Not Just for Laughs: Using Ethnic and Racial Caricatures in the Classroom

By M. Alison Kibler

A drunken Irish maid. A Jewish clothier contemplating insurance fraud. A pot-bellied German with wooden shoes, a glass of beer and a pretzel. A knife-wielding African American. Ethnic and racial caricatures like these were staples of American popular theater, popular music, early film and the cartoon periodicals of the turn of the twentieth century. No vaudeville bill was complete without at least one turn of ethnic or racial comedy, and shows often featured as many as three. The heyday of ethnic comedy in American popular culture coincided with the period of "New Immigration" of eastern and southern Europeans, and the maturing second-generation of the first mass wave of immigrants, many of Irish and German origins. The most common ethnic and racial caricatures of the late nineteenth and early-twentieth century were Irish, German and blackface minstrelsy; soon Italian, Hebrew, and Chinese types also became popular, as new immigrants began to pour into American cities.

These ethnic and racial clowns were, on several levels, the "butt" of jokes. They were the hapless "greenhorn" to their better-adapted brethren; or they were the "others" to the Anglo-Saxon center of American life. But these images should not stand alone; they are not simply abstractions of nativism. The social history behind the images reveals immigrant performers who perpetuated caricatures of their own group, or, in other cases, of African Americans or Chinese immigrants. Ethnic and racial communities also protested against them, remade them, and laughed at them. The social context of the images thus shaped the meaning of the caricatures. The complex history of these images can accomplish many goals in the classroom, from documenting nativism to disclosing fissures in minority groups and comparing different groups' power to control their representation in popular culture.

In the world of popular entertainment, these ethnic and racial stereotypes were interconnected, and sometimes interchangeable (David Nasaw, *Going Out: The Rise and Fall of Public Amusements* [New York: Basic Books, 1993]). The Yellow Kid comic strip, by Richard Outcault, featured Irish, German and African American characters getting into trouble in a poor Bowery neighborhood (Richard F. Outcault, *R. F. Outcault's The Yellow Kid: A Centennial Celebration of the Kid Who Started the Comics* [Northampton, Ma.: Kitchen Sink Press, 1995]). Comic duos in vaudeville often paired Hebrew and Irish impersonations against each other, and the Jewish-Irish pairing continued in the popular Broadway play (and later film) *Abie's Irish Rose*. Well-known Jewish performer Eddie Cantor had blackface and Italian impersonations in his comic repertoire (Ted Merwin, *In Their Own Image: New York Jews in Jazz Age Popular Culture* [New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2006], 21).

Reuben Crowder, who adopted an Irish stage name, Ernest Hogan, because of the popularity of Irish comedians, wrote "All Coons Look Alike to Me" in 1896, fueling thecoon song craze. Popular music with Chinese characters also included lines like "all lookee samee to me" and a parody of Hogan's song soon appeared: "All Chinks Look Alike to Me" (Moon 133).

The popular stereotypes of Irish, Jewish and German immigrants from the turn of the twentieth century are widely accessible in film and in print. Rick Easton's vaudeville website at the University of Virginia includes audio versions of the Model Minstrels and Hebrew Vaudeville (Julian Rose). *Happy Hooligan, A Wake in Hell's Kitchen,* and *Levi and Cohen, Irish Comedians* (1903), are available from the Library of Congress on YouTube. These collections reveal the quintessential stage Irishman with a protruding brow and lips with a pug nose. He is ape-like. He is shabbily dressed in green with bright red or green whiskers on his face and bottle of whiskey close at hand. He is bumbling, lazy and quick to fight. Several cartoons depict the simian Irishman, often resembling African Americans: Thomas Nast's "The Day We Celebrate" (Harper's April 6, 1887), "The Ignorant Vote—Honors are Easy" (Harper's December 9, 1882), Frederick Oppen's "The King of A-Shantee" (Puck, February 15, 1883), and Joseph Keppler's "Paddy Aping Uncle Sam" (Puck, March 22, 1882).

The popular Jewish stereotype was a criminal or a businessman, often both; he was dirty, materialistic, cheap and immoral—an insult to the long-suffering, self-controlled, law-abiding Jewish people (*American Israelite*, August 20, 1908 and March 31, 1910). The Stage Jew was characterized as a cheap Job with no ambition except to make money (*American Israelite*, August 25, 1910). Jewish criminals on stage and screen were willing to break the law for financial gain, and a variety of legitimate Jewish businessmen were depicted as miserly and immoral, if not explicitly criminal. Joe Welch, in mismatched coat and pants, with a long pointed beard, stood in the center of the vaudeville stage, silently faced the audience, then said, "maybe you think I happy?" (Merwin, 20). For the text of routines, instructors can consult "Selected Shtick" including popular song lyrics and vaudeville sketches, in an appendix of Harley Erdman *Staging the Jew: The Performance of an American Ethnicity*, 1860-1920 (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997).

Chinese stereotypes became a national trend in American popular culture in the 1870s, as the debate over Chinese immigration became a prominent political topic. First, white actors in "yellowface" presented Chinese men in dark tunics, spoke in pidgin English and wore makeup to slant their eyes. They emphasized strange dress, gender roles, and eating habits. Second, in

(continued on p. 8)
News from Libraries, Museums and Research Institutes...

New National Museum of American Jewish History Opens in Philadelphia

The National Museum of American Jewish History in Philadelphia is opening its new facilities to the public on November 26. The museum was housed since its founding in 1976 in smaller quarters about two blocks away. The new location, at Fifth and Market Streets, overlooks Independence Mall and its historic sites and museums. The site was purchased from a radio station which formerly occupied it; the building was replaced by a new one designed by noted architect James Polshek. A glass facade covers the building on the west side, facing the mall.

The five-story building, which was built at a cost of $151 million, offers about 100,000 square feet of exhibition space, over four floors. The core exhibition is organized chronologically over three floors, emphasizing the interaction between immigrant Jews and democracy. The exhibitions adhere closely to the general theme of the Jewish experience in America.

Elaborate dedication ceremonies were held during the weekend of November 12-14, and were attended by many celebrities. Full information about the new museum can be found at http://www.nmajh.org/

The museum at the Ellis Island National Monument in New York harbor has a current exhibition: "Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America." The exhibit explores the many ways in which Catholic sisters from many nations helped to develop the educational and social-service structures for all Americans. Through January 22, 2011. Information on the web at http://www.nps.gov/elis/index.htm

The Library Company of Philadelphia and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania will jointly award approximately twenty-five one-month fellowships for research in residence in either or both collections during the academic year 2010-2011. Two Balch Institute fellowships will support research in the HSP/Balch collections on the ethnic and immigrant experience in the United States. Short-term fellowships are tenable for any one-month period between June 2011 and May 2012. Stipend is $2000. There is also a full-year Albert M. Greenfield dissertation research fellowship with a stipend of $20,000. Full information is available online at http://www.librarycompany.org/fellowships/

The American Swedish Historical Museum in Philadelphia has a current exhibition, "Go Swedish! Smorgåsbord and Beyond," which explores Swedish food and culinary traditions. The exhibition will run through January 2011. Information at http://www.americanswedish.org/

The Center for Jewish History, 15 W. 16th St., New York City, offers National Endowment for the Humanities fellowships for senior scholars. The Center welcomes applications from any field whose research will benefit from consultation with materials at the Center. Full fellowships carry a stipend of up to $35,000 for a full year. Application is due by December 15, 2010. Web information: http://www.cjh.org/

Two new current exhibitions are at the Chinese Historical Society of America, 965 Clay St., San Francisco. "Detained at Liberty's Door" traces the formation of the Angel Island Immigration Station and highlights the inspiring story of Mrs. Lee Yoke Suey, the wife of a native-born citizen who was detained for more than 15 months on Angel Island. "The Architecture of San Francisco's Chinatown" is explored from its beginnings in the mid-19th century through the rebuilding following the Great Earthquake and Fire of 1906 to its presence as one of the country's most vibrant and enduring neighborhoods. Information on the web at http://www.chsa.org/

The Milwaukee Public Museum has a current exhibition, "Schweizertanz von Milwaukee," which recalls the 19th century Germanic practice of festivals featuring sharpshooters and target practice. Festivals of this type grew during the heavy years of German immigration in the mid-19th century. The exhibition continues through August 2012. Web info: http://www.mpm.edu/exhibitions/

The National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, is slowly recovering from the disastrous flooding of the Cedar River in 2008. A temporary headquarters has been opened in the nearby Kosek Building, a commercial structure, while plans proceed to move, elevate and rebuild the previous flood-damaged structure. Updates on the recovery process are on http://www.ncsmil.org/

The Philadelphia Jewish Archives Center has now been relocated to Temple University as part of Temple’s Philadelphia Urban Archives. The center is located in Temple’s Paley Library. The collections are housed on-site and visits should be arranged in advance. Contact the Center at 215-204-8257, or e-mail pjacs@temple.edu

The Bishop Museum in Honolulu, Hawaii, currently is displaying a traveling exhibition from the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles: "Fighting for Democracy: Who is the 'We' in 'We the People?'" The exhibit features the diverse perspectives of seven ordinary citizens whose lives and communities were forever changed by World War II. Through January 3, 2011. Information at http://www.bishopmuseum.org/exhibits/onexhibit.html

The Immigration History Research Center at the University of Minnesota offers grants-in-aid awards of up to $500 to assist graduate students, independent and other scholars traveling to conduct research for at least one week at the IHRC. The deadline for applications for 2011-2012 awards is June 1, 2011.

Post-doctoral scholars are also eligible to apply for additional funding for a maximum award of $1,000. The post-doctoral grant in aid supports a two-week residency while conducting research in the Center’s collections. Those applying for the post-doctoral grant in aid must clearly indicate their qualifications for the award in a letter of application. The deadline for post-doctoral grants in aid also is June 1, 2011. Info at http://www.librarycompany.org/fellowships/
From the IEHS President...

Greetings, IEHS members!

Once again, Autumn is moving toward Winter—at least in the Middle West where I am located. And with this annual change of seasons comes preparation for the Society’s events and meetings next year during the annual meeting of the Organization of American Historians. In 2011, the OAH will meet in Houston from Thursday, March 17, through Sunday, March 20.

IEHS activities during the OAH will include:

“Dessert Before Dinner,” the second annual reception for graduate students and junior career scholars, on Thursday, March 17, from 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. in Room 329 of the Hilton Americas-Houston. Let me urge all members to attend and talk with those just beginning their careers.

IEHS Meetings will take place on Friday, March 18, from 2:00 to 5:30 p.m. at the Hilton Americas-Houston (room to be announced):

- the Editorial Board of the Journal of American Ethnic History;
- the Annual Meeting of the Society;
- the Annual Meeting of the Executive Board, including newly elected Board members during their 2011-2014 three-year term of service.

The IEHS Annual Dinner will follow, beginning at 6:00 p.m. on Friday, March 18, at Kiran’s Restaurant and Bar which serves “fine Indian cuisine” at 4100 Westheimer Road, Houston. After the presentation of awards and prizes, Professor Ramon A. Gutierrez, Director of the Center for Race, Politics, and Culture at Preston and Sterling Morton Distinguished Service Professor of History at the University of Chicago, will speak on ‘Thinking About Race in a Post-Racial America: From Plessy v. Ferguson to Barack Obama.’

In early 2011, all members will receive a mailing from IEHS Secretary Tim Draper that will include additional details and a ballot for the 2011 election of three new Executive Board members.

In this message, I am also pleased to convey the following report from Executive Board member Rachel Krasner who serves as the Society’s web editor and has overseen the ongoing process of redesigning the Society’s website—www.iehs.org:

Over the course of this year, I will be working with website designer Steven Williams in order to make the IEHS website more user-friendly and dynamic. First—and perhaps, most importantly—we will reorganize the site to make it more visually appealing and, far easier to navigate. Additionally, the new website will streamline our administrative needs by making it easier to communicate with our membership via email, and enable us to sign up for the banquet and vote in IEHS elections online. The website will also be a way to share resources, and will include a syllabus-sharing section, a section on K-12 materials, and a (password protected) membership directory which will be searchable by research interest, making it easier for members to communicate with one another and collaborate on projects. Hopefully, this website upgrade will be a first step in thinking systematically about how technology can help us further the goals of the society and advance the field of immigration and ethnic studies.

Rachel and I hope that the new website will be functional in early 2011.

Newsletter editor Jim Bergquist richly deserves our thanks for his tireless work over the years on this semi-annual publication of the Society! Do remember to send him your news.

Best wishes,
Barbara M. Posadas, President IEHS

PERSONALS

Dan Burke (Montclair State University) has been named Executive Director of the Old World Wisconsin Foundation, a unit of the Wisconsin Historical Society which operates a historical immigrant farm community. Burke was previously vice-president of the foundation.

Nancy C. Carnevale (Montclair State University) has been named a 2010 American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation for her book A New Language, A New World: Italian Immigrants in the United States, 1890-1945 (Univ. of Illinois Press).

Simone Cinotto (University of Turin, Italy) was a Balch Institute fellow at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania during the year 2009-2010. Her research centered on public housing and cultural pluralism in Italian Harlem, 1937-1941.

Hasia Diner (New York University) has received a fellowship from the Guggenheim Foundation for the year 2010-2011. She is researching a history of Jewish peddlers in those places around the world to which European Jews emigrated. In November, she gave the keynote address at the annual meeting of the Swedish Association for Jewish Studies in Uppsala, Sweden.

At its annual meeting in April 2010 in New Harmony, Indiana, the Society for German-American Studies presented its Distinguished Achievement Award to Frederick C. Liebke (Emurities, University of Nebraska). He retired in 1994 and now is living in Eugene, Oregon.

Jeff Strickland (Montclair State University) has been appointed the new Book Review Editor for the Journal of American Ethnic History. He will take over the duties effective May 1, 2011.

From the Program Committee...

Each Fall, the IEHS Program Committee seeks paper and session proposals for the AHA and OAH annual meetings. We especially encourage a diversity of submissions in terms of ethnicity, gender, time periods, and subject areas, as well as a diversity of submissions from those at universities and community colleges, instructors, scholars, and graduate students.

For more information about meetings to be held in 2011, contact the Program Committee Chair:

Hasia R. Diner, IEHS Vice-President and President-Elect, Department of History, New York University, 53 Washington Square, New York, NY 10012. E-mail: hasia.diner@nyu.edu

Program Committee Members for the 2012 Meetings are:

Tylor Anbinder, George Washington University; e-mail: anbinder@gwu.edu
Roberta Parnett, York College (City University of New York); e-mail: parnett@york.cuny.edu
Meaghan Dwyer, Boston College; e-mail: mdwyerirkm@bc.edu
Eiichiro Azuma, University of Pennsylvania; e-mail: eazuma@history.upenn.edu
Lilia Fernandez, Ohio State University; e-mail: fernandez.96@osu.edu
Conferences and Meetings...

The Massachusetts Historical Society offers an annual series of immigration and urban history seminars held on several Thursday afternoons during the academic year. Seminars held during the fall included:

Sept. 30: Erika Lee (Univ. of Minnesota), “Angel Island: Immigrant Gateway in America.”


Nov. 18: Yael Schacher (Harvard Univ.), “Discrimination, Persecution, and Alien Women in U.S. Ports, 1930s to 1960s.”

Seminars scheduled for 2011 include:

Jan. 27: Llana Barber (Boston College), “If we would...leave the city, this would be a ghost town”: Urban Crisis and Latino Migration in Lawrence, Massachusetts, 1945-2000.”


March 24: Mary Anne A. Trasciatti ( Hofstra University), “Athens or Anarchy? Soapbox Oratory and the Early Twentieth-Century American City.”


Seminar meetings start at 5:15 P.M. and are followed by a light buffet supper (make reservations for the supper). Full information is at http://www.masshist.org/events/bsiuh.cfm

The University of the Basque Country, in Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain, plans a workshop to be held in Vitoria-Gasteiz December 16, 2010. Theme: “Beyond the Border, Behind the Men: The Invisibility of Female Migration.” For further information e-mail oscar.alvarez@ehu.es

The American Historical Association will hold its annual meeting in Boston, January 6-9, 2011. Theme: “History Society, and the Sacred.” The program includes four sessions jointly sponsored with the Immigration and Ethnic History Society. See the listing on p. 5.

Further information on the AHA meeting: http://www.historians.org/

The Polish American Historical Association will hold its annual meeting in conjunction with the AHA in Boston, January 6-8, 2011. Information about sessions and events can be found on the PAHA web-page: http://www.polishamericanstudies.org/Program.html

The Organization of American Historians will hold its annual meeting in Houston, Texas, March 17-20, 2011. Theme of the meeting is “Americans Divided and United: Multiple and Shifting Solidarities.” For program information, see the OAH web pages at http://www.oah.org/meetings/

The Immigration and Ethnic History Society will hold its annual meeting in connection with the OAH in Houston, March 17-20, 2011. The IEHS business meeting and annual dinner will take place on Friday, March 18. See “President’s message” on p. 3 for further details.

The American Conference for Irish Studies will hold its annual meeting at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, March 30-April 2, 2011. Theme: “Global Networks and Local Ties.” Information on the web at http://www.acisweb.com/

The Massachusetts Historical Association will sponsor a conference in Boston, April 7-9, 2011: “What’s New about the New Immigration? Traditions and Transformations since 1965.” Say the organizers: “This program will investigate how the substantial immigration of recent decades has transformed our nation politically, economically, demographically, and culturally.” Information on the web at http://www.masshist.org/events/conferences.cfm


The 35th annual symposium of the Society for German American Studies will take place April 14-16, 2011 on the campus of the University of Delaware in Newark and at the Winterthur Museum in Wilmington, Delaware. Further information on the web at http://sgas.org/meetings.html


The Immigration History Research Center in collaboration with the German Historical Institute in Washington, DC plans a three-day seminar at the University of Minnesota, Aug. 25-27, 2011. The subject: “Europe-Migration-Identity.” The seminar aims to promote exchanges between scholars engaged in the field of migration and emigration research and those who are interested in processes of "Euroamericanization" in the modern era (after 1850). Proposals due by Dec. 10, 2010. Further information on the web: http://www.ihr.cumn.edu/
Immigration and Ethnic History Sessions at the American Historical Association  
Boston, January 6-9, 2011

Following are sessions at the AHA co-sponsored by the IEHS:

"The Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s: Activist Protestants or Intolerant Americans?"
AHA Session 6
Immigration and Ethnic History Society 1
Thursday, January 6, 2011: 3:00 PM-5:00 PM
Room 103 (Hynes Convention Center)
Chair:
Evelyn Sterne, University of Rhode Island
Papers:
"We Put the Bible in the Schools": The Ku Klux Klan on Minnesota's Mesabi Iron Range" (David J. LaVigne, College of St. Benedict and St. John's University)  
"The Ku Klux Klan Confronts New England Catholics in the 1920s" (Mark P. Richard, Plattsburgh State University of New York)  
"The Hooded Schoolhouse: School Reform, State-Building, and Cultural Intolerance in the 1920s" (Thomas R. Pegram, Loyola University Maryland)  
Comment:
Leonard Moore, McGill University

"Crossing Borders, Transcending Boundaries: How Migrants Overcome Obstacles to Reach Their Destinations"
AHA Session 15
Immigration and Ethnic History Society 2
Thursday, January 6, 2011: 3:00 PM-5:00 PM
Berkeley Room (Marriott Boston Copley Place)
Chair:
Alan Kraut, American University
Papers:
"Generation 1.5: The Effects of U.S. Immigration Policy on Children" (Deirdre Moloney, Princeton University)  
"The Origins of the Criminal Alien Program" (Torrie Hester, Roanoke College)  
"The Rise of Illegal Immigration from Europe: An Unintended Consequence of the Quota Acts" (Maddalena Marinari, American University)  
Comment:
Madeline Y. Hsu, University of Texas at Austin

"Museums as Sacred Spaces: Constructions of National Identity"
AHA Session 99
Immigration and Ethnic History Society 3
Friday, January 7, 2011: 2:30 PM-4:30 PM
Wellesley Room (Marriott Boston Copley Place)
Chair:
Franklin Odo, Smithsonian Institution

Panel:
Jason Chang (University of California at Berkeley), Anna Pegler-Gordon (Michigan State University), and Suzy Serif (University of Texas at Austin)
Comment:
Franklin Odo, Smithsonian Institution

"Understanding the Transatlantic Migration Experience: Diverse and Similar Migration Patterns of People from Austria-Hungary"
AHA Session 167
Immigration and Ethnic History Society 4
Saturday, January 8, 2011: 11:30 AM-1:30 PM
Grand Ballroom Salon B (Marriott Boston Copley Place)
Chair:
Gary B. Cohen, University of Minnesota at Twin Cities
Papers:
"An Intermingling of Many Ethnicities? Intermarriage of U.S. Migrants from Austria-Hungary as an Indicator of Acculturation" (Annamarie Steidl, University of Minnesota at Twin Cities)  
"On Identity Politics and Marriage in Two Migrant Communities: The Cases of South Slavs in Pittsburgh and the Iron Range" (Wladimir Fischer, University of Vienna)  
"The Promise of 'Crowd-Sourced' Microdata for Studying the Lives of Dual Monarchy Emigrants, Immigrants, and Re-migrants" (James W. Oberly (University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire)  
Comment:
Jose C. Moya, Bard College, Columbia University

Also of Interest...

"The Borders of Immigration History: Citizenship and Politics from the Local to the Global"
AHA Session 67
Friday, January 7, 2011: 9:30 AM-11:30 AM
Boylston Room (Marriott Boston Copley Place)
Chair: Geraldo L. Cadava (Northwestern University).
Papers by: Hidetaka Hirotta, Boston College; Aaron J. Cavin, University of Michigan; and Shelley S. Lee (Oberlin College).
Comment:
George J. Sanchez, University of Southern California.

"(Re)Constructing Ethnic Identity among Migrants and Their Descendants: Cutting through Generations"
AHA Session 271
Sunday, January 9, 2011: 11:00 AM-1:00 PM
Dartmouth Room (Marriott Boston Copley Place)
Chair: Russell A. Kazal, University of Toronto.
Papers by: Verity Burgmann (Univ. of Melbourne); Dominique Clément (Univ. of Alberta); Matthew Hilton (Univ. of Birmingham).
New Publications Noted...


Ethnic and Racial Caricatures...
(continued from p. 1)
productions with characters of multiple races and ethnicities, the Chinese were often at the bottom of the pecking order. In Mulligan’s Silver Wedding (1881) for example, the Irish washerwoman, Honora Dublin, complains about a competing Chinese laundryman, Hog Eye:

Why don’t you have whiskers on your face like a many you baboon you...the likes of you coming to a free country and walking around in your petticoats and calling yourself a man (David Graham and Edward Harrigan, Mulligan’s Silver Wedding [1881] as quoted in Krystyn Moon, Yellowface: Creating the Chinese in American Popular Music and Performance, 1850s–1920s [New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press], 53).

Taken together, these examples offer several lessons. By depicting the Chinese as unassimilable, these impersonations defended Chinese exclusion, which became national policy in 1882. In addition, they show benefits of comparing the images of European immigrants—or the emerging white races—with the stereotypes of non-white races—like African Americans and Chinese Americans. Irish characters, for example, often gain the upperhand over non-white characters in multi-ethnic and racial plays; and Irish and Jewish performers often profited from the negative depiction of non-white races.

The characterization of the Chinese shares elements of the characterization of other groups. Most importantly, yellowface resembled blackface, because white actors pushed Chinese and African American performers out of the business of representing themselves. The Irish dominated minstrelsy when it became the first distinctly American form in the antebellum period; and Jews took center stage when blackface reemerged in early-twentieth-century film. Sophie Tucker, Eddie Cantor, and Al Jolson all made blackface a significant part of their successful careers in vaudeville and Hollywood. The role of immigrants in the history of blackface demonstrates the mutability of identity at the center of American acculturation, while at the same time revealing the “dark, racially exclusive side” of American nationalism (Michael Rogin, Black Face, White Noise: Jewish Immigrants in the Hollywood Melting Pot [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998], 55).

Another advantage of studying multiple ethnic and racial stereotypes simultaneously is to expose the gendered dimensions overarching these caricatures. One part of the humorous insult of these stage and print caricatures is gender inversion, to varying degrees. The androgyny of Chinese men and Irish women on stage was part of the negative characterizations of these groups. Anti-Chinese songwriters emphasized Chinese men’s femininity—their long hair (the “queue”), and feminine clothes. Songs portrayed Chinese men competing with Irish women in workforce and Chinese men did “women’s” work (Moon 51–52).

The popular stereotypes of the Irish female domestic servant also emphasized masculinity. She signified that the Irish were uncivilized because of their uncouth gender roles—their men were loafers, while their women were strong and in charge; but, in addition, her big feet and muscular arms also set her apart from the “refined...women who...were responsible for her supervision” (Andrew Urban, “Irish Domestic Servants: ‘Biddy’ and Rebellion in the American Home, 1850–1890,” Gender and History, 21, no. 2 (August 2009): 272). American popular culture often portrayed hard-working, beleaguered Irish women who “could quaff the flowing bowl, use her fists, feet or tongue better than her husband” (“Death of the Stage Irishman,” National Hibernian, July 15, 1906). The Stage Irishman, in turn, was a slacker. In her description of Frederick Opper’s cartoons, Maureen Murphy describes one extreme, “Biddy Tyrannus, an enormous, menacing figure who threatens her employers” (Maureen Murphy, “Bridget and Biddy: Images of the Irish Servant Girl in Puck Cartoons,” in New Perspectives on the Irish Diaspora, ed. Charles Fanning [Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000], 156). Opper’s “Irish Declaration of Independence” (1883) is a vivid example, as is the cross-dressed maid in the 1901 film, The Finish of Bridget McKeen. These examples show that the Stage Irishman, like other stage stereotypes, was gendered, not generic.

Professors can show students the shifting content and contexts of iconic ethnic and racial stereotypes. Film historian Charles Musser explains that The Finish of Bridget McKeen needs to be considered, along with other “uncomplimentary” films, as part of a trend in which the native-born characters, like rubes or “Uncle Josh”, were also ridiculed. Instead of seeing them only as nativist, Musser argues that these films like The Finish of Bridget McKeen urge[d] an accommodation to the dynamism of urban life” (Charles Musser, Before the Nickelodeon: Edwin S. Porter and the Edison Manufacturing Company [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991], 49). The films set out distinctive immigrant traits, only to encourage their transformation. In addition, did the comic art of ethnic role-playing expose the “stereotypes as nothing but constructions”—a “discarded mask”? (Musser 49, 50). The meaning of the films—harmless farce or insult?—depended on the audiences. This is particularly apparent with The Finish of Bridget McKeen because the Gaelic League, an organization central to the rise of Irish nationalism on both sides of the Atlantic, attacked The Finish of Bridget McKeen as part of its campaign against the Stage Irish in the early twentieth century. The Gaelic League’s attack on the movie was particularly interesting in this case because the sponsor and host for the film was the Ancient Order of Hibernians in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. The Gaelic League noted the contradiction of the AOH’s choice of entertainment: this organization had taken a leading role in the fight against the stage Irish in the early twentieth century, but promoted the offensive image of Bridget within their own hall. Was the AOH just inconsistent? Or did an all-Irish audience offer a more empowering context for the film?

More contemporary images, some with very long lives, provide rich examples of change over time, often in response to protest, but sometimes despite it. Born in 1893 at the Chicago World’s Fair, “Aunt Jemima” remains one of the most recognizable brands in American history. Aunt Jemima has been lightened and slimmed down during the second half of the twentieth century, when she became the target of criticism from African Americans. In his 1968 attack on Aunt Jemima, Eldridge Cleaver wrote that
the white man “had turned the black woman into a strong self-reliant Amazon and deposited her in his kitchen—that’s the secret of Aunt Jemima’s bandana” (M. M. Manning, Slave in a Box: The Strange Career of Aunt Jemima [Charlottesville: Univ. of Virginia Press, 1998], 181). The “Frito Bandito” provides an interesting contrast. The stereotype of a Mexican bandit has deep roots in early Hollywood, particularly after the Mexican Revolution (1910). Frito-Lay introduced the Frito Bandito in 1967 (these commercials are available on Youtube). The Frito Bandito leered at white Frito-consumers, and stole their corn chips. In 1968 Chicano groups protested against these negative images; Frito-Lay refined the bandito—to make him less grimacing—and ultimately stopped using the image in 1971, after the protesters threatened lawsuits. (“Mexican-Americans Assail Commercials,” New York Times, Dec. 10, 1968; Chon A Noriega, Shot in America: Television, the State and the Rise of Chicano Cinema [University of Minnesota, 2000]. As these examples show, ethnic and racial stereotypes can serve as examples of larger themes in history classrooms; but they can also be at the center of their own complex stories of resistance and reclamation.

M. Alison Kibler is Associate Professor of American Studies at Franklin and Marshall College. She is the author of Rank Ladies: Gender and Cultural Hierarchy in American Vaudeville (Univ. of North Carolina, 1999). She is finishing a book, “Paddy, Shylock and Sancho: Irish, Jewish and African American Protests against Mass Culture, 1890-1930.”

New Publications Noted...

(continued from p. 7)


Murillo, Luis E. “Tamales on the Fourth of July: The Transnational Parish of Coc-
New Publications Noted...
(continued from p. 9)


Conferences and Meetings...
(continued from p. 4)

The McNeil Center for Early American Studies and the Library Company of Philadelphia will sponsor a conference on "Ireland, America, and the Worlds of Matthew Carey" in Philadelphia, October 27-29, 2011. Carey (1760-1839) made his mark in both his native Ireland and in Philadelphia as a printer and editor of influential periodicals. He became the most prominent spokesman for Irish Catholics in America. Information on the web at: http://www.mceas.org/programs.htm


The American Studies Association will hold its 2011 meeting in Baltimore, Oct. 20-23. Information on the web at http://www.thesa.net/annual_meeting/

The Organization of American Historians will hold its 2012 annual meeting in Milwaukee, April 19-22. Theme: "Frontiers of Capitalism and Democracy." The deadline for proposals is Tuesday, February 1, 2011. See the web announcement at http://annualmeeting.oah.org/call_for_proposals/2012_milwaukee.html

Save the Date...

IEHS Annual Meeting
Houston, Texas
March 17-20, 2011
Activities Report for the Immigration and Ethnic 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: James.Bergquist@villanova.edu
Your name and affiliation:


IHS News Notes...

THEODORE SALOUTOS BOOK AWARD
Closing date for submissions for the annual Theodore Saloutos Book Award is December 31, 2010. To be eligible, a book must be copyrighted 2010. 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, Maria Cristina Garcia, Department of History, 450 McGraw Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853-4601, mcg20@cornell.edu.
Copies of the book must be received by all three members of the committee by Dec. 31, 2010. Send books to Professor Garcia at the address above, and also to Eiichiro Azuma, Department of History, 208 College Hall, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA 19104-6379, eazuma@sas.upenn.edu, and Alan Kraut, 6013 Sonoma Road, Bethesda, MD 20817, akaatu@american.edu. The 2010 award will be presented at the annual dinner meeting of the Society in 2011.

JOHN HIGHAM TRAVEL GRANT
Applications are now being received for the 2011 John Higham travel grants, which provide three $500 grants for graduate students to attend the 2011 meeting of the Organization of American Historians in Houston, Texas. OAH and the Immigration and Ethnic History Society will award these grants in memory of John Higham (1920-2003), past president of both organizations, and a towering figure in immigration, ethnic, and intellectual history. The successful candidates will have a preferred area of concentration in American Immigration and/or American Ethnic and/or American Intellectual history. Applications should be received by December 1, 2010. For full information and guidelines for application, see www.oah.org/activities/awards/higham/
Committee members for the 2011 prize are Elliott Barkan (California State University, San Bernardino), chair, Lon Kurashige (University of Southern California); and Dominic A. Pacyga (Columbia College, Chicago).

GEORGE POZZETTA DISSERTATION AWARD
The Immigration and Ethnic History Society invites applications for the 2011 George F. Pozzetta Award. Eligible are Ph.D. candidates who will have completed qualifying examinations by Dec. 1, 2010, and whose thesis focuses on American immigration, emigration, or ethnic history. The award provides $500 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. The application must also include a proposed budget, brief curriculum vitae, and a supporting letter from the major advisor. All materials must be received by each committee member by December 15, 2010, which is the submission deadline.
Send materials in hard copy (no FAXes accepted) to Raymond A. Mohl, Department of History, University of Alabama, Birmingham, Birmingham, AL 35294-0001, rmohl@uab.edu; to Nancy Green, 32 Bis Rue Lacapede, 75005 Paris, FRANCE; and to Nancy Carnvale, Department of History, Montclair State University, Montclair, NJ 07043. Inquiries may be sent to the committee chair, Prof. Mohl, at rmohl@uab.edu.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS
The Nominating Committee is now seeking nominations to fill three positions for three-year terms on the Executive Board of IEHS. Members may recommend colleagues; self-nominations are also welcome. Nominees must be members of the IEHS. Elections will be held prior to the annual meeting in Spring 2010. Forward your suggestions for nominees to any member of the committee: Charles Zappia (San Diego Mesa College), chair, e-mail czappia@sdcocd.edu; Anna Pegler-Gordon (Michigan State University), e-mail gordonap@msu.edu; Diane Vecchio (Furman University), e-mail Diane.Vecchio@Furman.edu; and Maddalena Marinari (American University), e-mail nunarinari@gmail.com. Deadline for receiving suggestions for nomination: January 4, 2011.
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

Annual dues: Individual (print or electronic), $45, $55 (Canada & Mexico), $80 (other foreign addresses); Student (print or electronic), $25, $35 (Canada & Mexico), $60 (other foreign addresses); New member (print or electronic), first year $35, $45 (Canada & Mexico), $70 (other foreign addresses). Institutional members (print or electronic), $245, $255 (Canada & Mexico), $280 (other foreign addresses). For print and electronic delivery, add $10 to individual rate, $50 to institutional rate. Electronic subscribers may have access to archives of all issues of the Journal of American Ethnic History for an additional $10 for individual subscribers, $20 for institutional subscribers.

New memberships and membership renewals should be sent to Journals, University of Illinois Press, 1325 S. Oak St., Champaign, IL 61820. They may also be sent via the web-page: http://www.press.uillinois.edu/journals/jaeh.html

OFFICERS OF THE IEHS

President: Barbara Posadas, Northern Illinois University, Dept. of History, DeKalb IL 60115. E-mail: bposadas@niu.edu
Vice-president: Hasia R. Diner, New York University, Dept. of History, New York NY 10012. E-mail: hrd1@nyu.edu
Secretary: Timothy Draper, Waubonsee Community College, Division of Social Sciences and Education, Sugar Grove IL 60554. Tel. (630) 466-2566. FAX (630) 466-5795. E-mail: tdraper@waubonsee.edu
Treasurer: Cheryl Greenberg, Trinity College, Dept. of History, 300 Summit St., Hartford CT 06106. Tel. (860) 297-2371. E-mail: Cheryl.Greenberg@trincoll.edu
Editor, Journal of American Ethnic History: John Bukowczyk, Dept. of History, 3094 Faculty/Administration Building, Wayne State University, Detroit MI 48202. Tel. (313) 577-2799. FAX (313) 577-6987. E-mail: aa2092@wayne.edu
Editor, Immigration History Newsletter: James M. Bergquist, Department of History, Villanova University, Villanova PA 19085-1699. Tel.: (610) 587-0838. FAX: (610) 519-4450. E-mail: James.Bergquist@villanova.edu

Inquiries about the Society should be directed to the appropriate officer. Newsletter submissions and questions about editorial matters should be sent to the newsletter editor at the address above. Requests for back issues of the newsletter should be sent to the editor; send $2.00 per copy (by check made out to Villanova University).

Subscriptions to the Immigration and Ethnic History Newsletter and the Journal of American Ethnic History are part of membership in the Society. Members' changes of address should be sent to Journals, Univ. of Illinois Press, 1325 S. Oak St., Champaign IL 61820, or via the web at http://www.press.uillinois.edu/journals/jaeh.html

Visit the IEHS web pages at www.iehs.org