

Faculti Summary

<https://faculti.net/enemies-among-us/>

In this text, John discusses the motivation behind his book, "Enemies Among Us," which centers on the internment of German Americans as well as Italians during World War II, a topic he explored due to personal connections to this history. He reflects on his childhood experiences and the lack of awareness regarding his family's internment during the war. His academic journey began when he researched German American internment at the University of North Carolina and progressed through to his thesis and dissertation.

John highlights the lack of existing literature on this subject compared to the extensive works on Japanese American internment, leading him to examine and compile primary sources, including government documents, to create a comprehensive first account of internment policies affecting all three ethnic groups: Germans, Italians, and Japanese. He discusses how government fears of perceived threats influenced internment policies, with varying responses based on population size and social integration.

Moreover, he shares insight into the internment experience itself, arguing that although conditions were not as extreme as in Nazi death camps, they still had significant psychological impacts on individuals. He emphasizes the different experiences of children versus adults in internment camps.

John stresses the importance of understanding this history to avoid future injustices, drawing parallels to contemporary issues related to immigration and societal responses to perceived threats. He describes his next project focusing on internment globally, aiming to uncover similarities and differences in internment experiences across various countries during the war. The goal of his work is to foster awareness of how fear can lead to the diminishment of civil liberties, reminding readers of the potential for history to repeat itself.