Urban America

1865-1896
Immigration

Europeans Flood the US
Largest Ancestry: 2000

Data based on sample. For internal use: confidence interval by race, sex, age, sampling areas, non-sampling areas, and other uses. See www.census.gov/prod/2005/dcn/0.pdf.

Ancestry with largest population in state (see map below)

Ancestry with largest population in county

- African American
- Asian
- American Indian
- American Indian
- Asian
- American Indian
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- American Indian
- Asian
- American Indian

Other:
- Chinese (San Francisco County, CA)
- Cuban (Miami-Dade County, FL)
- Dominican (New York County, NY)
- Filipino (Kauai and Molokai Counties, HI)
- French-Creole (LaGrange County, IN)
- Hawaiian (Kauai County, HI)
- Japanese (Hawaii County, HI)
- Polish (Wisconsin County, WI)
- Puerto Rican (New York County, NY)

by 1890s, more than ½ of all immigrants from eastern & southern Europe

including 14 million Jews 1860-1900
Reasons for Immigration

- US industry’s need for cheap labor
- Russian military conscription
- Depression in Italy
- Persecution of Jews in Eastern Europe
The Atlantic Voyage

- Steamship companies promoted passage to US
- Profitable, self-loading cargo
- Most in steerage
The Atlantic Voyage

- Ellis Island
- Most immigrants passed through
Ethnic Cities

- *How the Other Half Lives*, Jacob Riis 1890
- described NYC’s distinctions by ethnicity, religion, race, gender
- poverty, crowding, dirt, disease the daily reality for poor in NYC
- many “birds of passage” men came only to work & return
Bandit's Roost, Jacob Riis
Asian Immigration
Reasons for Chinese Immigration

- 430 million population
- poverty, unemployment, famine
- 1848 gold rush in CA
- Taiping Rebellion took 20 million lives
- Central Pacific RR
Most Chinese settled in western US
  ○ most locked out of US business
  ○ many opened their own business

Angel Island (1910-1940)
  ○ most Asian immigrants
Angel Island, California
Resurgence of Nativism
Nativism

- Extreme dislike for foreigners by native-born people
  - 1840s—anti-Irish
  - 1870-1900s—anti-Asian, Jew, eastern & southern European

- Reasons for Nativism
  - some feared Catholic influence
  - unions feared competition for jobs
Prejudice for Newcomers

- **American Protective Association**
  - 2 million members
  - anti-Catholic, foreigner, & immigration

- **Workingman’s Party of California**
  - anti-Chinese immigration
  - founded by an Irish immigrant
Impact of Nativism

- 1882: federal law banned convicts, paupers, & mentally ill
- Chinese Exclusion Act
  - barred Chinese immigration for 10 yrs & prevented Chinese citizenship
The New Urban Environment

- **Skyscrapers**
  - tall steel-framed buildings made possible by safe elevators
  - changed skyline of cities
  - Home Insurance Building, Chicago
Mass Transit

- horsecars, then cable- and electric trolley cars made possible suburbs
- congested streets led to elevated trains & subways
Trolley Car
Louisville to Jeffersonville

Louisville's northside elevated in Jeffersonville, IN. circa mid 1930's.
Elevated Train Platform
Separation by Class

- **High Society**
  - wealthiest families est. fashionable districts in heart of cities

- **Middle-class gentility**
  - rising middle-class moved to “streetcar suburbs”
  - many could afford “domestics”—often Irish maids

- **Working class**
  - 3 out of 4 New Yorkers lived in tenements—crowded multi-family apartments
  - annual wages: approx. $445
Urban Problems

- Crime
  - crowded conditions
  - alcohol; Jacob Riis blamed saloons for “breeding poverty,” corrupting politics, suffering wives, & corrupting children
Urban Problems

- Disease & Pollution
  - improper sewage disposal—typhoid & cholera
  - horse manure in streets
  - chimney smoke
  - coal soot, ashes, & cinders
Urban Politics
Urban Politics

- The Political Machine
  - informal political group designed to gain & keep power
  - caused by rapid city growth

- Political Bosses
  - gained power & office by promising to solve urban problems, provide urban services
Urban Politics

- **Graft**
  - dishonest or questionable means of getting money
  - ex: party boss learns where park to be built, buys land near the site, sells to city for profit

- **Fraud**
  - bribes & kickbacks
  - ex: NYC courthouse construction estimated at $250,000—cost $14 million; took 20 years to build
Tammany Hall
Tammany Hall

- 1860s-1870s
- NYC Democratic political machine run by William “Boss” Tweed
- 80% of top 30 US cities 1900
- in return for votes, machines handed out legal aid, jobs, fuel, shelter, & favors
“Boss” Tweed
THE TAMMANY TIGER LOOSE.—“What are you going to do about it?" (The first use of the famous Tiger symbol)
“Tweed Courthouse”
The Gilded Age
Mark Twain, Charles Warner wrote *The Gilded Age*, 1873

- gilded: gold on outside, cheap on inside
- Twain, Warner warning that industrialization led to growth, progress—but at price of poverty, corruption, crime, gap between rich & poor
Individualism

- idea that any American could rise in society
- Horatio Alger
  - author of “rags-to-riches” novels, in which poor person makes it big in big city
Social Darwinism

- **Herbert Spencer**
  - philosopher who applied Darwin’s theory of evolution to human society
  - argued that society evolved through competition & natural selection
  - “survival of the fittest”
  - paralleled *laissez-faire* government
  - used by Rockefeller to explain Standard Oil’s dominance

- **Gospel of Wealth**
  - Carnegie embraced Social Darwinism, but believed the rich had responsibility to the poor
Realism

- new movement in literature & the arts
- attempted to portray life realistically, rather than idealistically
Realism & Art

- realism portrayed everyday people in exacting detail
- Thomas Eakins—day-to-day life
The Agnew Clinic, 1889
Wrestlers, 1899
Realism & Literature

- Mark Twain:
  - declared the first true American novelist
  - American setting, characters, dialect
  - *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, 1884
I got the things all up to the cabin, and then it was about dark. While I was cooking supper the old man took a swig or two and got sort of warmed up, and went to ripping again. He had been drunk over in town, and laid in the gutter all night, and he was a sight to look at. A body would a thought he was Adam—he was just all mud. Whenever his liquor begun to work he most always went for the govment, this time he says: "Call this a govment! why, just look at it and see what it's like. Here's the law a-standing ready to take a man's son away from him—a man's own son, which he has had all the trouble and all the anxiety and all the expense of raising. Yes, just as that man has got that son raised at last, and ready to go to work and begin to do suthin' for HIM and give him a rest, the law up and goes for him. And they call THAT govment! That ain't all, nuther. The law backs that old Judge Thatcher up and helps him to keep me out o' my property. Here's what the law does: The law takes a man worth six thousand dollars and up'ards, and jams him into an old trap of a cabin like this, and lets him go round in clothes that ain't fitten for a hog. They call that govment! A man can't get his rights in a govment like this. Sometimes I've a mighty notion to just leave the country for good and all. Yes, and I TOLD 'em so; I told old Thatcher so to his face. Lots of 'em heard me, and can tell what I said. Says I, for two cents I'd leave the blamed country and never come a-near it agin. Them's the very words. I says look at my hat—if you call it a hat—but the lid raises up and the rest of it goes down till it's below my chin, and then it ain't rightly a hat at all, but more like my head was shoved up through a jint o' stove-pipe. Look at it, says I --such a hat for me to wear—one of the wealthiest men in this town if I could git my rights. "Oh, yes, this is a wonderful govment, wonderful. Why, looky here. There was a free nigger there from Ohio—a mulatter, most as white as a white man. He had the whitest shirt on you ever see, too, and the shiniest hat; and there ain't a man in that town that's got as fine clothes as what he had; and he had a gold watch and chain—a silver-headed cane—the awfulest old gray-headed nabob in the State. And what do you think? They said he was a p'fessor in a college, and could talk all kinds of languages, and knewed everything. And that ain't the wust. They said he could VOTE when he was at home. Well, that let me out. Thinks I, what is the country a-coming to? It was 'lection day, and I was just about to go and vote myself if I warn't too drunk to get there; but when they told me there was a State in this country where they'd let that nigger vote, I drawed out. I says I'll never vote agin. Them's the very words I said; they all heard me; and the country may rot for all me—I'll never vote agin as long as I live. And to see the cool way of that nigger—why, he wouldn't a give me the road if I hadn't shoved him out o' the way. I says to the people, why ain't this nigger put up at auction and sold?—that's what I want to know. And what do you reckon they said? Why, they said he couldn't be sold till he'd been in the State six months, and he hadn't been there that long yet. There, now—that's a specimen. They call that a govment that can't sell a free nigger till he's been in the State six months. Here's a govment that calls itself a govment, and lets on to be a govment, and thinks it is a govment, and yet's got to set stock-still for six whole months before it can take a hold of a prowling, thieving, infernal, white-shirted free nigger, and—"
William Dean Howells

- literary critic & author
- first to realize importance of Twain & Henry James
- *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, 1885
The Upper Class in Literature

- *Portrait of a Lady*, 1881 Henry James
- *The Age of Innocence*, 1920 Edith Wharton
Rebirth of Reform
Naturalism vs. Realism

- **realism**
  - people can control their lives & make choices to improve their situation

- **naturalism**
  - some people fail due to circumstances beyond their control
Naturalism in Literature

- *laissez-faire* didn’t always work
  - lives were destroyed through no fault of their own

- Stephen Crane *The Red Badge of Courage*

- Frank Norris *McTeague*

- Jack London *The Call of the Wild*
Theodore Dreiser

- grew up in Terre Haute, Sullivan
- brother of Paul Dresser (On the Banks of the Wabash)
- Sister Carrie, 1900
- An American Tragedy, 1925
Helping the Urban Poor
The Social Gospel (1870-1920)

- Washington Gladden, Columbus minister who called for churches to play new role in social reformation
- reform society, not just individuals
- Walter Rauschenbusch
  - NYC Baptist minister led Social Gospel movement
  - blamed competition for social problems
- Social Gospel led to many church programs for poor
Walter Rauschenbusch
Salvation Army

- founded 1878
- social welfare organization adopted military style structure
- practical aid
- Christian counseling
Young Men’s Christian Association

- YMCA
- Helped factory workers & urban poor
- Bible studies, prayer meetings, athletics
- Gyms, pools, low-cost hotels

Old Vincennes YMCA
4th & Broadway
Revivalism

- Dwight Moody
  - 1837-1899
  - one organizer of US YMCA (1860s)
  - gifted founder of church in Chicago
  - Moody Bible Institute
Revivalism

- Moody & Ira Sankey introduced gospel hymns to worship services
- rejected Social Gospel
- believed in redeeming souls & reforming character
Settlement House Movement

- offshoot of Social Gospel, 1866
- established by Jane Addams in Chicago
- middle-class counselors lived in lower-class neighborhoods, helping poor immigrants with medical care, recreation, English lessons
- shaped women’s role in social work
Jane Addams
Public Education

- Spread of Schools
  - millions more students due to immigration

- Americanization
  - to assimilate immigrant children, schools emphasized English, US History, civics, discipline, work ethic
Aliceville School (Ragsdale)
Old Brick School
Bicknell School
Public Education

- Morrill Land Grant Act, 1862
  - federal land to states to establish agricultural & mechanical colleges
  - Purdue University
Women’s Colleges

- increased opportunities
- Vassar, Wellesley, Smith
Public Education

- Public Libraries
  - free libraries = public education for adults
  - Carnegie contributed millions