

Immigrants and Urban Challenges

What You Will Learn...

Main Ideas

1. Millions of immigrants, mostly German and Irish, arrived in the United States despite anti-immigrant movements.
2. Industrialization led to the growth of cities.
3. American cities experienced urban problems due to rapid growth.

The Big Idea

The population of the United States grew rapidly in the early 1800s with the arrival of millions of immigrants.

Key Terms

nativists, p. 440

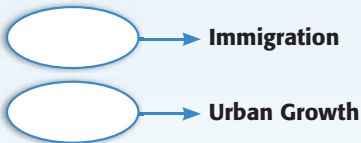
Know-Nothing Party, p. 440

middle class, p. 440

tenements, p. 442

TAKING NOTES

As you read, take notes on the causes of immigration and urban growth. Record your notes in a graphic organizer like the one shown below.



If YOU were there...

It is 1850, and you are a German immigrant standing on the deck of a steamboat, crossing Lake Erie. Other immigrants are on board, but they are strangers to you. Soon, you will arrive at your new home in Cleveland, Ohio. You've been told that other Germans have settled there. You hope to find friends and work as a baker. Right now, America seems very big and very strange.

What would you expect from your new life in America?

BUILDING BACKGROUND The revolutions in industry, transportation, and technology were not the only major changes in the United States in the mid-1800s. Millions of immigrants, mostly from Europe, swelled the population. Some settled in the rich farmland of the Midwest, while others moved to cities.

Millions of Immigrants Arrive

In the mid-1800s, large numbers of immigrants crossed the Atlantic Ocean to begin new lives in the United States. More than 4 million of them settled in the United States between 1840 and 1860, most from Europe. More than 3 million of these immigrants arrived from Ireland and Germany. Many of them were fleeing economic or political troubles in their native countries.

Fleeing the Irish Potato Famine

Most immigrants from the British Isles during that period were Irish. In the mid-1840s, potato blight, a disease that causes rot in potatoes, left many families in Ireland with little food. More than a million Irish people died of starvation and disease. Even more fled to the United States.

Most Irish immigrants were very poor. Many settled in cities in Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania. They worked at unskilled jobs in the cities or on building canals and

Push-Pull Factors of Immigration

QUICK
FACTS

Pull Factors

- Jobs
- Greater freedom and equality
- Abundant land

Push Factors

- Starvation
- Poverty
- Lack of political freedom

Starvation and poverty pushed many Irish families such as this one from their homes, while economic opportunities pulled them toward the United States.



ANALYSIS
SKILL

ANALYZING VISUALS

How was freedom a push factor and a pull factor?

railroads. Irish women often worked as domestic servants for wealthy families, laboring 16 or more hours per day. In 1849 a Boston health committee reported that low wages forced most Irish immigrants to live in poor housing.

Still, many immigrants enjoyed a new feeling of equality. Patrick Dunny wrote home to his family about this situation.

“People that cuts a great dash [style] at home ... think it strange [in the United States] for the humble class of people to get as much respect as themselves.”

—Patrick Dunny, quoted in *Who Built America?*
by Bruce Levine et al.

A Failed German Revolution

Many Germans also came to the United States during this time. In 1848 some Germans had staged a revolution against harsh rule. Some

educated Germans fled to the United States to escape persecution caused by their political activities. Most German immigrants, however, were working class, and they came for economic reasons. The United States seemed to offer both greater economic opportunity and more freedom from government control. While most Irish immigrants were Catholics, German immigrant groups included Catholics, Jews, and Protestants.

German immigrants were more likely than the Irish to become farmers and live in rural areas. They moved to midwestern states where more land was available. Unlike the Irish, a high percentage of German immigrants arrived in the United States with money. Despite their funds and skills, German immigrants often were forced to take low-paying jobs. Many German immigrants worked as tailors, seamstresses, bricklayers,

THE IMPACT TODAY

Many immigrants still come to the United States today. More than 16.4 million entered the United States between 1980 and 2000.

servants, clerks, cabinetmakers, bakers, and food merchants.

Anti-Immigration Movements

Industrialization and the waves of people from Europe greatly changed the American labor force. While many immigrants went to the Midwest to get farmland, other immigrants filled the need for cheap labor in towns and cities. Industrial jobs in the Northeast attracted many people.

Yet a great deal of native-born Americans feared losing their jobs to immigrants who might work for lower wages. Some felt **implicitly** threatened by the new immigrants' cultures and religions. For example, before Catholic immigrants arrived, most Americans were Protestants. Conflicts between Catholics and Protestants in Europe caused American Protestants to mistrust Catholic immigrants. **Those Americans and others who opposed immigration were called nativists.**

In the 1840s and 1850s some nativists became politically active. An 1844 election flyer gave Americans this warning.

“Look at the . . . thieves and vagabonds [tramps] roaming our streets . . . monopolizing [taking] the business which properly belongs to our own native and true-born citizens.”

—Election flyer, quoted in *Who Built America?*
by Bruce Levine et al.

In 1849 nativists founded a political organization, the Know-Nothing Party, that supported measures making it difficult for foreigners to become citizens or hold office. Its members wanted to keep Catholics and immigrants out of public office. They also wanted to require immigrants to live in the United States for 21 years before becoming citizens. Know-Nothing politicians had some success getting elected during the 1850s. Later, disagreements over the issue of slavery caused the party to fall apart.

READING CHECK Understanding Cause and Effect Why did the Know-Nothing Party try to limit the rights of immigrants?

Rapid Growth of Cities

The Industrial Revolution led to the creation of many new jobs in American cities. These city jobs drew immigrants from many nations as well as migrants from rural parts of the United States. The Transportation Revolution helped connect cities and made it easier for people to move to them. As a result of these two trends, American cities grew rapidly during the mid-1800s. Cities in the northeastern and Middle Atlantic states grew the most. By the mid-1800s, three-quarters of the country's manufacturing jobs were in these areas.

The rise of industry and the growth of cities changed American life. Those who owned their own businesses or worked in skilled jobs benefited most from those changes. The families of these merchants, manufacturers, professionals, and master craftspeople made up a growing social class. **This new middle class was a social and economic level between the wealthy and the poor.** Those in the new middle class built large, dignified homes that demonstrated their place in society.

In the growing cities, people found entertainment and an enriched cultural life. Many enjoyed visiting places such as libraries and clubs, or attending concerts or lectures. In the mid-1800s people also attended urban theaters. Favorite pastimes included bowling, boxing, and playing cards. The rules of baseball were formalized in 1845, and the game became increasingly popular.

Cities during this time were compact and crowded. Many people lived close enough to their jobs that they could walk to work. Wagons carried goods down streets paved with stones, making a noisy, busy scene. One observer noted that the professionals in New York City always had a “hurried walk.”

READING CHECK Summarizing How did the Industrial Revolution affect life in American cities?

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

implicit
understood though not clearly put into words

FOCUS ON READING

Look carefully at the quotation to the right from an election flyer. Does it include any examples of propaganda?

History Close-up

New York City, Mid-1800s

In the mid-1800s, cities such as New York City lured thousands of people in search of jobs and a better life. Many city dwellers found life difficult in the crowded urban conditions.

Many city residents, particularly immigrants, lived in crowded, unsafe conditions.

Many immigrants and other poor city dwellers worked long hours in factories at dangerous jobs.

Women—and frequently children—labored all day in small rooms making clothing to be sold to the wealthy.

City streets were crowded with people buying, selling, and transporting goods.

The first floor of the building served many purposes—living quarters, kitchen, and work space. Here, garments were finished for sale.

ANALYSIS SKILL ANALYZING VISUALS

How is this scene similar to one you might see in a large American city today? How is it different?

Urban Problems

American cities in the mid-1800s faced many challenges due to rapid growth. Because public and private transportation was limited, city residents had to live near their workplaces. In addition, there was a lack of safe housing. Many city dwellers, particularly immigrants, could afford to live only in **tenements**—poorly designed apartment buildings that housed large numbers of people. These structures were often dirty, overcrowded, and unsafe.

Public services were also poor. The majority of cities did not have clean water, public health regulations, or healthful ways to get rid of garbage and human and animal waste. Under these conditions, diseases spread easily, and epidemics were common. In 1832 and 1849, for example, New York City suffered cholera epidemics that killed thousands.

City life held other dangers. As urban areas grew, they became centers of criminal activity. Most cities—including New York, Boston, and Philadelphia—had no permanent or organized force to fight crime.

Instead, they relied on volunteer night watches, which offered little protection.

Fire was another constant and serious danger in crowded cities. There was little organized fire protection. Most cities were served by volunteer fire companies. Firefighters used hand pumps and buckets to put out fires. In addition, there were not enough sanitation workers and road maintenance crews. These shortages and flaws caused health and safety problems for many city residents.

READING CHECK Analyzing Why did so many American cities have problems in the mid-1800s?

SUMMARY AND PREVIEW Immigrants expected a better life in America, but not all Americans welcomed newcomers. The rapid growth of cities caused many problems. In the next section you will read about how America developed its own style of art and literature.

Section 1 Assessment

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Online Quiz

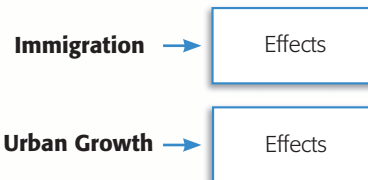
KEYWORD: SC7 HP14

Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and People

- Identify** Who were the **nativists**?
 - Compare and Contrast** In what ways were Irish and German immigrants to the United States similar and different?
 - Predict** How might the rise of anti-immigrant groups lead to problems in the United States?
- Describe** What led to the growth of cities?
 - Analyze** How did the rise of industrialization and the growth of cities change American society?
- Describe** What were **tenements**?
 - Summarize** What problems affected American cities in the mid-1800s?
 - Evaluate** What do you think was the biggest problem facing cities in the United States? Why?

Critical Thinking

- Identifying Cause and Effect** Review your notes on the causes of immigration and urban growth. Then add the effects of each to your graphic organizer.



FOCUS ON WRITING

- Identifying Important Events** In your notebook, create a two-column chart. In the first column, list events described in this section. In the second column, write a description of each event and a note about how it changed life in the United States.