

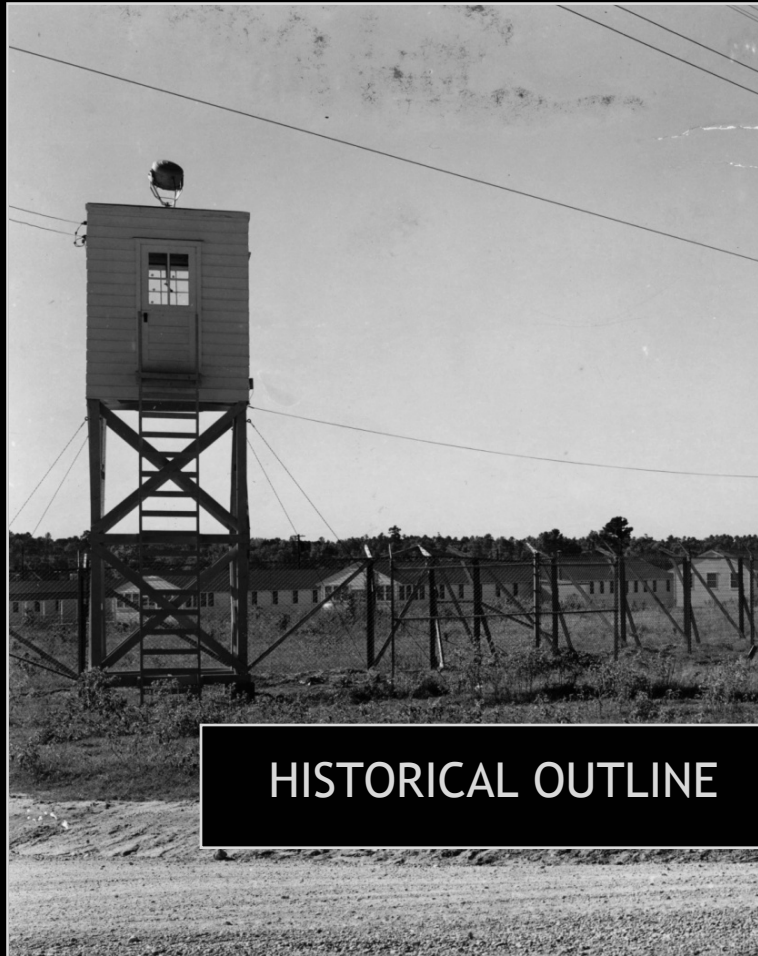


Camp Huntsville: The First World War II POW Camp in Texas

Dr. Jeff Littlejohn, Sam Houston State University



Camp Huntsville: The First World War II POW Camp in Texas



HISTORICAL OUTLINE

Origins and Construction



Prisoners and their Activities



German Re-education



Japanese Re-education



Deactivation: Country Campus





Camp Huntsville: The First World War II POW Camp in Texas

Origins and Construction

Beginning of World War II – September 1939

Pearl Harbor Attacked – 7 December 1941

POWs in British custody skyrocketed – early 1942

British pressured State Department to take prisoners



German prisoners captured during the Battle of Libya marching to a POW camp, June 1942



Camp Huntsville: The First World War II POW Camp in Texas

Origins and Construction

US Provost Marshal General called for two 3,000-man POW camps at Huntsville and Roswell New Mexico – 18 January 1942

Studies for five POW sites made – 20 February 1942

Huntsville judged most favorable (cheap land; prison)

PMG ordered camp construction – 18 March 1942



German soldier surrenders to two Allied soldiers near Bardia, Libya, November 1942



Camp Huntsville: The First World War II POW Camp in Texas

Origins and Construction

Camp located eight miles from Huntsville near Trinity River

837 acres purchased via eminent domain

Construction began in the summer of 1942

Lieutenant Colonel Harry E. Fisher named camp commander

Captain George Leslie Smith quartermaster of camp

Construction completed early September

Camp open house for local residents – September 18, 1942





Camp Huntsville: The First World War II POW Camp in Texas

Origins and Construction

The camp included over 400 buildings

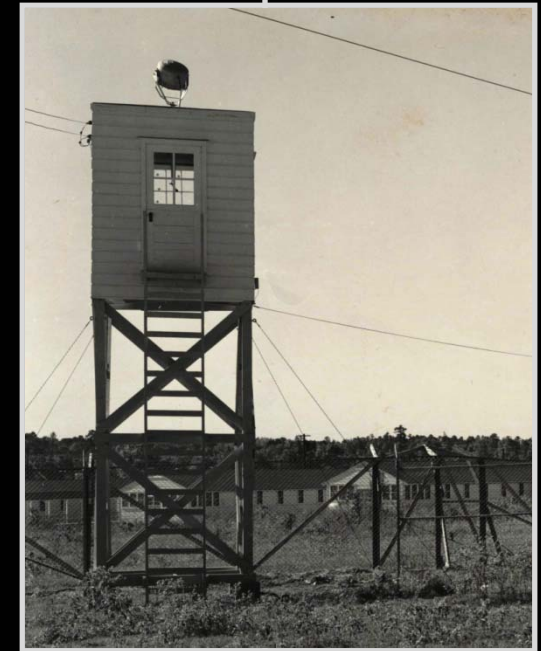
Four deep water wells, sewage system, & large incinerator

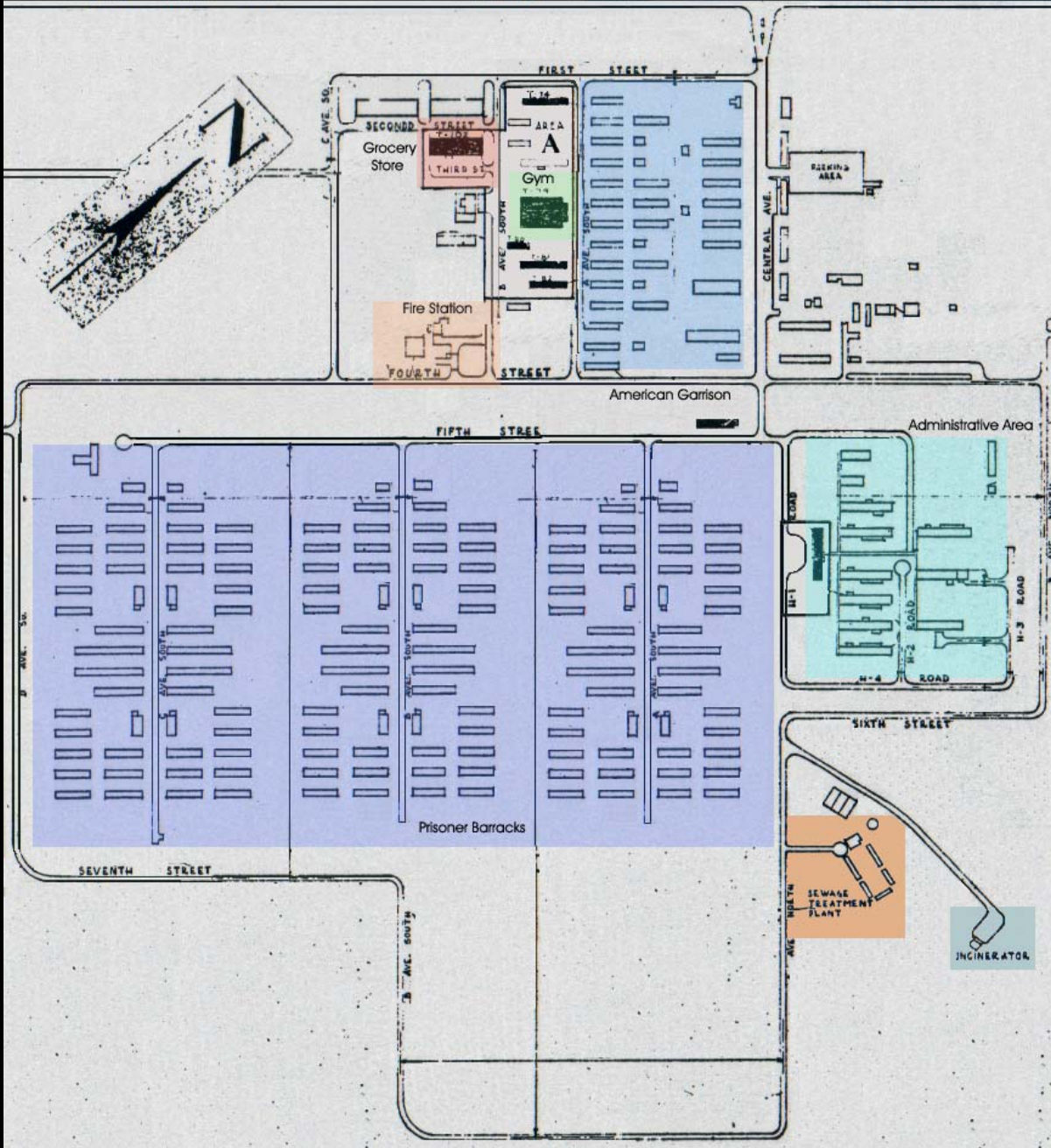
POWs divided into companies of 250 men each.

Each company had 6 barracks for living quarters, 1 each for showers, mess hall, recreation, US personnel.

Canteen and one infirmary for each 4 companies.

American personnel: laundry, bakery, barber shop, post exchange, commissary, cafeteria, officer's mess hall, officers' club, gymnasium, guardhouse, fire station, hospital







U. S. ENGINEER OFFICE

WAR DEPARTMENT

GALVESTON, TEXAS

HUNTSVILLE ALIEN ENEMY INTERNMENT CAMP - HUNTSVILLE, TEXAS

Looking S.W. at Compound #1 from 5th St. & H.I. Road

July 9, 1942

Fretz Construction Co.

Contract No. W-359-eng-4273

May 12, 1942

Photo No. 26



Image of Compound 1 Site Today – May 2008



U. S. ENGINEER OFFICE

WAR DEPARTMENT

GALVESTON, TEXAS

ALIEN ENEMY INTERNMENT CAMP - HUNTSVILLE, TEXAS

Sewage Disposal Plant - Looking Southeast
Fretz Construction Co.

Contract No. W-359-eng-4273

Aug. 19, 1942
May 12, 1942 Photo No. 37



U. S. ENGINEER OFFICE

WAR DEPARTMENT

GALVESTON, TEXAS

ALIEN ENEMY INTERNMENT CAMP - HUNTSVILLE, TEXAS

Incinerator - Looking Northeast
Fretz Construction Co.

Contract No. W-359-eng-4273

Oct. 6, 1942
May 12, 1942 Photo No. 41



U. S. ENGINEER OFFICE

WAR DEPARTMENT

GALVESTON, TEXAS

ALIEN ENEMY INTERNMENT CAMP - HUNTSVILLE, TEXAS

Sentry Towers, Floodlighting & Fencing - Looking Southwest

Oct. 6, 1942

Fretz Construction Co.

Contract No. W-359-eng-4273

May 12, 1942

Photo No. 42



Camp Huntsville: The First World War II POW Camp in Texas

Prisoners and their Activities

US began military action in North Africa in May 1942.

Between 1942-43, US and Allies battle Afrika Korps

POWs from Afrika Korps arrived in Huntsville in spring 1943

By October 1943, 4,840 prisoners at Camp Huntsville

Other camps in development as well

Sept 1942, PMG called for camps to hold 50,000 POWs

Huntsville became one of 70 camps in Texas





Temporary Holding Camp for German and Italian prisoners, including men from the *Afrika Korps*, after the Allies' takeover of Tunisia in May 1943.



Camp Huntsville: The First World War II POW Camp in Texas

Prisoners and their Activities





Camp Huntsville: The First World War II POW Camp in Texas

Prisoners and their Activities

Federal and local law allowed prisoners to work in area fields

150 lbs daily = \$1.50 maximum pay

Collectively averaged 80 bails/day

Approximately 60% of Walker County's wartime crop saved

Accounts from many locals remember POWs with fondness

German descendants wrote to Walker County in thanks

Camp reunions held across Texas





“With shovels instead of guns, they leave the stockade en route to trucks, which will take them to area farms,” *New York Times*, 15 June 1943



“Under the watchful eye of armed guards, the German POWs chop Texas cotton,” *New York Times*, 15 June 1943



Camp Huntsville: World War II POWS in East Texas

Prisoners and their Activities

In addition to agricultural work, POWs had ample free time.

POWs participated in orchestral and choral groups.

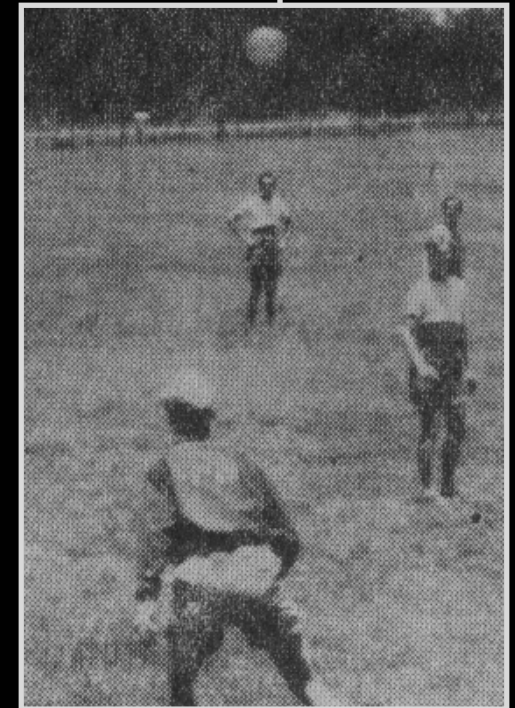
Played soccer and learned horseshoes and baseball.

Built furniture and other woodworking projects.

They spent time sunbathing daily.

Prepared German meals under supervision.

POWs allowed to buy one 3.2% beer every two days.





“Soccer is a favorite sport of the Huntsville Camp’s internees. Most of the prisoners are athletic, and inter-compound track meets, held at night under floodlights, are hotly contested,” *Houston Post*, 20 June 1943



“This prisoner is working on one of the sets for a play entitled ‘We’re Traveling Through Germany.’ It is only make believe. Travel is verboten for the duration ,” *Houston Post*, 20 June 1943



Camp Huntsville: World War II POWS in East Texas

German Re-education

Re-education program considered but dropped – March 1943

Major issue: Geneva Convention prohibited indoctrination

Nazi terror campaign in camps caused outrage – Early 1944

Dorothy Thompson met Eleanor Roosevelt

Maj Maxwell McKnight – Chief, Admin Section POW Operations

War Dept overcame Geneva obstacle by way of a loophole, which stated that POWs needed physical and mental outlets





Camp Huntsville: World War II POWS in East Texas

German Re-education

The re-education program is launched – Summer 1944

Lt. Col. Edward Davison directed the Special Projects Division of the Intellectual Diversion Program – Oct 1944

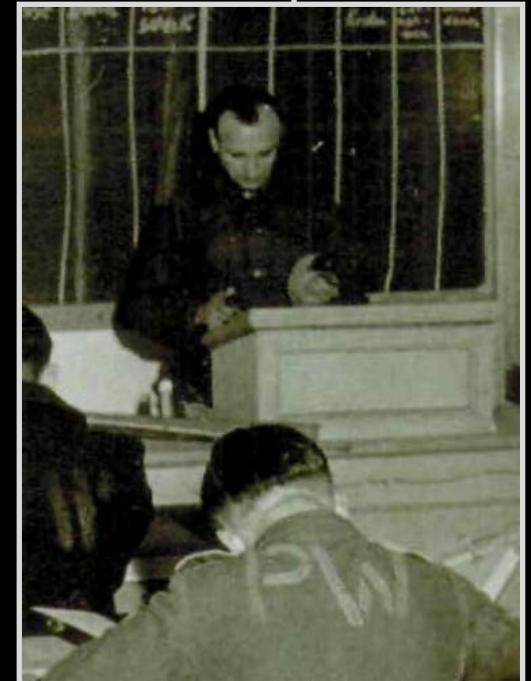
The IDP was also known as “The Idea Factory”

Consisted of eighty-five dedicated anti-Nazi POWs

They enjoyed relative freedom in their operations

Responsible for almost 380,000 German POWs

At the camp level Assistant Executive Officers- AEO





Camp Huntsville: World War II POWS in East Texas

German Re-education

“The Idea Factory’s” program included several operations

Produced *Der Ruf* (The Call) – March 1945 - April 1946

Edited camp newspapers and other media for camps

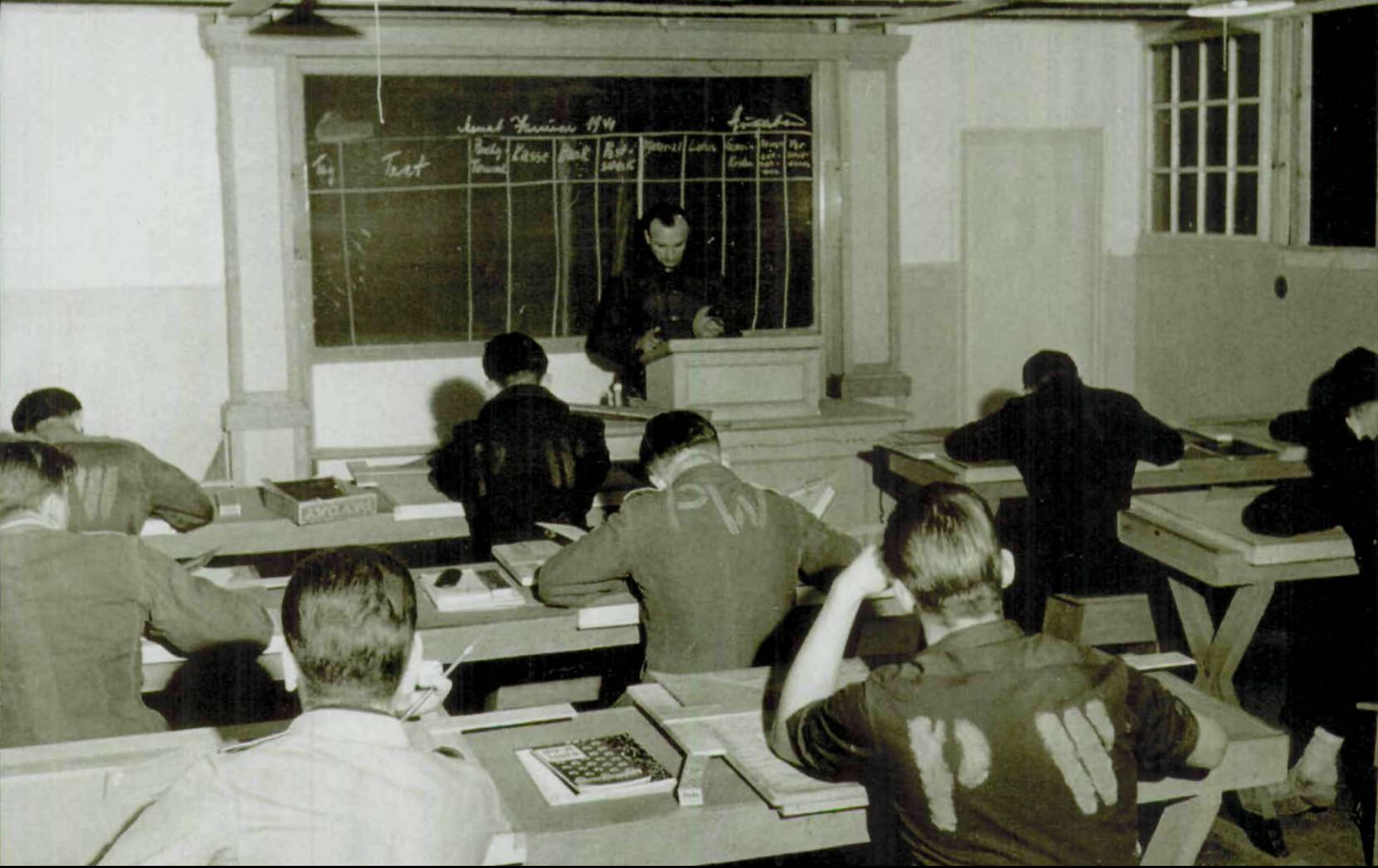
Approved and distributed films, news stories, and media for POWs

Oversaw courses in American History and democracy

Distributed music and literature by Jewish and African Americans

Encouraged theater performances by and for the prisoners





American History courses were taught at many POW camps (National Archives)



Prisoner attendance was required at films showing Nazi atrocities (National Archives)



DAS WACHSTUM DER DEMOKRATIE IM FRÜHEN AMERIKA

THE GROWTH OF DEMOCRACY IN EARLY AMERICA



Religionsfreiheit



Erziehung =
möglichkeiten



Eigenregierung

1

1620
MAYFLOWER
PAKT

Zur Erhaltung gleicher Rechte
und gerechter Gesetze



2

1643
NEU ENGLAND
STAATENBUND

Zum Gegenseitigen
Beistand



3

1754
ALBANY PLAN
EINER UNION

Grundsteinlegung
zur Verfassung



4

1774
CONTINENTAL
CONGRESS

Vorläufer der
Unabhängigkeitserklärung



5

1775
PATRICK
HENRY

Gebt mir die
Freiheit
oder den Tod



6

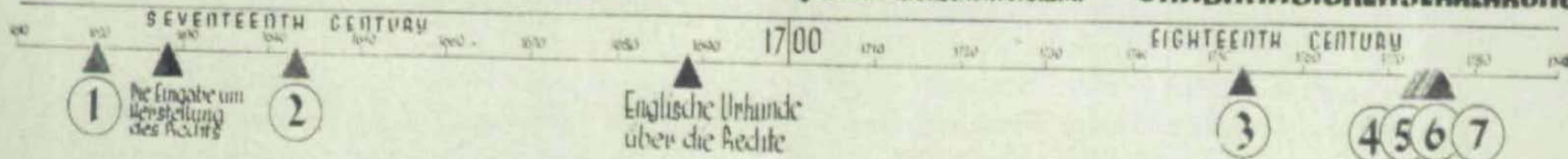
1776
THOMAS PAINE

Der
Sinn der
Menschenverstand



7

1776
UNABHÄNGIGKEITSERKLÄRUNG





Camp Huntsville: World War II POWs in East Texas

German Re-education

Captain Alton Brady -- AEO for Camp Huntsville

Staff Sergeant Henry W. Wilken assisted Brady

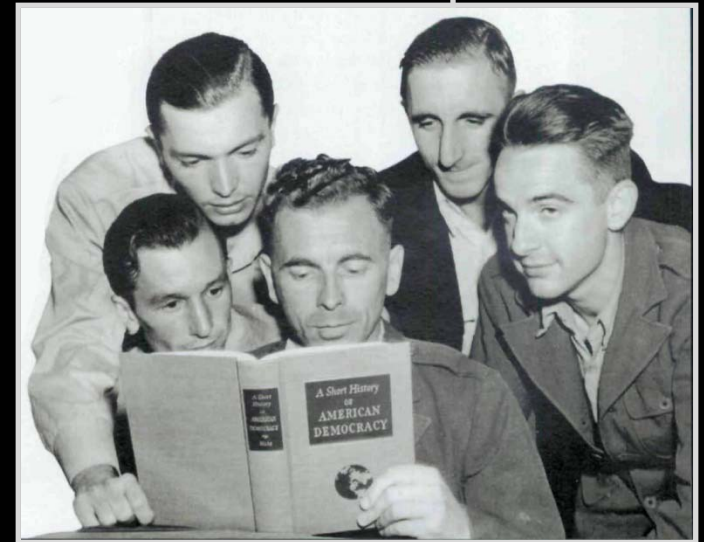
Camp Huntsville's newspaper *Die Fanfare*

Each compound had its own library

Camp Orchestras

Movies in Camp Huntsville- one 16-mm projector

Extensive education program





Camp Huntsville: World War II POWS in East Texas

German Re-education

VE Day- May 7, 1945

War Department revealed re-education – 28 May 1945

Kearney Experiment Begins with fall of Germany

Similar to earlier program

Trained administrative and law-enforcement personnel
in democratic values for positions in post-war Germany

The Kearney Experiment ends- April 5, 1946





Camp Huntsville: World War II POWS in East Texas

German Re-education

Nazi militants opposed the Factory's publications, until the militants were transferred by the AEOs

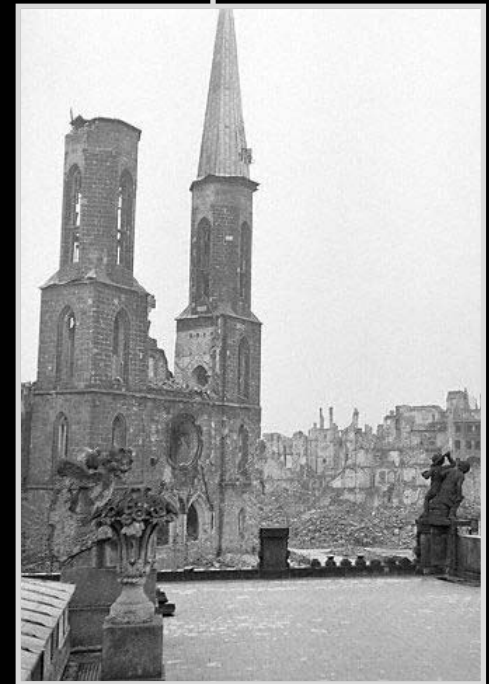
Rapid change in the discourse and feelings of the camps

Thousands of POWs introduced to American democracy

Thousands of Germans trained to work in post war Germany

The arrogance question -- American government and military

The hard work and dedication of 85 POWs led to re-education





Camp Huntsville: World War II POWS in East Texas

Japanese Re-education

Huntsville was the only camp for Japanese re-education

Japanese smallest number of Axis POWs in America

5,000 Japanese incarcerated, most at Camp McCoy

March 1945, talks began about Japanese program

John Emerson (State Dept) and C.W. Hepner (War Info)

April 1945, plan stressed limited and careful selection

July 1945, PMG established program for Japanese





Camp Huntsville: World War II POWS in East Texas

Japanese Re-education

Col. Boude C. Moore appointed to oversee the project

Huntsville selected, Boude appointed camp commander

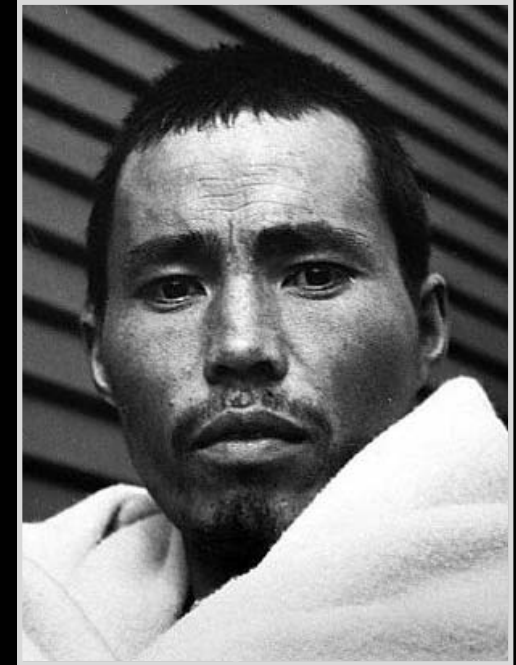
During summer 1945, all 5000 Japanese prisoners screened

First POWs arrived at Huntsville on 5 October 1945

Limited to 200 prisoners after decision to repatriate others

Director of Education, Research, Translation, and Evaluation

Organized lectures and assignments





Camp Huntsville: World War II POWS in East Texas

Japanese Re-education

Lectures by SHSTC professors

“The Necessity of a Free Mind in Search of the Truth”

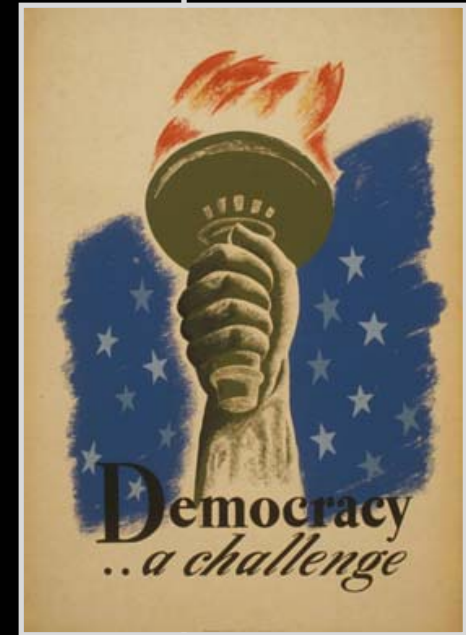
“Contrasts: Pseudo-Freedom in Japan and Real Freedom in US”

“The Main Points of the Declaration of Independence”

“The Objective of Military Government in Japan”

“Fundamental Rights of Man as Set Forth in the Bill of Rights”

Program Discontinued on 15 December 1945 – all repatriated





Camp Huntsville: World War II POWS in East Texas

Deactivation: Country Campus

Camp Huntsville decommissioned in early 1946.

SHSTC President Harmon Lowman obtained land and facilities for use by the college in 1946

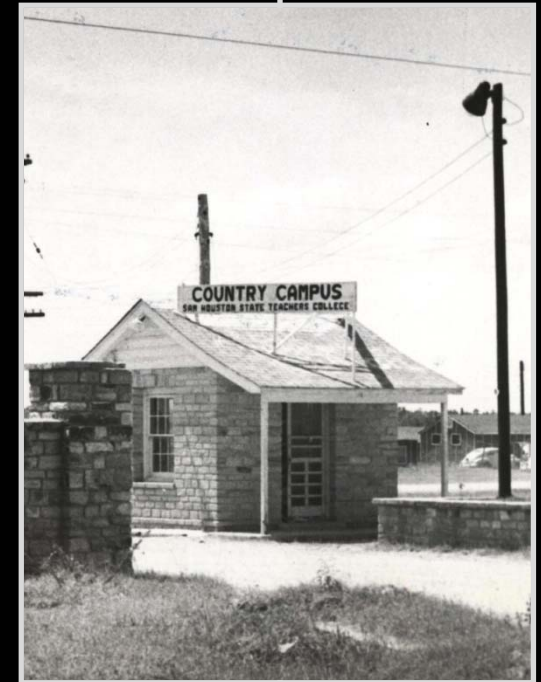
Country Campus: house and educate returning veterans

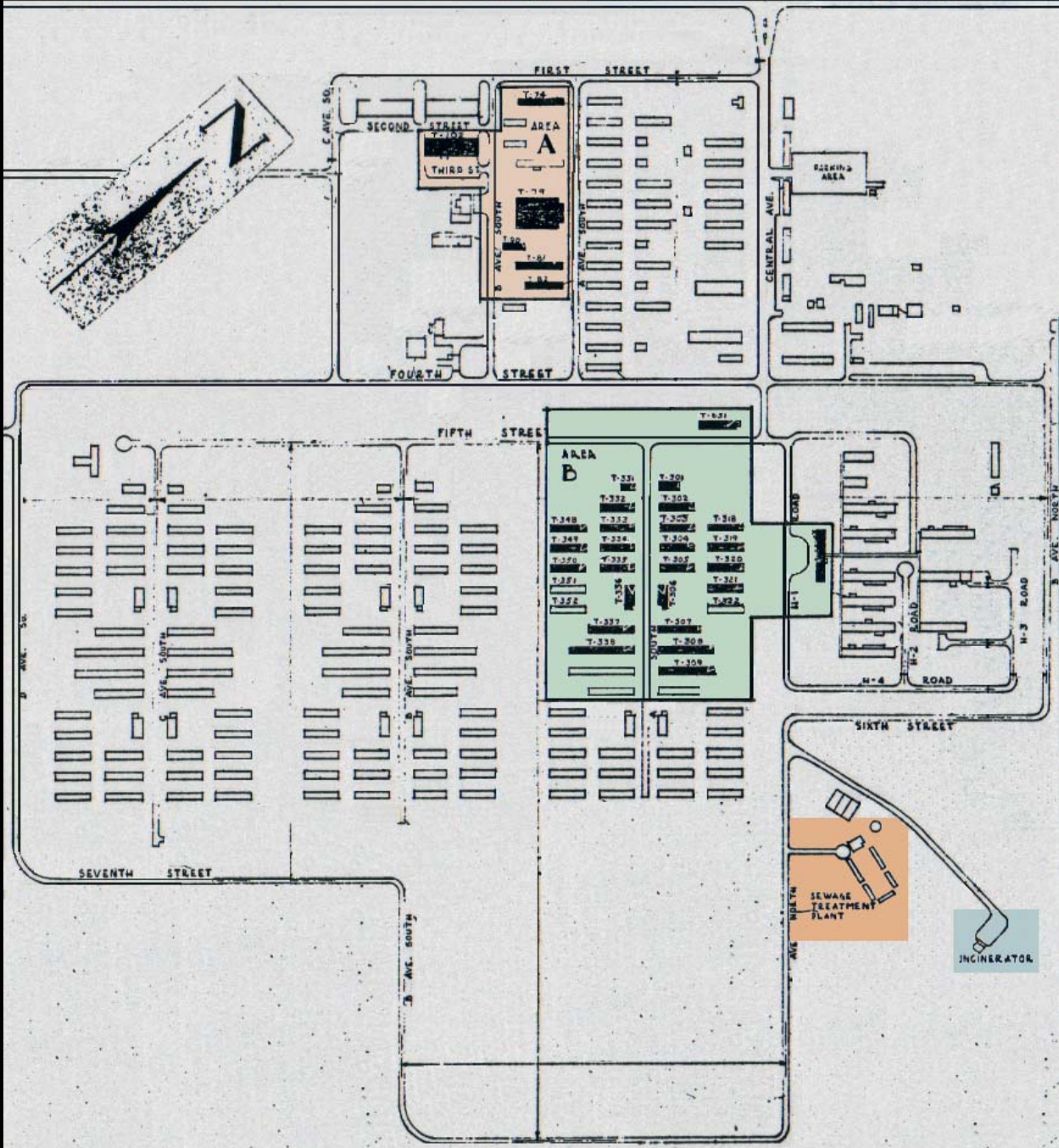
Barracks became apartments, classrooms, and offices.

Bus service established to main campus in Huntsville.

Country Campus discontinued in early 1960s

Now houses a nine hole golf course and an Observatory





AREA A

Streets: FIRST STREET, SECOND STREET, THIRD ST, FOURTH STREET, C AVE. SO., D AVE. SOUTH, E AVE. SOUTH, F AVE. SOUTH, G AVE. SOUTH, H AVE. SOUTH, I AVE. SOUTH, J AVE. SOUTH, K AVE. SOUTH, L AVE. SOUTH, M AVE. SOUTH, N AVE. SOUTH, O AVE. SOUTH, P AVE. SOUTH, Q AVE. SOUTH, R AVE. SOUTH, S AVE. SOUTH, T AVE. SOUTH, U AVE. SOUTH, V AVE. SOUTH, W AVE. SOUTH, X AVE. SOUTH, Y AVE. SOUTH, Z AVE. SOUTH.

Lot numbers: T-74, T-75, T-76, T-77, T-78, T-79, T-80, T-81, T-82, T-83, T-84, T-85, T-86, T-87, T-88, T-89, T-90, T-91, T-92, T-93, T-94, T-95, T-96, T-97, T-98, T-99, T-100.

AREA B

Streets: FIFTH STREET, SIXTH STREET, SEVENTH STREET, C AVE. SO., D AVE. SOUTH, E AVE. SOUTH, F AVE. SOUTH, G AVE. SOUTH, H AVE. SOUTH, I AVE. SOUTH, J AVE. SOUTH, K AVE. SOUTH, L AVE. SOUTH, M AVE. SOUTH, N AVE. SOUTH, O AVE. SOUTH, P AVE. SOUTH, Q AVE. SOUTH, R AVE. SOUTH, S AVE. SOUTH, T AVE. SOUTH, U AVE. SOUTH, V AVE. SOUTH, W AVE. SOUTH, X AVE. SOUTH, Y AVE. SOUTH, Z AVE. SOUTH.

Lot numbers: T-221, T-222, T-223, T-224, T-225, T-226, T-227, T-228, T-229, T-230, T-231, T-232, T-233, T-234, T-235, T-236, T-237, T-238, T-239, T-240, T-241, T-242, T-243, T-244, T-245, T-246, T-247, T-248, T-249, T-250, T-251, T-252, T-253, T-254, T-255, T-256, T-257, T-258, T-259, T-260, T-261, T-262, T-263, T-264, T-265, T-266, T-267, T-268, T-269, T-270, T-271, T-272, T-273, T-274, T-275, T-276, T-277, T-278, T-279, T-280, T-281, T-282, T-283, T-284, T-285, T-286, T-287, T-288, T-289, T-290, T-291, T-292, T-293, T-294, T-295, T-296, T-297, T-298, T-299, T-300, T-301, T-302, T-303, T-304, T-305, T-306, T-307, T-308, T-309, T-310, T-311, T-312, T-313, T-314, T-315, T-316, T-317, T-318, T-319, T-320, T-321, T-322, T-323, T-324, T-325, T-326, T-327, T-328, T-329, T-330, T-331, T-332, T-333, T-334, T-335, T-336, T-337, T-338, T-339, T-340, T-341, T-342, T-343, T-344, T-345, T-346, T-347, T-348, T-349, T-350, T-351, T-352, T-353, T-354, T-355, T-356, T-357, T-358, T-359, T-360, T-361, T-362, T-363, T-364, T-365, T-366, T-367, T-368, T-369, T-370, T-371, T-372, T-373, T-374, T-375, T-376, T-377, T-378, T-379, T-380, T-381, T-382, T-383, T-384, T-385, T-386, T-387, T-388, T-389, T-390, T-391, T-392, T-393, T-394, T-395, T-396, T-397, T-398, T-399, T-400.

SEWERAGE SYSTEM

Streets: FIFTH STREET, SIXTH STREET, SEVENTH STREET, C AVE. SO., D AVE. SOUTH, E AVE. SOUTH, F AVE. SOUTH, G AVE. SOUTH, H AVE. SOUTH, I AVE. SOUTH, J AVE. SOUTH, K AVE. SOUTH, L AVE. SOUTH, M AVE. SOUTH, N AVE. SOUTH, O AVE. SOUTH, P AVE. SOUTH, Q AVE. SOUTH, R AVE. SOUTH, S AVE. SOUTH, T AVE. SOUTH, U AVE. SOUTH, V AVE. SOUTH, W AVE. SOUTH, X AVE. SOUTH, Y AVE. SOUTH, Z AVE. SOUTH.

Manholes: M-1, M-2, M-3, M-4.

SEWERAGE TREATMENT PLANT

INCINERATOR

HUNTSVILLE

STATE HIGHWAY 45

TRINITY

SUN SETS HERE

THE COUNTRY CAMPUS
 IS A COMMUNITY OF 1100 PEOPLE AFFILIATED WITH SAM HOUSTON STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE OF HUNTSVILLE TEX.
 OTHER THAN SCHOOL HOURS THE RESIDENTS OF THE COUNTRY CAMPUS ENJOY MANY RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES.

PICNIC GROUNDS

GROCERY STORE
 MEAT PACKING COOL STORAGE
 EMERGENCY WATER SUPPLY
 OLD SWIMMING HOLE
 FIRE STA.

LAUNDRY
 HOME MAINTAINANCE
 GYM
 STUDENT HOMES

MORE HOMES

PREY'S HOUSE
 STUDENT & FACULTY HOMES
 NURSERY
 AREA FOR OUTDOOR GATHERINGS
 MRS. LINDSAY'S OFFICE
 EXTRA
 MAGAZINES
 WELCOME
 MR. LINDSAY'S OFFICE
 DANCE FLOOR

DEAN'S GARDEN
 FACULTY HOMES
 GARDEN PLOTS
 BUS STOP

GRAZING AND WOODED AREA

PARKING AREA
 TIN SHOP
 HEAVY EQUIPMENT SHOP
 WOOD SHOPS
 SHOP
 BUS YARD
 RIDING STABLE
 BRIDLE PATH

DAIRY AREA
 STUDENT HOMES

POST OFFICE
 HOME ECO. LABS
 MOVIE
 LIBRARY

PHYSICS
 ENGLISH
 KNOWLEDGE
 CHEMISTRY
 HISTORY
 HILL
 AGRICULTURE
 SOCIOLOGY
 BIOLOGY
 EDUCATION
 STUDENT HOMES

PHYSICAL EDUCATION GROUNDS

DEAN ADAMS
 DEAN'S GARDEN
 BUS STOP
 CLUB HOUSE
 FISHERY FINE
 GOLF COURSE
 PARKING

COUNTRY CAMPUS, TEX.





Entrance to Country Campus, ca. 1950



Lowman Hall at Country Campus, ca. 1950



Student Union at Country Campus, ca. 1950