

US History

Turn of Century America

Learning Target:

I can observe how the development of a mass culture changed the country at the turn of the century.

7. Mass Culture

The emergence of mass culture began to level regional differences and allow the country to share a similar culture no matter where they lived.

Leisure Activities:

Amusement Parks –

- Cities began setting apart green spaces (playgrounds, parks) for city dwellers' recreation
- Amusement parks often constructed on outskirts of cities
 - Often built by trolley-car companies to encourage ridership
 - Coney Island in Brooklyn; First Ferris Wheel in Chicago
 - Kennywood opened May 30, 1899 at end of the Mellon family's street railway

Sports –

- Bicycling
 - 1885 – First modern style bicycle
 - 1888 – 50,000 men and women participated; 1890 10 million bikes made
 - Started out as a male activity but quickly spread to women
 - Susan B. Anthony described it as a liberating activity for women
- Tennis
 - 1873 – Originated in North Wales; Spread to US a year later
 - Became popular at the turn of the century
- Baseball & Boxing
 - Became first spectator sports & profitable businesses
 - National League formed in 1869; American League in 1900
 - First World Series in 1903 (Pirates lost to Boston)
 - Negro Leagues also formed for blacks not allowed in Major Leagues

Refreshments –

- New snacks and recognizable brand names established
- 1900 – First Hershey Chocolate Bar
- 1886 – First Coca-Cola sold by an Atlanta pharmacist to cure headaches

Spreading Mass Culture:

Newspapers –

- Became common for newspapers to sensationalize headlines to sell papers
- Competition between Joseph Pulitzer's NY World and William Randolph Hearst's NY Morning Journal – Both exaggerated the news to sell papers
- Also led to comics, sports section, and an extended Sunday Paper

Fine Arts –

- Art galleries and libraries became more common at the turn of the century
- Libraries called “the poor man’s university”

Popular Fiction –

- Most famous author of the time Samuel Clemens aka Mark Twain

New Shopping Opportunities:

Shopping Centers & Department Stores –

- First urban shopping center opened in Cleveland in 1890 called the arcade
- Retail districts formed where public transportation could take shoppers in cities
- Marshall Field opened the first department store in Chicago in 1865
- Chain stores developed offering the same merchandise across the country

Advertising –

- Exploded between 1865 (\$10 million) – 1900 (\$95 million)
- Common in newspapers, magazines, and new inventions like the billboard
- Catalogs from Montgomery Ward and Sears allowed Americans to “shop the mail”
- 1896 the Post Office offered Rural Free Delivery to bring packages to every home