

Jan Stievermann and Oliver Scheiding, editors. *A Peculiar Mixture: German Language Cultures and Identities in Eighteenth-Century North America*. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013). Pp. vi, 284, Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, \$69.95.

This book proceeds from a conference in Mainz, Germany, in 2009. The conference observed the three-hundredth anniversary of large-scale emigration from the Palatinate and other parts of what is now southwestern Germany. Many but not all of the emigrants eventually settled in British America, especially the colony of New York. The title of the book is appropriate, for not only were the settlers “a peculiar mixture” but the book’s contents are a peculiar mixture as well.

In an informative introduction, coeditor Stievermann explains that this volume attempts to build on “the theoretical insights and findings of recent revisionist scholarship.” Furthermore, he notes that it “seeks to contribute to modernizing and further advancing the study of transatlantic German cultures and identities during the colonial period” (2). The book achieves these objectives as nine authors use interdisciplinary approaches “to explore new facets in the sociopolitical, religious, cultural, and literary history of the fast-growing community of German speakers in the middle colonies after 1709” (5). These approaches enable the authors to move beyond the traditional emphasis on New England’s importance in American history and the “nation or denomination-centered framework of interpretation” (2) and to consider American history in a transatlantic context. Viewed in this way, Stievermann contends that being German in America was complex. To immigrants in different situations it had diverse meanings. German immigrants in America, he claims, were “anything but homogeneous” (11). To some extent their identity depended on developments in Europe, and for many it changed over time. Their ethnic identity was “fluid” (9), not stable. The authors’ presentations are organized into three groups of three essays each.

The section on “Migration and Settlement” begins as Marianne Wokeck re-evaluates the “1709 Mass Migration” as “a transformative episode in the history of population movements” (23). Although there had been other large-scale movements of European people, she claims that this one was significant in that it “marked the beginning of a new stage in westward migration” (36). It established precedents in the organization of “transatlantic migration routes” (37). Also, it raised questions for the immigrants concerning their identity as they settled among people of other ethnic groups.

Rosalind Beiler describes the little-known role of “Information Brokers and Diplomats” in assisting the Palatines and Swiss Mennonites in their movement to British America during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. They obtained permission for emigrants “to cross political borders, . . . helped to arrange transportation, . . . and sought the funding” (48) necessary to enable them to reach their destinations.

Many historians have written about the hostility between European settlers and the Native Americans, but Philip Otterness tells a different story. Because the Palatines who moved to the valleys of the Schoharie Creek and the Mohawk River during the early eighteenth century received harsh treatment from their Dutch and English predecessors, they turned to the Indians for help. Otterness believes that without it, they may not have survived. In time, their relations became so close that the Germans and the Indians adopted some aspects of the ethnicity of the other. For example, some Germans, including Conrad Weiser, learned the Iroquois language, and some Indians learned to speak German. Even the French and Indian War did not fracture their relationship.

Cynthia Falk opens the section on “Material Intellectual Cultures in the Making” by providing through the New York Germans’ architecture and other objects what she considers “a necessary corrective to the prevailing focus on Pennsylvania in the study of German communities in early America” (85). Although both groups “adopted some elements of the Old World culture,” and “borrowed from other New World” groups that surrounded them, the smaller number of German immigrants in New York and other factors, such as the weather, “made New York’s Palatine settlements markedly different in character from Pennsylvania communities” (89, 93).

Shifting from material to intellectual culture, Patrick Erben complains in his essay on “(Re) Discovering the German Language Literature of Colonial America” that this branch of scholarship has not received the attention it deserves. He charges that what little there has been “was marred by nationalistic agenda” (18). He declares that the German-speaking immigrants “brought with them a rich literary, cultural, and religious tradition” that they recorded in “a variety of genres” (117). His intention is not merely to fill a gap but to show literary relationships that he suggests could be achieved “by means of translation and translingual textual exchange” (119). As examples, he points to the letters and books that were passed between German and English pacifists and to the similarities to be found in the poetry of the German Johannes Kelpius and the English Edward Taylor.

Wider cultural exchanges are discussed in Matthias Schonhofer's essay on "The Correspondence Network of Gotthilf Ernst Muhlenberg," Lancaster's Lutheran pastor from 1780 until his death in 1815 and an early American botanist. This essay describes Muhlenberg's use of letters "as a tool for scientific research . . . and the development of his web of contacts" (151). In 1784 he began to exchange specimens with German botanists. Because of what he called "unhappy troubles in the Old Countrie" (158), he expanded his correspondence to include Englishmen. In the early nineteenth century his interests turned exclusively to American plants "that could persist in our free air" (162). This German pastor and botanist expressed his desire to build "a national botanical tradition" (169). Despite his desire to fulfill "the promise of independence" (169), he and other American scientists remained dependent on Europe, demonstrating that continued interaction between the two cultures was essential.

The section on "Negotiations of Ethnic and Religious Identities" begins with Marie Basile McDaniel's essay on the "Divergent Paths" that Germans in America took in expressing who they were. Her point is that "German identity reflected the personal availability, strength, familiarity, and appeal of German individuals, communities, and institutions." It also involved the German speakers' repulsion . . . for the assertion of otherness by Anglo-Pennsylvanians" (186). They "revealed their identity through their choices of names, . . . marriage partners, executors of their estates, wills, church affiliations, and types of work. . . . Some associated with other German speakers and participated in a German speaking community." Other Germans "networked with non-Germans." "And a very small percentage occupied a liminal space between both groups" (202).

Jan Stievermann emphasizes a more cohesive group of German immigrants in his essay entitled "Defining the Limits of Liberty: Pennsylvania's Peace Churches during the Revolution." To historians of Pennsylvania's history, the account of the horrible treatment that members of the peace churches received at the hands of the so-called patriots is a familiar story. Stievermann insists that the refusal of the Mennonites, Amish, Dunkers, Schwenkfelders, and Moravians to support the War for American Independence stems not from their loyalty to Britain's King George III but from their understanding of the Christian scriptures. Pacifism was an integral part of their religion. They protested that William Penn had promised them religious liberty and charged that the revolutionary committees had denied them that liberty and had become "despotic" (219). The Pennsylvania legislature required them

to swear oaths to support its war effort, provide supplies, pay taxes, and serve in the military. When they declined, government officials fined them, confiscated their property, jailed, and even banished some. This experience reminded them of the “non-resistant martyrdom” (220) that their Anabaptist ancestors had suffered in Europe. Although the postwar Assembly withdrew the offending laws, many members of peace churches withdrew from political involvement. Several contingents of Mennonites actually left the new nation and settled in the Canadian province of Ontario. For the majority German “church people,” Lutherans and Reformed, their participation in the French and Indian War and the Revolution served as catalysts “toward fuller integration into Pennsylvania’s political culture” (213).

Such political and military developments have characterized historical analyses of early American history, according to Liam Riordan. Instead, he uses “Cultural History” in general and the “Pennsylvania German *Taufscheine*” during the revolutionary period in particular to interpret ethnic identity. Early *Taufscheine* were written and drawn by folk artists in bright colors on paper. Initially, they contained only traditional Pennsylvania art forms. The writing was broken, which is why sometimes they are called *fracturschriften*. Riordan contends that they filled the need to “document . . . family identity” (254) as many recorded the birth and baptism of children in an age when government statistics were deficient or nonexistent; however, nonbaptizing religious groups created them also. They were especially prevalent in southeastern Pennsylvania but existed far beyond. They may have had European antecedents, but “Pennsylvania *taufscheine* represent a clear departure from Old World prototypes” (253). Most were prepared between 1770 and 1840. Riordan contends that the “Pennsylvania Germans created and purchased *taufscheine* to reflect their newly assertive sense of ethnic particularity” (249). Whether they did so deliberately or unconsciously is an open question. During the nineteenth century, *taufscheine* began to be printed, mass produced, and sold commercially in German communities and in others as well. These changes and the inclusion of some English art forms indicate a broadening of Pennsylvania German identity.

The contents of this book demonstrate scholarship at its best. All of the essays are well written—clear and concise. Most authors provide fresh interpretations, especially Wokeck, Beiler, and Otterness. Schonhofer develops a distinctive topic to make a relevant point. All of the essays are documented fully. Several use unusual source material, including Falk, McDaniel, and Riordan. Erben provides a bibliography that is specific to his topic as well

as suggestions for further research. Riordan includes illustrations and a map to help readers to understand his text. Editors Stievermann and Scheiding identify the authors' qualifications and provide a detailed index.

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Jennifer Graber. *The Furnace of Affliction: Prisons and Religion in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011). ISBN 978-0-8078-3457-2. Cloth. \$42.00.

The Furnace of Affliction examines the role of religion in the first decades of the nation's penitentiaries. Specifically, Jennifer Graber sets out to determine whether or not religion was at the heart of reformative incarceration in the early prisons of New York State. Close connections between New York and Philadelphia reformers is immediately apparent, beginning with Quaker Thomas Eddy, who lead efforts at New York's Newgate Prison. Eddy took great inspiration from his Philadelphia friends who advocated nonviolence, spacious gardens, and a paternalistic philosophy. Eddy's efforts in New York failed and his influence had peaked and waned by 1804.

This time signified a transition in both the form and philosophy of religion's influence—perhaps the most dramatic turning point in the book. Graber shifts her focus from religious reformers (chiefly Quaker in the early decades) to Protestant chaplains who become more important as the years unfold. In this new era, the narrative of reformative incarceration shifts from one of quiet and peaceful reflection to a “furnace of affliction” in the words of the influential Baptist chaplain Reverend John Stanford, who led religious work at Newgate. Reverend Stanford's philosophy and approach to prisoners was crucial to the larger shift in expectations for punishment. Stanford promoted “a theology of redemptive suffering” that basically endorsed the increasing use of violent means to discipline and punish inmates (58).

The penitentiary system never worked as it was intended; inmates refused to be silent and obedient; guards violated rules; reformers fought with inspectors over what was right. This dynamic was repeated again and again as Auburn Penitentiary was to be built upstate with more modern design to accommodate the growing number of inmates subject to reformative incarceration. This time Boston's Reverend Louis Dwight became