



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
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Curriculum Unit 80.ch.11
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Crosscultural; study of aspects of life or perceptions thereof that may be common to several or many ethnic groups

Cultural Models; teaching techniques and student activities geared to comparisons of individual ethnic group differences considered within a framework of a commonality of universal needs and aspirations

“living” ethnic groups; those subcultures that have retained some significant, visible aspects of their ancestral culture; e.g., language, clubs, schools, churches in America

multicultural/multiethnic; relating to a society that is characterized by the existence of a number of distinct national, ethnic, or racial groups all operating within a framework of a larger nation of which they are members. Also, relating to studies thereof. The two terms are being used interchangeably herein.

Unit Objectives and Strategies.

America is a multicultural nation. Connecticut is one of the most heavily-ethnic states in the nation. These are facts about which there can be little dispute. See Appendix A Therefore, it follows that: ethnicity and its various manifestations, past and present, are crucial to the study and understanding of Connecticut history and, especially, the study of its diverse peoples.

Ethnic studies in one form or another have been a fact of life in many Connecticut secondary schools for a decade or more. Materials, some of them excellent, on the impact on Connecticut's history and on the state's past and contemporary society of the many separate cultural groups have been prepared for classroom use. *What has largely been missing, however, is a workable pedagogical method for utilizing these materials in the classroom. It is this void that the present work will attempt to address, at least partly .*

In view of the continuing need to find suitable pedagogical methods for presenting multiethnic materials in the

classroom, the United States Office of Education's Ethnic Heritage Branch in 1978⁷⁹ funded a project in Connecticut entitled "using Estonian/American Based Cultural Models for Studying the Multicultural Experience." Out of this came a considerable number of new materials which are being disseminated state-wide and nationally. The key element to consider here is the program's Cultural Models' component. Briefly, what is the Cultural Models' concept?

Foremost, it presents a view that though Connecticut's peoples represent a wide diversity of backgrounds and values (six-six separate groups have been identified in a recent study) ² there are many points of departure and aspiration common to all of them. Thus, the Models' approach stresses the *commonality* and *universality* of the human values and aspirations of all of these groups, at the same time noting historical and cultural peculiarities of how these values have and continue to be expressed. The contention, strongly expressed, is that in a multicultural society such as ours, commonality *must* be identified and recognized if that society is effectively and creatively to sustain itself. At the same time, the reality of the historical record, though that record perhaps be somewhat unsettling or uncomfortable to some of us at times, must nonetheless be accurately presented as well. Fortunately, it seems that both of these needs can be set by utilization of the Cultural Models' method.

In the spring of 1980, the Cultural Models' approach in the study of ethnicity in America and in Connecticut was field-tested by using the Estonian-American group as the base group. This occurred Principally at Lyman Memorial High School in Lebanon, but, also, at a number of other sites. This particular group and method was chosen because the necessary resource materials and the accompanying pedagogical method were in place. Principally, the Models involve a thorough student study of the base group experience and application of a set of twelve activities related to specific skills. *These teaching Models are heavily geared to crosscultural comparisons as a way to study any and all ethnic groups .*

Each of the twelve Models point to specific skills: inquiry, research, writing, and the mechanics of presentation. The specific problems that the Models address include: 1) the issue of cultural retention and survival, 2) the "melting pot" controversy, 3) enculturation and assimilation, 4) cultural symbols, 5) stereotypes, 6) role of family, 7) concept of home, 8) use of food, 9) concept of love and marriage, 10) concept of death, 11) question of modern personal and divided loyalties, and 12) human rights.

The results of the initial field tests showed that the choice of a relatively little-known, little visible, yet recent immigrant group such as the Estonians was fortunate. Many of the problems of student preconception or stereotyping associated with larger ethnic groups were thus avoided. At the same time, a noticeable disadvantage in picking such a base group proved to be that in some instances students had difficulty in relating its experience to that of other, larger groups *because* of its low visibility.

Thus, the present program is geared not wholly to reinventing the wheel, but, rather, adding new spokes to it. Three other rather distinct groups are included in the newly-restructured program: Italians, Jews, Puerto Ricans. It is hoped that a better program balance will thus be assured.

A six-week unit "Studying Connecticut's Multiethnic Society By Using The Cultural Models' Approach. Focus: Italians, Jews, Puerto Ricans, Estonians" is planned for the tenth-grade United States History program at Lyman for the spring of 1981. Clearly, however, the program is so structured that it will readily be transferable to any such contemplated or existing unit of work in a junior or senior high school program in Connecticut schools.

The initial three weeks of work would focus on the experience of the four groups listed as the basis for the

later study of *any* ethnic group. Three of the Cultural Models are adapted or totally developed anew to fit the new situation:

Model #1

—comparisons of tragic cultural hero-models. Student skills: research of figures such as Nathan Hale and his impact on Connecticut history.

Model #2

—role of family, extended and nuclear, and senior citizens in ethnic and mainstream American society. Student skills: critical thinking, writing.

Model #3

—perceptions of the role of the work ethic and education in a culture and their relationships to American society.

The unit which follows suggests some of the narrative and descriptive material necessary to teach about the four groups selected within the framework of the Cultural Models as described above. Only three aspects that are common to all four cultures are treated here. It is hoped, however, that the method that is presented will make possible the study of *any* cultural group in our society.

The remaining three weeks of the student unit would be devoted to individual and group activities geared to utilization of the Cultural Models concepts, as related to the experiences of any *other* ethnic groups of the students' own choice. The aforementioned skills would continue to be emphasized and refined. It is hoped that expanding the Models from the solely Estonian base to the four diverse groups listed will result in a broader student recognition and appreciation of the various problems and manifestations of ethnicity in our society.

Highlights in the History of Immigration To America.

Having mentioned the importance of recognizing the "global" concept in dealing with immigration issues, it is necessary to view the process *wholistically*, from the 1500s to the 1900s. Considerations of white contacts with and the nature of Native American cultures before and during the arrival of the immigrants, interesting topics in themselves, are beyond our scope here. The immigrant movement from the 1500s to our own age can be broken down in various ways, recognizing though that the scope and motivation varied considerably from period to period. A relatively simple, chronological approach may be as useful as any:

The period of the 1500s is usually considered to be a "preimmigrant" phase because little was done in the way of permanent settlement at that time. This was still, essentially, part of the Age of Exploration and European interest, for the main part, was limited to the seeking of passing economic advantage, missionary pursuits, exploitation of riches, i.e., gold, and the searching for trade routes and fishing areas. Of rather limited interest for our purposes here were the Spanish settlement of St. Augustine, Florida in the middle 1500s primarily as an outpost for the main Spanish Empire further to the south (e. g., *Puerto Rico* was a treasured holding compared to Florida.); and, the disastrous English enterprise at Roanoke Island in 1585 where all of the settlers seem to have perished or disappeared.

The 1600s bring the first full-scale, permanent European settlements to what is now the mainland United States, and, of special significance are the following four groups: English, Blacks, Swedes, and Dutch.

English immigrants of this period, initially in Virginia and Massachusetts, and, shortly later, in Connecticut, fall into five main categories: the religious dissenters, especially associated with early Massachusetts; indentured servants, people who sought their fortune in the New World and worked for a time (commonly, seven years) to pay for the passage over; tradesmen of all types who settled in the budding new towns on the seacoast; debtors and convicts who were shipped over as a result of governmental policies in England; and, significantly, the displaced yeomen (farmers) who provided much of the economic base for the new, land-rich, labor-poor colonies. England, at the time, was in the beginnings of an agricultural revolution whereby the small farmer was steadily losing out to the agricultural entrepreneur who was oriented much more to a capitalistic money-economy, most commonly in wool or grains.

The West African Blacks represent the second distinct group and, of course, they have the dubious distinction of being the only major group to have come here involuntarily. Their significance in early Connecticut history is thought to have been limited though their role in the Revolution may have been considerable. For instance, artist John Trumbull captured Black units on canvas and their role in this crucial period in our history is beginning to be considered more carefully. ³

Swedes represent the third element in the 1600s. They were associated primarily with the Middle Atlantic and the Delaware Valley area. If one remembers that Sweden at the time was one of the major Protestant powers in the contemporary European religious and imperialistic struggles such as the Thirty Years' War of 1618-1648, their move into the New World, though quite limited in scope, was a reflection of the European monarchies' new expansionist drive and desire for empire.

The Dutch in New Amsterdam, the Albany area and the Connecticut Valley represent another, momentarily-significant movement. The leading traders and global carriers of the time, the Dutch interest was primarily in the rich beaver trade and other commercial ventures. Again, the spotlight on them was rather fleeting as the New Netherlands Colony rather quickly became absorbed in the expanding English colonization of the East Coast.

The 18th century saw a continuation and expansion of the movement on the part of the first two groups, the English and the Blacks. In addition, four other elements contribute significantly: the Scotch-Irish, Pennsylvania Dutch (Germans), French Huguenots (Protestants), and the Spanish/Mexicans in the Southwest.

The Scotch-Irish, in large measure, turned out to be the "typical" frontiersmen of the new land the time-honored mountainmen, Indian fighters, and frontier settlers, especially in the Appalachian, Blue Ridge and Smoky Mountain areas where a distinctive "hill-billy" culture evolved; perhaps less so in the frontier towns of Massachusetts and Connecticut, especially the Voluntown area. Predominantly Protestant, they often were the "have-nots" of the age as the better coastal lands had already been turned over to plow and plantation by the earlier settlers.

Moved by a desire for rich farmland and espousing religious creeds that were not generally compatible with those of the European divineright monarchs in the fragile peace that followed the devastating inter-denominational wars in Europe, the Germans of Pennsylvania quietly carved out a niche of America that is still quite visible today.

The French Huguenots represent the fourth group in the 1700s. Expelled after Louis XIV's revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 which had guaranteed religious freedom to the relatively-few, but, economically-important Protestants in Catholic France, they turned, by the hundreds of thousands, in two directions. One group of these highly-skilled artisans, tradesmen, and entrepreneurs were welcomed whole-heartedly into the

rising Prussian (later, German) state, and thousands more landed in the seacoast towns on the eastern seaboard where their skills as clocksmiths and metal workers such as Paul Revere were much appreciated.

The Spanish movement into the Southwest from the “other side,” that is, Mexico, obviously had little impact on Connecticut and is really a chapter in our national rather than state history.

The 1800s are often called the “Age of the Great Migration” and it certainly was just that. The period from 1815 to 1860 is the age of the Welsh miner, the Irish railroad and canal builder, and the ever emigrating German farmer. This influence, especially the Irish, is obviously considerable in the development of Connecticut; less so for the other two groups. The Irish, the first large Catholic group, driven to starvation by the potato blight of the 1840s, provided much of the man-power for Connecticut’s new mills and building projects of the pre-Civil War era, especially the railroads. Signs of “No Irish Need Apply” at factory gates and “No Dogs or Irish” at restaurants are testimony to some of the darker sides of the immigrants’s initial experience and reception in this land.

From the Civil War to 1890, some of the same trends continued with the addition of an influx of the Chinese (“The Yellow Peril”) in California and Scandinavians. Though the latter were heavily concentrated in the Great Lakes area, nonetheless, the many Lutheran churches scattered about Connecticut are largely symbols of the Swedes who rather inconspicuously entered our ranks. The Georgetown section of Wilton is an example of this. They had been farmers back home. The mass production capacity of the new American agricultural “factories” of the West had brought them ruination, however. Thus, these northern farmers turned to the same land, America, for salvation that had helped to drive them to bankruptcy initially.

The period from 1890-1924 is the greatest of all in terms of immigrant numbers and impact. Largely non-Protestant, politically suppressed, and economically-deprived in the homeland, these millions of what Emma Lazarus’ inscription on the Statue of Liberty called the “huddled masses yearning to breathe free” have come to represent *the immigrant* in the popular American mind, correctly so to some extent. Thus, we see millions of the Slavic peoples of the Austrian and Russian Empires Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, and Ukrainians; Jews of Germany, many of whom had already come earlier and were well-established, and the survivors of the Russian pogroms; *Italian* villagers of the south; and, French-Canadians of Quebec and the French-Canadians of Quebec and the French of Maine. It was an exciting period, full of hope, sometimes disappointment, always challenge. Being mostly culturally and linguistically far-removed from the world-view and perceptions of the earlier-established, Protestant mainstream already in America, the so-called “New Immigration” contributed mightily to the vast diversification of our populace. Being largely down-trodden by virtue of their homeland experience, they contributed strongly to our popularly held notion of the “three-generation cycle.” That is that it takes three full generations before immigrant groups can become full-fledged members of our society, at which point, the theory says, they begin to renew and reassert their old ethnic identity.

From 1924 to the late 1930s, we see the “great interlude” when, due to the sharply restrictive immigration legislation of the 1920s and the calamities of the Great Depression and World War II, immigration slowed to a mere trickle. Movement in America in this period though highly significant in terms of later demographic patterns was largely internal the southern Black abandoning the mule and cottonfield, heading to the northern industrial city in search of the better life. And, we see the “Okie” abandoning his ruined, mortgage-ridden, Dust Bowl farm of the 1930s for the “gold” of California.

Since World War II, three distinct patterns of immigration stand out though far less conspicuously than the huge influx of the 1890 to 1920 period. One stream includes the “displaced persons” millions of middle and east European political refugees including *Estonians*. Then, thousands of west and middle European

technicians (the so-called “brain drain”) whose skills had a ready market waiting for them in America. Finally, the thousands of service brides, mostly German and Japanese, who followed their soldier-husbands back home to America. For reasons alluded to elsewhere in this paper, these groups generally had a much *easier* time in adjusting to our society. This largely seems to have been due to a relative compatibility of their own cultures and backgrounds with the existing American mores and expectations, and, significantly, they possessed a high level of technical, saleable work skills.

The second broad category, roughly from the 1950s to the present, included the *Puerto Rican* movement from the island to the mainland which, more accurately, can be termed an “internal” migration and the broad, external influx of Hispanics generally and Mexicans specifically to this nation. Due to sheer numbers alone and to relative cultural differences, this group has been much more difficult to absorb into our mainstream. Some reasons for this, particularly in the case of the *Puerto Ricans* , are alluded to elsewhere in this unit.

The “Frostbelt” to “Sunbelt” movement in this country represents the third broad category of internal migration, a relatively-new phenomenon which is evidently tied to shifting economic patterns and the relative costs and availability of energy resources. It is now going on and generalizations should, perhaps, be withheld for the moment. Talking recently to a U-Haul Rental Truck Company dealer in Willimantic, however, I received the rather startling information that, in his experience, ten times more of his company’s rental moving trucks and trailers were now being loaned to people moving to the Sunbelt rather than those heading back East. ⁴ A serious logistical problem for him and his company! A momentous demographic change in the making when considered nationally, even over a short period of time.

Thus, we tend to see that America has always been on the move, be that movement external or internal. It is of such a long duration and practice that it has become a thoroughly accepted pattern in our lifestyle long since. Few in our society can remember or even imagine how life could ever have been different. Yet, it had been so for most of the “wretched refuse” who had come to our shores over the last three hundred and fifty years.

Some Relevant Background Information on the Italian, Jewish, Puerto Rican, and Estonian Experience as Related to the Three Teaching Models .

These four cultural groups were chosen for inclusion in the present unit for a variety of reasons. Obviously, a case could readily be constructed for the inclusion of many other groups as well. This element of crosscultural transferability, indeed, is one of the most promising features of the Cultural Models’ element and such transferability is strongly encouraged.

The Italians were chosen because they are the largest ethnic group in the state one out every three of our people has some Italian background and because they are among the most urbanized. This relative concentration of population makes the study of Italian Americans particularly fruitful because their daily lifestyle within established ethnic neighborhoods can be studied. For example, the substantial Italian neighborhoods in New Haven and in Hartford’s South End should be noted. [For a full treatment of the Italian immigrant in Connecticut, See Unit XII of this volume]

The Jews were picked because they brought a culture and experience different from other immigrant groups. What is Jewishness? Is it a culture? a religion? a nationality? a set of values? These are interesting questions to consider in a classroom discussion.

Puerto Ricans represent a minority group that is still struggling to gain a recognized position in our society, a

recently-arrived group with a strong homeland, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, connection.

Estonians were chosen because they are a less-known, smaller, refugee group which is now half foreign-born, half American-born, a highly politicized group which is keenly involved in global affairs, particularly as a result of the continuing Soviet domination of its home land.

What, then, is some of the background information that is necessary for the teacher who is contemplating teaching this unit, especially in terms of the three Model activities that are presented in the activities' section?

Recognizing the traditional family structure and its operation is crucial to the understanding of any cultural group. So it is with the four groups cited. Above all, one must consider the role of the *extended family* which is elemental and is found in all four. This is obviously significant because many of our youngsters today are aware of only the *nuclear family* existence and, often, quite unaware that any other mode exists or has existed.

Simply stated, the *extended family* included all of the aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins, godparents, and, in some cases, even close family friends as a part of "one, big, family." Historically, such a structure provided *cohesion, direction, security, unity of purpose*, and a *labor pool* for the benefit of the extended family unit, particularly before the present age when government has assumed, or tried to, many of these economic and social security functions. The extended family was crucial to the lifestyle, indeed, survival of the group in the homeland setting; so, too, to its survival in Connecticut, especially in the early years of struggle after immigration. The literature and other expression of the four groups eloquently brings out the importance of the extended family. For example:

"Grandmother" a poem by Anna Haava (Estonian)

Grandmother, so generous, so kind
She was so dear to me.
She was in my childhood

As the radiant sun.

When she with soft hand
Caressed my little head,
With loving voice and word

Taught me and showed the way:

How the kindly shine of her eyes
Flew to my breast!
Merrily I shouted and sang

I, a little shepardess in the meadow.

Grandmother now breathes in the grave,
But in my heart remains
The shine of her eyes

Her figure of gold

Globeflowers and primrose
May they blossom on the old one's grave,
May the starshine and sun's rays
The beloved tomb enshrine!

(Translated by Enn O. Koiva) The concept of the family “friend” is less recognizable to many youngsters today, though they may be more familiar with the general idea of extended family. In my own personal experience, I can cite my wife’s Latvian “Grandmother” who was an integral part of the family operation to the day she died. Not related by blood to the other family members, she was, nonetheless, accepted as a full member of the group always. One must remember that many immigrant groups have been torn apart by the immigrant experience itself. Indeed, many of the group members had died or been killed in the various calamities that had afflicted the culture and the family members before immigration. This two-way process of “adopting” and “being adopted” provided a needed security blanket for all involved as well as satisfying deep psychological needs of “feeling wanted.”

In the Italian experience, this practice was taken a step further in that the Italians when they settled in Connecticut, primarily from 1880 to 1920, tended to immigrate by whole villages from impoverished southern Italy. see Unit XII And, they lived alongside their former neighbors in this state. Consequently, we see, even today, that dozens of Italian social and cultural clubs have names that signify their ancestral home town, e.g., Mormannese Ladies Society, Mormanno, Province di Cosenza, Calabria, Italy, Inc. and Societa Maglianese-Sabino Society (men) Magliano Sabino, Province di Rieti, Lazio, Italy. ⁵ The *padrones*, entrepreneurs who

relocated whole clans and villages from southern Italy and provided the people with initial jobs and lodging in America and in Connecticut, also transferred the *compadre* ("family friend") system to America in a style quite similar to the extended family notion of the Estonians and the Puerto Ricans.

The traditional Jewish family has some of this element also. Added to it is the mother as an assertive authority figure and guardian. ⁶ This matriarchal element is very much present in other forms in the Puerto Rican and Italian family structures as well; absent, however, in the Estonian notion which is much more northern, individualistic, Protestant, masculine in its orientation. ⁷

The cultural hero-model, especially the tragic, popular figure, is central to all of these cultures and is an important part of the immigrant consciousness as well. If one begins with the basic premise that most immigrants were a deprived people in one form or another most people do *not* simply abandon their homes and homeland unless there is real desperation the tragic here provides a useful and understandable personality that group members could identify with and perhaps emulate. The *tragic* hero is particularly important because it epitomized a certain sense of fatalism found in many immigrant groups a fatalism inspired by the uncertainties and insecurities of life in the new homeland. Thus, one must closely look at the role of the semilegendary "Italian Robin Hood" types that abound in Italian folklore and the real-life, 19th century folk hero, Gimseppe Garibaldi who actually lived in Connecticut for some time before continuing his fight for Italian unification in the middle 1800s. The importance of such charismatic figures, be they real or imagined, cannot be underestimated in their impact on the peoples' psyche be they south Italian peasants fighting for a piece of the "good earth" or eastern European Jews suffering in the persecutions (pogroms) of czarist Russia. To newly arrived immigrants, frightened at the spectra of a world they little comprehended, these hero-models provided important crutches and hope. What Puerto Rican youngster will not thrill to the name of baseball hero Roberto Clemente, tragically killed in an airplane crash in 1972. He had "made it" in American society. His example provided hope and inspiration for others. Many an Estonian-American eye will tear, even today, to the reading of *Tasuja* - "The Avenger" a semi-legendary, 14th century figure who supposedly led a revolt of his down-trodden countrymen against their Germanic overlords and perished in the struggle.

Though the hero-model has largely disappeared in contemporary American thought, our youngsters can perhaps still capture some of the spirit when considering the impact on our history of a Davy Crockett at the Alamo or the life and defiant death of the patriot-spy of Coventry, Nathan Male, "I regret that I have but one life to give for my country!" Thus, America when she was a young, struggling nation seemed to have had her tragic heroes also.

The concept of the work ethic and its corollary of material success provide another useful dimension to consider. And, here, the Model for the base groups varies considerably. Recognizing the dangers of over-generalizing, certain elements nonetheless stand out:

In relation to their numbers, the Jews and Estonians "succeeded" and prospered in America much more rapidly and completely than did the other two groups. Some historians have tried to explain this with the concept of the northern-southern European parallel and world-view. ⁸ Simply stated, this "Protestant" interpretation says that northern European cultures, at least since the Reformation, have developed much more of an active, aggressive work ethic and world-view of "The world is ours for the taking!" The early English settlers were supposedly a part of this "northern," aggressive Protestant ethic also.

By contrast, the southern, Catholic cultures supposedly could not effectively compete with the new, northern

assertiveness because of the rather stifling, traditionalist control mechanisms of the Catholic Church which, the thirty states, greatly dominated these southern cultures, particularly after the tumultuous period of the religious wars. The Jews, excluded from the northern *and* southern camps, were left to fend for themselves and opted mostly for a “northern” alternative, an approach that encouraged individual initiative, risk-taking and held the lure of material rewards. An interesting overall concept if, perhaps, overstated.

As stated earlier, the vast majority of the Italian immigrants were impoverished peasants of the area south of Rome, a cultural area much different from Milan and the Piedmont. One must recognize that among the most frustrated of the European peoples historically had been the Italians. Since the days of the Roman Empire, they had not had a unified nation; indeed, the area had been a frequent battleground of the various powers Germans, Turks, Spaniards, French, and Austrians for centuries. Worse yet, from a national standpoint, a strong provincialism had developed on the peninsula over the centuries, a provincialism so strong that a Neapolitan could scarcely conceive of a Florentine as being akin to him in very many ways.

When the long struggle for Italian unification finally did succeed in the 1870s, it was under the leadership of the northerners and the Kingdom of Sardinia. For all practical purposes, Italy was at least two nations, containing a relatively-modernized, industrialized North and an impoverished, agrarian, largely-feudal South: two areas far apart in outlook, even language.

Added to the political and cultural friction and the mutually shared suspicion between the two areas was another fact of life in the 19th century, the population explosion. The south Italian peasant had been barely able to subsist on his parched and rocky soil in the previous ages. The population boom of the time, which was world-wide, and the revolution of rising expectations which had accompanied the heroic stages of the national unification movement of the 1840s to the 1870s had left the southern peasant in a calamitous state. He was economically crippled and hopelessly outdated in his agricultural methods; psychologically and culturally, depressed and disappointed. The good life, or life at all, was eluding him. *He had to move to survive* .

The Italian immigrant to America (1880-1920) was accustomed to hard physical labor and had a strong family structure. These he had needed to survive in the inhospitable soil of his homeland. He had little or no awareness, however, of the great potentiality of formal education and advanced training because these possibilities had not been open to him, unlike the Estonians’ experience.

Thus, the Italians found themselves, to a great degree, settled in ethnic urban enclaves in Connecticut’s largest cities, living side by side with their former villagers and often performing the least desirable and tedious jobs in the new, industrial American city. Many did eventually break this cycle, largely by starting and entering the various businesses, many of which catered to the rest of the immigrant community itself. Generally, then, the Italians experienced the popularly-accepted “three-generation cycle;” that is that it takes three generations before an immigrant group can really begin to taste the good life and material rewards in America and be fully accepted and integrated.

Even today, Italian-American scholars and leaders consistently point to statistics that the Italians, though generally quite well off in the mainstream society as a result of their hard work and effort, still are proportionately attaining advance collegiate training leading to the various professions in considerably lower percentages than most other groups in our society. Evidently, some cultural patterns are not easily changed, even in America in the last decades of the 20th century. The Italian experience in New Haven is explored in depth in Unit XII of this volume.

The study of the Puerto Rican experience is somewhat similar, though, of course, much more depressing in

terms of the lack of general economic attainment and social acceptance by others. If Italian American leaders are lamenting that relatively few of their group are gaining a college education, the Puerto Rican leaders can point to dishearteningly low numbers of their group who are even completing high school. Being a recently-arrived group can be only a partial explanation for this. Other social/historical/cultural factors obviously must be significant though they are difficult to measure quantitatively: the traditional family structure that emphasizes intra-group interaction rather than broader, societal functions; the element that emphasized more of the reflective rather than active role in one's life; the Hispanic concept of *machismo* which emphasizes the role of the male in society in away that has little in common with expectations and roles in modern American corporate hierarchy. Additionally, of course, the various problems related to racial issues are quite obvious and, yet, complex. These are issues that many "northern" groups never had to deal with in their own experience as they were making their adjustment to American life.

The Jews, on the other hand, brought a work ethic as did the others, but, also, a much keener view of the advantages that possessing an advanced education can make in a modern, industrialized nation, America. With the Jewish experience, one must also be careful not to overgeneralize because one really deals with at least three major traditions the German Jewish, the eastern European, and the Mediterranean. Though distinct in cultural form, these diverse elements of Jews brought with them a certain commonality, a commonality which historically has prized individualism and the realization of the potential for individual attainment. This concept, thousands of years old in Jewish tradition, cannot be overemphasized as it relates to America because America, too, has lionized the individual of obvious attainment, be that attainment largely material or more in a spiritual vein. The Jews admired a person who "got ahead," particularly if he did so by using his native intelligence to full capacity. Small wonder perhaps that ninety percent of young Jewish-Americans today go on to college. ⁹

"Happy is the man that findeth wisdom and the man that getteth understanding." (Proverbs 313)." "A table is not blessed if it has fed no scholars." (Proverb).

The Estonian perception of the work ethic and the ingrained sense of the importance of education is also deeprooted. Unlike the Jews, they had lived in their own homeland for thousands of years. Like the Italians, Puerto Ricans, and Jews, they had been long suppressed by a succession of foreign conquerors, especially the Germanic barony and Russia. The Germanic elements, however, had greatly prized the value of education themselves and this value had been uniquely interwoven in the Estonian's makeup along with his own native cultural mores in an interesting blend. Over a century and a half ago, the Estonian peasant saw that the way to break the chains of bondage was to learn, and he did. By the 1920s, the small Estonian nation (1.1 million people) had the highest literacy rate of any nation in the world!

When the calamities of World War II forced some one hundred thousand of these people to emigrate, the ones who did so were, to an overwhelming extent, blessed with, if not formal educational or professional training, then, at least, a deep appreciation of it. Thus, we found young Estonians living and working in Willimantic's dilapidated mill district in 1950 while, at the same time, studying engineering at the University of Connecticut. By 1960, these Estonians were gone Tom Willimantic, working as professionals at Pratt Whitney Aircraft or Travellers Insurance Company in Hartford; their homes now are comfortably-middle class, raised ranches in the newer sections of Hartford's suburbs. The answer for them was the work ethic and the deep conviction that education was the way out. Their relative compatibility with at least the externals of mainstream American cultural expression and the absence of racial frictions between themselves and other Americans made the Estonians a real success story, within a decade. Like the Jews, they helped to counter the stereotype of the "three-generation cycle."

Notes

1. Banks, James A. (ed.), *Teaching Strategies for Ethnic Studies* , Boston, Allyn and Bacon, 1975.
2. Interview with Dr. Frank A. Stone, Director, World Education Project, The University of Connecticut, 1978.
3. Painting at the Lyman Memorial High School, Lebanon, Connecticut.
4. Informal discussion, May, 1980.
5. Weibust, Patricia S. with Gennaro Capobianco and Sally Innis Gould, *The Italians: In Their Homeland, In America, In Connecticut* , World Education Project, The University of Connecticut, 1978, p. 93.
6. Gould, Sally Innis, *The Jews: Their Origins, In America, In Connecticut*, World Education Project, The University of Connecticut, 1977, pp. 104-106.
7. Koiva, Enn O. (ed.), *Using Estonian-American Culture Models For Multicultural Studies* , U. S. Office of Education, Ethnic Heritage Branch Publication, 1979, pp. 77-80.
8. Tawney, H. H., *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, The New American Library, New York, 1954.
9. Gould, p. 102.
10. Koiva, p. 26.

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Strongly recommended for secondary students; important resource work; little methodology.

The Jews.

*** Butwin, Francis, *The Jews in America* , Minneapolis, Lerner Publishers Co., 1969.

Good Place to begin research on the topic.

*** Feldman, J. Abraham, *Remember the Days of Old* , Hartford, Congregation Beth Israel, 1943, (Hartford Library).

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+ Glazer, Nathan, *American Judaism*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1957.

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+ Gordon, Morton L., *The History of the Jewish Farmer in Eastern Connecticut* , doctoral dissertation, New York: Yeshiva University, 1974.

A unique treatment; may be used with some advanced secondary students.

** Gould, Sally Innis, *The Jews: Their Origins, In America, In Connecticut* , World Education Project, The University of Connecticut, 1977.

Strongly recommended for secondary students; important resource work: little methodology.

*** Silverman, Morris, *Hartford Jews 1659-1970*, Hartford, Connecticut Historical Society, 1970.

Again, a must source because of its uniqueness; may be used in classroom situations.

The Puerto Ricans.

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*** Hamlin, Oscar, *The Newcomers*, Harvard University Press, 1959. A classic; by the country's leading expert in the field.

*** Mills, C. Wright et. al., *The Puerto Rican Journal* , New York, Russell and Russell, 1967.

Useful for basic research; presents the total experience.

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Richly illustrated, folkloristic; useful for comparative culture s.

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+ Parming, Marju and Tonu Parming, *A Bibliography of English-Language Sources on Estonia*, Mew York, Estonia Learned Society in America Publication, 1974.

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*** Pennar, Jean, et. al., *The Estonians in America 1627-1975* , Oceana Publications, 1975.

A basic factbook, easily readable, no attempt at analysis.

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A monumental work with a wealth of original documentation; Written partially as a Christian history of Estonia; strongly opinionated.

Appendix A

(figures available in printed form)

Sample Lessons Based on the Cultural Models' Concepts.

Model #1 The Multicultural Connection-“National and Cultural Symbols: Who and What are They?”

Background:

Each country and culture has symbols that tie its people together. The symbols must be clear and easily recognizable by all. Thus, the television ad which says, “Baseball, hot dogs, apple pie, and Chevrolet” and we recognize the country instantly as America. People can also become symbols; for example, George Washington, Abraham Lincoln.

(figures available in printed form)

Consider:

Information available in your library and read about each of the following: Giuseppe Garibaldi (Italian), Roberto Clemente (Puerto Rican and Anne Frank (Jewish). What made each of them a *tragic hero-figure* for the people of their culture? P.S. Be careful when reading about Garibaldi. The reason why he may be considered a *tragic* hero may not be too obvious.

To do:

Research and Write a report on a *tragic* hero in Connecticut history, Nathan Hale. You should: 1) discuss the troubled times in which Hale was living; 2) bring in important facts about his life; 3) explain why he was a *tragic* figure; 4) clarify why and how he became a symbol for Americans of his own time and after; 5) conclude why Hale could be considered a tragic hero by people of almost any culture

Model #2 The Multicultural Connection -“Senior Citizens: The Throw-Away Generation?”

Background:

In Figure 1 are terms which appeared in the Estonian poem “Grandmother” by Anna Haava. Figure 2 brings out terms which have recently appeared in our newspaper accounts and television reports concerning our senior citizens.

(figures available in printed form)

Consider:

What huge cultural gap is indicated by Figures 1 and 2? Why has the issue of aging and the aged come more to the forefront of attention in recent years in our country?

To Do:

In most older societies including the Italian, Jewish, Puerto Rican (Hispanic), and Estonian the problem of the

aged and their care was handled by the family. It was the moral obligation of the younger members to see the older members through, including taking them into their homes. It used to be that way in America, too. What largely changed it?

Pretend that you are a noted sociologist who has been studying the problems of the aged in your home town in Connecticut. You have been asked to present a scholarly paper on the subject proposing solutions to the problem to a group of concerned citizens. Your statement is also being broadcast over a local television station. You proceed.

Model #3 The Multicultural Connection - "America's Ethnic Groups: The Melting Pot or the Unmeltables?"

Background:

Some ethnic groups have been absorbed into American society more rapidly and completely than have others. The rewards of American society particularly the material rewards have come to some groups more readily than to others. It seems that having: 1) a strong *work ethic* and 2) high levels of skilled training and *education* have historically brought material *rewards* in America to those persons and groups that have possessed these qualities.

(figures available in printed form)

Consider:

1. Has the Melting Pot worked in America? in Connecticut? If not, could it work? Specific examples?
2. Which groups have been "most meltable?" Why?"Least meltable?" Why
3. Discuss the Italians, Jews, Puerto Ricans, and Estonians in terms of "meltability."

To Do:

Pretend you are a state legislator who represents a city in Connecticut which has a large population of people who are recent immigrants from the hypothetical country of Baltica. They wish to start their own school where the Baltican language and culture as well as English would be taught to their children. This school would be in place of regular public school. The Balticans are a large voting bloc in the city; they tend to be people with strong family and religious ties. They are now asking for your support; the local newspapers are waiting for a news release from you. You give your public statement as follows:

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