

The *Lusitania* and the American Public Response:

A Newspaper Narrative

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## THESIS APPROVAL

The abstract and thesis of Maggie Elizabeth Lagle for the Master of Arts in Museum Studies was submitted to the graduate college on October 23, 2017 and approved by the undersigned committee.

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Since the First World War erupted on 4 August 1914, historians have been documenting the conflict and outbreak of war via writing books, conducting archival research, producing films, etc. In the 1920's following the conclusion of the war initial studies focused on the Crisis of 1914. Specifically, historians focused on the diplomatic and political aspects as well as who was primarily responsible for the outbreak of war. Eventually, historians would shift their focus to the soldiers themselves, researching and documenting their experiences during the war.

The research conducted focuses on the sinking of the *Lusitania* liner on 7 May 1915 and the American public response to the incident by examining newspapers from across the United States and their coverage of the sinking. Thesis chapters will include information obtained from the Northeast, South, Midwest, and American West to conduct thorough research and acquire general opinions throughout the country. Working on the assumption that German-Americans had a decisive impact on media coverage, newspapers from states with high and low German-American populations are examined, resulting in well-rounded research.

Introduction:

Brief Background on the *Lusitania*

Census Information from 1900 & 1910

This thesis examines the American public response to the sinking of the *Lusitania* liner on 7 May 1915. From the date of the sinking until the United States formally entered the First World War on 6 April 1917 Americans were conflicted between remaining neutral as President Woodrow Wilson originally intended, or joining the war efforts in Europe. A common misconception in generalized United States history is that the sinking of the *Lusitania* liner is the overwhelming reason behind the United States entering the war. This thesis seeks to disprove this idea by utilizing newspapers from throughout the country. Several aspects of history are present in this thesis including controversies surrounding the sinking, First World War diplomacy, American newspapers, and German-American populations via Census records in 1900/1910.

The First World War began as a conflict among industrialized nations. When war erupted in 1914, United States President Woodrow Wilson declared that the United States would remain neutral. The American public initially supported Wilson and neutrality while war raged on across the Atlantic. According to historians, one of the most influential events that changed American's perspectives on the conflicts in Europe was the rapid sinking of the *Lusitania* liner on 7 May 1915. The *Lusitania* was a popular, somewhat controversial topic of conversation, even before departing New York's Pier 54. This was because three months before the *Lusitania's* final voyage, Germany had declared unrestricted submarine warfare in the waters surrounding Great Britain.

Germany utilizing submarine warfare was due to several factors. Great Britain blockading the ports of Germany prevented war materials from entering the country.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Rodney Carlisle, *Sovereignty At Sea: U.S. Merchant Ships And American Entry Into World War I* (Gainesville: The University Of Florida Press, 2009), p. 5.

There was also the issue of the German population suffering from food shortages.<sup>2</sup> In addition to war supplies, food was also unable to be delivered to German ports.<sup>3</sup> Germany responded to these naval blockades during the early months of 1915 by attacking merchant ships in the waters around the British Isles war zone. These attacks were taking place regardless of the ship's country of origin. Several merchant ships encountered attacks in the spring of 1915.

Attacks initiated by the German Navy angered and horrified the American public and President Wilson.<sup>4</sup> These incidents involving British and French ships forced Wilson to consider separating relations with the German Empire.<sup>5</sup> American ships were also under attack in the spring of 1915. On 18 April 1915, *Cushing*, a United States Navy destroyer was attacked by a German aircraft.<sup>6</sup> The assault occurred due to the assumption that the *Cushing* was an allied ship.<sup>7</sup> The ship sustained light bomb damage.<sup>8</sup> However, the *Cushing* did not sink and was able to return to New York City.<sup>9</sup> Another attack occurred just before the *Lusitania* sinking. On 1 May 1915, a German U-30 submarine torpedoed *Gulflight*, a United States tanker.<sup>10</sup> The attack occurred twenty miles west of the Isles of Scilly and resulted in three casualties.<sup>11</sup> It wouldn't be until the sinking of the *Lusitania* that the topic of unrestricted submarine warfare would emerge in American public opinion. Germany claimed that the attack was justified, citing the published

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 17.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 35.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> The Isles of Scilly are an archipelago off the Cornish coast, in southwest England.

warning as tangible evidence. The German embassy in the United States published the formal warning on 22 April 1915 regarding passenger liners departing from and arriving in Great Britain.<sup>12</sup>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CUNARD</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Established 1840</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>EUROPE VIA LIVERPOOL</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>LUSITANIA</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Fastest and Largest Steamer now in Atlantic Service Sails <b>SATURDAY, MAY 1, 10 A.M.</b></p> <p>Transylvania..Fri., May 7, 5 P.M. Orduna.....Tues., May 18, 10 A.M. Tuscania....Fri., May 21, 5 P.M. <b>LUSITANIA..Sat., May 29, 10 A.M.</b> Transylvania..Fri., June 4, 5 P.M.</p> <hr/> <p>Gibraltar—Genoa—Naples—Piraeus S.S. Carpathia, Thur., May 13, Noon</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>ROUND THE WORLD TOURS</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Through bookings to all principal Port of the World.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>COMPANY'S OFFICE, 21-24 State St., N. Y.</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>NOTICE!</b></p> <p>TRAVELLERS intending to embark on the Atlantic voyage are reminded that a state of war exists between Germany and her allies and Great Britain and her allies; that the zone of war includes the waters adjacent to the British Isles; that, in accordance with formal notice given by the Imperial German Government, vessels flying the flag of Great Britain, or of any of her allies, are liable to destruction in those waters and that travellers sailing in the war zone on ships of Great Britain or her allies do so at their own risk.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>IMPERIAL GERMAN EMBASSY</b> WASHINGTON, D. C., APRIL 22, 1915.</p>
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Regardless of the warnings, the Captain of the *Lusitania*, William Thomas Turner, departed for England with 1,266 passengers and 696 crewmembers.<sup>13</sup> The ship was scheduled to leave New York Harbor at 10:00 A.M. There was some last minute passenger transfers conducted, which resulted in a two-hour departure delay for the *Lusitania*. Some of the passengers quipped at the delay, assuming Captain Turner was too

<sup>12</sup> "Ocean Travel." *The New York Times*, 22 April 1915.

<sup>13</sup> United States House And Senate Committee. *Claims By American Citizens As A Result Of The Loss Of The Lusitania*. By President Warren G. Harding, 7987 S.doc.176, (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 3 April 1922) p. 2.

afraid to sail into the warzone waters of the Atlantic. Due to the war, the British implemented a rationing of coal during the spring of 1915. Because of this, the *Lusitania* was forced to shut down the fourth boiler, which resulted in the top speed reducing by four knots. Other than the initial excitement over the postponement and the slower speeds, the voyage was somewhat uneventful up until the sinking occurred. Passengers spent their days at sea celebrating birthdays, anniversaries, and engagements in the ship's saloon. Concerts including performances from pianists, singers, and comedians also took place on board, which momentarily distracted the passengers from the dangers of war.

On 7 May 1915 at 2:10 PM, a German submarine commanded by Walther Schwieger fired a torpedo into the right-hand side of the *Lusitania*, eleven miles off the southern coast of Ireland. A popular theory claims that the explosion of the ship's main boiler resulted in the *Lusitania* perishing into the Atlantic eighteen minutes after the torpedo initially struck. Another theory indicates that the *Lusitania* was carrying highly flammable chemicals intended for the Allied troops in Europe, which resulted in the rapid sinking of the liner. A third theory, popular at the time, was that two torpedoes hit the ship causing it to sink faster than most believe it should. The total number of fatalities from the sinking includes 1,198; of the 197 American citizens on board, 128 died.<sup>14</sup>

The sinking of the *Lusitania* shocked the world. For the past one hundred years, historians have been writing about the sinking, its notable passengers, and the controversies surrounding the event itself from the German, British, and American

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<sup>14</sup> United States House And Senate Committee. *Claims By American Citizens As A Result Of The Loss Of The Lusitania*. By President Warren G. Harding, 7987 S.doc.176, (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 3 April 1922) p. 2.

perspectives.<sup>15</sup> Great Britain blamed Germany, claiming the Germans had violated the Cruiser Rules of warfare, which were international laws set in place to protect non-military ships from being fired upon without warning. The Germans blamed Great Britain, claiming the British Government was starving the German civilian populations through naval blockades.<sup>16</sup> Germany also claimed that the *Lusitania* was not a transatlantic passenger liner; they claimed it was a First World War armed merchant cruiser in disguise.

According to Germany, the *Lusitania* was also in possession of weapons, ammunition, arms, and other war-related supplies located in a secret compartment on the ship. This turned out to be true, and they were en route to the Allied forces in Europe. Germany stated that in possessing these items, the *Lusitania* was in violation of the Hague rules (which regulated maritime transportation), and because of that the *Lusitania* could be fired upon and destroyed in a warzone. Unlike Great Britain and Germany, America's response to the *Lusitania* sinking was extremely complex, considering the United States was not in the First World War on 7 May 1915.

The historiography of the *Lusitania* provides ample evidence that many Americans believe that the sinking of the *Lusitania* is the main cause of American

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<sup>15</sup> Historical Works Include: Michael Martin, *RMS Lusitania: It Was And It Wasn't* (Dublin: The History Press Ireland, 2014); Diana Preston, *The Lusitania: An Epic Tragedy* (New York: The Berkley Publishing Group, 2002); John Protasio, *The Day The World Was Shocked: The Lusitania Disaster And Its Influence On The Course Of World War I* (Philadelphia: Casemate Publishers, 2011); Colin Simpson, *The Lusitania* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1972).

<sup>16</sup> United States House And Senate Committee. *Claims By American Citizens As A Result Of The Loss Of The Lusitania*. By President Warren G. Harding, 7987 S.doc.176, (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 3 April 1922) p. 5.

entering the First World War.<sup>17</sup> During the initial research on the subject of the First World War and the United States involvement, some might question why the sinking of the *Lusitania* and America's official declaration of war on Germany did not occur concurrently. The sinking of the *Lusitania* occurred on 7 May 1915. The United States Congress met to declare war on the Imperial German Government on 3 April 1917, with the official declaration being on 6 April 1917.<sup>18</sup> The delay in the official declaration of war could be due to several factors such as President Wilson's strict neutrality stance, the contradicting reactions to the sinking, and the simple fact of unpreparedness. The American public response in the aftermath of the *Lusitania* must be examined to understand this delay between such crucial events.

To accomplish this task, this thesis will examine newspapers from different regions throughout the United States; taking into account the geographical locations of the publications, as well as the citizens' heritage. These are important factors in determining what the complete American public response was to the *Lusitania* incident. The four regions are: The Northeast, the South, the Midwest, and the American West. Newspapers were chosen based on location, readership, and German-American populations.

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<sup>17</sup> Sources Include: Francis W. Halsey, *The Literary Digest History Of The World War, Vol. IX Compiled From The Original And Contemporary Sources: American, British, French, German, And Others: Italy, Submarine Warfare, August 1914 - November 1918* (New York: Cosimo Classics Publishers, 1919); Diana Preston, *The Lusitania: An Epic Tragedy* (New York: The Berkley Publishing Group, 2002); Steward Halsey Ross, *Propaganda For War: How The United States Was Conditioned To Fight The Great War Of 1914 - 1918* (Joshua Tree: Progressive Press, 2009); Colin Simpson, *The Lusitania* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1972).

<sup>18</sup> United States House And Senate Committee. *War With The Imperial German Government*. By Gilbert Monell Hitchcock ,7249 S.rp.1 (Washington D.C.; United States Government Printing Office, 3 April 1917) p. 1.

During the early twentieth century, Americans relied on newspapers in order to stay informed with current events. Newspapers during the First World War were seen as the most trustworthy way to receive information on the conflicts in Europe. Newspapers were not delivering the information accurately, which is apparent when examining newspapers for this thesis. There are a few reasons behind the inaccurate reporting. In the beginning of the war, British forces successfully severed Germany's under-sea communication cables. This allowed for Great Britain to hold a monopoly over the quickest, most efficient method of transmitting news of the war from Europe to press agencies in the United States.

Propaganda also contributed to inaccurate reporting during the First World War. Once conflict erupted in 1914, the governments involved committed massive resources in order to shape public opinion. Newspapers were one of the most vital resources used, resulting in the influence of both neutral and enemy countries. The propaganda machine also affected journalists during the war. Government control, military influence, and the journalists' own proprietors also influenced the information being released to the newspapers during the war. One example of this occurred in March of 1915 when the British Army General Headquarters (GHQ) sent five accredited British war correspondents to France in order to report on the conflict more accurately. Phillip Gibbs, an English journalist was among the correspondents sent to France. Gibbs' stories were sent to several publications, including American newspapers. Unfortunately, Gibbs and other journalists' information suffered strict censorship, resulting in inaccurate reporting that is apparent when examining newspapers for this thesis.

Northeastern newspapers examined include *The Boston Globe*, *The New Jersey Asbury Park Evening Press*, *The New York Times*, *The Pittsburgh Gazette*, and *The Cincinnati Enquirer*. Southern newspapers examined include *The Tallahassee Democrat*, *The Greensboro Patriot*, *The Greenville News*, and *The Houston Post*. Midwestern newspapers examined include *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, *The Topeka State Journal*, *The Kansas City Star*, *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, *The Omaha Evening World-Herald*, and *the Deadwood Daily Pioneer Times*. The final chapter includes newspapers from the American West and incorporates *The Arizona Republic*, *The Los Angeles Evening Herald*, and *The Seattle Daily Times*.

Geography played a key role in the American response considering the origin cities of the passengers who lost their lives on the *Lusitania*. The majority of these passengers were from the Northeast, with only three passengers originating west of St. Louis, Missouri: one passenger from Kansas City, Missouri and the other two passengers from Los Angeles, California.<sup>19</sup> The nationalities of American citizens in 1915 play a significant role in this thesis. In the 1910 census, about nine percent of the United States' population had been born in Germany or was a child of German-born parents.<sup>20</sup> The German population was not spread out throughout the country. Most German-Americans settled in the Northeast or Midwest. In New York, Cincinnati, Chicago, and St. Louis, German-Americans made up over thirty-five percent of the city's population.

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<sup>19</sup> United States House And Senate Committee. *Claims By American Citizens As A Result Of The Loss Of The Lusitania*. By President Warren G. Harding, 7987 S.doc.176, (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 3 April 1922) pp. 2-4.

<sup>20</sup> United States Department of Commerce, Bureau Of The Census. *Thirteenth Census Of The United States Taken In The Year 1910*. (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1913) p. 194.

Since German-American populations concentrated in specific regions, the newspapers under review include some cities with high German-American populations and some cities with low German-American populations. By examining newspapers from both high and low German population centers, there is a balance in the research. The Northeast and Midwest consist of higher German-American populations, while the South and American West consist of lower German-American populations. Newspapers included in this thesis reflect these regions and populations statistics.

### Census Information in the United States

As mentioned above, geography played a key role in the American response considering the origin cities of the passengers who lost their lives on the *Lusitania*. The census information under inspection is the Thirteenth Census of the United States 1910: Census Reports Volume I – Population: General Report and Analysis.<sup>21</sup>

#### Section 10 | Table 35: Country of Birth (1910)

<u>State Name:</u>	<u>Total Population:</u>	<u>Foreign Born:</u>	<u>German Born:</u>	<u>German-American %</u>
Massachusetts	3,366,416	1,059,245	30,555	3 %
New Jersey	2,537,167	660,788	122,880	19 %
New York	9,113,614	2,748,011	436,911	16 %
Ohio	4,767,121	598,374	175,095	29 %
Pennsylvania	7,395,111	1,442,374	195,202	14 %
Florida	752,619	40,633	2,446	6 %
North Carolina	2,206,287	6,092	1,074	18 %
South Carolina	1,515,400	6,179	1,744	28 %
Texas	3,896,542	241,938	44,929	19 %

<sup>21</sup> The section topical for this thesis research includes Volume I, Section Ten, Chapter Seven: Country of Birth of the Foreign-Born Population. The Thirteenth Census of the United States was conducted on 15 April 1910 and completed in two weeks, the standard allotment of time according to the terms of the Census Act of 2 July 1909. The 1910 Census was the first Census to take place in April, rather than June. This change took place because large numbers of people were away from their homes in June, and this would provide a more accurate report.

Illinois	5,638,591	1,205,334	319,199	26 %
Kansas	1,690,949	135,450	34,508	26 %
Minnesota	2,075,708	543,595	109,628	20 %
Nebraska	1,192,214	176,612	57,302	32 %
South Dakota	583,888	100,790	21,544	21 %
Arizona	204,374	48,765	1,846	.04 %
California	2,377,549	586,432	76,307	13 %
Washington State	1,141,990	256,241	29,388	11 %

The information presented in the 1910 census indicates that the United States total number of foreign-born citizens totals 10,460,085. Of these citizens, 2,669,164 are from Germany. This information highlights the impact the German immigrants have on American public opinion, seeing as though the German immigrants make up twenty-six percent of the total number of foreign-born citizens in 1910.<sup>22</sup> As seen in the Census numbers, German-Americans were present heavily in the Northeast and the Midwest, with patterns indicating movement into the American West.

The historiography, as well as primary sources and excerpts from newspapers, provide evidence there were segments of the German-American population that did not support German war efforts.<sup>23</sup> The information presented in the 1910 Census indicates that the German-born American citizens made up a substantial piece of the American public opinion, especially while Europe was on the brink of war with tensions rising in the Balkans in the years leading up to the First World War.

### **Section 10: Country of Birth of the Foreign-Born Population (1910)**

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Sources Include: Des Hickey and Gus Smith, *Seven Days To Disaster: The Sinking Of The Lusitania* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons Publishing, 1982); Frederick C. Luebke, *Bonds Of Loyalty: German-Americans And World War I* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974).

<u>1900</u>	<u>1910</u>
Germany	Germany
Ireland	Russia
Canada	Ireland
England	Italy
Sweden	Canada
Russia	Austria
Austria	England
Italy	Sweden
Norway	Hungary
Scotland	Norway

The data listed in the table above represents the order of the ten leading countries on the numbers contributed to the foreign-born population of the United States as reported in the 1900 and 1910 U.S. Census reports.<sup>24</sup> As seen clearly in the data, the rank of each country changed during the decade with one exception: Germany. Based on these U.S. Census reports, Germany was the most relevant country in regards to the total foreign-born population. This is pertinent to understanding the different aspects of the American public response to the sinking of the *Lusitania*. The combination of newspaper accounts and census information provides glimpses into the opinions of Americans following the sinking of the *Lusitania* on 7 May 1915. The press was the most reliable and available gauge of public opinion in 1915 because official polls would not emerge on a widespread platform until 1935.<sup>25</sup>

The German-American population throughout the United States in 1915 was inconsistent. As seen in the Census information, large populations of German-Americans

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<sup>24</sup> "United States Census Bureau,"

<https://www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html>

<sup>25</sup> George Gallup, considered by many to be the "pioneer of survey sampling," would not establish his notoriously popular polling system until twenty years following the sinking of the *Lusitania*.

were present in the Northeast and the Midwest. Much like the irregular population numbers, the response to the sinking of the *Lusitania* was also inconsistent. This is seen in American newspapers in the days following 7 May 1915 and will be presented in chapters two through five in this thesis.

## Chapter One: Historiography

In addition to the media and newspaper publishing, historians were presenting their research as early as 1916 on the subjects of the *Lusitania* and American involvement in the First World War.<sup>26</sup> The historiography of the First World War has developed and adapted throughout the past century. Initially, historians focused on the outbreak of war, and the narratives of each of the countries involved in the conflict. This was noticeable following the conclusion of the war, as well as in the 1920's. There was a shift in historiography present in the 1930's, with new themes and ideas related to the United States moving towards an isolationism movement. Due to the devastating losses from the First World War and the Great Depression beginning in 1929, American public opinion was shifting towards non-entanglement in international politics.

This change exists in the historiography of the *Lusitania*, specifically when discussing the propaganda and its influence in pushing the United States formally into the First World War. Historians would continue to shift their writings following the Second World War, by beginning to focus on subjects outside of political and military history. For example, since the conclusion of the First World War most historians were researching and writing on the military statistics, political environments, and diplomatic relations surrounding the war. More recent works have placed emphasis on the soldiers themselves, and their perspectives on life behind the front lines and their feelings of nationalism. There is also a new field of research emerging, in which historians are writing about the ways the nations involved in the conflict are remembering the war. This

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<sup>26</sup> Early Sources Include: Theodore Roosevelt. *Fear God And Take Your Own Part* (New York, NY: George H. Doran Company, 1916); Francis W. Halsey, *The Literary Digest History Of The World War, Vol. IX Compiled From The Original And Contemporary Sources: American, British, French, German, And Others: Italy, Submarine Warfare, August 1914 - November 1918* (New York, NY: Cosimo Classics Publishers, 1919).

research provides commemorative outlets such as soldier and war memorials, as well as conferences and symposiums for historians to discuss their work with the general public.

One of the earliest examples of historiography on the sinking of the *Lusitania* is from the 26<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt. President from 1901 through 1909, Roosevelt held very strong opinions on President Wilson's handling of America's involvement in the First World War. Roosevelt's book *Fear God and Take Your Own Part* is a collection of articles he completed six years following his Presidency. These articles were compiled for various magazines and editorials throughout the American Northeast. Themes throughout *Fear God and Take Your Own Part* include patriotism, hyphenism, and establishing and maintain a strong military. Roosevelt projects his detest for President Wilson in the fourth chapter of his book. This chapter includes information regarding German unrestricted submarine warfare.<sup>27</sup> Roosevelt placed the blame for the sinking entirely on Germany and felt that the United States should have taken immediate action following the sinking of the *Lusitania*.

American journalist, historian, and editor, Francis Whiting Halsey's *The Literary Digest History of the World War* published in 1919 includes ten volumes. For this research, *Volume I: Outbreak and Causes-Western Front-June 1914 to October 1914* and *Volume IV: United States Enters the War-Western Front-December 1916 to March 1918* are of interest.<sup>28</sup> Halsey completed the ten volumes using newspapers accounts, official

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<sup>27</sup> Roosevelt, *Fear God And Take Your Own Part*, p. 111.

<sup>28</sup> Halsey, *The Literary Digest History Of The World War, Vol. IX*, p. 265. Additional Volumes from The Literary Digest History of the World War Include: *Vol. I: The Outbreak And The Causes; Vol. II: The German Advance On Paris; Vol. III: The Allied Autumn Offensive; Vol. IV: The United States Enters The War; Vol. V: Ludendorff's Colossal Drive In The West; Vol. VI: Foch's Victories Continued; Vol. VII:*

documents, photographs, and interviews with soldiers who faced active combat during the First World War as resources. Much like Roosevelt, Halsey blamed Germany for its actions against the *Lusitania*. He also blames President Wilson for not responding to the act itself.<sup>29</sup>

In 1939, Horace Cornelius (H.C.) Peterson published his work *Propaganda for War: The Campaign Against American Neutrality, 1914 - 1917*.<sup>30</sup> The main idea behind Peterson's work was that emotion rather than reason will almost always govern a country's decision in regards to foreign affairs during The First World War.<sup>31</sup> This work focuses on British and German propaganda, and how they each impacted the United States. Peterson believes the British propaganda machine is the sole reason behind the United States entering the First World War. It is also the reason many German-Americans faced such persecution during the war. Peterson also argues that the United States attempted to escape imperialistic interests in the Revolutionary War, yet in the First World War immediately aligned themselves with Great Britain and the Allied forces.

Arthur S. Link is considered by many to be the leading historian on President Wilson and his policies. In *Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era: 1910-1917*, Link provides an overview of the Wilson Administration as a whole, including political factors that directly influenced the decisions on foreign and domestic policy throughout Wilson's

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*Russia's Early Victories; Vol. VIII: The War Against Turkey; Vol. X: Battles Between Warships And The Work Of Commerce Raiders.*

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> H.C. Peterson, *Propaganda For War: The Campaign Against American Neutrality, 1914 - 1917* (Norman, OK: University Of Oklahoma Press, 1939), p. 125.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

presidency.<sup>32</sup> In regards to the *Lusitania*, Link presents the case that the sinking was simply a way to force Wilson to respond to the conflicts occurring in Europe.<sup>33</sup>

Dr. Carl Wittke's *The German Language Press in America* focuses on the chronicles of the German Press in the United States, beginning with the colonial period and concluding shortly following the First World War.<sup>34</sup> According to Wittke, the German-Americans living in the United States during the First World War encountered the most difficult and humiliating experiences any immigrant group has ever experienced in the history of American immigration.<sup>35</sup> The one possible exception to this would be the Japanese-Americans during World War II.<sup>36</sup> The *Lusitania* was considered by Wittke to be the first great crisis in German-American relations.<sup>37</sup>

In Ernest R. May's *The World War and American Isolation: 1914-1917*, the question of the American neutrality argument is presented by examining both the German and British viewpoints.<sup>38</sup> May accomplishes this by examining the actions of the German capital of Berlin, and actions of the British capital of London. May claims that the politics of both Germany and Great Britain infringed upon the American neutrality set in place by President Wilson. *The World War and American Isolation: 1914-1917* presents Wilson's attitude and the opinions of the American public and how they evolved throughout the First World War.

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<sup>32</sup> Arthur S. Link, *Woodrow Wilson And The Progressive Era: 1910 - 1917* (New York, NY: Harper And Row Publishers, 1954), p. 162.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, p. 164.

<sup>34</sup> Carl Wittke, *The German-Language Press In America* (Lexington, KY: University Of Kentucky Press, 1957), p. 235.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, p. 252.

<sup>38</sup> Ernest R. May, *The World War And American Isolation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959), p. 134.

Don Lawson, a military historian, had an approach similar to Roosevelt and Halsey in his book *The United States in World War I* that focuses on the story of General John J. Pershing and the American Expeditionary Forces during the First World War.<sup>39</sup> Lawson also discusses the *Lusitania* and the controversy surrounding the sinking. According to Lawson, the *Lusitania* disaster brought the United States to the brink of war.<sup>40</sup> He also argues that the abrasive views of Germany by Americans did not begin with the sinking of the *Lusitania*, stating “From the start of the war most Americans had reacted against Germany for its violation of Belgium neutrality.”<sup>41</sup>

Edwyn A. Gray’s *The U-Boat War 1914 - 1918* reiterates the same ideas Peterson presented in 1939.<sup>42</sup> Gray presents a chronological narrative of the submarine developments during the First World War from the British perspective. Gray includes information such as technological developments of the U-Boat and the daily lives of the men enlisted in the submarine service. In addition to the U-Boat, Gray also discusses statistical information on the losses merchant ships encountered during the First World War at the hands of the German submarines.

Colin Simpson, a historian as well as journalist published his work *The Lusitania* in 1972.<sup>43</sup> Differing from Gray, Simpson places the blame of the sinking on Great Britain rather than Germany. Simpson claims that the *Lusitania* was a disguise for the British

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<sup>39</sup> Don Lawson, *The United States In World War I* (New York, NY: Abelard-Schuman Publishing, 1963), p. 19.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, p. 35.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Edwyn A. Gray, *The U-Boat War 1914 - 1918* (London, Great Britain: Seeley, Service, And Co. Ltd Publishing, 1972), p. 23.

<sup>43</sup> Colin Simpson, *The Lusitania* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown And Company, 1972), p. 194.

Navy, transporting munitions and contraband for the Allied troops in Europe.<sup>44</sup> This was not a groundbreaking claim by Simpson. Stories surfacing about the controversial cargo manifest had been circulating for years following the sinking. Simpson differs from the previous historians by digging deeper, exposing new details further cementing the blame on Great Britain.

Frederick C. Luebke's *Bonds of Loyalty: German Americans and World War I* focuses heavily on the American public response following the sinking.<sup>45</sup> This work isolates the persecutions German-Americans faced during the First World War and focuses on the political environment following the conclusion of the war. The first chapter of the book presents an incident that took place in Collinsville, Illinois on 4 April 1918.<sup>46</sup> Robert Prager, a German-born coalminer was the victim of an attack by a mob of twelve men and then sentenced to death by lynching in downtown Collinsville.<sup>47</sup> According to Luebke, Prager was murdered simply because of his place of birth: Dresden, Germany.<sup>48</sup> Luebke also discusses the dilemma some German-Americans faced when the *Lusitania* sank, including their loyalty and where it should fall. Luebke claims that Prager and a majority of German-Americans would remain loyal to their newly adopted country. Regardless, Luebke presents themes such as "superpatriotism" and "neutrality with a German accent" throughout his work.

Historians Des Hickey and Gus Smith published *Seven Days To Disaster*, a day-by-day chronological timeline of the events leading up to the sinking, the voyage across

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Frederick C. Luebke, *Bonds Of Loyalty: German-Americans And World War I* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974), p. 131.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, p. 133.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, p. 134.

the Atlantic, and after the sinking itself.<sup>49</sup> This book isolates the key figures most involved in the day of the actual sinking, including the narratives of *Lusitania* Captain Turner, U-Boat Captain Schweiger, and the passengers including individuals that survived and the ones that did not.<sup>50</sup> These individualized narratives include the decisions made by each figure such as Captain Turner's blatant disregard for the German warnings, and Captain Schweiger's drastic decision to fire the torpedoes into the well-known passenger liner.<sup>51</sup>

David W. Detjen's *The Germans in Missouri, 1900 - 1918 Prohibition Neutrality, and Assimilation* focuses on the social and political movements German-Americans were involved in before, during, and immediately after the First World War.<sup>52</sup> According to Detjan, German-Americans were quite sympathetic toward the Central Powers during the First World War.<sup>53</sup> Detjan claims that when the First World War officially began in 1914, German-Americans did not encounter any conflicts in social or political environments. When the relations between Germany and the United States began to decline, problems began to arise for German-born American citizens. Detjan also presents court cases involving German-Americans. Some of which are from Detjan's personal experience working as a New York attorney representing German-Americans.

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<sup>49</sup> Des Hickey and Gus Smith, *Seven Days To Disaster: The Sinking Of The Lusitania* (New York, NY: G. P. Putnam's Sons Publishing, 1982), p. 264.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> David W. Detjen, *The Germans In Missouri, 1900-1918 Prohibition, Neutrality, And Assimilation* (Columbia, MO: University Of Missouri Press, 1985), p. 95.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, p. 96.

David Stevenson's work *The First World War and International Politics* examines the political activity throughout the war.<sup>54</sup> This work focuses on the political environment during the First World War, and the diplomats involved in the conflicts. Stevenson's work includes topics on trench warfare, the Russian Revolution, and the complexity of the Treaty of Versailles. In regards to American neutrality, Stevenson claims that the *Lusitania* disaster altered a majority of Americans opinions; resulting in President Wilson breaking ties with Germany.<sup>55</sup>

*World War I: Opposing Viewpoints*, edited by William Dudley includes articles and columns from historians and newspapers from the early twentieth century. Themes present in *Opposing Viewpoints* include neutrality and the United States' preparedness for the First World War. Editorials of Henry Watterson and a German newspaper based in New York called *The Fatherland* are relevant for this thesis. Watterson, a congressman, and longtime newspaper editor, condemned Germany for the sinking. Watterson also projected the same enthusiasm held by Roosevelt, in that Watterson firmly believed that the United States should have retaliated against Germany immediately following the sinking.<sup>56</sup> *The Fatherland* would take a much different approach to the events that occurred on 7 May 1915.

Diana Preston's *Lusitania: An Epic Tragedy* presents the facts, the conspiracies, and the opinions on the sinking of the *Lusitania*, specifically the United States formally

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<sup>54</sup> David Stevenson, *The First World War And International Politics* (Oxford, London: Clarendon Press Publishing, 1988), p. 71.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> William Dudley, *World War I: Opposing Viewpoints* (San Diego, CA: Greenhaven Press Inc., 1998), p. 78.

entering the First World War.<sup>57</sup> The work also incorporates technical aspects of the liner itself, as well as the politics surrounding the voyage before departing New York for Liverpool.<sup>58</sup> Preston begins the book by examining the development of the submarine, and the countries that were involved in perfecting a design specifically for military purposes. The details of the final voyage of the *Lusitania* are then presented, including passenger biographies of the better-known travelers. Preston concludes her work by examining the sinking and the aftermath. This aftermath includes court records, hearings, and closed-door political meetings by each of the countries involved.

Dale Zacher's *The Scripps Newspapers Go To War, 1914 - 1918* provides a glimpse of E.W. Scripp's ownership of twenty-one newspapers during the First World War. This work offers insight into one of the most dominant news outlets and presents how the press romanticized the *Lusitania* sinking, similar to stories seen in newspaper columns immediately following the event in 1915.<sup>59</sup> Zacher focuses on journalism's impact during times of war and argues that the *Lusitania* disaster was an opportunity for American newspapers to project "tragedy and heroism, not war or terrorism."<sup>60</sup> Zacher presents his case by stating that the sinking should have surprised nobody.<sup>61</sup>

Steward Halsey Ross places a strong emphasis on the British propaganda machine's role in the United States during the First World War in his work *Propaganda for War: How the United States was Conditioned to Fight the Great War of 1914 -*

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<sup>57</sup> Diana Preston, *The Lusitania: An Epic Tragedy* (New York, NY: The Berkley Publishing Group, 2002), p. 307.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Dale Zacher, *The Scripps Newspapers Go To War, 1914 - 1918* (Champaign, IL: The University Of Illinois Press, 2010), p. 61.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, p. 60.

1918.<sup>62</sup> In his work, Ross presents the power of the British propaganda machine by stating that Great Britain's advertising campaign forced the United States into the First World War. Ross claimed that from the beginning of the war until the sinking of the *Lusitania*, the United States was universally pro-Ally, solidified primarily by British propaganda.<sup>63</sup> Ross argues that the *Lusitania* disaster was not the only catalyst utilized by Great Britain during the First World War. According to Ross, the actions of the German army in Belgium and the Zimmermann telegram incident were both products of the British propaganda machine.

Similar to Ross, maritime historian John Protasio focuses heavily on the British as well in *The Day The World War Shocked: The Lusitania Disaster and Its Influence on the Course of World War I*.<sup>64</sup> Protasio's work highlights the popular conspiracy theories of the sinking; capitalizing on the fact that Germany, the United States, and Great Britain could all easily take the blame for the *Lusitania* disaster. Protasio differs from previous historians by presenting the speculation that the *Lusitania* was deliberately allowed to sink by the British Royal Navy, with the goal to force the United States into the First World War.<sup>65</sup>

Justus D. Doenecke's *Nothing Less Than War: A New History Of America's Entry Into World War I* focuses on the internal politics of President Wilson and his closest

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<sup>62</sup> Steward Halsey Ross, *Propaganda For War: How The United States Was Conditioned To Fight the Great War Of 1914 - 1918* (Joshua Tree, CA: Progressive Press, 2009), p. 145.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> John Protasio, *The Day The World Was Shocked: The Lusitania Disaster And Its Influence On The Course Of World War I* (Philadelphia, PA: Casemate Publishers, 2011), p. 126.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

advisors.<sup>66</sup> Doenecke also offers a glimpse of how Congress reacted to the sinking of the *Lusitania* and presents the contrasting opinions many in Washington D.C. held in the days following 7 May 1915. *Nothing Less Than War* proclaims that the United States' decision to formally enter the First World War on 6 April 1917 was not President Wilson's alone. There were many factors influencing Wilson's decision making, which Doenecke demonstrates to his audience.

Michael Martin presents a different opinion in *RMS Lusitania: It Wasn't And It Didn't*.<sup>67</sup> This work focuses on the operational response to the sinking from the British Royal Navy, civilian vessels used during warzone waters, and the impact the sinking had on the United States in 1915.<sup>68</sup> Martin attempts to destroy the cemented narrative of the *Lusitania* holding the responsibility for the United States formally entering the First World War. While Martin does, in fact, believe that the sinking brought the United States and Germany to the brink of war, Martin projects the viewpoint that the American stance on Wilson's decision to remain out of the conflicts would not be swayed by a loss of life.<sup>69</sup>

Michael S. Neiberg's *The Path To War: How The First World War Created Modern America* presents a wide variety of topics in his work, including how American's opinions shifted throughout the war, as well as the treatment of certain minority groups.<sup>70</sup> Chapter three of *Path* is most helpful in regards to this thesis research. Neiberg presents

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<sup>66</sup> Justus D. Doenecke, *Nothing Less Than War: A New History Of America's Entry Into World War I* (Lexington, KY: The University of Kentucky Press, 2011), p. 61.

<sup>67</sup> Michael Martin, *RMS Lusitania: It Was And It Wasn't* (Dublin, Ireland: The History Press Ireland, 2014), p. 99.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Michael S. Neiberg, *The Path To War: How The First World War Created Modern America* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 67.

the *Lusitania* sinking as the initial point of the First World War entering American lives on a personal level.<sup>71</sup> Neiberg also presents the American public response to the sinking of the *Lusitania*, incorporating the press in the reaction.

The historiography on the sinking of the *Lusitania* and the First World War is quite intricate. Over the past one hundred years, historians have been examining the *Lusitania* incident from the German, British, and American perspectives. As seen in the sources above, the historiography on the sinking of the *Lusitania* is just as complex as the American public's response was in 1915. Because of this it is essential to research every possible angle to fully understand the incident itself. This thesis attempts to accomplish this, by utilizing historiography, primary source materials, and the newspaper accounts in the following four chapters.

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

Chapter Two: Northeastern Newspapers

Massachusetts: *The Boston Globe*

New Jersey: *The Asbury Park Evening Press*

New York: The New York Times

Ohio: *The Cincinnati Enquirer*

Pennsylvania: *The Pittsburgh Gazette Times*

The Northeastern states had the strongest, most abrasive reactions to the sinking of the *Lusitania*. This was because a majority of the passengers traveling on the liner hailed from the Northeastern states. Another factor present is the location of Washington D.C. and the political background playing a part in the response. Even prior to the sinking of the *Lusitania*, the Northeast held an anti-German, pro-British stance. Since the conflict began in 1914, Americans were presented with the dilemma of remaining neutral, or becoming involved in the fighting. Since the sinking of the *Lusitania* caused the loss of American lives, President Wilson's neutrality stance was questionable for some living in the Northeast.

*The Boston Globe's* coverage of the *Lusitania* sinking began with their Saturday morning edition on 8 May 1915. *The Boston Globe* dramatized the event more so than other newspapers. Its coverage of the *Lusitania* sinking continued for several days, including stories of the American lives lost and information on the survivors. A few individuals specifically focused on were Alfred G. Vanderbilt, a famous multimillionaire and Charles Frohman, a popular theatre director.<sup>72</sup>

One story on 8 May 1915 included details about two Bostonians who were on the *Lusitania*.<sup>73</sup> Charles E. Lauriat Jr., a famous bookkeeper, and Mrs. Henry Adams, the wife of a banker were among the survivors.<sup>74</sup> The following day, 9 May 1915, *The Boston Globe* published information regarding a newlywed couple from Boston that sailed on the *Lusitania*.<sup>75</sup> Mr. Mason Lindsey and Mrs. Leslie Lindsey booked passage on the

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<sup>72</sup> "Lusitania Torpedoed About 1500 Lives Lost." *The Boston Globe*, 8 May 1915.

<sup>73</sup> "Lauriat Of Boston Among The Rescued." *The Boston Globe*, 8 May 1915.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> "Bridal Couple Among Missing." *The Boston Globe*, 9 May 1915.

*Lusitania* following their wedding.<sup>76</sup> As of the 9 May 1915, there had been no word on the couple that was sailing to England to establish their new home in Suffolk.<sup>77</sup> The focus on these individuals' narratives rather than technical statistics surrounding the *Lusitania* brought a personal connection to the readers of *The Boston Globe*.



In regards to the responsibility of the sinking, *The Boston Globe* blamed the event entirely on Germany, claiming that the attack by the German U-Boat was “the injustice to mankind” and “tragic.”<sup>78</sup> The editors of *The Boston Globe* included information from Berlin regarding the Kaiser taking no responsibility for the sinking, stating on 11 May 1915 that the German Foreign Office expressed “regret” for the loss of life, yet blamed the sinking entirely on Great Britain: “The following dispatch has been sent by the German Foreign Office to the German Embassy at Washington: The German Government desires to express its deepest sympathy at the loss of lives on board the *Lusitania*.”<sup>79</sup> The dispatch continued and claimed that the responsibility rests with the British Government because the British Navy was intentionally blockading German

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> “American Must Be Example Of Peace, Says Wilson.” *The Boston Daily Globe*, 11 May 1915.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

ports.<sup>80</sup> This plan of starving the German civilian population forced Germany to resort to retaliatory measures.<sup>81</sup>

Historian H.C. Peterson discusses this blockade and starvation of the German people in his work, *Propaganda For War: The Campaign Against American Neutrality, 1914 - 1917*.<sup>82</sup> According to Peterson, the fault of the sinking of the *Lusitania* does fall on Germany. He does not argue any of the facts of the incident, and claims that Germany had no choice in their decision to torpedo the *Lusitania*, or any other liner traveling through the warzone waters of the Atlantic. Peterson defends this by presenting the struggle Germany was facing due to Great Britain blockading German ports, resulting in thousands of starving German citizens. The only weapon available to respond to the blockade was submarine warfare.

Peterson also presents how the United States responded, including newspaper coverage. In his work, he claims that the East coast newspapers “lost their heads completely” and saw the sinking as a “type of sensation which sold their newspapers for them.”<sup>83</sup> He believed that the British propaganda campaign dominated the American press during the First World War. He claims that the outrage over the sinking of the *Lusitania* present in the American newspapers did not reflect the way most Americans felt about joining the Allies.

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> H.C. Peterson, *Propaganda For War: The Campaign Against American Neutrality, 1914 - 1917* (Norman: University Of Oklahoma Press, 1939), p. 125.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

Historians Des Hickey and Gus Smith reiterate this idea in their work, *Seven Days To Disaster: The Sinking Of The Lusitania*.<sup>84</sup> They also discuss the outrage expressed by the Northeastern newspapers, and erroneously claim that the majority of Americans were willing to formally enter the war against Germany following the sinking.<sup>85</sup> Regardless of this statement, Hickey and Smith emphasize the fact that German-Americans were disappointed when news of the sinking broke.<sup>86</sup> According to Hickey and Smith, German-Americans, while remaining loyal to the United States, were very concerned that the U.S. would formally enter the war due to the loss of American life on the *Lusitania*.<sup>87</sup>

On 12 May 1915, front-page coverage on *The Boston Globe* included information stating, “All relations with Germany will be severed unless Berlin guarantees to stop destruction on American lives and property.”<sup>88</sup> This was a constant theme throughout Boston’s coverage of the sinking; with the editors presenting the case that the Kaiser was guilty of murder, and should be held responsible for the loss of life on the *Lusitania*.<sup>89</sup> The article also includes information regarding Wilson’s Cabinet and their continued support in holding Germany responsible: “The Cabinet will unanimously support the President. No difference of opinion exists regarding the necessity for firm and immediate action. Germany will be told that the strict accountability note of Feb 11 was a friendly warning, but that it meant precisely what it said.”<sup>90</sup> Because Germany disregarded the

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<sup>84</sup> Des Hickey and Gus Smith, *Seven Days To Disaster: The Sinking Of The Lusitania* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons Publishing, 1982), p. 134.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> “American Must Be Example Of Peace, Says Wilson.” *The Boston Daily Globe*, 11 May 1915.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> “Holds Germany To Strict Account.” *The Boston Daily Globe*, 12 May 1915.

warning, they must be held to full responsibility for the loss of American lives on the *Lusitania*. The article continues to state that the overall general opinion in Wilson's Administration is "unless the United States holds Germany to a strict accountability for the *Lusitania* massacre, the whole fabric of international law will collapse."<sup>91</sup> According to the editors at *The Boston Globe*, Germany ignored the 11 February 1915 warnings regarding unrestricted submarine warfare, and should be held to full responsibility.<sup>92</sup>



The first day of coverage, the editors of *The Boston Globe* published information regarding Washington D.C. and President Wilson being shocked by the loss of life recorded on the *Lusitania*.<sup>93</sup> The article in *The Boston Globe* also states that because Americans perished in the sinking, the feeling of shock would be widespread throughout the country. According to the editors at *The Boston Globe*, President Wilson was up late on the night of the sinking, reviewing dispatches regarding the incident.<sup>94</sup> The article

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> "Germany Is Warned." *The Boston Daily Globe*, 11 February 1915.

Column States: "Germany Is Warned, Must Identify Ships Before Attack. United States Assures Germany That Attack Without Inquiry On Ship Flying American Flag Would Cause Serious Complications. Washington Asks Germany What Steps It Will Take To Identify Neutral Vessels. Note Sent To England Pointing Out Dangers From Using American Flag."

<sup>93</sup> "Washington Shocked By Loss On *Lusitania*." *The Boston Globe*, 8 May 1915.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

states that the United States must act in order to protect its citizens.<sup>95</sup> *The Boston Globe* concludes the column by proclaiming that sinking of the *Lusitania* shocked the officials of the United States Government, and spread “profound grief in the National Capital, with the view that it was the most serious situation confronting the American Government since the outbreak of war in Europe.”<sup>96</sup>

In his work *Woodrow Wilson And The Progressive Era: 1910 - 1917*, historian Arthur S. Link commented that following the sinking; America was “shocked and horrified” at what was characterized as the deliberate murder of almost twelve hundred non-combatants.<sup>97</sup> Historian Justus Doenecke strengthens this claim in *Nothing Less Than War: A New History Of America’s Entry Into World War I* that the American public was infuriated with the sinking.<sup>98</sup> He compares the sinking of the *Lusitania* to other shocking events, including the attacks on Pearl Harbor and 11 September 2001, stating that the American public was just as outraged with the *Lusitania* incident.<sup>99</sup> This is surprising, considering the delay in formally entering the war, as well as the newspaper coverage of the sinking in May 1915.

In additional columns on the same day, the editors at *The Boston Globe* claimed that the *Lusitania* had been under convoy surveillance during the time of the sinking, stating that the submarine responsible for sinking the *Lusitania* was able to elude

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Arthur S. Link, *Woodrow Wilson And The Progressive Era: 1910 - 1917* (New York: Harper And Row Publishers, 1954), p. 164.

<sup>98</sup> Justus D. Doenecke, *Nothing Less Than War: A New History Of America’s Entry Into World War I* (Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 2011), p. 71.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

accompanying torpedo boats and successfully attack the liner.<sup>100</sup> This would prove not to be true, and *The Boston Globe* published incorrect information. However the editors argued that the submarine responsible for the *Lusitania's* demise had more than enough time to determine that the passenger liner was not a warship, or cargo ship.<sup>101</sup> It was also claimed the submarine also had the opportunity to observe the British and American flags present on the *Lusitania* prior to firing the torpedo.<sup>102</sup> These claims were an attempt to sway public opinion against Germany, in order to place further blame for the sinking.

*The Boston Globe* also published information pertaining to the British Navy. These stories claimed that the United States, as well as Allied forces, were beginning to lose faith in the British Navy, citing the inaction during the *Lusitania* sinking as evidence.<sup>103</sup> This could be because there was a relatively small German-American population (three percent) in Massachusetts during the time of the sinking.<sup>104</sup>



<sup>100</sup> "Lusitania Probably Under Convoy At The Time." *The Boston Globe*, 8 May 1915.

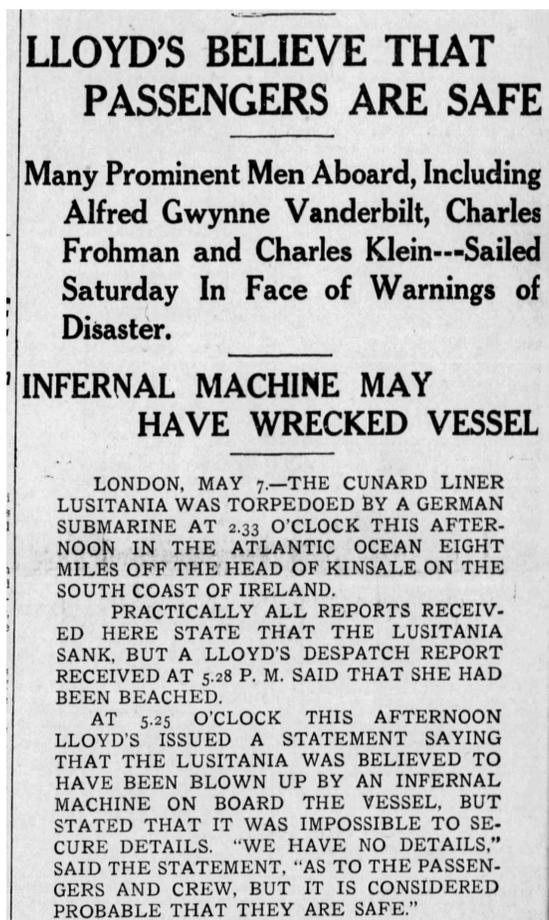
<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> "Lusitania Torpedoed About 1500 Lives Lost." *The Boston Globe*, 8 May 1915.

<sup>103</sup> "Loud Call For Justice On *Lusitania's* Fate." *The Boston Globe*, 9 May 1915.

<sup>104</sup> United States Department of Commerce, Bureau Of The Census. *Thirteenth Census Of The United States Taken In The Year 1910*. (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1913).

Further south on the Eastern seaboard, in New Jersey, one of the more popular newspapers included *The Asbury Park Evening Press* whose coverage of the *Lusitania* began on the night of the sinking. The initial coverage included inaccurate information, including claims that the liner itself had been beached rather than sunk, claiming that the *Lusitania* had beached on the Irish coast, and the crew and passengers had landed safely following the impact from the German torpedoes.<sup>105</sup>



These imprecisions could be for several different reasons, the most obvious being how quickly information was published following the incident. *The Asbury Park Evening Press* stated that initial reports from London to New York had been conflicting, allowing

<sup>105</sup> "Infernal Machine May Have Wrecked Vessel." *The Asbury Park Evening Press*, 7 May 1915.

for misinformation to reach audiences before tangible facts on the sinking were made available.<sup>106</sup> On the following evening, *The Evening Press* corrected their story and published accurate information regarding the *Lusitania's* demise. *The Evening Press* also published information relating to the controversial cargo the *Lusitania* was carrying. *The Asbury Park Evening Press* differed from *The Boston Globe* in this particular subject, where the editors for *The Globe* claimed that the *Lusitania* was, in fact, carrying controversial cargo across the Atlantic. *The Evening Press* published a front page story on 8 May 1915 not only claiming that the *Lusitania* was not carrying ammunition for the Allied forces, but also that the liner itself was not armed.<sup>107</sup> This would verify that the *Lusitania* would not be able to properly defend itself from an attack.<sup>108</sup> The article included the quote: “anticipating that Germany will claim that the *Lusitania* was practically a warship, the Admiralty issued a statement denying that the liner was armed.”<sup>109</sup>

Another difference in reporting was that *The Asbury Park Evening Press* only presented the officials of the Cunard Line Company as the real culprit for the sinking.<sup>110</sup> This front-page column expressed distaste and anger towards the company, stating that if the ship's Captain had decided not to depart New York in the first place, then the disaster would have been easily avoided.<sup>111</sup> Historian David Detjan supports this argument in his

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> “Vessel Was Not Armed, Declares Admiralty.” *The Asbury Park Evening Press*, 8 May 1915.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> “Criticise Admiralty And Officials Of Cunard Line.” *The Asbury Park Evening Press*, 10 May 1915.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

work *The Germans In Missouri, 1900-1918 Prohibition, Neutrality, And Assimilation*.<sup>112</sup>

Detjen believes the passengers knew the dangers of sailing on the liner, and that no remorse should be present due to the published warnings prior to the ship departing New York.<sup>113</sup> The editors of *The Asbury Park Evening Press* further claimed that exploding boilers were the cause of the rapid sinking of the *Lusitania*, which the officials at the Cunard Line Company should be held accountable for.<sup>114</sup>



With nineteen percent of the population of New Jersey being German-American, there is the possibility that the editors of *The Asbury Park Evening Press* would choose to deflect placing the blame on Germany for the sinking of the *Lusitania*.<sup>115</sup> Such indications include blaming the Cunard Line, as well as Captain Turner for the loss of American life on the *Lusitania*.

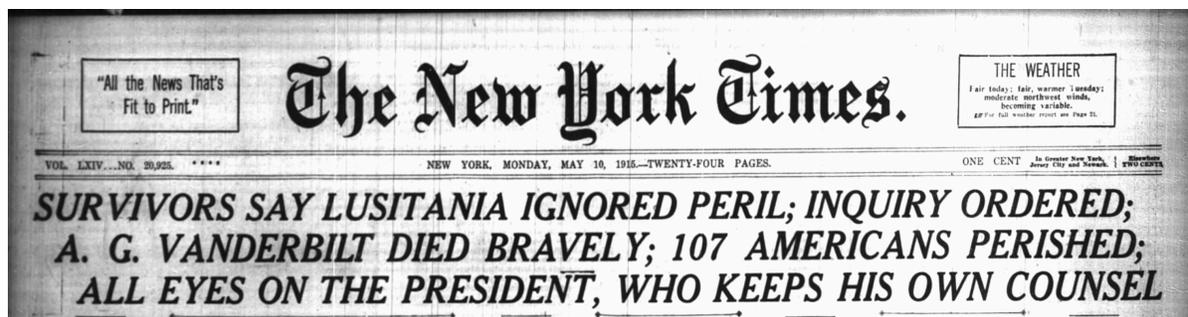
<sup>112</sup> David W. Detjen, *The Germans In Missouri, 1900-1918 Prohibition, Neutrality, And Assimilation* (Columbia: University Of Missouri Press, 1985), p. 102.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> "Criticism Admiralty And Officials Of Cunard Line." *The Asbury Park Evening Press*, 10 May 1915.

<sup>115</sup> United States Department Of Commerce, Bureau Of The Census. *Thirteenth Census Of The United States Taken In The Year 1910*. (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1913).

*The New York Times* took a more historical approach to presenting information regarding the *Lusitania* printing a week's worth of factual articles during their coverage of the *Lusitania* sinking. Similar to *The Asbury Park Evening Press*, one article claimed the *Lusitania* ignored the warnings posted by Germany before leaving New York Harbor on 1 May 1915.<sup>116</sup> In another article, the editors published Germany's reaction to the sinking, which was to place the blame entirely on England.<sup>117</sup>



In another column comparable to *The Asbury Park Evening Press*, *The New York Times* published information regarding the liner being unarmed.<sup>118</sup> But *The New York Times* also published information regarding the *Lusitania*'s inspection, which should have been completed in New York before departing on 1 May 1915.<sup>119</sup> According to the Cunard employees, the inspection never took place.<sup>120</sup> Because of this overlooked,

<sup>116</sup> "Survivors Say *Lusitania* Ignored Peril; Inquiry Offered." *The New York Times*, 10 May 1915.

<sup>117</sup> "President Says Our Example Must Be That Of Peace; Germany Regrets Our Loss, But Blames England" *New York Times*, 11 May 1915.

<sup>118</sup> "Survivors Say *Lusitania* Ignored Peril; Inquiry Offered." *The New York Times*, 10 May 1915.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

mandatory protocol, the *Lusitania* was essentially “Helpless as a ferry boat” traveling across the Atlantic into the warzone.<sup>121</sup>



Historian Diana Preston also discusses the behavior of the Cunard employees, as well as the delay in the United States formally entering the conflict. In *The Lusitania: An Epic Tragedy*, Preston expresses the view that the U.S. did not formally enter the war following the sinking of the *Lusitania* because America was not prepared to enter in the conflicts in Europe immediately following the sinking.<sup>122</sup> According to Preston, it would take a little under two years before formal entry would be a possibility.<sup>123</sup> Preston considers all factors surrounding the sinking, including the behavior of the Cunard

<sup>121</sup> “*Lusitania Was Unarmed.*” *The New York Times*, 10 May 1915.

<sup>122</sup> Diana Preston, *The Lusitania: An Epic Tragedy* (New York: The Berkley Publishing Group, 2002), p. 307.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid*, p. 332.

employees, specifically Captain Turner having a nonchalant attitude towards the *Lusitania*'s voyage through enemy submarine infested waters.<sup>124</sup>

The difference in the coverage provided by Boston, New Jersey, and New York papers indicates the larger number of German-Americans (sixteen percent) living in New York at the time.<sup>125</sup> The larger the potential readership of the German population would cause *The New York Times* and *The Asbury Park Press* to present the information more delicately, rather than following the abrasive route *The Boston Globe* chooses to take.

During the time of the sinking, a high percentage of German-Americans (twenty-nine percent) were present in Ohio.<sup>126</sup> *The Cincinnati Enquirer* covered the sinking for five days, including articles on the passengers lost.<sup>127</sup> Headlines from front-page coverage included "Rescue Craft Hurry From Ireland, Less Than 700 Saved" and "Fate of Prominent Americans Remains Secret - Ohioans Among Passengers - Women and Children Picked Up After Being Adrift."<sup>128</sup>

On 10 May, *The Cincinnati Enquirer* published an article with a statement from a Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania chemist living in Cincinnati during the time of the sinking. The article claimed that the *Lusitania* had been transporting deadly gas intended for the Allied forces in Europe.<sup>129</sup> Dr. John Braun, a chemist and a graduate of the University of Berlin, is the authority for the statement that the *Lusitania* carried a large quantity of gas made in

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid, p. 326.

<sup>125</sup> United States Department Of Commerce, Bureau Of The Census. *Thirteenth Census Of The United States Taken In The year 1910*. (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1913).

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> "Fourteen Hundred Persons Are Reported Lost When German Submarine Sinks The *Lusitania*; Berlin To Be Held Accountable For Americans." *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 8 May 1915.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> "Deadly Gas Carried on Liner." *Cincinnati Enquirer*, 10 May 1915.

Pittsburgh, which caused the apparent suffocation of the passengers and crew.<sup>130</sup> Dr. Braun was quoted as saying: “Material made in the Pittsburgh district figured in the destruction of the *Lusitania*.” The editors of *The Cincinnati Enquirer* claimed that this was not a conspiracy, but the shipment of certain deadly war materials in the French Army from a Pittsburgh district plant made the blowing up of the vessel “almost a foregone conclusion.”<sup>131</sup>

If this declaration by *The Cincinnati Enquirer* were accurate, it would confirm Germany’s suspicions regarding the *Lusitania* transporting contraband of war. This was an extremely controversial accusation, considering the United States was a neutral country transporting war supplies to Great Britain; who was fighting with the Allied forces against the Central Powers.

Author Colin Simpson discusses the conspiracy surrounding the sinking in his work *The Lusitania*.<sup>132</sup> Simpson presents the British purchasing operation in the United States prior to the ship departing New York. According to Simpson the operation that was financed primarily through the *Lusitania*’s company Cunard was accused of mislabeling specific cargo on board the day of the sinking.<sup>133</sup> The mislabeling of the cargo was an attempt to hide the contrabands of war. If the *Lusitania* had been transporting arms and ammunition for the Allied forces, then the liner itself would be considered an enemy warship rather than an innocent transatlantic passenger liner. The *Lusitania* was also holding in possession an undisclosed amount of pyroxyline, a

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Colin Simpson, *The Lusitania* (Boston: Little, Brown And Company, 1972), p. 194.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid, p. 195.

nitrocellulose compound also known as guncotton.<sup>134</sup> Guncotton is unstable to heat and even carefully prepared samples will ignite on a brief heating to temperatures more than three hundred degrees Fahrenheit.<sup>135</sup> Causing explosions upon contact with salt water, guncotton was considered by Simpson to be one of the possible reasons behind the eighteen-minute rapid sinking of the *Lusitania*.<sup>136</sup>

On Tuesday, 11 May 1915 the coverage defending Germany continued in *The Cincinnati Enquirer*. The main column on the cover page included the fairly standard headline “Germany Says Loss of Americans is Regretted.”<sup>137</sup> This article claims that Germany has formally apologized for the loss of American life on the *Lusitania*. There is a note of sympathy from Germany published by *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, as well as information placing the blame entirely on Great Britain for the demise of the *Lusitania*.<sup>138</sup> This article states that “the responsibility of the sinking rests with the British Government, which through its plan of starving the civilian population of Germany, has forced Germany to retaliatory measures.



In addition to blaming Great Britain for the *Lusitania*, *The Enquirer* also publishes an article proclaiming that British ships are expected to be armed, and

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> “Germany Says Loss Of Americans Is Regretted.” *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 10 May 1915.

<sup>138</sup> “Germany Sends Note Of Sympathy, But Blames Britain For Disaster.” *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 11 May 1915.

unwilling to follow the neutrality rules of warfare from then on.<sup>139</sup> Front-page coverage stated the following, “Until now few British merchantmen have been armed, but henceforth they will be as fast as guns can be provided.”<sup>140</sup> The editors of *The Enquirer* stated that the sinking of the *Lusitania* has made this certain and that it is not likely that before long the British Government will take up with questions of regulations concerning armed merchantmen entering American ports.”<sup>141</sup>

*The Cincinnati Enquirer* is the first publication to publish a story regarding American public opinion during this time. Immediately following the sinking, government officials realize that public opinion may be “the most difficult thing with which to deal.”<sup>142</sup> The editors stated, “for the time being an exhibition of deliberate calm, freedom from agitation and suspense of malice is regarded as the most potent meant the White House has to employ to keep public opinion in a fluid state with which it will be possible to deal.”<sup>143</sup> This column on 9 May 1915 *The Cincinnati Enquirer* presented information regarding President Wilson and his stance on remaining quiet and neutral throughout the First World War. Because of this, *The Cincinnati Enquirer* claimed that Wilson’s silence has contributed to the anger and disagreement of his policies, resulting in the rise of public opinion leaning towards the United States becoming formally involved in the First World War.<sup>144</sup> This article attempts to project itself as a scare tactic, convincing the readers of *The Cincinnati Enquirer* that war will be inevitable.

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<sup>139</sup> “British Ships Expected To Be Armed.” *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 11 May 1915.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> “Warship Silence.” *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, 9 May 1915.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

In Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, *The Gazette Times*' coverage of the *Lusitania* sinking began on 8 May 1915 and included factual information regarding the fatality statistics and details surrounding the incident.<sup>145</sup> Once the *Lusitania* sank, the "dead, drowned, and survivors are put ashore by ships speeding to rescue."<sup>146</sup> The editors of *The Gazette Times* also included local passengers numbers, stating "one hundred and eighty-eight were Americans among which about 25 who booked passage from Pittsburgh, PA."<sup>147</sup>

In his book, *The Path To War: How The First World War Created Modern America*, historian Michael S. Neiberg states that the ship itself was not just a passenger liner.<sup>148</sup> The *Lusitania* was responsible for many important figures such as journalists, politicians, and tourists traveling to and from Europe from the United States. Because of this, British and American leaders viewed the sinking as a "symbol of threat that Germany posed to the vital links between them and to civilization itself."<sup>149</sup>

The Eastern press painted the sinking of the *Lusitania* as a diplomatic crisis, forcing Americans to come together in response to the tragedy and impending conflicts across the Atlantic. Neiberg notes that most of the newspapers publish the narratives of the American lives lost on 7 May 1915, in attempts to force anger and the need for action out of the American public.<sup>150</sup> Neiberg concludes his research on the *Lusitania* by stating

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<sup>145</sup> "Loss Of Life High In Hundreds." *The Gazette Times*, 8 May 1915.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Michael S. Neiberg, *The Path To War: How The First World War Created Modern America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 67.

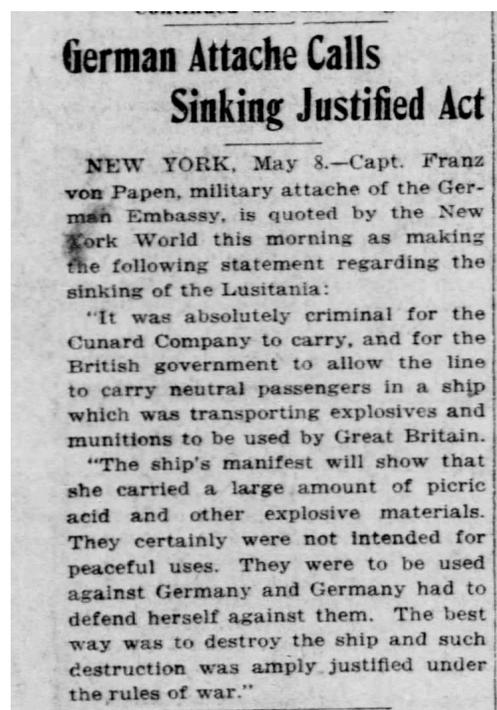
<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

that “the *Lusitania* and the events that occurred around it did not lead the United States to war, but they did force Americans to begin choosing sides in regards to the conflict.”<sup>151</sup>



Some of the more controversial published material by *The Gazette Times* included a smaller column, claiming that the officials in charge of the *Lusitania* were not concerned with published German warnings before departing New York for Liverpool.<sup>152</sup>



<sup>151</sup> Ibid, p. 68.

<sup>152</sup> “Undaunted By News, British Liner Sails.” *The Gazette Times*, 8 May 1915.

The article claimed this was due to Captain Turner not being concerned with the warnings, because of the speed of the *Lusitania* and that the liner had traveled through these waters several times since her maiden voyage in 1906. Another column suggested that German officials were referring to the sinking of the *Lusitania* as a “justified act of war.”<sup>153</sup> This column also reiterates that there was a published warning made readily available to the passengers booked on the *Lusitania*.

On the following day, *The Gazette Times* continued their commentary on *Lusitania* passengers.<sup>154</sup> This coverage included columns on the rescue efforts, specifically for the passengers that originated from Pittsburgh: “Of the twenty-four residents from Pittsburgh thought to have been on the *Lusitania*, sixteen of whose names have been made public and are known to have been passengers and eight whose names are withheld by the Cunard Steamship Company agents, only eight have been reported saved.”<sup>155</sup>



Additional coverage on 9 May 1915 included information on President Wilson and the controversial cargo the *Lusitania* was carrying. *The Gazette Times* took an approach similar to the other Northeastern newspapers, simply claiming that President Wilson would remain silent until all of the facts regarding the sinking had surfaced, yet

<sup>153</sup> “German Attache Calls Sinking Justified Act.” *The Gazette Times*, 8 May 1915.

<sup>154</sup> “Search for Bodies Goes On But Rescue Efforts Are All In.” *The Gazette Times*, 9 May 1915.

<sup>155</sup> “*Lusitania* Life Loss Placed At Nearly 1,200. 12 From Pittsburgh District Among Rescued.” *The Gazette Times*, 9 May 1915.

was feeling distressed and understands the gravity of the *Lusitania* situation.<sup>156</sup> *The Gazette Times* also included a statement from Wilson's private secretary Joseph Patrick Tumulty: "Of course, the President is considering very earnestly but very calmly the right course of action to pursue. He knows that the people of the country wish and expect him to act with deliberation as well as with firmness."<sup>157</sup>

Concerning the controversial cargo, *The Gazette Times* was very upfront about the information. The editors firmly stated that the *Lusitania* was in possession of artillery shells that originated from Pittsburgh, and had been reported before departing Pennsylvania for New York.<sup>158</sup> The editors of *The Gazette Times* could very well have been playing it safe in regards to their coverage of the sinking. Based on their smaller German-American population, it seems that they were attempting to satisfy both sides of the debate: blaming the British officials for failing to adhere to warnings, justifying the sinking from the German point of view, yet having sympathy for the innocent passengers on board the *Lusitania*.

Coverage of the *Lusitania* sinking in the Northeast is considered to be the most dramatic throughout the United States. This is apparent in *The Boston Globe* and *The Pittsburgh Gazette Times* coverage immediately following the sinking. Historiography also confirms this. Historians Des Hickey and Gus Smith discuss the outrage projected by Northeastern States in *Seven Days To Disaster: The Sinking Of The Lusitania*. Justus D. Doenecke confirms this in his work *Nothing Less Than War: A New History Of America's Entry Into World War* when discussing how the American public was

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<sup>156</sup> "Wilson Waits For All Facts: Keeps Silent." *The Gazette Times*, 9 May 1915.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> "Shells From Pittsburgh Reported On *Lusitania*." *The Gazette Times*, 9 May 1915.

infuriated with the sinking. This would not be the case for media coverage in other regions of the United States, especially in the following chapter when examining newspapers from the South.

Chapter Three: Southern Newspapers

Florida: *The Tallahassee Democrat*

North Carolina: *The Greensboro Patriot*

South Carolina: *The Greenville News*

Texas: *The Houston Post*

The Southern newspapers present a contrasting narrative to the response of the sinking of the *Lusitania* for a variety of reasons. The Southern states did not produce the number of *Lusitania* passengers that the Northeast had. In the South, a majority of the citizens were oblivious to the politics and world events, feeling that the issues in Washington D.C. and the wider world were not a large concern for them. There was also a small German-American population in the South. This chapter will examine America's response from the following areas: Tallahassee, Florida; Greensboro, North Carolina; Greenville, South Carolina; and Houston, Texas.

Florida having a German-American population of six percent is noticeable in their *Lusitania* coverage.<sup>159</sup> On Saturday, 8 May 1915 there was very little coverage of the sinking on the first page of the *Tallahassee Democrat*.<sup>160</sup> This small article did not spend a lot of time reflecting on the sinking itself; rather it focused on the fact that the *Lusitania* was the fastest, most luxurious passenger liner at the time of its sinking stating "the *Lusitania* was one of the largest of trans-Atlantic liners, as well as one of the speediest. She was built in Glasgow in 1906. She was 785 feet long. Her gross tonnage 9,145. She was owned by the Cunard Steamship Company of Liverpool."<sup>161</sup> What coverage there was of the sinking was a basic description of the location: "Kinsale, off which the *Lusitania* was torpedoed, is the seaport of Ireland, 13 miles southwest of Cork. It lies near the entrance of the St. George's channel, between Ireland and England."<sup>162</sup>

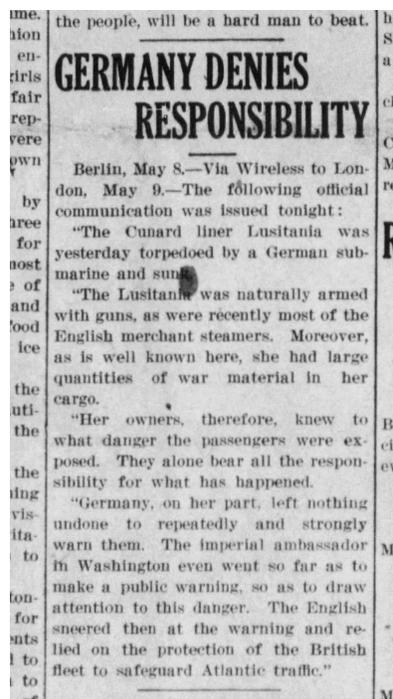
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<sup>159</sup> United States Department Of Commerce, Bureau Of The Census. *Thirteenth Census Of The United States Taken In The Year 1910*. (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1913).

<sup>160</sup> "Lusitania Was The Greatest Speeder." *The Tallahassee Democrat*, 8 May 1915.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.



The following issue, published on 10 May 1915 included another article regarding responsibility surrounding the sinking.<sup>163</sup> The editors at *The Democrat* published an official message from Germany:

"The Cunard liner *Lusitania* was yesterday torpedoed by a German submarine and sunk. The *Lusitania* was naturally armed with guns, as were recently most of the English merchant steamers. Moreover, as is well known here, she had large quantities of war material in her cargo. Her owners, therefore, knew to what danger the passengers were exposed. They alone bear all the responsibility for what has happened. Germany, on her part left nothing undone to repeatedly and strongly warn them. The imperial ambassador in Washington even went so far as to make a public warning so as to draw attention to this danger. The English sneered then at

<sup>163</sup> "Germany Denies Responsibility." *The Tallahassee Democrat*, 10 May 1915.

the warning and relied on the protection of the British fleet to safeguard Atlantic traffic.”<sup>164</sup>

The lack of coverage represented by *The Tallahassee Democrat* could be due to a few factors. As mentioned above, the small German-American population could have played a factor. Another reason could be because the sinking itself was not a concern for a majority of the people in Florida.

In North Carolina, *The Greensboro Patriot* had a more sympathetic response to the sinking, presenting front-page coverage of the sinking on 10 May 1915, a full three days after the event. This lag in coverage is due to the paper having editions twice a week on Monday and Thursday. The first opportunity for Lusitania coverage to appear was the Thursday edition. The Greensboro Patriot utilized scare tactics in their coverage, including a quote claiming that the Lusitania passengers “drowned like rats.”<sup>165</sup> Additional information described the bodies floating in the water in a very graphic manner.<sup>166</sup> The editors of *The Greensboro Patriot* claimed that “the doomed vessel carried 1,198 souls to their deaths,” and that the lucky ones that did survive the sinking were so critically injured that they will soon die at the hospitals in Kinsale, Queenstown, and Cork.<sup>167</sup> The article goes on to state that the majority of the *Lusitania* fatalities were women and children, yet many of the bodies were unidentifiable.<sup>168</sup> A more graphic excerpt from the column stated, “one dead mother was still clasping in her rigid arms the body of her three months old baby.” The article concludes with describing the

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

<sup>165</sup> “*Lusitania* Attacked And Sent To Bottom Of Sea Without Warning.” *The Greensboro Patriot*, 10 May 1915.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

overcrowding issues the hospitals and morgues were facing with the number of bodies arriving every hour.<sup>169</sup>

Historian Edwyn A. Gray expresses these somewhat graphic details in his work *The U-Boat War*. Gray claims that the “cold-blooded” sinking of the *Lusitania* was the most publicized tragedy of the First World War.<sup>170</sup> Similar to H.C. Peterson’s work, Gray places the fault of the sinking on Germany, yet claims that due to the war and the circumstances surrounding the naval blockade initiated by Great Britain, Germany had no other choice.<sup>171</sup> Gray differs in his work by presenting the case against the German captain of the submarine, Walther Schwieger. According to Gray, the German Emperor completely disowned Schwieger’s actions immediately following the sinking of the *Lusitania*.<sup>172</sup> This could have been an attempt to place the blame on the isolated Schwieger, rather than on Germany as a whole.<sup>173</sup>

**GERMANY SUBMARINE SINKS VESSEL  
AND TAKES TOLL OF 1,198 LIVES**

**LUSITANIA ATTACKED AND SENT TO  
BOTTOM OF SEA WITHOUT WARNING**

**GREATEST CRIME YET COMMITTED DURING  
PROGRESS OF THE EUROPEAN WAR  
STARTLES THE WORLD.**

**ADMINISTRATION FACES  
MOST GRAVE SITUATION.**

The destruction of the *Lusitania* brings the United States government face to face with the most serious situation that has confronted it since the outbreak of the European war. A Washington dispatch Saturday night said:

“President Wilson, upon whom the eyes of the world are focused at the present moment, studied in quiet seclusion today the aspects of law and fact in connection with the sinking by a German torpedo of the British liner *Lusitania*, with a consequent loss of many American lives.

“The great human tragedy coupled with the responsibilities of the hour caused the president to deny himself

Many Helpless Women and Children Among the Passengers Who Were Drowned Like Rats—Grave Situation Confronts United States.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Edwyn A. Gray, *The U-Boat War 1914 - 1918* (London: Seeley, Service, And Co. Ltd Publishing, 1972), p. 23.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid, p. 19.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

Additional columns included information claiming that the German officials and people living in southern Germany were celebrating over the news of the sinking.<sup>174</sup> The article goes into details surrounding the celebrations, stating that “towns were beflagged, especially along the Rhine, and the children had a half-holiday in honor of the event.”<sup>175</sup> The column continues to say that the general feeling in Germany and Austria is that the passengers on board the *Lusitania* knew of the danger and that therefore they undertook the voyage at their own risk.<sup>176</sup>

gues.

#### **British People Aroused.**

Nothing that the Germans have done since the outbreak of the war has aroused the anger and determination of the British people as the sinking of the *Lusitania*. This anger is shared by the Americans in London who had relatives or friends aboard.

Members of the London stock exchange insisted upon the withdrawal of all members of German birth, although nationalized. At many places throughout the country these nationalized British subjects were made to suffer for Germany's action. In one large ship-building plant at Wallsend the workmen threatened to strike unless those employed with German names were discharged, and the company, although badly in need of workmen, was compelled to grant the demands. German barbers and other Germans whose presence in the country has been tolerated since the war began also found themselves boycotted. But there have been no disorders of any kind.

disorders of any kind.

#### **Germans Rejoice With Ghoulish Glee**

A dispatch from Munich, Bavaria, says the *Lusitania* was destroyed by the German submarine U-39 and adds:

“There were great rejoicings today in southern Germany, according to the advices. Towns were beflagged, especially along the Rhine, and the children had a half holiday in honor of the event. The rejoicings are said to have spread even to Vienna and Budapest. It is said that the general feeling in Germany and Austria is that the Americans on board the steamer had been warned previously of their danger and that, therefore, they undertook the voyage at their own risk.”

<sup>174</sup> “Germans Rejoice With Ghoulish Glee.” *The Greensboro Patriot*, 10 May 1915.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*

The following issue of *The Greensboro Patriot*, released Thursday, 13 May 1915 had a small column regarding the *Lusitania*. The article included information on Germany promising not to sink any further neutral vessels moving forward.<sup>177</sup> The editors of *The Greensboro Patriot* included an official statement from the American Ambassador to Germany, James W. Gerard: “Germany has notified the United States that submarine commanders had been specifically instructed not to harm neutral vessels not engaged in hostile acts and that Germany would pay for damages to such ships in the war zones. Neutral ships carrying contraband will be dealt with according to the rules of naval warfare.”<sup>178</sup> The article concludes with stating that “if neutral ships are accidentally damaged in the war zone, Germany will express its regret and pay damages without prize court proceedings.”<sup>179</sup>

In 1910, South Carolina had the highest population of German-Americans citizens in the Southern states examined for this thesis, with a total of twenty-eight percent.<sup>180</sup> The coverage of the *Lusitania* by *The Greenville Daily News* reflects this percentage. The publication presented front-page coverage of the sinking beginning on 8 May 1915. *The Greenville Daily News* suggested that the United States was most responsible for the sinking of the *Lusitania* by stating that the ship was carrying contraband onboard the during the time of the sinking: “The ship’s manifest included 280,000 pounds of brass

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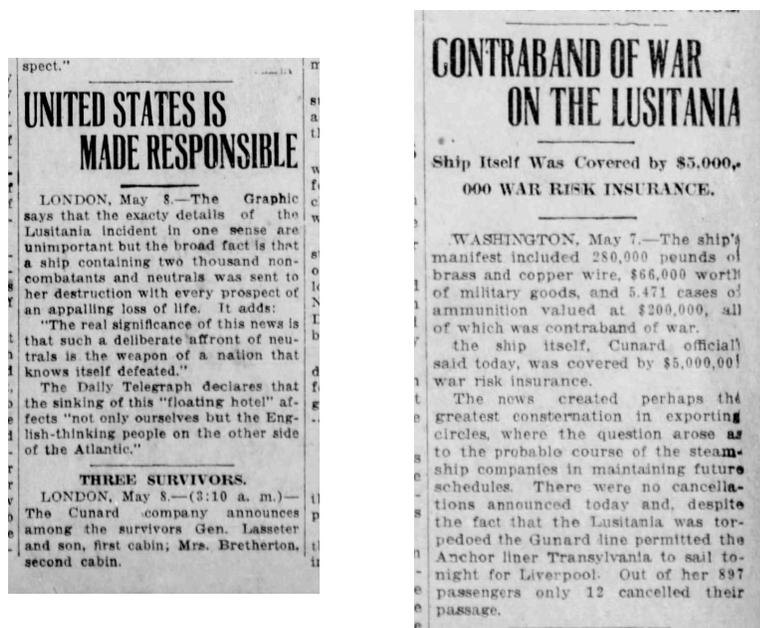
<sup>177</sup> “Germany Promises Not To Harm Neutral Vessels.” *The Greensboro Patriot*, 13 May 1915.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> United States Department of Commerce, Bureau Of The Census. *Thirteenth Census Of The United States Taken In The Year 1910*. (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1913).

and copper wire, \$66,000 worth of military goods, and 5,471 cases of ammunition valued at \$200,000, all of which was contraband of war.”<sup>181</sup>



In the following days, coverage presented in *The Greenville Daily News* continued to focus on placing the blame on any party other than Germany. One column, in particular, decided to place the blame on the functionality of the lifeboats themselves.<sup>182</sup> The article states that when the passengers realized that the *Lusitania* was sinking, they found that most of the lifeboats on the port side were so jammed because of the great list of the ship that they could not be lowered to safety.<sup>183</sup> The passengers fortunate enough to secure a seat on a functional lifeboat commented on this, stating that “several of the passengers began to jump overboard, in hopes of being picked up by one of the lifeboats nearby.”<sup>184</sup>

<sup>181</sup> “Contraband of War On The *Lusitania*.” *The Greenville Daily News*, 8 May 1915.

<sup>182</sup> “Boats Jammed As Passengers Made Rush For Safety.” *The Greenville Daily News*, 9 May 1915.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*

Another column strengthened this claim, reporting that the first lifeboat launched during the evacuation fell, resulting in the fatalities of everyone on board.<sup>185</sup> The editors of the *Greenville Daily News* also included a possible eyewitness account of the incident:

“It was shortly after two, probably ten minutes past and I was lingering in the dining room saloon chatting with my friends when the first explosion occurred. We knew at once what had happened. Some of us went to our berths and put on life belts. On making our way to the deck we were informed that there was no danger and we need not be alarmed but the ship was gradually sinking deeper into the water and efforts were made to launch the boats. Fifty or more people entered the first boat and as it swung from the davits it fell suddenly. I think most of the occupants perished. Other boats were launched with the greatest difficulty. Swinging free from one of them as it descended I struck out swimming strongly and steadily for a piece of wreckage which I observed. On reaching it I found it was one of the collapsible boats but I had to rip the canvas with a knife before I could get it open. Another passenger climbed into it and between us we were able to get about thirty people out of the water. While we were thus engaged I noticed the *Lusitania* was gradually sinking.”<sup>186</sup>

Attempts to excuse Germany of any blame are also expressed in William Dudley’s *World War I: Opposing Viewpoints*.<sup>187</sup> Excerpts from Dudley’s work include a

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<sup>185</sup> “Women And Children Dashed Together As The *Lusitania* Sank.” *The Greenville Daily News*, 9 May 1915.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>187</sup> William Dudley, *World War I: Opposing Viewpoints* (San Diego: Greenhaven Press Inc. 1998), p. 84.

pro-German newspaper *The Fatherland*, which claimed the *Lusitania* was not an innocent trans-Atlantic liner, and was completely oblivious to the First World War and the conflict between Germany and Great Britain.<sup>188</sup> The *Lusitania* was, in fact, an enemy warship transporting arms and munitions to Great Britain to assist the Allied forces against the Central Powers.<sup>189</sup> *The Fatherland* placed the blame entirely on the United States and Great Britain: the U.S. for failing to adhere to German warnings and Great Britain for transporting arms on a passenger liner.<sup>190</sup> According to the editors at *The Fatherland*, the sinking of the *Lusitania* was completely warranted, and Germany should face zero consequences due to the sinking and loss of American life.<sup>191</sup>

**BOATS JAMMED AS PASSENGERS MADE RUSH FOR SAFETY**

LONDON, May 8.—The latest estimate of lives lost as a result of the torpedoing of the Cunard liner *Lusitania* by a German submarine off the Irish coast yesterday is 1,198. It is believed that almost all, if not all, the survivors have been brought ashore and there is little hope of recovering any other passengers alive.

Of the dead many are women. The stories from Queenstown describe the bringing in of the bodies of a great number of women, many of them still unidentified. The Queenstown docks are the temporary resting places also of the bodies of several children. One dead mother still is clasping in her rigid arms the body of her three months' old baby.

When the *Lusitania* left New York she had on board 1,901 souls; 1,251 passengers and 650 crew. The passengers were made up of 291 in the first cabin, 599 in the second and 361 in the steerage. The list of survivors shows, so far, that about 90 first class and 75 second class passengers were saved. The first cabin passengers were at lunch when the unheralded German attack sent the liner to the bottom. It is noticeable that comparatively few first class passengers were saved.

Among the well known Americans whose bodies have not been recovered and who consequently are believed to have perished are Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt, Chas. Klein, the playwright, Justin N. Forman and Elbert Hubbard and his wife. The body of Chas. Frohmann of New York, theatrical producer, already has been recovered and brought ashore at Queenstown. The Hospitals of Queenstown are filled with the injured and the morgues with the dead.

Of those who left New York a

**WOMEN AND CHILDREN DASHED TOGETHER AS THE LUSITANIA SANK**

**HAD CLUSTERED IN LINES ON PORT SIDE PROTECTED BY MEN.**

**FIRST LIFE BOAT FELL AND LOST ALL OF ITS OCCUPANTS**

CORK, Ireland, May 8.—"From the day we sailed we complacently spoke of the possibilities of the German menace, but no one believed it, for we scorned the idea of being torpedoed," said P. J. Gauntlett, of Washington, who was traveling with A. L. Hopkins, among the missing, and S. M. Knox, of Philadelphia, who was saved.

"A number of us were going over on business. It was shortly after two—probably ten minutes past—and I was lingering in the dining saloon chatting with my friends, when the first explosion occurred. We knew at once what had happened. Shortly the ship listed perceptibly. I shouted to the others to close the ports. Some of us went to our berths and put on life belts.

"On making our way to the deck we were informed that there was no danger and we need not be alarmed, but the ship was gradually sinking deeper into the water and efforts were made to launch the boats.

"Fifty or more people entered the first boat and as it swung from the davits it fell suddenly. I think most of the occupants perished. Other boats were launched with the greatest difficulty.

"Swinging free from one of them

188 Ibid.

189 Ibid.

190 Ibid.

191 Ibid.

Looking further west, Texas had a significant German-American population in comparison to the other Southern states examined for this thesis. During the First World War, Texas had an average of nineteen percent.<sup>192</sup> *The Houston Post* presented their initial coverage of the *Lusitania* sinking on Saturday, 8 May 1915. Similar to *The Greenville Daily News*, *The Houston Post* also reported on the controversial cargo on board the liner, as well as the published warnings before departure from New York.<sup>193</sup> There was also a column located on the bottom of the front page on 9 May 1915 regarding Count Johann Heinrich Graf Von Bernstorff, the German Ambassador to the United States.<sup>194</sup> This column stated that he would not be making a statement on the incident until there was proof that the attack on *Lusitania* was confirmed.<sup>195</sup> There was also information regarding the urgency of the press to obtain a meeting with Bernstorff, stating “he had run a gauntlet of newspaper men who pursued him into his car in their determination to obtain an interview. Let them think; he was quoted, as saying when asked what he thought the American people think of the torpedoing of the *Lusitania*.”<sup>196</sup>

Historian Dale Zacher states that the sinking should have surprised nobody.<sup>197</sup>

The passengers received warning several days before the departure. Zacher also points to the testimony of Charles Edward Russell, ex-presidential candidate and renowned

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<sup>192</sup> United States Department Of Commerce, Bureau Of The Census. *Thirteenth Census Of The United States Taken In The Year 1910*. (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1913).

<sup>193</sup> “War Supplies Were Included In Cargo Of The *Lusitania*.” *The Houston Post*, 9 May 1915.

<sup>194</sup> “German Ambassador To U.S. Declined To Express An Opinion.” *The Houston Post*, 9 May 1915.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> Dale Zacher, *The Scripps Newspapers Go To War, 1914 - 1918* (Champaign: The University of Illinois Press, 2010), p. 60.

socialist who had traveled on the *Lusitania* in early April 1915, and published his story in the Cleveland Press on 30 April 1915.<sup>198</sup> Because of these factors, Zacher firmly believes that the sinking should not have surprised the United States or Great Britain, considering the blatant red flags before the *Lusitania* departed New York. The *Lusitania* was nothing more than “the greatest piece of anti-German propaganda the war has yet known.”<sup>199</sup>

*The Houston Post* also published a front-page headline claiming Germany accepts full responsibility, including the following statement: “Admits *Lusitania* torpedoed by German submarine, declaring steamer was armed - declared due warning given to England and the United States.”<sup>200</sup> The purpose of the somewhat contradictory stories published in *The Houston Post* seems to be a rather uncomplicated one. At this point, tensions were running high in certain parts of the Northeast. Minimizing aggressive public opinion was the main goal for a majority of the press during this time, specifically in areas of higher German-American populations.

The response to the sinking of the *Lusitania* in the South received much lighter, less dramatized press coverage than the Northeast. The editors of the Southern newspapers did not spend thorough time covering the sinking. This is apparent considering how much smaller and inaccurate the columns were in the Southern newspapers when compared to the Northeastern press. New England cities such as Boston and New York covered the sinking of the *Lusitania* for weeks following the sinking on 7 May 1915. The Southern press only dedicated a few days of *Lusitania* commentary. Geography placing the Southern states apart from New York, the departing

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<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> “Official Statement Issued By The German Government.” *The Houston Post*, 9 May 1915.

city of the *Lusitania* and Washington D.C., a tense political environment, could be one of the factors contributing to the limited coverage. The *Lusitania* coverage also reflected German-American population numbers. In contrast to the Northeast and the Midwest, the Southern states did not see a high, consistent, number of German-Americans.

Chapter Four: Midwestern Newspapers

Illinois: *The Chicago Tribune*

Kansas: The Topeka State Journal

Minnesota: *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*

Nebraska: *The Omaha Evening World Herald*

South Dakota: *The Deadwood Daily Pioneer Times*

In the region of the United States known as the Midwest, states had significantly higher German-American populations. Each state had a population of twenty percent or higher, which is apparent when examining the Midwestern coverage of the *Lusitania* sinking.<sup>201</sup> This chapter will examine newspapers from Chicago, Illinois; Topeka, Kansas; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Omaha, Nebraska; and Deadwood, South Dakota. The cities chosen reflect areas of high and low German-American populations, in order to fully understand the public opinion following the sinking.

In Illinois, *The Chicago Tribune* covered the sinking by placing the focus on facts and details. Immediately following the sinking on 8 May 1915, columns included stories of survivors were reported, as well as the list of casualties. According to the editors at *The Chicago Tribune*, there was a general feeling in this part of the country that the sinking of the *Lusitania* by the Germans was an outrage.<sup>202</sup> The majority of the nation was insistent on drastic action following the sinking.<sup>203</sup> Through correspondents in various cities, *The Chicago Tribune* obtained estimates of public opinion in widely separated parts of the country regarding the destruction of the *Lusitania*.<sup>204</sup> The weight of the opinions appeared to be overwhelming in condemnation of the sinking of the vessel since it occurred without giving an opportunity for passengers and crew to escape.<sup>205</sup> Professor Barrett Wendell of Harvard University expressed the sentiment of New

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<sup>201</sup> United States Department Of Commerce, Bureau Of The Census. *Thirteenth Census Of The United States Taken In The Year 1910*. (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1913).

<sup>202</sup> "1,400 Dead On Lusitania." *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, 8 May 1915.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

England by using the phrase “The *Lusitania* Massacre.”<sup>206</sup> A common expression of opinion among the more moderate was that the sinking of the *Lusitania* would prove a heavy blow to Germany in the loss of sympathy and respect of neutrals.”<sup>207</sup>

In *The Chicago Tribune*, trigger words such as “murder” and “piracy” were presented, mirroring President Roosevelt’s words in his 1916 publication.<sup>208</sup> *The Chicago Tribune* elaborated on Roosevelt’s views in their 10 May 1915 edition. The editors quoted Roosevelt with the following: “I said that not only our duty to humanity at large, but our duty to preserve our own national self-respect demanded instant action on our part and forbad all delay.”<sup>209</sup> Historian Don Lawson expresses this viewpoint as well, in his book *The United States in World War I*, claiming that when the incident occurred; the majority of Americans sided with President Roosevelt’s strict anti-German views and demanded that the United States formally declare war on Germany.<sup>210</sup>

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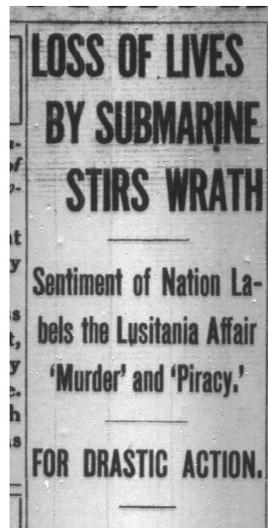
<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

<sup>207</sup> “Loss Of Lives By Submarine Stirs Wrath.” *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, 9 May 1915.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

<sup>209</sup> “Roosevelt Urges U.S. Back Up Ultimatum.” *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, 10 May 1915.

<sup>210</sup> Don Lawson, *The United States In World War I* (New York: Abelard-Schuman Publishing, 1963), p. 35.



In the days following the sinking, the focus shifted to President Wilson and his initial response. The coverage of President Wilson would continue for several days, including headlines in which the President asks the American people to stand united during perilous times.<sup>211</sup> On 11 May 1915, a front-page column presented the statement: “Trust Wilson.”<sup>212</sup> This column stated that there was increasing evidence that the American people are standing behind President Wilson and his actions, with the hope that the President will be successful in remaining neutral to the conflict in Europe.<sup>213</sup>



<sup>211</sup> “Wilson Speaks: Asks The People To Stand United.” *The Chicago Tribune*, 11 May 1915.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*

*The Chicago Daily Tribune* continued the theme of America remaining neutral while attempting to minimize public anger by publishing information regarding how the United States would handle the *Lusitania* situation. On 12 May 1915, the main story of the front page of *The Chicago Daily Tribune* indicated that the United States would be demanding full reparations from Germany regarding the sinking.<sup>214</sup> The editors also attempted to reassure their readers by claiming that there would be no immediate war threat due to the *Lusitania* sinking.<sup>215</sup> This would not be a constant theme.

In Kansas, *The Topeka State Journal* began their coverage of the *Lusitania* during their 7 May 1915 evening edition. *The Topeka State Journal* utilized scare tactics in their articles focusing on the *Lusitania*. On the front page, *The Topeka State Journal* printed a photograph of the grim reaper clutching onto the *Lusitania*, with captions including the words “catastrophic,” “war,” “disaster,” and “attack.”<sup>216</sup> This cartoon attempts to portray Germany as the culprit, and the passengers on the *Lusitania* as victims. Publishing this image rather than utilizing words immediately presents the audience of *The Topeka State Journal* with the impression that the *Lusitania* incident was a violent act resulting in the deaths of Americans. The cartoon implants a lasting impact on the reader much more effectively than words would accomplish.

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<sup>214</sup> “U.S. To Demand Full Atonement From Germany; No War Threat.” *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, 12 May 1915.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid.

<sup>216</sup> “*Lusitania* Is Sunk.” *The Topeka State Journal*, 7 May 1915.



Henry Watterson, a newspaper journalist, and editor, employs this idea of coercion as well. Watterson also emphasizes the innocence of the *Lusitania*, claiming that German submarine responsible for the attack was nothing more than a “mangling murderer,” responsible for the deaths of innocent women and children.<sup>217</sup> This view is quite abrasive, yet mirrors the opinions expressed by *The Boston Globe* following the sinking of the *Lusitania*. *The Topeka State Journal* publishing such dramatized articles and cartoons was surprising considering the amount of German-Americans living in Kansas during the sinking.<sup>218</sup> There were no attempts to place the blame on anyone other than Germany.

Minneapolis, Minnesota took a different approach than that of Topeka by examining both sides of the argument. With a German-American population of twenty

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<sup>217</sup> William Dudley, *World War I: Opposing Viewpoints* (San Diego: Greenhaven Press Inc.,1998), p. 78.

<sup>218</sup> United States Department Of Commerce, Bureau Of The Census. *Thirteenth Census Of The United States Taken In The Year 1910*. (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1913).

percent during the time of the sinking, Minnesota experienced isolated incidents in regards to Minnesotans either being pro-Germany or pro-neutrality.<sup>219</sup>



Regardless, the coverage of the sinking in *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune* included thoughts and opinions from both sides. Their coverage initially began the day after the sinking, on 8 May 1915. The article claims that the dead and wounded from the *Lusitania* were brought ashore, with some of the passengers unable to survive the voyage to land.<sup>220</sup> At the time of the impact from the torpedo, the *Lusitania* was streaming along about ten miles off Old Head Kinsale, on the last leg of her voyage to Liverpool.<sup>221</sup> Phrases intended to lead readers to oppose Germany such as “agents of destruction” and “innocent vessel” were presented in *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*: “the power agents of destruction tore through the vessel’s side causing terrific explosions.”<sup>222</sup> The article elaborates on the sinking itself, stating “almost immediately volumes of water poured through the openings and the ship listed. Boats which were already swung out on the davits were dropped overboard and were speedily filled with passengers who had

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> “Vessel, Not Warned, Struck Twice, Goes Down In 15 Minutes.” *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, 8 May 1915.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

been appalled by the desperate attack.”<sup>223</sup> According to the editors at *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, a wireless call for help was sent out and immediately rescue boats of all kinds were sent out from the neighboring points along the coast and Queenstown.<sup>224</sup> However, within fifteen minutes as “one survivor estimated and certainly within half an hour the *Lusitania* had disappeared.”<sup>225</sup>

There was a second column also published on the front page, opposing this view. This column included local opinions on the sinking itself, with Minnesotans expressing zero empathy for the passengers on the *Lusitania*. The editors of *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune* claimed, “the sinking was variously interpreted” in Minnesota.<sup>226</sup> Two local Minnesotan doctors expressed their views on the sinking, which were published by *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*:

“Dr. Cyrus Northrop, president of the Minnesota Peace Society, while saying it was horrible, took a practical view of the incident: The *Lusitania* was a British ship. Germany is at war with the British. It had given warning that it would sink British merchant vessels and it has done so and that’s all there is to it. I don’t know that this action is contrary to the laws of war, but it is horrible as all war is horrible. Dr. W.W. Fowell emphasized the point that the sinking of the *Lusitania* served no purpose toward bringing the war to a close and was, therefore, questionable.”<sup>227</sup>

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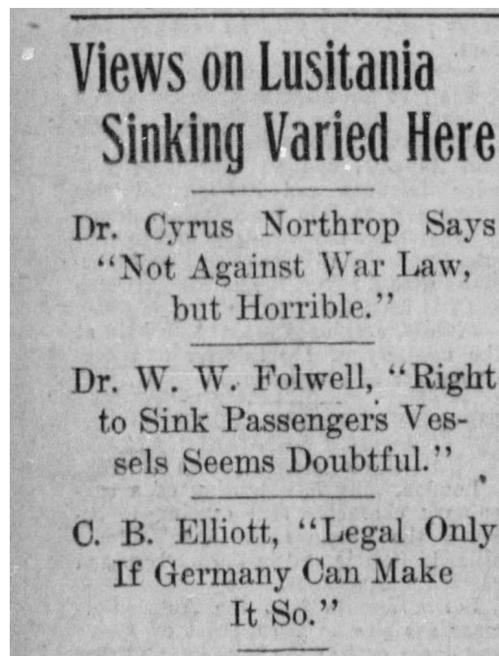
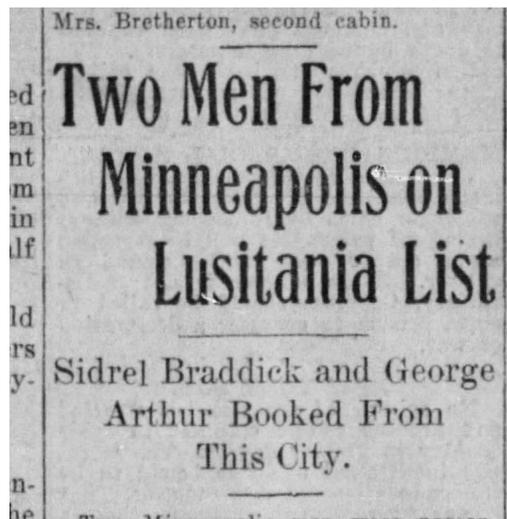
<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

<sup>226</sup> “Views On Lusitania Sinking Varied Here.” *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, 8 May 1915.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.



The following day, *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune* published coverage on who was to be held responsible for the sinking. The editors presented the official statement released by Berlin, in which Germany admitted to their submarine being responsible for torpedoing the *Lusitania*.<sup>228</sup> Immediately below this article, the editors of *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune* indicated that several Germany cities had been enthusiastically celebrating the sinking of the *Lusitania* published a small column.<sup>229</sup> Examples of the celebrations included German and Austria citizens celebrating the sinking in the streets, specifically in Southern Germany.<sup>230</sup> Classes were canceled for schoolchildren because of the sinking so that they could partake in the celebrations.<sup>231</sup>

<sup>228</sup> "Official Berlin Statement Admits German Submarine Torpedoed The *Lusitania*." *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, 9 May 1915.

<sup>229</sup> "German Cities Celebrate *Lusitania's* Sinking." *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, 9 May 1915.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

In contrast to their initial announcement, *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune* published Germany's response to the loss of American life on the *Lusitania*. According to the editors of *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, German officials were prepared to present a large cash settlement to the United States Government in regards to the American fatalities suffered during the sinking.<sup>232</sup> These conflicting attitudes could be a result in the public opinion during the time in Minnesota. With incidents of violence towards innocent German-Americans (who were disgusted with Germany's actions, and remained loyal to the United States throughout the First World War) as well as Americans who wanted to remain neutral to the fighting across the Atlantic, it was a safe bet for *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune* to publish both sides of the argument.

Frederick Luebke examines this in his work *Bonds of Loyalty*.<sup>233</sup> Luebke claims that an overwhelming majority of German-Americans condemned Germany for its actions and that these German-Americans remained loyal to the United States.<sup>234</sup> Regardless of the loyalty, German-Americans were experiencing personal attacks, including lynchings, vandalism, and arson. Luebke also presented the campaign against "hyphenism" and how the idea of superpatriotism was running rampant throughout the United States. In regards to the sinking itself, Luebke presents a case similar to Peterson and Gray: blame Germany for the loss of life, yet realize that they had no other choice based on Great Britain's actions.<sup>235</sup> Luebke emphasizes the specific response of German-Americans. He claims that the overwhelming majority of German-Americans were

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<sup>232</sup> "All U.S. Grievances May Be Set Forth In New Note To Germany." *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, 10 May 1915.

<sup>233</sup> Frederick C. Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty: German-Americans And World War I* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974).

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid*, p. 131.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid*.

outraged by the sinking, and remained neutral in regards to the United States formally entering the First World War.<sup>236</sup>

Due to the high number (thirty-two percent) of German-Americans living in Nebraska, there is an importance in examining newspapers originating from there.<sup>237</sup> Inaccurate information involving the liner itself was published, including the editors at *The Omaha World-Herald* claiming that all aboard were safe following the sinking of the *Lusitania*.<sup>238</sup> The column indicated that the *Lusitania* remained afloat for twelve hours following the impact from the torpedo.<sup>239</sup>



In addition to claiming all lives were safe, *The Omaha World-Herald* also published information regarding the *Lusitania* ignoring the German warnings, which were published in *The New York Times* the previous Sunday. *The Omaha World-Herald* also published a story parallel to the *Lusitania* headlines. The story in question is the

<sup>236</sup> Ibid.

<sup>237</sup> United States Department Of Commerce, Bureau Of The Census. *Thirteenth Census Of The United States Taken In The Year 1910*. (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1913).

<sup>238</sup> "Steamer *Lusitania* Sunk." *The Omaha Evening World-Herald*, 7 May 1915.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

torpedoing of two freighters located just south of Ireland. What's interesting about these two stories is how *The Omaha World-Herald* brought to light the fact that the two freighters received zero warning before their demise, yet the *Lusitania* received several prior to its departure from New York.<sup>240</sup>

The final newspaper under examination for this chapter is from South Dakota. *The Deadwood Daily Pioneer Times*. Beginning in the nineteenth and continuing into the twentieth centuries, the Dakotas had become an area settlement for a group called the Volga Germans. The German-American population for South Dakota averaged twenty percent during the decades before the *Lusitania* sinking.<sup>241</sup>

Coverage of the sinking began on 8 May 1915 with *The Deadwood Daily Pioneer Times* deciding to avoid the controversy between the German-Americans and blame the British owners of the *Lusitania* for the sinking.<sup>242</sup> The reasons included Cunard officials ignoring the advice not to sail through the warzone, and the contraband located underneath innocent passengers in the cargo hold of the ship.

**The Deadwood Daily Pioneer-Times.**

THIRTY-NINTH YEAR. DEADWOOD (BLACK HILLS), SOUTH DAKOTA. SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 9, 1915. PRICE FIVE CENTS

**ESTIMATED 1,198 LOST THEIR LIVES**  
 Among the Victims of the Lusitania Disaster are Elbert Hubbard and Wife, Alfred G. Vanderbilt, Charles Klein, Charles Frohman, Justin M. Forman — Probably All Survivors have been brought Ashore.

out of the dark red rock where the biggest spring bubbled up. The Sioux fought a desperate triumphant battle with the Cheyennes up on Battle Mountain, which overlooks the town, for the possession of the healing waters. And they still come back and pitch their dirty little tepees on the bank of the river, although their rough hewn tubs have been replaced by porcelain baths and swimming pools, and the modern homes of the white men are built on their old camping grounds.  
 At Hot Springs the east and west contradict Kipling. You may drive in your 1915 motor car to the camp

**BLAMES VESSEL'S OWNERS**

erties of the waters and their efficacy is being well advertised. William Bartlett and Art Colgan are providing for the visitors in the block opposite the springs, where they have installed six bath tubs and have furnished a reception room. Patients especially those afflicted with rheumatism, are coming in goodly numbers and it will soon be necessary to arrange for increased accommodations. While here, Mr. Wyatt secured the agency for the Maxwell automobile in Custer and Fall River counties.

**15,000 WERE ON STRIKE**

GERMAN GOVERNMENT ISSUES OFFICIAL STATEMENT TOUCH  
 LEAD HAS GREATEST  
 COAL MINERS AND OPERATORS OF EASTERN OHIO FEEL

<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

<sup>241</sup> United States Department Of Commerce, Bureau Of The Census. *Thirteenth Census Of The United States Taken In The year 1910*. (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1913).

<sup>242</sup> "Blames Vessel's Owners." *The Deadwood Daily Pioneer Times*, 9 May 1915.

Another reason *The Deadwood Daily Pioneer-Times* avoided placing the blame on Germany could have been because the American public was showing signs of distaste for Germany. Steward Halsey Ross comments on this in his work *Propaganda for War* that once the sinking occurred a majority of the American public held a strict anti-German stance, due to the political leaders, diplomats, and press directly influencing American public opinion.<sup>243</sup> Without the British propaganda machine in place, the anger over the sinking itself might have been much less exaggerated.<sup>244</sup>

Historian John Protasio comments on the British propaganda machine in his work *The Day The World Was Shocked: The Lusitania Disaster And Its Influence On The Course Of World War I*.<sup>245</sup> Protasio focuses on the British public response to the incident, claiming that a majority of British citizens rejoiced at the sinking of the *Lusitania*, assuming that the event would result in the United States officially joining the Allied forces against the Central Powers.<sup>246</sup> The British press would attack Germany much more abrasively than the American press. This was an attempt to cause panic and mass hysteria over the loss of life, specifically American life in hopes to successfully force the United States into the conflicts.<sup>247</sup>

Similar to *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, the editors of *The Deadwood Daily Pioneer Times* also commented on the harsh treatment German-Americans received

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<sup>243</sup> Steward Halsey Ross, *Propaganda For War: How The United States Was Conditioned To Fight The Great War of 1914 - 1918* (Joshua Tree: Progressive Press, 2009), p. 145.

<sup>244</sup> British propaganda, which aimed to mobilize hatred of the German enemy by spreading details of their atrocities, was used extensively by Great Britain in the First World War. These could be real, or alleged events.

<sup>245</sup> John Protasio, *The Day The World Was Shocked: The Lusitania Disaster And Its Influence On The Course Of World War I* (Philadelphia: Casemate Publishers, 2011).

<sup>246</sup> Ibid.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

following the sinking. This was present in a column on 12 May 1915, with the statement “never since the war began has such a wave of anti-German feeling surged through the country.”<sup>248</sup> The article continues, claiming that workmen in industrial districts are refusing to labor alongside men of German birth whether naturalized or not.<sup>249</sup> The column concluded with stating that the premises of Germans in many towns have been destroyed and the exchanges in many towns are barring their doors to those of German blood, regardless of all considerations.<sup>250</sup> A petition was also presented to the House of Commons calling attention to the danger of allowing aliens to be at large.<sup>251</sup>

Coverage also indicated that there had been riots in Liverpool, Manchester, Sanford, and Birkenhead. In Liverpool, the imprisonment of German-born citizens took place, and those naturalized were advised to leave the country.<sup>252</sup> Coverage of the *Lusitania* in Deadwood was very light in comparison to the remainder of the country. There is mention of the British Embassy remaining uneasy regarding the incident; however, there is nothing published blaming Germany for the sinking.<sup>253</sup>

This theme of light media coverage of the *Lusitania* will continue as the research moves further west, which will be apparent in the following chapter. The Midwestern states included a substantial German-American population when the *Lusitania* sank in May 1915. This is visible when examining newspapers from the area, specifically when looking at excerpts from *The Topeka State Journal* from Topeka, Kansas and *The Omaha*

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<sup>248</sup> “Anti-German Feeling Surges Thru Country.” *The Deadwood Daily Pioneer Times*, 12 May 1915.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

<sup>253</sup> “British Embassy Uneasy.” *The Deadwood Daily Pioneer Times*, 10 May 1915.

*World-Herald* from Omaha, Nebraska. The coverage displayed by newspapers located within high German-American populations utilized scare tactics in the form of frightening images and dramatized statements. This could have been an attempt to sway public opinion against Germany's favor, considering the environments in cities with high German-American populations were tense. Isolated incidents of violence against German-born citizens were present in Minneapolis, Minnesota; St. Louis, Missouri; and Collinsville, Illinois.

Frederick C. Luebke discusses these incidents in *Bonds of Loyalty: German-Americans And World War I*, declaring that German-Americans received incredibly harsh treatment in the First World War, specifically following the sinking of the *Lusitania* when tensions rose between the United States and Germany. These abrasive newspaper articles and violent attacks on German-born citizens were not present in the American West.

Chapter Five: American West Newspapers

Arizona: *The Arizona Republic*

California: *The Los Angeles Evening Herald*

Washington: *The Seattle Daily Times*

On the opposite side of the country, American West newspapers took a much different approach to the sinking of the *Lusitania* than their Northeastern counterparts. Having a small German-American population, as well as geography placing the Western states away from the problem contributed to how the newspapers handled the sinking. Chapter five of this thesis includes newspapers from the cities of Phoenix, Arizona, Los Angeles, California and Seattle, Washington.

At the time of the sinking, Arizona had the lowest German-American population of these Western states.<sup>254</sup> With less than one percent of the foreign-born population hailing from Germany, Arizona did not encounter the hypnenism issues a majority of the country did in May 1915.<sup>255</sup> Coverage of the *Lusitania* sinking in *The Arizona Republic* began on 8 May 1915. Front page coverage included statements from former President Roosevelt, claiming that the United States must act out of respect for the victims.<sup>256</sup> The column stated the following: “sinking of *Lusitania* represents not only piracy, but piracy on vaster scale of murder than any in history.”<sup>257</sup> Roosevelt was also quoted saying “This represents not merely piracy but piracy on a vaster scale of murder than any old time pirate ever practiced. This in the warfare that destroyed Louvain and Dinant, with hundreds of men, women, and children in Belgium. It is warfare against innocent men, women, and children traveling on the ocean against our fellow countrymen who are among the sufferers.”<sup>258</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> United States Department Of Commerce, Bureau Of The Census. *Thirteenth Census Of The United States Taken In The Year 1910*. (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1913).

<sup>255</sup> Ibid.

<sup>256</sup> “Must Act To Save Respect Of Nation.” *The Arizona Republic*, 8 May 1915.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

Historian David Stevenson discusses Roosevelt's strict viewpoint in his work *The First World War And International Politics*.<sup>259</sup> Wilson had claimed in February that Germany would be held to "strict accountability" if unrestricted submarine warfare resulted in the death of American citizens.<sup>260</sup> This resulted in Roosevelt's uncompromising attitude.<sup>261</sup> Some Americans, adhering to Roosevelt's abrasive views, felt that Wilson did not respond to the *Lusitania* accordingly, feeling that Wilson did not hold up to his promises made three months before the sinking. Regardless of opposing opinions on the subject, Stevenson claims that Wilson stood by neutrality following the sinking, believing it would be the best choice from a political stance.<sup>262</sup> This would be met with anger from some Americans, indicating that submission to Germany would result in additional American casualties. This anger would continue throughout the summer of 1915, culminating once again following the sinking of the British liner *Arabic*.<sup>263</sup> This sinking occurred in August, and resulted in additional American lives lost.<sup>264</sup>



<sup>259</sup> David Stevenson, *The First World War And International Politics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press Publishing, 1988), p. 70.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid, p. 71.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid.

The editors at *The Republic* did not place the blame on anyone in particular; rather they presented each side of the incident. Another front-page article suggested that the passengers on the *Lusitania* found the threat of Germany sinking the liner to be a rather humorous one: "German Embassy's note at the hour of sailing, telling of peril from German torpedoes ignored by 1251 sea goers. If actions speak louder than words about 1,258 passengers on the *Lusitania* were loud last Saturday in their defiance of the German Embassy's warning to all travelers who elected to book transportation on steamships of Great Britain of her allies."<sup>265</sup> The article continues to state that practically all of the *Lusitania's* passengers had an opportunity before departing New York City to read a notice published in many newspapers by the German embassy warning transatlantic voyagers that the ship was liable to destruction.<sup>266</sup> The editors at *The Republic* stated that many who had read the notice laughed at it, as did the Cunard Line officials on board the *Lusitania*.<sup>267</sup>

# THE ARIZONA REPUBLICAN

AN INDEPENDENT PROGRESSIVE JOURNAL

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## LESS THAN SEVEN HUNDRED SURVIVE SINKING OF LUSITANIA

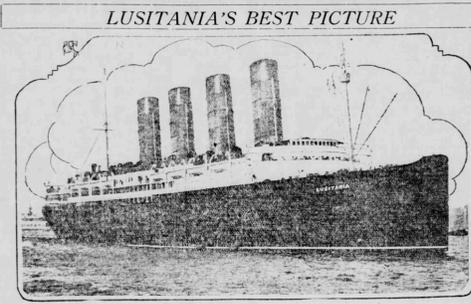
### FULL LIST OF SURVIVORS NOT AVAILABLE BUT NOT MANY LIKELY TO BE ADDED

Of Those Known to Have Escaped Death When the Vessel Went Down Very Few Were First-Class Passengers

**MANY BOATS COULD NOT BE LOWERED**

Vessel Sank So Quickly the Wireless Calls Could Not Bring Rescue Ships in Time to Be of Material Service

**GERMANY SAYS GUNS CARRIED BY LUSITANIA**



*LUSITANIA'S BEST PICTURE*

The Lusitania

### LUSITANIA CARRIED NO GUNS AND GERMANS HAD NO EXCUSE FOR ATTACK

President is Busily Engaged in Sitting Details of the Ocean Tragedy and Studying Aspects of Law and Fact

**HISTORY'S MOST SERIOUS CRISIS**

Secretary Bryan Says People Need No Advice at This Time as the Country Fully Understands the Situation

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**INSURANCE \$7,500,000. VALUE \$10,000,000**

NEW YORK, May 8.—Insurance on the Lusitania, it was said today, amounted to \$7,500,000. The vessel was valued in round figures at \$10,000,000. The worth of the cargo carried was reckoned at \$25,000. On her main-deck the largest stowage room was filled with "cartridges and ammunition, 420 cases, \$12,400." This was consigned to London.

The Lusitania until last year was one of the two largest ships of the Cunard service, was built in 1907 at Glasgow by J. Brown and Co. She and her sister ship, the *Mauretania*, were each 790 feet long with a breadth of 68 feet and a depth of 60 feet. A product of the rivalry for speed between the English and German companies in the trans-Atlantic service, her fastest trip was made westward in four days, seven hours and forty-two minutes, a record which was broken a few weeks later by the *Mauretania* her sister ship which made the west-bound voyage from Queenstown to New York in just one hour and one minute less than the time in the trans-Atlantic service. Her fastest trip was made westward in four days, seven hours and forty-two minutes, a record which was broken a few weeks later by the *Mauretania* her sister ship which made the west-bound voyage from Queenstown to New York in just one hour and one minute less than the time in the trans-Atlantic service. With a displacement of 32,000 tons and a horse power of 35,000, the *Lusitania* was one of the swiftest and most powerful steamships afloat. She had accommodations for 520 first class, 200 second class and 1200 third class passengers. She was launched June 7, 1906, at Clyde Bank.

to the rules of international law, including the declaration of London which Germany has signed, cannot warrant the sinking of a merchant-man without the previous exercise of the right to visit, search, and removal of non-combatants to a place of safety. The government states that in the last note to Germany sent at the same time found a warning that the imperial German government would be held "to strict accountability" by the United States for any loss of American vessels or lives.

The suggestion that warnings by the German embassy in newspaper advertisements should have been sufficient to deter Americans from traveling aboard ships flying the British flag, was widely commented upon among diplomats. At the state department Secretary Bryan revealed that the embassy's warning had never been officially communicated to the state department and that since the announcement by the German admiralty in February, of its prohibition of a war zone, and the American protest by a reply from Germany stating the government would disclaim responsibility for accidents to neutrals, the subject for several weeks had not been officially mentioned between Berlin and Washington governments.

Among a few diplomats there was a disposition to criticize American course for maintaining these warnings.

265 "Threat To Sink Is Laughed At By Passengers." *The Arizona Republic*, 8 May 1915.

266 Ibid.

267 Ibid.

The following day on 9 May 1915 front-page coverage included contradictory stories. One column stated that Germany knew for a fact that the *Lusitania* was carrying contrabands of war intended for the Allied forces in Europe.<sup>268</sup> The other column declared that the *Lusitania* did not have any arms or ammunitions in its cargo and that Germany had no tangible excuse for the sinking.<sup>269</sup> By presenting different aspects and opinions on the sinking, *The Republic* avoided taking sides. This was a logical approach by the editors, again considering the low German-American population as well as the geographical location of Arizona in regards to New York, the final departure of the *Lusitania*.

*The Los Angeles Evening Herald*, in California, took a patriotic approach to the sinking of the *Lusitania*, publishing articles regarding the heroism of the survivors as well as memorizing the passengers that perished.<sup>270</sup> Similar to Northeastern newspapers, photos of women and children were published, including accounts of turning to ones' faith and prayers in the wake of the disaster.<sup>271</sup>



<sup>268</sup> "Germany Says Guns Carried By *Lusitania*." *The Arizona Republic*, 9 May 1915.

<sup>269</sup> "*Lusitania* Carried No Guns And Germans Had No Excuse For Attack." *The Arizona Republic*, 9 May 1915.

<sup>270</sup> "Liner Death List Grows, 142 Americans Perish; Abandon Hope For 1457." *The Los Angeles Evening Herald*, 8 May 1915.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*

Additional columns on the front-page of *The Evening Herald* included statements such as “Sufferings of Women Described” and “American Men Calm When Facing Death on Sinking Atlantic Liner.” The article stated “the sufferings of delicate women, half crazed with grief and horror as they floated about for hours in the *Lusitania*’s life boats, were described today in dispatches from Queenstown, where most of the survivors landed.<sup>272</sup> Many of the women were wounded by the explosions in the ensuing panic and fell from the ship into the lifeboats.<sup>273</sup> A number of the women had the clothing half torn from their bodies.<sup>274</sup> The article also claimed that Mrs. M. N. Pappadopoulos, the “beautiful” wife of rich Athenian came ashore in only a pair of torn sailors trousers but wearing a \$10,000 diamond necklace after she was picked up from the sea by one of the lifeboats.<sup>275</sup> The article concludes with stating “she had fought for her life in the water for an hour and had seen her husband drown.”<sup>276</sup>

This very romanticized, over the top display put on by the editors of *The Evening Herald* could be a result of the fact that a majority of Los Angeles’ residents would prefer the Hollywood spin, rather than the grim photos published in *The Topeka State Journal*.<sup>277</sup> *The Evening Herald* also included information on the Los Angeles based passengers lost.<sup>278</sup> The editors of *The Evening Herald* presenting the correlation of A.G. Vanderbilt’s death on the *Lusitania* to John Jacob Astor’s death on the *Titanic*, just three

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<sup>272</sup> “Sufferings Of Women Described.” *The Los Angeles Evening Herald*, 8 May 1915.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid.

<sup>277</sup> “*Lusitania* Is Sunk.” *The Topeka State Journal*, 7 May 1915.

<sup>278</sup> “List on *Lusitania*.” *Los Angeles Evening Herald*, 8 May 1915.

years prior, represent this.<sup>279</sup> The editors of *The Evening Herald* choose to present this comparison for a few reasons. The *Titanic* and *Lusitania* occurred so closely together, and were owned by the same company. American lives were lost on both liners, and the casualties included notable, affluent citizens. J.J. Astor and A.G. Vanderbilt were both considered heroes by the press during the incidents, with eyewitness accounts stating that both men sacrificed their own lives to save other passengers, including women and children.<sup>280</sup>

Historian Carl Wittke reiterates this and discusses the differences in the German-American press and American newspapers. Wittke claims that the majority of newspapers choose to reflect on the loss of life, rather than facts and statistics.<sup>281</sup> Wittke states that as far as the response to the sinking is concerned, the German press in America claimed that the sinking of the *Lusitania* should have been celebrated, considering the war munitions the *Lusitania* was carrying to Europe for the Allies.<sup>282</sup> While the German press in America published this information, a majority of the American newspapers focused on the loss of American life rather than the tangible facts of the *Lusitania* case. Because of this, Wittke believes that the American public became more outraged over the sinking than they should have.

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<sup>279</sup> "A.G. Vanderbilt Dies Like Astor." *The Los Angeles Evening Herald*, 8 May 1915.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid.

<sup>281</sup> Carl Wittke, *The German-Language Press In America* (Lexington: University Of Kentucky Press, 1957), p. 253.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid.

At the time of the 1910 U.S. Census, California consisted of around thirteen percent German-born citizens.<sup>283</sup> There was an opportunity to cater to both parties as far as the press was concerned. However, coverage would not indicate any wrongdoing by the United States, Great Britain, and Germany. The goal of the editors of *The Evening Herald* seems rather simple: present the glorified tales of survivors, while respectfully mourning the lives lost.

*The Seattle Daily Times* took a historical approach similar to *The New York Times*. Being an evening release publication, *The Daily Times* was able to publish the *Lusitania* narrative the evening of 7 May 1915. Unfortunately, *The Daily Times* could not present their information factually. *The Daily Times* initially claimed that all on board the *Lusitania* “were saved.”<sup>284</sup> The front-page coverage stated that according to a Liverpool dispatch received by the Cunard line late today (8 May 1915), that three hundred passengers have landed at Clonakilty in West Cork, Ireland.<sup>285</sup> The article also declared that according to a dispatch from Queenstown, news received there from the *Lusitania* said that before sinking her lifeboats were over her sides.<sup>286</sup> Additional information stated that the lifeboats were launched before submersion indicating rescue efforts were successful.<sup>287</sup>

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<sup>283</sup> United States Department Of Commerce, Bureau Of The Census. *Thirteenth Census Of The United States Taken In The Year 1910*. (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1913).

<sup>284</sup> “Liner *Lusitania* Sunk!” *Seattle Daily Times*, 7 May 1915.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid.

<sup>287</sup> “Lifeboats Launched Before Huge Liner Plunges To Bottom.” *The Seattle Daily Times*, 7 May 1915.



In the following days, corrections were made, and the editors published survivor accounts as well as questioned Germany for their actions.<sup>288</sup> Historian Ernest May questions Germany for their actions as well and states that Germany and the United States are responsible for the *Lusitania* disaster.<sup>289</sup> May claims that Germany is responsible for the murder of innocent lives, and the United States is responsible for the transportation of war contraband.<sup>290</sup> May also presents the case that the Cunard officials in place on the *Lusitania* should also be partially blamed. Because the *Lusitania* did not adhere to the 18-knot speed and zigzag course prescribed by the Admiralty warnings could have been one of the reasons behind the successful attack by the German submarine.<sup>291</sup> Regardless of where the blame falls, May believes that the sinking of the *Lusitania* created the first real issue between the United States and Germany, but not an issue so large as to bring the United States into the war.<sup>292</sup>

<sup>288</sup> "Entire Nation Stands Behind President!" *Seattle Daily Times*, 14 May 1915.

<sup>289</sup> Ernest R. May, *The World War And American Isolation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), p. 134.

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid*, p. 135.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid*, p. 136.

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid*.

There could be several reasons behind the blatant inaccurate reporting from the Western newspapers on the sinking. The obvious being geography. The West Coast being on the opposite side of the country from the Northeast could have some influence. The low number of German-Americans could have also impacted the press. For example, when examining the final paper in Seattle, at the time of the 1910 U.S. Census Washington State consisted of around eleven percent German-born citizens.<sup>293</sup> There is an additional possibility of detachment. The West Coast considered the *Lusitania* disaster a Northeast problem. It was out of sight, out of mind. Which was a constant theme throughout the American West during the sinking and immediate aftermath.

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<sup>293</sup> United States Department Of Commerce, Bureau Of The Census. *Thirteenth Census Of The United States Taken In The Year 1910*. (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1913).

Conclusion:

Based on the historiography conducted on the First World War and the sinking of the *Lusitania*, The United States involvement in the war is presented rather clearly. When examining the public response to the sinking, there are contradicting responses throughout the country. Before the sinking, the American position was to keep neutral. The majority of the country shared this idea until the *Lusitania* perished which resulted in the loss of American citizens. At this point, the American response becomes somewhat contrasting. This is also present in First World War historiography, specifically when examining the *Lusitania* sinking.

Beginning in 1916, former President Theodore Roosevelt was expressing his views on the First World War in his work *Fear God And Take Your Own Part*.<sup>294</sup> His opinions were quite radical when compared to President Wilson's at the time. Roosevelt blamed the sinking entirely on Germany and urged Wilson and the United States Congress to formally declare war against Germany for their actions. Francis Whiting Halsey continues these ideas in his work *The Literary Digest History of the World War*.<sup>295</sup> Halsey also places the blame on Germany, as well as President Wilson for not responding to the *Lusitania* sinking immediately. This subject would reemerge in Don Lawson's work *The United States in World War I*.<sup>296</sup> Lawson argues that the *Lusitania* did, in fact, bring the United States to the brink of formal involvement in the First World War.

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<sup>294</sup> Theodore Roosevelt, *Fear God And Take Your Own Part* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1916).

<sup>295</sup> Francis W. Halsey, *The Literary Digest History Of The World War, Vol. IX Compiled From The Original And Contemporary Sources: American, British, French, German, And Others: Italy, Submarine Warfare, August 1914 - November 1918* (New York: Cosimo Classics Publishers, 1919).

<sup>296</sup> Don Lawson, *The United States In World War I* (New York: Abelard-Schuman Publishing, 1963).

Lawson also presents the stance that most Americans viewed Germany unfavorably from the outbreak of war in 1914, due to Germany harshly violating Belgium neutrality.

Other historians direct the blame of the *Lusitania* incident on Great Britain and the propaganda in place during the First World War. One example of this occurred when H.C. Peterson published his work *Propaganda For War: The Campaign Against American Neutrality, 1914 - 1917* which states that the British propaganda machine is the lone reason behind the United States formally entering the First World War.<sup>297</sup> Steward Halsey Ross reiterates the idea that Great Britain should be blamed as well in his work *Propaganda for War: How the United States was Conditioned to Fight the Great War of 1914 - 1918*.<sup>298</sup> Historian Colin Simpson places the blame of the sinking on Great Britain as well, in his work *The Lusitania*.<sup>299</sup> Rather than focus on the propaganda being projected by the British, Simpson claims irresponsibility on the British Navy should be considered the real culprit behind the *Lusitania* disaster. Some historians placed the blame of the sinking on the United States. This was because passengers on the *Lusitania* ignored the published German warnings. The United States is also at fault due to the ship departing New York with contraband on board. These mistakes are presented more frequently in the newspaper coverage from 1915, rather than in historiography from the last one hundred years.

The sinking caused the most outrage in the Northeast. This is because the majority of passengers hailed from there, the *Lusitania* departed from New York Harbor, and

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<sup>297</sup> H.C. Peterson, *Propaganda For War: The Campaign Against American Neutrality, 1914 - 1917* (Norman: University Of Oklahoma Press, 1939).

<sup>298</sup> Steward Halsey Ross, *Propaganda For War: How The United States Was Conditioned To Fight the Great War Of 1914 - 1918* (Joshua Tree: Progressive Press, 2009).

<sup>299</sup> Colin Simpson, *The Lusitania* (Boston: Little, Brown And Company, 1972).

Washington D.C. was experiencing tense political situations in 1915. *The Boston Globe* published information on the notable *Lusitania* passengers, which allowed the audience to gain a personal connection with the victims. *The Boston Globe* also published columns indicating that the majority of Americans were horrified over the sinking of the *Lusitania*, and demanded that President Wilson respond to Germany as quickly, and as sternly as possible. *The Asbury Park Evening Press* published columns with opposing information throughout their coverage of the sinking. One column included information stating that the *Lusitania* was not armed with any weapons to defend with against an attack; therefore they were helpless against Germany's submarines.<sup>300</sup> Another column suggested that the real culprit of the sinking are the officials of the Cunard Line Company for departing New York City in the wake of the German warnings.

*The New York Times* spent a majority of their coverage reporting on the facts and statistics of the sinking itself, as well as the days leading up to the *Lusitania* departing New York Harbor. Coverage included focusing on the inspection the *Lusitania* was required to have completed before sailing. *The New York Times* also published Germany's reaction to the sinking, which placed the blame entirely on Great Britain. *The Cincinnati Enquirer* placed the blame on Great Britain as well, in regards to the cargo the *Lusitania* was carrying. Additional columns included information on war supplies, as well as an interview with a chemist living in Pittsburgh during the time of the sinking. The interview indicated that a large quantity of deadly gas was made in Pittsburgh, which contributed to the deaths of some *Lusitania* passengers. In Pittsburgh, some coverage included controversial cargo in *The Gazette Times*, yet a majority of columns included

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<sup>300</sup> "Vessel Was Not Armed, Declares Admiralty." *The Asbury Park Evening Press*, 8 May 1915.

the rescue efforts and passenger information. *The Gazette Times* also claimed that most Americans were feeling distressed over the sinking, and were hopeful that President Wilson would weigh the facts of the *Lusitania* case before acting against Germany.

The Southern states did not show the same anger and outrage that the Northeast did. A majority of the Southern citizens did not feel that the political issues in Washington D.C. were a concern for them. There was also a smaller German-American population in the South, which contributed to the amount of coverage the *Lusitania* received in May 1915. For example, in Florida coverage of the sinking was very light on 8 May 1915 in *The Tallahassee Democrat*. There was only a small column on the *Lusitania*, which was present on the second page of the newspaper. The article focused on the ship itself, rather than the sinking. In North Carolina, *The Greensboro Patriot* published lighter coverage as well but took a more sympathetic approach to covering the sinking. Information published by *The Greensboro Patriot* also claimed that German cities were celebrating the sinking of the *Lusitania*.

In South Carolina, the coverage was wider in *The Greenville Daily News*. Of the Southern states examined, South Carolina had the highest German-American population. This is present in their coverage of the sinking. For example, *The Greenville Daily News* claimed that the United States should be held responsible for the sinking, due to the contraband of war present in the cargo hold of the ship. The focus of their coverage attempted to blame anyone for the sinking except Germany. In Texas, *The Houston Post* discussed the controversial cargo as well, though it was not as dominant in the coverage as *The Greenville Daily News*. *The Houston Post* also published a statement from the German Ambassador to the United States.

In the Midwest, anger was present in the newspapers due to the larger German-American populations residing there. *The Chicago Tribune* covered the sinking by placing emphasis on details and facts of the *Lusitania*. The editors also claimed that the sinking outraged the American public and that Germany should face immediate consequences for the *Lusitania*. These themes continued in Kansas, with *The Topeka State Journal*. *Topeka* utilized scare tactics, including graphic photographs and political cartoons portraying Germany as the culprit, and the *Lusitania* passengers as victims of murder. These explicit images left a lasting impression with the audience of *The Topeka State Journal*.

*The Minneapolis Morning Tribune* published stories including German celebrations and interviews with local Minnesotans. These interviews expressed the contrasting opinions many Americans held immediately following the sinking: should the United States formally enter the First World War, or remain neutral. There were opposing opinions present in Omaha, Nebraska as well. With a high German-American population, Nebraska experienced tense environments following the sinking of the *Lusitania*. *The Omaha World Herald* reflects these environments in their coverage. Initially, *The Omaha World-Herald* claimed that all of the passengers on board the *Lusitania* were safe. Their coverage also stated that the ship had remained afloat for twelve hours, which was nowhere near accurate. In opposition to *The Omaha World-Herald*, the editors in South Dakota immediately released the fatality numbers in the 8 May 1915 edition of *The Deadwood Daily Pioneer Times*. In South Dakota, the blame of the sinking fell on Great Britain rather than Germany. This could have been an attempt to calm tensions between

German-Americans, considering a majority of the American public held a strict anti-German stance during the First World War.

The American West did not have a high German-American population during the First World War. The newspapers in Arizona, California, and Washington State reflected this in their coverage of the *Lusitania* sinking. In Arizona, *The Republican* included statements from Roosevelt and President Wilson. Columns also included European news, specifically the issues Belgium was encountering during the time. In California, *The Los Angeles Evening Herald* approached their coverage of the sinking with a Hollywood spin, glamorizing the passengers who were on board the *Lusitania*. *The Los Angeles Evening Herald* did not spend a substantial amount of time on covering facts of the sinking.

Focusing on personal stories of the notable travelers allowed the audience to relate to the sinking on a more intimate level. The final newspaper examined is set in Washington State. *The Seattle Daily Times* published inaccurate information on the *Lusitania* on the day of the sinking: 7 May 1915. The front-page story claimed that all on board were safe. The inaccurate reporting of the *Lusitania* present in the American West was not only due to the low German-American population. Geography placing these states away from the Northeast was also a contributing factor.

During the months following the *Lusitania* incident, many Americans stood by the concept of neutrality. Some Americans claimed that Germany had the right to attack the *Lusitania*, blaming the passengers for embarking through dangerous waters. Others perceived the *Lusitania* incident as an act of murder and felt that Germany deserved punishment for the attack. Regardless of each opinion, the United States did not formally enter the First World War for almost two years following the sinking. This fact in

addition to the research presented in this paper result in the conclusion that the sinking of the *Lusitania* did not advance the United States into First World War. It did, however, cause tensions between some German-born Americans, and those who opposed war involvement entirely.

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