

# American Immigration & Urbanization

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At the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

# America Becomes Urban...

Population of cities grew rapidly in both North and South

- Chicago
  - Population grew by 5x
- New Orleans
  - 1870-1900 population doubled
- Massive immigration
  - 1870-1900
    - 11 million immigrants
    - Cities = “opportunity”



# New Immigrants Come to America

- In contrast to “old” immigrants who had come before, these “new” immigrants were often unskilled, poor, Catholic or Jewish, and likely to settle in cities rather than farms.



After 1900, 70% of all immigrants came from eastern or southern Europe.



# The Decision to Leave Home...

## PUSH FACTORS

- Persecution
- Economic hardship
- War

## PULL FACTORS

- Religious & political freedom
- Cheap land
- Factory jobs
- Family in the US



# The Immigrant Experience

- Coming to America was a big risk.
- Most immigrants only had enough money for the tickets, nothing else.
- Usually, they only brought with them what they could carry- clothes, pictures of loved ones, instrument, tools of their trade.



# Class Divisions Were Strictly Enforced



# The Immigrant Experience

- Most immigrants traveled in STEERAGE-
- The lowest levels of the ship.
- Cramped, no privacy, little ventilation



**“Steerage” Accommodations**





With the exception of the few wealthy travelers in “First” or “Second” Class, most immigrants traveled in “steerage”.

“Steerage” was often just a tiny bunk below the main deck – and very limited access to a small space on the deck itself.

Steerage tickets were about \$30 each, and trips lasted 10 to 40 days.



STEERAGE PASSENGERS AT SEA CA. 1902



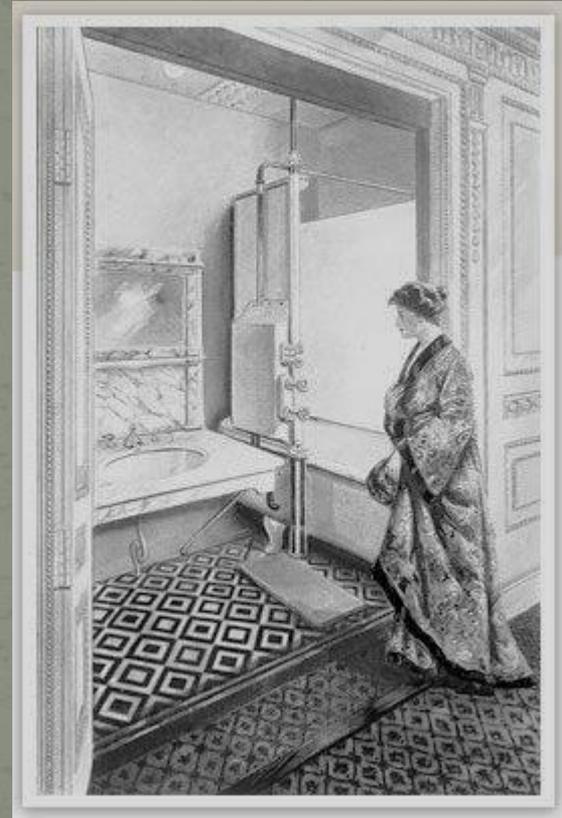
# “First Class” Bed & Private bathroom



# “Second” & “Third” Class Bathroom / Washroom



Real Photo

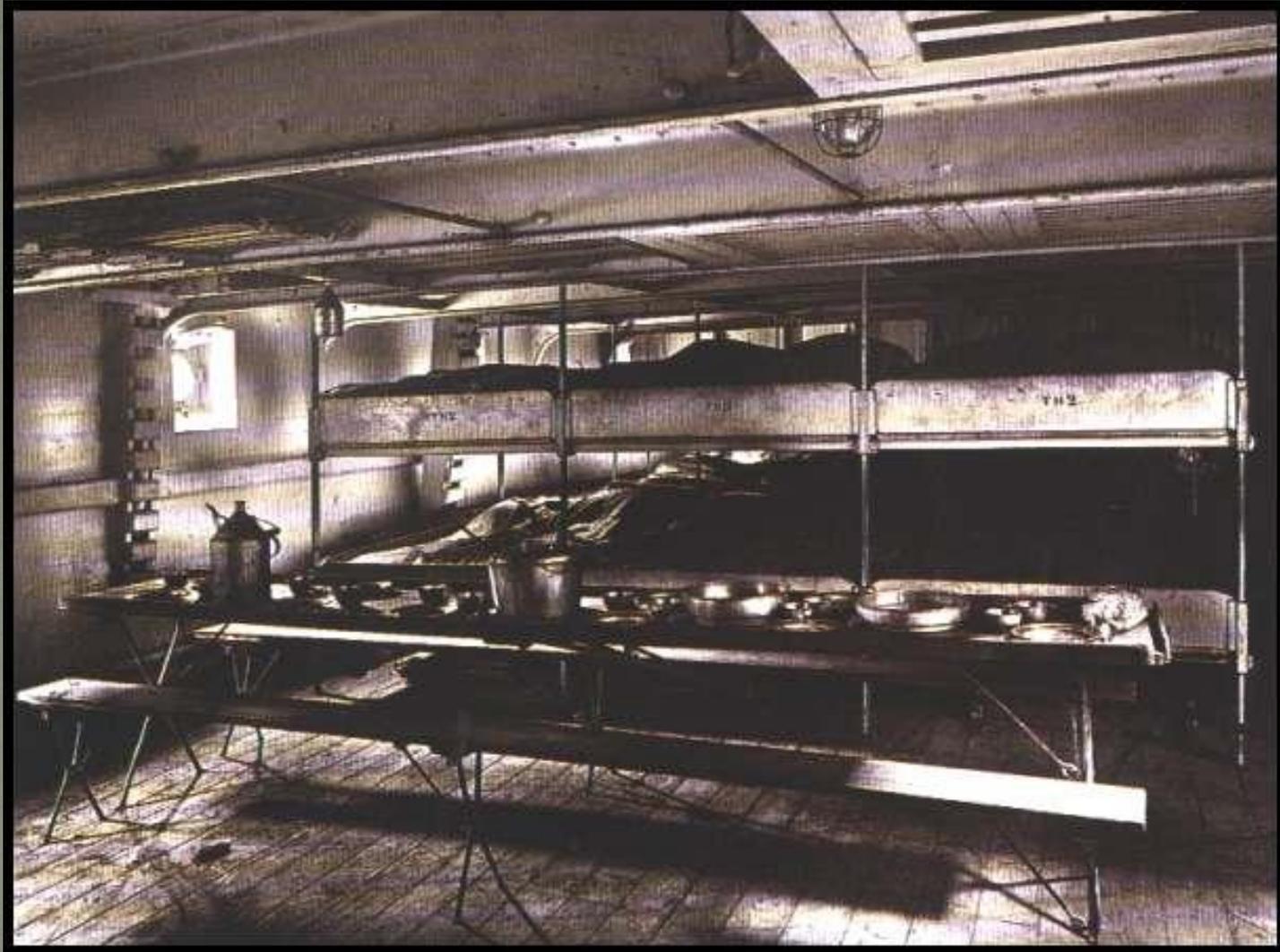


1901 Brochure Image

# “Steerage” Toilet & Shared Washroom



Up to 1000 people might share several buckets and a few sinks – with only sea water to use!



Steerage sleeping and eating area

President William H. Taft, in a report to the United States Immigration Commission:

“The open deck space reserved for steerage passengers is usually very limited, and situated in the worst part of the ship [...] Toilets and washrooms are completely inadequate; saltwater only is available.

“The ventilation is almost always inadequate, and the air soon becomes foul. The unattended vomit of the seasick, the odors of not too clean bodies, the reek of food and the awful stench of the nearby toilet rooms make the atmosphere of the steerage such that it is a marvel that human flesh can endure it... Most immigrants lie in their berths for most of the voyage, in a stupor caused by the foul air. The food often repels them... It is almost impossible to keep personally clean. All of these conditions are naturally aggravated by the crowding.”



# Immigrants Arrive at American Ports

- The first stop for ships at American ports was a processing station where immigration officials decided who could stay in the United States.
- Immigration officers conducted legal & medical inspections.





Upon arrival, the wealthy “First Class” passengers were quickly “examined” by the ship’s doctors and then taken straight into the city...



...while those in steerage had to wait to go through the immigration lines and be examined before entering the port city.

# Ellis Island





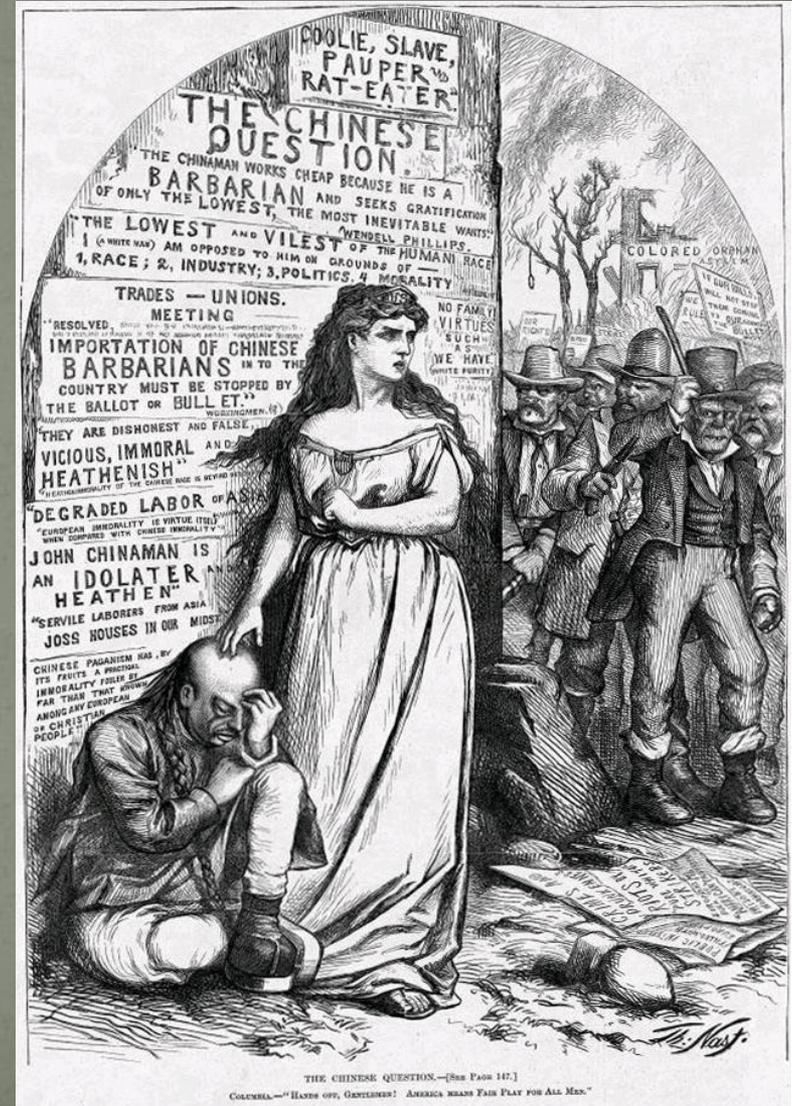




Courtesy of the National Archives

# Adjusting to Urban Society

- Chain Migration
  - Chinatown, Little Italy
- Adjustment
  - Skilled w/ Anglo-American customs
    - British Isles immigrants adaptation easier
  - Irish
    - Large population
    - Dominate Democratic party politics
    - Control Catholic church's hierarchy in major NE cities
  - New sense of Ethnic distinctiveness
    - Irish-American
  - To assimilate, or not?
    - Chinese, some Irish made enough money to return home to be successful
    - Nearly 50% went back to Italy



# Slums and Ghettos

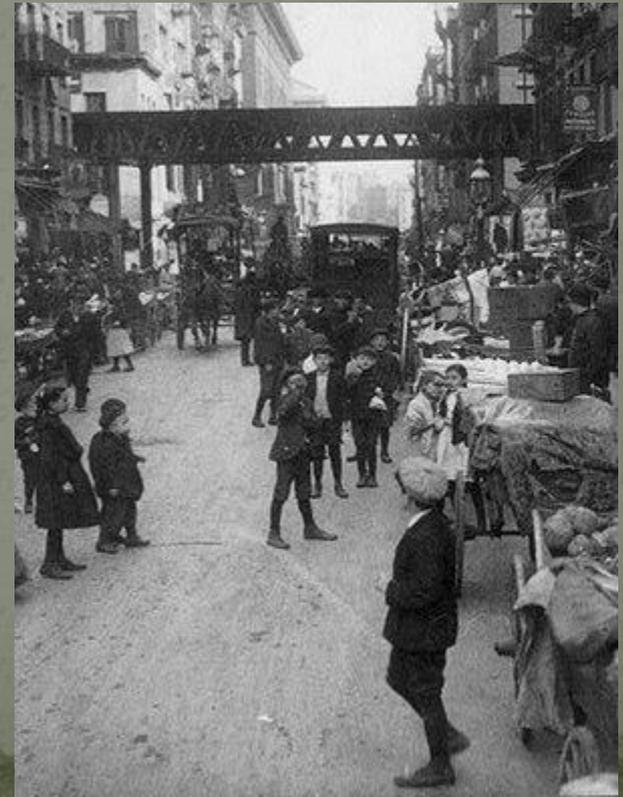


- Generally clustered within walking distance of manufacturing districts
- Began with landlords subdividing old buildings
  - Over packed with residents
  - Poor the renters, the worse the slum
- Ghettos
  - When pressure, law, and prejudice prevent from renting elsewhere
- Difficulties
  - Children
    - Whooping cough, scarlet fever, high IMR
  - Near Industrial districts
    - Noise, pollution, foul odors



# Immigrants Assimilate Into Society

- Most new immigrants stayed in cities, close to industrial jobs in factories.
- They lived in ethnic neighborhoods (ghettos) with people who shared native languages, religions, and culture.



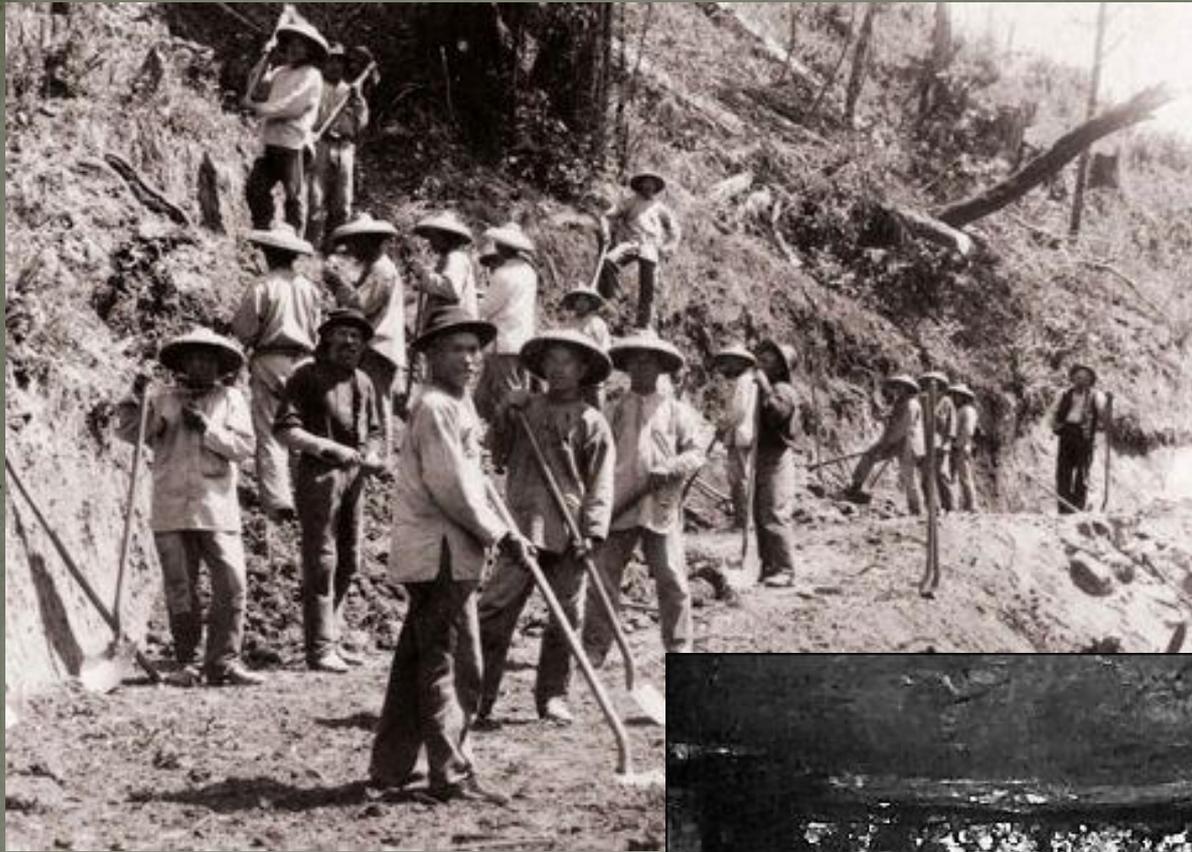
- Americanization- helping newcomers learn English and adopt American dress and diet.
- Settlement workers and immigrants alike believed that American society was a “melting pot” in which white people from all different nationalities blended to create a single culture.
- This model excluded Asian immigrants.
- However, most immigrants held on to their original cultures.
- Children were the first to become “Americanized”.



# New Immigrants Face Hostility

- Immigrants often faced Nativism, which was the belief that native born white Americans were superior.
- Immigrants often were willing to work for less pay.
- Protestants were also suspicious of Catholics coming from Italy, Ireland, and Poland.





- Chinese Exclusion Act- prohibited immigration by Chinese laborers, limited the civil rights of Chinese immigrants and forbade naturalization of Chinese Residents.

*July 23, 1892*

# CHINESE?

**NO! NO! NO!**

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Come to 10th and A Streets at 7:30  
Monday evening and express your  
opinion on the Chinese question.

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**SHALL WE HAVE**

# CHINESE

**NO! NO! NO!**

Image courtesy of the  
Washington State Historical Society, Tacoma

# HIP! HURRAH!

## CHINESE EXCLUDED

—The—

### Democratic Chinese Exclusion Bill

Has Been Signed by

## OUR DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENT

Hip! Hurrah! The White Man is on Top.  
Let every DEMOCRAT and all other GOOD Cit-  
izens turn out and Ratify this

### DEMOCRATIC MEASURE

PAPIST IMMIGRANTS ARE WRECKING OUR ECONOMY WITH THEIR FECUNDITY! WE MUST ERECT A WALL OF BRASS AROUND THE COUNTRY FOR THE EXCLUSION OF CATHOLICS!

1780



(“WALL OF BRASS...” IS QUOTED FROM JOHN JAY, THE FIRST CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT.)

CHINESE IMMIGRANTS AREN'T ASSIMILATING... AND IF WE LET TOO MANY IN, THEY'LL UNDERMINE OUR ECONOMY!

1850



NOW, I'VE GOT NOTHING AGAINST JEWS... BUT THE JEWS ARE COMING IN HUGE NUMBERS! THE ECONOMY CAN'T TAKE IT!

1920



WE'VE GOT NOTHING AGAINST MEXICANS, BUT THEY REFUSE TO ASSIMILATE! THEY'RE RUINING OUR ECONOMY!

NOW

WE SHOULD ERECT A WALL.



HISTORY MARCHES ON; NATIVISM MARCHES IN PLACE