

Life in America



Life after Ellis Island...

If you moved to a new country as an immigrant, what would you look for as a source of comfort?

Consider the things you would miss the most about your home country.

What would you do as soon as you arrived?

Challenges Immigrants Faced

- Finding a place to live
- Trying to understand the language and customs
- Discrimination from native white Americans
- Getting a job/working conditions when they did find one

*Immigrants
worked hard to
adjust to life in the
United States.*



Finding a place to live



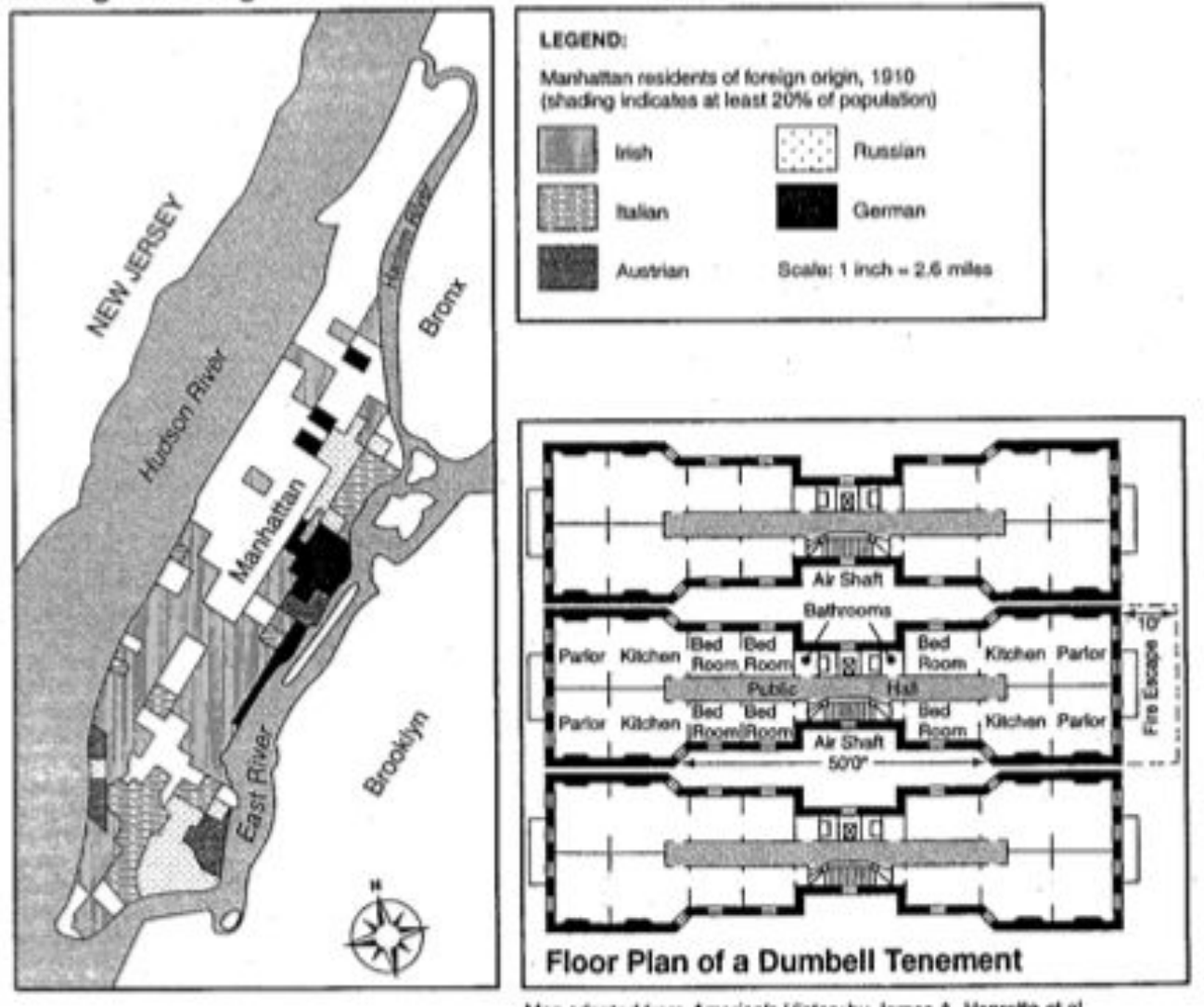
Ethnic Neighborhoods

- **Ethnic neighborhoods** (neighborhoods with people from the same country/ethnicity settled in close proximity) helped immigrants adjust to life in America
 - Many came from peasant backgrounds to NE cities (big change from rural villages)
 - Communities provided help, same language, familiar food and cultural traditions (newspapers, foods, businesses)
 - Help Americanize people – older immigrants served as mentors to help new immigrants find jobs and homes, and learn the language
- Ethnic institutions like churches, businesses, entertainment, newspapers, etc. all helped immigrants feel at home in their new country.

City Tenements



Immigrant Origins of Manhattan residents, 1910



Map adapted from *American Literature* by James A. Marrella et al

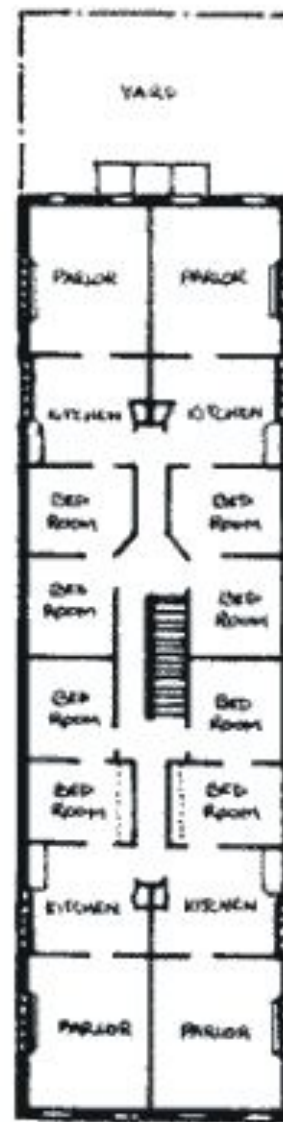
“Some tenants set out hunting for other flats, but could find none. The cheap ones were always occupied, the better flats were too dear. Besides, it wasn’t easy to move; it cost money, and it meant leaving one’s old neighbors. ‘The tenements are the same everywhere, the landlords, the same,’ said a woman.”

Tenement Living

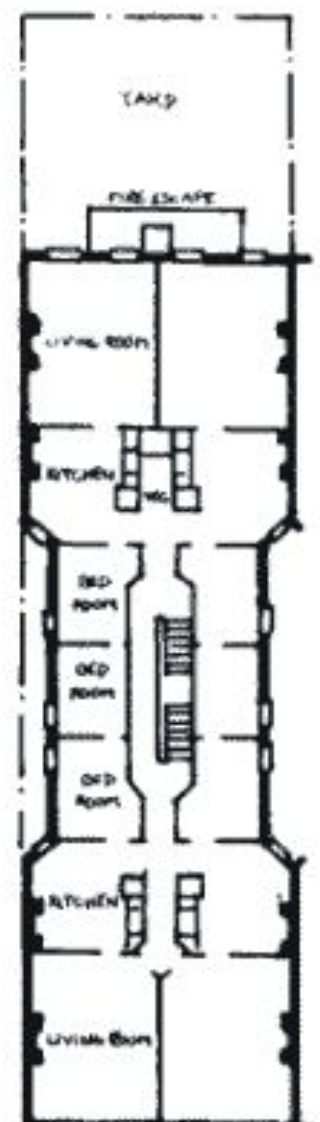
“The plaster was always falling down, the stairs were broken and dirty. Five times that winter the water pipes froze, and floods spurted from the plumbing, and dripped from the ceilings. There was no drinking water in the tenement for days. The women had to put on their shawls and hunt in the street for water. Up and down the stairs they groaned, lugging pails of water.”



A 1830-50
DOUBLE TENEMENT



B 1850-80
RAILROAD TENEMENT



C 1879-1901
DUMBELL TENEMENT





Bohemian Cigar Makers in Tenement



Italian Ragpicker and her Baby



Bandit's Roost



Necktie Workshop in a Division Street Tenement



Waiting for Lodging

“With the first hot nights in June police dispatches, that record the killing of men and women by rolling off roofs and window-sills while asleep, announce that the time of greatest suffering among the poor is at hand. It is in hot weather, when life indoors is well-nigh unbearable with cooking, sleeping, and working, all crowded into the small rooms together, that the tenement expands, reckless of all restraint.”

Trying to understand the language & customs



Americanization



- **Americanization**: to make or become American in character; to assimilate to the customs and institutions of the U.S., to bring under American influence or control.
- In the early 1900s, it referred to the movement where immigrants were developed into Americans.

- Most Americans believed that public schools could play an important role in helping to assimilate new immigrants into American life.
 - A NYC high-school principal proclaimed in 1902 that *"Education will solve every problem of our national life, even that of assimilating our foreign element."*

- Americanization programs were supported by:
 - employers
 - the government
 - local schools



Come to the Public Schools
Learn the Language of America.
Prepare for American Citizenship.
Free Classes for both Men and Women.
Classes in the Evening and Afternoon.
Apply to nearest Public School or
Library for further information.

Venite alle Scuole Pubbliche
Imparate la lingua di America. Preparate
di diventare un cittadino Americano.
Ve se sono classe per uomini e donne.
Le classe sono serali ed anche dopo
mezzogiorno.
Andate alla scuola pubblica piu vicina o alla
Biblioteca pubblica per altra informazione.

Jöjjenek a Public Schoolokba
Tanuljék meg Amerika nyelvét.
Készüljön amerikai polgárnak.
Osztályok úgy lérfiak mint nők számára.
Előadások délután es este.
Jelentkezzék a legközelebbi iskolában

Pridite v ljudske Šole!
Učite se ameriškega jezika!
Pripravljajte se za državljanstvo!
Razredi za moške in ženske!
Poduk zvečer in popoldne!
Vprašajte v bližnji publik šoli ali v
čitalnici za nadejna pójasnila.

Zapisz się do Szkoły Publicznej
Ucz się języka angielskiego.
Przygotuj się do Obywatelstwa
tego kraju.
Otwierany klasy dla mężczyzn i kobiet
wieczornie i po południu.
Zgłoś się do najbliższej Publicznej Szkoły
lub Biblioteki po dalsze informacye.

הגיעו אל בתי הספר הציבוריים
למדו את שפת אמריקה!
תכוננו את אזרחות אמריקה!
בית ספרים לזכרים ולנשים!
שיעורים בערב ובצהריים!
שאלו בבית הספר הציבורי הקרוב או
בבית הספר הציבורי למידע נוסף.



Classes included lessons on:

- English
- American history & govt
- Homemaking
- Personal hygiene
- Vocational training

- Classes were offered at night schools, factories, and community centers. Settlement houses, YMCAs, and churches also sponsored their own programs.

- Pressure on immigrants to assimilate was tremendous and extended to all areas of life including the workplace.
 - Some cities sponsored patriotic pageants where thousands of immigrants publicly swore their allegiance (part of a push for “100% Americanism.”)
 - Some immigrants were required to take English classes as a job requirement!
- **Women** were seen as the ones who would pass on American culture to their families, so organizations established classes to teach women American homemaking skills.
 - Cooking classes taught immigrant women how to cook American style and promoted certain vegetables as “American” while others were labeled “foreign.”
- Programs for **children** included opportunities to play that taught them how to go grocery shopping, American games and music, and took them on outings.



Into the Melting Pot

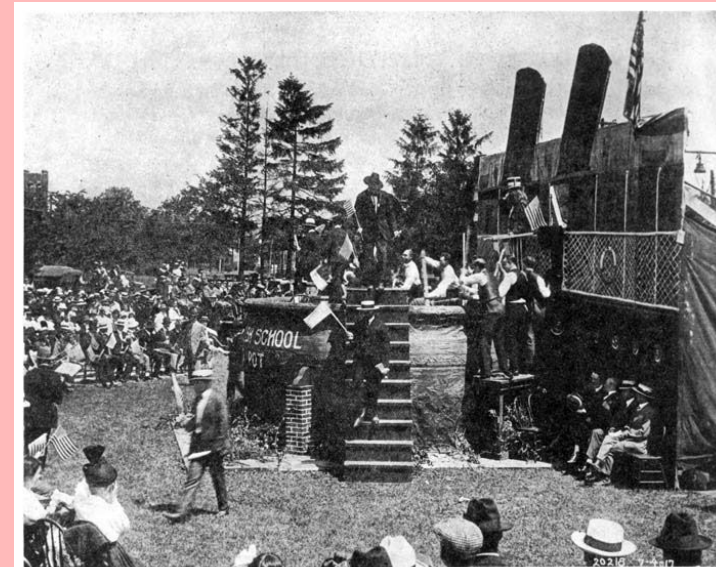


- **The melting pot**: a place where people of different ethnic, racial, and cultural backgrounds are all mixed together and become the same.
 - As immigration rates rose in the late 19th- early 20th centuries, many native-born Americans worried that immigrants from SE & E Europe might not be able to assimilate.
 - The melting pot was thought to be the key to maintain American culture against the foreign threat.

- **Henry Ford**, whose auto plants employed immigrant workers from every corner of Europe, was such a firm believer in the melting pot that he literally built one.
 - Ford, who once declared that "these men must be taught American ways, the English language, and the right way to live," forced his immigrant workers to attend "Americanization" courses where they were taught English and Ford's conservative values.

- Ford's giant 20-foot wood, canvas, and paper-mâché monstrosity served as the centerpiece for his Americanization School's graduation ceremony.

- He had workers dress in outlandish versions of their home countries' native costumes, climb into the giant pot before having them climb out the other side wearing modern business suits and waving tiny American flags while singing "The Star-Spangled Banner."



From the Collections of The Henry Ford

- Ford hoped that his literal demonstration of the melting pot's power would "impress upon these men that they are, or should be, Americans, and that former racial, national, and linguistic differences are to be forgotten."

- How did immigrants feel about these programs?
 - Some immigrants did not mind the effort to assimilate them.
 - For the most part, immigrants wanted to learn English which resulted in a shortage of English night classes.
 - Others resented the push to abandon their heritage.
- Immigrants who didn't attend formal schools still assimilated through informal contact at work, in the saloon, through movies or radio, or, in the case of children, in the city's streets, alleys, and playgrounds and parks.



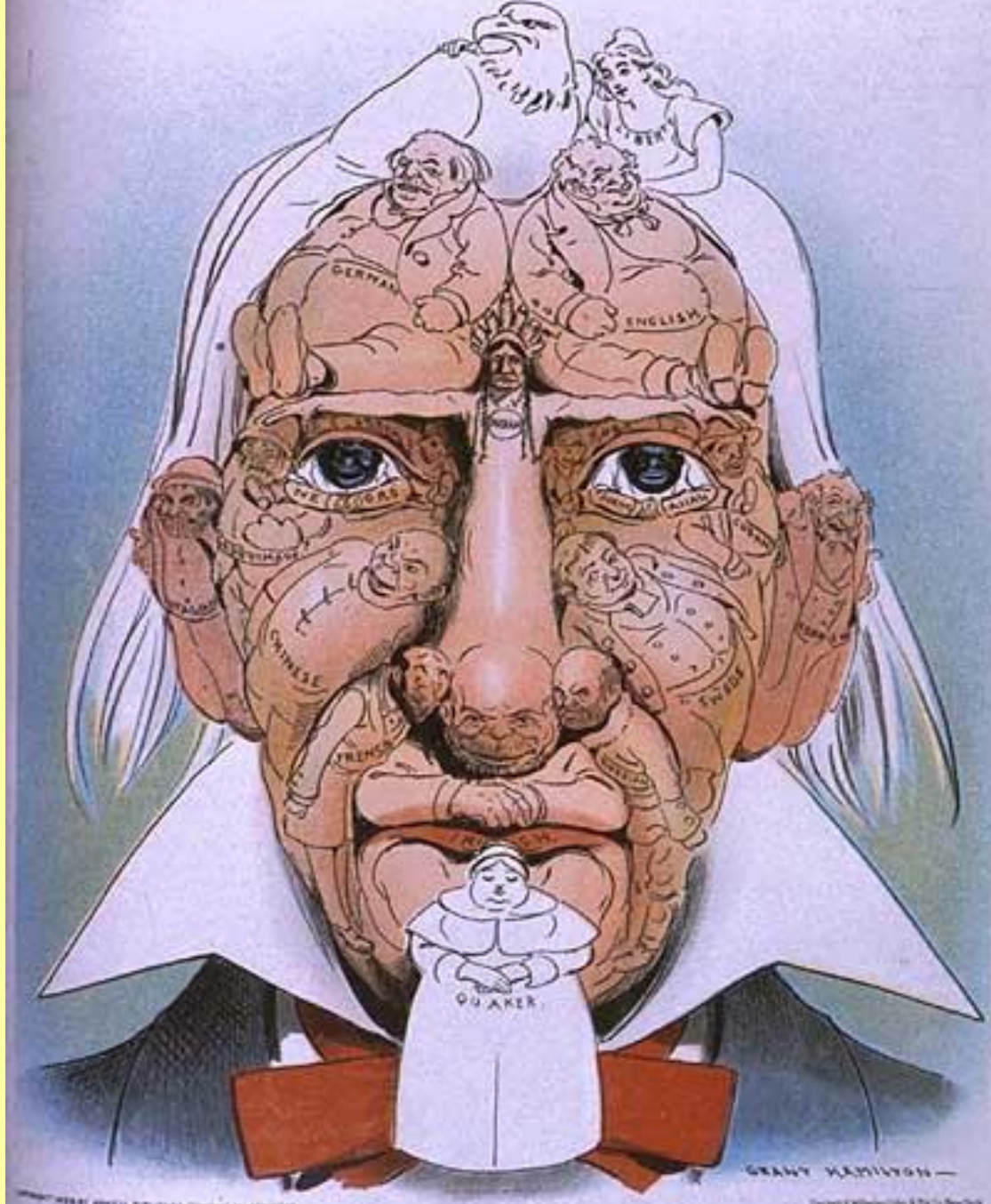
English language classes at Ford Motor Company, 1919. Ford was one of the first employers to institute a corporate Americanization program.



From the Collections of The Henry Ford

Discrimination from native white Americans

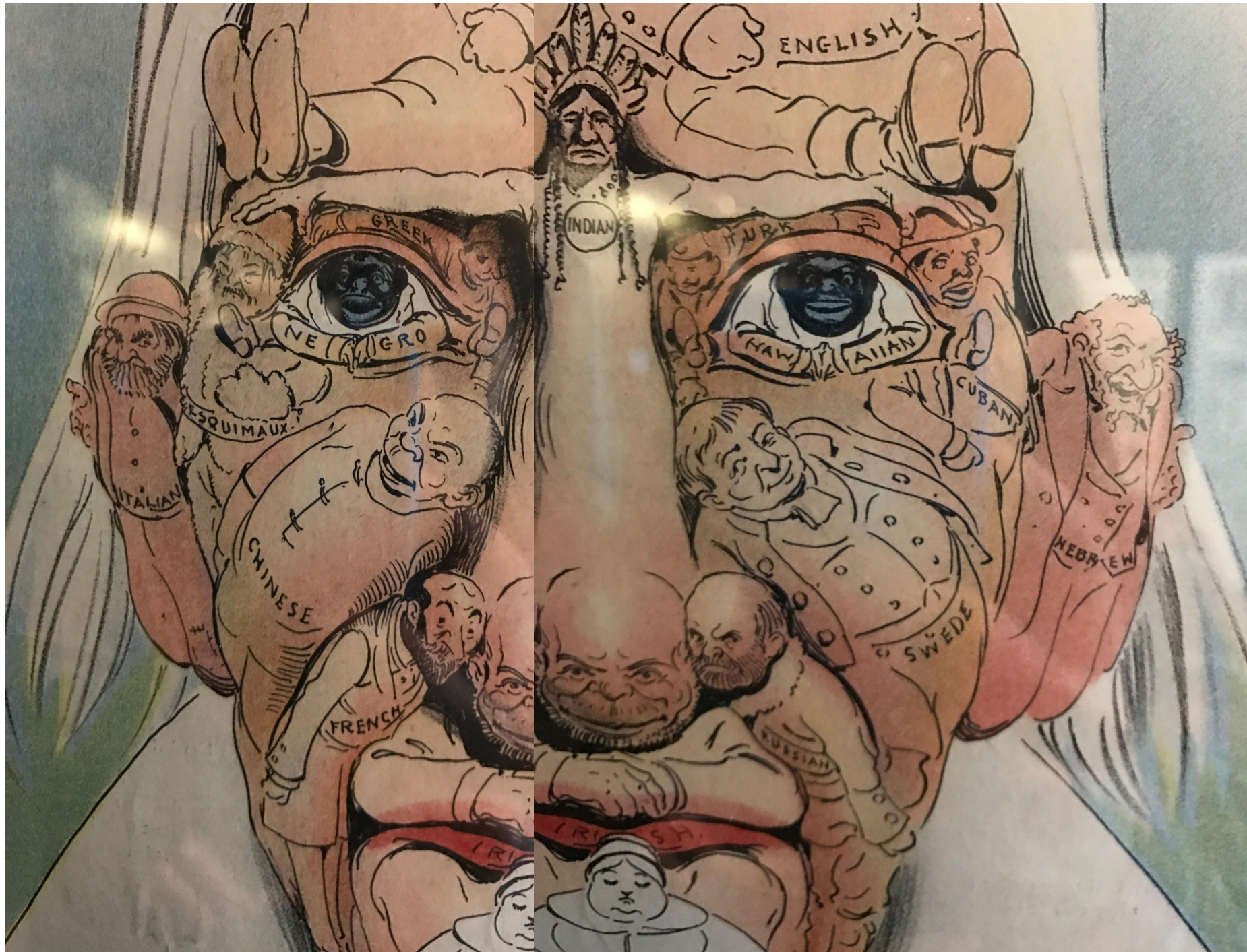




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UNCLE SAM IS A MAN OF STRONG FEATURES.



The Anglo-Saxon Myth

- Belief in the late 19th & early 20th centuries, held by many college professors, scientists, & intellectuals that more "primitive" races (any non-NW European "race") did not have the mental, physical, or social capacities of Anglo-Saxons.
 - Some scientists believed, for example, that the slope of a person's forehead was a good indicator of their intelligence. As the logic went, Anglo-Saxons were more likely to have a high forehead; therefore, "scientists" concluded that Anglo-Saxons were more intelligent.



John Fiske (1842-1901),
philosopher & historian &
popularizer of evolutionary
theory

Eugenics Movement



A group of poor men hold signs given to them by eugenics supporters on Wall Street (NY)

- Americans wanted to create the best possible society to progress and by limiting the inferior peoples from reproducing or coming to America, supporters of eugenics felt they could allow the nation to progress the most.
 - Eugenics helped people to rationalize "scientifically" their racism.
 - Many Americans already assumed that southeastern Europeans, African-Americans, Jews, and Asians were of "inferior" blood, eugenics simply gave them "scientific proof" that these "inferior" people were causing America's social problems.

- The best way to prevent the spread of inferior people in America was believed to be by controlling or restricting immigration.



- Some states went further and advocated for controlled breeding, institutionalization, and the forced sterilization of criminals, the insane, and feebleminded.
 - In 1927, a Supreme Court ruling upheld state forced sterilization programs as being “for the health and protection of the state.”
- Other states encouraged people of "good stock" to breed by hosting “Fitter Families” contests.

What is Nativism?

- A movement which began in the late 19th century & continued into the early 20th century
- Goal was to restrict & control immigration and immigrants (behavior, movement, opportunities, schooling, etc.)



Origins of the Nativist Movement?

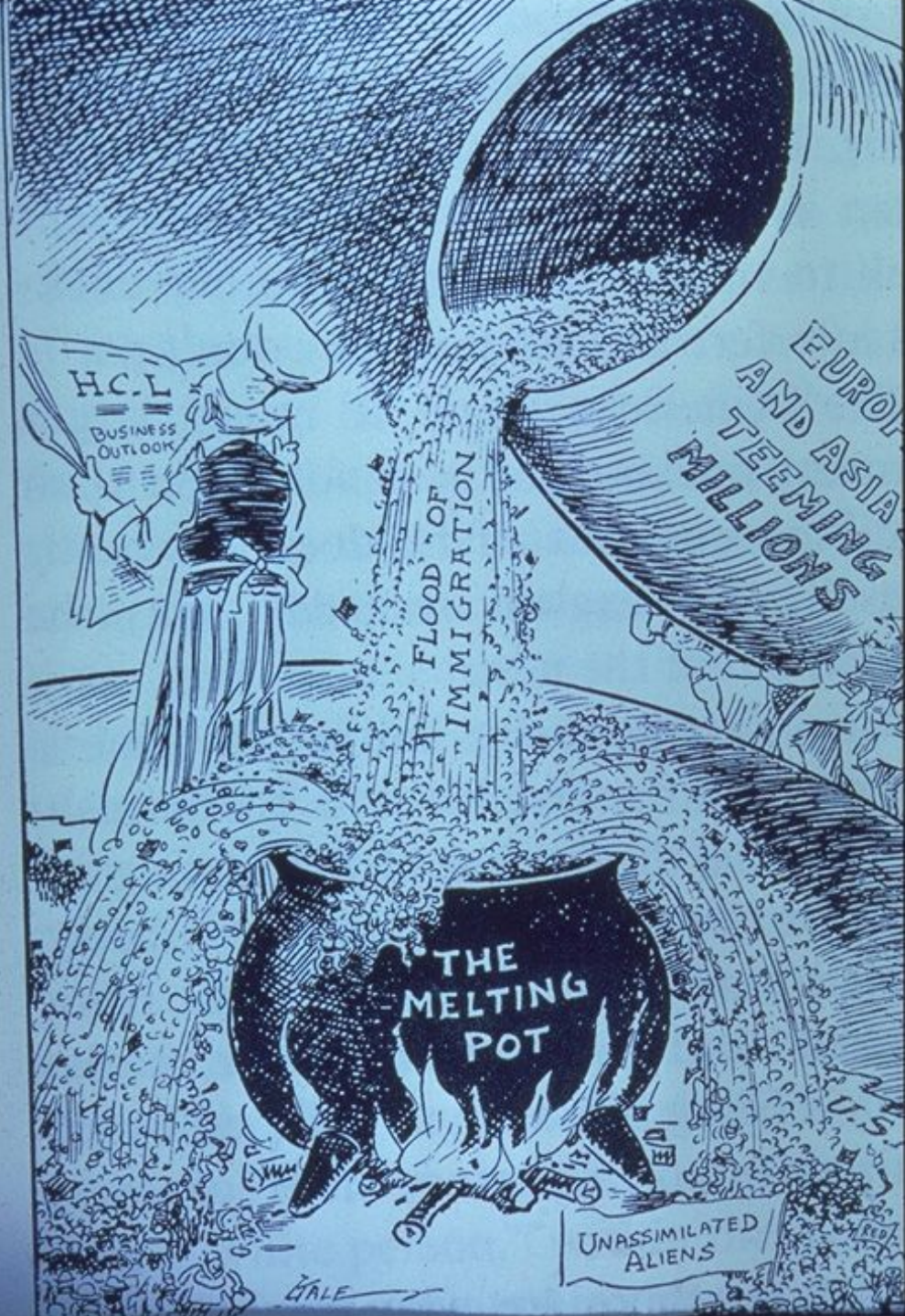
- Discrimination against immigrants was not new. In the 1850s, at least one political party had begun calling for:
 - Severe limits on immigration, especially from Catholic countries.
 - Restricting political office to native-born Americans (the US Constitution only restricts the office of President in this way).
 - Mandating a wait of 21 years before an immigrant could gain citizenship.
 - Restricting public school teaching to Protestants & daily Bible readings in public schools (from the Protestant version of the Bible).
 - Restricting the sale of liquor.



Who were the Nativists?



- Supporters of the Nativist Movement included:
 - *Employers* (wanted to control dangerous behaviors like drinking on the job, etc.)
 - *Prohibitionists* (people who wanted to ban alcohol) and *social reformers* (blamed immigrants for social problems, saw them as weak & lacking morals)
 - *Govt. officials* (feared the threat to American society and govt., wanted to limit numbers/types of immigrants)
 - *Native-born white workers* (feared job competition)
 - *Protestants* (feared Catholics particularly, wanted to limit Catholic influence in America)



H.C.L.
BUSINESS
OUTLOOK

EUROPE
AND ASIA
TEEMING
MILLIONS

FLOOD OF
IMMIGRATION

THE
MELTING
POT

UNASSIMILATED
ALIENS

GALE

Industrial Era Anti-Immigration Themes

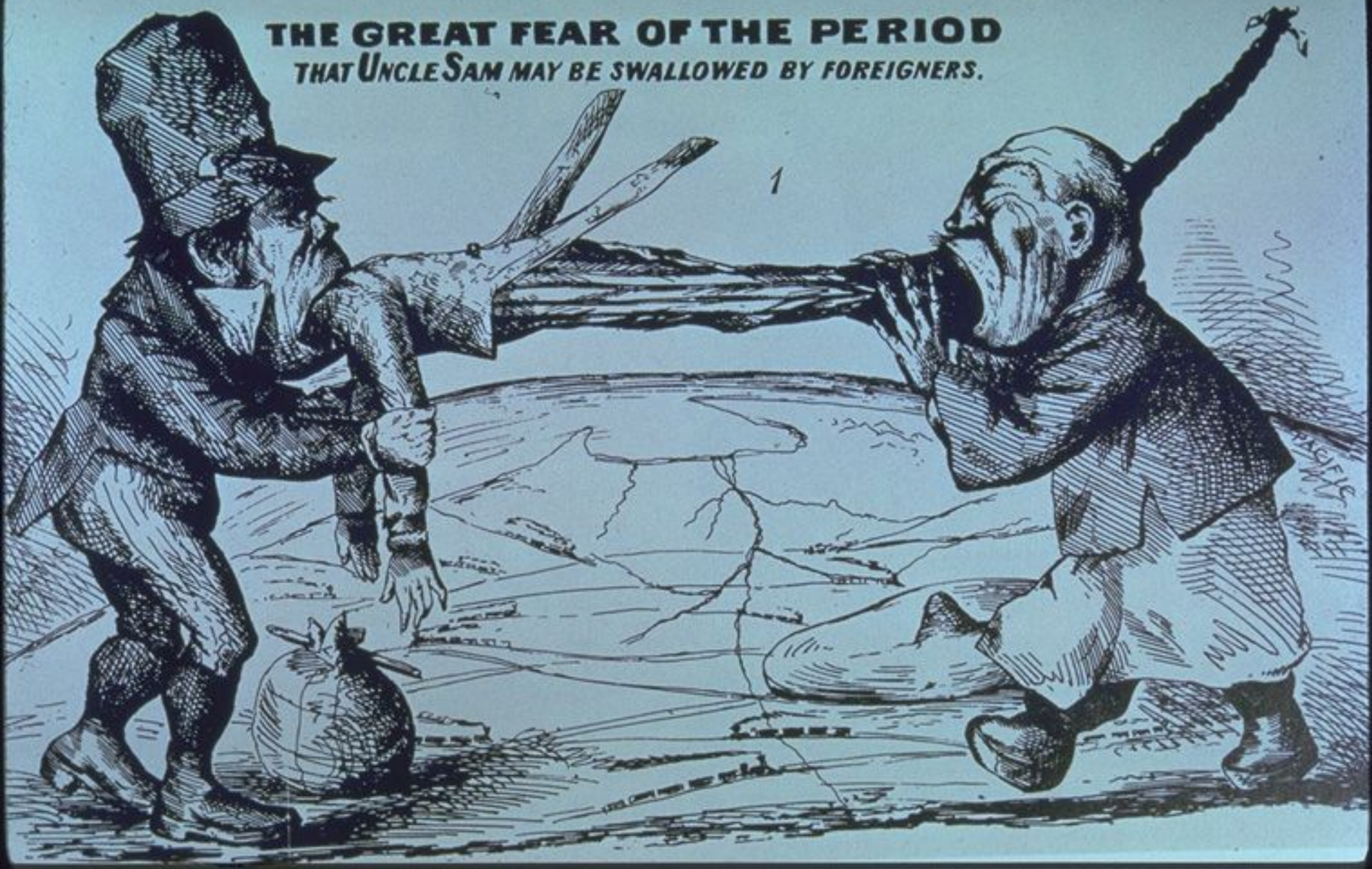
- Immigrants as lazy, poor, drug/alcohol abusers, prostitutes, competition for jobs, etc.
- Most frequent targets:
 - Chinese immigrants – WHY?
 - Competition with native-born Americans for jobs/money
 - Images of Chinese women as prostitutes and men as drug abusers
 - Irish immigrants – WHY?
 - Fear of the Catholic Pope
 - Representation of the Irish as drunks, lazy, poor, savages



THE HIGH TIDE OF IMMIGRATION—A NATIONAL MENACE.

Immigration statistics for the past year show that the influx of foreigners was the greatest in our history, and also that the hard-working peasants are now being supplanted by the criminals and outlaws of all Europe.

THE GREAT FEAR OF THE PERIOD
THAT UNCLE SAM MAY BE SWALLOWED BY FOREIGNERS.



Irish Immigration & Anti-Catholic Sentiment



PUCK.

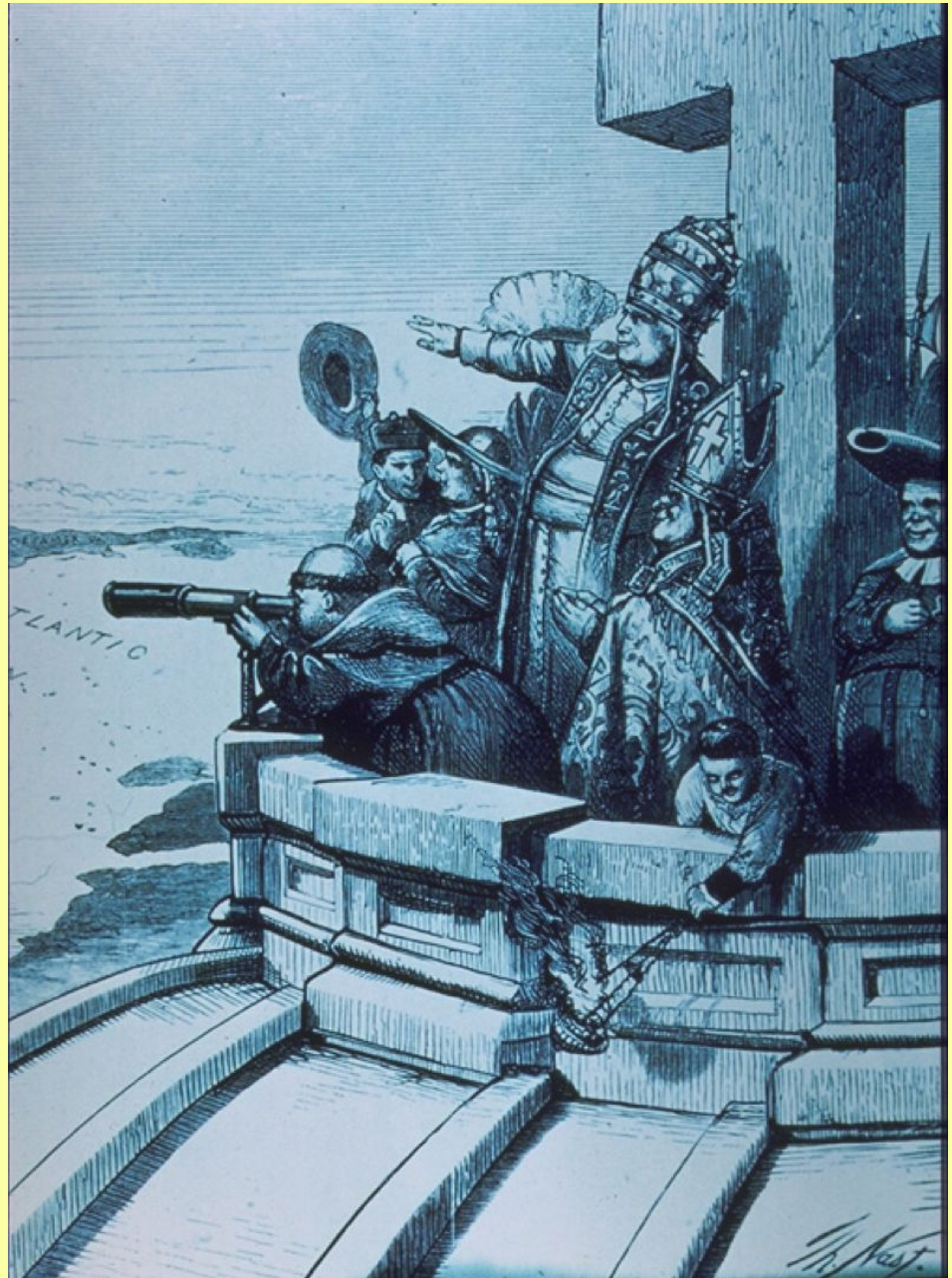


CITIZENSHIP

EQUAL RIGHTS

C. J. Taylor

THE MORTAR OF ASSIMILATION—AND THE ONE ELEMENT THAT WON'T MIX.



ATLANTIC

H. West



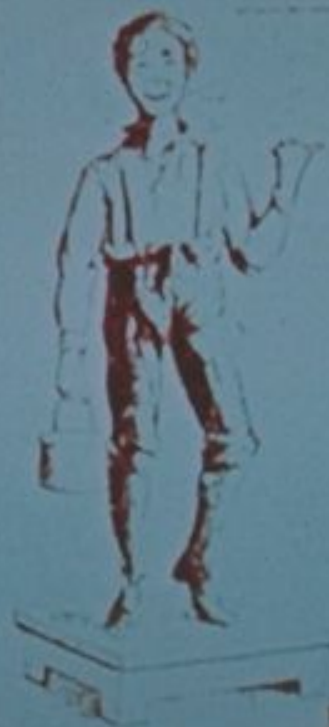
THE AMERICAN RIVER GANGES.

September 30, 1871

EVERYBODY WORKS BUT FATHER

THE LORD WILL PROVIDE

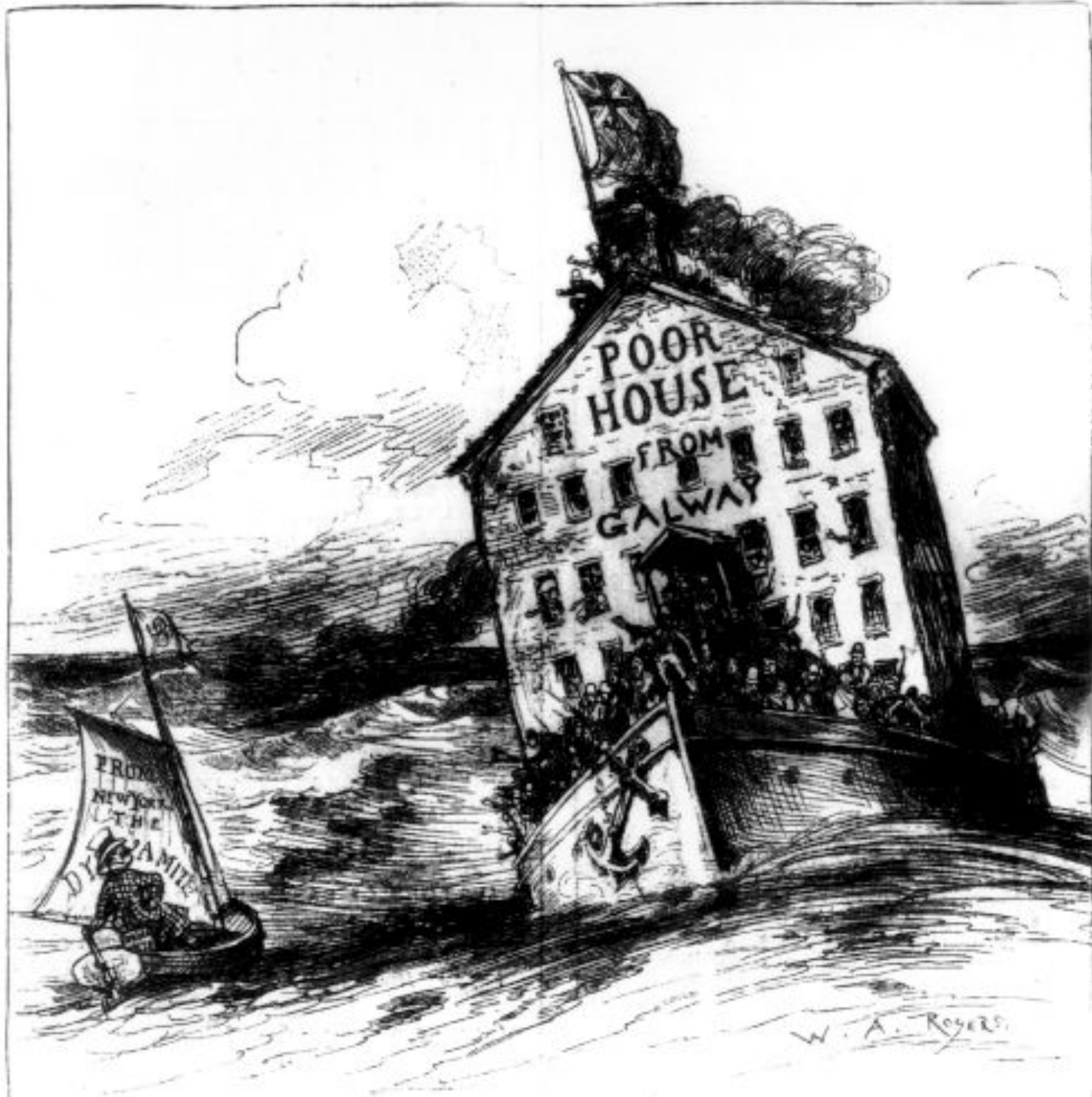
WHAT IS HOME
WITHOUT
A MOTHER



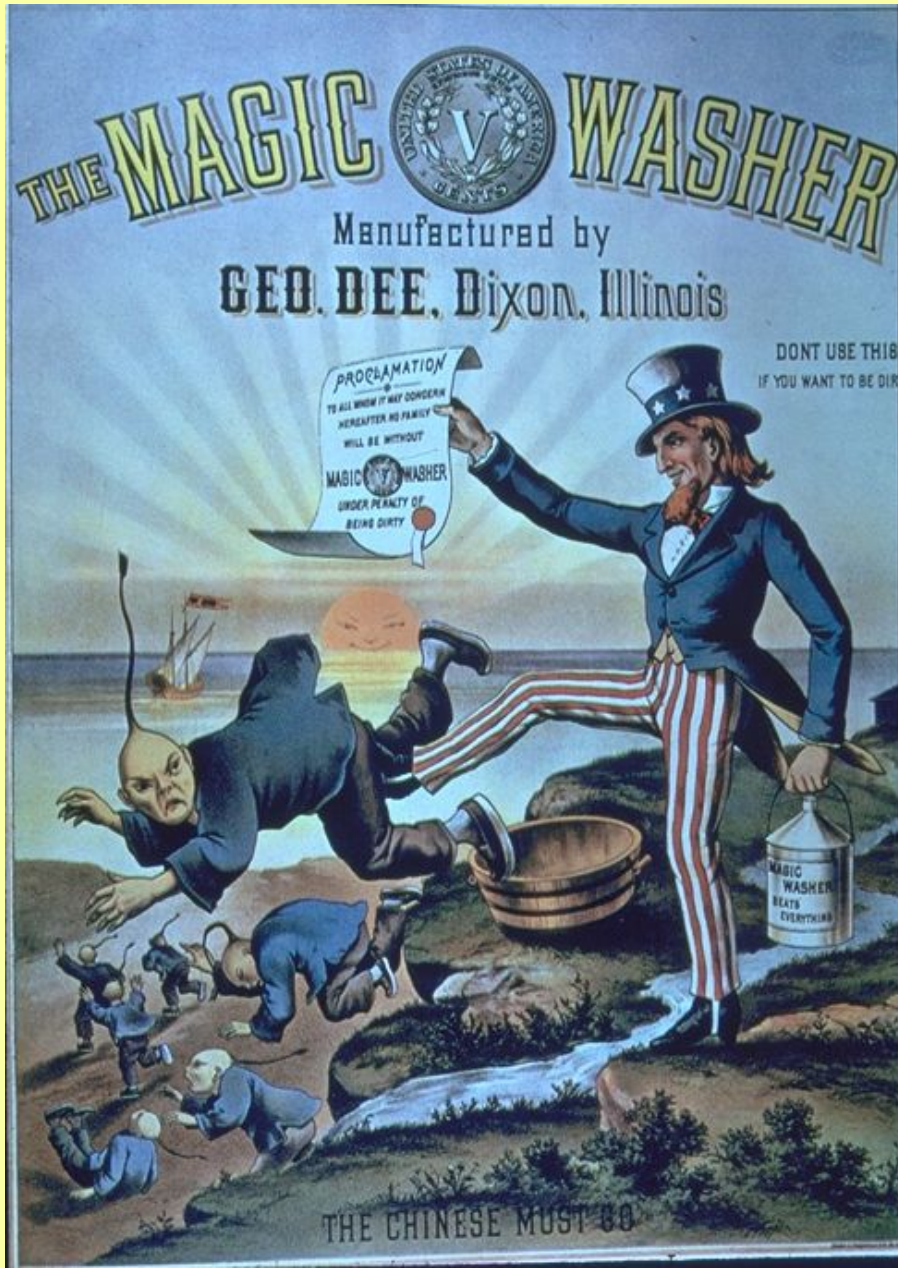
Mother Takes
In Washing.

So Does
Sister Ann.

Everybody Work
In Our House
But My Old M



Anti-Chinese Immigration



J Exhibit J. Conf

BOYCOTT

A General Boycott has been declared upon all **CHINESE** and **JAPANESE** Restaurants, Tailor Shops and Wash Houses. Also all persons employing them in any capacity.

All Friends and Sympathizers of Organized Labor will assist us in this fight against the lowering Asiatic standards of living and of morals.

AMERICA vs. ASIA

Progress vs. Retrogression

Are the considerations involved.

BY ORDER OF



Silver Bow Trades and Labor Assembly
and Butte Miners' Union

TRUTH

THE SHAME OF AMERICA —

JOHN CHIHAMAN AS THE HUSBAND OF OUR GIRLS.



THE WEDDING

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THE PROPOSAL



THE MARRIAGE



THE AMERICAN WIFE SUPPORTS THE FAMILY



THE CHINESE
SUPPORTS HIS HOME
AND LEAVES HER WITH
THE CHILDREN.

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Getting a Job & Working Conditions

Getting a job



- Many immigrants were farmers in their homelands, but had to find jobs in cities in the United States.
- Had to take low-paying, unskilled jobs in garment factories or steel yards, glass factories, mines and construction
- Some worked long hours for little pay in small shops or mills called sweatshops.
- Immigrants with appropriate skills sometimes found work in a wide range of occupations.
- Others saved, shared, or borrowed money to open small businesses.

Coal Mines





John Spargo, *The Bitter Cry of Children*

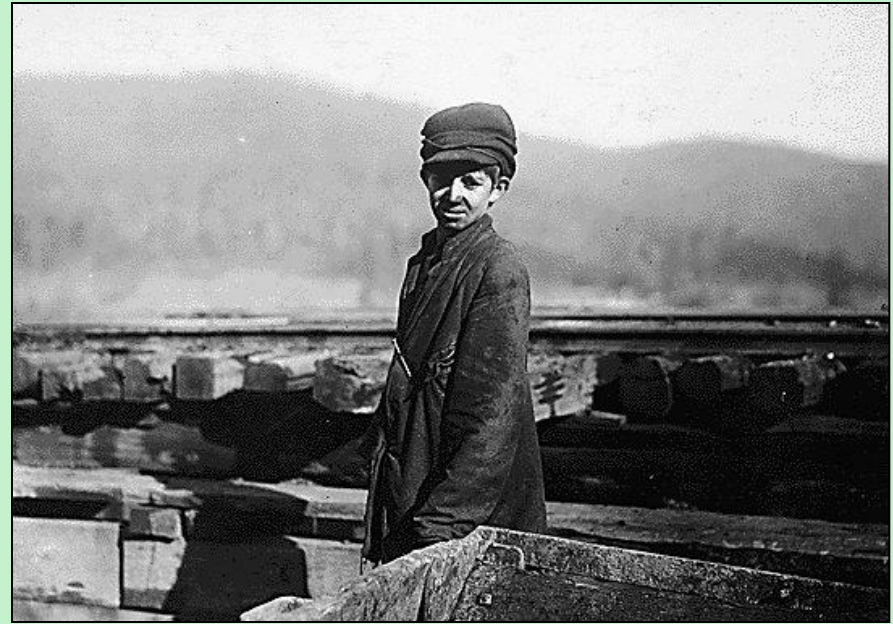
Work in the coal breakers is exceedingly hard and dangerous.

Crouched over the chutes, the boys sit hour after hour, picking out the pieces of slate and other refuse from the coal as it rushes past to the washers. From the cramped position they have to assume, most of them become more or less deformed and bent-backed like old men.

The coal is hard, and accidents to the hands, such as cut, broken, or crushed fingers, are common among the boys. Sometimes there is a worse accident: a terrified shriek is heard, and a boy is mangled and torn in the machinery, or disappears in the chute to be picked out later smothered and dead. Clouds of dust fill the breakers and are inhaled by the boys, laying the foundations for asthma and miners' consumption.

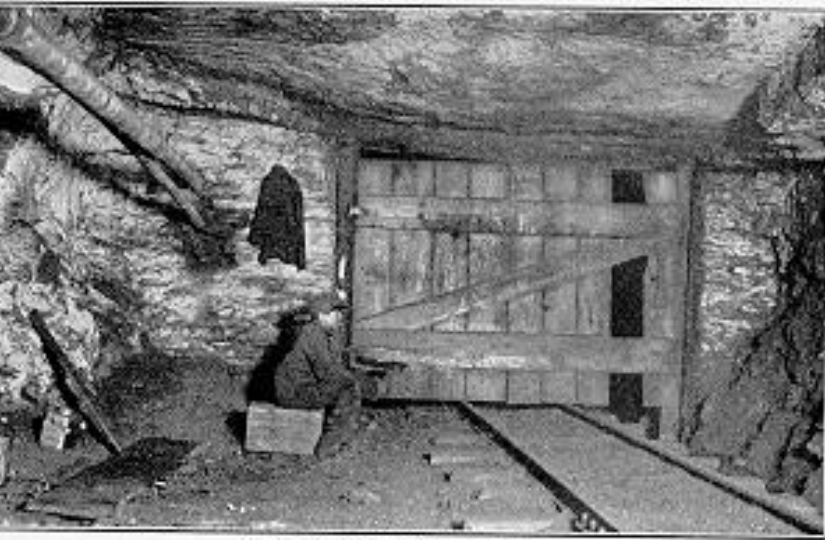


At the close of day. Waiting for the cage to go up. The cage is entirely open on two sides and not very well protected on the other two, and is usually crowded like this.



I once stood in a breaker for half an hour and tried to do the work a twelve-year-old boy was doing day after day, for ten hours at a stretch, for sixty cents a day.

I could not do that work and live, but there were boys of ten and twelve years of age doing it for fifty and sixty cents a day. Some of them had never been inside of a school; few of them could read a child's primer. True, some of them attended the night schools, but after working ten hours in the breaker the educational results from attending school were practically nil.



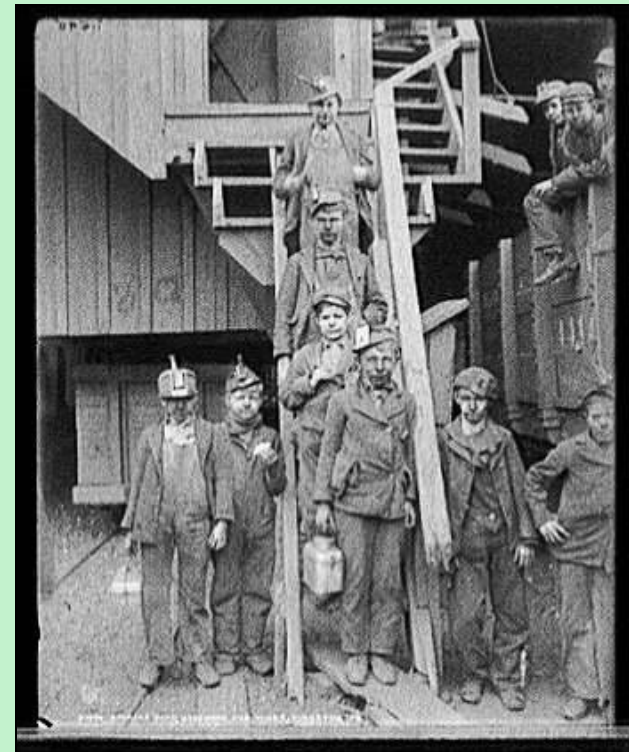
The Lonely Trapper Boy.



View of the Ewen Breaker of the Pennsylvania Coal Co. The dust was so dense at times as to obscure the view. This dust penetrated the utmost recesses of the boys' lungs. A kind of slave-driver sometimes stands over the boys, prodding or kicking them into obedience.

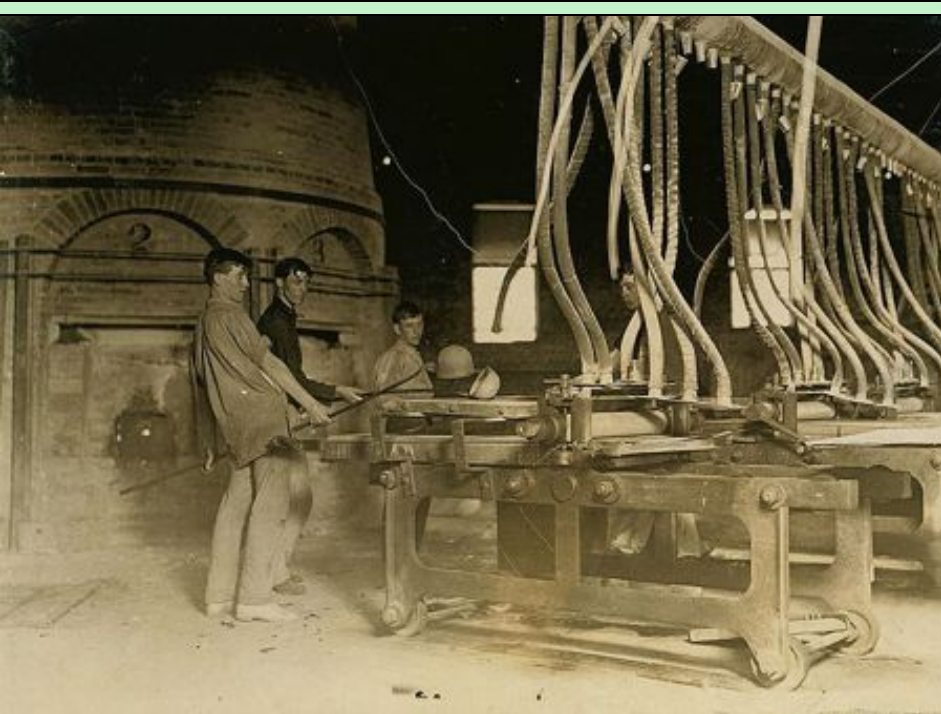


Pennsylvania Breaker Boys.



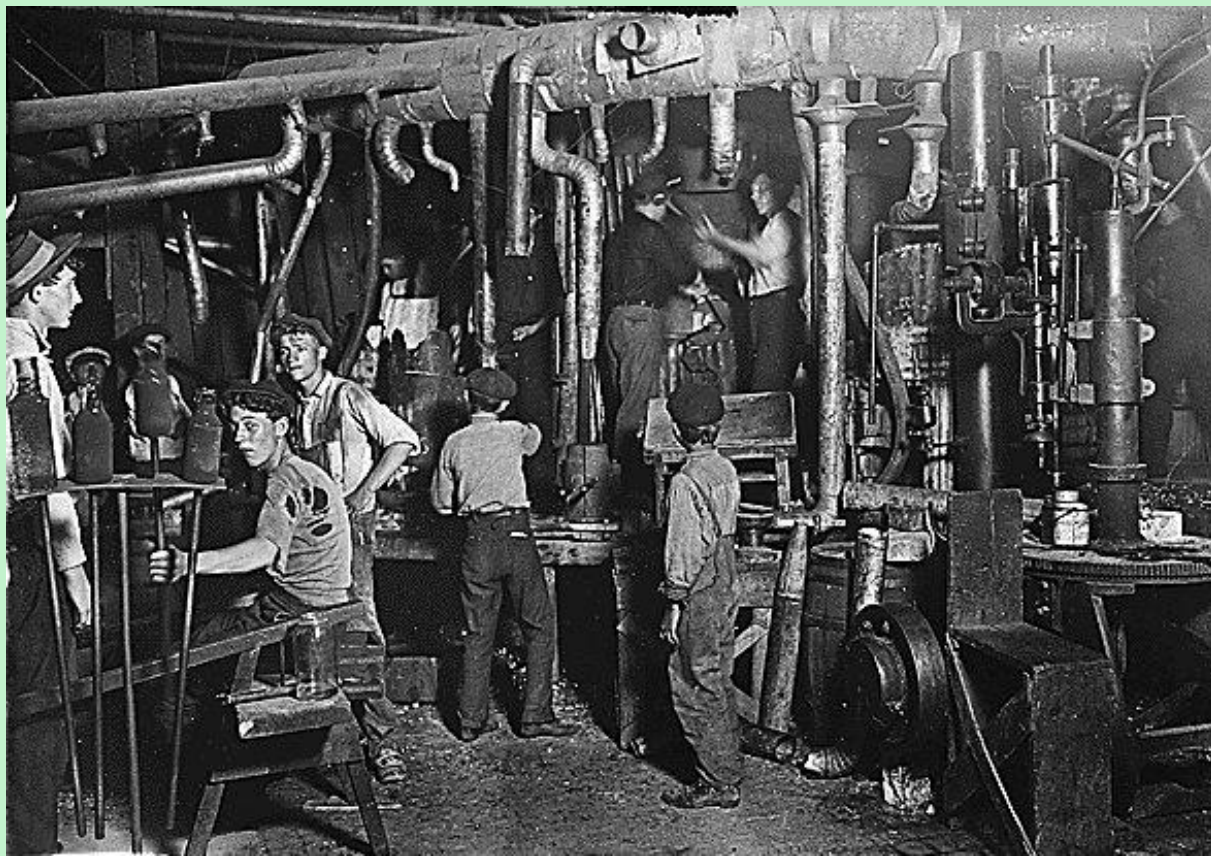
Glass Factories





“Carrying-in boys” (also referred to as “carrier pigeons”)

They took the red-hot bottles from the benches, three or four at a time, upon big asbestos shovels to the annealing oven, where they are gradually cooled off.... The work of these “carrying-in boys,” several of whom were less than 12 years-old, was by far the hardest of all. They were kept on a slow run all the time from their benches to the annealing oven and back again. I can readily believe what many manufacturers assert, that it is difficult to get men to do this work, because men cannot stand the pace and get tired too quickly...The distance to the annealing oven in the factory in question was one hundred feet, and the boys made 72 trips per hour, making the distance travelled in eight hours nearly 22 miles. Over half of this distance the boys were carrying their hot loads to the oven.

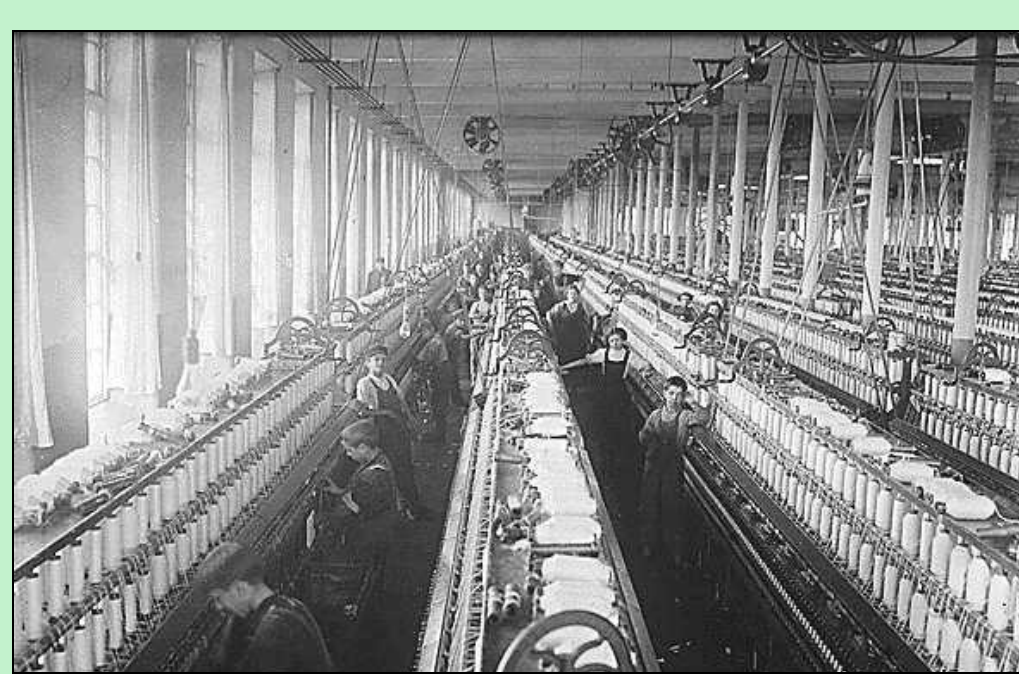


The effects of work in glass factories:

- The constant facing of the glare of the furnaces and the red-hot bottles causes serious injury: “Severe burns and the loss of sight are regular risks of the trade in glass-bottle making,” says Florence Kelley.
- Boys who worked all night got very little sleep which when combined with the heat and strain of their work and caused nervous conditions.
- Teachers reported that because of their employment by night in the factories, were drowsy and unable to receive any benefits from their attendance at school.
- Rheumatism and pneumonia were common due to working in conditions which were alternately burning due to the heat of the furnaces and the cold of the cooling rooms and walk to work.
- “I’d sooner see my boy dead than working here. You might as well give a boy to the devil at once as send him to a glass factory,” said one blower to me in Glassborough, NJ.

Textile Mills



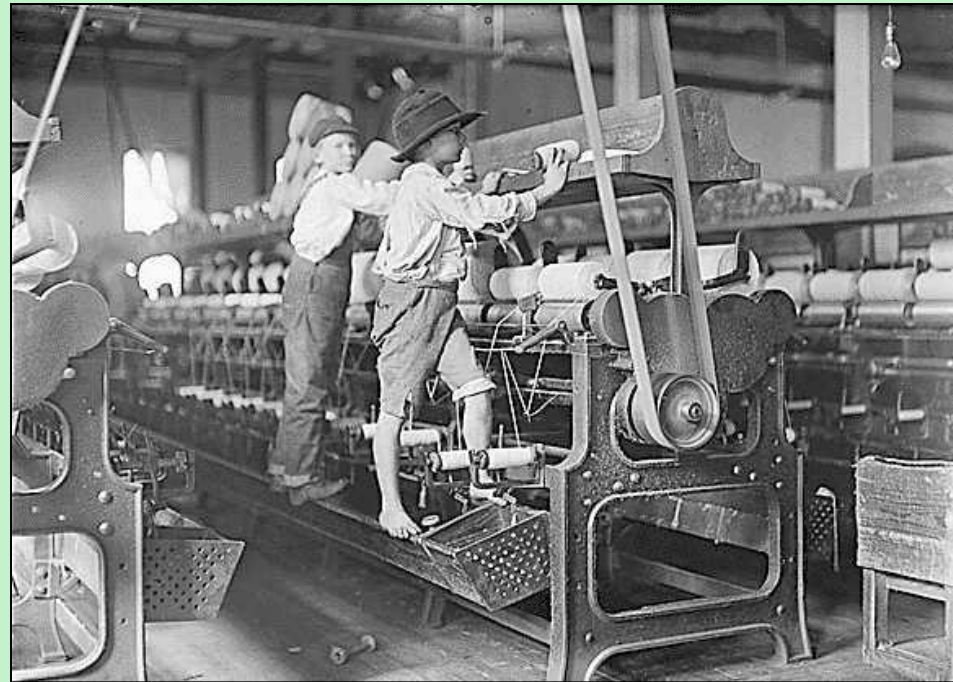


Conditions in a cotton mill:

“The mule-room atmosphere was kept from 85-90 degrees of heat... I had to gasp quick, short gasps to get air into my lungs at all. My face seemed swathed in continual fire. ...Oil and hot grease dripped down, sometimes falling on my scalp or making yellow splotches on my overalls or feet. Under the excessive heat...perspiration oozed from me until it seemed inevitable that I should melt away at last. To open a window was a great crime, as the cotton fiber was so sensitive to wind that it would spoil...When the mill was working, the air in the mule-room was filled with a swirling, almost invisible cloud of lint, which settled on floor, machinery, and employees, as snow falls in winter. I breathed it down my nostrils ten and a half hours a day; it worked into my hair, and was gulped down my throat. This lint was laden with dust, dust of every conceivable sort, and not friendly at all to lungs.”

Source: Priddy, Al, Through the Mill, (Norwood, MA, 1911)





Replacing bobbins on the machinery.

Factories





Industrial Diseases

- Varnishers in furniture factories inhaled poisonous fumes all day long and suffered from intestinal troubles.
- The gilding of picture frames produced a stiffening of the fingers.
- Workers in wallpaper and paint plants suffered from slow poisoning.
- The fumes from the manufacture of rubber goods produced paralysis and premature decay.
- Workers in leather works were often nauseated and fell victims to consumption.
- The little boys who make matches, and the little girls who pack them in boxes, suffered from "phossy-jaw," a gangrene of the lower jaw due to phosphorus poisoning.
- Little girls who worked in the hosiery mills and carried heavy baskets from one floor to another suffered back injury.
- Workers in textile factories who dye fabric frequently suffered from poisoning due to dye seeping into open wounds.

Sweatshops

- Workers in sweatshops were paid piecework – meaning they were paid per item produced.
 - This led to long work hours and conditions which demanded all family members work (including children as young as 3 or 4 years in age.) HOW SO? EXPLAIN.



Children in sweatshops were denied the right to sleep, worked from early morning until late at night, and were denied an education.

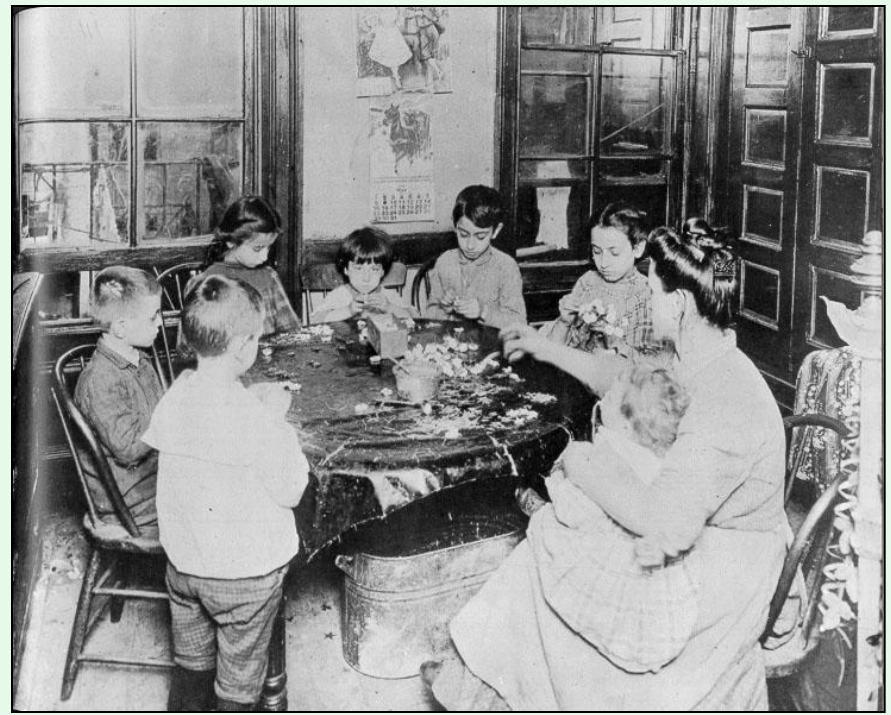


- What can such little babies do?
 - Wrap paper around pieces of wire
 - Sort beads for slipper-beaders
 - Pull basting threads on cheap garments
 - Arrange the petals of artificial flowers
 - Paste boxes for candy manufacturers



Picking nuts in dirty basement. The dirtiest imaginable children were pawing over the nuts and eating lunch on the table. Mother had a cold and blew her nose frequently (without washing her hands) and the dirty handkerchiefs reposed comfortably on table close to the nuts. The father picks now. New York City.

“I know of a room where a dozen or more little children are seated on the floor, surrounded by barrels, and in those barrels is found human hair, matted, tangled, and blood-stained – you can imagine the condition, for it is not my hair or yours that is cut off in the hour of death.” – John Spargo, The Bitter Cry of Children



A Jewish family & neighbors working until late at night sewing garters. This happens several nights a week when there is plenty of work. The youngest work until 9 p.m. The others until 11 p.m. or later. Father is out of work and also helps make garters. New York City.



Living Conditions – Company Towns



- In the cases of companies which were located outside of urban areas, many business owners created company owned towns where their workers lived.
 - Business owner controlled the factory, stores, housing, police, schools, everything in a town
 - Workers often paid in credit for goods at the company stores & paid their bill from their weekly paycheck.
 - **DOWNSIDES:** Workers were always in debt to the company (like sharecropping) and had no power to protest rent, wages, or prices (if argue = fired immediately)

Living & Working Conditions: horrible, unsanitary, long hours, dangerous work environment, no insurance or legal protections

Workers' status:

- Easily replaced
- No power to change or control their treatment
- No control over wages
- At mercy of business owners (ex: company towns and poor working conditions) and landlords

Owners' status:

- Distanced from conditions of workers
- Owners cut workers' wages to maximize their own profit
- No regard for workers' rights or safety

Feelings of powerlessness gave way to the rise to labor unions.