

THE ENGLISH AND GERMAN PRINTING OFFICE:

Bilingual Printers in Maryland and Virginia

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The presence of a sizable linguistic minority among the rural population in Maryland and Virginia at the time of the Revolution gave rise to a peculiar institution in American book and newspaper publishing: the "English and German Printing Office." Unlike the early German printers of Pennsylvania and the innumerable foreign-language publishers of the 19th and 20th century immigration, the printers in the western parts of Maryland, Virginia and, in one case at least, in North Carolina depended on the patronage of both segments of their biligual communities. Before 1800, the legislatures of Maryland and Virginia had already acknowledged the presence of a second language among parts of their populations by authorizing the publication of certain state documents in German translations. An unsuccessful attempt to have the same principle applied to federal laws was made by "a number of Germans residing in Virginia" in a petition to the Third United States Congress in 1794.

A demand for print in English and German existed in many communities located in the farm areas even though the town population was not predominantly of German origin. Wherever German-speaking inhabitants were represented in sufficient numbers, businessmen and politicians appealed to them in their vernacular. The bilingual printer could, of course, also satisfy the direct demand for almanacs, books and newspapers from the German settlements, a market which was limited by the modest intellectual exigencies and the proverbial thrift for which these farmers were known. Printing in both languages meant additional business which was well worth the investment in German fonts so long as German was still used in churches, schools and other functions outside the home circle. The progressive integration of the Germans during the first three decades of the 19th century effected the bilingual printer less than his few colleagues whose entire business depended on German printing alone. Coming from German stock himself, he even helped to hasten this integration by offering English reading matter to the Germans which corresponded to their likings and needs.

The following sketches of four of these bilingual printers are not to be considered as definitive descriptions of their careers. The material presented here is in a sense a by-product of other projects which were pursued over the past fifteen years.* We have compiled the information available to date on each printer in order to stimulate further interest leading up to a more purposeful search for their works. We have refrained from including John Gruber of Hagerstown and the Henkel Press of New Market because their output was mainly in German during the period in review and both firms have been adequately dealt with in published studies¹

* Field trips were undertaken with the aid of a Grant from the Johnson Fund of the American Philosophical Society.

¹ For Gruber see Dieter Cunz, "John Gruber and His Almanac," *Maryland Historical Magazine* XLVII (1952), 89-102. The Henkel Press has been the object of several studies of which Albert Sydney Edmond, "The Henkels, Early Printers in New Market, Virginia," *William and Mary Quarterly* 2nd Series, XVIII (1938), 174-195 is one of the best.

The first printer to recognize the opportunities which the western settlements adjacent to Pennsylvania offered was young Matthias Bartgis. His initial success, based undoubtedly on the fact that he printed in English as well as in German, attracted many other printers to the area. The Potomac and Shenandoah region had assumed considerable economic and political significance during the Revolution. We do not know to what extent Bartgis' move to Frederick, Maryland, was influenced by the vicissitudes of the war itself. Unlike other men of his trade, he has left no testimony of himself. There are no letters or business ledgers known to have survived which could enlighten us. All information now available about him is the result of painstaking patchwork to which Joseph Towne Wheeler, Felix Reichmann and Dorothy M. Quynn have contributed important details in their studies while eager family historians have added confusion through untenable conjectures.²

Bartgis was a true pioneer, an innovator who was ever staking out new territory. In business he suffered many reverses and a superficial observer might easily conclude that no printer started as many unsuccessful newspapers as Bartgis. Fellow printers had reasons to beware of him because of his swiftness in reacting to competition, often with the result that all parties involved suffered loss. Nevertheless, Matthias Bartgis brought bilingual printing and journalism into the back parts of Maryland and Virginia, laid the foundations upon which others could and did thrive, and supplied the large, ethnically mixed population with reading matter of the modest intellectual level which it required.

The story of the Bartgis family in America begins with the arrival of his father, Michel Bärtges, in Philadelphia on the ship *Two Brothers* on September 15, 1748. The passenger list contains exclusively German names without specifying the provinces of origin other than the common remark "Palatines." Michael Bärtges was a tanner by trade. In 1755 we find him established "near the Sugar House" in Philadelphia, and in 1757 as an innkeeper and tanner on the Germantown Road "near the Governor's Mill." Next, the family is recorded in Lancaster where Matthias was born on June 3, 1759, according to an entry in the baptismal book of Trinity Lutheran Church.³

Matthias Bärtges, or Bartgis, as the family name was spelled in most later records, was apprenticed to printer William Bradford in Philadelphia. Seventeen years old at the outbreak of the Revolution, Bartgis served briefly in the army and is said to have taken part in the battle of Germantown in October 1777. By that time, his name already appears in the imprint of a German almanac, *Der Hinckend-und Stolpernd- dock eilfertig-liegend-und laufende Americanische Reichs-Bothe, Das ist der Allerneueste-Verbesserte und Zuverlässigste Americanische Reichs-Staats-Kriegs-Siegs-und Geschichts-Calender*. This calendar was first issued for the year 1777 from Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Father Bartgis, who had achieved moderate wealth by that time, was probably behind this first venture of his son just as he continued to be an agent for Matthias' later products.

² Joseph Towne Wheeler, *The Maryland Press 1777-1790* (Baltimore, 1938), 57-62; Felix Reichmann, "German Printing in Maryland, A Check List, 1768-1950," *Reports, Society for the History of the Germans in Maryland* XXVII (1950), 9-70 (Bartgis Imprints on pp. 23-25, 28-85); Dorothy Mackay Quynn, "Bartgis' Lost Newspaper," in *Biographical Notes of Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, LV (1961), 1-4. A good compilation of Bartgis material was published by Sigfred Taubert in his series "Zur Geschichte des deutschen und deutschsprachigen Buchdrucks und Buchhandels im Ausland" in *Börsenblatt für den Deutschen Buchhandel* [Frankfurter Ausgabe] IX (1953) No 60 373-874.

³ Ralph Beaver Strassburger and William John Hinke, *Pennsylvania German Pioneers* (Norristown Pa., 1934), I, 379-380, II, 418; *Pennsylvanische Berichte*, Germantown, Pa. July 1, 1756; *Philadelphische Zeitung*, November 4, 1757; Taufbuch, Trinity Lutheran Church, Lancaster, Pa.

The exact time of Matthias Bartgis' removal to Maryland has not been ascertained. We may assume that it was during the latter part of the year 1777. His first Maryland imprint is the *Maryland Almanac for the Year of our Lord 1778*. German calendars for 1778 and 1779 still bear the Lancaster address but the fourth edition (for 1780) came from *Friedrichstadt*. That Matthias Bartgis was set up in business by his father is corroborated by a passage in Michael Bartgis' will which assigned to Matthias only the token payment of one shilling, "his having already received a printing press and types, a dwelling house in Fredericktown, and other property."⁴

During his first years in Frederick, Bartgis faced no local competition in western Maryland and the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. There was much demand for handbills and broadsides of all sorts. Bartgis' shop did job printing for various churches and for businessmen in English and in German. After considerable advance publicity on handbills, Bartgis launched his first newspapers. The bi-weekly German *Märyländische Zeitung* was started in October 1785, its English companion, *The Maryland Chronicle or the Universal Advertiser*, followed in January 1786.⁵ For both papers he aimed at a widespread circulation in the territory between York, Pennsylvania, and Winchester, Virginia. He advised his subscribers to band together in groups of fifty-two in every locality so that only one of them would have to travel to Frederick once a year to fetch the newspaper. As this suggestion seemed little enticing, he hired a postrider "for the purpose of conveying my English and German News-papers to Funk's-Town, Hager's-Town, Sharpsburg, Shepherd's-Town, Martinsburgh, and Winchester."⁶

Encouraged by the business which came his way from Virginia, Bartgis entered into a partnership with Henry Willcocks of Winchester in order to establish a printing press there and issue a local newspaper. By June 1787 he advertised for a partner to assume the management of his "Printing Office in the English and German Language, and the two public papers" in Frederick. We do not know whether his search for such a manager was successful and whether he was planning to move to Winchester himself at that time. The new weekly *Virginia Gazette, and Winchester Advertiser* appeared first on July 11, 1787. For about a month Bartgis was the agent for the Winchester *Gazette* in Frederick, and Willcocks served in the same capacity for Bartgis' *Maryland Chronicle* in Winchester. Already in August, 1787 the imprint of the paper was changed to "Printed by Bartgis and Willcocks." By January 1788, however, Bartgis became the sole proprietor of the Winchester press. Willcocks called on all persons to whom he was indebted to furnish their accounts immediately, thus ending Bartgis' first partnership in Virginia though not the last one. Bartgis proceeded at once with plans "to enlarge the *Virginia Gazette*, and to embellish it with an entire new type, which is now completing for me at Philadelphia." Time and again he proudly referred to his shop as the first press founded in Winchester.⁷

In October 1787, he also reached north and established the *Pennsylvania Chronicle, or the York Weekly Advertiser* in partnership with Thomas Roberts, owner of a press in York. This venture was abandoned after a few months.⁸ Evidently he had not found a reliable man for the management

⁴ Lancaster County Land Records, Book F/1/283 as cited by Quynn.

⁵ For listings of Bartgis' English-language newspapers see Clarence S. Brigham, *History and Bibliography of American Newspapers 1650-1820* (Worcester, Mass., 1947), Frederick, Md., I, 259-262; York, Pa., II, 990; Winchester, Va., II, 1167; Staunton, Va., II, 1153. For his German newspapers see Reichmann's check list and Klaus G. Wust, "Matthias Bartgis' Newspapers in Virginia," *The American-German Review*, XVIII (1951), No. 1, 16-18.

⁶ *Maryland Chronicle*, January 18, 1786.

⁷ All details cited in this paragraph have been gathered from the almost complete file of the *Virginia Gazette, and Winchester Advertiser* in the Handley Library of Winchester, Va.

⁸ Brigham, *op. cit.*, II, 990.

of his Frederick shop and now encountered great difficulties running printshops so far apart as Winchester and Frederick. As good editors and printers were scarce, Bartgis was quite fortunate in securing Nathaniel Willis for the *Gazette* in March 1788. Willis, "a gentleman who had carried on the printing business for upwards of ten years in Boston," remained the editor of the *Virginia Gazette* for almost two years. Apparently Bartgis did not do much to keep the printshop in good shape, for Willis dissolved their business association, complaining in April 1790: "The lingering difficulties I experienced during my late partnership, for want of the necessary implements for the completion of my business, was a grievance of a very mournful nature." Willis began immediately to publish a competitive sheet, the *Willis' Virginia Gazette*.

As early as March 1788 Bartgis was looking for bilingual help in his Winchester office. Notably the search for " a Journeyman Printer, Who is Master of the German language" indicates Bartgis' early intention to publish also a German newspaper in Virginia. By April 1788 the *Gazette* shop was equipped to strike off handbills in German "on short notice." The issues of June 1788 carried an announcement in German which tells us of the first regular post rider service in the Valley of Virginia. Adam Hickman of Rockbridge County, a German Revolutionary War veteran, and in August 1789, Peter Bernhart of Keezletown were employed by Bartgis to carry his "English and German newspapers" and all other mail "any person may wish forwarded with care." This service was provided every other week between Winchester and Staunton. The private mail system thus initiated by Bartgis years before United States postal routes were opened was extended in 1790 to include a bi-weekly run from Staunton to Fincastle. It was an important factor for rapid and regular communication between York, Pennsylvania and Botetourt County in Virginia and certainly strengthened the vital link which connected the German settlements in Pennsylvania, western Maryland and the hinterland of Virginia. A departure from this north-south pattern was the post which Bartgis sponsored from Lexington to Fauquier County in 1789. The mail-rider service was but a by-product of his enterprise. His primary concern was naturally the marketing of his print and the expansion of his newspaper chain. In June 1789, he announced in a German column of his *Winchester Gazette*: "As I have been asked repeatedly by my German countrymen why I do not issue a German newspaper here in this city, I am now willing to do so." On a separate broadside, he extolled the advantages of a *Virginische Zeitung* and announced a number of agents. Their location is indicative of the areas in which Bartgis expected to find his subscribers: Ludwig Meyers in Martinsburg, Bernhart Miller in Shepherdstown, Heinrich Becker in Winchester, Joseph Stauffer in Strasburg, Matthias Zehring in Woodstock, Peter Bernhart in Keezletown, Peter Heisckell in Staunton, and, as the only place outside the Shenandoah Valley, Jacob Kuhn in Fredericksburg. The plan of publishing a German newspaper drew immediate criticism from another competitor in Winchester, Richard Bowen of the *Virginia Centinel* for paying " particular adulation to the Germans " and forgetting to have a sheet ready " for the amusement of the Irish." Bartgis retorted in strong words and the controversy continued for a while, laying bare certain animosities which existed among the various ethnic groups in Winchester. On August 5th, Bartgis reported the arrival of a complete German printing equipment in Winchester and on September 2, 1789, the

⁹ *Willis' Virginia, Gazette*, April 24, 1790. Nathaniel Willis was active as a printer in Boston during the Revolutionary War. From 1788 until 1790 he was in Winchester, established the first newspaper in what is now West Virginia in Shepherdstown in 1790 and published a paper in Martinsburg from 1792 until 1799 when he moved to Chillicothe, Ohio. Cf. Douglas C. McMurtrie, *Pioneer Printing in Ohio* (Cincinnati, 1943), 7.

Virginische Zeitung was to have left the press. No copy of this paper has been found and, if it appeared as scheduled, it must not have lasted long.¹⁰ Still in February 1790 Bartgis wanted apprentices "that can read and write the German language" but he might have needed them for job printing in Winchester. Even Bowen answered the apparent demand for handbills in German by hiring German apprentices. Curiously enough, the two competitors, Bartgis and Bowen, joined forces in another enterprise. Already in January 1788, Bartgis had contemplated publishing the *Virginia Chronicle or, The Western Intelligencer* in Staunton. The response from the public was not too encouraging but two years later he persuaded Bowen to publish jointly with him the weekly *Staunton Gazette* which marked the beginning of printing in the southern part of the Shenandoah Valley.¹¹

The good fortune of Matthis Bartgis, who had engaged himself so heavily in Virginia that he discontinued both his English and German papers in Maryland, began to turn. In January 1792 he was forced to sell his entire printing equipment to Bowen and forthwith concentrated his efforts again on his Maryland interests which included the Bartgis paper mill at Pleasant Dale, about five miles northwest of Frederick. In his Maryland printing office, book publishing formed a part of the output although it was limited to ABC-books, a popular medical guide for farmers which ran through several editions, and Mason L. Weems' *Life of Washington* in the original and in a German translation. The General Assembly of Maryland commissioned Bartgis to translate and publish a German version of the proceedings of the Constitutional Convention of 1787.¹²

By May 1792, Bartgis was ready to publish an English weekly from Frederick, *Bartgis' Federal Gazette* which—under several names—was to last longer than any other newspaper of his career. A German paper followed suit very soon despite his previous, sad experience with the German-reading public. In the first issue of *Bartgis's General Staatsbothe*, dated January 5, 1793, the publisher states what looks like a good reason for resuming such a newspaper: "There are no German papers printed within eighty miles around," and it pains him. "to see and hear how Germans, who do not understand enough English, turn this Garden of God, this flourishing America into a land of Hottentots through a confusion of tongues worse than Babel and an ignorance which borders on absurdity." Bartgis makes it quite plain to his readers that he is about to do them a last and exceptional favor. He admonishes them not to lend their *Staatsbothe* to neighbors which would amount to robbing him of his deserved rewards: "I do not want to make public the shamefulness of many Germans, BUT names of repute shout loud at me from my ledger of the last German newspaper, they have been crying for three, four and more years: Shame! Shame! The memory of the many troublesome and costly trips also shouts at me, trips I had to make in order to collect these well-earned, trifling sums."

A few weeks later, at last, we learn of the real reason for Bartgis' decision to favor the Germans with a paper again. Samuel Saur was about to move to Baltimore and was trying to solicit one thousand subscribers before starting a German newspaper. By issuing the *Staatsbothe* Bartgis hoped to discourage Saur, a move which delayed Saur's German newspaper but not for long.¹³

¹⁰ The *Virginische Zeitung*, the controversy between Bartgis and Bowen and the postrider system have been dealt with in my article in the *American-German Review* XVIII (1951), No. 1, 16-18. See also Klaus G. Wust, "The Postman's Predecessor" in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, July 1, 1951. The postrider service to Botetourt was announced in the *Staunton Gazette*, February 5, 1790.

¹¹ Winchester *Virginia Gazette*, January 10, 1788; *Staunton Gazette*, February 6, 1790.

¹² For German books and broadsides printed by Bartgis see Reichmann, *op. cit.*, 28-36.

¹³ *Staatsbothe*, March 2, 1793. Samuel Saur (Sower) and his printing career in Baltimore were described by Dieter Cunz in his work *The Maryland Germans* (Princeton, 1948), 168-170 and by Sigfred Taubert in the December 1953 issue of the *Börsenblatt*.

The *Staatsbothe* is of some interest because it is the only early German newspaper of western Maryland of which a complete, one-year file has been preserved. Hidden deliberately from researchers by a descendant, it has only recently become accessible in the collection of the C. Burr Artz Library of Frederick, Maryland.¹⁴

The first issue is dated January 5, 1793 and the last one, the twenty-sixth, December 21, 1793. The *Staatsbothe* was issued every other Wednesday. It was printed on one sheet folded into four pages, each measuring 10 by 16 inches. The content differs little from other contemporary American papers. Local flavor is provided almost exclusively by the advertisements which in some cases will be of interest to students of early crafts and trades. In March and April, the *Staatsbothe* carried much news of the French Revolution, sparing its readers no terrifying detail of the sufferings of French royalty. Significantly enough, a letter to the editor from "a citizen" in the August 17 issue defends the uprising of the French people. In the last number, Bartgis voices strong criticism of the spreading manger cult: "In these days when cradles are being placed in Christian churches and to the singing of lullabies a wooden likeness of Christ is being rocked, it is either idolatry or something pretty close to it." Despite its low price of only seven shillings sixpence the *Staatsbothe* had no more luck than its predecessor. Nor did it fulfill its publishers hope of keeping competition from his doors. Saur established himself in Baltimore and in 1795 John Gruber opened shop in nearby Hagerstown.

Bartgis still had the *Gazette*, the ownership of which he retained until his retirement. As a publisher he became twice again involved in bilingual periodicals. From June 22, 1802 until December 23, 1806 he edited and published the *Hornet*, an English weekly in which he announced in the first issue: "We shall give our readers something in German every week from now on." But except for some scattered German notices in volume one, the promise was not kept until the Summer of 1803 when a German section, *Der Hornet* made its appearance on the last page and remained there for most of the issues until December 1806. At that time Bartgis sold his rights to the *Hornet* to William B. Underwood who had been his partner for a while.

Again from July 1807 until December 1808, the familiar imprint of Matthias Bartgis adorned a weekly, *The Independent American Volunteer—Der Americanische Voluntair*. Both of these bilingual papers showed strong Republican leanings, particularly the *Hornet* which carried this motto:

"To true Republicans I will sing
But aristocrats shall feel my sting."

The staid *Gazette* avoided partisan politics, a fact which might have contributed to its long life. That Bartgis did not print all his publications himself is evident from a letter which the New Market printer Ambrose Henkel wrote to his brother Solomon in May 1807: "I was in Frederick Town at Bartgis', he wished to give me work but it did not suit me, therefore I went on. He does not print his paper anymore, but has it printed for him."¹⁵ There were several other printshops active in Frederick. John P. Thomson produced books which were sold under Jacob D. Dietrick's imprint in Hagerstown. Charles T. Melsheimer did German printing for a number of years. The latter's role and possible relationship to the Bartgis

¹⁴ See footnote (43) in Cunz, *The Maryland Germans*, 171. The Artz Library now does not only permit researchers to consult the original but also has a microfilm version which is accessible to the general public. The *Staatsbothe* was presented to the library by Lillian Culler Storm and Margaret Storm Moore.

¹⁵ Letter Ambrose Henkel to Solomon Henkel, May 24, 1807. Tusing Collection of New Market, Va.

firm are not at all clear. Known Melsheimer imprints in Frederick include several religious books and pamphlets, ornate birth certificates and two weekly newspapers, *Der Freiheitsbothe* and the *Plain Dealer*, all dated between 1810 and 1813.

Information is also lacking about the full career of Matthias E. Bartgis, son of the elder Matthias, who published the *Philantropist* in Winchester, Virginia,¹⁶ from 1806 until 1809, and a weekly German newspaper in Frederick, *Der General Staatsbothe und Wahre Republicaner* from March 1810 till 1813. Except for one surviving issue, we know only that Bartgis, junior, offered the German paper for sale in March 1812, claiming a subscribers' list of five hundred names. As early as 1811, Matthias E. Bartgis is mentioned as a partner in the paternal business. Another son, B. F. Bartgis, was also trained as a printer but turned farmer instead. The elder Matthias sold his interest in the *Gazette* in 1820 and retired from business. He died in his 66th year on April 6th, 1825.¹⁷

In spite of these numerous details which could be gathered on his publishing and printing activities, we are still far from knowing much about Matthias Bartgis. The man who brought the first printing press to western Maryland at the time of the Revolution, who founded the first newspapers in the inland towns of western Virginia, speaks to us only through the impersonal columns of his editorials in a language as blunt as it was inelegant at times. Contemporary printers mention him rarely although all knew him. Seemingly he was not a man to turn to with the same confidence that John Gruber inspired in his colleagues. We also miss his name on the rosters of public life and of church activities. Bartgis' days were probably filled more than enough with work and often worry. The printery, the paper mill, a book bindery, and for a while, a chain of newspapers had to be managed. Help was hard to find. Good printers could find ready employment in the large cities and older population centers. Bartgis was ever looking for help, from well-endowed partners who would share his risks to the "young lad, about 14 or 15 years of age who can read well, and write tolerably, in the English and German languages."¹⁸ Much of his time was no doubt spent collecting debts although his subscribers did not have to pay cash: "Any kind of County Produce is received by M. Bartgis & Co. in payment for this paper," the Winchester *Gazette* announced. Bartgis knew the farmers and townfolk of his area well. It was for them that he published what they needed and what he thought good for them.

JOHN WISE (1773-1844)

Johannes Weiss (John Wise) was born in Frederick, Maryland, on September 2, 1773.¹⁹ His parents, Heinrich Weiss and Catherina Brunner were members of the local Lutheran church and their son was baptized there on February 26, 1775 by Pastor John Andrew Krug.²⁰ There is nothing else known about the youth of John Wise except that he learned the printer's trade. He might well have been one of the youngsters whom Bartgis trained in his Frederick printery. At the age of twenty years, Wise served with Major General Anthony Wayne's army as a sergeant in Captain Price's company during the campaign against the Indians and participated in the battle of the Maumee in August 1794. In the following

¹⁶ John K. Gott, "Imprints of Winchester, Virginia, 1787-1876," Master Thesis, Catholic University, 1953.

¹⁷ The date of Bartgis' death has been verified by William Rogers Quynn from the diary of Jacob Engelbrecht. Dr. Quynn is preparing this diary for publication. (See *Reports, SHGM XXXI* (1963), 63-6B).

¹⁸ *Maryland Chronicle*, February 1, 1786.

¹⁹ We owe thanks to Miss Evelyn L. Moore of Lynchburg, Va. for her considerable help in locating information on John Wise.

²⁰ A photostatic copy of the baptismal certificate was furnished by Miss Moore.

year, Wise left the army and came to Staunton, Virginia where he printed the *Virginia Gazette and Staunton Weekly Advertiser* for Robert Douthat. Early in September 1796, Douthat sold his paper to Wise & Adams, a partnership that was dissolved soon afterward. John Wise became the sole proprietor of the newspaper. He renamed it *The Phenix* in 1798 and adorned it with an unusual masthead inspired by Pennsylvania German folk motifs. The printshop was then located " on the Main Street, three doors above the Rising Sun."²¹

Knowledge about Wise's activities as a printer in Staunton remained obscured for many years and the presence of other men by the same name in Staunton led to some confusion.²² In 1951, Mr. John Cook Wyllie of the Alderman Library drew our attention to an item " Printed by John Wise, at his English and German Printing Office.' Meanwhile, a business ledger kept by Wise mainly during the years 1796-1803, with some later entries, has been turned over to the Alderman Library by his descendants.²³ It provides many a glimpse at his work as a bilingual printer in Augusta County. Most of the recorded business transactions were concerned with his English newspaper but the ledger also reveals that Wise published a German weekly newspaper in Staunton. Unfortunately, he never refers to its name and speaks only of his "German paper" instead. It seems to have started at the beginning of January 1800 and according to an order for a subscription entered on March 3, 1802 was still being published more than two years later. The names of many subscribers and advertisers in the ledger suggest that it was circulated principally in Augusta County. The subscription price in 1800 was nine shillings.

Many orders for handbills and pamphlets are recorded, frequently to be executed in both languages. No copy of Wise's German newspaper and broadsides has ever been found which shows how much of the early German material in the Shenandoah Valley is lost. In 1799, for instance, Wise printed handbills for Jacob Swoope, German leader of the Federalists in Augusta who was subsequently elected the first mayor of Staunton. Wise's customers included a number of non-German businessmen who ordered advertising in German. He seems to have printed a few books and booklets, all of them in English. There are a treatise on the art of punctuation and John Glendy's oration on the death of Washington which have been located. John Wise's paper purchases are not without interest. It has been known for some time that Gideon Morgan and Peter Burckhart²⁴ were authorized to conduct a lottery in 1790 to raise funds for the erection of a paper mill near Staunton. The names of the papermakers in the early years do not appear in local records. Wise's ledger might provide the clue as to which craftsman set up the successful paper mill on Mossy Creek. The printer mentions "Daniel Womelsdorf" several times. In 1797 he records a purchase of twenty-four reams of printing paper for 18 Pounds from Womelsdorf. This was no doubt the same Daniel Womelsdorf, junior, who was a papermaker in Berks County, Pennsylvania from 1779 to 1784. Local records in Augusta County, Virginia, list the papermaker in 1799 among "Insolvents and Delinquents" with the remark that he had removed to Albemarle. Wise evidently had contributed to Womelsdorf's insolvency because his ledger tells us that he was still paying off in 1802 for earlier

²¹ *The Phoenix*, Dec. 12, 1798; July 17, 1799. For Listing of extant issues of Wise's *Gazette and Phenix* see Brigham, *op. cit.*, II, 1156.

²² See brief sketch on Wise on page 55 in Klaus G. Wust, "German Printing in Virginia, A Check List, 1789-1884," *Reports*, SHGM, XXVIII (1958), 54-66.

²³ Ledger of John Wise, Manuscript Department, Alderman Library, University of Virginia.

²⁴ W. W. Hening, *Statutes at Large*, Vol. XIII, 174.

deliveries of paper. Meanwhile, James Miller, another papermaker in Augusta, was meeting the requirements of Wise's shop.²⁵

In August 1803, *The Phenix* appeared under the imprint of J. Wise and I. Woodruff. Two months later, Ira Woodruff took over as the sole editor and publisher. The precise date of closing of John Wise's printshop is not known but it might have coincided with Woodruff's takeover of the *Phenix*. John Wise became a contractor for carrying the United States mail between Staunton and Lewisburg, a service which he continued for nearly a quarter of a century. He also initiated the first stage line between Augusta County and Greenbriar County. In his later years, he was active in local Whig politics and the Methodist Church. Family records and the public tribute at the time of his death stress the fact that John Wise never accumulated riches. He died at Staunton on July 28, 1844.²⁶

JACOB D. DIETRICK (1778-1838)

In contrast to the scant remnants we have of Wise's printing activities, Jacob D. Dietrick's career as a publisher and printer can be traced well from a large number of extant imprints. Dietrick was born of German immigrant parents in the month of February 1778 in Philadelphia. In his native city, he received a thorough training in the retail trade in general and the book business in particular. He opened his first store in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, but in November 1800 removed to Hagerstown where his "ironmongery, paint, books, and fancy goods" business was located in the Diamond, opposite Jonathan Hager's Inn.²⁷ Despite this odd combination of merchandize, anticipating the modern super drugstore, books were Dietrick's main concern. Already in 1801 he installed a circulating library in an adjacent building. John Gruber printed for him a catalogue of almost one hundred pages in which the entire stock of his lending library is listed. Most of the titles were in English. There is, however, an appendix enumerating the German books which contains all the religious favorites of the rural Germans, tracts for housewives and farmers, popular medical and veterinary guides and a few lonely representatives of German literature such as Wieland and Kotzebue. In 1803, Dietrick advised the public that his circulating library had grown to about four hundred volumes.²⁸

For several years, Dietrick and Gruber were closely associated in business. Dietrick sold the almanacs and other publications of Gruber's press from his store. He seems to have financed the almanac in part and during a number of years this best known one of Gruber's products came out with Dietrick's imprint identifying him as the publisher. English books were printed for Dietrick's firm by John P. Thomson in Frederick. Dietrick also maintained a branch store in Winchester for a while, at least from 1804 until 1806.²⁹ By the latter year he seems to have acquired his own printing outfit which made him independent of Gruber.

While in Hagerstown, Dietrick took a prominent part in civic and church affairs. In 1803 he headed the committee for the establishment of a Lutheran parochial school. Politically his sympathies were Republican. The victory of the Republicans in 1805 secured him an appointment as postmaster, a position which was specially lucrative for a publisher since postmasters could send and receive mail free of charge at a time when

²⁵ For Womelsdorf's work in Pennsylvania see Dard Hunter, *Papermaking in Pioneer America* (Philadelphia, 1952), 168.

²⁶ *Staunton Spectator*, October 1, 1840; August 1, 1844.

²⁷ Thomas J. Scharf, *History of Western Maryland* (Philadelphia, 1882), II, 1061, 1172-3.

²⁸ Reichmann, "Check List," 10, 33; Hagerstown *Maryland Herald*, August 12, 1803.

²⁹ Wust, "Check List," 57-59.

postage represented a considerable cost factor.³⁰ Early in 1807, Dietrick was approached by political friends in Virginia about establishing two Republican newspapers in Staunton in order to counter the growing influence of the Federalists led by German merchant Jacob Swoope. He accepted the offer, left his Hagerstown store in the hands of a manager, and moved to Staunton in April 1807. In July of the same year, the first issue of his Republican *Staunton Eagle* appeared and in January 1808 a German companion sheet, *Der Deutsche Virginier Adler* followed, both in time to help elect Chapman Johnson as the Jeffersonian mayor. Dietrick sought a wide circulation for both newspapers but only the *Eagle* thrived for a while. He had agents in New Market, Mill Creek, Winchester, Oak Hill, Lexington and Fincastle (Dr. Jacob Woltz) in Virginia, Hagerstown, Williamsburg and Frederick in Maryland, Georgetown (Dr. John Ott) in the District of Columbia and at such distant places as Knoxville, Tennessee and Lancaster, Ohio. His printshop in Staunton was located "three doors above Mr. McGongal's Tavern."³¹

The *Eagle* was well edited and printed in handsome type. Dietrick did most of the printing, editing and soliciting himself. His grasp of national and state affairs was intelligent, his style in English quite fanciful but instructive. For him the press had a significant role in American society: "The importance of periodical prints, especially in a country such as ours, is manifest to every reflecting mind, and in a government like that of the United States, resting entirely on public opinion, it is of the last consequence, that opinion should be correctly formed and steadily adhered to. This cannot be done to any considerable extent, only through the medium of the press," he wrote in one of his editorials in 1807.³² Although Dietrick had the support of local political friends and enjoyed the benefits of being the "Printer of Congress" for Staunton, he was frequently in financial straits. In order to meet his needs for paper which was furnished by the mill of James Miller, he had to borrow considerable amounts of money. Besides, he bought additional type fonts from Samuel Walkup, the printer of the *Virginia Telegraph* in Lexington. The indentures in the Staunton court records list some of his printing material which he offered as security whenever he needed a loan. One such entry in May 1808 lists his equipment as "consisting of one Press, sixteen pair of one font small pica, one ditto great primer, one ditto french canon, one ditto long primer German, one ditto small french canon German, one ditto pica German, one impassing stone chasser galley."³³ In August 1808 he wrote that the *Eagle* "is advancing rapidly in circulation" but confessed at the same time that he did not have one dollar in his cash-box, "owing to the delinquency of others, it has been lately exhausted to purchase implements to carry on the war, such as paper, ink balls, pelts, cases, gallies, mallets, shooting-sticks, and sheep-feet."³⁴

The weekly *Adler* had been started on January 22, 1808 and with an occasional suspension "for want of sufficient force" was continued until the end of 1809.³⁵ Dietrick had considerable trouble with his journeymen and apprentices and his many advertisements for help show that this shop was mostly understaffed. Job printing and a bookbinding department made his a busy life. While attending a Methodist camp meeting in the neighbor-

³⁰ Lancaster (Pa.) *Staatsbothe*, January 30, 1805; Scharf, *op. cit.*, II, 1004; T. J. C. Williams, *History of Washington County* (Hagerstown, 1906), I, 130.

³¹ All details in this paragraph have been gathered from the issues of the *Staunton Eagle* in the libraries of Harvard University and the American Antiquarian Society, and in the Library of Congress. For listing of holdings see Brigham, *op. cit.*, II, 1154.

³² *Staunton Eagle*, August 14, 1807.

³³ Deed Book I, Corporation Court Staunton, Va., 105-6, 135-6, 157-8.

³⁴ *Staunton Eagle*, August 4, 1808.

³⁵ For details on *Der Deutsche Virginier Adler* see Wust, "Check List," 58.

hood, he was persuaded to give up his affiliation with the Lutherans and joined the Methodist church, an event which he considered a turning point in his private life. During the 1810-1811 campaign, Dietrick's *Eagle* supported Chapman Johnson for his successful candidacy for the United States Senate. Soon afterward he accepted a call to Lancaster, Fairfield County, Ohio, to found an English newspaper and to take over the German *Ohio Adler* which had been suspended. In the fall of 1812, both the *Ohio Eagle* and *Der Deutsche Ohio Adler* came off the Dietrick press in Lancaster. The new environment found Jacob D. Dietrick active in politics right away. In 1814 he was appointed postmaster, followed by his election as a Justice of the Peace in 1819. For fourteen years he served as Associate Judge of the Court of Common Pleas. His general store and his law office were the meeting places of town and country people. In 1814 he withdrew from the newspaper business to devote all his time to the store and public life. Both the *Adler* and the *Eagle* were continued by other hands, the latter still survives in the *Eagle-Gazette* of present times.³⁶

When Duke Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar visited Lancaster in 1825, he enjoyed Judge Dietrick as a local guide. The Duke wrote about this encounter: "Shortly after my arrival I was visited by several of the local German and half-German inhabitants. Among the latter I remarked Judge Dietrick, a native of Philadelphia, an agreeable, plain and well-informed man. He offered to be my guide and I gladly accepted." Dietrick, of course showed the guest to the office of his successor at the *Adler*, John Hermann, where the Duke observed: "The type for the German paper is from the foundry in Philadelphia, and cannot be said to be elegant; it is true there is generally but little elegance to be observed in German type. I read in Mr. Hermann's office about twelve German papers, published in the United States. They were mostly written in corrupt German; the only well written one was edited in Philadelphia by Mr. Hitter."³⁷

Dietrick remained a leader in the Ohio community until he was stricken by a kidney disease in October 1838. The Maryland-born physician, Dr. G. W. Boerstler, was called to his bedside. After two months of terrible suffering, Jacob D. Dietrick died on December 29, 1838.³⁸

LAWRENCE WARTMANN (1774-1840)

The Wartmann publishing firm in Harrisonburg, Virginia, also had bilingual beginnings. Lawrence Wartmann learned the printer's trade in Pennsylvania and is known to have worked in many shops without ever settling down for over a decade. Addicted to heavy drinking, he drifted for many years from one town to the next. He was a familiar figure in western Maryland but although journeymen printers were in great demand, Wartmann's reputation usually preceded him wherever he turned. The frequent complaints which printers voiced in their newspapers about journeymen who had let them down, become credible when we look at some of the comments on Wartmann in the correspondence file of the Henkel Press at New Market.

In the spring of 1810 Solomon Henkel, who was alone in the printery because his brother Ambrose was going on an extended apprenticeship tour, urgently needed a competent printer. Turning to John Jungmann, a journeyman in Gruber's shop at Hagerstown, the Henkels received the

³⁶ *The Fredonian*, Chillicothe, Ohio, September 1, 1812; Charles M. Wiseman, *Centennial History of Lancaster, Ohio* (Lancaster, 1898), 97-8, 103, 116; Brigham, *op. cit.*, II, 804-05; Charles C. Miller, *History of Fairfield County, Ohio* (Chicago, 1912), 303; *Ohio Eagle*, July 30, 1814; *Der Deutsche Ohio Adler*, October 11, 1827.

³⁷ Heinrich Luden (ed.), *Reise Sr. Hoheit des Herzogs Bernhard zu Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach durch Nord-Amerika in den Jahren 1825 und 1826* (Weimar, 1828), 192-194.

³⁸ *Ohio Eagle and Fairfield Advertiser*, January 5, 1839.

following reply on April 25, 1810: "I immediately informed Mr. Gruber of my inclination of leaving him. I offered to trade with him, that is, I offered to substitute Mr. Wartmann, but he rejected my proposal, saying that he too well knew Mr. Wartmann to be addicted to drinking. Then I endeavored to reprove that objection—believing that Mr. Wartmann, being in distress, would work. In short, I made use of all eloquence I was capable of, but of no use. Mr. Gruber will not take M. Wartmann—and it would not do for me to leave him without a hand!"³⁹ In their desperate situation, the Henkels had no other choice but call on Wartmann themselves in spite of this unfavorable introduction. Wartmann must have hurried down to New Market because he was working there a few weeks later. At first, his conduct was little encouraging and Solomon Henkel wrote in October: "Wartmann is still the same Wartmann."⁴⁰ Under the sobering influence of the strict Lutheran Henkel family, the journeyman straightened out soon and his employers had no reason to regret their choice. Wartmann turned out to be a most versatile and ingenious craftsman who was entrusted with the supervision of all printing and binding at the busy shop. There is no doubt that Wartmann's presence in the years between 1811-1813 was responsible for turning the rather amateurish printery into a going concern which produced upwards of 10,000 copies of books, including 2,500 hymnbooks of 375 pages each, in a single year. In 1812 and 1813 he also worked on a series of religious tracts for the Theological Printing Office of the Rev. A. B. Davidson in Harrisonburg, an association that led to dividing his time between New Market and Harrisonburg until he established his own business in the latter town late in 1815 or the following spring. Wartmann's relations with Solomon and Ambrose Henkel remained close and friendly and there is ample indication that they assisted him in starting his printing office. From the outset, he printed both in English and German.⁴¹ The first products under his own imprint were a slim volume of an oration by Daniel Bryan and a remarkable music book, Joseph Funk's *Allgemein nützliche Choral Music*. Solomon Henkel bore a substantial share of the publication cost. The fonts for printing the music used in this book belonged most likely to Anasias Davisson who printed his own songbooks in Harrisonburg at that time.⁴²

Several German books and broadsides followed until 1830 but English printing formed the bulk of Wartmann's output.⁴³ The local importance of this printer rests mainly on the *Rockingham Register*, a weekly newspaper that he started with 68 subscribers on July 27, 1822. The *Register* became the influential mouthpiece of the Jacksonian Democrats in Rockingham County and adjacent areas. It was continued by his sons and boasted of a circulation of over 2000 in 1860. In her recollections of life in Harrisonburg, Maria Koontz described Lawrence Wartmann's print shop on the second floor of an old log house: "The editor, Mr. Wartmann, was proprietor, printer, and everything else. I often went to look at him. He had a small folding press on a table in the middle of the room; in either hand he held a leather ball, which was used to ink the type. Then he

³⁹ Letter John Jungmann to Ambrose Henkel, April 25, 1810, Tusing Collection.

⁴⁰ Letter Solomon Henkel to Ambrose Henkel, October 18, 1810, Tusing Collection.

⁴¹ The question whether the Rev. A. B. Davidson and the folk hymn writer and printer Anasias Davisson were identical is far from having been solved. John W. Wayland, who was almost convinced that both names were used by the same person [pp. 45-47 in his *Historic Harrisonburg* (Staunton, 1949)], treated them separately again in his excellent chapter on "Printers," pp. 255-272 in *Twenty-Five Chapters on the Shenandoah Valley* (Strasburg, Va., 1957).

⁴² The first authoritative evaluation of this much quoted and often misunderstood American music book in the German language has been made by Harry Eskew, "Joseph Funk's *Allgemein Nützliche Choral-Music*" (1816), *Reports, SHGM XXXII* (1966), 38-46.

⁴³ Details of the German books and their authors may be found in Klaus G. Wust, "A Virginia-German Printer: Laurentz Wartmann," *American-German Review*, XX (1954), No. 6, 29-30, 39.

⁴⁴ Lester J. Cappon, *Virginia Newspapers, 1821-1935* (New York, 1936), 103.

placed the dampened paper on the type, and turning over the top of the press, screwed it down tight, until the impression was taken; removed the paper and went on in this way until one side of the edition was finished; then he set the type for the other side of the paper, and proceeded in the same manner until the whole edition was finished. On Saturday Harvey, his son about ten years old, would deliver the papers to the subscribers; I do not think there were more than one hundred. New Year's some one would write an address for Harvey to deliver to the subscribers, and receive a small amount of money from them."⁴⁵

Nothing has come to light so far about Lawrence Wartmann's origin and youth. The few letters which he wrote to Ambrose Henkel betray a well-educated man whose German was better in grammar and style than that of most bilingual printers of his day. His entries in the family Bible have been effaced by time and wear. Only one line is still legible, informing us that he was converted on November 16, 1818. Like his fellow printers John Wise and Jacob Dietrick, Wartmann joined the Methodists. Lawrence Wartmann died in Harrisonburg on April 11, 1840 at the age of 66 years, a fact which has been preserved only because the tireless chronicler of the Valley, the late John W. Wayland copied the inscription on the tombstone shortly before the monument was broken and eventually disappeared.⁴⁶

NOTES ON SOME OTHER PRINTERS

Benjamin Shue. There is a vague indication of the existence of another early printshop in the Shenandoah Valley. A bill of sale was discovered in Salisbury, North Carolina, disclosing that in 1794 Benjamin Shue of Shenandoah County, Virginia, had sold a press and printing equipment to Michael Brown in Salisbury.⁴⁷ A search through local records in Shenandoah Conty produced only one relevant transaction, the purchase of paper by Benjamin Shue from Woodstock merchant John Croudson in 1792.⁴⁸ Shue or Schuch had settled on the west bank of the Shenandoah in 1782.⁴⁹ Michael Brown's firm appeared in a 1798 imprint as "English and German Printing Office." The same imprint names John M. Slump as his printer. Slump took over the Brown press and moved his bilingual printery to Lincolnton, North Carolina, in the year 1800. When Slump's equipment was for sale in the fall of 1804, Solomon Henkel of New Market, Virginia, tried to buy it but his bid came in too late.⁵⁰

Charles Fierer. The first recorded printer in what is now the District of Columbia was the former Hessian ensign Carl Friedrich Führer who anglicized his name to Fierer in later years.⁵¹ He was captured at Trenton and in 1778 deserted after having been returned to his regiment in an exchange of prisoners. He enlisted in the Pulaski Legion and was later granted a captaincy in the Virginia cavalry. During the closing days of the war, he was severely injured and never fully gained his health again. Except for the fact that Fierer returned briefly to Germany in a futile attempt to recover some property, we have no indication as to where Fierer spent the immediate post-war years and where he received his training as a printer. Several announcements in the *Maryland Journal* of April 1787 inform us

⁴⁵ Maria Koontz Carr Manuscript, Collection of the late John W. Wayland. Maria Koontz was the granddaughter of the prominent Valley politician, John Koontz.

⁴⁶ Wayland, *Historic Harrisonburg*, 45.

⁴⁷ This document was acquired by James B. Childs of Washington in 1958 at Salisbury, N. C.

⁴⁸ Croudson Account Book Notes, Collection of the late John W. Wayland.

⁴⁹ Deed Books, Shenandoah County, Virginia, C 520-1, D 56, G 72-75, H 290-1, I 293-4 and other entries.

⁵⁰ Douglas C. McMurtrie, *Eighteenth Century North Carolina Imprints* (Chapel Hill, N. C. 1938) 166; also Letter Paul Henkel to Solomon Henkel, May 10, 1805, Tusing Collection.

⁵¹ Klaus G. Wust, "Germans Immigrants and their Newspapers in the District of Columbia." *Reports, SHGM XXIX* (1959), 37.

that he established a printing office in Georgetown in partnership with Christian Kramer.⁵² In February 1789, *The Times and the Patowmak Packet*, a weekly newspaper, commenced publication under Charles Fierer's imprint alone. An advertisement, "Wanted an Apprentice to learn the printing business in both the English and German Language," indicates that his shop was equipped for business in both languages.⁵³ Georgetown had quite a number of German inhabitants at that time who supported a Lutheran church. Besides, several Germans in Frederick and Washington counties had acquired land there in anticipation of a growth of Georgetown as a port. Frederick craftsmen advertised their products in the *Times*. Fierer himself sold a variety of merchandize, notably Amelung glass from New Bremen, "equal in quality and cheaper than that imported from Europe." Soon after starting his newspaper, Fierer was joined by a partner, Thomas U. Fosdick. Records of Montgomery County, Maryland, reveal that Fierer had financial difficulties. In 1791, both partners moved away to the then still active port of Dumfries in Prince William County, Virginia. On September 29, 1791, they began publication of *The Virginia Gazette and Agricultural Repository* in Dumfries which lasted at least until the end of 1793.⁵⁴ The last issue extant is that of December 19, 1793. Fierer was ill most of the time and his partner had left him in 1792. He died on December 9, 1794 and was buried in Dumfries, the same town where he had spent some time as a Hessian prisoner during the war.

John George Jungmann. Both the beginning and the highlights of John George Jungmann's career as a German-English printer belong to Pennsylvania but for many years he worked as a journeyman in the printshops of Maryland. Born in 1786 at Hummelstown, Dauphin County, Pennsylvania, he was raised and trained by an uncle, Gottlieb Jungmann, publisher of the *Neue Unpartheyische Readinger Zeitung*. When he was about twenty years old, John Jungemann went to Frederick where he worked one year for Bartgis, or "Barches" as he called him. Then he was hired by Gruber in Hagerstown and with the exception of a short time between 1808 and 1810 when he was employed by Christian Cleim to work on the *Baltimore Correspondent*, he remained Gruber's principal assistant. The success of the Hagerstown *Westliche Correspondenz* encouraged Jungmann to go into newspaper publishing on his own account. He moved to Central Pennsylvania and became the publisher of the *Republikaner* and the *Sunbury Gazette* in Sunbury. His subsequent life has been well described by one of his descendants, Caroline Vandegrift Youngman.⁵⁵

The history of these bilingual printers is not only a worthy subject for those interested in the process of integration of a linguistic minority. Increased knowledge about the scope of their work will enlighten us about the intellectual level of early American communities which had just emerged from a pioneer existence. The products of their presses which have been found and which still appear from time to time are valuable source material for workers in many fields. In this sort of search there can only be one disappointment: the finding of a second copy of an item one has located once before.

⁵² Frederick R. Goff, "Early Printing in Georgetown, 1789-1800," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* (April 1958), 107-134. For material on Fierer see pp. 109-113.

⁵³ *The Times and The Patowmak Packet*, April 23, 1789.

⁵⁴ Brigham, *op. cit.*, II, 1113.

⁵⁵ Caroline Vandegrift Youngman, "Printer John Jungmann," *Proceedings, Northumberland County Historical Society* XV (1946), 215-245. Jungmann's friendship with the Hagerstown printer dated from Gruber's partnership with Gottlieb Jungmann in 1793-94.