1900: The Bad Old Days

- Life was difficult in the United States
  - Life expectancy was 43 years (33 years for Blacks)
  - Large families (1/2 had 5 or more children)
  - Single parents as common as today
  - ½ of all children lost a parent
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  - Low income: $3000 per year in today’s dollars
  - Children work
  - No indoor plumbing, no phone
  - 60% live on farms/rural villages

- Science, technology, and medicine is just beginning
  - Virtually no known cures for major diseases
  - First virus identified (1890)
  - Discovery of X-rays, subatomic particles.
  - No movies, radio, television, or major publications
  - Limited electricity
  - 8000 cars in the country; none west of Mississippi

- Health and living standards poor
  - Tuberculosis, typhoid, outhouses
  - 120,000 horses (NYC) drop 25# manure on streets daily
  - 12 hour work days
  - Tenement houses
  - Families spend 43% of income on food
  - 40-50% are poor

- Life expectations limited
  - 93% die with no property
  - Freedom, in practice, existed only for the upper class
  - Human subjugation was the rule not the exception
  - Government was extremely limited; not a factor in people’s lives

…and the beginning of sociology

Source: http://www.path.coe.uh.edu/