

The Emergence of Urban America

- ❖ **How did immigration affect the growth of the modern city?**
 - ❖ **What led to the rise of powerful reform movements?**
 - ❖ **What was the impact of Darwinian thought on the social sciences?**
 - ❖ **What were the literary and philosophical trends of the late nineteenth century?**
- **The United States experienced urban transformation**
 - Age of great cities, population boom, more than half lived in urban areas by 1920
 - **Distinctive urban culture created by rise of big cities**
 - Heterogeneous population in cities
 - Jobs, wealth, excitement
 - **New social problems**
 - Poverty, political corruption, quality of life issues
 - Increasing prevalence of segregation

America's Move to Town

- **Good jobs and social excitement lured workers**
- Contrast between rural and urban life became sharper

Explosive Urban Growth

- **The frontier was a societal safety valve—historian Frederick Turner**
 - Cheap lands offered release for population pressures
 - **The flow of population toward cities was greater than the flow toward the West**
- **Spawning of new towns, railroads, mines in the West and South**
 - San Francisco, Los Angeles
 - Minneapolis, Omaha, Kansas City, Denver
 - Birmingham, Durham, Houston
- **While Far West had greatest proportion of urban population, Northeast had greater number of people**
 - City dwellers were increasingly homeless—could only offer labor
- **Technological advancements allowed cities to expand vertically**
 - Heating systems, electric elevator, cast-iron, steel-frame
- **Cities also expanded horizontally**
 - Cable cars, steam-powered trains, electric trolleys, subways
- **Spread of mass transit allowed large number of people to become commuters**
 - **Growing middle class retreated to suburbs**
 - Urban growth usually became a sprawl
- **Use of railways, cable cars, trolleys helped transform social character**
 - Before, people of all classes lived and worked together in the central city
 - **Emergence of suburbs segregated people according to economic standing**
 - Poorer districts had more crime

The Allure and Problems of the Cities

- **Rural youth were attracted by wonder of city life**
 - Thousands left for city during rural depressions
 - **Exodus from countryside was especially evident in the East**
- **Those who moved to the city often traded one set of problems for another**
 - No choice but to live in crowded apartments
 - Designers forced to build upward due to cramping
 - In New York City, result was **dumbbell tenement houses**
 - Tightly packed, dumbbell appearance from overhead, tiny air shafts, poor heating and ventilation, fire hazard
- **Early tenements were poorly heated, communal toilets outside, no privacy, no free space, infectious diseases, odor**
 - Mortality rate among urban poor was higher than general population

City Politics

- **Sheer size of cities helped create new form of politics**
 - A need grew for central organization to coordinate citywide services
 - Urban political machines developed—local committeemen, district captains, political boss
 - Bosses granted patronage and services—distributed food, coal, money, sponsored English classes, helped newcomers adjust to their new life
 - Political professionals felt entitled to some reward for having done the grubby work

Cities and the Environment

- **19th century urban communities were generally filthy**
 - Garbage, contaminated water, manure, pigs, untreated sewage
 - Epidemics of water-related diseases: cholera, typhoid, yellow fever
 - Horse carcasses from drawn carriages
- **Late 19th century: municipal reformers organized clean-up**
 - Goal was to improve appearance, and to remove causes of disease
 - “sanitary reformers” urged government
 - By 1900, 94% of cities had developed regular trash-collection services
- **Social and ecological trade-offs of public health improvements**
 - Waste dumped into waterways
 - Rural populations had to deal with urban waste sent downstream
- **Horse-manure problem involved trade-offs as well**
 - Urban horse manure had benefits: fertilizer
 - Human waste used as fertilizer too
- **Development of public health improvements separated most people from their sources of food**
 - “Flush and forget” mentality
 - Carrying capacity of waterways was not understood
 - Algal blooms suffocated fish

The New Immigration

- **Industrial Revolution brought waves of immigrants**
- Newcomers provided labor, but created racial tensions

America's Pull

- **Rural Europeans moved to urban America**
- **Ethnic neighborhoods preserved familiar folkways**
 - 1890: 4 of 5 New Yorkers were foreign-born
 - 1893: Chicago had largest Bohemian population in the world
- **Immigrants took flight from famine, racial, political, religious persecution, military service**
 - More immigrants pulled by America than pushed by home
 - American industries sent recruiting agents abroad
 - **Contract Labor Act of 1864:** federal government encouraged immigration by helping pay immigrant's passage—repealed in 1868 but general effects lasted within company's until 1885
- **Immigration peaked in 1900-1910**
- **Before 1880 immigrants were mainly from northern and western Europe**
 - **By 1890, Slavs and Jews from southern and eastern Europe rose**
 - Italians, Hungarians, Czechs, Serbs, Russians, Greeks

Ellis Island

- **Immigrant receiving center experience corruption**
- **Congress ordered investigation in response to increasing reports on corruption**
 - Resulted in closure of Castle Garden in 1890
 - New Bureau of Immigration took over
- **Congress funded construction of a new reception center on Ellis Island**

Making Their Way

- **Immigrants were immediately desperate for work**
- They weren't accustomed to America—exploited
 - **Padrones** were Greek and Italian agents that came to dominate labor market in New York
- **Immigrants gravitated to ethnic neighborhoods**
 - Little Italy, etc. Served as transitional communities
 - Housing and sanitation codes went unenforced

Nativist Response

- **Saw immigrants as threat to life and jobs**
- Threat to traditional culture of America
- Suspicious that criminals were coming from Europe
- **Mainly anti-Catholic and anti-Semitic sentiments**
 - **American Protective Association (APA)—devoted to stopping flow of immigrants**
 - Depression led many to join APA—blame on immigrants
 - APA promoted more strict naturalization requirements, refusal of Catholics, "American" language

Immigration Restriction

- **Representative Henry Lodge** took up cause of excluding illiterate foreigners

- Presidents vetoed bills on the basis that they penalized for lack of opportunity—not just
 - Cleveland, Taft, Wilson all vetoed, but Congress overrode the last
- **Proponents of immigration restriction did succeed in excluding Chinese**
 - Denis Kearney, leader of Workingmen’s party, was mainly against them
 - Chinese accepted low wages
- **1882, Congress overrode Arthur’s veto of Chinese Exclusion Act:** shut the door to Chinese immigrants for ten years
 - Overwhelming support, periodically renewed before ending in 1902—barriers removed in 1943
- **West Coast counterpart to Ellis Island was the Angel Island**
 - Processed mostly Asian immigrants
 - Chinese Exclusion Act did not stop flow completely

Popular Culture

- **Influx of people into large cities created new patterns of leisure**
 - Rural areas were tied to rituals of harvest
 - Most urban families were mobile nuclear
 - Most leisure time spent at home—piano, novels, cards, dominoes, chess, checkers
- **In congested areas, politics became as much a form of entertainment as a means of providing civic representation and public service**
 - People flocked to hear candidates give speeches
 - Membership in political party was like membership to a club
 - Labor unions were more social in nature than economic
 - Mass entertainment such as traveling shows

Vaudeville

- **Growing family incomes and innovations in transportation allowed more people to take advantage of urban life**
 - Theaters, operas, dance halls
 - Most popular and diverse form of theatrical entertainment: **vaudeville**
 - Play accompanied by music, emerged in saloons
- **Vaudeville variety shows featured comedians, singers, musicians, minstrels, jugglers, magicians, etc.**
 - All social classes were attracted
 - Middle-class standards of decorum were understood
 - Reflected heterogeneity of city life

Saloon Culture

- **Most popular destinations for working-class Americans in free time were saloons and dance halls**
 - More saloons than grocery stores by 1900
 - Sponsored by beer brewers, frequented by politicians
- **Saloons provided much more than food and drink**
 - Especially popular among male immigrants seeking friends
 - Served as busy social hubs, local political machines
 - Primary elections and political caucuses conducted in saloons

- **Men went to saloons to learn about jobs, engage in labor-union activities, cash paychecks, mail letters, read newspapers, gossip**
 - Served as places of refuge for poor people
 - Most saloons included gymnasiums
 - Group singing was especially popular activity
- **Saloons were definitely male enclaves**
 - Main bar was for men only
 - Some provided “snugs”—small rooms for female patrons
- **Saloons aroused intense criticism**
 - Anti-liquor societies such as Women’s Christian Temperance Union and Anti-Saloon League
 - Charged that saloons contributed to alcoholism, crime, etc.
 - Demanded that they be closed down
 - Saloon was the social and intellectual center of a neighborhood

Outdoor Recreation

- **Congestion and disease associated with city life led many people to participate in outdoor recreation intended to improve health**
 - Movement to create urban parks—New York’s Central Park in 1858 designed by Frederick Olmsted
 - City parks were more than recreational centers: promoted social stability and cohesion
 - Harmonizing influence
- **Parks offered more vigorous forms of exercise and recreation**
 - Before Civil War, women essentially had only one exercise option: pedestrianism
 - After Civil War, women enrolled in colleges in growing numbers, began to participate in physical education
- **Croquet and tennis courts were among the first additions to city parks—required little space and maintenance**
 - Played by both sexes
 - Tennis was seen as feminine
- **Cycling was more popular**
 - Bicycle craze swept the country by end of the century
 - Especially popular with women—exercise, freedom, access
 - Bloomers and split skirts
- **Urban working poor could not afford bike or croquet**
- Not as much free time either
 - Sought recreation on street corners
 - Musicians
 - Germans and Irish formed male singing groups and drinking groups
 - Also attended boxing matches and baseball games
- Large-scale amusement parks by the end of the century—Coney Island in Brooklyn

Workingwomen and Leisure

- **Leisure activities of working-class women was limited**
 - Burden of housework, little free time
 - Could not afford domestic help or sitters—led to combination of work and entertainment
 - Washing clothes, supervising children, shopping at market provided opportunities to socialize

- **Single women had more opportunities for leisure than working mothers**
 - Average workday declined—working people had more free time
 - Women flocked to dance halls, theaters, amusement parks, picnic grounds
 - Coney Island, movie theaters
- **Young single women participated in urban amusements for a variety of reasons**
 - Escape, pleasure, companionship, autonomy
 - Romance and sexual relationships
 - Parental and societal concerns tried to restrict freedom of single women

Spectator Sports

- **New spectator sports such as college football and basketball gained mass popularity**
 - Reflected growing urbanization of life
 - News of games could be conveyed quickly by newspapers
 - Unified ethnic groups, encouraged bets
- **Football emerged as a modified form of soccer and rugby**
 - Princeton and Rutgers played the first college football game in 1869
- Basketball invented in 1891 by James Naismith of YMCA
 - Goal was to create an indoor winter game
- **Baseball laid claim to being America’s national pastime at midcentury**
 - Alexander Cartwright invented it
- First professional teams was Red Stockings of Cincinnati
 - 1900: American League organized
 - Most democratic sport in America
 - All social classes attended games
- **Only white players allowed in major leagues**
 - African Americans played in minor league—Cuban Giants
- Sports became big part of national life
- Athletic craze, first modern Olympic Games held in 1893

Education and the Professions

The Spread of Public Education

- **Spread of public education was spurred by Americanization efforts**
- **Spread of secondary schools accounted for much of the increased enrollment in public schools**
 - Number of high schools grew
 - Emphasis on higher math, classical languages—vocational training, arts of typing, tools, bookkeeping

Vocational Training

- **Vocational training was most intensely promoted after the Civil War by missionary schools for African Americans in the South such as Hampton Institute**
 - Congress supported vocational training
 - **Morrill Act of 1862** granted each state 30,000 acres per congressman—income supplied agricultural teaching and mechanical arts
 - **Land-grant colleges**

- 1890 Second Morrill Act

Higher Education

- **Colleges sought to instill discipline and morality**
 - Stress on math and classics along with ethics and rhetoric
- **Demand for higher education led to increase in student population**
 - To accommodate diverse needs, colleges moved toward elective courses
 - **Henry Cabot Lodge** complained that electives allowed escape without learning
- **Colleges remained mainly male bastions**
 - Women's access improved
 - Vassar opened in 1865—first women's college to teach at same standards as male colleges
 - Wellesley and Smith colleges—Smith was first to set same admission requirements
- **Dominant new trend in higher education was rise of the graduate school**
 - Training was more focused
 - German system
 - **John Hopkins University** set precedent by making graduate work chief concern

Theories of Social Change

- **Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species***
 - Argued that existing species evolved through natural selection
- **Impact of the idea of species evolution**
 - Challenged religious views
 - Contradicted bible
 - Professional scholars urged critical interpretation of the bible
 - Some viewed evolution as divine will

Social Darwinism

- **Application of evolutionary theory to the social world**
 - **Herbert Spencer**: first major prophet of social Darwinism
 - Argued that human society also passed through natural selection—survival of the fittest
 - **Social society naturally evolved for the better**
 - **Implied government hands-off**
 - Hands-on would help the unfit
 - **Successful businessmen were engines of social progress**
- Idea spread quickly—*Popular Science Monthly*
- **Graham Sumner was the disciple of Spencer**—advocated social Darwinism in *Folkways*

Reform Darwinism

- **Efforts to promote “rugged individualism”**
 - **Lester Frank Ward**—*Dynamic Sociology* insisted that human brain also evolved
 - Minds shaped social revolution
 - **Argued that humanity could control progress—challenged Spencer's ideas**
 - **Cooperation, not competition would bring success**
 - **Government could become an agent of progress by:**

- Ameliorating poverty
- Develop education

Pragmatism

- **William James:** *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking*
 - Shared Lester Ward's focus on the role of ideas
 - Pragmatists believed that ideas gained validity from truth of social consequence
 - Reflected American inventiveness and experimental spirit
- **John Dewey:** instrumentalism—ideas were instruments for action
 - Unlike James, he was involved in movements for peace, education, women, labor

The Local Colorists

- Different responses to changes in life and thought
 - Local-color movement: favored times before distinction between rural and urban
 - **Sarah Orne Jewett** *The Country of the Pointed Firs*: admired parents' generation

Clemens

- **Mark Twain:** best of local colorists, found universal truths in common life
 - First great American writer born and raised west of the Appalachians
 - *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

Literary Naturalism

- **New literary school of naturalism**
 - Young rebels who imported scientific determinism into literature
 - Internal drives of humans—no control or understanding
- **Stephen Crane:** *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* and *The Red Badge of Courage*
 - Portrayed people in uncontrollable environments
- **Jack London and Theodore Dreiser**
 - **London** was socialist and believed in Nietzsche's doctrine of superman
 - *The Call of the Wild, The Sea Wolf*
 - Triumph of brute force
 - **Dreiser** presented protagonists who sinned without remorse
 - *Sister Carrie, The Financier, the Titan*

Social Criticism

- **Naturalists harbored intense outrage at human misery and injustice**
- **Henry George:** shocked by contrast between wealth and poverty, wrote *Progress and Poverty*
 - Held that everyone had equal right to land use
 - Proposed to tax the "unearned" increment of land, rent
- **Thorstein Veblen:** *The Theory of the Leisure Class* examined monetary values of middle class
 - Argued that property became the basis of reputation
 - Businessmen's interest in profit produced wasteful organization

The Social Gospel

- **More and more people took action to address social problems**
 - Legislative solutions, charity, philanthropic solutions
 - Socialism, anarchism

The Rise of the Institutional Church

- **Churches responded slowly**
- **Henry Ward Beecher**: Plymouth Congregational Church, social Darwinist, unworthiness of poor
- Where churches became prosperous, they fell easily under the spell of social Darwinism
- **Many churches responded to human need**
 - YMCA, Salvation Army—founded in UK
 - Institutional features—were more social than strictly religious
 - Gyms, libraries, lecture rooms, social facilities

Religious Reformers

- **Church leaders who felt declining influence of Christianity preached social gospel**
 - **Washington Gladden**: true Christianity lies in the principle that God is a savior
 - Argued for labor's right to organize, Christianity in the workplace
- **Intellectual leader of social-gospel movement was Walter Rauschenbusch**
 - *Christianity and the Social Crisis*—basis for the movement in kingdom of God
 - The church is one social institution alongside the family

Early Efforts at Urban Reform

The Settlement-House Movement

- **Dedicated reformers attacked problems of residential and community issues**
- **Residential community centers called settlement houses**
 - Settlement houses were staffed mainly by middle-class idealists
 - Settlement workers sought to improve lives
 - **Hull-House**: Jane Addams rejected “do-goodism,” pragmatism
 - Addams led effort to improve life—education, nursing
 - Hull-House sponsored facilities
- **Settlement-house leaders realized that spreading slums made their work difficult**
 - They therefore organized political support for housing laws, etc.
 - Lillian Wald promoted establishment of federal **Children's Bureau in 1912**
 - Jane Addams worked for peace movement—Nobel Peace Prize in 1931

Women's Employment and Suffrage

- **Settlement-house workers made up employed women**
- **Women population increased, women in labor force increased—greatest leap in 1880s to 1900s**
 - Clerical work given to women
- **Changes in occupational status**
 - **Susan B. Anthony**: demanded that 15th Amendment guarantee vote for women *and* black men
- **1869: unity of women's movement was broken up**

- Focus on question of whether movement should be specific or overriding
- **Susan B. Anthony and Cady Stanton founded National Women Suffrage Association** to promote women's suffrage amendment, other activists formed American Women Suffrage Association
- **Merged into National American Women Suffrage Organization**
 - Movement achieved local and partial victories as few states granted women's suffrage
 - Women's suffrage lost in California
 - 1917 New York accepted last
- **California Senator A. A. Sargent introduced bill—Anthony amendment**
- YWCA—parallel to YMCA—appeared everywhere in Boston.
- New England Women's Club started by Julia Howe
- General Federation of Women's Clubs
 - Literary and social activities
- New York Consumers' League and National Consumers' League
 - Sought to make buying public aware of labor conditions
 - "White List" of firms
- The National Women's Trade Union League aimed to bring educated and working-class women together with workingmen
- Those in the South generally opposed national women's suffrage

Toward a Welfare State

- **States adopted measures to regulate big business and labor conditions in public interest**
 - Regulation of railroads, supervision of banks, and regulation of insurance companies
 - Limiting hours required of workers
 - Limiting or forbidding child labor
- **In thwarting new regulatory efforts, Supreme Court used a interpretation of 14th Amendment**
 - Forbid states to deprive life, liberty, property
 - **Principle of substantive due process enabled judges to overturn laws that deprived persons of property to an unreasonable degree**
 - **Court also derived doctrine of "liberty of contract"—right to be free**
- **Slow erosion of laissez-faire**
- **From Reformers, social gospelers, Populists emerged idea of general welfare state**
 - No blueprint for welfare utopia