



Fall 8-22-2006

## Professors' Book Details Post-Civil War Recruitment Efforts

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### Recommended Citation

Winthrop University, "Professors' Book Details Post-Civil War Recruitment Efforts" (2006). *Winthrop News 2006*. 125.

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08/22/2006



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## Professors' Book Details Post-Civil War Recruitment Efforts

### Quick Facts

- Jason and Susan Silverman have collaborated to write "Immigration in the American South 1864-1895: A Documentary History of the Southern Immigration Conventions."
- The book will be available this fall.

ROCK HILL, S.C. - Winthrop University Professors **Jason** and **Susan Silverman** have teamed up to write a book about the Southern states' efforts after the **Civil War** to attract immigrants to replace slave labor.

Immigration remains a hot topic today for very different reasons. Southern businessmen realized after the **Civil War** that they needed to sell their region, said **Jason Silverman**, a history professor. "There was an enormous recruitment effort and it failed miserably," he said. "Southerners paid lip service to wanting immigrants but they wanted only certain kinds of immigrants, such as white Anglo Saxon Protestants or as one participant said, 'brains, brawn, and capital.' If their efforts had been successful, it wouldn't have taken the South until World War II to recover from the economic devastation from the Civil War."

Called "**Immigration in the American South 1864-1895: A Documentary History of the Southern Immigration Conventions**," the book provides a chronology of major events, an introductory essay, conference proceedings, newspaper accounts and chapter narratives on conventions held to organize recruitment of foreign and domestic labor. It outlines the chamber of commerce type handbooks produced by each state which promoted the region and listed the amenities of top cities. The book is a joint effort by **Jason Silverman**, author of nine books, and his wife, **Susan**, head of public services at Winthrop's [Dacus Library](#).

In 1876, representatives from 14 states gathered at a convention in New Orleans, La., to address immigration. The states came together again in 1883 to form the Southern Immigration Association of America and held several more conventions over the next decade. With railroad companies playing a major role in the recruitment efforts, the book also includes information on their activities. The final chapter contains state population statistics from 1870-1900, which show that foreign-born population in the South remained small.

Jason and Susan's research has uncovered colorful characters who have been lost to history, such as Southern Immigration Association President Col. A.J. McWhirter of Tennessee. Another was W. L. Glessner of Americus, Ga., who was responsible for the "advertising car," a handsome railroad car, which traveled throughout the North and West to advertise the many resources and benefits of the Southern states.

"Southerners dwelled on the war as the 'Lost Cause' and couldn't get beyond the belief that slave labor was the best way to keep their rural agrarian society intact," **Jason Silverman** said.

Research on the book began 20 years ago, though the **Silvermans** didn't start working on the book in earnest until two years ago. Published by the Edwin Mellen Press, it is \$39.95 and will be available this fall.

For more information, contact Jason Silverman at 803/323-4677.

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