

THE
TRIANGLE:
THREE GERMAN LAKE ERIE BALLADS.
IS EMIL RITTERSHAUS THE CATALYST BEHIND
ADA LINDEN'S AND THEODOR FONTANE'S "JOHN MAYNARD" BALLADS?

BY

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The poet Emil Rittershaus (April 3, 1834 – March 8, 1897) was thrust onto the stage of “John Maynard” research back in 1967. In a short, inconspicuous article by the editorial staff of the *Fontane Blätter*¹ (Potsdam, Germany), it was pointed out that, in 1871, in the extremely popular illustrated magazine entitled the *Gartenlaube* (=The Arbor), Rittershaus was the first German poet to compose a Lake Erie ballad: “A German Heart”² (“Ein deutsches Herz”). In his *Biographical Notes* written in 1885, one year before publication of Fontane’s “John Maynard,” Rittershaus proudly placed his own Lake Erie ballad at the top of his poetic creations.³

It was also established that Theodor Fontane himself had published an essay entitled “The Emperor’s Prison” in the *Gartenlaube* in the same year as “A German Heart.” Thus began the fascinating question of Ritterhaus’s possible role in the genesis of Theodor Fontane’s ballad “John Maynard.” In the same 1967 article, it was convincingly demonstrated that Fontane’s choice of the name of his steamer, the *Swallow*, was due to Rittershaus’s Lake Erie ballad. The steamboat in Rittershaus’s ballad just so happened to be called the *Swallow*! And to clinch the issue, a book dedicated to Fontane by Rittershaus in 1890 (four years after the publication of Fontane’s own Lake Erie ballad) established that the two men had been close friends and had remained in contact throughout the years.

The question of Rittershaus’s role in the genesis of Fontane’s “John Maynard” has in the interim remained a dormant issue. Did Fontane only borrow the name of his steamer? Or was more than a mere name involved? Was it perhaps Rittershaus who gave Fontane the very idea *and* the material for his famous ballad “John Maynard?”

Now yet another “John Maynard” ballad no-one had ever heard of was reaching discussion forums in the Internet. Anne Huberman, the creator of the John Maynard Home Page, spotted it and asked me to see what I could find out. The poet, a modest and rather impoverished elementary country school teacher in Westphalia, whose name – like that of Rittershaus – has sadly faded from memory,⁴ was Luise Förster (October 1, 1847 – November 23, 1911), whose *nom de plume* was Ada Linden. From 1876 until her death, Luise Förster lived with her younger sister in a rural setting in the quiet village of Wickrathberg (now incorporated into Mönchengladbach). Up till their mother’s death in 1893, both sisters were encumbered with caring for their invalid mother.⁵ Luise Förster, more commonly known by her pseudonym Ada Linden, was not only a poet but also the author of short stories and “tales,” which may be more properly regarded as novels. She was known and esteemed throughout the German Empire. Her works, many of which were for children, were also published in Switzerland and even (in German) in New York. Emil Rittershaus’s hometown of Barmen (now part of Wuppertal) is only 42 miles east

of Wickrathberg. But it is not simply the proximity of two “Lake Erie” poets and their common bonds to Westphalia that are striking. Emil Rittershaus was in contact with Luise Förster and actively encouraged her in her poetic endeavors.⁶ And thus the plot thickens: Intriguingly, Luise Förster’s ballad of John Maynard also has the *Swallow* as the name of her steamer!

Thus far, bibliographical information fixing the exact year Luise Förster composed her ballad has not been found. Also, the time span in which she and Rittershaus were in contact has not been determined on the basis of correspondence. Although her ballad can already be found in Karl Wilhelm Bindewald’s anthology of German women poets, whose date of publication is generally placed in 1890⁷, her ballad is obviously much older. It is highly unlikely that she would have tackled the legend of John Maynard *after* Theodor Fontane’s ballad had been published.

A question of marked significance is whether Fontane was even aware of the existence of Ada Linden (otherwise known as Luise Förster). One way of approaching the question is “through the backdoor” by a consideration of how well Fontane knew Bindewald. In 1873⁸, Karl Wilhelm Bindewald’s amazing *Poetic World History, A Collection of German Poems on General History* [*Poetische Weltgeschichte. Eine Sammlung deutscher Gedichte zur allgemeinen Geschichte*] was published in Frankfurt am Main. This unique three-volume work of poetry (published in one volume in the 2nd edition) traces events in world history from antiquity to the 19th century as related by the bards of the German nation. Theodor Fontane contributed *three* of his poems (which had been published at a much earlier date) to this work: “The Battle by Hemmingstedt” in 1500, “The Bartholomew Night” on August 24th, 1672, and “The Assassination of Wallenstein’s Generals” in 1634.⁹

As Fontane had played an active role in creating Bindewald’s *History*, it may be assumed that he would also have taken a keen interest in Bindewald’s later anthology of women poets, even without Rittershaus’s intercession or urging. Ada Linden’s “John Maynard” is part of that anthology, published three to four years after Fontane’s “John Maynard” was published in Munich and Vienna. Whether Rittershaus provided Fontane with information about Ada Linden, and at a much earlier date, remains a matter of conjecture.

In Ada Linden’s collected poems entitled *The Sound of Silence (Aus der Stille)* and put out in 1896, the ballad “John Maynard” is preceded by a poem entitled “Garfield.” This is not Garfield, the cat, but President James Garfield, whose humble origins (he was born in a log cabin) lent credence to the validity of the American Dream. The poem is about his inauguration ceremony and the gratitude he owed to his old mother, who was looking on proudly among the spectators. It was Garfield who, only a few months later, was assassinated by a religious fanatic. (The fact that the assassination is not even touched upon in the poem strengthens the assumption that the poem was indeed written before the assassination, and not years afterwards.) The year of Garfield’s inauguration (and assassination) was 1881. Following “John Maynard,” is “The Final Good-bye” (“Letzter Gruß”), whose setting is the German-Danish War over Schleswig-Holstein in 1865.¹⁰ In other words, the material in the small volume (109 pages) is a collection of poems, many with a definite historical reference, written over a lengthy period of time.

Checking with the Municipal Archives of Mönchengladbach, this writer was informed by the director that, apart from a brief sketch of her life as found in a “School Chronical” (*Schulchronik*), the city archives had absolutely nothing on Luise Förster. In the meantime,

the search continues, although admittedly women writers in the 19th century have been sadly neglected as an object of academic research in Germany.

The ballad “John Maynard,” published under the pseudonym Ada Linden, is relatively short: six stanzas of five lines, the last two words in the last line of each stanza resound with the name “John Maynard,” the concluding fifth line thus representing a climax to the momentum of its respective stanza, thus effectively adding suspense while intensifying Maynard’s role.

Lake Erie is mentioned, but the names of town or cities are bracketed out. Even the direction of the ship requires a bit of figuring: a westerly came up and was driving the flames to the back of the ship. In other words, the ship was traveling west. That the ship was heading west stands in sharp distinction to Gough’s version and, consequently, that of Horatio Alger, Jr. (1832-1899) and Theodor Fontane (1819-1898), who based their Lake Erie ballads on the prose version of John Bartholomew Gough (1817-1886).¹¹ Whether the western destination was a mere “poetic effusion,” or whether this should be taken to imply that the anonymous 1845 prose version of “The Helmsman of Lake Erie” was Ada Linden’s source, wherein the steamer was also heading west, is admittedly an open question but rather unlikely.

The time required to reach “port” (fourth stanza) is set in the Bindewald version of Ada Linden’s ballad at one and one half hours (a frightening length of time), in the later Schrottenthal version (*Aus der Stille*) at one hour (also rather long).¹² It will be recalled that Fontane gave his ship twenty minutes to reach the saving shore when fire broke out (2nd stanza, line 6), whereas Gough set the time at “three-quarters of an hour” (line 21). Alger’s ballad begins with the “bright faces” of the unsuspecting passengers, who “ere an hour had sped” could be confronted with the end of their lives. The 1845 version allows “forty minutes” (line 90).

In the second stanza of Ada Linden’s ballad a failed attempt is made to put out the fire. Fontane’s passengers do not even try to douse the flames, in contrast to all the other known versions of the John Maynard legend. In other words, Fontane’s “John Maynard” was definitely not the source of Ada Linden’s. Whether Gough was Ada Linden’s source is difficult to determine as she avoided many of the telltale details that could serve to decide the issue.

A singular aspect is that Ada Linden’s hero, John Maynard, seems divorced from a religious context. There is no reference to Maynard being “God-fearing” (Gough) or his “love of God” (1845 version) or that he “had died the death of a Christian hero” or a reference to his ascension to heaven (both 1845, the latter also Gough). Even Fontane gives Maynard the “crown” of life, i.e., immortality with ascension implicit. Instead, Ada Linden’s John Maynard saves both passengers and crew while sacrificing his own life, but does so because of his steadfastness, determination and sense of duty, while his skill in maneuvering the ship is stressed in the first, third and fifth stanzas. Although there is no reference to his age, the tone of the ballad suggests an experienced wheelsman, not a greenhorn or young man.

In the final stanza, the passengers seem to call out to Maynard in gratitude that they have escaped an agonizing death. Yet no response is heard. Then, after the curtain of smoke dissipates, the passengers see with their own eyes the horrifying sacrifice of the brave helmsman. But the reader is spared. The dramatic impact is heightened by drawing attention to the ship’s wheel where the dead helmsman still stands as still glowing from the burning

embers. Although John Maynard's corpse was still leaning against the wheel, there is no lurid description of the dead hero.

The fact that "John Maynard" is placed directly after "Garfield" in her collection of poetry suggests the year 1881 as the year of composition. This writer would like to submit the following thesis: Theodor Fontane had composed "The Tay Bridge" in 1880. This ballad is in many ways the mirror image of his Lake Erie ballad "John Maynard." In other words, rather than placing the date of composition of Fontane's John Maynard in 1885, the year 1881 would appear more logical, at least for a rough draft of the ballad. George Salomon, in his essay entitled "Who Is John Maynard"¹³ based his thesis that the summer of 1885 was the year of composition because Fontane's was often together with Theodor Grosser, a crude metal merchant with business contacts in the United States. The role played by Emil Rittershaus was not examined in Salomon's essay. Now Rittershaus is figuring in the genesis of *two* "John Maynard" ballads. Rittershaus, too, had connections with the United States. He had also been active as a reporter for a number of German-American newspapers.¹⁴ In other words, he was in a position to acquire information from the United States and pass it on to his literary colleagues. The year 1880 (or 1881) seems an appropriate and likely year for both Ada Linden and Theodor Fontane receiving John Maynard source material from Rittershaus.

The paucity of biographical material dealing with Rittershaus, who was one of the most popular personalities, both as a poet and a public speaker in the 19th century, is striking. The Allied bombing of his literary bequest in Barmen during WWII has obviously placed a damper on research.¹⁵ Only one dissertation from the year 1921 has been located dealing with Rittershaus's life and poetry.¹⁶ An interesting footnote reads:

Aus dem "Gruss aus London für mein liebes Weib am 1. Sonntag im Jahre 1864." (im Nachlass d. Dichters). [From "Greetings from London to my dear wife on the first Sunday in 1864" (in Rittershaus's literary bequest)].¹⁷

Although Rittershaus never visited the United States, he was in England, and apparently on several occasions. Here, on January 3rd, 1864, the first Sunday in the year, we find a twenty-eight-year-old Rittershaus in London writing a letter to his beloved wife Hedwig and enclosing his poetic effusions. No record is supplied as to how long Rittershaus had already been in London, or even why he was in London, but the tenor of the poem to which the footnote refers is that of despondency – the dire need of a friend who can be uplifting and provide consolation. This would seem to indicate that Rittershaus had not just arrived but had already been in London far too long. It will be recalled that John Bartholomew Gough's "John Maynard" issue of *The British Workman* [No. 107, London: Published monthly, by S. W. Partridge] was put out in London on November 1, 1863, a mere two months prior to the letter Rittershaus sent to his wife. The possibility that the spectacular "John Maynard" issue might have caught Rittershaus's attention when in London provides tantalizing room for speculation.

It should be pointed out that Rittershaus was active throughout his life in promoting and encouraging writers in Germany. Only recently one volume of an eight-volume work published in 1877 by Emil Rittershaus himself, entitled *Groteschen Sammlung zeitgenössischer Schriftsteller* (an anthology of contemporary German writers) was on offer in eBay. Also, as the President of the Free Masons in Germany, he played an important role in supporting freedom of belief and freedom of expression.

The Langewiesche edition of Ada Linden's poetry *Aus der Stille*, which was published in Rheydt in 1896, may also have been achieved through Rittershaus's connections. In an autobiographical note, Rittershaus wrote the following about his life from the age of fourteen in the year 1848:

“In the year of the revolution [1848], Hugo Oelbermann came to Barmen [Rittershaus's hometown] and worked as an apprentice at a bookshop. We became good friends. Both of us took an active interest in choir practice. It was through him that I became acquainted with the bookseller Langewiesche, who was not only generous in allowing me to borrow books from his large lending library, but, as he saw that I exercised extreme care with the gilt-edged volumes, I was even allowed to borrow new books that had just been published. From 1848 to 1854, I devoted four to five evenings a week to devouring books while burning the midnight oil. As a result, at the age of twenty I already looked like someone in his thirties and was only able to avoid illness due to my healthy lifestyle of swimming and outdoor exercise.”¹⁸

The kindly bookseller named Langewiesche in Barmen, who lent young Rittershaus books over the years, was also a poet whose pseudonym was, among others, L. Wiese.¹⁹ He may well have been the father or a relative of the W. Rob. Langewiesche Publishing House in Rheydt! (Rheydt was incorporated into Mönchengladbach in 1975.) In 1870, twenty-five years before publication of *Aus der Stille*, the Langewiesche Publishing House in Rheydt published three wartime songs Rittershaus had composed for the German soldiers fighting in France.²⁰ Rheydt is only a stone's throw (3.5 mi.) from Luise Förster's Wickrathberg. She assumed her teaching post there in the spring of 1876 at the age of 28. The question as to when Rittershaus and Luise Förster first came into contact is admittedly conjecture, yet it is obvious that Rittershaus was encouraging her while she was still at a relatively young and impressionable age. An “apprenticeship” in the art of poetry under “Meister Rittershaus” could well require three to five years, a span of time required before Ada Linden's “John Maynard” (assuming 1881 as the year of composition) was penned. Initial contact would thus take place between the years 1876 and 1878. Mention of Rittershaus in Schrattenthal's preface to *Aus der Stille* (late fall of 1895) and its publication by Langewiesche Verlag in Rheydt (in 1896) would seem to indicate that the two poets remained in contact until Rittershaus's death in March 1897.

The earlier anthology²¹ by Schrattenthal entitled *Unsere Frauen in einer Auswahl aus ihren Dichtungen. Poesie-Album zeitgenössischer Dichterinnen* [Our Women as Seen in a Selection of their Poetry. A Poetry Album of Contemporary Women Poets], undated, but with a preface by Karl Schrattenthal written in 1888, deserves close attention.

On page 281, we find a ballad by Ada Linden entitled “The Mother's Prayer” (“Das Gebet der Mutter”). It should be mentioned that Schrattenthal was selecting a *characteristic* poem from each woman whose poetry was enshrined in the pages of his anthology. As Schrattenthal himself put it: “My goal was to arrive at a characteristic sampling of the way each of the women poets went about creating their verse” (“Preface,” p. v).

“The Mother's Prayer,” modified on pages 15-18 in her later collection of poetry, *Aus der Stille*,²² is likely to remind the reader of Theodor Fontane's 1880 ballad, “Die Brück' am Tay” (“The Tay Bridge”). Not only are the Age of Railroads and the Steam Engine vividly portrayed, but the main character, the unnamed young engineer sitting high up in his cab, is tempted by demonic spirits (perhaps an illusion created only by the coiling movements of steam) to accelerate and derail the train. The “ghostlike lips” represent the scorpions in his

own mind because his unfaithful betrothed is a passenger on the train and in the arms of another. In Fontane's ballad, Johnny the engineer, is willing to fire up the engines in the belief that the Steam Engine is more powerful than a raging storm or the forces of Nature. The half-truths the Shakespearian witches whispered into Johnny's ear and which he naively accepted without question, lead to his death and the deaths of all his passengers. In Ada Linden's ballad, the engineer's "dear mother" ("Mütterlein," a term of endearment, not an actual diminutive) is able to save the soul and life of her endangered son (not to mention the lives of his passengers) through a prayer that wards off the self-destructive revenge demanded by deranged, demonic thoughts ensuing from the pain of unrequited love and the broken oath of fidelity. In the first version of Ada Linden's ballad, there is even a "signalman's cabin" (stanza 9, "Wärterhäuslein"), in which the pious old lady prays for her son. Johnny's father and mother in Fontane's ballad are in a "signalman's cabin" of sorts, which is termed the "tollhouse" ("Brückenhaus"). Ada Linden's first version even mentions a "stormy night" (also stanza 9, "Sturmnacht"), which is deleted in the second version as the "storm" is in the engineer's mind and not, as in "The Tay Bridge," the unleashed forces of Nature.

The expression, a "Good Man," is to be found only in the second version of *The Sound of Silence*, and significantly in the very last line of "The Mother's Prayer" ("ein Braver"). Here the reader catches strains reminiscent of "The Song of the Good Man" ("Lied vom *braven Manne*"), composed in 1776 by Gottfried August Bürger (1748-1794). Bürger's ballad was interwoven into both of Fontane's ballads dealing with the Age of the Steam Engine.²³ A number of elements in "The Song of the Good Man" contribute to the setting of Fontane's "The Tay Bridge." The "Song of the Good Man" also resounds in the "Song of Gratitude and Praise" in both the prologue and epilogue of Fontane's "John Maynard." The two ballads may be regarded as tragedies in the Age of the Steam Engine, yet viewed from two completely different perspectives. Johnny, the anti-hero, wreaks havoc in "The Tay Bridge" whereas John Maynard, in an act of supreme heroism and self-sacrifice, saves the passengers and crew on board the burning *Swallow*.

Ada Linden's "The Mother's Prayer" offers a much more positive view of man's potential to be saved than Fontane's "The Tay Bridge." In her ballad, in contrast to Fontane's, man can overcome false pride and remain responsible for his actions and for those he has been entrusted to protect. In "The Tay Bridge," Fontane seems to see futility in all man's creations: "*Sand, sand, / All that is built by the hand of man*" ("Tand, Tand / Ist das Gebilde von Menschenhand."). Ada Linden, rejecting Fontane's pessimism, sees in a mother's love the power to move mountains and fight off demons. The question whether there was any "interaction" between the two ballads, in the sense that Ada Linden's affirmation of the power of prayer over demons could possibly be a response to the excessive power Fontane's bequeaths to his Shakespearian witches, cannot, at present, be answered. It is, however, quite amazing that Ada Linden's railroad ballad should bear so many similarities to Fontane's while allowing her marked Protestant religiosity the prerogative of saving the floundering son. As both ballads are deeply psychological and concerned with the workings of Temptation as set in motion by "demons" and "witches" (metaphors of the "scorpions" in the protagonists' minds), they may be seen as "kindred spirits," even if the conclusions the two ballads arrive at are diametrically opposed.

The genesis of Schrattenthal's anthology is surprisingly long. Already in the Preface of Heinrich Groß's anthology (written in May 1884), Groß refers to his disappointment in not finding a copy of Professor Karl Weiß-Schrattenthal's own anthology, whose publication had been announced, and refers to Schrattenthal as "a man with great achievements to his credit." Schrattenthal, reciprocating, thanks Groß in his Preface and points out that the manuscript of

his anthology was already complete by 1882. Schrattenthal also points out that he had been working on the anthology “for years” prior to that date. Due to a mishap at the printer’s, publication was delayed for six years! The only chance of Ada Linden somehow being added “at the last minute” before publication in 1888 is Schrattenthal’s statement that the present album of poetry had been “enlarged.”

Professor Karl Schrattenthal was something of a 19th-century talent scout for promising women poets. His discovery of the untutored yet poetically gifted peasant woman Johanna Ambrosius, at roughly the same time as his preface to Ada Linden’s collected poems was written, created a sensation.²⁴

The opening lines of Schrattenthal’s preface to Ada Linden’s book of poetry pinpoint two temporal coordinates, which cast light on the time frame in which her poetry originated:

“When I set to work collecting material for my anthology entitled *A Selection of the Poetry of Our Nation’s Women*, I discovered a number of women poets, among whom was Ada Linden. Her narrative poems impressed me quite positively. I now know that my appraisal is also shared by more important authorities than myself, for none other than Emanuel Geibel expressed words of appreciation regarding Ada Linden’s poetry, and Emil Rittershaus encouraged the literary endeavors of the poet living in her remote village.” - Prof. Karl Weiß-Schrattenthal, late autumn of 1895.

The fact that Schrattenthal mentions both Rittershaus *and* Rittershaus’s close friend, Emanuel Geibel, in his Preface to Ada Linden’s book of poetry adds further weight to this writer’s suspicion that Ada Linden’s 1896 collection of poetry spanned decades and constituted her lifework as a poet. For to receive such “words of appreciation” from Geibel, we must assume that the poet was still alive. Yet Emanuel Geibel passed away on April 6th, 1884, two whole years before Theodor Fontane’s “John Maynard” was published and four years before Schrattenthal’s anthology of women poets finally went to press.²⁵

Schrattenthal’s reference to the time frame when he first became acquainted with Ada Linden’s poetry is of even greater significance: Ada Linden was not an “afterthought,” who was included at the last minute. Instead, Schrattenthal points out in the opening lines of his preface to *Aus der Stille* that he had already become acquainted with Ada Linden “*when I [Schrattenthal] set to work collecting material for my anthology*” – and this can only refer to work in preparing his initial manuscript that was already finished in 1882. These lines confirm unmistakably that Schrattenthal was *already* selecting from Ada Linden’s poetry *before* 1882 while engaged in preparing his manuscript, and that, *before* 1882, her poetic accomplishments were sufficient to attract and impress Austria’s leading anthologist of German-speaking women poets of the time.²⁶

Updates of this article (June 2008) may be expected if further information on the Linden-Rittershaus-Fontane triangle should be forthcoming.

Annotations:

- 1) [Editorial Staff], “Weiteres zu ‘John Maynard’: Der Schiffsname ‘Schwalbe’”, *Fontane Blätter*, (Potsdam, Germany: Fontane Archives, 1967, No. 4, pp. 153-154. For the English translation of the article, cf. http://homepage.mac.com/joel_huberman/JohnMaynard/SwallowEnglish.pdf For the original article in German, cf.

http://homepage.mac.com/joel_huberman/JohnMaynard/SwallowGerman.pdf

- 2) Emil Rittershaus, “Ein deutsches Herz,” *Die Gartenlaube, Illustriertes Familienblatt* (Leipzig: Verlag von Ernst Keil, 1871, no. 38, pp. 635-636. In no. 42 of the same year, pp. 705-707, there is a fascinating article entitled “Unter den Wellen des Niagarafalles” (“Beneath the Waves of Niagara Falls”) by C. Löwenherz. Buffalo is described as a “bright, friendly city on Lake Erie.” In the next issue, no. 43 (1871), pp. 718-721, Fontane himself contributed an article: “Ein Kaiser-Gefängnis” (“An Emperor’s Prison”).

The first printing of Rittershaus’s ballad was not in the *Gartenlaube*, but in the first edition (5000 copies available through subscription) of Rittershaus’s book of poetry entitled *New Poems* (Leipzig: Ernst Keil Verlag, 1871, pp. 17-31), which, due to its overwhelming popularity, was sold out within two months. In order to assuage a disappointed public, Rittershaus’s Lake Erie ballad was offered to readers as a consolation prize until a second edition of his *New Poems* could be printed! Cf. *Die Gartenlaube, ibid.*, (No. 38, 1871) p. 635, annotation at the bottom of the page and (No. 15, 1871) p. 259, 2nd column, annotation:

http://homepage.mac.com/joel_huberman/JohnMaynard/FNER.pdf

Rittershaus’s Lake Erie ballad in English:

http://homepage.mac.com/joel_huberman/JohnMaynard/HerzEnglish.pdf

For his Lake Erie ballad in German, cf.

http://homepage.mac.com/joel_huberman/JohnMaynard/HerzGerman.pdf

- 3) As late as August 19, 1885 (only one year before the publication of Fontane’s Lake Erie ballad), Rittershaus singled out “Ein deutsches Herz” (“A German Heart”) and “Der Henker” (“The Hangman”) as his best poetic works:

Emil Rittershaus, *Biographische Notizen, [Biographical Notes]* (Wuppertal, Germany: Hans Putty Verlag, 1947), p. 32.

The 1947 autobiographical text consists of a mere 25 pages, yet these pages comprise valuable insights into Rittershaus’s life. Although Wolfgang Springmann’s introduction to this autobiographical pamphlet would make it appear as if the *Biographical Notes* had only just been published in 1947, the impression is quite misleading. The pages published by the Hans Putty Verlag in 1947 had already been published posthumously in Leipzig in 1899! The *Biographical Notes* were not published until that year, as Rittershaus was concerned that its contents might unintentionally be regarded as offensive to his family or relatives. The title:

Emil Rittershaus. Nach seinen selbstbiographischen Aufzeichnungen und nach Erinnerungen von Julius Rittershaus. (Leipzig, 1899).

The 1947 reprint had removed roughly half the text! The 1899 first printing contained at least 57 pages (Cf. Alfred Stemmann, *Emil Rittershaus Dissertation*, cited below, p. 50, footnote 1). The publishing house in Leipzig may have been that of the *Gartenlaube*, with which Rittershaus was closely associated, but this remains conjecture. References to the 1899 publication (without mention of the publisher) with verbatim quotes matching the 1947 Putty edition (except for pagination) are to be

found in the following dissertation (Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität zu Münster in Westfalen):

Alfred Stemmann, *Emil Rittershaus, sein Leben und sein Dichten*. 1921 (215 pages) -unpublished but available in typewritten form from the German National Library in Leipzig.

The greatest weakness of Stemmann's dissertation is that Rittershaus's correspondence is basically bracketed out (the only exceptions being two letters, one to his wife in January 1864, and one from Ernst Keil of the *Gartenlaube* in 1870, which are not quoted but documented). The upshot is that the autobiographical monograph (referred to as "by Julius Rittershaus") is given disproportionate weight (21 footnotes). On p. 18 Stemmann reveals his method of research in footnote 1: Apart from the monograph, which Stemmann admits is far from complete, he will consider Rittershaus's lyrics as a source of biographical testimony. As a result, Ada Linden (Luise Förster) is not even mentioned in passing. Stemmann [cf. *Emil Rittershaus Dissertation*, p. 207] does mention Rittershaus's favorite German poet, Annette von Droste-Hülshoff [1797-1848]. The poet was born in Münster, Westphalia! Her ballad "Die Vergeltung" [published in 1844] is described by Stemmann as exerting an influence on Rittershaus's Lake Erie ballad, "A German Heart." Stemmann, however, fails to provide a critical analysis of the relationship between Rittershaus and Annette von Droste-Hülshoff or a consideration of *how* "Die Vergeltung" influenced "Ein deutsches Herz."

- 4) Joachim Bark, *Der Wuppertaler Dichterkreis, Untersuchungen zum Poetica Minor im 19. Jahrhundert*, (Abhandlungen zur Kunst-, Musik- und Literaturwissenschaft, vol. 86). (Bonn: H. Bouvier u. Co., 1969), Preface, p. IX: "In 19th century Germany we can, without any hesitation, speak of 20,000 poets, whose works were presented to a wider circle of readers through publishing companies, almanacs and anthologies. Roughly 15 % have been included in studies of the history of literature and have been evaluated for their merits. Nowadays literary criticism is occupied with – at the very most – 100 of these authors." Although the number of forgotten poets will obviously impress the reader, one should take into consideration that women of letters are given short shrift. A closer look at Bark's bibliography and the anthologies listed reveals that the most important anthologies of German women poets of the second half of the 19th century are not even listed. Also, one misses such milestones as Sophie Pataky's *Lexikon deutscher Frauen der Feder: Eine Zusammenstellung der seit dem Jahre 1840 erschienenen Werke weiblicher Autoren nebst Biographien der lebenden und einem Verzeichnis der Pseudonyme* (Berlin S.: Verlagsbuchhandlung von Carl Pataky), 1898. Thus it would appear that the statistics provided by Bark apply basically to poets of the male gender.
- 5) Although an invalid, the mother was able to play an extremely positive and supportive role in the lives of her daughters. Ada Linden's poems, for example, "Garfield" and "The Mother's Prayer" are suggestive of the strength of character, the absolute goodness and protective spirit the daughters saw in their mother.
- 6) For two references to the "Emil Rittershaus-Ada Linden" connection, cf. a) Ada Linden, *Aus der Stille*, Karl Schrattenthal, editor, (Rheydt, W. Rob. Langewiesche, 1896), p. v [from Professor Schrattenthal's Preface, written in late autumn of 1895] : http://homepage.mac.com/joel_huberman/JohnMaynard/ADSPrefEng.pdf

Also b) from a newspaper obituary on Luise Förster (reprinted without reference to the newspaper in question by the *Schulchronik*, StadtAMG 33/30/1 (Municipal Archives of Mönchengladbach): “She was a protégé of the poet Emil Rittershaus, who, impressed by her great poetic gifts, encouraged her to make her poetry available to a wider public rather than confining it to the modesty of her tranquil surroundings.”

http://homepage.mac.com/joel_huberman/JohnMaynard/MonchengladbackEng.pdf

- 7) Karl Wilhelm Bindewald (editor), *Deutschlands Dichterinnen. Blüten deutscher Frauenpoesie*. Part I, (Osterwieck/Harz: Druck und Verlag von A. W. Zickfeldt, date of publication not provided, p. 70. Antiquarian bookshops generally list “ca. 1890” as the date of publication. P. 4 of the preface cites the 1888 Schrattenthal anthology as “recently published” (cf. **Annotation 21**). Consequently, publication can be safely placed at 1889 at the earliest and 1890 at the latest.

From the different colors of the covers (red and brown), it is clear that at least two editions of this scarce two-volume work exist. Unfortunately, Part II [=vol. 2], which contains biographical information on the individual women poets included in its pages (and Ada Linden’s “John Maynard” is included), is not available in German libraries (quite possibly a consequence of the 1933 book-burning mania, which placed anthologies of lyrics and prose at the top of the list of books to be burned).

The three-volume Heinrich Groß anthology of 1885 contains no reference to Ada Linden, although a number of women poets who were younger than Ada Linden are included: Heinrich Groß, *Deutsche Dichterinnen in Wort und Bild*, vols. 1-3 (Berlin: Verlag von Fr. Thiel, 1885). In his preface (p. 4), Bindewald mentions a number of anthologies including Groß’s that were published before his own. Bindewald’s criticism of Groß is that his anthology is too arbitrary and thus “in the strict sense of the word cannot really qualify as an anthology” as it fails to consider the best and the most characteristic German poets. Whether Bindewald’s scathing criticism of Groß was a personal vendetta or justifiable in some sense is a matter for each reader to decide.

- 8) Karl Wilhelm Bindewald (editor), *Poetische Weltgeschichte. Eine Sammlung deutscher Gedichte zur allgemeinen Geschichte*. 2nd Edition. (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag von Wilhelm Erras, 1875), 3 volumes in one volume. As references in the 2nd Edition extend to 1872 (and this writer used the 2nd Edition), the first edition was in all likelihood published in 1873.
- 9) The following three poems were contributed by Fontane: K. W. Bindewald, *Poetische Weltgeschichte, ibid.*
- 1) vol. 2, pp. 150 – 151, “Die Schlacht bei Hemmingstedt.” (1500). Cf. **HFA**: The Carl Hanser edition of *Theodor Fontane’s Complete Works* [Theodor Fontane: *Sämtliche Werke*], edited and annotated by Walter Keitel (Munich: 1964), vol. 6, *Ballads, Songs, Sayings*, pp. 195-200): listed as “Der Tag von Hemmingstedt” and composed in 1851. Ada Linden also has a ballad entitled “Das Mädchen von Hemmingstedt” (cf. *Aus Der Stille*, **Annotation 6**, pp. 48-52). Fontane’s and Linden’s treatment and content, however, have very little in common.
 - 2) vol 3, p.41, “Die Bartholomäusnacht.” (d. 24. Aug. 1572). Cf. **HFA**, *ibid.*, vol. 6, *Attempts and Fragments*, p. 822: listed as “Katharina von Medici” and with an

uncertain date of composition in the 1850s. As this poem deals with the persecution of French Huguenots and indirectly with the roots of his family in France, the event was obviously of central importance.

- 3) vol. 3, p. 57, “Die Ermordung der wallenstein’schen [sic] Generale [sic].” (1634). Cf. **HFA**, *ibid.*, Ballads, Songs and Sayings, pp. 202-204: listed as “Schloss Eger” and composed in 1849. Fontane stated that this poem was the only one he had been able to produce within only a matter of minutes. (Cf. *Annotation* to p. 202 – **HFA**, *ibid.*, *Annotations* [“Anhang”], vol. 6, p. 923, cited from “Von zwangig bis dreißig”, VII, Ch. 3.).
- 10) Fontane, too, both as a poet and a journalist, took a keen interest in the German-Danish War. The following poems by Fontane deal with the event: “Der »Hundertkanonentag« (May 4, 1864), “Der Tag von Düppel” (April 18, 1864), “Einzug” (December 7, 1864) und “Am Jahrestag von Düppel” (April 18, 1865). Apart from a poetic treatment of the event, there are also numerous references to the war in his other poems and in his prose works. There is also an essay entitled “Der Schleswig-Holsteinische Krieg im Jahre 1864” (cited in **HFA**, *ibid.*, *Annotations*, vol. 6, p. 933).

The following quotation is from the chronology (“Zeittafel”) in Theodor Fontane, *Autobiographische Schriften* [*Autobiographical Writings*], III/2 (Berlin and Weimar, East Germany: Aufbau Verlag, 1982), pp. 291-292: “Fontane inspected the Danish theater of operations from May 17 to May 29 [1864] and again from September 9 to September 30 [1864], toured Copenhagen and visited [Theodor] Storm in Husum on his trip back. Beginning in September, reports on his trip to Denmark were published in the *Neue Preußische (Kreuz-) Zeitung*. In December Fontane was awarded the Alsen and Düppel Military Medallion.”

- 11) For a collation of the anonymous prose version of “The Helmsman of Lake Erie,” originally published in 1845, cf.:
http://homepage.mac.com/joel_huberman/JohnMaynard/Compared.pdf
For John Bartholomew Gough’s “Brave John Maynard” in *The British Workman* . (November 1, 1863), cf.:
http://homepage.mac.com/joel_huberman/JohnMaynard/GoughBW.pdf
For “John Maynard: A Ballad of Lake Erie” by Horatio Alger, Jr., cf.:
<http://www.ulib.niu.edu/rarebooks/alger/DigRepos/johnmaynard.cfm>
- 12) For a collation of Ada Linden’s “John Maynard,” cf. *Aus der Stille* von Ada Linden, herausgegeben von Karl Schrattenthal, (Rheydt: W. Rob. Langewiesche, 1896), pp. 89-90 **and** *Deutschlands Dichterinnen. Blüten deutscher Frauenpoesie* by Karl Wilhelm Bindewald [cf. **Annotation** 7], Part I. (Osterwieck/Harz:H. W. Zickfeldt, o. J.[1890]), p. 70:
http://homepage.mac.com/joel_huberman/JohnMaynard/TextualVar.pdf
For Ada Linden’s “John Maynard” translated into English, cf.
http://homepage.mac.com/joel_huberman/JohnMaynard/ADA_TR.pdf
- 13) George Salomon, “Wer ist John Maynard? Fontanes tapferer Steuermann und sein amerikanisches Vorbild” (Potsdam, East Germany: *Fontane Blätter*, No. 2, 1965), pp. 25-40. Cf. p. 35 for the reference to Theodor Grosser.
George Salomon’s article has been translated into English by Norman Barry:

- 14) Ernst Dossmann, "Emil Rittershaus und das Westfalenlied," *Heimatspflege in Westfalen*, 14. Jg., 6/2001, p.3. The Introduction, p. 1, by Wolfgang Springmann of Emil Rittershaus, *Biographische Notizen*, *op. cit.* [**Annotation 3**] points out that Rittershaus had "become a well-known figure abroad, particularly in England and the United States, as was demonstrated by the numerous obituaries in foreign newspapers on his death." On p. 25, Rittershaus himself refers to his work with "German-American newspapers." Unfortunately, he does not mention *which* papers he contributed to Theodor Grosser.
- 15) Cf. Emil Rittershaus, *Biographische Notizen*, *op. cit.* [**Annotation 3**], introductory comment by Wolfgang Springmann, pp. 5-6: Unfortunately, the Second World War exacted a severe toll on Rittershaus's literary bequest, which was stored in the basement of Barmen's Hall of Fame [Ruhmeshalle] during the war. Rittershaus's manuscripts, letters and pictures stored there were totally destroyed during an Allied bomb attack in the night from May 29 to May 30, 1943. Consequently, numerous insights into the literary life of 19th- century Germany have been lost forever. Fortunately, Rittershaus's statue was rescued by Dr. Dirksen, the Barmen Museum Director, and hidden away during the war so that it could not be melted down by the Nazis for the war effort. Both the abridged reprint of the autobiographical monograph and the concealed statue were made available to the public on the fiftieth anniversary of Emil Rittershaus's death – on March 8th, 1947.
- 16) Alfred Stemmann, *Emil Rittershaus, sein Leben und sein Dichten*. 1921. *op. cit.* [**Annotation 3**].
- 17) *Ibid.*, p. 135, footnote 1.
- 18) Emil Rittershaus, *Biographische Notizen*, *op. cit.* [**Annotation 2**], p. 18.
- 19) Alfred Stemmann, *op. cit.* [**Annotation 3**], p. 36, footnote 1.
- 20) Particularly, references to the Langewiesche Publishing House in Barmen (in 1870) and the Langewiesche Publishing House in Rheydt (also in 1870), where two collections of wartime songs by Emil Rittershaus were published in the very same year, make the Langewiesche Barmen-Rheydt link highly plausible. Cf. *Lexikon-Westfälischer Autoren und Autorinnen 1750 – 1950* (http://www.lwl.org/literaturkommission/alex/index.php?id=00000003&letter=R&layout=2&author_id=00000454): [Emil Rittershaus]

“Den Frauen und Jungfrauen in der Kriegszeit. Drei Lieder nach Volksweisen. Barmen: Langewiesche 1870. 15 pages. (UB Bonn) – Vorwärts! Nach Paris! Drei Kriegslieder nach Volksweisen für die deutschen Soldaten. Rheydt: Langewiesche 1870. 5 pages.”

Wilhelm Langewiesche, biographical note :

Born on December 4th, 1807, Wilhelm Langewiesche opened his bookshop in Barmen in 1837 and ran it until 1872. Afterwards he moved to Godesberg, where he died on March 24th, 1884. Cf.

http://www.lwl.org/literaturkommission/alex/index.php?id=00000003&letter=L&layout=2&author_id=00000418 : [Wilhelm Langewiesche]

- 21) Karl Schrattenthal (editor), *Unsere Frauen in einer Auswahl aus ihren Dichtungen. Poesie-Album zeitgenössischer Dichterinnen. Mitgabe für Frauen und Töchter gebildeter Stände*. (Stuttgart: Druck und Verlag von Greiner & Pfeiffer, undated (p. vii of Schrattenthal's Preface is dated 1888). K. W. Bindewald, *Deutschlands Dichterinnen* (cf. **Annotation 7**), p. 4 of his Preface to vol. 1, gives "Stuttgart 1888" as the place and date of publication of Schrattenthal's anthology.
- 22) Stanzas 11 and 13 were deleted in the 1896 edition. Stanzas 9 and 12 have been thoroughly reworked. Apart from spelling, some words and phrases were changed. Roughly 28 percent of the ballad was either deleted or rewritten.
- 23) Norman Barry, "Gottfried August Bürger's 'The Song of the Good Man' as a Source of Inspiration in both Theodor Fontane's 'John Maynard' and 'The Tay Bridge'" For online-access:
http://homepage.mac.com/joel_huberman/JohnMaynard/ManneEssay.pdf
- 24) An example of Professor Schrattenthal's success was the following discovery:

GERMANY'S NEW POET

Germany has a new poet. A peasant woman, JOHANNA AMBROSIUS, born in 1855, had lived unknown until the end of 1994, when a volume of her poems, edited by PROFESSOR KARL SCHRATTENTHAL was published, which has now run through fifteen editions, and made her the rage in the fatherland. She had no education except that of the village school, married a peasant at 20, and her life has been among the poorest of the poor. Yet her poetry shows no trace of the limitations among which she has been brought up. Her countrymen are already calling her the "deutsche Sappho."

- *The Daily Inter Ocean* (Chicago, Illinois), March 7, 1896, p. 11, c. 1-2, vol. xxiv, no. 349.

Shortly afterwards, Professor Schrattenthal's edition of Johanna Ambrosius's poetry was translated into English and published in Boston!

- 25) For an article on Emanuel Geibel in English, cf.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emanuel_Geibel
Theodor Fontane: *John Maynard*. In: *Berliner Bunte Mappe: Originalbeiträge Berliner Künstler und Schriftsteller*. (Munich: Verlagsanstalt für Kunst und Wissenschaft. vormals Friedrich Bruckmann, 1886), p. 22. The Austrian parallel edition, which surpasses the Munich edition in layout, should also be documented: *Berliner Bunte Mappe: Originalbeiträge Berliner Künstler und Schriftsteller*. (Vienna: C. Angerer & Göschl, 1886), p. 22. Cf.
http://homepage.mac.com/joel_huberman/JohnMaynard/BBM.gif und
http://homepage.mac.com/joel_huberman/JohnMaynard/Collation.pdf
- 26) Karl Wilhelm Bindewald (editor), *Deutschlands Dichterinnen. ibid.*, **Annotation 7**, "Preface," p. 4. In referring to Schrattenthal's "recently published" anthology (published in 1888), Bindewald points out that the name "Karl Schrattenthal" is a pseudonym used by the poet and anthologist "Karl Weiß, the Austrian academic

("Schulmann"), who deserves great credit for his research into German women's poetry and literature, and who has presently assumed a post as Professor in Pressburg (Bratislava)."