

Map Collecting in Switzerland (936 words)

Until the end of the 18th century, all government activity in Switzerland took place in the individual cantons, including any cartography (QV) which was often provided by private support and at individual expense. The cartography of the 17th century until 1800 should be seen chiefly in terms of military mapping (QV) and in terms of the expansion of the administrative functions of the state. Many of these maps and plans were not publicly accessible and therefore had a limited influence on the further cartographic development of printed maps. They were kept—along with other official documents—at government offices and state archives to which only a limited circle of people had access at the time. Significant plan collections from the 17th and 18th centuries can now be found at the canton state archives, such as in Zurich, Bern, etc. Engineers and officers also compiled private collections, which later sometimes ended up in public collections.

Today older maps can be found in many library collections, which themselves often began by donations or purchases from private collections.

From the 17th century, however, there was a growing interest in publicly obtainable mapping which gave rise to an increasing number of private collections.

The rise of wide spread formal education led to further permeation of cartographic knowledge in the 18th century, which in turn led to cheaper maps for a broader range of customers. With the influence of the Enlightenment emanating from France, the natural sciences gained pre-eminence. New endeavors in cartography were also undertaken, including precise baseline measurements as well as the first altitude measurements and maps were used as a basis for scientific research: The Bern geographer and bibliophile Samuel Engel (1702-1784) repeatedly cited maps he had consulted as sources for his comprehensive studies of the extent in degrees of latitude did Asia extend. Samuel Engel was a close relative of the renowned Albrecht von Haller (1708-1777) and his successor as chief librarian in Bern. From 1700, there are clear indications to describe definitively map holdings and reproductions in catalogs or bibliographies, and in the second half of the 18th century, the carto-bibliographic work intensified. Bern historian Gottlieb Emanuel von Haller (1735-1786), son of Albrecht, compiled an “Verzeichnis derjenigen Landkarten, welche über Helvetien und dessen verschiedene Theile bisher angefertigt worden sind“ (Index of Maps Made of Switzerland and Its Various Parts to Date) in 1766. It was published in 1771 by Anton Friedrich Büsching (1724-1793) in his “Magazin für die neue Historie und Geographie“ (Journal for Recent History and Geography). A new adaptation of the index appeared in 1785 in the “Bibliothek der Schweizer-Geschichte” Index of Swiss History” by Gottlieb Emanuel von Haller, who

likewise purchased a large quantity of maps: In his “Bibliothek der Schweizer-Geschichte,” on page 2, he compiled Collections of Swiss maps, views and so on, of which there were very many in Switzerland.

Haller reported that “The most outstanding I know are in Zurich collected by the City Councillor Leu and Mr. Leonhard Ziegler. At the public library in Bern and also with the *Stiftsschaffner* (administrator of the collegiate chapter of Saint Vincent)) Joh. Fried. Ryhiner. In Basel, with Pastor Falkeisen and Mr. J. Rud. Frey of the High Council and *Rechenrath* (Finance Council) and at the public library there.”

A pre-eminent position among the private map collections that arose in 18th-century Switzerland is taken by the Ryhiner collection, which was indexed, restored, and made public between 1994 and 1998 in a scholarly research project. François Jacques Durand described it as follows in 1795: “It would be difficult to find a more complete collection, and geographic maps so carefully chosen, than that of Mr. Ryhiner, *Councillor* of the Republic [of Bern]. It encompasses all of the rarest old maps, and all those of the most celebrated modern geographers.”

For the Bern statesman and geographer Johann Friedrich von Ryhiner (1732-1803), maps were an aid for further development of geographic science. This internationally pre-eminent private collection was donated to the then Municipal Library of Bern in 1867. The total of around 16,500 maps, topographical views, and plans are contained in 501 regionally and thematically organized volumes. Around 22 volumes concern Switzerland, 363 volumes European and 61 volumes non-European countries and continents. The remaining 55 volumes contain celestial and world maps, historical maps, and miscellaneous others. In its significance and size, the collection is comparable to the Stosch collection in Vienna and the Moll collection in Brno.

The Zurich collectors were Councillor Johannes Leu (1714-82), son of Mayor Hans Jakob Leu, and paper miller and bookseller Leonhard Ziegler (1749-1800). The former collection was at least partially subsumed into the Ziegler collection after the death of Johannes Leu. An index of the Ziegler collection, which comprised 300 items, was published in 1780 under the title “Atlas Helveticus, oder, Verzeichniss einer vollständigen Sammlung aller über die Schweiz und ihre verschiedenen Theile in Kupferstich und Holz-Schnitt herausgekommenen geographischen Charten.”

His son, Leonhard Ziegler zum Egli, a hospital administrator (1782–1854), donated the map collection to the Municipal Library in 1854.

The Mathematisch-Militärische Gesellschaft (Mathematical and Military Society) founded in 1765 by Zurich military officers collected maps since the founding of its library in 1769. The older maps came into the possession of the Map Association in 1882 and the Zurich Municipal Library in 1897.

The library in Basel was also among the most pre-eminent map collections in 18th-century Switzerland. The significant collection of the *Antistes* Hieronymus Falkeisen (1758–1838) was incorporated into the University Library in 1884 along with the Church Archives.

Falkeisen compiled outstanding collections of ecclesiastical historical documents and maps of Switzerland.

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