

Reed Ueda. *Postwar Immigrant America: A Social History*. Boston & New York: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1994. Pp. ix, 182. Paper, \$6.50. ISBN 0-312-07526-X.

Postwar Immigrant America, which is part of the Bedford Series in History and Culture, provides the reader with a global understanding of a vital aspect of American history, one that makes the United States unique among nations of the world. More than any other country, the United States has played a distinctive role as destination for the millions of emigrants who, for one reason or another, have sought new lives in a place far from home. From 1820 to 1930, the United States received 61 percent of the world's emigrants, not only more than any other nation, but also more than the total of all other nations.

The book focuses on the most recent immigration wave, which began after 1965 and has continued to the present. The first two chapters provide background and context by discussing pre-World War II immigration and the restrictionist policies that were aimed at southern and eastern Europeans, but even more severely at Asians. The rest of the book then examines changes that developed during and after World War II.

In 1965 Congress passed the Hart-Cellar Act, which reversed the former dominance of European immigrants. While Europeans constituted 90 percent of all newcomers to the United States in 1900, they made up only 11 percent in the 1980s. Instead, Latin Americans and Asians provided the bulk of those arriving since the 1970s. The post-1965 period also saw the influx of the most highly educated immigrants in American history. At the same time, a large proportion of low-skilled workers also arrived, resulting in newcomers of two distinct social classes.

Perhaps the greatest strength of *Postwar Immigrant America* is in the demographic and quantitative data presented in graphs, maps, and tables, enabling the reader to see, at a glance, general patterns and trends. For example, figure 1.5 presents the ratio of immigrants to the larger population, by decade from 1820 to 1990, thereby visually portraying the relative impact of immigrants on society. We see that the impact was highest from 1841 to 1860 and from 1881 to 1910. The reader can compare such information with that presented in figure 3.2, which shows an unprecedented surge in immigration from the late 1980s, which has continued into the 1990s.

The author uses maps to show other interesting data. Figure 3.9, for example, indicates those states receiving the heaviest concentration of immigrants in 1986, and figure 3.10 highlights the eight metropolitan areas—New York, Washington D.C., Miami, Chicago, Houston, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego—where over half of all immigrants settled in 1989. Numerous tables provide a wealth of information, such as the numbers of immigrants from Asia and Latin America since 1960, policy changes in preference systems under succeeding immigration laws, and the occupational distribution of Mexican immigrants from 1971 to 1990.

By examining immigration to the United States at the macro level, the book provides an overall perspective of U.S. immigration history. At the same time, readers will have to look elsewhere for specifics on demographic data and historical experiences of the various immigrant groups. With this in mind, instructors can use this handy and affordable book as an assigned reading, or extract material from it for lectures and discussions.

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