

## Peter Stephen Duponceau an Johann Severin Vater, 06.10.1819

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Adams, John Quincy Albers, Johann Abraham Caesar, Karl Adolph Clark, William Daschkow, Andrei Jakowlewitsch Ebeling, Christian Daniel Galiani, Ferdinando Heckewelder, Johann Gottlieb Ernst Lewis, Meriwether Long, Stephen Harriman Patterson, Robert Pike, Captain Zebulon Montgomery Schaeffer, Frederick David Zeisberger, David Adelung, Johann Christoph / Vater, Johann Severin: Mithridates, oder allgemeine Sprachenkunde mit dem Vater Unser als Sprachprobe in beynahe fünfhundert Sprachen und Mundarten, 4 Bände (Berlin: Vossische Buchhandlung 1806–1817) Duponceau, Peter Stephen (1819): Report of the Corresponding Secretary to the Committee, of his Progress in the Investigation committed to him of the General Character and Forms of the Languages of the American Indians. In: Transactions of the Historical and Literary Committee of the American Philosophical Society 1, S. xvii–xlvi Galiani, Ferdinando / Caesar, Karl Adolph (Übers.): Recht der Neutralität, oder von den gegenseitigen Pflichten neutraler und kriegführender Mächte, Band 1–2 (Leipzig: Walther 1790) Seetzen, Ulrich Jasper / Vater, Johann Severin: Proben Deutscher Volks-Mundarten, Dr. Seetzen's linguistischer Nachlass, und andere Sprach-Forschungen und Sammlungen, besonders über Ostindien (Leipzig: Gerhard Fleischer d. J. 1816) Vaterb, Johann Severin: Litteratur der Grammatiken, Lexica und Wörtersammlungen aller Sprachen der Erde (Berlin: Nicolai 1815) Vatera, Johann Severin: Untersuchungen über Amerikas Bevölkerung aus dem alten Continente (Leipzig: Christian Wilhelm Vogel 1810) Zeisberger, David: Grammar of the Language of the Lenni Lenape or Delaware Indians. Translated from the German Manuscript of the Author by Peter Stephen du Ponceau. With a Preface and Notes by the Translator (Philadelphia: James Kay, Junior 1827)

[205r]

Philadelphia, 6.<sup>th</sup> Oct. 1819

I have received my excellent & much venerated friend, your two kind letters of the 17.<sup>th</sup> of May, mit alles dazu beygelegt<sup>[a]</sup>, among which your picture was the to me

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a) [Editor] In deutscher Schrift, d.h. Kurrentschrift.

the most valuable. I thank you with all my heart for this present, which convinces me that you have judged that I should feel its value. I have neatly prefixed it to the Second volume of the Mithridates, where your labors begin; a work which I have always before my eyes, & often, very often in my hand. I call it my Manual of Philology. I shall never cease to consider it as the most valuable composition of the kind that the world has ever Seen. I hope you have received the first volume of the Transactions of the Historical & literary Committee of the **A. P. S.** in which I have in a few words attempted to Sketch the Character of this astonishing Book.

I have presented in your name to the **American Philosophical Society** the splendid ornament which you learned & ingenious Countrymen have erected in the Majesty of Peace, & in which your Share is peculiarly honorable<&> flattering to this Country & honorable to yourself. The Secretary has been ordered to return your thanks in form, & I take the first opportunity to convey to you the expression of the **Society's** gratitude & my own. I have asked & obtained permission of the **Society** to Send you all the copies I should think proper of the Indian Vocabularies that are in the Archives of the Historical Committee, & I avail myself of this permission to Send you seven of them fairly copied; all of them of the languages I have called Floridian & of those Spoken in the <South> Western parts of Louisiana, and<&> the Province of Texas. Those of the Keres, Comanches & which you [205v] Specially call for, we have not got & cannot at present procure. The Vocabularies which **Lewis** & **Clarke** collected are lost & those of **Pike** we have never heard of. The Government, however, has lately Sent a new expedition to the Westward, under the command of **Major Long**, of which, no doubt, you have heard. **The Secretary of State** h liberally invited the **Philosophical Society** to point out Subjects of investigation to be added to the instructions given to those who compose the expedition. As I was one of the Committee appointed to prepare those additional instructions, you may well Suppose that I have not forgotten the Indian languages. So that next Year we may expect to have Vocabularies of all the idioms of the Indians on the Missouri & Westward – at present I can only Send you that of the Osages or Washash, a Nation extending fast thro' a great distance from North to South, & in any opinion originally connected with the Iroquois or Hurons, as you will find by comparing Several of their words, particularly in the numerals. If I had a clerk or a copyist who could read & write German, I could send you many curious works & collections on the Indian languages; I shall write however, to my friend **Heckewelder** at **Bethlehem**, to see if he cannot get a copy made for you of **Zeisberger's** Delaware Grammar in the original. It is a long work, but perhaps he may find some young man &<or> woman that will take the pains. If not, I will not

promise any |206r| thing, lest I should not be able to keep my word, but I Shall do my best to content you to the extent of my power.

I return you many thanks for your excellent Index linguarum, which I have placed in my Library next to the Mithridates & your Proben Deutscher Volks Mundarten, all bound alike, & making together a complete body of Science. My friend Schaffer writes to me that you have enclosed to him a Copy of the Same work for the Society, but he had not yet received it. Be it as it may, I will not part with mine for any Society in the world; I value it too much. M<sup>r</sup> Patterson<sup>[b]</sup> has handed your letter to the Society; you need not be ashamed of your manner of writing English.

The first Volume of the Historical |sic| Transactions of the Historical Committee was Sent to you by His Excellency M<sup>r</sup> Daschkoff,<sup>[c]</sup> late Minister from Russia to this Country, who was kind enough to take charge of it in a packet directed to you. I hope he has Savely forwarded it. I send this packet to the care of D<sup>r</sup> Albers<sup>[d]</sup> of Bremen, with whom I have just begun a Correspondence. Since the death of the great Ebeling,<sup>[e]</sup> I have, alas! no Correspondent in Hamburg. I had begun with him a most valuable & interesting Correspondence, I mean a Correspondence which he rendered such; he professed, & I have no doubt, felt great friendship for me – he died, just as we begun to be known to each other.

I have always lived a very retired life, & not been fond of extending my Correspondences abroad. But about three Years ago, I was Seized with a violent passion for the German language; I had then a kind of half knowledge of it |206v| So far that I had translated into English Professor Cæsar's<sup>[f]</sup> German Translation of Galiani's Recht der Neutralitæt. But finding an excellent German Master<sup>[g]</sup> in this City, who was very poor & wanted assistance, I put myself under his tuition not thinking of any thing else but a Charitable work; but this good Man made me

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**b)** |Editor| Wohl Robert Patterson (1743–1824), Sekretär (1784), Vice-Präsident (1799) und Präsident (1819) der American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia (vgl. Penn University Archives).

**c)** |Editor| Andrei Jakowlewitsch Daschkow (1775–1831), von 1808 bis 1817 erster russischer Botschafter in den USA.

**d)** |Editor| Johann Abraham Albers (1772–1821), Stadtphysikus in Bremen, gründete 1808 die Zeitschrift „Amerikanische Annalen der Arzneykunde, Naturgeschichte, Chemie und Physik“.

**e)** |Editor| Christian Daniel Ebeling (1741–1817), Hamburger Aufklärer, Amerikanist etc.

**f)** |Editor| Karl Adolph Caesar (1744–1811), deutscher Philosoph. Seine deutsche Übersetzung von Ferdinando Galianis *Recht der Neutralität* erschien 1790 in Leipzig.

**g)** |Editor| Bei diesem "Master" könnte es sich um den bereits oben genannten Frederick David Schaeffer (1760–1836) handeln, mit dem Duponceau befreundet war (Jennifer Denise Henderson [2004]: *"A Blaze of Reputation and the Echo of a Name": The Legal Career of Peter Stephen Du Ponceau in Post-Revolutionary Philadelphia*, Diss. Florida State University, S. 71 Anm. 52). Der in Frankfurt am Main geborene Schaeffer, lutheranischer Pfarrer in Philadelphia, hatte acht Kinder und galt als "fine classical scholar" (James Grant Wilson / John Fiske [Hrsg.] [1900]: *Appletons' Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, New York: D. Appleton, s. v. "Schaeffer, Frederick David"). [FZ]

love & feel the beauties of the German idiom, So that for three Years I have taken from every day a lesson of one hour, & studied besides two hours daily by myself. This has raised an enthusiasm in me which has led to any Correspondence with [D<sup>r</sup> Ebeling](#), with you & other worthies of your Country. I still continue to take lessons of my good Master. We read together some of your best Poets, & he aids me to feel & understand their beauties, which he is well fitted for; being a Man of feeling & an excellent Classical Scholar. As I began to read with more ease, I studied your Untersuchungen & the great Mithridates; this raised another passion in me for the Indian languages, which was not difficult, for I have always been fond of Philology; but being a Member of a laborious & active profession (the Law) I have had little time to attend to more elegant studies. But there is no resisting fate. I am like an old Bachelor in Science, I must fall in love with it in my old age, after neglecting it in my more vigorous Youth. I regret the past times, & not having made a better use of them; but they will never return & so I must be contented.

I end this letter because my paper ends. God bless & preserve you for the benefit of Science & Mankind.

Your Sincere & affectionate friend

Peter S. Du Ponceau