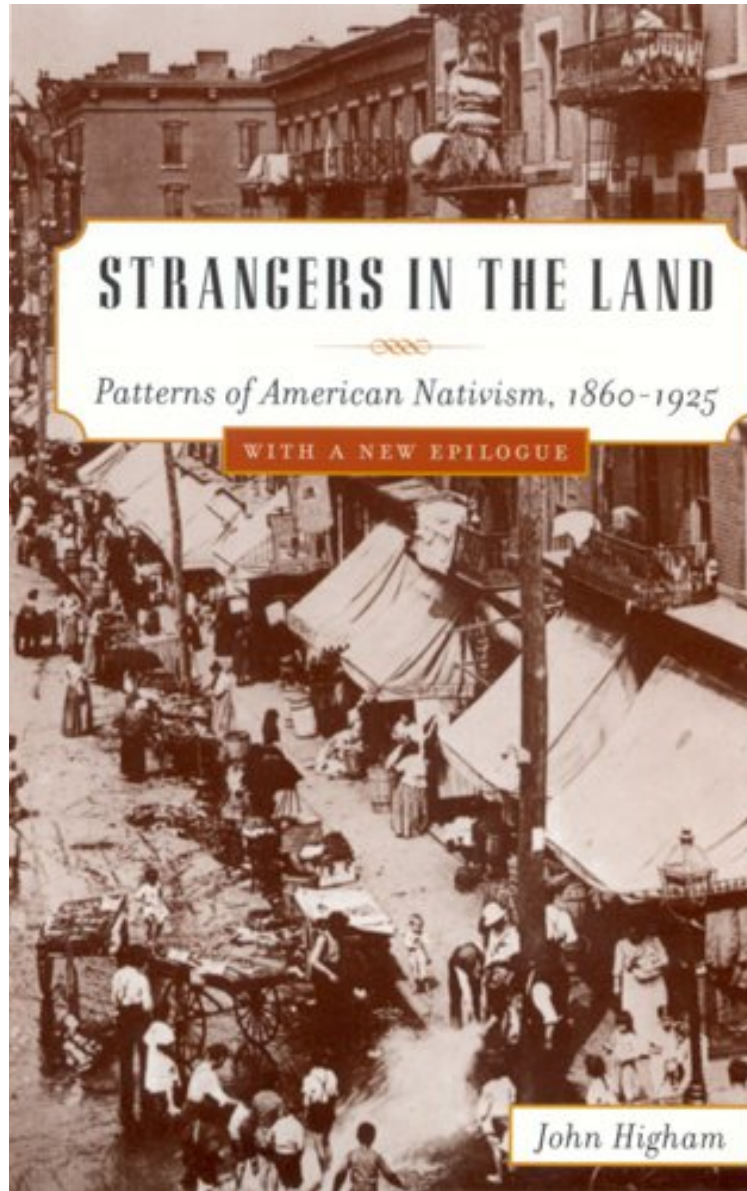


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Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925

John Higham

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John Higham : Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925:

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after page of fact after fact. There is no story, no narrative at all. It's also very easy to forget the information after reading it. My whole class read this book, and everyone had the same problem retaining the information that was presented. The day after we finished reading the book, one classmate commented, "Oh, I completely forgot that book existed." We had literally just finished reading it. There has to be a better book out there on this subject. I am an avid reader, and I have gotten through many a dry textbook. This book took it to a whole new level. 40 of 44 people found the following review helpful. Classic History By Customer Higham's work stands as the seminal work in the history of American nativism. The work is a careful, well-documented study of nationalism and ethnic prejudice, and chronicles the power and violence of these two ideas in American society from 1860 to 1925. He significantly moves beyond previous treatments of nativism, both in chronology and in interpretive sophistication. Higham defines nativism as a defensive type of nationalism or an intense opposition to an internal minority on the grounds of the group's foreign connections. By defining nativism as a set of attitudes or a state of mind, he sets the course for his book as tracing "trace an emotionally charged impulse" rather than "an actual social process or condition." As he argues that the ideological content of nativism remained consistent, he uses emotional intensity as a measure to trace in detail public opinion from the relative calm following the Civil War to the Johnson-Reed act of 1924 that severely limited European immigration. *Strangers in the Land* is, then, a history of public opinion, whose purpose is to show how nativism evolved in society and in action. Higham seeks to explain what could inflame xenophobia and who resisted it. He saw his work as part of a renewed interest in the study of nationalism following the national upheavals in the wake of the McCarthy hearings. Surely Higham's mentor at the University of Wisconsin, intellectual historian Merle Curti, influenced Higham's approach in seeking to examine the power of nationalism as an idea. Also influential was the intellectual climate of the 1950s with its distrust of ideology and disdain of prejudice. Higham admits being repelled by the nationalist delusions of the Cold War, again helping to explain why his study concentrates on seeking some explanation for the irrational and violent outbreaks. The book thus focuses on points of conflict, "antagonisms that belong within ideologies of passionate national consciousness." For example, Higham explains the 100 percent American movement in terms of progressive ideals and the desire of Americans to shape immigrants into a particular ideal of "Americanness" through education and assimilation. This intellectual construct eventually gave way to the racial thinking to which Higham assigns much influence in the efforts to restrict immigration. Ideology is also central to his chapter on the history of the idea of racism in which he argues that Anglo-Saxon nationalism, literary naturalism and a nascent understanding of genetics combined to bring forth arguments for immigration restriction to preserve the racial purity of the American people. Thus, key for Higham's argument is the power of ideas in shaping individual behavior and thereby shaping history. This text is an absolute must-read for anyone seeking to understand American nativism and the darker side of nationalism. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Colin J. Schmidt Every paragraph was something to read and remember.

Book by Higham, John

About the Author Higham /f John