

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

LESSON PLAN FIFTEEN: “*ZIP: A One-Act Play*”

APPROPRIATE GRADES/COURSES: 8-14, U.S. History; Civics, American Government, Political Science, Drama

TOPIC BACKGROUND SUMMARY:

(See Lesson Plan One for a general overview of the WWII Enemy Alien Control Program. What follows is a summary of the program as it applied to the German American community.)

German Americans constitute the largest ethnic group in the U.S. Approximately sixty million Americans claim German ancestry. During World War II, the U.S. government and many Americans viewed ethnic Germans and others of "enemy ancestry" as potentially dangerous, particularly recent immigrants. The government used many methods to control those of enemy ancestry, including registration, travel restrictions, relocation, property seizure, detention, internment, and deportation. Families were disrupted, reputations destroyed, homes and belongings lost.

Pursuant to the Alien Enemy Act of 1798 (50 USC, 21-24), which remains in effect today, the U.S. may apprehend, intern and otherwise restrict the freedom of “alien enemies” upon declaration of war or actual, attempted or threatened invasion by a foreign nation. During World War II, the U.S. government detained and interned at least 11,000 persons of German ancestry. By law, only "enemy aliens" could be interned. However, with governmental approval, their family members frequently joined them in the camps. Many such “voluntarily” interned spouses and children were American citizens. Internment was frequently based upon hearsay evidence gathered by the FBI and other intelligence agencies. Homes were raided and many ransacked. Fathers, and occasionally mothers, were arrested and disappeared. Children left behind after the arrests had to fend for themselves, and some were placed in orphanages.

Those who were arrested were considered “detainees,” and they were held in custody for weeks in temporary detention centers, such as jails and hospitals, prior to hearings to determine their fate. Frequently, their families had no idea where they were being held.

After their arrest and detention, the enemy aliens were given a brief hearing before an Enemy Alien Hearing Board, not as a right guaranteed under the provisions of the Alien Enemies Act, but as a gesture of what the government considered “fairness.” But the enemy aliens could not have attorneys, they could not know or see the evidence against them, they could not challenge their accusers, they could not call evidentiary witnesses on their behalf.

Hearing Board recommendations were forwarded to the Justice Department's Alien Enemy Control Unit (AECU) for a final determination that often took weeks or months. On the basis of the brief hearings, approximately half of the enemy aliens who went before Hearing Boards were sentenced to permanent internment. For those sentenced to internment, there was no right of appeal and they were shipped off to distant camps. One of those camps was in the desert outside Crystal City, Texas.

ZIP is a one-act play which tells the true story of Eberhard "Zip" Fuhr, a seventeen-year-old, baseball-loving high school student from the German American community in Cincinnati, who was arrested by the FBI as an enemy alien in 1943. Eberhard "Zip" Fuhr spent nearly five years in internment. His story reflects the injustices and the family havoc which characterized the German, Italian, and Japanese detention/internment experience.

ESTIMATED TIME OF COMPLETION OF LESSON PLAN:

Flexible: The presentation of ZIP will take one period. But as part of the unit of study for Alien Enemy Control Program issues, teachers may elect to devote from one-to-three periods to in-class reading of the scripts included in the Curriculum Package. The other one-act plays are entitled THE WHITE LINE (see Lesson Plan Sixteen) and THE MASTER TAILOR'S WIFE (see Lesson Plan Seventeen). Each script takes approximately twenty-five to thirty-five minutes to read.

Instead of focusing on a single play, teachers may also elect to break the class into three groups and have each group responsible for presenting a reading of one play to the rest of the class. This approach, involving some in-class rehearsal time, followed by presentations of all three plays and then discussion, might involve two-to-three periods of class time.

The scripts are to be considered primarily educational material. They are not copyrighted nor otherwise restricted regarding public performances. The scripts are available at no fee to any school drama department, as well as amateur and professional theater companies.

STUDENT OBJECTIVES:

Review and understand the various amendments of the Constitution covering issues of due process.

Be able to discuss the presence or absence of those provisions of the Constitution in the case of Eberhard "Zip" Fuhr.

Understand the various provisions of the WWII Alien Enemy Control Program, especially provisions for a hearing before a panel of citizens from the region of the enemy alien.

Understand how national security measures collide with issues of due process and human rights during times of war.

Understand the constitutional issues underlying the Alien Enemy Control

Program.

Understand and appreciate how World War II affected ethnic Germans in the United States.

Understand life in the camps and what that experience did to families.

MATERIALS:

Printed copies of the text of the play **ZIP**, dramatizing the case of Eberhard “Zip” Fuhr, a German American internee. The script is included at the end of this disk, under the file “Zip: A One Act Play.” No royalty or copyright payments are necessary for readings, stagings, or theater productions of **ZIP**. A class reading will take approximately twenty-five minutes.

Printed copies of the **Topic Background Summary**

Printed hand-outs defining **Key Terms/Concepts** (see Lesson Plan One)

Printed copies of the **Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Fourteenth Amendments** (see Lesson Plan Three or Four)

Printed copies of the **Alien Enemies Act** (see Lesson Plan One)

Printed copies of the **Specific Reading Material/Sources** for this Lesson Plan (see below)

TEACHER PREPARATION:

The script for ZIP is written as “Reader’s Theater.” In Reader’s Theater, the scripts are mostly read, not acted, and the staging is minimal. Reader’s Theater scripts lend themselves perfectly to classroom reading. For those teachers who choose to present ZIP outside the classroom, the script calls for minimal staging--a desk, two chairs, an American flag on a standard.

ZIP calls for six readers. A seventh reader can be added by assigning a student to read the stage directions. Readers for all parts can be either male or female. For full class involvement, teachers are encouraged to change readers during the course of the play.

PERIOD ONE: CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES:

For the teacher:

Distribute photocopied materials

For the Teacher and students:

Assign/select parts for class reading of ZIP

For the students: last half of period

Read ZIP

Homework

Choice of subjects:

Pretend you are Zip's attorney, defending him before an Alien Enemy Hearing Board. Write a one-page speech presenting your arguments *against* interning him.

Pretend you are the FBI agent prosecuting Zip before an Alien Enemy Hearing Board. Write a one page speech presenting your arguments *for* interning him.

KEY TERMS/CONCEPTS:

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

SPECIFIC READING MATERIAL/SOURCES FOR THIS LESSON PLAN:

For students interested in learning more about the Eberhard "Zip" Fuhr story, they may go to the following resources:

"The Eberhard Fuhr Story," available online at: www.gaic.info/real_people

"My Internment by the U.S. Government" by Eberhard Fuhr, available online at: www.foitimes.com/internment/Fuhr

"My Internment by the U.S. Government," available online at: www.traces.org/timeline.aftermath.html.fuhr

[Department of Justice Detention Facility and Internment Camp pictures and histories at http://www.gaic.info/internment_camp.html, especially Crystal City](http://www.gaic.info/internment_camp.html)

TSHA Online: "A Digital Gateway to Texas History" available online at: www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/article

"Life in Crystal City Internment Camp, Texas," available online at: www.scu.edu/SCU/Programs/Diversity/crystal.html

[Sites of Shame, a review of internment and WRA camps at www.densho.org](http://www.densho.org)

Students interested in learning more about Ernie Lombardi may go to the following resources:

www.baseballhalloffame.org/ernielombardi

www.baseballlibrary.com

<http://oaklandoaks.tripod.com/lombardi>

"Here In America: The Assembly on Wartime Relocation & Internment of Civilians." This DVD provides a succinct overview of the AWRIC event and the witnesses who testified at the Assembly, including scholars and witnesses from the German community. A complimentary copy of the DVD is included in the Enemy Alien Curriculum Package. For more information and to order additional copies of the DVD or the accompanying report, contact the national Japanese American Historical Society, 415-921-5007, njahs@njahs.org. Running time of the CD is approximately fourteen minutes.