

# COMMUNITY AND SPACE

## The Efforts of the German Language Press in the Establishment and Growth of Waterloo County's Turnvereins: 1855-1865

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There currently exists a general lack of detailed knowledge on the subject of the Turner movement in Canada. This examination of Waterloo County's mid-nineteenth century German language newspapers attempts to fill this void.

The distinctly German socio-political gymnastic organization called the Turnverein, founded by the early nineteenth century pedagogue and German nationalist Friedrich Ludwig Jahn, served as the major sporting organization of nineteenth century German settlements. Knowledge of Turner activity inside and outside Canada aided in the establishment of the Canadian Turnerbund in 1861. The German language press in Waterloo County informed the largely German population of Waterloo about world-wide Turner activity, as well as covering the Turnvereins of Waterloo County. Several individuals involved in the organization of the Turnvereins in the villages of Berlin, Preston, Waterloo and New Hamburg also held positions of influence in the German language newspapers. These individuals were Otto Pressprich, Louis Bloquelle, Edward Lindemann, Joachim Kalbfleisch, Jakob Teuscher, and John Hinderer. These men were involved as owners and/or editors in the following papers: the *Deutsche Canadier*, the *Canadische Bauernfreund*, and the *Canadisches Volksblatt*. One must assume the individuals involved with the Turnvereins at the organizational and administrative level deemed the Turnverein a typical and necessary part of a German community. The owners and editors displayed their belief in Turnen and its community function by acting as founding and executive members, organizing special commemorative events, and aiding the establishment of the Canadian Turnerbund. Through positive promotion and an appeal to the reading public, the individuals utilized their positions to reinforce the value of the Turner movement. The positive promotion included fundamental Turner values, such as the desire to remain united in a foreign land, the continuation of homeland traditions and cultural events, and the development of a physically and mentally strong youth.

The actions of the owners and editors reinforced the largely positive press coverage, and one may infer that the establishment of the Turnvereins of Waterloo County from 1855-1865 are to a degree

indebted to the individuals who used the newspaper as a means of notifying and convincing the public about the importance and availability of Turner activity.



Sessions and meetings were well attended at Clemson.