

GHI-GSP Research Fellows in 2015

Now in its ninth year, the joint fellowship program of the German Society and the German Historical Institute in Washington will bring four fellows to the Horner Library between June and August 2015. While one fellow, Elisabeth Piller, will make use of the twentieth-century collection for her project on Weimar Culture, the other three fellows will pursue research in topics of the "older" German-American history, reaching back to the sixteenth century.

Elisabeth Piller, whose dissertation is jointly supervised at the University of Heidelberg and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim, tackles the much neglected chapter of German cultural diplomacy after World War I in its links to German Americans. She is especially interested in the extensive relief work involving German Americans.

Andreas Obersdorf writes his dissertation at the University of Münster, Germany, with Professor Jürgen Overhoff who last year gave an inspiring talk at the German Society about William Penn's travels in Germany. Obersdorf also pursues a much neglected topic: the catholic element among Pennsylvania Germans in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, particularly the efforts of German Catholics in educational reforms in the western part of the state. His interest has been sparked by a close connection between Münster and Pennsylvania in the figure of Demetrius Augustinus von Gallitzin (1770-1840) who left his noble family behind and devoted his life to educational reforms in Loretto, PA.

Protestants and their charity efforts from the 16th-19th centuries are the topic of Duane Corpis's comprehensive study, "Overseas Charity and German Protestantism: Global Networks, Local Norms, 16th-19th Centuries." Duane Corpis, Associate Professor at Cornell University, submits the existing perception of – mostly local – Protestant charity to a revision in light of the building of global networks. As the German Society's primary mission was charity work for

German immigrants, its archival holdings promise to provide much material for his innovative work.

Tristan Coignard, Associate Professor in the Department of German Studies at the University of Bordeaux 3, focuses on the concept of the "rooted cosmopolitanism" by illuminating the life and work of Ludwig August Wollenweber, a political author and publisher in the nineteenth century. Coignard sees Wollenweber's mediation between the Palatinate and Pennsylvania as exemplary not just for the expansive worldview of an educated immigrant between two countries but also for a particular form of cosmopolitanism that maintains its roots in a particular area and a particular regionalism.

-Frank Trommler

Meet Our New Librarian

Hello, I am the "new" librarian here at the German Society. New is actually not quite accurate: I have actually worked in the Horner Library on and off for over 20 years! I was first hired in 1994 to work on the cataloging project, which aimed to catalog the historical library into a shared database and make our library holdings easily accessible to users. That goal was largely accomplished and I left to work at the Library Company of Philadelphia and the Rare Books Department of the Free Library of Philadelphia, not to mention raising my children in the interim.

I returned to the German Society in 2007 and joined the newly-formed Library Committee. Our goal was to reopen the library, which had been closed for some time. Since then, thanks to grant funding, I have continued to catalog portions of the Main Library and German American Collection. We have made great strides in the last few years in completing the cataloging. I look forward to moving into the new role of Librarian to continue improving access to our collections for German Society members as well as outside researchers.

-Bettina Hess

Departure of Our Librarian

It is with a mixture of sadness and excitement that I am writing my final Staatsbote column as the German Society's Librarian. These past two and a half years have afforded me opportunities that few librarians receive this early in their careers, and I feel very fortunate to have been not only permitted but encouraged to cultivate a broad array of experiences here. I have relished my tenure in this building, working with these amazing library collections and the myriad patrons who have contacted and visited the library during this time. After all, where else could I have contributed to a history museum exhibit and hosted a sauerkraut-making workshop within the span of a single year? While I am moving on in terms of my career, I'm not actually moving away from the area, so I hope to continue to see all of you at future German Society events!

-Chrissy Bellizzi