

REVIEWS

Rudolf Hofmeister, *The Germans of Chicago*

(Stipes Publishing Co: Champaign, Il., 1976), 285 pp.

Rudolf Hofmeister's book provides a real service to those interested in the story of the Germans in Chicago. Despite the fact that there were once more native-born Germans than Americans in Chicago, the role of the Germans has been largely ignored. Nearly everyone has heard that after Warsaw, Chicago has the second largest Polish community in the world, but even in the late nineteenth century when the Germans made up by far the largest ethnic group in Chicago, no one spoke of Chicago as a major German city. Even the history books pay scant heed to the position of the Germans in the building of Chicago. Hopefully, Professor Hofmeister's book will encourage others to pay a little more attention to the contributions the Germans undoubtedly have made in the Chicago area.

Fortunately, *The Germans of Chicago* is not merely a compilation of names or a listing of dates. Mr. Hofmeister has wisely chosen to allow some of the German-Americans to speak for themselves. Quotations from the letters of some of the immigrants and accounts from the German press in Chicago add a sense of personal involvement which helps to engage the contemporary reader's interest. Another advantage of this book for the general reader is that Mr. Hofmeister devotes an entire chapter to an account of the difficulties the Germans had in getting to America and to Chicago. Although this background might be well known to the student of immigration to America, Hofmeister's relating of the tales of the Germans' hardships to their eventual arrival in Chicago permits the reader to see many of the people mentioned in subsequent chapters as real human beings as well as nearly forgotten historical figures.

Mr. Hofmeister has divided the book into chapters dealing with disparate groups, ranging from the German-Americans in the work force to those active in the religious institutions of the city. In this manner he has succeeded in giving an adequate overview of the German-American contributions and has, at the same time, given a focus to each chapter which permits him to treat each area of the German influence in Chicago fairly com-

prehensively.

Overall I read the book with a good deal of interest, but two things did mar its impact for me. First of all, the style seems unduly influenced by German sentence constructions. For example, nearly every time a time element is used in a sentence it is placed near the beginning of the sentence so that it abruptly interrupts the expected smooth flow of the English sentence. Secondly, I missed some solid interpretations. Hofmeister presents a wealth of information which gives the impression that the Germans in Chicago were much more important than most people give them credit for. Why then have historians failed to even mention the role of the Germans? This question is never adequately answered, and after reading the final chapter on the influence of the Germans in the fine arts in Chicago, one wonders how the book could come to such an abrupt end. A final chapter trying to make some conclusions about the areas of life where German-Americans made their most important impact would have been most welcome and would also have served as a point of departure for others who might wish to further research the role of the Chicago Germans.

—Wallace Lagerwey
Elmhurst College

Gerard Wilk: *Americans From Germany*
(German Information Center - N.Y., 1976). 81 pp.

Wilk's journalistic contributions on German-Americana are well known to readers of the German-American press. This booklet is a fine selection of some excellent sketches on significant Americans from Germany. Aside from the standard repertoire, Wild has included several individuals generally not reviewed in introductory works, e.g. Christian Metz and Manfred George. He also includes a brief article on the University in Exile to acquaint readers during the 1930's and 1940's.

—Don Heinrich Tolzmann
University of Cincinnati

Klaus Wust and Norbert Muehlen, *The Story of German-American Involvement in the Founding and Development of America.*

(National Carl Schurz Association: Phila., 1976). 95 pp.

This beautifully illustrated book was produced as a companion piece to the travelling German-Americana exhibit of the National Carl Schurz Association. Wust contributed the chapters dealing with German-Americana prior to 1900; Muehlen treats German-American contributions to 20th century America.

The authors define German-Americans as "primarily German-speaking immigrants who made the United States their permanent home. They and their American-born children are usually readily identifiable as German-Americans." Wust and Muehlen also focus on where the German-Americans came from, why they came and what they accomplished. They don't subscribe to the antiquated melting pot theory to interpret German-American history. Indeed, they state that the German-Americans destroyed this myth in World War I by demonstrating that they were not meltable as an ethnic group. Some histories still utilize the dated assimilationist view to explicate American history and thereby indicate a basic lack of understanding for German life in America. The authors conclude that the German-Americans will contribute in the future "to the unlimited possibilities still inherit in this great nation." An excellent work.

—Don Heinrich Tolzmann
University of Cincinnati

The Palatine Immigrant.

Vol. I, No. 3 (1976); Vol I, No. 4 (1976); Vol II, No. 1 (1977).

Published by Palatines To America, 157 North State Street,
Salt Lake City, Utah 84103.

Volume I, No. 3 contains an interesting account of how a German-American family researcher traced down ancestors with the surname GRENoble. Volume I, No. 4 contains an informative article on Pennsylvania German ancestral research, Volume II, No. 1 includes an excellent "Palatine Origins Bibliography."

All three of these issues continue the important project of the Palatines To America group, namely the listing of the names, place of origin, year of emigration/or arrival in America, religion, and place of settling in America of early German-speaking immigrants.

—Robert E. Ward Baldwin-Wallace College

Pfälzisch-Rheinische Familienkunde,

XXVI. Jahrgang, Band 8, Heft 10 (1977).

In addition to articles on members of the Verein für Pfälzisch-Rheinische Familienkunde and notes on genealogical publications, this issue contains: articles on (1) the residents of Kindenheimer in the 16th and 17th centuries, (2) heirs in the town of Katzweiler in 1740, (3) the family name ***Dochnahl***, (4) all of the surnames in the Reformed church registers of the town of Mühlhofen from 1715 to 1794, (5) the descendants of Johannes Schwebel (from the city of Zweibrücken), (6) August von Parseval and his ancestors, (7) surnames of the former area of Buntenbach in the 18th century, (8) Johann Eimann (1764-1847), a famed Mennonite, (9) data from the register of the Lutheran church in Dielkirchen (***Haas, Nunnweiler, Schuhmacher, Drescher, Dreh***).

—Robert E. Ward
Baldwin-Wallace College

Der Salzburger. Mitteilungen des Ostpreussischen

Salzburgervereins,

Neue Folge Nummer 53. 1977 (1).

Published by the Salzburger Verein, this issue contains an abstract, in German, from A.B. Faust's ***The German Element in the United States*** (1909) which treats German settlements before the American Revolution in Georgia and New England. In addition to reviews of publications on the Salzburgers, news items from chapters of the organization, and miscellaneous items, there is also a column on genealogical inquiries. A copy of this issue is in the Ward Collection at the Western Reserve Historical Society in Cleveland, Ohio.

—Robert E. Ward, Baldwin-Wallace College