

Chapter 4 Lesson 2

Urbanization

After the Civil War, the population of American cities began to grow at a rapid rate. Most immigrants moved to the city, as did many rural Americans. This population boom in the cities occurred because the cities offered more and better paying job opportunities, electricity, more entertainment and modern indoor plumbing.

This rapid growth in population led to changes in American cities.

- 1) Land became more valuable, which led to the development of the skyscraper.
- 2) Land was reclaimed from nature (like wetlands) and developed, creating brand new cities.
- 3) Mass transit was developed to move large numbers of people around.
 - a. First horsecars (up through the 1890's)
 - b. Cable cars (1873)
 - c. Electric trolleys (1887)
 - d. Elevated railroads (Chicago 1892)
 - e. Subways (Boston 1897/ New York 1904)
- 4) Division into neighborhoods by social class and or ethnicity
 - a. The upper class lived in large homes in fashionable neighborhoods in the heart of town
 - b. Upper class women started women's clubs and later became very reform minded
 - c. Middle class grew in size but moved to areas away from the working class with larger homes
 - d. The middle class created "streetcar suburbs"
 - e. The working class often lived in tenements, over-crowded, lowest building standards
 - f. There were divisions among the working class
 - g. In many working class families, even the children worked
 - h. Growing numbers of women, in the working class and some middle class, worked outside the home
 - i. White native born women often found work as teachers, secretaries or clerks
 - ii. Immigrants often were domestic servants in the Northeast
 - iii. African American women were often domestic servants in the South
- 5) Urban problems: issues that were increased by the growth of cities
 - a. Pollution
 - b. Crime: increased across the board, from 1880-1900 murder increased from 25 per million to 100 per million
 - c. Sanitation issues: Horse manure, improper sewage disposal
 - d. Disease: typhoid fever, cholera and yellow fever (1870's-Memphis outbreak)
 - e. Fires
- 6) The rise of the political machines. Political machines were informal groups created to gain and hold political power. Political machines began to dominate politics in major cities because the cities rapidly outgrew their governments. Party bosses would promise assistance with issues in

return for votes. Party bosses also began to control city finances. Many grew rich from fraud or graft. Party bosses frequently gave contracts for services, construction, and utilities to their friends and political cronies. There was no fair, free competition for government contracts. The most famous of the party bosses was Boss Tweed of Tammany Hall (New York City's political machine). Tweed's greed hit a high point in the 1870's. The city of New York was racking up huge losses (estimates vary, but well over 30 million) and Thomas Nast (*Harper's Weekly*) and *The New York Times* were outing his activities. In 1873, he was convicted of fraud and served a short prison sentence.

- 7) Thomas Nast: the rise of the political cartoonist. Thomas Nast moved to the US from Germany when he was 6. He preferred drawing to studying and dropped out of school at the age of 13. He gained work as an illustrator and in 1862 went to work for *Harper's Weekly* as a political cartoonist. His work was so powerful that it is said that Boss Tweed offered him a 500,000 bribe to quit drawing cartoons. Thomas Nast is credited with creating the animals that still represent the two political parties today. The donkey was borrowed from the campaign of Andrew Jackson (Democrat) and Nast made it famous and commonplace. The elephant was used in a Nast cartoon to represent the Republican Party and the image caught on.