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Tomas Jaehn. *Germans in the Southwest, 1850-1920.* Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005. xii + 242 pp. $24.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8263-3498-5.

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The German Diaspora Reaches New Mexico

Tomas Jaehn's book on German migrants to New Mexico and their progeny during the period from New Mexico's organization as a U.S. territory through World War I is mistitled. The phrase "in the Southwest" should be replaced by "in New Mexico." Only occasionally does Jaehn generalize about the Southwest. There is to my knowledge no other substantial monograph on Germans in New Mexico. Inevitably, many readers will judge the book on the basis of how well it fills this gap.

Jaehn defines as "German" anyone born within the boundaries of what became the German national state of 1871, or anyone with at least one German-born parent or grandparent. This definition excludes Austrians, German Swiss and many German-speakers from Central and Eastern Europe. The same definition includes many Poles, Sorbs and others whose first language was not German. However, these are minor problems. It is unlikely that an appreciable number of German-speaking immigrants in New Mexico came from outside the boundaries of Bismarckian Germany. Use of a more–or less–inclusive definition of "German" would be unlikely to have altered Jaehn's conclusions appreciably. For the sake of convenience this review will follow his usage, which understandably is not always consistent.

A far more important issue is how much is gained by studying an area of the United States where few Germans went. Through statistical studies and comparisons with German immigrants elsewhere in the United States, Jaehn demonstrates that useful perspectives can be gained regarding New Mexico, the Southwest, German immigrants elsewhere in America and (although he does not pursue this last issue), the study of migrants and ethnicity in general. Some of the best parts of Jaehn's book are extended discussions of German travel literature on New Mexico and the Southwest. He shows that most German writers on the region tended to underplay or ignore the role of Hispanics and greatly overestimate the presence and role of Native Americans.

Jaehn argues that Germans in the Southwest did not have the same need to assert their ethnic identity that the far more numerous Germans in the Midwest and the Middle Atlantic States felt. He emphasizes two reasons for this contrast. The first is that so few Germans went to the Southwest that little was to be gained through ethnic

organizations. According to Jaehn's statistics, the New Mexico territorial census of 1850 turned up 292 Irish and 224 Germans; Germans comprised only 0.3 percent of the population of 61,547. Jaehn documents that, although from 1850 to 1920 Germans were one of the largest European ethnic groups in New Mexico, they were never more than 1.1 percent of New Mexico's total population (pp. 29-30).

He finds in the presence of a large Hispanic population in New Mexico a second reason why the Germans of New Mexico were not inclined, as were their brethren in the East and Midwest, to found ethnic associations such as chorale societies and *Turnvereine*. When Germans began to arrive in New Mexico in the mid-nineteenth century, Jaehn reasons, political and social life there was dominated by Hispanics, who were tolerant of other Europeans and whose political and cultural hegemony the Germans did not challenge. Jaehn has ascertained that almost all of the early German arrivals were males, many of whom married Hispanics and raised Spanish-speaking children.

The early German arrivals were mostly merchants–large and small, itinerant or with fixed places of business. A substantial proportion were German Jews, Jaehn observes, who were considered, and considered themselves, part of the German community. Jaehn implies that this climate of tolerance in New Mexico was unusual, but it was common in nineteenth-century America. Jaehn might usefully have compared the situation of the German merchants in New Mexico to that of the German merchants in nineteenth-century Mexico, especially in Mexico City, a subject on which there is a substantial literature in English, Spanish and German. At the very least–and this criticism applies to Jaehn's book as a whole–he might have fleshed out his abstractions about German New Mexicans with more substantial examples. He presents lists of German family names with little discussion of how they are relevant to the point he is making. His finding that successful German merchants tended to leave New Mexico is tantalizing since he provides few details. Jaehn's contention that German merchants brought capitalism to New Mexico is difficult to assess since he fails to define the crucial term "capitalism."

In an appendix on the occupations of Germans in New Mexico, Jaehn indicates the basis for his analysis of their social and economic situation. He is working with treacherous, difficult-to-employ categories. For example, Jaehn writes: "I consider German barbers, who learn the trade, members of a trade, and musicians, who presumably attended college, as professionals" (p. 148). Leaving aside the syntactical problems in this sentence, I gather that when Jaehn refers to "musicians" he is following the usage of the American censuses and combining what in German are two distinct occupations: *Musikanten*, people, often itinerants, who learned to play popular and folk music in bands and the like on the job; and what are usually described as *Musiker*, the principal performers of what we designate as "classical music." Jaehn's reference to "attending college" does not make sense for either type of musician. Most of the conservatories and *Fachhochschulen* of today did not exist in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Jaehn distinguishes two periods from 1850 to 1920. They are not sharply delineated. The first extends to the 1870s or 1880s and ends when, as a result of the extension of the railroad, substantial numbers of American migrants arrived in New Mexico. Only then, according to Jaehn, did Germans in New Mexico sense a need to organize and assert themselves as an ethnic group; even then the founding of ethnic organizations did not occur at the same tempo and scale as in the Middle West and the East. For Jaehn, World War I did not bring to New Mexico such heavy-handed anti-German Americanization measures as it did to the Midwest and East. He suggests that World War I enabled the Germans of New Mexico to merge with the Anglo-American majority at the expense of Hispanics and Native Americans. This conclusion meshes nicely with Russell A. Kazal's findings in his recent study of German Americans in Philadelphia: Protestant German Americans succeeded in identifying themselves as "old stock" in the aftermath of World War I.[1] In Jaehn's terms they became "Anglos." Both Kazal and Jaehn recognize the role of the decline in German immigration beginning in the late nineteenth century as an underlying factor in the waning of German ethnicity in the United States. They follow the major trend in historiography (including John A. Hawgood and Frederick C. Luebke) by regarding World War I as a powerful accelerator of tendencies toward the dissolution of what Hawgood called "German America."[2] Jaehn contributes significantly to the study of ethnic assimilation.

A number of minor errors have found their way into Jaehn's study. Although the book is generally well written, the author stumbles occasionally. For example, he refers to people "performing patriotic speeches" (p. 135). Another slip is perhaps partly a function of age. He alludes to "care packages" sent to Europe by people in the United States after World War I (p. 137). There were

American relief efforts in Europe following both world wars, but the acronym C.A.R.E. (Committee of American Remittances to Europe) is a product of World War II. There are also other obvious errors. One of Jaehn's best illustrations shows Adolph Bandelier, an important student of New Mexico, visiting the territory in 1880, but the opposing page implies that Bandelier first came to New Mexico in 1882 (pp. 22-23). (As Jaehn acknowledges, Bandelier was a German Swiss.) Some of Jaehn's allusions confuse more than they clarify. Invoking O. E. RÃ¶lvaag's great novel about Norwegian settlers on the North American frontier, *Giants in the Earth*, Jaehn characterizes New Mexico's Germans as "Per Hansa types" (p. 142). To Jaehn this metaphor means that the Germans assimilated quickly, were economically successful, lived in small towns and had urban occupations. It is difficult to calculate whether this description of Jaehn's subject or of RÃ¶lvaag's principal character is the faultier.

Despite flaws and blemishes, Jaehn's study is a welcome addition to the literature on the history of acculturation and German Americans. A gap in the history of the German diaspora has been narrowed by an ambitious book. Jaehn and his publisher have produced a handsome, well-illustrated book with a nice binding and a superb dust jacket.

Notes

[1]. Russell A. Kazal, *Becoming Old Stock: The Paradox of German-American Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

[2]. 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; reprint, New York: Arno, 1970); Frederick C. Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty: German Americans and World War I* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974).

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