

IMMIGRANTS AND THE REPUBLIC: GERMAN CATHOLICS IN NINETEENTH- CENTURY AMERICA

Edmund Spevack Memorial Lecture at Adams House, Harvard University, November 7, 2003. Speaker: Kathleen Neils Conzen. Co-sponsored by the GHI, Adams House, Harvard, and the Edmund Spevack Memorial Trust.

On November 9, 2003, Kathleen Neils Conzen of the University of Chicago delivered the first annual Edmund Spevack Memorial Lecture at Adams House, Harvard University. The series was inaugurated to pay tribute to the memory of Edmund Spevack (1963–2001), a former fellow of the German Historical Institute and resident of Adams House at Harvard University. (See Obituary in the Fall 2001 issue of the *GHI Bulletin*, pp. 3–4).

Professor Judy Palfrey, Master of Adams House, welcomed the audience and pointed out that focusing on the history of transatlantic exchange in a lecture series could contribute significantly to our own understanding of diversity. Witold K. Potempa, a representative of the Edmund Spevack Memorial Trust, reported about the activities of the Trust, including the establishment of a small library of Edmund Spevack's books at Adams House. Christof Mauch, in introducing the featured speaker, emphasized that the topic of Conzen's lecture reflected Spevack's research interest in the experience of nineteenth-century German immigrants in America. He also pointed out that Conzen's focus on religion, or more precisely Catholicism, was another connecting element between Conzen and Spevack. During the last weeks of his life, Edmund Spevack had begun work on a study of the cleric Neils Stensen, and when he was at Harvard and resident of Adams House, he had been the founder of the Catholic-Jewish Dialogue.

In her lecture, entitled "Immigrants and the Republic: German Catholics in Nineteenth-Century America," Conzen discussed four aspects of nineteenth-century ethnicity and Catholicism, all of which contributed to the distinctiveness and endurance of this German-Catholic "subculture": the success of transplanting Catholic institutions and settlement systems from Germany to America; the diaspora consciousness of German Catholics; the political differences between German-American Protestants and Catholics; and the *Kulturkampf* mentalité of German-American Catholics. The next issue of the *GHI Bulletin* will feature the full text of Kathleen Conzen's talk.

Christof Mauch