Historical Development of North American Cities

Lecture #3
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URBST 101: Urban issues: Poverty & Affluence

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Studying the Past...

- Studying the past keeps us from thinking of the present as natural or inevitable.

- Studying the past shows us how political, economic, and social relations change over time.

- Studying the past helps us to understand power.

  - Who has power and who doesn't.

  - How do those with power in the past affect the circumstances of today?

  - How those in power today may shape circumstances in the future.

Timeline Covered Today...

Overview:

➢ Colonial US Cities: circa 1600-1800

  ➢ Preindustrial period to the US Revolutionary War

➢ City Growth & Westward Expansion: 1800-1870

  ➢ Shifting from agrarian and trade-based ways of life to an industrial economy

➢ Industrial Metropolis: 1870-1950

  ➢ Full industrialization of urban economy

Colonial US Cities: circa 1600-1800

Colonial City: ca.1600–1800

- Settler Colonialism:

  - "a system of oppression based on genocide and colonialism, that aims to displace a population of a nation (oftentimes indigenous people) and replace it with a new settler population. Settler colonialism finds its foundations on a system of power perpetuated by settlers that represses indigenous people's rights and cultures by erasing it and replacing it by their own.

  - "The different forms of settler colonialism include: apartheid, military occupation, national policies of assimilation or biological warfare". (Cornell Law)

- Prior to the revolutionary war in 1775, there were approximately **600** different indigenous tribes with their own complex social systems, languages, and cultures.

EARLY INDIAN TRIBES, CULTURE AREAS,
AND LINGUISTIC STOCKS
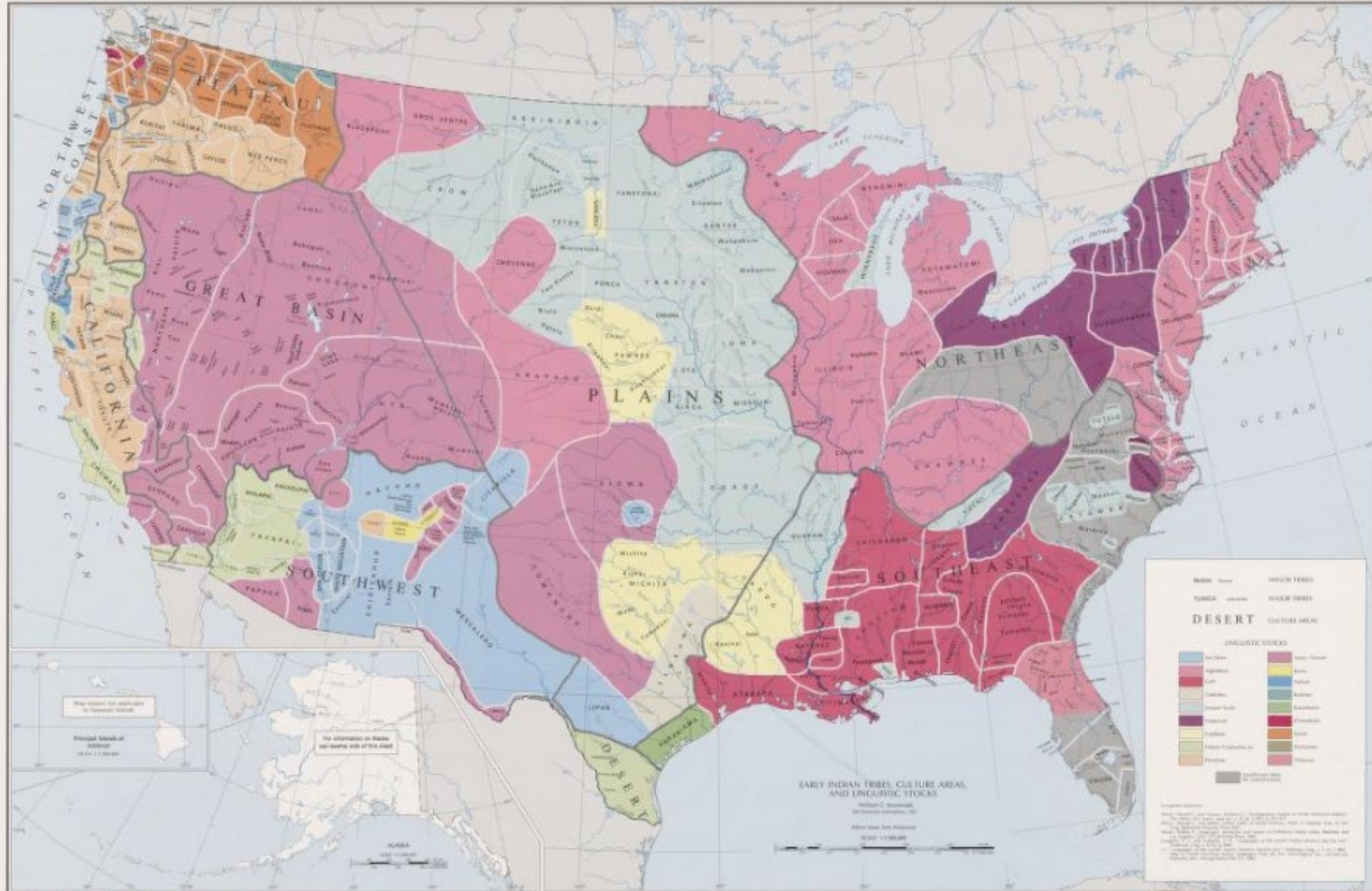
Indigenous Tribes

- In 1492 the native population of North America numbered 7-10 million among approx. 600 tribes.
- Eastern woodland tribes
  - Five nations of the Iroquois confederacy (i.e., Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, and Mohawk), Abenakis, Ahawnees, **Delawares**, Micmacs, Mahicans, and Pequots.
    - Sedentary hunter-gathers while others grew maize (corn), beans, and squash.
- Southeast tribes
  - Powhatans, Catawbas, Cherokees, Creeks, Natchez, Choctaws, and Chickasaws.
    - Primarily agriculturalists.
- Southwest tribes
  - Pueblos, Zunis, Navajos, and Hopis.
    - Adobe-dwelling bands in the arid regions.
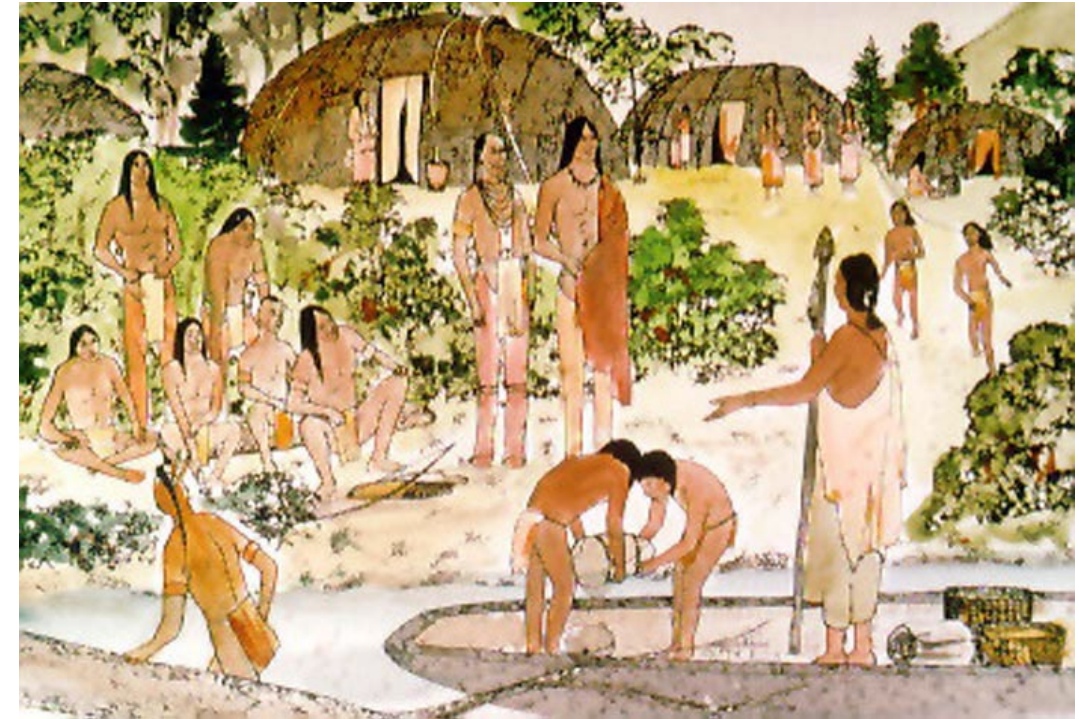
The Lenape of the Delaware Tribe dwelled in parts of what is now Delaware, Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey.

Colonial City: First settlements

- The first permanent European settlement was St. Augustine, founded by the Spanish in 1565, but it never developed past an outpost.
- In the 17th c. the English began colonizing and exploiting the land with the settlements of:
  - **Jamestown, Virginia in 1607** occupied by the Virginia Company of London, a trading company
  - **Plymouth, Massachusetts in 1620** occupied by Puritans seeking religious freedom
  - **Boston, Massachusetts in 1630** occupied by some who left Plymouth
  - **Newport (present day Rhode Island) in 1639** occupied by those escaping strict Puritanism in Boston
  - **Charleston (Charles Town) in 1680** occupied by English
  - **Philadelphia in 1682** occupied by William Penn for Quaker religious freedom

Colonial City: First settlements

- The Dutch settled New Amsterdam, on the tip of Manhattan Island, in 1624. It was ceded to the British in 1664 and renamed New York after King Charles II's brother, James, Duke of York.

- In the early 17th century, these first North American colonial "cities" were mostly European settlements that essentially served as outposts for trade and wealth generation for England's elites.

- This resource extraction began what would be a long history of exploitation and cooptation of Indigenous land with many of these early colonies developing into major metropolises.

In "The Fall of New Amsterdam," by Jean Leon Gerome Ferris, Peter Stuyvesant (left of center, with wooden leg) is shown standing among residents of New Amsterdam in 1664 as they beg him not to fire on the British warships waiting to claim the settlement for England. Credit: The Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division (NYT)

Colonial City: Character

As **outposts** -- primarily fueling the growth of post-medieval, industrializing European (mostly English) cities -- they were:

- **Very small in area and population** – it wasn't until the 18th c. that populations would approach 10,000 inhabitants.
  - Preindustrial colonial cities housed only 5% of the total colonial population.
- **Homogenous** in terms of ethnicity and religious backgrounds thus having cohesive community lives.
  - While it's true that some colonies were established by utopian religious communities that enjoyed a level of religious freedom due to their remoteness (e.g., Puritans and Quakers), be clear that they were primarily <u>economic entities.</u>
- **By water**, located on the Atlantic coast
- **Fortified** against indigenous people
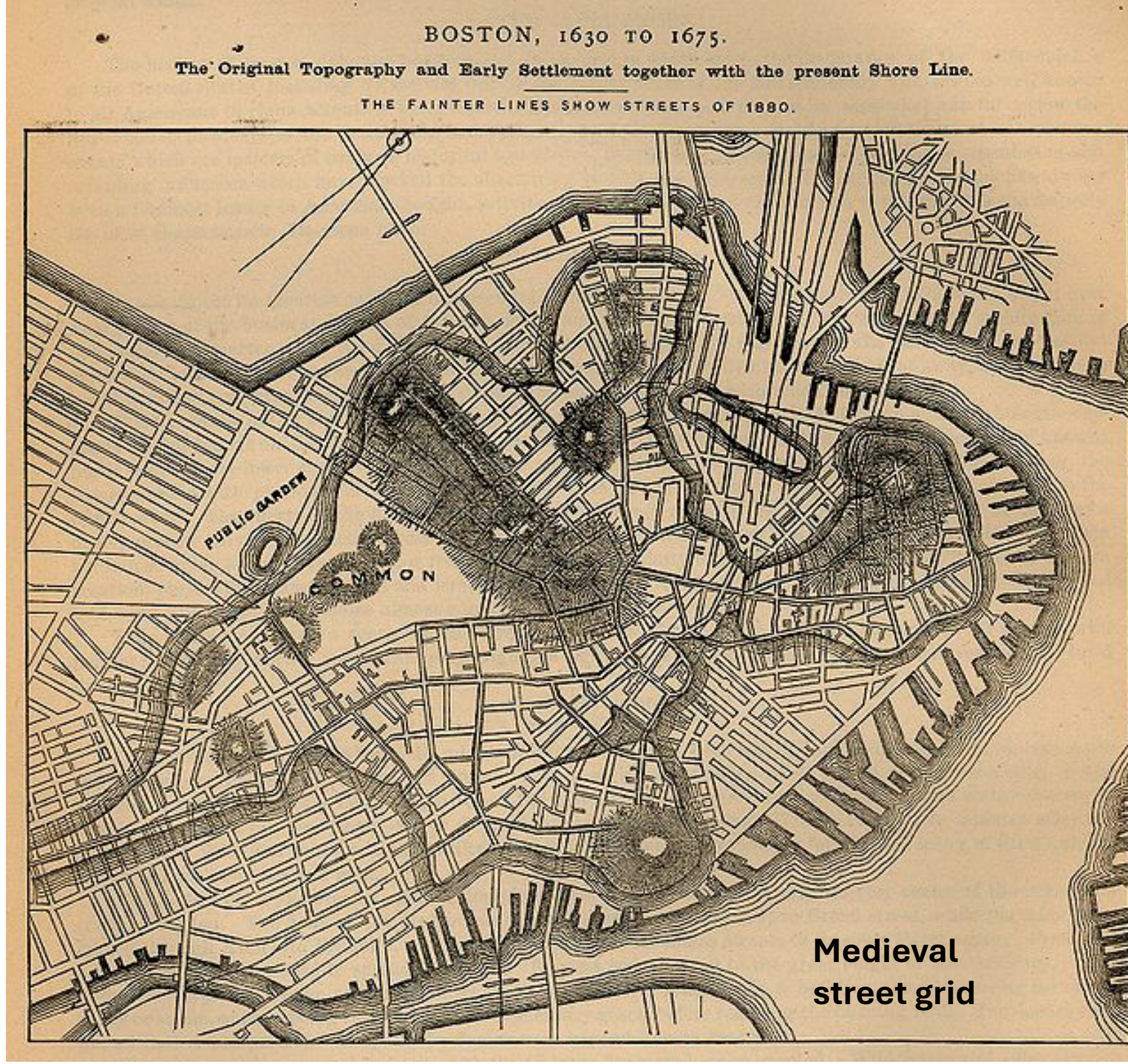- **"Medieval"** in layout (i.e. lacked a street grid)

Circa 1615, the village of jamestown, situated in the James River, Virginia.

New Amsterdam Colony, 1660

Land expansion

Broadway

The Wall (Street)

REDRAFT of THE CASTELLO PLAN NEW AMSTERDAM in 1660

Boston Colony, 1630-1675

BOSTON, 1630 TO 1675.

The Original Topography and Early Settlement together with the present Shore Line.

THE FAINTER LINES SHOW STREETS OF 1880.

PUBLIC GARDEN

COMMON

Medieval street grid

Colonial City: Economy

Trade-based economies and export centers for raw materials

- Extraction of raw materials from the local region
  - Northern colonies: lumber, fur
  - Southern colonies: indigo, tobacco, rice
- Fueled European economic development, industrialization & urbanization

Labor

- European Indentured Servants, impoverished Europeans– victims of enclosure of the commons
  - Enclosure Movement: Political economic movement in western Europe during the 17th century that privatized common land and forced formerly agrarian peasants to move into growing cities for work.
- Enslaved Africans
  - Taken and sold as property; used for labor

Tobacco Plantation, detail of a print by Richard H. Laurie, 1821 CE. Fort McHenry, Baltimore, Maryland.
https://www.worldhistory.org/image/13409/tobacco-plantation/

Triangular Trade

Where's the cotton?
This extraordinarily profitable crop wouldn't take off until the 1780s making the U.S. a key player in the world economy.

"Cotton exports alone put the United States on the world economic map. On the eve of the Civil War, raw cotton constituted 61 percent of the value of all U.S. products shipped abroad".

https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/12/empire-of-cotton/383660/
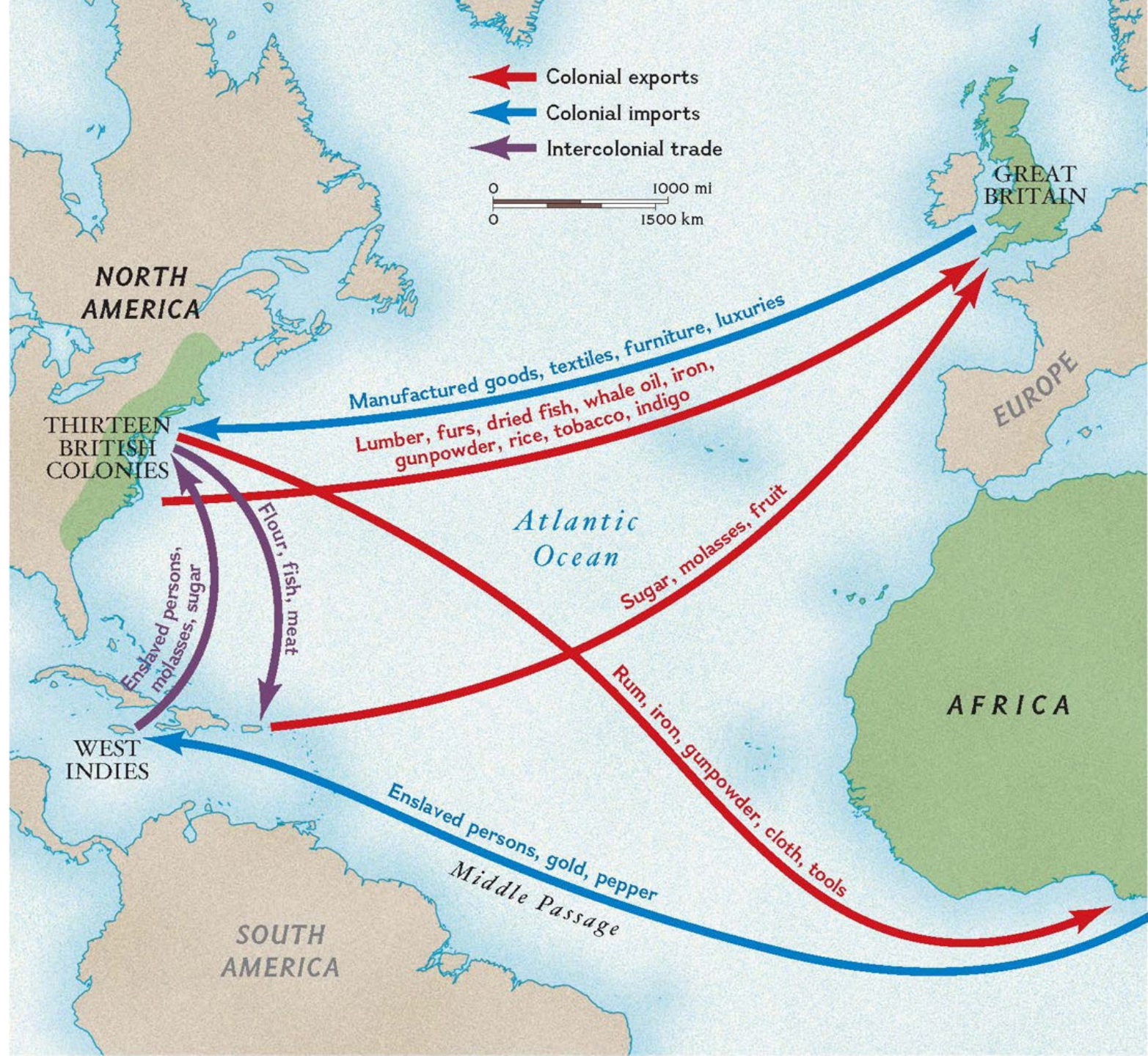
Revolution and Transition

- These early colonial cities grew and absorbed more and diverse people:
  - New York: Germans, Jews and Swedes
  - Philadelphia: German, Irish, Welsh, and Dutch
  - Charleston: French Huguenots (Protestants escaping religious persecution in France) and Scots
- Through the 18th c. immigrants moved inland and established secondary cities like New Haven and Baltimore.
- By the 1760s the 13 colonies had:
  - 12 major cities
  - 2 million English, 500,000 other Europeans, and 400,000 slaves (these populations included the hinterlands)

Revolution and Transition

- Cities tend to be places of significant wealth concentration, intellectual activity, and political power.

    - Much fervor for war was generated in cities, which then became centers for U.S. administration.

- Growing economic power and independence led colonial elites to wrest sovereignty from England.

    - Colonial merchants started to compete with British merchants and established separate trade agreements with the West Indies and Europe.

    - Local craftspeople also started producing goods for local consumption rather than relying on imports form England.

    - City governments started caving to local demands for trade freedom.

- The American Revolution was from 1775-1783

City Growth & Westward Expansion: 1800-1870

City Growth & Westward Expansion: 1800-1870

- After the Revolutionary War, urban spaces were dominant centers or power, but most of the population of the burgeoning nation was still rural.
  - The first census was 1790 where only 5% of the population lived in urban areas (places with more than 2,500 people).
  - There were only 24 of these "urban" places at this time
  - Philadelphia was the largest settlement at 42,000
- Westward Expansion: U.S. independence fueled the push further into the interior; securing "frontier" land for capitalist resource exploitation.

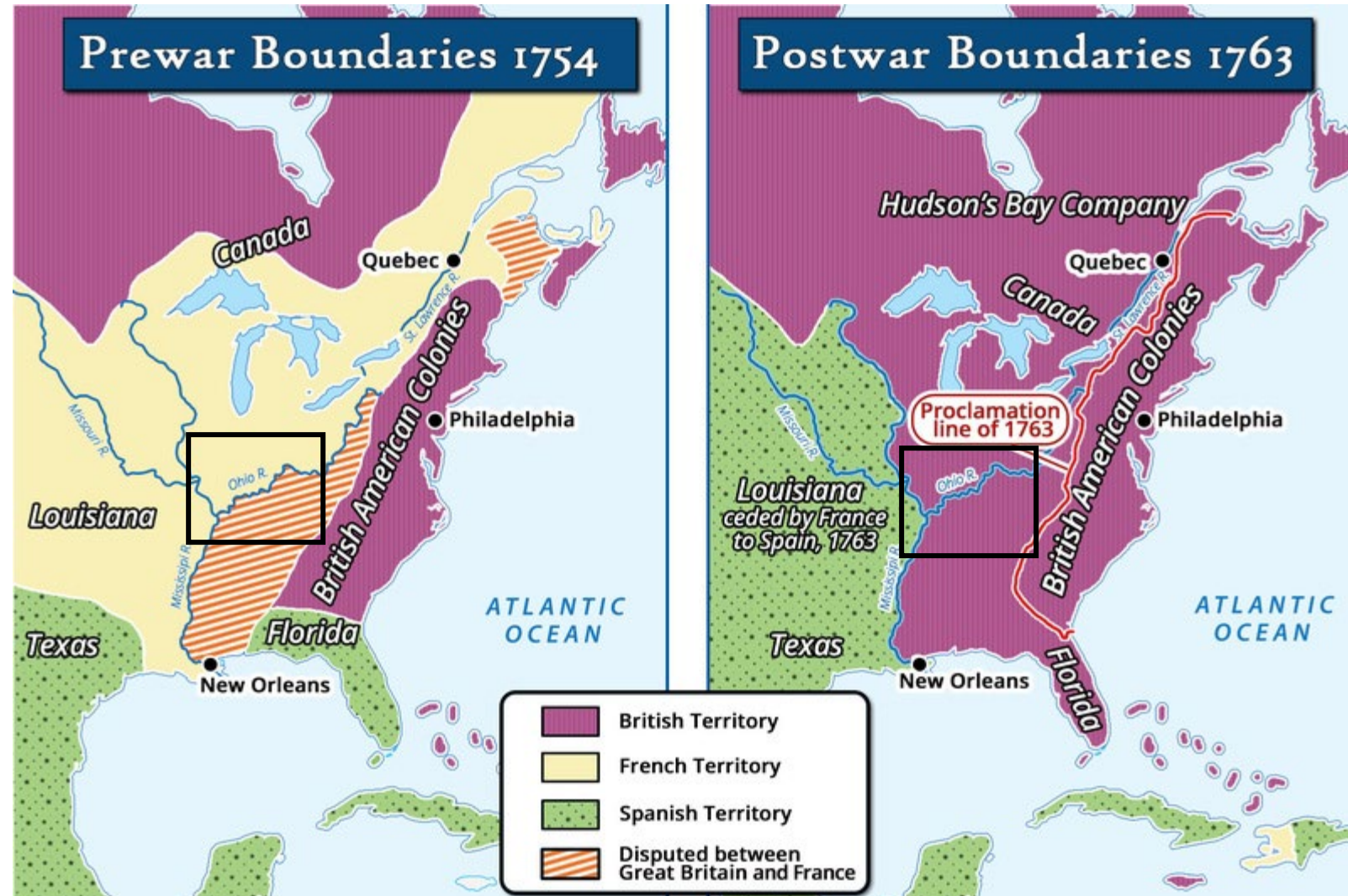**1775**
Colonial reach at outset of Revolutionary War
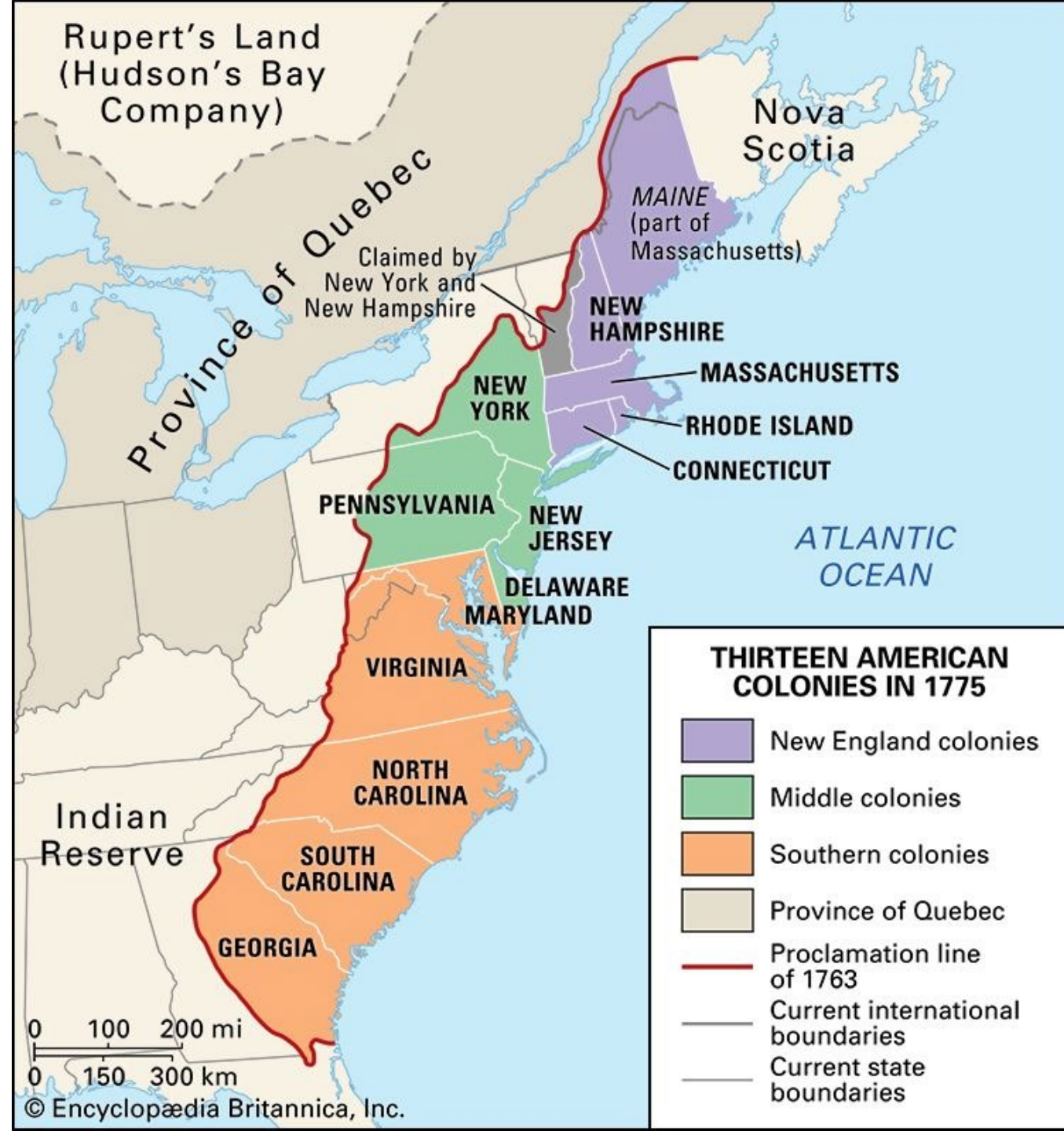
Colonial reach after Revolutionary War

States and Territories of the United States of America
August 7 1789 to May 26 1790

City Growth & Westward Expansion: 1800-1870

- With expansion of territories to the Mississippi River, city business leaders saw the economic potential of these territories and in the early decades of the 19th c. sought to link them to the cities in the East.

- This was a completely competitive move to develop economic trade power.

- It was clear that whoever captured the **Ohio Valley trade** would be the most prosperous.

  - In 1758, the Ohio River Valley was fought over in the French-Indian War.

  - In 1763 the French ceded all territories to the British who continued economic expansion.

Prewar Boundaries 1754

Canada
Quebec
British American Colonies
Philadelphia
Missouri R.
Ohio R.
Louisiana
Mississippi R.
Texas
Florida
New Orleans
ATLANTIC OCEAN

Postwar Boundaries 1763

Hudson's Bay Company
Quebec
Canada
Proclamation line of 1763
Philadelphia
Missouri R.
Louisiana ceded by France to Spain, 1763
Ohio R.
British American Colonies
Mississippi R.
Texas
New Orleans
Florida
ATLANTIC OCEAN

British Territory
French Territory
Spanish Territory
Disputed between Great Britain and France

City Growth & Westward Expansion: 1800-1870

Links to the West

- The National Road, built in 1811-1837, went from Baltimore through Appalachians
  - Facilitated settlement of the rich lands of the Ohio River Valley
- Philadelphia opened canals and turnpike routes
- New York opened the Erie Canal in 1825 – this would turn out to be key to NY's East Coast trade dominance in the mid 19th c.
- Baltimore opened a railroad line to Ohio in 1828
  - Other rail lines soon followed linking the East Coast to the hinterlands
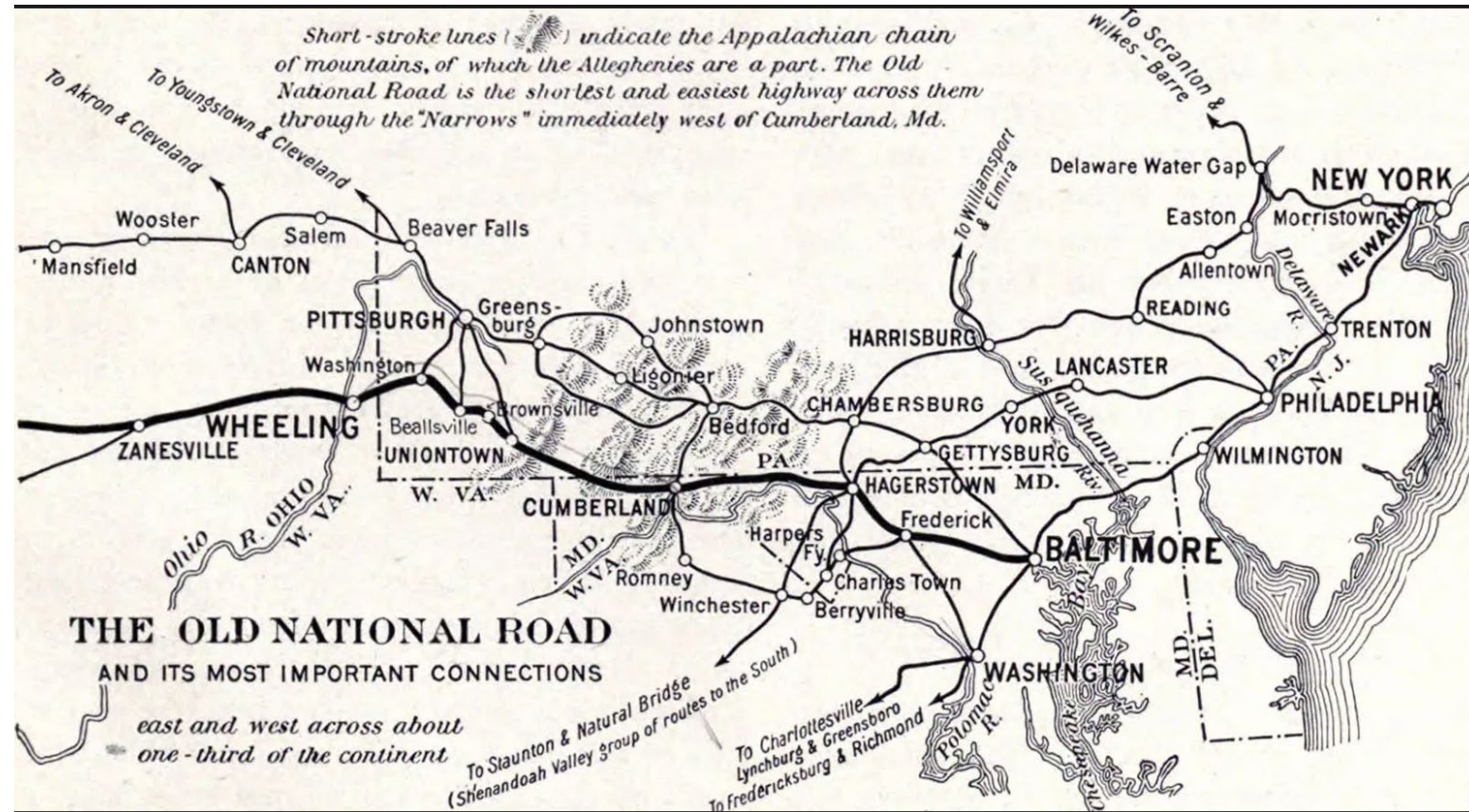
The National Road, stretching from Cumberland, Maryland westward, was the first road in the United States funded by the federal government. The US Congress approved authorization for the road in 1806, and construction proceeded from 1811 until 1834. Source: Bureau of Public Roads, US Department of Commerce

Urban Commerce Centers

- Control of the Ohio Valley Commerce by 1830 was had by three growing cities
  - New York
  - Philadelphia
  - Baltimore

TABLE 3–1 Population Growth of Selected East Coast Cities, 1790–1870

	1790	1810	1830	1850	1870
New York	33,131	100,775	214,995	515,500	942,292
Philadelphia	44,096	87,303	161,271	340,000	674,022
Boston	18,320	38,746	61,392	136,881	250,526
Baltimore	13,503	46,555	80,620	169,054	267,354
Charleston	16,359	24,711	30,289	42,985	48,956
Total U.S. urban dwellers	202,000	525,000	1,127,000	3,543,700	9,902,000
Total percent urban	5.1	7.3	8.8	15.3	25.7

Source: Statistics derived from U.S. Censuses in 1850, 1860, and 1910 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office).

TABLE 3–2 Incorporation Dates of the 50 Largest U.S. Cities by Historical Period

Pre-1776 (3)	1776–1820 (7)	1821–1860 (25)	1861–1880 (8)	1881–1910 (7)
New York (1685)	Nashville (1784)	Boston (1822)	Denver (1861)	Virginia Beach (1887)
Philadelphia (1701)	Baltimore (1797)	St. Louis (1822)	Tucson (1864)	Long Beach, CA (1888)
Charlotte (1774)	Dayton (1805)	Detroit (1824)	Minneapolis (1867)	Oklahoma City (1890)
	New Orleans (1805)	Memphis (1826)	Seattle (1869)	Miami (1896)
	San Antonio (1809)	Jacksonville (1832)	Phoenix (1871)	Tulsa (1898)
	Pittsburgh (1816)	Columbus (1834)	Fort Worth (1873)	Honolulu (1909)
	Cincinnati (1819)	Cleveland (1836)	Fresno (1874)	Las Vegas (1909)
		Chicago (1837)	Indianapolis (1874)	
		Houston (1837)		
		Toledo (1837)		
		Austin (1840)		
		Milwaukee (1846)		
		Atlanta (1847)		
		Albuquerque (1847)		
		Kansas City (1850)		
		Los Angeles (1850)		
		El Paso (1850)		
		Sacramento (1850)		
		San Diego (1850)		
		San Francisco (1850)		
		San Jose (1850)		
		Portland (1851)		
		Oakland (1854)		
		Dallas (1856)		
		Omaha (1857)		

Source: Based on data from *Statistical Abstract of the United States 1998* and from *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 1999.

- U.S. independence and the interior land grab led to a boom in the incorporation of numerous cities in the mid 19th Century
  - Note the cities that developed after the National Road and Erie Canal were in use

Early Industrialization

- U.S. entrepreneurs adopted new European industrial techniques to establish manufacturing bases in the new nation and profit from the abundance of raw materials.
    - Paterson, NJ -- founded in part by Alexander Hamilton -- was the first planned industrial city harnessing the power of the **Passaic Falls to become the cotton town of the US** and later a locomotive building center.
    - **New England became a leader in textiles** with factory towns emerging
    - Villages with **waterfalls established mills** for textiles and paper, show factories, and iron foundries.
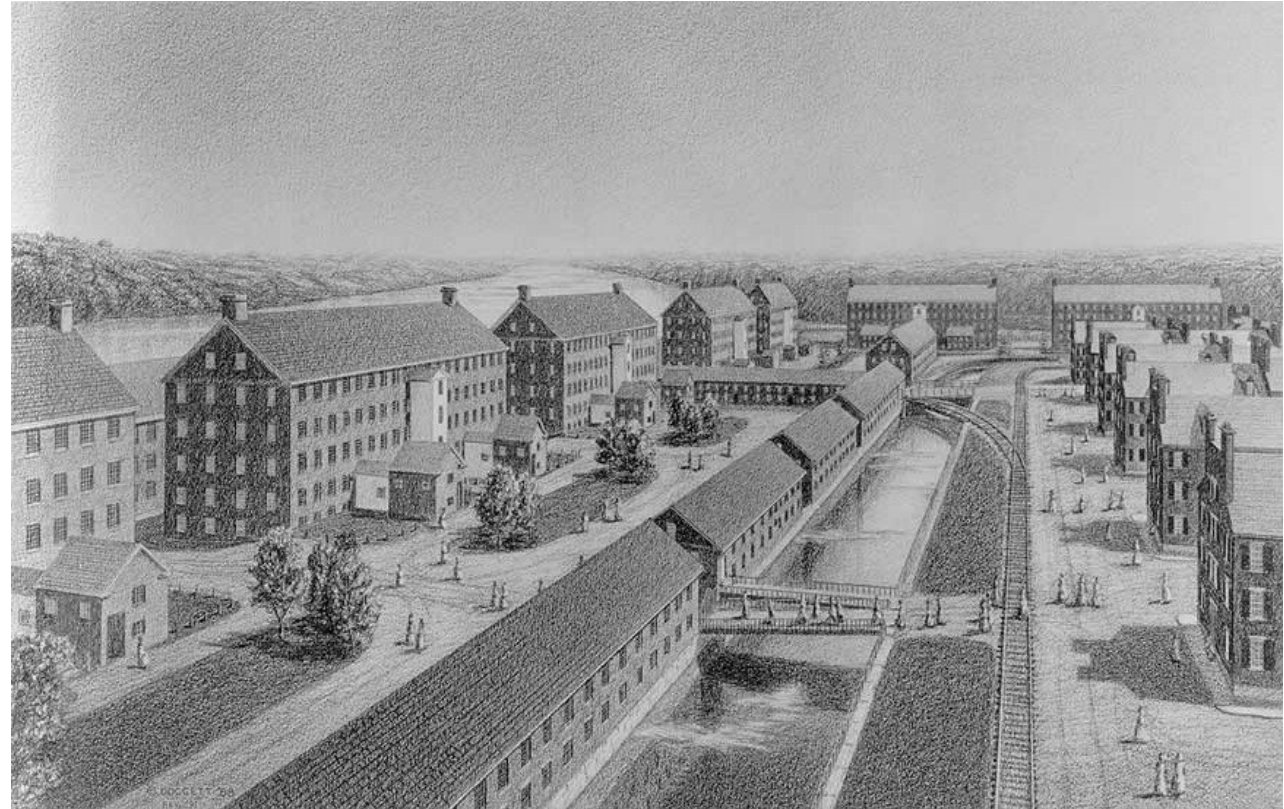
Boot Cotton Mills of Lowell, Massachusetts (Lowell National Historical Park; Kirk Doggett, Illustrator)

North/South : Urban/Rural Tensions

- Growing urbanization and industrialization alarmed many who preferred a rural/ agrarian life.
  - Thomas Jefferson, raised in a rural aristocracy of Virginia, saw cities as "ulcers in the body politic" with their growth leading to corruption.
- People debated the pros and cons of city life and many tensions revolved around the fact that from 1820-1860 the bulk of economic and population growth was in the Northern cities.
  - The North had railroad and water access helping produce more wealth and a greater share regional and national markets compared to the South that was still largely agrarian and slave-dependent.
- Tensions mounted and in 1861 the Civil War broke out, its fundamental cause being that of slavery.

Industrial Metropolis: 1870-1950

Industrial Metropolis: 1870-1950

- Familiar city features like skyscrapers and street grids emerged as the industrial era demanded spatial efficiency and "legibility" of the city.
- Two factors contributed to this transformation:
  - Industrial technology
  - Migration of millions to cities

Library of Congress/Detroit Publishing Co.*The Flatiron Building in New York, circa 1902-1910*

Industrial Metropolis: Technological Advances

- Constructing buildings with iron and later steel developed skylines of ever taller buildings, especially in NYC and Chicago.
  - The advent of the Otis elevator in the 1850s
- Street level transportation developed with elevated steam-powered trains by the 1870s and electric trolleys in 1880
  - The streetcar and subway would soon make suburbs a possibility for millions.
  - Some of the first suburbs grew outside Boston between 1870-1890

Raising a block of buildings on Lake Street, Chicago, in 1857 Chicago Historical Society/Wikimedia Commons.

Early Suburbs

- Early suburbs brought real estate speculators.

- For example, the Boston suburbs of Roxbury, West Roxbury and Dorchester gained over 23,000 new home between 1870-1890.

- Suburbs of the late 1800s allowed for a separation of work (city) and home (suburb), but brough economic and social homogeneity as they largely excluded the poor.

  - This pattern or exclusion and racism is repeated in post WWII suburbanization (more on that in lecture #4).

Corner of Dudley and Warren Streets (Dudley Square) in 1856, as Irish and other immigrants were first moving into this emerging streetcar suburb. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library.
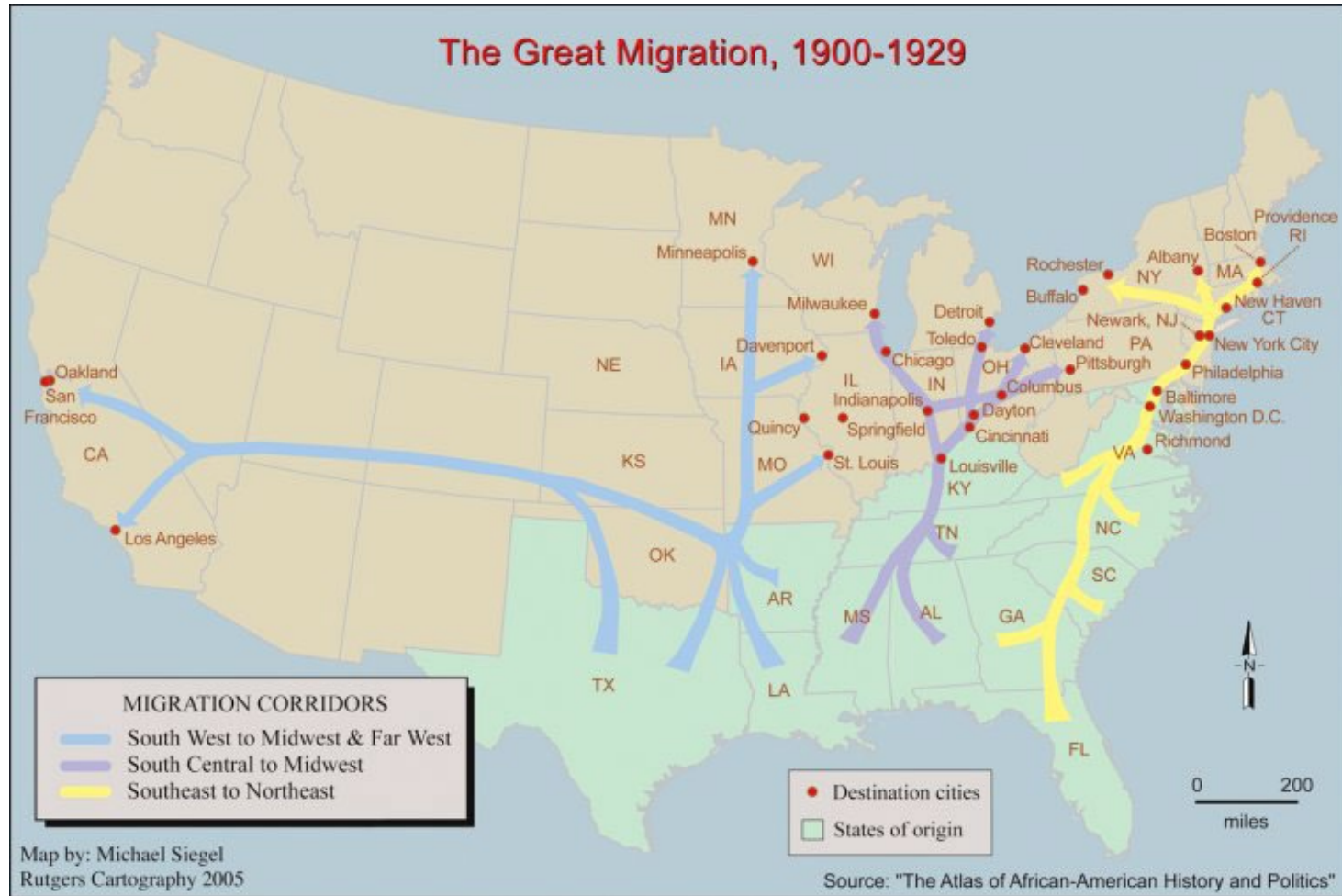
Industrial Metropolis: Migration

- From the mid 19th c. through the early 20th c. cities experienced explosive population growth.
  - Suburbs helped absorb the immense population growth in cities.
  - Between 1870-1920 cities (pop. 2,500+) combined populations grew form near 10 million to over 54 million.
    - The U.S became mostly urban for the first time in 1913.
    - For example, NYC went from barely 1 million to almost 6 million people in this time.

Industrial Metropolis: Migration

Trends influencing urban growth:

Rural-to-urban migration

- Looking for opportunity/wealth

- Result of automated manufacturing making hand-powered labor obsolete.

- Though there was a general shift toward urbanization during this time, the most significant movement was of African Americans from the rural south to northern cities after the Reconstruction (1880s) – this was known as the Great Migration.

The Great Migration, 1900-1929

MIGRATION CORRIDORS
- South West to Midwest & Far West
- South Central to Midwest
- Southeast to Northeast

- Destination cities
- States of origin

Map by: Michael Siegel
Rutgers Cartography 2005

Source: "The Atlas of African-American History and Politics"

Industrial Metropolis: Migration

Trends influencing urban growth:

Immigration from abroad

- Ethnic enclaves develop in cities (e.g., Italian, Jewish, Polish, Irish)

- Early immigration policy was fairly open until the 1920s, though before the Civil War, citizenship rights were restricted to "whites."

- WWI slowed immigration then in 1921 anti-immigrationists lobbied the US Congress to pass laws limiting the immigrants mainly from south and eastern Europe (they were considered "less desirable" immigrants)…further restrictions were enacted in 1924.

- These immigration quotas didn't limit migration though. Exploitable labor was found with the Great Migration of 600,000+ African Americans who migrated north during the 1920s.

  - African Americans moved to: Chicago's Souths Side, Harlem, Hartford, Baltimore, Washington DC, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Detroit in search of work.

  - Racial tensions often culminating in riots, such as Detroit's in 1925.

Industrial Metropolis:1870-1950

- Economies based on manufacturing and industrial production
  - Steel, coal, clothing…
- Millions of immigrants and rural migrants imported to fulfill labor demands of rapidly expanding industries
  - Crowded into low quality tenement housing
- "Robber barons"
  - Industrial era capitalists took advantage of weak economic regulations, high immigration numbers, and the lack of labor protections to become extremely wealthy. (e.g., Andrew Carnegie, J. P. Morgan, Cornelius Vanderbilt)
  - Heightened economic polarization

"The Bosses of the Senate" (1889) shows Robber Barons dominating American politics.
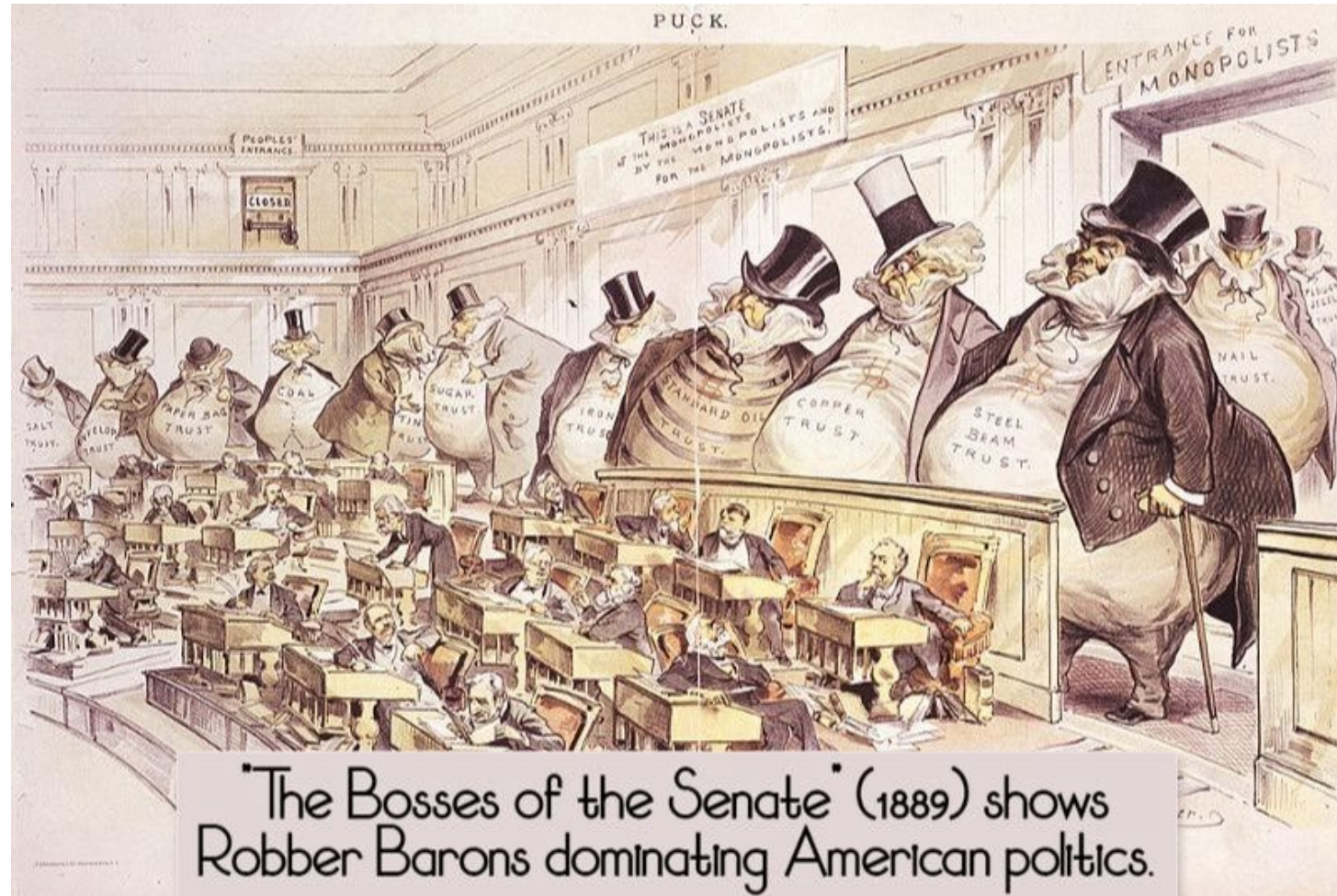
Machine Politics

- A political regime in which a "boss" amasses power by acting as a broker between democratically elected political elites and unorganized working-class residents.

- Though often corrupt (taking kickbacks, bribing), political machines were instrumental in obtaining employment and municipal services for otherwise economically disenfranchised urban residents.

Industrial Metropolis: Great Depression & New Deal Era

- The 1929 stock market crash led to the Great Depression, an economic crisis that demanded serious interventions from the public-sector in the form of Roosevelt's New Deal initiatives under the Federal Government.
  - **Housing:** High unemployment and dwindling wages meant mortgage holders could not make the balloon payments (even if they could manage monthly loan payments).
  - Lenders were reluctant to refinance and second and third mortgages become worthless as property values plummeted.

Federal Housing Administration

1934 National Housing Act → Federal Housing Administration (FHA) – the creation of the FHA meant the <u>federal government would insure mortgages</u> provided by private lenders.

- This was a revolutionary change in housing and <u>made monthly mortgage payments more manageable and the insurance program removed risk</u>, thus making interest rates low and housing more affordable for the average person...except for African-Americans and other non-whites who were largely excluded from FHA assistance through tactics like **redlining** [more in this in the lecture #4].
- The FHA guaranteed that creditors would be repaid 80% of a loan if the homeowner were to default.

Housing Act of 1937 (Wagner-Steagall Act) – established the U.S. Housing Admin. to build <u>publicly subsidized housing</u> (for each new unit, one substandard unit must be removed, operations left to local authorities). Low maximum income requirements...lead to concentration of poverty.

Racism of the FHA

- The impact of FHA policies was substantial in that it grew homeownership to such a degree that by 1960, 60% of Americans were homeowners—this also created the foundation of a sound economy at the time.

- However, this growth was uneven and created conditions for a flourishing (mainly white) suburbia at the expense of inner-city urban development in which the Black population was largely trapped.
  - **Second Great Migration:** From 1940-1970, 5 million African-Americans migrated from the South to urban areas in the North, Midwest, and west Coast.

Urban Renewal/"Negro" Removal

Central to urban renewal was new and profitable uses for urban land.

- **Housing Act of 1949** – "Declares that the general welfare and security of the Nation requires the establishment of a national housing policy to realize, as soon as feasible, the <u>goal of a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family</u>. Authorizes Federal advances, loans, and grants to localities to assist slum clearance and urban redevelopment".
  - Areas had to be identified as "blighted", "slum", or "ghetto" and could then be seized using the government's power of eminent domain.
  - Those living and working in these blighted areas were removed with minimal compensation.
    The land was sold to developers at a fraction of the city's cost due to federal subsidies.

- **Housing Act of 1954** – "provided funding for 140,000 units of <u>public housing</u>, giving preferential treatment to families that would be relocated for slum eradication or revitalization".
  - By June 30,1967 a total of 400,000 residential units had been demolished in the name of urban renewal with only 10,760 low-income units built on these sites.
  - African American communities were pathologized and deemed "disorganized" and of "no social loss" (Fullilove, 2005, p. 62).

Sources

- Fullilove, M. (2009). *Root shock: How tearing up city neighborhoods hurts America, and what we can do about it*. One World/Ballantine.

- Macionis, J. and Parrillo, V. (2001). *Cities and Urban Life, 2nd Ed*. Prentice Hall.

- Taylor K.-Y. (2019). *Race for profit : how banks and the real estate industry undermined black homeownership*. University of North Carolina Press.

- https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/news-wires-white-papers-and-books/1600-1754-native-americans-overview

Check hyperlinks and slide notes for additional sources.