

Randolph Vigne and Charles Littleton, eds. *From Strangers to Citizens: The Integration of Immigrant Communities in Britain, Ireland and Colonial America, 1550-1750*. London and Brighton: The Huguenot Society of Great Britain and Ireland and Sussex Academic Press, 2001. xxiv + 566 pp. + 32 illus. \$75.00. Review by ELLEN J. JENKINS, ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY.

The session papers of an academic conference often do not lend themselves readily to collection and publication. Too often, such compilations contain the driest material possible, appealing only to the presenters and their closest colleagues or, at best, to a small group of specialists. Such is not the case, however, with *From Strangers to Citizens: The Integration of Immigrant Communities in Britain, Ireland and Colonial America, 1550-1750*, a collection of 57 papers presented at the International Historical Conference of the Huguenot Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 5-7 April 2001. The conference, which was held at the Dutch Church, Austin Friars, London, commemorated the 450th anniversary of the charter in which Edward VI granted continental Protestant immigrants the right to conduct their own religious rites in England, apart from the procedures of the English Church. Edward also gave these "Strangers" the thirteenth-century Augustinian priory that stood, at the time, on the site of what became the "Dutch" Church.

Edited by Randolph Vigne, general editor of the Publications of the Huguenot Society, and Charles Littleton, of Birkbeck College, *From Strangers to Citizens* addresses numerous facets of the immigrants' experiences as outsiders, as well as their assimilation into or acculturation with the prevailing populations. As a collection of essays, the book provides depth and color to the stories of the thousands of refugees who left their native lands, largely to escape religious persecution, and settled in Britain, Ireland, or the American colonies. Organized topically, this collection includes sections on the founding of Strangers' churches; on the work of immigrant craftsmen and artists; on intellectuals among the

immigrant communities; and on the conditions in which non-Protestant Europeans and “Others” lived among the English, Irish, or American colonists.

The first superintendent of the “Strangers’ Church” in London was Jan Laski, who was appointed to that position by Edward VI in 1550. In “Discipline and Integration: Jan Laski’s Church Order for the London Strangers’ Church,” Christoph Strohm explains that it was Archbishop Thomas Cranmer who originally invited the Polish nobleman and Protestant cleric to England, eager to make use of Laski’s experience with the Continental Reformation to strengthen English Protestantism and anxious to use the Strangers’ churches as models for English congregations. Though Laski enjoyed a close relationship with Cranmer at first, their friendship was permanently damaged after the Polish cleric refused to submit the Strangers’ congregations to the English Protestant forms of worship. And though he was forced to leave England in 1553 upon the accession of the Catholic Mary Tudor, Laski was able, during his brief tenure, to forge a shared identity and sense of community among the French, Italian, and Dutch-German congregations in London, overcoming the obstacles of language and culture by creating a common order for church services. Strohm, of the Evangelisch-Theologische Fakultät, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, argues that Laski’s successful integration of immigrant groups into the Strangers’ Church served another important purpose by eliminating many avenues for liturgical conflict and preventing “the spread of anti-Trinitarian and other false doctrines” (31).

Similar religious backgrounds did not ensure cooperation. In his essay, “Myth and Realities of the Ashkenazi Influx,” Michael Berkowitz writes that the stereotypical view of English Jewry is that it was established by the Sephardic Jews from Spain and Portugal, who arrived early and were a wealthy and sophisticated elite by the time vast numbers of Ashkenazim arrived, having fled the turbulence of eighteenth-century Central Europe. According to this interpretation, the Sephardim looked with disdain upon the poverty and marginal or criminal occupations of the Ashkenazim

in England, only to be eclipsed gradually by the overwhelming numbers of Central-European Jews. Berkowitz, of University College London, points out that the Jews in England were falsely divided into two categories by suspicious onlookers—wealthy and reputable Sephardim, and poor and degenerate Ashkenazim—while the truth is that both groups contained rich and poor, respectable and disreputable members. In the long run, writes Berkowitz, the entry of the Ashkenazim into England actually strengthened the presence of Jews in the country, since they arrived in large enough numbers to bolster the smaller population of Sephardim, even if the latter avoided assimilation between the two groups.

The question of assimilation is the basis for several essays in this collection. One of the most instructive is “From Ethnicity to Assimilation: The Huguenots and the American Immigration History Paradigm,” by Bertrand van Ruymbeke. Van Ruymbeke, of the University of Toulouse, explains that American colonists were ignorant of France’s regional diversity—a strong identifying factor among French immigrants—and attached their own qualifying descriptions to their new neighbors. For example, Van Ruymbeke explains, Americans coined the oddly redundant term, “French Huguenot” to describe newcomers who were culturally and linguistically different (French) and were practitioners of a specific form of Protestantism (Huguenot). The Huguenots, who were *specifically* the Protestants in France, did not think of themselves as “French” until they were outside the boundaries of their own nation, while the Americans used the double-barreled name to differentiate between immigrants from countries other than France and the distinction between Frenchmen who were Catholic and those who were Protestant. Despite these new descriptors, the Huguenots in America continued to identify themselves by their French regional origins. Van Ruymbeke also argues that in their case, assimilation did not mean the elimination of ethnicity, culture, or traditions. The Huguenots in the American colonies, he writes, retained many of their own customs while incorporating those American traits and practices most useful to them in their new

circumstances. In doing so, they also influenced their new countrymen as the groups gradually commingled through marriage and commerce.

Standard histories too often gloss over the varied and complex processes involved in the passage from immigrant status to citizenship, despite the importance of immigration history in personal and national tradition. In mythologizing the accounts, or in emphasizing immigrants' nations of origin and abbreviating or ignoring differences within nationalities, we lose much valuable history. *From Strangers to Citizens* is a source of fascinating richness, not only in the depth these essays provide to those histories and in the riveting interpretations of the writers, but in the wealth of source materials they have consulted in European and American archives. The essays presuppose an advanced knowledge of history, but they will be enlightening reading for graduate students and academics, and this collection will be a valuable resource for university libraries.

Adrian Davies. *The Quakers in English Society 1655-1725*. Oxford: Clarendon, 2000. xvi + 262 pp. + 6 illus. £40.00. Review by KATE PETERS, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON.

This book is an impressive expansion of the author's doctoral thesis on early Essex Quakers. Adrian Davies has reworked his Essex material in order to discuss more broadly the impact of early Quakerism on English society: the book's stated aim is "to consider the social consequences of religious belief," and in particular to examine (and ultimately to question) the "extent of the fissures which opened up in society as a result of Quakerism" (4). In so doing, he has much of use to say about the transition from sect to denomination in the first seventy years of Quaker history and about the importance of local, grass-roots experience to our understanding of the development of the Quaker movement.