

The Beginning of German Gymnastics in America by: Erich Geldbach Marburg - Cappel

The first attempt in America to introduce physical education' as a regular part of the daily school curriculum was made at Round Hill School in Northampton, Mass. It was there that Joseph Green Cogswell and George Bancroft had started their new experimental school in the fall of 1823. A few months earlier the two reformers, in order to attract students, had published a "Prospectus" and had promised, as their educational aim, "to preserve the health and improve the morals and the mental powers".² Among other things, it was also through physical education that they believed these ends could be accomplished, particularly, of course, the preservation of health.

Accordingly, not too small a portion of the day at Round Hill School was devoted to playful activities. This is revealed in a letter which Cogswell, soon after the opening of the school, wrote to his friend George Ticknor of Harvard University:

"We rise at six and meet soon after for prayers, study till eight, at which hour we breakfast, then play till nine, from nine till twelve *Stunden*, dine at half past twelve, play till two, from two to five *Stunden*, sup at half past five, play till seven, and then assemble for the evening occupation . . .".³

The students did running (a mile in 6½ minutes), jumping, leaping, climbing, and, on Saturday afternoon, hiking.

During the following summer the students were encouraged to raise their own vegetables and build their own houses in what was called "Crony Village". In addition, they would swim in the summer and skate in the winter, and Cogswell took them out on annual journeys with horses and wagons.

¹For an account of the Beck, Follen, Lieber trio cf. Fred Eugene Leonard, *A Guide to the History of Physical Education* (Philadelphia & New York 1923), p. 227-244. The story of the Round Hill School is further traced by Bruce L. Bennett, "The Making of Round Hill School" in *Quest*, (April 1965), p. 53. 63.

²J. G. Cogswell and G. Bancroft, *Prospectus of a School to be established at Round Hill, Northampton, Mass.* (Cambridge, 1823), p. 9.

³Life of Joseph Green Cogswell as Sketched in his Letters. Privately printed at the Riverside Press (preparatory note signed by Anna E. Ticknor) (Cambridge, 1874). p. 141.

Both T. G. Appleton, a former "Round Hiller", and E. M. Hartwell⁴ held the view that these new revolutionary concepts in American education were adopted from the Swiss school reformers Fellenberg and Pestalozzi whom Cogswell had visited on his European sojourn. Inasmuch as the Swiss schools, particularly Fellenberg's Institution, may have served as a model, they are, however, most likely not the most important source for the two New England pedagogists. Their concept of physical education did not have the odd and rather clumsy characteristics of what has been referred to as "*Gliederpuppentumen*" (puppet's gymnastics) of the Pestalozzian system. The descriptions of the physical activities at Round Hill much more resemble the school programs of some of the Moravian schools in Germany and, above all, that of Schnepfenthal.⁵ The latter was an offspring of the famous "*Philunthropinum*" in Dessau and had been started by a former minister, Christian Gotthilf Salzmann. It was at that school that Guts Muths, the "grandfather of modern physical education" had developed his system of gymnastics.⁶ Cogswell had been in Schnepfenthal, which he described in a letter of March 8, 1817 as the "admirable institution of Salzmann" and which he found to be located "in a delightfully pleasant and healthy valley."⁷

That the Moravian school system may have also contributed to the physical work at Round Hill can be seen by the fact that Bancroft had attended Schleiermacher's famous lecture on pedagogy at the University of Berlin." Schleiermacher had been a pupil of the Moravian schools and, although he broke away from the Moravian Church, considered himself, none the less, a "Moravian of higher order" throughout his life. Schleiermacher's intense interest in physical education is further illustrated by his close association with the *Turner* of Jahn's *Hasenheide* who attended his worship services regularly.⁸ Although there is no direct evidence that either Cogswell or Bancroft had ever visited a Moravian school, it may have been

⁴Thomas G. Appleton, "Some Souvenirs of Round-Hill School" *Old and New VI*, July 1872, p. 36f. and Edward M. Hartwell, *Physical Training in American Colleges and Universities*. Circular of Information of the Bureau of Education Nr. 5, 1885 (Washington 1886), p. 23.

⁵Cf. Erich Geldbach, *Sport und Protestantismus. Geschichte einer Begegnung* (Wuppertal 1975), p. 82ff.

⁶Joh. Christoph Friedrich Guts Muths, *Gymnastik für die Jugend . . . Schnepfenthal 1804* (2nd enlarged ed.).

⁷Quoted in: *The Harvard Graduate Magazine VI*, 1897/98 p. 10. Cogswell, unfortunately, gave no additional information as he was at the bottom of the page.

⁸*The Life and Letters of George Bancroft*, ed. by M. A. DeWolfe Howe (Port Washington, N. Y./London 1971, reprint of the 1908 edition), p. 90: "I have taken a course of lectures with Schleiermacher on the science of education; it is the most interesting which I have as yet attended." Schleiermacher's interest in physical work can be seen in his letters. Cf. *Aus Schleiermachers Leben. In Briefen*, vol. II (Berlin 1860), p. 357ff.

through Schleiermacher that Bancroft's interest in physical education was first aroused.⁹

Not until Karl Beck came to Northampton had there been a systematic instruction in gymnastics. Together with his friend Karl Follen, Beck had for political reasons migrated to the United States late in 1824 and became instructor of Latin at Round Hill early in the spring of 1825 through the efforts of George Ticknor. Having been a student of *Turnvater* Jahn in Berlin, Beck, upon his arrival at the school, constructed an outdoor gymnasium according to Jahn's plan just below the school buildings and began with a systematic training. "The whole school was divided into classes, and each class had an hour three times a week for instruction by Dr. Beck."¹⁰

Beck had further called both Cogswell's and Bancroft's attention to physical work. In his biography of Bancroft, Nye contends that between 1824 and 1826 Bancroft attempted to write various articles, "one on German methods of physical education . . . all of which came to naught."¹¹ The two school reformers managed, however, to publish an "Account" of their efforts at Round Hill. In it they refer explicitly to the merits of physical education :

"The present generation has acquired such health and strength as it possesses without any care of its own; and we can hardly form any idea of a whole nation, eagerly providing for the improvement of the body as well as for intellectual culture, decreeing a triumph to superiority of force and recording in its annals the names of men distinguished for the perfection of their physical organization. We have no conception of a whole people, assembling to witness the display and reward the exertion of consummate physical skill, and at the same time enjoying the perfect and sublime productions of human genius. It may be impossible to

⁹B. L. Bennett, op. cit., p. 56 states that Bancroft was much influenced by his visit to the school in Schulpforta. (He misspelled the name Schulpforte as had been done in his source *The Life and Letters of G. Bancroft*, op. cit., p. 97). As a proof Bennett quotes from one of Bancroft's letters to President Kirkland of Harvard: "I find it quite instructive to observe their institution from time to time; they know how to unite gymnastic exercises, music, and the sciences . . ." This quotation does not, however, refer to the school in Schulpforta, but to a private institution in Berlin which was organized by a few enthusiastic pedagogists, three of whom had studied under Pestalozzi. Hence Bancroft could visit them "from time to time" which he could not have done in far-away Schulpforta. To be sure, Bancroft had visited Schulpforta also where he, incidentally, placed the young Frederic Henry Hodge in the famous *Gymnasium*. However, this school was just the opposite of the private institution in Berlin. The *Gymnasium's* academic courses had remained virtually unchanged from the time the school was founded in 1543 as a *Furstenschule* until the 19th century when the school, as a result of the Vienna agreement, came under the jurisdiction and supervision of Prussia. In 1819 some changes were carried out by the Prussian school administration, much to the dismay of the principal and prominent former students who protested violently. Needless to say that in the year of Jahn's arrest no program of physical education or *Turnen* was introduced into the school. Bancroft may have been influenced by the academic courses offered in the Schulpforta Gymnasium, but he certainly could not have gained any insight there with regard to physical work.

¹⁰Account by Shattuck, in: E. M. Hartwell, op. cit., p. 22.

¹¹Russel B. Nye, *George Bancroft, Brahmin Rebel* (New York 1972), p. 80.

engraft on any modern nation a system of physical education, corresponding to that which prevailed in ancient Greece. But something must be done. Food, sleep, and exercise must be regulated, purity protected, life guaranteed against casualties, and temperance and exercise be set, even in the dawn of existence, to keep watch over health. Games and healthful sports, promoting hilarity and securing a just degree of exercise, are to be encouraged. Various means of motion are to be devised and applied, and, where these are regularly used, every thing is done to assist nature in strengthening the youthful constitution. If in addition to regularity in the use of exercise, the kinds of it are so arranged, that the several powers of the body may successively be brought into action and gradually led to greater exertions, it will not be long before the physical being assumes a new appearance, and in addition to the acquisition of a control of the body, beneficial results will be visible in general industry, deportment, and morals. The attempt, therefore, to provide the various means for gymnastic exercises, merits to be encouraged ; and whether the methods are by turns strange or common, complicated or simple, the best that are known should be employed.

We are deeply impressed with the necessity of uniting physical with moral education; and are particularly favored in executing our plans of connecting them by the assistance of a pupil and friend of Jahn, the greatest modern advocate of gymnastics. We have proceeded slowly in our attempts, for the undertaking was a new one; but now we see ourselves near the accomplishments of our views. The whole subject of the union of moral and physical education is a great deal simpler than it may at first appear. And here, too, we may say, that we were the first in the new continent to connect gymnastics with a purely literary establishment.

And discipline? If intellectual industry is promoted, and relaxation from it obtained in the regular exercise of the body, time is fully occupied, and order protected by application."¹²

These lines once more suggest that it was Beck who was responsible for a systematic application of gymnastics. The results of his efforts are highly praised: Physical education is in accordance with the development of children as prescribed by nature and its laws; its effects are in accordance with an ethos of work and standard of morals as was socially acceptable

¹²J. G. Cogswell and G. Bancroft, *Some Account of the School for the Liberal Education of Boys, established on Round Hill (Northampton, Mass. 1826)*, p. 10-12.

in New England; its exercise was not an idle waste of time, as Puritans might have thought, but rather a proper means to “redeem the time”.

While in Northampton, Beck also translated *Turnvater Jahn's “Deutsche Turnkunst”*. The book appeared in 1828 under the title “Treatise on Gymnasticks, taken chiefly from the German of F. L. Jahn”. In his preface Beck warns that no one “should expect to receive a correct idea of gymnasticks through this work, unless he joins practical exercises to the perusal of it. Gymnasticks are an art, and theory and practice should never be separated”. Beck looked upon Jahn's book as a guide to gymnastics and at the same time as the first step in arousing public interest in this subject. He also wanted to call gymnastics to the attention of scholars and expressed the hope that in the future gymnastics in its relation with other fields would become a subject of “impartial and thorough investigation”. He lists a few:

“The effect of the simple exercises upon the constitution, and the particular members of the body. — The practical application of the single exercises for particular pursuits and occupations. — The advantages, derived by a republic from gymnastick exercises, uniting in one occupation all the different classes of the people, and thus forming a new tie for those who, for the most part, are widely separated by their different education and pursuits of life. — Of the connection of instruction in gymnasticks with that of the other branches in institutions for educating instructors for their profession.”¹³

Because of financial difficulties and for other reasons¹⁴ Round Hill School was closed in 1832. Bancroft had already left the institution two years earlier, and Beck, sensing the discouraging financial situation, had decided to take up a new position at a school in Philipstown, N. Y. Upon Follen's recommendation he was appointed professor of Latin at Harvard University in 1832 where he served in this capacity until his retirement.

It was Follen who first introduced gymnastics into Harvard University. The efforts on the part of a few prominent teachers to make physical work a part of the student's lives had preceded his arrival. The earliest document is a letter to President Kirkland, dated April 15, 1825:

¹³Treatise on Gymnasticks taken chiefly from the German of F. L. Jahn (Northampton 1828), p. IV.

¹⁴For a full account cf. B. L. Bennett, *op. cit.*, p. 61f.

Dear Sir,

At the Gymnastic meeting last evening the two letters you favored me with — were read.

Dr. Warren was desired to continue the inquiries respecting the celebrated Jahn, with a view to ascertain as definitely as possible his last and easiest terms. Wm. Sullivan, J. Jackson, Geo. Ticknor, J. S. Foster, & myself were made a Committee to ascertain on what terms the gentlemen in Pennsylvania could be obtained, and to attend to everything conducive to such a planting of the gymnastic art in America as to enable it to prevail + pervade, + renovate, + elevate this people through an endless succession of generations.

Respectfully yours, J. G. Coffin.”¹⁵

It is uncertain who was responsible for calling such a meeting, or who, other than the persons mentioned, might have participated in sponsoring the cause of gymnastics. It is certain, however, that the committee referred to in Coffin's letter was not an official committee of the University. Not until August 15, 1825 was there such a committee. On that day a meeting of the Corporation was held and it was voted “That the President, Dr. Warren and Dr. Jackson be desired to device a plan for Gymnastic Exercises, and make a report to the Corporation.”¹⁶ Warren and Jackson, both professors in the Medical School, met with President Kirkland and decided that it was best for the College to obtain Karl Beck as an instructor in the art.¹⁷ The only obstacle seemed to have been the financial question. When the Corporation met again on October 28, 1825 the “Committee on Gymnasticks were requested to consider and report further what aid can be obtained towards the support of an Instructor with the hope of establishing Dr. Beck or some other to have charge of this Department of the University.”¹⁸

All three members of the committee came to realize that Beck was most unlikely to come to Harvard. President Kirkland, therefore, wrote a short note to Warren on October 22, 1825 : “I ask you to request of Mr. Amory to inquire of George Reimer

¹⁵Harvard College Papers. 2nd ser., vol. I, p. 64, Harvard University Archives (henceforth quoted as HUA).

¹⁶Corporation Records VI, 1819-1827, p. 267. HUA.

¹⁷In an undated letter Warren wrote to Kirkland: “Dr. Jackson and myself had a meeting today. After discussing the subject of our commission, it seemed best to us to begin by engaging some person acquainted with the science of Gymnastics and obtaining the details of the requisite plan from him. — We therefore propose to you to ascertain whether Mr. Cogswell's gymnasium (= Beck) can be obtained. If not, whether he will come here at their vocation and instruct some other person — and give information as to the arrangements for us to make . . . In the meantime we must be looking round for a Professor of Gymnastics.” Corporation Papers 1825, HUA.

¹⁸Corporation Records VI, 1819-1827. p. 280. HUA.

— Berlin where Frederick Ludwig Jahn — the founder of the gymnastic art — lives + on what terms he may be obtained for us to teach gymnastics + German.”¹⁹ The President had in mind to secure the services of the very best man for Harvard, and that meant the “*Turnvater*” himself. As Ticknor thought of increasing the number of courses offered by the foreign language department, including classes in German, Jahn seemed to be the ideal candidate to teach in both areas.

Both Jackson and Warren developed some new ideas and submitted them to President Kirkland on October 27 and 28 respectively:²⁰

“If Dr. B cannot be obtained, is it possible that the German teacher, (whose name I will not venture to write) may be obtained to render the same services; or some other German already instructed in this art. Or, lastly, some one of our countrymen & a graduate of our College if possible, may be found ready first to learn & then to teach this useful art.

Or, perhaps, Dr. Beck might be engaged to give his assistance during six months. In this time different classes of students might be formed & organized in some manner, & gain much information from Dr. B., so that they might afterwards go on by themselves & transmit their knowledge to members of their respective companies & thus perpetuate their knowledge in the College.

With great respect I am Rev. Sir, your obedient servant
J. Jackson.”

Warren’s letter is more elaborate:

“Rev. and Dear Sir,

On receiving your note, I informed Dr. Jackson of your wish to have a report, and we thought of requesting a meeting of the Committee; but I afterwards received the enclosed letter from him, which should be read previously to the following remarks.

It would be extremely desirable to get Dr. Beck or some person acquainted with the details of the Gymnastic art, to act as superintendent. But we cannot expect to procure such an individual from Germany, in less time than a year; and consider it very improbable, that Dr. Beck would be relinquished by his present employers. — If the establishment of the Gymnasium should be post-

¹⁹Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, John C. Warren Collection (henceforth quoted as JCW Coll.).

²⁰College Papers. vol. XI, p. 82f.

poned, there is reason to apprehend it might be lost sight of. —

In this state of things, it seems to me expedient to take measures for opening a Gymnasium, without waiting for a professor of the art. — . . . I apprehend it would be best to provide every accomodation for the common games, which are practiced by young men; and a secluded place for employing them. Besides these, some extra-ordinary exercises might be necessary in bad weather; such as could be performed under cover. — If the proposed plan were opened in this way, it is impossible it could fail entirely; and this beginning would not preclude the introduction of more artificial modes of exercise, when a proper person can be procured to teach them.

The space required for a single Gymnasium might be about 200 yards in length, by 60 in bredth; but as this would not accomodate the whole of the students, and as it is probably necessary to the success of the project, that the classes should be separated, four times this space would be required, which would make about four acres. — Half this space might possibly answer. — The covered space required, might be about 100 feet by 25; this might be in 4 separate buildings or sheds; or a central building might be made, 100 feet square. The graduates, and probably some of the Government, would resort to the Gymnasium; which would perhaps be the best way in which the students could be invited. In the present state of things, it seems that we are not satisfied in proposing an exact plan; but simply the requesting your decision on these two points. 1. Whether an attempt shall be made to obtain Dr. Beck. 2. Whether a proper piece of land shall be immediately obtained.

I have the honour to be very respectfully your friend & servant John C. Warren.”

Warren also carried out the President’s request concerning Jahn. He wrote a letter to William Amory who was, at that time, on his way to be a student at Gottingen University. Amory answered from Gottingen on January 22, 1826:

“Dr. Warren — Dr. Sir,

I have to day received an answer from Mr. Reimer of Berlin, to whom I wrote immediately upon my arrival at Göttingen, concerning his friend Professor Jahn, explaining to him the intention of the Government of Harvard University to institute a Gymnasium at Cambridge & their desire to know upon what terms Prof. Jahn would go to America to teach the Gymnastic Art & the German Language. — Mr. Reimer apologizes in his answer of the 10th Inst. that an earlier reply to my

letter of Dec. 26th. had been necessarily prevented by his absence from Berlin at the time my letter reached there — this will excuse me I hope for the long delay that it had occasioned in this business. With Mr. Reimer's, I received one also from Professor Jahn himself, which as it contains a repetition of all that's important in Mr. Reimer's I will enclose it to you in English.

With regard to Salary Mr. R. is rather more explicit. He says Prof. Jahn could not receive less than two thousand dolls. a year & that he required his traveling expenses to be paid; he explained too some part of Prof. Jahn's rhapsody. — That the pension from the Prussian Govt. and his wife's prospective annuity are intended to indemnify him for his long imprisonment,²¹ and on condition that he will not recommence his former occupations. — His letter seems to imply that he must remain at home some years, to settle his pecuniary affairs; but this is not so — he is ready at any time that the gentlemen to whom you refer his terms think them reasonable enough to be accepted. I regret exceedingly that this negotiation should terminate as I apprehend it will unsuccessfully, and more especially as I hear from every body of whom I have made inquiries that Prof. J. is universally esteemed an excellent & intelligent man. — In inquiring of Prof. J. his terms, I have done all that I felt authorized to do. If his demands seem exorbitant, perhaps, you will propose your terms to him, he may relinquish part of his claims; or if not — some other man whose situation in Life and whose age are different may be found — & Prof. J. is I understand one of these men, who would lend his assistance making a selection with great readiness. — I shall of course be most happy if I can be of any service to you in effecting this or any other object. I will only add (that in case you approve of Mr. J.'s several points) Professors B. & B. the head men in the University Library told me that Mr. J. would no doubt make a very judicious selection in purchasing a Library. — My respects to your family & I am Sir your obt. Servt. Wm. Amory."

Jahn's letter explains in more details his "exorbitant demands" although some of his reasoning is rather obscure; his letter is dated January 8th 1826:

"Whoever has been compelled to witness the works which he has himself raised, destroyed by the power of others, would without doubt as soon as he could procure the necessary means, willingly labour for their resto-

²¹Jahn was held prisoner from 1819 to 1825

ration. Whoever as a Discoverer or Inventor first makes the offer of his Improvements to his own country and is rejected, must apply somewhere else. — Lastly, whoever is compelled in his own country to idleness and to abstain from all employment may without violating a precious duty, dedicate himself to the service of Mankind. — There is therefore no reason to hesitate with regard to the proposal itself, at the same time, there are several points which must first be settled. First — The Salary I receive from the Government, a pension of one thousand dollars a year for life, and at the same time enjoy the best opportunity and leisure for employing myself both usefully & agreeably, so that I can after some years longer live without care or trouble in the most respectable manner. — Secondly — The last six years have greatly impaired my property, so that a few years would be required in order to pay off all my debts — Thirdly, My wife receives after my death, if she remains in Germany, a pension of three hundred dollars a year for life, but which will not be granted if I cross the Sea — and it ought not be, that my transplantation to America should deprive me or those I leave behind me, of our income. — In order to teach the German Language in a foreign quarter of the Globe it is absolutely necessary to be previously provided with a small German Library of the value of at least three thousand dollars. This Library which must at all events be placed at the disposition of a Teacher, would remain in other respects the property of the Institution. If the Gymnastic art is ever to succeed there, & take deep root, one must commence, not sparingly but with spirit, I must therefore be permitted to bring with me four assistants who as they are all young men of scientific education must be paid accordingly. Such an important affair must not be permitted to flag or be neglected after one pair of eyes are closed in death. Should the Gymnastic Art once be removed across the Atlantic it must flourish proper until another Atlantic sink.

Signed F. L. Jahn.

In the duplicate of the letter in which this is enclosed you will find the original of Prof. Jahn himself.

Wm. Amory.

The Dolls. herein mentioned are of course Prussian dolls. — not more than 72 cts. of American Money.”²²

Jahn's demands were, indeed, “exorbitant”. The Corporation had proposed to Karl Follen that he be an instructor of German

²²Harvard College Papers, 2nd ser., vol. 1, p. 24f. & 33f., HUA. For a psychological analysis of Jahn's attitude cf. Erich Geldbach, “Turnvater Jahn — Harvard-Professor?” in: *deutsches turnen*, vol. 120, 28 Aug. 1975, p. 350-353.

at a salary of \$500 a year.²³ Follen had agreed to these terms and had moved to Cambridge in December 1825. When Amory's and Jahn's letters arrived, he had already begun a class in gymnastics. Follen was well qualified for such teaching. Although he had not been an immediate student of Jahn in Berlin, he had throughout his student days at Giessen University indulged in gymnastics and fencing. Like most *Turner* he advocated the unification of Germany; however, contrary to Jahn and most of his followers, he was of the opinion that this goal could only be achieved by means of the *Fürstenmord* (murder of the princes) : The monarchical system of government was to give way to a republic. On account of his radical views, Follen was forced to leave the country shortly after the theology student and *Turner* Karl Ludwig Sand had stabbed the reactionary writer August von Kotzebue to death.²⁴ Follen turned to Switzerland where he taught for a few years in the Law School of Basel University and then made his way to America, the "fatherland of his principles".²⁵

In a letter to his friend Beck early in March 1826 Follen wrote : "I expect our University will particularly apply to you on the subject of gymnastics. I have commenced gymnastic exercises with the students . . . At present I use one of the dining halls. All show much zeal."²⁶ The response of the students to Follen's efforts was, indeed, overwhelming, so much so that the administration of the University was afraid that some disorder might erupt and issued a "communication respecting Gymnastic exercises" on March 22, 1826 :

"The students wishing to practice gymnastic exercises under the direction of Drs. Webster and Follen will give in their names. — The students in each class who shall thus give in their names, will choose each term four of their member to act as monitor.

The monitor will attend by themselves the successive exercises given by the Gentlemen superintendants and will assist in importing a knowledge of the exercises (abroad). Those who attach themselves to the Gymnasium, have no exemption from any of the laws and rules of the College, particularly the law establishing study hours; the rule forbidding students to stop or collect or have sports in the entries on the piazza or any

²³Meeting of President and Fellows of Harvard College on Sept. 28, 1825, Corporation Records VI, 1819-1827, p. 278.

²⁴Details in: Erich Geldbach, *Sport und Protestantismus*, p. 151ff.

²⁵Follen to Lieber, Feb. 21, 1827, Huntington Library. Cf. also George W. Spindler, *The Life of Karl Follen* (Chicago 1917), p. 76ff.

²⁶Eliza Cabot Follen, *The Works of Charles Follen with a Memoir of his Life*, vol. I (Boston 1842), p. 161.

where in the College yard, and the law forbidding class meetings without leave. They must pay strict regard to the rules and orders prescribed by the Superintendants. — Instruments and apparatus will be placed in the play Ground that exercises may begin as soon as practicable. The Dinner in Commons will be at 1 o'clock after this week. You will give your names at this time and at the afternoon recitation and those who give their names may meet in the north inner dining Hall, tomorrow after morning Commons, and choose monitors for the remainder of this and for the next term."²⁷

About two weeks later Follen and Webster submitted a list of equipment that they felt was essential to build an outdoor gymnasium :

“Rev. President Kirkland, April 4, 1826
Dear Sir

Having had occasion to hear that our desire to promote the gymnastical exercises, has created some fear that the erection of the necessary machines would lead to more expenses than would be agreeable, we have thought it best to state to you our readiness to aid the students in these beneficial exercises provided we can feel at liberty to have the machines put up. We have therefore examined with Dr. Beck the book (= Jahn's *Deutsche Turnkunst*) & taken his advice; we have selected only such as are absolutely necessary to the success of the undertaking & herewith present a list of them : Without these machines we cannot teach any new exercises, & those the most important, & must be compelled to relinquish the experiment.

Should you authorize us to proceed we shall be careful to avoid unnecessary expense. Although the expense may be three or four hundred dollars, the successful introduction of these exercises may eventually amply repay it, in the inducement it may add to those already existing for students to repair here for education.

As the carpenters usually employed by the College may be too much engaged to attend to these machines, & as it will be attended with many advantages to have them put up during vacation, we respectfully ask permission to employ other workmen if necessary. We are Sir with great respect Yr. Obt. Servts.

J. Webster
Ch. Follen.

²⁷Rec. of the Immediate Government of Harvard College, X, 1822-1829, p. 119f.

List of machines wanted
 3 or 4 sets of Parallel bars
 2 Vaulting bars
 1 Balancing do.
 2 Machines for hanging & c.
 1 Dynamometer
 6 or 8 Jumping stands
 1 Ditch 25 feet wide at one end
 5 do. do. at the other
 30 do. do. long
 1 Climbing Machine, poles + ropes
 2 or 3 Rope ladders
 12 Jumping poles
 Moveable machine for hanging
 1 Mast with pins 30 feet
 1 Do. plain 60 feet
 1 Jumping step.”²⁸

The Corporation appropriated the money, and the gymnasium was set up at a piece of ground called the Delta. In his Autobiography James Freeman Clarke gives the following description :

“We began with a large room, fitted up with parallel and horizontal bars, ladders, climbing poles, wooden horses, dumb-bells, and the like. Afterward the triangular piece of ground, called the Delta, where Memorial Hall now stands, was fitted up with a more elaborate apparatus. Beside the rest, there was an upright mast, about seventy feet high, stayed by guys, which ran from the top of the mast in opposite direction to the ground, at an angle of about thirty degrees. Half-way up the mast was a platform, from which large beams ran out on either side, at right angles, supported at each end by strong posts. To this platform one could ascend by a ladder, but from the platform to the top he must climb the bare mast, aided only by a knotted rope.”²⁹

Because of the success of the gymnasium the President and Fellows of Harvard College voted on September 18, 1826 “that Dr. Follen be appointed Superintendent of the Gymnasium — for the year ending — to see to the execution of the regulations for the same + attend to give instructions not less than three times in a week and that he receive for his services one hundred dollars annually.”³⁰ The fact that Follen served as instructor

²⁸Corporation Papers, 1826, HUA.

²⁹J. F. Clarke, Autobiography, Diary and Correspondence, ed. by E. E. Hole (New York 1968). p. 43f. For further accounts cf. T. W. Higginson, in: The Harvard Book II. p. 186; C. Palfrey, in: The Harvard Register II, p. 193; A. Peabody, Harvard Reminiscences (Boston 1888), p. 120f.

³⁰Corporation Records VI, 1819-1827, p. 291, HUA.

of German and superintendent of the gymnasium for \$600 facilitated the University's decision to discontinue the negotiations with Jahn.

Follen's appointment as superintendent was renewed by the Corporation for the year 1827,³¹ and before the fall term started Follen had the rules of the gymnasium in print:

"The regular gymnastic exercises will be on Wednesday and Friday, from 12 to 1 o'clock, or, when the length of the day admits, during the hour next after supper. On Monday the Monitors and Vice-Monitors are to meet separately, to prepare for the general exercises.

During the time of the regular exercises, none but those who have entered their names as Gymnasts are allowed to be on the Delta, or in the Gymnastic Room, unless they are Officers of the College, or are introduced by one of them.

During the regular exercises, the pupils shall perform no other exercises than those which are indicated by their respective Monitors.

No pupil is allowed to sit or lie on the bare ground, or to rest on any part of the apparatus.

No part of the apparatus shall be used for any purpose for which it is not calculated, such as the ropes of the climbing apparatus for swinging, or the balancing bars for sitting.

Not more than three persons at a time shall be exercising upon the same balancing bar.

The Gymnasts are to be put into divisions, according to the height of the pupils.

In each of these divisions a Monitor and a Vice-Monitor are to be chosen by the division, one of whom will be the general Monitor for the week; and from him the other Monitors will receive directions.

During the regular exercises, the pupils are to observe the directions of their respective Monitors.

The dress allowed for the gymnastic exercises, shall be worn by the pupils only in the Gymnasium, and whilst going to it from their rooms and returning.

The pupils and Monitors are to conform to the regulations which may from time to time be made by the Superintendent of the Gymnasium, with the approbation of the President.

On the first Monday of each Term, those who wish to practise gymnastic exercises will meet in the south inner dining-hall, at noon; to enter their names, to be arranged in their divisions, and to choose Monitors.

³¹*Ibid.*, p. 311.

The meeting for the above purposes, for this Term, will be on Wednesday, the twenty-second of November instant, at noon.

Harvard University, 17 November, 1826.”

During the summer of 1827 the college also secured the services of a French fencing-master to give instructions in fencing to four monitors in each class who, then, instructed the rest of the students interested in fencing.³² Follen was asked by the President to submit a report on this part of physical culture which he did on December 17, 1827. Follen had been an outstanding and fearless fencer in his student days and defends this art against possible Puritan misconceptions :

“Reverend and dear Sir,

According to your injunction, I have the honor of presenting to you the reports of the instructor in fencing, Mr. Verley, and of the monitors.

To comply with your desire of having my own views of this new branch of instruction in college, I think it unnecessary to comment upon the usefulness of fencing in general. All those reasons which speak in favor of gymnastic exercises in general, recommend also this part of the system. It is acknowledged by all, that the exercise of fencing is in itself an innocent relaxation, conducive to health and graceful deportment. It imparts not only to the eye and the hand but to the whole frame, an exactness, nimbleness and firmness which must exert an invigorating influence upon all the mental as well as bodily powers. Accordingly we find the art of fencing practiced and taught as a regular branch of instruction in every university of Europe; and even where schools for gymnastic exercises in general are established, the fencing, on account of its difficulty and importance is commonly assigned to a particular teacher. In regard to the method of Mr. Verley I observe that the art of fencing he teaches is not that which is calculated for a military but merely for a general gymnastic use. The military and the gymnastic fencing are two distinct branches of the same art; and the latter only is commonly practiced by persons in civil life as a healthful and gentlemanly exercise. I have several times observed Mr. Verley in his practical instruction and while he was directing and advising the monitors who were engaged in teaching their fellow students, and I am convinced of his eminent qualification as an instructor in his department. The progress the students have made in fencing during the six months of Mr. Verley’s engagement, is very consider-

³²J. F. Clarke, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

able; and the interest of the students in their exercise has hitherto been constantly increasing. Mr. Verley has been very exact in fulfilling his engagement; and it gives me peculiar pleasure to have learned from the instructor as well as from the pupils, that the behavior of the students has been always respectful toward their teacher and friendly toward one another. This is one instance more in support of a conclusion derived from experience, that fencing in itself rather promotes than obviates good feeling among young men. It may indeed, as almost anything else, be made the means of fighting: but where the spirit of duelling does not already prevail, the fencing will never create it; and where that disposition exists, it will accomplish its ends by other and worse means, if it can not do it by fencing.

If the above remarks on the usefulness of fencing in general and on the method and success of Mr. Verley's instruction in college, are just, as I believe them to be, it would seem desirable to reengage this gentleman for a longer time than a quarter of a year. For the college certainly cannot expect Mr. Verley to make the instruction of our students his principal object unless he has a lasting interest in their proficiency in his department; and more effectual regulations for the practice of this art can be made if they are calculated for a longer period. I submit all these observations to your superior judgement, and have the honor to be, Reverend and dear Sir your obedient servant Charles Follen."³³

In the report for 1827 to the Board of Overseers the statement is made that "the students have continued, though not with the same eagerness, to take part in the Gymnastic Exercise, with no small advantage & improvement of their health."³⁴ The eagerness seems to have further dropped in 1828 so that Follen decided to resign from his position as superintendent. In his letter of resignation he mentions that the English translation of Jahn's book³⁵ was partly responsible for his decision:

"Dear Sir,

I request you to inform the Corporation of Harvard College of my desire to be dismissed from my office as superintendant of the Gymnasium at Cambridge. I think this office here in college no longer necessary since the translation of Jahn's work on gymnastics by Dr. Beck has furnished those who wish to practise these exercises according to rule, with a sufficient

³³Harvard College Papers, 2nd ser., vol. II. 1827-28, p. 160f., HUA.

³⁴Reports to the Overseers, vol. 13, 1826-1830, p. 53, HUA.

³⁵In August 1827 Follen had been authorized by the Corporation "to suscribe on behalf of the College for twelve copies of the Treatise on Gymnastic." Letter Book 1817-1828, p. 83. HUA.

guide. Any additional advice which might be wanted I shall always be glad to give. I should recommend the formation of a gymnastic society among the students with the same or similar rules as those adopted by the London gymnastics society, which were published in the Boston Medical Intelligencer of last year.³⁶

If the taste for these exercises should, as I hope, revive among the students this autumn, some repair in the apparatus, to the amount of nearly 20 dollars, will be necessary: and if the Corporation should wish to have this done, I am willing to give the proper directions to the carpenter.

I have the honor to be, Dear Sir respectfully yours
Charles Follen.”³⁷

Follen's resignation was also caused by the fact that he was appointed “Instructor in Ecclesiastical History & Ethics in the Theological School”.³⁸ His new duties and his old responsibilities as an instructor in German apparently forced him to sever his ties with the gymnasium.

Follen's optimistic prediction that Jahn's book would be a sufficient guide in all future activities of the gymnasium turned out to be false. With eagerness on part of the students already diminishing, the lack of leadership proved fatal for the exercises of German gymnastics at Harvard. The repairs which Follen had thought necessary were not carried out, and by 1830 all the apparatus had been dismantled.

Karl Follen should not only be remembered as the person who for the first time introduced gymnastics into an American College, but also as the superintendent of the first public gymnasium in America. During the year 1825 the discussion about opening such an institution went on among prominent citizens of Boston. Daniel Webster wrote to John Warren that he was “highly pleased with the idea of a gymnasium” and pledged his full support: “I shall most gladly assist in your endeavors, thinking that I do some service when I aid any measure calculated to enforce on the rising generation a sense of the invaluable advantages of temperance and exercise.”³⁹ Warren organized a private committee which applied to the City Council for a piece of land which might be turned into a gymnasium. The committee, then, asked the citizens of Boston to

³⁶They were also printed in the American Journal of Education I, 1826, p. 504ff.

³⁷Harvard College Papers, 2nd ser., vol. III. 1828-1829, p. 90, HUA.

³⁸Corporation Records VII, 1827-1836, p. 85, HUA.

³⁹Edw. Warren, ed., The Life of John Collins Warren, vol. I (Boston 1860), p. 224.

assemble for a meeting to be held at the hall of the Exchange Coffee House on June 15, 1826. At that meeting William Sullivan was chosen chairman and Charles P. Curtis Secretary. The secretary filed the following report which was published in William Russell's recently established periodical, the American Journal of Education :

“It appeared that the city authorities had granted the use of a piece of land at the westerly end of Boylston street . . . for two years from the 1st of May, 1826, — and that one or more instructors could be had to conduct the exercises of the Gymnasium; that such an Institution would develop the physical powers of the pupils therein, and direct the use of them, in the duties and rational amusements of social life, and essentially promote health and vigor; that similar establishments in Europe had produced the effects expected from them; and that the Gymnasium of the University has produced the most salutary and beneficial consequences among the students of that seminary; that far less of bodily strength and vigorous health, are found among the young men in this city, and especially among the *sedentary*, than might be, if a very practicable change of habits were introduced; and that a regular course of physical education would tend to prolong life, and to increase the proper enjoyment of it; and from these, and similar views, it was unanimously resolved by this meeting :

First. That it is expedient to attempt the establishment of a Gymnastic School in the city of Boston.

Secondly. That William Sullivan, John C. Warren, George Ticknor, John C. Coffin, and John S. Foster, together with such an addition to their number as they may select, not exceeding five, be a committee to carry the first resolution into effect, in conformity with the public notice for calling this meeting; that the committee be authorized to ask the voluntary contributions of the Citizens of Boston, for the establishment of a Gymnasium, at such time, and in such manner, as they may think expedient; and to receive and apply such contributions to establishing the same.

Thirdly. That this meeting have received with great pleasure the deputation of young gentlemen from the *University* of Cambridge, and are benefitted and obliged by the information derived from this source; that the interest which the members of the University have taken in the object of this meeting, is highly creditable to them ; and is regarded as a pleasing demonstration of public spirit and an honourable promise of future usefulness.

The deputation from the University presented the sub-joined letter, and verbally explained the course of exercises at the College Gymnasium, and its beneficial effects. In behalf of this committee it was stated to the meeting, that the health of the students had been greatly improved; that intellectual vigor was found to be the consequence of physical improvement, that the diseases and inquietudes of feeble digestion, had disappeared from among the students; that 'the demand for sensation' too frequently supplied in unoccupied periods, by *smoking*, was now fully satisfied by the manly exercises of the Gymnasium; that the regularity with which the course of instruction was pursued, from simple to masterly movements was such as to secure the pupils from injurious accidents, and that they were surprised to find how easily and securely exercises might be performed, which would seem to the uninstructed 'difficult, if not impracticable'; that its social effects were not the least of its consequences to be valued, inasmuch as one common interest, in a commendable pursuit, had brought into contact and friendly feeling, those who might have passed the whole period of college life without being more to each other than *mere strangers*.

Voted, That the transactions of this meeting be published."

The students who had appointed a committee to express their opinion at the meeting of the citizens had this to say about gymnastics :

"From the short experience we have had in gymnastic exercises we believe them highly beneficial, and we feel a sincere desire that others should participate in the advantages to be derived from them. The improvement in health has been perceptible, and general, among all those who have engaged in them. The cheerfulness which they produce, and the increased agility which results from them, are remarkable. The mind sympathises with the body, and is equally acted on. All idle apprehensions of danger have long since been removed; and we are surprised at the ease with which we perform motions, that at first seemed difficult, if not impracticable.

We are glad to find physical education gaining ground ; and hope it may soon become a regular part of the system of education. The soldier, sailor, traveller, and men of many mechanical employments, find the accomplishments of the gymnasium of the first necessity in their daily business ; and in cases of emergency, they are of the highest importance in every walk of life. The object of this communication is not however, to enter into an argument on the proposed establishment, but

simply to express the pleasure we feel, that such a one is in contemplation; and to assure you, that so far as can be argued from its popularity here, you have the highest prospect of success. With the highest respect,

John H. W. Page, Edward North, Robert Rantoul, Jr., *Seniors*; Ben. T. Crowinshield, Epes Sargent Dixwell, *Juniors*; S. M. E. Kittle, R. C. Winthrop, Charles C. Emerson, James Jackson, Jr., *Sophomores*; Benj. M. Saul, Benigno Davenport, W. H. Channing, *Freshmen*.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY, Cambridge,

June 14, 1826."⁴⁰

About a month after the citizens and students had met, the Committee issued a notice to the citizens of Boston:

"The undersigned Committee, appointed to effect the establishment of a GYMNASTIC SCHOOL in BOSTON, respectfully inform the citizens thereof, that this important measure cannot be carried into operation unless *the* sum of *five thousand* dollars shall be subscribed and given for the purpose.

The ground appropriated for this use by the City Government, is to be filled up and enclosed, — a building is to be erected, and suitable machinery and apparatus to be set up. An Instructor is to be paid.

The Committee believe, when the beneficial effects of this discipline and training shall once be felt and demonstrated, that the establishment will either be adopted by the city authorities, and carried on at the public expense; or that individuals capable and disposed, will find ample inducement to take it into their own hands.

When a sufficient sum shall have been subscribed, a proper person will be employed to collect the money. It may be remarked that the Committee have the same, and no other interest than every other inhabitant of Boston has in this measure. They have prepared the way for its success, so far as they have been able, and must now depend entirely on the disposition of the public to raise the necessary funds, every other means and agency being now at command. Every parent, child, and other person, whose happiness is to be promoted by the greatest improvement of the human being, which has in any age been contemplated or secured, must be deeply interested in the introduction and support of this branch of education, because without this, all other cultivation must be comparatively, but partial and unsuccessful. As this institution is intended to be

⁴⁰American Journal of Education I, 1826, 443-445.

accessible to all classes of persons, the subscription of any individual, however small or large, will be received gratefully, and faithfully applied.

WILLIAM SULLIVAN
 JOHN G. COFFIN
 JOHN C. WARREN
 GEORGE TICKNOR
 JOHN S. FOSTER
 THOMAS MOTLEY
 JOSIAH QUINCY, Jr.
 JOHN B. DAVIS

Wm. B. FOWLE was afterwards added.

At a meeting of the Committee, June 26, 1826, it was *Voted*, That the above notice be printed and left in the several insurance offices of the City, and that it be published in the newspapers."⁴¹

Soon after some money had been collected, Warren asked Follen to be interim-superintendent. Follen officially opened the public gymnasium on September 28, 1826: "The day after tomorrow my rope-dancing begins in Boston", he told his friend Karl Beck on September 26, "The gallows stand, in significant majesty, on the spot. There is no lack of gallow birds, large and small, genteel and vulgar."⁴² To his relatives in Europe he reported that he had set up an excellent *Turnplatz* in Boston and that he was to receive a yearly compensation of \$800 for his services which required him to be in Boston three days a week for four or five hours.⁴³ After only one month of operation a very favorable report appeared:

"The physical effects of the gymnastic exercise, on pupils of very different ages — from ten to fifty — are surprising. Many have doubled their vigor, and attained that habitual glow of activity which does not die away immediately after the hour for exercise is over, but accompanies the individual into the transaction of business, or sustains him through the tedious hours of sedentary application. The general and substantial improvement of health, is another benefit arising from the gymnasium. Periodical and pennant headaches . . . have in some instances been done away; and to all this may be added the ability for various bodily movements and efforts, which, a month ago, seemed to the same individuals who now perform them with ease, to require an energy almost miraculous . . . Perhaps one of the most gratifying circumstances connected

⁴¹Boston Public Library. The last sentence was later added by hand.

⁴²Follen, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 163.

⁴³H. Haupt, ed., Follen-Briefe, in: *Jahrbuch der Deutsch-Amerikanischen Historischen Gesellschaft von Illinois* XIV, 1914, p. 37.

with the gymnasium in this city, is the great diversity of situations in life to which the pupils belong. Physicians, lawyers, and clergymen, are intermixed with young men from the counter and the countinghouse, and with boys from the public schools. This circumstance is found not at all unfavorable to the decorum or the success with which the exercises are conducted, and is, we think, a very satisfactory indication of the extensive interest which the great subject of physical education has excited.”⁴⁴

On June 17, 1826, only two days after the decisive meeting of the citizens and students in Boston, Warren made a second attempt to procure the services of *Turnvater* Jahn — this time on behalf of the gymnasium in Boston. Again he wrote to William Amory in Göttingen asking him to direct a letter to Jahn. Amory answered on January 4, 1827:

“Dear Sir,

On receiving yrs. of June 17th. I wrote to Prof. Jahn making the inquiries you directed. I waited from October till December and as no answer came I requested Mr. Cunningham at Halle only 20 Miles from Prof. Jahn’s residency to call on the distinguished Professor and propose the questions contained in yr. last. He did so — I have just read his answer. He respectfully declines going to America for the present for the following reasons 1st. His mother, who is extremely old and failing has no other support than him, this fines him till her death.⁴⁵ 2nd. He considers himself already too far advanced in life for such an undertaking — & lastly he thinks that he is most serviceable to the cause of liberty by remaining where he is. He will write a statement of his views shortly and it shall immediately be forwarded to you. From all accounts — he seems to be a little cracked. He looks upon himself as one of the bulwarks of liberty, as a light to mankind and seems to imagine even now that the destiny of Europe rests upon his shoulders. He is a prodigious enthusiast — a great admirer of America of course and hopes to visit it at some future time. — He is at present patronizing the Greeks — wears the forbidden Burschen coat so that no man can say / as he told Mr. Cunningham ‘that he had changed his opinions with his coat’ — He called on Mr. C. accompanied by two Jena students who had come to pay him their homage — the three men dressed alike — with long hair — short frock coats + jackets with a

⁴⁴Am. Journal of Education I, 1826, 701.

⁴⁵Jahn’s mother died June 9, 1827. Cf. Carl Euler, Friedrich Ludwig Jahn. Sein Leben und Wirken (Stuttgart 1881), p. 583.

worked shirt collar turned over — He professes to have to most intimate knowledge of mankind and that he can accomodate himself to all from Prince to the Peasant — He recommended very highly a Mr. Liebe (sic) who he supposes already in America. This Mr. L. has been twice in Prison and escaped from Germany to avoid the trial — is one of the Prof.'s firmest adherents & as an Instructor in the Turnkunst extraordinarily well qualified. The 32 Students imprisoned on account of the last discovered treasonable society, are to be freed by the King as a Newyear's act — These or at least many will probably go to America & supply the country with Turn-Teachers — I sincerely hope they may — as I am sure the more German Instructors we have in America the better."

On the second page of his letter he added:

"A 4th. reason for Prof. Jahn's declining that I see I have omitted is that he is not entirely a free man — is still somewhat involved in some criminal processes still undetermined. If you ask an explanation of this ensuing inconsistency I am unable to answer it. —

With the highest respect and esteem
your Obt. & Humble Servant & Friend
Wm. Amory."

On the first page the following later addition is found:

"Excuse my occupying so much of yr. time. I thought it might be agreeable to you to hear any thing of so distinguished as Jahn is. Present my respects to Mrs. & Miss Warren and pray command my services if I can be of any use in anyway — Blumenbach enquires almost every time I see him after Dr. Warren & I promised him to obtain for him any work that you are writing or should write. I regret the unavoidable delay that there has been in this affair & hope that it may have occasioned no inconvenience."⁴⁶

The "Mr. Liebe" mentioned in Amory's letter was no other than Franz (Francis) Lieber who had been a close follower of Jahn. After the young theology student and *Turner* Karl Ludwig Sand had murdered the reactionary writer August von Kotzebue, Lieber, only a few days after Jahn, was also arrested on account of conspiracy and subversion. He was released from prison after four months only to find out that the Prussian police would not let him study at any Prussian University. He tried to be admitted in various other German universities, and

⁴⁶Mass. Hist. Soc., JCW Coll.

finally he matriculated at Jena where he received the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. With a few other Philhellenes he went to Greece to help the Greeks in their struggle against the Turks. Only after three months, however, Lieber was on his way back, completely disillusioned. He landed in Ancona and went to Rome where he met the Prussian minister to the Vatican, the famous historian Barthold Georg Niebuhr. Niebuhr liked Lieber very much and kept him as private tutor of his son Marcus. This was in the summer of 1822. The following year Niebuhr decided to go back home, and in August 1823 Lieber was in Berlin again. However, after only a few months, he was again under constant surveillance by the police who, on occasions questioned him and even arrested him once. Thanks to Niebuhr's intervention Lieber was released from prison, but he felt that he could no longer stay in Prussia, and in May 1826 he escaped to London. Through John Neal of Portland, Maine and George Bond of Boston, Lieber learned that the position of permanent instructor of the Boston gymnasium was open, and he immediately submitted his proposals in a letter to Bond on September 21, 1826. Lieber also sent two letters of recommendation, in their original and in an English version, to Bond. One was written by the instructor of the military swimming school in Berlin, Major General v. Pfuël, and the other by *Turnvater* Jahn himself.⁴⁷

Bond took all the material and went back to Boston. The gymnastic committee did not make an immediate decision as an answer from Jahn was still pending. Somewhat disturbed about the long delay Lieber reminded Bond on January 24, 1827 of the latter's promise :

“Dear Sir,

As you promised me in September of the last year to favour me with a notice weither (sic) the affairs in Boston might be favourable for an employment as Professor of Gymnastics, Swimming and German Language or not, I take the liberty to beg answer from you as early as possible, because it will be of the greatest importance to me to known weither (sic) there may be any chance for me of going to America

⁴⁷The proposals and Jahn's letter were printed in: *Am. Journal of Education* I, 1826, p. 700f. The original of v. Pfuël's letter reads thus: “Ce soussigné atteste que le Sieur Francois Lieber docteur en Philosophie a été élève distingué de l'école de natation militaire de Berlin; qu'il connaît a fons le mode d'instruction y établie, et qu'il possède toutes les qualités nécessaires pour diriger lui même une école de natation.

Berlin, le 24 Juillet 1826

signé de Pfuël (sic)

General major en service de Prusse.”

Boston Public Library, Ms. 382.

or not. I wish not to settle me here in any situation till I have a decisive answer from you, which I hope you will very soon oblige me with. Mr. Russel, editor of the *Journal of Education* in Boston, wrote about a month ago to one of his friends in London, that I should go to America, because he doubted not, that I would find or (sic) in Boston or in any other place of the united (sic) States a comfortable situation as well as Professor of German Language as Prof. of Gymnastics, but you understand that nobody can leave Europe, where he has at least scarcely to live, without any slight assurance for a situation in America. If I should built in Boston a Swimming School for this year, I must have a very early (sic) answer from you. — Just now I am writing a German Grammar.

Believe me Sir your most obedient Dr. Francis Lieber.”⁴⁸

When Amory’s letter arrived in Boston and it became obvious that Jahn would not come, Warren immediately called a meeting of the directors of the Gymnasium on February 20, 1827 and on the same night wrote the following letter to Lieber:

“Sir

Sometime since the directors of the Gymnasium just opened in this place, were informed by Mr. Neal that you were willing to come to this country and undertake the charge of the Gymnasium on certain conditions which were named by Mr. Neal. —

At the time we first heard of your reputation we had already engaged Dr. Follen to manage our Gymnasium; and of course we could not without doing him injustice, give you an invitation to superintend our institution. — Lately, however, Dr. Follen has expressed a wish to relinquish the duties of his office, provided you could be obtained to supply his place. — This recommendation with that of Dr. Beck, both of them, gentlemen highly respected by us, being confirmed by that of others, we do not hesitate to invite you to cross the Atlantic, and to offer you the charge of our Gymnasium on the following conditions :

1. — That we will pay the usual passage money from England to this country. —
2. — We will guarantee to Dr. Lieber \$800 for the first year of his residence in this country, and if Mr. Baur comes \$1000. —
3. — We will furnish the apparatus and ground for a Gymnasium, as it now stands without any expense to Dr. Lieber. — The apparatus we suppose

⁴⁸Mass. Hist. Soc., JCW Coll.

to be sufficient; but we shall be glad to make improvement in it. —

4. — We shall be glad to establish a swimming school; and if our funds admit we will furnish a place and materials for this purpose ; but our ability to do this will depend on the success of the Gymnasium; therefore we cannot at present make a full offer on this subject; although we have little doubt we shall be able to do this hereafter. — We believe also we shall be able to adopt any other improvements in physical education which may be desired by Dr. Lieber; but we cannot pledge ourselves beyond what we have distinctly and expressly agreed to. —
5. — If Dr. Lieber is of opinion that Mr. Baur will be essentially serviceable in the Gymnasium, we will agree to pay for his passage. It being understood that the sum thus paid by us, shall be repaid to us, either by the service of Mr. Baur, or in money after his establishment here; — and that Dr. Lieber consider himself bound to see this part of the contract performed.
6. — If the terms offered by us should be accepted by Dr. Lieber we should be glad to have him embark for this country as soon as possible.

It is highly probable that a swimming school would be a profitable and popular institution in Boston; and afford a more permanent source of income than the Gymnasium itself.

We think it probable that Mr. Baur could employ his talents successfully not as a preacher but in some other capacity.

This letter is to be accompanied by one from Dr. Follen. We request an answer to it as soon as practicable.

In the name of the Directors

John C. Warren, M.D.

President of the Boston Gymnasium
 Professor of Anatomy and Surgery^{5,49}
 in the University at Cambridge.

Only one day after the meeting of the directors, the treasurer of the committee sent the following letter to Dr. Warren:

“Respected Sir,

I saw Mr. Thayer last evening and learned for the first time that you had called a meeting of the Directors of the Gymnasium. I know not why I was not notified, but think it my duty to excuse my non appearance which

⁴⁹Mass. Hist. Soc., J. Quincy II Collection

must have somewhat embarrassed your proceedings. Soon after the meeting in Dec., indeed the next day I invested the 1000 dollars balance in my hands in a note of the Globe Bank bearing 4 percent interest. The man I employed to deliver the shares which had been subscribed for but not taken met with some delays, & did not collect more money than I thought it prudent to retain in my hands to meet current expenses, so that I have a balance of 188.78 in my possession, but March 1st. I shall have to pay 150 to Dr. Follen 50 to Mr. Turner & 75 to Schaffer. I hope to collect enough more on acct. of I have to meet these demands for nothing can be expected for tuition until the spring opens. Only seven pupils have entered since Dec. 13, when my last acct. was rendered.

These particulars only serve to show that we are living on our principal and must be stirring as soon as the weather permits.

Very respectfully, your obt. servt. Wm. B. Fowle.”⁵⁰

As can be learned from another letter written by Fowle to John Warren, Schaffer was the proprietor of the land upon which the gymnasium had been erected:

“Dear Sir,

I enclose such a lease as Schaffer, after a long discussion of the subject, declares to be the best he will give us. It is as good and even better than I expected, but I would not agree to it without your consent. In case we accept his terms? we have agreed upon some minor improvements, which I think will be salutary, one of which is, that he shall procure a man, whom we shall approve, to attend at the Gymnasium the *whole* time, and Schaffer is to be responsible for the *neatness of the garden* and security of the apparatus, he making up the difference of pay which such constant attendance of the Porter will occasion. If you think we had better accept his terms, be good enough to sign, and send the papers to the Gymnasium between 5 & 6 this afternoon, & I will have them passed before night.

Very respectfully, Yr. obt. servt. Wm. B. Fowle
Saturday June 23, 1827.”⁵¹

Lieber, upon receiving Warren’s letter, reacted favorably :

“Dear Sir,

The day before yesterday I ‘received your letter of Feb.

⁵⁰Mass. Hist. Soc., JCW Coll. Turner was a student of Harvard University and assisted Follen in Boston.

⁵¹Ibid.

20 inst. and I am ready to accept the honourable invitation to superintend the Boston Gymnasium and to establish a swimming school in your city. Although since the time, that I communicated my proposals to Mr. Neal my situation in London has been changed a great deal by my getting a large number of pupils for instruction in german and italian language, by my literary employments both for this country and for Germany and by founded hope to get the Professorship of german language and literature in the new London University, which is to be opened the next year, yet I prefer to give up my settlement once more and to cross the Atlantic in order to find on the other side my new country. The reason for my doing so is in principal the same, which led me to the field of Waterloo in my sixteenth year of age, which was my comfort during two imprisonments, induced me to go to Greece and which caused me at last to leave my country and my language.

I hope to leave England the first of May and to be able to establish a swimming school yet this year. I am sorry not to be able to leave England before the mentioned time on account of literary engagements, which I have to perform before my departure. Mr. Baur is very likely not to go with me, being employed in the mean time, but I hope an other of my old friends and equally well qualified as Mr. B., will join me.

My friend, Dr. Follen, speaks in so high terms of the Committee for Gymnastics and of Boston generally, that I shall leave Europe with great satisfaction. Believe, me, Sir, I only want benevolent and sincere intention from those citizens, who declared to patronize the Gymnastics, this important branch of education, and I am ready to devote all my faculties and knowledge of that art, and whatever I may have to offer, to my new country, and I shall be happy in being active in a free state. I am going to America with the sincerest wish, to be, if ever possible, of some use to the youthful republic, and to contribute my, though very small part, to the welfare of free citizens. I prefer a real activity in the United States to a literary one by which my name began to be known in Germany.

Give my compliments to Mr. Bond, a gentleman, whom I had the pleasure to know here, and who informed me then of his being member of the Committee for Gymnastics of your city.

I shall try to get some advance of money from the American Consul for my passage. My first walking out in Boston will be to meet you.

Dr. Thiarck sent me yesterday the duplicate of your letter and of that of Dr. Follen.

Believe me Dear Sir

Your faithfully Francis Lieber, Dr.”⁵²

Ten days later Lieber sent off an almost identical letter to Boston and on April 27, 1827 he was forced to inform Warren that “an unavoidable circumstance made it necessary to me to delay my departure from Liverpool till the 16th. of May.”⁵³ Then, on June 20, 1827, Lieber set foot on American soil. He immediately informed Warren of his arrival in New York:

“Dear Sir

I have the pleasure of informing you of my arrival at this city, to day at 10 o’clock after a voyage of 35 days from Liverpool, in the ship *Britannia*, the captain of which accepted a draft on you from me, guaranteed by the American Consul at Liverpool as payment for the passage. I shall leave this town in a few days after having delivered some letters, seen some schools, hospitals and other monuments of national civilisation and after having done some business, I am obliged to attend to. I understand that a steam pachét for Providence sets out on Thursday, by which I intend to go.

Give my best compliments to Mr. Bond, and express to the other Gentlemen of the Committee of the Boston Gymnasium my hope, to live with them on the happy terms on which men always live, who aim at the same salutary, popular and beneficent end. Be so kind to deliver the enclosed letter to my friend, Dr. Follen. I rejoice at making your personal acquaintance and I am

Dear Sir yours faithfully
Francis Lieber.”⁵⁴

When Lieber arrived in Boston, he was given a warm welcome and discovered that he was much respected among New Englanders — a fact that he attributed to Niebuhr’s letter of recommendation which he had previously sent to Follen. Soon after his arrival he took over the full charge of the gymnasium from Follen and devoted much of his time and energy to the building of a swimming school. Although the summer was well advanced, Lieber opened the school late in July. The school got off to a bad start, however. It was a cold and rainy day when it was opened, and only a few pupils came to the north side of the Mill Dam. The public interest did not rise above the level of casual curiosity even on days when the sun was

⁵²*ibid.*

⁵³*ibid.*

⁵⁴*ibid.*

shining. Not even a visit by President John Quincy Adams helped change the failing school into a flourishing enterprise. Lieber, in a letter to his parents, told every detail of the President's visit:

"You know already that six weeks ago I established a swimming-school on the plan of General Pfuel. It is on the bay, which is surrounded by hills, little towns, woods, and part of Boston itself. Yesterday the mayor called on me and said, Mr. Adams, the President of the United States, wished to visit my school. He desired to introduce me at once to the President, who had just come to the hotel where I am staying. Mr. Adams, who is a man of few words, asked me simply, after shaking hands with me, if he might see the school, and what hour would suit me. We made an appointment for ten o'clock that morning, as there would not then be many scholars present. He came punctually, accompanied by the mayor. Both were very plainly dressed.

After I had explained my plan to him, I asked him if he would do me the honor to swim with me, and if he preferred, we would go outside the enclosure, in order to avoid the frolicking boys, and let my boat follow us. The old man looked at the boys, and said: 'No, I prefer to stay here, if they will not laugh at me. Those good little swimmers will make fun of me.' We prepared ourselves for the bath, and this man of sixty-one sprang headlong into the water from a springboard six feet high. He repeated this several times, and swam about a quarter of an hour, conversing with me while he was in the water, and showing himself an experienced swimmer.

He praised the school, and expressed the wish that there were many establishments of the kind in the country, which would greatly tend to promote the public health. He said, also, he had tried all kinds of gymnastic exercises, but never had found greater refreshment after continuous mental exertion than from swimming. I returned part of the distance with him, and after many polite expressions of regard and thanks, we parted."⁵⁵

If the swimming school did not attract many pupils, the interest in the gymnasium began to decline in 1827/28 also. Caricatures of the *Turner* appeared in print-shops; the exercises were probably too demanding for beginners, they were, in fact, very much regimented and often repetitious and boring; also,

⁵⁵Thomas S. Perry, ed., *The Life and Letters of Francis Lieber* (Boston 1882), p. 77f.

Liebers's attention was too much diverted by his literary activities which he had begun in the winter of 1827. It was his plan to become well-known in America through a new Encyclopedia so that he would soon find a permanent professorship in some University, and if he did not succeed in his efforts to keep the gymnasium flourishing, his "Encyclopaedia Americana" certainly proved to be a success.⁵⁶ The gymnasium was closed in 1828, and Fowle was able to make an arrangement with Schaffer as he reports to Warren on January 23, 1829:

"Respected Sir,

At a meeting of the Directors of the Boston Gymnasium, the 21st. inst. it was voted, 'that an assessment of two dollars a share be laid immediately, to enable the treasurer to accept an offer of Mr. Schaffer whereby he relinquishes part of the claim which he has upon Dr. Warren & Wm. B. Fowle, agents for the proprietors, in leasing the Washington Garden.' The exigency for which you reserved the amt. of your two shares having arrived, and the amt. of the assessment being based upon the expectation of your paying when called on, I would respectfully call your attention to it.

It is a subject of regret that we have not been able to rouse the public to a sense of the value of the object for which this sacrifice has been made, but it is a subject of congratulation that the sacrifice is no greater. This assessment will enable us to settle the concerns of the institution entirely.

Very respectfully, your obedient Servant Wm. B. Fowle."⁵⁷

Whatever the reasons for the sudden end of gymnastic exercises both in Cambridge and Boston might have been⁵⁸, a characteristic feature connected with the gymnasium should be pointed out in conclusion. The exercises promoted the principle of equality. This can be demonstrated in three different areas. One has already been referred to above: People of all classes of society attended the gymnasium, and the mixing of pupils from "the great diversity of situations in life" was considered "most gratifying". In the wake of a first wave of urbanization in New England, the gymnasium was regarded as a means for a further democratization of society at large.

The very existence of gymnasia raised two other issues: Should women and blacks also be permitted to participate in

⁵⁶For Lieber's literary efforts to promote physical education cf. Frank Freidel, *Francis Lieber. Nineteenth Century Liberal* (Baton Rouge 1947), p. 58ff.

⁵⁷Mass. Hist. soc., JCW Coll.

⁵⁸Cf. E. M. Hartwell, *op. cit.*, p. 25f.

the exercises? The right of Afro-Americans to have access to a gymnasium was first debated in Portland, Maine. John Neal who had been a member of Völker's Gymnasium in London and who had first called Lieber's attention to the possibility of being superintendent of the Boston Gymnasium began, upon his return to Portland, to establish several gymnasia in the city. In his Autobiography he recalls :

“The late Governor Enoch Lincoln was my mother's next-door neighbor. Having understood that I was familiar with gymnastics, which he wanted to have introduced here, he proposed a lecture. A lecture! I had never been guilty of such a thing, in all my life; but, as soon as my mind was made up about staying here, I determined to establish a gymnasium, take charge of it myself, and, refusing all compensation, see what could be done for the people in that way . . . From the old town-hall, we went to Silver Street, where we succeeded in obtaining a large hay-magazine. There we set up our ladders, and ropes, and masts, parallel-bars, wooden-horses, &c., &c., with such success, that, before a month had gone over, I had under my charge at least fifteen or twenty full classes. Among these were many capital gymnasts. After this, when the spring opened, we took the old fort on the top of Munjoy-Hill, and established another gymnasium there with ditches and and leaping-poles.”

One day Neal was approached by a black man who expressed his desire to be admitted. Neal advised him to find other blacks who might be interested in the art of gymnastics so that a class of black gymnasts could be formed. Then, Neal brought the matter up for discussion at a meeting:

“A dead silence: I then urged upon the large school, that, in their vehement opposition to slavery, they had now a good opportunity for manifesting their sincerity, and of advancing the colored man, at least one step in the social scale. No answer. I then offered to take charge of the colored class myself, to be answerable for their good behavior, cleanliness, and strict obedience. And what think you was the results? Of all that large and prosperous association, for which I had been laboring, without pay, month after month, for about a year, only two could be found willing to admit a colored man into the association. These two were the late Mr. John Winslow, a Quaker; and Mr. Neal Dow, the son of a Quaker. This, I acknowledge, went far to dishearten me; for what was bodily training, compared with spiritual training? What a system of

gymnastics, weighed against humanity and consistency?"⁵⁹

It might be added that when Lieber was offered a professorship at South Carolina College, he hesitated to accept it on the ground that it meant for him to move to a slave-state. At about the same time when Lieber received the invitation from South Carolina, Follen joined the New England Anti-slavery Society. Later he became one of its vice-presidents and a major spokesman for its cause. Indeed, so deeply was he involved in anti-slavery activities that Harvard University withheld funds for the support of his professorship, and he was forced to sever his connections with the University.⁶⁰ Even in the Unitarian movement in which Follen served as a preacher for several years he was looked upon with some suspicion due to his commitment to the "Antislavery Cause as the cause of philanthropy, with regard to which all human beings, — white men and colored men, citizens and foreigners, men and women, have the same duties and the same rights."⁶¹

The question of girls' or women's participation in the exercises was first raised in Boston by William Fowle who was a teacher in the Monitorial School. Fowle had attended a lecture on Physical Education early in the spring of 1825 which had been delivered by Dr. John Coffin. In October of the following year Fowle sent a letter to Coffin which was printed in the *Medical Intelligencer*, a periodical edited by Coffin. In this letter Fowle reports how he started gymnastics for girls :

"The very day after the delivery of your first lecture, I procured two or three bars, and as many pulleys, and after I had explained the manner of using them to the best advantage, my pupils needed no further encouragement to action. The recess was no longer a stupid, inactive season; all were busy and animated. My chief difficulty was in the selection of proper exercises for

⁵⁹John Neal, *Wondering Recollections of a Somewhat Busy Life. An Autobiography* (Boston 1869). p. 333ff.

⁶⁰G. W. Spindler, op. cit., p. 193, note I. This has recently been questioned by Douglas C. Stange. "The Making of an Abolitionist Martyr: Harvard Professor Charles Theodor Christian Pollen (1796-1840)" in: *Howard Library Bulletin* XXIV, 1976, 17-24. Stange thinks that Pollen's involvement in the cause of abolitionism had nothing to do with his leaving the college. In fact, this is a "myth" created in the interest of abolitionism. The "facts" are that Follen had a professorship that was endowed by private funds for a period of only five years and that, when that period ended, the professorship was terminated. Those on certainly correct facts. When one considers, however, the untiring services that Follen had lent to the College, it is certainly surprising to see that his professorship was not renewed with College funds. Follen, it seems, had every reason to suppose that the College would provide the means for his position and thus give him an opportunity to remain a respected faculty member. This had been his often-expressed wish. But when the Corporation declined to provide the necessary funds, he resigned. Lack of money could hardly have been the reason. Spindler's conclusion that Follen's anti-slavery involvement had caused the Corporation to withhold the funds seems to carry more weight than Stange's argumentation. The whole affair is a perfect example that sometimes a "myth" comes closer to historical reality than the "facts".

⁶¹Cf. Walter, Donald Kring, *Liberals among the Orthodox: Unitarian Beginnings in New York City* (Boston 1974). p. 213ff.

females. You know the prevailing notions of female delicacy and propriety are at variance with every attempt to render females less feeble and helpless. — and the bugbears of rudeness, romping, &c. are sure to stare every such attempt in the face. I read all the books I could find, but met with very little applicable to the instruction of females. It seemed as if the sex had been thought unworthy of any effort to improve their physical powers. But the beneficial effects of what I had already introduced, led me to persevere, and I have finally succeeded in contriving apparatus and exercises enough to keep all employed in play hours. Besides the ordinary exercises of raising the arms and feet, and extending them in various directions, we have various methods of hanging and swinging by the arms, tilting, raising weights, jumping forward, marching, running, enduring, &c &c. I have no longer any anxiety about procuring suitable exercises, or in sufficient variety, for my pupils; and I believe the few parents whose more prim education led them to shudder at my innovation, have surrendered their prejudices.

As to the effect of the exercises on the character and conduct of the pupils, it may be recorded for the encouragement of others, that many weak and feeble children have at least doubled their strength, and now disdain the little indulgences which were then thought necessary to them. Some very dull children have become more animated, and some over sprightly ones have found an innocent way of letting off their exuberant spirits; the discipline of the school has not been impaired, nor has my participation in the exercises of the children lessened their respect for me or my orders. I do not pretend that every dull child has been completely excited, nor that every wild one has been tamed, nor every vicious one reformed, but I do believe that no child has been made worse than she would have become without the exercises, while many, very many, have been essentially benefitted . . . But some of the old school say, why not let the children walk much, and exercise themselves in useful household labors. I should recommend both these methods of exercise, but do not think they would be a complete substitute for gymnastics, though a very useful aid to them. But the fact is the children of the present day are not thus employed at home, but on the contrary are engaged in the health destroying business of committing books to memory, and filling the mind with indigestible food, that it may be a suitable companion for its dyspeptic envelope. I hope the day is not far distant when gymnasiums for women will be as common as churches in Boston, and when our young men, in selecting the mother of their future off-spring, will make it one con-

dition of the covenant that they be healthy, strong, capable of enduring fatigue, encountering danger, and helping themselves, and those who will naturally and of right, look to them for assistance.”

The editor added the following remarks:

“We value this letter mainly . . . because it is the first account we have seen of gymnastics having been successfully practised in any school for girls, in any part of the United States . . .”

Coffin then repudiates the male-female stereotype:

“Women in general, from their relations and duties, need the preserving and invigorating movements of the gymnasium, more than men, and when they shall have realised their vivifying effects, will be as much attached to them. In reference to this subject, the question is frequently asked, ‘are not walking, riding, and an attention to domestic concerns and duties, quite as good for health, and more useful and suitable for women, than the queer motions and gesticulations of the gymnasium?’ To answer briefly, we say no, they are not. Who is right? Let *facts* decide; and to ascertain where the facts, in the case are to be found, let this quere be first disposed of. What has been done for the last half century in the American Union, to render our women what *they are capable of being made*, healthy efficient and happy beings?”⁶²

The subject of gymnastics for women must have been discussed frequently by the directors of the Boston Gymnasium. When Karl Follen sent his first letter together with that of Warren to Lieber in London, he asked him to bring all the books on gymnastics which had in the meantime been published in Europe, “particularly also what has been done respecting women’s *Turn* exercises”.⁶³

Upon his arrival, Lieber was soon confronted with this problem, and in a book review he outlined “the principles of the several classes of exercises” :

“We would banish all exercises which only strengthen the arms, as detrimental to female beauty and grace, by moving the body too violently . . . The greatest part of the exercises should consist in a variety of movements of the legs, (standing on the same spot) in performing singly all those motions, which constitute

⁶²Both Fowle’s letter and Coffin’s remarks were reprinted in: *Am. Journal of Education* I, 1826, 698f.

⁶³Follen to Lieber, Huntington Library.

graceful walking, in many balancing exercises, in gymnastical plays, in which the pupils move frequently and quickly, but gracefully, and in some exercises calculated to strengthen and widen the chest. A great variety of active and pleasing exercise would thus be furnished for children and for grown ladies, to whom the exercises would be as salutary and as pleasant and practicable as to girls.

The best place for such an establishment would be a long and high room, in which some apparatus could be erected, and which should possess the appendage of a garden secluded from spectators. Such a garden is very desirable for several plays, as swinging, and other exercises which are performed on similar apparatus.

A calisthenic school on the plan now described, would be an invaluable resort, in all large cities, particularly, where the difficulty of maintaining uninterrupted health among young ladies is necessarily very great.

. . . it is certainly an affair of great consequences that in these days of liberal provision for the mental improvement of the female sex, care should be taken that the body is not sacrificed to the mind, not health to intellect. The true aim of education is to secure personal and relative happiness; and how much of all this is dependent on good health, and on the means, therefore, of preserving and securing it, every attentive parent knows from actual observation . . . The sedentary life and delicate frame of the female sex, render this subject one of peculiar moment to them; and the time, we hope, is not distant when opportunities will be furnished them of daily enjoying the benefits of exercise adapted to their circumstances, and contributing effectually to the fuller enjoyment of healthful happiness, and to the fuller development of the characteristic gracefulness of woman.”⁶⁴

As was mentioned earlier, gymnastic exercises both at Harvard and in Boston came to a sudden end. When one considers the amount of enthusiasm with which the new movement was welcomed by both the students of the college and by some prominent and influential citizens, it becomes difficult to explain its abrupt decline.

Edward Jarvis cited physiological reasons. The exercises were, in his opinion, too violent and active and were performed at the wrong time of the day.⁶⁵ Warren also suggested that the gymnasium failed because it called “for too much effort” on

⁶⁴Am. Journal of Education II, 1827, 49of.

⁶⁵Edward Jarvis, *Physiology and Law of Health* (New York) , p. 78 and 291.

part of the participants⁶⁶ and that the exercises were, therefore, carried out only as long “as their novelty lasted”.⁶⁷ In Warren’s biography it is further stated that the gymnasium could not be permanently successful in America as, in contrast to the “patient German character”, “our countrymen demand more excitement.”⁶⁸ Warren mentions also that “some defects in the institutions” might have been responsible for the unexpected closing-down.

An analysis of Lieber’s early writings upon his migration to the United States indicates that he clearly felt the defects of the institutions to be the routine-like operations. Adults lose pleasure in the exercise which they had found very exciting when they were young.

“The reason appears to us to be, that no difference is made in the exercises, for different ages. The adult requires, as a regular exercise, something other and higher than the common exercises of the gymnasium; something in which the mind, as far as possible, may be occupied at the same time with the body. He tires of the common routine of exercises, which he has learnt in his boyhood.”⁶⁹

Lieber’s own elaborate system of differentiation could not be carried out as the lack of interest in the exercises forced the Boston Gymnasium Committee to close the school before Lieber had a chance to test his ideas.

None of the reasons for the sudden decline of the gymnastic exercises in the sources are truly satisfying, and the lack of enough source material is the major obstacle in explaining why German gymnastics “became just another fad that went the way of the others.”⁷⁰

⁶⁶J. C. Warren, *Physical Education and the Preservation of Health* (Boston 1846), p. 41.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁶⁸Edw. Warren, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 222.

⁶⁹*American Quarterly Review*. Nr. 5, March 1828, p. 140f.

⁷⁰Deobald B. van Dalen and Bruce L. Bennett, *A World History of Physical Education* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1971), p. 381.