

Left Behind and Forgotten: The History of German-Canadian Families and Internment
During the Second World War

by

Zachariah Code

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies in partial
fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of History

Joint Master's Program

University of Manitoba/University of Winnipeg

Winnipeg, Manitoba

Abstract

This thesis presents three case studies of German-Canadian families affected by internment policies under the Defence of Canada Regulations (DOCR) during the Second World War. The primary aim of this research is to identify and interpret the narratives of the wives and children of German-Canadian internees, whose experiences have thus far been neglected in the historiography. The central research question of this work asks: What were the experiences of German-Canadian wives and children while their husbands were confined to remote internment camps? Drawing on previously unexamined letter collections and the business correspondence from the Office of the Custodian of Enemy Alien Property, this study offers a more nuanced understanding of how internment policies shaped the lives of internee family members beyond the physical confines of the camps. It also provides a clear account of how these policies were developed and introduces the government offices responsible for their implementation. At its core, this thesis defines the experiences of individuals who were not confined within physical camps but whose lives were nevertheless profoundly shaped by the same policies, a condition conceptualized here as *domestic internment*. Ultimately, the study demonstrates that internment policies directed at able-bodied men had significant consequences for their families, particularly for wives. Overall, it contributes a more comprehensive account of the experiences of German-Canadian families during the Second World War.

Acknowledgements

It certainly has been a journey to this point, and it would be remiss not to acknowledge those who have assisted in shaping this thesis. I first wish to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to my advisor, Dr. Alexander Freund, who has been development of this research. I especially grateful for his patience during our meetings and in responding to my long, often rambling emails. Without his enduring wisdom and strong connection to the German-Canadian community this thesis would not have come to fruition.

I also need to thank Dr. Ryan Eyford, Dr. Cedric Bolz, Dr. Lauren Faulkner Rossi, and Dr. Jeremy Brown for their support and guidance during my move from British Columbia to Manitoba. I am grateful as well to the members of my defense committee—Dr. Len Kuffert, Dr. Aileen Friesen, and Dr. Katharina Maier—for your time and critical analysis of my work, which helped sharpen some of the weaker spots in the narrative.

To the few that read a chapter of this thesis—Madison Herget-Schmidt, Cara Ginter, and Jayson Gislason—I am truly gratefully for your insightful feedback and or offering new perspectives that I might otherwise have overlooked. I also wish to acknowledge Lucile Chaput, Dr. Barbara Lorenzkowski, Dr. Bill Keel, Dr. Lothar Zimmermann, Dr. Michael O'Hagan, Dr. Jean-Michel Turcotte, Oli Cosgrove, and Betty Sveinson for their meaningful conversations and correspondence, which contributed to the development of this research.

Special thanks are due to the staff in the History Department—Sylvie Winslow, Katy Hunt, and Jennifer Cheslock—who routinely checked in on my progress as I worked in the lounge or in one of the offices of the Fletcher Argue Building.

I would also like to acknowledge that this research was supported by the Canada Graduate Scholarship-Master's program (CGS M) from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), as well as by various scholarships from the Winnipeg Foundation.

Finally, I offer my deepest gratitude to Laura Code and Michael Code. My parents have been a guiding light and stoic supporters in all the decisions I have made to this point. I would not be the historian I am today without them.

And of course, any errors of fact and judgment are my responsibility alone.

Table of Contents

Abstract	0
Acknowledgements:	0
Introduction:	1
Chapter 1: The Schneider Family.....	23
Chapter 2: The Martin Family.....	44
Chapter 3: The Holtmann Family.....	63
Conclusion:	84
Bibliography:	93

Introduction

After the Second World War, Graham Thompson, a retired officer of the Fort Henry Internment Camp in Ontario, recounted an anecdotal story involving an internee in an interview with author John Melady. Thompson recalled that the unnamed German civilian internee spoke at length to guards and fellow prisoners about letters he had received from his wife. The letters described dire conditions at home: the children were ill, and, with no income, government relief appeared to be the family's only option. Unexpectedly, the internee's wife arrived at the camp on a cold winter day. Thompson described her as "terribly worn out" and looked as though she had walked the entire three-mile distance from Kingston, Ontario, to the internment camp. She collapsed at the camp gate in tears and was carried inside. The reunion was highly emotional, marked by hugging, crying, and praying, which earned the unnamed internee considerable sympathy from others in the camp. Eventually, civilian internees were transferred out of Fort Henry; however, this unnamed internee was released. It was only then, that Thompson had learned the man was in fact a Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) officer who had been operating undercover to report on the internees within the camp. Thompson suggested that wife had been introduced to elicit sympathy from other internees who were experiencing similar hardships.¹ The accuracy of this story can never be fully verified, particularly given that the Fort Henry Internment Camp only housed civilian internees from September to October 1939. Nevertheless, the account raises an important question: to what extent does this narrative reflect the genuine hardships endured by the families of German-Canadian internees?

This thesis examines the physical, mental, and financial hardships experienced by the families of German-Canadian internees during the Second World War. It argues that wives of

¹ John Melady, *Escape From Canada! The Untold Story of German POWs in Canada 1939-1945*, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1981), 31-32.

internees endured life-altering hardships because of the sudden removal and internment of their husband. This study develops three case studies of German-Canadian families in Manitoba by drawing on three letter collections and the business correspondence from the Office of the Custodian of Enemy Alien Property. The research demonstrates that the forced removal of the familial patriarch fundamentally altered both the daily life and social structure of the families left behind. In all three case studies, the family's matriarch assumed responsibility for the economic and physical burdens associated with managing both the family business and the household. This shift imposed significant physical, mental, and financial strain on women who had to fundamentally adapt their lives to facing such burdens alone or run the risk of falling into destitution. The final case study further argues that, in some instances, the women left behind experienced greater hardship outside the physical confines of the internment camp than their husbands did while held as internees. By analyzing the correspondence of these three families, this thesis develops the term *domestic internment* to describe what wives and children had to endure as a secondary consequence of internment policies targeted solely at the husbands.

This research examines three German-Canadian families—the Schneiders, Martins, and Holtmanns—who were affected by the internment of the husband while the wife and children were left behind to fend for themselves. These families were selected primarily because of the accessibility and volume of their letter collections in public archives. The research underpinning this thesis primarily examines both personal and business correspondence, an approach that is relatively novel in Canadian internment historiography. Historian Sonia Cancian has described personal letter collections as:

documents recorded in the moment, or as events had just occurred, or were about to occur, they were written strictly to meet personal and familial needs. [...] Moreover, unlike census data and personal narratives of public figures, these documents were not

intended for analysis or for public use. [...] They mirror the individual writers' interior psychological and emotional spaces and their views of the outside world.²

This immediacy is especially valuable for understanding the hardships experienced in real time, whereas postwar summaries—even extensive interviews—often lack comparable detail. While other accounts of German-Canadians were identified during this research, the consistency of the correspondence and the active roles of the women in these families provide the foundation for this analysis. Another factor in the selection process was the apparent innocence of the internees; none of the three men highlight in this thesis were interned due to direct connections with Nazi-aligned groups. Notably, it is coincidental that all three families originated from Manitoba. The Schneiders' narrative captures a family's response to the sudden removal of the patriarch and the government's clear lack of support from the outset of internment. The Martin family correspondence illustrates how the husband's internment directly undermined the financial stability of the family. Finally, the Holtmann family narrative demonstrates that, in some cases, the women left behind endured greater hardships outside the physical confines of an internment camp than her husband experienced within it.

For the sake of terminological clarity, this thesis defines “German” as German-speaking immigrants and their descendants who acknowledge German cultural roots, regardless of geographic origin or degree of linguistic assimilation.³ The term “German-Canadian,” by contrast, traditionally refers to individuals who possess or possessed Canadian citizenship and maintain a distinct connection to Germanic heritage. However, this thesis expands the definition of “German-Canadian” to include individuals of German heritage who identified themselves as either Canadian or recognized Canada as their primary nation of residence, regardless of formal

² Sonia Cancian, *Families, Lovers, and their Letters*, (University of Manitoba Press, 2000), 9-10.

³ Gerhard P. Bassler, *The German Canadian Mosaic Today and Yesterday: Identities, Roots and Heritage*, (Ottawa: German-Canadian Congress, 1991), 1.

citizenship status. With respect to internment, this thesis defines an “internee” as any non-combatant civilian, a definition that aligns with prevailing historiographical conventions.⁴ Continually to these conventions, the title of “prisoner of war” (POW) is therefore reserved exclusively for combatant prisoners captured by Allied forces in theatres of war.⁵ The concept of “domestic internment,” which is novel to the historiography and established in this thesis, helps define and distinguish individuals who were not forcibly removed or uprooted by internment policies but whose lives were nonetheless restricted and altered by those same wartime laws. Lastly, within immigration historiography, the grouping of women and children under the term “dependents” has been critiqued for reinforcing stereotypical narratives that diminish their agency in comparison to their male “breadwinner” counterparts.⁶ This thesis does not seek to perpetuate such stereotypes.

The history of Germans in Canada is a long and complex narrative, yet many historians, such as Arthur Grenke and Gerhard P. Bassler, have acknowledged that German-Canadians have received little recognition in broader narratives of Canadian history. When considering European influences on Canada’s development as a nation, Germans are often regarded as an

⁴ Canadian government officially classified civilian internees as “Prisoners of War, Class 2,” while military combatants were designated “Prisoners of War, Class 1.” This classification was employed as a bureaucratic mechanism to distinguish civilian internees from combat POWs in the context of the 1929 Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War. Although these distinctions were employed by the Department of National Defence (DND), in practice the term POW was widely used to refer to all internees. This imprecision caused confusion among civilian internees, many of whom wrote to government authorities seeking clarification. Such inquiries, in turn, prompted a defensive response from the DND regarding the two-class system. Hubert Stethem to District Officer Commanding (Colonel Hugh de Norban Watson), 31 May 1940, (copy gifted to author from a family member of an internee), Department of National Defence Fonds, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Canada; Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, Committee on Emergency Legislation, *Defence of Canada Regulations*, (Ottawa: J. O. Patenaude, I.S.O., 1939), 33; John Stanton, “Government Internment Policy, 1939-1945,” *Labour / Le Travail* 31, (Spring, 1993): 211, 224.

⁵ For more on the general POW experience in Canada, see Nathan M. Greenfield, *Hanged in Medicine Hat: Murders in a Nazi Prisoner-of-War Camp, and the Disturbing True Story of Canada’s Last Mass Execution*, (Toronto: Sutherland House Books, 2022); Martin F. Auger, *Prisoners of the Home Front: German Pows and "Enemy Aliens" in Southern Quebec, 1940-46*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005); and David J. Carter, *Pow, Behind Canadian Barbed Wire: Alien, Refugee and Prisoner of War Camps in Canada, 1914-1946*, (Elkwater, Alta.: Eagle Butte Press, 1998).

⁶ Annie Phizacklea, ed., *One Way Ticket: Migration and Female Labour*, (United Kingdom: Routledge, 1983), 5-6.

underexamined ethnic group in comparison to the English and the French.⁷ Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many Germans migrated to Canada to escape religious persecution and displacement caused by European conflicts. Between 1817 and 1914, an estimated 80,000 Germans immigrated to Canada, with major railway centres in the Canadian Prairies—such as Winnipeg, Regina, and Calgary—attracting a considerable number of these immigrants.⁸ Although generally perceived as a quiet and industrious community, public attitudes toward Germans in Canada began to shift toward suspicion and hostility with the outbreak of the First World War. Both Bassler and Grenke note that rampant anti-German propaganda and the sinking of the civilian passenger liner *Lusitania* in May 1915 were catalysts for widespread unrest and rumors of subversive activity.⁹ The Canadian government gradually implemented the internment of enemy aliens following the passage of the War Measures Act on 4 August 1914; however, mass internment did not occur until 1915. Twenty-three internment camps operated across Canada and held a total of 8,579 enemy aliens, of whom 2,009 were classified as German.¹⁰ Meanwhile, approximately 80,000 additional individuals were required to register as enemy aliens, carry identity papers, and report regularly to the local authorities. In comparison with Second World War internment, one feature that remained unique to the First

⁷ For more on the general German-Canadian experience in Canada, see Gerhard P. Bassler, *Nation Builders and Enemy Aliens: Four Centuries of German Experience in Canada*, (Manitoba: FriesenPress, 2021); Jonathan F. Wagner, *A History of Migration from Germany to Canada, 1850-1939*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005); and Rudolf Anton Helling and Bernd Hamm, *A Socio-Economic History of German-Canadians, They, Too, Founded Canada: A Research Report*, (F. Wiesbaden, Germany: Steiner Verlag, 1984).

⁸ Arthur Grenke, *German Canadians: Community Formation, Transformation and Contribution to Canadian Life*, (Indianapolis: Trafford Publishing, 2018), 36, 39.

⁹ Bassler, *The German Canadian Mosaic Today and Yesterday: Identities, Roots and Heritage*, 61; Grenke, *German Canadians: Community Formation, Transformation and Contribution to Canadian Life*, 70.

¹⁰ For more on First World War internment in Canada, see Mary Chaktsiris, “Identifying the Enemy in First World War Canada: The Historiography and Bureaucracy of Enemy Alien Internment and Registration,” *Canadian Military History* 28, No. 2 (2019): 1-31; Bohdan S. Kordan, *No Free Man: Canada, the Great War, and the Enemy Alien Experience*, (Montreal; McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2016); and Bill Waiser, *Park Prisoners: The Untold Story of Western Canada’s National Parks, 1915-1946*, (Saskatoon: Fifth House Pub., 1999).

World War was Canada's approach to the families of those interned. A report from the Department of National Defence (DND) summarized the actions taken during the war:

Many of the prisoners had wives and families dependent upon them for support, consequently when the bread winners were interned their women and children had to be cared for. This was accomplished in two ways, either by allowing families to remain at their former homes and issuing to them a monthly sum for rent, food and fuel, in which manner 40 women and 81 children were cared for, or by permitting them to accompany the men to the internment station and there providing for them. The number looked after by the latter mode was as already intimated 81 women and 156 children, for whom the necessary additional accommodation was only available at the Spirit Lake and Vernon camps.¹¹

However, the Director of Internment Operations Major-General Sir William Otter also expressed the opinion in private letters that women “[were] as a rule even more disloyal than the husbands.”¹² Although the internment of enemy aliens during the First World War was considered fairly successful in practice, the Canadian government decided to adopt a much more limited approach the second time around.

Due to the First World War, the relatively open prewar immigration requirements for Germans coming to Canada were swiftly tightened and eventually barred altogether. During the 1920s, while the United States of America was the favorable option for emigrating Germans—due to American industrialization and wider economic opportunities—Canada emerged as a natural second choice. On 7 April 1923, the Canadian enemy-alien restrictions from the First World War were lifted, but Germany remained classified as a “non-preferred” country for accepting immigrants. The restrictions on German emigrants were fully removed on 8 January 1927, at which point their classification changed to “preferred.”¹³ Many of the German

¹¹ William D. Otter, *Internment Operations, 1914-1920*, (Ottawa: Thomas Mulvey, 1921), 6-7.

¹² Kordan, *No Free Man: Canada, the Great War, and the Enemy Alien Experience*, 253.

¹³ Grant W. Grams, *Coming Home to the Third Reich: Return Migration of German Nationals from the United States and Canada, 1933-1941*, (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Incorporated Publishers, 2021), 27-29.

immigrants during the 1920s and 1930s sought to escape the economic turmoil in Germany caused by the end of the First World War and Treaty of Versailles, which was only further exacerbated by Great Depression.

It was same economic chaos, social insecurity, and pervasive political uncertainty that allowed the growth of National Socialist German Workers' (Nazi) Party in the late 1920s and 1930s. However, unlike in Germany—or even in Britain—Nazi-oriented organizations in Canada remained little more than extremist radical groups rather than organized political movements. For example, Adrien Arcand, leader of the National Unity Party of Canada, attempted to construct an organization similar to the Nazi Party which was modeled on the British Union of Fascists under Oswald Mosley, but the group never gained widespread support outside of Québec. The *Deutscher Bund* Canada (The German Canadian Bund) adopted a softer approach to promoting political change while pursuing a similar goal of spreading Nazi cultural ideology in Canada. Founded in Waterloo in 1934, the Bund promoted a mythology that it “came into being to unify Germans from coast to coast.” It primarily attracted new German immigrants and German-Canadians experiencing economic hardship by offering several benefits to members.¹⁴

Meanwhile, the RCMP had begun monitoring German-Canadian political activities as early as 1931, which was then intensified by Hitler's ascension to power in 1933.¹⁵ The Department of External Affairs officially became involved in the matter in 1936, when Undersecretary O. D. Skelton appointed his trusted deputy, Norman Robertson, as departmental

¹⁴ For more on *Deutscher Bund* and radical fascist groups in Canada, see Hugues Théorêt, *The Blue Shirts: Adrien Arcand and Fascist Anti-Semitism in Canada*, translated by Howard Scott and Ferdinanda van Gennip, (Ottawa, Ontario: University of Ottawa Press, 2017); and Jonathan F. Wagner, *Brothers Beyond the Sea: National Socialism in Canada*, (Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2012).

¹⁵ Gregory S. Kealey, *Spying on Canadians: The Royal Canadian Mounted Police Security Service and the Origins of the Long Cold War*, (University of Toronto Press, 2017), 195.

representative to the RCMP “to discuss a number of questions arising out of the activities of Fascist and Nazi agencies in Canada.”¹⁶ These departments began raising the alarm that it might be necessary to devise a plan in case internment was once again required. Complacency was finally shattered on 12–13 March 1938, when Nazi Germany annexed Austria (*Anschluss*).

On 14 March 1938, an Order-in-Council (P.C. 531) established the Committee on the Treatment of Aliens and Alien Property and the Committee on Emergency Legislation. The latter was tasked with determining and drafting necessary wartime legislation.¹⁷ On 21 July 1938, the first meeting of the Committee on the Treatment of Aliens and Alien Property was held, chaired by Under Secretary of State Ephriam Herbert Coleman and included representation from every major Canadian government department. The first meeting produced an interim report outlining suggested preparations for internment in the event of war, whether against an Asiatic or European aggressor. These suggestions were later implemented as part of the alien internment regulations in the revised Defence of Canada Regulations (DOCR) of 1939.¹⁸ The committee’s recommendations were informed by assessments of both Canadian and British reports on internment operations during the First World War. One report, prepared by the DND, drew on top-secret documents from a British subcommittee established in 1920 to examine “the question

¹⁶ Robertson is appointed the Under Secretary of State for External Affairs in 1941, after (Oscar Douglas) Skelton’s sudden death. J. L. Granatstein, *A Man of Influence: Norman A. Robertson and Canadian Statecraft 1929-68*, (Ottawa: Deneau Publishers, 1981).

¹⁷ W. Stuart Edwards (Deputy Minister of Justice) to E. H. Coleman, 7 April 1938, File HQLEG-6-140516-7, File part 1, Box 8, RG13, A-2024-10084, Department of Justice Fonds, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Canada. Digital ID number: 4495454; Daniel Robinson, “‘Planning for the ‘Most Serious Contingency’: Alien Internment, Arbitrary Detention, and the Canadian State 1938–39,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 28, No. 2, (1993): 5–20.

¹⁸ “First Interim Report,” 21 July 1938, File HQLEG-6-140516-7, File Part 1, Box 8, RG13, A-2024-10084, Department of Justice Fonds. For general discussion on how the DOCR affected civil liberties, see Ramsay Cook, “Canadian Liberalism in Wartime: A Study of the Defence of Canada Regulations and Some Canadian Attitudes to Civil Liberties in Wartime, 1939 – 1945,” master’s thesis, Queen’s University, 1955.

of the treatment of aliens in time of war.” One specific point highlighted from those British documents by the DND concerned the treatment of families of the interned:

It has to be remembered that internment involves great hardship to the wives (especially if British-born) and families of the interned men. If the general principle of internment of male alien enemies is adopted, it will be necessary to establish machinery by which exemption may be granted to all those who can be left at large.¹⁹

This awareness was likely why Section 25(10) of the DOCR was recommended and established by the committee, which allowed that “if any enemy alien interned under the provisions of these Regulations has a wife or children living with or dependent upon him, such dependents may be permitted to accompany him.”²⁰ There is no indication in the committee’s first interim report that any other forms of potential government support were suggested, apart from Section 25(10).

The committee met again on 14 September 1938 to finalize the first interim report, which was officially submitted on 29 September 1938. A few months later, the Deputy Minister of National Defence, Colonel Léo Richer LaFleche, submitted the DND’s internment assessment to the committee on 17 April 1939. In the event of war with the assumed belligerent nations, the DND recommended that 25 percent of German and Italian nationals and 100 percent of Japanese nationals be interned, with a total estimated to be just under 10,000 individuals across Canada.²¹ Although the committee was not surprised by the projections, the reality of implementing them was considered infeasible, even when excluding the Japanese population. Instead, the committee and the Department of Justice requested that the RCMP compile lists of individuals affiliated with fascist organizations. It was not until 25 August 1939 that the RCMP informed Minister of

¹⁹ “Treatment of Aliens and Alien Property: Notes on the Situation as it Exists in the United Kingdom,” 15 July 1938, File HQLEG-6-140516-7, File Part 1, Box 8, RG13, A-2024-10084, Department of Justice Fonds.

²⁰ Canada, *Defence of Canada Regulations*, 36.

²¹ Colonel L. R. LaFleche to E. H. Coleman, 17 April 1939, File HQLEG-6-140516-7, File Part 1, Box 8, RG13, A-2024-10084, Department of Justice Fonds.

Justice Ernest Lapointe that the lists had been completed, identifying at least 641 individuals recommended for internment.²² Meanwhile, the Committee on the Treatment of Aliens and Alien Property had transitioned into the smaller Interdepartmental Committee on Aliens and Alien Property, colloquially known as the Robertson committee after its chairman, Norman Robertson.²³ The Robertson committee's first official meeting took place the day after the DOCR was enacted, on Friday, 1 September 1939. Over that weekend, the committee compiled a list of 335 names for internment, drawn from the original RCMP lists. On 4 September 1939, 303 individuals were arrested across Canada by the RCMP.

Discussions concerning the creation of a family camp in which internees and their families could live together arose only at the end of September 1939. The only known proposed location for such a camp was Grosse Isle, an island northwest of Québec City in the St. Lawrence River.²⁴ Grosse Isle was considered because it already had a small power plant and infrastructure, which were the remnants of a immigrant quarantine station that had officially ceased operations in 1938.²⁵ The island's history predates Canadian Confederation, having served primarily as a typhus quarantine station and an immigrant processing center during the 19th century. On 4 October 1939, Grosse Isle was assessed by the DND as a potential location for a camp, but the report concluded that the island's infrastructure required significant repairs

²² Barbara Lorenzkowski, "'Spies', 'Saboteurs', and 'subversives': German-Canadian Internees and the Wartime Discourse at the Canadian Homefront, 1939-1945," in *A Chorus of Different Voices: German-Canadian Identities*, edited by Angelika E. Sauer and Matthias Zimmer, (New York: P. Lang, 1998), 170; Wagner, *Brothers Beyond the Sea: National Socialism in Canada*, 131; Granatstein, *A Man of Influence: Norman A. Robertson and Canadian Statecraft 1929-68*, 85.

²³ The other two members of the Interdepartmental Committee on Aliens and Alien Property were J. F. MacNeill of the Department of Justice and RCMP Superintendent E. Bavin. Lorenzkowski, "'Spies', 'Saboteurs', and 'subversives': German-Canadian Internees and the Wartime Discourse at the Canadian Homefront, 1939-1945."

²⁴ "War Diary Internment Operations," 30 September 1939, File 2, Box 1, MG 6 E2, "Canada - National Defense - Streight, Harvey N. (Colonel)," Canada - National Defense fonds (1939-1945), Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

²⁵ Janet B. Wright, *Crown Assets: The Architecture of the Department of Public Works, 1867-1967*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 155.

and upgrades to accommodate internees. More importantly, the report found the location “most inadvisable to house women and children there during the winter months,” due to projected challenges accessing the island via the St. Lawrence River.²⁶ After the report was submitted, plans for a family camp were quickly abandoned, and in 1942 the island’s infrastructure was repurposed to support a top-secret anthrax factory operated by the DND in partnership with the United States and Britain.²⁷ Reasons for the rejection of further consideration to the idea of a family camp were never fully articulated. However, it is likely that the DND did not wish to administer a unique camp for women and children that chose to be there voluntarily. Such a camp would require substantial infrastructure and would have differed procedurally from all the other internment camps in Canada.²⁸

Even though the assessment of Grosse Isle was taking place on the same day, the DND went ahead and clarified their position on the families of the interned in a letter to RCMP Commissioner Stuart Wood. This clarification followed an incident in which the wife of an internee traveled with her husband to an internment camp, only to be denied entry to the camp:

Whereas Sub-section 10 of Regulation 25 of the Defence of Canada Regulations lays down that the dependants of an Enemy Alien interned may be permitted to accompany him, it is not the intention that such permission will be granted at the present time. No accommodation exists for females or children. The families of Enemy Aliens who are interned, if destitute, should be taken care of by the municipalities wherein such families are residing in the same manner as in the case of the head of the family being arrested and imprisoned.²⁹

²⁶ Brigadier E. C. Renaud to DND Secretary, [Grosse Isle Inspection Report], 7 October 1939, Image 1426-1431, File 7236-84-2, Microfilm C-5405, RG24-C-1, Department of National Defence Fonds, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Canada. Digital ID number: 940638.

²⁷ John Bryden, *Deadly Allies: Canada's Secret War, 1937-1947*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1989).

²⁸ The only comparative example is the Crystal City Internment Camp in Texas, which was constructed to specifically house families. Timothy J. Holian, *The German-Americans and World War II: An Ethnic Experience*, (New York: Peter Lang, 1998); Jan Jarboe Russell, *The Train to Crystal City: FDR's Secret Prisoner Exchange Program and America's Only Family Internment Camp during World War II*, (New York: Scribner, 2016).

²⁹ Stethem was the Assistant Director of Internment Operations to the Commissioner of Internment Operations Brigadier General Edouard de Bellefeuille Panet, but Stethem replaced Panet in 1940. Hubert Stethem to Stuart

Lieutenant Colonel Hubert Stethem clearly stated that, although the DOCR permitted wives and children to accompany internees, the Directorate of Internment Operations did not allocate facilities to house them. It is also apparent that Stethem's assertion—that "dependents" would be cared for by municipalities—appeared to only have reflected the position of the DND. However, on 14 October 1939, Harry Hereford, the Commissioner of Unemployment Relief, informed provincial governments that the federal government was now "responsible for food, fuel, clothing, shelter distributed to necessitous [internee families] in the locality."³⁰ Stethem subsequently sent a letter to the RCMP noting that Minister of Labour Norman Alexander McLarty expressed a similar view, effectively rendering Section 25(10) of the DOCR null and void.³¹ However, documentation detailing how this government relief was distributed is difficult to source.³² Moreover, the relief was not distributed equally to all families, as each case was assessed individually upon request.³³

Unfortunately, the issue remained unresolved for many, and internees continued to petition the government for reconsideration of policy regarding wives and children. In May 1940, the spokesman for the internees at the Kananaskis Internment Camp in Alberta wrote to Ernest Lapointe that "relatives of interned men report that they are threatened in the worst way,

Wood, 4 October 1939, File C11-19-3, Vol. 3564, RG18-F-3, Royal Canadian Mounted Police Fonds, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Canada. Digital ID number: 879816.

³⁰ John Joseph Kelly, "The Prisoner of War Camps in Canada 1939-1947," master's thesis, University of Windsor, 1976, 30.

³¹ Hubert Stethem to R. R. Tait, 18 October 1939, Image 3775, File 7236-48, Microfilm C-5393, RG24-C-1, Department of National Defence Fonds, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Canada. Digital ID number: 940447.

³² Michelle McBride's thesis records one mention of a "Regina Office of the Aid Society for the Dependents of Interned Enemy Aliens" run by Paula Massig. However, Massig was "active Nazi propagandist in Western Canada." There is no evidence of an aid society or any such office for families in Manitoba. Michelle McBride, "From Indifference to Internment - an Examination of RCMP Responses to Nazism and Fascism in Canada from 1934 to 1941," master's thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1997, 207.

³³ William Repka and Kathleen M. Repka, *Dangerous Patriots: Canada's Unknown Prisoners of War*, (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1982), 99-100; Kelly, "The Prisoner of War Camps in Canada 1939-1947," 195-196; John Hilmer, *Ein deutsches Schicksal in Kanada: Einwanderung--Internierung--Ringeln um Rehabilitierung*, introduction and edited by Lothar Zimmermann, (Toronto: German-Canadian Historical Association, 1996), xlix.

that they are cut off from relief, that they have to stand grave insults etc. The wives and families in many a case would prefer to join their breadearners in the internment camps.”³⁴ The letter prompted a response from Stethem to the commandant of Kananaskis, noting that “prisoners” were not permitted to refer matters to the Minister of Justice or any other government official without the DND approval. In the same letter, Stethem, in quite a frank manner, dismissed the claims regarding families being harassed as “vague” and concluded his point by informing the camp commandant that internees could be told:

[U]nder no circumstances will any female internee or child be interned in an Internment Camp [...] It is possible that the prisoners' spokesman is referring to Regulation 25(10) of the Defence of Canada Regulations, which is merely a proviso authorizing the responsible authorities to grant permission for the internment with the prisoner of his wife and children, IF SUCH AUTHORITIES CARE TO DO SO. The Regulation is permissive only and it says they may be permitted; it does not say they will be permitted. This question has already been settled, and such permission will not be granted. This paragraph was merely included in the Regulations in case it were deemed advisable to establish family camps, as was done in the last war. Such camps proved unsatisfactory.³⁵

Stethem also clearly articulates in the letter that all the men interned were devoted Nazis and that they, along with their families, should be grateful for the “decency” and “generosity” provided by the Canadian government. After the spokesperson for the internees at Kananaskis was informed of this, no further inquiries into the hardships of families were recorded by the DND.

During the Second World War, there were twenty-eight primary internment camps and numerous labour subcamps.³⁶ Although there is no definitive consensus on the total number of

³⁴ J. R. Brendel to Ernest Lapointe, 23 May 1940, File IO-T-10-1, File Part: 1, Vol. 6586, RG24-C-5, Royal Department of National Defence Fonds, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Canada. Digital ID number: 1088505.

³⁵ Hubert Stethem to District Officer Commanding (Colonel H. de N. Watson), 31 May 1940, Department of National Defence fonds.

³⁶ For more on physical spaces of internment camps in Canada, see Michael O'Hagan, "Beyond the Barbed Wire: POW Labour Projects in Canada during the Second World War," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Western Ontario, 2020; Lucile Chaput, “L’internement au Canada durant la Seconde Guerre mondiale: le camp de Petawawa n° 33, 1939-1946,” master's thesis, L’Université Rennes 2. 2016; and Ted Jones, *Both Sides of the Wire: The Fredericton Internment Camp*, Vol. 1 & 2, (Fredericton: New Ireland Press, 1988).

civilian internees, a government report in 1945 had recorded 2,423 civilians had been interned during the Second World War.³⁷ Canadian civilian internees and enemy nation nationals were initially divided between two camps from September 1939 to July 1941: the Kananaskis Internment Camp in Alberta, which primarily held Germans nationals, and the Petawawa Internment Camp in Ontario, where most Italian nationals were interned.³⁸ In preparation for an influx of German POWs and Enemy Merchant Seamen (EMS), civilian internees were transfer to the Fredericton Internment Camp in New Brunswick in July 1941. Meanwhile, Japanese Canadians who were arrested and interned were mainly held at the Angler Internment Camp in Ontario after 1942.³⁹ This thesis briefly examines the daily lives of internees within the camps; however, its focus remains on families outside the physical confines of the internment camps.

Ironically, the perspective of the RCMP has, by far, been the most predominant narrative in the historiography of German-Canadian internment—more so than that of the individuals who were interned. The historian who laid the foundations of the Second World War German-Canadian internment historiography was Robert H. Keyserlingk. Prior to Keyserlingk’s work in the 1980s, the major academic work that specifically focused on internment was John Joseph Kelly’s 1976 master’s thesis, which assessed Canada’s internment operations and evaluated

³⁷ The report does not include internees from Britain or uprooted Japanese Canadians. The total is the sum of “847 pro-Nazi, 782 pro-Japanese, 632 pro-Italians, 133 Communists, 27 N.U.P. members, and 2 unclassified.” “Internment Statistics [Report],” 18 August 1945, File C116-19-3, Vol. 3566, RG18-F-3, Royal Canadian Mounted Police Fonds, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Canada. Digital ID number: 879826.

³⁸ For more on the Italian Canadian internment experience in Canada, see Raymond Culos, *Injustice Served: the Story of British Columbia's Italian Enemy Aliens During World War II*, (Vancouver: Cusmano Books, 2012); Franca Iacovetta, Roberto Perin, and Angelo Principe, *Enemies Within: Italian and Other Internees in Canada and Abroad*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000); and Joseph Anthony Ciccocelli, "The Innocuous Enemy Alien: Italians in Canada During World War II," master's thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1977.

³⁹ For more on the Japanese Canadian internment experience in Canada, see Jordan Stanger-Ross, ed., *Landscapes of Injustice: A New Perspective on the Internment and Dispossession of Japanese Canadians*, (Montreal; McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2020); Mona Oikawa, *Cartographies of Violence: Japanese Canadian Women, Memory, and the Subjects of the Internment*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018); and Tom Sando and J. P. Desgagne, *Wild Daisies in the Sand: Life in a Canadian Internment Camp*, (Edmonton: NeWest Press, 2002).

whether they complied with the Geneva Convention.⁴⁰ Although Kelly concluded that internment operations during the Second World War were, on the whole, successful, Keyserlingk challenged the need for internment and specifically targeted the conduct of the RCMP. Between 1983 and 1993, Keyserlingk published five articles that ardently argued there was no evidence of subversive activity or attempts at sabotage by Canadians of German origin.⁴¹ His work effectively demonstrated that no large-scale “Nazi spy cabal” operated in Canada during the war. However, Keyserlingk’s conclusions can be viewed as inherently flawed due to his overt determination to establish the innocence of the German-Canadian community, a motivation shaped in part by the Japanese and Italian redress movements of the 1980s. In attempting to prove this innocence, his findings are at times contradictory and insufficiently grounded in primary sources.⁴² Nevertheless, Keyserlingk’s foundational research has ensured that his publications remain prominent within the historiography of internment.

⁴⁰ Ramsay Cook’s master’s thesis was published in 1955, but Cook’s work examines the broader implications of the Defence of Canada Regulations more so than examining the policies of internment specifically. Joseph A. Ciccocelli’s 1977 master’s thesis on Italian Canadian during the Second World War is also occasionally cited but has fallen into obscurity in newer publication in comparison to Kelly’s research. Kelly, “The Prisoner of War Camps in Canada 1939-1947;” Cook, “Canadian Liberalism in Wartime: A Study of the Defence of Canada Regulations and Some Canadian Attitudes to Civil Liberties in Wartime, 1939 – 1945;” Ciccocelli, “The Innocuous Enemy Alien: Italians in Canada During World War II.”

⁴¹ Robert H. Keyserlingk, “The Canadian Government’s Attitude Towards Germans and German Canadians in World War Two,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 16, No. 1, (1984); Robert H. Keyserlingk, “Agents Within the Gates’: The Search for Nazi Subversives in Canada during World War II,” *The Canadian Historical Review* 66, No. 2, (1985); Robert H. Keyserlingk, “Which Fatherland in War? The Canadian Government’s View of German Canadian Loyalties in World War Two,” in *Central and East European Ethnicity in Canada: Adaptation and Preservation*, edited by T. Yedlin, (Edmonton: Central and East European Studies Society of Alberta, 1985), 133-171; Robert H. Keyserlingk, “Breaking the Nazi Plot: Canadian Government’s Attitude Towards German Canadians, 1939-1945,” in *On Guard for Thee: War, Ethnicity, and the Canadian State, 1939-1945*, edited by Norman Hillmer, Bohdan S. Kordan, and Lubomyr Y. Luciuk, (Ottawa: Canadian Committee for the History of the Second World War, 1988), 53-69; Robert H. Keyserlingk, “Allies or Subversives? The Canadian Government’s Ambivalent Attitude Towards German Canadians in the Second World War,” in *Minorities in Wartime: National and Racial Groupings in Europe, North America, and Australia During the Two World Wars*, edited by P. Panayi, (Oxford: Berg, 1993), 239-260.

⁴² Keyserlingk, “The Canadian Government’s Attitude Towards Germans and German Canadians in World War Two,” 17; Keyserlingk, “Breaking the Nazi Plot: Canadian Government Attitudes Towards German Canadians,” 54.

Shortly after Keyserlingk's final article on internment in 1993, Michelle McBride's master's thesis challenged Keyserlingk's arguments that the RCMP lacked adequate intelligence beyond communist agitators and was unprepared to address German subversive threats. Although the publication's primary focus is the RCMP intelligence capabilities rather than internment, McBride's thesis is constructed around crucial research on RCMP Security Service records that are now more difficult to access due to their reorganization under Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) fonds at the Library and Archives Canada. Additionally, McBride painstakingly compiled what remains the most comprehensive list of German and Italian civilian internees to date.⁴³ More recent scholarship by Grant W. Grams has further undermined Keyserlingk's claim that there was no evidence of German subversion or sabotage.⁴⁴ Through meticulous archival investigation, Grams identified several instances in which the RCMP concealed potential subversive activities, none more damaging to Keyserlingk's argument than the Wolfgang Hauffe plot in Trail, British Columbia.⁴⁵ While the role of the RCMP during the Second World War has been the subject of extensive scholarly attention, publications that center on the experiences and perspectives of German-Canadian internees remain comparatively scarce.

During the 1990s, historian Lothar Zimmermann sought to shift the historiography away from an emphasis on the governmental structures behind internment and toward the individuals directly affected by it. Responding to Keyserlingk's publications, Zimmermann argued for

⁴³ McBride, "From Indifference to Internment - an Examination of RCMP Responses to Nazism and Fascism in Canada from 1934 to 1941," 136-137, 277-319 (Appendix 3).

⁴⁴ Keyserlingk, "Breaking the Nazi Plot: Canadian Government's Attitude Towards German Canadians, 1939-1945," 61; Grant W. Grams, "Enemies within Our Bosom: Nazi Sabotage in Canada," *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 14, No. 3-4, (2012), 2.

⁴⁵ Alexander Wolfgang Hauffe and three other German-Canadians planned and attempted to gather supplies to destroy the Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company (CMSC) factory in Trail, BC. The RCMP had the four men under surveillance for months, only arresting them on 13 December 1939 when Hauffe tried crossing the border into the US hoping to deliver a letter to the German Consulate in Seattle. Grams, *Coming Home to the Third Reich: Return Migration of German Nationals from the United States and Canada, 1933-1941*, 140-144.

greater attention to the “human element” and concluded his 1993 article by expressing hope “that the stories of other former internees will be preserved and this aspect of German-Canadian and immigrant history secured. Time is running out.”⁴⁶ Contributing to this shift, Zimmermann wrote the introduction and assisted in the editing of John Hilmer’s memoir, which remains the only published memoir of a German-Canadian internee to date. The Hilmer’s experience was a long and complex affair as both John and Muriel Hilmer were interned while their four children were placed in the government’s care. Although the Hilmer’s endured significant hardship, the memoir’s narrative is strategically edited to portray the government as the primary cause of their suffering while not fully addressing John Hilmer’s membership in the *Deutscher Bund*, which constituted immediate grounds for internment.⁴⁷ Meanwhile, Historian Barbara Lorezkowski argued Zimmermann’s editorial role as being “driven by the passionate anger that former internees” continue to feel over the absence of proper redress for this perceived “injustice.”⁴⁸ Lorezkowski’s 1998 article shifted away from “political and moral elements of German internment” and constructed a quantitative analysis by defining the government’s implemented stereotypes of “good Germans” and “bad Nazis.”⁴⁹ Lorezkowski compared assumed perceptions to the empirical data on the internees’ socioeconomic profiles and concluded that the

⁴⁶ Lothar Zimmermann, ed., *German-Canadian studies in the nineties, results & projects: Symposium 1992: Achtes Symposium Deutschkanadische Studien...*, 28. May, 1992, Vol. 8, (Toronto: German-Canadian Historical Association, 1993), 27; Lothar Zimmermann, “Those Other POWs: German-Canadian Civilians behind Canadian Barbed Wire and Prison Bars,” in *German-Canadian Yearbook*, vol. XVI, edited by Lothar Zimmermann and Hartmut Froeschle. (Toronto: Historical Society of Mecklenberg Upper Canada, 2000); Hilmer, *Ein deutsches Schicksal in Kanada: Einwanderung--Internierung--Ringeln um Rehabilitierung*, xxxix.

⁴⁷ Notably, the memoir was only published in German. Hilmer, *Ein deutsches Schicksal in Kanada: Einwanderung--Internierung--Ringeln um Rehabilitierung*, xl; Zimmermann, “Those Other POWs: German-Canadian Civilians behind Canadian Barbed Wire and Prison Bars,” 82; Hilmer Appeal Hearing Transcript, 21 November 1939, “Testimony by Germans - Notices of Objection Involved in Pro-Nazi Organizations - Arranged Alphabetically (F-J),” Volume 967, R188-67-2-E, RG13-F-12, Department of Justice fonds, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Canada. Digital ID number: 187118.

⁴⁸ Lorezkowski, “‘Spies’, ‘Saboteurs’, and ‘subversives’: German-Canadian Internees and the Wartime Discourse at the Canadian Homefront, 1939-1945,” 180.

⁴⁹ Lorezkowski, “‘Spies’, ‘Saboteurs’, and ‘subversives’: German-Canadian Internees and the Wartime Discourse at the Canadian Homefront, 1939-1945,” 168.

Canadian government interned a majority of German-Canadians who had rural socioeconomic backgrounds that arrived in Canada long before Hitler came to power—individuals who were, in fact, the opposite of those the government had intended to detain.⁵⁰ The article remains a strong concise socio-quantitative analysis in the historiography but falls short of the biographical depth and individual-centered focus that Zimmermann had advocated. Zimmermann’s hope to shift the historiography to focus on the individual has only begun by recent academic work.

An important parallel publication to this thesis is Lucile Chaput’s 2025 article, “The Story of Interned German-Canadians During the Second World War Through ‘Ordinary’ Immigration Trajectories.” Chaput presents microhistories of the lives of the German-Canadian internees Otto Thierbach, Bertha Hower, and Heinrich Holtmann, in order to shed light on individual experiences of internment and to better understand its complexity and lasting effects on personal lives.⁵¹ Chaput concludes that internment policies cannot be analyzed without “listening to individual viewpoints” and that internment had consequences on multiple levels.⁵² Her biographical examination of the internees identifies common themes, including deprivation of freedom, loss of income, interpersonal conflict, psychological stress, and a more nuanced understanding of life trajectories within the camps. The article also recognizes that internment had serious consequences on family life, as brief glimpses of familial experiences are interpreted through the narratives.⁵³ However, the primary focus of Chaput’s article is the interpretation of

⁵⁰ Lorenzkowski, “‘Spies’, ‘Saboteurs’, and ‘subversives’: German-Canadian Internees and the Wartime Discourse at the Canadian Homefront, 1939-1945,” 178-179.

⁵¹ Lucile Chaput, “L’histoire des internés germano-canadiens durant la Seconde Guerre mondiale au prisme de trajectoires d’immigrés « ordinaires ».” *Bulletin d’histoire politique* 32, No. 3, (2025), 143.

<https://doi.org/10.7202/1121818ar>

⁵² Chaput, “L’histoire des internés germano-canadiens durant la Seconde Guerre mondiale au prisme de trajectoires d’immigrés « ordinaires ».” 147.

⁵³ Chaput, “L’histoire des internés germano-canadiens durant la Seconde Guerre mondiale au prisme de trajectoires d’immigrés « ordinaires ».” 145.

internees' narratives in order to better understand internment policies. By contrast, this thesis examines how internment policies directly affected the families of the interned.

Research that focuses specifically on the families of the interned is almost entirely absent from the historiography. John Joseph Kelly's thesis concluded, somewhat vaguely, that the government believed it had "provided relief for those German families in need," but then acknowledged relief conditions deteriorated in 1940 and many families continued to suffer.⁵⁴ In other publications, wives and children have been recognized as having been "adversely affected by other kinds of wartime regulations," and scholars have highlighted "the predicaments of women who vacated homes, sold household belongings or store inventory, and found new accommodation while financially hard-pressed and anxious about absent husbands and sons."⁵⁵ Despite these acknowledgements, the agency of women and children is largely minimized, with attention typically confined to their concern for the internee rather than to the broader effects of internment policies on their own lives. The overall lack of female agency in male internment narratives is best compared to historian Marlene Epp echoing critics of male-oriented writing: "[women] wait in the sending areas for their spouses to return or ... passive reactors who simply follow a male migrant."⁵⁶ To address the scarcity of direct narratives from family members, this research draws on files from the Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property. Although this office maintained extensive contact with relatives of internees, its records—outside the research on the Japanese Canadian experiences—have received little sustained scholarly attention.⁵⁷ These

⁵⁴ Kelly, "The Prisoner of War Camps in Canada 1939-1947," 195-196.

⁵⁵ Iacovetta, Perin, and Principe, ed., *Enemies Within: Italian and Other Internees in Canada and Abroad*, 17-18; Kelly, "The Prisoner of War Camps in Canada 1939-1947," 195.

⁵⁶ Marlene Epp, *Women Without Men: Mennonite Refugees of the Second World War*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 5.

⁵⁷ The only publication that addresses the Custodian's Office in a comprehensive manner is Judith Roberts-Moore, "The Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property: An Overview of the Office and Its Records, 1920-1952," *Archivaria* 22 (January 1986), 106; Also see, Jordan Stanger-Ross and Will Archibald, "The Unfaithful Custodian:

records are crucial to understanding the substantial economic pressures placed on the internees and their families, pressures that produced significant hardship. The economic dimensions of internment have also received limited scholarly analysis beyond the Japanese Canadian experiences, which differs fundamentally due to overt racial discrimination.

The direct female experiences of internment have been organized around four major themes: female internment, family relocation, survival strategies, and release campaigns.⁵⁸ However, narratives of women who experienced physical internment have had the most consistent scholarship. Michelle McBride noted that several out of twenty-one women interned at Kingston Penitentiary in Ontario protested to the Internment Operations regarding their living arrangements. These complaints did not raise issue with being housed within a correctional facility, but rather from the way they were separated from their husbands.⁵⁹ To date, no study has centered its analysis exclusively on the narratives of German-Canadian women. This research represents the first sustained effort to primarily interpret internment through their perspectives.

Although all the German-Canadian internees examined in this study have, at one point or another, identified themselves and their families as “loyal Canadians,” their experiences of internment reflect broader themes in Canadian immigrant historiography. Historian Marlene Epp has observed that the “immigrant experience has frequently been defined by male norms. [...] Where families did accompany the adult male to a new country, women and children are often

Glenn McPherson and the Dispossession of Japanese Canadians,” in *Landscapes of Injustice: A New Perspective on the Internment and Dispossession of Japanese Canadians*.

⁵⁸ Iacovetta, Perin, and Principe, ed. *Enemies Within: Italian and Other Internees in Canada and Abroad*, 17.

⁵⁹ Michelle McBride, “The Curious Case of Female Internees,” in *Enemies Within: Italian and Other Internees in Canada and Abroad*, edited by Franca Iacovetta, Roberto Perin, and Angelo Principe, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 156; Additionally, Andrée Laprise has published on female internees and the Kingston Penitentiary; however, acknowledgment of Michelle McBride’s earlier work on female internees is notably absent. Andrée Laprise, *Coupables d’être étrangères. Le camp des femmes de Kingston, 1939-1943*, (Outremont: Athéna éditions, 2010).

grouped together as 'dependants' while the active decision-making and bread-winning roles are represented as the domain of the male head of house-hold.”⁶⁰ This social framework reflects the broader representation of families affected by internment. Other scholars have also highlighted within the historiography, “female immigrants have been rendered as invisible or [...] often stereotyped as dependents.”⁶¹ This gendered framing is particularly evident in the literature on German-Canadian internment and in postwar interviews with internees, which focus almost exclusively on male experiences. In contrast, this research aligns more closely with the work of Marlene Epp and Annemarie Tröger, emphasizing the experiences and agency of women:

[Epp’s] analysis is complicated by the fact that the context in which women stepped out of traditional gender roles was also one of great personal pain and tragedy. Annemarie Tröger, in analysing the war memories of German women, observes that many women displayed a psychological ambiguity between their need to be 'strong, brave and tough' and take on unconventional leadership and management roles, and their need for warmth and security, often epitomized in a 'male saviour figure.'⁶²

In similar circumstances, the wives of internees had to balance the hope for their husbands’ return with the sudden responsibility of managing both the family household and business.

This thesis’s historiography section is not all-encompassing of the scholarship on Second World War internment; however, it provides a comprehensive account of the historiography of German-Canadian internment in Canada. Historians Rhonda Hinthor and Jim Mochoruk have argued that “[t]here is no single historiography of internment. Rather there are several—as the various internment operations are most typically treated in splendid isolation from each other.”⁶³

⁶⁰ Epp, *Women Without Men: Mennonite Refugees of the Second World War*, 5.

⁶¹ Monica Boyd, “Immigrant Women in Canada,” in *International Migration: The Female Experience*, edited by Rita J. Simon and Caroline Brettell, (Totowa, N.J: Rowman & Allanheld, 1986), 45; Mirjana Morokvasic, “Woman in migration Beyond the reductionist outlook,” in *One Way Ticket: Migration and Female Labour*, edited by Annie Phizacklea, (London, United Kingdom; Routledge, 1983).

⁶² Epp, *Women Without Men: Mennonite Refugees of the Second World War*, 7.

⁶³ Rhonda Hinthor and Jim Mochoruk, eds. *Civilian Internment in Canada: Histories and Legacies. Civilian Internment in Canada*, (Winnipeg, Manitoba: University of Manitoba Press, 2020), 9.

Nevertheless, in a broader thematic sense, this thesis aligns with the framework advanced by Franca Iacovetta, Roberto Perin, and Angelo Principe's particularly their emphasis on the making of internment policy, its uneven implementation, and daily life both inside and outside the camps. Thus, this research contributes to what they describe as an "emerging social history of internment and wartime measures by considering the experiences of those affected by such decisions."⁶⁴

This thesis does not take a position on the legality of internment during the Second World War. However, it echoes a perspective advanced by Iacovetta, Perin, and Principe:

We sympathize with those falsely accused or victimized by wartime hysteria against 'enemy aliens.' We also have no interest in becoming apologists for state repression. As historians, however, we are concerned about the lack of public knowledge about and perspective on these controversial events. The version of history endorsed by the Italian-Canadian redress campaign simply left too much out.⁶⁵

Their statement about versions of history endorsed by the redress campaigns is particularly poignant within the broader historiography of internment in Canada. The conclusions of this work neither advocate for nor are driven by questions of redress. Its primary aim has always been to give voice to the forgotten German-Canadians who endured internment. The "forgotten" were not the internees confined in camps, who have often been vocal in sharing their narratives and are supported by their Italian and Japanese internee counterparts. Rather, the forgotten were the wives left behind, who endured a domestic internment, holding together their families one letter at a time. This research is dedicated to the many women who were never able to share their experiences of internment.

⁶⁴ Iacovetta, Perin, and Principe, *Enemies Within: Italian and Other Internees in Canada and Abroad*, 7, 14.

⁶⁵ Iacovetta, Perin, and Principe, *Enemies Within: Italian and Other Internees in Canada and Abroad*, vii.

Chapter 1: Thilde Schneider and Fritz Schneider

In the evening of 11 September 1939, an exhausted 44-year-old Mathilde Maria Schneider returned to her farm in Lockport, Manitoba. She had just spent the entire day in Winnipeg investigating the disappearance of her husband after she was told he was removed to an undisclosed location. That night, she began to write the first of many letters to her 42-year-old husband Frederick Karl Schneider, who had been taken into Winnipeg by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) a week earlier under the Defence of Canada Regulations (DOCR) for questioning. Thilde and Fritz, as they referred to one another, were both born in Germany but immigrated to Canada in 1926 and throughout the 1930s the couple were prominent members of their community. However, the Schneider family's future in Manitoba was abruptly disrupted by the outbreak of the Second World War. Although Fritz identified as a proud Canadian settler and farmer, he was interned at the Kananaskis Internment Camp in Alberta under suspicion of being a Nazi agent. The Schneider family's experience provides valuable insight into how families of an internee were affected by the sudden removal of the familial patriarch. The narrative also suggests that, although the Canadian government was aware that internment might affect the families of those interned, little was done from the outset to alleviate these concerns. In addition to the unexpected removal of her husband, the lack of adequate communication from the Canadian government imposed significant emotional and physical challenges on Thilde, severely limiting her ability to plan her family's future.

The key source used for this case study is the Schneider family fonds within the larger Little Britain collection held at the University of Winnipeg Archives.¹ The fonds consists

¹ Schneider/Snyder Family Sous-Fonds, CA UWA 23.20, Box 1, Little Britain Collection, University of Winnipeg Archives, Winnipeg, Manitoba. <https://main.lib.umanitoba.ca/schneider-snyder-family>

personal correspondence between Fritz and Thilde Schneider, spanning 1915 to 1942, along with occasional supporting documents. Out of forty-two letters dated between 1937 to 1942, nineteen pertain to Fritz's internment and eleven of those were handwritten in German by Thilde during his initial internment from 4 September 1939 to 22 April 1940. The absence of preserved correspondence during his reinternment from June 1940 to November 1942 makes a long-term assessment of the family's experience just not possible compared to the subsequent case studies in this thesis. In contrast to the other case studies, where letters written by husband to their wife were preserved, the Schneider family correspondence is notable because the letters written by wife were preserved. Thilde Schneider's preserved letters are currently the only known accessible correspondence of a German-Canadian wife corresponding with her interned husband. These letters are not only central to this analysis but also contribute significantly to the broader histories of female agency within the German-Canadian community. In addition to the personal letter collection of the Schneider family, business correspondence related to the family is preserved in the Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property fonds.² The final primary archival source in this chapter are the textual records of the Advisory Committee on Orders of Restrictions and Detention series in the Department of Justice fonds.³ This file unit contains the transcripts of the internee appeal hearings and other additional documents related to the appeal cases. Fritz Schneider's file contains the transcript of his hearing, a summary of the proceedings, the verdict, and a rare dissenting verdict, which constitutes into an 83-page booklet.

Frederick Schneider was born in Emmendingen, Germany, in 1896. His parents, Hermann Schneider and Frederika Woehrle, were prominent members of the community and

² "Schneider, Frederick Karol and Mathilda, Francisca," File 539, Vol. 626, RG117-A-3, Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Fonds, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Canada. Digital ID number: 1128921.

³ Advisory Committee on Orders of Restrictions and Detention [textual record], R188-67-2-E, RG13-F-12, Department of Justice fonds, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Canada. Digital ID number: 187118.

oversaw a furniture factory within the town. Fritz Schneider had just completed *Gymnasium*—the German equivalent to secondary school—when the First World War broke out in Europe. At seventeen, Schneider enlisted in the Imperial German Army rose to the rank of lieutenant during the war. He was fortunate enough to witness the war's end physically unscathed and reached his twenty-first birthday. After the war, Schneider stated that he promptly pursued a doctorate in law and economics from the Albert-Ludwig-Universität in Freiburg im Breisgau. Schneider also claimed he accrued a significant amount of work experience because of his degree with German government, which included working as provisional judge, state attorney, notary public, city administration, and in a lawyer's office.⁴ Born in 1895, Mathilde Hölscher met Fritz at same university while she was completing a doctorate in medicine.⁵ In 1921, the couple married in Thilde's hometown of Herne, which is now part of the west German state of North Rhine-Westphalia. Their marriage was founded on deep devotion and strong emotional connection. Fritz later described Thilde as the one person in the world that knew him the best, even to the extent that “she knows all [his] thoughts.”⁶ In 1922, Thilde gave birth to their first son, Hans, followed by their second child, Fred, in 1925. Although he had somewhat of prosperous legal career ahead of him in Germany, Schneider became a spokesperson for a group of farming families seeking to escape the ongoing political and economic turmoil within Germany.

In 1926, the Schneiders, along with approximately twenty other German families—totaling around 162 individuals—began the process of emigrating to Canada. With the support of

⁴ Schneider Appeal Hearing Transcript, 27 November 1939, pages 4 and 44, “Testimony by Germans - Notices of Objection Involved in Pro-Nazi Organizations - Arranged Alphabetically (S-T),” Volume 970, R188-67-2-E, RG13-F-12, Department of Justice fonds, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Canada. Digital ID number: 187118. (Hereafter cited as “Schneider Appeal Hearing Transcript, 27 November 1939”).

⁵ There is no record of Thilde practicing medicine in either Germany or Canada from the records examined. However, Fritz did refer to her as a “medical doctor” in his appeal hearing. Schneider/Snyder Family Sous-Fonds, CA UWA 23.20; Schneider Appeal Hearing Transcript, 27 November 1939, 28.

⁶ Schneider Appeal Hearing Transcript, 27 November 1939, 28.

the Association of German-Canadian Catholics (VDCK) and the Canadian Colonization Association, managed by Traugott Otto Francis Herzer and a subsidiary of the Canadian Pacific Company, the group arranged the collective purchase of 3,124 acres of land in Manitoba from an American businessman.⁷ A deal was brokered that the German settlers paid \$45 per acre of land for a grand total of \$140,580 with no down payment required.⁸ The following year, Fritz and Thilde Schneider officially co-founded the Society Farms and Little Britain community fifteen miles north of Winnipeg.⁹ While the area of Little Britain had been settled and named as early as the 1800s, the German settlers acknowledged this history and nevertheless chose to adopt the name for their own community.¹⁰ Fritz Schneider was designated the community's spokesperson, owing to his law background and fluency in English.¹¹ In 1928, their daughter Marianne was born, followed by their fourth child, Edith, in 1929. However, Marianne was tragically killed in a farm-related accident sometime between 1930 and 1931. Just a few months later, their third son, Wilfred, was born. The birthdate of their youngest and last child, Norbert (Bert), is unknown.

Despite the Great Depression and a drought across the Prairies, the early 1930s marked a period of growth and renewal for the Schneider family. In 1930, just a mile south of the Little Britain near Lockport, the Schneiders purchased their own farm, which was placed in Thilde's

⁷ For more on the Canadian Colonization Association, see Bassler, *The German Canadian Mosaic Today and Yesterday: Identities, Roots and Heritage*, 48-49. "March Snowstorm Greets Colony from Black Forest On Arrival at New Home," *Manitoba Free Press* Newspaper, 28 March 1927, 2.

⁸ Frederick Griffin, "A German Miracle in Manitoba," *Manitoba Free Press*, 21 June 1930, 42.

⁹ For more on the German Little Britain community, see Maria Wehrle's semi-biographical account, "We Sure Have No Regrets," of the community's history in *Stories of Selkirk's Pioneers and Their Heritage: In Commemoration of Selkirk's 125th Anniversary*, by Kenneth G. Howard, (Winnipeg, MB: Pioneer Publications, 2010), 360-368; And in *Beyond the Gates of Lower Fort Garry*, by the Rural Municipality of St. Andrews (Clandeboye, Man: Municipality of St. Andrews, 1982), 157-166. However, Wehrle's account minimizes Schneider's role within the founding of the community and some of the statistics do not match to primary sources.

¹⁰ The German Little Britain community has no connection with the original Little Britain settlement and the Presbyterian Church, which is now a heritage site. The original settlement was founded in the 1820s by former Hudson's Bay Company employees and their families. For more on the HBC settlement, see *The Old Stone Church: The History of Little Britain United Church (est. 1852)* by Viola Schneider and Gwen Fox. 2002. <https://littlebritainunitedchurch.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/lbuc.histories.pdf>

¹¹ *Manitoba Free Press*, 20 October 1927, 1.

name. Thilde's day-to-day activities consisted of managing the farm and household while Fritz sought additional career opportunities to support the family, which was common practice for farming families in the 1930s.¹² Following his Canadian naturalization in 1932, Schneider occupied most of his time as a director of the Winnipeg District Milk Producers Association, a role prompted in part by Little Britain's large herd of 300 cows. Schneider resigned from the Winnipeg District Milk Producers Association in late 1935 and pivoted to international trade relations. This was spurred by the signing of a Provisional Most-Favoured-Nation Trade Agreement and a Payments Agreement between Canada and Germany on 22 October 1936.¹³ Both the *Free Press* and the *Evening Tribune* expressed that these agreements will be a boon for grain firms, which were expected to benefit from increased profits and exports to Germany.¹⁴ The potential economic advantages of these new agreements attracted Schneider's attention.

Schneider wasted no time in initiating efforts to expand trade between Canada and Germany, beginning by networking with businessmen from the Grain Exchange and various other farmers' organizations. This early support facilitated his first trip to Germany in 1937. Schneider was successful in opening dialogue with the Reich Ministry of Economics and the Ministry of Food and Agriculture. Upon returning to Manitoba, Schneider began administering imports and exports on behalf of Canadian firms. It was at this stage that the Manitoba government, led by Premier John Bracken, approached Schneider to take on a more official

¹² Charlotte van de Vorst, *Making Ends Meet: Farm Women's Work in Manitoba*, Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2002, 55-57.

¹³ These two agreements built upon a similar trade deal that had been in place since 1932, but a key distinction in the 1936 negotiations was the inclusion of the Payments Agreement. This agreement allowed Germany to control the exchange of payments for imported goods, as Nazi legislation made it difficult to conduct business in foreign currencies. *The Canada Yearbook 1937*, (King's Printer: Ottawa, 1937), 492; "Details of Two Treaties with Germany Revealed," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 26 October 1936, 1, 5.

¹⁴ "Trade Pact with Germany Favoured by Grain Trade," *Winnipeg Free Press*, October 30, 1936, 26; "German Treaty Likely to Boost Wheat Exports," *The Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, October 26, 1936, 1.

role.¹⁵ The official collaboration was formalized at a December 1937 conference on markets of western farm products.¹⁶ In April and May of 1939, Schneider returned to Germany, capitalizing on the support from the Manitoba government. Bracken's endorsement of Schneider's travel to Germany is confirmed by two letters typed in German sent to Schneider on 31 March 1939.¹⁷ The Nazi government, for its part, appeared eager to engage with Schneider, appointing the Deputy Minister of Trade and Commerce Baron Alexander von Süßkind-Schwendi to meet with Schneider personally. Schneider documented the trip in detail, and it proved to be highly successful. However, only four months after he had returned to Manitoba from Germany, Fritz Schneider would travel again, but under very different circumstances.

On 4 September 1939, 303 individuals were detained across Canada in a large-scale sweep conducted by the RCMP. These 303 men, including Schneider, are recognized in some parts of the historiography as the "first wave" of Canadian civilian internees.¹⁸ A single document in the Archives of Manitoba records all individuals arrested on 4 September from the province, as well as those who remained under surveillance. The summary notes that Schneider was arrested for "[taking] assignments for German government."¹⁹ Schneider later recalled the irony of the day he was arrested in his internment appeal hearing. He stated that not fifteen

¹⁵ Schneider's relationship with Bracken remains somewhat obscure. There is some indication that Schneider was first introduced to Bracken while as a director for the Winnipeg District Milk Producers Association. However, Schneider clearly stated that Bracken was already advising him before his 1937 trip to Germany. Schneider Appeal Hearing Transcript, 27 November 1939, 8.

¹⁶ Schneider Appeal Hearing Transcript, 27 November 1939, 6.

¹⁷ John Bracken to Fritz Schneider, 31 March 1939, File 11, Box 1, CA UWA 23.20, Schneider/Snyder Family Sous-Fonds.

¹⁸ The "wave" terminology corresponds to spikes in internment arrests. However, the terminology is not widely used nor is it well defined in the historiography. For example, the uprooting and internment of the Japanese Canadians on 25 February 1942 has never been termed as a "third wave." Ernest Robert Zimmermann, *The Little Third Reich on Lake Superior: A History of Canadian Internment Camp R*, edited by David K. Ratz and Michel S. Beaulieu, (Edmonton, Alberta: The University of Alberta Press, 2016), 62.

¹⁹ The summary does not appear to be RCMP in origin and might be report written for provincial officials. "Nazis picked up by R.C.M.P. and [...]," 13 September 1939, "Miscellaneous Notes Re Alleged Nazis and Jehovah Witnesses," P262, John Pirozek Fonds, Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

minutes before the RCMP arrived at his house to take him in for “questioning,” journalists from the *Free Press* were interviewing him on the looming reality of war with Germany.²⁰ The resulting article, published the following day, offers rare insight into Schneider’s perspective at the onset of the war. His memory of the First World War took prominence in the interview: “It is all too horrible to believe that Europe is again at war and the people of the world may again have to experience the horrors of 1914-18.”²¹ While the article did not explicitly record Schneider’s views on the possibility of his own internment, he expressed confidence in the loyalty of the German-Canadian population, stating that everyone in the Little Britain community have thought nothing other than living peacefully in their adopted country.²² He proved to be correct as Schneider was the only German-Canadian from the Little Britain community to be interned. For the next week Schneider was held at the Winnipeg Immigration Building, which was designated as the receiving station for people arrested under the DOCR. Once taken into custody, the RCMP transferred detainees to military officers under the Directorate of Internment Operations, at which point they were formally classified as internees.²³

On 11 September 1939, Fritz Schneider was transferred from Winnipeg and placed on a train bound for the Kananaskis Internment Camp in Alberta. Thilde’s initial experience following

²⁰ Schneider Appeal Hearing Transcript, 27 November 1939, 13.

²¹ *Winnipeg Free Press*, 5 September 1939, 13.

²² *Winnipeg Free Press*, 5 September 1939, 13.

²³ Depending on the province, most receiving stations closed after this initial wave of arrests, with the RCMP assuming responsibility for transporting internees to internment camps where they were handed over to military authorities of the camp. Lieut. Col. Hubert Stethem to RCMP Inspector D. C. Saul, 8 September 1939, File C11-19-3, Vol. 3564, RG18-F-3, Royal Canadian Mounted Police fonds, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Canada. Digital ID number: 879816; Brig.-General E. de B. Panet to District Officer Commanding (Major J. W. Stagg), 15 December 1939, File 7236-3, Microfilm reel C-5376, RG24-C-1, Department of National Defence fonds, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Canada. Digital ID number: 940141; Internment Operations - War Diary Internment Operations, 28 December 1939, Canada - National Defence - Streight, Harvey N. (Colonel), file 2, Box 1, MG 6 E2, Canada - National Defence fonds, Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba; Lothar Zimmermann, "The Forgotten POWs: German-Canadian Enemy Aliens Behind Canadian Barbed Wire," in *Annales 8*, German-Canadian Studies in the Nineties: Results & Projects Symposium 1992, (Toronto: German-Canadian Historical Association, 1993), 24.

Fritz's arrest was one of confusion and emotional distress: "I just came back from Winnipeg. The whole day I tried hard to locate you. But the only information I got was, that I could write you c/o alien Receiving depot. They would not tell me where you have gone [...] I shall call again in the end of the week, maybe they can tell me then where you are."²⁴ The absence of accurate information about her husband had a significant emotional impact on Thilde. In another letter the following day, she wrote, "[i]t is so horrible for me that I do not know, where you are, how you are and when you will come back. I did not get any information to-day of your whereabouts. I am just waiting and waiting and thinking that I love you so very dearly."²⁵ Although her concerns might seem insignificant in a broader historical context, it is important evidence that the Canadian government was actively and intentionally withholding information from the families of internees. While some level of secrecy surrounding internment operations can be understood on grounds of national security, the refusal to share even the location of detainees with their immediate family members stands in direct contradiction to the government policy of supporting families outside the camps. This contradiction is evident in the case of family members such as Thilde, who travelled daily to Winnipeg to visit her husband prior to his relocation.

Thilde's frustration was compounded by the overt secrecy surrounding Fritz's disappearance. In the first letter she wrote to Fritz, she recalled how the lack of transparency was not lost on the Immigration Hall officers either. She noted that "Captain Corby, [who] was so very kind, he was so sorry that he could not tell me where you had gone. I hope the new place and the new officers are as nice as in the Immigration Hall."²⁶ In a follow-up letter the next day,

²⁴ Thilde Schneider to Fritz Schneider, 11 September 1939, File 13, Box 1, CA UWA 23.20, Schneider/Snyder Family Sous-Fonds.

²⁵ Thilde Schneider to Fritz Schneider, 12 September 1939, File 13, Box 1, CA UWA 23.20, Schneider/Snyder Family Sous-Fonds.

²⁶ Thilde Schneider to Fritz Schneider, 11 September 1939, File 13, Box 1, CA UWA 23.20, Schneider/Snyder Family Sous-Fonds.

Thilde noted to Fritz that Corby confirmed that there was policy of secrecy in place: “[Captain Corby] knows your address but at present he is not at liberty to say where you are. But he would have no doubt that I will hear from you in the near future.”²⁷ Curiously, the Office of the Custodian of Enemy Alien Property was also unaware of Schneider’s internment for at least a month. In a chain of letters dated 28 September to 10 October 1939, the Office of the Custodian indicated it had yet to be informed about Schneider’s internment and, as a result, had to request information about him from a company with which he had previously conducted business.²⁸ The letter further stated that “during the period of his internment his property was subject to the control of this office.”²⁹ This statement clarifies that the Office of the Custodian should have been informed of Schneider’s internment immediately upon his processing. It remains unclear whether this was an isolated case or part of a wider administrative issue.

A primary concern for Thilde following her husband’s disappearance from Winnipeg was whether she would ever be able to visit him again. The lack of official information regarding his whereabouts contributed to a false sense of hope. In one letter she wrote: “If you only would not be so far away, so that I can see you each Sunday. I will keep the car till I know, where you are. Maybe we can drive out Sunday to see you. But I am sure I can come to you by train, no matter how far it is. I will find a way to find and see you.”³⁰ Despite rumors, Thilde initially refused to believe that Fritz had been sent to the Rocky Mountains: “To-day I heard that your train was bound for Banff. But you can’t be as far as the Rockies.”³¹ None of the surviving letters indicate

²⁷ Thilde Schneider to Fritz Schneider, 12 September 1939, File 13, Box 1, CA UWA 23.20, Schneider/Snyder Family Sous-Fonds.

²⁸ Henry George Latimer Strange (Searle Grain Company Limited) to A. H. Mathieu (Assistant Deputy Custodian), 4 October 1939, File 539, Vol. 626, RG117-A-3, Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Fonds.

²⁹ Glenn W. McPherson (Office of the Custodian) to Gerald Stewart Rutherford (Debt Adjustment Board), 4 June 1940, File 539, Vol. 626, RG117-A-3, Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Fonds.

³⁰ Thilde Schneider to Fritz Schneider, 11 September 1939, Schneider/Snyder Family Sous-Fonds.

³¹ Thilde Schneider to Fritz Schneider, 12 September 1939, Schneider/Snyder Family Sous-Fonds.

exactly when Thilde was officially informed of Fritz's relocation to Kananaskis. The most plausible assumption is that she did not learn of his location until the embargo on internee mail was lifted in October 1939.

Due to the distance and new reality of managing both her children and the farm alone, Thilde could not make the journey to visit her husband. This situation was common among the majority of wives of internees, especially those living in rural parts of Canada. While family visitations were technically permitted, they rarely occurred due to the remote location of the internment camps. Moreover, visitations were heavily supervised by camp guards and seldom described as comforting experiences. According to accounts from former internment camp guards, supervising family visits was considered one of the most difficult and emotionally taxing assignments. One guard being interviewed after the war described it as such:

Most of the time I only wanted to be somewhere else. The poor wives would arrive, often in a terrible state, most of them crying. A lot were obviously poor. Some were on welfare. Most of them were young. Often they were amorous. Some had kids. They'd carry one or two and one would tag along, holding onto the mother's skirts or coat. Then at the end of the visit there were always a lot more tears. At times the women would become hysterical. I tell you, I hated being there.³²

However, the reality was far bleaker for many other internees who never received a single visitor—a circumstance that was particularly difficult for the older men in the camps.

In addition to concerns for her husband, and the maintaining of both a farm and a family, Thilde devoted herself to do everything possible to secure her husband's release from internment. After finding out that Fritz had been moved to Alberta, she wrote that "all [her] efforts to get [Fritz] released can't be in vain. [She] will double them and try very hard again

³² Melady, *Escape From Canada! The Untold Story of German POWs in Canada 1939-1945*, 30.

and again to get [him] back.”³³ Thilde believed there was no justification for her husband to deserve prolonged internment. She sent several letters that attempted to obtain updates on her husband’s case. One notable letter sent to the Minister of Mines and Resources, Thomas Alexander Crerar—who was also a past business associate of Fritz—refused to “pass any opinion on the matter of Doctor Schneider’s internment beyond that it was due perhaps, to the attitude he took and the opinions he expressed, possibly quite unintentionally.”³⁴ Additionally, on Thilde’s request, several members of their German community and Fritz’s business associates wrote to Ottawa to inquiry about his internment. John Bracken personally promised to Thilde that he was going to Ottawa to discuss the matter with the Minister of Justice Ernest Lapointe directly.³⁵ Whether the meeting between Bracken and Lapointe took place is unknown, this was the last time Bracken was reference by the couple in their letters.

Between October and November 1939, there is an absence of letters in the file, despite evidence from other preserved correspondence indicating that there was no official break in their communication. However, everything now ultimately hinged on how Fritz Schneider presented himself at his appeal hearing. On 27 November 1939, Schneider’s appeal was heard by the Advisory Committee on the Orders of Restrictions and Detentions at Kananaskis. The hearing was presided over by Judge F. L. Smiley. The other two members of the three-man committee were Assistant Under-Secretary of State William P. J. O’Meara and Departmental Solicitor Jacques Fortier of the Department of Transport. Schneider’s appeal is an outlier due to its length; other appeal hearing transcripts average a 10-to-20-page count whereas his was 75 pages, which was the result of a two day hearing. In concluding Schneider’s case, Judge

³³ Thilde Schneider to Fritz Schneider, 12 September 1939, Schneider/Snyder Family Sous-Fonds.

³⁴ Schneider Appeal Hearing Transcript, 27 November 1939, 77; T. A. Crerar to Thilde Schneider, 3 October 1939, File 14, Box 1, CA UWA 23.20, Schneider/Snyder Family Sous-Fonds.

³⁵ Thilde Schneider to Fritz Schneider, 11 September 1939, Schneider/Snyder Family Sous-Fonds.

Smiley and committee member O'Meara submitted a six-page statement recommending that Schneider should remain interned, citing alleged connections to fascist organizations and his trips to Germany.³⁶ Intriguingly, the third member of the committee, Jacques Fortier, objected to the recommendation and submitted a dissenting report in which he argued that Schneider should be released. Fortier argued that “[t]here is no evidence to establish that Schneider was either a member of Nazi organizations, or engaged in the dissemination of German propaganda, or otherwise engaged in subversive activities.”³⁷ Fortier additionally wrote that Schneider case was supported by the trade agreement of 1936 and Premier John Bracken of Manitoba. Fortier interpreted Schneider’s actions as those of a “business man who foresaw financial gain” and that the “release of F. K. Schneider would not be dangerous to Canada and recommends his conditional release.”³⁸ The final decision was not officially attributed to any individual, as all appeal recommendations were reviewed by the Robertson committee. Out of 305 appeal cases, the appeal committee recommended the release of 72 internees. However, upon a case-by-case review, the Robertson committee overruled many of the recommendations, and by 13 May 1940, a total of 136 internees had been released.³⁹ In Schneider’s case, Fortier’s dissenting verdict appears to have been persuasive to the Robertson committee because on 22 April 1940 Fritz Schneider was officially released.

³⁶ In Fritz Schneider’s case, the RCMP recorded him as a member of the *Deutscher Bund*, which was often considered sufficient grounds for internment. When asked about the affiliation in the appeal hearing, Schneider denied ever being a part of the organization. No evidence was turned over to the committee by the RCMP to support their claim, which was common occurrence in other internee appeal hearings; “RCMP Character Profile of Schneider,” Vol. 965, R188-67-2-E, RG13-F-12, Department of Justice Fonds, 25, 48; Schneider Appeal Hearing Transcription Summary, 27 November 1939, Vol. 970, R188-67-2-E, RG13-F-12, Department of Justice Fonds.

³⁷ “MR. FORTIER (Dissenting),” 27 November 1939, Vol. 970, R188-67-2-E, RG13-F-12, Department of Justice Fonds, 2.

³⁸ “MR. FORTIER (Dissenting),” 27 November 1939, Vol. 970, 2.

³⁹ Barbara Lorenzkowski states that 103 had been released by May 1940, but an RCMP security bulletin record 136 in a data assessment on internment and registration of enemy aliens. Gregory S. Kealey, Reginald Whitaker, Committee on Canadian Labour History, and Committee on Canadian Labour History, *R.C.M.P. Security Bulletins: The War Series*, (St. John’s, Nfld: Committee on Canadian Labour History, 1989), No.30, 13 May 1940, 243.

Over the course of the three months following the appeal hearing—from December 1939 to February 1940—Thilde’s letters provide a valuable window into the Schneider family’s daily life as they awaited a decision on Fritz’s release. On 30 November, both Thilde and their eldest son, Hans, sent letters to Fritz. Hans’s letter is particularly significant, as it is the only known preserved letter from a child of a German-Canadian internee. As much as internment affected the wives, the children of internees also perceived the new realities of their daily life. Changes could be as minimal as asking why their father was no longer coming home or whether he had sent a letter that week.⁴⁰ Thilde noted in her first letter to Fritz that “Wilfred and Bert [our] two sweet boys, who had tears in their eyes when I told them you had gone from Winnipeg.”⁴¹ However, in extreme cases children watched helplessly as both their parents were interned and they were placed in orphanages.⁴² Hans’s circumstances were distinct from many other children of internees as most were significantly younger compared to him. A gifted and award-winning student at Selkirk Devonshire Collegiate, Hans had been the recipient of the Governor General’s Medal in 1937.⁴³ At 17 years old in 1939, Hans possessed a level of maturity and awareness that allowed for a unique perspective. For instance, Hans reported to Fritz that “there is absolutely no anti-German feeling around here although some are really very anti-nazi.”⁴⁴ The rest of Hans’s letter is concerned primarily with business relating to the upkeep of the family farm. However, he also confirmed that the family had to sell their car shortly after his father’s internment—a detail consistent with other German-Canadian family narratives, in which the car was often the first asset liquidated to support household finances.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Thilde Schneider to Fritz Schneider, 16 January 1940, Schneider/Snyder Family Sous-Fonds.

⁴¹ Thilde Schneider to Fritz Schneider, 11 September 1939, Schneider/Snyder Family Sous-Fonds.

⁴² Hilmer, *Ein deutsches Schicksal in Kanada: Einwanderung--Internierung--Ringeln um Rehabilitierung*.

⁴³ *The Winnipeg Tribune*, 1 June 1938, 7.

⁴⁴ Hans Schneider to Fritz Schneider, 30 November 1939, Schneider/Snyder Family Sous-Fonds.

⁴⁵ Hans Schneider to Fritz Schneider, 30 November 1939, Schneider/Snyder Family Sous-Fonds.

The sudden removal of the family's primary "breadwinner," especially for an indefinite period, had a profoundly destabilizing effect on women who were not accustomed to simultaneously performing the roles of both homemaker and provider.⁴⁶ However, Thilde was already very proactive in maintaining the upkeep of the farm and household to the best of her ability; "My duty is to keep our home nice and our family happy. [...] The cows gave good milk and the hens are laying very well. Hans is managing very well and I have lots of work to do, the best comfort in these bitter days."⁴⁷ While Thilde was somewhat accustomed to Fritz being away from the farm for extended periods due to business travel, the uncertainty surrounding his release introduced a new layer of emotional strain. As the weeks passed without news, signs of psychological and physical exhaustion became increasingly apparent. In several letters, Thilde references a persistent illness that she directly associates with her husband's detention: "I don't feel well this evening. This afternoon I slept for 3 hours. Now it is somewhat better [...] But I still have a headache and an unpleasant feeling in my stomach."⁴⁸ In a subsequent letter, she more clearly links her condition to emotional distress: "My illness has left me so depressed. I felt a little better today, but I can't really work yet [...] if only I knew if you were with me for Christmas, I would be healthy again immediately."⁴⁹ Even within the relatively short four-month separation, it becomes evident that the prolonged uncertainty surrounding Fritz's internment was deeply affecting Thilde. Her condition was further aggravated by the irregularity of Fritz's letters, about which she frequently complained: "I haven't heard from you for so long! I received your last airmail letter eight days ago. I'll have to wait until Thursday or Friday before I hear

⁴⁶ Epp, *Women Without Men: Mennonite Refugees of the Second World War*, 5; Zimmermann, "Those Other POWs: German-Canadian Civilians behind Canadian Barbed Wire and Prison Bars," 81.

⁴⁷ Thilde Schneider to Fritz Schneider, 12 September 1939, Schneider/Snyder Family Sous-Fonds.

⁴⁸ Thilde Schneider to Fritz Schneider, 30 November 1939, Schneider/Snyder Family Sous-Fonds.

⁴⁹ Thilde Schneider to Fritz Schneider, 12 December 1939, Schneider/Snyder Family Sous-Fonds.

from you again.”⁵⁰ While the reasons for Fritz’s infrequent correspondence remain unclear, it is notable that his preserved letters from his earlier trips to Germany suggest he was typically an active and consistent writer.

By December, the possibility of Fritz not returning home was beginning to become increasingly real. Thilde’s letters from this period are primarily focused on the prolonged and anxiety-induced wait for the verdict from Fritz’s appeal hearing. While other topics—such as routine farm work, the purchasing of cows for the farm, and their children—appear throughout her correspondence, these subjects function more as distractions from the central emotional weight of not knowing when, or if, Fritz would return:

My God, I'm so worried and scared that you won't be released!!! What shall we do then? [...] I'm not going out for a moment, except for Hans. Perhaps I'll hear something tomorrow, or next week, or next week. We need to know for sure whether you're staying before I can undertake any further work. Won't they at least let you know? It's a pain, this waiting. Can't you ask somewhere? Should I write to the Minister of State personally?⁵¹

As her patience continued to wear thin, Thilde once again attempted to reach out to various levels of government to obtain more information about her husband’s case. This time, however, her efforts were accompanied by clear reservations. In a letter to Fritz, Thilde acknowledged that, “my gut tells me that I can't go to your friends anymore and I'm pushing for help again.”⁵² Despite these misgivings, Thilde proceeded to send an airmail letter on 5 February 1940 to the Acting Secretary of State and Minister of Justice, Ernest Lapointe, requesting an immediate update on her husband’s internment status. Whether that letter had any effect on the decision to release Fritz is unknown, but he was quietly released from internment two months later.

⁵⁰ Thilde Schneider to Fritz Schneider, 12 December 1939, Schneider/Snyder Family Sous-Fonds.

⁵¹ Thilde Schneider to Fritz Schneider, 2 February 1940, Schneider/Snyder Family Sous-Fonds.

⁵² Thilde Schneider to Fritz Schneider, 15 January 1940, Schneider/Snyder Family Sous-Fonds.

The internment narrative of the Schneider family should have concluded with Fritz Schneider's release on 10 April 1940. However, the gradual release of internees became increasingly visible to the Canadian public. The RCMP had reported on 13 May 1940 that 136 out of 405 internees had been released after appeal, which is a fairly steady stream of people released compared to intake.⁵³ On 21 May 1940, the *Free Press* published a headlining article detailing widespread dissatisfaction among Winnipeg war veterans with the current state of internment policy. Drastic resolutions were drafted by veterans at a general meeting of the St. James branch of the Canadian Legion the previous night, which called for RCMP to be given a "free hand to deal with apparently subversive elements" and for veterans to assist in "control of subversive action by hostile aliens."⁵⁴ These resolutions were prompted by "many members condemn[ing] the release of Dr. Schneider [...] asking for revocation of his and all similar releases."⁵⁵ They additionally demanded increased security measures for infrastructure and called for the deployment of seasoned military personnel to guard against the growing threat of subversive activity. Their argument was centered around the fact that Canada's vital bottleneck of communication on mainline railways through Winnipeg was vulnerable to sabotage. Notably, no attempted attacks on communication or railway infrastructure were documented by the RCMP. Nor have historians been able to find conclusive proof of credible threats to infrastructure, apart from the Hauffe plot in Trail, British Columbia.⁵⁶

It is likely that Schneider simply fell into the spotlight of the veterans' growing ire. Carl Montgomery, President of the Amputations Association of the Great War, stated to the *Free*

⁵³ Kealey, Whitaker, *R.C.M.P. Security Bulletins: The War Series*, 243.

⁵⁴ *Winnipeg Free Press*, May 21, 1940, 4.

⁵⁵ *Winnipeg Free Press*, May 21, 1940, 3-4.

⁵⁶ Grams, *Coming Home to the Third Reich: Return Migration of German Nationals from the United States and Canada, 1933-1941*, 140-144.

Press: “We are against the release of enemy aliens, Dr. Schneider, or anybody suspected of subversive activities in this country. [...] Can you imagine that with Winnipeg being considered as one of the centres of the fifth column in this country they release a man like Dr. Schneider?”⁵⁷

Whether this reaction stemmed from reliable information or mere rumor remains unclear.

Notably, the *Free Press* had not reported on Schneider’s internment prior to his release, suggesting that public perception may have been shaped by hearsay rather than fact.

Conveniently, the veteran organizations in Winnipeg found a political ally in Winnipeg South Centre Member of Parliament Ralph Maybank, who served as their primary advocate within the federal government.

On 28 May 1940, Maybank introduced a motion during the first session of the 19th Parliament, requesting “a copy of all correspondence, letters, telegrams and other documents relating to the internment as an enemy alien of F. K. Schneider, of Lockport, Manitoba, and the subsequent release of the said F. K. Schneider.”⁵⁸ This inquiry was unprecedented; unlike high-profile internees such as Adrien Arcand or Montreal Mayor Camillien Houde, individual cases were rarely, if ever, addressed directly on the floor of the House of Commons.⁵⁹ In doing so, Maybank had effectively thrust Schneider’s case into the national spotlight. On 3 June 1940, the Minister of Justice Ernest Lapointe publicly declined the request, stating that the documentation was not to be released. He justified his decision by claiming that disclosure would reveal

⁵⁷ *Winnipeg Free Press* 21 May 1940. 3-4.

⁵⁸ Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *House of Commons Votes and Proceedings*, 19th Parl., 1st Sess., No 9 (28 May 1940) at 58, https://parl.canadiana.ca/view/oop.proc_HOC_1901_1/100, accessed 25 July 2025.

⁵⁹ Camillien Houde (1889–1958) served as a Member of Parliament (1949-53) and as mayor of Montreal for four terms (1928-32, 1934-36, 1938-40, and 1944-54). He campaigned vigorously against conscription and openly supported Fascist Italy. On 2 August 1940, he publicly urged the men of Quebec to ignore the national registration. Three days later, he was arrested by the RCMP and subsequently interned in Petawawa and Fredericton for the duration of the war. He was also a prominent political opponent of the Minister of Justice, Ernest Lapointe, who signed his arrest warrant. Jones, *Both Sides of the Wire: The Fredericton Internment Camp*, Vol. 2, 333-339.

confidential information and potentially compromise individuals involved in the case.⁶⁰ It is more plausible that the government aimed to establish a precedent, thereby preventing a flood of similar requests. However, before Maybank could press the issue again, the government succumbed to public pressure and Schneider once again found himself in an internment camp.

On 10 June 1940—in response to Italy’s entry into the Second World War and in a renewed effort to demonstrate that the subversive threat was being taken seriously in Canada—the government and the RCMP had initiated the second mass wave of internment arrests. This latest sweep was supported by a federal amendment to Regulation 39 on 5 June 1940, which banned fascist and communist organizations and permitted the seizure of their property.⁶¹ The primary targets of this wave were Italian nationals and Italian Canadians, due to Italy’s official declaration of war. However, on 12 June, both the *Free Press* and *Evening Tribune* covered the re-arrest of Schneider on their respective front pages.⁶² Coverage of his re-arrest was also linked with the arrest of Winnipeg Alderman Jacob Penner who was arrested on the same day.⁶³ Official explanation for his re-internment was not given; however, the *Evening Tribune*’s article alluded to Schneider’s 1939 trip to Germany as significant evidence fueling rumors that he was a Nazi agent.⁶⁴ Notably, the fact that Schneider had been working closely with the Bracken government was not present by the newspaper articles. Ironically, in the same *Free Press* paper that announced Schneider’s re-arrest, Winnipeg Chief of Police George Smith announced that no

⁶⁰ *Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 3 June 1940, 11; 30 May 1940, 13.

⁶¹ Jody Perrun, *The Patriotic Consensus: Unity, Morale, and the Second World War in Winnipeg*, (Winnipeg, Manitoba: University of Manitoba Press, 2014), 35.

⁶² *Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 12 June 1940, 1,5; *Winnipeg Free Press* 12 June 1940, 1.

⁶³ Jacob Penner (1880-1965) elected to Winnipeg City Council in 1934 representing the North End as a communist. Penner’s experience is highlight in Perrun’s book. Schneider was not mentioned by Perrun, who primarily focused on the internment of Winnipeg communists; Perrun, *The Patriotic Consensus: Unity, Morale, and the Second World War in Winnipeg*, 38-43.

⁶⁴ *Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 12 June 1940, 5.

Italian Canadian had been targeted for arrest within the city.⁶⁵ Following his arrest, Schneider was held at Headingly Jail to await transfer to an internment camp.

The Office of the Custodian does not play a huge role in the Schneiders' narrative due to the farm assets remaining in Thilde's name. However, a memorandum dated 4 December 1941, produced by the Custodian's Office, offers valuable insight into the family's increasingly dire financial circumstances. The memorandum summarized the timeline of Schneider's internment and the Office of the Custodian's correspondence regarding the case. On 12 October 1939, the Western Trust Company confirmed that Fritz had been interned and noted "that the creditors had appointed two trustees and that it was their intention to force Mrs. Schneider to make an assignment under the Bankruptcy Act."⁶⁶ However, because Thilde Schneider held legal title to the family's farm in her name, the creditors' plan stalled, preventing immediate bankruptcy proceedings. This helps explain Thilde Schneider's growing anxiety about the family's financial future should her husband remain interned. Responsibility for maintaining the farm and avoiding bankruptcy fell entirely on her shoulders. Failure to do so would have led to the complete liquidation of the family's assets to satisfy Schneider's creditors.

At some point during 1942, Fritz was transferred from the Petawawa Internment Camp in Ontario to the Fredericton Internment Camp in New Brunswick. Documentation regarding the Schneider family's situation in 1941 is sparse, and no official records have surfaced concerning Schneider's second appeal hearing, which took place on 10 July 1942. However, it may be reasonably inferred that the hearing was favorable to Fritz, because he was released on 7 November 1942 to the Marylake Augustinian Monastery in King City, Ontario. His release was

⁶⁵ *Winnipeg Free Press*, 12 June 1940, 1.

⁶⁶ "Memorandum," 4 December 1941, File 539, Vol. 626, RG117-A-3, Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Fonds.

“conditionally upon his first subscribing to the Undertaking set out in Regulation 24 of the Defence of Canada Regulation, and further, that he subscribe to special undertaking.”⁶⁷ Although the nature of the special undertaking is not defined, it can be inferred that government prohibited Fritz from returning to Manitoba until at least the end of the war. This restriction is corroborated by the *Evening Tribune*, which reported “[Schneider’s] release was conditional that he not return to Manitoba for duration of the war unless with consent of the Department of Justice.”⁶⁸

Subsequently, Schneider relocated to Montreal after befriending Camillien Houde while they were interned together. He quickly capitalized on a cannery venture that arose during his time there, which became highly successful; eventually, the rest of his family joined him in Montreal.⁶⁹ Undoubtedly, the mounting pressure to sell their farm and home in Manitoba became overwhelming. It was during this period that the family changed their surname from Schneider to Snyder and remained in Québec until Fritz’s retirement in 1977. Although the precise reasoning behind the name change is unknown, it reflects broader patterns among German-Canadians in the postwar period, who often sought greater integration into Canadian society and wished to distance themselves from their recent pasts.⁷⁰ Following his retirement, Fritz and Thilde spent most of their time in Mexico until Thilde’s death in 1980. Fritz thereafter returned to Québec sporadically from Mexico until his own death in 1992. Of their five adult children, four have

⁶⁷ “Notice of Release,” 11 November 1942, File 539, Vol. 626, RG117-A-3, Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Fonds.

⁶⁸ *The Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 29 December 1942. 1.

⁶⁹ “Schneider, Hans-Joachim – Interview.” Interview by Alexander Freund. 2003-2004. Audio Recordings, Oral History Centre Archives.

⁷⁰ Cornelia Bartl, “The Loss of the German-Canadian Image,” in *German-Canadian Yearbook*, Vol. 13, edited by Georg K. Weissenborn, (Toronto: Historical Society of Mecklenburg Upper Canada, 1994), 315, 319; Grenke, *German Canadians: Community Formation, Transformation and Contribution to Canadian Life*, 87; Bassler, *Nation Builders and Enemy Aliens: Four Centuries of German Experience in Canada*, 140-149; Bassler, *The German Canadian Mosaic Today and Yesterday: Identities, Roots and Heritage*, 4; Chaput, “L’histoire des internés germano-canadiens durant la Seconde Guerre mondiale au prisme de trajectoires d’immigrés « ordinaires »,” 148.

been confirmed to have passed as well: Hans in 2003, Edith in 2007, Wilfred in 2012, and Fred in 2013. There is no indication that Fritz and Thilde Schneider ever returned to Manitoba.

The Schneider family narrative is unique among narratives of German-Canadian internment, which can be attributed to Fritz Schneider complex character and his re-internment. However, it is Thilde's surviving letter collection that creates this analysis and supports the reconstruction of the family's narrative. Thilde's letters provide rare and invaluable perspective: the voice of a German-Canadian woman speaking in her own terms. In contrast to following case studies, where the narratives of the wives must be interpreted through the lens of their husband's letters or a third-party viewpoint, Thilde's letters stand as a direct and unmediated account. They reveal how her husband's internment disrupted not only her emotional well-being but also the daily life and risked the economic stability of the family. Her letters also provide valuable insight into how the family was affected by the sudden removal of their husband and father. Fritz's disappearance from Winnipeg and the uncertainty of his release caused Thilde emotional and physical distress that was directly articulated in her letters. This was compounded by the lack of any correspondence or support by the Canadian government, little was communicated to ease the concerns of a family that just had a loved one disappear from the province. The lack of communication regarding Fritz, coupled with the government's direct action to re-intern him, effectively rendered planning for the future impossible, leaving Thilde in a state of domestic internment as she was forced to await his return. While Fritz had to endure being physically confined to internment camps, Thilde fought back emotional distress and depression while supporting both her farm and family. Although he eventually secured his release, the family's life in Manitoba was irreparably altered and cut short because of wartime internment policies

Chapter 2: Ruth Martin and Fred Martin

In the early morning of the 27 June 1940, Ruth Martin telephoned the Banque Canadienne Nationale to secure the funds for the upcoming hospital bills related to the birth of her third son. She was distraught to find out that all the family's assets had been frozen and placed in the care of the Western Trust Company, the agent of the Office of the Custodian of Enemy Alien Property in Winnipeg. Thankfully, the Western Trust acted quickly and had the funds transferred to Ruth as she was scheduled to be hospitalized that afternoon. All this new financial oversight was due to her husband's internment six days earlier on 21 June 1940. Although Frederick "Fritz" "Fred" M. Martin considered himself a loyal Canadian and had been in Canada since 1913, he was arrested during the second wave of internment in the summer 1940. Fred's internment placed the family sporting goods and paint distribution business—with offices in three different Canadian cities: Winnipeg, Toronto, and Montreal—in jeopardy. Despite heavy restrictions and continued government oversight, Ruth Martin kept both the business and family financially stable. The family's narrative presents strength and hope, even amidst the various hardships connected with internment: forced separation, unwanted government oversight, loss of physical and monetary possessions, and constant concern about their fate after the war. The Martins' narrative provides a unique perspective of the economic hardships related to internment policies and how the family had to adapt with little direct support from the government. Overall, the Martin family's story illustrates that the internment of the husband had a crucial effect on financial stability for the women and children left behind, which threatened their quality of life and well-being.

The story of Fred Martin's internment is preserved in files from the Office of the Custodian of Enemy Alien Property fonds and several letters in Fred Martin's personal fonds.¹ Fred's personal fonds contains fifteen letters addressed to Ruth Martin during his last six months of internment—from 4 October 1942 to 16 March 1943—and an unrelated ledger belonging to Ruth that tracked care packages sent to family in Germany after the war. These letters cover only a brief period of Fred's internment, as he had been interned for a full two years before this correspondence. These "letters" appear to be typed out drafts instead of the actual letters sent to Ruth. This assumption is based on their format and rough composition, containing numerous grammatical errors. It is also evident that Fred and Ruth exchanged a substantial number of letters and these letters were not the first in their correspondence with each other.² These draft letters likely exist because Fred was able to access a typewriter to organize his thoughts before writing them down on the official internment letter template. They are typed on traditional letter sized paper, not on the official internment folding letter templates provided to internees. The official internment letters were four inches by twelve inches and folded into three segments, much like folding a regular piece of paper to fit into an envelope. Properly sent letters also indicated that they came from a Canadian internment camp and were inspected by censors, which reportedly caused some families ridicule from neighbors when the mail was delivered.³ Some letters are typed in English when Fred discusses business matters, but the rest are typed or written in German. Unfortunately, due to the absence of response letters from Ruth, the narrative

¹ "Martin, Fritz," File part 1, File 3127, Vol. 645, RG117-A-3, Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Fonds, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Canada. Digital ID number: 1129151; "Martin, Fritz," File part 2 = 1940/06-1943/08; 3 = 1940/05-1941/12, File 3127, Vol. 646, RG117-A-3, Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Fonds, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Canada. Digital ID number: 1129152; Friedrich Martin Fonds, R2840-0-6-E, MG30-C154, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Canada. Digital ID number: 101649.

² Fred Martin to Ruth Martin, 16 October 1942, R2840-0-6-E, MG30-C154, Friedrich Martin Fonds, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Canada. Digital ID number: 101649.

³ Repka. *Dangerous Patriots: Canada's Unknown Prisoners of War*, 100.

is understandably incomplete. This is not uncommon in analyses of letter collections, as some historians have compared it to analyzing a one-sided conversation.⁴ The fate of both the letters that Fred actually sent to Ruth and the letters that Ruth wrote remains unclear and were not preserved in the family's fonds. However, the larger narrative gaps regarding how the family managed the first two years of Fred's internment can be supplemented by business correspondence from the Office of the Custodian.

The Office of the Custodian was heavily involved in oversight of the Martins' business, the Fred M. Martin Company, due to the Regulations Respecting Trading with the Enemy. The regulations restricted Canadian companies from doing business with German companies and any debt or profit related to stock previously received from German suppliers was paid to the Office of the Custodian.⁵ The day-to-day work of the Custodian's Office in Winnipeg was outsourced to the Western Trust Company who were recognized as their agents. The preserved business correspondence has been critical to this case study due to the Western Trust's third-party viewpoint and sympathetic support for Ruth Martin. The Office of the Custodian maintained three large files that consist of well over fifty business letters and written assessments related to the Martins' assets. In addition to physical documents, Fred Martin gave two interviews about his internment experience. The first interview was with historian Arthur Grenke in the early 1970s while Grenke conducted research for his doctoral dissertation at the University of Manitoba about Winnipeg's 1872 to 1919 German community.⁶ The second interview was for the

⁴ Ryan C. Eyford, "'Close Together, Though Miles and Miles Apart': Family, Distance, and Emotion in the Letters of the Taylor Sisters, 1881-1921," *Histoire Sociale* 48, No. 96 (2015), 71.

⁵ "Extra: P.C. 2512," *Canada Gazette*, 11 September 1939, 1-15.

⁶ Mr. F[red] Martin, interview. A copy of this interview was obtained from the collection of Professor Alexander Freund (University of Winnipeg). Freund purchased and digitized a collection of Grenke interviews from the Manitoba Museum that had the original cassette tapes. The provenance of why the original interview tapes were at the Manitoba Museum is unclear. However, the Library and Archives Canada also have copies of the interview cassette tapes and noted the interview was conducted when Arthur Grenke worked as an archivist for the National

1975 CBC special documentary film *The Red and the Rhine*.⁷ Both interviews provide context on Fred's internment experience and present Fred's postwar perception of his internment.

Fred recalled the moment he was arrested by the RCMP in *The Red and the Rhine*. Fred highlighted two important factors of his arrest experience: "My wife was pregnant, [...] [An RCMP officer] came in civilian clothing [...] but was very polite. The Mountie would have never taken me in. Never. He told me that we had nothing against you. But the public opinion."⁸ A similar sentiment was reiterated in Fred's interview with Grenke: "as far as I would later determine, it was an order given to the Mounties not on their own and they could not refuse."⁹ Fred emphasized in the interviews that he was arrested solely because the RCMP needed to fill a quota and appease public opinion. Unfortunately, whether RCMP records on suspected enemy aliens still exist is unknown, but it is documented that the RCMP possibly destroyed their files on Second World War internment during the 1960s. Writer and Journalist Charles Clay recorded that the RCMP had a possible total of 16,643 dossiers on suspicious aliens by 26 June 1940.¹⁰ However, after the war, in a RCMP memorandum on those same internment files and dossiers, Inspection Officer W. G. Gordon of the RCMP Central Registry wrote that "these files are taking up valuable space."¹¹ The other key point that Fred highlights about his arrest was Ruth's

Ethnic Archives of the Public Archives of Canada. "Martin, Fred – Interview," 1977, audio recording, Accession No. 1978-0042, National Ethnic Archives Fonds, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Canada. Digital ID number: 438186.

⁷ The documentary profiled the German-Canadian population in Manitoba, their contribution to the development of the province, and the history of German influence in the province. Frank Rasler, dir., "Specials - Documentary - *The Red and the Rhine*," March 1975, V312, 8 film reels (53 min., 66 sec.): on air prints; magnetic soundtracks; A rolls; B rolls, CBC Manitoba Fonds, Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

⁸ Frank Rasler, dir., "Specials - Documentary - *The Red and the Rhine*," 1975, V312, CBC Manitoba Fonds.

⁹ Mr. F[red] Martin, interview.

¹⁰ Charles Clay. *So, You Want a War Job!* (Oxford University Press, 1942), 90 (footnote).

¹¹ Additionally, the report notes that the files on communists should be reviewed but "we do not feel that we will be losing much if we destroy the files of Nazis, fascists and Japanese." The RCMP files that remain in the Library and Archives Canada on internees come from the copies retained by the Department of Justice and Department of External Affairs, which is likely only a fraction of the RCMP possibly destroyed. W. G. Gordon, "Memorandum," 4 November 1961, File part 2=1940-1941; 4=1943-1961, File C11-19-4, Vol. 3565, RG18-F-3, Royal Canadian Mounted Police Fonds, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Canada. Digital ID number: 879817.

condition of being pregnant. He was truly devoted to his wife and deeply affected by the forced separation from her, as the letters show.

The Office of the Custodian files described the Martin family as the following: “Mrs. Martin’s name is Ruth Martin, and she has [three] children, ages seven and two and one-half years. Her husband, Fritz M. Martin, devoted part of his time to giving music lessons and the remainder to what might be called Manufacturers’ Agent business, selling sporting goods of various kinds.”¹² Of the three children, the eldest—and most frequently mentioned in his father’s letters—was seven-year-old Peter.¹³ There was also Hans Martin, the middle child, who was only two years old at the time, and Rolf Martin, who was born shortly after his father’s internment. From the sources consulted, little is recorded about Ruth Martin’s background. However, the interview with Arthur Grenke managed to record some of Fred’s life before the Second World War. Frederick Martin was born in Dresden to a middle-class family sometime in the 1890s. He unknowingly escaped the First World War in Europe when he immigrated to Winnipeg in December 1913. However, once the First World War began, Fred lost his paint manufacturing job and experienced the prejudice against Germans firsthand.¹⁴ Curiously, Fred does not specify whether he was interned during the First World War, which as a new German immigrant to Canada without a job would have been unusual if he was not interned. It is not recorded whether Fred attempted to gain full citizenship or if the government recorded him as naturalized. Nevertheless, in both the interviews and his letters, Fred considered himself a loyal Canadian.

¹² A. I. Grierson (The Western Trust Co.) to Custodian of Enemy Alien Property Office, 27 June 1940, File part 2=1940/06-1943/08; 3=1940/05-1941/12, File 3127, Vol. 646, RG117-A-3, Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Fonds.

¹³ Peter Krause Martin (4 March 1933 – 1 June 2024). “Peter Martin Obituary.” Dignity Memorial, June 2024. <https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/winnipeg-mb/peter-martin-11847594>.

¹⁴ Mr. F[red] Martin, interview; Alexander Freund, ed., *Being German Canadian: History, Memory, Generations*, (Winnipeg, Manitoba, 2021), 47.

The Office of the Custodian had already been in contact with Fred Martin weeks before his internment. In the first week of June 1940, the Custodian's Office informed Fred they had become aware that he owed money to several German companies. They stated that, under the Regulations Respecting Trading with the Enemy, the debts now need to be paid off to the Office of the Custodian. Additionally, because he failed to inform the office within thirty days of the war starting, they would be adding a penalty of 5% of daily interest until it is paid.¹⁵ Fred quickly wrote back apologizing that he was not informed of any such rule and paid the outstanding debts, but without the additional charged interest. On 21 June 1940, shortly after Fred Martin's arrest, the Western Trust Company was charged with investigating his affairs. It was standard practice to record the assets of internees and similar assessments were performed on Fritz Schneider and Heinrich Holtmann.¹⁶ In the first response by the Western Trust to Office of the Custodian on 26 June 1940, they noted that they were in the progress of inventorying all of the Martins' assets in Winnipeg, including a 1940 Ford V.8.¹⁷ The car had been recently purchased, with on the initial instalments paid. The Ford was bought for \$1,100, with a \$500 trade-in for Fred's previous Plymouth Sedan, plus an initial payment of 38 dollars.¹⁸ The Custodian's Office had the vehicle seized and stored until it could be sold back to the auto dealer.

¹⁵ A. H. Mathieu to Fred M. Martin Co., 6 June 1940, "Neisch and Company - Fred M. Martin Co. - Winnipeg," File 2665, Vol. 1915, RG117-A-3, A-2025-03308, Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Fonds, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Canada. Digital ID number: 1163691.

¹⁶ "Schneider, Frederick Karol and Mathilda, Francisca," file 539, volume 626, RG117-A-3, Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Fonds; "Holtmann [Holtman], Heinrich," file 3396, Vol. 1953, RG117-A-3, Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Fonds, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Canada. Digital ID number: 1163711.

¹⁷ John Alexander MacAulay to T. W. Laidlaw (Custodian of Enemy Alien Property Office), 26 June 1940, File part: 2=1940/06-1943/08; 3=1940/05-1941/12, File 3127, Vol. 646, RG117-A-3, Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Fonds.

¹⁸ J. A. MacAulay to T. W. Laidlaw, 26 June 1940, File part: 2=1940/06-1943/08; 3=1940/05-1941/12, File 3127, Vol. 646, RG117-A-3, Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Fonds.

The majority of the letters from the Western Trust were written and signed by the company's secretary, Andrew Inglis Grierson.¹⁹ The letters written by him not only offer insight into the Martins' business, but also a surprising amount of detail on the family and the health of Ruth Martin. Even in the first correspondence with the Office of the Custodian about the Martin family, Grierson made special note of Ruth Martin's health: "It is our intention to make an inventory of these goods, but we understand Mrs. Martin is in a very delicate state of health at the present time and is particularly upset over her husband's internment."²⁰ The Western Trust's concern for Ruth Martin extended into the next letter that they sent to the Office of the Custodian on 27 June 1940. After quickly learning from the Banque Canadienne Nationale that all the family's monetary assets had been frozen, she frantically requested counsel from the Western Trust, as she expected to be hospitalized that afternoon. She gave birth to Rolf Martin only a couple of days later. She explained to the Western Trust that the reason she was anxious to process the money orders and cheques—that the Banque Canadienne Nationale had originally frozen—was because she needed the funds to pay her hospital bill.²¹ The Western Trust also wrote in the same letter of 27 June that "it is quite evident that she will require some assistance" and that "this case is rather urgent, owing to the condition of Mrs. Martin's health, we would appreciate hearing from you as soon as possible."²² The Custodian's response on 3 July was less than supportive, as it prioritized creditor protection above all else:

¹⁹ In another letter to the Custodian's Office from a barrister in Winnipeg, a "Mr. Grierson" is referred to as the "Inspector for the Custodian" in Winnipeg. Although this is undoubtedly the same person, the title of "Inspector for the Custodian" was not an official designation. Andrew Inglis Grierson died in 1951 at the age of 64. He served as the Western Trust's secretary for 35 years after immigrating to Canada from Scotland in 1909; *Winnipeg Free Press*, 9 May 1951, 7; *Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 9 May 1951, 8.

²⁰ J.A. MacAulay to T. W. Laidlaw, 26 June 1940, File part: 2=1940/06-1943/08; 3=1940/05-1941/12, File 3127, Vol. 646, RG117-A-3, Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Fonds.

²¹ A. I. Grierson to Custodian of Enemy Alien Property Office, 27 June 1940, File part: 2=1940/06-1943/08; 3=1940/05-1941/12, File 3127, Vol. 646, RG117-A-3, Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Fonds.

²² A. I. Grierson to Custodian of Enemy Alien Property Office, 27 June 1940.

While I appreciate the position in which Mrs. Martin finds herself, I think that it will be necessary for you to conduct an investigation into the business affairs of the internee, to find out what other creditors he has and to see that they are protected so far as there are assets to meet their claims. If you can satisfy yourselves that the creditors can be taken care of, then it will be in order for you to use your discretion as to releasing funds to Mrs. Martin.²³

This illustrates that the Office of the Custodian assumably had an unwritten creditors first policy and families of the interned were not of primary concern to the office. The Custodian of Enemy Property Office handled business affairs and management of enemy alien property but was never mandated to directly support the families of the interned. However, the lack of a specific governmental support system for families of the interned led them to rely on Custodian's Office as the easiest way to communicate with the federal government.

The tight control exercised by the Office of the Custodian over the finances of the interned had an adverse effect on their families, more so than on the interned themselves. Internees had little need for money in the internment camps as they were housed and fed substantial well, even compared to Canadian soldiers.²⁴ Conversely, for the families of the interned who depended on that money to survive, the actions and delays of the Custodian's Office often put them in precarious situations. On 16 July, Grierson reported to the Custodian's Office that Ruth had collected a considerable number of cheques and money orders, which could not be cashed due to Fred's internee status. Grierson acknowledged that Western Trust was not supposed to release funds to her without the Office of the Custodian's approval, but he also noted that "she is very much in need of funds, owes two months' rent on the house [...] hospital and doctors' bills, etc., we feel disposed to release some of these funds to her as you authorize us in

²³ T. W. Laidlaw to the Western Trust Company, 3 July 1940, File part: 2=1940/06-1943/08; 3=1940/05-1941/12, File 3127, Vol. 646, RG117-A-3, Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Fonds.

²⁴ Jonathan F. Vance. *Objects of Concern: Canadian Prisoners of War through the Twentieth Century*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1994), 131-132; Jones, *Both Sides of the Wire: The Fredericton Internment Camp*, Vol. 2, 420-422.

our discretion to do.”²⁵ The Western Trust was exceptionally supportive and lenient to Ruth, undoubtedly due to her health. In the same letter, Grierson wrote, “Mrs. Martin was in delicate health. She is at present confined to hospital, having given birth to a baby boy a few days ago. In the circumstances, she is very much in need of money [...] for the purpose of maintaining herself and her three children.”²⁶ However, Ruth was more active and vocal about her situation than other women in similar situations. Letters from the Western Trust indicate that Ruth was in contact with the Western Trust constantly, whether in person or over the phone.

The Office of the Custodian’s file on the Martins’ during the latter half of 1940 is sparse, as noted by the fact that winter was the slow period for the Martins’ company. The Western Trust supported Ruth’s desire to oversee the business and informed the Office of the Custodian that she was preparing to takeover after the birth of Rolf. She eventually regained enough of her health, and the Western Trust informed the Post Office Department (Royal Mail Canada) on 15 October 1940 that all mail for the company should be directed to her or them.²⁷ The rest of 1940 and into 1941 did not bring any new challenges for Ruth that were noteworthy enough for the Western Trust to record. Her main concern were more debts to German suppliers that were reported to Office of Custodian that need to be paid off and the German products liquidated.²⁸ Ironically one of the companies in question was managed by Fred’s brother in Germany. The Herrmann Neisch Company had shipped oil-based paints to Canada to be held in consignment. Unfortunately, the paints had spoiled because of their poor quality and low demand, rendering them impossible to

²⁵ A. I. Grierson to T. W. Laidlaw, 16 July 1940, File part: 2=1940/06-1943/08; 3=1940/05-1941/12, File 3127, Vol. 646, RG117-A-3, Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Funds.

²⁶ A. I. Grierson to T. W. Laidlaw, 16 July 1940.

²⁷ H. Beaulieu (Post Office Department of Canada) to E. H. Coleman (Custodian of Enemy Alien Property Office), 16 July 1940, File part: 2=1940/06-1943/08; 3=1940/05-1941/12, File 3127, Vol. 646, RG117-A-3, Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Funds.

²⁸ Western Trust Company to A. H. Mathieu, 20 March 1941, "Neisch and Company - Fred M. Martin Co. - Winnipeg," File 2665, Vol. 1915, RG117-A-3, A-2025-03308, Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Funds.

sell. This fact does not appear to have been grasped by the Office of the Custodian, which continued to request updates well into 1947 on whether the goods had been sold to pay the debt now owed to the Custodian.²⁹ Meanwhile, due to Fred's internment and the scaling back of business operations, many of the company's business records were moved into the basement of the family house, which were all promptly destroyed because of flooding in 1941.³⁰ Both Fred and the Western Trust reported that most of the company's archived business records had to be disposed of due to water damage.³¹

Out of the three case studies in this thesis, the Martin family was the only one recorded to have received monetary relief from the government, but the request was supported by a recommendation from the Western Trust. In a letter to the Provincial Relief Department, Grierson outlined the activities of 1941 for the family and the company:

Mrs. Martin has been carrying on the business under our supervision, and has received an allowance for maintenance of approximately \$30.00 per month plus the rent of the house which is \$31.50. Business has not been very good this year; consequently, she has been unable to dispose of all the stock on hand and much of it will have to be carried over until next year. It is quite evident that the business will not produce a livelihood for Mrs. Martin and her children during the coming Winter, and for that reason she intends to make application for assistance. Mrs. Martin when she calls will be able to give you complete information regarding the situation, but should there be any point which you think we can be of assistance to you we shall be pleased to hear from you.³²

Even though Ruth was successfully managing the company, the various stipulations placed on the business were not only crippling the company, but also the family that depended on it. Ruth

²⁹ H. P. Gardner to Fred Martin, 14 March 1947, "Neisch and Company - Fred M. Martin Co. - Winnipeg," File 2665, Vol. 1915, RG117-A-3, A-2025-03308, Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Funds.

³⁰ The specific month when the house flooded is not specified, but Manitoba had heavy rainfall year round in 1941; *Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 15 April 1941, 11; "City Clears Wreckage of a Flood," *Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 2 August 1941, 1; "More than 3 Inches Falls Here in 14-Hour Period," *Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 4 September 1941, 15; "Floods Meance Homes at Keewatin," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 14 October 1941, 1.

³¹ Fred Martin to H. P. Gardner, 9 April 1947; Fred Martin to A. I. Grierson, 4 February 1948, "Neisch and Company - Fred M. Martin Co. - Winnipeg," File 2665, Vol. 1915, RG117-A-3, A-2025-03308, Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Funds.

³² A. I. Grierson to Provincial Relief Dept. (H. Frederickson), 14 August 1941, File part: 2=1940/06-1943/08; 3=1940/05-1941/12, File 3127, Vol. 646, RG117-A-3, Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Funds.

was only permitted to collect an allowance of \$30.00 a month, which barely covered the rent. The amount of monetary assistance Ruth received from the Provincial Relief Department after her request goes unrecorded. Nevertheless, the relief was crucial for the family, as Fred acknowledged “we are about 1,500 poorer since October 1941. You can probably ask for support all year round since there won't be any business.”³³ This clearly articulates that Fred’s internment had detrimental effect on the finances of the family as a whole, but it was Ruth that had to bear the brunt of trying to balance the situation and secure financial support.

The personal correspondence between Fred and Ruth were written in a deeply personal manner, which provides substantial insight into his mental state during the last six months of his internment. The subject matter of the letters is wide-ranging, but what makes them especially valuable to the larger internment narrative is their focus on personal reflections rather than daily routines. Of the fifteen letters, most engaged with topics introduced in Ruth’s letters, making it unfortunate that those letters were not preserved. The content is best organized into five categories: the private thoughts shared between husband and wife, including their hardships and Fred’s reflections on his internment; Fred’s painting hobby and side business; discussions about business; their children, particularly around Christmas; and the conditions and daily life in the internment camp. Of these, the private thoughts exchanged between husband and wife provide the most significant insights into how internment affected them both. Fred wrote little about his daily life in the Fredericton Internment Camp, choosing instead to focus on other topics. His decision to avoid detailing camp daily life likely accounts for why these letter drafts have not been analyzed previously in comparison to Heinrich Holtmann’s letter collection.

³³ Fred Martin to Ruth Martin, 22 February 1943, R2840-0-6-E, MG30-C154, Friedrich Martin Fonds.

When reading the letters, the most prominent and striking aspect is Fred Martin's unwavering devotion to Ruth. In the first few letters, he was particularly concerned about and attentive to Ruth's well-being: "I'm so sorry that you had to work so hard. One request: take care of yourself as best you can now. Look after yourself."³⁴ He expressed his love and longing for her with great clarity and tenderness, articulating how much he missed her: "Yours is my whole heart, I heard the song last night. And I was in Hamburg again, experiencing everything again. Strange how you later relive everything so intensely [...] I know that I always loved you very much. Despite external hardships. Don't you also feel how inexpressibly happy your love makes me?"³⁵ It would not be much of an assumption to say that Ruth felt the same, given the volume of letters she wrote back to him. However, the letters were more than just correspondence. These letters were his lifeline, connecting him to his wife and young sons. "Oh, I try to be happy too, but there are so many things that you don't know about, emotional states that one goes through, especially lately. I still hope that I will see you soon [...] spring will come soon - then everything will be fine - God willing."³⁶ He was first sent to the Kananaskis Internment Camp in Alberta and then in July 1941 he was transferred to the Fredericton Internment Camp in New Brunswick. Considering the distance, and the time and money required for travel, it is all but certain that Fred went through his entire three-year internment without seeing Ruth and his children.

The instability and unpredictability of what could happen to them weighed heavily on their minds. For Fred, it was clear that he feared something worse might happen, as evidenced by his request for Ruth to catalog all their belongings and make two copies. "I want you to get a folder with loose leaves and start on a big job which got to be done very carefully and very

³⁴ Fred Martin to Ruth Martin, 16 October 1942, R2840-0-6-E, MG30-C154, Friedrich Martin Fonds.

³⁵ Fred Martin to Ruth Martin, 31 October 1942, R2840-0-6-E, MG30-C154, Friedrich Martin Fonds.

³⁶ Fred Martin to Ruth Martin, 28 February 1943, R2840-0-6-E, MG30-C154, Friedrich Martin Fonds.

exact: make a list of all articles in our possession, tools, fixtures, furniture, clothes, China, glass, curtains, blinds, bulbs electric wires etc. done to the soap holder, dish brush etc. even every tin of paint and crew driver or empty jars etc.”³⁷ Whether Fred was concerned Ruth might also be interned or the possibility of the family to be repatriated to Germany is unknown. Aside from a few organized repatriations, there is no record of the Canadian government attempting the mass removal of Italian Canadians or German-Canadians, in contrast to the treatment of Japanese Canadians at the end of the war. Yet Fred seemed to believe in November 1942 that he would not be returning to Winnipeg. “After all, I’ll be kicked out at the end of the war. I don’t want to experience that.”³⁸ However, the perception of his future quickly changed a month later:

I do agree entirely in principle to go to either Saskatchewan or Alberta or wherever is agreeable. I also agree in principle to work in a Mill or Farming etc [...] I have considered Canada my home and at no time have I ever felt hostile-quite the contrary is the fact. I therefore hope that the time is not too away when I can again do useful work, support my family and help bring up our boys and they have again their father back.³⁹

This is rare instance of an internee knowing months in advance of the special stipulations that would be placed on him upon his release. These stipulations typically involved a waiting period before the internee can return to the province where they had previously resided. In some cases, such as Bertha Hower from British Columbia, this waiting period could be indefinite.⁴⁰

Nevertheless, Fred was relieved that his Ruth never had to endure internment: “I am glad that you, dear Ruth, have been spared [internment], despite all the other suffering.”⁴¹ Yet, he struggled and never fully understood the reasons behind his own internment.

³⁷ Fred Martin to Ruth Martin, 31 December 1942, R2840-0-6-E, MG30-C154, Friedrich Martin Fonds.

³⁸ Fred Martin to Ruth Martin, 26 November 1942, R2840-0-6-E, MG30-C154, Friedrich Martin Fonds.

³⁹ Fred Martin to Ruth Martin, 26 December 1942, R2840-0-6-E, MG30-C154, Friedrich Martin Fonds.

⁴⁰ McBride, “The Curious Case of Female Internees,” in *Enemies Within*, 158.

⁴¹ Fred Martin to Ruth Martin, 18 December 1942, R2840-0-6-E, MG30-C154, Friedrich Martin Fonds.

The primary struggle Fred conveyed throughout his letters was his confusion over why he was separated from his family. Even three years into his internment, he continued to hope that he could demonstrate his loyalty to the country he clearly loved:

I have the worst days behind me when I felt so alone, I needed you so much. I was trying to feel your heart. For 30 years I believed in this country, loved it and always tried to act in the best interests of it. I have a family that any country in the world would be proud of. [...] Where my family is, is my home [...] I have not been given a chance to justify myself and explain my views, despite the many years and my friends here. This makes it bitter. And yet, I would still welcome release today.⁴²

This passage from his letter on 26 November 1942 is crucial for understanding Fred's mental state after two years of internment. He felt alone, forgotten, and even deceived by a country he had loved for 30 years: "It was more difficult than ever, people are slowly forgetting us [internees] if it wasn't for loved ones."⁴³ The key aspect that kept him connected to reality was his family, especially his wife. He does not portray himself as someone filled with intense anger or built-up aggression towards his situation, but rather as someone with a longing to make things right so he can return to the only thing that matters, his family. Not once throughout the letters does he express concern about his business or the need to return to it. Instead, he wrote only of his longing to return to the loved ones and home he had built in Winnipeg. After the war, when interviewed by Grenke, Fred explained that it was likely gossip that got him interned. Fred theorized that because "[he] bought a new car, a new ford, and that drew a little more attention," which he must "have some information to sell or something to get money from."⁴⁴ But, even in 1970s Fred wanted to emphasize that he did not "regret one day which [he] was interned."⁴⁵

⁴² Fred Martin to Ruth Martin, 26 November 1942, R2840-0-6-E, MG30-C154, Friedrich Martin Fonds.

⁴³ Fred Martin to Ruth Martin, 26 November 1942, R2840-0-6-E, MG30-C154, Friedrich Martin Fonds.

⁴⁴ Mr. F[red] Martin, interview.

⁴⁵ Mr. F[red] Martin, interview.

Cutting through the despair and the reality of his situation, Fred used oil painting as a form of escape. His artistic hobby developed long before his internment, and one of the products sold by his company was oil paints. Throughout his letters to Ruth, Fred requested various colours of oil paints and different paintbrushes to be mailed to him by care packages. The scale of his hobby was such that they both sold his paintings for extra cash. However, he noted that he parted with many of his paintings to internees who simply expressed a love for his art. Even the Schneiders were fans of his work, indicated by Fred asking Ruth if she had collected payment from Mrs. Schneider.⁴⁶ Fred noted to Arthur Grenke after the war that he was acquainted with Fritz Schneider and the Little Britain community but did not elaborate further.⁴⁷ Most of the sections in which Martin discusses his painting are written in shorthand and in a numbering system that he and Ruth created before his internment. He referred to most of his paintings by number to keep them organized and avoid confusion. However, there are sections where he takes the time to describe to Ruth what he was currently working on: “The oil [painting] ‘Birch Trees in the Snow’ is so peaceful, I liked it too, so longing and mild;” or “I started a ‘Summer Flowers’ oil [painting] because you love flowers so much. The great oil [painting] ‘Cathedral Mountains’ is much admired & surpasses all previous.”⁴⁸ Not only was his painting a mental escape from the realities of internment, but Fred also used it to keep his thoughts focused on Ruth.

Fred Martin mentioned several times that he had everything he needed in the camp, except for the occasional paintbrush and paint colour. This was especially evident when discussions of Christmas came up. “So for Christmas I have no material wishes, seriously & honestly. I have what I need, especially here. I would be very happy about Stollen [fruit loaf] if

⁴⁶ Fred Martin to Ruth Martin, 4 October 1942, R2840-0-6-E, MG30-C154, Friedrich Martin Fonds.

⁴⁷ Mr. F[red] Martin, interview.

⁴⁸ Fred Martin to Ruth Martin, 16 October 1942, R2840-0-6-E, MG30-C154, Friedrich Martin Fonds.

possible. Isn't that a gift given our circumstances?"⁴⁹ He became notably upset whenever Ruth sent him anything food-related, except for Stollen or, if possible, a strong liquor. There were at least two instances where Fred reprimanded her for sending a more decadent cake. He was upset that she used the ingredients on him instead of the family: "Love is not measured in cake, I would much rather you eat it yourself."⁵⁰ Although he stated that he could never actually be mad at her for sending such a gift, his complaints may be more of an indication of the family's food situation. Since the letters span the months of October to March, discussions of the Christmas season are present throughout. Fred never presented himself as overly upset about spending a third Christmas away from his family. However, he was very particular about ensuring they had a proper Christmas, possibly aiming to distract from the fact that he would once again not be there.

Shortly after writing his last letter on 16 March 1943, Fred Martin was finally released on 27 March 1943. His last letter suggests that he had no indication of his impending release. The letter focuses more on the downsizing of the company's Toronto location. However, Fred explained to Grenke during their interview that his lawyer colleague, Professor Max Huber, went to Ottawa to inquire about Fred's internment.⁵¹ Although a specific date for Huber's visit to Ottawa was not given, Fred made it very clear that it was because of Huber that he was released. Fred recalled that Huber asked to look at the file on Fred Martin's internment case, "and if there is anything against [Fred,] I will drop this [...] but if there is nothing against [Fred], I would like him to go free. Two days [later, Fred] was out."⁵² He was released from the Fredericton Internment Camp with the following stipulations: "Released conditionally upon his subscribing

⁴⁹ Fred Martin to Ruth Martin, 31 October 1942, R2840-0-6-E, MG30-C154, Friedrich Martin Fonds.

⁵⁰ Fred Martin to Ruth Martin, 4 October 1942, R2840-0-6-E, MG30-C154, Friedrich Martin Fonds.

⁵¹ Max Huber was the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross from 1928-1944. Yves Sandoz, "Max Huber and the Red Cross," *European Journal of International Law* 1, Vol. 18, (February 2007): 171-197. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ejil/chm005>; Mr. F[red] Martin, interview.

⁵² Mr. F[red] Martin, interview.

to the Undertaking set out in Regulation 24 of the Defence of Canada Regulations and to a special Undertaking.”⁵³ Based on Fred’s letter of 26 December 1942 and his release to Weyburn, Saskatchewan, it can be assumed that the special undertaking prevented him from returning to Winnipeg until after the war.

Although deemed fit for release from the physical internment camp, the Canadian government enforced stipulations that prolonged the hardships for internees and their families. This included financial stipulations, such as charging the family for the services of both the Western Trust and the Office of the Custodian. These charges were apparently not made evident to Ruth Martin until after the fact, as recorded in a letter from Grierson to the Custodian’s Office: “Mrs. Martin seemed somewhat surprised to learn that the Custodian had some charges in connection with this case, and further, that our charges also are to be borne by them. We pointed out to her that under Regulations the Custodian is entitled to be paid for services out of the assets of the estate.”⁵⁴ Even though Grierson made note of Ruth’s reaction, it is not unexpected that she was surprised by the charges. Had she been informed of charges due at the end of services when the Custodian originally took over, this would have occurred while her husband had just been interned and she was giving birth. These fees meant that the Martins were still indebted to the government in the form of what can only be described as a continuing financial internment:

We were unaware until yesterday that she had placed an order for goods in the United States, which [...] will cost in round \$450.00. In view of the fact that Mr. Martin has been released, we presume Mrs. Martin did not think it necessary to consult us before placing the order [...] She is quite willing that the Custodian continue to control the business until such time as she can, from the sale of the goods, accumulate sufficient funds to pay all charges. After paying the Custodian’s charges, there will not, we fear, be sufficient left to reimburse us for our services and out of pocket expenses which have been considerable. We trust that you will be agreeable to Mrs. Martin’s suggestion that she

⁵³ “Notice of Release,” 30 March 1943, File part: 2=1940/06-1943/08; 3=1940/05-1941/12, File 3127, Vol. 646, RG117-A-3, Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Funds.

⁵⁴ A. I. Grierson to G. G. Beckett (Custodian of Enemy Alien Property Office), 29 April 1943, File part: 2=1940/06-1943/08; 3=1940/05-1941/12, File 3127, Vol. 646, RG117-A-3, Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Funds.

carry on as hereofore until such time as sufficient funds have accumulated to pay all charges. [...] There are still some enemy goods on consignment on hand, and it is the intention, if any of these goods are sold, to apply the net proceeds on account of the purchase price thereof, and the amount will be sent to the Custodian.⁵⁵

Already crippled by three years of restrictions on their business, the Martins still had to surrender more money to the government due to fees associated with services that were created solely because of internment policies. This was in addition to the time Fred served at a physical internment camp and the stipulations placed on him after. Even though he had been released in 1943, the Office of the Custodian was still in contact with the Martins until 1948 when they finally agreed to close the file.⁵⁶ These regulations and restrictions crippled businesses, like the Martins' company, that relied on ordering materials and manufacturing goods for global distribution. Without Ruth's management, the business would undoubtedly have collapsed.

Fred eventually returned to Winnipeg as documented by the interviews for Arthur Grenke and *The Red and the Rhine* documentary. Unlike other internees who did not return to their home provinces, such as Fritz Schneider, Fred rebuilt the life his family had before the war and lived the rest of his life in Winnipeg. Fred Martin died on 22 April 1986, and his friend Heinrich Holtmann was one of the honorary pallbearers at his funeral.⁵⁷ The Fred M. Martin Co. was eventually converted into Fred Martin Agencies, which ceased operations in the 1990s. Peter and Rolf Martin continued in the sporting goods distribution but under different companies.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ A. I. Grierson to G. G. Beckett, 29 April 1943, File part: 2=1940/06-1943/08;3=1940/05-1941/12, File 3127, Vol. 646, RG117-A-3, Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Funds.

⁵⁶ Fred Martin to H. P. Gardner, 2 September 1948; Fred Martin to A. I. Grierson, 4 February 1948, "Neisch and Company - Fred M. Martin Co. - Winnipeg," File 2665, Vol. 1915, RG117-A-3, A-2025-03308, Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Funds.

⁵⁷ *Winnipeg Free Press*, 25 April 1986, 42.

⁵⁸ "Peter Martin Obituary." Dignity Memorial, June 2024. <https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/winnipeg-mb/peter-martin-11847594>.

The narrative of the Martin family is one of strength and hope but also highlights the financial toll that internment of the husband can have on the family. Ruth's determination to oversee the company while her husband was interned saved their business from complete collapse. This was all while caring for three small children and maintaining constant contact with the Western Trust. What little governmental assistance the family received was fought for by Ruth but only with additional recommendations from the Western Trust. The collection of Fred Martin's draft letters provides a very intimate view into the marriage and personal connections of a German-Canadian internee. However, this collection and narrative are far from complete. Unlike the Schneiders' letter collection, the absence of any correspondence from Ruth leaves large gaps in the family's experience. Thankfully, some of these gaps are filled with the business correspondence from the Office of the Custodian. While narratives of German-Canadian internees are scarce in the historiography, historical analysis of familial connections and how they were affected by internment are virtually nonexistent. Martin's letters and this analysis help to address that gap. The financial policies administered by the Office of the Custodian and imposed on internees made no exceptions for wives and children also affected by those same policies. Although she had not been interned, Ruth was still required to abide by these strict financial restrictions, which suggest that she experienced her own form of domestic internment while attempting to maintain the status quo until such policies were lifted. The perception that internment narratives begin and end within the physical space of the internment camp is clearly misconstrued and challenged by the Martin family's experience. More importantly, the Martin family's narrative illustrates that the physical internment of the husband had an equal, if not larger, economic impact on the family as a whole.

Chapter 3: Johanna Holtmann and Heinrich Holtmann

On the morning of 29 September 1941, 34-year-old Johanna “Hanna” Christina Holtmann met with Andrew Grierson at the office of the Western Trust Company in the McArthur Building in downtown Winnipeg. On the verge of a physical breakdown, she informed them that she could no longer manage her husband’s 400-acre farm in Rosser, Manitoba. Johanna was no longer able to find people to work on the farm, and with children too young to help with the manual labour, she found herself working alone from sunrise to sunset. She had undertaken the management of the farm after her 39-year-old husband, Heinrich “Henry” Holtmann was arrested and interned on 17 June 1940. Prior to the Second World War, Heinrich was a successful cattle farmer with one of the largest milk contracts in Manitoba. Johanna Holtmann’s narrative has previously been presented—by her husband—as that of an excellent homemaker who struggled to adapt to the demands of farm management and ultimately failed. This portrayal, however, is not entirely accurate. Although, managing a 400-acre farm with livestock and four young children eventually proved too much for her to balance, she nevertheless operated the farm for a full year before the situation became unsustainable. Over the twenty-month period that Heinrich was interned for, his letters to Johanna provide a glimpse into her suffering physical, mental, and economic hardships, while Heinrich himself lived a relatively comfortable life in the Kananaskis and Fredericton Internment Camps. Johanna’s experience clearly demonstrates several hardships faced by the families of those interned during this period. Analysis of the Holtmanns’ internment narrative establishes that, in some cases, the women left behind suffered more outside the physical confines of an internment camp than the husband did within it.

The letter collection that constructs most of this analysis is from Heinrich Holtmann’s fonds in the Library and Archives Canada, which consists of 60 letters and 36 postcards written

in German sent between June 1940 to January 1942. It is currently the largest known preserved letter collection of a German-Canada internee.¹ The content covers a wide range of topics, with Heinrich's experiences in the camp and matters related to the farm being the most prominent. Both Heinrich and Johanna were avid writers based on the frequency Heinrich reported receiving letters. Unfortunately, the letters that Johanna wrote to her husband were not preserved alongside his in the fonds. Without additional sources, Heinrich's letters read as a one-sided conversation—similar to the previous Martins' case study. However, when combined with the business correspondence from the Office of the Custodian, the narrative can be substantially expanded.² Although only a limited number of documents survive in the Custodian's file on Holtmann family, by the end of Heinrich's internment the Office of the Custodian had become quite involved in management of the farm. Due to the size of this letter collection and Heinrich's willingness to share his experience, this is not the first time these materials have been examined.

Heinrich Holtmann was prominently featured in the same interviews as Fred Martin. He was interviewed by Arthur Grenke in the early 1970s and later appeared in CBC's 1975 documentary *The Red and the Rhine*.³ These interviews, along with Heinrich's descriptions of the Fredericton Internment Camp, drew the attention of author and historian Ted Jones. Although not classically trained as a historian, Ted Jones primarily wrote about the history of his home province of New Brunswick and the historical work is highly regarded.⁴ Holtmann's interviews

¹ Heinrich Holtmann Fonds [textual record], R1806-0-7-E, MG30-C154, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Canada. Digital ID number: 101648.

² "Holtmann [Holtman], Heinrich," File 3396, Vol. 1953, RG117-A-3, Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Fonds, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Canada. Digital ID number: 1163711.

³ Holtmann referred to the Grenke interview as an "oral history interview for the National Archives." "Holtman, Heinrich - Interview," 1977, audio recording, Accession No. 1978-0051, National Ethnic Archives Fonds, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Canada. Digital ID number: 438171; Frank Rasler, dir., "Specials - Documentary - The Red and the Rhine," 1975, V312, CBC Manitoba Fonds.

⁴ "Obituary of Ted Jones," McAdam's Funeral Home & Crematorium, September 2023. <https://mcadamsfh.com/tribute/details/1467/Ted-Jones/obituary.html>.

and letters were incorporated into Jones's 1988 book, *Both Sides of the Wire: The Fredericton Internment Camp*.⁵ The publication offers a chronological history of the Fredericton Internment Camp, but rather than presenting a purely institutional study, Jones also included the personal narratives of internees who were held there. The first volume of the publication examines the initial camp that held civilian internees sent to Canada from Britain. Holtmann features more prominently in the second volume, which covers the camp's transition in July 1941 to housing all German and Italian Canadian civilian internees.⁶ Of the 60 letters and 36 postcards in Holtmann's fonds, only the 27 that related specifically to his internment in Fredericton were translated, sampled, and abridged.⁷ Jones's narrative foregrounds the plight of the internees in order to raise the broader question of whether internment had been necessary in the first place. In comparison, family members such as Johanna receive only brief recognition, with her experience summarized in a single statement: "[what] Johanna wanted most was to hear about her husband's welfare."⁸ This assumption on Jones's part is not supported by the surviving sources, as none of the letters provide direct insight into Johanna's personal thoughts or opinions. Nevertheless, Jones's work remains essential for presenting the Holtmann family's internment narrative.

Heinrich Holtmann was born in 1902, in the area surrounding the town of Oelde and village of Diestedde in the district of Warendorf, located in the western German state of North Rhine-Westphalia. He was raised in a farming family, but the Great Depression and inflation crippled the family financially, resulting in loss of the farm in 1923. In March 1928, Heinrich

⁵ Jones also viewed and cited the Office of the Custodian's file on Holtmann.

⁶ For more on experience of British civilians and Jewish refugee internees, see Jones, *Both Sides of the Wire: The Fredericton Internment Camp*, Vol. 1; Zimmermann, *The Little Third Reich on Lake Superior: A History of Canadian Internment Camp R*; and Eric Koch, *Deemed Suspect: A Wartime Blunder*, (Ontario: Methuen, 1980).

⁷ Translated from German into English by Maria Kaiser (1931-2017). Kaiser was a librarian and lecturer in the German Department at University of New Brunswick. "Death notice: Maria Margarete Kaiser – 1931-2017," *Necro Canada*, January 2017.

⁸ Jones, *Both Sides of the Wire: The Fredericton Internment Camp*, 520.

immigrated to Canada alone, leaving behind his parents and eight siblings. After spending a year working as a farm labourer and attending an agricultural short course at the University of Manitoba, he settled near Rosser, Manitoba, where he purchased a 400-acre farm near Little Britain.⁹ Although the farm was located close to Schneider's German community, the letters suggest that the Holtmanns lived on its periphery rather than being integrated into the Little Britain community.¹⁰ Furthermore, unlike his friend Fred Martin, Holtmann never mentioned Fritz Schneider in any of the letters or interviews. Heinrich purchased the farm from E. E. Price of Winnipeg under an agreement for sale dated 12 April 1929, at a price of \$32,404.00, which included livestock and equipment.¹¹ It is not specified how Heinrich acquired the funds for this purchase or whether he paid any portion upfront. When the Western Trust assessed the Holtmanns' assets in 1940, it recorded that the Holtmanns would still be paying off the purchase of the land, with interest, well into 1947.¹² The following spring he took possession of the farm and purchased purebred Holsteins from Holstein-Friesian cattle expert Samuel "Sam" Sims of Stonewall.¹³ Heinrich was extremely proud of his livestock and relied heavily on Sim's counsel well into his internment. He boasted on several occasions that "my herd of approximately 48 head fully accredited, registered and ROP tested Holsteins was, as the records show, one of the

⁹ "Holtmann, Heinrich," Manitoba Agricultural Hall of Fame.

<https://www.manitobaaghalloffame.com/ahofmember/holtmann-heinrich/>.

¹⁰ The connection between the two families seems to be intentionally vague. In an interview with Alexander Freund, Fritz Schneider's nephew, Hajo Schneider, does acknowledge that the two families knew each other quite well. "Schneider, Hans-Joachim – Interview." Interview by Alexander Freund. 2003-2004, Oral History Centre Archives; Heinrich Holtmann to Johanna Holtmann, 29 October 1940, R1806-0-7-E, MG30-C154, Heinrich Holtmann Fonds [textual record], Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Canada. Digital ID number: 101648.

¹¹ A. I. Grierson to T. W. Laidlaw, 7 July 1940, File 3396, Vol. 1953, RG117-A-3, Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Fonds, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Canada. Digital ID number: 1163711.

¹² A. I. Grierson to T. W. Laidlaw, 7 July 1940.

¹³ "Holtmann, Heinrich," Manitoba Agricultural Hall of Fame; Sarah Ramsden and Gordon Goldsborough, "Memorable Manitobans: Samuel George Sims (1870-1953)," Manitoba Historical Society, 19 December 2013. https://mhs.mb.ca/docs/people/sims_sg.shtml; "Not easy to Buy Good Dairy Cows in the East," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 27 December 1927, 3; *Winnipeg Free Press*, 21 August 1953, 15; "Cattle breeder S. G. Sims, dies aged 83," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 18 August 1953, 9.

best in the province. The milk contract with the City Dairy (Winnipeg) called for 22,000 pounds per month.”¹⁴ Holtmann’s farm also raised chickens and had 100 pigs at the time of his internment. Heinrich very proudly noted after the war; “I did it alone [and] mostly by hand.”¹⁵

Johanna Holtmann (née Westerlemke) immigrated to Canada in 1933, shortly after Heinrich returned to Germany to marry her. She was born on 29 May 1907 in same region as Heinrich, near the town of Oelde, North Rhine-Westphalia. There is no indication whether she had a profession before coming to Canada at the age of 26. Her obituary only notes that “She came to Canada as the bride [...] to become a farmer's wife on the prairies.”¹⁶ Their family grew quickly. By the time Heinrich was interned, they had four children: Johanna (6, referred to as “Hansi” in the letters), Theo (5), Helmut (3), Wilfried (1). After Heinrich was released from internment, the couple would go on to have four more children: Erika, Felix, Trudy and John. The latter half of the 1930s were uneventful yet prosperous for the Holtmann family. In the spring of 1939, Heinrich leased an additional quarter section from the Soldiers’ Settlement Board to expand the farm. However, further expansion plans were halted by his internment in 1940.

Heinrich Holtmann was arrested and interned on 17 June 1940. Similar to Fred Martin, he was not interned until the second wave of internment arrests in June 1940, after Italy had entered the war and fears of Nazi infiltration in Canada were at their height. Heinrich later recalled the day of his arrested during his interview with Arthur Grenke:

On a warm, sunny day in June of 1940, RCMP officers arrived in the village and drove out to my fields and said they wants to talk with me, that they wanted to take me to Winnipeg. ‘Bring your razor and toiletries.’ They said. [...] They had a list of German

¹⁴ Heinrich Holtmann to Louis St. Laurent, 18 December 1941, R1806-0-7-E, MG30-C154, Heinrich Holtmann Fonds [textual record]; Jones, *Both Sides of the Wire: The Fredericton Internment Camp*, 354.

¹⁵ Jones, *Both Sides of the Wire: The Fredericton Internment Camp*, 354.

¹⁶ “Johanna (Hanna) Christina Holtmann (nee Westerlemke),” Winnipeg Free Press Passages, 3 August 2005. https://passages.winnipegfreepress.com/passage-details/id-98882/Johanna_Holtmann.

names. I was still a German National at that time. However, I did not think that it would happen to me, but it did.¹⁷

In the CBC interview, Heinrich stated that the RCMP officers also told him that the arrests were intended “to even things out.”¹⁸ He emphasized this remark to suggest that the RCMP were simply rounding up Germans to fill a quota rather than acting on probable cause. Heinrich further justified this interpretation by noting that, in Kananaskis, he met “600 to 650 German people with the same experience.”¹⁹ In Winnipeg, he was placed in a holding cell and fingerprinted. He explained to Grenke, “there were no accusations. It was never asked if I was a member of the Nazi Party and it was never suggested that I was a member.”²⁰ In the evening of 17 June, he was placed on a passenger train bound for the Kananaskis Internment Camp in Alberta. Heinrich was accompanied by an RCMP officer with whom he was already acquainted, which he credited for the fact that he did not have to wear handcuffs during the journey, unlike other internees.

In his interview for the CBC, Heinrich spins a dramatic narrative about throwing a postcard out of a train window to inform his family of what had happened to him. Apparently, the family’s local postman found the postcard and delivered it to Johanna.²¹ Yet, it is clear from the first letter, written in Winnipeg while Heinrich was in RCMP custody, that he was already in communication with friends and family. In the letter, Heinrich wrote to Johanna that he had just learned he was “going to Alberta [that] evening, no question about it. But I told Halbrock to tell S[am] Sims how it is, and that you should come and see him. He'll surely be able to advise you

¹⁷ “Holtman, Heinrich - Interview,” 1977, Accession No. 1978-0051, National Ethnic Archives Fonds; Jones, *Both Sides of the Wire: The Fredericton Internment Camp*, 354-5.

¹⁸ Rasler, dir., “Specials - Documentary - *The Red and the Rhine*,” March 1975, V312, CBC Manitoba fonds.

¹⁹ Rasler, dir., “Specials - Documentary - *The Red and the Rhine*,” March 1975, V312, CBC Manitoba fonds.

²⁰ In an interview with Alexander Freund, Fritz Schneider’s nephew, Hajo Schneider, acknowledged that Holtmann was “a very ardent supporter of the National Socialist Regime, and I guess he had neighbours who denounced him.” “Schneider, Hans-Joachim – Interview.” Interview by Alexander Freund. 2003-2004, Oral History Centre Archives; “Holtman, Heinrich - Interview,” 1977, Accession No. 1978-0051, National Ethnic Archives Fonds; Jones, *Both Sides of the Wire: The Fredericton Internment Camp*, 355.

²¹ Rasler, dir., “Specials - Documentary - *The Red and the Rhine*,” March 1975, V312, CBC Manitoba fonds.

on the best course of action. Just don't worry, and make sure you have help around the house.”²²

This passage also foreshadowed the most prominent reoccurring challenge for Johanna. When the Western Trust assessed the family's assets, they recorded three hired men for the farm and a girl that assisted with the housekeeping.²³ After the war, Heinrich summarized the situation: “I thought that I had very good, hired workers on my farm. They had promised to stay with my wife but soon they left, mainly because other farmers in the area would say to them, ‘Are you crazy, working for a German!’”²⁴ By early July 1940, the Office of the Custodian, through the Western Trust Company, had reached out to Johanna to provide support.

Unlike Johanna, who seemed to be on good terms with the Western Trust, Heinrich was strongly opposed to any government oversight of his farm. After the war, in the Grenke interview, he maintained that “in the end it was my friends who really helped” Johanna with the farm.²⁵ However, this claim directly contradicts the advice he offered Johanna in his letters. On several occasions, Heinrich cautioned her not to “count too much on good friends. You will surely understand now that I didn't want to believe in it before, but when things are bad, you no longer have any.”²⁶ Instead, in a letter to Samuel Sims written three days after his internment, Heinrich outlined his expectations for how the farm should be managed moving forward:

As you may remember all pure bred stock belong to my Wife Mrs. J. Holtmann, a bill of sale was given in 34 and is registered at the County Court of Stonewall, the Car and Tractor are also property of my wife the facts are perhaps of importance if the Custodian of Alien Property should decide to supervise my property, in this case I wish you would point out to respective authorities that the above mentioned stock and property should be exempted from supervision I also would appreciate if you could spare enough time to

²² Heinrich Holtmann to Johanna Holtmann, 17 June 1940, R1806-0-7-E, MG30-C154, Heinrich Holtmann Fonds.
²³ A. I. Grierson to T. W. Laidlaw, 7 July 1940, File 3396, Volume 1953, RG117-A-3, Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Fonds.

²⁴ Jones, *Both Sides of the Wire: The Fredericton Internment Camp*, 355.

²⁵ “Holtman, Heinrich - Interview,” 1977, Accession No. 1978-0051, National Ethnic Archives Fonds; Jones, *Both Sides of the Wire: The Fredericton Internment Camp*, 359.

²⁶ Heinrich Holtmann to Johanna Holtmann, 23 April 1941, R1806-0-7-E, MG30-C154, Heinrich Holtmann Fonds; Heinrich Holtmann to Johanna Holtmann, 8 October 1941, R1806-0-7-E, MG30-C154, Heinrich Holtmann Fonds.

look after the stock from time to time in order to help my wife in regard to the management. You are readily aware of the fact that we spent much money and care for this stock and that a valuable breed would be destroyed in a short time, if not properly managed, in other words, it must under no circumstances be permitted that a chartered accountant get hold of the stock.²⁷

Whether Sims actually followed through with any support to Johanna is unknown, but Heinrich wrote to Johanna on same day, noting that the car, tractor, and cattle were all registered in her name.²⁸ Curiously, when the agents of the Western Trust visited Johanna, she stated that the Holstein cattle “belong[ed] to Mr. Holtmann.”²⁹ The Western Trust agents informed her that all assets belonging to Heinrich were now “vested in the Custodian and that she could not lawfully dispose of any of them without first obtaining the Custodian’s consent,” and she agreed that “if she is allowed to remain on and operate the farm, she should quite easily maintain herself and the children.”³⁰ This agreement marked the beginning of a year-long struggle for Johanna as she attempted to manage the day-to-day operations of the farm.

Only a month into Heinrich’s internment, cracks at home had already begun to show. On 4 August 1940, Heinrich wrote to Johanna in response to her last letter from July:

As I can see from your letter, you are again in need of help. I already wrote to you that it's not sustainable for you to help with the milking yourself in the long run, because otherwise, on top of everything else, you'll get sick, and it's not worth it. Constantly locking people up has hit the family, and especially the women, much harder than it has us; we're all clear on that over here. Therefore, I advise you, if you can't get any help with the milking, to complain to the authorities that it's impossible for you to continue running the farm. Let them figure out how to manage the operation themselves.³¹

²⁷ Heinrich Holtmann to Sam Sims, Camp Censorship Office Copy, 20 June 1940, File 3396, Vol. 1953, RG117-A-3, Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Funds.

²⁸ Heinrich Holtmann to Johanna Holtmann, 20 June 1940, R1806-0-7-E, MG30-C154, Heinrich Holtmann Fonds.

²⁹ A. I. Grierson to T. W. Laidlaw, 7 July 1940, File 3396, Volume 1953, RG117-A-3, Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Funds.

³⁰ A. I. Grierson to T. W. Laidlaw, 7 July 1940.

³¹ Heinrich Holtmann to Johanna Holtmann, 4 August 1940, R1806-0-7-E, MG30-C154, Heinrich Holtmann Fonds.

Johanna was likely complaining about the ongoing difficulty of finding farmhands to help manage the herd—a challenge compounded by Heinrich’s repeated advice that she avoid taking on the additional physical and strenuous work herself. However, the farm’s primary income came from the milk produced by the herd, and missing milk delivery quotas would have had serious consequences for both the farm and the family. Matters were further complicated by the fact that Heinrich frequently contradicted himself in his letters. Three weeks later, he instructed Johanna, “don't ever go to the Western Trust Corp.”³² Yet two months after that, he advised, “if the whole thing is giving you too much of a headache, the Western Trust Corp. says you should see how they handle it. Don't put your health at risk under any circumstances.”³³ Heinrich appears to have been growing increasingly concerned about his wife’s health due to the additional work she had to assume in the absence of hired help; he likely also feared that—like his parents before him—he might be forced to watch his farm taken from him by forces beyond his control.

The Holtmanns’ economic hardship became apparent only a few months into Heinrich’s internment. In addition to managing the family’s savings, Johanna was now responsible for the farm’s finances, particularly the payment of hired help. On 4 July 1940, Heinrich advised her that “[She will] probably have to pay wages; better to pay someone you know a little more than to rely on complete strangers and get annoyed. I'm sure you have a monthly allowance for yourself and the children, something like \$50. [On] July 15 [...] \$140.00 for the loan is due. Your life insurance is due on this date, please don't forget, or are you unable to get hold of any money?”³⁴ The monthly allowance that Heinrich referred to was the rumored financial support that families of the interned were supposedly to receive from the government. Yet a month later Johanna had

³² Heinrich Holtmann to Johanna Holtmann, 27 August 1940, R1806-0-7-E, MG30-C154, Heinrich Holtmann Fonds.

³³ Heinrich Holtmann to Johanna Holtmann, 7 October 1940, R1806-0-7-E, MG30-C154, Heinrich Holtmann Fonds.

³⁴ Heinrich Holtmann to Johanna Holtmann, 4 July 1940, R1806-0-7-E, MG30-C154, Heinrich Holtmann Fonds.

still received no such funds, and the rumors circulating in the camp were increasingly discouraging: “Now I fear that you will get \$20 in relief, as I hear here.”³⁵ Unfortunately, there is no openly accessible documentation to corroborate the rumors that Heinrich was referring to.

Johanna’s struggle to keep the household finances from collapsing was only intensified by Heinrich’s unfortunate assumptions and his descriptions of what might happen to the family in the worst-case scenarios. Heinrich wrote bluntly that, if she were to give up the farm, the family would virtually become beggars: “I certainly wouldn't mind if you gave up the whole thing, if I didn't have to worry about you and the children having to move to the city to live in miserable tin houses and live on relief.”³⁶ The financial hardship facing the family and the farm was undoubtedly not lost on Johanna, and such statements were unlikely to have helped her mental state. Heinrich was also contradictory in insisting that he did not want Johanna to give up the farm at all: “As long as you're still having people, I'd appreciate it if you stayed on the farm, even if things don't go as planned.”³⁷ Although financial concerns remained a consistent theme throughout the letters, Johanna’s physical strain appears to have been far more detrimental to her well-being long before the family’s finances threatened to collapse.

The Holtmanns’ children were all under the age of ten at the time of Heinrich’s arrest and therefore lacked the ability to write to their father. Aside from his occasional lament that the “little ones have almost forgotten their dad,” discussions of the children tended to serve as a brief reprieve from other, more serious topics.³⁸ For the most part, these references consisted of

³⁵ Heinrich Holtmann to Johanna Holtmann, 4 August 1940, R1806-0-7-E, MG30-C154, Heinrich Holtmann Fonds.

³⁶ Heinrich Holtmann to Johanna Holtmann, 11 October 1940, R1806-0-7-E, MG30-C154, Heinrich Holtmann Fonds.

³⁷ Heinrich Holtmann to Johanna Holtmann, 29 January 1941, R1806-0-7-E, MG30-C154, Heinrich Holtmann Fonds.

³⁸ Heinrich Holtmann to Johanna Holtmann, 1 February 1940, R1806-0-7-E, MG30-C154, Heinrich Holtmann Fonds.

Heinrich asking about childhood milestones—whether Theo could write yet, or whether Wilfried had begun to walk. One notable comment from Heinrich concerned their eldest daughter, whom he asked about in relation to her recovery from measles.³⁹ This detail is significant, as it underscores that, on top of her many other burdens, Johanna was also responsible for caring for young children. Moreover, Heinrich and Johanna were the only members of their families from Germany to immigrate to Canada, and their letters document the ongoing correspondence with relatives in Germany.

Beyond persistent economic hardships, Johanna’s ability to provide sufficient food for the family proved equally challenging. Although this issue was not addressed as directly as the family’s financial struggles, subtle statements from Heinrich suggested that it may have been a significant concern. His comments appear most prominently when responding to photographs of the children: “I hope they're all eating well, or are they all still thin and fidgety?”⁴⁰ and “Hansi and Theo have become a bit thin in the heat [...] so they should eat better when it gets colder.”⁴¹ Yet, her complaints might have been more reoccurring than what is portrayed by Heinrich’s responses. This is evident through Heinrich’s letter on 30 October, in which he expressed the wish that Johanna “could spend a few weeks [in the camp], [...] without having to struggle so much and worry about putting food on the table. But everything's going well, and the time can't be too far off when I can go back to my beloved work and provide.”⁴² Whether Heinrich was truly sincere about his wish for Johanna to join him in the internment camp is not clear, but he

³⁹ Heinrich Holtmann to Johanna Holtmann, 17 December 1940, R1806-0-7-E, MG30-C154, Heinrich Holtmann Fonds.

⁴⁰ Heinrich Holtmann to Johanna Holtmann, 16 February 1941, R1806-0-7-E, MG30-C154, Heinrich Holtmann Fonds.

⁴¹ Heinrich Holtmann to Johanna Holtmann, 27 August 1940, R1806-0-7-E, MG30-C154, Heinrich Holtmann Fonds.

⁴² Heinrich Holtmann to Johanna Holtmann, 30 October 1940, R1806-0-7-E, MG30-C154, Heinrich Holtmann Fonds.

enthusiastically described the camp canteen on multiple occasions praising both the quality and variety of the food. The passage also highlights once again how deeply attached Heinrich was to his farm and to his work. A month later, food problems seemed to subside. Nevertheless, even when food might have been in abundance, food preparation demanded a considerable amount of time—time that inevitably pulled Johanna away from managing the farm. She appeared to be constantly occupied with food-related tasks, as reflected in Heinrich’s inquiries; “I see you’ll have plenty of food for the time being. How were the garden and the potatoes in the field garden? Do you have enough potatoes? [...] Have you slaughtered the pig?”⁴³ This assessment also does not account for food costs or wartime rationing, which are not discussed in the letters. However, the Canadian government did not implement coupon rationing until early 1942, around the same time Heinrich was released from internment.⁴⁴ Heinrich’s letters additionally recorded him asking and receiving handmade cookies, pastries, scones, oatmeal, cured meats such as sausages, and even a roast chicken from Johanna. It is striking how much prepared food Johanna provided for him, especially given the amount of food available to the internees through camp.

A noticeable thread throughout many internee narratives is that they had relatively few complaints with daily life in the internment camps, and some even described their experiences as pleasant. Fred Martin, for example, firmly stated that he had no regrets about his time in an internment camp after the war.⁴⁵ By the second week into Heinrich’s internment, he wrote that “we’re passing the time as best we can. Playing card games, going to the cinema, listening to music, and other sports.”⁴⁶ The letters also record that he studied accounting, French, Russian,

⁴³ Heinrich Holtmann to Johanna Holtmann, 5 November 1940, R1806-0-7-E, MG30-C154, Heinrich Holtmann Fonds.

⁴⁴ Ian Mosby, *Food Will Win the War: The Politics, Culture, and Science of Food on Canada’s Home Front*. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014), 65-66.

⁴⁵ Mr. F[red] Martin, interview.

⁴⁶ Heinrich Holtmann to Johanna Holtmann, 3 July 1940, R1806-0-7-E, MG30-C154, Heinrich Holtmann Fonds.

and conducted weekly agricultural lectures. Although he occasionally complained about how boring or idle some days could be, he integrated into the camp community quickly. On one occasion, he wrote to Johanna that “Sunday, was so eventful that I didn't even get a chance to write. Church service, sports, a lunchtime concert, and an evening concert all filled my free time.”⁴⁷ Regarding food, the daily standard rations consisted of beef (14oz), Bread white or brown (14oz), Bacon (2oz), Cheese (1oz), rice (2oz), jam (2oz), butter (2oz), Milk (whole, evaporated, or irradiated.) (5oz), Tea (1/4oz), coffee (1/3oz), potatoes (14oz), fresh Veg. (8oz), apples (5oz), Split peas (1oz), Sugar (3oz), Salt (1/2oz), and pepper (1/7oz).⁴⁸ These standard rations did not include any food packages sent to internees or items purchased from the canteen, such as beer, wine, milk, and fresh fruit. Additionally, organizations such as the Red Cross and the YMCA donated substantial quantities of food. For example, at Christmas in 1942, the YMCA donated to the camp several turkeys, 5 crates of oranges, 5 gallons of sour pickles, 90 eggs, and 112 pounds of honey.⁴⁹ When Heinrich was transferred to the Fredericton Internment Camp, he praised the facility and climate there even more than Kananaskis. Nevertheless, he was not immune to the more psychological effects of the barbed wire, and by the eighth month of his internment, his letters grew progressively more pessimistic.

The summer of 1941 was the most difficult for the Holtmanns, both mentally and physically. Foreshadowing of Johanna's physical breakdown in August was already evident in late June. In response to a letter from Johanna, Heinrich wrote, “it's right that you wrote about what it's like on the farm; I can well imagine it, especially since you don't have any good [farm hands]. But the main thing is that you can live well and healthily with the children and not, like

⁴⁷ Heinrich Holtmann to Johanna Holtmann, 19 August 1940, R1806-0-7-E, MG30-C154, Heinrich Holtmann Fonds.

⁴⁸ Jones, *Both Sides of the Wire: The Fredericton Internment Camp*, 420.

⁴⁹ Jones, *Both Sides of the Wire: The Fredericton Internment Camp*, 437.

many women, rely on a few rented rooms in some back house for relief.”⁵⁰ It is clear that, even after a year, she still had not been able to find adequate help for the farm. Heinrich’s remark—imagining a worst-case scenario—was unlikely to provide the kind of emotional support she was hoping for. Nevertheless, the possibility of the family’s destitution continued to preoccupy him:

At least in Rosser you have a good house and all the comforts, and the children have everything they need. If it takes a long time, which is impossible to know, you won't be able to carry on alone. It's impossible for a woman to run the farm, and even if someone comes along from time to time to give instructions, it's all useless because you can't rely on people.⁵¹

Whatever Johanna’s mental state might have been, this was unlikely pleasant reading, even if her husband was trying to be reassuring. A historical assessment of women’s roles in agriculture demonstrates that his opinion that “[i]t is impossible for a woman to run the farm” is incorrect. Women in North America have a long history of managing farms while their husbands adopted secondary professions to support the family financially, a practice that was especially prominent during the 1930s and the Great Depression.⁵² Farm management was also closely tied to land ownership; like Thilde Schneider, Johanna did hold partial ownership of the property.⁵³ However, the hardships that Johanna faced were compounded by a lack of farm laborers and the constant care she was required to provide both to her young children and to a large herd of prized Holstein cows, which Heinrich stated on multiple occasions were not to be sold under any circumstances.

Based on the overall assessment of the correspondence, it does not appear that Heinrich begun his internment harboring the view that a “woman” was incapable of managing the farm. However, he did reiterate this sentiment in a letter to Minister of Justice Louis St. Laurent a few

⁵⁰ Heinrich Holtmann to Johanna Holtmann, 28 June 1941, R1806-0-7-E, MG30-C154, Heinrich Holtmann Fonds.

⁵¹ Heinrich Holtmann to Johanna Holtmann, 9 July 1941, R1806-0-7-E, MG30-C154, Heinrich Holtmann Fonds.

⁵² Van de Vorst, *Making Ends Meet: Farm Women's Work in Manitoba*, 55-57, 76-80.

⁵³ B. J. Cooper, “Farm Women: Some Contemporary Themes,” *Labour Le Travail* 24, (1989): 172; Heinrich Holtmann to the Western Trust Co., 30 August 1941, File 3396, Vol. 1953, RG117-A-3, Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Fonds.

months later.⁵⁴ What comes across as a sexist and rude remark to his wife—who had done her best to keep the 400-acre farm afloat—could be masking his own internal struggle over being unable to support his family. This interpretation is reinforced by comments such as: “It’s a real shame that I can’t be home right now to help you. We often don’t know how to kill time here. Make sure you get help at home again, and don’t make extra work for yourself because of me.”⁵⁵ He clearly perceived Johanna’s hardship, at least in part, as his own fault. Sadly, the situation only worsened for Johanna from this point forward.

In late August 1941, a letter from Johanna initiated a four-month downward spiral for the Holtmanns’ farm—one that would ultimately have an unexpectedly happy ending. Johanna’s original letter to Heinrich was not preserved, but Heinrich’s reply provides sufficient context: “I just received your letter regarding retirement [from the farm]. [...] But first I would like to make sure that you are sufficiently secure!”⁵⁶ In the same letter, Heinrich granted his consent for the Western Trust to assume full takeover the management of the farmland, but stipulated three conditions: that a suitable apartment for the family be found, preferably near Little Britain; that the contract with City Dairy continue; and, most importantly, that no livestock be sold without his approval. The general hope was that the Western Trust could find someone that would rent and takeover the day-to-day management of the farm, which was already an method used farms in Alberta.⁵⁷ On 30 August, Heinrich wrote to the Western Trust to reiterate these three

⁵⁴ Heinrich Holtmann to Louis St. Laurent, 18 December 1941, R1806-0-7-E, MG30-C154, Heinrich Holtmann Fonds.

⁵⁵ Heinrich Holtmann to Johanna Holtmann, 23 April 1941, R1806-0-7-E, MG30-C154, Heinrich Holtmann Fonds.

⁵⁶ Heinrich Holtmann to Johanna Holtmann, 26 August 1941, R1806-0-7-E, MG30-C154, Heinrich Holtmann Fonds.

⁵⁷ Jones, *Both Sides of the Wire: The Fredericton Internment Camp*, 358.

conditions and added that Sam Simms should be engaged as an adviser for the cattle. His letter the Western Trust made it clear why Johanna was relinquished management of the farm:

My wife cannot secure sufficient help on the farm and the job is too big for her. She has not only to take care of the farm, she also had to look after the household and our four children. No woman could stand so much strain for any length of time without suffering seriously in health [...] In the interest of the well-being and the good health of my wife and children I beg to inform you that I am quite prepared to lease the farm under certain conditions to a reliable and trustworthy person.⁵⁸

Johanna had reached a point of physical and mental exhaustion due to the demands of the farm and her inability to find adequate help. However, the conditions Heinrich set out were workable only if someone could be found to lease the farm. Presumably, the Western Trust agreed to these conditions, but it still required the consent of the Office of the Custodian in order to proceed.

Unfortunately, the Office of the Custodian was notoriously slow in issuing decisions.

Both Johanna and Heinrich sent correspondence to the main office in Ottawa, but no responses were recorded.⁵⁹ The case was finally acknowledged when Andrew Grierson sent a letter to A. H. Mathieu, the Assistant Deputy Custodian:

As before stated, Mrs. Holtmann was in this morning and definitely says that she cannot carry on unless arrangements can be made with a prospective Tenant to lease the land for one-third crop for the years 1942, 1943 and 1944, subject to termination in the event of Holtmann returning or the war being over before the expiration of the lease; the Tenant to assume all responsibility of working the land, milking and maintaining the cows, and he to obtain out of the milk cheque \$60.00 per month to help pay for labor; Mrs. Holtmann to continue to live in the house and board the Tenant and one man. Mrs. Holtmann believed that she can maintain the house, that is, three adults, four children, for \$100.00 a month and we would have to pay for the wood and coal necessary for the heating.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Heinrich Holtmann to the Western Trust Co., 30 August 1941, File 3396, Vol. 1953, RG117-A-3, Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Funds.

⁵⁹ Heinrich Holtmann to Johanna Holtmann, 24 September 1941, R1806-0-7-E, MG30-C154, Heinrich Holtmann Funds.

⁶⁰ A. I. Grierson to A. H. Mathieu, 29 September 1941, " File 3396, Volume 1953, RG117-A-3, Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Funds.

This outline of proposed action all but confirms that Johanna could no longer keep up with the hard labor. Strangely, the proposal also suggested that Johanna and the children would remain on the property. This contradicted the correspondence between Heinrich and Johanna, in which they had discussed finding new living accommodations. In a letter sent on 8 October, Heinrich was still under the impression that the family planned to move. He advised Johanna to “take the best apartment you can find, preferably a small bungalow, if there is a choice. I'm afraid it will be difficult to find something more suitable [...] (Don't send me anything else about the farm; it has to take its course now).”⁶¹ It is purely speculative but nonetheless plausible that Heinrich might not have been informed of the proposal that would have required Johanna to maintain the household of another man. However, Heinrich made a very pointed remark after the war that “other [internees] found out that their wives were cheating on them and these men would almost go insane.”⁶² Whom Heinrich was referring to is unknown; there are no recorded examples of internees stating that their wives had left them for other men, nor other evidence supporting Heinrich's claim. In the meantime, as Johanna and Heinrich attempted to determine their future, an intriguing exchange regarding the Holtmanns' case unfolded without their knowledge.

After Grierson's letter to Mathieu on 29 September, the Office of the Custodian finally responded. Strangely, neither a copy nor the original of the Custodian's reply was kept on file, although the Western Trust's follow-up letter was preserved.⁶³ Whatever the Custodian had suggested in its letter prompted a strong response from Grierson in defence of the Western Trust's actions. In the opening section of his letter, Grierson acknowledged:

⁶¹ Heinrich Holtmann to Johanna Holtmann, 9 October 1941, R1806-0-7-E, MG30-C154, Heinrich Holtmann Fonds.

⁶² “Holtman, Heinrich - Interview,” 1977, Accession No. 1978-0051, National Ethnic Archives Fonds; Jones, *Both Sides of the Wire: The Fredericton Internment Camp*, 546.

⁶³ The letter could exist in the papers of the Western Trust Company, but inquiry into sourcing that archive became difficult and bit beyond the scope of this thesis.

The [Western Trust] has been acting in the capacity of trustee herein primarily for the benefit of the debtor, namely the internee, but also with the interest of the creditors in mind. [...] further, that the Custodian wished to have all assets of internees under his control so that they may be liquidated and the proceeds used to pay for maintenance of the internee's family, as outlined in Mr. G[lenn] W. McPherson's general letter of instructions dated October 25th, 1939.⁶⁴

Grierson cited Custodian's instructions regarding operations, because both the waiver of the Western Trust's charges and the "withdrawal of the Custodian in this case" had been advised by the Custodian. He described both suggestions as "rather discouraging," observing that the removal of protections on the internee's property could allow creditors to dispossess Johanna and the children of "everything they have."⁶⁵ The rationale behind the Custodian's recommendations is not entirely clear, with Grierson once again providing a detailed outline of the case to them:

In this case, as representative of the Custodian, we were called upon to assume a measure of control and direction of the operation of the dairy farm, on which there are over twenty cows to be milked twice daily, and the monthly milk cheque amounts to over \$300.00. This was necessary because it was simply more than Mrs. Holtmann could do herself. She lacked training and experience and had great difficulty in securing adequate help, in this connection being confined to her own nationality, of which there is only a limited supply. [...] The farm lacked a guiding hand and this we endeavoured to provide. [...] Mrs. Holtmann was at her wits-end, working from early morning until late at night in the house and in the barn, and seemed to be on the verge of a break-down and told us she wanted to quit. [...] We have tried to draw a picture of the situation, in case the Custodian, when acquainted therewith may feel disposed to modify his previous decision to the extent of affording some protection to the dependents of the internee.⁶⁶

Similar to Ruth Martin's narrative, Grierson and the Western Trust emphasized that the actions the Office of the Custodian proposed would have detrimental effects on the families of the interned. In the cases of both Ruth and Johanna, Grierson had to describe, in considerable detail, their mental and physical conditions to underscore the seriousness of these situations.

⁶⁴ A. I. Grierson to A. H. Mathieu, 9 October 1941, File 3396, Volume 1953, RG117-A-3, Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Funds.

⁶⁵ A. I. Grierson to A. H. Mathieu, 9 October 1941.

⁶⁶ A. I. Grierson to A. H. Mathieu, 9 October 1941.

The Holtmanns remained in a state of limbo during the winter of 1941. Johanna and the children remained on the farm well into December. Meanwhile, Heinrich sent several letters to provoke discussion regarding his release. One letter, sent on 18 December 1941, may have significantly improved his chances. The recipient was the new Minister of Justice, Louis St. Laurent, who had been appointed on 6 December following the death of Ernest Lapointe a week earlier. In the letter, Heinrich explained that “[his] wife who since [his] arrest has tried every possible way and with every earthly means to keep [the farm] going can see clearly today that this is impossible. [...] The management of such a farm cannot be left with a woman for a great length of time, without having serious physical and mental effects on her.”⁶⁷ Heinrich concluded by asserting that “the whole situation regarding my farm could be eradicated or at least alleviated, I believe, if I were allowed to return and take over the management of my farm. In this way the fear of my family becoming a burden to the state would also be removed.”⁶⁸ Heinrich was released on 20 January 1942, only four weeks after the letter was sent.

After the war, Heinrich remained surprised by his release, asserting that “no one told [him] how [he] actually got out! [...] They probably let me out because I was costing the government and the taxpayers money to keep me. In the meantime, I lost two years of my life but I did not suffer personally. I had a very good farm; in fact, some people might have been jealous because I had such a good farm.”⁶⁹ In reality, however, it was likely his letter to St. Laurent that secured his freedom. This inference is supported by the fact that Heinrich, unlike both Fritz Schneider and Fred Martin, was immediately returned to Winnipeg. Schneider and Martin, by

⁶⁷ Heinrich Holtmann to Louis St. Laurent, 18 December 1941, R1806-0-7-E, MG30-C154, Heinrich Holtmann Fonds.

⁶⁸ Heinrich Holtmann to Louis St. Laurent, 18 December 1941.

⁶⁹ “Holtman, Heinrich - Interview,” 1977, Accession No. 1978-0051, National Ethnic Archives Fonds; Jones, *Both Sides of the Wire: The Fredericton Internment Camp*, 659.

contrast, were required to agree to a “special undertaking” as a condition of release stipulated by the Ministry of Justice, which prohibited them from returning home for a specified period.

Heinrich Holtmann and his farm thrived after the end of the Second World War. In 1965, his son Theo became a partner in the business and formed the “Holtmann & Sons Incorporated” (Holtmann & Sons/Rosser Holsteins), which continues to operate as one of the largest dairy farms in Manitoba.⁷⁰ Heinrich served as a board member of the Winnipeg District Milk Producers Co-op for eighteen years, including four years as vice president, and represented the organization at the Manitoba Farm Bureau and Dairy Farmers of Canada. Between 1970-1975, both Heinrich and Johanna volunteered for CESO (Canadian Executive Service Overseas), spending six months in Iran and four months in India supervising dairy operations.⁷¹ While in Winnipeg, Heinrich was interviewed by Arthur Grenke and the CBC about his internment experience. When Heinrich shared his story to Grenke, he summarised that, “My family did not suffer” because of internment.⁷² However, his prideful interpretation of the family’s strength and steadfastness in protecting the status quo of their lives against the government’s internment policies—which uprooted many families—minimizes Johanna’s experience of internment.

Johanna Holtmann’s internment experience illustrates her suffering physical, mental, and economic hardship she endured while maintaining her family and the farm. Her experience is central to this thesis’s argument that the wives of internees who were left behind endured a distinct form of domestic internment—a concept that has largely been overlooked but is supported by the fact that she was subject to the same internment policies as her husband, who

⁷⁰ Andrea Geary, “Milking cows runs in the family,” *Winnipeg Free Press Community Review*, 9 May 2016. <https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/our-communities/headliner/2016/05/09/milking-cows-runs-in-the-family>.

⁷¹ “Holtmann, Heinrich,” *Manitoba Agricultural Hall of Fame*.

⁷² “Holtman, Heinrich - Interview,” 1977, Accession No. 1978-0051, National Ethnic Archives Fonds; Jones, *Both Sides of the Wire: The Fredericton Internment Camp*, 659.

was confined in a camp. Without her strength and determination, Heinrich's farm and prized herd would have likely been liquidated to satisfy creditors long before his eventual release. In the final months of 1941, despite Heinrich's disappointment and recognition that Johanna could no longer continue, she had already managed a 400-acre farm and a family of four children for a full year before reaching complete physical exhaustion. It is particularly disheartening that her efforts were not acknowledged in any of the interviews Holtmann gave after the war.⁷³ The analysis of the Holtmanns' internment narrative further demonstrates that, in some cases, the women left behind could endure more life-altering hardships than the husband confined in a physical space of an internment camp. While internees were subjected to forced labor and confinement, they were typically provided with substantial rations and various amenities. By contrast, families left behind received minimal support from the federal government, which had abruptly removed the family's main provider. In the Holtmanns' case, it took several correspondences between the Western Trust and the Office of the Custodian merely to have Johanna's dire situation formally acknowledged. Ultimately, Heinrich may have been technically correct when he claimed that his family "did not suffer" as a whole. Yet Johanna endured immense hardship in silence, like many other German-Canadian women who struggled to keep their families together against overwhelming odds.

⁷³ Whether this was on purpose or not is unknown. None of Grenke's questions specifically asked about Johanna's experience and the original uncut film reel of Heinrich's CBC interview has likely long been destroyed.

Conclusion

The Second World War came to a dramatic end on 15 August 1945, when Japan surrendered to the Allies following the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Sixteen days later, the dwindling Fredericton Internment Camp was closed. The camp's remaining internees of twenty Germans and 420 Japanese were transferred to the Monteith Internment Camp in northern Ontario, which remained open until November 1946.¹ The closure of the Fredericton Internment Camp marked the unceremonious end of German-Canadian internment in Canada. The Directorate of Internment Operations closed the last internment camp—the Hull Internment Camp in Gatineau, Québec—in March 1947. Former internees like Fred Martin and Fritz Schneider were finally permitted to return to their home province now that the war was over. This was even though many of them had already construct lives in the provinces they were exiled to. Meanwhile, as this thesis has depicted, many former internees were still indebted to the Office of the Custodian, which continued to pursue the settlement of accounts well into the 1950s. During the 1960s, the Custodian's Office was transferred from the Secretary of State to the Registrar General and later to the Consumer and Corporate Affairs, before finally integrating into the Department of Supply and Services in 1972.² By that time, those affected by internment had reintegrated into Canadian society, rebuilding their lives and moving forward from experiences that had deeply disrupted, and in many cases nearly shattered, their families.

This thesis has presented several examples of the physical, mental, and financial hardships that the families of German-Canadian internees had to experience during the Second World War. Within a distinctly male internee focused historiography, this research demonstrates

¹ "Internment Statistics [Report]," 18 August 1945, File C116-19-3, Vol. 3566, RG18-F-3, Royal Canadian Mounted Police Fonds, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Canada. Digital ID number: 879826.

² Roberts-Moore, "The Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property: An Overview of the Office and Its Records, 1920–1952," 106.

that the families of the interned were also profoundly affected by the Canadian government's internment policies. The narratives of Thilde Schneider, Ruth Martin, and Johanna Holtmann each illustrate how the matriarch endured life-altering hardships following the sudden removal and internment of the familial patriarch. The Schneider and Martin family accounts further reveal that the Canadian government provided little direct support to the women and children, despite acknowledging that the internment of the family's primary wage earner would have significant consequences for wives and children. Finally, Johanna Holtmann's experience demonstrates that the wife of an internee could endure greater hardships outside the physical confines of an internment camp than her husband did within it.

The research in this thesis offers the first comprehensive examination of the adverse effects of Canadian Second World War internment policies on the lives of families left behind while the husband was interned. The analysis adopts a novel narrative lens that centres the perspectives of families as a unit in order to underscore that internment policies affected far more than those physically confined within the camps. This approach also allows the broader narrative of civilian internment in Canada to be reconstructed without reliance on official government accounts alone. As Professor Lothar Zimmermann has suggested, the historiography can and should move beyond defining German-Canadian internment solely through government records; however, focusing exclusively on the experiences of the interned themselves still produces an incomplete and overtly narrow understanding of the wider consequences of internment.

To be fully transparent, this assessment is far from comprehensive either. The unfortunate lack of preserved publicly accessible letters from family members meant that the experiences of Ruth Martin and Johanna Holtmann had to be interpreted primarily through the correspondence of their husbands, who may not have been fully aware of the day-to-day hardships endured by

their families. Moreover, the husbands' letters were shaped by the correspondence they received, which may have been self-censored. Wives and other family members may have wished to avoid burdening their loved ones with additional worries while they were confined in internment camps. Daily realities not readily apparent in these letters—such as enemy alien registration, food rationing, denunciations, and social alienation—most certainly played a significant role in the lives of some, if not all, of these families and further support the concept of domestic internment. No explanation is provided for why all letters were not preserved; whether they still exist in private collections or discarded remains unclear. This absence raises an important question: What criteria rendered internee letters sufficiently valuable to be archived in public institutions, while those written by family members were excluded? In the cases of Heinrich Holtmann and Fred Martin, it is highly probable that the narratives of being physical interned in a government run internment camp rendered these letters valuable to preserve. Holtmann alludes to this assumption in correspondence with Ted Jones: “All my documents from my internment are in the Public Archives in Ottawa. Out of this material you can get all the details of my internment experience far better than I could tell you now after 40 years.”³ The daily experiences of internees within camps have been largely deemed more historically valuable than the experiences of internees' families, thereby perpetuating the marginalization of women by privileging male narratives as more authoritative.

The postwar attitude of the Canadian government presents internment during the Second World War as a successfully managed and organized affair. However, the Canadian government's gravest oversight in planning for internment was the complete neglect of families and its assumption that the forced separation constituted the best course of action. Hubert Stethem's

³ Jones, *Both Sides of the Wire: The Fredericton Internment Camp*, 659.

candid remarks that families would be supported by municipalities through the same process “as in the case of the head of the family being arrested and imprisoned,” akin to a common criminal.⁴ Ironically, some internees “env[ied] the criminal in prison for at least he knows from the beginning how many years or months his imprisonment will last.”⁵ After assessing several narratives of internees and their families, it becomes clear that while the internment of able-bodied males was not entirely unexpected within the German-Canadian community, the length of internment extending into years drove many families to the brink of destitution. The proposal that municipalities would support families might have been acceptable had the Canadian government devised an adequate relief policy upon which destitute families could reliably depend on. However, due to the rushed planning of wartime and internment policies, it is evident that the government did not regard the welfare of the families as a pressing concern and was prepared to allow them to fend for themselves. This decision was ironically reversed in 1942 with the relocation and uprooting of entire Japanese-Canadian families from British Columbia, a reversal that only further exposes the extent of racial discrimination underpinning these policies. Although it is unlikely that any of the women discussed in this thesis would have chosen to accompany their husbands into an internment camp when they were initially interned, documented instances of women seeking to join their spouses demonstrated that there was a demand for family camps. Such a camp could have provided a critical safety net for those who experienced the greatest hardship following the forced removal of the family’s main provider, rather than confronting the very real prospect of destitution and survival on minimal relief.

⁴ Hubert Stethem to Stuart Wood, 4 October 1939, File C11-19-3, Vol. 3564, RG18-F-3, Royal Canadian Mounted Police Fonds, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Canada. Digital ID number: 879816.

⁵ A letter from an anonymous internee to his wife. Jones, *Both Sides of the Wire: The Fredericton Internment Camp*, 658.

Of the three family case studies in this thesis, the Schneider family narrative is unique within narratives of German-Canadian internment. In a historiography that has traditionally favoured male perspectives, it is Thilde Schneider's surviving letters that defined the family narrative and reinforce this case study's analysis. Her correspondence provides a rare and invaluable perspective: the voice of a German-Canadian internee's wife speaking in her own terms. In contrast to the other case studies, in which a wife's experience must be reconstructed through her husband's letters or mediated through a third-party account, Thilde's letters stand as a direct and unfiltered record. Her words describing her inability to locate her husband within Winnipeg are harrowing; nevertheless, she maintained hope that they would be reunited, presenting herself as resilient and composed in the face of her forced separation. Thilde's experience is significant because it demonstrates that families were present and actively engaged in efforts to locate loved ones who had been forcibly removed to internment camps. While her correspondence illustrates her agency in attempting to find Fritz, it also reveals the Canadian government's deliberate withheld information. Moreover, the letters show that even over a relatively short period, the internment of a husband imposed severe psychological strain, suggesting that prolonged separation was likely deeply traumatic for many family members. Although the day-to-day realities of farm management are better articulated in the Holtmann family case study, the continued internment of her husband required Thilde to rely on her own management of the farm to support the family. If Johanna Holtmann's experience as a farmer's wife left to fend for herself is indicative, it is likely that conditions for Thilde and her children deteriorated further as months turned into years. Ultimately, the Schneider family's home and farm in Manitoba were sold, and Thilde relocated with her children to Québec to join the exiled Fritz. The family never returned to live in the province.

In contrast to Fritz Schneider’s unique experience of reinternment, the internment narratives of Fred Martin and Heinrich Holtmann are defined by a series of shared characteristics. Both men were arrested and interned in June 1940, and both believed that their arrests resulted from malicious denunciations rather than substantiated evidence of subversive activity. They were initially held at Kananaskis before being transferred to Fredericton. Both men also described their internment as relatively tolerable, expressing few complaints or regrets, and each was released after at least two years of confinement. The primary distinction between their cases lies in Holtmann’s likely early release and return to his home province, prompted by the “situation regarding [his] farm.”⁶ What ultimately distinguishes the Martin and Holtmann family narratives, however, are the experiences and hardships endured by Ruth Martin and Johanna Holtmann. In both case studies, the women bore a far greater burdens than their husbands, who, despite their internment, experienced conditions that afforded time for painting, gardening, language learning, and adequate or even plentiful food. By contrast, Ruth and Johanna faced sustained economic, emotional, and physical hardship outside the camps, underscoring the disproportionate impact of the internment policies on the families left behind.

Ruth Martin’s narrative reveals her resilience and sustained hope despite the numerous hardships resulting from Fred’s internment, including forced separation, intrusive government oversight, the loss of physical and financial assets, and persistent uncertainty regarding the family’s postwar future. The Martin family’s experience demonstrates that the internment of a husband had profound consequences for the financial stability of an internee’s wife and family, directly threatening their quality of life and overall well-being. Unlike the Schneider and

⁶ Heinrich Holtmann to Louis St. Laurent, 18 December 1941, R1806-0-7-E, MG30-C154, Heinrich Holtmann Fonds.

Holtmann families, who owned farms, the Martins operated a sporting goods distribution company that faced additional constraints under the Regulations Respecting Trading with the Enemy. As a result of Fred's internment, all the family's assets were frozen, and it required intervention by the Western Trust Company to secure the release of funds necessary to cover medical expenses for the birth of their third child. Although this marked only the beginning of Fred's three-year internment, it was Ruth's determination and leadership that prevented the complete collapse of the family business. To its credit, the Western Trust Company appears to have recognized the severity of the hardships faced by both Ruth and Johanna, demonstrating a curious amount of empathy notably absent from the Office of the Custodian in Ottawa. A close analysis of the Office of the Custodian files reveals that economic restrictions played a far more significant role in shaping the lives of internees and their families than has previously been acknowledged. In a broader historiographical context, Ruth Martin's experience challenges interpretations of internment narratives that are confined within the physical boundaries of the internment camp.

Out of the three case studies, Johanna Holtmann arguably endured the most life altering hardships as she attempted to manage her husband's farm. Over the two years that Heinrich Holtmann was interned, Johanna faced sustained physical and emotional exhaustion while struggling to keep both the family and the farm economically viable. Her experience is central to this thesis's argument that the families left behind also suffered profoundly from internment, as it clearly demonstrates the extent to which her life was fundamentally reshaped by her husband's absence. With little assistance and limited prior experience, Johanna was forced to manage a 400-acre cattle farm entirely on her own. Her endurance delayed what was likely an inevitable mental and physical breakdown and, in doing so, prevented the farm from being sold to satisfy

creditors. An analysis of the Holtmann family's narrative reveals that, in some cases, the wife of an internee suffered more outside the physical confines of the internment camp than the husband did within it. This conclusion is not intended to diminish the suffering of internees, who were subjected to arrest, forced separation from their families, confinement, and compulsory labour. Nevertheless, many internees expressed a degree of satisfaction with the material conditions of internment, which included regular rations, adequate housing, access to medical care, and various amenities. By contrast, families left behind received minimal support from the federal government that had abruptly removed the family's primary wage earner. Women such as Johanna were forced to adapt in order to sustain their families, all while confronting the constant fear of financial ruin and destitution—a fear that Heinrich himself frequently reminded her of.

Each of these three women has a distinct story shaped by different hardships and experiences, yet all shared the singular, defining event of their husbands being interned by the Canadian government during the Second World War. The assumption that families of the interned, because they were not physically interned and were permitted to retain a degree of personal autonomy, avoided the worst hardships endured by internees is demonstrably false. The case studies of these three families provide compelling evidence that internment in Canada during the Second World War extended well beyond the boundaries of the physical camps. Although wives and children were not forcibly relocated to internment facilities, they endured what can be described as *domestic internment*. Fundamentally, domestic internment refers to individuals who were not confined within physical camps, but whose lives were nevertheless profoundly shaped by the same policies of the Defence of Canada Regulations (DOCR) and the Office of the Custodian of Enemy Alien Property. The wives—and, by extension, the children—of German-Canadian internees were subjected to many of the same forms of alienation,

surveillance, and restrictions imposed on able-bodied enemy alien men. The primary distinction drawn by the Canadian government was that able-bodied men were deemed a sufficient threat to national security to justify their forced relocation to federally run internment camps. Ultimately, the government did little to prevent the families of the interned from descending into economic precarity or destitution. Responsibility for survival of family fell almost entirely upon the matriarch, who was compelled to navigate a new dual reality as both the primary wage earner and homemaker, or else confront the persistent threat of poverty. However, when many husbands and fathers returned to their families and restored the status quo—as in the case of Heinrich Holtmann—the experiences and narratives of wives were often minimized in comparison to those of the men who had endured physical internment.

To conclude, Thilde Schneider, Ruth Martin, and Johanna Holtmann stand as exceptional examples of German-Canadian women who defied considerable odds. Each demonstrated independence, resilience, and determination in a period marked by profound hardship and emotional distress. In this respect, the women examined in this thesis share clear narrative parallels with the research of German women presented by Marlene Epp and Annemarie Tröger. The German-Canadian women in this study were compelled to step beyond traditional gender roles during moments of intense personal pain and upheaval. Returning to the opening of this thesis and the account of the unnamed internee and his wife at Fort Henry Internment Camp, the question remains whether that story accurately captured the lived experiences of internee families. When the findings of this research are applied to that account, Officer Thompson's narrative emerges as a hauntingly accurate depiction of how the families of German-Canadian internees were left behind, marginalized, and forgotten.

Bibliography

Archival Sources

Library and Archives Canada (LAC):

Department of Justice Fonds. 1796-2010. RG13.
Royal Canadian Mounted Police Fonds. 1868-1999. RG18.
Department of National Defence Fonds. 1874-2007. RG24.
Department of External Affairs Fonds. 1803-1995. RG25.
Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property Fonds. 1891-1977. RG 117.

Heinrich Holtmann Fonds [textual record], R1806-0-7-E, MG30-C154.
Friedrich Martin Fonds, R2840-0-6-E, MG30-C154.

“Martin, Fred – Interview,” Interview by Arther Grenke. 1977, audio recording, Accession No. 1978-0042, National Ethnic Archives Fonds, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Canada. Digital ID number: 438186.

“Holtman, Heinrich - Interview,” Interview by Arther Grenke. 1977, audio recording, Accession No. 1978-0051, National Ethnic Archives Fonds, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Canada. Digital ID number: 438171.

“Snyder, Frederick – Interview.” Interview by Bill McNeil. 1975, audio recording, Accession No. 1981-0111, Bill McNeil Fonds, Library and Archies Canada, Ottawa, Canada. Digital ID number: 168465

Provincial Archives of Manitoba:

Canada - National Defence fonds. Canada - National Defence - Streight, Harvey N. (Colonel) Collection, 1939-1945, MG 6 E2.

John Pirozek Fonds, 1939-1945, P262.

Rasler, Frank. *The Red and the Rhine*. CBC Manitoba Fonds, March 1975, 53 min., 66 sec., V312.

University of Winnipeg Archives:

Little Britain Collection. Schneider/Snyder Family Fonds. CA UWA 23.20.

“Schneider, Hans-Joachim – Interview.” Interview by Alexander Freund. 2003-2004. Audio Recordings, Oral History Centre Archives.

Periodicals

Canada Gazette. King's Printer. Ottawa, ON.
The Winnipeg Free Press. Winnipeg, MB.
The Winnipeg Evening Tribune. Winnipeg, MB.

Additional Primary Sources

Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, *House of Commons Votes and Proceedings*, 19th Parl., 1st Sess., No. 9 (28 May 1940) at 58,
https://parl.canadiana.ca/view/oop.proc_HOC_1901_1/100, accessed 25 July 2025.

Clay, Charles. *So, You Want a War Job!* Oxford University Press, 1942.

Otter, William D., *Internment Operations, 1914-1920*. Ottawa: Thomas Mulvey, 1921.

Statistics Canada. *The Canada Yearbook 1937*. King's Printer: Ottawa, 1937.

Secondary Sources

Theses:

Chaput, Lucile. "L'internement au Canada durant la Seconde Guerre mondiale: le camp de Petawawa n° 33, 1939-1946." Master's thesis, L'Université Rennes 2, 2016.

Ciccocelli, Joseph Anthony. "The Innocuous Enemy Alien: Italians in Canada During World War II." Master's thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1977.

Cook, Ramsay. "Canadian Liberalism in Wartime: A Study of the Defence of Canada Regulations and Some Canadian Attitudes to Civil Liberties in Wartime, 1939 - 1945." Master's thesis, Queen's University, 1955.

Kelly, John Joseph. "The Prisoner of War Camps in Canada 1939-1947." Master's thesis, University of Windsor, 1976.

McBride, Michelle. "From Indifference to Internment - an Examination of RCMP Responses to Nazism and Fascism in Canada from 1934 to 1941." Master's thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1997.

Myers, Adrian, Barbara L. Voss, Ian Hodder, and Ross W. Jamieson. "The archaeology of reform at a German prisoner of war camp in a Canadian national park during the Second World War (1943-1945)." Ph.D. Dissertation, Stanford University, 2013.
<http://purl.stanford.edu/yc370rj6066>.

O'Hagan, Michael. "Beyond the Barbed Wire: POW Labour Projects in Canada during the Second World War." Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of Western Ontario, 2020.

Articles:

- Bartl, Cornelia. "The Loss of the German-Canadian Image," in *German-Canadian Yearbook*, vol. 13. Edited by Georg K. Weißenborn. Toronto: Historical Society of Meenburg Upper Canada, 1994.
- Boyd, Monica. "Immigrant Women in Canada," in *International Migration: The Female Experience*. Edited by Rita J. Simon and Caroline Brettell. Totowa, N. J.: Rowman & Allanheld, 1986.
- Clark, Jessica P., Tricia Nowicki "Enemies Within or Without Enemies: "Enemy Aliens" and Internment in Canada during the Second World War." *The General: Brock University Undergraduate Journal of History* 3 (2018): 206-217. <https://doi.org/10.26522/tg.v3i0>
- Chaktsiris, Mary. "Identifying the Enemy in First World War Canada: The Historiography and Bureaucracy of Enemy Alien Internment and Registration." *Canadian Military History* 28, No. 2 (2019): 1-31.
- Chaput, Lucile. "Internment in Canada during the Second World War: Camp No. 33, 1939-1946", *Canadian Studies/Études canadiennes* 81 (2016): 129-147.
- "L'histoire des internés germano-canadiens durant la Seconde Guerre mondiale au prisme de trajectoires d'immigrés « ordinaires »." *Bulletin d'histoire politique* 32, No. 3 (2025): 125-148.
- Cooper, B. J. "Farm Women: Some Contemporary Themes." *Labour/Le Travail* 24, (1989): 167-180.
- Eyford, Ryan C. "'Close Together, Though Miles and Miles Apart': Family, Distance, and Emotion in the Letters of the Taylor Sisters, 1881-1921." *Histoire Sociale* 48, No. 96 (2015): 67-86.
- Grams, Grant W. "Enemies within Our Bosom: Nazi Sabotage in Canada," *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 14, No. 3-4 (2012): 1-20.
- Keyserlingk, Robert H. "'Agents Within the Gates': The Search for Nazi Subversives in Canada during World War II." *The Canadian Historical Review* 66, No. 2 (1985): 211-39.
- "The Canadian Government's Attitude Towards Germans and German Canadians in World War Two." *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 16, No. 1 (1984): 16-28.
- "Which Fatherland in War? The Canadian Government's View of German Canadian Loyalties in World War Two," in *Central and East European Ethnicity in Canada: Adaptation and Preservation*. Edited by T. Yedlin. Edmonton: Central and East European Studies Society of Alberta, 1985.

----- "Breaking the Nazi Plot: Canadian Government's Attitude Towards German Canadians, 1939-1945," in *On Guard for Thee: War, Ethnicity, and the Canadian State, 1939-1945*. Edited by Norman Hillmer, Bohdan S. Kordan, and Lubomyr Y. Luciuk. Ottawa: Canadian Committee for the History of the Second World War, 1988.

Lorenzkowski, Barbara. "'Spies', 'Saboteurs', and 'Subversives': German-Canadian Internees and the Wartime Discourse at the Canadian Homefront, 1939-1945," in *A Chorus of Different Voices: German-Canadian Identities*. Edited by Angelika E. Sauer and Matthias Zimmer. New York: P. Lang, 1998.

Morokvasic, Mirjana. "Woman in Migration Beyond the Reductionist Outlook," in *One Way Ticket: Migration and Female Labour*. Edited by Annie Phizacklea. London, United Kingdom; Routledge, 1983.

Roberts-Moore, Judith. "The Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property: An Overview of the Office and Its Records, 1920–1952." *Archivaria* 22 (January 1986): 95-106.

Robinson, Daniel. "Planning for the 'Most Serious Contingency': Alien Internment, Arbitrary Detention, and the Canadian State 1938–39." *Journal of Canadian Studies* 28, No. 2 (1993): 5–20.

Sandoz, Yves. "Max Huber and the Red Cross," *European Journal of International Law* 18, (February 2007): 171–197. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ejil/chm005>.

Stanton, John. "Government Internment Policy, 1939-1945." *Labour/Le Travail* 31, (1993): 203–42.

Zimmermann, Lothar. "The Forgotten POWs: German-Canadian Enemy Aliens Behind Canadian Barbed Wire," in *Annales 8. German-Canadian Studies in the Nineties: Results & Projects Symposium 1992*. Edited by Lothar Zimmermann. Toronto: German-Canadian Historical Association, 1993.

----- "Those Other POWs: German-Canadian Civilians behind Canadian Barbed Wire and Prison Bars," in *German-Canadian Yearbook*, vol. XVI. Edited by Lothar Zimmermann and Hartmut Froeschle. Toronto: Historical Society of Mecklenberg Upper Canada, 1993.

Monographs:

Auger, Martin F. *Prisoners of the Home Front: German Pows and "Enemy Aliens" in Southern Quebec, 1940-46*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005.

Bassler, Gerhard P. *The German Canadian Mosaic Today and Yesterday: Identities, Roots and Heritage*. Ottawa: German-Canadian Congress, 1991.

----- *Nation Builders and Enemy Aliens: Four Centuries of German Experience in Canada*. Manitoba: FriesenPress, 2021.

- Bryden, John. *Deadly Allies: Canada's Secret War, 1937-1947*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1989.
- Cancian, Sonia. *Families, Lovers, and their Letters*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2000.
- Carter, David J. *Pow, Behind Canadian Barbed Wire: Alien, Refugee and Prisoner of War Camps in Canada, 1914-1946*. Elkwater, Alta.: Eagle Butte Press, 1998.
- Culos, Raymond. *Injustice Served: The Story of British Columbia's Italian Enemy Aliens During World War II*. Vancouver: Cusmano Books, 2012.
- Duliani, Mario, and Antonino Mazza. *The City Without Women: A Chronicle of Internment Life in Canada During the Second World War*. Mosaic Press, 1994.
- Epp, Marlene. *Women Without Men: Mennonite Refugees of the Second World War*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000.
- Freund, Alexander, ed. *Being German Canadian: History, Memory, Generations*. Winnipeg, Manitoba, 2021.
- Grams, Grant W. *Coming Home to the Third Reich: Return Migration of German Nationals from the United States and Canada, 1933-1941*. Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Incorporated Publishers, 2021.
- Granatstein, J. L. *A Man of Influence: Norman A. Robertson and Canadian Statecraft 1929-68*. Ottawa: Deneau Publishers, 1981.
- Greenfield, Nathan M. *Hanged in Medicine Hat: Murders in a Nazi Prisoner-of-War Camp, and the Disturbing True Story of Canada's Last Mass Execution*. Toronto: Sutherland House Books, 2022.
- Grenke, Arthur. *German Canadians: Community Formation, Transformation and Contribution to Canadian Life*. Indianapolis: Trafford Publishing, 2018.
- Helling, Rudolf Anton, and Bernd Hamm. *A Socio-Economic History of German-Canadians, They, Too, Founded Canada: A Research Report*. Germany: Steiner Verlag, 1984.
- Hilmer, John. *Ein deutsches Schicksal in Kanada: Einwanderung--Internierung--Ringeln um Rehabilitation*. Edited and introduction by Lothar Zimmermann. Toronto: German-Canadian Historical Association, 1996.
- Hillmer, Norman, Bohdan S. Kordan, and Lubomyr Y. Luciuk, eds. *On Guard for Thee: War, Ethnicity, and the Canadian State, 1939-1945*. Ottawa: Canadian Committee for the History of the Second World War, 1988.

- Hinther, Rhonda, and Jim Mochoruk, eds. *Civilian Internment in Canada: Histories and Legacies. Civilian Internment in Canada*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: University of Manitoba Press, 2020.
- Holian, Timothy J. *The German-Americans and World War II: An Ethnic Experience*. New York: Peter Lang, 1998.
- Howard, Kenneth G. *Stories of Selkirk's Pioneers and Their Heritage: In Commemoration of Selkirk's 125th Anniversary*. Winnipeg, MB: Pioneer Publications, 2010.
- Iacovetta, Franca, Roberto Perin, and Angelo Principe, eds. *Enemies Within: Italian and Other Internees in Canada and Abroad*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016.
- Jones, Ted. *Both Sides of the Wire: The Fredericton Internment Camp*. Vol. 1 & 2. Fredericton: New Ireland Press, 1989.
- Kealey, Gregory S., Reginald Whitaker, Committee on Canadian Labour History, and Committee on Canadian Labour History. *R.C.M.P. Security Bulletins: The War Series*. St. John's, Nfld: Committee on Canadian Labour History, 1989.
<https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/RCMP/issue/archive>
- Kealey, Gregory S. *Spying on Canadians: The Royal Canadian Mounted Police Security Service and the Origins of the Long Cold War*. University of Toronto Press, 2017.
- Koch, Eric. *Deemed Suspect: A Wartime Blunder*. Ontario: Methuen, 1980.
- Kordan, Bohdan S. *Enemy Aliens, Prisoners of War: Internment in Canada during the Great War*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002.
- *No Free Man: Canada, the Great War, and the Enemy Alien Experience*. Montreal; McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016.
- Laprise, Andrée. *Coupables d'être étrangères. Le camp des femmes de Kingston, 1939-1943*. Outremont: Athéna éditions, 2010.
- McNair, Don, Lawrna Myers, Carol Brown, Vivian Elgie, and Jerry Thompson. *The Most Difficult of Our Camps: Vernon Internment Camp, 1914-1920*. Vernon, British Columbia: Vernon & District Family History Society, 2022.
- McNeil, Bill. *Voice of the Pioneer*. Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1978.
- Melady, John. *Escape From Canada! The Untold Story of German POWs in Canada 1939-1945*. Toronto: Macmillan, 1981.
- Mosby, Ian. *Food Will Win the War: The Politics, Culture, and Science of Food on Canada's Home Front*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014.

- Oikawa, Mona. *Cartographies of Violence: Japanese Canadian Women, Memory, and the Subjects of the Internment*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018.
- Panayi, Panikos. *Minorities in Wartime: National and Racial Groupings in Europe, North America, and Australia during the Two World Wars*. Oxford: Berg, 1993.
- Perrun, Jody. *The Patriotic Consensus: Unity, Morale, and the Second World War in Winnipeg*. Manitoba: University of Manitoba Press, 2014.
- Phizacklea, Annie, ed. *One Way Ticket: Migration and Female Labour*. London, United Kingdom; Routledge, 1983.
- Repka, William, and Kathleen M. Repka. *Dangerous Patriots: Canada's Unknown Prisoners of War*. Vancouver: New Star Books, 1982.
- Robin, Martin. *Shades of Right: Nativist and Fascist Politics in Canada, 1920-1940*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992.
- Rural Municipality of St. Andrews. *Beyond the Gates of Lower Fort Garry*. Clandeboye, Manitoba: Municipality of St. Andrews, 1982.
- Russell, Jan Jarboe. *The Train to Crystal City: FDR's Secret Prisoner Exchange Program and America's Only Family Internment Camp during World War II*. New York: Scribner, 2016.
- Sando, Tom, and J. P. Desgagne. *Wild Daisies in the Sand: Life in a Canadian Internment Camp*. Edmonton: NeWest Press, 2002.
- Sauer, Angelika E., and Matthias Zimmer, eds. *A Chorus of Different Voices: German-Canadian Identities*. New York: P. Lang, 1998.
- Schneider, Viola, and Gwen Fox. *The Old Stone Church: The History of Little Britain United Church (est. 1852)*. 2002. <https://littlebritainunitedchurch.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/lbuc.histories.pdf>
- Stanger-Ross, Jordan, ed. *Landscapes of Injustice: A New Perspective on the Internment and Dispossession of Japanese Canadians*. Montreal [Quebec]; McGill-Queen's University Press, 2020.
- Theobald, Andrew. *"Dangerous Enemy Sympathizers:" Canadian Internment Camp B, 1940-1945*. Fredericton, New Brunswick: Goose Lane Editions, 2019.
- Théorêt, Hugues. *The Blue Shirts: Adrien Arcand and Fascist Anti-Semitism in Canada*. Translated by Howard Scott and Ferdinanda van Gennip. Ottawa, Ontario: University of Ottawa Press, 2017.

Van de Vorst, Charlotte. *Making Ends Meet: Farm Women's Work in Manitoba*, Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2002.

Vance, Jonathan F. *Objects of Concern: Canadian Prisoners of War through the Twentieth Century*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1994.

Wagner, Jonathan F. *A History of Migration from Germany to Canada, 1850-1939*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005.

----- *Brothers Beyond the Sea: National Socialism in Canada*. 2nd ed. Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2012.

Waiser, Bill. *Park Prisoners: The Untold Story of Western Canada's National Parks, 1915-1946*. Saskatoon: Fifth House Pub., 1999.

Wright, Janet B. *Crown Assets: The Architecture of the Department of Public Works, 1867-1967*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997.

Zimmermann, Ernest Robert. *The Little Third Reich on Lake Superior: A History of Canadian Internment Camp R*. Edited by David K. Ratz and Michel S. Beaulieu. Edmonton, Alberta: The University of Alberta Press, 2016.

Websites:

Dignity Memorial. "Peter Martin Obituary." June 2024.
<https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/winnipeg-mb/peter-martin-11847594>.

Geary, Andrea. "Milking cows runs in the family." Winnipeg Free Press Community Review, 9 May 2016. <https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/our-communities/headliner/2016/05/09/milking-cows-runs-in-the-family>

Manitoba Agricultural Hall of Fame. "Holtmann, Heinrich."
<https://www.manitobaaghalloffame.com/ahofmember/holtmann-heinrich/>

McAdam's Funeral Home & Crematorium. "Obituary of Ted Jones." September 2023.
<https://mcamamsfh.com/tribute/details/1467/Ted-Jones/obituary.html>.

Necro Canada. "Death notice: Maria Margarete Kaiser – 1931-2017." January 2017.

Ramsden, Sarah, and Gordon Goldsborough. "Memorable Manitobans: Samuel George Sims (1870-1953)." Manitoba Historical Society, 19 December 2013.
https://mhs.mb.ca/docs/people/sims_sg.shtml

Winnipeg Free Press Passages. "Johanna (Hanna) Christina Holtmann (nee Westerlemke)." 3 August 2005. https://passages.winnipegfreepress.com/passage-details/id-98882/Johanna_Holtmann