Chapter 18: The Industrial City: Building It, Living In It

- **Urbanization**
  - Urbanization was inevitable because of industrialism.
  - And as industrialism proceeded further, city and factory began to merge.
  - Cities that used to be commercial centers became both industrial and commercial centers, including the older cities.
    - Such as Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and San Francisco.
  - New York was famous for being the nation’s largest manufacturing center and also as a city of trade and finance.

- **City Innovation**
  - As cities spilled over the conventional boundaries into the surrounding countrysides and became known as metropolitan areas.
    - This was due to the fact that people were flocking to the new joint industrial and commercial centers.
  - This didn’t occur in Europe, where cities stayed inside their well-defined borders and gave way to countryside abruptly.
    - In comparison, German cities had 158 people per sq. mile, while American cities had 22 per acre.
  - The whole concept of the city had to be innovated, because as Mark Twain said, “The only trouble about this town is that it is too large. You cannot accomplish anything in the way of business, you cannot even pay a friendly call without devoting a whole day to it…”
    - However, city builders used their ingenuity to figure out the problem of moving around nearly a million New Yorkers.

- **Mass Transit**
  - Transit continued to evolve during the 1800s, and new methods for mass transit began to develop…
    - The omnibus, in the 1820s, which was an elongated version of the horse-drawn carriage.
    - The horsecar, which was more efficient because it was a horse-drawn carriage that could pull more passengers at a faster pace through congested city streets.
    - Then the “trolley car” came around, and it soon replaced all other modes of transportation in cities.
- The first elevated railroads into operation in New York City, and they were first powered by steam engines, but soon switched to electricity as its power source.

- Lastly, underground railroads, or subways, became the norm for many of the largest cities in the United States.

- Mass transit had evolved into rapid transit.

• Skyscrapers

- As the mass transit revolution was being undertaken, a similar revolution was under way in the architecture business.

- A new building type, known as the skyscraper, became possible with steel girders, durable plate glass, and the invention of the passenger elevator in the 1880s.

- “The sky, so to speak, became the limit.”

- “The first skyscraper to be built on this principle was William Le Baron Jenney’s ten-story Home Insurance Building” in Chicago in 1885.

- However, New York soon overtook Chicago as the premier city for skyscraper construction because of the “unrelenting demand for prime downtown space”, and in 1913, the fifty-five story Woolworth Building was completed and marked the beginning of the modern Manhattan skyline.

• The Electric City

- The electric lights that lit up cities at night offered the most evidence that times had changed.

- At first, electric lights were better used to city lighting, like seen in Charles F. Brush’s electric arc lamps.

- Soon after, however, Thomas Edison’s invention of a serviceable incandescent bulb in 1879 made it possible for electric lighting to enter the American home.

- Electricity also made it possible for Alexander Graham Bell’s telephone (1876), which sped up communications beyond anything imagined previously.

• Private City, Public City

- Initially, cities were developed and innovated by private investors and individual entrepreneurs.

- This is because the common belief was that “the sum of such private activity would far exceed what the community might accomplish through public effort.”

- Yet, because of the Constitution, it was up to city governments to draw the line between public and private, and they soon began to do just that.
- Cities had the right to impose whatever regulations they wanted, even in cases of private land.

- Hundreds of thousands of city government projects sprang up around the country, and nowhere else in the world were their more massive public projects, such as the building of...

  - Aqueducts
  - Sewage systems
  - Bridges
  - Spacious parks

- The Urban Environment

  - In the middle of public and private, there was an environmental no-mans land.

    - This land often was filthy and poorly maintained.
      
    - A visitor to Pittsburg would notice the heavy smoke that polluted the air and the butchered hills that were once magnificent.

  - Hardest hit by the urban growth were the poor.

    - To accommodate the poor, city developers created the dreadful five- or six-story tenement buildings, structures that could house 20 or more families in cramped, airless apartments.

  - It wasn’t that America lacked a vision for a better city plan and development, in fact, its rural ideal included…

    - Larger park systems
    - Broad boulevards and parkways
    - Zoning laws
    - Planned suburbs

  - Cities did not foresee their development, and thus it went unplanned and unchecked, and often times, the lack of restraints gave way to slums.

- A Balance Sheet: Chicago and Berlin

  - The pluses and minuses of the urban environment are perhaps seen best in the comparison of Chicago (Illinois) and Berlin (Germany).

    - They make a good comparison because in 1900 they had virtually equal populations, however, in 1830; Chicago was just a muddy frontier city, while Berlin already had a
population of 250,000.

- Berlin was much grander than Chicago, and served the national purpose of being “a center where Germany’s political, intellectual, and material life is concentrated and its people can feel united.”

- However, as a functioning city, Chicago was superior to Berlin in numerous ways.
  - Chicago pumped 500 million gallons of water a day, or 139 gallons per person, versus only 18 gallons per person in Berlin.
  - Flush toilets were rare in Berlin in 1900, but nearly 60% of the residents of Chicago had them.
  - Chicago’s streets were lit mostly by electricity, while Berlin still relied mostly on gaslight.
  - Chicago also had…
    - A much bigger streetcar system.
    - Twice as much acreage devoted to parks.
    - A larger public library.
  - Chicago had also just completed an incredible sanitation project which reversed the course of the Chicago River so that its waters – and the city’s sewage – flowed away from Lake Michigan and down the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers.

- Although American cities were incredibly well functioning, they were “ugly” from an artistic point of view.

- **Upper Class/Middle Class**
  - In these new compact cities, clear class distinctions weakened, and people turned to conspicuous displays of wealth, such as…
    - Membership in exclusive clubs.
    - Residence in exclusive neighborhoods.
  - Unlike the poor, who had to live close to their jobs, higher-income urbanites could now choose where to live according to their personal desires and social preference.
  - **The Urban Elite**
- As early as the 1840s, the urban elite began to move out of the city to build fine rural estates.

- They would take a daily commute to their work, either by train or sometimes by the ferry.

- **Lifestyles of the Rich**

- Although they were many of the urban elite who took their residence outside the city, many of the very richest preferred the heart of the city…

- Chicago had Gold Coast.

- San Francisco had Nob Hill.

- Denver had Quality Hill.

- Manhattan had Fifth Avenue.

- However, great wealth did not automatically confer high social standing; it would sometimes take several generations to become part of the “in-crowd” in a city’s wealthy elite.

- New York became somewhat of a “magnet” for millionaires, and it was flooded with the wealthy, and soon underwent a strange reconstruction to determine those who properly “belonged” in New York society.

- **Ward McAllister and “High Society”**

- The key figure in this strange reconstruction of New York society was Ward McAllister.

- Ward McAllister was a southern-born lawyer, who had made a quick fortune in the California Gold Rush, and then resettled in New York as the “society arbiter”.

- McAllister published the first *Social Register* in 1888, which would serve as a “record of society, comprising an accurate and careful list” of all those deemed eligible for NY society.

- He also instructed the socially ambitious on how to select guests, set a proper table, arrange a party, and launch a young lady into society.

- At the apex of the *Social Register* stood “The Four Hundred”, who were the “cream of the crop” of NY society.

- The wealthy left their mark all over American society from Florida to Washington and from Arizona to Maine.

- If there was a magnificence in the American city, that was mainly their handiwork.

- If there was conspicuous waste and display, that too was most likely their doing.

- **The Suburban World**

- The middle class differed greatly from the upper class; they preferred retreating to privacy,
rather than flaunting themselves from the “hurly-burly of urban life.”

- The middle class was also changing, because of industrialization; new “white-collar jobs” were becoming the backbone of the economy, taking up more than ¼ of all employed Americans in 1910.

- With the middle class changing, it only made sense that the American city changed also—and it did, through suburbanization.

- No major American city escaped this process during the late 19th century, and during which city limits everywhere expanded rapidly and even outlying towns grew substantially.

- By the 1910 census, approximately 25% of the urban population lived in these autonomous suburbs.

- As one moved away from the center of a city, houses became nicer, etc., and one could tell the difference of social classes.

- The need for community had lost some of its force for middle-class Americans, and two attachments assumed greater importance…

1. Work
2. Family

• Middle-Class Families

- Work and family life used to be intertwined for middle-class families, however, with industrialism progressing, family life and economic activity parted this intertwining.

- In this new system…

- The father departed every morning for the “office”.

- Children spent more years in school.

- Food more often came ready made in cans and packages.

- Middle-class families became smaller, consisting typically by 1900, of husband, wife, and 3 children.

- This allowed closer relationships to be formed between family members in American suburbs.

• The Wife’s Role

- The burdens of domesticity fell heavily (and often solely) on the wife, and it was nearly unheard of for her to seek an outside career.

- Under the influence of popular books (i.e. *The American Woman’s Home* by Catharine Beecher in 1869) and magazines (*Good Housekeeping* and *Ladies’ Home*...
women, however, were still treated as inferiors to men, and could think of only “little and… trivial matters”.

In response to this, “many bright, independent-minded women rebelled against marriage”, and at one point the marriage rate fell to a low point during the last 40 years of the 19th century.

An increasing percentage of women that got a higher education decided to not marry, seeing it as somewhat of an “impoverished” life.

- **The Cult of Masculinity**

  Because of the fact that fewer women were marrying, it meant that of course, fewer men were marrying as well.

  Thanks to the census, we can trace the progression of this age cohort of men…

  - In the 1890s – early 30s, 40% were unmarried.
  - In the 1900s – early 40s; 25% still hadn’t married.
  - Ultimately, a hard-core, over 10% never married.
  - One historian dubbed this the Age of the Bachelor.

  The evolving urban scene offered all the comforts of home for bachelors.

  Men inherited this pride of independence, but with no longer being their own bosses or heads of a patriarchal family system, it went from “manhood” to “masculinity”.

  - Masculinity meant surmounting the feminizing influences of modern life.

  And this was accomplished in numerous ways…

  - Engaging in competitive sports, such as football.
  - Working out and becoming fit.
  - Engaging in Theodore Roosevelt’s “strenuous life.”
  - Reading best-selling cowboy novels or books that celebrate the primitive man.

- **Changing Views of Women’s Sexuality**

  While men were going from “manhood” to “masculinity”, women had an easier transition because they were in the process of being liberated from a repressive past.

  While women wanted fewer children however, contraceptive devices were not yet to the
point where they were widely used (outside of brothels) and socially acceptable.

- Anthony Comstock…

- Was an agent of the Post Office that was also secretary of the Society for the Suppression of Vice.

- He campaigned relentlessly to uplift the nation’s morals.

- This was done through a federal law, which he helped compose, that passed in 1873 and prohibited the sending of obscene materials through the U.S. mails.

  - This included any information on contraceptives, or any open discussion of sex.

- Comstock’s law led to a national obsession of the suppression of vice during the 1870s.

- Siding with Comstock was a large number of doctors, who feared that “uncoupling sex from procreation would release the sexual appetites of men, to the detriment of their health and the moral fiber of society.”

- Around 1890, however, contraception became widely acceptable by society, and ever more reliable.

  - This was the beginning of a sexual revolution.

- There came about a new image of the “new women” because of these changes.

- Attitudes Toward Children

  - The attitudes toward children also changed during this time period.

  - Previously, bearing more children meant more hands to work on the farm, or in the shop, etc.

  - However, urban families no longer saw this added benefit of children, and now the family was considered “responsible for providing a nurturing environment in which the young personality could grow and mature.”

  - This nurturing, or preparation for adulthood, became increasingly linked to formal education.

    - Between 1870 and 1900, school enrollment jumped up 150%.

- Also during this time, the stage of life dubbed adolescence was born, and in which the socializing role of parents shifted to those of one’s peers.

- City Life
“With its soaring skyscrapers, jostling traffic, and hum of business, the city symbolized energy and enterprise.”

The city was unlike anything ever seen before in the rural world, and every person that travelled to one immediately felt it.

- In the countryside, everyone knew everyone.
- In the city, you were alone in “a splendid desert” (Mark Twain).

And although migrants could never recreate the sense of community that they had left behind, “they found ways of belonging”, “built new institutions”, and “learned how to function in an impersonal, heterogeneous environment.”

- Newcomers

  - America’s cities grew tremendously between 1880 and 1900, jumping from 6 million to 14 million (in cities with more than 100,000 people).

  - Where did these people come from?

    - Many came from the countryside – half of all rural families on the move were city bound.

    - Foreigners, however, made up the largest percentage.

      - They made up 30% of the residents of New York, Chicago, Boston, Cleveland, Minneapolis, and San Francisco.

  - Which ethnic groups were where?

    - New York – Eastern European Jews
    - Chicago – Poles
    - Boston – Irish
    - Minneapolis – Swedish
    - San Francisco – Italians

  - As foreigners continued to arrive, those arriving later had little say in where they resided.

    - Many found cheap housing near the outlying factory districts.

    - Others settled in the congested downtown ghettos.

  - Immigrant institutions sprang up wherever there were large enough populations.

    - These included…
- Newspapers
- Clubs
- And other mutual-aid societies

• **Urban Blacks**
- Blacks really began to migrate toward northern cities at the turn of the century.
  - However, they still represented less than 2% of the population in cities such as Cleveland, Chicago, and New York City.
- Those that did reside there often retreated into concentrated ghettos, for example…
  - Chicago’s Black Belt on the South Side
  - New York’s Harlem
- These blacks faced very few job opportunities and had little hope of moving up any job ladder.
  - In spite of all the prejudice and discrimination, blacks built their own communities.
    - The most significant part of these communities were the churches, to which there were dozens in both Chicago and New York.
    - As it had been in the south, the church was the central institution for urban blacks, and the preacher was the most important local figure.

• **Ward Politics**
- While race and ethnicity divided urban newcomers, politics, integrated them.
- Urban political machines, like Tammany Hall in NY, acted as a “rough-and-ready social service agency, providing jobs for the jobless, a helping hand for a bereaved family, and intercession against an unfeeling city bureaucracy.”
  - Jobs of such urban political machines included…
    - Contractors seeking city business.
    - Gas companies and streetcar lines wanting licenses.
    - Manufacturers needing services and not-too-nosy inspectors.
    - Liquor trade and numbers rackets relying on a tolerant police force.
- However, these favors were not free, they came with the price of a vote, or a check, in which often part of that “donation” may find its way into a machine politician’s pocket.
- Soon Tammany Hall became synonymous for corruption, until it switched leaders in 1871 (from William Marcy Tweed to George Plunkitt).

- Plunkitt would visit any cultural event on a given day, and in general, worked against all the forces acting to isolate ghetto communities, instead trying to bring them all together.

- Religion in the City

  - For urban blacks the church was the centerpiece of their urban communities – it was also such for many other city dwellers.

  - But cities were not easy grounds for religious practice and all the great faiths – Judaism, Catholicism, and Protestantism – had to work hard to bring back religious belief within the secular urban world.

- Judaism: The Challenge to Orthodoxy

  - Before the large influx of Jews in the 1880s, there were 250,000 German Jews that were already well established and prosperous.

  - These new Jews did not agree with the established practice of Orthodox Judaism, and there was somewhat of a conflict.

  - However, with the new American environment, the newcomer Jews had difficulty keeping up their traditional practices, and eventually they had to abandon many altogether.

  - Although Orthodox Judaism survived this shattering of faith, it had reduced its claims on the lives of the faithful.

- “Americanism” and the Catholic Church

  - Catholics faced much of the same problem, they had arguments within the religion regarded how much they should reshape their religion to accommodate “Americanism.”

  - Soon immigrants that practiced Catholicism were demanding their own churches where they could speak their own languages freely, and also their own priests and bishops.

  - However, the Catholic hierarchy didn’t want to give them what they were asking for, but eventually satisfied all parties by giving them a small part of what they asked for.

  - A result of this was over 2000 foreign-language churches (and many others that were bilingual) by 1914.

- Protestantism: Regaining Lost Ground

  - Protestants were attempting to regain lost ground, because the large majorities of their converts were the upper class.

  - So, beginning in the 1880s, they started to evangelize among the unchurched and indifferent.
Methods of this evangelization included...

- The Salvation Army
- YWCAs and YMCAs
- Revivalist gatherings

“By realizing that many people remained villagers at heart,” revivalism took off when preachers realized all they needed to do was preach an optimistic, uncomplicated, non-denominational message.

• City Amusements

- “Going out” became a necessity in urban America.

- Some of these attractions were...

  - Music halls, such as the 6 vaudeville houses in Chicago in 1896, and the 22 in 1910.
  - Amusement parks, such as Coney Island.
  - Opium and cocaine, which were not yet illegal.
  - Prostitution, which became ever more prevalent.
  - Perhaps the most famous of the time, baseball.

- The method of “treating” a girl came about during this time period, and included a girl spending her money on getting dressed up while the boy paid for the entertainment.

  - The result of this was the breaking down of parent control over courtship, and a more easygoing culture of sexual interaction and pleasure seeking among working-class youth.

- Gay districts also began to increase in size and frequency.

• William Randolph Hearst and Yellow Journalism

- William Randolph Hearst, after being expelled from Harvard, took over his father’s mundane paper, San Francisco Examiner.

  - He revolutionized it, and brought about the first type of yellow journalism, or the first comic strip to appear in color.

- The main reason Hearst made barrels of money? Because he understood people and their hunger for information.

• The Higher Culture

- In the midst of all these new cultural sensations, a higher American culture was also being
- Lecturers, of culture and of learning, could be sent anywhere.

- Museums, public libraries, opera companies, and symphony orchestras, however, could only flourish in metropolitan areas.

• **Cultural Institutions**

- Some of the first major art museums were…
  - The Concoran Gallery of Art, opened in Washington D.C. in 1869.
  - NY’s Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1871, and moved locations near Central Park in 1880.
  - The Boston Museum of Fine Arts was founded in 1876.
  - Chicago’s Art Institute was founded in 1879.

- Some of the first major symphony orchestras were…
  - In New York, under the conductors of Theodore Thomas and Leopold Damrosch.
  - In Chicago and Boston during the next decade.

- The greatest library benefactor was Andrew Carnegie, who announced in 1881 that he would build a library in any town or city that was prepared to maintain it.

  - By 1907, Carnegie had spent more than $32.7 million to establish about 1000 libraries throughout the country.

• **The Literary Scene**

- American culture began to evolve, and things more established, such as Shakespeare, became “serious” theatre.

- Culture also became somewhat feminized, with men representing the “force principle,” and women the “beauty principle.”

- The city now served as a tool of culture, as well as economics.