

Rainer Sell

**Der Deutsche Pionier-Verein von Cincinnati,
Heinrich Armin Rattermann, and *Der Deutsche Pionier*:
A Nucleus of Nineteenth-Century German-America**

Der Deutsche Pionier-Verein von Cincinnati (DPVC) was founded in 1868 and existed for ninety-three years until March 1961.¹ According to its bylaws, its purpose was to renew and deepen old friendships and to record the experiences and history of the German pioneers in Cincinnati and environs by collecting relevant materials. Members had to be German immigrants, male, at least forty years of age, and residents of Cincinnati and environs for at least twenty-five years (*DDP* 1 [1869-70]: 27-28).² By 1930, the minimum residence requirement had been dropped completely and replaced by United States citizenship and command of the German language (*Vorstands-Bericht des Deutschen Pionier-Vereins* 62 [1929-30]: 17). The national and historic importance of the DPVC is primarily based on its publication *Der Deutsche Pionier*, in existence from March 1869 to 1887, when it was replaced by the considerably less ambitious annual *Vorstands-Bericht* (Proceedings). *Der Deutsche Pionier* is generally considered an indispensable source for the history of Germans in the United States.³ It owes its quality and high reputation particularly to Heinrich Armin Rattermann, editor of the journal from 1874 to 1885, self-taught historian, archivist, poet, journalist, co-founder and secretary of the German Mutual Fire Insurance Company of Cincinnati, one of the spiritual founding fathers of the DPVC and a central figure in Cincinnati's German-American cultural life.

The combination of a vigorous ethnic society (which documented its activities minutely), a journal of national, historic renown, and a dedicated, at times controversial editor resulted in one of the most productive, successful, and representative attempts at establishing a viable German-America in nineteenth-century America. The study of the symbiosis of the three elements allows insight into mutually supportive relationships, the questions that concerned the three, and the causes of the relatively short life of the journal in its original form.

Nativism, especially the Know-Nothing movement of the 1850s with its political planks for temperance legislation, increased residence requirements for voting, and the reading of the Protestant Bible in public schools had rallied Cincinnati's German-Americans to protect their political interests and traditional way of life.⁴ The forty-eighters, refugees from the abortive 1848 Revolution in Germany—among them many intellectuals—had bolstered the numbers of Cincinnati's German-Americans, stimulated their cultural and political activity, and awakened a greater sense of pride in their German heritage. Against this background of an increased German-American self-respect, the foundation of the DPVC is an expression of a growing awareness among German-Americans of previous German contributions to the development of Cincinnati and the United States in general. The society's motto "Willenskraft—Wege schafft" (where there's a will, there's a way) is a concise outline of its philosophy: an ethnic minority expressing pride in its heritage and demanding recognition of its achievements and way of life within a predominantly Anglo-American environment. The very name of the society seems to rival that of the American Pioneer Society of Cincinnati which was founded in 1856 (*DDP* 18 [1886-87]: 296). At a time when the idea of America as a melting pot of foreign nationalities appeared to be the unchallenged official doctrine, the philosophy and the program of the DPVC suggested an alternative whose boldness and novelty can only be compared to the demands of minorities in the United States for bilingual education and preservation of their cultural identities in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. Inherent in the DPVC's program is a demand for a German-American social and cultural existence distinct from the mainstream of American life and thus the potential for conflicts with American society. World War I was to highlight this problem for the DPVC in the most tragic way.⁵

Among the founding fathers of the DPVC were Dr. Joseph Pulte, Christian von Seggern, and Joseph Siefert. The committee to draft a constitution consisted of Jos. A. Hemann, Nic. Höffer, Michael Pfau, Joseph A. Pulte, Friedrich Heinrich Röwekamp, and Joseph Siefert. The first president of the DPVC was "Squire" Hanselmann (*DDP* 1 [1869-70]: 26). The year 1877 shows 977 regular and twelve honorary members. In 1876, the society authorized the foundation of *Zweigvereine* which soon came into existence in neighboring Newport and Covington, Kentucky (1877), as well as in Dayton and Toledo, Ohio (1878). There was some social exchange between these pioneer societies, and the *Zweigvereine* had their events and proceedings published in *Der Deutsche Pionier*. By 1890 membership in the DPVC had dropped to 343. One of the major reasons for this decline must be seen in the dissension within the DPVC over the publication of *Der Deutsche Pionier*. As early as 1872-73 Karl Rümelin, at that time editor of the journal, had to remind the members of the DPVC to support the good public cause of *Der Deutsche Pionier* by subscribing to the journal (*DDP* 4 [1872-73]: 428-29). Karl Knortz, editor of the journal from 1873-74, was dismissed, because he did not edit the journal "den Prinzipien und dem angesetzten Zwecke des Vereins gemäß" (*DDP* 6 [1874-75]: 40). The question of

continuing the journal was raised again and again. In June 1884 the secretary of the DPVC, F. W. Gerstle, complained about the deficit the journal had accrued again and about some 400 members (more than half of the DPVC's membership at that time) not having paid their dues (DDP 16 [1884-85]: 167). Gerstle also voiced criticism of Rattermann, the editor: his lack of communication with the *Vorstand*, his tardiness and incomplete reporting of minutes (DDP 16 [1884-85]: 530). The change from a monthly to a quarterly publication of *Der Deutsche Pionier* in 1885 and to the modest annual *Vorstands-Bericht* in 1887 was a financially sound measure, but affected the harmony within the society.⁶ It took away the initiative and enthusiasm of those who considered the journal an integral part of the DPVC's program which distinguished it from other German societies. In 1900 membership was up again to 667 and in 1910 up to 865. World War I with its strong anti-German sentiment in the United States made it difficult for the DPVC to continue its traditional activities. The fifty-ninth anniversary celebration took place under police surveillance, and the traditional German speech planned for the event had been forbidden by authorities. But austerity also helped to bring Cincinnati's German-Americans closer together. Membership increased during the war years and reached 1015 in 1918. Even prohibition, although a serious threat to German *Gemütlichkeit*, did not interrupt the DPVC's activities, although membership decreased: 707 members in 1931, 307 members in 1938. According to Christian Weishaupt, president of the DPVC during its last years, the society had sixty members when it dissolved for lack of membership and participation in 1961.

The main regularly scheduled activities of the DPVC were the monthly meeting (for business and social purposes), the annual business meeting to elect officers, the inauguration of the officers, the celebration of Washington's Birthday (beginning in 1876 and gaining in importance with the years), and the *Stiftungsfest* (the anniversary of the DPVC, usually celebrated in May or June). The latter was by far the most festive and conspicuous. It was an expression of traditional German *Gemütlichkeit* and conviviality worthwhile preserving and demonstrating to an American public. It united old and young, the whole family, friends, and guests. A German band would lead the festive train of pioneers on their way from the *Vereinshalle* to pleasant locales such as Inwood Park, Bellevue House, Eichler's Garten in Corryville, or the Cincinnati Zoological Gardens. On arrival, the pioneers would join their families and friends for picnicking, bowling, shooting at targets, conversation, singing, drinking, and dancing. At the center of each *Stiftungsfest* was a speech by a German-American Cincinnati of some standing such as Brühl, Rattermann, Rümelin, Hassaurek, Emil Rothe or Gustav Tafel (to name a few outstanding personalities from the halcyon days of the DPVC). Occasionally, a speaker from outside was invited such as Gustav Körner, Lieutenant-Governor of Illinois, who addressed the DPVC on May 27, 1873. The speech would invariably elucidate and praise the achievement of Germans in America. Often the mayor of Cincinnati or the secretary of the American Pioneer Society of Cincinnati

would find words of admiration and gratitude for the German contribution to life in Cincinnati and the United States. The harmony of the anniversaries seemed to come close to the vision of a German-American ideal: the fusion of the desirable economic and political conditions in America with a cultural, social, and emotional life deeply rooted in Germany.

By 1875, a choir had constituted itself within the DPVC which was to provide the musical background for joyful and solemn occasions in the society throughout its history. Trips to Germany were organized, the first of which took place in 1882. In 1883, the DPVC initiated festivities to celebrate the two hundredth anniversary of German immigration to the United States, festivities which united all German-American societies of Cincinnati and environs. Among the charitable activities were donations for victims of yellow fever in the South, victims of floods, contributions to the Red Cross, and homes for the aged. The DPVC always played an active part whenever the teaching of German in Cincinnati's schools became an issue.

In order to make the monthly meetings more attractive and to live up to the society's goals, talks were scheduled in which members would relate their life story as German-American pioneers. Later on the range of the talks was extended to cover travelogues, humoristic presentations, literary topics, educational issues, and German civilization in general. Soon it was felt that an effective preservation of German pioneer history for future generations would require some form of written documentation. On March 3, 1869, the publication of a monthly with the title of *Der Deutsche Pionier* was resolved, and the first issue appeared at the end of March 1869. During its eighteen-year history, the journal was edited by a committee of the DPVC, 1869-1870; by G. Brühl, 1870-1871; by E. H. Makk, 1871-1872; by Karl Rümelin, 1872-1873; by Karl Knortz, 1873-1874; by Heinrich A. Rattermann, 1874-1885; by Hermann Hensel, 1885-1887. Although the concept of the journal changed slightly over the years with different editors, each issue usually included poems on pioneers, pioneer experiences, and memories of the fatherland; biographies of famous German-Americans; historical essays and sketches of German life, language, and settlements in the United States; the proceedings of the DPVC and its *Zweigvereine* in Covington, Newport, Dayton, and Toledo; usually excerpted or complete speeches given during the *Stiftungsfest* and the celebration of Washington's Birthday; statistics on German immigration to the United States; short biographies of deceased members of the DPVC under "In Memoriam" and famous German-Americans elsewhere under "German-American Necrology"; and book reviews of literature pertaining to German-America. Under Rattermann's editorship from 1874 to 1885, the journal was run in a most scholarly and professional way. It clearly focused on its task. More detailed headings provided an informative table of contents for each annual volume. Authors were identified consistently in the table of contents as well as in the text. Footnotes indicated greater attention given to the sources and the accuracy of information. There were poems by Cincinnati's own German-American poets such as Brühl

(pseudonym Kara Giorg), Rattermann (Hugo Reimmund), and Fick as well as poems by other nationally known poets such as Theodor Kirchhoff, Konrad Krez, Caspar Butz, Ernst Anton Zuendt, Franz Lieber, Friedrich Albert Schmitt, Otto Körting, Friedrich Münch, and Mathilda Franziska Anneke. Although the literary quality of much of the poetry is mediocre by strict standards, it is invaluable as a mirror of German sentiment at that time. The poetry is often retrospective and nostalgic, romantic in its melancholy and preoccupation with nature and feelings, portraying American reality with eyes that seem to envision German rivers, forests, and towns. The poetry leaves no doubt about where German-America's spiritual homeland was.

The most valuable contributions to the journal are essays on the history of Germans in the United States and in the Midwest in particular. With their attention to detail and inclusion of oral history, these articles have preserved information that cannot be found anywhere else. What may strike today's reader as an occasionally overzealous tone by some writers to vindicate German achievements in America, has to be understood in the context of the times that produced the journal. Rattermann's history of the German element in Maine, his history of the German pioneers in Ohio, and his history of the first German *Sängerbund* of North America, Seidensticker's history of the monastic settlement in Ephrata, Pennsylvania, and Friedrich Schnake's essay on the beginnings of the Civil War in Missouri are among the best contributions to *Der Deutsche Pionier*.⁷ Because of their length, quite a few of the historical essays had to be presented in serial form.

The biographies of deceased members of the DPVC come closest to the original intention of collecting documents about German pioneers of Cincinnati and environs for future generations. Since in most cases they portray average lives, they often illustrate what history books usually fail to capture: the fate of the common man during a certain period of history.

One of the focal issues in *Der Deutsche Pionier* was the use and teaching of German in the United States. Since the flow of immigrants from Germany could not be expected to go on forever, German-Americans saw the survival of German culture and civilization in the United States closely linked with the German language. The language issue became one of the most central and propagandistic in *Der Deutsche Pionier*. Leading German-American educators and other public figures such as Hermann Schuricht, Karl-Ludwig Bernays, Adolph Douai, Felix Adler, Heinrich A. Rattermann, and Konstantin Grebner wrote about the need for bilingual education in public schools with high concentrations of German-American children and supported the foundation of German-American teachers' seminaries.⁸ They speculated about the superiority of the German language over English in areas such as philosophy and the sciences and proudly reported favorable developments on the language front. At times, the enthusiasm and wishful thinking of the contributors went far beyond what could reasonably be expected under the most favorable circumstances. But the intensity of

their involvement remains a testimony to the depth of their convictions and cultural roots in Germany.

Although not part of the DPVC's goals as stated in its constitution, the idea of going beyond Cincinnati with the collection and publication of documents on German pioneers was realized with the very first issue of *Der Deutsche Pionier* and continued to its last issue. There is no doubt that this decision accounts for the richness of information and the reputation that *Der Deutsche Pionier* has earned in history. One may speculate whether a better, more business-oriented distribution system would have assured a national audience and provided a sound financial basis. The quality of the journal at that time would have justified such success. As it turned out, the gulf between the reality of the DPVC as a local Cincinnati society and the far-reaching goals of some of the journal's editors was too wide to be bridged. When *Der Deutsche Pionier* was changed into an annual *Vorstands-Bericht* beginning 1887-1888, its scope was reduced drastically. Officers, financial statements, and other proceedings were given a prominent place, followed by a brief summary of activities during the past year, usually the complete speech given on Washington's Birthday, with the *Stiftungsfest* activities given much less attention. The most important part was now the "In Memoriam" of pioneers deceased during the year.

Throughout its history, the DPVC united German-Americans from all walks of life. Labor and the trades were represented as well as business and the professions. Some of its more prominent members are singled out here to show the quality of the DPVC's membership and their contribution to life in Cincinnati, Ohio, and the United States:⁹

Dr. Gustav Brühl (1826-1903): honorary member, successful Cincinnati physician, editor of *Der Deutsche Pionier* 1869-1870, frequent contributor of poems to the journal under the pseudonym of Kara Giorg, author of poetry and novels as well as scientific and anthropological essays (particularly on Central and South American civilizations). Max Burgheim (1844-1918): owner of the *Cincinnati Freie Presse* and *Tägliche Abend-Presse*, active in civic affairs, member of the Cincinnati *Turngemeinde*, member of the electoral college in 1890, author of *Cincinnati in Wort und Bild* (Cincinnati, 1890) and other guides. Dr. H. H. Fick (1849-1935): honorary member, prominent educator in the Cincinnati school system (German, art); designed the Cincinnati Plan of bilingual education used in many other American communities, editor of *Jung Amerika*, a children's magazine, and *Erziehungsblätter*, the official organ of the German-American Teachers' Association. Heinrich Haacke (1832-1903): journalist with the *Charlestoner Deutsche Zeitung*, *Montreal Herald*, and the *Toronto Globe*, owner of the *Cincinnati Volksfreund*. Friedrich Hassaurek (1832-1885): a forty-eight year old from Vienna, belligerent freethinker, editor of Cincinnati's anti-clerical *Hochwächter* and the *Volksfreund*, delegate to the 1860 Republican convention that nominated Lincoln; American consul in Ecuador, author of poetry, a novel, and a book on his years in Ecuador. John Hauck (1829-1896): president of the John Hauck Brewing Company and the German National Bank, financial savior of the Cincinnati Zoological Gardens. Christian Moerlein

(1818-1897): owner of the Moerlein Brewing Company. Karl Louis Nippert (1852-1904): lawyer, probate judge, Republican State Senator, Lieutenant-Governor of Ohio, a central figure in Cincinnati's civic life. Emil Rothe (1826-1895): a forty-eighter, leader of the German student movement involved in the 1848 Revolution, prominent Cincinnati lawyer, founder of the Democrat newspaper *Weltbürger* in Watertown, Wisconsin, member of the Wisconsin legislature, editor of the Cincinnati *Volksfreund*. Karl Gustav Rümelin (1814-1896): wealthy Cincinnati businessman, a voice of reason and moderation in the DPVC during difficult times, editor of *Der Deutsche Pionier* 1872-1873, co-founder of the Democratic paper *Volksblatt*, member of the Ohio House of Representatives and the Ohio Senate, contributor to journals with articles on climatology, economics, and travel; author of two books on viticulture. Charles G. Schmidt (1851-1930): honorary member; his name is synonymous with German song in America; very active in Cincinnati's singing societies and other cultural and civic activities, president of the Nordamerikanischer Sängerbund for many years. Carl Schurz (1829-1906): honorary member, the central figure of German-America in the second half of the nineteenth century, Lincoln's friend and supporter, minister to the court of Madrid, major general in the Civil War, U.S. Senator, Secretary of the Interior, journalist, orator, statesman. Jakob Seasingood (1814-1884): the patriarch of Cincinnati's famous Seasingood family, wealthy businessman and banker, very active in Jewish civic and charity organizations. Friedrich S. Spiegel (1855-1925): journalist for the *Volksblatt*, member of Cincinnati's school board and city council, judge, mayor of Cincinnati. Gustav Tafel (1830-1908): a forty-eighter, journalist, lawyer, co-founder of Cincinnati's Turngemeinde and Nord Cincinnati Turnverein, colonel of the 106th Regiment in the Civil War, mayor of Cincinnati. Dr. Isaac M. Wise (1819-1900): founder and president of Hebrew Union College 1875-1900; editor of *The American Israelite* and its German supplement *Die Deborah*; he is considered the father of the Jewish reform movement in America. Dr. E. G. Zinke (1816-1922): professor of obstetrics and gynecology at Ohio Medical College, a nationally known authority in his field, founder of the Ohio Maternity Hospital.

If one man has to be singled out especially for his service to the journal *Der Deutsche Pionier*, it is Heinrich Arminius Rattermann (1832-1923).¹⁰ Without him, the journal would never have achieved its reputation as an indispensable source for the history of Germans in America. Pride in his German heritage and an indomitable drive to vindicate the largely ignored German contribution to the development of America characterize his life and work. It is this spirit that helped found the DPVC and made it flourish during its early period, and was strong enough to sustain it through the repercussions of two world wars until 1961. Rattermann was among the spiritual founding fathers of the DPVC, and only the age and residence requirements of its constitution prevented him from becoming a founding father with membership in 1868.

In many respects, Rattermann is the exemplary German pioneer. His success as a self-made man of property is only surpassed by his achievements as a self-taught man of the mind. Born into a poor family in Ankum (Westphalia) in 1832, he came to Cincinnati in 1846 and soon had to help support his family by working in brickyards, slaughterhouses and also as a carpenter, painter, waiter, clerk, and grocer. With a degree in bookkeeping and some business experience in the lumberyard of his uncle, he initiated the foundation of the German Mutual Fire Insurance Company of Cincinnati (later known as the Hamilton County Mutual Fire Insurance Company). The position of secretary of this company, which he held from 1858 to his death in 1923, provided him with moderate wealth to support his large family and to cover substantial expenses for his library, historical research, and publishing ventures. A limited, but solid education in a German village school had left the fourteen-year-old emigrant with a thirst for knowledge, education, and a keen interest in literature and the arts. He soon began publishing poetry in Cincinnati's German newspapers under the pseudonym of Hugo Reimmund. Five of the twelve published volumes of his collected works contain poetry. A talent for music refined by self-taught lessons in composition found expression in various forms: Rattermann was an active member and co-founder of the singing societies *Sängerbund* (1850), *Männerchor* (1857), and *Orpheus* (1868). He directed the choir of the St. Johannes Kirche. In 1870, he initiated and directed a centennial celebration in honor of Beethoven's birthday. He was involved in opera productions, composed, and had some of his own compositions performed. Later on he was to write a history of the first German *Sängerbund* of North America. Rattermann, like many other German-Americans, considered music the cornerstone of German cultural life in America and one of Germany's main contributions to American civilization.

Toward the mid-1870s Rattermann began to dedicate more and more time to historical research. His scholarly interest in history had been stimulated and nurtured by his life-long German-American friend John Bernhard Stallo, prominent lawyer and judge in Cincinnati, Hegelian philosopher, and minister to Italy, and Oswald Seidensticker, respected colonial historian and professor of German at the University of Pennsylvania. Rattermann also had great admiration for Justus Möser, an eighteenth-century German historian who had tried to rekindle in his fellow-countrymen an appreciation for their own culture at a time of political and cultural domination by France.¹¹ Rattermann felt a similar concern for German culture within Anglo-America. The decisive impetus was provided by his own initial research efforts that seemed to indicate that German contributions to the development of America had been neglected by American historians. With a thoroughness and persistence proven in so many other fields, Rattermann now began to review American history for German traces. German participation and achievements in the Revolutionary War became the subject of a long serial article published in *Der Deutsche Pionier*. For instance, Rattermann believed he found proof that Washington's bodyguard was predomi-

nantly German.¹² By editing a Hessian soldier's diary, Rattermann tried to correct the negative image of the Hessian soldiers in American public opinion. Of course, he searched Cincinnati's as well as Ohio's history for German contributions. He soon extended his research to other areas of the Midwest and the United States and published a *Geschichte des großen amerikanischen Westens* in 1876-77. He contributed biographies to Gustav Körner's *Das deutsche Element in den Vereinigten Staaten 1818-1848* and provided other writers with biographical material (often without being given due credit). Most of his articles were published in *Der Deutsche Pionier*, in fact, so many that people could get the impression that Rattermann had appropriated the journal to fulfill his personal ambitions as a historian. The crisis of 1885, which meant the end of Rattermann's eleven-year editorship and serious conflicts with leading members of the DPVC, is symptomatic for the discrepancy between the ambitious goals of Rattermann and the reality of DPVC; after all, it was a society with primarily social interests and functions in Cincinnati. It was willing to support the sublime goal of tracing and recording German pioneer history as long as it did not cost the members additional money (by March 1885, *Der Deutsche Pionier* had run up a deficit of \$4,071). The DPVC was not and apparently did not want to become a historical society publishing a journal of national scope and reputation. That Rattermann perceived the journal and the society's goals as such can be considered a misunderstanding which benefited the history of German-America. For a year Rattermann continued his efforts by publishing his own *Deutsch-Amerikanisches Magazin* in 1886. After considerable sacrifices he had to realize that he had neither the means nor the audience to sustain such an ambitious professional enterprise, and the magazine ceased publication in 1887. This failure was a serious blow to a man who had always looked upon his editorship and historical research as the most important activities in his life and who had been recognized for his achievements with honorary life memberships in the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio, the New York Historical Society, Pennsylvania Historical Society, Illinois Historical Society (which issued a commemorative coin on the occasion of Rattermann's seventy-fifth birthday), the renowned Cincinnati Literary Club, and the German Literary Club of Cincinnati, of which he was the founder. Although Rattermann now found it more rewarding to write poetry again, he continued presenting historical lectures in various Cincinnati societies as well as contributing articles to historical journals such as *Deutsch-Amerikanische Geschichtsblätter*, edited at that time by Julius Goebel at the University of Illinois.

Throughout his life, Rattermann strongly supported efforts to maintain and improve the teaching of German in the United States. He was involved in the struggle for bilingual education in Cincinnati's schools, and supported the Nationales Deutsch-Amerikanisches Lehrerseminar in Milwaukee as a board member from 1886 to 1889 and as a speaker at teachers' conventions. Rattermann held the progressive and original view that German-American schoolbooks should reflect the reality of German-American life rather than that of Prussia.¹³

From 1887 to 1914 Rattermann was primarily occupied with preparing his *Gesammelte Ausgewählte Werke* for publication. Unable to find a publisher, he and his daughter Katherine finally set and printed twelve of the projected sixteen volumes themselves. Of special value are the *Biographikon* and the *Dichter-Album*, which fill a gap in German-American historical research at that time and comprise volumes X-XII of his collected works. They contain concise biographies of some 125 prominent German-Americans between 1800 and 1850; the poets are introduced with short biographical sketches and a few representative poems. In 1915, Rattermann's valuable library and private papers were purchased by the University of Illinois Library, accessible today as the Heinrich A. Rattermann Collection of German-American Manuscripts, an important source for research in German-Americana. Totally blind and deaf for the last ten years of his life, Rattermann continued dictating unfinished parts of his work. He died in 1923.

The seeds for the decline of the DPVC and disruption of the supportive harmony between the DPVC, its publication *Der Deutsche Pionier*, and its ambitious editor were planted early. Demanding age and residence requirements (forty and twenty-five years respectively) excluded Cincinnati's young German-Americans (until 1929) from active participation, the very element that would most likely carry on the tradition of cherishing and preserving the German heritage. The need for dealing with the present of German-America in order to preserve its past was expressed by *Der Deutsche Pionier*. Its very first volume contains an article on the German language issue in contemporary Pennsylvania schools and the study of German dialects in Pennsylvania along with strictly historical articles.¹⁴ By giving up on its journal in its original, ambitious and demanding form, the DPVC also gave up an instrument for critical documentation of the past and vital discussion of German-America's present. By settling into the financially (and intellectually) comfortable format of the *Vorstands-Berichte* with their emphasis on eulogies for the deceased, the DPVC expressed a predominantly retrospective attitude and forfeited the chance to reach out beyond Cincinnati.

As for Rattermann, his role as editor of *Der Deutsche Pionier* is not without irony. Rattermann, who owed so much to America's egalitarian attitude toward education and advancement in general, had maneuvered himself into the ivory tower of a self-taught archivist and scholar who looked down upon the majority of uneducated members of the DPVC.¹⁵ He incorporates, *in nuce*, the dangers of a German-America apart from the mainstream of American life; a German-America as a "mental reservation," an "attractive but dangerous corral" as John A. Hawgood would characterize such an existence in his book *The Tragedy of German-America* in 1940.¹⁶ Such isolation and limitation made Rattermann, for instance, overestimate the value of his poetry and fail to understand and appreciate achievements in contemporary German literature, accounted for a reversed prejudice toward Anglo-America, and led to unrealistic expectations concerning the future of German-America.

In retrospect, Cincinnati's German-American community, the DPVC, its activities, the journal *Der Deutsche Pionier* and its ambitious editor over many years represent one of the most organic and vigorous manifestations of German-American life in the United States. They are an exemplary chapter in the annals of German-America, representing its shortcomings as well as its triumphs.

University of Michigan-Dearborn
Dearborn, Michigan

Notes

¹ *Der Deutsche Pionier* 1 (1969-70): 27. The information concerning the end of the German Pioneer Society's existence was supplied to this author by Christian Weishaupt, president of the DPVC over the last years, in a letter of December 11, 1981. The primary sources for studying the history of the DPVC are the eighteen volumes of *Der Deutsche Pionier* (1869-87) and the *Vorstands-Bericht* (called *Jahresbericht* for 1887-88) which replaced *Der Deutsche Pionier* beginning with No. 20. The *Vorstands-Bericht* was apparently published until the end of the DPVC in 1961, although only volumes 20-70 (1887-1938) are accessible to the public as a complete set in the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County in Cincinnati. *Der Deutsche Pionier* hereafter: *DDP*.

² The limitation of membership to residents of Cincinnati and environs must have been cumbersome for the DPVC from the very beginning. By 1875 this part of the constitution had been changed to "Jeder eingewanderte Deutsche, welcher 25 Jahre in Amerika gewohnt . . . hat" (*DDP* 7 [1875-76]: 294).

³ Cf. Karl J. R. Arndt and May E. Olson, *German-American Newspapers and Periodicals 1732-1955; History and Bibliography* (Heidelberg: Quelle and Meyer, 1961) 441. Cf. also Don Heinrich Tolzmann, *German-Americana: A Bibliography* (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, 1975) 69.

⁴ For Cincinnati Germans, the Know-Nothing movement is epitomized by the events of May 12, 1856, the day of violent confrontations between the *Turngemeinden* of Cincinnati, Covington, and Newport on the one hand and a nativist crowd on the other. For a vivid description of the event and the subsequent trial see "Gedächtnissfeier in der Central Turnhalle: Die Knownothing Bewegung im Jahre 1856" (*DDP* 18 [1886-87]: 368-73).

⁵ Cf. G. A. Dobbert, "The Cincinnati Germans, 1870-1920; Disintegration of an Immigrant Community," *Bulletin of the Cincinnati Historical Society* 23.4 (1965): 229-42. Dobbert shows how uncritical allegiance to the homeland before and during World War I blurred the political judgment of many Cincinnati Germans and alienated them from their Anglo-American environment. Dobbert blames Cincinnati's German-language press for having "abysmally failed to guide the community through its troubled times" (*ibid.*, 239).

⁶ Rattermann complains about what he calls a witch-hunt against the journal in a letter to Ottendorfer, 15 Dec. 1884 (letter press copybook R.2.3v, p. 448 in the Heinrich A. Rattermann Collection of German-American Manuscripts at the University of Illinois Library in Urbana-Champaign). The publication of the *Guide to the Heinrich A. Rattermann Collection of German-American Manuscripts* by Donna-Christine Sell and Dennis Francis Walle, Robert B. Downs Publication Fund No. 4 (Urbana-Champaign, University of Illinois Library, 1979) has made accessible, among other valuable documents, Rattermann's correspondence which sheds new light on his biography and the history of the DPVC. Karl Rümelin, chairman of the committee to reevaluate the feasibility of *DDP* expressed the necessity to realize, "daß die Zeitschrift nicht der alleinige Zweck des Pionier-Vereins ist" (*DDP* 17 [1885-86]: 91). There is the bitter controversy between Rattermann and Karl Rümelin recorded in "Erwiderung Karl Rümelin's auf H. A. Rattermann's Artikel, der am 2. Januar 1887 in den 'Westlichen Blättern' erschien und eine Schrift im 'Deutschen Pionier' vom Jahrgang 1869, angriff, welche die Aufschrift führte: 'Geschichte der Gründung des Volksblatts'" (*DDP* 18 [1886-87]: 273-82). Rattermann accuses Rümelin of

historical inaccuracies, Rümelin accuses Rattermann of falsifying history and being motivated by "Bosheit über seine Entlassung von der Redaktion des 'Deutschen Pioniers'" (ibid., 273).

⁷ Cf. Heinrich A. Rattermann, "Zur Geschichte des deutschen Elements im Staate Maine," *DDP* 14 (1882-83), *DDP* 15 (1883-84), *DDP* 16 (1884-85); Heinrich A. Rattermann, "Geschichte des Ersten Deutschen Sängerbundes von Nordamerika," *DDP* 11 (1879-80), *DDP* 12 (1880-81), *DDP* 13 (1881-82); Oswald Seidensticker, "Ephrata, eine amerikanische Klostergeschichte," *DDP* 14-16 (1882-85); Friedrich Schnake, "Der Ausbruch des Bürgerkrieges in Missouri," *DDP* 11 and 12 (1879-81).

⁸ For some representative examples cf. C. L. Bernays, "Der Kampf der deutschen Sprache um ihr Dasein in den Vereinigten Staaten," *DDP* 9 (1877-78): 408-10; Heinrich A. Rattermann, "Die deutsche Sprache in der amerikanischen Schule," *DDP* 13 (1881-82): 170-79, 257-66; F. H. Röwekamp, "Geschichte der deutsch-englischen Schulen in Cincinnati," *DDP* 13 (1881-82): 217-26; Hermann Schuricht, "Zur Geschichte des deutsch-amerikanischen Lehrerbundes," *DDP* 15 (1883-84): 69-74; Karl E. Wolfradt, "Die Statistik des deutsch-amerikanischen Schulwesens," *DDP* 18 (1886-87): 50-55.

⁹ Short biographies of the personalities mentioned can be found in the necrology section of the *Vorstands-Berichte*. In fact, this is the main merit of the *Vorstands-Berichte* vols. 20-70 (1887-1938). They read like a "Who Was Who" in Cincinnati's German-American society.

¹⁰ The primary sources for the facts about Rattermann's life are: 1. an autobiographical account (written in English in the mid-1870s), letter press copybook #1 in the Heinrich A. Rattermann Collection of German-American Manuscripts at the University of Illinois Library in Urbana-Champaign; 2. a series of letters by Rattermann written to his friend Klemens Möllenbrock in Ankum, Germany (Rattermann's birthplace), between 1907-1908. The letters were published by Julius Goebel under the title of "Aus H. A. Rattermanns Leben" in *Deutsch-Amerikanische Geschichtsblätter* 18-19 (1918-19); 3. Rattermann's correspondence in the Heinrich A. Rattermann Collection of German-American Manuscripts. My description and evaluation of Rattermann's activities is indebted to the most recent critical account of Rattermann's life by Donna-Christine Sell in *Guide to the Heinrich A. Rattermann Collection of German-American Manuscripts*, pp. 1-18. Among the secondary sources one should mention Sister Edmund Spanheimer, *Heinrich Armin Rattermann: German-American Author, Poet and Historian, 1832-1923*, The Catholic University of America Studies in German 9 (Washington, 1937). This first comprehensive study of Rattermann's life and work has the great merit of using the (at that time uncatalogued) Rattermann collection of German-Americana and emphasizing its importance. In addition, the information given to Spanheimer by Rattermann's daughter Katherine provides valuable opinions and data not available anywhere else. It seems that in her attempt to draw attention to Rattermann's important role in German-America Spanheimer occasionally loses critical distance, especially when it comes to evaluating Rattermann's poetry. In this respect Henry Willen, *Henry Armin Rattermann's Life and Poetical Work* (Philadelphia, 1939) appears to be closer to the truth. By applying strict poetic standards, Willen comes to the conclusion that Rattermann was no poet, or a very mediocre poet at best. Fred Karl Scheibe, "Heinrich A. Rattermann: German-American Poet, 1832-1923," *German-American Studies* 1.1 (1969): 3-7, criticizes Willen for applying modernist standards to Rattermann's poetry.

¹¹ Cf. Spanheimer 104.

¹² Cf. "Die Leibgarde Washington's," *DDP* 7 (1875-76): 215-21, and "Die Leibgarde Washington's II," *DDP* 7 (1875-76): 469-85.

¹³ "Die deutsche Sprache in der amerikanischen Schule," *DDP* 13 (1881-82): 78.

¹⁴ "Die deutsche Sprache in Pennsylvanien," *DDP* 1 (1869-70): 208-12.

¹⁵ Cf. Rattermann's letter to Ottendorfer, 15 Dec. 1884 (letter press copybook R.2.3v, p. 448 in the Heinrich A. Rattermann Collection of German-American Manuscripts).

¹⁶ (New York, 1940) 267.