

Register for the
AMERICAN TURNERS, WILMINGTON,
RECORDS

1880-1965
(Span dates 1894-1957)

MSS 172
(M91-145)

8.6 Linear feet

Larisa Repin
Processing Archivist for the Balch Institute

September 2001

The Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies
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*This project was made possible with a generous grant from
John C. Haas*

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19 Hollinger boxes of mss.
1 oversize box of mss.
3 folders oversize materials

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PROVENANCE

This collection was donated to the Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies by Tom Frick for the society in 1991. The papers came in as one accession M91-145 and were processed in October 2001 by Larisa Repin, archival assistant for the Balch Institute. This project was made possible with a generous grant from John C. Haas.

A few photographs and artifacts have been separated from the manuscripts, but remain unprocessed as of October 2001. They retain the same MSS 172 number as the manuscripts and have been placed in one separate folder at the end of the last box.

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HISTORICAL NOTES

The Turner movement began in Berlin, Germany, in 1811, with Frederic Ludwig Jahn. In his book on nationality, Jahn, a high-school teacher, contended that only through the rational physical education of young people could an appropriate patriotism be rekindled in a Germany demoralized after its defeat by Napoleon at Jena in 1806. He opened his public outdoor gymnasium in the Hasenheide in Berlin, where his system soon became so popular it was emulated all over the country.

Jahn's system consisted of three categories: elective exercises, required gymnastics; and games, and every session opened and closed with patriotic songs. Although Jahn himself did not advocate for more individual political rights, many of those who joined the Turner movement actively sought social change, which led the King of Prussia to ban the societies in 1819. Jahn was imprisoned until 1824, and upon his release, forbidden to practice his educational methods.

That same year, Karl Beck and Karl Follen, former pupils and co-workers of Jahn, came to the United States; they were later followed in 1827 by another co-worker, Franz Lieber. Beck, along with the American historian, George Bancroft, opened the Round Hill School for boys in Northampton, Massachusetts, which incorporated Jahn's principles in its gymnasium. He also wrote the first manual on Turnerism in English.

Follen at first worked with Beck at his school, but left to teach German in Harvard University, where Beck later taught Latin and literature. Follen introduced the Turner gymnastic system at Harvard and also opened a public outdoor gymnasium in Boston. After Lieber arrived, he taught at Follen's public gymnasium. Unfortunately, however, none of these gymnastic enterprises endured for long. It was only after the European revolutions of 1848 that Turnerism really took hold in the United States. Among the German immigrants to this country during that period was Frederick Hecker, who established the first real Turnverein in Cincinnati, Ohio. Founded in November 1848 the Cincinnati Turngemeinde is considered the oldest Turner organization in the United States.

A number of other Turner societies were subsequently formed in other cities, joining in a national organization, which was reorganized in 1865 as the [North] American Gymnastic Union. This union was divided into territorial districts, each of which had a number of societies. Most of these societies were incorporated, owning their own property, and, in addition to offering physical education, also sponsored lecture courses and debating clubs.

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The Wilmington society was founded in 1859. It was organized to further physical education and to advance the physical, moral, and intellectual welfare of its members through sports, entertainments, and cultural activities. The organization consisted of active, passive, honorary, and lifelong members, and was composed of various sections and committees, which included: a physical education committee, which kept lists of active members who participated in gymnastic exercises; a cultural education committee which supervised cultural competitions and prepared the rules for education programs and festivals; a committee on entertainment which arranged all entertainments; and an auditing committee.

The national American Turners were still in existence as of September 2001, and headquartered in Louisville, Kentucky.

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SCOPE AND CONTENT

Textual Records: The materials of this collection cover the years 1880-1965, but are concentrated between 1894-1957, reflecting partly the history of Turner movement in the United States and mostly the educational mission of the organization. The collection consists of by-laws, correspondence, directories and historical information, engineering and architectural papers, financial data, and reference materials. There are also committee materials such as correspondence and minutes, and numerous curricula. Most of papers are in German, although there are some in English.

All correspondence has been indexed.

Photographs and Artifacts : A few photographs and artifacts had not been processed as of October 2001. They retain the same MSS 172 number as manuscripts and have been placed into separate folder at the end of the last box of the collection (Box 19).

RECORD SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

SERIES I: GENERAL OFFICE & MEMBERSHIP MATERIALS, 1880-1957 & n.d.
Boxes 1-10 & OS (Oversize) Folders 1-3

The records here consist of by-laws, constitutions, correspondence, directories, organizational property engineering and architectural materials, and financial data, such as bound general ledgers, cash records, and income and expense reports. There are also minutes, newspaper clippings, and reference materials. The earliest of these records are the financial ones. Most of the materials are in German with a very small part in English. Arrangement is alphabetical.

SERIES II: COMMITTEE & CLASS RECORDS, 1888-1965 & n.d.
Boxes 10-19, OS (Oversize) Box 1, & OS Folders 1-2

The bulk of Series II, pertaining to classes, is educational material, in such subjects as drawing, music, songs, poetry, and plays. There are numerous folders with tentative drawings, as well as literary drafts or language studies. Besides, this series includes some sport and physical training materials. Other records here pertain to the entertainment committee and contain festival and tournament materials, minutes, score sheets, and library borrowers' records. As above, the material here is mostly in German and arrangement is alphabetical.

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BOX LIST

SERIES I: GENERAL OFFICE & MEMBERSHIP MATERIALS, 1880-1957 & n.d.
Boxes 1-10, OS (Oversize) Box 1 & OS Folders 1-3

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>		
1	1	Anniversary & jubilee materials	1909, 1948 & n.d.
	2	By-laws, constitutions & other documents	1895, 1902-1907 1915-48 & n.d.
	3	Certificates, diplomas & other documents	1885, 1905-1915, &1948
OS Folders 1-2			
	4-10	Correspondence & notes	1899-1952 & n.d.
	11	Directories & other organizational information	1919-1920
2	1-4	Directories & other organizational information	1924-52 & n.d.
		Engineering & architectural records	
	5	Building description	n.d.
OS Folder 3		Plans & schemes	1903 & n.d.
	6-7	Specifications	n.d.
		Financial & statistical data	
	8-11	Correspondence & other materials	1911-1957 & n.d.
3	1-4	General ledgers, cash records, income & expense ledgers (bound)	1880-1932

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<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>		
4	1-4	General ledgers, cash records, income & expense ledgers (bound)	1901-1919
5	1-5	General ledgers, cash records, income & expense ledgers (bound)	1911-1919
6	1-6	General ledgers, cash records, income & expense ledgers (bound)	1917-1925
7 OS Folder 1 n.d.	1-4	General ledgers, cash records, income & expense ledgers (bound)	1925-1951 &
OS Folder 1		Flyers & posters	1928 & n.d.
7	5	Forms & blanks	n.d.
	6	Historical information	1917-1949 & n.d.
	7	License materials	1937-53
8	1-6	Minutes	1897-1932
9	1-5	Minutes	1925-61 & n.d.
	6	Newspaper clippings & print materials	1909-1942 & n.d.

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SERIES I: GENERAL OFFICE & MEMBERSHIP MATERIALS, 1880-1957 & n.d.

Box Folder

9	7	Plans	n.d.
10	1-3	Reference & other print materials	1881, 1903-49.
	OS Box 1		& n.d.
	OS Folder 1		

SERIES II: COMMITTEE & CLASS RECORDS, 1888-1965 & n.d.
Boxes 10-19, OS (Oversize) Box 1, & OS Folders 1-2

SUBSERIES A: Committee Materials, 1888-1965, Boxes 10-12

Box Folder

		Children Gym Classes Committee	
10	4	Correspondence & minutes	1939-40 & n.d.
		Entertainment Committee	
	5	Festival & tournament materials	1902-65 & n.d.
	6	Library (borrowers' records)	n.d.
11	1-5	Minutes	1888-1935
12	1	Score Sheets	1952-53 & n.d.
	2	Ticket books	1919 & n.d.

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SERIES II: COMMITTEE & CLASS RECORDS, 1888-1965 & n.d.

SUBSERIES B: Class Materials, 1894-1938 & n.d., Boxes 12-19

Box Folder

Educational & teaching materials

12	3-6	Drawing	n.d.
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13	1-5	Drawing	n.d.
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14	1-7	Drawing	n.d.
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Music, songs, poetry & other materials

15	1-6	Music	n.d.
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16	1-6	Music	n.d.
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17	1-6	Music	n.d.
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18	1-2	Music	n.d.
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	3-7	Songs, poetry & plays	1894-1938 & n.d.
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SERIES II: COMMITTEE & CLASS RECORDS, 1888-1965 & n.d.

SUBSERIES B: Class Materials, 1894-1938 & n.d., Boxes 12-19

Box Folder

Educational & teaching materials

Music, songs, poetry & other materials

19	1	Songs, poetry & plays	n.d.
	2-6	Roll books	1898-1922 & n.d.
	7	Score lists	n.d.
	8	Sport & physical training materials	1932-38 & n.d.
OS Folder 2			
	9-10	Reference & other print materials	n.d.

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(Correspondence is indicated by an asterisk)

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