

REVIEWS

Wilson, Joseph, ed., **Texas and Germany: Crosscurrents**. Rice University Studies, ed. Katherine F. Drew. Vol. 63, No. 3. Houston: William Marsh Rice University, 1977.

This collection of eleven essays is the best publication on Texas Germans since Terry Jordan's **German Seed in Texas Soil** in 1966. Taken for the most part from two Bicentennial symposia which brought together speakers from diverse backgrounds, these papers present a refreshingly well-written introduction to the cultural life of the German-speaking people in Texas. More than that, they show new interdisciplinary directions for immigrant ethnic studies in the Southwest which for the past fifty years have labored under the driest formula-writing and parochialism. Hopefully **Crosscurrents** will suggest fresh research and writing so that Texas-German studies may take a rightful place along with many fine works on the Ohio-Germans, the Germans from Russia, the Donauschwaben, Amish, Hutterites, and Pennsylvania Dutch.

Crosscurrents appeals to a wide audience. The student of immigrant ethnic studies will find no better overview of the Germans in Texas than the opening article by Terry Jordan, cultural geographer of North Texas State University. Local historians and genealogists, as well, will agree with Jordan's explanations of something they long have sensed: the roles of personality and correspondence as determinants of immigration and dispersal. Otto Tetzlaff's treatment of one popular immigration guide also reflects on the psychology of immigrants—their expectations, their questions, and preparations. The article touches, furthermore, on a number of intriguing areas (New World concepts, ethical idealism, Romanticism, literature as a shaper of social patterns, 19th-century advertising) which probably will come together in the introduction of Tetzlaff's forthcoming translation of **Der Auswanderer nach Texas. Ein Handbuch und Rathgeber . . .** (1846).

Two articles by Glenn Gilbert (Southern Illinois University) and Gilbert Jordan (Southern Methodist University) measure the dialectal origins of the German spoken in Texas, as well as the demands placed on the immigrants' language. Cut off from concurrent developments in its homeland, Texas German struggled to accommodate the new geography (**das Thicket**), flora (**die Corn-cob**), fauna (**der Bollweevil**, **Coyote**), weather (**der Tornado**), government (**das Courthouse**), livelihoods (**der Farmer**, **Roundup**), tools (**der Buggywhip**, **das Rope**), religion (**die Campmeeting**), sports (**der Homerun**), and the inevitable growth of technology (**der Flattire**, **die Steamengine**, **das Steeringwheel**, **der Windshieldwiper**).

The article by the noted Texas folklorist, Francis E. Abernethy (Stephen F. Austin State University), is a welcome addition to neglected folklore and folklife studies of the Texas-Germans, while UT linguist Winfred Lehmann's article surveys the literature of the Texas-Germans, concluding with a potentially

fruitful suggestion for comparative studies of regional American and German-American literature.

Written from the perspective of a European looking at Texas, A. Leslie Willson's "Another Planet: Texas in German Literature" is a delightful study of the myth of Texas in the fiction of Charles Sealsfield and contemporary German literature.

Compared with these works, two of the remaining essays in **Crosscurrents** seem somewhat defective, though they are, of course, quite interesting. Waltraud Bartsch's article on acculturation shows what can be done, as a beginning, with letters, memoirs, diaries, and sketches uncovered by scholars in their investigations. Editor Joseph Wilson's essay on the language sounds like the stuff of which research papers are made. An earlier informal discussion of the same material by Professor Wilson in **Schatzkammer**, 2 (1976) was a much more pleasing treatment of linguistic rub off and trilingualism among the Wends of Texas.

Joseph Wilson's introduction, however, suggests several new avenues of approach to Texas-German studies. Still, it stops far short of presenting the range of possibilities. We ought to be headed, at this point, toward broader social and intellectual studies, starting from broad bases for analysis. Such works should focus less on chronology and events and more on ideas, patterns, and personalities. Future work should identify "problems" and then follow the various responses (or failures to respond) to these problems.

As American thought has shifted from its theory of the melting pot to a new idea of pluralism and cultural diversity, immigrant ethnic studies have enjoyed a new vogue. Yet many of the recent works perpetuate the old parochialism of our field because scholars are not conversant in the broader contexts of their subjects. Black and Chicago studies have made the initial steps toward new ethnic research. For work on the Texas Germans, **Crosscurrents** is a very positive step in that same direction. It will remain for some time as a measurement of succeeding works in this field.

GLEN E. LICH

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Ravenswaay, Charles van, **The Arts and Architecture of German Settlements in Missouri: A Survey of a Vanishing Culture**. Columbia: University of Missouri Pr., 1977.

Contrary to the title, this is not a survey of a vanishing culture but rather a massive encyclopedic study of a surviving culture. The author, a former director of the Missouri Historical Society, spent forty years interviewing craftsmen, studying and photographing their work and examining documentary materials for this handsomely illustrated volume. Van Ravenswaay concentrates on the culture created by the Missouri Germans "and its expression in the design and craftsmanship of their buildings, and utilitarian or decorative household furnishings."

Part One traces the history of the first German settlements in Missouri, Gottfried Duden and his **Report of a Journey to the Western States of North America**, the various 48er settlements, the Giessen Society, various German villages and counties in Missouri. All of this is richly illustrated with pictures of landscapes, farmers, Missouri German home interiors etc. Part Two examines the buildings of the Missouri Germans in chapters dealing with log construction, frame construction, stone construction, brick construction, barns, designers and builders. One fascinating chapter deals with the objects which immigrants brought with them to Missouri: glassware, porcelain, furniture, heirlooms, family treasures etc. Part Three describes the various Missouri German crafts and various objects of domestic use in a series of chapters dealing with the craftsmen, furniture types and makers, musical instruments, wood carving, baskets, firearms, tin and copperware, stone cutting and carving, textiles, pottery, drawings, prints, paintings, blacksmiths, bookbinders, boxmakers, braziers, broommakers, glassmakers, locksmiths, painters, sabots, woodenware, silversmiths, watchmakers and jewelers.

This extraordinary volume is a major contribution to the study not only of German-American arts, architecture and crafts, but also to the German-American lifestyle which emerged in the nineteenth century. A bibliography on the Missouri Germans is also appended to the text. The work, an obvious reflection of years of study, demonstrates also the love of the German-American author for his subject matter. He writes "Often I thought of the rich sound and rhythm of conversations in German and German-English I had heard so often in the past." Every library and person interested in German-Americana should obtain this important book.

DON HEINRICH TOLZMANN
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Rimland, Ingrid, **The Wanderers: The Saga of Three Women Who Survived**, Concordia Publishing House, 3558 South Jefferson Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri 63118. No price indicated.

Significant segments of the world's population have found the twentieth century to be little more than a period of trial, tribulation and torment. The Jews of western and eastern Europe suffering at the hands of the Nazis, Africans tormented by colonial and native rulers alike and South American Indians decimated in the name of progress all have their tales of utmost woe to relate. The peoples of Russia have known every form of misery possible in the years since World War I, with war, starvation and the ever present brutality of Soviet Communism permeating their existence and taking toll in the form of the lives of millions of innocent people. The various ethnic groups of the Soviet Union have been especially unfortunate in their lot, given not only their experience of tyranny but also of Great Russian prejudice, which has demanded conformity or death. **The Wanderers** is the tale of one such ethnic group caught in the Russian vise—the German Mennonites of the Ukraine.

Ingrid Rimland's beautifully written and poignantly expressed saga of the plight of the German Mennonites in twentieth century Russia conveys the tale of people ensnared in the vicissitudes of a world that they truly did not make. The Mennonites, a hardworking, exceedingly ethnic conscious folk, originally came to Russia at the behest of the German-born Catherine the Great, who wished to settle German farmers on Russian soil in order to tap the agricultural abundance that awaited the diligent husbandman. Clustered in tightly knit communities bound by a common language and culture, the German Mennonites held themselves aloof from the native population, reaping wealth from their farming ability but also sowing the seeds of Russian hatred that was to eventually cost them dearly.

The author, who quite obviously experienced many of the events described in her book herself or obtained knowledge of them at first hand, relates in prose of the utmost vividness the manner in which the chaos of World War I and its aftermath began the process that was to eventuate in the death of hundreds of thousands of the German Mennonite population. Following the conflict, White and Red Russian alike preyed upon the honest, hardworking German farmers, looting their dearly bought homesteads and leaving a trail of blood and destruction in their wake. The agony of existence in Russia grew with every year until finally the German Mennonites could only look to a revived Germany for their salvation.

The German armies did eventually arrive but their security of tenure on the Russian steppe was of short duration and by 1944 the Wehrmacht was in retreat. Many of the surviving Mennonites left with the German military and in the process underwent yet another eternity of suffering and death. The brutality, rape and savagery that Rimland describes in her book tests the faith of the reader in the goodness of humanity and does not spare the auditor in any detail.

Those few miserably treated Mennonites who survived made their way to Paraguay where an entirely new set of woes lay before them. Rimland superbly relates the vicissitudes of existence in a jungle environment in which not only did all the elements appear to conspire against the Mennonites pioneers but personality clashes also threatened to destroy their continued existence as a collective entity.

NORMAN LEDERER

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Koehler, Eve Eckert, **Seven Susannahs: Daughters of the Danube**. Available from Mr. Matthias Aringer, General Secretary, United Danube Swabian Society of U.S.A., 6060 North 118th Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53225.

Paper. No price indicated.

Present-day observers of the German-American scene cannot help but notice that German traditions in all of their old **echt** vigor are no longer being sustained by the majority of the groups making up Germania. As the first generation dies

out and is only partially replaced by new immigrants eager to assimilate into the majority culture as soon as possible, the **Vereine** of Northern and Southern Germans are rapidly losing their former position close to the center of the German-American experiences.

This situation is not as yet true of the dynamic and energetic societies composed of German expellees from central and eastern Europe. Like the Ukrainians and the Latvians, to cite two other groups ruthlessly torn away from their homelands, the Volga Germans and the Danube Swabians in America cling to their heritage with a tenacity and a fervor that is beautiful to behold. Young German-Americans attending the affairs sponsored by these organizations can gain an appreciation of what Germania was like in the full flush of its enthusiasm a generation ago.

The saga of the Danube Swabians in Europe is a sad one. Vigorously pioneering in the broad plains of Hungary and Rumania during the heyday of the Habsburg empire, the Danube Swabians made the land bloom as their capacity for hard work and their spirit of cooperating converted desert wastes into granaries of production. The Danube Swabians came from all areas of southern Germany in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century to better their miserable lot as near-serfs through new positions as independent farmers. Settling in their own villages, they clung tenaciously to their Swabian dialect and their customs over the centuries.

As long as the Habsburg Empire existed, the lot of the Danube Swabians was not a bad one. But with the breakup of the empire following World War I and the rise of self-conscious nationalism in the various ethnic components of the former imperial lands, the position of the Danube Swabians became less secure. Their situations became hopeless with the invasion of the forces of Adolf Hitler and the consequent defeat of Germany in World War II. Many Danube Swabians fled their ancestral homelands along with the retreating German troops and suffered all of the pain and anguish that was the lot of the displaced person. Those who remained bore the full brunt of the savage and bestial Russian occupation. A fortunate few of the refugees made their way eventually to the United States where they have in general prospered through hard work and a spirit of enterprise. A remnant of the Danube Swabian population still exists on the broad plains of Hungary but its future viability as a Germanic cultural enclave is in serious doubt.

Eve Eckert Koehler's lyrical narrative of the past and present state of the Danube Swabians in Europe and America is a most worthy testimonial to the strength of spirit of this fascinating people. Using seven generations of family members named Susannah as a framework for her tale, the author depicts the history of the Danube Swabians from their origins in southern Germany until the holocaust of World War II and after. Prose is interspersed with poetry and song in her work in a largely successful effort to convey the essence of this ethnic group's experience.

The last section of Miss Koehler's book relates the effort of the author and her family to trace the fate of one of the Susannahs, considered to have died in a Russian hard labor camp after World War II. This highly moving and dramatic

portion of the text constitutes a major literary effort on the part of the author and clearly indicates her ability to convey a feeling of emotion in a most effective manner. It would be unworthy of the reviewer to reveal the startling outcome of the family' search.

Seven Susannahs should be read by all those concerned over the heritage of an important population segment of eastern Europe as well as by those seeking a reaffirmation of the ability of the human spirit to survive under conditions of extreme stress.

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Arndt, Karl J. R., **Der Freundschafts- und Handelsvertrag von 1785 zwischen Seiner Majestät dem König von Preussen und den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika / The Treaty of Amity and Commerce of 1785 between His Majesty the King of Prussia and the United States of America**. München: Heinz Moos Verlag, 1977.

This richly illustrated volume, published as a collector's edition in October 1977, contains important documentation and commentaries on 18th century German-American relations. It contains the 1785 treaty between Prussia and the U.S.; comments of the editor on the French and American original text and their German translation; the French, American and German text of the treaty; a facsimile of the complete treaty, ratifications in excerpts; background, genesis and importance of the treaty; abstracts of German documents on the treaty; bibliographical notes and also Goetz Fehr's "International Law based on the spirit of freedom and humanity." Dr. Arndt has provided us with important documentation which he places in historical context and supplies the reader with a vivid picture of the society, the economy and the political situation at the time this treaty came about.

DON HEINRICH TOLZMANN

University of Cincinnati

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Terry G. Jordan. **Texas Log Buildings: A Folk Architecture**. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978. Pp. 230, profusely illustrated, bibliog. (299 entries). 1st edition. Cloth \$15.95.

The University of Texas Press makes no idle claim in advertising this book as a possible cabin-raising guide. Jordan's explanations of the practices and techniques of early Texan log craftsmen are so meticulously clear that, by following these descriptions carefully, one could (with some luck) notch corners, raise a log wall, and construct a floor, roof, and chimney.

That was, of course, not the intention of this book. With a detailed glossary and comprehensive bibliography (divided into four categories), **Texas Log**

Buildings is a scholarly endeavor to preserve a rapidly disappearing legacy of American folk culture.

"Folk buildings are extensions of the people and the religion," explains the author in an introductory passage. With that, he begins a perceptive analysis of the effects of weather, climate, native vegetation, and terrain on architectural and domestic adaption. Jordan then traces developments in construction through a number of cultural influences: German Texans, blacks, and Anglo-Americans of lower Southern derivation (Alabama-Georgia-Carolinas), as well as those of upper Southern or Appalachian derivation (Arkansas-Tennessee-Kentucky). For all of them, the lowly log cabin was "home" during a certain phase of their upward social climb from wilderness to civilization. Although early craftsmen built predominately of oak, cedar, and pine, Jordan found examples of houses and outbuildings, stores, inns, churches, schools, and jails crafted from at least six other woods as well.

For most readers of **Journal of German-American Studies**, the most interesting part of this book will be **Chapter 2: The Origin and Diffusion of Log Folk Architecture**. Here Jordan details the Northern European origin of log architecture, its subsequent development as a building style in "Scandinavia, Finland, most of European Russia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, the Alpine lands, the Black Forest of Germany, the mountainous spine of Yugoslavia, and the Carpathians," and eventually its diffusion to North America. The log cabin ultimately reached Texas by several routes: the Anglo-American incursions (roughly 1820-60) and the northern European colonization (beginning with Germans ca. 1831-60).

In conclusion, the best characteristic of **Texas Log Buildings** is its comprehensive scope and perspective. Its weakness is that correlations between domestic architecture and social relations and values are not drawn, but then again Jordan is not writing of a homogeneous group.

The author is a sixth generation Texan of German and Anglo-American descent. His doctoral degree in cultural-historical geography was granted in 1965 by the University of Wisconsin at Madison, and since 1969 he has been at North Texas State University.

GLEN E. LICH

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Ausländer, Rose. **Aschensommer: Ausgewählte Gedichte**. Ed. Berndt Mosblech. Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1978. 245 pp.; and **Es bleibt noch viel zu sagen**. With two records of Ausländer reading her poetry and a print by HAP Grieshaber. Cologne: Literarischer Verlag Braun (1978). 47 loose, unnumbered pages.

The two volumes under review are the first selections of Ausländer's poetry which have been made available. **Aschensommer** offers an inexpensive introduction to the poet. It contains an extensive selection of Ausländer's poetry as well as two of her essays, a bibliography, and Jürgen Wallmann's excellent study

"Materialien zu Leben und Werk"—all for the very reasonable price of DM 9.80. Although not all of my personal favorites are included, it would be difficult to fault the editor's selections. The emphasis is placed upon the later works, which are clearly Ausländer's best. Only the title—taken from a poem from the poet's first postwar collection—seems somewhat inappropriate.

In **Es bleibt noch viel zu sagen**, too, later poems far outnumber earlier ones; a few from **Doppelspiel** are even included. But here the resemblance ends. This is a book for connoisseurs (although the price, DM 28, is far lower than one would expect). Each of the 46 poems is printed on a separate, loose page, and each is read by Ausländer on the records which are included. (The first record is the same as the one which accompanies the limited first edition of the **Gesammelte Gedichte**.) The poet's delivery is distinctive and appropriate. She neither declaims the poems, as might a professional actress, nor reduces them to banality, as do some poets when reading from their works. The emotional tone is—appropriately—present, but subdued. The subtle tensions inherent in her poetry assume even greater significance when the reader follows the printed text, comparing the effect of the written words and lines with that of the author's oral interpretation. An otherwise perfect product is marred by an editorial oversight: "Bitte I" is included in the text, but on the record "Bitte II"—a totally different poem—is read.

Everyone who enjoys German poetry should have a copy of **Aschensommer**. And everyone who truly appreciates fine poetry will want to own **Es bleibt noch viel zu sagen**.

JERRY GLENN

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Mimi Grossberg, **Amerika im austro-amerikanischen Gedicht 1938-1978**. Wien: Bergland Verlag. 1978. 64 pp.

A poetry collection of Austrian exile authors focusing on their American experience is the latest publication of Mimi Grossberg, an emigrée living since 1938 in New York City. Mrs. Grossberg, well-known for her anthologies of *Austro-Americana*, presents in this small volume 58 poems by 21 authors. Her collection offers a multitude of talents, lyric approaches, impressions, and aspects of the country which has become a refuge for these authors most of whom maintain their native language and literary tradition. One meets Friedrich Bergammer, Ernst Waldinger, Rose Ausländer, Margaret Kollisch—just to name a few. Mimi Grossberg's presentation is a valuable addition to the manifold research efforts into German language literature from the United States.

GERT NIERST
