

STATION 2- CITY LIFE

- 1. The group leader will read the introduction on the inside cover of this folder, “The population shifts to cities” out loud to the group.**
- 2. Each group member will look at the images of what life was like living in the cities.**
- 3. As a whole group, discuss the major problems of city life and living in tenements.**
- 4. Recorder will copy down a list of all the poor conditions and problems the group observes. (Note: Your list must include AT LEAST 16 problems

(this should NOT be in complete sentences.)**
- 5. Once your list is completed, add it to your Group Folder.**

The Population Shifts to Cities

Immigration increased into the United States because immigrants were pulled by the promise of work in industry. Leaving home required great courage. The voyage (trip) across the Atlantic or Pacific Ocean was often difficult and miserable. For most **European** immigrants, the trip ended in New York City at **Ellis Island**, where they would be greeted by the Statue of Liberty. For immigrants traveling from **Asia**, they landed on **Angel Island** at San Francisco Bay in California.

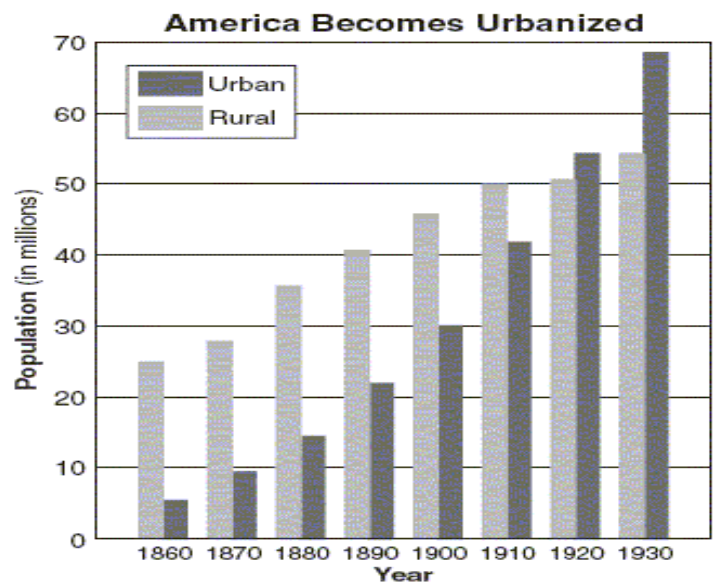
In both locations, immigrants would be forced to have a dreaded medical exam. If they failed because they were sick, they were sent back home. Only lucky immigrants were greeted by welcoming family members. Others stepped into a terrifying land whose language and customs they did not know. Often, these immigrants would settle in cities and neighborhoods where others spoke their same language. For example, Little Italy in NYC was made up of mostly Italian immigrants.

City populations began to increase as immigrants moved in and found jobs. However, not just immigrants began moving into the cities. Other families who had lived in rural (farm-like) towns began moving to find better paying jobs. During the Industrial Revolution, the population shifted from rural areas (farm-like) to urban areas (cities).

Business and industries were also drawn to cities because they offered good transportation and many workers. Increasing numbers of factory jobs became available in cities, followed by more workers to fill those jobs. The growth of cities that resulted from these changes is called urbanization.

American cities such as New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Chicago attracted immigrants with the promise of jobs. The growing population of the cities led to overcrowding and disease. Soon, political organizations and reformers were working to improve poor living conditions.

This graph shows that between 1860 and 1930, the rural population decreases while the urban population is increasing.



Source: U. S. Census (adapted)



The concentration (amount) of people in cities increased the danger for disaster because people and buildings were packed closely together.

Poverty and disease also threatened lives. Many people lived in tenements, which were run-down and overcrowded apartment houses. Old buildings, landlord neglect, poor design, and little government control led to dangerous conditions in many tenements.

Poor garbage pick-up also caused problems. Residents sometimes dumped their smelly garbage into the narrow spaces between buildings. A neighborhood with such overcrowded, dangerous housing was called a slum.



What life was like in a rundown city tenement in New York City



If you were a poor city resident in the late 19th century, you may have lived in an old-law tenement home.

These were dumbbell-shaped buildings with four apartments to each floor, three rooms in each, one after the other.

As you can see here, your home was probably dark, damp, and stuffy.

That's because before 1901, tenements were only required to have one window per apartment, or a tiny air shaft for ventilation [air flow

The kitchen may have looked like this.



It had a bathtub and stove in the same room.

A spigot (faucet) for water may have been in the hall or in the neighborhood's street. The water could be heated on the stove for bathing, but it was often unsafe for drinking.

Sewage flowed in open gutters and threatened to spread disease among those living nearby.



As for toilet facilities, they were communal (shared with everyone else). There were two common options for a "bathroom."

Sometimes a bucket was placed at the end of the hallway hidden by a curtain or on the top floor of the building.

Sometimes an outhouse (like a port-a-potty), which is shown here, would be available between tenements or on the building's roof.

When they were full, the buckets had to be removed and dumped by hand



Tenement life improved somewhat after 1901, when new-law tenements were required by the city: These were required to have bathrooms and running water in each apartment, and a window in every room. A major improvement, but not for the thousands of people still stuck in hot, stinky, firetrap, old-law units.

Group Number: _____

Examine the images of tenements and slums very closely. Read the descriptions of all of the images. List as many problems as you can after observing the pictures (You must write at LEAST 16):