

Amendment's ratification. As she makes perfectly clear, women of color suffragists were not a monolith. Instead, their activism was continually shaped by their own relationship with citizenship, their class status, and, perhaps most importantly, their position in the country's racial hierarchy. *Recasting the Vote* is a must read for scholars of suffrage, citizenship, and women's history.

*Sweet Greeks: First-Generation Immigrant Confectioners in the Heartland*, by Ann Flesor Beck. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2020. 304 pp. Illustrations, photos, notes, bibliography, index. \$27.95 paperback.

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I live in a small town, yet when I exit the highway, at one of the first main intersections, there is a Greek restaurant on all four corners. I never thought this was odd and just assumed that this is the way it is in West Virginia. Then I read Ann Flesor Beck's *Sweet Greeks: First Generation Immigrant Confectioners in the Heartland*.

In 1911, Henry Pratt Fairchild complained that the lack of scholarly material on Greek immigration left his book, *Greek Immigration to the United States*, with a meager bibliography. Today, there is a vast array of published material on Greek immigration, and even with such a bounty, Beck's book adds an important examination of the Greek immigrant experience in America's rural and small town heartland. While she consults a vast array of scholarly publications, the strength of this book is based on the many interviews she conducted with Greek Americans in the heartland.

As a memoir, Beck explores the life of her grandfather Constantine "Gus" Flesor, who migrated from the Peloponnesian hills to America in 1901. In that year, Gus made it to Chicago, took the train to Champaign-Urbana, and eventually made it to Tuscola, Illinois, where he worked as an apprentice confectioner with Greek relatives. Later, he worked on the railroad until he could afford to buy the business in Tuscola, and in the decades that followed, he brought family members to America, learned English, and faced down overt discrimination in establishing the confectionery that is still owned by his family today. In fact, Beck is one of the proprietors. Still, in a 1957 newspaper article celebrating Tuscola's centennial, only one sentence was given to Beck's grandfather.

The immigrant experience was similar for Greeks and for most southern Europeans. They left their homes in the late nineteenth century because of exhausted land, unrelenting poverty, marriage issues, and political upheaval. While New York City swelled with immigrants, many made their way to other parts of the United States. For Greeks, they moved to Boston, St. Louis, and Chicago.

As their numbers grew in America, Greeks established churches, Saturday schools, and of course, confectioneries because sweets were an integral part of the Greek diet going back to ancient times. When Gus Flesor bought his confectionery, his success was aided oddly enough by the temperance movement, which urged men to stop drinking and eat candy. The transformation of soda fountains from medicinal to social led these confectioneries to expand into ice cream and snacks. While many immigrants were loath to change their foodways and stuck to grocers of their home countries, the Greek-owned confectionery was quick to “Americanize,” providing sweets and treats that appealed to everybody. In addition, Greek-American entrepreneurs drove lunch carts to the factory districts and provided box meals at train stops throughout the heartland.

Still, like many southern Europeans, Greeks faced serious discrimination. Some Progressive Era reformers saw ice cream parlors as centers of immoral behavior, an ethnic novelty, or even culturally dangerous (81). Greek communities across the heartland became frequent targets for the overt racism, bigotry and violence directed at them. The term “greasy spoon” was perpetuated by the Ku Klux Klan who bolstered their boycotts by openly attacking customers who dared to frequent Greek restaurants and confectioneries.

The one hundred pages of notes and bibliography are a treasure trove to anyone researching Greek immigration. Although when you look for the book on Amazon it suggests further reading of Greek cookbooks, this is a story of Greek America.

Throughout the narrative, I felt I could reconstruct every business on Main Street, and if I was at a Flesor family reunion, I would have known everyone there. Among the many interviews, Lex Samaras proudly proclaimed to Beck that first generation Greeks came to America at such young ages, worked hard, learned a trade, and became successful despite being labeled “greasy Greeks” (117). Beck and her relatives can be proud of their contribution to being Americans.