

IMMIGRATION HISTORY RESEARCH CENTER

Spring/Summer 2010 – Volume XXIV, No. 2

From the Director

Dear Friends, As I write this letter, the IHRC staff — assisted by colleagues at the Institute for Global Studies — is hard at work on last-minute arrangements for a conference and archives workshop to be held in Andersen Library on May 17 and 18. Titled "The Migration Letter: Archiving Intimacy in the Postal Era" the symposium and archives workshop will bring together scholars and archivists from Canada, China, Germany, Norway, and Italy to discuss the collecting, digitization, and interpretation of letters exchanged between immigrants and their friends and relatives in their native languages. Long ago, University of Minnesota immigration historian **Theodore Blegen** hoped to publish a multi-volume collection of "America letters" written by immigrants. With new technologies to assist us, the IHRC now hopes to create international collaborations that will make digital archives of letters accessible to scholars, teachers, students, and family and community historians. "Letters" will remain a focus for IHRC activities for the year ahead, too. Check our website for upcoming events! Within the next month, the digital archive of Facebook writings created by our MN2.0 project will also be available for browsing.



Continued on page 3, Gabaccia

IHRC Thanks Halyna Myroniuk, Recognizes Distinguished Career

Halyna Myroniuk, senior curatorial assistant and library supervisor, retired after 44 years of service to the IHRC as a staff member. Halyna worked as a student at the Immigrant Archives, and she became a permanent staff member in 1970. The Friends of the IHRC graciously co-sponsored the retirement award event for Halyna on March 9th. Halyna was given a commemorative scrapbook that included contributions from many friends and colleagues. We are fortunate that she will continue volunteering for the IHRC for special archival projects in the future.



(L to R) Serge Scipko with Halyna at Berry Street, preparing materials to move to Andersen Library in 2000 and at the March 9th Appreciation Event.

Support IHRC by Contributing to Vecoli Chair Fund

We need YOUR help. The IHRC, the University of Minnesota, and higher education institutions have entered a period in which government funding will continue to decline. As budget cuts continue, we need YOUR contribution to complete the \$1,000,000 goal for the Rudolph J. Vecoli Chair in Immigration History.

For the last 25 years, the College of Liberal Arts (CLA) has paid a significant majority of IHRC staff salaries and operating expenses. IHRC endowments provide cushion against cuts in those areas. CLA also has supplemented the Vecoli Chair since its establishment. We cannot take that assistance for granted.

Make no mistake: the ongoing decline in state support for the University will affect IHRC. The Vecoli Chair is the strongest voice our Center has during these difficult times, and we must complete the endowment to make that voice heard.

Continued on page 3, Hawley

Global Race, Ethnicity & Migration

The IHRC had a busy spring schedule with an array of international immigration themes and speakers. Now, as ever, immigrants and refugees engage with their countries of origin. At times these interactions can become problematized by policies of either the country of origin or the new ‘home’ country and spark controversy. A February teach-in titled “Linked Lives: When are Immigrant and Refugee Engagements Problematized?” sought to provide a historical and comparative context for current Minnesota immigrant and refugee engagement with their countries of origins.

Global Race, Ethnicity & Migration, a collaboration of IHRC and the Institute for Global Studies, sponsored many talks by visiting scholars. **Guido Tintori**, Fulbright-Schuman Scholar at New York University, spoke about the controversy in Italy and Europe over South Americans of Italian descent claiming heritage citizenship under Italian nationality law to work as European Union citizens.

Marija Dalbello, Rutgers University, presented research on the influence of culture and society on documentary practices, documents and representations that are used to diffuse knowledge.



Ariane Chebel d'Apollonia, Sciences Po, Paris, analyzed historical perspectives and current debates on how immigration and migration are shaping modern views of citizenry and nation identity in Europe during a roundtable titled “Migration as a Challenge to Nationality and Citizenship: the European Case.”

Jan Rath, Director of the Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies at University of Amsterdam, discussed the

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commodification and marketing of diversity in urban landscapes, transforming ethnic neighborhoods into places of leisure and consumption by a wider public.



(L to R) **Annemarie Steidl**, **Vladimir Fischer**, and **James Oberly** presented an interim progress report on collaborative demographic and archival research conducted in Minnesota Population Center data sets, IHRC archival collections, and other sources. Their work is coordinated by Center for Austrian Studies.

Jacqueline Andall, University of Bath, presented a paper that considered how gender ideology has informed immigration policy and practice to produce distinct flows of female migrants as “entertainers” in Japan and live-in domestic workers in Italy.

Elena Isayev, University of Exeter, held a seminar that explored the integration of different forms of evidence into Mediterranean studies, based on her teaching about alternative histories through art and archaeology. She is the main investigator on the project “De-Placing Future Memory,” which studies the transmission of memory across time and space.

Visiting scholars and University of Minnesota faculty held a roundtable discussion on April 22 titled “Italy as a Cultural Crossroads: Long-Term Perspectives.” Papers were pre-circulated, and panelists included **Elena Isayev**; **Susanna Ferlito**, University of Minnesota; **Donna Gabaccia**, IHRC Director and **Jacqueline Andall**.

Grant-in-Aid Awards

Grants in aid awards are made possible through gifts to the IHRC’s ethnic studies, Vecoli Chair and other funds.

Ulla Aatsinki, Fulbright Scholar, Michigan Tech University, presented

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“Finnish Roots, American Wings? Efforts to Socialize Finnish-American Children by American Schools.”

Jüri Estam spoke on “Estonian World Council and Estonian American National Council.” His research visit was in preparation for writing histories of the two organizations for public audiences.

Folklorist **Joseph Sciorra**, John D. Calandra Italian American Institute of Queens College, CUNY, documented the role of lyricist Alessandro Sisco’s role in an international musical exchange that stretched from performances by Enrico Caruso to the television series “The Sopranos.”

William Samonides, Greek-American historian and author of *Greeks of Stark County*, returned to the IHRC for research on the Greeks from Asia Minor and spoke at a regional AHEPA meeting.

Collections & Community

Justin Schell and **Andy Wilhide** presented Minnesota 2.0 at World Languages Day classes at the University of Minnesota on May 18th. Andy also spoke on immigration history at the Family History Day Fair sponsored by Minnesota Genealogical Society on April 17th, with Friends of IHRC staffing an information booth. **Darrel Nicholson** helped represent IHRC at Finn Forum in late May.

IHRC collections were featured in “Below the Surface” at a University Libraries’ celebration of the 10th anniversary of Elmer L Andersen Library (on display through June 25). The IHRC joined with other co-sponsors to present “Hmong Literacies” with Center for Writing and “Frames of Violence” with Consortium for the Study of the Asias. In June the IHRC will co-sponsor “The Ethics of Working with Immigrant Populations.”



(L to R) **Kristel Tammik** and **Margit Laanemets** of the National Archives of Estonia spent March in the IHRC processing collections.

Visitors

David Chang, Molly Rojas Collins, Dan Detzner and Michael Stebleton brought classes to the IHRC for orientations and archival workshops for courses from writing to ethnic studies. **Brenda Child** sent many students for oral history assignments on Minnesota immigration, and **Kevin Murphy** invited Program Director **Haven Hawley** to comment on graduate student public history project reports. IHRC staff participated in archival visits by other classes at the University, arranged by the Archives and Special Collections, University Libraries. Haven Hawley led an Osher Lifelong Learning Institute session and a workshop on detecting forgery in archives, and **Halyna Myroniuk** provided insights about archival sources useful for studying Ukrainian immigration and Holodomor. **Sara Wakefield**

guided history of medicine students in using the Ukrainian Fraternal Association database of health, mortality, and demographic information, with archival materials enriching the session.

Minnesota International Center's International Visitor Leadership Program brought delegations from Armenia, Japan and Switzerland to the IHRC for discussions about immigrant integration and culture with Program Director **Haven Hawley**. **Eric Weitz**, Arsham and Charlotte Ohanessian Chair in the College of Liberal Arts and IHRC Faculty & Student Advisory Council member, consulted with Armenian representatives. American Latvian Association Graduate Fellow **Ilze Garoza** coordinated the visit to IHRC of Ambassador **Andrejs Pildegovics** and Honorary Consul **Laura Ramanis**, Republic of Latvia.



(L to R) Steve Atkinson, Mike Rakes & Cindy Herring

Staff Update

Welcome to IHRC's new accountant, **Mike (Kouzourakis) Rakes**. Mike began working with the IHRC and other units in November of 2009, after the retirement of **Steve Atkinson**. "I think the fact that all four of my grandparents immigrated to the United States from Greece gives a special meaning to my work with the IHRC," said Mike. **Kao Choua Vue** starting working in March as a student collections assistant. She is in her 3rd year in the urban studies program. Congratulations to recent graduate, **Meghan DeLisi**, student senior administrative assistant, who was selected for an Outstanding Student Employee Award given by the Office for Student Affairs.



Gabaccia, continued from page 1

So, even though our caverns still remain over-full, affecting our ability to collect new materials, the IHRC is managing to provide new materials, including those written by new immigrant groups, to researchers, teachers, and students, and more access to collections we already have.

As the school year ends, we'll be saying goodbye to some of our student workers who are graduating. As we've learned over the years, however, many "goodbyes" are instead "arrivederci's." For example, our long-time colleague Halyna Myroniuk, who retired in March after 44 years of service, is seen regularly around the IHRC, where she remains involved in a number of volunteer activities.

We hope to see you soon in our suite on the third floor of Andersen Library!

—**Donna Gabaccia, Director**

Hawley, continued from page 1

Supported by the Vecoli Chair fund, the IHRC Director's research agenda guides the scholarly study of immigrant experience in the U.S. and around the world. The Chair trains graduate students, funds archival workshops for communities and scholars, supports researchers developing IHRC collections, and initiates important projects like Digitizing Immigrant Letters.

As holder of the Vecoli Chair, IHRC Director Donna Gabaccia has brought together leading scholars, graduate students, community volunteers and archival professionals on the topic of how immigrants stayed in touch with those they left behind. The Center is establishing immigrant letters as a distinct collecting genre for archives around the world, increasing how many immigrant stories will survive to be told.

A fully endowed Vecoli Chair will guarantee that the IHRC Director can create projects like Digitizing Immigrant Letters. We need the Chair to be a strong voice for the IHRC, as well. YOUR donation, YOUR bequest, or YOUR pledge of matching funds will let us tell our story, and continue telling yours.

—**Haven Hawley, Program Director**



Giving to the IHRC

Did you know that the IHRC has preserved immigrant history for 45 years and Andersen Library is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year?! The Center enjoys a beautiful, state-of-the-art facility for preserving immigrant and refugee life for generations to come. But it is the people who make this building a home: the students, faculty, staff, volunteers, researchers, and visitors. You make us vibrant! Thank you for your continued support. —**Eva Widder**



Contact **Eva Widder**, External Relations, College of Liberal Arts, at 612-626-5146 or ewidder@umn.edu to arrange a bequest or pledge. Thank you for your support.

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IHRC News —Spring/Summer 2010



IMMIGRATION HISTORY RESEARCH CENTER
The IHRC promotes interdisciplinary research on international migration, develops archives documenting immigrant and refugee life, especially in the United States, and makes specialized scholarship available to students, teachers, and the public. The IHRC acts in partnership with various ethnic communities, historical agencies, research specialists, educators, and many others. Its work supports the tripartite mission — teaching, research, and service — of its parent institution, the University of Minnesota. IHRC is a unit of the College of Liberal Arts.

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Digitizing Immigrant Letters

The IHRC has begun digitizing letters written from 1850 to 1970 in languages other than English exchanged by international migrants and their loved ones. **Digitizing Immigrant Letters** will provide access to and interpretation of the letters for a diverse audience of scholars, teachers and students, and the general public. The pilot project includes selected materials from the IHRC archival collections. The project team includes **Sonia Cancian, Marija Dalbello, Wladimir Fischer, Donna Gabaccia, Ilze Garoza, Chelsey Kueffer, Johanna Leinonen, Halyna Myroniuk, and Daniel Necas.**

Our letters symposium titled “The Migration Letter: Archiving Intimacy in the Postal Era,” included a keynote address by Norwegian scholar **Orm Överlund**, and five panels that assessed recent scholarship on letter-writing in the context of international migration, introduced participants to research on Asian and European migrants to Canada and the U.S., and encouraged discussions of how archives holding collections letters written by or to immigrants can work most effectively with researchers, teachers, and communities. For additional information visit:

<http://ihrc.umn.edu/research/dil/index.html>



Diego & Mary Helen, 1914



Diego Delfino's letter to his daughter Mary Helen, 1925