

#10 - A Tale of Two Flags

100 years ago, on March 29, when anti-German sentiments were at a pre-war high, the following news item appeared in the *Kinsley Graphic*:

“Two German flags used to decorate classrooms at the Leavenworth high school were torn from the walls and formed material for a small bonfire kindled by members of the junior division of the reserve officers’ corps, formerly known as the high school cadets.”



Perhaps these two flags had hung in the classroom where the German language was being taught. There is no mention if these cadets were punished or applauded for the display.

In the same paper, the editor, James M. Lewis, wrote:

“The United States of America is virtually at war with Germany; and we ought to see the American flags floating from homes and business houses in Kinsley. In driving about Sunday, not one flag was observed – so let’s show our patriotism by floating flags from every business house and home.”

One week later, and a day before war would be declared, the editor’s chiding seems to have been heeded as he wrote:

“Tomorrow, Friday, has been proclaimed as Patriotic Day by Governor Capper, and it behooves everyone to observe it to the best of their ability. It has been very pleasing to note the number of homes and business houses from which the United States flag has been sent up this week. Many owners of cars have also put flags on them. Most of the United States citizens have a deep patriotic spirit in spite of the fact that they sometimes neglect to show any outward manifestation of it. But at a time like this, let everyone combine the outward show with the inward spirit and let the flags fly tomorrow.”



Note the 48 stars on this flag. Alaska and Hawaii were not in the union at the time. The Kinsley Library will fly the flag on March 29, 2017 to remember our country as it prepared for the World War of 100 years ago.