Bibliographical Essay

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Bibliographical Essay

As I was writing this book, colleagues repeatedly asked me whether enough had been written about immigrant women to justify a work of synthesis. In fact, the development of women’s studies and the resurgence of immigration into the U.S. since 1965 have resulted in an explosion of new research on immigrant women. In the interests of brevity, I have cited less than half the sources I consulted, and I have limited citations (with one exception) to sources in English. I nevertheless wish to note that a book like this one necessarily rests on the work of dozens of scholars, many of whom I do not name individually. Readers are urged to explore Francesco Cordasco, The Immigrant Woman in North America: An Annotated Bibliography of Selected References (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1985) and Donna Gabaccia, Immigrant Women in the United States: A Selectively Annotated Multi-Disciplinary Bibliography (New York: Greenwood, 1989).

In this bibliographical essay, I refer to works I found useful in formulating individual chapters. I also append two bibliographies of general works on immigrant women of many backgrounds and of works focused on immigrants of particular national and regional origins. These cite works focused specifically on women and works that analyze gender in immigrant life.

INTRODUCTION


1. WHERE IS THE OTHER SIDE?


For introductions to the enormous literature on immigrants of particular backgrounds, students can still learn much from The Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, 1980). They can also find useful bibliographies in Bodnar, The Transplanted, and Portes and Rumbaut, Immigrant America.

2. THE WOMEN OF THE OTHER SIDE


3. FROM MINORITY TO MAJORITY


4. LIVES OF LABOR


Shtetl, chapter 3. For the present, see Roger Waldinger, *Immigrants in the New York City Garment Industry* (Cambridge: Joint Center for Urban Studies of MIT and Harvard University, 1981).


Since this chapter emphasizes women’s work within family economies, it is fair to note that women’s historians sometime question the usefulness of this approach: Florence T. Bloom, “Struggling and Surviving—The Life Style of European Immigrant Breadwinning Mothers in American Industrial Cities, 1900–1930,” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 8 (1985): 609–20; Charlene Gannage, “Haven or Heartache? Immigrant Women and the Household,” *Anthropologica* 26, 2 (1984): 217–53. By examining paid and unpaid work in a family context, one can see that the transition from “working daughter” to “working mother,” as well as sharp differences between African American and working-class white women’s work in the past, refer to wage-earning work only.

5. ALL HER KIN

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5. ALL HER KIN


Oral histories, novels of immigrant life, and immigrant autobiographies remain important untapped sources for the study of immigrant families. I am unable to cite all of the works I have read while preparing this book, but refer the interested reader to chapters 10–12 in Gabaccia, Immigrant Women in the U.S.

Those interested in sexuality still have little choice but to turn to fiction and autobiography. See, for example, explorations of homosexuality and ethnicity in Dodici Azpadu, Saturday Night in the Prime of Life (Iowa City: Aunt Lute Book Co., 1983); Arlene Voski Avakian, Lion Woman’s Legacy: An Armenian-American Memoir (New York: The Feminist Press, City University of New York, 1992); Rachel Guido de Vries, Tender Warriors (Ithaca: Firebrand, 1986); Arturo Islas, Migrant Souls (New York: William Morrow, 1990).


Women’s historians have focused particularly on immigrant daughters’ efforts to free themselves from family oligarchy, largely through studies of single urban working-class women. The most important works for understanding this interpretation are Kathy Peiss, Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986); Christine Stansell, City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789–1860 (New York: Knopf, 1986); Joanne J. Meyerowitz, Women Adrift: Independent Wage Earners in Chicago, 1880–1930.
6. WORKING TOGETHER


7. MIDDLE-CLASS IMMIGRANTS


Much has been written on immigrant female notables, largely as a consequence of women’s historians’ strong interest in women’s contributions to American society (in the 1970s) and the sources of female achievement (in the 1980s). Immigration historians, by contrast, largely abandoned biography along with filiopietism during these same years.

Among the major problems facing those who would study immigrant and ethnic women’s achievements are the definitions of “achievement” and “American” used in standard sources. How, for example, could a foreign-born woman (who usually worked within a segregated ethnic community) qualify as a notable American? One has to assume that most community activists did not find their way into the standard biographical dictionaries of female notables. Nevertheless, these will remain the starting place for most studies of immigrant careers. For the past, see Edward T. James, Janet Wilson James, and Paul S. Boyer, Notable American Women, 1607–1950, 3 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, 1971). For comparisons with African American women, see Jessie Carney Smith, ed., Notable Black American Women (Detroit: Gale Research, 1992).


Foreign-born women in biographical dictionaries of female notables are heavily biased toward secular activists. Most founders, mother superiors, heads of sisterhoods and sisterhood federations, nuns, and ladies aids do not appear in Notable American Women. For women’s careers in the religious arena see the surprisingly large, if often adulatory, literature on immigrant nuns. For the Irish founder of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, see M. Jane Coogan, Mary Frances Clarke (Dubuque: Mt. Carmel Press, 1977); for the Irish founder of the Dominican Sisters of


The lives of female community activists can more easily be traced in lists of ethnic notables, and in publications aimed at readers of a particular ethnic or religious background. See, for example, Francis Bolek, ed., Who's Who in Polish America (New York: Harbinger House, 1943); Mary C. Donelin, “American Irish Women Firsts,” Journal of the American Historical Society 24 (1925): 215–21; David C. Gross, Pride of our People: The Stories of One Hundred Outstanding Jewish Men and Women (Garden City: Doubleday, 1979); Anita L. Lebeson, Recall to Life—The Jewish Woman in America (South Brunswick: Thomas Yoseloff, 1970).

8. Preservation and Innovation

I prefer the term culture change to both cultural assimilation (Milton Gordon’s term, Assimilation in American Life, pp. 70–71; see chap. 6, n. 1) and acculturation, the term preferred recently by many immigration historians. I believe the term leaves open the direction change took and the possibility that Americans also changed in response to their contacts with immigrants.

Given its centrality to immigrant culture, surprisingly little has been written on language usage. See Joshua Fishman et al., Language Loyalty in the United States: The Maintenance and Perpetuation of Non-English Mother Tongues by American Ethnic and Religious Groups (The Hague: Mouton, 1966); Nancy Faires Conklin and Margaret A. Lourie, A Host of Tongues: Language Communities in the United States (New York: Free Press, 1983). Studies of bilingualism in the U.S. focus mainly on Spanish speakers; e.g.
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The most important newspapers aimed at immigrant women include Dennica (Slovenian); Die Deborah (German-speaking Jewish); Die Deutsche Hausfrau: Monatschrift für die Deutschen Frauen Amerikas (German); Di Froy (Yiddish-speaking, Jewish, Communist); Glos Polek (Polish); Koti Home (Finnish); Kvinden og Hjemmet/Kvinnana och Hemmet (Swedish/Danish); L’Operaia (Italian, union); Der Leydis Garment Woyrker (Yiddish, ILWGU); Misionar (Ukrainian, religious); Moteru Balsas (Lithuanian, Communist); Nasze Pisemko (Polish, religious); Robitnytsia (Ukrainian, Communist); Tooveritar (Finnish, Socialist, later Communist; Di Yiidlische Froy (Yiddish-speaking Jewish, Socialist); Zarja (Slovenian); Zenske Listy (Bohemian); Zizvena (Slovak).


A good introduction to an expanding bibliography on health and medical concerns among today’s immigrant women can be found in Caroline Brettell and Patricia De Berjeois, “Anthropology and the Study of Immigrant Women,” pp. 41–64 in Seeking Common Ground.

IMMIGRANT WOMEN OF MANY BACKGROUNDS


Bibliographical Essay


**IMMIGRANT WOMEN OF PARTICULAR BACKGROUNDS**

**ASIAN**


**CHINESE**


**CUBAN**


**DOMINICANS**


**FINNISH**


**HAITIAN**


**IRISH**


**ITALIAN**


Japanese


Jewish Eastern European


Korean


Laotian


Latina


Mexican


Cotera, Martha P. *Profile on the Mexican American Woman*. Austin, Tex.: National Educational Laboratory, 1976.


**SLAVIC**

