

[Free pdf] The New Americans: Immigrant Life in Southern California

The New Americans: Immigrant Life in Southern California

Ulli Steltzer

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Ulli Steltzer : The New Americans: Immigrant Life in Southern California before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The New Americans: Immigrant Life in Southern California:

Book by Steltzer, Ulli

From School Library JournalYA-- Steltzer's 180 photographs and the personal stories of immigrants from 34 countries describe the differences between living in their native and adopted lands, the customs still being kept and new traditions acquired, and the newcomers' enthusiasm for work and play in their new home. The mood is upbeat: while acknowledging the hardships they face, these settlers are optimistic about their lives in the United States. Copyright 1989 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library JournalThe "new Americans" are from Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East, and their assimilation into our culture with retention of their cultural identity is the visual subject of photographer Steltzer. Her focus is southern California, and in five chapters she portrays the immigrants at work and play. In their own words, they relate their individual stories. The photographs are more realistic than artful, yet the brief narratives are worthwhile in recording the immigrant experience. A valuable contribution to understanding the varying heritages which comprise our national culture.- Boyd Childress, Auburn Univ. Lib., Ala. Copyright 1989 Reed

Business Information, Inc. *The New Americans: Immigrant Life in Southern California*, by Ulli Steltzer, should be required reading in United States high school and college social-science classes. Indeed, for all of us who enjoy the benefits and comforts of American society, Steltzer's superb photographic record of the most recent wave of immigration to the United States is an eye-opener. Unless we live in areas where refugees have been waylaid or settled, the plight of the mostly Third World people who now seek refuge with us remains outside our consciousness. *The New Americans* makes their lives real in words and pictures so successfully, few readers could finish the volume without a profound sense of privilege. Steltzer divides her study into thematic sections. "New Arrivals" captures individual or group portraits of various ethnic populations with brief first-person narrations accompanying the images to explain who the subjects are and why they have come to the United States. A Laotian family arrives anxiously at the airport; another image is captioned: "Until additional accommodations can be found, Kov Bunthan's family of four share their one-room apartment with twelve Cambodian relatives who just arrived from a Thailand refugee camp." In "Passing on Traditions," Steltzer captures wonderful symbolic moments, as in images from a Hmong courtship ritual during a New Year celebration or the traditional Maundy Thursday foot-washing of disciples by an Armenian archbishop. In another striking photo, three Mexican women pose as the three Marys of the Cross. "Becoming an American" chronicles everyday and celebratory experiences that mark immigrant groups' transition to American life: "Debbie Lee, two-and-a-half years old, takes out five books every time she goes to the library with her mother" or "Hollywood High School graduation at the Hollywood Bowl. 'Me school's student body consists of young Soviet Armenians, Southeast Asians, and Central Americans, with twenty percent of the students American born." "Work" portrays traditional practices which sustain identities as well as the basic labor of those fortunate to find employment (from peddling sunglasses at Venice Beach to sweatshops). The final section, "Celebration," concentrates upon ritualized experiences such as birthday or Christmas parties, sports, and even gambling. Along the way, the reader sees so much in fine detail through the technical expertise of Steltzer's camera. The crisp images and detailed captions are complemented throughout by the touching and starkly simple tales of the subjects. Who could not be moved by the words of Cambodian Pham Sak Keam: "If we plant vegetables, they are good for fast harvest. If we plant a tree, we can build a house in ten years. But if we raise people, we will live for centuries." Ulli Steltzer has humanized the faces of these "New Americans," lives we must value as we have the generations of our own immigrant ancestors, for they are truly the faces of our future. -- From Independent Publisher