Room Three: Work and Economic Integration

Law and Politics

Italian-Americans, especially those born in the United States quickly found success in both Californian law and politics. Augustus Splivalo was the first Italian American to be elected to the state assembly in 1870. His success was surpassed by Anthony Caminetti, who was the first American-born Italian elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1891. Caminetti went on to serve President Wilson as the Commissioner of Immigration in 1913. Angelo Rossi successfully moved from his flower shop to the Mayor’s office of San Francisco in 1931, and he held that position until 1944.

Since World War II, prominent San Francisco Italian-American politicians have included Joseph Alioto, who was elected mayor of San Francisco in 1967, and George Moscone, who was elected mayor and then assassinated in 1975. At the state level, Bob Moretti was the first Italian-American to be chosen speaker of the Assembly in 1971, and Edward Panelli was the first to be elected to the California State Supreme Court.