The Emergence of Urban America

- How did immigration affect the growth of the modern city?
- What led to the rise of powerful reform movements?
- What was the impact of Darwinian thought on the social sciences?
- What were the literary and philosophical trends of the late nineteenth century?

- The United States experienced urban transformation
  - Age of great cities, population boom, more than half lived in urban areas by 1920
- Distinctive urban culture created by rise of big cities
  - Heterogeneous population in cities
  - Jobs, wealth, excitement
- New social problems
  - Poverty, political corruption, quality of life issues
  - Increasing prevalence of segregation

America’s Move to Town

- Good jobs and social excitement lured workers
- Contrast between rural and urban life became sharper

Explosive Urban Growth

- The frontier was a societal safety valve—historian Frederick Turner
  - Cheap lands offered release for population pressures
  - The flow of population toward cities was greater than the flow toward the West
- Spawning of new towns, railroads, mines in the West and South
  - San Francisco, Los Angeles
  - Minneapolis, Omaha, Kansas City, Denver
  - Birmingham, Durham, Houston
- While Far West had greatest proportion of urban population, Northeast had greater number of people
  - City dwellers were increasingly homeless—could only offer labor
- Technological advancements allowed cities to expand vertically
  - Heating systems, electric elevator, cast-iron, steel-frame
- Cities also expanded horizontally
  - Cable cars, steam-powered trains, electric trolleys, subways
- Spread of mass transit allowed large number of people to become commuters
  - Growing middle class retreated to suburbs
  - Urban growth usually became a sprawl
- Use of railways, cable cars, trolleys helped transform social character
  - Before, people of all classes lived and worked together in the central city
  - Emergence of suburbs segregated people according to economic standing
  - Poorer districts had more crime
The Allure and Problems of the Cities

- Rural youth were attracted by wonder of city life
  - Thousands left for city during rural depressions
  - Exodus from countryside was especially evident in the East

- Those who moved to the city often traded one set of problems for another
  - No choice but to live in crowded apartments
  - Designers forced to build upward due to cramping
  - In New York City, result was dumbbell tenement houses
    - Tightly packed, dumbbell appearance from overhead, tiny air shafts, poor heating and ventilation, fire hazard

- Early tenements were poorly heated, communal toilets outside, no privacy, no free space, infectious diseases, odor
  - Mortality rate among urban poor was higher than general population

City Politics

- Sheer size of cities helped create new form of politics
  - A need grew for central organization to coordinate citywide services
  - Urban political machines developed—local committeemen, district captains, political boss
  - Bosses granted patronage and services—distributed food, coal, money, sponsored English classes, helped newcomers adjust to their new life
  - Political professionals felt entitled to some reward for having done the grubby work

Cities and the Environment

- 19th century urban communities were generally filthy
  - Garbage, contaminated water, manure, pigs, untreated sewage
  - Epidemics of water-related diseases: cholera, typhoid, yellow fever
  - Horse carcasses from drawn carriages

- Late 19th century: municipal reformers organized clean-up
  - Goal was to improve appearance, and to remove causes of disease
  - “sanitary reformers” urged government
  - By 1900, 94% of cities had developed regular trash-collection services

- Social and ecological trade-offs of public health improvements
  - Waste dumped into waterways
  - Rural populations had to deal with urban waste sent downstream

- Horse-manure problem involved trade-offs as well
  - Urban horse manure had benefits: fertilizer
  - Human waste used as fertilizer too

- Development of public health improvements separated most people from their sources of food
  - “Flush and forget” mentality
  - Carrying capacity of waterways was not understood
  - Algal blooms suffocated fish
The New Immigration

- Industrial Revolution brought waves of immigrants
- Newcomers provided labor, but created racial tensions

America’s Pull

- Rural Europeans moved to urban America
- Ethnic neighborhoods preserved familiar folkways
  - 1890: 4 of 5 New Yorkers were foreign-born
  - 1893: Chicago had largest Bohemian population in the world
- Immigrants took flight from famine, racial, political, religious persecution, military service
  - More immigrants pulled by America than pushed by home
  - American industries sent recruiting agents abroad
  - Contract Labor Act of 1864: federal government encouraged immigration by helping pay immigrant’s passage—repealed in 1868 but general effects lasted within company’s until 1885
- Immigration peaked in 1900-1910
- Before 1880 immigrants were mainly from northern and western Europe
  - By 1890, Slavs and Jews from southern and eastern Europe rose
  - Italians, Hungarians, Czechs, Serbs, Russians, Greeks

Ellis Island

- Immigrant receiving center experience corruption
- Congress ordered investigation in response to increasing reports on corruption
  - Resulted in closure of Castle Garden in 1890
  - New Bureau of Immigration took over
- Congress funded construction of a new reception center on Ellis Island

Making Their Way

- Immigrants were immediately desperate for work
- They weren’t accustomed to America—exploited
  - Padrones were Greek and Italian agents that came to dominate labor market in New York
- Immigrants gravitated to ethnic neighborhoods
  - Little Italy, etc. Served as transitional communities
  - Housing and sanitation codes went unenforced

Nativist Response

- Saw immigrants as threat to life and jobs
- Threat to traditional culture of America
- Suspicious that criminals were coming from Europe
- Mainly anti-Catholic and anti-Semitic sentiments
  - American Protective Association (APA)—devoted to stopping flow of immigrants
  - Depression led many to join APA—blame on immigrants
  - APA promoted more strict naturalization requirements, refusal of Catholics, “American” language

Immigration Restriction

- Representative Henry Lodge took up cause of excluding illiterate foreigners
Presidents vetoed bills on the basis that they penalized for lack of opportunity—not just
  • Cleveland, Taft, Wilson all vetoed, but Congress overrode the last

• Proponents of immigration restriction did succeed in excluding Chinese
  • Denis Kearney, leader of Workingmen’s party, was mainly against them
  • Chinese accepted low wages

• 1882, Congress overrode Arthur’s veto of Chinese Exclusion Act: shut the door to Chinese immigrants for ten years
  • Overwhelming support, periodically renewed before ending in 1902—barriers removed in 1943

• West Coast counterpart to Ellis Island was the Angel Island
  • Processed mostly Asian immigrants
  • Chinese Exclusion Act did not stop flow completely

Popular Culture
• Influx of people into large cities created new patterns of leisure
  • Rural areas were tied to rituals of harvest
  • Most urban families were mobile nuclear
  • Most leisure time spent at home—piano, novels, cards, dominoes, chess, checkers

• In congested areas, politics became as much a form of entertainment as a means of providing civic representation and public service
  • People flocked to hear candidates give speeches
  • Membership in political party was like membership to a club
  • Labor unions were more social in nature than economic
  • Mass entertainment such as traveling shows

Vaudeville
• Growing family incomes and innovations in transportation allowed more people to take advantage of urban life
  • Theaters, operas, dance halls
  • Most popular and diverse form of theatrical entertainment: vaudeville
    • Play accompanied by music, emerged in saloons

• Vaudeville variety shows featured comedians, singers, musicians, minstrels, jugglers, magicians, etc.
  • All social classes were attracted
  • Middle-class standards of decorum were understood
  • Reflected heterogeneity of city life

Saloon Culture
• Most popular destinations for working-class Americans in free time were saloons and dance halls
  • More saloons than grocery stores by 1900
  • Sponsored by beer brewers, frequented by politicians

• Saloons provided much more than food and drink
  • Especially popular among male immigrants seeking friends
  • Served as busy social hubs, local political machines
  • Primary elections and political caucuses conducted in saloons

Ishmam Ahmed; Ishmam.com
Men went to saloons to learn about jobs, engage in labor-union activities, cash paychecks, mail letters, read newspapers, gossip
  - Served as places of refuge for poor people
  - Most saloons included gymnasiums
  - Group singing was especially popular activity

Saloons were definitely male enclaves
  - Main bar was for men only
  - Some provided “snugs”—small rooms for female patrons

Saloons aroused intense criticism
  - Anti-liquor societies such as Women’s Christian Temperance Union and Anti-Saloon League
    - Charged that saloons contributed to alcoholism, crime, etc.
    - Demanded that they be closed down
    - Saloon was the social and intellectual center of a neighborhood

Outdoor Recreation
  - Congestion and disease associated with city life led many people to participate in outdoor recreation intended to improve health
    - Movement to create urban parks—New York’s Central Park in 1858 designed by Frederick Olmsted
      - City parks were more than recreational centers: promoted social stability and cohesion
        - Harmonizing influence
  - Parks offered more vigorous forms of exercise and recreation
    - Before Civil War, women essentially had only one exercise option: pedestrianism
    - After Civil War, women enrolled in colleges in growing numbers, began to participate in physical education
  - Croquet and tennis courts were among the first additions to city parks—required little space and maintenance
    - Played by both sexes
    - Tennis was seen as feminine
  - Cycling was more popular
    - Bicycle craze swept the country by end of the century
    - Especially popular with women—exercise, freedom, access
      - Bloomers and split skirts
  - Urban working poor could not afford bike or croquet
  - Not as much free time either
    - Sought recreation on street corners
    - Musicians
    - Germans and Irish formed male singing groups and drinking groups
    - Also attended boxing matches and baseball games
  - Large-scale amusement parks by the end of the century—Coney Island in Brooklyn

Wokingwomen and Leisure
  - Leisure activities of working-class women was limited
    - Burden of housework, little free time
    - Could not afford domestic help or sitters—led to combination of work and entertainment
      - Washing clothes, supervising children, shopping at market provided opportunities to socialize
• Single women had more opportunities for leisure than working mothers
  o Average workday declined—working people had more free time
  o Women flocked to dance halls, theaters, amusement parks, picnic grounds
  o Coney Island, movie theaters
• Young single women participated in urban amusements for a variety of reasons
  o Escape, pleasure, companionship, autonomy
  o Romance and sexual relationships
  o Parental and societal concerns tried to restrict freedom of single women

Spectator Sports
• New spectator sports such as college football and basketball gained mass popularity
  o Reflected growing urbanization of life
  o News of games could be conveyed quickly by newspapers
  o Unified ethnic groups, encouraged bets
• Football emerged as a modified form of soccer and rugby
  o Princeton and Rutgers played the first college football game in 1869
• Basketball invented in 1891 by James Naismith of YMCA
  o Goal was to create an indoor winter game
• Baseball laid claim to being America’s national pastime at midcentury
  o Alexander Cartwright invented it
• First professional teams was Red Stockings of Cincinnati
  o 1900: American League organized
  o Most democratic sport in America
  o All social classes attended games
• Only white players allowed in major leagues
  o African Americans played in minor league—Cuban Giants
• Sports became big part of national life
• Athletic craze, first modern Olympic Games held in 1893

Education and the Professions

The Spread of Public Education
• Spread of public education was spurred by Americanization efforts
• Spread of secondary schools accounted for much of the increased enrollment in public schools
  o Number of high schools grew
  o Emphasis on higher math, classical languages—vocational training, arts of typing, tools, bookkeeping

Vocational Training
• Vocational training was most intensely promoted after the Civil War by missionary schools for African Americans in the South such as Hampton Institute
  o Congress supported vocational training
  o Morrill Act of 1862 granted each state 30,000 acres per congressman—income supplied agricultural teaching and mechanical arts
    • Land-grant colleges
Higher Education

- Colleges sought to instill discipline and morality
  - Stress on math and classics along with ethics and rhetoric

- Demand for higher education led to increase in student population
  - To accommodate diverse needs, colleges moved toward elective courses
  - Henry Cabot Lodge complained that electives allowed escape without learning

- Colleges remained mainly male bastions
  - Women’s access improved
  - Vassar opened in 1865—first women’s college to teach at same standards as male colleges
  - Wellesley and Smith colleges—Smith was first to set same admission requirements

- Dominant new trend in higher education was rise of the graduate school
  - Training was more focused
    - German system
  - John Hopkins University set precedent by making graduate work chief concern

Theories of Social Change

- Charles Darwin’s On the Origin of Species
  - Argued that existing species evolved through natural selection

- Impact of the idea of species evolution
  - Challenged religious views
  - Contradicted bible
  - Professional scholars urged critical interpretation of the bible
  - Some viewed evolution as divine will

Social Darwinism

- Application of evolutionary theory to the social world
  - Herbert Spencer: first major prophet of social Darwinism
    - Argued that human society also passed through natural selection—survival of the fittest
  - Social society naturally evolved for the better
  - Implied government hands-off
    - Hands-on would help the unfit
  - Successful businessmen were engines of social progress

- Idea spread quickly—Popular Science Monthly
- Graham Sumner was the disciple of Spencer—advocated social Darwinism in Folkways

Reform Darwinism

- Efforts to promote “rugged individualism”
  - Lester Frank Ward—Dynamic Sociology insisted that human brain also evolved
  - Minds shaped social revolution
  - Argued that humanity could control progress—challenged Spencer’s ideas
  - Cooperation, not competition would bring success
    - Government could become an agent of progress by:
• Ameliorating poverty
• Develop education

Pragmatism
• **William James**: *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking*
  o Shared Lester Ward’s focus on the role of ideas
  o Pragmatists believed that ideas gained validity from truth of social consequence
    ▪ Reflected American inventiveness and experimental spirit
• **John Dewey**: instrumentalism—ideas were instruments for action
  o Unlike James, he was involved in movements for peace, education, women, labor

The Local Colorists
• Different responses to changes in life and thought
  o Local-color movement: favored times before distinction between rural and urban
  o **Sarah Orne Jewett** *The Country of the Pointed Firs*: admired parents’ generation

Clemens
• **Mark Twain**: best of local colorists, found universal truths in common life
  o First great American writer born and raised west of the Appalachians
  o *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

Literary Naturalism
• New literary school of naturalism
  o Young rebels who imported scientific determinism into literature
  o Internal drives of humans—no control or understanding
• **Stephen Crane**: *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* and *The Red Badge of Courage*
  o Portrayed people in uncontrollable environments
• **Jack London and Theodore Dreiser**
  o **London** was socialist and believed in Nietzsche’s doctrine of superman
    ▪ *The Call of the Wild*, *The Sea Wolf*
    ▪ Triumph of brute force
  o **Dreiser** presented protagonists who sinned without remorse
    ▪ *Sister Carrie*, *The Financier*, *the Titan*

Social Criticism
• Naturalists harbored intense outrage at human misery and injustice
• **Henry George**: shocked by contrast between wealth and poverty, wrote *Progress and Poverty*
  o Held that everyone had equal right to land use
  o Proposed to tax the “unearned” increment of land, rent
• **Thorstein Veblen**: *The Theory of the Leisure Class* examined monetary values of middle class
  o Argued that property became the basis of reputation
  o Businessmen’s interest in profit produced wasteful organization
The Social Gospel
- More and more people took action to address social problems
  - Legislative solutions, charity, philanthropic solutions
  - Socialism, anarchism

The Rise of the Institutional Church
- Churches responded slowly
  - **Henry Ward Beecher**: Plymouth Congregational Church, social Darwinist, unworthiness of poor
  - Where churches became prosperous, they fell easily under the spell of social Darwinism
- Many churches responded to human need
  - YMCA, Salvation Army—founded in UK
  - Institutional features—were more social than strictly religious
  - Gyms, libraries, lecture rooms, social facilities

Religious Reformers
- Church leaders who felt declining influence of Christianity preached social gospel
  - **Washington Gladden**: true Christianity lies in the principle that God is a savior
    - Argued for labor’s right to organize, Christianity in the workplace
- Intellectual leader of social-gospel movement was **Walter Rauschenbusch**
  - *Christianity and the Social Crisis*—basis for the movement in kingdom of God
  - The church is one social institution alongside the family

Early Efforts at Urban Reform

The Settlement-House Movement
- Dedicated reformers attacked problems of residential and community issues
- Residential community centers called settlement houses
  - Settlement houses were staffed mainly by middle-class idealists
  - Settlement workers sought to improve lives
  - **Hull-House**: Jane Addams rejected “do-goodism,” pragmatism
  - Addams led effort to improve life—education, nursing
    - Hull-House sponsored facilities
- Settlement-house leaders realized that spreading slums made their work difficult
  - They therefore organized political support for housing laws, etc.
  - Lillian Wald promoted establishment of federal *Children's Bureau in 1912*
  - Jane Addams worked for peace movement—Nobel Peace Prize in 1931

Women's Employment and Suffrage
- Settlement-house workers made up employed women
- Women population increased, women in labor force increased—greatest leap in 1880s to 1900s
  - Clerical work given to women
- Changes in occupational status
  - **Susan B. Anthony**: demanded that 15th Amendment guarantee vote for women and black men
- 1869: unity of women’s movement was broken up

Ishmam Ahmed; Ishmam.com
Focus on question of whether movement should be specific or overriding

- Susan B. Anthony and Cady Stanton founded National Women Suffrage Association to promote women’s suffrage amendment, other activists formed American Women Suffrage Association
- Merged into National American Women Suffrage Organization
  - Movement achieved local and partial victories as few states granted women’s suffrage
  - Women’s suffrage lost in California
  - 1917 New York accepted last

- California Senator A. A. Sargent introduced bill—Anthony amendment
- YWCA—parallel to YMCA—appeared everywhere in Boston.
- New England Women’s Club started by Julia Howe
- General Federation of Women’s Clubs
  - Literary and social activities
- New York Consumers’ League and National Consumers’ League
  - Sought to make buying public aware of labor conditions
  - “White List” of firms
- The National Women’s Trade Union League aimed to bring educated and working-class women together with workingmen
- Those in the South generally opposed national women’s suffrage

Toward a Welfare State

- States adopted measures to regulate big business and labor conditions in public interest
  - Regulation of railroads, supervision of banks, and regulation of insurance companies
  - Limiting hours required of workers
  - Limiting or forbidding child labor
- In thwarting new regulatory efforts, Supreme Court used a interpretation of 14th Amendment
  - Forbid states to deprive life, liberty, property
  - Principle of substantive due process enabled judges to overturn laws that deprived persons of property to an unreasonable degree
  - Court also derived doctrine of “liberty of contract”—right to be free

- Slow erosion of laissez-faire
- From Reformers, social gospelers, Populists emerged idea of general welfare state
  - No blueprint for welfare utopia