Chapter 18
Industry, Immigrants, and Cities,
1870—1900

Chapter Summary

Chapter 18 tells the story of late nineteenth-century northeastern urban and industrial development. Topics covered in this chapter include technological innovations of the times, the rise of the corporative model, the changing nature of work, turn of the century immigration, and urban and social changes of the late nineteenth century.

I. New Industry
   A. Inventing Technology: The Electric Age
   B. The Corporation and Its Impact
   C. The Changing Nature of Work
   D. Child Labor
   E. Working Women
   F. Responses to Poverty and Wealth
   G. Workers Organize

II. New Immigrants
   A. Old-World Backgrounds
   B. The Neighborhood
   C. The Job
   D. Nativism
   E. Roots of the Great Migration

III. New Cities
    A. Centers and Suburbs
    B. The New Middle Class
    C. A Consumer Society
    D. The Growth of Leisure Activities

IV. Conclusion

Learning Objectives

After a careful examination of Chapter 18, students should be able to do the following:

1. Identify Thomas Edison and describe his contribution to nineteenth-century technology through the development of electrical power.

2. Define the term *corporation* and explain its advantages as a nineteenth-century form of business organization.
3. Explain the impact of corporate mergers on American business and on traditional American values regarding business.

4. Define the terms *vertical integration* and *horizontal integration* and explain the distinction between the two.

5. Describe the changing nature of American labor during the nineteenth century, focusing on skill levels, working conditions, work hours, and family life.

6. Describe the conditions of child labor during the nineteenth century.

7. Describe the unique problems faced by women in the workplace during the late nineteenth century. Explain why women's work remained segregated from men's work until well into the twentieth century.

8. Define the term *settlement house* and describe Jane Addams's Hull House as an example of the interest in urban reform at the turn of the century.

9. Define the terms *The Gospel of Wealth* and *Social Darwinism* and explain how these political ideologies served to discourage efforts to alleviate urban poverty.

10. Describe the Great Uprising and explain how, despite its failure, the strike encouraged labor organization during the late nineteenth century.

11. Identify the Knights of Labor, the American Federation of Labor, and the Industrial Workers of the World as three major national labor unions that emerged in the United States during the late nineteenth century. Compare and contrast these unions in terms of policy, membership, and levels of success.

12. Describe the events surrounding the Homestead strike and the Pullman strike. Explain how these events reflect the challenges faced by labor unions at the turn of the century.

13. Discuss the reasons why socialism had a limited appeal for American workers at the turn of the century.

14. Describe the economic, religious, political, and technological factors that contributed to European migration at the turn of the century. Describe the factors that contributed to Asian migration to the United States at the turn of the century.

15. Describe the general characteristics of immigrant neighborhoods in the United States at the turn of the century.

16. Describe the unique characteristics of nativism as it evolved into the late nineteenth century. Explain how it differed from nativism during the early nineteenth century.

17. List examples of efforts to restrict and limit foreign immigration to America during the late nineteenth century.

18. Describe the living and working conditions of urban African Americans at the turn of the century.
19. Explain the distinctions between downtown centers and residential suburbs at the turn of the century. Comment on the social, class, racial, and ethnic divisions reflected in these distinctions.

20. Describe the consumer-oriented lifestyle of the new urban middle class.

21. Distinguish between the leisure activities associated with the wealthy, middle, and working classes of the late nineteenth century.

Topics for Classroom Lecture

1. Discuss the development of early American labor organization. Compare and contrast the Knights of Labor and the American Federation of Labor as two efforts to nationally organize labor during the late nineteenth century. The major distinction between the two organizations is that one failed and one succeeded. Outline the reasons for this by examining the membership, policy, agenda, and recruitment practices of each organization. What do the failure and success of these two unions say about nineteenth-century skilled and unskilled labor? Describe to students the tremendous challenges faced by any organization trying to unionize the large unskilled labor force of the nineteenth century.

2. Look at middle-class residences from the eighteenth century through the twentieth century and demonstrate to students how the architectural styles of the residences reflect the evolution of American middle-class values and priorities. How does the eighteenth-century farmhouse differ from the nineteenth-century Victorian suburban dwelling? How do these differences reflect the American movement from an agrarian to an industrial society and from a rural to an urban society? How do the differences reflect technological innovations and an improvement in the standard of living? Do the differences reflect changes in middle-class family life and the level of importance attached to family life? How does the nineteenth-century Victorian dwelling differ from the 1960s ranch house? What room tends to become the center or core of the 1960s home? Why? Again, look at how the differences in these two houses reflect economic and technological as well as social and psychological distinctions between nineteenth-century and twentieth-century middle-class suburban life.

Topics for Class Discussion and Essays

1. Have students discuss the impact of late nineteenth-century business consolidation on traditional American values regarding work and the economy. Consider the following issues for discussion:
   a. Ask students to define capitalism as an eighteenth-century economic philosophy emphasizing free enterprise, competition, individualism, and laissez-faire.
   b. Ask students to consider how late nineteenth century entrepreneurship signaled the ultimate realization of these characteristics of capitalism. Then, have them consider how late nineteenth-century entrepreneurship undermined the promise of capitalism. In other words, did the success of men like Carnegie and Rockefeller demonstrate the power of free enterprise, individualism, and competition as the means to attain success? Or, did their success ultimately destroy the promise of free enterprise, competition, and individualism for others?
   c. Would Americans have to forfeit part of capitalism in order to save it? Of free enterprise, competition, individualism, and laissez-faire, which of these tenets of capitalism would prove to be most important to Americans? Which one would be sacrificed by Americans in the belief that it would preserve the other three?
2. Have students discuss the impact of urban poverty on nineteenth-century American social philosophy. Why has urban poverty been such a difficult issue for Americans to address?
   a. Have students recall the Protestant work ethic as one of the earliest and yet one of the most lasting American philosophies regarding work, wealth, and social status. How did the new urban industrial society challenge this seventeenth-century philosophy that emphasized individual responsibility for wealth and that created a strong connection among work, wealth, and salvation (morality)? Did nineteenth-century urban middle-class Americans see in their urban industrial society examples of people who worked hard but reaped little reward, either financially or morally? How would that impact the strength of the Protestant work ethic as a social and moral philosophy?
   b. How did the Gospel of Wealth and Social Darwinism address urban poverty? Do these social philosophies borrow anything from the Protestant work ethic? In what sense are they distinctive from the Protestant work ethic?
   c. Have students consider the debate regarding individual responsibility for wealth or poverty versus social responsibility for wealth or poverty. Have Americans resolved this issue yet? Invite students to comment on their opinions regarding the propriety or impropriety and the success or failure of modern-day entitlement, welfare, and social reform programs.

Topics for Class Projects and Term Papers

1. Research the impact of immigration on American public education. Identify the challenges that faced the public school system at the end of the nineteenth century. How did native-born Americans expect public education to support the assimilation of the immigrant population into American society?

2. Research the early corporate cases that were decided by the Supreme Court. How did these cases reflect American concerns about the future of capitalism? How did corporations defend themselves against these fears?

3. Choose one of the ethnic and/or racial groups identified with nineteenth-century urban migration and explore the role of family in that culture.

4. Examine the Supreme Court case Muller v. Oregon. What questions did this case raise concerning women and the workplace? Was the decision a victory or a defeat for women?

5. United States immigration at the turn of the twenty-first century is being compared in many ways to immigration at the turn of the twentieth century. Ask students how the two demographic trends are similar. How are they different? Have students examine the number of immigrants who have entered the United States in the past 25 years or so. From where have many of these immigrants come? How has the United States addressed the economic, social, ethnic, racial, and political challenges that have accompanied present-day immigration?

Resources for Lectures and Research Projects


**Audio-Visual Resources**

*Destination America*, Discovery Channel, 30 minutes.
This program examines the history of American sentiment regarding immigration and asks whether Americans have historically regarded it as a right or a privilege.

*Ellis Island*, A&E Video, 150 minutes.
This video is a four-part chronicle of the gateway for immigration at the turn of the century, drawing heavily from interviews from the Ellis Island Oral History Project.

*Empires of Industry: The Story of Oil*, The History Channel, 50 minutes.
This video explores the history of the oil industry in America from its origins in the nineteenth century.

This video is a biography of Andrew Carnegie narrated by David Ogden Stiers.

*The Rockefellers: Biography*, A&E Video, 50 minutes.
This video examines the lives of the nineteenth-century oil barons.