Telling it like it was...

Illinois' elders share their stories

Illinois Department on Aging

Governor Rod R. Blagojevich
Director Charles D. Johnson

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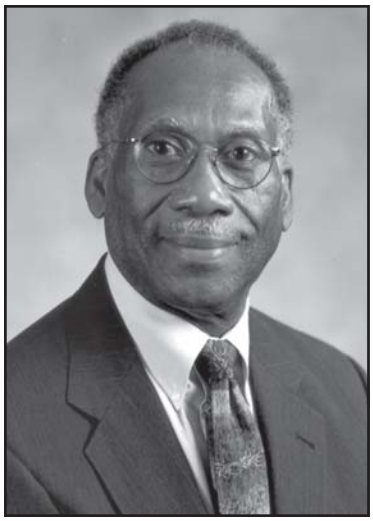
Together in Illinois



Dear Friends:

As this little book attests, the history of Illinois is not about just one dominant group, but rather the stories of the many groups of people who have come together to make our state strong.

In reading the book, I am struck by the strength of the peoples we are. It is a many-layered strength.

The strength of our state and our America is found in the singular fortitude, the toughness, if you will, of the individuals who came to this state. They came by choice and in chains; they came first-class and steerage. They came by horseback, in covered wagons and in boxcars. Others, the native inhabitants, accommodated to the newcomers. But all of them, no matter how or when they arrived, adapted with courage and grace, accepting new neighbors and new conditions with an eye on the future and a willingness to sacrifice that is awesome to contemplate.

The strength of our land is found in the support that extends within families and within communities for others who are newcomers, dislocated or made vulnerable by age or circumstance. It is found in the community leaders at the top of an arduous climb who recall their own struggle by reaching down to help those who follow. It is found in neighbors who help newcomers accommodate to new ways in a new land. It is found in the family members who respectfully help their elders, and by so doing, honor themselves and their children as well.

And the strength of our land is also found in the larger, diverse group that we are.

The strength of our state is the strength of us, the group. It is the strength that recognizes the weakness of isolation. It is the strength that respects the commonality of good intentions. It is the strength that prays for the hope of mutual effort.

Sincerely,

Charles D. Johnson

Charles D. Johnson
Director, Illinois Department on Aging

Table of Contents

The History of Immigrants in Illinois ..... *i*

AFRICAN AMERICAN: People of Color in Illinois ..... *iii*

Earlmond Adams ..... *vii*

NATIVE AMERICAN: The First to Arrive ..... *viii*

nu na hi du na tlo hi lu i (The Trail Where They Cried) ..... *x*

Russell Schafer ..... *xi*

1 ASSYRIA
Virginia Eli

3 BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA
Zlatan Buzaljko

5 BRITISH GUIANA
Rev. Carlton Hyliger

7 CAMBODIA
Hoeun Srey

9 CHINA
Xui Xian Chen

11 ETHNIC CHINESE FROM SOUTH EAST ASIA
Duc Huang

13 GERMANY
John Meyer

15 GREECE
Christos Thodoropoulos

17 HAITI
Henry Bellevue

19 INDIA
Sudha Baxi

21 IRELAND
Bill Murphy

23 THE ORPHAN TRAIN
Robert Emmet Manning

25 ITALY
Francesco Cesario

27 JAPAN
Margaret Yoshimura

29 KOREA
Shin Kang

31 LITHUANIA
Jonas Kavaliunas

33 MEXICO
Ricardo Avilez

35 PALESTINE
Suliman Dawod Maali

37 PHILIPPINES
Rufina Razon Ancheta

39 POLAND
Krystyna Nittka

41 PUERTO RICO
Delia Amparo Peña

43 RUSSIA
Sabina Pello

45 SCANDINAVIA
Krista Nielsen

47 SERBIA
Nikola Mitic

49 UKRAINE
Kamiliya Morozyuk

51 VIETNAM
Qua Van Tran

Ethnic Museums 53

Underground Railroad Exhibits and Programs

The History of Immigrants in Illinois

We all came from somewhere. Most of us are immigrants or descendents of immigrants; some more recent than others. Immigration to America occurred in three distinct "waves."

The First Wave

The first wave of immigrants came largely from western and northern Europe. The English were the main group in the 17th Century along with small groups of Dutch, Swedes and Welsh, among others. The number of immigrants from these countries peaked in 1790 and continued at a slower pace thereafter. Between the 18th and mid-19th Centuries, immigrants of German and Scotch-Irish ancestry arrived.

The Second Wave

Millions of Italians, Slavs and Greeks came between the last two decades of the 19th Century and the first decade of the 20th Century, forming the second wave of immigrants. These non-English-speaking "new immigrants" of the 19th Century, who came from southern and eastern Europe, were predominantly Catholics, Orthodox or Jewish. The "new" immigration peaked in the first decade of the 20th Century. World War I and the Great Depression practically ended European immigration until the influx of displaced persons and refugees during and after World War II brought many Poles and Lithuanians, among others, to our shores.

The Third Wave

Beginning in the mid-to-late 1960s, a third wave of immigrants has written its place in American history. Unlike the "old" and the "new" immigrants, the "third wave" was largely Asians, consisting of Vietnamese, Cambodians, Ethnic Chinese from Southeast Asia, Laotians, Hmongs, Koreans, Asian Indians, Pakistanis, together with some Latin Americans such as Cubans, Mexicans and Puerto Ricans. Conflicts in the Middle East and Eastern Europe have resulted in a geometric increase in the number of Assyrians and Palestinians, as well as refugees from the former Soviet Union and the former Yugoslavia. The fact that some of the third wavers came from pre-industrial, and even preliterate, societies presents unique problems in cultural adaptation and social adjustment.

"We all came from somewhere..."

Intergroup Relations

Each new wave of immigrants generated controversy by virtue of the language they spoke, the culture and customs they brought with them, and the nature of their social behavior and economic adaptation patterns. Each major wave of new immigrants had to contend with an outpouring of negative public opinion. The "old stocks," those who came before the beginning of the 18th Century, had mixed feelings about the new immigrants who came after them. They prided themselves on being the earlier people who had contributed to the political and religious foundations of the new country. On the one hand, they felt that new immigrants had "no business to be in this country." On the other hand, the new immigrants were needed as sources of cheap labor for the growing American economy. During the ensuing years, until the beginning

of the 20th Century, religious conflict festered, especially between Protestants and Catholics. The shifting patterns of national origins, and differences in language, religion and values were sources of prejudice and conflict. A product of this ferment was the concept of the "melting pot," which was coined to emphasize both the Protestant and English-speaking influence over other languages and relations. To minimize eastern and southern European influence, Congress passed the National Origin Act of 1924, which favored the native stock of the first wave of immigrants from northern and western Europe. The distinction for immigration purposes, between "Eastern" and "Western" hemispheres of the world, was thereby created to legally discriminate between groups who wanted to immigrate to the United States.

Conflicts between northern and southern Europeans during the early 19th Century were soon replaced with tensions between "Orientals" and "Occidentals" during the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. At the turn of the 20th Century, southern and eastern Europeans were expected to melt into the American melting pot with the aid of public schools, ethnic churches and temples, settlement houses and other civic and voluntary associations. Asians, however, particularly the earlier Chinese immigrants, were considered "unmeltable." Hostility toward the "Yellow Peril" took several forms, including the imposition of the Foreign Miner's Tax—originally passed to discriminate against Mexicans—on Chinese immigrants in the 1850s. Mob violence occurred in several western states until finally, in 1882, Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act — the first legislation ever to legally bar a specific group of people from becoming American citizens on the basis of race. Japanese farm labor workers were brought in to replace the Chinese until their numbers were also curtailed in the so-called "Gentlemen's Agreement" between the United States and Japan in 1907. Soon afterward the exclusion of all persons from the "Eastern" hemisphere of the world was enacted into law in 1924.

The 1965 Immigration Reform Act removed the racial restrictions to immigration and gave countries of the eastern hemisphere the same quota of 20,000 a year as that given to those of the western hemisphere.

The Melting Pot

The history of Illinois mirrors the arrival of each immigrant group to America's shores; it is a snapshot of the larger picture of ethnic ascendancy to power and public acceptance. Beginning with the Irish who first came in large numbers as canal diggers and laborers in 1836, immigrants and refugees left their mark on the landscape and socioeconomic life by virtue of their unique ethnic adaptation patterns and occupational achievements.

The changes that have taken place in Illinois are best exemplified in Chicago's historic Maxwell Street area. Here, Polish sausage shacks and Mexican taco stalls are found next to Chinese luggage vendors, where Kosher shops and authorized circumcisers once stood. Nearby are storefronts once owned by blacks, now managed by Korean retailers. Not too far away the store signs for wholesale and retail produce carry polyglot Greek, Italian and Jewish names, punctuated by Chinese characters and Spanish words. ❖

"The history of Illinois mirrors the arrival of each immigrant group to America's shores..."

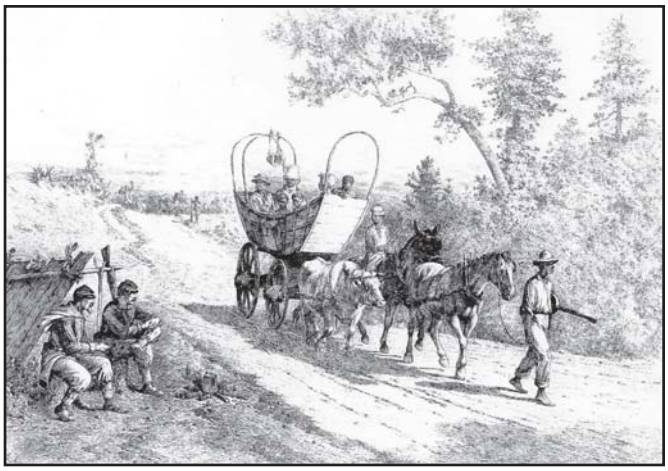
People of Color in Illinois

The first Illinois settler and Chicago's founder was a man of color, Jean Baptiste Pointe DuSable, a Haitian pioneer who came to this country as a fur trader in 1764 and in 1770 became the first outsider to settle in the Chicago area.

During DuSable's time, about one-sixth of the 3,000 residents of the Chicago area were black. This number included slaves, freemen, pioneers, sailors and immigrants from the East Indies and the Caribbean Islands.

In addition to freemen and immigrants, Illinois also was home to people of color who came to Illinois after buying their freedom. Free Frank McWorter was one. Born a slave in 1777, McWorter earned enough money to buy 16 of his family members out of slavery. In the fall of 1830, when he was 53 and his wife 59, they and their four free children traveled more than 500 miles in a covered wagon from Kentucky to Pike County in central west Illinois on the Mississippi River, where McWorter set up a farm. Other free black families lived around Golconda before the Civil War.

But DuSable, a free immigrant to the northern tip of the state, and Worter, a free land owner, are not representative of the black population in the state at that time. Illinois had a history of servitude from the early 18th century until the Civil War. Slavery was introduced into what is now Illinois when French settlers arrived in the first half of the 18th Century. The first slaves in the Illinois Country, as the area was called, were brought in by Philip Francis Renault, who worked for the French Trading Company. According to the "The History of Negro Servitude in Illinois," written by Norman Dwight Harris, Renault brought about 500 black slaves from Santo Domingo and settled by Fort de Chartres, near what is today Ste. Genevieve, Missouri. By the mid-18th Century, the French had established five settlements in Illinois Country: Kaskaskia, Cahokia, Fort Chartres, St. Philippe and Prairie du Rocher. Harris writes that there were about 1,100 French



Courtesy of Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

in these settlements and about 300 slaves. The slaves, he writes, were regarded as "real property" and forced to work as laborers and house servants.

In 1787, the U.S. Congress passed the Ordinance for the Government of the Territory Northwest of the Ohio River. Known as the Northwest Ordinance, it established a territory with laws that prohibited slavery, encouraged public education and guaranteed religious freedom and civil rights to its people. The provision, however, was weakened by its interpretation by the territory's first governor, Arthur St. Clair, who stated that it called for no new slaves, but that those

who had been held in bondage before the ordinance was passed would remain enslaved.

By 1803 some legal status was given to blacks, but the laws were widely ignored, historian Norman Harris writes.

Slavery did not become a real issue for the white majority until December 1817 when Illinois leaders were framing a constitution so that Illinois could be admitted to the Union. After heated debate over the slavery issue, "compromisists" won, Harris writes. As a result, in the new state of Illinois, people who were enslaved before 1818 would remain in bondage.

After that, conditions for slaves in the state seemed to get only worse. Between 1819 and 1853, a number of state "Black Laws" were passed, adding more restrictions on slaves. The laws prohibited any black person from settling in Illinois unless he or she had a freedom certificate that had to be attested to in court. No black person could be brought into the state to be emancipated. Blacks without a freedom certificate were judged to be slaves and were sold at auction as unclaimed.

Even worse, a law adopted in 1819 by the First General Assembly of Illinois permitted indentured servitude for blacks, a situation virtually indistinguishable from slavery. Although the law presumed that indenture would be limited in time, servitude for blacks often lasted a lifetime. The privileges of free slaves were limited, not expanded, by the act, which identified runaway slaves and indentured servants as property in a free state.

An example of the consequences of that law stands today in Shawneetown on the Ohio River in southeastern Illinois. Here, John Crenshaw, a salt manufacturer, allegedly established a virtual prison for indentured servants in the attic of his home. The operation, which used runaway slaves, was so sophisticated that the Crenshaw mansion included a secret wall that opened out like a garage door when wagonloads of slaves were driven into the house.

Illinois' second governor, Edward Coles, who had come to the state from Virginia because he abhorred slavery, tried to repeal the Black Laws in 1822 and to liberate the slaves held by the remaining French inhabitants, but he failed.

Fearing that slavery would be declared illegal, a majority in the Illinois General Assembly called for a statewide referendum to reconvene the Constitutional Convention. This way, legislators could amend the constitution to legalize slavery.

But efforts to reconvene the convention failed, probably because the people of Illinois were more likely to oppose slavery than to condone it.

It was not until 1831 that Abolitionist movement began in Illinois. Part of the Abolitionist movement involved the Underground Railroad, an informal network of anti-slavery "conductors" who helped enslaved "passengers" move to freedom by providing a ride or directions to the next "station," where "station operators" offered safe hiding places in homes, barns, churches and outdoor areas along the "railroad" to freedom, usually in Canada.

It was necessary to conduct this work underground, or secretively, because it was against federal as well as state law. It was dangerous business. The escaping slaves faced a constant threat of being

captured, becoming ill or dying from hunger and exposure to the elements. And their helpers, morally outraged by the thought of human slavery, faced consequences, too: the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 levied fines and imprisonment for anyone assisting an escaping slave.

Courtesy of Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Its position at the conflux of the Mississippi and Ohio rivers, adjoining the slave states of Kentucky and Missouri, positioned Illinois as an important crossing for the Underground Railroad. Once through the long state, slaves were relatively close to the West by crossing friendly Iowa that was an active anti-slavery state, or to Canada through Michigan or Wisconsin.

Although the Ohio river may have been gentler to cross than the Mississippi, more way stations were known to have existed on the western border of Illinois, perhaps because it was believed that a fugitive slave would find a less-threatening route through Missouri than through Kentucky and Tennessee.

One of the best-known stations was operated in the Princeton home of Owen Lovejoy, who was later elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, where he introduced the Emancipation Proclamation. (His brother, Elijah, was murdered by a mob angry at his anti-slavery stance as editor of the *Alton Observer.*)

Stations in Chicago were run in the home of John Jones, a tailor, on South Dearborn Street, and at a church on the site now occupied by Chicago's City Hall. The Jessie Kellogg home in DeKalb was the base of Abolitionist activities with the Congregational Church of Sycamore.

Benajah G. Roots bought land on Route 51, south of Tamaroa in Perry County, when he came west from Connecticut in 1839. In 1854, after housing fugitive slaves in his other Tamaroa homes, Roots arranged to have a three-story, 12-room house built near a railroad track specifically for use as an Underground Railroad stop. The house, with many barns and buildings offered a number of hiding places, including a fake cistern in the basement.

Although most Underground Railroad stations were secret and anonymity was essential, one site is well known in Illinois: the Richard Eells House in Quincy. Dr. Eells was caught transporting an escaping slave, charged with harboring a slave, found guilty and fined. Later he ran for several public offices on the Abolitionist Liberty party ticket.

Slaves who came through Illinois invariably did not stay in Illinois. This was because slaves feared being turned in. This was especially true after the Fugitive Slave Laws were passed by the U.S. Congress in 1793 and 1850 to make harboring escaped slaves illegal.

Illinois thus became treacherous ground for runaways as evidenced by sheriffs' notices for runaway slaves placed in newspapers for those African-Americans who could not produce a Certificate of Freedom, the official documentation of their freedom. Illinois also allowed slave owners from Kentucky,

Tennessee, Alabama, Missouri and Virginia to place ads in newspapers in search of runaway slaves.

Remarkably, some free people of color continued to prosper. One of them, James Henry Johnson, established a family farm on Wood Station Road in Alton in 1854.

When the Civil War began, most black people watched from the sidelines.

In the beginning, writes historian Lerone Bennett, Abraham Lincoln and his administration thanked black volunteers, and sent them home with an understanding that the war was a 'white man's war.'

For two years, black volunteers were denied military duty and the administration continued to return fugitive slaves and to appease the Border States that condoned slavery.

"Insofar as it can be said that Lincoln had a policy, it was to rid America of both slaves and blacks, Bennett writes in his book "Before the Mayflower." Finally, however, the North realized that blacks were needed in the war effort if the draft was to be avoided. So in 1862 Congress passed laws forbidding Union officers to return slaves to Confederates, emancipated the slaves held in the District of Columbia and gave Abraham Lincoln discretionary power to sue black groups.

After the Emancipation Proclamation was issued Jan. 1, 1863, black men (and a few women disguised as men) headed for the Union army. By the end of that year, there were 58 regiments of black troops with up to 50,000 black soldiers in Union ranks, although, historian Victor Hicken reminds us in his book "Illinois in the Civil War," that number was probably considerably higher because many were passing for white and others simply were not counted. Illinois supplied 1,811 black soldiers to the Union army, according to most authorities. Black participation in the Illinois army began on Sept. 24, 1863,

Courtesy of Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

when the War Department authorized Gov. Richard Yates to raise a regiment infantry of blacks from Illinois. In spite of opposition, the 29th U.S. Colored Infantry was finally mustered.

On Dec. 6, 1865, the 13th Amendment was passed to abolish slavery.

In 1876, John W. E. Thomas became the first black elected to the Illinois legislature. Rep. Thomas, who represented Chicago, eventually served in the 30th, 33rd and 34th Illinois General Assemblies. It was not until 1885, however, that Illinois enacted a civil rights bill for black citizens that had been framed by Rep. Thomas. ❖

Telling it like it was…

Earlmond Adams

Family and community: Is there anything more important than that?

Community and a sense of place in the Midwest are an important part of Earlmond Adams' life. A Chicagoan for the past 58 years, she was born in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and has lived in the Midwest all of her life.

"In the black community, family is important and our homes express our respect for history and our need to remain connected to our families and our communities," Earlmond says.

The history of her family proves her point. Her grandparents, like many Illinoisans of color, immigrated to the Midwest from the South and from border states where life was often perilous. The journey of her grandfather, William H. Roberts, from Missouri to Iowa is described in the book "They Came to North Tama: Old Buckingham Tranquility Folklore." Her grandmother, Mary Alice Thompson Roberts, made a similar trek from Arkansas to Iowa. The couple married and first lived in Iowa where he became a barber and she a fine dressmaker.

In 1910 the family moved to Cedar Rapids, Iowa, where, their daughter, Helen, attended high school and studied music, becoming an accomplished musician and serving as a church organist. She and her mother operated a dressmaking shop.

Helen was married June 29, 1921, to Thomas Allen Mason, who had come to Cedar Rapids from Cairo, Illinois. Thomas Mason, a leading black businessman in the small city, owned and operated a dry cleaning business. They were the parents of two girls and two boys: Earlmond, Earnestine, Thomas Jr. and Eugene. The family's dressmaking skills were passed on to Earlmond, while Earnestine inherited musical skills. Thomas Jr. followed the family pattern as an independent businessman and remained in Iowa, where his children live today. Eugene died young without descendents.

The family moved to Chicago in 1946, where they opened a grocery store in the Englewood neighborhood on the city's south side. The original store has closed, but the family still owns and lives in the building. Today, it is a duplex. Earlmond, who married and divorced, lives downstairs on the site of the original store; her only daughter, Carol, lives upstairs. Carol's only son lives nearby with his wife and baby son. Earnestine, now widowed, lives down the street from her sister.

"We like the feeling of rootedness," says Earlmond. "Family and community: Is there anything more important than that?"

The First to Arrive

Native Americans first arrived in Illinois more than 12,000 years ago. Until the arrival of French explorers in the late 1600s, Native Americans were the only people in Illinois. Many tribes called the prairies of Illinois their home and depended on the state's natural resources for survival.

During the 1700s and throughout the 1800s, the Illinois Indian's territory shrank and many began to move. Land formerly occupied by these moving tribes was taken over by other tribes and would eventually become desirable to white settlers.

Life was forever changed for the Native Americans, with treaties from the U.S. government being abandoned and their homeland taken away to accommodate the new settlers.

Black Hawk War

By the 1830s, the process of removing Indian tribes from lands in the eastern United States to accommodate white settlers had been embraced by President Andrew Jackson, many in Congress and the bulk of the population at large. Few were apologetic, believing that the tribes and their homes were obstacles to the spread of a superior civilization.

Native claims to eastern lands had often been guaranteed "forever" in treaties with the U.S. government in the early decades of the 19th century. However, the unstoppable westward drive of white settlers convinced authorities that many of those agreements should be scrapped and new ones negotiated that would assign the tribes to less desirable areas west of the Mississippi River. Weakened by protracted warfare and motivated by bribes and threats, most tribes could not resist relocation. A few, however, took stands against expulsion and resorted to armed resistance or sought the protection of the courts.

In the Old Northwest, the Sauk and Fox had maintained a homeland in the area along the Rock River, close to where it empties into the Mississippi (the vicinity of modern Rock Island, Illinois). In 1804, under somewhat dubious circumstances, the tribes surrendered their claims and agreed to eventually relocate across the Mississippi. They were allowed to retain temporary possession of their homeland until white settlers arrived in sufficient numbers to warrant the land's subdivision and sale — an event that did not occur until the 1820s. Not all Fox and Sauk supported this treaty and some did not feel bound by its provisions.

Black Hawk (1767-1838), a war leader of the Sauk and Fox, was an outspoken critic of relocation and had a history of being a thorn in the side of the U.S. government. He had fought with the British in the War of 1812 and maintained relations with officials in Canada in later years. By 1830, most of the Sauk and Fox had resettled west of the Mississippi under the leadership of Black Hawk's younger rival, Keokuk, whose moderation and willingness to relocate were welcomed by government officials.

"Black Hawk was an outspoken critic of relocation and had a history of being a thorn in the side of the U.S. government."

In 1831, Black Hawk, who had briefly moved to present-day Iowa, joined with some of his followers and crossed the Mississippi to reclaim their homes in Illinois. Nervous officials there, and in the neighboring Michigan Territory, summoned militia units. The threat of force was sufficient to induce Black Hawk to sign a new accord, the so-called "Corn Treaty," that recognized the 1804 agreement's validity. Black Hawk retreated again to Iowa.

A harsh winter in 1831-32 reawakened sentiments among the Sauk and Fox for returning to the more hospitable environment of their former home. In April 1832, Black Hawk led more than 400 warriors and their families back to the Rock River where they planted their corn for the coming year. The Indian intention should not have appeared warlike. Less than one-fifth of the Sauk-Fox population migrated, the majority of them women, children and older people. Nevertheless, the Illinois governor again called up the militia and requested regular U.S. Army soldiers.

In May, the tense situation began to spin out of control when a Sauk emissary, under a white flag of truce, was shot and killed by a militiaman. In retaliation, Black Hawk and his warriors surprised a militia encampment with a nighttime attack.

The resulting conflict was hardly a war in the traditional sense. The natives under Black Hawk's command retreated northward ahead of the combined militia and regular forces, moving from northern Illinois into present-day southwestern Wisconsin. One encounter of note occurred on July 21 at Wisconsin Heights, where Black Hawk demonstrated great skill in avoiding a crushing defeat, but paid a heavy price in the lives of his dwindling number of warriors.

The climax came in early August where the Bad Axe River flows into the Mississippi. On August 1, Black Hawk, under a white flag, attempted to surrender to forces aboard the steamboat Warrior, but the vessel's suspicious captain opened fire, killing and wounding a number of Black Hawk's followers. That evening, Black Hawk decided to continue the northward retreat, but the bulk of the native force chose to remain and make a stand. On the 2nd, the Sauk and Fox were decisively defeated on the banks of the Bad Axe. Over an eight-hour period, soldiers slaughtered fleeing Indians indiscriminately.

Courtesy of Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

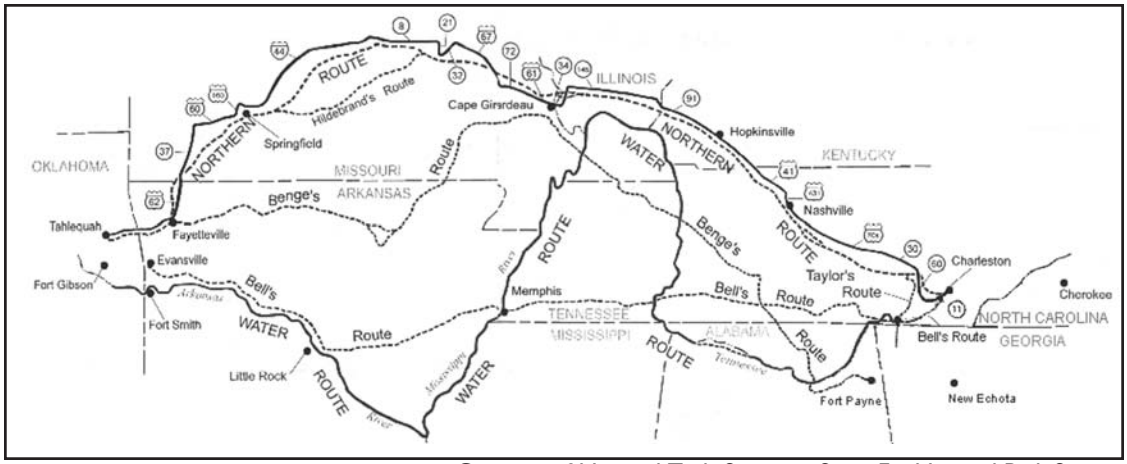
Black Hawk took refuge with the Winnebago, but was later handed over to U.S. forces and temporarily imprisoned in St. Louis. He lived out his life on tribal lands in Iowa and died in 1838 at the age of 71.

Seventy settlers and soldiers, and hundreds of Black Hawk's band died as a result of the war, which also signaled the end of conflict between settlers and Native Americans in Illinois and Wisconsin.

Native resistance to relocation occurred roughly contemporaneously among the Cherokee and Seminole in the South. ❖

* (Information on Black Hawk was obtained via www.u-s-history.com).

nu na hi du na tlo hi lu i (The Trail Where They Cried)



Courtesy of National Trails System – Santa Fe, National Park Service

"One by one Indian people were removed to the West. The Delaware, the Ottawa, Shawnee, Pawnee and Potawatomi, the Sauk and Fox, Miami and Kickapoo, the Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek and Seminole. In all, some 90 thousand Indians were relocated. The Cherokee were among the last to go. Some reluctantly agreed to move. Others were driven from their homes at bayonet point. Almost two thousand of them died along the route they remembered as the Trail of Tears." Documentary: The West (Ken Burns/ Stephen Ives)

Nearly 9,000 Cherokees passed through Southern Illinois between 1838 and January 1839 on their fateful Trail of Tears, crossing the Ohio River into Illinois at Golconda. Their trek took them westward on the 19th century version of what is now Route 146.

Today, the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail auto route enters Southern Illinois on the ferry at Cave-In-Rock, turns west onto Route 146 north of the city and continues westward until it crosses the Mississippi.

The Trail of Tears

As settlers of European descent entered (around 1803), Native Americans were pushed south and west. In 1838-39, the Cherokee, Creek, and Chickasaw nations were forced by the U.S. Army to move from the southeast to reservations in Oklahoma Territory. They spent the winter at makeshift camps four miles south of the Forest's southern boundary. Bitter cold and starvation claimed hundreds of lives. The cruel trek came to be known as the "Trail of Tears." The State Forest's name memorializes the tragic event.

The Trail of Tears State Forest, administered by the Division of Land Management, is situated in western Union County. Just over 5,000 acres are within the State Forest. Visit the Illinois Department of Natural Resources' web site at www.dnr.state.il.us to learn more about the Trail of Tears State Forest.

Telling it like it was…

Russell Schafer

"The 'Trail of Tears' was a horrible journey for Native Americans," Russell said. "It breaks my heart to even imagine how they suffered."

Russell Schafer never knew his maternal grandmother. As a matter of fact, he doesn't remember if he was even told her name. All he knew was that she was a Cherokee Indian and that she had married a French fur-trader in the late-1800s in Missouri. Russell's mother was born in 1904 and later moved to Tallula, Illinois, where he was born in 1924. He spent his adult life as a farmer in Middletown, Illinois, with his wife, Zona and their four children.

Growing up during the Depression was tough enough, but to also be teased and called "half-breed" was a lot for a young boy to handle. But, according to Russell, he developed a strong character because of it. "I never had much time to play, anyway," he said, "because I had to work with my dad, who was a carpenter, to help out the family. So I tried not to let the teasing bother me too much.

"I hate to admit that I was ashamed of my heritage growing up, but I'm very proud of it now," he said. "And I know that what I went through was nothing compared to what my ancestors endured."

"The 'Trail of Tears' was a horrible journey for Native Americans," Russell said. "It breaks my heart to even imagine how they suffered."

Mr. Schafer stated that he wanted to learn more about his Cherokee heritage, but records were poorly kept, if at all, once the tribes started their trek west. Many descendents of Cherokee Indians can neither be certified nor qualify for tribal membership in the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma because their ancestors were not enrolled during the final enrollment. Only enrolled members of the Cherokee Nation named on the Final Rolls, which were compiled between the years of 1899-1906, were listed.

Footnote: Russell Schafer passed away soon after this interview was conducted.

Of the 4.5 million Assyrians in the world, nearly one-fourth of them live in Illinois. They are a proud people with an empire that once stretched from Egypt to Turkey. The empire shrunk to the area of Mesopotamia, between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, and then eventually to nothing. But their spirit, their culture and language lives on. Although most of Illinois' Assyrians were born in Iraq, many were also born in Iran, Syria and Lebanon. A smattering was born in Turkey and the former Soviet Union. They all learn Assyrian at home, as their first language; those born in Iran learn Farsi in school, and those from Iraq, Syria and Lebanon learn Arabic. Assyrians claim to be the first Christians, and are still closely aligned with one of three religious sects: the Church of the East, the Syrian Orthodox Church, and the Chaldean Church. Their language is similar to the language of Christ. While Assyrians are visible in all professions, they tend to be self-employed, many in restaurants and grocery stores. Scores of the Middle-Eastern restaurants in the Chicago area are owned by Assyrians.

The first wave of Assyrians came to the United States following the massacre of Assyrians by Turkish and Kurdish forces during World War I. About 3,000 settled in Chicago and formed a community for subsequent arrivals. A second wave came in 1948 following the persecution of Assyrians in Iran. Many more came, especially from Iraq, during the Iran/Iraq war of the 1980s. And, of course, the Gulf War in 1991 and the subsequent embargo against Iraq led

to still more refugees fleeing shortages of food and medicine. Many continued to come through the 1990s from Iraq, Iran, Syria, Lebanon and Turkey. They came as refugees, as students, and as immigrants under the family reunification program. It is not unusual to spend several years in a refugee camp or in another country while awaiting authorization to come to the United States

Assyrians are not leaving Iraq right now, but they would like to. There are long lines at the Iraq Passport Office in Baghdad, full of Assyrians trying to obtain their first ticket out of the country — a passport. There are family members in the United States, Australia, Europe and New Zealand ready to sponsor them, but they need passports and they need authorization from the host country.

Telling it like it was…

Virginia Eli

Virginia's plan to bring the last six of her eight children is unfulfilled.

The succession of immigration within a family can be seen in Virginia Eli's story. She has eight children, six in Baghdad and two in the United States. Her daughter married an Assyrian who came to America in the 1980s; in 1992 he returned to Iraq to get married and brought his new wife to Texas. When his wife became a citizen, she sponsored her mother, Virginia. The plan was that Virginia would become a citizen and sponsor her other children. But Texas didn't suit her because there was no Assyrian community; there was nobody to talk to. She was lured to Illinois by a sick cousin who needed someone to help her, and by the large Assyrian community.

Virginia Eli was born about 60 kilometers north of Baghdad, but moved to Baghdad as a child and lived there until immigrating to the United States in 1998 at age 61. The cousin she was caring for in Chicago died, and Virginia moved into the home of another older person who needed help. That person subsequently went to a nursing home, and for the past three months Virginia has found temporary shelter in the various homes.

The plan to bring her other children to America has not yet been fulfilled because Virginia was unable to pass the citizenship exam. She will try again. Returning to Iraq is, of course, not a safe option at this time. She will reapply for citizenship, even though the $345 application fee is more than she made last month.

Virginia would like to live in a subsidized senior housing facility, and is on the waiting list for a couple of them. But they have to be within walking distance of the community agencies and the churches. She goes to service at an Assyrian church every day; on weekends she goes to the Assyrian church as well as an "American" church. As with previous generations of immigrants, the church and ethnic community agencies are her source of comfort, support and companionship.

Bosnia-Herzegovina, with Sarajevo as its capital, was, until 1992, one of the six republics of the former Yugoslavia. It was a modern, prosperous republic, with religiously diverse populations living in relative harmony. Under the leadership of Josip Tito, Yugoslavia broke with Stalin's brand of communism and established its own brand. Under Tito's communism, public worship and religiously-based customs were discouraged or banned outright. In the Bosnia of 1992, 44 percent of the population was Muslim; Eastern Orthodox Christians (also called Serbs) were 31 percent of the population; and Roman Catholics (also called Croats) were 17 percent of the population. While there were some villages in the countryside where one group or the other predominated, Bosnia's towns and cities have traditionally been the shared home of people from all religious groups. According to the 1990 census, 41 percent of all marriages in Bosnia were between partners from different religious backgrounds.

The rise to power of Slobodan Milosevic, and his belief in religious purity, hastened the dissolution of federal Yugoslavia. By 1992, the Republics of Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina had declared their independence. In retaliation, Milosevic directed the Yugoslav National Army to cleanse the country of all non-Serbs. This included Serbs who were married to non-Serbs, or who had a parent who was a non-Serb. The National Army overran 70 percent of Bosnia's territory by driving out, imprisoning or killing the non-Serb inhabitants.

Nearly 250,000 Bosnians were killed by Milosevic's troops, and 800,000 took refuge in other countries. An estimated 200,000 came to the United States, many after having spent several months in concentration camps or countries that offered temporary asylum. The first to come to Chicago, in December 1993, were medical evacuees. In 1994, the United States granted refugee status, and the trail of refugees began. There are more Bosnians in Illinois than in any other state. Of the estimated 40,000 in Illinois, three-fourths are in Metropolitan Chicago; the others are employed in meat packing and manufacturing plants in places like Moline, East St. Louis and Quincy.

Telling it like it was…

Zlatan Buzaljko

He was arrested when he was 56 years old and put in a concentration camp. He never knew why.

"My life was just like anyone else's. I lived in a house with my family and worked as a pharmacist. Then, it was all taken away when I was put in a concentration camp. I barely escaped Bosnia with my life."

Zlatan Buzaljko's story is similar to most refugees. They had everything to make a nice life, and then they had nothing. Mr. Buzaljko was 56 years old and living in Stolac, Herzegovina when he was arrested by Croatians and put in a concentration camp. The reason for the arrest? Maybe because his father was a Muslim. Maybe because his mother was a Serb. Maybe because he was a leader — director of all pharmacies in Herzegovina. He never knew the reason.

Zlatan spent the next 18 months in two concentration camps. He witnessed unspeakable torture and killing almost daily. His wife, who was hiding and waiting in Croatia, was wounded twice from Croatian and Serbian shelling. Zlatan was released from the camp in 1994 by the International Red Cross, with the stipulation that he leave the country immediately. His first choice was Norway, because one of his two sons was already there. The second son was still in a concentration camp. Unfortunately, Norway closed their refugee program the day before Zlatan applied, so he and his wife came to the United States. His second son joined them several months later when he was released. The Buzaljko's have one son and two grandchildren in Chicago, one son and two grandchildren in Norway, and another grandchild in Herzegovina. Zlatan's brother and 92-year-old mother live in Serbia; another brother is in Montenegro.

The U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement gave Zlatan the choice of three cities to live in, and he chose Chicago. A resettlement agency helped the family find housing, clothing and furnishings, and offered English classes and employment services. Because of his poor mental health, he qualified for Supplementary Security Income (SSI). He learned English well enough to pass the citizenship test and helped other Bosnians adapt to life in the United States. In spite of the death of his wife, and his own poor health, Zlatan has the spirit and determination to make life better for his family, his friends and other refugees who are trying to balance their memories with their dreams.

British Guiana was the name of the United Kingdom colony on the northern coast of South America, now the independent nation of Guyana.

Before the arrival of Europeans, the region was inhabited by both Carib and Arawak tribes, who named it Guiana, land of many waters. The Dutch settled in Guyana in the late 16th century, but their control ended when the British became the de facto rulers in 1796. The colonies of Essequibo, Demerara and Berbice were officially ceded to the United Kingdom in the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1814 and at the Congress of Vienna in 1815. In 1831 they were consolidated as British Guiana. Following the abolition of slavery in 1834, thousands of indentured laborers were brought to Guyana to replace the slaves on the sugarcane plantations, primarily from India but also from Portugal and China. Some maintain that in today's population there are two types of Guyanese, those who derived from the African slaves (Afro-Guyanese), and those who derived from the Indian indentured servants (Indo-Guyanese). However, Guyanese culture is in many ways homogeneous, due to shared history, intermarriage and other social-cultural factors.

The British stopped the practice of importing labor in 1917. Many of the Afro-Guyanese former slaves moved to the towns and became the majority urban population, whereas the Indo-Guyanese remained predominantly rural. A scheme in 1862 to bring black workers from the United States was unsuccessful. The small Amerindian population lives in the country's interior.

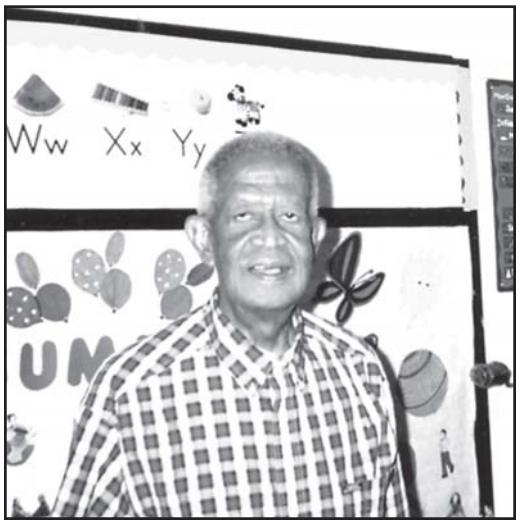
The people drawn from these diverse origins have co-existed peacefully for the most part. Racial disturbances between Indo-Guyanese and Afro-Guyanese erupted in 1962-1964, due in large part to external intervention. However, the basically conservative and cooperative nature of Guyanese society contributed to a cooling of racial tensions.

Guyana achieved independence on May 26, 1966, and became a republic on February 23, 1970.

* (Information on Guiana was obtained via Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia).

Telling it like it was…

Rev. Carlton Heyliger



We are honored to have him as part of our family here.

A better education for his children was the dream that led Carlton Heyliger to the United States in 1968. Born Jan. 31, 1917, in the former British Guiana, he became a minister in his native country and lived a satisfying life with his wife, Elaine, in McKenzie City, a very prosperous industrial city in Guiana. Life was good, but the Rev. Heyliger wanted to give his children something extra — he wanted to ensure his children the benefit of a formal education.

The first stop in America was Washington, D.C. It was here that the Rev. Heyliger first preached — to the 1969 graduating class at Howard University. The event was made even more special because one of Howard University's graduating engineers was the Rev. Heyliger's son.

In 1976 at age 60, the Rev. Heyliger joined the Foster Grandparent Program. He was assigned to the Hazel Bland Promise Center in East St. Louis, which is a center especially designed to assist children with special and exceptional needs. The Rev. Heyliger felt the assignment would be a challenge, however he accepted it graciously. Twenty-eight years later he is still volunteering his services at the Hazel Bland Promise Center.

"Rev. Heyliger is a stable and trustworthy fixture here at the Promise Center," says Joyce Williams, director of the center.

"He has devoted himself to the lives of the children he serves. He is respectable and an honorable person whom is reliable, dependable and steadfast with his service to the program.

"We are honored to have him as part of our family here."

The Foster Grandparent Program and the Hazel Bland Promise Center where the Rev. Heyliger volunteers his service understand that his mission to the Foster Grandparent Program is to give back to others the knowledge, experience and wisdom he has acquired.

Cambodians have suffered the tragedies of war from the time of the revolution in 1970 to the communist takeover in 1975. Moreover, from 1975-79, they were exposed to genocide, on a scale not known since the holocaust. It is estimated that over a million of their own people were killed by fellow Cambodians, the Khmer Rouge under Pol Pot. In early 1979, after invading Cambodia, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam installed a government under its control. The Vietnamese have been centuries-old enemies of the Cambodians.

A small first wave of Cambodian refugees was, in large part, comprised of businessmen, military personnel and students. Later, in 1979 and 1980 - the years of the boat people and, during the Khmer Rouge's reign of terror, a more heterogeneous group came. Many were of peasant origin, and were put on a plane and set down to cope with a frantic, urban America. In many cases, the older men had been rice farmers, and the women housewives in a subsistence agricultural economy. Because the Khmer Rouge systematically killed persons with education or professional status, very few of those who came to the United States had much formal education; even fewer spoke English. Most came with little or no money and few possessions.

Because of their backgrounds, Cambodians in Illinois have found it difficult to get good-paying jobs. The language barrier is hard to overcome because many adults were illiterate when they arrived, unable to read and write in even their own language. The

Cambodian community suffers greatly from the loss of family members, caused by the vicious killing in their home country. Many families are headed by widows and often there is little adult supervision. Adults who are struggling to survive themselves, often are unable to give their children direction. A Cambodian resettlement agency, with leadership sensitive to what the community needs, has been successful in establishing programs and services to instill the values that the Khmer Rouge tried to destroy.

Telling it like it was…

Hoeun Srey

He spent four years in a work camp where he endured starvation and witnessed unspeakable horrors.

Before April 1975, Hoeun Srey led a comfortable, happy life as a husband, father of four, and a rice farmer (with a few cows). Then the Khmer Rouge overran the country, emptied the cities, confiscated farmland, and sent people to work camps. Hoeun spent four years in a camp, separated from his family. He witnessed unspeakable horrors and endured starvation that killed many others. One hundred people in his camp had to share a daily total of 10 cups of rice.

In 1979, Vietnamese forces subdued the Khmer Rouge terror to the extent that Hoeun was released from the camp and joyfully reunited with his wife and daughter. One son was killed by the Pol Pot regime, and the other two were somewhere in Cambodia. He, his wife and daughter walked for two days and two nights to reach the border of Thailand where they found caring faces, food and medical treatment in a refugee camp. For the first time in years, Hoeun felt safe!

The little family of three lived in the refugee camp for six years. On Dec. 30, 1985, they flew to the United States. The first stop was in Washington State where Hoeun was outfitted for winter with his first coat, hat, gloves and boots. Then they flew to Chicago. The first time Hoeun saw a snow-covered tree, missing all its leaves, he thought it was dead. He — and the trees — experienced new life the first spring after his arrival. He was reunited with other Cambodians through the Cambodian Association of Illinois. The agency assisted him and his family with obtaining financial benefits, medical care and learning English. Hoeun learned English so well that he successfully passed his U.S. citizenship test in 1997. His framed certificate hangs on the wall above his bed.

Hoeun's wife died a few years ago; her death brought him great suffering. He lives with his daughter who works at a jewelry factory. This 81 year old greets each day by meeting his Cambodian friends at the lakefront and vigorously exercising. In bad weather, he runs up and down the stairs in his apartment building. He enjoys eating Chinese food in a neighborhood restaurant and attends a Cambodian Buddhist temple.

Hoeun has not seen his sons for nearly 30 years. Neither he nor they have enough money to make the long journey to visit. The sons call him every couple of months. He shows a picture of one of 17 grandchildren, a grandson who has brought honor to the family as a Buddhist monk. Another photo shows a young grandson proudly holding a one dollar bill, sent to him by a grandfather he has never seen.

Chinese immigrants first came to the United States for the California gold rush. Later, they supplied the cheap coolie labor to build the transcontinental railroad. After the last spike of the railroad was set in place, the Chinese settled in the western states and worked in jobs that were considered "women's work" — cooking and washing in what were predominantly male-only frontier towns. In so doing, they gained a foothold in the establishment of Chinese restaurants and laundries.

Anti-Chinese sentiment ran high during the 1870s and resulted in riots as well as legislation that forbid Chinese men to marry non-Chinese women. The first segregated residential area was formed in what is now San Francisco's Chinatown. The development of Chinatowns in other cities, including Chicago, followed the same pattern. Residential segregation in northern cities began with the Chinese, and later the same practice was applied to African Americans during their large internal migration to northern war plants. Discrimination against Chinese in California was the impetus for a migration eastward, toward cities like Chicago and New York. In 1872, the first Chinese laundry opened in Chicago. Two years later there were 18 such laundries. The first Chinatown in Chicago was established in the 1880s.

The residential communities, particularly in Chicago, were not traditional, family-centered ones. In 1910 there were 1,713 men and 65 women. This imbalance altered slightly after World War II with the passage of the "Bride's Act," which allowed Chinese men who served in the military to return home to get a bride. An added consequence of past legislation resulted in Chinese men entering their infirm years with little or no family support. The first Chinese social service organizations were formed to assist these men.

Illinois' Chinese population can be divided into the old, Cantonese-speaking stock who came from six villages in Guangdong Province, and the new stock who came here as students, professionals and technical personnel, and who are scattered around the state. They came from Taiwan, Mainland China, and Hong Kong. A wave of Mandarin-speaking students and professionals came after being displaced by the 1949 revolution in China. By the mid-1970s, another major immigration occurred as China and America renewed relations, in what was dubbed "ping pong diplomacy." Current immigration policies favor professionals, those who are self-supporting, and those who are reuniting with family members. It is primarily the elderly who are reuniting with family members.

Telling it like it was…

Xui Xian Chen

Her five younger brothers are devoted to her. She cared for them most of her life.

Xui Xian spent most of her life caring for her five younger brothers; now they're looking after her. When her mother died, and the youngest was still a baby, Xui Xian took over. Her schooling was interrupted and domestic chores filled each day. Even when her father remarried and had two more children, the stepmother didn't assume any responsibility for the children from the first wife. Xui Xian chose not to marry because she didn't want to leave her brothers in the care of the stepmother.

Xui Xian's father worked at an import-export firm in the cosmopolitan, westernized city of Shanghai. Perhaps because it was such an important trade and business center, the city was an enticing target during the communist revolution of 1949. The Chens, like most others, lost their jobs and had their property confiscated. Worry over his family caused Xui Xian's father to become ill, and he died leaving Xui Xian and her stepmother without a peacemaker in the home.

Fortunately, the oldest brother was already in the United States, doing research work in Illinois for a Shanghai-based chemical company. He petitioned for the next two brothers to join him, so that all three were safely in America before China closed the door. The brothers were unable to return to China, or even to receive news about the family for several years.

When China opened up, and people were able to leave, the brothers in Illinois brought the two remaining brothers to the United States and, in 1991, Xui Xian, at age 71, joined them. She lives in a residential facility for Chinese elderly in Chicago's Chinatown district. She seems to always be smiling, even though her world is pretty silent. Her English skills are very limited, in spite of regular attendance at English classes. Also, everybody around her speaks Cantonese and she speaks Mandarin. There is no similarity between the two languages.

But she still has all five brothers, and they all live in Illinois. They are devoted to her; they come to visit, they bring groceries, take her on outings, and they speak her language!

With the fall of South Vietnam to the Viet Cong in 1975, the Vietnamese were not the only refugees fleeing the war-ravaged country. Thousands of ethnic Chinese from Vietnam found equal, if not greater, reasons to flee. With the subsequent fall of Cambodia and Laos, ethnic Chinese who had settled in those countries joined Cambodians and Laotians in fleeing for safety. Most of the ethnic Chinese in Vietnam came from the Guangdong Province of China; or, more likely, their ancestors did. Many had never lived in China, but spoke Cantonese, lived in segregated communities, and were not part of the mainstream societies.

The Chinese are a mercantile people, and ran businesses in the countries where they settled. Indeed, many of the Vietnamese restaurants and businesses in Illinois are run by ethnic Chinese from Vietnam. When the Communists took over Vietnam, the Chinese were among the first to have their businesses and homes confiscated and were often expelled to the countryside where they were forced to clear land and begin farming. Many Chinese were pressured to emigrate while also being forced to pay bribes to do so.

When the ethnic Chinese from Vietnam came to America, U.S. officials did not distinguish them as separate from Vietnamese. Even though they did not speak Vietnamese, the country of origin named on their papers was Vietnam. It didn't take American authorities long to know that a separate resettlement

agency, specifically for ethnic Chinese from South East Asia, needed to be established.

Ethnic Chinese, sometimes called Vietnamese Chinese, value education and hard work. Like other South East Asian refugees, resettlement agencies placed them in various locations around the State. Most, however, moved to Chicago to be near others who spoke their language and shared their culture. After acculturation among their peers, they tend to move out of urban areas into the suburbs.

Telling it like it was…

Duc Huang

He and four of his six children fled Vietnam in a fishing boat but ended up in a refugee camp in Malaysia.

When asked what he liked about America, Duc Huang said 'democracy.' "The United States has a good constitution, and they follow it." Americans tend to take democracy for granted but people from countries with no democracy appreciate it. For Duc Huang and his family, there was no democracy in the segregated (Chinese) section of Saigon where they were forced to live. He was nine years old when his family moved from Fujian Province in China to Vietnam. And he was 43 in 1977 when he and four of his six children fled Vietnam on a fishing boat. This was not their first attempt to escape. "We tried so many times that I forget how many," he said. They ended up in a make-shift refugee camp on a small, undeveloped Malaysian island. After four months in the camp, they received authorization to go to America as official refugees.

The Jewish Federation resettled the Huang family in Chicago, set them up in housing, and enrolled the children in school. Mr. Huang immediately petitioned for his wife and two children to join them. Thankfully, they arrived the following year, after spending a few months in a different refugee camp in Malaysia. He is luckier than most because all six children (and eight grandchildren) are alive and living in the Metropolitan Chicago area.

Duc Huang was a successful and enterprising businessman in Vietnam and with his entrepreneurial spirit was able to reestablish himself in Illinois. He set up a manufacturing plant and purchased real estate. Equally significant, he founded a community-based ethnic agency to help other Chinese refugees adjust to life in America. He continues to serve as an advisor to the agency, as well as on the Board of Directors of another community-based ethnic agency. His fluency in four languages, Fujianese, Cantonese, Vietnamese and English, enables him to assist many people.

Last year, for the first time since 1977, he returned to Vietnam. He shook his head and said that the visit made him sad. "There was nobody there I knew." That's what happens. Even when it's safe to move back, when lives are no longer in danger, there's not much to go back to.

German immigration to Illinois started in the 1830s, with some immigrants relocating from Pennsylvania. By 1860, there were more than 25,000 Germans in Illinois. Large numbers came in 1849 because of political and economic upheaval at home. They worked in meatpacking plants, helped build the Michigan-Illinois canal, and entered manufacturing and the building trades. Numerous churches, Lutheran and Catholic, were founded between 1846 and 1880.

The German population tripled between 1870 and 1900. There were more than 400,000 in Illinois by the end of the century; almost one-fourth of the population of Chicago was German. In fact, after 1885, the German language was taught in the public schools. The coming of World War I, however, ended that. After a period of vocal nationalism during the years of American neutrality, German-American activities and institutions were dealt a sharp blow when the United States entered the war.

After World War II, in the late 1940s, the 1950s and early 1960s, a large percentage of German immigrants were the so-called displaced persons who were living in Eastern European countries and either fled or were expelled. The post-World War II population included Jews who

qualified as refugees, following the enactment by the United Nations of the first laws to protect persons who were in danger of persecution if they remained in their native country.

Immigration mirrors countries' political, religious and economic situations. Because these conditions are stable in Germany, immigration has all but stopped.

Telling it like it was…

John Meyer

A grateful tourist from Chicago, who claims that he saved her life while in Ecuador, encouraged John to move his family to Chicago.

Like many of Germany's Jews, John Meyer's route to America was through a couple of intermediate countries. As a medical student in Berlin in 1933, he took heed when rumors spread that Jewish students would be asked to leave the universities. Ahead of the exodus he moved to Genoa, Italy, to continue his studies. He received his medical degree in 1939 at about the same time that all Jewish foreigners were given six months to leave Italy. He and his new wife, also a Jew from Germany, rushed from consulate to consulate trying to find a country that would accept them. Finally they found one: Ecuador. They scanned world maps to locate it, and then proceeded to book passage on a ship to take them there.

True to the spirit that remained his throughout life, John spent some of his last money to go to the opera because he heard they did not have opera in Ecuador; and, indeed, he did not see another opera or hear another concert until 10 years later when he moved to Chicago.

Meanwhile, in Ecuador he studied Spanish, now his third language, to prepare for the 42 exams he must pass to obtain a medical license. Most of the next 10 years in Ecuador became more active, as American and European tourists and businessmen arrived. Many Americans urged John, his wife and 6-year-old daughter to emigrate to the United States. One was a tourist from Chicago who claims that John saved her life. She was so grateful that she kept in touch after returning to Chicago and continued encouraging the family to come. So, John started on his fourth language, English, obtained a visa and headed for Chicago. He was elated to find a hospital job that paid $75 a month.

John dedicated his life to administering to the poor. In Chicago he worked with tuberculosis patients and in clinics that focused on health care for low-income people. After retiring at age 80, he volunteered his services in a free clinic. Two years ago, he was proud to be welcomed back to Berlin to accept a public apology, on behalf of the classmates of 1933, for the expulsion of students and scientists. John took great solace from the certificate that read, "For this wrong, the University wishes to apologize. [The apology] can only be symbolic reparation to demonstrate that the University assumes its responsibility before history and its victims. The preoccupation with this chapter of the University's past will also continue in the future to be at all times a reminder of the meaning and value of democracy and freedom."

The large influx of Greek immigration into the United States came during the period of "new immigration" toward the end of the 19th Century. The new Greek immigrants were largely from rural areas — poor and mostly young, male, unskilled workers. Between the start of the 20th Century until the passage of the 1924 Immigration Quota Act, nearly half a million Greek immigrants came to America. Prior to World War II, Chicago had the largest Greek immigrant community in the United States. The Great Depression and World War II disrupted the flow of Greek immigration. Recent immigrants came after the 1965 non-quota legislation.

Earlier Greek immigrants were scattered throughout the country to work in the mines and on the railroads. Greek immigration to Illinois began in earnest after the Great Fire of 1871, when young men came to rebuild the city. Prior to this, only occasional Greek seamen arrived by way of the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers. The Greeks, like all immigrants of that era, began their lives in America with little capital. Discrimination against foreigners and licensing rules posed many barriers. By 1920, Greeks had become the foremost restaurant owners, and led in a number of other businesses.

Greek immigrants never intended to stay. In fact, about 40 percent of them returned to Greece. Those who remained formed a stable

and well-organized community and worked hard to maintain their cultural identity. Many voluntary associations, churches, schools and coffee houses served as the focus of community life for the Greek population. Perpetuation of the Greek language has always been a significant concern of Greek immigrants. The Greek press and Greek schools helped to preserve the Greek language among immigrants and their offspring, which helped to preserve their cultural identity and communal in-group cohesion.

Telling it like it was…

Christos Thodoropoulos

He still remembers the terrible drought and resulting famine that struck his village in 1917.

"The happiest day of my life was when my daughter called me 'Daddy'," says Christos Thodoropoulos, a healthy 92 year old, who with all of his stellar accomplishments, rates his marriage of 62 years as his proudest achievement.

Christos was born in the small village of Pellana, near Sparta, in Greece on Oct. 4, 1911, the middle child of five children. He still remembers the terrible drought and resulting famine that struck his village in 1917. His father was a bricklayer who found it difficult to make ends meet during this time; he worked for a whole day to purchase a half pound of feta cheese for his family. When Christos was 7 or 8 years old, his father built a one-story home from lumber he took apart, bit by bit, from the barn the family had been renting. Christos brought his father stones to build the foundation.

Most mothers take their children to school by the hand, but Christos' mother took him by the ear. He didn't want to go — children feared their teachers. Christos loved learning, so he studied English and Greek all his life and wrote poetry in Greek.

His father fought the invading Turks in 1911 and in 1922. He had been able to visit the United States and work there, sending enough money home to lift the family from poverty. He petitioned for all the family; and they arrived at the end of August in 1930, except for the oldest daughter, who was over 21. Christos went to school for a while, and then through a gracious benefactor, was able to purchase a tiny restaurant for $400 in 1934. He served a meal of a hamburger, a doughnut and a cup of coffee for 11 cents. The first month he made $92.00! He remained in the restaurant business for the next 48 years. During World War II, he served in the U.S. Army as a cook in the officers' mess, managing to make old mutton taste like young lamb.

Christos visited Greece many times. By accident, he discovered an important archeological site near his hometown, the birthplace of Helen of Troy, finding coins from Alexander the Great on the site. Christos has made musical recordings, been a model, and was in a movie with Bruce Willis. He has been a benefactor to Pellana, giving the village new paved streets. He loves his family: a daughter, a son, 5 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren. One grandson is captain of a tank division in Iraq right now.

Every Friday, Christos walks seven miles downtown. In 1997, at the age of 86, he won two medals in the Senior Olympics — a gold and a bronze. His dream is to go to the 2004 Olympics in Athens — he'd really like to compete in the 100-meter race.

One of the first non-native settlers in Illinois was a Haitian. In 1773, Jean Baptise Pointe DuSable, a black man of Haitan and French descent, settled on the banks of the Chicago River. Married to a Native American woman, he was fluent in several Indian dialects as well as English, French and Spanish. His trading post included a home with two barns, a mill, a dairy, a bake house, a poultry house, a workshop, stable and livestock holdings. His granddaughter was the first child born in Chicago in 1796. In 1800, he sold his extensive property and returned with his family to Peoria. He is considered the founder of Chicago.

Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere and has been plagued by political violence and corrupt dictators for many years. Haiti was first dominated by Spain, then France. The United States occupied Haiti from 1915 to 1957. In 1957, general elections put Francois Duvalier, also known as "Papa Doc," in power. He was widely reported to be a cruel dictator who persecuted his opposition, particularly people with education and professional status. He died in 1971, and his son, Jean Claude Duvalier (Baby Doc) succeeded him. Baby Doc was reported to be equally brutal. He served until 1986. During the nearly 30-year reign of the Duvalier family, many professionals fled Haiti, mostly to the United States. Similar to the Cubans, many Haitian refugees tried to get to Florida by boat; Haiti is only 600 miles from the U.S. coast.

In 1986, Baby Doc was overthrown. Haiti was under military rule until 1990, when the first

democratic election was held and Jean-Bertrand Aristide was elected president. Unfortunately, political instability has continued and Aristide's party has been accused of widespread corruption. On February 29, 2004, Aristide was forced to flee Haiti as members of an armed rebel group took control of several cities. Since April 2004, the United States, France, Canada and Chile have troops in Haiti as part of a force sanctioned by the United Nations. With this new threat of violence, hundreds of Haitian refugees have once again tried to enter the United States through the Florida coast.

Telling it like it was…

Henry Bellevue

"A piece of my heart is in Haiti," Henry said, "But I am so happy to be an American."

The streets of Port Au Prince, Haiti's capital, are noisy and crowded. But if you travel west on the island, following the steep road through the mountains, you will find the beautiful city of Jèrèmie: It is nestled high in the mountains of Haiti, where the sun shines hot in the day and cool breezes from the Caribbean Sea blow in at night. In fact, the weather is what Henry Bellevue misses the most about Haiti.

"To see the true beauty of Haiti," Henry says, "you have to leave the city and go to the mountains."

Henry was born and raised in Jèrèmie; he was married and his four children were born there. Henry worked as a bus driver and a mechanic. But, his route was unlike any other bus route in Illinois. Every day, Henry drove passengers from Jèrèmie, across the entire country of Haiti, into the Dominican Republic where many Haitians go to find work. The route was long and treacherous, following narrow, winding mountain roads where many accidents have occurred. But Henry was happy because a good job in Haiti means a good life.

Henry's four children immigrated to the United States to find better jobs in the "land of opportunity." In 1981, Henry's sons in Illinois finally convinced him to come to America; he was 59 years old. Even though Illinois did not have mountains like his home city of Jèrèmie, Henry fell in love with his new land. His children helped Henry and his wife to make the difficult adjustment to the new language and the new culture. Shortly after he arrived in Illinois, Henry found a part-time job at a Haitian community center. The executive director there says "Henry is my right-hand man." Henry enjoys helping other Haitians in his community adjust to a new way of life.

Ten months ago, just shy of his 81st birthday, Henry passed his U.S. citizenship exam. "A piece of my heart is in Haiti," he says, "But I am so happy to be an American." Henry's biggest worries today are focused on the recent eruption of violence in Haiti. Henry has many relatives that still live in Jèrèmie who face a daily struggle to escape the danger that is all around them. Henry hopes that America and Haiti will work together to bring a solution to that nation's problems.

Henry loves the freedom he has found in Illinois, but he can't stop thinking about the family that he has left behind; he says, "Regardless of your status in the United States, the turmoil in Haiti always hurts."

In 1965, the Immigration Reform Act opened the doors for thousands of Indians to immigrate to the United States. Highly skilled professionals, including physicians and engineers, took jobs in hospitals, universities and corporations throughout the country.

A second wave of immigration occurred in the 1980s, and most of those who came to Illinois settled in Chicago. These new immigrants were less skilled and took jobs in retail and small businesses in what became known as "Little India." Indians from all over Illinois and adjacent states come to the district on weekends to shop for Indian goods and eat Indian food.

In the early 1990s, thousands of computer professionals arrived in Chicago, making Indians the third largest group in the city, after Mexicans and Poles. More recently, Indians tend to come for business and stay three to six years. In addition, the outsourcing of information technology to India has slowed the immigration that was prevalent in the 1990s. Most Indians, at least the younger ones, speak English fluently in addition to their native language. India has 15 major languages and 844 different dialects. Most of the major languages are represented in Illinois. The Indian population in Illinois is dominated by Gujaratis who strictly observe caste rites and rituals and seldom marry out of their own caste. Single men often travel back to India to find a wife, and most Indian marriages are still arranged.

Indian immigrants living in the United States continue to face some difficult challenges. Unfortunately, Indians of all economic standings often have to deal with racial discrimination. As a result, Indians have developed social service programs to help people within their community deal with these issues. In spite of the challenges, Indians have become a vital part of society in the United States. They are a people with strong family values and great pride in their heritage.

Telling it like it was…

Sudha Baxi

Her daughter and son-in-law sponsored her to join them in Chicago.

Like most older Indians, Sudha Baxi came to the United States because of her children. Her daughter and son-in-law were already settled in Chicago, and they sponsored her to join them. A sponsor has to agree to support the new immigrant for five years. Sudha wanted to come to the United States and become a citizen so that she, in turn, can sponsor her son to come. It was her daughter's dream to come to America, and her son's dream. Not hers. In fact, she just went home to India for her first visit, after six years here, and was sad to be reminded of what she left behind. "India is great," she beamed.

Like other immigrant parents who followed their children to America, Mrs. Baxi and her husband lost the traditional support system they had in India, and are now at risk of isolation and loneliness. Her homesickness is reflected in her response to the question about what she likes most about Chicago. She likes seeing other Indians, being with them, talking and worshipping with them. Sudha lives in the "Little India" section of Chicago near Devon Avenue. The shops, restaurants and street life, as well as her work as a cook at a senior center for Indians, makes being away from home a little more tolerable.

When asked what she thinks about Americans, Sudha answered, through the interpreter, that they are "lovely." They smile and are courteous to her, and they ask about her sari and the dot on her forehead that signifies good luck, and announces her status as a married woman.

The potato was the staple of the Irish diet. In the late 1840s, the country's entire crop of potatoes was destroyed and Ireland experienced a famine that killed 1.5 million people. An equal number emigrated from Ireland in the decade that followed. But the potato famine was just the last straw. Economic and political oppression under the British had already resulted in thousands leaving.

The construction of the Illinois and Michigan Canal brought the Irish to Illinois in 1937. The canal linked the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers and went through the counties of Cook, Grundy, LaSalle and Will. When funds ran out, the canal diggers were paid with land. As a result, many of the Irish workers became landowners and settled along the canal. Many relocated to the central Illinois counties of Macon, Shelby, Moultrie and Christian. Irish influence is seen in Carbondale, where the Southern Illinois University has an extensive Irish Studies Program, and an exchange program with a university in Galway, Ireland.

The involvement of the Irish in politics, even in their earliest days, can be attributed to honing their skills against the British. And, of course, the ability to speak English gave them an advantage. Perhaps, because the Irish spoke English, it was easy for them to get jobs in the United States and "disappear." During the 1970s, '80s and into the '90s, many came

with tourist visas, and remained. Although exact numbers are unknown, they are presumed to be one of the largest groups of undocumented workers in the United States.

With the formation of the European Union, however, Ireland became more prosperous, and fewer Irish came to America searching for employment. In addition, more are returning to their homeland to take part in Ireland's flourishing new economy.

Telling it like it was…

Bill Murphy

He lived on a farm in what many consider the most beautiful part of Ireland. But he didn't see the beauty — only the struggle to make a living from the farm.

Most Irish who left their home country in the early part of the 20th Century were not expected to return. The family left at home mourned each departure as they would a death. Perhaps that's why when Bill Murphy saw his mother, on his first visit back in six years, "the tears were rolling down her face" with the joy of seeing her son.

Bill grew up on a farm, three miles outside of Killarney, in what many consider to be the most beautiful part of Ireland. He didn't see the beauty — he only saw the work and the struggle to make a living from the farm. He was the second oldest of nine, and the oldest of the boys. As the oldest son, he was entitled to inherit the farm. When his younger brother was injured, Bill gave him the farm and emigrated to the United States. His father had a sister in Chicago who agreed to sponsor him. Bill and a cousin sailed on a boat from Southampton, England to New York on tickets originally purchased by two priests who cancelled their trip. He arrived in October 1948, a few weeks shy of his 28th birthday.

Bill's first job was on an assembly line in a canning factory. After spending his whole life outdoors (only going inside to sleep) he found the noise, heat and lights too big a change. After five months, he got a better job, digging graves and tending the grounds at two cemeteries. His transportation to the cemeteries was with a neighbor who had just bought a station wagon; he picked up Bill and a few others for a modest fee that helped him make car payments. Bill joined a south side Gaelic football team, playing matches on the north and west sides of Chicago.

Sometimes, in the early years, when he missed Ireland, he asked himself, "What am I doing here?" But then Bill met his wife, a U.S.-born girl of Irish descent, at dances held in parish halls and Irish social clubs in 1955. They married and had five children. The first, a girl, was born with spina bifida and only lived a few weeks. The other four children did not see their father much — Bill usually held one full time and two part-time jobs. Before he retired at the age of 71, Bill had worked digging sewers, starting and stoking coal-burning furnaces, moving furniture and cleaning offices. He only retired then because he was afraid that if he didn't, he wouldn't live to collect his pension!

Although the story of immigration is generally understood to be tales of people who chose to leave one place to settle permanently in another, the dislocation is not always made willingly. The story of the orphan train is a heart-tugging example of passive resettlement.

The so-called "Orphan Train," the largest migration of children in history, began in 1854 and continued for 76 years to ameliorate the social problem caused by a large number of children orphaned and abandoned during and after the Civil War. The train was New York's solution to the problem of caring for an estimated 150,000 to 200,000 orphaned children, a number too large to be accommodated by the social and economic resources in New York City at that time. The idea behind the train was that the homeless children could be transported to rural families west of New York where they could become productive members of agrarian families: sometimes filling the need for children for childless couples, and in some cases providing a form of servitude for farms that needed cheap labor.

The train was launched by Charles Loring Brace, founder of the modern foster care movement, who also started the Children's Aid Society in New York. Under his direction, children were launched on trains, mostly to locations in the Midwest, where strong children were needed to work on farms.

Some of the children were orphaned, others neglected among the teeming tenements in New York City, still others, runaways or gang members.

During the orphan-train trip, children were usually accompanied by a placing agent who lined them up for inspection by prospective takers at regular stops. Inspection was often similar to the way that slaves and animals were selected for their capacity to work. Children not selected at a stop were returned to the train and traveled on to the next stop for display.

ASYLUM CHILDREN!

A Company of Children, mostly Boys, from the New York Juvenile Asylum, will arrive in

ROCKFORD, at the Hotel Holland,

THURSDAY MORNING, SEPT. 6, 1888,

And Remain Until Evening. They are from 7 to 15 Years of age.

Homes are wanted for these children with farmers, where they will receive kind treatment and enjoy fair advantages. They have been in the asylum from one to two years, and have received instruction and training preparatory to a term of apprenticeship, and being mostly of respectable parentage, they are desirable children and worthy of good homes.

They may be taken at first upon trial for four weeks, and afterwards, if all parties are satisfied, under indentures,—girls until 18, and boys until 21 years of age.

The indenture provides for four months schooling each year, until the child has advanced through compound interest, and at the expiration of the term of apprenticeship, two new suits of clothes, and the payment to the girls of fifty, and to the boys of one hundred and fifty dollars.

All expenses for transportation will be assumed by the Asylum, and the children will be placed on trial and indentured free of charge.

Those who desire to take children on trial are requested to meet them at the hotel at the time above specified.

E. WRIGHT, Agent.

PLEASE EXTEND THIS INFORMATION.

Courtesy of Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Although its history has been well-documented in other states, little is known about the orphan train stops in Illinois. According to a spokesperson at the Illinois State Library, records were not kept on this subject in Illinois.

Telling it like it was…

Robert Emmet Manning

Robert Emmet Manning, born in 1871, and his brother Thomas, born in 1869, arrived in Illinois on the Orphan Train from New York City. The boys had been placed in a Catholic orphanage in 1876 after their parents died. The brothers and three sisters were born to parents Thomas and Mary, who had immigrated to New York City from County Gallway, Ireland, in 1848 during the potato famine.

The famine, which reached its height between 1846 and 1850, caused when the country's single crop was felled by a fungus, led to mass migration. One million survivors of the famine left Ireland, many of them destined for the United States. It is estimated that 73,912 Irish citizens immigrated to Illinois during that period.

At first, the new immigrant family did well. But as five children were born, resources were limited and the parents had left behind a support network in the old country. And so, when Thomas died in a work-related streetcar accident, and then Mary contracted tuberculosis and died, there was no one to care for the brothers.

It is assumed that the brothers were brought to the orphanage by their three older sisters, who were unable to care for them full time, but visited them at the orphanage and brought them food occasionally. The brothers lived in the orphanage for four years, but in 1880, the city of New York faced a crisis with a burgeoning population of dependent orphans, the result of the Civil War, disease and poverty. And so the Orphan Train was born.

The brothers were put on a train exclusively for Catholic children that was directed toward stops of prospective receiving families who were also Catholic. At a stop in Manhattan, Illinois, the boys were selected by two related farm families, probably because they appeared to be able workers. Robert was probably the luckier of the brothers. Selected by a family with one disabled child, he lived with them and was mutually regarded as their own son.

With a horse-drawn plow fitted over his shoulders, he worked hard, but years later told his children that he was happy and felt secure in his new home. He stayed with a family named Gallagher, but he was never formally adopted by them, and did not take their name. He married in Manhattan and bought a house a few doors from his foster family. Robert Manning married Ann Gallagher, a relative of his foster family, and the couple had five children, 26 grandchildren and 47 great grandchildren.

His brother, Robert, did not fare as well. Soon after being "placed" with a family, he disappeared and was never heard from again.

Italy has always played a central role in world culture. Italians have produced some of the world's most admired sculpture, architecture, painting, literature, and music, particularly opera. Yet, Italy is a country that has been plagued by poor natural resources, economic instability and political conflict. From 1890 to 1914, Italians immigrated to the United States in large numbers, mainly for economic reasons. By 1930, more than 4.5 million Italians had entered the United States. During World War II, many Italians joined the U.S. Army to fight against Mussolini.

Italian immigrants settled all over Illinois, forming communities made up of family and friends from the same village or region in Italy. In the 1940s, Chicago's Cabrini-Green housing project was entirely Sicilian. Many of the early immigrants were unskilled workers who found jobs as railroad and construction laborers; they were poor, but hard-working, and poverty was virtually eliminated in two generations.

Italians brought with them a culture that is very family-oriented. Although the man is considered the head of the family and is generally the sole provider, Italian women play a strong role in family affairs and are highly respected in the home. Italians love food and consider cooking to be an art and eating a celebration. No celebration is complete without a good pasta dish. Italian cooking has completely permeated the American culture. Although all Italian-Americans identify strongly with their

native culture, very few speak the language fluently and approximately 50 percent choose to marry someone who is not Italian.

For many years, the Italians suffered prejudice and insult. They were called dirty and lazy. They were (and still are) stereotyped as gangsters and criminals. Yet, Italians ignored the stereotypes and chose to completely integrate themselves into American society and, as a result, transformed the culture. Italians are throughout Illinois. However, Italian immigration to just about anywhere has come to a halt. The country's economy is finally stabilizing and beginning to grow.

Telling it like it was…

Francesco Cesario

He came to the United States in 1957 at the age of 18. He got a dictionary and taught himself how to speak English — one word at a time.

Francesco Cesario came to the United States in 1957. His family sold everything they had and left their home in San Fili, Italy to find a better life in America. There were some people in Francesco's hometown who resented his family's move. At that time, many Italians had the opinion that anyone who left Italy to live in America was a traitor.

Francesco arrived in New York by boat and the next day went to Chicago by train. He was only 18 years old, but he was already skilled as a barber. He and several of his relatives crammed into a small apartment on the south side of Chicago until each could afford to move out on their own. Francesco's biggest challenge in those days was to learn the language, but he immediately began working long hours and never had enough free time to go to school. So he got a dictionary and taught himself to speak English, one word at a time.

Francesco's father gave him sound advice when they first arrived. He said, "You are living in America, so be an American. Get accustomed as soon as you can and do things like they do." Francesco became determined to adjust. He never forgot who he was or where he came from, but he worked hard to be independent and successful. It wasn't very long before Francesco became the owner of his first hair salon.

Frank met his wife, Teresa, in Illinois; she was also an Italian immigrant. He now has two children and two grandchildren. It's been 47 years since he came to Illinois. He's visited Italy a few times, but he never had a desire to move back. Francesco says it was a positive attitude that helped him through the immigrant experience: "I was always happy here because I really wanted to be here. The things that were not as I liked were not important anyway, not worth focusing on."

Every spring, Francesco thinks about what he misses most — picking mushrooms in the mountains of Italy. "But," he says, "You push the nostalgia away because you want to be here, you want to be an American."

Most Japanese Americans in Illinois are descendants of the immigrants who came to America between 1900-1924, before the Asian Exclusion Act blocked any further immigration. These immigrants were primarily farmers, fishermen and owners of small businesses. They acculturated to American society even though they were excluded from citizenship.

During WWI, Japanese families sent their young sons into the U.S. Army with pride. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor in WWII, these same families became victims of wartime hysteria when all people of Japanese ancestry were classified as dangerous, enemy aliens. Over 120,000 Japanese Americans were forced to leave their homes and jobs and placed in internment camps until the end of WWII in 1945.

When the internment camps were closed, many of the detainees were skeptical about returning to their former homes on the West Coast; as a result, Illinois became a leading destination for them. Those who settled in Illinois had to face a new ordeal: cemeteries refused to sell them burial plots. The Japanese Mutual Aid Society had to negotiate with several cemeteries for the sale of small communal plots. In spite of the struggles, many Japanese made Illinois their home. The nationwide effort of members of the Japanese community resulted in the passage of the McCarran-Walter Act in 1952, which ended the ban on Asian immigration and made citizenship possible for all Japanese people living

in the United States. During the 1980s, federal legislation was enacted that paid reparations to every Japanese-American who had been interned during WWII.

Today, immigration of people from Japan has almost completely stopped because Japan's economy is flourishing and offers many opportunities for its people. The Japanese social service agency that was established to help the resettlement effort in Illinois now offers classes in Japanese language and culture to third, fourth and even fifth-generation Japanese Americans.

Telling it like it was…

Margaret Yoshimura

She strengthened her listening and speaking skills by watching television.

Margaret was a young girl living in Tokyo when World War II began. She was a freshman in high school in 1941 when her school was bombed. But, she said, she was "fearless."

In 1950, while still in Tokyo, Margaret married a Japanese American soldier who served in the Counter Intelligence Corps for the U.S. Army. When he was discharged in 1953, they moved to his hometown of Chicago with their baby girl. Margaret had to learn English quickly because her husband's Japanese was "no good." She strengthened her listening and speaking skills by watching television.

Margaret remembers her transition into the American way of life in a very vivid way: through dreams and food. For the first few years after arriving in the United States, all her dreams were in Japanese. Even if the person in the dreams was American, they were speaking Japanese. Then, for one entire year her dreams were silent; there was no verbal communication. She remembers the day when all her dreams began to come in English, even when she dreamed about old friends from Japan.

Her second transition to American life was food. A traditional Japanese breakfast is rice, fish, pickles and Miso soup. Margaret says that the aroma of Miso soup just fills the house. For several years, Margaret's house in Chicago smelled like Miso soup at breakfast time. After about five years of living here, breakfast filled the house with the smells of bacon, eggs and coffee.

Two more children were born to her and her husband in Illinois, and Margaret never had time to miss her home in Tokyo. But, she said, she would never allow sadness to control her anyway. Her strong character enabled her to conquer any situation.

Today, Margaret spends her time doing Yoga, working with ceramics at the Japanese center, and shopping with her friends. "With any luck," she says, "I'll live to be 150!" The fearless teenager is now a widow, happy she has found freedom and peace in the United States.

The first wave of Koreans, who came to Hawaii in 1903 as plantation laborers, were classified as Japanese nationals because Korea was part of the Japanese empire. Their immigration was restricted by the exclusionary policies against all Asians, and it wasn't until the end of the Korean War in 1953 that they immigrated to the U.S. mainland. Between 1968 and 1975, following the Immigration Reform Act of 1965, the increase was seven-fold. There are large concentrations of Koreans in Honolulu, Los Angeles, Chicago and New York.

Korean immigrants settled in Illinois in two distinctive ways. First, professional and technical personnel have generally moved to the suburban Chicago and downstate communities directly from abroad or other U.S. cities, following the paths of their friends and relatives who had moved there earlier. Second, those who came as small businessmen often started out in poor neighborhoods where the rent is affordable and the crime rate is high by opening "Mom and Pop" grocery stores. Some of these new Korean immigrants settled in predominantly black neighborhoods even though they did not have previous experiences with life in the inner city.

Korean immigration to the United States slowed in the 1990s, in fact many returned to Korea to live because Korea achieved economic prosperity and political stability. Also, America lost some of its allure after rumors made it back to Korea about the destruction of Korean businesses during the riots in Los

Angeles following the Rodney King verdict in 1992.

Koreans share the same psychological feelings of marginality as other new immigrants. But, unlike other recent Asian immigrants from Taiwan, the Philippines, India and Hong Kong, the Korean newcomers are less familiar with Western culture in general, and in the use of English language in particular. Perhaps because of this, the Korean community is very cohesive in that they have several Korean-language newspapers, as well as social, religious and community service agencies.

Telling it like it was…

Shin Kang

His mission was to translate the Old Testament from Hebrew to Korean. But first he had to learn Hebrew — so he came to America.

He was a man with a mission. As a college student in Korea, Shin Kang knew what he wanted to do. He wanted to translate the Old Testament directly from Hebrew into Korean. To do that, he had to learn Hebrew; and that's what brought him to the United States. He ended up at the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana, after having received a Ph.D. in Biblical studies at the Hebrew Union College's Rabbinical Seminary in Cincinnati, Ohio, and after having taught Sumerian languages at Yale.

The University of Illinois recruited him to curate their museum and to make sense of their collection of thousands of clay tablets written in Sumerian. He and his wife and three children lived in Champaign-Urbana for 11 years. While there, they sponsored 55 family members to come to America. Those members sponsored others, until the Kangs were responsible for over 200 Koreans in the 1970s. Most came first to Champaign-Urbana, and then spread from there. At least one family member is still there, running an Oriental grocery store.

Shin and his family returned to Yale for a few years, until the Evangelical Free Church Seminary in Deerfield lured him back to Illinois. He had 20 to 25 Korean seminary students coming to day classes when he realized that many more wanted to attend, but could only come in the evening. As a result, he established his own college to facilitate evening classes. He was a busy man. In addition to his teaching (and now education administration) he was often called to Iraq to read tablets at archeological sites. At the same time, he was a devoted husband, father and son-in-law. Like many elderly parents of adult children, his mother-in-law lived with the family and baby-sat while the parents worked and went to school.

Meanwhile, his dream of translating the Bible was still just a dream. In 1997, he stopped everything else and started working on the translation. In 1998, he and his wife moved to Washington State to work full-time on the translation. Well, it was sort of full time, because he had a huge garden to tend, and oysters to harvest. The translation is now complete, and in the final stages of editing.

But Illinois is still on his mind. He owns a tree farm near Joliet where he planted baby trees by himself. He still likes to check on it periodically. Maybe even build a house there. If it's possible to have two passions, he does: translating the Bible, tree farming and gardening. Maybe there's a connection!

The Lithuanian community in America is the product of two distinct waves of immigration. The first wave began in the 1860s and continued until World War I and the restrictive immigration legislation of the 1920s. During this period, approximately 300,000 Lithuanians, mostly Catholic peasants, came to America to find economic opportunities and religious expression.

One of the characteristics of the earlier Lithuanian immigration to the United States (and many other groups as well) was the practice of chain migration. As the first arrivals became established, they would encourage their relatives and fellow villagers to join them. Those who accepted the invitation would be helped by the earlier immigrants, who would provide temporary room and board and information about jobs. By 1900, the primary settlement areas shifted to the coal regions of western Pennsylvania and southern Illinois, and some of the smaller eastern industrial towns and Midwestern cities such as Chicago, Cleveland and Detroit. As they developed their English skills, some were able to move into the ranks of the semi-skilled and skilled. Within their ethnic enclaves, many were able to start small businesses, which dealt with an ethnic clientele. The most common of these was the saloon, a multipurpose institution that often served as a boarding house, restaurant, labor market, social center, travel agency and bank.

The second, but smaller, wave of immigration came after World War II and was mostly made up of

professionals and intellectuals who were either displaced persons or were fleeing the Soviet takeover of Lithuania. The Displaced Persons Act of 1948 resulted in 30,000 Lithuanians coming to the United States as political immigrants. These immigrants were better educated and more nationalistic than their earlier brethren. Thus, they helped to rejuvenate the ethnic community. The 1990 independence of Lithuania from the Soviet Union initiated a new cycle of economic immigrants into Illinois. Independence also enabled some of the political immigrants to return to Lithuania, if not to live, at least to visit, for the first time since 1948.

Telling it like it was…

Jonas Kavaliunas

They came to Illinois in 1951 and were helped by the National Catholic Association, which gave the family of four $10 to get them started.

Jonas Kavaliunas and his wife left their native Lithuania in 1944, along with 60,000 others, to take refuge in Germany. They lived there until 1951, when they moved to Illinois, aided by the National Catholic Association. The Association gave the family of four $10 to get them started. Within three days Jonas had a job. He worked in a factory until he completed a correspondence course in bookkeeping and obtained an office job. In 1955 he was offered a one-year job teaching German to American soldiers at the Army Language School in Monterrey, California. When he returned to Chicago he went back to a factory job. Inspired by his stint in Monterrey, however, he enrolled in college classes and obtained a certificate to teach German in high schools. By 1958 he was back in the classroom permanently.

The Kavaliunas raised their family and, in their late 70's, retired from the careers they had established. But, like most immigrants, Jonas and his wife wanted to go back to their native Lithuania. So, in 1991, after Lithuania won its independence from the Soviet Union, they returned there to live. They bought an apartment and Jonas, ever the scholar, obtained a job teaching German. But nothing was the same. The Kavaliunas' believed that 50 years under communism changed the manner of the people and the government. Mrs. Kavaliunas made a trip to her ancestral home, only to find it burned to the ground, with rubble still strewn. Most significant, though, was that she missed her children and grandchildren back in Illinois, especially on Christmas Eve. So, after two years, they gave up their apartment in Lithuania and returned to, what they realized, was their real home – Illinois.

In order to keep the Lithuanian culture alive for future generations, Jonas set up "Saturday" schools to teach the Lithuanian language, traditions, art and songs. The schools are still in operation with American-born Lithuanian children attending. Students from the school perform in the annual Lithuanian celebration which, this year, was held in Rosemont, Illinois. Thousands of Lithuanians came from around the United States and Canada to celebrate. Metropolitan Chicago is known throughout North America and Lithuania as the capital of American Lithuanians. Because of the dedication of people like Mr. Kavaliunas, North Americans are keeping the Lithuanian culture alive, and North America is richer because of it.

The border between the United States and Mexico was an open frontier until the 1920s. Beginning about 1900, the Southwest attracted laborers from Mexico to work in agriculture, ranching, industry and mining. Mexicans were drawn into the labor force before World War I, particularly the steel mills, to help in the war effort. Their experience was needed even more during the post-war expansion after World War I. During this period, alternative sources of cheap labor supply from China and Japan were cut off because of the legislative action that excluded them. In Illinois, Mexicans were recruited to work on the railroads, steel mills, tanneries and meat packing plants. As a result, the communities where they originally settled now see third, fourth and even fifth generations of Mexican-Americans. Some meat packing communities are recruiting their first generation of Mexicans.

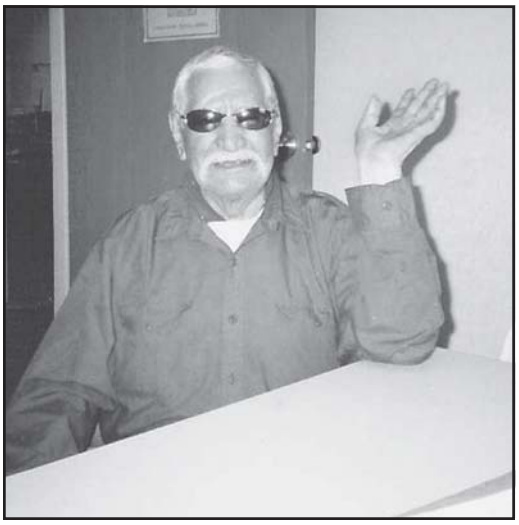
Various laws were passed over the years to either encourage Mexican immigration, or force them back to Mexico, depending on the needs of the U.S. labor force. The bracero (laborer) program, officially discontinued in 1964, made up some 25 percent of the seasonal farm workers in the United States. Illinois saw many seasonal workers come and go over the years. However, in recent years, they are more likely to bring their families and settle. As a result, downstate communities are seeing more and more Mexicans in their education and health care systems.

One of the ways Mexicans coped with life in the United States was by creating mutual aid societies. Membership and goals varied but they all supported social life and most provided assistance to families in need, with such services as loans, burial services, and mediation of disputes within the community. The Catholic Church has also been a key element in the Mexicans' support system.

Because Mexico is so close to the United States, Mexicans have, historically, assumed they would return home permanently. As a result, they have been reluctant to invest too much, emotionally, in the United States. For instance, they are the least likely among ethnic groups to learn English or become citizens. With the decline in Mexico's economy, however, that is changing.

Telling it like it was…

Ricardo Avilez



His son brought him to Illinois 15 years ago, at the age of 70, because life on the farm was getting too difficult.

For most North Americans, Mexico is a vacation spot filled with sun and sandy beaches. In fact, Ricardo Avilez lived for 70 years in the State of Guerrero, the same state that includes the resort towns of Acapulco and Ixtapa. He never saw either one. His vision of Mexico is his father's farm, and his own farm that he owned for almost 50 years. Ricardo grew tomatoes, peppers, beans and corn; and he had a few cows. He loved the land, and he worked it from sunrise to sunset. When asked what his hobbies were in Mexico, he says he never had time for any. There was always too much work to do on the farm. "I want Americans to know," said Ricardo, "that we Mexicans are very hard workers."

Fifteen years ago, at the age of 70, his son brought him to Illinois because life on the farm was becoming too much of an effort. Nevertheless, he obtained a factory job in Illinois to make a little money. He says he'd still be working today if his health were better. He recently had a series of surgeries: a ruptured appendix, gall stones, and cataracts.

His poor health and forgetfulness make it difficult for him to be at home during the day while his son is working. As a result, he goes to an adult day center in the community. He loves it. Everybody speaks Spanish and there are many activities. Others at the center helped Ricardo celebrate his 85th birthday. And even though he never saw the Pacific Ocean in Guerrero, he enjoys visiting Lake Michigan with others from the center. Another change: he had no time for hobbies in Mexico, but here he has learned to play dominoes and the ladies at the center think he is a fierce competitor.

Ricardo was an only child growing up in Mexico. By contrast, he has 11 children, and 40 or more grandchildren. Seven of his children are in the United States, and the rest in Mexico. He considers himself blessed. Sometimes Ricardo wants to go back to Mexico. His children go back, but he has not. "It will always be my homeland," he said; but added, "I love America. My life is more peaceful here."

In 1948, Israel was made a nation and the country's borders were carved into the middle of the area known as Palestine. Almost one million Palestinians became refugees and many immigrated to the United States at that time. In 1967, Israel occupied the rest of Palestine, and now refers to the land as the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The resulting war increased the immigration of Palestinians to the United States. Since then, immigration has remained steady as Israel continues to occupy Palestinian land to make way for Jewish settlements. During the Gulf War, 400,000 Palestinians were put out of Kuwait, making them refugees for the second or third time.

New Palestinian immigrants to Illinois are predominantly Muslim and speak Arabic. They bring with them traditions that have been followed for thousands of years. Palestinians in Illinois honor the tradition of writing a marriage contract and having a formal engagement; many marriages are still arranged. Palestinians keep close ties with members of their extended family (cousins, aunts, uncles, etc.) Elders are highly respected in the community and cared for by family members; nursing homes are non-existent for Palestinians.

It is estimated that 15 percent of Palestinian immigrants in the United States live below the poverty line, although third and fourth generation Palestinian Americans have worked hard to find economic success. Palestinians have a very strong connection to their homeland; many

send money home to relatives since unemployment there has risen to 60 percent.

The greatest concern for the Palestinian community is the fact that they don't have a country to call their own. Those living in Palestine are considered "stateless," and don't have citizenship or a passport. Many Palestinians in the United States suffered great injustice since the events of September 11, 2001, and have to constantly defend themselves against discrimination by those who view them as terrorist sympathizers.

Telling it like it was…

Suliman Dawod Maali

He believes America is the land of opportunity where, if you work hard, you can make it.

War and conflict impacted Suliman Maali's life three times. The first time was in 1948 when Sam's (as he likes to be called) father's bakery in Jerusalem was destroyed during the first Arab-Israeli war. Sam's father took his wife and children back to the family's village of Beitunia near Ramallah in the rolling hills of central Palestine. They settled on land owned by Sam's grandfather and grew olives, figs and dates. His father became a mailman. Life in Beitunia was simple and good. The air was fresh, and everyone knew everyone else. Families took care of each other's children and elderly relatives.

Sam's life was disrupted a second time during the 1967 Six Days War. He saw people killed, towns destroyed, children starving and friends imprisoned. Although Beitunia was not destroyed, nearby villages were, and the refugees came to live in Sam's town. They'd lost their homes, possessions and jobs. There were not enough resources in Beitunia to sustain the increased population. Sam's ticket out was by marrying a Palestinian-American woman. The choice to settle in Chicago was obvious. There were already, in 1970, 2,000 people in Chicago from his village. Now there are 6,000, creating a "Little Beitunia" in America. Sam said that Palestinians like America because they know its history of freedom and justice; he believes America is the land of opportunity where, if you work hard, you can make it.

Returning to Palestine was always his dream. In 1987, Sam took his children back to Palestine with the hope of settling there permanently. However, it was not to be. Their lives were quickly disrupted by the first intifida. There was violence in the streets, schools were closed, a curfew was imposed; his children were afraid. Within months they were back in Illinois.

He goes back to the real Beitunia every chance he gets, even though traveling around the old hometown is getting difficult. For example, a trip from Beitunia to Jerusalem used to take 20 minutes, now, with the checkpoints, it could take six hours. "And then," shrugs Sam, "you may get turned back and never make it to Jerusalem."

When asked if he always thought of himself as a Palestinian, Sam answered, "Yes, of course. It's like forgetting how to drink water." Then he corrected himself with the boast, "I'm a Palestinian-American."

The first Filipinos to arrive in this country (in 1903) were 100 talented and promising young men who were handpicked and financed by the U.S.-controlled Philippine government for education in America. They received funding to cover their expenses and were under contract to return to the Philippines upon completion of their training. They all became provincial and national leaders when they returned to their homeland. Their success fired the ambition of relatives and town folks, who became convinced that an American education was the key to attaining status. Unfortunately, the second wave of students didn't receive stipends to cover their expenses, and ended up as itinerant workers in the canneries of Alaska and farmlands of California. In the winter, many moved to the cities to work as culinary helpers, domestic workers or gardeners.

All Asians were barred from immigrating except for the Filipinos, who enjoyed a special status because their country was then under U.S. control. Because of the Philippines' status with the United States, its people were not impacted by the legislation that excluded other Asians. In fact, Filipinos were actively recruited by the United States to replace the Japanese and Chinese labor force.

The Great Depression curtailed the hiring of Filipino laborers and in 1932 legislation was passed that imposed an immigration quota. When the Philippines was granted its Independence, its people came under the restrictive immigration quota (50 a year), along with Japan, China, Korea, and many other countries defined as

falling into the "Eastern" hemisphere of the world.

It was not until the late 1960s that Philippine professionals immigrated to the United States in any great number. For the most part, these professionals were doctors, nurses, engineers and accountants. Although the greatest population of Filipinos is in and around Chicago, they can be found at hospitals and universities throughout the state. Filipinos are the fourth largest group immigrating to Illinois, after Mexicans, Poles and Indians.

Telling it like it was…

Rufina Razon Ancheta

In 1997, she returned from the Philippines to babysit her first grandchild — and stayed for the next three!

For her 75th birthday, Rufina Ancheta gave the gift of herself. She surprised her children, grandchildren and siblings with an autobiography of her very notable life. She wrote the book in-between babysitting for her Filipino-American grandchildren and gardening, but went back to the Philippines to have it published.

Mrs. Ancheta's American story goes back to 1958 when, as an employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's International Service, she spent seven months touring rural America to get ideas to take back to rural women in the Philippines. She saw the rural/urban contrast of farmhouses with no plumbing and skyscraper buildings beyond human-scale. So, when she returned to America 32 years later for her daughter's graduation from Chicago's Roosevelt University, there were no surprises: only that there were more tall buildings. Rufina and her husband spent an American holiday traveling around the country visiting relatives. At that time, only four of her eight siblings lived in the United States; now they all live here. The Ancheta's came to America again in 1993 for a niece's wedding. When they left, Rufina told her two daughters, both of whom came as students and married Americans, that this was their last visit to the States and that the next time she saw them would be in the Philippines.

It was not to be. In 1997 she returned to babysit for her first grandchild, and stayed for the next three. She became a citizen in 2003, scoring 100 percent on the test. Rufina goes back to the Philippines every year or so to see her other two children and four grandchildren and, of course, her husband. She said her husband doesn't like the cold climate in America's Midwest, and is more suited to life on the farm in the Philippines.

What she likes best about America? The way Americans treat their children and their elderly. And least? "There's too much consumerism," she said with a scowl. "People buy a lot of things that they don't need." When asked what values from the Philippines she'd like to pass on to her American-born grandchildren, Mrs. Ancheta said she wanted them to have a sense of family. She wants them to know their cousins. It was apparent from the Tagalog song her 7-year-old granddaughter was singing that she also wants them to know a bit of the language and traditions of her native land.

Polish peasants came to America during the late 1890s and early 1900s in search of jobs. They were accompanied by some members of the upper classes who contributed to building churches, schools and organizations. This first wave of Polish immigrants settled in newer cities such as Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Louis and in mining towns. The solidarity of the Polish community has been described as being built on the orientation of death, in the sense that the first mutual aid societies formed were death-benefit societies. Members of the neighborhood paid small sums annually to a collective fund, which was used to bury their dead. Many of the societies consisted of people from the same village of origin before immigration. These societies later added more functions, becoming the focus of community lives. These mutual aid societies also provided loans for new immigrants to start businesses, conduct classes and organize religious activities. In addition to the societies and community organizations, the Catholic Church was the integrating and stabilizing factor of Polish communities.

The second wave of Poles came as refugees and displaced persons during and after World War II. They had been citizens of a restored and independent Poland, were more educated and had experienced the war, often in the armed forces or labor camps.

At the time of the 1965 Immigration Reform Act, an estimated 20 percent of Illinois residents were Polish. With the lifting of the quota restrictions, Polish immigrants, eager to leave the communist country, settled in Illinois to join relatives and neighbors who came before them. While many came as documented immigrants, an even larger number entered on temporary visas and remained illegally.

Telling it like it was…

Krystyna Nittka

She and her husband speak English and Polish interchangeably. "We argue in English," she said, "but I pray in Polish."

When did you begin thinking of America as home? At the point this question was posed to Krystyna Nittka, she had been in the United States more than half her life. She left her native Poland at age 35 in the mid-1960s. It took about 10 years for her to start thinking of America as home. But it wasn't so much a matter of time as place. She and her husband moved to a small town and became part of the community. They became accepted and valued members, starting with the church choir and expanding to local groups and organizations.

The Nittkas never lived in a Polish community in Illinois because their sponsor, Krystyna's cousin, didn't live in one. As a result, she had to struggle to learn English: there was no reverting to the native language at local markets or on the street. And struggle, she did. She sought out the best English classes, and enrolled. Even though she mastered English, Krystyna never attained the career status she had in Poland. Typical of all immigrants, she had to take what she could find. She started out on an assembly line where English was not necessary. Because her math was better than her English, she got a job in the bursar's office at Roosevelt University, and then moved on to a few more jobs before retiring from the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

It was her husband who wanted to come to America. He despised the communist system and even tried to defect as a teenager. But when they came, they came legally. It was a time in Poland when there was a loosening of restrictions, and they were allowing people to leave. They were on a short waiting list and were gone within six months of applying.

Memories of Poland and the people she knew are fresh and joyful. Krystyna has made five or six visits back to Poland to visit relatives, and her sister has been here to visit a couple of times. She and her husband speak English and Polish interchangeably in their home. "We argue in English," says Krystyna, "but I pray in Polish."

Puerto Ricans are unique among American ethnic groups in that they are, as a result of the Jones Act of 1917, United States citizens. Because they are citizens, they are considered migrants, not immigrants, and they are not subjected to immigration quotas. Substantial migration to to the mainland took place after the Jones Act was signed into law. Most came seeking better economic opportunities, and settled, initially, in New York City. Up until the late 1940s, Puerto Rico had an agriculturally-based economy. As a result, those who migrated tended to have few skills and little education.

Puerto Ricans migrated to as far away as Hawaii when the exclusionist immigration policies drastically reduced sources of cheap labor from Asia. The 1940s and 1950s were periods of massive migration to the mainland by Puerto Ricans searching for employment opportunities. In the 1960s, a consistent reverse migration pattern began to emerge as many aging laborers chose to retire to their place of birth.

From 1970 onward, there was a noticeable change in the educational level of Puerto Ricans who migrated to the mainland. There were increasingly more with college educations and professional skills. They became visible in such positions as teachers, administrators and politicians. The arrival of Puerto Ricans to Illinois started slowing down in the 1980s and has continued to be slow, perhaps because the economy on the Island is doing better. It is not unusual for Puerto Ricans to move several times between the Island and mainland.

Because of their African, Caribbean and European roots, Puerto Ricans have a range of skin color. One of the difficult adjustments dark-skinned Puerto Ricans have had to make in the United States was accommodating to American racial attitudes. In Puerto Rico, problems of discrimination and prejudice hinge much more on social class than on skin color. Indeed, there can be a range of beautiful shades within one family.

Telling it like it was…

Delia Amparo Peña

She came to Chicago in 1962 with three small children. She arrived on a Friday; and by Monday, she was working.

"I suffered too much in my life. When my son died and I talked to the counselor, he told me I was strong and he knew I would survive." That was 20 years ago, and it's a good thing Delia Peña survived because she helps a lot of people. She came to Chicago in 1962 with three small children. She arrived on a Friday, and by Monday she was working. She had a brother who drove her around Chicago looking for a factory that made clothing. Her brother worked at Nabisco and wanted her to work there. She said, "No, I don't want to make cookies, I want to make dresses." It's what she knew how to do, and what she liked. "I saw a building with dresses hanging in the window, so I walked into the building and asked them if they made dresses." They said they did, then asked her to fill out an application and hired her on the spot.

She continued as a dressmaker until the factories closed. They were low-paying jobs, and she had to have a side business sewing for others, working up to 20 hours a day, to support her family. Her Social Security, after 35 years of working, is $493 a month. She continues to supplement it by doing alterations for a dry cleaning business and some dress making.

Delia Peña never stops giving to others. She drives to Chicago from her home in Aurora three or four days a week. She moved in with her daughter as a cost-savings measure after she retired. One day a week she teaches quilting at a Chicago senior center. Another day she helps the teacher, at the same center, teach English to older Poles and Hispanics. "It's good," she said, "because it helps me with my English, too." Other days she comes to the City to take her sister to doctors' appointments. And, of course, she still comes to Chicago on Sundays to go to church. She has found a little church in Aurora, so she may be making a gradual transition. It's a good thing because, as she points out, Aurora is far from Chicago and gas is expensive.

She still has four siblings in Puerto Rico, and goes back every couple of years to visit. When asked if she would like to go back to live, Mrs. Peña replied, "Not to live, but to die." Like many older people, she wants to be buried in her native land, where her mother and father were buried. But she's not ready to leave her Illinois children and grandchildren. And, she's quick to add, "Thank God for my health. I have no sickness. I eat right and take care of myself." Like she always did.

The first Russians reached America in 1747 when fur traders arrived in Alaska. When Alaska became a part of the United States, most of these Russians returned home. It was not until the late 19th Century that large numbers of Russians emigrated to the United States. The main reason for this was the wave of violent attacks in southern Russia against the Jewish community. Over half settled in New York and Pennsylvania. Most were unskilled and took jobs in factories and mines. They gradually moved west and settled in urban areas, including Chicago.

Between 1820 and 1920, over 3,250,000 people emigrated from Russia to the United States. Many came following the Russian Revolution of 1917. They were highly qualified engineers and scientists, actors and composers, musicians, painters and dancers. The end of World War II and the anti-Semitism of the Stalinist regime created another wave of immigrants, just as skilled as the Post-World War I wave.

In the 1970s, ‘80s and ‘90s, those leaving the Soviet Union were predominantly refugees fleeing communism and the cold war. Until 1989, Soviet Jews were free to head to the United States if they had an Israeli visa. Following the collapse of the Soviet Empire and the end of the cold war, the United States began to reassess its refugee policies, and reduced the number of refugees allowed to enter America from the former Soviet Union.

The Russians that settled in many parts of Illinois are mostly those who came as refugees. Older people tend to live on their own, often in senior residential facilities; perhaps as a relief from the crowded living conditions in the Soviet Union. The survival skills they developed in the Soviet Union to cope with untrustworthy officials and food shortages may irritate Americans – until the Americans understand their history.

Telling it like it was…

Sabina Pello

She has vivid memories of landing at O'Hare Airport in 1990. "As soon as I stepped on this land, I knew I was home," she said.

She dreamed of being a singer of classical music, like her grandmother before her. But because she was Jewish and living in the Soviet-controlled city of Leningrad in Russia, Sabina Pello was not allowed to study music at the conservatory. Her family had been exiled from Kiev and her father was declared an "enemy of the people."

Rather than allow disappointment to overwhelm her, Sabina went to the university, received a degree in Biochemistry Engineering and obtained a good job doing research. She later married a famous classical musician and had one son. With no warning, her husband, at a very young age, died of a heart attack in the middle of a performance.

The political situation in Russia worsened and Sabina became determined to get out of what she viewed as the totalitarian regime of the Soviet Union. Her request to leave the country was repeatedly denied and she was classified as a "refusenik." Because of her political views, she lost her position at the research plant, and for the next 12 years supported herself and her son by knitting and sewing clothing for people in her community.

Sabina's son married and was able to come to Illinois through relatives of his wife. When Gorbachev came to power, Sabina was finally allowed to come and visit her son in the United States. In 1990, Sabina, her second husband and her 87-year-old mother came as refugees to Illinois. She has vivid memories of landing at O'Hare Airport: "As soon as I stepped on this land, I knew I was home. I was sure I would be able to pursue all my dreams."

Sabina quickly learned English and found a job as a medical interpreter at a Chicago hospital. She became active in the Illinois Chapter of the American Association of Immigrants from the former USSR and, before long, she was president. She is a tireless advocate for other Russian refugees, asylees and immigrants who are trying to attain their citizenship.

Scandinavians are, perhaps, best known for their Viking history in the 8th through 10th Centuries when bands of sea-faring marauders invaded other European nations, pillaging and plundering. If a raid wasn't feasible, the Vikings would trade. Some Viking adventurers stayed in the countries they invaded, learning the native language, marrying the indigenous people, embracing a new culture and adopting the local religion.

Most Swedes, Norwegians, Danes and Finns came to the United States between 1830 and 1930. A large number of ambitious Scandinavians came after the enactment of the Homestead Act of 1862 and settled in the farm-friendly Midwest. Some immigrants came with building skills of carpentry and bricklaying. Swedes and other Scandinavians did much of the work to rebuild the city after the Great Chicago Fire of 1871.

At the turn of the last century, Scandinavians were a significant proportion of the population in Chicago. But they also established churches, settlements and farms throughout Illinois. Cleng Peerson, a Norwegian, founded a small village named Norway in LaSalle County. Swedes established Bishop Hill in Henry County. The Danes settled in Dwight, McNabb, Sheffield and Plano, after working on the railroads that brought them to those communities in the 1860s.

In the twentieth century, immigration was often prompted by economic crises or religious

upheavals. The Scandinavian countries had very different experiences during World War II, but some came to America because the economies in Scandinavia suffered in the years during and just after the war. Sweden was officially neutral, but accepted and cared for thousands of Jewish refugees. Norway and Denmark were occupied by Nazi soldiers from April 1940 until the end of the war. Many immigrants will never forget the day that trains, so full of soldiers that some were hanging on to the outside of the train cars, arrived in their hometowns.

Telling it like it was…

Krista Nielsen

They moved to Florida in 1978 and then recently moved to Chicago to a Danish retirement residence.

"I love adventure! I knew when I was very young that I would go places and do things!" Krista Nielsen's first adventure, at age 19, was leaving her native Denmark and working on a farm in Norway. She came back to Denmark, wanting to study nursing. But her limited formal education precluded her admission to the hospital program she had chosen; in 1952, she decided to go to Canada. On the trans-Atlantic ship to Halifax, she met a young Swedish émigré whose destination was also Calgary. Once in Calgary, she found work on a farm — but that only lasted one week. Getting into a taxi, she gave the driver a menu from the ship on which the Swedish girl had written her name and address. Through her, Krista found employment as a housekeeper for an American oil man. She went to the Danish Club in Calgary and found herself a husband.

The young couple moved to a mining town in Ontario to improve their economic situation. Her husband worked underground for 20 years, mining iron ore. Krista worked for the other mining company, doing payroll and accounts receivable. They had a son and five years later, a daughter. Krista decided the time had come to finish her education and went to school with her children. She got the highest grade in English!

Krista returned to Denmark after her father died in the summer of 1960, bringing the children with her. Suddenly, she was conscious that perhaps she did not have many opportunities for her children to know her family. She had to borrow money for the tickets home as the mines weren't doing very well and her husband was only working four days a week.

The mines closed in 1978 and the Nielsens decided it was time for a change. They had visited friends in Florida and decided to move there. They bought a motel in Sarasota on their 25th wedding anniversary. After several years, they sold it and opened an antiques and collectibles store. Krista eventually sold the items on eBay.

Just this May, the Nielsens came to Chicago to live in a Danish retirement residence they had heard of through friends in the Danish Club in Sarasota. They realized that with their children married and living in Canada, they could not impose on their friends to care for them in their retirement years. They enjoy independent living, but should they need it, supportive care is available. Not surprisingly, they chose the company of their Scandinavian peers.

Serbia has had a complex history. Before 1918 it was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. After World War I, it became part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croatians and Slovenians. After World War II, it became one of the six republics and two independent provinces comprising Yugoslavia. Gradually the other five republics broke away from Yugoslavia until, in July 2004, Serbia and the two independent provinces (Kosovo and Pojvodina) were the only remnants of Yugoslavia. At that point they dropped the name Yugoslavia and officially became Serbia.

Several immigration waves brought the Serbians to the United States. The first Serbian immigration in the last two decades of the 19th Century brought people willing to work hard, but with limited education. Some came to avoid serving in the Austro-Hungarian army. They worked in Illinois' steel mills and slaughterhouses. Another wave of immigrants came after World War II. The third wave, coming in the 1990s, came as both immigrants and refugees to escape the wars in Bosnia and Croatia.

Education for the children and involvement in the orthodox churches and Serbian social organizations has been, and remains, important values in the community. Keeping family traditions can be a challenge to immigrant families, but a new baby is still frequently given a grandparent's name.

Weddings are still three-day affairs. The first day, the bride's family and the groom's family each entertain their guests. The second day, the groom's family accompanies him to the bride's house, where he arrives to escort her to the church for the wedding ceremony. That is followed by a reception (often for hundreds of guests). The third day, the bride's family welcomes the groom's family. All three days of celebration feature food, drink and music.

Telling it like it was…

Nikola Mitic

He came to Chicago in 1965 with his father, mother and brother. He later graduated from the U of I with a degree in electrical engineering.

The story of Nikola Mitic's immigration to the United States is a three-generation story. His grandfather, after suffering for four years in a prisoner of war camp during World War II, decided not to go home again. He stayed in Germany for a few years after the war, then came to the United States and found work in a steel mill on the southeast side of Chicago. He sent money home to his wife and two sons and toys to his grandchildren, but it was 1962 before he went home to Serbia to see his family. He had not seen them in nearly 20 years. The visit was so successful that the next year, his wife joined him. Two years later, Nikola's family came: his father, mother and younger brother.

Nikola's father went to work right away in the steel mills on Chicago's southeast side. Nikola went to school — he did not know a word of English. But he was fortunate: his homeroom teacher tutored him in English and he learned quickly, relying on an English-Serbian dictionary for help. As a teenager, he was the most fluent English speaker in the family and it was his responsibility to interpret for the adults. He was the interpreter when his father opened a bank account and when his mother had to visit a doctor. "It was unnatural — the relationship is backward — the parents are supposed to be the ones who know more than you." Neither his mother nor his grandmother ever learned English. The neighborhood they lived in was full of other immigrants, but the only friends the mother and grandmother had were Serbian. The Serbian church was the center of the family's social life.

Nikola graduated from the University of Illinois with a degree in electrical engineering. When it was time to marry, he went back to Serbia for three months and began to court a girl from his hometown. They did not see each other very often as her parents were very strict, but their relationship developed through letters and pictures. The wedding was held the following summer in Serbia, attended by all the family except the grandfather, who could not leave work.

Nikola's father and grandfather both retired from the steel mill, and Nikola also worked there for eight years. He has had a variety of professional positions, most recently working as an independent electrical engineering contractor and also developing real estate. He and his wife live in Lake County, but still commute every Sunday to the Serbian church on the southeast side of the city. It remains the place that still feels like home.

There have been three mass immigrations of Ukrainians to the United States. The first began in the 1880s and ended in 1914 at the start of WWI. The Ukraine was not even a recognized nation at the time of this immigration. Many of the first immigrants were poor, illiterate, unskilled peasants seeking a better life in America. They called themselves "Rusyns." Ukraine declared its independence in 1918, but the country's land was divided up among other nations after WWI.

The second mass immigration (1920–1939), brought Ukrainians to the United States who were more nationalistic, literate and skilled than their predecessors. These immigrants remained very loyal to their homeland and their goal was to see the Ukraine become an independent state. When Hitler invaded the Ukraine during WWII, dissidents organized the Ukrainian Partisan Army, which became the largest underground anti-Nazi force in Europe. Nearly 7 million Ukrainians died in WWII. At the end of the war, many lost their homes and were classified as displaced persons. When Congress passed the Displaced Persons Act of 1948, the third mass immigration of Ukrainians to the United States began. These immigrants were highly skilled professionals who were forced to leave the Ukraine just before the Soviets took over.

The Ukraine was part of the USSR until the breakup of the Soviet Empire. When the Ukraine became an independent state in 1991, a fresh wave of immigrants and refugees came to Illinois. The refugees were religious refugees in that they were not of the Ukrainian Orthodox sect. They were as likely to be Baptist as Jewish. But, because they speak Russian (as well as Ukrainian), they are often, erroneously, assumed to be Russians. Some consider it an insult, as Russia was the oppressor.

For Ukrainian Christians, Christmas Eve is the most sacred holiday; they celebrate by serving a 12-course, meatless, dairyless meal. The celebration includes an interesting tradition: a dessert pastry is thrown against the ceiling and if it sticks, it is a good omen for the new year.

Telling it like it was…

Kamiliya Morozyuk

She and her husband became U.S. citizens a year ago. She said, "In Ukraine I had existence. In America, I have life."

Kamiliya Morozyuk's wedding picture shows a beautiful young couple; as a bride, she wore a long gown and wedding veil with an elaborate headdress. The picture belies the poverty and hardship the young couple endured. They were married in 1954 and had a new baby in each of the next five years. By 1972, they had seven children, five sons and two daughters.

The part of Ukraine that Kamiliya grew up in, before and during World War II, was on the border between German and Russian domination. The Russian front advanced through her village twice, and the German army came through in-between. For the three years her village was occupied by Nazi soldiers, she learned German in school. The fighting in the village destroyed many of the buildings. It took 15 years after the war ended for the region to rebuild. Many villagers perished during the two years of terrible flooding and starvation that struck in 1947. Food was so scarce that people tried to cook and eat tree leaves. Perhaps Kamiliya's life was saved because she was relocated for those two years to a village where food was still available.

Kamiliya and her husband survived through unrelenting hard work. In addition to caring for their children, Kamiliya worked in a clothing factory, sewing the toe seams on stockings. She usually worked the night shift, leaving her husband home with the children. During the day, he worked as a truck driver, electrician, plumber and builder.

Their oldest son came to the United States in 1995. He urged his parents to come. They applied for and were granted refugee status on the basis of religious persecution in 1997. They found a safe haven in Berwyn, Illinois with their son in the adjacent apartment building, a daughter in the apartment upstairs and their church a couple of blocks away. Even though four children remain in Ukraine, Kamiliya and her husband gratefully became U.S. citizens a year ago. She says, "In Ukraine I had existence. In America I have life."

When the U.S. Justice Department waived entry restrictions on April 22, 1975, to allow over 130,000 Indochinese into the country, it was the first public acknowledgment that the Vietnam War was coming to an end. The U.S. government realized their moral responsibility to give refuge to the thousands of South Vietnamese who were no longer safe in their own country. Without an existing Vietnamese community to welcome or support them, the refugees had to settle where the churches and resettlement agencies put them. The dispersal of the Vietnamese throughout all 50 states was intended to prevent the emergence of a massive settlement or "ghetto."

The Vietnamese population is not a homogeneous group. Some, particularly the first wave of arrivals who came during 1975-77, were mostly from urbanized areas, if not Saigon itself. Many were professionals, technical workers, businessmen and military personnel. Being well educated, highly skilled and able to speak English, at least moderately well, they quickly adapted to the American way of life. Others, who came later, originated from the countryside and were less sophisticated in dealing with the quick pace of life in this country. Many spent years in resettlement camps in the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand, having escaped from Vietnam on boats.

Although Vietnamese are no longer coming to the United States as refugees, they are coming as immigrants, sponsored by their adult children. In many cases, there is nobody left in the home village to care for them.

Telling it like it was…

Qua Van Tran

He was arrested at his home and taken to a re-education camp to learn the benefits of a socialist state. He was told he would be there a month; he was there six years.

When Qua Van Tran was born in the north of Vietnam in 1938, Vietnam was still one country. When the Communist-led Vietminh defeated the French in 1954, Vietnam was divided into two nations, and North Vietnam became Communist. It was at this point that Qua's family moved to South Vietnam to join Qua, who had been at a pre-military boarding school since age 13.

By the time Saigon fell in 1975, Qua had reached the rank of captain in the South Vietnamese Army, and was supervisor of cadets at a junior military school. Initial plans by the U.S. military to evacuate him failed and he was told to "go home." Waiting at home were his wife and six children, ages 5 to 16. Within days, North Vietnamese officials came to his home, arrested him, and took him to a re-education camp so he could learn the benefits of a socialist state. He was told he'd be in the camp for one month, but it was six years. It became a forced labor camp.

His wife supported herself and the children by doing menial jobs, and by selling the family's possessions. When Qua was released in 1981, he found that, because of his past, he was unemployable. Self-employment was his only recourse, and he strategically set up a business of raising ducks. With an eye always on the sea, the road to freedom, he devised plans for connecting to people who had fishing boats. He worked hard raising ducks, learned the mechanics of running a boat, saved money to use as payoffs, and made contacts with fishermen.

After 10 failed attempts, he finally succeeded in escaping by boat. The failed attempts were the result of information leaks and poor organization. Once he was arrested and imprisoned for a month. Meanwhile, four of his children escaped before him, one-by-one, via the sea. Qua's boat ended up on an oil rig owned by Indonesia in the South China Sea. On the oil rig, he was granted asylum, spent a couple months in a refugee camp in Indonesia and arrived in Chicago to reunite with his children in 1986. It was not until five years later, after he became a U.S. citizen, that he was able to sponsor his wife and two youngest children to join him.

In closing the interview, Qua wanted his words quoted: "I'm thankful to the USA for my freedom, and for the college education, good jobs and financial stability of all my children."

Ethnic Museums

Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture
6500 S. Pulaski Road
Chicago, Illinois 60629
773-582-6500

Bishop Hill State Historic Site
P.O. Box 104
Bishop Hill, Illinois 61419
309-927-3345

Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site
30 Ramey Street
Collinsville, Illinois 62234
618-346-5160

Chicago Neighborhood Tours
312-742-1190
All tours depart from:
Chicago Cultural Center
77 E. Randolph Street
Chicago, Illinois 60601

Czechoslovak Heritage Museum
122 W. 22nd Street
Oak Brook, Illinois 60523
630-472-0500; 1-800-543-3272

Das Motorad Museum
1901 South Western Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60608
312-738-2269

DuSable Museum of African American History
740 E. 56th Place
Chicago, Illinois 60637
773-947-0600

Ethnic Heritage Museum
1129 S. Main Street
Rockford, Illinois 61107
815-962-7402

John Hauberg Indian Museum
Black Hawk State Historic Site
Black Hawk Road
Rock Island, Illinois 61201
309-788-9536

Hellenic Museum and Cultural Center
801 W. Adams
Chicago, Illinois 60607
312-655-1234

Irish American Heritage Center
4626 N. Knox
Chicago, Illinois 60630
773-282-7035

Mexican American Historical Museum
7601 S. Cicero Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60652

Mitchell Museum of the American Indian
2600 Central Park Avenue
Evanston, Illinois 60201
847-475-1030

Museum of Mexican Culture and History
3050 W. Cermak Road
Chicago, Illinois 60623

National Italian American Sports Hall of Fame
1438 W. Taylor
Chicago, Illinois 60607
312-226-5566

Polish Museum of America
984 N. Milwaukee
Chicago, Illinois 60622
773-384-3352

Spertus Museum
618 S. Michigan Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60605
312-322-1747

Spurlock Museum
600 S. Gregory Street
Urbana, Illinois 61801
217-333-2360

Steelworkers and Forge Gallery
310 N. Ottawa Street
Joliet, Illinois 60432
815-722-4140

Swedish American Museum Association
5211 N. Clark
Chicago, Illinois 60640
773-728-8111

Ukranian National Museum
721 N. Oakley Boulevard
Chicago, Illinois 60612
312-421-8020

Underground Railroad Exhibits and Programs

Alton Museum of History
2809 College Avenue
Alton, Illinois 62002
618-463-1795

The Black World History Wax Museum
2505 St. Louis Avenue
St. Louis, Missouri 63106
314-241-7057

Bronzeville Children's Museum
9600 S. Western Avenue
Evergreen Park, Illinois 60805
708-636-9504

Chicago Historical Society
Clark Street at North Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60614
312-642-4600

Dr. Richard Eells House
415 Jersey Street
Quincy, Illinois 62301
217-222-1799

Graue Mill and Museum
3800 S. York Road
Oak Brook, Illinois 60523
630-655-2090

Lucius Read House
106 N. Union Street
Byron, Illinois 61010
815-234-5031

Mother Rudd House
4690 Old Grand Avenue
Gurnee, Illinois 60031
312-791-1846

Naper Settlement
523 S. Webster
Naperville, Illinois 60450
773-947-0600

Owen Lovejoy House
Route 6 East
Princeton, Illinois 61356
815-879-9151

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