

# Different Viewpoints

## Two Views of Immigration

The history of immigration to the United States has been both celebrated and criticized. Many millions of immigrants arrived in the United States in the late 1800s. The newcomers sought opportunity, enriched American culture, and caused concerns. Here, two political cartoons address the immigration issue.

### Pro-Immigration

Uncle Sam plays the role of Noah in this cartoon. As immigrants file two by two into the safety of the ark, they leave behind the dangers of Europe that are darkening the sky. A sign lists some reasons people came to the United States to begin a new life.



### Anti-Immigration

"Columbia's Unwelcome Guests" shows another view of immigration. In this 1885 cartoon, the figure of Columbia bars entry to anarchists, Socialists, and Communists who enter from the sewers of Europe's darker society. Some of the inscriptions on the column pedestal beside Columbia read "Anarchy is not liberty," and "When a Man's Rights End, His Neighbor's Begin."



### Learning From History

1. **Historical Analysis** According to the cartoon, why were people concerned about immigrants coming to the United States? **CA CS3; HI1; HI3**
2. Which cartoon best expresses your own views on immigration today? Why?

newcomer. That same year, Congress passed the **Chinese Exclusion Act**. This law barred Chinese immigration for 10 years and prevented the Chinese already in the country from becoming citizens. The Chinese in the United States protested that white Americans did not oppose immigration by Italians, Irish, or Germans. Some Chinese organized letter-writing campaigns, petitioned the president, and even filed suit in federal court.

All efforts proved fruitless. Congress renewed the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1892 and then made it permanent in 1902. In 1890 the number of Chinese living in the United States totaled 105,000. By 1900 that number had dropped to just above 74,000. In the 40 years after the passage of the act, the Chinese population in the United States continued to decrease. The act was not repealed until 1943.

**Reading Check** **Explaining** Why did nativists oppose immigration?

## Urbanization

**Main Idea** **During the three decades following the Civil War, the United States transformed rapidly from a rural nation to a more urban one.**

**Reading Connection** Do you currently live in an urban, rural, or suburban area? In which of these kinds of areas do you hope to live 10 years from now? Why? Read on to learn what life was like in the late 1800s for residents of urban communities in the United States.

During the three decades after the Civil War, the urban population of the United States—those living in towns with a population of 2,500 or more—grew from around 10 million in 1870 to more than

30 million in 1900. New York City alone, which had over 800,000 inhabitants in 1860, grew to almost 3.5 million by 1900. In 1840 the United States had only 131 cities; by 1900 that number had risen to over 1,700.

**The Growth of American Cities** Most of the immigrants who poured into the United States in the late 1800s lacked the money to buy farms and the education to obtain higher-paying jobs. They remained in the nation's growing cities, where they toiled long hours for little pay in the rapidly expanding factories. Despite the harshness of their new lives, most immigrants found that the move had still improved their standard of living.

The United States offered immigrants a chance at social mobility, or moving upward in society. Although only a few immigrants rose from poverty to great wealth, many seized the opportunities the American system offered and rose from the working class to the middle class. Although some immigrants faced prejudice, most Americans accepted the idea that people in the lower classes could rise in society.

Many rural Americans also began moving to the cities at this time. Farmers moved to the cities because urban areas offered more and better-paying jobs than did rural areas. Cities had much to offer, too—bright

lights, running water, and modern plumbing, plus many things to do and see, including museums, libraries, and theaters.

**The New Urban Environment** As millions of people flooded into the nation's cities, engineers and architects developed new approaches to housing and transporting such a large number of people. Demand raised the price of land, **inducing** owners to grow upward rather than outward. Soon, tall steel frame buildings called skyscrapers began to appear on American skylines. Chicago's ten-story Home Insurance Building, built in 1885, was the first skyscraper, but other buildings quickly dwarfed it. New York City boasted more skyscrapers than any other city in the world. With limited land, New Yorkers had to build up, not out.

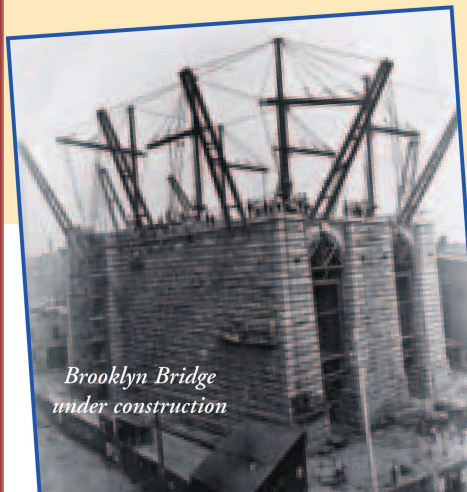
Various kinds of mass transit developed in the late 1800s to move huge numbers of people around cities quickly. In 1890 horsecars—railroad cars pulled by horses—moved about 70 percent of urban traffic in the United States. More than 20 cities, beginning with San Francisco in 1873, installed cable cars, which were pulled along tracks by underground cables. In 1887 engineer Frank J. Sprague developed the electric trolley car.

## The Technology of Urbanization

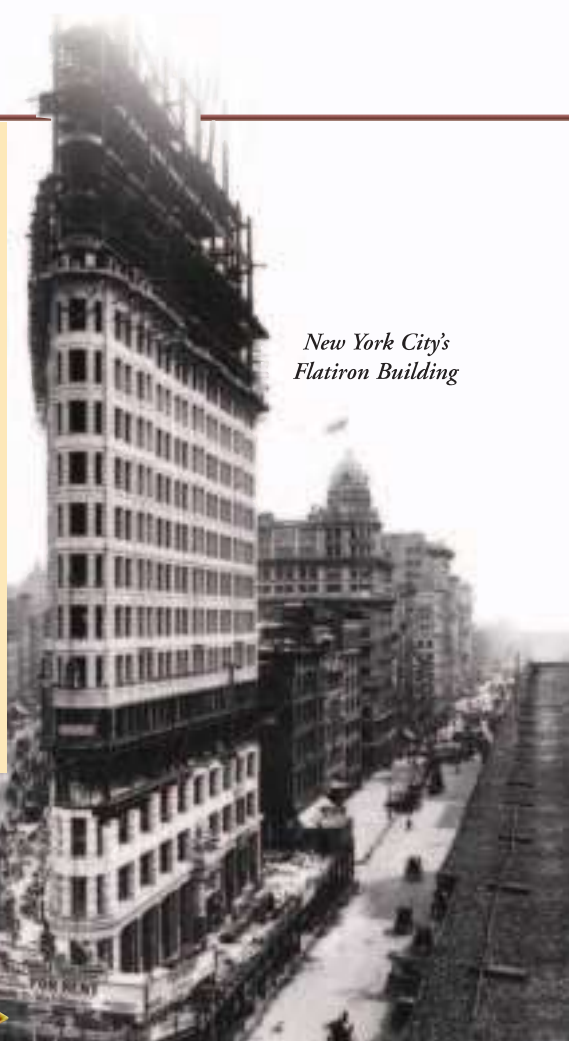
Before the mid-1800s, few buildings exceeded four or five stories. To make wooden and stone structures taller required enormously thick walls in the lower levels.

By the late 1800s, steel companies were making girders capable of bearing a building's weight. Walls no longer had to support the building—a steel frame skeleton was all that was needed. Meanwhile, Elisha Otis invented the safety elevator in 1852, and by the late 1880s, the first electric elevators had been installed, making tall buildings practical.

Steel also changed the way bridges were built. New technology enabled engineers to suspend bridges from steel towers using cables also made of steel. Using this technique, John A. Roebling, a German American engineer, designed New York's Brooklyn Bridge—the largest suspension bridge in the world at the time it was completed in 1883.



*Brooklyn Bridge under construction*

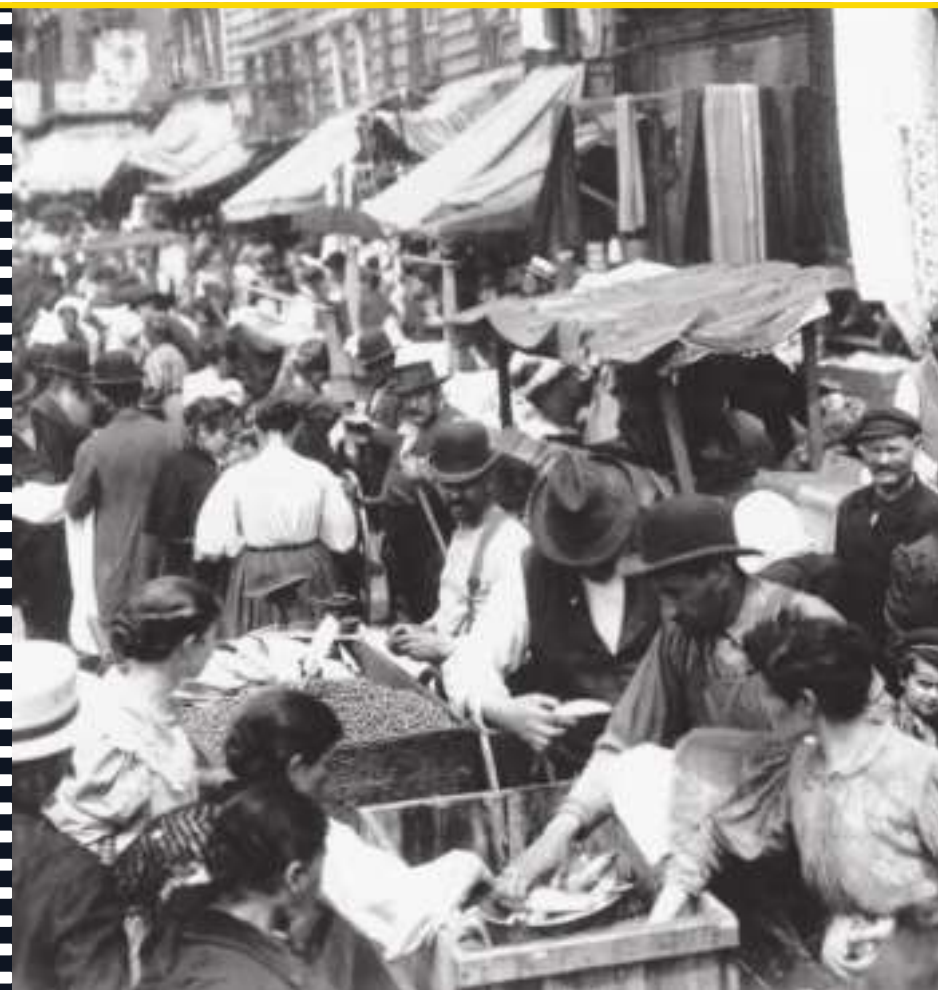


*New York City's Flatiron Building*

**MOMENT  
in HISTORY**

**TEEMING TENEMENTS**

The swelling tide of immigration to U.S. cities in the late 1800s led to deplorable living conditions and almost unbearable congestion. By 1890, more than two-thirds of New York's 1.5 million residents lived in overcrowded apartment buildings called tenements. On the Lower East Side, one of the most densely populated areas in the world, people frequented vibrant outdoor markets such as this one on Hester Street for goods from eggs to rugs to pots and pans. Gossip, haggling, and cries of street peddlers—mostly in Yiddish in this Jewish neighborhood—echoed down the street from dawn to dusk.



In the largest cities, congestion became so bad that engineers began looking for ways to move mass transit off the streets. Chicago responded by building an elevated railroad, while Boston, followed by New York, built America's first subway systems.

**Separation by Class** In the growing cities, wealthy people and the working class lived in different parts of town. So too did the middle class. The boundaries between neighborhoods can still be seen in many cities today.

During the last half of the 1800s, the wealthiest families established fashionable districts in the hearts of cities. Americans with enough money could choose to construct a feudal castle, an English manor house, or a Tuscan villa. In New York, Cornelius Vanderbilt's grandson **commissioned** a \$3 million French chateau equipped with a two-story dining room and a marble bathroom.

American industrialization also helped create a growing middle class. The nation's rising middle class included doctors, lawyers, engineers, managers,

social workers, architects, and teachers. It was typical for many people in the emerging middle class to move away from the central city. Some took advantage of the new commuter rail lines to move to "streetcar suburbs." During this period, middle-class salaries were about twice that of the average factory worker. In 1905 a college professor earned a middle-class salary of \$1,100.

In New York City, three out of four residents squeezed into **tenements**, dark and crowded multi-family apartments. To supplement the average industrial worker's annual income of \$490, many families sent their young children to work in factories or rented precious space to a boarder.

**Urban Problems and Politics** Especially for the working poor, city living posed threats such as crime, violence, fire, disease, and pollution. Native-born Americans often blamed immigrants for the increase in crime and violence. In reality, the crime rate for immigrants was not significantly higher than that for other Americans.

Alcohol contributed to violent crime. Danish immigrant Jacob Riis, who documented slum life in his 1890 book *How the Other Half Lives*, accused saloons of “breeding poverty,” corrupting politics, bringing suffering to the wives and children of drunkards, and fostering “the corruption of the child” by selling beer to minors.

Improper sewage disposal contaminated city drinking water and triggered epidemics of typhoid fever and cholera. Though flush toilets and sewer systems existed in the 1870s, pollution remained a severe problem as horse waste was left in the streets, smoke belched from chimneys, and soot and ash accumulated from coal and wood fires.

A new kind of political system, the political machine, developed to meet these urban problems. This system provided essential city services in return for political power. The **political machine**, an informal political group designed to gain and keep power, came about partly because cities had grown much faster than their governments. New city dwellers needed jobs, housing, food, heat, and police protection. In exchange for votes, political machines and the party bosses who ran them eagerly provided these necessities. The payoff for party bosses came on Election Day. Urban immigrant groups, which wielded tremendous voting strength, voted in overwhelming numbers for the political machines.

The party bosses who ran the political machines also controlled the city’s finances. Many machine politicians grew rich as the result of fraud or **graft**—getting money through dishonest or questionable means. Outright fraud occurred when party bosses accepted bribes from contractors, who were supposed to compete fairly to win contracts to build streets, sewers, and buildings. Corrupt bosses also

sold permits to their friends to operate public utilities, such as railroads, waterworks, and power systems.

Tammany Hall, the New York Democratic political machine, was the most famous such organization. **William M. “Boss” Tweed** was its corrupt leader during the 1860s and 1870s. Tweed’s corruption led him to prison in 1874.


Other cities’ machines controlled all the city services, including the police department. For example, St. Louis’s boss never feared arrest when he called out to his supporters at the police-supervised voting booth, “Are there any more repeaters out here that want to vote again?” Based in Kansas City, Missouri, the Pendergast brothers, James and Thomas, ran state and city politics from the 1890s until the 1930s.

Opponents of political machines, such as political cartoonist Thomas Nast, blasted bosses for their corruption. Defenders countered that city and state governments were ineffective. Machines provided necessary services and helped to assimilate the masses of new city dwellers.

 **Reading Check** **Evaluating** How did the influx of immigrants affect the cities?

**HISTORY Online** 

**Student Web Activity** Visit the *American Vision: Modern Times* Web site at [tav.mt.glencoe.com](http://tav.mt.glencoe.com) and click on **Student Web Activities—Chapter 3** for an activity on urbanization.

**HISTORY Online**  **Study Central**

For help with the concepts in this section of *American Vision: Modern Times* go to [tav.mt.glencoe.com](http://tav.mt.glencoe.com) and click on **Study Central**.

**SECTION 3 ASSESSMENT**

**Checking for Understanding**

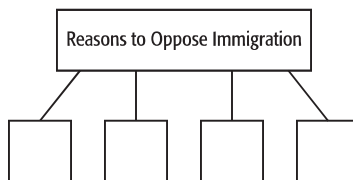
- Vocabulary** Define: nativism, commission, tenement, political machine, graft.
- People and Terms** Identify: Chinese Exclusion Act, William M. “Boss” Tweed.
- Places** Locate: Ellis Island, Angel Island.
- Describe** where most immigrants to the United States settled in the late 1800s.

**Reviewing Big Ideas**

- Comparing** What impact did industrialization have on the working class, the middle class, and the wealthy in the late 1800s?

**Critical Thinking**

- Analyzing** What problems could arise in cities in which political machines controlled all services?
- Organizing** Complete a graphic organizer similar to the one below by listing reasons nativists opposed immigration to the United States.



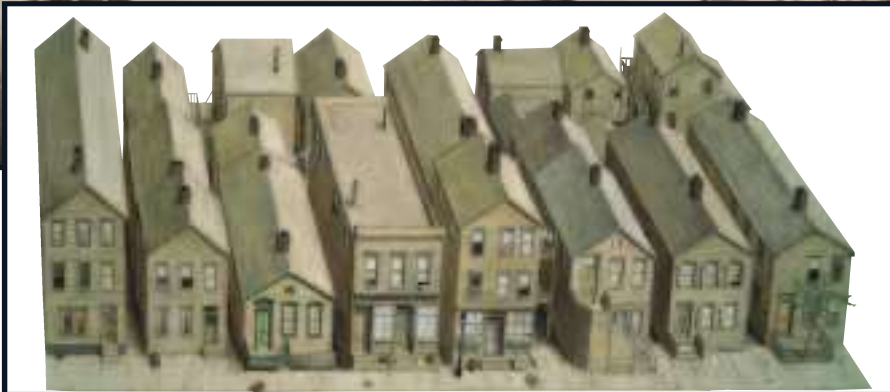
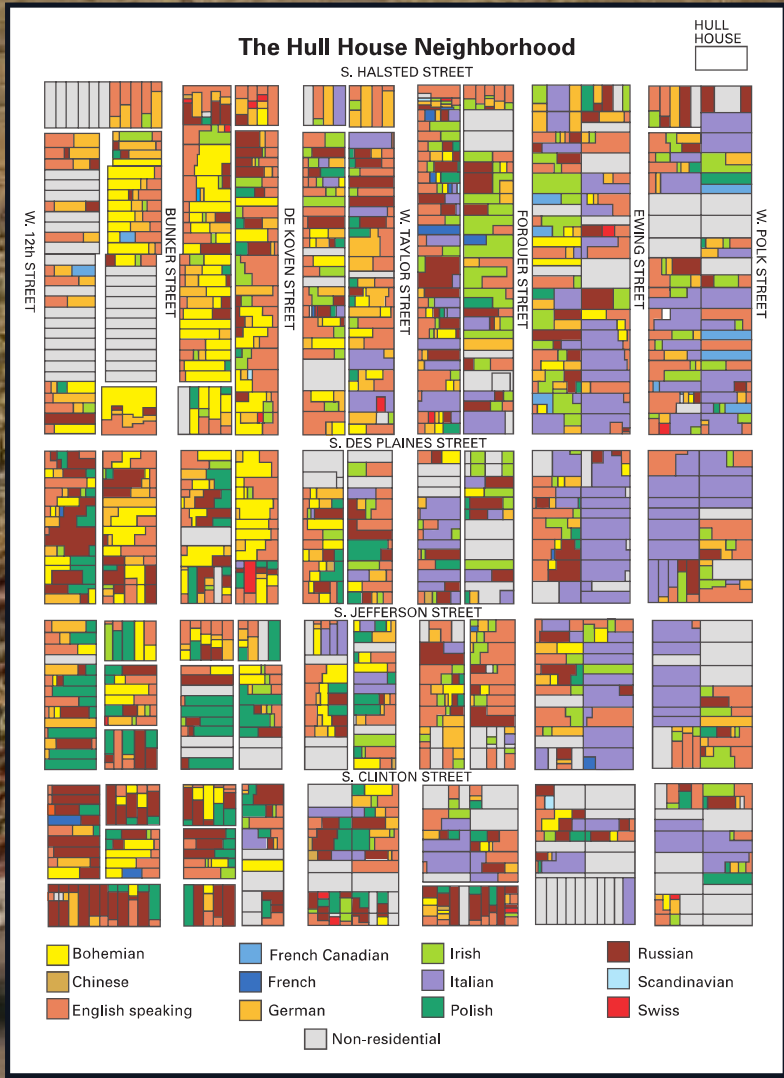
**Analyzing Visuals**

- Examining Photographs** Study the photographs on page 259 of the Brooklyn Bridge and Flatiron Building. Why was it advantageous to construct taller buildings rather than purchase more land?

**Writing About History**

- Persuasive Writing** Imagine that you are a newspaper editor in the late 1800s. Write an editorial in which you support or oppose political machines. Include reasons to support your position. **CA 11WS1.2; 11WA2.4**





Chicago's apartment buildings, or tenements, were squeezed onto lots that measured 25 by 125 feet (7.6 by 38.1 m). These lots typically held three families and their boarders. Unlike New York City's tenements, most were only two or three stories tall.

# Immigrants Arrive In Chicago

**A** major port and a conduit for the nation's east-west rail travel, Chicago was a booming industrial center for the lumber, grain, meatpacking, and mail-order businesses at the end of the 1800s. Since the early 1870s, more ships had been docking in Chicago than in New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Charleston, and San Francisco combined. The city's expansion was phenomenal. In 50 years, it grew from a modest frontier town to the second-largest city in the country.

Immigrants swarmed into Chicago seeking jobs. Poles found work slaughtering livestock; Irish laying railroads; Russian and Polish Jews making clothes; Swedes constructing buildings and Italians forging steel. Women established boardinghouses, took in sewing to do at home, and worked in factories. In most factories, the hours were long and the working conditions difficult: noisy, hot, grimy, and overcrowded. By the beginning of the 1900s, three-fourths of the people in this teeming metropolis were European immigrants and their American-born children.

Ethnic neighborhoods dotted the city, as did blocks of tenements thrown up to house the flood of

newcomers. The inset map at left—an enlargement of the highlighted rectangle on the lithograph—shows the Hull House neighborhood in Chicago's West Side in 1893. Hull House was established by social reformer Jane Addams to “investigate and improve the conditions in the industrial districts of Chicago.” The neighborhood was one of the city's poorest. Its tenement buildings were disease-ridden and dangerous, crowding about 270 residents into each acre. Jane Addams wrote: “The streets are inexpressibly dirty, the number of schools inadequate, sanitary legislation unenforced, the street lighting bad, the paving miserable and altogether lacking in the alleys.”

The neighborhood was also one of the most ethnically diverse. As the inset shows, the bewildered new immigrants tended to settle in enclaves that had already been established by others from their homeland. They banded together as they learned about the ways of the new land. Many immigrants found comfort in social life centered on the church or synagogue. Younger immigrants were more eager to abandon their old customs. Many of them quickly adopted American clothes and manners, learned to speak English, and tried to make American friends.



A visiting nurse puts drops in an infant's eyes. Crowded conditions threatened the health of many of the immigrants in Chicago's tenements.



## LEARNING FROM GEOGRAPHY

1. How did the location of Chicago influence its development?
2. Pose and answer five questions about the geographic distribution and patterns shown on this model.