

ALONG THE WALL

PHOTOGRAPHS AT THE FALL OF THE BERLIN WALL, 1989

In early November of 1989, Professor Richard Schade was in Munich signing the original linkage agreement between the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität and the University of Cincinnati. When the news broke that the East German government had unexpectedly lifted all travel restrictions on its citizens, Schade rushed to Berlin. The Wall was falling. Since 1961, the Berlin Wall had been both a physical barrier between East and West Berlin and a visible reminder of restrictions on freedom for East Germans. The photographs and captions in this exhibition are Schade's visual record of the Fall of the Wall—a revolutionary event that would become emblematic of the end of the Cold War.

Dr. Schade describes his visual account of the Wall:

In November 1989, I sought to document the Wall, rather than the crowds of people celebrating the new reality. Its surface, its face had a personality of its own -- hard, flat, a riot of color, wild images, both strident and uplifting words, sentiments of all kinds splayed with abandon, spray paint swirls respecting none of the work of previous artists and writers. Walking along the Wall was an act of reading an erratic text, a cacophony of viewing a series of disconnected and variegated images. It was not a book, it was a 12-foot high scroll miles in length.

Richard E. Schade is a professor emeritus of German Studies, University of Cincinnati. He has published on the interplay between graphic arts and literature in the Early Modern period and in the late work of Günter Grass. Dr. Schade has taught courses on German culture, history and literature from the Medieval to the twentieth century. He has also been deeply involved in the German American community in Cincinnati, serving for sixteen years as Honorary Consul of the Federal Republic of Germany. He was instrumental in acquiring the segment of the Berlin Wall installed at the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center.