

Mr. B's History students:

Read and review the attached history notes (Immigration,
Growth of cities and New Inventions)



Changes and Challenges after the Civil War

As America grew and prospered, people from all over the world began arriving on its shores. Between 1860 and 1910 over 20 million immigrants traveled from Asia, Europe, and Mexico in search of a better way of life for themselves and their families. The **increase in immigration, growth of cities,** and amazing **new inventions** contributed to great change and challenges as America expanded!

In the late 1800s, many immigrants came to the United States in search of **better opportunities** for themselves and their children, **freedom from cruel or oppressive governments, religious freedom,** and **adventure.** The California Gold Rush brought Chinese and Mexican immigrants who were tempted by the promises of gold and a better future. Others like the Germans and French came to escape oppressive governments, bloody revolutions, and poverty. Immigrants from Ireland left their homeland to escape famine, or starvation, and disease. Italian immigrants left behind overcrowded living conditions, low wages and high taxes. Still others came to America for religious freedom.

As the population of the United States dramatically increased, cities grew and prospered. Before the Civil War, most of the important cities in the United States were located on the banks of rivers or on harbors near oceans. In the late 1800s, however, cities began to develop inland near natural resources needed for industry. Thousands of miles of railroad track made it possible to connect resources, products, and customers all across the country. Many of these new cities grew up around **specialized industries.** For example, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania became a center for steel production, while Chicago was known for its meat-packing industry.

The growth of American cities was also connected to population changes that occurred in the late 1800s. One of these changes was the influx, or arrival of millions of **immigrants** from all around the globe. As the immigrants entered the country, many of them flocked to the new industrial cities in search of jobs. In addition to the influx of immigrants, millions of Americans were moving to the urban areas, or cities, from the rural areas, or the country. They, too, were in search of new job opportunities created by the **rapid growth of industry.** More and more workers were needed to mine coal, refine oil, make machinery, produce textiles, build railroads, and stoke the ever burning furnaces of the steel mills.

Changes and Challenges after the Civil War: Immigration

Immigration

As America grew, it also became more and more **culturally diverse**, or different. Millions of people from all over the world were now living and interacting in cities, towns, and rural areas from coast to coast. With this diversity came conflict. What were some of the challenges faced by Americans after the Civil War?

As more and more immigrants flooded the cities of America, some Americans began to worry. They were afraid that new immigrants, who were willing to work for low wages, would take their jobs. Before long, some groups of immigrants, like the Chinese and the Irish, were faced with **discrimination**. Discrimination is the unfair treatment of people based on their race or culture.

In the western United States, many people born in America wanted **Chinese immigrants** to return to their own country. They were afraid that the Chinese would take all of the available jobs. As a result, in the mining industry Chinese workers were made to pay a tax to pan for gold and some were even beaten and driven out of the goldfields. In addition, state laws were passed in California that stopped Chinese immigrants from getting government jobs and forced them to pay higher taxes. Finally, in 1882 Congress passed a law which stopped the Chinese from immigrating to the United States.

The **Irish** also experienced discrimination in America. Many Americans feared that the growing number of Irish immigrants entering the Northeastern states would put them out of work or cause their wages to decrease. In addition, they also believed that their taxes would increase because of the need for additional police protection, schools, and sanitation services. Before long, job posters and newspaper advertisements included the words "No Irish Need Apply!" Even hotels and restaurants were soon refusing to serve Irish patrons, or customers.

Changes and Challenges after the Civil War: Growth of Cities

Growth of Cities

As industry expanded so did the populations and problems of American cities. One major problem was a scarcity, or shortage of housing that resulted in overcrowding. Most workers could not afford to live very far from their jobs. As a result, they lived close to the factories in neighborhoods that reflected their cultural background. These poor neighborhoods, or **ghettos** were filled with apartment houses called **tenements**.

Tenement buildings caused major challenges in the areas of **sanitation, disease, and safety**. Tenement buildings were often poorly made and did not have running water and toilets. Insects, rats, and decaying garbage were common. These crowded, unsanitary conditions caused diseases to spread rapidly from family to family. Fire was another constant danger. Because most tenement buildings were constructed partly of wood, terrible fires sometimes burned down entire city blocks killing hundreds of people and leaving thousands homeless.

As the problems grew, some efforts were made to solve them. In Chicago, a wealthy woman by the name of **Jane Addams** decided to help. In 1889, Jane Addams started **Hull House** in one of Chicago's ghettos. Hull House was a settlement house or community center. It housed a kindergarten for the children of working mothers and classes in sewing, cooking, and English for immigrants trying to adjust to their new life. By the early 1900s, nearly 100 settlement houses had been erected, or built in cities across the country.

In some of America's major cities like New York City, Philadelphia, and Chicago, organizations known as **political machines** also stepped forward to help immigrants. These unofficial political organizations gained power by taking care of the needs of new immigrants. Each political machine was run by a "boss" who could get things done. Bosses often provided services like constructing sewers and paving streets that the official city governments could not handle. This powerful man could also supply new immigrants with much needed money, food, housing, and jobs.

Political machines proved to be a challenge for developing cities, however. As they grew in power and influence, **corruption increased**. Political machines often protected criminal organizations, such as those involved in gambling, from the police. They also demanded financial contributions from local businesses. Businesses that did not agree to the payments would soon find their city services, such as trash collection, cut as well as higher tax bills in their mailboxes.

Changes and Challenges after the Civil War: New Inventions

New Inventions

Contributing to the development of cities and industrial growth were **new inventions** that changed the American way of life. The **electric light bulb** was one of these inventions. **Thomas Alva Edison** used electricity to power the first practical electric lighting. For the first time Americans had control over the light in their homes. In addition, industrial plants could now operate continuously with shifts of workers coming in around the clock. Before long, electricity was used for mechanical purposes also. Manufacturers began to produce small and large appliances for use in the home. **Electric irons, washing machines, vacuums, and refrigerators** made the life of the housewife more enjoyable. In factories and other types of businesses, steam engines were replaced by **electric motors and tools**. This made factories safer while increasing production and encouraging growth. Transportation was also improved with the introduction of the **electric streetcar**.

Another invention that contributed to great changes and industrial growth in America was the **telephone**. In 1876 **Alexander Graham Bell** began a revolution in communication with the development of his "electrical speech machine." News of his invention spread quickly across America and Europe. Within a few short years a number of private telephones were in use, public coin machines were installed, the first phone directory was published with fifty names, and a phone was installed in the White House. By the early 1900s, over two million telephones were in operation, and the first transcontinental telephone line was up and running between New York and California.