

## GERMAN IMMIGRANTS AND THEIR NEWSPAPERS IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

By KLAUS G. WUST

The history of the German element in the District of Columbia has yet to be written. Local life in the national capital as a subject for historiography has not provided the same attractions to professional and amateur historians as have the events in cities, areas or states which have grown naturally out of geographic and economic circumstances. Local events in Washington, though colorful at times, have always been overshadowed by the prominence of national affairs. The composition of its population has been largely determined by the functions and requirements of the many federal agencies. The District of Columbia as a political entity has undergone great population shifts several times during its history, the most significant having taken place in the recent past. Furthermore, it would be virtually impossible to describe the history of any segment of the Washington population without looking across the district line into the counties of Northern Virginia and Maryland where many of the people reside who are playing a part in its civic and social life. This is particularly true of the German element which has shown a marked tendency towards locating in the suburbs of the two neighboring states throughout the last 50 years.

The Washington area has always had a sizeable foreign-born population, but immigration here was different from that found in other eastern cities. The absence of large industries and a commercial life limited to the requirements of the capital and its immediate surroundings are the main reasons for this difference in the social pattern of immigrant life. Germans, Austrians and Swiss were to be found primarily in the small trades, as craftsmen of many sorts, as hotel and restaurant owners, in liberal professions, and somewhat later in the various branches of the federal government. Government positions, however, were not available to newly arrived immigrants and preliminary studies seem to indicate that most of the German born government employees spent their waiting period for citizenship in other parts of the United States.

For those reasons, the German element of the District of Columbia was never a homogeneous group. On the other hand, no regional element from the German-speaking countries, save the Swiss, was ever numerous enough to develop its own group life. The only real common bond of the German population in Washington was and is the common tongue. Here the need for a German language newspaper appears clearly, but there too the German press of the District of Columbia shows characteristics which are typical for the composition and the prevailing mood of the largest foreign language group in the national capital. Several attempts at establishing a German newspaper in Washington prior to 1859 proved futile because the editors

were not able to adjust to the particular social, political and economic conditions existing among the Washington Germans.

A brief description of the historical background of the Germans in the District until the appearance of the first German newspaper is indispensable since no other historical account is available.<sup>1</sup>

While the main stream of immigrants arriving from Pennsylvania and Maryland ports during the 18th century was directed toward Western Maryland and the Valley of Virginia, some Germans located on both banks of the Potomac. The occurrence of German names in the early records of Georgetown indicates the presence of German inhabitants prior to 1765. In 1766 Colonel Charles Beatty, one of the original founders of the town, set apart a lot of ground for the sole use and benefit of the Lutheran Church under the condition "that they would build on it within a reasonable time a house of worship." The Lutherans took possession of the lot at once and organized themselves into a congregation, and in 1769 the cornerstone was laid for the first German church. The congregation, however, was unable to secure a permanent pastor. Itinerant ministers from Virginia, Western Maryland and Pennsylvania held occasional services.

Prominent among the German inhabitants of Georgetown were Henry Yost and John Unselts who operated one of the largest gun factories in Maryland,<sup>2</sup> and Charles Fiehrer, printer and publisher of the first newspaper in the history of the District of Columbia. Fiehrer, a former Hessian soldier who had joined the Continental Army, set up his English and German print shop in Georgetown in 1789.<sup>3</sup> Nothing is known about the extent of his German printing but his weekly *The Times and The Patowmack Packet* was still being circulated in 1791. This German printer has also been credited with having published the first book in this area, an almanac of which no copy has been found so far.<sup>4</sup>

A wealthy German, Jacob Funk of Washington County, bought a section which is now bounded by 18th to 24th Streets and "H" Street, Northwest, and the Potomac River and laid out a town which he called Hamburg. It was also frequently referred to as "Funk's Town." Of its 287 lots, the greater part was acquired by Germans living in Western Maryland, Pennsylvania, Alexandria and Bladensburg. In 1768, Funk sold two lots to the German Lutherans and to the German Reformed for five pounds sterling each. Neither lot appeared to have been used for church purposes prior to 1833 because the expected influx of German immigrants never took place. When the Federal District was established in 1791, most of the lots were still unoccupied.

In 1790 President George Washington requested a report on the ownership situation in Hamburg which was sent to him on December 9th of the same year: "We went up to Jacob Funk in Washington County for a particular state of the situation of the Lotts in Hamburg and never till yesterday received his answer. We find there are 287 Lotts laid out upon

<sup>1</sup> An attempt was made to collect and publish records of the Germans in the District of Columbia by the short-lived *Deutsche Historische Gesellschaft für den Distrikt Columbia* in 1905 and 1906. Five issues of *Berichte* were actually published but unfortunately represent little of historical value. Main contributors were Christian Strack and Gustav Bender. Strack had collected considerable data which he is said to have destroyed during a mental illness prior to his death in 1914. Bender published his "Skizzen aus dem deutschen Vereins- und Volksleben" in 22 instalments in the *Washington Journal* from February 1, 1918 until July 26, 1918. Another series, entitled "Beiträge zur Geschichte der Deutschen im Distrikt von Columbia" by Klaus G. Wust appeared in 32 instalments in the *Washington Journal* between September 9th, 1957 and October 10th, 1958. The special centennial issue of the *Washington Journal* of April 17th, 1959 also contained much historical material.

<sup>2</sup> Dieter Cunz, *The Maryland Germans* (Princeton, 1948), 141-142.

<sup>3</sup> *The Times and The Patowmack Packet*, April 23, 1789.

<sup>4</sup> Lee Grove, "Washington Book Stores," *Library Journal*, LXXXIV (1959), 1984. Fiehrer also operated a book and glass ware store. He was the Georgetown agent for John Frederick Amelung's glass factory at New Bremen, Maryland. Cf. Cunz, *op. cit.*, 163-166.

130 acres of land, and as far as we can Judge from the Book of Sales kept by Funk which he sent us, the whole of the Lotts are in the hands of about 150 Proprietors, principally Dutchmen residing in Frederick and Washington Counties, and in Pennsylvania who have heretofore held them in but little estimation."<sup>5</sup>

In 1792 both Washington and Jefferson suggested to the three Commissioners for the Federal City to "import Germans and Scottish Highlanders as tradesmen and laborers" for the construction of the first government buildings and other public works in the new capital. An old farm building between "E" and "F" Streets and 24th and 25th Streets was fitted as rooming house for "emigrants" and reportedly housed many Germans until 1789.<sup>6</sup>

In Alexandria (which belonged to the District of Columbia until 1844) Germans had begun to settle during and after the Revolutionary War. Notable among them were Peter Hoffman who established a sugar refinery and Colonel Michael Swope who kept a well-known ship chandlery business in the town which at that time was also a minor immigrant port. A prominent Alexandrian, Richard Dinmore, wrote in 1807: "In Alexandria there are now resident several of those Hessians whom the English paid for and sent to conquer this country. They stayed here after the war and some of them are now among the wealthiest men in this place."<sup>7</sup>

When the total number of Germans in Washington City, Georgetown and Alexandria was not sufficient to warrant even the establishment of a permanent church congregation during the first two decades of the 19th century, a local German newspaper would certainly not have found enough support. The German *Westliche Correspondenz* of Hagerstown had some subscribers in Georgetown. The German printer, Jacob D. Dietrick of Staunton, Virginia, listed Dr. John Ott of Georgetown as agent for his *Deutsche Virginier Adler* in 1807. James Kennedy and Sons in Alexandria offered German almanacs for sale in 1816 and 1817.<sup>8</sup>

The colonial Germans who were among the early settlers of Georgetown and its vicinity were largely assimilated in language and customs, and due to their inability to get pastoral care for their congregations from the German Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania, they had also joined the churches of their Anglo-Saxon neighbors, when a new generation of immigrants began to arrive after 1815.

Many of the newcomers were "indentured servants" who were offered for service against payment of their passage by captains of vessels arriving in Annapolis and other ports. Advertisements announcing the arrival of German redemptioners appeared frequently in Washington and Alexandria newspapers in 1817.<sup>9</sup> One of the Germans who arrived at that time in Washington, Andreas Schiebler, recorded that almost 800 Germans lived then in the city and its vicinity, many of whom found only temporary employment and moved west afterwards.

During the summer of 1832 a large number of laborers, principally Germans and Irish, came to the city and were engaged for the most part in macadamizing Pennsylvania Avenue, working on the canal and digging

<sup>5</sup> Allen C. Clark, "Origin of the Federal City," *Records of the Columbia Historical Society*, XXXV-XXXVI (1935), 27 ff. Facsimile of Funk's deed reproduced in Paul A. Menzel, *History of Concordia Lutheran Church* (Washington, 1933), 4.

<sup>6</sup> Gustav Bender, "Die ersten Deutschen im Distrikt Columbia," pp. 187-189 in Max Heinrici (ed.), *Das Buch der Deutschen in America* (Philadelphia, 1909).

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Charles W. Janson, *The Stranger in America* (London, 1807). Cf. also Klaus G. Wust, "Colonial Era German Settlers in Alexandria," *Alexandria Gazette*, March 5, 1954.

<sup>8</sup> *Staunton Eagle*, December 18, 1807; *Alexandria Gazette*, October 18, 1816.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. particularly *National Intelligencer* and *Alexandria Gazette* from February 25 to March 3, 1817.

trenches for water pipes. No provisions had been made to house these workers whose number was estimated at 400. Most of them were lodged in miserable hovels. In the middle of August an epidemic of cholera broke out which claimed many lives among their ranks.<sup>10</sup> Resident Germans helped their unfortunate fellow-countrymen. Through this sudden reinforcement of their numbers they were encouraged to found a German church. A scholar from Germany, Dr. J. G. Büttner, who visited Washington in 1844, wrote about the founding of Concordia Lutheran Evangelical Church: "Its first preacher was a Mr. Ungerer. He was elected in the fall of 1832, in a year during which many Germans came to Washington to work on Pennsylvania Avenue and who formed a congregation under the leadership of several Germans who had lived in the country for a long time. Services were held in the Court House which the Mayor let them use for that purpose. Still during the fall of the same year the cornerstone of the church was laid. The lot had been given by a German Pennsylvanian."<sup>11</sup> According to the church records, the building was erected on the original lot sold by Jacob Funk to the Lutherans and Reformed in 1768. The first constitution of Concordia Church in 1833 was signed by sixty-eight men, among them a number of members of German pioneer families in Georgetown.

The founding of Concordia Church was an important event in the life of the German element in Washington. From the beginning the church did not stress denominational differences. It became the first center of German community activities. Although many of the laborers moved on after the Avenue was completed, a small but constant flow of new immigrants arrived. They filled the need for artisans, machinists, engravers and other skilled craftsmen, or set themselves up in small shops or taverns.

The German Catholics also began to organize a congregation in 1838 but their number was very small—probably not more than twenty families. They met in the home of John George Eichhorn for devotions and extended a call to the Redemptorists Fathers in Baltimore to hold mass once a month. In 1845 a lot was acquired for the German Catholics and a Swiss-born priest, Mathias Alig, was appointed to serve the new congregation which became known as St. Mary's Church. The church building was completed in 1845.<sup>12</sup>

The earliest German worldly organization in Washington was the German Benevolent Society which was founded in the early forties. In October 1846 it built its own "German Hall" on the west side of 11th Street, a short distance north of "F" Street. There was also a German band which marched at the head of numerous parades which the Germans liked to stage for various festive occasions. The dedication of St. Mary's Church called for such a public manifestation and likewise the opening of the German Hall which was preceded by a procession of some 250 members of the German Benevolent Society.<sup>13</sup>

There was little or no wealth among the District Germans in the forties. The largest German congregation, Concordia Church, repeatedly had difficulties in raising enough money to provide the bare minimum salary for

<sup>10</sup> Wilhelmus B. Bryan, *A History of the National Capital* (New York, 1916), II, 239; Margaret B. Smith, *First Forty Years of Washington Society* (New York, 1906), 336. Much information on early German immigrants in Washington can be gathered from Vivian Holland Jewett, "Abstracts of Naturalization Records, Circuit Court, District of Columbia, 1802-1820," *National Genealogical Society Quarterly*, June 1953 and succeeding issues.

<sup>11</sup> J. G. Büttner, *Briefe aus und über Amerika* (Dresden, 1845), II, 156-158.

<sup>12</sup> *The Catholic Mirror*, July 4, 1891; *Washington Journal*, October 24, 1896; Charles L. Boehmer, *History of St. Mary's Church* (Washington, 1945), 13-18.

<sup>13</sup> *National Intelligencer*, October 12 and 14, 1846.

its ministers. In 1843 the Rev. Heinrich Borchers left the church because lack of funds to pay his salary made his stay in Washington impossible. His successor, the Rev. A. T. Biewend did not fare much better and could not live on the salary of his two congregations, i.e. Concordia in Washington and the old Lutheran church in Georgetown which he tried to revive between 1845 and 1847. He earned part of his livelihood by giving lessons in five languages. J. G. Büttner observed during his visit in 1844 that "the high living costs in Washington may be the reason why, compared to the other cities, so few Germans settle here."

A number of strict Lutherans voiced dissatisfaction with the union of Lutheran and Calvinistic principles at Concordia Church. In 1851 they appealed to the Rev. E. G. Keyl of Baltimore to preach to them and organize them into a congregation. Thus Trinity Lutheran came into being. Already in 1852 a small building on "E" Street was fitted as a place of worship and the Rev. A. Nordmann secured as permanent pastor.<sup>14</sup>

Besides the churches and the Benevolent Society, there was only one other significant German institution in the city: a German school which was organized about 1842 by the Benevolent Society. The few local Germans who read newspapers in their vernacular subscribed to the New York *Staats-Zeitung* which was sold in Washington as early as 1838 or to the Baltimore *Correspondent* founded in 1841 by Friedrich Raine. The latter had a long list of Washington subscribers until the advent of a permanent local newspapers in Washington in 1859.

#### THE BEGINNING: POLITICAL PRESS OF THE LIBERALS

During the fourth decade of the 19th century a number of German liberals came to Washington who were less interested in the church and benevolent activities of the German burghers than in the lofty ideals of liberty and democracy which were being suppressed by the princes in the German States. These men were the forerunners of the Forty-Eighters who were to come to the United States in considerable numbers after the unsuccessful German revolutions of 1848 and 1849. While retaining a vivid interest in the events of the fatherland, they also embraced American politics wholeheartedly and gradually aroused also a limited response among the politically passive local German population.

Foremost among them was Alfred Schücking, a brother of the German novelist Levin Schücking.<sup>15</sup> The former came to Washington via New Orleans where he edited the semi-weekly *Der deutsche Courier* in 1842.<sup>16</sup> Early in the following year Alfred Schücking arrived in Washington to assume the editorship of a large monthly called *Der Deutsche in Amerika* which had been started in 1842 by Otto Hoffmann in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.<sup>17</sup>

Whatever the real reasons behind this transfer, it brought the first German print shop into the National Capital. The "German and English Printing Office" of P. Augustus Sage was located on "E" Street near 10th Street, N. W. With it came the first German language periodical in Washington. It was a far cry from a local newspaper of the type that

<sup>14</sup> *Der Lutheraner*, January 18, 1853.

<sup>15</sup> Alfred Schücking was a contributor to numerous German newspapers in America and Europe. After several attempts at establishing newspapers of his own, he wrote for the *Washington Journal* and its forerunners. He earned his livelihood as an insurance broker and by representing German consular and shipping interests in Washington until his death in 1901.

<sup>16</sup> Carl Wittke, *The German Language Press in America* (Lexington, Ky., 1957), 42.

<sup>17</sup> H. A. Rattermann, "Deutsche Bilder aus der Geschichte der Stadt Cincinnati," *Der Deutsche Pionier* IX (1877-78), 479-80. P. J. Egenter, *Amerika ohne Schminke* (Zurich, 1857), 264-67.

was established during the same period in most other American cities with a sizeable German population. From its beginning it was meant to be more than a national monthly and its editor intended for it to be sent in large numbers to Germany where censorship interfered greatly with liberal publications. Copies must have found their way across the ocean because the *Allgemeine Presszeitung* in Leipzig applauded Schücking's magazine editorially: "This publication does not rank behind any English one of similar purpose and already after less than four months of publication counts over 5000 subscribers. It is the mouthpiece of all German scholarly forces. It is incredible what this publication has already achieved in such a short time without having vast funds for buying able pens."

Schücking himself asserted that *Der Deutsche in Amerika* was "of mammoth size, and now the largest paper in the Union." In fact, the sheets of this paper measured 60 inches by 25 inches. Furthermore, the editor announced in April 1843 that it had "already a circulation over the whole Union, the contiguous south, Canada and Germany."<sup>18</sup>

With financial backing from the supporters of Tyler, the controversial Whig president, Schücking added a weekly newspaper to his mammoth publication. On April 20, 1843 the first issue of *Deutsche National Zeitung* appeared. Aimed at nation-wide distribution it embarked vigorously on the campaign for John Tyler, the *Volkskandidat*. In his first editorial Schücking left no doubt as to the political overtones of his paper when he wrote: "Our feelings are enthusiastically democratic. Hence single-minded readers will know to what party we belong."

In his editorial on October 11, 1843 Schücking explained a change in the name of the newspaper which was effected at that time: "When this newspaper was first published, we called it the "*Deutsche National Zeitung*." However, we now recognize our mistake and feel too strongly how unsuitable the word German is not to suppress it at once. Inasmuch as there is no German nation in Germany (let us rather say—in the German states), there is much less such a thing in America." He continues with the following statement of policy: "As an integrated part of the great American people, however, German Americans have a claim to the consideration of their fellow citizens and equal rights in every respect. Wherever these are denied, the Americans *par excellence*, alias the "natives," have themselves to blame if the Germans take up an opposing and separate position."

The *National Zeitung* furnishes the report of the earliest recorded German gathering of a political nature in Washington. On October 9, 1843 a meeting was held in protest against the arrest by the Hessian authorities of Professor Sylvester Jordan of Marburg University.<sup>19</sup> A local committee was elected by those in attendance to organize the collection of funds to aid the Marburg Professor and other German liberals. It included Charles Fenderich as president, Alfred Schücking as secretary and W. Creutzfeld, Washington correspondent of the New York *Deutsche Schnellpost*, as treasurer. This local news item is characteristic of the attitude of the liberal newcomers to the German scene in Washington.

Schücking's journalistic brilliance which was widely recognized could not save the two publications from ending in failure when the necessary support was not obtained. The colossal *Der Deutsche in Amerika* disappeared first. Tyler's withdrawal from nomination in 1844 and the reorientation of his

<sup>18</sup>*National Intelligencer*, April 7, May 5, 1843; *National Zeitung*, October 11, 1843.

<sup>19</sup>*National Zeitung*, October 11, 1843; Sylvester Jordan (1792-1861), Austrian-born jurist was a professor at Marburg University from 1821 until 1838 when he was arrested for his liberal views. Jordan remained imprisoned until 1845. In 1848 he became a Hessian deputy of the *Bundestag* and a member of the German National Assembly.

Whig backers probably dried up the source of political funds. Early in 1846 the *National Zeitung* and its publisher Augustus Sage faced bankruptcy. On July 7, 1846 the contents of the office of the *National Zeitung* were sold at an auction "to secure a debt due to Alfred Schücking."<sup>20</sup>

Goodwill and printing equipment of the paper were acquired by Karl Joseph Koch, a former theologian who had turned newspaperman. Koch revived the *National Zeitung* and published it for about ten months.<sup>21</sup> In 1848 he appeared in Baltimore where he edited the *Maryland Demokrat*, a Democratic party organ. In Washington, Dr. Friedrich Schmidt rallied some more political funds and launched his short-lived *Der Nationale Demokrat* on May 6th, 1847. Evidently, Schmidt lent his name to several ephemeral ventures in the course of a few years. Unlike Schücking, Schmidt represented the conservative faction of the pre-forty-eighters. In his Whig-backed, bi-lingual *Der Zuschauer am Potomac* which was initiated on January 10, 1850, Schmidt condemned the radical and anti-clerical attitude of the recently arrived Forty-eighters and seemed deeply disturbed by the fear that the extreme, intolerant agitation of these radicals could damage the reputation of the entire German element in America. The *Zuschauer* which was printed by Augustus Sage warmly supported Zachary Taylor's administration. In its English section, *The Spectator on the Potomac*, the editor tried to interpret the attitudes of his German fellow-citizens toward the Anglo-Saxon public. While the *Zuschauer* lasted not much longer than one year, Schmidt resurrected the *National Demokrat* for a brief spell in 1852.

Undaunted and in no way discouraged by his repeated failures to establish a lasting newspaper, Schmidt looked for an other publisher and for renewed support from the party treasury. Both were found in the following year. This time he featured "a political and literary family newspaper" without choosing a new name. On July 9th, 1853 the third *National Demokrat* left the presses of Buell and Blanchard in Washington. The editor emphasized "Christian and Free Democratic principles." The leading, orthodox Lutheran journal *Der Lutheraner* hailed Schmidt's new paper as a well edited and informative newspaper but criticized its editor for choosing the word "Christian" to attract wide circulation. He would do better to concentrate on political affairs and leave the defense of Christian principles to religious publications. The Davenport, Iowa, *Demokrat* reported that Schmidt's *National Demokrat* was the organ of the Free Democratic Party and received a subsidy of \$3000.- for the first year. The radical German press attacked the newcomer to the political scene even before the first issue went to press. The *Anzeiger des Nordwestens* in *Oshkosh* (Wisconsin) was particularly outspoken: "We recognize by no means in this sheet a representative of German culture, all the less since it will indulge in the American mania for bigotry. We consider it rather a bigotted newspaper written in German letters but not with German spirit." The first issues of *Der National Demokrat* were distributed free of charge throughout the country but despite all advance publicity and criticism the paper shared the fate of its predecessors. It did not live to the beginning of the year 1854.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> *National Intelligencer*, July 1, 1846.

<sup>21</sup> Koch was born at Castell near Mainz in 1809. In Germany he had made a name for himself as the author of numerous devotional books. In 1839 he came to America where he settled in Philadelphia earning his living by giving religious lectures. Later he edited the *Philadelphia Demokrat*. After his brief sojourn in Washington, Koch removed to Baltimore as editor of the *Maryland Demokrat*. He also founded *Minerva*, an unsuccessful scholarly magazine. A short journalistic career in Illinois was followed by his return to Baltimore where Koch joined the staff of Raine's *Correspondent*. He left Maryland in 1862 to edit German papers in Allentown, Pa.

<sup>22</sup> *National Demokrat*, July 9, 1853.

Alfred Schücking entered the scene again in the fall of 1854 when the first issue of a monthly appeared which Julius Ende, a German printer with some journalistic ambitions of his own, set up for him in his print shop. The impressive title, *Schücking's Washingtoner Intelligenzblatt für die Vereinigten Staaten und Deutschland*, expressed the editor's aim to reach readers all over the country as well as in Germany. Business and international trade news dominate the material contained in the first issue, dated October 1, 1854 which has been preserved. It is doubtful, however, that many more issues were ever published.

From 1843 until the middle of the fifties not a single one of the German language newspapers published in Washington aimed specifically at the local German population. Neither the high-flung projects of Schücking for a national and even international periodical nor the numerous political campaign sheets of this period found much response among the middle class and laboring class Germans in the District who accounted for the majority of the prospective readers. An American political consciousness was hardly developed among these immigrants. A day-to-day economic struggle dominated their interests. During their leisure time, they sought social contact with people of their own background and language. The development of distinct German organizations in Washington followed the same pattern which can be traced in all other American cities with a noteworthy German population during the 19th century. The first step was always the forming of separate religious organisations. Next came their own society for the relief of the sick. The *Verein* devoted to social, cultural or recreational fellowship followed suit as soon as a certain economic security was achieved by the majority of the immigrant community. Foremost among such societies ranked the *Gesangverein* (singing society), the *Turnverein* (gymnastic society) and the *Schützenkompanie* (rifle company). Not until such organizations were firmly established could a local German-language newspaper count on much support. Once the societies were in existence, their announcements and a full coverage of their activities would represent the best incentive to a sufficient readership within the German community.

#### WASHINGTON'S "LITTLEGERMANY" AND THE KNOW-NOTHING

During the fifth decade of the 19th century Washington's "little Germany" took shape. The 1850 Census for the city (not including Georgetown or the Alexandria area relinquished by the District in 1844) listed 4,282 citizens of foreign birth of whom 1,246 were born in the German Confederation. By 1860 Washington numbered 3,222 German-born inhabitants.<sup>23</sup> These figures do not include the American born second generation which then was still largely adhering to the immigrant environment in which it had grown up.

However small this figure might seem, the Germans developed a very active social life which was characterized by a variety of organizations. The first recorded existence of a singing society dates back to October 1849, when the Rev. Samuel Finkel organized a choir for his Concordia Church. The male members of this choir eventually drew up a charter for their group and on April 21, 1851 the *Sängerbund* formally became the first choral society in the history of the city. Under the direction of Charles Walter, this group met in the old German Hall. Its first public appearance occurred in 1852 when its members sang at a reception for the Hungarian patriot Lajos Kossuth.

<sup>23</sup>The total population of Washington amounted to 40,000 in 1850, and 61,122 in 1860.



At the same time the *Sozialdemokratische Turnverein*, a gymnastic society composed of liberal and partly radical elements, was organized. A second gymnastic organization, the *Turngemeinde*, united the more conservative men among the Turner enthusiasts. While the *Turnverein* had its headquarters and *Turnhalle* in Mathias Pabst's restaurant on New Jersey Avenue near the Baltimore depot, the *Turngemeinde* held its weekly *Freisschule* every Sunday night in a place called "Alt Capitol." Prominent among the early Turners were R. Schellhaas, Louis Waldecker, Conrad Dieterich and Carl Steinmetz.

In 1851 or 1852 German citizens founded the *Washington Jäger Company*, a militia organization which soon became known all over the city for its colorful uniforms, its martial display and the conviviality which reigned at its annual festivals in Becker's *Eichenwald*, a German beer garden in the city. The *Jägerfest* of May 1856 was a particularly noteworthy highlight of German social activities and was covered by several out-of-town German-language newspapers.

Several other singing societies originated in the fifties: the *Turner Liedertafel* (Prof. Christian), *Männerchor* (Prof. Bukert), *Sängerrunde* (Director Raudenberg) and in Georgetown the *Concordia Gesangverein*. On April 18, 1859 these five German societies decided to hold common concerts under the leadership of Professor F. Kley, director of the *Sängerbund*. This was the first step towards their merger into the *Washington Sängerbund*. In Alexandria the German *Musikverein* was founded.

From the existence of these many German societies we may deduce that German life was flourishing at that time despite an increasing anti-foreigner agitation during the mid-fifties. The Know-Nothing movement also held sway in Washington. In 1855 an attempt was made to require naturalized citizens to reside in the District for an additional year after naturalization before they could vote although they might have spent their entire waiting period of five years in the District. An opinion of the District Court was obtained against this interpretation but the Commissioners of Elections being Know Nothings disregarded the court opinion and rejected numerous naturalized citizens at the polls. The situation became grave after the Know Nothing party became very strong and almost carried the mayoralty election of 1856. When a city election took place in the following year a gang of Plug Uglies from Baltimore came to Washington to lend a hand to the Know Nothing candidates. They attacked German and Irish voters and tried to keep them away from the polls. The situation got rapidly out of hand when they directed cannons loaded with cobble-stones against the foreign-born voters. Mayor William B. Magruder appealed to President Buchanan for help. A battalion of Marines was alerted, marched to the polls near the old Northern Liberties Market and attacked the rioters. The First of June 1857 was long remembered by the foreign-born citizens of Washington. Six people were killed, the police chief and several policemen and District officials were injured. The Germans were mindful of the fact that the federal and local authorities had acted swiftly and forcefully to protect the rights of the foreign-born in Washington, but the violent attacks against their rights had one immediate effect: the average German immigrant became aware of his own political duties in his new country. Germans in Washington reacted to the threats of the Know Nothings by banding together even more than they had in the quiescent past.

The decided to stage a patriotic political demonstration of their own by directing the attention of their native fellow citizens to the share the German element had had in the building of the American Republic. The

figure of the drillmaster of the Revolutionary Army, General Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben was chosen as a symbol for this peaceful manifestation. From July 26 to July 29 a Steuben festival was held in the city in which all German societies, clubs and churches participated. During these three days the city was virtually dominated by the Germans. The practical consequences of this celebration were manifold. Newspapers carried favorable comments on the festivities. The German organizations decided to form a *Steuben Association* which would co-ordinate future activities of the same sort and also collect funds for a national Steuben monument to be erected at a prominent site in Washington.<sup>24</sup>

During these eventful years the first German newspapers for local readers appeared on the scene. Established with the financial aid of the Republican Party, the *Union und Washington Correspondent* came out under the editorship of Karl Burghal. It was printed half in German and half in English and was a vigorous defender of the immigrant's position in American politics. It appeared at a moment when such a defense was most needed and welcomed by the Germans. No less outspoken than Burghal was Louis Schade, a Douglas-Democrat who held minor government positions in Washington from 1853 to 1856.<sup>25</sup> The printing office of the *Union* published his treatise on immigration in 1856 in which Schade proved with statistics the benefit of immigration to America.<sup>26</sup>

Next appeared in 1856 the *Washington Wochenblatt* edited and published by Julius Ende whose moderate views were violently attacked by the Republicans, both locally and in neighboring Baltimore. The *National Era* of Washington which had a German contributor, William Beschke, called Ende an "instrument of the present administration," and wrote: "the *Washington Wochenblatt* has so limited a circulation that it might be deemed by many unworthy of notice" while Beschke wrote an entire column refuting one of Ende's editorials.

The radical German daily *Wecker* in Baltimore frequently heaped insults on Ende's paper.<sup>27</sup> The *Wecker* carried regular news columns about German affairs in Washington, especially items concerning the Turners, from the pen of its able Washington correspondent, Carl Steinmetz. Evidently, the *Wecker* had many readers in Washington.<sup>28</sup>

While the *Union und Washington Correspondent* seems to have been discontinued in 1856, Ende's *Wochenblatt* was still publishing in 1858 when Alfred Schücking made his next appearance on the Washington newspaper

<sup>24</sup> Information on the German societies was gathered from the files of the *Baltimore Wecker* and other contemporary newspapers as well as from commemorative pamphlets issued by various organizations.

<sup>25</sup> Louis Schade (1829-1903) was a native of Berlin. He participated in the 1848 uprising and subsequently decided to emigrate to America where he arrived in 1851. From 1853 until 1856 he was a statistician for the Federal Government. Senator Douglas installed Schade as the editor of the *National Demokrat* in Chicago in 1856. Two years later Schade moved to Burlington, Iowa, where he was admitted to the bar. He returned to Washington in 1859 to establish a law practice. He also edited the *Intelligenzblatt* and in 1861 the *Militär-Gazette* for Werner Koch. His defense in 1865 of Captain Henry Wirz, Swiss-born ex-superintendent of the notorious Confederate prison camp at Andersonville, brought him national attention. Schade did all in his power to obtain a fair trial for Wirz amidst an atmosphere of revenge. The Wirz trial won him thousands of friends in the South while most fellow Forty-Eighters considered Schade's defense of Wirz a betrayal of the Union cause. In 1878 Schade published the weekly *Sentinel* in English in which he defended particularly the interests of the immigrants. Until his death he remained a frequent contributor to the *Washington Journal*. (Cf. Alexander J. Schem (ed.), *Deutsch-Amerikanisches Conversations-Lexicon* (New York, 1869-74), IX, 723; X, 419).

<sup>26</sup> Louis Schade, *The Immigration into the United States of America from a Statistical and National Economical Point of View* (Washington, 1856). Schade tried to prove with the help of statistical methods that without immigration after 1790, the population of the U. S. in 1850 would have amounted to 7,555,423 people while the actual figure for 1850 was 19,987,573 inhabitants.

<sup>27</sup> *National Era*, April 3, 1856; *Baltimore Wecker*, March 18 and 26, 1856.

<sup>28</sup> Steinmetz, a social-democratic refugee from Baden, was active in German radical circles in Cincinnati and Richmond before coming to Washington as a correspondent for the *Wecker*. Before the outbreak of the Civil War, Steinmetz moved to New York. Cf. Wittke, *op. cit.*, 86; Klaus G. Wust, "German Immigrants and Nativism in Virginia, 1840-1860," *Society for the History of the Germans in Maryland, Reports XXIX* (1956), 40-43

scene. This time Schücking launched a modest weekly, the *Washingtoner Anzeiger*. It lasted exactly thirteen weeks until April 1859 when its list of subscribers was acquired by a young German immigrant printer, Werner Koch.

Before turning to the successful publishing career of Koch, a glance at the German life in 1859 might serve to illustrate the manner in which the German element in Washington had reached a climax of activity. Four major celebrations were staged on the Potomac meadows in Arlington during the year 1859. On May 9th the Turner societies held their May Festival there. Three weeks later the Washington *Jäger Companie* invited all Germans to its rally. On June 16 the Sängerbund and other societies were hosts to their sister organizations from New York, Baltimore, Richmond, Alexandria and Petersburg for a two days' celebration. After a torchlight parade through downtown Washington to City Hall where the Mayor addressed the Germans, the festivities continued the next morning at eight with a march past the White House to Georgetown, thence across the river on canal boats to Arlington where the official program lasted until late at night. In September another Steuben Festival was held. This time official Washington joined the Germans in a massive demonstration which was climaxed by a rally on the Arlington banks of the Potomac. Detailed reports on these festivities and all other noteworthy events of the German element in Washington since April 1859 have appeared in the volumes of the newspapers established by Werner Koch at that time. Although it underwent several changes in name, it has remained for a century now the chronicle and the lasting bond of several generations of German immigrants.

#### WERNER KOCH: PIONEER OF THE LOCAL GERMAN PRESS

Werner Koch was born on April 13th, 1834 in Alsfeld in Hesse. While he was still in school he lost his father and the burden of providing for the family fell partly upon him. He left school and apprenticed himself to the Ehrenclau publishing company which published the *Alsfelder Kreisblatt*. Besides learning the printing trade from the bottom up, he soon became familiar with the editing, composing and distribution of the small local newspaper. In 1853 he left for America and came to Washington for the first time. Friedrich Schmidt engaged him as a printer for his *National Demokrat*. The failure of this weekly left Koch without a job in a country still strange to him. He made his way to New York where he signed up on a whaler. Several months of hardship in the South Atlantic hunting grounds followed. On the return trip he jumped ship in the West Indies and found a job as a hand on a freighter bound for Baltimore. Once again he went out on a ship sailing for Rio de Janeiro. By 1856 he had saved enough money to return to Washington where he opened a cigar store. Keeping a store, however, did not satisfy him. Early in 1857 Koch went to Richmond where he found employment as a printer in the shop of Hoyer and Ludwig. Together with Pastor John C. Hoyer he edited and printed the small weekly *Das Auge* in the capital of Virginia. A year later he came to Washington for the third time, now determined to stay and realize his long cherished dream: to found a newspaper of his own. When he acquired Sage's print shop on the corner of 7th Street and Louisiana Avenue he had just reached his 25th year. After a few weeks of job printing, he proudly announced the publication of his *Washingtoner Intelligenz-Blatt*.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> *Washington Journal*, March 11, 1911. For Koch see also "Das Washingtoner Journal und sein Herausgeber," in Max Heinrici, *op. cit.*, 553-554.

Koch did not hesitate to establish his editorial principles immediately. The first issue carried his own editorial which became a guiding star to all succeeding editors of the newspaper except for a few deviations, notably during the editorship of Max Conheim which will be dealt with later. Under the headline "Our Viewpoint," Koch wrote:

Although the purpose of our newspaper will hardly go beyond that of a useful, impartial, local sheet, nevertheless we would like to declare right at the outset that we do not intend to avoid any timely question. In covering social events as well as political conditions we shall proceed independently as well as dispassionately.

We have little to do with political parties as such, but we are all the more interested in their real or alleged purposes. Nothing prevents us in this respect from combining the strictest impartiality with great frankness. The peculiar character of the German element in this place which differs considerably from the composition of German groups in other localities, makes it easy for us to maintain such a position of public criticism which could not be upheld in a city where one's own personality would willingly or unwillingly be drawn into the struggle between opposing parties.

We are convinced that we do not exaggerate in stating that political hatred is non-existent among the Germans of Washington. Political fanaticism has fallen on infertile ground here. Impartial criticism, on the other hand, is at home with us. In the whirlpool of party politics we are spectators rather than actors.

After this statement of policy, Koch emphasized that the *Intelligenz-Blatt* was not to be a German newspaper, but an American newspaper in the German language. "We consider it our foremost duty to assist the Germans of Washington in protecting and promoting their rights and interests, and to make them more respected among the native citizens as a national group and as individuals. Furthermore, we consider it our duty to oppose any attempt which seems hostile and dangerous to the free institutions of our adopted country."

During the first months Koch's multifarious duties drove him almost to despair. Louis Schade who had meanwhile arrived was busy establishing his law practice and seemingly did not keep his earlier promise of help until almost a year had elapsed. Thus Werner Koch wrote most of his own copy, set and printed the entire paper, was his own paper-boy, and also collected the subscription fees. The few night hours that remained for his sleep were spent on an old, hard table in the print shop. The number of subscribers increased but slowly. "Why is it so difficult to publish a German newspaper in Washington?," he asked in one of his editorials, "There should be enough support considering the number of Germans and their intellectual standing." He supplied part of the answer:

1. The competition of the two German dailies in Baltimore which many Washington readers find on their breakfast table earlier than subscribers in outlying districts of Baltimore.
2. We need a capable journalist to provide a good, readable newspaper lest the people prefer one of the many papers which are being imported from Germany."

The two Baltimore papers, the *Correspondent* and the *Wecker* both tried to hold their ground in Washington but Koch encountered this competition by giving more space to reports on local events than Baltimore could afford to do without slighting their home town readers. It was with much pride that he wrote in the issue of March 17, 1860: "The next issue will complete the first yearly volume which means that for the first time in the Nation's Capital a German newspaper has survived the probation period."

The increasing radicalism of the Republicans greatly disturbed many Germans in Washington who felt that it would eventually lead to civil war. "The Republicans seem to esteem the Negro seven times higher than the white Europeans and will finally ruin all our business by moving the

Capital away from Washington as Senator Grinnis suggested," was the statement voiced in a May 1860 editorial. During the Lincoln campaign of the same year, Koch united his *Intelligenz-Blatt* with *Die Metropole*, a weekly founded by R. Schellhaas in August 1860. From October 1, 1860 on, the daily newspaper was called *Tägliche Metropole*, published by W. Koch and R. Schellhaas. The latter, an instrument builder for the coast survey service, was an ardent Turner. A month later H. Wernich joined the two partners and the firm was thenceforth called W. Koch & Co. This merger fulfilled Werner Koch's dream of a daily newspaper in Washington. A promotion campaign was launched to get support from the many German businessmen in the city which was not quite as successful as Koch and his associates had hoped it would be. In the issue of November 17, 1860, they complained: "A large part of our local German population is composed of Jews who are generally well off. It is very regrettable that especially this group of citizens lends little support to the German press."

The daily edition made it possible to keep the readers well informed on the crucial events leading to the Civil War. On December 6, 1860 a dramatic editorial was published in support of saving the Union at all cost and preventing the imminent war. One month later the *Metropole* was forced to relinquish its daily edition and resume weekly publication. "The present crisis which has completely surprised us greenhorns in the business, and the indifference on the part of many citizens force us to give up our daily edition." The brief dream of a daily paper had come to an end. On January 11, 1861 the *Metropole* reverted to weekly publication under Koch's sole management. While much editorial attention during the preceding year had still been given to the anti-immigration policies advocated by many politicians and the *Metropole* had joined the rest of the German press in the United States in its fight against the encroachments of prohibition and proposed blue laws, these controversial matters were now overshadowed by the dangers of an imminent civil war. Although some comment regarding the Republican attitudes was critical, there was no doubt as to where both Schade and Koch stood: "The Union must be preserved" was the tenor of their cautious writings on the eve of the war.

Already on January 19, 1861 the *Metropole* reported that the two German militia organizations, the Washington Rifles and Turner Rifles (a hastily founded military company of the Washington Turners) were holding frequent exercises to be prepared for all eventualities. Readers were called upon to be ready to "protect the Union, the Constitution and the property of the Nation." When the first shells hit Fort Sumter, the Turner Rifles announced the formation of a second company. A few days later, Colonel C. M. Smith, Commander of the D. C. Volunteers formally created the Eighth Battalion consisting of the Washington Rifles and Companies A and B of the Turner Rifles. Among the volunteers was Werner Koch. While the German Battalion was still practicing in the Washington area, Koch continued publication of his newspaper. "Our readers may forgive us if our reading matter this week is not very copious. Editing, type-setting and spending the night on sentinel duty is too much for one man alone. Yet we want to assure you that our newspaper will come out regularly so long as we have not been killed, even though the type-cases might have to be brought out to the guard house." But he could not keep his promise. On June 10, 1861 the Eighth Battalion, D. C. Volunteers, left Washington and went into the field. The *Metropole* suspended publication. Werner Koch transferred later to the 59th Regiment, New York Volunteers.

During Koch's absence of more than one year no civilian German news-

paper appeared in Washington. Several German news sheets were published by members of German Union troops stationed in the Washington area. The *Armee-Courier* edited by Bullinger is reported to have come out for a while but it was not possible to ascertain whether it was printed in the Capital. The *Pennsylvania Fifth* carried a German section, edited by Sergeant Christian Zinn. Its type was set in the office of the Alexandria Gazette and the steam press of the *Sentinel* was used to do the printing.<sup>30</sup> The title of another paper, *Der Spassvogel*, printed in Alexandria shortly after the outbreak of the war, has been recorded but nothing is known about its publisher.<sup>31</sup>

During the winter of 1862 Koch contracted a disease and was discharged after he had been commissioned as a Second Lieutenant. He hurried home in order to restore his newspaper. The presence of large contingents of the Union army composed of German immigrants caused him to give his paper a new name, the *Militär gazette*. Louis Schade served again as editor. Although its appearance was enthusiastically welcomed by the soldiers, it was far from being a financial success. Furthermore, in May, 1863 a weekly German newspaper called the *Alexandria Beobachter* was established in neighboring, Union-held Alexandria.<sup>32</sup> Koch was almost ready to give up when unexpected financial support became available.

Max Cohnheim, a former contributor of the well-known humorous journal *Kladderadatsch* in Berlin and author of one of the first plays written specifically for the German American stage (*Herz und Dollar*) had arrived in Washington where friends had helped him to obtain a position with the Treasury Department. Before the war Cohnheim edited a flourishing humorous magazine, the *New York Humorist*, which he had established in 1858 with the aid of Otto Bretthauer. The outbreak of the Civil War forced him to discontinue it.<sup>33</sup> In Washington he looked for a printer and for financial supporters. The printer he found in Werner Koch. The money was furnished by Nicholas Weygand whose wine and liquor business was thriving during the war years and by Ferdinand Kasche, a prosperous hotel owner.

Koch agreed to let Cohnheim assume all editorial responsibilities, a concession which he was forced into by his precarious financial situation. Cohnheim also chose a new name, and *Columbia* as the weekly was called, made its first appearance on October 17, 1863. It had a very successful start under its new name and editorship. Cohnheim began with 200 subscribers, four months later he reported 800 and by 1865 this number had doubled. German newspapers all over the country reprinted some of his editorials, many of which were written with vinegar rather than ink. He attacked everything that seemed conventional to him. As time went on, he embarked on an anti-clerical course which finally included assaults against all religious groups from orthodox Jewry to liberal Lutheranism. *Columbia* became without doubt the most colorful German language paper ever published in Washington.

The following "Genesis of *Columbia*" which Cohnheim wrote for his issue of January 2, 1864 is typical of the style that he relished:

1. In the beginning Schade created the *Militär gazette*, and Bullinger the *Armee-Courier*;
2. And Washington was without form and void; and darkness was in the heads of certain old Washingtonians: and the spirit of Burgeler moved upon the waters of the Potomac.

<sup>30</sup> We owe thanks to Mr. Earl Lutz of Richmond who placed his findings on German war newspapers at our disposal.

<sup>31</sup> Hermann Schuricht, *History of the German Element in Virginia* (Baltimore, 1900), II, 103.

<sup>32</sup> *Alexandria Gazette*, June 5, 1863.

<sup>33</sup> Witke, *op. cit.*, 186.

3. And Weygand and Kasche and other comfortable people spoke: Let there be a new newspaper: and there was a new newspaper.
4. And the public saw that the newspaper was good: and the public divided the light from the darkness;
5. And called the light *Columbia*, and the darkness was called *Katholische Kirchenzeitung*.<sup>34</sup> And from the evening to the morning *Columbia* received its first 100 subscribers."

For a while, the German public enjoyed Cohnheim's tirades. His editorials were lucid manifestations of criticism which spared nobody and nothing. Occasionally he opened his columns for retorts from those whom he had attacked. Louis Schade was his ablest contender and the Cohnheim-Schade controversy, a fight between the ultra-radical and the moderate liberal, was followed with much interest by the Germans in other cities. Much space was devoted to the issues and events of the war. Cohnheim unconditionally supported the Lincoln administration and its backers among the German Americans in the North and Midwest. Particularly moving are the issues of *Columbia* dealing with the assassination of President Lincoln. On April 22, 1865 all pages of *Columbia* were bordered in black in order to express the profound sorrow of German Americans everywhere. The *Saengerbund* rendered a last farewell to the beloved great man at the side of his body when he was lying in state at the Capitol. All German societies of Washington, Georgetown and Alexandria participated in the Lincoln funeral procession.

As early as August 14, 1865 *Columbia* published an appeal of the German societies in the city to raise funds for a Lincoln statue. Numerous picnics were held and entertainments were given to contribute a substantial sum to the fund which was used in 1868 to erect the statue of Lincoln in front of City Hall.

During the last two years of the war business in Washington was booming. Businessmen of every faith supported the *Columbia* through liberal advertising. Cohnheim felt so much encouraged by his success that he resigned from his government position on April 1, 1866. He moved his editorial office out of Koch's print shop and established the *Columbia* bureau on Pennsylvania Avenue. These steps were unwise. Not only did many Germans leave Washington soon after the war to join the renewed migration to the West but also local business experienced a recession which was reflected in a sharp reduction of the *Columbia* revenue. Soon Cohnheim was considerably in arrears with his payments to Koch. After a few months of hesitation, Cohnheim had to inform his readers on January 12, 1867: "Family considerations force us to resign," which was definitely a euphemism. Heavily loaded down with debts, Max Cohnheim virtually left Washington by night and headed for San Francisco. He was never again seen in the District.

Werner Koch had anticipated this development for some time. He took over what assets were left and the masthead of the issue of *Columbia* published on January 19, 1867 bore his name as publisher and editor again. After the interlude of Cohnheim's radical editorship, the newspaper now returned to the policy which Koch had outlined in 1859. Faithfully the *Columbia* recorded the events of the following years. The establishment of the Territorial Government in Washington on February 21, 1871 brought about a sudden interest in local politics.

While Koch's newspaper hailed the creation of self-government for the District in several editorials, another German resident of Washington,

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 178-179. The *Kirchenzeitung* was published by Maximilian Oertel in Baltimore.

Nehemiah H. Miller, used his personal contacts among the inner circle of the Grant administration to secure nomination to the newly created Legislative Council. The *Georgetown Courier* characterized the nominations as follows: "Not one old resident, nor a Democrat, nor a Catholic, nor an Irishman nor a man of Irish descent among the nominees, and yet we have three darkies—Douglass, Gray and Hall, a German (Miller), two natives of Maine and one of Massachusetts."<sup>35</sup> N. H. Miller obtained funds from party friends to establish a Republican German newspaper because Koch's *Columbia* tried to avoid party politics and was not available for the ensuing campaign in March and April 1871.

Early in March 1871 Miller began publication of a daily newspaper, *Täglicher Washingtoner Anzeiger*. It was printed by Philip L. Schriftgiesser, a Polish-born printer who had settled in Alexandria during the Civil War. He had emigrated from Poland because of political reasons. In 1863 he had published the first Polish language periodical in America, *Echo z Polski*, and moved to Washington after the war. There he had established a printshop for publications in English, Polish and German.<sup>36</sup> Although Miller's *Anzeiger* was enabled to distribute many free copies by virtue of substantial subsidies, the majority of the Washington Germans remained faithful to Koch's *Columbia*. Miller who had been made Assistant District Attorney for the District Government figured in the investigations of the activities of the Board of Public Works conducted by the House District Committee. During these hearings in March 1872 Miller revealed that Captain Albert Grant had approached him with an offer of \$20,000 to buy the *Anzeiger* and turn it into an opposition organ of the District government, a proposal which he had refused. On that occasion Miller also asserted that there were about 15,000 people of German descent residing in the District, many of whom were ignorant of the English language, and that one-third of the taxes of the area were paid by the German population.<sup>37</sup> The number of German Americans cited by Miller seems exaggerated in view of the 1870 census returns which reveal only 4133 born in Germany plus 146 Swiss-born and 35 Austrian-born residents, even if a liberal allowance is made for those who were second generation Germans among the native born population.

Nehemiah Miller nevertheless ran into financial difficulties soon after the first Republican enthusiasm about German support had subsided. Werner Koch whose *Columbia* had held its own during the two years when it had a daily competitor in the city, agreed to Miller's terms to sell his *Anzeiger* to him and to merge the two German papers. On March 31, 1873 the subscribers of *Columbia* and *Täglicher Anzeiger* held the first issue of the *Washingtoner Journal* in their hands. Proudly Koch announced: "The weekly *Columbia* and the daily *Anzeiger* have ceased publication last Saturday and the *Journal* has taken their place."

#### THE JOURNAL HAD COME TO STAY

The new *Washingtoner Journal* combined the best features and services of its two predecessors. While news items from the German-speaking countries in Europe appeared daily, much space was devoted to American politics, especially to the events in Washington, Maryland and Virginia. In order to encounter successfully the continued competition of the *Baltimore Correspondent*, Koch introduced home delivery through paper boys

<sup>35</sup> James H. Whyte, *The Uncivil War: Washington During Reconstruction* (New York, 1958), 106.

<sup>36</sup> Stanislaw Osada, *Prasa i Publicystyka Polska w Ameryce* (Pittsburgh, 1930), 17.

<sup>37</sup> Whyte, *op. cit.*, 133, 285.



which in turn caused the *Correspondent* to provide the same service in Washington. But the *Journal* had come to stay.

While not aligning himself with one political party Koch never remained unpolitical. During the time when the District still had its territorial form of government, he repeatedly urged his readers to take an active part in local politics. In one editorial in May 1873 he stated reproachfully: "What a pitiful part the German-American element has played in this District! Negroes are in our assembly, Negroes are in prominent positions in our health department and in the city administration. And you, Germans, what are you? You have degraded yourselves!" He continued to point out that more than 12000 German-speaking citizens lived in the greater Washington area. "Governor Shepherd has made 230 appointments. Only the very important job of the street lamp lighter has been given to a German, Mr. G. Schlegel!," he remarked sarcastically after the appointments for the territorial administration became known in November, 1873.

In the October 1873 elections the newly formed Temperance Party endorsed for the first time a large number of candidates. The *Journal* bitterly opposed the *Temperenzler* and organized an active campaign against them, claiming after the election that the German vote had been responsible for defeating the Temperance candidates in the 13th and 14th Districts. An increased number of advertisements from breweries, bars and beer gardens provided the financial stimulus for a constant campaign against all attempts at introducing blue laws which Koch editorially called "an infringement upon our personal liberty."

When in the following year the present form of commission government was introduced for the District of Columbia, the hope for effective political participation had to be buried. The inhabitants of Washington became again "spectators rather than actors" on the political stage as Koch had expressed it so aptly in 1859. The *Journal* thenceforth concentrated its efforts on promoting the social and cultural activities of the Germans.

German life in Washington had reached its zenith. The old established societies had been joined by many new ones since the end of the Civil War. The *Schützenverein* which had fought in the war as Washington Rifles became the most popular organization. In 1866 it had opened its large *Schuetzenpark* on the east side of Georgia Avenue between Kenyon and Hobart Streets and this was to become for two decades the most popular recreation place for Washington Germans. The Washington *Sängerbund* grew to a membership of several hundred and proudly counted among them national figures such as Carl Schurz (during his residence as Senator from Missouri in Washington) and Labor leader Samuel Gompers. It was soon joined by the *Arion* singing society which was to last some forty years. Turners organized the Columbia *Turngemeinde* after the war. Two German "tribes" of the Improved Order of Red Men and one German lodge of the Ancient Order of Druids existed in Washington in 1872. Four years later the German-speaking Masonic Lodge *Arminius* (F. A. A. M.) was chartered. Several new beneficial organizations were founded by Germans, notably the *German Society* which was to assist indigent immigrants and other Germans who needed temporary relief. As early as 1860 a German cemetery association was founded which acquired Prospect Hill Cemetery, where many German Americans of Washington have been buried during the past century. The German Catholics acquired an adjacent area which became St. Mary's Cemetery. Since the 1860's Concordia Church maintained an orphan home on 14th Street. In 1879 the present German Orphan Home in Anacostia was founded. By 1872 Washington had two

German Catholic churches (St. Joseph's was established as a second German parish in 1868 and remained German until 1886) and six German Protestant churches. Several of these churches supported their own German schools. In 1867 the German Lutheran Church of Georgetown was re-opened and a German school was operated in conjunction with it. In 1886 Appleton Prentiss Clark, then a member of the city council had succeeded in making the German language a part of the instruction given in the public grammar schools. By 1873 German was taught in six public schools.

Even Alexandria received its share of German social life. Besides the old *Musikverein*, the Alexandria *Männerchor* and a *Turnverein* sprang up. A social club for Germans, *Die Eintracht* was founded which owned its club building and restaurant. German free masons received a charter for their own *Teutonia Lodge*. A non-sectarian German school was established by Rabbi Loewensohn. In 1868 Germans Lutherans organized their own church in Alexandria.

The great diversity of German social and cultural activities in the Washington area was further increased by the great annual festivals and gay parades which were staged throughout the city at frequent intervals. One such occasion was the news of the German victory over France in 1871 when even liberal refugees who had fled from persecution by the very powers who were now ruling the newly-created German Empire made their peace with their old foes and joined in the jubilant celebrations. Throughout the Franco-German War Koch had warmly supported the German cause and former Forty-Eighter Louis Schade was instrumental in bringing the illegal arms shipment to France to the attention of Congress.

Werner Koch had little to worry about for a number of years. The *Journal* retained a steady though small circulation which consisted of some 1300 paid subscriptions. Advertising seemed to be sufficient for the modest budget of the *Washingtoner Journal*. Much of the time Koch did his own writing for the local page. His articles were not brilliant in style or conception but they did not make unpleasant reading. National and international news were extracted from other newspapers both American and European, a practice which has remained quite common among German American newspapers to this day. Certain editorials and longer features were contributed by local talent. Familiar names like those of Louis Schade and Alfred Schücking appeared frequently again as well as several new names among them L. Kronheimer, Gustav Rietz, Ernst Faetz and Gallus Thomann.

The establishment of a second German newspaper, the weekly *Volks-Tribun* in the early summer of 1875 did not significantly influence the circulation of the *Journal*. First of all, the *Volks-Tribun* was a political newspaper with an outspoken Republican trend and secondly it aimed at national distribution. It was launched by Carl Roeser, a Forty-Eighter, who had been active in Midwestern politics before the Civil War. During the Lincoln administration Roeser had been appointed clerk in the Treasury Department.<sup>38</sup> After the war he settled permanently in Washington. His son-in-law, Emmanuel Waldecker, became the publisher of the *Volks-Tribun*. From 1887 until 1892 Christian Strack assisted Roeser in the editorial work. After Roeser's death in 1897 the *Volks-Tribun* was continued by Waldecker alone for several years until it ceased publication in 1902.

Only one serious local competitor for the *Journal* arose during the next few years: it was the weekly *Washington Revue* published from September

<sup>38</sup> For further information on Roeser see A. E. Zucker (ed.), *The Forty-Eighters* (New York, 1950), 331.

1895 onward for at least two years if not more. The *Revue* was edited by a local lawyer, William L. Elterich who was a leader in German organizations of the city. Previously, from 1893 to 1894, Elterich had launched another weekly, *Deutsche Presse*, which could not muster enough support. In his *Revue*, Elterich gave a full coverage to local German events. The few extant issues of this paper show that the *Revue* in 1894 carried more local news items and more advertising than did its older counterpart. Neither the time nor the reasons for its demise are known.

There were probably several other German language newspapers in Washington prior to 1900 which do not seem to have lasted long or to have exerted any noteworthy influence on the local German population.<sup>39</sup>

Whatever competition the *Volks-Tribun*, the *Deutsche Presse* and the *Revue* represented during this decade, did not hurt Koch too much because he had exercised extreme caution earlier when he decided to discontinue daily publication in 1882 and to have his paper appear three times a week; soon afterwards he converted his newspaper into the weekly *Washington Journal*. Koch did not want to be confronted once more with a situation which might have forced him out of business. He expanded his job printing department at the same time and promised his readers to make the weekly *Journal* even more a truly local newspaper than it had been during the previous years. In 1892, Christian Strack left the *Volks-Tribun* and entered into a contract with Koch. For the first time since 1873 the *Journal* had again a regular and well versed editor. H. Christian Strack was born at Reiskirchen near Giessen in Hesse on April 23, 1848 as the son of a Lutheran pastor. After military service during the Franco-German War, he earned a doctorate in philosophy at Giessen University and entered the teaching profession. In December 1883 he emigrated to the United States. In New York Strack taught in private schools and at the same time edited the *Wissenschaftliches Wochenblatt*. Two years later he removed to Washington where at first he worked as a correspondent and language teacher before he joined Roeser's *Volks-Tribun* in 1887.

Strack kept the *Washington Journal* on a relatively high journalistic level. Much emphasis was placed on reports from the American scene. Popular conservative novels were published serially and many short stories, poems and jingles, some of them produced by local talent, provided much variety. The print shop was moved to 710 Sixth Street, N. W., where it was to remain until 1955. The volumes of the *Journal* of these years form a rich storehouse of Washington lore and history. The outstanding events of the first decade of the new century were the first official visit of a member of the ruling family in Germany, Prince Henry of Prussia, the brother of the Kaiser, in February 1901, the German Day of November 1903, which was officially opened by President Roosevelt, and the reception given to the Viennese Choral Society by the German population of Washington in 1908. The unveiling of the Steuben Monument on Lafayette Square in 1910 was hailed as "an act of belated official recognition of the German contributions to the building of the American Nation." Never before (and never since) has the German element of Washington stood as much in the spotlight of public attention as during the days of the Steuben Festival of December 1910. President William Howard Taft presided at the unveiling ceremony and spoke words which evoked loud cheers from the many thousands of German Americans present:

<sup>39</sup>A complete volume of *Die Tafelrunde*, a weird, spiritualistic journal edited and published by P. L. Schücking in Washington from July 1870 until June 1872 has been preserved. In 1889 *The German American*, a national weekly, was being published by Richard Guenther, L. W. Habercom and Paul Wolff.

When Baron Steuben came to this country he found Germans who had preceded him and who, like him, had elected to make this their permanent home. Since his day millions of his countrymen have come to be Americans, and it adds great interest to our celebration and emphasizes the propriety of the action of Congress in erecting this statue to know that the German race since the Revolution has made so large a part of our population and played so prominent a part in the growth and development of our country.

The roster of German societies in the parade of almost 10 000 men and women which lasted for several hours reads like a list of all major organizations of German Americans in the Eastern States. A chorus of a thousand voices composed of the *Washington Sängerbund* and its sister societies from eight states sang at the official ceremonies. The Washington *Kriegerbund* composed of veterans of the Civil War and of the German Wars was host to similar veteran clubs from many other cities. *The Columbia Turnverein* had rented the National Rifle's Armory for a great German *kommers*. Special mention was made in the *Washington Journal* as well as in the daily press of the large number of German societies of Washington which took part in the parade under the command of Charles Gerner and Frank Wiegand. The Butchers Benevolent Association No. 1 of Washington, mounted and in uniform, commanded by Chris Rammling, made a special impression on the public. Most local German organizations were members of the United German Societies of the District of Columbia which in turn formed the local branch of the National German-American Alliance.<sup>40</sup>

These Steuben festivities during the cold winter days of 1910 warmed the hearts of Washington's German Americans. As the *Journal* put it so aptly in one of its reports: "Forgotten are the days of the Know Nothing. We are no longer stepchildren of America. We may gratefully remember our mother Germania and love faithfully our bride Columbia." The "hyphen" between German and American seemed acceptable. The official representation of imperial Germany at the festival and the many kind things said by the official speakers about Germany and Emperor William seemed to substantiate the security which German Americans felt amidst this general good will and friendship between their old and their new country.

It was the golden era of German-Americanism. For the first time a national organization existed which tried to unite all German Americans, the National German-American Alliance. Its local branch, the "United German Societies of the District of Columbia," consisting of 23 organizations, had been founded in 1890, i. e. ten years before the Alliance came into being. It grew out of the first "German Day" on October 6, 1890 in commemoration of the arrival of the first German immigrants in 1690 in Pennsylvania, an event which was celebrated annually for many years until World War I.<sup>41</sup>

Although the *Journal* reported regularly on the events organized by this federation of German organizations, neither Werner Koch nor Christian Strack showed too much enthusiasm over this mammoth body. They must somehow have sensed the imprudence of its activities which often turned into German patriotic excesses. Both Koch and Strack loved their German heritage but they were imbued with a realistic sense of moderation. Koch especially, who had lived in Washington for more than a half a century at that time, felt uncomfortable in the face of the exuberance of the German National Alliance.

<sup>40</sup> The United States Government published a 234 page public document on this event, entitled *Proceedings Upon the Unveiling of the Statue of Baron von Steuben*, compiled by George H. Carter (Washington, 1912).

<sup>41</sup> Cf. "Der Deutsch-Amerikanische Zentral-Verein im District von Columbia," in Heinrici, *op. cit.*, 824-827. Prominent men in the *Zentral-Verein* included Paul Schulze, L. W. Habercom, John Hockemeyer, Rudolph Saur, Wm. L. Elterich, Kurt Völckner, Simon Wofl, Martin Wiegand, F. A. Rockar und Gustav Bender.

But his days were numbered. Early in 1909 it became more and more evident that Werner Koch was afflicted with a lung tumor which slowly reduced his physical strength. With the iron will-power typical of his long career, he dragged himself to the office every morning. For two years the mortally ill septuagenarian punctually and faithfully observed all his chores until one morning in February, 1911, when he had to be taken home by his friends. A few days later, on March 8, 1911, Werner Koch died.

Christian Strack wrote a moving tribute to his deceased publisher and friend in the issue of March 11, 1911 and messages from numerous friends and organizations poured in lamenting the death of Koch. But in the same issue the *Washington Journal* also carried an advertisement which read: "For sale: the Washington Journal and job printing equipment belonging to this company. Edward W. Koch, Census Bureau."<sup>42</sup> It was suddenly revealed that the *Journal* had not proved profitable for many years. Werner Koch and his faithful scribe, Christian Strack, had carried on the only German newspaper in Washington at a continuous loss. Everybody was appalled, but only a few of the enthusiastic Germans in the city were willing to do something about it. Nobody knew that Christian Strack had worked without a regular salary for several months while German-Americanism had had its heydays. The *Journal* appeared until March 25, 1911 when there was no more money to pay the type-setters. It was symptomatic of all the hurrah-crying of that period that nobody ever seriously inquired about the financial situation of the *Journal* which had been so greatly praised by the National German-American Alliance.

Suddenly when there was no longer a German newspaper in Washington to announce the forthcoming meetings of some 30 societies, to list the German services of the churches and to report on the many little and big events among the local German population the readers realized what this weekly paper had actually meant to them. Several emergency meetings were held by leading German American citizens to discuss the fate of the *Washington Journal*. Martin Weigand, Charles T. Schwengler, Simon Wolf, Christian Heurich and Gustav Bender were instrumental in raising the funds that were necessary to save the *Journal*. Immediately thereafter, the "Washington Journal Co." was founded under the management of Schwengler. On May 27, 1911, the *Journal* reappeared after only two months of interruption. The print shop was entrusted to Ernst Welker, a printing foreman from Roanoke, Virginia, while Dr. Strack continued to be the editor.

The new head of the *Journal*, Capt. Charles Theodore Schwengler (1862-1940) was born at Werdenberg near St. Gallen in Switzerland and came to America as a young man to study geology in Kansas City. After graduating from a mining school he entered the government service. During the Spanish-American War Schwengler had received a commission as captain of the army reserve.

Capt. Schwengler's management of the *Journal* was complicated by an unexpected event: the loss of its editor, Christian Strack, whose health was so much impaired that through the intervention of friends he had to be committed to the Ruppert Home for the Aged in December 1912. He died there on November 29, 1914. Strack's life had never been blessed with earthly possessions. The meager salary which he had drawn from the

<sup>42</sup> Edward W. Koch, son of Werner Koch, was born in Washington in 1864. Although he was an apprentice in his father's print shop, he decided in favor of a statistician's career. In 1880 he entered federal service and became later chief of the Population Division of the Bureau of Census. He was instrumental in introducing the punch card system for census tabulations. Edward Koch died in Washington in 1958 at the age of 94.

publisher of the *Washington Journal* was but an insufficient reward for a man of his calibre. Throughout his career he compensated for his financial circumstances by an unexcelled idealism. The Hon. Simon Wolf who had himself often contributed of his talent and money to the German paper said at the grave of his departed friend: "Christian Strack was a man of outstanding gifts. He was a poet, a historian, an able journalist, and a great patriot."

E. Max Hesselbach took over Strack's place for several months and was then followed as editor by Kurt Völkner, a prominent spokesman of the German American National Alliance and president of its D. C. branch, who was an official of the Library of Congress. He did his best to bring the *Journal* in line with the principles of the Alliance.

To the Washington branch fell a particularly prominent task. The Alliance was centering its political activities on the fight against prohibition, and in December 1913 it appointed "a number of prominent residents, who are members of our District of Columbia branch, to form a standing legislative committee in Washington." The chairman of this committee was the Hon. Simon Wolf. The Alliance did not conceal its reason for choosing him as chairman when it cynically stated that Wolf "is—which is very important for our purpose—one of, if not the most influential of Jews in the United States," and would therefore "bring in a vigorous and persistent element of our population to work for us." This German lobbying committee was to be maintained at the expense of liquor and brewing companies among them William Muehleisen, Jr., a Washington liquor dealer, Edward F. Abner, of the Abner-Drury Brewing Co., Albert Carey and Christian Heurich, both local brewers. The activities of the Alliance against prohibition legislation and in the field of German cultural endeavors hitherto not perturbed the public at large, but the outbreak of the war in Europe suddenly changed the situation. The Alliance then considered it its primary task to defend Germany's position in that war.<sup>43</sup> The *Washington Journal* was drawn into the propaganda campaign which the Alliance waged on behalf of the German cause. From August 1914 onward, reports from the European war theater featuring the victories of the German armies occupied most of that space in the *Journal* which was not reserved for local news. Soon after the beginning of the hostilities in Europe, articles in the English language were inserted which were clipped for the most part from *The Fatherland*, the official mouthpiece of the Alliance and from *The Crucible*, a state-wide Alliance news bulletin for Virginia.<sup>44</sup> A statement addressed to "Our advertisers," also in English, explained the policy of the editor during the first war year: "In duty bound this newspaper extends its sympathies, its influence and aid to Germany and Austria, now struggling in war against a powerful alliance. These efforts have been duly appreciated by our German-American citizens who have come forward with subscriptions, giving us an enlarged circulation." Circulation figures indicate that paid subscriptions actually increased from 1060 in 1914 to 2610 in early 1915. Almost simultaneously, however, a word of caution was addressed to the Germans in Washington: "We have to listen to much nonsense and many accusations directed against the German *Reich* during

<sup>43</sup>Clifton J. Child, *The German-Americans in Politics 1914-1917* (Madison, Wis., 1939), 14-15. Simon Wolf (1836-1923) was a native of Bavaria. He came to America in 1848 at the age of 12. After 18 years in Ohio he moved to Washington in 1862. In 1869 he was appointed recorder for the District of Columbia and from 1878 to 1881 he was a civil judge. His law practice was well renowned. Cf. *Dictionary of American Biography*, Vol. 20, 449; *Deutsch-Amerikanische Geschichtsblätter*, xiv (1915), 386.

<sup>44</sup>*The Fatherland* was published in New York 1914-17. *The Crucible* was the organ of the German-American Alliance of Virginia published from December 1914 until May 1915 in Richmond.

these days. Remain cool, do not get excited, and defend the Fatherland by spreading the true facts." There is no evidence that the *Journal* or for that matter any other German-language newspaper which embraced the German cause in 1914-15 sold its favors for German gold. No investigation, private or official, has found any ties between the German Embassy on Massachusetts Avenue and the little German American weekly on Sixth Street. Certainly, much propaganda coming from sources in Germany found its way onto the desk of the *Journal's* editor but the attitude of this and most of the other German-language newspapers would have been pro-German in any case. Despite a doubled circulation and some gains in advertising, the *Journal* faced bankruptcy by 1915. Martin Wiegand who had already put out a considerable sum in 1911 to save the paper, again stepped in, but in August 1915 he was joined by a young man who had no fortune to speak of but brought with him an indefatigable determination to save the only German newspaper in Washington: Hermann G. Winkler.

#### TWO WORLD WARS AND THEIR AFTERMATHS

Since 1913 a young German immigrant had been the manager of the *Washington Journal's* printshop. Hermann G. Winkler was born in Bunzlau, Silesia on January 12, 1888. When he was still a child his family moved to Westphalia where he served his printer's apprenticeship in the little town of Halver. At the age of twenty-three, Hermann Winkler emigrated to the United States and settled in Washington. Soon after his arrival he found employment as a printer with the *Journal*. In 1915 he used all his savings to acquire the rights and assets of the *Journal*, and suddenly found himself following in the footsteps of Werner Koch as its sole publisher and editor. He assumed these responsibilities at a time when all over the country men in more fortunate circumstances gladly rid themselves of the tasks involved in putting out a newspaper in German. From the very beginning all odds were against the young publisher, but he went to work relentlessly. He restored a sense of moderation to the paper. Gustav Bender was entrusted with the editorial work during this critical phase when it became evident that the United States was heading towards a war against Germany, a fact that would have been completely unthinkable in 1911 and even in 1914. The *Journal* suddenly found itself denounced as "un-American" and "pro-Kaiser." Winkler whose own personality represented the best in the German tradition that immigrants brought to this country was neither too cautious nor rash during this trying period. So long as the United States was neutral, he felt that it was no disgrace to side with the old country, but once the new country was at war, he left no doubt as to his loyalty though he and his newspaper had to take a course which he would not have chosen of his own free will. The *Journal's* conduct was above suspicion and it was permitted in November 1917 to continue publication and distribution "under permit No. 167 authorized by the act of October 6, 1917."

Before this permit had been issued, the *Journal* like all other German-language newspapers in the country, had to provide exact translations of all news and editorial matters related to the war to the local postmaster. The first months from April to November 1917, therefore, put an additional burden on the publisher. The process of filing these translations was cumbersome and expensive and resulted in a sharp reduction of news items in the *Journal*. Yet of all the experiences and trials of 1917, censorship was the least painful. The war had brought in its wake the most violent

and hysterical effort to eradicate everything of German origin in the United States. The Nation's Capital vied with the most notorious localities in the country in proving its superpatriotism. The "drive against Teutonism" was the most sorrowful chapter in the history of the German immigrants in Washington. Its effects on individuals and institutions were disastrous. Within a few months Washington's "Little Germany" was wiped out either through pressure from without or through fear and desperation among its own ranks.

Alone the *Washington Journal* held out. Hermann Winkler and Gustav Bender (who assumed the pseudonym of *Germanicus*) tried to instill in their readers encouragement and faith in the future. The *Journal* supported the Liberty Bond Drives and called for loyalty but in early 1918 it resumed a bolder editorial stand. The "infamy of the Allied blockade of Germany" was severely attacked and letters from dislocated former Washington residents were printed. In December 1917 over 1300 Germans who were not yet American citizens or had shown no intention of becoming naturalized had been forced to leave the District of Columbia. Exactly one year later, however, most of them were permitted to return.

The financial situation of the *Journal* was once again critical. Most advertisers had withdrawn their support in 1917 for fear of being identified with the enemy cause by advertising in a German-language newspaper. Winkler tried to save expenses by using the stereotypes which were supplied by the German Press and Plate Co. of Cleveland but this did not always prove satisfactory since frequently shipments were held up by the authorities and the harrassed editor had to substitute at the last minute old plates of the early war years which glorified German victories and therefore brought renewed criticism from the authorities. The Bureau of Publicity of the Treasury Department recognized this plight of German editors and began to supply a patriotic plate service which extolled the virtues of German American citizens and called on them to contribute liberally to the Liberty Loan drives. By June 1918 the situation of the *Journal* became so precarious that its publisher had to appeal to the local citizenry for immediate help. F. L. J. Boettcher wrote several enthusiastic articles on why the German newspaper in Washington should be preserved. Paul Gleis, a recent immigrant, wrote his memorable plea *Worte der Ermunterung*. The requested help came and once again Martin Weigand stepped in and signed as co-owner. The crisis was overcome. When the end of the war and the allied victory became facts, the *Journal* raised its voice in favor of merciful peace terms for Germany based on President Wilson's Fourteen Points. Few German newspapers in America had survived the years of trial. When the war hatred subsided and German Americans began to recover from the great psychological shock, the scene was disastrous. Many societies had disbanded. Their property had been confiscated. But Hermann Winkler felt that the stagnation after the war was only temporary. He rallied his fellow citizens for a new great task when he founded the Central Committee for the Relief of Distress in Germany and in German Austria. The first appeal of this committee appeared in the *Journal* on August 8, 1919. Due to this effort a sum of almost \$50,000 was raised in Washington.

Locally also Winkler and his *Journal* became the point of crystallization or renewed German-American activities. When the last remaining German clubhouse, the *Sängerbund Hall*, was to be sold because the members of this once large organization were unable to retain it, Hermann Winkler called a meeting in the office of the *Washington Journal*. Among those



present were Martin Weigand, Kurt Voelckner, Gustav Bender and Daniel von Boettiger. These men worked out the plan on the basis of which the Concord Club was founded. They thus maintained successfully the last German club house as a meeting place for the other organizations until the United States Government purchased the building for Government purposes, for the price of \$42,000. The club continued to exist, however, meeting privately and endeavoring to build or rent a central German Club House. It was not successful until after World War II but in the meantime it found another worthy purpose, namely the establishment of a German Language School for children which it financed. Several other groups, among them the *Sängerbund*, were reorganized. The *Journal* grew again in readership and importance. Winkler was able to install modern printing equipment which enabled him to print and publish books.

In enumerating all these facts we should keep in mind that, although the war hatred was supplanted by a more sympathetic attitude toward things German, new obstacles were presented by economic difficulties. Prohibition had a detrimental effect on the recently revived German organizations. The temporary decline of German-American social life necessarily entailed a decline of the German-language press. Finally the depression of the thirties dealt heavy blows to the *Journal* and its intrepid publisher.

Not a single weekly issue was missed, however, during the years since World War I. While many of the old faithful contributors and readers had passed away, new immigrants filled the ranks. From 1923 until 1954 most of the local news items and a regular column called *Randglossen* were the work of Paul Gleis.

Professor Gleis was born on January 5, 1887 at Rheine, Westphalia. After graduation from the public and secondary schools of his native city, he studied at the Universities of Munich, Berlin, Leipzig and Münster. In 1911 the University of Münster conferred upon him a doctor's degree. Immediately upon graduation Dr. Gleis received a call from the Catholic University of America at Washington, D. C. as professor and head of the Department of German Philology and Literature and Comparative Philology. His association with this institution lasted for forty-four years until his death. During his thirty years as contributor to the *Journal* he advocated the best of Christian-German traditions. Several of the other contributors to the *Journal* between the two World Wars deserve mention. Waldemar Kloss of the Library of Congress wrote a series of literary articles on Goethe in 1932 which earned international attention. Dr. Othmer was the author of critical observations on political subjects which appeared soon after the first World War under the pseudonym "Lynkeus." Other contributors were Julius Hofmann, Clemens H. Leineweber, Henry J. Brühl, W. F. König, Paul Menzel and Georg Timpe.

By 1933 there were again twenty-three active German societies in Washington. Hermann Winkler and other members of the Concord Club were instrumental in federating most of them as *Deutsch-Amerikanische Gesellschaft*, a union which, however, did not survive World War II. It succeeded for several years in organizing "German Days" again, noteworthy among which the one in 1934 when Congressman H. C. Luckey (Nebraska) and Pastor Fritz O. Evers (Baltimore) spoke. Two organizations were exclusively devoted to cultural endeavors: The German Literary Society (1901-1941) which was led throughout its existence by Anita Schade, the Washington-born daughter of Louis Schade, held monthly literary and musical soirées, and the German Theatre Club founded in 1925 by post-war immigrants,

among them Walter Camp and Henry Heller, staged many German dramas and comedies. By 1934 the *Sängerbund* had again reached a peak of excellence under the direction of Max Grundlach and the presidency of Karl Stober. That year it won honors in national competition and went the following year to expand its activities to include a women's choir. The momentum continued throughout the remainder of the thirties with Paul Otterbach assuming the presidency in 1937. Under his guidance, the *Sängerbund* celebrated its ninetieth anniversary with a concert at the Willard Hotel on April 27, 1941.

Although the thirties were years of great activity among the German Americans of Washington, they were overcast by the shadows of the events in Germany. Viewing the apparent rebirth of a strong Germany from the far and safe shores of America, some German Americans tended to rejoice at every gain Nazi Germany made. Small Nazi cells were even founded in the District of Columbia. They remained, however, isolated from the great majority of the residents of German descent. With great tact and constant discrimination, Hermann Winkler steered his *Journal* clear of any involvement. At times, it became necessary to stand up against attempts of Nazi elements and their interference. When the *Washington Journal* published a directory of German organizations and churches in Washington in 1937, the brief historical survey included the contribution of German immigrants of Jewish faith such as Simon Wolf and Emil Berliner, and the masonic lodge and "Schlaraffia," whose sister organizations were both banned and persecuted in Nazi Germany received their rightful place without the slightest hesitation.<sup>45</sup>

When World War II broke out, the tenor of the articles in the *Journal* expressed sadness about the new trials which had come for Germany and a determination to uphold the best in German traditions. As early as 1939 the stand of the publisher was unmistakably expressed: "We are more interested in the welfare of America than in the fate of Europe. Our first concern is America." In December 1941, when German Americans for the second time in one generation were faced with the fact that a state of war existed between their country of origin and their adopted country, the decision was clear and much more spontaneous than in 1917. The editorial on December 12, 1941 was simply entitled: "We are all Americans!"

Throughout the war a comprehensive covering of the events in Europe and in the Pacific was secured by pooling news resources with one of the larger German dailies, the Rochester *Abendpost*. Occasionally the Office of War Information used the *Journal* for disseminating material of special concern to foreign-born citizens. In a few instances the attempts of the *Journal* to draw a line between the German people and its heritage and the Nazi regime were misinterpreted by overly eager censors but the conduct of the owner and publisher as an American citizen and the respect he enjoyed everywhere in the city proved such criticism baseless.<sup>46</sup>

Few German-language publications survived the Second World War, others collapsed immediately after the conflict. Hermann G. Winkler never thought of discontinuing the *Washington Journal*. Once peace was restored, the task of organizing the relief for Germany became still more exigent than after 1919. Once again the *Journal's* office on Sixth Street became the bustling center of the fund drive for German relief.

Most German societies had remained inactive during the war years.

<sup>45</sup> Hermann G. Winkler, *Directory of German Organizations and Churches in the Nation's Capital* (Washington, 1937).

<sup>46</sup> From oral statements made to the author by one of the former censors, Mr. Henry Rutz of Washington.

Some did not have the strength to reorganize after the war. The *Concord Club* and the *Sängerbund* were the first to gather again. Until the present time the Concord Club has annually contributed to the relief for refugees in Germany. Ten years ago it acquired its own club house, at 2434 Wisconsin Avenue which serves as headquarters for several German clubs. A great deal of credit for the continuation of the *Sängerbund* goes to its war time president, Alfred Kopf. As soon as it was possible, Kopf reconvened the *Sängerbund* in the spring of 1946 and gave concerts for the benefit of War Relief in Germany. Under the leadership of Jacob Schwalb and H. Joseph Moeller, and its musical directors Frederick Fall (1948-1951) and Max Seeboth (since 1951), the singing society has regained a stature comparable to that of pre-World War I days. The Arminius Lodge and the Arminius Social Club (founded in 1933) have renewed their activities. Among other groups which are once again active are the *Schlaraffia Washingtonia* and several benevolent societies. A number of new organizations were founded since 1945.<sup>47</sup> The Swiss Club of Washington (founded in 1923) showed an understandable tendency to remain aloof from other German-speaking groups during the years of trial. Since the last war, German social and cultural life in Washington has shown a noticeable change. All endeavors have become more genuinely American although in most instances the German language and background still form the basis of their activities. Annual participation in such events as the Folk Festival of Nations sponsored by the D. C. Recreation Department and the Christmas Pageant of Peace have put German Americans in the midst of the community at large. On the other hand, numerous American-born people, many not of German background, have joined some of the societies to sing European songs, to listen to lectures on German literature or to play a good match of soccer with their German-born friends.

The *Washington Journal* has not only followed this trend but often times had indeed been the leader in this direction. Both its editor-publisher, Hermann G. Winkler, and his faithful editorial writer and chronicler, Paul Gleis, lived to see this new development take shape. They helped bring about what can be termed, after all the years of hardship, misunderstanding and distrust, the better days.

In the fall of 1953, Hermann Winkler relinquished the management of his newspaper to his American-born son, Carl H. Winkler who had grown up in the old print shop on Sixth Street and witnessed at the side of his father the difficult years and their aftermaths. On October 5, 1954, Hermann Winkler died after several months of illness. During the very last months of his life he still held the editorship until he became convinced that his lifetime work would pass into hands that would not only continue what he and Koch had created but would place it firmly into a new age with the requirements and tasks it entailed. May we quote here from the obituary written by the eminent historian of German Americans, Dieter Cunz: "From a strict business point of view the *Journal* was never a lucrative venture. Only an editor-owner who considered the sentimental and idealistic elements of such an undertaking could carry on with so much perseverance, patience and enthusiasm. . . . A word remains to be said about what counts more than all facts and figures, that he was one of the kindest, friendliest and most warm-hearted men we have known. His balance and

<sup>47</sup> The Goethe Society of America, Washington Chapter, was constituted in 1949. (Cf. Augustus J. Prahl, "The Goethe Societies of Baltimore and Washington," *SHGM*, XXIX (1956), 58-63). German Jewish refugees residing in Washington organized their *Chevrah Achduth* in 1948. The *Washington Sport-club* was started in 1956. The Steuben Society of America chartered its "Christian Heurich Unit No. 85" in 1957. A local chapter of the Austrian-American Society and the lively *Schuhplattler-Verein Washingtonia* are among the newcomers.

poise, his soft spoken voice and his disarming smile will long be remembered."<sup>48</sup> History seemed to repeat itself. Just as Christian Strack had followed his publisher Werner Koch, Paul Gleis died on July 11, 1955, only eight months after Hermann Winckler had passed away.

A new generation has taken over one of the oldest German-language newspapers in the United States. It is not premature to state that the *Journal* has been an important factor in the revival of many German endeavors in the Nation's Capital. Its local coverage has been greatly expanded. In 1955 a regular Virginia section was added which has found an enthusiastic response among Virginians of German origin. Circulation figures have shown a constant rise. On important issues of local interest the *Journal* has taken a stand which has found an echo outside the German community, particularly on the question of establishing a cultural center in Washington.<sup>49</sup> Editorials have been frequently reprinted here and in Europe. Recently, a drive initiated by the *Journal* for the creation of a German language school has met with wide publicity.<sup>50</sup> The National Convention of the Steuben Society of America held in Washington in August 1956 provided an occasion for a special issue. While all worthy endeavors in the field of German affairs find wholehearted support in the columns of the *Journal*, the latter spares neither criticism nor reproach when there is any evidence of activities among German Americans or outsiders which are violating the basic American principles of freedom and equality. One of the first indictments of the racist activities of rabble-rouser John Kasper, a former Georgetown bookseller, appeared in the *Journal*. While a sympathetic attitude toward the democratic, new Germany is natural and found its expression in a series of articles on the occasion of the visit of German President Theodor Heuss in Washington in June 1958, articles on events in Germany in the *Journal* have often reflected American views which are not always pleasant reading matter to some politicians in Germany.

The *Washington Journal*, modest in its scale and limited in its means as it is, has once again become the outspoken leader of those inhabitants of Washington, Virginia, Maryland and several other southern states who cherish and maintain the heritage of their native country while they wholeheartedly embrace the new world to which they have come either as refugees from persecution to find freedom and peace, or to better their economic circumstances and thus contribute to the life of a nation that has been nourished by a never-ending stream of immigrants from many parts of the world.<sup>51</sup> Germans, Swiss and Austrians have contributed much to the building of America, and also of the area which is now being served by the *Journal*. The new masthead of the *Washington Journal* since 1955 carries no longer the legend "An American Newspaper in the German Language." It is no longer necessary because a newspaper which has reached its 100th year of publication in the Capital of the United States cannot be anything but an American newspaper.

<sup>48</sup>By Dieter Cunz in the 29th Report of the *SHGM*, p. 83.

<sup>49</sup>*Congressional Record*, May 16, 1957, A 3764-65.

<sup>50</sup>*Transatlantische Austausch-Nachrichten*, January 1959, p. 21. An interesting sketch of the functions of the *Washington Journal* was carried by the foreign news service of the *Deutsche Presse Agentur* on April 20, 1959.

<sup>51</sup>The 1950 Census reported the following figures for foreign-born residents from the three German-speaking countries:

	Germans	Austrians	Swiss
District of Columbia	3,010	1,141	390
Virginia	3,916	794	254
Maryland	12,563	2,609	509

GERMAN NEWSPAPERS IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

A Check List, 1843-1959

- Washingtoner Anzeiger, 1858-59. Weekly. Editor: Alfred Schücking. Subscribers' list sold to *Intelligenzblatt* in April 1859. No copy found. (Cf. *Intelligenzblatt*, April 9, 1859).
- Täglicher Washingtoner Anzeiger, 1871-73. Daily except Sunday. Publ.: Philip L. Schriftgiesser and Nehemiah Miller. Editors: 1871 August S. Börnstein, 1872-73 Nehemiah Miller. Bought by Werner Koch in April 1873 to form *Washingtoner Journal* with *Columbia*. Circulation in 1872: 1500.  
DLC—1872, Jan. 8; 1873, Jan. 1-March 28 (some issues missing).
- Columbia, 1863-73. Published by Max Cohnheim and Werner Koch, 1863-67, Werner Koch, 1867-73. Editors: 1863-67 Max Cohnheim, 1867-73 Louis Schade. Circulation in 1872: 1200. United with *Anzeiger* in April 1873 to form *Washingtoner Journal*.  
DLC—Oct. 17, 1863-March 20, 1869 (some issues missing).  
DWJ—1871, May 6.
- Der Deutsche in Amerika, 1843-44(?). Monthly. Founded by Otto W. Hoffmann in Harrisburg, Pa. in 1842. Removed to Washington in Spring 1843. Publ.: P. Augustus Sage. Editor: Alfred Schücking.  
No copy found. (Cf. *National Zeitung*, Oct. 11, 1843; Wittke, 42; Olson).
- Deutsche National Zeitung—see *National Zeitung*.
- Deutsche Presse, 1893-94 (?). Weekly. Publ.: Perls, Brandes, Bauer & Co. Editor: W. L. Elterich.  
No copy found. (Cf. Olson, Rowell, 1893-94).
- The German-American, 1889. "A National Weekly, devoted to the Interests of the German-Americans." Publ. & Editors: Richard Guenther, L. W. Habercom, Paul Wolff. Might have been published in English. Existence surmised from letter by Paul Wolff, *The German-American*, P. O. Box 32, Washington, D. C., dated May 1, 1889.  
No copy found.
- Washingtoner Intelligenzblatt, 1859-60. Weekly. (Direct forerunner of *Washington Journal*, continued as *Die Metropole*, 1860-61, *Militärgazette*, 1862, *Columbia*, 1863-73). First issue April 2, 1959.  
Publ.: Werner Koch. Editors: Werner Koch, Louis Schade, Alfred Schücking. DLC—April 2, 1859-Aug. 11, 1860 (complete file).
- Washington Journal, 1873-present. Daily except Sunday, March 31, 1873-March 31, 1885; Three times a week April 2, 1885-March 1, 1888; Weekly since March 1888. Formed by union of *Columbia* and *Anzeiger* in 1873. *Washingtoner Journal* 1873-1911, since 1911 *Washington Journal*. Circulation: 1875 (1300), 1890 (800), 1910 (1000), 1915 (2610). Publ.: Werner Koch, 1873-1911, Charles T. Schwegler, 1912-15, Hermann G. Winkler, 1915-53, Carl Winkler, 1953-present. Editors: 1873-92 Werner Koch (also for brief periods Alfred Schücking, Louis Schade, G. Tomann, L. Kronheimer), 1892-1912 Christian Strack, 1912-15 Gustav Bender, 1915-53 Hermann G. Winkler, assisted at first by Gustav Bender and from 1923-53 by Paul Gleis, 1954-present Klaus G. Wust.  
DLC—1873 complete; 1874 to June 30; 1876, Oct. 10; 1877, July 9-Dec.; 1878 complete; again complete file from Apr. 7, 1888-Dec. 15, 1894; Complete from Jan. 1, 1898 to present.  
DWJ—complete file 1915-present.  
GLDB—complete file 1926—Oct. 19, 1939.  
GSIA—complete file 1953-present.  
ICHi—1876, Oct. 12.  
MWA—1876, Aug. 24.
- Die Metropole, 1860-61. Weekly, Aug.-Sept., 1860; Daily except Sunday, Oct., 1860-April 20, 1861. Publ. & Editors: Werner Koch and R. Schellhaas, Oct.-Nov., 1860; Werner Koch and H. Wernich, Nov. 1860-April 1861.  
DLC—complete file 1860-April 20, 1861.
- Militärgazette, 1862. Weekly for German Americans in Union Army stationed in and near Washington. Publ.: Werner Koch. Editor: Louis Schade.  
No copy found. (Cf. *Washington Journal*, March 11, 1911).
- Der Nationale Demokrat, 1847. Political campaign sheet. Editor: Friedrich Schmidt.  
DLC—1847, May 6.
- Der National Demokrat, 1852. Listed in *American Newspapers*.  
MiGR—1852, July 21. (reported missing since 1945) (Cf. Olson).

- Der National Demokrat, 1853. National weekly. First issue July 9, 1953. Publ.: Buell & Blanchard. Editor: Friedrich Schmidt.  
DLC—1853, July 9.  
MWA—1853, July 9.
- National Zeitung, 1843-47. National weekly. Started as *Deutsche National Zeitung* April 20, 1843. Title changed to *National Zeitung* Oct. 11, 1843. Publ.: P. Augustus Sage, 1843-46; Carl J. Koch, 1846-47. Editors: 1843-46 Alfred Schücking; 1846-47 Carl J. Koch. Publication suspended for several months in 1846.  
DLC—1843, Oct. 11.  
PaPeS—1847, Feb. 26-April 1.  
(Cf. *National Intelligencer*, April 7, May 5, 1843; July 1, 1846).
- Washington Revue, 1895-98(?). Weekly. "Illustriertes Wochenblatt für Literatur, Kunst, Wissenschaft, Politik und Unterhaltung." Publisher and Editor: William L. Eltermich. First issue publ. Sept. 13, 1895.  
DStM—1896, Oct. 24; Dec. 5.  
DWJ—1896, Oct. 24.
- Schücking's Washingtoner Intelligenzblatt für die Vereinigten Staaten und Deutschland, 1854. Monthly. Mainly business and international trade news. Publ. & Editor: Alfred Schücking. Printer: Julius Ende.  
DLC—1854, Oct. 1.
- Die Tafelrunde, 1870-72. Bi-weekly. Spiritualistic organ. First issued in July 1870, last issue June 15, 1872. Publ. & Editor: P. L. Schücking.  
DWJ—complete set.
- Union und Washington Correspondent, 1855-56(?). Weekly. Established by Republican Party. In English and German. Editor: Karl Burghthal.  
No copy found. (Cf. *Baltimore Wecker*, March 26, 1856, Wittke, 142).
- Der Volks-Tribun, 1875-1902( ?). Weekly. Publ.: Emanuel Waldecker & Co.; Editors: 1875-87 Carl Roeser; 1887-92 Christian Strack. Circulation: 1880 (1620), 1900 (3360).  
DLC—1876, July 29; 1880, July 10; 1881, June 18.  
ICHi—1876, Aug. 5.  
MWA—1876, Aug. 26.  
(Cf. Olson; Ayer, 1880-1902).
- Washington Wochenblatt, 1856-58. Weekly. Publ.: A. & M. Gross. Editor: Julius Ende.  
No copy found. (Cf. *Baltimore Wecker*, March 18, 1856; *National Era*, Apr. 3, 1856; *Washington Star*, Jan. 28, 1858; Emery, 66).
- Der Zuschauer am Potomac, 1850-51. Whig campaign sheet, partly in English. Publ.: & Editor: Friedrich Schmidt. Printer: P. Augustus Sage.  
DLC—1850, Jan. 10.  
MWA—1850, Jan. 10.  
NHHaD—1850, Jan. 28, March 23, July 17, Aug. 18, Sept. 29, Nov. 21, Dec. 19; 1851, Jan. 2.

#### SYMBOLS FOR LOCATIONS

DLC	Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.
DStM	St. Mary's Church Rectory, Washington, D. C.
DWJ	Washington Journal, Inc., Washington, D. C.
GLDB	Deutsche Bücherei, Leipzig, Germany.
GSIA	Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, Stuttgart, Germany.
ICHi	Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Ill.
MiGR	Grand Rapids Public Library, Grand Rapids, Mich.
MWA	American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.
NHHaD	Dartmouth College, Hanover, N. H.
PaPeS	Schwenkfelder Library, Pennsburg, Pa.

#### REFERENCES

- American Newspapers*: Winifred Gregory (ed.), *American Newspapers, 1821-1936*. (A Union List of Files Available in the U. S. and Canada), (New York, 1937).
- Ayers*: N. W. Ayers & Sons *Directory of Newspapers and Periodicals* publ. annually since 1868.
- Emery*: Fred A. Emery, "Washington Newspapers," *Records of the Columbia Historical Society*, XXXVII (1937), 41-72.
- Olson*: May Olson and Karl Arndt, *A List of Journals and Newspapers Published in German in the USA between 1732 and 1954*. To be published in Germany as volume 2 of *Deutsche Presseforschung*.
- Rowell*: Geo. P. Rowell & Co.'s *American Newspaper Directory* publ. annually from 1869-1908.
- Wittke*: Carl Wittke, *The German Language Press in America* (Lexington, Ky., 1957).

## A NOTE OF THANKS

In the Spring of 1954, the late Mr. Hermann G. Winkler asked the author to compile a brief history of the *Washington Journal* and of its direct forerunners. The result of that first study was an account based exclusively on the extant files of the German newspapers in Washington which Mr. Winkler had deposited with the Library of Congress several years ago. Mr. Winkler, however, supplemented the research notes by numerous reminiscences of the four decades during which he was the publisher and editor of the *Washington Journal*. This assistance proved invaluable because Mr. Winkler was to be felled by a serious illness during the month of October of the same year. It is, therefore, with a feeling of deep gratitude that this commemorative booklet is dedicated to the memory of the man whose indefatigable labors and sacrifices alone had saved the German newspaper in Washington from an early demise.

During the past two years the original study was extended in its scope in order to include much indispensable background information on the German immigration in the District of Columbia. Numerous individuals have assisted the author in locating material in libraries and in private hands. To all of them go cordial thanks.

The Society for the History of the Germans in Maryland has not only made possible the publication of this study in its forthcoming Thirtieth Report but has also readily given its permission for an advance release of this reprint on the occasion of the centennial of Washington's German-language newspaper.

Finally, the author's thanks are due to the present publisher of the *Washington Journal*, Mr. Carl H. Winkler, whose friendship and whose understanding have made it a happy experience for the author to continue the long tradition of editing this "useful local sheet."

KLAUS G. WUST

Washington, D. C.

July 4, 1959