

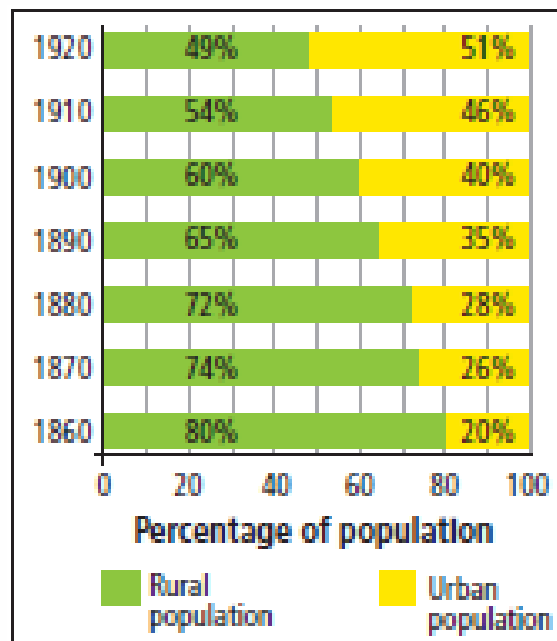


What challenges did city dwellers face, and how did they meet them?

City dwellers faced the **noise**, **dirt**, and **crime** of the cities, the hardships of **factory work**, and the overcrowded, dangerous conditions of **tenements**.

Governments and city **planners** tried to alleviate dangerous conditions and **make cities better, safer places to live**.

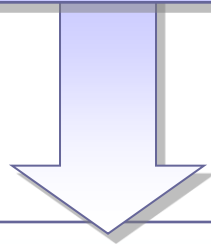
Rural and Urban Population



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau



In 1860, most Americans lived in rural areas, with only 16 percent living in towns or cities with a population of at least 8,000.



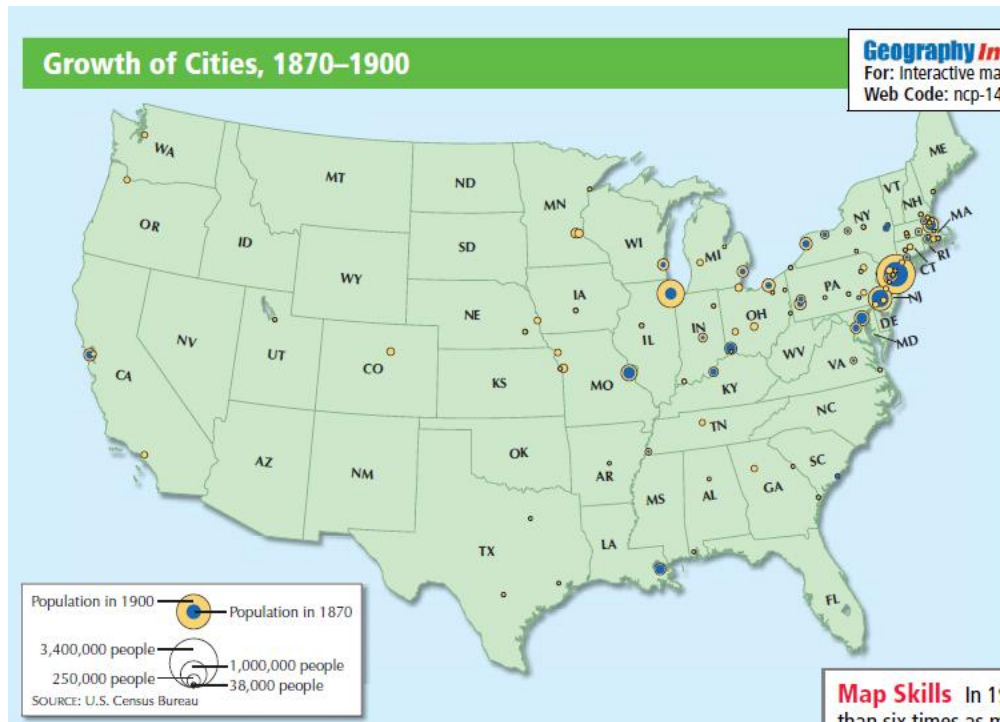
By 1900, 32 percent – or **15 million Americans** – lived in cities with populations of more than 50,000.



This period was the beginning of an **upsurge in American urbanization** that brought changes to the country.



America's major cities were manufacturing and transportation centers connected by railway lines.



The cities were clustered in the **Northeast**, on the **Pacific Coast**, and along the waterways of the **Midwest**.

Life was hard in the cities, but most people preferred them to the country.



- Workers' children could attend city schools.
- Churches, theaters, social clubs, and museums offered companionship and entertainment.
- Most city workers were able to enjoy a higher standard of living, and some moved into the growing middle class.

Many **rural-to-urban migrants** moved to cities in the **1890s**.

Immigrants, Farmers, and Migrants from the Rural West	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They were attracted by land and economic opportunities.• It was hard for farmers to work on rigid schedules in crowded factories, but factories paid wages in cash.
African Americans	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The majority of African Americans stayed in southern cities.• But African American migrants to northern and western cities paved the way for a much larger migration after World War I.



As cities swelled in size, American innovators developed new technologies to improve living conditions.

Technology	Description
skyscrapers	They were steel-frame buildings 10 stories or taller , built because there was no room left on the ground to expand.
safety elevators	Invented by Elisha Otis , they made taller buildings practical.
central heating systems	Made to carry heat to all parts of a building.



Mass transit reshaped the nation's cities.



- In 1888, Richmond, Virginia started using streetcars powered by overhead electric cables.
- Within a decade, every major city followed.
- Electric streetcars were quieter, cleaner, and more efficient than coal-driven commuter trains or horse-drawn trolleys.





Traffic congestion often kept streetcars from running on schedule.

In 1897, Boston solved this problem by building the nation's first subway system, and New York City followed suit in 1904.

Mass transit made it possible for middle- and upper-class people to move to the suburbs.

As cities grew, planners began to use zoning to designate certain parts of the city for certain functions.

Cities set aside space for heavy industry, financial institutions, homes, and public spaces such as libraries and government buildings.

But parks were also important in cities, and **Frederick Law Olmsted** designed many well-known ones, such as New York City's Central Park.





Many neighborhoods became overcrowded.

Some poor workers lived in **tenements**, which usually were unhealthy and dangerous because they had few windows and little sanitation.

At this time, cities had filthy, unpaved streets and sanitation problems, conditions perfect for breeding epidemics.



- To solve these problems, governments and city planners tried to regulate housing, sanitation, sewers, and public health.
- They began to take water from clean reservoirs and to use water filtration systems.



Cities responded to the threats of fire and crime with professional **fire fighting teams**, uniformed **city police forces**, and new **electric streetlights**.

However, the police were unable to overcome the challenge of conflicts between different racial groups, classes, and neighborhoods.



Urban Problems

Problem	→	Solution
Crowding	→	Skyscrapers, city planning, parks
Poor housing	→	Building codes
Danger	→	Streetlights and police forces
Potential for fire	→	Electric lights and fire departments
Poor sanitation	→	Public-health departments

