



IHRC news

Immigration History Research Center • University of Minnesota

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SAT Web site highlighting IHRC's project: www.saveamericastreasures.org/profiles.htm
Photos and logos available upon request

Immigration History Research Center Receives *Save America's Treasures* Grant

The National Park Service has awarded \$250,000 to the University of Minnesota's Immigration History Research Center (IHRC) through the heritage preservation program "Save America's Treasures." This federal matching award will support "Documentation of the Immigrant Experience," an IHRC initiative aimed at providing educational resources for ethnic community organizations, school classrooms, and the general public.

The IHRC is one of six organizations in Minnesota with initiatives designated as official projects of Save America's Treasures, a public/private partnership of the White House Millennium Council and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The current grant was made possible with assistance from Minnesota Fifth District U.S. Rep. Martin O. Sabo.

"Documentation of the Immigrant Experience" will make original historical source materials more widely available and assist ethnic communities in preserving their unique histories. A central feature of the effort will be the digitizing of selected documents from the IHRC collections to establish a major new Internet resource of historical photographs, memoirs, letters, newspaper articles, pamphlets, and other material.

Partnering with community cultural and ethnic organizations, the project also will gather and create new historical documentation on immigration—including exhibits, oral histories, public programming, and publications reflecting the perspectives and voices of immigrants. It will also sponsor workshops for educators on the use of historical source materials for teaching.

"We have never subscribed to an elitist view that archives are for the few," said historian and IHRC director Rudolph Vecoli. "During the IHRC's 37-year history, we have attempted to make the center's documentary treasures accessible to the many, through workshops for teachers and family historians, publications, exhibits,

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even a vaudeville show—and more recently, the Internet. This grant will expand our capability for outreach many-fold. Soon, more people than ever will have access to immigrant letters and diaries, photos, and other precious and fragile records—with a simple keystroke.”

Steven Rosenstone, dean of the College of Liberal Arts, lauded the IHRC for its “spectacular success” in documenting the immigrant experience and said, “The IHRC is one of our great treasures. As immigration issues maintain their prominence in our news, it is particularly important that this center continue to build its resources and reach out to communities throughout the country.”

The IHRC has begun the process of launching “Documentation of the Immigrant Experience” by readying a set of photographs from its collections for access on its Web site, <www.umn.edu/ihr>. The project is expected to run for three years initially, with many features becoming a permanent part of the IHRC’s program. Additional funding to match the Save America’s Treasures award will be sought throughout the project.

For more information about the project, including how you, your school, or your ethnic organization can participate, contact IHRC Curator and Asst. Director Joel Wurl, 612-625-0553 or <wurlx001@umn.edu>.

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The IHRC was founded in 1965 in response to keen interest in the role of immigration in the making of America. Today, the IHRC maintains a vast and diverse archive of documentation on immigrant groups throughout the country, with particular emphasis on those (from Europe and the Near East) that had their peak of immigration around the turn of the 20th century. The center also produces a wide array of programs and publications aimed at fostering greater understanding of the immigrant experience. These sources and programs attract researchers from throughout the United States and abroad.