

a case study of Chester, PA, focusing on racial problems resulting from the uneven postindustrial development and lack of progress of its black population. The author contends that although his study is limited to one city, many other cities are experiencing shortsighted economic revitalization that results in a racialized divide in which sections of cities benefit while other sections stagnate. In Chester, racialized economic development results from local elites and city governments that divide and prioritize city spaces marked for development while poor neighborhoods and communities that often involve homogeneous populations of racial and social class differences are continually bypassed. Poor black communities are sealed off from areas deemed economically attractive, for example, increasing tourism in a waterfront location in Chester. It is a racial issue because geographic areas in cities deemed economically feasible for future development do not include economic upgrading of poor neighborhoods and communities. Though this case study does not include any new findings, a strength of the book is "a good number of concrete accounts of how the local politics of urban development is consistently and strategically anchored in the ideologies and rhetoric of race." **Summing Up:** ★★ Recommended. Upper-division undergraduates and above.—*P. J. Venturelli, Valparaiso University*

CC 54-5421 HT690 MARC
Rocca, Jean-Louis. **The making of the Chinese middle class: small comfort and great expectations.** Palgrave Macmillan, 2017. 281p bibl index ISBN 9781137393388 cloth, \$159.00; ISBN 9781137393395 ebook, contact publisher for price

This important contribution is the best effort yet by Western social scientists in their continuous struggle to define what being middle class means in Chinese society. Rocca (Sciences Po, Paris) aptly traces the rise of cultural manners to signal social standing to insiders and outsiders. His longish chapter on lifestyles is the most nuanced treatment of the topic. The expansion of the urban arena, which involves frequent interaction among strangers, requires a new ethos, and none is better than the development of distinct social manners. In this way, lifestyles are a matter of confrontation and competition among social groups wanting to impose their own behaviors and representations on the lower social classes. In the China case, rural migrants are considered to be in need of moral guidance. What better role model than China's newly emerged middle class—the carrier of superior education, talent, and material success that is behaviorally manifested in an articulated, genteel lifestyle? When it comes to lifestyle, however, there is a gender bias: women are perceived to possess the superior artistic eye, enabling most women to readily impose their aesthetic sensibilities within the home. A thoughtful book worthy of further consideration. **Summing Up:** ★★ Recommended. All academic levels/libraries.—*W. R. Jankowiak, University of Nevada, Las Vegas*

CC 54-5422 HQ1064 MARC
Samuel, Lawrence R. **Aging in America: a cultural history.** Pennsylvania, 2017. 196p bibl index ISBN 9780812248838 cloth, \$34.95; ISBN 9780812293654 ebook, \$34.95

Samuel, author of *Remembering America* (CH, Apr'16, 53-3665), among other works, and founder of consulting firm Boomers 3.0, is part of the expanding contingent of writers addressing the changing social, economic, and political aspects of growing old in the post-WWII US. All too often, in contrast to the venerable place that the life-experienced hold outside modern industrial societies, older people are the targets of widely held attitudes viewing the natural act of aging as necessarily categorized by physical and cognitive decline. Samuel asserts that baby boomers (those born between 1946 and 1964) should collectively use their numbers and economic influence deriving from expendable income and time to challenge Americans' esteem for independence so often associated

only with the young and able-bodied. He optimistically believes that those in the last third of their lives can achieve satisfaction free from compulsions to achieve goals otherwise forever deferred. Arguably the commerce-driven, anti-aging mentality, fueled by false images of being forever young, is anti-human and anti-life. Instead, one should strive to remain competent, adaptable, connected, and active. Samuel offers a useful addition to the issue of aging, providing accessible summaries of recent gerontological, geriatric, and self-help works and his own insights. **Summing Up:** ★★ Recommended. All levels/libraries.—*F. J. Augustyn Jr., Library of Congress*

CC 54-5423 HM821 MARC
Scheidel, Walter. **The great leveler: violence and the history of inequality from the Stone Age to the twenty-first century.** Princeton, 2017. 504p bibl index ISBN 9780691165028 cloth, \$35.00; ISBN 9781400884605 ebook, contact publisher for price

Scheidel, a distinguished scholar of many disciplines at Stanford, has written an important book that he admits is rather depressing. The question is, given the world's large and growing inequalities of wealth and income, what does the historical record show to have been effective social forces for creating greater equality? His answer: it requires massive violence. World wars, brutal communist dictatorships, pandemic disease—these are the only things Scheidel can find, going back as far as records allow, which have significantly reduced the Gini coefficient (the most commonly used measure of inequality)—and even that does not last very long. Scheidel does not offer much cause for optimism about peaceful, incremental movements toward greater equality. Moreover, he thinks these historical tools of re-equalization have been rendered very unlikely in the world today. This book will be widely read and spur a wave of critical scholarship. **Summing Up:** ★★★★★ Essential. All academic levels/libraries.—*B. Weston, Centre College*

54-5424 E184 CIP
Trans-Pacific Japanese American studies: conversations on race and racializations, ed. by Yasuko Takezawa and Gary Y. Okihiro. Hawai'i, 2016. 430p bibl index ISBN 9780824847586 cloth, \$68.00; ISBN 9780824867621 ebook, contact publisher for price

These chapters and essays by US- and Japanese-based scholars in Japanese American studies focus on advancing the field's understandings of the intersections of "Japaneseness" in Japanese American studies. The 21 contributions are divided among eight sections that include orientation, socializations, communities, intersections, borderlands, reorientations, pedagogies, and dialoguing subject positions. Using archives, art, newspapers, letters, photographs, and interviews, these accomplished scholars from both Japan and the US dialogue and engage readers with the history of the Issei (first-generation Japanese immigrants) and their relations with the homeland and with other generations. As part of these conversations, Japan-based scholars critique Japanese American studies scholarship's lack of use of Japanese-language primary sources, while US-based scholars problematize and critique the legacies of Japanese imperialism and Japanese ethnonationalism in relation to Japanese identity and community formations. In the last section, scholars from both Japan and the US provide their own narratives of navigating outsider positionality in their studies of the lived Japanese American history and experience. This volume, a first in Japanese American studies, involves US and Japanese scholars discussing positionality, language, insight, and interpretations within the historical context of early immigration and Japanese American incarceration and racialization, as well as initiating conversations on Japanese imperialism and ethnonationalism and its impact in the Japanese American community. **Summing Up:** ★★★★★ Essential. Upper-division undergraduates and above.—*G. J. Yoo, San Francisco State University*