

The Forgotten Camp:  
The Reedsburg Prisoner of War Camp

Matthew C. Carter  
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Capstone Advisor: Dr. Robert Gough

Cooperating Professor:  
Dr. Selika Ducksworth-Lawton

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## **Abstract**

During World War II the United States housed over 400,000 Prisoners of War across the United States. Wisconsin was struggling to meet the needs of their farming industry and needed to find other sources of labor. Reedsburg, Wisconsin was chosen as one of the branch camp locations to hold some of the German prisoners. The prisoners while staying in Reedsburg were used throughout the area in order to help with the labor shortage that was prevalent throughout Wisconsin and Reedsburg. Local area farms and canning factories took advantage of this.

## Introduction

Reedsburg was not unlike many other cities around the United States during World War II. Reedsburg was struggling with its farming and other industries that were located within the state. However, Reedsburg had a special opportunity that they would take advantage of. Reedsburg was picked as a location for one of the 36 branch camps during World War II that housed prisoners of war. Faced with struggling times and a high demand for food, the city of Reedsburg was picked to house these prisoners and even use them throughout the area to help on the farms and in canning factories. But why does no one know about this secret? It has been 64 years since the war ended, yet very few know about this camp. I am writing this paper in order to inform the public and show why the experience of the POW camps was historically important to Reedsburg. I will discuss what Wisconsin and Reedsburg were like during the war, the history of the camp and how the prisoners of war were used, then finally compare the Reedsburg camp to other camps within Wisconsin and the nation.

Growing up and living in Reedsburg for my whole life, going on to 24 years now, I had learned many things during high school about World War II. Some of these things were important and stuck with me; other things just flew over my head and seemed useless. Every student learns about the Holocaust and Nazis and the atrocities that they committed during the war years. The one thing I had never been taught was that there was a German prisoner of war camp in my hometown. I learned about the topic by searching through the internet one day and stumbling across an article that was posted about a book that was written and published in 1998.

The book was *Reedsburg Remembers 150 Years*. Within the book it has an article, the one I had found, that said that Reedsburg housed a prisoner of war camp during 1945<sup>1</sup>. I was shocked when I saw this, since living in Reedsburg I had never heard anything about it. It made me curious because knowing

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<sup>1</sup> Sesquicentennial History Committee, *Reedsburg Remembers 150 years: A History of Reedsburg, Wisconsin, 1848-1998*, (Chelsea: Book Crafters, 1998), p. 108.

about it would have made learning about history a lot more interesting for students, since it dealt directly with where we all live. This gave me the idea to use this topic as my senior thesis and I hope to bring deeper knowledge about the camp to the people in and around Reedsburg. Recently the book *Stalag Wisconsin* came out and detailed all the camps within Wisconsin. I felt that while it did discuss Reedsburg, it left me wondering more about the camp. In order to answer these questions I plan to show what Wisconsin and Reedsburg were like during the War. I will then give a history of the camp and the use of the prisoners. Finally I want to make a comparison of the Reedsburg camp to other camps within Wisconsin and the nation. I will be completing these tasks through research of primary and secondary sources<sup>2</sup>. The most important primary source that I will be relying on will be newspaper articles and interview with residents that were present during the time of the Prisoner Of War (POW) Camp.

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<sup>2</sup> According to University of Maryland website, <http://www.lib.umd.edu/guides/primary-sources.html#primary>, *Primary sources* are “original materials. They are from the time period involved and have not been filtered through interpretation or evaluation.” They also define *Secondary Sources* as “accounts written after the fact with the benefit of hindsight. They are interpretations and evaluations of primary sources.”

## History of Reedsburg

Reedsburg, which is located in Sauk County, has a population of a little over 9,000 people. This town has grown largely since its beginnings and is continuing to grow. Reedsburg is located in what is known as the Upper Baraboo Valley<sup>3</sup>. The start of this area dates back to the mid-1800s when the land was settled by Americans traveling west looking for new and exciting opportunities as well as land to make this happen. Prior to that, however, the land was formed through glaciers that pushed their way through the area. The Baraboo Bluffs make up majority of the area around the Reedsburg and Baraboo landscape. The Bluffs are made primarily of quartzite with trees scattered throughout, leading the area to be famous as a sightseeing destination<sup>4</sup>.

The first people in the area were the Native Americans that were believed to have crossed the Natural Bridge that was formed in the early history. In 1603 Governor DeMont claimed the land that would become Sauk County and eventually Reedsburg. Soon the tribes in and around the area became known as the Winnebago tribe. The Winnebago's used the land for food, such as hunting and fishing the nearby waterways. Many of the trails that they created for passing through the area were used as wagon trails for the eventual settlers of Reedsburg. The Native Americans in the area were receptive to the new settlers coming into the area. Ah-Ha-Cho-Ka was chief of the Winnebago tribe that welcomed many settlers, even letting some of the white settlers stay with them in their "Indian Diggings." Ah-Ha-Cho-Ka was able to avoid Indian removal and stay in the area long after many were relocated to Nebraska<sup>5</sup>.

Wisconsin became a territory in 1836 and officially become the 30<sup>th</sup> state admitted to the Union in 1848. Wisconsin's land, prior to becoming the territory, had switched hands throughout the years by various countries selling it to other countries. Wisconsin at one point was part of Indiana, Illinois, and

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<sup>3</sup> Claudette Stager, *Reedsburg Intensive Survey* (Reedsburg: University of Wisconsin Extension Sauk County, 1983), p. 4; For a map of Wisconsin and Reedsburg, see Appendix A

<sup>4</sup> Kenneth I. Lange, *A County Called Sauk: A Human History of Sauk County, Wisconsin* (Baraboo: Sauk County Historical Society, 1976), p. 2

<sup>5</sup> Sesquicentennial History Committee, *Reedsburg Remembers 150 Years*, p. 10 & 11.

Michigan Territories, all at separate times however. Sauk County, in which Reedsburg is presently located within, was established into Wisconsin in 1840, but it took until 1848 to become part of the state. Within those eight years, the land needed to be surveyed, and by 1849 the official boundaries were drawn as to what they are today<sup>6</sup>.

While all of the rejoicing was taking place associated with Wisconsin becoming a state and Sauk County being created, settlers were gradually settling within the newly formed state and county. In 1845 James Babb moved to Wisconsin from Ohio. Babb was born in Virginia, but eventually moved to Ohio in 1810, prior to arriving in Wisconsin. Babb claimed 1,500 acres of land to use for agriculture and he eventually added to his total acreage to a total of 1,800 acres<sup>7</sup>. When he arrived in the area, he immediately started to build his house. He hired men from neighboring Sauk Prairie and Baraboo to build his house and clear the land around his house to use for agriculture. He also had some of the Native Americans help with the building process<sup>8</sup>. He continued his friendly relations with the Indians, as they called him Ma-ha-shi-ka Ne-ha-hatka, which translates to “hairy breast.” This was his nickname because of his habit of wearing a shirt that would be opened in the front, exposing his hairy chest<sup>9</sup>. Babb dreamed about one day having enough money to build a water-powered dam along the river, but first he had to get the rest of his family to Wisconsin.<sup>10</sup> In 1845 Babb left his newly built home in the hands of his Native American friends and traveled to Ohio to get the rest of his family. He returned from his trip in 1846<sup>11</sup>.

In 1847 the most influential member of Reedsburg arrived to town, David C. Reed. Reed would emerge suddenly and immediately stake claim to 200 acres of land, which included the site of his future mill and also a mine. Reed provided housing for the people who were helping build the necessities of the

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<sup>6</sup> Reedsburg Remembers 150 Years, p. 10

<sup>7</sup> Stager, Reedsburg Intensive Survey, p. 7

<sup>8</sup> Sesquicentennial History Committee, Reedsburg Remembers 150 Years, p. 17

<sup>9</sup> Stager, Reedsburg Intensive Survey, p. 7

<sup>10</sup> Merton Edwin Krug, *History of Reedsburg and the Upper Baraboo Valley*, (Madison: Democrat Printing Company, 1929), p. 20.

<sup>11</sup> Sesquicentennial History Committee, Reedsburg Remembers 150 Years, p. 17

newly forming area, so they built “shanty row.”<sup>12</sup> By 1848, Reed and the other residents had built a dam, Shanty Row, and a voting precinct. The precinct was named Baraboo, but with the nearby township of Baraboo, the name was changed to Reedsburg<sup>13</sup>.

George and Edward Willard were relatives of the founder of Baraboo and noticed a large pine forest north of Reedsburg. They decided to cut the pine trees and float them down the river, past Reedsburg, to their saw mill in Baraboo. When Reed first settled in the area, he saw some logs floating by and decided they would be perfect to use to help build shanty row and his own living quarters. As he saw more logs floating down river past him, he decided he could use these logs again by putting his dam to use<sup>14</sup>. Reed would then lower his dam in order for logs to pass, but then realized that he could stop them and maybe make some money. This eventually led to the “Saw Log War.”<sup>15</sup> Tempers calmed and the area eventually returned to normal. This started of a great rivalry between the cities of Reedsburg and Baraboo and provided momentum for the Reedsburg to survive until December 11, 1850, when it became established as a town<sup>16</sup>.

While 1850 proved to be a time for joy, with Reedsburg newly becoming a town, other parts of the world were not celebrating. Immigrants were flooding into the United States from all over, mostly from Europe. This was especially true of the state of Wisconsin during this time. German immigrants started arriving in the state of Wisconsin as political refugees, as turmoil was brewing within the German states. The second wave of migration was starting to pick up speed in 1850, as German, Norwegian,

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<sup>12</sup> Krug, History of Reedsburg, p. 21; “shanty row” refers to the line of shanties that were built for housing along the river. They were all numbered and had distinctions about each. Number 1 was the bachelor shanty, while the others were primarily for the members to live in.

<sup>13</sup> Sesquicentennial History Committee, Remembering 150 Years, p. 22; Reeds Burgh was the name of the area in which the residents were staying, once the new voting precinct was to be renamed; they changed the name to Reedsburgh, eventually dropping the “h” to what is now, Reedsburg.

<sup>14</sup> Krug, History of Reedsburg, p. 22

<sup>15</sup> Stager, Reedsburg Intensive Survey, p. 9; For more information on the Saw Log War and how the rivalry between Reedsburg and Baraboo was created out of this, refer to the book “Reedsburg Remember 150 Years” located on pages 29 & 30.

<sup>16</sup> Stager, Reedsburg Intensive Survey, p. 88.

Swiss, and Danish refugees were all crossing the borders into Wisconsin. Most of the German's that settled within Reedsburg were from Hanover, Germany.<sup>17</sup>

Various types of industries were springing up around Reedsburg, many of which revolved around agriculture. Another major industry came during the “hop boom,” which was introduced to the area in 1852 by Jesse Cottington. Cottington grew up in England and came over to the United States, eventually to Wisconsin, bringing with him the knowledge he had gained growing up in England<sup>18</sup>. Alcohol, especially beer was an important part of the German culture. With the already high German population, this was a popular idea. But in 1854 the largest percent of Germans coming into Wisconsin were arriving from Southwestern Germany. They made their presence known in Wisconsin by having about 200,000 immigrants enter the state<sup>19</sup>. This helped with the boom years of the newly founded industry. During this time, New York, which was previously a hop center, was struggling, allowing other areas to prosper. This did not last for long, when in 1868 the “Hop Crash” of 1868 set in and many people who were in the hops industry started to struggle. The arrival of the railroad eventually helped turn things around once again<sup>20</sup>.

Prior to that Reedsburg did its part to help out the North and its industries during the Civil War. By having such a diverse population in the area, it was not uncommon for the residents to not fully be aware of what the South was like, using slavery as a means for production. Many of the German residents, along with others from the area, did not grow up with slavery, making them against the idea. On September 2, 1861, Reedsburg alone enlisted forty men into the army, which led to the creation of the 12<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Company B. Over 1,049 men from the Reedsburg area enlisted to fight. They trained for a month before departing for Camp Randall on October 30, 1861. It was not until January 11, 1862 that

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<sup>17</sup> Stager, Reedsburg Intensive Survey, p. 94; For a map and graph of German immigration into Wisconsin in the 1800s, see Appendix B.

<sup>18</sup> Sesquicentennial History Committee, Reedsburg Remembers 150 Years, p. 31.

<sup>19</sup> Zeitlin, Richard H., *Germans in Wisconsin* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin Press, 2000), p. 4.

<sup>20</sup> Sesquicentennial History Committee, Reedsburg Remembers 150 Years, p. 31.

they were sent out of the state and on their way to fight for the Union. The soldiers that left that day were on their way to Atlanta, fighting in many battles along the way.<sup>21</sup>

Traveling for the soldiers was hard since there was no direct railroad in the area at this time. Railroads were quite popular, which many of the residents were hoping for since the inception of the state. In 1857, the first railroad made its way into Wisconsin in 1857.<sup>22</sup> It was not until 1870 that Reedsburg got the legislature to sanction a railroad line to pass through it. The community voted to raise \$25,000 in bonds to help pay for the railway. January 1, 1872 culminated the work the residents did when the first train came into town on the Madison Division of the Chicago and Northwestern that was extended to pass through Reedsburg. The new excitement only lasted a year, before the city turned against government action, which ultimately revolved around the railroad.

The new railroad depot was used as a gathering place for many angered citizens to protest the deportation of a Native American family from the area. The family was descendants of A-Ha-Cho-Ka, or Blue Wing, who was the chief of the Winnebago tribe located nearby. The Native Americans were to be relocated to a Nebraska reservation by U.S. soldiers that were sent down from Sparta. Previous members of the tribe were removed in the late 1840s, but they remained behind. The government was now telling them that they needed to be relocated to be with the rest of the tribe. The residents of Reedsburg heard about a group of Winnebago Indians that were surrounded and forced out of the area by being loaded into trains just two days before Christmas in 1873 just north of them. This did not sit well with them since Blue Wing and the other Indians in the area had welcomed them into the area when Reedsburg was being settled. Blue Wing's wife and children were gathered by the soldiers and taken to the railroad depot in order to be boarded upon the train, but a group of men showed up to make sure that this did not happen. Eventually they were allowed to stay in Reedsburg by showing their papers and avoided being removed to

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<sup>21</sup> Sesquicentennial History Committee, *Reedsburg Remembers 150 Years*, p. 97 & 98.

<sup>22</sup> The Wisconsin Cartographer's Guild, *Wisconsin's Past and Present: A Historical Atlas*, (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), p. 51.

Nebraska<sup>23</sup>. The city coming together to keep their friends in Reedsburg was just the beginning of what was to come for the city.

The city organized throughout the years, not just for their Native American friends, but for the community. In 1869, the city came together once again to create the first fire department in the city. A three man committee was created to form the first Hook & Ladder Company in the area. In 1873 they added to the department by purchasing many other materials that the fire department needed to form the Babcock Hook & Ladder Company No. 1. To make it complete, Reedsburg built their first engine house in 1879-1880.<sup>24</sup> The population banded together to help improve Reedsburg as many of them were finding friendships based upon their heritage. By 1870, 141 of the total 547 people of Reedsburg were foreign born.<sup>25</sup> The German population was so great in Reedsburg, a German newspaper was created, “Der Sauk County Press.” The next large group of immigrants to enter Wisconsin was in 1882, when around 250,000 Northeastern Germans found their way to Wisconsin.<sup>26</sup>

In 1900 there was a lack of medical knowledge to help with the booming population. This changed when the William Stolte house was purchased by Dr. Adelbert Edwards, who just moved from Lime Ridge to the area. Stolte turned this house into the first hospital in Reedsburg. In 1902 the renovations began to the home that turned it into the hospital that is still standing today in its original location, though it is no longer used as a hospital<sup>27</sup>. In 1903, just three years later after the first hospital opened, Reedsburg received a new High School. This would be altered slightly in 1923, when a large addition was added to the school to accommodate an extra 260 students<sup>28</sup>. The next big news for the area did not come until 1912 with the first library being opened. The Reedsburg Carnegie Library opened on January 12, 1912. The new “free library” was a large success for the area, built largely on the funds of the

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<sup>23</sup> Sesquicentennial History Committee, Reedsburg Remembers 150 Years, p. 32 & 33.

<sup>24</sup> Sesquicentennial History Committee, Reedsburg Remembers 150 Years, p. 55 & 56.

<sup>25</sup> Stager, Reedsburg Intensive Survey, p. 94

<sup>26</sup> Stager, Reedsburg Intensive Survey, p. 95

<sup>27</sup> Sesquicentennial History Committee, Reedsburg Remembers 150 Years, p. 68.

<sup>28</sup> Sesquicentennial History Committee, Reedsburg Remembers 150 Years, p. 136.

Andrew Carnegie Foundation. Upon opening, the library held 3,490 books.<sup>29</sup> Books played an important role in the coming years, as war was on the horizon.

With the outbreak of war in 1914, the United States changed how they acted. Fear was spreading throughout the United States once they joined the war in 1917. This fear sent Reedsburg's Co. A, 1<sup>st</sup> Wisconsin Infantry, to guard the Armory. On April 7, 1917, 17 troops left Reedsburg for the Armory. Three months later, the entire unit was called to Camp Douglas. The men were then sent down to Camp MacArthur, in Waco, Texas, prior to heading overseas. They joined with other Wisconsin and Michigan soldiers, to form the 32<sup>nd</sup> Division. They fought in many battles, being one of the first groups of soldiers to occupy German soil<sup>30</sup>. The newly formed library and the citizens of Reedsburg came together once more, collecting books and other materials to send overseas for the soldiers to read while away<sup>31</sup>. As the war drew to a close in 1918, Reedsburg celebrated the ending of the war by flooding the streets for a parade through downtown. Another parade was held in May of 1919 to welcome home the troops that had left<sup>32</sup>.

The Progressive Movement had been part of the United States for quite a while now, starting in the 1880s and lasting until around the 1920s. Wisconsin was no different, having one of the major players being the governor at the time, Robert LaFollette. One aspect of the Progressive Movement was the banishment of alcohol within the United States. Seen as an evil in many ways, Reedsburg was one of the first cities to take action. Reedsburg went "dry" on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 1917. With that passing, no new liquor licenses were to be issued, as well as not renewing them. This was the first time in the short history of Reedsburg that alcohol was not being sold. It was met with complaints by many residents, but it did not matter because on January 16, 1919 the Volstead Act was put into place banning alcohol in the United

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<sup>29</sup> Sesquicentennial History Committee, Reedsburg Remembers 150 Years, p. 160.

<sup>30</sup> Sesquicentennial History Committee, Reedsburg Remembers 150 Years, p. 100.

<sup>31</sup> Sesquicentennial History Committee, Reedsburg Remembers 150 Years, p. 101.

<sup>32</sup> Sesquicentennial History Committee, Reedsburg Remembers 150 Years, p. 102 & 103.

States. The Prohibition law stayed in effect until 1933 despite its ineffectiveness to stop alcohol consumption, as many residents, even in Reedsburg, found ways around it<sup>33</sup>.

During this time the Great Depression had also hit. Many residents were hit quite hard, like many others throughout the rest of the United States and eventually the World. Franklin D. Roosevelt created many programs to help aid the communities around the U.S. trying to get them back on their feet. Programs created through Roosevelt's New Deal Program were installed to try and get the economy moving. It was not until the outbreak of World War II and the invasion of Poland by the Germans that the economy really started to see a turnaround. Factories were now starting to change to creating war goods, not just domestic products. Car manufacturers were starting to produce tanks and food distribution was being closely watched and eventually rationed. Decisions needed to be made in order to provide for the nation during this time period.

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<sup>33</sup>Sesquicentennial History Committee, Reedsburg Remembers 150 Years, p. 294 & 295.

## Why Were the United States and Wisconsin Chosen to hold Prisoners?

The German prisoners were brought over to the United States from Europe, more specifically from their ally, England. Approximately 425,000 prisoners were held within the United States. Within the group of 425,000 that were held within the United States, approximately 371,000 were German prisoners<sup>34</sup>. The first group of prisoners was brought over in August of 1942 after the North African Campaign when about 150,000 prisoners were captured by Great Britain. The U.S. decided to accept 50,000 prisoners from Great Britain after they were captured by the allied troops in the North African Campaign<sup>35</sup>. There was an average of about 20,000 prisoners arriving on the shores per month during this time<sup>36</sup>.

The threat of Germany was another reason that these prisoners were brought over to the United States. Rumors started to spread throughout Europe that Hitler was planning to take action regarding the prisoners that were being held in Britain. It was then that the 50,000 prisoners were accepted by the United States. The rumor that was spreading was the belief that Hitler was planning to air-lift weapons to the German prisoners, much like the United States had done with food and other goods to West Berlin during the Cold War<sup>37</sup>.

The POWs that were brought over to the U.S. went through a “strict” procedure. Prisoners were assigned numbers prior to coming to the U.S. after being caught, then they were fingerprinted and photographed. Upon completing the preliminary stages, then they were able to receive medical treatment if needed. Once they were examined by medical officials, they were interrogated by military officials, and then transported to the U.S.<sup>38</sup>. The United States decided early on that they would bring prisoners over to

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<sup>34</sup> Reiss, *Bronzed Bodies*, p. 475.

<sup>35</sup> Arnold Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners of War in America*, (Briarcliff Manor: Scarborough House, 1979), p. 2.

<sup>36</sup> Arnold Krammer, “German Prisoners of War in the United States,” *Military Affairs*, (April 1976), p, 68.

<sup>37</sup> Cowley, *Stalag Wisconsin*, p. 10

<sup>38</sup> Arnold Krammer, “German Prisoners of War in the United States,” *Military Affairs*, (April 1976), p, 68.

the U.S. through the use of empty liberty ships<sup>39</sup>. After that the prisoners arrived in the United States and were sent by train to the next stop, which most likely was the camp in which they were to be held. Often times the arrival of the prisoners was watched upon by citizens of the city. Jim Pawlisch, a Reedsburg resident was one of those gazers.

“I rode my bike down to watch as they arrived in Reedsburg at the train depot in olive colored passenger cars. The steam train came rolling into Reedsburg with the prisoners and they didn’t look happy. Many looked young faced. Quite a few had little Nazi flags in the windows of the train<sup>40</sup>.”

There were two different types of camps that held prisoners within the U.S. The first camp was a permanent camp, which often times was located at an army base that was already in existence. These camps usually held anywhere from 1,000 to 5,000 prisoners. The average number held at this type of camp was about 2,500 prisoners<sup>41</sup>. Camp McCoy, which was the permanent camp within Wisconsin, was a little different than the average. At its peak time during the war, Camp McCoy held 3,500 Japanese, 5,000 German, and about 500 Korean prisoners<sup>42</sup>. Eventually the number declined, most likely down to the normal average of 2,500, but for a short while the camp held roughly 9,000 prisoners.

The second type of camp, which was what Camp Reedsburg was considered to be, was a branch camp. Branch camps were in small isolated areas that could be easily guarded<sup>43</sup>. This was made apparent by the number of guards that Camp Reedsburg had (twenty guards and two officers). Camp Reedsburg is located on marshy land, which was not of much use for anything else, until Webb High School was built

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<sup>39</sup> Cowley, *Stalag Wisconsin*, p. 10; Liberty Ships were cargo ships built by the United States to transport goods.

<sup>40</sup> Interview with Jim Pawlisch.

<sup>41</sup> Arnold Krammer, “German Prisoners of War in the United States,” *Military Affairs*, (April 1976), p, 68.

<sup>42</sup> Cowley, *Stalag Wisconsin*, p. 15

<sup>43</sup> Arnold Krammer, “German Prisoners of War in the United States,” *Military Affairs*, (April 1976), p, 68.; For a picture of what Camp Reedsburg looked like, see Appendix C.

in 1955<sup>44</sup>. Despite the camp being discussed in the local paper on a few rare occasions, the newspaper also made it clear that it was not to be bothered by citizens. “Police warn to stay away from the camp it is of no concern to the public.”<sup>45</sup> Residents of LaValle, Wisconsin, which is about a 15 minute drive from Reedsburg, had very little knowledge about the camp, because of how secretive it was<sup>46</sup>.

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<sup>44</sup> [http://www.rsd.k12.wi.us/Admin/Complete\\_Brochure.pdf](http://www.rsd.k12.wi.us/Admin/Complete_Brochure.pdf)

<sup>45</sup> “To Quarter 137 Prisoners Here,” *Reedsburg Times Press*, 28 June 1945, p. 1.

<sup>46</sup> Interview with Juliette Gant

## Wisconsin During World War II

The United States during World War II was an interesting place to live. With such a large assortment of ethnicities living within the boundaries at the time, tension was sure to rise during the war between many different groups of people. With extremely large numbers of German and Italian people living in the country, conflicts were sure to arise. While this may have been a prediction of what it was going to be like during the war, Wisconsin was actually quite different.

At the start of the war, Wisconsin was sitting on the edge of their seats. Germany had invaded Poland, proving to be the aggressors of the war. Wisconsin, having the large German population was sure to take a hit from the perspective of “Nazi lovers.” Wisconsin had a total population in 1940 of over three million residents. Of the three million Wisconsin residents, the census shows that 88,800 whites were born in Germany, while even more had were coming from German heritage<sup>47</sup>. While it was believed that the tensions would rise between these residents, the opposite happened. Residents with German and Italian heritage made it clear that they opposed their home countries and that they were siding with the United States. Neighbors were very understanding of this issue, but some still were cautious<sup>48</sup>. The caution came with good reason, since Nazi sympathizers rose throughout the United States.

Japanese-Americans had it the hardest as many were forced into Japanese Internment camps throughout the duration of the war following the bombing of Pearl Harbor. While that was true, Germans, Italians, and Japanese were all required to stop down at the local post offices as “enemy aliens” in order to register. They were required to bring photos and alien registration cards<sup>49</sup>. In the 1940s, only 23 Japanese

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<sup>47</sup> <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/>; See Appendix D for a map of German population within Wisconsin in 1940/1990.

<sup>48</sup> William F. Thompson, *The History of Wisconsin: Continuity and Change, 1940-1965, Vol. VI*, (Stevens Point: Worzalla Publishing Company, 1988), p. 64.

<sup>49</sup> Sesquicentennial History Committee, *Reedsburg Remembers 150 Years*, p. 105

were in Wisconsin, and majority of them were in Milwaukee County. The majority of the Japanese Prisoners of War that were in Wisconsin were held at Camp McCoy<sup>50</sup>.

The outbreak of the War was what Wisconsin needed in order to step up and help their country. Men and women volunteered to help their country by fighting in the war, or on the home front. In 1942 the draft age was lowered from 21 to 18, making it possible for more men to enter into the services. By 1943 Wisconsin had registered over one million men into the service, while almost 9,000 women were enlisted as nurses<sup>51</sup>. While the total number of men fighting in the war was staggering, Wisconsin did its part to contribute with man power and even “woman power”. In the end of the war, a total of approximately 20 million military deaths occurred worldwide. Within that 20 million, 292,000 were Americans<sup>52</sup>. It is estimated that nearly 8,000 Wisconsin soldiers died, while 13,600 ended up wounded in battle<sup>53</sup>.

During the time that the men and women were out fighting and giving their time to the country, the state itself was doing its part. Large numbers of farm goods were needed throughout the country. This included: milk, eggs, wheat, soybeans, cranberries, and other canned vegetables<sup>54</sup>. Canned goods became imperative to the war effort, since they were able to be sent overseas to soldiers to eat on the front lines. This meant that large quantities were needed and Wisconsin was willing to step up its production in order to help out. During 1945, the foreign workers (mainly Mexican and Jamaican) that were brought in were used in agriculture for an average of 11.8 hours per work day. In total, they had logged a total of 1,006,449 man-hours<sup>55</sup>. Men were not the only ones logging hours on the farm.

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<sup>50</sup> Thompson, *The History of Wisconsin*, p. 65.

<sup>51</sup> Thompson, *The History of Wisconsin*, p. 66 & 67.

<sup>52</sup> Thompson, *The History of Wisconsin*, p. 102

<sup>53</sup> Thompson, *The History of Wisconsin*, p. 67 & 68.

<sup>54</sup> Thompson, *The History of Wisconsin*, p. 83

<sup>55</sup> Farm Labor News, Farm Labor Staff, *Farm Labor News*, March 1, 1945, p. 2

Women were also stepping up their role. “Women were efficient and worked on numerous farms in truck and market-garden farms, small fruit growers, dairy, poultry and seed growing farms as well”<sup>56</sup>. From 1940-1944 the number of women in the workforce rose nationally from 13 million to 19 million<sup>57</sup>.

Foreign workers were being brought in to the United States from Mexico and Jamaica in 1945. With 1,500 being from Mexico and 1,600 from Jamaica, prisoners were not the only source of additional labor<sup>58</sup>. The projection of foreign workers hours was figured out by looking at 1944 production levels, and estimates that employers would be able to get about 10 hours a day from the workers. Canning crops were estimated at the high average of hours spent per day working at 12, while pickles were the lowest in hours with 8 ½. Those hours that were projected ended up earning Wisconsin \$1.5 million in 1944<sup>59</sup>.

Soybeans were another major industry during the war. In 1943, Wisconsin produced over one million bushels of soybeans for the first time ever<sup>60</sup>. Eggs were equally important for Wisconsin in 1943. Wisconsin produced 2.196 million eggs in 1943, up from 1.594 million in 1939. Over this four year span, Wisconsin drastically increased its output. Milk production also rose 20% from 1939 to 14 billion pounds, which counted for 12 percent of the nation’s production of milk. The total gross income from agriculture during 1943 was \$766 million, up an astonishing 160% from 1939<sup>61</sup>.

Although the farming industry was hit relatively hard in 1943, it was worse in 1944 when the men who were deferred from service were now required to enter. This would leave the farms greatly unmanned, despite the workers that were brought in to help alleviate that stress. In 1943, they did not want enlisted men to be working in the fields to help, which had happened on occasion previously. This

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<sup>56</sup> Farm Labor Staff, *Farm Labor News*, March 1, 1945, p. 3

<sup>57</sup> Thompson, *The History of Wisconsin*, p. 97

<sup>58</sup> Farm Labor Staff, *Farm Labor News*, May 1, 1945, p. 3

<sup>59</sup> Farm Labor Staff, *Farm Labor News*, June 1945, p. 2.

<sup>60</sup> Thompson, *The History of Wisconsin*, p. 83

<sup>61</sup> Thompson, *The History of Wisconsin*, p. 84

was when Wisconsin turned to using POWs as a labor force<sup>62</sup>. At the close of the war in 1945, Wisconsin called upon Mexican-Americans from Texas to come up and lend a hand. The Federal Government brought over British subjects from Jamaica, the Bahamas, British Honduras, and Barbados in 1943. The number of Mexican and West Indian workers at that time was 1300. This would more than double in just two years, making 1945 have 3,200 Mexican and West Indian workers.

Rationing became very important throughout Wisconsin and the state. With so many people being pushed around the United States for work, being pushed around Wisconsin was no different. Residents were required to ration their goods and make sure that they were not “over indulging” in goods and services. This policy was put in place by the Federal Government, just like it was during World War I. Rationing was thought to help limit the quantity of goods that were used at home, in order to give more to those fighting overseas. Many of the goods that were rationed were gas, meat, and tires. In December of 1942, gas rationing went nationwide<sup>63</sup>.

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<sup>62</sup> Thompson, *The History of Wisconsin*, p. 92.

<sup>63</sup> Thompson, *The History of Wisconsin*, p. 76

## History of Camp Reedsburg

In Wisconsin, there were 38 different branch POW camps, with one main camp. The main camp was located at Fort McCoy in Tomah<sup>64</sup>. The sizes of each camp were varied throughout the state. Camp McCoy was one of the largest, while the sizes of the other branch camps were quite small. Reedsburg was one of the smaller camps throughout the state. The camp provided many different things for the city of Reedsburg while in operation, some good and some bad.

Camp Reedsburg was located at the north end of Webb Avenue; the camp was only in Reedsburg for a short time, from June 1945 to August 1945<sup>65</sup>. During this time, Webb Avenue only extended as far as Third Street instead of extending all the way to Eighth Street as it does today<sup>66</sup>. The camp was located just west of Brewery Hill, behind Walnut Street. Eber Janzen lived on Walnut Street at the time. He said that his “backyard was the POW Camp”<sup>67</sup>. The camp was not a very large structure, but was big enough to house 137 German prisoners<sup>68</sup>. The prisoners were housed in army squad tents and used a well for their source of water<sup>69</sup>. The boundaries of the camp were well shown by fencing. However this fence was not the military style of chain-linked fence and barbed wire that most are used to seeing in the movies. “A snow fence was all that held these prisoners in”<sup>70</sup>.

The living arrangements for these men were not much better. You might expect that 137 men living in an area, there would be a big structure set up for them to sleep in. Instead, the camp consisted of “white canvas tents used to hold them”. The tents were “small, not very large” and were the place that prisoners spent their nights during the hot summer of Wisconsin<sup>71</sup>. A few portable buildings were also

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<sup>64</sup> Betty Cowley, *Stalag Wisconsin: Inside WWII Prisoner-of-War Camps*, (Oregon: Badger Books Inc., 2002), p. 51.

<sup>65</sup> Cowley, *Stalag Wisconsin*, p. 51; See Appendix E for map location of Camp Reedsburg

<sup>66</sup> Interview with Shirley Burmester

<sup>67</sup> Interview with Eber Janzen

<sup>68</sup> “To Quarter 137 Prisoners Here,” *Reedsburg Times Press*, 28 June 1945, p. 1.

<sup>69</sup> Interview with Carl Steinweg

<sup>70</sup> Interview with Dick Gant

<sup>71</sup> Interview with Eber Janzen

erected for the prisoners; these provided some additional space for them. It also was the headquarters for the people watching over the camp.

Within the camp the tents and portable buildings were used for daily life, such as eating. Money that was made during the time working in the canning factory and the farms was paid by employers to the U.S. Treasury, and then from there the POWs received a flat 60-cent per day rate. This money could be used to buy personal goods while at the POW camp, but they were not allowed the chance to purchase cigarettes, candy, or beer<sup>72</sup>. With not being able to purchase any sweet snacks, eating was important for the prisoners. The diet for them consisted of pickled herring, beef hearts and liver. Sometimes they got sugar and margarine, and they always had plenty of fresh vegetables<sup>73</sup>. The people who ran the camp ate very similarly to the prisoners, with possible slight variations to their diet.

The camp was run by twenty guards, mostly veterans of the South Pacific, and two officers. Most of the time, the people chosen to guard the camps were picked because “they could not be used anywhere else for lack of skill, intelligence, or fitness.”<sup>74</sup> These people were the ones overseeing the camp trying to make things run as smooth as possible. An ad in the newspaper asked the public to help these new guards out as much as possible. They said that the guards “could use a radio and some furniture at the camp if it was possible. It is not apparent whether or not the help was granted, but the camp was opened and the prisoners soon arrived.

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<sup>72</sup> “To Quarter 137 Prisoners Here,” *Reedsburg Times Press*, 28 June 1945, p. 1.

<sup>73</sup> “To Quarter 137 Prisoners Here,” *Reedsburg Times Press*, 28 June 1945, p. 1.

<sup>74</sup> Matthias Reiss, “Bronzed Bodies behind Barbed Wire”, *The Journal of Military History* 69 (April 2005): 489.

## Reedsburg during World War II

Reedsburg's experience during WWII was very similar to that of the rest of the cities in the state. The city sent many members to fight overseas, to see many perish as well as many come back wounded. In 1942, many men between the ages of 20 and 45 were required to enlist in the army, at Town Hall. Upon graduation from Reedsburg's high school, many members were often leaving right for war because of the new age limit for drafting. Also in 1942, rationing was put into effect. In 1942 rationing hit Reedsburg with the rationing of rubber, mainly tires and inner tubes. Sauk County was allowed 22 tires and 18 tubes per month for passenger cars. This was slightly increased for the use of trucks and tires, since it was allowed 58 tires and 49 tubes per month<sup>75</sup>.

Car use was also rationed. With tires being rationed, it was hard to drive as much as one liked, for fear of having a flat tire. Another reason driving was not used much during that time was because of the Federal Car Use Tax Stamp. The stamp was needed for every car that was owned in order to be used, which was purchased at the local Post Office for \$2.09. Also being rationed was the use of gasoline. Gasoline use for cars was highly regulated, while it was still regulated for farming purposes, but not as tightly<sup>76</sup>.

After Pearl Harbor, many areas were thinking about needing some sort of group in place in case something was to happen in their hometown. Because it could happen at Pearl Harbor, it could happen anywhere. The Civilian Defense Corps was soon created within Reedsburg. The thought was that if they could get enough members to join to have 80 persons per 1,000 citizens, they were able to take care of themselves. Drills were run throughout the city to test this group of people. The people enlisted in the Civilian Defense Corps were wide ranging in nature, but they all had the defense of their community in

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<sup>75</sup> Sesquicentennial History Committee, Reedsburg Remembers, p. 105

<sup>76</sup> Sesquicentennial History Committee, Reedsburg Remembers, p. 105

mind. Classes were taught at South School for First Aid in case an attack occurred; they would be ready to assist anyone that needed help. They were war ready having such positions as bomb wardens<sup>77</sup>.

On one such occasion they actually played out a test, as if they were being attacked. A “blue warning” was sent out through a series of sirens. This meant that all defense personnel should report to their stations. Following the first warning a second warning went out, a “red warning”, again taking place through a series of sirens and bells going off. This meant that all pedestrians should leave the streets, parks, and anywhere public to take shelter. Soon following, a second “blue warning” sounded, the third warning overall, telling the citizens that it was ok to go back to their daily lives. The “bombing of Reedsburg” occurred without warning however in January 1944. This happened when a plane flew low overhead dropping leaflets upon the community. They read something like “This could have been a bomb, join Women’s Army Corps”<sup>78</sup>.

While this was to help defend from outside attacks, many arguments were taking place within the community. Many of these were aimed at the idea of having the POW camp in their hometown. Outrage over the camp was cited through letters to the editor of the local newspaper, which was referred to previously in the paper. With “Nazi labor being preferred.” it took a cool head to keep the city calm<sup>79</sup>. This calmness came through in another letter to the editor. This letter said that the German men were forced to fight and it was the right of the Americans to help them. The author to this letter took a jab at the previous author by stating that the previous anonymous author was probably a “person (who) was refused a job and for some reason decides to blame it on the POW who have come to the community to ease the labor shortage”<sup>80</sup>.

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<sup>77</sup> Sesquicentennial History Committee, *Reedsburg Remembers*, p. 105

<sup>78</sup> Sesquicentennial History Committee, *Reedsburg Remembers 150 Years*, p. 105

<sup>79</sup> According to the article entitled, “To Quarter 137 Prisoners Here,” *Reedsburg Times Press*, June 28, 1945, once civilian labor was available to work, the POWs would be removed and allow the citizens to work.

<sup>80</sup> “From Our Readers,” *Reedsburg Times Press*, 18 July 1945

This shows that not all citizens of this country and city were opposed to the camp. As shown previously, Reedsburg took very kindly to these men. The author in the rebuttal letter also stated that the men “were the victims of a man called Hitler who must have been hit by the devil himself.”<sup>81</sup> This letter shows the attitude in which the community had toward these men. Not only did this letter show the passion in which Nazis and Hitler were hated, but they understood that not all of the German soldiers were on the side of the Nazi regime.

At the end of the war, Reedsburg, like most cities, celebrated the victory and the idea that its men would be soon coming home. At the announcement of VE-Day, the city erupted<sup>82</sup>. Stores throughout Reedsburg ended up closing early as sirens and bells rang out letting everyone know what was happening. Students were let out of school in order to celebrate with the rest of the community. Fire trucks ended up driving throughout the town with their siren on. While this was the victory over Germany, the one with Japan remained active. War with Japan lasted a little longer and finally ended with the dropping of the Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Once this was finally finished, the bells and sirens sounded again. They even held a parade throughout Reedsburg, complete with a marching band. Churches even held victory services to help celebrate<sup>83</sup>.

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<sup>81</sup> “From Our Readers,” *Reedsburg Times Press*, 18 July 1945.

<sup>82</sup> VE-Day (Victory in Europe Day) is what the surrendering of Germany in WWII is commonly referred to as.

<sup>83</sup> Sesquicentennial History Committee, *Reedsburg Remembers 150 Years*, p. 107

## Prisoners and labor

The prisoners arrived by train into the city and came without knowing much, if anything, about the area. Once they arrived, it often times reminded them of their hometowns<sup>84</sup>. On a few rare occasions, some people brought back the prisoners they had contracted during the war, after they had been repatriated to Germany at the conclusion of the war<sup>85</sup>. This made them familiar with the area for their returns. Once the prisoners were settled in they were used throughout the area to help with farming and canning. In 1945, farm labor was the greatest limiting factor in farm production in Wisconsin. With all the available men being in service, the farming industry was hurting. Wisconsin was in need of approximately 50,000 part-time and seasonal workers for the 1945 harvest<sup>86</sup>.

While the prisoners were a great source of work, some other programs were put into place by the federal government to help with the labor issues. The Bracero Program was issued in 1942 to help with the agricultural needs<sup>87</sup>. This agreement was between Mexico and the United States to send Mexican braceros to the U.S. By 1945 58,000 braceros were working in agriculture within the United States<sup>88</sup>. While it seems like a good program, it was seen as unfair by many of the Mexican workers because of the mistreatment that were faced. They were often times underpaid and given less than adequate housing and food<sup>89</sup>. It is the belief of some that the mistreatment of Mexican workers and the exceedingly fortunate treatment of German prisoners came out of fear. The fear was that Germany would find out about

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<sup>84</sup> Interview with Evan Lange

<sup>85</sup> Interview with Carl Steinweg; repatriated is the term used when describing being sent back to their home country.

<sup>86</sup> Farm Labor Staff, *Farm Labor News*, March 1, 1945, p. 1

<sup>87</sup> Barbara Schmitter Heisler, "The Other Braceros: Temporary Labor and German Prisoners of War in the United States, 1943-1946," 31, *Social Science History*, (Summer 2007): 239

<sup>88</sup> The Other Braceros, p Barbara Schmitter Heisler, "The Other Braceros: Temporary Labor and German Prisoners of War in the United States, 1943-1946," 31, *Social Science History*, (Summer 2007): 241.

<sup>89</sup> Barbara Schmitter Heisler, "The Other Braceros: Temporary Labor and German Prisoners of War in the United States, 1943-1946," 31, *Social Science History*, (Summer 2007): 246

mistreatment of their German's and do the same to American prisoners<sup>90</sup>. While it is unknown at this point whether or not anyone in Reedsburg was involved with this program, it is important to note that it did exist and that there were undoubtedly numerous Mexican workers in the area during this time.

While some of the Braceros were not getting the treatment they were told they would get, German POWs were seen as getting extremely generous treatment. Prisoners were allowed to leave the camps to work, sometimes even fish down at the river located behind the camp<sup>91</sup>. The Prisoners also left camp to work in the area canning factories and farms. The canning factory in Reedsburg employed approximately 60 of these prisoners, while Baraboo used 40 and North Freedom used 37<sup>92</sup>. Prisoners were also scattered throughout the local farms. Only the best fit prisoners were allowed to work on the farms<sup>93</sup>.

The people who contracted these prisoners for work on their farms were told that they were to eat separately. On one occasion, this did not happen. Reedsburg resident Daniel Thieding had about five or six prisoners out at his family farm to help during the thrashing; they were accompanied by one armed guard. When his father was told that the prisoners needed to eat separately, he replied with a "no, if they work with us they eat with us". Mr. Thieding made his point and was awarded the prisoners to work on his farm. His parents' ability to speak German made the transition quite easy for the new workers. While the prisoners worked on his farm, he also had another worker. While this was most likely very uncommon practice, the one guard also helped at times. "The guard took off his revolver and said that if they saw any guards coming to let him know"<sup>94</sup>.

While it is very unlikely that many guards helped by engaging in physical activity with the prisoners, it doesn't mean that they did not have some sort of friendship with them. A photograph does

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<sup>90</sup> Barbara Schmitter Heisler, "The Other Braceros: Temporary Labor and German Prisoners of War in the United States, 1943-1946," 31, *Social Science History*, (Summer 2007): 242

<sup>91</sup> Interview with Jim Pawlisch

<sup>92</sup> "To Quarter 137 Prisoners Here," *Reedsburg Times Press*, 28 June 1945, p. 1.

<sup>93</sup> Interview with Evan Lange

<sup>94</sup> Interview with Daniel Thieding

exist showing a relationship with four of the prisoners<sup>95</sup>. The photograph and the story about how the guard took off his revolver showed that they were not very concerned with fear of the prisoners. It became quite apparent to many of the citizens, not just the guards, that they were not dangerous. The fear of the Nazi soon diminished. Almost a calming over the city came when this was realized, and it became even more apparent when residents watched the prisoners and their everyday activities. They could be seen playing soccer throughout the day to pass time, or on Sundays they could be heard singing songs in German during their church services. The citizens that could speak German often times enjoyed listening to the prisoners as they sang<sup>96</sup>.

Even kids at the time got the chance to interact with the prisoners, despite the “strict warning” given by the police in the paper. Jim Pawlisch remembers an instance when he was shown an Iron Cross from one of the German prisoners<sup>97</sup>. Eber Janzen had some contact, as little as it might have been, while delivering milk to the POW camp itself. He did so despite the “horrible smell of the place”<sup>98</sup>. Interaction could also be made while prisoners were fishing on the river if residents were passing by in a boat<sup>99</sup>. Many times prisoners were friendly to residents if they waved. The overall theme was that the prisoners were not mean; in fact they were very nice people. Some residents even believed it was because prisoners never had it as good as when they were here<sup>100</sup>.

Other chances for interaction came when prisoners were working at the canning factory. Workers were marched downtown and then over to the canning factory. The military men sometimes used cars while they were marching to the factory<sup>101</sup>. Shirley Burmester worked at the dental office and at the canning factory, where many of the prisoners worked. She agreed that they were “very hard workers and

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<sup>95</sup> For the photograph of the guard and prisoners, see Appendix F.

<sup>96</sup> Interview with Eber Janzen

<sup>97</sup> Interview with Jim Pawlisch; The Iron Cross was a military award given to members of the German Army.

<sup>98</sup> Interview with Eber Janzen

<sup>99</sup> Interview with Jim Pawlisch

<sup>100</sup> Interview with Evan Lange

<sup>101</sup> Interview with Evan Lange

the nicest people.” She had never once had a problem with any of them while working there. “They were very polite and nice; they waited in line for me to get a drink of water before they got theirs.” While she did have a run-in, it was not with the prisoners, it was with a guard. One night on her way home from work, she was followed by a guard. She took off running to get to her house, which was located near the camp. She said that her father took her to the police station that night and she did not work at the canning factory in Reedsburg again<sup>102</sup>.

With the treatment of the prisoners being considered overly nice and the non-fear factor among many of the people that lived in and near the cities in which the camps were located, many started to wonder why. Why were the prisoners not feared as prisoners? One resident of Reedsburg wrote in to the *Reedsburg Times Press* wondering the same thing saying, “Is Nazi labor preferred over our own? Some Nazis violated every law of God or man.”<sup>103</sup> This was a valid concern for many, especially since the treatment of prisoners was vastly different between the United States and Nazi Germany. German prisoners were given passenger cars to ride in, while prisoners in Germany were stashed in cattle cars for transportation.

Some of this tenderness and caring for the German prisoners can be attributed to the strong German heritage that was present throughout the United States, especially within Wisconsin. Others have differing opinions, stating that they believe it can be attributed to the strong female population that was present within many of the U.S. cities. With many of the men out fighting, most of the city’s population was female dominant. “For many Americans, the German veteran soldiers seemed to embody central masculine virtues<sup>104</sup>.” This thought scared government officials, who feared that many women found the prisoners extremely attractive and try to start relationships with the prisoners while they were here, maybe

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<sup>102</sup> Interview with Shirley Burmester

<sup>103</sup> “From Our Readers,” *Reedsburg Times Press*, 12 July 1945, p. 1.

<sup>104</sup> Matthias Reiss, “Bronzed Bodies behind Barbed Wire”, *The Journal of Military History* 69 (April 2005): 475.

even trying to help them escape<sup>105</sup>. With not having an idea what the “Nazis” looked like upon arrival, many were curious as to just that thought, what they looked like.

Many were astonished when they saw that they did not look any different than themselves<sup>106</sup>. “Whatever reservations Americans had about the ‘Nazi prisoners’ usually disappeared when they came into contact with them. The German POWs seemingly looked like-if not sometimes better than-their own ‘boys’ in uniform...”.<sup>107</sup> They looked so much alike that they were required to wear special uniforms that were marked with a “PW” on it to distinguish between the two<sup>108</sup>. This thought can also be attributed to why the Mexican workers might have faced such a difficult time while working here. While the Mexicans were not the only workers here other than prisoners, they were the next largest group of workers. The fascination with the German physique and the attitude that they were no different looking than the Americans were did not make it any easier on the Mexican migrant workers.

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<sup>105</sup> Matthias Reiss, “Bronzed Bodies behind Barbed Wire”, *The Journal of Military History* 69 (April 2005): 492.

<sup>106</sup> Matthias Reiss, “Bronzed Bodies behind Barbed Wire”, *The Journal of Military History* 69 (April 2005): 476.

<sup>107</sup> Matthias Reiss, “Bronzed Bodies behind Barbed Wire”, *The Journal of Military History* 69 (April 2005): 477.

<sup>108</sup> Matthias Reiss, “Bronzed Bodies behind Barbed Wire”, *The Journal of Military History* 69 (April 2005): 483.

## Escaping from Prison Camps

Being a POW is rough for anyone, let alone the prisoners that were held overseas by the Germans and Italians. With oppressive regimes, atrocities occurred quite often, despite having strict guidelines to protect these exact things from happening. The Geneva Convention of in 1929 gave a sense of what was expected of the prisoners and the countries that were holding them captive. According to the Geneva Convention, upon capture prisoners must be disarmed and searched. After that process is complete, they can be taken to the prison in which they will be detained. The prisoners can be expected to work, unless they were an officer, as long as they are treated humanely and are not humiliated and/or degraded<sup>109</sup>. Women are also allowed to be taken prisoner, but they are expected to be treated as an equal, along with any special accommodations they might need as a female.<sup>110</sup>

Prisoners who are of the medical field or who are chaplains were considered to not be prisoners, but were still to be held captive. They are allowed to practice medicine or ministerial duties as needed by the prisoners<sup>111</sup>. The United States also had guidelines that needed to be followed, other than the ones stated previously. American POWs are to fill out a “capture card” within a week of being captured, to let people know that they are captured, but still alive and where they are being held<sup>112</sup>. Whether or not the prisoner had any ill feelings toward their enemy, they were required to salute anyone of a higher rank, even commanders of the camp no matter their rank<sup>113</sup>. Failure to do so could result in punishment.

Punishments for prisoners were very wide ranging, yet the captors still had to follow strict guidelines. The punishment often times was 30 days of confinement, a practice made widely known by war movies dealing with escape attempts. Along with the 30 days of confinement, deprivation of

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<sup>109</sup> Department of Defense, Prisoner of War: Rights & Obligations Under the Geneva Convention, p. 6. Officers were given the option as to whether or not they wanted to work.

<sup>110</sup> Department of Defense, Prisoner of War: Rights & Obligations Under the Geneva Convention, p. 4

<sup>111</sup> Department of Defense, Rights and Obligations, p. 4

<sup>112</sup> Department of Defense, Rights and Obligations, p. 6

<sup>113</sup> Rights and Obligations, p. 7

privileges and extra duties often times were given for the same amount of time as the solitary confinement. While it was a punishable offense to attempt and escape, or help someone escape, the only punishments allowed to be given out were outlined above. No other punishment could be given; the enemy countries were not allowed to try the escapee in a court. While it was a hassle for the guards to protect the communities, whether in the United States or Europe, escape attempts did happen. The “Conventions recognize it is the POW’s duty to try to escape”, giving permission basically for the prisoners to try and escape<sup>114</sup>. This is exactly what they did.

Camp Reedsburg did not have any such escape attempts, or at least none that have been documented or shared with the public. Many people, such as the interviewees, have stated how nice and courteous the prisoners were while here. While escapes did not happen here, it does not mean that they were not thought of or even conspired to the point of having plans drawn up. It is not proven one way or another that this did or did not happen, but one can suggest that it did get brought up in the short amount of time that the Reedsburg branch was open. But just because it did not happen in Reedsburg, does not mean that it did not happen in Wisconsin. This is just one of the differences that make Camp Reedsburg different than other camps within Wisconsin.

Camp McCoy held the largest amount of prisoners, majority of them being the Japanese POWs that were being held in Wisconsin. These prisoners were rarely contracted out because of the tendency that they had for attempting to escape. One such occasion occurred for Camp McCoy in 1943. Three Japanese prisoners had escaped by taking a Camp McCoy truck and driving off with it. Because of the location of Camp McCoy in Tomah, Wisconsin, this gave excellent access to major highways that they could use for a getaway<sup>115</sup>.

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<sup>114</sup> Rights and Obligations, p. 8

<sup>115</sup> Cowley, Stalag Wisconsin, p. 40.

While the prisoners were caught within a week, they were not caught until they reached Minnesota. It was a young boy who at the time saw them running through his yard that reported it, only to find out later that the men he saw running were POWs from Wisconsin. This was not the only attempt to escape from Camp McCoy. In 1944 another escape attempt occurred. This prisoner did not last quite as long as the previous attempt and he was caught within an hour or so of his escape<sup>116</sup>. With railroad tracks nearby and trains constantly coming and going, it could have been very easy for prisoners to catch and ride and then end up in some place that was quite different from the location that they had left. Everyone who escaped during World War II was caught, but that is not to say that some attempts were more successful than others.

Within the United States during World War II, there were a total of 1,583 escape attempts that have been reported. Many did not try to escape for fear, but mainly because none had a clue where to go once they got outside of their camp<sup>117</sup>. Mexico and Canada were popular destinations if the escapee's could figure out how to get there and where it was actually located in relation to where they were being held. The largest attempt that ever occurred took place at the camp located at Papago Park, Arizona. The escapes took place in 1944, when 25 German POWs escaped through a tunnel that was dug out underground<sup>118</sup>. The tunnel that they dug was set up outside of a nearby bathhouse and measured 178 feet long<sup>119</sup>. It was convenient because it looked as though the POWs were using the facility, but actually they were digging the tunnel. The tunnel was about two and a half feet in diameter, which was dug with coal shovels. The shovels were there in order for them to carry coal to heat the bathroom, but were never intended to be used for digging an escape tunnel<sup>120</sup>.

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<sup>116</sup> Cowley, *Stalag Wisconsin*, p. 40

<sup>117</sup> Krammer, *Nazi Prisoners of War in the United States*, p. 115

<sup>118</sup> Arnold Krammer, "German Prisoners of War in the United States," *Military Affairs*, (April 1976), p. 71

<sup>119</sup> John Hammond Moore, *The Faustball Tunnel: German POWs in America and Their Great Escape*, (New York: Randomhouse, 1978), p. 124.

<sup>120</sup> Moore, *The Faustball Tunnel*, p. 122.

The first group of prisoners left at 9:00 pm on December 23, 1944, with the following groups to leave in 20-minute intervals after the first group<sup>121</sup>. The tunnel that was used took three and a half months to complete, but only took hours for twenty-five prisoners to escape from the camp. All of the prisoners were collected within three weeks, but that amount of time was enough to cause quite an uproar within the community. Having prisoners running wild through their town was enough for them to panic, let alone once the newspapers got a hold of this story and run with it. Nothing serious happened because of the escape, as it is pointed out that many of them escaped out of boredom, with a side benefit of maybe being successful<sup>122</sup>.

Overall, many escapees were captured relatively quickly after their escapes. Some took as little as hours to be captured, but some also took months. Camp Deming, New Mexico also had an escape take place in 1945. Many escapees were caught, but a few were still left roaming free after the war had ended. Some were still being captured in 1953, '54, '59, and '64. After 1964, there was still one prisoner left to be captured. He was not heard from until he contacted an historian, Professor Arnold Krammer, author of the *Faustball Tunnel and Hitler's Last Soldier In America*<sup>123</sup>.

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<sup>121</sup> Moore, *The Faustball Tunnel*, p. 154.:

<sup>122</sup> Arnold Krammer, "German Prisoners of War in the United States," *Military Affairs*, (April 1976), p. 71.; It should be noted that there are differing reports as to the length of the tunnel that was dug. *The Faustball Tunnel* states that the tunnel was 178 feet in length, while "German Prisoners of War in the United States" says that the tunnel was 250 feet long. It is a large discrepancy, with Arnold P. Krammer not mentioning where the information came from in his journal article, while John Hammond Moore used prisoners for his information along with official documents produced by the U.S. Government.

<sup>123</sup> Georg Gaertner and Arnold Krammer, *Hitler's Last Soldier In America*, (Briarcliff Manor: Scarborough House, 1985), p. 11 & 12.

## Dissolving of the Prison Camps

With the example of escape attempts being a small part of what differentiated Camp Reedsburg from other camps around the United States, other differences were prevalent between all of the various camps. Another national effort was put in place, only this time it was not to protect against escape attempts by the prisoners. This new effort was to try and “help” the prisoners. In a government effort to spread the meaning of Democracy, POW camps throughout the U.S. were set up to reeducate prisoners, mainly about the ideals of democracy. Great Britain also took part in the process of reeducation, and Russia soon followed. Russia however, had a different outlook on the reeducation process, as they trained their prisoners in the idea of Marxism and Leninism and in the communist way of life<sup>124</sup>.

This time was used throughout the United States to try and reach the hearts of the Nazi prisoners to get them familiar with what it was like to live in a democratized world. German prisoners were often sent items through the German Red Cross with which they could read. These items included books and pamphlets, which were often filled with Nazi ideology<sup>125</sup>. This obviously caused problems for the United States military that was in the very early stages of trying to stop the spread of communism and put an end to Hitler’s reign. Schools were put together within the camps, but early on were mainly taught by Nazi officers who were in the camp as well<sup>126</sup>. However the United States turned away from the idea of letting other German prisoners teach, and turned to other people to teach the classes, many of whom had no background knowledge of how to speak German<sup>127</sup>. The goal of the project was simple.

“The basic objective [is] to impress on the mind of the German prisoner of war the attitude of the citizen of the United States toward life and government. We are not attempting to Americanize these German prisoners of war. We are just trying to enable

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<sup>124</sup> Smith, Jr., Arthur L. *The War for the German Mind*, (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1996), p. vii

<sup>125</sup> Cowley, Stalag U.S.A, p. 91.

<sup>126</sup> Cowley, Stalag U.S.A. p. 92

<sup>127</sup> Smith, Jr., *The War for the German Mind*, p. 31.

them to understand our way of life and-if they understand it-do you think they will fail to realize it is a better way of life than the one they left behind?"

It was not only during the war that these prisoners were used to aid the United States. While the aid that was taking place was in the form of hard labor and the hope that they turned to the American way of life, they were using specific prisoners to help with a government program that was based off of the reeducation process. Prisoners from Germany were being used to document what they had gone through since the beginning of the war. The U.S. would, over the span of fifteen years, have German officers who were prisoners complete manuscripts about the Nazi war effort<sup>128</sup>. Until the termination of this program in 1961, these "historians" created over 2,400 manuscripts that aided the United States with their writings about World War II<sup>129</sup>.

There is no information present which states whether or not the prisoners were given any formal education within Camp Reedsburg. With no such information available, it does not mean that it did not happen. Often times many of the education processes came without knowledge to anyone, not even the prisoners who were learning. By having close relationships with the farmers and workers at the factories, even the prison guards, they could see what life was like during Reedsburg. Interacting on a daily basis with the farmers in their own home, often times eating with the family of the farm they were working on, they were given a glimpse as to what family life was like. This in itself was an educational lesson, despite it not being taught by a formal teacher or with a formal lesson plan.

Many of the prisoners enjoyed Wisconsin and the United States so much that they decided to come back to the U.S. after being repatriated back to Germany. Between 1947 and 1960, roughly 500,000 Germans came to the United States. Many came to flee the turmoil that was present in Germany at the

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<sup>128</sup> James A. Wood, "Captive Historian, Captivated Audience: The German Military History Program, 1945-1961" *Journal of Military History*, (January 2005), p. 124.

<sup>129</sup> James A. Wood, "Captive Historian, Captivated Audience: The German Military History Program, 1945-1961" *Journal of Military History*, (January 2005), p. 146.

time; others came because of what they had heard about America. Some just came to come back because of how much they enjoyed their time as a POW here. Some came back on their own, others came back through the help of the families that they met while working on their farms<sup>130</sup>. Reedsburg even had residents come to Reedsburg during this time, some of whom were prisoners and others to find something new.

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<sup>130</sup> Interview with Carl Steinweg

## Comparisons of Camp Reedsburg

With many differences that seemed to be almost overwhelming, there were a lot of similarities throughout Camp Reedsburg and other camps that held prisoners. Camps were located throughout the United States for various reasons. As stated earlier, the main reason was to take prisoners off the hands of the other allied members that were fighting in the war. It was not until later that they were put to work. Work by the prisoners was not the only similarity with these camps, but it was the overall binding entity that they all had in common.

Door County Wisconsin was and still is famous for the land that they have to offer to the cherry growers of Wisconsin and the United States. Door County has been using cherry growing as a way of life for over a hundred years<sup>131</sup>. With the same shortage that hit Reedsburg and the rest of the United States during World War II, Door County needed to rely on POW labor to keep up with the demands that needed to be met. Prisoner labor proved effective in 1945 by picking 508,020 pails of cherries. The prisoners were paid \$1.35 per day, with 40-cents being taken out per day for meals that were being provided. During their spare time, the orchards hired program coordinators to create activities to keep the POWs entertained during their off time<sup>132</sup>.

Camp Reedsburg paid around the same rate per day once the excess money was taken out from the prisoners daily allotment. While the prisoners were given the chance to have coordinated activities for them in Door County, Reedsburg does not show any such coordination of events other than the church services which were regularly held. Fishing and soccer were popular activities, but most of the time was spent relaxing from a hard day of work, and most likely writing letters.

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<sup>131</sup> Betty Boedeker Pearson, "History of Door County Cherry Pickers," *Historical Review of Brown County and Northeast Wisconsin* 24 (Summer 2007): p. 20.

<sup>132</sup> Betty Boedeker Pearson, "History of Door County Cherry Pickers," *Historical Review of Brown County and Northeast Wisconsin* 24 (Summer 2007): p. 21.

Minnesota was also a place that held many POWs throughout World War II, for the same reasons as Wisconsin. In 1942, Minnesota also felt the labor shortage crisis. Being very similar to Wisconsin, farming was a large component to the overall well-being of Minnesota. Many farmers were short on labor because of the war, with the need of help they turned to the POWs<sup>133</sup>. Princeton, Minnesota was the first camp to open within the state boundaries on September 1, 1943. It housed 100 Italian prisoners that had been captured just eight weeks earlier<sup>134</sup>. Community leaders were allowed to tour the camp, which was the most glaring difference from Reedsburg's camp to the one located in Princeton<sup>135</sup>. Another difference, though not major, was the difference in crops that the POWs were farming. Princeton POWs were farming potatoes, while Reedsburg prisoners were farming a variety of goods.

Minnesota and Wisconsin were not the only locations in the Midwest that were using the POWs. Iowa also engaged in the practice of using POW labor. Camp Algona was one located in Iowa that a camp was located. The camp was created in order help work in agriculture around the area. Camp Algona allowed the production of two POW-German newspapers called *Drahtpost* and *Lagerzeitung*<sup>136</sup>. It was very rare for a camp to allow such a newspaper to be published, let alone in German. The paper was filled with sport news from within their camp, essays, stories, and other world news that provided entertainment. Even word games were published within the paper. The newspaper provided entertainment for the prisoners and keep them busy when they were not busy working in the fields. Overall, the camp produced twenty-four German POW-generated editions of the two papers within the fifteen months that they were at Camp Algona<sup>137</sup>.

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<sup>133</sup> Anita Buck, *Behind Barbed Wire: German Prisoners of War Camp in Minnesota*, (St. Cloud: North Star Press of St. Cloud, Inc., 1998), p. 14.

<sup>134</sup> Pearson, *Behind Barbed Wire*, p. 21.

<sup>135</sup> Pearson, *Behind Barbed Wire*, p. 22.

<sup>136</sup> Michael Luick-Thrams, *Camp Papers: The German POW Newspapers at Camp Algona, Iowa 1944-46*, (St. Paul: Traces, 2003) , p. ii

<sup>137</sup> *Camp Papers*, p. ii

Camp Reedsburg used prisoner of labor, but did not allow for the use of a newspaper to be published by the prisoners. It was not just Reedsburg that did not allow this; many places did not allow it because it would have been published in the native language with no way for the guards to know what it was saying. With a large number of German speakers present in the community, the guards could have had one of the citizens read it, but that would have taken up too much time, time that could have been used on farming. It was very rare having such a freedom to act through newspapers, but the prisoners took advantage of it by publishing numerous issues of the paper while there.

## Conclusion

With hundreds of POW camps located throughout the United States, Reedsburg has joined a sort of fraternity with the rest of the United States. While other locations can say that they have had a POW Camp, it is not very widespread throughout the United States. Many places do not mention the fact that they have had a camp located in their city and the reasoning for this is unknown.

The fact that these camps were being hidden, whether intentional or unintentional, is playing into the reasons for their nonexistence in the knowledge of today's youth. The people living at the time of their existence did not know the camps were nearby, so it is not a wonder that many students and people today do not know about them. While the internment camps are being brought to the foreground in discussion of what had happened to the Japanese, these POW camps should also be mentioned. The internment camps were a negative part of history and should be explained as such. However, these other branch camps should be brought up and talked about as well, to spread the knowledge that not all of the camps were started for horrifying reasons. They were not started to keep an entire ethnicity under supervision or to complete genocide, but instead they were created to house prisoners of war, and upon completion of the war were allowed to be repatriated back to their home countries to do as they pleased.

Many other questions still remained unanswered about these camps. Some of which are the notions of the physique of the prisoners and the roles that they played at the time of their terms as POWs. How much of a role did their looks play in the treatment they received? Were they treated better by the prison guards, community, and even the women out of an infatuation for them? Other things to consider for further research are the roles of the guards. With the large German population that was present at the time and the prisoners that were there, did they embody what Wisconsin truly was? German's were all over the area, the prison guards who were brought in to guard the camp were not. In other words, the prisoners worked on the farms and Wisconsin is known for farming, perhaps the prisoners were more at

home than one would have thought? Also, does racism have anything to play into the treatment of the Bracero workers?

Finally, these camps are historically significant because they offer a bit of history that is largely forgotten. I am hoping that with the writing of this paper, the public will become aware to why this POW camp is historically important to Reedsburg. Camp Reedsburg brought together a community of strangers who were fighting against their own family and neighbors. Citizens became friends and create lasting relationships with many of these prisoners. I hope to have opened the door of discussion to Camp Reedsburg and other similar camps throughout the United States. This process was done in the hopes that someday these camps will also be discussed as an important part of our history.

## Bibliography

### Secondary Sources

#### Books

Bischof, Günter and Stephen E. Ambrose. *Eisenhower and the German POWs: Facts Against Falsehood*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992.

This book discussed the belief that Eisenhower had mistreated and ordered the mistreatment of German prisoners. While it is said that Eisenhower ordered this, it has not been proven, but the fact that troops mistreated German prisoners has been written about.

Buck, Anita Albrecht. *Behind Barbed Wire: German prisoners of war camps in Minnesota*. St. Cloud, MN: North Star Press of St. Cloud, 1998.

This book gave me information for the section comparing the Reedsburg camp to other camps. It provides information dealing with camps in Minnesota during World War II, which was useful in the section about comparing camps.

Carlson, Lewis H. *We Were Each Other's Prisoners: An Oral History of World War II American and German Prisoners of War*. New York: Basic Books, 1997.

This book gave some insight into the lives of the prisoners of war. While it does include both U.S. and German prisoners, I only concentrated on the sections that dealt with the German prisoners.

Cowley, Betty. *Stalag Wisconsin: Inside WWII Prisoner-Of-War Camps*. Oregon, WI: Badger Books, 2002.

This book helped me when looking at the role that Wisconsin played in holding prisoners of war. It also helped me put into context how the prisoners were dispersed throughout the branch camps to work in the nearby factories and/or farms.

Gaertner, Georg and Arnold Krammer. *Hitler's Last Soldier In America*. New York: Stein and Day, 1985.

This book provided the background information in the section for escapes. It provided the information for the part dealing with the last prisoner to be found that had escaped from a prisoner of war camp in World War II.

Gansberg, Judith M. *Stalag U.S.A.: The Remarkable Story of German POWs in America*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1977.

This book helped out a great deal because of the focus being specifically on German POWs. The book gave me more of a nationwide look at what it was like for other states that had housed the prisoners and was used during the comparison section of the paper.

Kochavi, Arie J. *Confronting Captivity: Britain and the United States and Their POWs in Nazi Germany*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005.

This book will not be of any direct help that I can see right now. However, after reading it, it could offer some sort of comparison from what the American and British prisoners held in German camps suffered, compared to the German prisoners held in the United States and, more importantly, in Wisconsin. Other than the comparative aspect, I do not feel this book will offer much use for my paper topic.

Krammer, Arnold. *Nazi Prisoners of War in America*. New York: Stein and Day, 1979.

This book offered a discussion about what it was like for German prisoners who were held in the United States. It provided some background information throughout my paper.

Krug, Merton Edwin. *History of Reedsburg and the Upper Baraboo Valley*. Madison, WI : Democrat Printing Company, 1929.

This book was very informative. It was written about forty years after the settlement so much of the information was still fresh in the minds of the community. This information gave me background information for the history of Reedsburg.

Lange, Kenneth I. *A County Called Sauk: A Human History of Sauk County, Wisconsin*. Baraboo: Sauk County Historical Society, 1976.

This book was used for basic background information about Reedsburg. It was primarily used for the information within the book about the settlement of Reedsburg.

Luick-Thrams, Michael. *Camp Papers: The German POW Newspapers at Camp Algona, Iowa 1944*. St. Paul: Traces, 2003.

This provided me with some background information about the prisoner of war camp in Iowa that allowed their camp to create newspapers in German. This helped with the section comparing the camps to Reedsburg.

Moore, John Hammond. *The Faustball Tunnell: German POWs in America and Their Great Escape*. New York: Random House, 1978.

This book was incorporated into the section in my paper about escapes and escape attempts within the Wisconsin camps. It also provided the background information on the escape in Arizona for comparison.

Sesquicentennial History Committee. *Reedsburg Remembers 150 Years, 1848-1948*. Chelsea, MI: BookCrafters, 1997.

This book provided me with a variety of information dealing with the history of Reedsburg. It gave me details to use in many sections of the paper, including the camp itself and the section dedicated to the history of Reedsburg and Reedsburg during World War II.

Smith, Jr., Arthur L. *The War for the German Mind: Re-Educating Hitler's Soldiers*. Providence, RI: Berghahn Books, 1996.

This book dealt with the subject of reeducating the prisoners of war during their time here. This provided information in the section of comparison and how other camps reeducated their prisoners, while Reedsburg did not.

Stager, Claudette. *Reedsburg Intensive Survey*. Reedsburg, WI: University of Wisconsin Extension Sauk County, 1983.

This book gave a lot of details about Reedsburg and the statistical information about it. It gave many statistics about the history of Reedsburg as well as up to the present time of the book being written.

Thompson, William Fletcher. *Continuity and Change, 1940-1945*, vol. 6 of *The History of Wisconsin*, (Madison, WI: Wisconsin State Historical Society Press, 1988).

This book gave me a large amount of information about what Wisconsin was like during World War II. Information was used during the background history of Wisconsin and sporadically throughout the Reedsburg section.

Wisconsin Cartographers' Guild. *Wisconsin's Past and Present: A Historical Atlas*. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1998.

This book offered information that dealt with German immigration and German population within Wisconsin. I used two maps, one that detailed the German immigration influx into Wisconsin in the 1800s and another map that showed the distribution of German population within Wisconsin in 1940 & 1990.

Zeitlin, Richard H. *Germans In Wisconsin*. Madison, WI: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 2000.

This book will be used to help with background information about the history of the German settlers. This was useful when writing the section about the German settlers that came into Wisconsin and in Reedsburg.

### Journal Articles

Heisler, Barbara Schmitter. "The 'Other Braceros': Temporary Labor and German Prisoners of War in the United States, 1943-1946." *Social Science History* 31 (2007): 239-271.

This article looked at what it was like for Mexican and German workers working within the United States during World War II. It also looked at how the Mexican workers were "allies" of the country, but were out-casted once they arrived. It showed what it was like when the "enemy" Germans came into the country as prisoners, but was seen as normal and befriended by many of the citizens, especially in the state of Wisconsin.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Returning to America: German Prisoners of War and the American Experience." *German Studies Review* 31 (2008): 537-556.

This was useful because it dealt with the prisoners that have returned to the U.S. after being repatriated. It gave background information, as well as firsthand accounts, of why they would want to return

Hudnall, Amy C. "Humiliation and Domination Under American Eyes: German POWs in the Continental United States, 1942-1945." *Social Alternatives* 25 (2006): 33-39.

This article offered information about what it was like for some groups of prisoners in the U.S. It gave a lot of information about prison life and some of the things that the prisoners had gone through while here.

Jaehn, Tomas. "Unlikely Harvesters: German Prisoners of War as Agricultural Workers in the Northwest." *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 50 (2000): 46-57.

This article looked at what it was like to work as a prisoner of war in northwest United States. It gave details about the agriculture that is present there as well as what it was like for the prisoners to be in that area working on the land.

Krammer, Arnold P. "German Prisoners of War in the United States." *Military Affairs* 40 (1976): 68-73.

This article offered a lot of information that was similar to the book written by this author. But his article offered a lot of information that was easy to find throughout the paper and it offered a lot of statistical information. The numbers that were given were very useful in multiple sections of my paper.

Pearson, Betty Boedeker. "History of Door County Cherry Pickers," *Historical Review of Brown County and Northeast Wisconsin* 24 (2007): 18-27.

Reiss, Matthias. "Bronzed Bodies behind Barbed Wire: Masculinity and the Treatment of German Prisoners of War in the United States during World War II." *Journal of Military History* 69 (2005): 475-504.

This article looked at how the citizens of the United States had befriended the German prisoners. It also discussed how it was feared that the women would take a particular liking to these men, which would become very dangerous for the United States. This article was useful because it went into great detail about the American attitude toward these prisoners compared to the attitude of the government.

Woods, James A. "Captive Historians, Captivated Audience: The German Military History Program, 1945-1961." *Journal of Military History* 69 (2005): 123-147.

German prisoners were put to work during the years that they were interned in the United States. This article helped me because it examined how the prisoners were used to produce literature showing every aspect of the Nazi war party and what they stood for. It showed what these prisoners were "taught" while in Germany and what it was like after the reeducation process.

#### Websites

Cole, Brad. "Map of Wisconsin Cities-Wisconsin Road Map." <http://geology.com/citiesmap/wisconsin.shtml> (accessed October 30, 2009).

This site provided me with a map of what Wisconsin looks like. It also gave me "Reedsburg" located on the map. Most maps do not have Reedsburg, but this was one did.

Mapquest Maps. "Maps & Driving Directions." Mapquest, Inc. [www.mapquest.com](http://www.mapquest.com) (accessed October 30, 2009).

This site gave me the map which I used to locate where the prisoner of war camp had been located in Reedsburg.

Reedsburg School District. "Welcome to Reedsburg Schools." Reedsburg Area School District. [http://www.rsd.k12.wi.us/Admin/Complete\\_Brochure.pdf](http://www.rsd.k12.wi.us/Admin/Complete_Brochure.pdf) (accessed October 30, 2009).

This website gave me information about what year Webb High School was built. This provided me the information that talked about what happened to the land that the prisoner of war camp was located on after the camp had dissolved.

University Libraries. "Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Sources." University of Maryland. <http://www.lib.umd.edu/guides/primary-sources.html#primary> (accessed October 30, 2009).

This website gave me the information about the use of sources to inform the readers what the difference is. It provided me with the definitions of each, to clarify what each one is.

University of Virginia Library. "Historical Census Browser." University of Virginia.  
<http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/> (accessed October 30, 2009).

This site gave me a lot of information regarding the German population in Wisconsin. I searched throughout the site for statistics about German immigration into Wisconsin and then narrowed it down to deal strictly with Sauk County.

## **Primary Sources**

American Forces Information Service, *Prisoner of War: Rights and Obligations Under the Geneva Convention*, Department of Defense: 1987.

This document gave me information about the Geneva Convention. It outlines, as it states, the rights of the prisoners. This provided important information about how they should be treated and what was expected for punishments by the prisons that were holding each prisoner of war.

### Newspapers

"Reedsburg (WI) Times Press, 1944-1945." P68-798. Wisconsin Historical Society Library Microforms Room. Madison, WI.

This source provided me with personal accounts through editorials and newspaper articles found within the newspaper. I used this information to see how the citizens were feeling at the time of finding out that Reedsburg was chosen as a site for the branch camp, and the after effect that it had.

State Farm Labor Staff. *Farm Labor News: Extension Service, University of Wisconsin*. March-October, 1945.

### Interviews

Burmester, Shirley, Interview (phone) by author, Reedsburg, WI, October 8, 2009.

Gant, Dick, Interview (phone) by author, Reedsburg, WI, October 6, 2009.

Gant, Juliette, Interview (phone) by author, Reedsburg, WI, October 6, 2009.

Janzen, Eber, Interview (phone) by author, Reedsburg, WI, October 6, 2009.

Lange, Evan, Interview (phone) by author, Reedsburg, WI, September 29, 2009.

Pawlisch, Jim, Interview (phone) by author, Reedsburg, WI, October 6, 2009.

Steinweg, Evan, Interview (phone) by author, Reedsburg, WI, October 6, 2009.

Thieding, Daniel, Interview (phone) by author, Reedsburg, WI, October 8, 2009.

## Appendix A



Photo courtesy of [www.geology.com](http://www.geology.com)

## Appendix B

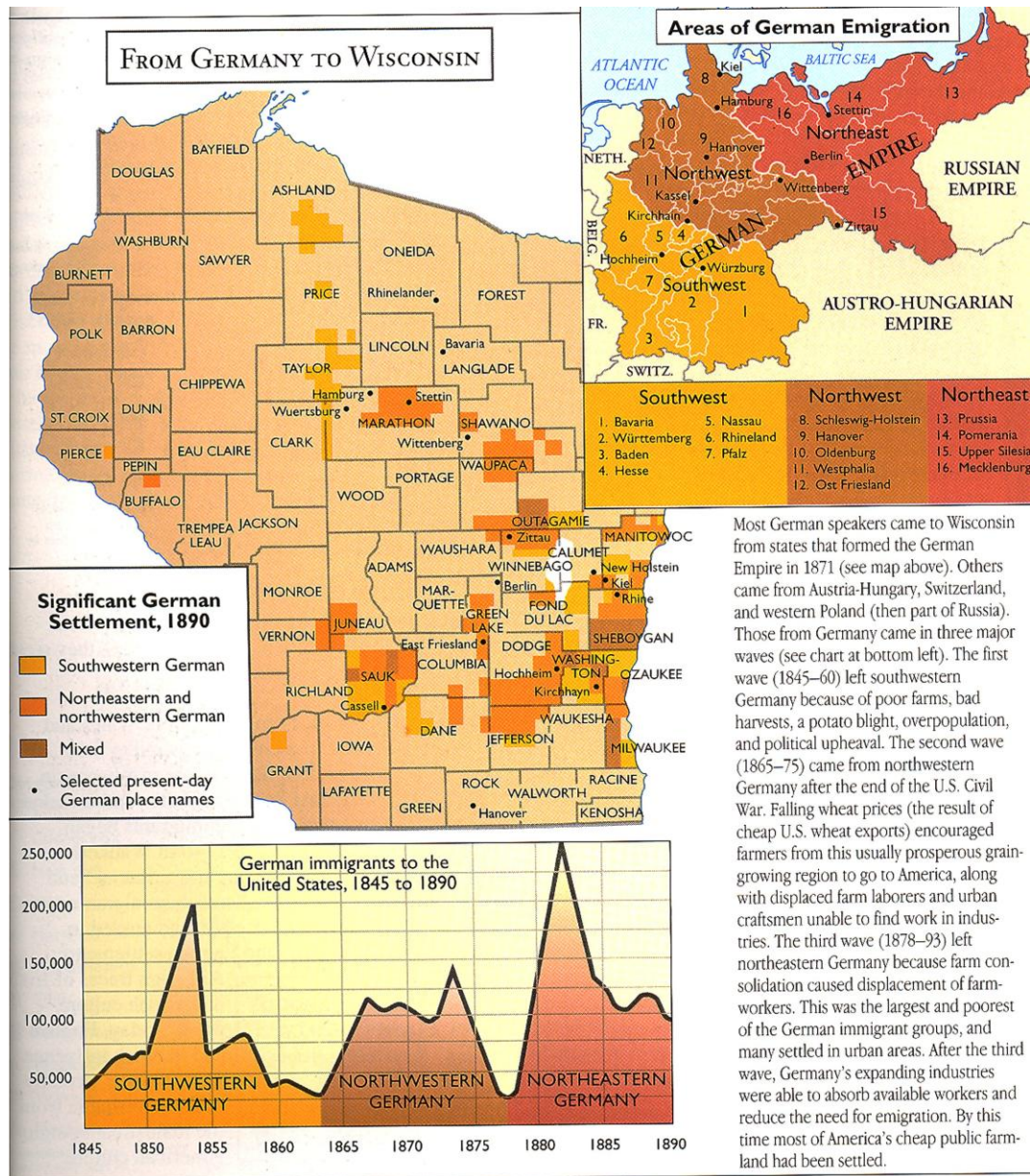


Photo courtesy of *Wisconsin's Past and Present: A Historical Atlas*, p. 18

## Appendix C



Photo courtesy of Sauk County Historical Society

## Appendix D



## Appendix E

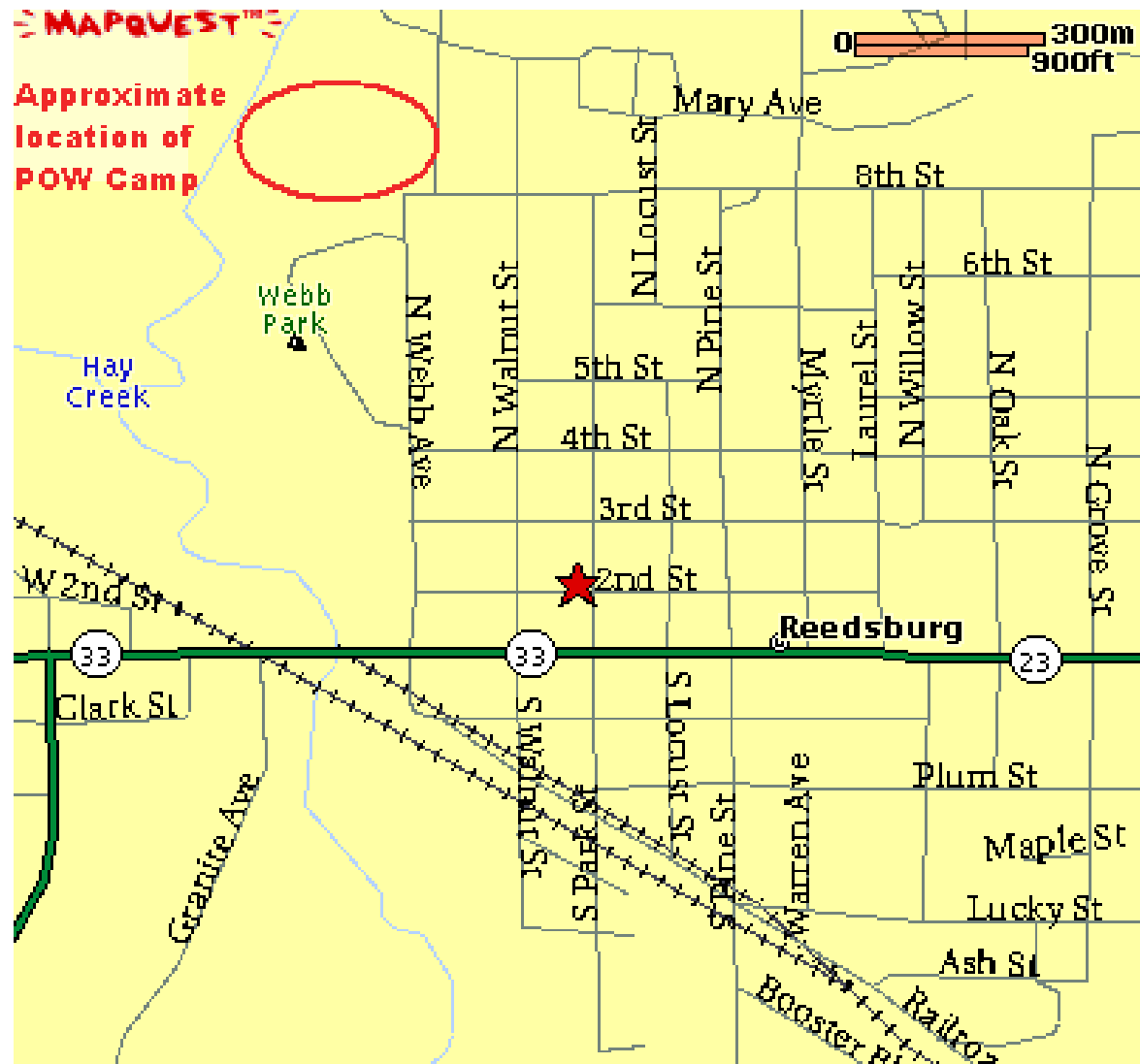


Photo courtesy of [www.mapquest.com](http://www.mapquest.com)

## Appendix F



Photo courtesy of Sauk County Historical Society