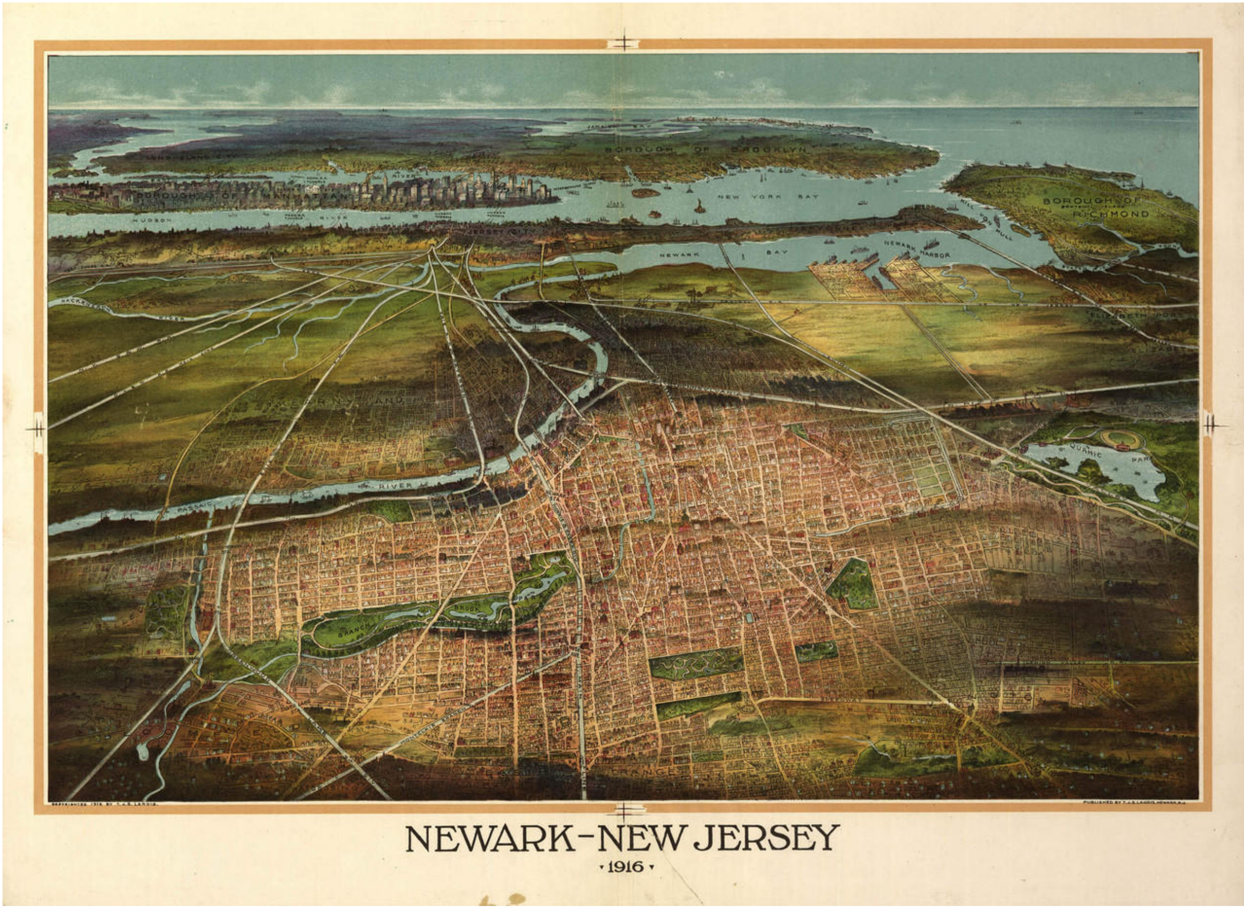
If Newark is under-researched, especially compared to New York or Chicago, we must nevertheless ask the question: What can be learned from Newark that we don't already know from more intensively researched cities? Why study Newark now?

This question has two parts:

One. The study of American urban design especially has been dominated by New York and Chicago and by the designers based in those two cities. What can we learn from Newark, not only in terms of formal urban design but also vernacular neighborhood design and characteristic housing typologies? What are Newark's defining public spaces and monuments that give help to give the city its identity? Is this identity tied to any geographic, spatial, political, and ethnographic circumstances? And most importantly, in your opinion, what are the most important spatial frontiers, adjacencies, policies, politics, and actors that are key today in bridging together new opportunities for urban redevelopment, which deserve to be better known as possible models for the contemporary American city?

Two. Detroit and Newark were the 13th and 16th largest American cities respectively in 1900, with Detroit's population at 286,00 and Newark's at 246,000. (Milwaukee and Washington DC were the 14th and 15th). Although both cities might be characterized as early 20th century "boom towns" for American industry and immigration, and both later embodied "the urban crisis," Newark followed a distinctive path – in its rise and fall, and in its unique relationship to the American metropolis, New York City. How would you characterize Newark's uniqueness, both in terms of its economic history and its social history? What were the city's characteristic strengths and weaknesses, both in its boom and shrinking years? What, if anything, can we learn from Newark's experience in terms of urban recovery today?



Newark in foreground with the Port of New York and Manhattan skyline in distance
Lithograph produced 1916 on occasion of the 250th anniversary celebration of the city's founding in 1666

What makes Newark unique? What aspects of urban history, or American history more broadly, are best told through the lens of Newark? In many ways, Newark is not particularly unique. It is not the largest and wealthiest city; that title belongs to New York. It is not the poorest city; that title belongs to St. Louis. It is not *the* most visible symbol of urban decline and decay; that title belongs to Detroit. It is not the most "suburban" large city; that title belongs to Los Angeles or Phoenix. And it is not the city that has recovered and gentrified most after mid-century decline; that title belongs to San Francisco. But, in its approximation of the "average" American city – in its periods of economic boom and bust, decline and recovery – the story of Newark probably comes closest to telling the story of many places through one place.

Telling urban history through cities that are unique, in its own way, produces a distorted picture. Told from New York City and San Francisco, the American city has returned triumphant and successful from mid-century decline: economic growth, new urbanism, gentrification, and a creative class after 1970s bankruptcy. Told from Detroit and St. Louis, the American city is both racially divided and irredeemably fallen from its mid-century heights of wealth from industrial production. These cities on the edges – in their uniqueness – act on history, drive history through the inventions, products, and ideas they produce. What happens in New York shapes the rest of the nation. What happens in Newark does not.

What was the impact of urban renewal on New York City? What was impact of the City Beautiful on Chicago? What was the impact of "the creative class" on San Francisco? The better way to phrase these questions might be in reverse. Urban renewal certainly had an impact on New York City, but more importantly New York City – as largest city and trendsetter under Robert Moses and other leaders – set the terms for urban renewal policy, forged the path of what was thought possible for other cities to follow. The better question might be instead: What was the impact of New York City on urban renewal, on the policies first conceived in New York and then copied nationwide in cities that learned from New York? Similar questions might ask: What was impact of Chicago on the City Beautiful? What was the impact of San Francisco on the "creative class," on Richard Florida's assumption that creative tech industries alone could fuel urban rebirth? Global cities act on history. Local cities, like Newark, are acted on by history.

Told from the middle, told from cities like Newark, the average American city is largely acted on by history, by political and economic forces largely beyond the control of any individual city. Over the past century, at different decades in time, Newark has variously struggled with industrialization (1890s), water supply (1900s), public transit (1910s), economic depression (1930s), deindustrialization (1950s), population loss and slum clearance (1960s), urban decline (1970s), and now gentrification (2000s). Newark city leaders have tried (and more often failed than succeeded) to counter these challenges with the limited powers they have as city government alone: to collect taxes, regulate land use, pay police, and fund public schools. These local tools alone were not enough to combat national problems: drug use, crime rates, incarceration, racial discrimination, and urban-suburban inequality.

In its own way – by not claiming to be unique, by only claiming to be average – Newark reveals the urban form and urban history as interplay between global and local forces. Newark was the product of economic change, industrial growth, immigration policy, housing policy, urban renewal, and suburban sprawl. Told through Newark, the impact of national policies on local cities is more visible. Told through Newark, for instance, the rise and fall of American manufacturing becomes visible. The story of deindustrialization is more complex than absolute decline (Detroit's story) and more complex than the easy reorientation from an industrial economy into a knowledge economy (New York's story). Told through the middle, told through Newark, this is a more nuanced 20th-century story than simple decline and rebirth.

In the following sections, I will start with a snapshot of Newark in 1913: the qualities of urban life that made it particularly successful and economically powerful at this time. I will then trace, in each of the following four sections, the various national and international forces that acted on the city over the following century: the automobile, urban renewal, population loss, labor organizing, and changes in manufacturing processes. Each of these shifts, in their own way, de-centered Newark from the economic and cultural gravity it once had.

A Snapshot of Newark and Detroit in 1913

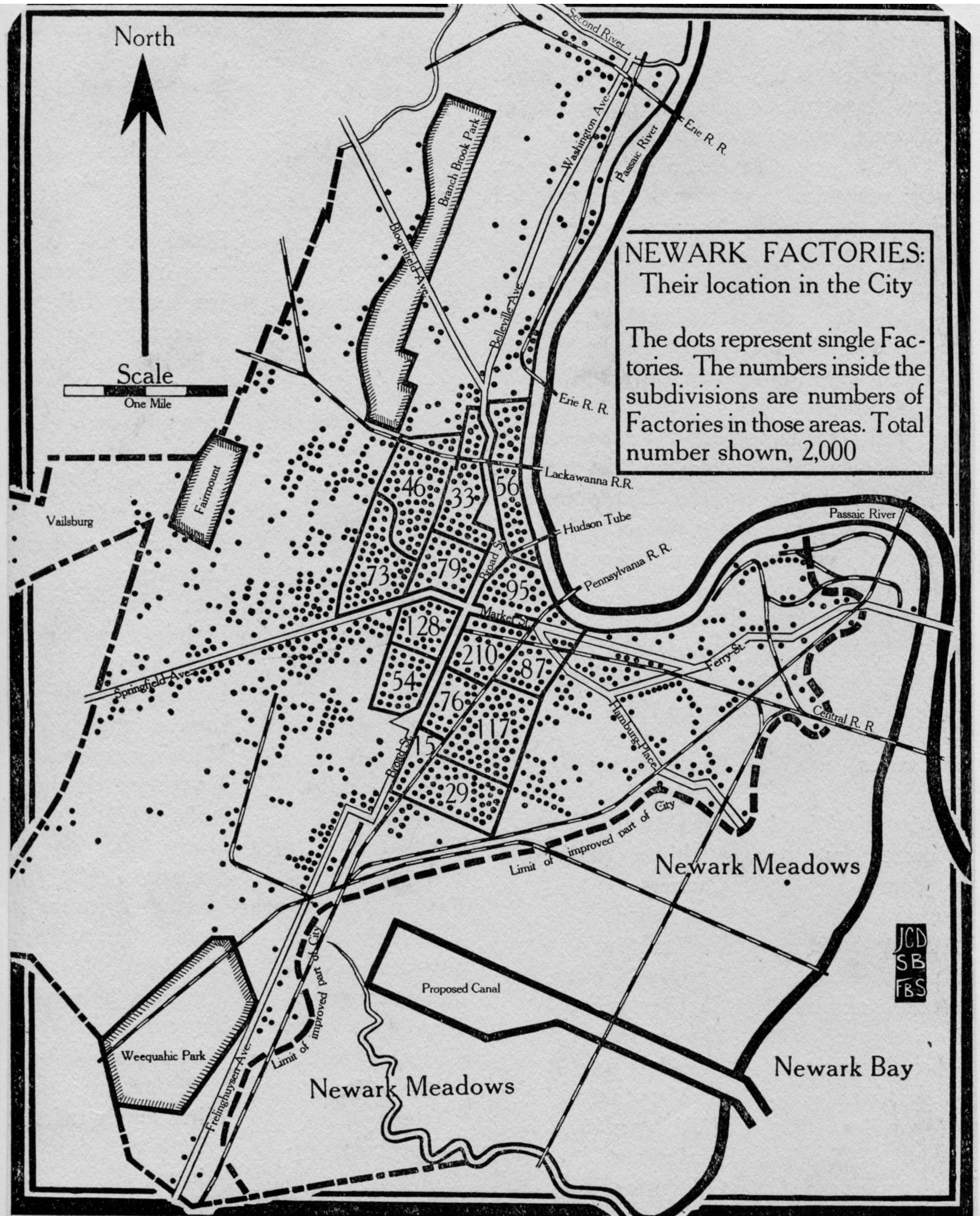
The first mass-produced Model T Ford rolled off the Highland Park moving assembly line in December 1913. In company publications and on the pages of *Scientific American*, Henry Ford boasted of productivity gains unheard of in human history: a car rolled off the assembly line every minute of every day. In the final assembly, there was one laborer to mount the gas tank to the frame, another to mount the engine, another for the dashboard, steering wall, and radiator, and then the four wheels rimmed in white rubber dropped down on chutes, locked into place by men with hydraulic torque wrenches. Shipped over iron bands of railroad steel, a global system of suppliers descended on this final assembly line in Highland Park: rubber from Brazil, oil from Texas and California, coal from Pennsylvania, iron from Minnesota mines, copper from the American Southwest, and investment capital from New York markets.

Henry Ford's moving assembly line was by no means the world's first assembly line, but it became the most famous. Ford's success came from one simple realization, whose consequences have done more to shape twentieth-century urban history (and Newark history) than any other technology and discovery: the logics of the linear city; the logics of the moving assembly line applied from factories to the design of entire cities.

An older industrial model: Move the laborers to where the machines are found.
A newer industrial model: Move the machines to where the laborers are found.

Ford's realization came from observing workers on the older factory floors, the skilled work of pipe fitters, welders, and the hundreds of other allied crafts required for car production. The older model of production held down the cars in a fixed location, while teams of laborers moved along from car to car, each team adding a different component to the final product. Instead of the laborers following the machines across the factory floor and moving from place to place, Ford realized it would be cheaper to have stationary laborers fixed in time and place, and to bring the machines to the laborers on the moving assembly line. In the old model, parts were pulled from across the city of Detroit, from hundreds of individual parts suppliers in different factories. In the new model, all production was brought under one roof.

The year 1913 incidentally also caught Newark at its economic height: City planner Harland Bartholomew had just completed the city's first master plan and comprehensive system of land use zoning laws. The number of Newark factories peaked in the 1910s. In the forty years from 1872 to 1912, the number of factories in Newark doubled from 1,000 to 2,000. In these same years, the value of total annual industrial output grew from $73 million to $220 million (and if 1912 dollars are adjusted for inflation: $6.9 billion in 2023). The size of the labor force employed in factories grew from 30,000 in 1872 to 76,000 in 1912, meaning that nearly half the city's adult population worked in factories. The amount of department store and theater retail sales revenue within the one-mile radius of the city's downtown peaked in the 1910s, when one half of all retail sales by revenue in the entire state of New Jersey were in Downtown Newark. The number of top income earners living within Newark city limits peaked around 1900 at the height of the Gilded Age, and then declined each year thereafter as the wealthiest industrial elite moved to the suburbs. Today, a century later, all of these metrics for urban success are no longer found in Newark. Nor are these metrics found in mid-size industrial cities like Newark in each of their own respective metro regions: Gary for Indiana, New Haven for Connecticut, Baltimore for Maryland, etc.



It will be noted that the dots within the several subdivisions in the center of the city do not correspond with the number of factories in those subdivisions. The dots simply give one the proper idea of where Newark's factories are situated. Within each of the areas marked out by the black lines, there are as many factories as the number in the center of the area indicates.

The dots do not represent separate factory buildings. In some cases they represent several factories in the same building. It is not possible on so small a map to show differences in the number of hands employed in the factories. The map does show, however that the factories have kept close to the trolley and business center of the city at Broad and Market Streets, and close to the railway lines that cross the city, and close also to the water transportation facilities afforded by the Passaic River.

Map of Newark factory locations in 1911

The period of post Civil War prosperity for Newark was short-lived. If measured by economic size alone, Newark kept on growing after 1913. But year-on-year population growth and economic growth of five to ten percent, with urban populations doubling in twenty years or less was long-term unsustainable for Newark, or American cities more broadly. In every year after the 1910s, the rate of new patents registered in Newark, the number of new companies formed, and foreign-born immigrants as a percentage of the city's population declined. More than a precipitous decline after the July 1967 "riots" and more than single-source explanations for urban decline like redlining and white flight, Newark's decline was gradual.

The year 1913 incidentally also caught the Newark metro area in the middle of the largest industrial labor organizing yet seen. In the Paterson silk mill strike of 1913, thousands of high-skilled Italian and immigrant laborers walked off the job with two main demands: a living wage and management promises not to replace their skilled labor with multiple-loom-mill systems that produced more cloth with fewer laborers. Assembly line production, based on the principles of Henry Ford, threatened to deskill and cause unemployment for a generation of textile workers. The mills had chosen Paterson, much as the breweries, machine shops, and tanneries had chosen Newark, for the same three reasons: 1) access to abundant moving freshwater and raw materials to transform into consumer products; 2) proximity to New York City consumer markets and investment capital; and 3) access to cheap immigrant labor fresh out of Ellis Island. These were the three preconditions in 1913 for Newark's success as industrial giant, qualities of urban life present in 1913 and now absent a century later.

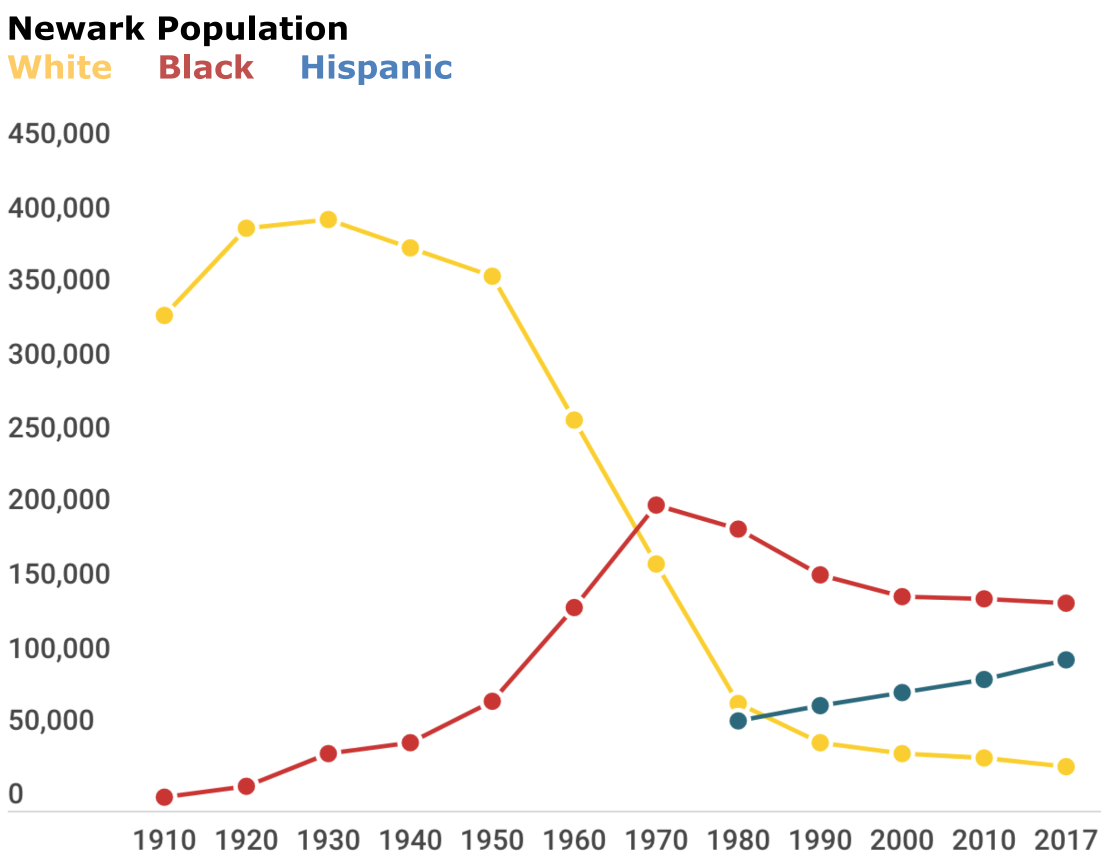
Newark succeeded and thrived during this brief stage of capitalist production: between the early stage of semi-mechanized craft production in thousands of workshops and the late stage of highly mechanized machine production in giant factory floors. Newark's form of production was neither as rural as the 1830s textile mills of Lowell in Massachusetts, nor as urban as the 1930s car factories of the River Rouge in Detroit.

Unlike Detroit's economy entirely built around car production, Gary and Pittsburgh built on steel mills, Camden built on shipyards, Houston built on oil, Lowell and Paterson built on textiles, Newark's economy was diversified around smaller scale craft production. Unlike the hundreds of other factory boomtowns, there was no single industry or employer in Newark that dominated the city's entire urban economy. Instead, there was a diversity and multitude of smaller players.

In many ways, Fordist production and the logics – both mechanic and economic – of the moving assembly line fundamentally threatened the economic success of Newark in 1913 and, for that matter, Newark-like cities.

Henry Ford did not invent the moving assembly line. The history goes back earlier to the moving assembly lines of Chicago meatpacking houses, and before that to Adam Smith's pin factory in *Wealth of Nations*. Millions of cattle and hogs were hung from Chicago's moving belts and stripped down to the bone. Perhaps, more than a moving assembly line in the classic sense, Chicago was a macabre disassembly line, the processes of Highland Park played in reverse: Finished animals transformed into raw materials in Chicago vs. raw materials transformed into finished products in Detroit. But the logics of mechanical production and labor saving were identical across diverse industries: to replace labor and to consolidate production, to transform factories that made craft products into factories that made consumer products. Meatpacking was transformed from a backyard craft product requiring the butcher's skill into a mass-produced consumer product made by unskilled immigrants on low wages. This Fordist logic, applied first to meat and cars, would soon be applied to all manner of other products once made in Newark.

These capital logics were first developed in a select few industries – like pin production, meatpacking, and cars – and soon spread to all other products and areas of urban life. In historical retrospect, labor saving devices in Detroit's moving assembly lines and labor unrest in Newark factories were two snapshots in time of a larger national picture. The strikers of 1913 were aware, on a fundamental level, of changes soon to come to their urban economy: labor-saving devices, looms that promised to replace human with mechanical labor. Corporate mergers and acquisitions in the mill industry increased profits and efficiency, but they resulted in fewer factories and newer factories in rural locations far from the urban areas where employees historically lived.



The logics of Fordism and the linear city – as applied to Newark – undermined the features of urban life that had at one time made this place an economic and industrial powerhouse. These economic shifts had direct consequences for the city's built environment: 1) on where the wealthy chose to live in city or in suburb; 2) on the supply of industrial jobs for the working class; 3) on the locations of factories within the city limits or in suburbs beyond; and 4) on the contemporary racial wealth gap. These four shifts are the outline of Newark's rise and fall. These trends are found across the spread of cities like Newark, but they are most visible in Newark.

1) Where did the wealthy choose to live, in city or in suburb? What were the consequences of wealthy shifts in living patterns?

The city's cultural and industrialist elite contributed in large measure to the quality of the city's public parks, paved streets, public schools, libraries, cultural, and civic institutions. Newark's had a long list of industrialist family fortunes: Hahnes and Bamberger with wealth from department stores; Ballantine, Feigenspan, and Krueger from breweries; Murphy from varnish; Peddie from patent leather; Weston from chemicals; Hyatt from celluloid plastics; Clark from textiles; Wiss from scissors; Griffith from pianos and records; Dryden from industrial accident insurance; and dozens of others.

The spirit of Andrew Carnegie's "Gospel of Wealth" captures in a nutshell the attitudes of Newark's industrial and economic elite in the 1900s. Carnegie claimed that with this great wealth came the responsibility to spend it wisely on good works, charity, and institutions that improved the quality of life for the urban working classes. When it came to Newark, these "good works" included active participation in civil society, charitable contributions to welfare causes and public hospitals, lobbying for state investment in water supply, roads, and infrastructure. Add to this the generations of middle-class and upper class married Newark women who were excluded from the workforce and so instead volunteered their time in civil society causes. Newark women engaged in temperance societies against alcoholism, charitable societies for orphans, suffragettes for women's right to vote, volunteers in schools and public life in the spirit and philosophy of Jane Addams at Chicago's Hull House. The bounds of late-Victorian gender norms restricted the causes where this generation of middle-class females could volunteer, to the areas of public life thought to bring out the nurturing qualities of the "fairer sex."

Outside of the home and domestic sphere of female activism, elite men and male clubs were largely responsible for the City Beautiful movement in Newark. Early attempts at land use law in Newark, for instance, attempted to keep industrial smoke and noise away from "the better class" of residential districts. Early efforts at street paving, street tree planting, and street sign code enforcement attempted to make downtown appear physically attractive and – more importantly – appear safe to growing numbers of female shoppers. In 1910s New York City, when most department stores were located on Ladies Mile (now Sixth Avenue), the slogan rang: "Below 8th Street, the men are making it [on Wall Street]. Above 8th Street [on Ladies Mile], the women are spending it." Newark's own downtown in 1910 was itself divided into three distinct land use areas: a primarily working-class industrial area home to the densest concentration of factories in the state; an area of office towers for white-collar male workers; and an area of department stores for largely female shoppers. Further efforts in Newark, from both city planners and department store business interests, advocated for public support and public spending on the trolley lines that linked suburb and city, female shoppers to downtown businesses.

Equally important in 1910 was that the business elite lived within walking distance of their factories, their jobs, and their low-wage employees. This produced in Newark a patchwork quilt of land uses, with the homes of the elite and their servants usually no more than a few city blocks from factories, tenements, and commercial districts. The economic and class divisions of the city were both upstairs servants vs. downstairs wealthy and back-alley working class vs. front-street managerial class. On large streets and avenues there were homes of the wealthy, while on streets immediately behind were the tenements and homes of their employees. On upstairs floors were the small rooms for Irish (later black) domestic servants, while on the parlor room floors below were the spacious rooms of their employers and masters.

In a time before the car brought spatial mobility across entire metro regions, Newark's wealthy tended by default to live within the city. A three to four mile walk from Downtown brought one to the city edge, to farms and land uses beyond reach of both commuters and trolley lines. For instance, 80 percent of the entire metro area's population lived within the city limits of Newark in 1910 and commuted to jobs in Newark. But as cars came, and as the suburbs grew, the percent of the metro area's population beyond the city limits grew year on year in nearby commuter suburbs. The rich gradually became spatially unmoored from their employees and their factories.

From 1913 through to the 1930s New Deal and 1950s postwar prosperity, Newark's civil society evolved in ways that ultimately disadvantaged the city. The responsibilities of the state and federal governments grew to include many aspects of urban life formerly controlled through Tammany Hall style politics and patronage employment: Social security replaced Newark's old age homes funded through charitable donations. Welfare payments and aid to parents with dependent children replaced charitably funded orphanages. Federal food programs for the poor replaced soup kitchens and the Tammany Hall practice of giving a chicken to every poor family who showed up to vote for the political machine on election day. Hospitals had been founded by the City Government (for relief cases), Catholic Church (for Italian and Irish immigrants), Protestant Church (for Germans), and Jewish faith (for Eastern European immigrants). By mid-century as the state assumed more responsibility for public health, these hospitals evolved from denominational and charitable projects into nondenominational and public institutions funded through taxes alone. Anti-poverty and urban improvement projects were transformed from local programs funded by elite charity and the Catholic Church into federal responsibilities funded by taxes.

The effect of growing regional power and federal power on Newark's civil society is not immediately clear. But I speculate this resulted in reduced participation from elites in civic life and charitable works. Add to this the slow entry of middle-class women into the workplace, women's right to vote (18th Amendment), and the ban on alcohol (the 19th Amendment, which was largely the product of female activism because suffragettes and religious groups believed alcoholism increased domestic abuse and wife beating. Newark was home both to some 50 breweries and the nation's first branch of Alcoholics Anonymous.) The result was a precipitous decline from the 1920s to 1960s in the size and number of civic and charitable organizations in Newark. The acceptable outlets for middle-class female participation in public life expanded beyond mere participation and advocacy for charitable projects. By mid-century, women were about to enter the workplaces. Gone from Newark (as well as the Lower East Side) were patronage traditions of middle-class and elite women volunteering their time on Sundays for charitable balls, knitting clothes for poor children, or visiting the homes of poor women who they thought lacked "moral education."

However, the larger trend as early as the 1920s in Newark was for the middle and upper classes to migrate away from the urban core, to live in commuter suburbs only accessible to downtown by automobile. Automobile registrations in Newark grew at least 1,000 percent from 1910 through 1920, doubling and tripling again by the 1930s. Did the movement of elites away from cities and into more isolated suburbs lead them to become less invested in urban life, in urban progress, and in the City Beautiful movement? One indication might be the names and backgrounds of who was elected Mayor of Newark. In the nineteenth century: only political elites with wealth from banking and industry. In the twentieth century: only political men of working-class origins, who had risen through the ranks of machine politics. Local elections transformed from elite projects in the 19th century into broader-based demonstrations of electoral power in the 20th. In 1900, political elites lived within Newark, and the future of their fortunes depended on the future of the city: on water supply for their breweries, on trolley lines for their employees' commutes, on public electrical supply for their machines. By mid-century, political elites lived beyond Newark and had diversified the sources of their wealth beyond labor-intensive industrial production within the city limits. In short, the automobile allowed elites to leave Newark.

The logic of Fordism, as applied to Newark, required production on assembly lines and the vertical integration of supply chains to bring all aspects of production under one roof. This process was contrary to how Newark ran business and managed its industries in the 1900s. More than a single-source employer, Newark had a diversity of networked small businesses owned by a range of elites. Factories for screws, factories for wood boards, still more factories to assemble the screws and boards into boxes, and yet another factory that bought the finished boxes and filled them with product. Factories that transformed cows into meat for New York markets, factories that transformed cow skins into leather, factories that produced buttons from animal bone, factories that made string, and still more factories that assembled gloves from leather, string, and animal bone. Each stage of production in Newark occurred through different manufacturers in different corners of the city: the exact opposite of Fordist logic.

2) How was the industrial working class employed? How did production changes influence the urban working class?

Newark industries in 1900 largely grew and prospered from their proximity to New York City investment capital. The most common practice in nineteenth-century Newark and New York City was to source capital from local financiers, to build the factory nearby, to bring the raw materials to the factory, and to employ local labor. This produced intense demands in Newark factories for thousands of low-paid manual laborers. Because labor demand could not possibly be met through native-born Americans alone, Newark benefitted again from proximity to New York City, the Port of New York, and generous immigration policies at Ellis Island.

Beginning in the 1920s, U.S. immigration policy changed in profound and permanent ways. The practice at Ellis Island in the 1900s was simple: European immigrants boarded in their homelands, arrived in America, and were only screened for their fitness as immigrants when they arrived at Ellis Island. With the exception of Chinese immigrants who were banned outright, almost all immigration applicants were accepted on arrival. Only two percent of applicants at Ellis Island were refused entry. After 1924, changes to immigration law ended most immigration to America, closed Ellis Island as port of arrival, and imposed immigration quotas on races considered unfit: Jews, Italians, Eastern Europeans, Arabs. In the resulting labor shortage, Newark employer looked to the American South, to replace immigrant labor with black labor.

In 1900, small factories were built locally and employed foreign laborers. Newark factories made everything and employed laborers from everywhere. Laborers crossed international borders to where the machines were located.

Today, large factories are built in foreign places and employ local labor in these foreign places. Machines move to where the laborers are located.

This shift was gradual for Newark. Immigration laws restricted the supply of immigrant laborer, forcing Newark manufacturers to look elsewhere for cheap labor: first to the American South during the Great Migration and later to places like Puerto Rico. By the 1930s, new immigrants to America did not come from Europe, then in the midst of World War II. In a period of American isolationism, new immigrants to Newark came from the American South, from within America's own borders.

At the same time, mass production changed agriculture in the American South. Car production at Ford's Highland Park ended in 1927. Although itself larger than any factory in Newark and New York City, the Ford factory at Highland Park had grown too small for the scale of car production. River Rouge began car production, on a factory floor and industrial park itself as large as the entire city of Newark. Ford then retooled Highland Park to make tractors, to do for American farmers what Ford had already done for American commuters: To mechanize movement and increase productivity at the expense of urban life.

In the 1930s and 40s, the American South witnessed several trends. Mechanized agriculture in cotton production reduced the need to employ black bodies as tenant farmers. The Boll Weevil devastated cotton production in the American South, forcing manufacturers to retool production from cotton to less labor intensive crops that required no black labor. The Ku Klux Klan, lynching, and continued racial violence threatened black communities. And 1924 changes to immigration law produced a labor shortage in northern factories. The result was factories that turned south to meet their labor needs, and southern laborers that turned north to meet their hopes for freedom. During the Great Migration, some six million blacks left the American South. About 200,000 settled in Newark by 1960, transforming a majority white and wealthy city into a majority black and poor city. Most blacks in Newark were either unemployed or employed as domestics, manual laborers, waiters, and factory workers on the shop floor, in jobs once held by ethnic whites.

3) How did factory locations, within the city limits or in suburbs beyond, effect the urban economy and urban form?

White migrants to Newark entered an expanding urban economy in the early twentieth century. They largely profited from the city's growth and graduated from the urban rental market to the suburban homeowner market in a few years. Successive waves of English, Germans, Irish, Italians, Jews, Greeks, Czechs, Polish, and Ukrainians passed through the city's revolving doors, in from Ellis Island and out to the New Jersey suburbs within a few years.

By contrast, black migrants to Newark entered a shrinking industrial economy in mid century. Black migration to Newark peaked during the WWII years when 1) immigrants from Europe could not make it across the ocean; 2) the city's economy was geared toward total war production requiring 24/7 factory operation; and 3) jobs were plentiful and available. For a brief few years, black migrants benefitted from the labor shortage.

As soon as the war ended, Newark factories struggled to return and retool to a postwar consumer economy. The economic landscape of production at mid-century was fundamentally different and at a scale Newark manufacturers could not compete. On the one hand, decades of mergers produced factory floors larger than any land available in Newark's dense urban core of only 27 square miles. If Detroit's River Rouge was the future of production, then there was simply no room in Newark for the factories of the future. On the other hand, the rising power of labor unions in the Northeast and Midwest motivated factories to move to areas of the U.S. that had both more room for growth and fewer protections for workers. For instance, cotton and textile mills moved from Newark and Paterson to the American South. Other industries migrated from Newark to New Jersey suburbs.

In the older economic model, Newark factories were clustered both around railroad lines and around the neighborhoods where laborers worked. In an age before cars, railroads were the only way to receive and distribute goods. In the newer economic model, factories migrated from Newark and its railroad lines to the suburbs and their interstate highways. Interstate 280 sliced through Newark in the 1950s, Garden State Turnpike was completed in the 1960s, and Interstate 78 in the 1970s. All three highways, as well as the 41,000 more miles of the Interstate Highway network, pulled industry away from Newark and into suburban locations distributed across the metro region.

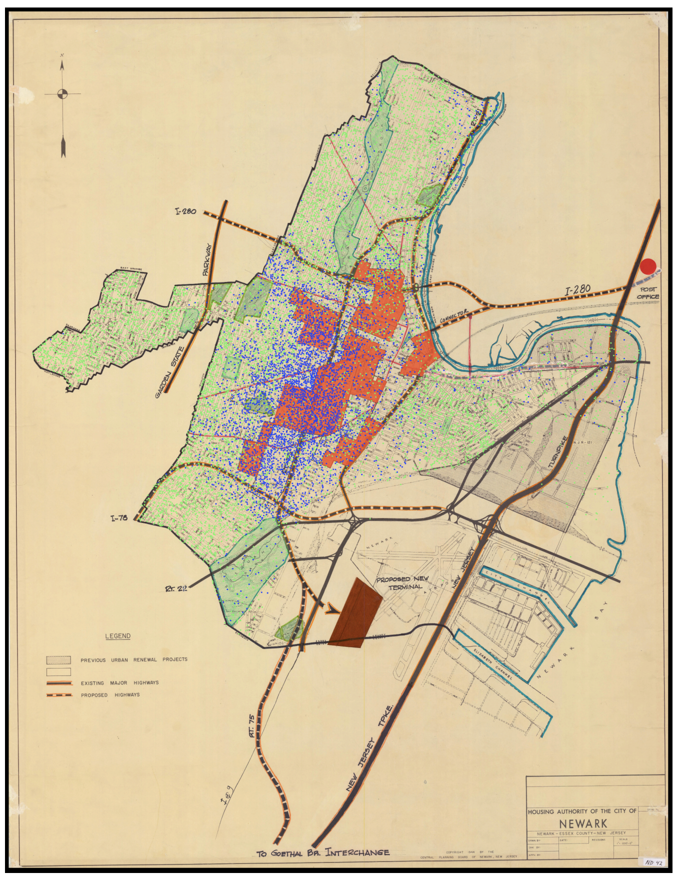
At each step of the way, federal legislation was responsible for factory relocations beyond Newark: federal regulations that allowed corporate mergers and acquisitions; laws that defended unions in some state and weakened them in others; defense spending contracts starting under President Eisenhower that siphoned billions of tax dollars from northern cities into rural locations and suburban locations in the American Sun Belt and Southwest.

Residential segregation and employment segregation worsened the picture for black residents, both in Newark and nationally. On the one hand, market forces and Fordist production models caused factories to migrate from city to suburb. On the other hand, government forces and racial prejudice conspired to lock blacks into cities and to keep them out of the same suburbs where Newark factories had relocated. The result was a mass migration of jobs out of Newark (where blacks could live) and into distant suburbs (where blacks could not live). Thousands of blacks entered Newark in the same decades that factories – the city's only and almost entire economic base – were leaving Newark.

State housing policies deepened the urban crisis for Newark. There was mortgage redlining that refused to finance homeownership in neighborhoods that were black, Italian, Jewish, immigrant, poor, or non-white. Urban renewal also displaced some 60,000 people in Newark, mostly along racial lines. From 1945 to the 1967 "riots," one in four black families lost their homes to slum clearance and state-funded urban renewal. By contrast only one in twenty-five white families were displaced.

Map of Newark in 1963

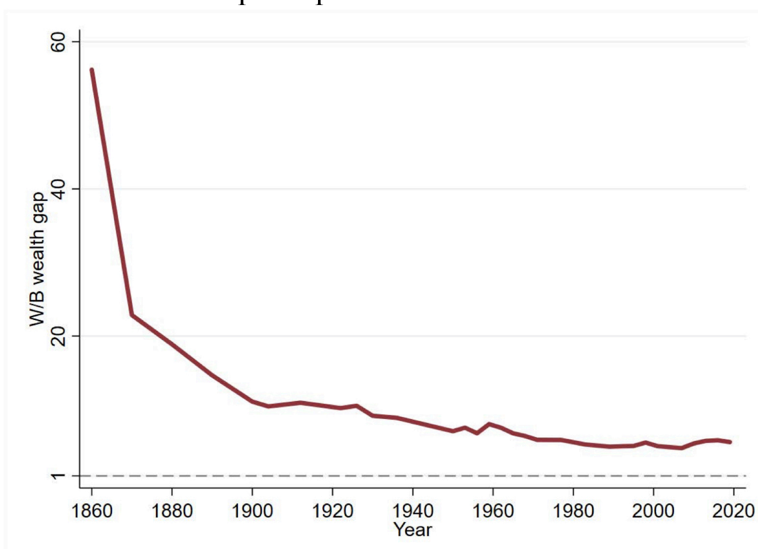
The spatial concentration of urban renewal in black neighborhoods



- - - - - Highways (built and proposed)
Areas identified and cleared as slums
• Black families
• White families
1 dot = 50 people

During the postwar period of economic prosperity for the American nation and suburbs, Newark lost most of its industrial jobs, declining from a wartime peak of about 150,000 to less than 30,000 by 1970. Other claims locate Newark's decline as a response to the Great Migration, to fears of black migrants, to rising crime, and racial discrimination. But the July 1967 "riots" in Newark – and the Detroit "riots" just one week after Newark – were at the tail end of urban decline and deindustrialization. The 1960s "riots" and rising crime rates in the 1970s were not the start of urban decline or even its cause. The "riots" were the end of an urban crisis with origins and causes visible in Newark's economy as early as the 1920s: deindustrialization in cities, industrialization in suburbs, employment discrimination, corporate mergers, and the logics of assembly-line mass production scaled up from running individual factories to running entire metro regions and nation states.

White-black per capita wealth ratio: 1860-2020



4) How did all of these changes in history contribute to the persistent and contemporary racial wealth gap?

Decades of activism from the 1950s to the present have called for blacks to be included in the social, political, and spatial institutions of social mobility. These include workplaces, ballot boxes, schools, and suburbs. But the racial wealth gap between median white family wealth vs. median black family wealth has not narrowed in the decades since the 1960s. In 1865, the median white family was some 40 times wealthier than the median black family freed from slavery just months before. In 1920, this gap had narrowed to a 15-fold difference. In 1960, this gap still left the median white family seven times wealthier than the black family. Today, this gap still leaves white families some five times wealthier, as well as more than twice as likely to own the space they live.

The racial wealth gap between Newark city and suburbs is as large and as persistent as the racial wealth gaps still found in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. The median net worth of families living in Newark is just $10,000, while families in neighboring suburbs have a median net worth of $200,000. As much as this racial wealth gap maps between city and suburb along lines of black and white races, it also maps out within individual races. There are significant income gaps between black families who rent their homes in Newark vs. black families who own their own homes in the city's suburbs. As much as a question of racial income gaps, there is a co-equal problem of limited social mobility that restricts all races, ethnicities, and incomes outside of the wealthiest one percent.

Location	**Black Families** Median Income 2020	**White Families** Median Income 2020	**Racial Earnings Gap** Ratio white / black
Newark Metro	$34,110 Blacks in Newark	$95,218 Whites in Newark metro	**2.8**
New Jersey	$55,453	$91,515	**1.7**
Florida	$43,418	$61,065	**1.4**
Georgia	$46,964	$69,546	**1.5**
Louisiana	$41,479	$61,255	**1.5**
Mississippi	$31,389	$57,781	**1.8**
United States	$48,175	$78,912	**1.6**

There were once institutions in Newark, as well as the American city more broadly, that guaranteed broad-based social mobility. Good public schools, jobs accessible by trolley car public transportation, access to diverse food options and local groceries, dozens of performing arts theaters, and hundreds of corner-store greengrocers spread across the dense tenement landscape of the early-twentieth-century city. Most importantly, industrial employment in Newark offered relatively high wages and corporate profits distributed across thousands of employees. All of the largest employers by market capitalization in early-twentieth-century Newark were industrial companies and insurance companies. Even the insurance companies of Newark – Prudential, Mutual Benefit, American Insurance Company, and the Firemen's Insurance Company as the big four – employed between them some 15,000 people. In an age before computers, even the work of insurance companies was labor intensive with hundreds of semi-skilled clerical workers required to manage accounts and process customer claims. These big four insurers in Newark owned between them dozens of office towers.

Each of the thousands of factories in Newark also employed a range of trades and skills, from unskilled manual labor on low wages to highly skilled artisan labor paid almost as much – sometimes more – than white collar laborers in offices. Within one factory, and between competing factories in Newark, there seems to have been a range of skills and market competition for skilled labor. An immigrant could enter with one low-paid job, learn through apprenticeship, and then rise in one generation through merit and promotion. For instance, the largest industry in Newark – not by volume of product but by the value of product when sold in New York City – was jewelry. There was no training school for learning the trade, no college degree required to work at Tiffany's factories in Newark. There was only a system of "guilds" and apprenticeships that promoted employees from within their ranks.

Today, all of these institutions are gone. The largest companies in Newark by profits are all financial services companies, insurance companies, tech companies, and banks that employ small numbers of so called knowledge workers in the creative class. In addition, even within these companies, computers have replaced much of the semi-skilled labor once accomplished by clerical workers of immigrant background. Each of these employers requires a college degree at minimum to enter the field. And none of them offer the same opportunities to promote the lowest-paid employees within their ranks, to transform blue-collar immigrant workers into middle-income employees the way Ford did for Detroit with his $5 workday.

To scale up production of a car and consumer product requires new employees, new factories, and assembly lines. Detroit as a city rose and fell seemingly on the wealth and power of its three biggest employers, the big three automakers: Chrysler, Ford, and GM. They collectively employed thousands of people for labor-intensive products. By contrast, to scale up production of a financial services company or piece of software requires few new employees. The technology and code, once invented, is infinitely copied and resold through digital and non-human infrastructure.

The largest company telecommunications company today is Google, with assets worth $1.7 trillion and only 165,000 employees. Google employees are almost all highly skilled and well-paid knowledge workers. By contrast, the largest company in both size and market capitalization in the 1950s and 60s was AT&T, with assets worth $13 billion and over one million employees. AT&T's employees spanned the entire range of skills from low skilled and low paid telephone line operators, to women on the nation's thousands of telephone switchboards, to highly-paid research scientists at Bell Labs in New Jersey, to corporate executives. Most company profits at AT&T went to make payroll, for the company's millions of employees and customers. By contrast, most profits at Google go to a small number of employees, with the rest for shareholders, investors, and savings. While AT&T makes a consumer product in a material economy, Google makes a financial and digital product in a so-called knowledge economy. Like Ford Motors, the company AT&T was tool for broad-based working class social mobility; Google is not.

America in 1913 had no income tax, no social safety net, no welfare state, and no political levers that permitted wealth redistribution. But in its own way, the very means of production in Newark – labor intensive craft labor in a diversified market where no one manufacturer held a monopoly – created distinct patterns of urban growth and required that most company profits be invested directly back into the company and employee wages.

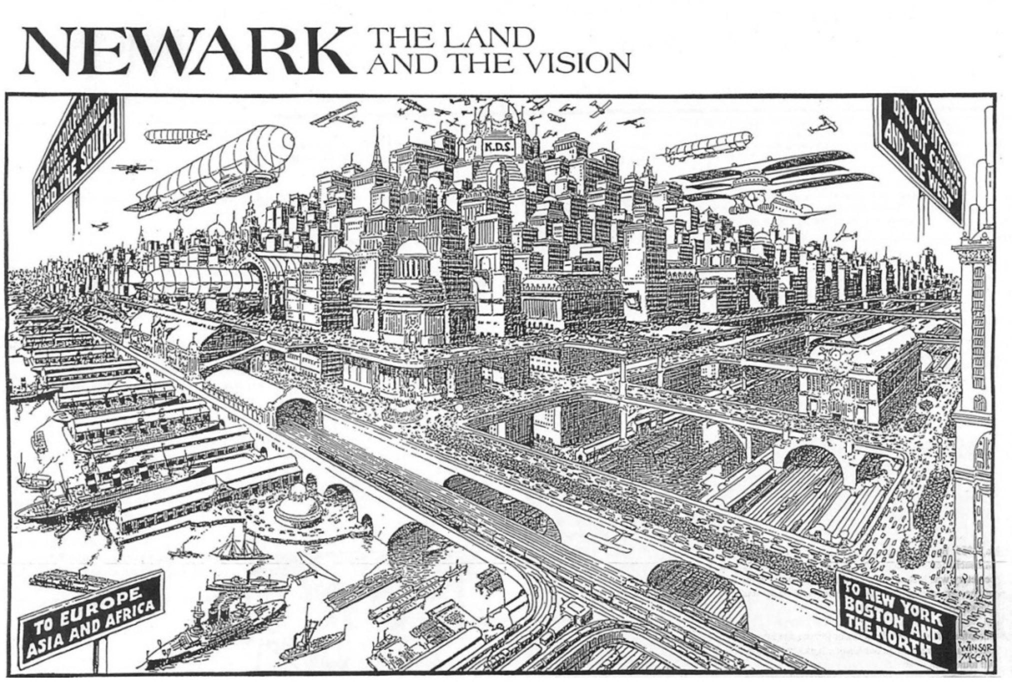
Economist Joseph Stieglitz describes modern America as a New Gilded Age. In this New Gilded Age, the logics of assembly line mass production have been pushed to their farthest extreme. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) from 1994 eliminated tariffs and trade barriers, resulting both in further deindustrialization for Newark and massive deindustrialization for Detroit automakers. The end of trade barriers and the abolition of tariffs in the name of "free trade" resulted in U.S. industry migrating abroad. Newark-based industries migrated first to the American South and southwest in search of cheaper labor, and then to abroad. Rather than bringing immigrant laborers to U.S. soil to work in U.S. factories, it is cheaper to build factories abroad and to ship their products by container ships the size of entire city blocks.

To return to the snapshot in time of Newark in the year 1913, the first Gilded Age benefitted this city: massive employment in industries, high demand for immigrant labor, and capital investment to turn immigrant labor into profits for Newark's industrial elite. This elite, was in its own turn, invested in the future of this city: in the city's schools, infrastructure, parks, street repair, and cultural institutions. This Gilded Age in Newark produced a distinct built environment and patterns of urbanism specific to that moment in time: dense tenement districts, factories ringed along railroad corridors, elite mansions within walking distance of immigrant slums, and trolley lines radiating from downtown businesses to every corner of the city.

The second Gilded Age of today has had a different effect on Newark. On the one hand, Fortune 500 companies like Amazon, Prudential, Panasonic, Mars, and others are based in the city and have thousands of employees. But comparatively little of this wealth trickles down to the rest of the city, from downtown office towers to outlying neighborhoods where generations of blacks have lived in cycles of poverty since the 1960s. There is no shortage of well-paid office jobs in the city, and there are about as many jobs in Newark today as there was in the 1910s for a population that is the same today as it was in 1910. But the range and number of these good jobs remain inaccessible to immigrants and blacks in Newark who have no college degrees.

The first Gilded Age of Newark, in its own way, might have motivated specific forms of patronage politics and "Tammany Hall" in Newark. The wealthy were, in their own way, charitable to the city because they lived in the same factory town as their employees, in the same streets and buildings. In other words, Newark was a company town. On one end of the spectrum, there were company towns like Bethlehem (dominated by Carnegie Steel), Pullman town near Chicago (dominated by the Pullman Car Company), and West Virginia mining towns (with their own currency scrip and company stores that ran their employees into debt). These towns, Pullman in particular, produced a total architecture, an urban built environment that – however beautiful – was designed entirely around the worker and company control of labor. On the other end of the spectrum in urban America were metropolises on the scale of Chicago and New York, places so large that no one company could control the entire economy. At the end of the workday, the immigrant employees of the Triangle Shirtwaist Company, and thousands of sweatshops like it in New York, disappeared into the city, sight unseen. Company management lived comfortably isolated in the Upper East Side, their employees several miles away in the Lower East Side. By contrast, somewhere in the middle, between company town like Pullman and metropolises like New York City, sat mid-range industrial cities like Newark. These cities like Newark were neither so small that one company could control them, nor so large that employers could remain entirely indifferent to the needs of their employees. The result in Newark was a fragile collaboration within the small circles of the city's industrial and urban elite into the kinds of cultural projects we now call, in retrospect, the City Beautiful.

Visions of Progress
Prediction from 1920s of how Newark would appears in the 1980s
Nothing ages faster than our visions of the future.



Drawing by Winsor McCary from a 1928 newspaper article "Newark 58 Years from Today" shows an impossibly futuristic city that never came to be.