

Unit 2 Notes: Gilded Age

Westward Expansion

3 Reasons to Move West

- Mining Boom: Gold, resources
- Demand for Cattle
- Transcontinental Railroad

Mining

- Gold and silver shipped east from western mines
- **Boomtowns** grew quickly when a mine opened and often disappeared quickly when the mine closed becoming **Ghost Town**
- Mining was **dangerous**
 - The equipment was unsafe and miners had to breathe hot, stuffy air that causes lung disease. Poorly planned explosions and cave-ins killed and injured miners. Fires were also a threat.
- **Gold Rush** – massive population movement to **California** in search of Gold
- **“Forty-Niners** – nickname given to those that fled to California to “strike it rich”

Cattle Kingdom

- Demand for **beef**
- Cattle ranchers in Texas drove herds to Abilene, Kansas, to be shipped east.
- Cattle ranching spread across the **Great Plains**, creating the Cattle Kingdom that stretched from Texas to Canada.
- Competition, the invention of **barbed wire** and the loss of prairie grass brought an end to the Cattle Kingdom.
- Inventions
 - Steel Plow
 - Barbed Wire – invented by **Joseph Glidden**

Cowboys:

- Cowboys were workers who took care of ranchers’ cattle.
- They borrowed many techniques from vaqueros, Mexican ranch hands.
- Most important duty was the cattle drive.
 - The **Chisholm** Trail
 - was a popular route for cattle drives.
- Life in cattle towns was often rough and violent.
- Cowboy life was often romanticized
- "The **Open** Range " - public land open to anyone who used it for cattle grazing
- Round ups: **Branded** and gather cattle for slaughter or market.

Railroad

- The growth of the West created a need for communication across the country.
 - The **Pony Express** carried messages on a route 2,000 miles long.
 - Telegraph lines put the Pony Express out of business.
- Demand for a transcontinental railroad grew.
 - Congress passed the **Pacific Railway Act** of 1862 and 1864, giving railroad companies loans and land grants.
 - The railroads agreed to carry mail and troops at a lower cost.
- East and West were connected by the **Transcontinental** Railroad.
- Large numbers of **Chinese** and **Irish** immigrants worked on the railroads.
 - Harsh conditions: Indian attacks, explosives, etc.
- On May 10, 1869, the railroad lines met **Promontory Point**, Utah. Tracks joined with a golden spike

Growth: Results of the Railroad

- Economic growth and population in the West **increased**
- Better **transportation** for people and goods
- Encouraged people to move west.
- Railroads became one of the country's **biggest** industries.

Native Americans

- Conflict over land
 - Railroads threaten Indian existence
 - Cut through hunting grounds
 - Disturb buffalo (main food source)
 - Conflicts over land were frequent
- Indian Removal Act of 1830
 - Forced tribes to relocate to reservations in Oklahoma
 - Tribes forced to live together did not get along
- Culture Clash on the Great Plains
 - Indians wouldn't give up their land without a fight
 - Army responded with attacks on the plains tribes.
 - Sand Creek Massacre
 - 150 Indians, mostly women and children killed
 - Reservations
 - An area of federal land reserved for Indian tribes
 - Most Indians refused to be confined by reservations
- Battle of Little Bighorn
 - "Custer's Last Stand"
 - US troops led by Colonel Custer attacked Sioux and Cheyenne Indians
 - Indians outnumbered Custer, they were led by Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull
 - Custer's troops were wiped out
- Assimilation
 - The U.S. government wanted Indians to assimilate, or adapt into American culture
 - **Dawes Act:** Reservation land is distributed to individual families, rather than tribes

Settling the Great Plains

- Homestead Act
 - Provided tracts of land to settlers in the West to increase expansion
 - 160 acres of public land for a small fee to anyone who agreed to work the land and live on it for 5 years
 - 600,000 farms took part in the deal claiming over 80 million acres of land
- African Americans move West
 - People who made new lives in the West included women, immigrants, and African Americans.
 - African Americans became cowboys, joined the army, and a majority became farmers
 - Thousands of southern African Americans, known as **Exodusters**, moved to Kansas.
 - Many of the farmers faced racism, despite their freedom and ownership of land

Farms Rise Up in Protest

- Populist Party
 - Many farmers came to the Great Plains, but debt and a fall in crop prices caused them to fail.
 - As farmers debts rose, so did their anger
 - A protest movement began based on **populism**
 - **Populists: Political party that favor's the common people's interest over the wealthy or business interests.**

- Greenback Party
 - Planned to relieve farmers' debt
 - Goal: Increase paper money by changing gold standard
 - Gold Standard: Every dollar had to be backed by a dollar's worth of gold to ensure value
 - Greenbacks wanted money backed by Gold and Silver to increase inflation and cause a rise in crop prices

- William Jennings Bryan
 - Supported free silver coinage, condemned the Gold Standard
 - Populist
 - Democratic candidate for president in 1896
 - Populists supported Bryan instead of splitting the silver vote
 - Bryan lost, and the populist party ended

Innovation and Industry

New Inventions & Technologies

- American life changes drastically
 - Candles, Oil Lamps → Electricity
 - Icebox → Electric Fridge
 - Letters → Telephone/Telegraph
 - Horse & Buggy → Automobile

Americans invest in new technology

- Financial Backing: willingness to risk money on new businesses.
- Capitalism: An economic system in which factories, equipment, and other means of production are privately owned rather than being controlled by the government.

Investors

- Investors put money in railroads, factories, scientific research, etc. They make sure inventory have patents.
- Ex: Thomas Edison financially supported by J.P. Morgan
- Patents: Sole legal right to make or sell an invention for a specific period of time.

Patents:

- Federal government began issuing patents in 1790, by 1860 a total of 360,000 had been granted. Between 1860 and 1890 there were 600,000 granted.
- Thomas Edison holds the record for patents with 1,093 in all.

Changes in Communication

- Samuel B. Morse: 1st Telegraph-Morse Code (1844)
 - o 1843- Telegraph lines connecting Washington DC to Baltimore
 - o By 1870s, Western Union Telegraph Company dominated industry.
- Alexander Graham Bell: Telephone (1876)
 - o Bell Telephone Company- plenty of financial support
 - o Patent ran out in 1893, independent telephone companies formed
 - o 13million phones by 1920

Changes in Transportation

- Planes- Wright Brothers
- Automobiles from Europe

Bessemer Process - Henry Bessemer (1855)

- Revolutionizes Steelmaking
- New technology for turning iron into steel, gave rise to the Iron industry
- Allowed steel to be made cheaper and quicker
- Andrew Carnegie invests – Carnegie Steel Company
- Largest and most modern steel mill of its time (Pittsburgh)
- Steel Products: Railroads, Bridges, Skyscrapers

Thomas Edison & Electricity

- Light Bulb & Electric Generating Station
- Benefits of artificial lighting
- Allowed companies to stay open longer
- Factories ran through the night. Work and read at night. Electric fridges & other appliances

Industrial Growth

- Interchangeable Parts: used to produce goods in large quantities (Mass Production)
- Machines could produce identical parts for quick assembly
- Unskilled workers ran machines, no longer needed skilled artisans

Henry Ford's Moving Assembly Line

- Allowed for mass production of automobiles
- Workers stand in one place while conveyer belt bring product/work to them
- 1 or 2 tasks, then product move to next worker
- Car was built down the assembly line until finished, Increased productivity, cheaper goods

3 Factors of Production

- Land: Resources –ex: Soil, forests, minerals (Abundant resources)
- Labor: Workers – ex: (Immigrants)
- Capital: Any asset that can be used to produce income – ex: Money, buildings, tools, machinery

Corporations

- Corporations a company that is recognized by law as existing independently from its owners.
- A corporation can own property, borrow money, sue, or be sued.
- People can invest in corporations by buying stock, investors become owners of the company
- Wealthy capitalists bought huge amounts of stock to control companies.
- Investors not liable for company's debt, could lose what they invested and that's it

Competition

- Competition provides consumers with choices
- Businesses had to slash prices to compete
- Debts rose, prices fell, bankruptcy
- Power capitalists tried to limit competition
- Buy or Bankrupt other companies
- John D. Rockefeller had great success with his Standard Oil Co.

John D. Rockefeller refined oil, Standard Oil Co.

- Bought out and merged with other companies to limit competition
- Made deal with railroads to ship oil at discount prices to undercut competitors, allowed them to cut their prices
- Other companies then had to sell to Rockefeller or go bankrupt
- By 1882, Standard Oil Co. had become a Monopoly

Monopoly & Trusts

- Monopoly a company that completely dominates a particular industry
- Standard Oil Co. owned 90% of nation's oil production
- With competitors out of the way they could rise prices and reap great profits
- Alternative approach to reduce competition were trusts.
- Trusts A set of companies that are managed by a small group known as trustees.
- They have the power to prevent companies in the trust from competing with each other.

Big Business – Industrial Giants

- One of 2 ways to expand business: Horizontal or Vertical Integration

Horizontal Integration: Joining together as many firms from the same company as possible (Rockefeller did this)

Vertical Integration

- Taking control of each step in the production and distribution of a product
- Acquire raw materials to manufacture, package, and ship
- Carnegie expanded his Steel company this way He bought iron mines, coal fields, ships, railroad, etc.

Laissez-Faire

- People realized big business was limiting competition and prices continued to rise.
- Law makers and politicians were unwilling to stop such business practices
- Laissez-Faire: market regulates itself through supply and demand, no government interference
- “leave business alone” (Philosophy of the Industrial era)

Social Darwinism

- Followed ideas of laissez-faire, government doesn't regulate business.
- Adapted Darwin's ideas
- Best run businesses ran by most capable people would prosper and survive
- Allow businesses to fail or succeed on their own

Sherman Anti-Trust

- Americans were alarmed that small businesses were denied opportunities
- 1890- This law outlawed trusts, monopolies and other forms of business that restricted trade.
- Government did really attempt to enforce the law. Wording of law was vague, and courts that would interpret were biased and decided in favor of big business.

The Growth of the Labor Movement

- Working Class: Men, women, & children that work for wages in factories, mill, mines, and other businesses performing manual labor.
- Division of Labor: Factory production is divided into separate tasks, with one task assigned per worker

Child Labor

- Why did children work in the industry
 - 1. Families couldn't survive, even with both parents working
 - 2. Children made less pay for the same work so factory owners were happy to employ them.
- Some states passed laws with minimum age- 14/15
- Laws were often ignored and not enforced
- Most dangerous jobs because of their small size
- Little opportunity for school

Working Conditions

- 6 days a week, 10+ hours a day, earning about \$1 a day (Long days, low wages)
- Hazardous environments
- Little or no financial compensation for injuries
- Cramp, unventilated sweatshops
- Lose job if they protested to heavy flow of immigrants coming in

Unsanitary Living Conditions

- Slums: heavily populated parts of the city marked by filth and squalor
- Tenements: – rundown apartment buildings of 4 to 6 floors, usually 4 families on a floor. These families would cook, eat, and sleep in the same room, men, women, and children together. Disease flourished in these cramped, airless quarters.

The Labor Movement

- Labor Union - A group of workers organized to protect the interest of its members.
 - Goal 1: Higher wages
 - Goal 2: Shorters hours
 - Goal 3: Better working conditions
- Power came from the threat of a strike
 - Strike: workers refused to go to work.
 - Strikes could shut down factories, railroads, mines, but were usually a last resort.

National Labor Organizations

- Unions joined forces to form a national labor federation, or a group of unions.
- Poor leadership and lack of unity led to collapse.
- Economic depression hit and unemployment was high, there was a lot of competition for jobs which made it hard to have create national labor unions

Tactics used to undermine unions

- Yellow dog Contracts”- Business owners pressured employees to sign a written pledge to not join a union
 - They only hired workers who would sign the pledges.
- Blacklists - Owners would also exchange lists of union members and organizers.
 - They would not hire those on the lists

Knights of Labor: accepted skilled, unskilled, African American, and women workers.

American Federation of Labor – organized skilled workers

Collective Bargaining – negotiations between employers and employee representatives concerning wages, working conditions, etc.

Railroad Strike of 1877

- Depression going on, owners slashed prices → West Virginia rail workers strike.
- ½ the nation's RRs were shut down (largest labor uprising in American history)
- Riots broke out, RR property burned and looted
- US Army was brought in to end strike, 1st time

Haymarket Affair

- Strikers fought with scabs police broke up fight
- Anarchists, people who reject all forms of government, set up protest meeting in Haymarket Square.
- 1000+ people showed up to calmly protest. Police showed up to break it up, someone threw a bomb into police and they fired on the crowd.
- This divided the labor movement.

Homestead Strike

- Pinkerton Agents hired to protect Carnegie Steel plant from strikers
- Gun battle broke out, Pinkerton agents finally gave up and Strikers took over the town
- Broken up by state militia. Non-union workers were brought in, Union was shut out of the plant for 4 decades

Pullman Strike

- Pullman Palace Car Company, workers lived in the company town in company apartments and bought food from company owned stores.
- Employees owed large debt to the company, their wages went straight to bills.
- During 1894 depression, Pullman cut wages 25% so they went on strike, strike was supported by American Railway Union
- Shut down railroad traffic in the Midwest and refused to handle trains with Pullman cars
- Federal Troops sent in to break up strike

Role of the Federal Government in Labor Unions

- Government often sided with business, not unions
- Eugene V. Debs – Railway union leader, leader of Socialist Party of America, ran for president 5 times

Gains made by labor union

- Skilled workers from 1819 to 1915
 - 54 to 49 hours per week
 - \$17.60 to \$21.30 a week
- Most unskilled (white women, African Americans, immigrants) still struggled

IMMIGRANTS AND URBANIZATION

- America became a melting pot
- LIFE IN THE NEW LAND
- Immigrants arrived via steam boats = shorter trip
 - The trip from Europe took about a month, while it took about 3 weeks from Asia
- Separation on the ships by classes
 - Slept in metal bunks, Seasickness, spoiled food and filthy toilets
- Destination
 - Ellis Island for Europeans
 - Angel Island for Asians

- **Push Factors Problems that cause people to move**
 - 1. Overpopulation
 - Lack of Jobs
 - Crowded Cities
 - 2. Hunger, Food Shortage
 - Potato Rot → Irish Famine
 - Crop Failure
 - 3. Scarcity of Arable Land
 - Commercial Farming
 - 4. Religious Persecutions
 - Russians, Polish, Jews

- **Pull Factors: Attractions that draw people to another place**
 - 1. Idea of life in a free, democratic society
 - 2. Jobs/Opportunity
 - Factories, unskilled jobs, railroads
 - 3. Natural Resources
 - Ample farmland, minerals, forests, etc.
 - 4. American Letters
 - Communication from friends and family already immigrated.
 - “land of milk and honey” and a place where the streets are “paved with gold”

- **ELLIS ISLAND, NEW YORK**
 - Ellis Island, New York – European Immigrants
 - Pass inspection at the immigration stations
 - Took hours
 - Sick sent home
 - Prove they weren’t criminals
 - Show they had some money
 - Prove they could work

- **ANGEL ISLAND, SAN FRANCISCO**
 - Angel Island, San Francisco Bay – Asians
 - Primarily Chinese
- Angel Island processing was much harsher than Ellis Island
 - Immigrants withstood tough questioning and long detentions in filthy conditions

- **FRICION DEVELOPS**
 - Some tried to assimilate into American culture
 - Others kept to themselves and created ethnic communities
 - Many came to think of themselves as Italian-Americans, Polish-Americans, Chinese-Americans, etc

- **IMMIGRANT RESTRICTIONS**
 - As immigration increased, so did anti-immigrant feelings among natives
 - Nativism (favoritism toward native-born Americans) led to anti-immigrant organizations and governmental restrictions against immigration
 - In 1882, Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act which limited Chinese immigration until 1943

- **THE CHALLENGES OF URBANIZATION**
 - Rapid urbanization, most immigrants settled in cities, jobs affordable housing

- **MIGRATION FROM COUNTRY TO CITY**
 - Rapid improvements in farm technology (tractors, reapers, steel plows) made farming more efficient in the late 19th century
 - It also meant less labor was needed to do the job
 - Many rural people left for cities to find work- including almost ¼ million African Americans

- **URBAN PROBLEMS**
 - *Housing*: overcrowded tenements were unsanitary
 - *Sanitation*: garbage was often not collected, polluted air
 - *Transportation*: Cities struggled to provide adequate transit systems
 - *Water*: Without safe drinking water cholera and typhoid fever was common
 - *Crime*: As populations increased thieves flourished
 - *Fire*: Limited water supply and wooden structures combined with the use of candles led to many major urban fires – Chicago 1871 and San Francisco 1906 were two major fires

- **EUROPEANS**
 - Between 1870 and 1920, about 20 million Europeans arrived in the United States
 - Before 1890, most were from western and northern Europe
 - After 1890, most came from southern and eastern Europe
 - All were looking for opportunity

- **CHINESE**
 - Between 1851 and 1882, about 300,000 Chinese arrived on the West Coast
 - Attracted by the Gold Rush
 - Work for the railroads, farmed or worked as domestic servants
 - An anti-Chinese immigration act by Congress curtailed immigration after 1882

- **Urban Populations Explode**
 - Most immigrants settled in places like New York, Chicago, Boston, Cleveland, etc.
 - Lived in areas with those who spoke the same language

- **Immigration from Asia**
 - “...utter heathens, treacherous, sensual, cowardly, cruel...” - Henry George
 - Chinese “could never be Americanized”
 - Mob violence towards Chinese
 - Economic woes blamed on Chinese
 - Chinese Exclusion Act (1882) – no immigration of Chinese for 10 years