

Karl J. R. Arndt and Reimer C. Eck, eds. *The First Century of German Language Printing in the United States of America. Volume 1 (1728-1807); Volume 2 (1808-1830)*, comps. Gerd-J. Bötte and Werner Tannhof, with Annelies Müller. Göttingen: Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Göttingen, 1989. Pp. xxx, 1-594; [iv], 595-1245. \$100.

Issued as Volumes XXI-XXII (1987-88) of the Publications of the Pennsylvania German Society, the present reference work is the long-awaited updating of the classic bibliography of German-American imprints by Prof. Oswald Seidensticker (1825-1894), published in 1893 as *The First Century of German Printing in America*. The completion of this task by librarian-scholars associated with the University of Göttingen represents a satisfying completion of the circle. That university has been a leader in American studies beginning with the work of Prof. A. W. Schlözer in the late 18th century. Its library collection of North American imprints is outstanding in Germany. And finally, Göttingen was the birthplace of Oswald Seidensticker.

It does not take away from Seidensticker's pioneering achievement that soon after its appearance others published notices of items Seidensticker had missed (Whether intended or not, one of the results of efforts to compile complete bibliographies is to bring to light obscure and hidden copies of rare imprints previously unseen by scholars). Among the most active was Ammon R. Stapleton writing in *The Pennsylvania German* (1904-1905). Gerhard Griedrich added further titles in *Pennsylvania History* (1940), based on his cataloging project in the Abraham Harley Cassel Collection at Juniata College. In addition to such specific updatings of Seidensticker, a large number of regional and national bibliographies turned up additional items. Examples of the latter are A. Rachel Minick, *A History of Printing in Maryland, 1791-1800* (1949) and Roger P. Bristol, *Maryland Imprints, 1801-1810* (1953). Then Wilbur H.

Oda published a number of bibliographical articles in the *Pennsylvania Dutchman* in the 1950's, as part of his revised and enlarged edition of Seidensticker's early compilation.

Professor Arndt of Clark University, well-known in the field for his massive annotated listing of German-American newspapers (with May E. Olson), sought funding in the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany to continue the Oda initiative, cut short by the latter's death. A German grant allowed Annelies Müller to pursue the project, but she soon discovered that a more broadly-based and better-funded effort was needed to do justice to the task. This came with a sizable grant from the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft through the Göttingen library. A trained librarian, Werner Tannhof, assisted by his wife Monika, spent two years in the United States (1983-1985), visiting more than one hundred public and private collections to gather data. To ensure accuracy, the Tannhofs made extensive copies of titlepages and other significant material. Back in Germany, Werner Tannhof worked on the collected data, using computers and internationally accepted cataloging rules; when he took another position, Gerd-J. Bötte completed the task.

The result of these many years of labor is impressive. The number of German-American imprints through 1830 has been more than doubled (3151 entries). Full titles and meticulous collation (including signatures) allow much more precise identification of variant issues. A large number of locations are given (ordinarily ten is the limit), using the code-system established by the Library of Congress; specific library designations (or note of presence in private collections) are provided for those copies used for the main entries. Rather inclusive references to other bibliographical listings are appended for each entry. There are a generous number of illustrations of titlepages, often supplied from the holdings of the library at Göttingen.

The unprecedented compilation in one place of this data bank and intensive labor with it often allowed the compilers to identify places of printing and names of printers, where these were lacking on imprints. Distinctive typefaces and printers' ornamentations usually provided the distinguishing clues. The rationale is provided by the compilers: "Since no individual researcher in any collection may ever have the opportunity to compare as many individual imprints at any one time, we felt obliged to try to assign as many items as possible to individual printing offices" (xii). The same process allowed the identification of several "ghosts" (previously cited titles which never existed). They acknowledge that these procedures are not without risk and welcome corrections.

In deference to the Seidensticker model, imprints are listed year by year from 1728 through 1830, and alphabetically within each year by place of publication and printer. Also following the early pattern, sizes of imprints are given in the older manner (e.g., folio, 4vo, 8vo etc.). Judgements may vary as to the wisdom of these decisions. A number of indexes at the end of Volume 2 compensate for the limitations of this order; they provide a main index (including names of authors, editors, translators, engravers, booksellers, and composers, as well as titles), an index of printers, publishers and stereotypes, an index of places of printing and publications, and an index of genre types (derived from a thesaurus for rare books). Some considerable use suggests that the indexes are complete and accurate. It was not possible for lack of time (and likely of space) to provide a subject index based on Library of Congress headings.

By policy decision, the two volumes do not present a total picture of German-American printing. They omit newspapers (recently listed in Arndt/Olson); they also do not include broadsides, although information on some 1200 of these usually rare items were collected in the course of the project. A third volume devoted to these rare imprints will be necessary, although no specific plans for this

are reported. This absolutely necessary task should be given a high priority; it would be an useful and worthy project for a foundation grant.

The volumes are attractively designed, with the typeface well-chosen to allow concentrated text without losing legibility. The binding follows the pattern of the Pennsylvania German Society. Despite the complex process of compilation/editing and the detailed text, typographical and other errors have been held to an acceptable minimum. That there are some is revealed, for example, on the page of acknowledgments, where "truely" is found instead of "truly" and, more seriously, "Hover" is listed instead of "Hoover."

There is a mistaken attribution for a Lancaster imprint of 1788, *Der Besiegte Wiedertäufer* (#707). Following Clifford K. Shipton and James E. Mooney, *National Index of American Imprints Through 1800* (1969), the compilers assign the authorship to a Peter Bläser. It should instead be Dr. John Christopher Kunze (1744-1807), a recognized Lutheran divine in Philadelphia and New York. It was a rebuttal of the *Apologie* (#696) by Alexander Mack, Jr. (1712-1803); Mack responded to the refutation in another small book, *Anhang zum Widerlegten Wiedertäufer* (#695).

As monumental as is *The First Century* in this form, and as helpful as it will be to many researchers from a wide variety of disciplines, it will not be a final word. Recent auction catalogs from the extensive collection of German-American imprints by Donald R. Hinks have several references to relevant items not included. Because the Hinks collection was used in the present work and locations to it were noted, its ongoing dispersal will make such references out-of-date. Nevertheless, all those connected with the project deserve much credit for the devoted labors, great care, and exemplary scholarship manifested in it. It is a very significant achievement. All academic libraries and many individual researchers will need to acquire it. It will be indispensable for many years.

Donald F. Durnbaugh
Elizabethtown College