

Ethnic Americans

Ethnic Americans

A History of Immigration

FOURTH EDITION

Leonard Dinnerstein and David M. Reimers

Columbia University Press

New York

Columbia University Press
Publishers Since 1893
New York Chichester, West Sussex

Copyright ©1999 Columbia University Press
All rights reserved

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Dinnerstein, Leonard.

Ethnic Americans : a history of immigration / Leonard Dinnerstein
and David M. Reimers. — 4th ed.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-231-11188-6 (cloth). — ISBN 0-231-11189-4 (pbk).

1. United States—Ethnic relations. 2. Ethnology—United States. 3. United States—
Emigration and immigration. 4. Americanization. 5. Immigrants—United States—
History. I. Reimers, David M. II. Title.

E184.A1D48 1999

305.8'00973—DC21

98-42643



Casebound editions of Columbia University Press books are printed on permanent
and durable acid-free paper.

Printed in the United States of America

c 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

p 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

TO

Rita and Levon Kabasakalian

AND

Jack and Dorothy Reimers

Contents

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	ix
PREFACE	xi
CHAPTER 1	The Colonial Heritage 1
CHAPTER 2	A Wave of Immigrants, 1789–1890s 17
CHAPTER 3	A New Wave of Immigrants, 1890s–1920s 49
CHAPTER 4	Ethnic Conflict and Immigration Restriction 73
CHAPTER 5	Immigration After World War II, 1945–1998 97
CHAPTER 6	Newcomers from South of the Border 125
CHAPTER 7	Pilgrims’ Progress: Ethnic Mobility in Modern America 151
CHAPTER 8	Whither Ethnic America? Assimilation into American Life 179
EPILOGUE	A New Immigration Debate 201
BIBLIOGRAPHIC ESSAY	207
APPENDIX	217
Table A.1	Immigration to the United States by Country, for Decades 1820–1995 218
Table A.2	Provisions of the Major United States Immigration Laws and Programs 222
INDEX	227

List of Abbreviations

ADL	Anti-Defamation League (B'nai B'rith)
AFL	American Federation of Labor
AHEPA	American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association
AICF	American Immigration Control Foundation
APA	American Protective Association
Balance	Population-Environment Balance
CAPS	Californians for Population Stabilization
CCN	Carrying Capacity Network
DP	Displaced Persons
FAIR	Federation for American Immigration Reform
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
GAPA	Greek American Progressive Association
ILGWU	International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union
INS	Immigration and Naturalization Service
IRCA	Immigration Reform and Control Act
MAYO	Mexican American Youth Organization

Preface

THE ORIGINAL IMPETUS for writing this book was Americans' heightened concern with, and glorification of, ethnicity and ethnic values at the end of the 1960s and early 1970s. Both of us were brought up in the 1930s and 1940s, when one learned that becoming a "good American" meant shedding foreign ties, culture, and religion, and adapting to what now might be called the values and beliefs of white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant America. By the 1970s, however, ethnicity had become chic. People wore buttons announcing that they were proud to be Polish or Italian; reporters wrote favorably on the virtues and values of ethnic working-class neighborhoods in cities like Baltimore and Pittsburgh; and people of a variety of backgrounds, instead of Anglicizing their names, "ethnicized" them. In such a context we prepared the first edition, confident that Americans were showing renewed interest in the experiences of their immigrant forebears.

Since that time the peoples of European ancestry have mixed with one another in a manner that their grandparents did not dream of, and much of the assertion of ethnicity of the 1970s has proved to be superficial. Yet the interest in immigration is stronger, and scholars of immigration and social history have published a remarkable number of books and articles exploring the nation's immigrant past. The new scholarship has greatly enhanced our understanding of several peoples, and particularly of the women of those cultures. We now know so much more than we did only a few years ago of the Huguenots and Scots of colonial America, of the Irish and Germans throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, of Italians and Jews in a wider variety of American cities and of their unique experiences. There are also a plethora of works on Hispanics and Asians, written by members of those groups, that simply did not exist twenty-five years ago. As a result of this explosion of knowledge, we have attempted to revise this volume, incorporating as much of the recent scholarship as possible while adjusting and enhancing earlier interpretations.

As in the earlier editions, we have focused on those non-English people who came voluntarily to the New World after 1607. By limiting the topic in this fashion we have obviously excluded American Indians and African slaves. Their history is in many respects unique and requires separate treatment. In *Ethnic Americans* we have, of course, discussed blacks who came

to the United States voluntarily from Africa and the West Indies. Indeed, more black immigrants have come to the United States in the last fifty years than in the entire period of slavery.

Two years after the publication of the third edition of *Ethnic Americans* in 1988, Congress passed a law that increased yearly immigration allowances by 35 percent; in 1996 Congress made other significant changes. We have incorporated the impact of the provisions of those laws in this text. When the third edition was being written in the middle 1980s, new trends in the history of immigration were becoming visible, and these trends have continued. The last ten years have witnessed the greatest wave of immigration in American history, and it appears that immigration will remain high for at least the foreseeable future. An overwhelming majority, probably 85 to 90 percent, of newcomers hail from Latin America and Asia rather than from Europe. In 1960 the leading country of origin for immigrants in this country was Germany, with nearly one million Germans in the United States. Next was Canada, followed by Poland and the Soviet Union. In 1996 Mexico, the Philippines, China, Cuba, India, and Vietnam headed the list. Just at a time when older European groups have been undergoing rapid change, and in some cases virtually disappearing as separate cultures, whole new ethnic communities have emerged. In the 1990s, final totals for immigration will probably exceed ten million people, more than the sum in any previous ten-year period in American history. Because this volume stresses the twentieth century, we have taken these trends into account.

We offer this fourth edition in the hope that it continues to be not only a brief summary of the immigrant experience but also a reflection of the most recent scholarship and public policies. We want to thank Pat Doherty and Julie Newman for preparing the manuscript.

Leonard Dinnerstein
David M. Reimers

Ethnic Americans

