

# Library Committee Set to Unveil New “Adopt a Book” Program

Fundraising initiative will preserve holdings while celebrating library’s treasures

The German Society of Pennsylvania’s Library Committee will soon unveil a new program designed to raise money for the preservation of the Society’s historic collection of books, while celebrating some of the Library’s little-known treasures.

The “Adopt a Book” program will enable German Society members and other interested parties to support the conservation of Library books that have become damaged over the years. Common repairs needed on the books include front and back cover reattachment, fixing bindings, building small enclosures for volumes to keep the books safe, and other basic repairs that will help preserve the books for future generations.

Founded in 1817, the German Society’s Library is home to remarkable treasures that document the literary culture of German readers in Philadelphia and beyond for over two centuries. After so many years, some of the Library’s books are in need of conservation treatment in order to preserve them for future study and use. As books age, their pages tend to become brittle, and bindings begin to deteriorate. This is especially true for nineteenth-century volumes, meaning that many of the Library’s books require attention from professional conservators.

The Library Committee has been working for months to select volumes in need of care that are also likely to be of interest to prospective adoptive “parents,” who will pay for the conservation treatments. This in-depth effort has involved searching the library’s shelves for items in need of repair and conferring with respected Philadelphia book conservator Ruth Scott Blackson, who will perform the treatments. Items slated for adoption include a pamphlet about beer published in 1894, a guide to fireworks published in 1823, an 1865 copy of a eulogy to Abraham Lincoln that was preached after his assassination, as well as some of the library’s oldest volumes, including works published in the 1600s and 1700s.

An exhibition sampling the initial forty books to be put up for adoption will soon open in the reading room of the German Society’s Library, and the Library Committee is preparing a catalogue of adoptable books, which will be distributed shortly. Books will be available at multiple price points. Adoptive parents will receive an official Certificate of Book Adoption from the Committee, listing the name of the book they selected, as well as what treatments their donations will support. If they so wish, the parents’ names will be listed in the books’ online Library catalogue records, so that future researchers will know who sponsored repairs on the books in question. This program is designed so that donors may adopt books on their own behalf, or do so in honor of a friend or loved one.

The Library Committee is planning an exclusive event to be held later this year for the books’ adoptive parents, to focus on methods of book conservation and exploration of the Library’s holdings. The Committee is finalizing its plans for its initial roster of adoptable books, and German Society members should look for further communications on this project in the near future. In the meantime, any questions can be forwarded to the Library Committee’s Adoption Coordinator, Dr. Alex L. Ames, at [alames@udel.edu](mailto:alames@udel.edu).



This music book, published in Philadelphia by Schäfer und Koradi in 1883, will also be made available for adoption.