

BOOK REVIEWS

peaceful endeavor first. In this way, Allen set forth the foundation for the cornerstone idea of all struggles for rights efforts to come. Because of this idea and his bold stubbornness, which he consistently presented in his pamphlets, sermons and memoir, Allen deserves recognition as a founder. The fact that Allen had links to Philadelphia, rural Pennsylvania towns such as Radnor, Delaware, and other parts of the mid-Atlantic, means that this region was the setting for the establishment of an idea that would shape the civil rights movement in America a century and a half later.

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Friederike Baer. *The Trial of Frederick Eberle: Language, Patriotism, and Citizenship in Philadelphia's German Community, 1790 to 1830*. (New York: New York University Press, 2008. Pp. viii, 271, illustrations, appendixes, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, \$48.00.)

In Philadelphia in 1816, two churches, which formed a single Lutheran congregation, held annual elections for the congregation's leaders. The balloting for this election was unruly and contentious, reflecting a bitter conflict between two groups in this German-American congregation. One group wanted to elect leaders who supported the use of English in the churches' services; the other group wanted to keep the services entirely and exclusively in German. Shortly after the elections, which were won by the pro-German group, 59 German Americans from the pro-German group were charged with rioting and conspiracy during the elections. The subsequent trial takes its name from Frederick Eberle, a baker, whose name appeared first in alphabetical order among the defendants.

This is a book about that trial. In describing the trial, the book's author, Friederike Baer, examines issues of ethnicity, Americanization, social class and language use in the early 19th century. The story is a fascinating one that raises issues about identity and assimilation that remain relevant to this day. And the story abounds with ironies and interesting insights into how ethnicity was contested and defined. Both sides of the language dispute used arguments that were grounded in American values of independence and citizenship, and both sides "embraced modes of behavior that were characteristic of American behavior at that time" (21). Beyond the specific charges

of rioting and conspiracy, the pro-German group claimed that they should have rights to use their own language in services; the pro-American group claimed that they had rights to have sermons in the dominant language of the nation. Although the pro-English group tried to question the patriotism of the pro-German group, Baer finds that the situation was quite complex and there were strong national sentiments among the pro-German group. In fact, the pro-German group had an American eagle emblazoned on their ballots, which was, ironically, illegal under the election laws of the time.

Most of the pro-German group spoke at least some English, and one of the concerns of everyone was that many younger congregational members could not understand German. Martin Luther, the founder of the Lutheran Church, had decreed that church services should be in the language understood by the congregation. But which language was that, English or German? Baer also finds that social class was an important factor in this dispute. Wealthy congregation members were on the side of English. Working class and artisan members of the congregation, pressed by economic changes that were marginalizing them, were generally supporters of German to the exclusion of English. Language became a battleground for class interests.

The issue of national and ethnic identity was complex for everyone involved. Near the conclusion of the book, Baer notes that the nation's strongest advocates of Germanic cultural accomplishments did not come from areas like Philadelphia with heavy German-American populations. In fact, it appears that there was a much stronger interest in Germanic culture in heavily Anglo-American New England during the early 1800s (187). Although the defendants were found guilty of the charges, no one was sent to jail. The issue of language use was not really decided by the courts, which focused on the charges of conspiracy and rioting. In fact, the courts during this period supported the rights of private citizens to determine language use in their own lives. Baer concludes the book with the statement, "The Eberle trial confirmed that in the early American republic, language choice remained a private matter unregulated by the state" (190).

Baer's style is readable and the arguments are clear. But the book might be challenging for a casual reader. At times, this reviewer felt somewhat overwhelmed by the minutia of the Eberle trial. Baer uses different aspects of the trial to delve into important issues about American society and history. This makes some sense in terms of building a presentation and suspense about the outcome of the trial. This reviewer, however, sometimes felt a little vertigo as the book jumped back and forth between trial details and broader

themes in the surrounding society. But these criticisms are minor. The book is interesting and makes very important points about language use, assimilation and American identity. These points are still very relevant and provide a perspective for examining similar issues about assimilation and language use in today's society. Baer is able to use a very local and relatively unimportant disagreement about a church election to examine very broad and lasting issues concerning ethnicity and assimilation in American society.

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James Marten and A. Kristen Foster, eds. *More Than a Contest Between Armies: Essays on the Civil War Era*. (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2008. Pp. xii, 308, illustrations, notes, suggested readings, index. Cloth, \$35.00.)

More Than a Contest Between Armies is a collection of essays derived from the first twelve lectures given in Marquette University's "Frank L. Klement Lectures: Alternative Views of the Sectional Conflict." From his 1952 article in the *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* to the posthumously published *Lincoln's Critics: The Copperheads of the North* (1999), historian Frank L. Klement published several path breaking books and numerous articles on the Copperhead—or antiwar Democrat—movement during the American Civil War. Extensively researched and carefully argued, Klement maintained that the Copperheads were not a disloyal fifth column or fire in the rear, but a loyal opposition who based their political positions on conservative understandings of the Constitution, economic grievances, western regional suspicion of eastern industrialists, legitimate political dissent, and the need for self-preservation in the face of an increasingly powerful and centralizing federal government. In recent years, Klement's interpretations have been challenged by several young scholars, but his writing on Civil War Copperheads remains the most thorough work of its kind, and, to the mind of this reviewer, has yet to be supplanted.

More Than a Contest Between Armies is a fitting tribute to the legacy of Frank Klement, who taught history at Marquette from 1948 until the mid-1980s. Indeed, the authors of these essays are historians at some of the finest academic institutions in the nation and the winners of numerous prizes and awards for their scholarship. And in keeping with the title—which is derived