

Germans in the New World: Essays in the History of Immigration

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Senechal's study is a worthy contribution to the Blacks in the New World series. Her historiographical essay as an introduction to her study might deter some less scholarly readers, and may have been more appropriately placed as an afterword, but this is a minor matter of personal preference. Her well-written and well-documented investigation provides both general readers and scholars with much useful information and interpretation about class, race, and racism in the Springfield riot, in particular, and race riots in general.

Germans in the New World: Essays in the History of Immigration, by Frederick C. Luebke. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990. xxii, 198 pp. Notes, table, index. \$24.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY JOHN D. BUENKER, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-PARKSIDE

Of all America's myriad immigrant groups, none came in greater numbers over a larger span of time or made more of an impact on the Midwest than did the Germans. Yet, as Frederick C. Luebke observes, few groups have received less serious analysis because no others have been so divided by religion, political persuasion, socioeconomic status, occupation, culture, or social character. With language as their only unifying characteristic, Germans were much slower to organize on a national scale for any common purpose, thereby necessitating focus on the state or local level. Luebke, the author of previous books on the political life of Germans in Nebraska, on Germans in Brazil, and on German-Americans in World War I, goes a long way toward remedying that neglect by placing German immigration within larger conceptual frameworks. Successfully avoiding the pitfalls of elitism and filiopietism, Luebke has gathered together a spectrum of ten sociohistorical essays, written and revised by him over a quarter-century, that view the German immigrant experience as a "process of change over time in ethnic minority group culture as it interacts with other groups, native and immigrant, within a specific physical and social environment" (152). At the same time, the essays serve as a map of the author's intellectual odyssey and of the evolution of the "new" immigration history.

Luebke's interest in immigration history originated in his own search for identity and self-location, a quest that is reflected in the focus of the first five essays, which deal directly with the efforts of German-Americans to adapt to the American environment over time. The first examines how the Missouri Synod Lutheran Church reacted defensively to its minority status in America through language maintenance, printing and publishing outlets, and parochial schools, semi-

naries, and teacher colleges. This closed system, Luebke argues, resulted in a "heightened self-consciousness, an uncompromising isolationism and a determination to have little to do with the enemies of the True Faith" (xiv). Two of the other essays in the first group analyze unsuccessful efforts by German-Americans, just before and after World War I, to construct effective national organizations. In both cases, the attempts foundered due to a combination of internal division and confusion of purpose, on the one hand, and Old Country disasters, on the other. Examining the post-World War I crusades to restrict the use of German and other foreign languages in the Great Plains states, Luebke demonstrates that German-Americans were too fragmented to offer much effective resistance, even though the Evangelical Lutheran Church initiated the suit that led to the invalidation of the Nebraska language law by the U.S. Supreme Court. The curse of heterogeneity also doomed most German political efforts, although some leaders achieved limited success when they sacrificed ethnic ideals in favor of partisanship. Over time, foreign policy issues substantially replaced ethnocultural ones as the most salient and inclusive for German-Americans.

Combating the parochialism that characterizes most studies of American immigration, Luebke also reveals that important insights can be gained by cross-national analyses. Comparing German migration to Brazil with that to the United States, he concludes that, while their motivations, institutions, and social and cultural characteristics were decidedly similar, their receiving societies and their physical environments were quite divergent, allowing South Americans to establish more exclusive, concentrated rural colonies that permitted greater preservation of language and culture. Although Germans were well received in both countries, Brazilian immigrants maintained greater social distance from the host society and flaunted a greater air of cultural superiority. Ironically, those same conditions guaranteed that Brazilian-Germans suffered even greater persecution during World War I.

For serious scholars of American immigration, even the provocative cross-cultural section pales before the insights contained in the last two historiographical chapters. The first cogently summarizes the evolution of the major interpretive schools of immigration history from the assimilative frontier thesis of Frederick Jackson Turner to the complexly pluralistic theories of present-day analysts. While Turner erred in positing the total triumph of environment over culture, he performed a valuable service in pioneering a methodology based on systematic small-unit analysis of original sources documenting mass behavior. That method has enabled subsequent generations of immi-

gration historians to view assimilation as "an interactive process in which both the immigrant and the receiving societies are changed," and which is "infinitely complex and varies from time to time and from place to place as opportunities, economic and otherwise, are presented to the individual in both contexts or structures" (151). Over the past quarter-century, the author concludes, immigration history has stressed pluralism over assimilation, quantitative sources over qualitative, ordinary people over elites, conflict over contributions, and intergroup diversity over homogeneity. In the book's last essay, Luebke boldly attempts an interpretation of three hundred years of German-American history based on what he regards as the best studies of the past two decades. While some may quarrel with specific characterizations, few would attempt to dispute the coherence of his overview. Nor would anyone seriously challenge Luebke's assertion that present-day midwestern American culture is heavily saturated with Teutonic ingredients. "To understand three centuries of Germans in America," Luebke sagely concludes, "is to understand ourselves" (180).

The Enduring Indians of Kansas: A Century and a Half of Acculturation, by Joseph B. Herring. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1990. xii, 236 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$25.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY WILLIAM T. HÄGAN, UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

Historians usually have celebrated what Alvin Josephy called "The Patriot Chiefs," those resorting to arms to resist the white invader. Thus it is the Black Hawks, the Sitting Bulls, and the Geronimos who have received the most attention. Not so in this book. Joseph B. Herring has singled out for discussion and commendation those fragments of once powerful tribes that managed not only to resist removal from Kansas in the 1860s and 1870s, but succeeded in retaining significant elements of their old cultures. These are Indians who, in Herring's phrase, "never forgot that they were Indians" (1). In case studies of these bands of survivors, the author describes the leadership and the strategies that enabled them to be acculturated without being assimilated. By thus focusing on the Indians themselves and how they overcame heavy odds, Herring places his account in the growing stream of "new Indian history."

It would appear at first glance that this study covers some of the same ground as two earlier works. Herring himself is the author of an admirable study of Kenekuk, the Kickapoo Prophet, whose career is examined again in this volume. H. Craig Miner and William E. Unrau,

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