

# history theatre

## Play Guide



## **The Working Boys Band**

A world premiere musical  
Book and lyrics by Dominic Orlando  
Music by Hiram Titus

**May 3 – June 1, 2014**



**History Theatre**  
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Saint Paul, MN 55101

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\*Material provided (all or in part) by Laura Weber.

# Summary of the Play

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The play takes place in 1917, as America joins the Allied forces against Germany and other Axis powers in World War I, which began in 1914.

## Act One

A group of working boys—cannery worker-turned-pickpocket Andy, newsboy Franky, flour mill worker Bjorn, and laundry worker Caleb—open the play by describing their difficult working conditions in song, concluding “*It’s a pain in the neck but the pay ain’t bad, and it beats the gutter, but it makes me mad...*”

The scene shifts to a conversation in the study of Judge E.F. Waite, a crusader for children’s rights, and Professor C.C. Heintzeman, a German-born music teacher. The Professor is trying to convince the Judge to provide financial assistance to revive a band for newsboys the Professor once led. This band would be for all working boys. The Professor says “learning the humanistic arts” would be beneficial to counteract the “coarsening effect” that work has on their young minds. The time is right, they realize, because “*We have Progressive in the White House [Woodrow Wilson] and a Socialist in City Hall [Minneapolis mayor Thomas Van Lear].*”



Their conversation is interrupted by the Judge’s ward, Harriet Kent, who has been boarding with the Judge while she attended the University of Minnesota. Now that she has graduated she is eager to start a business of designing and making hats. The Judge (and her parents) would prefer that she become involved with work of a “more redeeming... social value.” The Judge agrees to help Harriet set up a shop if she spends some time doing a bit of community work. The Professor seizes upon the opportunity and suggests that she could help him with the Working Boys Band.

Auditions are held for the Working Boys Band. Harriet finds herself surrounded by a group of rough-and-tumble boys and realizes that she does not have much patience for children. As she is trying to organize the auditioners a boy (Andy) runs in, chased by a policeman. Andy is accused of pickpocketing but insists he was only on his way to the auditions for the band. He is helped in his lie by Franky who had snuck into the room during the excitement. Harriet recognizes Franky as her “cousin” – a fellow ward of Judge Waite and a talented musician who had been a member of the Professor’s newsboy’s band, but ran off to live by his wits. The policeman leaves Andy in Harriet’s charge.

Harriet confronts Franky for running away from the Judge’s house and the Professor’s band. Franky claims that he’s happier on his own, but he wants to audition for the Working Boys Band as a way to evade the draft. The cousins sing a duet that points up the differing impulses of the Progressive movement: breaking up monopolistic trusts, passing pure food and drug laws, and sympathy to the rights of workers on one hand, and censorship, eugenics, and Prohibition on the other.

The varying musical abilities, “street smart” cockiness, and ill health of some of the working boys make early band rehearsals somewhat chaotic. Mr. Warnock, a manager with the Twin Cities Rapid Trolley Company and the vice president of the Working Boy’s Band board of directors, is a frequent visitor. He has taken a shine to Harriet. When a fight breaks out between Franky and Bjorn over who will be first chair in the trumpet section, Mr. Warnock jokingly offers to make a bet with the Professor as to whether the music can, in fact, tame the seemingly wild boys. Amid the chaos, the Professor confidently takes the bet.

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We see Franky and Andy becoming friends as they swap stories and bond over their mutual connections to the Judge and Harriet. Andy has become the newest ward of the Judge. Harriet is trying to be a good influence and keep Andy in line; Franky is turning out to be a bad influence by encouraging Andy to go to the pool hall and be late for band practice. We also see the Professor working with young Caleb who plays the flute quite beautifully, but is also painfully shy. The Professor learns that Caleb's father is a pastor who believes that music is a form of vanity so he is wary of playing music in public. The Professor invites Caleb to attend a church service where his friend plays Bach for the congregation to help allay his fears.

When the boys come in for rehearsal the Professor chastises them for not cleaning up after work. The boys get frustrated and sing a song about the strictness of the band being just another example of rules and expectations that grown-ups place on the kids and the Professor is "just another Boss!" Bjorn throws his trumpet at the Professor and quits along with a couple other boys. This makes the Professor even stricter with the band. After rehearsal, Harriet points out the brutal reality that these boys are coming from: a long day of hard work day in and day out. She suggests that more compassion is needed in order to find balance.

Their conversation is unexpectedly interrupted by Mrs. T.G. Winter of the Commission of Public Safety and Captain Washburn of the Minnesota Home Guard. The Commission has charged Mrs. Winter with ensuring child welfare for Hennepin County. She is concerned that the youths are under the direction of the German-born Professor, who has lived in the U.S. since age 10, but is not yet a citizen.

As a way of proving that the Professor is not a true American, Captain Washburn quizzes the Professor about the name for sauerkraut – now called "Liberty Cabbage." Mrs. Winter and Captain Washburn are humorless, zealous patriots and order the Professor to register as an alien and to make the band ready to march in a Loyalty Day parade down Nicollet Avenue in six short weeks. If the band is not ready by then the Professor will be dismissed.

With the added pressure of the Loyalty Day parade now on his shoulders and the Commission of Public Safety calling him back to their office for interviews every week, the Professor is agitated by the boys' lack of discipline, especially Franky and Andy. Harriet reminds him to remain calm and use compassion, and so the Professor composes a march to help express what he is hoping to give the boys through the music that they play and the discipline of the band: "*Manliness, Integrity, Intelligence, and Kindness.*"

The boys settle in for the rehearsal as the Professor shows Andy that being the drum major is more than just "throwing the stick" around. As he does so, Andy steals his pocket watch. When the Professor realizes that his "grandfather's watch from the old country" is missing all of the boys help him look for it -- except for Franky who knows that Andy took it, and Harriet who suspects that Andy did. Harriet pulls Andy aside and sings a song about believing that he can be a good person and make the right choice. Andy gives the pocket watch to Harriet and shares a secret with her. Harriet returns the watch to the Professor and they resume rehearsal with Andy helping to lead the band.

Their rehearsal is interrupted by a boy who brings in the news that Bjorn was in an accident at the flour mill and is at the hospital. Harriet and the boys go to the hospital to visit Bjorn while the Professor and Judge Waite go to meet with the Commission of Public Safety again. While Mrs. T.G. Winter interrogates the Professor, Bjorn reflects on how much he misses being in the band, being part of a team, and making music.

**continued**

The next week before rehearsal Harriet and Mr. Warnock set up chairs as they wait for the Professor to return from yet another interview with the Commission. When the boys arrive, Mr. Warnock decides to take over and begin the lesson. When Harriet tries to explain the situation to the boys she is interrupted by Mr. Warnock. Franky speaks up and tells Mr. Warnock to let Harriet talk or he'll be punched in the face. Mr. Warnock doesn't heed the warning and Franky punches him. In response, Mr. Warnock sings a song explaining that all men have better straighten up and get to work, whatever work that might be.

Finally the Professor arrives, accompanied by the Judge, Mrs. Winter, and Captain Washburn. Mrs. Winter is there to interview the boys to see if the Professor has done anything that might be un-American during the rehearsals. The boys defend the Professor and Franky calls out Mrs. Winter as a bully. She gets Harriet to admit that Franky is 21 years old, and thus subject to the draft. Franky runs away chased by Captain Washburn. The Professor is now without his best musician. The act ends with the boys rallying around the Professor as their leader.

## **Act Two**

It is one week before the big Loyalty Day parade. The Professor, Harriet, and the band are practicing on the parade route. As Andy leads the marchers around Loring Park, the Professor mentions to Harriet that he has read about her and Mr. Warnock together in the society pages. Harriet gives the Professor a hat for good luck and the Professor tells her that there is always a need to "be reminded of how good life can be, no matter all the other hardships." When he leaves to go work with the band, Harriet sings a song of admiration for the Professor, and wishes he were younger.

A week later, Andy is again in Loring Park waiting for Harriet to walk back to the Judge's house. While alone, Andy takes off his hat and unpins his hair; we see that Andy is actually a girl. She gives her head a good scratch before resetting her hair and restoring her hat. Franky appears and is looking for the Professor; he has decided to stop running away from his responsibilities and wants the Professor to turn him into the Commission so there will be no more doubt about his loyalty to America. While they wait for the Professor and Harriet to return from their walk, Andy and Franky find themselves affected by the full moon. As do the Professor and Harriet.

The day of the big parade arrives. The boys perform okay, a "Solid B." This is considered a victory by the Professor and the boys, but Mrs. Winter is still critical. Mr. Warnock asks the Judge for Harriet's hand in marriage. The Judge can see that the Professor has feelings for Harriet but will not allow himself to express them because he is consumed with concern for the welfare of the boys in his band.

Franky is also about to march in the parade, but as a soldier. Some of the other new recruits are excited about going to the battlefield; Franky sings about boys going off to war with the warning "be careful where you send your sons." Before the soldiers march away to training camp, Andy reveals herself to be a girl and she rushes to kiss Franky. Mrs. Winter and Captain Washburn take this to be further proof of the Professor's deceit.

Ignoring Mr. Warnock's pleas not to do anything rash, Harriet turns down his marriage proposal and tries to stand up for the Professor by taking responsibility for concealing Andy's secret. As punishment for her deceit, Mrs. Winter bars Harriet from any employment in the state of Minnesota. The professor is dismissed from leading the Working Boys Band and Mr. Warnock is assigned to replace the Judge as the Chairman of the Board of Directors.

In the coming weeks, we learn through letters to Franky from Andy, Caleb, and Bjorn that the Working Boys Band, under the leadership of Mr. Warnock, continues to improve and is making a number of successful appearances all over town. The Professor is teaching again at Hamline and still trying to appeal to the Commission to let him stay and work in Minnesota. Harriet is living with her family in New York but has plans to move back to Minnesota and hopes to reunite with the Professor when the war is over.

# The World of the Play: Child labor in early 20<sup>th</sup> century America

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## Industrial America and the Progressive movement

After the Civil War, America's abundant natural resources, new inventions, and a receptive market for goods combined to fuel an industrial boom. The expansion of railroads, mining, and manufacturing created a demand for labor to lay the rails, dig out the ore, tend the furnaces, work in mills, and carry out many other tasks. Many Americans moved from rural to urban areas to take industrial jobs. The labor force more than doubled.

The expanding economy, however, needed more workers than the nation could supply. As a result, the period from the Civil War to World War I (1865-1914) witnessed the largest influx of immigrants in American history: more than 26 million people, equivalent to three-quarters of the nation's entire population in 1865. Most immigrants during this era were from Europe, particularly eastern and southern Europe. By 1910, immigrants and their children made up more than 35 percent of the total U. S. population.

Foreign-born residents and their children were concentrated in dense urban neighborhoods -- often slums -- and endured working conditions that included long hours, unhealthy and unsafe conditions, and very low wages. The gap between rich and poor was extreme. In spite of the prevailing "Horatio Alger" myth of the poor boy pulling himself up by his bootstraps to become wealthy, it was very difficult for the immigrant industrial workers to rise to the middle class.



The unregulated effects of the Industrial Revolution led to a number of calls for reform that historians call "The Progressive Era," dating from the late 1890s through the first two decades of the twentieth century. The movement was made up of various groups with differing, and sometimes contradictory, aims. Some reformers had economic goals, such as suppressing big business. Others were concerned with corrupt urban politics and the power of party bosses. Some middle-class reformers wished to use the government to stabilize the social order by suppressing unions, but others wanted the government to support workers' rights, including the right to unionize.

Women emerged on the political scene during this era. Many advocated for social change, such as women's right to vote or use birth control. Women were also active in efforts to regulate working conditions for women and children in particular. Prohibition began as a women's crusade to fight the evils of alcohol that caused some men to drink away their paychecks or become violent toward their wives and children.



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## Child labor reform efforts

Child labor was one of the main concerns of the Progressive Era. Child labor, including indentured servitude and child slavery, however, has existed throughout American history.

As the need for factory labor increased after the Civil War, factory owners often preferred to hire children. They worked for lower wages, they were felt to be more manageable (and less likely to strike), and their small hands made them able to do work that required handling small parts and tools. American children worked in large numbers in mines, glass factories, textiles, agriculture, canneries, home industries, and as newsboys, messengers, bootblacks, and peddlers.

Factory wages were so low in general that children were seen as part of the family economy. Immigrants and rural migrants often sent their children to work, or worked alongside them. Child laborers were denied the chance to be children, which included the chance to go to school, condemning them to lives of illiteracy and poverty.

The number of children under the age of 15 who worked in industrial jobs for wages climbed from 1.5 million in 1890 to 2 million in 1910.

Children who worked in industrial settings developed serious health problems. Many child laborers were underweight. Some suffered from stunted growth and curvature of the spine. They developed diseases related to their work environment, such as tuberculosis and bronchitis for those who worked in mines or mills. They faced high accident rates due to physical and mental fatigue caused by hard work and long hours. Telegraph messengers, shoeshine boys, and newspaper delivery boys who worked outdoors in all kinds of weather were exposed to extreme cold which caused illness and death, and standing on concrete pavement for hours on end caused orthopedic defects.



Minnesota's largest industries during this era were agriculture, lumbering, and mining. Children were part of these economies. Other than Minneapolis's flour mills, the urban areas of Minneapolis and St. Paul did not have the level of industrialization of large Eastern cities or Southern textile mills. The working boys (and girls) of the play are shown to work in the local industries of flour milling and vegetable canning (south of the cities), and as entertainers, messengers, laundry workers, and newsboys.



Union organizing and child labor reform were often intertwined. By 1900, states varied considerably in their child labor standards and degree of enforcement. Growing opposition to child labor in the North caused many factories to move to the South. However, many Americans were beginning to see child labor as "child slavery" and demanded an end to it.

In 1904, a group of Progressive reformers founded the National Child Labor Committee (NCLC), an organization that aimed to abolish child labor. The NCLC received a charter from Congress in 1907. It hired teams of investigators to gather evidence of children working in harsh conditions and then organized exhibitions with photographs and statistics to dramatize the plight of these children. The most well-known of these investigators was photographer Lewis Hine. (See below.)

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In 1912, the Children's Bureau was founded as a federal information clearinghouse. In 1913, the Children's Bureau was transferred to the Department of Labor. The numbers of working children began to decline as the labor and reform movements such as the NCLC grew and labor standards in general began improving.

Reform of child labor was not an immediate success, however. The first federal child labor law was passed in 1916: the Keating-Owens Act. According to the act, a minimum age of 14 was established for workers in manufacturing and 16 for workers in mining; a maximum workday of 8 hours; prohibition of night work for workers under age 16; and a documentary proof of age. Only businesses involved in interstate commerce or foreign commerce were subject to it. Nevertheless, in 1918, the Supreme Court declared the Keating-Owens Act unconstitutional on the ground that congressional power to regulate interstate commerce did not extend to the conditions of labor.

It took two decades of agitation by the NCLC and other groups and numerous attempts by Congress to pass a national law designed to improve working conditions and to raise the legal working age. (See timeline.) Reformers, however, did succeed in forcing legislation in some states by banning child labor and setting maximum hours. By 1920, the number of child laborers was cut to nearly half of what it had been in 1910.

Finally, after the long and frustrating legal struggle, Congress passed the Fair Labor Standards Act in 1938. It continues to be the basis of other labor reforms to this day. Provisions of the act that dealt with child labor allowed children fourteen and fifteen years old to work, but only if their work did not interfere with their schooling or health. It prohibited anyone under eighteen from working in mining, manufacturing, logging, and other dangerous occupations. It limited the number of hours a day a child could work, and also mandated a minimum wage that applied equally to adults and children.

Today, approximately 215 million children, many as young as five, are involved in child labor around the globe.

## The photography of Lewis Hine

Lewis W. Hine was born in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, in 1874. He studied sociology at the University of Chicago, Columbia University, and New York University. He became a teacher in New York City at the Ethical Culture School around 1904, where he encouraged his students to use photography as an educational tool.

Hine and his students traveled to Ellis Island in New York Harbor, photographing the thousands of immigrants who arrived each day. The experience led Hine to conclude that documentary photography could be used as a tool for social change and reform.

In 1908, Hine left his teaching position to become the photographer for the National Child Labor Committee (NCLC). Over the next decade, Hine documented child labor to aid the NCLC's lobbying efforts to end the practice. Hine believed that if people could see for themselves the abuses and injustice of child labor, they would demand laws to end those evils.

He traveled around the country photographing the working conditions of children in all types of industries. He photographed children in coal mines, in meatpacking houses, in textile mills, and in canneries. He took pictures of children working in the streets as shoe shiners, newsboys, and hawkers.



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In many instances he tricked his way into factories to take the pictures that factory managers did not want the public to see. Sometimes he hid his camera in his coat and positioned the lens behind a buttonhole. He was careful to document every photograph with precise facts and figures. Because he used subterfuge to take his photographs, he believed that he had to be “double-sure that my photo data was 100% pure—no retouching or fakery of any kind.”

During and after World War I, Hine photographed American Red Cross relief work in Europe. In the 1920s and early 1930s, he made a series of “work portraits,” which emphasized the human contribution to modern industry. In 1930, Hine was commissioned to document the construction of The Empire State Building. Hine photographed the workers in precarious positions while they secured the iron and steel framework of the structure, taking many of the same risks the workers endured. In order to obtain the best vantage points, Hine was swung out in a specially designed basket 1,000 feet above Fifth Avenue.

During the Great Depression, he again worked for the Red Cross, photographing drought relief in the American South, and for the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), documenting life in the mountains of eastern Tennessee. He also served as chief photographer for the Works Progress Administration's (WPA) National Research Project, which studied changes in industry and their effect on employment, but his work there was never completed.



The last years of his life were filled with professional struggles due to loss of government and corporate patronage. As the Progressive era reform impulse died out, few were interested in his work, past or present. He was also viewed as passé by the younger New Deal social documentary photographers, including its head, Roy Stryker. Hine lost his house and applied for welfare. He died in poverty at age 66 on November 3, 1940.

After Lewis Hine's death, his son Corydon donated his prints and negatives to the Photo League, which was dismantled in 1951. The Museum of Modern Art was offered his pictures but did not accept them; but the George Eastman House in Rochester, New York, did.



Hine's reputation has continued to grow, however, and he is now recognized as a master American photographer. His images of working children stirred America's conscience and helped change the nation's labor laws. Hundreds of his photographs are available online from the



National Archives through the Online Catalog (OPA). The Library of Congress holds more than five thousand Hine photographs, including examples of his child labor and Red Cross photographs, his work portraits, and his WPA and TVA images. In addition to ten thousand images at the George Eastman House, the Albin O. Kuhn Library & Gallery of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County has five thousand photos Hine took for the National Child Labor Committee.

# The World of the Play: Timeline of child labor reform in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century

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- 1904** National Child Labor Committee (NCLC) forms, marking the beginning of an aggressive national campaign for federal child labor law reform.
- 1907** NCLC receives charter from Congress to investigate child labor conditions.
- 1908** Former teacher Lewis Hine begins to photograph child laborers across the country for the National Child Labor Committee. The artistry of the photos brings the issue of child labor before the eye of the public in a way that leads to change.
- 1910** U.S. census records 2 million child laborers.
- 1912** Children's Bureau is established as a federal information clearinghouse. Becomes part of the Bureau of Labor in 1913.
- 1916** New federal law, the Keating Owens Act, sanctions state violators. First federal child labor law prohibits movement of goods across state lines if minimum age laws are violated. The law is in effect only until 1918, when it's declared unconstitutional, then revised, passed, and declared unconstitutional again.
- 1920** Number of child laborers under age 15 drops to under a million (half of 1910 total).
- 1924** Congress passes a constitutional amendment giving the federal government authority to regulate child labor, but too few states ratify it and it never takes effect
- 1936** Federal purchasing law passes. Walsh-Healey Act states U.S. government will not purchase goods made by underage children
- 1937** Second attempt to ratify constitutional amendment giving federal government authority to regulate child labor falls just short of getting necessary votes
- New federal law makes sugar beet growers ineligible for benefit payments if they violate state minimum age and hours of work standards for children.
- 1938** Federal regulation of child labor achieved in Fair Labor Standards Act. **For the first time, minimum ages of employment and hours of work for children are regulated by federal law.**

# The World of the Play: Minnesota Commission of Public Safety

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During the late stages of the Progressive Era, Minnesota and the nation drifted from their reform preoccupations to concern with European affairs and involvement in World War I. Fears that Minnesota's large German-born population may represent an internal security threat caused the Minnesota state legislature to create the Commission of Public Safety in 1917.

The Commission's mission was to control subversive activity, ensure compliance with the national military draft, and take steps to conserve food, fuel, and other essentials for the war effort. Members of the Commission interpreted their powers broadly and soon launched a campaign of suppression against those whom they considered enemies of the state—political dissidents, labor agitators, and Minnesotans of German heritage.



The Commission became a virtual government in its own right. It had no oversight by other elected governmental bodies. Its members suspended civil rights, set up a 7,000-member armed militia and created a network of spies. Minnesota business leaders supported this because they were worried about union organizers and striking workers affecting their businesses. They were counting on the commission to keep workers in line, as the play describes happening with the trolley workers strike (which is based on an actual strike).

As the play mentions, another tactic of the Commission was loyalty parades and renaming things with German words. Shades of the Iraq War-era involved the renaming of French fries, “freedom fries,” such as Sauerkraut became liberty cabbage in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Germania Life Insurance Company of St. Paul changed its name to Guardian Life and removed the statue of “Germania” featured on its building. In early 1918, resident aliens in Minnesota had to register with the government at settlement houses and other locations. The pressure to assimilate resulted in a significant jump in naturalization as thousands sought citizenship.

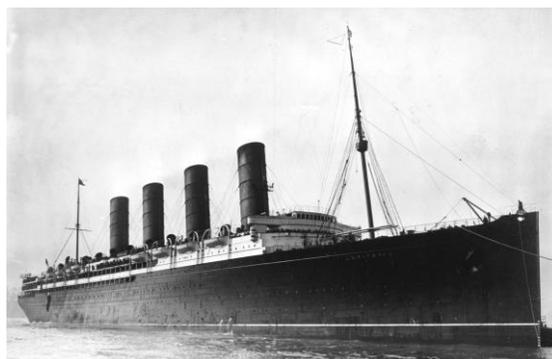
Minnesota was not the only state to set up militias or home guards. However, few if any had followed Minnesota's example of suspending civil liberties, demanding loyalty oaths, and requiring alien registration of people.

The Commission's efforts were precursors of the clampdown on civil liberties in the U.S that followed the end of World War I, fueled by increased labor uprisings and the Russian Revolution of 1917. Immigration restrictions were put in place in 1924. Prosperity returned and the reform impulse was over, at least until the Great Depression of the 1930s.

# The World of the Play: America's involvement in World War I and anti-German sentiment

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On May 7, 1915, a torpedo from a German U-boat fired on the British ocean liner RMS Lusitania. The ship was carrying 1,962 passengers and crew members. The vessel sank within 18 minutes and 1,198 lives were lost; 128 were American citizens. As the conflict grew in Europe President Woodrow Wilson had tried to keep the United States neutral, which was the view of the majority of Americans. But after the sinking of the Lusitania and several other ships carrying civilians, the public view of neutrality switched quickly. Wilson decided that in order to gain the peace that he wanted for the world, the United States would have to go to war. On May 6, 1917 the United States Congress declared war on Germany.



Once America entered the war, anti-German sentiment grew and an epidemic of mistrust of German-Americans began to spread. In 1915, over half of the public and private schools offered foreign language as a part of the curriculum with French classes outnumbering German three to one. By the 1920s, half of the schools in the nation had banned teaching any foreign languages to elementary school children. What had started as anti-German sentiment grew to include any foreign-born citizens who might appear to have a stronger tie to their country of origin than to America. The question was raised: how could the United States work as a melting pot if people that had moved here years ago still refused to speak English?

Native-born Americans invented a term to describe this deviation—"hyphenism." Hyphenism questioned patriotic loyalties of foreign-born citizens in the United States. The implication being that if you were a hyphenated American, you could not be a "true" American. Germans were the largest non-English speaking immigrant group in the United States prior to WWI and they in particular came under fire. English-speaking Americans were having trouble understanding why German-Americans would not willingly give up their German culture. They perceived German-Americans as clannish and arrogant, and found the numerous German-American festivals – where dancing and beer-drinking was commonplace, even on the Sabbath – especially troublesome.

As for German-Americans whose homeland was now the enemy, the message was clear: *You are expected to Americanize yourselves or leave.* Some Germans assimilated quickly. Others -- like German Catholics and Lutherans -- believed that the preservation of their faith depended on maintaining their German language and culture. Some German-Americans reacted by overtly defending their loyalty to the United States. Others changed the names of their businesses, and sometimes even their own names, in an attempt to conceal German ties and to disappear into mainstream America. Additionally, mainstream America endeavored to erase any hint of German influence as well: sauerkraut became liberty cabbage, hamburger became liberty steak, and even German measles was renamed liberty measles.

President Wilson and his administration discussed seriously the issue of German-American loyalty. The Attorney General, Thomas Gregory, believed that German-born citizens would make trouble. He approved a plan to use volunteers to gather information on German immigrants and German-born Americans suspected of potential disloyalty. This volunteer group became the American Protective League. It soon mushroomed into a vast network of 200,000 volunteers who worked as amateur detectives and were deputized as a semi-official branch of the Bureau of Investigation. They began by spying on German immigrants, but soon investigated anyone with dissenting views. People that spoke out about the war and labor rights were at risk for jail time during the war under the Sedation Act of 1918.

Ironically, and contrary to Wilson's opinion about divided loyalties, thousands of German-Americans fought in the trenches with the allied forces during in World War I, led by German-American John J. Pershing, whose family had long before changed their name from Pfoerschin.

## Discussion Questions:

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- 1) What similarities and differences do you see in the treatment of German-Americans during WWI, Japanese-Americans during WWII, and people of Muslim faith and immigrants from the Middle East after 9/11?
- 2) What's in a name? Why did Americans change the name of sauerkraut to "liberty cabbage" and French fries to "freedom fries"?
- 3) Imagine that you were living in America during WWI. Do you think you would have the same concerns about German-Americans as many other Americans did? Why or why not?

## Writing Activities:

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- 1) What does it mean to be a patriot?
- 2) What impact did xenophobia have on German-Americans and the United States as a whole during World War I?
- 3) What are the differences between how the German-Americans were treated during WWI and how the Japanese-Americans were treated during WWII?
- 4) How were other ethnic groups impacted by World War I in America?

# Group Activity:

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## Instructions:

I. Split the students into groups of four.

II. Assign each member of the group one of the following characters:

1) **German-American**

Family immigrated to America when you were 3 years old; you are now 21 years old. You have no memory of Germany. Your family speaks German at home (mostly for grandmother's sake), but you are fluent in reading, writing, and speaking English (you have a little bit of an accent). You think of America as your home.

- if you are a male, you have been drafted to fight overseas
- if you are a female, your older brother has been drafted to fight overseas

*or – student's choice*

Moved to the United States 10 years ago in search of a better life and opportunities; you are now 28 years old. You are becoming fluent in English, you love America, and this is where you will raise your family.

- if you are a male, you are willing to fight for your new home
- if you are a female, you would be proud to have your husband fight for your new home.

2) **Member of the Minnesota Commission of Public Safety (MCPS):**

You were born and raised in Minnesota; your parents moved to Minnesota from the east coast long before you were born. You are a concerned citizen. There is a large population of German immigrants in Minnesota – recent immigrants who came here to work in the mills and factories. Many of them still have ties to their homeland; there may be spies among them.

3) **Minnesota Guy or Gal**

You were born and raised in Minnesota; you are now about 21 years old. Your parents or your grandparents moved to here when they were your age, perhaps just as Minnesota was becoming a state. Your heritage is very likely Scandinavian and you still celebrate some of the “old world” traditions and holidays, but your family speaks English and you all definitely consider yourselves to be Americans.

- if you are a male, you have been drafted to fight overseas
- if you are a female, your older brother has been drafted to fight overseas

4) **Labor Activist**

You moved to Minnesota many years ago to work in the mines in the northern part of the state. You are part of the progressive movement and you want to change the labor laws and form unions for better wages and safer working conditions.

III. Have each group discuss the following:

- 1) How does the member of the MCPS go about finding out who among their neighbors is a German sympathizer or a true patriot?
- 2) How do you feel about being drafted or having someone you love drafted to fight in The Great War?
- 3) What does the German-American have to do to prove that he or she is as much of an American as anyone else?
- 4) Who might the member of the MCPS think is the bigger threat: the Labor Activist or the German-American?

# For Further Research and Suggested Reading

## Books

### Juvenile nonfiction

Bartoletti, Susan Campbell. *Kids on Strike!* Houghton Mifflin Co. 1999.

Tells the story of children who stood up for their rights against powerful company owners by organizing labor strikes throughout the United States, from 1836 to 1912. The children worked in spinning rooms, and as newsboys, coal workers, garment workers, and more. Illustrated with more than one hundred photographs as well as with the work of photographer Lewis Hine.

Cahn, Rhoda and William. *No time for school, no time for play; the story of child labor in America.* J. Messner, 1972.

Describes the lives of working children in the United States before the passage of child labor laws.

Freedman, Russell. *Kids at work : Lewis Hine and the crusade against child labor.* Clarion Books, 1994.

Photo biography of early twentieth-century photographer and schoolteacher Lewis Hine, using his own work as illustration. Hines's photographs of children at work were so devastating that they convinced the American people that Congress must pass child labor laws.

Gourley, Catherine. *Good girl work: factories, sweatshops, and how women changed their role in the American workforce.* Millbrook Press, 1999.

Discusses the girls and women in the industrial workforce of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the reforms and movements that changed their working conditions and the nature of the work itself.

Saller, Carol. *Working Children.* Carolrhoda Books, 1988.

Describes the various jobs which children performed during the early 1900s, the reasons for employment, working conditions, the efforts of reformers, and child labor today.

### Adult nonfiction

*Lewis Hine : from the collections of George Eastman House, International Museum of Photography and Film.* D.A.P./Distributed Art Publishers, [2012]

Posever, Verna and Curtis Stanley Mallach. *Photography and reform : Lewis Hine & the National Child Labor Committee.* Milwaukee Art Museum. 1984

Trattner, Walter I. *Crusade for the children; a history of the National Child Labor Committee and child labor reform in America.* Chicago, Quadrangle Books 1970.

Keillor, Steven J. *Shaping Minnesota's Identity; 150 Years of State History.* Pogo Press, 2008

Bausum, Ann. *Unraveling Freedom, The Battle For Democracy on the Home Front During World War I.* The National Geographic Society, 2010.

continued

## Websites

### Child Labor Education Project

The Child Labor Public Education Project of the University of Iowa Labor Center and Center for Human Rights provides educational workshops and materials on a range of issues regarding child labor in the U.S. and other countries:

[http://www.continuetolearn.uiowa.edu/laborctr/child\\_labor/](http://www.continuetolearn.uiowa.edu/laborctr/child_labor/)

### National Archives: Teaching With Documents: Photographs of Lewis Hine: Documentation of Child Labor

<http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/hine-photos/>

### “The History of Child Labor During the American Industrial Revolution,” by Jennifer Wagner

October 2002

[http://ihscslnews.org/view\\_article.php?id=95](http://ihscslnews.org/view_article.php?id=95)

### The History Place: Child Labor in America 1908-1912

The Photographs of Lewis W. Hine

<http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/childlabor/>

### Teaching with Primary Sources: Child Labor

Eastern Illinois University

[http://www.eiu.edu/~eiutps/newsletter\\_childlabor.php](http://www.eiu.edu/~eiutps/newsletter_childlabor.php)

### Teacher’s Guide: Primary Source Set

“Children’s Lives at the Turn of the Twentieth Century,” Library of Congress

[http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/childrens-lives/pdf/teacher\\_guide.pdf](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/childrens-lives/pdf/teacher_guide.pdf)

### Olson, Dan. “In another time of war, Minnesota suspended civil liberties,” Minnesota Public Radio. July 4, 2005.

Historian Hy Berman talks about the Minnesota Commission on Public Safety.

[http://news.minnesota.publicradio.org/features/2005/07/04\\_olsond\\_safety/](http://news.minnesota.publicradio.org/features/2005/07/04_olsond_safety/)

### War Hysteria & the Persecution of German-Americans, Authentic History, July 12, 2012

<http://www.authentichistory.com/1914-1920/2-homefront/4-hysteria/>

## Films

### *America and Lewis Hine*, 1984

Documentary about early 20th-century photographer Lewis Hine, who helped to expose grim working conditions in American factories and mines, especially the abuse and exploitation of children by their employers. Later, he became the official photographer for the construction of the Empire State Building.

Watch free on Hulu <http://www.hulu.com/watch/525958>

### *Newsies* (Touchstone Pacific Partners and Walt Disney Productions, 1992)

Feature film follows the life of 17-year-old Jack "Cowboy" Kelly (Christian Bale), one of the hundreds of homeless and orphaned children who sold newspapers in New York City during the 1890s to support themselves. Jack and his fellow newsboys, dubbed "newsies" for short, work for Joseph Pulitzer selling his newspaper, the New York World, on the streets of Manhattan. Based loosely on the New York City Newsboys Strike of 1899.