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# The Tunebook of Conrad Doll

*By*

ROBERT BENAWEY BROWN AND FRANK X. BRAUN

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ONE hundred and fifty years ago, despite the absence of either Sinatras or Pinzas, music played a considerably more important part in the life of the average American than it does today. If a slight confusion of the senses may be overlooked, we can say that music then was less of a spectator sport.

Books were not exactly scarce, but neither were they plentiful, especially in the newly settled districts. If the pioneer was lucky, he had a weekly paper. An almanac was standard equipment, and there were long and hearty sermons available on the Sabbath, offering abstruse reasoning or hellfire by the hogshead, according to the pioneer's inclination. But along with occasional rifle matches, dances, and bouts with J. Barleycorn, these nearly completed the catalogue of his available amusements.

A fair part of the rest of his none too abundant leisure was devoted to singing. And much of this musical activity was on a fairly elaborate scale; that is, part singing was normal practice and ventures into reasonably elaborate arrangements were not unknown.

This was particularly true in the German settlements. A more than usually pious folk, some of the practices listed above were, in theory at least, taboo for them. Consequently, there was a sincere and widespread enthusiasm among the Pennsylvania Dutch for music in general and singing in particular. The singing school was as much a part of existence as the Sunday sermon.

Most of this singing was done from manuscript books of tunes, sometimes with words written in but more usually, perhaps, with

only the music. As any music copyist will affirm, this is at best a tedious and imperfect means of supplying any very considerable demand.

This was the problem faced by one Conrad Doll of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and solved by him in his *Sammlung / Geistlicher Lieder nebst Melodien, / von Verschiedenen Dichtern und Componisten. / Gedruckt und Herausgegeben / von / Conrad Doll. Lancaster. / 1798*.<sup>1</sup>

Among the scarcer of German-American imprints, this little book is known in only two copies, one in the Herbert C. Ely collection of the William L. Clements Library and the other in the library of Dr. W. H. Oda, of Philadelphia. Neither is described in bibliographies, and the book was not known to either Evans<sup>2</sup> or Seidensticker.<sup>3</sup> Both copies have turned up very recently.

Aside from its rarity, this represents, insofar as an extensive search has revealed, the first German-American singing book printed before 1800 in which the music is presented in parts together with all the words for several stanzas.<sup>4</sup> And, as will be indicated, it shows strong evidences of both the effect upon the transplanted German community of the musical work being produced in other sections of the new country and of the best hymnody of their religion in the continent from which they had come.

Doll appears on the title-page as printer and publisher, but the announcement should, apparently, be taken with a goodly sized portion of salt, since nothing that is known of him indicates that he ever had anything to do with the inside of a print shop. This leaves the possible printers as Johann Albrecht *u.comp.*, Robert and William Dickson, William Hamilton, Conrad Wort-

<sup>1</sup> 163 p.l., 109, 131 p. 12.6 x 25.6cm. (inside covers). Both copies.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Evans, *American Bibliography*. Vol. XII, 1798-1799 (Chicago, Ill., Privately printed for the author by the Columbia Press, 1934).

<sup>3</sup> Oswald Seidensticker, *The First Century of German Printing in America, 1728-1830* (Philadelphia, Schaefer & Koradi, 1893).

<sup>4</sup> Allen P. Britton, *Theoretical Introductions in American Tunebooks to 1800* (Unpublished manuscript. Ann Arbor, Michigan, University of Michigan, 1948).

man, and Jacob Lahn.<sup>5</sup> Christian Jacob Hütter has also been suggested, but there is no certainty that he was established until the following year. Examination of the type and typography in books produced by these several printers and publishers has as yet given no definite answer as to the press which turned out the book under the Doll imprint.

On the verso of the title-page is a short preface by the Rev. Christian Ludwig Becker, signed with his initials. Becker was, at the time, the local pastor.<sup>6</sup> His preface gives the reasons which motivated Doll in his pioneer production.

"It hardly needs any proof," says Becker, "that a beautiful song, sung according to the rules of the art, not only ennoble the sentiments of the heart but also contributes greatly to the heightening of devotion during the service."

He goes on to deplore the state of the German-American singing schools, or at least the state of their output in the way of song. The reason they are so far behind their European counterparts, he says, is that "the music books . . . had to be written by hand." Since few people have either the desire or the ability to undertake this laborious task, the singers have had to get along with the old songs already in their *répertoire*.

As a result, according to Becker, the enthusiasm of the singers has waned. But Doll, with his new collection, hopes to provide novelty, the desire for which "lies deep in the human heart."

If Doll finds encouragement, Becker adds, "then he is resolved to furnish continuations in similar volumes until this work has reached a degree of perfection that approaches the best German works of this kind."

Regretfully, we must assume that the sought after encouragement was not forthcoming, since Doll's single volume stands completely alone.

<sup>5</sup> Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 413-414.

<sup>6</sup> Henry Harbaugh, *The Fathers of the German Reformed Church in Europe and America* (Lancaster and Philadelphia, Sprenger and Westhaeffer, 1857-1881). III: 65.



The style and orthography of the preface is that of a cultured man, which Becker was, and is in sharp contrast to the second section, *Short and Necessary Instruction in Vocal Music*, which is most probably by Doll himself.

In those days, the work of a schoolmaster, which Doll's father was and which Doll was to become, had considerably more content than that of the pedagogue today. He "kept" the school, but he was also expected to act as chorister and organist, and in the absence of a minister, he was to read sermons and conduct public worship.<sup>7</sup> The German-American schoolmaster's qualifications, like those of his New England contemporary, had little to do with education.<sup>8</sup> The emphasis was placed upon his ability to play the organ, lead the singing, act as sexton, and serve as clerk of the church.<sup>9</sup> Of these, organ playing and song leading were probably the most important.<sup>10</sup> And in addition to the musical part of his specifically churchly duties, he very often conducted a singing school, for which latter he might receive some small supplement to his normally meagre stipend.<sup>11</sup>

This, then, was the *milieu* in which Doll matured, and from which the tunebook of 1798 emerges. The school was certainly a typical parochial school of the Reformed Church, where it was required that the Bible be read and explained, that the catechism be used as a statement of doctrine, and that prayer and singing be heard and taught.<sup>12</sup>

The curriculum of the schools of the German Reformed Church in the eighteenth century can be briefly summarized as reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, and religious instruction,

<sup>7</sup> Frederic George Livingood, *Eighteenth Century Reformed Church Schools*, in: Pennsylvania German Society, *Proceedings and Addresses* (Norristown, Pa., Norristown Press, 1930), XXXVIII: 258.

<sup>8</sup> Colyer Meriwether, *Our Colonial Curriculum, 1607-1776* (Washington, D. C., Capital Publishing Co., 1907), p. 17.

<sup>9</sup> Livingood, *op. cit.*, p. 259-260.

<sup>10</sup> Livingood, *op. cit.*, p. 259ff.

<sup>11</sup> Livingood, *op. cit.*, p. 264.

<sup>12</sup> Livingood, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

the latter including singing.<sup>13</sup> Hymn books were almost certainly used in the schools, as a great deal of the time was devoted to singing.<sup>14</sup> An example might well be Sauer's 1753 reprint of the Marburg Reformed hymn book, which also conveniently contained the Heidelberg catechism.<sup>15</sup>

In his instructions to the prospective singer and in his dissertation on the rudiments of music, Doll follows with remarkable fidelity the work of William Tans'ur (1699-1783), whose *opera* were widely used and widely borrowed in the American tunebooks of the period.<sup>16</sup> He does, however, vary from Tans'ur's pattern in his failure to present a scheme of solmization, the provision of syllabic substitutes for notes, as "do re mi fa" and so forth.<sup>17</sup> In any event, Doll indicates a definite familiarity with what his English singing neighbors were doing in the way of music.

The orthography of this whole section shows peculiar discrepancies in comparison with Pastor Becker's preface and Doll's own sources. Capitalization of nouns is standard and uniform in the Swiss hymnals from which Doll's selections came and in the preface of the work. But the rest of the book seems to lack any guiding principles, and its erratic character extends into the hymns themselves. Within the same song, nouns appear first capitalized and later in lower case. Adjectives and adverbs leap from upper to lower case with the same impartiality. The printer or proof-reader may not, of course, be entirely blameless, but the careless attitude would seem to argue the compiler's lack of familiarity with the "modern" German of his day.

There may, however, be a certain sly Calvinistic method in part of Doll's orthographic madness. The one rule followed with

<sup>13</sup> Livingood, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 240.

<sup>15</sup> Seidensticker, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

<sup>16</sup> William Tans'ur, *The American Harmony; or, Royal Melody Complete*. Sixth edition (Newburyport, Printed and sold by Daniel Bailey, 1771). 2 vols.

<sup>17</sup> Britton, *op. cit.*



any consistency at all is that any appellations referring to the Deity and to Biblical characters are capitalized. The names of Satan and Mary are the exceptions: they are invariably in lower case.

Conrad was the son of John Doll, schoolmaster at the Reformed Church School at Lancaster, Pennsylvania.<sup>18</sup> Little is known of his early years or of his musical interests and training. The church records<sup>19</sup> do tell us that an increase in his father's salary was in part justified by Conrad's organ playing. Conrad continued as organist after his father's death in 1807, and later was to hold both positions up to the time of his abrupt dismissal in 1819.<sup>20</sup>

As to Doll's training as an organist, it seems reasonable to assume that he studied under that cultured scrivener and author of the famous *Music Book*, Caspar Schaffner,<sup>21</sup> who taught music and penmanship and played the church organ (built by Tannenberg) from 1795 to 1799. It is quite possible, then, that it was under the influence of the musician and composer Schaffner that Conrad Doll compiled and published his *Sammlung* in 1798. An assumption that Doll might have published his teacher's *Music Book* proved incorrect, for a comparison<sup>22</sup> of the contents of the Doll book with those of the Schaffner manuscript showed conclusively that no connection existed between the two. The selections in the manuscript include hymns, fiddlers' tunes, catholic anthems, American marches, and patriotic songs of Schaffner's own

<sup>18</sup> For bibliographical data on Conrad Doll we are indebted to Elizabeth C. Kieffer, Reference Librarian of the Fackenthal Library, Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and Archivist of the First Evangelical and Reformed Church of Lancaster, the church of both Doll and his father.

<sup>19</sup> First Evangelical and Reformed Church of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, *Consistory Records*, January 4, 1806.

<sup>20</sup> First Evangelical and Reformed Church of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, *Consistory Records*, 1806-1819.

<sup>21</sup> Described in Elizabeth C. Kieffer, *Three Caspar Schaffners*. In: Lancaster County Historical Society. *Historical Papers and Addresses* (Lancaster, Pa.), XLII: 195ff. (1938).

<sup>22</sup> Undertaken by Elizabeth C. Kieffer.

composing, as well as selections from Handel, Haydn, Pleyel, and Mozart. The Doll book, on the other hand, restricts itself exclusively to songs of a religious nature.

The sources from which Conrad Doll drew the hymns for his *Sammlung* have both historical and cultural interest. In the book, he mentions three names, Zollikofer, Bachofen, and Schmidlin, all three of them Swiss. Whether his choice was conditioned by the availability of song collections or by his own personal preference is, of course, impossible to determine. If he had any choice, it was probably musical considerations that made him, the descendant of emigrants from the Palatinate, prefer Swiss song collections to those composed in his grandfather's home district. Whatever his considerations were, he chose well, for these three Swiss hymn compilers and composers were the outstanding representatives of Swiss hymnody in the mid-eighteenth century.

Zollikofer, Bachofen, and Schmidlin represent a link in a pious chain reaction that had its origin in the Netherlands in the seventeenth century. In the prosperous Dutch states, once the Reformed Church had successfully emerged from its internal religious struggles, there arose a reform movement under the leadership of Jodocus van Lodenstein<sup>23</sup> (1620-1677), "The Rejuvenator."

Through the medium of the hymn, Lodenstein and his followers attempted to bridge the gap between formalized surface religiosity and the subjective, emotional, and nearly mystic approach to matters of faith. This new note of pietistic individualism which was in time to soften the hard shell of Calvinist orthodoxy manifested itself in the lyrics and compositions of a host of hymn writers.<sup>24</sup> These soon found their way into northwestern and central Germany.<sup>25</sup> By the time this pietistic wave reached

<sup>23</sup> His famous hymn book, *Uytspanningen* (Utrecht, 1676) went into sixteen editions.

<sup>24</sup> Joachim Neander (1650-1680), Richard Tersteegen (1697-1769), and others.

<sup>25</sup> Among them Hermann Reinhold Pauli (1682-1750) and Johann Wilhelm Krafft (1696-1767).



Switzerland in the second decade of the eighteenth century, it contained not only its original Dutch components but had had superimposed upon these, on its way through Germany, the coloration of Lutheran Spenerism and Hallensian pietism.

To be sure, these new hymns of the reform movement did not gain access into the official songbooks of the Reformed Church in any of the three countries. In Switzerland, they were used mainly in private religious circles, in the pietistic meetings which were frowned upon by church and state authorities and which were for a time, in 1716, actually forbidden. Pietistic and religious as the lyrics of these hymns were, their melodies, according to Koch,<sup>26</sup> often approached the aria, as had those of their German forerunners.

Yet even the early Swiss hymn writers<sup>27</sup> added a touch of their own. Melodies taken over from the German received in their hands additional worldly touches in the form of increasing numbers of slurred notes and in an often minuet-like arrangement. Since the Swiss Calvinist Church looked askance at any man-made songs and adhered strictly to the psalms for official church use, the Swiss hymn writers actually wrote and composed for popular consumption, and hence adapted their productions to popular taste. The most ingenious and inventive of these Swiss hymn writers were Zollikofer, Schmidlin, and Bachofen, the sources of Conrad Doll's *Sammlung*.

Caspar Bachofen (1692-1755), pastor and cantor of a reformed church in Zürich, is chiefly known for his hymn book *Musikalisches Halleluja*,<sup>28</sup> from which Doll took seventeen songs. The bulk of the Lancaster schoolmaster's collection, thirty-four

<sup>26</sup> Eduard Emil Koch, *Geschichte des Kirchenlieds und Kirchengesangs der Christlichen, Insbesondere der Deutschen Evangelischen Kirche* (Stuttgart, C. Belser, 1866-1877). VI: 110.

<sup>27</sup> Johann Ludwig Steiner, *Neues Gesangbuch* . . . (Zürich, Heidegger und Rahn, 1723); Johann Kaspar Degeller, *Hymni* . . . (Schauffhausen, J. A. Ziegler, 1732); Caspar Zollikofer, *Gebät-Music* (St. Gallen, 1738), and others.

<sup>28</sup> The first edition of this work was in 1727. A fifth edition was published in 1750 in Zürich by Bürkli.

pieces, came from Johannes Schmidlin, the bachelor pastor of Wetzlikon. Schmidlin is unique in at least one respect, for in the dedication to his collection of hymns, *Singendes und Spielendes Vergnügen Reiner Andacht* . . . (Zürich, Bürkli, 1752), he acknowledges that he drew on the lyrics of such famous poets as Haller, Canitz, and Triller, and on the pious melodies of Kreuzberg, Schmoll, Rambach, and others. Schmidlin's melodies, at least in Koch's opinion, are too frivolous and playful, and are therefore inferior to those of Bachofen.<sup>29</sup>

There is but one hymn taken over from the *Gebät-Music*<sup>30</sup> of Caspar Zollikofer, a man whose name is securely established not only in the history of hymnody but in the history of German literature as well. With Meister and Keller von Uri, he was a collaborator in Bodmer and Breitinger's journal *Die Discourse der Mahlern* (Zürich, 1721-1723).

So, in the hymn collection of a Lancaster schoolteacher and organist, there is reflected a definite evolutionary stage in Calvinist hymnody, the cumulative poetic and spiritual products of Dutch, German, and Swiss pietism, clad in the attractive musical patterns of three Swiss hymnodists. Doll's *Sammlung* was unquestionably a striking piece of musical pioneering among his Zwinglian brethren of Lancaster. It is doubtful, however, that his selections found any immediate acceptance among the official church songs. It was many years after the death of his Swiss models before some of their hymns were adapted for church use.

Conrad Doll's attempt to draw inspiration from European religiosity displays a typical chronological lag that is frequently ap-

<sup>29</sup> Koch, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

<sup>30</sup> A fuller title of this work is: *Himmlisch-Gesinnter Seelen Himmel-Durchschallende und Unsern Gott Billig hoch Verherrlichende Gebät-Music, das ist: Geistreiches Gesang-und Gebät-Buch, bestehend in 1000 auserlesenen Seufzer-oder Gebät-Weisen gestellten sowohl alten als aber auch viel und noch mehr neuen, verändert und verbesserten geistlichen lieblichen Liedern, mit anmutigen, aus unterschiedlichen Musicalischen Büchern gezogenen, auch zum theil gantz neu-componierten liechten Melodien zu 2, 3, 4 und 5 stimmen. Nebst einem accurat gezeichneten Generalbass* (St. Gallen, Gedruckt bei Ruprecht Weniger, 1738).



parent in the cultural patterns of immigrants who lean spiritually on the old soil. For in the year of publication of the *Sammlung*, which he certainly meant to represent the latest in hymnody, the Continental hymn writers were already well into the next stage of their development. Their songs, by that time, bore the characteristic stamp of moralistic and predicated rationalism.

But in technique, in his presentation of musical knowledge, Doll was certainly on an even plane with the rest of his American contemporaries. Long after 1798, English-American songbooks were coming off the press which were definitely inferior to the Lancaster imprint that has become both a curiosity and a rarity.