

book, in its details, brings to life a period in which San Francisco's Catholics, and the Catholic Church in San Francisco, faced a set of circumstances, locally and globally, dramatically different from what is currently the case. Many readers, like myself, will enjoy the book for this reason alone.

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*The Urban Colonists: Italian American Identity and Politics in Utica, New York.*

By Philip A. Bean.

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479 pages.

Philip A. Bean's *The Urban Colonists: Italian American Identity and Politics in Utica, New York* is more than the story of Italian Americans in a town in upstate New York. It accomplishes what virtually every other "case study" on Italian Americans and politics has failed to do. By telling the story of Italian Americans in Utica, it tells the wider story of Italian Americans as a major ethnic group in the United States, thus providing a significant contribution to the history of the country as a whole.

From the story of John Marchisi, who left his native Turin to join the Napoleonic army and, through a series of fortuitous events, became the first Italian to settle in Utica, to the activities of a well-established community during the Cold War era, Bean details how an ethnic group comes into being in an American city — the transformation from a group of Italians *in* Utica into the community of the Italians *of* Utica. There is no way to identify the exact moment in the book when this transformation takes place. Nonetheless, the various aspects of social life and interactions covered by the author provide an excellent explanation and a detailed description of this process.

Bean examines different facets of the social and economic lives of Italian immigrants, from culture, nationalism, and religion to their professional and business-related activities. In doing so, he is attentive to the often-turbulent relations with other ethnic groups in the area, exploring conflict and cooperation between Italian Americans in Utica and members of other groups.

The extensive discussion of the social and economic aspects of the Italian-American community in Utica serves as a foundation upon which the author builds the core of the work: the analysis of the political activities of the community. The discussion of the Italian-American political machine in Utica provides an account of a lesser-known urban machine than some of its overstudied counterparts, such as the Albany Regency in the neighboring state capital or Tammany Hall in New York City. The meticulous account of the idiosyncrasies of the Italian-American political machine in Utica is useful for a general understanding of the functioning of not only the large-city machines mentioned above but also of the equally important, and arguably more widespread, machines that ruled smaller (and far more numerous) urban areas, such as the Pendergast machine in Kansas City, Missouri. In other words, this careful analysis of

a smaller machine adds nuance to an important topic that is too often studied through the distorting lens of the unrepresentative reality of New York City.

Once again, while dealing with the Utica political machine, Bean traces the entire history of the phenomenon analyzed, from the opening of a saloon on Clay Street to the creation of a powerful machine with statewide—if not national—influence. Interestingly, the ethnic-based Italian-American political machine in Utica ended up controlling and influencing the formal structures of both major American parties at different points in time. The author shows how the Republican machine increased its influence throughout the years, reaching its peak thanks to the political ability of men such as Salvatore Pellettieri and Alfred Bartolini. Both of these Italian-American Republican leaders were influential enough to successfully establish a direct relationship with Vice President James S. Sherman (during the Taft administration), who personally acknowledged the importance of the Italian-American Republican machine of Utica and conceded favors to the two Italian-American local political bosses that were denied to many others (169). The author explores the successive decline of the Republican machine, while the parallel ascension of the Democratic Italian-American political machine in Utica progressively captures the main focus of the analysis. The Democratic machine was instrumental in the gubernatorial victory of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and Bean illustrates how its leaders exploited “federal public works projects, the post office, and the [local] water company” in order to distribute patronage and consolidate its power in the area. This continuity of the Italian-American ethnic element within the informal structures of the dominant political party, regardless of which party was dominant at any point in time, is particularly compelling.

The only shortcoming of the book is more of a suggestion for future research than an actual criticism. While in the first part of the book the author makes constant reference to the interactions, differences, and similarities between Italian Americans and members of other ethnic groups, when the analysis shifts to the political activities of Italian Americans, only very seldom does Bean reference other ethnic groups. Consequently, some large and important questions remain unanswered. Are Italian-American political machines fundamentally different from non-Italian-American political machines? Are Italian Americans and/or other ethnic groups more or less inclined to organize the political struggle through informal party structures than other groups? Is the political behavior of Italian Americans in any way similar or dissimilar to the behavior of other groups in the United States and/or from the political behavior of those who remained in the motherland? The author touches upon all of these questions but provides no ultimate answers. Such questions should be explored in depth by future researchers, who will benefit enormously from the work of Philip Bean, regardless of whether they choose to analyze Italian Americans in Utica or anywhere else in the United States.

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