

inclusion. Here one can find entries on Asian Americans who have left an imprint on all facets of American life and culture: music (Zubin Mehta, Sieji Ozawa), politics (U.S. Senators Hiram Fong, S. I. Hayakawa, Daniel Inouye, Spark Matsunaga), art (Isamu Noguchi), religion (the reverend Sun-myung Moon), architecture (I. M. Pei), literature (Maxine Hong Kingston), and science (Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar). There are entries on heroes (Wayne Collins, an ardent supporter of Japanese Americans during World War II) and villains (California Oriental Exclusion League). One can also find definitions of terms that have been associated with Asian Americans, such as *yellow peril*, *boat people*, *model minority*, and *enryo*. A surprisingly large number of entries are devoted to court cases, suggesting the innumerable legal barriers that these minority groups had to overcome in a country that often did not welcome their arrival.

If one is to find fault with this work, it is with the occasional lack of proportion found among the entries. One gets the impression that the length of the entries sometimes has more to do with the availability of information and the recency of the event than with the intrinsic importance of the topic. How else can one explain the inconsequential details in the account of the 1982 murder of Vincent Chin, a Chinese American who was bludgeoned to death by two men who apparently mistook him for a Japanese and linked him with unemployment in the automobile industry in Detroit? The entry devoted to Iva D'Aquino ("Tokyo Rose") also seems, at two pages, excessive. In general, however, the entries are balanced, informative, and accurate.

The historical and primarily sociological essays are uneven and, on the whole, cursory. The four-page history of Chinese Americans found in this book is more detailed than the treatment to be found in a typical encyclopedia, but it is useful only as a thumbnail sketch.

Because of its comprehensiveness and because of the paucity of readily available information on Asian Americans, this reference work will be a highly useful addition to library collections. Those who are interested in the history and contributions of Asian Americans will also want to obtain a copy.

—Victor N. Okada  
California State Polytechnic University, Pomona

**Richard Klayman. *A Generation of Hope: 1929-1941*. (Malden, MA: Old Suffolk Square Press, 1987) 166 pp., \$50.00.**

There would be little disagreement among students of American Jewry that we know relatively little about the experience of Jews living in the smaller cities and towns of this country. In recent years, the number of community studies has grown. Typically, however, the research site is a

larger metropolis, or else a circumscribed neighborhood of Jewish settlement in a major urban center.

In contrast to this approach, Richard Klayman proposes to reconstruct an in-depth portrait of ethnic group life in the small New England city of Malden, Massachusetts, north of Boston. In *A Generation of Hope*, the author highlights the lives of American-born sons and daughters of East European Jewish immigrants, a cohort that he depicts as champions of “national confidence and faith in America’s promise.”

The goals are admirable: to focus on expressions of ethnic identification of second generation Jews in hitherto unexplored communities. Klayman’s premise is that this generation “possessed incredible confidence and ease as to their American identities.” Ostensibly his task is to substantiate this statement, itself an oversimplification, by the Malden example. However, his analysis is misguided, often confusing, and rarely convincing.

Over and over, we read that the swell of experimentation and reform which signaled the New Deal era matched the spirit and commitment to America’s improvement which second generation Jewry possessed. Yet, there is little verification of this theme. It seems to me that we are asked instead to accept its validity on faith, as if reiteration of a claim ensures its truth. Or else the author seems to feel that sufficient proof lies in what he calls the “most suggestive words and pictures of this generation.”

These words and pictures, our data so to speak, were selected (how? on what basis?) from a ten year sample of Malden High School Yearbooks from 1930 to 1940. I am not out-and-out dismissing the utility of these journals as interesting sources for the social history of a community. However, the placement of unidentified yearbook snapshots randomly throughout the text and the prominence accorded some rather undistinguished quotes from graduates at the beginning of each chapter leave the reader puzzled as to the significance of these materials. There is no conceptual or theoretical framework to help decipher their meaning.

Sometimes good writing can remedy or help us overlook methodological deficiencies. Unfortunately, Klayman’s prose is only a further blemish. Sentences are convoluted and sometimes downright undecipherable, for example: “Those youthful atmospheric leaps in time and space that carry one deep in reveries of what life someday might become were especially unsuited to an era that was boundless only in doubts.” In addition, there are several spelling errors of English words, as well as misconstrued usages of Yiddish terminology.

I am left saddened by my inability to recommend very much about *A Generation of Hope*. Yes, the layout of the book is elegant, handsomely bound with large margins. However the price, both in actuality and metaphorically, to be paid for this gloss is too steep. Except perhaps for nostalgic graduates of Malden High.

—Hannah Kliger  
University of Massachusetts, Amherst