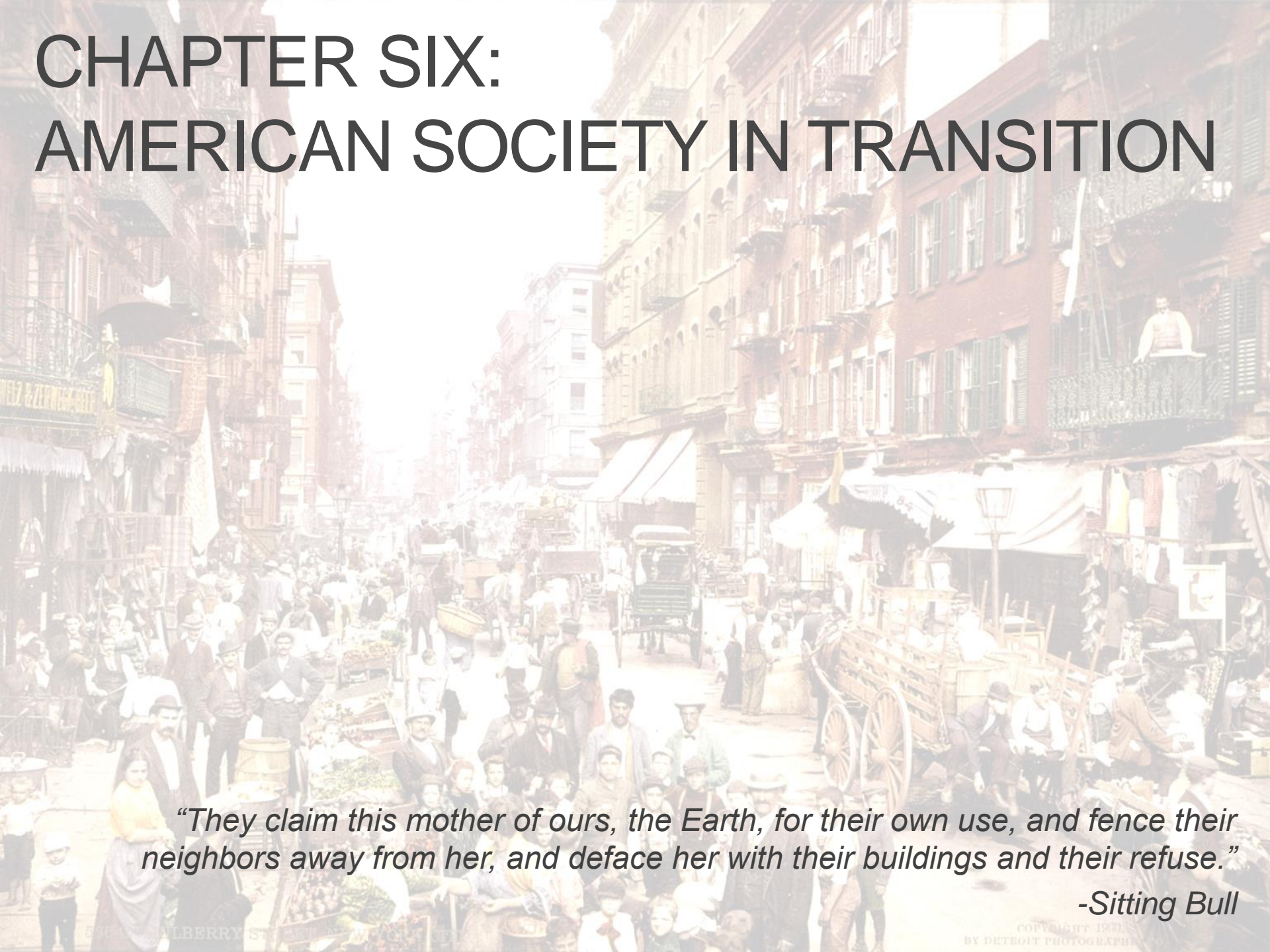


# CHAPTER SIX: AMERICAN SOCIETY IN TRANSITION



*"They claim this mother of ours, the Earth, for their own use, and fence their neighbors away from her, and deface her with their buildings and their refuse."*

*-Sitting Bull*

# Chapter Objective, Essential Questions, & TEKS

- Objective:
  - Identify the major characteristics of American urbanization and westward expansion during the late 1800s. Analyze the causes and effects of changing demographic patterns and examine the emergence of the nativist and assimilation movements.
- Essential Questions:
  - What economic, social, and political changes did urbanization bring to American cities?
  - What were the experiences of immigrants in the late nineteenth century?
  - What factors contributed to the settlement of the Great Plains and Far West?
- TEKS:
  - History: 2 (A), 2 (B), 2 (C), 3 (A), 3 (B), 3 (C), 3 (D)
  - Geography: 12 (A), 13 (A), 13 (B), 14 (A)
  - Economics: 15 (A), 15 (C)
  - Citizenship: 23 (B)
  - Culture: 26 (B)

# Chapter Vocabulary

- Urbanization
- Demography
- Tenement
- Political Machine
- Political Bosses
- Immigration
- Push & Pull Factors
- New Immigrants
- Ethnic Ghettos
- Nativists
- Americanization
- Chinese Exclusion Act
- Frontier
- Great Plains
- Klondike Gold Rush
- Homestead Act
- Indian Wars
- Reservations
- Dawes Act
- American Indian Citizenship Act

# Important Ideas

- In the 19th century, Americans moved from the countryside to cities as the nation became more urbanized. The use of farm machinery meant fewer workers were needed on farms, while demand for labor in factories and cities expanded.
- Urbanization brought many problems. Cities often lacked adequate public services for their growing populations. Streets were noisy, dirty, and congested. Many newcomers lived in crowded tenement housing.
- Political "bosses" ran "political machines." They provided basic services for immigrants and the poor, in exchange for their votes; they used their control of city government to make personal fortunes on overpriced city contracts.
- Immigration escalated in the late nineteenth century. A variety of "push" and "pull" factors brought more immigrants to the United States seeking a better life.
- The "New Immigrants" came from Southern and Eastern Europe - Russia, Italy, Poland, and Greece. Most were Catholic or Jewish, spoke no English and were often poor. They tended to settle in large Eastern cities. They lived in ethnic communities in ghettos, where they could speak their native language.
- The children of the immigrants were often "Americanized" in the public schools.

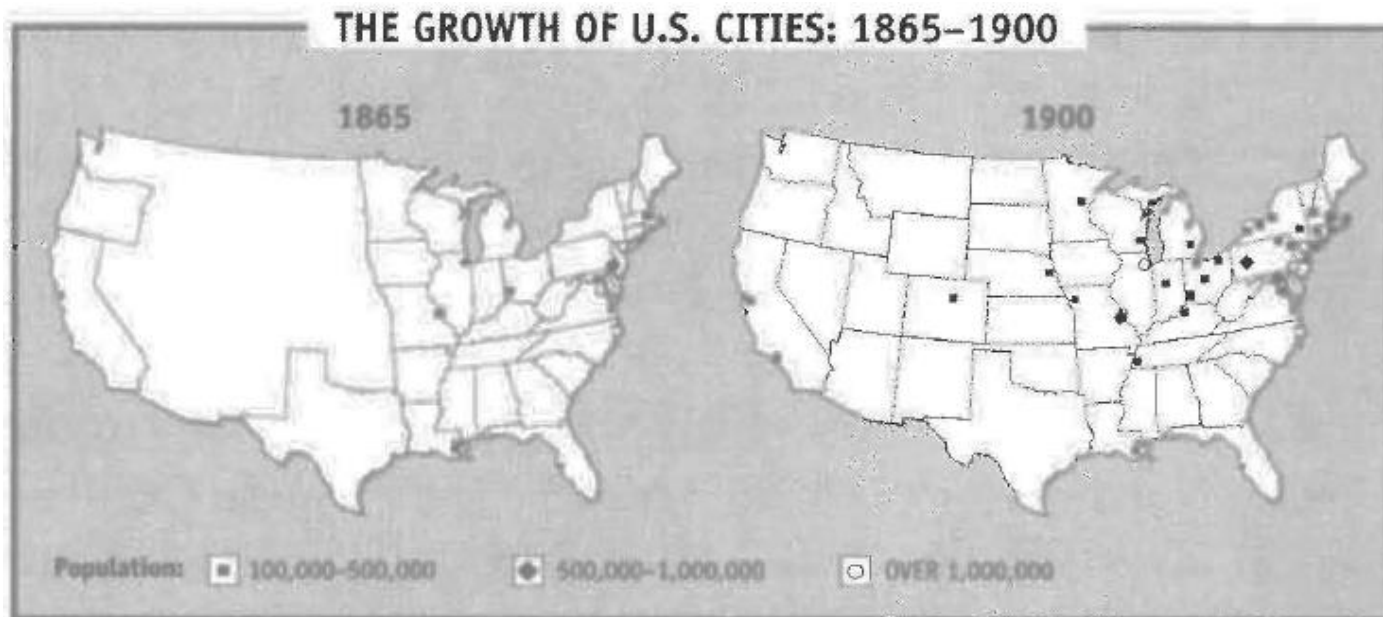
# Important Ideas

- Nativists opposed immigration. The Chinese Exclusion Act was the first federal law restricting immigration. It prohibited Chinese immigration for 10 years.
- The frontier was the line between areas of settlement and those areas dominated by nature and Native American Indians. The last frontier consisted of the Great Plains and mountains, deserts, and basins of the Far West. The completion of the Transcontinental Railroad and the defeat of the Indians during the Indian Wars closed the final frontier and opened the region to settlement.
- Miners were attracted to the Far West by discoveries of precious metals such as during the California Gold Rush of 1849 and the Klondike Gold Rush of 1896.
- Ranchers came to drive their cattle herds across the open range to rail lines. Farmers occupied land under the Homestead Act and built homes and farms. To overcome the lack of rain and trees, they built homes of sod, dug water wells, and used steel plows and barbed wire.
- Government policy drove the Indians onto government reservations in the West.
- The Dawes Act, although intended to help Indians, had the opposite effect. It gave tribal lands to individual Indians, who often sold them. The American Indian Citizenship Act (1924) made all Indians into U.S. citizens.



# Urbanization: The Growth of Cities

- In the last chapter, you learned how American industrialization increased its pace in the decades following the Civil War. Accelerating industrialization contributed to the process of urbanization -- the movement of people from the countryside to towns and cities.
- Demography is the study of population. One of the topics that demographers study is where people live. An important result of industrialization was the rapid expansion of American cities. In 1865, only two U.S. cities actually had populations of more than 500,000-New York and Philadelphia. By 1900, that number had risen to six. Three of them- New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia -- reached populations of more than one million inhabitants. By this time, 40 percent of Americans lived in cities, and the proportion was growing.



# Urbanization: The Growth of Cities

- Several factors contributed to the rapid urban growth. The introduction of new farm machinery, such as Cyrus McCormick's reaper, which cut and bundled grain, greatly reduced the number of farm jobs. Farmers and rural laborers sought work in towns and cities. At the same time, the rise of industry had created many new job opportunities. Workers were needed in factories, mines and workshops, and for services like transport. Americans were also attracted to cities by their cultural opportunities, popular entertainments, and rich variety. Finally, the explosion in urban growth was further fueled by unprecedented levels of immigration.



# Overcrowding & Congestion

- Urbanization led to physical changes in the landscape. Trees and fields were replaced by wood and brick buildings and by paved roads. American cities mushroomed so quickly that municipal (*city*) authorities were often unable to deal adequately with all of their problems.
- Cities grew haphazardly. Streets were often not wide enough to bear the increased traffic. Horse-drawn cars crowded the streets, making movement almost impossible. Factories and trains polluted the air, while sewage sometimes contaminated drinking water and spread disease. Cities lacked the ability to deliver essential services - like clean water, garbage collection, and public schools - to so many residents. As cities grew, whole families crowded into tenements - single-room apartments often without heat or lighting. Frequently many families shared a single toilet.

**Inadequate Public Services.** Cities lacked the ability to deliver increased public services — hospitals, police forces, schools, fire departments, street cleaning, and garbage collection.

**Transportation.** Horse-drawn coaches and later electric trolleys were needed to transport workers to their jobs. To eliminate the pollution created by coaches and trolleys, New York City built a subway in 1900. By 1930, New York City had the world's largest subway system.

## THE PROBLEMS CREATED BY GROWING CITIES

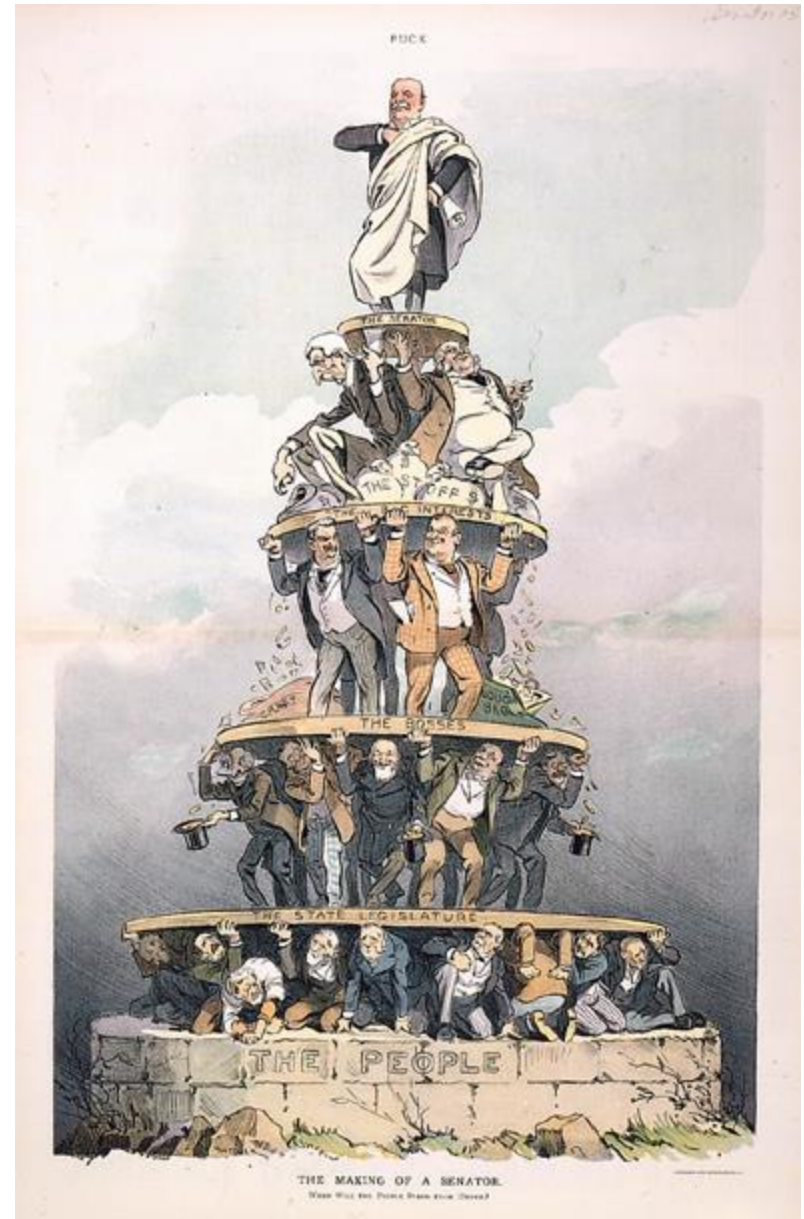
**Overcrowding.** Families were crowded into tenements (*small apartment buildings*). These tenements often lacked daylight, heat, fresh air, and adequate plumbing.

**Social Tensions.** In cities, rich people lived next door to the poor. Seeing the luxuries of the wealthy distressed poor people and increased social tensions and crimes.



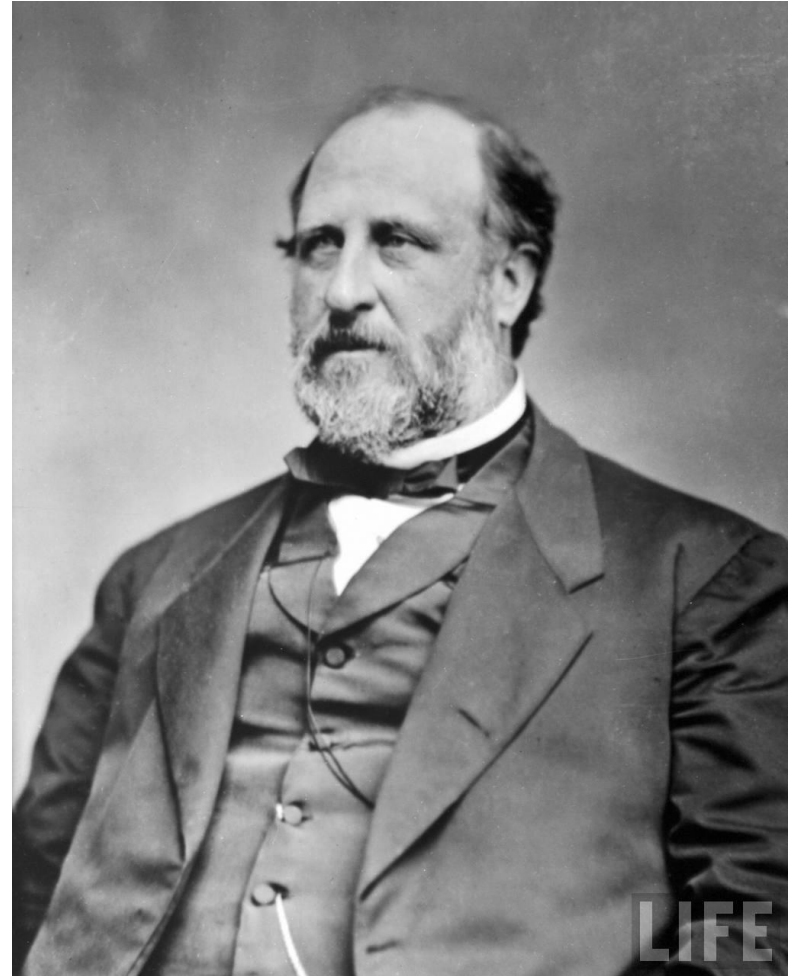
# Political Machines

- City governments were often run by corrupt "political machines." The leaders of these machines were known as political "bosses." Either the boss or a small group told the workers and supporters of the machine what to do. The machines often provided jobs and other services to immigrants and the poor in exchange for their votes. The power of the political boss depended upon his ability to dominate voting and to control the agencies of municipal government. The machines also often had the support of other local business leaders.
- By controlling elected officials in local government, political bosses were able to hand out government "patronage" jobs to reward loyal workers. The bosses then used their control of "city hall" to make illegal profits on city contracts or by collecting bribes.



# Political Machines

- For example, Boss Tweed of Tammany Hall in New York City controlled thousands of city workers and influenced the operation of schools, hospitals, and other city-run services. Tweed benefited from the support of Irish immigrants. He controlled or bribed lawmakers to pass laws favorable to his interests. Tweed often overpaid himself on construction projects and land sales, stealing millions from the city.
- While the political machines were corrupt, they did play a useful role. They helped immigrants settle into their new homeland, find housing, and obtain jobs. They also helped immigrants become naturalized citizens and even provided money to help them through hard times. The political machines were often the ones to get a street paved, extend a water pipe, or approve construction. But these services came at a very high price.



# Immigration

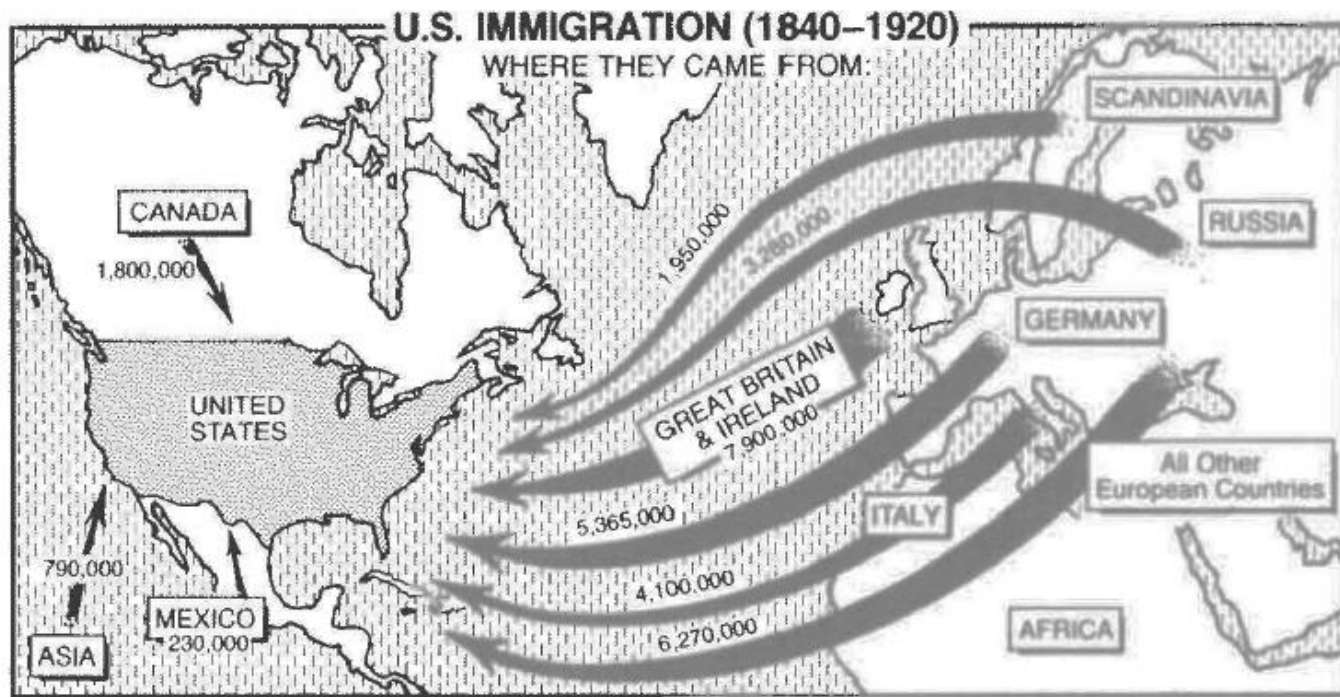
- In the late nineteenth century, European immigrants flooded American cities in search of work and places to live. In many of the largest American cities, European immigrants even came to outnumber native-born Americans.
- Immigrants have always come to the United States for a variety of reasons. Historians often divide these into "**push**" and "**pull**" factors. A desire to escape oppression, poverty, religious discrimination or ethnic persecution "pushed" immigrants out of their homelands. A belief that America offered freedom and economic opportunity as well as ties to relatives already living here generally "pulled" immigrants to these shores. They saw the United States as a land of unbounded opportunities. Immigrants who fled oppressive regimes in Europe yearned to live in a democratic society like the United States.





# The “New Immigrants” 1880 - 1920

- Before 1880, most immigrants to America came from parts of Northern Europe, especially Great Britain, Ireland, and Germany. In general, these immigrants were Protestants, except for large numbers of Irish Catholics. Most of these early immigrants spoke English.
- Patterns of immigration changed in the 1880s. The construction of railroads across Europe and the appearance of large ocean-going steamships made the voyage to America more accessible to many Europeans. Most of these **“New Immigrants”** came from Southern and Eastern Europe, especially Poland, Italy, Austria-Hungary, Greece, and Russia. They were often Catholic, Jewish, or Orthodox Christian rather than Protestant, and spoke no English.



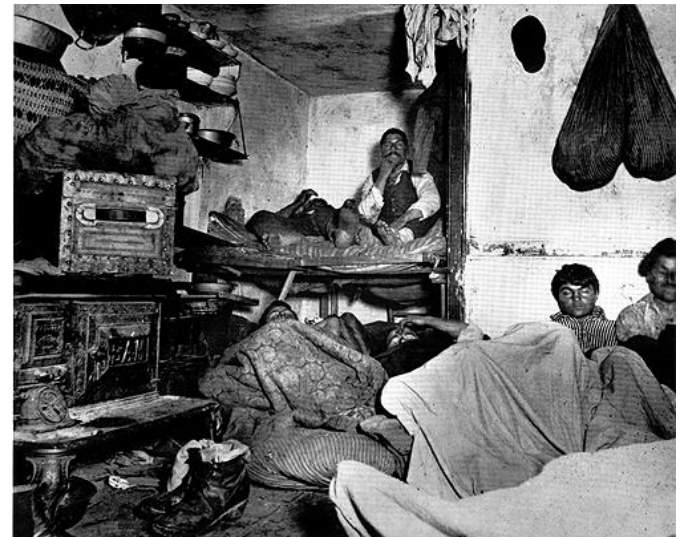


# The Immigrant Experience

- Immigrants in the late nineteenth century usually faced great hardships, beginning with their passage to America. They traveled in **steerage**, in an open room below the water line, often with their life's belongings in a single bag. On a clear day, they assembled on the ship's deck for sunshine and fresh air. Most first arrived in New York City, where they were processed at the vast government center on **Ellis Island** in New York Harbor. Those with tuberculosis or other diseases were sent back.
- The "New Immigrants" either stayed in New York City or took trains to join their relatives in other parts of the country. Most settled in cities. They were usually poor, dressed differently from other Americans and were unfamiliar with American customs. They moved into crowded, tenement buildings and worked at unskilled jobs for long hours at low pay. They often faced hostility and discrimination from native-born Americans and even from other, different immigrant groups. Despite these hardships, there was often a strong spirit of optimism among many immigrants. Many had already survived far worse conditions in the countries where they came from. If America was not everything they had hoped for, they appreciated that there were new opportunities for both themselves and their children.

# The Immigrant Experience

- To cope with their problems, immigrants usually settled with relatives and others of the same nationality in ethnic neighborhoods known as **ghettos**. The immigrants felt more comfortable around those who spoke the same language and who followed the same customs as themselves.
- In their own communities, immigrants could speak their native language, attend their own churches and synagogues, and be among relatives and friends from the "Old Country." Some of these communities even published newspapers in their own native language. However, living in these ethnic ghettos also isolated immigrants from mainstream American life, making it harder for them to adopt new customs.



# The Process of Americanization

- While some adult immigrants attended night school to learn English, most were too busy working and caring for their families to spend time learning a new language or culture. It was left to their children to learn English and become "**Americanized**"-- learning to dress, speak, and act like other Americans.
- These immigrant children eventually became "**assimilated**" -- similar to other Americans. America was seen as a "**melting pot**" in which immigrants were "melted" down and reshaped. America's public schools greatly assisted in this process. Often Americanization was accompanied by conflict. For example, immigrant parents might desire an arranged marriage for their children, while their children insisted on finding their own marriage partners according to the American custom.





# The Rise of Nativism

- As the flood of immigrants grew, hostility to immigration also mounted. Nativists, or those "born" or "native" to the United States, wanted to restrict immigration. Nativists believed that people of other races, religions, and nationalities were inferior and that the "New Immigrants" were especially inferior to white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant Americans. Nativists feared the "New Immigrants" could never be fully absorbed into American society since they lived in ghettos and spoke their own languages. Finally, Nativists argued that immigrants working for low wages would take away jobs from other Americans.



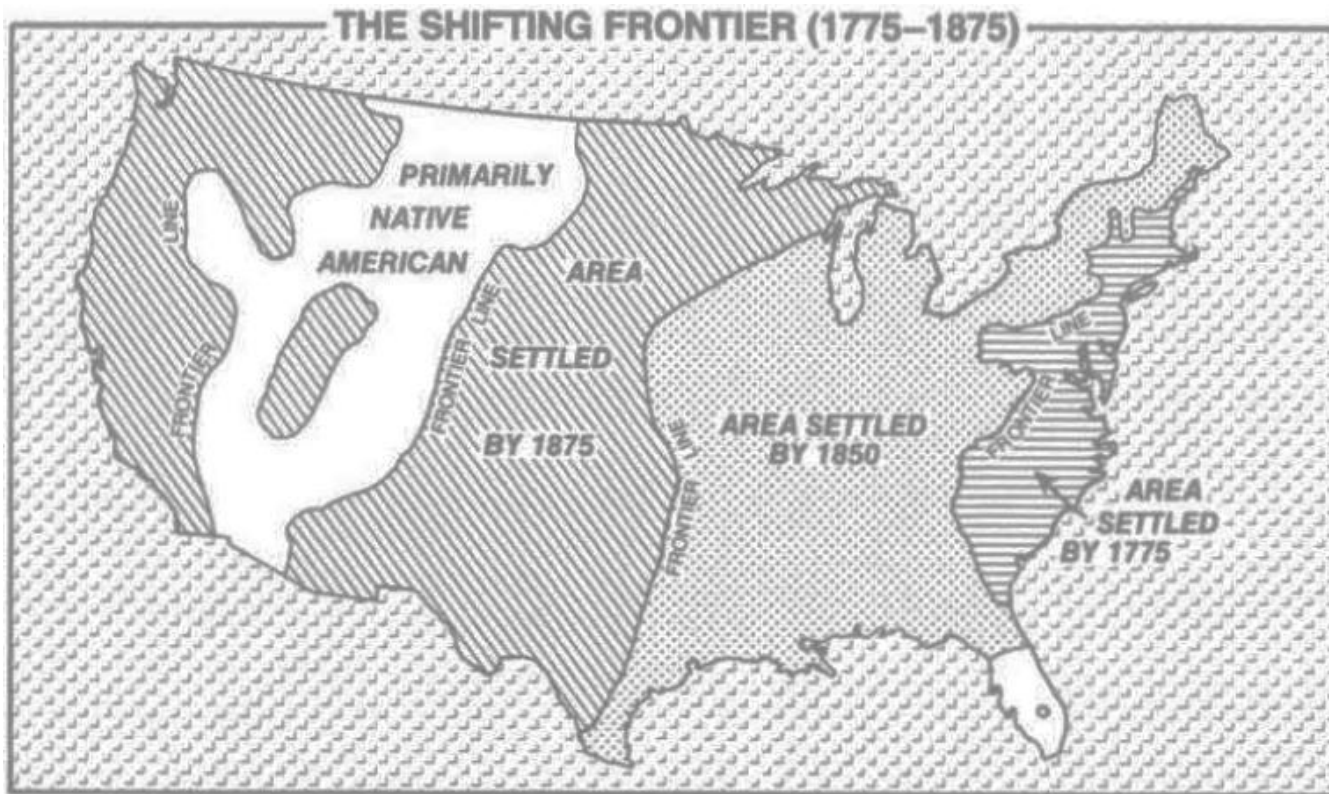


# Early Restrictions on Immigration

- For most of the nineteenth century, there were no limits at all on immigration to the United States. Anyone who was healthy and could afford to come here was permitted to immigrate.
- The Chinese Exclusion Act ( 1882) was the first federal law to restrict immigration to the United States. It reflected American prejudices at the time against Asians. In California, political leaders blamed unemployment and a general decline in wages on the presence of Chinese workers. The law temporarily banned the immigration of Chinese workers and placed new requirements on Chinese residents already living in the United States. These residents had to obtain a special certificate before leaving the United States if they planned to re-enter. State and federal courts were denied the ability to grant citizenship to Chinese residents. American leaders carefully negotiated with the Chinese government in order to enforce this ban.
- In *U.S. v. Wong Kim Ark* (1898), the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the children of Chinese immigrants born in the United States could not be denied citizenship. This part of the Chinese Exclusion Act, the Court held, violated the 14th Amendment.

# The Last American Frontier

- In the later nineteenth century, the last American frontier was transformed by America's rapid population growth and industrial development. The frontier has generally been defined as the line separating areas of settlement from "unsettled" wilderness territory. From another point of view, the American frontier marked the dividing line between areas where Native Americans lived and areas settled by more technologically advanced peoples.



# The Lure of Precious Metals

- Even before the Civil War, settlers had been drawn to the California "gold rush" of 1848-1849. In 1896, a Californian and two Indian friends found a gold nugget near Canada's Klondike River near Alaska. This set off one of the most turbulent gold rushes in history. Within months, 100,000 gold-seekers set out for the Yukon. The voyage was long, hard. And cold, and only 30,000 completed the trip, with most giving up along the way. Still other discoveries of gold and silver were made in Alaska, the Rocky Mountains and the Black Hills of North Dakota. Thousands of prospectors and adventurers moved to these areas in hopes of striking it rich. Rough-and-ready mining towns sprang up overnight; often they collapsed just as fast when the minerals ran out or larger mining companies took over.



1897. "We have it Rich!" - Washing and panning gold, Rockville, Ore.  
Old timers. Spriggs, Lambard Dillon at work.  
Photo and copyright by Grubb, 1889.



# The Indian Wars

- After the Civil War, Union troops were stationed in forts along the frontier. They defeated several of the tribes on the Great Plains and Southwest during the Indian Wars and moved them onto reservations. Typical was the contest with the Sioux Indians. After the discovery of gold in the Black Hills of Dakota in 1875, the Sioux were asked to move from their sacred grounds. The following year, Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse defeated General George Custer and killed 264 soldiers at Little Big Horn. Within two years, Crazy Horse was captured and killed and most of the Sioux were forced onto reservations. However, unrest among the Sioux in 1890 led to the slaughter of 300 unarmed Sioux men, women and children by machine gun fire at Wounded Knee, South Dakota.





# The Impact of the Railroads

- As you learned in the last chapter, the Transcontinental Railroad, completed in 1869, reduced the journey from New York to San Francisco from six months to just ten days. Rail travel increased dramatically with its completion. Soon the United States led the world, with more railroad track mileage than England and France combined. The railroads attracted an increasing number of settlers to the west. Settlers could now ship their crops by rail to distant Eastern markets.
- Railroad tracks also often ran through Native American territories, leading to new conflicts. From 1870 to 1890, the herds of buffalo on the Great Plains were destroyed by sharpshooters traveling by train. This development affected the ability of the Plains Indians to remain on the Plains.



# The Availability of Cheap Land

- Before the Civil War, the federal government had sold unsettled land from its vast public domain for about \$1.25 an acre. After the Southern states seceded, the remaining states passed several bills that the South had previously blocked. These laws encouraged expansion in the West. President Lincoln signed the **Homestead Act** in 1862. The act stated that any citizen could occupy 160 acres of government land. If the settler "improved" the land by making a home and growing crops, after five years the homesteader would own the property. Many European immigrants were attracted by this offer of free land. Almost 1,400,000 homesteads were eventually granted under the Act.

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View on the Big Blue, between Camden and Crete, representing Valley and Rolling Prairie Land in Nebraska.

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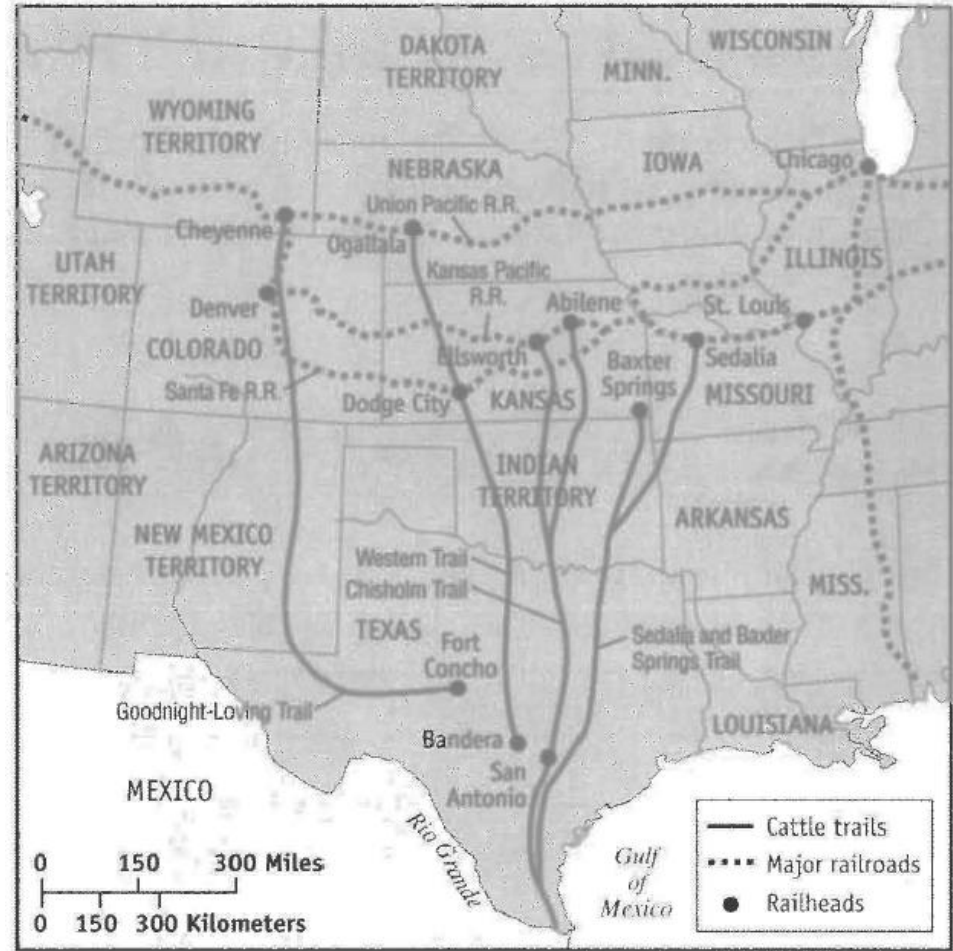
# The Cattle Industry

- At the end of the Civil War, there were several million wild longhorn cattle grazing on the Great Plains in Texas. Some Texans decided to drive these cattle northwards to the railroad lines in Kansas. From Kansas, the cattle were shipped to Chicago to be slaughtered. The beef was then shipped by refrigerated rail cars to cities in the East. It took about three months to drive the herds north from Texas across Indian Territory to Kansas. On this "long drive," the cattle grazed on the grasses of the open range--unfenced lands not belonging to anyone.
- Cowboys, who learned to ride, rope, and brand from Mexican *vaqueros*, kept the herds moving northwards. The romantic image of the cowboy has become a symbol of the individualism of the American spirit. **Western music**, with its roots in British folk ballads, celebrates cowboy life. In actual fact, most cowboys led lonely, isolated lives, dependent on the herd owners for work. As many as one in five cowboys was African-American.



# The Cattle Industry

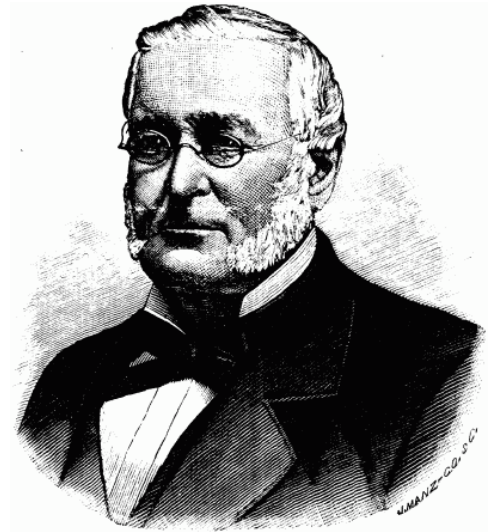
- In the late 1870s and 1880s, the herds were driven farther north a year before they were ready for slaughter. They fattened themselves by grazing on the plains of Montana, Wyoming, and the Dakotas. However, by 1886, overgrazing had destroyed much of the grass. Shepherders and farmers had bought up much of the open range and enclosed it with barbed wire fences. Two severe winters and very hot summers killed millions of cattle in 1886 – 1887, finally ending the long drive. But cattle ranchers remained, breeding cattle on the “closed range,” and sending their cattle eastwards by train each year to be fattened by eastern farmers.





# Farming on the Great Plains

- The railroads also led farmers to occupy the Great Plains. The Homestead Act and the sale of railroad land-grants stimulated the movement of farmers westwards. The railroads made it possible for farmers on the Great Plains to ship their crops to the East. About half of the settlers were immigrants from Europe; the other half were the children of farmers from the East and Midwest.
- At first, these farmers faced the hostility of both Indians and cattlemen. The Indians were defeated by federal troops in the "Indian Wars." The cattlemen formed associations and hired men to commit acts of violence against the early homesteaders. Eventually, the farmers won this conflict because they came in greater numbers and were able to enclose their lands with barbed wire.



# Farming on the Great Plains

- The farmers faced many natural obstacles on the Great Plains. From railroad advertisements, they had expected to find well-watered, wooded lands. Instead, when they arrived, they found little rainfall, few trees, tough soil, extreme temperatures, plagues of grasshoppers, and personal isolation. Some starved or returned to the East. Families that stayed were forced to do endless hours of heavy work. During the winter months, families might be snowed in for months on end. With technological ingenuity, they were able to overcome many obstacles. To make up for the lack of trees, they built sod-houses from clumps of grass and soil; they used barbed wire to keep cattle and other animals off their farms. They used steel plows to turn the soil, drilling equipment to dig deep water wells and windmills to haul water. They used harvesters and threshers to farm more acres with fewer workers.



# Fate of the Native Americans: Government Policy

- Native American Indians once occupied all of the present United States. They were composed of many different groups, speaking hundreds of different languages. The advancing line of settlement and diseases from Eurasia like smallpox severely reduced Native American populations and pushed them westwards.
- From 1830 to 1890, the U.S. government systematically followed a policy of pushing Native Americans from their traditional lands onto government reservations in the West.

**Forced Removal.** In 1830, Congress ordered the removal of all Native American Indians to west of the Mississippi. Nearly one-quarter of the Cherokees perished on the journey westward, known as the **Trail of Tears**.

**Flood of Settlers.** Large numbers of settlers overwhelmed the Native Americans. In 1869, the Transcontinental Railroad was completed. Along with the Homestead Act, the continuation of railroad lines made Native American lands even more desirable.

## FACTORS ERODING NATIVE AMERICAN CONTROL OF THE WEST

**Warfare.** The technological superiority of the U.S. government made resistance futile. The **Indian Wars**, which pitted settlers and federal troops against Native American Indians, lasted from 1860 to 1890.

**Destruction of Natural Environment.** Competition between settlers, miners, and farmers for the land led to the destruction of the natural environment on which Native Americans depended for their livelihood.



# Fate of the Native Americans: The Reservation

- Once a particular Native American tribe submitted to federal authority, its members were settled on a reservation. Reservation lands were usually smaller than the lands from which the tribe was removed and often consisted of undesirable land. The federal government promised food, blankets, and seed but this policy clashed with tribal customs, since Native Americans were traditionally hunters, not farmers.





# Fate of the Native Americans: The Dawes Act, 1887

- Many reformers urged that Native Americans undergo Americanization – adopting the culture of other "mainstream" Americans. The Dawes Act sought to hasten their Americanization. The act officially abolished Native American tribes. Each family was given 160 acres of reservation land as its own private property. Private property was expected to replace tribal land ownership, and each Native American would become a farmer. Those who adopted this way of life were promised U.S. citizenship and the right to vote.
- Before the Dawes Act, Indians still controlled about 150 million acres. Twenty years later, two-thirds of this land was sold. White settlers bought up much of the "Indian Territory," which then became the state of Oklahoma. Although well intended, the Dawes Act nearly destroyed surviving Native American Indian culture.

**Threatened Tribal Ways.** Assimilation threatened Native American culture. The act encouraged individual farm ownership, opposing the tradition of sharing tribal lands.

**Hunters, Not Farmers.** Many Native American Indian tribes had never farmed the land, since they were hunters by lifestyle and tradition.

## SHORTCOMINGS OF THE DAWES ACT

**Infertile Lands.** The lands given to Native American Indians were often infertile. The government also never provided farm equipment or assistance in learning how to farm.

**Reservation Life.** These reservations often suffered from malnutrition, poverty, and untreated health problems. Reservation schools provided an inferior education.

# American Indian Citizenship Act (1924)

- Before 1924, Native Americans held a unique position under federal law. Some had become citizens by marriage to a U.S. citizen; others were granted citizenship by serving in the U.S. military, or through special treaties. Most Native Americans, however, were still not U.S. citizens, and they were actually blocked from the normal process of naturalization open to foreigners. In 1924, the U.S. Congress therefore passed the American Indian Citizenship Act. This law granted immediate U.S. citizenship to all Native American Indians born in the United States.
- Under the new act, Indians did not need to give up tribal lands or customs to become citizens, as they did under the Dawes Act. Some historians see the act as a reward for Native American enlistment as soldiers in World War I. Since Native American Indians had served the nation in wartime, they deserved to be given American citizenship. Ten years later, the Dawes Act was replaced by an act guaranteeing tribal self-government.