

Review of *German-Americana: Selected Essays*

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German-Americana: Selected Essays

By Don Heinrich Tolzmann

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Editor's Page

The book I have chosen to review this time is *German-Americana: Selected Essays* by Don Heinrich Tolzmann and published by the Little Miami Publishing Company in 2008. Tolzmann, former curator of the German-Americana Collection and director of German-American Studies at the University of Cincinnati is one of the leading scholars of German-American history and has published many articles on the subject. *German-Americana* is a collection of thirty-seven speeches and articles divided into six parts, such as: Anniversaries and Celebrations (including speeches at dedications); Museums and Centers (including a history of the Germanic Museum at Harvard and German Emigration Center in Bremerhaven); and Libraries and Research (including a description of German-American libraries at several libraries).

Essays in "People and Places" evaluate the remaining traces of German-American life in New York City's *Kleindeutschland* (Little Germany), the history of the often overlooked settlements in northern Kentucky, and German culture in Minnesota. Of particular interest in this section are the accounts of Mary Schwandt, who was kidnapped during the 1862 Sioux Uprising, and the biography of John Kay, the lead singer of the rock-and-roll band Steppenwolf.

In "Authors and Publications" Tolzmann republishes three essays first printed in *Der Maibaum*. They include his surprising find of a book published in Cincinnati entitled *Christian's Immigration from Germany* during a visit in Hermann, Missouri (2007), his cataloging the "Writings of Friedrich Muench" (2008), and his narrative of the life of Dr. C.F.W. Walther of Missouri (2009). Additional essays in this section of the book include biographies of several well-known publishers, such as Wilhelm Kaufmann, the author of *Die Deutschen im amerikanischen Bürgerkrieg* (Germans in the American Civil War); "Free Thinker" and publisher Albert Steinhauser of New Ulm, Minnesota; notable historians of German-American newspapers, Karl J.R. Arndt and Robert E. Cazden; and "the Baltimore Sage," H.L. Mencken.

There is not much to critique on this book. The publisher could have eliminated such obvious mistakes as “arrived in arrived in 1785” on page 60. Nevertheless, this is an excellent collection of essays and thoughts by one of the foremost scholars of German-American history. The reader gains valuable insight into the research process through “The Roebling Suspension Bridge and the Question of Slave Labor” and “Swiss Travel Notes” and the section “Notes and Reviews” recommends new research topics and tools. The book will be a worthwhile read for the general public as well as scholars interested in German-Americana.