Students, Cultural Politics and the History of the “Old Immigration”

By David A. Gerber

In the last three years I have become aware that a particular type of student, with surprisingly sharply defined and consciously understood needs, has been attracted to my undergraduate seminar, “European Immigrant Lives.” I want to discuss the personal needs and aspirations of these students and reconsider how we teach them. I will not offer particular prescriptions, such as a model syllabus or reading list. In fact, I believe that neither the classroom nor the professional discourse of immigration history can ultimately provide them with what they are looking for. But at least immigration historians can be better prepared to explain to students why we cannot help them.

At best, what I hope to do in this brief space is to explain these students to those who seek to teach them and to suggest a way out of the dilemma these students face. This in itself is no unimportant goal. Like most teenagers, these students live in the present, a location that is usually the enemy of history. However, our particular present moment is one of tremendous significance not only for them, and but for the many American immigration historians who study what I will call the “Old Immigration.” By this I mean all of the European immigrants of the first two mass immigrations. In the light of a century and more of European acculturation and of the massive contemporary immigration from everywhere in the world but Europe, increasingly it seems that the old distinctions among the European ethnic groups, on which so much of the politics of the past have been based, are losing their power. As of now, this is felt not so much in the historical analysis of us European-Americans who belong to the Immigration and Ethnic History Society, as in the contemporary cultural politics that influences how historians are regarded and how they come to regard themselves. The plight of my students is intimately tied up with such developments as the increasingly widespread conception of a single European-American historical experience, one in which the British, Germans, and Irish, for example, are thought to be similar to the Poles, Jews and Italians because, despite their differences, they are all white—which the Asian, Latino, and Caribbean immigrants of the recent past are not. Historians of European immigration resist thinking of the past this way, just as my students resist the implications of this argument for their own lives. But it may help us reconsider our own professional practice and how our work is perceived by others by reflecting on the ways in which our students are mirrors of the cultural politics of the present.

During the first meeting of the semester in all my undergraduate seminars, I routinely ask students, “What brings you to want to study this particular history?” In History 416, the answers regularly go much beyond such usual responses as “it sounds interesting,” “the room is convenient,” and “I need a seminar for my history major requirements.” The students in “European Immigrant Lives” have something else in mind, and they spend the next two hours in animated discussion of a common situation that frames the goals they bring to the seminar. Invariably white with European immigrant ancestry, most often with multiple ethnic genealogies, these young men and women are in search of a useable past that will help them find positive identities. Much around them at the present time encourages them to regard themselves in a way that they resist—as undifferentiated “white people.” It is not difficult to understand the origin of the various pressures they feel. Contemporary multiracial immigrations that are remaking the cultural content of daily life and the makeup of our campuses are an obvious influence on these students’ self-perceptions. So, too, are public and private affirmative action programs, but beyond them lies the discourse about distributive justice and historical responsibility for discrimination that has been present for a generation at every level of our national life. The university curriculum, too, asserts its own influences racializing these students’ identities. A number of disciplines, including history, have been engaged recently in studying “whiteness” and moving our understanding of race into the inner recesses of mind (continued on p. 8)

TO OUR READERS

In April 1998, the Immigration History Society voted to change its name to the Immigration and Ethnic History Society.

Accordingly, the Immigration History Newsletter has been renamed the Immigration and Ethnic History Newsletter.

Volume numbering will continue in the same series. The last issue of the Immigration History Newsletter was vol.30, no.1 (May 1998). This issue (vol. 30, no. 2; November 1998) is the first issue of the Immigration and Ethnic History Newsletter.
News from Libraries, Museums and Historic Sites...

The Social Science Research Council has announced competition for fellowships to research international migration to the United States. Fellowships, funded by the Andrew Mellon Foundation, are for the academic year 1999-2000. The goal is to foster innovative research into a wide range of migration subjects. Fellowships support twelve months of dissertation or postdoctoral research. Deadline for application is January 13, 1999. For information and applications address: International Migration Program, SSRC, 810 Seventh Ave., New York, NY 10019. E-mail: migration@ssrc.org

The Asian American Studies Center at the University of California at Los Angeles has acquired the papers of New York human rights activist Yuri Kochiyama. Ms. Kochiyama donated over 100 boxes of papers, periodicals and other materials.

Among recent archival acquisitions at the Immigration History Research Center at the University of Minnesota: Records of the American Council of Polish Cultural Clubs, 1951-1970; supplementary records of the American Latvian Association, 1953-1996; papers of Knuts Lesjo, Latvian musician and writer, 1940-1993; papers of John and Marusia Popovich, Ukrainian ethnic leaders, 1929-94; papers of Mary Ellen Mancina Batinnich, Italian-American educator and poet, 1923-1996; papers of Bohdan Futala, president of the Ukrainian Student Organization of Mikhnoivsk, 1965-73; papers of Joyce Hakala, Finnish-American musicologist, 1970-1997; records of the (Finnish-American) Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, New York Mills, Minnesota (1889-1990);

Tell your friends...

...about the benefits of membership in the Immigration and Ethnic History Society. It's a bargain! Refer them for membership and other information to the new IEHS web page: http://www.libertynet.org/balach/iehs

records of the Finnish-American Translators' Association; American sheet music collected by Raymond and Kaarina Wargelin, 1890-1980; additional records of the Joint Baltic American National Committee from the 1980s and 1990s; and additions to the Sons of Italy Archive. Information: IHRC, 826 Berry St., St. Paul MN 55114. E-mail: IHRC@gold.tc.umn.edu

The Batch Institute for Ethnic Studies, Philadelphia, is accepting applications for its summer 1999 research fellowship program. The fellowships provide housing and a $500 per month stipend, and are intended to help scholars who wish to spend an extended period in research on American immigration and ethnicity. Deadline for application: March 15, 1999. For information, contact the Library, Batch Institute, 18 S. 7th st., Philadelphia PA 19106. Telephone: (215) 925-8090. E-mail: balchlib@balchinstiute.org. Information also on the web site: www.libertynet.org/balach

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The archives of Northwestern University have opened for research the records of the Northwestern University Settlement Association, which was founded 1891 to serve a poor immigrant neighborhood on the northwest side of Chicago. The voluminous records span the period 1891-1995, and include correspondence, reports, minutes of meetings, and demographic information. Information: Patrick Quinn, University Archivist, Deering Library, 1935 Sheridan Road, Evanston IL 60208-2300. Telephone: (847) 491-3354. E-mail: archives@nu.edu

A new exhibition on immigration from India will open at the Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies, Philadelphia on Feb. 4, 1999. "Live like the Banyan Tree: Images of the Indian American Experience," curated by Leela Prasad, brings together the fruits of extensive field research in the Philadelphia-New Jersey region. Beginning mid-January, a preview may be seen on the Balch web site: http://www.libertynet.org/balach

The Kheel Center for Labor-Management Documentation and Archives at Cornell University has set up a "learning exhibit" on the World Wide Web about the Triangle Shirt Waist Factory fire, which killed 146 women laborers, mostly immigrants, in 1911. The page contains documents, photos, and other materials. Address: http://www.its.cornell.edu/trianglefire/

The Korean American Historical Society has established a website: http://deestudios.com/kahs

The State University of New York at Stony Brook has established a web site devoted to Italian-American studies. Address: http://www.ssnyeb.edu/cis/iam/

The University of Bradford (England) and its Irish Diaspora Research Unit have set up an Irish Diaspora discussion list for scholarly discussion. For information about the list, contact Patrick O'Sullivan (e-mail: P.O'Sullivan@bradford.ac.uk) or consult the web site: http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/diaspora

The University of Toronto and its Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations has announced the publication of a new on-line journal, Women in Judaism: A Multidisciplinary Journal. Its address is: http://www.utoronto.ca/wjudaism

New York University Press invites proposals for its new book series on Religion, Race and Ethnicity. The series, say the editors, will "advance our understanding of religion as a determinative dynamic in the lives of different racial and ethnic communities." Proposals should be about 3-5 pages, and sent simultaneously to Peter Paris, Princeton Theological Seminary, CN821, Princeton NJ 08542 (e-mail peters.paris@ptsem.edu); and to Jennifer Hammer, NYU Press, 70 Washington Square South, New York NY 10012 (E-mail: HammerJ@elmer5.bobst.nyu.edu). Queries may be directed to the same people.
A Message from the President...

Our change of name having been formally recorded by the Secretary of State in Minnesota (where the Society was originally incorporated), we are now officially the Immigration and Ethnic History Society.

Well, you may say, so what? What does it signify to add the words "and Ethnic" to our name? Only our corporate action in the future can really answer that question. But for the moment, let me offer the following comments.

First, the simple act of changing makes a statement. It tells the world we know our field of interest has been transformed and that we intend to make the necessary adjustments. We had, of course, been adjusting to change all along, but doing it incrementally—silently, so to speak. By 1997, however, it had become obvious that many workers in the field either didn't know of our existence, or regarded it as irrelevant to their concerns. It was therefore time to say out loud that we are aware of the new shape of things and are convinced we can contribute to a better understanding of its complexities.

Secondly, adding the words "and Ethnic" gives formal recognition to a crucial difference between the present and the early days of the "Immigration and Ethnic History Society"—the vastly enhanced conceptual salience of "ethnicity," especially in its relation to "race." Again, this is not really new. The founders of the Society were well acquainted with these matters, and our scholarly quarterly (established 1981) is explicitly the Journal of American Ethnic History. Yet, as Donna Gabaccia and James Grossman pointed out several years ago in their valuable collection of course syllabi, college classes focused on ethnicity have a different shape from those employing a more traditional immigration-history approach. Since our own members are among those teaching ethnicity-oriented courses, it seems only right to give their perspective equal billing in our title. Moreover, we want to make clear to minority spokespersons who reject the "immigration model" as misleading that we are very much open to their concerns.

A third point relates to the enormous increase of immigration since 1970. That posed a challenge to the Society, and the change of name is an outward indication of our collective determination to meet it. Most obviously, renewed immigration has brought vast numbers of newcomers from parts of the world not heavily represented in 19th- and early 20th-century immigration. This has profoundly affected the very subject-matter of our field. To understand its new configuration, we must reach out to scholars from these newer groups, both learning from them and enriching the context within which they work.

The fourth point: more is required than simply reaching out to historians of Latino and Asian groups. We must also take into account the cross-disciplinary dimensions of the field. This is particularly important now because when heavy immigration is actually under way it attracts more attention from social sciences than from historians. This was as true in the past as it is today. Thus when the massive immigration of 1880-1925 was in full flood, leading historians of the U.S. treated the subject as (in Edward Saveth's words ) a sort of "historiographic hangnail." The books we now regard as classics from that era were all written by social scientists like Emily Greene Balch, Robert F. Forster and, most notably, W. I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki. No professional historian published a general account of the phenomenon until George M. Stephenson's 1926 History of American Immigration.

When we turn to the present we find the same thing. For despite some fine surveys of recent immigration by Elliott Barkan, David Reimers, and Reed Ueda (all historian-members of IEHS), the landscape of scholarship on post-1965 immigration is overwhelmingly dominated by sociologists, economists, political scientists, and anthropologists—to say nothing of an immense literature in court cases and law journals on issues relating to immigration, naturalization, and refugee policy. And if we add race, ethnicity, and group identity to the mix, a whole new range of disciplinary perspectives further complicates the picture. For here we have to take into account the work of scholars in psychology, literature, American Studies, Ethnic Studies, educational theory and practice, and more, extending all the way to moral philosophy and theology.

Now there is nothing surprising about this situation. Indeed, the study of immigration and ethnicity has always had a strongly cross-disciplinary character. But the contemporary explosion of interest in the field, and the plethora of approaches deployed in its study, threatens to overwhelm us in a buzzing, confounding confusion. We need to work together to sort out the leading themes, to compare past and present, and in general to get a better grip on what is happening and where we are going.

The IEHS harbors no imperialistic illusions in this regard. It does not aspire, all on its own, to bring a new kind of coherence and order into the field, although it has a record of accomplishment of which we who make up its membership are proud. But while we believe we have something to offer those outside our ranks, we also realize that we need to learn from them. Hence we want to reach out to them—historians and non-historians alike—inviting them to join us in exploring the new scholarly terrain of immigration/ethnicity on the eve of the new century.

These considerations seem to me to point toward, but not to exhaust, what changing the name of our organization really means.

Philip Gleason
President, IEHS

THE IEHS WEB PAGE

...is now open. It contains information about the Immigration and Ethnic History Society; membership information; minutes, notices of activities and awards; information about the Journal of American Ethnic History; and some useful links to other institutions and associations.

The IEHS web page resides on the server of the Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies in Philadelphia. The page was set up with the assistance of Dr. Karl Krueger of the Balch Institute staff.

The IEHS web page is found at the following address: http://www.libertynet.org/balch/iehs
Wayne State University plans an interdisciplinary conference in Detroit March 4-7, 1999. Theme: “The University and the City: Urban Education and the Liberal Arts.” Information: John J. Bukowieczyk, Dept. of History, 3125 F/AB, Wayne State Univ., Detroit MI 48202. E-mail: aa2092@wayne.edu

Sarah Lawrence College will hold a conference March 5-7, 1998: “Native Women Weaving Urban Traditions: An Exploration of Indigenous Women and their Communities in Urban Areas.” Information: Alice Nash, Women’s History Program, Sarah Lawrence College, One Mead Way, Bronxville, NY 10708. E-mail: anash@mail.slc.edu


Avignon University and its Centre for the Study and Research of North-South Relations is holding a conference in English March 18-21 1999 in Avignon: “Migration and Countries of the South.” Contact: Gwyn Campbell, Centre for the Study of North-South Relations, Université d’Avignon, 74 rue Louis Pasteur, Case. no. 19, 84029 Avignon Cedex 1, France.

Michigan State University will host a conference April 7-10, 1999: “Race in 21st Century America.” Information on the web: www.jsri.msu.edu/raceconf or E-mail: jsri@msu.edu

Interdisciplinary Nineteenth-Century Studies will hold its fourteenth annual conference at the Ohio State University, Columbus, April 9-10, 1999. Sessions are organized around the general topic “Transatlanticisms.” Information: Clare Simmons, Dept. of English, Ohio State Univ., Columbus OH 43210-1370. E-mail: simmons.9@osu.edu

The annual symposium of the Society for German-American Studies will be held April 22-25, 1999 in New Ulm, Minnesota. Among topics planned are “Outcomes and Results of the 1848 Immigrants” and “German Immigration and the California Gold Rush.” Information: La Vern Rippley, St. Olaf College, Northfield MN 55057-1098. E-mail: ripplyl@stolaf.edu

The Belgium Luxembourg American Studies Association will hold an interdisciplinary conference in Brussels May 7-9, 1999. Topic: “National Stereotypes in Perspective: Americans in France-Frenchmen in America.” Information: William L. Chew III, Vesalius College, VUB, Pleinlaan 2, 1050 Brussels, Belgium. E-mail: wchew@vub.ac.be Information on the web: http://www.vub.ac.be/VECO

The Oulu-Hamano Institute of Early American History and Culture will hold its annual conference June 11-13, 1999 at the University of Texas in Austin. The conference will provide a forum for the study of all aspects of the lives of North America’s indigenous and immigrant peoples from the 16th century to approximately 1815. Information on the web: http://www.utexas.edu/academic/oliahc


The Chinese Historical Society of San Diego, the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California and the Chinese Historical Society of America will hold the Sixth Annual Chinese American Conference at the University of San Diego, July 9-11, 1999. The conference theme,
The Oral History Association will hold its annual meeting Oct. 7-10, 1999 in Anchorage, Alaska. Theme: “Giving Voice: Oral Historians and the Shaping of Narrative.” Information: Susan Armitage, Women’s Studies Program, Washington State University, Pullman WA 99164-4007. E-mail: armitage@wsu.edu

The Social Science History Association will hold its 1999 meeting Nov. 11-14 in Fort Worth, Texas. A call for papers and panels has been issued by the Migration/Immigration network. For information and to make proposals, contact Suzanne Sinke, Clemson University (ssinke@clemson.edu) or Dorothée Schaeider, University of Illinois (schdra@uiuc.edu). Proposals are due by February 1, 1999. Keynote address will be by Peter Kolchin (Univ. of Delaware).

The Norwegian-American Historical Association and the Minnesota Historical Society will co-sponsor a conference April 6-8, 2000 in St. Paul. Theme: “Vandring: Norwegians in the American Mosaic, 1825-1900.” Deadline for proposals: March 1, 1999. Contact: J.R. Christenson, History Dept., Luther College, Decorah IA 52101. Telephone: (319) 382-4362. E-mail: christjn@luther.edu

PERSONALS

Ronald Bayer (Georgia Institute of Technology), editor of the Journal of American Ethnic History, received the Outstanding Book Award from the Gustavus Myers Center for the Study of Human Rights in North America. The book was Race and the Shaping of Twentieth-Century Atlanta (1996).

Robert Cazden, bibliographer and retired professor at the University of Kentucky library school, was awarded the Society for German-American Studies Outstanding Achievement award in April 1998. He was recognized for his extensive research and publications on the German-American press and book trade.

Neil Foley (Univ. of Texas) received a fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies for work on “Becoming Hispanic: Mexican Americans and the Faustian pact with ‘whiteness’ in the Southwest, 1830-1880.”

Walter D. Kamphoefner (Texas A. and M. Univ.) has been awarded a Senior Fulbright Lectureship in Germany for the academic year 1998-99. He will lecture on immigration and urbanization at the Institute for Migration Research and Intercultural Studies at the University of Osnabrück.

Maureen Lloyd Kirby has been appointed director of the American Swedish Historical Museum in Philadelphia.

M. Mark Stolarik (Univ. of Ottawa) has been awarded a research grant and sabbatical leave by his university for the academic year 1998-99 to write a comprehensive history of Slovak migration to North America.

W. Richard West, director of the National Museum of the American Indian, has been elected chair of the board of directors of the American Association of Museums.

At the November 1998 meeting of the American Studies Association, Gary Okihiro, director of Asian-American studies at Cornell University, was awarded the Carl Bode-Norman Holmes Pearson Prize for lifetime contributions to American studies.

Five persons were recipients of fellowships for summer 1998 at the Batch Institute for Ethnic Studies, Philadelphia. They were: Ting Ni (St. Mary’s Univ., Minn.), doing research on the Chinese Catholic Church in America; Stefano Loconi (Univ. of Florence, Italy), studying the Italian-American press and the Mussolini government in the 1920s and 1930s; Simone Cinotto (Univ. of Genoa), researching food and Italian-American identity in the 1920s and 1930s; Najia Aarim (Univ. of Moulay Ismaïl, Morocco), studying “Chinese Immigrants, African Americans and the Problem of Race in the United States, 1882-1904”; Henry Yu (UCLA), whose project was “How Tiger Woods Lost his Stripes: American Multiculturalism, Global Capitalism and a History of Transnational Migration.”

NECROLOGY

Paul Chow, a civil engineer who led the campaign to preserve the Angel Island Immigration Station in San Francisco Bay, died June 30, 1998 in San Francisco at the age of 69. Chow lobbied for the State of California to take over the site as a state park in the 1970s and to restore the immigration station, used by thousands of Chinese immigrants before 1940. He also succeeded in having the federal Department of the Interior designate the site in May 1998 as a National Historic Landmark. About 300,000 people visit Angel Island each year.

Jerre Mangione, writer and historian of Italian-American life, died August 16, 1998 in Haverford, Pennsylvania at the age of 89. He was emeritus professor of American literature at the University of Pennsylvania, where he had been a faculty member since 1961, teaching composition and

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New Publications Noted...


Canadian Ethnic Studies/Études ethniques au Canada 29:3 (1997) is a special issue on Icelandic immigration.


Inouye, Frank T. "Immediate Origins of


MELUS 22 (1997): 4 is a special issue on “Ethnic Autobiography.”


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Students and Cultural Politics...
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and culture where it is said to function as a fundamental category of American consciousness.

Beyond the understanding that by the conventional criteria they are indeed "white," however, these students do not believe that being white says anything important about who they are. It is not a basis upon which to build a sense of the personal social identities they will take into adult life. They certainly are not indifferent to racism. It isn't difficult to bring them to understand the symbolic power of whiteness in our history and culture, nor to encourage them to understand that white skin has functioned to provide material and psychological privileges to those who possess it. They do not aspire to live in a world where this remains true. They are racial egalitarians, though divided on the means by which we are to reach a society free of racism. But they see such questions as matters of politics, and along with most of their generation they do not find politics very interesting, let alone a way to model their self-understandings. Nor do they feel themselves very much privileged because of their whiteness. Here is upstate New York job markets are still uncertain, and many available jobs do not pay well or promise a secure future. Furthermore, the companies from which many of them seek jobs have established "diversity" as a major priority in recruiting employees. Whiteness gives them nothing in particular that it is in their interest to cling to. Beyond that, of course, whiteness does nothing to satisfy their longings for group membership. Their friends may be drawn more from the ranks of white students than not, but this is very different from feeling identification with whiteness. The white race in contemporary America is not a group with a unique culture and a self-conscious identity—except among a small band of racist fanatics living in remote mountain redoubts in the West. Such people do not inspire race pride. In fact, these students see white racial identification as fundamentally disgraceful, like antisemitism, something associated with disreputable and marginal individuals who are un-American.

Students therefore find little value in "whiteness." Nor does it offer any goals to which they may aspire. It is not surprising that these students come to my seminar craving the warm, sustaining embrace of what they imagine ethnicity to be, and to seek positive identities in ethnicity. Yet few of them have a solid ground on which to claim any ethnicity of their own. They are usually of complex mixed backgrounds produced by the acceleration of intermarriages among European ethnicities during the decades since World War II. These are the fourth and fifth generation children who claim, for example, to be "Greek-Jewish-Scottish-German," or "Jewish-Italian-Dutch," or some other of the combinations and complex genealogies by which Americans now identify their family backgrounds. More often than not they have been raised with no particular identifications with any of these ethnicities, but simply with an awareness that all of them somehow comprise their "roots." They cannot fit comfortably into the shrinking group life of any particular ethnic culture, and their parents are seldom members of the narrowing ranks of ethnic activists who enable those various group lives to continue.

So they experiment by choosing ethnicities, singly and in combinations, with all of the humor, pathos, and inventiveness described by Mary Waters in Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America (1990). Whatever positive, endearing or quirky traits they find in themselves and in their families, they attribute to ethnic traits that are said to lurk in some part of their ancestry, rather than to the influences of the general culture, the immediate social situation, or the personality of individuals. If some member of their family is cheap, it is the Scottish element in the family tree asserting itself; if one is insistent on large family meals at holidays, it is the Italian element; if one is stubborn and stolid, the German. This leap through a cultural void can be fun, and it makes for entertaining conversation in seminars, as the students compare notes on what they believe makes them what they are. But it is a superficial wisdom, as the students themselves ultimately admit. They will acknowledge that the most important influences on them come not from ancestry, but from consumer culture and the electronic mass media, whose influence their parents and teachers also suspect to be dominant. They thus seem to grasp intuitively that their generation exists on the edge of new cultural possibilities and identities. But though they might look forward to these twenty-first century consumer opportunities with enthusiasm, they look also backward with nostalgia, frustration, and as great a degree of regret as young people can feel, to things of the spirit, such as community, that seem to have been lost. These feelings are deepened by the realization that they never really experienced what they perceive they are losing.

I am aware that while I have risked being on the edge of romanticizing the European ethnic past, I have also created a rather stark picture of these students' lives. In actuality, not all of them are endeavoring to navigate their way into adulthood through such a profound cultural void. Some students of this generation continue to be able to use ethnic identification productively in fashioning identities for themselves. These are students whose parents share some common origin, or more often, though of diverse background, have somehow negotiated an identification with one ethnicity. When elderly grandparents and other relatives who are deeply rooted in ethnicity interact frequently with these students, this interaction reinforces the student's feelings of ethnic identification. Religion, too, occasionally functions to provide students with positive identities. As Will Herberg anticipated in Protestant-Catholic-Jew (1955), for some families the Catholic parish has become a pan-ethnic community and source of identification that serves the same function that ethnicity did earlier in their century. In their adult lives, religious affiliation may well fill the void they now sense in their lives. College campuses, however, do not encourage religiosity, and any devoutness displayed on the campuses of large public universities such as mine is usually viewed by most students with suspicion.

In the context of contemporary mass migrations ethnicity, not race or religion,
NOTES FROM THE PROGRAM COMMITTEE

The Program Committee for the 1998-99 year consists of Alan Kraut (American University), chair; Betty Bergland (University of Wisconsin-River Falls); Barry R. Chiswick (Univ. Of Illinois-Chicago); Peter Kivisto (Augustana College, Illinois); Joy Lintelman (Concordia College, Minnesota); Sally Miller (University of the Pacific); and Erma Watkins-Oyens (Fordham University).

Members of the Program Committee are seeking papers and panels for submission to major conferences in 1999-2000. Specific members will be working on individual conferences.

Betty Bergland is seeking possible panels for the joint meeting of the American Studies Association and the Canadian American Studies Association, to be held in Montreal Oct. 28-31, 1999.

The theme of this conference is “Crossing Borders/Counting Centuries.” The theme allows for multiple interpretations, but immigration and migration subjects are certainly a possibility. Members may submit papers or panels either directly to the ASA or to Betty Bergland, who will submit them to the ASA program committee.

Guidelines for papers are in the September issue of the ASA newsletter. Betty Bergland will attempt to form panels for those who have individual papers. Proposals must be accepted by the ASA Program Committee, and must be mailed by January 23, 1999. If you have an idea for Betty Bergland to work with, contact her at Dept. of History, Univ. of Wisconsin-River Falls WI 55402. Telephone: (715) 425-3164. E-mail: betty.a.bergland@uwrf.edu

Joy Lintelman is seeking to put together panels for the Organization of American Historians meeting to be held in St. Louis March 30-April 2, 2000. OAH information about papers and submission can be found on their web page: http://www.indiana.edu/~oah/meetings/2000program/call.html

Theme for the meeting is “The United States and the Wider World.” Again, migration subjects would seem to be relevant. Members can submit papers or panels directly to the OAH program committee, or Joy Lintelman will be glad to put together panels for IEHS co-sponsorship. Proposals must be received by the OAH by Jan. 15, 1999. Contact her at the History Department, Concordia College, Moorhead MN 56562. Telephone: (218) 299-3491. E-mail: lintelma@cord.edu

Sally Miller is working on possible panels for IEHS co-sponsorship at the AHA convention of January 2000.

Theme of the program is “History for the Twenty-First Century: Continuity and Change.” Submit proposals for possible papers and panels to Sally Miller by December 15, 1998. She can be reached at the History Department, Univ. of the Pacific, Stockton CA 95211. FAX: (209) 946-2318. E-mail: smiller3@aop.edu

Necrology...

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-Fred Grubel, former executive director of the Leo Baeck Institute in New York, died Oct. 4, 1999 in New York City at the age of 89. The institute, founded in 1956 with branches in London, New York, and Jerusalem, was devoted to the study of German-speaking Jewish life and culture. Grubel became the director of the New York branch in 1968 and developed it as a major research center. Born in Leipzig, Gruber was expelled by the Nazis from law school and, in 1938, placed in the Buchenwald concentration camp; in 1939, he obtained a British visa and emigrated with his family; they came to the United States in 1940.
New Publications...
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Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique Française 51:2 (1997) is a special 50th anniversary issue on "Les pratique de l'histoire de l'Amérique française depuis 50 ans."


IHS News Notes...

THEODORE SALOUTOS BOOK AWARD

Closing date for submissions for the annual Theodore Salouts Book Award is December 31, 1998. To be eligible, a book must be copyrighted 1998. A book may be nominated by the author, the publisher, a member of the prize committee, or a member of the Immigration History Society. Inquiries and nominations should be submitted to the chair of the Salouts Prize Committee, Prof. Reed Ueda, History Dept., Tufts Univ., Medford MA 02155.

Copies of the book must be received by all three members of the committee by December 31, 1998. Send books to Prof. Ueda at the address above; and also to: Prof. Cheryl Greenberg, Trinity College, Hartford CT 06106-3100; and Prof. John McClymer, History Dept., Assumption College, Worcester MA 01615-0005.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

In 1999, the Immigration and Ethnic History Society will fill three positions on the Executive Board for the three-year term 1999-2002. Members may send suggestions for these three positions to the Chair of the Nominations Committee: David Emmons, Dept. of History, Univ. of Montana, Missoula MT 59812 (E-mail: emmons@selway.umt.edu). Other members of the committee are: Lynn Dumenil (Occidental College); Mark K. Bauman (Atlanta Metropolitan College), Suzanne Sinke (Clemson University), and Jay Dolan (University of Notre Dame). The deadline for submitting suggestions to the chair is Jan. 15, 1999. Ballots will be mailed in mid-February 1999.

GEORGE POZZETTA DISSERTATION AWARD

The Immigration History Society announces competition for the 1999 George E. Pozzetta Award. It invites applications from any Ph.D. candidate who will have completed qualifying examinations by Dec. 1, 1998, and whose thesis focuses on American immigration, emigration, or ethnic history. The award provides $750 for expenses to be incurred in researching the dissertation. Applicants must submit a 3-5 page descriptive proposal in English, discussing the significance of the work, the methodology, sources, and collections to be consulted. Also included must be a proposed budget, a brief curriculum vitae, and a supporting letter from the major advisor. All materials must be received by each committee member by Dec. 15, 1998, which is the submission deadline. Send materials in hardcopy (no FAXes accepted) to: Josh DeWind, Social Science Research Council, 810 Seventh Ave., New York, NY 10019; Barbara Posadas, Department of History, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL 60115-2893; and Thos. J. Curran, History Dept., St. John's Univ., Jamaica NY 11439.

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY

The annual meeting of the Immigration and Ethnic History Society will take place jointly with the annual meeting of the Organization of American Historians in Toronto, April 22-25, 1999. The annual dinner of the Society will be held the same weekend. Further details about these events will be included with the ballot to be mailed to all members in late February.

Activities Report for the Immigration History Newsletter

Mail your information for the next Newsletter to:

James M. Bergquist, Department of History, Villanova University, Villanova PA 19085-1699

or FAX a copy to (610) 519-4450 or send information via E-Mail to: bergquist@ucis.vill.edu

Your name and affiliation:

THE IMMIGRATION AND ETHNIC HISTORY SOCIETY

...was founded in 1965 as the Immigration History Group. It was chartered in 1972 as the Immigration History Society. In 1998 the Society, which had traditionally dealt with ethnicity as well as immigration, changed its name to the Immigration and Ethnic History Society.

The purpose of the Society is to promote the study of the history of immigration to the United States and Canada from all parts of the world, including studies of the background of emigration in the countries of origin; to promote the study of ethnic groups in the United States, including regional groups, native Americans and forced immigrants; to promote understanding of the processes of acculturation and of conflict; to furnish through the Immigration and Ethnic History Newsletter information as to research, organizations, meetings and publications in the field of immigrant history; to help organize sessions on immigration and ethnicity at meetings of learned societies; and generally to serve the field of immigration-ethnic history with special reference to professional scholarship.

MEMBERSHIP

...in the Immigration History Society includes subscriptions to the quarterly Journal of American Ethnic History and the semiannual Immigration and Ethnic History Newsletter. Dues for individuals: one year, $30; 2 years, $55; 3 years, $75. Dues for institutions: one year, $72; 2 years, $138; 3 years, $184. Students: 1 year, $15. Patrons: 1 year, $100 (individuals or institutions who wish to provide more substantial financial support to the Society will have their names listed on the inside cover of the Journal). For domestic first-class mail, add $32 per year. For all subscriptions outside U.S.A., add $32 per year for surface mail, or $48 per year for airmail. Membership dues should be sent to Journal of American Ethnic History, Transaction Periodicals Consortium, Rutgers University, 35 Berrue Circle, Piscataway NJ 08854-8042.

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Subscriptions to the Immigration and Ethnic History Newsletter are part of membership in the Society. Members' changes of address should be sent to Journal of American Ethnic History, Transaction Periodicals Consortium, Rutgers University, 35 Berrue Circle, Piscataway NJ 08854-8042.

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