



## The Names of John Gergen Immigrant Identities in Early Twentieth-Century St. Louis

Benjamin Moore

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“No one has brought into print the details of an individual working-class St. Louisan’s life in anywhere near the depth that Moore has done—and this from what started as a handful of crumbling school assignments found in a dumpster. Moore’s point, however, is for us not simply to discover a once-invisible man, but also to reflect upon the extent to which identity itself is, in this nation, shaped by the collective decisions of the people and institutions that shape our lives and record our traces.”—**Eric Sandweiss**, Indiana University, author of *St. Louis: The Evolution of an American Urban Landscape*

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Rescued from the dumpster of a boarded-up house, the yellowing scraps of a young migrant's schoolwork provided Benjamin Moore with the jumping-off point for this study of migration, memory, and identity. Centering on the compelling story of its eponymous subject, *The Names of John Gergen* examines the converging governmental and institutional forces that affected the lives of migrants in the industrial neighborhoods of South St. Louis in the early twentieth century. These migrants were Banat Swabians from Torontál County in southern Hungary—they were Catholic, agrarian, and ethnically German.

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