



THE IMMIGRATION AND ETHNIC HISTORY NEWSLETTER

Vol. XXXVII, No. 1 Published for Members of the Immigration and Ethnic History Society

May, 2005

Thirty Years Later: Reviewing the Vietnamese-American Experience

By Hien Duc Do

April 30th, 2005 marked the 30th Anniversary of the fall of South Vietnam, the end of the Vietnam War, and the sudden arrival of a large number of Vietnamese refugees to the United States. For the last 30 years, this day has been commemorated by thousands of Vietnamese Americans living in communities throughout the United States, from San Jose, CA to Falls Church, VA. It is a day with events that include memories of their homeland, criticisms of the Vietnamese government, celebration of their achievements since their arrival, a reinforcement of their ethnic solidarity, and a day to build a stronger Vietnamese American community. How and why did they resettle here? What has been their adaptation process, and how is it different from that of other immigrant groups? The following essay will offer a brief overview of the literature and recent research regarding these questions.

The 2000 census counted more than one million Vietnamese Americans living in the United States. Most Vietnamese immigrants live in urban and metropolitan areas with well-developed and vibrant ethnic communities. One of the major differences between the Vietnamese immigrants and other more recent immigrant communities is their original status as refugees from an unpopular and divisive war involving the United States. Because of all the controversies regarding that war, their initial reception in 1975 was mixed. Some Americans opposed their resettlement because of their negative views of the war, and because of their fear of negative economic and social impacts on American society. There were others, however, who welcomed the refugees because of their support for people fleeing a communist regime and because of their humanitarian beliefs.

We will not discuss here the many books, articles and films about the Vietnam War itself. One of the triggering events that led to the collapse of South Vietnam was the "Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Viet-Nam," signed in Paris, France on January 28, 1973 by representatives of the United States government, the Government of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam), and the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam). Under this agreement, the United States agreed to withdraw its military and economic support, which accelerated the deterioration and the downfall of South Vietnam. The flight of the Vietnamese refugees began within the country with the North Vietnamese military offensive of mid-March 1975, and ended on April 30, 1975 when Saigon, the capital of South Viet Nam, came

under the control of the Provisional Revolutionary Government. This resulted in the arrival of the newest Asian refugee group to the United States at the time.

Social scientists have generally divided Vietnamese emigration history into two periods, each with several "waves" (Kelly, 1977; Nguyen, 1985). The first period began in April 1975 and continued through 1977. This period included the first three waves of Vietnamese refugees to the United States. The first wave, with some ten to fifteen thousand people, began a week to ten days before the collapse of the government. The second wave involved some eighty thousand people who were evacuated by aircraft during the last days of April. The final wave during this period involved forty to sixty thousand people who left on their own in small boats, ships, and commandeered aircraft during the first two weeks of May 1975. They were later transferred to Subic Bay and Clark Air Force base in the Philippines and to the island of Guam after having been picked up, in many cases, by the United States Navy and cargo ships standing off the coast of Vietnam.

The second period of the Vietnamese refugees migration began in 1978 and continues even today. Since the fall of South Vietnam, many Vietnamese have tried to escape the political oppression and the major social, political and economic reforms instituted by the new Vietnamese communist government. The numbers are no longer as massive as they once were. A significant characteristic of this period, especially between the years 1978 to 1980, is the large number of ethnic Chinese migrating out of Vietnam and Cambodia (St. Carmail 1983; Whitmore, 1985). There were many Vietnamese who also left during this period. These individuals have been called "Vietnamese boat people" because the majority of them escaped in homemade, poorly constructed boats and wooden vessels (Grant, 1979; Haskins, 1980; Wain, 1981). This was a very dangerous process because of the poor conditions of many of the boats, the escapees' scant knowledge of navigational skills, the limited amount of provisions they were able to bring and, finally, numerous attacks by Thai sea pirates. The death rate of the "Vietnamese boat people" was very high.

To minimize the social and economic impact of the large influx of refugees, President Gerald Ford adopted the Refugee Dispersion Policy. This policy served four purposes: to relocate the Vietnamese refugees as quickly as possible; to ease the impact of a large group of refugees on a given community; to make it logistically

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News from Libraries, Museums and Research Institutes...

The cornerstone of the German Immigration Center in Bremerhaven was laid on October 6, 2004. The scheduled opening of the center, which its founders say will be the largest emigration museum in Europe, is set for August 8, 2005. Information about the museum and the progress in its construction can be found on the web page:

<http://www.dah-bremerhaven.de>

The Immigration History Research Center at the University of Minnesota has added to its collections additional records of the American Fund for Czechoslovak Refugees, 1948-1990; additional records of the International Institute of Minnesota, 1975-present; supplementary records of the International Institute of New Jersey, 1930s-1987; papers of Joseph Rukavina, Croatian community leader in the Twin Cities. Information on the web at <http://www.ihrc.umn.edu/>

The Polish American Historical Association invites nominations from both members and non-members for its annual awards. The Oscar Halecki Prize honors an important book on the Polish experience in the United States. The Kulczycki Prize is awarded for an important dissertation on the Polish experience in the United States, to assist in its publication as a book. Other awards include the Creative Arts Award, Civic Achievement Awards, and the Amicus Poloniae Award. Nominations must be received by June 15, 2005. To nominate someone for these prizes, or for further information, contact Prof. Neal Pease, Dept. of History, Univ. of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. E-mail: pease@uwm.edu.

The Museum of the City of New York has an exhibition: "El Barrio: Puerto Rican New York." Through June 12, 2005.

The Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation's traveling exhibit about Angel Island has been currently showing at the University Library, California State Univ., Hayward, through May 31. The exhibit is available for display by other museums in the future. For information, contact info@aaisf.org

The formation of a Chinese Canadian Historical Society of British Columbia has been announced. Further information about the society is on the web at <http://www.cchsbc.ca/>

At the Chinese Historical Society of America, 965 Clay Street, San Francisco, is a new exhibition dealing with stereotypes of Chinese: "Trading on Fear: Chinese Images in American Trade Cards." Through July 31, 2005.

The National Archives and Records Administration has published a new finding guide, *Guide to Records of Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders at the National Archives and Records Administration, Pacific Region-San Francisco* (NARA reference information paper 111, 2004). Information by e-mail:

sanbruno.archives@nara.gov

Two new exhibits on Chinese Americans can be found currently in Nevada. At the Nevada State Railroad Museum, 2180 South Carson, Carson City, through Dec. 30, 2005 is an exhibit on Chinese in lumbering in the Sierra Nevada. At the Fourth Ward School Museum, 5327 S. C St., Virginia City, is an exhibit on Chinese on the Comstock Lode (through Oct. 30).

NECROLOGY

Rev. William Wolkovich-Valkavicius, prominent scholar of Lithuanian-American studies, died Jan. 12, 2005 in Marlborough, Massachusetts. He was 75 years of age. Ordained in 1953, he served in various parishes in Massachusetts, most recently in Norwood, in addition to his scholarly work. His major work was *Lithuanian Religious Life in America* (3 vols., 1980-1988).

CARLTON QUALEY AWARD

At the annual meeting of the IEHS in San Jose on April 2, 2005, the biennial Carlton Qualey award for the best article published in the *Journal of American Ethnic History* was presented to Russell A. Kazal of the University of Toronto. His article was "The Interwar Origins of the White Ethnic: Race, Residence, and German Philadelphia, 1917-1939" (*Journal of American Ethnic History* 23, no. 4 [summer 2004]:78-131).

PERSONALS

Mary Patrice Erdmans (Central Connecticut State University) has been elected president of the Polish American Historical Association.

Donna Gabaccia, currently Mellon Professor of History at the University of Pittsburgh, has been appointed director of the Immigration History Research Center at the University of Minnesota. She will also hold the new Rudolph J. Vecoli Professorship in the Department of History at Minnesota. She will succeed Rudolph Vecoli, who will retire this summer.

At the annual meeting of the Organization of American Historians on April 2, Mae M. Ngai (University of Chicago) received the Frederick Jackson Turner Award for an author's first book. Her book was *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton Univ. Press). On the same day, Prof. Ngai received the Theodore Saloutos Award from the IEHS for the same book (see p. 6).

Also at the OAH, Michel Cordillot (Université Paris 8) received the Willi Paul Adams Award for the best book on American history published in a foreign language. His book was *The Democratic and Social Republic in America: French Speaking Radicals in the USA: A Biographical Dictionary, 1848-1922* (Editions de l'Atelier).

FROM THE PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Current chair of the IEHS Program Committee is Ronald Bayor (Georgia Institute of Technology), vice-president and president-elect of the Society. The committee coordinates proposals for sessions that the IEHS will sponsor at major academic conferences. Members who have ideas for panels or papers for forthcoming conferences through 2007 can contact the program committee chair: Ronald Bayor, Georgia Institute of Technology, Dept. of History, Technology and Society, Atlanta GA 30332. E-mail: Ronald.Bayor@hts.gatech.edu

MINUTES OF THE EDITORIAL BOARD AND
BUSINESS MEETING

THE IMMIGRATION AND ETHNIC HISTORY SOCIETY
SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA, APRIL 2, 2005

John Bukowczyk, editor of the *Journal of American Ethnic History*—since fall 2004 and beginning with the *JAEH* Fall 2005 (24:1) issue—opened the meeting of the Editorial Board at 4:45 p.m. He reported that the journal has continued to be released on schedule and that the statistics of manuscripts accepted, reviewed, and rejected compare with the preceding years. He noted that he is considering publishing an anniversary issue, marking the Journal's twenty-fifth year. Reporting on subscriptions and the trend from previous years, Bukowczyk noted a slight decline for the year 2004-2005, with total active subscribers at 767; these include institutions, 407; individuals, 281; students, 14; foreign subscribers, 85; and complimentary/exchange copies, 65. He felt the decline was minimal, but the low number of student subscribers was troublesome for the future of the organization. The reduction in institutional subscriptions reflected, he believed, the "crisis of academic publishing." Bukowczyk noted also that many who submit manuscripts to the Journal are not members, and some editorial board members have allowed their subscriptions to lapse. He is seeking to address these issues.

Regarding finances, he reported that Wayne State University appears to provide less support for him than Ron Bayor received at Georgia Tech, since he has neither a student assistant nor secretarial help. If IEHS were to offer assistance, he noted, this may present financial burdens on the Society in the future. Victor Greene asked what amount the IEHS provided to the Journal; Barkan reported about \$500 was given in the past. Regarding personnel, Bukowczyk reported that all JAEH Board members were retained in the transition to the new editorship. The Book Review Editor, however, has resigned, effective June 30, 2005. Elliott Barkan is seeking a replacement. Some discussion emerged regarding the submission of articles and book reviews. Moses Rischin proposed the shock value of reviewing books and subjects on the edge. Barkan reported that the Book Review Policy was expanded under his editorship to include works in other disciplines, such as sociology, and that the strength of the journal is its breadth.

The IEHS President, Elliott Barkan, then opened the Annual Meeting. Jim Bergquist moved and Cheryl Greenberg seconded the motion to approve the minutes from the 2004 meeting. The motion carried. Barkan recognized those members of the Executive Board that will be stepping down after three years and thanked them for their service: Eric Arnesen, Nora Faires and Dorothee Schneider. Barkan also thanked Eric Arnesen for preparing the e-mail list of the IEHS members. He wishes to expand the list and stated that Transaction has requested that members submit e-mail addresses. He also reported that the IEHS needs to expand its list of "Specialists" and invited members to consider this. Noting evidence of interest in the Society, he reported that there have been over 15,000 "hits" on the IEHS Website.

IEHS Secretary Betty Bergland reported the results of the election for the new Executive Board members. The new members elected

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Message from the IEHS President

Dear Colleagues,

I am sure most of you learned one way or another that the OAH, rather than cross picket lines of striking hotel workers in San Francisco, chose to relocate the entire convention to San Jose. It appears about 400 persons chose not to switch, and thus the convention was far quieter than usual. These events affected us as well. Not only did we relocate our annual dinner to a Cuban restaurant in San Jose but, for the first time that I can remember, we were unable to muster a quorum in order to conduct business officially at our business meeting. I hope that we do not go through that again and that our members will take the time in the future to attend our business meeting and annual dinner. The next time will be April 21, 2006, in Washington, DC.

Although we could not vote on the proposed amendment to include the new Higham Travel Grant Award committee as a standing one or on some financial items, other topics were informally covered, including the results of the election to our Executive Board, the financial status of the Society (good), our participation in the National Coalition for History, our application to participate on one of the Census Bureau advisory committees for the 2010 census, my representing the IEHS at the conference May 12-14 to honor Rudy Vecoli (who is retiring as director of the Immigration History Research Center), and a lengthy discussion concerning the possibility of a third major conference to be sponsored by the Society. That was not resolved because it is a costly and complex undertaking. However, Alan Kraut, Hasia Diner and I did sign a contract with NYU Press to publish a collection of 12 revised essays from the 2003 conference in New York City in a collection tentatively entitled *Borders, Boundaries, and Bonds: America and Its Immigrants in Eras of Globalization*. The plan is for this book to be published in 2006. Half the royalties will go to the IEHS.

Finally, I wish to reach out to all of you concerning several matters: *First*, we need your email address because matters do arise that warrant our trying to reach you more promptly. And, I hasten to add, this list will not be sold or shared with any other organization. So, please, just email me at ebarkan@csusb.edu and say hello so I can incorporate your address on the list I currently have. *Second*, we are eager to expand our list of "specialists" on the IEHS web site and I would welcome hearing from you. It is a good reflection on our Society if we can present an extensive list of members who possess special skills and/or bodies of knowledge.

Third, and very critically, this Society was founded during the era when the Ellis Island mentality was still predominant and most newcomers had come from Europe, or rather most scholars studying immigration were looking eastward to Europe rather than northward to Canada, southward to Mexico and the Caribbean, and westward to Asia and the Pacific. You are certainly aware that we cannot sustain this organization by remaining principally fixed on European migrations, although newcomers do continue to come from there. Not only is migration now thoroughly global in origin but considerations of race in relation to migrants and refugees (as well as gender, class, and religion) are also inescapable. We need to

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Conferences and Meetings...

The **Communal Studies Association** will hold its 2005 conference Sept. 29-Oct. 1 at Old Economy Village in Ambridge, PA. Conference Theme: "Festivals, Anniversaries, Rituals, and Celebrations in Community." Further information on the web at <http://www.communalstudies.info/conferences.shtml>

Syracuse University and its College of Visual and Performing Arts plan a conference Oct. 6-8 in Syracuse: "Contesting Public Memory." "Our sense of the contention of public memories includes: efforts to resist, resurrect memories, or redefine memories, etc." Full information on the web at <http://www.vpa.syr.edu/crs/memories.htm>

The **Chinese Historical Society of America and San Francisco State University** are organizing a conference Oct. 7-9, 2005 in San Francisco. Theme: "Branching Out the Banyan Tree: A Changing Chinese America." Further information on the web at <http://www.chsa.org/>

The **10th International Metropolis Conference** on international migration will take place in Toronto, Oct. 17-21, 2005. Theme: "Our Diverse Cities: Migration, Diversity and Change." For information and registration, see the web-page at <http://www.toronto.ca/metropolis/>

The **Oral History Association** has scheduled its annual meeting Nov. 2-6, 2005 in Providence, Rhode Island. Theme: "Voices of Dissent, Voices of Hope." Further information on the web at <http://dickinson.edu/oha/>

The **American Studies Association** will hold its annual meeting in Washington, DC, Nov. 3-6, 2005. Theme: "Groundwork: Space and Place in American Cultures." Information on the web at <http://www.georgetown.edu/crossroads/AmericanStudiesAssn/annualmeeting/ASA2005/2005.htm>

The **Social Science History Association** will hold its 30th annual meeting, November 3-6, 2005, in Portland, Oregon. Theme: "Big Social Science History." Information on the web at <http://www.ssha.org/ssha2005/index.html>

The **American Italian Historical Association** will hold its 38th annual conference in Los Angeles, November 3-6, 2005. Theme: "Speaking Memory: Oral History, Oral Culture and Italians in America." Paper and panel proposals accepted until June 1, 2005. Contact the conference chairperson: Luisa del Giudice, Italian Oral History Institute, PO Box 241553, Los Angeles CA 90024-1553, tel. 310-474-1698. E-mail: huisadg@humnet.ucla.edu Information also on the web at <http://www.aiha.fau.edu/>

The **Historical Society of Pennsylvania** will hold a symposium Nov. 5, 2005: "Pennsylvanians Behaving Badly: Violence, Disorder, and Transgression." Say the organizers: "The symposium aims to explore the ways in which violence and transgression mark social, economic and political fault lines and define or redefine individuals' and groups' relationships to one another and the state." Paper submissions accepted until July 1, 2005; include a 500-700 word summary and a brief *curriculum vitae*. Contact: Kathryn Wilson, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1300 Locust St., Philadelphia PA 19107. E-mail: kwilson@hsp.org

The **McNeil Center for Early American Studies** in Philadelphia sponsors the fifth annual New Sweden History Conference, Nov. 19, 2005. Theme: "New Sweden and its European Neighbors." The conference "will examine relations between the seventeenth-century Swedish colonists and their Swedish- and Finnish-American descendants of the eighteenth century, on the one hand, and other European-American residents of the Delaware Valley over the period from the 1630s until the end of the Revolutionary War." One-page abstracts, accompanied by a brief *curriculum vitae* will be received until July 1, 2005. Contact the McNeil Center, 3619 Locust Walk, 3rd floor, Philadelphia PA 19104-6213. E-mail: mceas@ccat.sas.upenn.edu

The fourth annual **Allen Morris Conference** on the history of Florida and the Atlantic World will be held Feb. 25-26, 2006 in Tallahassee. Theme: "Which Centers and Whose Peripheries?" The Program Committee wishes to "investigate questions of cultural retention and cultural exchange during periods of political change." Proposals closed April 1, 2005. Further information on the web at <http://mailer.fsu.edu/~egreen/morris.htm>

The **Centre d'Histoire Sociale du XXe Siècle** (Université Paris I, Pantheon Sorbonne) is organizing a conference to be held March 27-29, 2006 at the École Normale Supérieure in Paris. Theme: "History, Gender and Migration (Atlantic World, XIXth and XXth centuries)." Submissions are solicited by Oct. 1, 2005, and should include a 1000 -word proposal, one-page *curriculum vitae*, contact information and a previous paper or references to published work. Language of presentation may be either French or English. Some travel aid may be available. For further information or to submit proposals, contact Philippe Rygiel, Centre d'histoire sociale du XXe siècle, 9 rue Mahler, 75004 Paris, France. E-mail: prygiel@ens.fr

The next annual meeting of the **Immigration and Ethnic History Society** will take place at the meeting of the **Organization of American Historians** in Washington, DC, April 19-22, 2006.

The **Norwegian-American Historical Association, Norway Chapter**, will hold its ninth seminar June 21-23, 2006 at Telemark University College, Bø i Telemark, Norway. Theme: "Migration and Memory: Norwegian-American Dimensions." NAHA-Norway encourages papers from many academic disciplines. Presentations should be limited to twenty minutes and may be in either English or Norwegian. Prospective speakers are invited to submit a half-page proposal and a one-page *curriculum vitae*. Deadline: Nov. 1, 2005. For further information, or submission of papers: Dina Tølfesby, Norwegian-American Collection, National Library of Norway, Oslo Division, PO Box 2674 Solli, N-0203 Oslo, Norway. E-mail: dina.tolfesby@nb.no

Minutes of the Annual Meeting...*(continued from p. 3)*

for a three year term are Thomas Dublin, State University of New York at Binghamton; Madeline Hsu, San Francisco State University, and Susanne Sinke, Florida State University. The new members to the Executive Board were congratulated. She reported that eighty ballots were received from IEHS members, a number consistent with past elections.

IEHS Treasurer Diané Vecchio gave the Treasurer's Report. The current balance of \$5,441.89 is approximately \$2,000 less than the balance one year earlier of \$7,338.66. She explained that part of the problem had to do with the lack of a firm schedule of payments from Transaction. Barkan added that he discussed this issue with Transaction Publishers and it was agreed that a set schedule of payments would be made to the IEHS on March 15 and September 15, which would then be reflected consistently in the Treasurer's Report. Vecchio called our attention to the fact that IEHS/OAH contributions to the John Higham Fund totaled \$11,449.83.

Jim Bergquist, the *IEHS Newsletter* Editor, presented his report. He noted that 808 copies were sent this year. Also he reported that he was able to reduce the cost of the mailing to \$628.00 (from \$730.00) because of changes in mailing procedures. He also reported that he is always looking for information and for pedagogical and historiographical articles for the *Newsletter*.

President Barkan then reported that two IEHS-sponsored sessions will be presented at the 2005 OAH Annual Meeting: "Foreign States, Diplomats, and Consuls among Immigrants in Twentieth-Century America," and "Portraying Immigration and Ethnic History through Exhibits."

President Barkan noted that the IEHS is a member of the Board of the National Coalition for History, an organization that lobbies for history matters at the federal level and monitors legislation. He recently attended its meeting and reported that the coalition is in a financial crisis. Currently, the IEHS contributes \$500, and Barkan proposed increasing that amount. Victor Greene recommended increasing the amount by \$100.00. Since a quorum was not reached at the meeting, no vote could be taken. Barkan said he would consider having the Board vote on this via email.

The Committee Chairs then made their reports. Ron Bayor, Program Committee Chair announced that six proposals had been submitted for conferences in 2006, to AHA, OAH and SSHA. Results from these submissions, however, had not yet been received.

Victor Greene, representing the Higham Award Committee, reported that this year there were eight submissions for the Higham Award. He recommended that in the future applicants send a brief statement of their research and whether they will present a paper at OAH. Barkan stated that to ensure continuity and consistency, he wanted one Executive Board member on each of the Awards Committees.

Barkan then addressed Old Business. Transaction Publishers will hereafter submit funds from dues to the IEHS Treasurer semi-annually, on September 15 and March 15. Barkan said that the tabled amendments from the last meeting would remain tabled. The By-Law proposal for this year will be held in abeyance because of the absence of a quorum. And there are currently no proposals for a revised logo.

Barkan then turned to New Business. The first item discussed was the possibility of a third conference. Bukowczek asked, why sponsor a conference? Barkan stated it gives visibility and publicity to the Society. Greene asked if there were any concrete advantage. Barkan

noted that the NYU Press had signed a contract to publish the proceedings of the last conference. There was no prior authorization from the Society, however, so it will not be an IEHS publication. It is due to be completed by September 2005; it will be edited by Elliott Barkan, Hasia Diner and Alan Kraut. Bayor asked if we received any more members, students or money from the ventures; he thought, it seemed not. The discussion then moved toward possible future conferences. Green suggested that conferences should also include new approaches and historiography—not just contemporary concerns. Barkan noted that diverse groups sponsored sessions at NYU. Bergquist stated that it would be important to have university affiliation. Vecchio proposed that a broad topic would attract more interest and contributions, and she proposed a focus on new migration in the South. Green suggested that we might open it up to the Bahamas and/or Central America. Bergquist stated that the advantage of a conference is the promotion of scholarship. Barkan said that they will continue to explore conference possibilities.

Barkan then reported on what he was doing about committee structures, arguing that IEHS committee procedures had been haphazard and stating, "We need to stop this." Therefore, he will lay out specific guidelines for the processing of the Award Committees and the Nominating Committee to eliminate the confusion and repetitive steps by committees and the president.

The last item discussed was outreach to others. Greene pointed out that regular communications were important and that an exchange of Newsletters could be valuable. Chan asked what benefits can the Society provide to others, that this is an important consideration in outreach efforts. Rischin proposed that a personal link with others is critical. Greene suggested that something might be done for the 25th Anniversary of the *JAEH*. Bukowczyk proposed a reception. Chen suggested a committee discuss this.

The meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m. and moved to the Habana Cuba Restaurant for the annual banquet. [Members present never exceeded 13, and according to the IEHS By-Laws 15 constitutes a quorum.]

Respectfully submitted,

Betty Bergland
IEHS Secretary

Message from the President...*(Continued from p. 3)*

rethink our organizational mission and explore ways to expand our presence so that we explicitly represent—and boldly convey that we do—all types and origins of migration. If we do, hopefully we can thereby more effectively attract members who are involved with Latino, Canadian, Caribbean, Pacific Island, African, and Southeast, South, and Western Asian peoples and migrations. And maybe that also means it may be time to rethink the name of our organization in order to be more inclusive.

If you have any suggestions, ideas, comments, etc., please let me hear from you. It is essential that we address these matters in a forthright way. Thanks, and be well.

Elliott Barkan
President, IEHS

Visit the IEHS web page at <http://www.iehs.org>

THEODORE SALOUTOS BOOK AWARD, 2004

The annual Theodore Saloutos Book Award for the outstanding book of the year in American immigration and ethnic history was made to Mae Ngai, University of Chicago for her book *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton Univ.). The committee consisted of Madeline Hsu (San Francisco State U.), chair; April Schultz (Illinois Wesleyan Univ.); and Dorothee Schneider (Univ. of Illinois). The award was made at the annual dinner of the Immigration and Ethnic History Society in San Jose, April 2, 2005. The citation follows:

The committee very quickly fixed upon Mae Ngai's *Impossible Subjects* as this year's honoree. This rapid decision did not stem from a lack of competition, for the committee read many wonderful monographs displaying painstaking research and carefully crafted arguments and narratives that greatly enriched and refined the field. However, most immigration and ethnic history monographs tend to focus on single ethnic groups in particular locations—a scholarly necessity because of the highly localized and historically specific processes attending the experiences of different racial and ethnic groups.

Professor Ngai's *Impossible Subjects*, however, takes as its focus the historical evolution of the concept and practice of "illegal aliens" during a broad historical period extending from the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act through the more general 1965 Immigration Act and up to the present. She emphasizes the contradictions between the individuals that cross borders and the legal and racialized construction of some of those persons as perpetually alien to the American nation. Professor Ngai writes, "Immigration restriction produced the illegal alien as a new legal and political subject, whose inclusion within the nation was simultaneously a social reality and a legal impossibility—a subject barred from citizenship and without rights. . . . The illegal alien is thus an 'impossible subject,' a person who cannot be and a problem that cannot be solved." (4-5) For certain groups,

the lack of access to legal entry forever restricted their ability to attain legal residency, much less the protections of citizenship. They become a permanent subcaste of illegal aliens with increasingly limited rights in the United States.

By focusing on a conceptual category critical to understanding immigration policy and national identity, Professor Ngai is able to conduct comparative analyses that is far broader in scope than most studies of immigration and ethnicity. *Impossible Subjects* brings together the histories of Chinese, Japanese, Mexicans, Filipinos, Canadians, Europeans and other groups. Her inquiry also breaches disciplinary walls by integrating the related sets of questions raised by the historical subfields of legal, institutional, judicial, foreign relations and social history.

Building upon a truly impressive breadth of archival research, Professor Ngai recounts with scholarly mastery the many stories and detailed shifts in law and practice attending the racialization of illegal aliens. Despite the complexity of this terrain, she shapes a rigorous argument and narrative that always retains in view the oftentimes tragic consequences imposed by differential laws and practice upon "impossible subjects" whose only crime is to try to escape poverty by seeking better lives in the United States. *Impossible Subjects* is an inspiring example of the highest of intellectual standards that is also, a deeply humane book.

Other New Publications Noted..

Abel, Emily K. "Only the Best Class of Immigration": Public Health Policy Toward Mexicans and Filipinos in Los Angeles, 1910-1940." *American Journal of Public Health* 94 (2004): 932-939.

Aldino, Frank W. "Ye Come from Many a Far off Clime, and Speak in Many a Tongue": The Garibaldi Guard and Italian-American Service in the Civil War." *Italian Americana* 22 (2004): 47-63.

Amerasia Journal 30, no. 1 (2004) is a special issue on Korean American identity.

Anagnostou, Yiorgos. "Forget the Past, Remember the Ancestors! Modernity, 'Whiteness,' American Hellenism, and the Politics of Memory in Early Greek America." *Jour-*

nal of Modern Greek Studies 22 (2004): 25-71.

Arredondo, Gabriela F. "Navigating Ethno-Racial Currents: Mexicans in Chicago, 1919-1939." *Journal of Urban History* 30 (2004): 399-427

Austin, Allan W. *From Concentration Camp to Campus: Japanese American Students and World War II*. Champaign: U. Ill., 2004.

Bao, Jiemin. *Marital Acts: Gender, Sexuality, and Identity among the Chinese Thai Diaspora*. Honolulu: U. Hawaii, 2004.

Barajas, Frank P. "Resistance, Radicalism and Repression on the Oxnard Plain: the Social Context of the *Betabelero* Strike of 1933." *Western Historical Quarterly* 35 (2004): 28-51.

Barde, Robert. "An Alleged Wife: One Immigrant in the Chinese Exclusion Era." *Prologue* 36 (2004): 24-35.

Barde, Robert and Wesley Ueunten. "Pacific Steerage: Japanese Ships and Asian Mass Migration." *Pacific Historical Review* 73 (2004): 653-660.

Bassler, Gerhard J. "German Culture and the Inuit: The Moravian Mission in Labrador." *Yearbook of German-American Studies*, 2003, 73-98.

Blair, Sara and Jonathan Freedman, eds. *Jewish in America*. Ann Arbor: U. Mich., 2004.

Brøndal, Jørn. *Ethnic Leadership and Midwestern Politics: Scandinavian Americans and the Progressive Movement in Wisconsin, 1890-1914*. Champaign: U. Ill., 2005.

Brooks, Charlotte. "Sing Sheng versus Southwood: Residential Integration in Cold War California." *Pacific Historical Review* 73 (2004): 463-494.

Buenker, John D. and Lorman Ratner, eds. *Multiculturalism in the United States: A Comparative Guide to Acculturation and Ethnicity*, 2nd revised ed. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2005.

Buitron, Richard A. *The Quest for Tejano Identity in San Antonio, Texas, 1913-2000*. NY: Routledge, 2004.

Bukhari, Zahid et al., eds. *Muslims' Place in the American Public Square: Hopes, Fears and Aspirations*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira, 2004.

Cambridge, Vibert C. *Immigration, Diversity, and Broadcasting in the United*

States, 1990-2001. Athens: Ohio U., 2005.

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Thirty Years Later...*(continued from p. 1)*

easier to find sponsors; and to prevent the development of ethnic ghettos (Liu, 1979). This policy was driven by political and financial factors, not social considerations (Kelly, 1977).

As a result, nine voluntary agencies were contracted by the government's Interagency Task Force to handle the resettlement of the refugees in the United States. These voluntary agencies were to find sponsors that were able to fulfill both financial and moral responsibilities and match them with refugees' families. The responsibilities included providing temporary food, clothing and shelter, assistance in finding employment or job training for the head of the household, enrolling the children in school and finally, providing ordinary medical care (Liu, 1979). In short, the sponsors would serve as a resource to introduce the refugees into the society while they become economically independent.

There were four ways for the refugees to leave the temporary refugee camps: resettlement to a third country; obtaining repatriation to Vietnam; demonstrating proof of being financially self-supportive; or finding a sponsor through the voluntary agencies (Kelly, 1977). The method most frequently used by Vietnamese refugees was the family sponsorship method. The other three ways were impractical and difficult. Only a small number of refugees chose to return to Viet Nam. Darell Montero and Marsha Weber (1979) reported that "by October 1975, repatriation had been granted to 1,546 refugees." The majority were military men who were forced to leave their families behind at the time of their evacuation. Similarly, given the nature of their plight, very few refugees had the required resources and few other countries offered their assistance.

As a result, sponsors found by voluntary agencies consisted of religious congregations, parishes or affiliates, individual families, corporations, and companies with former Vietnamese employees. If the refugees had relatives who could fulfill the same requirements, they could qualify as sponsors as well. However, Skinner (1980) reported only 15,000 Vietnamese living in the United States prior to 1975. Most of these individuals were students staying

temporarily on visas, former diplomats, or wives of American soldiers. In essence, there was no Vietnamese-American community and thus this method hardly applied to the first waves of refugees.

Nevertheless, the Vietnamese from the first waves used the family sponsorship method more frequently at a later time in order to sponsor family and relatives who were stranded in Vietnam after 1975. The primary ways in which this method was used was through the implementation of two Federal Government sponsored programs that resulted from the Conference on Indochinese Refugees held in Geneva, Switzerland on June 14, 1980. These programs were the Orderly Departure Program and the Humanitarian Operation Program. The goal of these programs, as stated in congressional hearings, was to "provide Vietnamese a 'viable alternative' to dangerous clandestine departure by boat or over land." Many Vietnamese families who arrived during the first and second period, and who now have citizenship or permanent residence status, used the first category to bring family members to the United States.

There were also others who arrived under the Humanitarian Operation Program. The majority of these individuals were older refugees who spent their adulthood as soldiers or civil servants in the South Vietnamese government. They would qualify under the HO Program if they were imprisoned in "re-education" or labor camps for a number of years and could demonstrate this fact. As a result of spending many years doing physical labor with limited nourishment in unbearable conditions, many of the people who came under this program were physically, psychologically and emotionally spent when they arrived. This group within the Vietnamese American community has faced many problems in adjusting to life in the US (Tran, 2000).

Vietnamese American communities have continued to form, develop and expand over the last 30 years. Although the initial group of Vietnamese refugees was dispersed throughout the United States, they have since congregated in several states after their initial arrival. There are many reasons why these communities formed in specific states. First, most communities were a result of the patterns of sponsorship during the initial arrival. In other words, communities tended

to form in cities and states that initially received more refugees than others. This created both a critical mass and the opportunity for people to seek out each other for friendship in a new environment. From there, certain needs that were unfulfilled, including food, social services, and religious support, were developed and provided by the people themselves. Family reunification was an important variable that compelled people to migrate. Those with extended families who were originally separated sought ways to live closer to their families in order to receive support from this kinship network.

Second, most refugees chose to migrate to states with job opportunities, especially those that required little English proficiency and specific skills. These tended to be jobs in the high-tech industry, as assembly line workers, as low-level technicians, as quality control workers, in low-end manufacturing positions, in the service sector, and in garment, agricultural, and similar industries. Third, they concentrated in areas where the cost of housing and overall cost of living was reasonable (at the time) so that they could fulfill the dream of home ownership. Fourth, most of the communities were formed in areas where the weather was milder than their original destinations and more like the weather in Vietnam. These and other variables played a significant role in the secondary migration process that led to the continuing development of Vietnamese American communities throughout the United States but concentrated in a few states. Data from the 2000 Census indicate that California is still the state most preferred by Vietnamese immigrants, followed by Texas, Washington, Virginia, Louisiana, Florida, and Pennsylvania. These seven states together include almost 73% of the total number of Vietnamese immigrants in the United States.

One of the benefits that Vietnamese Americans have enjoyed since their arrival in 1975 is a more tolerant climate in the United States compared to other times in American history. America has gone through tremendous social, political, educational, and religious changes as a result of the civil rights movement, the anti-war movement, and the emergence of minorities of color as a social and political force. In addition, the 1965 Immigration Act had a tremendous impact on race relations in America (Chan, 1991,

Warner 1999, Eck, 2001). This legislation opened the door for immigration by allowing many different immigrants to enter the United States. It also allowed them to bring their own culture, ethnic background, and, more importantly, their religions. In short, for Vietnamese refugees, although there was tremendous pressure to quickly assimilate economically, there was much less pressure to assimilate socially and religiously. As such, they were allowed to practice their religions without much interference and scrutiny and with much more freedom than at any other time in history.

While their initial focus was economic survival and adaptation to life in America, Vietnamese have recently turned their attention to claiming a voice in America by participating in all the available social, political, economic and educational institutions. Although they originally focused on homeland politics and the overthrow of the Vietnamese Communist government, with the coming of age of a new generation they have expanded their activity into issues in the United States as well. While they continue to bring attention to the issues of human rights violations and religious persecution in Viet Nam to Congress and the public with demonstrations, petitions, and full-page advertising in newspapers, they have also focused on issues relating to their status in the United States. To this end, there is an increase in the numbers of Vietnamese Americans engaged in the political process in recent years with a number of Vietnamese Americans running for political office. There are also recent indications of Vietnamese Americans building coalitions and alliances with other groups, especially in demanding more accountability from the local police and legal institutions.

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Hien Duc Do is Professor of Social Science at San Jose State University. He is the author of The Vietnamese Americans (Greenwood Press, 1999). His current research centers on the role of religion in immigrant communities.

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Journal of American Ethnic History**

The Immigration and Ethnic History Society is now seeking a Book Review Editor for its quarterly *Journal of American Ethnic History*. The Book Review Editor is responsible for selecting, requesting, receiving, and distributing books for review; identifying and recruiting reviewers; and editing, assembling, and arranging book reviews and review essays for each journal issue. The *Journal* publishes about 80-100 book reviews and 5-10 review essays per year and operates under quarterly deadlines (March 1, June 1, September 1, December 1).

The Book Review Editor should have good editorial, administrative, and organizational skills; broad knowledge of the immigration and ethnic history fields; and institutional support sufficient to perform the functions of the position and cover the costs of materials, postage, shipping, telephone, and especially a student assistant.

The Book Review Editor works in cooperation with the journal editor, who oversees final submissions, scheduling, and production of the journal. Preferably, the term of appointment is five years. The Book Review Editor must also be, or be willing to become, a member of the IEHS. The start date for the job is July 1, 2005, or as soon thereafter as possible. The position is uncompensated except for what the Book Review Editor may arrange with his or her department or dean.

For further information about the IEHS and its publications, go to www.iehs.org. For more information about this position, or to apply for it, please contact: Elliot R. Barkan, president, Immigration and Ethnic History Society, Dept. of History, Calif. State University, San Bernardino CA 92407-2397. Tel: 909-880-5525.

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HIGHAM TRAVEL AWARDS, 2005

Three John Higham travel grants to attend the 2005 Organization of American Historians convention, jointly administered by the IEHS and the OAH, were awarded to graduate students Victoria Cain (Columbia University), Christopher Nichols (Univ. of Virginia), and Nicholas Rosenthal (University of California at Los Angeles).

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Mail your information for the next Newsletter to:

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New Publications? Awards? Conferences Planned? Research Projects? Give us full details in the space below. Attach additional sheet for more information. Return by October 1, 2005.

IHS News Notes...**THEODORE SALOUTOS BOOK AWARD**

Closing date for submissions for the annual Theodore Saloutos Book Award is December 31, 2005. To be eligible, a book must be copyrighted 2005. A book may be nominated by the author, the publisher, a member of the prize committee, or a member of the Immigration and Ethnic History Society. Inquiries and nominations should be submitted to the chair of the Saloutos Prize Committee, Dorothee Schneider, 512 West Washington, Urbana IL 61801. E-mail: dorotheeschneider@gmail.com

Copies of the book must be received by all three members of the committee by Dec. 31, 2005. Send books to Dr. Schneider at the address above, and also to Prof. April Schultz, Dept. of History, Illinois Wesleyan Univ., Bloomington IL 61702-2900; and to Prof. Madeline Hsu, Dept. of Asian American Studies, San Francisco State University, 1600 Holloway Ave., San Francisco CA 94132.

JOHN HIGHAM TRAVEL GRANT

The Organization of American Historians and the Immigration and Ethnic History Society (IEHS) have created a fund in memory of John Higham (1920-2003), past president of both groups. When fully financed, Higham Grants of \$500 each will be given to up to three graduate students each year to facilitate their OAH/IEHS annual meeting attendance. Preferred candidates will be those with interests related to those of Higham: American immigration/ethnic history or American intellectual history. Candidates should submit applications by December 1, 2005 for the 2005 OAH meeting. Required information: current and permanent addresses, educational background, degrees received and expected, current institution and status, lists of publications and papers, and travel funds available from other sources. Applicants should include a short statement (not over 500 words) about how they envision the annual meeting will help prepare them for a career in history. Applications should be sent electronically (Word format only) to Higham@OAH.org. Grants will be announced in early February 2006.

NEW BOARD MEMBERS AND EDITOR

Members elected to three-year terms on the executive board of the IEHS are: Thomas Dublin, SUNY Binghamton; Madeline Hsu, San Francisco State University; and Suzanne Sinke, Florida State University.

GEORGE POZZETTA DISSERTATION AWARD

At the annual dinner of the IEHS on April 2, the Immigration and Ethnic History Society named two co-recipients who will share the George E. Pozzetta Award. The two are: David J. LaVigne, University of Minnesota, for his project "Black Mesabi: Race, Ethnicity and Nation on the Mesabi Iron Range"; and John W. Weber III, College of William and Mary, for his project "The Shadow of the Revolution: South Texas, the Mexican American Working Class."

The Immigration and Ethnic History Society announces competition for the 2006 George E. Pozzetta Award. It invites applications from any Ph.D. candidate who will have completed qualifying examinations by Dec. 1, 2005 and whose thesis focuses on American immigration, emigration, or ethnic history. The award provides a sum 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, 2005, which is the deadline. Send materials in hard copy (no Faxes accepted) to Deirdre Moloney (chair of the committee), Dept. of History, St. Francis Univ., Loretto PA 15940; and to Cindy Hahamovitch, Dept. of History, College of William and Mary, PO Box 8795, Williamsburg VA 23187-8795; and to Yong Chen, Dept. of History, 239 Murray Kreiger Hall, University of California-Irvine Irvine CA 92697-3275. Inquiries may be sent to Prof. Moloney at dmmfal@mail.francis.edu

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.

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