

American History: Chapter 18

The Age of The City



Home Insurance Building, north-east corner, 1885

The Urbanization of America

1920 Census – more people living in cities than rural areas – why?

- Better-paying jobs, entertainment, and cultural experiences
- New forms of transportation – Railroads, ocean liners

Mechanized farming caused farmers to move

- Few good employment opportunities for African Americans

The Urbanization of America

New Immigration

- 1880 – 1920s
- Southern and Eastern Europe – Poland, Italy, etc.
- Moved to cities – little money to buy farming goods
- Nativism increased – different languages, hard to unionize, worked for low wages, unskilled jobs, mostly Catholic

Assimilation:

- Process of becoming “American”
- 2nd generation immigrants were more likely to assimilate
- Public schools only taught English

The Urbanization of America

American Protective Association:

- Anti-Catholic
- Wanted to stop immigration
- Similar to the Know-Nothing Party from 1840s-1850s

Immigration Restriction League:

- Advocated screening of immigrants
- Chinese Exclusion Act – prohibited Chinese immigration

The Urban Landscape

Many parks began to develop

- Central Park – Frederick Law Olmstead
- Social Class differences over how parks should be used

1893 World's Fair:

- Chicago – “city beautiful” movement
- *Devil in the White City* – Erik Larson

Immigrants lived in crowded cities

- Often in poor conditions
- Tenement houses – became known as slum houses
- Jacob Riis: photographed tenement houses in NYC – *How the Other Half Lives*

New forms of transportation:

- Elevated railway – NYC and Brooklyn Bridge

Skyscrapers:

- Made possible by steel
- Chicago

How the Other Half Lives, Jacob Riis



1893 Worlds Fair Exhibit Hall



Chicago Worlds Fair, Thomas Moran



The Original Ferris Wheel



Strains of Urban Life

Disasters in cities:

- Chicago and Boston (1871) fires
- San Francisco (1906) earthquake (7.8) → fire

Disease in cities:

- Unsanitary drinking water

Growing number of city residents were poor

- Salvation Army (1879)

1906 San Francisco Earthquake



Strains of Urban Life

Political Machines: (Tammany Hall)

- Provided jobs and assistance to constituents

Honest Graft:

- Inside scoop on government projects
- Buy land before government, then resell at a higher price

Dishonest Graft:

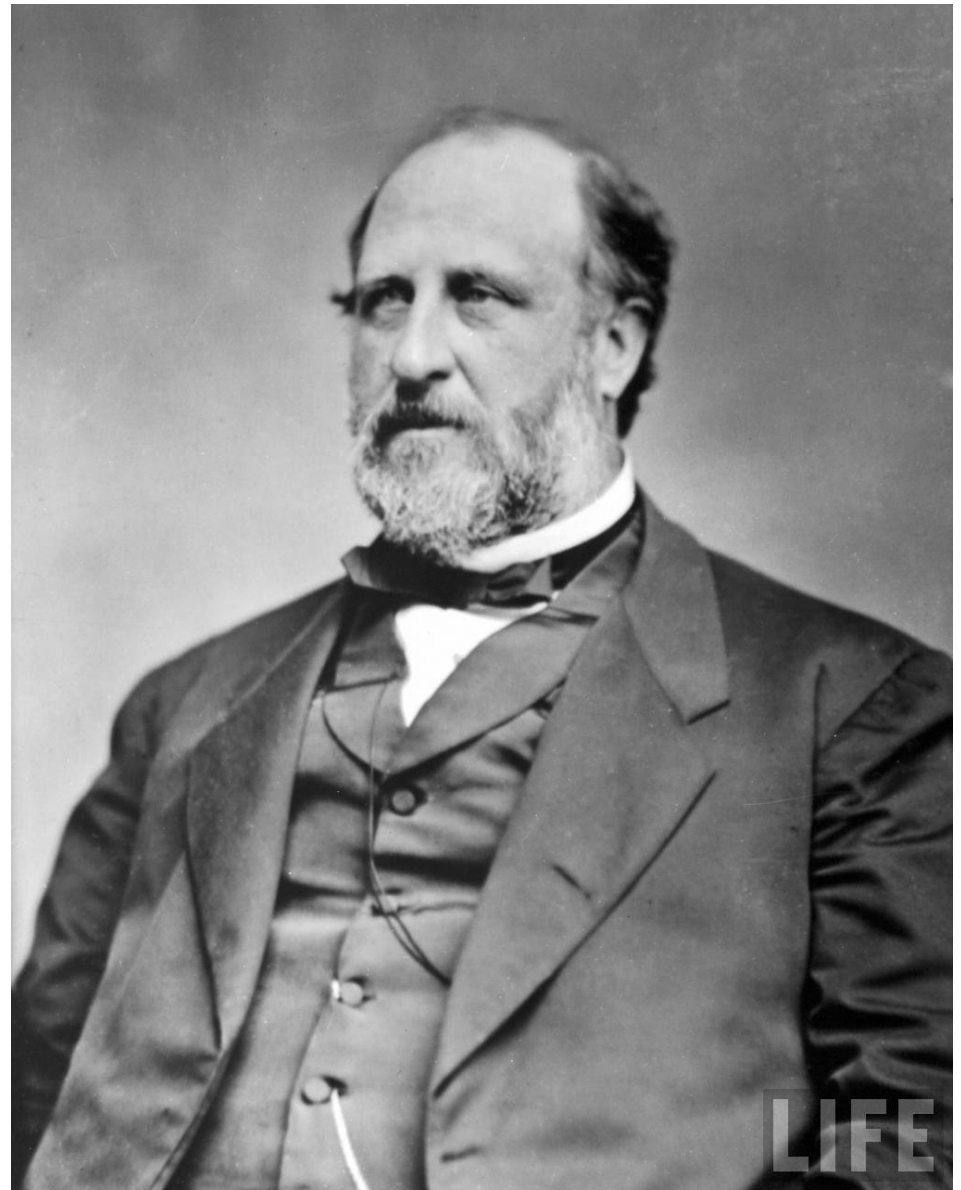
- Stealing

William “Boss” Tweed

- Stole roughly \$200 million through fraud
- Controlled elections
- Ultimately captured due to Thomas Nast’s political cartoons

William "Boss" Tweed

Nast shows Tweed's source of power: control of the ballot box. "As long as I count the Votes, what are you going to do about it?"



The Rise of Mass Consumption

Many jobs saw a rise in wages

- Women, African Americans, and Mexicans were largely left out
 - Textiles, paper, laundries, etc.

Key inventions that affected industry:

- Sewing Machine -> out of homes, into factories and stores
- Refrigerated railcar -> farming industry

Changes in shopping

- Chain and department stores:
 - Woolworth's – dry goods
 - Montgomery Ward and Sears Roebuck catalogs – helped farmers
 - Macy's Department Store
- Impact of these new ways of buying goods?
 - Small businesses were affected
 - Women advocated consumer protection and improvement in wages and working conditions

Leisure in the Consumer Economy

“8 hours for work, 8 hours for rest, 8 hours for what we will”

Amusement parks – Coney Island

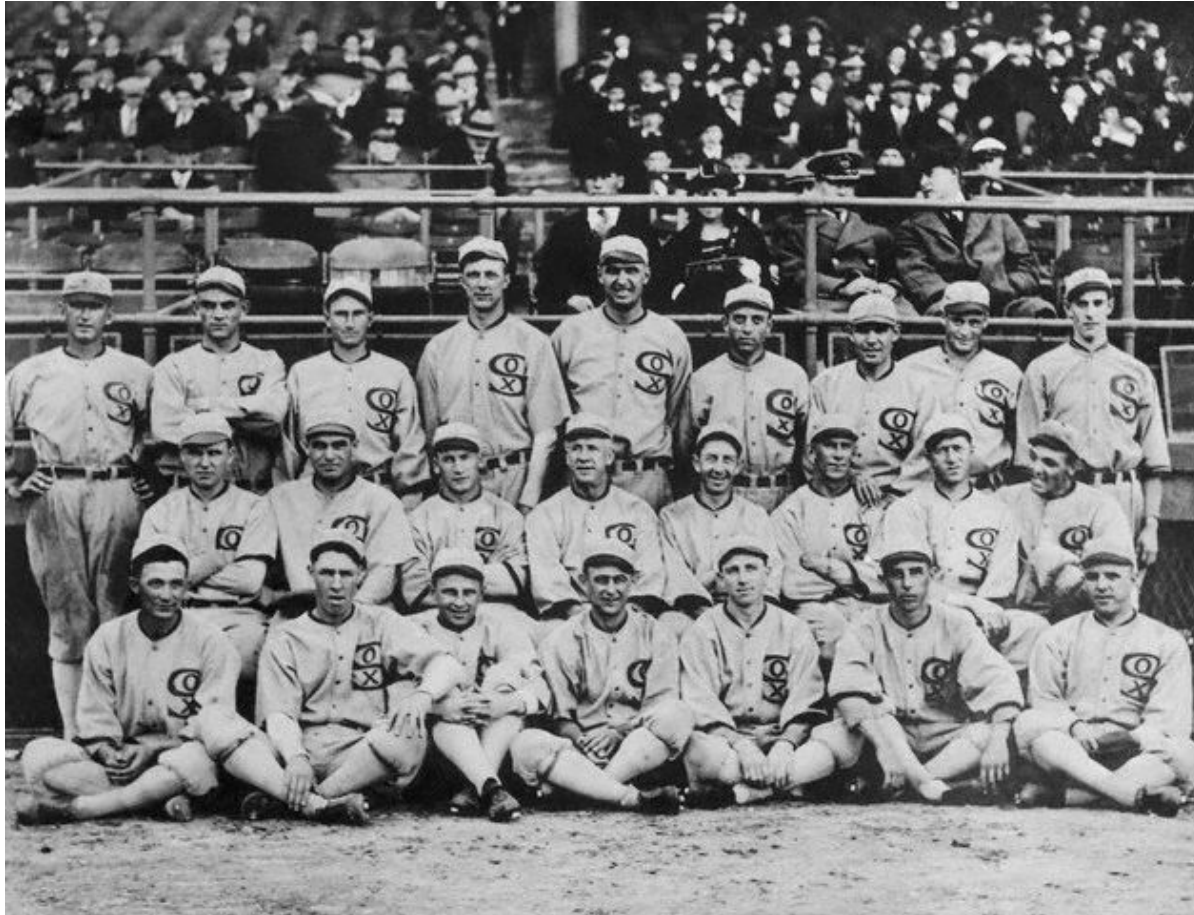
Sports:

- Baseball
 - Cincinnati Reds (1869)
 - 1919 World Series Scandal – The Reds Win!
- Horse racing – Kentucky Derby
- College Football – NCAA

Movies:

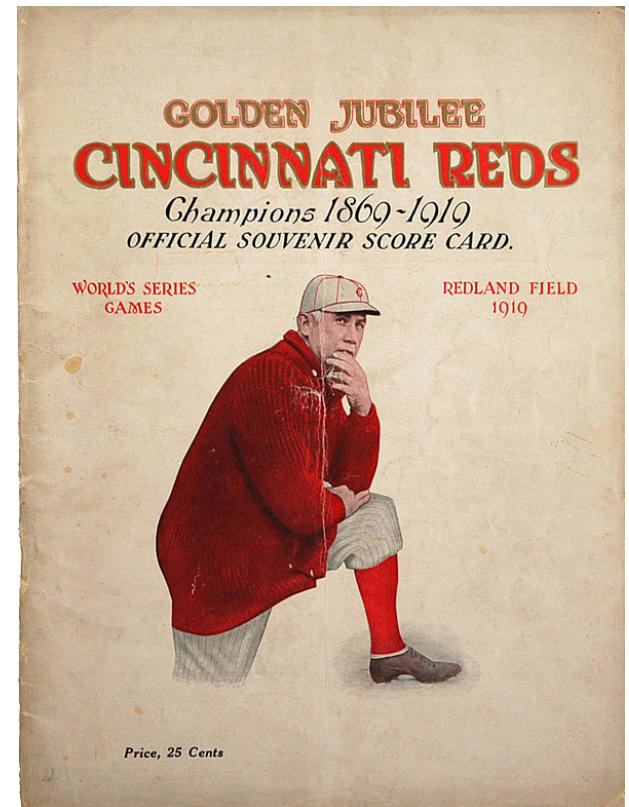
- Silent films until the 1920s
- D.W. Griffith – *The Birth of a Nation*

1919 World Series Scandal

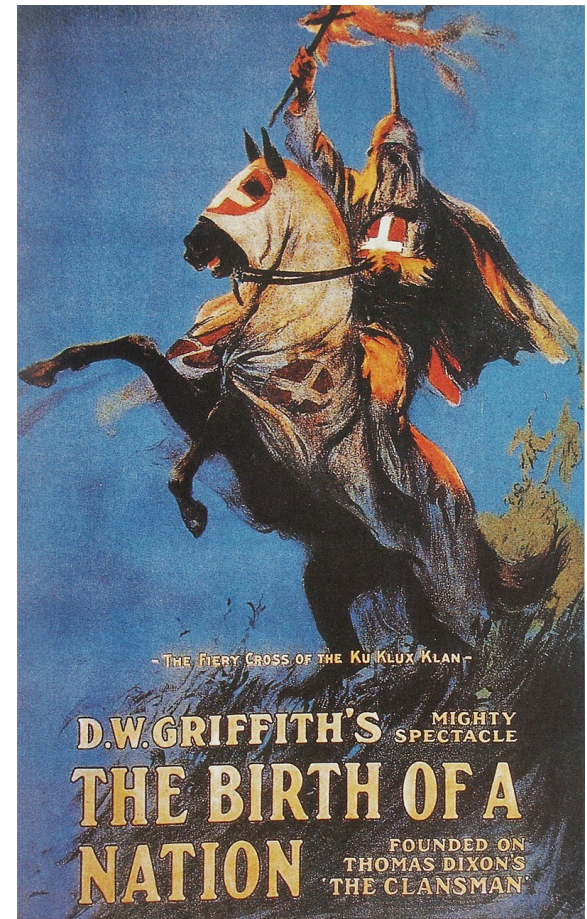


Chicago White Sox Team Photo

World Series Program



The Birth of a Nation



Actors costumed in the full regalia of the Ku Klux Klan chase down a white actor in blackface in a still from *The Birth of a Nation*, then the longest film ever made, directed by D.W. Griffith, California, 1914.

Leisure in the Consumer Economy

The Saloon:

- Meeting place for working-class individuals
- Important gathering place for political machines

Growth of Temperance:

- Response to the saloon and immigrants
- Anti-Saloon League:
 - Hoped to cut down on crime and political machines

Growth of Newspapers:

- “Yellow Journalism” – sensationalizing news stories
- William Randolph Hearst - *Journal*
- Joseph Pulitzer - *World*

“Yellow Journalism” cartoon about the Spanish-American War of 1898, Independence Seaport Museum. The newspaper publishers Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst are both attired as the Yellow Kid comics character of the time, and are competitively claiming ownership of the war



High Culture in the Age of the City

Important Writings:

- Frank Norris – *The Octopus*
 - Depicted relationship between farmers and railroads
- Upton Sinclair – *The Jungle*
 - Exposed horrors of meat packing industry
 - Pure Food and Drug Act, Meat Inspection Act (1906)

Ashcan School:

- Artwork that depicted slums and “grim aspects of modern life

Theory of Evolution (Darwin) challenged religion and schools

- Scopes Trial in the 1920s
- “Pragmatism”
- Ideas were to be tested, not just based on theories

Clarence Darrow (left) and William Jennings Bryan (right) chat in court during the Scopes Trial



High Culture in the Age of the City

Education

- John Dewey:
 - Hoped to change education
 - Less reliance on memorization, more on acquiring knowledge through experience
- Growth of Education:
 - Increase in free primary and secondary education
 - Rural areas still lagged behind
- Morrill Land Grant
 - Land set aside to states by federal government for colleges
- Higher education opportunities for women were limited
 - Some institutions created separate female schools