

THE REPORT

Seventy years ago some Baltimoreans of German birth or descent gathered to found the Society for the History of the Germans in Maryland. It was the time of the flowering of German life in the city. German newspapers, schools, churches, singing, gymnastic and social organization indicated a strong force of cohesion among the German element. The founding fathers of this Society must have had some premonition that this could not last forever and so they set their goal: to collect the records and to preserve the historical material of the activities of the German-Americans in this city and state. In fact, they wanted more. They wished to gather and publish historical material pertaining to the entire history of German immigration and German settlements in the Free State. Thus this Society was founded in 1886. After it had been in existence for one year, it published its first *Report*, a slim pamphlet accounting for the business of the group. Soon these *Reports* became the vessel of publication for the organization, containing articles on the various historical phases of German-American life in Maryland. These *Reports* were published annually until 1907. Thereafter there was a long lapse in publication. Only after the Society had received a substantial legacy from the late Mr. Ferdinand A. J. Meyer, the regular publication of the *Reports* could be resumed. From 1939 until the present, five volumes have been issued (1939, 1942, 1945, 1950, 1953). If we receive new donations, we shall try to continue publication at a three year interval.

Aside from these *Reports* (I-XXVIII), the Society three times in its history supported the publication of books: *The History of the German Element in Virginia* (1900) by Herrmann Schuricht; *The History of the German Society of Maryland* (1909) by Louis P. Hennighausen; and *The Maryland Germans* (1948) by Dieter Cunz.

The life of the Society is not restricted to the publication of historical material. At least once a year the members meet for a banquet and general meeting at which the various activities are reported to the members. After such a meeting, there is always a lecture by an outstanding speaker or historian who discusses some aspect of the history of German immigration into the United States; some great German-American personalities, such as Francis Lieber, Ottmar Mergenthaler or Carl Heinrich Schnauffer; some group, such as the Forty-eighters or the Pennsylvania Dutch; some of the German-American institutions or traditions, their churches, their folklore, their humor. These annual lectures have contributed much to stimulate the interest of the members in the history of their ancestors.

Since the publication of the last *Report* the following lecturers spoke at the annual meetings of the Society:

- 1958: Arthur D. Graeff (Philadelphia), "The Wit and Humor of the Pennsylvania Germans."
- 1954: Neil H. Swanson (Baltimore), "The Time They Lived In."
- 1955: Panel Discussion "Who Were the Great German-Americans?" Participants: Augustus J. Prah, Dieter Cunz, Eitel Wolf Dorbert, A. E. Zucker (all of the University of Maryland).
- 1956: Klaus G. Wust (Arlington, Virginia), "The Southward Movement of the Pennsylvania Germans."

On September 30, 1953, the Society sponsored a Gustav Strube Memorial Concert in the Peabody Conservatory of Music. On June 11, 1955, thirty members of the Society undertook a group excursion to visit the headquarters of the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation in Philadelphia.

Fifty years ago, German-American historical societies existed in several states of the nation, such as Pennsylvania, Illinois, Ohio and Maryland. Today the Society for the History of Germans in Maryland is the only one of its kind. It, therefore, is not strictly a local organization any more. It has some members out of state and it has in its publication program repeatedly looked over the borders of Maryland. In fact, the first book publication of the Society dealt with the Germans in a neighbor state of the South. The present *Report* again looks North and South. Several of our articles had national rather than local implications and they account for the increasing interest that our *Reports* have met among the libraries all over the country.

Due to the increased activities of the Society in the last fifteen years its membership has grown considerably. We had fifty members in 1940 and we have more than one hundred today. With the help of its members and the support of its friends the Society hopes to go into the eighth decade of its history with full strength and renewed vigor.

D.C.

February, 1956

