

ing interest in historic preservation as one of the most powerful economic and social forces affecting modern perceptions of the landscape. Spurred by the Historic Preservation Act of 1966, preservationists aim to identify and evaluate all historical resources and to preserve historically significant ones. With a \$17 million annual budget, America's Industrial Heritage Project, for instance, seeks to turn a nine county region of south-central Pennsylvania into a national park based upon industrial heritage. It has become a major U.S. National Park Service preservation project. Francaviglia, suspicious of such efforts, argues that in most cases

preservation has been a selective (and subjective) process that favors properties that are attractive, desirable, or marketable — those historical properties that the culture feels are worthy of preservation. This selective preservation has resulted in the saving of certain residential and commercial properties, while many industrial features owned by the mining interests have vanished. Included in the latter are buildings, headframes, flumes, and other structures. Therefore, preserved mining landscapes are usually lopsided assemblages of genteel buildings — not the gritty landscape of everyday industrial life that characterized the mining district during its active period(s). (180)

Whether the industrial heritage project in central Pennsylvania follows the narrow selection processes that Francaviglia criticizes or develops broader interpretations remains to be seen. Developing a holistic perspective of today's mining landscape depends on how well one utilizes all available clues, including topography, the nature of the extraction process, weather conditions, and re-vegetation, among numerous other considerations.

Hard Places is a good place to start for those interested in an intro-

duction to America's mining landscapes or in finding out how to begin to make sense of the country's mining heritage (including Western Pennsylvania). Professionals and academics — archaeologists, architects, mining engineers, geographers, historians, and others — will find Francaviglia's effort useful to their work and a source for linking with other disciplines.

Hard Places is not without its shortcomings. The author does address the role of the operator and mine worker, but the discussion is often overwhelmed and lost in the description of the physical structures. It is equally important to remember that although these communities and areas were hard places to live, they were decided upon, invested in, planned, and maintained by human beings, a point Francaviglia does not seem especially interested in. The stories of mine workers and their families, which unfolded throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, still affect us today. Understanding how resources were developed in our country may help us gain more insight into what it takes to develop resources on a much larger scale in the modern global economy. ■

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News from the Land of Freedom: German Immigrants Write Home

Edited by Walter D. Kamphoefner, Wolfgang Helbich, and Ulrike Sommer

Part of the Documents in American Social History, series editors Nick Salvatore and Kerby Miller.

Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991. Pp. ix, 645. Preface, introduction, appendix, sources cited, index. \$35

THIS volume, which presents a selection of immigrant writings to friends and fam-

ily in Germany, is part of Cornell Press' series originally published in German. It draws on the Bochum Immigrant Letter Collection, which is housed at Ruhr University-Bochum. The editors undertook the daunting task of selecting, introducing, and abridging entries from the nearly 5,000 letters in the Bochum collection to "present a work that would meet the highest scholarly standards of documentation and authenticity, that would make a solid contribution to research in social history, but that at the same time would provide to general readers with historical, political, or social interests an informative and even exciting piece of literature." (pg. viii) With such an ambitious goal, it is remarkable how well they have succeeded.

The book's extensive introduction places the letters in the context of German immigration, and offers a trenchant discussion of demographic, migratory, and settlement patterns. The introductory section also touches on other issues necessary for an understanding of the letters' content and meaning: nativism, politics, ethnicity, German language instruction in schools, the German language press, and the impact of World War I on German-American life. In addition, the editors evaluate the general status and usefulness of letters as historical documents, and describe their criteria and methods for selecting and abridging the letter series included in the volume.

Kamphoefner, Helbich, and Sommer divided the letters into three broad categories which reflect the occupation of the writer: farmer, worker, or domestic servant. Introductory essays on the experiences and circumstances of each occupational group open the three sections, and relevant information also prefaces each of the 20 series of letters contained in the volume. The editors deserve praise for this thorough introductory work, for without it, fully appreciating the letters would be difficult indeed. Equally commendable is the meticulous and extensive documentation which

characterizes the entire volume. The editors consulted an incredible number of sources — census reports, church records, city directories, immigration and passenger lists, to name only a few — on both sides of the Atlantic to trace not only the writers and their families, but also to authenticate statements, dates, and places mentioned in the letters. The volume, which includes helpful maps, a useful appendix of weight, measure, and currency equivalents, and a detailed index, deserves high marks for design, production, and translation.

The letters themselves reveal a number of common themes. Nearly all demonstrate the importance of continuing ties to Germany. Immigrant letters were catalysts in promoting or discouraging chain migration, and the letters detail the filial, cultural, and financial dynamics which influenced Germans on both sides of the Atlantic. Many immigrant correspondents also remarked on other shared experiences and perceptions: the difficulty of communicating in an English-speaking country; the high prices of food and clothing compared to Germany; and differing cultural practices. One example is the divergent styles of American and German celebrations of the Christian Sabbath. "You also have to get used to doing without Sunday revels," Matthias Dorgathen wrote to his family from Masilon, Ohio in 1881, "because Sundays everything's shut, saloons and businesses in general.... Here Saturday night is Sunday, on Sundays there's nothing going on," (428, 430).

Difficulty becoming acculturated was another common theme, though the writers demonstrated a variety of experiences. Some immigrants saw few differences in their new circumstances. Heinrich Moller, for instance, frequently remarked in letters to German relatives written from Cumberland, Maryland, during the 1860s and 1870s, that "In America everything is just the same as it is in Germany." (211) Most, however, agreed with Engel

Winkelmeier, a domestic servant who wrote to her parents from Brooklyn, New York, in 1867 that "it's a different world here." (575) At their best, the letters reveal much about this different world, shedding light on both the immigrants' attempts to adjust to their new lives and the society which they confronted. Many writers commented on new and unaccustomed opportunities for economic and social advancement. Writing to family and friends in 1882, Pittsburgh laborer Christian Kirst, for instance, compared Germany to his new home:

Things here are quite different from over there, here it doesn't matter who you are, here the banker knows the beggar, even our Peter has the son of a banker as a friend ... If a man comes here who has some means he can do a good business, here it isn't like over there, here you can do what you want, here it is a free country, here is the land of Canaan where milk and honey flow! ... I've already saved more here and lead a better life with my family than even the best is able to over there... (476, 478)

Regrettably, not all of the letters in the collection are as stirring or revealing as Kirst's. This is probably the volume's one major flaw: in attempting to address both a general and a scholarly audience, the editors wound up pleasing neither completely. General readers will find the introduction lengthy and overly technical. Many of the letter series also will not enthrall non-specialists, as the entries tend to be tedious rather than "entertaining, perhaps even gripping," (45) as the editors had hoped.

Different problems lessen the volume's appeal to scholars. In addition to focusing on emigration and adaptation, the editors intended to make "a contribution to the history of the inarticulate, history from the bottom up, the history of everyday life." (30) In general, they succeed admirably in this, but their editorial

policy of abridging letters by editing such things as "long lists of prices, ... ritualized pious reflections, ... [and] endless lists of persons to whom the letter-writer wishes to send his or her best regards" (46) diminishes the volume's usefulness to anyone interested in using the letters for further research. Much of what was eliminated, it would seem from their brief summaries of elisions, is the material necessary for writing systematic social history. Obviously, difficult editorial decisions had to be made to keep the volume readable and at a manageable length. For social historians investigating religion, gender, kinship networks, patterns of consumption, and other topics of current interest, however, the editors' choices often prove exasperating. These reservations must be tempered, though, by acknowledging the wealth of material which they did manage to include. While they could not, to paraphrase an American president popular among German immigrants, please all of the people all of the time, Kamphoefner, Helbich, and Sommer have made an important and impressive contribution to our understanding of immigration and German-American culture with *News from the Land of Freedom*. ■

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Sternwheelers on the Great Kanawha River

By Gerald W. Sutphin and Richard A. Andre

Privately published, 1991. Pp x, 198. Illustrations. \$25 post-paid, from Trans-Allegheny Books, 114 Capitol St., Charleston, WV 25301

STEAMBOAT enthusiasts are a special breed of old-time transportation fanatics, needing to be blessed with good imaginations. Railroad, automobile, and even airplane buffs can view the objects of their affection in museums, and ride in surviving relics, now mostly tourist attractions like the Strasburg Rail-