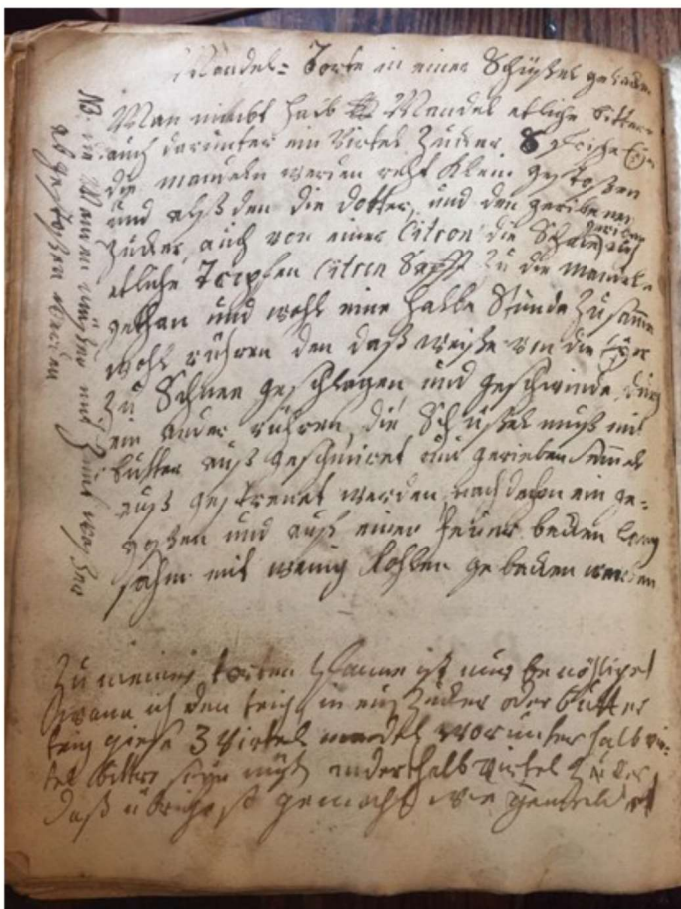


Transcribing Manuscripts at the Horner Library

The Horner Library contains many individual documents and manuscript collections from the 18th through the 20th centuries, most of them handwritten in the old German script called *Kurrent*. This handwriting was used in Germany until the early 20th century when a modified form called *Sütterlin* was introduced. If you have old family documents or letters at home, they are probably written in this script, in which many of the letters are shaped differently from modern cursive, making it very difficult even for native German speakers to read.



One such example in our library is the German Society's own records, starting with the original minute book which dates back to 1764. We recently started a transcription group, which meets in the library on Tuesdays from 12-2pm, to work on deciphering some of our old documents to make them more accessible. One thing that has become clear is that it is much easier to do this transcription work in pairs or small groups rather than individually. What one

person may miss, another may pick up, and the more sets of eyes on a page, the easier it is to puzzle out what at first glance seems totally illegible.

The impetus for beginning this project was the Library's involvement with the German Historical Institute's *German Heritage in Letters* project, which has been collecting and digitizing the letters Germans sent to their emigrant relations in the United States between roughly 1850 and 1920, and to which we have contributed letters from our *Eugen Klee Collection*. One aspect of the project is the possibility for members of the public to contribute and also to transcribe and translate the letters directly on the Germanletters.org website.

On March 31, 2020, the Horner Library, in cooperation with the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, will also host a day-long transcription workshop, led by Paul Peucker and Tom McCullough of the Moravian Archives in Bethlehem, for anybody interested in learning how to read *Kurrent*, perhaps for letters or documents in their own family collections. For more information on the upcoming workshop or the weekly transcription group, please email: librarian@germansociety.org.

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