

American Urbanization & the Gilded Age

A. Immigration

1. Millions immigrated to the U.S. throughout both the 19th & early 20th century due to *push factors* (things that compel people to leave their homes) like famine, war, or persecution & *pull factors* (things that draw people to a new place) like economic opportunity or religious freedom
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
2. American immigration came in two waves, categorized as “*old*” *immigrants* & “*new*” *immigrants*
 - a. “*Old*” *immigrants* came from 1800 to 1880, which numbered more than 10 million
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - (3)
 - b. “*New*” *immigrants* came from 1880 to 1910, which numbered more than 12 million
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - (3)
3. Most “*new*” *immigrants* stayed in the cities to be close to factory jobs & often lived in ethnic neighborhoods with people who shared their native language, religion, & culture
 - a. In many cities, settlement houses ran *Americanization* programs that helped newcomers learn English & adopt American dress & diet
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - b. Due to “*new*” *immigrants* larger numbers, different religions, cultures, jobs, & associations with the mounting problems of urban

areas, some Americans viewed them with suspicion & discriminated against them

(1)

(2)

- c. Due to such views, laws were passed to limit the immigration of some ethnic groups, most notably the ***Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882*** (prohibited immigration by Chinese laborers, limited Chinese immigrants civil rights, & forbade the naturalization of Chinese residents)

B. The Rise of Urban Society

1. In the late 19th century, America experienced a period of ***urbanization*** where the number of cities & those living there increased dramatically

- a. The nation's major cities were manufacturing & transportation centers mainly in the Northeast, on the Pacific Coast, & along waterways of the Midwest

(1)

(2)

- b. Prior to the growth of cities, architects could not design buildings much higher than 10 stories, but the advent of the steel frame allowed for the development of ***skyscrapers*** (large, multistory buildings) that accommodated the sprawling urban populations

(1)

(2)

- c. With ***mass transit*** (public systems that could transport large numbers of people fairly inexpensively), workers no longer had to live within walking distance of jobs or markets, which led to the growth of ***suburbs*** (residential neighborhoods on the outskirts of a city)

(1)

(2)

2. Leisure activities started playing a more dominate role in American society with numerous types of activities that originated during this era

- a. In 1857, Frederick Law Olmsted designed New York's 2.5-mile-long Central Park, which offered a rural retreat from the crowded city
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - b. Several methods came about to begin to feed the hunger many city dwellers had for entertainment & excitement
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - (3)
 - c. During the late 1800s, many became introduced to & accustomed to watching & playing organized sports like baseball, football, basketball, & boxing
3. Increases in literacy rates after the Civil War, led to increased reading as a leisure activity
- a. U.S. daily newspaper publications increased nearly 400% from 1865 to 1910, which led to great competition among newspapers to sell copies
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - b. **Yellow Journalism** was characterized by running sensational & many times, fabricated news stories to sell copies & using this type of journalism saw a fierce competition between newspapers owned by **Joseph Pulitzer & William Randolph Hearst** that constantly trying to outdo each other
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - c. Other types of popular literature also experienced growth during this time period
 - (1)
 - (2)

C. Political Machines & Governmental Corruption

1. American cities were unprepared for the incredible growth they experienced during the late 19th century, which resulted in the lack of needed public services like police & fire protection, clean water supplies, utility systems, sewage disposal, & unpaved streets littered with trash
 - a. With city governments needing to supply these services, an alliance between businesses & politicians resulted, which often fostered corruption
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - (3)
 - b. Such occurrences were by no means isolated incidents with many city officials during the Gilded Age practicing *graft* as a means to increase their incomes
 - (1)
 - (2)
2. Most major cities were dominated by *political machines* (unofficial political organizations designed to keep a certain political party in power) with political *bosses* that dictated the party's positions on city ordinances & made deals with business leaders to make money for themselves & *machine* members
 - a. By political *bosses* offering jobs, political favors, & services to local residents, *political machines* gained & maintained support
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - (3)
 - b. Probably no other *political boss* abused his power more than "**Boss**" *William M. Tweed* of the *Tammany Hall* political machine in NYC, which with his ring members gained bribes & kickbacks that totaled about \$200 million between 1865 & 1871
 - (1)

(2)

3. While President Ulysses S. Grant was personally honest, the worst misconduct at the national level occurred during his administrations
 - a. In 1869, some executives of the Union Pacific Railroad had formed a dummy construction company (known as *Crédit Mobilier*), which was wrongly credited with completing the last 600 miles of the transcontinental railroad that swindled Union Pacific stockholders & the federal government out of more than \$20 million
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - b. Also in 1869, a couple speculators that had enlisted the help of Grant's brother-in-law, attempted to corner the nation's gold market
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - c. In another scandal (known as the *Whiskey Ring*), several liquor distillers bribed officials in the Dept. of Treasury to receive cheaper tax rates, which resulted in more than 100 officials being convicted

D. Civil Service Reform

1. The feeling that the *spoils system* (system where politicians awarded government jobs to loyal party workers, with little regard for their qualifications) corrupted government prompted several prominent figures to promote *civil service reform*
 - a. With *civil service reform*, it was intended that most government workers would get their jobs due to their expertise & maintain them regardless of which political party won the election
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - b. Many proponents of the *spoils system* felt that without it, they would not be able to attract the people needed to run their parties

2. In July 1881, President James A. Garfield was shot by Charles J. Guiteau, who thought he deserved a political appointment for articles wrote in favor of Garfield during the election
 - a. While probably mentally insane, Guiteau reasoned that if Garfield would not give him a government job, then he would kill him so that Vice President Chester A. Arthur, a known defender of the spoils system, would become president & then give him a political appointment
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - b. The *Pendleton Civil Service Act of 1883* said that the President must appoint federal jobs according to rules laid down by a bipartisan Civil Service Commission
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - c. Following the passing of the *Pendleton Act*, the *spoils system* continued to a much lesser extent, with more deserving candidates sometimes being overlooked if they were not of the right political party

E. The Populist Era

1. From 1870 to 1900, farmers faced several problems, like severe weather conditions, droughts, falling prices, high interest rates, & discriminatory railroad freight rates
 - a. Most farmers had borrowed money to pay for more land or to buy new equipment so they could raise more crops & animals to sell to the growing urban populations
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - b. For farmers to better their situations, they needed to either lower their costs or decrease the amounts of their loans, which led several farmers to organize cooperatives that allowed them to pool their resources so equipment could be bought cheaper & final products sold for more
 - (1)

- (2)
 - c. Conceding to the demands of many farmers, the federal government established the *Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC)* to regulate the railroads, which guaranteed farmers cheaper railroad rates when transporting their goods using the railways
2. The **Populist Party** was organized in 1892 when discontented southern & western farmers realized that neither major party would enact their proposals
 - a. The *Populist Party* called for a graduated income tax, government ownership of railroad & telephone companies, voting reforms, & the free (or unlimited) coinage of silver to combat low prices of farm products
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - b. The lowering of prices due to the gold standard made it very difficult for farmers to make a profit & pay off their debts, so the Populists wanted to add silver to the gold (at ratio of 16-1) to back U.S. money, which would cause the inflation rate to rise more quickly
 - (1)
 - (2)
3. Following the depression of 1893, the Democrats adopted the Populist's free silver issue in 1896 & nominated *William Jennings Bryan* as their presidential candidate
 - a. The *Populist Party* concurrently nominated Bryan as their candidate in 1896
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - b. While Bryan's losses demonstrated the declining position of farmers & the rise of urban America, the plight of the farmers was brought into national focus with most of the *Populist* goals being adopted during the Progressive Era