

Send These To Me

Immigration and Ethnicity
in Tompkins County

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Tompkins County Historical Commission

The Tompkins County Historical Commission was created by Resolution of the Tompkins County Legislature on August 7, 2018 to advise the Legislature on all historical matters relevant to Tompkins County including commemorations, events, monuments, historical publications, and grant opportunities.

The Commission is composed of a diverse group of community members who have an academic, professional, or personal interest in local history. Among its many initiatives, the Commission encourages, sponsors, and publishes manuscripts such as this pamphlet that are intended shed new light on unique aspects of the County's history.

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Introduction

“Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me.”

In 1883, Emma Lazarus wrote these immortal words in a poem, “The New Colossus” to raise money for a pedestal for the Statue of Liberty. Our *Send These to Me* tells the story of immigrants who came and made their homes in Tompkins County, New York. We have set the county’s history against the national history of immigration. While population-level data is available, information about local individuals and incidents is not always easy. There is some literary evidence for the 19th century, for the 20th and 21st centuries, statistical evidence from the decennial U.S. Census becomes the backbone of this work. The tone of the evidence changes, but the questions remain the same: who came and when; how were those newcomers perceived, especially when they came to be seen as a group; and how did Tompkins County evolve from being a place where those newcomers were met with suspicion to a time when the ethnicity of the recently arrived is honored and celebrated?

We have dug into usual and unusual sources to tell this story: letters, essays, newspapers, church records, organizational records, oral histories, personal reminiscences. But we have also looked in some unusual places, locating menus and advertisements to see the introduction of foods that would have been called “foreign,” and at obituaries looking for the significance of religion, politics, foodways, and that might appear in those last words about the departed.

Tompkins County, like the United States, is both a melting pot where many different nationalities, ethnicities, and cultures have come together, and a chef’s salad composed of different ingredients that have landed side by side becoming part of the community while retaining aspects of their original characteristics. *Send These to Me* hopes to show where we have come from and, hopefully, increase our understanding of where we are going as a society. This is a story of mobility and of adaptability by all.

The first people known to have been here, the Gayogohó:nqʔ (the people of the Cayuga nation, part of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy), were forced from the land during the American Revolution by an invading army. After that war they were subject to coercive treaties; their land was used to establish a culture that denied or romanticized their earlier presence. A few Gayogo hó:nqʔ remained on the land after settlement by peoples of European descent, but there is little historical evidence of their presence.¹

We begin this history of immigration to what became Tompkins County with settlers who were predominately of white Protestant European descent, primarily English and some from the Hudson Valley of Dutch background. They were mostly people from New York and the Middle Atlantic states, along with a scattering of free people of color, a few Southerners, and some enslaved Blacks.

We looked to see when enough individuals had arrived to perceive themselves — and to be regarded by others — as a group, and at how these “ethnic groups” were welcomed. We wondered at what point they might have faced discrimination and when they become accepted part of the whole population of the county. “Ethnic” is a tricky term and can be based on place of origin, language, religion, customs, or even foodways. It is an identification that varies at times by geographical lines because many countries altered their borders or had them changed for them. Ethnicity can be a cultural term as well as an important form of self-definition. We use it here to identify people as they identified themselves or as they were named in the U.S. census.

Our purpose is to show how our current diverse population came about; we do so knowing full well that there will be outliers, some who don’t fit any category or might fit in several. The arc of this history takes us from a population dominated by one tradition that gradually became diverse, to an acceptance and appreciation of others. We attempt to show how Tompkins County’s evolution reflects our country’s motto, *e pluribus unum*. It has not always been easy, but we now celebrate our diverse population.

The Land of Whiskey and Pumpkin Pie

In 1824, the *Gazetteer of the State of New-York* spoke of central New York as “a sort of fantastical compound, ...the land of whiskey and the land of pumpkin-pie,” recognizing that those early settlers who seem today to have been so similar were people of two cultures. One consisted of “the Anglo-Dutch from eastern New York and Pennsylvania ‘who took a drop or two’” and the other “sober New Englanders who fortified themselves with pumpkin pie.” The tension played out near Keuka Lake, some 40 miles west of Tompkins County, where each group wanted to reflect its own origins in the village name. They finally settled upon Penn Yan, for Pennsylvania Yankee.²

Prior to the Revolutionary War, western land in New York was barred to Euro-American settlement by treaties between the British colonial managers and the Haudenosaunee. Following the war, the land that became Tompkins County was the new frontier for settlers. The northern portion of the county was designated as part of the Military Tract and allotted to veterans, because New York State had no money with which to pay those who reenlisted in 1778. Veterans were promised land in payment for their service. After 8 years, a lottery in 1790 assigned 600-acre lots in 26 towns to those eligible or to their heirs. The southern part of what became Tompkins County was designated as part of the Watkins & Flint Purchase, and sold by New York in 1794 to land speculators and developers. They bought large portions with the expectation of making a profit by selling off acres to newcomers, many of whom came from Connecticut.

These early newcomers were primarily white and mostly Protestant in religion, although they held a variety of well-established ecclesiastical differences that mattered greatly in those days: Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, and Episcopalian. Some of those who came had no religious connection. There were probably others too — perhaps Deists and free thinkers.

Among these early settlers, there were several second- and third-generation families from the Hudson Valley whose birthplace was New York but whose background, language, and culture was New York-Dutch. They affiliated with the Dutch Reformed Church and established a congregation in the Town of Caroline in 1812 and another in Ithaca in 1830.

Those who settled in the Watkins & Flint Purchase, where land sold for \$2 to \$4 an acre or was given by the state to those who had advanced the state's interest, were also of various backgrounds but came primarily from eastern Connecticut where frontier land in New York was extensively advertised. Other new settlers came from New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and eastern New York. There were, in addition, at least five families from the South.³

Free and Enslaved Black Settlers

There were perhaps two dozen free Blacks among the settling generation. They came west, hoping for opportunity on the frontier. Early on, they worked on farms, and as barbers, cattle dealers, and skilled or unskilled laborers.

Not all Blacks were free, however. Gideon Morehouse from New Jersey, who settled in Ludlowville, probably brought the first enslaved person, Peter Wheeler, in 1800, and treated him cruelly.⁴ A small group of men came north from Maryland and Virginia hoping to create plantations. They found land for sale in the Watkins & Flint Purchase that became the towns of Caroline and Danby, and brought with them enslaved people. Some from the Hudson River Valley — old Dutch families — brought house slaves with them. In all, there were possibly four or five dozen enslaved people in the early years of the 19th century.⁵

These enslaved people did not work side-by-side in long rows picking cotton, as they might have in the South, because there was no commercial

cotton production here. In fact, these people — that is, those not free to determine their own lives — most likely worked as general farm laborers and domestics within a home, as gardeners, and as helpers in small industries, such as blacksmithing, performing useful tasks for those who controlled their lives. This is not to say slavery was not cruel but that the conditions in Tompkins County required labor on family farms and small enterprises, rather than large groups who worked on sprawling agricultural operations. Gathered in small numbers on a farm, or singly in a home, the enslaved in Tompkins County were most likely in close contact with their owners, unlike the conditions of field slaves. While the brutal conditions of the South were not the rule here, for those enslaved, slavery meant living in isolation from each other and the lack of personal freedom.

Many residents found slaveholding cruel or un-Christian. Slaveholding here was probably also inefficient and costly to owners, and some freed their slaves.⁶ All were freed in 1827 when New York State outlawed slavery.

The Emergent Community

Those Euro-Americans who first made their way to the land that became Tompkins County, those who came for an allotted tract or land they bought were not landless — they were not impoverished people who wandered about, despised by those who thought themselves their betters. Central New York was a somewhat democratic frontier — except for Blacks, free or enslaved; for women; and for those without sufficient resources to gain a foothold.

Both men and women came to the land that became Tompkins County between 1798 and 1817, and they had different roles to play in making their way on land new to them. The men worked, many as farmers, but an early census tells us that in Ithaca in the year 1825 there were also:

lawyers, physicians, apothecaries, printers, joiners, tanners, tailors, blacksmiths, white-washers, coppersmiths, wagon makers, millers,

*wheelwrights, saddlers, a potter, one brewer, ten grocers, watch-makers, three cabinet makers, and two bakers.*⁷

These were the people who “worked,” but nowhere mentioned are the women who washed clothing, made beds, tended children, cooked, and sometimes kept chickens and cows, grew flowers and vegetables, or took care of the sick at home. Others boarded out and worked as domestic servants or “hired girls.” Some women, even in the 1820s, taught at the Ithaca Academy and in private home schools, but their occupation and their names were not listed in the census until the 1850s. Women who lived on farms, worked but were not counted as workers. Their jobs were not considered worthy of comment because the lives of women of that day were circumscribed by religious dictum, rigid social mores, and traditional thought. Nonetheless, women did work, inside and outside the home.

Those living in the small settlement of Ithaca derived their livelihoods by commercial and mercantile means. By the 1820s, Ithaca had acquired a reputation as a “happening place,” according to Peleg Cheeseborough, and as being a “most fluctuating place,” according to others, because people came and went, not always finding here the means of improving their lives or seeing elsewhere new and possibly better opportunities.⁸ It was to remain, always so.

By 1846, an unnamed writer in the local newspaper commented that it was undeniable that while the population of Ithaca was variable “in a remarkable degree,” it was also constantly changing. “Men coming and going,” he wrote, with only a small number making Ithaca their fixed residence, though all would acknowledge, the writer insisted, that a “more pleasant and agreeable village,” a “higher and more refined society, can nowhere be found.” Yet, the writer cautioned that the mobility of the population continued due to “little assistance, [and because] no encouragement is given to the young.” Who, he asked, was receiving adequate salary? Hope, he wrote, perishes in the face of “distant comfort,” that is,

the expectation of doing better at some later time, and he warned that the young will leave the community.⁹ This has proved to be true throughout the past two centuries — the young leaving for better opportunities, the population growing with the arrival of newcomers.

“Emigrant Operatives”

While mobility and lack of adequate pay for native sons were seen as problems, another writer, who signed his name as “Jacksonville,” warned in 1846 that employers were bringing “laborers from Europe to work at lower prices than they wish to pay their own countrymen.” He warned of “emigrant operatives” sent by the shipload, a fact he blamed on high tariffs, for how long would manufacturing last without cheap labor?¹⁰ The question to ask then, is who were the laborers from Europe who came to these shores and eventually to Tompkins County? How were they received? And when were a few needed workers seen as too many?

Irish settlers began appearing in Tompkins County in the mid-1830s, and more arrived in the 1840s to take up domestic service or laboring jobs. They competed with Black laborers, all free since 1827, for both skilled and unskilled work. These newcomers from Ireland, suffering dreadfully from famine at home, were viewed with some suspicion by those already in place. They were predominately of the Roman Catholic faith and were not in favor of the suppression of alcoholic beverages, two features that worried the white Protestant majority.

As early as 1836, the *Jeffersonian & Times*, published in Ithaca, commented that “the movements of the Catholics furnish to the Protestant and Patriot, just cause for alarm in this country,” and the editor warned of Catholic “espionage” in Protestant homes and businesses.” He believed that Irish Catholics represented a “disciplined” army reporting to priests who responded to the orders of the Pope — a foreign power.¹¹

The most vocal critic of the Irish was the Reverend William Wisner, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Ithaca, who used his pulpit to turn his wrath on the Roman Catholic Church and by inference and sometimes explicitly on the Irish themselves. Wisner wrote of the Pope as a “man of sin, the son of perdition prophesied of in holy scriptures.” He feared the priestly caste and a religion consisting of “rules and forms, and addressing itself to the sensuous nature of man,” as opposed to those with religious liberty, meaning Presbyterians and other Protestants. Wisner preached that a member of the Roman Catholic faith “belongs to a foreign government.” We recognize this today as bigoted hate speech.¹²

He feared that “Irishmen in America [will] learn to bide their time,” because “year by year the Irish were becoming more and more powerful in America.” What worried Wisner was that there was a presidential election close at hand. He moaned that the political parties would want to “buy” the Irish vote, and that the priesthood would be willing to sell it. He warned that the section of the “papal army which is quartered upon us in this country seems particularly thirsty for protestant blood.”¹³ Not all Protestant ministers thought as William Wisner did, and not everyone in his congregation agreed, but Wisner’s sermons were preached loudly and then printed and widely distributed.¹⁴

After a time, the Irish in Ithaca sought citizenship and participation in the political process. The problem they faced, however, was that the political parties in 1840 and 1850s consisted of some of the old Federalists along with some from the National Republican Party, the Anti-Masonic Party, and disaffected Democrats who created the Whig Party. Since all were anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic, for the most part, Irish men joined the Democrat Party.¹⁵

Their faith was also important to the new Irish settlers. They originally celebrated mass in private homes, with priests from Auburn, Syracuse, and Owego, who came as often as possible. “On the Sundays they had

no mass the people assembled and read the prayers and held what they called Sunday School.”¹⁶

On his 1847–1848 tour of his new diocese, John Timon, the bishop of Buffalo, celebrated Mass in the Ithaca City Hall and the next year appointed Father Michael Gilbride as the first resident pastor of the parish. That same year a building lot (the site of Immaculate Conception’s current rectory) was purchased for the congregation, and Father Gilbride collected funds for the erection of a church. The small church, called St. Luke, was completed in 1850 by the new priest, Father Michael Creedon, and dedicated on December 7, 1851. Father Gilbride also created St. James the Apostle Church in Trumansburg in 1848, and Father Creedon began St. Patrick Church in McLean in 1851.

With the growth of the Catholic population in Ithaca, a larger church was needed and, under the leadership of Father Bernard McCool, Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, on the corner of Geneva and Seneca Streets was dedicated in 1860; the present church building was dedicated in 1898. The church acquired a four-acre lot on East Hill for Immaculate Conception Cemetery, in 1865 renamed Mt. Olivet. St. Anthony Catholic church was erected in Groton in 1873.¹⁷

The public learned about the local Irish first-hand or by reading reports of court activity in the newspaper: in 1857 Patrick Dunn, identified as Irish, was fined for drunkenness; Mrs. Bridget O’Hare exhibited drunken behavior by throwing stones through a neighbor’s window. Peter O’Flynn was charged with drunkenness and Mike McFoy with assault and battery. Mrs. Jane Ward, identified as “an Irishwoman,” was fined for disorderly conduct, and then there was Duffy Glicker, who appeared almost every month before the judge for a variety of misdeeds. Duffy’s case was further complicated when Mrs. Glicker was also hauled into court. The point of all this was not about the offences or the fines collected by the court, but the fact that these people disturbing the peace — or

perceived as disturbing the peace by the community — were identified in the newspaper by their ethnicity, making sure readers would see the Irish as a distinct and unruly group unlike themselves.¹⁸

There was a voice speaking on behalf of the Irish. A poem titled *Immigrant Sparrows* appeared in the *Ithaca Democrat*, plainly laying out the situation from the Irish perspective.

*They call us a nuisance, they do my son,
And threaten to slaughter us every one
And yet they allured us from over the sea
And bade us be happy as happy could be
And feel that we live in the land of the free.
And now that we multiply, many and great
And pick up a living both early and late
All through the winter, so stormy and cold
As well as the summer, these Yankees they scold
And say we are selfish, and saucy and bold.
But how did they guess we were going to live
Unless we picked up what they promised to give
But they'll find it not easy to drive us away
We are growing in number and power each day
So, don't you forget it, we've come here to stay.*

The message is clear: the Irish were here and flourishing even in the face of hostility on the part of those they named as Yankees.¹⁹

Others Among Us

In 1849, a notice in the *Ithaca Chronicle* announced that, “the China Man is in town and will be exhibited every day and evening,” at the Pekin Tea Store kept by J. P. Eldred. This is the only notice of such an exhibit, and it might be something of an advertising hoax — we cannot say if there was a real person, a cardboard advertisement, or a pile of tea boxes. At the same time, Frank Atwater offered customers tea at his Canton Tea Store. The ad invited the reader to “follow the multitude, and you will see the “Elephant,” — a code word of the day for seeing something unbelievable, for who had ever seen an elephant? Or who had made a fortune on the California gold fields, or who had seen a Chinaman?²⁰ According to the census, no Asians lived in Tompkins County at this time.

The 1855 New York State census for Tompkins County showed a total population of 31,765. Among the 1,857 foreigners in the county the greatest number were from Ireland. Others came from Great Britain, Scotland, Canada, and Germany. There was a scattering of residents from Prussia, South America, Holland, Switzerland and Austria.²¹

The Student Population

The signing of the Cornell University Charter in Albany 1865 signaled another local change. In 1868, when classes began, there were 435 students of amazing diversity on campus, including two brothers from England, a Brazilian, and a Russian. In 1869, there was a student of color from Haiti, and one from Bermuda. Writing in his diary in 1870, Ezra Cornell noted that students came to Cornell from twenty-eight states and eleven foreign countries.²² Over time, more students came from Brazil; a contingent travelled here from Japan; others hailed from Russia, Bulgaria, “Servia,” Hungary, the Sandwich Islands [Hawaii], Cuba, “Hayti,” Bermuda, and the Bahamas; and students always came from Canada, which hardly seemed foreign.

The early faculty also included men from other countries. James Law, a Scot educated in England and France, became Cornell's first Professor of Veterinary Medicine in 1868; the next year George Behringer and Frederick. L. O. Röehrig, both Germans, came to Ithaca as language instructors. Other faculty of foreign origin followed including nonresident faculty. In addition to faculty, some of the crews erecting university buildings included foreign laborers. In 1869, Ezra Cornell noted in his diary twenty families of mechanics from Oxford, England had come to Ithaca, including, masons, carpenters, and other skilled workers. In a comment to his father, Alonzo B. Cornell noted that his instructions had been to select only such men from the foreigners "as will be likely to vote right when they become voters." In the same entry, Cornell notes that others were writing to Germany to locate a few experienced stonecutters.²³

Young women at Cornell were warned away from socializing with foreign students, yet Lucy Crandall from Ithaca (Cornell Class of 1876) married Pedro de Mello-Souza, an engineering student from Brazil and sailed off to make a life in São Paulo.²⁴

Anna Botsford (Class of 1885), later to marry Professor John Comstock, wrote of being asked to a Thanksgiving Ball by E. F. Jordão, a handsome Brazilian who was attending Cornell. She turned to Vice-President William Channing Russel who "advised me not to go anywhere with Brazilian students because they were foreigners with very different customs from ours." Having already accepted the invitation, she attended the ball and "no Puritan youth could have treated me with more courtesy and respect." She found that the Brazilians were all "gentlemen, by our standards as well as their own."²⁵

Foreign students continued to arrive at the university. By 1888, there were approximately 70 students from foreign countries who had graduated: 35 from Brazil, 32 from Canada, 12 from Japan, 7 from England, and 5 from Russia, among other places.²⁶

Cornell's first Japanese student, Kanaye Nagasawa, studied Natural History in 1870; the first Japanese graduate, Ryokichi Yatabe, graduated in 1876. While the *Ithaca Journal* rarely commented on the Japanese students; when it did it was usually in less than positive terms: Japanese students were responsible for a horse breaking a leg; Japanese students were buying and cooking "the despised and outlawed English sparrows which makes a toothsome dish"; and blamed for capsizing a large yacht in the Inlet. Bunzo Sugi (Class of 1891), took exception in a "Letter to the Editor," writing that: "It was the Japanese students who came to the rescue and helped to pull some wet Americans out of the water."²⁷

Immigrants from Germany

Between 1880 and 1900, Germans constituted the fourth largest group to immigrate to Tompkins County. Those identified as German were the fourth largest group, after those from English speaking countries, between 1880 to 1900. They did not form a community but quickly became "Americanized." The Germans seem to have mainly come as couples or families, rather than as single individuals, although they sometimes had single boarders in their households.

Unlike the Irish, the Germans did not share a single religion. Although the U.S. census never asked for religion, some German immigrants were Protestant, chiefly Lutherans from northern Germany, and some were Roman Catholic, from southern Germany. The small number of German Jews would probably have culturally identified as Jewish. While the Catholics attended Immaculate Conception Church, there wasn't a Lutheran church in Ithaca until 1913, when St. Luke's was founded as the Church at the Campus Gate by Cornell's Lutheran Student Association to serve the campus and the community.²⁸

German immigrants in the 1880 census were largely skilled laborers; their occupations included cabinet maker, carpenter, glass worker, mill-

er, tanner, worker at the organ factory, baker, clerk, machinist, nurse, barber, grocer, music teacher, “clothier,” and saloon keeper. *The Ithaca City Directory* included a “German” hotel/restaurant, the *Gasthaus Zur Germania*, run by an Austrian immigrant, Carl Schallowitz. There was also the much-memorialized tavern keeper Theodore Zinck, a native of Alsace, who primarily catered to students.

An 1890 *Ithaca Journal* article described American feelings about German immigrants:

*It is often said, and with truth, that if all immigrants to this country were Germans, we should hear no more about immigrant exclusion bills. The German anarchist is of course an exception, but fortunately he is quite rare. The mass of German immigrants take kindly to American institutions and make industrious, solid citizens. There is, however, a danger.... In certain sections German immigrants by their very numbers and social qualities... do not readily get saturated with American ideas... and... do not quickly learn English.*²⁹

The Jewish Community

The historical record of the Ithaca Jewish community begins with the stones in the Ithaca City Cemetery on University Avenue. Morris Lubliner, a young Jewish man working as a clerk, died in April 1856. He was buried high on the hill above the City Cemetery, which led to the establishment of a small Jewish section. The Jews in the area, their number few, had no interest in being buried on sacred Christian soil. At the same time, Ithaca’s Christians were not interested in ecumenism. In December that same year, Caroline Cohen died, her newborn son some days later. They too were laid to rest in this special section. Over the years, that piece of land at the top of the City Cemetery was incorporated, and

in 1938 it became the property of Temple Beth-El. That portion was first described on the map as the “Jewish Addition,” a parcel of land approximately 44 by 75 feet. Between 1856 and 1899, an additional 16 infants and one 16-year-old were buried there, along with 3 people in their 20s and one who was 31 years old.

In the years after the Civil War, several Jewish merchants established themselves in Ithaca. The Sugerman family came from elsewhere, spent eleven years in Ithaca, and then moved on. The family of Theodore Dobrin moved to Ithaca in the late 1860s. Dobrin established a hoop-skirt factory, gradually branching out to make and sell other millinery products and items of ladies’ furnishings.³⁰ The Dobrins were joined in Ithaca by their relatives, the Rothschild brothers, and in the 1870s by the Schmaus family. Slowly the Jewish population grew.

By 1913, approximately 25 Jewish family groups lived in Ithaca. Their place of origin was generally listed as New York or New England, indicating they were making a second or even third move. Some were German-speaking Jews; others were Russian Jewish families who spoke Yiddish at home. They worked in clothing shops or at the junkyard run by Henry Blostein, who also served the community as the *schochet* or the ritual butcher. He kept chickens in his basement until City law prohibited it in an attempt to ensure that there would be harmony among neighbors.³¹

In October 1913, Jacob R. Mazur moved to Ithaca to serve as Rabbi and to study with Nathaniel Schmidt at the university. The *Ithaca Journal* noted on October 10, 1913: that “Although young [he would have been around 23 at the time], he has studied extensively and was appointed a rabbi five years ago. He returned last year from religious service in South Africa.” He moved into an apartment at 420 Cascadilla Street where he lived with his wife Edith. Mazur was from Russia (an area later identified as Poland); Edith was from Hungary. Jacob Mazur conducted services for Passover and the High Holy Days at the Arcanum Hall at 156 East State

Street, and in 1915, “a special service and prayers for peace...[to] express mourning and sorrow for the conditions in Europe caused by the war.” The Mazurs left Ithaca in November 1915 when Rabbi Mazur accepted an appointment in Tampa, Florida.³²

A curious aside with a funny local twist: By 1920, the Mazurs had moved to Montgomery, Alabama. The Federal Census shows that Jacob was 30 years old, his wife Edith 26, and they were the parents of two sons. Their older child was named Siegmund, and he was listed as being almost 5 years old. His birthplace had given the census takers some difficulty as it was listed as “Ithaca,” no state given, but in another handwriting someone added in pencil, “Greece.” Little Siegmund, of course, had been born in Ithaca in 1915, but at the time, who in Alabama knew of Ithaca, New York?³³

“Huddled Masses”

Between 1880 and 1920, more than 20 million immigrants arrived in the United States. They came primarily from Eastern and Southern Europe and for a variety of economic, social, and religious reasons: poverty, persecution, and pogroms; avoiding war or military conscription. They came for an opportunity to work, for betterment for themselves and their children — they came hoping for a better life.

Few of these newcomers reached Tompkins County directly. For the most part, they stopped in one or more places along the way. Finns came predominately from Michigan to the Newfield area; Syrians came from the coalfields of Pennsylvania; Greeks came in what is called a “chain migration,” where people of one family group or one town follow others to a particular destination, often through New York City.

This raises the question of why immigrants after 1880 decided to come to Tompkins County. Some joined family members already here or trav-

eled here to become family members. Syrian men, for example, paid for the passage of women from their hometowns to come as brides. Some, as with the Finns, came because there was abandoned and inexpensive land for sale in the towns of Newfield and Spencer. Most, however, came because there was work.

In the 1890s, especially, and until 1917 when this country entered the Great War, there was a need for workers — especially for people who would take jobs that many native-born people disdained. Immigrant workers built roadways — street and road improvements required back-breaking work with shovels and picks to expand and create highways, especially necessary after the invention and growing popularity of the automobile. There were creeks in Ithaca that needed to be cleared and shored up to prevent flooding. Starting in 1906, the Inlet was deepened, and embankments built. The City's population was expanding, and people needed homes. At Cornell, there were new buildings requiring laborers and specialists in stone masonry. Street paving began in 1891, new bridges were needed, and older ones to be replaced; in 1912 the reservoir on Six Mile Creek was built. The hospital was constructed in 1911, and in 1923, a City Commission was formed to improve overall conditions, including the creation of parks and filling the marshland at the head of the lake.

While the number of manufacturers would decrease dramatically over time, in 1890, there were eighty factories in Ithaca. The Ithaca Gun Company, founded in 1883, flourished well into the second half of the twentieth century. Morse Chain began in 1898, and a shirt factory was started in 1899. There were two salt companies digging beneath the lake, and two companies manufacturing glass. The Ithaca Sign Company, which began in the 1890s, needed laborers, as did the local lumber industry, the paper mills, and the railroads.

The First Italians

There were eight Italians with fixed permanent addresses recorded in the 1880 census. By 1900, there were 42 Italians. The number rose to 114 in 1905, mostly young males who worked as day laborers and lived on the edge of South Hill overlooking Fall Creek gorge, in what became known as the Klondike — a place taking its name from the Canadian gold rush of 1904 — that is, somewhere distant and foreign. And probably uncomfortable.

Ruth Reed Bailor grew up on Water Street and remembered that from the porch of their home they could hear “accordion music and songs of the Italian workers who lived for a time on South Hill, in an area called ‘The Klondike.’” Her father warned her to stay away from the area as it was considered dangerous. Anita Reed also recalled that there was a “heavy concentration of Italians and Hungarians in the neighborhood where I lived as a child in the northwest section of Ithaca, and most of the parents of my playmates spoke in their native tongues a good bit of the time.”³⁴

By 1910, there were more Italians in Ithaca, living in boarding houses, working on roads, water lines, and in construction. But there were also some entrepreneurs among them, selling ice cream, running bakeries, and working as tailors. That year, 253 additional Italian laborers arrived, recruited by Frank Speno to work on the railroad. The Alien Contract Labor Law of 1885 had prohibited individuals or corporations from prepaying transportation or encouraging importation of aliens under contract for labor. This law, amended several times, was generally not observed. It is unclear just how the Speno family operated. Frank Speno certainly controlled and distributed work once the Italians were in Ithaca, and the Klondike was just down the hill from his home on Hudson Street, where Oak Hill Manor nursing home is now located.³⁵

While Italian men worked on the roads or cleared creeks, the few Italian women of this era remained at home. Louise Matosich recalled that

her grandmother arrived in Ithaca knowing no English. Needing some clothing, a neighbor advised her to “get your husband to give you some money,” and she would take her to Rothschild’s Department Store. When they finished shopping, they realized that the man who was to pick them up was late. The “two ladies were beginning to panic until he arrived. They had never been away from their block,” and had no idea how to get back home.³⁶

Italians in the county can be tracked in the local newspapers especially when their work proved to be dangerous. In 1911, ten Italian laborers were near a concrete wall that fell on North Tioga Street, and the same year an “Italian escaped death” working on the railroad, or the next year when an Italian fell into a “boiling vat” at Portland Cement. They were rarely named, but identified by nationality when they were injured, broke the law, or engaged in fighting³⁷

During this time, the courts repeated their earlier pattern of reporting to the newspapers the ethnicity of those arrested, identifying them as “an Italian,” or “fighting Italians,” or simply, as on a city labor accident report, as a number. One hundred years earlier, those of Irish extraction who had been arrested were so identified. What had been negative attitudes about the Irish were transferred to Italians and Hungarians and others who came to the county around the turn of the century. The Irish had become established. As one writer commented about this carry-over hostility, “this is anxiety from the recently arrived towards the very newly arrived.”³⁸

In 1915, however, there was a mass exodus. Several special trains stopped in Ithaca as Italian men from all over upstate New York returned home to fight with Italy during the Great War. There followed locally, complaints about a lack of laborers.³⁹ At the conclusion of the war, immigration by Italians to the United States and to Tompkins County picked up, some accompanied by families.

Syrian Immigrants

In 1904, a small group of Maronite Christians moved to Portland Point in the Town of Lansing. Maronite Christians, followers of St. Maron, a fourth-century monk, lived in the shadow of Mount Lebanon in the Upper Galilee, an area in Biblical times known as Syro-Phoenicia. They became a persecuted minority within the Ottoman Empire, being neither Turks nor Arabs nor Assyrians. As Christians, they were subject to taxation and impressment into the Ottoman military. The United States presented the young with a future far brighter than they could imagine at home.⁴⁰

Abraham Caliel was the first to arrive, followed by James Solomon in 1905, and then his brother in 1907, all coming from the coal mines in Pennsylvania to work in the International Salt Company's mine. Others followed: Mike Solomon, Tony Isaac, Leo Solomon, Abraham Abraham, George Solomon, Caliel Abraham. They brought over sisters and cousins as brides, generally paying about \$100 for travel and visas, and the families intermarried. In 1914, Mary Mauer, described as "a brunette beauty of almost Oriental type," became engaged to Michael Moses. The *Ithaca Journal*, trading in stereotypes of exotic foreigners, reported that the wedding was stopped when Mary's father, accompanied by the local sheriff and his assistant, demanded money to cover the cost of bringing Mary to the United States. The *Ithaca Journal* noted that: "If a Syrian wishes to marry one of his own countrywomen she usually has to be imported for the occasion, and imported wives cost money." After negotiations, however, Mr. Mauer allowed the wedding to continue.⁴¹

In all, over the next ten years, seven family groups established themselves in eight to ten modest homes rented to them by the International Salt Company. In 1917, the men on Syrian Hill formed the Young Melkie Society, a fraternal organization to aid those in need and to send money back to their families in Melkie, an area just north of Damascus. In 1920,

the Salt Company built a small church, named Saint George Orthodox, that sits at the end of the street overlooking the lake below.⁴²

In Tompkins County, people of Syrian or Lebanese descent still live on Myers Heights Road. There were also Syrians living in the City of Ithaca.

In a long conversation with Lorraine Abraham and her sisters Catherine and Barbara in their home in October 2008, they told of their father who had come to America looking for a better life, going first to Glens Falls where a Syrian community had already formed, and then to Lansing. In 1909, Abraham Caliel wrote to his sister Flora that he “had somebody she could marry,” and Flora, age 15, came to Lansing in 1909 to marry Leo Abraham. Their daughter Lorraine recalled that the family was poor but fortunate; that they celebrated Syrian festivals and that each day, her mother would rise, go to the door facing Cayuga Lake to pray, asking a blessing for the house and family. The rent for their house was \$2 per week, but in 1957, given an opportunity by the Salt Company, the family bought their home. Flora Abraham took in piecework to add to the family income; she served as a midwife, and she went to school to learn to cook and speak English. At the age of 70, Flora Abraham became a citizen.⁴³

In the local press, the Syrians of the county were reported to be close knit, religious, patriarchal, and practical. After 1930, the number of those born in the Near East declined, and many of their descendants moved elsewhere for education and work. The congregation at Saint George dwindled as many worshipped in area churches, with only occasional services held in the old church.

Many of Syrian descent, however, remained in the area. Julia Caliel Mike, for example, was born in 1909 at Myers; she died in 2009 and is buried in the Pine Grove Cemetery in Lansing. Abraham George, Sr. and his wife Camilla, were from Mattan Arnouk, Syria, and lived on West Court Street, in Ithaca. Mr. George Sr. worked at the Ithaca Salt Company and the family lived near others in Ithaca identified as immigrants, some

from Assyria. George Peter, who worked at Cornell and was elected a university trustee. He grew up on a farm in Danby and lived there, and in Aurora, New York until his death in 2008.⁴⁴

Early Chinese Workers

The earliest mention in the *Ithaca Journal* of a Chinese presence in Ithaca occurs on April 20, 1885, when “John Lee, the Chinese laundry man, of Aurora street was fined \$6... for assault and battery.” Several boys had been teasing the Chinaman and he caught one and gave him a thrashing. Lee said “me no payee 6 dollar.” On November 20, the *Journal* reported that “An evil disposed person hurled a stone through the window of the Chinese laundry on North Aurora street last night.” There seems to have been a grudging acceptance of the newcomers, for on January 26, 1888, the *Ithaca Journal* reported: “A reporter who had occasion to be out early this morning found the Chinese laundry on Aurora street brilliantly lighted and the celestials hard at work polishing shirt bosoms at half past one o’clock. There’s no eight hour fol-de-rol...” While praising their work ethic, but using the term ‘celestials,’ the *Journal* applied a racist caricature commonly applied to Chinese immigrants. A June 30, 1888 editorial suggested that “the Celestial invaders first came to this city to set up their washtubs in unequal competition with needy women with families dependent.” This is the first mention of such competition, rationalizing opposition to the foreigners by showing a perceived local cost. This blast from the *Journal* was escalated into a dispute with the *Ithaca Democrat*, whose editor advocated allowing Chinese entry to the United States, the policy advocated by the Democratic Party.⁴⁵

In 1890, there were at least five commercial laundries listed in the *Ithaca City Directory*: Charlie and Joe Sing had an establishment at 5 North Aurora Street; another Chinese laundry was in the basement of the Exchange Hotel. There were three other laundries, as well as numerous

individuals who identified themselves as laundresses or laundry men. In this era before washing machines, a washerwoman or a laundry was a great aid. By 1900, there were 94 individuals — 76 white women, 8 black women, 8 white men, and 2 Chinese men who ran laundry services that were especially useful to students far from home and without the facilities to deal with soiled clothing.⁴⁶

While Chinese laundrymen were considered exotic and useful, there were tensions. The *Ithaca Journal* reports two incidents where other immigrants had problems with them. There was a complaint from a “Hun” who had lost his laundry ticket and “two Italians,” whose laundry was given to someone else. People were also curious about the exotic newcomers. In 1900, the *Journal* interviewed Joe Sing and Lee Fung about their reaction to the “war now on” in China. Joe Sing said: “I have [no opinion]. . . . I have been in the United States 20 years, and was 18 when I came here. . . .” Lee Fung said: “I am 33 and an American. I was born in California. I have been in Ithaca 6 years.” In 1904, Joe Sing told a reporter that he intended to return to China that year, having saved up a lot of money, and would leave the business to his nephew Lee Sing, but in 1907, he is listed as a contributor to the Y.M.C.A. fund in Ithaca, and as having narrowly escaping death in a fire on Aurora Street that started in a restaurant and consumed the laundry.⁴⁷

Blacks from the South

Another population shift during the last third of the nineteenth century, and mostly unnoticed by the community at large, occurred as newly arriving African Americans came from the South, expanding the number of Blacks who claimed Tompkins County as home. In 1860, there had been 297 Black people in the county, while in 1890, the number was 403 — a significant increase. Among the newcomers, most were confirmed as Baptists, with different beliefs and a different form of church governance

than the Methodist residents affiliated with the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church on Wheat Street.⁴⁸ This led the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel on North Albany Street to switch its denominational orientation and to become the Calvary Baptist Church, where the newer residents were more comfortable. The St. James AME Zion Church dated back to 1836. The two congregations continue to this day.

The Finlanders

Richard Koski dates the first three Finns in the Spencer, Van Etten, and Newfield area to 1910. According to the interviews conducted by George McGonigal in the 1980s, Evard Lampila and Emil Lintala came from Michigan in 1913. A few other Finns followed in 1916 and 1919. They came primarily for land. Richard Koski tells of a land auction in 1919 when “a stranger to these parts, carrying a suitcase and wearing rubber boots, raised his hand for the highest and winning bid.” The auctioneer reminded the bidder that the sale was to be in cash, paid on the spot, so the man, “took off his hat and from it counted out all the money.” Koski reports that when word that a Finn had bought the land, people hopped in their buggies or cars to “see what a Finlander looked like.”⁴⁹

During what is called The Great Migration, Finland lost 10 percent of its population, beginning in the 1870’s and accelerating after the Russian government began a campaign for the Russification of Finland. Many Finns went to Michigan and Minnesota, some to the Pacific Northwest. They initially sought employment in construction, mining, and lumbering — dangerous labor. But for some, no longer welcome or able to find work having been blacklisted for radical union or political activities, the goal was land to call their own. Without resources, they looked for inexpensive farms that others had abandoned such as those that could be found in the towns of Newfield, Van Etten, and Spencer. According

to George McGonigal, “In 1920 the average value of farms belonging to Finns was \$5,247” while the average value of farms of the native born was \$10,019.⁵⁰

Word spread and other Finns from Ishpeming and other northern places in Michigan arrived to buy farms in and around Newfield. Then Jacob and Sanna Luoma came from Washington State to purchase land and more Finns followed. The 1920 census claims 111 Finns living throughout the county, and in 1930 there were 147.

In a family memoir, Charles Huhtanen wrote that the farm his father bought in the Town of Dryden in 1927 was “overrun by the last glacier, was very poorly drained, rocky and unproductive but they set about making a go of it.” Koski quotes an interview with Oiva Vesa, who arrived in 1933, who remembered that “When my parents bought the farm, it had been abandoned as a lot of places up here were. There were no doors or windows on the house.” Some of the ancient barns were converted into chicken houses and many farmers had a side business repairing watches or shoes or as house builders. Many Finnish women went out to work cleaning houses.

William Koski, who bought his farm on Garrett Road in the Town of Ulysses wrote:

When we bought the place from Bill Makarainen, there was just a house, a small dairy barn, and 85 acres. I made another floor on the barn, put some windows in, and some dormers on the third floor. I built an addition on the end so there was room for a couple of cows. We put about 1,000 chickens in that barn. Then maybe a couple of years after that, I cut some logs from our woods, had them sawed at Sheldon’s sawmill, and built a bigger barn across the road that was three stories. Altogether, we had about 3,000 chickens, and you could make a living with that if prices were good and you didn’t get diseases in them.⁵¹

These newcomers brought with them Finnish culture that included coffee and bread called *pulla*, lively music, dancing, and a willingness for cooperation. They were accused by some of clannishness and there are stories of insults that Finnish children endured at school until they became proficient enough in English to shout back.

Incoming Finns faced another problem — the Finnish community was not monolithic. In 1913, local Finns established a church with 50 members. In 1928, Finnish farmers in Spencer and Van Etten started the Spencer Co-operative Society where they sold eggs, poultry feed, hardware, and coal. Thus, a split arose between the “church Finns” and the “co-op Finns,” who were committed to “socialism” that appeared to threaten old-time farmers who struggled on their own.⁵²

Finns stressed hard work, family, membership in the Finger Lakes Finns (established in 1968), and on *Sisu* — that Finnish concept of courage and determination.⁵³

Central Europeans

In 1883, there was a notice that Colonel Horton had secured a “gang of Hungarians to work at the coal dock.” He brought in 19 hard- working foreigners and headed back to Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania, for 10 more. An *Ithaca Journal* report claimed that “they cannot understand a word of English and are instructed by signs,” but the Lehigh Valley Railroad company found them “quiet, docile and industrious.” Their pay was \$1.50 per day and they lived on \$2 per week, sending the remainder home to family. Their diet, according to the article, consisted of a loaf of bread for midday meal, with vegetable soup for breakfast and dinner. They were robust workers, the newspaper commented, but they were “slightly susceptible to fatigue.”⁵⁴ The federal census shows 10 Hungarians in the county in 1900, 27 in 1920, and 234 in 1930.

Martin Srnka served as a translator for Hungarians. In 1910 when Mrs. Juliana Laso was arrested, Srnka spoke for her in court. She was fined \$5 after pulling off her dress and shoes but Srnka explained that she had been in the country only 2 months and knew no English. Uncommented upon was the fact that Mrs. Laso had to resort to picking up coal along the train lines to heat her home.⁵⁵ After that, Hungarians appear in the newspaper, always identified by their ethnicity, especially if they ran afoul of the law — just as the Irish had in the 1840s and 1850s and the Italians at the end of the 19th century. In 1911, a Hungarian named Paul Marchi encountered a “man of swarthy complexion [who] proved to be a Greek.” Marchi “touched” the other man, removing his billfold and the money in it. The two were taken to court and Marchi was given the chance to repay what he had taken or go to jail. He paid up and “vanished from the station with the speed of an express train.” Later that year, several men accused of being drunk were identified as Hungarian.⁵⁶

Hungarians in the county did not come looking for farmland, as had the Finns. Most worked as common unskilled laborers, some as servants, and a few as skilled workers, such as tailors, carpenters, or blacksmiths. Unlike women of most other ethnicities, Hungarian women advertised in the *Ithaca Journal* looking for housework. In 1914, there were more than a dozen advertisements in the “Want Ad Female” section of the daily newspaper, some reading, “Hungarian woman searching for general housework,” and some that announced that they understood English. When a disorderly house was raided, it was reported that two American women and three Hungarian women were jailed: the men were discharged; the women were fined \$15 each. Where there were fights, the participants were named by their ethnicity. The Ithaca Children’s Home announced that among the 30 children under its care, there were 14 Americans, 2 Hungarians, 3 Italians, and 2 “colored.”

In 1915, Martin Srnka and his brother Joseph, named as president and secretary, created the National Slavonic Society, No. 505. There is no

further mention of this group, but as with many societies with a shared cultural background, its participants came together to support each other, to send money to families in Europe, and to pay funeral expenses. As early as 1905, newspapers carried notices about the Sons of Italy, along with the Knights of Columbus, membership consisting of men with predominantly Irish surnames, created as early as the 1880s. Sometimes these groups are referred to as burial societies, as they put up money for funeral and family expenses in times of need.

Interestingly, the ethnicity of people involved in a fracas were identified as Hungarian or Slavs, and sometimes as Czechs, and at other times Bohemians. On a more positive note, when Joseph Homolka was killed in an auto accident in 1917, the *Ithaca Journal* reported that he was “a Bohemian by birth,” and “well liked in Groton.” He had arrived there eight years earlier to work at the Smith-Corona typewriter plant. As a plant foreman, he would have been respected, regardless of his immigrant status.⁵⁷

Many of the early Czech immigrants in Newfield were encouraged to buy abandoned farms by Albert Tesar, who is identified as a land or real estate agent. Tesar advertised in the Chicago Czech-language newspaper *Hodpodar* about available land in the Newfield area.⁵⁸ Tesar was born in Bohemia in 1867. He married Mary Foreman who was also of Bohemian parentage but born in Wisconsin. They lived for a time with Tesar’s sister and brother-in-law in Newfield, then on the Van Etten and Watkins Road in Cayuta, Schuyler County. Later the couple moved to Elmira.⁵⁹ They brought Czech families to the area, beginning in 1905. Most had immigrated to the United States in the 1870s and 1880s and had lived in other states before coming to Tompkins County.

Of those who came sometime after 1905 were the Korbel, Krejca, and Vyskocil families, followed by others. Many of the abandoned farm-houses these newcomers bought were in bad repair and the fields were

stony and full of thistles. Some children, who grew up speaking Czech at home, attended the Pony Hollow School in Newfield where, it was reported, they were treated with some hostility because of their identification as Bohemian. Their classmates were known to lock up their desks to prevent thievery by people they considered “Gypsies,” and, therefore, untrustworthy. This prejudice associated with Bohemians was current at the time as the term “bohemian,” associated with carefree rule-breakers, had come from a perceived connection between Bohemians and the Romani.⁶⁰

At other times during this period, people of central European background were indiscriminately lumped together. In truth, however, European borders shifted, and people moved away from places of difficulty to places of greater safety. But even those who remained in place experienced shifting borders and identification, the varying borders of the Austro-Hungarian Empire led to confusion. Members of the Stanway family were listed in the local 1920 census as of Russian-Ukrainian parentage, their mother having been born in Austria. Frank O. Halub arrived in Newfield in 1907. He and Anton Trozebal identified themselves in the 1920 census as from “Ostra-Hungarian Bohemian.” Some newcomers to Newfield named their homeland as Austria-Bohemia.⁶¹

On March 6, 1914, the YMCA announced that 200 foreign-born men were studying English, among them Greeks, Hungarians, Persians, Italians, Poles, Russians, Bohemians, and Norwegians. In 1915, the New York courts upheld a protectionist law that barred “aliens” from working on construction. As Barton Hall at Cornell was being built at the time, the unnaturalized citizens affected by this ban included Italians, Hungarians, Poles, and Syrians. There was some hope that “Albany” might change this ruling, but it threw some immigrant workers into difficult economic circumstances.⁶²

Yet separatism, while maintained by some, was not universal. In March 1915, Professor A.B. Faust observed that 35 percent of Americans could

claim hyphenated backgrounds as “older stock intermarried,” although he noted that newcomers were most likely to marry within their own group. He added, “We must learn to live peacefully together.”⁶³

The Greeks

John P. Chacona, an immigrant from Greece, was in Ithaca selling candy as early as 1898, although no Greeks were listed in the Tompkins County census for 1900.⁶⁴ Ann Greenwood who studied Greek emigration to Ithaca, wrote that Chacona “not only determined the future evolution of a Greek community in Ithaca, but determined virtually the very membership of that community.”⁶⁵

John Chacona had come to Ithaca, New York from Tsintzina, a small community near Sparta that hugged the side of a mountain at the very southern tip of the Peloponnesus — the mass of Greece that plunges like fingers into the Mediterranean Sea. Chacona was followed by his cousins Marcus and John N., who established and ran Chacona Candy. By 1908, Chacona Candy was successful and John P. Chacona owned real estate in Ithaca. An *Ithaca Journal* article approvingly noted: “Chacona Stores a Credit to Ithaca.... Mr. Chacona is the possessor of four of the finest candy stores of which any city, big or little, can boast. Besides, there is another Chacona store in Buffalo.”⁶⁶

Others from the area followed. The Manos family, Chacona cousins, also from Tsintzina came; Peter Anastosopulos joined them. By 1910, there were seventeen Greeks who appear in the Ithaca census. All were involved with making and selling candy or confections.

Most of the Greeks who came to Tompkins County did so after a stop elsewhere. They came in small numbers, and they entered the commercial life of the county, not as laborers, as had the Italians, but as owners or workers in small enterprises that brought them in direct contact with

their customers. They began as candy sellers, later, they worked in and established restaurants.

Greek immigration to the U.S. was predominantly male and many intended to return to their homeland. The 1910 census lists one Greek family with children, Mr. and Mrs. Paul N. Chacona and their three young children, a small daughter and twins, who had been born here, along with a lodger from Greece who was also a relative. By 1920 the number of Greek immigrants had increased to thirty-three (now including seven families), with an additional twenty-two second-generation Greeks. By 1930, the census lists forty-three Greek immigrants, in nine Greek households, including several widowed grandmothers living with adult children in addition to boarders, many of whom were related by name or by place of origin in Greece, as well as their American-born children. Most of the adult men continued to be employed in the candy or restaurant business.

Prejudice against immigrants continued to exist. In 1915 the *Ithaca Journal* reprinted an article from the *Utica Observer*, with the title, “Becoming a Changed People,” categorizing Italians (especially Southern Italians), Greeks, and “Hebrews” as “those races which are further removed from American customs, languages, standards of living, habits of thought, etc.” than the earlier “Northern European” immigrants.⁶⁷

There is little evidence of discrimination against the Greeks here. Perhaps people in the Tompkins County sympathized with the Greeks. We know that in 1821 Ithacans had donated to the Greek cause in their war resisting Turkish invasion.⁶⁸ Many felt a connection with Greek democracy, they recognized neo-classical public architecture, and they recounted Greek myths. While the immigrants might have been confused with Classical Greeks, their occupations in Tompkins County, as businessmen — candy makers and restaurants owners — rather than laborers, brought local residents in direct contact with these newcomers. The Greek community also made efforts to integrate and show their patriotism. During the World War I era, the *Cornell Daily Sun* reported on April 25, 1918

that “Greek citizens in this city raised a subscription to buy a Greek flag to fly beside those in front of the Liberty Loan headquarters,” giving \$100 more than their goal. An article in the *Ithaca Journal* on January 27, 1921, reported that the fifteen Greek families in Ithaca “have done their bit for the children of Europe” by donating \$150 to the European Relief Organization fund for starving children.

New Immigrants

The county’s population expanded during the first thirty years of the twentieth century growing from 33,830 in 1900 to 41,490 in 1930. In terms of percentages of foreign born in the county, the number in 1900 was 6.1%, and in 1930, 7.9%. These foreign-born newcomers were met variously by people already here, probably depending upon how much contact there was between them and how they were talked about. The reputation of a group might also have depended upon the types of jobs the newcomers held and about those who were economically successful, because within each group there were those who succeeded and did well, and some who did not. Leaders emerged: the clergy played a special role, as did those who had language skills, or those who helped build up the community or who had economic success. But not all foreigners received a warm welcome.

We know this is true because of the subtle ways in which the newspapers spoke of foreigners, and because in 1917 there was a rather startling talk given at a meeting of the Women’s Alliance of the First Unitarian Society of Ithaca. Robert H. Treman, a prominent banker, philanthropic and social leader in the community spoke, extolling the virtues of “the people who have come from other shores... and... the new spirit, the new blood, the new ideas that have come to our land with the coming of these countless families across the seas...” He urged his audience to show a new kind of welcome and a new warmth of friendliness to the foreign-born people.

Treman's talk was reported in full in the newspaper:

The Irish, English, Scotch and Welch[sic], who came here early, were prolific and now have the largest numbers.... The Germans came in the forties and fifties, and many of their descendants are prominent in our city today. The Hungarians and Bohemians first came in the late seventies and eighties, but not in large numbers. The French came in such small numbers that they have but few descendants in Ithaca. The Italians first came in the early [eighteen] eighties but not in large numbers until the great demand for Italian laborers came shortly after 1900. During the past summer the local Italians responded loyally to their country's call to arms and the city is practically depleted except for our naturalized Italians.

A few Mexicans were attracted to Ithaca by Cornell University and some of them have married and reside here. The Swedes, Norwegians and Danes have been here since the late sixties and seventies and have become citizens and heads of families.

A division of our city into nationalities would be purely a matter of guess, but even a guess carefully considered might not be uninteresting. After much reflection and delving into statistics I would say that the British Islands have contributed 65 per cent of our city blood, Germany and Austria 12 per cent, Italy, seven per cent, Hebrews two percent, French two per cent, Denmark, Norway and Sweden one percent, Africans four percent, leaving two per cent for errors in calculation. The Russian, Austrian and German Hebrews, I have classed under the head "Hebrews" as they seem more distinctly unified than any other race now in America.

...And, at this point, let me say that no race has contributed more, propositionally, to our city's well being than have our splendid and patriotic Hebrew fellow citizens.⁶⁹

Treman went on to speak of the thrift and industry displayed by more of the foreign-born residents, commenting that “We might well contrast them with some of their proud American critics who, unwilling to do lowly tasks, [who] stand on the street corners ‘knocking,’ [meaning, begging] while their families suffer and acquire a debt as our ambitious foreign friends acquire a competence.” He went on to urge his audience to “Give Them a Warm Welcome,” urging support of the work of the Night School that was helping foreigners to learn English and American history.

Mostly, Robert Treman urged his audience to “show a new kind of welcome and a new warmth of friendliness to the foreign-born people.” He suggested that the ceremony of citizenship be made more impressive. Treman ended by noting that “We cannot always carry the American flag with us, nor see it where we go, but we can all of us wear its meaning in our hearts, and in so doing we will carry the gospel of liberty, welcome and opportunity to all who have come to our shores.”⁷⁰

The question for us to ask is why Robert Treman gave such a talk? The answer must be that he saw around him hostility to the foreign born and he hoped to shake Ithacans from this negative attitude. Had all foreigners been welcome, there would have been no need for such a topic or such a talk. Treman alerts us to attitudes that are often hard to capture and attitudes that residents of the county and of the country had long held. The Irish met resistance as did the Jews, Italians, Hungarians, Bohemians, and others who sought refuge and a second chance in Tompkins County. Treman’s words linger and have meaning over time.

Cornell Students

There were other foreigners in Tompkins County who were considered exotic rather than threatening. Foreign students at the university found themselves strangers in a strange land — and in a strange status, for most

of those from foreign lands who came to Cornell to study were of a privileged economic class. They would not have been here otherwise. They were often ogled for exotic customs and clothing that appeared odd to townspeople. But their economic input to the university and the community was appreciated, and they were often sought out by the churches and other groups to speak about their homeland.

In 1904, Cornell students created a Cosmopolitan Club. While membership was intended primarily for international students, many Cornell faculty joined, and townspeople were eligible for “associate membership.” Unitarian minister Cyrus Heizer was a charter member. The Cosmopolitan Club hosted lectures and national “nights” focusing on the food and culture of members. While only men were included in membership, we know that co-eds and women from Ithaca attended various functions. In 1911 the group constructed a building at 301 Bryant Avenue.

Cornell’s first Chinese student came in 1897. The *Ithaca Journal* published an article including a photograph on September 18, with a longer article and interview on November 16. The *Journal* noted: “Cornell has long been noted for the polyglot character of her student body, but this year she breaks all her own records in this respect, for in the freshman class there is a genuine, full-blooded Chinaman.” Sao-ke Alfred Sze was very different from the Chinese laundrymen the *Journal* had written about earlier:

Sao-Ke Sze, or S. Alfred Sze, as he signs his name in this country, is a person of no mean connections. His brother was last year the Chinese American minister in New York city....

He is living while here in a large students’ rooming house.... His room looks just like other students’ rooms, except... across one corner is draped the huge yellow national flag....’

‘I came to Cornell,’ said he, ‘instead of going to Harvard or any of the other Eastern universities, because I had friends who were

coming here, and also because I heard that the climate of Ithaca is healthy. I heard that they had this new elective system also, and that was an inducement.'

'I have taken up the arts course, with French, German, history, political economy. I like all the subjects, and especially political economy, for that treats of what I expect to have to do when I go back to China. I will return to my country as soon as I am graduated from Cornell....

I very much prefer not to say how I like American girls. I am very glad to go out and to be in society. But you must not ask me how I like American girls....' 71

Alfred Sao-ke Sze returned to China and had a distinguished diplomatic career, becoming the first Chinese ambassador to the United States and a founding member of the World Bank.

A Chinese fraternity, Rho Psi, began at Cornell in 1916. About twenty Chinese engineering and science students pooled their funds to buy a house at 212 Fall Creek Drive that would be maintained until the early 1930s. This would be a way to ensure that these students could have food that mirrored what they had known at home, plus the luxury of speaking their own language after long days in class.⁷²

On June 24, 1914, the *Ithaca Journal* crowed: "Chinese Children Born in Ithaca at City Hospital. First of Such Parentage Born Here – Young Parents Very Much Pleased and Little Ones Welcomed by Many Friends of Two Families." The first baby was born on June 23 and named Ulysses Yeh: "this small youngster with the Greek name, born in America of Chinese parents, is the cause of much rejoicing." His parents were Yu Liang Yeh, a student at Cornell and his wife Yee Yeh.⁷³

Acting President William C. Russel had warned Anna Botsford, foreigners had different ways, and he intimated, they were not to be trusted.

Would they tempt American women into marriage, as had happened in the 1870s, with Lucy Crandall?

In November 1898 there was a notice that “Han Lee Wong, Geneva’s Chinese laundryman had married Miss Louise B. Cullen; an American girl of Rochester.” Educating students was one thing, labor competition was another, but interracial marriage was perceived as threatening (and illegal in 31 states, as late as 1960, although there was no such law in New York,). One interesting registration form reads:

Registration #1669

Date: 2 June 1918

Groom: Waro Nakahara, 25

Address: born, Tokyo, Japan

Residence: 120 Linden Ave., Ithaca

Parents: Father, Fikuko Nato

Bride: Dorothy Bernice Waterman, 23

Address: 703 N. Aurora Street, Ithaca

Parents: George Waterman & Ofilia Watermann

Witnesses: Mary Youn, Tokosuki Yokogawa⁷⁴

Diversity in Tompkins County

The comments Robert Treman made in 1917 underscore the fact that many people were wary of foreigners, believing that they threatened contemporary prosperity or mores, that they had customs different from those that were known and loved; that they prayed differently, had different attitudes about alcohol, even that they looked different. Their cooking smelled decidedly more interesting and thus exotic and probably dangerous. They were distrusted because they were different. This was not only

true in Tompkins County for it had long been true in the United States.

The Great War brought about significant anti-German sentiment. On January 23, 1918, the *Ithaca Journal* published an article, “German Samples of Truth (written for The Journal by Dr. William Elliot Griffis)” in which he warned that German immigrants and residents might be “more loyal to the Fatherland than to the country in which they lived, and in which they made their wealth.” In February 1918 federal regulations required that all German “alien enemies,” including those who had “taken out their first naturalization papers” were required to register with the Ithaca Police or at local post offices elsewhere in Tompkins County. Registrants had to provide photographs and fingerprints. In June, 1918, “all native German alien women in this city” were required to register at police headquarters be fingerprinted and photographed that they might be given an identification card to be carried “on the holder’s person for the duration of the war.” In addition, American women married to German aliens were also required to register.” By the end of the month, 21 “alien women” had registered.

A charge was made against Millie Breitenbecker, who lost her position as a telephone operator for rumored pro-Germanism that was based on her surname. She replied:

I wish to deny through your paper the false accusations being made against me. I am a full free born American and as such I appeal to the people who are the same. My parents are both American born, of French and German descent. They have always been law abiding loyal American citizens and have lived in this city 43 years. While I have not done as much as some to help the war cause I have done as much as my earnings would permit. From my small savings I bought a Liberty bond with the second loan, not bought with the idea of an investment but with the idea of “doing my bit,” our name is also enrolled with the “Red Cross” [sic]. I am

*a true American with no other country's welfare at heart. With these facts made public I ask protection from the people of the country whose motto is "Truth and Justice."*⁷⁵

Some immigrants spoke loudly of their loyalty to this country. In February, Yervant H. Maxudian, an Armenian immigrant, president of the Maxudian Phonograph Company, and Cornell graduate (Class of 1914) enlisted in the Signal Corps. The newspaper quoted him:

*When I first came to America, I was most astonished to find so much freedom and liberty, the things for which I would gladly risk my life.... Now I am glad to have this opportunity to give my services to my adopted country of which I am very proud, and if necessary even my life.... I wish to take this opportunity to thank the people of this most beautiful city for their friendship and consideration to me. I have always felt very much at home and even forget that I was born over on the other side.*⁷⁶

An Independence Day parade in Ithaca in 1918 included, along with the wives and mothers of men in U.S. service, "Italians and other citizens of foreign birth," including the Italian band, and school children.⁷⁷

Limiting Immigration

While the U.S. had a long history of increasingly restrictive immigration laws (see Appendix), the Immigration Act and the National Origins Act of 1924 explicitly limited the number of immigrants allowed to enter the U.S. by means of a 2% quota of each nationality represented in the federal census of 1890 — which dated to just before the great migrations of people from eastern and southern Europe. These country-by-country limits were specially designed to keep out "undesirable" ethnic groups, specifically Slavs, Italians, Greeks, and Eastern European Jews, and to maintain America's character as a nation of northern and western European stock.

The total number of foreign-born allowed into the United States was 164, 667 including:

<i>Germany</i> 51,227	<i>Russia</i> 2,248
<i>Great Britain</i> 34,007	<i>Netherland</i> 1,648
<i>Irish Free State</i> 28,567	<i>Hungary</i> 473
<i>Sweden</i> 9,561	<i>Finland</i> 471
<i>Poland</i> 5,982	<i>Greece</i> 100
<i>Italy</i> 3,845	<i>Syria</i> 100
<i>Czechoslovakia</i> 3,073	

South American and African nations and some countries, such as India, with no showing in the 1890 census, had no quota at all. People wishing to immigrate had to vie for 1,900 undesignated slots.⁷⁸

The Anti-Immigrants

While anti-immigration groups had appeared early in the 19th century, the Ku Klux Klan was re-established in 1915 and flourished in the mid-1920s, even in upstate New York. It opposed, in particular, Blacks, Catholics, Jews, and foreigners. In Tompkins County, where there were relatively few African Americans or Jews, the local Klan was primarily anti-Roman Catholic.⁷⁹

A local woman of Irish descent wrote in her diary that “there was a problem that always scared us as children. At least one man used to burn crosses just over our line fence. He apparently was a member of the Ku Klux Klan and did not like Catholics. My Uncle Jim, a Big Irishman, went to his house and beat him up and then would tear down the crosses.”⁸⁰

Creating Community

From 1920 to 1930 the local African American community increased from 454 to 642, most coming from Southern states, with a few from the

West Indies and Canada. Black residents were largely concentrated in the Southside neighborhood and along North Albany Street, a pattern that continues to this day.⁸¹ Men worked primarily as janitors, laborers, and in the hospitality industry; women did domestic work, taking on jobs as housekeepers, cooks, laundresses, and maids.

On June 8, 1921, the *Ithaca Journal* reported the first public meeting of the Ithaca branch of the NAACP, held in St. James AME Zion Church. Ithaca Mayor E. C. Stewart assured the organization of his cooperation in any movement for the betterment of local conditions. By 1923 the local branch had over 200 members. That year, C.O. Wilson and Eliot Douglas published three issues of the *Monitor*, a local newspaper “devoted to the interests of Colored People.”

Later in the 1920s the community began to address the needs of neighborhood youth. The Servus League, organized in 1928 promoted the creation of the Southside Community Center. Originally meeting in a rented house, the Center bought a house at 305 South Plain Street in 1932. With the purchase of the adjacent lot and the assistance of the Ithaca Common Council and the federal Works Progress Administration, and with community contributions, they constructed the present building, dedicated by First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt on February 17, 1938.⁸²

Restrictive Covenants

The county’s total population, rose to 42,340 in 1940. There was need for more housing. With an increase of population and movement within the county, some landowners subdivided and sold lots, creating new city streets. On South Hill, especially, deeds for lots on a few new streets included restrictive covenants, written in by the land developers, that stated, “the house is not to be sold either by the grantee or any subsequent owner to negroes or undesirable foreigners.”⁸³ The Supreme Court had upheld the constitutionality of restrictive covenants in 1926, and it was not

until 1968 that the Fair Housing Act finally prohibited “discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of dwellings and other housing-related transactions, based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex” in the U.S.⁸⁴

Self-Identification

By 1930 there were 3,263 foreign born in Tompkins County accounting for 7.9% of the total population. In addition, there were the children and grandchildren of earlier immigrants — the Irish, for example, or Finns or Syrians who had been here for some years — and many formed ethnically based fraternal organizations. The Czechs created a society in 1911 called the Premysyl Ottokar Lodge, and ran Czech Hall in Newfield. The Italians had the Sons of Italy (Figli d’Italia), founded in 1918. Jewish women had founded a Ladies Aid Society in the 1918, that became the Sisterhood of Temple Beth-El in 1940, and the Daniel Rothschild Lodge No. 1450 was chartered in 1941, becoming the B’nai B’rith Men’s club in 1971.

Yet not all ethnic groups could be considered homogeneous, and not all of these new county residents with a shared ethnic background found each other agreeable. While some in Tompkins County might speak of “the Irish,” they were not a monolithic group. A poem from the 1920s, read at a family reunion of Irish Protestants, contained these lines :

*For these are two races of Irish,
And history will prove me right
In culture, ideals and religion,
They’re as different as day and night.
The first is what is termed old Irish
The original Celtic strain,
Always followers of St. Patrick,
And impracticable in the main.*

*There is then the newer Irish,
Trace its origins and you'll find;
That it's largely Anglo-Saxon
Of the most progressive kind.*⁸⁵

Italians who did not initially establish their own congregation (as they had in the city of Cortland) found that the Irish maintained leadership positions in the church hierarchy. According to other accounts, there was division among the Italians in Ithaca, some having come from Carpineto, on the southeastern coast of Italy and others from Fondi, on the northwestern coast. One Ithaca woman of northern Italian descent, recalled that she was raised to “discriminate against southern Italians,” whose food ways and culture were different from her own.⁸⁶

Among the Jews there had been discussion about the affiliation of the temple, because the Jewish community in Ithaca was not large enough to maintain separate orthodox and conservative-reform congregations. Separate services were held until 1924 when Temple Beth-El was organized, in cooperation with Cornell Hillel. In 1942 the temple engaged its first full-time rabbi.⁸⁷ In 1991, an Ithaca Reform Temple began. Congregation Tikkun v’Or (Congregation of Healing and Light) moved into its new synagogue in Lansing in 2005.

There was evidence of overt local anti-Semitism in the 1920s and 1930s. While Cornell never had official quotas for Jewish students (unlike other Ivy League universities), Cornell President Livingston Farrand described his solution: selective admissions which included “personal qualities, character, public spirit, etc., as well as the basic consideration of scholastic standing.” The net result of this theoretically “fair” solution was to limit the number of Jewish students at Cornell.⁸⁸

While the University was outwardly bias-free, student-landlord interactions were not always that way. In a memoir, James B. Gitlitz, Cornell

class of 1930, commented “I never actually encountered any overt anti-Semitism at Cornell such as I encountered among Ithaca townspeople when I looked for a room my first week.” He continued, “At about half a dozen places I was met with refusal because I was obviously Jewish and was told to my face that they did not rent to Jews.”⁸⁹

While landlord relations with Jewish students was an obvious source of irritation, Cornell professors were not necessarily free from expressing prejudice. In an issue of *Cornell Alumni News*, Harold Rosenthal (Class of 1925, M.D. 1929) discussed anti-Semitism, noting that in class, he “heard one of the most distinguished professors liken repulsive conduct to that characteristic of “the pushing, shoving, aggressive *New York* type of person.” He knew exactly what the professor was insinuating.⁹⁰ Rosenthal went on to the Cornell Medical School, but students like Gitlitz and Harry Caplan were discouraged from graduate studies in the humanities. While Gitlitz would earn a law degree from Cornell, Caplan went on to receive his M.A. and Ph.D. in Classics at Cornell and became one of Cornell’s most beloved professors.⁹¹

Ithaca resident Robert Garcia described growing up on Cascadilla Street in the 1920 and 30s. He remembered a mix of ethnicities and reported that you could tell a family’s heritage by their gardens: Italians always had tomatoes and basil, his Hispanic family always had chilis.⁹² Jemma Macera, a native Ithacan who was born “in her Italian immigrant father’s hotel and bar,” wrote that one friend’s father didn’t want his daughter “to come over to our house because of the awful smells in the kitchen.” Her guess was that came from the garlic and olive oil that “Mom used when cooking our vegetables and in pizza sauce.”⁹³ Yet, David Potorti wrote in the *Ithaca Journal* that “In those days, Czechs, Poles, Hungarians and Italians populated our neighborhood around Washington Park. You could walk in any direction and know who lived in each house, where they worked, and their children’s names. There were godmothers and godfathers, grandmothers and grandfather, cousins and second cousins.”⁹⁴

Echoes of Elsewhere

The county's overall population between 1940 and 1950 increased by a startling 16,782 newcomers. The decade before, from 1930 to 1940 there had been an increase of only 850 persons. That low number can be explained by the Great Depression, fewer students at the university, and the lack of jobs locally as well as nationally. The percentages of foreign-born in the county in each decade goes from 7.9% in 1930; 6.9% in 1940 and 5.7% in 1950, reflecting the 1924 federal restrictions to immigration.

In 1950, Tompkins County again had a significant increase in overall population, rising from 42,340 residents in 1940 to 59,220 in 1950 (a 39.64% increase). A major factor was the growth of Cornell University, which, thanks in large part to the GI Bill, admitted far more students, and the hiring of additional faculty.

Immigration reflected the chaos in Europe as the Soviet Union disrupted established governments, unsettling populations already traumatized by the war. Yet the growth in Tompkins County in the decades of the 1940s and 1950s was due primarily to people coming from elsewhere in the United States: students and faculty returning to study; veterans entering the educational system, many for the first time, some under the G.I. Bill; some renewed industry as war time products turned to home use; and, especially, the “baby boom,” as new families caught up for lost time.

A New Start: Hart-Celler Legislation

In 1965 the U.S. Congress passed the Immigration and Nationality Act, commonly known as the Hart-Celler Act, signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson. Hart-Celler, named for its two sponsors Senator Philip A. Hart of Michigan and Representative Emanuel Celler of New York, abolished the 1924 quota system that had been based on national origin. Celler, who served in the House of Representatives from 1923

to 1973, had given his first important speech in the House in vehement opposition to the Immigration Act of 1924. The 1965 Hart-Celler Act was the culmination of his fight to overcome immigration restrictions based on national origins. The act established a new immigration policy based on re-uniting families and attracting skilled labor. After passage, everything shifted, especially in Tompkins County, as did attitudes about ethnicity in the United States.

The 1960 census showed that the county population grew by seven thousand people to 66,164, and reached 78, 879 in 1970 (a 16.19% increase). For the rest of the 20th and early 21st centuries, it continued to grow, totaling 101,740 in 2010.⁹⁵ In 1960, most newcomers were from Italy, Canada, England, Germany, and Hungary, others came from Asia (unspecified by country), Central and South America, and Mexico, as well as from European countries. By 1970, more Asians and, specifically, Chinese are listed, and the percentage of people listed as foreign born grew from 5.5% in 1970 to 12.5% in 2010, with the greatest number now coming from China, Korea, India, and Japan, as well as other Asian countries.⁹⁶

Embracing Ethnicity

Especially for the children born following the years of million-person emigrations in the 1890s, and especially during the war years, ethnicity was often something played down in the attempt to be as American as possible. German Americans, for example, had to deal with the reality of two world wars and being German-American became complicated.

Attitudes about being a hyphenated-American changed and began to be celebrated. In 1973 Congress, reflecting new attitudes and newly realized political needs, passed the Ethnic Heritage Studies Act directing grants to educational organizations to develop curriculum materials for students in elementary and secondary schools dealing with the history, geography, society, economy, literature, art music, drama, language

and culture of ethnic heritage or regional groups that contributed to the American heritage and to provide training for teachers to use this material. This promoted centers for the study of various cultures and the era of multiculturalism began in earnest.

Well before the Ethnic Heritage Studies Act, Cornell received aid from the government and foundations to establish ethnic centers: the East Asia Program in the 1950s, followed by a Southeast Asia Program in 1951 and a South Asia Program. A Latin American Studies Program began in 1961, and in 1987, programs in Latina/o Studies and Asian American Studies were added.⁹⁷ Cornell's library collections increased in scope and fame, and the university offered instruction in some 50 foreign languages. These programs attracted students, many natives of the countries under consideration, some second and earlier generation children of immigrants, and many American students who suddenly found study of regional and world cultures important especially after the Kennedy years and experience in the Peace Corps.

There was also a noticeable shift in the those looking up their genealogy in the National Archives and in local repositories. Earlier family searchers had been primarily people wanting to prove a link to ancestors to give them access to membership in the Daughters or Sons of the American Revolution, or other patriotic organizations. But from the 1970s onward, the children of immigrants and minority groups increasingly sought to trace their own families. In 1976, Alex Haley (born in Ithaca where he lived for six weeks) published *Roots: The Saga of an American Family*, which quickly became a bestseller and a TV series, dramatically increasing the interest of Blacks researching their own histories. Genealogical research came into its own with many people seeking information about their origins. It also became easier to pursue, thanks to online systems and the availability of the federal census online. Most recently, DNA testing has increased people's knowledge of and interest in family background.

Newer Immigrant Groups

Over time, the number of Asian residents in Tompkins County grew. In 1943 the United States Congress passed the Magnusson Act lifting the ban on Chinese immigration and citizenship. It was not, however, until passage of Hart-Celler in 1965, that the numbers of Chinese in the county began a dramatic increase. Starting in 1970, there were 222 Chinese in Tompkins County; in the year 2000 there were 1,692, and in 2010 there were 2,241. In 1990 there were 250 people from Hong Kong (representing its independence at the time) in addition to 455 who had come from Taiwan. The Chinese were not the only Asians who began to make Tompkins County home. In 1970 there were 52 native-born Japanese living in the county, rising to 478 in 2000. The number of Koreans in the county grew from 488 in 1980, to 794 in 2000, and 1,122 in 2010.

The 1970 census lists 82 people from Southeast Asia (defined without country specificity). In 1975, 166 people were identified as coming from Vietnam, and by 1990 there were 184 Vietnamese residents in the county. There were 102 persons from Thailand registered in 1990, some directly from refugee camps, and 91 Indonesians. Many of these immigrants connected with programs at Cornell University.

People from the Indian sub-continent also arrived, as they did elsewhere in the United States. They were called by many the “model minority,” as most were well-educated professionals. Beginning in 1970s, Indian engineers and doctors and other professionals answered the needs in communities around the nation. In 1980 there were 270 Indians listed in the Tompkins County’s census; in 1990, 464, and 696 in 2010.⁹⁸ The India Community of Ithaca currently sponsors cultural events and community service projects and various student groups focus on traditional culture, especially dance, from various parts of the subcontinent.

Local connections with Tibet began in 1980 when the Dalai Lama, gave rights to Snow Lion Press, located in Ithaca, to publish his works. In

1991 the U.S. government allowed 1,000 Tibetans to resettle in groups in this country, gatherings large enough that they would be able to maintain their language and culture. Some came to Tompkins County, sponsored by churches and individuals. Robed monks wearing sandals, walking, and playing soccer appeared in Ithaca. In 1992 they established the Namgyal Monastery of Buddhist Studies on North Aurora Street, offering western students an opportunity to study Tibetan Buddhism. The monastery also served as a cultural center for the Tibetan refugee community to help ensure the preservation of their language and culture through traditional festivals, rituals, and classes for Tibetan children. The Dalai Lama visited Ithaca several times. A monastery, Du Khor Choe Ling (Land of Kalachakra Study and Practice), opened in 2004 on Tibet Drive, in the Town of Ithaca, off Route 96.⁹⁹

In 2017 Catholic Charities of Tompkins/Tioga was approved to resettle fifty newly arrived refugees, and Ithaca became a home for refugees from Afghanistan, Bhutan, Myanmar (Burma), Cuba, Iraq, Syria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Ukraine. Mostly these people came as family groups, and Ithaca was selected because of its “welcoming atmosphere, diversity, and cultural and linguistic assets.” Among those are the Karen, an ethnic minority native to southeastern Burma and western Thailand, who first began to arrive in 2006. Their lives had been uprooted by political violence, instability and persecution that had driven many into refugee camps. Cornell’s Southeast Asia Program now supports programs that focus on the Burmese and Karen cultures. In 2019 the 4-H Karen Mural Project unveiled a street mural in Ithaca.¹⁰⁰

In 1990 several countries never before represented in the Tompkins County census appear, as regional identifications gave way to more specific national classifications. The general category South America disappeared from the federal census and people were listed by country of origin, the majority from Colombia, Panama, Uruguay, Venezuela, and

Peru. People from Pakistan, Ghana, Laos, Haiti, Malaysia, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, and Nigeria were listed.

Latino residents organized the Latino Civic Association of Tompkins County in 1994, “to foster a unified Latino community, strengthen Latino identity, and promote solidarity, cultural pride and civic engagement.” In 2020 the organization had 575 members and sponsored Latinx Heritage Month each October. The organization also helped migrants, especially farmworkers; hosted bilingual town halls and focus groups; encouraged census participation; and sponsored scholarships for Latinx high school seniors.¹⁰¹

According to the 2010 census, 12.9 percent of the Tompkins County population were foreign born. Fifteen percent spoke a language other than English at home.¹⁰² Asians, who now represented 10.4 percent of the population, came from: China (2,241), Korea (1,122), India (686), Japan (319), Malaysia (234), Hong Kong (206), Thailand (204), Myanmar (200), Vietnam (192), Singapore (151), Taiwan (142), Philippines (104), and Cambodia (100). Other countries represented among the county’s newcomers were from Canada (852), Germany (560), Russia (274), United Kingdom (272), Ukraine (255), Israel (217), Guyana (157), France (149), Italy (144), Venezuela (135), Mexico (131), “Other Eastern Africa” (122), Brazil (106), and Cameroon (103), as well as numerous other countries with numbers less than 100.¹⁰³

Muslims represent the latest group to cement an identity in the county. Religious services for Muslims began at Cornell in 1965, but in 2021 the community opened the Al-Huda Islamic Center on Cayuga Vista Drive in the Town of Lansing. According to a spokesperson for the Center, there are currently some 500 believers in the county, about 300 of these “are transient — students or scholars at Cornell University or Ithaca College — the remainder are permanent residents of the area.”¹⁰⁴

The Significance of Food

For a long time, food was food: it was what could be grown, preserved from the previous harvest, gotten nearby, or purchased in the store. As the county's population diversified, a wide range of food became available locally. Early Greek immigrants produced candy and confections, the first Italians sold peanuts on the street, the Syrians, once established, put on lunches for Rotary and other club meetings that must have seemed exotic to those accustomed to general American fare. We have used food and restaurants as a way of showing how these have altered and expanded local knowledge and familiarity with differing ways.

In 1916 there were sixteen confectioners in Ithaca, many operated by recent immigrants, such as the six Greeks listed in the *Ithaca Directory*: Chacona Brothers, Peter Floros, George Manos, James Neferis, John Poolos, and Peter Theofiles. Their goods were not listed as Greek, but they came from a Greek culinary tradition and were popular with the public. Bruno Mazza offered baked goods at 408 North Meadow Street, but he did not advertise his produce as Italian. Hotels offered food but of the eighteen listed none featured a particularly ethnic cuisine. There were eleven dealers offering ice cream. Ithaca saloons, numbering fourteen in 1916 offered food, but none advertised anything that might have been considered anything but usual fare.

In the 20th century things changed leading to an increased interest in “foreign” food — a way to introduce different tastes, but in those cultures that had produced them. A national “chop suey craze” influenced both foodways and popular culture. While the origins of chop suey are unclear, many Chinese thought of it as an American invention.¹⁰⁵ A Chinese student at Cornell wrote: “chop suey is unknown in China and owed its origin to this country...”¹⁰⁶ As part of the craze, the Dragon Chinese Restaurant appeared briefly in 1911 at State and Aurora Streets, with “a Chinese chef to prepare chop suey and other Oriental tit-bits.”¹⁰⁷ The Shanghai Restaurant opened in 1922 on North Aurora Street in rooms

that had been remodeled into an exotic dining space, the decorations made by Chinese students at Cornell. The ‘Shanghai’ specialized in chop suey, although American dishes were also served. Several people “expressed pleasure that Ithaca will have such an establishment... heretofore admirers of Oriental dishes have had to go to other cities for their chop suey and similar Chinese delicacies.” While the owners were not Chinese, the “restaurant will have two Chinese cooks and a staff of Chinese waiters.”¹⁰⁸ The 1925 *Ithaca City Directory* lists the proprietor as Louie See Kow and four Chinese employees. The Shanghai Restaurant seems to have closed by 1927, but that year for a short time the Oriental Chop Suey Garden featured American Chinese food. By 1925 Atwater’s Big Food Store in Ithaca advertised “La Choy sprouts, Chow Main Noodles, La Choy Sauce, and Shou Yu Sauce” for home cooking.¹⁰⁹ And, in 1928, the “Table Talks Column” by Jeanette Beyer featured “Some Chinese Cooking,” and recipes with the assistance of two Chinese students, “Mr. Shu and Mr. Ku.”¹¹⁰

In 1931 the *Journal* announced the opening of the Asiatic Garden on East State Street, owned and operated by Wing and Susie Tang, who had come from Canton (Guangzhou) in southern China. When Ithaca’s urban renewal forced the Tangs out of their first building, they moved to 118 West State Street. Anyone who ate there remembers Susie, the waitress who knew what you wanted before you did. Eventually, Wing and Susie asked their son to help them develop the new restaurant. King Tang and his wife Jean took over the restaurant in 1965. It was a “traditional Mom and Pop operation” and remained that way until the end. The Tangs stuck to the tradition set by Wing and Susie — a Chinese American mix. Along with lo mein and fried rice, the menu had a lot of American dishes, such as steak, pork chops, roast beef, corned beef, fried haddock and scallops. “In the old days not many people ate Chinese food,” Jean says. “We kind of introduced Chinese food to the Americans.”¹¹¹

Italian spaghetti was also reinterpreted for American tastes, with the addition of more meat (spaghetti and meatballs) and sweetened tomato

sauce. Italian immigrants opened “spaghetti houses” across America.¹¹² The first mention of an Italian restaurant in Ithaca came in a 1925 *Journal* advertisement for a short-lived Joe’s Restaurant (not the same as the later Joe’s) on W. State Street, with “spaghetti” on the menu. After 1926 Italian restaurants came and went in Ithaca: in 1926 The New Seneca Hotel on Seneca and Fulton Streets was an “Italian Restaurant Specializing in Spaghetti and Macaroni”; in 1927 the Villa Oreste advertised itself as “Ithaca’s New Restaurant DeLuxe... Spaghetti Our Specialty... Three Miles from Ithaca on Trumansburg Road”; in 1929 Potter’s Restaurant in Trumansburg invited people to “Try our Italian Spaghetti and Chile Con Carne”; and in 1932 Roma Restaurant on State Street advertised “We Specialize in Spaghetti” available with meat balls, chicken, pork chops, steak, and mushrooms. In 1933 the New Deal Grill on State and Meadow streets had “Italian and American Cooking for Discriminating Appetites” including “Antipasto, Raviolas, Chicken a la Cassiatore, New Deal Scallopine, and Cutlet a la Milanese.” Then in 1933 Joe’s Restaurant opened at 602 West Buffalo Street, operated by Vincenzo Pollio and Elvira Yengo Pollio, which would be appreciated as a family restaurant and gathering place for many years.¹¹³

The Italian restaurants were usually family operations. When the Napoli Restaurant closed in 2019, Donna Sposito Sutton, the daughter of one of the owners, recalled: “Napoli’s grew out of culture, community, and most importantly family...it captures how our family was built, how it grew, and thrived in Ithaca and beyond. In each slice of pizza made by my dad and uncle, each spoonful of sauce made by my mom, each table bussed by a cousin, a sibling, a friend turned into family, there was love. And after 43 years, that’s all anyone can really ask for.”¹¹⁴

In 1942 The Italian Bakery advertised “Pizzeria far better than any you’ve tasted...” (as well as “Syrian bread”). In 1945, the “In the Kitchen” column of the *Journal* provided a recipe for “Pizza (pronounced peet-za)... an Italian pie with a savory filling made of sausage or anchovies and cheese. It’s the favorite after-the-movies-snack of teenagers.”¹¹⁵ Joe’s

Restaurant began serving pizza, “the famous Italian snack with Cheese or Anchovies” around 1947, and other restaurants followed (the Lehigh Valley Hotel advertised “Tomato Pie (also known as Pizza),” but it wasn’t until 1959 that Pirro’s Pizzeria began as a dedicated “pizza parlor,” with “The original Italian pizza.”¹¹⁶

It was a challenge for Ithaca’s small Jewish community to obtain kosher food in general and kosher food for Passover, in particular. There were no local sources for kosher meat and Passover matzoth had to be purchased elsewhere. In 1916 the *Journal* reported that “A large quantity of Matzoths or unleaven [sic] bread will arrive in the city for the use of members of the faith.” In 1916, Atwater’s advertised “Kosher Crisco.” In 1919 an article mentioned “a small consignment of ‘kosher’ meat’ shipped to Ithaca from Syracuse, and in 1922 a classified ad listed “Rye Bread Every day herring matzos, kosher sausage. Paluba 410 Cascadilla Street.” Abraham Paluba served as the Rabbi for several years, and also advertised “Passover Board” to Cornell students. The *Cornell Daily Sun* carried notices that local Jewish families invited Jewish students to contract for meals during Passover week. In 1932 Atwater’s advertised “For the Jewish Passover Yellow Pike White Fish” [for gefilte fish] and in 1933 Marshall Dairy Co. had “Kosher Milk and Butter Inspected by Rev. Samuel Saritzky for the Passover.”¹¹⁷

Delicatessens also offered Jewish food. The Alpine Restaurant, “Ithaca’s Newest Delicatessen and Restaurant,” owned by Samuel Kuntz, opened on North Aurora Street in 1932.¹¹⁸ Fink’s Delicatessen on Eddy Street, with “Kosher Style Sandwiches” began in 1948¹¹⁹ and, in 1952, became Firpo’s Restaurant and Delicatessen, advertising “Italian, American and Jewish Food.”¹²⁰ The Marilyn Hotel also served kosher food in its delicatessen, and, when it closed, its manager (and son of the owner Samuel Kuntz) Harold J. Kuntz opened Hal’s Delicatessen and Sandwich Shoppe on North Aurora Street in April 1961.¹²¹

In 1927 the Red & White Cafeteria on College Avenue advertised “Hungarian Food Prepared by Joe Lisseck. Patronage of Jewish Students Invit-

ed.”¹²² The Colonade, with “a wide variety of Syrian foods” opened in the late 1930s on the South Aurora Street Extension, advertising “Entertain Your Friends Differently with Syrian Food.”¹²³ In 1959 the Plantation Inn presented “Syrian Foods as You Like It! 4 miles east of Ithaca on the Ithaca-Cortland Road.”¹²⁴

The Ithaca restaurant scene saw little change through the 1950s. Additional Chinese restaurants joined the Asiatic Garden, and other Asian restaurants followed. As early as 1961 the Oriental Shop offered “Sukiyaki ingredients Rice Cookies & Crackers.”¹²⁵ Hiroyuki (Rick) Ogata bought the Oriental Shop in 1967, and in 1970 he opened Azuma as the first Japanese restaurant in Ithaca, “specializing in both Japanese and popular Chinese food...with an oriental decor, and on weekends, a girl wears a kimono, the Japanese dress, while serving customers... The restaurant employs two Japanese cooks....”¹²⁶

A greater array of food appeared: “Ithaca Discovers Indian cuisine and... lines of people have been waiting to get in since the very first day...” when Mandala opened in 1984, with two Indian chefs.¹²⁷ A review in January 1989 by Franklyn Crawford lavishly praised the new Thai restaurant: “...the mere fact that there’s a restaurant like The Thai Cuisine in our city is like a blessing from the Buddha.”¹²⁸ Wok Village, a family-style Chinese-Vietnamese restaurant, opened in 1990.

Etienne Merle, a graduate of Cornell’s Hotel School, opened L’Auberge de Cochon Rouge, in 1971, with a select French menu. While Greeks had owned restaurants and worked in restaurants from the early 20th century, it was not until 1972 that the Souvlaki House in Collegetown provided “Traditional Greek Cuisine.” In 1976 Zorba’s, a restaurant offered Greek cuisine claiming it was “The only Authentic Greek Restaurant in Ithaca. Let us prepare your complete Greek dinner to go and enjoy an evening in Greece in your own home.”¹²⁹ Subs & Such, Ltd., a Mexican restaurant on North Aurora Street joined the lineup in 1977: “Ithaca’s Only Mexican

Restaurant serving Mexican Taste Treats Such as Tacos Beef Burrito's and Mexican 'No Jumping' Beans" to be joined by two more Mexican restaurants, Juana's Cantina and Dos Amigos in 1981.¹³⁰

Today fast food, restaurants, or take out places offer a variety of cuisines. Supermarkets sell products from around the world. Some claim that "Ithaca, NY has more restaurants per capita than New York City and continues to attract diners across the globe."¹³¹ In fact, there are several pages of restaurants in the last phone book and online sites. Not surprisingly, currently more than 36 food establishments in Tompkins County offer pizza, America's favorite food.

Ethnicity and Identity

Once in this country, or in Tompkins County, people from other places did not abandon their earlier ethnic identities. Since direct evidence is hard to find, we turned to an unusual source, *Ithaca Journal* obituaries of foreign-born or first-generation people for whom a significant feature of their lives was a connection to their places or culture of origin. From the many obituaries that appeared in the *Ithaca Journal*, we offer these few:

November 29, 2008: *Arthur U. Kahkonen, born in 1913 in Plummer, Minnesota; orphaned at 9, "he was taken in by his mother's sisters who had emigrated from Finland"; he moved to Van Etten and farmed with his brother; became a lumberjack in Karalia, his parents' homeland; and worked in Baltimore steel mills before being blacklisted for union organizing. He farmed in Mecklenburg and ran Art's Transmission Service. He loved going to the meetings of the Finger Lakes Finns.*

April 7, 2009: *Robert O. Sundquist, 69; born in Ithaca, his life exemplified "courage and determination, as in the Finnish concept of Sisu."*

November 30, 2011: Joseph O. Ciaschi, 79, born and raised in Ithaca, the son of Italian immigrants. “Grandfather of restoration” in Ithaca transforming the Ithaca passenger train station into a restaurant, as well as restoring Boardman House, Lehigh Valley House, State Theatre, Maxi’s Supper Club, Odd Fellows Home, and Clinton House; member of Immaculate Conception Church and the Sons of Italy.

February 21, 2014: Irene “Iza” Rocker Feldman, 77, a Polish Holocaust survivor, she and her family immigrated to the U.S. in 1949, settling in Ithaca; she was the authority when it came to Yiddish; a lifelong member of Temple Beth-El and the Sisterhood of Temple Beth- El.

November 23, 2016: Matoula Manos Nickles, 88; born in Gorista, Laconia, Greece; she and her husband came to Ithaca in 1957 and owned Pop’s Place; she also worked at Manos Diner. She was a long-time member of St. Catherine Greek Orthodox Church where she served as the president of the Philoptochos Society.

February 27, 2016: Rachel Josefowitz Siegel, 91, born in Berlin; emigrated to the U.S. in 1939; moved to Ithaca in 1949, was active in Hadassah and Temple Beth-El. She wrote *Celebrating the Lives of Jewish Women: Patterns in a Feminist Sampler* (1997), *Jewish Women in Therapy: Seen but Not Heard* (1991), and *Jewish Mothers Tell Their Stories: Acts of Love and Courage* (2000) as well as a personal memoir.

November 29, 2018: Yoshiko Lange, 93, born Yoshiko Shimizu in Japan; met her husband who was with the U.S. Air Force; moved to U.S., and in 1963 became a naturalized citizen. In 1982, the family came to Ithaca; she spent many years working for the Cornell Library’s Wason Collection “where she was able to use her Japanese language skills to best advantage.”

June 29, 2019: *Samuel Norman, born 1930, parents immigrated from Syria; grew up in Portland Point. “In retirement, Sam fulfilled a dream when he... visited Syria where they met with family members in the village where his parents had grown up, and on what had been his father’s farm located on the shores of the Mediterranean.”*

March 16, 2019: *Mary Ann Snider, 77; born in Femoy County Cork, Ireland; immigrated to NYC in 1956; moved to Trumansburg in 1990; owned the Willow Creek Bar, taught Irish dance at Trumansburg Dance Studio and at the Community School of Music and Art.*

January 22, 2021: *Benedetto (Benny) Campagnolo, 98; born in Fondi, Italy; arrived in the U.S. in 1947; learned to make pizza at the Lehigh Valley House; and “loved feeding Ithaca his legendary pizza for over 6 decades” at the Roma Pizzeria, which he opened in 1969. He mentored other Italian Americans who went on to open their own pizzerias, including Vinny’s Italian Kitchen, Napoli Pizzeria, and Sal’s Pizzeria.*

Displaced at Heart

We might all be considered immigrants or displaced persons. We come from elsewhere, from over there, from afar, from the old country, from what was once home. Most people moved here for opportunity, leaving behind family and the familiar, but they also came fleeing persecution, poverty, or powerlessness. Each of us who comes does so cautiously, bringing an anxiety about finding a place — a place good enough for survival and for success for family. Those who came earliest, then those who joined them, those who came later, and the recently arrived, met challenges posed by this place and from the people already established here.

We are each a combination of cultures, of ways brought here and cultures acquired anew. We each bring things from the past, from elsewhere, and find ways to incorporate into our lives many strands.

We have overcome, however, the fear of the “other,” of those who worship differently, of those whose kitchens swell with aromas of elsewhere, so that now those dishes on kitchen platters can be the smell of home. Yet, in so many ways, we are still a people in transit. We are all from somewhere. We are here now and are, at least for a time, part of the story of Tompkins County, New York.

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Endnotes

- 1 See Kurt Jordan, *The Gayogohó:nq' People in the Cayuga Lake Region: A Brief History*, (Ithaca, NY: Tompkins County Historical Commission), 2022, part of a pamphlet series about Tompkins County's history.
- 2 Horatio Gates Spafford, *A Gazetteer of the State of New-York*, (Albany: B.D. Packard), 1824, p. 320, quoted in Harold William Thompson, *Body, Boots and Britches*, Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1939, p. 450. See also Lise Bang-Jensen, "The People of Tompkins County," *Ithaca Journal*, March 4, 1976 and Carol Kammen, "Whiskey and pumpkin pie rub elbows in Upstate," *Ithaca Journal*, June 5, 1982.
- 3 Not so noticeable today, these newcomers represented two distinct community cultures, those people from New England favoring a participatory town government, publically funded education, and often a town common on which cattle could graze. Those from the Middle Atlantic States in general preferred not to collect taxes for education, hiring schoolteachers or private tutors. The two views of community clashed along Keuka Lake resulting in the community of Pennsylvania-Yankee, or Penn Yan.
- 4 Wheeler, Peter, *Chains and Freedom or, The Life and Adventures of Peter Wheeler, A Colored Man Yet Living: A Slave in Chains, A Sailor on the Deep, and A Sinner at the Cross [three volumes in one], as told to Charles Edwards Lester*, (New York: E.S. Arnold & Co., 1839).
- 5 Geo. E. Goodrich, *The Centennial History of the Town of Dryden 1797-1897* (Dryden, 1898), p. 48; and "Sketch of Caroline's Earliest Days," in *What They Wrote: 19th Century Documents from Tompkins County, New York* (Ithaca: Cornell University Libraries, 1978), Carol Kammen, ed., pp. 32-34.
- 6 On December 1, 1818, J.J. Speed filed a manumission document with the Caroline Town Clerk freeing Peter Webb. See Charles Mulks Papers, #3654. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library. Box 4, Notebook 10.
- 7 See "Census of Ithaca," Jan. 5, 1826, *Ithaca Journal*, reprinted in *What They Wrote*, p. 28.
- 8 See Peleg Cheeseborough's recollections; John Perkins letter, and a letter to the Crittendens, in *Ibid*, pp. 9, 40 and 54.
- 9 Unsigned letter to the Editor, *Ithaca Journal & General Advertiser*, Sept. 2, 1846, p. 3. Children from rural families also left for better land or oppor-

- tunity. See the letter from Laura Case to her relatives in Caroline, in *What They Wrote*, pp. 54-55.
- 10 'Jacksonville', "Protection for American labor," *Ithaca Journal & General Advertiser*, Sept. 2, 1846, p. 3.
 - 11 *What they Wrote*, p. 61.
 - 12 William Wisner, *Elements of Civil Liberty*, (Ithaca: Andrus, Gauntlett & Co., 1853), p. 62. See also John Bodo, *The Protestant Clergy and Public Issues, 1812-1848* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954).
 - 13 *Ibid.*, pp. 221-22. There is, of course, much more that Wisner had to say, worrying that a law that required postmasters to deliver mail on a Sunday was a way of "violating" the acknowledged precepts of Christianity," [p. 76].
 - 14 *Ibid.*
 - 15 See Joe Mareane, *Political Tompkins: Presidential Elections in Tompkins County since 1828*, (Ithaca, 2021) pp. 16-21. This is the 4th in a series of pamphlets about local history published by the Tompkins County Historical Commission.
 - 16 "A Partial History of the Catholic Church in Tompkins County," *Ithaca Daily Journal*, February 16, 1880, and "Ithaca's Catholic Institutions," Feb. 28, 1881. See also *1889 Golden Jubilee Edition 1939 Catholic Journal*, (Rochester, N.Y.), Oct. 5, 1889.
 - 17 *Ithaca Daily Journal*, Feb. 16, 1880.
 - 18 See *Ibid.*, various issues throughout 1857.
 - 19 See *Ithaca Democrat*, July 19, 1888.
 - 20 See *Ithaca Journal & Advertiser*, Sept. 2, 1846, June 1849, and Aug. 1, 15, & 22, 1849 and see notes collected by Gretchen Sachse, former Tompkins County Historian [to 2000] in Tompkins County Historian Archives.
 - 21 See the New York State Census for 1855. The census for 1845 shows no one from Ireland in the county, but the figure of 809 from Great Britain certainly includes some Irish.
 - 22 See Carol Kammen, "Not the Most Isolated Place on the Eastern Seaboard," an essay about Cornell's early international presence <https://ecommons.cornell.edu/handle/1813/2857>.

- 23 Ezra Cornell Diary, Mar. 1, 1869, Ezra Cornell Papers, Box 38, Rare and Manuscript Collections [RMC]. Later in the diary on a page with no number, Cornell noted that fourteen Englishmen were to “sale” on the steamer *Jarva* on June 26. They were expected to arrive by July 5. See Alonzo B. Cornell to Ezra Cornell, May 14, 1869, Cornell Papers, 32/12 to 15.
- 24 After being shipwrecked and rescued, Lucy Crandall set up an English-speaking school in São Paulo, and divorced her husband, but remained in Brazil for the remainder of her life. Deceased Alumni Files, Rare and Manuscript Collections [RMC], Cornell University Library.
- 25 Anna Botsford Comstock. *The Comstocks of Cornell*, (New York: Comstock Publishing Associates, 1953) pp. 76-77.
- 26 *The Ten-Year Book of Cornell University*, v. 2, 1868-1888.
- 27 See *Ithaca Journal*, December 23, 1887; April 13, 1888; May 14, 1888; May 24, 1888.
- 28 St Luke’s first appears in the *Ithaca City Directory* in 1919.
- 29 *Ithaca Journal*, Feb. 17, 1890.
- 30 Anne Kramer, “The Early Ithaca Jewish Community,” typed manuscript, in Carol Kammen’s files, marked Jews.
- 31 Ibid.
- 32 See *Ithaca Journal*, Aug. 7, 1915.
- 33 See U.S. Census, Montgomery Alabama, 1920. The Mazur family eventually moved to St. Louis, Missouri, where Rabbi Mazur became the senior rabbi for Congregation Brith Sholom.
- 34 See Carol Kammen, *Lives Passed: Biographical Sketches from Central New York*, (Interlaken, NY: Heart of the Lakes Pub., 1984), pp. 105-07 and 155.
- 35 The Foran Act, or the 1885 Alien Contract Labor Law (Sess. II Chap. 164; 23 Stat. 332) prohibited the importation and migration of foreigners and aliens under contract or agreement to perform labor in the United States. In 1864 Congress passed a law encouraging companies to provide passage to workers in exchange for labor; this was repealed in 1885 when there was fear of a “flood of immigrants,” especially workers from south, central and eastern Europe.

- 36 Louise Matosich, "Ancestors left all they knew to come to Ithaca," *Ithaca Journal*, Aug. 23, 2008.
- 37 See 'Italians Americans in Tompkins County, V5-4-10 at the History Center, folder 6 which contains notices about Italians from 1909 through 1913.
- 38 Edmund DeWaal, *The Hare with Amber Eyes*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010) p. 188.
- 39 See, for example, *Ithaca Daily Journal*, Sept. 11 and 11, 1915. Italy first sided with Germany and the Austro-Hungarians but in 1915 switched sides to fight with Great Britain.
- 40 See Philip K. Hitti, *The Syrians in America*, (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1924) and Philip M. Kayal and Joseph M. Kayal, *The Syrian-Lebanese in America: A Study in Religion and Assimilation*, (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1975). And see Kammen's file marked Ethnicity: Syrians.
- 41 The sheriff and his assistant were invited to join the party and "did not reach home until shortly before daybreak." According to New York marriage records, Mary, age 15, and Michael were married in Ludlowville on January 26, 1914. See 1910 Federal Census for Michael Moses, born in 1890 in Assyria and immigrated to the United States in 1906. He was a boarder, along with seven others, in the home of Leo Abraham. See also *Ithaca Journal*, Jan. 27, 1914 for wedding announcement.
- 42 Today the church is managed by St. Catherine's Greek Orthodox Church and is opened one day a year for services.
- 43 See notes dated 30 Oct. 2008 of interview in Kammen's files Ethnicity: Syrians.
- 44 See Julia Mike obituary, *Ithaca Journal*, Oct. 2009 and George Peter obituary on Aug. 12, 2008. See also, email from Margaret McDowell who requested information about the Ithaca Syrian community, dated Aug. 10, 2020 in Kammen's files.
- 45 See *Ithaca Journal*, June 30, July 13 & 20, Aug. 1 & 2, 1888, and do not miss the long essay "Homes of the Heathen: A Glimpse of the Chinese Quarter of San Diego," by Walter G. Smith in which he complains about "people who come here to gather all the money they can, and take it out of the country," insisting that the thoughtful patriot is "opposed to the entry of Chinese," Ibid, Aug. 4, 1888. Chinese laundries could be found in Ithaca until 1917.

- 46 It's difficult to identify individual Chinese laundrymen. The newspaper gave them generic English names like "John Lee" and "Charlie Sing." The *Cornell Daily Sun* advertised "Mark On, Chinese Laundry, No. 5 N. Aurora St. and Joe On, No. 10 W. State St. downstairs" in 1888, but "Mark Yet, Chinese Laundry, No. 5 N. Aurora St." in 1890. The Ithaca directories mention "Lee John and Mahong, Chinese laundry at 5 N Aurora" Street in 1886; in 1888 Charlie and Joe Sing, Chinese Laundry at 5 N Aurora, with Kin Louie as an employee and On Joe, Chinese laundry in the basement of the Exchange Hotel. The 1900 Census lists two Chinese men: Ching Lee, born in 1866, who had immigrated to the U.S. in 1875, and could read, write and speak English, and Frank Lee, who was born in 1868 in California. Neither is listed in the 1910 Census. In the 1920 census, a Chinese man named George Toy was running a laundry at 117 S. Aurora St.
- 47 *Ithaca Journal*, June 9, 1909.
- 48 The name of the street was changed to Cleveland Avenue in 1908.
- 49 Richard Koski, "Finns of the Trumansburg Area," a five-page account in Kammen's files, Ethnicity: Finns.
- 50 George A. McGonigal, "Finnish-American Immigrant Workers and Institutions: An Overview (1890-1925)," and a Case Study (1919-1953), p. 15, unpublished student paper, 1985, copy in Kammen files: Ethnicity: Finns.
- 51 Richard Koski, "Finns of the Trumansburg Area."
- 52 See McGonigal, "Finnish-American Immigrant Workers and Institutions."
- 53 See obituaries for Aune Knunttila, *Ithaca Journal*, Nov. 9, 2017, Arthur W. Kahkonen, Nov. 29, 2008, Leslie R. Saikkonen, July 28, 2011, and that of Susan Ann Launonen-Hautala, who was for a time the Danby Town Historian, May 29, 2010.
- 54 *Ibid.*, June 14, 1883,
- 55 *Ibid.*, March 10, 1910.
- 56 *Ibid.*, July 19, Sept. 6 and Oct. 24. And see *Ibid.*, March 1 and 2, 1915.
- 57 *Ibid.*, Sept. 18, 1914, July 24, 1916; Feb. 22, and June 18, 1917 (Homolka), and Sept. 30, 1918.
- 58 See "Czechs and Bohemians" in the *Encyclopedia of Chicago* at www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org p. 153.

- 59 See Margaret Hobbie, "Czech Immigrants in Newfield: An Important Part of Our Heritage," in *DeWitt Historical Society Newsletter* (Spring 1985) pp.1 & 6. See New York State Census 1905 and Federal Census of 1910 and 1920 for Frank and Mary Tesar, who first made their home with John Tompson, his wife and mother-in-law Barbara Vik, all from Bohemia. The servant in that home was Lois Alorshorsak, also from Bohemia.
- 60 Ibid. pp. 4 & 5.
- 61 See Anthony Soblatura and Charles Douka in the 1920 U.S. census.
- 62 *Ithaca Journal*, March 6, 1914.
- 63 See March 22 and 25, 1915, Ibid.
- 64 Nov. 29, 1898, *Ithaca Journal*.
- 65 Anne Greenwood, "The Greek Immigration into Ithaca," paper written for a history class at Cornell University, 1974; copy in Kammen's files. Ethnicity: Greeks.
- 66 "Chacona Stores a Credit to Ithaca," *Ithaca Journal*, Dec. 24, 1908.
- 67 *Ithaca Journal*, Feb. 17, 1915.
- 68 "Celebrating Greek Independence Day in Ithaca," Ibid., March, 29, 2017.
- 69 "Foreign Born Here," talk by Robert Treman, reported *Ithaca Journal*, Feb. 22, 1917.
- 70 Ibid.
- 71 Ibid, Nov. 16, 1897.
- 72 Jingyuan Zhang, "Cornell Chinese Students' Club: The Early Days," unpublished paper in Elaine Engst's files.
- 73 When Yu Liang Yeh (1893-1971) came to Cornell in 1913, he was accompanied by his wife (which was unusual for any student, but especially for an international student). He went on to get a Ph.D. from M.I.T., worked for DuPont and returned to China to join his family business. A second Chinese-American baby was born early the next morning to Mr. and Mrs. James Yuan, who was a student at the Cascadilla School. See, *Ithaca Journal*, June 24, 1914.

- 74 Waro Nakahara was a graduate student at Cornell, who received his Ph.D. in biology in 1918. Berenice (or Bernice) Dorothy Waterman lived in Ithaca with her parents and worked as a stenographer at in the Entomology Department at Cornell. The couple were married by the retired Congregational minister, William Elliot Griffis, who maintained his connections with Japanese students. The *Ithaca Journal* on June 3, 1918 announced the marriage, without comment, except to note that Dr. Nakahara had been appointed to work at the Rockefeller Institute in New York. The couple returned to Japan in 1925, and he eventually became president of the National Cancer Center in Tokyo. He died in 1976, and a lengthy obituary noted that he was survived by his wife Berenice [sic] Dorothy Nakahara.
- 75 *Ithaca Journal*, Apr. 6, 1918 and *Ithaca Daily News*, April 6, 1918. Armenia (Millie) Breitenbecker Grove (1873-1962), the daughter of Louis and Elizabeth Bug Breitenbecker, worked as a telephone operator. Her paternal grandparents were from France, her maternal grandparents from Bavaria.
- 76 *Ithaca Journal*, Feb. 27, 1918.
- 77 Ibid., July 3, 1918.
- 78 See “Who was shut out?: Immigration Quotas, 1925-1927.” Available online at <https://docest.com/who-was-shut-out-immigration-quotas-1925-1927>.
- 79 See Shawn Lay, *Hooded Knights on the Niagara: The Ku Klux Klan in Buffalo* (N.Y.: NYU Press, 1995).
- 80 A diary notation “from Terry Davis’ aunt,” reported in an email from Patricia W. Gaines to Carol Kammen, dated Apr. 26, 1998, in Kammen’s files: under KKK.
- 81 A 2015 analysis of housing in Ithaca noted: “while the City’s Black population hovers around 6.5 percent, Census tract 10 (Southside, West End, and part of the West Hill neighborhood) is 22 percent Black or African-American.” *Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice*, City of Ithaca, New York, May 2015.
- 82 *Plan Ithaca Greater Southside Neighborhood Plan* Draft, Dec. 19, 2018. Available online at <http://www.cityofithaca.org/DocumentCenter/View/9220/Southside-Neighborhood-Plan-Full-Draft-2018-12-19>
- 83 For evidence of restrictive covenants in local deeds, see, in particular Deed Marked No. 255 between Ira L. Pearsall to William K. Ravert for parcel recorded in the Tompkins County Clerk’s Office in Liber 236 of Deeds at p.

490. See other parcels on Pearsall street, dated from 1929 to 1940. See email correspondence with Jay Franklin, Director of Assessments for Tompkins County, February 5, 2021.
- 84 See https://depts.washington.edu/civilr/covenants_report.htm.
- 85 This poem was given to me by a student in my History class at Tompkins Cortland Community College some years ago. Kammen files, Irish.
- 86 See personal interviews and letters in Kammen's files Ethnicity: Italians.
- 87 See Anna Aber Morus, "The History of Temple Beth-El Ithaca, New York," typescript, 1979, Kammen's files: Jews.
- 88 Elaine D. Engst, *Jewish Life at Cornell, 1865-2005*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Library, 2006).
- 89 James B. Gitlitz, *Memos for my Children: An Autobiography*, (Binghamton, 1995).
- 90 Ibid., quoted in Elaine D. Engst, *Jewish Life*, pp. 19-20. See also Harold Rosenthal, "One Man's Experience," *Cornell Alumni News*, (June 1982) p. 18. This comment was a continuation of a discussion begin in *Ibid.*, Nov. 1981. See also Harold Carl Rosenthal Papers, including a scrapbook and ca. 1982 typescript about anti-Semitism at Cornell (#37-5-1667).
- 91 Ibid.
- 92 Carol Kammen interview with Robert Garcia.
- 93 Letter, Jemma Macera to Carol Kammen, July 25, 2010 and Macera obituary, *Ithaca Journal*, Feb. 16, 2019.
- 94 See July 2, 2008, *Ibid.*, p. 7A.
- 95 See <https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-counties/ny/tompkins-county-population>
- 96 See University of Richmond American Panorama online: <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/foreignborn/#decade=1960&county=G3601090> The 1960 census shows an increase of 18.3% of foreign born, but that number only reflects a change in reporting, showing not only foreign born, but also the children of immigrants. For 1950, 1970-2010, only foreign born are included.

- 97 In 1987 a Hispanic Studies Program began. The name was changed to Hispanic American Studies, then to reflect more recent thinking, to Latino Studies in 1995 and to Latina/o Studies in 2015.
- 98 See Arun Venugopal, "The Making of a Model Minority," *The Atlantic*, Jan./Feb. 2021, , pp. 22-25.
- 99 Franklyn Crawford, *Snow Lion Newsletter*, Autumn, 2001, available online and <https://www.namgyal.org/about/overview-of-namgyal-ithaca/>
- 100 See www.CatholicCharitiesTompkins/Tioga/immigrant_services.org and <https://pocketsights.com/tours/place/Karen-Mural-Project-43905>
- 101 Latino Civic Association of Tompkins County: <https://www.lca-of-tc.org/>
- 102 <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/tompkinscountynewyork>
- 103 See University of Richmond American Panorama online: <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/foreignborn/#decade=2010&county=G3601090>
- 104 *Tompkins Weekly*, Feb. 24-March 2, 2021, p. 5. See also the website for Al-Huda Islamic Center at www.alhudaislamiccenter.org.
- 105 Historians now think that chop suey probably came from China's Pearl River Delta region with Chinese who came to California during the gold rush. See Andrew Coe, *Chop Suey* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009) and Anne Mendelson, *Chow Chop Suey* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016).
- 106 *Cornell Daily Sun*, March 22, 1923.
- 107 *Ithaca Journal*, Oct. 10, 1911.
- 108 *Ibid*, Oct. 21, 1922.
- 109 *Ithaca Journal*, Aug. 21, 1925.
- 110 *Ibid*. Dec. 26, 1928 Mr. Shu is probably Shu Kung Tsu (1928-1929 M.S.) Mr. Ku is probably Ku Yu Tsuan (Ku Yü-ch'üan) 1928-1931 MME, Ph.D.) from Shanghai, although there is also a Ku Chien-Chi (1926-1928 B.S.).
- 111 *Ibid*. Oct. 8, 1931 and https://www.ithaca.com/news/local_news/changing-times/article_69c11687-14ff-5cfe-a23e-452d811286d5.html
- 112 Corby Kummer, "Pasta," *The Atlantic*, July 1986 <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1986/07/pasta/306226/>

- 113 *Ithaca Journal*, Sept. 16, 1925; May 19, 1926; June 9, 1927; Nov. 30, 1929; Nov. 3, 1932; Nov. 11, 1933; Oct. 7, 1933.
- 114 "Founders Saddened with Closing," *Ithaca Times*, May 1-7, 2019.
- 115 Gaynor Maddox, "In the Kitchen," *Ithaca Journal*, Oct. 10, 1945.
- 116 *Ithaca Journal*, June 19, 1942; May 22, 1947; Sept. 23, 1949; Oct. 24, 1959.
- 117 *Ithaca Journal*, April 8, 1916; March 13, 1915; July 19, 1919; Jan. 17-23, 1922; April 18, 1932; April 8, 1933 and *Cornell Daily Sun*, Apr. 7, 1910, March 30, 1911, March 25, 1912, March 18, 1922.
- 118 *Ithaca Journal*, Aug. 19, 1932.
- 119 Ibid. Feb. 6, 1948.
- 120 *Cornell Daily Sun* April 19, 1952.
- 121 *Ithaca Journal*, April 5, 1961.
- 122 *Cornell Daily Sun*, Sept. 26, 1927.
- 123 Ibid., Nov. 7, 1935.
- 124 *Ithaca Journal* Oct. 7, 1959.
- 125 Ibid., Sept. 8, 1961.
- 126 Ibid., Sept. 12, 1967 The Oriental Shop was previously owned by John McCoy of Ithaca, assistant professor of linguistics, who taught Chinese linguistics as well as Japanese and Mongolian at Cornell for 18 years. He and his wife Stella offered popular Chinese cooking classes for some years in their home.
- 127 Ibid. June 26, 1984.
- 128 Ibid. Franklyn Crawford "Wondering where to go for dinner? Thai it, you'll like it." Jan. 5, 1989.
- 129 Ibid. Feb. 18, 1976.
- 130 Ibid. April 27, 1977.
- 131 <https://www.downtownithaca.com/directory/dining/>

Appendix: United States Immigration Laws

1875 • **Page Act** prohibited “undesirable” immigrants, i.e. contract laborers from Asia.

1882 • **Chinese Exclusion Act** provided a 10-year moratorium on Chinese labor immigration, with stricter criteria for “nonlaborers.” The act also placed new restrictions on Chinese who were already in the U.S., refusing state and federal courts the right to grant them citizenship.

1882 • **Immigration Act of 1882** imposed a head tax of 50 cents levied on all aliens who landed at U.S. ports. That legislation also excluded “idiots, lunatics, convicts, and persons likely to become a public charge.”

1885 • **Alien Contract Labor Law** banned the importation of contract labor

1891 • **Immigration Act of 1891** created the Bureau of Immigration in the Treasury Department to enforce immigration laws. It also extended exclusions to persons suffering from certain contagious diseases and required that the officers of every vessel carrying aliens to report the name, nationality, last residence, and destination of each person, and the return, at the expense of the shipping company, of anyone who did not qualify.

1892 • **Geary Act** extended the Chinese Exclusion Act.

1903 • **Immigration Act of 1903** specifically identified anarchists, as well as “people with epilepsy, beggars, and importers of prostitutes” for exclusion. Yet, while stiffening the requirements for entry, there was an exclusion to the rules allowing anyone liable to execution for a religious offense in their country of origin be permitted entry.

1906 • **Naturalization Act of 1906** increased the head tax was increased to \$5 and among other disqualifying traits, the importation of prostitutes or of any woman or girl entering this country for the purposes of prostitution. A literacy test was included, in either English or another language, of persons over sixteen of those who should be able to read.

1907 • **Immigration Act of 1907** excluded all people with specific mental or physical conditions or those “certified by the examining surgeon as being

mentally or physically defective, such... defect... which may affect the ability of such alien to earn a living.”

1907 • *Expatriation Act* stripped citizenship from American-born women who married non-citizen men (but not from men who married non-citizen women).

1910 • *White-Slave Traffic Act* (also known as the Mann Act) addressed enforced prostitution and human trafficking, “white slavery,” building on the federal Dillingham Immigration Commission appointed in 1907 to investigate the problem of immigrant prostitutes.

1917 • *Immigration Act of 1917* officially excluded about 500 million people from Asia and introduced a reading test.

1918 • *Immigration Act of 1918* expanded the Anarchist Exclusion Act.

1922 • *Cable Act* repealed the Expatriation Act.

1924 • *Immigration Act and the National Origins Act of 1924* (Johnson-Reed Act) limited the number of immigrants allowed to enter the U.S. by means of a 2% quota of each nationality represented in the federal census of 1890

1943 • *Exclusion Repeal Act* (Magnuson Act) also permitted Chinese already in the U.S. to become citizens.

1952 • *Immigration and Nationality Act* (McCarran-Walter Act) abolished restrictions for people of Asian ancestry and, while retaining the quota system, put more importance on labor qualifications.

1965 • *Immigration and Nationality Act* (Hart-Celler Act) abolished the national origin as quota system and created a priority system based on family reunification and skills.

For an excellent explanation of the shifts in American immigration law, see Jessica Goudeau, *After the Last Border: Two Families and the Story of Refuge in America*, published by Viking Press in 2020.

