17

Industrial America: Corporations and Conflicts
1877–1911

For millions of his contemporaries, Andrew Carnegie exemplified American success. Arriving from Scotland as a poor twelve-year-old in 1848, Carnegie found work as an errand boy for the Pennsylvania Railroad and rapidly scaled the managerial ladder. In 1865, he struck out on his own as an iron manufacturer, selling to friends in the railroad business. Encouraged by Republican tariffs to enter the steel industry, he soon built a massive steel mill outside Pittsburgh where a state-of-the-art Bessemer converter made steel refining dramatically more efficient. With Carnegie leading the way, steel became a major U.S. industry, reaching annual production of 10 million metric tons by 1900—almost as much as the *combined* output of the world's other top producers, Germany (6.6 million tons) and Britain (4.8 million).

At first, skilled workers at Carnegie's mill in Homestead, Pennsylvania, earned good wages. They had a strong union, and Carnegie affirmed workers' right to organize. But Carnegie—confident that new machinery enabled him to replace many skilled laborers—eventually decided that collective bargaining was too expensive. In the summer of 1892, he withdrew to his estate in Scotland, leaving his partner Henry Clay Frick in command. A former coal magnate and veteran foe of labor, Frick was well qualified to do the dirty work. He announced that after July 1, members of the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers would be locked out of the Homestead mill. If they wanted to return to work, they would have to abandon the union and sign new individual contracts. Frick fortified the mill and prepared to hire replacement workers. The battle was on.

At dawn on July 6, barges chugging up the Monongahela River brought dozens of private armed guards from the Pinkerton Detective Agency, hired by Carnegie to defend the plant. Locked-out workers opened fire, starting a gunfight that left seven workers and three Pinkertons dead. Frick appealed to Pennsylvania's governor, who sent the state militia to arrest labor leaders on charges of riot and murder. Most of the locked-out workers lost their jobs. The union was dead.

As the **Homestead lockout** showed, industrialization was a controversial and often bloody process. During the half century after the Civil War, more and more Americans worked not as independent farmers or artisans but as employees of large corporations. Conditions of work changed for people of all economic classes. Drawn by the dynamic economy, immigrants arrived from around the globe. These transformations provoked working people, including farmers as well as industrial workers, to organize and defend their interests.

IDENTIFY THE BIG IDEA

What new opportunities and risks did industrialization bring, and how did it reshape American society?

Marianna Mine Disaster The bituminous mines of Marianna, Pennsylvania, and many other rich sites provided the coal that fueled American industrial growth. On November 28, 1908, an explosion in the mine killed 158 workers. Many were American-born; some were Irish, Welsh, Italian, and Polish immigrants. Here, a horse-drawn wagon carries bodies recovered from the mine. Such catastrophes laid bare the human cost of industrialization. Marianna was one among many: in the same decade, disasters at Scofield, Utah; Jacobs Creek, Pennsylvania; Monongah, West Virginia; and Cherry, Illinois, each killed over 200 men. Library of Congress.

The Rise of Big Business

In the late 1800s, industrialization in Europe and the United States revolutionized the world economy. It brought large-scale commercial agriculture to many parts of the globe and prompted millions of migrants — both skilled workers and displaced peasants — to cross continents and oceans in search of jobs. Industrialization also created a production glut. The immense scale of agriculture and manufacturing caused a long era of deflation, when prices dropped worldwide (Figure 17.1).

Falling prices normally signal low demand for goods and services, and thus stagnation. In England, a mature industrial power, the late nineteenth century did bring economic decline. But in the United States, production expanded. Between 1877 and 1900, Americans' average real income increased from $388 to $573 per capita. In this sense, Andrew Carnegie was right when he argued that, even though industrialization increased the gap between rich and poor, everyone's standard of living rose. In his famous 1889 essay "Wealth" — later called "The Gospel of Wealth" — he observed that "the poor enjoy what the rich could not before afford. What were the luxuries have become the necessaries of life."

To see a longer excerpt of "The Gospel of Wealth," along with other primary sources from this period, see *Sources for America's History*.

Technological and business efficiencies allowed American firms to grow, invest in new equipment, and earn profits even as prices for their products fell. Growth depended, in turn, on America's large and growing population, expansion into the West, and an integrated national marketplace. In many fields, large corporations became the dominant form of business.

Innovators in Enterprise

As rail lines stretched westward between the 1850s and 1880s, operators faced a crisis. As one Erie Railroad executive noted, a superintendent on a 50-mile line could personally attend to every detail. But supervising a 500-mile line was impossible; trains ran late, communications failed, and trains crashed. Managers gradually invented systems to solve these problems. They distinguished top executives from those responsible for day-to-day operations. They departmentalized operations by function — purchasing, machinery, freight traffic, passenger traffic — and established clear lines of communication. They perfected cost accounting, which allowed an industrialist like Carnegie to track expenses and revenues carefully and thus follow his Scottish mother's advice: "Take care of the pennies, and the pounds will take care of themselves." This **management revolution** created the internal structure adopted by many large, complex corporations.

During these same years, the United States became an industrial power by tapping North America's vast natural resources, particularly in the West. Industries that had once depended on water power began to use prodigious amounts of coal. Steam engines replaced human and animal labor, and kerosene replaced whale oil and wood. By 1900, America's factories and urban homes were converting to electric power. With new management structures and dependency on fossil fuels (oil, coal, natural gas), corporations transformed both the economy and the country's natural and built environments.
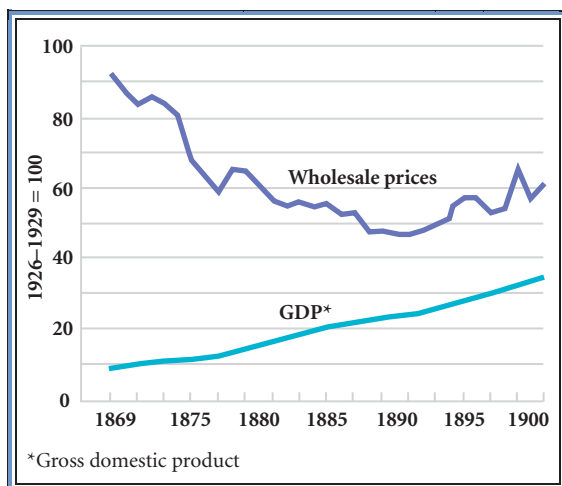

FIGURE 17.1

Business Activity and Wholesale Prices, 1869–1900

This graph shows the key feature of the performance of the late-nineteenth-century economy: while output was booming, wholesale prices were, on the whole, falling. Thus, while workers often struggled with falling wages — especially during decades of severe economic crisis — consumer products also became cheaper to buy.

Production and Sales   After Chicago's Union Stock Yards opened in 1865, middlemen shipped cows by rail from the Great Plains to Chicago and from there to eastern cities, where slaughter took place in local butchertowns. Such a system — a national livestock market with local processing — could have lasted, as it did in Europe. But Gustavus Swift, a shrewd Chicago cattle dealer, saw that local slaughterhouses lacked the scale to utilize waste by-products and cut labor costs. To improve productivity, Swift invented the assembly line, where each wageworker repeated the same slaughtering task over and over.

Swift also pioneered **vertical integration**, a model in which a company controlled all aspects of production from raw materials to finished goods. Once his engineers designed a cooling system, Swift invested in a fleet of refrigerator cars to keep beef fresh as he shipped it eastward, priced below what local butchers could afford. In cities that received his chilled meat, Swift built branch houses and fleets of delivery wagons. He also constructed factories to make fertilizer and chemicals from the by-products of slaughter, and he developed marketing strategies for those products as well. Other Chicago packers followed Swift's lead. By 1900, five firms, all vertically integrated, produced nearly 90 percent of the meat shipped in interstate commerce.

Big packers invented new sales tactics. For example, Swift & Company periodically slashed prices in certain markets to below production costs, driving independent distributors to the wall. With profits from its sales elsewhere, a large firm like Swift could survive temporary losses in one locality until competitors went under. Afterward, Swift could raise prices again. This technique, known as predatory pricing, helped give a few firms unprecedented market control.

Standard Oil and the Rise of the Trusts   No one used ruthless business tactics more skillfully than the king of petroleum, John D. Rockefeller. After inventors in the 1850s figured out how to extract kerosene — a clean-burning fuel for domestic heating and lighting — from crude oil, enormous oil deposits were discovered at Titusville, Pennsylvania. Just then, the Civil War severely disrupted whaling, forcing whale-oil customers to look for alternative lighting sources. Overnight, a forest of oil wells sprang up around Titusville. Connected to these Pennsylvania oil fields by rail in 1863, Cleveland, Ohio, became a refining

Swift & Co.'s Packing House, Chicago, c. 1906

This photograph shows the processing system that enabled Swift and other large packers to save money through high volume and deskilled labor. The overhead pulley system shown in the upper right moved carcasses from place to place for completion of different tasks. Auto manufacturer Henry Ford, who won fame for his moving assembly line, claimed he got the idea after visiting a meat-packing plant such as this. Library of Congress.

center. John D. Rockefeller was then an up-and-coming Cleveland grain dealer. (He, like Carnegie and most other budding tycoons, hired a substitute to fight for him in the Civil War.) Rockefeller had strong nerves, a sharp eye for able partners, and a genius for finance. He went into the kerosene business and borrowed heavily to expand. Within a few years, his firm — Standard Oil of Ohio — was Cleveland's leading refiner.

Like Carnegie and Swift, Rockefeller succeeded through vertical integration: to control production and sales all the way from the oil well to the kerosene lamp, he took a big stake in the oil fields, added pipelines, and developed a vast distribution network. Rockefeller allied with railroad executives, who, like him, hated the oil market's boom-and-bust cycles. What they wanted was predictable, high-volume traffic, and they offered Rockefeller secret rebates that gave him a leg up on competitors.

Rockefeller also pioneered a strategy called **horizontal integration**. After driving competitors to the brink of failure through predatory pricing, he invited them to merge their local companies into his conglomerate. Most agreed, often because they had no choice. Through such mergers, Standard Oil wrested control of 95 percent of the nation's oil refining capacity by the 1880s. In 1882, Rockefeller's lawyers created a new legal form, the **trust**. It organized a small group of associates — the board of trustees — to hold stock from a group of combined firms, managing them as a single entity. Rockefeller soon invested in Mexican oil fields and competed in world markets against Russian and Middle Eastern producers.

Other companies followed Rockefeller's lead, creating trusts to produce such products as linseed oil, sugar, and salt. Many expanded sales and production overseas. As early as 1868, Singer Manufacturing Company established a factory in Scotland to produce sewing machines. By World War I, such brands as Ford and General Electric had become familiar around the world.

Distressed by the development of near monopolies, reformers began to denounce "the trusts," a term that in popular usage referred to any large corporation that seemed to wield excessive power. Some states outlawed trusts as a legal form. But in an effort to attract corporate headquarters to its state, New Jersey broke ranks in 1889, passing a law that permitted the creation of holding companies and other combinations. Delaware soon followed, providing another legal haven for consolidated corporations. A wave of mergers further concentrated corporate power during the depression of the 1890s, as weaker firms succumbed to powerful rivals.

By 1900, America's largest one hundred companies controlled a third of the nation's productive capacity. Purchasing several steel companies in 1901, including Carnegie Steel, J. P. Morgan created U.S. Steel, the nation's first billion-dollar corporation. Such familiar firms as DuPont and Eastman Kodak assumed dominant places in their respective industries.

Assessing the Industrialists   The work of men like Swift, Rockefeller, and Carnegie was controversial in their lifetimes and has been ever since. Opinions have tended to be harsh in eras of economic crisis, when the shortcomings of corporate America appear in stark relief. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, a historian coined the term *robber barons*, which is still used today. In periods of prosperity, both scholars and the public have tended to view early industrialists more favorably, calling them *industrial statesmen*.

Some historians have argued that industrialists benefitted the economy by replacing the chaos of market competition with a "visible hand" of planning and expert management. But one recent study of railroads asserts that the main skills of early tycoons (as well as those of today) were cultivating political "friends," defaulting on loans, and lying to the public. Whether we consider the industrialists heroes, villains, or something in between, it is clear that the corporate economy was not the creation of just a few individuals, however famous or influential. It was a systemic transformation of the economy.

A National Consumer Culture   As they integrated vertically and horizontally, corporations innovated in other ways. Companies such as Bell Telephone and Westinghouse set up research laboratories. Steelmakers invested in chemistry and materials science to make their products cheaper, better, and stronger. Mass markets brought an appealing array of goods to consumers who could afford them. Railroads whisked Florida oranges and other fresh produce to the shelves of grocery stores. Retailers such as F. W. Woolworth and the Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company (A&P) opened chains of stores that soon stretched nationwide.

The department store was pioneered in 1875 by John Wanamaker in Philadelphia. These megastores displaced small retail shops, tempting customers with large show windows and Christmas displays. Like industrialists, department store magnates developed economies of scale that enabled them to slash prices. An 1898 newspaper advertisement for Macy's Department Store urged shoppers to "read our books, cook in our saucepans, dine off our china, wear our silks, get
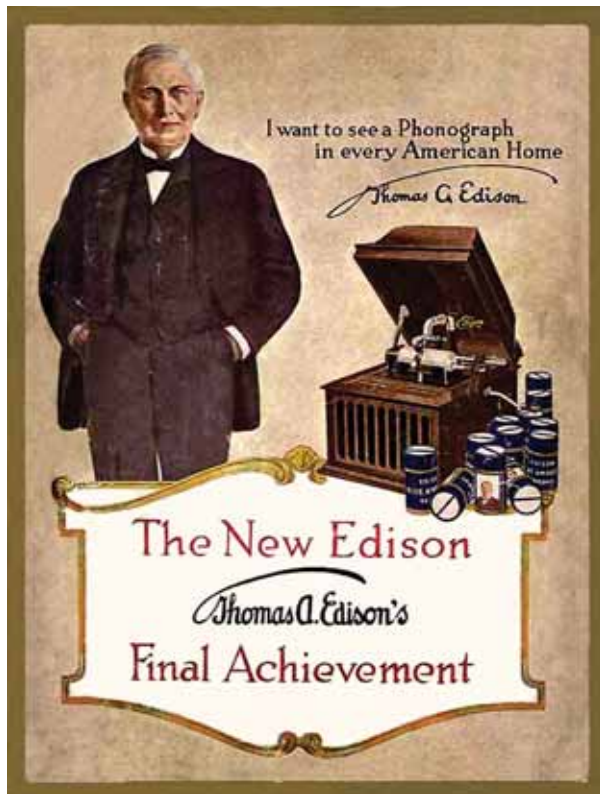
Thomas Edison

The wondrous inventions that emerged from Edison's laboratory in Menlo Park, New Jersey, ranged from the phonograph shown here to electric light bulbs, moving pictures, and Portland cement. Edison (1847–1931) became a national hero—and the holder of over one thousand patents. He was also a shrewd entrepreneur who artfully cultivated both publicity and investor support. In demonstrating electric lights, he chose first to illuminate the headquarters of the *New York Times* and the nearby offices of powerful financier J. P. Morgan. In this advertisement he makes a democratic appeal to all Americans—but only the affluent could afford a phonograph, which cost about $20. Dennis Nyhagen, The Digital Deli Online, www.digitaldeliftp.com.

under our blankets, smoke our cigars, drink our wines—Shop at Macy's—and Life will Cost You Less and Yield You More Than You Dreamed Possible."

While department stores became urban fixtures, Montgomery Ward and Sears built mail-order empires. Rural families from Vermont to California pored over the companies' annual catalogs, making wish lists of tools, clothes, furniture, and toys. Mail-order companies used money-back guarantees to coax wary customers to buy products they could not see or touch. "Don't be afraid to make a mistake," the Sears catalog counseled. "Tell us what you want, in your own way." By 1900, America counted more than twelve hundred mail-order companies.

The active shaping of consumer demand became, in itself, a new enterprise. Outdoors, advertisements appeared everywhere: in New York's Madison Square, the Heinz Company installed a 45-foot pickle made of green electric lights. Tourists had difficulty admiring Niagara Falls because billboards obscured the view. By 1900, companies were spending more than $90 million a year ($2.3 billion today) on print advertising, as the press itself became a mass-market industry. Rather than charging subscribers the cost of production, magazines began to cover their costs by selling ads. Cheap subscriptions built a mass readership, which in turn attracted more advertisers. In 1903, the *Ladies' Home Journal* became the first magazine with a million subscribers.

The Corporate Workplace

Before the Civil War, most American boys had hoped to become farmers, small-business owners, or independent artisans. Afterward, more and more Americans—both male and female—began working for someone else. Because they wore white shirts with starched collars, those who held professional positions in corporations became known as white-collar workers, a term differentiating them from blue-collar employees, who labored with their hands. For a range of employees—managers and laborers, clerks and salespeople—the rise of corporate work had wide-ranging consequences.

Managers and Salesmen   As the managerial revolution unfolded, the headquarters of major corporations began to house departments handling specific activities such as purchasing and accounting. These departments were supervised by middle managers, something not seen before in American industry. Middle managers took on entirely new tasks, directing the flow of goods, labor, and information throughout the enterprise. They were key innovators, counterparts to the engineers in research laboratories who, in the same decades, worked to reduce costs and improve efficiency.

Corporations also needed a new kind of sales force. In post–Civil War America, the drummer, or traveling salesman, became a familiar sight on city streets and in remote country stores. Riding rail networks from town to town, drummers introduced merchants to new products, offered incentives, and suggested sales

EXPLAIN CONSEQUENCES
What opportunities did the rise of corporations offer to different types of "middle workers"—those who were neither top executives nor blue-collar laborers?

The Salesman as Professional, 1906

Salesmanship magazine featured this image in its June 1906 issue, depicting the traveling salesman as an energetic, well-dressed professional. The advertisement urges salesmen to join the United Commercial Travelers of America (UCTA), a fraternal organization founded by salesmen in 1888 (and still in existence today). UCTA offered its members the opportunity to purchase insurance and build business networks with fellow salesmen. Through such organizations, white-collar workers and managers (who were almost never unionized) banded together to pursue their common interests and express professional pride. *Salesmanship*, June 1906, Columbus Ohio.

displays. They built nationwide distribution networks for such popular consumer products as cigarettes and Coca-Cola. By the late 1880s, the leading manufacturer of cash registers produced a sales script for its employees' conversations with local merchants. "Take for granted that he will buy," the script directed. "Say to him, 'Now, Mr. Blank, what color shall I make it?' . . . Handing him your pen say, 'Just sign here where I have made the cross.'"

With such companies in the vanguard, sales became systematized. Managers set individual sales quotas and awarded prizes to top salesmen, while those who sold too little were singled out for remedial training or dismissal. Executives embraced the ideas of business psychologist Walter Dill Scott, who published *The Psychology of Advertising* in 1908. Scott's principles — which included selling to customers based on their presumed "instinct of escape" and "instinct of combat" — were soon taught at Harvard Business School. Others also promised that a "scientific attitude" would "attract attention" and "create desire."

Women in the Corporate Office   Beneath the ranks of managers emerged a new class of female office workers. Before the Civil War, most clerks at small firms had been young men who expected to rise through the ranks. In a large corporation, secretarial work became a dead-end job, and employers began assigning it to women. By the turn of the twentieth century, 77 percent of all stenographers and typists were female; by 1920, women held half of all low-level office jobs.

For white working-class women, clerking and office work represented new opportunities. In an era before most families had access to day care, mothers most often earned money at home, where they could tend children while also taking in laundry, caring for boarders, or doing piecework (sewing or other assembly projects, paid on a per-item basis). Unmarried daughters could enter domestic service or factory work, but clerking and secretarial work were cleaner and better paid.

New technologies provide additional opportunities for women. The rise of the telephone, introduced by inventor Alexander Graham Bell in 1876, was a notable example. Originally intended for business use on local exchanges, telephones were eagerly adopted by residential customers. Thousands of young women found work as telephone operators. By 1900, more than four million women worked for wages. About a third worked in domestic service; another third in industry; the rest in office work, teaching, nursing, or sales. As new occupations arose, the percentage of wage-earning women in domestic service dropped dramatically, a trend that continued in the twentieth century.

On the Shop Floor

Despite the managerial revolution at the top, skilled craft workers — almost all of them men — retained considerable autonomy in many industries. A coal miner, for example, was not an hourly wageworker but essentially an independent contractor, paid by the amount of coal he produced. He provided his own tools, worked at his own pace, and knocked off early

Telephone Operators, 1888

Like other women office workers, these switchboard operators enjoyed relatively high pay and comfortable working conditions—especially in the early years of the telephone industry, before operators' work routines speeded up. These young women worked for the Central Union Telephone Company in Canton, Ohio. Ohio Historical Society.
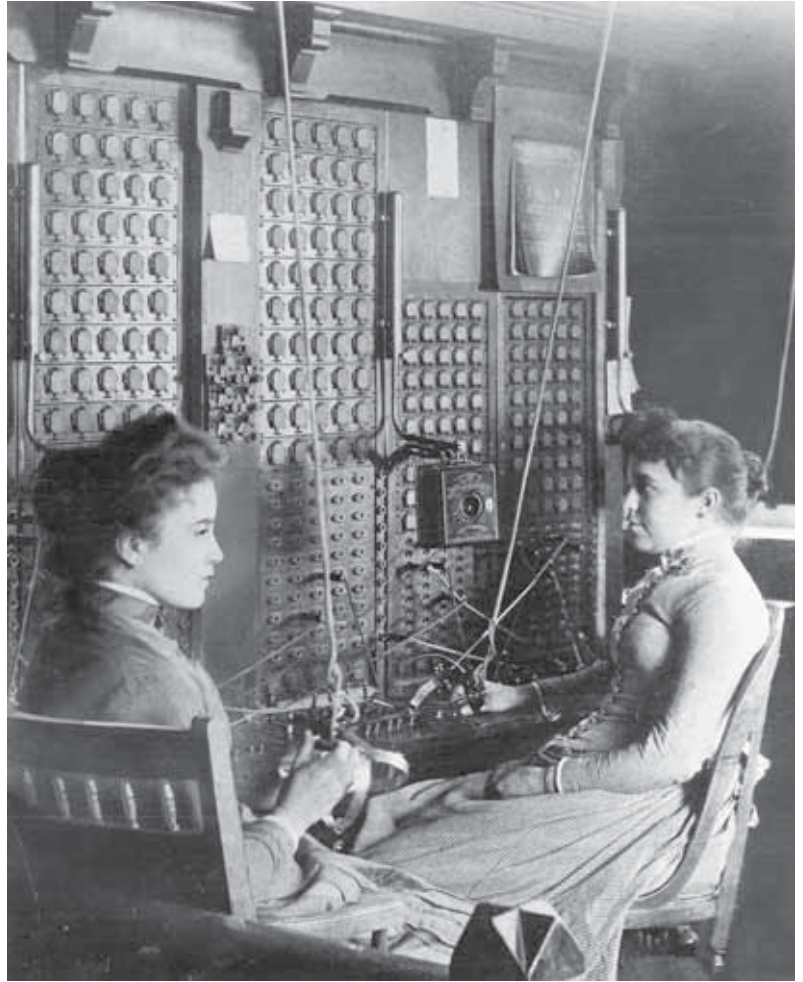
when he chose. The same was true for puddlers and rollers in iron works; molders in stove making; and machinists, glass blowers, and skilled workers in many other industries. Such workers abided by the stint, a self-imposed limit on how much they would produce each day. This informal system of restricting output infuriated efficiency-minded engineers, but to the workers it signified personal dignity, manly pride, and brotherhood with fellow employees. One shop in Lowell, Massachusetts, posted regulations requiring all employees to be at their posts by the time of the opening bell and to remain, with the shop door locked, until the closing bell. A machinist promptly packed his tools, declaring that he had not "been brought up under such a system of slavery."

Skilled workers—craftsmen, inside contractors, and foremen—enjoyed a high degree of autonomy. But those who paid helpers from their own pocket could also exploit them. Subcontracting arose, in part, to enable manufacturers to distance themselves from the consequences of shady labor practices. In Pittsburgh

steel mills, foremen were known as "pushers," notorious for driving their gangs mercilessly. On the other hand, industrial labor operated on a human scale, through personal relationships that could be close and enduring. Striking craft workers would commonly receive the support of helpers and laborers, and labor gangs would sometimes walk out on behalf of a popular foreman.

As industrialization advanced, however, workers increasingly lost the independence characteristic of craft work. The most important cause of this was the **deskilling** of labor under a new system of mechanized manufacturing that men like meat-packer Gustavus Swift had pioneered, and that automobile maker Henry Ford would soon call **mass production**. Everything from typewriters to automobiles came to be assembled from standardized parts, using machines that increasingly operated with little human oversight. A machinist protested

TRACE CHANGE OVER TIME

How did conditions change for industrial workers in the late nineteenth century, and why?

***Ironworkers—Noontime,* 1880**
The ideal qualities of the nineteenth-century craft worker—dignity, brotherhood, manliness—shine through in this painting by Thomas P. Anschutz. *Ironworkers—Noontime* became a popular painting after it was reproduced as an engraving in *Harper's Weekly* in 1884. Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco.

in 1883 that the sewing machine industry was so "subdivided" that "one man may make just a particular part of a machine and may not know anything whatever about another part of the same machine." Such a worker, noted an observer, "cannot be master of a craft, but only master of a fragment." Employers, who originally favored automatic machinery because it increased output, quickly found that it also helped them control workers and cut labor costs. They could pay unskilled workers less and replace them easily.

By the early twentieth century, managers sought to further reduce costs through a program of industrial efficiency called **scientific management**. Its inventor, a metal-cutting expert named Frederick W. Taylor, recommended that employers eliminate all brain work from manual labor, hiring experts to develop rules for the shop floor. Workers must be required to "do what they are told promptly and without asking questions or making suggestions." In its most extreme form, scientific management called for engineers to time each task with a stopwatch; companies would pay workers more if they met the stopwatch standard. Taylor assumed

that workers would respond automatically to the lure of higher earnings. But scientific management was not, in practice, a great success. Implementing it proved to be expensive, and workers stubbornly resisted. Corporate managers, however, adopted bits and pieces of Taylor's system, and they enthusiastically agreed that decisions should lie with "management alone." Over time, in comparison with businesses in other countries, American corporations created a particularly wide gap between the roles of managers and those of the blue-collar workforce.

Blue-collar workers had little freedom to negotiate, and their working conditions deteriorated markedly as mass production took hold. At the same time, industrialization brought cheaper products that enabled many Americans to enjoy new consumer products—if they could avoid starvation. From executives down to unskilled workers, the hierarchy of corporate employment contributed to sharper distinctions among three economic classes: the wealthy elite; an emerging, self-defined "middle class"; and a struggling class of workers, who bore the brunt of the economy's new risks
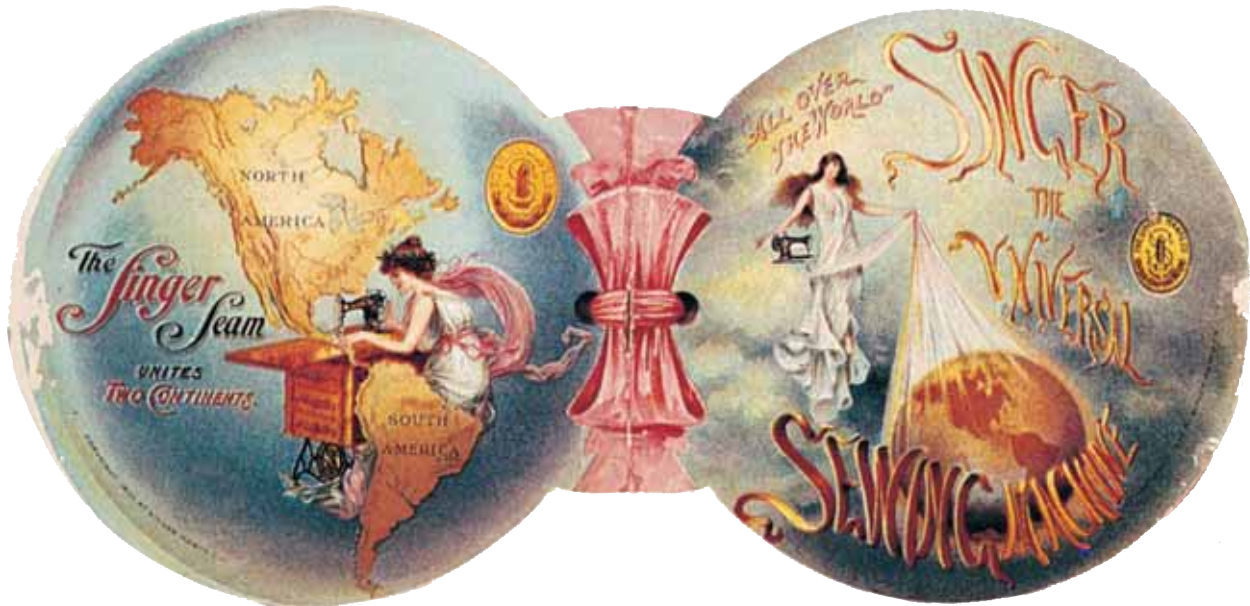
The Singer Sewing Machine

The sewing machine was an American invention that swiftly found markets abroad. The Singer Manufacturing Company, the dominant firm by the time the Civil War began, exported sewing machines to markets as far-flung as Ireland, Russia, China, and India. The company also moved some manufacturing operations abroad, producing 200,000 machines annually at a Scottish plant that employed 6,000 workers. Singer's advertising rightly boasted of the international appeal of a product that the company dubbed "The Universal Sewing Machine." © Collection of the New-York Historical Society.

and included many Americans living in dire poverty. As it wrought these changes, industrialization prompted intense debate over inequality (Thinking Like a Historian, p. 554).

Health Hazards and Pollution   Industrialized labor also damaged workers' health. In 1884, a study of the Illinois Central Railroad showed that, over the previous decade, one in twenty of its workers had been killed or permanently disabled by an accident on the job. For brakemen — one of the most dangerous jobs — the rate was one in seven. Due to lack of regulatory laws and inspections, mining was 50 percent more dangerous in the United States than in Germany; between 1876 and 1925, an average of over 2,000 U.S. coal miners died each year from cave-ins and explosions. Silver, gold, and copper mines were not immune from such tragedies, but mining companies resisted demands for safety regulation.

Extractive industries and factories also damaged nearby environments and the people who lived there. In big cities, poor residents suffered from polluted air and the dumping of noxious by-products into the water supply. Mines like those in Leadville, Colorado, contaminated the land and water with mercury and lead.

Alabama convicts, forced to work in coal mines, faced brutal working conditions and fatal illnesses caused by the mines' contamination of local water. At the time, people were well aware of many of these dangers, but workers had an even more urgent priority: work. Pittsburgh's belching smokestacks meant coughing and lung damage, but they also meant running mills and paying jobs.

Unskilled Labor and Discrimination   As managers deskilled production, the ranks of factory workers came to include more and more women and children, who were almost always unskilled and low paid. Men often resented women's presence in factories, and male labor unions often worked to exclude women — especially wives, who they argued should remain in the home. Women vigorously defended their right to work. On hearing accusations that married women worked only to buy frivolous luxuries, one female worker in a Massachusetts shoe factory wrote a heated response to the local newspaper: "When the husband and father cannot provide for his wife and children, it is perfectly natural that the wife and mother should desire to work. . . . Don't blame married women if the land of the free has become a land of slavery and oppression."

Poverty and Food

Amid rising industrial poverty, food emerged as a reference point. How much was too little, or too much? If some Americans were going hungry, how should others respond? The documents below show some contributions to these debates.

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1. **Lewis W. Hine, "Mealtime, New York Tenement," 1910.** *Hine was an influential photographer and reformer. He took a famous series of photographs at Ellis Island, remarking that he hoped Americans would view new immigrants in the same way they thought of the Pilgrims. What does the photographer emphasize in the living conditions of this Italian immigrant family and their relationships with one another? Why do you think Hine photographed them at the table?*

George Eastman House.

2. **Louisa May Alcott, *Little Women*, 1869.** *Alcott's novel, popular for decades, exemplified the ideal of Christian charity. At the start of this scene, Mrs. March returns from a Christmas morning expedition.*

Merry Christmas, little daughters! . . . I want to say one word before we sit down [to breakfast]. Not far away from here lies a poor woman with a little newborn baby. Six children are huddled into one bed to keep from freezing, for they have no fire. There is nothing to eat. . . . My girls, will you give them your breakfasts as a Christmas present?

. . . For a minute no one spoke, only a minute, for Jo exclaimed impetuously, I'm so glad you came before we began!

May I go and help . . . ? asked Beth eagerly.

I shall take the cream and the muffins, added Amy. . . . Meg was already covering the buckwheats and piling the bread into one big plate.

I thought you'd do it, said Mrs. March, smiling.

. . . A poor, bare, miserable room it was, with broken windows, no fire, ragged bedclothes, a sick mother, wailing baby, and a group of pale, hungry children. . . . Mrs. March gave the mother tea and gruel [while] the girls meantime spread the table [and] set the children round the fire. . . .

That was a very happy breakfast, though they didn't get any of it. And when they went away, leaving comfort behind, I think there were not in all the city four merrier people than the hungry little girls who gave away their breakfasts and contented themselves with bread and milk on Christmas morning.

3. **Mary Hinman Abel, *Promoting Nutrition*, 1890.** *This excerpt is from a cookbook that won a prize from the American Public Health Association. The author had studied community cooking projects in Europe and worked to meet the needs of Boston's poor. How does she propose to feed people on 13 cents a day— her most basic menu? What assumptions does she make about her audience? In what ways was her cookbook, itself, a product of industrialization?*

For family of six, average price 78 cents per day, or 13 cents per person.

. . . I am going to consider myself as talking to the mother of a family who has six mouths to feed, and no more money than this to do it with. Perhaps this woman has never kept accurate accounts. . . . I have in mind the wife [who has] time to attend to the housework and children. If a woman helps earn, as in a factory, doing most of her housework after she comes home at night, she must certainly have more money than in the first case in order to accomplish the same result.

. . . The Proteid column is the one that you must look to most carefully because it is furnished at the most expense, and it is very important that it should not fall below the figures I have given [or] your family would be undernourished.

[Sample spring menu]
Breakfast. Milk Toast. Coffee.
Dinner. Stuffed Beef's Heart. Potatoes stewed with Milk. Dried Apple Pie. Bread and Cheese. Corn Coffee.
Supper. Noodle Soup (from Saturday). Boiled Herring. Bread. Tea.

Proteids. (oz.)	21.20
Fats. (oz.)	14.39
Carbohydrates. (oz.)	77.08
Cost in Cents.	76

4. Werner Sombart, *Why Is There No Socialism in the United States?*, 1906. *Sombart, a German sociologist, compared living conditions in Germany and the United States in order to answer the question above. What conclusion did he reach?*

The American worker eats almost three times as much meat, three times as much flour and four times as much sugar as his German counterpart. . . . The American worker is much closer to the better sections of the German middle class than to the German wage-labouring class. He does not merely eat, but dines. . . .

It is no wonder if, in such a situation, any dissatisfaction with the "existing social order" finds difficulty in establishing itself in the mind of the worker. . . . All Socialist utopias came to nothing on roast beef and apple pie.

5. Helen Campbell, *Prisoners of Poverty*, 1887. *A journalist, Campbell investigated the conditions of low-paid seamstresses in New York City who did piecework in their apartments. Like Abel (source 3), she tried to teach what she called "survival economics." Here, a woman responds to Campbell's suggestion that she cook beans for better nutrition.*

"Beans!" said one indignant soul. "What time have I to think of beans, or what money to buy coal to cook 'em? What you'd want if you sat over a machine fourteen hours a day would be tea like lye to put a back-bone in you. That's why we have tea always in the pot, and it don't make much odds what's with it. A slice of bread is about all. . . . We'd our tea an' bread an' a good bit of fried beef or pork, maybe, when my husband was alive an' at work. . . . It's the tea that keeps you up."

6. Julian Street, Show and Extravagance, 1910. *Street, a journalist, was invited to an elite home in Buffalo, New York, for a dinner that included cocktails, fine wines, caviar, a roast, Turkish coffee, and cigars.*

Before we left New York there was newspaper talk about some rich women who had organized a movement of protest against the ever-increasing American tendency toward show and extravagance. . . . Our hostess [in Buffalo] was the first to mention it, but several other ladies added details. . . .

"We don't intend to go to any foolish extremes," said one. . . . "We are only going to scale things down and eliminate waste. There is a lot of useless show in this country which only makes it hard for people who can't afford things. And even for those who can, it is wrong. . . . Take this little dinner we had tonight. . . . In future we are all going to give plain little dinners like this."

"*Plain*?" I gasped. . . . "But I didn't think it had begun yet! I thought this dinner was a kind of farewell feast — that it was —"

Our hostess looked grieved. The other ladies of the league gazed at me reproachfully. . . . "Didn't you notice?" asked my hostess. . . .

"Notice *what*?"

"That we didn't have champagne!"

Sources: (2) Louisa May Alcott, *Little Women*, Part 2, Chapter 2 at xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/ALCOTT/ch2.html; (3) Mary Hinman Abel, *Practical, Sanitary, and Economic Cooking Adapted to Persons of Moderate and Small Means* (American Public Health Association, 1890), 143–154; (4) Werner Sombart, *Why Is There No Socialism in the United States?*, trans. Patricia M. Hocking and C. T. Husbands (White Plains, NY: International Arts and Sciences Press, 1976), 97, 105–106; (5) Helen Campbell, *Prisoners of Poverty* (Cambridge, MA: University Press, 1887), 123–124; (6) Julian Street, *Abroad at Home* (New York: The Century Co., 1915), 37–39.

ANALYZING THE EVIDENCE

1. These documents were created by journalists and reformers. What audiences did they seek to reach? Why do you think they all focused on food?

2. Imagine a conversation among these authors. How might we account for the differences in Sombart's and Campbell's findings? How might Hine, Abel, and Campbell respond to Alcott's vision of charitable Christian acts?

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Using the documents above and your knowledge from this chapter, write a short essay explaining some challenges and opportunities faced by different Americans in the industrializing era — including those of the wealthy elite, the emerging middle class, skilled blue-collar men, and very poorest unskilled laborers. How did labor leaders and reformers seek to persuade prosperous Americans to concern themselves with workers' problems? To what dominant values did they appeal?

Child Labor

For many working-class families, children's wages—even though they were low—made up an essential part of the household income. These boys worked the night shift in a glass factory in Indiana. Lewis Hine, an investigative photographer for the National Child Labor Committee, took their picture at midnight, as part of a campaign to educate more prosperous Americans about the widespread employment of child labor and the harsh conditions in which many children worked. Library of Congress.

In 1900, one of every five children under the age of sixteen worked outside the home. Child labor was most widespread in the South, where a low-wage industrial sector emerged after Reconstruction (Map 17.1). Textile mills sprouted in the Carolinas and Georgia, recruiting workers from surrounding farms; whole families often worked in the mills. Many children also worked in Pennsylvania coal fields, where death and injury rates were high. State law permitted children as young as twelve to labor with a family member, but turn-of-the-century investigators estimated that about 10,000 additional boys, at even younger ages, were illegally employed in the mines.

Also at the bottom of the pay scale were most African Americans. Corporations and industrial manufacturers widely discriminated against them on the basis of race, and such prejudice was hardly limited to the South. After the Civil War, African American women who moved to northern cities were largely barred from office work and other new employment options; instead, they remained heavily concentrated in domestic service, with more than half employed as cooks or servants. African American men confronted similar exclusion. America's booming vertically integrated corporations turned black men away from all but the most menial jobs. In 1890, almost a third of black men worked in personal service. Employers in the North and West recruited, instead, a different kind of low-wage labor: newly arrived immigrants.

Immigrants, East and West

Across the globe, industrialization set people in motion with the lure of jobs. Between the Civil War and World War I, over 25 million immigrants entered the United States. The American working class became truly global, including not only people of African and Western
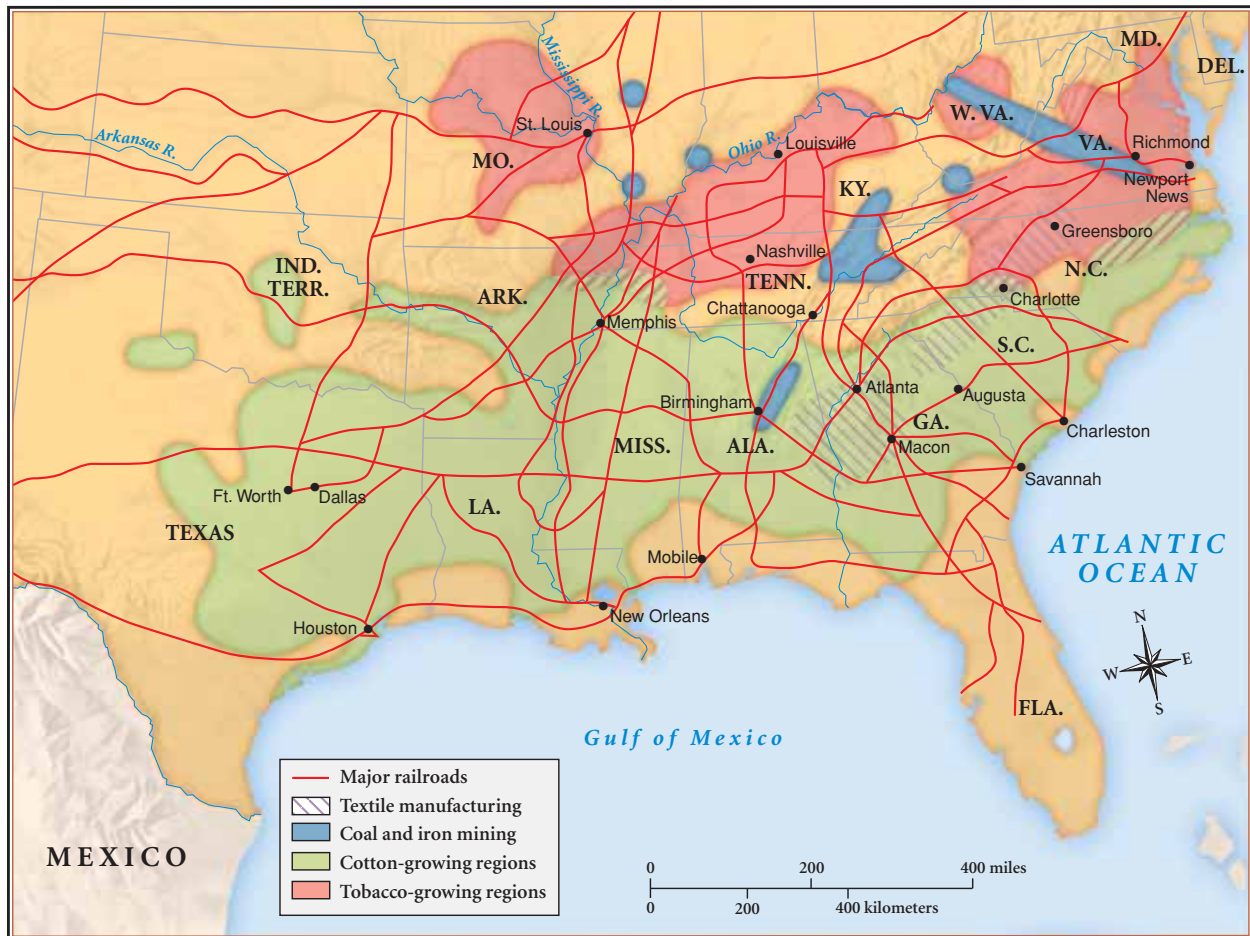
MAP 17.1

The New South, 1900

The economy of the Old South focused on raising staple crops, especially cotton and tobacco. In the New South, staple agriculture continued to dominate, but there was marked industrial development as well. Industrial regions evolved, producing textiles, coal, and iron. By 1900, the South's industrial pattern was well defined, though the region still served—like the West—as a major producer of raw materials for the industrial region that stretched from New England to Chicago.

European descent but also Southern and Eastern Europeans, Mexicans, and Asians. In 1900, census takers found that more than 75 percent of San Francisco and New York City residents had at least one parent who was foreign-born.

In the new industrial order, immigrants made an ideal labor supply. They took the worst jobs at low pay, and during economic downturns tens of thousands returned to their home countries, reducing the shock of unemployment in the United States. But many native-born Americans viewed immigrants with hostility, through the lens of racial, ethnic, and religious prejudices. They also feared that immigrants would take more coveted jobs and erode white men's wages.

For immigrants themselves, America could be disorienting, liberating, and disappointing.

Newcomers from Europe

Mass migration from Western Europe had started in the 1840s, when more than one million Irish fled a terrible famine. In the following decades, as Europe's population grew rapidly and agriculture became commercialized, peasant economies suffered, first in Germany and Scandinavia, then across Austria-Hungary, Russia, Italy, and the Balkans. This upheaval displaced millions of rural people. Some went to Europe's mines and factories; others headed for South America and

German Beer, Mexican Workers, c. 1900
Immigrants from Germany owned and managed most of the breweries in the United States. But workers at the Maier and Zoblein Brewery in Los Angeles came from many nations, including Mexico. At that time, about 4,000 Mexicans lived in Los Angeles County (about 4 percent of the population); by 1930, 150,000 Mexican-born immigrants lived in Los Angeles, making up about 7 percent of the city's rapidly growing population. Los Angeles Public Library.

the United States (Map 17.2; America Compared, p. 560).

"America was known to foreigners," remembered one Jewish woman from Lithuania, "as the land where you'd get rich." But the reality was much harsher. Even in the age of steam, a transatlantic voyage was grueling. For ten to twenty days, passengers in steerage class crowded belowdecks, eating terrible food and struggling with seasickness. An investigator who traveled with immigrants from Naples asked, "How can a steerage passenger remember that he is a human being when he must first pick the worms from his food?" After 1892, European immigrants were routed through the enormous receiving station at New York's Ellis Island.

Some immigrants brought skills. Many Welshmen, for example, arrived in the United States as experienced tin-plate makers; Germans came as machinists and carpenters, Scandinavians as sailors. But industrialization required, most of all, increasing quantities of unskilled labor. As poor farmers from Italy, Greece, and Eastern Europe arrived in the United States, heavy, low-paid labor became their domain.

In an era of cheap railroad and steamship travel, many immigrants expected to work and save for a few years and then head home. More than 800,000 French

UNDERSTAND POINTS OF VIEW
What factors accounted for the different expectations and experiences of immigrants in this era?

Number of Immigrants per Decade to the United States

- To 10,000
- 100,000–500,000
- 500,000–1,000,000
- 1,000,000–2,000,000
- Over 2,000,000

- - - - - Approximate area of immigrants to the United States claiming Polish ancestry. Poland was not an independent country at this time.
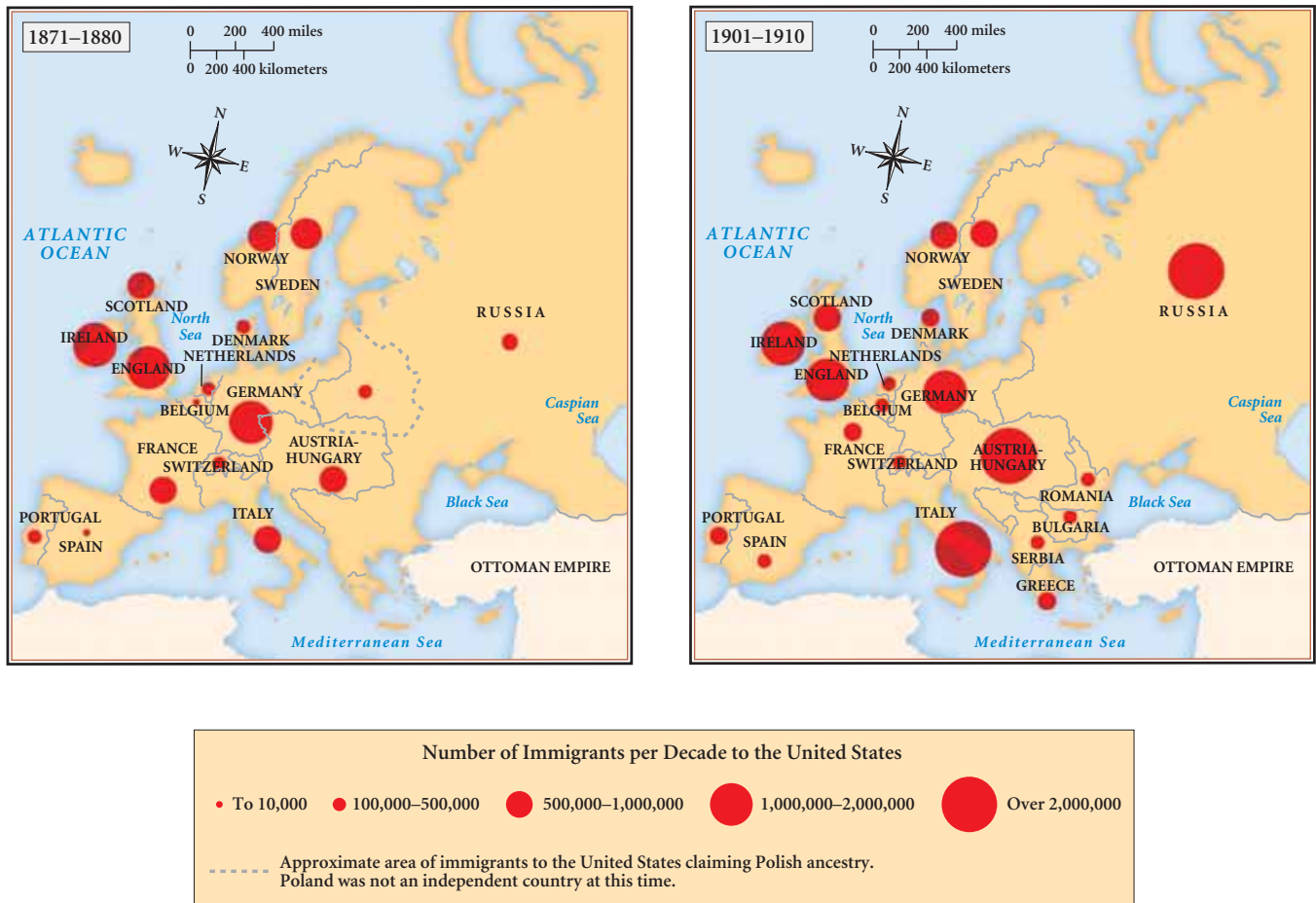
MAP 17.2

Sources of European Immigration to the United States, 1871–1910

Around 1900, Americans began to speak of the "new" immigration. They meant the large numbers of immigrants arriving from Eastern and Southern Europe—Poles, Slovaks and other Slavic peoples, Yiddish-speaking Jews, Italians—who overwhelmed the still substantial number of immigrants from the British Isles and Northern Europe.

Canadians moved to New England in search of textile jobs, many families with hopes of scraping together enough savings to return to Quebec and buy a farm. Thousands of men came alone, especially from Ireland, Italy, and Greece. Many single Irishwomen also immigrated. But some would-be sojourners ended up staying a lifetime, while immigrants who had expected to settle permanently found themselves forced to leave by an accident or sudden economic depression. One historian has estimated that a third of immigrants to the United States in this era returned to their home countries.

Along with Italians and Greeks, Eastern European Jews were among the most numerous arrivals. The first American Jews, who numbered around 50,000 in 1880, had been mostly of German-Jewish descent. In the next four decades, more than 3 million poverty-stricken

Jews arrived from Russia, Ukraine, Poland, and other parts of Eastern Europe, transforming the Jewish presence in the United States. Like other immigrants, they sought economic opportunity, but they also came to escape religious repression (American Voices, p. 562).

Wherever they came from, immigrants took a considerable gamble in traveling to the United States. Some prospered quickly, especially if they came with education, money, or well-placed business contacts. Others, by toiling many years in harsh conditions, succeeded in securing a better life for their children or grandchildren. Still others met with catastrophe or early death. One Polish man who came with his parents in 1908 summed up his life over the next thirty years as "a mere struggle for bread." He added: "Sometimes I think life isn't worth a damn for a man

Emigrants and Destinations, 1881–1915

The United States received more new residents than any other nation during the era of industrialization, but it was not the only place where emigrants (those departing) became immigrants (those arriving). The graph below shows six major destinations for emigrants from four European countries.

British Emigrants (excluding Ireland)
United States 57%
Canada 22%
Oceania* 13%
Africa 8%

German Emigrants
United States 95%
Africa <1%
Oceania* <1%
Brazil 2%
Canada 1%
Argentina 1%

Italian Emigrants
United States 55%
Argentina 23%
Brazil 16%
Africa 3%
Canada 2%
Oceania* <1%

Swedish Emigrants
United States 100%

* Primarily to Australia and New Zealand
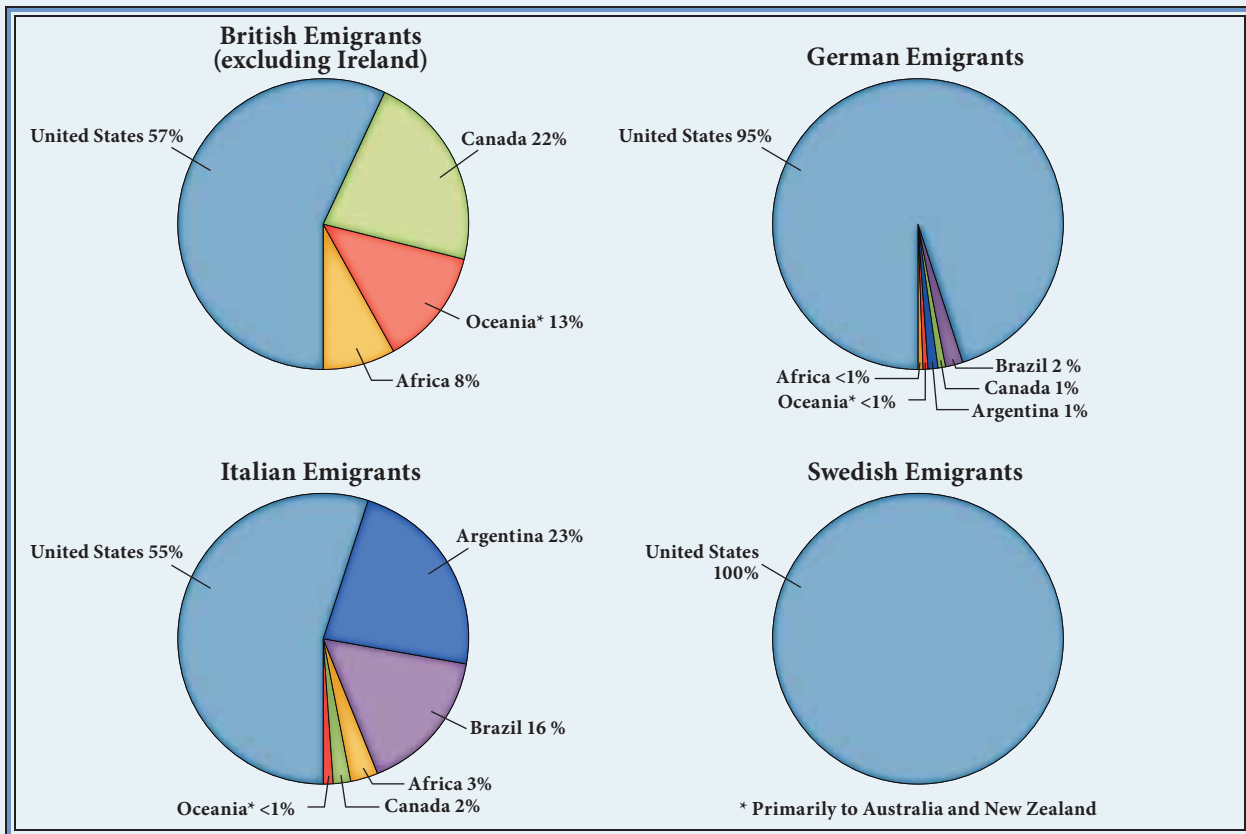
FIGURE 17.2
Major Destinations for Emigrants, 1881–1915

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What might account for the different emigration patterns shown here?
2. What choices and limitations might each group of emigrants have faced in choosing the country to which they emigrated? Do these figures suggest anything about the conditions various groups may have encountered in different countries, upon arrival?

like me. . . . Look at my wife and kids — undernourished, seldom have a square meal." But an Orthodox Russian Jewish woman told an interviewer that she "thanked God for America," where she had married, raised three children, and made a good life. She "liked everything about this country, especially its leniency toward the Jews."

Asian Americans and Exclusion

Compared with Europeans, newcomers from Asia faced even harsher treatment. The first Chinese immigrants had arrived in the late 1840s during the California gold rush. After the Civil War, the Burlingame Treaty between the United States and China opened

the way for increasing numbers to emigrate. Fleeing poverty and upheaval in southern China, they, like European immigrants, filled low-wage jobs in the American economy. The Chinese confronted threats and violence. "We kept indoors after dark for fear of being shot in the back," remembered one Chinese immigrant to California. During the depression of the 1870s, a rising tide of racism was especially extreme in the Pacific coast states, where the majority of Chinese immigrants lived. "The Chinese must go!" railed Dennis Kearney, leader of the California Workingmen's Party, who referred to Asians as "almond-eyed lepers." Incited by Kearney in July 1877, a mob burned San Francisco's Chinatown and beat up residents. In the 1885 Rock Springs massacre in Wyoming, white men burned the local Chinatown and murdered at least twenty-eight Chinese miners.

Despite such atrocities, some Chinese managed to build profitable businesses and farms. Many did so by filling the only niches native-born Americans left open to them: running restaurants and laundries. Facing intense political pressure, Congress in 1882 passed the **Chinese Exclusion Act**, specifically barring Chinese laborers from entering the United States. Each decade thereafter, Congress renewed the law and tightened its provisions; it was not repealed until 1943. Exclusion barred almost all Chinese women, forcing husbands and wives to spend many years apart when men took jobs in the United States.

Asian immigrants made vigorous use of the courts to try to protect their rights. In a series of cases brought by Chinese and later Japanese immigrants, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that all persons born in the United States had citizenship rights that could not be revoked, even if their parents had been born abroad. Nonetheless, well into the twentieth century, Chinese immigrants (as opposed to native-born Chinese Americans) could not apply for citizenship. Meanwhile, Japanese and a few Korean immigrants also began to arrive; by 1909, there were 40,000 Japanese immigrants working in agriculture, 10,000 on railroads, and 4,000 in canneries. In 1906, the U.S. attorney general ruled that Japanese and Koreans, like Chinese immigrants, were barred from citizenship.

The Chinese Exclusion Act created the legal foundations on which far-reaching exclusionary policies

Chinese Workers in a Salmon Cannery, c. 1900

Shut out of many fields of employment by racial discrimination, many Chinese immigrants founded their own restaurants, laundries, and other small businesses. Others, like these cannery workers in Astoria, Oregon, took on some of the most grueling and lowest-paid work in the American economy. Job segregation reinforced, in turn, racial prejudice. Visiting British author Rudyard Kipling, touring canneries along the Columbia River, described Chinese workers in the plants as "blood-besmeared yellow devils." These workers, refuting Kipling's slur, appear clean and respectable. Notice the man in an apron, on the left, who wears his traditional queue, or braided pigtail, tucked into his straw hat. Oregon Historical Society.
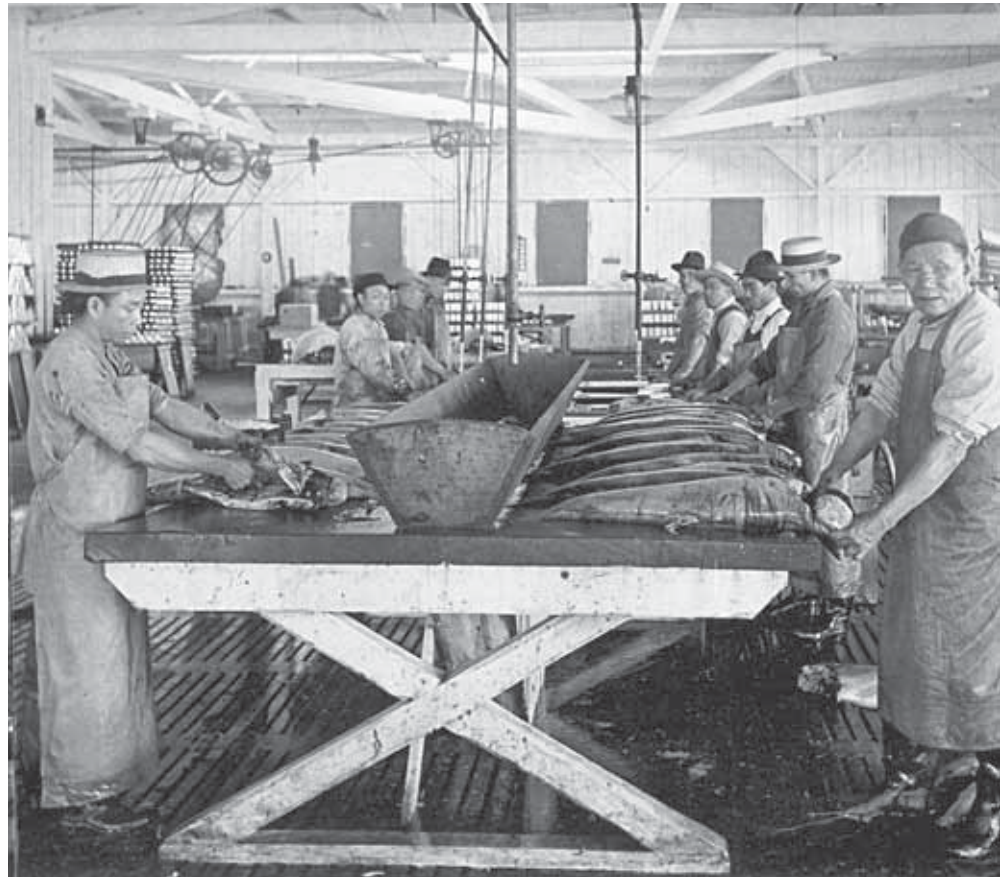
Jewish Immigrants in the Industrial Economy

Following anti-Semitic violence in Russia during the 1880s, thousands of Jews fled to the United States. Almost a quarter million came between 1881 and 1890, the majority settling in New York City. These poverty-stricken newcomers posed problems for New York's assimilated Jews, most of whom were German- or American-born. Community support networks were quickly overwhelmed; New York's United Hebrew Charities almost went bankrupt. Jewish leaders watched with dismay the expansion of tenement wards. They worried that the presence of so many Eastern European "beggars," as one Reform rabbi put it, would heighten American anti-Semitism.

In 1901, New York's Jewish leaders founded an Industrial Removal Office (IRO) to help disperse Jewish newcomers. By 1922 the office sent over 79,000 Eastern European Jews to locations across the country. IRO correspondence provides a window on how newcomers sought to negotiate places in America's industrial economy. Note that most of the letters are translated from Yiddish. As one immigrant noted, inability to speak English could limit employment opportunities and cause "great distress."

Alex Grubman

Letter from Portland, Oregon, 1905

I write you how fortunate I am in being placed in one of the largest dry goods houses in Oregon by Hon. Sig Sichel. . . . He went personally with me until he procured the present position for me as inside salesman and to start at $60 a month. . . . [Many people here] wish me to thank the I.R.O. for helping them to success. . . . Mr. Lvov or Lvovsky, a tinsmith sent out direct 2 years ago has a stove and hardware store. M. Kaplan a tailor is earning $20–25.00 a week. Mr. Nathan Siegel who arrived only a few days ago is already employed as a clerk earning $10.00 for a start.

Barnet Marlin

Letter from Atlanta, Georgia, 1906

Dr. Wildauer secured a place for me to work, at wooden trunks. . . . I could not earn more than 60 cents a day and was working harder than a horse. . . . Atlanta does not pay to work, especially for a foreigner. . . . Several weeks passed by and at the end I was in debt. . . .

During that time I became acquainted with a Jewish policeman and he was the only one who took pity on me. . . . I told my friend the policeman that I had $15.00 (sent to me by my brother) and he advised me to go out peddling. He took me to a store and told the storekeeper to furnish me for over $30.00 worth of goods. He also acted as my reference and prepared me with everything. I went out peddling and gradually I earned enough money to pay all my debts; and so I kept on peddling. I earned enough money and bought a horse and wagon. I now convey goods from the city to the country and sell them there. I thank you very much for sending me to Atlanta.

Raphael Gershoni

Letter from Atlanta, Georgia, 1905

Why do you sent people to Atlanta? You give them eight days worth of food and then you let them starve in the street among Negroes. . . . I was given a job to work in a restaurant kitchen, to wait on Negroes, and to clean the Negroes' closets, for three dollars a week. . . . I was then given ten dollars for goods so that I might go around and peddle in Atlanta. But out of this ten dollars, I have to pay four dollars for lodging and three dollars a month for a place just to lay my head. . . . It is hopeless to work in Atlanta. The highest wage is 75 cents a day. And for what kind of work? . . . The competition is difficult here. Why should anyone hire a white greenhorn when they can get a black Negro, who is strong as iron. . . . Everyone says that the only choice here is to go out into the countryside and peddle. But one needs 40–50 dollars worth of goods. How do I get the money? . . . I would like to ask you to help me out. Help me crawl out of black Atlanta and go to Chicago. There I have friends and can make out better.

Charles Zwirn

Letter from La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1913

[Mr. Goldfish] took me into his house and gave me a very nice welcome. He then led me to the synagogue and introduced me to all the members. Mr. Goldfish is a Jew with a real Jewish heart. He is religiously inclined and the biggest businessman in the city. If any controversy arises, it is always settled by Mr. Goldfish. . . . [He] took me to a shop and they paid me $6 more than I earned in New York. When I wanted to thank him, he said that the only thing he expects of me is that I conduct myself properly and go on the right path so I can eventually succeed. This, he said, was the best reward I can give him. I did as he told me and saved a few hundred dollars. . . .

Another man sent here had been in the country two months. . . . He was sent to Mr. Goldfish, who found him a job sorting corks for $2 a day. . . . He then left. By the way, . . . would you be so kind as to send to me a boy to drive a milk wagon on Mr. Jacob's farm and an older man to work at junk? They must be honest and respectable people.

Mary Rubin

Letter from New Orleans, Louisiana, 1905

You have sent us out here to starve for hunger and live in the streets. . . . We have arrived in New Orleans about 12 o'clock in the night, and there was nobody to await us there, and we had to go around alnight and look for the address which you had given. . . . They put the nine of us all in one room, with out a bed or a pillow to sleep on. . . . Then they took Mr. Rubin and his wife up to the cigar factory and gave them both a job. Mrs. Rubin is getting about four ($4) a week and Mr. Rubin five ($5). Now we will ask you if a family man can make a living with that. And Mr. Rosenthal they told if he wants work he will have to look for it himself. . . . When he found work, they told him to bring his tools and come to work. He went to the office and asked for the tools; they told him that he can't have them.

. . . [The local Committee] sent mama to be a cook for $4 a month, which she had never done before, and if she wanted to be a cook in N.Y. she could have gotten 3 times that much or more, but it did not suit us to let our mother be a cook, and now we should have to do.

Nathan Toplitzky

Letter from Detroit, Michigan, 1908

I, Nathan Toplitzky, sent to the above city 5 months ago, wish to inform you that a great misfortune has happened to me. Your committee has placed me to work in a machine factory where I have earned $.75 a day, and being unskilled I have had 4 of my fingers torn from my right hand. I now remain a cripple throughout my life. For six weeks my sufferings were indescribable.

When the condition of my health improved a little, I called on the Committee and they advised me to go back to the old employer. I went back to him and he placed me to work at the same machine where the accident occurred. Having lost my fingers I was unable to operate the machine. . . . Kindly write to your Committee to find a position for me.

S. Klein

Letter from Cleveland, Ohio, 1905

In the past week something terrible has happened here. Two men sent here by the Removal Office committed suicide out of despair. One took poison and the other hanged himself. . . . That shows the deplorable condition of those who are sent here by the Removal Office. The Cleveland Removal Office is managed by an inexperienced young man who maintains his position merely through favoritism. . . . It was told to me that the one who hanged himself came to this agent and implored him with tears in his eyes to provide some kind of employment.

Source: Letters from the Records of the Industrial Removal Office; 1-91; AJHS, NY, NY and Boston, MA as follows: Alex Grubman, Box 116, Folder 14; Barnet Marlin, Box 95, Folder 4; Raphael Gershoni, Box 95, Folder 4; Charles Zwirn, Box 120, Folder 9; Mary Rubin, Box 99, Folder 17; Nathan Toplitky, Box 101, Folder 7; S. Klein, Box 114, Folder 5.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. Based on the accounts above, what factors contributed to an immigrant's economic success or failure in a new location?
2. In at least ten places, the immigrants above report on wages—daily, weekly, or monthly. For comparison, make a rough conversion of all of these to weekly wages and list them. What do you conclude about compensation for professional, skilled, and unskilled work?
3. Using information from this chapter, as well as the documents above, explain why immigrants sent to the South might have faced more difficulties, on average, than those sent to other parts of the country.

would be built in the 1920s and after (Chapter 22). To enforce the law, Congress and the courts gave sweeping new powers to immigration officials, transforming the Chinese into America's first illegal immigrants. Drawn, like others, by the promise of jobs in America's expanding economy, Chinese men stowed away on ships or walked across the borders. Disguising themselves as Mexicans — who at that time could freely enter the United States — some perished in the desert as they tried to reach California.

Some would-be immigrants, known as paper sons, relied on Chinese residents in the United States, who generated documents falsely claiming the newcomers as American-born children. Paper sons memorized pages of information about their supposed relatives and hometowns. The San Francisco earthquake of 1906 helped their cause by destroying all the port's records. "That was a big chance for a lot of Chinese," remembered one immigrant. "They forged themselves certificates saying they could go back to China and bring back four or five sons, just like that!" Such persistence

ensured that, despite the harsh policies of Chinese exclusion, the flow of Asian immigrants never fully ceased.

Labor Gets Organized

In the American political system, labor has typically been weak. Industrial workers cluster in cities, near factories and jobs; compared with small towns and rural areas, urban areas have been underrepresented in bodies such as the U.S. Senate and the presidential electoral college, in which representation is calculated by state, rather than (or in addition to) individuals. This problem became acute in the era of industrialization, and it has lingered. Even today, the twenty-two U.S. senators elected from Alaska, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Mississippi, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming represent a smaller number of people, *combined*, than the two U.S. senators who represent heavily urban California.

Faced with this obstacle, labor advocates could adopt one of two strategies. First, they could try to make political alliances with sympathetic rural voters
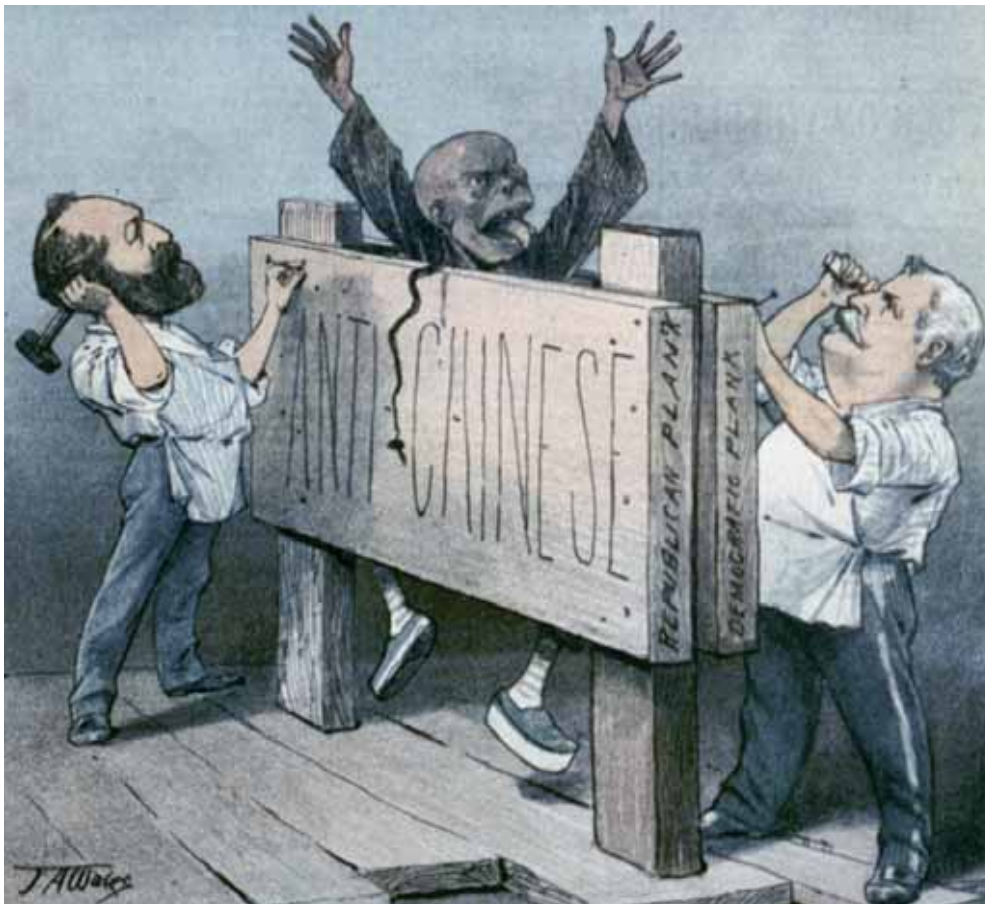
Anti-Chinese Racism

This cartoon from the magazine *Puck*, drawn by James A. Wales during the 1880 presidential campaign, offers vivid evidence of the widespread and virulent American prejudice against Chinese immigrants. Republican candidate James Garfield, on the left, and Democratic candidate Winfield Scott Hancock, on the right, both nail up their party's "planks" in favor of restricting Chinese immigration. Asian immigrants were not permitted to apply for naturalization as U.S. citizens; they thus had no vote and no power in politics. Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, with bipartisan support, soon after Garfield's victory. Library of Congress.

who shared their problems. Second, they could reject politics and create narrowly focused trade unions to negotiate directly with employers. In general, labor advocates emphasized the first strategy between the 1870s and the early 1890s, and the latter in the early twentieth century. Across this era, while industrialization made America increasingly rich and powerful, it also brought large-scale conflict between labor and capital.

The Emergence of a Labor Movement

The problem of industrial labor entered Americans' consciousness dramatically with the **Great Railroad Strike of 1877**. Protesting steep wage cuts amid the depression that had begun in 1873, thousands of railroad workers walked off the job. Broader issues were at stake. "The officers of the road," reported strike leader Barney Donahue in upstate New York, "were bound to break the spirit of the men, and any or all organizations they belonged to." He believed railroad companies wanted to block workers from "all fellowship for mutual aid." The strike brought rail travel and commerce to a halt. Thousands of people poured into the streets of Buffalo, Pittsburgh, and Chicago to protest the economic injustice wrought by railroads — as well as fires caused by stray sparks from locomotives and injuries and deaths on train tracks in urban neighborhoods. When Pennsylvania's governor sent state militia to break the strike, Pittsburgh crowds reacted by burning railroad property and overturning locomotives. Similar clashes between police and protesters occurred in other cities across the country, from Galveston, Texas, to San Francisco.

The 1877 strike left more than fifty people dead and caused $40 million worth of damage, primarily to railroad property. "It seemed as if the whole social and political structure was on the very brink of ruin," wrote one journalist. For their role in the strike, many railroad workers were fired and blacklisted: railroad companies circulated their names on a "do not hire" list to prevent them from getting any work in the industry. In the aftermath of the strike, the U.S. government created the National Guard, intended not to protect Americans against foreign invasion but to enforce order at home.

Watching the upheavals of industrialization, some radical thinkers pointed out its impact on workers. Among the most influential was Henry George, whose book *Progress and Poverty* (1879) was a best-seller for decades after publication. George warned that Americans had been too optimistic about the impact of

railroads and manufacturing, which they hoped would — after an initial period of turmoil — bring prosperity to all. George believed the emerging industrial order meant permanent poverty. Industrialization, he wrote, was driving a wedge through society, lifting the fortunes of professionals and the middle class but pushing the working class down by forcing them into deskilled, dangerous, and low-paid labor. George's proposed solution, a federal "single tax" on landholdings, did not win widespread support, but his insightful diagnosis of the problem helped encourage radical movements for economic reform.

Many rural people believed they faced the same problems as industrial workers. In the new economy, they found themselves at the mercy of large corporations, from equipment dealers who sold them harvesters and plows to railroads and grain elevators that shipped and stored their products. Though farmers appeared to have more independence than corporate employees, many felt trapped in a web of middlemen who chipped away at their profits while international forces robbed them of decision-making power.

Farmers denounced not only corporations but also the previous two decades of government efforts to foster economic development — policies that now seemed wrongheaded. Farmers' advocates argued that high tariffs forced rural families to pay too much for basic necessities while failing to protect America's great export crops, cotton and wheat. At the same time, they charged, Republican financial policies benefitted banks, not borrowers. Farmers blamed railroad companies for taking government grants and subsidies to build but then charging unequal rates that privileged big manufacturers. From the farmers' point of view, public money had been used to build giant railroad companies that turned around and exploited ordinary people.

The most prominent rural protest group of the early postwar decades was the National Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry, founded in 1867. Like industrial workers, Grange farmers sought to counter the rising power of corporate middlemen through cooperation and mutual aid. Local Grange halls brought farm families together for recreation and conversation. The Grange set up its own banks, insurance companies, and grain elevators, and, in Iowa, even a farm implement factory. Many Grange members also advocated political action, building independent local parties that ran on anticorporate platforms.

During the 1870s depression, Grangers, labor advocates, and local workingmen's parties forged a national political movement, the **Greenback-Labor**

Houston's Cotton Depot, c. 1909

After the Civil War, cotton agriculture blossomed on the rich lands of east Texas, and Houston simultaneously blossomed as the region's commercial center. This tinted photograph from the 1890s reveals the tremendous volume of traffic that came through Houston, where Texas cotton was compacted in steam-powered cotton presses, loaded onto railcars, and shipped to cotton mills in the Southeast and Britain to be made into cloth. University of Houston Libraries, Special Collections, George Fuerman Collection.

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

How did the methods used by railroad workers to protest their working conditions compare with the tactics employed by the Greenbackers, who also sought reform?

Party. In the South, Greenbackers protested the collapse of Reconstruction and urged that every man's vote be protected. Across the country, Greenbackers advocated laws to regulate corporations and enforce an eight-hour workday to reduce long, grueling work hours. They called for the federal government to print more greenback dollars and increase the amount of money in circulation; this, they argued, would stimulate the economy, create jobs, and help borrowers by allowing them to pay off debts in dollars that, over time, slowly decreased in value. Greenbackers, like many industrial labor leaders, subscribed to the ideal of **producerism**: they dismissed middlemen, bankers, lawyers, and investors as idlers who lived off the sweat of people who worked with their hands. As a Pittsburgh worker put it in an 1878 poem, it was not the money-handlers or executives at the top but the "noble sons of Labor . . . / Who with bone, and brain, and fiber / Make the nation's wealth."

The Greenback movement radicalized thousands of farmers, miners, and industrial workers. In Alabama's coal-mining regions, black and white miners cooperated in the party. Texas boasted seventy African American Greenback clubs. In 1878, Greenback-Labor candidates won more than a million votes, and the party elected fifteen congressmen nationwide. In the Midwest, Greenback pressure helped trigger a wave of economic regulatory actions known as **Granger laws**. By the early 1880s, twenty-nine states had created railroad commissions to supervise railroad rates and policies; others appointed commissions to regulate insurance and utility companies. Such early regulatory efforts were not always effective, but they were crucial starting points for reform. While short-lived, the Greenback movement created the foundation for more sustained efforts to regulate big business.

The Knights of Labor

The most important union of the late nineteenth century, the **Knights of Labor**, was founded in 1869 as a secret society of garment workers in Philadelphia. In 1878, as the Greenback movement reached its height, some Knights served as delegates to Greenback-Labor conventions. Like Grangers, Knights believed that ordinary people needed control over the enterprises in which they worked. They proposed to set up shops owned by employees, transforming America into what they called a cooperative commonwealth. In keeping with this broad-based vision, the order practiced open membership, irrespective of race, gender, or field of employment — though, like other labor groups, the Knights excluded Chinese immigrants.

The Knights had a strong political bent. They believed that only electoral action could bring about many of their goals, such as government regulation of corporations and laws that required employers to negotiate during strikes. Their 1878 platform denounced the "aggressiveness of great capitalists and corporations." "If we desire to enjoy the full blessings of life," the Knights warned, "a check [must] be placed upon unjust accumulation, and the power for evil of aggregated wealth." Among their demands were workplace safety laws, prohibition of child labor, a federal tax on the nation's highest incomes, public ownership of telegraphs and railroads, and government recognition of workers' right to organize. The Knights also advocated personal responsibility and self-discipline. Their leader, Terence Powderly, warned that the abuse of liquor robbed as many workers of their wages as did ruthless employers.

Growing rapidly in the 1880s, the Knights union was sprawling and decentralized. It included not only skilled craftsmen such as carpenters, ironworkers, and beer brewers but also textile workers in Rhode Island, domestic workers in Georgia, and tenant farmers in Arkansas. Knights organized workingmen's parties to advocate a host of reforms, ranging from an eight-hour workday to cheaper streetcar fares and better garbage collection in urban areas. One of their key innovations was hiring a full-time women's organizer, Leonora Barry. An Irish American widow who was forced into factory work after her husband's death, Barry became a labor advocate out of horror at the conditions she experienced on the job. To the discomfort of some male Knights, she investigated and exposed widespread evidence of sexual harassment on the job.

The Knights' growth in the 1880s showed the grassroots basis of labor activism. Powderly tried to avoid

The Knights of Labor

The caption on this union card — "By Industry we Thrive" — expresses the core principle of the Knights of Labor that everything of value is the product of honest labor. The two figures are ideal representations of that "producerist" belief — handsome workers, respectably attired, doing productive labor. A picture of the Grand Master Workman, Terence V. Powderly, hangs on the wall, benignly watching them. Picture Research Consultants & Archives.

strikes, which he saw as costly and risky. But the organization's greatest growth resulted from spontaneous, grassroots striking. In 1885, thousands of workers on the Southwest Railroad walked off the job to protest wage cuts; afterward, they telegraphed the Knights and asked to be admitted as members. The strike enhanced the Knights' reputation among workers and built membership to 750,000. By the following year, local assemblies had sprung up in every state and almost every county in the United States.

Just as the Knights reached this pinnacle of influence, an episode of violence brought them down. In 1886, a protest at the McCormick reaper works in

IDENTIFY CAUSES

What factors contributed to the rapid rise of the Knights of Labor? To its decline?

Industrial Violence: A Dynamited Mine, 1894

Strikes in the western mining regions pitted ruthless owners, bent on control of their property and work-force, against fiercely independent miners who knew how to use dynamite. Some of the bloodiest conflicts occurred in Colorado mining towns, where the Western Federation of Miners (WFM) had strong support and a series of Republican governors sent state militia to back the mine owners. Violence broke out repeatedly between the early 1890s and the 1910s. At Victor, Colorado, in May 1894, as dozens of armed sheriffs' deputies closed in on angry WFM members occupying the Strong Mine in protest, the miners blew up the mine's shaft house and boiler. Showered with debris, the deputies boarded the next train out of town. Because Colorado then had a Populist governor, Davis Waite, who sympathized with the miners and ordered the deputies to disband, this strike was one of the few in which owners and miners reached a peaceful settlement—a temporary victory for the union. Library of Congress.

Chicago led to a clash with police that left four strikers dead. (Three unions, including a Knights of Labor assembly, had struck, but the Knights had reached an agreement and returned to work. Only the machinists' union remained on strike when the incident occurred.) Chicago was a hotbed of **anarchism**, the revolutionary advocacy of a stateless society. Local anarchists, many of them German immigrants, called a protest meeting the next day, May 4, 1886, at **Haymarket Square**. When police tried to disperse the crowd, someone threw a bomb that killed several policemen. Officers responded with gunfire. In the trial that followed, eight anarchists were found guilty of murder and criminal conspiracy. All were convicted, not on any definitive evidence that one of them threw the bomb (the bomber's identity still remains unknown) but on the basis of their antigovernment speeches. Four of the eight were executed by hanging, one committed suicide in prison, and the others received long sentences.

The Haymarket violence profoundly damaged the American labor movement. Seizing on resulting anti-union hysteria, employers took the offensive. They broke strikes with mass arrests, tied up the Knights in expensive court proceedings, and forced workers to sign contracts pledging not to join labor organizations. The Knights of Labor never recovered. In the view of the press and many prosperous Americans, they were tainted by their alleged links with anarchism. Struggles between industrialists and workers had created bitter divides.

Farmers and Workers: The Cooperative Alliance

In the aftermath of Haymarket, the Knights' cooperative vision did not entirely fade. A new rural movement, the **Farmers' Alliance**, arose to take up many of the issues that Grangers and Greenbackers had earlier

sought to address. Founded in Texas during the depression of the 1870s, the Farmers' Alliance spread across the plains states and the South, becoming by the late 1880s the largest farmer-based movement in American history. A separate Colored Farmers' Alliance arose to represent rural African Americans. The harsh conditions farmers were enduring—including drought in the West and plunging global prices for corn, cotton, and wheat—intensified the movement's appeal. Traveling Alliance lecturers exhorted farmers to "stand as a great conservative body against . . . the growing corruption of wealth and power."

Like earlier movements, Alliance leaders pinned their initial hopes on cooperative stores and exchanges that would circumvent middlemen. Cooperatives gathered farmers' orders and bought in bulk at wholesale prices, passing the savings along. Alliance cooperatives achieved notable victories in the late 1880s. The Dakota Alliance, for example, offered members cheap hail insurance and low prices on machinery and farm supplies. The Texas Alliance established a huge cooperative enterprise to market cotton and provide farmers with cheap loans. When cotton prices fell further in 1891, however, the Texas exchange failed. Other cooperatives also suffered from chronic underfunding and lack of credit, and they faced hostility from merchants and lenders they tried to circumvent.

The Texas Farmers' Alliance thus proposed a federal price-support system for farm products, modeled on the national banks. Under this plan, the federal government would hold crops in public warehouses and issue loans on their value until they could be profitably sold. When Democrats—still wary of big-government schemes—declared the idea too radical, Alliances in Texas, Kansas, South Dakota, and elsewhere decided to create a new political party, the Populists (see Chapter 20). In this venture, the Alliance cooperated with the weakened Knights of Labor, seeking to use rural voters' substantial clout on behalf of urban workers who shared their vision.

By this time, farmer-labor coalitions had made a considerable impact on state politics. But state laws and commissions were proving ineffective against corporations of national and even global scope. It was difficult for Wisconsin, for instance, to enforce new laws against a railroad company whose lines might stretch from Chicago to Seattle and whose corporate headquarters might be in Minnesota. Militant farmers and labor advocates demanded federal action.

In 1887, responding to this pressure, Congress and President Grover Cleveland passed two landmark laws. The Hatch Act provided federal funding for agricultural research and education, meeting farmers' demands for government aid to agriculture. The **Interstate Commerce Act** counteracted a Supreme Court decision of the previous year, *Wabash v. Illinois* (1886), that had struck down states' authority to regulate railroads. The act created the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC), charged with investigating interstate shipping, forcing railroads to make their rates public, and suing in court when necessary to make companies reduce "unjust or unreasonable" rates.

Though creation of the ICC was a direct response to farmer-labor demands, its final form represented a compromise. Radical leaders wanted Congress to establish a direct set of rules under which railroads must operate. If a railroad did not comply, any citizen could take the company to court; if the new rules triggered bankruptcy, the railroad could convert to public ownership. But getting such a plan through Congress proved impossible. Lawmakers more sympathetic to business called instead for an expert commission to oversee the railroad industry. In a pattern that repeated frequently over the next few decades, the commission model proved more acceptable to the majority of congressmen.

The ICC faced formidable challenges. Though the new law forbade railroads from reaching secret rate-setting agreements, evidence was difficult to gather and secret "pooling" continued. A hostile Supreme Court also undermined the commission's powers. In a series of sixteen decisions over the two decades after the ICC was created, the Court sided with railroads fifteen times. The justices delivered a particularly hard blow in 1897 when they ruled that the ICC had no power to interfere with shipping rates. Nonetheless, the ICC's existence was a major achievement. In the early twentieth century, Congress would strengthen the commission's powers, and the ICC would become one of the most powerful federal agencies charged with overseeing private business.

Another Path: The American Federation of Labor

While the Knights of Labor exerted political pressure, other workers pursued a different strategy. In the 1870s, printers, ironworkers, bricklayers, and other skilled workers organized nationwide trade unions. These "brotherhoods" focused on the everyday needs of workers in skilled occupations. Trade unions sought

Samuel Gompers, c. 1890s

Samuel Gompers (1850–1924) was one of the founders of the American Federation of Labor, and its president for nearly forty years. A company detective took this photograph when the labor leader was visiting striking miners in West Virginia, an area where mine operators resisted unions with special fierceness. George Meany Memorial Archives.

a **closed shop** — with all jobs reserved for union members — that kept out lower-wage workers. Union rules specified terms of work, sometimes in minute detail. Many unions emphasized mutual aid. Because working on the railroads was a high-risk occupation, for example, brotherhoods of engineers, brakemen, and firemen pooled contributions into funds that provided accident and death benefits. Above all, trade unionism asserted craft workers' rights as active decision-makers in the workplace, not just cogs in a management-run machine.

In the early 1880s, many trade unionists joined the Knights of Labor coalition. But the aftermath of the Haymarket violence persuaded them to leave and create

TRACE CHANGE OVER TIME

How did the key institutions and goals of the labor movement change, and what gains and losses resulted from this shift?

the separate **American Federation of Labor** (AFL). The man who led them was Samuel Gompers, a Dutch-Jewish cigar maker whose family had emigrated to New York in 1863. Gompers headed the AFL for the next thirty years. He believed the Knights relied too much on electoral politics, where victories were likely to be limited, and he did not share their sweeping critique of capitalism. The AFL, made up of relatively skilled and well-paid workers, was less interested in challenging the corporate order than in winning a larger share of its rewards.

Having gone to work at age ten, Gompers always contended that what he missed at school he more than made up for in the shop, where cigar makers paid one of their members to read to them while they worked. As a young worker-intellectual, Gompers gravitated to New York's radical circles, where he participated in lively debates about which strategies workingmen should pursue. Partly out of these debates, and partly from his own experience in the Cigar Makers Union, Gompers hammered out a doctrine that he called pure-and-simple unionism. *Pure* referred to membership: strictly limited to workers, organized by craft and occupation, with no reliance on outside advisors or allies. *Simple* referred to goals: only those that immediately benefitted workers — better wages, hours, and working conditions. Pure-and-simple unionists distrusted politics. Their aim was collective bargaining with employers.

On one level, pure-and-simple unionism worked. The AFL was small at first, but by 1904 its membership rose to more than two million. In the early twentieth century, it became the nation's leading voice for workers, lasting far longer than movements like the Knights of Labor. The AFL's strategy — personified by Gompers — was well suited to an era when Congress and the courts were hostile to labor. By the 1910s, the political climate would become more responsive; at that later moment, Gompers would soften his antipolitical stance and join the battle for new labor laws (Chapter 20).

What Gompers gave up most crucially, in the meantime, was the inclusiveness of the Knights. By comparison, the AFL was far less welcoming to women and blacks; it included mostly skilled craftsmen. There was little room in the AFL for department-store clerks and other service workers, much less the farm tenants and domestic servants whom the Knights had organized. Despite the AFL's success among skilled craftsmen, the narrowness of its base was a problem that would come back to haunt the labor movement later on. Gompers, however, saw that corporate titans and their political allies held tremendous power, and he

advocated what he saw as the most practical defensive plan. In the meantime, the upheaval wrought by industrialization spread far beyond the workplace, transforming every aspect of American life.

SUMMARY

The end of the Civil War ushered in the era of American big business. Exploiting the continent's vast resources, vertically integrated corporations emerged as the dominant business form, and giant companies built near monopolies in some sectors of the economy. Corporations devised new modes of production, distribution, and marketing, extending their reach through the department store, the mail-order catalog, and the new advertising industry. These developments laid the groundwork for mass consumer culture. They also offered emerging jobs in management, sales, and office work.

Rapid industrialization drew immigrants from around the world. Until the 1920s, most European and Latin American immigrants were welcome to enter the United States, though they often endured harsh conditions after they arrived. Asian immigrants, by contrast, faced severe discrimination. The Chinese Exclusion Act blocked all Chinese laborers from coming to the United States; it was later extended to other Asians, and it built the legal framework for broader forms of exclusion.

Nationwide movements for workers' rights arose in response to industrialization. During the 1870s and 1880s, coalitions of workers and farmers, notably the Knights of Labor and the Farmers' Alliance, sought political solutions to what they saw as large corporations' exploitation of working people. Pressure from such movements led to the first major attempts to regulate corporations, such as the federal Interstate Commerce Act. Radical protest movements were weakened, however, after public condemnation of anarchist violence in 1886 at Chicago's Haymarket Square. Meanwhile, trade unions such as the American Federation of Labor organized skilled workers and negotiated directly with employers, becoming the most popular form of labor organization in the early twentieth century.

CHAPTER REVIEW

MAKE IT STICK   Go to **LearningCurve** to retain what you've read.

TERMS TO KNOW   Identify and explain the significance of each term below.

Key Concepts and Events

Homestead lockout (p. 544)
management revolution (p. 546)
vertical integration (p. 547)
horizontal integration (p. 548)
trust (p. 548)
deskilling (p. 551)
mass production (p. 551)
scientific management (p. 552)
Chinese Exclusion Act (p. 561)
Great Railroad Strike of 1877 (p. 565)

Greenback-Labor Party (p. 565)
producerism (p. 566)
Granger laws (p. 566)
Knights of Labor (p. 567)
anarchism (p. 568)
Haymarket Square (p. 568)
Farmers' Alliance (p. 568)
Interstate Commerce Act (p. 569)
closed shop (p. 570)
American Federation of Labor (p. 570)

Key People

Andrew Carnegie (p. 544)
Gustavus Swift (p. 547)
John D. Rockefeller (p. 547)
Henry George (p. 565)
Terence Powderly (p. 567)
Leonora Barry (p. 567)
Samuel Gompers (p. 570)

REVIEW QUESTIONS   Answer these questions to demonstrate your understanding of the chapter's main ideas.

1. How did the rise of big business in the United States transform the economy and affect the lives of working people?

2. How did patterns of immigration to the United States change between the 1840s and the 1910s? What roles did newly arrived immigrants play in the economy during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries?

3. Compare the accomplishments and limitations of American farmer-labor movements of the 1870s and 1880s, such as the Greenback-Labor Party and the Knights of Labor, with those of the American Federation of Labor. Why did the latter choose a different strategy?

4. This chapter explores the impact of industrialization from many points of view. Based on this information, do you think the term *industrial statesmen* or *robber barons* is more accurate as a description for Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller, and other early titans? Or would you prefer a different term? Explain why.

5. **THEMATIC UNDERSTANDING**   Review the events listed under "Politics and Power," "Peopling," and "Work, Exchange, and Technology" on the thematic timeline on page 543. Industrialization was an *economic* process, but it also transformed American society and politics. How?

MAKING CONNECTIONS   Recognize the larger developments and continuities within and across chapters by answering these questions.

1. **ACROSS TIME AND PLACE**   Imagine a conversation in the 1890s between a young brother and sister in Chicago, who are working, respectively, in a meat-packing plant and as a telephone operator, and their grandmother, who as a young girl worked in a Lowell, Massachusetts, textile mill in the 1840s (Chapter 9) before the family moved west to take advantage of new opportunities. What similarities and differences might they see in their various experiences of work? What does this tell us about changes in workers' lives over these decades?

2. **VISUAL EVIDENCE**   Return to the chapter-opening photograph (p. 545), taken in the aftermath of a terrible mining accident in Pennsylvania. Imagine, first, that the young man in the middle of the picture, facing the camera, is the nephew of an Irish immigrant miner who was killed in the explosion. In the voice of this young man, write a letter to the editor of the local paper explaining what lessons Americans should take from the disaster.

Now imagine instead that the young man has enrolled in business school to become a manager; he is the son of a Scottish-born executive in the mining company, and Andrew Carnegie is his hero. In the voice of this young man, write a letter to the editor explaining what lessons Americans should take from the disaster.

MORE TO EXPLORE   Start here to learn more about the events discussed in this chapter.

Roger Daniels, *Coming to America* (2002). A sweeping overview of immigration to the United States from colonial times to the 1980s.

Walter Friedman, *Birth of a Salesman* (2004). A lively treatment of the rise of salesmanship.

Erika Lee, *At America's Gates* (2003). One of several superb recent treatments of Chinese immigration and exclusion.

Harold Livesay, *Samuel Gompers and Organized Labor in America* (1978). A classic biography of the AFL's founder.

David Montgomery, *Citizen Worker* (1993). A brief exploration of workers' experiences with government, electoral politics, and the marketplace in the late nineteenth century.

Richard White, *Railroaded* (2011). A recent reassessment of big business and its impact, focusing on the railroad industry.

TIMELINE

Ask yourself why this chapter begins and ends with these dates and then identify the links among related events.

1863	• Cleveland, Ohio, becomes nation's petroleum refining center
1865	• Chicago's Union Stock Yard opens
1867	• National Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry founded
1869	• Knights of Labor founded
1875	• John Wanamaker opens nation's first department store in Philadelphia
1876	• Alexander Graham Bell invents the telephone
1877	• San Francisco mob attacks Chinatown • Great Railroad Strike
1878	• Greenback-Labor Party elects 15 Congressmen.
1879	• Henry George publishes *Progress and Poverty*
1882	• John D. Rockefeller creates Standard Oil Trust • Congress passes Chinese Exclusion Act
1884	• Knights of Labor at peak of membership
1885	• Rock Springs massacre of Chinese miners
1886	• Haymarket Square violence • American Federation of Labor (AFL) founded
1887	• Hatch Act • Interstate Commerce Act
1889	• New Jersey passes law enabling trusts to operate in the state
1892	• Homestead lockout
1893	• Severe depression hits; causes mass unemployment and wave of corporate mergers
1900	• America's one hundred largest companies control one-third of national productive capacity
1901	• J. P. Morgan creates U.S. Steel, America's first billion-dollar corporation
1907	• Marianna, Pennsylvania, mine disaster
1908	• Walter Dill publishes *The Psychology of Advertising*

KEY TURNING POINTS: In the era of industrialization, what events prompted the rise of labor unions and other reform groups that called for stronger government responses to corporate power? Before 1900, what key events or turning points marked reformers' successes and failures?

18
CHAPTER

The Victorians Make the Modern
1880–1917

IDENTIFY THE BIG IDEA

How did the changes wrought by industrialization shape Americans' identities, beliefs, and culture?

When Philadelphia hosted the 1876 Centennial Exposition, Americans weren't sure what to expect from their first world's fair— including what foods exhibitors would offer. One cartoonist humorously proposed that Russians would serve castor oil, Arabs would bring camel's milk punch, and Germans would offer beer. Reflecting widespread racial prejudices, the cartoon showed Chinese men selling "hashed cat" and "rat pie." In reality, though, the 1876 Exposition offered only plain lunchrooms and, for the wealthiest visitors, expensive French fare.

By the early twentieth century, American food had undergone a revolution. Visitors to the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904 could try food from Scandinavia, India, and the Philippines. Across the United States, Chinese American restaurants flourished as a *chop suey* craze swept the nation. New Yorkers could sample Hungarian and Syrian cuisine; a San Francisco journalist enthusiastically reviewed local Mexican and Japanese restaurants. Even small-town diners could often find an Italian or German meal.

What had happened? Americans had certainly not lost all their prejudices: while plates of *chop suey* were being gobbled up, laws excluding Chinese immigrants remained firmly in place. Industrialization reshaped class identities, however, and promoted a creative consumer culture. In the great cities, amusement parks and vaudeville theaters catered to industrial workers (Chapter 19). Other institutions served middle-class customers who wanted novelty and variety at a reasonable price. A Victorian ethos of self-restraint and moral uplift gave way to expectations of leisure and fun. As African Americans and women claimed a right to public spaces—to shop, dine, and travel freely—they built powerful reform movements. At the same time, the new pressures faced by professional men led to aggressive calls for masculine fitness, exemplified by the rise of sports.

Stunning scientific discoveries—from dinosaur fossils to distant galaxies—also challenged long-held beliefs. Faced with electricity, medical vaccines, and other wonders, Americans celebrated technological solutions to human problems. But while science gained popularity, religion hardly faded. In fact, religious diversity grew, as immigrants brought new faiths and Protestants responded with innovations of their own. Americans found themselves living in a modern world—one in which their grandparents' beliefs and ways of life no longer seemed to apply. In a market-driven society that claimed to champion individual freedom, Americans took advantage of new ideas while expressing anxiety over the accompanying upheavals and risks.

Chicago Department Store Advertisement, 1893 In the same year that the Chicago World's Columbian Exhibition offered an array of dazzling experiences for visitors, the city's Siegel-Cooper Department Store did the same for consumers who could afford to shop in its halls. Note the many types of goods and services offered in its "Sixty-Five Complete Departments," from meat and groceries to medical and legal advice. What evidence, here, shows the types of customers the store sought to attract, inviting them to say, "I'll meet you at the Fountain"? How did the store encourage shoppers to linger? Chicago History Museum.

Commerce and Culture

As the United States industrialized, the terms *middle class* and *working class* came widely into use. Americans adopted these broad identities not only in the workplace but also in their leisure time. Professionals and corporate managers prospered; they and their families enjoyed rising income and an array of tempting ways to spend their dollars. Celebrating these new technological wonders, Americans hailed inventors as heroes. The most famous, Thomas Edison, operated an independent laboratory rather than working for a corporation. Edison, like many of the era's businessmen, was a shrewd entrepreneur who focused on commercial success. He and his colleagues helped introduce such lucrative products as the incandescent lightbulb and the phonograph, which came widely into use in American homes.

Even working-class Americans enjoyed cheaper products delivered by global trade and mass production, from bananas and cigarettes to colorful dime novels and magazines. Edison's moving pictures, for example, first found popularity among the urban working class (Chapter 19). Consumer culture *appeared*, at least, to be democratic: anyone should be able to eat at a restaurant or buy a rail ticket for the "ladies' car" — as long as she or he could pay. In practice, though, this was not the case, and consumer venues became sites of struggle over class inequality, race privilege, and proper male and female behavior.

Consumer Spaces

America's public spaces — from election polls to saloons and circus shows — had long been boisterous and male-centered. A woman who ventured there
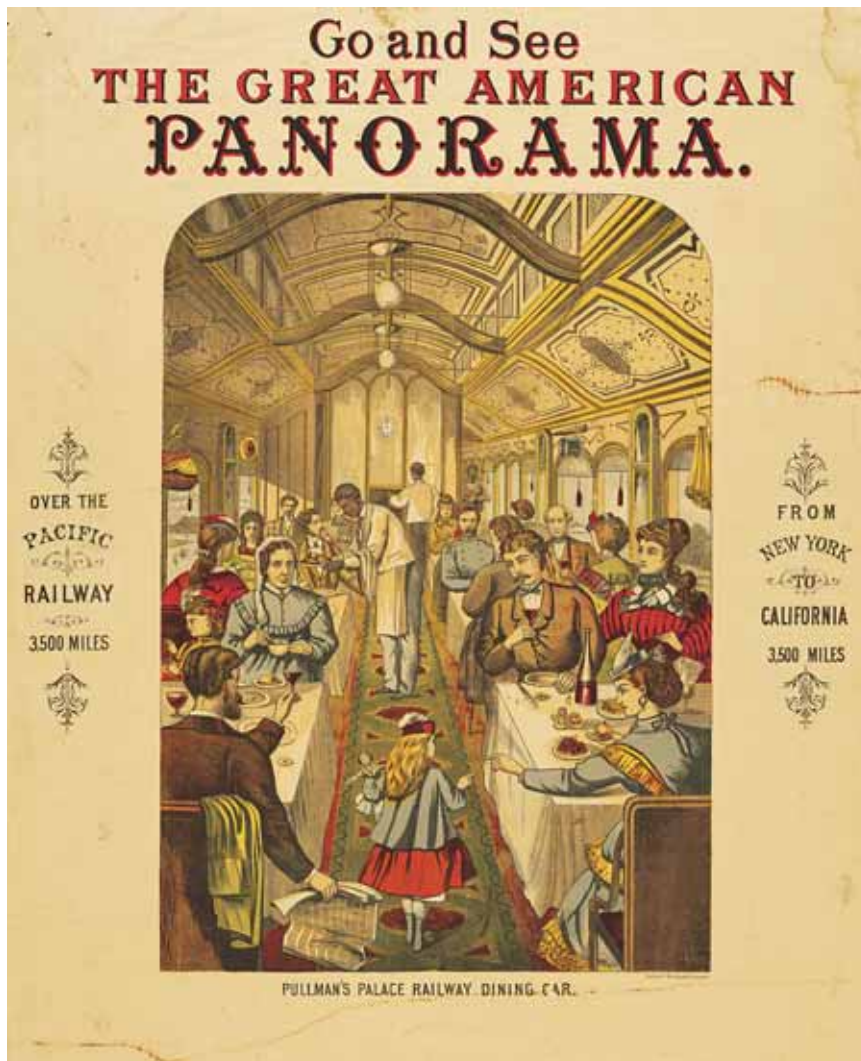
Pacific Railway Poster, c. 1900
This color lithograph emphasized the family atmosphere of the railroad's Pullman Palace Dining Cars. Pullman, a Chicago-based manufacturer, became a household name by providing high-class sleeping and dining cars to the nation's railroads. Such advertisements invited prosperous Americans to make themselves "at home" in public, commercial spaces that were safe and comfortable for respectable women and children. Note that all the passengers are white, and the waiters black. Work as a railroad waiter or porter was one of the better-paid, more prestigious jobs available to African American men. Demands for segregated rail cars often focused on the alleged threat that black men might pose to white women — while, at the same time, such men and women regularly came in contact as railroad employees and passengers. Wisconsin Historical Society.

without a male chaperone risked damaging her reputation. But the rise of new businesses encouraged change. To attract an eager public, purveyors of consumer culture invited women and families, especially those of the middle class, to linger in department stores and enjoy new amusements.

No one promoted commercial domesticity more successfully than showman P. T. Barnum (1810–1891), who used the country's expanding rail network to develop his famous traveling circus. Barnum condemned earlier circus managers who had opened their tents to "the rowdy element." Proclaiming children as his key audience, he created family entertainment for diverse audiences (though in the South, black audiences sat in segregated seats or attended separate shows). He promised middle-class parents that his circus would teach children courage and promote the benefits of exercise. To encourage women's attendance, Barnum emphasized the respectability and refinement of his female performers.

Department stores also lured middle-class women by offering tearooms, children's play areas, umbrellas, and clerks to wrap and carry every purchase. Store credit plans enabled well-to-do women to shop without handling money in public. Such tactics succeeded so well that New York's department store district became known as Ladies' Mile. Boston department store magnate William Filene called the department store an "Adamless Eden."

These Edens were for the elite and middle class. Though bargain basements and neighborhood stores served working-class families, big department stores enlisted vagrancy laws and police to discourage the "wrong kind" from entering. Working-class women gained access primarily as clerks, cashiers, and cash girls, who at age twelve or younger served as internal store messengers, carrying orders and change for $1.50 a week. The department store was no Eden for these women, who worked long hours on their feet, often dealing with difficult customers. Nevertheless, many clerks claimed their own privileges as shoppers, making enthusiastic use of employee discounts and battling employers for the right to wear their fashionable purchases while they worked in the store.

In similar ways, class status was marked by the ways technology entered American homes. The rise of electricity, in particular, marked the gap between affluent urban consumers and rural and working-class families. In elite houses, domestic servants began to use — or find themselves replaced by — an array of new devices, from washing machines to vacuum cleaners. When Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone in

1876, entrepreneurs introduced the device for business use, but it soon found eager residential customers. Telephones changed etiquette and social relations for middle-class suburban women — while providing their working-class counterparts with new employment options (Thinking Like a Historian, p. 578).

Railroads also reflected the emerging privileges of professional families. Finding prosperous Americans eager for excursions, railroad companies, like department stores, made things comfortable for middle-class women and children. Boston's South Terminal Station boasted of its modern amenities, including "everything that the traveler needs down to cradles in which the baby may be soothed." An 1882 tourist guide promised readers that they could live on the Pacific Railroad "with as much true enjoyment as the home drawing room." Rail cars manufactured by the famous Pullman Company of Chicago set a national standard for taste and elegance. Fitted with rich carpets, upholstery, and woodwork, Pullman cars embodied the growing prosperity of America's elite, influencing trends in home decor. Part of their appeal was the chance for people of modest means to emulate the rich. An experienced train conductor observed that the wives of grocers, not millionaires, were the ones most likely to "sweep . . . into a parlor car as if the very carpet ought to feel highly honored by their tread."

First-class "ladies' cars" soon became sites of struggle for racial equality. For three decades after the end of the Civil War, state laws and railroad regulations varied, and African Americans often succeeded in securing seats. One reformer noted, however, "There are few ordeals more nerve-wracking than the one which confronts a colored woman when she tries to secure a Pullman reservation in the South and even in some parts of the North." When they claimed first-class seats, black women often faced confrontations with conductors, resulting in numerous lawsuits in the 1870s and 1880s. Riding the Chesapeake & Ohio line in 1884, young African American journalist Ida B. Wells was told to leave. "I refused," she wrote later, "saying that the [nearest alternative] car was a smoker, and as I was in the ladies' car, I proposed to stay." Wells resisted, but the conductor and a baggage handler threw her bodily off the train. Returning home to Memphis, Wells sued and won in local courts, but Tennessee's supreme court reversed the ruling.

In 1896, the U.S. Supreme Court settled such issues decisively — but not justly. The case, ***Plessy v. Ferguson***,

America Picks Up the Telephone

New consumer technologies often had different impacts on working-class and rural Americans than they did on the prosperous elite and the middle class. The documents below also suggest some of the ways that telephone use reflected new expectations about women's roles in the home, workplace, and society.

1. **"Hello Ma Baby" sheet music cover and lyrics, 1899.** *This popular music hit, this song was written in the voice of an African American man to his girl. The man's tuxedo is a bit disheveled; in 1899, most white Americans would have assumed he wore it for waiting tables or other service work. The woman wears a dressing gown—not how a respectable lady would want to appear. Nonetheless, the racial depiction here is more modern than those of old-fashioned minstrel shows. The song's chorus appears below. What changing expectations does it convey about courtship and dating?*

Courtesy of the E. Azalia Hackley Collection of Negro Music, Dance and Drama, Detroit Public Library.

Hello! ma Baby, Hello! ma honey, Hello! ma ragtime gal,
Send me a kiss by wire, Baby, my heart's on fire!
If you refuse me, honey, you'll lose me, then you'll be left alone;
Oh baby, telephone, and tell me I'm your own.

2. **"The Perfect Operator,"** *Saturday Evening Post,* **July 12, 1930.** *Katherine Schmitt opened the New York Operator's School in 1902. Looking back later, she described the qualities sought in operators. What does this document tell us about the values of the emerging corporate workplace?*

[The operator] must now be made as nearly as possible a paragon of perfection, a kind of human machine, the exponent of speed and courtesy; a creature spirited enough to move like chain lightning, and with perfect accuracy; docile enough to deny herself the sweet privilege of the last word. She must assume that the subscriber is always right, and even when she knows he is not, her only comeback must be: "Excuse it please," in the same smiling voice.

3. **"The Mischievous Telephone Girl Makes More Trouble,"** *Wheeling Register,* **West Virginia, October 26, 1884.** *Early operators had to speak to each caller and manually connect the call. Newspapers in the 1880s featured many stories like this one. Telephone companies predominantly hired young white native-born women as operators, or "hello girls." Many such employees came from the working class.*

The girl had been asleep a long time, when somebody called. Looking at the switch board, she observed that No. 1,111 was down, and leisurely raised the phone to her ear. . . . "Hello! . . . You bald headed old sinner! What do you want?"

"Dr. Highflyer. No. 2,222."

"Hello!"

"Hello, Highflyer! My wife is not very well to-night. She has a severe pain in the back of her neck, and complains of a sort of goneness in the abdomen. . . . What shall I do for her?"

Here the wicked telephone girl switched on a machinist who was telling the owner of a saw mill what he thought ailed his boiler and the answer . . . was as follows:

"I think she's covered with scales inside about an inch thick. Let her cool down during the night, and before she fires up in the morning, take a hammer and pound her
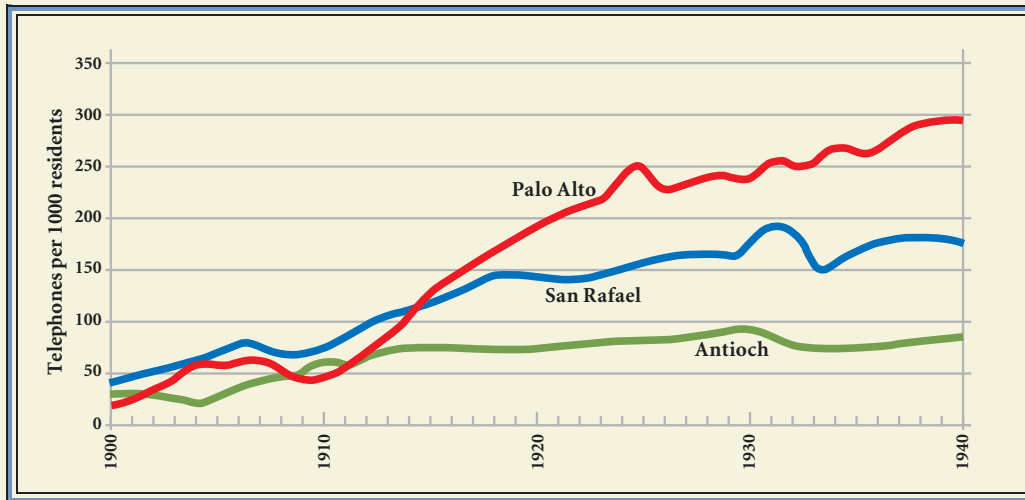
Based on Figure 9 from *A Social History of the Telephone to 1940*, by Claude S. Fischer (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992). Copyright © 1992 by The Regents of the University of California. Used by permission of the University of California Press.

thoroughly all over, and then take a hose and hitch it on the fire plug and wash her out."

. . . The result is that No. 1,111 does not now speak to No. 2,222, and Dr. Highflyer has had the telephone taken out of his house.

4. **Estimated residential telephones in three California locations, 1900–1940 (top of page).** *Palo Alto was an affluent university town. Antioch was working-class. San Rafael had a mixed economy, including some industry; it served increasingly as a bedroom community for San Francisco professionals.*

5. **Telephone etiquette from "A Woman of Fashion,"1898.** *At the turn of the century, etiquette authorities began grudgingly to acknowledge the role of telephones in social life. Do you notice any contradictions in the advice below?*

Invitations by telephone, for anything other than informal engagements . . . are hopelessly vulgar. They should be the last resort. Invitations to bicycle or to play golf may be transmitted in this way, and the telephone is a blessing often in adjusting details, or making explanations; but for most social matters the use of the telephone is questionable, at best. Many women will stand with aching feet and irritated brow at a telephone for half an hour rather than write a note which would take four minutes. . . . Invitation by telephone is one of those modern innovations to which the conservative have never been accustomed, and which shocks elderly, conventional persons still. The convenience of the telephone for quickness and prompt response appeals, however, to so many persons, that it is hopeless and useless to inveigh against it. . . . If some one's note has been mislaid or forgotten, there is nothing simpler than to telephone to repair the error, and to explain. It is much speedier than sending a note. . . . There is no excuse for telephoning an invitation when time is not an object, or when the person invited is not an intimate friend.

6. **Bell Telephone advertisement, 1910.** *The text from this ad was accompanied by a picture of a young woman on the telephone with young men and women in a room behind her, dancing.*

For Social Arrangements: The informal invitation which comes over the phone is generally the most welcome. The Bell service makes it possible to arrange delightful social affairs at the last moment. . . .

For Impromptu Invitations: The easiest way to get up an informal party, quickly, is by telephone.

Sources: (2) Venus Green, *Race on the Line* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 67; (3) *Wheeling Register*, October 26, 1884; (5) *Etiquette for Americans* (New York: Herbert S. Stone & Co., 1898), 59, 70–71; (6) Claude S. Fischer, *America Calling* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 184.

ANALYZING THE EVIDENCE

1. Consider the audience for each of these sources. Who was intended to read, view, or listen to it? What message does it convey?
2. Sources 2, 5, and 6 all give advice on how women should behave. Compare these pieces of advice. In what ways are they similar and different?
3. Based on these sources, which groups of Americans appear to have been affected by the arrival of telephones, and how?

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Using evidence from these sources and your knowledge of the period, write an essay explaining how the telephone contributed to, and reflected, changes in American women's social and economic roles.

Horatio Alger Jr.

In dozens of popular boys' books published between 1867 and 1917, Horatio Alger Jr. assured young readers that if they were honest, worked hard, and cultivated good character, they could succeed in the new competitive economy. His heroes, such as the famous "Ragged Dick," often grew up in poverty on the streets of big cities. *Brave and Bold* (1874) told the story of a small-town boy forced to work in a factory; he is unfairly fired, but through persistence and courage he wins a good job and recovers an inheritance for his mother. Alger's books were republished often, as in this boys' magazine from 1911, and many remain in print today. Courtesy Stanford University Archives.

was brought by civil rights advocates on behalf of Homer Plessy, a New Orleans resident who was one-eighth black. Ordered to leave a first-class car and move to the "colored" car of a Louisiana train, Plessy refused and was arrested. The Court ruled that such segregation did not violate the Fourteenth Amendment as long as blacks had access to accommodations that were "separate but equal" to those of whites. "Separate but equal" was a myth: segregated facilities in the South were flagrantly inferior. Jim Crow segregation laws, named for a stereotyped black character who appeared in minstrel shows, clearly discriminated, but the Court allowed them to stand.

Jim Crow laws applied to public schools and parks and also to emerging commercial spaces—hotels, restaurants, streetcars, trains, and eventually sports stadiums and movie theaters. Placing a national stamp of approval on segregation, the *Plessy* decision remained in place until 1954, when the Court's *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* ruling finally struck it down. Until then, blacks' exclusion from first-class "public accommodations" was one of the most painful marks of racism. The *Plessy* decision, like the rock-bottom wages earned by twelve-year-old girls at Macy's, showed that consumer culture could be modern and innovative without being politically progressive. Business and consumer culture were shaped by, and themselves shaped, racial and class injustices.

Masculinity and the Rise of Sports

While industrialization spawned public domesticity—a consumer culture that courted affluent women and families—it also changed expectations for men in the workplace. Traditionally, the mark of a successful American man was economic independence: he was his own boss. Now, tens of thousands worked for other men in big companies—and in offices, rather than using their muscles. Would the professional American male, through his concentration on "brain work," become "weak, effeminate, [and] decaying," as one editor warned? How could well-to-do men assert their independence if work no longer required them to prove themselves physically? How could they develop toughness and strength? One answer was athletics.

"Muscular Christianity" The **Young Men's Christian Association** (YMCA) was one of the earliest and most successful promoters of athletic fitness. Introduced in Boston in 1851, the group promoted muscular Christianity, combining evangelism with gyms and athletic facilities where men could make themselves "clean and strong." Focusing first on white-collar workers, the YMCA developed a substantial industrial program after 1900. Railroad managers and other corporate titans hoped YMCAs would foster a loyal and contented workforce, discouraging labor unrest. Business leaders also relied on sports to build physical and mental discipline and help men adjust their bodies to the demands of the industrial clock. Sports honed men's competitive spirit, they believed; employer-sponsored teams instilled teamwork and company pride.

Working-class men had their own ideas about sports and leisure, and YMCAs quickly became a site of negotiation. Could workers come to the "Y" to play

billiards or cards? Could they smoke? At first, YMCA leaders said no, but to attract working-class men they had to make concessions. As a result, the "Y" became a place where middle-class and working-class customs blended — or existed in uneasy tension. At the same time, YMCA leaders innovated. Searching for winter activities in the 1890s, YMCA instructors invented the new indoor games of basketball and volleyball.

For elite Americans, meanwhile, country clubs flourished; both men and women could enjoy tennis, golf, and swimming facilities as well as social gatherings. By the turn of the century — perhaps because country club women were encroaching on their athletic turf — elite men took up even more aggressive physical sports, including boxing, weightlifting, and martial arts. As early as 1890, future president Theodore Roosevelt argued that such "virile" activities were essential to "maintain and defend this very civilization." "Most masterful nations," he claimed, "have shown a strong taste for manly sports." Roosevelt, son of a wealthy New York family, became one of the first American devotees of jujitsu. During his presidency (1901–1909), he designated a judo room in the White House and hired an expert Japanese instructor. Roosevelt also wrestled and boxed, urging other American men — especially among the elite — to increase their leadership fitness by pursuing the "strenuous life."

> To see a longer excerpt of Theodore Roosevelt's views on sports, along with other primary sources from this period, see *Sources for America's History*.

America's Game   Before the 1860s, the only distinctively American game was Native American lacrosse, and the most popular team sport among European Americans was cricket. After the Civil War, however, team sports became a fundamental part of American manhood, none more successfully than baseball. A derivative of cricket, the game's formal rules had begun to develop in New York in the 1840s and 1850s. Its popularity spread in military camps during the Civil War. Afterward, the idea that baseball "received its baptism in the bloody days of our Nation's direst danger," as one promoter put it, became part of the game's mythology.

Until the 1870s, most amateur players were clerks and white-collar workers who had leisure to play and the income to buy their own uniforms. Business frowned on baseball and other sports as a waste of time, especially for working-class men. But late-nineteenth-century employers came to see baseball, like other athletic pursuits, as a benefit for workers. It

provided fresh air and exercise, kept men out of saloons, and promoted discipline and teamwork. Players on company-sponsored teams, wearing uniforms emblazoned with their employers' names, began to compete on paid work time. Baseball thus set a pattern for how other American sports developed. Begun among independent craftsmen, it was taken up by elite men anxious to prove their strength and fitness. Well-to-do Americans then decided the sport could benefit the working class.

Big-time professional baseball arose with the launching of the National League in 1876. The league quickly built more than a dozen teams in large cities, from the Brooklyn Trolley Dodgers to the Cleveland Spiders. Team owners were, in their own right, profit-minded entrepreneurs who shaped the sport to please consumers. Wooden grandstands soon gave way to concrete and steel stadiums. By 1900, boys collected lithographed cards of their favorite players, and the baseball cap came into fashion. In 1903, the Boston Americans defeated the Pittsburgh Pirates in the first World Series. American men could now adopt a new consumer identity — not as athletes, but as fans.

Rise of the Negro Leagues   Baseball stadiums, like first-class rail cars, were sites of racial negotiation and conflict. In the 1880s and 1890s, major league managers hired a few African American players. As late as 1901, the Baltimore Orioles succeeded in signing Charlie Grant, a light-skinned black player from Cincinnati, by renaming him Charlie Tokohoma and claiming he was Cherokee. But as this subterfuge suggested, black players were increasingly barred. A Toledo team received a threatening note before one game in Richmond, Virginia: if their "negro catcher" played, he would be lynched. Toledo put a substitute on the field, and at the end of the season the club terminated the black player's contract.

Shut out of white leagues, players and fans turned to all-black professional teams, where black men could showcase athletic ability and race pride. Louisiana's top team, the New Orleans Pinchbacks, pointedly named themselves after the state's black Reconstruction governor. By the early 1900s, such teams organized into separate **Negro Leagues**. Though players suffered from erratic pay and rundown ball fields, the leagues thrived until the desegregation of baseball after World War II. In an era of stark discrimination, they celebrated black manhood and talent. "I liked the way their uniform fit, the way they wore their cap," wrote an admiring fan of

the Newark Eagles. "They showed a style in almost everything they did."

American Football   The most controversial sport of the industrializing era was football, which began at elite colleges during the 1880s. The great powerhouse was the Yale team, whose legendary coach Walter Camp went on to become a watch manufacturer. Between 1883 and 1891, under Camp's direction, Yale scored 4,660 points; its opponents scored 92. Drawing on the workplace model of scientific management, Camp emphasized drill and precision. He and other coaches argued that football offered perfect training for the competitive world of business. The game was violent: six players' deaths in the 1908 college season provoked a public outcry. Eventually, new rules protected quarterbacks and required coaches to remove injured players from the game. But such measures were adopted grudgingly, with supporters arguing that they ruined football's benefits in manly training.

Like baseball and the YMCA, football attracted sponsorship from business leaders hoping to divert workers from labor activism. The first professional teams emerged in western Pennsylvania's steel towns, soon after the defeat of the steelworkers' union. Carnegie Steel executives organized teams in Homestead and Braddock; the first league appeared during the anthracite coal strike of 1902. Other teams arose in the midwestern industrial heartland. The Indian-Acme Packing Company sponsored the Green Bay Packers; the future Chicago Bears, first known as the Decatur Staleys, were funded by a manufacturer of laundry starch. Like its baseball equivalent, professional football encouraged men to buy in as spectators and fans.

Football Practice, Chilocco Indian School, 1911
Football became widely popular, spreading from Ivy League schools and state universities to schools like this one, built on Cherokee land in Oklahoma. The uniforms of this team, typical of the day, show very limited padding and protection—a factor that contributed to high rates of injury and even death on the field. As they practiced in 1911, these Chilocco students had an inspiring model to look up to: in that year Jim Thorpe, a fellow Oklahoman and a member of the Sac and Fox tribe, was winning national fame by leading the all-Indian team at Pennsylvania's Carlisle School to victory against Harvard. Thorpe, one of the finest athletes of his generation, went on to win gold medals in the pentathlon and decathlon at the 1912 Olympics in Stockholm, Sweden. National Archives.

The Great Outdoors

As the rise of sports suggests, elite and middle-class Americans began by the 1880s and 1890s to see Victorian culture as stuffy and claustrophobic. They revolted by heading outdoors. A craze for bicycling swept the country; in 1890, at the height of the mania, U.S. manufacturers sold an astonishing ten million bikes. Women were not far behind men in taking up athletics. By the 1890s, even elite women, long confined to corsets and heavy clothes that restricted their movement, donned lighter dresses and pursued archery and golf. Artist Charles Gibson became famous for his portraits of the Gibson Girl, an elite beauty depicted on the tennis court or swimming at the beach. The Gibson Girl personified the ideal of "New Women," more educated, athletic, and independent than their mothers.

Those with money and leisure time used railroad networks to get to the national parks of the West, which, as one senator put it, became a "breathing-place for the national lungs." People of more modest means began to take up camping. As early as 1904, California's Coronado Beach offered tent rentals for $3 a week. A decade later, campgrounds and cottages in many parts of the country catered to a working-class clientele. In an industrial society, the outdoors became associated with leisure and renewal rather than danger and hard work. One journalist, reflecting on urban life from the vantage point of a western vacation, wrote, "How stupid it all seems: the mad eagerness of money-making men, the sham pleasures of conventional society." In the wilderness, he wrote, "your blood clarifies; your brain becomes active. You get a new view of life."

As Americans searched for such renewal in remnants of unexploited land, the nation's first environmental movement arose. John Muir, who fell in love with the Yosemite Valley in 1869, became the most famous voice for wilderness. Raised in a stern Scots Presbyterian family on a Wisconsin farm, Muir knew much of the Bible by heart. He was a keen observer who developed a deeply spiritual relationship with the natural world. His contemporary Mary Austin, whose book *Land of Little Rain* (1905) celebrated the austere beauty of the California desert, called him "a devout man." In cooperation with his editor at *Century* magazine, Muir founded the **Sierra Club** in 1892. Like the earlier Appalachian Mountain Club, founded in Boston in 1876, the Sierra Club dedicated itself to preserving and enjoying America's great mountains.

Encouraged by such groups, national and state governments set aside more public lands for preservation and recreation. The United States substantially expanded its park system and, during Theodore Roosevelt's presidency, extended the reach of national forests. Starting in 1872 with the preservation of Yellowstone in Wyoming, Congress had begun to set aside land for national parks. In 1916, President Woodrow Wilson provided comprehensive oversight of these national parks, signing an act creating the **National Park Service** (Map 18.1). A year later, the system numbered thirteen parks — including Maine's Acadia, the first east of the Mississippi River.

Environmentalists also worked to protect wildlife. By the 1890s, several state Audubon Societies, named in honor of antebellum naturalist John James Audubon, banded together to advocate broader protections for wild birds, especially herons and egrets that were being slaughtered by the thousands for their plumes. They succeeded in winning the Lacey Act (1900), which established federal penalties for selling specified birds, animals, and plants. Soon afterward, state organizations joined together to form the **National Audubon Society**. Women played prominent roles in the movement, promoting boycotts of hats with plumage. In 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt created the first National Wildlife Refuge at Pelican Island, Florida.

Roosevelt also expanded preservation under the Antiquities Act (1906), which enabled the U.S. president, without congressional approval, to set aside "objects of historic and scientific interest" as national monuments. Two years later, Roosevelt used these powers to preserve 800,000 acres at Arizona's magnificent Grand Canyon. The act proved a mixed blessing for conservation. Monuments received weaker protection than national parks did; many fell under the authority of the U.S. Forest Service, which permitted logging and grazing. Business interests thus lobbied to have coveted lands designated as monuments rather than national parks so they could more easily exploit resources. Nonetheless, the creation of national monuments offered some protection, and many monuments (such as Alaska's Katmai) later obtained park status. The expanding network of parks and monuments became popular places to hike, camp, and contemplate natural beauty.

The great outdoors provided new opportunities for women with the means to travel. One writer, advising women to enjoy mountain hikes, hinted at liberating possibilities: "For those loving freedom and health," he recommended "short skirts, pantlets, stout shoes, tasty hat." And like other leisure venues, "wilderness" did not remain in the hands of elite men and women.

MAP 18.1

National Parks and Forests, 1872–1980

Yellowstone, the first national park in the United States, dates from 1872. In 1893, the federal government began to intervene to protect national forests. Without Theodore Roosevelt, however, the national forest program might have languished; during his presidency, he added 125 million acres to the forest system, plus six national parks in addition to several that had already been created during the 1890s. America's national forest and park systems remain one of the most visible and beloved legacies of federal policy innovation in the decades between the Civil War and World War I.

As early as the late 1880s, the lakes and hiking trails of the Catskill Mountains became so thronged with working-class tourists from nearby New York City, including many Jewish immigrants, that elite visitors began to segregate themselves into gated summer communities. They thus preserved the "seclusion and privacy" that they snobbishly claimed as the privilege of those who could demonstrate "mental and personal worth."

At the state level, meanwhile, new game laws triggered conflicts between elite conservationists and the poor. Shifting from year-round subsistence hunting to a limited, recreational hunting season brought hardship to poor rural families who depended on game for food. Regulation brought undeniable benefits: it suppressed such popular practices as songbird hunting and the use of dynamite to kill fish. Looking back on the era before game laws, one Alabama hunter remembered that "the slaughter was terrific." But while game laws prevented further extinctions like that of the passenger pigeon, which vanished around 1900, they made it harder for rural people to support themselves from the bounty of the land.

Women, Men, and the Solitude of Self

Speaking to Congress in 1892, women's rights advocate Elizabeth Cady Stanton described what she called the "solitude of self." Stanton rejected the claim that women did not need equal rights because they enjoyed men's protection. "The talk of sheltering woman from the fierce storms of life is the sheerest mockery," she declared. "They beat on her from every point of the compass, just as they do on man, and with more fatal results, for he has been trained to protect himself."

Stanton's argument captured one of the dilemmas of industrialization: the marketplace of labor brought

John Singer Sargent, *Mr. and Mrs. I. N. Phelps Stokes*, 1897

This painting was a wedding gift to this wealthy young couple, both of whom inherited substantial fortunes. In what ways does the artist, a famous portraitist, represent Edith Minturn Stokes as a "New Woman" of the 1890s? What does he suggest about the relationship between husband and wife? How might we reconcile this with the painting's title, which identifies the central figure as "Mrs. I. N. Phelps Stokes," not as "Edith"? Mrs. Stokes was a noted beauty and active in an array of charitable causes. Here she wears a shirtwaist and skirt, more practical than the traditional heavy dresses and bustles of the previous decade. © The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image source: Art Resource, NY.

both freedom and risk, and working-class women were particularly vulnerable. At the same time, middle-class women — expected to engage in selfless community service — often saw the impact of industrialization more clearly than fathers, brothers, and husbands did. In seeking to address alcoholism, poverty, and other social and economic ills, they gained a new sense of their own collective power. Women's protest and reform work thus helped lay the foundations for progressivism (Chapter 20) and modern women's rights.

Changes in Family Life

The average American family, especially among the middle class, decreased in size during the industrial era. In 1800, white women who survived to menopause had borne an average of 7.0 children; by 1900, the average was 3.6. On farms and in many working-class families, youngsters counted as assets on the family balance sheet: they worked in fields or factories. But parents who had fewer sons and daughters could concentrate their resources, educating and preparing each child for success in the new economy. Among the professional classes, education became a necessity, while limiting family size became, more broadly, a key to upward mobility.

Several factors limited childbearing. Americans married at older ages, and many mothers tried to space pregnancies more widely — as their mothers and grandmothers had — by nursing children for several years, which suppressed fertility. By the late nineteenth century, as vulcanized rubber became available, couples also had access to a range of other contraceptive methods, such as condoms and diaphragms. With pressure for family limitation rising, these methods were widely used and apparently effective. But couples rarely wrote about them. Historians' evidence comes from the occasional frank diary and from the thriving success of the mail-order contraceptive industry, which advertised prominently and shipped products — wrapped in discreet brown paper packages — to customers nationwide.

Reluctance to talk about contraceptives was understandable, since information about them was stigmatized and, after 1873, illegal to distribute. During Reconstruction, Anthony Comstock, crusading secretary of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, secured a federal law banning "obscene materials" from the U.S. mail. The **Comstock Act** (1873) prohibited circulation of almost any information about sex and birth control. Comstock won support for the law, in part, by appealing to parents' fears that young people were receiving sexual information through the mail,

Portrait of a Middle-Class American Family

This photograph of the Hedlund family was taken on July 4, 1911, on the front porch of their home in St. Paul, Minnesota. Christian, Grace, and Anna Hedlund appear on the top row, Louis and George on the bottom. Families like this one—with three children—were becoming typical among the middle class, in contrast to larger families in earlier generations. This photo was taken by twenty-one-year-old Joseph Pavlicek, a recent immigrant from Eastern Europe who was boarding with the Hedlunds. Pavlicek bought fireworks for the children to celebrate the holiday. He remembered being so proud and grateful to be in America that his heart "was nearly bursting." Minnesota Historical Society.

PLACE EVENTS IN CONTEXT

In what ways did the Comstock Act reflect and contradict the realities of American life in the industrial era?

promoting the rise of "secret vice." Though critics charged Comstock with high-handed interference in private matters, others supported his work, fearful of the rising tide of pornography, sexual information, and contraceptives made available by industrialization. A committee of the New York legislature declared Comstock's crusade "wholly essential to the safety and decency of the community." It appears, however, that Comstock had little success in stopping the lucrative and popular trade in contraceptives.

Education

In the industrial economy, the watchword for young people who hoped to secure good jobs was *education*. A high school diploma—now a gateway to a college degree—was valuable for boys who hoped to enter professional or managerial work. Daughters attended in even larger numbers than their brothers (Table 18.1). Parents of the Civil War generation, who had witnessed the plight of war widows and orphans, encouraged girls to prepare themselves for teaching or office jobs, work before marriage, and gain skills they could fall back on, "just in case." By 1900, 71 percent of Americans between the ages of five and eighteen attended school. That figure rose further in the early twentieth century, as public officials adopted laws requiring school attendance.

Most high schools were coeducational, and almost every high school featured athletics. Recruited first as cheerleaders for boys' teams, girls soon established field hockey and other sports of their own. Boys and girls engaged in friendly—and sometimes not-so-friendly—rivalry in high school. In 1884, a high school newspaper in Concord, New Hampshire, published

TABLE 18.1				
High School Graduates, 1870–1910				
Year	Number	Percent 17-Year-Olds	Male	Female
1870	16,000	2.0	7,000	9,000
1890	44,000	3.0	19,000	25,000
1910	156,000	8.6	64,000	93,000

Source: *Historical Statistics of the United States*, 2 vols. (Washington, DC: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1975), 1: 386.

this poem from a disgruntled boy who caricatured his female classmates:

> We know many tongues of living and dead,
> In science and fiction we're very well read,
> But we cannot cook meat and cannot make bread
> And we've wished many times that we were all dead.

A female student shot back a poem of her own, denouncing male students' smoking habit:

> But if boys will smoke cigarettes
> Although the smoke may choke them,
> One consolation still remains —
> *They kill the boys that smoke them.*

The rate of Americans attending college had long hovered around 2 percent; driven by public universities' expansion, the rate rose in the 1880s, reaching 8 percent by 1920. Much larger numbers attended a growing network of business and technical schools. "GET A PLACE IN THE WORLD," advertised one Minneapolis business college in 1907, "where your talents can be used to the best advantage." Typically, such schools offered both day and night classes in subjects such as bookkeeping, typewriting, and shorthand.

The needs of the new economy also shaped the curriculum at more traditional collegiate institutions. State universities emphasized technical training and fed the growing professional workforce with graduates trained in fields such as engineering. Many private colleges distanced themselves from such practical pursuits; their administrators argued that students who aimed to be leaders needed broad-based knowledge. But they modernized course offerings, emphasizing French and German, for example, rather than Latin and Greek. Harvard, led by dynamic president Charles W. Eliot from 1869 to 1909, pioneered the **liberal arts**. Students at the all-male college chose from a range of electives, as Eliot called for classes that developed each young man's "individual reality and creative power."

In the South, one of the most famous educational projects was Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Institute, founded in 1881. Washington both taught and exemplified the goal of self-help; his autobiography, *Up from Slavery* (1901), became a best-seller. Because of the deep poverty in which most southern African Americans lived, Washington concluded that "book education" for most "would be almost a waste of time." He focused instead on industrial education. Students, he argued, would "be sure of knowing how to make a living after they had left us." Tuskegee sent female graduates into teaching and nursing; men more often entered the industrial trades or farmed by the latest scientific methods.

Washington gained national fame in 1895 with his **Atlanta Compromise** address, delivered at the Cotton States Exposition in Atlanta, Georgia. For the exposition's white organizers, the racial "compromise" was inviting Washington to speak at all. It was a move intended to show racial progress in the South. Washington, in turn, delivered an address that many interpreted as approving racial segregation. Stating that African Americans had, in slavery days, "proved our loyalty to you," he assured whites that "in our humble way, we shall stand by you . . . ready to lay down our lives, if need be, in defense of yours." The races could remain socially detached: "In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress." Washington urged, however, that whites join him in working for "the highest intelligence and development of all."

Whites greeted this address with enthusiasm, and Washington became the most prominent black leader of his generation. His soothing rhetoric and style of leadership, based on avoiding confrontation and cultivating white patronage and

TRACE CHANGE OVER TIME
How did educational opportunities change after the Civil War, and for whom?

Booker T. Washington

In an age of severe racial oppression, Booker T. Washington emerged as the leading public voice of African Americans. He was remarkable both for his effectiveness in speaking to white Americans and for his deep understanding of the aspirations of blacks. Born a slave, Washington had plenty of firsthand experience with racism. But having befriended several whites in his youth, he also believed that African Americans could appeal to whites of good will—and maneuver around those who were hostile—in the struggle for equality. He hoped, most of all, that economic achievement would erase white prejudice. Brown Brothers.

private influence, was well suited to the difficult years after Reconstruction. Washington believed that money was color-blind, that whites would respect economic success. He represented the ideals of millions of African Americans who hoped education and hard work would erase white prejudice. That hope proved tragically overoptimistic. As the tide of disenfranchisement and segregation rolled in, Washington would come under fire from a younger generation of race leaders who argued that he accommodated too much to white racism.

In addition to African American education, women's higher education expanded notably. In the Northeast and South, women most often attended single-sex institutions, including teacher-training colleges. For affluent families, private colleges offered an education equivalent to men's — for an equally high price. Vassar College started the trend when it opened in 1861; Smith, Wellesley, and others followed. Anxious doctors warned that these institutions were dangerous: intensive brain work would unsex young women and drain energy from their ovaries, leading them to bear weak children. But as thousands of women earned degrees and suffered no apparent harm, fears faded. Single-sex higher education for women spread from private to public institutions, especially in the South, where the Mississippi State College for Women (1885) led the way.

Coeducation was more prevalent in the Midwest and West, where many state universities opened their doors to female students after the Civil War. Women were also admitted to most African American colleges founded during Reconstruction. By 1910, 58 percent of America's colleges and universities were coeducational. While students at single-sex institutions forged strong bonds with one another, women also gained benefits from learning with men. When male students were friendly, they built comfortable working relationships; when men were hostile, women learned coping skills that served them well in later employment or reform work. One doctor who studied at the University of Iowa remembered later that he and his friends mercilessly harassed the first women who entered the medical school. But when the women showed they were good students, the men's attitudes changed to "wholesome respect."

Whether or not they got a college education, more and more women recognized, in the words of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, their "solitude of self." In the changing economy, they could not always count on fathers and husbands. Women who needed to support themselves could choose from dozens of guidebooks such as *What Girls Can Do* (1880) and *How to Make Money Although a Woman* (1895). The Association for the Advancement of Women, founded in 1873 by women's college graduates, defended women's higher education and argued that women's paid employment was a positive good.

Today, many economists argue that education and high-quality jobs for women are keys to reducing poverty in the developing world. In the United States, that process also led to broader gains in women's political rights. As women began to earn advanced degrees, work for wages and salaries, and live independently, it became harder to argue that women were "dependents" who did not need to vote.

Class of 1896, Radcliffe College

When Harvard University, long a bastion of male privilege, created an "Annex" for women's instruction in 1879, it was a sure sign of growing support for women's higher education. The Annex became Radcliffe College in 1894. Two years later, this graduating class of thirty posed for their portrait. Among them was Alice Sterling of Bridgeport, Connecticut, who went on to marry Harvard graduate Frank Cook and devote herself to Protestant foreign missions. On two trips around the world, Alice Sterling Cook visited all the women's colleges that missionaries had founded in India, China, and Japan. Cook's energetic public activities typified those of many women's college alumnae. Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University.

From Domesticity to Women's Rights

As the United States confronted industrialization, middle-class women steadily expanded their place beyond the household, building reform movements and taking political action. Starting in the 1880s, women's clubs sprang up and began to study such problems as pollution, unsafe working conditions, and urban poverty. So many formed by 1890 that their leaders created a nationwide umbrella organization, the General Federation of Women's Clubs. Women justified such work through the ideal of **maternalism**, appealing to their special role as mothers. Maternalism was an intermediate step between domesticity and modern arguments for women's equality. "Women's place is Home," declared the journalist Rheta Childe Dorr. But she added, "Home is the community. The city full of people is the Family. . . . Badly do the Home and Family need their mother."

The Woman's Christian Temperance Union   One maternalist goal was to curb alcohol abuse by prohibiting liquor sales. The **Woman's Christian Temperance Union** (WCTU), founded in 1874, spread rapidly after 1879, when charismatic Frances Willard became its leader. More than any other group of the late nineteenth century, the WCTU launched women into reform. Willard knew how to frame political demands

in the language of feminine self-sacrifice. "Womanliness first," she advised her followers; "afterward, what you will." WCTU members vividly described the plight of abused wives and children when men suffered in the grip of alcoholism. Willard's motto was "Home Protection," and though it placed all the blame on alcohol rather than other factors, the WCTU became the first organization to identify and combat domestic violence.

The prohibitionist movement drew activists from many backgrounds. Middle-class city dwellers worried about the link between alcoholism and crime, especially in the growing immigrant wards. Rural citizens equated liquor with big-city sins such as prostitution and political corruption. Methodists, Baptists, Mormons, and members of other denominations condemned

drinking for religious reasons. Immigrants passionately disagreed, however: Germans and Irish Catholics enjoyed their Sunday beer and saw no harm in it. Saloons were a centerpiece of working-class leisure and community life, offering free lunches, public toilets, and a place to share neighborhood news. Thus, while some labor unions advocated voluntary temperance, attitudes toward prohibition divided along ethnic, religious, and class lines.

WCTU activism led some leaders to raise radical questions about the shape of industrial society. As she investigated alcohol abuse, Willard increasingly confronted poverty, hunger, unemployment, and other industrial problems. "Do Everything," she urged her members. Across the United States, WCTU chapters founded soup kitchens and free libraries. They introduced a German educational innovation, the kindergarten. They investigated prison conditions. Though she did not persuade most prohibitionists to follow her

THE TEMPERANCE CRUSADE—WHO WILL WIN?

A Plea for Temperance, 1874

The origins of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union lay in spontaneous prayer meetings held by women outside local saloons, where they appealed for men to stop drinking and liquor sellers to destroy their product. A string of such meetings in Ohio won national attention, as in this image from a popular magazine, the *Daily Graphic*. "Who Will Win?" asked the artist. The answers varied. A few saloon owners, struck with remorse over the damage caused by alcohol abuse, smashed their beer kegs and poured their liquor into the gutters. Far more refused, but in the 1880s, temperance women succeeded in organizing the largest grassroots movement of their day to build support for outlawing liquor sales. The Granger Collection, New York.

lead, Willard declared herself a Christian Socialist and urged more attention to workers' plight. She advocated laws establishing an eight-hour workday and abolishing child labor.

Willard also called for women's voting rights, lending powerful support to the independent suffrage movement that had emerged during Reconstruction. Controversially, the WCTU threw its energies behind the Prohibition Party, which exercised considerable clout during the 1880s. Women worked in the party as speakers, convention delegates, and even local candidates. Liquor was big business, and powerful interests mobilized to block antiliquor legislation. In many areas — particularly the cities — prohibition simply did not gain majority support. Willard retired to England, where she died in 1898, worn and discouraged by many defeats. But her legacy was powerful. Other groups took up the cause, eventually winning national prohibition after World War I.

Through its emphasis on human welfare, the WCTU encouraged women to join the national debate over poverty and inequality of wealth. Some became active in the People's Party of the 1890s, which welcomed women as organizers and stump speakers. Others led groups such as the National Congress of Mothers, founded in 1897, which promoted better child-rearing techniques in rural and working-class families. The WCTU had taught women how to lobby, raise money, and even run for office. Willard wrote that "perhaps the most significant outcome" of the movement was women's "knowledge of their own power."

Women, Race, and Patriotism   As in temperance work, women played central roles in patriotic movements and African American community activism. Members of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), founded in 1890, celebrated the memory of Revolutionary War heroes. Equally influential was the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC), founded in 1894 to extol the South's "Lost Cause." The UDC's elite southern members shaped Americans' memory of the Civil War by constructing monuments, distributing Confederate flags, and promoting school textbooks that defended the Confederacy and condemned Reconstruction. The UDC's work helped build and maintain support for segregation and disenfranchisement (Chapter 15, Thinking Like a Historian, p. 502).

African American women did not sit idle in the face of this challenge. In 1896, they created the **National Association of Colored Women**. Through its local clubs, black women arranged for the care of orphans, founded homes for the elderly, advocated temperance,
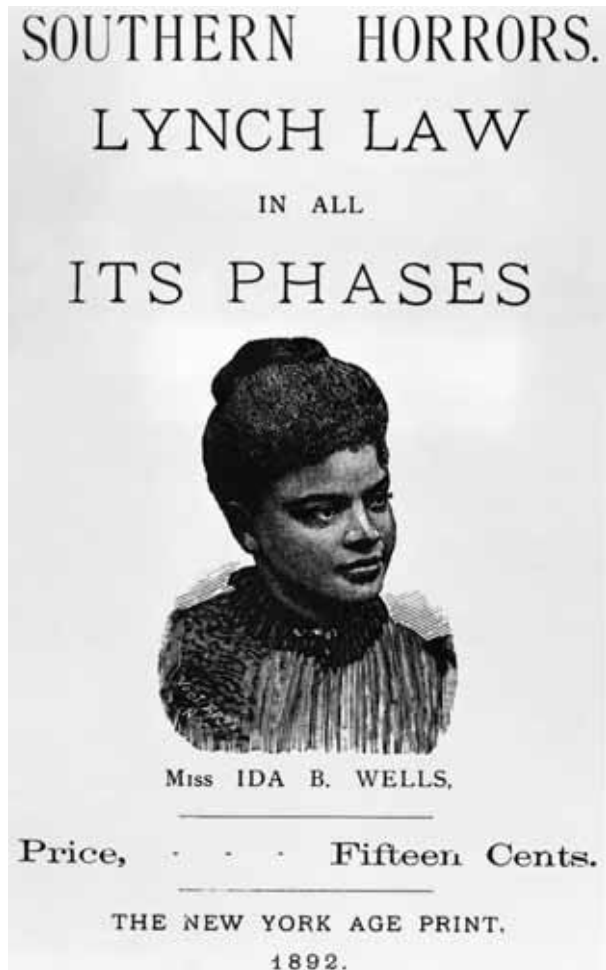
Ida B. Wells

In 1887, Ida Wells (Wells-Barnett after she married in 1895) was thrown bodily from a train in Tennessee for refusing to vacate her seat in a section reserved for whites, launching her into a lifelong crusade for racial justice. Her mission was to expose the evil of lynching in the South. This image is the title page of a pamphlet she published in 1892. Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

and undertook public health campaigns. Such women shared with white women a determination to carry domesticity into the public sphere. Journalist Victoria Earle Matthews hailed the American home as "the foundation upon which nationality rests, the pride of the citizen, and the glory of the Republic." She and other African American women used the language of domesticity and respectability to justify their work.

One of the most radical voices was Ida B. Wells, who as a young Tennessee schoolteacher sued the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad for denying her a seat in the ladies' car. In 1892, a white mob in Memphis invaded a grocery store owned by three of Wells's

friends, angry that it competed with a nearby white-owned store. When the black store owners defended themselves, wounding several of their attackers, all three were lynched. Grieving their deaths, Wells left Memphis and urged other African Americans to join her in boycotting the city's white businesses. As a journalist, she launched a one-woman campaign against lynching. Wells's investigations demolished the myth that lynchers were reacting to the crime of interracial rape; she showed that the real cause was more often economic competition, a labor dispute, or a consensual relationship between a white woman and a black man. Settling in Chicago, Wells became a noted and accomplished reformer, but in an era of increasing racial injustice, few whites supported her cause.

The largest African American women's organization arose within the National Baptist Church (NBC), which by 1906 represented 2.4 million black churchgoers. Founded in 1900, the Women's Convention of the NBC funded night schools, health clinics, kindergartens, day care centers, and prison outreach programs. Adella Hunt Logan, born in Alabama, exemplified how such work could lead women to demand political rights. Educated at Atlanta University, Logan became a women's club leader, teacher, and suffrage advocate. "If white American women, with all their mutual and acquired advantage, need the ballot," she declared, "how much more do Black Americans, male and female, need the strong defense of a vote to help secure them their right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness?"

Women's Rights   Though it had split into two rival organizations during Reconstruction, the movement for women's suffrage reunited in 1890 in the **National American Woman Suffrage Association** (NAWSA). Soon afterward, suffragists built on earlier victories in the West, winning full ballots for women in Colorado (1893), Idaho (1896), and Utah (1896, reestablished as Utah gained statehood). Afterward, movement leaders were discouraged by a decade of state-level defeats and Congress's refusal to consider a constitutional amendment. But suffrage again picked up momentum after 1911 (Map 18.2). By 1913, most women living west of the Mississippi River had the ballot. In other localities, women could vote in municipal elections, school elections, or liquor referenda.

The rising prominence of the women's suffrage movement had an ironic result: it prompted some women — and men — to organize against it, in groups such as the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage (1911). Antisuffragists argued that it was expensive to add so many voters to the rolls; wives' ballots would just "double their husbands' votes" or worse, cancel them out, subjecting men to "petticoat rule." Some antisuffragists also argued that voting would undermine women's special roles as disinterested reformers: no longer above the fray, they would be plunged into the "cesspool of politics." In short, women were "better citizens without the ballot." Such arguments helped delay passage of national women's suffrage until after World War I.

By the 1910s, some women moved beyond suffrage to take a public stance for what they called **feminism** — women's full political, economic, and social equality. A famous site of sexual rebellion was New York's Greenwich Village, where radical intellectuals, including many gays and lesbians, created a vibrant community. Among other political activities, women there founded the Heterodoxy Club (1912), open to any woman who pledged not to be "orthodox in her opinions." The club brought together intellectuals, journalists, and labor organizers. Almost all supported suffrage, but they had a more ambitious view of what was needed for women's liberation. "I wanted to belong to the human race, not to a ladies' aid society," wrote one divorced journalist who joined Heterodoxy. Feminists argued that women should not simply fulfill expectations of feminine self-sacrifice; they should work on their own behalf.

Science and Faith

Amid rapid change, the United States remained a deeply religious nation. But new discoveries enhanced another kind of belief: faith in science. In the early nineteenth century, most Americans had believed the world was about six thousand years old. No one knew what lay beyond the solar system. By the 1910s, paleontologists were classifying the dinosaurs, astronomers had identified distant galaxies, and physicists could measure the speed of light. Many scientists and ordinary Americans accepted the theory of evolution.

Scientific discoveries received widespread publicity through a series of great world's fairs, most famously Chicago's 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, held (a year late) to celebrate Columbus's arrival in America in 1492. At the vast fairgrounds, visitors strolled through enormous buildings that displayed the latest inventions in industry, machinery, and transportation. They marveled over a moving sidewalk and, at dusk,

Dates on the map indicate when individual states, on their own initiative, granted full suffrage to women.

Note how women won the right to vote in a roughly west-to-east movement. What reasons might be advanced to explain this pattern of diffusion?

CANADA

WASH. 1910

MONTANA 1914

NORTH DAKOTA

MINN.

ME.

OREGON 1912

IDAHO 1896

WYOMING 1890

SOUTH DAKOTA 1918

WIS.

VT. N.H. MASS.
NEW YORK 1917
R.I.
CONN.

NEVADA 1914

UTAH 1896

COLORADO 1893

NEBRASKA

MICH. 1918

IOWA

PA.

N.J.

CALIF. 1911

KANSAS 1912

ILL. IND. OHIO

MO.

MD. DEL.

W. VA. VA.

KY.

N
W   E
S

ARIZONA 1912

NEW MEXICO

OKLAHOMA 1918

ARK.

TENNESSEE

NORTH CAROLINA

S.C.

ATLANTIC OCEAN

PACIFIC OCEAN

TEXAS

LA.

MISS. ALA. GEORGIA

FLA.

0   250   500 miles
0   250   500 kilometers

MEXICO

Effective Date of Equal Suffrage
- By 1909
- 1910–1918
- Partial suffrage by 1919
- No women's suffrage by 1919

This map uses colors to divide the states into four categories. **Purple** indicates where women had the right to vote before 1910. In **blue** states women had equal voting rights prior to 1919. **Red** shows where women enjoyed the right to vote in some elections, but not others. **Green** indicates the states where women could not vote at all in 1919.

(after Opdycke)

MAP 18.2

Women's Suffrage, 1890–1919

By 1909, after more than sixty years of agitation, only four lightly populated western states had granted women full voting rights. A number of other states offered partial suffrage, limited to voting for school boards and such issues as taxes and local referenda on whether or not to permit the sale of liquor licenses (the so-called local option). Between 1910 and 1918, as the effort shifted to the struggle for a constitutional amendment, eleven states joined the list granting full suffrage. The West remained the most progressive region in granting women's voting rights; the most stubborn resistance lay in the ex-Confederacy.

saw the fair buildings illuminated with strings of electric lights. One observer called the fair "a vast and wonderful university of the arts and sciences."

It is hardly surprising, amid these achievements, that "fact worship" became a central feature of intellectual life. Researchers in many fields argued that one could rely only on hard facts to understand the "laws of life." In their enthusiasm, some economists and sociologists rejected all social reform as sentimental. Fiction writers and artists kept a more humane emphasis, but they made use of similar methods—close observation and attention to real-life experience—to create works

of realism. Other Americans struggled to reconcile scientific discoveries with their religious faith.

Darwinism and Its Critics

Evolution—the idea that species are not fixed, but ever changing—was not a simple idea on which all scientists agreed. In his immensely influential 1859 book, *On the Origin of Species*, British naturalist Charles Darwin argued that all creatures struggle to survive. When individual members of a species are born with random genetic mutations that better suit them for

their environment — for example, camouflage coloring for a moth — these characteristics, since they are genetically transmissible, become dominant in future generations. Many scientists rejected this theory of **natural selection**. They followed a line of thinking laid out by French biologist Jean Baptiste Lamarck, who argued, unlike Darwin, that individual animals or plants could acquire transmittable traits within a single lifetime. A rhinoceros that fought fiercely, in Lamarck's view, could build up a stronger horn; its offspring would then be born with that trait.

Darwin himself disapproved of the word *evolution* (which does not appear in his book) because it implied upward progress. In his view, natural selection was blind: environments and species changed randomly. Others were less scrupulous about drawing sweeping conclusions from Darwin's work. In the 1870s, British philosopher Herbert Spencer spun out an elaborate theory of how human society advanced through "survival of the fittest." **Social Darwinism**, as Spencer's idea became (confusingly) known, found its American champion in William Graham Sumner, a sociology professor at Yale. Competition, said Sumner, was a law of nature, like gravity. Who were the fittest? "Millionaires," Sumner declared. Their success showed they were "naturally selected."

Even in the heyday of Social Darwinism, Sumner's views were controversial (American Voices, p. 596). Some thinkers objected to the application of biological findings to the realm of society and government. They pointed out that Darwin's theories applied to finches and tortoises, not human institutions. Social Darwinism, they argued, was simply an excuse for the worst excesses of industrialization. By the early twentieth century, intellectuals revolted against Sumner and his allies.

Meanwhile, though, the most dubious applications of evolutionary ideas were codified into new reproductive laws based on **eugenics**, a so-called science of human breeding. Eugenicists argued that mentally deficient people should be prevented from reproducing. They proposed sterilizing those deemed "unfit," especially residents of state asylums for the insane or mentally disabled. In early-twentieth-century America, almost half of the states enacted eugenics laws. By the time eugenics subsided in the 1930s, about twenty thousand people had been sterilized, with California and Virginia taking the lead. Women in Puerto Rico and other U.S. imperial possessions (Chapter 21) also suffered from eugenics policies. Advocates of eugenics had a broad impact. Because they associated mental unfitness with "lower races" — including people of African, Asian, and Native American descent — their arguments lent support to segregation and racial discrimination. By warning that immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe would dilute white Americans' racial purity, eugenicists helped win passage of immigration restriction in the 1920s.

Realism in the Arts

Inspired by the quest for facts, American authors rejected nineteenth-century romanticism and what they saw as its unfortunate product, sentimentality. Instead, they took up literary **realism**. In the 1880s, editor and novelist William Dean Howells called for writers "to picture the daily life in the most exact terms possible." By the 1890s, a younger generation of writers pursued this goal. Theodore Dreiser dismissed unrealistic novels that always had "a happy ending." In *Main-Travelled Roads* (1891), based on the struggles of his midwestern farm family, Hamlin Garland turned the same unsparing eye on the hardships of rural life. Stephen Crane's *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1893), privately printed because no publisher would touch it, described the seduction, abandonment, and death of a slum girl.

Some authors believed realism did not go far enough to overturn sentimentalism. Jack London spent his teenage years as a factory worker, sailor, and tramp. In stories such as "The Law of Life" (1901), he dramatized what he saw as the harsh reality of an uncaring universe. American society, he said, was "a jungle wherein wild beasts eat and are eaten." Similarly, Stephen Crane tried to capture "a world full of fists." London and Crane helped create literary **naturalism**. They suggested that human beings were not so much rational shapers of their own destinies as blind victims of forces beyond their control — including their own subconscious impulses.

America's most famous writer, Samuel Langhorne Clemens, who took the pen name of Mark Twain, came to an equally bleak view. Though he achieved enormous success with such lighthearted books as *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876), Clemens courted controversy with *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884), notable for its indictment of slavery and racism. In his novel *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889), which ends with a bloody, technology-driven slaughter of Arthur's knights, Mark Twain became one of the bitterest critics of America's idea of

John French Sloan, *A Woman's Work*, 1912

The subject of this painting — a woman hanging out laundry behind a city apartment building — is typical of the subjects chosen by American artist John Sloan (1871–1951). Sloan and a group of his allies became famous as realists; critics derided them as the "Ash Can school" because they did not paint rural landscapes or other conventional subjects considered worthy of painting. Sloan, though, warned against seeing his paintings as simple representations of reality, even if he described his work as based on "a creative impulse derived out of a consciousness of life." " 'Looks like' is not the test of a good painting," he wrote: "Even the scientist is interested in effects only as phenomena from which to deduce order in life." Cleveland Museum of Art. Gift of Amelia Elizabeth White.

progress. Soon afterward, Clemens was devastated by the loss of his wife and two daughters, as well as by failed investments and bankruptcy. An outspoken critic of imperialism and foreign missions, Twain eventually denounced Christianity itself as a hypocritical delusion. Like his friend the industrialist Andrew Carnegie, Clemens "got rid of theology."

By the time Clemens died in 1910, realist and naturalist writers had laid the groundwork for **modernism**, which rejected traditional canons of literary taste. Questioning the whole idea of progress and order, modernists focused on the subconscious and "primitive" mind. Above all, they sought to overturn convention and tradition. Poet Ezra Pound exhorted, "Make it new!" Modernism became the first great literary and artistic movement of the twentieth century.

In the visual arts, new technologies influenced aesthetics. By 1900, some photographers argued that their "true" representations made painting obsolete. But painters invented their own forms of realism. Nebraska-born artist Robert Henri became fascinated with life in the great cities. "The backs of tenement houses are living documents," he declared, and he set out to put them on canvas. Henri and his followers, notably John Sloan and George Bellows, called themselves the New York Realists. Critics derided them as the Ash Can school because they chose subjects that were not conventionally beautiful.

In 1913, Realists participated in one of the most controversial events in American art history,

EXPLAIN CONSEQUENCES
What effect did technology and scientific ideas have on literature and the arts?

Three Interpretations of Social Darwinism

The idea that human society advanced through "survival of the fittest" was a popular doctrine, referred to by historians as "Social Darwinism." Many Americans agreed with Harvard sociologist William Graham Sumner, who argued that the poor and weak were a "burden," a "dead-weight on the society in all its struggles." Such views prompted a range of responses, ranging from enthusiastic endorsement to uneasy accommodation to impassioned opposition.

Theodore Dreiser
The Financier

Theodore Dreiser (1871–1945) was an American literary naturalist. His novel *The Financier* (1912) traces the rise of Frank Cowperwood, a young man who, during the last years of the nineteenth century, becomes a powerful banker. Dreiser loosely based the character on the life of financier Charles Yerkes. In this excerpt, the narrator describes a transformative moment in Cowperwood's youth.

[Cowperwood] could not figure out how this thing he had come into — this life — was organized. How did all these people get into the world? What were they doing here? Who started things, anyhow? His mother told him the story of Adam and Eve, but he didn't believe it. . . .

One day he saw a squid and a lobster put in [a] tank, and in connection with them was witness to a tragedy which stayed with him all his life and cleared things up considerably intellectually. The lobster, it appeared from the talk of the idle bystanders, was offered no food, as the squid was considered his rightful prey. He lay at the bottom of the clear glass tank . . . apparently seeing nothing — you could not tell in which way his beady, black buttons of eyes were looking — but apparently they were never off the body of the squid. The latter, pale and waxy in texture, looking very much like pork fat or jade, moved about in torpedo fashion; but his movements were apparently never out of the eyes of his enemy, for by degrees small portions of his body began to disappear, snapped off by the relentless claws of his pursuer. . . .

[One day] only a portion of the squid remained. . . . In the corner of the tank sat the lobster, poised apparently for action. The boy stayed as long as he could, the bitter struggle fascinating him. Now, maybe, or in an hour or a day, the squid might die, slain by the lobster, and the lobster would eat him. He looked again at the greenish-copperish engine of destruction in the corner and wondered when this would be. . . .

He returned that night, and lo! the expected had happened. There was a little crowd around the tank.

The lobster was in the corner. Before him was the squid cut in two and partially devoured. . . .

The incident made a great impression on him. It answered in a rough way that riddle which had been annoying him so much in the past: "How is life organized?" Things lived on each other — that was it. Lobsters lived on squids and other things. What lived on lobsters? Men, of course! . . . And what lived on men? he asked himself. Was it other men? Wild animals lived on men. And there were Indians and cannibals. And some men were killed by storms and accidents. He wasn't so sure about men living on men; but men did kill each other. How about wars and street fights and mobs? . . .

Frank thought of this and of the life he was tossed into, for he was already pondering on what he should be in this world, and how he should get along. From seeing his father count money, he was sure that he would like banking; and Third Street, where his father's office was, seemed to him the cleanest, most fascinating street in the world.

Source: Theodore Dreiser, *The Financier* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1912), 10–15.

Lyman Abbott
The Evolution of Christianity

Liberal Congregationalist Lyman Abbott (1835–1922) was a noted advocate of the Social Gospel. In *The Evolution of Christianity* (1892), Abbott sought to reconcile the theory of evolution with the development of Christianity.

The doctrine of evolution is not a doctrine of harmonious and uninterrupted progress. The most common, if not the most accurate formula of evolution is "struggle for existence, survival of the fittest." The doctrine of evolution assumes that there are forces in the world seemingly hostile to progress, that life is a perpetual battle and progress a perpetual victory.

The Christian evolutionist will then expect to find Christianity a warfare — in church, in society, in the individual. . . . He will remember that the divine life is

resident in undivine humanity. He will not be surprised to find the waters of the stream disturbed; for he will reflect that the divine purity has come into a turbid stream, and that it can purify only by being itself indistinguishably combined with the impure. When he is told that modern Christianity is only a "civilized paganism," he will reply, "That is exactly what I supposed it to be; and it will continue to be a civilized paganism until civilization has entirely eliminated paganism." He will not be surprised to find pagan ceremonies in the ritual, ignorance and superstition in the church, and even errors and partialisms in the Bible. For he will remember that the divine life, which is bringing all life into harmony with itself, is a life resident in man. He will remember that the Bible does not claim to be the absolute Word of God; that, on the contrary . . . it claims to be the Word of God . . . as spoken to men, and understood and interpreted by men, which saw it in part as we still see it, and reflected it as from a mirror in enigmas.

He will remember that the Church is not yet the bride of Christ, but the plebeian daughter whom Christ is educating to be his bride. He will remember that Christianity is not the absolutely divine, but the divine in humanity, the divine force resident in man and transforming man into the likeness of the divine. Christianity is the light struggling with the darkness, life battling with death, the spiritual overcoming the animal. We judge Christianity as the scientist judges the embryo, as the gardener the bud, as the teacher the pupil, — not by what it is, but by what it promises to be.

Source: Lyman Abbott, *The Evolution of Christianity* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1892), 8–10.

Lester Frank Ward
Glimpses of the Cosmos

Lester Frank Ward (1841–1913) helped establish sociology in the United States. Following French philosopher Auguste Comte, he held that the social sciences should develop methods of improving society. In his autobiography *Glimpses of the Cosmos* (1913–1918), Ward rejected Social Darwinism.

How shall we distinguish this human, or anthropic, method from the method of nature? Simply by reversing all the definitions. Art is the antithesis of nature. If we call one the natural method, we must call the other the artificial method. If nature's process is rightly named natural selection, man's process is artificial selection. The survival of the fittest is simply the survival of the strong, which implies, and might as well be called, the destruction of the weak. And if nature progresses through the destruction of the weak, man progresses through the *protection* of the weak. . . .

. . . Man, through his intelligence, has labored successfully to resist the law of nature. His success is conclusively demonstrated by a comparison of his condition with that of other species of animals. No other cause can be assigned for his superiority. How can the naturalistic philosophers shut their eyes to such obvious facts? Yet, what is their attitude? They condemn all attempts to protect the weak, whether by private or public methods. They claim that it deteriorates the race by enabling the unfit to survive and transmit their inferiority. . . . Nothing is easier than to show that the unrestricted competition of nature does not secure the survival of the fittest possible, but only of the actually fittest, and in every attempt man makes to obtain something fitter than this actual fittest he succeeds, as witness improved breeds of animals and grafts of fruits. Now, the human method of protecting the weak deals in such way with men. It not only increases the number but improves the quality.

Source: Lester Frank Ward, *Glimpses of the Cosmos* (New York: Harper, 1913), 371, 374.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. By telling the squid and lobster story, what message was Dreiser conveying to readers, about men such as Cowperwood? If Abbott and Ward had read *The Financier*, how might they have responded? Why?

2. Historians sometimes claim that American thinkers of this era, endorsing Social Darwinism and "survival of the fittest," opposed social reform. How do Abbott and Ward complicate that view?

the Armory Show. Housed in an enormous National Guard building in New York, the exhibit introduced America to modern art. Some painters whose work appeared at the show were experimenting with cubism, characterized by abstract, geometric forms. Along with works by Henri, Sloan, and Bellows, organizers featured paintings by European rebels such as Pablo Picasso. America's academic art world was shocked. One critic called cubism "the total destruction of the art of painting." But as the exhibition went on to Boston and Chicago, more than 250,000 people crowded to see it.

A striking feature of both realism and modernism, as they developed, was that many leading writers and artists were men. In making their work strong and modern, they also strove to assert their masculinity. Paralleling Theodore Roosevelt's call for "manly sports," they denounced nineteenth-century culture as hopelessly feminized. Stephen Crane called for "virility" in literature. Jack London described himself as a "man's man, . . . lustfully roving and conquering." Artist Robert Henri banned small brushes as "too feminine." In their own ways, these writers and artists contributed to a broad movement to masculinize American culture.

Religion: Diversity and Innovation

By the turn of the twentieth century, emerging scientific and cultural paradigms posed a significant challenge to religious faith. Some Americans argued that science and modernity would sweep away religion altogether. Contrary to such predictions, American religious practice remained vibrant. Protestants developed creative new responses to the challenges of industrialization, while millions of newcomers built institutions for worship and religious education.

Immigrant Faiths   Arriving in the United States in large numbers, Catholics and Jews wrestled with similar questions. To what degree should they adapt to Protestant-dominated American society? Should the education of clergy be changed? Should children attend

Arthur B. Davies, *Dancers*, 1914–1915
Artist Arthur Davies (1862–1928) was one of the primary organizers of New York's 1913 Armory Show, which introduced Americans to modernist art. An associate of John Sloan and other New York Realists, Davies experimented with an array of painting styles, as well as printmaking and tapestry making. This painting dates from a three-year period, just after the Armory Show, in which Davies experimented with Cubist techniques. *Dancers*, 1914–1915 (oil on canvas), Detroit Institute of Arts, USA/Gift of Ralph Harman Booth/The Bridgeman Art Library.

religious or public schools? What happened if they married outside the faith? Among Catholic leaders, Bishop John Ireland of Minnesota argued that "the principles of the Church are in harmony with the interests of the Republic." But traditionalists, led by Archbishop Michael A. Corrigan of New York, disagreed. They sought to insulate Catholics from the pluralistic American environment. Indeed, by 1920, almost two million children attended Catholic elementary schools nationwide, and Catholic dioceses operated fifteen hundred high schools. Catholics as well as Jews feared some of the same threats that distressed Protestants: industrial poverty and overwork kept working-class people away from worship services, while new consumer pleasures enticed many of them to go elsewhere.

Faithful immigrant Catholics were anxious to preserve familiar traditions from Europe, and they generally supported the Church's traditional wing. But they also wanted religious life to express their ethnic identities. Italians, Poles, and other new arrivals wanted separate parishes where they could celebrate their customs, speak their languages, and establish their own parochial schools. When they became numerous enough, they also demanded their own bishops. The Catholic hierarchy, dominated by Irishmen, felt the integrity of the Church was at stake. The demand for ethnic parishes implied local control of church property. With some strain, the Catholic Church managed to satisfy the diverse needs of the immigrant faithful. It met the demand for representation, for example, by appointing immigrant priests as auxiliary bishops within existing dioceses.

In the same decades, many prosperous native-born Jews embraced Reform Judaism, abandoning such religious practices as keeping a kosher kitchen and conducting services in Hebrew. This was not the way of Yiddish-speaking Jews from Eastern Europe, who arrived in large numbers after the 1880s. Generally much poorer and eager to preserve their own traditions, they founded Orthodox synagogues, often in vacant stores, and practiced Judaism as they had at home.

But in Eastern Europe, Judaism had been an entire way of life, one not easily replicated in a large American city. "The very clothes I wore and the very food I ate had a fatal effect on my religious habits," confessed the hero of Abraham Cahan's novel *The Rise of David Levinsky* (1917). "If you . . . attempt to bend your religion to the spirit of your surroundings, it breaks. It falls to pieces." Levinsky shaved off his beard and plunged into the Manhattan clothing business. Orthodox Judaism survived the transition to America, but like other immigrant religions, it had to renounce its claims to some of the faithful.

Protestant Innovations   One of the era's dramatic religious developments — facilitated by global steamship and telegraph lines — was the rise of Protestant foreign missions. From a modest start before the Civil War, this movement peaked around 1915, a year when American religious organizations sponsored more than nine thousand overseas missionaries, supported at home by armies of volunteers, including more than three million women. A majority of Protestant missionaries served in Asia, with smaller numbers posted to Africa and the Middle East. Most saw American-style domesticity as a central part of evangelism, and missionary societies sent married couples into the field. Many unmarried women also served overseas as missionary

Christian Missions in Japan, 1909

Through this colorful postcard, Protestant missionaries in Japan demonstrate their success in winning converts (at least a few) and their adaptation of missionary strategies to meet local needs and expectations. Here, outside their headquarters, they demonstrate "preaching by means of banners." The large characters on the vertical banner proclaim the "Association of Christian Gospel Evangelists." The horizontal banner is a Japanese translation of Matthew 11:28, "Come unto me, all ye who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."
© Bettmann/Corbis.

teachers, doctors, and nurses, though almost never as ministers. "American woman," declared one Christian reformer, has "the exalted privilege of extending over the world those blessed influences, that are to renovate degraded man."

Protestant missionaries won converts, in part, by providing such modern services as medical care and women's education. Some missionaries developed deep bonds of respect with the people they served. Others showed considerable condescension toward the "poor heathen," who in turn bristled at their assumptions (America Compared, p. 601). One Presbyterian, who found Syrians uninterested in his gospel message, angrily denounced all Muslims as "corrupt and immoral." By imposing their views of "heathen races" and attacking those who refused to convert, Christian missionaries sometimes ended up justifying Western imperialism.

Chauvinism abroad reflected attitudes that also surfaced at home. Starting in Iowa in 1887, militant Protestants created a powerful political organization, the **American Protective Association** (APA), which for a brief period in the 1890s counted more than two million members. This virulently nativist group expressed outrage at the existence of separate Catholic schools while demanding, at the same time, that all public school teachers be Protestant. The APA called for a ban on Catholic officeholders, arguing that they were beholden to an "ecclesiastic power" that was "not created and controlled by American citizens." In its virulent anti-Catholicism and calls for restrictions on immigrants, the APA prefigured the revived Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s (Chapter 22).

The APA arose, in part, because Protestants found their dominance challenged. Millions of Americans, especially in the industrial working class, were now Catholics or Jews. Overall, in 1916, Protestants still constituted about 60 percent of Americans affiliated with a religious body. But they faced formidable rivals: the number of practicing Catholics in 1916 — 15.7 million — was greater than the number of Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians combined.

Some Protestants responded to the urban, immigrant challenge by evangelizing among the unchurched. They provided reading rooms, day nurseries, vocational classes, and other services. The goal of renewing religious faith through dedication to justice and social welfare became known as the **Social Gospel**. Its goals were epitomized by Charles Sheldon's novel *In His Steps* (1896), which told the story of a congregation

who resolved to live by Christ's precepts for one year. "If church members were all doing as Jesus would do," Sheldon asked, "could it remain true that armies of men would walk the streets for jobs, and hundreds of them curse the church, and thousands of them find in the saloon their best friend?"

The Salvation Army, which arrived from Great Britain in 1879, also spread a gospel message among the urban poor, offering assistance that ranged from soup kitchens to shelters for former prostitutes. When

The Salvation Army on the Streets
This theater poster for the popular play *On the Bowery* (1894), written by theater agent Robert Neilson Stephens, shows how many Americans perceived the Salvation Army. Here, Salvation Army workers in New York City offer the organization's newspaper, *War Cry*, to a man who brushes them off (rudely). The man is Steve Brodie, a celebrity who was recruited to portray himself onstage. A former East River lifesaving champion who became a saloon owner in New York's Bowery district, Brodie had won fame in 1886 by claiming to have jumped from the Brooklyn Bridge and survived. (It was later claimed that he faked the stunt, but "doing a Brodie" became popular slang for taking a big risk.) While many Americans admired the Salvation Army, others — particularly men of working-class origins, like Brodie — rejected its appeals. Library of Congress.

Christianity in the United States and Japan

During the 1893 Chicago World's Columbian Exhibition, a Parliament of Religions brought together representatives of prominent faiths for discussion. English-speaking Protestants dominated the program, but several Asian representatives included Kinzo Hirai, a lay Buddhist from Japan. In his speech, Hirai reviewed Japan's experiences with the United States since Commodore Matthew C. Perry "opened" the country in 1853.

I do not understand why the Christian lands have ignored the rights and advantages of forty million souls of Japan for forty years. . . . One of the excuses offered by foreign nations is that our country is not yet civilized. Is it the principle of civilized law that the rights and profits of the so-called uncivilized, or the weaker, should be sacrificed? As I understand it, the spirit and necessity of law is to protect the rights and profits of the weaker against the aggression of the stronger. . . .

From the religious source, the claim is made that the Japanese are idolaters and heathen. . . . [A]dmitting for the sake of argument that we are idolaters and heathen, is it Christian morality to trample upon the rights and advantages of a non-Christian nation, coloring all their natural happiness with the dark stain of injustice? . . .

You send your missionaries to Japan and they advise us to be moral and believe Christianity. We like to be moral, we know that Christianity is good; and we are very thankful for this kindness. But at the same time our people are rather perplexed. . . . For when we think that the treaty stipulated in the time of feudalism, when we were yet in our youth, is still clung to by the powerful nations of Christendom; when we find that every year a good many western vessels of seal fishery are smuggled into our seas; when legal cases are always decided by the foreign authorities in Japan unfavorably to us; when some years ago a Japanese was not allowed to enter a university on the Pacific coast of America because of his being of a different race; when a few months ago the school board in San Francisco enacted a regulation that no Japanese should be allowed to enter the public school there; when last year the Japanese were driven out in wholesale from one of the territories of the United States; when our business men in San Francisco were compelled by some union not to employ Japanese assistants and laborers, but the Americans; when there are some in the same city who speak on the platform against those of us who are already here; when there are many who go in procession hoisting lanterns marked "Japs must go"; when the Japanese in the Hawaiian Islands were deprived of their suffrage; when we see some western people in Japan who erect before the entrance to their houses a special post upon which is the notice, "No Japanese is allowed to enter here" — just like a board upon which is written, "No dogs allowed"; when we are in such a situation, notwithstanding the kindness of the western nations from one point of view, who send their missionaries to us, that we unintelligent heathens are embarrassed and hesitate to swallow the sweet and warm liquid of the heaven of Christianity, will not be unreasonable.

Source: *The World's Parliament of Religions*, ed. John Henry Barrows (Chicago: Parliament Publishing Co., 1893), 444–450.

ANALYZING THE EVIDENCE

1. What is Hirai's attitude toward American Christians?
2. Of what events is Hirai aware that are taking place in the United States? How does this shape his view of Christian missions in Japan?
3. How might American delegates to the Parliament, especially Protestant missionaries, have responded to Hirai?

all else failed, down-and-outers knew they could count on the Salvation Army, whose bell ringers became a familiar sight on city streets. The group borrowed up-to-date marketing techniques and used the latest business slang in urging its Christian soldiers to "hustle."

The Salvation Army succeeded, in part, because it managed to bridge an emerging divide between Social Gospel reformers and Protestants who were taking a different theological path. Disturbed by what they saw as rising secularism, conservative ministers and their allies held a series of Bible Conferences at Niagara Falls between 1876 and 1897. The resulting "Niagara Creed" reaffirmed the literal truth of the Bible and the certain damnation of those not born again in Christ. By the 1910s, a network of churches and Bible institutes had emerged from these conferences. They called their

Billy Sunday with His Bible
One of the most popular Protestant preachers of the early twentieth century, Billy Sunday (1862–1935) was a former professional baseball player with an imposing physique and dynamic preaching style. More willing than most of his predecessors to make direct political arguments, Sunday championed antiradicalism and prohibition—stances that foreshadowed the Protestant political crusades of the 1920s. Sunday's most famous sermon was his anti-liquor exhortation, "Get on the Water Wagon." Library of Congress.

movement **fundamentalism**, based on their belief in the fundamental truth of the Bible.

Fundamentalists and their allies made particularly effective use of revival meetings. Unlike Social Gospel advocates, revivalists said little about poverty or earthly justice, focusing not on the matters of the world, but on heavenly redemption. The pioneer modern evangelist was Dwight L. Moody, a former Chicago shoe salesman and YMCA official who won fame in the 1870s. Eternal life could be had for the asking, Moody promised. His listeners needed only "to come forward and take, TAKE!" Moody's successor, Billy Sunday, helped bring evangelism into the modern era. More often than his predecessors, Sunday took political stances based on his Protestant beliefs. Condemning the "booze traffic" was his greatest cause. Sunday also denounced unrestricted immigration and labor radicalism. "If I had my way with these ornery wild-eyed Socialists," he once threatened, "I would stand them up before a firing squad." Sunday supported some progressive reform causes; he opposed child labor, for example, and advocated voting rights for women. But in other ways, his views anticipated the nativism and antiradicalism that would dominate American politics after World War I.

Billy Sunday, like other noted men of his era, broke free of Victorian practices and asserted his leadership in a masculinized American culture. Not only was he a commanding presence on the stage, but before his conversion he had been a hard-drinking outfielder for the Chicago White Stockings. To advertise his revivals, Sunday often organized local men into baseball teams, then put on his own uniform and played for both sides. Through such feats and the fiery sermons that followed, Sunday offered a model of spiritual inspiration, manly strength, and political engagement. His revivals were thoroughly modern: marketed shrewdly, they provided mass entertainment and the chance to meet a pro baseball player. Like other cultural developments of the industrializing era, Billy Sunday's popularity showed how Americans often adjusted to modernity: they adapted older beliefs and values, enabling them to endure in new forms.

SUMMARY

Industrialization and new consumer practices created foundations for modern American culture. While middle-class families sought to preserve the Victorian domestic ideal, a variety of factors transformed family life. Families had fewer children, and a substantial majority of young people achieved more education than their parents had obtained. Across class and gender lines, Americans enjoyed athletics and the outdoors, fostering the rise of environmentalism.

Among an array of women's reform movements, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union sought

prohibition of liquor, but it also addressed issues such as domestic violence, poverty, and education. Members of women's clubs pursued a variety of social and economic reforms, while other women organized for race uplift and patriotic work. Gradually, the Victorian ideal of female moral superiority gave way to modern claims for women's equal rights.

New intellectual currents, including Darwinism, challenged Victorian certainties. In the arts, realist and naturalist writers rejected both romanticism and Vic–torian domesticity. Many Americans were shocked by the results, including Theodore Dreiser's scandalous novel *Sister Carrie*, Mark Twain's rejection of Christian faith, and the boldly modernist paintings displayed at New York's Armory Show. Science and modernism did not, however, displace religion. Newly arrived Catholics and Jews, as well as old-line Protestants, adapted their faith to the conditions of modern life. Foreign missions, in the meantime, spread the Christian gospel around the world, with mixed results for those receiving the message.

C H A P T E R   R E V I E W

MAKE IT STICK   Go to **LearningCurve** to retain what you've read.

TERMS TO KNOW   Identify and explain the significance of each term below.

Key Concepts and Events

Plessy v. Ferguson (p. 577)
Young Men's Christian Association (p. 580)
Negro Leagues (p. 581)
Sierra Club (p. 583)
National Park Service (p. 583)
National Audubon Society (p. 583)
Comstock Act (p. 585)
liberal arts (p. 587)
Atlanta Compromise (p. 587)
maternalism (p. 589)
Woman's Christian Temperance Union (p. 589)
National Association of Colored Women (p. 591)

National American Woman Suffrage Association (p. 592)
feminism (p. 592)
natural selection (p. 594)
Social Darwinism (p. 594)
eugenics (p. 594)
realism (p. 594)
naturalism (p. 594)
modernism (p. 595)
American Protective Association (p. 600)
Social Gospel (p. 600)
fundamentalism (p. 602)

Key People

Thomas Edison (p. 576)
John Muir (p. 583)
Booker T. Washington (p. 587)
Frances Willard (p. 589)
Ida B. Wells (p. 591)
Mark Twain (Samuel Langhorne Clemens) (p. 594)
Billy Sunday (p. 602)

REVIEW QUESTIONS   Answer these questions to demonstrate your understanding of the chapter's main ideas.

1. Why did athletics become popular in the late-nineteenth-century United States? In what ways did this trend represent broader changes in American society and culture?

2. What changes in women's private and public lives occurred in the decades after the Civil War, and how did these affect women from different backgrounds? Why do you think emphasis on the status of "ladies" became so insistent in this era?

3. Some historians argue that the changes brought by industrialization caused Americans to become a more secular people. To what extent do you agree or disagree, and why? Use evidence from this chapter to make your case.

4. What policy changes resulted, in part, from Americans' new zest for outdoor recreation? (You may also want to review Chapter 16, pp. 521 and 524–525 on John Wesley Powell, the creation of Yellowstone, and early wildlife conservation.)

5. **THEMATIC UNDERSTANDING**   On the Part 6 thematic timeline (p. 543), review developments in "Ideas, Beliefs, and Culture" and "Environment and Geography." How did industrialization change Americans' relationship to the outdoors — to natural environments? What connections do you see between those changes and other, broader shifts in American society and culture?

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Recognize the larger developments and continuities within and across chapters by answering these questions.

1. **ACROSS TIME AND PLACE**   This chapter explains cultural transformation as largely the result of industrialization. That's true, but it's not the whole story: the Civil War also helped bring about change. Organizers of the WCTU, for example, were distressed by alcoholism among the industrial working class but also by the plight of veterans, some of whom anaesthetized their war wounds through heavy drinking. Review the material in Chapters 14 and 15, on the Civil War and its aftermath, and then write an essay in which you explain how changes in American society during the Civil War and Reconstruction laid the groundwork for new controversies in the areas of race relations, reform, science, and religious faith.

2. **VISUAL EVIDENCE**   This chapter contains several depictions of domestic spaces, and also of women in public. After studying these images, how would you describe the ideal roles that Americans of this era believed women should fulfill? Did the ideal differ, based on social and economic class? Compare these images to the photographs of women in this chapter. What differences do you see between the "ideal" depictions and the ways in which real women appeared in front of the camera?

MORE TO EXPLORE   Start here to learn more about the events discussed in this chapter.

Patrick W. Carey, *The Roman Catholics in America* (1996). A major synthesis of American Catholic history.

Stephen Fox, *The American Conservation Movement* (1985). A history of the rise of environmentalism.

Glenda Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow* (1996). An influential account of African American women's activism in reform and politics.

Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity* (2001). A good introduction to the new ideas of masculinity that

emerged in this period, and their impact on religious faith.

Jonathan Sarna, *American Judaism* (2004). Provides an excellent account of the negotiations between Americanized Jews and new Eastern European immigrants in this era.

David Shi, *Facing Facts* (1994). Explores the impact of realism and scientific thinking on the arts and intellectual life.

TIMELINE   Ask yourself why this chapter begins and ends with these dates
and then identify the links among related events.

1861	• Vassar College founded for women
1872	• First national park established at Yellowstone
1873	• Association for the Advancement of Women founded • Comstock Act
1874	• Woman's Christian Temperance Union founded
1876	• Baseball's National League founded • Appalachian Mountain Club founded
1879	• Salvation Army established in the United States
1881	• Tuskegee Institute founded
1885	• Mississippi State College for Women founded
1890	• National American Woman Suffrage Association founded • Daughters of the American Revolution founded
1892	• Elizabeth Cady Stanton delivers "solitude of self" speech to Congress • John Muir founds Sierra Club
1893	• Chicago World's Columbian Exposition
1894	• United Daughters of the Confederacy founded
1895	• Booker T. Washington delivers Atlanta Compromise address
1896	• National Association of Colored Women founded • Charles Sheldon publishes *In His Steps* • *Plessy v. Ferguson* legalizes "separate but equal" doctrine
1900	• Lacey Act
1903	• First World Series • First National Wildlife Refuge established
1906	• Antiquities Act
1913	• Armory Show of modern art held in New York City
1916	• National Park Service created

KEY TURNING POINT: Some historians have argued that the 1890s was a crucial turning point in American culture — a decade when "modernity arrived." Based on events in this chapter, do you agree?

19
CHAPTER

"Civilization's Inferno": The Rise and Reform of Industrial Cities
1880–1917

IDENTIFY THE BIG IDEA

How did the rise of large cities shape American society and politics?

Clarence Darrow, a successful law-yer from Ashtabula, Ohio, felt iso-lated and overwhelmed when he moved to Chicago in the 1880s. "There is no place so lonely to a young man as a great city," Darrow later wrote. "When I walked along the street I scanned every face I met to see if I could not perchance discover some-one from Ohio." Instead, he saw a "sea of human units, each intent upon hurrying by." At one point, Darrow felt near despair. "If it had been possible I would have gone back to Ohio," he wrote, "but I didn't want to borrow the money, and I dreaded to confess defeat."

In the era of industrialization, more and more Americans had experiences like Darrow's. In 1860, the United States was rural: less than 20 percent of Americans lived in an urban area, defined by census takers as a place with more than 2,500 inhabitants. By 1910, more Americans lived in cities (42.1 million) than had lived in the entire nation on the eve of the Civil War (31.4 million). The country now had three of the world's ten largest cities (America Compared, p. 611). Though the Northeast remained by far the most urbanized region, the industrial Midwest was catching up. Seattle, San Francisco, and soon Los Angeles became hubs on the Pacific coast. Even the South boasted of thriving Atlanta and Birmingham. As journalist Frederic C. Howe declared in 1905, "Man has entered on an urban age."

The scale of industrial cities encouraged experiments that ranged from the amuse-ment park to the art museum, the skyscraper to the subway. Yet the city's complexity also posed problems, some of them far worse than Clarence Darrow's loneliness. Broth-els flourished, as did slums, pollution, disease, and corrupt political machines. Fast-talking hucksters enjoyed prime opportunities to fleece newcomers; homeless men slept in the shadows of the mansions of the superrich. One African American observer called the city "Civilization's Inferno." The locus of urgent problems, industrial cities became important sites of political innovation and reform.

George Bellows, *New York* George Bellows, a member of the so-called Ash Can school of painters (Chapter 18), was fascinated by urban life. In this 1911 painting, he depicts Madison Square during a winter rush-hour, crowded with streetcars, horse-drawn wagons, and pedestrians. If you could enter the world of this painting, what might you hear, feel, and smell, as well as see? What does Bellows suggest about the excitement and challenges of life in the big city? Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

The New Metropolis

Mark Twain, arriving in New York in 1867, remarked, "You cannot accomplish anything in the way of business, you cannot even pay a friendly call without devoting a whole day to it. . . . [The] distances are too great." But new technologies allowed engineers and planners to reorganize urban geographies. Specialized districts began to include not only areas for finance, manufacturing, wholesaling, and warehousing but also immigrant wards, shopping districts, and business-oriented downtowns. It was an exciting and bewildering world.

The Shape of the Industrial City

Before the Civil War, cities served the needs of commerce and finance, not industry. Early manufacturing sprang up mostly in the countryside, where mill owners could draw water power from streams, find plentiful fuel and raw materials, and recruit workers from farms and villages. The nation's largest cities were seaports; urban merchants bought and sold goods for distribution into the interior or to global markets.

As industrialization developed, though, cities became sites for manufacturing as well as finance and trade. Steam engines played a central role in this change. With them, mill operators no longer had to depend on less reliable water power. Steam power also vastly increased the scale of industry. A factory employing thousands of workers could instantly create a small city such as Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, which belonged body and soul to the Jones and Laughlin Steel Company. Older commercial cities also industrialized. Warehouse districts converted to small-scale manufacturing. Port cities that served as immigrant gateways offered abundant cheap labor, an essential element in the industrial economy.

> **COMPARE AND CONTRAST**
>
> How were America's industrial cities different from the typical city before 1860?

Mass Transit   New technologies helped residents and visitors negotiate the industrial city. Steam-driven cable cars appeared in the 1870s. By 1887, engineer Frank Sprague designed an electric trolley system for Richmond, Virginia. Electricity from a central generating plant was fed to trolleys through overhead power lines, which each trolley touched with a pole mounted on its roof. Trolleys soon became the primary mode of transportation in most American cities. Congestion and frequent accidents, however, led to demands that trolley lines be moved off streets. The "el" or elevated railroad, which began operation as early as 1871 in New York City, became a safer alternative. Other urban planners built down, not up. Boston opened a short underground line in 1897; by 1904, a subway running the length of Manhattan demonstrated the full potential of high-speed underground trains.

Even before the Civil War, the spread of railroads led to growth of outlying residential districts for the well-to-do. The high cost of transportation effectively segregated these wealthy districts. In the late nineteenth century, the trend accelerated. Businessmen and professionals built homes on large, beautifully landscaped lots in outlying towns such as Riverside, Illinois, and Tuxedo Park, New York. In such places, affluent wives and children enjoyed refuge from the pollution and perceived dangers of the city.

Los Angeles entrepreneur Henry Huntington, nephew of a wealthy Southern Pacific Railroad magnate, helped foster an emerging suburban ideal as he pitched the benefits of southern California sunshine. Huntington invested his family fortune in Los Angeles real estate and transportation. Along his trolley lines, he subdivided property into lots and built rows of bungalows, planting the tidy yards with lush trees and tropical fruits. Middle-class buyers flocked to purchase Huntington's houses. One exclaimed, "I have apparently found a Paradise on Earth." Anticipating twentieth-century Americans' love for affordable single-family homes near large cities, Huntington had begun to invent southern California sprawl.

Skyscrapers   By the 1880s, invention of steel girders, durable plate glass, and passenger elevators began to revolutionize urban building methods. Architects invented the skyscraper, a building supported by its steel skeleton. Its walls bore little weight, serving instead as curtains to enclose the structure. Although expensive to build, skyscrapers allowed downtown landowners to profit from small plots of land. By investing in a skyscraper, a landlord could collect rent for ten or even twenty floors of space. Large corporations commissioned these striking designs as symbols of business prowess.

The first skyscraper was William Le Baron Jenney's ten-story Home Insurance Building (1885) in Chicago. Though unremarkable in appearance — it looked just like other downtown buildings — Jenney's steel-girder construction inspired the creativity of American architects. A **Chicago school** sprang up, dedicated to the design of buildings whose form expressed, rather than masked, their structure and function. The presiding

Woolworth Building, New York City

Under construction in this photograph, taken between 1910 and 1913, the headquarters of the nationwide Woolworth's five-and-dime chain became a dominant feature of the New York skyline. Manhattan soon had more skyscrapers than any other city in the world. Library of Congress.

genius of this school was architect Louis Sullivan, whose "vertical aesthetic" of set-back windows and strong columns gave skyscrapers a "proud and soaring" presence and offered plentiful natural light for workers inside. Chicago pioneered skyscraper construction, but New York, with its unrelenting demand for prime downtown space, took the lead by the late 1890s. The fifty-five-story Woolworth Building, completed in 1913, marked the beginning of Manhattan's modern skyline.

The Electric City   One of the most dramatic urban amenities was electric light. Gaslight, produced from coal gas, had been used for residential light since the early nineteenth century, but gas lamps were too dim to brighten streets and public spaces. In the 1870s, as generating technology became commercially viable, electricity proved far better. Electric arc lamps, installed in Wanamaker's department store in Philadelphia in 1878, astonished viewers with their brilliant illumination. Electric streetlights soon replaced gaslights on city streets.

Before it had a significant effect on industry, electricity gave the city its modern tempo. It lifted elevators, illuminated department store windows, and above all, turned night into day. Electric streetlights made residents feel safer; as one magazine put it in 1912, "A light is as good as a policeman." Nightlife became less risky and more appealing. One journalist described Broadway in 1894: "All the shop fronts are lighted, and

the entrances to the theaters blaze out on the sidewalk." At the end of a long working day, city dwellers flocked to this free entertainment. Nothing, declared an observer, matched the "festive panorama" of Broadway "when the lights are on."

Newcomers and Neighborhoods

Explosive population growth made cities a world of new arrivals, including many young women and men arriving from the countryside. Traditionally, rural daughters had provided essential labor for spinning and weaving cloth, but industrialization relocated those tasks from the household to the factory. Finding themselves without a useful household role, many farm daughters sought paid employment. In an age of declining rural prosperity, many sons also left the farm and — like immigrants arriving from other countries — set aside part of their pay to help the folks at home. Explaining why she moved to Chicago, an African American woman from Louisiana declared, "A child with any respect about herself or hisself wouldn't like to see their mother and father work so hard and earn nothing. I feel it my duty to help."

America's cities also became homes for millions of overseas immigrants. Most numerous in Boston were the Irish; in Minneapolis, Swedes; in other northern cities, Germans. Arriving in a great metropolis, immigrants confronted many difficulties. One Polish man,

Lighting Up Minneapolis, 1883
Like other American cities, Minneapolis at night had been lit by dim gaslight until the advent of Charles F. Brush's electric arc lamps. This photograph marks the opening day, February 28, 1883, of Minneapolis's new era: the first lighting of a 257-foot tower topped by a ring of electric arc lamps. The electric poles on the right, connecting the tower to a power station, would soon proliferate into a blizzard of poles and overhead wires, as Minneapolis became an electric city. © Minnesota Historical Society/CORBIS.

who had lost the address of his American cousins, felt utterly alone after disembarking at New York's main immigration facility, Ellis Island, which opened in 1892. Then he heard a kindly voice in Polish, offering to help. "From sheer joy," he recalled, "tears welled up in my eyes to hear my native tongue." Such experiences suggest why immigrants stuck together, relying on relatives and friends to get oriented and find jobs. A high degree of ethnic clustering resulted, even within a single factory. At the Jones and Laughlin steelworks

in Pittsburgh, for example, the carpentry shop was German, the hammer shop Polish, and the blooming mill Serbian. "My people . . . stick together," observed a son of Ukrainian immigrants. But he added, "We who are born in this country . . . feel this country is our home."

Patterns of settlement varied by ethnic group. Many Italians, recruited by *padroni*, or labor bosses, found work in northeastern and Mid-Atlantic cities. Their urban concentration was especially marked after the

The World's Biggest Cities, 1800–2000

This table lists the ten largest cities in the world, by population in millions, at the start of the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries.

TABLE 19.1

1800	
City	**Population**
Beijing, China	1.10 million
London, United Kingdom	0.86
Guangzhou, China	0.80
Istanbul, Turkey	0.57
Paris, France	0.55
Hangzhou, China	0.50
Edo (later Tokyo), Japan	0.49
Naples (later part of Italy)	0.43
Suzhou, China	0.39
Osaka, Japan	0.38

1900	
City	**Population**
London, United Kingdom	6.48 million
New York, United States	4.24
Paris, France	3.33
Berlin, Germany	2.42
Chicago, United States	1.72
Vienna, Austria	1.66
Tokyo, Japan	1.50
St. Petersburg, Russia	1.44
Philadelphia, United States	1.42
Manchester, United Kingdom	1.26

2000	
City	**Population**
Tokyo, Japan	34.45 million
Mexico City, Mexico	18.02
New York City/Newark, United States	17.85
São Paulo, Brazil	17.10
Mumbai (Bombay), India	16.09
Delhi, India	15.73
Shanghai, China	13.22
Calcutta, India	13.06
Buenos Aires, Argentina	11.85
Los Angeles, United States	11.81

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. In each year, how many of the world's ten largest cities were located in the United States? In what regions of the world were the other cities located? What does this tell us about the United States's role in the world at each of these historical moments?

2. The figures from 1900 and 2000 show, to a large degree, the effects of industrialization. What does the table suggest about its impact?

The San Francisco Earthquake

California's San Andreas Fault had caused earthquakes for centuries—but when a major metropolis arose nearby, it created new potential for catastrophe. The devastating earthquake of April 18, 1906, occurred at 5:12 A.M., when many residents were sleeping. This photograph of Sacramento Street shows the resulting devastation and fires. The quake probably killed over 2,000 people, though the exact number will never be known. A massive 296-mile rupture along the fault, felt as far away as Los Angeles, Oregon, and central Nevada, the earthquake refuted contemporary geological theories. It prompted researchers to open new lines of inquiry aimed at predicting tremors—and constructing urban buildings that could withstand them. Universal History Archive / UIG / The Bridgeman Art Library.

1880s, as more and more laborers arrived from southern Italy. The attraction of America was obvious to one young man, who had grown up in a poor southern Italian farm family. "I had never gotten any wages of any kind before," he reported after settling with his uncle in New Jersey. "The work here was just as hard as that on the farm; but I didn't mind it much because I would receive what seemed to me like a lot." Amadeo Peter Giannini, who started off as a produce merchant in San Francisco, soon turned to banking. After the San Francisco earthquake in 1906, his Banca d'Italia was the first financial institution to reopen in the Bay area. Expanding steadily across the West, it eventually became Bank of America.

Like Giannini's bank, institutions of many kinds sprang up to serve ethnic urban communities. Throughout America, Italian speakers avidly read the newspaper *Il Progresso Italo-Americano*; Jews, the Yiddish-language *Jewish Daily Forward*, also published in New York. Bohemians gathered in singing societies,

while New York Jews patronized a lively Yiddish theater. By 1903, Italians in Chicago had sixty-six **mutual aid societies**, most composed of people from a particular province or town. These societies collected dues from members and paid support in case of death or disability on the job. Mutual benefit societies also functioned as fraternal clubs. "We are strangers in a strange country," explained one member of a Chinese *tong*, or mutual aid society, in Chicago. "We must have an organization (*tong*) to control our country fellows and develop our friendship."

Sharply defined ethnic neighborhoods such as San Francisco's Chinatown, Italian North Beach, and Jewish Hayes Valley grew up in every major city, driven by both discrimination and immigrants' desire to stick together (Map 19.1). In addition to patterns of ethnic and racial segregation, residential districts in almost all industrial cities divided along lines of economic class. Around Los Angeles's central plaza, Mexican neighborhoods diversified, incorporating Italians and Jews.

MAP 19.1

The Lower East Side, New York City, 1900

As this map shows, the Jewish immigrants dominating Manhattan's Lower East Side preferred to live in neighborhoods populated by those from their home regions of Eastern Europe. Their sense of a common identity made for a remarkable flowering of educational, cultural, and social institutions on the Jewish East Side. Ethnic neighborhoods became a feature of almost every American city.

Later, as the plaza became a site for business and tourism, immigrants were pushed into working-class neighborhoods like Belvedere and Boyle Heights, which sprang up to the east. Though ethnically diverse, East Los Angeles was resolutely working class; middle-class white neighborhoods grew up predominantly in West Los Angeles.

African Americans also sought urban opportunities. In 1900, almost 90 percent of American blacks still lived in the South, but increasing numbers had moved to cities such as Baton Rouge, Jacksonville, Montgomery, and Charleston, all of whose populations were more than 50 percent African American. Blacks also settled in northern cities, albeit not in the numbers that would arrive during the Great Migration of World War I. Though blacks constituted only 2 percent of New York City's population in 1910, they already numbered more than 90,000. These newcomers confronted conditions even worse than those for foreign-born immigrants. Relentlessly turned away from manufacturing jobs, most black men and

PLACE EVENTS IN CONTEXT

What opportunities did urban neighborhoods provide to immigrants and African Americans, and what problems did these newcomers face?

The Cherry Family, 1906

Wiley and Fannie Cherry migrated in 1893 from North Carolina to Chicago, settling in the small African American community that had established itself on the city's West Side. The Cherrys apparently prospered. By 1906, when this family portrait was taken, they had entered the black middle class. When migration intensified after 1900, longer-settled urban blacks like the Cherrys often became uncomfortable, and relations with needy rural newcomers were sometimes tense. Collection of Lorraine Heflin/Picture Research Consultants & Archives.

women took up work in the service sector, becoming porters, laundrywomen, and domestic servants.

Blacks faced another urban danger: the so-called **race riot**, an attack by white mobs triggered by street altercations or rumors of crime. One of the most virulent episodes occurred in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1906. The violence was fueled by a nasty political campaign that generated sensational false charges of "negro crime." Roaming bands of white men attacked black Atlantans, invading middle-class black neighborhoods and in one case lynching two barbers after seizing them in their shop. The rioters killed at least twenty-four blacks and wounded more than a hundred. The disease of hatred was not limited to the South. Race riots broke out in New York City's Tenderloin district (1900);

Evansville, Indiana (1903); and Springfield, Illinois (1908). By then, one journalist observed, "In every important Northern city, a distinct race-problem already exists which must, in a few years, assume serious proportions."

Whether they arrived from the South or from Europe, Mexico, or Asia, working-class city residents needed cheap housing near their jobs (Map 19.2). They faced grim choices. As urban land values climbed, speculators tore down houses that were vacated by middle-class families moving away from the industrial core. In their place, they erected five- or six-story **tenements**, buildings that housed twenty or more families in cramped, airless apartments (Figure 19.1). Tenements fostered rampant disease and horrific infant mortality.
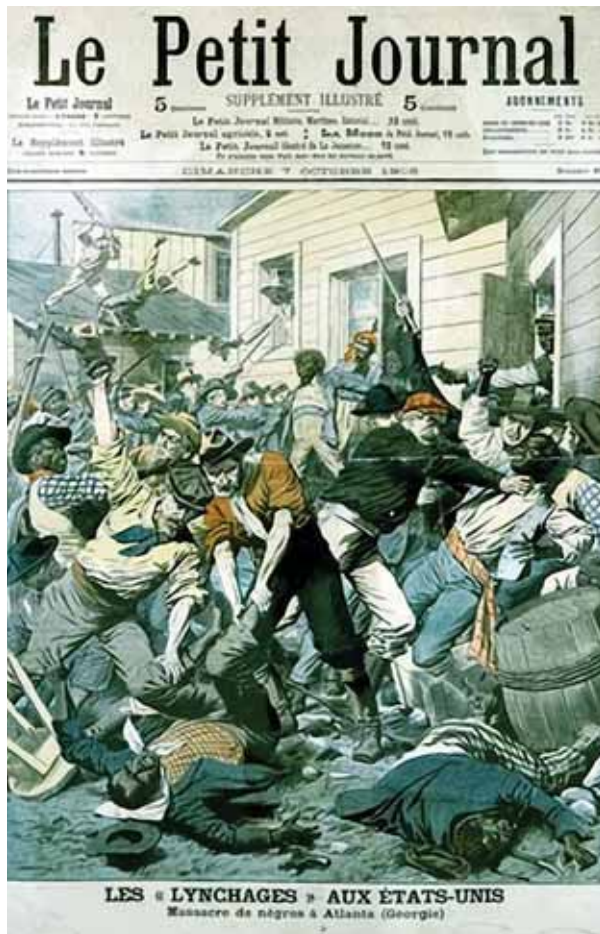
The Atlanta Race Riot—Seen from France

The cover of this Paris newsmagazine depicts the Atlanta race riot of 1906. While the artist had almost certainly never visited Atlanta, his dramatic illustration shows that, from this early date, racial violence could be a source of embarrassment to the United States in its relations with other countries. Picture Research Consultants & Archives.

In New York's Eleventh Ward, an average of 986 persons occupied each acre. One investigator in Philadelphia described twenty-six people living in nine rooms of a tenement. "The bathroom at the rear of the house was used as a kitchen," she reported. "One privy compartment in the yard was the sole toilet accommodation for the five families living in the house." African Americans often suffered most. A study of Albany, Syracuse, and Troy, New York, noted, "The colored people are relegated to the least healthful buildings."

Denouncing these conditions, reformers called for model tenements financed by public-spirited citizens willing to accept a limited return on their investment. When private philanthropy failed to make a dent, cities turned to housing codes. The most advanced was New York's Tenement House Law of 1901, which required interior courts, indoor toilets, and fire safeguards for new structures. The law, however, had no effect on the 44,000 tenements that already existed in Manhattan and the Bronx. Reformers were thwarted by the economic facts of urban development. Industrial workers could not afford transportation and had to live near their jobs; commercial development pushed up land values. Only high-density, cheaply built housing earned landlords a significant profit.
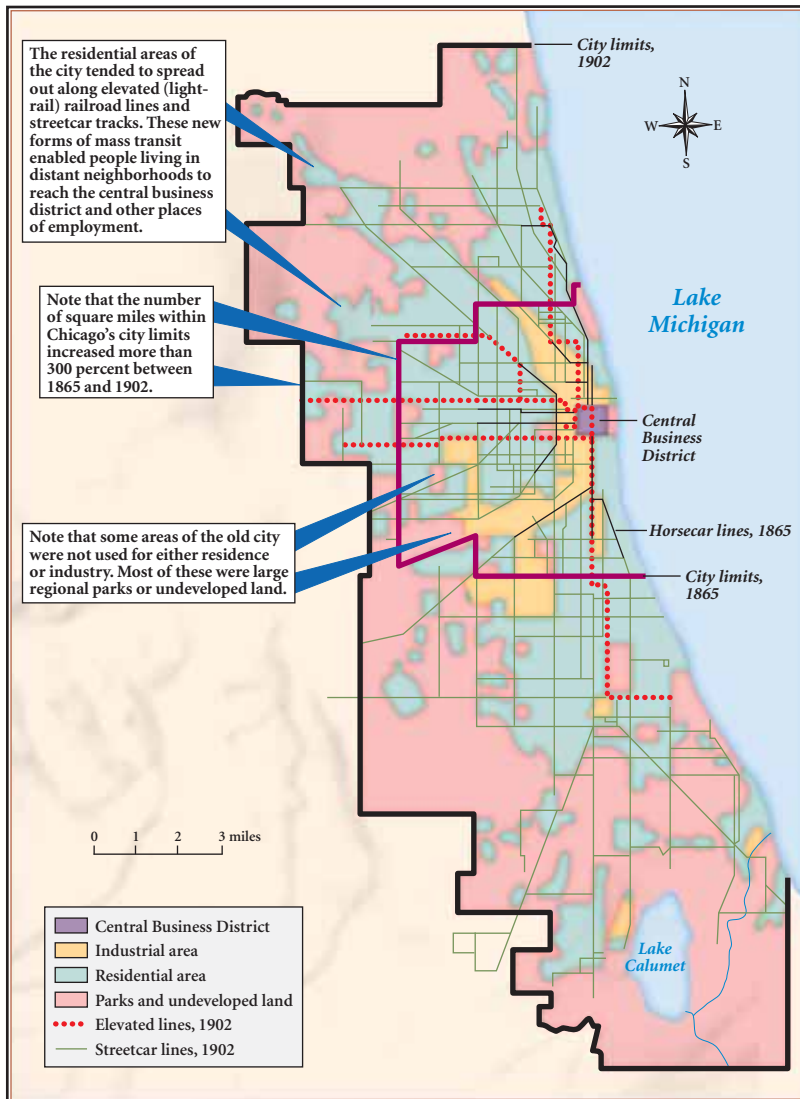
City Cultures

Despite their dangers and problems, industrial cities could be exciting places to live. In the nineteenth century, white middle-class Protestants had set the cultural standard; immigrants and the poor were expected to follow cues from their betters, seeking "uplift" and respectability. But in the cities, new mass-based entertainments emerged among the working classes, especially youth. These entertainments spread from the working class to the middle class—much to the distress of many middle-class parents. At the same time, cities became stimulating centers for intellectual life.

Urban Amusements   One enticing attraction was **vaudeville theater**, which arose in the 1880s and 1890s. Vaudeville customers could walk in anytime and watch a continuous sequence of musical acts, skits, magic shows, and other entertainment. First popular among the working class, vaudeville quickly broadened its appeal to include middle-class audiences. By the early 1900s, vaudeville faced competition from early movie theaters, or nickelodeons, which offered short films for a nickel entry fee. With distaste, one reporter described a typical movie audience as "mothers of bawling infants" and "newsboys, bootblacks, and smudgy urchins." By the 1910s, even working girls who refrained from less respectable amusements might indulge in a movie once or twice a week.

More spectacular were the great amusement parks that appeared around 1900, most famously at New York's Coney Island. These parks had their origins in world's fairs, whose paid entertainment areas had offered giant Ferris wheels and camel rides through "a street in Cairo." Entrepreneurs found that such attractions were big business. Between 1895 and 1904, they installed them at several rival amusement parks near Coney Island's popular beaches. The parks offered New Yorkers a

COMPARE AND CONTRAST
How did working-class and elite city residents differ in how they spent their money and leisure time?

The residential areas of the city tended to spread out along elevated (light-rail) railroad lines and streetcar tracks. These new forms of mass transit enabled people living in distant neighborhoods to reach the central business district and other places of employment.

Note that the number of square miles within Chicago's city limits increased more than 300 percent between 1865 and 1902.

Note that some areas of the old city were not used for either residence or industry. Most of these were large regional parks or undeveloped land.

City limits, 1902

Lake Michigan

Central Business District

Horsecar lines, 1865

City limits, 1865

0   1   2   3 miles

Lake Calumet

Central Business District
Industrial area
Residential area
Parks and undeveloped land
Elevated lines, 1902
Streetcar lines, 1902

MAP 19.2

The Expansion of Chicago, 1865–1902

In 1865, Chicagoans depended on horsecar lines to get around town. By 1900, the city limits had expanded enormously and so had the streetcar service, which was by then electrified. Elevated trains eased the congestion on downtown streets. Ongoing extension of the streetcar lines, some beyond the city limits, ensured that suburban development would continue as well.
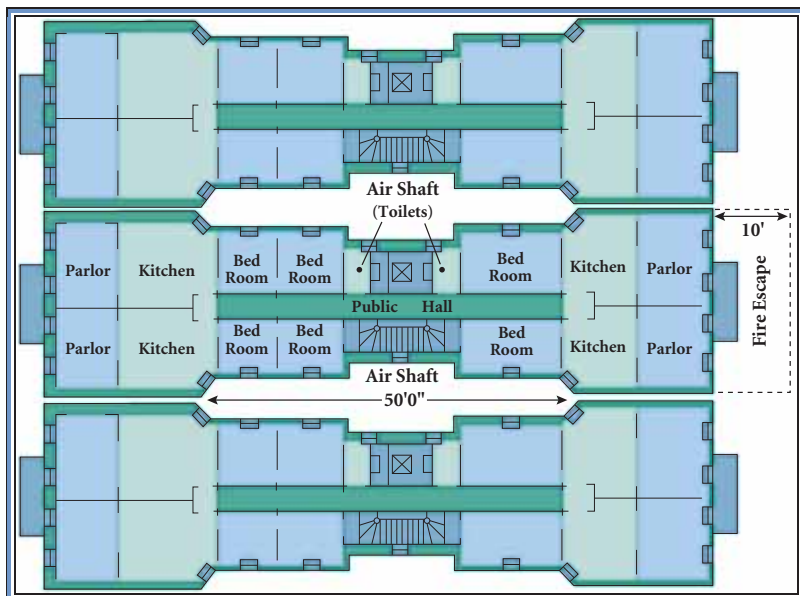

Air Shaft (Toilets)

Parlor Kitchen Bed Room Bed Room Bed Room Kitchen Parlor

Public   Hall

Parlor Kitchen Bed Room Bed Room Bed Room Kitchen Parlor

Air Shaft

10'

Fire Escape

50'0"

FIGURE 19.1

Floor Plan of a Dumbbell Tenement

In a contest for a design that met an 1879 requirement for every room to have a window, the dumbbell tenement won. The interior indentation, which created an airshaft between adjoining buildings, gave the tenement its "dumbbell" shape. But what was touted as a model tenement demonstrated instead the futility of trying to reconcile maximum land usage with decent housing. Each floor contained four apartments of three or four rooms, the largest only 10 by 11 feet. The two toilets in the hall became filthy or broke down under daily use by forty or more people. The narrow airshaft provided almost no light for the interior rooms and served mainly as a dumping ground for garbage. So deplorable were these tenements that they became the stimulus for the next wave of New York housing reform.

Amusement Park, Long Beach, California
The origins of the roller coaster go back to a Switchback Railway installed at New York's Coney Island in 1884, featuring gentle dips and curves. By 1900, when the Jack Rabbit Race was constructed at Long Beach, California, the goal was to create the biggest possible thrill. Angelenos journeyed by trolley to Long Beach to take a dip in the ocean as well as to ride the new roller coaster—and the airplane ride in the foreground. © Curt Teich Postcard Archives, Lake County Museum.

chance to come by ferry, escape the hot city, and enjoy roller coasters, lagoon plunges, and "hootchy-kootchy" dance shows. Among the amazed observers was Cuban revolutionary José Martí, working as a journalist in the United States. "What facilities for every pleasure!" Martí wrote. "What absolute absence of any outward sadness or poverty! . . . The theater, the photographers' booth, the bathhouses!" He concluded that Coney Island epitomized America's commercial society, driven not by "love or glory" but by "a desire for gain." Similar parks grew up around the United States. By the summer of 1903, Philadelphia's Willow Grove counted three million visitors annually; so did two amusement parks outside Los Angeles.

Ragtime and City Blues Music also became a booming urban entertainment. By the 1890s, Tin Pan Alley, the nickname for New York City's song-publishing district, produced such national hit tunes as "A Bicycle Built for Two" and "My Wild Irish Rose." The most famous sold more than a million copies of sheet music, as well as audio recordings for the newly invented phonograph. To find out what would sell, publishers had musicians play at New York's working-class beer gardens and dance halls. One publishing agent, who visited "sixty joints a week" to test new songs, declared that "the best songs came from the gutter."

African American musicians brought a syncopated beat that began, by the 1890s, to work its way into mainstream hits like "A Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight." Black performers became stars in their own right with the rise of **ragtime**. This music, apparently named for its ragged rhythm, combined a steady beat in the bass (played with the left hand on the piano) with syncopated, off-beat rhythms in the treble (played

with the right). Ragtime became wildly popular among audiences of all classes and races who heard in its infectious rhythms something exciting—a decisive break with Victorian hymns and parlor songs.

For the master of the genre, composer Scott Joplin, ragtime was serious music. Joplin, the son of former slaves, grew up along the Texas-Arkansas border and took piano lessons as a boy from a German teacher. He and other traveling performers introduced ragtime to national audiences at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. Seeking to elevate African American music and secure a broad national audience, Joplin warned pianists, "It is never right to play 'Ragtime' fast." But his instructions were widely ignored. Young Americans embraced ragtime.

They also embraced each other, as ragtime ushered in an urban dance craze. By 1910, New York alone had more than five hundred dance halls. In Kansas City, shocked guardians of morality counted 16,500 dancers on the floor on a Saturday night; Chicago had 86,000. Some young Polish and Slovak women chose restaurant jobs rather than domestic service so they would have free time to visit dance halls "several nights a week." New dances like the Bunny Hug and Grizzly Bear were overtly sexual: they called for close body contact and plenty of hip movement. In fact, many of these dances originated in brothels. Despite widespread denunciation, dance mania quickly spread from the urban working classes to rural and middle-class youth.

By the 1910s, black music was achieving a central place in American popular culture. African American trumpet player and bandleader W. C. Handy, born in Alabama, electrified national audiences by performing music drawn from the cotton fields of the Mississippi Delta. Made famous when it reached the big city, this

music became known as the **blues**. Blues music spoke of hard work and heartbreak, as in Handy's popular hit "St. Louis Blues" (1914):

> Got de St. Louis Blues jes blue as I can be,
> Dat man got a heart lak a rock cast in the sea,
> Or else he wouldn't gone so far from me.

Blues spoke to the emotional lives of young urbanites who were far from home, experiencing dislocation, loneliness, and bitter disappointment along with the thrills of city life. Like Coney Island and other leisure activities, ragtime and blues helped forge new collective experiences in a world of strangers.

Ragtime and blues spread quickly and had a profound influence on twentieth-century American culture. By the time Handy published "St. Louis Blues," composer Irving Berlin, a Russian Jewish immigrant, was introducing altered ragtime pieces into musical theater — which eventually transferred to radio and film. Lyrics often featured sexual innuendo, as in the title of Berlin's hit song "If You Don't Want My Peaches (You'd Better Stop Shaking My Tree)." The popularity of such music marked the arrival of modern youth culture. Its enduring features included "crossover" music that originated in the black working class and a commercial music industry that brazenly appropriated African American musical styles.

Sex and the City   In the city, many young people found parental oversight weaker than it had been before. Amusement parks and dance halls helped foster the new custom of dating, which like other cultural innovations emerged first among the working class. Gradually, it became acceptable for a young man to escort a young woman out on the town for commercial entertainments rather than spending time at home under a chaperone's watchful eye. Dating opened a new world of pleasure, sexual adventure, and danger. Young women headed to dance halls alone to meet men; the term *gold digger* came into use to describe a woman who wanted a man's money more than the man himself.

But young women, not men, proved most vulnerable in the system of dating. Having less money to spend because they earned half or less of men's wages, working-class girls relied on the "treat." Some tried to maintain strict standards of respectability, keenly aware that their prospects for marriage depended on a virtuous reputation. Others became so-called charity girls, eager for a good time. Such young women, one investigator reported, "offer themselves to strangers, not for money, but for presents, attention and pleasure." For some women, sexual favors were a matter of practical necessity. "If I did not have a man," declared one waitress, "I could not get along on my wages." In the anonymous city, there was not always a clear line between working-class treats and casual prostitution.

Dating and casual sex were hallmarks of an urban world in which large numbers of residents were young and single. The 1900 census found that more than 20 percent of women in Detroit, Philadelphia, and Boston lived as boarders and lodgers, not in family units; the percentage topped 30 percent in St. Paul and Minneapolis. Single men also found social opportunities in the city. One historian has called the late nineteenth century the Age of the Bachelor, a time when being an unattached male lost its social stigma. With boardinghouses, restaurants, and abundant personal services, the city afforded bachelors all the comforts of home and, on top of that, an array of men's clubs, saloons, and sporting events.

Many industrial cities developed robust gay subcultures. New York's gay underground, for example, included an array of drinking and meeting places, as well as clubs and drag balls. Middle-class men, both straight and gay, frequented such venues for entertainment or to find companionship. One medical student remembered being taken to a ball at which he was startled to find five hundred gay and lesbian couples waltzing to "a good band." By the 1910s, the word *queer* had come into use as slang for *homosexual*. Though harassment was frequent and moral reformers like Anthony Comstock issued regular denunciations of sexual "degeneracy," arrests were few. Gay sex shows and saloons were lucrative for those who ran them (and for police, who took bribes to look the other way, just as they did for brothels). The exuberant gay urban subculture offered a dramatic challenge to Victorian ideals.

High Culture   For elites, the rise of great cities offered an opportunity to build museums, libraries, and other cultural institutions that could flourish only in major metropolitan centers. Millionaires patronized the arts partly to advance themselves socially but also out of a sense of civic duty and national pride. As early as the 1870s, symphony orchestras emerged in Boston and New York. Composers and conductors soon joined Europe in new experiments. The Metropolitan Opera, founded in 1883 by wealthy businessmen, drew enthusiastic crowds to hear the innovative work of Richard Wagner. In 1907, the Met shocked audiences by presenting Richard Strauss's sexually scandalous opera *Salome*.

Art museums and natural history museums also became prominent new institutions in this era. The nation's first major art museum, the Corcoran Gallery

of Art, opened in Washington, D.C., in 1869, while New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art settled into its permanent home in 1880. In the same decades, public libraries grew from modest collections into major urban institutions. The greatest library benefactor was steel magnate Andrew Carnegie, who announced in 1881 that he would build a library in any town or city that was prepared to maintain it. By 1907, Carnegie had spent more than $32.7 million to establish over a thousand libraries throughout the United States.

Urban Journalism   Patrons of Carnegie's libraries could read, in addition to books, an increasing array of mass-market newspapers. Joseph Pulitzer, owner of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* and *New York World*, led the way in building his sales base with sensational investigations, human-interest stories, and targeted sections covering sports and high society. By the 1890s, Pulitzer faced a challenge from William Randolph Hearst (Thinking Like a Historian, p. 620). The arrival of Sunday color comics featuring the "Yellow Kid" gave such publications the name *yellow journalism*, a derogatory term for mass-market newspapers. Hearst's and Pulitzer's sensational coverage was often irresponsible. In the late 1890s, for example, their papers helped whip up frenzied pressure for the United States to declare war against Spain (Chapter 21). But Hearst and Pulitzer also exposed scandals and injustices. They believed their papers should challenge the powerful by speaking to and for ordinary Americans.

Along with Hearst's and Pulitzer's stunt reporters, other urban journalists also worked to promote reform. New magazines such as *McClure's* introduced national audiences to reporters such as Ida Tarbell, who exposed the machinations of John D. Rockefeller, and David Graham Phillips, whose "Treason of the Senate," published in *Cosmopolitan* in 1906, documented the deference of U.S. senators — especially Republicans — to wealthy corporate interests. Theodore Roosevelt dismissed such writers as **muckrakers** who focused too much on the negative side of American life. The term stuck, but muckrakers' influence was profound. They inspired thousands of readers to get involved in reform movements and tackle the problems caused by industrialization.

Governing the Great City

One of the most famous muckrakers was Lincoln Steffens, whose book *The Shame of the Cities* (1904), first published serially in *McClure's* magazine, denounced the corruption afflicting America's urban governments. Steffens used dramatic language to expose "swindling" politicians. He claimed, for example, that the mayor of Minneapolis had turned his city over to "outlaws." In St. Louis, "bribery was a joke," while Pittsburgh's Democratic Party operated a private company that handled most of the city's street-paving projects — at a hefty profit. Historians now believe that Steffens and other middle-class crusaders took a rather extreme view of urban politics; the reality was more complex. But charges of corruption could hardly be denied. As industrial cities grew with breathtaking speed, they posed a serious problem of governance.

Urban Machines

In the United States, cities relied largely on private developers to build streetcar lines and provide urgently needed water, gas, and electricity. This preference for business solutions gave birth to what one urban historian calls the "private city" — an urban environment shaped by individuals and profit-seeking businesses. Private enterprise, Americans believed, spurred great innovations — trolley cars, electric lighting, skyscrapers — and drove urban real estate development. Investment opportunities looked so tempting, in fact, that new cities sprang up almost overnight from the ruins of a catastrophic Chicago fire in 1871 and a major San Francisco earthquake in 1906. Real estate interests were often instrumental in encouraging streetcar lines to build outward from the central districts.

When contractors sought city business, or saloon-keepers needed licenses, they turned to **political machines**: local party bureaucracies that kept an unshakable grip on both elected and appointed public offices. A machine like New York's infamous Tammany Society — known by the name of its meeting place, Tammany Hall — consisted of layers of political functionaries. At the bottom were precinct captains who knew every city neighborhood and block; above them were ward bosses and, at the top, powerful citywide leaders, who had usually started at the bottom and worked their way up. Machines dispensed jobs and patronage, arranged for urban services, and devoted their energies to staying in office, which they did, year after year, on the strength of their political clout and popularity among urban voters.

For constituents, political machines acted as a rough-and-ready social service agency, providing jobs for the jobless or a helping hand for a bereaved family. Tammany ward boss George Washington Plunkitt, for example, reported that he arranged housing for

Making Mass Media: Newspaper Empires

Among the businesses that served urban consumers were mass-market newspapers. Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World* led the way in the 1880s; a decade later Pulitzer had a powerful rival in the *New York Journal*, owned by William Randolph Hearst.

1. **R. F. Outcault's "The Yellow Kid" comic, *The World*, August 9, 1896.** *Pulitzer and Hearst introduced Sunday color comics, including "The Yellow Kid" (shown here on a bicycle). Working-class readers instantly recognized the "kid," slang that then referred to working-class immigrant children. The Kid, like other boys of his age, wore skirts; tenement toddlers' heads were shaved to discourage lice.*
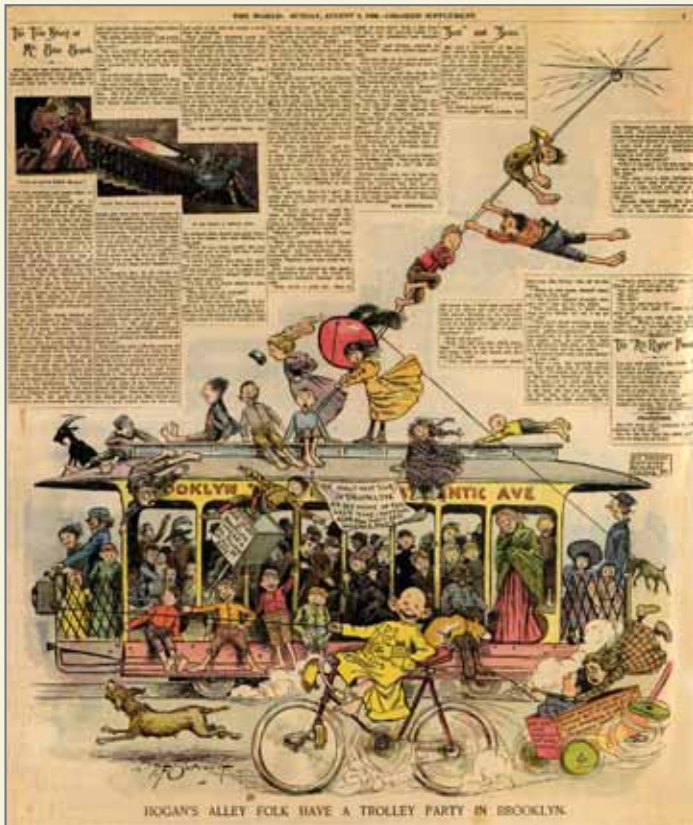
The World, Sunday, August 9, 1896.

2. **Editorial, *Wheeling Register*, April 6, 1885.** *A West Virginia newspaper commented on a campaign by the* New York World *to complete the Statue of Liberty. Parts of the statue, donated by France, were languishing in New York City parks.*

The *New York World* is a liberty-loving journal. It has taken the responsibility of being foster mother to that much abused piece of bronze called the "BARTHOLDI statue." It begins to look as if the *World* may nurse it to a successful termination by raising funds enough through public contributions to complete the pedestal upon which it is to stand. Success to the enterprise.

3. **"HOMELESS, HOPELESS! Nellie Bly in a Night Haunt of the City's Wretchedest of Women," *New York World*, February 9, 1896.** *Pulitzer and Hearst hired many "stunt reporters." The most famous was Elizabeth Jane Cochrane, who took her pen name, Nellie Bly, from a popular song. In 1892, sponsored by the* World*, Bly beat the record in Jules Verne's famous novel Around the World in Eighty Days, circumnavigating the world in seventy-two days. She filed many investigative pieces such as this one.*

An old woman stood with her back against the side of a building. Over her head was a ragged shawl that had once been red. Around her knees hung a limp and shapeless calico skirt. The rain and sleet were falling steadily and lay thick and slushy upon the streets.

I shivered as I stopped to watch. . . . If the old woman felt the cold she gave no sign. She stood motionless, peeping around the corner. Her eyes were fixed upon the door of the Oak Street Station-House.

Just then three small boys, unmindful of the weather, came trudging down the street . . . industriously gathering every white spot that showed upon the pavement to add to the black snowballs they held in their wet red hands.

Turning the corner suddenly they came upon the old woman. For a second they paused and looked at her and she glared at them. It reminded me of the way dogs behave when they turn a corner and espy a cat. . . . The old woman started on a frantic hobble across the street, the boys after her. Their black snowballs landed squarely and soakingly against her bent back. . . . The old woman shouted things as she ran, things that do not sound well and are never by any chance reproduced in print, but they seemed to increase the delight of the fiendish boys. . . . She could hobble she made for the station-house and the boys pursued her, pelting her.

4. **Lewis Wickes Hine, newsboys selling at a Hartford, Connecticut saloon, 9:30 P.M., March 1909.** *In addition to subscriptions and sales at newsstands, newspapers sold bundles of one hundred papers to boys and girls, who resold as many as they could. Photographer Lewis Hine's caption, included below, suggests one strategy for selling papers. Hine, working for the National Child Labor Committee, took many such images.*

Library of Congress.

A common case of "team work." The smaller boy . . . goes into one of the saloons and sells his "last" papers. Then comes out and his brother gives him more. Joseph said, "Drunks are me best customers. . . . Dey buy me out so I kin go home." He sells every afternoon and night. Extra late Saturday. At it again at 6 A.M.

5. **Newsboys strike coverage, *New York Herald-Tribune*, July 25, 1899.** *As sales plummeted after the War of 1898, Pulitzer and other newspaper titans raised the cost of a newspaper bundle, for children who resold them, from 50 to 60 cents. Newsboys struck. They failed to get the 50-cent price reinstated, but the* World *and other companies agreed to buy back unsold papers, which they had not done before. Kid Blink, the strike leader, was blind in one eye.*

The newsboys' strike gathered new strength last night in a monster mass meeting held at New Irving Hall. . . . "Kid" Blink, who has been made Grand Master Workman of the union, led the procession. . . . The unbiased spectator last evening could not fail to be impressed with the resolute, manly fight the little fellows are making. . . .

SPEECH OF "KID" BLINK

. . . Dis is de time when we'se got to stick togedder like glue! But der's one ting I want ter say before I goes any furder. I don't believe in getting' no feller's papers frum him and tearin' 'em up. I know I done it. (Cries of "You bet you did!") But I'm sorry fer it. No! der ain't nuttin in dat. We know wot we wants and we'll git it. . . . Dem 10 cents is as good ter us as to de millionaires — maybe better. . . . We'll strike and restrike till we get it. . . . We'll stick togedder like plaster, won't we, boys?

The boys answered that they would.

6. **Circulation statistics for the *New York World* from *N. W. Ayer and Son's American Newspaper Annual and Directory*, 1910.**

Edition	Political affiliation	No. of Pages	Circulation
Morning	Democratic	16	361,412
Evening	Independent	12–16	410,259
Sunday	Democratic	56–72	459,663

Sources: (2) *Wheeling Register*, April 6, 1885; (3) *New York World*, February 9, 1896; (5) *New York Herald-Tribune*, July 25, 1899; (6) *N. W. Ayer and Son's American Newspaper Annual and Directory* (Philadelphia: N. W. Ayer and Son, 1910), 623.

ANALYZING THE EVIDENCE

1. Based on these sources, why do you think "yellow journalism" was popular and profitable? What audiences did it serve, and how?
2. Consider the tone and point of view of sources 1, 3, and 5. What do they suggest about American attitudes toward the urban poor?
3. What do these sources say about how Pulitzer and Hearst viewed their role as publishers? How might we compare their newspaper empires to other corporations of the industrial era (Chapter 17)?

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Write a brief essay in which you explain the ways in which the rise of mass-market newspapers might have contributed to and helped to publicize calls for progressive reform.

families after their apartments burned, "fix[ing] them up until they get things runnin' again." Plunkitt was an Irishman, and so were most Tammany Hall leaders. But by the 1890s, Plunkitt's Fifteenth District was filling up with Italians and Russian Jews. On a given day (as recorded in his diary), he might attend an Italian funeral in the afternoon and a Jewish wedding in the evening. Wherever he went, he brought gifts, listened to his constituents' troubles, and offered a helping hand.

The favors dispensed by men like Plunkitt came via a system of boss control that was, as Lincoln Steffens charged, corrupt. Though rural, state, and national politics were hardly immune to such problems, cities offered flagrant opportunities for bribes and kickbacks. The level of corruption, as Plunkitt observed, was greater in cities, "accordin' to the opportunities." When politicians made contracts for city services, some of the money ended up in their pockets. In the 1860s, William Marcy Tweed, known as Boss Tweed, had made Tammany Hall a byword for corruption, until he was brought down in 1871 by flagrant overpricing of contracts for a lavish city courthouse. Thereafter, machine corruption became more surreptitious. Plunkitt declared that he had no need for outright bribes. He favored what he called "honest graft" — the profits that came to savvy insiders who knew where and when to buy land. Plunkitt made most of his money building wharves on Manhattan's waterfront.

Middle-class reformers condemned immigrants for supporting machines. But urban immigrants believed that few middle-class Americans cared about the plight of poor city folk like themselves. Machines were hardly perfect, but immigrants could rely on them for jobs, emergency aid, and the only public services they could hope to obtain. Astute commentators saw that bosses dominated city government because they provided what was needed, with no condescending moral judgments. As reformer Jane Addams put it, the ward boss was a "stalking survival of village kindness." Voters knew he was corrupt, but on election day they might say, "Ah, well, he has a big Irish heart. He is good to the widow and the fatherless," or, "he knows the poor." Addams concluded that middle-class reformers would only make headway if they set aside their prejudices, learned to "stand by and for and with the people," and did a better job of it than the machine bosses did.

EXPLAIN CONSEQUENCES

Why, given that everyone agreed machines were corrupt, did urban voters support them?

Machine-style governments achieved some notable successes. They arranged (at a profit) for companies to operate streetcars, bring clean water and gaslight, and remove garbage. Nowhere in the world were there more massive public projects — aqueducts, sewage systems, bridges, and spacious parks — than in the great cities of the United States. The nature of this achievement can be grasped by comparing Chicago, Illinois, with Berlin, the capital of Germany, in 1900. At that time, Chicago's waterworks pumped 500 million gallons of water a day, providing 139 gallons per resident; Berliners made do with 18 gallons each. Flush toilets, a rarity in Berlin, could be found in 60 percent of Chicago homes. Chicago lit its streets with electricity, while Berlin still relied mostly on gaslight. Chicago had twice as many parks as the German capital, and it had just completed an ambitious sanitation project that reversed the course of the Chicago River, carrying sewage into Lake Michigan, away from city residents.

These achievements were remarkable, because American municipal governments labored under severe political constraints. Judges did grant cities some authority: in 1897, for example, New York's state supreme court ruled that New York City was entirely within its rights to operate a municipally owned subway. Use of private land was also subject to whatever regulations a city might impose. But, starting with an 1868 ruling in Iowa, the American legal system largely classified the city as a "corporate entity" subject to state control. In contrast to state governments, cities had only a limited police power, which they could use, for example, to stop crime but not to pass more ambitious measures for public welfare. States, not cities, held most taxation power and received most public revenues. Machines and their private allies flourished, in part, because cities were starved for legitimate cash.

Thus money talked; powerful economic interests warped city government. Working-class residents — even those loyal to their local machines — knew that the newest electric lights and best trolley lines served affluent neighborhoods, where citizens had the most clout. Hilda Satt, a Polish immigrant who moved into a poor Chicago neighborhood in 1893, recalled garbage-strewn streets and filthy backyard privies. "The streets were paved with wooden blocks," she later wrote, "and after a heavy rainfall the blocks would become loose and float about in the street." She remembered that on one such occasion, local pranksters posted a sign

City Garbage

"How to get rid of the garbage?" was a question that bedeviled every American city. The difficulties of keep-
ing up are all too clear in this ground-level photograph by the great urban investigator Jacob Riis, looking
down Tammany Street in New York City around 1890. Museum of the City of New York.

saying, "The Mayor and the Aldermen are Invited to
Swim Here." As cities expanded, the limitations of
political machines became increasingly clear.

The Limits of Machine Government

The scale of urban problems became dramatically evi-
dent in the depression of the 1890s, when unemploy-
ment reached a staggering 25 percent in some cities.
Homelessness and hunger were rampant; newspapers
nationwide reported on cases of starvation, despera-
tion, and suicide. To make matters worse, most cities

had abolished the early-nineteenth-century system of
outdoor relief, which provided public support for the
indigent. Fearing the system promoted laziness among
the poor, middle-class reformers had insisted on pri-
vate, not public, charity. Even cities that continued to
provide outdoor relief in the 1890s were overwhelmed
by the magnitude of the crisis. Flooded with "tramps,"
police stations were forced to end the long-standing
practice of allowing homeless individuals to sleep inside.

Faced with this crisis, many urban voters proved
none too loyal to the machines when better alterna-
tives arose. Cleveland, Ohio, for example, experienced

eighty-three labor strikes between 1893 and 1898. Workers' frustration centered on corrupt businesses with close ties to municipal officials. The city's Central Labor Union, dissatisfied with Democrats' failure to address its concerns, worked with middle-class allies to build a thriving local branch of the People's Party (Chapter 20). Their demands for stronger government measures, especially to curb corporate power, culminated in citywide protests in 1899 during a strike against the hated streetcar company. That year, more than eight thousand workers participated in the city's annual Labor Day parade. As they passed the mayor's reviewing stand, the bands fell silent and the unions furled their flags in a solemn protest against the mayor's failure to support their cause.

To recapture support from working-class Clevelanders, Democrats made a dramatic change in 1901, nominating Tom Johnson for mayor. Johnson, a reform-minded businessman, advocated municipal ownership of utilities and a tax system in which "monopoly and privilege" bore the main burdens. (Johnson once thanked Cleveland's city appraisers for raising taxes on his own mansion.) Johnson's comfortable victory transformed Democrats into Cleveland's leading reform party. While the new mayor did not fulfill the whole agenda of the Central Labor Union and its allies, he became an advocate of publicly owned utilities, and one of the nation's most famous and innovative reformers.

Like Johnson, other mayors began to oust machines and launch ambitious programs of reform. Some modeled their municipal governments on those of Glasgow, Scotland; Düsseldorf, Germany; and other European cities on the cutting edge of innovation. In Boston, Mayor Josiah Quincy built public baths, gyms, swimming pools, and playgrounds and provided free public concerts. Like other mayors, he battled streetcar companies to bring down fares. The scope of such projects varied. In 1912, San Francisco managed to open one small municipally owned streetcar line to compete with private companies. Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on the other hand, elected socialists who experimented with a sweeping array of measures, including publicly subsidized medical care and housing.

Republican Hazen Pingree, mayor of Detroit from 1890 to 1897, was a particularly noted reformer who worked for better streets and public transportation. During the depression, Pingree opened a network of vacant city-owned lots as community vegetable gardens. Though some people ridiculed "Pingree's Potato Patches," the gardens helped feed thousands of Detroit's working people during the harsh depression years. By 1901, a coalition of reformers who campaigned against New York's Tammany Hall began to borrow ideas from Pingree and other mayors. In the wealthier wards of New York, they promised to reduce crime and save taxpayer dollars. In working-class neighborhoods, they vowed to provide affordable housing and municipal ownership of gas and electricity. They defeated Tammany's candidates, and though they did not fulfill all of their promises, they did provide more funding for overcrowded public schools.

Reformers also experimented with new ways of organizing municipal government itself. After a devastating hurricane in 1900 killed an estimated six thousand people in Galveston, Texas, and destroyed much of the city, rebuilders adopted a commission system that became a nationwide model for efficient government. Leaders of the **National Municipal League** advised cities to elect small councils and hire professional city managers who would direct operations like a corporate executive. The league had difficulty persuading politicians to adopt its business-oriented model; it won its greatest victories in young, small cities like Phoenix, Arizona, where the professional classes held political power. Other cities chose, instead, to enhance democratic participation. As part of the Oregon System, which called for direct voting on key political questions, Portland voters participated in 129 municipal referendum votes between 1905 and 1913.

Crucibles of Progressive Reform

The challenges posed by urban life presented rich opportunities for experimentation and reform. As happened in Cleveland with Tom Johnson's election as mayor, working-class radicals and middle-class reformers often mounted simultaneous challenges to political machines, and these combined pressures led to dramatic change. Many reformers pointed to the plight of the urban poor, especially children. Thus it is not surprising that **progressivism**, an overlapping set of movements to combat the ills of industrialization (Chapter 20), had important roots in the city. In the slums and tenements of the metropolis, reformers invented new forms of civic participation that shaped the course of national politics.

PLACE EVENTS IN CONTEXT
How did reformers try to address the limits of machine government? To what extent did they succeed?

Fighting Dirt and Vice

As early as the 1870s and 1880s, news reporters drew attention to corrupt city governments, the abuse of power by large corporations, and threats to public health. Researcher Helen Campbell reported on tenement conditions in such exposés as *Prisoners of Poverty* (1887). Making innovative use of the invention of flash photography, Danish-born journalist Jacob Riis included photographs of tenement interiors in his famous 1890 book, *How the Other Half Lives*. Riis had a profound influence on Theodore Roosevelt when the future president served as New York City's police commissioner. Roosevelt asked Riis to lead him on tours around the tenements, to help him better understand the problems of poverty, disease, and crime.

Cleaning Up Urban Environments One of the most urgent problems of the big city was disease. In the late nineteenth century, scientists in Europe came to understand the role of germs and bacteria. Though researchers could not yet cure epidemic diseases, they could recommend effective measures for prevention. Following up on New York City's victory against cholera in 1866 — when government officials instituted an effective quarantine and prevented large numbers of deaths — city and state officials began to champion more public health projects. With a major clean-water initiative for its industrial cities in the late nineteenth century, Massachusetts demonstrated that it could largely eliminate typhoid fever. After a horrific yellow fever epidemic in 1878 that killed perhaps 12 percent of its population, Memphis, Tennessee, invested in state-of-the-art sewage and drainage. Though the new system did not eliminate yellow fever, it unexpectedly cut death rates from typhoid and cholera, as well as infant deaths from water-borne disease. Other cities followed suit. By 1913, a nationwide survey of 198 cities found that they were spending an average of $1.28 per resident for sanitation and other health measures.

> **IDENTIFY CAUSES**
> What prompted the rise of urban environmental and antiprostitution campaigns?

A Hint to Boards of Health

In 1884, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* urged municipal and state boards of health to work harder to protect urban children. When this cartoon appeared, New Yorkers were reading shocking reports of milk dealers who diluted milk with borax and other chemicals. Note the range of health threats that the cartoonist identifies. Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center.

A HINT TO BOARDS OF HEALTH—HOW OUR CITIES INVITE THE CHOLERA

The public health movement became one of the era's most visible and influential reforms. In cities, the impact of pollution was obvious. Children played on piles of garbage, breathed toxic air, and consumed poisoned food, milk, and water. Infant mortality rates were shocking: in the early 1900s, a baby born to a Slavic woman in an American city had a 1 in 3 chance of dying in infancy. Outraged, reformers mobilized to demand safe water and better garbage collection. Hygiene reformers taught hand-washing and other techniques to fight the spread of tuberculosis.

Americans worked in other ways to make industrial cities healthier and more beautiful to live in. Many municipalities adopted smoke-abatement laws, though they had limited success with enforcement until the post–World War I adoption of natural gas, which burned cleaner than coal. Recreation also received attention. Even before the Civil War, urban planners had established sanctuaries like New York's Central Park, where city people could stroll, rest, and contemplate natural landscapes. By the turn of the twentieth century, the **"City Beautiful" movement** arose to advocate more and better urban park spaces. Though most parks still featured flower gardens and tree-lined paths, they also made room for skating rinks, tennis courts, baseball fields, and swimming pools. Many included play areas with swing sets and seesaws, promoted by the National Playground Association as a way to keep urban children safe and healthy.

Closing Red Light Districts   Distressed by the commercialization of sex, reformers also launched a campaign against urban prostitution. They warned, in dramatic language, of the threat of white slavery, alleging (in spite of considerable evidence to the contrary) that large numbers of young white women were being kidnapped and forced into prostitution. In *The City's Perils* (1910), author Leona Prall Groetzinger wrote

"FRIENDS" MEETING EMIGRANT GIRL AT THE DOCK
"The girl was met at New York by two 'friends' who took her in charge. These 'friends' were two of the most brutal of all the white slave traders who are in the traffic."
—U. S. Dist. Attorney Edwin W. Sims
Foreign girls are more helplessly at the mercy of white slave hunters than girls at home. Every year thousands of girls arriving in America from Italy, Sweden, Germany, etc., are never heard of again.

The Crusade Against "White Slavery"

With the growth of large cities, prostitution was a major cause of concern in the Progressive Era. Though the number of sex workers per capita in the United States was probably declining by 1900, the presence of red light districts was obvious; thousands of young women (as well as a smaller number of young men) were exploited in the sex trade. This image appeared in *The Great War on White Slavery*, published by the American Purity Foundation in 1911. It illustrates how immigrant women could be ensnared in the sex trade by alleged "friends" who offered them work. Reformers' denunciations of "white slavery" show an overt racial bias: while antiprostitution campaigners reported on the exploitation of Asian and African American women, the victimization of white women received the greatest emphasis and most effectively grabbed the attention of prosperous, middle-class Americans. From *The Great War on White Slavery*, by Clifford G. Roe, 1911. Courtesy Vassar College Special Collections.

that young women arrived from the countryside "burning with high hope and filled with great resolve, but the remorseless city takes them, grinds them, crushes them, and at last deposits them in unknown graves."

Practical investigators found a more complex reality: women entered prostitution as a result of many factors, including low-wage jobs, economic desperation, abandonment, and often sexual and domestic abuse. Women who bore a child out of wedlock were often shunned by their families and forced into prostitution. Some working women and even housewives undertook casual prostitution to make ends meet. For decades, female reformers had tried to "rescue" such women and retrain them for more respectable employments, such as sewing. Results were, at best, mixed. Efforts to curb demand — that is, to focus on arresting and punishing men who employed prostitutes — proved unpopular with voters.

Nonetheless, with public concern mounting over "white slavery" and the payoffs machine bosses exacted from brothel keepers, many cities appointed vice commissions in the early twentieth century. A wave of brothel closings crested between 1909 and 1912, as police shut down red light districts in cities nationwide. Meanwhile, Congress passed the Mann Act (1910) to prohibit the transportation of prostitutes across state lines.

The crusade against prostitution accomplished its main goal, closing brothels, but in the long term it worsened the conditions under which many prostitutes worked. Though conditions in some brothels were horrific, sex workers who catered to wealthy clients made high wages and were relatively protected by madams, many of whom set strict rules for clients and provided medical care for their workers. In the wake of brothel closings, such women lost control of the prostitution business. Instead, almost all sex workers became "streetwalkers" or "call girls," more vulnerable to violence and often earning lower wages than they had before the antiprostitution crusade began.

The Movement for Social Settlements

Some urban reformers focused their energies on building a creative new institution, the **social settlement**. These community welfare centers investigated the plight of the urban poor, raised funds to address urgent needs, and helped neighborhood residents advocate on their own behalf. At the movement's peak in the early twentieth century, dozens of social settlements operated across the United States. The most famous, and one of the first, was **Hull House** on Chicago's West Side, founded in 1889 by Jane Addams and her companion Ellen Gates Starr. Their dilapidated mansion, flanked

Hull House Playground, Chicago, 1906

When this postcard was made, the City of Chicago's Small Parks Commission had just taken over management of the playground from settlement workers at Hull House, who had created it. In a pattern repeated in many cities, social settlements introduced new institutions and ideas — such as safe places for urban children to play — and inspired municipal authorities to assume responsibility and control. Picture Research Consultants & Archives.
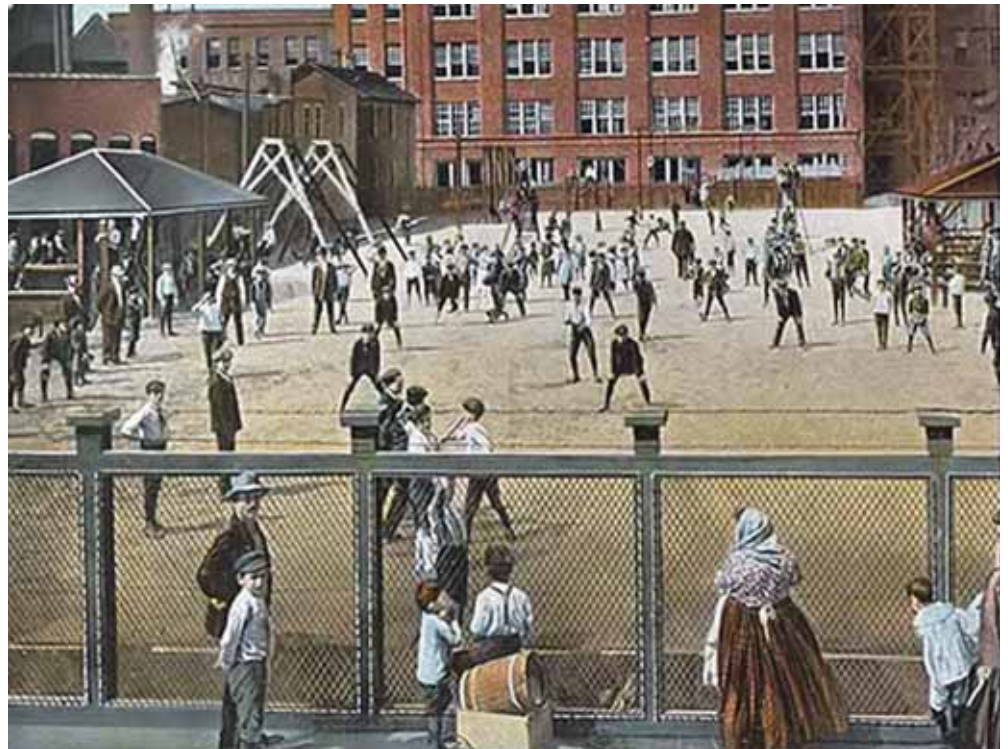
by saloons in a neighborhood of Italian and Eastern European immigrants, served as a spark plug for community improvement and political reform.

The idea for Hull House came partly from Toynbee Hall, a London settlement that Addams and Starr had visited while touring Europe. Social settlements also drew inspiration from U.S. urban missions of the 1870s and 1880s. Some of these, like the Hampton Institute, had aided former slaves during Reconstruction; others, like Grace Baptist in Philadelphia, arose in northern cities. To meet the needs of urban residents, missions offered employment counseling, medical clinics, day care centers, and sometimes athletic facilities in cooperation with the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA).

Jane Addams, a daughter of the middle class, first expected Hull House to offer art classes and other cultural programs for the poor. But Addams's views quickly changed as she got to know her new neighbors and struggled to keep Hull House open during the depression of the 1890s. Addams's views were also influenced by conversations with fellow Hull House resident Florence Kelley, who had studied in Europe and returned a committed socialist. Dr. Alice Hamilton, who opened a pediatric clinic at Hull House, wrote that Addams came to see her settlement as "a bridge between the classes. . . . She always held that this bridge was as much of a help to the well-to-do as to the poor." Settlements offered idealistic young people "a place where they could live as neighbors and give as much as they could of what they had."

Addams and her colleagues believed that working-class Americans already *knew* what they needed. What they lacked were resources to fulfill those needs, as well as a political voice. These, settlement workers tried to provide. Hull House was typical in offering a bathhouse, playground, kindergarten, and day care center. Some settlements opened libraries and gymnasiums; others operated penny savings banks and cooperative kitchens where tired mothers could purchase a meal at the end of the day. (Addams humbly closed the Hull House kitchen when she found that her bland New England cooking had little appeal for Italians; her coworker, Dr. Alice Hamilton, soon investigated the health benefits of garlic.) At the Henry Street Settlement in New York, Lillian Wald organized visiting nurses to improve health in tenement wards. Addams, meanwhile, encouraged local women to inspect the neighborhood and bring back a list of dangers to health and safety. Together, they prepared a complaint to city council. The women, Addams wrote, had shown "civic enterprise and moral conviction" in carrying out the project themselves.

Social settlements took many forms. Some attached themselves to preexisting missions and African American colleges. Others were founded by energetic college graduates. Catholics ran St. Elizabeth Center in St. Louis; Jews, the Boston Hebrew Industrial School. Whatever their origins, social settlements were, in Addams's words, "an experimental effort to aid in the solution of the social and industrial problems which are engendered by the modern condition of life in a great city."

Settlements served as a springboard for many other projects. Settlement workers often fought city hall to get better schools and lobbied state legislatures for new workplace safety laws. At Hull House, Hamilton investigated lead poisoning and other health threats at local factories. Her colleague Julia Lathrop investigated the plight of teenagers caught in the criminal justice system. She drafted a proposal for separate juvenile courts and persuaded Chicago to adopt it. Pressuring the city to experiment with better rehabilitation strategies for juveniles convicted of crime, Lathrop created a model for juvenile court systems across the United States.

Another example of settlements' long-term impact was the work of Margaret Sanger, a nurse who moved to New York City in 1911 and volunteered with a Lower East Side settlement. Horrified by women's suffering from constant pregnancies — and remembering her devout Catholic mother, who had died young after bearing eleven children — Sanger launched a crusade for what she called birth control. Her newspaper column, "What Every Girl Should Know," soon garnered an indictment for violating obscenity laws. The publicity that resulted helped Sanger launch a national birth control movement.

Settlements were thus a crucial proving ground for many progressive experiments, as well as for the emerging profession of social work, which transformed the provision of public welfare. Social workers rejected the older model of private Christian charity, dispensed by well-meaning middle-class volunteers to those in need. Instead, social workers defined themselves as professional caseworkers who served as advocates of social justice. Like many reformers of the era, they allied themselves with the new social sciences, such as sociology and economics, and undertook statistical surveys and other systematic methods for gathering facts. Social work proved to be an excellent opportunity for educated women who sought professional careers. By 1920, women made up 62 percent of U.S. social workers.

Cities and National Politics

Despite reform efforts, the problems wrought by industrialization continued to cause suffering in urban workplaces and environments. In 1906, journalist Upton Sinclair exposed some of the most extreme forms of labor exploitation in his novel *The Jungle*, which described appalling conditions in Chicago meatpacking plants. What caught the nation's attention was not Sinclair's account of workers' plight, but his descriptions of rotten meat and filthy packing conditions. With constituents up in arms, Congress passed the **Pure Food and Drug Act** (1906) and created the federal Food and Drug Administration to oversee compliance with the new law.

The impact of *The Jungle* showed how urban reformers could affect national politics. Even more significant was the work of Josephine Shaw Lowell, a Civil War widow from a prominent family. After years of struggling to aid poverty-stricken individuals in New York City, Lowell concluded that charity was not enough. In 1890, she helped found the New York Consumers' League to improve wages and working conditions for female store clerks. The league encouraged shoppers to patronize only stores where wages and working conditions were known to be fair. By 1899, the organization had become the **National Consumers' League** (NCL). At its head stood the outspoken and skillful Florence Kelley, a Hull House worker and former chief factory inspector of Illinois. Kelley believed that only government oversight could protect exploited workers. Under her crusading leadership, the NCL became one of the most powerful progressive organizations advocating worker protection laws.

Many labor organizations also began in a single city and then grew to national stature. One famous example was the **Women's Trade Union League**, founded in New York in 1903. Financed by wealthy women who supported its work, the league trained working-class leaders like Rose Schneiderman, who organized unions among garment workers. Although often frustrated by the patronizing attitude of elite sponsors, trade-union women joined together in the broader struggle for women's rights. When New York State held referenda on women's suffrage in 1915 and 1917, strong support came from Jewish and Italian precincts where unionized garment workers lived. Working-class voters hoped, in turn, that enfranchised women would use their ballots to help industrial workers.

Residents of industrial cities, then, sought allies in state and national politics. The need for broader action was made clear in New York City by a shocking event

The Jungle

This poster advertises a 1914 silent film based on Sinclair's reform novel, which tells the story of Lithuanian immigrants struggling to get by amid the dangerous work, starvation wages, and abysmal living conditions of Chicago's meatpacking district. The film launched the film careers of actors George Nash and Gail Kane, who played the hero, Jurgis Rutkus, and his wife, Ona. Sinclair himself appeared at the start of the film, explaining how he conducted research for his story. Socialist clubs often screened the film, which ended—like the book—with a ringing call for workers to organize and create a "cooperative commonwealth" to take control of their conditions of life and work. Courtesy Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.

on March 25, 1911. On that Saturday afternoon, just before quitting time, a fire broke out at the **Triangle Shirtwaist** Company. It quickly spread through the three floors the company occupied at the top of a ten-story building. Panicked workers discovered that, despite fire safety laws, employers had locked the emergency doors to prevent theft. Dozens of Triangle workers, mostly young immigrant women, were trapped in the flames. Many leaped to their deaths; the rest never reached the windows. The average age of the 146 people who died was just nineteen (American Voices, p. 630).

"These Dead Bodies Were the Answer": The Triangle Fire

Entire books have been written about the catastrophic 1911 fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company in New York City. The following excerpts are from documents by four contemporaries who in various ways played a part in the Triangle tragedy and its aftermath. Note the different audiences that these speakers and authors were addressing and the lessons that each one draws from this horrific event.

William G. Shepherd, Reporter

William G. Shepherd's eyewitness account appeared in newspapers across the country. Working for the United Press, Shepherd phoned the story to his editor as he watched the unfolding tragedy.

I was walking through Washington Square when a puff of smoke issuing from a factory building caught my eye. I reached the building before the alarm was turned in. I saw every feature of the tragedy visible from outside the building. I learned a new sound—a more horrible sound than description can picture. It was the thud of a speeding, living body on a stone sidewalk. . . .

I looked up—saw that there were scores of girls at the windows. The flames from the floor below were beating in their faces. Somehow I knew that they, too, must come down, and something within me—something I didn't know was there—steeled me.

I even watched one girl falling. Waving her arms, trying to keep her body upright until the very instant she struck the sidewalk, she was trying to balance herself. Then came the thud—then a silent, unmoving pile of clothing and twisted, broken limbs. . . .

On the sidewalk lay heaps of broken bodies. A policeman later went about with tags, which he fastened with wire to the wrists of the dead girls, numbering each with a lead pencil, and I saw him fasten tag no. 54 to the wrist of a girl who wore an engagement ring. . . .

The floods of water from the firemen's hose that ran into the gutter were actually stained red with blood. I looked upon the heap of dead bodies and I remembered these girls were the shirtwaist makers. I remembered their great strike of last year in which these same girls had demanded more sanitary conditions and more safety precautions in the shops. These dead bodies were the answer.

Stephen S. Wise, Rabbi

A week after the fire, on April 2, 1911, a memorial meeting was held at the Metropolitan Opera House. One of the speakers, Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, a prominent figure in New York reform circles, made the following remarks.

This was not an inevitable disaster which man could neither foresee nor control. We might have foreseen it, and some of us did; we might have controlled it, but we chose not to do so. . . . It is not a question of enforcement of law nor of inadequacy of law. We have the wrong kind of laws and the wrong kind of enforcement. Before insisting upon inspection and enforcement, let us lift up the industrial standards so as to make conditions worth inspecting, and, if inspected, certain to afford security to workers. . . . And when we go before the legislature of the state, and demand increased appropriations in order to ensure the possibility of a sufficient number of inspectors, we will not forever be put off with the answer: We have no money.

The lesson of the hour is that while property is good, life is better; that while possessions are valuable, life is priceless. The meaning of the hour is that the life of the lowliest worker in the nation is sacred and inviolable, and, if that sacred human right be violated, we shall stand adjudged and condemned before the tribunal of God and history.

Rose Schneiderman, Trade Unionist

Rose Schneiderman also spoke at the Metropolitan Opera House meeting. At age thirteen, she had gone to work in a garment factory like Triangle Shirtwaist's and, under the tutelage of the Women's Trade Union League, had become a labor organizer. The strike she mentions in her speech was popularly known as the Uprising of the 30,000, a nearly spontaneous walkout in 1909 that launched the union movement in the women's garment trades.

I would be a traitor to these poor burned bodies if I came here to talk good fellowship. We have tried you good people of the public and we have found you wanting. The old Inquisition had its rack and its thumbscrews and its instruments of torture with iron teeth. We know what these things are today; the iron teeth are our necessities, the thumbscrews are the high-powered and swift machinery close to which we must work, and the rack is here in the firetrap structures that will destroy us the minute they catch on fire.

This is not the first time girls have been burned alive in the city. . . . Every year thousands of us are maimed. The life of men and women is so cheap and property is so sacred. There are so many of us for one job it matters little if 146 of us are burned to death.

We have tried you citizens; we are trying you now, and you have a couple of dollars for the sorrowing mothers, brothers, and sisters by way of a charity gift. But every time the workers come out in the only way they know to protest against conditions which are unbearable the strong hand of the law is allowed to press down heavily upon us . . . [and] beats us back, when we rise, into the conditions that make life unbearable.

I can't talk fellowship to you who are gathered here. Too much blood has been spilled. I know from my experience it is up to the working people to save themselves. The only way they can save themselves is by a strong working-class movement.

Max D. Steuer, Lawyer

After finding physical evidence of the locked door that had blocked escape from the fire, New York's district attorney brought manslaughter charges against the Triangle proprietors, Max Blanck and Isaac Harris, who hired in their defense the best, highest-priced trial attorney in town, Max D. Steuer. In this talk, delivered some time later to a rapt audience of lawyers, Steuer described how he undermined the testimony of the key witness for the prosecution by suggesting that she had been coached to recite her answer. The trial judge instructed the jury that they could only convict Blanck and Harris if it was *certain* they had known the emergency exits were locked; as Steuer notes, the jury voted to acquit.

There are many times, many times when a witness has given evidence very hurtful to your cause and you say, "No questions," and dismiss him or her in the hope that the jury will dismiss the evidence too. [*Laughter*.] But can you do that when the jury is weeping, and the little girl witness is weeping too? [*Laughter*.] . . . There is one [rule] that commands what not to do. Do not attack the witness. Suavely, politely, genially, toy with the story.

In the instant case, about half an hour was consumed by the examiner [Steuer]. . . . Very little progress was made; but the tears had stopped. And then [the witness] was asked, "Now, Rose, in your own words, and in your own way will you tell the jury everything you did, everything you said, and everything you saw from the moment you first saw flames."

The question was put in precisely the same words that the District Attorney had put it, and little Rose started her answer with exactly the same word that she had started it to the District Attorney . . . and the only change in her recital was that Rose left out one word. And then Rose was asked, "Didn't you leave out a word that you put in when you answered it before?" . . . So Rose started to repeat to herself the answer [*laughter*], and as she came to the missing word she said, "Oh, yes!" and supplied it; and thereupon the examiner went on to an entirely different subject. . . . [W]hen again he [asked her to repeat her story] . . . Rose started with the same word and finished with the same word, her recital being identical with her first reply to the same question.

The jurymen were not weeping. Rose had not hurt the case, and the defendants were acquitted; there was not a word of reflection at any time during that trial upon poor little Rose.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. The hardest task of the historian is to conjure up the reality of the past—to say, "This is what it was really like." That's where eyewitness evidence like the reporter Shepherd's comes in. What is there in his account that you could only obtain from an eyewitness?

2. Both Rabbi Wise and Rose Schneiderman were incensed at the Triangle carnage, yet their speeches are quite different. In what ways? What conclusions do you draw about the different motivations and arguments that led to reform?

3. Max Steuer and Rose Schneiderman came from remarkably similar backgrounds. They were roughly the same age, grew up in poverty on the Lower East Side, and started out as child workers in the garment factories. The differences in their adult lives speak to the varieties of immigrant experience in America. Does anything in their statements help to account for their differing life paths? What might have happened if Rose Schneiderman, rather than "little Rose," had faced Max Steuer on the witness stand?

Shocked by this horrific event, New Yorkers responded with an outpouring of anger and grief that crossed ethnic, class, and religious boundaries. Many remembered that, only a year earlier, shirtwaist workers had walked off the job to protest abysmal safety and working conditions—and that the owners of Triangle, among other employers, had broken the strike. Facing demands for action, New York State appointed a factory commission that developed a remarkable program of labor reform: fifty-six laws dealing with such issues as fire hazards, unsafe machines, and wages and working hours for women and children. The chairman and vice chairman of the commission were Robert F. Wagner and Alfred E. Smith, both Tammany Hall politicians then serving in the state legislature. They established the commission, participated fully in its work, and marshaled party regulars to pass the proposals into law—all with the approval of Tammany. The labor code that resulted was the most advanced in the United States.

Tammany's response to the Triangle fire showed that it was acknowledging its need for help. The social and economic problems of the industrial city had outgrown the power of party machines; only stronger state and national laws could bar industrial firetraps, alleviate sweatshop conditions, and improve slums. Politicians like Wagner and Smith saw that Tammany had to change or die. The fire had unforeseen further consequences. Frances Perkins, a Columbia University student who witnessed the horror of Triangle workers leaping from the windows to their deaths, decided she would devote her efforts to the cause of labor. Already active in women's reform organizations, Perkins went to Chicago, where she volunteered for several years at Hull House. In 1929, she became New York State's first commissioner of labor; four years later, during the New Deal (Chapter 23), Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed her as U.S. secretary of labor—the first woman to hold a cabinet post.

The political aftermath of the Triangle fire demonstrated how challenges posed by industrial cities pushed politics in new directions, transforming urban government and initiating broader movements for reform. The nation's political and cultural standards had long been set by native-born, Protestant, middle-class Americans. By 1900, the people who thronged to the great cities helped build America into a global industrial power—and in the process, created an electorate that was far more ethnically, racially, and religiously diverse.

In the era of industrialization, some rural and native-born commentators warned that immigrants were "inferior breeds" who would "mongrelize" American culture. But urban political leaders defended cultural pluralism, expressing appreciation—even admiration—for immigrants, including Catholics and Jews, who sought a better life in the United States. At the same time, urban reformers worked to improve conditions of life for the diverse residents of American cities. Cities, then, and the innovative solutions proposed by urban leaders, held a central place in America's consciousness as the nation took on the task of progressive reform.

SUMMARY

After 1865, American cities grew at an unprecedented rate, and urban populations swelled with workers from rural areas and abroad. To move burgeoning populations around the city, cities pioneered innovative forms of mass transit. Skyscrapers came to mark urban skylines, and new electric lighting systems encouraged nightlife. Neighborhoods divided along class and ethnic lines, with the working class inhabiting crowded, shoddily built tenements. Immigrants developed new ethnic cultures in their neighborhoods, while racism followed African American migrants from the country to the city. At the same time, new forms of popular urban culture bridged class and ethnic lines, challenging traditional sexual norms and gender roles. Popular journalism rose to prominence and helped build rising sympathy for reform.

Industrial cities confronted a variety of new political challenges. Despite notable achievements, established machine governments could not address urban problems through traditional means. Forward-looking politicians took the initiative and implemented a range of political, labor, and social reforms. Urban reformers also launched campaigns to address public health, morals, and welfare. They did so through a variety of innovative institutions, most notably social settlements, which brought affluent Americans into working-class neighborhoods to learn, cooperate, and advocate on behalf of their neighbors. Such projects began to increase Americans' acceptance of urban diversity and their confidence in government's ability to solve the problems of industrialization.

CHAPTER REVIEW

TERMS TO KNOW   Identify and explain the significance of each term below.

Key Concepts and Events

Chicago school (p. 608)

mutual aid society (p. 612)

race riot (p. 614)

tenement (p. 614)

vaudeville (p. 615)

ragtime (p. 617)

blues (p. 618)

yellow journalism (p. 619)

muckrakers (p. 619)

political machine (p. 619)

National Municipal League (p. 624)

progressivism (p. 624)

"City Beautiful" movement (p. 626)

social settlement (p. 627)

Hull House (p. 627)

Pure Food and Drug Act (p. 629)

National Consumers' League (p. 629)

Women's Trade Union League (p. 629)

Triangle Shirtwaist Fire (p. 629)

Key People

Scott Joplin (p. 617)

Tom Johnson (p. 624)

Jacob Riis (p. 625)

Jane Addams (p. 627)

Margaret Sanger (p. 628)

Upton Sinclair (p. 629)

Florence Kelley (p. 629)

REVIEW QUESTIONS   Answer these questions to demonstrate your understanding of the chapter's main ideas.

1. What were the major features of industrial cities that arose in the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? What institutions and innovations helped make urban life distinctive?

2. What were the limitations and achievements of urban governments run by political machines?

3. Why did so many reform initiatives of the early twentieth century emerge in large cities? What were some of those initiatives, and what was their political impact?

4. THEMATIC UNDERSTANDING Using the thematic timeline on page 543, consider some of the ways in which mass migrations of people — both from other countries and from places within the United States — shaped industrial cities. How did this influence American society, culture, and national identity?

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Recognize the larger developments and continuities within and across chapters by answering these questions.

1. **ACROSS TIME AND PLACE**   In Chapter 17 we explored the activities of agrarian reformers and labor unions who protested the impact of industrialization on their lives. In Chapters 18 and 19 we considered the work of middle-class and urban reformers who sought to address some of the same conditions. Chronologically, their work overlapped: note, for example, that Jane Addams founded Hull House in 1889, just as the Farmers' Alliance was reaching a peak of activism and workers had organized the Knights of Labor and American Federation of Labor. Imagine a conversation among the following individuals: a rural man or woman active in the Farmers' Alliance; a skilled workman who joined the American Federation of Labor; an urban antiprostitution reformer; and a middle-class volunteer who worked in a settlement house. How would each have described the problems caused by industrialization? What remedies would each suggest? On what points would they have disagreed? Can you imagine any issues on which they might have worked together? What does this suggest about the opportunities and limits of alliance building, in the late 1800s and early 1900s, across class and geographic lines?

2. **VISUAL EVIDENCE**   Imagine that you have just arrived in a big American city in the early 1900s. Look carefully at all the images in this chapter and group them under two categories: (1) problems and dangers you might have encountered as a new urban resident; (2) sights and opportunities that might have been appealing and exciting to you as a newcomer. On balance, do you think you would have wanted to stay, or turn around and head back home? Why? What factors might have shaped your decision?

MORE TO EXPLORE   Start here to learn more about the events discussed in this chapter.

Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull House* (1910). An inspiring must-read by a great American reformer.

George Chauncey, *Gay New York* (1994). A groundbreaking study of the rise of urban gay subcultures.

Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements* (1986). Explores urban working-class dating and the world of young working-class women.

Harold Platt, *The Electric City* (1991). A study of how electricity shaped the urban industrial society and economy.

Ruth Rosen, *The Lost Sisterhood* (1982). A poignant account of Progressive Era antiprostitution campaigns and their tragic impact on sex workers.

David Von Drehle, *Triangle: The Fire That Changed America* (2003). The most recent account of the fire and its consequences.

TIMELINE   Ask yourself why this chapter begins and ends with these dates and then identify the links among related events.

1866	• New York City contains cholera epidemic
1869	• Corcoran Gallery of Art opens in Washington, D.C.
1871	• First elevated railroad begins operation in New York
1878	• Yellow fever epidemic in Memphis, Tennessee
1883	• Metropolitan Opera opens in New York
1885	• First skyscraper completed in Chicago
1887	• First electric trolley system built in Richmond, Virginia
1889	• Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr found Hull House in Chicago
1890	• Jacob Riis's *How the Other Half Lives*
1892	• New York's Ellis Island opens
1893	• Ragtime introduced to national audiences at Chicago World's Fair
1897	• First subway line opened in Boston
1899	• Central Labor Union protests in Cleveland • National Consumers' League founded
1901	• New York passes Tenement House Law • "City Beautiful" plan developed for Washington, D.C.
1903	• Women's Trade Union League founded
1904	• Subway running the length of Manhattan completed
1906	• Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* published • Food and Drug Administration established • Atlanta race riot
1910	• Mann Act prohibits transportation of prostitutes across state lines
1911	• Triangle Shirtwaist Company fire in New York
1913	• Fifty-five-story Woolworth Building completed in New York

KEY TURNING POINTS: On the timeline above, what tipping points can you identify when Americans began to propose political solutions for urban industrial problems? What issues did they emphasize?

20
CHAPTER

Whose Government? Politics, Populists, and Progressives
1880–1917

We are living in a grand and wonderful time," declared Kansas political organizer Mary E. Lease in 1891. "Men, women and children are in commotion, discussing the mighty problems of the day." This "movement among the masses," she said, was based on the words of Jesus: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them." Between the 1880s and the 1910s, thousands of reformers like Lease confronted the problems of industrialization. Lease herself stumped not only for the People's Party, which sought more government regulation of the economy, but also for the Knights of Labor and Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), as well as for women's suffrage and public health.

Between the end of Reconstruction and the start of World War I, political reformers focused on four main goals: cleaning up politics, limiting the power of big business, reducing poverty, and promoting social justice. Historians call this period of agitation and innovation the Progressive Era. In the 1880s and 1890s, labor unions and farm groups took the lead in critiquing the industrial order and demanding change. But over time, more and more middle-class and elite Americans took up the call, earning the name *progressives*. On the whole, they proposed more limited measures than farmer-labor advocates did, but since they had more political clout, they often had greater success in winning new laws. Thus both radicals and progressives played important roles in advancing reform.

No single group defined the Progressive Era. On the contrary, reformers took opposite views on such questions as immigration, racial justice, women's rights, and imperialism. Leaders such as Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, initially hostile to the sweeping critiques of capitalism offered by radicals, gradually adopted bolder ideas. Dramatic political changes influenced the direction of reform. Close party competition in the 1880s gave way to Republican control between 1894 and 1910, followed by a period of Democratic leadership during Wilson's presidency (1913–1919). Progressives gave the era its name, not because they acted as a unified force, but because they engaged in diverse, energetic movements to improve America.

IDENTIFY THE BIG IDEA

In the Progressive Era, how and why did reformers seek to address the problems of industrial America? To what extent did they succeed?

Coxey's Army on the March, 1894 During the severe depression of the 1890s, Ohio businessman Jacob Coxey organized unemployed men for a peaceful march to the U.S. Capitol to plead for an emergency jobs program. They called themselves the Commonweal of Christ but won the nickname "Coxey's Army." Though it failed to win sympathy from Congress, the army's march on Washington—one of the nation's first—inspired similar groups to set out from many cities. Here, Coxey's group nears Washington, D.C. The man on horseback is Carl Browne, one of the group's leaders and a flamboyant publicist. As the marchers entered Washington, Coxey's seventeen-year-old daughter Mamie, dressed as the "Goddess of Peace," led the procession on a white Arabian horse. Library of Congress.

Reform Visions, 1880–1892

In the 1880s, radical farmers' groups and the Knights of Labor provided a powerful challenge to industrialization (Chapter 17). At the same time, groups such as the WCTU (Chapter 18) and urban settlements (Chapter 19) laid the groundwork for progressivism, especially among women. Though they had different goals, these groups confronted similar dilemmas upon entering politics. Should they work through existing political parties? Create new ones? Or generate pressure from the outside? Reformers tried all these strategies.

Electoral Politics After Reconstruction

The end of Reconstruction ushered in a period of fierce partisan conflict. Republicans and Democrats traded control of the Senate three times between 1880 and 1894, and the House majority five times. Causes of this tight competition included northerners' disillusionment with Republican policies and the resurgence of southern Democrats, who regained a strong base in Congress. Dizzying population growth also changed the size and shape of the House of Representatives. In 1875, it counted 243 seats; two decades later, that had risen to 356. Between 1889 and 1896, entry of seven new western states — Montana, North and South Dakota, Washington, Idaho, Wyoming, and Utah — contributed to political instability.

> **IDENTIFY CAUSES**
> What factors led to close party competition in the 1880s?

Heated competition and the legacies of the Civil War drew Americans into politics. Union veterans donned their uniforms to march in Republican parades, while ex-Confederate Democrats did the same in the South. When politicians appealed to war loyalties, critics ridiculed them for **"waving the bloody shirt"**: whipping up old animosities that ought to be set aside. For those who had fought or lost beloved family members in the conflict, however — as well as those struggling over African American rights in the South — war issues remained crucial. Many voters also had strong views on economic policies, especially Republicans' high protective tariffs. Proportionately more voters turned out in presidential elections from 1876 to 1892 than at any other time in American history.

The presidents of this era had limited room to maneuver in a period of narrow victories, when the opposing party often held one or both houses of Congress. Republicans Rutherford B. Hayes and Benjamin Harrison both won the electoral college but lost the popular vote. In 1884, Democrat Grover Cleveland won only 29,214 more votes than his opponent, James Blaine, while almost half a million voters rejected both major candidates (Map 20.1). With key states decided by razor-thin margins, both Republicans and Democrats engaged in vote buying and other forms of fraud. The fierce struggle for advantage also prompted innovations in political campaigning (Thinking Like a Historian, p. 640).
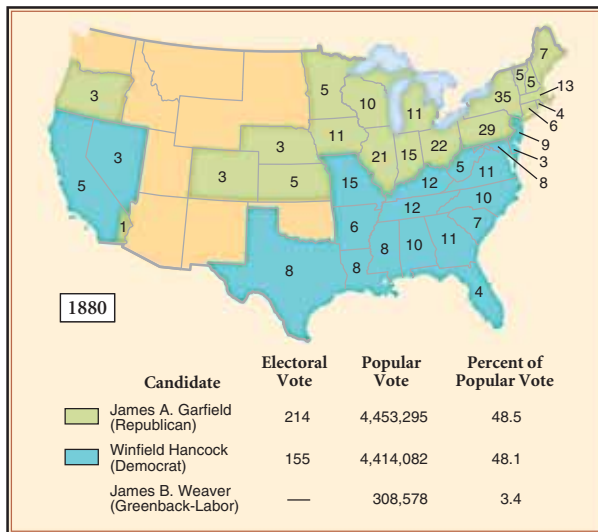
Some historians have characterized this period as a **Gilded Age**, when politics was corrupt and stagnant and elections centered on "meaningless hoopla." The term *Gilded Age*, borrowed from the title of an 1873 novel cowritten by Mark Twain, suggested that America had achieved a glittery outer coating of prosperity and lofty rhetoric, but underneath suffered from moral decay. Economically, the term *Gilded Age* seems apt: as we have seen in previous chapters, a handful of men made spectacular fortunes, and their "Gilded" triumphs belied a rising crisis of poverty, pollution, and erosion of workers' rights. But political leaders were not blind to these problems, and the political scene was hardly idle or indifferent. Rather, Americans bitterly disagreed about what to do. Nonetheless, as early as the 1880s, Congress passed important new federal measures to clean up corruption and rein in corporate power. That decade deserves to be considered an early stage in the emerging Progressive Era.

New Initiatives   One of the first reforms resulted from tragedy. On July 2, 1881, only four months after entering the White House, James Garfield was shot at a train station in Washington, D.C. ("Assassination," he had told a friend, "can no more be guarded against than death by lightning, and it is best not to worry about either.") After lingering for several agonizing months, Garfield died. Most historians now believe the assassin, Charles Guiteau, suffered from mental illness. But reformers then blamed the spoils system, arguing that Guiteau had murdered Garfield out of disappointment in the scramble for patronage, the granting of government jobs to party loyalists.

In the wake of Garfield's death, Congress passed the **Pendleton Act** (1883), establishing a nonpartisan Civil Service Commission to fill federal jobs by examination. Initially, civil service applied to only 10 percent of such jobs, but the act laid the groundwork for a sweeping transformation of public employment. By the 1910s, Congress extended the act to cover most federal positions; cities and states across the country enacted similar laws.

1880

Candidate	Electoral Vote	Popular Vote	Percent of Popular Vote
James A. Garfield (Republican)	214	4,453,295	48.5
Winfield Hancock (Democrat)	155	4,414,082	48.1
James B. Weaver (Greenback-Labor)	—	308,578	3.4

1884

Candidate	Electoral Vote	Popular Vote	Percent of Popular Vote
Grover Cleveland (Democrat)	219	4,879,507	48.5
James G. Blaine (Republican)	182	4,850,293	48.2
Benjamin F. Butler (Greenback-Labor)	—	175,370	1.8
John P. St. John (Prohibition)	—	150,369	1.5

1888

| Candidate	Electoral Vote	Popular Vote	Percent of Popular Vote
Benjamin Harrison (Republican)	233	5,447,129	47.9
Grover Cleveland (Democrat)	168	5,537,857	48.6
Clinton P. Fisk (Prohibition)	—	249,506	2.2
Anson J. Streeter (Union Labor)	—	146,935	1.3

MAP 20.1

The Presidential Elections of 1880, 1884, and 1888

The anatomy of hard-fought, narrowly won presidential campaigns is evident in this trio of electoral maps. First, note the equal division of the popular vote between Republicans and Democrats. Second, note the persistent pattern of electoral votes, as states overwhelmingly went to the same party in all three elections. Here, we can identify who determined the outcomes—"swing" states, such as New York and Indiana, whose vote shifted every four years and always in favor of the winning candidate.
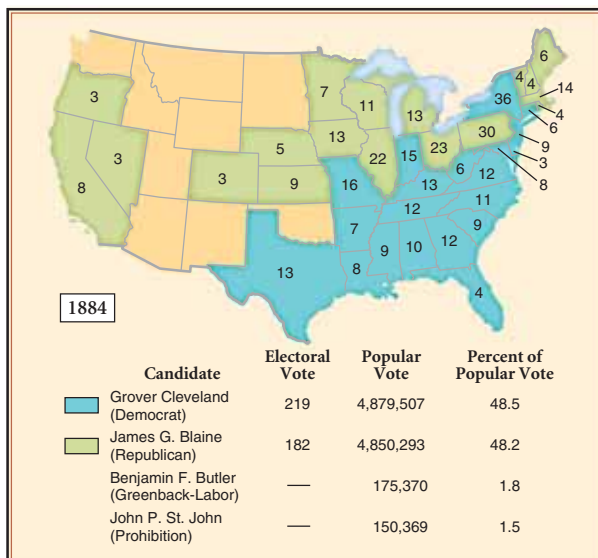
Civil service laws had their downside. In the race for government jobs, they tilted the balance toward middle-class applicants who could perform well on tests. "Firemen now must know equations," complained a critic, "and be up on Euclid too." But the laws put talented professionals in office and discouraged politicians from appointing unqualified party hacks. The civil service also brought stability and consistency to government, since officials did not lose their jobs every time their party lost power. In the long run, civil service laws markedly reduced corruption.

Leaders of the civil service movement included many classical liberals (Chapter 15): former Republicans who became disillusioned with Reconstruction and advocated smaller, more professionalized government. Many had opposed President Ulysses S. Grant's reelection in 1872. In 1884, they again left the Republican Party because they could not stomach its scandal-tainted candidate, James Blaine. Liberal Republicans—ridiculed by their enemies as **Mugwumps** (fence-sitters who had their "mugs" on one side and their "wumps" on the other)—helped elect Democrat Grover Cleveland. They believed he shared their vision of smaller government.
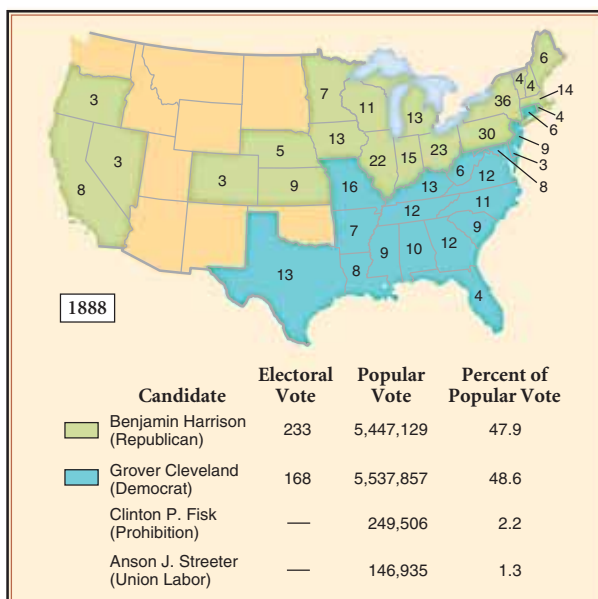
As president, Cleveland showed that he largely did share their views. He vetoed, for example, thousands of bills providing pensions for individual Union veterans. But in 1887, responding to pressure from farmer-labor advocates in the Democratic Party who demanded action to limit corporate power, he signed the Interstate Commerce Act (Chapter 17). At the same time, municipal and state-level initiatives were showing how expanded government could help solve industrial problems. In the 1870s and early 1880s, many states created Bureaus of Labor Statistics to investigate workplace safety and unemployment. Some appointed commissions to oversee key industries, from banking to dairy farming. By later standards, such commissions were underfunded, but even when they lacked legal

Making Modern Presidents

Between 1880 and 1917, the stature and powers of the U.S. president grew in relation to those of Congress. Presidential campaign techniques also changed. The sources below shed light on candidates' increasing public visibility and new uses of campaign funds.

1. **Household sewing machine company advertisement, 1880s.** *President Grover Cleveland, a bachelor, married young Frances Folsom in a quiet White House ceremony in June 1886. The bride, a college graduate who was twenty-six years younger than her husband, proved wildly popular. The Clevelands never authorized political or commercial use of the First Lady's image. Nonetheless, over their objections, young women organized "Frankie Cleveland Clubs" to march in Democratic parades, while companies such as this one capitalized on her popularity in advertising.*

Picture Research Consultants & Archives.

2. **Account of Benjamin Harrison's front porch campaign in Indianapolis,** *New York Tribune*, **October 12, 1888.** *For much of the nineteenth century, presidential candidates left campaigning to their allies. A man who promoted himself risked appearing vain and greedy for office. By the 1880s, Republicans began to run "front porch campaigns": party leaders arranged for delegations to visit the candidate at home.*

This morning General Harrison's home was surrounded by visitors, who had arrived in the city in the night and on the early morning trains. . . . There were many relic-hunters among the early visitors and they swarmed about the house, taking, without protest from any one, whatever they were pleased to seize. There is no longer a fence about the house to be converted into relics, and so the visitors are taking the trees now. The shrubbery has almost disappeared. . . . The informal reception began as soon as the General got up from [breakfast] and continued until afternoon. The first delegation was composed of representatives of the Cincinnati Republican Clubs. . . . A delegation from Belleville, Ill., which . . . had patiently waited for more than four hours, were next invited to enter the house, and they were accorded the usual hand-shaking reception. . . .

The parade early in the afternoon was the principal feature of the day's demonstration. Two hundred or more clubs participated and they came from all parts of the State, representing various classes and interests. . . . There were mounted men and men on foot, women in wagons and women in uniform marching, brass bands. . . .

On the balcony beside General Harrison stood his wife, with several of her lady friends.

3. **Henry George on money in politics,** *Wheeling Register*, **September 19, 1896.** *Reformer Henry George was among many who warned of the influence of corporate contributions, solicited brilliantly in 1896 by William McKinley's campaign manager, Mark Hanna. Short of funds, Democratic candidate William Jennings Bryan undertook exhausting nationwide speaking tours.*

There is no question which of the great parties represents the house of Have and which the house of Want. . . . Democrat[s] are cramped for want of funds. . . . On the other hand there is practically "no end of money" at the disposal of the McKinley committees. . . .

As for the banks, the great railroad companies and insurance companies, who, even in ordinary times find it to their interest to help financially one, and frequently both, sides . . . , their purse strings are unloosed more freely than ever before, but only in one direction.

The danger to a republican form of government of a money interest in politics is so clear that it needs not to be dwelt upon. . . . The steady tendency of American legislation, national and state, has not merely been to create great special interests, but in the very effort to control them for the benefit of the public, to concern them directly in politics.

4. **Theodore Roosevelt on the campaign trail, 1904.** *Having watched Bryan's electrifying tours, Theodore Roosevelt became the first winning candidate to adopt the practice. In 1904, after a summer front porch campaign, he undertook a thirty-day speaking tour of the West. To cover as much ground as possible, Roosevelt often spoke from the last car of his train.*

Library of Congress.

5. **"Expenses of the Campaign,"** *Springfield Daily Republican*, **September 22, 1900.**

It is estimated that it costs $25,000,000 to elect a president of the United States. The annual allowance which the British Parliament makes to Queen Victoria is $1,925,000 . . . indicat[ing] that it is much cheaper to maintain a queen permanently than it is to elect a president. . . .

More than half of the money spent by both national and state committees goes for campaign orators. During the next three months it is estimated that the Republican national committee will have 3000 "spellbinders" traveling out of the Chicago headquarters and 2500 who will report to the New York office. . . .

The next largest item on the campaign bill is that for printing. . . . Each of the national committees will spend at least $500,000 in this way. Before the campaign is over it is estimated that both the Republican and Democratic committees will send out 100,000,000 separate documents. . . .

One more important branch of the work is the two house-to-house canvasses of the voters. . . . Hundreds of men are employed in each state, and the work of tabulating and classifying the results is by no means small. . . .

Some novel campaign methods will be adopted by both the great parties during the campaign just opening. The Republicans, it is stated, have decided to use phonographs. . . . Some eloquent party man . . . will deliver a speech before a phonographic record, from which any desired number of copies may be made . . . and sent far out into the rural districts, where it would be impossible for the more popular and important orators to go. . . .

Democrats, on the other hand, will pin their faith to stereopticons [an early slide projector].

Sources: (2) *New York Tribune*, October 12, 1888; (3) *Wheeling Register*, September 19, 1896; (5) *Springfield Daily Republican*, September 22, 1900.

ANALYZING THE EVIDENCE

1. What did a presidential candidate need in the 1880s to run an effective campaign? Two decades later, what had changed, and what had not?
2. Based on these documents, what developments both inside and outside of politics seem to have influenced changing campaign strategies?

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Historians have traced the rise of an "imperial presidency" in the late 1890s and early 1900s. How might new campaign techniques have reflected, and perhaps contributed to, this rise? To what extent was it a Republican invention?

"Political Purity," *Puck*, **1884**

This Democratic cartoon suggests the disillusionment with Republicans that emerged among many voters in the 1880s. Here, the party chooses a dress, bustle, and plume to celebrate Republicans' achievements in prior decades: the Union war record, Emancipation, and "high moral ideals." Her undergarments tell a different story: they are marked with scandals of the Grant era (Chapter 15), while the economic interests of tariff supporters ("protection") are depicted as her corset. The hats in the upper right corner show Republicans' attempts to appeal to various constituencies: temperance advocates and German immigrants, workingmen and business leaders. Whitelaw Reid, staunchly Republican editor of the *New York Tribune*, appears as the party's handmaiden. *Puck*, August 20, 1884.

power, energetic commissioners could serve as public advocates, exposing unsafe practices and generating pressure for further laws.

Republican Activism   In 1888, after a decade of divided government, Republicans gained control of both Congress and the White House. They pursued an ambitious agenda they believed would meet the needs of a modernizing nation. In 1890, Congress extended pensions to all Union veterans and yielded to growing public outrage over trusts by passing a law to regulate interstate corporations. Though it proved difficult to enforce and was soon weakened by the Supreme Court, the **Sherman Antitrust Act** (1890) was the first federal attempt to forbid any "combination, in the form of trust or otherwise, or conspiracy, in restraint of trade."

President Benjamin Harrison also sought to protect black voting rights in the South. Warned during his campaign that the issue was politically risky, Harrison vowed that he would not "purchase the presidency by a compact of silence upon this question." He found allies in Congress. Massachusetts representative Henry Cabot Lodge drafted the Federal Elections Bill of 1890, or **Lodge Bill**, proposing that whenever one hundred citizens in any district appealed for intervention, a bipartisan federal board could investigate and seat the rightful winner.

Despite cries of outrage from southern Democrats, who warned that it meant "Negro supremacy," the House passed the measure. But it met resistance in the Senate. Northern classical liberals, who wanted the "best men" to govern through professional expertise, thought it provided too much democracy, while machine bosses feared the threat of federal interference in the cities. Unexpectedly, many western Republicans also opposed the bill — and with the entry of ten new states since 1863, the West had gained enormous clout. Senator William Stewart of Nevada, who had southern family ties, claimed that federal oversight of elections would bring "monarchy or revolution." He and his allies killed the bill by a single vote.

The defeat was a devastating blow to those seeking to defend black voting rights. In the verdict of one furious Republican leader who supported Lodge's proposal, the episode marked the demise of the party of emancipation. "Think of it," he fumed. "Nevada, barely a respectable *county*, furnished two senators to betray the Republican Party and the rights of citizenship."

Other Republican initiatives also proved unpopular — at the polls as well as in Congress. In the Midwest, swing voters reacted against local Republican campaigns to prohibit liquor sales and end state funding for Catholic schools. Blaming high consumer prices on protective tariffs, other voters rejected Republican economic policies. In a major shift in the 1890 election, Democrats captured the House of Representatives. Two years later, by the largest margin in twenty years, voters reelected Democrat Grover Cleveland to the presidency for a nonconsecutive second term. Republican congressmen abandoned any further attempt to enforce fair elections in the South.

The Populist Program

As Democrats took power in Washington, they faced rising pressure from rural voters in the South and West who had organized the Farmers' Alliance. Savvy politicians responded quickly. Iowa Democrats, for example,

Riding to a Populist Rally, Dickinson County, Kansas, 1890s

Farm families in wagons carry their banners to a local meeting of the People's Party. Men, women, and children often traveled together to campaign events, which included not only stump speeches but also picnics, glee club music, and other family entertainments. Kansas State Historical Society.

took up some of the farmers' demands, forestalling creation of a separate farmer-labor party in that state. But other politicians listened to Alliance pleas and did nothing. It was a response they came to regret.

Republicans utterly dominated Kansas, a state chock-full of Union veterans and railroad boosters. But politicians there treated the Kansas Farmers' Alliance with contempt. In 1890, the Kansas Alliance joined with the Knights of Labor to create a People's Party. They then stunned the nation by capturing four-fifths of the lower house of the Kansas legislature and most of the state's congressional seats. The victory electrified labor and agrarian radicals nationwide. In July 1892, delegates from these groups met at Omaha, Nebraska, and formally created the national People's Party.

Nominating former Union general and Greenback-Labor leader James B. Weaver for president, the Populists, as they became known, captured a million votes in November and carried four western states (Map 20.2).

In recognizing an "irrepressible conflict between capital and labor," Populists split from the mainstream parties, calling for stronger government to protect ordinary Americans. "We believe," declared their **Omaha Platform** (1892), "that the power of government — in other words, of the people — should be expanded as rapidly and as far as the good sense of an intelligent people and the teachings of experience shall justify, to

UNDERSTAND POINTS OF VIEW

How did the political goals of Populists differ in this period from those of Democrats and Republicans?

MAP 20.2

The Heyday of Western Populism, 1892

This map shows the percentage of the popular vote won by James B. Weaver, the People's Party candidate, in the presidential election of 1892. Except in California and Montana, the Populists won broad support across the West and genuinely threatened the established parties in that region.

the end that oppression, injustice and poverty should eventually cease." Populists called for public ownership of railroad and telegraph systems, protection of land from monopoly and foreign ownership, a federal income tax on the rich, and a looser monetary policy to help borrowers. Some Populist allies went further to make their point: in New Mexico, the Gorras Blancas, a vigilante group of small-scale Mexican American farmers, protested exploitative railroads and "land grabbers" by intimidating railroad workers and cutting fences on large Anglo farms.

> To see a longer excerpt of the Omaha Platform, along with other primary sources from this period, see *Sources for America's History*.

Populist leaders represented a grassroots uprising of ordinary farmers, and some won colorful nicknames. After a devastating debate triumph, James H. Davis of Texas became known as "Cyclone." Mary E. Lease was derided as "Yellin' Mary Ellen"; her fellow Kansan Jerry Simpson was called "Sockless Jerry" after he ridiculed a wealthy opponent for wearing "fine silk hosiery," boasting that he himself wore no socks at all. The national press, based in northeastern cities, ridiculed such "hayseed politicians," but farmers insisted on being taken seriously. In the run-up to one election, a Populist writer encouraged party members to sing these lyrics to the tune of an old gospel hymn:

> I once was a tool of oppression,
>   As green as a sucker could be
> And monopolies banded together
>   To beat a poor hayseed like me. . . .
>
> But now I've roused up a little,
>   And their greed and corruption I see,
> And the ticket we vote next November
>   Will be made up of hayseeds like me.

Driven by farmers' votes, the People's Party had mixed success in attracting other constituencies. Its labor planks won support among Alabama steelworkers and Rocky Mountain miners, but not among many other industrial workers, who stuck with the major parties. Prohibitionist and women's suffrage leaders attended Populist conventions, hoping their issues would be taken up, but they were disappointed. The legacies of the Civil War also hampered the party. Southern Democrats warned that Populists were really Radical Republicans in disguise, while northeastern Republicans claimed the southern "Pops" were ex-Confederates plotting another round of treason. Amid these heated debates, the political system suddenly confronted an economic crisis.

The Political Earthquakes of the 1890s

In 1893, a severe economic depression hit the United States. Though it was a global shock, and the agriculture sector had already lagged for years, Republicans blamed Grover Cleveland, who had just reentered the White House. "On every hand can be seen evidences of Democratic times," declared one Republican. "The deserted farm, the silent factory."

Apparently receptive to such appeals, voters outside the South abandoned the Democrats in 1894 and 1896. Republicans, promising prosperity, gained control of the White House and both chambers of Congress for the next fifteen years. This development created both opportunities and challenges for progressive reformers. A different pattern emerged in the South: Democrats deployed fraud, violence, and race-based appeals for white solidarity to defeat the Populist revolt.

Depression and Reaction

When Cleveland took the oath of office in March 1893, hard times were prompting European investors to pull money out of the United States; farm foreclosures and railroad bankruptcies signaled economic trouble. A few weeks later, a Pennsylvania railroad went bankrupt, followed by several other companies. Investors panicked; the stock market crashed. By July, major banks had drained their reserves and "suspended," unable to give depositors access to their money. By year's end, five hundred banks and thousands of other businesses had gone under. "Boston," one man remembered, "grew suddenly old, haggard, and thin." The unemployment rate in industrial cities soared above 20 percent.

For Americans who had lived through the terrible 1870s, conditions looked grimly familiar. Even fresher in the public mind were recent labor uprisings, including the 1886 Haymarket violence and the 1892 showdown at Homestead — followed, during the depression's first year, by a massive Pennsylvania coal strike and a Pullman railroad boycott that ended with bloody clashes between angry crowds and the U.S. Army. Prosperous Americans, fearful of Populism, were even more terrified that workers would embrace socialism or Marxism. Reminding Americans of upheavals such as the Paris Commune of 1871 and its bloody aftermath, conservative commentators of the 1890s launched America's first "Red Scare" — a precursor to similar episodes of hysteria in the 1920s (Chapter 22) and 1950s (Chapter 25).

In the summer of 1894, a further protest jolted affluent Americans. Radical businessman Jacob Coxey of Ohio proposed that the U.S. government hire the unemployed to fix America's roads. In 1894, he organized hundreds of jobless men — nicknamed Coxey's Army — to march peacefully to Washington and appeal for the program. Though public employment of the kind Coxey proposed would become central to the New Deal in the 1930s, many Americans in the 1890s viewed Coxey as a dangerous extremist. Public alarm grew when more protesters, inspired by Coxey, started out from Los Angeles, Seattle, and other cities. As they marched east, these men found warm support and offers of aid in Populist-leaning cities and towns. In other places, police and property owners drove marchers away at gunpoint. Coxey was stunned by what happened when he reached Capitol Hill: he was jailed for trespassing on the grass. Some of his men, arrested for vagrancy, ended up in Maryland chain gangs. The rest went home hungry.

As this response suggested, President Grover Cleveland's administration was increasingly out of step with rural and working-class demands. Any president would have been hard-pressed to cope with the depression, but Cleveland made a particularly bad hash of it. He steadfastly resisted pressure to loosen the money supply by expanding federal coinage to include silver as well as gold. Advocates of this **free silver** policy ("free" because, under this plan, the U.S. Mint would not charge a fee for minting silver coins) believed the policy would encourage borrowing and stimulate industry. But Cleveland clung to the gold standard; however dire things became, he believed, the money supply must remain tied to the nation's reserves of gold.

Even collapsing prices and a hemorrhage of gold to Europe did not budge the president. With gold reserves dwindling in 1895, he made a secret arrangement with a syndicate of bankers led by John Pierpont Morgan to arrange gold purchases to replenish the treasury. Morgan helped maintain America's gold supply — preserving the gold standard — and turned a tidy profit by earning interest on the bonds he provided. Cleveland's deal, once discovered, enraged fellow Democrats. South Carolina governor Ben Tillman vowed to go to Washington and "poke old Grover with a pitchfork," earning the nickname "Pitchfork Ben."

As the 1894 midterm elections loomed, Democratic candidates tried to distance themselves from the president. But on election day, large numbers of voters chose Republicans, who promised to support business, put down social unrest, and bring back prosperity. Western voters turned many Populists out of office. In the next congressional session, Republicans controlled the House by a margin of 245 to 105. The election began sixteen years of Republican national dominance.

Democrats and the "Solid South"

In the South, the only region where Democrats gained strength in the 1890s, the People's Party lost ground for distinctive reasons. After the end of Reconstruction, African Americans in most states had continued to vote in significant numbers. As long as Democrats competed for (and sometimes bought) black votes, the possibility remained that other parties could win them away. Populists proposed new measures to help farmers and wage earners — an appealing message for poverty-stricken people of both races. Some white Populists went out of their way to build cross-racial ties. "The accident of color can make no difference in the interest of farmers, croppers, and laborers," argued Georgia Populist Tom Watson. "You are kept apart that you may be separately fleeced of your earnings."

Such appeals threatened the foundations of southern politics. Democrats struck back, calling themselves the "white man's party" and denouncing Populists for advocating "Negro rule." From Georgia to Texas, many poor white farmers, tenants, and wage earners ignored such appeals and continued to support the Populists in large numbers. Democrats found they could put down the Populist threat only through fraud and violence. Afterward, Pitchfork Ben Tillman of South Carolina openly bragged that he and other southern whites had "done our level best" to block "every last" black vote. "We stuffed ballot boxes," he said in 1900. "We shot them. We are not ashamed of it." "We had to do it," a Georgia Democrat later argued. "Those damned Populists would have ruined the country."

Having suppressed the political revolt, Democrats looked for new ways to enforce white supremacy. In 1890, a constitutional convention in Mississippi had adopted a key innovation: an "understanding clause" that required would-be voters to interpret parts of the state constitution, with local Democratic officials deciding who met the standard. After the Populist uprising, such measures spread to other southern states. Louisiana's grandfather clause, which denied the ballot to any man whose grandfather had been unable to vote in slavery days, was struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court. But in ***Williams v. Mississippi*** (1898), the Court allowed poll taxes and literacy tests to stand.

By 1908, every southern state had adopted such measures.

The impact of disenfranchisement can hardly be overstated (Map 20.3). Across the South, voter turnout plunged, from above 70 percent to 34 percent or even lower. Not only blacks but also many poor whites ceased to vote. Since Democrats faced virtually no opposition, action shifted to the "white primaries," where Democratic candidates competed for nominations. Some former Populists joined the Democrats in openly advocating white supremacy. The racial climate hardened. Segregation laws proliferated. Lynchings of African Americans increasingly occurred in broad daylight, with crowds of thousands gathered to watch.

The convict lease system, which had begun to take hold during Reconstruction, also expanded. Blacks received harsh sentences for crimes such as "vagrancy," often when they were traveling to find work or if they could not produce a current employment contract. By the 1890s, Alabama depended on convict leasing for 6 percent of its total revenue. Prisoners were overwhelmingly black: a 1908 report showed that almost 90 percent of Georgia's leased convicts were black; out of a white population of 1.4 million, only 322 were in prison. Calling attention to the torture and deaths of prisoners, as well as the damaging economic effect of their unpaid labor, reformers, labor unions, and Populists protested the situation strenuously. But "reforms" simply replaced convict leasing with the chain gang, in which prisoners worked directly for the state on roadbuilding and other projects, under equally cruel conditions. All these developments depended on a political **Solid South** in which Democrats exercised almost complete control.

The impact of the 1890s counterrevolution was dramatically illustrated in Grimes County, a cotton-growing area in east Texas where blacks comprised more than half of the population. African American voters kept the local Republican Party going after Reconstruction and regularly sent black representatives to the Texas legislature. Many local white Populists dismissed Democrats' taunts of "negro supremacy," and a Populist-Republican coalition swept the county elections in 1896 and 1898. But after their 1898 defeat, Democrats in Grimes County organized a secret brotherhood and forcibly prevented blacks from voting in town elections, shooting two in cold blood. The Populist sheriff proved unable to bring the murderers to justice. Reconstituted in 1900 as the White Man's Party, Democrats carried Grimes County by an overwhelming margin. Gunmen then laid siege to the Populist sheriff's office, killed his brother and a friend, and drove the wounded sheriff out of the county. The White Man's Party ruled Grimes County for the next fifty years.

New National Realities

While their southern racial policies were abhorrent, the national Democrats simultaneously amazed the country in 1896 by embracing parts of the Populists' radical farmer-labor program. They nominated for
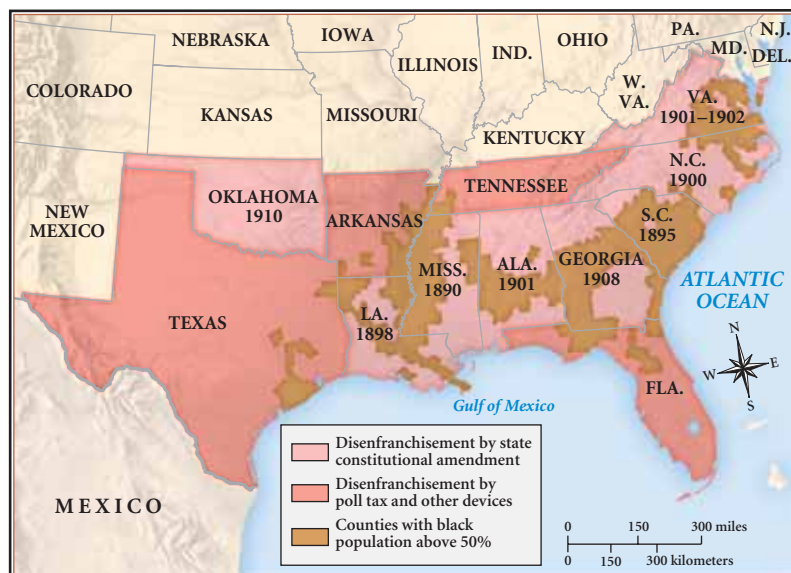
MAP 20.3

Disenfranchisement in the New South

In the midst of the Populist challenge to Democratic one-party rule in the South, a movement to deprive blacks of the right to vote spread from Mississippi across the South. By 1910, every state in the region except Tennessee, Arkansas, Texas, and Florida had made constitutional changes designed to prevent blacks from voting, and these four states accomplished much the same result through poll taxes and other exclusionary methods. For the next half century, the political process in the South would be for whites only.
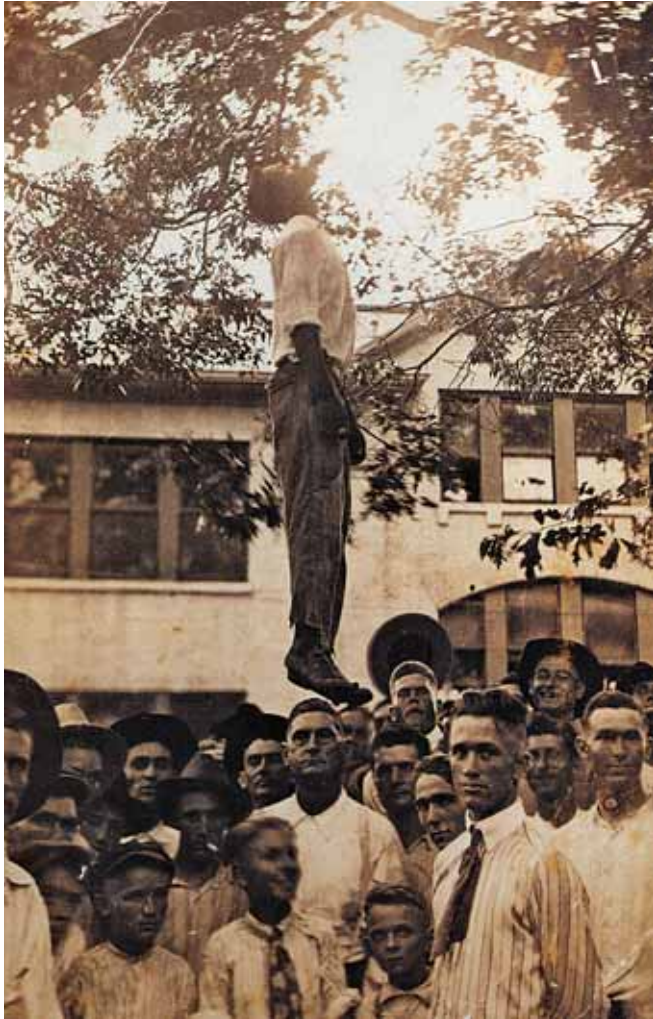
Lynching in Texas

Lynchings peaked between 1890 and 1910; while most common in the South, they occurred in almost every state, from Oregon to Minnesota to New York. After many lynchings—such as this one in the town of Center, Texas, in 1920—crowds posed to have their pictures taken. Commercial photographers often, as in this case, produced photographic postcards to sell as souvenirs. What do we make of these gruesome rituals? Who is in the crowd, and who is not? What do we learn from the fact that this group of white men, some of whom may have been responsible for the lynching, felt comfortable having their photographs recorded with the body? The victim in this photograph, a young man named Lige Daniels, was seized from the local jail by a mob that broke down the prison door to kidnap and kill him. The inscription on the back of the postcard includes information about the killing, along with the instructions "Give this to Bud From Aunt Myrtle." Private Collection.

president a young Nebraska congressman, free-silver advocate William Jennings Bryan, who passionately defended farmers and attacked the gold standard. "Burn down your cities and leave our farms," Bryan declared in his famous convention speech, "and your cities will spring up again as if by magic; but destroy our farms and the grass will grow in the streets of every city in the country." He ended with a vow: "You shall not crucify mankind on a cross of gold." Cheering delegates endorsed a platform calling for free silver and a federal income tax on the wealthy that would replace tariffs as a source of revenue. Democrats, long defenders of limited government, were moving toward a more activist stance.

Populists, reeling from recent defeats, endorsed Bryan in the campaign, but their power was waning. Populist leader Tom Watson, who wanted a separate program, more radical than Bryan's, observed that Democrats in 1896 had cast the Populists as "Jonah while they play whale." The People's Party never recovered from its electoral losses in 1894 and from Democrats' ruthless opposition in the South. By 1900, rural voters pursued reform elsewhere, particularly through the new Bryan wing of the Democratic Party.

Meanwhile, horrified Republicans denounced Bryan's platform as anarchistic. Their nominee, the Ohio congressman and tariff advocate William McKinley, chose a brilliant campaign manager, Ohio coal and shipping magnate Marcus Hanna, who orchestrated an unprecedented corporate fund-raising campaign. Under his guidance, the party backed away from moral issues such as prohibition of liquor and reached out to new immigrants. Though the popular vote was closer, McKinley won big: 271 electoral votes to Bryan's 176 (Map 20.4).

Nationwide, as in the South, the realignment of the 1890s prompted new measures to exclude voters. Influenced by classical liberals' denunciations of "unfit
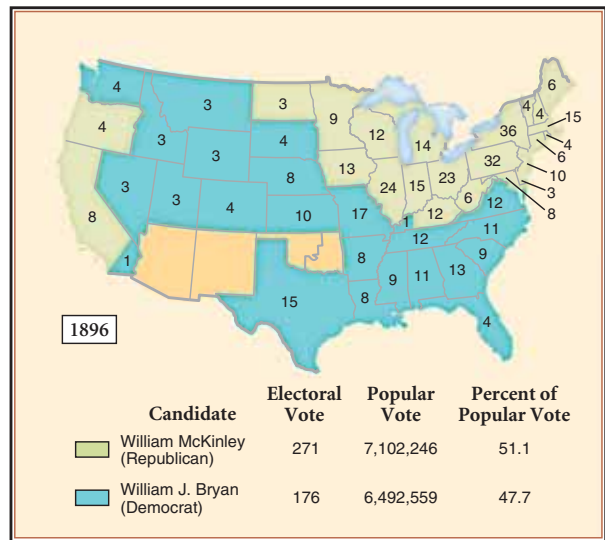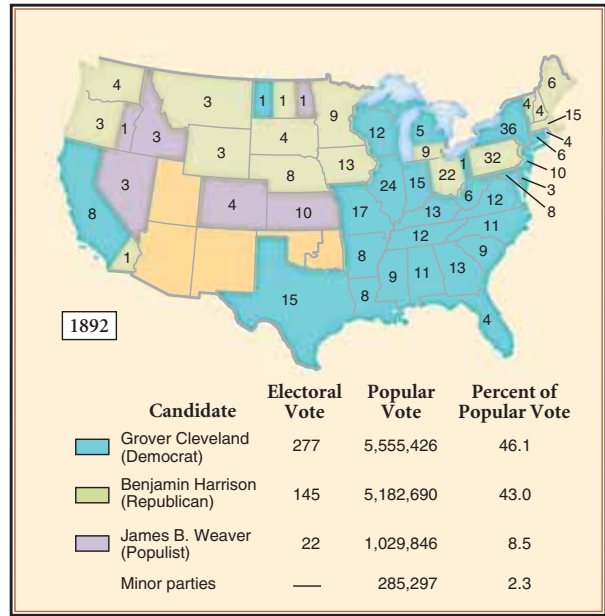
William Jennings Bryan

This 1896 campaign poster emphasizes the youth of the thirty-six-year-old Nebraska Democrat and includes portraits of his wife Mary and their three young children. The full text of his famous "Cross of Gold" speech appears flanked by silver coins and overlaid with "16 to 1," representing the Chicago platform's proposal to mint U.S. silver coins at a 16-to-1 ratio with gold, increasing the money supply to stimulate the economy and aid borrowers. At the bottom stand a farmer and industrial workingman—primary bases of Democratic support. Many farmers and workers voted for McKinley, however, especially in the industrial heartland of the Northeast and Midwest. Though Bryan secured the electoral votes of the South and a substantial majority of western states, McKinley won the election. Library of Congress.

Candidate	Electoral Vote	Popular Vote	Percent of Popular Vote
Grover Cleveland (Democrat)	277	5,555,426	46.1
Benjamin Harrison (Republican)	145	5,182,690	43.0
James B. Weaver (Populist)	22	1,029,846	8.5
Minor parties	—	285,297	2.3

Candidate	Electoral Vote	Popular Vote	Percent of Popular Vote
William McKinley (Republican)	271	7,102,246	51.1
William J. Bryan (Democrat)	176	6,492,559	47.7

MAP 20.4

The Presidential Elections of 1892 and 1896

In the 1890s, the age of political stalemate came to an end. Students should compare the 1892 map with Map 20.1 (p. 639) and note especially Cleveland's breakthrough in the normally Republican states of the Upper Midwest. In 1896, the pendulum swung in the opposite direction, with McKinley's consolidation of Republican control over the Northeast and Midwest far overbalancing the Democratic advances in the thinly populated western states. The 1896 election marked the beginning of sixteen years of Republican dominance in national politics.

voters," many northern states imposed literacy tests and restrictions on immigrant voting. Leaders of both major parties, determined to prevent future Populist-style threats, made it more difficult for new parties to get candidates listed on the ballot. In the wake of such laws, voter turnout declined, and the electorate narrowed in ways that favored the native-born and wealthy.

Antidemocratic restrictions on voting helped, paradoxically, to foster certain democratic innovations.

Having excluded or reduced the number of poor, African American, and immigrant voters, elite and middle-class reformers felt more comfortable increasing the power of the voters who remained. Both major

parties increasingly turned to the direct primary, asking voters (in most states, registered party members) rather than party leaders to choose nominees. Another measure that enhanced democratic participation was the Seventeenth Amendment to the Constitution (1913), requiring that U.S. senators be chosen not by state legislatures, but by popular vote. Though many states had adopted the practice well before 1913, southern states had resisted, since Democrats feared that it might give more power to their political opponents. After disenfranchisement, such objections faded and the measure passed. Thus disenfranchisement enhanced the power of remaining voters in multiple, complicated ways.

At the same time, the Supreme Court proved hostile to many proposed reforms. In 1895, for example, it struck down a recently adopted federal income tax on the wealthy. The Court ruled that unless this tax was calculated on a per-state basis, rather than by the wealth of individuals, it could not be levied without a constitutional amendment. It took progressives nineteen years to achieve that goal.

Labor organizations also suffered in the new political regime, as federal courts invalidated many regulatory laws passed to protect workers. As early as 1882, in the case of *In re Jacobs*, the New York State Court of Appeals struck down a public-health law that prohibited cigar manufacturing in tenements, arguing that such regulation exceeded the state's police powers. In *Lochner v. New York* (1905), the U.S. Supreme Court told New York State it could not limit bakers' workday to ten hours because that violated bakers' rights to make contracts. Judges found support for such rulings in the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, which prohibited states from depriving "any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law." Though the clause had been intended to protect former slaves, courts used it to shield contract rights, with judges arguing that they were protecting workers'

> **PLACE EVENTS IN CONTEXT**
> What developments caused the percentage of Americans who voted to plunge after 1900, and what role did courts play in antidemocratic developments?

The U.S. Supreme Court, 1894

During the 1890s, the Supreme Court struck down a number of pieces of progressive legislation, including a progressive federal income tax that had been signed into law by Congress and the president. In the Knight Sugar Case (*United States v. E. C. Knight Co.*), the Court ruled that the federal government had limited power over interstate commerce when a company did most of its manufacturing in a single state. In another 1894 decision, *In re Debs*, manufacturers were allowed free use of injunctions to shut down strikes. Two years later, in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the Court gave national sanction to racial segregation. In the front row, from left to right, are justices Horace Gray, Stephen J. Field, Chief Justice Melville W. Fuller, John Marshall Harlan I, and David J. Brewer. Standing in the back row, left to right, are justices Howell Jackson, Henry B. Brown, George Shiras, and Edward Douglas White. C. M. Bell, Collection of the Supreme Court of the United States.

freedom *from* government regulation. Interpreted in this way, the Fourteenth Amendment was a major obstacle to regulation of private business.

Farmer and labor advocates, along with urban progressives who called for more government regulation, disagreed with such rulings. They believed judges, not state legislators, were overreaching. While courts treated employers and employees as equal parties, critics dismissed this as a legal fiction. "Modern industry has reduced 'freedom of contract' to a paper privilege," declared one labor advocate, "a mere figure of rhetoric." Supreme Court justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., dissenting in the *Lochner* decision, agreed. If the choice was between working and starving, he observed, how could bakers "choose" their hours of work? Holmes's view, known as legal realism, eventually won judicial favor, but only after years of progressive and labor activism.

Reform Reshaped, 1901–1912

William McKinley, a powerful presence in the White House, was no reformer. His victory was widely understood as a triumph for business and especially for industrial titans who had contributed heavily to his campaign. But the depression of the 1890s, by subjecting millions to severe hardship, had dramatically illustrated the problems of industrialization. At the same time, the success of McKinley's campaign managers — who spent more than $3.5 million, versus Bryan's $300,000 — raised unsettling questions about corporate power. Once the crisis of the 1890s passed, many middle-class Americans proved ready to embrace progressive ideas. The rise of such ideas was aided by historical chance, when a shocking assassination put a reformer in the White House.

Theodore Roosevelt as President

On September 14, 1901, only six months after William McKinley won his second face-off against Democrat William Jennings Bryan, the president was shot as he attended the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York. He died eight days later. The murderer, Leon Czolgosz, was influenced by anarchists who had carried out recent assassinations in Europe. Though Czolgosz was American-born, many feared that McKinley's violent death was another warning of the threat posed by radical immigrants. As the nation mourned its third murdered president in less than four decades, Vice President Theodore Roosevelt was sworn into office.

Roosevelt, from a prominent family, had chosen an unconventional path. After graduating from Harvard, he plunged into politics, winning a seat as a Republican New York assemblyman. Disillusioned by his party's resistance to reform, he left politics in the mid-1880s and moved to a North Dakota ranch. But his cattle herd was wiped out in the blizzards of 1887. He returned east, winning appointments as a U.S. Civil Service commissioner, head of the New York City Police Commission, and McKinley's assistant secretary of the navy. An energetic presence in all these jobs, Roosevelt gained broad knowledge of the problems America faced at the municipal, state, and federal levels.

After serving in the War of 1898 (Chapter 21), Roosevelt was elected as New York's governor. In this job, he pushed through civil service reform and a tax on corporations. Seeking to neutralize this progressive and rather unpredictable political star, Republican bosses chose Roosevelt as McKinley's running mate in 1900, hoping the vice-presidency would be a political dead end. Instead, they suddenly found Roosevelt in the White House. The new president, who called for vigorous reform, represented a major shift for the Republicans.

Antitrust Legislation   Roosevelt blended reform with the needs of private enterprise, but on occasion he challenged corporations in new ways. During a bitter 1902 coal strike, for example, he threatened to nationalize the big coal companies if their owners refused to negotiate with the miners' union. The owners hastily came to the table. Roosevelt also sought better enforcement of the Interstate Commerce Act and Sherman Antitrust Act. He pushed through the Elkins Act (1903), which prohibited discriminatory railway rates that favored powerful customers. That same year, he created the Bureau of Corporations, empowered to investigate business practices and bolster the Justice Department's capacity to mount antitrust suits. The department had already filed such a suit against the Northern Securities Company, arguing that this combination of northwestern railroads had created a monopoly in violation of the Sherman Antitrust Act. In a landmark decision in 1904, the Supreme Court ordered Northern Securities dissolved.

That year, calling for every American to get what he called a Square Deal, Roosevelt handily defeated Democratic candidate Alton B. Parker. Now president in his own right, Roosevelt stepped up his attack on trusts. He regarded large-scale enterprise as the natural tendency of modern industry, but he hoped to

Reining in Big Business

This 1904 cartoon from *Puck* shows Theodore Roosevelt as a tiny figure with a sword marked "public service," taking on railroad developer Jay Gould, financier John Pierpont Morgan, and other Wall Street titans. The figure at the top right is oil magnate John D. Rockefeller. In its reference to the folktale "Jack the Giant Killer," the cartoon suggests how difficult it will be for the president to limit the power of globally connected bankers and financiers. Library of Congress.

identify and punish "malefactors of great wealth" who abused their power. After much wrangling in Congress, Roosevelt won a major victory with the passage of the Hepburn Act (1906), which enabled the Interstate Commerce Commission to set shipping rates.

At the time Roosevelt acted, trusts had partially protected themselves with the help of two friendly states, New Jersey and Delaware, whose legislatures had loosened regulations and invited trusts to incorporate under their new state laws. With its Northern Securities ruling, however, the Supreme Court began to recognize federal authority to dissolve the most egregious monopolies. Roosevelt left a powerful legacy

to his successor, William Howard Taft. In its *Standard Oil* decision (1911), the Supreme Court agreed with Taft's Justice Department that John D. Rockefeller's massive oil monopoly should be broken up into several competing companies. After this ruling, Taft's attorney general undertook antitrust actions against other giant companies.

Environmental Conservation   Roosevelt was an ardent outdoorsman and hunter. It was after the president went bear hunting in Mississippi in 1902, in fact, that a Russian Jewish immigrant couple in New York began to sell stuffed "Teddy's bears," which became an American childhood tradition. After John Muir gave Roosevelt a tour of Yosemite Valley, the president described the transcendent experience of camping in the open air under the giant sequoias. "The majestic trunks, beautiful in color and in symmetry," he wrote, "rose round us like the pillars of a mightier cathedral than ever was conceived."

Roosevelt translated his love of nature into environmental action. By the end of his presidency, he had issued fifty-one executive orders creating wildlife refuges and signed a number of bills advocated by environmentalists. He also oversaw creation of three national parks, including Colorado's Mesa Verde, the first to "protect the works of man": American Indian archaeological sites. Also notable was his vigorous use of the Antiquities Act, through which he set aside such beautiful sites as Arizona's Grand Canyon and Washington's Mt. Olympus.

Some of Roosevelt's conservation policies, however, had a probusiness bent. He increased the amount of land held in federal forest reserves and turned their management over to the new, independent U.S. Forest Service, created in 1905. But his forestry chief, Gifford Pinchot, insisted on fire suppression to maximize logging potential. In addition, Roosevelt lent support to the **Newlands Reclamation Act** (1902), which had much in common with earlier Republican policies to promote economic development in the West. Under the act, the federal government sold public lands to raise money for irrigation projects that expanded agriculture on arid lands. The law, interestingly, fulfilled one of the demands of the unemployed men who had marched with Coxey's Army.

Roosevelt's Legacies   Like the environmental laws enacted during his presidency, Theodore Roosevelt was full of contradictions. An unabashed believer in

what he called "Anglo-Saxon" superiority, Roosevelt nonetheless incurred the wrath of white supremacists by inviting Booker T. Washington to dine at the White House. Roosevelt called for elite "best men" to enter politics, but he also defended the dignity of labor.

In 1908, Roosevelt chose to retire, bequeathing the Republican nomination to talented administrator William Howard Taft. Taft portrayed himself as Roosevelt's man, though he maintained a closer relationship than his predecessor with probusiness Republicans in Congress. In 1908, Taft faced off against Democrat William Jennings Bryan, who, eloquent as ever, attacked Republicans as the party of "plutocrats": men who used their wealth to buy political influence. Bryan outdid Taft in urging tougher antitrust and prolabor legislation, but Taft won comfortably.

In the wake of Taft's victory, however, rising pressure for reform began to divide Republicans. Conservatives dug in, while militant progressives within the party thought Roosevelt and his successor had not gone far enough. Reconciling these conflicting forces was a daunting task. For Taft, it spelled disaster. Through various incidents, he found himself on the opposite side of progressive Republicans, who began to call themselves "Insurgents" and to plot their own path.

Diverse Progressive Goals

The revolt of Republican Insurgents signaled the strength of grassroots demands for change. No one described these emerging goals more eloquently than Jane Addams, who famously declared in *Democracy and Social Ethics* (1902), "The cure for the ills of Democracy is more Democracy." It was a poignant statement, given the sharply antidemocratic direction American politics had taken since the 1890s. What, now, should more democracy look like? Various groups of progressives — women, antipoverty reformers, African American advocates — often disagreed about priorities and goals. Some, frustrated by events in the United States, traveled abroad to study inspiring experiments in other nations, hoping to bring ideas home (America Compared, p. 653).

States also served as seedbeds of change. Theodore Roosevelt dubbed Wisconsin a "laboratory of democracy" under energetic Republican governor Robert La Follette (1901–1905). La Follette promoted what he called the **Wisconsin Idea** — greater government intervention in the economy, with reliance on experts, particularly progressive economists, for policy recommendations. Like Addams, La Follette combined respect for expertise with commitment to "more Democracy."

He won battles to restrict lobbying and to give Wisconsin citizens the right of **recall** — voting to remove unpopular politicians from office — and **referendum** — voting directly on a proposed law, rather than leaving it in the hands of legislators. Continuing his career in the U.S. Senate, La Follette, like Roosevelt, advocated increasingly aggressive measures to protect workers and rein in corporate power.

Protecting the Poor   The urban settlement movement called attention to poverty in America's industrial cities. In the emerging social sciences, experts argued that unemployment and crowded slums were not caused by laziness and ignorance, as elite Americans had long believed. Instead, as journalist Robert Hunter wrote in his landmark study, *Poverty* (1904), such problems resulted from "miserable and unjust social conditions." Charity work was at best a limited solution. "How vain to waste our energies on single cases of relief," declared one reformer, "when *society* should aim at removing the prolific sources of all the woe."

By the early twentieth century, reformers placed particular emphasis on labor conditions for women and children. The **National Child Labor Committee**, created in 1907, hired photographer Lewis Hine to record brutal conditions in mines and mills where children worked. (See Hine's photograph on p. 621.) Impressed by the committee's investigations, Theodore Roosevelt sponsored the first White House Conference on Dependent Children in 1909, bringing national attention to child welfare issues. In 1912, momentum from the conference resulted in creation of the Children's Bureau in the U.S. Labor Department.

Those seeking to protect working-class women scored a major triumph in 1908 with the Supreme Court's decision in **Muller v. Oregon**, which upheld an Oregon law limiting women's workday to ten hours. Given the Court's ruling three years earlier in *Lochner v. New York*, it was a stunning victory. To win the case, the National Consumers' League (NCL) recruited Louis Brandeis, a son of Jewish immigrants who was widely known as "the people's lawyer" for his eagerness to take on vested interests. Brandeis's legal brief in the *Muller* case devoted only two pages to the constitutional issue of state police powers. Instead, Brandeis rested his arguments on data gathered by the NCL describing the toll that long work hours took on women's health. The "Brandeis brief" cleared the way for use of social science research in court decisions. Sanctioning a more expansive role for state governments, the *Muller* decision encouraged women's organizations to lobby for further reforms. Their achievements included

A Progressive Reports from New Zealand

Henry Demarest Lloyd, a reform journalist discouraged by populism's defeat in the United States, toured New Zealand in 1899. Lloyd wanted to study New Zealand's sudden burst of reform legislation stemming from a great industrial strike in 1890 and, in its wake, a Labor Party election victory that precipitated dramatic change.

Lloyd was one of many reformers who looked overseas for progressive ideas. The urban settlement movement in the United States was inspired by British examples. Municipal, state, and federal officials borrowed innovative policies from other parts of the industrializing world—from scientific forest management to workmen's compensation laws.

New Zealand democracy is the talk of the world to-day. It has made itself the policeman and partner of industry to an extent unknown elsewhere. It is the "experiment station" of advanced legislation. . . .

Instead of escaping from the evils of the social order by going to a new country, the Englishmen who settled New Zealand found that they had brought all its problems with them. . . . The best acres were in the hands of monopolists. . . . The little farmer, forced by unjust and deliberately contrived laws to pay his own and his rich neighbor's taxes, had to sell out his little homestead to that neighbor for what he could get. The workingman, able to get neither land nor work, had to become a tramp. . . . The blood of the people was the vintage of the rich.

Here is the record of ten years [of progressive legislation]: . . . The rich man, because rich, is made to pay more. . . .

By compulsory arbitration the public gets for the guidance of public opinion all the facts as to disputes between labor and capital, [and] puts an end to strikes and lockouts. . . . For the unemployed the nation makes itself a labor bureau. It brings them and the employers together. It reorganizes its public works and land system so as to give land to the landless and work to the workless. . . . The state itself insures the working people against accident.

. . . The nation's railroads are used to redistribute unemployed labour, to rebuild industry shattered by calamity, to stimulate production by special rates to and from farms and factories, to give health and education to the school and factory population and the people generally by cheap excursions.

. . . Women are enfranchised. . . . On election day one can see the baby-carriage standing in front of the polls while the father and mother go in and vote — against each other if they choose.

Last of all, pensions are given to the aged poor.

. . . We are exhorted to take "one step at a time" [but] this theory does not fit the New Zealand evolution. . . . It was not merely a change in parties; it was a change in principles and institutions that amounted to nothing less than a social right-about-face. It was a New Zealand revolution, one which without destruction passed at once to the tasks of construction.

Source: Henry Demarest Lloyd, *Newest England* (New York: Doubleday, 1901), 1, 364–374.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What reforms had New Zealand enacted, according to Lloyd, and what problems did they solve?
2. New Zealand had a population of one million in 1890, mostly British immigrants and their descendants, with a smaller number of native Maori. Why might reform have been easier to achieve there than in the United States?

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the first law providing public assistance for single mothers with dependent children (Illinois, 1911) and the first minimum wage law for women (Massachusetts, 1912).

Muller had drawbacks, however. Though men as well as women suffered from long work hours, the *Muller* case did not protect men. Brandeis's brief treated all women as potential mothers, focusing on the state's interest in protecting future children. Brandeis and his allies hoped this would open the door to broader regulation of working hours. The Supreme Court, however, seized on motherhood as the key issue, asserting that the female worker, because of her maternal function, was "in a class by herself, and legislation for her protection may be sustained, even when like legislation is not

Robert M. La Follette

La Follette was transformed into a political reformer when, in 1891, a Wisconsin Republican boss attempted to bribe him to influence a judge in a railway case. As he described it in his autobiography, "Out of this awful ordeal came understanding; and out of understanding came resolution. I determined that the power of this corrupt influence . . . should be broken." This photograph captures him at the top of his form, expounding his progressive vision to a rapt audience of Wisconsin citizens at an impromptu street gathering. Library of Congress.

necessary for men." This conclusion dismayed labor advocates and divided female reformers for decades afterward.

Male workers did benefit, however, from new workmen's compensation measures. Between 1910 and 1917, all the industrial states enacted insurance laws covering on-the-job accidents, so workers' families would not starve if a breadwinner was injured or killed. Some states also experimented with so-called mothers' pensions, providing state assistance after a breadwinner's desertion or death. Mothers, however, were subjected to home visits to determine whether they "deserved" government aid; injured workmen were not judged on this basis, a pattern of gender discrimination that reflected the broader impulse to protect women, while also treating them differently from men. Mothers' pensions reached relatively small numbers of women, but they laid foundations for the national program Aid to Families with Dependent Children, an important component of the Social Security Act of 1935.

While federalism gave the states considerable freedom to innovate, it hampered national reforms. In some states, for example, opponents of child labor won laws barring young children from factory work and strictly regulating hours and conditions for older children's labor. In the South, however, and in coal-mining states like Pennsylvania, companies fiercely resisted such laws — as did many working-class parents who relied on children's income to keep the family fed. A proposed U.S. constitutional amendment to abolish child labor never won ratification; only four states passed it. Tens of thousands of children continued to work in low-wage jobs, especially in the South. The same decentralized power that permitted innovation in Wisconsin hampered the creation of national minimum standards for pay and job safety.

The Birth of Modern Civil Rights   Reeling from disenfranchisement and the sanction of racial segregation in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), African American leaders faced distinctive challenges. Given the obvious deterioration of African American rights, a new generation of black leaders proposed bolder approaches than those popularized earlier by Booker T. Washington. Harvard-educated sociologist W. E. B. Du Bois called

W. E. B. Du Bois

W. E. B. Du Bois was born in western Massachusetts in 1868, the son of a barber and a domestic worker. He received an excellent local education and went on to earn his BA and PhD at Harvard, as well as to study with cutting-edge social scientists in Germany. By 1900, Du Bois had become a national civil rights leader and America's leading black intellectual. Famous for his sociological and historical studies, including *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), Du Bois helped found the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and edited the organization's journal, *The Crisis*. Between 1900 and 1945, he helped organize Pan-African conferences in locations around the world. Toward the end of his life, Du Bois pursued this Pan-African ideal by moving to Ghana, the first modern African nation formed after the end of European colonialism. He died there in 1963. Special Collections and Archives, W. E. B. Du Bois Library, University of Massachusetts Amherst.

for a **talented tenth** of educated blacks to develop new strategies. "The policy of compromise has failed," declared William Monroe Trotter, pugnacious editor of the *Boston Guardian*. "The policy of resistance and aggression deserves a trial."

In 1905, Du Bois and Trotter called a meeting at Niagara Falls — on the Canadian side, because no hotel on the U.S. side would admit blacks. The resulting Niagara Principles called for full voting rights; an end to segregation; equal treatment in the justice system; and equal opportunity in education, jobs, health care,

and military service. These principles, based on African American pride and an uncompromising demand for full equality, guided the civil rights movement throughout the twentieth century.

In 1908, a bloody race riot broke out in Springfield, Illinois. Appalled by the white mob's violence in the hometown of Abraham Lincoln, New York settlement worker Mary White Ovington called together a group of sympathetic progressives to formulate a response. Their meeting led in 1909 to creation of the **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**. Most leaders of the Niagara Movement soon joined; W. E. B. Du Bois became editor of the NAACP journal, *The Crisis*. The fledgling group found allies in many African American women's clubs and churches. It also cooperated with the National Urban League (1911), a union of agencies that assisted black migrants in the North. Over the coming decades, these groups grew into a powerful force for racial justice.

The Problem of Labor   Leaders of the nation's dominant union, the American Federation of Labor, were slow to ally with progressives. They had long believed workers should improve their situation through strikes and direct negotiation with employers, not through politics. But by the 1910s, as progressive reformers came forward with solutions, labor leaders in state after state began to join the cause.

The nation also confronted a daring wave of radical labor militancy. In 1905, the Western Federation of Miners (WFM), led by fiery leaders such as William "Big Bill" Haywood, helped create a new movement, the **Industrial Workers of the World** (IWW). The Wobblies, as they were called, fervently supported the Marxist class struggle. As syndicalists, they believed that by resisting in the workplace and ultimately launching a general strike, workers could overthrow capitalism. A new society would emerge, run directly by workers. At its height, around 1916, the IWW had about 100,000 members. Though divided by internal conflicts, the group helped spark a number of local protests during the 1910s, including strikes of rail car builders in Pennsylvania, textile operatives in Massachusetts, rubber workers in Ohio, and miners in Minnesota.

Meanwhile, after midnight on October 1, 1910, an explosion ripped through the *Los Angeles Times* headquarters, killing twenty employees and wrecking the building. It turned out that John J. McNamara, a high official

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

How did various grassroots reformers define "progressivism," and how did their views differ from Theodore Roosevelt's version of "progressivism"?
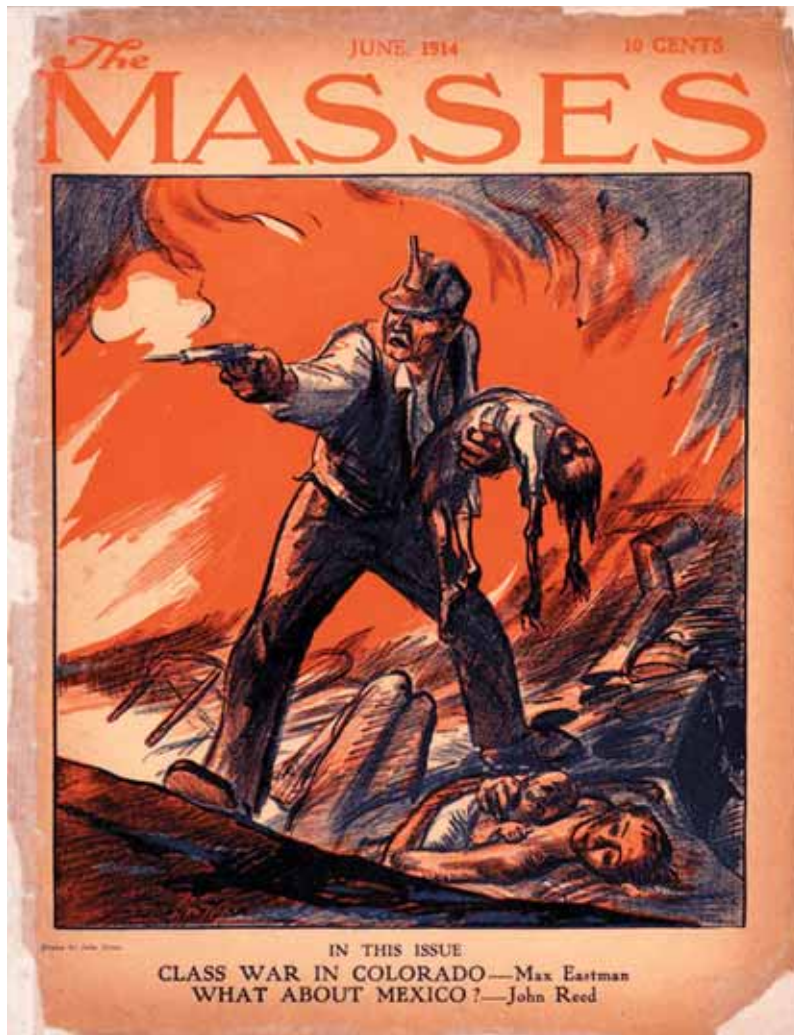
The Ludlow Massacre, 1914

Like his drawings of Triangle Shirtwaist fire victims in New York, this cover illustration for the popular socialist magazine *The Masses* demonstrates John Sloan's outrage at social injustice in progressive America. The drawing memorializes a tragic episode during a coal miners' strike at Ludlow, Colorado—the asphyxiation of women and children when vigilantes torched the tent city of evicted miners—and the aftermath, an armed revolt by enraged miners. *The Masses*, June 1914.

of the American Federation of Labor's Bridge and Structural Iron Workers Union, had planned the bombing against the fiercely antiunion *Times*. McNamara's brother and another union member had carried out the attack. The bombing created a sensation, as did the terrible Triangle Shirtwaist fire (Chapter 19) and the IWW's high-profile strikes. What should be done? As the election of 1912 approached, labor issues moved high on the nation's agenda.

The Election of 1912

Retirement did not sit comfortably with Theodore Roosevelt. Returning from a yearlong safari in Africa in 1910 and finding Taft wrangling with the Insurgents, Roosevelt itched to jump in. In a speech in Osawatomie, Kansas, in August 1910, he called for a **New Nationalism**. In modern America, he argued, private property had to be controlled "to whatever degree the public

welfare may require it." He proposed a federal child labor law, more recognition of labor rights, and a national minimum wage for women. Pressed by friends like Jane Addams, Roosevelt also endorsed women's suffrage. Most radical was his attack on the legal system. Insisting that courts blocked reform, Roosevelt proposed sharp curbs on their powers (American Voices, p. 658).

Early in 1912, Roosevelt announced himself as a Republican candidate for president. A battle within the party ensued. Roosevelt won most states that held primary elections, but Taft controlled party caucuses elsewhere. Dominated by regulars, the Republican convention chose Taft. Roosevelt then led his followers into what became known as the Progressive Party, offering his New Nationalism directly to the people. Though Jane Addams harbored private doubts (especially about Roosevelt's mania for battleships), she seconded his nomination, calling the Progressive Party

The Republicans Resist Roosevelt, August 7, 1912

This cartoon appeared in the political humor journal *Puck*, six weeks after the Republican convention nominated Taft and two days after the new Progressive Party nominated Theodore Roosevelt. The baptismal choir consists of men such as Gifford Pinchot, who helped Roosevelt form the new party. The G.O.P. elephant refuses to be baptized in "Teddyism," though Preacher Roosevelt insists, "Salvation is Free." President William Howard Taft, dressed in brown with a hat, pulls on the elephant's tail. Library of Congress.

"the American exponent of a world-wide movement for juster social conditions." In a nod to Roosevelt's combative stance, party followers called themselves "Bull Mooses."

Roosevelt was not the only rebel on the ballot: the major parties also faced a challenge from charismatic socialist Eugene V. Debs. In the 1890s, Debs had founded the American Railway Union (ARU), a broad-based group that included both skilled and unskilled workers. In 1894, amid the upheavals of depression and popular protest, the ARU had boycotted luxury Pullman sleeping cars, in support of a strike by workers at the Pullman Company. Railroad managers, claiming the strike obstructed the U.S. mail, persuaded Grover Cleveland's administration to intervene against the union. The strike failed, and Debs served time in prison along with other ARU leaders. The experience radicalized him, and in 1901 he launched the Socialist Party of America. Debs translated socialism into an American idiom, emphasizing the democratic process as a means to defeat capitalism. By the early 1910s, his party had secured a minor but persistent role in politics. Both the Progressive and Socialist parties drew strength from the West, a region with vigorous urban reform movements and a legacy of farmer-labor activism.

Watching the rise of the Progressives and Socialists, Democrats were keen to build on dramatic gains they had made in the 1910 midterm election. Among their younger leaders was Virginia-born Woodrow Wilson, who as New Jersey's governor had compiled an impressive reform record, including passage of a direct primary, workers' compensation, and utility regulation. In 1912, he won the Democrats' nomination. Wilson possessed, to a fault, the moral certainty that characterized many elite progressives. He had much in common with Roosevelt. "The old time of individual competition is probably gone by," he admitted, agreeing for more federal measures to restrict big business. But his goals were less sweeping than Roosevelt's, and only gradually did he hammer out a reform program, calling it the New Freedom. "If America is not to have free enterprise," Wilson warned, "then she can have freedom of no sort whatever." He claimed Roosevelt's program represented collectivism, whereas the New Freedom would preserve political and economic liberty.

With four candidates in the field — Taft, Roosevelt, Wilson, and Debs — the 1912 campaign generated intense excitement. Democrats continued to have an enormous blind spot: their opposition to African American rights. But Republicans, despite plentiful opportunities, had also conspicuously failed to end segregation or pass antilynching laws. Though African American leaders had high hopes for the Progressive Party, they were crushed when the new party refused to seat southern black delegates or take a stand for racial equality. W. E. B. Du Bois considered voting for Debs, calling the Socialists the only party "which openly recognized Negro manhood." But he ultimately endorsed Wilson. Across the North, in a startling shift, thousands of African American men and women worked and voted for Wilson, hoping Democrats' reform

COMPARE AND CONTRAST
Why did the election of 1912 feature four candidates, and how did their platforms differ?

Theodore Roosevelt: From Anti-Populist to New Nationalist

Theodore Roosevelt published the first piece below in a leading journal in 1897. At the time he was serving as police commissioner of New York City. The second document is a famous speech he delivered in 1910, when he had retired from the presidency but was planning a bid for the 1912 Republican nomination.

"How Not to Help Our Poorer Brother," 1897

In the 1890s Roosevelt, a rising Republican star, forcefully denounced populism and other radical movements. The comments below were part of an exchange with Populists' 1896 vice-presidential nominee, Tom Watson of Georgia.

There are plenty of ugly things about wealth and its possessors in the present age, and I suppose there have been in all ages. There are many rich people who so utterly lack patriotism, or show such sordid and selfish traits of character, . . . that all right-minded men must look upon them with angry contempt; but, on the whole, the thrifty are apt to be better citizens than the thriftless; and the worst capitalist cannot harm laboring men as they are harmed by demagogues. . . .

The first lesson to teach the poor man is that, as a whole, the wealth of the community is distinctly beneficial to him; that he is better off in the long run because other men are well off, and that the surest way to destroy what measure of prosperity he may have is to paralyze industry and the well-being of those men who have achieved success.

. . . It may become necessary to interfere even more than we have done with the right of private contract, and to shackle cunning as we have shackled force. All I insist upon is that we must be sure of our ground before trying to get any legislation, and that we must not expect too much from this legislation. . . . The worst foe of the poor man is the labor leader, whether philanthropist or politician, who tried to teach him that he is a victim of conspiracy and injustice, when in reality he is merely working out his fate with blood and sweat as the immense majority of men who are worthy of the name always have done and always will have to do. . . .

Something can be done by good laws; more can be done by honest administration of the laws; but most of all can be done by frowning resolutely upon the preachers of vague discontent; and by upholding the true doctrine of self-reliance, self-help, and self-mastery. This doctrine sets forth many things. Among them is that, though a man can occasionally be helped when he stumbles, yet that it is useless to try to carry him when he will not or cannot walk; and worse than useless to try to bring down the work and reward of the thrifty and intelligent to the level of the capacity of the weak, the shiftless, and the idle. . . .

If an American is to amount to anything he must rely upon himself, and not upon the State. . . . It is both foolish and wicked to teach the average man who is not well off that some wrong or injustice has been done him, and that he should hope for redress elsewhere than in his own industry, honesty and intelligence.

New Nationalism Speech, August 31, 1910

Roosevelt delivered this speech to a gathering of Union veterans at Osawatomie, Kansas, a site associated with abolitionist John Brown (Chapter 13). Why do you think Roosevelt chose this occasion and audience?

Of that [Civil War] generation of men to whom we owe so much, the man to whom we owe most is, of course, Lincoln. Part of our debt to him is because he forecast our present struggle and saw the way out. He said:

. . . "Labor is prior to, and independent of, capital. Capital is only the fruit of labor, and could never have existed if labor had not first existed. Labor is the superior of capital, and deserves much the higher consideration."

If that remark was original with me, I should be even more strongly denounced as a Communist agitator than I shall be anyhow. It is Lincoln's. I am only quoting it; and that is one side; that is the side the capitalist should hear. Now, let the working man hear his side.

"Capital has its rights, which are as worthy of protection as any other rights. . . . Nor should this lead to a war upon the owners of property. Property is the fruit of labor; property is desirable."

. . . It seems to me that, in these words, Lincoln took substantially the attitude that we ought to take; he showed the proper sense of proportion in his relative estimates of capital and labor, of human rights and property rights. One of the chief factors in progress is the destruction of special privilege. The essence of any struggle for healthy

liberty has always been, and must always be, to take from some one man or class of men the right to enjoy power, or wealth, or position, or immunity, which has not been earned by service to his or their fellows. That is what you fought for in the Civil War, and that is what we strive for now.

. . . Practical equality of opportunity for all citizens, when we achieve it, will have two great results. First, every man will have a fair chance to make of himself all that in him lies; to reach the highest point to which his capacities, unassisted by special privilege of his own and unhampered by the special privilege of others, can carry him, and to get for himself and his family substantially what he has earned. Second, equality of opportunity means that the commonwealth will get from every citizen the highest service of which he is capable.

. . . When I say that I am for the square deal, I mean not merely that I stand for fair play under the present rules of the game, but that I stand for having those rules changed so as to work for a more substantial equality of opportunity and of reward for equally good service. . . . This means that our government, national and State, must be freed from the sinister influence or control of special interests. Exactly as the special interests of cotton and slavery threatened our political integrity before the Civil War, so now the great special business interests too often control and corrupt the men and methods of government for their own profit. We must drive the special interests out of politics. . . .

The Constitution guarantees protections to property, and we must make that promise good. But it does not give the right of suffrage to any corporation. The true friend of property, the true conservative, is he who insists that property shall be the servant and not the master of the commonwealth. . . . The citizens of the United States must effectively control the mighty commercial forces which they have themselves called into being.

There can be no effective control of corporations while their political activity remains. To put an end to it will be neither a short nor an easy task, but it can be done. . . .

We are face to face with new conceptions of the relations of property to human welfare, chiefly because certain advocates of the rights of property as against the rights of men have been pushing their claims too far. The man who wrongly holds that every human right is secondary to his profit must now give way to the advocate of human welfare. . . .

No man can be a good citizen unless he has a wage more than sufficient to cover the bare cost of living, and hours of labor short enough so that after his day's work is done he will have time and energy to bear his share in the management of the community. . . . We keep countless men from being good citizens by the conditions of life with which we surround them. We need comprehensive workmen's compensation acts [and] laws to regulate child labor and work for women. . . .

The New Nationalism puts the national need before sectional or personal advantage. It is impatient of the utter confusion that results from local legislatures attempting to treat national issues as local issues, [and] the impotence which makes it possible for local selfishness or for legal cunning, hired by wealthy special interests, to bring national activities to a deadlock. This New Nationalism regards the executive power as the steward of the public welfare. It demands of the judiciary that it shall be interested primarily in human welfare rather than in property. . . .

The object of government is the welfare of the people. The material progress and prosperity of a nation are desirable chiefly so far as they lead to the moral and material welfare of all good citizens.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. In what ways did Roosevelt's views change between 1897 and 1910? What factors might have contributed to the change? Can you identify aspects of Roosevelt's thinking that remained the same?
2. How might the jobs Roosevelt held or sought, in 1897 and in 1910, have influenced his ideas?
3. If you were asked, after reading these documents, what Roosevelt stood for, how would you respond?

energy would benefit Americans across racial lines. The change helped lay the foundations for Democrats' New Deal coalition of the 1930s.

Despite the intense campaign, Republicans' division between Taft and Roosevelt made the result fairly easy to predict. Wilson won, though he received only 42 percent of the popular vote and almost certainly would have lost if Roosevelt had not been in the race (Map 20.5). In comparison with Roosevelt and Debs, Wilson appeared to be a rather old-fashioned choice. But with labor protests cresting and progressives gaining support, Wilson faced intense pressure to act.

Wilson and the New Freedom, 1913–1917

In his inaugural address, Wilson acknowledged that industrialization had precipitated a crisis. "There can be no equality of opportunity," he said, "if men and women and children be not shielded . . . from the consequences of great industrial and social processes which they cannot alter, control, or singly cope with." Wilson was a Democrat, and labor interests and farmers — some previously radicalized in the People's

Party — were important components of his base. In the South, many of those voters also upheld strong support for white supremacy. Despite many northern African Americans' support for Wilson, his administration did little for those constituents. But he undertook bold economic reforms.

Economic Reforms

In an era of rising corporate power, many Democrats believed workers needed stronger government to intervene on their behalf, and they began to transform themselves into a modern, state-building party. The Wilson administration achieved a series of landmark measures — at least as significant as those enacted during earlier administrations, and perhaps more so (Table 20.1). The most enduring was the federal progressive income tax. "Progressive," by this definition, referred to the fact that it was not a flat tax but rose progressively toward the top of the income scale. The tax, passed in the 1890s but rejected by the Supreme Court, was reenacted as the Sixteenth Amendment to the Constitution, ratified by the states in February 1913. The next year, Congress used the new power to enact an income tax of 1 to 7 percent on Americans with annual incomes of $4,000 or more. At a time when white
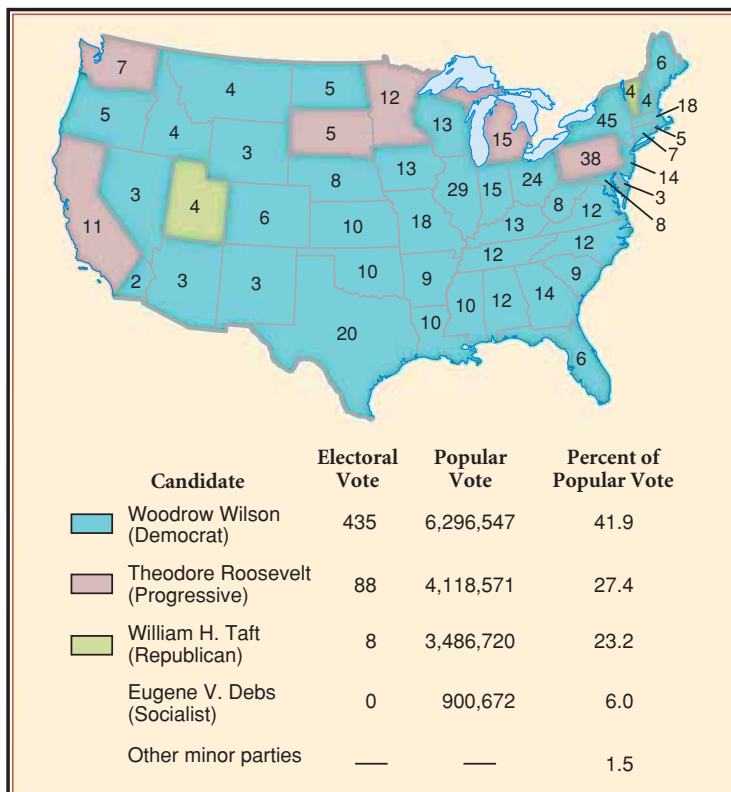
MAP 20.5

The Presidential Election of 1912

The 1912 election reveals why the two-party system is so strongly rooted in American politics — especially in presidential elections. The Democrats, though a minority party, won an electoral landslide because the Republicans divided their vote between Roosevelt and Taft. This result indicates what is at stake when major parties splinter. The Socialist Party candidate, Eugene V. Debs, despite a record vote of 900,000, received no electoral votes.

Candidate	Electoral Vote	Popular Vote	Percent of Popular Vote
Woodrow Wilson (Democrat)	435	6,296,547	41.9
Theodore Roosevelt (Progressive)	88	4,118,571	27.4
William H. Taft (Republican)	8	3,486,720	23.2
Eugene V. Debs (Socialist)	0	900,672	6.0
Other minor parties	—	—	1.5

"The Finishing Touch," November 2, 1912

Three days before the election, *Harper's Weekly*, which endorsed Woodrow Wilson, suggested in this cartoon some of the reasons why he would win. Roosevelt supported protective tariffs, while Wilson called for tariff reform; Democrats also claimed that Roosevelt's antitrust proposals were not sufficiently aggressive and that in 1904 he had taken a large campaign contribution from Standard Oil. Such controversies showed the nation's accelerating momentum for reform. The man in the middle is Wilson's campaign manager, William McAdoo. *Harper's Weekly*, November 2, 1912, p. 26.

male wageworkers might expect to make $800 per year, the tax affected less than 5 percent of households.

Three years later, Congress followed this with an inheritance tax. These measures created an entirely new way to fund the federal government, replacing Republicans' high tariff as the chief source of revenue. Over subsequent decades, especially between the 1930s and the 1970s, the income tax system markedly reduced America's extremes of wealth and poverty.

Wilson also reorganized the financial system to address the absence of a central bank. At the time, the main function of national central banks was to back up commercial banks in case they could not meet their obligations. In the United States, the great private banks of New York (such as J. P. Morgan's) assumed this role; if they weakened, the entire system could collapse. This had nearly happened in 1907, when the Knickerbocker Trust Company failed, precipitating a panic. The **Federal Reserve Act** (1913) gave the nation

a banking system more resistant to such crises. It created twelve district reserve banks funded and controlled by their member banks, with a central Federal Reserve Board to impose regulation. The Federal Reserve could issue currency — paper money based on assets held in the system — and set the interest rate that district reserve banks charged to their members. It thereby regulated the flow of credit to the general public. The act strengthened the banking system and, to a modest degree, discouraged risky speculation on Wall Street.

Wilson and the Democratic Congress turned next to the trusts. In doing so, Wilson relied heavily on Louis D. Brandeis, the celebrated people's lawyer. Brandeis denied that monopolies were efficient. On the contrary, he believed the best source of

TRACE CHANGE OVER TIME
To what degree did reforms of the Wilson era fulfill goals that various agrarian-labor advocates and progressives had sought?

TABLE 20.1

Major Federal Progressive Measures, 1883–1921
Before 1900
Pendleton Civil Service Act (1883)
Hatch Act (1887; Chapter 17)
Interstate Commerce Act (1887; Chapter 17)
Sherman Antitrust Act (1890)
Federal income tax (1894; struck down by Supreme Court, 1895)
During Theodore Roosevelt's Presidency, 1901–1909
Newlands Reclamation Act for federal irrigation (1902)
Elkins Act (1903)
First National Wildlife Refuge (1903; Chapter 18)
Bureau of Corporations created to aid Justice Department antitrust work (1903)
National Forest Service created (1905)
Antiquities Act (1906; Chapter 18)
Pure Food and Drug Act (1906; Chapter 19)
Hepburn Act (1906)
First White House Conference on Dependent Children (1909)
During William Howard Taft's Presidency, 1909–1913
Mann Act preventing interstate prostitution (1910; Chapter 19)
Children's Bureau created in the U.S. Labor Department (1912)
U.S. Commission on Industrial Relations appointed (1912)
During Woodrow Wilson's Presidency, 1913–1920
Sixteenth Amendment to the Constitution; federal income tax (1913)
Seventeenth Amendment to the Constitution; direct election of U.S. senators (1913)
Federal Reserve Act (1913)
Clayton Antitrust Act (1914)
Seamen's Act (1915)
Workmen's Compensation Act (1916)
Adamson Eight-Hour Act (1916)
National Park Service created (1916; Chapter 18)
Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution; prohibition of liquor (1919; Chapter 22)
Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution; women's suffrage (1920; Chapter 21)

efficiency was vigorous competition in a free market. The trick was to prevent trusts from unfairly using their power to curb such competition. In the **Clayton Antitrust Act** (1914), which amended the Sherman Act, the definition of illegal practices was left flexible, subject to the test of whether an action "substantially lessen[ed] competition." The new Federal Trade Commission received broad powers to decide what was fair, investigating companies and issuing "cease and desist" orders against anticompetitive practices.

Labor issues, meanwhile, received attention from a blue-ribbon U.S. Commission on Industrial Relations,

appointed near the end of Taft's presidency and charged with investigating the conditions of labor. In its 1913 report, the commission summed up the impact of industrialization on low-skilled workers. Many earned $10 or less a week and endured regular episodes of unemployment; some faced long-term poverty and hardship. Workers held "an almost universal conviction" that they were "denied justice." The commission concluded that a major cause of industrial violence was the ruthless antiunionism of American employers. In its key recommendation, the report called for federal laws protecting workers' right to organize and engage in collective bargaining. Though such laws were, in 1915, too radical to win passage, the commission helped set a new national agenda that would come to fruition in the 1930s.

Guided by the commission's revelations, President Wilson warmed up to labor. In 1915 and 1916, he championed a host of bills to benefit American workers. They included the Adamson Act, which established an eight-hour day for railroad workers; the Seamen's Act, which eliminated age-old abuses of merchant sailors; and a workmen's compensation law for federal employees. Wilson, despite initial modest goals, presided over a major expansion of federal authority, perhaps the most significant since Reconstruction. The continued growth of U.S. government offices during Wilson's term reflected a reality that transcended party lines: corporations had grown in size and power, and Americans increasingly wanted federal authority to grow, too.

Wilson's reforms did not extend to the African Americans who had supported him in 1912. In fact, the president rolled back certain Republican policies, such as selected appointments of black postmasters. "I tried to help elect Wilson," W. E. B. Du Bois reflected gloomily, but "under Wilson came the worst attempt at Jim Crow legislation and discrimination in civil service that we had experienced since the Civil War." Wilson famously praised the film *Birth of a Nation* (1915), which depicted the Reconstruction-era Ku Klux Klan in heroic terms. In this way, Democratic control of the White House helped set the tone for the Klan's return in the 1920s.

Progressive Legacies

In the industrial era, millions of Americans decided that their political system needed to adjust to new conditions. Whatever their specific goals—and whether they were rural, working-class, or middle-class—reformers faced fierce opposition from powerful business interests. When they managed to win key

regulatory laws, they often found these struck down by hostile courts and were forced to try again by different means. Thus the Progressive Era in the United States should be understood partly by its limitations. Elitism and racial prejudice, embodied in new voting restrictions, limited working-class power at the polls; African Americans, their plight ignored by most white reformers, faced segregation and violence. Divided power in a federalist system blocked passage of uniform national policies on such key issues as child labor. Key social welfare programs that became popular in Europe during these decades, including national health insurance and old-age pensions, scarcely made it onto the American agenda until the 1930s.

An international perspective suggests several reasons for American resistance to such programs. Business interests in the United States were exceptionally successful and powerful, flush with recent expansion. At the time, also, voters in countries with older, more native-born populations tended to support government regulation and welfare spending to a greater extent than their counterparts in countries with younger populations and large numbers of immigrants. Younger voters, understandably, seem to have been less concerned than older voters about health insurance and old-age security. Divisions in the American working class also played a role. Black, immigrant, and native-born white laborers often viewed one another as enemies or strangers rather than as members of a single class with common interests. This helps explain why the Socialist Party drew, at peak, less than 6 percent of the U.S. vote at a time when its counterparts in Finland, Germany, and France drew 40 percent or more. Lack of pressure from a strong, self-conscious workingmen's party contributed to more limited results in the United States.

But it would be wrong to underestimate progressive achievements. Over several decades, in this period, more and more prosperous Americans began to support stronger economic regulations. Even the most cautious, elite progressives recognized that the United States had entered a new era. Multinational corporations overshadowed small businesses; in vast cities, old support systems based on village and kinship melted away. Outdated political institutions—from the spoils system to urban machines—would no longer do. Walter Lippmann, founding editor of the progressive magazine *New Republic*, observed in 1914 that Americans had "no precedents to guide us, no wisdom

PLACE EVENTS IN CONTEXT
What factors explain the limits of progressive reform in the United States?

that wasn't made for a simpler age." Progressives created new wisdom. By 1917, they had drawn blueprints for a modern American state, one whose powers more suited the needs of an industrial era.

SUMMARY

The Progressive Era emerged from the political turmoil of the 1880s and 1890s. In the 1880s, despite the limits imposed by close elections, federal and state governments managed to achieve important administrative and economic reforms. After 1888, Republican leaders undertook more sweeping efforts, including the Sherman Antitrust Act, but failed in a quest to protect black voting rights. In the South and West, the People's Party called for much stronger government intervention in the economy, but its radical program drew bitter Republican and Democratic resistance.

The depression of the 1890s brought a wave of reaction. Labor unrest threw the nation into crisis, and Cleveland's intransigence over the gold standard cost the Democrats dearly in the 1894 and 1896 elections. While Republicans took over the federal government, southern Democrats restricted voting rights in the Solid South. Federal courts struck down regulatory laws and supported southern racial discrimination.

After McKinley's assassination, Roosevelt launched a program that balanced reform and private enterprise. At both the federal and state levels, progressive reformers made extensive use of elite expertise. At the grassroots, black reformers battled racial discrimination; women reformers worked on issues ranging from public health to women's working conditions; and labor activists tried to address the problems that fueled persistent labor unrest. The election of 1912 split the Republicans, giving victory to Woodrow Wilson, who launched a Democratic program of economic and labor reform. Despite the limits of the Progressive Era, the reforms of this period laid the foundation for a modern American state.

C H A P T E R   R E V I E W

MAKE IT STICK   Go to **LearningCurve** to retain what you've read.

TERMS TO KNOW   Identify and explain the significance of each term below.

Key Concepts and Events

"waving the bloody shirt" (p. 638)
Gilded Age (p. 638)
Pendleton Act (p. 638)
Mugwumps (p. 639)
Sherman Antitrust Act (p. 642)
Lodge Bill (p. 642)
Omaha Platform (p. 643)
free silver (p. 645)
Williams v. Mississippi (p. 645)
Solid South (p. 646)
Lochner v. New York (p. 649)
Newlands Reclamation Act (p. 651)
Wisconsin Idea (p. 652)

recall (p. 652)
referendum (p. 652)
National Child Labor Committee (p. 652)
Muller v. Oregon (p. 652)
talented tenth (p. 655)
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) (p. 655)
Industrial Workers of the World (p. 655)
New Nationalism (p. 656)
Federal Reserve Act (p. 662)
Clayton Antitrust Act (p. 662)

Key People

Mary E. Lease (p. 636)
William Jennings Bryan (p. 647)
Theodore Roosevelt (p. 650)
Robert La Follette (p. 652)
Louis Brandeis (p. 652)
W. E. B. Du Bois (p. 654)
Eugene V. Debs (p. 657)

REVIEW QUESTIONS   Answer these questions to demonstrate your understanding of the chapter's main ideas.

1. Reformers in the Progressive Era came from different backgrounds and represented several distinct interests. What were some of those backgrounds and interests? How did their goals differ?

2. How did the economic crisis of the 1890s shape American politics?

3. Compare the reform legislation passed during Theodore Roosevelt's presidency with that of Wilson's term. How were these goals and achievements shaped by the broader agenda of the party that held power (Republicans, in Roosevelt's case, and Democrats, in Wilson's)?

4. **THEMATIC UNDERSTANDING**   Look at the events on the thematic timeline on page 543. Historians often call the decades from the 1880s to the 1910s the Progressive Era. Given the limitations and new problems that emerged during this time, as well as the achievements of progressive policymaking, do you think the name is warranted? What other names might we suggest for this era?

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Recognize the larger developments and continuities within and across chapters by answering these questions.

1. **ACROSS TIME AND PLACE** Returning to Chapter 17, review the strategies and goals of the labor and agrarian organizations that flourished in the 1880s. The People's Party embodied many of those ideas. Imagine that you are a journalist interviewing a former People's Party leader in 1917. To what extent might he or she have said that progressives had, after 1900, fulfilled the agrarian-labor agenda? To what extent might he or she criticize progressives for failing to achieve important reforms? What do you conclude from this about the similarities and differences of populism and progressivism?

2. **VISUAL EVIDENCE** Study the cartoons that appear on pages 642, 651, and 660. One depicts a woman's dressing room; two depict combat among men. What do these cartoons tell us about the ways that ideals of masculinity and femininity were deployed in political campaigns? How might you use these cartoons to explain the challenges that women faced in winning suffrage during the Progressive Era? (For a counterpoint, you may also want to examine John Sloan's drawing about the Ludlow Massacre, on p. 656, and compare its depiction of masculine violence to the other three cartoons.)

MORE TO EXPLORE   Start here to learn more about the events discussed in this chapter.

Charles Calhoun, *Conceiving a New Republic* (2006). An excellent account of post-Reconstruction politics, emphasizing issues of race and Republicans' dilemma in the South.

John Milton Cooper, *The Warrior and the Priest* (1983). A provocative dual biography of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson.

Maureen Flanagan, *America Reformed* (2007). A readable introduction and guide to further sources on progressive movements.

Michael Kazin, *A Godly Hero* (2006). This biography of William Jennings Bryan is a good starting point on the era's Democrats and their charismatic leader.

Robert C. McMath, *American Populism* (1993). A lively history of the Farmers' Alliance and People's Party.

Nancy Woloch, ed., *Muller v. Oregon* (1996). An excellent analysis and collection of primary documents on this critical legal decision.

TIMELINE

Ask yourself why this chapter begins and ends with these dates and then identify the links among related events.

1881	• President James Garfield assassinated
1883	• Pendleton Act establishes the Civil Service Commission
1890	• Sherman Antitrust Act • People's Party created in Kansas
1893	• Economic depression begins
1894	• Coxey's Army marches on Washington, D.C.
1895	• John Pierpont Morgan arranges gold purchases to rescue U.S. Treasury
1896	• William McKinley wins presidency • *Plessy v. Ferguson* establishes "separate but equal" doctrine
1898	• *Williams v. Mississippi* allows poll taxes and literacy tests for voters
1899	• National Consumers' League founded
1901	• Eugene Debs founds the Socialist Party of America • McKinley assassinated; Theodore Roosevelt assumes presidency
1902	• Newlands Reclamation Act
1903	• Elkins Act
1904	• Robert Hunter publishes *Poverty*
1905	• Industrial Workers of the World founded • Niagara Principles articulated
1906	• Hepburn Act
1908	• *Muller v. Oregon* limits women's work hours
1909	• NAACP created
1912	• Four-way election gives presidency to Woodrow Wilson
1913	• Sixteenth Amendment • Seventeenth Amendment • Federal Reserve Act
1914	• Clayton Antitrust Act

KEY TURNING POINTS: In the timeline above, identify key actions taken by Congress and the Progressive Era presidents, and those enacted by the Supreme Court. What role did each branch of government play in the Progressive Era, and how did those roles change over time?