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## Palatines, Liberty, and Property: German Lutherans in Colonial British America (Early America: History, Context, Culture)

By A. G. Roeber



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In *Palatines, Liberty, and Property* A. G. Roeber explains why so many Germans, when they faced critical choices in 1776, became active supporters of the patriot cause. Employing a variety of German-language sources and following all the major German migration streams, Roeber explores German conceptions of personal and public property in the context of cultural and religious beliefs, village life, and family concerns. Co-winner of the John H. Dunning Prize from the American Historical Association, Roeber's study of German-American settlements and their ideas about liberty and property provides an unprecedented view of how non-English culture and beliefs made their way from Europe to America.



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## **Editorial Review**

### Review

This superb book... takes its place as the most comprehensive exploration yet of eighteenth-century German migration to and settlement in America. Ambitious in subject matter, impressive in research and thematic treatment, it is a model of transatlantic investigation that greatly expands our knowledge of mobility in the Atlantic world and ethnic diversity in colonial America. By admirably conveying the variegated experiences of this demographically and culturally significant block of settlers, Roeber establishes them as players in the early American drama.

*(Reviews in American History)*

A landmark volume, based on a decade of diligent research in German archives and public records as well as in sources in the United States, it marks a new era of more sophisticated knowledge and interpretation of how German understandings of liberty and property were transplanted to and transformed in the New World.

*(American Historical Review)*

This volume is a significant contribution also to immigration studies. It is a model. Europe is a starting point. Settlement patterns are studied. Village and congregational reconstructions are utilized. Concepts in the German lexicon are analyzed. Throughout, Roeber has avoided oversimplification and recognized the richness and complexity of the German-American contribution to colonial life.

*(Journal of American History)*

Roeber moves colonial legal history in a direction that colonial social and political history has been traveling: multiethnic, trans-Atlantic, and comparative... Particularly valuable in this respect is Roeber's work on the Germans' Old and New World legal institutions and sources of law, inheritance practices, litigiousness, trans-Atlantic networks, and understandings of liberty and property... Although the book might be read as a study of liberty and property as 'keywords'... it is more impressive, indeed exemplary, as a social history of conceptual change.

*(Law and History Review)*

The most thoughtful and comprehensive study ever attempted of the German migration to eighteenth-century America and how it affected and was affected by the Revolution. Roeber's research on German law and patterns of landholding has no parallel in English-language scholarship. This is the one book that everyone should read who wishes to understand the scope and significance of the first massive voluntary migration of non-English speaking settlers to British North America.

(John M. Murrin, Princeton University)

## About the Author

**A. G. Roeber** is professor of history and religious studies, head of the Department of History, and co-director of the Max Kade German-American Research Institute at the Pennsylvania State University. He is the author of *Faithful Magistrates and Republican Lawyers: Creators of Virginia Legal Culture, 1680-1810*.

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