

0. AMERICA ENTERS WWI - Story Preface

1. A WORLD AT WAR

2. THE LUSITANIA

3. MUNITIONS ON BOARD?

4. A TERRIBLE COINCIDENCE

5. TORPEDO ATTACK on LUSITANIA

6. DEATH OF A SHIP

7. VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS

8. AMMUNITION ON BOARD?

9. WAR MOMS

10. A BELLIGERENT MILITARY

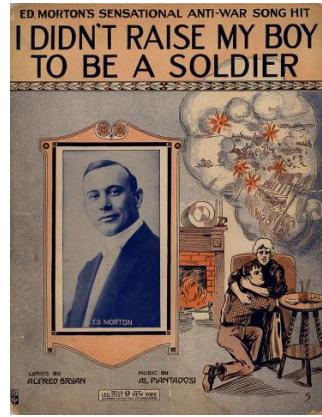
11. FATAL RUMORS

12. ALL IN THE FAMILY

13. AMERICA ENTERS WWI

14. THE WAR EFFORT

15. END OF THE WAR



Not all Americans supported their country's entry into the "Great War in Europe," later known as World War I. This image depicts the cover sheet of a popular song, in 1915, expressing more pacifist sentiments. Cover image online via Wikimedia Commons. Click on the image for a better view.

America entered the war in April of 1917:

- James Gerard (US Ambassador to Germany) spoke in favor of it, using harsh words for German-Americans who supported the Kaiser.
- Franklin Lane, Secretary of the Interior, also supported war and cited Germany's actions in sinking the *Lusitania*.
- Congressional leaders overwhelmingly supported a declaration of war.

We can hear segments of the more famous speeches on-line, thanks to the Library of Congress. [Franklin K. Lane](#), Secretary of the Interior, [said](#):

We are fighting Germany because she sought to terrorize us and then to fool us. We could not believe that Germany would do what she said she would do upon the seas. Yet, we still hear the piteous cries of children coming out, out of the sea where the Lusitania went down, and Germany has never asked forgiveness of the world.

Despite all his years of diplomacy in Germany, [Gerard's speech](#) was particularly harsh:

And if there are any German-Americans here who are so ungrateful for all the benefits they have received that they are still for the Kaiser, there is only one thing to do with them. And that is to hog-tie them, give them back the wooden shoes and the rags they landed in, and ship them back to the Fatherland.

[Samuel Gompers](#), head of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) [predicted](#) the war would be won by the side which could best organize its labor force to [support the war effort](#).

This war is a people's war - labor's war. The final outcome will be determined in the factories, the mills, the shops, the mines, the farms, the industries, and the transportation agencies of the various countries. That group of countries which can most successfully organize its agencies of production and transportation, and which can furnish the most adequate and effective agencies with which to conduct the war, will win.

Gompers' prediction was amazingly accurate.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/AMERICA-ENTERS-WWI-Lusitania-Sinking>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/AMERICA-ENTERS-WWI-Lusitania-Sinking>

Questions 2 Ponder

Is Warmongering Useful?

Before the U.S. joined WWI, some prominent Americans spoke in favor of aiding the Allies while others strongly opposed U.S. involvement.

Franklin K. Lane, Secretary of the Interior, said:

"We are fighting Germany because she sought to terrorize us and then to fool us. We could not believe that Germany would do what she said she would do upon the seas. Yet, we still hear the piteous cries of children coming out, out of the sea where the Lusitania went down, and Germany has never asked forgiveness of the world."

James Gerard, who had been America's ambassador to Germany immediately before the war, also spoke strongly in favor of U.S. involvement, as shown by these words:

And if there are any German-Americans here who are so ungrateful for all the benefits they have received that they are still for the Kaiser, there is only one thing to do with them. And that is to hog-tie them, give them back the wooden shoes and the rags they landed in, and ship them back to the Fatherland.

Would you consider the words of Franklin Lane and James Gerard to be "warmongering" words? Explain your answer.

Have you ever heard politicians speak "warmongering" words? Explain your answer.

Is warmongering ever useful? Explain your answer.

Media Stream



Franklin K. Lane

Image online, courtesy the [passporttoyournationalparks](http://passporttoyournationalparks.com) blog site.

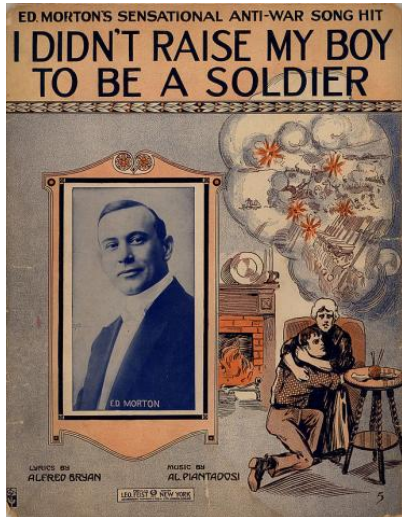
View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Franklin-K.-Lane>



Samuel Gompers

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Library of Congress.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Samuel-Gompers>



AMERICA ENTERS WWI

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/>