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After World War II, Americans' educational attainment and standard of living rose in tandem. Hence, many economists concluded that more education brought both personal prosperity and national economic growth. Economist Edward Denison of the Brookings Institution attributed 20 percent of U.S. productivity gains between 1948 and 1973 to increased schooling.

But contradictory evidence also exists. Economic growth has been highest in the South, where local schools are poorest. Michigan, whose public schools and universities are among the nation's best, has suffered chronic unemployment (an average rate of 9.2 percent since 1970). Abroad, such economic successes as Japan and West Germany badly trail the United States in average levels of formal education. In 1979, 5.2 percent of the U.S. population was attending college, compared to 1.9 percent in West Germany and 2.1 percent in Japan.

The trouble, says Samuelson, is that "no one really knows how much formal schooling is necessary to sustain a suitable work force or, for that matter, precisely what skills it requires."

The question of what makes an effective school is equally perplexing. A recent study of 30 elementary schools by Gilbert Austin of the University of Maryland suggests, however, that successful schools share these common features: strong principals, parents actively engaged in their children's education, firm discipline, and high teacher expectations of their pupils' performance.

"To a considerable degree," concludes Samuelson, "education is and must be an act of faith." Schooling cannot be regarded "as a mechanical process leading to automatic rewards." Schools, he believes, "are being asked to cure problems of employment and economic stagnation . . . beyond their power to remedy." The old danger remains: Citizens of a nation confused about what schools *can* provide always risk being disappointed by what they get.

Black Income Vs. Black Wealth

"Wealth and Economic Status" by William P. O'Hare, in *Focus* (June 1983), Joint Center for Political Studies, 1301 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W., Suite 400, Washington, D.C. 20004.

Americans usually compare the relative well-being of whites and blacks by looking at statistics on annual income. Measuring personal wealth—real estate, stocks, bonds—yields a slightly different picture.

The good news, according to O'Hare, a Joint Center for Political Studies researcher, is that, nationwide, blacks narrowed the "wealth gap" during the last two decades. While black families' incomes hovered at about 60 percent of that of white families between 1967 and 1979, their wealth doubled in comparison to whites'. The bad news: The wealth gap remains wider than the income gap. At \$24,608 in 1979, the average wealth of black families was still only 36 percent of that of white families (\$68,891).

Viewed another way, black households in 1979 held assets equal to

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2.5 times their annual income; white households had amassed wealth equal to four years' income.

O'Hare cites a study of 7,000 families by economists Robert B. Pearl and Matilda Frankel to show where the two groups had their assets in 1979. Home ownership absorbed 46 percent of blacks' wealth but only a third of whites'—blacks had little money remaining for other "nonessential" investments. Another 21 percent of black and 15 percent of white assets were in rental housing. Household goods and vehicles accounted for 24 percent of black wealth; four percent of blacks' money and 13 percent of whites' was invested in small businesses or farms.

Only seven percent of black wealth was in the form of financial assets—stocks, bank accounts—and 22 percent of black households (1.9 million) had no such assets at all, not even a checking account.

PRESS & TELEVISION

Washington's Elite Beats

"The Golden Triangle: The Press at the White House, State, and Defense" by Stephen Hess, in *The Brookings Review* (Summer 1983), 1775 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

About 150 reporters regularly cover Washington's high-status "Golden Triangle"—the White House, State Department, and Pentagon. Although many have worked on two or even three of these prestigious beats, each of the three news contingents is different. Why? Because of the nature of the institutions they cover.

So argues Hess, a Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution. Under current practice, most of the roughly 75 print and TV newsmen who cover the President, for example, are those who covered his election campaign. The recent high turnover in the Oval Office is mirrored in the White House pressroom. The result, says Hess, is a press corps of "high energy and low historical memory."

These campaign-oriented reporters have not covered past presidents, and thus have no predecessor against whom to measure "their man"; they tend to see White House policy decisions chiefly in terms of domestic political impact and often give short shrift to substantive issues.

State Department reporters, by contrast, are often seasoned pros. They have to be. The department employs 42 full-time press officers and hosts a daily briefing for reporters. But due to the traditional secrecy shrouding diplomacy, Hess says, the prevailing official attitude around Foggy Bottom is that "ideally there should be no news at all."

Newsmen on the State beat learn "nuance journalism," a subtle system of code words, cues, and even body language from which they must infer what is happening. (An example: "No comment" usually means "yes"; "can neither confirm nor deny" might mean "yes.") Hess wor-