The Urbanization of America, 1880-1920
Outline

• The Gilded Age
• Characteristics of Urban America
• The City as a new frontier
• The Great Migration
• Life in New York City
• Aid for the Urban Poor
• Urban entertainment and assimilation
• Prohibition
• Images of Urban America
Characteristics of Urbanization During the Gilded Age

1. Megalopolis
2. Mass Transit
3. Magnet for economic and social opportunities
4. Pronounced class distinctions
5. New opportunities for women
6. Squalid living conditions for many
7. Political machines
8. Ethnic neighborhoods
The City as a New "Frontier?"

- New Architectural Style
- New Use of Space
- New Class Diversity
- New Energy
- New Culture ("Melting Pot")
- New Symbols of Change & Progress
- Make a New Start
- New Levels of Crime, Violence, & Corruption
- New Form of Classic "Rugged Individualism"
THE URBAN FRONTIER

• 1870-1890
  – US Population doubles
  – Population of cities Tripled

• By 1900, 40% of Americans lived in cities of more than 2500

• NYC was the second largest city in the world with 3.5.
• The Great Migration
Many of the Exodusters eventually left Kansas, and Oklahoma for California.

MIGRATION CORRIDORS
- South West to Midwest & Far West
- South Central to Midwest
- Southeast to Northeast

Destination cities
Southern states

Map by Michael Siegel
Rutgers Cartography 2005

Picket line at the Mid-City Realty Company, Chicago, Illinois, July 1941
NYC tenement 1910
Jacob Riis, 1889
“Lodgers in a Bayard Street Tenement, Five Cents a Spot”
Rise of the Cities

- Technology
  - Electric elevator
  - Steel
  - Trains
  - Public transportation

- Led to diversification of cities
Lure of the Cities

• Why were cities attractive to people?
  – Jobs.
  – Lifestyle
  – Electricity, plumbing, department stores, elegance.
The Ugly Side of Cities

- Waste disposal problem
- Dirty and Smelly
- Many didn’t have easy access to baths
- Crime
• Slums grew

• Dumbbell tenements

• 7-8 stories, with 6 families to a floor.
Integrating the Immigrants

- Big-city machines
- Protestant clergy: “social gospel”
- Jane Addams: Hull House in Chicago.
Hull House – a settlement house set up by Jane Addams

Hull House in the early 1900’s (above) and Jane Addams in the 1930’s (right).
Hull-House Nursery, ca. 1890s
The New Morality

• Battle in the late 19th century over morals, sexuality and the place of woman.
  - Divorce rate begins to rise
  - Birth control
  - People talking more openly about sex
  - Shocks conservative Americans
Conservative Backlash

- Anthony Comstock

- Comstock Law passed by congress in 1873, outlawed “obscenity”

- He confiscated over 200,000 obscene pictures.
Families And Women In The City

• New stresses on and reshaped the family

• Birthrates declined
  – Why?

• Divorce rate went up
  – Why?

• Suffrage movement
Suffrage Movement

- National American Woman Suffrage Association,
  - 1800’s Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony
  - Carrie Chapman Catt ->>
Women’s Suffrage Before the Nineteenth Amendment

Equal suffrage (with date voted)
Partial woman suffrage
No statewide woman suffrage
Prohibition And Social Progress

• Prohibition movement gained strength in late 1800s.

• National Prohibition party (1869).
  – Woman’s Christian Temperance Union. (1874)

• Carrie Nation.

• Anti-Saloon League (1893)

• Prohibition—1919.
Bunks in a sevent-cent lodging-house, Pell Street
“There is no mistaking it: nowhere in the world are so many people crowded together on a square mile as here....yet the sign "For Rent" is the rarest of all....Here is one (building) seven stories high. . . it contains thirty-six families . . . In this house, where a case of small-pox was reported, there were fifty-eight babies and thirty-eight children that were over five years of age.

In Essex Street two small rooms in a six-story tenement were made to hold a "family" of father and mother, twelve children, and six boarders....These are samples of the packing of the population that has run up the record here to the rate of three hundred and thirty thousand per square mile.”

– Jacob Riis, How the Other Half Lives, 1890
Jacob Riis – Men’s Lodging Room in the West 47th Street Station – c. 1892
The "Montgomery Guards" gang at the West 37th Street dock
Reform

- Garbage collection and street cleaning began regularly.

Street cleaning, Fourth Street
• New buildings were required to have fire escapes and plumbing.
Separate residential and industrial zones were developed.
Help for the Poor

- Salvation Army
The worldwide expansion of the Salvation Army
Basketball was invented in 1891 at a YMCA.
* Music, sports and vaudeville helped to encourage assimilation.
Cities Take On a New Look

(left) The Chrysler Building was the world's tallest building from 27 May 1930 to 1931. (right) The Empire State Building was the world's tallest building from 1931 to 1972.
Trolleys, downtown Westborough, Massachusetts
- Trolleys and subways were developed in order to make transportation more efficient.

A train of Brooklyn Union elevated cars circa 1907
Shopping, Sports and Entertainment

- Macy’s opens a nine-story building in New York City.
- Baseball, football and basketball gain in popularity.

The Cuban Giants of 1885, the first black professional baseball team.
Basketball was invented by James Naismith in 1891.
- Vaudeville shows became extremely popular.

Examples: comedians, song and dance routines, and acrobats
- Music such as ragtime became extremely popular as well.

Example: Scott Joplin – an African American composer
5-Cent Lodgings
Men’s Lodgings
Women’s Lodgings
Immigrant Family Lodgings
1890s "Morgue" – Basement Saloon
Dumbbell Tenement Plan

Tenement House Act of 1879, NYC
Italian Rag-Picker
Mullen’s Alley "Gang"
“Black & Tan” Saloon
A Struggling Immigrant Family
Another Struggling Immigrant Family
Rosa Schneiderman, Garment Worker
Child Labor
## Average Shirtwaist Worker’s Week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours Range</th>
<th>Number of Employees</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>51 hours or less</td>
<td>4,554</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52-57 hours</td>
<td>65,033</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58-63 hours</td>
<td>12,211</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 63 hours</td>
<td>562</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total employees, men and women 82,360
Women Voting for a Strike!
Local 25 with Socialist Paper, The Call
Public Fear of Unions/Anarchists

How the Police Are Protecting the Public From the Terrible Shirtwaist Strikers.
Arresting the Girl Strikers for Picketing
Scabs Hired
The Triangle
Shirtwaist
Factory Fire,
March 25, 1911
“The Shirtwaist Kings”
Max Blanck and Isaac Harris
Triangle Shirtwaist Factory
Asch Building, 8th and 10th Floors
Typical NYC Sweatshop, 1910
Typical NYC Sweatshop, 1910
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Typical NYC Sweatshop, 1910
Inside the Building After the Fire
Most Doors Were Locked

24. Sarah Cammestine
Swore doors were all locked
Crumpled Fire Escape, 26 Died
One of the Heroes

25. Joseph Zito
Elevator Boy. Performed heroic work
10th Floor After the Fire
Dead Bodies on the Sidewalk
One of the “Lucky” Ones?

18. One girl who escaped, lost two sisters in fire
Rose Schneiderman
The Last Survivor
Scene at the Morgue
Relatives Review Bodies
145 Dead
SCENES OF DEATH AND SORROW AT THE GREAT NEW YORK FIRE DISASTER

Page of the New York Journal
One of the Many Funerals
Protestors March to City Hall
Labor Unions March as Mourners
Women Workers March to City Hall
The Investigation

26. Mayor Gaynor
Commissioner Waldo
Chief Croker

It is now up to them for investigation
History of the Needlecraft Industry by Ernest Feeney, 1938