

## REVIEWS

**David C. Hammack, Diane L. Grabowski, & John J. Grabowski, eds.**  
*Identity, Conflict, and Cooperation: Central Europeans in Cleveland, 1850–1930.* Cleveland: Western Reserve Historical Society, 2002. ix + 364 pp., \$15.95 (paper). ISBN: 0911704558.

This collection of essays is the product of a collaborative undertaking initiated in the late 1980s by the Labor Migration Project at the University of Bremen. The endeavor brought together European and American scholars to conduct research on the migratory and inter-ethnic experiences of Central Europeans in Cleveland, Ohio. The European participants are scholars well known for their work on emigration: Ivan Čizmić (Croats), Julianna Puskás (Hungarians), Adam Walaszek (Poles), and Matjaž Klemenčič (Slovenes). American participants included Winston Chrislock (Czechs) and Michael Kopanic (Slovaks). Another well-known European scholar, Dirk Hoerder, directed the effort.

The volume contains seven articles. Six essays focus on individual ethnic communities in Cleveland, and the seventh is a historical overview of Cleveland. In a brief but thoughtful introduction, Dirk Hoerder mentions relevant historiographical issues and outlines basic themes that shaped both the project's research agenda and the community histories the participants subsequently wrote. Each author brought his or her own perspective to the research; however, investigating conflict *and* cooperation among—as well as within—the individual ethnic communities was one of the project's unifying objectives. As



participants, examined the complicated process of community building, they were also to investigate identity formation and acculturation among the Central Europeans that settled in Cleveland. Having such unified themes promised a cohesion so often missing in collected works.

The fine overview essay by David C. Hammack (with the assistance of three other scholars) provides an essential framework for the collection's individual group histories. In addition to Cleveland's growth and economic development, he traces the migration of foreign peoples into the city. Hammack also draws intriguing parallels between Budapest and Cleveland. The discussion reminds readers that neither immigration nor the migratory experience was unique to the United States; moreover, the influx of foreign peoples similarly affected European and American cities.

The remaining essays are actually condensed histories of individual ethnic communities. The full versions of the authors' unpublished manuscripts are housed in the library of the Western Reserve Historical Society and are available to researchers. Of course, persons interested in Cleveland Slovenes will want to consult Matjaž Klemenčič's monograph (1995) on the topic. In his contribution to this volume (307–44), Klemenčič gives a short background of Slovene emigration and the movement into Cleveland. In addition to providing demographic statistics on Slovenes in Cleveland, he chronicles the development of their parishes, schools, national halls, fraternal organizations, associations, and businesses. He discusses laity-clergy relations, socialism among Slovene immigrants, and Slovene involvement in the workers' movement. In addition to describing political activities on behalf of the homeland during World War I, Klemenčič also sketches Slovene participation in Cleveland politics during the first three decades of the twentieth century.

Summarizing all the individual essays here would be a needlessly redundant exercise. As the authors grapple with issues unique to their particular ethnic community, their treatment of common themes naturally reflect each group's particular experiences. Nevertheless, given the collaborative nature and shared themes guiding the project, the essays cover essentially the same topics. Authors typically describe homeland conditions, and examine motives for emigrating and the migratory characteristics of their respective groups. Turning to the Cleveland experience, common subjects discussed include settlement patterns,



ongoing geographic mobility, employment patterns, living conditions, institutional formation (including churches and fraternal and other organizations), newspapers, religious tensions, intra-ethnic conflicts, union involvement, local, national, and international political activities, homeland issues during World War I, and social mobility. Attention is given to clergymen and prominent persons—especially politicians—that achieved distinction both within their ethnic communities and outside of them. Each essayist offers some commentary on interethnic relations and indicates that both conflict *and* cooperation characterized such relations. The authors also make observations about identity formation as immigrants and their children adjusted to the heterogeneous city of Cleveland.

Collectively, the essays confirm already generally accepted conclusions. In essence, ethnic groups were not homogeneous—for example, they were divided along religious, ideological, and class lines. The studies also bear out established findings that interethnic conflict and cooperation were relative. Observations about identity formation, particularly among the second generation, are somewhat perfunctory and possibly reflect preconceived assumptions rather than documented analysis.

The extensive use of foreign-language sources is a distinguishing and laudable feature of the research that went into all of the community histories. Fluent in the languages of their respective ethnic groups, each scholar mined an impressive range of foreign-language documents. In fact, the documentation suggests a dogged determination to cull sources that had not previously been fruitfully examined. However, with the exception of Adam Walaszek, there is slim evidence that the authors of the community studies are aware of relevant, important secondary works, especially modern English-language scholarship. Thus, the insights of many contemporary scholars do not find their way into the discussions. By overlooking pertinent secondary materials, the authors miss opportunities to refine their arguments. Consequently, at times, the analysis seems superficial. Considering Slovenes in particular, Klemenčič's discussion of education and the second generation would have been enriched by reference, for example, to John Bodnar's analyses of education and Slavic immigrants. Overall, the essay would have benefited if Klemenčič had incorporated various works by Bodnar as well as by Victor Greene, Ewa Morawska, and other



scholars that have investigated Slavic groups in America. They provide insights that could have enhanced his discussion of Slovenes in Cleveland

In general, the essays make for tedious reading. Except for Hammack's contribution, they are larded with excessive details. For example, discussions of settlement patterns and institution building have an inordinate number of street names and intersections. Precise street addresses are combined with institutional names (and, occasionally, with all their name variations over time). The inclusion of maps would have helped rectify this problem and added clarity while possibly reducing verbiage. At times, authors seemed determined to mention every prominent person in the ethnic community. All the minutiae muddles the narrative, bewilders the reader, and obscures unifying themes. The essays would have benefited from a more careful copyediting—not only to reduce extraneous details, but to correct errors as well as to eliminate inconsistencies.

Noting that the works in this volume tend to be more descriptive than interpretive is not meant to disparage the essays or their contribution to the historical literature. The narrative features, institutional thrust, and focused nature of the essays have real merit. The authors meticulously chronicle the histories of six immigrant groups that moved into and subsequently had an impact on Cleveland. The essays contain a wealth of information about individual ethnic communities that was formerly unknown or had not been drawn together into a single account. The well-structured index facilitates easy comparisons among and between groups. In addition, the index entries also highlight unique aspects of the separate ethnic communities. The collection is, therefore, an indispensable resource for persons seeking information on Cleveland's diverse ethnic groups. By studying previously understudied ethnic groups—Central Europeans—in a city that has also received insufficient scholarly attention, these scholars have helped fill a void in the historical record. Moreover, the collaborative nature of this project should encourage other scholars, especially students of immigration, to follow a similar path.

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