

those promoting a new relationship between Italians and black America an array of images and symbols that make this difficult transition seem noble and historically compelling. For that contribution, delivered with passion and flair, *Flavor and Soul* is a landmark in both cultural studies and in the exploration of race in the United States.

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Work Cited

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See You in the Streets: Art, Action, and Remembering the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire.

By Ruth Sergel.

Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2016.

209 pages.

This is the story of how Ruth Sergel—a well-known American artist, director, writer, and human rights activist—became involved in efforts to remember and commemorate the New York City Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire of 1911 on its one-hundredth anniversary and beyond. Beginning with her public art project *Chalk* and continuing for over a decade as the leader of the Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition, Sergel was instrumental in marking the centenary of the fire. In this book she reflects on the ways her work on the Triangle fire affected her activism and her art both personally and professionally.

This relatively short, thoughtful, and exceptionally well-written book brings the Triangle fire into sharp focus. Sergel writes about all the twists and turns of public memory and commemoration that finally led her to focus on the fire. Yet Sergel didn't write this book alone. Each chapter includes at least one "postcard"—photographic and textual sidebars written by Sergel's colleagues and supporters. Each postcard offers an interesting perspective on the fire, its aftermath, and how the tragedy is viewed and understood today.

The deadliest such event in New York's history, the Triangle fire of 1911 cost the lives of 146 garment workers, 123 of them women, mostly young immigrants. It generated national and international outrage over sweatshop working

conditions in New York City and led to the passage of a number of progressive labor, workplace safety, and fire laws and regulations across the entire country. The fire ranks with the Haymarket riot (1886), Homestead strike (1892), Pullman strike (1894), Ludlow massacre (1914), and Battle of Blair Mountain (1921) as one of the defining moments in U.S. labor history. The response to the fire helped strengthen the labor movement during a tumultuous period in American industrial and union history leading up to World War I and the Red Scare era that followed.

The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory produced shirtwaists, a popular woman's blouse of the period. Modeled after men's dress shirts with a turnover collar, slim-fitting cinched waist, and front buttons, the shirtwaist was frequently embellished with embroidery, rhinestones, and fancy stitching. The blouses were produced by the thousands, primarily by women in urban sweatshops. These women were often recent immigrants from Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe, including Italy, although Sergel doesn't focus on the fire's impact on the Italian and Jewish immigrant communities of the period.

Many sweatshops like the Triangle Factory were also firetraps—accidents waiting to happen. There was often poor control of highly flammable materials—the cloth, fabric remnants, lint, and dust that were part of the work; a lack of training in emergency procedures on the factory floors; and most particularly limited access to emergency exits, since doors and staircases were often blocked or locked to prevent theft. Indeed, the Triangle fire was one of many disasters in this period that did force improvements in fire and safety codes—regulations taken for granted today but that came about only through tremendous loss of life, including the Iroquois Theatre fire (Chicago, 1903), the sinking of the riverboat *General Slocum* (New York, 1904), and the Collinwood School fire (Cleveland, 1908).

Sergel's work has focused on trying to make sure that this suffering is remembered and the victims of the Triangle fire are honored now and into the future. Her first project, *Chalk*, was an effort to employ an ephemeral medium to inspire longer-term remembrance. Beginning in 2004, her volunteers used chalk to write the names and ages of the Triangle victims on the sidewalks in front of the homes where they had once lived. It was understood that the chalk would rapidly wash away, but each year's remarking was an opportunity to engage volunteers and other New Yorkers in the commemoration of the fire and the lives it took.

Sergel's work parallels Gunter Demnig's *Stolpersteine* (stumbling blocks) project, begun in 1992, that has spread across Europe. Each of these *Stolpersteine* is a paving stone faced with a brass plaque noting the name and birth date of a Holocaust victim and is set in the sidewalk where that person last lived or worked. The beauty of Demnig's design is its simplicity. The *Stolpersteine*

communicate how thoroughly violence was woven into the fabric of everyday life during the Holocaust, and their ubiquity gives a sense of the scale of the killings. By similarly personalizing the Triangle victims, Sergel's work also underscores how many families and neighborhoods were touched by the fire.

Sergel's concept also evokes the ghost bike movement that began about a decade ago with bicycles, painted white, placed near where a cyclist had been killed or injured by a motorist. *Chalk* is also related to the vernacular memorials often erected on-site and in the immediate aftermath of a tragedy or act of violence—such as the tributes left at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando after the mass murder there last year. These memorials are sometimes termed “makeshift,” “spontaneous,” or “temporary” but are often quite the opposite: They can involve careful thought and planning and are sometimes maintained for long periods of time.

Sergel's innovation involves turning these on-site memorials into performance art. That is, each year's rechalking offers an opportunity to reengage a community in remembrance. Other artists such as Sarah Kanouse and Lori Laitman have sought to use public art, opera, and performance to draw attention to events like the Haymarket and Ludlow massacres, as have other popular efforts to remember similarly difficult issues of social and cultural division and strife. At the same time, Sergel's work is a new take on the concept of a “living memorial.” Living memorials are efforts that go beyond anchoring remembrance in a specific place or physical monument. Instead, they try to keep memory alive in other ways—through events like *Chalk*, but also via exhibitions, websites, social media, movies, books, documentaries, and other activities. Syracuse University's effort to honor the many students it lost in the terrorist bombing of Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988 is a case in point. Permanent, physical memorials were part of the efforts both in Syracuse and in Lockerbie (as well as at Arlington National Cemetery), but the emphasis has been on using the bombing to promote understanding and exchange rather than revenge and retribution.

The structure of Sergel's book is as engaging as the story itself. Its chapters carry the narrative forward, but each one includes one or more of the postcards mentioned above. These postcards sometimes include archival and contemporary photos, but they also offer brief essays and reflections by Sergel's friends and colleagues about the fire, its aftermath, and recent commemorative efforts. For example, Sergel's chapter on the “Sustainability” of memorial efforts includes “The Treasurer's Lament,” by Sheryl Woodruff, which features not only her reflections on the difficulty of fundraising for the commemoration but also a spreadsheet of the Triangle Fire Coalition's budget. Even the page headers are an act of commemoration, with the victims listed by name and age across the pages of the book.

As the chapters move forward, Sergel pauses to look back and jump ahead and reflect on how her conception of her art and activism have changed over the course of the project. She is not at all reticent in noting the difficulties and frustrations of mobilizing this sort of grassroots remembrance.

Finally, the book is noteworthy for its readability. Even though Sergel covers a wide range of topics, she writes in a clear, accessible style. Of the many artists, designers, and memory provocateurs who have focused attention on events like the Triangle fire, Sergel is perhaps alone in writing about her own experiences, motives, and regrets. This is one of the book's greatest strengths and a reason I hope it will be widely read. It has relevance for recent research on public memory and commemoration but more importantly can help other communities face the issue of remembrance of similarly devastating tragedies once the original witnesses have passed away.

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The Italian Emigration of Modern Times: Relations between Italy and the United States Concerning Emigration Policy, Diplomacy and Anti-Immigrant Sentiment, 1870–1927.

By Patrizia Famà Stahle.

Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016.

180 pages.

The century-old history of lynchings of Italians across the United States provides a remarkable window into race, justice, violence, social mores, human rights, and the working class in the context of mass migration and rapid industrialization. Patrizia Famà Stahle's book on this topic is her unrevised dissertation submitted to the University of Southern Mississippi in 2010. In sharp contrast to its exceedingly broad title, this book is really about twelve lynchings of Italians between 1879 and 1910, ranging in location from Florida to Nevada, and the Italian government's struggles to understand and react to the unpunished communal violence.

Chapters 1 and 2 provide a thin survey of Italian migration from the 1870s to the onset of Fascism, drawing heavily upon Robert Foerster's classic *The Italian Emigration of Our Times* (Foerster 1919), which is the basis of Stahle's title. In her summary of Italian migration, Stahle includes puzzling statements such as, "Although emigration from southern Italy was not late, there were