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# Chapter 25 - America Moves to the City

## I. The Urban Frontier

1. From 1870 to 1900, the American population doubled, and the population in the cities tripled.
2. Cities grew up and out, with such famed architects as Louis Sullivan working on and perfecting skyscrapers (first appearing in Chicago in 1885).
  - The city grew from a small compact one that people could walk through to get around to a huge metropolis that required commuting by electric trolleys.
  - Electricity, indoor plumbing, and telephones made city life more alluring.
3. Department stores like Macy's (in New York) and Marshall Field's (in Chicago) provided urban working-class jobs and also attracted urban middle-class shoppers.
  - Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* told of a woman's escapades in the big city and made cities dazzling and attractive.
  - However, the move to city produced lots of trash, because while farmers always reused everything or fed "trash" to animals, city dwellers, with their mail-order houses like Sears and Montgomery Ward, which made things cheap and easy to buy, could simply throw away the things that they didn't like anymore.
4. In cities, criminals flourished, and impure water, uncollected garbage, unwashed bodies, and droppings made cities smelly and unsanitary.
  - Worst of all were the slums, which were crammed with people.
  - The so-called "dumbbell tenements" (which gave a bit of fresh air down their airshaft) were the worst since they were dark, cramped, and had little sanitation or ventilation.
5. To escape, the wealthy of the city-dwellers fled to suburbs.

## II. The New Immigration

1. Until the 1880s, most of the immigrants had come from the British Isles and western Europe (Germany and Scandinavia) and were quite literate and accustomed to some type of representative government. This was called the "Old Immigration." But by the 1880s and 1890s, this shifted to the Baltic and Slavic people of southeastern Europe, who were basically the opposite, "New Immigration."
  - While the southeastern Europeans accounted for only 19% of immigrants to the U.S. in 1880, by the early 1900s, they were over 60%!

## III. Southern Europe Uprooted

1. Many Europeans came to America because there was no room in Europe,

nor was there much employment, since industrialization had eliminated many jobs.

- America was also often praised to Europeans, as people boasted of eating everyday and having freedom and much opportunity.
  - Profit-seeking Americans also perhaps exaggerated the benefits of America to Europeans, so that they could get cheap labor and more money.
2. However, it should be noted that many immigrants to America stayed for a short period of time and then returned to Europe, and even those that remained (including persecuted Jews, who propagated in New York) tried very hard to retain their own culture and customs.
    - However, the children of the immigrants sometimes rejected this Old World culture and plunged completely into American life.

#### **IV. Reactions to the New Immigration**

1. The federal government did little to help immigrants assimilate into American society, so immigrants were often controlled by powerful “bosses” (such as New York’s Boss Tweed) who provided jobs and shelter in return for political support at the polls.
2. Gradually, though, the nation’s conscience awoke to the plight of the slums, and people like Walter Rauschenbusch and Washington Gladden began preaching the “Social Gospel,” insisting that churches tackle the burning social issues of the day.
3. Among the people who were deeply dedicated to uplifting the urban masses was Jane Addams, who founded Hull House in 1889 to teach children and adults the skills and knowledge that they would need to survive and succeed in America.
  - She eventually won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931, but her pacifism was looked down upon by groups such as the Daughters of the American Revolution, who revoked her membership.
  - Other such settlement houses like Hull House included Lillian Wald’s Henry Street Settlement in New York, which opened its doors in 1893.
  - Settlement houses became centers for women’s activism and reform, as females such as Florence Kelley fought for protection of women workers and against child labor.
  - The new cities also gave women opportunities to earn money and support themselves better (mostly single women, since being both a working mother and wife was frowned upon).

#### **V. Narrowing the Welcome Mat**

1. The “nativism” and anti-foreignism of the 1840s and 1850s came back in the 1880s, as the Germans and western Europeans looked down upon the new Slavs and Baltics, fearing that a mixing of blood would ruin the fairer Anglo-Saxon races and create inferior offspring.
  - The “native” Americans blamed immigrants for the degradation of the urban government. These new bigots had forgotten how they had been scorned when they had arrived in America a few decades before.
  - Trade unionists hated them for their willingness to work for super-low wages and for bringing in dangerous doctrines like socialism and communism into the U.S.
2. Anti-foreign organizations like the American Protective Association (APA) arose to go against new immigrants, and labor leaders were quick to try to stop new immigration, since immigrants were frequently used

as strikebreakers.

3. Finally, in 1882, Congress passed the first restrictive law against immigration, which banned paupers, criminals, and convicts from coming here.
4. In 1885, another law was passed banning the importation of foreign workers under usually substandard contracts.
5. Literacy tests for immigrants were proposed, but were resisted until they were finally passed in 1917, but the 1882 immigration law also barred the Chinese from coming (the Chinese Exclusion Act).
6. Ironically in this anti-immigrant climate, the Statue of Liberty arrived from France—a gift from the French to America in 1886.

## **VI. Churches Confront the Urban Challenge**

1. Since churches had mostly failed to take any stands and rally against the urban poverty, plight, and suffering, many people began to question the ambition of the churches, and began to worry that Satan was winning the battle of good and evil.
  - The emphasis on material gains worried many.
2. A new generation of urban revivalists stepped in, including people like Dwight Lyman Moody, a man who proclaimed the gospel of kindness and forgiveness and adapted the old-time religion to the facts of city life.
  - The Moody Bible Institute was founded in Chicago in 1889 and continued working well after his 1899 death.
3. Roman Catholic and Jewish faiths were also gaining many followers with the new immigration.
  - Cardinal Gibbons was popular with Roman Catholics and Protestants, as he preached American unity.
  - By 1890, Americans could choose from 150 religions, including the new Salvation Army, which tried to help the poor and unfortunate.
4. The Church of Christ, Scientist (Christian Science), founded by Mary Baker Eddy, preached a perversion of Christianity that she claimed healed sickness.
5. YMCA's and YWCA's also sprouted.

## **VII. Darwin Disrupts the Churches**

1. In 1859, Charles Darwin published his *On the Origin of Species*, which set forth the new doctrine of evolution and attracted the ire and fury of fundamentalists.
  - "Modernists" took a step from the fundamentalists and refused to believe that the Bible was completely accurate and factual. They contended that the Bible was merely a collection of moral stories or guidelines, but not sacred scripture inspired by God.
2. Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll was one who denounced creationism, as he had been widely persuaded by the theory of evolution. Others blended creationism and evolution to invent their own interpretations.

## **VIII. The Lust for Learning**

1. A new trend began in the creation of more public schools and the provision of free textbooks funded by taxpayers.
  - By 1900, there were 6,000 high schools in America; kindergartens also multiplied.
2. Catholic schools also grew in popularity and in number.
3. To partially help adults who couldn't go to school, the Chautauqua movement, a successor to the lyceums, was launched in 1874. It included public lectures to many people by famous writers and

extensive at-home studies.

4. Americans began to develop a faith in formal education as a solution to poverty.

## **IX. Booker T. Washington and Education for Black People**

1. The South, war-torn and poor, lagged far behind in education, especially for Blacks, so Booker T. Washington, an ex-slave came to help. He started by heading a black normal (teacher) and industrial school in Tuskegee, Alabama, and teaching the students useful skills and trades.
  - However, he avoided the issue of social equality; he believed in Blacks helping themselves first before gaining more rights.
2. One of Washington's students was George Washington Carver, who later discovered hundreds of new uses for peanuts, sweet potatoes, and soybeans.
3. However, W.E.B. Du Bois, the first Black to get a Ph.D. from Harvard University, demanded complete equality for Blacks and action now. He also founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1910.
  - Many of DuBois's differences with Washington reflected the contrasting life experiences of southern and northern Blacks.

## **X. The Hallowed Halls of Ivy**

1. Colleges and universities sprouted after the Civil War, and colleges for women, such as Vassar, were gaining ground.
  - Also, colleges for both genders grew, especially in the Midwest, and Black colleges also were established, such as Howard University in Washington D.C., Atlanta University, and Hampton Institute in Virginia.
2. The Morrill Act of 1862 had provided a generous grant of the public lands to the states for support of education and was extended by the Hatch Act of 1887, which provided federal funds for the establishment of agricultural experiment stations in connection with the land-grant colleges.
3. Private donations also went toward the establishment of colleges, including Cornell, Leland Stanford Junior, and the University of Chicago, which was funded by John D. Rockefeller.
4. Johns Hopkins University maintained the nation's first high-grade graduate school.

## **XI. The March of the Mind**

1. The elective system of college was gaining popularity, and it took off especially after Dr. Charles W. Eliot became president of Harvard.
2. Medical schools and science were prospering after the Civil War.
  - Discoveries by Louis Pasteur and Joseph Lister (antiseptics) improved medical science and health.
  - The brilliant but sickly William James helped establish the discipline of behavioral psychology, with his books *Principles of Psychology* (1890), *The Will to Believe* (1897), and *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902).
    - His greatest work was *Pragmatism* (1907), which preached what he believed in: pragmatism (everything has a useful purpose).

## **XII. The Appeal of the Press**

1. Libraries such as the Library of Congress also opened across America, bringing literature into people's homes.
2. With the invention of the Linotype in 1885, the press more than

kept pace with demand, but competition sparked a new brand of journalism called “yellow journalism,” in which newspapers reported on wild and fantastic stories that often were false or quite exaggerated: sex, scandal, and other human-interest stories.

3. Two new journalistic tycoons emerged: Joseph Pulitzer (New York World) and William Randolph Hearst (San Francisco Examiner, et al.).

d. Luckily, the strengthening of the Associated Press, which had been established in the 1840s, helped to offset some of the questionable journalism.

e. Hi Mrs. Kelly!

### **XIII. Apostles of Reform**

1. Magazines like Harper’s, the Atlantic Monthly, and Scribner’s Monthly partially satisfied the public appetite for good reading, but perhaps the most influential of all was the New York Nation, launched in 1865 by Edwin L. Godkin, a merciless critic. These were all liberal, reform-minded publications.
2. Another enduring journalist-author was Henry George, who wrote Progress and Poverty, which undertook to solve the association of poverty with progress.
  - It was he who came up with the idea of the graduated income tax—the more you make, the greater percent you pay in taxes.
3. Edward Bellamy published Looking Backward in 1888, in which he criticized the social injustices of the day and pictured a utopian government that had nationalized big business serving the public good.

### **XIV. Postwar Writing**

1. After the war, Americans devoured “dime-novels” which depicted the wild West and other romantic and adventurous settings.
  - The king of dime novelists was Harland F. Halsey, who made 650 of these novels.
  - General Lewis Wallace wrote Ben Hur: A Tale of the Christ, which combated the ideas and beliefs of Darwinism and reaffirmed the traditional Christian faith.
2. Horatio Alger was even more popular, since his rags-to-riches books told that virtue, honesty, and industry were rewarded by success, wealth, and honor. His most notable book was titled Ragged Dick.
3. Walt Whitman was one of the old writers who still remained active, publishing revisions of his hardy perennial: Leaves of Grass.
4. Emily Dickinson was a famed hermit of a poet whose poems were published after her death.
5. Other lesser poets included Sidney Lanier, who was oppressed by poverty and ill health.

### **XV. Literary Landmarks**

1. Other famous writers:
  - Kate Chopin, wrote about adultery, suicide, and women’s ambitions in The Awakening.
  - Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens) wrote many books, including The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Roughing It about the wild West, The Gilded Age (hence the term given to the era of corruption after the Civil War) and The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County.
  - Bret Harte wrote California gold rush stories.
  - William Dean Howells became editor in chief of the Atlantic Monthly and wrote about ordinary people and sometimes-controversial social themes.

- Stephen Crane wrote about the seamy underside of life in urban, industrial America (prostitutes, etc.) in such books like *Maggie: Girl of the Street*.
  - He also wrote *The Red Badge of Courage*, a tale about a Civil War soldier.
- Henry James wrote *Daisy Miller* and *Portrait of a Lady*, often making women his central characters in his novels and exploring their personalities.
- Jack London wrote about the wild unexplored regions of wilderness in *The Call of the Wild*, *White Fang*, and *The Iron Heel*.
- Frank Norris's *The Octopus* exposed the corruption of the railroads.
- Paul Laurence Dunbar and Charles W. Chesnutt, two Black writers, used Black dialect and folklore in their poems and stories, respectively.

## **XVI. The New Morality**

1. Victoria Woodhull proclaimed free love, and together with her sister, Tennessee Claflin, wrote *Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly*, which shocked readers with exposés of affairs, etc.
2. Anthony Comstock waged a lifelong war on the "immoral."
3. The "new morality" reflected sexual freedom in the increase of birth control, divorces, and frank discussion of sexual topics.

## **XVII. Families and Women in the City**

1. Urban life was stressful on families, who were often separated, and everyone had to work—even children as young as ten years old.
  - While on farms, more children meant more people to harvest and help, in the cities, more children meant more mouths to feed and a greater chance of poverty.
2. In 1898, Charlotte Perkins Gilman published *Women and Economics*, a classic of feminist literature, in which she called for women to abandon their dependent status and contribute to the larger life of the community through productive involvement in the economy.
  - She also advocated day-care centers and centralized nurseries and kitchens.
3. Feminists also rallied toward suffrage, forming the National American Woman Suffrage Association in 1890, an organization led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton (who'd organized the first women's rights convention in 1848 at Seneca Falls, NY) and Susan B. Anthony.
4. By 1900, a new generation of women activists were present, led by Carrie Chapman Catt, who stressed the desirability of giving women the vote if they were to continue to discharge their traditional duties as homemakers in the increasingly public world of the city.
  - The Wyoming Territory was the first to offer women unrestricted suffrage in 1869.
  - The General Federation of Women's Clubs also encouraged women's suffrage.
5. Ida B. Wells rallied toward better treatment for Blacks as well and formed the National Association of Colored Women in 1896.

## **XVIII. Prohibition of Alcohol and Social Progress**

1. Concern over the popularity (and dangers) of alcohol was also present, marked by the formation of the National Prohibition Party in 1869.
  - Other organizations like the Women's Christian Temperance Union also rallied against alcohol, calling for a national prohibition of the beverage.

- Leaders included Frances E. Willard and Carrie A. Nation who literally wielded a hatchet and hacked up bars.
  - The Anti-Saloon League was also formed in 1893.
- 2. The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was formed in 1866 to discourage the mistreatment of livestock, and the American Red Cross, formed by Clara Barton, a Civil War nurse, was formed in 1881.

## **XIX. Artistic Triumphs**

1. Art was largely suppressed during the first half of the 1800s and failed to really take flight in America, forcing such men as James Whistler and John Singer Sargent to go to Europe to study art.
2. Mary Cassatt painted sensitive portraits of women and children, while George Inness became America's leading landscapist.
3. Thomas Eakins was a great realist painter, while Winslow Homer was perhaps the most famous and the greatest of all. He painted scenes of typical New England life (schools and such).
4. Great sculptors included Augustus Saint-Gaudens, who made the Robert Gould Shaw memorial, located in Boston, in 1897.
5. Music reached new heights with the erection of opera houses and the emergence of jazz.
6. Thomas Edison invented the phonograph, which allowed the reproduction of sounds that could be heard by listeners.
7. Henry H. Richardson was another fine architect whose "Richardsonian" architecture was famed around the country.
  - The Columbian Exposition in 1893, in Chicago, displayed many architectural triumphs.

## **XX. The Business of Amusement**

1. In entertainment, Phineas T. Barnum (who quipped, "There's a sucker born every minute," and "People love to be humbugged.") and James A. Bailey teamed up in 1881 to stage the "Greatest Show on Earth" (now the Ringling Bros. and Barnum and Bailey Circus).
2. "Wild West" shows, like those of "Buffalo Bill" Cody (and the markswoman Annie Oakley who shot holes through tossed silver dollars) were ever-popular, and baseball and football became popular as well.
3. Baseball emerged as America's national pastime.
4. Wrestling gained popularity and respectability.
5. In 1891, James Naismith invented basketball.

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