

DON HEINRICH TOLZMANN.....

REVIEWS

Norbert Krapf, Finding the Grain: Pioneer Journals, Franconian Folktales, Ancestral Poems. Jasper, Indiana: Dubois Historical Society, 1977.

Finding the Grain, a collection of pioneer journals, German folklore translations, ancestral documents, pictures and poems, was one of the projects sponsored by the Dubois County Bicentennial Committee. Norbert Krapf, a professor of English and American literature at Long Island University, was born and raised in the German section of southern Indiana. He studied German in Schwaebisch Hall, Germany at the Goethe Institute and since that time has been engaged in genealogical and local historical research. This book represents a masterful attempt to present family history within the context of the German heritage of Indiana.

Krapf includes original German documents, letters, journals and passports of German immigrant ancestors who came to Indiana. English translations are also provided. These materials offer insight into the problems the Germans encountered as they entered the U.S. The difficulty in translating this must have been complex since the writing was unpunctuated in some cases, the vocabulary archaic or dialect, the grammar inconsistent and the writing difficult to decipher. The volume contains maps of where the Germans settled in southern Indiana as well as illustrations from villages in Germany from whence the immigrants came. Krapf includes a number of German folktales in German and English. "The German versions are included to remind Dubois County readers that, for most of them, their ancestral heritage cannot be discovered and preserved through American English alone." Mr. Krapf writes "This need to search out my German heritage probably has something to do with my regret at never having been able to speak with people like my great aunt. I often wonder now what she and her generations could have told me about the world of their parents had I spoken their language..." He eventually learned German and rediscovered his ancestral heritage.

Hopefully more pioneer journals and letters will surface as a result of this excellent book and lead to further publications that combine local history and genealogy.

Emil Meynen, Bibliography on German settlements in Colonial North America... Reprint of the 1937 edition: Detroit: Gale, 1966. \$20.

This is the major bibliographical guide to publications on the Germans in the colonial era. It lists 7,762 books, articles, addresses etc. written before 1937. Much of this deals with the Palatines in America. One section deals with "The Palatine Emigration and German Settlements in New York Province" while other sections cover such topics as "The Palatine Colonies in Ireland" and "The Palatine-Irish-Americans." Meynen also lists over a thousand colonial German-American genealogies, many of which are Palatine. Also of great use is the local history section which lists all the histories of the Germans in the following states: Pennsylvania, Maryland, the Virginias, North Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, New York, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Wisconsin, Kansas, Nebraska, Minnesota, North Dakota and also Canada. This is a basic guide which anyone researching German ancestry from the colonial era should consult.

Robert R. Robinson-Zwahr, Die Bremerverwandtschaft in Deutschland und in Texas (The Bremers and Their Kin in Germany and in Texas). Volume One. Wichita, Texas: Nortex Press, 1977. 652 p.

The fabric of American history has been woven together from the research of numerous local historians and genealogists and Robinson-Zwahr's family history will certainly become a basic reference source on the German-Texans. Robert Robinson-Zwahr is a fifth generation member of three German-Texan pioneer families who traveled under the auspices of the Verein zum Schutze deutscher Einwanderer in Texas (Society for the Protection of German Immigrants in Texas) to the Republic of Texas in 1844-45.

Many genealogies are of interest only to the immediate families concerned. However, Robinson-Zwahr has placed the story of his people within the broad context of German-American history in general and German-Texana in particular. It is without doubt the major German-American genealogical publication of the year. Genealogists interested in publishing their family history could not consult a finer source in terms of style, format, research techniques etc. This an excellent model for all who are compiling a German genealogy.

Volume Two will contain a surname index with 10,000 names and a bibliography on the Germans in Texas. The Appendix in Volume One contains numerous documents, letters, etc. from his family, but most importantly it also reprints two German language books written and published in Texas by his ancestor Fritz Goldbeck, a noted German-Texan poet. The book bears a German title and contains quite a bit of German language material, but is basically an English language publication. However, the book will probably sell well in Germany, Texas and across America because of the masterful research techniques that it displays.

The price of Robinson-Zwahr's fine book has not been set yet, but interested readers may contact The Nortex Press, Box 1369, Wichita Falls, Texas 76307.

Clifford Neal Smith and Anna Piszczan-Czaja Smith, Encyclopedia of German-American Genealogical Research. New York: R. R. Bowker Co., 1976.

The primary purpose of this reference work, according to the authors, is to survey the materials available to genealogists searching for roots in the German-speaking areas of Europe. Since German-American genealogical research has not been systematically studied in the past, this work serves as an inventory of some of the basic reference tools. A further purpose is to provide American researchers with background material on German customs, sociological stratification, governmental organization, and ethnographic considerations having a bearing on immigrant ancestors. As Smith notes, the Germans are the largest ethnic group in the U.S. Certainly in the period 1820-1957 they far outnumbered those from Great Britain.

This encyclopedia offers the researcher valuable information and data on reference materials available: lists, bibliographies, statistical tables, records, primary sources, historical data etc. Sections of the book cover such topics as: German Ethnic Religious Bodies in America; Language and Onomastics; Genealogy in Germany; Heraldry; and German-American Genealogy. With reference to the Palatines Smith lists six pages of publications which deal with Palatines who immigrated to America.
