

# URBANIZATION

## Growth of American Cities: Pages 117-121

**Introduction** – *Fill in the blanks to complete the sentences.*

The word **rural** refers to the \_\_\_\_\_ or a \_\_\_\_\_ area. **Urban** refers to \_\_\_\_\_ areas. **Suburban** refers to the \_\_\_\_\_ around a city called **suburbs**.

### **To the Cities** (118)

Where were most Americans living by 1920?

Why were people coming to the cities in general?

Why do you think so many farmers were forced to sell their farms and move to the cities? (THINK)

Why were many young people coming to the cities?

### **African Americans and The Great Migration**

Why did many African Americans move to the cities? (118)

What were the “push” factors that made them want to leave the south? (120)

What were the “pull” factors that made them want to move to the cities up north? (120)

### **Neighborhoods** (118)

What happened to areas that became crowded after wealthier people moved out?

Who often moved in after they left?

What kinds of neighborhoods were formed? Describe at least three:

# URBANIZATION

## Rapid Growing Pains – Pages 119-120

### Urbanization Problems

#### ***Housing:***

American cities grew very fast and no one had \_\_\_\_\_ for their growth. There was no way to create good \_\_\_\_\_ for all the people who crowded into the cities. **Slums** developed.

Slums are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ parts of a city.

#### ***Water and Sanitation:***

Why were so many people in cities getting sick?

What did many cities do to help fix this problem?

What didn't this stop all the disease – especially in the slums?

***Crime and Fire*** were two other major problems that rapidly growing cities had to deal with.

Why crime?

Why fire?

**Jacob Riis** – Reflect on your tour of the “Jacob Riis Gallery” during class. What were your thoughts and feelings as you viewed his photographs?

# Jacob Riis



Jacob Riis, c. 1912

**J**acob Riis, a police reporter whose work appeared in several New York newspapers, documented the living and working conditions of the poor. Through articles, books, photography, and lantern-slide lectures, Riis served as a mediator between working-class, middle-class, and upper-class citizens.

## **Improving City Conditions**

Riis argued for better housing, adequate lighting and sanitation, and the construction of city parks and playgrounds. He portrayed middle-class and upper-class citizens as benefactors and encouraged them to take an active role in defining and shaping their communities. Riis believed that charitable citizens would help the poor when they saw for themselves how "the other half" lived.

According to historian Robert Bremner:

"The reformers' problem was to rouse the public from its lethargy, make consciences uneasy, and stir genial good will into enthusiasm for social betterment. Their first step was to lay bare the responsibility of the community for needless suffering."

## **Nurture, Not Nature**

Critics of charities argued that poverty was the result of individual or moral weakness; therefore, the poor could not be helped through charitable donations. Gilded Age reformers like Riis believed that poverty was the result of environmental conditions; thus, reform efforts could help the poor.

Speaking at an 1895 lecture at the Labors of the Tenement House Chapter of the King's Daughters, Riis stated:

"The reason charity has been discredited is because it has worked with the broken fragments, the drunken and the shiftless, helping as it could, mourning that such things must be, but never asking the reason why or knowing anything of the honest, thrifty poor who live lives of heroism such as we cannot live."

Riis believed that moral citizens, regardless of their economic status, should be given a chance to improve their lives. Like Riis himself, given that chance, many could rise out of poverty and into the ranks of the middle class.

Riis chose to work with middle-class and upper-class philanthropists to bring about reform. He believed that private wealth could help transform the slums into better places to live. "I am a believer in organized, systematic charity upon the evidence of my senses," Riis wrote in his autobiography.

## **Questions**

1. What was Jacob Riis's actual job?
2. Why did Riis go out and photograph "the other half"? What did he hope would happen?
3. Why did critics of charities argue that they were wasting their time? What was this idea called? (Hint: we talked about it before, as one way to explain why some people became so wealthy.)