SSUSH12A; 13B and 14A
Urban Society during the Gilded Age
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Immigration

• By the 1890's more than half of America’s immigrants came from Europe.

• Europeans abandoned their homelands to come to America due to several reasons:
  ✓ Availability of Jobs
  ✓ Limited Immigration Restrictions
  ✓ Avoidance of Forced Military Service
  ✓ Avoidance of Religious Persecution
  ✓ Opportunity to Improve their Social Status

• Other factors that also made it easier for European immigrants to come to America included:
  ✓ Elimination of old laws restricting peasants to their villages
  ✓ Opportunity to take their life savings with them to America
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The Atlantic Voyage

• Most immigrants from Europe booked the most basic and cheapest accommodations on a steamship, known as steerage.
  ✓ Offering only basic amenities
  ✓ Massive bunks holding five people
  ✓ Limited use & availability of toilets
  ✓ Poor food served out of huge pots
  ✓ Overcrowded with no privacy

• Iowa Professor, Edward A. Steiner, disguised as an immigrant to write about the typical steerage passage.

  “One the whole, the steerage of the modern ship ought to be condemned as unfit for transportation of human beings.”
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Arrival in America

• At the end of a 14 day trip in steerage, most immigrants disembarked at Ellis Island in New York Harbor.

• Between 1892 and 1954, this tiny island was the symbolic gateway to America.

• Admitting approximately 10.5 million immigrants during its 35 years of operation.

• It was the Federal Government’s first Immigration Inspection Station where:
  • Officials record name, age, occupation, country of origin, and available money to start new life.
  • Medical inspections to detect sick & diseased.
  • Detention and Deportation of undesirables.
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Arrival in America

• While most Europeans entered America through Ellis Island, Chinese and Japanese immigrants entered through Angel Island in San Francisco Bay.

• Unfortunately, for many Asians, the island was as close as they would get to entering the U.S. due to:
  ✓ Page Act of 1875: Restricting undesirable Chinese immigrants from entering the U.S.
  ✔ Cheap forced labor and prostitutes.
  ✓ Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882: Prohibiting immigration by all Chinese Laborers.

• Causing some Asian immigrants to be detained several years on the island before being allowed into the United States.
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Growth of Cities and Ethnic Diversity

- The influx of immigrants into the United States caused the rapid growth of many of the nation's largest cities.
- In most cities, neighborhoods were separated by ethnic groups, such as:
  - Little Italy (in Manhattan)
  - Little Poland (in Brooklyn)
  - Jewish East Side (in New York)
  - Little Germany (in Manhattan)
  - Chinatown (in San Francisco)
- In each neighborhood, or ward, immigrants spoke their native language, established clubs, and re-created the lifestyles of their homeland.
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Growth of Cities and Ethnic Diversity

- The new wave of immigration in America led to increased feelings of Nativism by many American born residents.
- 1840’s & 1850’s: Nativist dislikes focused on immigrants from Ireland and Germany.
- 1870’s & 1880’s: New Nativist dislikes for immigrants focused more on Asians, Jews, and Eastern Europeans (Poles, Hungarians, Albanians, Romanians and Bulgarians).
- Nativists who opposed immigration into the U.S. formed several new organizations:
  - 1877: Anti-Chinese immigrant labor Workingman’s Party of California
  - 1887: American Protective Association formed by Midwestern Protestants
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The New Urban Environment

- During the decades following the Civil War, Urban Population grew rapidly in the United States.
- New York City alone, which had just over 1 million inhabitants in 1860, grew to almost 5 million by 1910.

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The New York Borough of Manhattan

- By 1865, the core of the city was made up of Substandard Muti-Story, Multi-Family, dwellings called Tenements.
- Living in these Tenements was cramped, unhealthy, and sometimes dangerous.
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The New Urban Environment

- City living also posed various threats, especially for the working class poor.
  - Improper sewage disposal threatened city drinking water.
  - Overcrowding triggered epidemics of Typhoid Fever and Cholera.
  - Respiratory problems due to accumulation of Soot and Ash from chimneys.
  - Negative impact of Alcohol on Violent Crime, Corrupt Politics, & Children.
  - Minor criminal activities like thieves, swindlers, & pickpockets.
  - Increased Murder Rates from 25 to 100 per million people (1880-1900)
  - Nativists often blamed immigrants for the increase in crime & violence.
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The New Urban Environment

- 1890: Danish-American Photojournalist Jacob Riis published *How the Other Half Lives: Studies among the Tenements of New York*, which documented the squalid living of New York slums:
  - Bandit’s Roost
  - Blind Man’s Alley
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The New Urban Politics

• A new urban political system developed to meet all the problems in the city:
  ✓ The Political Machine
    ➢ Informal Political Group
    ➢ Made up of Party Bosses
    ➢ Provided Police Protection
    ➢ Used Fraud to Get Results
    ➢ Accepted Bribes for Favors
    ➢ Reacted Quicker than City Officials
    ➢ All in Exchange for Votes

• 1870’s: William M. “Boss” Tweed ran New York’s Democratic political machine known as Tammany Hall, leading to his imprisonment for fraud.
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Changing Urban Society

• While the poor Working Class usually lived in crowded Tenement Buildings in Manhattan, many of the nation’s rising Middle Class moved into what were called the city’s Streetcar Suburbs.

• In New York City, the outer Suburbs of Brooklyn and Queens were eventually incorporated into the city limits.

• Most of these Middle Class residents were Doctors, Lawyers, and Managers.

• Many of New York’s High Society, like Andrew Carnegie, built castle like mansions in Manhattan’s Upper East Side.
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Building the New Urban Infrastructure

• As cities grew, and the price of land increased, buildings grew upward instead of outward.

• In 1884, the Home Insurance Building in Chicago, Illinois, was the first structure to be called a Skyscraper.

• By the late 1880’s, Builders were using Steel Girders to construct even taller buildings.

• In 1897 and 1902, the triangular shaped Flatiron Buildings were constructed in Atlanta and NYC.
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Building the New Urban Infrastructure

• Cities also developed various types of Mass Transit to move people around rapidly.

• In 1832, New York City developed the first Horse Car, or Street Car, line in the U.S.

• In 1878, Leland Stanford opened a Cable Car line in San Francisco, California.

• By 1888, the first successful electric Trolley Car service started in Richmond, Virginia.

• As city congestion worsened, engineers developed both elevated and subway (underground) mass transit systems.
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Society’s Changing Cultural

• 1873: Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner wrote a book entitled *The Gilded Age: A Tale of Today*, which satirized the political corruption and serious social problems in urban America.

• 1880’s: Former Massachusetts Minister, Horatio Alger, wrote more than 100 “rags-to-riches” novels promoting the idea that anyone could be successful, known as Individualism.

• 1884: Philosopher Herbert Spencer applied Charles Darwin’s theory of Natural Selection to human society when he coined the phrase “Survival of the Fittest.”

• Since “Social Darwinism” paralleled the economic doctrine of “Laissez-Faire, it appealed to Industrialists like John D. Rockefeller and J. P. Morgan.
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Society's Changing Cultural

• Although he believed wholeheartedly in Social Darwinism and Laissez-Faire, Andrew Carnegie wrote the *Gospel of Wealth*, to promote the idea that wealthy Americans should engage in Philanthropy to give back to the American public.

• Likewise, both artists and authors began using the ideology of Realism to portray people more realistic in their work.

  • American Painter Thomas Eakins, made many paintings depicting day-to-day subjects.

• 1884: Missouri Author, Mark Twain, wrote his masterpiece, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, about a boy and his exploits.
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New Leisure Activities

• Industrialization during the late 1800's improved the Standard of Living for most Americans allowing them to spend money on Entertainment & Recreation.

• City Saloons played an important role for male workers during the 1800's, providing a place to eat, drink, socialize, and discuss politics.

• Although founded prior to the Civil War, by the 1880's, most cities and universities attracted spectators to both Football and Baseball games.

• In addition, Theaters began offering a new form of variety entertainment appealing to Middle Class families, known as Vaudeville.
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New Leisure Activities

• Like Vaudeville, a new form of music grew out of the bustling traditions of the city and its saloons and honky-tonks, known as Ragtime.

• 1890’s – 1920’s: Ragtime was made popular through the mixture of traditional African-American dance rhythms and the marches of John Philip Sousa, by African-American Composer Scott Joplin, known as the King of Ragtime.

• During the early 1900’s, Coney Island became a popular Amusement Park for Working-Class families from New York City, offering various rides and food for just a nickel or a dime.
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Rebirth of Reform

• Major changes in society during the growth of cities caused some Americans argued that societies problems requires both government and social reforms.

• 1870 – 1920: Two ministers (Washington Gladden of Ohio and Walter Rauschenbusch of New York) led the Social Gospel movement to expand the churches social missions.

• 1880’s: Originating in the United Kingdom, the Salvation Army and the Young Men’s Christian Association were both influenced by the Social Gospel movement providing support to Americans.

• The services they provided included:
  ✓ Bible Studies
  ✓ Counseling
  ✓ Family Planning.
  ✓ Lost cost hotel rooms
  ✓ Libraries and Schools
  ✓ Swimming Pools & Gyms
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Rebirth of Reform

• An offshoot of the Social Gospel movement was the development of various Settlement Houses reformers and middle-class residents to help the poor.
  • 1889: Jane Addams established the Hull House in a poor neighborhood of Chicago.
  • 1892: Lillian Wald established the Henry Street Settlement in Manhattan’s Lower East Side.

• The need to train and educate workers, as well as assimilate immigrants into the American culture promoted the establishment of Public Schools.

• Teaching immigrants English, American History, and Citizenship was part of a process called Americanization.

• In addition, wealthy industrialist Andrew Carnegie donated millions of dollars to build thousands of Free Libraries to help educate Americans.