

Chapter 25: America Moves to the City 1865–1900 Chapter Contents

Book Title: The American Pageant

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# Chapter 25

## America Moves to the City 1865–1900

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Chapter 25: America Moves to the City 1865–1900 Chapter Introduction  
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## Chapter Introduction

*What shall we do with our great cities? What will our great cities do with us ...? [T]he question ...does not concern the city alone. The whole country is affected ...by the condition of its great cities.*

**Lyman Abbott, 1891**

Born in the country, America moved to the city in the decades following the Civil War. By the year 1900, the United States' upsurging population nearly doubled from its level of some 40 million souls enumerated in the census of 1870. Yet in the very same period, the population of American cities *tripled*. By the end of the nineteenth century, four out of ten Americans were city dwellers, in striking contrast to the rustic population of stagecoach days.

This cityward drift affected not only the United States but the entire industrializing world. European peasants, pushed off the land in part by competition from cheap American foodstuffs, were pulled into cities—in both Europe and America—by the new lure of industrial jobs. A revolution in American agriculture thus fed the industrial and urban revolutions in Europe, as well as in the United States.

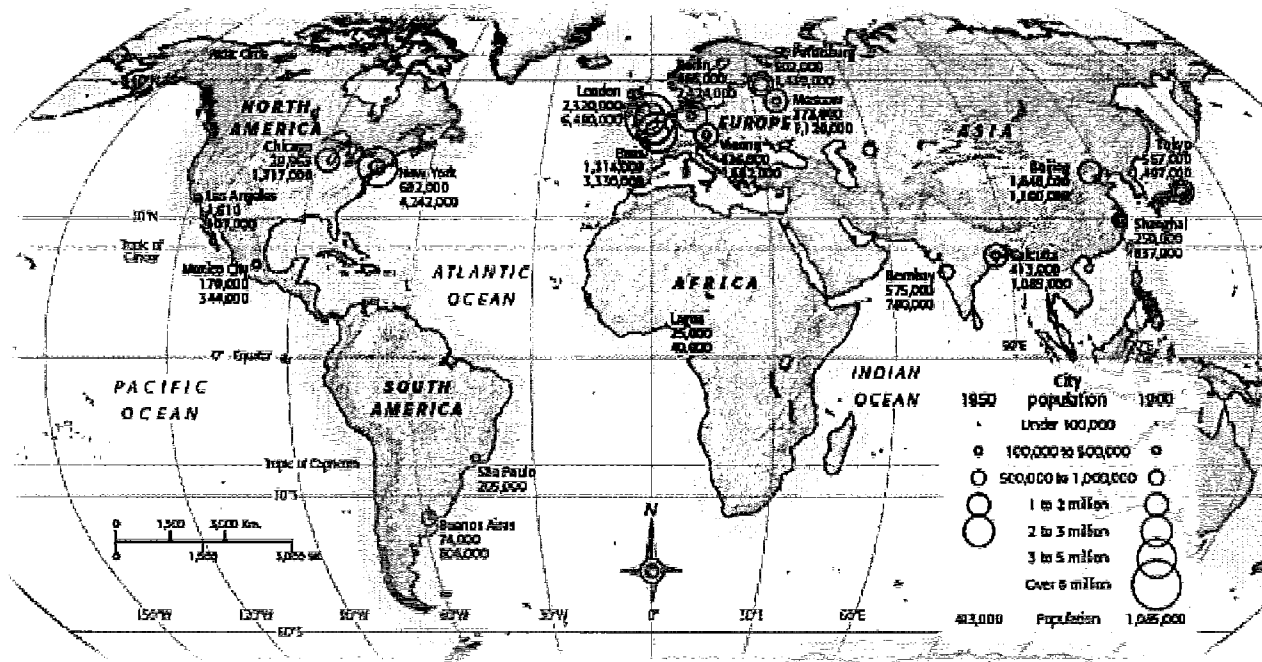
Chapter 25: America Moves to the City 1865–1900: 25-1 The Urban Frontier  
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## 25-1 The Urban Frontier

The growth of American metropolises was spectacular. In 1860 no city in the United States could boast a million inhabitants; by 1890 New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia had vaulted past the million mark. By 1900 New York, with some 3.5 million people, was the second-largest city in the world, outranked only by London. Throughout the world, cities were exploding. London, Paris, Berlin, Tokyo, Moscow, Mexico City, Calcutta, and Shanghai all doubled or tripled in size between 1850 and 1900. The population of Buenos Aires multiplied by more than ten (see Map 25.1).

### Map 25.1

## Size of World Cities 1850–1900



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Sources: United Nations, "World Urbanization Prospects: The 2005 Revision"; Tertius Chandler and Gerald Fox, *3000 Years of Urban Growth* (New York: Academic Press, 1974); U.S. Census; Spencer H. Brown, "Public Health in Lagos, 1850–1900: Perceptions, Patterns, and Perspectives," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 25, no. 2. (1992): 345; Josephine Olu Abiodun, "The Challenges of Growth and Development in Metropolitan Lagos," in *The Urban Challenge in Africa: Growth and Management of Its Large Cities*, ed. Carole Rakodi (New York: United Nations University Press, 1997), 193–195; United Nations Demographic Yearbook.

American cities grew both up and out. The cloud-brushing skyscraper allowed more people and work-places to be packed onto a parcel of land. Appearing first as a ten-story building in Chicago in 1885, the skyscraper was made usable by the perfecting of the electric elevator. An opinionated Chicago architect, **Louis Sullivan** (1856–1924), contributed formidably to the further development of the skyscraper with his famous principle that "form follows function." Nesting loftily above city streets in the new steel-skeleton high-rises that Sullivan helped to make popular, many Americans were becoming modern cliff dwellers.

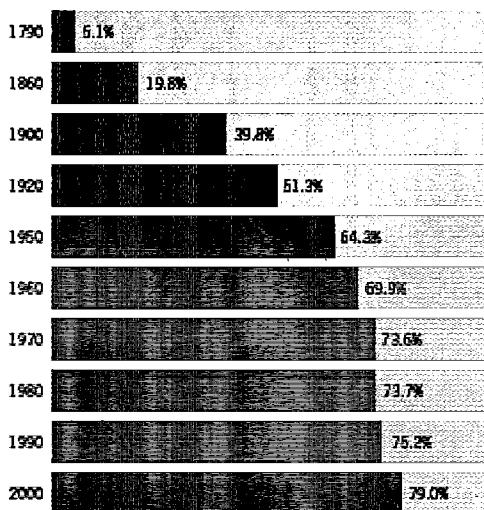
Americans were also becoming commuters, carted daily between home and job on the mass-transit lines that radiated out from central cities to surrounding suburbs. Electric trolleys, powered by wagging antennae from overhead wires, propelled city limits explosively outward. By the end of the century, the nation's first subway opened in Boston; London had led the way by building a subway as early as 1863. The compact and communal "walking city," its boundaries fixed by the limits of leg-power, gave way to the immense and impersonal megalopolis, carved into distinctly different districts for business, industry, and residential neighborhoods—which were in turn segregated by race, ethnicity, and social class.

Rural life could not compete with the siren song of the city (see Figure 25.1). Industrial jobs, above all, drew people off farms in America as well as abroad and into factory centers. But

the urban lifestyle also held powerful attractions. The predawn milking of cows had little appeal when compared with the late-night glitter of city lights, particularly alluring to young adults yearning for independence. Electricity, indoor plumbing, and telephones—whose numbers leapt from some 50,000 in 1880 to over 1 million in 1900—all made life in the big city more enticing. Engineering marvels like the skyscraper and New York's awesome Brooklyn Bridge, a harplike suspension span dedicated in 1883, further added to the seductive glamour of the gleaming cities.

### Figure 25.1 The Shift to the American City

This chart shows the percentage of total population living in locales with a population of twenty-five hundred or more. Note the slowing of the cityward trend from 1970 on.



(Sources: Historical Statistics of the United States; U.S. Census Bureau.)

Cavernous department stores such as Macy's in New York and Marshall Field's in Chicago attracted urban middle-class shoppers and provided urban working-class jobs, many of them for women. The bustling emporiums also heralded a dawning era of consumerism and accentuated widening class divisions. When Carrie Meeber, novelist Theodore Dreiser's fictional heroine in *Sister Carrie* (1900), escapes from rural boredom to Chicago just before the turn of the century, it is the spectacle of the city's dazzling department stores that awakens her fateful yearning for a richer, more elegant way of life—for entry into the privileged urban middle class, whose existence she had scarcely imagined in the rustic countryside.

### The Brooklyn Bridge

The Brooklyn Bridge opened on May 24, 1883. It had taken thirteen years to build and was the largest suspension bridge in the world, as well as the first made of steel wire. On opening day, an astonishing 1,800 vehicles and 150,300 people made the short but breathtaking trek between the New York City boroughs of Manhattan and Brooklyn. The first person to cross was Emily Warren Roebling, the daughter-

in-law of the original designer, John Augustus Roebling, and the wife of his son, Washington Roebling, who had taken over the job when his father died suddenly in 1869. When Washington fell ill himself, Emily learned civil engineering and oversaw much of the remaining work on the bridge.



Library of Congress

The move to the city introduced Americans to new ways of living. Country dwellers produced little household waste. Domestic animals or scavenging pigs ate food scraps on the farm. Rural women mended and darned worn clothing rather than discard it. Household products were sold in bulk at the local store, without wrapping. Mail-order houses such as Sears and Montgomery Ward, which increasingly displaced the rural “general store” in the late nineteenth century, at first did not list trash barrels or garbage cans in their catalogues. In the city, however, goods came in throwaway bottles, boxes, bags, and cans. Apartment houses had no adjoining barnyards where residents might toss garbage to the hogs. Cheap ready-to-wear clothing and swiftly changing fashions pushed old suits and dresses out of the closet and onto the trash heap. Waste disposal, in short, was an issue new to the urban age. And the mountains of waste that urbanites generated further testified to a cultural shift away from the virtues of thrift to the conveniences of consumerism.

The jagged skyline of America's perpendicular civilization could not fully conceal the canker sores of a feverish growth. Criminals flourished like lice in the teeming asphalt jungles. Sanitary facilities could not keep pace with the mushrooming population explosion. Impure water, uncollected garbage, unwashed bodies, and droppings from draft animals enveloped many cities in a satanic stench. Baltimore was described as smelling like a billion polecats.

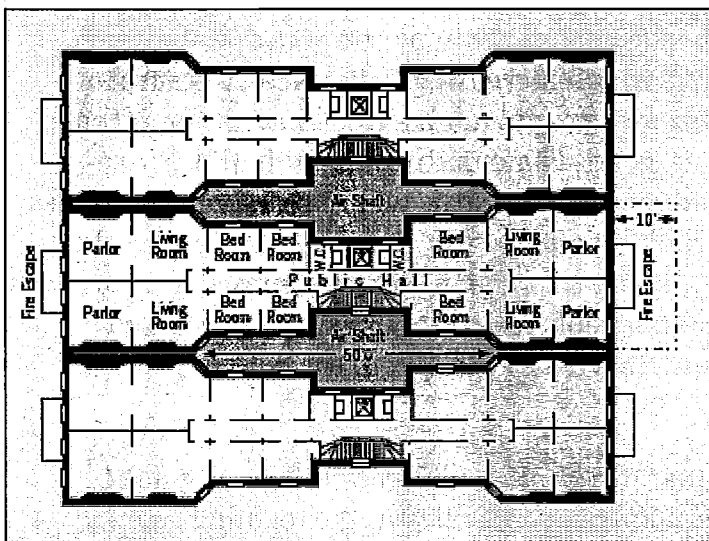
The cities were monuments of contradiction. They represented “humanity compressed,” remarked one observer, “the best and the worst combined, in a strangely composite community.” They harbored merchant princes and miserable paupers, stately banks and

sooty factories, green-grassed suburbs and treeless ghettos, towering skyscrapers and stinking tenements. The glaring contrasts that assaulted the eye in New York reminded one visitor of “a lady in ball costume, with diamonds in her ears, and her toes out at the boots.”

Worst of all were the human pigsties known as slums. They seemed to grow ever more crowded, more filthy, and more rat-infested, especially after the perfection in 1879 of the “dumbbell” tenement (see Figure 25.2). So named because of the outline of its floor plan, the dumbbell was usually seven or eight stories high, with shallow, sunless, and ill-smelling air shafts providing minimal ventilation. Several families were sardined onto each floor of the barracks-like structures, and they shared a malodorous toilet in the hall. In these fetid warrens, conspicuously in New York's “Lung Block,” hundreds of unfortunate urbanites coughed away their lives. “Flophouses” abounded where the half-starved and unemployed might sleep for a few cents on verminous mattresses. Small wonder that slum dwellers strove mightily to escape their wretched surroundings—as many of them did. The slums remained foul places, inhabited by successive waves of newcomers. To a remarkable degree, hard-working people moved up and out of them.

### Figure 25.2 Dumbbell Tenement

This was the standard architectural plan for the human warehouses on New York's Lower East Side. Despite the innovation of an air shaft to bring light and ventilation to the middle of the building, only one room in each of the apartments was directly exposed to sunlight and open air. All families on a floor shared the toilet (“W.C.”) in the hallway.



Cities were dangerous for everyone. In 1871 two-thirds of downtown Chicago burned in a raging fire that left ninety thousand people homeless and destroyed more than fifteen thousand buildings. Closely packed wooden structures fed the insatiable flames, prompting Chicago and other wary cities to require stone and iron buildings downtown. The wealthiest began to leave the risky cities behind and head for semirural suburbs. These leafy “bedroom communities” eventually ringed the brick-and-concrete cities with a greenbelt of affluence.

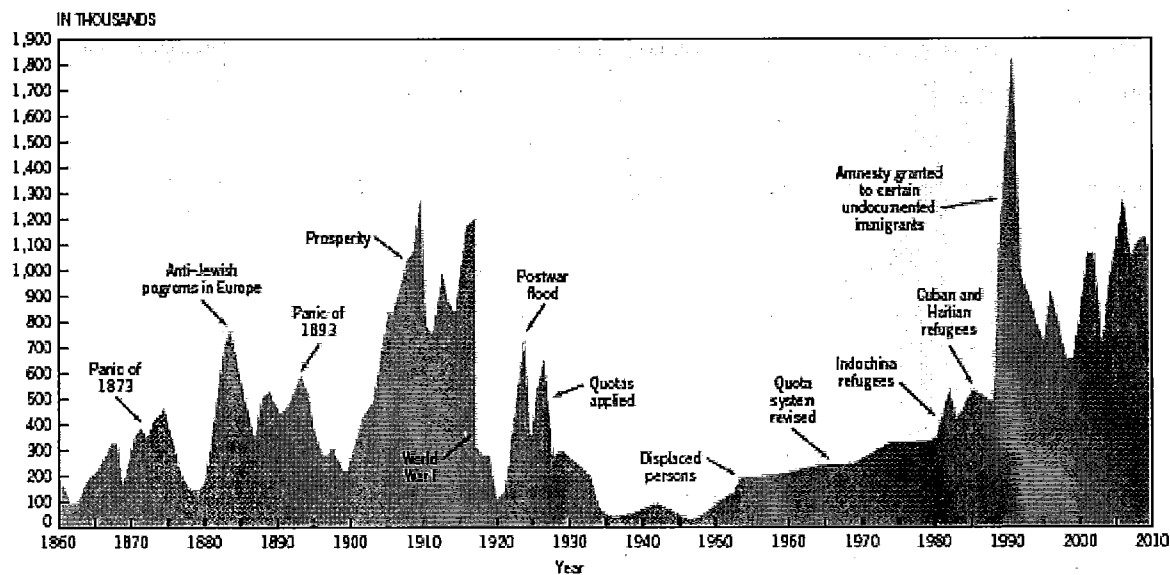
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## 25-2 The New Immigration

The powerful pull of the American urban magnet was felt even in faraway Europe. A seemingly endless stream of immigrants continued to pour in from the old “mother continent.” In each of the three decades from the 1850s through the 1870s, more than 2 million migrants had stepped onto America's shores. By the 1880s the stream had swelled to a rushing torrent, as more than 5 million cascaded into the country. A new high for a single year was reached in 1882, when 788,992 arrived—or more than 2,100 a day (see Figure 25.3).

**Figure 25.3**  
**Annual Immigration, 1860–2010**

After 1924 these numbers include only legal, documented immigrants. The 1989 total includes 478,814 people granted permanent residence status under the “amnesty” provisions of the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act. The 1990 total includes 880,372 people granted permanent residence under these provisions. The peak came in 1991, when 1,123,162 people were affected by amnesty.



(Sources: Statistical Abstract of the United States, relevant years; Department of Homeland Security, Yearbook of Immigration Statistics, 2009.)

Until the 1880s most immigrants had come from the British Isles and western Europe, chiefly Germany and Ireland. Also significant were the more than 300,000 Chinese immigrants. Many of these earlier immigrants had faced virulent nativism, especially the Irish and the Chinese. In fact, the latter were legally excluded in 1882.

But by the last decades of the century, the “old” European immigrants had adjusted well to American life by building supportive ethnic organizations and melding into established

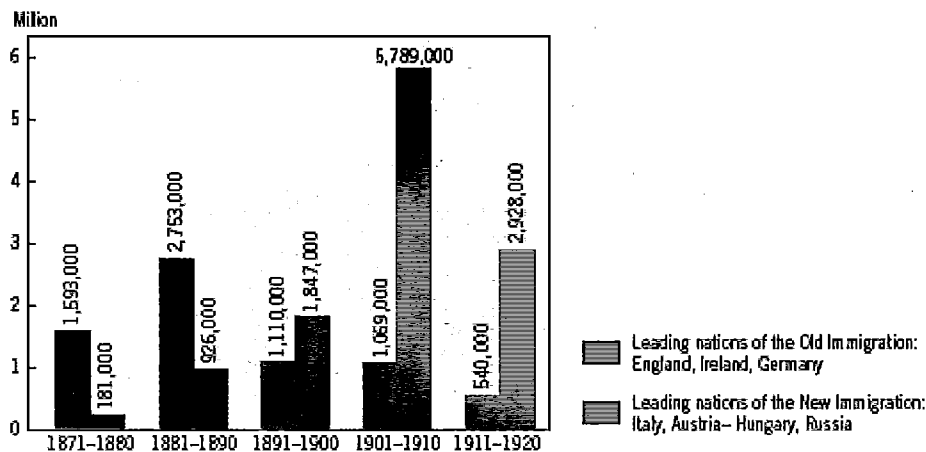
farm communities or urban craft unions. Although many still lived, worked, and worshiped among their own, they were largely accepted as “American” by the native-born.

In the 1880s the character of the immigrant stream changed drastically (see Figure 25.4). The so-called **New Immigrants** (Immigrants from southern and eastern Europe who formed a recognizable wave of immigration from the 1880s until 1924, in contrast to the immigrants from western Europe who had come before them. These new immigrants congregated in ethnic urban neighborhoods, where they worried many native-born Americans, some of whom responded with nativist anti-immigrant campaigns and others of whom introduced urban reforms to help the immigrants assimilate.) came from southern and eastern Europe. Among them were Italians, Jews, Croats, Slovaks, Greeks, and Poles. They came from countries with little history of democratic government, where people had grown accustomed to cringing before despotism and where opportunities for advancement were few. These new peoples totaled only 19 percent of the inpouring immigrants in the 1880s, but by the first decade of the twentieth century, they constituted an astonishing 66 percent of the total inflow. They hived together in cities like New York and Chicago, where the “Little Italys” and “Little Polands” soon claimed more inhabitants than many of the largest cities of the same nationality in the Old World (see “Makers of America: The Italians.”).

Figure 25.4

### Old and New Immigration (by decade, 1871–1920)

In the 1880s the sources of immigration to the United States shifted from the British Isles and western Europe to southern and eastern Europe. A century later the old “mother continent” of Europe would account for only 10 percent of immigrants to America (see Figure 42.5).



### Mulberry Street on New York City's Lower East Side, ca. 1900

Population densities in early-twentieth-century American cities were among the highest in the world. Mulberry Street, shown in this photo, was at the heart of New York's “Little Italy” neighborhood.





Library of Congress

Largely illiterate and impoverished, many immigrants at first were content to live within these tightly bound communities based on native language and religion. There they worshiped in Orthodox or Roman Catholic churches or synagogues and in some cases nourished radical political ideas. There, too, they felt sheltered from Americans who revived old nativist fears that had plagued Old Immigrants in the 1840s and 1850s—fears that these New Immigrants would not, or could not, assimilate to life in their new land. The skeptics, who included some immigrants of the earlier wave, began asking whether the nation had become a melting pot or a dumping ground.

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## 25-3 Southern Europe Uprooted

Why were these bright-shawled and quaint-jacketed strangers hammering on the gates? In part they left their native countries because Europe seemed to have no room for them. The population of the Old World was growing vigorously. It nearly doubled in the century after 1800, thanks in part to abundant supplies of fish and grain from America and to the widespread cultivation in Europe of that humble New World transplant, the potato. American food imports and the galloping pace of European industrialization shook the peasantry loose from its ancient habitats and customary occupations, creating a vast, footloose army of the unemployed. Europeans by the millions drained out of the countryside and into European cities. Most stayed there, but some kept moving and left Europe altogether. About 60 million Europeans abandoned the Old Continent in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. More than half of them moved to the United States, while their compatriots spread out across the globe to South America, Canada, Africa, and Australia. Masses of people were already in motion in Europe before they felt the tug of the American magnet. This European diaspora, dominated by immigration to the United States, was, in many ways, simply a by-product of the urbanization of Europe.

“America fever” proved highly contagious in Europe. The United States was often painted as a land of fabulous opportunity in the “America letters” sent by friends and relatives already transplanted—letters that were soiled by the hands of many readers. “We eat here every day,” wrote one jubilant Pole, “what we get only for Easter in our [native] country.” The land of the free was also blessed with freedom from military conscription and institutionalized religious persecution.

Profit-seeking Americans trumpeted throughout Europe the attractions of the new promised land. Industrialists wanted low-wage labor, railroads wanted buyers for their land grants, states wanted more population, and steamship lines wanted more human cargo for their holds. In fact, the ease and cheapness of steam-powered shipping greatly accelerated the transoceanic surge.

**Mary Antin** (1881–1949), who came to America from Russian Poland in 1894 when thirteen years of age, later wrote in *The Promised Land* (1912),

*“So at last I was going to America! Really, really going, at last! The boundaries burst. The arch of heaven soared. A million suns shone out for every star. The winds rushed in from outer space, roaring in my ears, ‘America! America!’”*

As the century lengthened, savage persecutions of minorities in Europe drove many shattered souls to American shores. In the 1880s the Russians turned violently upon their own Jews, chiefly in the Polish areas. Tens of thousands of these battered refugees, survivors of centuries of harassment as hated outcasts, fled their burning homes. They made their way to the seaboard cities of the Atlantic Coast, notably New York. Jews had experienced city life in Europe—a circumstance that made them virtually unique among the New Immigrants. Many of them brought their urban skills of tailoring or shopkeeping to American cities. Destitute and devout, eastern European Jews were frequently given a frosty reception not only by old-stock Americans but also by those German Jews who had arrived decades earlier and prospered in the United States, some as garment manufacturers who now employed their coreligionists as cheap labor.

Many of the immigrants never intended to become Americans in any case. A large number of them were single men who worked in the United States for several months or years and then returned home with their hard-earned roll of American dollars. Some 25 percent of the nearly 20 million people who arrived between 1820 and 1900 were “birds of passage” who eventually returned to their country of origin. For them the attraction of the American magnet was never strong.

Even those who stayed in America struggled heroically to preserve their traditional culture. Catholics expanded their parochial-school systems, and Jews established Hebrew schools. Foreign-language newspapers abounded. Yiddish theaters, kosher-food stores, Polish parishes, Greek restaurants, and Italian social clubs all attested to the desire to keep old

ways alive. Yet time took its toll on these efforts to conserve the customs of the Old World in the New. The children of the immigrants grew up speaking fluent English, sometimes mocking the broken grammar of their parents. They often rejected the Old Country manners of their mothers and fathers in their desire to plunge headlong into the mainstream of American life.

Chapter 25: America Moves to the City 1865–1900: 25-4 Reactions to the New Immigration

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## 25-4 Reactions to the New Immigration

### Jewish Women Working in a Sweatshop, ca. 1910

Countless immigrant women found their first American employment in shops like this.



Brown Brothers

America's government system, nurtured in wide-open spaces, was ill-suited to the cement forests of the great cities. Beyond minimal checking to weed out criminals and the insane, the federal government did virtually nothing to ease the assimilation of immigrants into American society. State governments, usually dominated by rural representatives, did even less. City governments, overwhelmed by the sheer scale of rampant urban growth, proved woefully inadequate to the task. By default, the business of ministering to the immigrants' needs fell to the unofficial "governments" of the urban political machines, led by "bosses" like New York's notorious Boss Tweed.

Makers of America

### The Italians

Who were the "New Immigrants," these southern and eastern European birds of

passage that flocked to the United States between 1880 and 1920? Prominent and typical among them were the Italians, some 4 million of whom sailed to the United States during the four decades of the New Immigration.

They came from the southern provinces of their native land, the heel and toe of the Italian boot. These areas had lagged economically behind the prosperous, industrial region of northern Italy. The north had been the seat of earlier Italian glory, as well as the fountain-head of the successful movement to unify the country in 1860. There industry had been planted and agriculture modernized. Unification raised hopes of similar progress in the downtrodden south, but it was slow in coming. Southern Italian peasants tilled their fields without fertilizer or machinery, using hand plows and rickety hoes that had been passed down for generations.

### Italian Immigrants Arriving at Ellis Island, ca. 1910



Brown Brothers

From such disappointed and demeaned conditions, southern Italians set out for the New World. Most came to the United States, but significant numbers headed for Argentina to work in agriculture. Almost all of them were young men who intended to spend only a few months, stuff their pockets with earnings, and return home. At least half of the Italian immigrants did indeed repatriate—as did comparable numbers of the other New Immigrants, with the conspicuous exception of the Jews, who had fled their native lands to escape religious persecution. Most of the Italian immigrants to the United States sailed through New York harbor, sighting the Statue of Liberty as they debarked from crowded ships. Many soon moved on to other large cities, but so many remained that in the early years of the twentieth century, more Italians resided in New York than in the Italian cities of Florence, Venice, and Genoa combined.

### Pietro Learning to Write on Jersey Street

“The sons shall teach the fathers,” the old saying goes. Many immigrants learned English from their children who attended American schools, like this youngster and parent in early-twentieth-century New Jersey.



Museum of the City of New York The Jacob A. Riis Collection, #160

Since the immigrant Italians, with few exceptions, had been peasant farmers in the Old Country, the U.S. government encouraged them to practice their ancestral livelihood here, believing they would more rapidly assimilate in the countryside than in the ethnic enclaves of the cities. But almost all such ventures failed. The farmers lacked capital, and they were in any case more interested in earning quick money than in permanently sinking roots. Although they huddled in the cities, Italian immigrants did not abandon their rural upbringing entirely. Much to their neighbors' consternation, they often kept chickens in vacant lots and raised vegetables in small garden plots nestled between decaying tenement houses.

### **Italian Immigrant Women Doing Piecework at Home in New York, ca. 1910**



Culver Pictures

Those who bade a permanent farewell to Italy clustered in tightly knit communities that boasted opera clubs, Italian-language newspapers, and courts for playing bocci—a version of lawn bowling imported from the Old Country. Pizza emerged from the hot wood-burning ovens of these Little Italys, its aroma and flavor wafting into the hearts and stomachs of all Americans.

The Italians typically earned their daily bread as industrial laborers—most famously as longshoremen and construction workers. They owed their prominence

in the building trades to the “padrone system.” The *padrone*, or labor boss, met immigrants upon their arrival and secured jobs for them in New York, Chicago, the West, or wherever there was an immediate demand for labor. The padrone owed his power to his ability to meet the needs of both Italian newcomers and American bosses, and he often managed to manipulate both for his own gain.

### Italian Construction Workers, ca. 1910



Brown Brothers

Lacking education, the Italians, as a group, remained in blue-collar jobs longer than some of their fellow New Immigrants. Many Italians, valuing vocation over schooling, sent their children off to work as early in their young lives as possible. Before World War I, less than 1 percent of Italian children enrolled in high school. Over the next fifty years, Italian Americans and their offspring gradually prospered, moving out of the cities into the more affluent suburbs. Many served heroically in World War II and availed themselves of the GI Bill to finance the college educations and professional training their immigrant forebears had lacked.

Taking care of the immigrants was big business indeed. Trading jobs and services for votes, a powerful boss might claim the loyalty of thousands of followers. In return for their support at the polls, the boss provided jobs on the city's payroll, found housing for new arrivals, tided over the needy with gifts of food and clothing, patched up minor scrapes with the law, and helped get schools, parks, and hospitals built in immigrant neighborhoods. Reformers gagged at this cynical exploitation of the immigrant vote, but the political boss gave valuable assistance that was forthcoming from no other source.

The nation's social conscience, slumbering since the antislavery crusade, gradually awakened to the plight of the cities, and especially their immigrant masses. Prominent in this awakening were several Protestant clergymen, who sought to apply the lessons of Christianity to the slums and factories. Noteworthy among them was Walter Rauschenbusch, who in 1886 became pastor of a German Baptist church in New York City. Also conspicuous was Washington Gladden, who took over a Congregational church in Columbus, Ohio, in 1882. Preaching the “social gospel,” they both insisted that the churches tackle the burning social issues of the day. The Sermon on the Mount, they declared, was

the science of society, and many social gospelers predicted that socialism would be the logical outcome of Christianity. These “Christian socialists” did much to prick callous middle-class consciences, thus preparing the path for the progressive reform movement after the turn of the century.

## Examining the Evidence

### **Manuscript Census Data, 1900**

Article I of the Constitution requires that a census of the American people be taken every ten years, in order to provide a reliable basis for congressional apportionment. Early censuses gathered little more than basic population numbers, but over the years the census takers have collected information on other matters as well—including occupational categories, educational levels, and citizenship status—yielding copious raw data for historical analysis. The census of 1890 was the first to use punch cards and electric tabulating machines, which greatly expanded the range of data that could be assembled and correlated—though the basic information was still hand-recorded by individual canvassers who went door-to-door to question household members and fill out the census forms. Those handwritten forms, as much as the aggregate numbers printed in the final census tally, can furnish invaluable insights to the historian. Despite its apparent bureaucratic formality, the form shown here richly details the lives of the residents of a tenement house on New York’s Lower East Side in 1900. See in particular the entries for the Goldberg family. In what ways does this document reflect the great demographic changes that swept late-nineteenth-century America? What light does it shed on the character of immigrant “ghettos”? What further use might historians make of information like this?

### **Reactions to the New Immigration**





England, she acquired the decaying Hull mansion in Chicago in 1889. There she established Hull House, the most prominent (though not the first) American settlement house.

Soft-spoken but tenacious, Addams became a kind of urban American saint in the eyes of many admirers. The philosopher **William James** told her, "You utter instinctively the truth we others vainly seek." She was a broad-gauge reformer who courageously condemned war as well as poverty, and she eventually won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931. But her pacifism also earned her the enmity of some Americans, including the Daughters of the American Revolution, who choked on her antiwar views and expelled her from membership in their august organization.

Located in a poor immigrant neighborhood of Greeks, Italians, Russians, and Germans, Hull House offered instruction in English, counseling to help newcomers cope with American big-city life, child-care services for working mothers, and cultural activities for neighborhood residents. Following Jane Addams's lead, women founded settlement houses (Mostly run by middle-class native-born women, settlement houses in immigrant neighborhoods provided housing, food, education, child care, cultural activities, and social connections for new arrivals to the United States. Many women, both native-born and immigrant, developed life-long passions for social activism in the settlement houses. Jane Addams's Hull House in Chicago and Lillian Wald's Henry Street Settlement in New York City were two of the most prominent.) in other cities as well. Conspicuous among the houses was Lillian Wald's Henry Street Settlement in New York, which opened its doors in 1893.

The settlement houses became centers of women's activism and of social reform. The women of Hull House successfully lobbied in 1893 for an Illinois anti-sweatshop law that protected women workers and prohibited child labor. They were led in this case by the black-clad Florence Kelley, a guerrilla warrior in the urban jungle. Armed with the insights of socialism and endowed with the voice of an actress, Kelley was a lifelong battler for the welfare of women, children, blacks, and consumers. She later moved to the Henry Street Settlement in New York and served for three decades as general secretary of the National Consumers League. The pioneering work of Addams, Wald, and Kelley helped blaze the trail that many women—and some men—later followed into careers in urban reform and the new profession of social work. For these female reformers, and for many other women, the city offered a new kind of frontier opportunity.

More than a million women joined the work force in the single decade of the 1890s. Strict social codes prescribed which women might work and what jobs they might hold. Because employment for wives and mothers was considered taboo, the vast majority of working women were single. Their jobs depended on their race, ethnicity, and class. Black women had few opportunities beyond domestic service. White-collar jobs as social workers, secretaries, department store clerks, and telephone operators were largely reserved for native-born women. Immigrant women tended to cluster in particular industries, as Jewish women did in the garment trades. Although hours were often long, pay low, and advancement limited, a job still bought work-ingwomen some economic and social independence. After contributing a large share of their earnings to their families, many women still had enough money in their pocketbooks to enter a new urban world of sociability—excursions to amusement parks with friends on days off, Saturday night dances with the "fellas."

Chapter 25: America Moves to the City 1865–1900: 25-5 Narrowing the Welcome Mat

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## 25-5 Narrowing the Welcome Mat

Antiforeignism, or “nativism,” earlier touched off by the Irish and German arrivals in the 1840s and 1850s, bared its ugly face in the 1880s with fresh ferocity. The New Immigrants had come for much the same reasons as the Old—to escape the poverty and squalor of Europe and to seek new opportunities in America. But “nativists” viewed the eastern and southern Europeans as culturally and religiously exotic hordes and often gave them a rude reception. The newest newcomers aroused widespread alarm. Their high birthrate, common among people with a low standard of living and sufficient youth and vigor to pull up stakes, raised worries that the original Anglo-Saxon stock would soon be outbred and outvoted. Still more horrifying was the prospect that it would be mongrelized by a mixture of “inferior” southern European blood and that the fairer Anglo-Saxon types would disappear. One New England writer cried out in anguish,

*O Liberty, white Goddess! is it well  
To leave the gates unguarded?*

In response to nativists who condemned the New Immigrants as despicable human specimens threatening to drag down the American race, the Jewish immigrant playwright **Israel Zangwill** (1864–1926) celebrated the new superior American emerging out of what he called “the great melting pot” of European races:

*“America is God's crucible, the great melting pot, where all the races of Europe are melting and re-forming! ...Germans and Frenchmen, Irishmen and Englishmen, Jews and Russians—into the Crucible with you all! God is making the American!”*

Native-born Americans voiced additional fears. They blamed the immigrants for the degradation of urban government. Some trade unionists assailed the alien arrivals for their willingness to work for “starvation” wages that seemed to them like princely sums and for importing in their intellectual baggage such seemingly dangerous doctrines as socialism, communism, and anarchism. Many business leaders, who had welcomed the flood of cheap manual labor, began to fear that they had embraced a Frankenstein's monster.

### Looking Backward

Older immigrants, trying to keep their own humble arrival in America “in the shadows,” sought to close the bridge that had carried them and their ancestors

across the Atlantic.



"Looking Backward" by Joseph Keppler, 1893 Library of Congress

Antiforeign organizations, reminiscent of the "Know-Nothings" of antebellum days, were now revived in a different guise. Notorious among them was the American Protective Association (APA), which was created in 1887 and soon claimed a million members. In pursuing its nativist goals, the APA urged voting against Roman Catholic candidates for office and sponsored the publication of lustful fantasies about runaway nuns.

Organized labor was quick to throw its growing weight behind the move to choke off the rising tide of foreigners. Frequently used as strikebreakers, the wage-depressing immigrants were hard to unionize because of the language barrier. Labor leaders argued, not illogically, that if American industry was entitled to protection from foreign goods, American workers were entitled to protection from foreign laborers.

### **Lady Liberty Being Readied for Travel**

A centennial "birthday present" from the French people, the Statue of Liberty arrived from France in 1886.

Musee Carnavalet, Paris/Laurie Platt Winfrey, Inc.

Congress finally nailed up partial bars against the inpouring immigrants. The first restrictive law, passed in 1882, banged the gate shut in the faces of paupers, criminals, and convicts, all of whom had to be returned at the expense of the greedy or careless shipper. Congress further responded to pained outcries from organized labor when in 1885 it prohibited the importation of foreign workers under contract—usually for substandard wages.

President **Grover Cleveland** (1837–1908) declared in 1897,

*“It is said ...that the quality of recent immigration is undesirable. The time is quite within recent memory when the same thing was said of immigrants who, with their descendants, are now numbered among our best citizens.”*

In addition to the first federal restrictions on immigration, the year 1882 brought forth a law to bar completely one ethnic group—the Chinese. Hitherto America, at least officially, had embraced the oppressed and underprivileged of all races and creeds. Hereafter the gates would be padlocked against defective undesirables—plus the Chinese.

In later years other federal laws lengthened the list of undesirables to include the insane, polygamists, prostitutes, alcoholics, anarchists, and people carrying contagious diseases. A proposed literacy test, long a favorite of nativists because it favored the Old Immigrants over the New, met vigorous opposition. It was not enacted until 1917, after three presidents had vetoed it on the grounds that literacy was more a measure of opportunity than of intelligence.

In 1886 the Statue of Liberty arose in New York harbor, a gift from the people of France. On

its base were inscribed the words of Emma Lazarus:

*Give me your tired, your poor  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.*

To many nativists, those noble words described only too accurately the “scum” washed up by the New Immigrant tides. Yet the uprooted immigrants, unlike “natives” lucky enough to have had parents who caught an earlier ship, became American citizens the hard way. They stepped off the boat, many of them full-grown and well muscled, ready to put their shoulders to the nation's industrial wheels. The Republic owes much to these latecomers—for their brawn, their brains, their courage, and the yeasty diversity they brought to American society.

Chapter 25: America Moves to the City 1865–1900: 25-6 Churches Confront the Urban Challenge

Book Title: The American Pageant

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## 25-6 Churches Confront the Urban Challenge

The swelling size and changing character of the urban population posed sharp challenges to American churches, which, like other national institutions, had grown up in the country. Protestant churches, in particular, suffered heavily from the shift to the city, where many of their traditional doctrines and pastoral approaches seemed irrelevant. Some of the larger houses of worship, with their stained-glass windows and thundering pipe organs, were tending to become merely sacred diversions or amusements. Reflecting the wealth of their prosperous parishioners, many of the old-line churches were distressingly slow to raise their voices against social and economic vices. **John D. Rockefeller** was a pillar of the Baptist Church, J. Pierpont Morgan of the Episcopal Church. Trinity Episcopal Church in New York actually owned some of the city's worst slum property. Cynics remarked that the Episcopal Church had become “the Republican party at prayer.” Some religious leaders began to worry that in the age-old struggle between God and the Devil, the Wicked One was registering dismaying gains. The mounting emphasis was on materialism; too many devotees worshiped at the altar of avarice. Money was the accepted measure of achievement, and the new gospel of wealth proclaimed that God caused the righteous to prosper.

### Morning Service at Moody's Church, 1908

Thousands of Chicagoans found the gospel and a helping hand at evangelist Dwight Lyman Moody's church. Although Moody himself died in 1899, his successors continued to attract throngs of worshipers to his church, which could hold up to ten thousand people.

Chicago History Museum

Into this spreading moral vacuum stepped a new generation of **Liberal Protestants** (Members of a branch of Protestantism that flourished from 1875 to 1925 and encouraged followers to use the Bible as a moral compass rather than to believe that the Bible represented scientific or historical truth. Many Liberal Protestants became active in the “social gospel” and other reform movements of the era.) . With roots in the Unitarian revolt against orthodox Calvinism, liberal ideas came into the mainstream of American Protestantism between 1875 and 1925, despite frequent and bitter controversies with fundamentalists. Entrenched in the leadership and seminaries of the dominant denominations, liberal Protestants adapted religious ideas to modern culture, attempting to reconcile Christianity with new scientific and economic doctrines. They rejected biblical literalism, urging Christians to view biblical stories as models for Christian behavior rather than as dogma. They stressed the ethical teachings of the Bible and allied themselves with the reform-oriented “social gospel” movement and urban revivalists like Dwight Lyman Moody, a former shoe salesman who captivated audiences with his message of forgiveness. Their optimistic trust in community fellowship and their focus on earthly salvation and personal growth attracted many followers. They helped Protestant Americans reconcile their religious faith with modern, cosmopolitan ways of thinking.

Simultaneously, the Roman Catholic and Jewish faiths were gaining enormous strength from the New Immigration. By 1900 Roman Catholics had become the largest single denomination, numbering nearly 9 million communicants. Cardinal **James Gibbons** (1834–1921), an urban Catholic leader devoted to American unity, was immensely popular with Roman Catholics and Protestants alike. Acquainted with every president from Johnson to Harding, he employed his liberal sympathies to assist the American labor movement.

By 1890 the variety-loving Americans could choose from 150 religious denominations, 2 of them brand-new. One was the band-playing Salvation Army, whose soldiers without swords invaded America from England in 1879 and established a beachhead on the country's street corners. Appealing frankly to the down-and-outers, the boldly named Salvation Army did much practical good, especially with free soup.

The other important new faith was the Church of Christ, Scientist (Christian Science), founded by **Mary Baker Eddy** in 1879 after she had suffered much ill health. Preaching that the true practice of Christianity heals sickness, she set forth her views in a book entitled *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* (1875), which sold an amazing 400,000 copies before her death. A fertile field for converts was found in America's hurried, nerve-racked, and urbanized civilization, to which Eddy held out the hope of relief from discords and diseases through prayer as taught by Christian Science. By the time she died in 1910, she had founded an influential church that embraced several hundred thousand devoted worshippers.

Urbanites also participated in a new kind of religious-affiliated organization, the Young Men's and Women's Christian Associations. The YMCA and the YWCA, established in the United States before the Civil War, grew by leaps and bounds. Combining physical and other kinds of education with religious instruction, the "Y's" appeared in virtually every major American city by the end of the nineteenth century.

Chapter 25: America Moves to the City 1865–1900: 25-7 Darwin Disrupts the Churches

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## 25-7 Darwin Disrupts the Churches

The old-time religion received many blows from modern trends, including a booming sale of books on comparative religion and on historical criticism as applied to the Bible. Most unsettling of all were the writings of the English naturalist **Charles Darwin**. In lucid prose he set forth the sensational theory that higher forms of life had slowly evolved from lower forms, through a process of random biological mutation and adaptation.

Though not the first scientist to propose an evolutionary hypothesis, Darwin broke new ground with his idea of "natural selection." Nature, in his view, blindly selected organisms for survival or death based on random, inheritable variations that they happened to possess. Some traits conferred advantages in the struggle for life, and hence better odds of passing them along to off-spring. By providing a material explanation for the evolutionary process, Darwin's theory explicitly rejected the "dogma of special creations," which ascribed the design of each fixed species to divine agency.

Darwin's radical ideas evoked the wrath of scientists and laymen alike. Many zoologists, like Harvard's Louis Agassiz, held fast to the old doctrine of "special creations." By 1875, however, the majority of scientists in America and elsewhere had embraced the theory of organic evolution, though not all endorsed natural selection as its agent. Many preferred an alternative mechanism proposed earlier by the French biologist Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, who argued that traits acquired during the course of an individual's life could shape the future genetic development of a species. Lamarckians briefly tamed the unsettling Darwinian view of chance mutation and competitive inheritance, but Darwin's version would become scientific orthodoxy by the 1920s.

Clergymen and theologians responded to Darwin's theory in several ways. At first most believers joined scientists in rejecting his ideas outright. After 1875, by which time most

natural scientists had embraced evolution, the religious community split into two camps. A conservative minority stood firmly behind the Scripture as the infallible Word of God, and they condemned what they thought was the “bestial hypothesis” of the Darwinians. Their rejection of scientific consensus spawned a muscular view of biblical authority that eventually gave rise to fundamentalism in the twentieth century.

As a student at Harvard Medical School, **William James** (1842–1910) was influenced by Darwinian science. He reviewed Darwin's theory in his first published article in 1865:

*“A doctrine like that of Transmutation of Species ...cannot but be treated with some respect; and when we find that such naturalists, ... many of whom but a few days ago were publicly opposing it, are now coming round, one by one, to espouse it, we may well doubt whether it may not be destined eventually to prevail.”*

Most religious thinkers parted company with the conservatives and flatly refused to accept the Bible in its entirety as either history or science. These “accommodationists” feared that hostility toward evolution would alienate educated believers. Over time an increasing number of liberal thinkers were able to reconcile Darwinism with Christianity. They heralded the revolutionary theory as a newer and grander revelation of the ways of the Almighty. As one commentator observed,

*Some call it Evolution,  
And others call it God.*

Darwinism undoubtedly did much to loosen religious moorings and to promote skepticism among the gospel-gluttoned. While the liberal efforts at compromise did succeed in keeping many Americans in the pews, those compromises also tended to relegate religious teaching to matters of personal faith, private conduct, and family life. As science began to explain more of the external world, commentators on nature and society increasingly refrained from adding religious perspectives to the discussion.

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## 25-8 The Lust for Learning

Public education continued its upward climb. The ideal of tax-supported elementary schools, adopted on a nationwide basis before the Civil War, was still gathering strength. Americans were accepting the truism that a free government cannot function successfully



if the people are shackled by ignorance. Beginning about 1870, more and more states were making at least a grade-school education compulsory, and this gain, incidentally, helped check the frightful abuses of child labor.

Spectacular indeed was the spread of high schools, especially by the 1880s and 1890s. Before the Civil War, private academies at the secondary level were common, and tax-supported high schools were rare, numbering only a few hundred. But the concept that a high-school education, as well as a grade-school education, was the birthright of every citizen was now gaining impressive support. By 1900 there were some six thousand high schools. In addition, free textbooks were being provided in increasing quantities by the taxpayers of the states during the last two decades of the century.

Other trends were noteworthy. Teacher-training schools, then called "normal schools," experienced a striking expansion after the Civil War. In 1860 there were only twelve of them, in 1910 over three hundred. Kindergartens, earlier borrowed from Germany, also began to gain strong support. The New Immigration in the 1880s and 1890s brought vast new strength to private Catholic parochial schools, which were fast becoming a major pillar of the nation's educational structure.

Public schools, though showering benefits on children, excluded millions of adults. This deficiency was partially remedied by the Chautauqua movement, a successor to the lyceums, which was launched in 1874 on the shores of Lake Chautauqua, in New York. The organizers achieved gratifying success through nationwide public lectures, often held in tents and featuring well-known speakers, including the witty **Mark Twain**. In addition, there were extensive Chautauqua courses of home study, for which 100,000 people enrolled in 1892 alone.

Crowded cities, despite their cancers, generally provided better educational facilities than the old one-room, one-teacher red schoolhouse. The success of the public schools is confirmed by the falling of the illiteracy rate from 20 percent in 1870 to 10.7 percent in 1900. Americans were developing a profound faith, often misplaced, in formal education as the sovereign remedy for their ills.

Chapter 25: America Moves to the City 1865–1900: 25-9 Booker T. Washington and Education for Black People

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## 25-9 Booker T. Washington and Education for Black People

War-torn and impoverished, the South lagged far behind other regions in public education, and African Americans suffered most severely. A staggering 44 percent of nonwhites were illiterate in 1900. Some help came from northern philanthropists, but the foremost champion of black education was an ex-slave, **Booker T. Washington**. His classic autobiography, *Up from Slavery* (1900), tells how he slept under a board sidewalk to save pennies for his schooling. Called in 1881 to head the black normal and industrial school at Tuskegee, Alabama, he began with forty students in a tumbledown shanty. Undaunted, he taught black students useful trades so that they could gain self-respect and economic security. Washington's self-help approach to solving the nation's racial problems was

labeled “accommodationist” because it stopped short of directly challenging white supremacy. Recognizing the depths of southern white racism, Washington avoided the issue of *social* equality. Instead he grudgingly acquiesced in segregation in return for the right to develop—however modestly and painstakingly—the economic and educational resources of the black community. Economic independence would ultimately be the ticket, Washington believed, to black political and civil rights.

### **Booker T. Washington (1856–1915)**

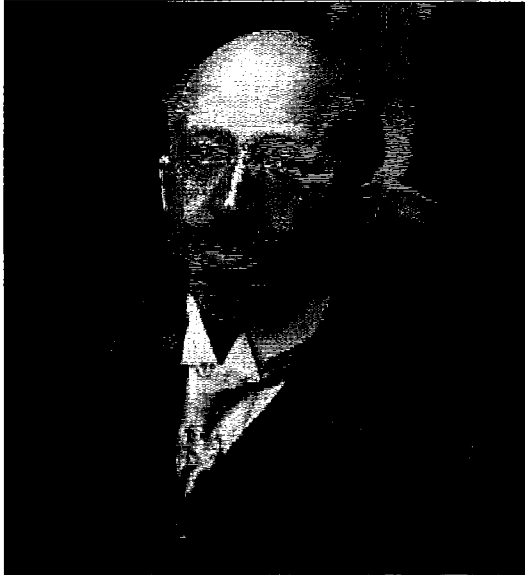
In a famous speech in New Orleans in 1895, Washington grudgingly acquiesced in social separateness for blacks. On that occasion, he told his largely white audience, “In all things that are purely social, we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress.”

Tuskegee University Archives

Washington's commitment to training young blacks in agriculture and the trades guided the curriculum at **Tuskegee Institute** (A normal and industrial school led by **Booker T. Washington** in Tuskegee, Alabama. It focused on training young black students in agriculture and the trades to help them achieve economic independence. Washington justified segregated, vocational training as a necessary first step on the road to racial equality, although critics accused him of being too “accomodationist.”) and made it an ideal place for slave-born George Washington Carver to teach and research. After Carver joined the faculty in 1896, he became an internationally famous agricultural chemist who provided a much-needed boost to the southern economy by discovering hundreds of new uses for the lowly peanut (shampoo, axle grease), sweet potato (vinegar), and soybean (paint).

### **W. E. B. Du Bois (1868–1963)**

In 1961, at the end of a long lifetime of struggle for racial justice in the United States, Du Bois renounced his American citizenship at the age of ninety-three and took up residence in the newly independent African state of Ghana.



Library of Congress

Other black leaders, notably Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois, assailed **Booker T. Washington** as an “Uncle Tom” who was condemning their race to manual labor and perpetual inferiority. Born in Massachusetts, Du Bois was a mixture of African, French, Dutch, and Indian blood (“Thank God, no Anglo-Saxon,” he would add). After a determined struggle, he earned a Ph.D. at Harvard, the first of his race to achieve that goal. (“The honor, I assure you, was Harvard’s,” he said.) He demanded complete equality for blacks, social as well as economic, and helped found the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909. Rejecting Washington’s gradualism and separatism, he argued that the “talented tenth” of the black community should be given full and immediate access to the mainstream of American life. An exceptionally skilled historian, sociologist, and poet, he died as a self-exile in Africa in 1963, at the age of ninety-five. Many of Du Bois’s differences with Washington reflected the contrasting life experiences of southern and northern blacks.

W. E. B. Du Bois (1868–1963) wrote in his 1903 classic, *The Souls of Black Folk*,

*“It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s self through the eyes of others.... One ever feels his two-ness—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.”*

## 25-10 The Hallowed Halls of Ivy

Colleges and universities also shot up like lusty young saplings in the decades after the Civil War. A college education increasingly seemed indispensable in the scramble for the golden apple of success (see Table 25.1). Even women and African Americans were finding new opportunities for higher education. Women's colleges such as Vassar were gaining ground, and universities open to both genders were blossoming, notably in the Midwest. By 1880 every third college graduate was a woman. By the turn of the century, the black institutes and academies planted during Reconstruction had blossomed into a crop of southern black colleges. Howard University in Washington, D.C., Hampton Institute in Virginia, Atlanta University, and numerous others nurtured higher education for blacks until the civil rights movement of the 1960s made widespread attendance at white institutions possible.

Table 25.1

### Educational Levels, 1870–2010

Year	Number Graduating from High School	Number Graduating from College	Median Number of School Years Completed *	High School Graduates as a Percentage of 17-Year-Old Population
1870	16,000	9,371		2.0%
1880	24,000	12,896		2.5%
1890	44,000	15,539		3.5%
1900	95,000	27,410		6.4%
1910	156,000	37,199	8.1 *	8.8%
1920	311,000	48,622	8.2 *	16.8%
1930	667,000	122,484	8.4 *	29.0%
1940	1,221,000	186,500	8.6	50.8%
1950	1,199,700	432,058	9.3	59.0%
1960	1,858,000	392,440	10.5	69.5%
1970	2,889,000	792,316	12.2	76.9%
1980	3,043,000	929,417	12.5	71.4%
1990	2,574,000	1,051,344	12.7	73.4%

2000	2,833,000	1,237,875	NA	69.8%
2005	3,109,000	1,439,264	NA	79.5%
2010 (est.)	3,295,000	1,648,000	NA	82.4%

(Source: Folger and Nam, *Education of the American Population*, a 1960 Census Monograph.) (Sources: *Digest of Education Statistics*, 1992, 2009, a publication of the National Center for Education Statistics; *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, relevant years.)

The truly phenomenal growth of higher education owed much to the Morrill Act of 1862. This enlightened law provided a generous grant of public lands to the states for support of education. **Land-grant colleges** (Colleges and universities created from allocations of public land through the Morrill Act of 1862 and the Hatch Act of 1887. These grants helped fuel the boom in higher education in the late nineteenth century, and many of today's public universities derive from these grants.), most of which became state universities, in turn bound themselves to provide certain services, such as military training. The Hatch Act of 1887, extending the Morrill Act, provided federal funds for the establishment of agricultural experiment stations in connection with the land-grant colleges. These two pieces of legislation spawned over a hundred colleges and universities, including such institutions as the University of California (1868), the Ohio State University (1870), and Texas A&M (1876).

### Stanford University Under Construction, Late Nineteenth Century



Courtesy Stanford University Archives

Private philanthropy richly supplemented government grants to higher education. Many of the new industrial millionaires, developing tender social consciences, donated immense fortunes to educational enterprises. A philanthropist was cynically described as “one who steals privately and gives publicly.” In the twenty years from 1878 to 1898, these money barons gave away about \$150 million. Noteworthy among the new private universities of high quality were Cornell (1865) and Leland Stanford Junior (1891), the latter founded in memory of the deceased fifteen-year-old only child of a builder of the Central Pacific Railroad. The University of Chicago, opened in 1892, speedily forged into a front-rank position, owing largely to the lubricant of John D. Rockefeller's oil millions. Rockefeller died

at ninety-seven, after having given some \$550 million for philanthropic purposes.

Significant also was the sharp increase in professional and technical schools, where modern laboratories were replacing the solo experiments performed by instructors in front of their classes. Towering among the specialized institutions was Johns Hopkins University, opened in 1876, which maintained the nation's first high-grade graduate school. Several generations of American scholars, repelled by snobbish English cousins and attracted by painstaking Continental methods, had attended German universities. Johns Hopkins ably carried on the Germanic tradition of profusely footnoted tomes. Reputable scholars no longer had to go abroad for a gilt-edged graduate degree. Dr. Woodrow Wilson, among others, received his Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins.

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## 25-11 The March of the Mind

Homegrown influences shaped the modern American university as much as German models. Antebellum colleges had stressed the “unity of truth,” or the idea that knowledge and morality existed in a single system. Religious instruction in moral philosophy and natural theology served as pillars of the old classical curriculum. In the wake of the Darwinian challenge, when religion and science seemed less compatible, university reformers struggled to reconcile scientific education and religion to preserve the unity of moral and intellectual purpose. When that effort faltered, university educators abandoned moral instruction and divorced “facts” from “values.”

Other pressures also helped doom the traditional curriculum. The new industrialization brought insistent demands for “practical” courses and specialized vocational training in the sciences. The elective system, where students selected courses, was gaining popularity. Reformers also emphasized fields of concentration to prepare students for entry into a profession. Specialization, not synthesis, became the primary goal of a university education. The reform spirit received a powerful boost in the 1870s when Dr. Charles W. Eliot, a vigorous young chemist, became president of Harvard College and embarked upon a lengthy career of educational statesmanship. As a sign of the secularizing times, Eliot changed Harvard's motto from *Christo et Ecclesiae* (For Christ and Church) to *Veritas* (Truth).

Medical schools and medical science after the Civil War were prospering. Despite the enormous sale of patent medicines and so-called Indian remedies—“good for man or beast”—the new scientific gains were reflected in improved public health. Revolutionary discoveries abroad, such as those of the French scientist Louis Pasteur and the English physician Joseph Lister, left their imprint on America. ✪ The popularity of heavy whiskers waned as the century ended; such hairy adornments were now coming to be regarded as germ traps. As a result of new health-promoting precautions, including campaigns against public spitting, life expectancy at birth was measurably increased.

One of America's most brilliant intellectuals, the slight and sickly **William James** (1842–

1910), served for thirty-five years on the Harvard faculty. Through his numerous writings, he made a deep mark on many fields. His *Principles of Psychology* (1890) helped to establish the modern discipline of behavioral psychology. In *The Will to Believe* (1897) and *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902), he explored the philosophy and psychology of religion. In his most famous work, *Pragmatism* (1907), he pronounced America's greatest contribution to the history of philosophy the concept of **pragmatism** (A distinctive American philosophy that emerged in the late nineteenth century around the theory that the true value of an idea lay in its ability to solve problems. The pragmatists thus embraced the provisional, uncertain nature of experimental knowledge. Among the most well-known purveyors of pragmatism were **John Dewey**, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., and William James.)—that the truth of an idea was to be tested, above all, by its practical consequences (see “Makers of America: Pioneering Pragmatists,”).

Chapter 25: America Moves to the City 1865–1900: 25-12 The Appeal of the Press

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## 25-12 The Appeal of the Press

Books continued to be a major source of edification and enjoyment, for both juveniles and adults. Best sellers of the 1880s were generally old favorites like *David Copperfield* and *Ivanhoe*.

Well-stocked public libraries—the poor person's university—were making encouraging progress, especially in Boston and New York. The magnificent Library of Congress building, which opened its doors in 1897, provided thirteen acres of floor space in the largest and costliest edifice of its kind in the world. A new era was inaugurated by the generous gifts of **Andrew Carnegie**. This openhanded Scotsman, book-starved in his youth, contributed \$60 million for the construction of nearly 1,700 public libraries all over the country, with an additional 750 scattered around the English-speaking world from Great Britain to New Zealand. By 1900 there were about nine thousand free circulating libraries in America, each with at least three hundred books. Roaring newspaper presses, spurred by the invention of the Linotype in 1885, more than kept pace with the demands of a word-hungry public. But the heavy investment in machinery and plant was accompanied by a growing fear of offending advertisers and subscribers. Bare-knuckle editorials were, to an increasing degree, being supplanted by feature articles and non-controversial syndicated material. The day of slashing journalistic giants like **Horace Greeley** was passing.

### The “Penny Press”

The Chicago Daily News was but one of several cheap, mass-circulation newspapers that flourished in the new urban environment of Gilded Age America.

Chicago History Museum

Sensationalism, at the same time, was capturing the public taste. The semiliterate immigrants, combined with strap-hanging urban commuters, created a profitable market for news that was simply and punch-ily written. Sex, scandal, and other human-interest stories burst into the headlines, as a vulgarization of the press accompanied the growth of circulation. Critics now complained in vain of these “presstitutes.”

Two new journalistic tycoons emerged. **Joseph Pulitzer**, Hungarian-born and near-blind, was a leader in the techniques of sensationalism through his ownership of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* and *New York World*. His use of colored comic supplements featuring the “Yellow Kid” gave the name **yellow journalism** (A scandal-mongering practice of journalism that emerged in New York during the Gilded Age out of the circulation battles between Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World* and William Randolph Hearst's *New York Journal*. The expression has remained a pejorative term referring to sensationalist journalism practiced with unethical, unprofessional standards.) to his lurid sheets. A close and ruthless competitor was the youthful William Randolph Hearst, who had been expelled from Harvard College for a crude prank. Able to draw on his California father's mining millions, he ultimately built a powerful chain of newspapers, beginning with the *San Francisco Examiner* in 1887.

Unfortunately, the overall influence of Pulitzer and Hearst was not altogether wholesome. Although both championed many worthy causes, both prostituted the press in their struggle for increased circulation; both “stooped, snooped, and scooped to conquer.” Their flair for scandal and sensational rumor was happily somewhat offset by the introduction of syndicated material and by the strengthening of the news-gathering Associated Press, which had been founded in the 1840s.



## 25-13 Apostles of Reform

Magazines partially satisfied the public appetite for good reading, notably old East Coast standbys like *Harper's*, the *Atlantic Monthly*, and *Scribner's Monthly* and new western entrants such as the California-based *Overland Monthly*. Possibly the most influential journal of all was the liberal and highly intellectual New York *Nation*, which was read largely by professors, preachers, and publicists as “the weekly Day of Judgment.” Launched in 1865 by the Irish-born Edwin L. Godkin, a merciless critic, it crusaded militantly for civil-service reform, honesty in government, and a moderate tariff. The *Nation* attained only a modest circulation—about ten thousand in the nineteenth century—but Godkin believed that if he could reach the right ten thousand leaders, his ideas through them might reach tens of millions.

**Henry George (1839–1897) wrote in *Progress and Poverty* (1879),**

*“Our boasted freedom necessarily involves slavery, so long as we recognize private property in land. Until that is abolished, Declarations of Independence and Acts of Emancipation are in vain. So long as one man can claim the exclusive ownership of the land from which other men must live, slavery will exist, and as material progresses on, must grow and deepen!”*

Another journalist-author, Henry George, was an original thinker who left an enduring mark. Poor in formal schooling, he was rich in idealism and in the milk of human kindness. After seeing poverty at its worst in India and land-grabbing at its greediest in California, he took pen in hand. His classic treatise *Progress and Poverty* undertook to solve “the great enigma of our times”—“the association of progress with poverty.” According to George, the pressure of a growing population on a fixed supply of land unjustifiably pushed up property values, showering unearned profits on owners of land. A single 100 percent tax on those windfall profits would eliminate unfair inequalities and stimulate economic growth.

George soon became a most controversial figure. His single-tax idea was so horrifying to the propertied classes that his manuscript was rejected by numerous publishers. Finally brought out in 1879, the book gradually broke into the best-seller lists and ultimately sold some 3 million copies. George also lectured widely in America and Britain, where he left an indelible mark on English Fabian socialism. George's proposals resounded for decades. As late as 1903, a young female follower applied for a patent for “The Landlord's Game,” which bore a striking resemblance to Parker Brothers' later Monopoly, released in 1935. In the earlier game, the point was not to amass property, but to expose the unfair advantage enjoyed by the landlord and to show “how the single tax would discourage speculation.”

**Edward Bellamy**, a quiet Massachusetts Yankee, was another journalist-reformer of remarkable power. In 1888 he published a socialistic novel, *Looking Backward*, in which the hero, falling into a hypnotic sleep, awakens in the year 2000. He “looks backward” and finds that the social and economic injustices of 1887 have melted away under an idyllic government, which has nationalized big business to serve the public interest. To a nation already alarmed by the trust evil, the book had a magnetic appeal and sold over a million copies. Scores of Bellamy Clubs sprang up to discuss this mild utopian socialism, and they heavily influenced American reform movements near the end of the century.

Chapter 25: America Moves to the City 1865–1900: 25-14 The New Morality

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## 25-14 The New Morality

Like other radical reformers, Victoria Woodhull shook the pillars of conventional morality when she publicly proclaimed her belief in free love in 1871. Woodhull was a beautiful and eloquent divorcée, sometime stockbroker, and tireless feminist propagandist. Together with her sister, Tennessee Claflin, she published a farout periodical, *Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly*. The sisters again shocked “respectable” society in 1872 when their journal struck a blow for the new morality by charging that Henry Ward Beecher, the most famous preacher of his day, had for years been carrying on an adulterous affair.

Pure-minded Americans sternly resisted these affronts to their moral principles. Their foremost champion was a portly crusader, Anthony Comstock, who made lifelong war on the “immoral.” Armed after 1873 with a federal statute—the notorious “Comstock Law”—this self-appointed defender of sexual purity boasted that he had confiscated no fewer than 202,679 “obscene pictures and photos”; 4,185 “boxes of pills, powders, etc., used by abortionists”; and 26 “obscene pictures, framed on walls of saloons.” His proud claim was that he had driven at least fifteen people to suicide.

The antics of the Woodhull sisters and Comstock exposed to daylight the battle in late-nineteenth-century America over sexual attitudes and the place of women. Switchboards and typewriters in the booming cities became increasingly the tools of women's independence. Young workingwomen headed to dance halls and nightclubs when the day was done, enjoying a new sense of freedom in the cities. This “new morality” began to be reflected in soaring divorce rates, the spreading practice of birth control, and increasingly frank discussion of sexual topics. By 1913, said one popular magazine, the chimes had struck “sex o'clock in America.”

### “Get Thee Behind Me, (Mrs) Satan!”

A colorful and charismatic figure, Victoria Claflin Woodhull was the first woman to run for the presidency, in 1872. That same year, noted cartoonist Thomas Nast viciously attacked her for advocating free love.

## The Granger Collection

**Makers of America****Pioneering Pragmatists**

Nineteenth-century Americans, among them proper Bostonians of an intellectual bent, had a habit of joining clubs. Luminaries such as the philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson, the novelist Nathaniel Hawthorne, and the natural scientist Louis Agassiz regularly met for sumptuous food and social conversation at the Saturday Club. Younger members of Boston's polite society mimicked their elders at a junior edition known simply as "The Club." In a world without academic conferences or professional forums, serious intellectual conversations in the United States tended to occur at private philosophical and literary societies, or simply at regular gatherings in a scholar's home study. One club, founded in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in January 1872, lasted only nine months, but its members left a lasting mark on American intellectual life.

**William James (1842–1910), Physician, Psychologist, and Philosopher**

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“It was in the earliest Seventies that a knot of us young men in Old Cambridge, calling ourselves, half-ironically, half-defiantly, 'The Metaphysical Club,' ... used to meet, sometimes in my study, sometimes in that of **William James**,” recalled Charles Sanders Peirce in 1907. Peirce's Metaphysical Club was hardly a success by most conventional standards. It kept no records of its proceedings. Its members missed meetings and (except for Peirce) made no mention of its existence in their letters, diaries, or writings. Some of their relatives despised it. A young **Henry James** (novelist brother of William) griped, “It gives me a headache merely to know of it.” But it did boast an impressive roster of members, including three young men in their early thirties who eventually became foundational figures in their respective fields: the logician and scientist Peirce; the medical doctor, psychologist, and philosopher William James; and the jurist and legal scholar Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. With their Harvard friend and fellow philosopher Chauncey Wright, they assembled frequently in their homes and, usually over a bottle of rum, argued over the meaning of life and the nature of the universe. Joined later by the philosophers **John Dewey** and George Herbert Mead, these thinkers gave earliest expression to a distinctive American philosophy known as “pragmatism.”

**Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914), Mathematician and Logician**

© Bettmann/Corbis

Pragmatism sprouted in the fertile intellectual soil of the late-nineteenth-century Atlantic world. The ground had already been tilled by the naturalist **Charles Darwin**, whose revolutionary contributions to evolutionary science greatly influenced the early pragmatists. In place of fixed species, Darwin had posited a natural world of chance, change, and contingency. Thinkers like Peirce and James applied Darwin's insights from biology to fields such as philosophy, logic, and psychology. To them old ways of thinking that assumed absolute truths, sanctioned by religious teaching or idealist philosophy, no longer made sense in the Darwinian age. Instead they welcomed the provisional, fallible nature of experimental knowledge. As James put it, pragmatism “means the open air and possibilities of nature, as against dogma, artificiality, and the pretence of finality in truth.” In short, they embraced uncertainty and developed an entire philosophical system around it. The true value of an idea, said the pragmatists, lay in its ability to solve problems.

### **Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. (1841–1935), Supreme Court Justice and Scholar**

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While all the pragmatists were far-ranging in their intellectual pursuits, Dewey demonstrated his faith in the unity of theory and practice by becoming a public intellectual and social activist. He founded the Laboratory School at the University of Chicago in 1896 to experiment with an educational philosophy rooted in “learning by doing.” He promoted an ethical vision of American society by linking arms with progressive reformers in the 1910s, and he championed democratic ideals by promoting third-party politics in the 1930s and anti-Stalinist agitation in the 1940s. Throughout a prolific career that spanned three generations, Dewey continually stressed the positive virtues of experience, cooperation, and democracy, and he urged philosophers to abandon futile debates about knowledge in favor of tackling the real “problems of men.”

Holmes, as a justice on the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court for twenty years and on the U.S. Supreme Court for another three decades, similarly followed

pragmatism's injunction to evaluate the effects of ideas rather than simply adopt prescriptions from the past. From his personal experience fighting in the Civil War (where he nearly died from his wounds), Holmes acquired a bleak skepticism toward jurisprudence. While on the bench, he became renowned for his masterfully crafted dissents, most famously asserting the principle of “judicial deference” to legislatures in *Lochner v. New York* (1905) and protecting freedom of speech, even freedom for the “opinions that we loathe,” in *Abrams v. United States* (1919).

### **John Dewey (1859–1952), Educator and Philosopher**

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Many commentators on pragmatism have considered it the quintessential expression of American practicality. To its critics pragmatism symbolizes the vulgar, can-do attitude and narrow anti-intellectualism of the American middle class. To its celebrants pragmatism offers a needed correction to conventional philosophy by accepting the uncertain and provisional nature of knowledge, reconciling science and culture, and promoting an ethical ideal of democracy. Pragmatism went out of fashion during the Cold War era (ca. 1945–1990), when Americans believed in moral certainties such as the superiority of the United States and the value-free empiricism of science. But it has enjoyed a striking renewal in recent years. As new kinds of uncertainty ranging from terrorist violence to scientific dilemmas raise fresh challenges in the twenty-first century, many modern American intellectuals are harking back to pragmatism. First formulated in the cozy confines of Cambridge's Metaphysical Club more than a century ago, pragmatism offers today's thinkers a philosophy of life built on experimentation, ethical commitment, and open-ended democratic debate.

## 25-15 Families and Women in the City

The new urban environment was hard on families. Paradoxically, the crowded cities were emotionally isolating places. Urban families had to go it alone, separated from clan, kin, and village. As families increasingly became the virtually exclusive arena for intimate companionship and for emotional and psychological satisfaction, they were subjected to unprecedented stress. Many families cracked under the strain. The urban era launched the era of divorce. From the late nineteenth century dates the beginning of the “divorce revolution” that transformed the United States' social landscape in the twentieth century (see Table 25.2).

Table 25.2

### Marriages and Divorces, 1890–2008 \*

Year	Marriages	Divorces	Ratio of Divorces to Marriages
1890	570,000	33,461	1:17
1900	709,000	55,751	1:12
1910	948,166	83,045	1:11
1920	1,274,476	170,505	1:7
1930	1,126,856	195,961	1:5
1940	1,595,879	264,000	1:6
1950	1,667,231	385,144	1:4.3
1960	1,523,381	393,000	1:3.8
1970	2,159,000	708,000	1:3
1980	2,390,000	1,189,000	1:2
1990	2,443,000	1,182,000	1:2
2000	2,329,000	NA	NA
2008	2,017,000	NA	NA

(Sources: *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, relevant years; National Center for Health Statistics, *National Vital Statistics Report*, relevant years.)

Urban life also dictated changes in work habits and even in family size. Not only fathers but mothers and even children as young as ten years old often worked, and usually in

widely scattered locations. On the farm having many children meant having more hands to help with hoeing and harvesting; but in the city more children meant more mouths to feed, more crowding in sardine-tin tenements, and more human baggage to carry in the uphill struggle for social mobility. Not surprisingly, birthrates were still dropping and family size continued to shrink as the nineteenth century lengthened. Marriages were being delayed, and more couples learned the techniques of birth control. The decline in family size in fact affected rural Americans as well as urban dwellers, and old-stock “natives” as well as New Immigrants. Women were growing more independent in the urban environment, and in 1898 they heard the voice of a major feminist prophet, Charlotte Perkins Gilman. In that year the freethinking and original-minded Gilman published *Women and Economics*, a classic of feminist literature. A distant relative of Harriet Beecher Stowe and Catharine Beecher, Gilman displayed the restless temperament and reforming zeal characteristic of the remarkable Beecher clan. Strikingly handsome, she shunned traditional feminine frills and instead devoted herself to a vigorous regimen of physical exercise and philosophical meditation.

In 1906 progressive reformer **Jane Addams** (1860–1935) argued that granting women the vote would improve the social and political condition of American cities:

*“City housekeeping has failed partly because women, the traditional housekeepers, have not been consulted as to its multiform activities. The men have been carelessly indifferent to much of the civic housekeeping, as they have been indifferent to the details of the household.... City government demands the help of minds accustomed to detail and a variety of work, to a sense of obligation to the health and welfare of young children, and to a responsibility for the cleanliness and comfort of other people.”*

In her masterwork of 1898, Gilman called on women to abandon their dependent status and contribute to the larger life of the community through productive involvement in the economy. Rejecting all claims that biology gave women a fundamentally different character from men, she argued that “our highly specialized motherhood is not so advantageous as believed.” She advocated centralized nurseries and cooperative kitchens to facilitate women's participation in the work force—anticipating by more than half a century the day-care centers and convenience-food services of a later day.

Fiery feminists also continued to insist on the ballot. They had been demanding the vote since before the Civil War, but many high-minded female reformers had temporarily shelved the cause of women to battle for the rights of blacks. In 1890 militant suffragists formed the **National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA)** (An organization founded in 1890 to demand the vote for women. NAWSA argued that women should be allowed to vote because their responsibilities in the home and family made them indispensable in the public decision-making process. During World War I, NAWSA supported the war effort and lauded women's role in the Allied victory, which helped to



finally achieve nationwide woman suffrage in the Nineteenth Amendment (1920). Its founders included aging pioneers like Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who had helped organize the first women's rights convention in 1848, and her long-time comrade Susan B. Anthony, the radical Quaker spitfire who had courted jail by trying to cast a ballot in the 1872 presidential election.

### **Ida B. Wells (1862–1931)**

Ida B. Wells courageously and tirelessly crusaded against the lynching of African-Americans. Her sensational pamphlet of 1892 summoned blacks to defend themselves against white violence, declaring that “a Winchester rifle should have a place of honor in every black home.”

Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, The New York Public Library. Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations

By 1900 a new generation of women had taken command of the suffrage battle. Their most effective leader was **Carrie Chapman Catt**, a pragmatic and businesslike reformer of relentless dedication. Significantly, under Catt the suffragists deemphasized the argument that women deserved the vote as a matter of right, because they were in all respects the equals of men. Instead Catt stressed the desirability of giving women the vote if they were to continue to discharge their traditional duties as homemakers and mothers in the increasingly public world of the city. Women had special responsibility for the health of the family and the education of children, the argument ran. On the farm, women could discharge these responsibilities in the separate sphere of the isolated homestead. But in the city, they needed a voice on boards of public health, police commissions, and school boards.

By thus linking the ballot to a traditional definition of women's role, suffragists registered encouraging gains as the new century opened, despite continuing showers of rotten eggs and the jeers of male critics who insisted that women were made for loving, not for voting. Women were increasingly permitted to vote in local elections, particularly on issues related to the schools. Wyoming Territory—later called “the Equality State”—granted the first unrestricted suffrage to women in 1869. Many western states soon followed Wyoming's example (see Map 25.2). Paralleling these triumphs, most of the states by 1890 had passed laws to permit wives to own or control their property after marriage. City life also fostered the growth of a spate of women's organizations, including the General Federation of Women's Clubs, which counted some 200,000 members in 1900. Meanwhile, in 1893 New Zealand became the first nation to grant women equal suffrage rights, further inspiring American reformers.

### Map 25.2

## Woman Suffrage Before the Nineteenth Amendment

Dates show when a state or territory adopted woman suffrage. Note the concentration of woman-suffrage states in the West.

© Cengage Learning

The reborn suffrage movement and other women's organizations largely excluded black women from their ranks. Fearful that an integrated campaign would compromise its efforts to get the vote, the National American Woman Suffrage Association limited membership to whites. Black women, however, created their own associations. Journalist and teacher Ida B. Wells inspired black women to mount a nationwide anti-lynching crusade. She also helped launch the black women's club movement, which culminated in the establishment of the National Association of Colored Women in 1896.

Chapter 25: America Moves to the City 1865–1900: 25-16 Prohibiting Alcohol and Promoting Reform

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## 25-16 Prohibiting Alcohol and Promoting Reform

Alarming gains by **Demon Rum** spurred the temperance reformers to redoubled zeal. Especially obnoxious to them was the shutter-doored corner saloon, appropriately called "the poor man's club." The barroom helped keep both him and his family poor. Liquor consumption had increased during the nerve-racking days of the Civil War, and immigrant groups, accustomed to alcohol in the Old Country, were hostile to restraints. Whiskey-loving foreigners in Boston would rudely hiss temperance lecturers. Many tipplers charged, with some accuracy, that temperance reform amounted to a middle-class assault on working-class lifestyles.

The National Prohibition party, organized in 1869, polled a sprinkling of votes in some of the ensuing presidential elections. Among the favorite songs of these sober souls were "I'll Marry No Man If He Drinks," "Vote Down the Vile Traffic," and "The Drunkard's Doom." Typical was this:

*Now, all young men, a warning take,  
And shun the poisoned bowl;  
'Twill lead you down to hell's dark gate,  
And ruin your own soul.*

Militant women entered the alcoholic arena, notably when the **Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU)** (Founded in Ohio in the 1870s to combat the evils of excessive alcohol consumption, the WCTU went on to embrace a broad reform agenda, including campaigns to abolish prostitution and gain the right to vote for women.) was organized in 1874. The white ribbon was its symbol of purity; the saintly Frances E. Willard—also a champion of planned parenthood—was its leading spirit. Less saintly was the muscular and mentally deranged "Kansas Cyclone," Carrie A. Nation, whose first husband had died of alcoholism. With her hatchet she boldly smashed saloon bottles and bars, and her "hatchetations" brought considerable disrepute to the prohibition movement because of the violence of her one-woman crusade.

But rum was now on the run. The potent Anti-Saloon League was formed in 1893, with its members singing "The Saloon Must Go" and "Vote for Cold Water, Boys." Female supporters sang "The Lips That Touch Liquor Must Never Touch Mine." Statewide prohibition, which had made surprising gains in Maine and elsewhere before the Civil War, was sweeping new states into the "dry" column. The great triumph—but only a temporary one—came in 1919, when the national prohibition amendment (Eighteenth) was attached to the Constitution.

### **Carrie Nation Advertised as a Lecturer**

Nation took her antidrink crusade to several universities, including Harvard and Yale, which she denounced as "hellholes." Predictably, the students greeted her with wild burlesque. "All Nations Welcome but Carrie" became a standard saying in saloons throughout the land.

Kansas State Historical Society

Banners of other social crusaders were aloft. The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) was created in 1866 after its founder had witnessed brutality to horses in Russia. The American Red Cross was launched in 1881, with the dynamic and diminutive five-foot-tall Clara Barton, the “angel” of Civil War battlefields, at the helm.

### **Doused for the Cause, Minnesota, 1878**

These umbrella-toting temperance crusaders stood their ground, despite the water poured on them by the indignant wife of the billiard-hall owner.

Anoka County Historical Society

Chapter 25: America Moves to the City 1865–1900: 25-17 Postwar Popular Fiction  
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## 25-17 Postwar Popular Fiction

Not all social activity proved so serious. Post–Civil War Americans devoured millions of “dime novels,” usually depicting the wilds of the woolly West. Paint-bedaubed Indians and quick-triggered gunmen like “Deadwood Dick” shot off vast quantities of powder, and virtue invariably triumphed. These lurid “paperbacks” were frowned upon by parents, but goggle-eyed youths read them in haylofts or in schools behind the broad covers of geography books. The king of the dime novelists was Harlan P. Halsey, who made a fortune by dashing off about 650 potboilers, often one in a day.

General Lew Wallace—lawyer, soldier, and author—was a colorful figure. Having fought with distinction in the Civil War, he sought to combat the prevailing wave of Darwinian skepticism with his novel *Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ* (1880). A phenomenal success, the book sold an estimated 2 million copies in many languages, including Arabic and Chinese, and later appeared on stage and screen. It was the *Uncle Tom's Cabin* of the anti-Darwinists, who found in it support for the Holy Scriptures.

An even more popular writer was Horatio Alger, a Puritan-reared New Englander, who in 1866 forsook the pulpit for the pen. “Holy Horatio” wrote more than a hundred volumes of juvenile fiction that sold over 17 million copies. His stock formula depicted a poor boy new to the city, who, through a combination of virtue, hard work, and bravery, achieved success, honor, and middle-class respectability—a kind of survival of the purest, especially nonsmokers, nondrinkers, nonswearers, and nonliars. Although accusations of sexual impropriety haunted Alger throughout his life, he implanted in his readers moral lessons and the conviction that there is always room at the top (especially if one is lucky enough to save the life of the boss's daughter and marry her).

Chapter 25: America Moves to the City 1865–1900: 25-18 Literary Landmarks

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## 25-18 Literary Landmarks

Literature and the arts were not immune to the era's sweeping changes. Confronted by new cities and industries, American writers and artists forsook the romantic sentimentality of an earlier age and generated three interrelated currents in the arts: realism, naturalism, and regionalism. Instead of depicting life as it ought to be lived or had supposedly existed in times gone by, realism sought to document contemporary life and society as it actually was, in all its raw and raucous and sometimes even scandalous detail. Naturalism took this fascination with modern life one step further, examining the determinative influence of heredity and social environments in shaping human character. Meanwhile, regionalism aspired to capture the peculiarity, or “local color,” of a particular region, before national standardization bleached its variety away. All three movements responded to the Gilded Age's urban, industrial transformation.

**Realism** (Mid-nineteenth-century movement in European and American literature and the arts that sought to depict contemporary life and society as it actually was, in all its unvarnished detail. Adherents eschewed the idealism and nostalgia of the earlier romantic sensibility.) quickly came to dominate post–Civil War American literature. Foregoing romantic pageantry and supernatural melodrama, American authors increasingly found their subjects in the coarse human comedy and material drama of the world around them. **William Dean Howells** (1837–1920), the celebrated “father of American realism,” emerged as the era's preeminent advocate of unsentimental literature. A printer's son from Ohio, Howells had scant schoolhouse education, but his busy pen carried him high into the literary circles of the East. In 1871 he became the editor in chief of the prestigious Boston-based *Atlantic Monthly*, where he championed the careers of several young American writers. In no less than thirty-six novels and nearly two hundred books, he wrote about ordinary men and women in familiar surroundings and about contemporary and sometimes controversial social themes. His most famous novel, *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885), describes the moral trials of a newly rich paint manufacturer caught up in the caste system of Brahmin Boston. Other well-known works dealt with the once-taboo subject of divorce and the reformers, strikers, and socialists of Gilded Age New York.

Two recipients of Howells's patronage and friendship—Mark Twain and Henry James—carried literary realism to new heights. With his meager formal schooling in frontier Missouri, the mustachioed Twain (1835–1910) typified a new breed of American authors in revolt against the elegant refinements of the old New England school of writing. Christened Samuel Langhorne Clemens, he had served for a time as a Mississippi riverboat pilot and later took his pen name, **Mark Twain**, from the boatman's cry that meant “two fathoms.” After a two-week stint in the local Confederate militia, Twain journeyed westward to Nevada and California, a trip he described, with a mixture of truth and tall tales, in *Roughing It* (1872). One year later, he teamed up with Charles Dudley Warner to write *The Gilded Age*. An acid satire on post–Civil War political corruption and speculative greed, the book gave a name to an era.

Many other books flowed from Twain's busy pen. *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) preceded *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884), an American masterpiece that defied Twain's own definition of a classic as "a book which people praise and don't read." Over the decades, countless readers have been captivated by Huck's and Jim's search for freedom and friendship across the colorful (and often racist) backdrop of the antebellum Mississippi River valley. Twain's later years were soured by bankruptcy growing out of unwise investments, and he was forced to take to the lecture platform and amuse what he called "the damned human race." Journalist, humorist, satirist, and foe of social injustice, he made his most enduring contribution in capturing frontier realism and colloquial humor in the authentic American dialect.

In 1935 **Ernest Hemingway** (1899–1961) wrote,

*"All modern American literature comes from one book by **Mark Twain** called *Huckleberry Finn*.... All American writing comes from that. There was nothing before. There has been nothing as good since."*

### **Mark Twain (1835–1910)**

Born Samuel Langhorne Clemens, he was not only America's most popular author but also a renowned platform lecturer. This photograph was taken at his house at Quarry Farm, near Elmira, New York, where he wrote major portions of both *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

Twain's homegrown vernacular met its match in Henry James's elegantly filigreed prose. Brother of Harvard philosopher **William James**, **Henry James** (1843–1916) was a New Yorker who turned from law to literature and spent most of his life in Europe. Taking as his dominant theme the confrontation of innocent Americans with subtle Europeans, James penned a remarkable number of brilliant realist novels, including *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881) and *The Wings of the Dove* (1902). His book *The Bostonians* (1886) was one of the first novels about the rising feminist movement. James's fiction experimented with point of view and interior monologue, and he frequently made women his central characters, exploring their inner reactions to complex situations with a deftness that marked him as a master of “psychological realism.” Long resident in England, he became a British subject shortly before his death.

Like her friend James, **Edith Wharton** (1862–1937) took a magnifying glass to the inner psychological turmoil and moral shortcomings of post-Civil War high society. Born into money, Wharton spent her years in the blue-blooded social circles of New York, Newport, and Paris. In 1885 she married well but not happily and increasingly turned her energies to writing. Wharton's many novels, including *The House of Mirth* (1905) and *The Age of Innocence* (1920), exposed the futile struggles and interior costs of striving characters stuck on the social ladder.

Wharton's portrayal of upper-crust social strife verged on **naturalism** (An offshoot of mainstream realism, this late-nineteenth-century literary movement purported to apply detached scientific objectivity to the study of human characters shaped by degenerate heredity and extreme or sordid social environments.), a more intense literary response than mainstream realism to the social dislocations and scientific tumult of late-nineteenth-century America. Naturalistic writers sought to apply detached scientific objectivity to the study of human beings—or “human beasts,” in French novelist Émile Zola's famous phrase. While realist authors often treated middle- and upper-class characters in everyday settings, naturalistic novelists placed lower-class, marginal characters in extreme or sordid environments, including the urban jungle, where they were subject to the cruel operations of brute instinct, degenerate heredity, and pessimistic determinism.

**Stephen Crane** (1871–1900), the fourteenth child of a Methodist minister, exemplified this naturalistic urge in his writing. His *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1893), a brutal tale about a poor prostitute driven to suicide, exposed the seamy underside of life in urban, industrial America. The novel proved too grim to find a publisher, so Crane had it printed privately. He rose quickly to prominence with *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895), the stirring story of a bloodied young Civil War recruit (“fresh fish”) under the extreme stress of fire. Crane himself had never seen a battle and wrote entirely from printed Civil War records. Sharing the misfortune of his many characters, he died of tuberculosis in 1900, when only twenty-eight.

In “The Art of Fiction” (1884), Henry James (1843–1916) articulated the technical goals of realist literature:

“[T]he air of reality ...seems to me to be the supreme virtue of a novel.... [I]t is here that he [the novelist] competes with his brother the painter in his



*attempt to render the look of things, the look that conveys their meaning, to catch the colour, the relief, the expression, the surface, the substance of the human spectacle.”*

Candid, naturalistic portrayals of contemporary life and social problems were the literary order of the day by the turn of the century. Jack London (1876–1916), famous as a nature writer in such books as *The Call of the Wild* (1903), depicted a future fascistic revolution in *The Iron Heel* (1907), a book that displayed London's socialist leanings. Frank Norris (1870–1902), like London a Californian, wrote *The Octopus* (1901), an earthy saga of the stranglehold in which railroad and corrupt politicians held California wheat ranchers. A sequel, *The Pit* (1903), dealt with the making and breaking of speculators on the Chicago wheat exchange.

Conspicuous among the new naturalistic “social novelists” rising in the literary firmament was Theodore Dreiser (1871–1945), a homely, gangling writer from Indiana. He burst upon the literary scene in 1900 with *Sister Carrie*, a graphic narrative of a poor working girl adapting to urban life in Chicago and New York. She becomes one man's mistress, then elopes with another, and finally strikes out on her own to make a career on the stage. The fictional Carrie's disregard for prevailing moral standards so offended Dreiser's publisher that the book was soon withdrawn from circulation, though it later reemerged as an acclaimed American classic.

Sharing a common documentary impulse with realist and naturalistic fiction, regionalism (A recurring artistic movement that, in the context of the late nineteenth century, aspired to capture the peculiarities, or “local color,” of America's various regions in the face of modernization and national standardization.) as a movement sought to chronicle the peculiarities of local ways of life before the coming wave of industrial standardization. By the end of the nineteenth century, practically every region of the country had its share of “local color-ists.” At first blush, these regionalist writers accentuated the differences among still-distant American locales and indulged in a bit of provincial nostalgia. At the same time, however, their work also served to demystify (to some extent) regional differences, especially among national audiences bent on postwar reunification.

Twain, London, and Bret Harte, among other western writers, popularized (and often debunked) the lusty legends of the Old West. A foppishly dressed New Yorker, Harte (1836–1902) struck it rich in California with gold-rush stories, especially “The Luck of Roaring Camp” (1868) and “The Outcasts of Poker Flat” (1869). Catapulted suddenly into notoriety by those short stories, he never again matched their excellence or their popularity.

Interest in local-color writing about the South also revived in the aftermath of Reconstruction. Two black writers, **Paul Laurence Dunbar** (1872–1906) and **Charles W. Chesnutt** (1858–1932), brought their distinctive voices to late-nineteenth-century literature. Dunbar's poetry—particularly his acclaimed *Lyrics of Lowly Life* (1896)—and Chesnutt's fiction—short stories in Howells's *Atlantic Monthly* and *The Conjure Woman* (1899)—embraced the use of black dialect and folklore, previously shunned by black authors, to capture the spontaneity and richness of southern black culture.

Pioneering women also contributed to the post-Civil War southern literary scene. Drawing from her experiences as a young bride and businesswoman in Louisiana, the daring feminist author **Kate Chopin** (1851–1904) wrote candidly about adultery, suicide, and women's ambitions in *The Awakening* (1899). Largely ignored after her death, Chopin was rediscovered by later readers, who cited her work as suggestive of the feminist yearnings that stirred beneath the surface of “respectability” in the Gilded Age.

Some important authors, of course, defied categorization. The gifted **Henry Adams** (1838–1918)—son of Charles Francis Adams, grandson of John Quincy Adams, and great-grandson of John Adams—turned unrivaled family connections into a prolific career as a historian, novelist, and critic. In his nine-volume *History of the United States During the Administrations of Jefferson and Madison* (1889–1891), Adams defended his patrician heritage from posthumous attack. Alarmed by modern trends, Adams penned a paean to the bygone beauty and spiritual unity of the High Middle Ages in *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres* (1905). Similar anxieties about modernity resurfaced in his best-known work, *The Education of Henry Adams* (1907), an autobiographical account of his own failure to come to grips with the chaotic forces of turn-of-the-century life.

Chapter 25: America Moves to the City 1865–1900: 25-19 Artistic Triumphs

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## 25-19 Artistic Triumphs

Realism and regionalism (more so than naturalism) also energized the American art world, much as they did the literary sphere. Philadelphia's native son Thomas Eakins (1844–1916) created a veritable artistic catalogue of his hometown's social, scientific, and sporting life at the end of the nineteenth century. Boston-born **Winslow Homer** (1836–1910), who as a youth had secretly drawn sketches in school, brought a similar mastery to the pastoral farms and swelling seas of the Northeast. Earthily American and largely resistant to foreign influences, he reveled in rugged realism and boldness of conception. His oil canvases of the sea and its fisherfolk were striking; probably no American artist has excelled him in portraying the awesome power of the ocean.

Following in the footsteps of the expatriate writers **Henry James** and **Edith Wharton**, prominent American painters working in the realist style made their living abroad. **James Whistler** (1834–1903) did much of his work, including the celebrated portrait of his mother, in England. This eccentric and quarrelsome Massachusetts Yankee had earlier dropped out of West Point after failing chemistry. “Had silicon been a gas,” he later jested, “I would have been a major general.” Another gifted portrait painter, likewise self-exiled in England, was **John Singer Sargent** (1856–1925). His flattering but somewhat superficial likenesses of the British nobility and America's nouveau riche were highly prized. Mary Cassatt, an American in exile in Paris, painted sensitive portrayals of modern women and children that earned her a place in the pantheon of the French impressionist painters, whose work revolutionized the European art world after their 1874 debut.

The most gifted sculptor yet produced by America was **Augustus Saint-Gaudens** (1848–

1907). Born in Ireland of an Irish mother and a French father, he became an adopted American. The national urge to commemorate the Civil War brought him a number of famous commissions, including the stirring Robert Gould Shaw Memorial, erected on Boston Common in 1897. It depicts Colonel Shaw, a young white "Boston Brahmin" officer, leading his black troops into battle in the Civil War.

Music, too, was gaining popularity. America of the 1880s and 1890s was assembling high-quality symphony orchestras, notably in Boston, Chicago, and Philadelphia. The famed Metropolitan Opera House of New York was erected in 1883. In its fabled "Diamond Horseshoe," the newly rich, often under the pretense of enjoying the imported singers, would flaunt their jewels, gowns, and furs. While symphonies and operas were devoted to bringing European music to elite American audiences, new strains of homegrown American music were sprouting in the South, another outgrowth of the regionalist trend. Black folk traditions like spirituals and "ragged music" were evolving into the blues, ragtime, and jazz, which would transform American popular music in the twentieth century.

A marvelous invention was the reproduction of music by mechanical means. The phonograph, though a squeakily imperfect instrument when invented by the deaf Edison, had by 1900 reached over 150,000 homes. Americans were rapidly being dosed with "canned music," as the "sitting room" piano increasingly gathered dust.

### **Winslow Homer, Snap the Whip (1872)**

Among Homer's most famous and controversial paintings, it has been interpreted both as an homage to the innocence of youth and the simplicity of rural life and as a somber allegory about the fragility of human relationships.

the-century movement among progressive architects and city planners, who aimed to promote order, harmony, and virtue while beautifying the nation's new urban spaces with grand boulevards, welcoming parks, and monumental public buildings.) . Its proponents wanted the new American city not just to look beautiful but also to convey a confident sense of harmony, order, and monumentality. To achieve these effects, they copied European styles of beaux arts classicism and planning ideas from the master builder of Paris, Baron Georges-Eugène Hauss-mann, who in the 1860s had recast the City of Light with grand boulevards, parks, and public buildings. Aiming to assert America's prominence among the greatest urban cultures of the Western world, architects constructed grandiose urban landmarks such as New York's Grand Central Terminal (1913). City planners like Daniel Burnham redesigned Chicago and Washington, D.C., in the belief they could make them perfect progressive cities, inspiring civic virtue in their inhabitants. To this end, they joined contemporary landscape architects and park builders like **Frederick Law Olmsted**, who sought to foster virtue and egalitarian values with his designs for New York's Central Park (1873) and Boston's "Emerald Necklace" (1896), as well as the campus of Stanford University, which opened in 1891.

**Hamlin Garland** (1860–1940), the well-known midwestern novelist and writer of short stories, was immensely impressed by the cultural value of Chicago's Columbian Exposition. He wrote to his aged parents on their Dakota farm,

*"Sell the cook stove if necessary and come. You must see this fair."*

Burnham's first major project, which came to symbolize the City Beautiful movement, was his design for the great **World's Columbian Exposition** (Held in Chicago, Americans saw this World's Fair as their opportunity to claim a place among the world's most "civilized" societies, by which they meant the countries of western Europe. The Fair honored art, architecture, and science, and its promoters built a mini-city in which to host the fair that reflected all the ideals of city planning popular at the time. For many, this was the high point of the "City Beautiful" movement.) , held in Chicago in 1893. His imposing landscape of pavilions and fountains honored the four hundredth anniversary of Columbus's first voyage. This so-called dream of loveliness was visited by 27 million people (roughly equivalent to two-fifths of the nation's population). The Chicago exposition did much to raise American artistic standards and promote city planning, although many fairgoers proved more interested in the contortions of a hootchy-kootchy dancer named "Little Egypt."

### **World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893**

Lagoons helped make the exposition's main buildings, dubbed the "White City," shimmer as the "City Beautiful," in stark contrast to the blocks of dull gray buildings that dominated the real Chicago.

Granger Collection

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## 25-20 The Business of Amusement

Fun and frolic were not neglected by the workaday American. The pursuit of happiness, heralded in the Declaration of Independence, had by century's end become a frenzied scramble. People sought their pleasures fiercely, as they had overrun their continent and built their cities fiercely. And now they had more time to play.

Varied diversions beckoned. The legitimate stage still flourished, as appreciative audiences responded to the lure of the footlights. Vaudeville, with its coarse jokes and graceful acrobats, continued to be immensely popular during the 1880s and 1890s, as were minstrel shows in the South, now performed by black singers and dancers rather than by whites wearing blackface as in the North before the Civil War.

The circus—high-tented and multiringed—finally emerged full-blown. Phineas T. Barnum, the master showman who had early discovered that “the public likes to be humbugged,” joined hands with James A. Bailey in 1881 to stage the “Greatest Show on Earth.” ✱

Colorful “Wild West” shows, first performed in 1883, were even more distinctively American. Headed by the knightly, goateed, and free-drinking William F. (“Buffalo Bill”) Cody, the troupe included war-whooping Indians, live buffalo, and deadeye marks-men. Among them was the girlish Annie Oakley. Rifle in hand, she could at thirty paces perforate a tossed-up card half a dozen times before it fluttered to the ground (hence the term *Annie*

*Oakley* for a punched ticket and later for a free pass).

Baseball, already widely played before the Civil War, was clearly emerging as the national pastime, if not a national mania. A league of professional players was formed in the 1870s, and in 1888 an all-star baseball team toured the world, using the pyramids as a backstop while in Egypt. Basketball was invented in 1891 by **James Naismith**, a YMCA instructor in Springfield, Massachusetts. Designed as an active indoor sport that could be played during the winter months, it spread rapidly and enjoyed enormous popularity in the next century.

A gladiatorial trend toward spectator sports, rather than participative sports, was exemplified by football. This rugged game, with its dangerous flying wedge, had become popular well before 1889, when Yale man Walter C. Camp chose his first “All American” team. The Yale-Princeton game of 1893 drew fifty thousand cheering fans, while foreigners jeered that the nation was getting sports “on the brain.”

Even pugilism, with its long background of bare-knuckle brutality, gained a new and gloved respectability in 1892. Agile “Gentleman Jim” Corbett, a scientific boxer, wrestled the world championship from the aging and alcoholic John L. Sullivan, the fabulous “Boston Strong Boy.”

Two crazes swept the country in the closing decades of the century. First, croquet became all the rage, though condemned by moralists of the “naughty nineties” because it exposed feminine ankles and promoted flirtation. Second, the low-framed “safety” bicycle came to replace the high-seated model. By 1893 a million bicycles were in use, and thousands of young women, jokesters remarked, were turning to this new “spinning wheel,” one that offered freedom, not tedium.

### **Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, ca. 1907**

By the late 1800s, the “Wild West” was already passing into the realm of myth—and popular entertainment. Famed frontiersman William F. (“Buffalo Bill”) Cody (1846–1917) made his fortune showing off his tame cowboys and Indians to enthusiastic urban audiences in Europe as well as the United States. Buffalo Bill's “Wild West”—an extravaganza featuring skilled horsemen from around the globe, including Turks, South American gauchos, Arabs, and Cossacks—was even more motley than the real one.

Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Wyoming, Gift of the Coe Foundation

### **Cyclists on the Monterey Peninsula, California, 1888**

Men and women alike took to the roads on the newfangled “two-wheelers.” Bicycling especially appealed to young women eager to escape nineteenth-century strictures against female exercise and bodily exposure.

Courtesy of the California History Room, California State Library, Sacramento, California

The land of the skyscraper was plainly becoming more standardized, owing largely to the new industrialization. Although race and ethnicity assigned urban Americans to distinctive neighborhoods and work-places, to an increasing degree they shared a common popular culture—playing, reading, shopping, and talking alike. As the century drew to a close, the explosion of cities paradoxically made Americans more diverse and more similar at the

same time.

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## 25-21 Chapter Review

### 25-21a Key Terms

- **New Immigrants** (Immigrants from southern and eastern Europe who formed a recognizable wave of immigration from the 1880s until 1924, in contrast to the immigrants from western Europe who had come before them. These new immigrants congregated in ethnic urban neighborhoods, where they worried many native-born Americans, some of whom responded with nativist anti-immigrant campaigns and others of whom introduced urban reforms to help the immigrants assimilate.)
- **settlement houses** (Mostly run by middle-class native-born women, settlement houses in immigrant neighborhoods provided housing, food, education, child care, cultural activities, and social connections for new arrivals to the United States. Many women, both native-born and immigrant, developed life-long passions for social activism in the settlement houses. Jane Addams's Hull House in Chicago and Lillian Wald's Henry Street Settlement in New York City were two of the most prominent.)
- **liberal Protestants** (Members of a branch of Protestantism that flourished from 1875 to 1925 and encouraged followers to use the Bible as a moral compass rather than to believe that the Bible represented scientific or historical truth. Many Liberal Protestants became active in the “social gospel” and other reform movements of the era.)
- **Tuskegee Institute** (A normal and industrial school led by **Booker T. Washington** in Tuskegee, Alabama. It focused on training young black students in agriculture and the trades to help them achieve economic independence. Washington justified segregated, vocational training as a necessary first step on the road to racial equality, although critics accused him of being too “accommodationist.”)
- **land-grant colleges** (Colleges and universities created from allocations of public land through the Morrill Act of 1862 and the Hatch Act of 1887. These grants helped fuel the boom in higher education in the late nineteenth century, and many of today's public universities derive from these grants.)
- **pragmatism** (A distinctive American philosophy that emerged in the late nineteenth century around the theory that the true value of an idea lay in its ability to solve problems. The pragmatists thus embraced the provisional, uncertain nature of experimental knowledge. Among the most well-known purveyors of pragmatism



were **John Dewey**, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., and William James.)

- **yellow journalism** (A scandal-mongering practice of journalism that emerged in New York during the Gilded Age out of the circulation battles between Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World* and William Randolph Hearst's *New York Journal*. The expression has remained a pejorative term referring to sensationalist journalism practiced with unethical, unprofessional standards.)
- **National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA)** (An organization founded in 1890 to demand the vote for women. NAWSA argued that women should be allowed to vote because their responsibilities in the home and family made them indispensable in the public decision-making process. During World War I, NAWSA supported the war effort and lauded women's role in the Allied victory, which helped to finally achieve nationwide woman suffrage in the Nineteenth Amendment (1920).)
- **Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU)** (Founded in Ohio in the 1870s to combat the evils of excessive alcohol consumption, the WCTU went on to embrace a broad reform agenda, including campaigns to abolish prostitution and gain the right to vote for women.)
- **realism** (Mid-nineteenth-century movement in European and American literature and the arts that sought to depict contemporary life and society as it actually was, in all its unvarnished detail. Adherents eschewed the idealism and nostalgia of the earlier romantic sensibility.)
- **naturalism** (An offshoot of mainstream realism, this late-nineteenth-century literary movement purported to apply detached scientific objectivity to the study of human characters shaped by degenerate heredity and extreme or sordid social environments.)
- **regionalism** (A recurring artistic movement that, in the context of the late nineteenth century, aspired to capture the peculiarities, or "local color," of America's various regions in the face of modernization and national standardization.)
- **City Beautiful movement** (A turn-of-the-century movement among progressive architects and city planners, who aimed to promote order, harmony, and virtue while beautifying the nation's new urban spaces with grand boulevards, welcoming parks, and monumental public buildings.)
- **World's Columbian Exposition** (Held in Chicago, Americans saw this World's Fair as their opportunity to claim a place among the world's most "civilized" societies, by which they meant the countries of western Europe. The Fair honored art, architecture, and science, and its promoters built a mini-city in which to host the fair that reflected all the ideals of city planning popular at the time. For many, this was the high point of the "City Beautiful" movement.)

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### 25-21b To Learn More

A complete, annotated bibliography for this chapter—along with brief descriptions of the People to Know—may be found on the American Pageant website. The Key Terms are defined in a Glossary at the end of the text.

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## Chapter Review

## 25-21c People to Know

Jane Addams Charles Darwin Booker T. Washington W. E. B. Du Bois Joseph Pulitzer  
William Randolph Hearst John Dewey Carrie Chapman Catt Horatio Alger Mark Twain  
Henry James Winslow Homer Augustus Saint-Gaudens Frederick Law Olmsted

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## Chapter Review

### 25-21d Chronology

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 1859 | Charles Darwin publishes <i>On the Origin of Species</i>  |
| 1862 | Morrill Act provides public land for higher education   |
| 1863 | World's first subway system opens in London   |
| 1866 | American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) created   |
| 1869 | Wyoming Territory grants women right to vote  |
| 1871 | <i>Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly</i> published  |
| 1872 | Metaphysical Club meets in Cambridge, Massachusetts   |
| 1873 | Comstock Law<br>Construction of New York's Central Park officially completed  |
| 1874 | Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) organized<br>Chautauqua education movement launched<br>Impressionist artists debut in Paris |

- 1876** Johns Hopkins University graduate school established
- 
- 1879** Henry George publishes *Progress and Poverty*  
Dumbbell tenement introduced  
Mary Baker Eddy establishes Christian Science  
Salvation Army begins work in America
- 
- 1881** Booker T. Washington becomes head of Tuskegee Institute  
American Red Cross founded  
Henry James publishes *The Portrait of a Lady*  
Barnum and Bailey first join to stage "Greatest Show on Earth"
- 
- 1882** First immigration-restriction laws passed
- 
- 1883** Brooklyn Bridge completed  
Metropolitan Opera House built in New York
- 
- 1884** Mark Twain publishes *The Adventures of Huckle-berry Finn*
- 
- 1885** Louis Sullivan builds first skyscraper, in Chicago  
Linotype invented
- 
- 1886** Statue of Liberty erected in New York harbor
- 
- 1887** American Protective Association (APA) formed  
Hatch Act supplements Morrill Act
- 
- 1888** Edward Bellamy publishes *Looking Backward*  
American all-star baseball team tours world
- 
- 1889** Jane Addams founds Hull House in Chicago
- 
- 1890** William James publishes *The Principles of Psychology*  
National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) formed
- 
- 1891** Basketball invented  
Stanford University opens
-

- 1893** Lillian Wald opens Henry Street Settlement in New York  
Anti-Saloon League formed  
World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago  
New Zealand grants women right to vote
- 
- 1895** Stephen Crane publishes *The Red Badge of Courage*
- 
- 1897** Library of Congress opens  
Robert Gould Shaw Memorial erected on Boston Common
- 
- 1898** Charlotte Perkins Gilman publishes *Women and Economics*
- 
- 1899** Kate Chopin publishes *The Awakening*
- 
- 1900** Theodore Dreiser publishes *Sister Carrie*
- 
- 1907** Henry Adams privately publishes *The Education of Henry Adams*
- 
- 1910** National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) founded
- 

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