

Econ 111B
Economic History

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Fact or Factoid?

“In the United States, capitalist economic growth has primarily benefited white males. Minorities, immigrants, and the poor have gained little and must work harder and harder to just keep from sinking into abject poverty.”

Table 1

American Consumer Goods of 2000 Nonexistent or Rare Two Centuries Ago^a

<i>Household furnishings</i>	<i>Kitchen equipment</i>	<i>Personal care, health</i>
Electric lighting (99)	Electric/gas range (99)	Eyeglasses
Running water (99)	Electric/gas oven (99)	Contact lenses
Indoor flush toilet (99)	Electric/gas refrigerator (99)	Artificial limbs
Electric/gas hot water heater (92)	Coffee maker (99)	Safety razor
Air conditioning (76)	Microwave oven (91)	Vitamins
Ceiling fan (60)	Dishwasher (48)	Painkillers
Floor coverings	Freezer (35)	Anti-allergens
Bedsprings	Outdoor gas grill (28)	Anti-depressants
<i>Household cleaning</i>	Toaster	Exercise equipment
Vacuum cleaner (92)	Waffle iron	Quartz, digital watch
Clothes washer (82)	Food processor	<i>Food, tobacco</i>
Clothes dryer (74)	Blender	Canned foods
Electric iron	Friction matches	Frozen foods
<i>Transportation</i>	<i>Communications</i>	Prepared cereals and mixes
Automobile (92)	Telephone (95)	Margarine
Jet airplane flight	Cordless phone (61)	Chewing gum
Motorcycle	Answering machine (58)	Cigarettes
Bicycle	Personal computer (40)	Pocket lighter
<i>Recreation</i>	Laser printer (38)	
Radio (98)	Cellular phone (33)	
Color television (97)	Pager	
Video cassette recorder (82)	Fax machine (6)	
Stereo equipment (69)	Photocopier (4)	
Camcorder (26)	Mechanical pen/pencil	
Movies	<i>Clothing</i>	
Motorboat	Synthetic fibers	
Jet ski	Elastic goods	
Camera, roll film	Sewing machine	

a. Numbers in parentheses are percent of households with item for goods for which data are available.
Sources: Brady, 1972; Cox and Alm, 1999; Lebergott, 1993; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1998.

Smallpox



Vaccination: 1796

Last case in the world: 1978

Handheld Purification Device



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Lecture Outline

American Experience in a Comparative Perspective

1. Hardware and software
2. Income per capita
3. Income distribution
4. Education and health
5. Resources on the margin
6. Lack of barriers to growth
7. Absorptive capacity
8. Cultural ties and technological change
9. Primary product export growth and the world market