

Book Reviews

Edited by Roland Paul and Karl Scherer: *Palatines in America*.

(Kaiserslauten: Institut für Pfälzische Geschichte und Volkskunde, 1995, Pp. 225)

Many of the essays in this book were published during the three hundredth anniversary of German emigration to America in 1983 under the title "300 Years Palatines in America" which was not reviewed in this journal, or in many others. Because this publication has been out of print for years, the editors have brought out an augmented edition. One of its distinctive features is that it is bilingual, with many passages in German followed by their counterparts in English. Most of the essays have been written by the editors. Scherer was the director, while Paul was the assistant director of the Institute for Palatine History and Folk-life.

Although the book does not provide comprehensive coverage of its subject, the range of its essays does give an overview of emigration from the Palatinate, in what is not southwestern Germany, primarily to Pennsylvania and New York. Particular essays, however, probe deeply into specific topics, such as Scherer's on conditions in the Palatinate during the eighteenth century and Paul's on emigration between the mid-nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries. Paul's study of Palatine and Hessian newspapers of the World War I period reveals the painful dilemma that many German Americans faced because of the conflict. Since other accounts mostly emphasize the emigration from the Palatinate to British colonies, studies of the later period are especially informative.

The last section of the book contains a series of vignettes. They describe familiar and some not so familiar Palatine emigrants. Scherer has included little known facts about "Joshua Harsch alias Kocherthal" who led settlers from the Palatinate to the Hudson Valley of New York in the early eighteenth century, and Nicholas Herchheimer who helped to halt the eastward advance of the British army through upper New York in 1777 during the War for American Independence. Fritz Braun dealt with "Henry Harbaugh – The First German Dialect Author in

Pennsylvania." Cartoonist Thomas Nast was the subject of Hermann Gessner's sketch. While others are worthy of the attention that they received, some seemed less important in America than in the Palatinate, especially during the political strife of the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Concluding the book is a brief history of the Institute for Palatine History and Folklife Studies.

This book will interest readers who want to know more about the history of the Palatinate, German American history, and the history of American immigration. It is well illustrated, including portraits, maps, and charts. Some, but not all, essays are documented. The bibliography lists many of the relevant studies by American scholars and numerous lesser known works by German specialists in Palatine history. Both the citations and bibliographical listings can help American researchers to identify useful German sources.

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Edited by Larry Tise. *Benjamin Franklin and Women*.

(University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000. Pp. xxxi, 184, notes, bibliographical note, index. \$58.00 cloth, \$18.95 paper.)

On November 20, 2000, *The New York Times* printed a series of advertisements for The History Channel's latest documentary on the founding fathers. Featured in the ad campaign was Benjamin Franklin, whose distinguished portrait graced an entire page. In classic mug-shot style, however, a large banner branded him a "skirt-chaser." This portrayal of the philandering Franklin permeates both popular culture and much of the historiography surrounding Franklin's life. In spite of the resilience and popularity of this image, historians have only tangentially studied the women in Franklin's life and his ideas about women.

In an effort to address this historiographic gap, Larry Tise, then executive director of the Benjamin Franklin National Memorial, suggested "Franklin and Women" as the topic for the Memorial's 1994 annual conference. Of the papers presented, all but one was revised for publication in *Benjamin Franklin and Women*, edited by Tise. The seven articles contained within the volume provide a much-needed scholarly examination of Franklin's interactions with individual women, and his impact on women's roles in eighteenth century society.

The first section, "Franklin's Women, looks at Franklin's relationships with specific individuals. Sheila Skemp examines Franklin's wife Debo-

rah Read Rogers. Skemp relies heavily on Laurel Thatcher Ulrich's definition of married women as "good wives" during the eighteenth century; celebrating Deborah's business acumen but ascribing her little "power or authority in the household, much less in the wider world." While this article provides the most complete published examination of Deborah's life to date, it upholds the standard interpretation of Deborah as languishing in Benjamin's shadow.

Larry Tise's contribution examines Franklin's relationship with his daughter Sarah. Relying heavily on Claude-Anne Lopez and Eugenia Herbert's standard work, *The Private Franklin: The Man and His Family*, Tise recounts Franklin's relationship with Sarah, including a detailed description of how she squandered her share of his considerable estate. Philosophically, Franklin aspired to greater rights for women, but practically he was unable to provide Sarah with an education or privileges equal to that of her half-brother William. Though Tise provides an excellent examination of Sarah's quest for independence from her father, little notice is given to Sarah herself. Conspicuously absent is any discussion of her considerable contributions during the American Revolution.

Any collection on Franklin and women would not be complete without an article from Claude-Anne Lopez, the leading scholar of Franklin's private life. Lopez examines Franklin's relationships with Catharine Ray, Polly Hewson, and Georgiana Shipley, concluding that each relationship was platonic. Those looking for lurid stories of Franklin's sexual misconduct will be sorely disappointed, as Lopez portrays Franklin as a beloved mentor and friend to each of these women.

The second section, entitled "Franklin and the Transforming World for Women," is especially valuable, providing insightful analysis of women in the eighteenth century. While Franklin remains at the center of each article, the contributors successfully comment on how Franklin was both shaped and influenced societal attitudes relating to women.

Jan Lewis comments on the inconsistency of Franklin's views on gender and on the situation of women in the eighteenth century. Lewis theorizes that due to gendered attitudes regarding sexuality, women played an equal if not larger role than Franklin in determining the nature of their relationships. Unwilling to form a sexual relationship with Franklin, they instead developed valuable friendships. Thus, Franklin formulated two different types of families: the patriarchal, sexual arrangement with Deborah and a series of platonic "substitute families" composed of female admirers. Lewis emphasizes the contradiction

between Franklin's own appreciation of sexual difference and the "imperatives of republicanism which negated the distinctions of gender."

Mary Kelly examines the prevailing ideas about the education of women during Franklin's lifetime. Using Franklin's daughter as an example, Kelley argues that Sarah's plight highlights the interrelationship between women's education and the growth of republican motherhood. While later in his life Franklin advocated a more balanced curriculum for women, his daughter received only a rudimentary education. This contradiction underscores Kelly's thesis that while the revolutionary generation proclaimed women's intellectual equality, education was meant to inform domestic obligations rather than bring self-improvement.

The volume's strongest article, written by Carla Mulford, examines how Franklin has been portrayed through literature. Mulford examines the distinctly American preoccupation with Franklin's heterosexuality. Beginning with Franklin's contemporaries and continuing through the present, Mulford traces the resilience of slander and innuendo relating to Franklin's sexual activities. Mulford concludes that while Franklin scholarship has evolved into a sophisticated and complex pursuit, the public prefers to retain the more colorful cultural myths surrounding Franklin's sexual exploits.

In the final article, Susan Stabile examines Franklin's role as mentor to the transatlantic development of salons and *belles lettres*. Relying heavily on David Shield's *Civil Tongues and Polite Letters*, Stabile credits Franklin with "elevating and expanding the involvement of women" through his interaction with many prominent participants in the intellectual circles of the eighteenth century.

While this collection of essays does an admirable job in describing Franklin's relationships and attitudes toward women, there are a few noteworthy omissions. The first section on "Franklin's Women" provides no discussion of his well-documented relationship with his youngest sister, Jane Mecom. While each of the essays in this section illuminate Franklin's relationships, the women themselves deserve interpretation in their own right, free from unfair comparisons to the great Franklin. In addition, absent from the volume is an essay focusing on Franklin's own assumptions about femininity beginning with his adoption of the pseudonym Silence Dogood at age sixteen. While the authors incorporate Franklin's views throughout their essays, a detailed examination of his writings would have provided much needed back-

ground on the evolution of Franklin's complex personal philosophy on women.

Rooted in solid research and free from sensationalistic accusations about his private life, *Benjamin Franklin and Women* provides a balanced introduction to Franklin's relationships and attitudes toward women. As the first look at Franklin since the maturation of women's studies, it provides a wealth of information on both Franklin and eighteenth century women's history, while at the same time suggesting many avenues for further research.

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By Marc Stein. *City of Sisterly and Brotherly Loves: Lesbian and Gay Philadelphia, 1945-1972*.

(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000. Pp. xv, 457, notes, index.)

In his book, *City of Sisterly and Brotherly Loves: Lesbian and Gay Philadelphia, 1945-1972*, Marc Stein offers a startling view of the social history of Pennsylvania's largest city. His provocative study raises not only eyebrows but also questions about how we document urban history and even Pennsylvania history. Drawing upon oral histories, archival sources, newspapers — both straight and gay/lesbian, and censuses, Stein crafts a postwar history of an urban subculture. The book has four parts: everyday life, public cultures, pre-Stonewall politics, and post-Stonewall politics. The Stonewall Riot of June 28, 1969, in New York City is considered to be the starting point of the national gay and lesbian liberation movement. Beginning chronologically with the end of World War II, generally recognized as a turning point in American history, Stein's book ends in 1972, the year of the first "gay pride" parade in Philadelphia.

I found Stein's geographies of same-sex households and venues in Philadelphia's neighborhoods fascinating. Center City was at the heart of most public gay and lesbian culture during the postwar period although the suburbs were sites of activity too. Stein provides much insight into how the African American community interacted with the gay and lesbian community, which is traditionally portrayed by the media as Euro-American. Less engrossing, however, is the detailed narration, culled from oral histories, of the emergence, struggles, and agendas of the various gay and lesbian organizations, both local and national. It is a saga of public hostility and ruthless raids by local police on places suspected to be gay and lesbian. It is also a story of bravery,

of how these men and women fought back and how they survived. There are minor weaknesses. Some of the "coming out" stories seem to get in the way of the author's construction of the social reality of gay/lesbian politics in Philadelphia. So much of this is comparatively recent history and so many of the oral history accounts are inconsistent that one wonders whether it is too soon to attempt an objective local history of this subculture.

An important aspect of this book is its treatment of public culture and public policy. In particular, the chapter on the controversy over the naming of the Walt Whitman Bridge is superb. Here is an open public discussion about same-sex identities and its moral, political, and religious implications. Numerous religious denominations including the Catholic Church objected to naming the bridge after Walt Whitman. Stein shows that this episode and the actions of city officials mobilized Philadelphia gays and lesbians. When district attorney, future Philadelphia mayor Ed Rendell helped raid a gay bookstore, and as police commissioner former mayor Frank Rizzo ordered scores of raids on gay and lesbian bars. Both Rizzo and Rendell, however, eventually became more "gay friendly." Although it may be seen as esoteric and controversial, Stein's book teaches us that it is necessary to include the history of minorities such as African Americans and marginal groups such as gays and lesbians into Philadelphia and Pennsylvania history.

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