

ZION'S HISTORIC EXHIBIT

CHARLES H. MIEGEL

The present pastor of Zion Independent German Lutheran Church, Fritz O. Evers, following the free and liberal traditions of his predecessors, the illustrious Julius Hofmann and Heinrich Scheib, celebrated Zion's 178th Anniversary, by arranging an interesting exhibit of the cultural work and influence of the men and women of German origin in our community. The exhibition was staged in the Adler Saal of the Parish House, and contained many objects, not only interesting but of historic value.

In addition to many individual exhibits of family relics and heirlooms, prints, books and pictures, musical instruments, household utensils, ornaments, handicraft work, pieces of artisanship, and the like, institutions such as the Johns Hopkins University, the Maryland Historical Society, the Pratt Library and the Peale Museum, lent items from their possessions.

This Society had a large number of objects typical of its work; among such were scrap books containing clippings from newspapers covering local G.-A. activities, programs and souvenirs of social organizations of days by gone; old files of the "Deutsche Correspondent" and "Baltimore Wecker," ancient Bibles and historical works; early calendars and publications of pre-Revolutionary date—illustrative of the period when more books and pamphlets, chiefly of a religious nature, were printed in German than in English, among such some by Saur, the first American type-founder.

The exhibition was officially opened by the late Thomas Foley Hisky, the then president of the Historical Society. During its continuance it was visited by over 1,200 persons, among these being the then German Ambassador, Dr. Hans Luther.

In the photograph of the exhibit hall, appearing in this publication, there is shown in the lower right hand sector the exhibit of the Historical Society.

On the table, right center, is seen a patent of nobility granted to the Seemann brothers dating back to 1593. One of the last of their name, resident in Baltimore City, Adoniram D. Seeman, cherished and preserved this interesting and beautifully illuminated parchment which had been brought to this country by his progenitors in the fifties of the last century. The document is now housed in the Baltimore Museum of Art.

The exhibit of the Turnverein Vorwaerts was graced by a bronze bust of "Vater Jahn" and by pictures of members and groups of the early days of turnen in Baltimore.

In the center of the hall stood a model of the emblematical figure of the Pastorius Monument, the original of which stands in Germantown, now incorporated into and as a part of Philadelphia. Suspended from the ceiling, in front of the stage, hung the imperial banner which had been one of the decorations of the German House at the St. Louis Exposition.

Directly in front of the stage was a piano lent by Thomas Foley Hisky. It was the work of his grandfather who came from Austria and who was a pioneer piano maker of Baltimore.

Two other events aided in making the week's celebration replete with the flavor of the historical. The first was a festival play, written and directed by Charles H. Miegel, depicting six episodes in the 178 years of history of Zion Church. The pageant-play was written in German, with the exception of one episode. Its title was "Die Mauern von Zion," that is, "The Walls of Zion." The episodes included the founding of the congregation in 1755 by Pastor Johann Bager, an itinerant preacher who rode horseback from Pennsylvania six times a year to perform his religious duties. Other characters were: Dr. Friederich Wiesenthal, of local colonial and Revolutionary War fame; Baltimore's

first brewer, Daniel Barnetz, in whose home the founders met; and Master Woerschler, the school teacher of the children of the German settlers.

Another scene in the play was the fire of March 30, 1840, which left standing only the walls of the present church building. Another was that of the young, energetic, progressive and liberal preacher-schoolmaster, Heinrich Scheib, in 1844, demonstrating the new

wonder of that day invented by Morse—the telegraph.

The other event referred to, was the placing of the old Scheib School bell in a belfry shrine located in the church garden. For many decades this bell summoned the pupils of the school to their classes. Scheib School, an institute pre-eminent among those of that period, founded in 1836, flourished until 1895.

STATEMENT OF ASSETS

JANUARY 15, 1939

Cash and investments owned by the Society for the History of the Germans in Maryland, are as follows:

\$ 700—Baltimore City, General Improvements 5½%, due 1940.

2,000—Howard County Public Improvement Bonds 4½%, due 1953.

3,000—State of Maryland Emergency Relief 4%, due 1943.

\$4,729.06 Cash in Equitable Trust Company—Savings Account.

CHARLES F. STEIN, JR.

Treasurer.