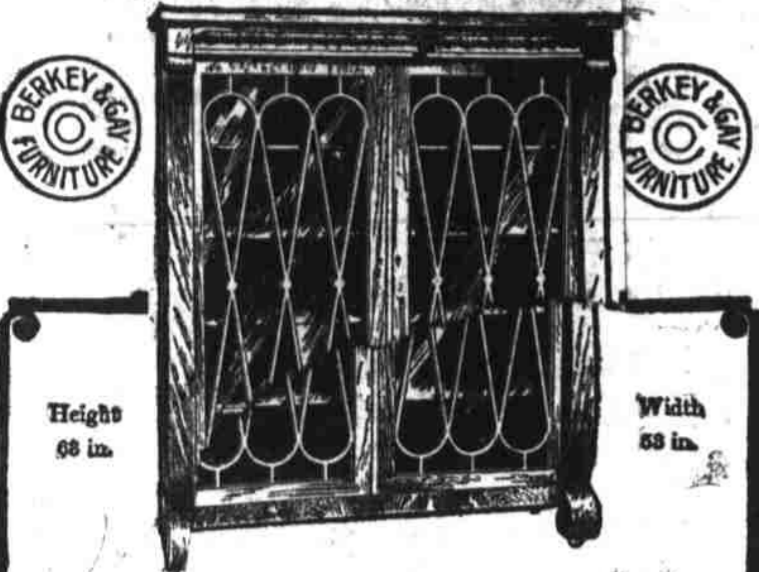


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BARBED WIRE REPLACES "WELCOME" SIGN AT HOT SPRINGS HOTEL

A DAY WITH THE INTERNED GERMANS.

White Flag of Immigrant Service Floats Over Hotel That Was Went to Welcome Many Guests During the Season—How Interned Germans Pass Time.

(By Donald Gillis.) At Hot Springs, 38 miles west of Asheville via the Southern railway, where the French Broad emerges from its mountain walls with crashing waters to broaden into a wide, hundred-acre shaded lawn and rolling upland surrounding a large four-story hotel flies the white flag and symbolic lettering, "U. S. T. S." indicating that it is a United States immigrant station.

A month ago the hotel was conducted by J. E. Rumbough, and it was open to all comers, now it is the property of the United States and the guests are exclusively Germans—500 officers and 100 members of the crews of ships caught in American ports by the beginning of the war in 1914.

Then invisible signs spelled "Welcome"; now a four-foot high wire netting topped by a strand of barbed wire surrounds the property and is patrolled by khaki-clad men armed with pistols and badged as "watchmen." These visible, animate "signs" mean "Verboten" to those inside, and the translation in unmistakable North Carolina language to those outside is "Keep Out."

To Bar Curious. Fence and guards are not so much to keep in the Germans as to keep out curious Americans. Why should these Germans wish to see how their compatriots are dying in misery or living in torture in France they are living in ease in a fine hotel where other guests have been paying \$4 a day and "up" to \$10 a day for tennis courts, natural hot baths, delightful climate and superb scenery.

They pay no bills; no dusky-handed pirates hold them up for tips. The French Broad lulls them to slumber with its sounds of the sea. And, if any German should think of running away there are certain reasons to suggest a change of mind. These are lanky hunters from the mountains who pause at the fence to stare unwinking at the foreigners, their faces showing neither enmity nor friendship.

The German mind comprehends that once in the mountains stout German legs cannot match the long, loping stride that travels far and fast; there is nothing in sea craft or official directions that tell how to counter these persons with their following of erect-tailed yellow hounds whose melody comes down at times from the hills to them. There is a well defined no-trespassing line that these persons are somehow different from town-raised Belgians.

These Germans were brought to Hot Springs from Ellis Island and other immigrant stations where they had been kept since the United States entered the war. They are officially designated as "detained immigrants," aliens who had not chosen to acquire residence in this country before the beginning of hostilities, and who are not now eligible to do so. Under President Wilson's proclamation they are also "alien enemies" and can be so treated if occasion requires.

No Trouble. But no such occasion has arisen. "What will you do in case of any breach of discipline?" he asked. "I was asked by a Citizen representative of Director of Internment Alfred Hampton. 'We have not come to that bridge,' he replied. The Germans make absolutely no trouble; they strictly obey the few rules imposed on them by the American officials. But if occasion should arise? One need not be a student of physiology to read firmness and decision in the faces of Mr. Hampton, Thomas V. Kirk, inspector in immediate charge, and Supervising Inspector F. F. Berkshire. They are courteous and considerate, but always there is the iron hand in the velvet glove.

The rules are few. At 9 a. m. daily the government charges answer roll call, and there is a daily fire drill. Then they are strictly no-trespassing in the grounds until 11 o'clock at night when taps sound. They generally keep busy, working when they work, playing when they play, loafing but little. One of the most distinguished by a pair of trousers seemingly several sizes too large for him, who was seen hunting for a four-leafed clover, searched as diligently as if seeking a lost diamond.

Classes have been organized by the chief officers, and daily instruction is given to petty officers and common seamen in mathematics, navigation and languages. "In three years nearly every one of these men will have the technical education necessary to command a ship," said an American official. Squads run through a system of military "setting up" exercises daily.

Work For Government. Some of the German work for the government, 50 ship carpenters being engaged in the construction of additional barracks on the grounds on whose completion a thousand more Germans will be brought to Hot Springs. Others are working as common laborers, and others as mechanics. The station officials decline to give the names of the workers, but it runs from \$20 to \$30 a month, it is learned from other sources.

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water and sewer, and is accessible. To house the expected thousand who are coming seven barracks, duplicates of army cantonments, are building besides a kitchen to finish the barracks is 20 by 163 feet in size, up-and-down board sides, double floored, with composition roof, and bunk along the walls. The mess hall will be 18 by 74 feet, the kitchen in the middle. The barrack bath house will be behind its cantonment, its size 14 by 50 feet, equipped with showers, and expected of lumber will be required for these constructions and this is now being delivered by the Laurel River Lumber company at the rate of two cars a day. The plumbing contract was given the Union Plumbing company of Asheville. Army men said the buildings could not be completed before March, but Director Hampton, the assistant commissioner of Internment and who was designated by Secretary of Labor W. B. Wilson as director of internment and who will be at the station until the station is complete, hopes to finish the work in two months. He is desirous of giving contracts locally wherever possible, and suggests that Asheville supply houses keep in touch with the work.

The station hospital is located in the "Hampton cottage," that which was built and occupied many years ago by General Wade Hampton, the noted Confederate general who later was governor of South Carolina and U. S. senator, the father of Director Hampton. It is in charge of Dr. Brown of the U. S. Public Health Service whose address to the Southern Sociological congress attracted much attention. Last week there were nine patients in the hospital. One, who was sick when he came to the station, died Tuesday.

Hot Springs people seem to be well pleased to have the station there. The feature which most appeals to them is the concert which the band of fifty pieces gives each Thursday and Sunday afternoons. On July fourth many people came from the surrounding country to hear the band play, and when it did not were much incensed. It was intended to show disrespect to the American holiday. It is stated however that the band would have played if it had known music was expected.

Everyone in the station seems to be serious. So far as can be seen the Germans are contented, but there is an absence of joking and laughing. Among so many Americans, even if confined in a foreign land, one imagines there would be some merriment, some display of humor, but these are lacking in the Hot Springs station. "Are these men satisfied with their treatment?" was asked of a naturalized German who had talked with some of the members of German officers' families. "Oh, yes," said he. "And they are glad to be here instead of being in France." Emphatic was his answer. "No, ninety-nine out of a hundred of these men would be in the war if they could get there."

But there is some humor at the fence. Some persons who have not informed themselves of conditions regard the station as a government-maintained curiosity, a sort of menagerie of two-headed, three-legged foreigners. One of them came to a

guard station, a youth wearing an imitation cow-boy sombrero and a suit of clothes that accentuated an extreme tailor's design. "Say," he announced, "Where is he, I want to see him." The imperturbable guard demanded, "See who?" "The head man, the big mutt," responded the youth. "That's the man I want to see." The guard, considering, asked, "What you want to see him about?" to which reply was made, "I want to go through and see what's here. I want to see

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"Remember, boy, that behind officers and government, and people even, there is the Country Herself—your Country—and that you belong to her as you belong to your own mother.

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everything; don't want to miss none." The guard pointed to another station. "You ask them two men they which is the big mutt," said he, and turned a wink on the bystanders. "That fellow must be a general or something," remarked one. In a few minutes the "general or something" was seen hastening from the "big mutt" station toward the suburbs of Hot Springs, doubtless embittered toward both the United States and Germany.

Delicate Matters. The handling of these aliens is regarded by the United States government in a somewhat delicate matter. It wishes to treat them considerately, but avoid "spilling" them. Matters are now running smoothly, and it is for fear of possible interruption that the officials wish to keep the station closed and eliminate visitors. It has been proposed that soldiers be installed as guards, but this is regarded as unnecessary and expensive. The aliens are now on the "honor system" practically. Rules are few and unobtrusive. The Germans have a system of regulations for their own officers and common seamen, and these, for example, the regulation against smoking in the writing room is their rule.

But, on the other hand the authorities do wish to be in the actual of keeping these public enemies in luxurious idleness while Americans may be stinted for food, and they are irritated at reports which place them in this attitude before the people. "These men do not live like princes," said an official. "They are quartered in a hotel meant to house officers and make no mistake. They are housed in rooms or bunks in the halls. It is not true that the government allows \$1 a day for their food and they provide their own commissaries."

The government provides all the food of the kind these men have been accustomed to, and it is cooked by German chefs in a kitchen, which reports, former cooks of big liners, naturally the meals are appetizing. The food cost to the government is not over fifty cents a day per man, and for the "luxuries" we furnish see for yourself.

"Verboten," On Door. A "Verboten" sign was on the door of the spotless kitchen, a ponderous chest with bushy whiskers looked like Admiral Von Tirpitz in a cook's cap. On the range was an enormous pan of cabbage, in a small receptacle were turnips, in another potatoes, there was a pan of roast beef, two kettles of soup, and on a steamer a pan of beans. "They like stews and soups," said the official. All the bread is rye.

The dining room was no less clean. The tables were plain boards and stationary. The crockery was plain, and very thick. Distinctly German officers and men are observed here, the ordinary seamen and waiters eating first.

Before the Germans can be put to work the station must first be ready for them to do and at present there is not enough work to "go round." They can be put to work, said an official, and it is hoped to have many of them employed on the highway to Tennessee when work on it starts.