

position is fully explored, yet they do not emerge merely as victims of their situation within capitalist productive relations, but as agents, too, who took steps when opportunity offered to resist oppressive circumstances and grasp for more control of their employment conditions.

Beechert traces the first transformation of the workforce in the replacement of indigenous Hawaiians by Asian laborers. Polynesian Hawaiians preferred subsistence agriculture to low wages, grueling plantation work, introduced by American entrepreneurs, and their numbers were steadily dwindling. Chinese, Portuguese, Japanese and Filipino indentured laborers were in turn exploited by planters, who turned the divided nature of the workforce to their advantage, preventing concerted opposition to the exploitative conditions. Civil rights for workers improved with the American acquisition of Hawaii as a territory at the turn of the century, but sporadic worker demonstrations and strikes were organized on ethnic lines, while the small local American Federation of Labor addressed the needs of white, skilled workers. Fresh initiatives in union ideas and leadership, emerging during the New Deal and the immediate post-war period, ushered in a new era for workers as divisions on racial lines were vigorously opposed. By the year 1959, when Hawaii was admitted to statehood, slow but certain advances were underway.

This study leaves unexplored large areas of work in Hawaii, not least the bulk of women's work. It elucidates the relationship of ethnicity and class, however, with perception. Other historians will build on Beechert's insights to broaden our knowledge and understanding of gender relations and of the social relations of productive labor dealt with at a less general level. As it stands, the book will serve as a basic text for many years to come.

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**David M. Brownstone, Irene M. Franck, and Douglass L. Brownstone. *Island of Hope, Island of Tears*. (New York: Penguin Books, 1986) xii, 307 pp., \$9.95 paper.**

The most compelling aspect of this dramatic history of immigration to the United States via Ellis Island is its vivid documentation of actual human experiences. Personal testimonies from dozens of immigrants form a living tissue that connects the detailed, fully-researched historical data on immigration history. These oral descriptions recreate the journey for us, illustrate the conditions in the homeland being left behind, and give us an insider's view of the bureaucratic tribulations

each immigrant faced on Ellis Island. The result is a powerful, inspiring testimonial to the courage, ingenuity, determination, and strength of the human spirit. These accounts, often expressed in slightly awkward, simple English prose, rivet the reader, opening up worlds long forgotten, and, through their very simplicity, underscore the complexity and intensity of the immigrant experience.

The Brownstones and Franck have succeeded here in intertwining the personal and the emotional with a scholarly and unimpassioned account of the “new immigration,” that massive migration from the countries of eastern and southern Europe which began in the 1880s. Between 1900 and 1914, immigration soared to about a million people a year. During World War I, it very nearly ceased, but it increased again between 1919 and 1922. Then restrictive legislation passed in 1921 and 1924 virtually ended the “new immigration.” (The “old immigration” of the nineteenth century was from northern and western Europe.) The immigrants who tell their stories in this book (first published in 1979) came to America between 1892 and the early 1930s. All came through Ellis Island, which opened as the first Federal Immigration Station in 1892.

This book’s stunning explication of the history of Ellis Island accompanied by histories of extraordinary, ordinary people reminds us once again of the importance of recording and studying individual lives in historical context. History without its human expression is meaningless; we can only learn from history if we participate in it, and reading these autobiographical episodes allows us to identify, to relive distant, tumultuous times, and to reassess and reevaluate our own historical lives. It is astonishing how rarely we see a study of the interface between history and its makers.

It is difficult to summarize here the immense amount of raw data that provide the framework for these rich, absorbing narratives. The authors had access to major archives and oral history collections, including those in the American Museum of Immigration, the Chicago Polonia Project, the Immigration History Research Center at the University of Minnesota, the Pennsylvania Ethnic Heritage Studies Center, and the Jewish Historical Society. The informants are identified (often by pseudonym only), but more information on when and where interviews took place would have been helpful. Scores of people contributed to the book, providing their stories, references, photographs, documentation, and eyewitness accounts. It is unfortunate only that more stories could not be included; ideally, we want to hear them all.

The fact that there are limitations to any attempt to collect the memories of people involved in major historical events only convinces us even more that we need many more texts dedicated to such goals. We need a book exactly like this one on the “old immigration”; we need one on the Chinese immigration, and on those of our own time: from Haiti, from Mexico, from Southeast Asia. To hear from the people themselves—about their goals, their circumstances at home, their journeys to

America—would enlighten us not only about current history in the making, but about the universality in human motivation, human needs, and the human spirit.

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**Carol Bruchac, Linda Hogan, Judith McDaniel, eds. *The Stories We Hold Secret—Tales of Women’s Spiritual Development*. (Greenfield Center, New York: The Greenfield Review Press, 1986) xxiii, 290 pp. \$12.95 paper.**

*The Stories We Hold Secret — Tales of Women’s Spiritual Development* is an anthology of thirty-one short fiction pieces written by and about women in America. These are not stories about extraterrestrial visits, enlightenment through gurus, or dramatic religious conversion; rather, these are stories of inner knowing, of our “holy dailiness,” as Linda Hogan says in the preface. The stories are as varied as women’s experience, from the quietness of a Native American woman cooking beans and cornbread in her kitchen to the tumult of a woman who for the first time becomes involved with a workers’ strike.

Each story evokes—and invokes—evolution, as does the anthology itself: the first section contains stories of women confronting abortion, prison, alcoholism; the next section is of “simple acts,” a Jewish woman revealing her lesbianism to her brother, a harassed factory worker smashing a time-clock, a woman confronting her stepfather who abused her as a child; the third section deals with natural rhythms—gentle musings during a pregnancy amidst poverty, reminiscence during the illness and death of a once ebullient German mother; the last section is about women who have named and fully claimed their special powers. In its affirmation of personal growth as an essential element for societal growth, the book is evolutionary; it is revolutionary in naming feelings and experiences that are often denied.

This book puts to rest any notion that ethnic experience or women’s experience is monolithic. We read of a young Japanese woman grappling with her role in a politically oriented Asian American writer’s workshop and of an older Japanese woman sadly acknowledging the passing of traditional culture in America. We witness a black woman’s rage, Big Mama with a faith that healed, and a black woman’s exotic affair with a lesbian lover living in a Harlem tenement. We meet Native American women, one enjoying the simple pleasures of her home, one taking action to aid those protesting at Wounded Knee, another recounting a prayer meeting. Ultimately, these intimate, intensely personal stories are about each woman herself; they illustrate the truth of the cartoon showing a