

AP US History

Chapter 17 - Industrial Supremacy

Finn Frankis

Key Concepts

What are this chapter's key concepts?

- **6.1.1.C** - ↓ prices for goods → ↑ worker wages → ↑ std. of living, access to new goods, but also ↑ gap betw. rich/poor
- **6.1.1.A** - Cities brought Asian/S. and E. European/Afr. American migrants to escape poverty, religious persecution, restricted social mobility
- **6.2.1.B** - Urban neighborhoods formed for specific ethnicities/races/classes
- **6.2.1.C** - International migration → debates over assimilation w/ many immigrants finding compromise
- **6.2.1.D** - Govt. thrived by providing social services to immigrants/poor in cities w/ unequal power distribution
- **6.2.1.E** - Corporations needed managers/clerical workers → middle class w/ leisure time
- **6.3.1.C** - Artists/critics like agrarians, utopians, socialists, Social Gospel advocates emphasized different visions for U.S. society

The Urbanization of America

What characterized the growing urban migrations to America?

Immigrants, attracted to cities on new transportation lines for new opportunities, consisted in part of rural women and Southern blacks; most, however, were international migrants from Europe. They formed ethnic communities encouraging specific cultural values and reminders of home. Most immigrants sought to assimilate as "Americans"; many were forced by the conditions of American society. The nativist movement continued, but politicians never came to a united front.

What was most attractive about cities to migrants?

- Throughout nation, cities grew significantly w/ majority in urban areas by 1920
- Natural ↑ insignificant due to higher infant mortality, disease, reduced fertility rate; most were rural migrants seeking for new opportunities and safety
 - Women able to behave in ways shunned by countryside for impropriety
 - Gay men/lesbian women able to build growing culture (but still mostly hidden)
 - Jobs far more plentiful, better-paying
- Transportation far more rapid: railroads and ocean liners → competitive shipping, easy transportation

Cities grew primarily due to immigrants from other regions taking advantage of rapid railroad or ocean transportation to find new, more prosperous job opportunities or to find cultural havens to support lifestyles deemed improper in the countryside.

What characterized the migrations to cities?

- Urbanization → great geographical mobility w/ countless departing agricultural regions of East (some to West, but many to East/Midwest cities)
- Young rural women departed farms for cities because mechanization → increasingly dominated by single men; most home-produced goods available in widespread quantities
- Southern blacks departed to escape oppression, violence, debt, poverty despite limited opportunities in factory/professional work
 - Generally janitors, domestic servants, low-paying jobs; women often outnumbered men
 - Several cities established African-American communities, but most Afr. American migration occurred post-WWI
- Largest source of pop. growth: immigrants from abroad; Europe was greatest source
 - S./E. Europeans (Italians, Greeks, Slavs, Slovaks, Russian Jews, Armenians, etc.) came in largest numbers
 - Most earlier N. European migrants had been wealthy/educated (like Germans/Scandinavians), but limited wealth of new migrants → mainly settled in cities as unskilled laborers

Several young rural women as well as southern blacks departed for cities to escape a changing job market offering them increasingly fewer opportunities; however, the majority of population growth came from immigrants, of which Eastern and Southern Europe were the greatest sources.

What characterized the ethnic communities within cities?

- Several cities had majority of pop. foreign-born immigrants + children; group greatly diverse within itself
 - Most countries dominated by Italian/Spanish migrants but U.S. had no dominating group
- Most struggled to adapt to urban life → ethnic communities formed to re-create features from homelands
 - Sometimes ppl. from same province/town/village; often more diverse but always offered familiar settings (like newspapers in native languages, stores w/ native foods, religion, chance to communicate w/ relatives)
 - Some groups advanced more rapidly than others (like Jews, Germans), perhaps due to ethnic neighborhoods enforcing specific cultural values (like Jews and education)

With most U.S. cities characterized by a large, very diverse group of foreign-born immigrants, ethnic communities often formed, offering their inhabitants a unique taste of culture from their homelands and eased the transition from rural to urban lifestyles. They are one explanation for the prosperity of certain groups over others (like the Jews compared to the Irish).

How did immigrants assimilate to city life?

- Nearly all immigrants relatively young (15-45), faced conflict between ethnic roots and assimilation
- Most sought to become "Americans" w/ many first-generation immigrants actively losing old culture, even more second-generation; often shunned parents who preserved old values
- Male-female relations far more liberal in U.S. than in many other nations → several families struggled with reduced control over daughters/wives, but family structures remained strong
- Assimilation often encouraged by native-born Americans w/ English at school/work, majority of stores selling American products, foreign church leaders encouraging American ways to attract native-born Americans

Most immigrants to America sought assimilation, often ridding themselves of past cultural ties to become "true Americans." Assimilation often conflicted with ingrained beliefs, notably the increasing American liberality of women. Assimilation was often a necessity: English remained essential, and diets and clothing habits often had to be adapted to align with what was accessible.

How did some exclude immigrants?

- Nativism continued w/ scorn for Europe on East Coast, Asia on West Coast due to fear of losing jobs
 - Henry Bowers formed xenophobia/conspiracy-based **American Protective Association** to stop immigration w/ membership 500k by 1894
 - Harvard alumni formed sophisticated **Immigration Restriction League** requiring literacy tests and other methods
- Politicians struggled w/ question of immigration: Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, later "undesirables" banned along with tax, literacy requirement passed but vetoed in 1897
 - Conflicted due to many native-born Americans welcoming cheap labor sources

The nativist movement scorned new immigrants and attempted to exclude them through literacy tests and xenophobic organizations. Politicians never came to a united front on immigration; although the Chinese Exclusion Act as well as some immigrant taxes were passed, most were unable to bypass the desire of several Americans for cheap labor.

The Urban Landscape

What were the major characteristics of how cities were laid out?

Cities were generally known for expansive public spaces like parks, libraries, and art galleries; reconstruction projects were undertaken to revamp old neighborhoods. The wealthiest lived in fashionable districts of the city; the moderately wealthy lived in suburbs and commuted to work; the vast majority lived in densely packed buildings with low rent and poor living conditions. New transportation systems developed, notably the cable car and the elevated railway, to serve the needs of the masses; skyscrapers began to emerge after the Civil War.

How did cities begin to develop public spaces?

- Urban parks reflected goal to limit congestion of city, starting w/ Olmsted/Vaux w/ Central Park to serve as truly natural contrast
- Buildings like libraries, museums, theatres, concert halls, art galleries developed as centers of culture and knowledge
 - Driven by wealthiest inhabitants of cities, seeking to produce city fit for their lifestyle
 - Philanthropy often drove even to create parks; had positive effects on cities overall
- Growing size → large rebuilding projects like in older Euro. cities to wipe out old neighborhoods, create more elegant areas
 - Most notable: "Great White City" for Chicago World's Fair; symmetrical city surrounding lagoon to contrast widespread assumption of disorder
 - 1850s Boston: marshy tidal land filled in over 50 yrs. to create "Back Bay," landfill producing new neighborhood
 - Several other cities followed by filling in lakes to combat limited space; NYC relied more on expanding territory

Parks brought a natural contrast to city life, most notably New York's Central Park; furthermore, the philanthropic efforts of the wealthy, often out of a desire to create a more refined city, led to several public buildings like libraries and art galleries. Larger-scale rebuilding projects were undertaken too, with new land being annexed, old neighborhoods being torn down, and lakes being filled in.

How did the wealthy find suitable housing accommodations?

- Wealthiest lived in central mansions in central parts of city, like Nob Hill of SF, Fifth Avenue of NYC, Back Bay of Boston
- Moderately wealthy expanded to suburbs, relying on cheaper land to purchase larger properties, transportation systems like streetcars/trains to reach downtown
 - "Streetcar suburbs" popular in Boston, Chicago
 - Suburbs emphasized potential to own large tracts of land

Although society's wealthiest lived in dedicated "fashion districts" in the city centers, the moderately wealthy members of society generally flocked to the suburbs for the cheap land and easy transportation to the city.

How did workers and the poor find housing accommodations in cities?

- Most urban residents rented apartments from landlords seeking to squeeze as many into small space → high density, but high demand → little bargaining power
- Little money invested to improve housings: profits were easy to come by; Southern cities known for Afr. Americans living in former slave quarters, narrow brick houses
- "Tenement": used to refer to slum dwellings despite advertising practical and cheap design; often windowless, lacking plumbing, cramming several into a room
- **Jacob Riis**, Danish immigrant/NY reporter publicized poor conditions of slums; few could find viable, low-cost alternatives

The lower classes generally rented from landlords, who squeezed several into single units and invested little money for improvement: tenements, common in New York, were slum dwellings often lacking windows or plumbing. Few could find a viable solution without raising costs.

How did transportation systems connect the nation?

- Urban growth → great challenges w/ old streets narrow, dusted, muddy; paving unable to keep up with expansion
- Large volume of ppl. → need for mass transit
 - Horse-driven streetcars too slow to be viable
 - 1870: NYC opened elevated railway w/ filthy yet rapid trains speeding through city; cable cars soon explored
 - 1897: Boston opened first subway by moving some trolley lines underground
 - **John A. Roebling** completed the Brooklyn Bridge in NYC in the 1880s

Urban growth led to significant transportation challenges; the large volume of traffic meant that mass transit had to be explored. The most viable methods were elevated railways and cable cars; the subway grew in popularity by the turn of the century.

How did the skyscraper begin to advance in relevance?

Cities began to grow upward soon after the Civil War, with new cast iron and steel beam techniques emerging by the 1870s and elevators emerging by the 1850s. The Equitable Building of New York was 7.5 stories, and the tallest building grew significantly in the coming years.