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Book Reviews

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Unfortunately, few monographs on Albert Gallatin (1761-1849) have been produced in the last half century, but interest in the contribution of this most eminent Swiss American has recently been revised largely by Bénédict de Tscharner’s *Albert Gallatin*, and Nicholas Dungan’s excellent study. As a senior advisor to the French Institute of International and Strategic Relations and a former president of the French-American Foundation in New York, Dungan brings his expertise on transatlantic affairs to the study of Gallatin. Making good use of the Gallatin papers at New York University, Dungan has produced the best academic study to date on the Swiss American diplomat, politician, and educator.

Albert Gallatin grew up in the exhilarating atmosphere of Geneva during the Enlightenment, which produced the important thinker, Jean Jacques Rousseau. Coming from an advantaged background, Gallatin had many opportunities to make his mark in the world, and some of his contemporaries made their fortunes in France. But Gallatin was a romantic, similar to the Marquis de Lafayette, and he saw much to admire in the potential of the nascent United States with its promise of freedom, equality, and opportunity. He bravely came to Boston in 1780 at age nineteen, when the outcome of the War of Independence was far from certain, and he later settled in Pennsylvania.

Speaking little English upon his arrival, Gallatin soon mastered the new language and made good use of his many talents to succeed in his adopted country. He became active in politics and was chosen by the state legislature to serve briefly as a US Senator. He later served two terms as Representative to Congress, but he became most effective as the Secretary of Treasury under Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, and Gallatin’s financial skills made possible the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. Madison used Gallatin as a diplomat, and the former Swiss
brought an end to the War of 1812 by negotiating the Treaty of Ghent in 1814, which was a diplomatic triumph. Despite the fact that the war had gone poorly for the United States, the peace treaty assured that no territories were lost and no additional restrictions were placed on that country.

Gallatin moved to New York late in life and was instrumental in founding New York University as a means of offering an advanced education even to people of modest means. While Gallatin’s contribution to the United States was considerable, he was very disturbed about the harsh treatment of the American Indians. In an attempt to understand the native cultures, he established the study of native ethnicity to appreciate the peoples who were being destroyed by white Americans. Albert Gallatin was a very admirable man, and Dungan’s study is a worthy appreciation of the Swiss American and his many contributions.

- Kurt Winkler, Emporia State University
Book Review

by Barry Maxfield


There were many ethnic groups who settled America, such as the Swiss and the Germans. But little is written on their history. It has become increasingly important to analyze history from their viewpoints. Todd opens the preface of this book with an assertion which leads the reader to want a new perspective on history "of our [U.S.] white population there are at least twenty seven percent of German birth or extraction, while those of English origin number but thirty percent."(page 5) He then asks the question, why is history written from an English perspective? He gives the answer that Early American history was written by men from New England.

Todd has complied, edited, commented and, with the help of Julius Goebel, translated manuscripts written by Christoph Von Graffenried, a Swiss Bailiff who led a company to establish a colony in 18th century colonial America. The book includes a general history of the German Palatine with some insight into Swiss life in Bern.

It covers topics which include reasons for the Revolutionary War, feudal systems in America, labor contracts, colonial travel, and colonial politics, Swiss immigrants in North Carolina and Virginia and white relations with Indians.

The figures who play a role in this book and are of interest to historians: Christoph Von Graffenried, Anton Von Graffenried, Thomas Cromwell, Sir William Waller, Joshua Kochertal, Franz Louis Michel, John Lawson, Georg Ritter and King Charles II.

The editors construct this narrative around two printed Graffenried manuscripts, one in German and one in French, which are included in the book in their respective languages. The book includes an appendix which gives a short vocabulary of older English words and German and
French words with translations.

The book is laid out in five chapters: the historical introduction, the German manuscript, the English translation of the manuscript, the French manuscript and the English translation of it. This seems a well thought out methodology to present this material.

In the historical introduction, the editor lays out a well-documented discussion of the Palatine migration or the movement of Germans of the Palatinate. The discussion is heavy in the Reformation, Counter-Reformation and English politics. It also covers Graffenried’s early history through his travels in America.

The historical introduction is broken into sub-chapters inside the chapter. These sub-chapters are not listed in the table of contents, but are indexed at the back of the book. The sub-chapters have leads such as “The Decisive Cause of the Palatine Migration” and “Survey of the Final Disposal of the Palatines.” In Part I Chapter I, Graffenried enters the picture with a history of his early life, bringing the reader into the year 1661.

This book is meant for the serious historian who is seeking to understand the other views of the Early American experience. This book is also important in that it highlights the problems that caused the American Colonists to become restless under English rule, ultimately culminating in the War for Independence. It makes the point that the Swiss and German colonists had the same discontent and problems as their English counterparts. It is substantial proof of the place the Swiss and German people had in the weaving of the ethnic tapestry of America.

- Barry Maxfield, Utah Valley University
Jean Piaget (1896-1980) was a psychologist, epistemologist, logician, and social theorist. He was born in Neuchâtel, Switzerland, and died in Geneva, and he is one of the most significant psychologists of the twentieth century. Piaget’s empirical work and theoretical conceptions changed the way psychologists and scholars think about psychological development in children. Leslie Smith, Emeritus Professor, Lancaster University stated that his influence on developmental psychology can be compared to Shakespeare’s influence on English literature in the sixteenth century.

Originally published in French as Jean Piaget et Neuchâtel: l’apprenti et le savant in 1996 during the centenary celebration of Piaget’s birth, the book illuminates his early years. Written by multiple authors—including psychologists, archivists, and historians—the scholars shed light on the early development of one of the early development scholars.

Although the editors state in the preface that the intention of the book is not to explain Piaget or discern his career as determined by social or personal destiny, the book does indeed expand our understanding of Piaget’s background. Neuchâtel’s political, religious, cultural, scientific and educational climate is discussed in multiple chapters. Arthur Piaget, Piaget’s father, as well as other influential people in Piaget’s life, are described and discussed. The ideas within the book are well supported. The authors build upon the work of Piaget scholars and draw on research from primary sources such as letters and writings by Piaget in his youth. The book focuses on Piaget’s maturation and early years in his hometown of Neuchâtel as well as his studies, both in his early schooling and at the University Neuchâtel. It also expands upon Piag-
et’s later life and work such as the reception of his early ideas outside of Switzerland.

This book is an excellent addition to biographic and psychological literature. Piaget theories are described and discussed in detail in every child psychology textbook, but knowing the history and maturation of this eminent psychologist can widen the understanding of the person and his theories.

- Barbaraella Frazier, Brigham Young University