Immigration, the movement of peoples from one region or nation to another, is generating new interest among scholars in the social sciences and humanities, and among those outside the academy as well. The partisan rancor surrounding recent immigration legislation before the US Congress, and the furor raised of late in France and the Netherlands over Europe’s failure to economically and culturally assimilate its Arab and Islamic peoples, indicate how divisive the subject is. A profile of Liberia’s newly elected president, in the March 27 New Yorker, noted the continuing divide between the indigenous tribes of the interior and the Americo-Liberian descendants of the former slaves who established the country as an independent state in 1847. Throughout the world diaspora communities have become the norm rather than the exception.

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This issue of Focus highlights the wealth of primary sources and documentation on immigration amassed by CRL. These materials support the study and analysis of a phenomenon that has challenged public policy for centuries, while creating diverse, enlightened societies throughout the world.

—Bernard F. Reilly, Jr., President
The most obvious sources for the study of immigration are the massive tabulations of data on residents and households compiled by national governments, the population censuses. Censuses document in detail the settlement patterns and socio-economic status of immigrant groups. CRL has assiduously collected many of the major compilations, which are itemized in an online topic guide.

Some notable examples:

• **African census reports.** Published in microform by the Library of Congress, this set includes about 26 census reports of various dates from 1911–1955, for Botswana, French West Africa, Gambia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Nigeria, Rhodesia (Northern and Southern), Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Uganda, Zanzibar, and Ziguinchor, Senegal.

• **Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics.** *Census of Canada, 1851–1852* and *Census of Canada, 1860–1861*. Hardcopy of the report of the census of Canada containing both population and non-population statistics. The census covers Ontario and Quebec.

• **Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics.** *Census of Canada, 1870–1871*. This report of the census of Canada covers New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Ontario, and Quebec. It also includes information on earlier censuses, from 1665–1871, and vital statistics for 1608–1876.

• **Russian and Soviet censuses, 1897–1970.** These microform collections include the first census of the Russian Empire in 1897, the 1926 Russian census, and the 1952 and 1970 USSR population censuses.

• **The United States federal population decennial census schedules, 1790–1930.** CRL has the U.S. National Archives microfilm editions of these original censuses, a “census substitute” for 1890, and the soundex for the 1880 population schedules. The soundex filing system is a phonetic code used to file together similar sounding surnames with variant spellings. This system was used to create a card index for the 1880 population census. Only households with children aged 10 and under were indexed in the 1880 soundex.

• **Western European census reports, 1960.** Published by Redgrave Information Resources in microfiche with an English language guide. This collection reproduces 74 official census reports of the 22 nations of western Europe, covering the 1960 census period. The reports are written in the language of the issuing country.
Writings on the subject of immigration over the years vary widely in motivation, viewpoint, approach, and quality. Publications in the CRL collections run the gamut, from 19th century tracts designed to promote ethnic prejudice and bias, to those that use sophisticated metrics of modern social and behavioral science. A keyword search of the CRL online catalog under “immigration” yields several hundred primary sources. Here are a few.

The American Culture Series, a massive 627-reel microform set published by University Microfilms, is a collection of American political and cultural literature of the 19th century, rich in early writings on immigration. The massive collection contains a number of key works of the virulent anti-Irish and anti-Catholic ideology of the Nativist movement that arose in the northeastern US during the antebellum period. Among them are two 1835 polemics by Samuel F. B. Morse, better known for introducing the telegraph, and others:


American Culture also includes early writers who took a historiographical approach to the subject:

- William Jeremy Bromwell. *History of immigration to the United States, exhibiting the number, sex, age, occupation, and country of birth, of passengers arriving . . . by sea from foreign countries, from September 30, 1819 to December 31, 1855; compiled entirely from official data: with an introductory review of the progress and extent of immigration to the United States prior to 1819, and an appendix, containing the naturalization and passenger laws of the United States*. New York: Redfield, 1856.

CRL holdings of later 19th and early 20th century American sociological
literature document the attempts—some more progressive than others—of American thinkers and scholars to come to grips with the impact of the great tides of immigrants from Ireland, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Some of these authors saw the various migrating ethnic groups in terms of social Darwinist hierarchies. Others advocated public policy solutions based on quantitative, scientific observation of socialization processes among the new populations. The works of the latter signal the beginnings of social engineering in the United States.

A few of the works:


Immigration is a perennial interest of scholars in disciplines ranging from history to political science. CRL’s dissertation collection includes numerous studies of the nature, causes, and impact of immigration on France, Israel, the Caribbean, Canada, and the United States. Some of the titles held by CRL:


*Aliens or Americans?* is one in a popular series of monographs published by the Young People’s Missionary Movement. From CRL collections.


Scholars like Michael Suleiman and Irene Joshi have demonstrated the documentary value of newspapers published in and for the growing number of expatriate communities around the world. Suleiman showed how much of the political and cultural lives of Arab communities in the United States are revealed through their newspapers and journals. (See Focus, Spring 2004.)

In a paper presented at the 1997 Symposium on Access to and Preservation of Global Newspapers, Irene Joshi illustrated how the idea of Indian independence was carried by newspapers to South Asian communities in China, the Caribbean, South Africa, Switzerland, and San Francisco long before Britain ended their dominion over the subcontinent.

CRL holds more than 1,000 newspaper titles published in the U.S., and many more from other regions of the world, for specific ethnic groups from the mid-1800s to the present. In many cases the files are extensive and often are the longest or most complete files extant. Follow this link to CRL’s searchable database of the US ethnic titles.

Many of these holdings are in microform, but some of the titles still are held only in original format.
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