

## **The Growth of Northern Cities**

*The rise of factories occurred along with the growth of Northern cities. Large numbers of Americans, as well as newly arrived immigrants, flocked to urban areas in search of work. Where were these cities located? What was it like to live in an early American city?*

*Words to watch for:*

*urbanization vermin  
revitalization sanitation*

As the Industrial Revolution took hold in America, people flooded into cities in search of work. New York City, the nation's largest urban area, saw rapid growth in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. By 1860, more than 800,000 people called it home. In that same year, Philadelphia, a city which had a population of 28,000 in 1790, surpassed 560,000.

Across the Northeast, communities that had once been small villages grew into major cities. Between 1820 and 1840, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, and Louisville all experienced significant growth. Each of these cities benefitted from their location on the Mississippi River, or one of the river's major tributaries. As the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers served as the super highways of the era, the network between farmers in the Midwest and the merchants in the Northeast spurred this growth. The 1830s also saw the Great Lakes region become a center for US and Canadian shipping. Chicago, Milwaukee, Detroit, and Buffalo all grew rapidly.

During this era, the US population doubled every twenty-five years. By 1860, the United States was the fourth most populous country in the western world, behind only Russia, France, and Austria. In 1790, only two US cities had a population of more than 20,000. By 1860, that number had grown to forty-three. However, such rapid urbanization brought on a host of undesirable byproducts and consequences.

Increased crime, inadequate street lighting, smelly and crowded slums, foul sewage, polluted water, infestations of vermin, and lack of proper garbage disposal all posed serious problems. The streets were filled with horse manure, and scavenging hogs continued roaming in alleys and walkways well into the 1840s. If America's urban areas were going to continue to grow, many sanitation and safety issues would need to be addressed.



*Boston in 1830*

In 1823, under the direction of Mayor Josiah Quincy, Boston pioneered a new sewer system as part of an urban revitalization plan. Other American cities began addressing their waste and garbage issues as well. In 1842, New York City abandoned the use of wells and cisterns for drinking water, piping in cleaner water for its residents. Although it was not an original goal, this approach also choked off the breeding grounds for malaria-carrying mosquitoes, which further enhanced the standard of living in the city. Cholera, and other waterborne diseases, would persist throughout the end of 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Eventually these illnesses would be all but eliminated by improved water and sewage treatment systems.

**Guided Reading:** *Fill in the blanks below to create complete sentences.*

1. As the Industrial Revolution took hold in America, people flooded into cities in search of \_\_\_\_\_.
2. By 1860, more than \_\_\_\_\_ people lived in New York City.
3. Between 1820 and 1840, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, and \_\_\_\_\_ all experienced growth.
4. The 1830s also saw the \_\_\_\_\_ region become a center for US and Canadian shipping.
5. The \_\_\_\_\_ Rivers served as the super highways of the era.
6. The 1830s also saw the Great Lakes region become a center for US and Canadian \_\_\_\_\_.
7. In many US cities, scavenging \_\_\_\_\_ continued roaming in alleys and walkways well into the 1840s.
8. If America's urban areas were going to continue to grow, many \_\_\_\_\_ and safety issues would need to be addressed.
9. In 1842, New York City abandoned the use of wells and cisterns for \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Cholera, and other \_\_\_\_\_, would persist throughout the end of 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

**Multiple Choice:** *Select the choice that completes the statement or answers the question.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Which of the following statements is true?
  - a. In 1860, New York City was the country's second-largest urban area.
  - b. By 1860, more than 800,000 people lived in Philadelphia.
  - c. In 1790, Philadelphia's population surpassed the population of New York City.
  - d. The cities of the North experienced rapid growth in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.
  
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Which statement is accurate?
  - a. Between 1820 and 1840, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, and Louisville all experienced very little growth.
  - b. The 1830s saw a significant drop in the amount of shipping on the Great Lakes.
  - c. In the 1830s, Chicago, Milwaukee, Detroit, and Buffalo all grew rapidly.
  - d. In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the US population doubled every fifty years.
  
3. \_\_\_\_\_ How many US cities had reached a population of 20,000 by 1860?
  - a. 17
  - b. 24
  - c. 43
  - d. 52
  
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Which city pioneered a new sewage system in 1823?
  - a. Boston
  - b. Philadelphia
  - c. Chicago
  - d. Pittsburgh
  
5. \_\_\_\_\_ What was the primary reason that so many people moved to Northern cities during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century?
  - a. The cities had improved transportation systems.
  - b. The people admired the cleanliness of American cities.
  - c. People were in search of entertainment.
  - d. People were in search of work.

**Vocabulary:** *Match each word with its correct definition. Consider how the word is used in the lesson. This might help you define each term. Use a dictionary to help if necessary.*

- |                   |               |
|-------------------|---------------|
| a. urbanization   | d. sanitation |
| b. vermin         | e. scavenge   |
| c. revitalization |               |

6. \_\_\_\_\_ to take or gather from discarded material
7. \_\_\_\_\_ rodents
8. \_\_\_\_\_ the increase in the proportion of people living in cities
9. \_\_\_\_\_ the disposal of sewage and solid waste
10. \_\_\_\_\_ to give new vitality or vigor to a city or community

**Summarize:** *Answer the following questions in the space provided. Attempt to respond in a complete sentence for each question. Be sure to use correct capitalization and punctuation!*

1. Who was the mayor of Boston in 1823?
  
2. What type of diseases persisted into the 20th Century?
  
3. When did the population of New York City surpass 800,000?
  
4. Where are Chicago, Milwaukee, Detroit, and Buffalo located?
  
5. Why did St. Louis, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, and Louisville grow so rapidly?
  
6. How did New York City provide cleaner drinking water for its citizens?

**Student Response:** *Write a paragraph addressing the questions raised below. A thorough response should consist of at least five complete sentences.*

7. In this lesson, you learned about many of the problems facing American cities. In your opinion, which of these issues posed the biggest health or security threat? Explain your answer!