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# The Immigration and Ethnic History Newsletter

## Ethnic Commemoration: Negotiating Identity and Inclusion

By Jon G. Malek

Commemoration and memorial sites have received much attention from scholars of memory, nationalism, and military history. In North America, work has focused on issues surrounding the World Wars, the Holocaust, and museums. Critical approaches to commemoration have examined the politics of representation (G. Ashplant et al., *Commemorating War: The Politics of Memory*, 2000) and the role of commemoration in building national memory (J. Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning and the First World War*, 1997). However, ethnic commemoration remains a source that remains to be utilized to its full potential. For those examining immigration and ethnic history in North America, studying commemorative events and structures can be revealing. A recent examination I carried out of a commemorative museum exhibit of the Filipino community in Winnipeg, Manitoba, revealed an underlying tension in the community about how its fifty-year history should be represented (J. Malek, "Memories of Migration," 2015). Studying sites of commemoration can reveal ways in which the state includes ethnic groups into regional and national histories, and how ethnic communities exercise their agency in their attempt to write themselves into those histories.

Commemoration is performed by multiple actors, with varied intentions, and in different milieus. In the realms of ethnic commemoration, the major actors are the state and particular ethnic communities. In the case of both, identity politics are an important motivation. The lack of commemoration can have significant implications for how an ethnic community negotiates its belonging within North America. This can be further complicated when that community has experienced certain injustices in their host countries, although trauma need not be required in the politics of memory.

An example of how a lack of commemora-

tion can write a group out of a regional history is the Japanese in the Canadian Prairies following the 'evacuations' that followed 1941. I grew up in a small community outside of Winnipeg, Manitoba. I never gained a sense of the community's history, although I knew it was tied closely to Steinbach, Manitoba, one of the first major Mennonite settlements in North America. However, I was surprised – shocked, even – to learn that Japanese 'evacuees' during World War II had worked in the farm fields of my town. Apparently, they fit in well with the community, performing needed labour; however, growing up I never knew this. Certainly, there was no public commemoration about this event, but neither did this factor into the public memory of the community. Given that there were no Japanese descendants living in this community, I can only assume that they had moved on, perhaps taking with them the memory of their presence. Without any commemoration or public memory of this particular event, the place of Japanese in the agricultural history of Southern Manitoba is largely forgotten, thus preventing the inclusion of this ethnic group in broader histories.

At the level of the state, the commemoration of ethnic groups such as the Japanese, who experienced forced evacuations and incarceration during World War II, is vital to reconciliation and to writing these groups into a national memory. After the United States issued an apology to Japanese Americans in the 1988 Civil Liberties Act, an arena for

publically acknowledging and commemorating the experiences of Japanese Americans was established. Many such commemorative sites go beyond acknowledging the victimhood of thousands of Japanese-descended Americans, and emphasize their

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**From the IEHS President**



On October 23-24, the Immigration and Ethnic History Society and the Immigration History Research Center co-sponsored the “Immigrant America” conference at the University of Minnesota to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Hart-Celler Act, and the fiftieth anniversary of our respective organizations. I am pleased to report that the conference was a success. Over

two hundred people attended-- archivists, librarians, museum curators, and faculty and graduate students. We reflected on the field of immigration history— its past trajectories, its current state, and possible future directions— n over twenty panels, plenaries, and breakout sessions. The conversation was intellectually energizing.

It was hard to choose between concurrent sessions. There were panels on film, theater, digital storytelling, museum curation, and historiography. Topics included citizenship, law, advocacy, the carceral state, refugees, undocumented labor, and international adoption. Here is just a small sample of the presentations over the two-day conference: Pawan Dhingra, David Reimers, Marilyn Halter, and Lynn Johnson reflected on change and continuity in the post-1965 migration. Hiroshi Motomura’s lunchtime keynote addressed the legacies of the 1965 Immigration Act. David M. Hernández, Carl Lindskoog, Tanya Golash-Boza, and Aviva Chomsky presented on detention and deportation policies since 1965. Violet Johnson, Keith Mayes, Ahmed Yusuf, and Ira Berlin discussed African and African American Migrations. Charlotte Karrem Albrecht, Leila Ben-Nasr, and Carol Fadda-Conrey led a roundtable discussion on the state of the field of Arab American Studies. Doug Massey, Guillermina Jasso, Charles Hirshman, Doug Hartmann, Jack DeWaard, and Ryan Allen assessed the 1965 act and discussed the future of immigration policy in the United States. On Friday evening we were treated to a special screening of the “Immigrant Stories” project at the IHRC archives and their wonderful “People on the Move” exhibit.

I was especially excited to hear the work-in-progress of several doctoral candidates: Carly Goodman, of Temple University, presented on her research on the

US Diversity Visa lottery. Sharon Park, of the University of Minnesota, spoke on American attitudes toward refugee aid and welfare programs during the Cold War. Evan Taparata, also of the University of Minnesota, discussed American reactions to refugee populations in the early national period and the 19th century. Adam Goodman, who defended his dissertation at the University of Pennsylvania this past year, discussed the compromises and failings of immigration policy in the post-WWII period. There are so many other scholars we could name here. It’s clear the future of the field is in good hands.

I wish to give a special thanks to Erika Lee, the director of the Immigration History Research Center, and her wonderful colleagues and staff (especially Saengmany Ratsabout, Melissa Kwon, Emily Janish, and Rachel Hanson), who were such wonderful hosts. Our colleagues on the program committee—Maddalena Marinari, Ellen Engseth, Michael Innis-Jiménez, Evan Taparata, Hasia Diner, John Bukowczyk, and Saeng Ratsabout—helped put together an excellent conference. Thank you! On Saturday evening, as we said our goodbyes, we heard over and over again “Let’s have another conference soon!” That’s the best praise a team could receive.

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If you have visited our website in recent weeks, [www.iehs.org](http://www.iehs.org), you will have noticed a new look. Nick Trajano Molnar, our new Digital Humanities Officer and Newsletter editor, has designed for us a more ‘user-friendly’ website. IEHS.org includes teaching resources and links to libraries, archives, and research institutions. Back issues of the IEHS newsletter are now also available on our website. We even have a new blog thanks to Maddalena Marinari and Miriam Borenstein, who organized a contest and chose ten excellent essays that will be published as blog entries over the next year. The blog will be a regular feature of the new IEHS website. Miriam Borenstein is also supervising our Twitter feed and Facebook page. Please follow us on social media!

Nick Molnar has several other plans for the website, including a repository of audio interviews with scholars in our field, and links to audio book reviews. If you have suggestions for content, or would like to volunteer in some capacity, please contact one of us.

(From the IEHS President continued from page 2)

Thank you, Nick, for your many hours of work on this important project.

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On a final note, the IEHS will hold its 2016 meeting at the OAH in Providence this April. You are also invited to our “Dessert before Dinner” reception on Thursday afternoon, and our annual awards banquet on Friday evening. Information on all these events will be sent out shortly. Please check the OAH program for our cosponsored panels as well. We hope to see you at one or more of these events.

**Maria Cristina Garcia**  
President, Immigration and Ethnic History Society



**IEHS Sponsorship of Conference Panels**

IEHS members and other scholars researching topics in immigration, migration, race, and ethnicity should consider seeking IEHS sponsorship for panel/roundtable conference proposals. For major conferences, such as the AHA, ASA, OAH, and SSHA, sponsorship has facilitated acceptance. In order to receive sponsorship, please submit your proposal to one of the program committee members: Madeline Hsu (chair) (myhsu@austin.utexas.edu), Kathy Lopez (kmlopez@rutgers.edu), or Maddalena Marinari (mmarinar@gustavus.edu) at least a week before the deadline. You may also consult with the committee members in advance regarding framing of themes or recruiting other presenters/chairs/commentators from among the ranks of members. In addition, to receive sponsorship, the session organizer must be a member of IEHS. Once the proposal is accepted, we strongly encourage all session participants to be members as well. Here is a list of major upcoming conferences, their themes, deadlines, and links to the CFPs. IEHS is happy to sponsor at other conferences as well.

**OAH 2017 (New Orleans)**  
"Circulation": CFP <http://www.oah.org/meetings-events/meetings-events/call-for-proposals/>  
Proposals due January 23, 2016.

**American Studies Association 2016 (Denver)**  
Home/Not Home: Centering American Studies Where We Are  
CFP [http://www.theasa.net/annual\\_meeting/page/submit\\_a\\_proposal/](http://www.theasa.net/annual_meeting/page/submit_a_proposal/)  
Proposals due Feb. 1, 2016

**AHA 2017 (Denver)**  
Historical Scale: Linking Levels of Experience  
Proposals due Feb. 15, 2016

**SSHA 2016 (Chicago)**  
Beyond Social Science History: Knowledge in an Interdisciplinary World  
CFP [http://www.ciser.cornell.edu/SSHA/SSHA\\_CFP\\_2016.pdf](http://www.ciser.cornell.edu/SSHA/SSHA_CFP_2016.pdf)  
Proposals due Feb. 20, 2016

**Back issues of the Immigration and Ethnic History Newsletter are now available on [IEHS Online!](http://iehs.org/online/1960s-1970s/)**

**The website features a digital version of every back issue of the IEHS Newsletter for the previous 40 + years. It is a great way to learn about the evolution of the Society and how historical scholarship on immigration has changed over time. Visit: <http://iehs.org/online/1960s-1970s/>**

## New Publications Noted

- Abrajano, Marisa, and Zoltan L. Hajnal, eds.** *White Backlash: Immigration, Race, and American Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015.
- Akhtar, Saima.** "Immigrant Island Cities in Industrial Detroit," *Journal of Urban History* 41 (2015), 175-92.
- Alba, Richard and Nancy Foner.** *Strangers No More: Immigration and the Challenges of Integration in North America and Western Europe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015.
- Arnold, Kathleen R., ed.** *Contemporary Immigration in America, vols. 1-2: A State-By-State Encyclopedia*. Santa Barbara: Greenwood, 2015.
- Biskupski, M. B. B.** *The Most Dangerous German Agent in America: The Many Lives of Louis N. Hammerling*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2015.
- Bowman, Kristi L., ed.,** *The Pursuit of Racial and Ethnic Equality in American Public Schools: Mendez, Brown, and Beyond*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2015.
- Cooley, Angela Jill.** *To Live and Dine in Dixie: The Evolution of Urban Food Culture in the Jim Crow South*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2015.
- Cooper, James.** "A Log-Rolling, Irish-American Politician, Out to Raise Votes in the United States': Tip O'Neill and the Irish Dimension of Anglo-American Relations, 1977-1986," *Congress and the Presidency* 42 (Jan.-April 2015), 1-27.
- Cooper, Tova.** *The Autobiography of Citizenship: Assimilation and Resistance in U.S. Education*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2015.
- Daniels, Roger.** *Franklin D. Roosevelt: Vol. 1 The Road to the White House, 1882-1939*. Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 2015.
- Daniels, Roger** has published "Historical Context," in Foundation Document. Tule Lake Unit. WWII Valor in the Pacific National Monument. January 2015, 33-43.
- Davis, Roger P.** "The Nebraska Commission on Mexican-Americans at the Crossroads: The Dilemma of False Expectations-Neither Service nor Power, 1973-1980," *Nebraska History* 96 (Spring 2015), 26-41.
- Diner, Hasia R.** *Roads Taken: The Great Jewish Migrations to the New World and the Peddlers Who Forged the Way*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015.
- Dunkelman, Mark H.** *Patrick Henry Jones: Irish American, Civil War General, and Gilded Age Politician*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2015.
- Eshkoli-Wagman, Hava.** "Did the American Jewish Press Torpedo Rescue Opportunities? Resettlement Plans for Jewish Refugees in Alaska and the Dominican Republic, 1938-1943," *Modern Judaism* 35 (2015), 83-107.
- Fisher, Colin.** *Urban Green: Nature, Recreation, and the Working Class in Industrial Chicago*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015.
- Gerhardt, Bruce.** "A Gentleman's Game: Nineteenth-Century Soccer in Omaha," *Nebraska History* 96 (Spring 2015), 14-25.
- Gold, Steven J.** "Ethnic Enclaves," pp. 1-18, in *Emerging Trends in the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Robert Scott and Stephan Kosslyn, eds. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, 2015.
- Gold, Steven J.** "Detroit's Arab American Community," pp. 296-297 in Joseph F. Healey and Eileen O'Brien. *Race, Ethnicity, Gender and Class: The Sociology of Group Conflict and Change* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage 2015.
- Gold, Steven J.** "Adaptation and Return among Israeli Enclave and Infotech Entrepreneurs," *Research in the Sociology of Work: Special Issue on Immigration and Work*, April 2015; 203-229.
- Herzog, Ben.** *Revoking Citizenship: Expatriation in American from the Colonial Era to the War on Terror*. New York: New York University Press, 2015.
- Heisser, David C. R., and Stephen J. White Sr.** *Patrick N. Lynch, 1817-1882: Third Catholic Bishop of Charleston*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2015.

(New Publications Noted continued from page 4)

na Press, 2015.

**Hsu, Hsuan L.** *Sitting in Darkness: Mark Twain's Asia and Comparative Racializations*. New York: New York University Press, 2015.

**Hsu, Madeline Y.** *The Good Immigrants: How the Yellow Peril Became the Model Minority*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015.

**Hunter, Gordon, ed.** *Immigrant Voices, Vol. 2*. New York: Penguin, 2015.

**Janis, Ely M.** *A Greater Ireland: The Land League and Transatlantic Nationalism in Gilded Age America*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2015.

**Jaroszyńska-Kirchmann, Anna D.** *The Polish Hearst: Ameryka-Echo and the Public Role of the Immigrant Press*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2015.

**Kibler, M. Alison.** *Censoring Racial Ridicule: Irish, Jewish, and African American Struggles over Race and Representation, 1890-1930*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015.

**Labrador, Roderick N.** *Building Filipino Hawai'i*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015.

**Lopez, Sarah Lynn.** *The Remittance Landscape: Spaces of Migration in Rural Mexico and Urban USA*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015.

**Lovoll, Odd S.** *Across the Deep Blue Sea: The Saga of Early Norwegian Immigrants from Norway to America through the Canadian Gateway*. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2015.

**Lung-Amam, Willow.** "Malls of Meaning: Building Asian America in Silicon Valley Suburbia," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 34 (2015), 18-53.

**MacKay, Kathryn L.** "The Chocolate Dippers' Strike of 1910," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 83 (2015), 38-51.

**McMahon, Cian T.** *The Global Dimensions of Irish Identity: Race, Nation, and the Popular Press, 1840-1880*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015.

**Nelson, David Conley.** *Moroni and the Swastika: Mormons in Nazi Germany*. University of Oklahoma Press, 2015.

**O'Brien, Gillian.** *Blood Runs Green: The Murder That Transfixed Gilded Age Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015.

**Padoongpatt, Tanachai Mark.** "'A Landmark for Sun Valley': Wat Thai of Los Angeles and Thai American Suburban Culture in the 1980s San Fernando Valley," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 34 (2015), 83-114.

**Richard, Mark Paul.** *Not a Catholic Nation: The Ku Klux Klan Confronts New England in the 1920s*. Amherst & Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2015.

**Richard, Mark Paul.** "'The Humble Parish Bank': The Cultural Origins of the U.S. Credit Union Movement," *New England Quarterly*, 88:3 (September 2015), pp. 449-482.

**Trujillo-Pag n, Nicole.** "Recovering Latinos' Place in New Orleans," *Louisiana History* 55 (2014), 177-92.

**Ueda, Reed.** *Crosscurrents: Atlantic and Pacific Migration in the Making of a Global America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.

**Walls, Laura Dassow.** "'As You Are Brothers of Mine': Thoreau and the Irish," *New England Quarterly* 88 (March 2015), 5-36.

(Ethnic Commemoration continued from page 1)  
contributions to the United

States. The *Memorial to Japanese-American Patriotism in World War II*, for example, was constructed in the National Capital to commemorate internment, but also American patriotism expressed by Japanese Americans.

A similar public arena was set in Canada following an official apology to Japanese Canadians by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney in September 1988. One such site was a community project in New Denver, British Columbia. The site, the *Nikkei Internment Memorial Centre*, was designed by multiple generations of Japanese Canadians to recreate the internment camp that was in New Denver. Such sites, driven by the community itself, are contested arenas of identity politics as ethno-cultural groups not only negotiate and debate how to understand a traumatic past, but to move past it and write themselves into regional and national histories. In the case of the *Nikkei Internment Memorial Centre*, the process of creation and design has been brilliantly analyzed, highlighting the processes of inter-generational memory and the potentially therapeutic results of commemoration (K. McAllister, *Terrain of Memory*, 2010).

Similarly, in the United States and Canada, there have been many state sponsored and community driven commemorative projects of Chinese. In both countries, the Chinese (as well as other Asian nationalities) were the target of blatantly racist and discriminatory legislation that increasingly limited their entry rights. In Canada, the most infamous policy was the Chinese Head Tax, instituted in 1885, which culminated in the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1923 that forbade the immigration of Chinese. Canadian Parliament enacted these acts despite the role that Chinese played in Canadian industry and society. The Chinese Head Tax was repealed in 1947, and fifty-years after this (1997), a plaque was released in Winnipeg's Assiniboine Park in commemoration (see <http://goo.gl/KXrN3h>). The Federal Government issued an official apology for the Chinese Head Tax in 2006, and this seems to have given energy to commemorative acts of Chinese Canadians. In 2011, the *Chinese Head Tax Monument* was unveiled in Brandon, Manitoba, upon commission by the Westman Chinese Association and funding from all levels of government (<http://goo.gl/VqL36p>). Another major Chinese commemorative structure, the *Memorial to Commemorate the Chi-*

*nese Railroad Workers in Canada*, was built in Toronto, Ontario, to memorialize the role of Chinese Canadians in the construction of the Canadian National Railway. This railway has been hailed by Canadian historians as a key development in Canada's national identity, connecting the east and west coasts. These Chinese monuments can be seen as acts of reconciliation and of acknowledging past wrongs; the *Memorial to Commemorate the Chinese Railroad Workers in Canada*, erected in Toronto in 1989, is not just an act of commemoration, but one of including Chinese in the act of nation building. Placed just off a major thoroughfare in Toronto with significant pedestrian traffic, the memorial offers a public venue in which Chinese Canadians can find space in the history of nation building in Canada.

Many of these commemorative and memorial sites are the result of lobbying, fundraising, and planning by community organizations. In both cases of the Japanese and Chinese official apologies in Canada, local and national cultural groups worked to rally the public and petition the government for redress and apology. These actions and, in particular, the acts of building commemorative sites are an exercise of agency. Not only are these groups holding government accountable, but they are taking control of how they want their experiences and histories remembered and written into the national memory.

Japanese and Chinese immigrants faced similar circumstances in Canada and the United States. Filipino communities in both countries, however, have had a significantly different history, although the need for commemoration remains. In the United States, there is a far more contested history that is tied to American imperialism in the Philippines starting in 1898. During the Asian exclusionary period, many Filipinos were able to migrate to the U.S. as a result of being American nationals. However, there remained significant anti-Filipino sentiment, resulting in racism and discrimination. In Canada, Filipino immigration did not begin in earnest until most of Canada's discriminatory immigration policy towards Asian nationalities had been repealed. Thus, their historical experience within Canada has differed from Filipino Americans. Nevertheless, commemoration maintains an important impetus in both countries. In the United States, the Smithsonian Institute hosted the exhibit *Silanggalot (The Ties that Bind Us)* in 2006. The exhibit's subtitle – Filipinos

(Ethnic Commemoration continued from page 6)

in America, from Colonial Subjects to Citizens – reflects the history of colonial subjugation within the U.S., but also emphasizes the path the Filipino community has taken to active American citizenship.

In Canada, Filipino Canadians are equally intent on their inclusion in Canadian history. In Manitoba, a Filipino community organization curated an exhibit celebrating fifty-years of the community in Manitoba. This community organization utilized archival research and oral histories to create a history of the community, and also to narrate the process of becoming Filipino Canadian. The exhibit emphasized how Filipino professionals filled an acute need for medical and educational professionals, as well as how Filipino workers staffed Winnipeg's many garment factories throughout the 1970s and 1980s, driving a booming Manitoban industry. This exhibit was an expression of Filipino agency as the curators decided how they wanted their community to be represented in Canadian society and how their history was to be told.

Commemorative acts and structures should not be ignored in the research of ethnic communities. Not only do they provide a means of examining community dynamics through their design and construction, but they give a public demonstration of how such communities understand their historical experiences and view their belonging in a wider community. Both in the United States and Canada, significant amounts of government funding are available for funding heritage projects like memorial sites, creating arenas of expression that ethnic groups can take advantage of to commemorate their histories and write themselves into national histories. These memorials are tied up in the politics of identity, and for those interested in ethnic history and, moreover, in writing more inclusive regional or national narratives, these sources should not be ignored.



**Jon G. Malek** is a Ph.D. candidate at Western University, and is a member of the Migration and Ethnic Relations Program. His research on Filipino Canadians places their migration within the larger Filipino diaspora.

### Upcoming Historiographical Articles

Thank you Jon for your contribution to this edition of the *IEHS Newsletter*. Upcoming issues will feature exciting discussions and overviews of fields that will be of great interest to our membership, including Southern Jewish History, German Migration, and Mexican Migration. The upcoming contributors are:

Summer 2016: **Mami Davis**, Georgia State University

Winter 2016: **Heiko Wiggers**, Wake Forest University

Spring 2017: **Jaime Aguila**, Arizona State University

Any reader who has an interest in contributing to future issues of the *IEHS Newsletter* is encouraged to contact the Editor, Nicholas Trajano Molnar, at [nmolnar@ccp.edu](mailto:nmolnar@ccp.edu)

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New Publications? Awards? Conferences Planned? Research Projects? Give us full details in the space below. Attach an additional sheet to provide more information if necessary.

Mail to the return address or email nmolnar@ccp.edu

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