

# Arrival and Settlement in a New Place

by Giles R. Wright



NEW JERSEY HISTORICAL COMMISSION, DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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Thomas H. Kean, Governor  
Thomas H. Burgio, Secretary of State

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HOWARD L. GREEN, GENERAL EDITOR

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This series is based on the Multi-Ethnic Oral History Collection of the New Jersey Historical Commission, Department of State. The collection contains over fifteen hundred life histories of New Jerseyans of varied ethnic backgrounds, tape-recorded by students at several New Jersey colleges. For more information about this collection please contact the Ethnic History Project at the Commission.

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## INTRODUCTION

There are two basic, somewhat contradictory schools of thought about the people of the United States of America. In one view, Americans share essentially the same culture and traditions. In the other, they are divided by their varied backgrounds.

These views are often represented by figures of speech. Those who hold the first view may use the image of a melting pot — a vessel in which separate metals or other substances are gradually blended into one. In this view America dissolves immigrant cultures to form a new mixture.

A prosperous French immigrant farmer, Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, expressed this idea more than two hundred years ago. He wrote that the American abandons his "ancient prejudices and manners" and takes new ones "from the new mode of life he has embraced." In America, he felt, "individuals of all nations are melted into a new race."

Proponents of the second view compare American society to a salad bowl or a hearty stew. The separate ingredients, they say, do not blend together and lose their special characteristics; instead, the flavors and textures of all the ingredients complement each other to make a whole which is better than the sum of the parts.

In the same way, these thinkers argue, Americans keep elements of their original cultures alive for many generations. These thinkers, often called "cultural pluralists," believe many cultures coexist in our nation.

Both metaphors — the melting pot and the salad bowl — recognize that ethnic diversity has been fundamental in the growth of the United States. Since the seventeenth century our history has been the story of many cultures interacting. The meeting and mixing of traditions, values, and expectations from all over the world give United States history its special complexity.

New Jersey, with more than a hundred ethnic groups, is an excellent

example. Few states have so many cultural backgrounds within their boundaries. The booklet you are about to read contains excerpts from the tape-recorded life histories of New Jerseyans from many of these groups.

The tapes were made by college students, most of them just a few years older than you, during the school year 1979-80. The people they interviewed, who so readily told the stories of their travels, careers, homes and families, live in your towns and cities. They could be your neighbors, friends or relatives. Remember this as you read. This booklet is based on interviews conducted by students like you with people like many of your acquaintances.

Some of your neighbors speak languages other than English. Others use English with rich, thick accents that may be hard to understand. Often they seem detached from the affairs of community or neighborhood that interest you. But if you knew them better you would probably find that they are involved in communities of their own, communities of people who share ethnicity, who belong to the same ethnic groups.

But what is an ethnic group?

Generally, it is a collection of people who share a culture — people with the same race, religion, nationality, language, history, values, or customs. Different combinations of these elements determine ethnic identity for different groups.

For example, race is the main thing that defines American blacks as an ethnic group. The Chinese and Japanese, however, are of the same race but different ethnicities. Religion gathers Jews of many nationalities into a single ethnic group, but national origin and other characteristics divide Christians and Muslims into many.

Language and other cultural elements separate the Flemings ethnically from the Walloons, even though they share Belgian nationality. But the English, the Irish and the Scots, who all speak the same language, belong to different ethnic groups.

Ethnicity is an elusive concept. But it is one of the keys to United States history. This booklet will bring you closer to understanding it.

In presenting voices from New Jersey's ethnic groups great care has been taken to let them speak clearly. Spoken language must be edited to make it readable. Sometimes the prose has been changed substantially, but every passage accurately reflects the intention, meaning and even verbal style of the speaker.

We have several aims for this series. Oral history — that is, the tape-recording of people's recollections — captures the past in a special way. We hope these booklets show that all people, in the way they conduct

their lives, both make history and are made by it. We hope the words of people from so many cultural backgrounds will help you understand your own ethnic background. And we hope to make you more perceptive about the ethnic heritage of others.

## Arrival and Settlement in a New Place

I left with one intention in mind. As soon as I got here and started making a few dollars I was going to bring other members of the family. . . . So what should I do first? The twenty-five dollars — I had not touched it because all I had to do was show that I had it — I sent it right back to my Aunt Esther. Then next, should I repay Esther [the rest of what I owed her] or should I bring my sister Mollie over? I decided to send for Mollie first and the two of us together could see what to do.

At that time there were Jewish peddlers\* who would sell you a steamship ticket on the installment plan, for a half a dollar a week or even a quarter a week. As long as someone vouched for you, that you would pay your debts, you could buy a lot of things. Many many people, immigrants, bought their things this way, on credit.

So this was my plan. When Mollie came she could sew. She would make a few dollars a week and I would make a few dollars a week; together we could pay Aunt Esther off and then start bringing the rest of the family here. But do you know what happened? The big war broke out before we could turn around. We came here in August, 1913, and in August, 1914, a year later, the war broke out. It cut off everything from Europe.

When I started to make a little money I was living as a boarder, but I got tired of it. You know, the woman has three rooms on Essex Street or some other little street downtown and she would keep two or three people. Besides sleeping, she would feed them and do their laundry. She would put up single beds and sofas and all that in three rooms, including the kitchen. This is the way I lived, and it was not easy. Not that we were used to much better; at least I was not, and I didn't mind it so much. But the bugs, the bedbugs would eat you alive. From one

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\*See glossary

place to another you moved figuring here is going to be better; but it was not. . . . Maybe the price was even a little higher, so even if you made an extra two dollars a week you paid it out in rent.

People would say to me, "Aren't you anxious to go back to the town where you were born?" And I would answer, "I don't want any part of it. I don't even want to remember it." It was one place in my life that I did not care to discuss. I did not like it and I was not the only one. There were many people like me.

—Max Teicher

*The experience of arriving and settling is common to all who ever uproot themselves to find a new home. Sometimes their expectations are met, sometimes not. Still, they enter a new environment with new customs and, often, a new language. In this country stories about first experiences in new places are common.*

*The United States is truly, as the late John F. Kennedy said, a "nation of immigrants." All of its citizens have immigrated here or are descended from others who have. The forefathers of the native Americans, most scholars believe, crossed the Bering Strait from Asia to North America in a series of migrations between 40,000 and 11,000 B.C. While blacks were forced to come to North America as slaves, their twentieth-century exodus\* from the South to the North is similar to the experience of emigrants from foreign lands.*

The geographical mobility characteristic of every ethnic group in this nation explains why memories of reaching and settling in new residences are so plentiful. Also, as this booklet shows, such memories reveal that first impressions, wherever the migrant came from and whatever followed, were strong and varied.

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS

*Mildred Arnold, an Afro-American, was ten when she came to Newark with her mother, brothers, and sisters in 1924. They were migrating from the town of North, South Carolina.*

My father and uncle met us at the Pennsylvania Railroad Station and brought us up here to Newton Street, right across from the Newton Street School. We came on the trolley. . . . Oh Lord, to come up South Orange Avenue on that trolley car, that was something. I never rode on a trolley before; I had never even seen a trolley. I was saying to myself, "What is this? We can ride like this?"

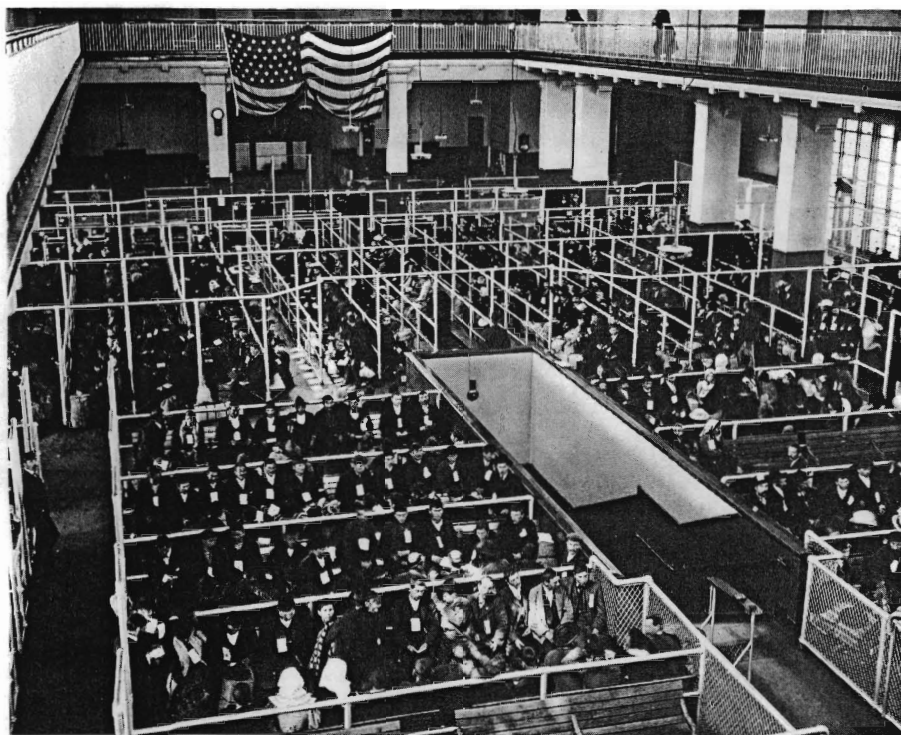
INTERVIEWER: So this was your first impression?



ARNOLD: Oh, yes. Everything was amazing. . . . You had a lot of gaslights in Newark. When they came on in the nighttime, . . . the streets lit up. We had never seen anything like that. Down South, when the sun went down there was only darkness.

*Rosa Torres was eighteen when she reached Brooklyn from Puerto Rico in 1951.*

In the beginning I was really scared because it was such a big city. I came from the country, you know; it was not that crowded and noisy; there were only two or three houses close together.



crowded great hall at Ellis Island, where the federal government operated an immigration station from 1892 to 1954. Notice the tags the immigrants wear as they wait to be processed. On April 17, 1907, the busiest day in the station's history, 11,747 immigrants passed through. This photograph, by Edwin Levick, cannot be dated exactly. The forty-five-star flag places it between 1900, when the building opened, and 1907, when Oklahoma became the forty-sixth state. Courtesy of the Local History and Genealogy Department, New York Public Library.

*On arriving from Italy in 1936, Louise Coulter settled in Manhattan. She was fourteen.*

I'll never forget the apartment where we lived. It was in Manhattan, in what was known as "Hell's Kitchen". . . . I had never been in an apartment because I was raised on a farm. It was what they called a "railroad flat": rooms all in a row. You had to go from one room to the other. Six of us lived in four rooms.

*In 1961, Helen Brigit Tully, who is Irish, settled in Jersey City. She was twenty-four.*

It was in the summertime when I came: June. . . . The buildings looked very dirty. I expected the buildings . . . [and] streets to be newer. I think the houses had drab looks because of the screens in the windows. You couldn't see through to the drapes and curtains like you saw at home. You just saw dark screens and that's what made it look dirty to me. . . .

I also didn't expect to see a lot of people sitting on curbs, sitting around. One thing that amazed me was spitting. I couldn't believe that people would just spit on the street.

In London where I lived for a while it got quiet at night. In Jersey City it never seemed to get quiet at all.

*Juri Kostiuk, a Brazilian of Polish descent, reached Philadelphia in 1961 when he was twenty-eight. One especially American feature struck him.*

What opened my eyes real wide were the cars: big cars, Cadillacs, car dealers selling brand-new cars and saying, "No down payment." I dreamt about the day when I could get my car. That's what impressed me.

*Brooklyn became Astrid Henning's new home when she arrived from Norway in 1929. She was twenty-two.*

When I saw Brooklyn I was sad because all of the houses looked alike. I was used to little white houses with gardens, and here it was these apartment houses. What bothered me most was that in every window it said "To Let." I thought they said "Toilet." . . . I even asked my friends, "How come they advertise that they have toilets?"

*Doris Russell, a black, moved from North Carolina to Newark in 1962, when she was a child.*

Seeing so many people packed in one house, two- and three-family houses, that was really different. Down South you didn't have anything but a one-family house or a split-level. Seeing five and six families going into one building, that was a fascinating thing to me.

*Rose Connell, fifty-seven, tells of arriving from Scotland in 1950. She settled in Cleveland, Ohio.*

I was absolutely amazed, because we were still on rations at home. . . . The first thing I wanted when I got here was a banana. At home they were given only to children and the old-age citizens. . . . I was amazed at the food and the helpings. I just couldn't believe there was so much food.

*Delores Polisano, born in Morocco of Italian parents, arrived in 1946 at age seventeen. She made her residence with her in-laws in Orange.*

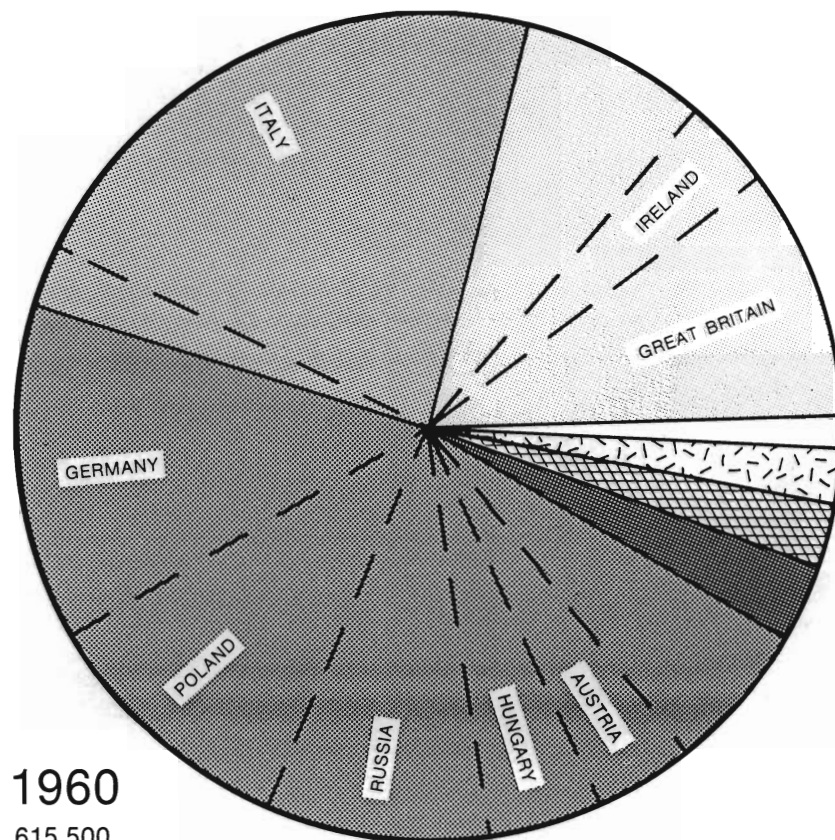
I came when the war was over; I was a war bride. I came here and it snowed like heck. I had never seen snow before in my life and it really shocked me. I thought the world was coming to an end. . . .

And the wooden houses. I used to write my mother and say, "We have wooden houses; you wouldn't believe it. They are like doll houses." (My brothers had built me a [wooden] doll house.) In Morocco it's mostly marble and cement blocks, stucco.\* . . . It was amazing to hear the steps squeaking. . . . Oh, it was terrible, I was so afraid. My husband actually had to carry me up the steps. . . .

And the refrigerator. I was in and out of it every minute making ice cubes. . . . At home we had an icebox where you put the ice in every morning. They used to deliver blocks of ice. Here there were so many amazing things.

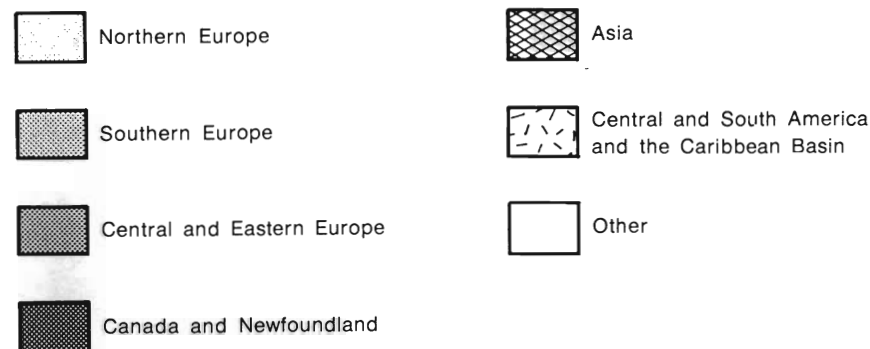
*Minna Brenman reached New York City in 1948, when she was twenty-two. She had been living in a displaced-persons camp.*

I couldn't get over the abundance. . . . It was quite shocking. The thing that shocked me most was the waste in this country, people throwing out so many things that other people could use. Still today I just cannot throw out a piece of bread. . . . I guess this is my war past.



1960

615,500



In 1960 615,000 New Jerseyans were foreign-born. Nearly half of these came from central and eastern Europe. Almost a third came from Italy.



A Slavic woman with all her possessions, Ellis Island, 1905. This is one of many photographs by Lewis Hine that have become familiar images of the immigrant experience. It portrays the experience authentically, though it was probably staged. Courtesy of the International House of Photography at George Eastman House.

*Josephine Cassidy came to Newark from Ireland in 1929, at thirteen.*

All I saw were tall buildings and tenement houses. I had never seen them before. I was like in another world. Because when you're coming from Ireland at thirteen you're really like seven. You're not as advanced as the kids in this country. . . .

I can tell you a little funny thing I did. They had this truck, and they threw a big bundle of papers out on the street, to be picked up later by the paper boys. I thought they were junk. So, I brought them home to my mother. She said, "Oh Jo, you can't do that."

"But," I said, "he threw them out of the truck. He doesn't want them." . . . I just didn't understand the system here.

*In 1949, when she was eleven, Tiiu Lapsins settled with her family in North Carolina. They were displaced persons from Estonia.*

In North Carolina they didn't know what an Estonian was. As a matter of fact, they didn't know what foreigners were. We were about forty miles from the Tennessee border, in the hills. It was so sheltered there. They didn't know about other nationalities. . . .

I don't even know what the farmer who sponsored us expected of us. I think he thought we were uneducated and ignorant people. . . . He [showed] my father . . . a couple of broken-down tractors, and he asked my father, "Do you know what they are? What they are used for?" [Laughs] Of course, they didn't work. My father had to work there with horses and plows. . . .

I was tall, skinny and very blonde. In North Carolina, in that area, there weren't that many blondes, and I can remember everybody looking at me sort of strange, like I was, you know, some creature from out of space.

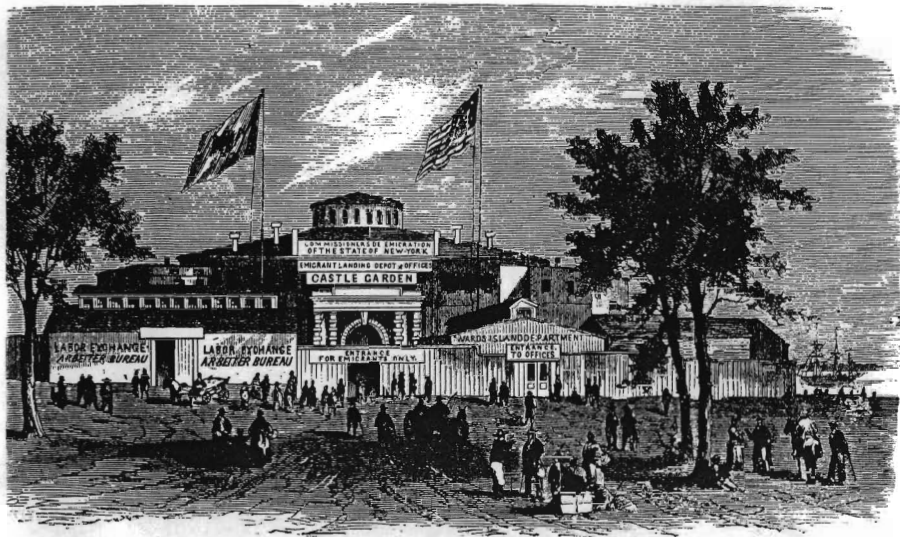
*Emelda Villaman left the Dominican Republic in 1949 at the age of eighteen. She settled on Manhattan's East Side.*

When I saw the fire escape I said, "They always told me that people in this country lived in a rush. Those are the stairs you have to take?" [Laughs] "What would happen if you were in high heels and you were in a hurry?" I thought the fire escape was the way to go up and down the building until they explained to me what they were for.

*In 1938 Hilda Wolin, a member of a Jewish family fleeing Nazi persecution, moved from Germany to New York City. She was eighteen.*

We had never seen anything but white people before. We had never seen a Negro. We had never seen a Chinese. It was all quite strange. . . .

I went to live with a cousin of mine in Westport, Connecticut. I lived there for a couple of months and had my first experience with a skunk.



Castle Garden in 1869. Located at the southern tip of Manhattan Island, Castle Garden was the site of an immigration station administered by the state of New York from 1855 until 1890 when the federal government took charge of receiving New York's immigrants. This illustration comes from the French magazine *L'Univers Illustré*. Courtesy of the Picture Collection, New York Public Library.

... They sent me out one night to put out the garbage and I came back and everybody was sniffing. They all sniffed. I said, "Gina, there was the cutest pussy cat outside. It was black with a white stripe." They all ran in different directions.

*In 1952, at the age of twenty-seven, Walter Lesche arrived with his family under the sponsorship of Seabrook Farms.\* They settled in Seabrook.*

In Germany we had an apartment of two rooms which we, especially my wife, had to fight very hard to get. After the war there was a housing shortage over there. . . .

In Seabrook they were building more houses for all of the new workers coming in, but they weren't ready yet. So they put us in an old prisoner-of-war camp out in Parvin State Park. They had these little chicken coops, about fifteen by fifteen feet, [with] clapboard inside and wallpaper pasted over it. There were a couple of cots and a stove and, the nicest part

of the whole thing, a refrigerator. We had never had a refrigerator before. But when the man showed us this place, my wife cried like the dickens. "You mean we traveled this far for this?" she said. It was quite disappointing, you know. But still I figured this is just a beginning.

## WHERE TO LIVE

*It was all quite strange for most new arrivals. Whether they had come halfway around the world or covered the more modest distance from the South to the North, they met formidable difficulties, beginning with the problem of where to live.*



The main building at Ellis Island. It was completed in 1900 to replace structures that burned in 1897. During the station's six decades of operation more than 24 million immigrants were admitted to the United States, 16 million of them here. Five million were refused admittance or deported later; perhaps 2 million of these went through Ellis Island. After the island was closed it was offered for sale as excess federal property, but in 1965 it was attached to the Statue of Liberty National Monument. It is now undergoing extensive renovations. Courtesy of the National Park Service, Statue of Liberty National Monument/American Museum of Immigration.





The Nguyen family and friends at the Fort Indiantown Gap (Pennsylvania) refugee camp. This was one of four camps established by the government to accommodate more than four hundred thousand Vietnamese refugees who entered the United States after 1975. The residents usually waited in these camps for security clearance or sponsors before resettling elsewhere. Courtesy of the Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies.

**Clustering.** *Recent arrivals from the same ethnic background tended to settle near one another. Such clustering is not very surprising; after all, ethnicity often includes a shared homeland, a shared piece of territorial space. Many immigrant groups clustered on a regional scale, and today certain groups are identified with particular regions of the United States.*

*French-Canadians, for example, often made their homes in New England. In 1920, 73 percent of the French-Canadians in the United States lived in that region. Marilda Paquette, ninety, recalls:*

*I was only two when I came here. We came by train. . . . It was in the winter, so we took a sleigh right to the train from our home. . . . We settled in Haverhill, Massachusetts, and never moved to any other place.*

*For Cubans southern Florida is an important settlement place. Almost half the Cubans in this country are concentrated in and around Miami;*

*most of the other half live in the New York metropolitan area. Eliu D. Ramos, twenty-six, tells of his early years in this country.*

*When we left Cuba we went to Mexico for three months and then to Miami, Florida. . . . We lived in Miami from January 1964 to June 1967, [when] we went to Puerto Rico. [We] came back to Miami in December 1967, . . . and from there we came up to Vineland.*

*Gloria Ruiz-Mesa Graff, thirty, recalls similar events. Her path to New Jersey, however, was more direct.*

*My parents decided to leave [Cuba] in 1960 because of Castro's coming to power. . . . We went to Miami for about a year; we had family there. . . . Then we moved up to New Jersey.*

*Finns, like other Scandinavian groups, tended to settle in the northern Midwest, Michigan and Minnesota in particular. In 1900, in fact, almost half the Finns in the United States were in these two states. Helmi Holmberg, sixty-nine, first lived in Minnesota.*

*My father lived in the Bronx, but we went with my mother to Duluth, Minnesota. She had a rooming house there, and all of her boarders were Finns.*

*Filipinos, Chinese and Japanese have settled primarily in the West, mostly in California. Mae Ikeda, a seventy-one-year-old Japanese, describes her family's settlement.*

*My father came in the early 1900s and settled in California. . . . I guess he tried to do anything, any type of job. By the time my mother came in 1908 he was a gang boss for a sugar-beet\* company in Spreckles, California. He had other young Japanese men that he recruited to work on the sugar-beet farms, to do the stoop labor\* and harvesting and so forth.*

**Cities and Farms.** *The Japanese favor urban areas in most of the United States. In New Jersey, however, they are primarily a rural people, because they came here to work at Seabrook Farms in Cumberland County after their confinement in detention centers during World War II. Itsuke Asada, a fifty-two-year-old Japanese, explains this.*

There was still such prejudice in California. Our parents didn't really have anywhere to go, because everything we had there was just gone. . . . A representative from Seabrook Farms came and said . . . they would provide us with housing and a place to work. My mother and dad discussed it, and they felt that they might as well come here because there was no sense in going back to California.

INTERVIEWER: Were there many people who took this offer?

ASADA: Oh, yes. At one time there were over three thousand Japanese here. They were all housed and fed and given work.

*Ray Ono, forty-eight, is another Japanese who went to Seabrook.*

We just didn't have anything . . . when the war was ending. As a matter of fact, we were in debt. . . . There was nothing to go back to in California. The business was gone. We never owned any homes or property. There were no job opportunities. So when Seabrook offered to pay our way [east] in return for a promise to work for a period of time, that's what we took. . . . I guess my parents would be considered indentured servants.\* . . . Of course they took it because it was the only thing that was there.

*Over the years, the Irish tended to settle in towns and cities. In New Jersey, the cities that drew Irish immigrants included Newark, the Oranges, Harrison and Kearny. Dominic Cassidy's family arrived in 1927. He was ten.*

We came directly to Harrison. My sister had an apartment there. . . . We stayed there for one month until we got a much larger apartment in Kearny. . . .

Kearny was strictly a Scòt and Irish town. Most of the people in Harrison and Kearny at that time came either from Paisley, Scotland, or Belfast, Ireland. This was because of the linen mills and the thread mills, the type of work they had left back in the old country. [There were,] for example, the Clark Thread Mills in East Newark and Harrison. Many of the girls found work there because they were weavers. . . .

So it was like coming to the old country, like coming to Belfast, because there were so many people here who had lived in Belfast. It was just like walking up Falls Road. The people that you would meet would be friends that you had on the other side. We all had a common bond because of the area that we left in Ireland. And we picked up the same bond in America.



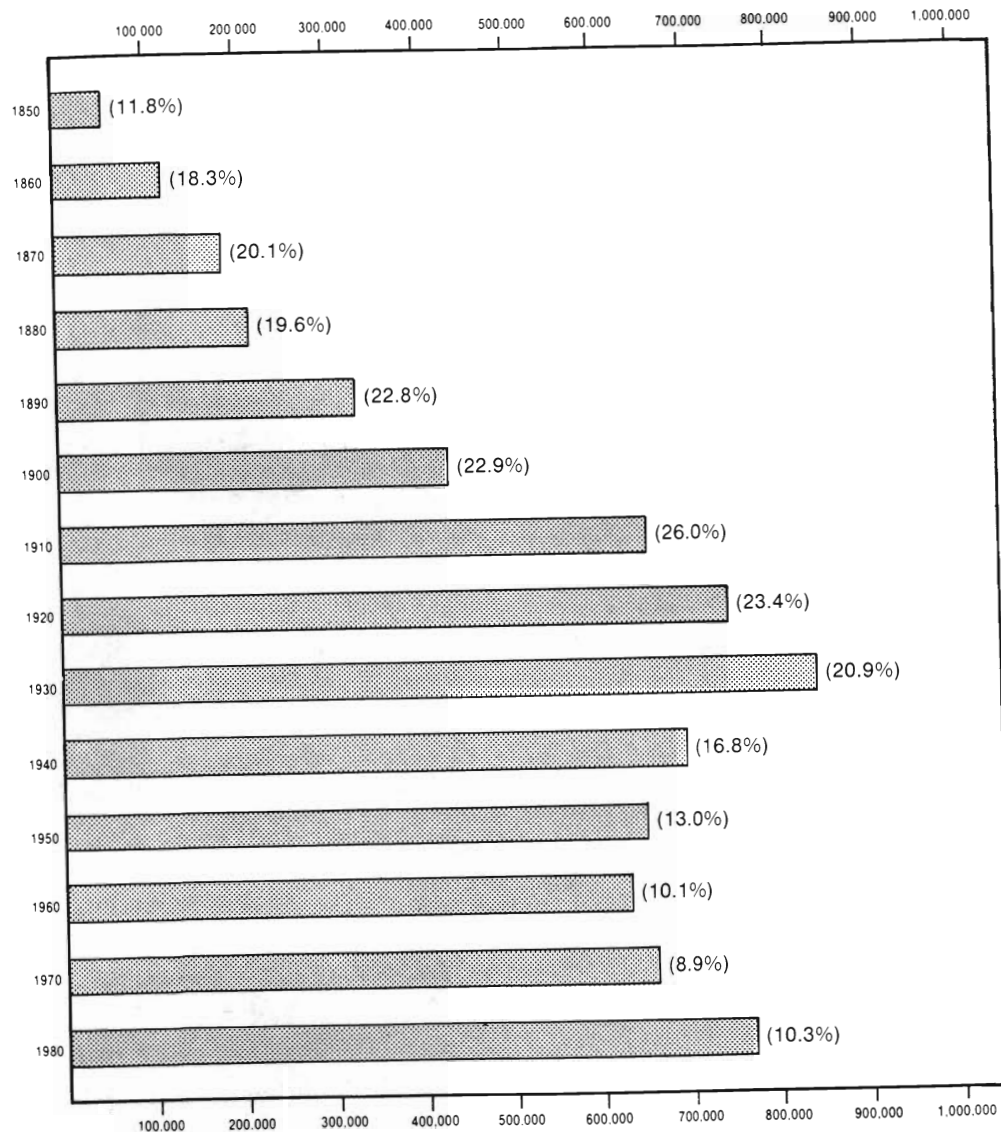
After Soviet forces suppressed an insurrection in Hungary, the United States admitted roughly forty thousand refugees. They were temporarily housed at Camp Kilmer in Piscataway, Middlesex County, where this photograph was taken in 1956. Courtesy of the American Hungarian Foundation.

*Other ethnic groups, such as the Italians, have settled in both urban and rural areas in New Jersey. The Italians are well represented in such cities as Newark, Jersey City, Paterson, Hoboken, Union, Trenton and Camden. Diodito Spina, seventy-one, tells of coming to this country in 1926 and settling in Jersey City, which had a very large Italian population.*

I first lived in a boarding house downtown. . . . It was a mixed neighborhood, mostly Italians and colored people.

*On the other hand, since the 1870s there has been a large agricultural community of Italians around Vineland. Mary DeFalco, sixty-three years old, talks about her parents' settlement in this area.*

## NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF FOREIGN-BORN NEW JERSEYANS



During the sixty years between the census of 1870 and the census of 1930, an average of 22 percent of all New Jerseyans were foreign-born. That is, one of every five was born in another country. Today about 11 percent, or one in ten, are foreign-born.

My father got here when he was twenty-one years old. My mother was sixteen when [her family] came.

[My mother's] aunt had come before, [and] had written and told them they would be able to find a little farm and make a living here. She met them in New York, and they came to live in Vineland. . . .

Then my father and mother met and they were married. They lived on Vine Road, where they bought a little farm. My father was a farmer. My mother did housework and took care of us.

*Puerto Ricans, like Italians, live in both the cities and the rural areas. Juan Victor Martinez came to the mainland in 1965, when he was twenty-two. He settled in a city.*

I came to live . . . with my sister in Carteret. . . . It was about six months that I stayed there. Then we moved to Perth Amboy. It's more Puerto Rican; it was like a Puerto Rican community. . . . I was speaking Spanish there like I was at home.

*Tomas Rodriguez, thirty, tells why he settled in southern New Jersey.*

I left Puerto Rico in 1966. . . . I came to Elmer—it's a little town—to work on a farm, to pick tomatoes and things like that. I stayed in Elmer about three months, then I moved to Vineland. . . . I didn't speak English and there were a lot of Spanish-speaking people in Vineland.

**Chain Migration.** *One reason why ethnic groups disperse themselves unevenly is a process called "chain migration." Early migrants help later ones by providing information about opportunities, paying for transportation, and arranging for initial accommodations and employment. People rarely settle in a particular place because of random events and circumstances. They settle where they have a relative or friend. Sixty-nine-year-old James Costanzo gives an example of the process.*

It was always through a relative who was here. They would write back to Italy. There was always a connection. . . . For example, my grandmother had a brother in Brooklyn. That's how she came here.

*Peter Giunta, fifty-four, explains his family's immigration to Glassboro.*

My father . . . had a sister who had married and had come to the United



This Lewis Hine photograph, taken in 1905, shows an Italian family being ferried to Ellis Island from their ship's Manhattan pier. Sometimes the piers were so busy that new arrivals had to wait several days just to get on the ferry. Courtesy of the Local History and Genealogy Department, New York Public Library.

States. . . . She established the fact that he would have a place to live and would not be a burden on the American people or the government. . . . He came, and over a period of years [he] sent for three of his brothers. They came within about two years of one another.

*Irene Maiatico, sixty-three, tells how her parents came to this country.*

My mother's older brother came first. After he got settled and made a few dollars, he sent money so that [the rest] could come.

My father came when he was about sixteen years old. He just came alone. He had an uncle who lived here, and he came and lived with them for a while until he got situated.

*Asked why her family settled in Brooklyn, seventy-seven-year-old Angela Guido says:*

We didn't know any other place to go. My father's brother took us there. He found rooms for us just across the street from his house. And that's where we settled and stayed for quite some years.

*Mildred Arnold's family movement also provides an example of chain migration. In addition, it illustrates another common pattern, in which the father migrates first, settles permanently, and then sends for his family.*

My father left the South a couple of months before we did. He had a brother here in Newark who was working. . . . He'd write my father and tell him, "If you come up here, I got a job for you." So when my daddy came up here he went to work.

My uncle lived [on] Newton Street on the first floor. The landlord was an Italian and he let my father have the second floor. . . . And then we came on up.

*Children of working age were often the first to leave home. Then they brought the other breadwinners in the family to join them and eventually moved the family members less likely to work. Dominic Cassidy describes this pattern.*

I was among the last of the family to come to this country. My first brother left in 1921, a little after the great war. There was no opportunity in Ireland for him to get work, so he emigrated to America along with his wife. When he landed here he sent for my sister; my sister left in 1922. They in turn sent for the rest of us; another brother in 1923, another sister in 1924. My parents and I came together in 1927. So the exodus started in 1921, and we all finally wound up here in 1927 as a family.

*Helen Waring moved from Scotland to Kearny in 1927 at twenty-two.*

My sister Catherine came over first, and she got a job as a housekeeper. . . . One year later I came over with my father. He got a job with Clark Thread Mills and I took care of two boys. . . .

The amount to bring my mother and all the rest of them was around \$500. My father was thinking about going home because we had accumulated only \$200. . . . But Mrs. Steele, the person my father was rooming



with, said, "Before you do that, Andy, go see this man." . . . My father and I went to see him and we signed our lives away for \$500. He arranged everything; he brought the family out. We paid this back to him at the rate of \$50 a month.

## SETTLEMENT PLANS

*Many immigrants did not plan to settle permanently. They came intending to work and then return home with their savings. These people were sometimes called "birds of passage." Diodito Spina's father was one of them.*

My father . . . came to this country when he was seventeen or eighteen. He used to work on the railroad because that was the only job open in the 1880s. . . . The work was very bad; they used to have deep snows during the winter season. So he would stay during the summer; in the wintertime he used to go back to Italy. . . .

He left my mother [in Italy]; he left us all. My mother used to have a child every year. He suffered one winter [in America] and when he went back to Italy the following year he got twins. He said, "If I had known this, I would have come back last year." That was the life he led up till 1913. [Then] he went back to Italy and never returned to America. In 1920 he passed away and he left eight children.

*Anna Bebul, seventy-five, tells how her father returned to their native province of Slovakia in the Austro-Hungarian Empire\* well before she came to this country in 1919.*

My father was a farmer. He went back and forth three times. . . . He worked, he made money and then he went back to buy some property. . . . At that time I think it was easier than now.

*Although he spent many years in this country, Charles Nagao's father was also a "bird of passage." Mr. Nagao, sixty-three, speaks of his father's migration here and his eventual return to Japan.*

Many immigrants had the idea of coming to the United States to make their fortune and then to return to their country. . . . I believe my father came to the United States about the turn of the century and mother followed much later, possibly another ten years or so. . . . He farmed

in Salinas, California, until the time I was born. This was back in 1916.

Immediately after I was born the family . . . moved down to southern California to Terminal Island. He was fishing for tuna in the area. We left in 1924 for Japan. This was his first trip back. We stayed for a couple of years and then returned to the States because it was very difficult for him to continue farming in Japan and support the big family he had. . . . He lived here for several years and then he went back to Japan. This was, I believe, around 1935. That was the last time. He left the United States for good.

*Some migrants who were not "birds of passage" also returned home. They had uprooted themselves with the intention of settling permanently, but they had run into unexpected difficulties. Mariano Alicea, thirty-nine, recalls that his father came to the mainland from his native Puerto Rico in 1955, but returned after a few years.*

He used to be a sugar-camp foreman before he came to America. . . . Here he wasn't able to get a job right away. So he got a job [as] a caretaker for a cemetery. . . . He only remained here for a couple of years. He had a language barrier. He wasn't able to do well where he was working because of layoffs and things like that. So he went back to the island. . . . And he had to reestablish himself. It was quite hard, because he [had] sold everything before he came, back in the 1950s.

My father did not adjust because the . . . culture was different, the language was different. For someone of his age it was hard to adapt to or assimilate\* the American way of living. That's quite hard for any adult who comes from another country.

*Some migrants, on the other hand, planned to return home but ended up staying in the United States. Fifty-eight-year-old Julia I. Oldfield, who was born in New York City, tells why her parents left Hungary and what they planned to do.*

They decided that they would come and work and save some money. Their idea was just to make money and go back, . . . because they really did like it there. . . . They had family there. It was just that they were poor.

But as the years went by things changed both here and there. So they decided they would stay on here.

*Itsuke Asada's parents made their children learn Japanese because they*

*intended to return to Japan. But during World War II, West Coast Japanese were put into detention camps, and the Asadas never went home.*

We spoke nothing but Japanese when we were little. . . . We all had to know how to read, write and speak Japanese, because we were going back. We would be ashamed if we didn't know our own language. So we didn't speak any English until we started school here.

*The parents of Gloria Ruiz-Mesa Graff also came for a temporary stay that became permanent. They left Cuba in 1960, expecting—like many others who fled Communist regimes—that the government in their homeland would soon change so that they could go back.*

In the beginning my parents really believed that we were going to be here for maybe just two or three years. . . . My father had a very good job. He was a judge, and we had three homes. We were very comfortable and we liked it there. That was home; we wanted to go back.

*Michael Roselli's father left Italy for good but experienced difficulties here that changed his mind. Nevertheless, he remained. Mr. Roselli, sixty-five, says:*

I remember my father coming home and he was always grumbling. After a while he started saying, "I don't know why I came to this country. I'm killing myself over here for nothing, working like a slave." He was sort of disgusted. He had to get up very early in the morning. He'd leave . . . in the dark and he came home in the dark. He was so disgusted at times that he sort of cursed the day that he came to this country.

*Other permanent immigrants made several trips to their homelands and back, usually to maintain ties with family members until they could arrange to resettle them. Louise Consalo, who was born in 1909 in New York City, gives an example of this:*

My father came first. He came to work and made enough money to bring my mother here with the family. He made three trips back and forth to Italy, and he didn't bring my mother over here until he had a place fixed for her.

*Some migrants moved, changed their minds and returned home, then*

*had further changes of heart. John Burke, who was born in Ireland in 1906, had such an experience:*

In 1925 . . . I landed in New York and then I came to Jersey City. I stayed in Jersey City for a couple of weeks with my aunt and then I went to Philadelphia. . . . I didn't like the jobs or the work and I got homesick. I went back to Ireland in May. . . .

For about a year I worked around my father's farm. Then there was a . . . big ranch only a few miles away, so I worked there for three years. Then in 1929 . . . the man who had this ranch . . . laid me off. A few friends of mine were talking about going to America, so I said, "I'll go with you." This time I went to Jersey City.

*The parents of Louise Coulter underwent a similar series of changes over a longer period of time.*

My mom and dad met on the boat in 1908. . . . They married shortly after that and remained in the States until 1921. My oldest brother, Larry, was born in 1911, and my sister Teresa was born in 1914.

. . . [In 1921] they decided to go back to Italy. They had saved a little bit of money. It started out to be just a visit. But when they got there I was born. My grandparents convinced my father to take whatever little money he had and invest it in a home over there. . . .

Living for us there wasn't too great. Mussolini\* was coming into power and he and the Communists were fighting each other. And anyone that came from a different country wasn't really accepted too well. But they remained there. Then when Larry became eighteen, they received a notice from the Italian government that he had to go in the service. My father would have none of this; he said, "He's an American citizen. If he has anything to do like this he's going back to the States." So they managed to get passage for him.

Larry landed in New York. We had some paisans\* [who] . . . had a grocery store in an Italian section and he started working for them. This was in 1929 when the stockmarket crash[ed]. . . . [But] he saved some money and brought my sister, Tessie, over; she . . . was also an American citizen. My parents were glad to let her come back, because they were talking about coming back also.

So Tessie came in 1933. . . . And she and my brother saved a little bit of money and sent for my father in 1934. In the meantime, in 1929 another son was born, and my mother, brother, and I remained there. In 1936 they sent for us and the three of us came over.

*Hilda Malkin, who is also Jewish, was born in 1921 in New York City. She attributes a similar feeling to her parents.*

I never heard them once regret that they left Europe. They always said that America was the golden land.

My father would say over and over again that even if he had the money, he would never go back to even visit Russia. My mother seemed to feel the same way, although at times she would appear a little nostalgic. Apparently she came from an area where there was an abundance of food. She would recall the wonderful fruits of her little village, that the apples there were better than the apples here and so on and so forth.

But my father, who came from a place where hunger seemed to prevail, had no such nostalgic thoughts and never looked back.



The statue of Liberty, with Ellis Island in the background. Millions of immigrants who passed through Ellis Island in the early twentieth century saw the statue as a symbol of welcome to their new home. Courtesy of the National Park Service, Statue of Liberty National Monument.

*Another group of migrants came to the United States with no thought of ever returning home, not even for a visit. Often they had suffered bitterly in the old country. Celia Soloway, a seventy-nine-year-old Russian Jew, is an example.*

I never planned to go to Russia again. Never! I was singing that I'd never come back again when I left. And I'll keep my promise. . . . I'll never go away from the United States. I love this country. I think it's the best country in the world. I had a bad life in Europe. That's why I came here.

## NOTES ON THE SPEAKERS

**Mariano Alicea** is a thirty-nine-year-old Puerto Rican who comes from a family of twelve children. Some of his older brothers and sisters immigrated to the mainland in the early 1950s, and his father followed with the rest of the family in 1955. After two years in Yonkers, New York, and New York City, Mr. Alicea and most of the family moved back to Puerto Rico. He returned to New York about a year later and stayed with an older brother. He finished high school in Newark and went to college in Tennessee. He now teaches in a bilingual program in Vineland, Cumberland County. He is married and has three children.

**Mildred Arnold**, an Afro-American, is the oldest of the nine children of Edward and Minnie Mack. She was born December 23, 1913, in the town of North, South Carolina, where her father was a sharecropper. When she was ten her father moved to Newark to become a construction worker. With her mother and four younger siblings, Mrs. Arnold joined him a few months later, and she has lived in Newark ever since. She left school in the eighth grade and worked briefly as a domestic. She married Joseph Arnold in 1932 and had three daughters. She was divorced in 1944. Mrs. Arnold was the first black woman hired by Celanese, for which she worked during World War II. She spent twenty-five years with a catering business, and then taught for ten years in a day-care program. She retired in 1978. Meanwhile, in 1967, she returned to school at night. She has obtained her high-school diploma and is working toward an associate's degree at Essex County College.

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NOTE: We have given the ages of the speakers during the school year 1979-1980, when they were interviewed.

**Itsuke "Iddy" Asada**, fifty-two, is a Nisei.\* She was born in Salinas, California — once known as "the lettuce capital of the world" — where her father was a farm laborer. During World War II, when Mrs. Asada was a teenager, her family was confined in Arizona in a detention camp for Japanese. They found jobs at Seabrook Farms in 1945. Mrs. Asada earned a certificate from a tailoring school in Philadelphia and then returned to Seabrook Farms, intending to work there only temporarily. But she stayed for thirty-one years, and now works in the office of a food processing plant. She was married in 1953 to another Nisei, whom she knew in the detention camp and met again at Seabrook. They live in Bridgeton, Cumberland County. Their son, a graduate of West Point, is a career army officer.

**Anna Behul**, a seventy-six-year-old Slovak, was born in Bratislava, Czechoslovakia. At fourteen she came to the United States with four cousins. In Pittsburgh, where she lived with an uncle and his family, she worked as a nursemaid. About a year and a half later she moved to Newark to live with her sister. She worked and attended night school to improve her English. In 1925 she married Michael Behul, a fellow Slovak. He was a long-distance truck driver; after he retired he wrote articles for several Slovak-language newspapers. They had two children. Widowed for more than twenty-three years, Mrs. Behul lives in Newark.

**Minna Brenman**, fifty-four, was born in Lublin, Poland, of Jewish parents. She was raised in Lublin, where her father owned a lumber business. After the Germans invaded Poland in 1939 Mrs. Brenman, her parents, and her older sister were sent to concentration camps. Freed by American troops in 1945, Mrs. Brenman located her father, the only other member of the family who survived. They settled in Frankfurt, Germany, where her father worked to resettle Jewish refugees. In 1948 they came to New York City. Mrs. Brenman worked in a clothing factory and attended night school to study English and learn the millinery trade. Later she worked in a millinery shop. She was married in the early 1950s and has two children. She and her husband live in Matawan, Monmouth County.

**John Burke**, seventy-three, was born in Ballydavid, County Galway, Ireland. He was one of twelve children. After six years of school he quit to work on his father's farm. At fourteen he became an apprentice grocer in a nearby town, but a few years later he returned to the farm. He came to this country in 1925. He stayed with an aunt in Jersey City and then with a cousin in Philadelphia, where he worked in an A & P and waited tables in a social club. He went back to Ireland in 1926

and worked as a farm laborer, but in 1929 he returned to Jersey City. He held jobs at Western Electric and on the docks, but because of the Great Depression he had little steady work before World War II. Eventually he became a foreman on the docks. Married in 1936, Mr. Burke is the father of two daughters and three sons. He is retired and lives in Farmingdale, Monmouth County.

**Dominic Cassidy**, born June 9, 1916, in Belfast, Ireland, came to the United States with his father and mother in 1927. His four older brothers and sisters had come here earlier. He and his parents moved between Harrison and Kearny, both in Hudson County, several times. Mr. Cassidy left school in the ninth grade to work, and over the next decade he was a Western Union delivery boy, a hospital porter, a church sexton, a grave digger, and a truck driver. Since the early 1950s he has worked for the Prudential Life Insurance Company, where he started as a night porter and moved into management. He married Josephine Comerford in 1938. They have nine children, of whom two are adopted. They live in Middletown.

**Josephine Cassidy** was born in Ireland in 1915 to John and Mary Comerford. While she was a child her parents emigrated, leaving their seven children with their grandmother. Mr. Comerford worked at Newark's Essex House. Josephine joined her parents in Newark in 1929 when she was thirteen. She attended night school for one year, completing the ninth grade, and then went to work to help support the growing family — seven more children were born in Newark. She began as a domestic servant, and also worked in factories manufacturing candy, hats, and pants. In 1938 she married Dominic Cassidy and moved to Kearny, Hudson County. Since then she has been a housewife, bearing seven children and adopting two others. She lives with her husband in Middletown.

**Rose Connell**, who is fifty-seven, was born in Glasgow, Scotland. In 1950 she came to Newark to visit her younger sister, Isabella Kilpatrick, who had left home in 1947. Mrs. Connell, a nurse, planned to work here for a year and then return to Scotland. Instead, she married a man she met here, a Scot visiting the United States from Canada, where he worked as a machinist. Mrs. Connell worked for a year at a hospital in Newark before she was married. After three years in Canada the couple moved to Ohio, where they had two children. They now live in Red Bank, Monmouth County.



**Louise Consalo**, born March 14, 1909, was the youngest of five children of Italian immigrants. Her father was a marble cutter and polisher. She was born in New York City, but when she was about twelve the family moved to Brooklyn. In 1926 she married a farmer and moved to southern New Jersey. Her husband later established a produce business, which several of their six children still run. Mrs. Consalo, a widow, lives in Glassboro, Gloucester County.

**James Costanzo** was born March 17, 1910, in Morristown, Morris County. His mother had come to this country from Italy in 1894, when she was four, and his father had come around 1900, at seventeen. They met in Morristown and were married there in 1907. The father worked as a laborer for a while and then operated a beer distributorship and a candy store. Mr. Costanzo's mother was a housewife, raising three children. Mr. Costanzo attended Fordham University and the New Jersey Law School and then practiced law and ran a real estate business in Morristown. Now retired, he has recently published a history of the Italian community in Morristown. He lives in Convent Station, Morris County.

**Louise Coulter**, a fifty-eight-year-old Italian, is the third of four children of Angelo Cardana, a baker, and his wife, Palmeira. The Cardanas spent thirteen years in the United States and had their first two children here, but went back to Italy before Mrs. Coulter was born. Members of the family started returning to this country in 1929. Mrs. Coulter and her mother and younger brother came when she was fourteen. She lived in New York City for thirteen years, finishing the ninth grade and going to work in a women's clothing factory. In 1949 she married and moved to Vineland, Cumberland County. She and her husband have four children. They live in Vineland.

**Mary DeFalco**, sixty-three, is a daughter of first-generation Italian immigrants. She has lived in Vineland, Cumberland County, all her life. She and her twin sister finished eighth grade before they went to work on the family farm. She later took a night course in typing and bookkeeping at the Vineland Business School. Since 1942 she has been a bookkeeper for the Vineland Produce Auction. In 1945 she married James DeFalco, a mechanic who worked for the state government. He is now retired. The DeFalcos have one daughter.

**Rachel Gerson** was born December 9, 1908, in Nottingham, England.

Her parents were Russian Jews who moved first to the United States and then to join relatives in England. They had four children in the United States and four more in England. Later the father returned to the states with some of the older children to open a delicatessen in Philadelphia. A year later, when Mrs. Gerson was fourteen, her mother brought the rest of the family to join them. Mrs. Gerson finished high school in Philadelphia and worked as a sales clerk at Gimbel's department store, where she eventually became an assistant jewelry buyer. She married Marvis Gerson, a pharmacist, in 1935 and left Gimbel's a year later. The Gersons have one daughter and live in Vineland, Cumberland County.

**Peter Giunta**, whose parents were immigrants from Italy, was born in Hasbrouck Heights, Bergen County, in 1925. He was raised in Glassboro, Gloucester County, where his father ran a produce business. Mr. Giunta spent several years in the army. He lives with his wife and three children in Vineland, Cumberland County. He manages an insurance company.

**Gloria Ruiz-Mesa Graff** is a thirty-year-old Cuban. Her family left Cuba in 1960 after Fidel Castro seized power. Gloria and her brother came to this country promptly. Her father, who was a judge, followed with her mother three weeks later. They settled with relatives in Miami, and the father and brother worked at a race track. When it closed a year later they found jobs at the Garden State Race Track in Cherry Hill, Camden County. Mrs. Graff finished high school in Paulsboro, Gloucester County, and graduated from Glassboro State College. In 1972 she married David Graff, whom she had met at college. They live with their son in Vineland, Cumberland County, where they both teach.

**Margaret Greene** is a seventy-five-year-old native of Ireland. She was one of nine children of Patrick Nobis, a farmer, and his wife, Annie. When she was about nineteen her fiancé, Andrew Greene, came to the United States. She followed after a year and lived with her oldest sister in West Orange, Essex County, working at Westinghouse in Bloomfield and as a domestic servant in Livingston until she was married. She lived with her husband in Orange for over thirty years and bore seven children there. The Greenes live in Avon, Monmouth County.

**Angela "Lena" Guido** is the oldest of three children born to Giuseppe and Maria Pagano. Her father left Italy when she was a small child. In 1909, when she was six, she and her mother joined him in Brooklyn, where he delivered ice and coal. In 1914 the family returned to Italy

on a visit. World War I broke out while they were there, and Mr. Pagano served in the Italian army. He and Angela returned to Brooklyn in 1918. Angela's husband-to-be, whom she had met in Italy, followed in a few months, and they were married a few years later. They moved to West Orange, Essex County, where Mr. Guido became an ice and coal deliveryman. They had six children. Mrs. Guido, a widow, still lives there.

**Astrid Henning**, a seventy-two-year-old Norwegian, is one of seven children born to Ole Hanson, a railroad construction foreman, and his wife, Verthine. Mrs. Henning was brought up in Stavanger, Norway, where she completed eight years of school and became a file clerk in a lawyer's office. When she decided to emigrate she became a packer in a cannery to earn more money. Five years later, in May 1929, she joined a sister in New York. She worked as a domestic servant until July 1930, when she married a fellow Norwegian and settled in Brooklyn. The Hennings had two sons. After 1940 Mrs. Henning held various jobs: she wrote for a Norwegian language newspaper, demonstrated food at Macy's department store, managed the executive dining room at the U. S. Steel Fairless Hills Works in Pennsylvania, and worked as a governess-housekeeper. Mrs. Henning is a widow. Since 1969, when she retired, she has lived in Plainfield, Union County, near one of her sons.

**Helmi Holmberg** was born September 1, 1910, in Finland. In 1926 she and her older sister came to this country to live with their mother, who ran a boarding house in Duluth, Minnesota. Mrs. Holmberg moved to New York City in 1928 and worked as a domestic servant for two years. She attended a beauty culture school in Duluth for a year, worked as a beautician in New York for three and a half years, and then returned to domestic service. In 1939 she married Rudolph Holmberg, another Finn. He was a traveling salesman. During the first few years of their marriage they lived in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Florida and traveled widely. When Mr. Holmberg returned from the army in 1946, they bought a blueberry farm in Vineland, Cumberland County. They still run it.

**Mae Ikeda**, a seventy-one-year-old Nisei,\* was born in Salinas, California. She is the oldest of ten children. Her father came to this country from Japan as a recruiter and supervisor of Japanese sugar-beet workers. Her mother joined him in 1908, and they bought a farm. In 1928 he was killed in a car accident, leaving Mrs. Ikeda responsible for the farm. After graduating from the University of California at Berkeley in 1932, Mrs. Ikeda married, and she and her husband ran the farm for several

years. During World War II they were sent with their four children to a detention camp for Japanese in Arizona. After the war they came to Seabrook Farms, in Cumberland County, where Mrs. Ikeda worked in the quality control laboratory for nineteen years. Then she took a job at Bridgeton Hospital. She has been active in the Japanese-American Citizen's League since it was formed in 1930. Now retired, she lives with her husband in Bridgeton, Cumberland County.

**Iuri Kostiuk**, the son of Polish immigrants to Brazil, was born January 26, 1933, in Sao Paulo, Brazil. He quit school after four years to work in a tailor shop. He got married in 1961, and about a year later he came to this country with his wife and young son. They settled in Philadelphia, where Mr. Kostiuk had a cousin and a close friend. He worked for the clothing manufacturer Stanley Blacker for about fifteen years, starting as a tailor and advancing to management. He is now in the construction business with relatives. The Kostiuks have two sons and live in Millville, Cumberland County.

**Tiiu Lapsins** was born in Tallinn, the capital of Estonia. She is one of four children. Her family left a displaced-persons camp in Germany in 1949 and came to this country under the sponsorship of a farmer from Marion, North Carolina. Mrs. Lapsins was eleven. The family stayed in Marion a year and a half, then moved to Seabrook Farms, Cumberland County, where her parents found jobs. Mrs. Lapsins worked at Seabrook after finishing high school. In 1958 she married Janis Lapsins, a Latvian who had also emigrated from a displaced persons camp. They have three children and live in Bridgeton, Cumberland County.

**Walter Lesche**, fifty-five, was born in a small eastern German town that now belongs to Poland. His father was a carpenter. After eight years of school Mr. Lesche took up blacksmithing. During World War II he was drafted into the German army. His parents and two sisters eventually fled their home, and Mr. Lesche could not return to it after the war. He was married in 1946, and he came to the United States with his wife and their four-year-old daughter as war refugees in 1952. He worked for Seabrook Farms for twelve years and then started a welding business in Bridgeton, Cumberland County, where he lives.

**Irene Maiatico**, sixty-three, was born in Vineland. Her father was a mason; he and his wife emigrated separately from Italy early in the century and met in this country. Unable to afford college, Mrs. Maiatico became

a beautician, then used part of her wages to help one of her sisters through nursing school. In 1941 she married Silvio Maiatico, an Italian from Glassboro, Gloucester County. She has been a housewife since then, raising two sons. She lives in Vineland, Cumberland County.

**Hilda Malkin**, who is Jewish, was born February 11, 1920, in Harlem, New York City. Her mother emigrated from Lithuania around 1904, her father from Great Russia in 1912. Until she was thirteen her parents ran a grocery store in Harlem; then they opened one in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn. Mrs. Malkin finished high school in Brooklyn and majored in German at Hunter College, graduating in 1940. After several years in Baltimore with the Social Security Administration she went to work for the New York City public schools. She was married in 1949. She received an M.A. in German at Hunter College in 1952. She has been both a teacher and a school administrator, and is now an educational associate in guidance and counseling. She has two children and lives with her husband in Matawan, Monmouth County.

**Juan Victor Martinez**, a thirty-seven-year-old Puerto Rican, moved to the mainland in 1965. He lived with his sister in Carteret, Middlesex County, and then in Perth Amboy. He washed dishes and worked in a factory while studying English in night school. In 1972, on a visit to Puerto Rico, he married a girl from his hometown. He is now a community relations officer in the Hispanic community of Newark. He lives in Newark with his wife and three children.

**Charles Nagao** was born in Salinas, California, in 1916. His father, a farm laborer and fisherman, emigrated from Japan early in the 1900s and sent for his wife several years later. Eventually the family moved to Terminal Island. They moved back to Japan in 1924 and returned to Terminal Island in 1932. After high school Mr. Nagao started a business delivering distilled water. He was married in 1938, and one year later his wife bore twin daughters. During World War II the family was held in a detention camp in California. Released in December 1944, they came to Seabrook Farms. Mr. Nagao worked for Seabrook Farms for nineteen years, starting as a packing-house laborer and ending as a manager in the personnel office. His third child, a son, was born in 1950. Mr. Nagao is the assistant manager in the international division at Wheaton Industries. His wife is the supervisor of microfilm for Cumberland County. They live in Bridgeton.

**Julia I. Oldfield**, fifty-eight, was born in New York City to James and Caroline Vistalis soon after they arrived from their native Hungary. A few years later her father, a shoemaker, had to change occupations for medical reasons; he worked as a bricklayer for a while and then became a cabinet maker for the Steinway Piano Company. Julia married Edwin Oldfield a few years after high school, and has been a housewife ever since. Her husband is a flight inspector for the Federal Aviation Administration. They live in Lincroft, Monmouth County.

**Ray Ono**, a forty-eight-year-old Nisei,\* was born in Terminal Island, California, where his father was in the tuna business. His parents were Japanese immigrants. During World War II, when Mr. Ono was a boy, the family was held in an internment camp in California. Afterward they moved to Seabrook, where his parents became packers on the assembly line at Seabrook Farms. After high school Mr. Ono earned a B.A. degree from Juniata College in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania. He spent thirteen years with Western Electric as part of a team testing the effectiveness of the American radar defense system. He is now an analyst with Valco Glass, a manufacturer of glassware for biological research. His wife, who was born in Japan and came to this country in 1965, teaches Japanese flower arrangement. They live in Bridgeton, Cumberland County.

**Marilda Paquette**, a ninety-year-old French Canadian, was born in Waterloo, Canada, a small town in the province of Quebec. Her parents took her and six older brothers and sisters to Haverhill, Massachusetts, when she was two. They had five more children there. Her father, who worked in a shoe factory, died of diphtheria at thirty-eight, leaving the older children to help support the family. Their mother remarried about five years later. While visiting an older sister in Florida, Miss Paquette met a businesswoman who hired her to manage a dress shop in East Orange, Essex County. She managed the shop for forty-eight years. She lives in a nursing home in East Orange.

**Edwin Penalvert**, born December 3, 1948, came to the mainland from his native Puerto Rico in 1963 with his mother, older sister and younger brother. They went to Vineland to be with Mr. Penalvert's father, a farm laborer and carpenter, who had immigrated ahead of them. He died thirteen days after they arrived. To help support the family, Mr. Penalvert worked on a farm and at McDonald's, Burger King, and Progresso Foods. After finishing high school, he attended Cumberland County College



and earned a B. A. from Glassboro State College. He lives in Vineland, Cumberland County, where he is a teacher.

**Delores Polisano**, born in 1929, was born and raised in Morocco, where her parents had gone from their native Italy several years earlier. She married an American soldier in 1945 and came to the United States as a war bride a year later, when she was seventeen. They lived with her husband's mother in East Orange, Essex County, for four years, then bought a farm near Jamesburg, Middlesex County, and lived there for a number of years. They had ten children. Mrs. Polisano moved back to East Orange when her mother-in-law became ill, and her husband joined some of their sons, who were grooming race horses in Pennsylvania. When her mother-in-law died Mrs. Polisano moved to Freehold, Monmouth County, to live with her oldest daughter. She is a pricer and wrapper in a meat market.

**Eliu D. Ramos**, twenty-six, was born in Cuba. His father was a clergyman. The family came to the United States in 1961 and settled in Miami, where Mr. Ramos's father was a pastor in the First United Spanish Presbyterian Church. They went to Puerto Rico in 1967 and returned to Miami a year later. Then they moved to Vineland, Cumberland County, where his father became the pastor of another Presbyterian church. Mr. Ramos finished high school in Vineland and then spent a year in Venezuela, during which he was married. He has a son from this marriage. He worked at Sears in Vineland for five years and became a division manager. He is now an automobile salesman. He lives in Vineland with his second wife, who is an Italian, and their young daughter.

**Tomas Rodriguez**, is a thirty-year-old Puerto Rican, one of eight children. He left school in the twelfth grade, when he was seventeen, and moved to Elmer, Salem County, to work on a farm where his father had earlier been a migrant laborer. Three months later he moved to Vineland. He washed dishes in a hospital and worked in a clothing factory and a construction firm. In 1969 he sent to Puerto Rico for his childhood sweetheart and married her; they live in Vineland with their four children. Mr. Rodriguez is a machine operator in a textile plant.

**Michael Roselli** came to this country from Italy with his mother and younger brother in 1915, when he was five. They joined his father, who worked on the docks and in the construction industry, in West Hoboken,

now part of Union City, Hudson County. About eight years later the father died, and Michael had to quit school. He worked in an aluminum factory and a gas station, fixed cars at Sears, and drove a truck. He was married in 1937. Retired, he lives in Weehawken, Hudson County, with his wife; their son lives nearby in Palisades Park, Bergen County.

**Doris Russell**, a thirty-year-old Afro-American, was born in Greenville, North Carolina. At age eleven she moved to Newark to join her mother, who had come north earlier. Soon after she finished high school she was married. She has worked in a clothing factory and served as a nurse's aide in a hospital, and now does typing and domestic work part-time. Her husband is a paint mixer for Sherwin Williams. They live in Newark with their four children.

**Celia Soloway**, a Jew, was born in 1900 in Vilna, (now the capital of the Lithuanian Republic, Soviet Union). At twelve she learned dress-making. She came to this country in 1922 with her mother and younger brother and sister. They settled in Brooklyn, joining her oldest sister and her husband. Mrs. Soloway worked in a factory making nightgowns for four years, then got married. She had a son and a daughter. A widow, she lives in West New York, Hudson County.

**Diodito Spina**, seventy-three, came to the United States from Italy when he was seventeen. In Jersey City, where he had a brother, he worked in factories making boxes, rubber hose, and other products. He returned to Italy in 1931 and came back to Jersey City a year later. He operated his own business for a while. Married in 1937, he has three children. Not yet retired, he lives in Jersey City.

**Max Teicher** was born in 1897 into a Jewish family in Turka in the Ukraine. When he was a boy his father, a tallith\* maker, had to stop working because his eyes failed and he could not afford glasses. Since Mr. Teicher could not earn enough in Turka to help his mother support the family, he moved to the United States when he was sixteen, planning to make money and bring the rest of the family over. He settled in New York City. He was married during World War I. For most of his life he was an agent for the John Hancock Insurance Company, while his wife worked in the garment industry. She and her sister started a women's sportswear factory in Newark; later, she and Mr. Teicher ran it together for about ten years. They had a son and a daughter. They

retired to Florida in 1962. Mr. Teicher died in 1975, aged seventy-eight, and Mrs. Teicher died several years later.

*(Mr. Teicher was not interviewed for this project. He tape-recorded many autobiographical stories in the last year of his life, and his son, Harvey Teicher, donated the tapes to us at the request of Leah Lifschitz, a project interviewer.)*

**Rosa Torres** is a forty-eight-year-old Puerto Rican. In 1951 she moved to Brooklyn to live with her uncle and aunt. She intended to study nutrition, but her uncle persuaded her that she should work first to help finance her education and bring her parents to the mainland. She took a job in a factory making women's slippers, but soon married a distant cousin and quit working to start a family. In 1968, she went back to work. She and her husband, a cook, live with their three children in Vineland, Cumberland County. She is a teacher's aide.

**Helen Brigit Tully**, forty-two, moved from her native Ireland to England when she was seventeen. She became a nurse and worked until 1961, when she came to this country for her sister's wedding and decided to stay. She worked in a hospital in Jersey City and at Greystone Park State Hospital in Morristown, Morris County. She married Thomas Tully in 1964. She and her husband, a teacher, live in Neptune, Monmouth County, with their five children.

**Emelda Villaman** was born September 16, 1931, in Santo Domingo, the capital of the Dominican Republic. Her father, a hotel manager, died when she was in her teens. She moved to this country at nineteen, after she finished training as a beautician. She stayed with an aunt in Brooklyn and styled wigs for dolls in a toy factory until she could bring her mother to the United States. In 1956 she married a Cuban and moved to New Jersey. She has a daughter who attends American University in Washington, D. C. She works as a beautician and lives in Union City, Hudson County. She is divorced, but plans to remarry.

**Helen Waring**, seventy-five, is the oldest of nine children of Andrew and Jemima Davidson of Brookershire, Scotland. After she quit school at fourteen she worked as a nursemaid and a grocery clerk. She and her father moved to this country in 1927 and settled in Kearny; he took a job at the nearby Clark Thread Mills and she found work as a domestic. In 1929 she married an Englishman who worked at the Ford Motor Company in Newark. She worked at the Clark Thread Mills until the

first of her three children was born. She lives in Kearny, Hudson County.

*(Helen Waring's sister, Isabella Malley, was interviewed for this project as well.)*

**Hilda Wolin**, fifty-nine, was born of Jewish parents in Frankfurt, Germany. She was raised in Essen, where her parents operated a small department store. Her father died when she was a child, and she and her brother were raised by governesses. At sixteen she finished a high-school secretarial course, but under the Nazis there were few jobs for Jews in Germany. Therefore, Mrs. Wolin did domestic work in Holland for a year. In 1938 the family moved to this country and settled in New York City. Mrs. Wolin worked as a nursemaid, then took a job in a clothing factory, where she stayed until she married a career serviceman in 1942. She was divorced ten years later. She has two children. She is a supervisor in a post office in New York City and lives in Parlin, Middlesex County.

## CAPSULE HISTORIES OF THE ETHNIC GROUPS

**Afro-Americans.** In 1980 the census counted about 26.5 million Afro-Americans (also called blacks or Negroes). They are one of the nation's largest ethnic groups. Their ancestors came from Africa south of the Sahara desert, particularly a 300-mile-wide strip along the west coast from Senegal to Angola.

The Afro-American experience began in 1619, when twenty blacks arrived at Jamestown, Virginia. Unlike other ethnic groups, blacks were brought here forcibly. In 1790 there were 757,000 Afro-Americans in the United States. Nearly 700,000 were held as slaves in various states, especially in the South; the rest were free.

The cotton gin, invented in 1793, enabled southern planters to raise ever-increasing amounts of cotton. As a result, they needed more and more slaves. Since the slave trade was outlawed in 1808, virtually cutting off the supply of new slaves from Africa, this demand was met mainly through childbirth. The number of slaves increased rapidly; the 1860 census listed almost 4 million slaves out of about 4.5 million Afro-Americans.

Slavery existed here for more than 200 years. Blacks protested against it in various ways, from running away to staging full-scale rebellions. The Thirteenth Amendment, which was adopted in 1865 as a result of the Civil War, abolished it.

From then until the turn of the century 90 percent of America's blacks stayed in the South. Many continued to farm, renting land in a system called sharecropping. They suffered new kinds of oppression: sharecrop-

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NOTE: We are indebted to the *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* for much of the material in these histories.

ping trapped them in endless debt, and Jim Crow laws restricted the activities of blacks in the city as well as the country.

Afro-Americans struggled against these injustices as they had against slavery. Some protested by migrating. They began their first massive movement from the South during World War I, when there was a sudden demand for their labor in northern industries. This exodus was interrupted by the Great Depression, but it resumed at the start of World War II and continued through the 1960s. Since 1970 almost half of all black Americans have lived outside the South, and about 90 percent have been in or near cities.

There have been blacks in New Jersey since the early colonial period. In this century southern blacks have moved here in large numbers; Afro-Americans are one of the state's largest ethnic groups, making up about 13 percent of the population. Most are in cities. There are black majorities in Camden, East Orange, Newark, Orange and Plainfield, and sizable black populations in Atlantic City, Elizabeth, Irvington, Jersey City, Paterson, Trenton, and other New Jersey cities.

**Cubans.** The 1980 census recorded about 600,000 persons of Cuban origin — the third largest group of Hispanics in the nation. Most came to the United States as refugees after Fidel Castro seized power in 1959 and started restructuring Cuban society. There have been three waves of Cuban immigration. The first began in 1959 and ended in 1962, when direct flights between Cuba and the United States were suspended; the second lasted from 1965, when an airlift was established, to 1972; the third was the "freedom flotilla" of 1979-80, when 130,000 refugees were admitted by special order of President Jimmy Carter.

The first wave consisted of professionals, managers, entrepreneurs, and other upper- or upper-middle-class people displaced by the socialist revolution. The later immigrants, especially the 1979-80 group, were less highly trained. Women predominated before 1979, but two-thirds of the 1979-80 group were male. Most Cubans have found semiskilled or skilled jobs, and about 20 percent are white-collar workers. A very few are agricultural workers. As a group, Cuban immigrants are older than most other Hispanics.

Although the Cubans are dispersed throughout the nation, about 70-75 percent live in Florida, New Jersey and New York. Forty percent live in Miami, and most of the rest live in Chicago, Jersey City, Los Angeles, Newark, New York City and Union City. West New York, New Jersey, also has a large Cuban community.

**Dominicans.** The Dominican Republic shares the Caribbean island of Hispaniola with Haiti. Most Dominican immigration is fairly recent. Dominicans leave home for the same reasons Mexicans and other people from the Caribbean basin do: overpopulation, poverty, unfair land distribution, inferior schools and little work. They can find more pay, better jobs and a higher standard of living here.

The United States has 300,000 residents of Dominican descent. Nearly two-thirds are first-generation. Until 1930 immigration was unrestricted; Congress placed no quotas on Western Hemisphere countries, and the Dominican Republic erected no barriers to departure. But when Raphael Trujillo became dictator in 1930 it became hard to leave, and few Dominicans moved to the United States until he died in 1961. The number of immigrants and visitors has soared since then.

Typically, one family member comes, establishes a foothold, and then sends for others. Dominicans resemble the nineteenth-century immigrants from many countries in that most of them come from rural areas and have little education and few job skills. Most find poorly paid jobs as unskilled workers in manufacturing or services. Some move on to skilled work or open small businesses. Only a small percentage are white-collar workers or professionals.

New York is home to about 70 percent of the Dominicans in the United States. Puerto Rico is second, but New Jersey is close behind. Most of the Dominicans in New Jersey are near New York City in Elizabeth, Jersey City, Newark and Paterson. Several other eastern cities, such as Boston, Miami, and Washington, also have significant Dominican populations.

**Estonians.** The Estonians, who are one of the smaller ethnic groups in the United States, come from a country northeast of the Baltic Sea. Culturally and socially, they resemble Scandinavians. Estonia was independent from 1918 until 1940, when it was annexed by the Soviet Union. It was occupied by Germany between 1941 and 1944 and reannexed by the Soviet Union in 1944. Today it is one of fifteen republics that constitute the Soviet Union.

Estonians began to arrive here in substantial numbers around 1900. There are no accurate figures before 1922, because immigration officials listed them as Russians, but somewhere between 70,000 and 200,000 were here in 1920. They lived in the industrial states of the Midwest, the Northeast, and the West Coast.

After the Soviets reannexed Estonia in 1944, many more fled. About 15,000 came to the United States between 1940 and 1965 and settled

in the Estonian communities that had already been established.

In 1970 more than half the Estonians in the United States lived in the Washington-Boston corridor. Fifteen percent lived in the Great Lakes region and 19 percent were on the Pacific Coast. Estonians have clustered in three parts of New Jersey: the Paterson-Teaneck area in the north, Lakewood in the center and Seabrook in the south.

**Finns.** Finns are the smallest Scandinavian group in the United States. In 1980 there were roughly 670,000 persons of Finnish descent in the country. Finns come from a land north of the Soviet Union on the Baltic Sea. The first Finns came here in the seventeenth century, but no major Finnish immigration took place before the Civil War. General Scandinavian immigration began in the 1840s, led by Norwegians and Swedes; Finns and Danes began to arrive in large numbers after the 1860s. Most Finns came between 1890 and 1920.

Finns had many reasons for emigrating. Some were political. Finland had once been a Swedish duchy, and a Swedish minority still owned most of the land and dominated commerce and government. The Russians, to whom Sweden had ceded the country in 1809, attempted to conscript Finns, reduce their independence, and make Russian the official language. Finns objected to these conditions, and also opposed the state-sanctioned Lutheran church, which controlled religion.

Other reasons were economic. Finland was affected by the same problems that troubled the rest of late nineteenth-century Europe. Work became scarce in rural areas, but the growing local textile industry was not expanding fast enough to absorb the jobless workers.

Finnish immigrants proved to be a fairly mobile labor force in this country. Most worked in fishing, lumbering, mining, construction, agriculture, textiles and domestic service. Generally the men lived in boarding houses; the women lived in the homes where they worked.

Finns belonged to religious organizations representing several varieties of Lutheranism. Mutual aid societies and labor unions also helped bind Finnish communities. Swedish-speaking Finns generally maintained separate associations.

Most Finns settled in the row of northern states from the Pacific Coast to the northeast, especially Michigan and Minnesota. New Jersey has a small Finnish population with identifiable communities in Bergenfield, Englewood, Bogota, Morristown, Newark and Jersey City in the north and Camden in the south.

**French-Canadians.** The 1.5 million persons of French-Canadian descent in the United States make up the nation's largest French-speaking ethnic

group. There have been some French-Canadians here since the American Revolution — primarily trappers, explorers and traders — but there was no major influx until the nineteenth century. Then, large numbers migrated, primarily from the province of Quebec. Most came between 1845 and 1895.

Like other places from which masses have emigrated, Quebec suffered from land shortages and had too few cities to absorb the extra population. In addition, after the 1840s, Canadian farms, mills, and lumber companies were forced to compete for British trade with their more efficient counterparts in the United States. Canadians had been able to count on the British market for much of their livelihood before then.

Since it was easy to travel to the U.S., many French Canadians immigrated to look for work. Many of these immigrants went back home after making some money. Others returned when the economy turned downward in the United States and improved in Canada. French-Canadian immigration has fluctuated widely, and French Canadians have exhibited a high rate of return.

Most settled in New England, but large numbers also made homes in Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Wisconsin and, more recently, California. New Jersey's small French-Canadian population is dispersed throughout the state.

French Canadians have worked in a variety of trades. Before 1860 many worked in agriculture, lumbering, or brickmaking. During the Civil War, many came as contract laborers in war-related industries. Later, French Canadians found ready employment in America's expanding industrial economy; they provided much of the work force in New England's textile plants, boot and shoe factories, mills, foundries and furniture factories.

**Germans.** There have been Germans in North America since the seventeenth century, but they did not begin to arrive in great numbers until after 1820. Since the colonial period more Germans have immigrated to the United States than any other ethnic group. Roughly 35 million Americans have some German ancestry.

About 6.9 million Germans came here between 1820 and 1970. Nearly 5 million arrived in the peak period from 1840 to 1900. They began emigrating in the 1820s because the Napoleonic wars and a series of poor harvests had disrupted the European economy.

During the following years they found a variety of other reasons to emigrate. Political repression drove liberals out in the 1830s and late 1840s, and forced socialists to flee in the 1880s. Religious intolerance drove out many non-Protestants in the 1870s. Some Germans left to avoid military conscription.



However, most Germans emigrated for economic reasons. The population rose until there were too many people for the land. At the same time German factories were undermining the cottage industries that helped many agricultural workers live, but were not able to offer jobs to everyone.

Most German immigrants came from the southern and southwestern German states. The majority were agricultural laborers and small farmers; the rest were mainly artisans, tradesmen and shopkeepers.

About one-third of the German immigrants were Catholic. Most of the rest adhered to the German Protestant churches — Lutheran, Evangelical, and Reformed. There were also Jews, Methodists and Pietists.

Though Germans scattered throughout the United States, most settled in the Mid-Atlantic and upper Midwestern states. Boston, Charleston, Chicago, Cleveland, New York City and Philadelphia all had large German communities. A great German triangle of settlement developed between the Mississippi and Ohio rivers, bounded by Cincinnati, Milwaukee and St. Louis. Germans worked at many of the same skilled occupations here as at home: tailoring, cigarmaking, cabinetmaking, retailing, mining, manufacturing, agriculture, baking, and brewing. Relatively few German women worked. Those who did generally chose to provide services — to be servants, laundresses, or bakers, for example — rather than work in factories or do clerical jobs that required English.

New Jersey attracted many Germans. German communities are scattered throughout the state, with heavy concentrations in Essex and Hudson counties. Hoboken, Jersey City, Newark, Union City, Weehawken, West Hoboken and West New York all have large German communities. Carlstadt (Passaic County), Egg Harbor City (Atlantic County) and Guttenberg (Hudson County) are predominantly German.

**Hungarians.** The Hungarians, or Magyars, are closer ethnically to the Finns, Estonians and Lapps of distant northern Europe than to their neighbors in Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Rumania and the Ukraine. There are perhaps one million persons of Hungarian descent in this country, but this figure is imprecise because national boundaries have shifted and immigration and census officials have been inconsistent. Hungarians were part of the wave of immigration from central and eastern Europe that lasted from the 1880s to World War I. Between 1899 and 1914 about 460,000 immigrated. Hungarians struggling to overcome debt, high taxes and irregular employment found the expanding economy of the industrial United States attractive.

These immigrants were drawn to northern Illinois and Indiana, eastern Ohio, western Pennsylvania, and West Virginia, where they could work in coal mining and the steel industry. Chicago, Cleveland, New York and Pittsburgh also acquired large Hungarian populations. Many Hungarian immigrants settled in New Jersey before World War I, especially in New Brunswick and Passaic. Hungarians also settled in Elizabeth, Irvington, Jersey City, Linden, Manville, Perth Amboy, South River, Trenton, Woodbridge, and elsewhere.

In later years Hungarian immigrants settled in the same places. About 60,000 have entered this country since World War II. The first 25,000 arrived just after the war as displaced persons or as refugees from Hungary's new Communist regime. The remaining 35,000 were among the 200,000 who fled Hungary after the failure of the Hungarian revolt of 1956.

**Irish.** From the colonial period to the First World War Ireland provided America with large numbers of immigrants. The Irish were the second largest immigrant group in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; only the Germans exceeded them.

Some Irish Catholics came to Virginia and the Chesapeake Bay area as servants in the seventeenth century. Many Protestants came in the eighteenth century; by 1790 about 40,000 Irish, half of them Catholic and half Protestant, had settled here.

Between 1820 and 1920 about 4.7 million Irish immigrants came. Four million, almost all Catholic, arrived during the nineteenth century, driven from home by overpopulation, high rents, tenant evictions, and a succession of bad harvests. Many came to escape the famine of 1845.

A smaller wave of Irish immigrants came in the 1920s. Another began in the late 1940s and lasted through the 1950s.

Most Irish immigrants settled in cities. The early settlers went to Baltimore, Boston, New York City, Philadelphia and Providence; later arrivals settled further west in Chicago, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, San Francisco and other cities. By 1870 the Irish outnumbered every other immigrant group in California. In 1880 a third of all Irish immigrants lived outside the Eastern Seaboard.

The Irish are unique among immigrant groups in that more women immigrated than men. Generally, the new arrivals found unskilled or semiskilled work. The men became laborers, soldiers, policemen, railroad workers and miners. The women worked mainly as domestics. The few skilled or white-collar workers tended to settle further west than the others.

The Irish have made up a significant portion of New Jersey's population for some time. They have large communities in Elizabeth, Jersey City, Newark, New Brunswick, Paterson and Trenton.

**Italians.** The Italians are one of the largest ethnic groups in the United States. More than five million have arrived since 1820, the vast majority between 1880 and 1920. Before 1860 most came from northern Italy; nearly 14,000 arrived between 1820 and 1860, the majority in the 1850s. Although they scattered throughout the nation, the largest numbers went to California and New York.

A massive emigration from southern Italy began in the 1880s. In 1860 Italy's many rival, independent states were united into a single nation. Southern Italian peasants supported unity and hoped to benefit from it, but were disappointed. There were too many people for the land, the agricultural economy was weak, and northern Italians controlled the country and discriminated against them.

The majority of the southern Italian immigrants were sojourners — young men who planned to work for one or two years and then return to Italy with the money they made. Between 1899 and 1924 about 3.8 million Italians entered the United States and 2.1 million returned to Italy. Immigration stabilized after 1900, when more women and children began to come.

Although they were peasants, most Italians settled in industrial areas and held a variety of jobs. Men worked in the clothing industry, the building trades, restaurants and other service occupations, and the fishing and shipping industries. Women took jobs in the garment, silk, artificial flower, candy, lace, and cigar industries. A few Italians became successful farmers — particularly the northern Italians in California.

Large Italian communities developed in industrial cities like Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Denver, Detroit, Kansas City, Milwaukee, New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and St. Louis. There are also many Italians in the states of Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island.

Italians are New Jersey's largest ethnic group. The state has significant Italian populations in its main industrial cities — Camden, Hoboken, Jersey City, Newark, Paterson, Trenton and Union — and in its southern agricultural areas, especially in and around Vineland.

**Japanese.** One of America's largest Asian ethnic groups is the Japanese. In 1980 there were 791,000 people of Japanese descent in the United States.

Significant immigration began in the 1890s to supply cheap labor in agriculture, railroad building, mining and other industries. In 1890 there were twelve thousand in Hawaii and three thousand on the mainland, mostly in California. In 1920 there were 220,000 in the country; half of these, mostly first-generation immigrants, were on the mainland, particularly on the West Coast. In all, nearly 300,000 entered the country between 1891 and 1924, but some remigrated.

The Japanese faced considerable racial hostility. Discriminatory laws denied citizenship to them and limited their property rights severely. In 1924 the Japanese, along with other alien groups, were denied entry altogether.

In the early 1940s, after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, there was a wave of hysteria against the Japanese on the West Coast. More than 110,000 were unconstitutionally confined in concentration camps on the allegation that they posed a threat to national security. Hawaiian Japanese were not detained.

New Jersey had few Japanese until the end of World War II, when 3,000 people from the detention camps accepted jobs at Seabrook Farms in the southern part of the state. This was the only concentration of Japanese on the East Coast. Japanese immigration resumed in the 1970s. The 1980 census reported that there were approximately 10,000 Japanese in New Jersey.

**Jews.** The Jewish ethnic group is one of the largest in America. It is also one of the very few whose members did not come here from a specific geographical area. It is impossible to find out exactly how many Jews have immigrated because they were counted in the statistics for the countries they came from.

There have been Jews in the New World since the seventeenth century, though there were not many until the middle of the nineteenth. Most of the early arrivals were Sephardic Jews from Spain or Portugal. Millions of Ashkenazi Jews came during the mass European migrations of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Three more groups have arrived since the 1930s.

More than 250,000 Jews immigrated before 1880, mostly from Germany or the German-speaking parts of Central Europe. Generally young and unmarried, these immigrants settled in cities across the United States and worked in many of the same occupations they had had in Europe: tailoring, small-scale merchandising, shoemaking, and peddling.

These immigrants adapted quickly to middle class life in the United States. Jewish communities developed along the peddlers' distribution

network: in Chicago, Cincinnati, Milwaukee, New Orleans, St. Louis, San Francisco and elsewhere. By the 1850s Jews were involved in meatpacking, shoe manufacture and large-scale retailing.

Between 1880 and 1920, 2.7 million Jews came to the United States from eastern Europe — Russia, Poland, Austria-Hungary and Rumania — where the laws had forced them to settle in designated areas, limited their economic activities, and allowed their neighbors to persecute them intensely. These immigrants settled in the large cities of the Northeast and Midwest. They supplied the garment industry and other trades with skilled workers, and immigrant neighborhoods with small shops and businesses.

The flow of Jewish immigrants slowed greatly in the 1920s, when the United States imposed drastic quotas. But three separate Jewish immigrant groups have arrived since then: victims of Nazi persecution, Israelis, and Russian Jews.

Although immigration was reduced to a trickle during the Great Depression, about 150,000 Jewish refugees came from Nazi Germany during the 1930s. These were generally well-educated business people or professionals, most of whom settled in New York, Chicago, San Francisco or other large cities. The Depression made it difficult for them to resume their old professions, but most eventually established themselves.

About 300,000 Israelis have arrived since Israel was established in 1948, the majority since the late 1960s. They have come for the same kind of reasons as many other groups. They want to find economic opportunity, to live less austere than at home, or to avoid military duty and war. Half of these immigrants, including New Jersey's sizable Israeli community, are in metropolitan New York. The rest have settled in large cities such as Chicago and Los Angeles.

The other recent Jewish immigrant group is from the Soviet Union. About 130,000 have arrived, mostly since 1969, when Soviet emigration policy changed.

In 1970 New Jersey's Jewish population was 400,000. Almost 6 percent of the state's total population were Jews, and nearly 7 percent of all the Jews in the United States lived in New Jersey. Seventy-five percent of New Jersey's Jewish population lives in the corridor that runs from Middlesex County north through Bergen County, but other large Jewish communities have formed in Trenton, Camden and along the shore.

New Jersey is one of the few states in which Jews established farming colonies. The first of these colonies was established in the 1880s. They were located in the southern counties in Alliance, Farmingdale, Woodbine

and several other communities. They thrived for many years, though now most of them have gone out of existence.

**Norwegians.** Norwegians began to immigrate in the 1820s as part of the great influx from northern Europe. About 800,000 Norwegians came here between 1820 and 1924, most of them after 1840. Nearly 60 percent arrived in three decades: the 1860s, the 1880s and the 1900s.

In the nineteenth century Norway's population increased sharply and good farmland grew scarce. Most of the immigrants were peasants attracted by high wages and cheap land, which promised to make them socially and economically independent.

Until the 1880s most Norwegian immigrants established farms in the upper Midwest, especially in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa and the Dakotas. After that, craftsmen, seamen, and unskilled laborers from Norwegian cities predominated. These later immigrants, joined by the children of earlier ones, traveled further west. Many settled on the Northwest Coast and worked in fishing, lumbering, and shipbuilding. Another community developed on the East Coast around the shipping industry.

There are substantial Norwegian communities in Brooklyn, Chicago, Minneapolis, and Seattle, as well as the smaller cities of Sioux City, Iowa; Duluth, Minnesota; Fargo, North Dakota; and Eau Claire and La Crosse, Wisconsin. In New Jersey most Norwegians have settled in Camden, Jersey City, Newark and Paterson.

**Poles.** The more than five million Americans of Polish descent are one of the country's largest ethnic groups.

Although there have been Poles here since the early seventeenth century, large numbers did not arrive until the mid-nineteenth century. About 2.5 million came during the mass migration from central and eastern Europe of 1850-1920. Most were from Polish lands that had been seized by Germany, Austria and Russia in the eighteenth century. Those from German-held territories came mainly before 1890. Most Austrian Poles came after 1890, most Russian Poles after 1900.

Early Polish emigrants were usually political exiles, but in the nineteenth century most had economic motives. Eastern Europe was still heavily agricultural. There was very little industry, and land represented security. But the population was increasing, the agricultural economy was slumping, and small farms were being gathered into larger and more efficient estates; as a result, many peasants had to leave the land. Some found work in mining and industry, but many emigrated.

There were also religious reasons. Many nineteenth-century Poles



emigrated to escape the "Kulturkampf" (literally, "culture struggle"), which was a German campaign to weaken the Catholic Church in territory the Germans controlled.

Poles have continued to come here since World War I, though in smaller numbers. Poland was politically turbulent between 1920 and 1950, there was internal chaos in the 1920s, the Germans occupied the country during World War II, and a communist regime took power after the Russians drove the Germans out. During this period 260,000 Poles came to the United States.

Arriving Polish immigrants knew a good deal about their new country, largely because earlier immigrants had written them in Poland. They settled in the rapidly expanding urban and industrial centers of the Middle Atlantic and Midwest, where the mills, foundries, slaughterhouses and mines offered employment. The largest Polish community developed in Chicago. Other major communities grew up in Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit, Milwaukee, Minneapolis-St. Paul, New York City, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Omaha, St. Louis and Toledo.

In New Jersey, Poles settled mainly in the urban-industrial belt of Passaic, Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Union and Middlesex counties. Bayonne, Camden, Elizabeth, Jersey City, Newark, Paterson and Trenton all have sizeable Polish communities.

**Puerto Ricans.** The island of Puerto Rico has been a United States possession since the Spanish-American War in 1898. Puerto Ricans are American citizens subject to American law, but they cannot vote, have no voting representation in Congress, and pay no federal income tax.

About 1.5 million Puerto Ricans have moved to the United States mainland, most of them Catholic. This migration began in the 1820s, but did not reach major proportions until the end of World War II. Puerto Ricans came here for many reasons. Unemployment was high at home, transportation to the mainland was cheap, travel was unrestricted, and there was an established Puerto Rican community here.

More than half the immigrants settled in New York City, which has more Puerto Ricans than San Juan, Puerto Rico's capital and largest city. Other large communities are in Boston, Los Angeles, Miami, San Francisco, and several cities in New Jersey.

Generally, Puerto Rican immigrants are young and unskilled. Most arrived just as the cities were beginning to lose the kind of industrial jobs that sustained previous immigrant groups.

New Jersey ranks second to New York in the size of its Puerto Rican population. Camden, Elizabeth, Hoboken, Jersey City, Newark, Passaic,

Paterson, Perth Amboy and Trenton have large Puerto Rican communities. There are also significant numbers of Puerto Ricans in Atlantic City, Dover, Lakewood, Long Branch, New Brunswick, and the farming region around Vineland in Cumberland County.

**Scots.** Scots are one of the largest American ethnic groups; the 1980 Census recorded more than ten million people of Scottish descent. There were Scots in New Jersey and South Carolina as early as the seventeenth century. Probably most early Scottish immigrants were Highlanders, and many were transported criminals or religious and political refugees.

Scots began to arrive in large numbers around 1850. Most were textile workers, steel workers, masons and miners from the industrialized Lowlands. Scotland suffered continuing economic depression during much of the nineteenth century, and many Scots emigrated. Most went to Canada until 1870, after which most came to the United States. Between the 1850s and World War I nearly 480,000 Scots moved here.

Immigration dropped during World War I but resurged sharply afterward. Severe unemployment, particularly in textiles and heavy industry, drove nearly 160,000 Scots to come to America during the 1920s. During the Great Depression, however, Scots stopped immigrating and many returned home.

Economic conditions in Scotland improved, and immigration to the United States never grew large again. Since 1950 some Scots have emigrated, but relatively few have come to this country.

The overwhelming majority of Scottish immigrants were Presbyterian. Scots helped establish the Presbyterian church in America and took it wherever they settled.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Scottish immigrants settled in the Mid-Atlantic area, the South, and to a lesser extent, New England. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries they have settled in New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and other Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states, as well as in the Midwest and on the Pacific Coast.

The largest numbers of people of Scottish birth or parentage in 1980 were in California, Texas and Pennsylvania. New Jersey ranked thirteenth. The Scots in New Jersey have clustered in the northern urban centers of Essex, Hudson, Passaic and Union counties.

**Slovaks.** Slovaks come from the Carpathian mountains. Their region was once part of the Kingdom of Hungary and is now part of eastern Czechoslovakia. About 40 percent of the population of Czechoslovakia is Slovak.

The Slovaks were one of several Slavic peoples that joined the mass migration from eastern and southern Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. More than one-half million Slovaks came to the United States; the Poles were the only Slavic group that came in greater numbers.

The Slovaks, like most others emigrating in the late nineteenth century, left home for economic reasons. The population of Slovakia increased dramatically between 1720 and 1840, especially in the east, leaving most of the peasants landless. Since the Hungarian rulers did not want industry and opposed land reform, emigration was the only choice for survival.

Most Slovak immigrants were peasants. Until World War I, many more men came than women. A large majority intended to return to Czechoslovakia once they had made their fortunes; they settled in the industrial Northeast and Midwest, where the coal mines, steel mills and oil refineries offered steady employment. About half traveled back and forth to Czechoslovakia, but most finally settled in this country.

Most of the first generation remained unskilled workers. Their children became skilled workers, and the third and fourth generations have abandoned heavy industry and the industrial cities for white-collar jobs and the suburbs.

Half of the Slovak population settled in Pennsylvania, the rest in Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, New York, New Jersey and Ohio. In New Jersey the Slovaks are concentrated in the industrial areas of Boonton, Carteret, Clifton, Elizabeth, Jersey City, Linden, Newark, Passaic, Perth Amboy, Trenton and West Paterson.

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Marilda Paquette

Astrid Henning

Mildred Arnold

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## GLOSSARY

**assimilate:** To be absorbed into the cultural traditions of a society or group; to adapt or adjust.

**Austro-Hungarian Empire:** A multinational, multilingual state that existed in eastern Europe from 1867 to 1918. It was created by Franz Joseph, Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary, and was dissolved at the end of World War I. Germans, Austrians, and Magyars dominated its politics, but its population included the Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Serbs, Croatians, Slovenes, Ruthenians, and many Rumanians. When it was dissolved it had about 50 million subjects. It was broken into several independent countries, including Austria, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia. The Rumanian regions were returned to Rumania.

**exodus:** An emigration or mass departure.

**indentured servant:** A person who contracts to work for another for a specified time, usually in exchange for transportation, food, clothing, and shelter.

**Mussolini:** Benito Mussolini (1883-1945), the political leader of Italy from 1922 to 1943. As leader of the Italian fascists, he exercised dictatorial powers. His highly centralized government suppressed political opposition, severely regimented Italy's economy and society, and glorified the nation and the race. He allied Italy with the Germans in World War II, and fell from power when it became obvious that the war was lost. He was executed by his countrymen on April 28, 1945.

**Nisei:** A child of Japanese immigrants who is born and raised in America, especially the United States. The word is a compound of the Japanese terms for "second" and "generation." Immigrants from Japan are called

*Issei* (from “first generation”). The children of Nisei parents are called *Sansei* (from “third generation”).

**paisan:** The Italian word for *countryman*. Italians use it to designate fellow Italians.

**peddler:** One who sells merchandise in the street or door-to-door.

**Seabrook Farms:** A company in Deerfield Township, Cumberland County, that produced food products from 1912 to 1982, when its parent company closed it. A pioneer producer of frozen vegetables, it became the world’s largest farming-freezing operation. After World War II its founder, Charles F. Seabrook, recruited workers from groups the war had victimized. Many Japanese-Americans from American detention camps and many war refugees from European displaced-persons camps took jobs at Seabrook Farms, making it a distinctly multiethnic community.

**stoop labor:** The hand work and frequent bending required to cultivate and harvest certain crops, such as vegetables.

**stucco:** A building material similar to concrete. It is plastered over the outside walls of a building to form a hard covering.

**sugar beet:** A vegetable grown for the sugar in its roots.

**tallith** (pronounced “tallis”): A fringed prayer shawl traditionally worn by Jewish men during worship.



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