

## WORLD WAR II ALIEN ENEMY CONTROL PROGRAM CURRICULUM GUIDE AND LESSON PLANS

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LESSON PLAN THIRTEEN: *“The Christmas Train to Ft. Lincoln”*

APPROPRIATE GRADES/COURSES: 8-12, U.S. History; Civics, American Government

### TOPIC BACKGROUND SUMMARY:

(See Lesson Plan One for a general overview of the World War II Enemy Alien Control Program)

Shortly before Christmas in 1941, a train with six or seven passenger cars made its way from points in California up the coast to Portland, Oregon, and Seattle, Washington, then on to Spokane, Washington, across the Rockies and the subsequent plains to the final destination of Ft. Lincoln, Bismarck, North Dakota. This was no ordinary train. Many of its windows were blacked out or barred. At the rear of each car sat a guard with a mounted and loaded machine gun. All along its route, the train picked up men. Some sat and wept during the trip. Others stared morosely into space. As the hours passed, seatmates began telling each other their stories. They found that their stories were very similar. Each had been arrested by the F.B.I. on December 8 or 9, shortly after Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor. Each had been temporarily held in county jails or other detention centers. Each had been arrested as a so-called “dangerous” enemy alien, but none had been told the basis of these charges. Now, disgraced and confused, they were being taken away from friends and family to spend the holidays in a place called Ft. Lincoln, just south of Bismarck, North Dakota.

Among the men on the train were Karl Vogt and Erich Braemer.

Who were these two men, and why were they there?

ESTIMATED TIME OF COMPLETION: Two class periods

### STUDENT OBJECTIVES:

To solve the mysteries of why Karl Vogt and Erich Braemer were on the Christmas Train.

To sharpen the analytical and research skills of the students.

To facilitate the ability of students to work together in a group and reach

consensus.

To increase awareness of the historical record as to the cessation of *human* and *constitutional rights* during our country's history--particularly WWII.

To review and/or introduce the definitions of the terms *constitutional and human rights, due process, discovery, and the writ of habeas corpus.*

To review and/or introduce the content of *Presidential Proclamation 2526.*

To review and understand Article I, Section 9, Paragraph 2 of the U.S. Constitution.

To review and understand the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution.

To promote discussion of our roles and responsibilities as government leaders and individual citizens during times of war or national crisis.

#### MATERIALS:

Printed copies of **The Topic Background Summary**

Printed copies of **Article I., Section 9, Paragraph 2,** and the **Fourteenth Amendment** from the U.S. Constitution. (See Lesson Plan Three)

Printed copies of **Presidential Proclamation 2526** (see Online/Media Sources below)

Printed copies of the **Online/Media Sources** and **Specific Reading Material** listed below.

#### TEACHER PREPARATION:

Prepare copies of the **Topic Background Summary.**

Prepare copies of **Online/Media Sources** and **Specific Reading Material.**

Prepare copies of **Article I., Section 9, Paragraph 2,** and the **Fourteenth Amendment** to the U.S. Constitution. (See Lesson Plan Three)

Prepare copies of **Presidential Proclamation 2526.** (see Online/Media Sources section below)

Familiarize yourself with the "Karl Vogt Story" (see "Real People" section of [www.gaic.info](http://www.gaic.info) and <http://misplacedamerican.blogspot.com/>)

Familiarize yourself with Erich Braemer's story (see articles on <http://misplacedamerican.blogspot.com/> and a segment in the "Karl Vogt Story" [www.gaic.info](http://www.gaic.info))

Familiarize yourself with Lesson Plan One, Topic Background Summary

Familiarize yourself with the general internment information at [www.gaic.info](http://www.gaic.info)

Familiarize yourself with the story of the Doolittle Raiders. (See Online/Media and Specific Reading Material sections below) Take note of the fact that Fred Braemer was the bombardier on Jimmy Doolittle's lead airplane.

Prepare a list of questions for each group to answer about each of the two internees:

For Karl Vogt:

- 1) Why was he on the Christmas train?
- 2) Who was Jenny Gelber and how does she fit into this story?
- 3) Were Karl's constitutional and/or human rights violated by the U.S. How?
- 4) Also answer question 3 for Elsie, Armin and Ursula Vogt.
- 5) How did *Presidential Proclamation 2526* impact this family?

For Erich Braemer

- 1) Why was he on the Christmas Train?
- 2) How did *Presidential Proclamation 2526* impact this man and his family?
- 3) Why do you think Erich was paroled soon after he arrived at Ft. Lincoln?
- 4) Who was Jimmy Doolittle and how does he fit into this story?
- 5) Were Erich's constitutional and/or human rights violated by the U.S.? How?

## PERIOD ONE--CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

For the teacher and students:

Introduce and discuss the concepts of *constitutional* and *human rights* with emphasis on the terms *due process*, *discovery*, and *writ of habeas corpus*.

Introduce and discuss parts of the U.S. Constitution pertaining to the above terms--particularly **Article I, Section 9, Paragraph 2**, and the **Fourteenth Amendment**.

For the teacher:

Distribute **Topic Background Summary** and read aloud.

Distribute list of **Online/Media Sources** and **Specific Reading Material**.

Divide the class into two groups: the Braemer Group, and the Vogt Group.

Instruct the two groups that their task is to find out as much as they can about the man they have been assigned to investigate.

Assign each group a leader/facilitator.

Explain to the class that their major sources in their research will be the **Online/Media Sources**, information from the **Specific Reading Material**, and whatever published documents they can discover. Explain to the class that as homework each group will work as individuals or in small teams within their group to gather information needed to answer the questions about either Karl Vogt or Erich Braemer.

Have each group meet for the remainder of the period. Instruct the group leader/facilitator to assign areas of research responsibility for each person in the group.

Explain that each individual is to bring whatever information he or she collects to class tomorrow.

Student homework

Students from the two groups will work individually, or perhaps in pairs, to gather information from the **Online/Media Sources** or **Specific Reading Material** on Karl Vogt or Erich Braemer. They should be encouraged to dig deeper into the stories of Vogt and Braemer to gather whatever information they can beyond the specific assigned questions.

## PERIOD TWO--CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES:

### For the teacher

Quickly instruct each group to meet for the purpose of compiling the information that has been individually collected. The group leader should be instructed to facilitate this process by writing the answers to the list of questions assigned each group. The facilitator should also list whatever additional information has been researched and collected.

### For the students, first half of period

The students meet to compile their information.

### For the students, second half of the period

The two group leaders/facilitators present their findings on Erich Braemer and Karl Vogt respectively to the rest of the class.

### For the teacher

Suggestions for ending this unit:

Hold a class vote on the most interesting piece of information turned up during the research.

Have each group vote on the most intrepid researcher. Then have the whole class vote on the most intrepid researcher overall. Perhaps an award of some kind could be given for this.

Have each class member write an essay on whether she/he has gleaned **new information** for herself/himself regarding how people may be treated by the government and society in this country during times of national crisis. If none of what was discovered by the class is new information for a student, ask him/her to explain why it is not. Ask each to end the essay with an assessment of whether or not her/his research skills have improved because of the original assignment.

## KEY TERMS/CONCEPTS FOR THIS LESSON PLAN

(See Lesson Plan One for a glossary of general terms and concepts)

**Constitutional Rights:** The rights of a citizen of any country, granted to him by the fundamental set of laws incorporated in the country's constitution.

**Human Rights:** Freedom from arbitrary interference or restrictions by governments. The term largely encompasses the same rights called **civil liberties** or **civil rights**, but often suggests rights that have not been recognized.

**Due Process:** The principle that an individual cannot be deprived of life, liberty, or property without appropriate legal procedures and safeguards.

**Discovery:** Part of the pre-trial litigation process during which each party requests relevant information and documents from the other side in an attempt to “discover” pertinent facts

**Writ of Habeas Corpus:** A writ of habeas corpus is a judicial mandate to a prison official ordering that an prisoner be brought to the court so it can be determined whether or not that person is imprisoned lawfully and whether or not he should be released from custody.

#### SPECIFIC READING MATERIAL FOR THIS LESSON PLAN:

(See Lesson Plan One for a comprehensive reading list on the World War II Enemy Alien Control Program.)

“Real People” stories from [www.gaic.info](http://www.gaic.info): “The Karl Vogt Story”.

Articles about Eric Braemer and Karl Vogt from:  
<http://misplacedamerican.blogspot.com/> (a personal blog by Ursula Vogt Potter)

Internment Camp summaries from [www.gaic.info](http://www.gaic.info), especially regarding Ft. Lincoln, Bismarck, ND (See [http://www.gaic.info/internment\\_camp.html](http://www.gaic.info/internment_camp.html))

The U.S. Constitution---specifically Article 1, Section 9, Paragraph 2 and the Fourteenth Amendment

Christgau, John: *Enemies: World War II Alien Internment*, Iowa State University Press, 1985; iUniverse.com, 2001 (reprint)

Fox, Stephen, *Fear Itself: Inside the FBI Roundup of German Americans during World War II*, ( iUniverse, Inc., 2005)

Glines, Carrol V., *The Doolittle Raid*, Schiffer Publishing:1991

Jacobs, Arthur D: *A Prison Called Hohenasperg: An American Boy Betrayed by his Government During World War II*, UPublish.com: 1999

Krammer, Arnold: *Undue Process: The Untold Story of America’s German Alien Internees*, Rowman & Littlefield, New York: 1997

Potter, Ursula Vogt: *The Misplaced American*, Authorhouse: 2002

#### ONLINE/MEDIA RESOURCES FOR THIS LESSON PLAN:

(See Lesson Plan One for a comprehensive list of Online/Media Sources)

The Alien Enemy Act: Title 50, Section 21, USC: Followed by Presidential Proclamations 2525, 2526, 2527. The Act can be found in Lesson Plan One. The Act and Orders and be found at: <http://www.gaic.info/history.html> under Related Laws

Information on the “Doolittle Raiders.” [www.DoolittleRaid.com](http://www.DoolittleRaid.com)

Information about Eric Braemer and Karl Vogt from:  
<http://misplacedamerican.blogspot.com/> (a personal blog by Ursula Vogt Potter)

German American Internee Coalition: [www.gaic.info](http://www.gaic.info). This organization and its Web site present detailed information and case histories on the German, German American, and German Latin American chapter of the Alien Enemy Control Program, including background and pictures on many internment camps. This Web site has links to other enemy alien online sources.

TRACES: [www.traces.org](http://www.traces.org). Traces is an educational organization and history museum in St. Paul, Minnesota that focuses in part on the Alien Enemy Control Program. Its Buseum-2 has traveled throughout the Midwest and has been viewed by tens of thousands of guests. The Buseum-2 presents a rolling exhibit of enemy alien case histories and background. This Web site has links to other Enemy Alien online sources.

[www.johnchristgau.com/enemies.html](http://www.johnchristgau.com/enemies.html). This is the Web site of John Christgau, author of *Enemies: World War II Alien Internment*. This Web site has links to other online sources.

[www.fear-itself.com](http://www.fear-itself.com). This is the Web site of Stephen Fox, author of *Fear Itself: Inside the FBI roundup of German Americans during World War II*. This Web site has links to other online sources.

Jonathan Potter: academic reference librarian-- [jdp@scn.org](mailto:jdp@scn.org) (general information)

Karen Ebel, Esq.: [kebel@yahoo.com](mailto:kebel@yahoo.com) (general information)

John Christgau: [jchristgau@aol.com](mailto:jchristgau@aol.com) (author-expert on Ft. Lincoln)

Professor Stephen Fox: [mckeasy@mac.com](mailto:mckeasy@mac.com) (author-WWII historian)

Heidi Donald: [donald@cruzio.com](mailto:donald@cruzio.com) (general information)

Clara Wetherby: [CBWetherby@aol.com](mailto:CBWetherby@aol.com) (information about Erich Braemer)

Ursula Potter: [upotter@charter.net](mailto:upotter@charter.net) (information about Karl Vogt and Erich Braemer)

Students should also be encouraged to “Google” terms like “Internment,” “World War II Internment,” “Alien Enemy,” “Enemy Aliens,” and other related terms that will provide resource leads.