

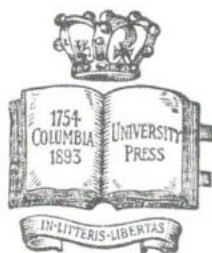
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY GERMANIC STUDIES

AMERICA IN IMAGINATIVE GERMAN
LITERATURE IN THE FIRST HALF
OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

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OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

BY

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TO
THE MEMORY OF
MY PARENTS

PREFACE

The following study had its origin in an investigation of the presentation of America in the works of Sealsfield, which was suggested to the author by Professor Camillo von Klenze of the College of the City of New York ten years ago. This research was nearly completed when the writer learned that a similar subject had been treated from a different angle by a student of Professor Julius Goebel of the University of Illinois and was well on the way to publication. He decided, therefore, to extend his researches to German literature in general from 1800 to 1850 and to trace therein the views of German writers on the United States. The most important part of this comprehensive investigation, which is limited to imaginative literature, is presented in the following dissertation.

In the eventful years of the last decade this work has been a source of pleasure and comfort to the author. Inspired by the love of his native as well as of his adopted country, he has endeavored to show how the swift rise of the Western Republic from its foundation was reflected in contemporary German poems and novels, and thus to produce a work that would be interesting and useful alike to the student of history and of literature.

I welcome this opportunity to express my gratitude to Professor Camillo von Klenze for the keen interest which he took in this study and for his many helpful suggestions; to Miss Dorothy Dondore, associate professor of English, Elmira College, New York, who called my attention to important works in French and English literature bearing on the subject of my thesis; to Mr. Daniel B. Duncan, instructor in English in

University Extension at Columbia University, for a careful reading of the manuscript, and to Professor F. W. J. Heuser and Dr. George C. O. Haas for prompt and valuable assistance in proofreading. Furthermore, I am deeply obliged to Mr. Frederic W. Erb and Mr. Roger Howson of the Columbia University Library for their courtesy in procuring for me important material from the libraries of other American universities, and also to these libraries, which so generously responded to their request.

My chief indebtedness is to Professor Robert Herndon Fife. It is due to his great interest in my work and to his untiring efforts that my research material has taken its final form in regard to composition and style, and that the manuscript could go to press. Above all, his friendly counsel and expert guidance as well as the unflinching encouragement he gave me in my undertaking, will always be most thankfully remembered

New York City,
March, 1926.

P. C. W.

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INTRODUCTION

The work here presented is based upon a much more comprehensive investigation than the title indicates. In undertaking his researches the author sought to determine how the United States was presented to the German reader in general during the first half of the nineteenth century. For that purpose he included in his research material all German publications of whatever sort in regard to America from 1800 to 1850, such as books of travel, scientific works, contributions to periodicals and imaginative literature, whether of German or German-American origin.

However, these studies yielded such an abundance of material that it seemed desirable to limit the present work to the most interesting and important phase of the subject, the imaginative literature of the period investigated. For the selection of this topic the following reasons were decisive.

In the first place, this subject has not yet found adequate treatment. While we have several good essays dealing with America in imaginative literature during and after the time of the Revolutionary War, no such presentation exists for the great period of the young Republic's political, economic, and cultural development during the first half of the nineteenth century. The works of Goebel,¹ Castle,² and Minor,³ on this topic either give only a cursory review of the subject or they treat merely the most important writers. In recent years,

¹ Jul. Goebel, "Amerika in der deutschen Dichtung," in *Forschungen zur deutschen Philologie*, 1894.

² Ed. Castle, "Amerikamüde," *Jahrb. der Grillparzergesellschaft*, 1902.

³ J. Minor, *Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen*, 1896, pp. 662 ff.

Constantin Breffka, an American scholar residing in Germany, has published there a literary treatise entitled *Amerika in der deutschen Literatur*.⁴ This essay in its twenty-six pages gives only a concise summary of the views of German writers on the American republic from its foundation to modern times.

Secondly, it is of special interest to know what the representatives of imaginative literature, the German poets and novelists thought and wrote about America during the period of political unrest and longing at home, when so many German eyes turned away from the deplorable conditions of the Fatherland to the land of promise on the other side of the Atlantic.

Thirdly, it is in the sphere of imaginative literature that the material for determining German views of America during this period is most accessible and complete for our purpose.

The following investigation deals, therefore, only with the presentation of America in imaginative German literature in the first half of the nineteenth century, and material from the wider field of research will be drawn upon only so far as it relates to our main subject. Later on the author hopes to be able to work out and to publish the other parts of his investigations.

An introductory chapter is intended to show how the United States appeared in German publications during the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Such an introduction seems necessary in order to see how far America was known in Germany at the beginning of the period that directly concerns us and to determine as nearly as possible the sources of information about America from which the German writers of the following years drew their knowledge of the Western Republic. In this connection a brief reference has been made to the presentation of America in French and English literature in the seventeenth

⁴ Köln (J. G. Schmitz), 1917.

and eighteenth century. This first chapter will, therefore, attempt a general survey of all the important German publications in regard to America from 1775 to 1800, including a side-glance at the typical French and English presentation of the New World up to that time.

In planning the course for the main part of our investigation, we shall follow the various literary currents in Germany between 1800 and 1850 in their chronological and logical order. Thus, we shall have to begin with a discussion of the attitude toward America as manifested by the Romanticists in their earlier and later periods. Only such descriptions of travel as are in themselves closely related to creative literature will be treated. The next two chapters will be devoted respectively to the conception of America in the exotic novel and in the works of the Austrian poets. Following thereon the study will trace in the third decade the changing views of America which accompanied the infusion of a more realistic spirit into Romantic literature, and later on, will deal with the literature of the emigrants, echoing, as it did, the great migration to the New World during the thirties. Finally, we shall seek to show how the republic of the West appeared to the militant eyes of Young Germany. In conclusion, the results derived from our investigation will be brought together in an effort to present a comprehensive view of America as reflected in imaginative German literature from 1800 to 1850.

CHAPTER I

THE AWAKENING OF INTEREST IN AMERICA IN GERMAN LITERATURE FROM 1775 TO 1800

During the first half of the eighteenth century, Germans had from time to time emigrated to America in larger or smaller numbers,¹ but on account of the great distance and the difficulty of travel, no genuine and wide-spread interest in the New World had been aroused either in the higher or in the lower classes of the people. It is not surprising, therefore, that German literature in that period makes little mention of the New World.

An entirely different picture presents itself to us in the last quarter of the century. During that time writers began to gather and to spread information about America. Many scholars were engaged in the study of the new continent. A considerable number of poets praised the intense love of liberty in the hearts of the American people. The causes for the awakening of this interest can be traced partly to intellectual currents and partly to the political events of this period.

The second half of the eighteenth century can be characterized as an age of marked increase of curiosity. Frequent reports of transatlantic journeys of discovery led to a progressive widening of the mental horizon. Books of travel were in eager demand. The worth and importance of nations outside of Europe, which up to that time had never been mentioned in historical works, came to be generally admitted. An ideal of *Humanität*, broad enough to include even those people that rank lowest in human

¹ Cf. F. R. Diffenderffer, *The German Immigration into Pennsylvania, 1700 to 1775*. Part II: The Redemptioners.

society, as the savages, found many adherents.² The result was that America, too, scarcely regarded before, came more and more within the range of vision of the poets and philosophers of Europe.³

Political events helped to confirm this new cosmopolitan spirit. The striking personality of Benjamin Franklin, who, in 1766, had visited Holland and Germany and had been received with great distinction by the men of learning in these countries, necessarily aroused interest in Franklin's country.⁴ But above all, the Revolutionary War attracted general attention.⁵ Poets and scholars alike watched the struggle with the keenest interest, expressing in their works either warm sympathy or fundamental opposition to the cause of the colonies. As Biedermann says, "With the war for independence the educated classes in Germany begin for the first time to turn toward America."⁶

Frederick the Great was the first German monarch who took a friendly attitude toward the American Republic. During the Revolutionary War he not only prevented the English from hiring auxiliaries in his own states, but also rendered difficult the soldier-traffic of the German princes. He expressed openly his admiration for the bravery of the Americans and the strategy of George Washington, approved Steuben's entrance into the American army, and hastened, after the Republic had been established, to form a friendly alliance and a commercial treaty with her.⁷

² Cf. Herder, *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern*, 1778.

³ Cf. Schaumkell, *Geschichte der deutschen Kulturgeschichtsschreibung*, etc., pp.3 ff.

⁴ Cf. B. M. Victory, *Benjamin Franklin and Germany*, Diss., p. 54.

⁵ Cf. Goethe, *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, W.A., v. 29, p. 68.

⁶ K. Biedermann, *Die nordamerik. u. die franz. Revolution*, etc., p. 483.—A. L. Heeren, *Autobiogr. Mitteilungen*, p. 19.—H. Steffens, *Was ich erlebte*, I, 77 ff.

⁷ Cf. Victory (see note 4), p. 16.—Fr. Kapp, *Friedrich der Grosse und die*

Immanuel Kant always showed himself a staunch supporter of the American cause against the English government, whose policies appeared to him almost despotic. His remarks to the Englishman Joseph Green,⁸ to whom he presented the struggle of the colonies in a favorable light, are very characteristic for his attitude toward the political events of his time. The results of his political studies up to the time of the American war for liberty are laid down in two treatises: "Ideen zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht," and "Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?" both published in 1784 in the *Berlinische Monatsschrift*.

How jubilantly German literature greeted the Revolutionary War has been clearly and exhaustively shown in two recent papers by J. T. Hatfield and E. Hochbaum, and by J. A. Walz.⁹ The poets of Storm and Stress, such as Klinger and Lenz, were influenced by the revolt of the colonies. Schiller, Herder, Wieland, Voss, Leopold von Stolberg, Schubart, Klopstock, Gleim and others exalted the glory of Franklin and Washington, denounced the disgraceful soldier-traffic of German princes, and strongly supported the liberal aspirations of the Americans. It was, to be sure, not the political events as such that awakened this overwhelming sympathy for America in the hearts of these poets, but the humanitarian ideals which they saw realized in the victorious struggle of the colonies. "Our men of learning

Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika.—P. L. Haworth, *Frederick the Great and the Revolution*.—Rosengarten, *Frederick the Great and the United States*.

⁸ Cf. F. W. Schubert, "Immanuel Kant und seine Stellung zur Politik" etc., in *Raumers Histor. Taschenbuch*, 1838, p. 597.

⁹ Hatfield and Hochbaum, "The Influence of the American Revolution upon German Literature" in *Americana Germanica*, III, nos. 3 and 4.—J. A. Walz, "The American Revolution and German Literature" in *Modern Language Notes*, no. 6-8 (1901).

and our poets," says Robert Prutz, "believed that there were ideas here at work very similar to those so often dreamed of: all men brethren, heaven on earth, and Astraea in person mistress of the new Utopia."¹⁰ Gervinus expresses the same thought: "The distant events in America, of which only the shining rays could be seen, the character of Franklin, so congenial to German *Gemülichkeit*, all this contributed to link ideal with reality in political minds."¹¹

The *Berlinische Monatsschrift* of the year 1783 once more voiced the joy of the poets in a sublime ode, "Die Freiheit Amerikas," which begins with the words:

Frei bist du, (sag's in höherem Siegeston,
Entzücktes Lied), frei, frei nun Amerika,
Erschöpft, gebeugt, bedeckt mit Schande
Weicht dein Feind, und du triumphierst.¹²

In addition, quite a number of German folksongs appeared in the seventies and eighties dealing with the causes of the Revolutionary War, the German mercenaries going to America, and the conclusion of peace in 1783.¹³

On the stage, as well, incidents of the American Revolutionary War were presented. Rosengarten calls attention to *Der Hessische Officier*, a curious little play printed in Göttingen in 1781 and characteristic as showing the interest in America at the time of its publication. "The scene," he says, "is laid in Philadelphia during its occupancy by the British, and Indians,

¹⁰ Rob. Prutz, "Die politische Poesie der Deutschen," in *Literarhistorisches Taschenbuch*, I. Jahrg. 1843, p. 443.

¹¹ Gervinus, *Geschichte der deutschen Dichtung*, V, 424.

¹² The author who signed J. F. H-1, was professor at a German university.—Cf. H. P. Gallinger, *Die Haltung der deutschen Publizistik zu dem amerik. Unabhängigkeitskriege 1775-1783*, Diss.

¹³ See: *Histor. Volkslieder der Zeit von 1756-1871*, coll. and ed. by F. W. Freiherr v. Diefurth, II, 4, 5, 7, 32-36, 370-373.

Quakers, English, German, and American soldiers, and negroes are among the dramatic persons. It must have been written by some one who had been here, for it shows great familiarity with the city and the conflicting parties residing or stationed here during the Revolution."¹⁴

That the enthusiasm of the poets of that time was sentimental and superficial, becomes evident from the fact that a change of feeling towards America quickly took place as soon as the cruelties of the French Revolution came to light. When Romanticism with its one-sided intellectual interests and absorbing aesthetic enthusiasm made its entrance into German literature, America was hardly considered further.

A permanent place, however, was assured to the United States through the Revolutionary War within the sphere of German journalism, which developed rapidly in the last quarter of the eighteenth century.¹⁵ As early as the seventies interest in politics had begun to awaken among the Germans as a result of stirring events in foreign countries, and after 1776 popular treatises, scientific works, and descriptive literature on America were published in increasing numbers. Among all classes of the people there was a free and lively discussion of the causes, justification, and consequences of the American war. Newspapers and important magazines furnished reports and interesting accounts. Statistical material, historical and geographical publications, translations of English and French works, all kinds of news from the New World, especially the letters and diaries of German mercenaries who had served in the Revolutionary War, familiarized the German people more and more

¹⁴ Rosengarten, "American History from German Archives," etc., in *Pennsylv. German Society Proc.*, v. 13, p. 25.

¹⁵ Cf. H. P. Gallinger (see note 12) and G. S. Ford, "Two German Publicists on the American Revolution" in the *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, VIII (1909).

with the new continent and its inhabitants. All this body of information formed a reservoir of fact and legend about America which was an abundant source of material and inspiration for the writers of imaginative literature in the new century as well as for the historians and geographers.

Gallinger in his essay *Die Haltung der deutschen Publizistik zu dem amerikanischen Unabhängigkeitskriege* gives a list of those journals and periodicals that made America a subject of discussion at that time. He says: "Immediately after the beginning of the war, in the year 1775, great interest was manifested in it in Germany, as can be seen from the rather detailed accounts in the newspapers. In the following three years a great number of publications appeared which had their origin in the struggle. From 1778 on the interest in the question of right decreased. Although in the last years a considerable number of works appeared dealing generally with the war and the history of America, comparatively little controversial literature was published. According to Professor Sprengel's statement, there was universal and uninterrupted interest in the struggle throughout Germany."¹⁶

Of the political-historical publications referring to America in the last quarter of the eighteenth century first consideration must be given to Schloezer's *Briefwechsel* and Schubart's *Deutsche Chronik*.

August Ludwig Schloezer was professor of History and Statistics in Göttingen. His *Briefwechsel meist historischen und politischen Inhalts* appeared there in sixty issues at irregular intervals from February 1776 until May 1782 and was widely read. The references to America in this periodical consist of statistical, historical, polemical, and descriptive information. Numerous letters mainly from officers of the Hessian troops in America written to their relatives at home give interesting

¹⁶ Gallinger, *op. cit.*, p. 72 ff.

details about the country and its inhabitants, reflecting the first impressions gained in the new land.

In regard to the constitutional question Schloezer was decidedly on the side of England. "He raved wildly against the North Americans, as if he had been a genuine native of Old England."¹⁷ Schloezer speaks of the "American mob"; he calls the colonists "rebels," and is enraged at German sympathies for the Americans. Zermelo points out that Schloezer, in spite of his liberal tendencies, looked on the revolt from the standpoint of his colleagues in Göttingen and his patrons in Hanover, that he was without sympathy for republicanism, but that his information about America, in spite of his partiality, was reliable and valuable.¹⁸

That Schloezer's pro-British feeling did not prejudice him against America in other than political respects is proved by many notes in his *Correspondence* which give a favorable account of the country and its inhabitants. Ford, therefore, comes to this conclusion: "An examination of the *Briefwechsel* leaves no question that its editor was opposed to the colonists in their struggle, but, contrary to the general view, it convinces me that the material furnished in the sixty issues was on the whole likely to put the colonists in a favorable light before the intelligent German public."¹⁹

As early as 1771, in the preface to the translation of an English geographical work *Erdbeschreibung von America*, Schloezer had pointed out how near America had drawn to Europe, how important the New World had become to the Old World. It is impossible, he feels, not to take notice of America in modern history. Not only statesmen, scholars, and business men, but

¹⁷ F. C. Schlosser, *Geschichte d. 18. Jhs.*, IV, 245.

¹⁸ Zermelo, "Aug. Ludw. Schloezer, ein Publicist im alten Reich," in *Jahresbericht über die Friedrich-Werdersche Gewerbeschule in Berlin*, 1875, p. 18.

¹⁹ Ford (see note 15), p. 167.

even plain readers of newspapers now need information about America, each for a different purpose. There can be no doubt that Schloezer was instrumental in arousing interest in America, an interest which not only attracted the attention of the masses in Germany, but was soon to influence the imagination of German poets and novelistic writers.

Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart²⁰ also frequently refers to America in his *Deutsche Chronik*. This semi-weekly journal, published from 1774 to 1777 in Augsburg and Ulm, was devoted to literature and politics and enjoyed an ever increasing popularity. Schubart, a genuine Swabian, a passionate defender of republican liberty, naturally sympathized with the colonists, although he had the exalted ideas of British liberalism. As Gallinger puts it, "His zeal for the cause of the Americans was restrained only by his love of Old England."²¹ "There is hardly an issue," says Ford, "that does not give some space to America. He says that everybody is absorbed in the news from this country. Nothing in all the world is so talked about and discussed. He reports everything he can get. Sometimes it is a letter, sometimes it is a clipping. Sometimes it is a vision of the year 2400, picturing the twelve colonies as ruling over all that part of the world, with America the home of the sciences and of religion pure and undefiled."²²

Ludwig Wekhrlin,²³ another influential South-German journalist, took a decidedly hostile attitude toward the colonies in his magazine *Chronologen*, published in twelve volumes from

²⁰ Chr. Fr. Schubart (1739-1791), poet, journalist, and musician, lived in Mannheim, Augsburg, and Ulm. From 1777 to 1787 he was a political prisoner on the Hohenasperg, later stage-manager in Stuttgart.

²¹ Gallinger, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

²² Ford (see note 15), p. 170.

²³ Wilhelm Ludwig Wekhrlin (1739-1792), a popular journalist, lived in or near Nördlingen, Württemberg, where he published his journals, *Chronologen* and *Ungeheuer*.

1779 to 1783 in Nördlingen. He feared that America's Declaration of Independence might separate this country from Europe, not only politically, but also in regard to commerce and colonization, thus impairing European civilization. He concludes his remarks on this subject with the emphatic statement that the Americans were madmen running about in broad daylight with torches in their hands to look for the day.

Other periodicals discussing the Revolutionary War are the *Göttinger Musenalmanach* (Lauenburg and Göttingen, 1775-1784), *Deutsches Museum* (Leipzig, 1776-1788), *Bibras Journal von und für Deutschland* (1784 ff.), Wieland's *Der Deutsche Merkur* (Weimar, 1773-1784), *Amerikanisches Archiv* (Braunschweig, 1777-1778), Jakobi's *Iris* (Düsseldorf, 1775), Köster's *Neueste Staatsbegebenheiten* (Frankfurt and Mainz, 1775-1779), *Historisch-Genealogischer Kalender* (Leipzig, 1784).²⁴ All of them defend the cause of the colonies and pay the highest tribute to the zeal for liberty and the valor displayed by the Americans in their fierce struggle for independence.

It is of special interest to note that the weekly *Nachrichten zum Nutzen und Vergnügen*, published from 1775 on in Stuttgart, and edited in 1781 by young Schiller, devotes considerable space to America. The Revolutionary War was the main topic of the political news of this journal. Its political standpoint, to be sure, was just as undecided and immature as that of every other publication in this century of political infancy. Moreover, the Swabians had always looked upon England as representing an ideal form of liberal government. Once the London correspondent of the journal raises the question: "Has not England the right to rule her subjects and to protect her states against rebels?" On the whole, however, the paper prefers to side with the colonies and publishes with evident sympathy the letter of

²⁴ Cf. *Americana Germanica*, III (1900), 350-352, also Gallinger, *op. cit.*, pp. 20, 52.

an English officer who voices his displeasure over the war. Unreservedly it stands up for the Americans and Indians, inveighs against the inhuman warfare organized by the British with the help of their savage allies, and in several anecdotes scoffs at the "British lion."²⁵

Summing up, we may say that all over Germany the war was the subject of earnest discussion in periodicals of standing. In Prussia and Swabia these sympathized almost universally with the Americans, while in Hanover they espoused the cause of England.

Not only the war, but also the new conditions in America resulting from the war were closely watched and eagerly discussed by a number of leading German journals. Slowly, but irresistibly, economic and social life is progressing in America. This is the tenor of Chr. Fr. D. Schubart's references to our country in his *Vaterlandschronik* (1787-1791). To comfort his compatriots who had, like himself, suffered under the intolerable caprice and selfishness of German princes, he exclaims: "Thirteen golden gates in the Republic are open to the victims of intolerance and despotism."²⁶

The *Politisches Journal nebst Anzeige von gelehrten und anderen Sachen*, a monthly published from 1781 on by a society of learned men in Hamburg, maintains at first a more passive attitude towards the newly established Republic, but it judges the prevailing conditions soberly and impartially. We learn from its pages that everything is still in a stage of transition, unsettled, fluctuating, growing. There is as yet little happiness among the inhabitants, and poverty is not a thing unknown; commerce is in general insignificant, and there is hardly any respect for constitutional government.²⁷ In 1787 the periodical

²⁵ *Vierteljahrschrift für Literaturgeschichte*, II, 361.

²⁶ Schubart's *Vaterlandschronik*, 1787, p. 38.

²⁷ *Politisches Journal*, 1785, I, 213.

reports discord in the budding republic, frequent emigration to Canada and the South, dissension and anarchy within the States—all this evidencing the fact that independence was of no benefit to America.²⁸ An aristocratic régime lies heavily upon the country, it is stated; everything is in a state of confusion highly detrimental to national interests.²⁹ As the years pass and the century draws to a close, the *Journal* reflects conditions in a more favorable and promising light. We are informed that commerce with England is increasing, that new territories are joining the Union, that the Indians are in retreat before the settlers, that public instruction in the higher schools is improving and education progressing among the masses. From 1792 to 1794 the journal contains commercial reports of the United States, from 1797 to 1799 it notes repeatedly the severe loss of life through yellow fever and devastating war with the aborigines.

The *Neues Göttingisches historisches Magazin*, a quarterly edited by C. Meiners and L. T. Spittler, frequently received information from America in the years 1790-1794. During this period its columns contain an anthropological treatise on the Indians,³⁰ official documents from the War Department of the Union,³¹ a favorable commercial report issued by Alexander Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury,³² a survey of American newspapers,³³ and other interesting information of a semi-scientific sort.

In 1793 (Nov.) the *Neue Teutsche Merkur* gives to its readers an excellent description of the new City of Washington, which, at that time, was in process of construction and promised to

²⁸ *Polit. Journal*, 1787, I, 475, 711.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 1787, II, 357.

³⁰ *Neues Gött. hist. Magazin*, 1790, pp. 102-156.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 1792, IV, 708.

³² *Ibid.*, 1794, I, 57.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 191.

become a second Rome. Furthermore, the journal publishes in 1797 an interesting sketch taken from an English book of travel, "A visit to the home of President Washington," in addition, an essay on ancient fortifications in North America, and a letter from Philadelphia, in which the writer, a German-American, discusses American literature and pleasures, presenting his adopted country, to be sure, in a very unfavorable light.³⁴

All these periodicals presuppose, of course, circles of educated readers interested in transatlantic news. Such a growing interest could not fail to prepare the ground for a presentation of America within the sphere of imaginative literature in the years to come.

That the foundation of our republic was a political event of such importance that it engaged the closest attention of German scholars, we shall see when we now turn to noteworthy historical works on America issued in this period.³⁵

The first fundamental, comprehensive work on America as a republic was J. J. Moser's *Nordamerika nach den Friedensschlüssen vom Jahre 1783* (Leipzig, 1784).³⁶ The author begins with a discussion of the various stages of the conclusion of peace in 1783. In regard to the British-American controversy he reserves his own opinion and simply states the views of others. He takes up the climate and physical features, the inhabitants

³⁴ *Neue Teutsche Merkur*, 1793 (Nov.), p. 217; 1797 (April), pp. 5, 50, 168

³⁵ We pass over, as lying outside of our field of research, publications which, appearing during the Revolutionary War, treat America as a British colony, as L. A. Baumann's *Abriss der Staatsverfassung der vornehmsten Länder in Amerika* (1776) and Chr. Leist's *Beschreibung des Britischen Amerika* (1778).

³⁶ Johann Jakob Moser (1701-1785), professor of German political science in Tübingen, later chancellor of the university in Frankfurt a/O. Like Schubart, he fell a victim to ducal tyranny in Württemberg and was from 1759 to 1764 a political prisoner at the Hohentwiel. His writings, comprising 500 to 600 volumes, deal for the most part with German and international law.

and their religion, treating each State separately. Special sections of the work refer to the American landscape, to charts and publications about the country, and to international European law in its bearing on America.

Following closely upon the war of the Revolution appeared in 1785 (Frankenthal) the *Geschichte der Revolution in Nordamerika* by Matthias Christian Sprengel.³⁷ Sprengel was thoroughly conversant with British colonial history, which was a favorite subject of his academic lectures. How great an interest his students took in his favorite study is evidenced by his remark: "In my 'American war' my lecture-room looks really like a black cave or the ill-reputed 'Black Hole' (of Calcutta)."³⁸ As early as 1777 he had published his *Briefe den gegenwärtigen Zustand von Nordamerika betreffend*, written in the ardent pro-British spirit of Schloezer. Much more conciliatory toward the American cause is his attitude in his *Geschichte der Revolution in Nordamerika*, mentioned above. This work, based on extensive bibliographical sources, which are, to be sure, mostly English, is divided into two main parts. The first gives an account of the historical development of each State, including its political constitution. In the second part, which treats the History of American Independence, the author discusses at length the British-American controversy, taking sides here with the Americans. A special chapter is devoted to a characterization of American military and naval leaders. In considering the results of the war for America and Europe Sprengel points out:

³⁷ M. Chr. Sprengel (1746-1803), professor of geography and history. He began his academic lectures in Göttingen in 1778, as a follower of Schloezer, with a public lecture on the British colonies in America. Later he became professor in Halle a/S. His extensive scientific researches were largely devoted to American subjects.

³⁸ Quoted by F. Hänsch in *M. Chr. Sprengel, ein geogr. Publizist im Ausgange des 18. Jhs.*, p. 18.

"In the course of time this republic will soon outshine her sister-powers, and it will take more than centuries to confine her growing greatness," and "All Europe is now at liberty to purchase first-hand and at the lowest price American products, which otherwise she could obtain only by way of England and at a much higher price."³⁹ Sprengel through his far-reaching activity as a scholar and university teacher exerted a marked influence upon the intellectual and public life of his time. As the editors of Georg Forster's works say, "Sprengel began to lead the German people out into the wide world."⁴⁰

Another historical publication, Fr. Seidel's⁴¹ *Die Staatsverfassungen der Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika* (Berlin, 1795) gave its readers very valuable information about the characteristic features of the United States government and about the new spirit of liberty that permeated American political and social institutions. This work appeared as Part IV of the German edition of Ramsay's *History of the American Revolution*. In the preface to this edition the German editor extols the Revolutionary War as a heroic struggle overshadowing entirely the long-admired deeds of the Roman republic. Ramsay, he says, deserves credit for the calm and unassuming manner in which he presents the events of the war. In the first part of his treatise Seidel undertakes to interpret the "spirit of the Constitution of the United States." He discusses the political system of the Union and the character of its population, and he then goes on to set forth the principles of American government, as guaranteeing the liberty of the people and the political rights and duties of American citizens. The second part contains the constitutions of the States; the third, the Constitution of the

³⁹ Sprengel, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

⁴⁰ G. Forster's *Sämtliche Schriften*, I, p. vi.

⁴¹ Günther Karl Friedr. Seidel (1764-1800), professor of history at the Berlinisch-Kölnisches Gymnasium.

Union. The work is supplemented by official documents concerning the history of the Revolutionary War and by annotated statements of Vice-president John Adams, referring to the cause of the American Revolution. An especially valuable paragraph enables the reader to inform himself about all English and German literature on the war which had been published up to that time.

In addition to the historians, a number of leading scholars in the field of geography and ethnology drew the attention of the German public to America in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. L. T. V. Spittler⁴² in Göttingen was one of the first who felt the necessity for the historian to study ancient and modern physical geography, including also America in the sphere of his researches. After him a special place was assigned to the geography of America by A. Fr. Büsching⁴³ in his publications *Magazin für die neuere Historie und Geographie von 1767 an* (Halle a/S.) and *Wöchentliche Nachrichten von neuen geographischen, statistischen u. a. Büchern* (Berlin, 1773-1787).

The first independent and comprehensive presentation of the geography of the United States was undertaken by Daniel Ebeling⁴⁴ in his *Erdbeschreibung und Geschichte von Amerika*, published in five volumes by Bohn in Hamburg in 1793. For decades thereafter this work was the richest source of information for all those in Germany who were interested in the study of America. After Ebeling's death, in 1817, an article in Cotta's

⁴² Ludw. Tim. Freiherr v. Spittler (1752-1810), a political writer, professor of philosophy in Göttingen, 1779-1797.

⁴³ A. Fr. Büsching (1724-1793), originator of the modern politico-statistical method of geography. Professor of theology in Göttingen, after 1767 member of the supreme consistorial court and headmaster of the Graue Kloster Gymnasium in Berlin. Most of his works are in the field of geography.

⁴⁴ Christoph Daniel Ebeling (1741-1817), after 1784 professor of history and the Greek language at the Gymnasium in Hamburg. He edited a series of descriptions of travel from 1780 to 1790.

Allgemeine Zeitung, written in his memory, called public attention to the incomparable merits of his work, and especially to the painstaking original researches on which it is based. The writer points out how Ebeling, regardless of expense and difficulties, never flagged in his efforts to obtain complete information from America. In writing his book he made use of all kinds of publications from the States, from important newspapers to insignificant leaflets and pamphlets, and also sought information from educated Americans in Hamburg. Even in America Ebeling's geography was well spoken of and was said to compare favorably with geographical works by native authors.⁴⁶

It may be worth mentioning, in this connection, that these men, Ebeling, Schubart, Moser, Spittler, Büsching, Sprengel, Seidel, never visited America in person. All of them, however, took pains to gather their material from reliable sources not only of English but also of American origin. Besides, they maintained close connections either with German-Americans or with travelers who had visited this country. They doubtless also obtained first-hand news from German mercenaries after their return from the New World, among whom were many men of culture. Furthermore, the cities where most of the works on America were published had a special regional interest in this country. Thus Hamburg, the great seaport of Germany, was especially attracted by the economic and geographical conditions of the Union, just as Göttingen, through its relations with England, was interested in our political development, while Swabia, always a friend of liberty, cherished hopes that the victory of the American colonies would mean the beginning of a new era of freedom even for Europe.

⁴⁶ *Allgemeine Zeitung*, July 31, 1817. (Appendix).—Israel Thorndike, a merchant in Boston, purchased in 1818 for the use of Harvard the library of Ebeling, which consists of 4,000 volumes and is remarkably rich in works on American history and antiquities.