



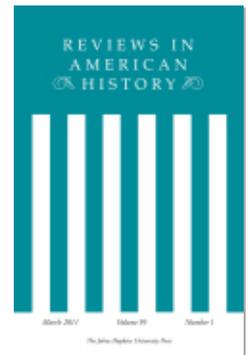
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Immigration Historiography at the Crossroads

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IMMIGRATION HISTORIOGRAPHY AT THE CROSSROADS

David A. Gerber

James M. Berquist. *Daily Life in Immigrant America, 1820–1870: How the First Great Wave of Immigrants Made Their Way in America.* Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2008, rev. 2009. xix + 329 pp. Chronology, notes, bibliography, glossary and index. \$16.95 (paper).

June Granatir Alexander. *Daily Life in Immigrant America, 1870–1920: How the Second Great Wave of Immigrants Made Their Way in America.* Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2007, rev. 2009. xix + 332 pp. Chronology, notes, bibliography, glossary, and index. \$16.95 (paper).

Well-respected immigration historians James M. Berquist and June Granatir Alexander have both recently published significant works of synthesis in the field. Together they cover the classic era of European immigration from the return of prosperity and rise of immigration in the 1820s, following the Panic of 1819, to the imposition of quota laws on immigration in the 1920s. These studies provide an opportunity to take the measure of the current state of immigration historiography, a particularly self-conscious field to the extent that there is a powerful and abiding tradition of academic inquiry that has survived over the course of almost a century. It is manifest in both books, inviting the professional reader's scrutiny for markers of the evolution of that tradition. I myself write from within that interpretive tradition and am sympathetic to its aspirations for both the emotional weight of the stories it has to tell and the importance of those stories for understanding Americans. In 2008, I wrote a review essay defending immigration history against recent criticisms I felt were overdrawn and unfair.¹ But that does not mean that I regard the current writing of immigration history to be unproblematic or the field not in need of renewal.

Both of these gracefully written, well-conceived books, which are intended for lay readers and college surveys but are also useful summaries for scholars, have been published at a time when stock-taking in immigration historiography also has been urged from outside the field. The field has witnessed an enormous expansion of knowledge in the last four decades. But its basic

interpretive assumptions and conceptual frameworks have increasingly been questioned. Scholars working in contemporary ethnic studies find immigration history's traditional preoccupation with the integration and assimilation of white Europeans, its East Coast bias, and its drawing excessively sharp distinctions between the experiences of the so-called *Old Immigrants* (Northern and Western Europeans) and *New Immigrants* (Southern and Eastern Europeans) to the relative neglect of non-European immigrants and to the West and Southwest, as well as of race and racialization more generally, has led to an inadequate picture of the formation of both American cultural diversity and American social pluralism. We might know better the European immigrants within their separate ethnicities as the result of such scholarship, it is contended; but when we cannot adequately conceive of those immigrants in the context of the racial fault lines of American society, we cannot really know America—for both the system of privileges and disabilities and the cultural identities by which American social order is formed and sustained will elude us. In the work of its most thoughtful advocates, who resist the emotional and ideological temptations of writing the history of comparative victimization, this is a powerful critique that needs to be taken seriously. To that extent, immigration history seems to be at a crossroads, in need of understanding what it has accomplished and what its next assignments might be. These two studies display at one and the same time the tremendous achievements of immigration history and of our need to consider its future direction.

Immigration history owes its origins to the intellectual reaction against nativist-driven anti-immigrant polemics, social work ethnography, and self-justifying phileopietism that, for better or worse, constituted the framework of immigration discourse in the United States at the turn of the last century. It was a reaction that took place simultaneously with the rise of professional academic scholarship in the social sciences and in history, which sought to displace just such moralization, political or philosophical, and replace it with truth determined by empirical methods. Moralizing did little beyond conceiving of the immigrants as a problem, whether hopeless or remediable; and, in turn, it evoked a defensive thrust from those (such as the non-academic historians from the immigrants' own groups) claiming the immigrants were *not* a problem.²

The effort to move beyond such understandings evolved in two directions. First, with the publication of the University of Chicago sociologists William I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki's five-volume *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (1918–20), systematic research was to proceed through social scientific inquiry into the nature of modernity and modernization. The immigrants, as in the case of the Poles in the United States, would be analyzed within the framework of general models of modern social change that sought to conceive of cycles of group organization, disorganization, and reorganization prompted

by interactions with the central transformative processes of Western modernity: population growth, the commercialization of agriculture, industrialization, urbanization, and population movements. In addition, *reorganization* opened up the academic discussion not only of what came eventually to be known as *ethnicity* (which, in their study, Thomas and Znaniecki themselves referred to as “a new Polish American society”), but also ultimately of immigrant assimilation. Through the work in the 1920s and 1930s of researchers such as Robert Park, William Burgess, and Louis Wirth and their students, the University of Chicago Sociology Department became the principal home for such work—which while not precisely *historical*, as historians would understand it—was *developmental* in its analysis of change over time.³

A second direction emerged in print soon after the publication of the Thomas and Znaniecki study. The founding generation of social historians of immigration began to take interest in the lived experiences, attitudes, and values of European immigrants. Because most of these historians—scholars such as Marcus Lee Hansen, Theodore Blegen, George M. Stephenson, and Carl F. Wittke—were themselves the assimilating sons and grandsons of the Scandinavian and German immigrants of the first great wave of European immigration in the nineteenth century, they were especially interested in the ways in which the immigrants might be inserted into the great narrative of American social historiography as it was conceived in the post-Turnerian intellectual environment: in the settlement of western frontiers as well as in significant election campaigns and in wars. In so doing, they wished to democratize American historiography, making it large enough to contain the story not only of the Anglo-American Founding Fathers, but also of their own people.⁴

By the mid-twentieth century, with the publication of Oscar Handlin’s classic work *The Uprooted* (1951), these two directions would merge such that lived experiences, attitudes, and values would be analyzed within the framework of a modernization model. Buried not far below the surface of Handlin’s poetic, tragic rendering of immigrant lives was Thomas and Znaniecki’s organizational paradigm, though Handlin was much more impressed with what he took to be the disorganizing chaos and bitter alienation attendant on immigration and resettlement than with the ways the immigrants reorganized their lives by forging new identities and creating vital communities. For Handlin, all efforts at reorganization were defensive patchworks displaying a lack of self-confidence of the sort we might anticipate from traumatized people, said to be suspended between moribund peasant traditions and the all-encompassing processes transforming Western societies.⁵

In the ensuing years, beginning with the milestone 1964 essay of Rudolph Vecoli, criticizing Handlin’s work would become a cottage industry for immigration historians. Vecoli urged close inspection of individual European

peoples rather than analysis of the sort Handlin advanced, which posited the existence of a generic European peasantry. But above all else, Vecoli advanced an understanding based on the immigrant's own self-conscious purposefulness in making the choices that governed their lives and in forming the social and cultural worlds in which they resided. His was a powerful argument against the logic of influential post-World War II modernization models that saw humanity swept up in processes too powerful to be resisted or shaped by ordinary people on the ground of their daily lives. Vecoli understood, too, the usefulness of the work of the early twentieth-century social historians in sustaining a three-dimensional picture of European immigrant peoples, though the work of those historians was mostly neglected after mid-century.⁶ Vecoli was joined in his critique of Handlin by the British historian Frank Thistlethwaite, whose work took longer to enter the field in the United States, but whose pathbreaking 1961 essay on the structures of European international migrations in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries did a great deal to make what Handlin conceived of as inchoate movements of rootless peasants into purposeful migrations in practical and rational pursuit of opportunity. Thistlethwaite moved to supplant an Americocentric understanding of international migration out of Europe with an analysis that was truly international and transnational, and especially sensitive to rhythms and linkages within global capitalism.⁷ A generation later, this perspective was forcefully put forward in John Bodnar's 1985 syncretical volume, *The Transplanted*, the title of which explicitly marked a position in opposition to that advanced in *The Uprooted*.

Vecoli was an inspiration for a generation of immigration historians; like Bodnar, many were descendents of the Eastern and Southern Europeans of the second great wave of immigrants of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They joined together with an emerging generation of Americanists, forging—around a concept British labor historian E. P. Thompson would famously call *agency*—a new social history that Jesse Lemisch described as *History from the Bottom Up*. It was the history of ordinary people and daily life and was often conceived of as playing a role in determining the course of great events, which had previously only been studied from the standpoint of elite actors.⁸

As the New Social History gathered force in the 1970s and 1980s, immigration historians were able to make use of and assist in advancing the insights of a variety of new or newly invigorated historiographies (especially women's and gender history, labor history, and urban, local, and community history). These combined with their own ever-sharper insights about the individual societies and cultures out of which mass international migration proceeded to demonstrate repeatedly the resilience, creativity, pragmatism, and purposefulness of the immigrants. While the fit has been imperfect because of the influence of racial proscriptions, the methods and concepts developed could easily be

employed to write not only about European immigrants, but non-Europeans as well, for all immigration histories have in common, at the most general level of abstraction, population movement, resettlement, and ethnicity.

Yet, in the efforts at narrative synthesis, non-Europeans have tended to be neglected. Because of racial proscriptions, their stories could not be folded neatly into the stories of the European majority and were thus allowed to dangle unresolved precisely at the point at which differences in the histories became manifest. The consternation resulting from the disparate direction of these histories is compactly summarized by the revealing, almost offhand remark of Carl F. Wittke. Wittke did take up the histories of immigrants from Asia in his 1939 syncretical history of American immigration—the first by a professional scholar. But he was nevertheless led to remark that Asian American histories constituted “a brief and strange interlude in the general account of the great migrations to America.”⁹ Wittke was wrong in both parts of his judgment, for these histories were not brief, and their strangeness was greatly in the eye of ethnocentric beholders. But his confusion is significant evidence of intellectual exhaustion and a lack of imagination, and it is part of the heritage of immigration historiography.

Today, those working within the tradition of inquiry conceived from Thomas and Znaniecki to Handlin and Handlin’s critics would generally conceive of themselves as social historians, interested in ordinary people and daily life. Their assumptions and questions continue to reveal the influence of the complex genealogy of immigration historiography. The field continues to be dominated by interpretations drawn from the histories of European immigrants and, long after anyone actually argued explicitly with *The Uprooted*, to reflect interest in the reorganization process—and hence in asserting the European immigrant’s capacity for purposeful change that eventuated, after resettlement, in ethnic identity and ethnic communalism. It is true that the language of disorganization fell into disuse long ago, not simply for being an incorrect description of the immigrants’ consciousness and activities, but also because it was based on the faulty assumption that there was a normative order to which history somehow required immigrants to conform. It was replaced by the more neutral, social scientific language of *formation*, as in *ethnic group formation*, or *ethnicization*. But the research strategy of many immigration historians continues to be conceived within the general framework of Vecoli’s and Thistlethwaite’s response to Handlin that helped to eventuate in Bodnar’s synthesis.

The principal reason for this continuity is that it has proven enormously productive in creating knowledge about immigration and immigrants, and it is responsible for the publication of hundreds of skillfully argued and deeply researched monographs that have given voice to millions of immigrants. From a backwater of American historiography in the middle of the last century, immigration history became a much-valued component of the effort to piece

together American social history, and hence took a position at the cutting edge of the most vital literature of late twentieth-century American history.¹⁰ It raised its profile in the discipline through the organization of what would eventually become known as the Immigration and Ethnic History Society and the publication of both the *Journal of American Ethnic History* and a newsletter. It finds a valued place on the programs of the leading professional meetings. It has been internationalized to the extent that historians in far-flung locations throughout the world work within its paradigms and regularly meet with its American practitioners. Yet, in the ranks of those identifying with the field, one still finds few writing the history of non-European immigrants. Those scholars who do are more likely to define themselves in terms of the various multicultural components of ethnic studies than of immigration history as conventionally understood.¹¹

The enormous recent productivity of immigration historians in extending their findings to an increasing roster of ethnicities, and their ever-increasing capacity for elaborations of class and gender within the frameworks of the field's familiar paradigms, are evident in the Berquist and Alexander books. So, too, are the limitations of those paradigms. The different periodizations aside, both works generally follow the same strategy of narrative construction that was pioneered by Bodnar a quarter-century ago. They begin with matters about which we now possess finely grained understanding as the result of extensive research outside of, as well as within, the United States and on the findings of American and non-American literatures: thorough examinations of the long-term structural causes and immediate political, religious, and material precipitants of population movements, as these are apparent in specific national, regional, and local contexts. They place international, transoceanic population movements within a changing framework of a variety of migratory possibilities (to nearby industrial cities and to neighboring countries and regions; and seasonal, temporary, and permanent), which depend on job markets, individual motivations, and the evolution of international shipping. Described in considerable depth are streams of migratory movements out of specific areas, layered over time from pioneering early efforts by solitary individuals to mature chain migrations, in which migration itself becomes the reason for later migrations, as people seek to join friends, family, and former neighbors. Settlement patterns within the United States are described at length and linked to the extension of transportation, the availability of cheap farm land, job and agricultural markets, postal communications, and, finally, the calving of immigrant settlements that sent out members in search of farm land or job opportunities and thus colonized settlements further from coastal areas. There is no eastern bias in either book, in which the appearance of successive American *wests* sets the stage for a multifocal, national understanding of immigrant settlement.

Both books discuss immigrant occupations, both agricultural and industrial, and the condition of immigrant work; the marginal lives available to generally poor immigrant farmers and industrial workers; the often harsh conditions of daily life; and the formation of ethnic communities of resettlement constructed around religious institutions, mutual benefit societies, and the foreign language press. In the later period, the struggles and impediments accompanying the emergence of multiethnic labor unions are described. They survey some significant interactions with American public institutions, such as schools or political parties. They also analyze the immigrants' emotional, ideological, and practical aspirational engagements with American opportunities and with emerging American identities, as well as the nativist pressures that both forced and discouraged these engagements. Berquist's book ends at mass industrialization, the eclipse of subsistence farming, and the growing political integration of antebellum immigrants after the Civil War. Alexander's book ends with the epidemic of nativist prejudice and discrimination of the World War I-era, which would set the stage for the imposition of quotas on European immigration in the 1920s and the anti-immigrant politics of a resurgent Ku Klux Klan.

The differences in tone and subject matter have to do with the authors' own specializations and with their individual readings of the experiences they describe. Alexander's work is by far the darkest in its evocation of the daily life promised in her title: the poverty, sickness, insecurity, and nativist hostility faced by immigrants every day. She analyzes these deftly and at considerable length, offering an important reminder of the historical relevance of social class and worker exploitation in the past. This is useful at a moment in which some historians are eager to push the European immigrant majority immediately into a privileged white working class and then into the middle class, glossing over the many decades of individual, family, and group struggle. The labor unions and political activism necessary for many immigrants to begin to gain a secure material foothold have also recently been neglected.

Neither book develops in any consistent, self-conscious way a model of assimilation, but this is understandable to the extent that both of them are more about the immigrant generation than its descendents. Alexander, however, portrays immigrants as more or less outside the reach of American society beyond the realm of work; and the "foreign districts" (her term, appropriating the language of contemporary observers) of cities and industrial towns she writes of never seemed more outside the American Dream than in her description. When Alexander does write of public education, on the other hand, it is as much to indict the schools for nativism and insensitivity to the difficulties of immigrant life as to examine the roles they played in furthering the engagement with America with which so many of their students have credited them. For his part, in keeping with his longtime research interest in the political integration of German immigrants, Berquist spends considerable

time convincingly analyzing the place of the Germans and the Irish, and to a much lesser extent the Dutch and Scandinavians, in the evolution of the second-party system in the 1850s. Daily political life at the local level is evoked less here, however, than ethnic elite political activity and pronouncements, though general immigrant partisan alignments and voting are analyzed. Alexander is not concerned with participation in partisan politics at all, as she informs us at the beginning. Neither author takes up at any length the role that political patronage and municipal employment played in the expansion of immigrant opportunity. Gifts of food, coal, cash, or jobs generated by political parties and urban machines for their supporters functioned, from the rise of the party system, as a type of “welfare” in a pre-welfare state. They were also an early, informal type of affirmative action, as the work of political scientists like Ira Katznelson has pointed out in his comparisons of the political mechanisms of socioeconomic mobility available to European immigrants in the historic past, but less available to African Americans.¹²

For practitioners of immigration history as it has been traditionally conceived, the type of narrative synthesis achieved in these two works, variously fine tuned though it may be from one book to the other, is just what should be expected. That it is done so well by both authors enhances the books’ value. But for those looking at them from outside the field’s own expectations, both works are likely to seem wanting, especially in the matter of race. Historians of whiteness—the most prolific and significant of whom is David Roediger, who has valid claims to having a foot in the camp of immigration history—have addressed race-in-immigration from multiple analytical perspectives, but many immigration historians seem reluctant to advance the discussion from their own direction.¹³ To these historians of race-in-immigration, the Berquist and Alexander books, which profit greatly from recent literature in extending and deepening descriptions of immigrant life, will not appear to take us much beyond Bodnar’s synthesis of a generation ago. Neither book under review, in fact, has an index entry for “race.”

It cannot be claimed that race is completely absent in either book, whether in the discussion of non-European population movement or of race as manifest in behavior—though it is not present at all as a factor in dealing with identity constructions, a controversial matter written about extensively by a number of historians of whiteness. Both works briefly address Asian, especially Chinese, immigrations, and do so along some of the same interpretive lines (population movements, destinations, and occupations) as the European immigrations are discussed. But the subject is overwhelmed by the histories of European immigrants. As Alexander explains in guiding the reader through the choices she made in forming her narrative, the Europeans did make up almost 90 percent of the international migrants coming to the United States between 1870 and 1920 (and probably just as high a percentage, if not more, from 1820

to 1870). Alexander prepares us for her emphasis on Europeans by explaining that she will not discuss Caribbean and Mexican (or, as it transpires, other Latin American) immigrations (p. 5). The brief discussions of the Chinese and Japanese immigrants in both books eventually lapse, and little is said of Asian ethnic community formations or interactions with public institutions and public life.

One can appreciate the difficulties that lurk behind Alexander's choices: the European and non-European immigrants have, at times, parallel and, at other times, intersecting narratives; and the digressions and exceptions required in going from one narrative to the other make for cumbersome analytical work and narrative construction. Erika Lee has achieved more than most social historians in linking these narratives by establishing a connection between Chinese Exclusion in 1882 and the subsequent mechanisms of its enforcement and the eventual limitations of European immigrants in the early twentieth century. But the connections she draws are established more through analogy than explicit causality, so the possibilities for linkage at that level seem tentative.¹⁴

What is sacrificed in these choices is larger than mere coverage of groups. After all, there were dozens of European groups, and only a relatively few of the larger ones can be analyzed even by the most conscientious scholar. What is lost, rather, is a significant opportunity for advancing our understandings of the forces behind the structuring of society and the processes of social, cultural, and political cohesion. This is suggested in Berquist's brief discussions of conflicts involving native and immigrant white workers and Chinese immigrant and African American workers over jobs, living space, and racial resentments in New York City and also in California during and after the Civil War. He draws no real conclusions about the meanings or consequences of such conflicts for understanding the integration and assimilation of European immigrants compared with the sort that Roediger has for years addressed with such acuity in his discussions of whiteness. In such matters, we immigration historians have seemed reluctant to address the larger forces at work in creating both social systems and the foundations of American belonging.

Since its emergence, immigration history has been occupied with experiential reconstructions and with the formation of ethnic communities and ethnic identities to the extent that it has been reluctant to address those larger forces in the coming together of America itself. This is one reason we depend on political scientists like Katznelson to help us understand, for example, the *larger* historical implications of the daily workings of machine politics.

Nowhere does the matter of the larger meanings of race become more difficult than in the question of identities. Whiteness scholars maintain that race as whiteness was a constitutive element in ethnic-identity formation European immigrants were themselves initially negatively racialized; hence, a great deal

of identity construction in America for immigrants was bound up in the effort to become "white." Irish, Jews, Slavs, and Italians, it is claimed, were not regarded as white—or only marginally. It is not necessarily clear whether this means, from one study to another, they were simply not regarded as respectable or that they were seen as biologically distinct and hence innately different and inferior. An analytical problem emerging immediately from this contention is the scant evidence of any consciousness among European immigrants of such a process of becoming white. Certainly we have the evidence presented by the pogrom-like hate riots, prompted by job and spatial competition, of Irish workers against the Chinese in the West and against African Americans in the East. The question of the representativeness of racist behavior aside, public discussions of racial identity as white—as for example might manifest themselves in avowals of race pride—are rare, in contrast to declarations of ethnic pride or American patriotism. Many European immigrants in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries settled in locations with few nonwhite residents. Those, like farmers on the Great Plains or industrial workers in Northern cities such as Buffalo or in small mining towns in the Pennsylvania coal belt, did not interact often, if at all, with members of racial minorities. The farmers on the prairies, we recall, settled after the Native Americans were cleared from the land. The evidence of race consciousness does indeed become more pronounced in the mid-twentieth century, with the resistance of the second and third generations of some European ethnic groups to the increasing presence of African Americans attempting to reside in European ethnic neighborhoods of the largest cities. An important foreshadowing of these confrontations, which was also rooted greatly in job competition and insecurity growing out of strikes and strikebreaking, took place in Chicago in the well-known attacks in 1919 on African Americans in heavily immigrant neighborhoods; but these infamous, bloody events are not mentioned in Alexander's work.

Many European immigrants simply do not seem to have been preoccupied with being white, as opposed to being poor, powerless, and targets of hostility. Those who ended up settling permanently in the United States certainly wished to share in the opportunities supposed to come to Americans, for opportunity was the reason for immigration in the first place. They did not create the racial hierarchies that they encountered on arrival. As individuals, they were certainly in no convenient position to change them on behalf of the less privileged; and, under the circumstances, they were willing to profit from them. But it is not clear that they gave them much thought, since those rules seemed like the established order. Most were consumed with their own difficulties in making lives in a new land.

There is ample evidence that, at some point, they or their descendants came to share the racist assumptions on which those rules were founded, but there is much about that we do not know, because it remains unaddressed in the

evidence we have. What do Swedes or Norwegians think of Chinese? Jews or Greeks of Mexicans? Finns or Icelanders of African Americans? What do Croats, Slovenes, and Serbs think about being white? In Roediger's thoughtful formulation, "becoming white" has meant becoming a part of the structure of racial privilege that has separated the destinies of European immigrants and ethnicities from America's racial minorities. Of course, for the European groups, this was present from the start of their American careers; for, in contrast to Asians, they were never completely excluded, even under the quota regime, from immigrating, and their right to naturalization remained secure. But Roediger has in mind their ability to participate in state programs of the postwar era, such as the G.I. Bill of Rights and federal mortgage insurance, to which racial minorities had unequal access. Yet these programs appear central to the prosperity, and ultimately the assimilation into the mainstream, of white ethnic groups. Did any of these European peoples see taking advantage of such opportunities as opting for whiteness and racial privilege, as opposed to taking advantage of possibilities long denied by economic marginality, political powerlessness, and poverty? Since whiteness has historically been the normative position of the majority of individuals in American society, it may plausibly be replied that it need not be consciously marked or reflected upon by individuals; it simply *is* for those privileged to be granted it. With it comes the opportunity, and eventually the dignity and civil equality, promised, in the first place, to Americans. This is a plausible contention to which we should remain open, but it is one that quite evidently is difficult to deal with within the historian's accustomed, empirical ways of working. It requires speculations about consciousness that, in the absence of evidence, we are not in a sound position to make.¹⁵

Yet to evade such matters is to evade our history. I have no magic formula to untie these knots. Nor can I say that, as an immigration historian, I endorse all of the recent criticisms made of the field for the selectivity of its subject matter or the limitations of its ambitions. Some of these criticisms do not acknowledge, or are simply dismissive of, the complexity of the conceptual and interpretive issues faced by conscientious people working in the field. Mirroring contemporary American political discourse, some of them also seem slow to confront, or are insensitive to, the workings of class in American history. To that extent, they see a bloc of *white people* in our history, where in reality there has been instead a complex social formation shaped not only by ethnic cultures, but by greatly differential access to power and opportunity that helped to give rise to a variety of radical and social democratic political ideologies at critical periods in the history of American capitalism. Indeed if anything offers the hope of a new, broad synthesis of American social history, it would be an effort to reconceptualize both the variety of ethnic and racial histories as part of the larger narrative of recruitment of labor—by which American capitalism

consolidated its power and achieved its stunning productivity—and the making of the working classes and mass popular cultures of daily life that were formed from these labor migrations. But that these criticisms of immigration history, especially those that come from such contemporary discourses as ethnic studies and critical race theory, are sometimes overstated or unfairly stated, does not imply that they should remain unaddressed.

To me, it appears that we are reaching the limits of our ability to make significant breakthroughs within the intellectual frameworks that have governed immigration history for a century. The basic outline of our understanding remains the same from one work of synthesis to the next. But as immigration historians approach this crossroads, they are certain to find other American historians approaching it from the direction of other specialized interests. Whatever the specific path historians are taking, a larger vision of the goals of social history now seems necessary. After decades of concentration on the various components comprising American society, it seems the moment to shift our focus to reclaim a vision of the formation of the whole.

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1. David A. Gerber, "What's Wrong with Immigration History?" *Reviews in American History* 36 (December 2008): 543–56.

2. Dorothy Ross, *The Origins of American Social Science* (1992), 143–71, 303–89.

3. Stow Persons, *Ethnic Studies in Chicago, 1905–1945* (1987); Robert E. L. Faris, *Chicago Sociology, 1920–1932* (1970).

4. Jon Gjerde, "New Growth on Old Vines—The State of the Field: The Social History of Ethnicity and Immigration in the United States," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 18 (Summer 1999): 40–65.

5. David J. Rothman, "The Uprooted: Thirty Years Later," *Reviews in American History* 10 (September 1982): 311–19.

6. Rudolph J. Vecoli, "Contadini in Chicago: A Critique of *The Uprooted*," *Journal of American History* 5 (December 1964): 404–17, and "'Over the Years I Have Encountered the Hazards and Rewards that Await the Historian of Immigration,'" George M. Stephenson and the Swedish American Community," *Swedish American Historical Quarterly* 51 (April 2000): 130–49.

7. Frank Thistlethwaite, "Migration from Europe Overseas in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," XIe Congress International des Sciences Historiques, *Rapports V* (Uppsala, 1960): 32–60. Vecoli acknowledged his and immigration history's debt to Thistlethwaite in the coedited volume marking the thirtieth anniversary of the essay's publication: Rudolph J. Vecoli and Suzanne M. Sinke, eds., *A Century of European Migrations, 1830–1930* (1991).

8. Edward P. Thompson, "Agency and Choice," *New Reasoner* 5 (Summer 1958): 89–106, and *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963); Jesse Lemisch, "Towards a Democratic History," *Radical Education Project Occasional Paper* (1967), and "The American Revolution

from the Bottom-Up," in *Towards a New Past: Dissenting Essays in American History*, ed. Barton Bernstein (1968). The term "history from the bottom-up" was actually coined by Theodore Blegen (*Grass Roots History*, 1947) years earlier, but in the 1960s and '70s it became indelibly associated with Lemisch because of his strong and articulate espousal of the history of ordinary people and daily life.

9. Carl F. Wittke, *We Who Built America: The Saga of the Immigrant* (1939), 458.

10. The creativity and proliferation of works in the field is attested to in Reed Ueda, ed., *A Companion to American Immigration* (2006, Blackwell Companion to American History Series). Its essays constitute an excellent introduction to and summation of American immigration history to this moment.

11. Founded in 1965, as was the Immigration History Group, the organization's newsletter has been published since 1969 and its journal since 1981.

12. Ira Katznelson, *Black Men, White Cities: Race, Politics, and Migration in the United States* (1973), and *City Trenches: Urban Politics and the Patterning of Class in the United States* (1981).

13. David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (1999), and *Working toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White* (2005). The following, all but one (Brodkin) written by historians, investigate race at the boundaries of European ethnicities: Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (1995); Karen Brodtkin, *How the Jews Became White Folks and What that Says about Race in America* (1994); Jennifer Guglielmo and Salvatore Salerno, eds, *Are Italians White? How Race Is Made in America* (2003); Russell Kazal, *Becoming Old Stock: The Paradox of German American Identity* (2004); Thomas A. Guglielmo, *White on Arrival: Italians, Race, Color, and Power in Chicago, 1890–1945* (2003).

14. Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration during the Exclusion Era, 1882–1943* (2003).

15. Eric Arneson addressed conceptual and methodological issues raised by whiteness scholarship from the perspective of labor history in an extended and powerful critical essay, "Whiteness and the Historian's Imagination," *International Labor and Working Class History* 60 (September 2001): 3–32.