

# The Rise of the American City



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## I. Sources of Urbanization

- A. As steam replaced water power for mills, industries concentrated geographically (iron makers in Pittsburgh, meat-packing in Chicago, Haverhill, Massachusetts in shoes, etc.)
- B. Large-scale production instantly created small cities of workers--company towns dominated by one industry.
- C. Gateways for immigrants (New York, Boston, San Francisco) provided abundant cheap labor.

## II. Problems of the City

### A. Mass transit

- 1. Until 1890, the horse car (using railroad tracks) accounted for 70% of city traffic. Limitations:
  - a. Slow
  - b. Limited pulling power
  - c. Left piles of manure
- 2. Cable cars (first used in San Francisco in 1873) and electric trolley cars (Richmond, 1887) with overhead power lines replaced horses in many cities

## IV. Corruption in the City

- A. Police forces (separate from the military and controlled by local officials) established to maintain law and order

1. Poorly defined duties.
2. Ineffective in controlling theft, prostitution, gambling.
3. Symbiotic relationships developed between police and institutions, such as saloons, they were supposed to oversee.
4. Reform came slowly, as independent police commissions were established to control bribery and graft.

#### B. Political bosses emerged, controlling city machines

1. Ward captains turned out voters on Election Day.
2. Jobs handed out as political favors, as were tax breaks and licenses.
3. While some machines provided welfare services, opportunities for corruption were great.
  - a. Boss Tweed in New York's Tammany Hall controlled 60,000 jobs. He was arrested, bribed his way out of jail, escaped, re-caught and finally died in jail.
  - b. Big Jim Pendergast held absolute power in Kansas City, controlling gambling and liquor licenses

### V. Battling the City's Problems

#### A. Reformers sought to counter poverty and other urban problems by focusing on moral uplift

1. YMCAs and YWCAs formed to provide housing and recreation opportunities
2. Salvation Army effective in providing emergency aid, housing, street kitchens
3. Comstock laws sought to close down gambling, pornography, prostitution, and Sunday liquor sales.

#### B. Social Gospel sought to apply teachings of Jesus' to the problems of urban society. Blame for problems did not rest with the poor, but with society.

1. Washington Gladden--true Christianity requires churchgoers to fight social injustice.
2. Walter Rauschenbusch--*Christianity and the Social Crisis*. Churches should unite to reform the abuses of industry and fight for peace.

#### C. Settlement Houses--founded by Jane Addams to offer literacy classes, crafts classes, job training, and a sense of dignity to urban dwellers, particularly immigrants.

