

Summary: Growing Cities

Moving to Cities

Many people moved to cities in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Many immigrants lived in cities. People who lived on farms also moved to the city. Machines were used on many farms. Fewer workers were needed. People moved to cities to find jobs. Cities grew very fast. By 1920, more than half of all Americans lived in a city.

Chicago was a city that grew quickly. It was in a good location near transportation routes, natural resources, and Lake Michigan. Factories in Chicago cut logs into lumber. Mills turned wheat and corn into food. Stockyards held thousands of animals, which would later be used as food.

Changes in Cities

Cities changed as they got bigger. Thomas Edison and Nikola Tesla were inventors. They invented new ways to make electricity and send it through wires. New inventions needed electricity for power. Electric elevators were used in skyscrapers to carry people to different floors. Theater stages were lit with electric lights. Stores used electric signs to attract shoppers. Electricity powered the rapid transit system. Streetcars and subways moved people around the city quickly.

Growing cities had problems. Cities became crowded and noisy. There was not enough housing. People lived in slums. City people, especially immigrants, helped each other find housing and jobs. Reformers wanted city life to be better. In 1889, Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr started Hull House. This was a new settlement house in Chicago. People came to Hull House to learn English. They got medical care and looked for jobs. There were clubs for children. Reformers in other cities built settlement houses.



Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

stockyard *noun*, a fenced area where large numbers of animals are kept until they are used for food or moved

skyscraper *noun*, a very tall building

rapid transit *noun*, a system of trains that people use to travel around cities

slum *noun*, a poor, crowded part of a city

settlement house *noun*, a community center for people in cities



After You Read

REVIEW What factors helped Chicago grow?

Circle the sentence that tells what factors helped Chicago grow.

REVIEW What kinds of help did immigrants find in settlement houses?

Underline the sentences that say why people went to Hull House.