

WWI in Chicago meant some meatless days

Many locals didn't think America should be in 'the war to end all wars'

BY PATRICK BUTLER

Chicago was never the same after the U.S. entered "The Great War" 100 years ago last month, said Joseph Gustaitis, author of *Chicago Transformed: World War I and the Windy City*.

In just six years – between 1913 and 1919 – the 19th Century city became the teeming economic and political powerhouse it is today, Gustaitis told the Ravenswood/Lakeview Historical Association during a recent meeting at the Sulzer Library, 4455 N. Lincoln.

For years, Germans were Chicago's largest and most admired immigrant group, said Gustaitis, noting "there wasn't a lot of enthusiasm (or any practical reasons) for getting into a European war."

Moreover, he added, many Americans – especially the Irish – didn't think the U.S. should be fighting alongside the British, especially with Berlin giving significant aid to Irish revolutionaries along with a promise that if Germany and her allies won, the peace treaty would require England to give up Ireland. President Woodrow Wilson pledged neutrality for the U.S., a position that the vast majority of Americans favored.

Not surprisingly, the most popular song in 1916 – the year before the U.S. entered the war – was "I Didn't Raise My Boy to be a Soldier," Gustaitis noted.



A local resident gets her book autographed by Joseph Gustaitis after a talk by the author. "It was the war that changed everything. Nothing has ever been the same since." Photo by Patrick Butler

But all that changed after the U.S. learned Berlin had tried to get Mexico to attack the U.S. in return for a promise that Mexico would recover Texas, Arizona and New Mexico as a reward. Mexico didn't take the bait, realizing the militarily stronger U.S. would still be their next-door neighbor even after their German advisors went home.

The U.S. entered the war 100 years ago on April 6, 1917. On June 26, the first 14,000 U.S. infantry troops landed in France to begin training for combat.

After four years of bloody stalemate along the western front, the entrance of America's well-supplied forces into the conflict marked a major turning point in the war and helped the Allies to victory. When the war finally ended, on Nov. 11, 1918, more than two million American soldiers had served on the battlefields of West-

ern Europe, and some 50,000 of them had lost their lives.

A number of Americans who previously wanted no part of what many saw as a "family argument" between England's King George V and Russia's Czar Nicholas II and their first cousin, German Kaiser Wilhelm, were suddenly tripping all over themselves to enlist to fight "the War to End All Wars," Gustaitis said.

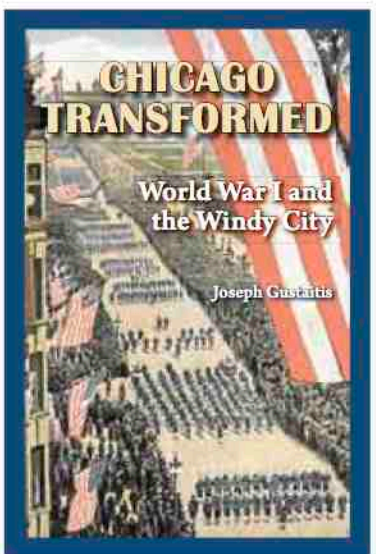
As "anti-Hun" sentiment grew following the U.S. entry into the war, suddenly German Hospital in Lincoln Park became Grant Hospital, the Germania Club in Old Town became the Lincoln Club, the Bismarck School became the Fredrick Funston School, Sauerkraut became "Liberty Cabbage," and German shepherd dogs suddenly became Alsatians, Gustaitis said.

The American Protective League went hunting for "traitors," Germans (or German-looking Americans) were made to kiss the American flag, and "Four-Minute Men" gave patriotic pep talks during theater intermissions.

In addition to some mandatory food rationing, Chicagoans voluntarily participated in "meatless days" and "wheatless days" to help feed American "Doughboys" at the front, Gustaitis added.

The Army, he noted, even held a "huge war exposition" in Grant Park in 1918, featuring "recreated battles" using tanks, artillery and captured German equipment as a way of stimulating war bond sales and recruitment.

Compared to the rest of the world, America's role in World



Author Joseph Gustaitis discusses his latest book, *Chicago Transformed: World War I and the Windy City*. America - and the world - have never been the same since, he told an audience at Sulzer Library.

War I was relatively brief and decisive. But the memories of what some consider an almost forgotten war linger on, even in the least likely places, Gustaitis said.

Like in the hockey world. One of the returning veterans ended up buying an interest in a struggling Portland, Oregon, hockey team, and moved it to Chicago.

He renamed the team after the Blackhawk Division he'd served in.

After all, Gustaitis said, the Chicago Blackhawks sounded a lot better than the original name – the Rosebuds.

Celebrate Mama and Nonna at Club Lucky

Mother's Day will be celebrated 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday, May 14 with an all-you-can-eat brunch buffet at Club Lucky, 1824 W. Wabansia Ave.

Included in the buffet are eggs, vegetable frittata, Applewood smoked bacon and sausage, French toast, seasonal berries, smoked and grilled salmon, pastries and bagels, Caprese, Club Lucky, Caesar and baby green salads with mini mozzarella, chicken francese and Vesuvio, roast pork loin, rosemary roasted potatoes, green beans amandine, baby carrots with Sherry Vin Gastrigue, cheese tortellini in pesto cream sauce, linguine with broccoli olio, penne marinara, veal meatballs, fried calamari, giambotta, chicken fingers and a dessert table.

The price for adults is \$29.95, Kids \$17.95, those aged 5 and under are complimentary.

Reservations are suggested, call 773-227-2300 or visit www.clubluckychicago.com.

Slow the decline, tame the party bus

The North Side's so-called party trolleys have long been a blight and have now become a danger. Multiple shootings have recently occurred on some of them. Whatever these vehicles offer our already collapsing society, you decide. Addictions of myriad kinds are rife and lamentably becoming increasingly ubiquitous in our society (e.g., alcohol, drugs, sex, and electronics). Now guns have entered the party culture picture.

Plenty of law-abiding, civilized revelers are overshadowed by countless noisy, troublesome, and recently even dangerous passengers. What else might one expect but shootings when you mix uncontrolled use of alcohol with guns?

What "freedoms" are being

protected by permitting, even encouraging, such boorish, selfish,

of character and conscience will do about this situation we will see.

Letters to the Editor

frenetic, and violent displays? Who is benefiting from such regressive functioning? Where do civility, empathy, and observation of boundaries come in?

There have been continuing attempts to rein in these problematic nuisances.

Chicago is soaring rapidly toward its nadir. Can we slow its decline and help it reclaim any of its lost stature? We will see. However, warm weather is approaching, and we have no time to waste.

Party trolleys and buses are not the problem. It is the misuse of them that is the problem.

What civilized, honest leaders

Leon J. Hoffman
Lakeview East

Correction!

Thank you so much for the wonderful coverage and article entitled, "German History on the North Side," by Patrick Butler in the April 19-25 edition.

But there were two separate misprints in the article.

The correct name of the book written by Joseph Heinen, and noted in the talk, is "Lost German Chicago."

The other misprint was to Joseph Heinen's profession... you said "...Heinen, an artist and long time Lincoln Square resident..."

Well, Joseph is a restaurateur and owner of The Red Lion Lincoln Square, 4749 N. Rockwell St.

Susan Barton Heinen
Lincoln Square

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TUESDAY: \$3 Coors Light & Miller Lite Drafts, \$4 Well Cocktails, \$4 Summer Shandy & Revolution Drafts, \$5 Jumbo Wing Basket (10)*

WEDNESDAY: Karaoke in Lucy's at 9 p.m.
\$1 Coors Light & Miller Lite Bottles, \$4 Well Cocktails, \$5 Grape & Cherry Bombs, \$5 Fireball Shots

THURSDAY: Trivia in Lucy's at 8pm
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SUNDAY: \$6 Tito's Handmade Bloodies, Jumbo Screwdrivers, White Trash Mimosas and Cocktails, \$6 Michelada, \$4 All Domestic Bottles, \$12 Pitchers, \$5 John Daly's, \$6 Jumbo Wing Basket (10)*

*Dine in only. One drink minimum. Food specials start at 4pm unless otherwise noted. Some restrictions may apply.

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