

## Day 90, DBQ Practice

Leisure activities of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century contributed to class divisions and consciousness. Assess the validity of this statement

*Samuel Chotzinoff, born in Russia in 1889, remembered his childhood on Stanton Street in Manhattan.*

There was always excitement on Stanton Street from the time school let out until supper time, and for an hour or two between that meal and bedtime. Something was always happening, and our attention was continually being shifted from one excitement to another. "What's a matter?" was a perpetual query as we were attracted by a sudden frantic exodus from a tenement, the clang of an ambulance as it drew up in front of a house, a person desperately running, pursued by a crowd, a runaway horse and wagon, a policeman forcibly propelling a drunk and twisting his arm until the wretch screamed with pain, an altercation through open windows between next-door neighbors.... There were no bells or letterboxes in the entrance corridors of the tenements on Stanton Street. The mailman blew a whistle in the downstairs hail and called out names in a voice loud enough to be heard even on the fifth floor, and the people would come running downstairs to get their letters....

Every day after supper I would beg to be allowed to play for a while in front of the house, where I could be seen from our windows and, at the proper time, summoned to bed. Between sundown and evening, on fair days, Stanton Street had an enchantment of its own. The dying sun benevolently lacquered the garish red-brick buildings, softly highlighting a window, a cornice, a doorway. We would play on the sidewalks and in the gutter until the air grew dark and we could barely tell who was who. Then the lamplighter would emerge from the Bowery, carrying his lighted stick in one hand and a small ladder in the other. In the light of the gas lamps we played leapfrog over the empty milk cans in front of the grocery store. Each of us would vault over a single can and then, if successful, augment the vault over as many as seven cans! Or we would play hide-and-go-seek in the dim vestibules of the tenement houses.

### Urban Saloons

Article by sociologist Royal Melendy on "The Saloon in Chicago," published in 1900

Scattered throughout the city, within easy reach of any neighborhood, are saloons offering a form of entertainment to the people not unlike the cheap vaudeville. Passing back of the screen, we enter a large room filled with tables and chairs; at the end of the room is a stage. While men and women sit around these tables, drinking beer and smoking, the painted, bawdy girls entertain them with the latest popular songs and the skirt dance. The regular vaudeville bill, including the comic man, acrobatic feats, cake-walks, etc., is presented. The character of the entertainment is but a reflection of the character of the neighborhood. In some communities no obscene word is uttered, and but little that is suggestive of evil is presented. It affords an opportunity for the hard-worked men and women to escape from their stuffy homes and thoughts of poverty into a clean, well-lighted room, where with their families they can enjoy an evening of pleasure. To see the hardened, careworn expressions on their faces gradually relax and melt away into expressions of simple enjoyment, as they laugh heartily at the jokes, might at first arouse one's sense of humor, but it would soon impress one deeply with the pathos of it all: with the thought that this little entertainment, cheap and vulgar as it is, seems to satisfy their longing for amusement. Patriotic songs are never missing, and I have heard them join heartily in the chorus. Cheer after cheer greets the names of our heroes, as they appear in the songs of the girls. The sense of the masses on the Cuban war policy could easily be determined by their applause and hisses at the saloon vaudevilles. These people have a sense of honor peculiar to themselves, and a careful observation of that which most frequently elicits their applause shows that an appeal to their sense of honor is sure to be well received. In——-'s vaudeville saloon it is estimated that 3,000 pass in and out between the hours of 8 P. M. and 6 A. M. Saturday nights. As has been stated, the character of these saloons varies with the neighborhood, and vulgar songs are frequently sung. The evil influence of some of these cannot be overestimated. Then too prostitutes often come here and mingle with the crowd.

### Coney Island

When I got out I stayed at my sister s for a month, and then went as a nursery governess in a family where there are three children, none of them over eight years of age. I have to teach them their lessons, including German, and to take them out driving and playing. I have recovered my health, but I will never again undertake to manage a strange baby.

The duties are light; I have two afternoons a week to myself and practically all the clothing I need to wear. My salary is \$25 a month.

Wherever I have been employed here the food has always been excellent; in fact, precisely the same as that furnished to the employer s families. In Germany it is not so. Servants are all put on an allowance, and their food is very different from that given to their masters.

I like this country. I have a great many friends in New York and I enjoy my outings with them. We go to South Beach or North Beach or Glen Island or Rockaway or Coney Island. If we go on a boat we dance all the way there and all the way back, and we dance nearly all the time we are there.

I like Coney Island best of all. It is a wonderful and beautiful place. I took a German friend, a girl who had just come out, down there last week, and when we had been on the razzle-dazzle, the chute and the loop-the-loop, and down in the coal mine and all over the Bowery, and up in the tower and everywhere else, I asked her how she liked it. She said : " Ach, it is just like what I see when I dream of heaven."

Yet I have heard some of the high people with whom I have been living say that Coney Island is not tony. The trouble is that these high people don t know how to dance. I have to laugh when I see them at their balls and parties. If only I could get out on the floor and show them how they would be astonished.

### Casey at the Bat

Ernest Lawrence Thayer, 1888

The outlook wasn't brilliant for the Mudville nine that day:  
The score stood four to two, with but one inning more to play,  
And then when Cooney died at first, and Barrows did the same,  
A pall-like silence fell upon the patrons of the game.  
...  
Then from five thousand throats and more there rose a lusty yell;  
It rumbled through the valley, it rattled in the dell;  
It pounded on the mountain and recoiled upon the flat,  
For Casey, mighty Casey, was advancing to the bat.  
....  
Ten thousand eyes were on him as he rubbed his hands with dirt;  
Five thousand tongues applauded when he wiped them on his shirt;  
Then while the writhing pitcher ground the ball into his hip,  
Defiance flashed in Casey's eye, a sneer curled Casey's lip.

And now the leather-covered sphere came hurtling through the air,  
And Casey stood a-watching it in haughty grandeur there.  
Close by the sturdy batsman the ball unheeded sped—  
"That ain't my style," said Casey. "Strike one!" the umpire said.

From the benches, black with people, there went up a muffled roar,

Like the beating of the storm-waves on a stern and distant shore;  
"Kill him! Kill the umpire!" shouted someone on the stand;  
And it's likely they'd have killed him had not Casey raised his hand.

With a smile of Christian charity great Casey's visage shone;  
He stilled the rising tumult; he bade the game go on;  
He signaled to the pitcher, and once more the dun sphere flew;  
But Casey still ignored it and the umpire said, "Strike two!"

"Fraud!" cried the maddened thousands, and echo answered "Fraud!"  
But one scornful look from Casey and the audience was awed.  
They saw his face grow stern and cold, they saw his muscles strain,  
And they knew that Casey wouldn't let that ball go by again.

The sneer is gone from Casey's lip, his teeth are clenched in hate,  
He pounds with cruel violence his bat upon the plate;  
And now the pitcher holds the ball, and now he lets it go,  
And now the air is shattered by the force of Casey's blow.

Oh, somewhere in this favoured land the sun is shining bright,  
The band is playing somewhere, and somewhere hearts are light;  
And somewhere men are laughing, and somewhere children shout,  
But there is no joy in Mudville—mighty Casey has struck out.

Vaudeville Show Playbill, c. 1900

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