Immigrants, Urbanization, Life at the Turn of the 20th Century (1877-1917)

The Americans: Chapters 7 & 8; pp. 252-300

At the turn of the 20th Century, many countries experienced a marked increase in emigration; immigrants came to the United States in search of economic opportunity, freedom from persecution, and a chance to improve their lives. Immigrants brought their religion, beliefs, languages, and social customs with them to the United States.

Access to education has long been a part of the American dream. Education enabled many immigrants to adjust to their new world. In school, children learned about democracy and civic responsibility. Many immigrants also took advantage of the opportunities to learn about American culture by going to museums, theaters, and concerts.

At home African Americans led the fight against voting restrictions and Jim Crow laws. Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois were leaders in the struggle for racial equality. Washington advocated a gradual approach that would engender economic independence for African Americans. Du Bois sought a more immediate end to inequality.

Objectives:
- Identify immigrants’ country of origin.
- Describe immigrants’ journey and the experiences at United States immigration stations.
- Describe the movement of immigrants to the cities and the opportunities they found there.
- Explain how cities dealt with housing, transportation, sanitation, and safety issues.
- Describe the organizations and people that offered help to immigrants.
- Explain the role of political machines and political bosses.
- Summarize the turn of the century communication innovations.
- Describe the impact of 20th century technological advances on urban planning.
- Trace the historical underpinnings of legalized segregation and the African American struggle against racism in the United States.
- Summarize the turn of the 20th century race relations in the North and the South.
- Identify discrimination against minorities in the American West.
- Analyze the spread of mass culture in the United States at the turn of the 20th century.
Key Terms:

1. Ellis Island
2. Angel Island
3. nativism
4. Chinese Exclusion Act
5. Gentlemen’s Agreement
6. political machines
7. poll tax
8. segregation
9. literacy test
10. Jim Crow laws
11. grandfather clause
12. Plessy v. Ferguson

Key People:

1. Jane Addams
2. Jacob Riis
3. Boss Tweed
4. Louis Sullivan
5. Daniel Burnham
6. Frederick Law Olmsted
7. Booker T. Washington
8. W.E.B. Du Bois
9. Ida B. Wells
10. Mark Twain

Key Questions:

1. What trends or events in other countries prompted people to move to the United States in the later 19th century and early 20th centuries?
2. What difficulties did many of these new immigrants face?
3. Why did cities in the United States grow rapidly?
4. What problems did this rapid growth pose for cities?
5. What solutions to urban problems did the settlement house movement propose?
6. Why did the political machine become common in big cities in the late 19th century?
7. How did new technology promote urban growth around the turn of the 20th century?
8. In what ways did methods of communication improve in the late 19th and early 20th centuries?
9. How did late 19th century public schools change?
10. What were Jim Crow laws?
11. What voting restrictions were imposed on African Americans in South?
12. What was the significance of the Supreme Court’s ruling in Plessy v. Ferguson?
13. How did Mexicans help make the Southwest prosperous in the late 19th century?
14. What leisure activities flourished at the turn of the 20th century?
15. What innovations in retail methods changed the way Americans shopped during this time period?