

And people just threw their garbage in the street. But the



Building the City: Workers atop the Singer Building, the tallest in the world at 35 stories New York City, 1908

reformers and scientists stopped all that with sanitation laws. 500,000 people per square mile living on the Lower East Side got awfully crowded and smelly!

"Walking to my factory job took me past the newest innovation in

construction, the skyscraper. Elisha Otis' electric elevator and the use of a structural steel framework allowed builders to erect the Woolworth Building in 1913--at 55 stories, the world's tallest building. City planning has helped to make sense of where everything is going. They started it in Chicago after the 1893 Columbian Exhibition.

"On the way, one might pass all sorts of new arrivals to the city. See that young man talking about how things are different on the farm where he's from? He is just part of the large country-to-city migration that's taken place within my lifetime. According to the most recent census, more people live in urban areas than rural ones for the first time in American history. Millions of immigrants poured into the cities, trying to get jobs and make a better life. The political bosses helped them out with jobs and food when they could, but the reformers keep trying to outdo them with their settlement houses and such.

"Blacks have been flocking to cities since after the Civil War looking for better jobs and some political freedom. The labor shortage after 1914 brought millions more to the cities, but the problems they face are no less difficult than what they left behind on the Southern farms. Up north they face economic discrimination instead of just political. They piled into neglected and overcrowded sections like Harlem, where the white middle-class used to live before they moved to the suburbs. They still don't have much political power, but it's beginning to grow."

References:

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Whaling; Harlem Davidson, 1908