

**“REAL TOP-NOTCH GERMANS”:
GERMAN PRISONERS OF WAR IN CARROLL COUNTY,
MARYLAND,
DURING WORLD WAR II**

During World War II, the United States incarcerated nearly a quarter of a million German prisoners of war in camps across the country. Each prisoner had a unique experience based on the location of the camp, the type of employment assigned, and the possibility of recreation and interaction with other prisoners and American citizens.¹ Because the German prisoners so closely resembled the white Americans they encountered and because so many Americans were of German descent, Americans more easily related to them, especially when compared to the African Americans, Japanese Americans, Native Americans, and other outsiders in their communities. This was especially true in Carroll County, Maryland, where prisoners and local citizens worked with each other peacefully.

Interactions between German prisoners of war and the local citizenry were often significantly different from other similar situations across the United States involving prisoners of war from countries other than Germany. Despite their status as enemy captives, in both Carroll County and the United

States as a whole, German prisoners of war were often treated better than some of the local citizenry, likely due to their physical resemblance to the majority population in the area where they were held captive.

Previous studies on German prisoners of war in the United States have approached the subject from several perspectives. One group of studies focuses on the United States' compliance with the Geneva Accords, which outlined proper guidelines for holding prisoners of war.² In yet other studies, historians have examined the strong criticism of the entire prisoner labor program by the major labor unions and argued that pressure from unions influenced the War Manpower Commission to use prisoners almost exclusively in the agricultural sector.³ Yet a third group examines how Americans interacted with the prisoners, and a few have touched briefly on the degree to which race influenced the experience of the prisoners. The experience of German prisoners of war in Carroll County, Maryland, tends to confirm the contention that race and racial bias contributed to the relatively benign treatment of

German prisoners of war in Maryland.

When the United States entered World War II in 1941, few prisoner-of-war facilities existed. Therefore, the United States dealt with the enemy prisoners of war who poured into the United States during the North Africa campaign in 1943 by filling former Civilian Conservation Corps camps. Later, other camps were constructed. Camps were generally located in rural, isolated areas in the Southeast, Midwest, and Southwest, far from major industrial centers important to the war effort. By the end of the war, there were 155 base camps scattered across the United States and over 500 branch camps. The branch camps provided labor in areas of need, most often seasonal work in private and agricultural sectors.⁵

The branch camp located in Westminster, Maryland, filled most of the criteria and provided seasonal labor on Carroll County farms. Carroll County was a predominately rural area in the 1940s, with a majority white population of German descent.⁶ The camp was created from the base camp at Fort Meade when the Carroll County Cannery Association petitioned the Provost Marshall

General for seasonal labor in 1944. The camp was located on Fenby Farm Road near the present-day Wakefield Valley Golf Course, just outside of Westminster, MD (See map, page zz).⁷ According to Jim Shriver, Carroll County resident and son of the then owner of the B. F. Shriver company, the prisoners worked mostly in the fields of his father's canning factory. Though the factory jobs inside the cannery were usually filled by members of the community, Jim Shriver remembered having to find extra laborers outside of Carroll County to work in the fields. The hired laborers were generally outsiders to the community, including migrant Latino workers and “daily hauls” from Baltimore.⁸ Because of the labor shortage during World War II, the German prisoners filled the role of the outsiders by providing the much needed labor in the Carroll County fields.

First impressions of German prisoners had a great impact on how many Americans treated them. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States War Department instituted a propaganda campaign to rally support for the war. That, added to the remnants of World War I propa-

ganda against the Germans, created an image of arrogant Nazi soldiers. Many Americans expected German prisoners to look similar to the large and brutish characterizations in propaganda publications. However, when the captured soldiers came into American ports, many American citizens often confused them with the US Army personnel guarding them.⁹ The fact that the German soldier appeared similar to the majority of Americans resonated more than the knowledge that the prisoners were a foreign enemy. Despite efforts by the United States' government to create an image of a vicious and evil enemy, American citizens, who were able to relate to the familiar-looking German prisoners, reacted to German prisoners with curiosity rather than revulsion.

As a nine-year-old boy in Carroll County, Don Haines knew the prisoners of war were coming, and remembers lying awake at night wondering what the Germans would look like. He was scared of the war and of the prisoners because he had seen the adult males in his own life leave for war to fight men from the very same country as the prisoners who were about to arrive. He remem-

bered his "hatred [for the Germans] was growing daily."¹⁰ Haines knew he had to see the prisoners for himself, and went to the fields to watch the German prisoners as they worked. When the Germans saw him, Haines recalled them pointing at him and saying, "*der Kinder*" [sic]. He recalls:

With that, one of the Germans stood up, took off his cap, turned toward me and gave me a smile that stayed with me for fifty-five years. "Guten Tag," he said, still smiling. I didn't speak, but raised my hand in greeting... I left the bean field still hating all Germans—except one. It's hard to hate a man who smiles at you.¹¹

Haines later told his mother where he had been, and when she asked what they looked like he simply responded, "They look like us."¹² It is clear that although his hatred of German soldiers as a whole was still intact, his perceptions of them as individuals had changed. Another local man described the Carroll County prisoners as "real top-notch German soldiers—you didn't see any that weren't smart-looking."¹³

Jim Shriver's younger sister, Helen Riley, remembers the

German prisoners working in her father’s fields. Riley was thirteen years old when they came to Carroll County and described herself as being “apprehensive” about the German soldiers. She did not know what to expect of the prisoners, but remembered her first interaction as nothing special: “They were just men. They weren’t fierce, they were very friendly.”¹⁴ Her apprehension seemed to disappear when she realized that that the prisoners were not as fierce as she had imagined. Riley noted that after meeting the prisoners, she was more curious than fearful of them.

Because she was a young girl, Helen Riley was only able to have limited contact with the German prisoners, but her encounters vividly portray the enemy German soldiers as kind and helpful people, not arrogant Nazi brutes. Riley’s most vivid memory involved German prisoners saving her life. One day, while walking in the pasture, Riley realized that someone had left the gate open and a horse had escaped. As she chased after the horse, she stepped on a beehive. The bees swarmed around her. A few prisoners on their lunch break under a tree nearby saw her predicament, ran

to her, and hosed her with water to drive the bees away. When she had settled down, she realized that another prisoner had run after the horse and brought it back into the pasture. For Riley, the German prisoners saved her life and helped her become a better horseback rider. She commented, “The prisoners were fun as far as I was concerned.”¹⁵

Jim Shriver, a teenager during the war, recalled that the German prisoners he oversaw were all from Hitler’s Afrika Korps, captured in North Africa in 1942 and 1943 and described them as “handsome young men.”¹⁶ Shriver does not recall his first impression of the German prisoners and said he was too young to worry about it. He does remember not being afraid of the prisoners because they were heavily guarded by US Army personnel. He remembers a prisoner helping him count columns while he worked as a weigh master, and, though he spoke no German and could not communicate verbally with the prisoner, he recalled that “numbers are the same in every language.”¹⁷ Shriver also worked for his father during the war, and was in charge of supervising a group of ten prisoners in Union Mills,

Maryland. Also working there were many local Pennsylvania Dutch farmers. Shriver recalls hearing many prisoners and local workers conversing with each other. Jim Shriver also heard many stories about the prisoners second- or thirdhand. One story involved prisoners putting out a fire for the Smeltzer family that would have destroyed the entire farm if not for the prisoners' help. Another story describes a prisoner blowing into the air in an attempt to ask the guard which way the wind was blowing. When the guard finally understood the prisoner's question, the prisoner demonstrated that he wanted to shuck the wheat in the direction of the wind so that the drying process would occur more quickly, making for a better harvest. If these stories are true, it is a testament to the temperament of the German prisoners and their willingness to cooperate and interact with the local community. Yet even if the stories are only myth, they provide further evidence of a positive perception of the German prisoners of war in Carroll County and a welcoming attitude toward the familiar- looking Germans.

On a local level, Riley and Shriver were able to have unique experiences with the prisoners

because of their father's company, an opportunity which other citizens of Carroll County did not have. Most citizens relied on the local newspapers in the area: the *Carroll County Times*, the *Democratic Advocate*, and the *Baltimore Sun*. Despite their three-month presence in 1944, the German prisoners were not often openly discussed in local newspapers. Helen Riley noted, "A lot of people didn't know they were here... they didn't advertise it."¹⁸ Indeed, local newspapers seemed reluctant to mention the presence of prisoners in the Carroll County area. In June 1944, the local weekly *Democratic Advocate* ran a small blurb hinting at the prisoner of war program that read:

Half-Million Workers Needed by Canneries: Washington—Food production requirements in 1944 will necessitate recruiting an army of 500,000 cannery workers in 25 fruit and vegetable processing states, Paul V. McNutt, director of the War Manpower Commission, said recently. Canned food quotas are larger this year than in 1943, McNutt said.¹⁹

The *Democratic Advocate* mentions an "army" and a desper-

ate need for workers, but no mention of where the workers would come from. On a national scale, employers were already forced to hire African Americans and women. Locally, Westminster had used hired workers in the local canneries prior to the war, a situation exacerbated by the war-related labor shortage. One had to ask where the necessary 500,000 laborers were going to come from.²⁰ Still, when the story appeared in the *Baltimore Sun* on June 24, 1944, the headline, “German Prisoners of War Arouse Interest In Carroll,” was not one based on suspicion, but rather curiosity. The article does outline reservations and apprehensions felt by the citizens of Carroll County about the “aliens” who might escape or sabotage the farms or canneries. Any fears were allayed, however, by noting that the prisoners would be heavily guarded and well supervised by Capt. Dewey Taylor, that no sabotaging had occurred where the prisoners had been working, and that the prisoners had been requested by the Carroll County Canner’s Association.²¹ Few other discussions of the prisoners are to be found.

In national newspapers, a similar trend reveals itself. At the beginning of the war, many articles defended the use of the prisoners of war and assured readers of their safety. At the same time, articles presented a positive view of the German prisoners of war, calling them “youthful” and “beautifully trained,” “resigned to making the most of the situation,” and “good workmen.”²² Farmers for whom the German prisoners worked called them “orderly and courteous,” and were “unanimous in their praise of the men.”²³ Other articles expressed distaste for United States policy, but were still sympathetic to the German prisoners. It saw the German people as victims of Nazism, with their environment having played the most important role in their political formation.²⁴ Another articles discredited the notion that the German nation, and German prisoners was “paranoid, or bloodthirsty, or militaristic, or aggressive....”²⁵ It argued that the German people were capable of creating a healthy democratic nation as long as the victorious Allied Powers did not ruin the peace process as they had in 1918. The overall tone of these articles defended the German prisoners and portrayed them in a positive light.²⁶

The acceptance of the German soldiers found in personal narratives and newspapers contrasts with the rampant prejudice in the United States in the 1940s against other outsiders. In many cases, the same articles which praised the German prisoners expressed a "bitter opposition" to the Italian prisoners of war.²⁷ In contrast to the German prisoners, Italian prisoners of war were labeled arrogant fascists and "Mussolini's one-time supermen."²⁸ The treatment was worse for Japanese prisoners of war. Few Japanese prisoners even made it to the continental United States, and the War Department eventually barred them from working contract labor, forcing them to work entirely on military installations, "keeping them from the public eye."²⁹ Also, despite the findings in the Munson Report which affirmed the loyalty of Japanese Americans, over 110,000 Japanese Americans and Japanese living in the United States were interned by the United States government under the auspices of national security.³⁰

The German prisoners themselves noted how well they were treated and their experiences reflect a sense of identification

between German prisoners and the large portion of the American population of German descent. Guenther Oswald, a prisoner at Camp Trinidad in Boston, recalled one farmer who brought a few prisoners home to his grandmother to sing to her in German. In return for their cooperation, they received food and cigarettes.³¹ Kurt Gerhard Pechmann remembered German Americans visiting the prisoners while they worked in the fields and asking prisoners to care for dogs while they vacationed.³² Not only did prisoners experience preferential treatment from their American captors, but they also witnessed firsthand the prejudices that existed in the United States. It seems ironic that German prisoners, who had been raised in an atmosphere of rampant anti-Semitism were critical of and often surprised by the racial tensions in America. A prisoner in Roswell, New Mexico remembers:

...he [Gutierrez] was a Mexican.... He was a very nice guy. When we went to the barbershop, he stood in the corner... and, as he was 'colored,' he had to wait until all the Whites were done...things like that upset us very much..³³

The irony is obvious, but perhaps the Germans hoped or believed that Americans were more tolerant than their own national leaders.

German prisoners also noticed that they were not expected to do as much work as other manual laborers. In Carroll County, Shriver noted that the German prisoners of war were expected to pick about one hundred baskets per day, while the daily hauls from Baltimore and other hired labor were expected to bring in two hundred baskets.³⁴ The same trend is reflected nationally.³⁵ In fact, the only instance reported that hints at racism involves a non-local guard. Paul McGee, a local man, remembers an Native American army guard at the camp who “hated those Germans like a black snake.”³⁶ The sentiment in Carroll County generally, on the other hand, was marked by a wary acceptance of and, at times, a sympathy for the German prisoners of war.

That some German prisoners of war enjoyed their stay in the United States is evidenced by the number of men who wished to remain here or return after the war. According to a poll of the German prisoners taken just before they left for Germany, seventy-four

percent had a positive attitude toward America.³⁷ Helen Riley and Jim Shriver both remember their father’s receiving a letter, addressed to “Jim the Canning Man, Maryland,” from one of the German prisoners who had worked in his fields.³⁸ This type of interaction was widespread across the United States as former German prisoners of war tried to contact their American employers for visa sponsorship. For the German prisoners, staying in America or returning to America seemed to be the best option for beginning their life after the war.

It would appear that at least in Carroll County Americans often allowed their segregationist attitudes to influence their attitude toward certain prisoners of war. Even as the government interned many American citizens, particularly Japanese-Americans, many white Americans looked kindly on the German soldiers who looked so much like themselves. While some of the positive treatment can be credited to the United States’ adherence to the Geneva Accords, the intimacy of the relations cannot. Time after time, on both the local and national level, white Americans pointed out that the Germans “looked just like us.”

When placed in context of the racial tensions in the United States at the time and the movements which followed, the treatment of the German prisoners becomes more significant. The German prisoners of war who worked in Carroll County may have been outsiders, but they were certainly not perceived and treated as such

by those who interacted with them. Though only present in Carroll County for three months, the German prisoners of war were not perceived as strangers in the community as the “daily hauls” had been, but were rather treated not unlike a normal member of the local German American community.

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NOTES

- 1 The differences in American camps can be studied in the secondary works on many of the individual camps or camps in specific states. Some important studies include: Allen V. Koop, *Stark Decency* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1988); David Fiedler, *The Enemy Among Us* (Columbia, MO: Missouri Historical Society Press, 2003); Betty Cowley, *Stalag Wisconsin* (Middleton: Badger Books, 2002); Michael Walters, *Lone Star Stalag* (Bryan, TX: Texas A & M University Press, 2006); and Robert Billinger, *Hitler's Soldiers in the Sunshine State* (Gainseville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2000); John Hammond Moore, *The Faustball Tunnel* (Annapolis, MD: US Naval Institute Press, 2006).
- 2 In 1955, George Lewis and John Mewha compiled the earliest studies of the prisoner of war system in the United States in which they argued that prisoners were well treated in accordance with the 1929 Geneva Accords. They found that, "[a]ll provisions protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the prisoners [were] closely followed." (George G. Lewis and John Mewha, *History of Prisoner of War Utilization by the United States Army, 1776–1945* [Washington: Department of the Army, 1955], 76–77). Other historians have argued that the United States went well beyond mere compliance with the Geneva Accords. In 1979, Arnold Kramer pointed out that the United States went as far as securing a variety of food to match the prisoners' national tastes. German prisoners petitioned for and eventually received pork, *Bratwurst*, and fish soup, and Italian prisoners were fed a steady diet of pasta. It is also notable that the prisoners were even allowed to petition at all, considering the POWs were already well fed by the American government (Arnold Kramer, *Nazi Prisoners of War in America* [Lanham, MD: Scarborough House Publishers, 1996], 48–49.) It is interesting to note that I only came upon one study in which the authors argued that the United States failed to uphold the articles of the Geneva Accords. This study about prisoners working in the Southern lumber industry argued that the job was too dangerous, that the lumber industry was too closely related to the war industry, and that the work occurred in an unsuitable climate. The claims were investigated by the American government and ruled not in violation of the Geneva Accords. This, however, did not stop the authors from viewing these complaints as evidence of a grand failure to honor the Accords in the lumber industry. For the full article, see: James Fickle and Donald Ellis, "POW's in the Piney Woods: German Prisoners of War in the Southern Lumber Industry," *The Journal of Southern History* 56 (1990): 695–724.
- 3 Kramer discusses the issues raised by various industries. For example, the meat packing industry was afraid of the loss of wages to union workers, the railroad industry was afraid of sabotage, and the forestry industry raised concerns about the work being too closely related to the war industry. All industries raised concerns

- about how to pay the prisoners as to not upset free laborers (Krammer, 94–106). According to Byron Fairchild’s study of the United States Army in World War II, complaints by organized labor led to over fifty percent of prisoners being directed to work in the agricultural sector, not because of an enormous shortage of labor, but because that labor was not unionized (Byron Fairchild and Jonathan Grossman, *The War Department: The Army and Industrial Manpower* [Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1959], 193).
- 4 One important study by Mathias Reiss examines how the idea of masculinity and the image of the ideal male body influenced perceptions of the prisoners. Reiss argues that because Nazi prisoners looked so much like youthful American soldiers, Americans eagerly accepted them and were extremely curious about them (Mathias Reiss, “Bronzed Bodies Behind Barbed Wire.” *Journal of Military History* 69 [2005], 476). He also discussed the masculinity and sexual attractiveness of these prisoners. Though relationships between white women and “others” were taboo in America at the time, these interactions between white women and white Germans were seen as the result of the overly flirtatious American women (Reiss 492–493).
- 5 Krammer, 26–28. For a map of where the prisoner of war camps were located, see Krammer, 31.
- 6 In 2000, 30% of Carroll County residents claimed German ancestry, 6% Italian, and the majority of residents claimed some European descent. The most compelling data in this instance would be county-wide census figures from 1940, but that information will not be available until 2012.
- 7 Gerald Fischman, “Housing German POWs,” Pages of Carroll, insert to the *Carroll County Times*, 16 July 1987, 109. Specifically, Fischman states that the camp was located “where Fenby Farm road crosses a stream.” This was echoed by Jim Shriver (Shriver, personal interview with the author, 9 October 2008).
- 8 Jim Shriver, personal interview with the author, 9 October 2008. It is never clear what the ethnicity of the individuals in the “daily hauls” was, but Shriver’s tone gave the impression of members of the lower classes of society. My impression, based on his tone and some outside research leads me to believe the workers were African American and other recent immigrants to Baltimore, largely Polish.
- 9 According to Reiss, Americans were surprised that the German prisoners were not the representatives of a superAryan race that they imagined as their enemy. Rather, most Americans saw a reflection of themselves in the prisoners, rather than the stereotypical arrogant Nazi (Reiss 48–479). One army chaplain remembers: One gets the impression, after seeing thousands of these men, that in general they are undersized.... Nor are they the “Aryans” of Hitler’s picture gallery, blond-haired, blue-eyed, rosy-cheeked, with the torso of some Teutonic god. Some have blond

- hair, some black, some red; most have varying shades of brown....” (“PWs Nazis in US Prison Camps are Arrogant and sturdy but far from being supermen. By a US Army Chaplain,” *Life* 16 [10 January 1944], 47).
- 10 Don Haines, “The day the Germans came and changed me forever,” *Carroll Senior Paper*, June 2001, 4. Haines admitted that, as a nine-year-old, he bought into the United States’ propaganda and fully supported the war effort. He collected stamps because of the slogan, “lick a stamp—slap a Jap.” It is not known if unclear whether his idea of the prisoners was shaped by the war propaganda before he encountered them or if it was just the result of the wild imagination of a nine-year-old boy.
- 11 *ibid.*
- 12 *ibid.*
- 13 J. Edgar Jones, quoted in: Fishman, “Housing German POWs.”
- 14 Helen Riley, personal interview with the author, 2 October 2008.
- 15 Riley, who liked to ride horses, remembers riding around her father’s fields while the prisoners worked. Although unable to speak to the prisoners because she knew no German, Riley remembered that the prisoners would try to help her improve her horseback riding skills. When on lunch break, they would demonstrate different ways to hold the reins in order to help her improve her grip and control (Reilly, personal interview, 2 October 2008).
- 16 Shriver does recall with humor that there was one prisoner who was very ugly. This prisoner was severely beaten and somewhat disfigured. Later, Shriver discovered that this prisoner had supposedly been the sparring partner of famous German boxer Max Schmeling, hence his disfigurement and beaten face. Shriver also noted that the men were not afraid of showing off their bodies. He laughed as he described the prisoners waiting to urinate until they reached the end of the field facing the Littlestown Pike. The prisoners would then wave at passersby and watch the traffic drive by as they relieved themselves.
- 17 Shriver, personal interview, 9 October 2008.
- 18 Riley, personal interview, 2 October 2008. Riley believes that a large number of local citizens harbored anti-Nazi sentiment because their sons, fathers, brothers, and other family members were fighting overseas. Jim Shriver felt that the location of the camp contributed to the surprising public silence about its presence in the area. The camps were upstream and largely out-of-sight. Shriver assumes that the camps were purposely isolated for fear that the population at large might have protested or petitioned to find other hired labor if it had been known that prisoners were working in the fields (Shriver, personal interview, 9 October 2008).
- 19 “Half-Million Workers Needed by Canneries,” *Democratic Advocate*, 16 June 1944, Section 2.
- 20 The *Democratic Advocate* also neglected to mention the workers in its weekly column, “Maryland’s Farm Front This Week,” in every issue

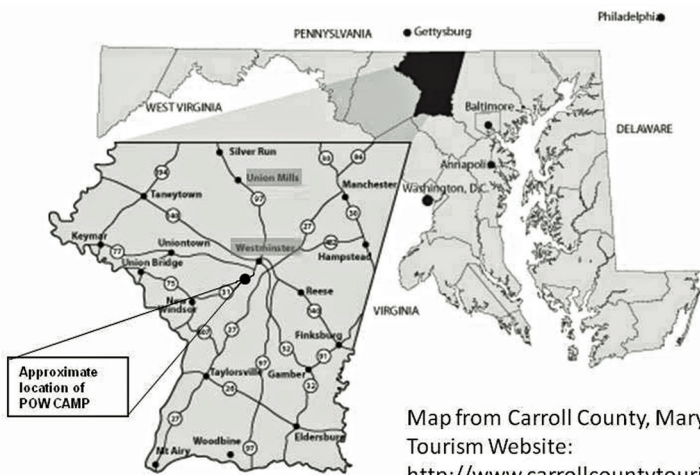
- between June 1944 and August 1944. The column discussed topics such as prices, projected harvests, laborers, but never the German prisoners who kept many Carroll County farms and canning businesses producing at full capacity in 1944.
- 21 Gordon Propf, “German Prisoners of War Arouse Interest in Carroll,” *Baltimore Sun*, 24 June 1944. It is also interesting to note that although Carroll County residents were assured that the prisoners of war would be heavily guarded by Army personnel, Helen Riley and Jim Shriver remember things differently. They both recall the prisoners being heavily guarded in June 1944, their first month in Westminster, but they also recall that by the end of the confinement period, supervision had greatly decreased. Shriver remembers that at the beginning of the prisoner-of-war program there was one guard for every five prisoners. As time passed, the ratio shrank to one to ten, one to fifteen, then, in some places, to no guards at all (Shriver, personal interview, 9 October 2008). Even when there were guards present, they sometimes shirked their duties. J. Edgar Jones remembers a guard teaching a prisoner to swim. The guard handed his rifle to another prisoner to hold while he was in the water (Fischman, “Housing German POWs”). It seems that the guards, businesspersons, and farmers who utilized the prisoners believed that they were trustworthy. They had confidence that the prisoners would not run away, sabotage the harvest, or harm the farms or locally citizenry.
- 22 “Africa Corps Men Build Dam in U.S.,” *New York Times*, 31 May 1943. The article also included a justification of the payment of the prisoners, a touchy topic with the labor unions in the United States. The article was a response to American criticisms that the camps were too luxurious for their purposes and many citizens labeled their local camp as a “Fritz Ritz” (Krammer, 28).
- 23 “Prisoners of War Aid Our Farmers,” *New York Times*, 22 October 1944.
- 24 “Not on the Quota,” *New York Times*, 25 July 1943. The author was highly critical of the United States’ open door to the foreign soldiers, which allowed the prisoners “to visit this country without regard to passports or quota restrictions, and all expenses paid.” He reminds readers of the many Hessian soldiers who settled here after the Revolutionary War and became “such good citizens that it was afterward hard to distinguish them from the other ‘Pennsylvania Dutch.’” To get his point across, the author compared political views of the modern German soldier to an American descendant of a German immigrant: “The racial stock, the individual potentialities are much the same. The son of the prisoner, if educated in the ways of freedom, can be as good a citizen of democracy as the son of the American soldier. The prisoner himself belongs to a wasted generation.”
- 25 James Warburg, “Can the Germans Cure Themselves?” *New York Times*, 20 August 1944.
- 26 This is not to say that there were no other criticisms in the *New York*

- Times*. Most of the truly critical reports circulated near the end of the war when Americans learned the full extent of the suffering of the Jews in Nazi concentration camps and American prisoners of war in Nazi labor camps. Nonetheless, it can be said that the full realization of the situation in Europe created more fury among the American people than did the special treatment which was accorded German prisoners of war from the beginning.
- 27 “Prisoners of War Aid Our Farmers.” Because of the opposition, Italian prisoners of war never worked on individual farms and labored mostly within their camps or in seaside ports.
- 28 Lawrence Dame, “Arrogance of Axis Prisoners Antagonizes the Public,” *New York Times*, 23 July 1944.
- 29 John Paul Bland, *The Secret War at Home*, (Cumberland County, PA: Cumberland County Historical Society, 1976), 66.
- 30 Many Japanese Americans suffered discrimination, abuse, and even internment during the war. Those interned received an official apology only in 1993. Although some German Americans were interned during the Second World War, German-Americans could largely avoid discrimination because of their heritage by not speaking German publicly and forgoing customs which were obviously German. Japanese Americans, on the other hand, were identifiable even if they spoke perfect English. There are many important studies on this topic, but for a good account of the internment camps, see: Michi Weglyn, *Years of Infamy: The Untold Story of America’s Concentration Camps*, (New York: Morrow, 1976).
- 31 Lewis Carlson, *We Were Each Other’s Prisoners* (New York: Basic Books, 1998).
- 32 Carlson, 210.
- 33 Corporal Hans Gurn, quoted in Krammer, 93. Many prisoners did not understand segregation policies. Prisoner Josef Krumbachner recalled the ignorance that led to the arrest of a few German prisoners who attempted to escape: they made the mistake of sitting in the section of a ferryboat in Mississippi labeled “colored,” unaware of the taboo of a white man sitting amongst the blacks. Another attempted escape in Mississippi ended when the prisoner greeted a group of blacks walking down the street, immediately causing suspicion (Carlson, 152).
- 34 Shriver, personal interview, 9 October 2008. In Shriver’s eyes, just because the prisoners were expected to do less did not make them lazy. Despite the hundred baskets difference between the Germans and other groups, Shriver said that the Germans, “weren’t slackers,” and did what they had to do.
- 35 German Corporal Hein Severloh noted that the blacks working with him in Alabama were expected to haul 200 to 300 pounds of cotton per day, while he and his fellow Germans were only expected to haul around 100 pounds (Krammer, 92).
- 36 Paul McGee, interviewed in Fishman, “Housing German POWs.”
- 37 Krammer, 263.

“REAL TOP-NOTCH GERMANS,” NOTES

38 Riley, personal interview, 2 October 2008, and Shriver, personal interview, 9 October 2008. Shriver does

not remember what happened to the letter and does not recall his father doing anything about it.



Map from Carroll County, Maryland
Tourism Website:
<http://www.carrollcountytourism.org/fidus/index.aspx>

MAP OF CARROLL COUNTY, MARYLAND