

INTRODUCTION

Writing the history of our Society is a challenge. Such a task, because of lack of documentation, compels one to transcend pure accumulation of fact.

Indeed, sheer luck was needed to discover rare authentic documents dating back to the time of its foundation, (Meaning: Foundation Charter, Reports on Assembly Meetings, etc.) and the first fifty years of its existence are not better documented; we have only a few rare copies of the statutes revised in 1930. Nothing was ever written about the creation of our Society, either in the "Luxemburger Wort" in 1894, founding date generally accepted until now, or in the "Gazette" of Gonner, or in the various publications of Chicago . . . nor does the Press mention the anniversaries. Meanwhile, new elements have appeared which establish that the foundation was twelve years earlier than originally determined.

Based on the assumption that it was created in 1894, one can naturally wonder why the "American Club" did not manifest itself more often between 1894 and 1940. There are several plausible explanations for this; the various anniversaries, for instance, which could have been so many festive occasions for the "American Club", fell on days and periods inappropriate at that time, and did not lend themselves to celebration:

20th Anniversary: June 10th, 1914, two months before the First World War;

25th Anniversary: June 10th, 1919, at a time when our country, like the whole of Europe, was subject to post-war problems;

50th Anniversary: June 10th, 1944, four days after D-Day in Normandy. It would have been a wonderful occasion to celebrate if, alas! the country had not been occupied by the Nazis.

That these circumstances had their impact, there is no doubt. They do not suffice, however, to fully explain the lack of publicity given the Club activities. The true reasons can be surmised by attentively reading the 1930 statutes. That is why a central part of this historical writing will be devoted to them later on.

Our task is both easier and more complicated for the period starting with the Fifties: easier because direct and written sources are available in abundance; but abundance itself complicates matters. Confronted with abundant information, an avalanche of documents, a multitude of primarily cultural events, made culling this information frustrating.

Therefore, one should not expect to find here a complete, detailed historical account, but rather an overall view. The purpose of this account is simply to bring out certain developments, certain particular aspects, rather than to be a dry listing of events.

I trust that, in this optic, I will have succeeded in presenting a lively biography of an association that is almost one hundred years old, but remains as young and as active as it was in 1882.

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