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**Official Minutes of the Seventh Convention of the North American Turner Union held in New Ulm, Minn. on May 27, 28 and 29, 1876.**

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**Seventh Convention of the North American Turner Union held in New Ulm, Minn. on May 27, 28 and 29 1876.**

**First day.**

In accordance with the National Executive Committee's announcement, the delegates of the various districts gathered for the Seventh Convention of the National Union at 10 am in the gymnasium.

Mr. Chas. Roos, the speaker of the New Ulm Gymnastic Union, called the session to order. Next, Mr. Lackner, the speaker of the National Union, stepped onto the podium and addressed the audience:

"The Executive Committee pointed out in its report that this Convention would have to discuss issues of more than the usual importance, issues of relevance beyond the boundaries of the Gymnastic Union. Indeed, it would be odd if, in this stormy time when many old rotting conditions are shaken and new political, social and religious problems must be solved daily, a gathering of free thinking and intelligent men who long to take an active part in the public life doing good, should hesitate how and where they may do so. All around us, d that things must not only change

but improve; the better conscience of the people is standing up resolutely and aggressively against the political corruption;

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science fights the faith in the Bible as never before and the entire area of social issues has turned into a battle field for reformists, agitators and restless minds in general.

It is not in the nature of the Turners to sit around and let things go as they may. It is their duty to get involved in the public life, to take part in the solution of every issue which may be of importance to the people's fate. All of this they must do without neglecting their first and foremost task – education.

As at every other Convention, the question will rise now again how to foster practical gymnastics, how to continue to support the schools which grow unceasingly and how to increase the significance of the Gymnastic Teachers Seminary.

I believe that we cannot pay enough attention to this college especially because its importance to gymnastics in general cannot be appreciated highly enough. Every teacher educated in this institution is a persistent and able agitator for gymnastics – because of his devotion to the selected vocation and because of his own interest.

To emphasize the Seminary and increase its effectiveness, we need monetary funds before all else. One of the tasks before this Convention will be to not only procure them but to do so in abundance.

Without being unjust one could, as before, complain that too little happened in the area of the intellectual endeavors in the past two years. However, I do not believe we should be satisfied with the stereotypical recommendations made in debates and lectures in regard to this issue. To stimulate the Turners intellectually, it is of the utmost importance to present them with living and practical issues that need to be resolved, issues, which intrinsically and without anything artificial stimulate the interest of the Turners and urge them to participate actively in the

intellectual efforts. The Executive Committee as well indicated in its report what these topics might be and I would like to draw the delegates' attention to this part of the report.

In addition, it will be necessary to take a clear stand in the area of politics and this position does not have to be within the limits of one political party. For the honest citizen, it is more important that certain issues may be resolved in the interest of public honesty rather than this or the other party may win. It could be that we exercise the strongest influence in this regard when we keep a position independent from any one party's.

However, I am convinced that the delegates will find the right path after their thorough contemplation of this issue.

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And now, my friends, let us not forget especially one thing – in order to insure the life potential of the Gymnastic Union we must constantly give it new meanings of life. We may not and do not want to draw on the accomplishments of years past. Just as the citizens of our friendly New Ulm do not look at the East with its ready canals and railroads, its cities and villages but towards the West and find new fields for their work in its prairies and wild forests and build their future there, so we may not look back at the accomplishments of previous years but must look into the future and seek new realms for our work there.”

At this point, the president of the Union moved to appoint a temporary chairman of the Convention. Col. Wm. Pfänder was elected unanimously. As he took over the podium, he made a short speech, in which he pointed out the importance of the Convention to the delegates again and urged for the quick resolution of the issues. Turner Fellmann from Baltimore and Kaufmann from Chicago were appointed temporary secretaries. Upon a motion, a committee for the examination of the candidates' mandates was appointed. Turners Spitzer from New York, Tönsfeld from St. Louis and Burgheim from Cincinnati were elected to serve on it. A 10-minute break was allowed to give the committee an opportunity to do their work.

## **Report of the Committee for the Examination of the Mandates**

Represented are:

**The Executive Committee** through: Franz Lackner, A. Fürstenberg, Carl Lotz, C. A. F. Huncke, Max Stern and A. Georg from Chicago; the Gymnastic Committee of the Executive Committee through A. Lang and John Gloy from Chicago.

**New York Turner District:** 17 federal votes: S. Spitzer, Heinr. Meßner, Phillip Andres.

**Ohio Valley Turner District:** 10 federal votes: A. Seidensticker, Charles Köhne, Adalbert Kriegar, Lorenz Schmidt and Julius Krämer.

**St. Louis Turner District:** 21 federal votes: Julius Tönsfeld.

**New England Turner District:** 12 federal votes: Carl Eberhard.

**Wisconsin Turner District:** 35 federal votes: Emil Wallber, Geo. Brosius, R. Günther, Theodor Racef, H. Fink, G. Burghardt, E. Hartung, Jos. Dworschack.

**Chicago Turner District:** 17 federal votes: Jos. Kaufmann, Emil Höchter, Jacob Lucas, Fritz Götz and H. Stahl.

**Süd=östlicher Turner District:** 2 federal votes: J. R. Fellmann.

**West=New York Turner District:** 8 federal votes: H. Pfässtin.

**Philadelphia Turner District:** 8 federal votes: Ernst C. Stahl.

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**New Jersey Turner District:** 5 federal votes: Wm. Pfänder.

**Pittsburgh** “ 16 federal votes: Fritz Mertens.

**Minnesota** “ 9 federal votes: Rudolph Sieber, Ch. Roos, J. C. Fleisher, Caspar Sauer, John Rank, H. Manderfeld, Carl Albrecht, Theo. Sander, E. G. Pahl.

**Oberer Mississippi Turner District:** 15 Bundesstimmen: August Timm, F. Blunck.

**Lookout Mountain** “ 4 federal votes: Jacob Petry.

**Central Illinois** “ 6 federal votes: Christian Rübsame, E. Gillig.

**Cincinnati** “ 13 federal votes: Max Burgheim und A. Stecher.

**Texas** “ 9 federal votes: H. Siemering.

**Pacific** “ 22 federal votes: Fr. Forster.

**North West** “ 2 federal votes: Richard Fischer.

**Connecticut** “ 8 federal votes: Hermann Cirkler.

**Charleston** “ 2 federal votes: Peter Scherer.

**Missouri Valley** “ 6 federal votes: H. Brunsing.

The Committee's report was approved. After that, the Executive Committee was instructed to find out how many votes the West New York and the Connecticut districts are justified to have. According to the report, West New York has 10 votes and Connecticut 8 votes.

Upon a motion passed, the following Turners were appointed for permanent officers:

Emil Wallber, Milwaukee, Wis., 1. chairman.

M. Burgheim, Cincinnati, O., 2. chairman.

J. R. Fellmann, Baltimore, Md., 1. secretary,

Jos. Kaufmann, Chicago, Ill., 2. “.

Next, a committee was appointed to elect the standing committees. Turners Höchster, Seidensticker, Spitzer and Wallber were elected on it.

Next, a letter from the West Minneapolis Gymnastic Union was read, in which the union offers its hospitality to the delegates who intend to visit Minneapolis and St. Louis. The invitation was accepted and Turners Sieber and Rank were instructed to send in the list of names of those delegates. In addition, a letter from Hermann Thate from New York was read, in which he points out the importance of the Meeting of German Radicals and Republicans in Cincinnati in June and recommends we send delegates there. He recommends further the American Turners be represented at the world exhibition and the gymnastic fest taking place in Venice.

A letter from Mr. Schütz from the Freie Gemeinde (Freethinking Congregation) in Milwaukee was sent on to the Committee for Intellectual Matters

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and the delegate from this Congregation was granted permission to attend the Convention.

Another 15-min. break was taken to give the Committee for Organization time to appoint the standing committees. When it was over, the second secretary Burgheim called the session to order. Upon motion passed, the reports of the executive committees from 1874-5 and 1875-6 were read. Next, the Committee for Appointing the Standing Committees presented the following report:

### **Committees.**

1. Committee for Platforms and Statutes: Spitzer, Seidensticker, Lackner, Siemering, Burgheim, Roos, Burghardt.
2. Auditing Committee for the Bookkeeping and the Finance and Statistics Reports of the Executive Committee: Schmidt, Günther, Timm, Forster, Petry.
3. Committee for Categorization of the Instructions: E. C. Stahl, Huncke, Krämer, Hartung, Mertens, Manderfel, Albrecht.
4. Committee for Practical Gymnastics and Gymnastic Teachers Seminary: Metzner, Brosius, Tönsfeld, Georg, Stecher, Götz, Sieber, Gloy, Lang.
5. Committee for Intellectual Efforts: Lucas, Lotz, Fink, Pfäffin, Fischer.

6. Committee for Complaints and Appeals: Höchster, Röhne, Pfänder, Blunck, Riebsame, Eberhardt, Racef, Fleischer, Cirkler.
7. Committee for General Union Affairs: Kriegar, Andres, Stern, H. Stahl, Gillig, Pahl, Sauer.
8. Committee for the Union Publication: Andres, Sanders, Dworschack, Rank, Scherer.

At this point, adjournment until 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

### **Afternoon Session**

The session was called to order by the chair shortly after 3 o'clock.

The chair read the mandate of Turner Hermann Brunsing from Turner district Missouri Valley. It was accepted.

John Gloy informed us in a letter that he is willing to hold a lecture about socialism for the Convention. His offer was accepted and Mr. Gloy was asked to give his talk on Saturday afternoon at 2 o'clock.

At this point, the chair read an agenda.

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### **Committee Reports.**

The Committee for Categorization presented first.

The Committee for the Union Publication presented a preliminary report – the plan is to keep the “Future” as the Union’s journal.

Turner Stern moved to ask Gloy to give his talk right away since there wasn’t any special business. The previous motion relating to this lecture was withdrawn and Turner Stern’s motion passed. Next, Gloy gave his presentation.

At this point, adjournment until Sunday morning 9 o'clock.

## **Day Two.**

### **Morning Session.**

The chair called the delegates to order at 9 o'clock, a quorum was present.

A letter from Turner Zapp from Toledo was read and handed to the Committee for Practical Gymnastics; same with a report from F. Bertsch from Cincinnati. A correspondence from H. Siebold from Indianapolis regarding the Michigan Turner district was sent on to the National Executive Committee for a report at the Convention.

Next, the minutes of the previous session were read and approved.

Below, an incomplete:

### **Report of the Committee for Platform and Statutes:**

After considerable deliberations, we recommend to keep the current national platform unchanged and without any additions or omissions.

This recommendation was accepted unanimously.

### **Draft of the Committee for Practical Gymnastics and Gymnastic Teachers Seminary:**

- a) Competitive Gymnastics.
  1. The team competitions gymnastics will be combined with the individual competitions gymnastics.
  2. The same applies for the horizontal bar, parallel bars and the horse (back flips and side leaps).
  3. Three compulsory and two optional exercises must be performed at both, the horizontal and parallel bars. Two compulsory and one optional exercises must be performed at the horse.
  4. The number of Turners in a team may not exceed twelve and be less than six.



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5. The average score a team receives will decide the team's prize. The highest number of the score a Turner receives will decide the individual prize. (The average score is produced when the total of the team members' scores is divided by the number of members a team has).

6. Turners whose unions or districts do not form teams will be assigned to other teams, however, their accomplishments will be judged only individually.

The scale of the scores will be 1 to 10.

7. Every participant at the competitive gymnastics must take part in at least three kinds of athletics.

8. The competitive gymnastics will be conducted in two sections. The first section competes in the third, and the second section in the second gymnastics level.

9. Athletics consists of high and long jump, pole vault, javelin throw, wrestling, stone throw, climbing, club swing, weight lifting, running, shooting and swimming.

10. By the long jump, it will be started with 14 feet, by high jump with the breast height of the shortest participant.

11. By the javelin throw, the target will be a disc with 5 rings with about 2 inch distance in between. The distance for the javelin throw will be 35, for the bow throw 40 feet.

12. A rock of about 35 lbs. will be used for the stone throw.

13. For wrestling, the pairs will be determined by lot. Whoever touches the floor with both shoulders will be pronounced beat.

14. The judging will be done using the old modus and no foreman will be appointed.

b) Judges and exercises.

1. The Executive Committee appoints the judges, however we recommend it draw in younger people in this function as well.
2. The competition exercises shall be determined by a committee elected by the Gymnastic Teachers Congress. These exercises shall be submitted to the competition judges direct before the start of the competition.

c) Youth Gymnastics.

1. The pupils shall be divided in three age groups.
2. The first group will consist of pupils under 14 years of age.
3. The first group shall participate in high and long jump, climbing and running only; the second will participate in horizontal bar, parallel bars, high and long jump; the third class in horizontal bar, parallel bars and horse as part of the compulsory exercises which are for the highest gymnastic level of the third group.

After its presentation, this report was discussed paragraph by paragraph and accepted as recommended.

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A request from the St. Louis District:

To admit the optional and compulsory exercises to the competition at national gymnastic festivities.

A vote conducted by districts produced the result of 164 votes for and 84 against – the request was granted.

The chair read a mandate of the Central Mississippi Turner District which accredited Turner Wilh. Roch from New Ulm with 2 national votes.

The following report of the Committee for Intellectual Efforts was read and acknowledged:

### **Report of the Committee for Intellectual Efforts**

The Committee submitted the following suggestions for the consideration of the Convention:

1. To recommend in the most compelling way to the unions they monitor the public schools unceasingly, keep all influence of the church that endangers them at a distance and fight it by introducing German in the curriculum and use it as a teaching aid, as well as adopt a teaching method which will rouse the mind and the character. In addition, to recommend the unions strongly support the free thinking German private schools and build such, where none exist and the public schools do not fulfill all rightful requirements.
2. To commit the unions to contribution to the founding fund of the projected German – American Teacher Seminary, to set the minimum dues to one dollar per member and, in addition, to demand of every union to view itself as a Seminary founding union, to contribute as such and to report about the achieved results every 3 months beginning June 1 until the realization of the project may be deemed secured.
3. To instruct the Executive Committee to take the necessary steps at the appropriate time in order to secure the union the relevant say by the building and establishing of the Seminary, as well as a fitting part in the control over its leadership.
4. To recommend to the unions to build Sunday schools in which the various religious systems can be explained objectively and the corresponding views of the modern world views compared by skilled Turners or such individuals who can be engaged for this purpose.
5. To set specific evenings, at least one each month, for intellectual education. On these occasions, it should be arranged that short and popular lectures about educational topics be held either by union members or speakers from outside and debates about general interesting issues be combined with the lectures. In such locations where Freie

Gemeinden (Free thinking congregations) or other intellectually rigorous unions exist, the lectures and the moral propaganda should be conducted in close partnership with them.

6. To require of the unions to set a certain percentage of their income for the building and/or expanding of libraries and the establishment of reading rooms and be determined to acquire only accomplished and instructive works.

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To emphasize to the unions, in consideration of the sad social and political days the country is experiencing, how important it is to examine critically not only its current social and political conditions and institutions but the so called 'socialist' theories and reform efforts as well. The unions must keep all this in mind while selecting the necessary education materials and do not stray from the principles of a universal humane education.

7. Urgent request of those Turners with such a calling to submit written discourses on topics of gymnastics as well as general human interest to the Gymnastic Union journal from time to time. In addition, to call upon them to promote to the best of their abilities the goals of the Gymnastic Union in other journals of principles akin to ours.
8. To insure our Union is represented at the Radical Convention in Philadelphia on June 26 of this year through a delegate elected by the Executive Committee and to instruct him to report to the Executive Committee as soon as possible.

Paragraphs 1, 4, 5, 6 and 8 were accepted, paragraphs 2 and 3 were rejected and sent back to the Committee and the following was added to paragraph 7:

Addendum to paragraph 7:

"The Executive Committee must take on the responsibility to provide the Turners through the Union journal with clarification of all those issues where a timely and correct understanding appears to be particularly useful."

### **Afternoon Session.**

The chair called the delegates to order, a quorum was present.

The Committee for General Union Affairs reported as follows:

**The Committee for General Union Affairs** is honored to present the following report for the consideration of the Seventh Convention of the Union:

As it is expressed in the reports of the Executive Committee, the Union lost many of its members in the past few years and one of the most important tasks of this Convention must be to find ways to strengthen the numbers of those who carry the Turner principles. Your Committee regrets, however, not to be able to provide concrete suggestions to accomplish this, unless a decision is passed through which unions and union members may be reminded how necessary it is to pursue any practical attempts to draw such men whose membership appears desirable into the gymnastic unions. This is how other unions gain new members. The slow decline in our membership is caused solely by weak promotion and recruitment.

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We spotted several recommendations in the instructions submitted to us. Below, we present them to the Convention as decisions:

1. Decided: to expand the accomplishments of the Gymnastic Teachers Seminary by the offering education to female gymnastic teachers – an issue approved long ago; that the necessary funds will be acquired by increasing the Union dues to 20-25 cents; that the Seminary will remain in Milwaukee.
2. Decided that the Gymnastic Union will bestow financial support upon the future German Teacher Seminary provided a Department of Practical Gymnastics is established there.
3. Decided to keep the Convention a biennial event.

4. Decided that the next national gymnastic fest will take place in Milwaukee, Wis.
5. Decided that the next Convention will take place in Baltimore, Md., or in Nashville, Tenn.
6. Decided that the National Executive Committee will remain in Chicago.
7. Decided that the Executive Committee is responsible for the representation of the Union at the German Education Days and the seminary conventions.
8. Decided that the Executive Committee must insure a representation of the Union at the Convention of the Free Thinkers in Philadelphia.
9. Decided that, in future, an Executive Committee member selected by the same must be involved in creating the schedule for the national gymnastic fests.
10. Decided to authorize the Executive Committee to send gymnastic teachers on temporary assignments to those districts unable to provide a monetary remuneration.

Recommending these decisions to your gracious approval, we sign with Turner greetings:

Adalb. Kriegar

Max Stern

Philipp Andres

Caspar Sauer

Chas. E. Gillig

H. Stahl

E. G. Pahl

The Committee.

The report was acknowledged and the discussion of the individual paragraphs ended with accepting paragraphs 3, 6, 7, 9 and 10. Paragraph 1 was submitted to the Committee for Practical Gymnastics. Paragraph 4 caused a debate, in which the representative of the Central Illinois

Turner District asked for the Union gymnastic log for Peoria. St. Louis was added as another location to be considered.

The vote by federal votes produced the following result: 197 votes for Milwaukee and 6 for Peoria upon which Milwaukee's election was finalized.

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In addition to the cities mentioned in paragraph 5, the cities Indianapolis, Wheeling, Philadelphia and St. Antonio were suggested as possible locations for the next Convention. The vote produced the following result: 136 federal votes for Nashville and 114 for Indianapolis. Thus, Nashville was the elected location.

The report of the Committee for the Union Publication.

#### **Report of the Committee for the Union Publication at the 7. Convention.**

New Ulm, May 29, 1876.

After the Committee thoroughly examined the instructions received from the 7 districts as well as the reasons for and against establishing our own union journal, it reached the following conclusions:

The "Zukunft" ("Future") will remain the Union publication for the next two years, under these conditions:

1. It is the editorial board's duty, when assaults against the districts' leaderships are published, to print official responses as well.
2. It is the editorial board's duty to publish articles for the enlightenment and education about political, social, religious and economic current topics and to express the principles of the Union platform for their true understanding by the members.

3. The journal's last page shall be designated for the Union's address book and the other columns on that page mainly for the Turners' ads.
4. Ads about festivities, elections, appellations, etc. shall be priced according to the regular ad rates.
5. Any announcements by the Executive Committee shall be accepted free of charge.
6. The districts' leaderships have the right to claim one half column each month for minutes and business issues free of charge.
7. It is the editorial board's duty to publish at least one original article every week which addresses gymnastics in general.
8. It is the editorial board's duty to accept materials about technical gymnastics. Every member shall be allowed to publish his views on apparatus gymnastics in the journal.
9. The districts' leaderships are responsible for providing written materials about athletics and other issues through engaging qualified Turners for these tasks.
10. The Executive Committee and the district unions are obliged to promote the further development and distribution of the journal.
11. It is the duty of the Executive Committee to take responsibility for the fulfillment of various paragraphs of this agreement.

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12. The district unions are compelled not to overload the journal with repeated reports about festivities and misuse it.

Philipp Andres

Theodor Sandey

Jos. Dworschak

John Ranf

P. Scherer, secretary.



The recommendations in the report were pronounced decisions, with the addition of § e and m, page 37 of the decisions of the 6. Convention in Rochester. These are:

- e. Announcements from the Executive Committee shall be accepted free of charge.
- m. §37 of the Union Statutes will be published in a suitable place on page eight.

**Report of the Auditing Committee for the Bookkeeping and the Finance Report of the Executive Committee.**

New Ulm, Minn., May 28, 1876.

To the Convention – your Committee examined the bookkeeping and the receipts and found them correct.

The treasury is today:

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| According the report of the Executive Committee | \$1,586.88 |
|---|------------|

New contributions since from:

|                        |         |
|------------------------|---------|
| Central Miss. District | \$18.15 |
|------------------------|---------|

|                |         |
|----------------|---------|
| Texas District | \$75.30 |
|----------------|---------|

|        |            |
|--------|------------|
| Total: | \$1,680.33 |
|--------|------------|

Outstanding balance from:

|                     |         |
|---------------------|---------|
| New Jersey District | \$21.95 |
|---------------------|---------|

|                   |          |
|-------------------|----------|
| Michigan District | \$44. 00 |
|-------------------|----------|

|                           |         |
|---------------------------|---------|
| Lookout Mountain District | \$45.30 |
|---------------------------|---------|

|        |          |
|--------|----------|
| Total: | \$111.25 |
|--------|----------|

We recommend the Executive Committee be given total authorization regarding sending traveling agitators. However, it should set a maximum amount for every trip before the traveler is sent out.

Lorenz Schmidt

Richard Günther

August Timm

Fr. Forster

Jakob Petry

The Committee.

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The report was approved.

It was decided that when the Executive Committee sends out agitators, it would select such Turners who, in addition to their intellectual abilities, are also familiar with physical exercises.

The following incomplete report of the Committee for Complaints and Appeals was submitted:

**Report of the Committee for Complaints and Appeals.**

To the Convention of the N. A. G. U.

The signed below Committee presents the following incomplete report of its work to the Convention.

1. Regarding the matter of the New Brownfield Gymnastic Union vs. Turner Adalbert Kriegar where the Union complains about certain expressions in a correspondence between said

Kriegar and the “Zukunft” (“Future”). Since Turner Kriegar states vehemently that in his correspondence about the Texas Gymnastic Unions he meant only some unprincipled organizations which do not belong to the union and whose actions justify the expressions he used, your Committee does not find a reason for a complaint.

2. Texas Turner District vs. National Executive Committee – protest against the English circulars.

Your committee regrets that the comments included in the English circular of the Executive Committee evoked offence, however the Committee cannot find that Executive Committee overstepped its authority. Thus, the Committee moves to reject the protest of the Texas Turner District.

Emil Höchster

Chas Köhne

W. Pfänder

H. Cirkler

Theod. Blunck

I. C. Fleischer

C. Riebsame

C. Eberhard

Theo. Racef

The Committee.

The Convention supported the Committee’s position.

The Executive Committee was prepared to report about the affairs of the Michigan Turner District, however it was decided to leave the issue for the future National Executive Committee to resolve.

Moved and passed: to review all decisions and statutes of the Gymnastic Union which have been created since its establishment and are still in existence and to publish them in their edited version together with the minutes of this Convention.

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The report of the Committee for Platforms and Statutes was acknowledged:

### **Report of the Committee for Platforms and Statutes**

To the Convention of the N. A. Gymnastic Union:

Your Committee presents the following report regarding the statutes:

It is a logical statement accepted by all that nothing ought to be changed in the main law of an institution without sufficient need to do so. As there aren't any complaints regarding the current statutes in general, your Committee decided not to recommend any changes but to consider only the points we received instructions to do so.

The instructions presented to us pertain to three points only: 1. the Convention of the Union, 2. the Union festivities and 3. the Union dues.

1. Regarding the first point – the instructions quite agree to continue to hold the Convention once every two years. Accordingly, Your Committee recommends to leave the relevant statutes regulation as it is.

An instruction from Cincinnati demands that, in the future, the Union bear the cost for one delegate from each district. Whatever can be said in support of this, it is plain to see that this suggestion is absolutely unfulfillable because of financial concerns.

2. The instructions about Union gymnastic festivities are various. After a thorough evaluation of the issue, your Committee recommends the current statute prescribing the Union gymnastic fest be held once every two years be kept.

A request from Philadelphia that all visitors of a gymnastic fest who do not participate in the active exercises be charged a \$3.00 fee does not appear opportune to us. We must ask ourselves whether this may not decrease the attendance at the Union fest. In addition, the execution of the decision must be always left to up to the discretion of the hosting union. In some places, this regulation may be removed whereas in others, that might not be done and that would not be advisable.

3. The majority of the instructions about the Union dues is in favor of increasing the dues to 20 cents each year. Some districts object. Since it is expected from all sides that the Union Seminary expands its impact and this is not possible without additional funds, we move to change §10 in section B as follows:

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§10: Each Union district pays yearly dues of 20 cents for every member within the first half of the first fiscal year.

S. Spitzer

A. Seidensticker

A. Siemering

F. Lackner

Max Burgheim

G. Burghardt

Chas Roos

The Committee.

The individual paragraphs were accepted as decisions. Article 3 was approved with a two thirds majority, 24 against 8 federal votes.

The Committee for Practical Gymnastics submitted the following additional report including general regulations:

**General Regulations.**

1. Turners who won several first prizes at the Union festivities shall receive only one laurel wreath and one diploma, the latter shall include all disciplines in which the prizes were awarded.
2. The competitive shooters at Union festivities will be allowed to use their own weapons provided these comply with the rules.
3. All regulations set for competitive gymnastics at the Union festivities apply to the districts fests as well.
4. Unions which accept hosting a national union fest shall organize a gymnastic demonstration for boys and girls.
5. From now on, free and program exercises shall be allowed at the Union fests.
6. It is recommended to the districts to pay the travel costs of their most accomplished Turners to the next Union fest.
7. The union shall obtain extra diplomas for young gymnasts' prizes.
8. The Convention recommends to the districts that they conduct the practical gymnastic days in a strict manner.
9. The districts are urged to work as hard as they can for the fostering of girls gymnastics.
10. The following rubrics shall be added to the next statistical reports:
  - a) The number of the members obligated to do gymnastics.
  - b) The average number of the participants in the practical gymnastics.
  - c) The number of the members who came to us from pupil schools.

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Lastly, the Committee recommends the following ways to foster physical exercises:

- a) Through the hire of gymnastic teachers in all unions where possible.
- b) Through public awards of the most diligent (not the best) Turners in the various districts.
- c) Through promotional work so the old Turners in all districts may participate in physical exercises again.

The report was acknowledged and approved in its separate parts.

Turner Wilhelm Pfänder read a short history of the building, struggles and development of the Turner colony New Ulm he himself had composed. It was decided to include it in the minutes and publish it in the Union journal.

Decided that the 7. Convention of the N. A. G. U. resolutely damns the actions of the Commission of the Philadelphia Gallery which forbid it be open on Sundays.

Decided to let the commission officers know about the above statement in English and in German.

### **Day Three.**

#### **Morning Session.**

After a call of delegates' names confirmed the presence of a quorum, the sessions' minutes from the second day were read and approved.

The Committee for Platforms and Statutes submitted an additional report.

#### **Report Committee for Platforms and Statutes**

To the Seventh Convention of the N. A. Gymnastic Union:

Greetings!

The signed below committee recommends the approval of the following draft to the Convention:

1. An addendum to the Constitution.
2. Two decisions regarding the representation of the Union Conventions.
3. General political resolutions.

S. Spitzer

F. Lackner

G. Burghardt

Chas. Roos

Max Burgheim

A. Siemering

A. Seidensticker

The Committee.

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**Addendum to the Constitution.**

Because there is no provision in the statutes in case the town selected to host the Union Convention or the Union fest turned out to be unsuitable or impossible to use as a result of unexpected circumstances, we propose the following addendum to the Union statutes, Section A.



A.

§6 If hosting a Union fest or a Union Convention in the city selected at the previous Convention turns out to be impossible or absolutely unsuitable as a result of unexpected circumstances, the Executive Committee shall suggest two cities and provide the reasons for the decision. The selected city shall be determined through majority of the federal votes. If there is no time to conduct such a vote, the Executive Committee will be authorized to postpone the Convention so a vote may be possible.

1. Decided to instruct the Executive Committee to charge the districts not represented in this Convention a hefty fine should they avoid being expelled by providing a reasonable excuse for their absence.
2. Decided to emphasize to all districts that it is their duty of honor to be represented through their own delegates rather than assign Turners from other districts to represent them.

### **General Political Resolutions.**

The North American Gymnastic Union confirms and emphasizes its continuous support of the political standpoint it adopted two years ago as stated in the decision below:

1. The Convention is convinced that none of the currently existing political parties support any reforms political with true conviction; in addition, these organizations became unworthy of the public trust by allowing sick deformities of religious and social movements in their midst and lent themselves as tools for bigotry and corruption.

Because of this, the Convention announces its resolute support of the formation of a new party whose foremost duty will be the safeguarding of personal freedom and which will act uncompromisingly against public corruption and will strive for reforms as befit our times.

2. We view and declare the following as reforms befit for our time:

- a) A radical change in the civil service of the government so that its employees are hired and promoted not because of their political activities but for their abilities as proven in federal exams. The duration of their service shall be determined through their conscientious work performance, honesty and skills and in no way as a result of any political consideration or the whim of the executive authorities.
- We view and pronounce the current system of positions assignment the main cause for the corruption and demoralization of our public government.

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- b) Return to hard currency and damnation of every attempt to regulate the public and private credit through inflation or worsening of our monetary system.
- c) Ruthless and uncompromising fight against all and every fraud at the public elections.
- d) Implementation of the principle of division of church and state by removing all tax exemptions for church assets, removing confession classes from all public schools and extracting all confession regulations from legislation.
3. We demand these reforms not only be accepted in the platform of the party, but also a guarantee of their enforcement through nomination of such candidates whose life and work up until now are a pledge for their integrity and ability to enforce those principles.
4. When an attempt is made by those of a kindred spirit to found an organization or party based on these principles, we recommend that the Executive Committee participate in the creating and leading of this organization by sending a delegate and that all Turners support these endeavors in their candidates.

After a debate about the paragraphs, the report was approved as read. In addition, it was decided to accept the following request:

The Executive Committee and the individual districts and unions must see to it that the political decisions are published in the local press as quick as possible.

Decided to appoint a committee of three members to translate the resolutions in English and offer them to the public through the associated press immediately.

Turners Pfänder, Seidensticker and Stern were elected to serve on this committee.

Additional Report of the Committee for Practical Gymnastics.

### **Report of the Committee for Practical Gymnastics.**

Gymnastic Teachers Seminary Affairs.

1. The Gymnastic Teachers Seminary shall remain in Milwaukee and under the leadership of Turner Brosius.
2. The Convention is against a merge of the Gymnastic Teachers Seminary with a projected German – American Teachers Seminary.
3. Following an announcement from Milwaukee that 8 unions wish to have gymnastic teachers but are unable to procure them due to lack of teachers, we ask the districts to prompt skilled teachers to attend the Gymnastic Teachers Seminary and, if necessary, make it possible for them by offering any assistance needed.
4. The Convention owes its gratitude to the faculty and directors of the Gymnastic Teacher Seminary, as well as Milwaukee's gymnastic union for their self-sacrificing work leading the institution. A letter of thanks will be prepared and sent to them.

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### **General Regulations (continued)**

1. We recommend to the unions who have competent gymnastic teachers to assist their neighbor unions in any way they can.
2. An exhibit of gymnastic equipment shall be arranged at the Union fests.
3. Lang's Turntafeln [set of lithograph plates of gymnastic exercises for instruction], which are now close to being completed met with earned approval everywhere because they accomplish their goal and, according to the evaluation of all experts, are a work of

considerable value. We strongly recommend to those unions who still haven't got any to obtain them.

Considering the big efforts the author put into creating the plates and the discussions at the Rochester Convention, we recommend to the current Convention to determine an appropriate compensation for gymnastic teacher August Lang.

H. Meßner

The Committee for Practical Gymnastics

This report was acknowledged and all paragraphs were accepted without any changes.

Following the report above, it was decided to elect a three - member committee which would submit suggestions about the amount of compensation for gymnastic teacher Lang to the Convention. The chair appointed Turners Fürstenberg, Riebsame and Fink.

Next, the Committee for Intellectual Efforts presented their report. It was amended and accepted as follows:

Considering the extraordinary importance the establishment of a school for German – American teachers, one that is led in the spirit of our Union, has for the German culture in this country and especially for the Gymnastic Union, the unions are obliged to elect committees in their own midst. These committees will gather funds through collection, benefits performances and similar suitable enterprises. The collected money shall be handed in to the Executive Committee to send on to the Board of Trustees of the Seminary. The districts directors are asked to contribute as much as they can to the cause so that results are produced and the goal is finally achieved.

### **Afternoon Session.**

The call of names confirmed a quorum is present.

The Committee for Intellectual Efforts reported that it prepared the following quiz questions for the Union gymnastics fest:

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**Quiz:**

1. The best combinations and groups of optional exercises.
2. The intellectual life in the gymnastic unions – how it is and how it should be.

These questions were approved by the Convention.

The Committee for Complaints and Appeals reported:

**Report of the Committee for Complaints and Appeals.**

The signed below Committee reports about its work to the Convention.

**I.**

Regarding the matter of the appeal of New York Gymnastic Union vs. the Executive Committee, your Committee takes the liberty to present this to the Convention:

Your Committee believes that, in order to better comprehend the issue, it is necessary to present a concise version of the case:

A while ago, Turner Meinhardt from the N. Y. Gymnastic Union made a statement under oath to a New York court besmirching the reputation of another member of the N. Y. Gymnastic Union and justified his statement, made in an affidavit on this occasion, using events in the New York Gymnastic Union. In the complaint initiated by the Turner in question and in the verdict issued later (Meinhardt's suspension for five years), it says that Meinhardt tried maliciously to afflict damage upon the gymnastic union and indirectly the National Union. Meinhardt lodges an appeal to the district's leadership, which it refers to an extra session. At this extra session, Meinhardt's appeal is rejected and the verdict confirmed, after which Meinhardt appeals to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee pronounces the following based on the recommendation of its Committee for Appeals:

Your Committee does not share in the slightest the opinion that the above accusation of M. has reasonable grounds, rather it is quite obvious to the Committee that Meinhardt never attempted to damage the union. However, Meinhardt's actions lack even the minute trace of brotherliness towards his union comrade and must be labeled as inconsiderate. In our opinion, Meinhardt should have initiated an investigation of the issue in question in his union and presented the result of such an investigation in his statements in court before he appeared in court bearing such weighty misgivings against a union brother.

However, since there is no doubt that the gymnastic union is not able and not authorized to limit the member in his exercising his civil duties and since we have no laws which deal with such or similar cases, we can only recognize that Meinhardt is guilty of a Turner-unworthy behavior. He failed to let the union decide about the guilt or innocence of the Turner before he, Meinhardt, made a public statement.

For this,

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it is our opinion, Meinhardt ought to be penalized. We recognize Meinhardt's longstanding efforts and his self-sacrificing work for the gymnastics cause as grounds for mitigation and recommend the Executive Committee adopt the following decision:

Decided that the verdict of the New York district session from November 28 should be overturned and Turner Meinhardt penalized with a fine for his inconsiderate behavior towards his union brother and reinstated in his rights as a member of the N. Y. G. U.

Based upon this decision, the N. Y. Gymnastic Union submits an appeal to the Convention providing the following grounds:

1. We find, that in its decision the Executive Committee completely ignored the first point of the complaint by disregarding the fact that the statement provided by F. Meinhardt in his affidavit was proven untrue, that he provided false information under oath.

2. Regarding the exercise of civil duties and civil rights of a Turner – we would accept the position of the Executive Committee if it did not ignore the fact that M. used the private union matters (not even partially) in his affidavit enclosing the union’s jurisdiction.
3. In addition, we question the Executive Committee’s right to use a member’s former merits as mitigation grounds as this is the prerogative of the union alone and, in fact, was applied in this case, otherwise the verdict would have been much more severe.
4. We see the Executive Committee’s overstepping its authority especially in the fact that it not only rejects our verdict but actually replaces it with another one. Not only is there no law to justify that, to our knowledge; in addition, we refer to the Executive Committee’s own recommendations (See yearly report, pp. 14 and 15, from July 1, 1875).

Such is the issue as submitted to the Committee for its attention and report to the Convention.

Your Committee takes the liberty to present the following to the Convention:

Re point 1 of the appeal: your Committee finds that in the minutes of the meeting of directors, the union session of the New York Gymnastic Union, as well as the New York Turner district submitted to the Committee, it is not at all proven that Meinhardt made his statements in court with malevolent intent and that he knowingly provided false information under oath.

Re point 2: your Committee finds it valid because only union matters were used as foundation for the affidavit made by Meinhardt.

Re point 3: your Committee finds it justified as well, however your Committee believes that the Executive Committee has the right to provide mitigation grounds in order to support its verdict, which is completely different from that of the N. Y. gymnastic union.

Re point 4: your Committee does not see that the Executive Committee oversteps its authority by replacing the verdict issued by the union with another one. Your Committee does not find a law, which gives the Executive Committee the right to do that, however it also does not find a law, which forbids the Executive Committee

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to assign a different penalty. The Executive Committee's recommendations the N. Y. Gymnastic Union refers to, address the procedures in cases of complaints or the penalties for proven offences or crimes in general, but, in our opinion, do not stipulate anything regarding the issue in question.

Regarding the verdict of the Executive Committee – your Committee allows itself to prove that it does not hold the opinion of the Executive Committee for logical and, for that reason, it cannot support its decree.

Based on the reasons above and those following, your Committee takes the liberty to present to the Convention the following recommendation:

Considering the fact that the verdict of the New York Gymnastic Union against Meinhardt was based on the malicious intent of the same Meinhardt at his court statement and considering the fact that your Committee cannot find any proof to support such intent in Meinhardt; because, when the N. Y. Gymnastic Union dismissed the offence against the plaintiff on October 23, 1875 no proof was presented that Meinhardt submitted his affidavit (dated August 2, 1875) with malicious intent and knowingly provided false statements;

Considering the fact that the appeal of the N. Y. Gymnastic Union does not appear supported enough;

Considering also the fact that your Committee has proof which was presented after issuing the verdict and neither the directors nor the N. Y. Gymnastic Union knew of it when they issued their verdict and which proof aims to show that the N. Y. Gymnastic Union's premise it bases its verdict upon is wrong:

Your Committee recommends the entire issue be sent back to the N. Y. Gymnastic Union for the necessary investigation and precise collection of proof.



## II.

In the appeal case of H. Thiese vs. Rochester Gymnastic Union, the Committee is of the opinion, that although some specific competency questions are to be explained deeper, the decision of the Rochester Gymnastic Union and/or National Executive Committee must be maintained.

## III.

In the appeal case of F. F. Hackius vs. Toledo Gymnastic Union Vorwärts (Forward), your Committee recommends the following:

The Committee concurs with the Executive Committee's decision regarding the matter of Hackius vs. Toledo Gymnastic Union and confirms - Turner Hackius from the Toledo Gymnastic Union Vorwärts (Forward) is to be penalized with a fine for his decidedly un-Turner-like behavior confronting perceived problems in secret.

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Because we do not approve of the way the Toledo Gymnastic Union handled this grievance in the slightest, because F. F. Hackius lost his rights and privileges of a member of this union with his suspension from it, the Toledo Gymnastic Union will reinstate his member's rights after he has paid the dues for one year.

Lastly, your Committee takes the liberty to draw the Convention's attention to the Executive Committees recommendations (Executive Committee report, pp. 14 and 15, from July 1, 1875) because it believes that, so far, nothing has been done towards creating uniform procedures for handling any grievances cases in all national unions. It recommends the future Executive Committees be required to do just that.

Committee for Complaints and Appeals

Emil Höchstler

Theod. Blunck

Chas. Köhne

Wm. Pfänder

C. Riebsame

C. Eberhard

I. C. Fleischer

Theo. Racef

H. Cirkler

The representatives of the affected districts expressed their agreement with the statement and the Convention accepted the Committee's recommendations.

An additional contribution submitted by the Committee for Intellectual Efforts is to be published as Article 3 of the already submitted report. It was approved as stated below:

To instruct the Executive Committee to contact diligent speakers willing to travel and work out the conditions under which they would agree to hold lectures in the unions. Furthermore, the Executive Committee should inform the unions of their negotiations and if a sufficient number of unions wish to hear lectures, it should make definitive arrangements with the speakers.

An additional report from the Committee for General Union Affairs was accepted as follows:

The Committee for General Union Affairs recommends the approval of the following decision:

Decided that Turners who attend the Union gymnastic fests must present proof that they belong to a national union to the host union or unions.

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The request submitted to us that all Conventions of the National Union ought to be held in centrally located cities does not carry much merit, in our opinion, to be made a decision since every Convention location is determined by a Convention which will always be able to find the right place.

A. Kriegar

Max Stern

Caspar Sauer

Chas. C. Gillig

E. G. Pahl

Philipp Andres

The Committee

The Special Committee reported about Lang's Turntafel as follows:

The Committee for determination of the remuneration to be given to Aug. Lang for his creation of the Gymnastic Tables in accordance with the decision of the 1874 Convention allows itself to report that given the excellent quality of his work and to encourage further endeavors in this area the amount of \$500 should be paid out to Turner August Lang from the Union treasury. This is the Committee's recommendation to the Convention.

Your Committee is informed that, in accordance with the decision of the previous Convention, the author was paid an advance of \$500 by the Executive Committee which he now owes to the Union treasury. The Committee is of the opinion the advance money be determined the compensation amount.

C. Riebsame

H. Fink

A. Fürstenberg

The Committee

The proposed recommendations were accepted.

A request from the New York Gymnastic Union to be reimbursed \$40 for advertisement costs incurred at the last gymnastic fest was approved.

A request that all ads pertaining to a Union gymnastic fest be submitted through the Executive Committee to the Union journal was approved.

In addition, it was decided to authorize the National Executive Committee to send one delegate to the Convention of the Freie Gemeinden (Free thinking congregations).

Decided to recommend to the National Executive Committee to re-elect the former directors of the Gymnastic Teachers Seminary.

Next, the following notes of gratitude were composed:

1. To the Turners and citizens of New Ulm.
2. To the members of the current Executive Committee.

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3. To the editors and publishers of the Union journal.
4. To the officers of the Convention.

Adjournment until half past 8 o'clock in the evening.

### **Evening Session.**

Quorum present. Today's session minutes were read and accepted with some changes.

Decided to express the Convention's gratitude to the editor of the "N. U. Post" for his efforts in publishing our discussions.

At this point, adjournment with no future date assigned.

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### **About the origin and fortunes of New Ulm.**

A lecture held by Turner Wm. Pfänder at the Seventh Convention of the North American Gymnastic Union in New Ulm, Minn.

Many of our union members would have wondered after the adjournment of the Convention held in Rochester, N. Y. two years ago that a tiny place in the farthest Northwest received the honor to host the Convention taking place in the Republic's anniversary year. Thus, it is appropriate to offer a concise history of this town, which is the practical result of an enterprise conceived at the Convention of the Socialist Gymnastic Union in Buffalo, N. Y. in 1855.

The project of a Turner settlement was approved in a session and it began to be realized with the support of the Cincinnati union. The work advanced rapidly and the project was carried out in the summer of 1856.

The strong participation and the explicitly stated intent that the participants become indeed settlers paved the way for an active development of the project. Only the financial crisis, which erupted in 1857, dealt it a blow, caused the actual settlers hardship and threatened the result. Even if no real famine occurred, the settlers had to endure some limitations and deprivations one cannot fully comprehend unless one was in the midst of it. It was fortunate that the cheerful Turner spirit kept the comrades together and could find a positive aspect in all the hardship.

The beautiful location of the place, the goodness of the soil, the healthy climate of the Garden of Minnesota, as the Minnesota River valley is rightfully called, offered enough attraction so that, even without a powerful flow of members of the settlers' union, a thriving settlement sprang up soon. After only a few years, a friendly small town was established where one can feel at home. The gymnastic union

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organized during the first months of the settlement's existence in 1856 had just about a dozen members at first. Soon, it made good progress, a pretty gymnasium was built and established itself as the center of the developing social life. Song, music and drama performances offered suitable relaxation for the hard working and diligent people. The "Pioneer", founded in the first year of the settlement as well, provided contact to the rest of the world and when the Civil War erupted, New Ulm built a very strong contingent considering the size of its population. Only one Turner died on the field from illness, although our volunteers looked death in the eye on numerous occasions.

During the steady development of the settlement, we often heard threats from the nearby living Sioux Indians intending to chase away the white settlers. However, no one took those seriously because the area was densely populated and Fort Ridgely, situated 18 miles up the Minnesota River, was occupied by military troops. Both factors were considered such strong protection that even the state government, familiar with the Indian character, did not see any real danger.

However, in the early summer of 1862, the peace was broken several times which showed that the mood of the Indians was very unsettled. On August 18, without the smallest advance warning, a drama erupted unlike any other in the history of the Indian battles. In the early morning hours of that day, the German settlers at the border of the reservation were attacked and massacred at the same time. It is possible that only the arrival of a recruitment troop from New Ulm saved all settlers west of New Ulm from a certain death. This troop raced with music and flying flags in their carriages into the area, however the Indians discovered them when they were 7 miles to the west of the small town. The Indians then went into ambush and received the approaching

carriages with a volley killing many citizens of New Ulm immediately and seriously injuring others. The survivors escaped and warned about the attack on their way. The settlement's entire population retreated into the city where all necessary defense actions were taken immediately.

On the next morning, a formal attack of a large number of red skins took place. However, after a long battle, they were pushed back. The battle resumed on Saturday, following several attempts of the Indians to overtake Fort Ridgely.

It would be beyond the scope of this narration if I tried to go into details of the entire battle. I will stay brief and only say that,

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after several hundred and eighty buildings went up in flames and a huge number of citizens fell or were wounded, the Indians retreated after a final attack on Sunday, August 24.

With only about 30 buildings as the only remains from the prosperous settlement, it was a hard task to begin the struggle for livelihood anew. The delegates who are now at this historical place of past events can see for themselves whether and how the old settlers, with the help of the ones arrived since, managed to do it. Even though not everything happened in accordance with the ideas of the founders of the settlement union of the Social Gymnastic Union, we have the satisfaction to know that New Ulm is a thriving, friendly place where everyone can feel at home, a town especially proud of its schools, which no other city in this state can outdo.

Much has been said about the settlement as years have passed, some of it are lies dictated from bigotry and written by feathers in meek hands to show how a just court has punished the sinful town. Let it be enough to point out to the Convention that if intolerance and hate towards those who think differently prevailed in the Turners' minds, today churches and church institutions would not be next to gymnasiums, overlooking the friendly Minnesota valley.

After my short presentation, I hope that the Turners of the United States will look at hosting this year's Convention on a tiny piece of earth, a loyal outpost of the gymnastic culture under most

difficult conditions for the past twenty years, with a warm feeling of togetherness. It is how the Turners of New Ulm feel towards all their brothers Turners.

The previous print of the minutes by the editorial board of the "Future" and the need to send these to Secretary Fellmann in Baltimore for his correction delayed the publication. To avoid yet further delay, the Executive Committee decided to send out the minutes without the collected decisions of the earlier Conventions and have the latter published separately as soon as possible.



