discrimination against blacks. Evidence of this was daily manifest, since the Germans often worked shoulder-to-shoulder with black field hands.

There developed a camaraderie and mutual fascination between the P.O.W.s and their black co-workers," Mrs. Foley notes. "The Germans admired the blacks as workers, and the Germans often sought and received small favors from the blacks."

Indeed, when P.O.W.s attempted to escape Louisiana, often they would seek shelter and support at the black cotton—bizarre historical echo of the "underground railway" of the mid-nineteenth century.

Did Germans escape from the camps? Schott and Foley have uncovered no evidence of a successful escape back to Germany, but prisoners did go A.W.O.L. Usually they were apprehended within a few days; sometimes they simply turned themselves in, tired of the heat and mosquito bites.

Many of the U.S. officers who ran Louisiana P.O.W. camps were Jews of German origin—giving their task because they knew the German language. "The P.O.W.s initially interpreted this as a confirmation of Nazi propaganda that Jews controlled the U.S.," Schott explains. "However, frequently a rapport developed between the captured Nazis and their American Jewish supervisors, who found a common ground in the sharing of German language and culture."

Not all the ironies of camp life were upbeat and amicable. U.S. camp commandants sometimes allowed hard-core Nazis to keep discipline among their fellow Germans. This gave them opportunity to persecute the anti-Nazi Germans in the camps. "At Camp Livingston, where the Nazis seem to have been in power, four murders occurred," Foley notes.

The Nazi term for their brutal nighttime attacks on fellow prisoners was "walks of the Holy Ghost." U.S. authorities made some effort to segregate hard-core Nazis into special camps like Camp Alva, Oklahoma, but every Louisiana camp had its contingent of true believers. Schott and Foley estimate about 20 percent of the P.O.W.s were confirmed Nazis. Their influence varied from camp to camp, and depended on the American camp officials.

At the side camps the P.O.W.s fulfilled their official raison d'être: replacing conscripted farm hands by bringing in the harvest of rice, sugar cane and cotton. They were also employed in shoring up the levee in Plaquemines Parish in cutting timber in the piny woods, and even in cleaning Tulane Stadium after the Sugar Bowl.

They were paid 80 cents a day, with extra incentives for exceeding production quotas. Officers fared much better: Colonels earned $90 a month and lieutenants $28.80, and an officer was not forced to do manual labor. Pay came in the form of government scrip, which could purchase items in the camp canteen. As the war ended, P.O.W.s were allowed to convert their scrip to dollars.

They ate well—indeed, their generous rations were the envy of U.S. citizens and soldiers, who complained that P.O.W.s got more and better food, drinks and cigarettes.

The farmers whose crops they harvested often ignored the rules prohibiting supplemental feeding of the Germans. Schott and Foley have found stories of farmers grateful for a successful harvest treating their P.O.W. hands to steak dinners in St. Martinville, or to a seafood feast, with women, in Lake Arthur.

As the war came to a close, the camps became recreation centers, as P.O.W.s were prepped in democratic principles for their return home. Although most left for home in late 1945, many P.O.W.s did not depart until mid-1946, almost a year after the war ended. "The P.O.W.s became a political football, as agricultural interests insisted they could not get the 1945 crop in without P.O.W. labor," Schott relates.

Since their departure, the Germans seem to have been relegated to memory, but seldom to print. The task of recording and documenting the P.O.W. experience in Louisiana began almost from accident, as Rosaline Foley began securing background material for a novel.

"I was beginning a novel about the return of a Louisiana rice farmer of German descent, who had been a poorly treated P.O.W. in Germany. He comes home to find well-treated Germans working for his family farm."

Finding little written material on P.O.W.s in Louisiana, she began interviewing local people about the era. "I became fascinated with it," she says. "I believed some effort should be made to preserve this information historically, and went to Dr. Schott. He got interested and obtained a grant from U.S.L. which enabled him to go to Washington, D.C., for government archival material. This grant also supported our further field interviews in Louisiana."

They gathered prison camp newspapers, photographs of the camps, county agent reports of P.O.W. work, balls of tinfoil saved by P.O.W.s, even works of art and musical compositions created by the Germans and given to Louisianaans. Foley and Schott compiled their initial data and anecdotes into a 18-page pamphlet, "Bayou Stalag: P.O.W.s in Louisiana," and exhibited the collected artifacts and photographs at U.S.L.'s Dupre Library in November, 1981.

But the pieces of the historical puzzle they found and fitted together revealed a much bigger and more interesting puzzle...and many of the missing pieces were in Germany. So they went to Germany. "I never dreamed the project would go this far," says Schott, of the two-week trip he and Mrs. Foley completed in October, 1983, to interview Germans whose P.O.W. years were spent in Louisiana. "But it worked out in an amazing way."

Schott obtained a second grant from U.S.L., and many private individuals underwrote Mrs. Foley's travel expenses, under the auspices of the International Good Neighbor Council. Some of these contributors had employed P.O.W.s during the war years.

Schott and Foley have obtained names and addresses of a number of German ex-P.O.W.s through an ad in "Die Oase" ("The Oasis"), a newsletter for former Afrika Korps soldiers. They got names and serial numbers of P.O.W.s from former employers and from camp newspapers, sent them to a German veterans' organization and received addresses. They located some ex-P.O.W.s through Louisianans who, after 40 years, continued to correspond with their German friends. They packed their itinerary in advance with as many interviews, meetings and reunions as they could arrange.

"We went there to get the German side of the story—to see how much...

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