

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE LIBRARY AND ITS COLLECTIONS

The Joseph P. Horner Memorial Library is the preserved *Volksbibliothek* of the German Society of Pennsylvania. The library contains over 70,000 volumes, of which approximately 80 percent are in the German language. A special committee of the German Society of Pennsylvania founded the library in 1817 with the following words of justification:

the high standing which German literature has justly acquired in modern times and which is very little known here, rendered in the opinion of your committee highly eligible to make the beginning of such a library as contemplated in the charter without loss of time. Your committee beg leave to suggest that no good books in any language should be excluded but, as the investments must be to a limited amount that particular attention should be paid in the first place to forming a collection of works in the German language this city being unprovided with them, whereas of English and even books in the dead languages there are so many public and private collections that hardly any individual can fail to have access to them if he wishes.¹

In 1839, the library's holdings were cataloged into seven groupings: Theology, History, Moral Sciences, Physical Sciences, Geography and Travel, Art, and Literature. During the middle third of the century, the collection grew modestly with English-language acquisitions predominating. This reflected the fact that between 1818 and 1859 English served as the official language of the society.² The library journeyed down a decidedly more German path after the 1859 centennial of Friedrich Schiller's birth. The reawakening of the society's German spirit sparked renewed interest in German-language books. By the late 1860s, the library, then under the stewardship of Oswald Seidensticker, regained its distinctively German character. Seidensticker (1825–1894), a professor of German at the University of Pennsylvania since 1867, chaired both the society's Library Committee and Archive Committee. It was Seidensticker's commitment

¹ GSP Minutes, March 25, 1817. For this quotation and a discussion of the founding of the library within the context of the history of the society, see the forthcoming publication of the German Historical Institute penned by Birte Pflieger.

² Frank Trommler, "The Library of the German Society of Pennsylvania and Its Consolidation under Oswald Seidensticker," in *Atlantic Understandings: Essays in Honor of Hermann Wellenreuther*, ed. Claudia Schnurmann and Hartmut Lehmann (Münster/Hamburg: LitVerlag, forthcoming).

to the preservation of German-American print culture that makes the library of the German Society of Pennsylvania the valuable asset that it is today.³

In 1879, J. B. Hertzog and Seidensticker replaced the catalog of 1839 with a new letter-based system, which grouped the German-American Collection under A, all non-fiction under B-J, and fiction under K. The society has maintained this system (with a reorganization of Category A during 1928/9) to the present day.⁴

The Main Collection of the library has been housed in its current location since 1888. After a funding campaign during the 1990s, the building underwent extensive restoration between February 1998 and September 1999.⁵ The library is named in the memory of Joseph P. Horner, who was born in 1882 in Gossengrün, Bohemia, near Karlsbad, Austria (now within the Czech Republic) and died in 1944. Joseph studied the French horn in Vienna and at age sixteen immigrated to the United States, where he joined his brother Anton. Anton and Joseph both played the French horn in the Pittsburgh Symphony and were founding members of the Philadelphia Orchestra. Anton also taught at Philadelphia's Curtis Institute from 1924 to 1942. Joseph retired from the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1938. After the death of Joseph's sister Mary in 1962, the library of the German Society of Pennsylvania received a trust of over \$300,000.⁶

From 1994 to 1998, University of Pennsylvania Germanic Languages Professor Frank Trommler and Director of Bryn Mawr College Libraries Elliott Shore led a restoration and cataloging project of the library's holdings.⁷ As a result of this project, over 24,000 volumes were cataloged into the Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN). Of these volumes, "fully 57% of the books cataloged are new to the database, and close to 20% represent unique titles in U.S. libraries."⁸

³ For more on Seidensticker's imprint on the collections, see *ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Frank Trommler and Elliott Shore, "Report of the Five-Year German Library Project, 1994-1999," November 30, 1999. The restoration of the building was funded by "the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, the Alfred Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach Stiftung, CoreStates Bank, the German Society of Pennsylvania, and other organizations and foundations as well as private donors," Frank Trommler, "The Library of the German Society of Pennsylvania." I thank Frank Trommler for providing me with these and other materials regarding the restoration and cataloging project, as well as the history of the library in general.

⁶ This biographical sketch is a close paraphrasing of the article "Joseph Horner (1882-1944)" in *Der Neue Pennsylvanische Staatsbote*, March 1997.

⁷ This project was funded by the "Fritz Thyssen Stiftung, the Robert Bosch Stiftung, and German Foreign Ministry, the German Society of Pennsylvania, the Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation, the University of Pennsylvania, Albert and Hete Barthelmes, and other private sponsors," Frank Trommler, "The Library of the German Society of Pennsylvania."

⁸ Frank Trommler and Elliott Shore, "Report of the Five-Year German Library Project."

The library currently consists of six collections: the Main Collection, the German American Collection, the Manuscripts Collection, the Newspaper Collection, the Carl Schurz Pamphlet Collection, and the Carl Schurz Periodicals Collection. The Main Collection is housed in the Library Hall. The collection has been shelved according to the library's distinct cataloging system. During the cataloging project of 1994–1999, all books dating from 1917 and earlier were entered into the Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN) and were assigned their corresponding Library of Congress Classification Number. The German American Collection (GAC) consists of over 9000 items. The GAC is divided into Books, Pamphlets, Oversized, Manuscripts, and Manuscripts (Flat-Oversized). As a part of the restoration project, the GAC items were sent to the Northeast Document Conservation Center in Andover, Massachusetts.⁹ The Manuscripts Collection includes materials pertaining to the German Society of Pennsylvania and document collections that the society received from the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation. This collection was not cataloged during the restoration project of the 1990s. The Newspaper Collection is divided into two groups: 1) a microfilm collection that is stored within the Library Hall and 2) newspapers that were sent for restoration and microfilming to the American Antiquarian Society. The society has donated some of the latter to the American Antiquarian Society. Other newspapers are currently being microfilmed and returned to the society. The society's newspaper holdings are not limited to those within the Newspaper Collection. The present guide lists the newspapers of all six collections and clearly marks their locations (see the Newspaper Collection, Newspapers Located within the other Collections). The society received the materials that comprise the Carl Schurz Pamphlet Collection and the Carl Schurz Periodicals Collection upon the demise of the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation. The Carl Schurz Pamphlet Collection includes many biographies of famous German Americans. The Carl Schurz Periodicals Collection contains many German-American newspapers.

Note: The entries listed, for the most part, appear as they are found in the Joseph B. Horner Library records. The present guide preserves inconsistencies in spelling, capitalization, and German grammar. Folder titles are also given as written by library staff. In most cases, entries are also given in the order in which they appear in the card catalog.

⁹ Ibid.