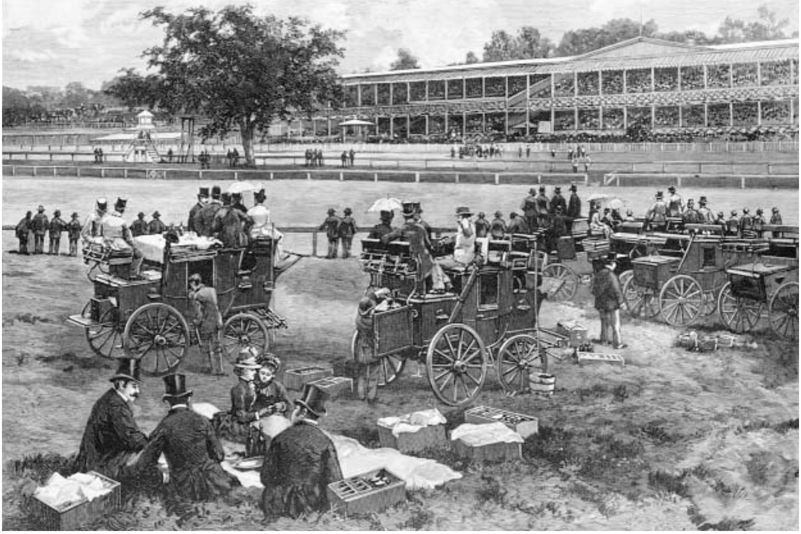
SECOND EDITION

The American History Series

Sport in Industrial America

1850–1920

Steven A. Riess



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Steven A. Riess
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Sport in Industrial America, 1850–1920

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Dedicated to the memory of my grandparents,
Alfred and Mathilde Riess and Berta and Jacob Finder.

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PREFACE and ACKNOWLEDGMENTS to the SECOND EDITION

I am honored to have the opportunity to write a second edition of this book. My thanks to the publisher, Andrew J. Davidson. The first edition was well received by both students and instructors for its coverage, analysis, and readability. The book was recognized as a *Choice* "Outstanding Academic Book" for 1996. I again want to thank the late Abraham S. Eisenstadt for his outstanding work as my editor on that edition. This edition has undergone some significant changes. In revision I corrected all errors I discovered, supplemented the narrative, and introduced the most current interpretations in the field. Naturally, I thoroughly revised the bibliographical essay to account for the substantial new literature in the field. The most dramatic change is the addition of an entirely new concluding chapter on the subject of American Sport in the International Arena. This topic was insufficiently recognized in the first edition, and it has been the subject of enormous scholarship since that volume was published. Permit me to single out two of the leading contributors to that subfield, Mark Dyreson and Gerald Gems, for their excellent monographs, and also for the kind assistance they gave me in creating the new chapter. I benefited from outstanding support from Andrew Davidson, who edited the manuscript, and Linda Gaio, who did a superb job hunting down photographs. As always, I am alone responsible for any errors.

Steven A. Riess
Skokie, Illinois

INTRODUCTION

Sport in modern society is one of the most popular forms of mass entertainment. People all around the world enjoy playing and watching sports. Millions attend soccer matches, horse races, and baseball games, while over a billion watch the Olympics and the World Cup on television. The United States in the late nineteenth century became one of the first countries in which sport was a widespread obsession. Great Britain was the very first, and the American fascination with sport began as a product of its colonial heritage and the nineteenth-century, trans-Atlantic, Anglo-American culture. In the mid-nineteenth century, before the United States became an industrial, urban nation, sport had not yet achieved a high level of prominence or widespread popularity. Sport appealed largely to segments of the economic and social elite and to lower-class subcultures that composed the sporting fraternity. The term *sport* had very negative connotations, defined as an object of derision, or a person with a flashy lifestyle or a mutation. As historian Elliott Gorn points out, sport intimated boisterousness, defiance of social constraint, and loutish behavior.

Historians today define sport as pastimes, primarily competitive, that require physical dexterity. These contests may be against oneself, another individual, or a rival team. The sporting games of most people around the world in the mid-nineteenth century were premodern, traditional village pastimes, such as wrestling or throwing stones, or adjuncts to religious ceremonies, such as the Native American games of lacrosse and shinny. Historians Allen Guttmann and Melvin Adelman, authors, respectively, of *From Ritual to Record: The Nature of Modern Sports* (1978) and *A Sporting Time: New York City and the Rise of Modern Athletics, 1820–70* (1986), describe premodern sports as unorganized or informally arranged athletic contests. Rules were simple, unwritten, and based on local customs and traditions, competition was local, and little role differentiation existed among participants. Reports of contests were not widely disseminated or remembered (other than by oral tradition), and no statistics or records were kept. Modern sports, on the other hand, are described as highly organized, secular activities with formal institutions at local, regional, and national levels. Rules are formal, standard, and written, and competition is theoretically open to everyone under the same conditions. Roles are highly differentiated between spectators and players, and among professionals and amateurs who specialize in particular sports and even certain positions. Finally, in modern sports, results are widely publicized and statistics and records are carefully maintained.

American sport in 1850 was only just beginning to become modernized. Furthermore, it was virtually an exclusive male preserve that defined and exemplified manly behavior as aggressive, courageous, vigorous, and unchildlike. Popular sports were primarily participatory and offered athletes an opportunity to demonstrate physical prowess, make money from prizes or bets, and fraternize with their rivals. Mass spectatorship had already become significant, particularly for elite-sponsored thoroughbred racing (although harness racing was the first modern sport organized by middle-class Americans), attended in some cases by huge audiences, and pedestrianism (long-distance running races), which matched working-class athletes. These contests provided spectators with entertainment, sociability, and gambling opportunities.

American sportsmen up to the 1850s constituted a sporting fraternity of upper- and working-class men who enjoyed traditional sporting pastimes. They composed an important segment of the male bachelor subculture that rejected middle-class Victorian morality. These men enjoyed camaraderie, sociability, and instant gratification in male-only settings in which they escaped from women, domesticity, and work. They valued such manly behavior as drinking, frequenting prostitutes, gambling, and demonstrating athletic prowess. However, sport was not yet very popular among future-oriented middle-income men, who generally frowned upon it as an immoral and socially debilitating waste of time.

The premodern, mid-nineteenth-century sporting culture was heavily influenced by the agrarian character of society. At this time 84.7 percent of Americans still lived in rural areas, and their favorite sports were contests of strength, skill, and courage that they enjoyed at taverns and in the countryside. In the early 1800s, woods and streams were readily accessible to most American sportsmen who fished, hunted, shot at targets, and rode horses. Spectators could watch horse races, combat contests like gouging (rough-and-tumble, no holds-barred frontier matches), prizefighting and wrestling, and such blood sports as animal baiting and cock fighting. Nonetheless, as early as the colonial era, cities played an important role in American sport; with their relatively concentrated populations, they provided a site for sports clubs and sports entrepreneurs. Eighteenth-century colonial cities had elite fishing, racing, and fox-hunting clubs, and by the early 1800s cities also had more democratic organizations for rowing, racquets, gymnastics, and target shooting. Colonial publicans were the first sporting entrepreneurs. They sponsored animal baiting, marksmanship contests, billiards, and bowling, all pastimes that involved wagering and attracted thirsty sporting men. Tavern promotion of animal baiting declined in the antebellum era, replaced in part by an occasional illegal prize fight. Boxing demonstrated courage and other manly traits; in 1837 the *New York Herald* argued that this sport was "far preferable to the insidious knife . . . , or the cowardly and brutal practice of biting, kicking or gouging." Spectator sports were mainly contested in cities that had sufficient gate-paying sportsmen to encourage promoters to arrange matches.

The purpose of this book is to explain how sport in the United States developed from a morally suspect, premodern entertainment in 1850 that did not attract the interest of most Americans into a respectable, modernized national obsession, culminating in the Golden Age of Sports in the 1920s. During this period the variety and number of sports rapidly increased, sporting institutions became modernized and participatory, and spectator sport became popular with men from all social classes and most demographic groups. Cities became responsible for providing public space for their residents to play, sports arenas became prominent semipublic facilities, open to anyone paying admission, and private clubs were established for the exclusive use of their memberships. In this era, star athletes like John L. Sullivan, Ty Cobb, and Christy Mathewson became national heroes. My analysis of the rise of sport and its development focuses both on the internal history of major sports (the rise of leagues, rules, records, championships, and the dissemination of information) and the influence of broader societal developments, primarily urbanization (city building) and industrialization, and, secondarily, class, race, ethnicity, and gender, upon sporting institutions. In addition, I examine the impact of sport upon the broader American culture and society.

The changes in the American sporting scene began at midcentury and then accelerated after the Civil War, primarily as a result of urbanization and industrialization. The greatest relative increase in urban population in American history occurred in the mid-nineteenth century. As a result, the proportion of the population that resided in cities tripled, from 7.2 percent in 1820 to 19.8 percent in 1860. In 1820 there were just 61 cities (population of 2,500 or more), only 11 of which had more than 10,000 residents. By 1860 there were 93 cities with over 10,000 people, including 9 with over 100,000.

American cities in this era were commercial communities, known as "walking cities" because residents usually walked wherever they had to go, seldom for more than thirty minutes. These cities were almost always located on navigable bodies of water, modest in size (the city limits extended only a couple of miles from the center of town), had small populations, and a highly mixed land use. The docks were the center of business activity. By the 1870s, the accelerated pace of urban growth led to the rise of the industrial radial city. These cities had substantial populations and were physically much larger than walking cities, their size made feasible by the emergence of extensive public transportation systems. Their economies were increasingly based on industry rather than trade. Land uses were highly specialized with distinctive commercial, residential, and industrial areas radiating out in concentric circles from the Central Business District (downtown). Organized sport emerged in the larger walking cities of the mid-nineteenth century, but the great boom in sport took place in the radial industrial cities after the Civil War. Their concentrated populations included a critical mass of potential sports participants and spectators; they provided a ready market for sports entrepreneurs who sold athletic equipment or promoted commercial sports contests.

The role of the city in the rise of modern sport was greater than simply being the site where athletes were drawn from and where sport became organized, commercialized, and professionalized. Cities were organic entities composed of physical structures, social organizations, and value systems that interacted over time to create urban change that itself helped shape the rise of sport. A city's physical structure included its spatial dimensions, demographics, neighborhoods, communication and transportation networks, and economic institutions, while its social organizations encompassed political and governmental structures, social institutions, social classes, and ethnic and racial groups. Value systems comprised individual and group attitudes, ideologies, and behavior. American sport in the industrial radial city was primarily a product of the constant blending of the elements of urbanization with each other and with sport itself.

The late-nineteenth-century sporting boom had its origins in various social forces operating in the antebellum walking city. A major factor was the emergence of a sports creed that changed middle-class attitudes toward sport from negative to positive. This transformation was produced by a broad-based reform movement that sought to ameliorate living conditions for slum dwellers as well as for sedentary white-collar workers by promoting wholesome out-of-door sports. The new sport doctrines demonstrated that athletics could be uplifting and promote public health, improve morality, and build character. It placed sport firmly within the traditional

American expectation that leisure-time activities should be useful as well as diverting.

Once sport's popularity began to grow, the rise of industrial capitalism heavily influenced its direction. The shift from an agrarian and commercial economy to an industrial economy reshaped the urban social structure, the distribution of wealth, and traditional leisure patterns. The industrial age also ushered in remarkable technological innovations. Improved communication networks made possible immediate reports of sporting events by widely read cheap daily newspapers, while the construction of railroads made sport more accessible across the country, facilitating tours by baseball teams, prize fighters, and renowned race horses. Furthermore, factories used innovative manufacturing techniques to mass-produce inexpensive sports equipment that increased opportunities for participation.

The changing spaces of towns that evolved into radial cities had a big impact on sport. Traditional playing areas were often destroyed as land use patterns shifted, such as when empty lots that formerly served as cricket pitches were used for housing or factories. Lovely boulevards and quaint rural roads used for trotting became busy city streets. Once remote streams were drained and woods were cleared, requiring sportsmen to travel further to unpolluted waterways or timberlands. Some of the problems of accessibility were alleviated by innovations such as railroads, streetcars and electric trolleys that enabled athletes and spectators who could afford the cost to get to sporting venues.

City governments responded slowly to the growing needs for outdoor space. Social reformers and boosters pressured municipalities to secure and develop public space for recreation. Cities, led by the example of New York's Central Park in 1858, established beautiful suburban public parks after the Civil War. By the early 1900s, municipalities also developed inner-city sites for small parks and playgrounds, baths, recreational piers, and schoolyards. Local governments continued to be responsible for protecting public property, maintaining order, and promoting morality. The authorities kept young ballplayers out of city streets, regulated sports crowds, issued licenses for sports promotions, fought the gambling menace, and often maintained Sunday blue laws (regulations that enforce strict moral standards, particularly on the Sabbath).

Sport in industrial America was substantially influenced by social class, which was itself heavily shaped by industrialization and urbanization. The economic changes that resulted from industrial capitalism greatly benefited the old rich and created outstanding opportunities for the new rich who made their money as industrial entrepreneurs and financiers. The upper class constituted less than 5 percent of the population, yet by 1890 owned about 30 percent of the national wealth. The elite had considerable leisure time and abundant discretionary income, which society men and women enjoyed in various ways, including participation in exclusive sports clubs and expensive sports. The rich, especially people of new wealth, organized and joined athletic, racing, and country clubs with restricted memberships. They enjoyed sports at these private organizations, and their membership certified their status and separated them from lesser sorts. Their sons proved their manliness by participating in tough sports, particularly football, and by building up an overseas American Empire, carrying the "White Man's Burden" to the third world, where they used American sports to spread their national culture.

Middle-class athletic participation grew markedly in the industrial age. Industrialization altered the antebellum middle class of independent master artisans, farmers, clerks, and shopkeepers into a largely dependent cohort of white-collar clerks, bureaucrats, and professionals who were increasingly employed by business or the growing government. Whereas the old middle class had been critical of sport and its negative social impact, the new middle class was keenly interested in sport because of the influence of the new sports creed, the emergence of upright games such as baseball (which was nonviolent and not identified with gambling, yet still manly and potentially character-building), and the positive role models of the English, Scottish, German, and Scandinavian sporting subcommunities. Besides having a newfound interest in sport, the new middle class had the time, money, and access to athletic facilities that enabled them to enjoy sport.

While urbanization and industrialization facilitated the sporting interests of the upper and middle classes, these processes hindered blue-collar participation. The industrial revolution limited workers' discretionary time and income because of onerous factory work schedules, limited leisure time, and low incomes. The shift in workplace from small craft shops to the machine-driven factory system made skills less necessary, and hence less valuable. Artisans who had considerable control over the antebellum workshop and considerable free time lost most of their independence and control over their labor with the rise of industrialization. Like machine operators and unskilled laborers, they now worked long hours for modest wages. By 1890 the bottom 90 percent of the population owned only one-fourth of the national wealth. In addition to low incomes and limited discretionary time, lower-class sporting opportunities were hindered by the loss of traditional playing areas to urban development and the increased size of cities, which made outdoor sporting sites such as rivers, woods, parks, and baseball fields increasingly inaccessible.

Ethnicity and race were also major factors in the emerging American sporting experience. With the exception of the Irish, who readily fit into the male bachelor subculture, immigrants from western Europe brought over with them a sporting heritage that provided a positive role model for middle-class Americans. Voluntary ethnic sports clubs established in urban neighborhoods or rural communities helped these newcomers adjust to American life by sustaining their traditional culture. Conversely, the new immigrants from eastern and southern Europe came to American cities without a sporting legacy, and they did not become sports-minded. Their sons, however, eager to become Americanized, became active in sports, especially those that fit in with their inner-city environment. Ironically, their athletic participation often enhanced their ethnic identity as they emulated ethnic heroes or joined ethnic sports clubs. Finally, the immigrants' athletic experience was quite different from that of African Americans, whose participation in the national sporting culture was limited and even barred because of race. Despite their skill in many sports, African Americans in the late nineteenth century were forced out of many amateur organizations as well as most professional sports.

Two of the biggest developments in sport in the industrial age were intercollegiate sport and youth sport. Intercollegiate sport, based on the so-called Oxbridge model of competition (as conducted at Oxford and Cambridge Universities in England) provided college men with a chance to demonstrate manliness, and gave both men and (briefly) women an opportunity to display their prowess, organize extracurricular activities, and promote school spirit. Intercollegiate sport emerged primarily at elite eastern institutions whose student bodies were upper or upper-middle class. By the late nineteenth century, other schools, including the more democratic state universities, copied the program. College football became the big game, and while ostensibly an amateur game, it became highly commercial, and important matches were played in major cities to draw the largest possible audiences. The commercial nature of football encouraged the rise of the professional coach, who often violated the ethics of amateurism and sportsmanship in order to win.

High-school students appropriated the collegiate paradigm, creating student-run interscholastic athletic associations that provided a focal point for the student body and the surrounding neighborhood. Sports programs were also developed by physical educators for elementary-school students, and outside of schools by boys' workers at settlement houses, YMCAs, and inner-city parks to acculturate inner-city, second-generation youth, improve their health, and train them to become productive, law-abiding citizens.

Another major theme is the boom in commercial spectator sports made possible by the great increase in the number of cities and the size thereof. By 1920, when half (51.4 percent) of the national population lived in cities, sixty-eight cities housed over 100,000 residents, led by New York with 5.6 million. Growing populations in the industrial era provided the potential audience needed to encourage a boom in sport. The three leading professional sports were prizefighting, which appealed to the sporting fraternity, horse racing, which appealed to gamblers and the elite, and baseball, which appealed to everyone. Prizefighting was almost universally banned in industrial America because of its violence, the typically low-life origins of fighters and spectators, and the gambling nexus. It was illegal everywhere until the 1890s when permitted in Louisiana, New York, and Nevada, and had a checkered history until the 1920s. Horse racing was a very popular sport in the late nineteenth century, with hundreds of tracks scattered across the country. Reformers, however, fought the sport because of the wagering, and by 1910 only a handful of tracks remained open. Baseball, on the other hand, became the national pastime, its popularity unrivaled. Professional baseball, a relatively inexpensive spectator sport, appealed to all classes, but especially catered at first to middle-class audiences. Tickets to major league games could be as cheap as 25 cents, which even the lowest classes could afford on occasion. Their attendance was hindered, however, by Sunday blue laws and work schedules. A popular baseball creed developed in the early 1900s that epitomized the finest American values, such as self-reliance, respect for authority, and teamwork. Professional teams, usually locally owned, became public symbols of their hometowns. Major League Baseball was considered a meritocracy, drawing players mainly from lower-middle-class urban backgrounds. It was, however, the first major sport to draw the color line, barring African Americans from participating after 1884.

The preeminent sports promoters were typically professional politicians or close associates whose connections provided sports entrepreneurs with protection for their investments, inside information (the best potential sites for sports facilities; plans for mass transit; and warnings about gambling raids), and preferential treatment from City Hall. The promoters built venues that were originally flimsy and dangerous edifices, but as sport became more commercialized and progressive building codes were enacted, the structures became larger, more modern, safer, and costlier. They included large, multifunctional downtown arenas and enormous outdoor facilities such as baseball parks and racetracks built on the outskirts of town or in nearby suburbs. Facilities such as New York's Madison Square Garden, Belmont Park, and the Polo Grounds were among the most prominent semipublic edifices in the industrial radial city.

A new topic examined in this second edition is the role of the United States in the globalization of sports. As mentioned, the United States was originally a recipient of sporting cultures brought over by immigrants. But in the last third of the nineteenth century, Americans began bringing *their* games overseas to prove American manliness, athletic prowess, and high level of civilization—and to make money. In addition to formal baseball tours, American educators, missionaries, and businessmen began teaching distinctly American games in the Pacific Rim and the Caribbean basin, to people who believed American sports represented democracy, meritocracy, and other important American qualities. This began as a part of the

"White Man's Burden" that Americans willingly accepted, but by the turn of the twentieth century it slowly began to become part of national foreign policy, another tool to Americanize and maintain social control over the informal U.S. empire and its new colonies.

The globalization of sport also led to higher levels of international competition, beginning in boxing when a former American slave, Bill Richmond, fought in England in the 1790s and early 1800s. The first championship contest was a boxing match between another former slave, Tom Molineaux, and titlist Tom Cribb in 1810, at Cropthorne, Sussex, attended by several thousand, in which the Englishman kept his crown. In 1811, Cribb took their rematch that reportedly drew 15,000 fans. Thereafter, Americans occasionally participated in sporting events in Great Britain, where they vied to prove their mettle against the finest athletes in the world. This culminated in American participation in the new modern Olympic Games, a quadrennial event that began in 1896. While "the Olympics" consisted of several athletic disciplines, American attention was mainly riveted at track-and-field, which U.S. teams dominated. Their success at the international level was perceived as evidence for the superior physicality of American men, but also the advanced state of U.S. civilization that had led to the production of such outstanding athletes.

By 1920, sport was one of the most prominent popular institutions in America. During the decade of the 1920s, the Golden Age of Sport, men of all social and ethnic backgrounds played and watched sport, as did many middle- and upper-class women. Attendance and rates of participation were at record highs, reflecting the decade's higher standard of living, greater discretionary income, and increased leisure time. Once-shunned gambling sports such as thoroughbred racing and boxing enjoyed great revivals. In 1927, a record 104,000 fans at Chicago's Soldier Field saw Gene Tunney earn $990,000 when he successfully defended his heavyweight title against Jack Dempsey.

Every major sport had its great heroes: Babe Ruth (baseball), Red Grange (football), Jack Dempsey (boxing), Bill Tilden (tennis), Bobby Jones (golf), and Charles Lindbergh (aviation). There were even a few heroines, most notably Gertrude Ederle (swimming) and Helen Wills (tennis). In an increasingly bureaucratic and urban society, their achievements demonstrated the continuing merit of traditional, small-town American values such as hard work and self-reliance. Team sports heroes also epitomized more modern values, such as cooperation and teamwork. Idols such as Grange and Lindbergh combined the best of both worlds, the qualities of both the pioneer and the organization man of the modern industrial society.

CHAPTER ONE

Urbanization, the Technological Revolution, and the Rise of Sport

Sport in the industrial United States was dramatically shaped by urbanization and technological innovation. It was in cities where major amateur and professional sports as well as many popular recreational sports achieved their modern form. Most top athletes were born and reared in cities and played at urban sports facilities ranging from billiard parlors and bowling alleys to arenas, racetracks, parks, and baseball fields. Yet the city was more than a place with a large population that provided a home for players and spectators, and playing sites for athletic contests. Cities performed an active role in the evolution of athletic institutions and sporting cultures that developed in interaction with the principal elements of urbanization.

The city's influence on sport dated back to the colonial era, when 5 percent of the population lived in urban sites. In towns such as New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and Charleston, the relatively concentrated populations provided tavern owners sponsoring sports events with a potential market and facilitated the formation of mid-eighteenth-century sports clubs. Residents relied on their municipal governments to regulate semipublic institutions (particularly taverns), public space (parks and streets), and Sabbath behavior to protect community norms and morality when threatened by the growing sporting interest.

Urbanization did not proceed rapidly in the early-nineteenth-century walking city, but beginning in the 1830s, the pace of urbanization accelerated greatly. During that decade the urban population increased by 63.7 percent; then 92.1 percent in the 1840s, the highest in American history, and 75.4 percent in the 1850s. Population and physical expansion increased dramatically in established cities, accompanied by the appearance of hundreds of new cities. Between 1830 and 1860, New York, the nation's largest city, grew from 202,000 to 814,000; Philadelphia from 161,000 to 566,000; and Brooklyn from 15,000 to 267,000. The town of Chicago in 1833 had merely 300 inhabitants, but it grew to 109,000 in 1860, making it the ninth largest city in the United States. By 1870, one-fourth of the national population was urban, and fifty years later, most Americans were living in cities.

The industrial radial cities of the late nineteenth century grew through annexing outlying communities, made possible by rapid mass transit systems that enabled residents to live even farther than walking distance from their jobs. The central business district (CBD) formed the nucleus of this city. Its property became extremely expensive, shaping the CBD into a highly specialized center of business, culture, and entertainment, that housed corporations, banks, and offices of professional people in newly built skyscrapers, as well as department stores, hotels, museums, theaters, and railroad stations. The high cost of land pushed heavy industry out toward cheaper peripheral areas and satellite cities and dispersed city dwellers into concentric residential zones surrounding the downtown. The first residential belt in the city was the slum, a heterogeneous, impoverished area filled with the latest arrivals to the city. It had poor-quality housing, inadequate urban services, and high mortality and crime rates. The next district was the zone of emergence, an area of upper-lower-class neighborhoods, often second-generation Irish and Germans, that was safer and healthier than the slums. Families lived in modest homes on small lots. The third residential region was known as the suburban fringe. These homogeneous, middle-class, white Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) localities had large, single-family homes on substantial, grassy, tree-lined lots, employed servants, and were blessed by excellent schools and other public services, as well as low rates of crime and mortality. Middle-class husbands at first rode street cars and cable cars to their downtown jobs, but by the 1890s they were traveling by more efficient, electrically powered trolley cars. Boston and New York even had subways by 1904. Beyond the city limits were the suburbs proper, which included wealthy bedroom communities like Evanston and Lake Forest, whose residents rode trains to downtown Chicago to work, but also industrial suburbs like Gary, Indiana, and Cicero, Illinois, whose working-class residents worked close to home in local factories.

The rapid pace of urbanization influenced the rise of sport in several ways. The problems created by urbanization, such as rapid social change, growing social divisions, sedentary middle-class lifestyles, and the expansion of crowded, disease-ridden slums led Jacksonian reformers in the 1830s and 1840s to develop a positive sporting ideology that justified widespread participation in sport. The new sports creed portrayed humane, non-gambling athletic competition (or "clean sport") as socially useful recreations that would improve the health, morality, and character of alienated, poor inner-city residents and revitalize the hard-working middle class who spent little time in the fresh air engaged in exercise or physical labor. These beliefs also prompted a park movement to preserve and create public space for outdoor recreation, especially crucial for slum residents who lacked access to open space and fresh air. Empty lots, formerly used for playing areas, were lost to urban development as cities became more crowded, significantly limiting outdoor space for sport and thereby hindering participation. The push for uplifting sports and breathing spaces enabled reformers by the turn of the century to use sports to acculturate immigrant children by teaching them traditional American values.

Urbanization also had an important impact on the rise of spectator sports. The growing populations of cities created potential markets for spectator sports, although the expanding size of cities made accessibility to arenas and sports fields problematic. Along with public parks, these semipublic facilities became important city institutions that contributed to the urban booster spirit and publicized a town's progressive qualities. Star athletes became local heroes who were seen as role models, and city teams became a source of community for rootless urbanites, promoting a sense of hometown pride.

The Industrial Revolution contributed to the rise of sport in many ways, most directly through technological innovations. The four main contributions of modern technology to post-1870s sports were a) improved communications that provided fans with timely information about sporting events; b) transportation innovations that reduced the cost of travel to contests by participants and spectators; c) the mass production of inexpensive sporting equipment, which encouraged participatory sport, along with d) the invention of new types of sporting equipment.

Urban Reform and the Ideology of Sport

The emergence of a sports ideology justifying athletic participation as a positive force led to sport becoming one of the most popular American amusements. The idea that sport needed to be a beneficial and uplifting institution was rooted in Puritan values that required all pastimes to be moral, revitalizing recreations. The new positive sports creed that emerged in the Jacksonian Era was closely tied to other reform movements that promoted political democracy, social justice, and economic opportunity to address the problems created by the rapid rate of urbanization. The threat of class conflict was exacerbated by growing extremes of wealth and poverty. The urban population was becoming far more heterogeneous because of Irish and German immigration—in 1850 half of Boston's heads of households were immigrants. Traditional values and norms seemed to be breaking down, reflected by skyrocketing crime rates because of widespread poverty and transiency, especially among unsupervised young men who joined street gangs. Urban riots became commonplace due to such factors as anti-abolitionism, racism, and nativism. Disastrous public health problems characterized city life. Impoverished, overcrowded slums had inadequate sanitation and polluted water, insufficient supplies of nutritious food, and poor medical care, resulting in terrible epidemics and high mortality rates. Thus it was hardly surprising that social critics compared city life unfavorably to rural society, whose homogeneous residents presumably enjoyed closer interpersonal ties and whose lifestyle was portrayed as healthy, honest, self-reliant, hardworking, and nonmaterialistic.