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United States increased by 65 percent (64 million), while the U.S. population rose by only 18 percent (37 million). Between 1984 and 1986, auto vehicle usage rose twice as fast as the U.S. population. This "automobile vehicle population explosion" is the chief villain, along with the sprawl of suburban office buildings and such massive shopping centers as Tysons Corner in Virginia and the Oakbrook Shopping Center near Chicago.

The most popular suburban antigrowth strategy is to make new buildings very expensive. One town in California charges \$16,000 for each building permit. In other places, developers are forced to assume the costs of roads, sewers, schools, and parks once financed by local governments. Yet, Downs notes, such extra costs are passed from the developer to the homebuyer. By forcing up the price of housing, antigrowth advocates inadvertently bar "households with low or moderate incomes" from the suburbs, and lengthen the distance low-wage workers must travel to reach suburban jobs.

Suburban traffic congestion, Downs contends, will ultimately lessen over time, as employees move closer to their work sites and more new jobs are created in expanding exurbs. Staggering work hours, as well as increasing work done at home, will also help reduce rush-hour congestion. Meanwhile, simple restrictions on development will continue to be ineffective as a traffic control measure; for as long as the *total* number of jobs in a metropolitan area increases and employees continue to prefer driving to work, the amount of suburban traffic will continue to increase.

America Takes a Bath

"The Early History of Cleanliness in America"
by Richard L. Bushman and Claudia L. Bushman,
in *The Journal of American History* (Mar.
1988), Organization of American Historians, 112
North Bryan St., Bloomington, Ind. 47401.

In 1799, Elizabeth Drinker, wife of a Philadelphia merchant, stepped into the family's new "shower box" for the first time. "I bore it better than I expected," she wrote in her diary, "not having been wett all over att once, for 28 years past."

Mrs. Drinker's abstinence from bathing or showering was not uncommon. According to Richard Bushman, a historian at the University of Delaware, and Claudia Bushman, executive director of the Delaware Heritage Commission, before the 19th century, bathing in the United States was at best an irregular practice. Even rich city-dwellers typically washed themselves using only a towel and a basin of cold water.

Like the Drinkers, other wealthy people had begun to install private showers or tubs in their homes during the 1790s to supplement infrequent trips to the public baths. But their bathing techniques did not meet present-day standards of cleanliness: Several people shared the same water and soap played no part.

During the first half of the 19th century, cleanliness gradually became an indicator of breeding and morality. Etiquette manuals advising regular full-body washing proliferated among the American well-to-do. These books reflected the influence of British standards of civility established by such dandies as England's George Bryan "Beau" Brummell. Then middle-

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class Americans began to acquire the habit, believing that cleanliness would help them climb the social ladder. Their views were reflected in Horatio Alger's *Ragged Dick* (1868), which depicted the relative ease with which Dick, a street urchin, marched into respectability with a good scrub and a change of clothes.

Washing became the norm in most middle-class households by mid-century. But while washstands became common, bathtubs were still a novelty; in 1860, Boston had only 3,910 of them for a population of 177,840. Full-body bathing provided an adventure to those who tested it out. As New York socialite George Templeton Strong commented after building himself a bathroom in 1843, "I've led rather an amphibious life for the last week—paddling in the bathing tub every night and constantly making new discoveries in the art and mystery of ablutions."

By the late 1850s, hand soap had come into common use. American manufacturers satisfied the growing popular demand for soap by increasing production of French-style toilet soap in addition to the coarser grades used for washing laundry and cleaning floors. During the 1880s, the Cincinnati-based firm of Procter and Gamble became one of the first U.S. companies to successfully mass-produce hand soap, beginning with the introduction of the Ivory bar in 1882. But even as the "culture of cleanliness" spread among all social classes, as late as 1906, only 20 percent of the houses in Pittsburgh had bathtubs.

Thinking About Guns

"Second Thoughts About Gun Control" by James D. Wright, in *The Public Interest* (Spring 1988), 1112 16th St. N.W., Ste. 530, Washington, D.C. 20036.

At least 20,000 laws now exist in the United States that regulate or restrict the ownership or use of firearms. But do these "gun-control" laws actually reduce crime? Wright, a sociologist at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, no longer believes they do.

About 20,000 murders occur in the United States each year; 60 percent are committed with firearms. In addition, firearms are involved in half of all U.S. suicides, and approximately 2,000 accidental deaths. The *total* number of gun-related deaths is 30,000, only one to two percent of the total annual number of U.S. deaths.

Most estimates of the number of guns owned by Americans are "produced by advocates" favoring or opposing control, and are therefore not reliable. What is known is that about 250 million guns (excluding military weapons) were legally imported or manufactured in the United States during this century. Wright estimates that 150 million of these weapons remain in private hands, and that half of U.S. households have at least one firearm. Thus, even if guns were completely outlawed, the existing stock would be sufficient to supply criminals "for at least the next century." If these weapons were confiscated, police would have to seize several hundred guns to get *one* gun used in a crime.

For a criminal, a firearm is a tool that produces extra income at little cost. Duke economist Phillip Cook reports that robberies committed with