



The American Ethnic Geographer

A Specialty Group of the Association of American Geographers

Volume 7, Number 1

Winter 1999

Comments from the A.E.G.S.G. Chair

Aloha! Hope everyone is ready for the upcoming meeting in Hawaii. It is obvious from the preliminary program that once again our specialty group is front and center with contributions. The legacy of our group is one of commitment to successful AAG meetings and the Honolulu event is no exception. In some ways our group has a life of its own and seems to only get better and stronger. This is directly contributable to each and everyone of you. All should be proud of your contributions and strong commitment.

Just a quick look at the program reveals the depth and breadth that our specialty group has and the major contributions it has to offer to the field of geography. The group's record, as always is impressive. *Mahalo* (thank you).

You can also see from the Newsletter that Carlos Teixeira has been working very hard, but his life would, and could, be much easier with your help. Make sure you send him information concerning your activities, research, successes, book reviews and short pieces. As a

former newsletter editor, you never have enough material so please continue the flow to Carlos.

One last note. If you have items for discussion in the specialty group business meeting, please forward them to me and we'll get them on the agenda. Also, if you have a new address (especially E-mail) please send that along.

Again, thanks for your hard work, give yourself a pat on the back and see you in Hawaii.

Doug Heffington

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A.E.G.S.G. Sponsored or Co-Sponsored sessions at the Honolulu (Hawaii) A.A.G. Meeting—1999

#39	Pacific Islands Geography I: Ecology and Population	#298	Future Research Directions in American Ethnic Geography
#65	Toward an Applied Ethnic Geography	#322	New Perspectives on Immigration and Ethnicity in the City
#99	American Ethnic Geography Distinguished Scholar: Michael P. Conzen	#363	Melting Pot or Marble Cake? Immigrant Identities and Cultural Politics I: Policy, Power, and Populations
#136	Problems of American Ethnic Groups	#388	Melting Pot or Marble Cake? Immigrant Identities and Cultural Politics II: Policy, Power, and Populations
#158	The Hawaiian Home Lands: A Temporal and Spatial Synthesis	#399	Geography of Judaic Studies
#252	Preserving Sacred Geography: Saving Native Sacred Sites in the 21st Century		

Business Meeting: Friday, March 26, 1999 from 6:45-8:00pm

American Ethnic Geography on the Internet

Lawrence Estaville,
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The enormous amount of information on the Internet provides ethnic geographers with data at national, state, county, municipal, and sub-municipal scales. This information is generally quantitative in nature but a large amount of qualitative material in the form of written documents, place descriptions, organizational charters and constitutions, individual opinions and insights, and surnames, for instance, are available from hundreds of websites, bulletin boards, and listservs. Furthermore, geographers have begun to explore the research possibilities regarding American ethnic groups that use the Internet to maintain or strengthen their ethnic identities and ties. This discussion has brought forth several questions that need to be addressed concerning the identification of variables to measure ethnic identity on the Internet, types and significance of sites that have information about ethnic groups, and spatial patterns and relationships of the Internet sites.

While returning on an airplane from the April 1995 Chicago AAG meeting, I began to think about all the buzzing at the meeting regarding the Internet as an increasingly important source for data about American ethnic groups. I became curious, however, about the question of whether these ethnic groups were using the Internet to try to maintain their ethnic identities and ties. When I found a few moments, I jotted down a simple research design and jumped onto the Internet in August 1995 and decided then to do another search for sites that seemed to be nexuses in the maintenance of ethnic identity the following April to see what changes, if any, had occurred. Much remains to be done in exploring the Internet to try to discern if American ethnic groups are using this communications web to maintain their ethnic identities in whatever ways.

Here is an outline of this very preliminary study I discussed at the 1996 AAG meeting in Charlotte that clearly confirmed that not only are American ethnic groups using the Internet to maintain their ethnic identities but the number of such sites and connections are increasing by a substantial rate each year.

Problem:

Do ethnic groups in the U.S. use the Internet to maintain or strengthen their ethnic identities?

Working Hypotheses:

1) What different types of sites can be identified that deal with ethnic issues?

2) Where are the sites that deal with ethnic issues?

3) What kinds of groups deal with ethnic issues?

4) Do these groups communicate in ways that attempt to maintain or strengthen their ethnic identities?

Method:

Use Internet search engines to identify sites that concern American ethnic issues at two points in time to discover any change in the number, location, and types of sites.

1) In August 1995 use Yahoo! and Infoseek to search for sites for African Americans, Asian Americans, and Native Americans

2) In April 1996 use Yahoo! and Infoseek to search for sites for African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans; expand search to include Hispanics, Chicanos/Latinos, and Cajuns

Analysis:

1) Comparisons of sites for African Americans, Asian Americans, and Native Americans August 1995, April 1996

A) Number of sites:

August:

African Americans: 27 sites; many personal webpages
Asian Americans: 13 sites; many personal webpages
Native Americans: 14 sites; many personal webpages

April:

African Americans: 146 sites; many personal webpages
Asian Americans: 134 sites; many personal webpages
Native Americans: 157 sites; many personal webpages

B) Location of sites:

August:

African Americans: throughout the U.S.; many in the South
Asian Americans: throughout the U.S.; many in West
Native Americans: throughout the U.S.; many in West

April:

African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans:
Similar to August locations but denser distributions

C) Type of sites:

August:

African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans:

Universities, libraries associations, fraternities, personal; mostly information about group culture and activities, historical data

April:

African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans:

Universities, libraries, associations, fraternities, newsgroups, news services, commercial, personal; wide range of information about group culture and activities, historical data, individual communications, commercial appeals

2) Current examples of American ethnic sites:

A) African Americans

B) Hispanic Americans

C) Cajuns

3) Questions for further research:

A) Do Internet sites for ethnic groups have any distinctive spatial pattern; if so, are there any important spatial relationships within and among these site locations?

B) Can variables be identified that can measure accurately whether the Internet helps maintain or strengthen ethnic identities?

C) What types of sites are most important in the maintenance or strengthening of an ethnic groups culture through time?

The North American Urban Kaleidoscope: The Social Transformation of Toronto

Larry S. Bourne

Department of Geography, University of Toronto

Readers of this Newsletter are certainly aware of the dramatic social transformation introduced into many North American cities by recent waves of foreign immigration. This is particularly the case for those metropolitan areas that have served as "gateways" for immigrants. Yet, such gateways have always been polyglot places. New York, for example, was nearly 60% foreign born in 1860; Chicago was almost as diverse. So what is different about recent immigration? This commentary briefly introduces recent trends in immigration in Toronto and speculates on some of the issues involved.

Toronto, and Canada writ large, have always been the destinations for immigrants from abroad. As of the 1996 Census, about 17.6% of the Canadian population was foreign-born, roughly the same proportion as in the first decades of this century. The rate of immigration has varied widely over time, depending on policy decisions and politics, and on economic conditions in both the source countries and in Canada. In the last ten years, however, the rate of immigration has increased significantly as rules of entry have been relaxed. Inflows have grown from an average of 85,000 annually in the 1980s to over 220,000 in the 1990s. As a proportion of resident population (29 million in 1996), the latter is a much higher rate than in the United States.

How does the current immigration scene in Canada differ from those of earlier periods? Four differences stand out. First, the context in which immigration is taking place is very different. In most of the post-war period annual immigration levels have been determined with at least one eye on current economic conditions. Over the last ten years, however, those

levels seem to have become detached from economic realities (e.g. the unemployment rate). At the same time fertility levels, and thus rates of natural population increase, have declined (and sharply so since the early 1960s). As a result, immigration now accounts for over 50% of national population growth, and between 75 and 100% of the growth of some metropolitan areas. Second, immigration flows and become increasingly focused on only a few metropolitan areas. As of 1996, 52.4% of all foreign-born populations were resident in the three largest metropolitan areas—Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver—compared to just over 34% of the total national population. For recent immigrants, those arriving since 1991, almost 74% are resident in the three metropolitan areas, and over 43% are living (or were at the time of the Census) in Toronto alone. Third, the sources of immigrants are now vastly different. In the immediate post-war period over 85% of immigrants came from so-called traditional source countries—notably Europe and the U.S. Since 1981, in contrast, only 15% have come from Europe and over 70% have come from new or non-traditional source countries—notably from Asia, the Caribbean, Africa and Latin America.

As a consequence, these three metropolitan areas are beginning to look and feel very different from cities in the rest of the country. In the Toronto metropolitan area, for example, over 47% of the metropolitan area population (or 1.9 million people) is now foreign-born, with over 190 different ethnic, cultural, racial and linguistic groups represented. Toronto is now the most ethnically and racially diverse urban area on the continent. Interestingly, the traditional correlations between

ethnicity, culture, race and language have also changed. Whereas many of the earlier European immigrant populations were non-English-speaking, many of the recent non-European populations (those defined as visible minorities, or more crudely, non-whites), including those from Hong Kong, India, Pakistan, the Caribbean and parts of Africa, are English-speaking. Thus, conventional stereotypes of the immigrant population have to be rewritten.

Fourth, the destinations of immigrants within metropolitan areas are now also different. Increasingly, recent immigrants have gone straight to the suburbs rather than through traditional reception areas in the inner city. Although suburbs have always had immigrants, many of them low-income and working class, more recently middle-class immigrants have gone to the new suburbs and lower-income immigrants to the older suburbs. Intense suburban concentrations of new immigrants in effect have become the new reception areas. This shift of destinations to the suburbs, especially in Toronto (and Vancouver), is in part attributable to the size of the immigrant groups, the attraction of new jobs and less expensive housing,

and in the case of older suburbs, the availability of social housing. Whatever the reason, the face of the suburbs in Toronto, and in other Canadian gateway cities, has been extensively revised. Whether the new faces behave, as consumers, workers and citizens, in ways different from those of older residents remains an open question.

What is clear, however, is that the scale of this social transformation, however that term is defined, is unprecedented. The few metropolitan areas in Canada that serve as gateways for new immigrants are becoming more distinctive over time, and less like the rest of the country. This is most emphatically the case for multi-cultural, multi-ethnic Toronto. Indeed, by the next decade the expanded City of Toronto (the former Metro) will have a majority of visible minorities. How will the city's institutions and social services adapt? Will the newcomers differ in their behaviour and attitudes with respect to place, identity and politics? The rapidity of the social transformation in Toronto does—and will continue to—pose challenges for almost all stakeholders in the future of the metropolitan area, but it also offers opportunities for a new and energetic multi-cultural urban society.

A.A.G. Session Report

Boston A.A.G., 28 March 1998; A.E.G. Specialty Group Session #6503 The Homeland Concept Revisited (Part 2)

Organizer and Chair: Lawrence E. Estaville, Southwest Texas State University

Panelists: Charles S. Aiken, Daniel D. Arreola, Martyn J. Bowden, Stephen C. Jett, Richard L. Nostrand.

The discussion focused on several of the 12 questions developed and deliberated at the 1994 San Francisco AAG. (A transcript of that session was published in Fall 1997 by *The American Ethnic Geographer*.) These questions remain as the seminal issues surrounding debate of the homeland concept, nearly a decade after its genesis in geography. This report was condensed and edited in April 1998 by Douglas A. Hurt from a tape-recording made at the session. Part 1 was reported in Vol. 6, No. 2.

4. How long does it take for a homeland to develop?

Nostrand: States that the United States is a nation of immigrants. The strongest case for a homeland in the forthcoming book comes from **Jett's** study of Navajo. He believes that **Conzen** would argue that non-American Indians do not have homelands in the United States, but came from their homelands. There exists a need to be in a place for a long time period for a homeland to exist.

Arreola: The time element is significant for the Tejano who developed a perceived difference from other Mexican-Americans of the borderland region. This relational interaction may

be important in addition to the time factor. Tejano interaction with other ethnic groups crystallized their own ethnic identity.

Jett: Do Mexican-American origins within Mexico differ?

Arreola: Yes. Tejano roots are in Northeastern Mexico.

Estaville: Asks **Hardwick** to comment on her book on Russians (*Russian Refuge: Religion, Migration, and Settlement on the North American Pacific Rim*).

Hardwick: Conditions in the original homeland have much to do with the amount of time necessary for the creation of a new homeland. The Russian craving for a new homeland in the United States is intense. Time depends on the people, the place they came from, and conditions in the new land.

Estaville: Are the Russians developing a homeland in Northern California?

Hardwick: Yes. The post-Glasnost Russian immigrants in Sacramento showed an early sense of homeland. They were aided because a culture hearth was already in place and the new immigrants clustered around it.

5. *What is the minimum areal size of a homeland?*

6. *Is there a particular spatial structure for a homeland? [questions were asked jointly]*

Arreola: Believes that cultural capitals and gradations are possibly another addition to the homeland concept. He argues that neighborhoods and homes may be too small to be homelands.

Nostrand: The smallest homeland in the forthcoming book is **Steven Schnell's** Kiowa which is a multi-county area. Ghettos or homes do not qualify as homelands, but are ethnic islands. He repeats that homelands do not have to be ethnic, but can be self-conscious such as the Mormon or Anglo-Texan homelands.

Arreola: Is there a minimum threshold size? Are neighborhoods, such as **Hardwick's** Russians, excluded?

Nostrand: States that "how long" and "how big" are difficult questions.

Hardwick: Notes that the community dialectic is important. A size limitation makes logical sense, but a community defines a homeland differently than scholars.

7. *How is a homeland recognized – internally, externally, or both?*

Michal Kohout: Do ethnic homelands imply a notion of ethnic purity? Are homelands a place of exclusion?

Arreola: Mythology plays an important role in homelands. Homelands are constructed only for one group.

Estaville: Cajuns utilize myth as an important role in commercialization that has led to reduced negative stereotypes. Pride in myth is not used as cultural cement but to sell the homeland commercially.

Bowden: States that the word Yankee appears when Yankees begin to disappear. A similarity to the cowboy myth and invented tradition. Yankee originated as a derogatory term from the Dutch, yet it becomes a word of identification. Yankees created an acceptable, complex mythology of an imagined past.

Estaville: Notes that the creation of an imagined past may be a "marker" in the homeland concept. This is a quality of the Cajun experience, too.

Arreola: And the Tejano experience.

Steven Hoeschler: Can traditional Cajun culture accommodate the new commercialization?

Estaville: Yes. However, a Cajun renaissance is unlikely. He notes the decline in monolingual speaking Francophones. Language is key to any culture. What it means to be Cajun is changing.

8. *When does a homeland cease to exist?*

Aiken: Referenced an article that stated that contemporary Blacks have bypassed the plantation areas of the South and look back to Africa as their homeland. But, sometimes Blacks can not identify with African places. For many Blacks, plantation areas have ceased to exist as homelands because they refuse to think of them in those terms, even though many return to those areas.

Hardwick: Asks if this constitutes a non-recognized homeland.

Aiken: Right.

Mary Elizabeth Brown: Asks about return Black migration to the urban South.

Aiken: Blacks are moving back to the metropolitan South, such as Atlanta, because of kinship ties as well as economic factors. Referenced the idea that political change in the South has allowed for freedom of movement that did not exist 30 years ago.

Hoeschler: The homeland concept implies issues of borders and border control. Who is allowed to be part of a homeland? How can **Aiken** argue for the Black South as a homeland?

Aiken: Dismissed the use of Black farm ownership data as a measure. Instead, home ownership shows a commitment to place. There has been a dramatic rise in Black home ownership in the South since the 1960s. Home ownership is higher for Blacks in the plantation South than the nation as a whole.

Hoeschler: Comments that if **Aiken** can find case studies of Blacks returning to the rural plantation South, then his argument for a homeland would be strengthened.

Aiken: States that he used a conservative approach for his forthcoming book chapter.

9. *What homelands exist today in North America?*

Hardwick: Russians she has studied are in the formative stage of homeland development. Comments on the need to use extended interviews for accuracy. Interview use is crucial because homelands can not be understood or expressed without talking with people.

Nostrand: The Hispano homeland exists today, although it peaked about 1900. Notes that **Schnell's** Kiowa homeland chapter in the forthcoming book is based entirely on interviews.

Bowden: Yankees became equivalent, in outsiders' eyes, to the North by the Civil War. The Yankee homeland core began to die before the Revolution and was certainly gone by 1815. Yankee culture became committed to the nation and a new definition of New England – a redefinition of Yankees.

Arreola: The Tejano homeland is emerging due to a demographic explosion, ethnic revival, and the element of myth-

making.

George F. Carter, Jr.: What is NAFTA's effect on encouraging ethnic identities?

Arreola: Stated that cross-border infusions into the Tejano homeland are hard to see without being born into that group.

Jett: Discussed the historic incorporation of different groups into Navajo society. Also, the Navajos are undergoing rapid population growth and are expanding their territorial control through land purchases. Nearly 100 percent of the homeland is Navajo. This guarantees their continuation as a homeland. However, the videoization of culture encourages the erosion of traditional Navajo culture, language, and religion especially among the youth, at the same time revivalism is occurring. He believes that the Navajo sense of homeland will remain, but be transformed over time.

Aiken: In time, some urban Blacks may look to the plantation South, although the region is ignored today. Today, Blacks look to Africa. Restates the idea of invented places and invented homelands. The African homeland for Blacks is an invented homeland.

Estaville: Cajuns are a people with distinct foodways, music, etc., but their language is gone and their history is a myth.

Kohout: Asks if myth building can be used to defend a peoples' identity from the created myths of outsiders?

Arreola: Yes. Groups can take a defensive posture. Commented on the perceived difference between the terms "Spanish" and "Mexican" in Texas.

Bowden: Many groups define themselves, and their borders, by having words for their enemies. He noted the historical deep hatred between Massachusetts Yankees and Rhode Islanders.

Smith: Commented that control of place is an important homeland characteristic.

Brown: Is there a homeland presence in urban areas? Homelands seem to be primarily rural.

Arreola: The Tejano homeland is urban - a greater percentage than the national average. Historically, Tejanos had a town centered founding process.

Estaville: Referenced **Sheskin's** research on Jewish-American urban homelands and **Hardwick's** study of urban Russians. Commented on the military theme of homelands - a place that a group of people love and bond with and would defend and die for.

End of Session

Douglas A. Hurt

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News of A.E.G.S.G. Members and Research in Progress

From Susan Hardwick:

*Dept. Of Geography and Planning
Southwest Texas State University*

1. Our department here at SWT will be hosting the Southwestern Association of American Geographers (SWAGG) next fall on October 20-23. We are very interested in having the American Ethnic Geography Specialty Group sponsor a session on ethnic geography in the region. If anyone is interested in participating in this session, please contact Susan Hardwick at sh19@swt.edu or joy adams at joy@garden.com. We are also planning a field trip on ethnic tourism as a featured part of the conference program. Why not come to Central Texas in the fall and join us in the SWAAG festivities?

2. At the fall, 1998 meeting of SWAAG held at LSU, Susan Hardwick, Steven Hoeschler and Fred Shelley organized a special paper session on the ethnic geography of Texas and Louisiana. Participants in this session included SWT grad students Joy Adams, and Rebecca Sheehan, University of Texas grad student Bella Bychkova Jordan, LSU grad student Jake Besterman, independent scholar George Carter, and SWT professor Susan Hardwick. In a related special session, Lawrence Estaville presented a thought provoking paper on Louisiana Cajun culture.

Jesse McKee needs your help!

Kendall/Hunt has agreed to publish ETHNICITY IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICA (Jesse O. McKee, editor) if there is sufficient orders from your college/university bookstore! Odd way of doing business, but this is the hand Dr. McKee has been dealt. I urge you to think about this and place an order for one or more of your classes. Kendall/Hunt's address is: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 4050 Westmark Drive, P.O. Box 1840, Dubuque, IA 52004. Dr. McKee's address is Department of Geography and Area Development, University of Southern Mississippi, Box 5051, Hattiesburg, Mississippi 39406-5051.

Enrichment Funds for upcoming speakers

Doug Heffington applied for and received funding from the AAG from the Annual Meeting Enrichment Funds for two speakers at the upcoming Hawaii meeting. Additional funding was provided by Middle Tennessee State University. Darrell Yagodich of the Hawaiian Homelands Project will speak on "The Hawaiian Home Lands: A Temporal and Spatial Synthesis" and Andrew Gulliford of the Department of History and Office of Historic Preservation at MTSU will

speak on "Preserving Sacred Geography: Saving Native Sacred Sites in the 21st Century". Both of these sessions are co-sponsored with the American Indian Specialty Group.

The "Delta" field trip

Doug Heffington of MTSU and Klaus Meyer-Arndt of Western Florida University lead the "Delta" field trip for the November meeting of the Southeastern Division of the AAG in Memphis, TN. The bus was full and we explored some of the ethnic landscapes of the Delta by way of the "Blues Highway" (US Highway 61) as we ate soul food at Mrs Bullock's cafe in Helena, Arkansas and visited a Chinese cemetery outside of Tunica, Mississippi.

Upcoming Publications...

Wei Li (University of Connecticut) has an article "Building Ethnoburbia: The Emergence and Manifestation of Chinese Ethnoburb in L.A.'s San Gabriel Valley" which will appear at the coming issue of *Journal of Asian American Studies*. This is part of her contribution to the field of Asian American Studies, in which she currently holds a joint-appointment. She has also been selected by the AAG's Nystron Dissertation Award committee as one of the finalists for this year's competition, and will present a paper at a Nystron session in Honolulu.

Gary Gaile and Cort Willmott (editors). *Geography in America at the Dawn of the 21st Century* (Forthcoming). An AAG endorsed work (published by Oxford University Press), this book will review the state of the discipline through its

specialty groups. Every specialty group will have an "entry"/ contribution in this important edited volume. The American Ethnic Geography specialty group selected Lawrence E. Estaville, Susan W. Hardwick, James P. Allen and Ines M. Miyares ("American Ethnic Geography: Development, Contributions, and Challenges") as its representatives in this volume.

Call for papers

Conference: "Violations: Gender-Based Risks in Women's Lives." This two day conference is sponsored by the University of Toronto and will be held on April 15 and 16, 1999. A panel discussion at this conference will focus on "Issues of Race/Ethnicity and Violence Against Women." For further information, contact Aysan Sev'er, Conference organizer, Fax 416-287-7283/email SEVER@scar.utoronto.ca

Call for Student Papers

I owe each of you an apology concerning the "Call for Student Papers" for the Hawaii meeting. I simply overlooked the submittal deadline to the AAG and assume all responsibility for this oversight. In recent years, we have not had a lot of success in students submitting papers for our competition and my oversight has certainly not helped the situation. Again, I apologize. However, if you have students that are interested and have papers to be presented at the AAG, please have them submit to me a copy of their paper by no later than March 14, 1999. They can fax it to me at (615) 898-5592.

The next issue (Vol. 7, No. 2) of *The American Ethnic Geographer* will be published in September 1999. The deadline for submission of items for the newsletter is September 1, 1999.

Send submissions to: *Carlos Teixeira, Editor, The American Ethnic Geographer*, Scarborough Campus, University of Toronto, Department of Geography, 1265 Military Trail, Scarborough, Ontario, Canada, M1C 1A4. E-mail: cart@scar.utoronto.ca

And don't forget to check out the AEGSG web site at: [HTTP://EVEREST.HUNTER.CUNY.EDU/AEGSG](http://EVEREST.HUNTER.CUNY.EDU/AEGSG)

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