mind. In a letter to Jacob Schiff, head of the investment firm of Kuhn, Loeb & Company, Wilson outlined his dilemma regarding one aspect of his neutrality policy:

The law standing as it does, the most I can do is to exercise influence, and in the case of lending money I was directly applied to for advice and approval. Here my duty is clear. It was my duty to discourage loans to belligerents.\textsuperscript{49}

The president was attempting to maintain the moral high-ground while simultaneously adhering to the law and the wishes of American business. In early 1915 he turned to Robert Lansing, a renowned expert on international law, for advice on whether or not an embargo would be a violation of neutrality. Lansing concurred with Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan that to deny the Allies the right to purchase arms would be looked upon as an unneutral act, especially since, in their minds, the Bartholdt and Volmer bills were designed to favor one side over the other.\textsuperscript{50} Consequently, Wilson took the position that while the government must not be involved the president had no right to interfere with the sale by private companies of munitions to belligerents. With the Wilson now firmly against embargo legislation, the measures had little chance of becoming law.

Despite what seemed to be a losing cause, Bartholdt spoke on behalf of the legislation he sponsored on February 15, 1915. He reminded the House that the United States was a composite nation, not made up of only people of English ancestry. In fact Americans of German descent made up the single largest ethnic group. He accused the British and French of trying to turn American opinion against Germany.
through the use of the English language press in America. He applauded such groups as the NGAA which attempted to combat lies spread by the pro-British press.\textsuperscript{51}

German-American activity on behalf of Germany was designed to preserve the good name of a people that had contributed much to the growth of the United States. These actions grew out of a sense of national pride and a desire that the United States not become involved in the conflict. Bartholdt concluded by chastising the American government for a neutrality that was overtly unneutral—in favor of Great Britain at the expense of Germany.\textsuperscript{52}

Shortly after this address Bartholdt retired from Congress, thus abandoning plans to run for the Senate. He explained the reason in his memoirs:

\begin{quote}
Alas, this bud of an idea was killed by European cannon. The war caused so sharp a division among our people that, as I saw it, a man of German blood would have had about as much chance as a grasshopper in a coop of hungry turkeys. At least for the Senate.\textsuperscript{53}
\end{quote}

Thus ended the career of perhaps the most influential German-American congressman. He had originally been elected to the House in 1892. Ever since the founding of the Alliance in 1901 he had been a strong advocate for the organization’s efforts at being granted a national charter, its combating prohibition and maintaining German culture in America. His retirement was not only a blow to securing passage of embargo legislation, but also a setback for the Alliance which lost its greatest spokesman in Congress. The NGAA, in \textit{Mitteilungen}, commended Bartholdt as being not only a friend of German-Americans, but also an individual who always placed the interests of the United States above everything else.\textsuperscript{54}
Another pressing issue in the United States during the period of neutrality was Germany's submarine policy. Early successes by U-boats in sinking British warships encouraged Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz, head of the German navy, to expand the campaign to include enemy commerce. From September 1914 to January 1915 a debate raged amongst German naval leaders over Tirpitz's proposal. In the end his view won out and on February 4 the Kaiser declared the waters around Britain to be a "war-zone" in which all military and commercial shipping would be subject to submarine attack. The United States government responded by warning Germany of "the very serious possibilities of the course of action apparently contemplated," and that the German government would be held strictly accountable for its actions.

Quick to materialize, these consequences placed the NGAA in an unenviable position of attempting to defend a government that appeared to be making war on civilians. The sinking by a German submarine of the British passenger liner *Lusitania* on May 7, 1915 produced the high-water mark of Alliance activities on behalf of an embargo as well as a wide-spread backlash against Germany in the United States since 128 Americans were among the 1,198 killed in the attack. Instead of following public sentiment, which branded the U-boat's actions as a barbaric attack on civilians, *The Fatherland* and *Mitteilungen* unwisely chose to blame United States policy of allowing arms shipments to belligerents as reason for the incident. The main blame, however, was placed squarely on British maritime policy and an English government that failed to warn passengers of munitions in the ship's hold. An editorial in *Mitteilungen* even went so far as to accuse the British of "letting the vessel go to her
doom, in the hopes of drawing the United States into the war.\textsuperscript{56} The Alliance also charged that had the Bartholdt-Volmer Bills been law, the munitions in the ship's hold that caused the explosion would not have been there and 128 Americans would still be alive.\textsuperscript{57} Finally, the group pointed out that the German embassy had posted warning notices next to the Cunard Line advertisements advising passengers that by sailing into British waters they were at risk, since those waters constituted a war zone. The British, for their part, chose not to tell passengers about the arms in the cargo hold.\textsuperscript{58} The timing of the Alliance was less than wise, for even though it reasserted loyalty to the United States, the sinking of the \textit{Lusitania} produced the first wave of anti-German sentiment that carried over to all German-American organizations.\textsuperscript{59} Hexamer even began to receive threatening letters.\textsuperscript{60}

The sinking, coupled with Wilson's sharply-worded notes to the German government, threw the Alliance on the defensive. In hindsight it would have been well advised to either support American policy or keep quiet until the storm blew over. More important was the fact that the Alliance never did take a definitive position on the submarine question. Its indecision led Americans supporting the Allied cause—which constituted a majority—to become convinced that the NGAA considered sinking passenger liners in war zones justifiable. No matter what the Alliance did, or how it responded in the future, that position would be irrevocably linked to the Alliance and its purported campaign for absolute American neutrality. As it continued to pledge loyalty to the United States, the Alliance chastised Wilson for placing blame on Germany, insisting that the actions of the United States and Great Britain had led to
the sinking. Instead of sending harshly worded statements to the German government, the United States should be investigating a charge that munitions were in the *Lusitania*'s hold and taking steps to end the arms trade which had caused the incident in the first place.\textsuperscript{61}

On June 24 a demonstration was held at Madison Square Garden in support of keeping America out of the war. The Alliance helped to organize the gathering which featured William Jennings Bryan as the keynote speaker. Bryan had recently resigned his post as Secretary of State in protest over Wilson's notes to the German government regarding the *Lusitania* incident. He deemed the harsh tone of the second note—which demanded an end to Germany's submarine policy—as exceptionally dangerous. This incident persuaded Bryan that Wilson had set America on a collision course with Germany. He spoke of patriotism and honor to one's country, and the need to stay out of the war at all costs. He also condemned those who sought profit in carnage and who desired American entry into the conflict:

>This is war as we now have it, and yet these of our countrymen who see in force the only arbitrator of international disputes, revel in the daily account of carnage in the name of national honor, and call upon this nation to prepare itself to enter the contest.\textsuperscript{52}

Bryan's speech met with spontaneous cheers from a gathering made up of primarily German and Irish-Americans. They responded by waving American flags and calling for an end to a policy that could bring America into the war. The body passed a resolution calling for passage of the Bartholdt-Volmer Bills, stronger measures by government to protect its citizens abroad, and freeing America from the

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yoke of foreign tyranny and the money interests. The last statement was a reference to Britain's blacklisting of American business and those American munitions firms doing business with the Central Powers.63 Another outcome of the gathering was the creation of a body called The Friends of Peace, a joint German-Irish American effort sponsored by the NGAA and AOH designed to keep the United States from going to war on the side of Great Britain.64

The NGAA viewed the Madison Square Garden demonstration as a great success, a reinforcement of its belief that the nation did not wish to go to war with Germany and a mandate for continuing criticism of administration policy. The New York branch's convention in July produced a scathing attack on the president by Henry Weismann, who accused Wilson of grasping at powers not granted in the Constitution, of one-sided neutrality that had drawn the United States dangerously close to war with Germany. He finished with a remark that Wilson was a bankrupt politician and should not be re-elected.65

The Alliance continued to work for embargo legislation. The Chicago chapter helped organize the American Embargo Conference on August 1 and for the next five and a half months it worked at organizing similar committees across the nation. By February 1916 it claimed to have over 2500 branches.66 This organization, created and dominated by German-Americans, sponsored petition drives and letter writing campaigns aimed at influencing Congress and the president on issues involving neutrality.
In the meantime the NGAA met in San Francisco in August 1915 for its eighth and, unknown to anyone at this time, last national convention. This gathering was larger and more extravagant than the previous seven; more than six hundred delegates representing forty-five states attended the meeting. The group had decided to switch the meeting time from October to August in order to coincide with the San Francisco Exposition.

Agitation of the past few months over Wilson's neutrality policy, and demands by the German-American press that the NGAA clarify its stand on German-American relations produced anticipation for lively sessions. Even before the convention formally met, Hexamer again sharply rebuked the government for allowing for arms shipments to England while claiming to be neutral. In most of its sessions the conference devoted itself to resisting an anti-German bias in the nation's newspapers and clarifying the Alliance's position on the embargo and other war-related questions. Convinced that British interests controlled the English language press, the delegates called upon the Associated Press and the United Press to correct themselves and report the war in an unbiased fashion.

This accusation brought a sharp reply from Arthur Copp, Superintendent of the Western Division of the A.P. Copp admitted that many newspapers exhibited a pro-British bias, but insisted that the Associated Press had nothing to do with the editorial policies of these papers. He strongly condemned the charge that his organization was controlled by English capital and chastised the convention for making such an unjust accusation.
The action on the convention floor heated up on the third day when a resolution submitted by Henry Bloedel provoked the delegates into angered debate. The resolution called for a letter for President Wilson which condemned his conduct of foreign policy and hypocritical stance on neutrality and placed blame for the continuing controversy over submarine warfare squarely on the American government for trying to play both ends against the middle. Bloedel's letter ended with the rhetorical assertion that the United States stood convicted before the tribunal of history.70

The harshness of the letter surprised many of the delegates, and produced a debate so intense that several delegates and national officers threatened to resign if the letter was sent. In the end Hexamer, who might have inspired the letter with his denunciation of Wilson, stepped in and worked toward a compromise. An amended letter, accepted by the delegates, called upon the government to act in the name of humanity and help bring about the war's end, rather than assisting in its continuation through supplying arms to the belligerents. In this time of darkness, the letter concluded, America should be a moral light.71

The debate over the Bloedel resolution had exposed the stress that the world war had produced for the German-American Alliance, if not for the German-American population. The resolution had divided the organization as never before and a small faction was prepared to challenge the administration outright, even to the point of personal attacks on the president. As demonstrated in his preliminary talk, Hexamer was prepared to go to this extreme. The majority of delegates, realizing that such
actions would only serve to antagonize the president and public opinion in the United States, counseled moderation. In the end their views won out as the Alliance focused on trying to maintain peace between Germany and the United States.

The damage had already been done. The debate in San Francisco also divided the German-American press. Such papers as the Milwaukee Germania-Herold and The New Yorker-Staats Zeitung applauded the delegate's decision to take a more moderate stance. On the other hand the Cincinnati Freie Presse and The Fatherland chastised the convention for not being willing to utilize the strong language necessary on the issue.72 The Fatherland accused the Alliance of "retreating into typical German-American conservatism at a time that when stronger language regarding United States policy needed to be employed."73 The New York Times, on the other hand, admonished the gathering for its denunciation of Wilson and its continued criticism of American policy.74

Needless to say, the convention had attracted the attention of the president and people around him. Wilson chose not to respond to the accusations, saying privately that to respond to accusations of men like Weismann and Hexamer would give the impression that he was paying them deference. Some of his aides, however, were hard-pressed to keep silent on the issue. Joseph P. Tumulty, Wilson's secretary, said that the attitude of such men was growing increasingly intolerable to Americans not in the hyphen class.75 The fact that the president and his staff even paid attention to the proceedings indicated that they viewed the Alliance as a force to be considered. To openly criticize the organization, however, would run the risk of drawing the ire of the
German-American community—something the president was not willing to do so close to an election year.

A new situation arose in late summer 1915 that again caused the Alliance to attack administration policy. In an attempt to bolster the purchasing power of Great Britain, American exporters urged the president to reverse the government’s position on granting loans to the Allies. On August 21 Wilson gave the go ahead for loans to be granted to the Allies so that they could continue to purchase goods, including munitions in the United States. In reaching his decision the president was influenced by his earlier stand on the embargo question—the belief that the American government could not truly be neutral if it prevented belligerent nations from borrowing money. He was also influenced by a renewed strain in United States-German relations due to the sinking of the British liner *Arabic* by a German U-boat on August 19. The ship could not have possibly been hauling contraband since it was traveling westward from Liverpool, England. Wilson informed the German ambassador that Germany must yield on this question or suffer a break in diplomatic relations. In response the German government offered its “Arabic Pledge”—a promise to not attack passenger ships without warning, and a substantial concession to the United States. Even before the German concession the president had decided to lift the ban on loans to belligerents.

The response of the NGAA was swift. On September 15 Hexamer denounced the actions in a memorandum to all Alliance chapters. In a speech on that same day he charged that “in combination the money trusts and the Anglo-American finance campaign control the press and are trying to draw a friendly nation into the conflict.”
He called upon all German-Americans to protest by withdrawing funds from any banks that granted loans to the Allies. The German-American press responded with the greatest outcry coming from the East and Midwest. The *Germania-Herald, Illinois Staats-Zeitung*, *Pittsburgh Volksblatt und Freiheits-Freund*, and *The New Yorker Staats-Zeitung* accused the United States of being dominated by the money trust. The *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung* sarcastically asked why should Americans buy British bonds when one could purchase Confederate bonds cheaper and they would be just as good. Local Alliance chapters, especially in the Midwest and East organized protest meetings and petition drives. The New York chapter went so far as to suggest that German-Americans pool their money and create a new banking system.

Speaking in November in Milwaukee on the tenth anniversary of the founding of the Wisconsin branch, Hexamer praised past efforts by the group in promoting German culture and ideals. He spoke of patriotism, love of country and insisted that the NGAA sought, not a pro-German policy, but a pro-American policy based upon strict neutrality. He again condemned loans to the Allies as a waste of money that Americans could use helping people at home. In his discussion of German culture he revealed a side previously not visible—at least to the extreme exhibited in Milwaukee:

No people is so modest and no people is so ready to recognize the good in others as the Germans. But we will not permit our kultur of two thousand years to be trodden down in this land. We can give our German kultur only to America if we stand together and conquer that dark spirit of muckerdom and prohibition just as Siegfried once slew the dragon.
What prompted Hexamer to speak in such a way is not known. His overt praise of German culture during a time of serious strain in relations between the United States and Germany was ill-timed. He evidently attempted to revive a campaign against temperance that had become secondary to war-related issues.

By the end of the year the efforts at combating the loan program had proved moderately successful. In cities with large German-American populations, such as New York and Chicago, many bankers refused to participate, fearing a run on their institutions.

But the campaign for passage of the Bartholdt-Volmer Bills ended in failure. In the face of growing pro-Allied sentiment and pressure from American business engaged in overseas trade, Chairman Henry Flood of the House Foreign Affairs Committee pigeon-holed the bills and by early 1916 embargo legislation seemed all but dead. American producers and manufacturers went on to fill an estimated 3.3 billion dollars worth of orders for the Allies during 1916. Yet the Alliance could not view this setback as a final defeat. Public opinion, while pro-Ally, did not desire to see the United States become directly involved in the conflict. The NGAA could claim a degree of satisfaction for this attitude, but the events of the past year hardened Hexamer and other members towards what it perceived as a nation falling victim to special interest groups that placed monetary gain over the morality of supplying war material that prolonged the suffering of millions, and an administration that was pro-British and unwilling to support legitimate trade with the Central Powers.
The NGAA faced other consequences of the events of 1915. Various actions, coupled with statements by the national leadership, had begun to tarnish the Alliance in the eyes of the public and the government. While many sympathized with the effort to keep America out of the war they could not condone the public condemnation of the president and his policies, not from what appeared to be if not a foreign, at least a foreign-oriented—a pro-German—organization. Even the attempts to explain their position in terms of patriotism failed. Many Americans viewed the actions as an effort to influence United States foreign policy in favor of Germany. The embargo and loan debates brought out sharp division within the Alliance itself. Up until this time such differences had not been a matter of public record. The controversy at the San Francisco convention changed that situation. It remained to be seen if these divisions were permanent or only spontaneous reactions to emotional issues.

The events of 1915 produced the greatest fear of all: that financial ties to the Allies would eventually result in America being drawn into the war in order to protect its investment, or simply that war would be the final result of events as they transpired. To avoid that catastrophe, the NGAA felt that the United States needed to have a government that would enforce a policy of absolute neutrality. Thus the primary objective in 1916 was the defeat of Woodrow Wilson in his effort at reelection.

Of course the election was not the only issue of concern. In January 1916 Senator Thomas Gore introduced two resolutions designed to keep American citizens from traveling on the vessels of belligerent nations. The first resolution called for the refusal to grant a passport to any American seeking passage on a belligerent vessel.
The second resolution, more strongly worded, prohibited the transportation of United States citizens on vessels of belligerent nations. In February Representative Jeff McLemore of Texas introduced legislation that authorized the president to warn all Americans to not travel on armed merchant vessels. Through keeping Americans out of danger on the high seas, both pieces of legislation were aimed at ending the continuing controversy—or at least the worst features of it—between the United States and Germany over submarine policy. Wilson objected to principles in the legislation and to having policy dictated to him and his opposition caused both resolutions to go down to defeat, Gore's on March 3 and McLemore's on March 7.

For the NGAA, the Gore-McLemore resolutions took on an ominous tone. Beginning on March 7 the New York World published a series of articles which attempted to link the NGAA to the Gore-McLemore resolutions, thus accusing it of interfering in politics at the national level. In his book The German-Americans in Politics Clifton Childs argued that this information had, at least, the flavor of a plot for anyone who had a little knowledge of the Alliance and its activities.

The World accused the NGAA of being nothing more than a “German Lobby” in disguise that had as its goal the defeat of Wilson and manipulation of American foreign policy. It charged that through the hiring of lobbyist T.L. Marsalis the Alliance became the sponsor of the two bills in Congress. The paper claimed to have obtained letters between Alphonse Koelble, president of the United German Societies of New York, and Henry Weismann that dealt with plans to create a lobby for the German government in Washington. The World failed to indicate how it obtained the
correspondence. The State Department and White House viewed the revelations as significant. Wilson was said to have stated that the articles were proof of an organized German plot in America.90 The New York Times chastised the Alliance for attempting to violate its charter by “trying to influence the presidential election.”91

The Alliance reaction indicates that it was caught off guard. Hexamer flatly denied that the NGAA had prompted the Gore-McLemore resolutions. He admitted that he supported any measure that would either warn or prohibit American citizens from traveling on vessels of belligerent nations, but denied that his organization was attempting to influence the upcoming Republican convention in hope of defeating Wilson.

In a seemingly contradictory statement, Albert Godsho, Hexamer’s secretary, stated that the Alliance intended to work to secure the president’s re-election if the Republicans nominated Elihu Root or Theodore Roosevelt, candidates considered even more Anglophile than Wilson. The Times article promptly utilized this statement to charge that the NGAA was prepared to involve itself in national politics, in violation of its national charter.92 Godsho, fully aware of restrictions on the national organization, probably meant that the local and state chapters would work to influence the election’s outcome. Local chapters possessed no national charter, and thus faced no legal constraints similar to the national organization.

Adding to the confusion, Koeble admitted that the letters were genuine, and that they had been stolen from his office. He insisted that while the Alliance supported the Gore-McLemore resolutions, it had nothing to do with their drafting
and flatly denied the participation of Marsalis. Several Senators and Congressmen, including Gore and McLemore, Speaker Champ Clark and Senator William Borah supported Koelble’s accounts. Each stated that while they might have met Marsalis, he was not a pro-German lobbyist. Other Congressmen accused the World of publishing a story that was nothing more than a deliberant, malignant, and malicious lie. Eventually the controversy surrounding the World expose died down.

The World article, however, had added to the growing suspicion of the Alliance and many people joined in the attack. In late 1915 the group had found itself under criticism from various individuals and groups around the nation. The most vocal critic had been former president Theodore Roosevelt, who condemned the NGAA for retarding the assimilation of German-Americans into American society. In reply, the Alliance chastised Roosevelt for condemning German-Americans, "for not blowing into the British horn." Mitteilungen accused him of accepting British money for Outlook, a publication he edited. Ironically, when Roosevelt was president he had applauded the work of the Alliance and the contributions of German-Americans. While probably an attempt to bolster his presidential ambitions, Roosevelt's charges identified—or reconfirmed—him as an extreme Anglophile and a threat to all aspects of the Alliance’s program.

This early criticism formed the cornerstone for an “anti-German” campaign that would begin to escalate in early spring 1916. In March the World again went on the attack—branding the NGAA as an agent of the Kaiser and demanding that it be disbanded. It insisted that the Alliance sought the defeat of Wilson because he would
not ally the United States with the Teutonic powers. As in the previous expose the World had little concrete evidence to back its statements. It was simply following an old practice of producing sensational literature to sell newspapers. For its part, while the Alliance had always professed its loyalty to the United States, and never given any indication that it was a pan-German movement, it had taken positions, including one on submarine warfare that were similar to positions of the German government. Together with attacks on Great Britain and American neutrality policy, these positions left it vulnerable to—even invited—criticism, including the charge that it acted as an agent for German interests.

And the charges continued to come. Gustavus Ohlinger, president of the Toledo Chamber of Commerce, later a star witness in Senate hearings to revoke the charter of the Alliance, published an article in the April edition of the Atlantic Monthly entitled, “German Propaganda in the United States,” which accused the Alliance of being nothing more than a separatist organization designed to promote German interests in America. Ohlinger in 1916 also published a book entitled Their True Faith and Allegiance, in which he viewed the Alliance as a component of the “Teutonic battle line in the struggle against Anglo-Saxon leadership.” Outlining activities of the NGAA since its inception, he concluded that the organization promoted only German interests in America. He warned that in seeking to place German ideals above the duties of American citizenship the Alliance acted as an agent of disunion.
As with the articles in the *World*, Ohlinger's statements represented not fact, but slanted interpretations and no small measure of sensationalism. They also reflected a continuing belief in the nation of some sort of "Pan-German" plot to undermine American institutions and values. While impossible to prove, these accusations laid a foundation of suspicion in regards to the Alliance and other pro-German organizations. The NGAA must share part of the blame for the criticism it received. In following an agenda that was openly pro-German the Alliance went against a national mood that was primarily pro-British and was having serious problems with German actions on the high-seas.

The incident that brought about a new crisis in German-American relations was the torpedoing of the channel steamer *Sussex* by a German U-boat in the English Channel on March 24, 1916—seemingly a violation of the *Arabic* pledge. Wilson responded by forwarding a harshly-worded note to the German government demanding an end to all attacks on passenger ships and merchant vessels or face a break in relations. Not wishing to antagonize the United States, the German government, after debating the issue, surrendered to American demands a second time. The *Sussex* incident ended in a victory for American diplomacy, but it had produced a new strain in relations with Germany and again placed the Alliance under a microscope as the nation prepared for the upcoming presidential election.

Much has been written regarding the activities of the Alliance and German-Americans in general during the election of 1916. In the case of the NGAA the election served as the "high-water" mark for its activities on the national level. Both
the Alliance and the German-American community regarded it as the most important election since 1860.102 Each prospective candidate possessed some measure of threat in the eyes of many German-Americans. Roosevelt’s violent anti-German and anti-hyphen rhetoric of the past few months had left him absolutely discredited. Wilson’s one-sided neutrality underscored his Anglophile tendencies and the potential for him drawing the United States into the war against Germany. For the Alliance the election nonetheless became a matter of honor and survival, and the group had no choice but to get involved. It had long ago committed itself to involvement in issues beyond the realm of German culture and history. Older issues of German language instruction, theater, music, and other cultural enterprises, while still important, now took a back seat to politics and the war.

Even the prohibition question had become a issue of secondary importance—partly due to the fact that the Alliance was no longer receiving funds from the NACL, which had been disbanded in March 1916. As the Alliance grew more controversial at the national level, the brewers began to distance themselves from the organization. Though funding would continue to a degree at the local level, support for the national organization would never again reach the levels of 1914-1915. Without this funding the NGAA was hard-pressed to continue its campaign against the “wets” while pursuing its main goal, now defined as keeping America out of the war. Given the commercial and financial connections between the United States and the Allies, an absolute impartial American neutrality no longer seemed possible.
By taking part in the election the Alliance was taking a gamble. If its candidate were to lose it would find itself discredited while possibly attracting the ire of the new president and his government. For this reason Alliance members disagreed on how far it should go in national politics. Weismann warned against any involvement at all. Elected president of the New York branch at the state convention in July, he advised staying out of politics.103

Nonetheless, a majority of state chapters began to organize against Wilson (almost certain to be renominated by the Democrats) and in opposition to Roosevelt’s becoming the Republican candidate. The Illinois Alliance adopted as its slogan Alle gegen Roosevelt und Wilson, and called for help from all chapters in Illinois and other states.104 Other state branches passed similar resolutions. The Central Alliance of Pennsylvania met in special session in April to consider the question of participation in the national election. Officers in attendance agreed that while its charter prohibited the national organization from taking part in national politics, it did not prevent state branches from doing so. The Central Alliance devised a plan for coordinating the individual state organizations. Timm, an officer in the state Alliance and also the secretary of the national organization, became head of the committee.105 It was decided that a meeting of branch leaders should take place early in the near future to discuss the election.

The German-American position had improved somewhat in the summer due to a reprieve in German-American relations brought about by the Sussex concession and by a strain in Anglo-American relations caused by British seizure of mail ships on the
Atlantic, its blacklisting of many American companies and unwillingness of the Allies
to enter into peace negotiations as proposed by President Wilson. The blacklisting of
eighty-seven American companies suspected of dealing with the Central Powers
brought Wilson almost to the breaking point. In a letter to Colonel Edward House the
president wrote that, "This black list business is the last straw, I am seriously
considering asking Congress to authorize me to prohibit loans and restrict exportations
to the Allies." Ambassador Page, upon returning from London, attempted to plead
Great Britain's case and was, in turn, treated "like the plague." In the end however
other factors prevailed: Secretary of State Robert Lansing informed the British
ambassador that the president would use retaliatory legislation only as a last resort.

It was under these circumstances that delegates from twenty-eight states
gathered at the Hotel Kaiserhof in Chicago from May 28-29. The timing of this
special gathering, shortly before the Republican convention in the same city,
represented an effort to influence the nominating procedure. The main task of the
meeting was to coordinate the position of the local Alliance chapters, the German-
American press, and leaders within the German-American community. On the second
day the collective body agreed to eight resolutions:

1. We demand a neutrality in strict accordance with the advice
   contained in George Washington's address to the American people.
2. We urge a foreign policy which protects America lives and
   American interests with equal firmness and justice.
3. We condemn every official act and policy which shows passionate
   attachment for one belligerent nation or inveterate antipathy for
   another.
4. We deplore those utterances, voiced by officials, ex-officials, and others designed to create a division along racial lines among our people.
5. We hope that no party will nominate for the Presidency a candidate whose views tend to establish such division.
6. We trust that the Republican Convention will unite all the elements in the party upon a candidate whose views are in harmony with those hereinbefore expressed.
7. We trust the Democratic Convention will nominate for the Presidency one who subscribes to the views expressed hereinbefore.
8. We assert that any candidate for the Presidency who is not in accord with the views expressed hereinbefore is unworthy the support of a free and independent electorate.\textsuperscript{108}

While not endorsing any candidate the delegates gave obvious hints as to whom not to support. Item four was directed at Roosevelt and Wilson, both of whom had been voicing objections to the activities of the Alliance and the German-American press. Although they mentioned no names, the resolutions represented an effort to encourage the Republicans to select a candidate acceptable to the Alliance. Immediately after the meeting a delegation arrived at the hotel of Charles Hillis, chairman of the Republican National Committee. The delegation told Hillis that German-Americans would gladly vote for Charles Evans Hughes, but in no way would they support the candidacy of Theodore Roosevelt or Elihu Root.\textsuperscript{109}

The English language press responded critically to the resolutions, which some deemed an ultimatum. Calling the assembled body “apologists for murder,” the\textit{New York Times} observed that “the only interests that interest them are German.”\textsuperscript{110} The\textit{St. Louis Post-Dispatch} accused the conference of “attempting to create a German-American block in order to control the nation’s foreign policy.”\textsuperscript{111} Critics were not confined to the press. Roosevelt commented that the leaders of the German-American
Alliance should be reminded that the nation elects an American President, not a Viceroy of the German Emperor in America. In a Memorial Day address at Arlington National Cemetery, Wilson warned the nation against hyphens who allowed the love of their old country to supersede their ardor for America.

These and other public and private remarks suggested that the Kaiserhof gathering only served to further alienate a segment of the German-American community in the eyes of the nation. The situation did not improve when such leading German-American papers as the *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung*, *Illinois Staats-Zeitung*, *Herold-Germania*, *Pittsburgh Volksblatt und Freiheits-Freund* came out in favor of the resolutions. The *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung* went so far as to say that the actions stemmed from a “healthy Americanism.”

The National Alliance neither sponsored nor officially participated in the gathering. A number of national officers, including Timm and John B. Mayer, participated on the committee charged with rallying the vote in the German-American community. Hexamer was careful to keep a distance from the gathering. In the end the conference only succeeded in further isolating leaders of the German-American community from large segments of the American populace, which viewed them as individuals who promoted German interests in America. The Chicago meeting helped remove the shroud of patriotism from the German-American Alliance. Many Americans began to see in its place an iron cross.

By late summer, with the campaign in full swing, the press bureau of the NGAA came out in favor of the resolutions passed at the Kaiserhof. Pleased that the
Republicans had nominated Charles Evans Hughes, local and state chapters went to work. In a speech on August 2, Hexamer boasted that “at the polls German-Americans will show what they are worth.” Hughes found German-American support to be at best a mixed blessing. While he welcomed the vote, he did not welcome overt efforts on his behalf that might project him as the “German candidate.” He tried to keep his distance. Wilson on the other hand utilized criticism by the NGAA to his benefit. In accepting the nomination he delivered a veiled slap at the Alliance by stating that he neither sought the favor of nor feared that small alien element which placed loyalty to a foreign power above the United States. In his campaign Wilson succeeded in portraying the Alliance, while never mentioning it by name, as an organization that rejected true Americanism, while being careful to not alienate the German-American vote. In a letter to William Hutting dated September 20, 1916, Wilson indicated that he did not believe that the majority of German-Americans were against him and that, “with some exceptions the majority were patriots like himself.”

In its efforts to defeat Wilson, the Alliance played into his hands. On October 12 Hexamer issued a memo on his private stationary to all Alliance chapters which called upon members to do whatever they could to promote the election of Hughes. The memo insisted that reelection of Wilson would render the Alliance politically impotent for a long time. The details of this note did not become public knowledge until a Senate committee began an investigation into the Alliance in 1918.
Hexamer's appeal carried a clear sense of urgency, an impression that he had begun to see the writing on the wall and was calling for one last stand. With his organization fully committed to Wilson's defeat he realized the consequences of a different outcome, that Wilson's reelection probably would result in the United States entering the war against Germany, the consequences of which would be devastating to the NGAA, if not to the German-American community. These fears came to fruition when the nation narrowly reelected Wilson in November—ironically, partly because of the slogan: "he kept us out of war." The Alliance had focused all its energies on his defeat and lost the gamble. It was now faced with a potentially hostile administration at a time when the group was increasingly finding itself under a cloud of suspicion.

The participation of the Alliance in the election of 1916 was the high point in the group's efforts at influencing policy regarding the war. What had started out in August 1914 as a program for collecting war-relief for Germany led to efforts at keeping America out of the conflict and preventing arms shipments to the Allies, culminating in an attempt to remove the president from office. Except for the first program, the Alliance was ill-suited for these tasks. By taking part in foreign and domestic politics it entered into a realm that was beyond the scope of its purpose. Founded as an organization of intellectuals and professionals whose goal it was to preserve and promote German culture in America, it entered uncharted waters with little preparation, obliged—or so it thought—to take positions on issues that were contrary to popular opinion. Their overt Germanness made them easy targets for the
press and the Democrat party which labeled them out of touch with mainstream America, if not apologists for an unpopular belligerent. By the beginning of 1917 the NGAA found itself on the defensive. In the eyes of many Americans the shroud had vanished and what one could see emerging from Alliance headquarters at 419 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, was an iron cross.

End Notes

4 The Pan-German League was founded in 1890. Its purpose was to foster increased national sentiment in Germany and to awaken the racial and cultural homogeneity (Zusammengehörigkeit) of all people of German origin around the world. Two of its major advocates in Germany were Prince von Bulow and Admiral von Tirpitz. A detailed analysis of the League and its work is Mildred S. Wertheimer’s, *The Pan-German League, 1890-1914* (New York: Octagon Books, 1971). DANB. *Protokoll der Funsten Konvention*, 153-154.
11 *Der Lutheraner* 70 (August 18, 1914), p. 270.

13 *The Fatherland*, vol. 1, no. 3 (August 10, 1914), 13.


16 Congress, Senate, *The National German-American Alliance: Hearings Before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Judiciary*, 271. During the 2 1/2 years that the fund operated Pennsylvania contributed $261,322,000, Connecticut $108,506,000, and Wisconsin $102,656,000.


18 Ibid., 21.


20 Commerce Department statement as reprinted in *Mitteilungen*, vol. 6 (October 1914), 1-2.


22 Charle J. Hexamer, *Address of Dr. C.J. Hexamer, President of the National German-American Alliance* (Philadelphia: Graf & Breuinger, 1914), 3-4.


24 Charles Hexamer to George Sylvester Viereck, September 6, 1914, reprinted in *The Fatherland*, vol. 1 (6 September 1914), 2.

25 *St. Louis Westliche-Post*, 9 August 1914, p. 4.


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33 Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Exportations of Munitions of War: Hearings Before the Committee on Foreign Affairs*, 60.
34 Ibid., 68.
40 "Insist on New Neutral Policy," 1.
41 *The Literary Digest*, 50 (February 13, 1915), 299-301.
45 *The New Yorker Staats-Zeitung*, 1 February 1915, 1; and *The Fatherland*, 2 (February 10, 1915), 1.
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47 "Hyphenaton Justified," *Open Court*, 29 (Spring 1915), 557.
52 Ibid., 8-9.
53 Richard Bartholdt, *From Steerage to Congress*, 372.
56 *Mitteilungen*, 7 (June 1915), 4.
57 "Why the Lusitania was Sunk," The Fatherland, 2 (May 19, 1915), 1; and Mitteilungen, 7 (May 1915), 1.
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60 Frederick Luebke, Bonds of Loyalty: German-Americans and World War I (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974), 134.
61 "Unsere Pflicht ist Ruhiges Prufen," Mitteilungen, 7 (June 1915), 4.
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64 Carl Wittke, German-Americans and the World War, (Columbus, OH: Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 1936), 74.
66 Wittke, German-Americans and the World War, 75.
68 "Ein Protest gegen die Deutschfeindliche Haltung eines Teiles der Anglo-Amerikanischen Presse," Mitteilungen, 7 (September 1915), 23.
69 Ibid., 28.
70 "Gegen die Neutralitat der Bundesregierung und Waffenausfuhr," Mitteilungen, 7 (September 1915), 29.
71 "An Open Letter Addressed to the Honorable Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States, by the National German-American Alliance," Mitteilungen, 7 (September 1915), 30.
73 The Fatherland, 3 (August 18, 1915), 1.
75 Joseph Patrick Tumulty to Woodrow Wilson, 6 August 1915, The Papers of Woodrow Wilson, vol. 34, 116. Wilson's statement made during a conversation is repeated by Tumulty in this letter.
76 Congress, Senate, Committee on Munitions Industry, Report of the Committee on Munitions Industry, 64th Cong., 2nd sess., (September 1915), 59-77.
78 Georg von Bosse, Dr. C.J. Hexamer: Sein Leben und Wirken (Philadelphia: Druck und Verlag, 1922), 85.


“Dr. Hexamer in Milwaukee,” *Mitteilungen*, 7 (December 1915), 27.


Ibid., p. 1.


*Mitteilungen*, 7 (November 1915), 4.

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Ibid., 57.

Clifton Childs devotes much attention to the activities of the Alliance during the election of 1916 in his work, *The German-Americans in Politics*. Childs’ work is an excellent treatment of the subject and is the first source to go to when examining the issue. Both David Detjens and Frederick Luebke treat the subject in their books. Another study that concentrates specifically on the election is Thomas Kerr, “German-Americans and Neutrality in the 1916 Election,” *Mid-America*, 43 (April 1961), 95-105.


*Mitteilungen*, 7 (April 1916), 21; and *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung*, 3 July 1916, 1.
Translated, *Alle gegen Roosevelt und Wilson* means "All against Roosevelt and Wilson."


Ibid., 99.


Detjens, *The Germans in Missouri*, 122.

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CHAPTER VI

THE TWILIGHT AND THE END, 1917-1918

The fate of the German-American Alliance would be bound up in a series of events set in motion in early 1917. On January 31 Germany announced that it would resume unrestricted submarine warfare—a move that canceled all previous concessions to the United States and openly threatened American ships. On February 3 Wilson responded by severing diplomatic relations and giving Ambassador Bernstorff his passport. The initial reaction within the German-American community was panic, as many people thought that the United States and Germany were on the verge of war. In cities across the nation resident aliens rushed to get their citizenship papers; in Chicago, ninety percent were of German and Austrian birth. This panic also generated a run on the banks by German-Americans who feared that they would lose their money in such a conflict. The German-American press attempted to calm this fear. The New Yorker Staats-Zeitung asked that German-Americans “Be calm. Whatever may happen your money is safe, and no American government, least of all the present one would think of touching it.”

Many local and state chapters of the Alliance were quick to praise Wilson’s decision and pledge their loyalty. Their actions, seemingly contradictory to previous agitation that had sought to keep America neutral, were based upon the harsh reality
that condemnation of the president’s decision would further label the group as anti-American.

The national organization acted differently. Instead of quickly pledging its loyalty it continued to lobby for continued neutrality at a time when war between the United States and Germany looked more and more likely. On February 5 Hexamer wired presidents of the state chapters calling upon them to organize peace meetings and adopt resolutions requesting that Congress submit the question of declaring war to a referendum. He also called for a meeting of national officers to discuss the growing crisis between the United States and Germany. Not all chapter presidents agreed with this strategy. Many viewed Hexamer’s suggestion as a move that would further discredit the organization. In calling for a national referendum, the Alliance would give the impression that it sought to influence United States foreign policy. Paul Meerscheidt, vice-president of the Texas chapter, cabled Hexamer that the Texas Alliance opposed any attempts to influence national policy on the war. He strongly urged Hexamer to drop the matter. Other state chapters gave similar advice and Hexamer had to abandon the idea of a national referendum.

Several NGAA officers did respond to the request for a meeting to discuss the break in relations with Germany. On February 7 representatives from twenty-eight states gathered in Philadelphia for a closed-door session of the executive council. What happened behind those doors is a matter of dispute. In three separate articles published after the meeting the *New York Times* quoted Hexamer as saying that the gathering passed a series of resolutions supporting Wilson’s actions and pledging that
in case of hostilities between the two nations the Alliance would organize regiments of
German-Americans to fight under Wilson's command. The NGAA also would
immediately turn over all funds gathered for war relief in Germany to the American
Red Cross.6

Past scholarship accepted the *Times* stories as true.7 Yet the articles are
inconsistent. The first two, appearing on February 8 and 9, indicate that the meeting
took place over a two day period when in fact the session lasted only one day. The
story that appeared on February 10 contradicted the first two regarding the use of war
relief funds. The last article stated that in event of war the Alliance would stop
collecting for German war relief and begin a collection for the American Red Cross.
The first two stories claimed that the NGAA would turn over all its war relief funds to
the American Red Cross.

The national leadership of the NGAA flatly denied that Hexamer had said what
was quoted in the *Times*. The NGAA said that Hexamer would never have offered to
turn over funds collected for a specific purpose without first consulting those who
donated the money. It did agree that the Alliance pledged its loyalty to the United
States in the event of war. In the March edition of *Mitteilungen*, Joseph Keller
denounced the continued distortions in the American press concerning Alliance
activities. Keller repudiated the charge that the Alliance would organize battalions of
German-Americans and in passing remarked that, "unlike Colonel Roosevelt, Charles
Hexamer was not a world-conqueror".8
John Tjarks, who was at the Philadelphia meeting, also flatly rejected statements the *Times* attributed to Hexamer. As treasurer of the national relief fund he denied that the Alliance intended to give money contributed for German war relief to the American Red Cross. If war broke out between the United States and Germany, the funds would be held until the end of hostilities and then sent to Germany. Tjarks did not say if the Alliance would support a fund to assist the American Red Cross.9

Three interpretations of the conflicting stories are possible. One was that Hexamer did indeed say what the *Times* said—a doubtful proposition considering that he earlier had issued a memorandum calling upon the state chapters to organize peace demonstrations and petition Congress for a national referendum on declaring war. Statements attributed to him by the *Times* contradicted these moves. A second version is that Keller and Tjarks' remarks denying Hexamer's statements were true—a more likely scenario given the Alliance's actions after the United States did declare war on Germany with respect to recruitment of German-Americans, and disposition of funds for German war relief.

A final version, one meant for conspiracy buffs, could be that the *Times* article was actually a plant by the Alliance to promote itself as a patriotic organization willing to do anything for love of country. Considering that the organization was under a microscope, such statements, it was hoped, would help portray the organization in a more positive light. In order to placate the membership as well as those German-Americans who contributed to the relief fund the NGAA released a scathing rebuttal of the *Times* articles in order to quickly crush any doubts about its actual stance.
The question as to what Hexamer really said is still open for debate. In their testimony before the Senate committee investigating the Alliance in early 1918 neither Tjarks nor Keller made any mention of the incident. Tjarks did testify that all but $188 of the relief fund had been sent to Germany and Austria prior to the outbreak of hostilities in April 1917. After April the remaining funds remained in the bank. Local Alliance chapters then began to collect money for the American Red Cross to assist in their relief efforts overseas.\textsuperscript{10}

Whatever Hexamer said or did not say, the fact that such a meeting took place at all during a very sensitive time cast further doubt on the Alliance and its motives. In this instance, the national organization should have followed the lead of the state chapters and immediately pledged loyalty to the United States. It had always claimed to be a “patriotic American organization,” and an excellent way of proving it would have been to come out in support of Wilson’s decision to break relations and wait. The national leadership chose not to do so, continuing instead, for the next month, with its program of attempting to influence United States policy regarding the war, albeit in a more subdued manner. It declined to condemn Germany’s declaration of unrestricted submarine warfare, preferring to call upon the president to “warn all Americans off ships bound for the war zone.”\textsuperscript{11} Even the publication of the Zimmerman telegram in late February did not move the NGAA from its course of action, despite the fact that it now found itself clearly out of the mainstream of a nation that more and more saw war as the only solution to the problems with Germany. Instead of attacking the German government for sending the telegram—
which had sought to incite war between the United States and Mexico—the Alliance chose to further attack Great Britain for its actions. The April issue of Mitteilungen issued a strong warning at a time when war between Germany and the United States was fast becoming a certainty:

Americans should remain cool and not rock the boat. They should weigh carefully every statement that comes from abroad. They should most important of all, recollect that British publicists are in control of our newspapers and their press associations. We are nourished with a flood of mendacity that comes here in endless streams. The truth will be told some day, but not until the world is relieved from the malign clutches of the British empire. We are at the mercy of the most powerful and arrogant government which assumes, not only to dominate the seas, but actually controls our intelligence and is dangerously near in complete possession of our government.12

The NGAA had saved its most vehement attack against Britain for the end. It also directly accused both the nation’s press and government of being dominated by England. While the majority of the nation’s papers and the federal government, including Wilson, had Anglophile tendencies they certainly could not be labeled as pawns of Great Britain.

Instead of assisting the effort to keep America out of the conflict, brash statements like the one above only served to heighten suspicion of the organization. George Creel, soon to be named head of the Committee on Public Information—America’s “propaganda ministry” during the war—charged that even before the war the Alliance had been creating a network of agents to operate in the United States in the event of war with Germany.13 According to Creel these agents already were
operating within the public school system at the secondary and college level. Another
group had infiltrated the press in order to promote pro-German propaganda.

Creel's statements, of course, had no factual basis. Nonetheless, his committee
launched a propaganda campaign that portrayed the NGAA as an organization that
continued to promote German nationalism. Earlier attempts at preserving German
culture and contributions, viewed in a positive fashion before 1917, now became a
threat to America. The Alliance thus became the latest in a long line of German-
American groups charged with carving out distinct German colonies in the United
States to preserve the "culture of mind and heart gained in the old fatherland."14 A
writer from Nebraska worried that Germans were replacing the Anglo-Saxons who
had built the state and that eventually there no longer would be any "American"
communities.15

To be sure, some publications had attempted to restrain anti-German
sentiment. In February 1917 the Literary Digest called upon America to recognize
that the majority of German-Americans were good citizens and that if war did come, it
would not be with these people.16 The New Republic also reminded the nation that
most German-Americans were patriotic and loyal, not to be blamed for the actions of
"certain" groups which claimed to represent the German-American community but in
reality were nothing more than "haters and baiters who sought to poison the nation's
energy."17

Walter Woehlke, a former member of the Alliance, commented in Century
Magazine on the situation facing the NGAA and German-Americans in general. He
explained that because of the psychological pressure brought upon by Americanization, few hyphenated citizens would be disloyal to America if their homeland engaged in armed conflict with the United States. Nonetheless, the "hyphenated American" would always be looked upon as an outsider and a potential threat in times of crisis.  

Woehlke's analysis brings up a significant point regarding the mentality of America on the eve of war. The United States had always been a nation of many nationalities governed by an Anglo-Saxon majority. Waves of nativism had swept the nation during times of crisis—at times targeting specific groups, and during other times attacking immigrants in general. The reasons for this nativism are complex. In some instances, as in the early 1890's they were economic—based on the fear that immigrants would take away jobs from native-born Americans. In other circumstances they reflected a belief that certain races, such as eastern Europeans, were intellectually and morally inferior to the Anglo-Saxon majority. A final reason, especially in the case of the Irish, was the fear of Catholicism and its influence in Protestant America. For the most part German-Americans had remained free from the nativist attacks experienced by other ethnic groups. With the United States on the verge of war with Germany, however, they would feel the wrath of the nation on a level never before experienced, as the United States again would demonstrate that it had too little in the way of democratic tolerance during times of trouble.

For his part Wilson tried in vain to avoid war with Germany. On February 26 he asked Congress for permission to arm merchant ships, hoping that such a move
would deter German U-boats from sinking American vessels—an action which the Alliance viewed as drawing the nation closer to war. It proved to be a futile gesture. On March 18 the president learned that German U-boats had sunk three American vessels. Despite this fact, Wilson was still hesitant. Even during a cabinet meeting on March 20, after his advisors informed him that the United States had no alternative to war, the president did not reveal his thoughts.

In the end he decided that the German government had forced the decision upon him. On April 2, 1917 he addressed a special session of Congress to ask for war and explain factors that brought it about. But he offered a world of caution. Such a conflict would be a war against the German government not the German people, he said, and Americans should demonstrate their friendship toward German-Americans:

We shall, happily still have an opportunity to prove that friendship in our daily attitude and actions toward the millions of men and women of German birth and native sympathy who live amongst us and share our life, and we shall be proud to prove it toward all who are, in fact, loyal to their neighbors and to the Government in the hour of test. They are, most of them, as true and loyal Americans as if they had never known any other fealty or allegiance. They will be prompt to stand with us in rebuking and restraining the few who may be of a different mind and purpose.

The "few" was a reference to the Alliance and various elements of the German-American press which Wilson viewed as not representative of the feelings of German-America, and which had turned many people against German-Americans. Four days later Congress voted to declare war on Germany.

Branches of the NGAA quickly declared their loyalty and support for the American war effort, one example being the New York chapter—traditionally one of
the most vocal—which called for an immediate demonstration of loyalty. *The Fatherland*, a paper that at one time had supported the Alliance, but now chose to champion the war effort for reasons of literary survival, conceded that it had lost its battle to keep the United States out of the war, and reminded its readers that while their hearts may go out to Germany, they were first and foremost American citizens; a cowardly act in view of past editorials.\(^{22}\)

At the national level the Alliance also expressed its loyalty, although grudgingly and with no sense of satisfaction. There were no memorandums from the national officers to the local organizations, no calls for mass displays of loyalty. A number of factors may account for this attitude. First, on the eve of Wilson’s speech, the NGAA still refused to believe that war between the United States and Germany was evident. Second, the national leadership waited for the reaction of the state chapters before making any public statements. Third, the national leadership might have wanted to wait for the initial excitement to die down before formulating a cohesive stand on the issue. Finally, division within the organization prevented it from taking a unified stand.

It was the last scenario that accounted for the group’s indecision. With Hexamer at the helm, compromise on past positions was impossible. In the May edition of *Mitteilungen*, he asked that all German-Americans keep a cool head and not involve themselves in any activities which could be interpreted as pro-German—a lukewarm response at best. Further indications of his ethnic chauvinism appeared in a general warning that he issued to German-Americans to be on guard since the Justice
Department was watching for any sign of disloyalty. Any American of German descent found to be a threat to national security would be prosecuted. While Hexamer's statement stopped short of clearly defining the position of the national leadership, it did indicate that, as its leader, he had revealed his response to American entry into the war against Germany: it was an act beyond his comprehension and belief.

Under a cloud of suspicion and facing dissension within its own ranks, the Alliance found it difficult to formulate a cohesive policy. Many of the western branches, which had been less vocal in their support of Germany and less critical of United States neutrality policy, found it easier to adjust to war. Other state and local chapters which had spent the past two and one-half years supporting Germany, working to keep America out of the war, found it difficult to let go of their anger towards Great Britain and the American government which they felt had allowed itself to be drawn into the conflict. The Cleveland Alliance refused to take part in the war movement because it would only serve to aid the cause of Great Britain. The Illinois Alliance, while declaring its loyalty, also stated that it would not become part of the mob that was condemning Germany and its allies. The St. Louis branch found itself divided on the issue. When Alliance member Kurt von Reppert came out against the declaration of war and chastised Wilson, other members of the chapter resigned in protest.

The NGAA did not help matters when it printed comments from the extreme pro-German wing of the organization, which could not reconcile itself to American
involvement in the conflict. In the June edition of Mitteilungen, Edward von Mach, a professor at Harvard, condemned the German-American press and elements within the NGAA which swiftly had done an about face when the United States entered the war. His article extolled German virtues, stating that all Americans of German descent should be proud to claim Germany as their fatherland, encouraged German-Americans to not involve themselves in a conflict brought upon them by lies of the Allies and the American government.26

The disunity within the organization was a major reason why the national executive council decided not to hold a biennial convention in 1917. Hexamer wanted to go ahead with the gathering but met opposition from Joseph Keller and Leo Stern of Wisconsin, who argued that a convention now would further cast suspicion on the organization. They cautioned patience until time would allow the Alliance to continue with its work again. Hexamer argued that a convention would demonstrate that the organization was still functioning at the national level.27 In the end the executive council decided by a vote of 26 to 11 that while no convention would be held in 1917, a council meeting in November would take up the matter of holding one in 1918. The fact that an overwhelming majority of the council opposed a convention demonstrated the depth of division within the organization brought about by the war and the anti-German hysteria that was engulfing the nation.

The inability to clearly define a position regarding the war also was evident in the monthly publication of Mitteilungen. After the May issue the bulletin published very few reports from the state branches—and very few articles about the war.
Complicating matters for the national leadership was the fact that a vast majority of the western and eastern chapters were in favor of American involvement whereas branches in the Midwest called for the NGAA to stand up for its rights and continue with its work—a further explanation of why the NGAA never openly declared its support for the war effort thus making it difficult to convince the nation of its loyalty. Instead *Furor Americanus* ("American fury") grew as the United States prepared to send its soldiers overseas.

The battle would be waged on the cultural, social and human battlefront. The nation's largest ethnic component found itself under attack within a nation that it had contributed so much to help build and the NGAA became the lightening rod for this campaign. Roosevelt commented that the Alliance, "has tried to be both German and American but are traitors against America... we must see that the melting pot really does melt. There should be but one language—English."  

In two short years the efforts at promoting German culture in the United States were all but eradicated. German *Sangerbundes* and *Turnvereins*, as well as other German-American cultural organizations, closed their doors forever. German churches closed; those remaining open held services in English. The German language, formerly viewed as an agent of scholarly study, came under attack as a hindrance to the Americanization process and a sign of continued loyalty the fatherland. The teaching of German in primary and secondary schools stopped. German names became Americanized: sauerkraut, for example, became liberty cabbage. "Patriotic" Americans toppled statues of Baron von Steuben. In less than two years the nation
attempted to eradicate over three hundred years of German culture in America and force assimilation of the nation’s largest ethnic group.

The German language press came under attack as a source of pro-German propaganda, spewing out a steady diet of anti-government lies in an effort to hinder the American war effort while attempting to divide the nation in an effort to secure a German victory. An article in the September 1917 issue of *Current Opinion* wondered how the editors of German-American newspapers, who had been so loyal to the German cause and so critical of United States policy before April 1917, could suddenly voice their patriotism and have people believe them. In defense of the German language press, the vast majority supported the American war effort. Yet such actions did not erase what many believed to be past sins and by the war’s end only 278 German language papers remained in the United States—down sixty percent from pre-war totals.

The Catholic Central Verein also came under attack—although not nearly on the level the Alliance faced. The Verein also had supported the Central Powers during American neutrality but in a far more subtle manner, choosing to not lobby Congress or make public pronouncements on the issue. Nonetheless the organization came under a degree of criticism, the worst case scenario being a death threat mailed to president Frederick Kenkel shortly after America’s declaration of war. The Verein was able to survive during 1917-1918 because it kept its distance from the Alliance and actively supported the war effort by supplying chaplain’s materials and reading.
material for servicemen, as well as taking an active part in Liberty Bond drives. To
the end of the conflict it remained intact, although a weakened organization.

The government also joined in a propaganda campaign aimed at German-
American organizations outside the mainstream of society. In August 1917 the
Committee on Public Information, a new government organization established by
executive order on April 4, published *American Loyalty by Citizens of German
Descent*. The pamphlet, which contained short articles focusing on the
accomplishments of German-Americans, reported that only a small percentage of the
ethnic group was disloyal to the United States. It identified factions within the
German-American community which were "disloyal and outside the mainstream of
American values and as a consequence should be disbanded," and praised those loyal
German-Americans who saw themselves only as Americans.

The forces in favor of prohibition took the opportunity to further discredit the
NGAA, in effect, to use the war to foster their campaign. The Anti-Saloon League
attempted to tie the Alliance to the United States Brewers Association through the
funding program (which had become public) during the years 1911-1916. The League
attempted to make it appear that the entire brewing industry was disloyal. Wayne B.
Wheeler, counsel for the Anti-Saloon League, charged that "the liquor traffic aids
those forces in our country whose loyalty is called into question at this hour." The
League accused the NGAA of promoting German culture in the United States at the
expense of American culture, and of being tied to the German government. In fact
the League was turning the Alliance's constitution—the charge to promote German
culture—against it, by dredging up the old accusation of the NGAA being involved in the Pan-German movement. These efforts contributed to the Senate’s decision to hold hearings about the activities of the Alliance. Beginning in February 1918 and later in September the Senate engaged in full scale investigations into the brewing and liquor interests and German propaganda which, needless to say, also involved the Alliance.

Wilson even entered into the debate, although with nothing resembling the intensity of other critics. He praised German-Americans as being loyal to the ideals of America, remarking that only a small percentage of them divided their loyalties between the land of their ancestors and the United States.37 The President had not forgotten the NGAA’s criticism of his policies during the neutrality debate, its advocating fair-play for Germany, and its attempts to secure his defeat in 1916. While never mentioning the Alliance by name, he condemned those German-American organizations which sought to turn on their country, branding them “the evil influences that are at work.”38

Not surprisingly, a former president joined the attack. In September 1917 Theodore Roosevelt published “The Children of the Crucible,” in which he insisted that all immigrants must give up allegiance to their native land. If they refused they should no longer receive the benefits of being an American. Roosevelt wrote that any German-American who directly or indirectly acted against the interests of the United States should be regarded as traitors. He was direct and specific: “The German-American Alliance constitutes a grave threat to the nation. It is the duty of all Americans to man the trenches against the enemy within our gates.”39
The earlier positions of the NGAA had finally come back to haunt it. Besides the group’s actions during the period of American neutrality, the pre-war attempts to promote German culture in America, while an admirable notion during times of peace, now resulted in a charge of attempting to supplant American culture with German culture. Since the founding of the Alliance in 1901, the leadership, and above all Charles Hexamer, never wavered from the original goals of promoting German culture in America and encouraging better relations between the United States and Germany. It never sought to replace American culture with German. In all respects the Alliance had remained true to this task. But it took several positions during the period of neutrality—on the submarine issue, for example, or arms shipments prior to American involvement—which were defensible, but not exactly wise. After April 1917 the inability (or maybe even the unwillingness) of the national leadership to clearly come out in strong support of the American war effort placed the group in a very tenuous position, especially when one considers the national mood that viewed Germany as the enemy, and a threat to the survival of democracy.

Even though the NGAA was being broken apart by internal divisions the national leadership attempted to maintain a sense of continuity. In the June 1917 issue of Mitteilungen Hexamer argued that despite the adversity, both internal and external, affecting the organization, it still had many reasons to remain united and functioning. It remained important to preserve contributions of Americans of German descent, even at a time when German-American institutions in America were under assault. In a final plea for unity, Hexamer asked that “In this dark hour for German-Americans the task
of the NGAA must remain focused on the preservation of German culture and institutions, a task begun by the German Society of Pennsylvania back in 1764.\textsuperscript{40}

Hexamer thus exhibited a continued unwillingness to compromise and retreat from the Alliance's original mission—despite the fact that circumstances of the time warranted moderation in both words and actions. One wonders why he continued to pursue such a course. One explanation is that he saw nothing wrong with pursuing preservation of German culture, thus taking Wilson at his word that the war was not against the German people or German-Americans and their culture. He felt the Alliance had already gone too far in its activities to turn back—in essence the group should go down fighting for what it believed. A final explanation could be that Hexamer was more German than American. In countless speeches he had praised German culture, language, and institutions, while never giving the same adulation for American ones. By this time he had lost respect for the United States and what it stood for. Speaking to his friend Edwin Humes in 1916 he remarked that the American system of government "is a failure and the only correct form of government is a constitutional monarchy."\textsuperscript{41} He, of course, was referring to Germany's government. This comment, not made public until the Senate hearings, reflected a high degree of cultural chauvinism and could do much to explain Hexamer's continued remarkable rigidity.

The hard-line stance and refusal to support the war effort did not reflect the opinion of the rank-and-file. By September 1917 a vast majority of the branches of the NGAA had ceased condemning American involvement in the war. They began to raise
money for the American Red Cross and stopped agitation against prohibition in reaction to the Anti-Saloon League's efforts to portray them as a threat to the war effort.

The activity on behalf of German culture also dwindled remarkably. As cities and states began to cease German language instruction in public schools the local and state branches of the Alliance for the most part stood by and watched it happen. The campaign for German language instruction continued at the national level, but even there it was low-key and almost defensive. In the July issue of Mitteilungen the NGAA pointed out that students taking German classes were typically the brightest in the school. The campaign for the teaching of German continued through October 1917, by which time it had been expanded to include German language instruction in colleges and universities. The Alliance stressed that by not teaching German the student would be unable to fully appreciate the great pieces of German literature, poetry, and theater that had been taught in the nation's institutions of higher learning for the past one hundred years. For the most part efforts by the NGAA regarding German language instruction were confined to articles in the monthly bulletin. Unlike the pre-war years in which the group openly campaigned and lobbied for German in the public schools, this defensive effort was relegated to the printed word. The July 1917 issue of Mitteilungen contained an article reprinted from the Cincinnati Volksblatt which sought to remind the nation that the United States was at war with the German government, not the German language, and that the nation must "keep alive the torch of civilization amidst the horrors of war."
In its efforts to stem the tide of anti-Germanism the NGAA mostly made pledges of loyalty, and called upon the nation to not condemn Americans of German descent. As with the attempts at preserving the German language, this campaign existed on paper. The Alliance called upon the citizenry to not prejudge neighbors based upon war hysteria. It admonished the nation for allowing the popular press to mold opinions of an ethnic group that only a short time ago it had considered to contain some of the greatest contributors to the growth of the United States. As with their other attempts, this campaign fell upon deaf ears in a nation at war.

The stress brought about by the war against Germany began to take its toll on the national headquarters of the NGAA. In October 1917 Hexamer announced that he would step down as president in November. He said that ill health had forced the decision, which was partly true, considering that he always had suffered from heart trouble. The decision also was the result of internal divisions that he could no longer reconcile. Hexamer had been the most vocal of all the Alliance officers in criticizing Wilson's policies during the period of American neutrality. Some of his officers, including Stern and Sutro, believed that this attitude reduced his effectiveness as president now that America was at war with Germany. Hexamer always had been the main spokesman for the Alliance, his enthusiasm often approaching the point of fanaticism. At a time when German-Americans were viewed with suspicion and their culture being threatened in America, some members felt that he was not the right individual to lead the organization through the storm. Conciliation was not one of his many talents. His inability to compromise reduced his effectiveness during a time...
when the organization needed a unifying force at the helm rather than one who invited controversy.

On November 29 the executive committee of the NGAA met in Chicago at the Red Star Inn on North Clark Street. Few people showed up, no one from the West. After strong debate, in which Hexamer still held out for holding a convention in 1918, the committee voted against him. If he had any qualms about his earlier decision to resign, this vote—in essence a rejection of his leadership—surely removed them. Hexamer formally stepped down from the presidency. When first vice-president Joseph Keller declined the position the executive council appointed Sigmund von Bosse, president of the Delaware chapter, as the new president of the NGAA.46

With Hexamer’s departure the NGAA lost not only the only president it had known, but it also its main driving force. It was Hexamer’s dedication, organizational ability and energy that kept the Alliance together for as long as it lasted. He had devoted his entire adult life to maintaining and promoting German culture in America. In the end his cultural chauvinism, the position taken by the NGAA during America’s neutrality—including the attacks on Wilson and efforts to influence the election of 1916—and the shift in attitudes towards German-Americans brought about by America’s belligerent status resulted in the decline of his organization and the end of his dream.

One could easily portray Hexamer as out of the mainstream in his desire to promote German institutions in America. But such an evaluation would be misleading. He truly believed that what he was doing was good, not only for German-Americans,
but for Americans in general. He had remembered the lessons of his father, a former
"48er" who instilled in him a love of democracy and liberty and a suspicion of any
government that attempted to take those rights from its citizens. Despite earlier
comments advocating a monarchy over a democracy—expressed most likely in the
heat of passion—he was a true American in the Jeffersonian sense of the word, a
believer that the power of government rested solely in the hands of the governed.

When the Senate began an investigation of the Alliance in late February 1918,
Hexamer would be too ill to appear as a witness. He lingered for almost two more
years, leading a quiet life outside the public eye. On January 8, 1920 the former
president of an organization that at one time claimed over 2.5 million members passed
away at age fifty-seven.47

Without its leader, torn by internal dissension, the Alliance was ready for the
final blow. President von Bosse tried to maintain a semblance of the national
organization in his December 1917 address published in Mitteilungen. He cautioned
moderation and calm while reminding the Alliance of the aims and purposes of the
organization mentioned in the charter. Von Bosse proclaimed that at the end of the
conflict the NGAA would resume its proper role as the educational and patriotic
organization, and at that it would be in the forefront of mending the nation's wounds
and bringing about a reconciliation between the United States and Germany.48

Von Bosse tried in vain to rally an organization that barely existed. Besides
suffering from a reduction in membership, the Alliance found itself alone, virtually
without allies. Its association with the Ancient Order of Hiberians, which had never
amounted to anything beyond words and friendly exchanges, was all but forgotten as each organization became absorbed in its own problems. The AOH worried about events in Ireland, and while sympathetic to the plight of the NGAA, could do little to help. As mentioned earlier, the Catholic Central Verein, which had always tried to maintain a distance from the Alliance, also had troubles. While never as vocal as the NGAA in its assessment of United States neutrality policy, it still was not exempt from the anti-German hysteria facing the nation. Even before America's declaration of war in April 1917 the organization was divided. Some chapters came out openly for Wilson's neutrality while others backed the cause of the Central Powers. By early 1918 the CCV had more to concern itself with than the plight of the NGAA.49

Even the German-American press deserted the Alliance. The rift between the two had begun back in February 1917 when the national leadership of the Alliance began to back away from its stance on German war relief and possible United States involvement in the conflict. A number of newspapers including the *Cincinnati Freie Presse, Illinois Staats-Zeitung*, and the *Westliche Post* in St. Louis denounced the "strategic retreat" of the NGAA.50 Herman Hagedorn, a prominent German-American writer, took the opportunity to label the past utterances of the Alliance as "pompous drivel." An organization that had once professed to be the representative of German-Americans, now turned tail when it was needed the most—an unfounded accusation since the national leadership never wavered from its goals and objectives. George Sylvester Viereck, who had changed the name of the *Fatherland* to *Viereck's American Monthly*, attempted to distance himself from the organization. In what was
probably an effort to save his own "hide" he said that, in reality, the NGAA had never really been important on the national scene in politics—another unfounded statement.  

While some within the German-American community accused the Alliance of selling out, the exact opposite feeling existed within the rest of the nation. Beginning in early 1918 it was possible to hear calls for the revocation of the Alliance's charter across the nation. Ironically the most vocal cries came from the Midwest where the Alliance was at one time firmly entrenched. On January 16, 1918 Senator William King of Utah introduced a bill that would revoke the Alliance's charter. Specifically the bill ordained that:

the Act approved February twenty-fifth, nineteen hundred and seven, entitled "An Act to incorporate the National German-American Alliance," be, and the same is hereby, repealed. 
Sec. 2. That the Attorney General is directed to bring an action in any district court of the United States having jurisdiction of the property of said corporation to have a receiver appointed to take charge of such property, pay the debts, and wind up the affairs of said corporation.

King accused the NGAA of being an organization more German than American, a threat to the nation's welfare, and as a consequence should not benefit from a Congressional charter.  

At first the Alliance chose to take this threat lightly. The executive council stated that the group had nothing to fear since the organization had done nothing that could be considered disloyal or a threat to the nation. With an air of naiveté it announced that the Congress would not revoke a charter granted to an organization merely because it had the word "German" in front of it, that once the facts were out in
the open the Senator from Utah would quickly withdraw his resolution. This position appeared in the February 1918 issue of *Mitteilungen*, ironically the last to be published.

The Senate began investigations into the group’s activities on February 23. Chaired by Senator King, they would last until April 13, 1918. The government focused on the activities of the Alliance in the areas of national politics, attempts to promote German culture, and the prohibition question. The main argument concerned involvement in national politics from 1914-1917, something that the charter had forbidden. King’s committee targeted political activities by local Alliance chapters, specifically in Pennsylvania, Florida, Texas, and Kansas. The chief counsel for the NGAA, Karl Scholtz, countered that the restriction on political activities referred only to the national organization, not the state and local branches. It was a fine line of defense, one that the government could easily cross given the national mood at the time.

For its star witness the government summoned Gustavus Ohlinger, president of the Toledo Chamber of Commerce. A vigorous opponent of the NGAA during the past three years, Ohlinger had soundly denounced the organization in an article “To Our Citizens of German Descent,” and in the book *Their True Faith and Allegiance*. Ohlinger considered himself an expert on the Alliance and its activities, but in reality he knew little of the organization’s scope and purpose, basing his knowledge primarily on the activities after August 1914. He demonstrated this ignorance early in his testimony when he attempted to connect the NGAA to the Pan-German League, not
knowing that the Alliance had rejected any affiliation with the organization back in 1909.\textsuperscript{56}

Even so, the government relied heavily on Ohlinger's testimony. His distortions set the tone for the way the Senate conducted the hearings over the next two months. With little regard to what the NGAA had done prior to the war, the Senate committee accepted as truth the distortions of the Alliance's activities during the war. Press coverage helped further the idea that the Alliance was part of a pro-German network seeking to undermine America's war effort. So ridiculous and unfounded were the charges leveled against the NGAA that today one can look upon them with contempt. Yet given the mood of the nation in 1918 it did not take much to convince Americans that the Alliance was indeed in league with the Kaiser and his minions.

Ohlinger charged that the Alliance sought to unify the German-American element in a united block, retard the assimilation process, openly campaign for the German cause, oppose the policies of the United States government regarding the war, and strongly oppose the prohibition of alcohol.\textsuperscript{57} His charges, exaggerations of the truth in most cases, made good headlines in \textit{The New York Times} which was quick to run a story labeling the Alliance as, "an agent of sedition."\textsuperscript{58} While it was true that the Alliance opposed prohibition, it did so in a peaceful, democratic way. During 1914 to 1917 it had opposed United States policies regarding the war, and campaigned for fair treatment of Germany. In its opposition to potential American military involvement during this period the NGAA was not alone, but echoed the opinion of
the vast majority of Americans who shared similar views. William Jennings Bryan had summed up their feelings when he stated that, “the United States should stand firmly in favor of peace and not allow itself to be drawn into war with any of the belligerents.”

Ohlinger also attacked the Alliance as an un-American organization, citing the group’s efforts to promote and maintain German culture in America. His testimony focused on the charge that the NGAA had violated its charter by promoting, not American but German interests in America, the latter accusation based upon the efforts at promoting German language instruction, German-American history, and other areas of German-American culture. Ohlinger also mentioned the Kaiser’s awarding Hexamer the Order of the Eagle in 1914.

Ohlinger freely admitted that the NGAA never put up candidates for election, but he insisted that the Alliance had become involved in politics in other ways: rallying the German-American vote and protesting the government’s neutrality policies. His main evidence came from articles published in the *Mitteilungen* during the time when the leadership attempted to rally German-American opinion to its position on the war. He pointed to efforts at undermining United States policy, such as the New Willard Hotel conference of January 1915, as proof of the Alliance’s disloyalty. Ohlinger admonished the group for never supporting the government’s actions during 1914-1917; it was more German than American.

While one could accuse the Alliance of being somewhat foolish in the positions taken from 1914-1917, it acted in neither the fashion nor to the extreme suggested by Ohlinger. In accusing the group of being politically active he walked a fine line. While
it was true that the NGAA did lobby the government on issues of concern to the group such as prohibition and American neutrality policy, its work was in that respect no different from groups like the Anti-Saloon League, and pro-Allied organizations which had lobbied the government on behalf of their causes. The only difference, and for the NGAA the most damaging, was that none of these other organizations possessed a Congressional charter, nor did they vocalize their discontent with United States policy as vehemently as the Alliance. Yet the NGAA never violated its charter at the national level since it did not openly come out in favor of one political party over the other.

Despite being politically active before the war, the stance taken by the Alliance in the neutrality debate, its efforts during the election of 1916, coupled with United States military involvement helped bring about the viewpoint that the Alliance had always been anti-American in its political stances. Wartime hysteria caused the nation to quickly forget that Presidents Roosevelt and Taft had earlier praised the group for its work.

Ohlinger's accusations gave the press more issues on which to feed. The *New York Times* again distorted the information to read that Hexamer had been the Kaiser's deputy and ruler of the German people in America. Such fallacious accusations even caused the German press to rally behind the Alliance. *The New Yorker-Staats Zeitung*, which recently had chastised the group, ridiculed both Ohlinger's testimony and the exaggerations of the *Times* by saying that, as an educational and cultural organization, the NGAA did not attempt to retard the assimilation process but instead encouraged it.
The government also relied upon the testimony of Henry Campbell, assistant editor of the *Milwaukee Journal*, who repeated the charge that the NGAA had promoted Pan-Germanism by retarding, instead of assisting, the assimilation of German immigrants in America.\textsuperscript{64} He further contended that the group sought to speed up the citizenship process, not for the purpose of turning immigrants into Americans, but so they could vote on issues of concern for the Alliance.

Campbell's testimony concerning United States neutrality policy largely repeated Ohlinger's accusations, reinforcing an image of the Alliance as supporting Germany, embarrassing the United States, and generally promoting policy favorable to the Central Powers.\textsuperscript{65} He pointed to the Chicago conference of 1916 and the effort to influence the selection of the Republican candidate and of course the attempt to defeat Wilson as evidence of involvement in partisan politics. Campbell correctly reported that a large number of the state and local branches took an active role in trying to unseat the incumbent president. What he failed to mention was that while some members of the national executive council were present at the meeting, the national leaders, including Charles Hexamer, kept their distance for fear of connecting the organization to direct political involvement.

The testimony of Ohlinger and Campbell formed the basis for the government's case against the NGAA. The principle accusation was that the Alliance had violated its national charter by directly participating in politics. Yet the charter itself did not directly forbid the group from doing so as long as it did not openly favor one party over the other. The organization's charter, while stating that the group would refrain
from participation in party politics, also stipulated that it would reserve the right to defend and maintain its principles in the political field should it feel attacked.66

The Alliance’s accusers felt that the group had overstepped its bounds by attempting to influence neutrality policy and the outcome of the 1916 election. They attempted to link the NGAA with the Pan-German League in an effort to demonstrate that even as early as 1907 the Alliance had strayed from its intended purpose as a cultural organization and became a political entity with the interests of Germany in mind. The national leadership had utilized state and local chapters to promote the group’s goals while stating that the purposes were purely patriotic and American.

Afforded the opportunity to speak, the leaders of the Alliance completely denied the charges of political activity and pro-Germanism. Chief counsel Karl Scholtz submitted a paper which outlined the group’s position. The document contended that Senator King had no right to preside over hearings on a bill that he introduced and that the Senate had no right to act as prosecutor, judge and jury in this matter. The Senate had based its case on testimony with little foundation and no merit. If the government saw fit to prosecute the Alliance it should do so in a court of law.67 This protest, while placed in the record, fell upon deaf ears as subcommittee contended that these hearings did not constitute a court of law and that they were following proper procedure.

Sutro denounced the treatment afforded to German-Americans and the Alliance since the beginning of the war:
For three and a half years not only we, the members of our great National German-American Alliance, but all the American citizens of German origin or even of German names, have been the targets for insult and vilification on the part of these people and now also Congress is asked to stamp its seal of approval upon this unreasonable and contemptible persecution.68

He complained that an ethnic group that had been looked upon with respect only a few years earlier was now being condemned as unpatriotic. Such a shift in opinion not only reflected wartime hysteria but also a complete misunderstanding of German-Americans and their culture.

Sutro argued that the government, and to some extent, the general population, had determined that any attempt by German-Americans to promote German culture in America was a sign of loyalty to the German government. He pointed out that the Alliance had always rejected the aims of the Pan-German movement. The Alliance was always careful to tie efforts to promote German culture in with the contributions of German-Americans to the United States. The involvement in politics was not for the sake of promoting German issues but to induce German-Americans to exercise their duties as citizens.69 German-Americans, no less than any citizen, had a fundamental right to voice concerns over government policies or support or oppose an individual seeking office. Sutro thus argued that the Alliance had done nothing that other groups in the past or present had not done to influence the government’s policies. A major difference, of course, was that other groups had not been connected—either in fact or in public perception—to a nation with which the United States was at war.
Five more witnesses, four of them officers of the national organization, attempted to deflect the main charge of improper political activity. At this time the government raised the prohibition issue as evidence of the Alliance’s political activity in concert with brewing and liquor interests. It was during these hearings that the connection between the two became public. Percy Andreae testified that he had supplied the Alliance with funds to combat prohibition from 1914-1916, and traced the route of distribution. He also acknowledged that local brewers and the brewers association had contributed money before that time.70

The government attempted to use Andreae’s testimony to tie the Alliance and brewing and liquor interests into German propaganda efforts in the United States. The Senators did not succeed. Andreae, Tjarks, and Keller all testified that the Alliance used funds given it strictly for the anti-prohibition campaign. They supplied documentation to support the testimony and proved that the funding had stopped even before the United States had declared war on Germany in April 1917.71 At the end of the first round of testimony Senator King curiously admitted that it was not within the realm of this hearing to investigate the ties between the NGAA and the liquor interests in America.72

This issue would be taken up in September 1918 when the Senate launched another investigation—this time focusing on the brewing and liquor interests and German propaganda. By this time the Alliance had ceased to exist as an organization. The purpose of the hearings was to investigate charges that a conspiracy existed in the United States in which German-Americans in the brewing industry had worked hand-
in-hand with the German government to influence America’s foreign policy. The Senate attempted to link the NGAA directly with German propaganda efforts in America. The committee charged that the Alliance had been working for years to organize the German-American population into a separate community in America. Allegedly, the Alliance and the liquor industry joined forces after the start of war in Europe to promote German interests and undermine United States policy both prior to and after America’s entrance into the war. These hearings, which established further connections between the NGAA and the USBA were important in keeping alive the air of suspicion concerning anti-government and anti-American plots. The hearings also touched on Bolshevik propaganda in the United States. Prompted by the anti-German hysteria, they also helped fuel the flames of an anti-Communist hysteria that would manifest itself in the Red Scare of 1919-1920.

During April 1918 the anti-German hysteria reached its peak with the lynch of a German-American named Paul Robert Praeger in Collinsville, Illinois by a band of “patriotic” Americans who had accused him of spreading Socialist doctrine and being a German spy. The participants were lauded for their actions by a jury that found them innocent of murder after only five minutes of deliberation. This activity took place at a time when the outcome of the war was still in doubt and American soldiers were being rushed to the front lines to help turn back a German offensive. Within weeks the “doughboys” would find themselves involved in the bloody battles of Chateau Thierry and Belleau Wood—their presence doing much to end the last German offensive in France and turn the tide of the war.
Thus, as an anxious nation watched events in Europe, a war at home against German-Americans escalated. The governor of Ohio demanded that “firing squads be used to deal with traitors.” In Chicago, four German-Americans who refused to kiss the flag were tarred and feathered, while the local Germania Club had to change its name to the Lincoln Club. The Chicago Tribune called for the internment of German-American women suspected of being spies. The mayor of Michigan City, Indiana was arrested and accused of being a German spy. Meanwhile all around the nation German books were being removed from libraries and burned. Even the government was not exempt from this mood. Congress passed the Espionage and Sedition Acts, loosely-worded restrictions on free speech that targeted the war’s critics and purported German espionage activity in the United States.

Amidst this backdrop the hearings into the Alliance resumed on March 9 with testimony by high-ranking officials in the organization. The first to testify was John Tjarks, former chairman of the finance committee, who revealed that the NGAA had raised over $886,000 to assist individuals in Germany and Austria-Hungary who were suffering due to the conflict. People receiving the funds, which the Alliance had given to the German and Austrian ambassadors in the United States, included the wounded, prisoners of war, the widowed and orphans.

The testimony further revealed that shortly before United States entry into the war Tjarks had sent a letter to all chapters announcing that funds would no longer be collected for German war relief. When America entered the war the NGAA made little effort to raise funds for the American Red Cross, choosing instead to allow local
chapters to decide what they wanted to do. Many selected to continue fund raising; but the attitude of the national leadership (it did not assist an American cause as it once supported the Germans) again brought up the loyalty question. Tjarks' testimony was made to appear as if the NGAA had been aiding the German war effort.

The appearance of Joseph Keller produced the same line of questioning. The Senators asked Keller to discuss his involvement with German language instruction and the selection of textbooks in the Indianapolis public schools. The Senators evidently hoped to link the NGAA with promoting German ideas and values in the public school system prior to 1917. As with many other lines of attack the committee was not able to make a direct connection between the Alliance and the selection of textbooks in the public schools. In this case book selection was made by the Indiana board of education, of which Keller was not a member and thus had no voice in what was used in the schools.77 Keller's statements had little effect on the committee. The mere fact that the NGAA promoted the German language was enough for the Senators to believe that it was more German than American.

Testimony regarding anti-prohibition activity, raising funds for German war relief, and promotion of the German language and values did much to cast suspicion upon the Alliance. The most damaging connection, however, was the state branches' direct involvement in politics. It was on this issue that the committee sought revocation of the group's charter. Edwin Humes, United States District Attorney for Western Pennsylvania, made the connection. His investigations of the Allegheny branch revealed it had been organized expressly for political involvement.78 As

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evidence he cited minutes from the organization’s business meetings during the period from April 1914 to December 1917 that revealed attempts at influencing neutrality policy through direct involvement in state and national elections and in raising money for German war relief. The minutes also disclosed that the Allegheny branch openly campaigned against Wilson. \(^7\) None of these practices were illegal, and they did not technically violate the national charter, but coupled with earlier statements, Humes’ disclosures convinced the Senate committee that the NGAA was un-American—a threat to national security which needed to be disbanded.

The task of trying to change the minds of the committee now fell in the hands of Sigmund von Bosse, the new Alliance president, and Timm, the national secretary. Von Bosse read from a prepared statement which denied all charges against the Alliance. The NGAA had never wavered from its original mission as an educational and patriotic organization and had never participated in activities that could be viewed as un-American. \(^8\) Von Bosse was merely stating what had been said many times in the past.

But the young president was ill-prepared to deal with the rigorous questioning he received. He contradicted himself, tripped over his own words concerning the Alliance’s stance on German invasion of Belgium (to which the Alliance did not even respond), the submarine campaign (which the NGAA viewed as self-defense on Germany’s part), and the question of war guilt: the Alliance blamed the Allies for seeking to surround and suffocate Germany through the Triple Entente. This line of questioning made it look as if the Alliance had supported the German invasion of
neutral Belgium, justified the sinking of the *Lusitania*, and clung to the notion that Germany had no responsibility for the outbreak of the war.\textsuperscript{81} The press was quick to pick up on this. Under the headlines “Asserts *Lusitania* Was Legally Sunk,” the *New York Times* charged that the Alliance condoned German aggression against innocent civilians. While the article did state that the NGAA had claimed to be completely loyal since United States entry into the conflict, the *Times* questioned sincerity of the statement given the group’s actions from 1914-1917.\textsuperscript{82}

Von Bosse’s lengthy testimony did little to dissuade the Senators, and neither did Timm. Questioned about the election of 1916, Timm said that the national organization did not endorse any single candidate and did not come out openly against one. Politics was left in the hands of the local and state branches; the national organization acted in the areas only listed in the NGAA’s constitution.\textsuperscript{83} When it asked about the objective of promoting German *kultur* in America, the committee reminded Timm of Hexamer’s use of that term in a speech delivered in Milwaukee in 1916. Timm explained that *kultur* was a term that the group as a rule did not use because of its possible implications. He had counseled Hexamer against its use.\textsuperscript{84}

Events outside the hearings also played against the Alliance. Weinsberg, president of the Missouri chapter, was accused of sedition after the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* published an interview in which he allegedly stated that Germany would win the war in six months.\textsuperscript{85} Eventually brought to trial on sedition charges, Weinsberg would be found innocent after a lengthy trial—the only officer in the NGAA to be tried for disloyalty under the Espionage and Sedition Acts.\textsuperscript{86}
Leaders of the Alliance knew that their appearance before the Senate had been futile. On March 22 the *The New York Times* published an interview in which von Bosse admitted that the group expected have its charter revoked. He also pointed out the danger of such actions to the nation:

> Our only regret is that the manner of revoking our charter has been made the vehicle for stirring up the feeling of bitterness between the racial integers in this country. The loss of the charter does not in itself mean much to us under the circumstances. As members of the Alliance we realize that we have perhaps done many things we should not have done and have left undone things we should have done. As loyal Americans there is nothing for us to do now but to put every effort into the prosecution of the war to an early and successful conclusion.87

In a special meeting on April 11, 1918 the executive council voted to disband rather than wait for the federal government to do the job for them. In its last official, and ironic act, the council voted to turn over the $30,000 remaining in its treasury to the American Red Cross to aid American soldiers fighting against Germany.88

The Senate finished its hearings, and as expected, recommended that Congress take immediate action to revoke the group’s charter. The committee came to the conclusion that the NGAA had purposely set out to perpetuate the division of America along ethnic lines both prior to and after the outbreak of war in Europe. The Alliance repeatedly demonstrated its preference for German institutions over American. The committee did not condemn all German-Americans, only those in the NGAA who throughout its entire “disloyal and disgraceful career sought to place a cloud of suspicion over law-abiding Americans of German descent.”89
The Senate approved the bill on July 2 and the House on July 29. President Wilson signed the measure into law on August 31, 1918. Even though the NGAA had not functioned as an organization for more than four months, the Senate could not resist firing yet another shot. Senator William Borah said that activities of the Alliance demonstrated the need for all ethnic groups to become completely Americanized and that there was no room for divisions along ethnic and cultural lines in America. In closing he emphasized that the United States should never allow such an ethnic organization to rise again.\textsuperscript{90}

Borah's statement revealed much regarding the mood of the United States in the late summer of 1918. Wartime hysteria prompted a backlash against all things German. The Alliance, being the most visible German-American organization, became a natural target. The group had supported an unpopular belligerent from 1914-1917, and could not remove itself from that connection in the minds of Americans who demanded "one-hundred percent Americanism," even after the United States entered the war against Germany. Von Bosse viewed this attitude and the treatment of the National German-American Alliance in general as an example of the ethnic and racial divisions that existed in the nation. The war did bring about an attack on all things German, but this was an isolated case confined to a short time period. Prior to 1917 German-Americans were the most respected ethnic group in the United States, and the Alliance itself was even praised for many of its activities. Even more than the question of ethnic division the war raised sharp questions concerning tolerance, civil rights, and diversity within the nation. In the end then, the story of the National German-
American Alliance is one of an ethnic group that believed deeply in what it was doing but fell victim to its own passion, and to the passions of the time.

End Notes

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12 “Americans Should Be on Their Guard,” *Mitteilungen*, 9 (April 1917), 5.
14 Heinrich Maurer, “The Earlier German Nationalism in America,” *American Journal of Sociology*, 22 (January 1917), 519-520.
16 “Where German-Americans Stand,” *Literary Digest*, 54 (February 17, 1917), 389.

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42 "Why the Study of German is to be Recommended," Mitteilungen, 9 (October 1917), 5.
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60 The National German-American Alliance: Hearings, 19-27.
61 Ibid., 70-72.
64 The National German-American Alliance: Hearings, 95-96.
65 Ibid., 108-118.
67 The National German-American Alliance: Hearings, 132-133.
68 Ibid., 138.
69 Ibid., 171.
70 The National German-American Alliance: Hearings, 206-218.
71 Ibid., 255-263 and 279-292.
72 Ibid., 243.
73 Congress, Senate, Brewing and Liquor Interests and German Propaganda, VI-VII.
76 The National German-American Alliance: Hearings, 249.
77 Ibid., 276-277.
78 Ibid., 313.
79 The National German-American Alliance: Hearings, 312-327.
80 Ibid., 333-347.
81 Ibid., 363-364 and 388-389.
83 The National German-American Alliance: Hearings, 410-414.
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85 "Dr. Weinsberg Says Germans Will Win the War," The St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 13 April 1918, p. 1 and 3.
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CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION: ETHNICITY AND AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

In writing the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson incorporated Enlightenment thought concerning the relationship between government and citizens. Jefferson took those ideas one step further, creating a treatise that included democratic values and the idea that all people should benefit from the fullness of American life. Over the years Jefferson's dream of "universal democracy" underwent many tests—chief amongst them the Civil War which, in part, was fought to make all men equal. The millions of immigrants who came to America from foreign lands between 1820 and 1920 also believed in Jefferson's words—so much so that many fought and died to preserve the Union. Yet upon arrival immigrants often faced hardship and sometimes persecution similar to that which they left behind. The promise of American democracy was not necessarily there for the taking, especially during times of economic and political unrest.

It was the second and third generations of these immigrant families that began to enjoy the fruits of their parents' labors. Citizens by birth, they looked upon the United States as a land of endless opportunity, and for many this vision became a reality. This progress was especially true for the members of the National German-
American Alliance, the majority of whom were from the middle and upper-middle classes—people who had “made it” in terms of economics, education and status.

Opportunity, however, had its price as the nation underwent a transition from an Anglo-agrarian society to a multi-ethnic industrial one that sought to cast all people within its “melting pot.” Yet many believed that the freedom promised in America included the right to preserve distinct and different ways of life—so long as one obeyed the law and acted in a responsible manner. Unfortunately, such an exercise of freedom at times ran into trouble. At the dawn of the twentieth century a number of factors—large-scale immigration from Europe and an increase from Asia, stresses brought on by industrialization, the rise to world power status, and the Progressive movement—helped to create a situation in which conformity to a “perceived” American ideal began to displace the right of the individual to practice a distinct way of life. Theodore Roosevelt summed up this national mood by stating that there were no English-Americans, or Irish-Americans, or Italian-Americans; there are only Americans. His words bespoke the feelings of many in the United States who, on the eve of World War One, had become “one-hundred percenters.” Yet the question was asked even then: what is an American? For some it was an individual who fully supported the nation’s values and mores—discarding those of his or her heritage. Many, however, believed that it was possible to be an American, yet maintain ties to one’s past. Such people were labeled “hyphenates” and were tolerated during times of peace. But hard times created pressures and prejudices, although they varied in accordance with different groups.
Such was the story of the National German-American Alliance. There can be no doubt that the members of the organization were Americans in every sense of the word; one cannot question their love of liberty and democratic ideals. More so than most "super patriots," they believed in Jefferson’s words that, "governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." They also believed in the Constitution that promised all Americans the blessings of liberty. To promote those ideals they labeled themselves an "educational and patriotic" society. They also recognized that the blessings of liberty had a price. To that end they included in the preamble to their constitution a statement that they were willing to risk everything for the welfare of the United States and that, above all, the individual must exercise good citizenship and obey the law.

Within these parameters the members of the Alliance strongly believed that it was possible to be both American and German-American. They saw nothing wrong with promoting one’s ethnic diversity—a precursor of a trend that would become powerful later in the twentieth century. To them, the United States was a nation of diverse cultures, and it was this diversity that made the nation what it was. For the first seven years of its existence the Alliance remained true to its objectives by promoting German culture in America and preserving the memory of contributions by German-Americans. In its efforts the organization received praise from both the public and private sector.

After 1909 the group began to stray from that original mission. Perhaps it was that pursuing its objectives, and broadening the definition, inevitably led the
organization into sensitive territory. Involvement in politics at the national level—especially the debate over prohibition—began to tarnish the image of the organization. The Alliance fought hard to prevent establishment of prohibition, arguing that it was an infringement on personal liberty and would, in the end, cause more problems than create solutions. In that respect the NGAA accurately predicted the trials and tribulations of the “Roaring Twenties,” as the group’s warning that making alcohol illegal would make it a “forbidden fruit,” even more desirable than before, became a reality, as did the prediction concerning the rise of organized crime and violence to levels never seen before by the nation. The extent to which the Alliance anticipated virtually every problem to be associated with prohibition was truly remarkable. As the organization grew in size and became a force in the prohibition debate it was inevitable that the brewing and liquor interests would take notice. Accepting funds from the USBA, while freeing up the Alliance’s own assets for other projects, became a “Pandora’s Box” in that once opened it could not easily be closed, the result being that the NGAA was drawn deeper into the political arena—a place it said it would never go, and where it was ill-equipped to operate. Unified in as long as it maintained its emphasis on cultural preservation, the organization’s increased political involvement inevitably produced internal tension as many key officers—even as early as 1911—objected strongly to the Alliance’s increasing commitment to the prohibition debate.

Such activities also did not go unnoticed outside Alliance circles. The German identification, previously welcomed and honored, now began to take on a different coloring. On the eve of the World War One the Alliance had become more a political
lobbying organization than one dedicated to the promotion of culture and memory, although to be sure, there was some legitimate blending of the two. Alcohol represented both a political issue and an agent of culture. It was during the period of United States neutrality that the Alliance finally broke away from the ideals by which it was founded. In its attempts to secure complete American neutrality and—by its definition—fair play for Germany it became an organization labeled as being more German than American. For many it had become the National German Alliance.

The choice of politics over culture and ethnicity proved to be fatal, as the NGAA failed to achieve its goals between August 1914 and April 1918. More important, it lost much of what it had achieved during the first thirteen years of its existence, while contributing heavily to the anti-German hysteria of 1917-1918 which all but eradicated the culture that the Alliance so passionately sought to preserve. Its vehement stance on the neutrality question and its promotion of the German cause, while not illegal and in some measure understandable, was certainly unwise and did much to paint the Alliance as a German organization, leaving many Americans hard-pressed to believe that the motives were "educational and patriotic." With United States entry into the conflict previous attempts at maintaining German culture became signs of overt cultural chauvinism and evidence that the Alliance was indeed still wedded to the fatherland. In combination with the organization's unwillingness to support wholeheartedly the American war effort, repeated attempts at promoting German culture seemed to prove the case—the iron cross flew proudly over 416 Walnut Street. During its last year of existence, torn by internal dissent which cost the
group its president and main driving force, the NGAA became an easy target for a public and government eagerly searching for "the secret enemy within." In the end the NGAA, which did indeed do much to bring about its own demise, became a victim of war-hysteria and an example of what can happen to those who seek to maintain a sense of ethnicity—at least the wrong kind—during times that demand conformity.

The story of the Alliance during 1914-1918, and throughout its entire existence, demonstrates the difficulty ethnic organizations faced in seeking to preserve their culture and maintain a sense of ethnicity in times of peace and war. One cannot condemn the work of the Alliance both during the pre-war and neutrality years. As an organization born in a desire to preserve German culture in the United States it seemed logical that the NGAA would wish to see the birthplace of that culture survive the war intact, although certainly not to the extent that it would support a German victory over America. As with its pre-war endeavors, the Alliance defended its wartime behavior—unconvincingly, as it turned out—as an expression of patriotism.

In truth, the Alliance was neither disloyal nor subversive during its existence. Its actions in the political realm, while never illegal, were ill-advised and contributed much to the group’s downfall and to the anti-German hysteria of 1917-1918. It never deliberately promoted disunity or disloyalty but plowed persistently ahead with its ethnic agenda, seemingly unaware of, or oblivious to, the ramifications for a greater American society. Its fate would be determined in the volatile environment that was American democracy during the first years of the twentieth century and in the end of course, by the shifting fortunes of war.
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