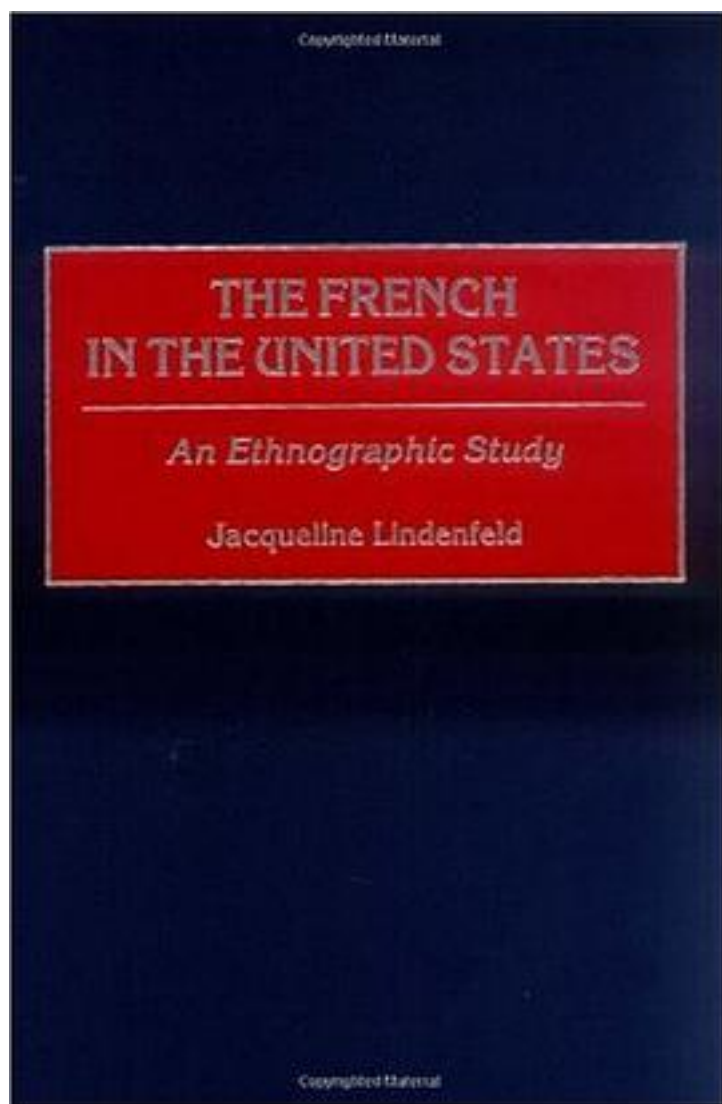


The French in the United States



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著者:Lindenfeld, Jacqueline

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Complex patterns of acculturation are revealed in the most comprehensive ethnographic study of contemporary French immigrants in the United States. Written by a French-born American anthropologist who has insider status among French Americans, "The French in the United States" offers a fresh look at the histories and experiences of French immigrants. In the foreign-born generation, a high degree of social integration into American society co-exists with the maintenance of a French identity which manifests itself in the areas of language, culture, and perceptions. The French heritage does not usually endure past the second generation, however, because its maintenance within the family is not adequately supported by collective efforts, due to a lack of cohesiveness among French-born individuals who have become permanent immigrants. A number of factors account for the foregoing: the small number of French natives in the United States, their scattered geographical distribution, the absence of spatially defined communities populated by direct immigrants from France, and a very high rate of intermarriage. Another important factor is the primarily individual nature of migration from France to this country since the last half of the 20th century, and a highly developed sense of self-direction in those who stay permanently. Their French identity must be regarded as cultural rather than ethnic: it is tied to a distant homeland, rather than to a group with territorial, institutional, and organizational identity in the United States. Lindenfeld delves into the makings of this French identity and distinguishes French immigrants from other Americans.

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