

# See below

[History](#)



## Incorporation: Urbanization, Industrialization and Race During the Gilded Age

The period immediately following the end of the civil war, also known as the Gilded age, was the birth-time of modern America. As European history turns on the pivot of the First World War, modern America turns on the pivot of the civil war. In the gilded age, the country had to find ways to mend itself, to incorporate into a hale whole. During the Gilded age, America “incorporated” in three related ways - urbanization, industrialization, and race.

One of the first ways America incorporated during the gilded age was the growth of urbanization. While urban areas did not necessarily grow in terms of number, the size and density of urban areas, especially in the North, grew rapidly in the period immediately following the end of the civil war. This growth was fueled by several sources. Europe had recently faced several major crises, including the Irish Potato Famine (ending 1852, only a decade or before the civil war), fueling continued Irish immigration that continued as family connections were made in the United States. The Revolutions of 1848 caused political strife, as did the collapse of the second French Empire. In short, many Europeans were pushed into immigration seeking a better life, driving the unprecedented growth of American cities. A second notable source of growth for American cities in this period was immigration of black southern Americans. Finally able to move freely, many chose to leave their former slave-masters and seek better jobs in the North. These new urbanized areas incorporated America, becoming one of America’s first “melting pots,” as long-standing Americans interacted frequently with new immigrants from the south and Europe.

This increased urbanization also had significant economic impacts. American

<https://assignbuster.com/see-below-essay-samples-12/>

cities, fueled by massive population growth, and seemingly unlimited natural resources, quickly became some of the most productive places in the world. This created a vast amount of wealth, new businesses constantly “incorporating,” and developing into some of the most powerful institutions in the world. The richest Americans from the “Gilded Age” were some of the richest people in the history of the world up to this point, and the likes of Rockefeller and his ilk gave this era its gilded name.

The third prong of incorporation in the United States, racial incorporation, was much less complete than the other two. Laws were set in place theoretically giving black Americans all the rights of to participate completely in the political process, if not fully in American society in several other ways. These laws, however, were immediately weakened by “Jim Crow” laws, which set limits on voting such as literacy, having had a grandfather who had voted, or other such things not directly pertaining to race, but effectively still prohibiting black americans from participating in the political process. The KKK was at its peak during this period, and lynchings, cross burning and other unspeakable acts of violences were unfortunately common, especially in the South. This demonstrates that incorporation can not always be accomplished by fiat, and that the letter and the law and its application can be very different.

American incorporated in several ways during the gilded age. It added new populations to urban areas - black americans from the south and Europeans being two prominent groups. It also incorporated in the sense of developing industrial power, and in terms of a more broad and democratic political process.