

# Urbanization

## Urbanization:

- With the change from an agricultural economy to an industrial one came the change from a rural society to an urban one.
- Demographically, the population shifts were dramatic.
  - In 1880, seven out of ten Americans lived on farms or in towns with fewer than twenty-five hundred people.
  - By 1900 40% of Americans lived in cities.
  - By 1920, a milestone had been reached: a majority of people-51.5 percent-dwelled in cities.

## Population

- Population from 1870 - 1900 doubled to about 80 million (105 million by 1920)
- No American city had 1 million people in 1860.
  - By 1900,
    - New York had 3.5 million people; 2nd largest in world (London 1st)
    - Chicago and Philadelphia had over 1 million people.
  - Cities of more than 100,000 people: 1880=17 1920=38
  - In 1910, in 18 of the 25 largest cities in the United States, immigrants and their children made up more than half the total population.

## Migration

- Migration also fueled the rise of the cities
  - Migration of African Americans to urban areas--African Americans began moving from the south to the northern and western areas of the country (NOT the Great Migration which comes after WWI). They were fleeing sharecropping, violence, political oppression and seeking better economic conditions. They did not find this.
  - By 1900 32 American cities had a population of more than 10,000 blacks
  - Few factories hired African Americans so they were forced to take jobs in the service and domestic sector of the economy--cleaning, cooking, garbage removal, etc.

## Skyscrapers

- **Skyscrapers** emerged as steel allowed for taller buildings and elevators were perfected.
  - **Louis Sullivan** (1856-1924) -- "form follows function" when making buildings.
  - **Brooklyn Bridge** (**John A. Roebling**)

## Mass-Transit

- Commuting increased due to mass-transit (e.g. electric trolleys) streetcar suburbs emerged

## Urban Problems

- As the urban population increases, cities struggle with many problems.
- Water quality--by the early twentieth century only 6 percent of urban residents received filtered water
- Among the problems cities face are overcrowded, unsanitary housing; mass transportation needs(Few streets were paved); fires and crime; Disposing of sewage, cleaning streets (especially given the ever-present horse) and removing garbage

## Housing (Tenements)

- Urban growth outstripped cities' abilities to provide for it
  - Police and fire protection
  - Row houses attempt to conserve space by sharing side walls with other buildings.
    - Dumbbell tenements (named for their shape) are an effort to allow for more windows and improve slum conditions.
  - Jacob Riis “How the Other Half Lives”

## Tenements Reformers Mobilize

- Reform-minded church leaders inspire the building of churches in poor neighborhoods and espouse efforts to help the indigent.
- Settlement houses are established in slum areas.

## The Promise of America

Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breath free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,  
Send these, the nameless, tempest-tossed to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door.