Chapter 7

Pilgrims' Progress: Ethnic Mobility in Modern America

THE GRIM LIVING CONDITIONS facing the different waves of immigrants also confronted their children and sometimes their grandchildren. Often, the newcomers moved slowly out of poverty and the ghettoes, and gains made by the second and third generations were lost. Yet the striking fact of American history is social mobility, an overall improvement in status and living conditions for the descendants of the millions who flocked to the United States. Progress was by no means even from group to group or from generation to generation.

Of the European immigrants, the Irish probably had the most difficult time, but a few made spectacular progress and became veritable personifications of the rags-to-riches story. Robert Joseph Cuddihy began as an office boy in Funk & Wagnalls publishing house in New York City at the age of sixteen. Working his way up, he became a wealthy and powerful publisher. Joseph P. Kennedy, the son of a Boston immigrant saloon keeper and father of President John F. Kennedy, made his fortune on Wall Street and in the motion picture business and later served as ambassador to Great Britain. John Buckley, the founder of one of America's leading conservative families, emigrated to America without much money. After a mixture of success and failure in Texas, his son, William F. Buckley, arrived in New York City nearly penniless in 1922 but soon thereafter became a millionaire. Peter McDonnell began his career as a bondsman in New York City and laid the foundation of a major Wall Street brokerage house.

But most of America's Irish moved up the social scale slowly. Working in unskilled occupations provided few opportunities for advancement. The growth of canals and railroads offered low-paying, backbreaking jobs that left the workers unemployed and practically destitute whenever and wherever each project ended. As a result, Irish settlements developed all over the country but usually at or near canal and railroad depots. The opening of textile mills in New England also created opportunities for those willing to work long and hard.

The Irish managed to improve their lot during the nineteenth century. By

the 1870s in Boston they had already come to dominate the police and fire departments. Throughout the nation young Irish women staffed urban elementary schools. They constituted 25 percent of the teachers in Boston and New York City in the 1880s and a generation later gained a foothold in the teaching ranks of Buffalo, Chicago, and San Francisco. In the twentieth century Irish men and women used their connections to win more municipal jobs. Young Irish women continued to be important in urban schools while the men became police and firemen in cities other than Boston. In New York City, for example, by the 1930s they constituted 75 percent of the fire department and half of the police. They also constituted 25 percent of the sanitation workers. In the private sector women became clerks in telephone and insurance companies and waitresses in Schrafft's and Stouffer's restaurants. The Irish also dominated New York City's transit system and its Transport Workers Union. The most thrifty of the workers saved money to buy houses. This was possible in part because many persisted at one job and in one place year after year. The Irish also tended to marry late, thereby enabling young workers to save enough for down payments on modest homes. If these schemes for property accumulation proved insufficient, wives and children worked and contributed to the family coffers. Putting children to work added to the family's income, of course, but it also hurt the younger generation's chances for future mobility.

The Irish were successful in many businesses at a time when education was not as necessary as it would later become. The construction industry boomed as urban America grew. The Irish, using the influence of friends in city halls, became contractors and builders. By 1890 there were twice as many of them in these occupations compared to other immigrant groups. In Philadelphia Edward J. Lafferty constructed the city's waterworks, and James P. (Sunny Jim) McNichol, another Irish politician-contractor, helped build the city's subways, sewers, and water filtration plant.

During the twentieth century, and especially after World War II, the Irish progressed rapidly to middle- and upper middle-class status. They ran businesses, worked in banks and insurance companies, and became doctors, lawyers, professors, civil servants, and technicians. The occupational distribution of the American Irish in 1980 resembled that of the northern urban Anglo-Saxon Protestants. Among the white Catholics in America, the Irish usually had more education, better jobs, and higher incomes. Few could claim the fabulous wealth of America's most famous Irish family, the Kennedys, but not many were poor, either. The American Irish had at long last arrived.

To consider the Irish experience solely in terms of the move from shanties to suburban homes and from ditch diggers to lawyers is to form an incomplete picture. In two special vocational areas—the Roman Catholic Church

and politics—the Irish had experiences that were unique, not because they were so lucrative but because the ethnic group valued these positions. To have a son become a lawyer or doctor was of course a sign of success, but the Irish also considered it important to give a son or a daughter to the Church.

That the Irish dominated the Catholic Church in America is not surprising. In Ireland the Church carried the faith and was a source of comfort in the face of English oppression. It served a similar function in America. The hostility of native Protestant Americans to the Irish and to Catholicism only made the Church more important, for it provided the embattled Irish immigrant with a bulwark of security.

Shortly after the Irish arrived in the 1840s, they became the dominant group in the American Catholic hierarchy. From Archbishop John Hughes of New York, to Minnesota's John Ireland, to Baltimore's James Cardinal Gibbons, the first American cardinal, and to New York City's Francis Cardinal Spellman, Terrence Cooke, and John O'Connor, the leading American Catholics have usually been of Irish origin. The Irish supported the parochial schools, sent their sons and daughters to do God's work, and gave what they could from their meager incomes for religious activities. When non-Irish Catholics, such as the Italians, arrived in large numbers, they often resented Irish control of the Church and demanded their own clergy and parishes. The Church disapproved of nationality or ethnic parishes in principle, but they existed among Germans, Poles, and French Canadians. In the twentieth century, Irish control of the Church hierarchy gradually lessened but never disappeared. In the 1990s the Irish constituted fewer than one fifth of the Catholics in the United States but about a third of the clergy and half of the hierarchy.

During the 1980s and 1990s the Roman Catholic Church experienced a shortage of priests and nuns; in part this was due to the fact that Irish Americans were achieving widespread success in other professions. Practically all regions of the nation contained parishes looking for clergy, and hospitals and schools looking for nuns as nurses and teachers. In 1998 California's Oakland Diocese had only 6 students at St. Patrick's Seminary in Menlo Park, compared to 24 twenty years earlier. The diocese itself had only 110 active priests to serve its half million Roman Catholics, a figure far below the national average. Nationally the number of priests had fallen from almost 60,000 in 1978 to 48,000 in 1998 even though the Catholic population had grown. Some parishes were being run by laypeople and by nuns who did everything except give the sacraments. Scholars noted that as the Irish, and Italians as well, chose other careers, the Church had to go abroad for clergy. One parishioner commented, "When I was young, most parents were delighted to have a son in the seminary. Today they want their kids to go to

Stanford or Harvard." Such shortages prompted considerable debate, but no change, in the Church's attitude toward married clergy and ordination of women.

Irish domination of urban politics was not so complete as of the Church, but it was impressive. New York City elected a Roman Catholic mayor in 1880, and Boston followed suit four years later. Before the end of the century Irish "bosses" dominated local politics in New York, Jersey City, Hoboken, Boston, Chicago, Buffalo, Albany, and Troy (New York); Pittsburgh, St. Paul, St. Louis, and Kansas City (Missouri); Omaha; New Orleans; and San Francisco. New York City's famed Tammany Hall passed into Irish hands when "Honest John" (his enemies called him "crooked as a ram's horn") Kelly succeeded Protestant boss William M. Tweed in 1874, and it remained under Irish control for the next eighty years. Bosses Frank Hague of Jersey City and Tom Pendergast of Kansas City, Missouri were legends in their day, as was Mayor Richard Daley of Chicago in his.

No Irish urban politician was so extraordinary as James Michael Curley of Boston. He served in local offices before becoming U.S. congressman, mayor of the city, and then governor of Massachusetts. Curley symbolized many aspects of the Irish style in politics. He maintained his contacts with the Church and the Irish community and was a skillful showman. He played upon the Irish resentment of Boston's Brahmins to build a personal following, and he provided jobs and social services for the poor. He also knew how to appeal to his followers: "My mother was obliged to work . . . as a scrubwoman toiling nights in office buildings downtown. I thought of her one night while leaving City Hall during my first term as Mayor. I told the scrubwomen cleaning the corridors to get up; 'The only time a woman should go down on her knees is when she is praying to Almighty God,' I said. Next morning I ordered longhandled mops and issued an order that scrubwomen were never again to get down on their knees in City Hall." Critics attacked Curley for corruption, but no matter—he won an election even while in jail.

The Irish reach for the presidency began in 1928 when Al Smith from the Lower East Side of New York City became a candidate. He rose swiftly through New York City's Democratic organization (Tammany Hall) and served as state legislator and governor before grasping for the big prize. Smith epitomized the Irish Catholic politician, a factor that worked both for and against him in 1928. He opposed Prohibition, attacked immigration restriction laws, and was a devout Catholic. As a result, he won the Catholic and immigrant vote in many places and reversed Democratic fortunes of the 1920s by capturing a dozen or so of the nation's largest cities. The Democratic presidential candidate amassed more popular votes than any of his predecessors ever had. (Part of the explanation for this, no doubt, was that a

larger percentage of women voted in 1928 than had done so in 1920 or 1924.) Nevertheless, many Protestants feared that the Roman Catholic Church would exert a strong influence on a Catholic in the White House and voted Republican for the first time in their lives. Herbert Hoover won the election.

After Smith's defeat no Irish Catholic and no other member of an ethnic minority group made a bid for the presidency until John F. Kennedy's triumph in 1960. Keenly aware that politicos still regarded his Roman Catholic faith as a severe handicap, Kennedy faced the religious issue squarely. His victory in the West Virginia primary proved that he could win Protestant votes, and his smooth political machine achieved a first-ballot nomination at the Democratic convention. Yet the religious issue would not die, and Kennedy had to make several strong statements about his belief in the separation of church and state. In the election Kennedy lost some votes because of his Catholicism, but he ran strongly in the heavily Catholic Northeast and slipped into the presidency by the narrowest margin of any victorious candidate since Woodrow Wilson in 1916.

Kennedy's election, culminating a century of Irish political activity, was built on the earlier victories of Irish politicians in city wards. His religious commitments were public knowledge, as were his ties to the Irish community. Some even said an "Irish Mafia" had won him the nomination. A few Catholics went to the other extreme and insisted that Kennedy was not Catholic enough. Kennedy was clearly different from both Al Smith and James Curley. Born into a wealthy family, educated at Choate and Harvard, he was assimilated, cosmopolitan, and intellectual, and he did not seem particularly Irish—except for political purposes. Whether another type of Irish politician could have won in 1960 is debatable, but the old ward boss was a thing of the past by then. The Irish had arrived in politics as they had in business and in the Church.

Another Irish Democrat, New York's Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, later pointed out that on the day that Kennedy died the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the majority leader of the U.S. Senate, and the chairman of the Democratic National Committee were all Irish Catholic Democrats. Moynihan suggested that perhaps such Irish domination will not occur again, but Thomas (Tip) O'Neill, former Speaker of the House, was one of the most prominent Democrats to oppose President Ronald Reagan, also of Irish descent, during his tenure in the White House. Irish Catholic ancestry is obviously no longer a handicap for any candidate making a bid for the presidency.

The largest of the nineteenth-century immigrant groups, the Germans, generally rose faster than the Irish. They had certain advantages: they were not so poor when they arrived and they had more education. Unlike the

Irish, many Germans farmed successfully, but most lived in or later moved to cities. Those without skills or education took laboring jobs, but many became skilled workers in America's growing industries. They were also cabinet makers, bakers, tailors, bookbinders, and furniture makers, and often they were the leaders in craft unions. For example, the bakers' unions in the 1870s and 1880s were solidly German. Some German workers even veered off into radical politics.

German immigrants and their children did well in business and were a successful minority by the time of World War I. They brought with them their love of beer drinking and their beer-making skills, and they founded breweries that became virtually a German monopoly in the early twentieth century. St. Louis and Milwaukee are centers of the beer business, and names like Pabst, Miller, Schlitz, Schaefer, and Anheuser-Busch became household words in twentieth-century America. Germans also ran beer gardens, hotels, and restaurants like Mader's in Milwaukee and Luchow's in New York City. An observer said of the beer gardens: "The commencement of one of these establishments appears to be very simple. A German obtains a cellar, a cask of beer, a cheese, a loaf of bread, and some pretzels—puts out a sign and the business is started." Although breweries and beer gardens were the most notable German connections to the liquor business, a few Germans, such as Paul Krug, developed vineyards in California.

Germans were also successful in other areas of business. George Westinghouse, a poor farm boy from upstate New York, patented the air brake for trains and then founded a major corporation. Another inventor, Charles Steinmetz, who became known as the wizard of Schenectady, was the dynamic force behind the huge General Electric Company. Although Steinmetz had a European education, he arrived at Ellis Island from Germany without funds or a job. Indeed, he was almost deported. His mastery of electricity led him to fame and fortune. John A. Roebling, another innovator, put his ideas about steel cables to use in building suspension bridges. Roebling died while supervising the construction of his most famous, the Brooklyn Bridge.

Other Germans used their talents in the ethnic community as clergymen and editors of German periodicals and newspapers, which were numerous on the eve of World War I, or operated small businesses that catered to the German American community. A few branched out into politics, among them Robert Wagner of New York and the socialist Victor Berger of Milwaukee. These politicians, like the Irish, built their strength on the ethnic vote and service to ethnic communities. Germans had elected congressmen and senators regularly after the Civil War and governors in Illinois and Kentucky in the 1890s.

Germans also excelled in music. City orchestras in the nineteenth century were heavily German, and German singers were popular in America, as were German singing societies. Germans also made musical instruments. Steinway and Sons was the most famous of the German piano makers, but others such as Knabe, Weber, and Wurlitzer were well known too.

Although World War I was a shattering experience for many German Americans and caused many of their institutions to decline, it did not impede their socioeconomic progress. They prospered in practically every key area of American business, the professions—as doctors, lawyers, engineers—government, and science. They were well represented among the American corporate elite, and had high education levels and solid incomes. Not many were poor. So much were the descendants of German immigrants a part of American life that few Americans conceived of them as a distinct ethnic group. Nevertheless, President Richard Nixon's chief White House assistants from 1969 to 1973, H.R. Haldeman and John Ehrlichman, were known to a number of Washingtonians as the "German shepherds."

The Swedes have also prospered. The children and grandchildren of many of those who tilled the soil in the upper Midwest sought opportunities in burgeoning cities like Minneapolis and Chicago. In urban areas they became skilled workers and clerks and gradually moved into better jobs. As a group Swedes prospered about as much as Germans; in the twentieth century they were second only to the British in their proportion of skilled workers in America. A few even advanced into the business elite; Swedish-born Rudolph A. Peterson, for example, became president of the giant Bank of America in 1961. A minority remained farmers and prospered on the land.

Norwegians were similar to Swedes in their immigration patterns, migrating into the upper Midwest to become farmers and farm laborers. But Norwegians were also sailors and found jobs as seamen in American ports; they were especially important on the West Coast. Like the Swedes, they became increasingly urbanized after 1900, and many came to America with skills that they could use in the expanding industrial society. By the 1980s Norwegian Americans had done well and had generally moved into the middle class, with many becoming successful businessmen, skilled workers, and professionals. Of course, politics was open in areas where Norwegians and Swedes were numerous. In 1892 Knute Nelson, with the aid of his fellow Norwegians, won the governorship of Minnesota, and Swedish and Norwegian names have been prominent in the politics of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and the adjacent states ever since.

Finns in America were slower to move up the occupational ladder than their Swedish and Norwegian neighbors. Of the Protestant groups immigrating after 1880 the Finns were the least skilled, and this accounts for

some of their difficulties in achieving occupational mobility. They generally settled in the Midwest but were not inclined to become farmers. They moved frequently in search of work and were especially numerous in the mining regions of the upper Midwest. They often worked in company towns, where few opportunities existed for those without skills. Finns also tried to found their own businesses but were not notably successful. Later generations finally moved out of the unskilled ranks and competed more successfully, but socioeconomically they usually lagged behind Swedes and Norwegians.

None of the immigrants coming in large numbers before 1890, not even the Irish, were so scorned as the Chinese. After they had been forced out of mines and had helped build the railroads and raise crops in California, the Chinese drifted to the cities in search of employment. A few were successful merchants, but most found urban life harsh and jobs limited. They worked as domestics, as cigar makers, or in other low-paying industries. Most important to the livelihood of Chinese Americans was the proverbial laundry, which developed largely because the Chinese could find little else to do. The shortage of women on the frontier left this domestic service, considered women's work, open to the Chinese. A laundry required little skill and practically no capital, only soap, a scrub board, an iron, an ironing board, and long hours of hard labor. Laundries were usually one-man or family enterprises. As the Chinese moved into the cities or to the East, they took their businesses with them. By 1880 over 7,000 Chinese made their livings in laundries in San Francisco alone, and in 1920 the U.S. Census Bureau reported that nearly a third of employed Chinese were engaged in laundry work.

Restaurants and groceries were also important to the Chinese community. The restaurants originated in the mining camps along the railroads, where the Chinese preferred their own food. The railroad bosses agreed that letting the Chinese cook their own meals was cheaper than furnishing an American diet. The Chinese discovered that others liked their cuisine too; chop suey and chow mein became staples on their menus. Restaurants required some capital, hence they were not as numerous as laundries. But like the laundries, they were often family businesses and served as outlets for entrepreneurs blocked from other jobs. Groceries, the third main type of Chinese small business, were not so important as restaurants and laundries. Nevertheless, enterprising businessmen found them outlets for their skills and energies. In the South and West, Chinese groceries thrived, and a few later expanded into supermarkets.

Until World War II the Chinese American community had many service workers, small proprietors, and operatives, and few professional and techni-

cal workers. But a strong family system, a commitment to education, and hard work changed patterns after 1945. Declining prejudice, especially during World War II when America was an ally of China, also helped. Prior to the war Chinese Americans serving in the U.S. Navy had been delegated to work as messmen and stewards, but during the war they were admitted as apprentice seamen. Shipyards, aircraft factories, and other defense industries experiencing labor shortages began to employ workers of Chinese ancestry. These were modest changes, but they marked the beginning of improved employment opportunities.

The Chinese American community of the 1990s was different from that of a century before. By 1960 many Chinese had moved into the middle class. They shunned jobs in laundries and other undesirable forms of employment in favor of technical and professional occupations. Particularly in mathematics and science the Chinese made a name for themselves; several won Nobel Prizes, among them Chen Ning Yang and Yzyng Dao Lee. Veneration for learning and scholarship was revealed by the fact that by the 1960s proportionately more Chinese than Caucasians had completed college.

In business, while laundries were declining, restaurants thrived, and Chinese Americans found new opportunities in finance, trade, architecture, and computing. Perhaps most well-known of the Chinese immigrants was I.M. Pei, who achieved an international reputation as an architect. Pei arrived in the United States in 1935 to study engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He later switched to architecture and decided to remain in the United States, becoming an American citizen in 1954. He was asked to design major projects, including the John Hancock Building in Boston and the East Wing of the National Gallery in Washington, D.C. A similar story of fame and success could be told of An Wang, founder of the Massachusetts computing firm that bears his name.

Chinese women, like American women generally, have moved into the professional and managerial labor market, and some have become successful in spite of discrimination against their sex. One of San Francisco's most well-known restaurants was run by Cecilia Chiang, who entered the United States in 1958. She said, "I have confidence. I love people, I love food, and about Chinese food, I think I know better than all the people I know." While running restaurants was a traditional Chinese occupation, it was unusual for women. By 1986 Chiang owned four restaurants in California. Since 1983 another enterprising Chinese American woman, Connie Chung, has been a high-paid and leading television news personality.

As the twentieth century drew to a close, Chinese Americans generally earned more than most other Americans, including many people of European origin, and they were well represented in professional occupations. In

universities they stood out in science and computer departments; at the University of California at Berkeley, one of the nation's premier institutions, Chinese American Chang-Lin Tien was named chancellor in 1990. Asians made up 4 percent of the faculties of American universities in the 1990s, which was about the same proportion of Asians in the population. In California, Asians were 10 percent of the population but constituted one third of the state's undergraduates and 20 percent of the university faculty. Their academic success put them in a difficult situation. Long the victims of racism, Asians discovered during California's debate over affirmative action that if class rank and SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) scores were the bases of admission, they would benefit from a nonethnic admissions policy.

It is important to remember that Chinese Americans, and Asians generally, have done well because of education, strict family values, and a culture in which both parents encourage high aspirations. Chinese Americans, however, complain that American businesses have glass ceilings that keep them from the top jobs. And many of the latest newcomers lack proficiency in English and do not have the skills for economic success. As discussed, the Indochinese refugees have had an especially difficult time in adjusting to their new homes; in the late 1990s a large number of families were still living in poverty or on welfare.

With a small population on which to build a political base, politics was not a common way up the social ladder; but in Hawaii, with its large Chinese population, the chances were better. Hiram Fong made his political career there. He began as deputy attorney for the city and county of Honolulu, then moved into the legislature, and finally ended in the U.S. Senate. Fong's career in some ways symbolizes the rise of Chinese Americans. Born into a large and poor family, he began as a farm laborer. But he was an enterprising young man and worked his way through the University of Hawaii and Harvard Law School. He became a successful lawyer and businessman before he launched his political career.

Outside of Hawaii it was more difficult for Chinese Americans, and Asians generally, to win elective office before the 1980s. When the people of Delaware choose Shien Biau Woo lieutenant governor in 1984 he won national recognition. In 1985 Los Angeles elected its first Chinese American to the City Council, and Mayor Dianne Feinstein of San Francisco appointed a Chinese American to the Board of Supervisors. Elsewhere a few other victories were scored, but none compared to the election in 1996 of Gary Locke as governor of Washington. Locke won by a lopsided vote even though Asians in that state constituted only 4 percent of the population. A graduate of Yale University, Locke had served as a county executive and had been in the state legislature for ten years.

Of the millions of immigrants coming after 1880, no other group experienced such startling success as the Jews. Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews who came in the colonial period were already solidly middle class when the central European Jews (most of whom were German) arrived before the Civil War. Many in this earlier wave had been traders in Germany, and they took up peddling and storekeeping in the New World. Spreading out over the nation, they made rapid progress in commerce and trade. The Lehmans and Seligmans achieved prominence in finance and banking while Benjamin Altman and Adam Gimbel became major department-store owners. A study made in 1889 of 18,000 gainfully employed Jews, most of whom were from German-speaking ares, found that approximately one third were retailers; 15 percent were bankers; 17 percent were accountants, bookkeepers, clerks, and copyists; and 12 percent were salesmen, commercial travelers, and agents.

The bulk of eastern European Jews, coming after 1880, was poor, but they too succeeded in America in the twentieth century. In 1980 family incomes of America's Jews were higher than those of any other ethnic group, including the elite white Protestant Episcopalians. And their educational levels were also high. Almost 90 percent of Jews of college age were attending institutions of higher education in the 1970s, and a high proportion were in graduate and professional schools.

Of the first generation from eastern Europe, a majority worked in the garment industry and in trade, with only a few in the professions. Jews were involved in the formation—and in their early years made up most of the members—of both the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union, founded in 1910 and 1914, respectively. Children of these union members more often than not went to college and sought higher-status occupations. Anti-Semitism in the professions, including discriminatory quotas in medical schools, made it harder to achieve professional mobility, but they accomplished it nonetheless. Statistics of the late 1960s indicated that about half of all gainfully employed adult Jews were professionals, more than double the figure for Protestants and Catholics. And by the early 1970s yearly incomes for a majority of Jewish families whose heads were typically between 30 and 59 years of age averaged over $16,000, compared to a national average for all families of under $11,000. In the 1990s scholars estimated that Jews earned almost 50 percent more than non-Jews.

Second-generation Jews usually chose professions in which they could be independently employed and not subject to the bigotry of prejudiced employers. As a result many became physicians, lawyers, accountants, pharmacists, and dentists. In the 1930s and even in the 1960s, Jews made up

more than half of New York City's dentists, physicians, and lawyers. The third generation of Jews still found law and medicine attractive, but the decline of discriminatory hiring practices in the business and academic worlds opened opportunities not available to their parents and grandparents.

On Wall Street, large investment houses, law firms, and major banks rarely hired Jews, Italians, and other people of southern and eastern European origins unless the firms were Jewish themselves. In the 1970s and 1980s, however, the need for talent was great, a more tolerant atmosphere developed, and the sharp division between Jewish and Gentile investment houses began to blur. In 1987 the top executive of the nation's fourth largest bank—the Manufacturers Trust Company—was Edward Miller, the son of Lithuanian immigrants. Miller had not gone to an Ivy League school, but had attended Brooklyn College in New York City. In 1983 another Jewish banker, Boris S. Berkovitch, became vice-chairman of a firm run by old-stock Americans, Morgan Guaranty Trust Company. A study completed in 1986 revealed that 58 percent of the nation's 4,350 senior executives just below the chief executive level were Protestant, but seven years before the figure had been 68 percent. The percentage of Jews had grown from 5.6 percent to 7.4 percent in the same period. An examination of Chicago's top business leaders revealed similar findings. Among those under age 40, non-Protestants made even larger gains. By the end of the twentieth century American Jews had succeeded in many fields. *Forbes* magazine estimated that over 30 percent of the richest Americans were Jews. During the presidency of Bill Clinton, two New York Jews served in politically sensitive positions that affected the nation's—and the world's—economic policies. One was Alan Greenspan, appointed as Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System by President Ronald Reagan in 1987; the other was Robert Rubin, chosen Secretary of the Treasury in 1994.

The career of Henry Kissinger in both academia and politics is indicative of the rise of American Jews. Kissinger excelled as a professor at Harvard, a university that for several decades limited the number of Jewish students it would admit. He later served as the first Jewish Secretary of State under Presidents Richard M. Nixon and Gerald R. Ford. The State Department itself was another outpost that had long had a reputation for anti-Semitism. As for elective offices, Jews increasingly won seats in the House of Representatives and in the Senate. At one time in the 1990s, ten senators were Jewish.

In academia Harold Shapiro earned a Ph.D. at Princeton and taught at the University of Michigan before turning his hand to administration. In 1987 he accepted the presidency of Princeton University, the first Jew to do so. Princeton had been the symbol of white Protestantism, and until the 1960s

had restricted its Jewish enrollment. Upon hearing of Shapiro's appointment, a member of the Hillel Foundation said, "This shows that Princeton has come a long way. If you had asked Jewish students at Princeton in the 1960s if they could picture Princeton with a Jewish president, I'm sure they would have said no." Harvard, Yale, Dartmouth, and Columbia universities also appointed men of Jewish heritage in the 1980s and 1990s. In 1945 the president of Dartmouth had publicly declared that his college was "a Christian college founded for the Christianization of its students." But less than four decades later a Jew became president of Dartmouth. College presidents were only one sign of Jewish presence in higher education; Jewish professors were prominent in the nation's leading colleges, universities, and professional schools.

Like all American women, Jewish women have had an uphill battle to achieve what they could in business, politics, the arts, and academia. Perhaps more than any other affected group, Jewish women benefited from the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Coming from the same socioeconomic backgrounds as their brothers and with similar educations through college, once the discriminatory barriers came down they were available and had the necessary skills to take advantage of equal opportunities in society. They entered law and medical schools in record numbers, and moved into the stock market, investment banking, and other endeavors from which they had been barred by restrictive academic and corporate gender policies. Ruth Bader Ginsberg became the first Jewish woman appointed to the Supreme Court in 1993; both Gerda Lerner and Linda Kerber were chosen to be president of the Organization of American Historians; and Bella Abzug became the first woman to win election to the House of Representatives on a women's rights platform in the early 1970s.

Other successful Jewish women could be found in the arts. Barbra Streisand, of Hollywood fame, came to prominence on the New York stage in 1963, the same year that Betty Friedan published her classic commentary on the expectations for middle-class women in *The Feminine Mystique*. Wendy Wasserstein, like Lillian Hellman in a previous era, won high praise for her plays and one of them, *The Heidi Chronicles*, received a Pulitzer Prize.

Although individual Jews can be found in almost every line of business and professional endeavor, as a group the eastern Europeans, their children, and their grandchildren have made their greatest impact in the clothing, entertainment, and intellectual worlds of American society. By the earliest years of the twentieth century the manufacture of ready-to-wear clothing was in the hands of Jewish owners; in 1950 more than 85 percent of American-made clothes were manufactured in Jewish-owned shops. In the late

1980s, Michael Dell started his now world-famous computer business, and in 1998 he became the richest man in Texas.

In the entertainment field both the theater and the movies provided avenues of mobility for Jewish actors, actresses, writers, tunesmiths, directors, and producers. Two Jews of Russian ancestry, David Sarnoff and William Paley, developed what one financial publication called "perhaps the world's two greatest broadcasting empires," the Radio Corporation of America (now part of General Electric) and the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS), respectively. In the intellectual community leading journals such as *Commentary*, since 1945, and *The New York Review of Books*, since the 1960s, have relied on Jewish sponsors and/or editors. Authors like Norman Mailer, Philip Roth, Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Meyer Levin have been among the major figures in American literature in the post-World War II era. And in academia prominent scholars like historian Oscar Handlin, social scientist Seymour Martin Lipset, and economist and Nobel Prize winner Milton Friedman won international recognition. Artist Ben Shahn, discoverer of the polio vaccine Jonas Salk, filmmakers Stanley Kubrick and Steven Spielberg, violinist Yehudi Menuhin, conductor and composer Leonard Bernstein, and former Supreme Court Justice and ambassador to the United Nations Arthur Goldberg are only a few of the Jews of eastern European descent who have distinguished themselves in American society. Not all Jews are as prominent and accomplished as the aforementioned group, but it is worth noting that no twentieth-century European minority has risen as fast, socially and economically, as have the descendants of Jews who arrived from eastern Europe at the turn of the century.

The remarkable success of Jews was undoubtedly the consequence of hard work, skill, and an arduous struggle in an expanding economy. Their traditional respect for learning facilitated advancement because education was an important vehicle for social mobility. To what extent American public schools really served immigrants is a subject of debate and in need of study, but in the case of Jewish immigrants they were of great advantage. Parents pushed their children to achieve, and they themselves, eager for an education, attended public evening schools. As journalist Abraham Cahan, chronicler of the Lower East Side of New York City, put it, "The ghetto rang with a clamor for knowledge."

In addition to their respect for education, Jews brought with them urban living experiences and skills that could be used in commercial and industrial America. Though Jews faced tensions and problems common to all immigrant groups, their families were relatively stable, providing a sense of security as well as a springboard for their children. The older German-Jewish community, another extraordinarily accomplished group, with its many welfare

agencies, was sometimes suspicious of and hostile to the greenhorns from eastern Europe with their different dress, language, and ideas; but on the whole was a source of strength to newcomers. Inadvertently, anti-Semitism united and strengthened the entire Jewish community and prompted many of the more successful to help their less fortunate kin.

Also to be reckoned with in analyzing Jewish immigrants' success are the intangibles, such as the culture of the group, which cannot be precisely measured. Certainly, there was a clash between Protestantism and Judaism, but in many ways there was agreement over key values. Jews found it easier than did some others to accept the American stress upon individual achievement and mobility. Differences over religion did not lead to the rejection of these broader American values. On the contrary, more than one analyst has observed how readily Jewish Americans accepted the Protestant ethic of hard work and material accomplishment.

Perhaps the reasons for Jewish emigration also had something to do with their success in the United States. Like so many others, they came in search of a better life, but unlike many others, they could not go back to the Old World. The pogroms that had driven them away in the early part of the twentieth century and the Holocaust of the 1940s dimmed most hopes of returning. Because of religious persecution in Europe, Jews came with a determination to make America truly the Promised Land.

As we have seen, Italians had a somewhat different experience. They were probably poorer than the Jews and, coming from a rural background, were unfamiliar with city life. A large number were interested only in collecting a bit of cash and then returning to Italy. For many Italians success meant bringing something home, not achieving status in the United States. Often they moved from job to job and finally back to Italy. Consequently, they did not experience the rapid social mobility that Jews did, but they gradually prospered nonetheless.

Although most Italians lived in cities, a few succeeded on the land. On both the East and West Coasts Italians became skillful truck farmers and supplied growing urban areas with food. The di Giorgio orchards eventually covered 40,000 acres in California. More famous in that state were the wineries, like Italian-Swiss Colony and Gallo Brothers. In 1971 the Gallo Winery had revenues of a quarter of a billion dollars. Along with German wines, Italian American wines became the best known in American stores. A few Italians also became successful in the South, raising cotton, sugar cane, and other crops.

Like all other ethnic groups, Italians have their notable success stories. Among northern Italians the career of Amadeo P. Giannini, founder of the Bank of America, is outstanding. Giannini began as a banker for immigrants

but expanded his operations in the early twentieth century. When the San Francisco earthquake struck in 1906, he rescued his bank's gold, hidden in a produce wagon, and was quickly ready to open for business again. Expanding from San Francisco's North Beach Italian colony, he branched out and made his bank a major factor in the state's growing economy. He saw the future in branch banking and expanded from real estate to industrial financing. When he retired in 1945, Bank of America had become the largest private bank in the world, with $5.5 billion in deposits and over 3 million depositors.

Other Italians ran groceries and opened restaurants. Some were importers of products such as olive oil, macaroni, and ravioli; others were producers of ethnic goods in demand by Italian Americans and later by other Americans as well. One such family ethnic enterprise was begun by Joseph Pellegrino. As a boy he arrived in America from Sicily with $13. After shining shoes and buying and selling cooking oils for a living, he went into the pasta business. He eventually took over the Prince Company and made it the largest pasta maker in America, employing 1,000 people in the 1980s.

For most, however, success came gradually and not spectacularly. Beginning as garment workers in New York City, day laborers or miners in Pennsylvania, or in other unskilled or semiskilled jobs, Italian Americans found the path upward difficult. Although some individuals made giant leaps, the second generation improved itself over the first modestly, becoming construction workers and foremen, small businessmen, and lesser white-collar workers rather than unskilled laborers, factory workers, and miners. After World War II the third generation made greater progress. As job opportunities expanded with the decline of prejudice, some Italian Americans even found new chances in large businesses, finance, and the professions. In the early 1970s the presidents of Ford Motor Company and Chrysler Corporation were John Riccardo and Lee A. Iacocca, both of Italian descent. When Riccardo left the failing Chrysler Corporation, Iacocca replaced him to have a try at putting the company on its feet. His dynamic leadership and the revival of Chrysler made Iacocca something of a folk hero and made his autobiography, *Iacocca*, a best-seller in the mid-1980s.

The rise of these two men in business was both symbolic and representative of the upward mobility of ethnic Americans into the nation's business elite. As banks and corporations began to hire Jews, they hired men and women of Italian, Hungarian, and other ancestries as well. In 1985 Anthony P. Terracciano, the grandson of Italian immigrants, became vice-chairman of New York City's Chase Manhattan Bank, the same position that Peter C. Palmieri had obtained at Irving Trust Company the year before.

It is not difficult to explain the reasons these opportunities became available in the formerly restricted field of investment banking. A *New York*

Times article in June 1986 pinpointed the need for change: "Deregulation has forced large commercial banks to engage in new activities that require skilled, aggressive executives. To fill the posts, the banks are tossing aside old barriers and converting their upper managements increasingly into meritocracies. As Barry M. Allen, first vice-president of the Bank of Boston, put it: 'We can't afford to keep out any talented person.' " Therefore old school ties, family connections, and a "gentleman's C" in college grades were less important factors in the banking world. And ethnic names, which had once been the kiss of death, became irrelevant except when policies concerning affirmative action were involved.

Changed values after the end of World War II had incredible ramifications. Until 1945 most Italian Americans who attended college were of northern Italian descent. Even so, the general education level of Italian Americans was lower than the average for other whites. In the 1950s, for instance, fewer than 5 percent of native-born Italian Americans were completing college, a figure well below the national average. Yet Italians began to catch up in college attendance after 1960. For those with education, prestige jobs were open and with them the possibility of higher incomes. In general, Italian Americans were achieving middle-class status, not the equal of Jews or even the Irish, but ahead of recent immigrant groups like the Puerto Ricans (who are of course American citizens by birth) and Mexicans. Italian incomes were above the national median according to the 1990 census, and as they increasingly attended college and professional schools they found employment in the nation's law firms, as physicians, and in universities. In the 1990s L. Jay Oliva became the first Italian American to be appointed president of New York University, succeeding John Brademus, of Greek ancestry, who had held that position in the 1980s.

Settling in large numbers in urban areas and being Catholic opened other possibilities to Italians for broader participation and achievement, in particular with regard to the Catholic Church and politics. However, the Irish controlled the Church and played a large role in urban politics. Not until after World War II did Italian Americans begin to break into the hierarchy of American Catholicism. In 1967 the grandson of an Italian immigrant became bishop of the diocese embracing Mississippi, and a year later another Italian American became bishop of Brooklyn, the largest diocese in the United States. Although Italians were moving up in the Church by the 1990s, they were still underrepresented in the hierarchy.

Once Italians began to register and vote in American elections, they began to rise politically. But in this area too their move upward was slow. Before World War II the most successful Italian American politician was congressman and later mayor of New York Fiorello La Guardia. La Guardia was some-

thing of an anomaly. He was Protestant, not Catholic; he had a Jewish mother; and he could speak several languages. He also tried to appeal to many groups, not merely to Italian Americans. San Francisco with its large Italian population also had an Italian mayor in the 1930s, but not until after the war did Italian Americans make significant political breakthroughs. In 1946 in Rhode Island, John O. Pastore became the first man of Italian background to be elected governor of a state. Rhode Island later sent Pastore to the U.S. Senate, the first Italian American elected to the upper house of Congress. Increasingly, in the 1950s and 1960s Italians were elected to important political offices as congressmen, state legislators, and mayors of big cities. In the 1970s Connecticut voters twice elected Ella Grasso governor of the state; this was the highest political office ever held by an Italian American woman. In 1982 in neighboring New York, Mario Cuomo became the first Italian American to be elected governor of the Empire State, and he was reelected twice. He was succeeded as governor by George Pataki, of Hungarian ancestry. Italians remained active and visible in the state, however. Alphonse D'Amato was one of the two U.S. Senators from New York, serving his state in the 1980s and 1990s; in 1984 New York Congresswoman Geraldine Ferraro was both the first woman and the first person of Italian ancestry chosen to run for Vice-President of the United States on the Democratic ticket. Another Italian American, Rudolph Giuliani, won his second term as mayor of New York in 1997.

For a long time Italians had received negative publicity because some of them had participated in organized criminal activities. In the 1950s Senator Estes Kefauver of Tennessee conducted hearings about crime in America and paraded Italian American gangsters before his Senate committee and a national television audience. Kefauver said that the Mafia, controlled by Italian Americans and Italians in Italy, was "the shadowy international organization that lurks behind much of organized criminal activity." The charge that Italians in America were involved with the Mafia was not new. As early as 1891 the New York *Tribune* had insisted that "in large cities throughout the country, Italians of criminal antecedents and propensities are more or less closely affiliated for the purpose of requiring injuries and gratifying animosities by secret vengeances. These organizations in common speech and belief are connected with the *Mafia*, and that designation fairly indicates their character and motives. Through their agency the most infernal crimes have been committed and have gone unpunished."

Certainly some Italian Americans have been involved in organized crime. As Humbert Nelli, historian of Italians in Chicago, put it:

> Crime, one means of economic advancement independent of education, social background or political connections, provided for all classes of

> Italians opportunities for quick and substantial monetary gain and sometimes for social and political advancement as well. Within the colony bankers and padroni, blackhanders and other lawbreakers all realized small but important profits by swindling or terrorizing compatriots. The "syndicate," a business operation reaping vast profits from the American community, offered almost limitless opportunities for promotion within its hierarchy. Thus for some, crime offered means of advancement within the ethnic community and for others, opportunities outside it.

How many or what percentage of Italians and their children engaged in such work is impossible to determine. Popular accounts and later stereotypes about the Black Hand, the Mafia, and members of *La Cosa Nostra* emphasized unduly this type of activity among Italians and Italian Americans.

However, Italian Americans have not monopolized organized crime. Historians and sociologists remind us that various other ethnic groups have been associated with criminal activity. In the nineteenth century the Irish were notorious in New York City's Five Points district, and crime has always been a part of ghetto life in this country; as the ethnic occupants of the slums change, so do the names on the police arrest lists. One study of the top underworld figures in Chicago in 1930 estimated that 30 percent were of Italian background, 29 percent of Irish background, and 20 percent of Jewish background. While Al Capone was famous in the Chicago rackets of the 1920s, men like Arnold Rothstein and Meyer Lansky were prominent in New York City.

It should also be kept in mind the extent to which criminal activities were an avenue of social mobility. In previous eras, old-stock Americans have held powerful positions in American industry, banking, insurance, and commerce. With few exceptions they have always been loath to allow immigrants or their children opportunities for advancement to the middle and upper levels of management. Crime, like entertainment and sports, was a way out of the ghetto and a means of achieving material success. Reluctantly, some chose it; for others the choice was not so reluctant.

Another point that must be made is that while certain activities are legally considered crimes, not everyone in the country regards them as wrong. Swedes and some pietistic Protestant immigrants may have shared the old-stock white Protestant aversion to gambling and drinking, but others did not think it so terrible to gamble or to supply liquor to thirsty throats during Prohibition. Besides, it was the so-called respectable citizens' patronage of illegal liquor suppliers that made Prohibition a failure. President Warren G. Harding drank during his tenure in the White House, and it was rumored that he and his cronies supported private bootleggers. As Chicago gangster

Al Capone asked in the 1920s: "What's Al Capone done, then? He supplied a legitimate demand. Some call it bootlegging. Some call it racketeering. I call it a business. They say I violate the prohibition law. Who doesn't?"

If crime has been a path upward for older immigrants, there is evidence that more recent migrants to the city will follow a similar pattern as their predecessors move into more respectable occupations. Recent research has indicated that African Americans, Russians, Colombians, and Jamaicans were already moving to take over organized crime as other minorities had done before them. Or as one Italian American said, "I guess it's their turn now."

Even though only a few Italian Americans have been associated with crime, they have left a lasting impression. The revelations of the Kefauver committee and best-selling books and movies like *The Godfather* have produced a sense of shame and indignation at the stereotype of the Italian criminal. In 1972 Frank Sinatra complained in *The New York Times* that "there is a form of bigotry abroad in this land which allows otherwise decent people . . . to believe the most scurrilous tales if they are connected to an Italian-American name."

The experiences and paths of mobility of other ethnic groups that were part of the great surge from southern and eastern Europe at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries have varied from those of the Italians, and to a considerable extent from those of one another. Greeks were apt to be entrepreneurs—restauranteurs, theater owners, food processors—or professionals, such as doctors, lawyers, and teachers. The career of Alexander Pantages was typical of wealthy ethnic minorities. He came from a middle-class background but made his fortune in the entertainment world. After emigrating to the United States and working at odd jobs, he made money in gold in the Yukon and then made a fortune in the movie-house business, owning at one time a chain of eighty theaters. The Skouras brothers also owned a large number of movie houses, and Spyros Skouras became president of a major Hollywood organization, Twentieth Century-Fox. Although the careers of Pantages and the Skourases were exceptional, most Greek Americans were ensconced in the upper middle class by the 1980s.

Slavic peoples also began largely as unskilled workers in industrial America, but the second and third generations did not improve their positions as fast as some others of European descent. The working-class districts of American cities were often centers of Polish, Hungarian, and Russian life, of neat and well-kept houses, not prosperous but substantial. Like the Irish before them, the Slavs prized home ownership and invested their savings in their homes and neighborhoods. Disproportionately members of the working

class, their offspring were mainly trade unionists and blue-collar workers. A survey of Slavs in Connecticut in the 1960s showed, for example, that 40 percent belonged to unions. Slavic Americans generally had incomes lower than those of the Irish or Jews or white Protestants, and their educational levels were also low. They had often found schools—important for mobility—inhospitable, and many dropped out before completing high school.

Although just reaching the middle-income level in the 1950s and 1960s, many Slavs were nonetheless continuing their educations, moving up the economic ladder, and finding better jobs. One scholar has concluded that throughout the 1920s and 1930s college attendance for Polish American men increased but lagged considerably behind the national norm. By the 1950s, he argues, Polish American males were just as likely to attend college as other white males, and a decade later Polish American women reached the national average for white women. Among Slovaks, Slovenes, and Croatians, the pace was just a bit slower than that of Poles.

These upward trends were confirmed by a study the United States Commission on Civil Rights published in 1986. From census and other data the commission found that Americans of southern and eastern European descent had achieved educational and earning parity with other whites of European background, meaning Germans, British, Irish, and Scandinavians. The commission noted that when millions from southern and eastern Europe arrived after 1880, they generally had about four fewer years of schooling than other white Americans and earned considerably less in their unskilled jobs. The third generation coming of age in post-World War II America had caught up with and even surpassed other whites. They had better jobs than their immigrant ancestors, earned more, and were well educated. The study found both men and women from southern and eastern Europe to have equaled their white counterparts from other areas of Europe.

Of course the success of Jews, whose ancestors hailed from Poland, Russia, and Rumania and who earned relatively high incomes and were quite well educated, would in part explain the results of the study, but even non-Jewish descendants of immigrants from eastern Europe did well. At the bottom of the income scale, the commission discovered proportionately fewer people of southern and eastern European descent living below the poverty line. The commission concluded:

> The results reveal that along virtually every dimension, Americans of southern and eastern European ancestry have generally succeeded as well or better than other Americans. This does not imply that many individuals of eastern or southern European heritage have not suffered from prejudice; it only suggests that for the groups as a whole, there is

> no overt indication of current and widespread discrimination against them in the labor market—that is, the excellence of group-specific differences that cannot be explained by standard economic variables such as those accounted for in this report.

However, this assessment does not mean that the children and grandchildren of southern and eastern European immigrants were uniformly successful. Sometimes children did not do as well as their parents. Many second-generation Jewish businessmen were dismayed that their professionally trained children earned less money than they did. Moreover, in all groups there were poor people. Finally, it is important to keep in mind that the top positions in American society did not open up for many minority group members until the 1970s, and most key posts in leading law firms, businesses, and banks are still filled by old-stock Americans. The trend toward a more open executive suite was evident, but only in recent decades have members of most minority groups been hired solely on the basis of talent and ability.

Just as Irish, Germans, and, later, Italians did, the descendants of Slavs, Greeks, and other eastern Europeans became active in political affairs. In the early 1930s Anton Cermak became the first Czech mayor of Chicago, but most breakthroughs occurred later. Like so many other immigrants, Czechs were slow to become involved in politics; but the second and third generations began to assert themselves more effectively. In 1958 the Polish American press reported that thirteen Americans of Polish background had been elected to Congress, and Poles were important politically in cities like Chicago, Cleveland, Milwaukee, and Buffalo. In 1968 Edmund Muskie of Maine became the first American of Polish extraction to run for vice-president, the same year that Spiro T. Agnew, governor of Maryland and the first politically prominent Greek American, was elected to that office. Six years later voters of Massachusetts chose a Greek American, Michael S. Dukakis, as governor. In 1986 he won his third term by the biggest margin of any Massachusetts governor in the twentieth century. After that victory, Dukakis, who speaks Greek, Spanish, and Korean in addition to his native tongue, English, ran unsuccessfully against George Bush for the presidency in 1988. Besides Dukakis, the other most prominent Greek American political leader in the 1980s was U.S. Senator Paul Sarbanes of Maryland. In 1986, voters of that same state sent Barbara Mikulski, a Polish American woman, to the Senate. President Jimmy Carter also elevated Polish Americans to high posts. He chose Muskie for Secretary of State and Zbigniew Brzezinski for National Security Adviser.

While the descendants of southern and eastern European immigrants were

making their marks both economically and politically, so were the descendants of the one Asian group—Japanese Americans—that had come during the same period as the eastern Europeans. Yet of the immigrants arriving in large numbers between 1880 and 1920, no other group experienced such intense prejudice as these Asians. Moreover, only the Japanese had to endure the shock of being placed in virtual concentration camps during World War II. Those interned on the West Coast lost nearly everything they owned, including their stakes in agricultural and small businesses. Beginning from scratch after the war, they rapidly improved their position. The key to much of their success was education. By 1950 the Japanese had a higher educational level than whites, with a considerable segment going to college. In the 1990s nearly 90 percent of third-generation Japanese Americans were attending some college or university, double the national rate and well above the 58 percent figure for second-generation Japanese Americans. Their attainments, combined with lessening prejudice, led to better jobs and higher incomes. Japanese Americans as a group tend to concentrate in prestige white-collar positions with higher than average incomes.

Many examples can be cited of the changing fortunes of Japanese Americans. S. Stephen Nakashima was interned with his family during World War II. He graduated from Berkeley in 1948 but could not find a job as an accountant; companies at that time refused to hire Japanese Americans. He went to Berkeley's Boalt Hall School of Law and upon graduation built a successful law practice. In 1989 Governor George Deukmejian (the first Armenian to become governor of an American state) appointed him to the California Board of Regents supervising public higher education, where he was joined by another Asian, Chinese American David Lee. Now successful, Nakashima found himself opposing the university's affirmative action program, saying that it discriminated against whites and Asians.

Even political life beckoned after the war for Japanese Americans. The *Issei* (the first generation) were ineligible for citizenship and hence excluded from politics. But members of the native-born second generation (*Nisei*), who were automatically citizens, grew into a potent political force. Sharp increases in the number of registered voters were translated into electoral victories. In 1968 both members of the House of Representatives from Hawaii as well as Democratic Senator Daniel Inouye were of Japanese ancestry. By 1980 another Japanese American, Spark Matsunaga, had joined Inouye in the Senate. Japanese Americans were also well represented in the Hawaiian legislature, the civil service, and business organizations. California, the state that had fostered so much hostility toward Japanese immigrants and their children, in 1976 elected S.I. Hayakawa, a Japanese American, to the U.S. Senate.

In 1997, the new Congress included seven people of Asian and Pacific Is-

land ethnicity. Japanese Americans were the most prominent, but unlike other Asian groups they were predominately American born and hence U.S. citizens. As noted earlier in the case of the Chinese, it took time for newcomers to become assimilated and familiar with American politics. In the 1990s Asians formed new groups such as the Asian Pacific Americans for a New Los Angeles and the Asian Pacific Planning Council to push for their own agenda. As they began to enter politics, more Asians were elected to office. The first Korean American elected was Jay Kim, who won a seat in the House of Representatives in 1992 from California's wealthy Orange County. Kim, a conservative Republican, represented the interests of his affluent European American constituents.

As noted, many Chinese Americans were beginning to make their marks, as were Vietnamese, Asian Indians, Koreans, and Filipinos. In fact, the striking accomplishments of Asians were among the highlights of America's postwar ethnic experience. Newspapers, magazines, and television and radio stations carried features in the 1980s such as "What Sends Asians to the Head of the Class?"; "A Look at Success of Young Asians"; "Asians: The Model Minority"; or "The Triumph of Asian Americans."

Asian Americans scored well on academic tests and were well represented in the nation's top schools. More than one professor was known to remark that the way to increase the nation's Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores in math was to increase Asian immigration. In 1986, Asian Americans made up about 2 percent of the nation's population but accounted for 19 percent of Massachusetts Institute of Technology's undergraduates and 8 percent of Harvard's undergraduates. In the top music schools in the 1990s they were also disproportionately represented in the enrollment figures. "We have twenty-four Kims alone. It's incredible," reported Osegnam Fuschi of the admissions department of the Juilliard School of Music. Yehudi Menuhin, the celebrated violinist, called Asians "the Jews of the future," and predicted their achievements would equal those of eastern European Jewish descendants such as Jascha Heifetz, Vladimir Horowitz, and Arthur Rubinstein, among other great musicians.

Much evidence existed to support the impression that Asian Americans and new Asian immigrants, men as well as women, were prospering. Each year after 1980 the list of winners of the annual Westinghouse Science Talent Search competition contained a disproportionate number of Asian names. In 1987 David Kuo of New York City became the third member of his remarkable family to be named a Westinghouse Science Talent Search winner. The 1993 list of forty finalists included George Lee and Constance Chan from California; H Van Nguyen from Florida; Ravi Shanker Kamath from Kansas; Ken Sandor Wang from Maryland; Youngju Ryu, Erwin Lin, and

Willis Huang from New York; and Mahesh Kalyana Mahjanthappa from Colorado. Academic achievements resulted in improved incomes and better jobs. Asians generally were better educated than other Americans, and were more apt to be professionals; thus they earned more money, a fact revealed by the 1990 census which reported that median incomes for Japanese, Chinese, and Asian Indian families were above those of white families, and Koreans were about at the same level as the median. Moreover, a smaller proportion of Asians lived below the government's poverty line.

Asian Americans still confronted discrimination, and violence was not unknown in the 1990s. The Civil Rights Commission reported a rise in incidents of violence after 1980. For women there was also resistance from their own families and communities to their achieving success outside of the family. To be sure, CBS's Connie Chung was highly visible, as were important scholars such as Sucheng Chan. Gay Wong, a professor of education at California State University at Los Angeles, remarked in 1994, "You see families here now in the United States with American-born children, and the sons are still the inheritors of the property. You see in-laws baby-sitting the son's children, not the daughter's children." Another professor added, "Even though they may not be taught in a conscious way, the socialization we undergo is such that we might feel guilty or ashamed if we don't fulfill those roles."

While Asian success was often praised it is important to remember that whites with similar educations did better financially than Asians, and that the nation's Chinatowns housed many working-class and poor Chinese. While individual success stories can be found among Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Laotians, many of their families struggled to make ends meet. Such class and ethnic divisions made it clear that Asian Americans constituted many groups with diverse cultures, education, and incomes.

Asians did not stand out in athletics, but many men from other ethnic groups did. Athletics, in fact, might be compared to entertainment as one of the great levelers of American society for men. For women, achievement came only in tennis and golf until the 1990s when other professional sports, such as basketball, began to open. Sports have therefore been a way for many members of ethnic groups to escape working-class lives. Famed nineteenth-century boxers like John L. Sullivan and James Corbett were Irish, and Notre Dame's great football team of the 1930s, coached by Knute Rockne, was known as the fighting Irish. Gertrude Ederle, the first woman to swim the English Channel, was of German descent. In baseball other Germans found fame and sometimes fortune. Lou Gehrig, Honus Wagner, Rube Wadell, and the greatest German American player of all, Babe Ruth, born George Herman Erhardt in Baltimore, were idols in their day. Irish, English, and Ger-

mans dominated baseball until the 1920s, when Polish and Italian players began to rise. The DiMaggio brothers were the most famous of the Italian baseball players. Stan Musial, Ed Lopat, and Ted Kluszewski were of Polish ancestry. In our own day, African Americans and Hispanics are finding the world of professional athletics one arena in which they can compete and be judged strictly on the basis of their talents and accomplishments.

Because baseball is popular in the Caribbean and throughout Latin America, it is no surprise that many Latinos play after coming to the United States. Dominican Juan Marichal was a star pitcher for a number of years, and his countryman Manny Ramirez stood out for Cleveland in the late 1990s. Another Hispanic, Puerto Rican Orlando Cepeda, won the National League's most valuable player award in 1967. In 1996, Texas Ranger Juan Gonzalez won the American League's most valuable player award. Then in 1997 the Boston Red Sox signed Pedro Martinez to a $75 million, multiyear contract, which made him the highest-paid player in baseball—until Mike Piazza of the New York Mets dethroned him in 1998 by putting his signature on a contract worth $90 million. By the end of the decade Hispanics constituted approximately 20 percent of major league rosters, even though they were only 10 percent of the population. Players came from Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Columbia, Venezuela, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic. In the 1990s Joe Cubas aided Cuban ballplayers in defecting from Castro's communist state. He managed to negotiate a lucrative contract for Livan Hernandez of the Florida Marlins in 1996, and Hernandez received the most valuable player award for his performance in the 1997 World Series.

Latin Americans also entered other sports. Boxing was a big attraction, and on occasion some played football. *Hispanic* magazine counted fourteen Latinos in the National Football League in 1997. Perhaps the most successful was Daniel Villanueva, a field goal kicker for the Dallas Cowboys and Los Angeles Rams. After his retirement, he became general manager of KMEX, a Spanish-language TV station in Los Angeles. He expanded his community and business interests and was reportedly the second wealthiest Mexican American, with a net worth of $86 million. Only Texas oilman Antonio R. Sanchez, Jr., was reportedly worth more.

Of course achievement in athletics was related to the background of the players. Ice hockey, a cold-weather sport, was not particularly well known in Latin America or among large numbers of Mexican Americans. Thus people of Canadian or Scandinavian background were more apt to be hockey players, just as blacks have excelled in basketball and football due to greater opportunities to participate in those sports.

Obviously, most of the descendants of immigrants could not be outstanding athletes and had to take the more usual paths—white-collar and profes-

sional positions—to middle-class security. Better jobs provided higher incomes and a route out of the ghettoes. At first the move was to better neighborhoods in the city, but since the end of World War II the trek has been increasingly to the suburbs. In New York City in the late 1920s fewer than 10 percent of Jews still lived on the famed Lower East Side. The completion of the subways stimulated the exodus to the upper reaches of Manhattan and the Bronx and across the East River into Brooklyn and Queens. In Chicago the original Italian districts declined in the 1920s. The subsequent depression and post-World War II housing shortage curtailed movement, but the affluence of the 1950s rejuvenated it. The growth of suburbia in the 1950s and 1960s can be attributed largely to the exodus from the city of the children and grandchildren of the Irish, Italians, Poles, Jews, and Scandinavians who shared in the nation's growing prosperity. So great was the trend that by 1970 the census showed more people, overwhelmingly white, living in suburban America than in central cities. In many cases the pattern of movement went far beyond neighboring greenbelts. Sunshine and job opportunities drew people to the South and the West. Florida and California in particular more than doubled their populations in the decades after World War II, and the growth in job opportunities in regional centers such as Washington, D.C., and Houston, Texas also resulted in mushrooming populations. California and Texas, aided by immigration, are now the most populous states in the nation.

However, old ethnic neighborhoods did not disappear completely. Slavs and Italians, less affluent and strongly attached to their homes and old family neighborhoods, were the last to leave, and many simply remained where they were. As a result there are still ethnic enclaves of Italians in New York City and Newark, New Jersey, and Slavic neighborhoods in Philadelphia, Detroit, Milwaukee, Cleveland, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, and Buffalo. Moreover, refugee arrivals since 1945 have strengthened some of the old ethnic neighborhoods. Just as the descendants of the original Chinese were moving out of the Chinatowns in America, renewed immigration in the 1980s and 1990s once again swelled the neighborhoods' populations. Similarly, refugee Hasidic Jews reinforced the Jewish population of Brooklyn when they settled in the Williamsburg, Crown Heights, and Borough Park sections.

Yet the general trend was clear. The older and more prosperous immigrants' descendants measured their success by their movement. Many of the recent Asian immigrants did likewise. They too headed for the suburbs to live in more substantial housing and to send their children to better schools. In the process they left behind less affluent blacks, Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and other Latin Americans. This was particularly noticeable in major metropolises. New York City, the symbol of the nation's ethnic diversity and the port of entry for so many newcomers, was becoming less

Irish, Jewish, and Italian and more black, Asian, and Hispanic. The borough of Queens, formerly a step up for the second and third generations, now houses immigrant colonies of Maltese, Greeks, Croatians, West Indians, Armenians, Koreans, Thais, Vietnamese, Cambodians, Laotians, Filipinos, and Japanese.

Two major differences between most of these more recent settlers and immigrants of earlier generations are that the newer arrivals are generally better educated and of a higher social status than turn-of-the-century immigrants, and their presence is not resented as much as was their predecessors'. A New York City population analyst observed in the summer of 1980: "The Asians are generally perceived by their neighbors as a stabilizing influence." They open stores, encourage their children in school, and apparently have the same goals and values as middle-class Americans.

However, Hispanics are not always viewed so favorably. Despite their achievements in sports, the new Latinos' chances of climbing the ladder of success have been limited. As noted, the Cubans have done much better than Mexicans and Central Americans. For other post-1945 immigrants, evidence is already mounting of a pattern of mobility. Scholarly studies show that those who arrived in the 1940s and 1950s are making more money than many native-born Americans of similar characteristics.

It is too soon to chart the progress of Asians and peoples from the Caribbean, Middle East, and Africa arriving in the post-1965 waves, yet some evidence is available. Many take jobs initially in lines of work below their training and find an inadequate knowledge of English to be a barrier. Professionals have at times encountered difficulties in obtaining licenses to practice their skills. Nevertheless, some are already demonstrating an entrepreneurial spirit, and with more time in the United States they move ahead. As one journalist put it in 1997, "Immigrant families are the building blocks. . . . They repopulate desolate communities. . . . Immigrant families save better than American-born families do, educate their children better and raise their living standards faster than the native born." While these observations hide some failures and the many differences among immigrants, they point to the continuing belief that America is the land of opportunity.