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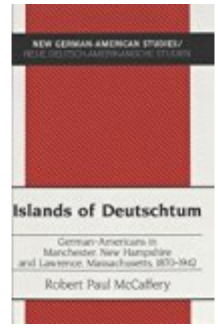

Robert Paul McCaffery. ***Islands of Deutschtum: German-Americans in Manchester, New Hampshire and Lawrence, Massachusetts, 1870-1942.*** New York and Berlin: Peter Lang, 1996. xi + 254 pp. $47.95, cloth, ISBN 978-0-8204-3338-7.

Reviewed by Jeff Strickland

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This first-rate portrayal of Germans in two small New England cities is a welcome addition to German-American historiography. Previous scholars failed to recognize the significance of German immigration in the region. In ***The Westfalians: From Germany to Missouri*** (1987), historian Walter D. Kamphoefner determined that a relatively large portion of skilled Germans from industrialized Saxony had immigrated to New England during the late nineteenth century. During that same period Manchester, New Hampshire and Lawrence, Massachusetts became two of the largest textile producing cities in the world. Robert Paul McCaffery demonstrates that Germans from Saxony were influential in the growth of these industrial centers. Moreover, Germans formed thriving communities in Manchester and Lawrence that remained significant until 1942.

McCaffery provides a superb background on German settlement in New England. In many ways, the Germans that migrated to Manchester and Lawrence were atypical of others throughout the Mid-Atlantic and midwestern states. The most important difference was their German origins: they came from the industrial areas of Saxony and Silesia instead of the farms of southwest or northeast Germany. Manchester and Lawrence were already textile centers, and Germans left their low-paying textile jobs in southeast Germany for the higher-paying ones of these U.S. cities. In the late nineteenth century these cities became the largest textile producers in the world. At the same time, industry in Saxony declined with the acquisition of the more competitive Ruhr industrial region in 1871. Soon after German unification, unemployed skilled workers began migrating to Manchester and Lawrence. In addition, many German immigrants were influential in the educational institutions of New England.

The Germans of Manchester and Lawrence were never as significant as they were in the midwest, according to McCaffery, but they did affect economic growth, social change, and politics. Furthermore, the Germans of both cities were in solidarity because they came from the same towns in Germany, mainly Saxony. Saxons were responsible for about five percent of total German immigration, but approximately 35 percent of the Germans in Manchester and Lawrence.

McCaffery provides insight into the lives of Augustus Canis, J. Adam Graf, Friedrich August Dick, and other Saxon immigrants who influenced the New England communities in which they lived and worked. German businessmen served the communities that grew up around the textile mills and, along with skilled workers, they supported *Deutschtum* within their communities.

Most scholars identify German-Americans as politically apathetic, but in Manchester and Lawrence, Presbyterians, Catholics, and Free Thinkers were politically united. McCaffery contends that the relatively small size of the New England cities and their German communities contributed to this unusual unity. The Germans of these communities actively resisted Americanization, according to McCaffery, because they were "transplanted", not uprooted, from the same area in Germany (i.e. Saxony). He identifies the language, religion, clubs and language press as primary factors in German immigrant community formation. In Manchester and Lawrence, Germans attended German language schools and read the *Anzeiger und Post*. Following World War I, the editors of the newspaper emphasized the need to learn German for the preservation of German culture. In addition, the editors attacked prohibition, opposed immigration restrictions, and were concerned with post-war conditions in Germany, including peace negotiations. Surprisingly, the German Presbyterian Church was the most influential organization followed by the German Catholic Church. In Germany, the Lutheran and Catholic churches were the dominant religious institutions.

During World War I, German Catholics and Protestants united to preserve the "Germanness" of their communities. Services were conducted in German but its use gradually declined as English became the primary language. The role of the German Lutheran Church was insignificant until the 1930s, when the first Lutheran church appeared. During the 1920s and 1930s religious and ethnic intermarriage increased.

Remarkably, German *vereinsleben* or "clublife" lasted through World War I, the interwar period, and World War II. German-Americans of both communities were members and, therefore, supported numerous German clubs, including school clubs, shooting clubs, national and regional clubs, as well as men's choirs and mutual aid societies. McCaffery maintains that the Germans of Manchester and Lawrence had more clubs per population than the larger cities of the Midwest with greater German-American communities. During the interwar period, the German clubs were preoccupied with fundraising for the benefit of war-torn Germany. At the same time, immigration declined to insignificant levels. In the early 1930s the remaining Germans became interested in the economic revival of Germany but offered little support for Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany.

Gradually, club enrollment declined and non-Germans began to be admitted. The German churches of Manchester and Lawrence distanced themselves from their German heritage with the onset of World War II. German schools disbanded and only limited club activity continued after the war. Following World War II, emigration led to significant decreases of the German populations in both communities, mainly a result of the GI Bill and associated programs. German-Americans, however, remained in predominantly German districts. McCaffery determines that Germans in Manchester and Lawrence considered themselves American but held onto their culture as it gradually disappeared. In 1942, the *Anzeiger und Post* ceased publication, signifying the end of attempts to preserve *Deutschtum* and the erosion of the German-American communities in Manchester and Lawrence.

McCaffery's *Islands of Deutschtum* will take a deserved place among the standard works on Germans in America. Although McCaffery relies heavily on the *Anzeiger und Post*, his bibliography demonstrates an exhaustive grounding in the primary and secondary literature. Moreover, he does an excellent job of putting the Germans of New England into the larger context of Germans in America. This volume is similar to historian Stanley Nadel's *Little Germany* (1990) in which he examines the German community in New York City during the middle to late nineteenth century. Both authors thoroughly investigated their targeted communities in the tradition of the New Social history. *Islands of Deutschtum* is well written and provides valuable insight into a previously neglected region of German America.