



Minnesota State University, Mankato  
Cornerstone: A Collection of Scholarly  
and Creative Works for Minnesota  
State University, Mankato

---

All Graduate Theses, Dissertations, and Other  
Capstone Projects

Graduate Theses, Dissertations, and Other  
Capstone Projects

---

2013

## Problems in Historiography: The Americanization of German Ethnics

Bradley Jake Hustad  
*Minnesota State University - Mankato*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://cornerstone.lib.mnsu.edu/etds>



Part of the [United States History Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Hustad, B. J. (2013). Problems in Historiography: The Americanization of German Ethnics [Master's thesis, Minnesota State University, Mankato]. Cornerstone: A Collection of Scholarly and Creative Works for Minnesota State University, Mankato. <https://cornerstone.lib.mnsu.edu/etds/141/>

This APP is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Theses, Dissertations, and Other Capstone Projects at Cornerstone: A Collection of Scholarly and Creative Works for Minnesota State University, Mankato. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Graduate Theses, Dissertations, and Other Capstone Projects by an authorized administrator of Cornerstone: A Collection of Scholarly and Creative Works for Minnesota State University, Mankato.

Problems in Historiography: The Americanization of German Ethnics

By

Bradley J. Hustad

An Alternate Plan Paper Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Science

In

History

Minnesota State University, Mankato

Mankato, Minnesota

May 2013

Problems in Historiography: The Americanization of German Ethnics

Bradley J. Hustad

This alternate plan paper has been examined and approved by the following  
paper committee members.

Lori Ann Lahlum, Advisor

Kathleen Gorman

H. Matthew Loayza

## **ABSTRACT**

“Problems in Historiography: The Americanization of German Ethnics”

Bradley J. Hustad.

Master of Science in History

Minnesota State University, Mankato, 2013

Gaps still exist in the history written about German Americans and how they assimilated or acculturated into American society from the late seventeenth century until the present day. History written about how German Americans became Americanized contains fifteen distinct types of scholarship that can roughly be divided into urban and rural disciplines. Because historians have not applied ideas introduced in urban studies into research about rural areas and vice versa, the overall arguments advanced by historians suffer. Additionally, historians have not researched colonial Germans, Germans who immigrated to America before the Revolution, in extensive depth. Furthermore, scholars can do more research on the relationship between religion, social issues, urban space, and the countryside.

## **PROBLEMS IN HISTORIOGRAPHY: THE AMERICANIZATION OF GERMAN ETHNICS**

The history of German immigration to the United States begins in 1683 with the first settlement of Germans in Germantown, Pennsylvania. Palatines and Swiss Mennonites dominated German immigration during this period. In 1776, this migration stream ended due to the Revolutionary War. Many of these Germans migrated to Pennsylvania and the German language they spoke fused with English to develop a hybrid language, Pennsylvania German. Immigration from Germany did not pick up again until the 1830s. From 1830 until 1846, most Germans came from southwestern Germany to the United States, mostly for economic reasons. In German scholarship, these migrants are referred to as Dreiziger, a term signifying that they came during the 1830s.

In 1846, German immigration increased dramatically due to a variety of reasons. The Forty-Eighters, frustrated with the European political system, immigrated for political reasons. The term Forty-Eighters refers to the failed European revolutions of 1848 which challenged the European political status quo. In the United States, the Forty-Eighters often assumed political leadership amongst the Germans. They generally settled in urban areas and many became newspaper columnists and editors. During the same period, the Old Lutherans migrated to America for religious reasons. The Prussian King, eager to unite the Lutheran and Reformed Churches in his lands, decreed that both

churches share the same liturgy. Lutherans, angered by the Prussian King's actions, left for the United States. Upon arrival in their adopted homeland, Old Lutherans naturally opposed any type of effort that would compromise what they saw as true Lutheran faith. Most Germans, however, still left their home for economic reasons.

The onset of the American Civil War stymied German immigration for a time. From 1864 to 1873, German migration increased again, but did not reach its previous levels. In addition to southwestern Germans, western and northwestern Germans came to the United States, again for mostly economic reasons. Due to economic recession, immigration levels dropped and did not pick up again until 1880. German migrants in the late nineteenth century are referred to as the Late Liberals by Heinz Kloss. Germans during this time came mostly from eastern Prussia. When the United States entered World War I in 1917, immigration again stopped.<sup>1</sup>

The history written about the Americanization of these German immigrants from the late seventeenth century through the present day consists of fifteen dominant or mainstream types of scholarship. In most cases, there is strict division between urban and rural history after the 1950s. By and large, preceding scholarship in the urban or rural disciplines after that time influenced the subsequent scholarship in that discipline, although there is some overlap in regards to women's history. In addition to these general trends, it is important to understand the different terms used by historians and writers when describing the process of Americanization. Finally, there are still problems

---

<sup>1</sup> Albert B. Faust, *The German Element in the United States*, vol 1. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin & Co, 1909), 111-5; Horst Rößler, "Massenexodus: die Neue Welt des 19. Jahrhunderts," in *Deutsche im Ausland – Fremde in Deutschland*, ed. Klaus J. Bade (München: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1992), 148-50.

or gaps that historians can address or research in order to increase our understanding of the Americanization of German immigrants.

It is easier to understand what these problems are if one comprehends the types of scholarship that have dominated the discipline. The fifteen phases of the historiography of German-American assimilation or acculturation begin with filiopietism, the melting pot, the Turner Thesis, Hawgood's Theory, and Kloss' description on failed German attempts at unity. This beginning period of historical scholarship started in the early nineteenth century and ended in the 1940s. In the 1950s, the historiography splits into a rough dichotomy between urban and rural history. Sociologists such as Robert E. Park heavily influenced historians beginning during this time. Their focal point centered on the ghetto and immigrant hardships. In the 1960s, historians crafted a political interpretation that expanded on the ghetto analysis. Labor and women's historians who followed afterwards concentrated on culture and women. Then sociologists again introduced new concepts in the 1990s that culminated in a new interpretation of ethnic identity in the twenty-first century.

German-American rural history after 1940 and into the 1980s is rather limited. When historians took notice of chain migration communities in rural America, however, things picked up. Chain migration occurs when people from a geographic area cluster and settle together in a community in a foreign land following immigration. At about the same time, women's historians also began to write about rural history. In the following

decade, the 1990s, Andreas Reichstein offered a new interpretation of assimilation and acculturation on the frontier.

The terms used by these historians to describe the Americanization of ethnics is important because they can mean very different things. Ethnics are people who share a common culture or characteristics, often due to shared origin, outside of the dominant group in a society. Commonly immigrants, ethnics in the United States Americanized or adopted to the core American culture. Americanization is the process by which ethnics are assimilated and/or acculturated through time. Americanization can refer to either assimilation or acculturation. Scholars have both these terms to describe the Americanization process, but they are not similar. Assimilation refers to a process in which ethnics lose their identity through time and can no longer be identified separately from the dominant society. In the case of German Americans, assimilation can be identified by the disappearance of the German language. Whereas assimilation focuses on ethnics losing a distinguishable identity, acculturation instead draws attention to the process and transfer of cultural change between two groups. For example, acculturation can be evidenced between German ethnics and American society by the introduction of the hot dog by German Americans and its rise in popularity in the United States. Americanization can refer to either process or it can include both.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Milton M. Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 61-2. For alternate definitions of assimilation and acculturation, see Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess, *Introduction to the Science of Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1921), 735.



The characterization of this Americanization process still has problems. The dichotomy between urban and rural history itself is one of them. Additionally, historians can study and expand upon the interplay between religion, ethnicity, and politics. Other issues include the Americanization of German immigrant soldiers, the effect of foreign relations with Germany on the assimilation or acculturation process during the interwar period, and a disregard for German immigrants prior to the nineteenth century. All these gaps prevent a true comprehensive grasp of German-American history.

To demonstrate that gaps still exist in the historical record of German ethnic Americanization, it is useful to retrace the evolution of German-American historical research in even greater detail. Two types of scholarship, filiopietism and the melting pot, are the fountainheads from which questions of German-American assimilation and acculturation spring.

Filiopietism, the world's introduction to German-American history, can be described as contributionist history.<sup>3</sup> The authors, usually first- or second-generation German Americans, attempted to prove that ethnic Germans made contributions to American history: that what they did was worthwhile and had meaning. Because this

---

<sup>3</sup> Emil Klauprecht, *Deutsche Chronik in der Geschichte des Ohio-Thales, und seiner Hauptstadt Cincinnati in's Besondere...* (Cincinnati: G. Hof & M.A. Jacobi, 1864); Friedrich Kapp, *Geschichte der Deutschen im Staate New York bis zum Anfange des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* (New York: Verlag von E. Steiger, 1867); Rudolf A. Koss, *Milwaukee* (Milwaukee: Herold, 1871); Gustav P. Körner, *Das deutsche Element in den Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika, 1818-1848* (Cincinnati: A.E. Wilde & Co, 1880); Anton Eickhoff, *In der neuen Heimath: geschichtliche Mittheilungen über die deutschen Einwanderer in allen Theilen der Union* (New York: E. Steiger & Co, 1884); Wilhelm Hense-Jensen, *Wisconsin's Deutsch-Amerikaner, bis zum Schluß des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Milwaukee: Die Deutsche Gesellschaft, 1900-1902, 2 vols.); and Rudolf Cronau, *Drei Jahrhunderte deutschen Lebens in Amerika* (Berlin: D. Reimer, 1909).

type of history concerned itself so much with proving German-American value, it ignored other factors.<sup>4</sup>

The first writer to concern himself with proving German-American value was Franz Löher who felt that German-American history in the United States was ignored by English-speaking Americans. He hoped to foster a sense of ethnic awareness by picturing German Americans as an enlightened people.<sup>5</sup> His history was a response to the anti-immigrant Nativism of the mid-1800s. Pressured by such attitudes, German Americans had ample motivation to prove their worth. An example of this can be seen in Heinrich Armin Ratterman, editor of *Der Deutsche Pionier*, a serial publication of the Der Deutsche-Pionier Verein von Cincinnati from 1874-1885. He desired “to prove that Germans had played their honorable part in the development of the United States.”<sup>6</sup> Even if Ratterman was unable to prove his point to some Americans, his works formed the basis for subsequent interpretations of German-American history.<sup>7</sup>

Ratterman may have been influential, but Albert B. Faust surpasses all other contributionist historians by distinction of writing filiopietism’s “crowning achievement”

---

<sup>4</sup> Kathleen Niels Conzen, “Die Assimilierung der Deutschen in Amerika: Zum Stand der Forschung in den Vereingten Staaten,” in *Die deutschsprachige Auswanderung in die Vereinigten Staaten: Berichte über Forschungsstand und Quellenbestände*, ed. Willi Paul Adams (Berlin: John F. Kennedy Institut für Nordamerikastudien Freie Universität Berlin, 1980), 34.

<sup>5</sup> Franz Löher, *Geschichte und Zustände der Deutschen in Amerika (Cincinnati: Eggers & Wulkop, 1847)*.

<sup>6</sup> Mary Edmund Spanheimer, *Heinrich Armin Ratterman: German Author, Poet, and Historian* (New York: AMS Press, 1970), 101-2.

<sup>7</sup> Kathleen Niels Conzen, “The Writing of German-American History,” *The Immigration History Newsletter* 12, no. 2 (November 1980): 3.

in the decade before the Great War.<sup>8</sup> Faust explained how German Americans laid the foundations for Pennsylvania's wealth, opened the frontier against the natives, made the Virginia Valley the richest farming region in the state of Virginia, and helped win the west. He described their prominence in agriculture, political influence, role in education, and their scientific and cultural contributions.<sup>9</sup>

Faust only briefly touched upon assimilation at all. Instead, he stated that his "purpose [was] to apply to the German element [a] standard of measurement [pertaining to their] favorable influence upon the land and people of the United States."<sup>10</sup> Thus, Faust stressed the contributions made by German Americans while virtually ignoring other issues such as the Americanization process. Therefore, he embodies the essence of filiopietistic scholarship.

Although history of this kind still exists even today, World War I largely displaced filiopietistic scholarship.<sup>11</sup> The war ushered in discrimination that put great pressure on the ethnic German community which created an unfavorable environment for

---

<sup>8</sup> Conzen, "Die Assimilierung," 34; La Vern J. Rippley, *The German Americans* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1976), 223.

<sup>9</sup> Albert B. Faust, *The German Element in the United States*, vol. 1 and 2 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin & Co, 1909).

<sup>10</sup> Faust, vol. 2, 1.

<sup>11</sup> La Vern J. Rippley, *The German Americans* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1976); Theodore Huebner, *The Germans in America* (Philadelphia: Chilton Co, 1962); Gerhard K. Friesen and Walter Schatzberg, eds., *The German Contribution to the Building of the Americas: Studies in Honor of Karl J.R. Arndt* (Worcester, Mass.: Clark University Press, 1977); German Heritage Society of Greater Washington D.C., *First Germans at Jamestown: A Commemoration* (Washington D.C.: German Heritage Society of Greater Washington D.C., 1997); Don Heinrich Tolzmann, *The German-American Experience* (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2000).

the continued domination of filiopietistic scholarship. Before the war, specific studies on German Americans focused entirely on German-American contributions. Afterwards, German-American history answered questions about Americanization for the first time.

Filiopietism serves as the starting point of German-American history, but not the starting point for history concerning itself with questions of Americanization. That distinction belongs to melting pot theory. It was a Frenchman, J. Hector St. John Crevecoeur, who introduced the idea of an American melting pot in the late eighteenth century. Crevecoeur believed that European ethnics left behind their prejudices and adopted new ones due to a new life and new government in the United States. These conditions formed an American from the various European ethnics that immigrated to America.<sup>12</sup> By the beginning of the twentieth century, the melting pot thesis caught the imagination of Americans. A nineteenth century American poet, Ralph Waldo Emerson, described how a “melting and intermixture...will construct a new race...which will be as vigorous as the new Europe which came out of the smelting-pot of the Dark Ages.”<sup>13</sup> Titus Munson Coan, another American writer, marveled that “the fusing process goes on as in a blast-furnace; one generation... transforms the English, the German, the Irish emigrant into an American. His traits of race and religion, fuse down in the democratic

---

<sup>12</sup> J. Hector St. John Crevecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer Describing Certain Provincial Situations, Manners, and Customs and Conveying Some Idea of the Late and Present Interior Circumstances of the British Colonies in North America* (London: T. Davies, 1782).

<sup>13</sup> Stuart Pratt Sherman, introduction to *Essays and Poems of Emerson*, by Ralph Waldo Emerson (New York: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1921), xxxiv.

alembic like chips of brass thrown into the melting pot.”<sup>14</sup> Israel Zangwill, a novelist, proclaimed that “America is God’s Crucible, the great Melting-Pot where all the races of Europe are melting and reforming... Germans and Frenchmen, Irishmen and Englishmen, Jews and Russians – into the Crucible with you all! God is making the American.”<sup>15</sup>

Thus, the crucible or melting pot describes a sort of utopia whereby it is destined that all distinct cultural elements of various ethnics are transformed into a new American identity due to American democracy and American conditions. Melting pot scholars did not go into detail about specific ethnic groups, but classified German-Americans, Italian-Americans, and other immigrants all together. Additionally, the thesis is idealistic and did not detail what caused Americanization or how it occurred. But, the thesis did introduce the concept to historians.

Frederick Jackson Turner, towering as a giant among historians, is responsible for expanding upon the idea of the melting pot by asking the ‘what’ question.<sup>16</sup> He deduced that the frontier forged American democracy and identity.<sup>17</sup> He argued that the frontier “promoted a composite nationality of the American people” and acted as a crucible in

---

<sup>14</sup> Titus Munson Coan, “A New Country,” *The Galaxy* 19, no. 4 (April 1875): 63.

<sup>15</sup> Israel Zangwill, *The Melting Pot, a Drama in Four Acts* (New York: MacMillan, 1909), 52.

<sup>16</sup> Rudolph J. Vecolli, “Ethnicity: A Neglected Dimension of American History,” in *The State of American History*, ed. Herbert J. Bass (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970), 75.

<sup>17</sup> Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: H Holt & Co, 1920).

which the “immigrants were Americanized, liberated, and fused into a mixed race, English in neither nationality nor characteristics.”<sup>18</sup>

Turner’s ideas about fusing into a mixed race closely echo those who advanced the idea of the melting pot. He was clearly influenced by the melting pot idea. As such, his version of history might be described as a second phase in the historiography of the melting pot. But, it was clearly a second phase that expanded upon the original or first phase brought forward by Crevecoeur, Coan, and Zangwill. Turner’s ideas of the frontier, however, were so influential that they could be described as forming a Turner School all of its own, the school of ethnic Turnerians.

One of Turner’s students, Marcus Lee Hansen, retained Turner’s ideas in relation to immigration, but used a macro or large scale approach while also addressing assimilation in terms of second and third generation immigrants.<sup>19</sup> In Hansen’s view, second generation immigrants assimilated into American society readily,<sup>20</sup> an opinion shared by another post-World War I historian, Joseph Schafer.<sup>21</sup> Thus, Hansen and Schafer introduced the idea that there were generational differences in the assimilation process, a concept later expanded upon by sociologists in the 1960s.

---

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 22-23.

<sup>19</sup> Marcus Lee Hansen, *The Atlantic Migration, 1607-1860* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1940).

<sup>20</sup> Marcus Lee Hansen, *The Immigrant in American History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1940); Marcus Lee Hansen, “The Study of Man: The Third Generation in America,” *Commentary* XIV (November 1952).

<sup>21</sup> Joseph Schafer, “The Yankee and the Teuton in Wisconsin,” *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 7, no. 1 (September 1923): 17-18.

Whereas Hansen and Schafer pioneered a generational approach, Carl Wittke, also a Turnerian, paved the way for a political approach. In the late 1930s, Wittke began to shed light on how German immigrants perceived themselves in America during critical periods such as the 1850s and the First World War.<sup>22</sup> Although German Americans “did not readily shed the customs of their fatherland” and “their continental viewpoint...became a source of friction with native Americans” leading to violent attacks, the conditions of the frontier made the failure of permanent German settlements inevitable.<sup>23</sup>

Witte touched upon the conflicts between old stock Americans and German Americans. But, he avoided defining any new theory of Americanization that could be conceptualized as a result.<sup>24</sup> Wittke remained mired in the Turner Thesis with its concentration on the effects of the frontier, even while exploring political conflicts that did not fit the mold.

Although Wittke remained mired in the Turner Thesis, John A. Hawgood did not. He expanded on conflicts first introduced by Wittke to come up with a new approach specific to German-American assimilation in the 1940s.<sup>25</sup> Hawgood began his narrative

---

<sup>22</sup> Carl Wittke, *German Americans and the World War* (Columbus: Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 1936); Carl Wittke, “Ohio’s Germans, 1840-1875,” *Ohio Historical Quarterly* 66, no. 4 (October 1957): 339-54; Carl Wittke, *We Who Built America: The Saga of the Immigrant* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1939).

<sup>23</sup> Wittke, *We Who Built America*, 195, 206.

<sup>24</sup> Conzen, “The Writing of German-American History,” 6.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

in the 1850s when the German-American hyphen came into being because of the influence of Forty-Eighters, Nativism, slavery, temperance, and sabbatarianism.<sup>26</sup>

The Forty-Eighters who emigrated from Germany during the late 1840s and 1850s came to the United States for political reasons. Unsatisfied with Europe's political structure, many of them were idealists who entered into American politics. They were opposed to slavery which became a hotbed issue during the time. For this reason, many Southerners were unhappy with them. The temperance movement aimed to prohibit the use and sale of alcoholic beverages, something opposed by the majority of German Americans. Many sabbitarians were not only opposed to alcohol, but also frowned upon any other type of extracurricular activities on Sunday. Because sabbitarians viewed the ethnic German custom of going to the park and having picnics or dances on Sunday afternoons with disdain, this created another source of tension. According to Hawgood, these forces helped German Americans retain an ethnic identity during the 1850s.

But retention of this identity resulted in "artificial prolongation" of the hyphen.<sup>27</sup> Hawgood theorized that German Americans assimilated too slowly to American society which led to the conflicts between them and Americans during World War I. When Dieter Cunz and even Wittke himself later echoed Hawgood, the theory became the dominant history of ethnic German Americanization amongst American historians.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> John A. Hawgood, *The Tragedy of German-America: The Germans in the United States of America during the Nineteenth Century – and After* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1940), 227-35.

<sup>27</sup> Hawgood, 286.



Although Hawgood's theory expanded the history of the Americanization of German ethnics by including political events and conflict, it failed to consider divisions inside the German-American community, assumed German Americans were slower at assimilation without a comparative approach against other ethnic groups, and suffered from, at times, an almost extreme anti-German bent. Despite these problems, he was one of the first to focus exclusively on German Americans.

Hawgood's Theory, however, was not the only approach to German-American assimilation during the 1940s and 1950s. Another approach emerged from the other side of the ocean because of National Socialist influence in the 1930s. Because National Socialists concerned themselves with questions of race, they steered academics in Germany towards studies about the persistence of German societies and German people outside of the fatherland.<sup>29</sup>

The result of such studies culminated in Heinz Kloss' work on exploring German-American attempts at political and cultural organization at a national level. He divided German Americans into two large groups, Church Germans and Club Germans. Among Church Germans, Catholics and Protestants, mostly Lutherans, are about equally divided.

---

<sup>28</sup>Dieter Cunz, *The Maryland Germans: A History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1948); Carl Wittke, *Refugees of Revolution: The German Forty-Eighters in America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1952); Noel Iverson, *Germania, U.S.A.: Social Change in New Ulm, Minnesota* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1966); Donald R. Taft and Richard Robbins, *International Migrations: The Immigrant in the Modern World* (New York: Ronald Press Co, 1955).

<sup>29</sup>Irmgard Erhorn, *Die deutsch Einwanderung der Dreissiger und Achtundvierziger in den Vereinigten Staaten und ihre Stellung zur nordamerikanischen Politik: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Deutschamerikanertums* (Hamburg: Hans Christian, 1937); Georg Timpe, ed., *Katholisches Deutschtum in den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika: Ein Querschnitt*, vol. 4 of *Volksdeutsche Quellen und Darstellungen* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1937).

Club Germans are those devoted to more secular interests and are usually concentrated in more urban areas. Club Germans include the Dreiziger, Forty-Eighters, and Late Liberals.<sup>30</sup>

Among Church Germans, the arrival of Old Lutherans in the 1830s, with their uncompromising insistence on correct religious doctrine, prevented the unity of German Protestants. German Catholic efforts at unity failed because the Catholic hierarchy stressed a Catholic identity over an ethnic one, an economic depression, and World War I. Differences between the Dreiziger and Forty-Eighters, political fragmentation after 1860, and again, World War I all played a role in preventing unity amongst Club Germans. According to Kloss, the different world views of German Americans “worked bitterly as a dividing element” and “split them into a number of ethnic groups.”<sup>31</sup> Repeated failures at national unity because of such divisions created a “psychological block,” and this combined with the “shock” of world war prevented German Americans from retaining their distinctive identity.<sup>32</sup>

Although Hawgood and Kloss explained how political and social events shaped the process of assimilation, they did not focus on urban history, race, economic status, or generational change. Sociologists from Chicago, such as Robert E. Park and Ernest W.

---

<sup>30</sup> Heinz Kloss, *Um die Einigung des Deutschamerikanertums: Die Geschichte einer unvollendeten Volksgruppe* (Berlin: Volk und Reich Verlag, 1937); Heinz Kloss, “German-American Language Maintenance Efforts,” in *Language Loyalty in the United States: The Maintenance and Perpetuation of Non-English Mother Tongues*, ed. Joshua A. Fishman (London: Mouton & Co, 1966).

<sup>31</sup> Kloss, *Um die Einigung*, 36.

<sup>32</sup> Kloss, “German-American Language Maintenance,” 249.

Burgess, and others, such as Milton M. Gordon, explored these concepts in the 1950s and 1960s. Their work influenced later interpretations of history.

Park first looked at urban history and poverty in 1950.<sup>33</sup> By doing so, he provided theoretical tools and concepts for subsequent research.<sup>34</sup> Milton provided more tools as well by defining and drawing attention to the differences between assimilation and acculturation. Complete assimilation occurred, he argued, when former ethnics entered the clubs and institutions of the core society. He brought awareness back to generational change. First-generation immigrants were less assimilated than the second and third generations.<sup>35</sup>

Burgess also drew attention to generational change in the process of assimilation. He introduced the concept of radial extension which divided the city into a number of zones, numbered one through three. He defined the first zone as the center of the city with the second and third zones radiating outward. The third zone formed the periphery or very edge of the city. Poor, first-generation immigrants lived in the first two zones, but as immigrant families grew richer and entered the second generation, they began to

---

<sup>33</sup> Robert E. Park, *Race and Culture* (Glencoe, IL: The Fress Press, 1950); Robert E. Park, "The City as Social Laboratory," in *Chicago: An Experience in Social Science Research*, ed. T.V. Smith and Leonard D. White (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968).

<sup>34</sup> Mary C. Waters and Tomas R. Jimenez, "Assessing Immigrant Assimilation: New Empirical and Theoretical Challenges," *Annual Review of Sociology* 31 (2005): 106.

<sup>35</sup> Milton M. Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964).

move out of these inner zones to outer, peripheral zones.<sup>36</sup> As they moved out of the inner city, immigrants became Americanized. According to this approach, the city became the agent of assimilation rather than Turner's frontier.<sup>37</sup>

The most prominent German-American sociologist who picked up on these ideas was John E. Hofman. Hofman used language as a yardstick to measure assimilation. Using quantitative analysis, Hofman documented the decreasing use of German and the increasing use of English in the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, an immigrant church founded by Old Lutherans, from the 1920s through the 1940s. Not only did urban churches move towards English faster than rural churches, there was also a clear generational difference between older and newer members in regards to the choice of language.<sup>38</sup>

The sociologists of the 1950s and 1960s heavily influenced subsequent German-American historians.<sup>39</sup> Although the sociological approach emphasized a quantitative analysis, it lost sight of an overall American framework. Historians such as Oscar

---

<sup>36</sup> Robert W. Burgess, "Urban Areas," in *Chicago: An Experience in Social Science Research*, ed. T.V. Smith and Leonard D. White (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968).

<sup>37</sup> Vecoli, 78.

<sup>38</sup> John E. Hofman, "Mother Tongue Retentiveness in Ethnic Parishes," in *Language Loyalty in the United States: The Maintenance and Perpetuation of Non-English Mother Tongues*, ed. Joshua A. Fishman (London: Mouton & Co, 1966); John E. Hofman, "The Language Transition in Some Lutheran Denominations," in *Readings in the Sociology of Language*, ed. Joshua A. Fishman (The Hague: Mouton & Co, 1968).

<sup>39</sup> Frederick C. Luebke, *Germans in the New World: Essays in the History of Immigration* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 144-47; Christiane Harzig, *Familie, Arbeit und weibliche Öffentlichkeit in einer Einwanderungsstadt: Deutschamerikanerinnen in Chicago um die Jahrhundertwende* (St. Katharinen: Scripta Mercaturae Verlag, 1991), 70-75.

Handlin, Guido Dobbert, and Frederick C. Luebke fused an emphasis on urban space developed by the sociologists with an overarching narrative.

Handlin was the first historian to grasp the sociological concept of urban space.<sup>40</sup> He argued that new immigrants were forced into poor inner-city ghettos because American society rejected them. Because of a deep desire to escape poverty, immigrants wanted to assimilate. The move out of the ethnic ghetto and into the suburbs was marked amongst the second generation resulting in speedy assimilation. This, in turn, caused changes in the urban environment. Often, Handlin argued, this was a very painful process.<sup>41</sup> Other historians copied Handlin's urban ghetto model in the 1950s.<sup>42</sup>

In the following decade, Dobbert and Luebke expanded upon the urban ghetto model by introducing a political narrative that took the First World War into account.<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> Luebke, *German in the New World*, 139.

<sup>41</sup> Oscar Handlin, *The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migrations that Made the American People* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1951); Oscar Handlin, "Immigration in American Life: A Reappraisal," in *Immigration and American History: Essays in Honor of Theodore C. Belgen* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1961), 8-24; Oscar Handlin, *Boston's Immigrants, 1790-1880: A Study in Acculturation* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1959).

<sup>42</sup> Maldwyn Allen Jones, *American Immigration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960); Peter I. Rose, *They and We: Racial and Ethnic Relations in the United States* (New York: Random House, 1964); Philip Taylor, *The Distant Magnet: European Emigration to the U.S.A.* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971); Stanley Lieberson, *Ethnic Patterns in American Cities* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963).

<sup>43</sup> Guido A. Dobbert, "German Americans between New and Old Fatherland," *American Quarterly* 19, no. 4 (Winter 1967): 663-680; Frederick C. Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty: German Americans and World War I* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974); Frederick C. Luebke, "The Germans," in *Ethnic Leadership in America*, ed. John Higham (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978); Sister Audrey Olson, "The Nature of an Immigrant Community: St. Louis Germans, 1850-1920," *Missouri Historical Review* 66 (1972): 342-59; Clifford L. Nelson, *German-American Political Behavior in Nebraska and Wisconsin, 1916-1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1972); Claus Wust, *The Virginia Germans* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1969).

No longer did Germans adapt to American society abnormally as Hawgood suggested; instead German reactions followed a predictable pattern based on social changes. Political historians reasoned that second generation movement towards the periphery eroded the *raison d'etre* of inner city German quarters.

Some ethnic Germans, however, sought to preserve a distinctly German-American society, flocked to the banner of national organizations. These German-American national organizations latched onto political agendas sure to gain support from the wider community. These political rallying points included a stand against Prohibition and a pro-Germany course during the Great War. Luebke argues that these actions were predictable, the natural result of social changes, but that Americans did not interpret those actions that way when the United States finally entered the World War I. Because latent tension already existed between the American core culture and German-American ethnic culture, “discordant ethnic relationships were laid bare.”<sup>44</sup> The political historians examined different German-American groups as well and concluded that they reacted differently to World War I harassment. Nevertheless, the war accelerated “the assimilation of most German-American groups.”<sup>45</sup>

Political historians adapted the urban ghetto model in order to explain German-American assimilation within an overarching historical narrative. But, labor historians identified two problems with it. Sam Bass Warner Jr., Howard P. Chudacoff, and other

---

<sup>44</sup> Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty*, 78.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 329.

scholars pointed out that urban ghetto history did not address Americanization in terms of class.<sup>46</sup> Second, they demonstrated that the ghetto experience was unique to German Americans and only a few other ethnic groups during the late nineteenth and twentieth century. Most foreign immigrants to the United States never lived in ghettos and the ghetto experience was almost exclusively confined to the largest urban cities. This ignored other periods of time, other ethnic groups, and smaller urban or rural areas. Even when settlement did occur in ghettos, the concentration was not as strong as the urban ghetto model suggested.<sup>47</sup> These problems demonstrated the need for a comparative approach and studies concerning class.

In the 1980s, labor historians chose to address these problems by examining relationships between working-class culture, urban space, and the labor movement.<sup>48</sup>

Heinz Ickstadt and Klaus Enslenn emphasized the importance of culture in transforming

---

<sup>46</sup> Dirk Hoerder, "Research on the German Migrations," in *People in Transit: German Migrations in Comparative Perspective, 1820-1930*, ed. Dirk Hoerder and Jörg Nagler (Washington D.C.: German Historical Institute, 1992), 415.

<sup>47</sup> Sam Bass Warner Jr. and Colin B. Burke, "Cultural Change and the Ghetto," *Journal of Contemporary History* 4, no. 4 (October 1969): 173-87; David Ward, "The Emergence of Central Immigrant Ghettos in American Cities: 1840-1920," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 58, no. 2 (June 1968): 343-59; Humbert S. Nelli, *Italians in Chicago, 1880-1930: A Study in Ethnic Mobility* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970); Howard P. Chudacoff, "A New Look at Ethnic Neighborhoods: Residential Dispersion and the Concept of Visibility in a Medium-Sized City," *Journal of American History* 60, no. 1 (June 1973): 76-93.

<sup>48</sup> Hartmut Keil and John B. Jentz, eds., *German Workers in Industrial Chicago, 1850-1910: A Comparative Perspective* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1983); Hartmut Keil, ed., *German Workers' Culture in the United States, 1850 to 1920* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988); Hartmut Keil and John B. Jentz, *Deutsche Arbeiterkultur in Chicago von 1850 bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg: Eine Anthologie* (Ostfildern: Scripta Mercaturae Verlag, 1988); also available in English, see *German Workers in Chicago: A Documentary History of Working-Class Culture from 1850 to World War I*, trans. Burt Weinshanker (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988); Dirk Hoerder, ed., *American Labor and Immigration History, 1877-1920s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983); Dirk Hoerder, ed., *Labor Migration in the Atlantic Economies: The European and North American Working Classes during the Period of Industrialization* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1985); Dirk Hoerder, ed., "Struggle a Hard Battle" – *Essays on Working-Class Immigrants* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1986).

German workers into Americans. Enslenn traced cultural changes in German workers' saloons and beer gardens during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.<sup>49</sup>

Ickstadt examined the absorption of German ethnic culture by the dominant mass culture.<sup>50</sup> German workers tied their ethnic identity to class consciousness during the nineteenth century, but as second-generation German workers became more active and "lines of ethnic, economic, and political organization became increasingly blurred."<sup>51</sup> With the advent of the second generation and the appeal of mass culture, the formerly ethnic workers' unions and organizations became Americanized.

Although urban labor history added to the overall picture of immigrant German Americanization by focusing on the working class and stressing the importance of culture, it did not take women's issues into account. In the late 1980s and 1990s, historians began addressing this problem as well.

The first women's history narratives came from the wellspring of labor history. Christiane Harzig used methods of urban labor historians to first address women in the acculturation process. Just like previous historians, she admitted that those who lived in

---

<sup>49</sup> Klaus Enslenn, "German-American Working-Class Saloons in Chicago: Their Social Function in an Ethnic and Class-Specific Cultural Context," in *German Workers' Culture in the United States, 1850-1920*, ed. Hartmut Keil (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988).

<sup>50</sup> Heinz Ickstadt, "A Tale of Two Cities: Culture and Its Social Function in Chicago during the Progressive Period," in *German Workers' Culture in the United States, 1850-1920*, ed. Hartmut Keil (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988).

<sup>51</sup> Klaus Enslenn and Heinz Ickstadt, "German Working-Class Culture in Chicago: Continuity and Change in the Decade from 1900 to 1910," in *German Workers in Industrial Chicago, 1850-1910: A Comparative Perspective*, eds. Hartmut Keil and John B. Jentz (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1983), 251.



the ethnic center of the city were further removed from acculturation than those who lived on the periphery. She reasoned that contacts developed between German-American immigrants and non-Germans likely led to acculturation and recognized that the contacts women made were different than the contacts made by men. By examining women's volunteer work, she concluded that women in the ghetto or ethnic neighborhoods solidified social contacts across urban space. These contacts, in turn, caused acculturation.<sup>52</sup>

Harzig steered attention towards acculturation as opposed to assimilation and also upon the types of contacts men and women developed that led to acculturation. Later women's historians expanded on Harzig's pioneering works.<sup>53</sup> Silke Wehner traced acculturation among single, German women working as domestic servants. She argued that their experiences as domestic servants in the city hurried acculturation.<sup>54</sup> Deirdre M. Mageean argued that women's groups were active agents in the acculturation process.<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>52</sup> Christiane Harzig, *Familie, Arbeit, und weibliche Öffentlichkeit in einer Einwanderungsstadt: Deutschamerikanerinnen in Chicago um die Jahrhundertwende* (St. Katherinen: Scripta Mercaturae Verlag, 1991).

<sup>53</sup> Christiane Harzig, ed., *Peasant Maids, City Women: From the European Countryside to Urban America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997); Dirk Hoerder and Jörg Nagler, eds., *People in Transit: German Migrations in Comparative Perspective, 1820-1930* (Washington D.C.: German Historical Institute, 1995).

<sup>54</sup> Silke Wehner, "German Domestic Servants in America, 1850-1914: A New Look at German Immigrant Women's Experiences," in *People in Transit: German Migrations in Comparative Perspective, 1820-1930*, ed. Dirk Hoerder and Jörg Nagler (Washington D.C.: German Historical Institute, 1995).

<sup>55</sup> Deirdre M. Mageean, "Acculturation of Immigrant Women in Chicago at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," in *People in Transit: German Migrations in Comparative Perspective, 1820-1930*, ed. Dirk Hoerder and Jörg Nagler (Washington D.C.: German Historical Institute, 1995).

Russel A. Kazal introduced the latest approach of urban historians towards the Americanization of ethnic Germans. It stresses both cultural and women's history just like previous scholars. It also continues to insist that German Americans assimilated because of the appeal of mass culture and the World War I crisis. Where Kazal differed from previous narratives, however, is his focus on what they became. Studying the German element in the city of Philadelphia, Kazal argues that German Americans shed their ethnic identity in favor of a new white ethnic identity after World War I. The formation of this new identity has racial overtones. As African-Americans or blacks started to occupy white urban neighborhoods, whites move out. Thus, most German Americans assimilated and melded together with others of northwest European descent.<sup>56</sup>

Kazal's assertion that a new white ethnic identity formed was largely influenced by sociologist Richard D. Alba. In 1990, Alba employed quantitative methods and surveys in Washington D.C. to show that true ethnics had largely disappeared from American life. Alba borrowed from Herbert J. Gans to explain apparent ethnic behavior that remained. Both Gans and Alba argued that continued displays of ethnic behavior were really signs of symbolic ethnicity. Americans of European descent had become white Americans.<sup>57</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> Russell A. Kazal, *Becoming Old Stock: The Paradox of German-American Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

<sup>57</sup> Richard D. Alba, *Ethnic Identity: The Transformation of White America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); Herbert J. Gans, "Symbolic ethnicity: the future of ethnic groups and cultures in America," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 2, no. 1 (January 1979): 1-20.

Whereas there are a multitude of urban studies concerned with German-American assimilation and acculturation written by historians after the 1950s, the same cannot be said about rural studies. Historians began to take notice of a lack of rural studies in the 1980s. Conzen remarked on the absence of rural Germans in her overviews of German-American historiography.<sup>58</sup> Carol G. Coburn speculated that the strong emphasis on urban history lessened the emphasis on rural variables.<sup>59</sup> The sociologists of the 1960s, political historians of the 1970s, the urban labor scholars of the 1980s, and womens' historians in the early 1990s all primarily focused on German Americans in the cities.

There was still, however, history written about ethnic Germans in rural areas. Hildegard Binder Johnson described dwindling participation amongst a rural Minnesotan German Reading Society as evidence of Americanization in the 1940s.<sup>60</sup> In the 1960s, Terry Jordan demonstrated that the assimilation of Hill Country Texas Germans remained incomplete.<sup>61</sup> Rural history written about ethnic Germans prior to the 1980s is likely tucked away into state and local history journals which keeps it marginalized.

This marginalization disappeared in the late 1980s. Although most ethnic Germans immigrated to urban areas, one-quarter of all German Americans were engaged

---

<sup>58</sup> Conzen, "Assimilierung," 51; Conzen, "Writing of German-American History," 8.

<sup>59</sup> Carol G. Coburn, *Life at Four Corners: Religion, Gender, and Education in a German-Lutheran Community, 1868-1945* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1992), 160.

<sup>60</sup> Hildegard Binder Johnson, "The Carver County German Reading Society," *Minnesota History* 24, no. 3 (September 1943): 214-25.

<sup>61</sup> Terry Jordan, *German Seed in Texas Soil: Immigrant Farmers in Nineteenth-Century Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1966); Terry G. Jordan, "A Religious Geography of the Hill Country Germans of Texas," in *Ethnicity on the Great Plains*, ed. Frederick C. Luebke (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980).

in agriculture from 1870 to 1900.<sup>62</sup> Historians, thus, realized that to neglect this area of ethnic German history was a serious omission.

When rural historians started to focus on fixing this omission in the late 1980s, they noticed strong retentiveness or maintenance of ethnic identity among ethnics outside of the city. In terms of assimilation, they maintained the idea that as generations passed, they lost their ethnic identity due to modern influences. But, they shed light on how rural ethnic communities developed in the first place. Jon Gjerde and Robert C. Ostergren linked American settlements with European villages overseas. Chain migration occurred creating ethnic clustering in rural America.<sup>63</sup> The Upper Midwest's vast size enabled homogenous communities. Because of these many local homogenous communities, competing visions for the future of America struggled against each other.<sup>64</sup>

Although Gjerde wrote about Norwegians and Ostergren referred to Swedes in their studies, their ideas found a place in German American history. Walter D. Kamphoefner confirmed the chain migration of Westfalians, a German people, to

---

<sup>62</sup> Christiane Harzig, "Lebensformen im Einwanderungsprozeß," in *Deutsche im Ausland – Fremde in Deutschland*, ed. Klaus J. Bade (München: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1992), 161,64.

<sup>63</sup> Jon Gjerde, *From Peasants to Farmers: The Migration from Balestrand, Norway, to the Upper Middle West* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Robert C. Ostergren, *A Community Transplanted: The Trans-Atlantic Experience of a Swedish Immigrant Settlement in the Upper Middle West, 1835-1915* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988).

<sup>64</sup> Jon Gjerde, *The Minds of the West: Ethnocultural Evolution in the Rural Middle West, 1830-1917* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

Missouri. Germans became Americanized in the course of two generations, but persistence of ethnicity into the third generation was more common in rural areas.<sup>65</sup>

Studies of chain migration established that rural communities were more resistant to Americanization. Even though women's historians in the 1990s did not stress chain migration, they also noted ethnic retentiveness. Examining a pious, rural community in Kansas, Carol G. Coburn argued that part of the reason for slower assimilation outside of the city was increased religious devotion. Assimilation still occurred, however, due to economic contacts made across space.<sup>66</sup>

Coburn's claim about contacts across space echoes a similar theme previously advanced by urban women's historians such as Harzig. Additionally, Coburn connected rural to urban history by tracing the footsteps of rural women who moved into more urban areas after becoming domestic servants. When compared with women who remained in rural areas, assimilation was much quicker. Thus, women's history shows some overlap between the urban and rural dichotomy, an important exception.

Despite this early influence, ethnic German women's history in rural areas drifted away from it in the latter part of the 1990s. Even though Linda Schelbitzki Pickle and Kathleen Neils Conzen focused on women and local ethnic communities just like Coburn, they did not stress contacts across space like her or Harzig. They argued that

---

<sup>65</sup> Walter D. Kamphoefner, *The Westfalians: From Germany to Missouri* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

<sup>66</sup> Carol G. Coburn, *Life at Four Corners*.

local ethnic communities neither completely assimilated nor acculturated.<sup>67</sup> Rather, ethnic communities partially adapted to American customs based on their past and evolved in patterns specific to their local conditions, a process they referred to as “parallel transformation” or “cultural convergence.”<sup>68</sup>

Instead of focusing on retentiveness in rural areas, Andreas V. Reichstein looks at assimilation versus acculturation at the turn of the new century. He did not argue for one process as opposed to the other, but rather argued that both processes took place. In order to show this, he studies the immigration of two branches of a single family, the Wagners, into rural Texas and rural Illinois. In one branch of the family, they lost ethnic consciousness after the deaths of all members from the second generation. In the other branch, descendants became prominent members in their community and communicated German high culture through the establishment of museums and festivals. Using this as evidence, Reichstein argues that assimilation and acculturation are not exclusive terms. Rather, some individuals can assimilate into the dominant society, while other individuals can affect and influence society.<sup>69</sup>

From Andreas V. Reichstein back to Albert B. Faust, there has been much written about German Americans and how they adapted to conditions in the United States.

---

<sup>67</sup> Kathleen Neils Conzen, *Making Their Own America: Assimilation Theory and the German Peasant Pioneer* (New York: Berg, 1990); Linda Schelbitzki Pickle, *Contented Among Strangers: Rural German-Speaking Women and Their Families in the Nineteenth-Century Midwest* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996).

<sup>68</sup> Conzen, *Making Their Own America*, 33; Pickle, 198.

<sup>69</sup> Andreas V. Reichstein, *German Pioneers on the American Frontier: The Wagners in Texas and Illinois* (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2001).

Despite the amount of material written on ethnic German assimilation and acculturation, there is still more that can be studied.

The dichotomy between urban studies and rural studies is itself a detriment to the overall picture presented. Generally, a new theory or narrative in one field is not advanced or pursued in the other. For example, we can compare the latest works in both areas, Reichstein and Kazal. Both make very compelling, persuasive arguments. But Kazal's insistence on the adoption of a new white ethnic identity is not examined in rural studies. It might be worthwhile to see whether Conzen's ethnic retentiveness or parallel transformation in local communities is really nothing more than Alba's symbolic ethnicity. Likewise, Reichstein's claim that different members of an ethnic group can either assimilate or acculturate into society is not scrutinized in an urban context. Without a cross comparison between both environments, the arguments presented by historians lose sway.

More research should be conducted on the Americanization of soldiers in the military. Wolfgang Helbich asserts that German-born Union soldiers during the Civil War did not become American, but persisted in ethnic identity. He questions whether or not German civilians adapted more readily to American ways than German soldiers.<sup>70</sup> Most accounts of German Americans during World War I, meanwhile, emphasize the Americanization of immigrant Germans in the civilian population. They fail to take into

---

<sup>70</sup> Wolfgang Helbich, "German-Born Union Soldiers: Motivation, Ethnicity, and Americanization," in *German-American Immigration and Ethnicity in Comparative Perspective*, ed. Wolfgang Helbich and Walter D. Kamphoefner (Madison: Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies, University of Wisconsin, 2004), 320.

account German-American soldiers who served overseas. How did their war experience affect their Americanization? Did the Civil War and World War I have different affects on German-American acculturation? If so, why?

Although the political based interpretation of German-American assimilation leaves out the unique experience of soldiers, it did include an emphasis on foreign relations. Deteriorating foreign relations between Germany and the United States contributed to the hostility of Americans to German ethnics during the Great War. This hostility, in turn, hastened Americanization. Bringing the narrative up to World War II, Sander Diamond asserts that almost all German Americans rejected Nazi ideology during the war. Foreign relations between Nazi Germany and the United States were again part of the equation.<sup>71</sup> Worsening foreign relations between Germany and the United States during the Second World War worsened German American retentiveness just as it did during the First World War.

If poor foreign relations hurried Americanization during both World Wars, is it possible that it could work in reverse? Michael Wala studies efforts of the German Foreign Office and the German Navy to foster relationships with German Americans during the Weimar or interwar period. He states that their efforts revitalized German ethnic identity.<sup>72</sup> Wala indicates that the cooling of relations between Germany and the

---

<sup>71</sup> Sander A. Diamond, *The Nazi Movement in the United States, 1924-1941* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974).

<sup>72</sup> Michael Wala, "Reviving Ethnic Identity: the Foreign Office, the Reichswehr, and German Americans during the Weimar Republic," in *German-American Immigration and Ethnicity in Comparative*



United States during the Weimar period may have reversed the Americanization process slightly. The study of Americanization amongst ethnic Germans could benefit from further examination of interwar diplomacy.

Most studies of German-American history concentrate on the nineteenth and twentieth century experience. This is not completely without reason. Roughly 65,000 to 100,000 Germans came to the United States in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as opposed to almost six million Germans that arrived from 1820 to 1930.<sup>73</sup> Thus, it makes sense that historians would concentrate on a period with more immigrants and more readily available sources. This focus, however, ignores an important group, the colonial Germans.

Concerning colonial Germans, Wittke stated that the conditions of the frontier ensured the failure of permanent Pennsylvania German settlements. Subsequent historians, however, did not address the colonial Germans in their accounts of German-American history. It is as if the divergence from filiopietistic and melting pot history into deeper questions about assimilation and acculturation also meant a departure from the study of colonial Germans. If it is necessary to examine new interpretations in a rural versus urban context, then it is also necessary to examine these interpretations between these two distinct German immigration groups. By not doing so, the current history of

---

*Perspective*, ed. Wolfgang Helbich and Walter D. Kamphoefner (Madison, WI: Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies, University of Wisconsin – Madison, 2004), 326-42.

<sup>73</sup> Agnes Bretting, “Mit Bibel, Pflug und Büchse: deutsche Pioniere im kolonialen Amerika,” in *Deutsche im Ausland – Fremde in Deutschland: Migration in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. Klaus J. Bade (Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1992), 137; Rößler, 148.

immigrant German Americanization falls woefully incomplete and ignores a rich, bountiful history.

A final problem revolves around religion. There is an almost exhaustive amount of research that can still be conducted in order to put world views, urbanity, and Americanization amongst all the different German immigrant churches into proper perspective.

There has been a lot written about the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (LCMS) when compared to what has been written about other denominations. Kloss asserted that Old Lutherans, from which the LCMS sprang, prevented unity amongst immigrant German Protestants. Hofman showed that LCMS churches transitioned to English services faster in urban areas as opposed to rural areas. Luebke concluded that the First World War flushed “German Lutherans into the main currents of American life. In order to be effective, they had to break down ethnic barriers.” This trend, however, “was less evident” in the LCMS.<sup>74</sup> Alan Graebner echoed Luebke’s sentiments when examining the LCMS.<sup>75</sup> Coburn asserts that the LCMS viewed assimilation as “a threat...to spiritual salvation” and tried to preserve the German language for this reason.<sup>76</sup>

---

<sup>74</sup> Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty*, 315.

<sup>75</sup> Alan Graebner, “The Acculturation of an Immigration Lutheran Church: The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, 1917-1929” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1965).

<sup>76</sup> Coburn, 157.

All this literature supports the view that the LCMS was a culturally conservative German immigrant church resistant to Americanization, especially in more rural areas. However, it is difficult to determine this idea's accuracy without comparing the LCMS to other German immigrant churches. Counted among German immigrant Lutheran churches alone is the Pennsylvania Ministerium, Ministerium of New York, North Carolina Synod, Maryland Synod, Virginia Synod, Ohio Synod, Iowa Synod, Buffalo Synod, Michigan Synod, Minnesota Synod, Wisconsin Synod, and Pittsburgh Synod. This long list does not take into account other German immigrant churches such as Baptist, Congregational, Methodist, and Reformed.

Other major historians who focused on religion outside of the LCMS include Carl E. Schneider, Kloss, and Kazal. Schneider applied Turner's methods in order to explore the German Evangelical Kirchenverein's adaptation to the American frontier in the late 1930s.<sup>77</sup> Kloss asserted that the Roman Catholic Church, interested in unifying its various ethnic elements to keep the peace, served as an agent of assimilation amongst German-American Roman Catholics. Kazal used German-American Roman Catholics as an example to show the formation of a new white ethnic identity. This relative lack of significant other material shows that more precise research is required into other ethnic German churches, especially that of the various Protestant churches.

---

<sup>77</sup> Carl E. Schneider, *The German Church on the American Frontier: A Study in the Rise of Religion among the Germans of the West, Based on the History of the Evangelischer Kirchenverein des Westens, 1840-1866* (St. Louis: Eden Publishing House, 1939).

Methods of exploring how Americanization occurred amongst the various churches include the retention of the German language. However, the adoption of female teachers, the disappearance of a strict division between men and women in the pews, and the decline of women covering their head in church can all be used as metrics of Americanization in the various churches. Do they tie in with language maintenance efforts or not? These factors remain unexplored in significant depth.

Relationships between rural areas, urban areas, conservatism, religion, and ethnicity can be explored in greater depth. Doubtlessly, the Americanization of German ethnics is complex. Scholarship on the subject has gone through fifteen distinct phases up to the present day and many scholars have presented ideas that help us understand what happened. However, addressing gaps will provide a greater understanding about the Americanization of German immigrants.

One such gap is a dichotomy between rural and urban history. Rural history and urban history have competing viewpoints in advancing the story's agenda. Taking a new theory or interpretation and examining it in both environments can create a more compelling argument. Likewise, this can be applied when studying German-American immigrant groups across time. Historians need to include Colonial Germans who immigrated prior to 1776 in their analysis. Americanization amongst German immigrant soldiers is lacking as well as an analysis on the affect of interwar diplomacy on America's Germans. The relationship between German-American churches,

conservatism, urbanity, and Americanization can be flushed out even more by studying in detail various church groups and making comparisons.

Not only should historians conduct more research in these topics, they should also employ different methods. First, historians should unearth seemingly hidden sources. Johnson's work on Minnesotans in Carver County is probably only one example of scholarship buried away in local and state histories. Looking for such history may not only reveal information about rural areas, but non-rural areas as well. Perhaps, marginalized records like these can open up the field of research in the entire discipline.

Additionally, scholars should also look at quantitative data. It is easy to understand that spoken German was disappearing from the LCMS in the mid-twentieth century when Graebner graphs the rising membership of the LCMS compared to declining subscription to German language periodicals in the same synod. Further statistics and figures might not seem useful because it only proves an already established fact, that Americanization occurred, but it does detail Americanization's speed and pace. Hofman also shows that such data can record areas of greater ethnic retentiveness. If quantitative data such as Hofman's and Graebner's can be compared between other ethnic German organizations or religious denominations, our understanding of Americanization amongst immigrant Germans will only increase.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

*Books*

- Alba, Richard D. *Ethnic Identity: The Transformation of White America*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990.
- Bade, Klaus J., ed. *Deutsche im Ausland – Fremde in Deutschland: Migration in Geschichte und Gegenwart*. München: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1992.
- Coburn, Carol G. *Life at Four Corners: Religion, Gender, and Education in a German Lutheran Community, 1868-1945*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1992.
- Conzen, Kathleen Neils. *Making Their Own America: Assimilation Theory and the German Peasant Pioneer*. New York: Berg, 1990.
- Crevecoeur, J. Hector St. John. *Letters from an American Farmer Describing Certain Provincial Situations, Manners, and Customs and Conveying Some Idea of the Late and Present Interior Circumstances of the British Colonies in North America*. London: T. Davies, 1782.
- Cronau, Rudolf. *Drei Jahrhunderte deutschen Lebens in Amerika*. Berlin: D. Reimer, 1909.
- Cunz, Dieter. *The Maryland Germans: A History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1948.
- Diamond, Sander A. *The Nazi Movement in the United States, 1924-1941*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974.
- Eickhoff, Anton. *In der neuen Heimath: geschichtliche Mittheilungen über die deutschen Einwanderer in allen Theilen der Union*. New York: E. Steiger & Co, 1884.
- Erhorn, Irmgard. *Die deutsch Einwanderung der Dreissiger und Achtundvierziger in den Vereinigten Staaten und ihre Stellung zur nordamerikanischen Politik: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Deutschamerikanertums*. Hamburg: Hans Christian, 1937.
- Faust, Albert B. *The German Element in the United States with Special Reference to its Political, Moral, Social, and Educational Influence*. 2 vols. Boston: Houghton Mifflin & Co, 1909).

- Fishman, Joshua A., ed. *Language Loyalty in the United States: The Maintenance and Perpetuation of Non-English Mother Tongues*. London: Mouton & Co, 1966.
- Friesen, Gerhard K. and Walter Schatzberg, eds. *The German Contribution to the Building of the Americas: Studies in Honor of Karl J.R. Arndt*. Worcester, Mass.: Clark University Press, 1977.
- German Heritage Society of Greater Washington D.C. *First Germans at Jamestown: A Commemoration*. Washington D.C.: German Heritage Society of Greater Washington D.C., 1997.
- Gjerde, Jon. *From Peasants to Farmers: The Migration from Balestrand, Norway, to the Upper Middle West*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- Gjerde, Jon. *The Minds of the West: Ethnocultural Evolution in the Rural Middle West, 1830-1917*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997.
- Gordon, Milton M. *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1964.
- Handlin, Oscar. *Boston's Immigrants, 1790-1880: A Study in Acculturation*. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1959.
- Handlin, Oscar. *The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migrations that Made the American People*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1951.
- Hansen, Marcus Lee. *The Atlantic Migration, 1607-1860*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1940.
- Hansen, Marcus Lee. *The Immigrant in American History*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1940.
- Harzig, Christiane. *Familie, Arbeit und weibliche Öffentlichkeit in einer Einwanderungsstadt: Deutschamerikanerinnen in Chicago um die Jahrhundertwende*. St. Katharinen: Scripta Mercaturae Verlag, 1991.
- Hawgood, John A. *The Tragedy of German-America: The Germans in the United States of America during the Nineteenth Century – and After*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1940.
- Hense-Jensen, Wilhelm. *Wisconsin's Deutsch-Amerikaner, bis zum Schluß des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*. 2 vols. Milwaukee: Die Deutsche Gesellschaft, 1900-02.

- Hoerder, Dirk, ed. *Labor Migration in the Atlantic Economies: The European and North American Working Classes during the Period of Industrialization*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1985.
- Hoerder, Dirk and Jörg Nagler, eds. *People in Transit: German Migrations in Comparative Perspective, 1820-1930*. Washington D.C.: German Historical Institute, 1992.
- Hofman, John E. "The Language Transition in Some Lutheran Denominations." In *Readings in the Sociology of Language*, edited by Joshua A. Fishman. The Hague: Mouton & Co, 1968.
- Huebner, Theodore. *The Germans in America*. Philadelphia: Chilton Co, 1962.
- Iverson, Noel. *Germania, U.S.A.: Social Change in New Ulm, Minnesota*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1966.
- Jones, Marldwyn Allen. *American Immigration*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960.
- Jordan, Terry G. *German Seed in Texas Soil: Immigrant Farmers in Nineteenth-Century Texas*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1966.
- Kampfhoefner, Walter D. *The Westfalians: From Germany to Missouri*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987.
- Kapp, Friedrich. *Geschichte der Deutschen im Staate New York bis zum Anfange des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*. New York: Verlag von E. Steiger, 1867.
- Kazal, Russell A. *Becoming Old Stock: The Paradox of German-American Identity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004.
- Keil, Hartmut and John B. Jentz. *Deutsche Arbeiterkulture in Chicago von 1850 bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg: Eine Anthologie*. Ostfildern: Scripta Mercaturae Verlag, 1988.
- Keil, Hartmut and John B. Jentz, eds. *German Workers in Chicago: A Documentary History of Working-Class Culture from 1850 to World War I*. Translated by Burt Weinshanker. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988.
- Keil, Hartmut, ed. *German Workers' Culture in the United States, 1850 to 1920*. Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988.



- Keil, Hartmut and John B. Jentz, eds. *German Workers in Industrial Chicago, 1850-1910: A Comparative Perspective*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1983.
- Klauprecht, Emil. *Deutsche Chronik in der Geschichte des Ohio-Thales, und seiner Hauptstadt Cincinnati in's Besondere*. Cincinnati: G. Hof & M.A. Jacobi, 1864.
- Kloss, Heinz. *Um die Einigung des Deutschamerikanertums: Die Geschichte einer unvollendeten Volksgruppe*. Berlin: Volk und Reich Verlag, 1937.
- Körner, Gustav P. *Das deutsche Element in den Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika, 1818-1848*. Cincinnati: A.E. Wilde & Co, 1880.
- Koss, Rudolf A. *Milwaukee*. Milwaukee: Herold, 1871.
- Lieberson, Stanley. *Ethnic Patterns in American Cities*. New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963.
- Löher, Franz. *Geschichte und Zustände der Deutschen in Amerika*. Cincinnati: Egger & Wulkop, 1847.
- Luebke, Frederick C. *Bonds of Loyalty: German-Americans and World War I*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974.
- Luebke, Frederick C. *Germans in the New World: Essays in the History of Immigration*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990.
- Nelli, Humbert S. *Italians in Chicago, 1880-1930: A Study in Ethnic Mobility*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1970.
- Nelson, Clifford L. *German-American Political Behavior in Nebraska and Wisconsin, 1916-1920*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1972.
- Ostergren, Robert C. *A Community Transplanted: The Trans-Atlantic Experience of a Swedish Immigrant Settlement in the Upper Middle West, 1835-1915*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988.
- Park, Robert E. and Ernest W. Burgess. *Introduction to the Science of Sociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1921.
- Park, Robert E. *Race and Culture*. Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1950.

- Pickle, Linda Schelbitzki. *Contented Among Strangers: Rural German-Speaking Women and Their Families in the Nineteenth-Century Midwest*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996.
- Reichstein, Andreas V. *German Pioneers on the American Frontier: The Wagners in Texas and Illinois*. Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2001.
- Ripley, La Vern J. *The German Americans*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1976.
- Rose, Peter I. *They and We: Racial and Ethnic Relations in the United States*. New York: Random House, 1964.
- Smith, T.V. and Leonard D. White, eds. *Chicago: An Experience in Social Science Research*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1968.
- Spanheimer, Mary Edmund. *Heinrich Armin Ratterman: German Author, Poet, and Historian*. New York: AMS Press, 1970.
- Taft, Donald R. and Richard Robbins. *International Migrations: The Immigrant in the Modern World*. New York: Ronald Press Co., 1955.
- Taylor, Philip. *The Distant Magnet: European Emigration to the U.S.A.* New York: Harper and Row, 1971.
- Timpe, Georg, ed. *Katholisches Deutschtum in den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika: Ein Querschnitt*. Vol. 4 of *Volksdeutsche Quellen und Darstellungen*. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1937.
- Tolzmann, Don Heinrich. *The German-American Experience*. Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2000.
- Turner, Frederick Jackson. *The Frontier in American History*. New York: H Holt & Co, 1920.
- Wittke, Carl. *German Americans and the World War*. Columbus: Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 1936.
- Wittke, Carl. *Refugees of Revolution: The German Forty-Eighters in America*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1952.
- Wittke, Carl. *We Who Built America: The Saga of the Immigrant*. New York: Prentice Hall, 1939.

Wust, Claus. *The Virginia Germans*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1969.

Zangwill, Israel. *The Melting Pot, a Drama in Four Acts*. New York: MacMillan, 1909.

*Articles and Book Chapters*

Coan, Titus Munson. "A New Country." *The Galaxy* 19, no. 4 (April 1875): 462-72.

Conzen, Kathleen Niels. "Die Assimilierung der Deutschen in Amerika: Zum Stand der Forschung in den Vereingten Staaten." In *Die deutschsprachige Auswanderung in die Vereinigten Staaten: Berichte über Forschungsstand und Quellenbestände*, edited by WilliPaul Adams. Berlin: John F. Kennedy Institut für Nordamerikastudien Freie Universität, 1980.

Conzen, Kathleen Niels. "The Writing of German-American History." *The Immigration History Newsletter* 12, no. 2 (November 1980): 1-14.

Handlin, Oscar. "Immigration in American Life: A Reappraisal." In *Immigration and American History: Essays in Honor of Theodore C. Belgen*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1961.

Hansen, Marcus Lee. "The Study of Man: The Third Generation in America." *Commentary* XIV (November 1952): 492-500.

Jordan, Terry G. "A Religious Geography of the Hill Country Germans of Texas." In *Ethnicity on the Great Plains*, edited by Frederick C. Luebke. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980.

Luebke, Frederick C. "The Germans." In *Ethnic Leadership in America*, edited by John Higham. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978.

Sherman, Stuart Pratt. "Introduction." *Essays and Poems of Emerson*, by Ralph Waldo Emerson. New York: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1921.

Schafer, Joseph. "The Yankee and the Teuton in Wisconsin." *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 6, no. 2 (December 1922): 125-45, 261-79, 386-402, 3-19.

Vecolli, Rudolph J. "Ethnicity: A Neglected Dimension of American History." In *The State of American History*, edited by Herbert J. Bass. Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970.

Waters, Mary C. and Tomas R. Jimenez. "Assessing Immigrant Assimilation: New Empirical and Theoretical Challenges." *Annual Review of Sociology* 31 (2005): 105-25.

Wittke, Carl. "Ohio's Germans, 1840-1875." *Ohio Historical Quarterly* 66, no. 4 (October 1957): 339-54.

*Unpublished Dissertation*

Graebner, Alan. "The Acculturation of an Immigration Lutheran Church: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1917-1929." PhD diss., Columbia University, 1965.