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# Lady *Turners* in the United States: German American Identity, Gender Concerns, and *Turnerism*

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Germans as a group have represented a unique and forceful current in the stream of immigration to the United States. The 1990 census indicated that more than 20 percent (58 million) of American adults are of German descendant, making them the largest ethnic group in American society. By the time of the Declaration of Independence in 1776, over one quarter of a million Germans had already settled in North America, and between 1850 and the turn of the century, over 3.5 million German newcomers entered the country.<sup>1</sup> Discussions of immigration seldom distinguish between males and females. Researchers have neglected the differences between the acculturation and Americanization processes of German men and women, concentrating on ethnic experiences of male immigrants.<sup>2</sup> A high percentage of women immigrated to the United States as well; between 40 and 50 percent of the German immigrants in the nineteenth century were females.<sup>3</sup>

Friedrich Muench, a nineteenth-century German-American journalist, is one of the few writers who publicly took notice of immigrated German women: “[German] women here have a significant and difficult task, but they sense its importance, are never plagued with boredom, and are content with what they accomplish every day for the good of their loved ones.”<sup>4</sup> But his remark reaffirmed the traditional role of women in his time.

The German-speaking women in the United States faced cultural barriers in their new home country, and they needed to learn how to deal with their new situation in the American environment. In her 1998 book on rural German-American women, historian Linda Schelbitzki Pickle notes an immigrant letter that stated “Old trees don’t transplant well,” suggesting that younger women adapted easier to the American life and society, which in turn called for new forms of behavior in immigrant women.<sup>5</sup> She argues that in addition to age and health, the presence of family members (especially female relatives) and the affection and support of their husbands were important factors influencing how

women felt about their lives in America.<sup>6</sup> The support immigrant women found in their home- and family-centered lives helped them to face the “traumatic experiences of cultural alienation,” such as being exposed to a different language, unfamiliar customs, and alien surroundings while living among people with diverse ethnic backgrounds.<sup>7</sup> The support systems of female relatives—if they had any—helped women, especially in rural areas, enabling them by both sharing the hard work and alleviating loneliness. Women who lacked close family members living in the vicinity had to build female communities among their neighbors for mutual support.<sup>8</sup>

Many German immigrants lived in the ethnic communities, called the Little Germanies, which arose in the mid-nineteenth century in cities with large German populations, especially in the Midwest and along the East Coast and Great Lakes.<sup>9</sup> Here they found a variety of German stores, artisans, organizations, German language press, and associations (*Verein*, plural *Vereine*).<sup>10</sup> The *vereine*, in particular, were an important part of the life of these ethnic enclaves.<sup>11</sup> As “subcommunities” they offered a certain economic and cultural security and solidarity to new German immigrants, and helped them to face the harsh life in the new country.<sup>12</sup> According to historian Kathleen Neils Conzen, these associations became “nurseries of ethnicities” in which German culture could spread, and helped form an ethnic culture and identity.<sup>13</sup> German customs, rituals, and cultural practices evolved in manner and content to fulfill the needs of the host society, a process that fits into Eric Hobsbawm’s concept of “invented traditions.”<sup>14</sup>

Women were included in the social life of the German-American community as well. They were part of the Sunday afternoon beer garden life, participated in picnic rituals, and could be found among tavern visitors. German-American women founded their own *vereine*; they seldom joined Anglo-American organizations, due mostly to communication and cultural problems. In 1911, the *Deutsch-Amerikanische Vereinsadreßbuch* [Directory of German-American Societies and Organizations] mentioned almost 100 female societies (*Frauenvereine*) in Chicago alone.<sup>15</sup> Irene Häderle is one of the few historians who has extensively studied these *Frauenvereine*. She believes their proliferation was driven by the necessity to fulfill social needs in the United States, a void filled by the government and the churches in Germany.<sup>16</sup> Possibly, however, immigrant German women, just like men, felt an urge to mix with people who shared the same cultural background.

Some male-oriented *vereine* also encouraged active participation by women, but did not accept them as members. The largest and most influential associations were probably those devoted to developing physical education (*Turnvereine*), which originally were exclusively male clubs. Especially in the nineteenth century, these organizations also offered opportunities for German immigrants to continue their cultural traditions. Many of them still exist today. The *turner* societies are an example of *vereine* in the nineteenth-century in which German-speaking women could find shelter.<sup>17</sup> This article focuses on the role of females in the German-American *turner* movement.

## The American *Turner* Movement

Today the American *turner* movement can look back on a history of more than 150 years that is closely connected with the failed German revolution of 1848-49. The political refugees—the “Forty-Eighters”—organized the first *turner* societies in the Americas. They

had a strong political impact on these societies; their union, founded in 1850, was to become a “planting school for all revolutionary ideas which have their origin in a natural and rational world conception.”<sup>18</sup>

In the United States, the *turners'* political targets included nativism, slavery and the temperance and Sabbath-day laws. The majority of these Germans supported the political goals of the Republican Party during the 1850s and 60s. The agitation against slavery appeared in the *turners'* support of Lincoln's army in the Civil War, although some instead fought for the Confederate cause. In the postbellum years the federation of *turner* associations (*Turnerbund*) concentrated on educational goals, such as the introduction of their physical training programs into public schools. In 1866 they established a training course for *turner* instructors (*Turnlehrerseminar*), which later became the Normal School of the American Gymnastic Union,<sup>19</sup> and some societies were active in the industrial labor movement of the 1870s and 1880s.<sup>20</sup> During its boom years in the early 1890s the *turner* movement included over 40,000 members, with another 25,000 children and 3,000 women participating in the activity classes. Such proliferation had ceased by the time of World War I, and the radical and social revolutionary tendencies in the *turner* movement had also declined.<sup>21</sup> A difficult era for German-Americans had begun due to the anti-German hysteria in these war years, and with it for the *turner* movement (*Turnbewegung*). The statistical reports of the *turner* union show that the number of societies and membership remained constant in the years of World War I—around 200 societies with approximately 38,000 members. The decline started after the war in 1918 and did not stop until 1943, when less than 100 societies with only 16,000 *turners* remained.<sup>22</sup>

The Americanization and assimilation process of the *turner* movement accelerated after World War I. This is illustrated by the decline of German as the official language in protocols, principals, and their newspaper *Amerikanische Turnzeitung*. By and by the societies adopted English and also Americanized their names, which always included “*Turners*,” but frequently dropped the German *turngemeinde* or *turnverein*. In the 1930s the new slogan of the *turners* became “*Turnerism is Americanism*” to distance themselves from their German background.<sup>23</sup> Most societies tried not to get involved with the in the United States founded national socialistic orientated *Amerikanische Volksbund* that pursued a “pan-Germanism.”<sup>24</sup> After World War II, the membership numbers climbed again, reaching 25,000 in the 1950s. One certain cause for this rise was the new immigration wave, which brought more than 500,000 German immigrants to the United States between 1950 and 1959.<sup>25</sup> Since the beginning of the movement, over 700 *turner* societies have been formed in the United States. In 1999, although 59 societies still belonged to the umbrella organization *American Turner*, no more than ten independent societies remained. The cultural impact the *turner* societies once exerted on the German-American population has diminished today. Only a few societies remain that have strong ties to German tradition and culture.<sup>26</sup>

Until now, the role of the American female *turners*, or *lady turners* as they call themselves, has been neglected by historians, although women were involved in the associational life (*Vereinsleben*) of the *turners*. From the very beginning, they offered a number of services that would help the *turner* societies. The *turners* had provided exercise classes for girls since the 1850s and for women since the 1880s. However, the immigrant German

women did not follow the example of their counterparts back in Germany who had founded *turner* societies purely for females (*Turnschwwestern*), including those in Mannheim (1846) and Frankfurt am Main (1848). Both societies dissolved again in the early 1850s.<sup>27</sup> In the United States, German-American females instead chose to found Ladies' Auxiliaries between 1868 and the 1930s.

German sport historian Horst Ueberhorst is one of the few who did some research on the lady *turners* (*Turnerinnen*). His 1978 overview on the American *turner* movement, *Turner unterm Sternenbanner*, dedicated one chapter to women.<sup>28</sup> The discussion is not, however, very extensive; it devotes more to the development of women's sport in the United States than to the female *turners*. More detailed work appeared in Alida J. Moonen's 1993 dissertation *The Missing Half: The Experience of women of the Indiana Athenaeum Turnverein Women's Auxiliary 1876-1919*, which provides insight into the work and life of this auxiliary and provides material on German American history in Indianapolis. She explores the "seeming contradictions between the liberating physical and intellectual experiences these women had within the context of their own organization and the continuing constraints involved in the patriarchal ethnic social group."<sup>29</sup> However, her study does not consider gender issues in the *turner* union (*turnerbund*) in general. Christiane Harzig, too, includes a short chapter on German women that were organized in two Chicago *turner* societies in her extensive work on female German-Americans in Chicago at the turn of the century. She had a different focus in her study and also did not put these ladies's clubs or sections in the context of the German-American *turner* movement as a whole.<sup>30</sup> Not only historians have neglected gender issues. The *turners* themselves did not take up the discussion very often, and in *turner* publications such as the *Die Turn-Zeitung*, *Amerikanische Turnzeitung*, and *Turner-Kalender*, hardly any contributions written by or about women can be found.



Turn class, Turner Ladies, New Ulm (n.d.). Courtesy Brown County Historical Society, New Ulm, Minnesota

This article tries to begin filling this gap by presenting an overview of the participation of women in the German-American *turner* societies from the mid-nineteenth century through the 1990s. It not only concentrates on their participation in physical activities at the *turnvereine*, but also considers other aspects of their gender experiences in *turnerism*, such as the founding of the Ladies' Auxiliaries, which is not connected with the activity of *turnen*, but rather a part of the *turners'* social life. Women's long struggle for "full" membership in the *turner* societies represents another gender aspect explored in this study. In fact, women would wait until the beginning of the twentieth-century to gain membership in at least some societies. Although the *Turnerbund* proclaimed the equality of sexes in its organization in the early 1990s there were still *turnvereine* that would not accept women as members.<sup>31</sup>

### Girls and Women Participate in "Turn Classes"

Female participation in physical education was not a new topic in the early 1850s when the immigrant *turners* took up the discussion of "admission of the female sex to physical exercise."<sup>32</sup> At that time, some American educators had already introduced physical exercise at various educational institutions for girls. For example, the *American Annals of Education and Instruction* published articles dealing with physical education for girls. In its April 1, 1832 issue, one article describes the principles of establishing a girls' school are described. The article advocates including proportionate intellectual, physical and moral education. The author mentions physical vigor the basis of energy of character. The results of physical education are "habitual health, uniform cheerfulness of temper, and the ability to undergo sustained and vigorous application of the mind without exhaustion." Physical educator Fred Leonard gives an overview of schools that offered physical education for the female sex. The first educational institution he mentions was established in 1825, the Boston Female Monitorial School for girls. Exercises like running, jumping dancing and others were performed until it had to be reduced due to concerns of parents.<sup>33</sup>

Another important person in the introduction of physical education to girls and women was the female educator Catharine E. Beecher (1804-75). In the mid-1820s she developed the concept of "Calisthenics" at the Hartford Female Seminary in Connecticut, and in 1831 she published a booklet entitled "A Course of Calisthenics for Young Ladies in Schools and Families." Based on her study, Beecher held that the health of American women and girls was worse than that of English, Scottish or Irish women. One of the best known schools for women was the Mount Holyoke Female Seminary, founded in 1837 under the leadership of Mary Lyon. The time schedule of 1839 had daily walks and "calisthenics" on the itinerary.<sup>34</sup>

The *turners* included both supporters and opponents of this participation.<sup>35</sup> *Turner* instructor Eduard Müller, an advocate, observed "unresponsible neglect" of girls and women in exercise or "turn classes." He argued in an article published in 1853 in the *Turn-Zeitung* that, because girls had to sit a great deal in educational institutions and got little physical exercise aside from some walking, they suffered from weak muscles, spine problems, "laughing, crying, head, breast, stomach, and abdominal cramps as well as head gout and other diseases." He stressed that this ought to be changed. He further stated that shoes and corsets specifically designed for women even reinforced these body dysfunctions, because

they had a negative effect on the girls' future lives as housewives and mothers. Müller advised *turnen* that they should act to prevent these diseases, recalling that the ancient Greek women also performed physical exercise on a regular basis. He then encouraged women to do the same exercises as men, because they had the same "blood circulation, respiration, digestion, muscles and nerves." Only for reasons of decency did he recommend performing certain exercises in a gender specific manner. Above all, he called for a halt to constrictive clothing for girls and women.<sup>36</sup>

Some turner societies seemed to have taken this advice to heart. The 1858 annual report of the *Socialistic Turnerbund* mentioned that there were several unspecified societies that offered turn classes for girls. During the 1860s the statistical reports of the *turnerbund* began presenting figures about girls. In 1865 the *New York Turnverein* and the *Cincinnati Turngemeinde* offered exercise classes for girls in which a total of 50 girls participated. One year later there were 120 girls; in 1870, 211 and, in 1893—two decades later—the total across the societies had risen to almost 9,000.<sup>37</sup> Laura Gerlach, who in 1877 became the first woman to graduate from the *turners'* Normal School, probably was among these girls.<sup>38</sup>

The *turners'* exercise classes included more than just young girls. Women who already had offered their services to the *turner* societies revealed a growing interest for active *turnen*, as Marie Keilhuber wrote in 1853 in the *Turner-Kalender*. Her article was one of the few written by a woman that appeared in nineteenth-century *turner* publications. For her, it was not enough to offer her services to the *turners*; she demanded to be part of all aspects of *turnerism*:

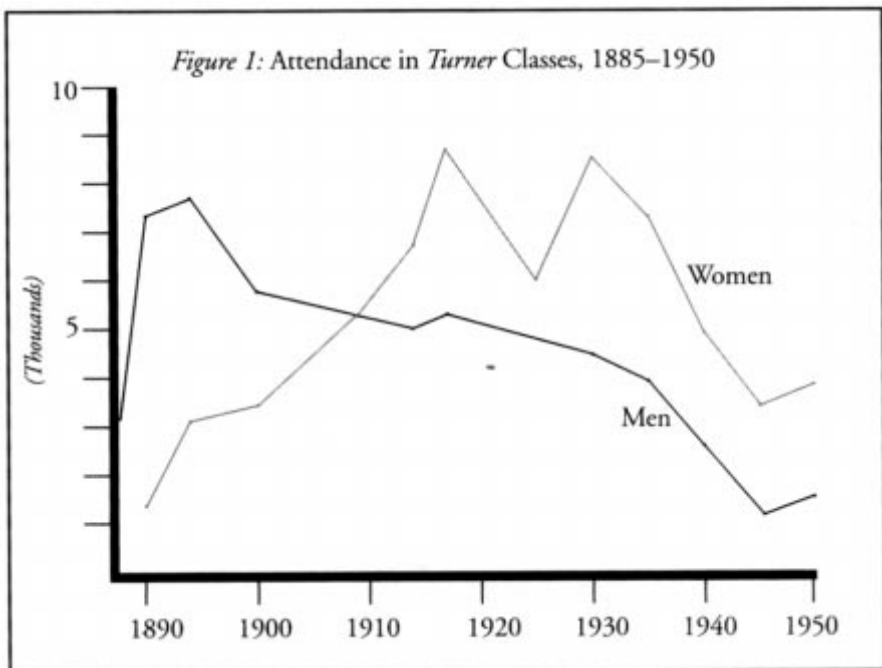
I only say that if ladies at the organized festivities like fairs, balls, coffee klatschs, etc. are responsible for the decoration of the halls, organizing collections, providing a good meal, this has a certain usefulness, but is only a subordinate part of their activity. The main thing is and will be appropriate participation in the solution of the ideal task of turnerism, and this is the education of a gender of sound body and mind.<sup>39</sup>

No exact year can be determined when the *turner* societies started to offer their first exercise classes for ladies.<sup>40</sup> Proof exists that some *turnvereins* began in the 1870s. The Concordia Turnverein, located in St. Louis, held its first classes for women in 1878, followed in 1884 by the *turner* societies in Syracuse and Rochester, New York. The hundredth anniversary of the New York Turn Verein indicates that its first classes for women were held in 1891, and two years later it featured its own women's section.<sup>41</sup> The *turnerbund's* annual report mentioned active females for the first time in 1893: 2,714 *turnerinnen* in 24 of the 34 districts.<sup>42</sup> The popularity of women's participation in the *turners'* exercise classes went so far, that, twenty-six years later, they outnumbered the male *turners*. As seen in the table on page xxx, in 1909, the number of ladies participating in *turn classes* exceeded the number of males for the first time. From 1913 on, women's attendance never dropped below the men's (see Figure 1, page 389).<sup>43</sup> By that time, exercise classes for women became accepted by the *turners*, as the American Turnfather, George Borsius of the Milwaukee *Turnverein*, noted in 1907: "A welcome appearance in the *turners'* life is the rise of the exercising ladies' classes. . . . A strong country needs healthy mothers who do their job with love and who want to and can fulfill their duties."<sup>44</sup> By emphasizing "strong country," this statement also demonstrates the transition to a German-American culture.

The growing popularity of female participation in exercise and sport classes in the United States provides an explanation for women surpassing the number of males in *turner* classes, but the war years could also account for it. Many *turners* fought for the American army. As a result their participation in the *turner* activity classes dropped. The popularity of the exercises for females can also be seen in the integration of girls and women in the national *turnfests*. In the 1870s they were allowed to participate in exhibition demonstrations, such as line formations or mass exercises. Over the years, different pieces of equipment like Indian clubs, dumbbells, and flags were added to their performances. After the turn of the century girls also performed in class drills and dances.<sup>45</sup> But not until the 1921 *turnfest* could they participate in competitive events.<sup>46</sup>

The *turnfests* were not the only instance in which female gymnasts were excluded from competitive events before the second decade of the twentieth century. Initially, only men competed in gymnastics. The German men who had introduced *turnen* in the United States proved quite successful when it became a competitive sport beyond the *turner* societies. For instance, at the 1904 Olympic Games in St. Louis, most gymnastics medals went to members of American *turner* societies.<sup>47</sup>

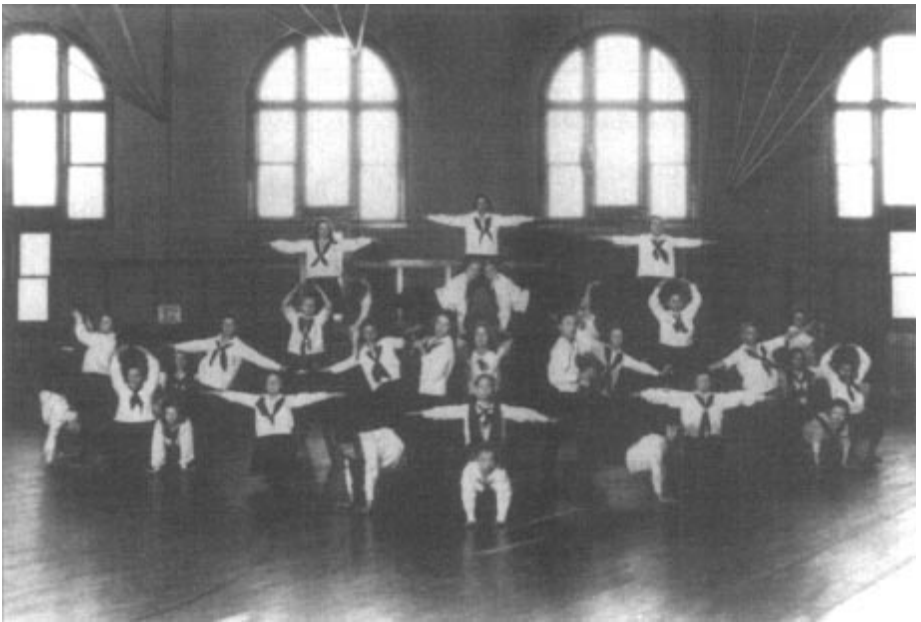
By the turn of the century, the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU), to which the *turners* belonged, controlled amateur competitions in gymnastics.<sup>48</sup> In 1931, when the AAU finally added competitive individual gymnastics events for women to its championship program, the female *turners* also had some national- and international-level success. Between 1931 and 1956, 80 percent of the individual titles in all-around AAU competitions or championships were won by *Turnerinnen*. In 1936, American *turner* women for the



first time participated in the Olympic Games. Twelve years later, six of the eight American gymnasts on the female Olympic team in 1948 in London had *turner* backgrounds. The team placed third. This was their best record, although gymnasts with a *turner* background participated on the American Olympic teams until 1968. However, their numbers dropped in the 1950s, when the *turner* societies no longer offered high-level training for either sex. By that time American colleges, YMCAs, YWCAs, and private sport clubs had begun taking over, and gymnastics or *turnen* for males and females in the *turner* societies became only a recreational sport.<sup>49</sup>

### The Social *Vereinsleben* and the Rise of Ladies' Auxiliaries

In the years after the Civil War, the *turnerbund* set new goals for itself, stressing politics less and concentrating more on culture and education. Now that they lived in a country in which they could enjoy the freedom they had defended as members of *turner* regiments or companies, a new aspect of the discourse on human rights began. The minutes of the 1871 *turner* union's meeting emphasized one of the aims of the German revolution of 1848—equality for all people—as a major goal.<sup>50</sup> In this context, the *turners* also debated women's rights and equality. But not many *turners* defended women's rights, although they felt a deep respect for women—especially German women. For example, Friedrich Hecker, the famous *turner*, Forty-Eighter and spokesman of the German-American community, stated in a discussion on women's rights and women's suffrage in Pittsburgh in the 1870s:



Girls in formation at the Indianapolis South Side Turners (*n.d.*). Courtesy Ruth Lilly Special Collection and Archives at Indiana University Purdue University (IUPUI) University Library

Name me a flower that blooms more beautifully than the sculful [*sic*] eyes of a woman. Therefore the ancient German people attributed to the eyes of a woman the Seeing Eye, and the entire northern legend of the Gods centered around the Woman and her honor.—This has been continued on as the young German still looks to the young German girl for his bride. This is the honoring of the German woman in our time. Against this compare a typical example representing Women's Rights—the mother, who is to raise the children, who makes the scum speech and takes part in all kinds of debates and discussions of a political battle! Political job hunters, who serve on all kinds of jury cases—can you picture such a woman as the Queen who is to reign over your home and children?<sup>51</sup>

Hecker and other immigrant German men feared that if women gained the right to vote, the defenders of the temperance laws, which the *turners* strongly opposed, would gain supporters.<sup>52</sup> This fear also had a political background. For the Republican Hecker,<sup>53</sup> women were influenced by the Catholic church, which he equated with the Democratic party. He was convinced that women's suffrage would turn many votes to the Democrats.<sup>54</sup>

In general, *turner* opponents of women's rights defended the traditional German view of women within the patriarchal family, in which they were depicted as subjective and emotional. They would rather have women staying at home, caring for their children and husbands, than giving them more rights. At a *turner* meeting in 1872 the opponents argued that women could not participate in public affairs because of their "low intellectual capacity." They feared that if women were allowed to vote, women also could be elected to public offices, which would prevent them from fulfilling their duties as housewives. They also believed that only women of "low morals and passion on a grand scale" would strive for equality, causing the nation to fall into the "arms of clerics."<sup>55</sup> *Turners* in favor of equality of the sexes argued that women had already become teachers, and thus were part of the American educational system.<sup>56</sup> Thus far, the nation had not fallen "into the arms of clerics;" neither had working women neglected their families. They went on to state that only if women achieved political equality could they provide their children with an intellectual education, bringing the children up in an "understanding, independent matrimonial life."<sup>57</sup>

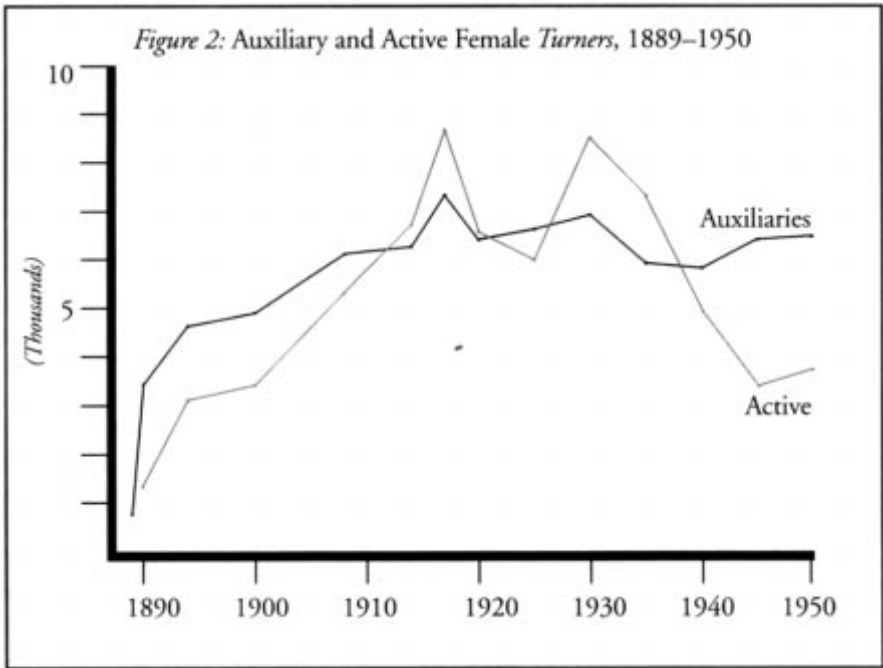
All of these discussions occurred generally, but did not question whether women could (or should) become members of the *turner* societies. It seems as if the male *turners* saw no necessity for this discussion. In their eyes females always had been part of the *vereinsleben* in one way or another and had offered their services, such as when women were honored by the *Philadelphia Turngemeinde* for sewing the society's flags in 1851. At the *Stiftungsfest* (founding celebration) of this *verein*, women presented the *turners* with a flag, and Amalie Müller gave a speech in which she explained that girls and women would like to become a part of *turnerism*—*Turnerei*. She continued her speech in a traditionally subordinate female way, and added that nature did not intend for them to do the same things as men, but to inspire them with "good and beautiful ideas and it is the man, who accomplishes them."<sup>58</sup>

German-American women chose a different way to participate officially in the male-dominated *vereinsleben* of the *turners*. Between 1868 and 1929, they started organizing Ladies or Women's Auxiliaries that tried to incorporate a "communal consciousness about

their activities within the milieu” of the *turner* societies.<sup>59</sup> The first minutes of the Women’s Auxiliary of the Indianapolis Turnverein in 1876 stated that this auxiliary strove to “do all in its power to support the *Turners* and especially to promote the girl’s gymnasium classes to assist in the increase and continuance of the *Turner* library to aid the *Turners* in every way and to participate in all mental and social affairs of the Turnverein.”<sup>60</sup> The Milwaukee and Cleveland *Turnvereine* were the first *turner* societies to establish auxiliaries, in 1868, followed by the Indianapolis *Turnverein* in 1876 and one year later by the Cincinnati *Turngemeinde*. The *turner* society in Syracuse, New York, organized a women’s club in 1884, and the nearby Rochester *Turnverein* followed this example. In 1889 the New Ulm *Turnverein* in Minnesota had an auxiliary; the Los Angeles *Turners* established one in 1897, as did the Akron *Turnverein* in 1904, whose aim was “to work for the good for the *turners*.” The second article of the Akron auxiliary’s 1912 statutes mentioned that “each decent German women or girl over 16 years of age can become a member.”<sup>61</sup> Rather late, in 1915, the usually progressive New York *Turn Verein* opened a “Damen Verein” for wives and daughters of *turners*, intended to continue German customs and habits.<sup>62</sup>

Figure 2 (page 393) shows the number of members of the Ladies’ Auxiliaries and the active female *turners* of the *turnerbund* from 1889 until 1950. Between 1914 and 1935, more women joined the exercise classes of the *turners* than were members in the auxiliaries. The union’s statistics do not mention how many women did exercises and also belonged to the auxiliaries; there might have been some overlap. One can assume that the general interest in exercise classes dropped once the ladies reached a certain age, as they then might have only attended the auxiliaries’ meetings to maintain membership in the *turnverein*. These ladies’ auxiliaries mainly offered financial support to the *turners* and in organizing festivities or parties, usually raising money through organizing bazaars, auctions, and dinners. “They proved their worth and ability by presenting a check for one hundred dollars,” the Akron *Turner Club* mentioned shortly after the founding of its Ladies Auxiliary.<sup>63</sup> The auxiliary from New Ulm donated \$41,000 to the *turner* society between 1890 and 1956.<sup>64</sup>

Moonen’s study describes the first decades of today’s Athenaeum Ladies’ Auxiliary in Indianapolis. This Auxiliary started with eighteen women; the male *turners* of the *Indianapolis Socialer Turnverein* had initiated the Auxiliary in 1876.<sup>65</sup> Indianapolis was one of America’s freethinker and *turner* strongholds. When this auxiliary was founded in the 1870s, the *turners* were closely connected with the freethinkers in that city, who included many Forty-Eighters and *turners*. This movement advocated rationalism, science, and history as proper guides for living, and criticized organized religion for promoting superstition and bigotry. It fought against the influence of the churches and the government in public areas, such as education.<sup>66</sup> Due to their ties to this movement, and their anti-religious and political engagement, the *turners* had an isolated position within the group of the German-speakers, and thus can be seen as a “subcommunity” among the Germans of Indianapolis. The churches in particular tried to prevent their members from joining freethinker-influenced associations. This isolation affected the wives of the *turners*, who lived within the German-speaking *turner* community.<sup>67</sup> In the *turner* auxiliaries they were able to find friends and speak their native language. The membership of the Indianapolis *Turnverein*’s auxiliary averaged 100 between 1900 and 1919. To become a member, one



had to be invited first and then introduced at the next auxiliary meeting. At the following meeting, the members would vote on the acceptance of the new member. They financed themselves through fundraising and the money they made at various sales, card games, lotteries, and other gambling games.<sup>68</sup>

Another role the Indianapolis *turner* ladies fulfilled involved supervision of children's *turn* classes, which grew rapidly after the Civil War. Because the number of girls attending these classes grew, *turner* ladies were trained as assistant instructors to chaperone these classes. The largely Victorian values of the white American middle class of the time did not consider it decent absent a female adult during the classes. However, the ladies' main task was to organize festivities and run big dinner events (*Turnfeste*).<sup>69</sup>

To accomplish their different tasks, the women of the Athenaeum *Turners* established a network of social services. This can be seen in their number of committees, such as a Monthly Committee, a Cheer/Sick Committee, a Mental Training Committee, and a School Committee. Each committee had a delegation which worked for the various purposes. This auxiliary was also active in mental exercise (*Geistiges Turnen*), participating in poetry, literature, and writing contests and organized discussions. They also financially supported the *turner* union's normal school, founded in 1866 and located in Indianapolis since 1907, and furnished the female student's dormitories, which were located in a building near the Athenaeum.<sup>70</sup> After World War I they raised money to support orphan's homes and hospitals in Germany.<sup>71</sup>

Ladies' auxiliaries continue to exist today. The 1999 directory of the American *Turners* showed that 30 societies had such an organization. According to Ruth Kayser, the

president of the National Ladies' Auxiliary, nineteen of them are members of this umbrella organization, founded in 1919, which today includes almost 1,000 women. They are independently organized, and they have their own statutes, principles, and offices. Since 1966, the president of the National Ladies' Auxiliary has belonged to the National Board of the American *Turners*, representing the interests of women.<sup>72</sup> In 1994, they dropped the "Ladies'" and renamed the organization "National Auxiliary." This change offered men a chance to become members, too, although only a few have take done so.<sup>73</sup> The opportunities for interaction among themselves, on the one hand, and recognition for their work by the male *turners*, on the other, might explain the continuance of the Auxiliaries until today, even though women now can become full members in almost all *turner* societies.

### The Female Membership Debate in the *Turner* Movement

As more and more women participated in the *turner* societies through the auxiliaries and exercise classes, the *turner* union took up the issue of accepting women as "full" members in their societies at their national conventions. In 1894 and 1895, the *turners* discussed this question with great intensity. The convention denied the Long Island District's appli-



Female students from the Normal College of the American Gymnastic Union at the Sailors' Monument, Indianapolis (1918). Courtesy Ruth Lilly Special Collection and Archives at Indiana University Purdue University (IUPUI) University Library

cation to propose the issue of women's full membership. Nevertheless, the Pacific District ignored this decision and told its societies to accept women, much to the displeasure of the *turnerbund's* executive board; the executive board argued that it was not a question of being up-to-date, but that the decisions of the national convention must be obeyed.<sup>74</sup>

Not until the turn of the century did the leaders of the *turnerbund* decide, after a vote of thirteen in favor votes and one against, to take up the following recommendation concerning the acceptance of women in the statutes:

The societies belonging to the union can accept women as members. Female and male members of a society have the same rights and duties in affairs concerning the society, district or union; however, societies that have not accepted women so far should not be forced to accept leaving or traveling passes which women have.<sup>75</sup>

This recommendation had been formulated at the national convention two years earlier, but had not been adopted in the statutes. Each society could now make its own decision whether or not to accept women.

Some *turners* societies began to incorporate women as members, as noted in a 1904 souvenir program of the Brooklyn *Turnverein*: "The North American Gymnastic Union is a league of gymnastic societies of the United States of America, organized for the purpose of bringing up men and women strong in body, mind and morals, and of promoting the dissemination of liberal and progressive ideas."<sup>76</sup> That same year, the *turnerbund* had also decided that *turner* Philipp Rappaport should write a general discourse on the "civil equality of the sexes" (*Bürgerliche Gleichstellung der Geschlechter*), after he had suggested at the 1902 meeting that the statutes and principles of the union should add the passage "we (the turners) approve of the civil equality of both sexes." In Rappaport's discourse, printed in 1905, he asked the *turnerbund* as an advanced organization to take up the fight for liberty according to their tradition. This time the fight would be for women's liberty. After the executive board denied Rappaport's appeal to take up the issue, the next official *turner* meeting in 1906 decided to have a referendum on that subject: the *turners* of all societies should decide. Only about 15% of the almost 40,000 *turners* actually voted; 3,499 voted against the proposal, 2,081 were in favor, and 468 abstained.<sup>77</sup>

During the two world wars, women eagerly participated in the *turners'* sport and exercise classes, but the discussion about their membership was not continued at the national level. In 1946, American *Turner* president Carl Weideman again tried at the national convention to persuade all societies to accept women over 21 years of age and give them the right to vote. He even demanded some advertising aimed at persuading women to join the *turner* societies.<sup>78</sup> Weideman had little success; otherwise, three decades later in 1974, another *turner* president, Wilfred Racker, wouldn't have appealed to the membership for the same changes. Racker added that some societies had lost their tax exempt status for excluding women from membership.<sup>79</sup> For Racker, the females were a "substantial" membership pool, and thus a potential solution to the financial strain cause by falling membership.<sup>80</sup> Racker also pointed out that women would be perfect for certain positions as officers in the societies, such as secretaries, treasurers, and cultural chairs.<sup>81</sup> Racker's statement implies the chauvinistic opinion that women should become members to help the finances of the societies and should take over certain positions without too much

responsibility. He didn't mention the positions of the vice-presidency or presidency, nor did he mention equality as a reason for women becoming members.

Although men viewed women not as fully adequate for all offices, women still were able to attain them. For instance, in 1968 the Buffalo *Turners* became the first American *turner* society to have a female president. The 1999 directory of the American *turner* societies shows a distribution of positions similar to the one Racker had suggested in the 1970s. In the 59 *turnvereine*, the majority of women officers were secretaries or cultural chairs; only a few could be found among the presidents or vice-presidents. Physical education chairs were almost equally distributed between men and women. The majority of offices held by women in 1999 were positions related to cultural affairs and preservation, something the *turner* ladies traditionally pursued in their ladies' auxiliaries and secretarial posts. None of these positions gives them much responsibility. The unasked question is whether women prefer to hold these offices compared to those in which they would have more responsibility, or whether they simply do not get elected to other offices.

The discussion concerning whether women should become regular members in all societies still continues. In 1988, the president of the American *Turners*, Eldon Zahm, again argued in favor of including women to improve the financial situation of the *turners*. But this was the only rationale he offered for allowing women in the *turner* societies.<sup>82</sup> Finally, four years later, the new president, Ed Colton, mentioned in his official speech in 1992 at the 64th National Convention of the *turner* union that all *turner* societies should now allow women to become members. Yet interviews with *turners* revealed a different perception. In the mid-1990s a few *turnvereine* still remained which denied memberships to females, although since 1994 the statement "No candidate for membership in any society belonging to the American *Turners* may be denied such membership on the basis of such candidate's sex" has been included in the American *Turners*' statutes and principles. In particular the *turner* societies in Pennsylvania did not accept women until the end of the 1990s; the *turners* in New Ulm, Minnesota, and Riverside, New Jersey, have only accepted women as members since 1998.

Today women may join a *turner* society and participate in all areas of the associational life. However, there still remains an underrepresentation of female members in many *turner* societies. To get a picture of the present condition and the assimilation and Americanization process of the formerly German *turner* societies, questionnaires were distributed in all *turner* societies belonging to the American *Turners* in 1997-98.<sup>83</sup> One question concerned the membership's gender distribution. Out of the 37 societies that answered the questionnaire, 4 mentioned having more female members, 26 had more male members, and another 4 had equal membership (3 societies did not answer this question). An explanation for today's underrepresentation of women might be the historic process of women's participation in the *turner* affairs and some societies' traditional exclusion of women until the 1990s. But it could also be due to the lower degree of sport engagement of women, which the German sociologists Klaus Heinemann and Manfred Schubert describe in an analysis of the German sport societies published in 1994. Moreover, the athletic offerings of the American *turner* societies are ball games, with few dancing, fitness, or health-related classes on their schedules, if they have any at all—which women apparently prefer to ball games.<sup>84</sup>

## Conclusion

This article has examined several gender-related aspects in the American *turner* movement. It showed that women had always been a part of the *vereinsleben* in one way or another, and through their strong communal solidarity, they were and are still able to support the *turner* societies in many ways: financially, culturally, and educationally. The development of the ladies' auxiliaries can be seen as part of the assimilation process the *turner* movement went through in the United States; it was an adaptation to the new circumstances. In Germany, the *turners* did not develop ladies' auxiliaries. The founding of these organizations is a typical American phenomenon, which often occurred in ethnic communities and in connection with ethnic sport societies, like the American Sokol and Falcon associations, as well as some ethnic YMCAs or YWCAs.<sup>85</sup> The roots of these auxiliaries could be seen in the early American "bees"—gatherings of women who met in their spare time to do handcrafts. These bees, which grew out of church work, had an important social function for women.<sup>86</sup> As in the auxiliaries, they exchanged thoughts and shared problems while working for a useful purpose.

For German-American women of the first generation, whose lives in general were restricted to the household, the ladies' auxiliaries of the *turner* societies functioned as nurseries of ethnicity.<sup>87</sup> They allowed women to experience familiar cultural surroundings in a foreign country in which they not only built up a new existence, but also took over the tasks of guardians of culture (*Kulturbewahrerinnen*)—although they gradually gained familiarity with the American language and culture. In the auxiliaries, German immigrant ladies escaped—for a few hours—the reality of a life which confronted them with many problems. They also developed female friendships, established bonds with other women, and built up female communities, which Schelbitzki Pickle sees as important for immigrant women.

From a historian's perspective, like that presented by Anne Firor and Mari Jo Buhle, one purpose of women's associations is the networks they establish. These networks help women learn how to conduct business, carry on meetings, appear in public, and manage economic and financial duties. Through the participation in women's associations or clubs, women are exposed to a wider range of social experience than in their daily, family-centered life.<sup>88</sup> They gain feelings of self worth, learn to appear in public, and become skilled at fundraising, making their expertise invaluable. The *turner* auxiliaries filled this role. They provided women the opportunity to prove themselves and helped them find acceptance among equals beyond the understanding of the male-dominated world. Being an auxiliary member was one way for German-American women in the nineteenth century to gain independence from male-dominated cultural practices, and this broadened women's horizons and roles.

In contrast to the male *turner* societies, which substantially engaged in the sociopolitical affairs of their new home country during the nineteenth century, there is no information on political activities in the ladies auxiliaries. Unlike other nineteenth-century female associations in the United States, my research has uncovered no information on the *turnerinnen's* involvement in women's suffrage. It seems that the *turner* ladies instead contributed their time to social work on a local or society level, such as fundraising, catering

for society functions, educating *turner* children in German language and culture, and supervising physical education classes for children.<sup>89</sup>

Women eagerly participated in physical education classes and worked for the welfare of the *turner* organizations. I believe that the male societies could not have functioned without the ongoing work women performed. In a subordinate, but nonetheless independent way, women tried to be part of the mostly male *turner* societies. They supported them financially and donated their time to different kinds of volunteer work. They thus expressed their agreement with the *turners'* cultural way of doing and thinking. These women showed their loyalty to the world of their men, who respected the ladies and integrated them in the *vereinsleben*—but without the right to vote. Later, in the twentieth century, most societies accepted females as members. Certainly this was for more than just gender equality—in many cases the financial contribution from female memberships were needed to survive. Still, some American *turnvereine* held on to their tradition of being exclusively male societies. Not until the 1990s did all societies accept women, and only a few women held major leading positions in their societies. The percentage of today's females in the American *Turners* is not known, although it appears lower than the male percentage.

Today, although not every *turnvereine* counts women among its members, many rely on female membership for the continuing vitality of the organization. Women's participation in these societies has been closely connected with the ethnic history of the German-Americans, and ought to be compared with other German-American associations or ethnic sport organizations founded in the United States. This research serves only as a beginning. More detailed studies are necessary to explore the role of women in the American *turner* movement. These studies should consider other aspects as well, such as the social recruitment of the female members of the *turner* societies (or their ladies auxiliaries), the degree the women's autonomy and leadership roles in these clubs, and the importance of the auxiliaries to the German-American community as a whole.<sup>90</sup> From a sport historian's perspective, information on females' involvement in *turnfests* and their role as physical educators would be of greatest interest, as well as comparative studies which focus on the role of women in other ethnic "sport" clubs such as, for instance, the Falcon or Sokol organizations.

Finally, this excerpt from a poem written by *turner* Ernst A. Zündt in 1883 expresses, long before women were accepted as full members in the *turner* societies, that they were respected by the male *turners*. Especially in the last stanza, Zündt emphasizes that those *turnvereine* that include women in their associational life prosper better and faster than those that do not.<sup>91</sup>

It's time for the women in every state  
 To join *turner* groups and participate;  
 Liberated, brave, going along  
 With *turner* men, so free and strong!  
 Joining the joyous in happy elation,  
 Raising their glasses in grand celebration!

A club with women, experience shows,  
 Prospers better, more quickly grows  
 Than one that has to do without  
 Their magical presence-beyond a doubt!

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1. Willi Paul Adams, *The German-Americans: An Ethnic Experience*. Trans. LaVern J. Rippley and Eberhard Reichmann. (Indianapolis: Max Kade German American Center, 1993), 3.
  2. For an overview on the ethnic history of the German-Americans, see Kathleen Neils Conzen, "Germans," in Stephen Thernstrom (ed.), *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* (Cambridge, Mass: 1980), 405-25, as well as LaVern J. Rippley, *The German-Americans* (Boston: Twayne, 1976), and Frank Trommler, ed., *Amerika und die Deutschen* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1986).
  3. Linda Schelbitzki Pickle, *Contended Among Strangers: Rural German-Speaking Women and Their Families in the Nineteenth Century Midwest* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 208. One reason for this neglect in immigrant women's history might be that, according to Schelbitzki Pickle, only a small number of letters, diaries and memoirs written by German immigrant women exist. She conjectures that the illiteracy rate was higher among German women than men, and that women had only little leisure time, which was not necessarily devoted to writing. *Ibid.*, 201ff.
  4. Quoted in Schelbitzki Pickle, *Contended Among Strangers*, 91.
  5. *Ibid.*, 93, 99, 127, 40.
  6. *Ibid.*, 127.
  7. *Ibid.*, 6.
  8. *Ibid.*, 106-08.
  9. See Jürgen Eichhoff, "Die Deutsche Sprache in Amerika," in F. Trommler, ed., *Amerika und die Deutschen: Eine über 300jährige Bestandsaufnahme* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1986), 237.
  10. See Stanley Nadel, *Little Germany: Ethnicity, Religion and Class in New York City, 1845-80* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 41. Downtown Indianapolis, for example, had "twelve groceries or meat markets, six drugstores, two bakeries, three hardware stores, ten dry goods stores, six tobacco shops, five tailor shops, two toy and notion stores and three bookstores" that all belonged to Germans in the 1860s. In addition there were German lawyers, doctors, architects and newspapers. In the 1880s, six German-language newspapers were published on a daily basis. George Theodore Probst, *The German in Indianapolis: 1840-1918*. (Indianapolis: German-American Center, 1989), 57, 92ff.
  11. The German-American national directory of addresses listed 6,586 German secular societies in the United States in 1916-17. Cincinnati, for instance, had over 100 German societies and organizations before World War I. Among them were 12 singing societies, 12 labor unions, 59 neighborhood support groups, 3 *turner* societies, 13 cultural charities, and 7 general charities. See Frederick C. Luebke, *Bounds of Loyalty: German-Americans and World War I* (De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974), 43; Don Heinrich Tolzmann, "The Survival of an Ethnic Community: The Cincinnati Germans, 1918-1932." (Ph.D. diss., University of Cincinnati, 1983), 93.
  12. Milton Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 34.

13. Kathleen Neils Conzen, "Ethnicity as Festive Culture: Nineteenth-Century German Americans on Parade," in Werner Sollors, *The Invention of Ethnicity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 50, 58.
14. Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
15. Irende Häderle, "Deutsche Frauenvereine in den USA, 1840-1930: Ein Zwischenbericht," in ed. Monika Blaschke and Christina Harzig, *Frauen wandern aus: Deutsche Migrantinnen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Bremen: Universität Bremen Laborprojekt, 1990), 89.
16. Häderle, "Deutsche Frauenvereine," 95.
17. Häderle, "Deutsche kirchliche Frauenvereine in Ann Arbor," in Blaschke and Harzig, *Frauen wandern*, 14. Turner means a person who engages in physical and mental activities that descend from the German Turnvater, Friedrich Ludwig Jahn (1778-1852). This article uses the term for consistency with source material and the perspective of the German-American community.
18. *Convention Protocol of Socialistic Turnerbund*, 1859-60. All the protocols and minutes of the turner union used in this article can be found in the Ruth Lilly Special Collection and Archives at Indiana University-Purdue University (IUPUI) at Indianapolis Library.
19. This was the second institution in the United States at which one could be trained to be a physical education teacher. The first one was Dr. Lewis's Normal Institute for Physical Education, founded in 1861 in Boston. See Edward Mussey Hartwell, "Physical Training in American Colleges and Universities," Information Circular of the Bureau of Education 5-1885 (Washington: Bureau of Education, 1886).
20. See Eric Pumroy and Katja Rampelmann, "Introduction," *Research Guide to the Turner Movement in the United States*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996).
21. See the *Annual Reports* of the *Nordamerikanische Turnerbund* for the 1890s.
22. See the *Statistical Reports* of the *Nordamerikanische Turnerbund* between 1914 and 1943.
23. *Annual Reports* of the *Nordamerikanische Turnerbund* (1925), 11 and (1935), 3; *Annual Report of the American Turners* (1938), 6; Pumroy and Rampelmann, *Research Guide*, xxv.
24. Ripley, *The German-Americans*, 203-05. The *Amerikanische Volksbund* is better known as the German-American Bund. See *Baumgartner v. United States*, 322 U.S. 665, 669 (1944).
25. Adams, *The German-Americans*, 6.
26. Pumroy and Rampelmann, *Research Guide*, 332.
27. Gertrud Pfister, "Frauen—das zweite Geschlecht," *Deutsches Turnen Sonderausgabe Vor 150 Jahren: Revolution und Turnerbund* (1998): 18.
28. Horst Ueberhorst, *Turner unterm Stemenbanner* (München: Heinz Moos Verlag, 1978).
29. Alida Joyce Moonen, "The Missing Half: The Experience of Women of the Indiana Athenaeum Turnverein Women's Auxiliary 1876-1919" (Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 1993), 4.
30. See Christiane Harzig Familie, *Arbeit und weibliche Öffentlichkeit in einer Einwanderungsstadt: Deuschamerikanerinnen in Chicago um die Jahrhundertwende* (St. Katharinen: Scripta Mercaturae Verlag, 1991), 262-67.
31. In addition to the research done by Schelbitzki Pickle on rural German-speaking women in the United States and by Moonen on the Indianapolis' Lady Turners, this study draws heavily on anniversary publications of the turner societies, annual reports, minutes and statistics of the *turnerbund*, and information gathered from various visits at turner societies and interviews with their members.
32. Title in the German original: "Zulässigkeit des weiblichen Geschlechts zu den Leibesübungen."
33. [Anonymous], "Account of a Female School," *American Annals of Education and Instruction* (1 Apr. 1832): 210; Fred Leonard, "The First Introduction of the Jahn Gymnastics Into America (1825-30)," *Mind and Body* (1906): 289-293.
34. Leonard, "First Introduction," 313ff. See Catharine E. Beecher, *Letters to the People in Health and Happiness* (New York: 1855), 131ff; Roberta Park, "Sport, Gender and Society in a Transatlantic

- Victorian Perspective,” in ed. J.A. Mangan and R. Park, *From “Fair Sex” to Feminism! Sport and the Socialization of Women in the Industrial and Post-Industrial Eras* (London: Frank Cass, 1987), 64; Linda Borish, “The Robust Woman and the Muscular Christian: Catharine Beecher, Thomas Higginson, and Their Vision of American Society, Health and Physical Activities,” *International Journal of the History of Sport* 4(2) (Sept. 1987): 139-54; Betty Spears and Richard Swanson, *History of Sport and Physical Education in the United States*, 3d ed. (Dubuque, IA: Wm. Brown Publishers, 1988), 94ff, 101, 141.
35. The discussion about the participation of females in physical activities included opponents and advocates among American physical educators, just like among the *turners*. Advocates included Dudley A. Sargent, Dioclesian Lewis, and Matthew Vassar, founder of the female Vassar College. In 1865, Vassar was among the first colleges to have a gymnasium, a bowling alley, and a riding stable. Later, Vassar students were taught in baseball, basketball, rowing, and archery. Allen Guttmann, *Women’s Sports: A History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 140-43; Betty Spears and Richard Swanson, *History of Sport and Physical Education*, 101, 141; Roberta Park, *Sport, Gender and Society*, 63ff.
36. See Eduard Müller, “Das Turnen und das weibliche Geschlecht,” in *Turnzeitung* (15 Feb. 1853, 1 Mar. 1853).
37. *Minutes of the Socialist Turnerbund 1858; Minutes of the Nordamerikanische Turnerbund. 1865-93.*
38. Emil Rinsch, *History of the Normal College of the American Gymnastic Union Indiana University 1866-1966* (Rochdale: Indiana University, 1966). 21f.
39. The German original reads:  
 Ich sage nur, denn wenn bei veranstalteten Festlichkeiten, wie “Fairs”, Bällen, Kränzchen etc., die Damen sich mit der Ausschmückung der Hallen befassen, Collecten veranstalten, für einen guten Imbiß sorgen, so ist damit allerdings auch geholfen, aber es macht doch nur den untergeordneten Theil ihrer Thätigkeit aus. Die Hauptsache ist und bleibt die entsprechende Theilnahme an der Lösung der idealen Aufgabe der Turnerei, und diese besteht in der Heranbildung eines an Leib und Seele gesunden Geschlechts.  
 Marie Keilhuber, “Plaudereiner einer Turnschwester,” *Amerikanischer Turner-Kalender* (Milwaukee: 1883), 43.
40. Robert Knight Barney, “For Such Olympic Games: German-American Turnfests as Preludes to the Modern Olympic Games”, in ed. F. Landry, M. Landry, and M. Yerlès, *Proceedings of the International sport Symposium* [Quebec City, Canada, 21-25 May 1990] (Sainte-Foy, Quebec: 1991), 701.
41. Concordia Turnverein, *Golden Jubilee* (St. Louis: 1925); Rochester Turners, *Historical Journal: A Souvenir of the Centennial Celebration*, (Rochester, NY: 1952); Syracuse Turners, *125th Anniversary* (Syracuse, NY: 1979); New York Turn Verein, *The History of the New York Turn Verein for the Centennial Celebration* (New York: 1950).
42. *Official Minutes and Protocols of the Nordamerikanische Turnerbund* (1893), 23.
43. The *turnerbund* included these statistics in its annual reports from 1885 to 1950. After 1950, the reports did not state separate statistics for each sex. See *Official Minutes and Protocols of the Nordamerikanische Turnerbund, 1885-1950.*
44. The German original reads:  
 “Eine willkommene Erscheinung im turnerischen Leben bildet der Aufschwung der turnenden Damenklassen... Einkräftiges Volk bedarf gesunder Mütter, die ihrem Berufe mit Liebe obliegen und ihren Pflichten nachkommen können und wollen.”  
 “Die Turnschule des Turnverein-Milwaukee, 1853-1907,” *Dem Turnverein gewidmet von Turnlehrer George Brosius* (Milwaukee: 1907), 19.
45. See various programs of the national turnfest, such as Executive Board of the North American Gymnastic Union, “The Twenty Sixth National Festival of the North American Gymnastic Union” [Milwaukee, WI, 21-25 Jun. 1893], *Reports of the Special Committee on Observation* (1893); *Illustrated Souvenir Program of the 27th National Festival of the North American Gymnastic Union*, (St.

- Louis: Western Engraving Company, 1894); *Official Souvenir Program of the 30th National Gymnastic Festival of the North American Gymnastic Union* [Cincinnati, 19-28 Jun. 1909].
46. Robert Knight Barney, "For Such Olympic Games," 701.
  47. Volker Kluge, *Die Olympischen Spiele 1894-1964* (Berlin: Sportverlag, 1980), 29ff.
  48. See Gerald R. Gems, *Windy City Wars: Labor, Leisure, and Sport in the Making of Chicago* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1997), 187.
  49. Brian Schenk, *USA Gymnastics: The History of USA Gymnastics (The Early Years Through 1991)* (Indianapolis: USA Gymnastics Publications, 1997), 53, 77ff, 157; Heinrich Metzner, *History of the American Turners*, 4th rev. ed. (Rochester, NY: National Council of the American Turners, 1989), 62-65.
  50. Heinrich Metzner, *Jahrbücher der Deutsch-Amerikanischen Turnerei*, Vol. III (New York: 1894), 204-11.
  51. Clipping from a Belleville, Illinois newspaper of about 1878, in the Hecker Papers, University of Missouri (St. Louis).
  52. Among the lectures Hecker gave was one on women and women's suffrage which reflected a very conservative anti-liberal opinion. Friedrich Hecker, "Weiblichkeit und Weiberrechtelei," in *Reden und Vorlesungen* (Waldkirch: Waldkircher Verlag 1985), 71-99.
  53. Hecker was a "state elector at large" during the election campaign in 1860. He supported Abraham Lincoln. Sabine Freitag, *Friedrich Hecker: Die Biographie eines Republikaners* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag 1998), 199ff.
  54. *Ibid.*, 429.
  55. *Official Minutes and Protocol of the Nordamerikanischer Turnerbund* (1872), 2-4.
  56. In general, German-Americans did not approve of female school teachers; they preferred the traditional male-provided education they had experienced in the Old Country. In 1900 there were 314,269 female teachers and professors in the United States, of whom only 86 had a German background. Schelbitzki Pickle, *Contended Among Strangers*, 82.
  57. *Protocol of the Nordamerikanischer Turnerbund: Halbjahresbericht des Vororts* (1872), 4.
  58. See "Fahnenweihe und Stiftungsfest der Turngemeinde von Cincinnati," *Turnzeitung* (Mar. 1851); "Das Turnfest in Philadelphia," *Turnzeitung* (Aug. 1851).
  59. Moonen, "The Missing Half," 100. Among the auxiliaries drawn from the Pumroy and Rampelmann *Research Guide*, none was located in the American South. This might be because there were fewer Germans and thus fewer *turner* societies.
  60. See Women's Auxiliary Minutes of the Athenaeum Auxiliary (16 Apr. 1876).
  61. See statutes of the Akron TV Damen Section, 1912.
  62. See the following societal anniversary publications: Akron (OH) Turner Club, *Centennial Anniversary, 1885-1985*; Cincinnati Central Turners, *The First Turner Society in America* (Cincinnati: 1948); Denver Turnverein, *Centennial Journal* (Denver: 1965), 21, 35; Indianapolis Turnverein, *75th Anniversary* (1926), 15; Milwaukee Turnverein, *Wisconsin State Turn Fest: Official Programm and Memorial Edition and 85th Anniversary Turn Verein Milwaukee* (Milwaukee: 1938), 33; Los Angeles Turners, *One Hundredth Anniversary 1871-1971* (Los Angeles: 1971); New Ulm Turner Frauenverein, *140th Anniversary of the New Ulm Turnverein and Turner Hall Marker Dedication, September 27, 1996* (New Ulm, MN); New York Turn Verein, *The History of the New York Turn Verein for the Centennial Celebration* (New York: 1950); Rochester Turners, *Historical Journal: A Souvenir of the Centennial Celebration* (Rochester, NY: 1952).
  63. See Akron Turner Club, *Centennial Anniversary*.
  64. See New Ulm Turner Frauenverein, *140th Anniversary*.
  65. This auxiliary still exists. In 1990 it had 30 members, and its main goal was to support the Athenaeum, the former German House in Indianapolis. Today this national historical landmark is the home of several German associations and the YMCA. The building needs a great deal of repair

- work, which the *turner* ladies financially support. Interview with Rosalind McCart, President, Athenaeum *Turner Ladies Auxiliary* (August 1998).
66. Pumroy and Rampelmann, *Research Guide*, xxii.
  67. Moonen, "The Missing Half," 53ff 45, 73.
  68. *Ibid.*, 122ff.
  69. *Ibid.*, 130-35, 152, 181ff.
  70. *Ibid.*, 151.
  71. Pumroy and Rampelmann, *Research Guide*, 38.
  72. *Ibid.*, 10.
  73. *See Protocols of the American Turners National Council Meeting* (1994).
  74. *See Nordamerikanischer Turnerbund, Jahresbericht des Vororts*, vol. V-VI (Milwaukee: 1895, 1896).
  75. German original:
 

Den Bundesvereinen ist es gestattet, auch Frauen als Mitglieder aufzunehmen. Weibliche und männliche Mitglieder eines Vereines haben in allen Vereins-, Bezirks- und Bundesangelegenheiten gleiche Rechte und gleiche Pflichten; doch sollten Vereine, die noch keine Frauen aufgenommen haben, nicht gezwungen sein, Abgang- und Reisekarten, welche Frauen ausgestellt wurden anzuerkennen.

*Official Minutes and Protocols of the Nordamerikanischer Turnerbund* (1904): lxxv.
  76. Souvenir Programme of the Gymnastic Exhibition at the Armory 13th Regiment H.A.N.G.N.Y. Sumner & Jefferson Aves. Brooklyn, Turn-Verein of Brooklyn, E. D. Wednesday April 20, 1904.
  77. Philipp Rappaport, *Die bürgerliche Gleichstellung der Geschlechter* (Milwaukee: Bundesvorort des Nordamerikanischen Turnerbundes, 1905).
  78. *See Official Minutes of the 41st Convention of the American Turners*, held at the Athenaeum, Indianapolis (Indianapolis: 1946), 8.
  79. A look at the annual reports of the American *Turners* shows that the financial support for a scholarship which the *turners* awarded every year was lower for women than for men. In the 1960s women received an annual stipend of \$100, and men \$250. Beginning in 1972 both sexes got \$600, which was raised in 1994 to \$750. American *Turners* National Council Meeting, 1972 and 1994. Minutes of the 54th National Convention of American *Turners*, 1972; Minutes of the American *Turners* National Council Meeting, South Bend, Indiana (1994).
  80. In the 1950s, total membership had climbed to 25,000, organized in approximately 80 societies. One cause of this rise was the new immigration wave, which brought more than 500,000 German immigrants to the United States between 1950 and 1959. Adams, *The German-Americans*. 6. Membership then dropped steadily in the 1960s and 70s eventually to approximately 13,000. *Statistical Reports of the American Turners*, 1950-2000.
  81. Letter from Wilfred Racker to all societies, 7 Nov. 1974, Lilly Collection.
  82. *62nd National Convention of the American Turners* (Toledo, OH: 1988).
  83. A total of 37 societies answered the first questionnaire and gave information on their physical and social programs, membership numbers, age structure of the membership, and gender distribution. The second questionnaire was returned by 160 *turners* from 15 societies, and mainly provides insight into the ethnic background of these members and their reasons for joining the *turner* societies.
  84. Klaus Heinemann and Manfred Schubert, *Der Sportverein: Ergebnisse einer repräsentativen Untersuchung* (Schorndorf: Hofmann Verlag, 1994), 93.
  85. American Sokol, 1865-1990; *125th Anniversary of Sokol in the United States* (1990). Examples for ladies auxiliaries within the YMHA can be found in Linda Borish, "Athletic Activities of Various Kinds: Physical Health and Sport Programs for Jewish American Women," *Journal of Sport History* 26 (Summer 1999): 240-70.
  86. Gerda Lerner, *The Woman in American History* (Menlo Park, NJ: Addison Wesley Company, 1971), 71.

87. Schelbitzki Pickle, *Contended Among Strangers*, 30.
88. Anne Firor Scott, *Natural Allies: Women's Associations in American History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 2.
89. Moonen, "The Missing Half," 162.
90. Haderle suggests these points for further research on German-American frauenvereine in general. See Häderle, "Deutsche Frauenvereine," 93.
91. I want to especially thank Ginny Ditrlich for translating the poem into English. The German original can be found in the *Turner-Kalender*, 1883, 48ff:

Und im Lande soll sich vor allem  
Die Frau im Turnkreise gefallen;  
Mit den Freien soll sie die Freie sein,  
Mit den Starken in dem Muth gedeih'n,  
Mit den Frohen sich freuen am heitern Tag,  
Den Becher und kränzen beim Festgelag  
...  
Die Erfahrung lehrt, daß jeder Verein,  
Den die Frauen mit ihrer Gegenwart weih'n,  
Viel besser gedeiht, viel schneller sich mehrt,  
Ah jene, wo man ihres Zaubers entbehrt.