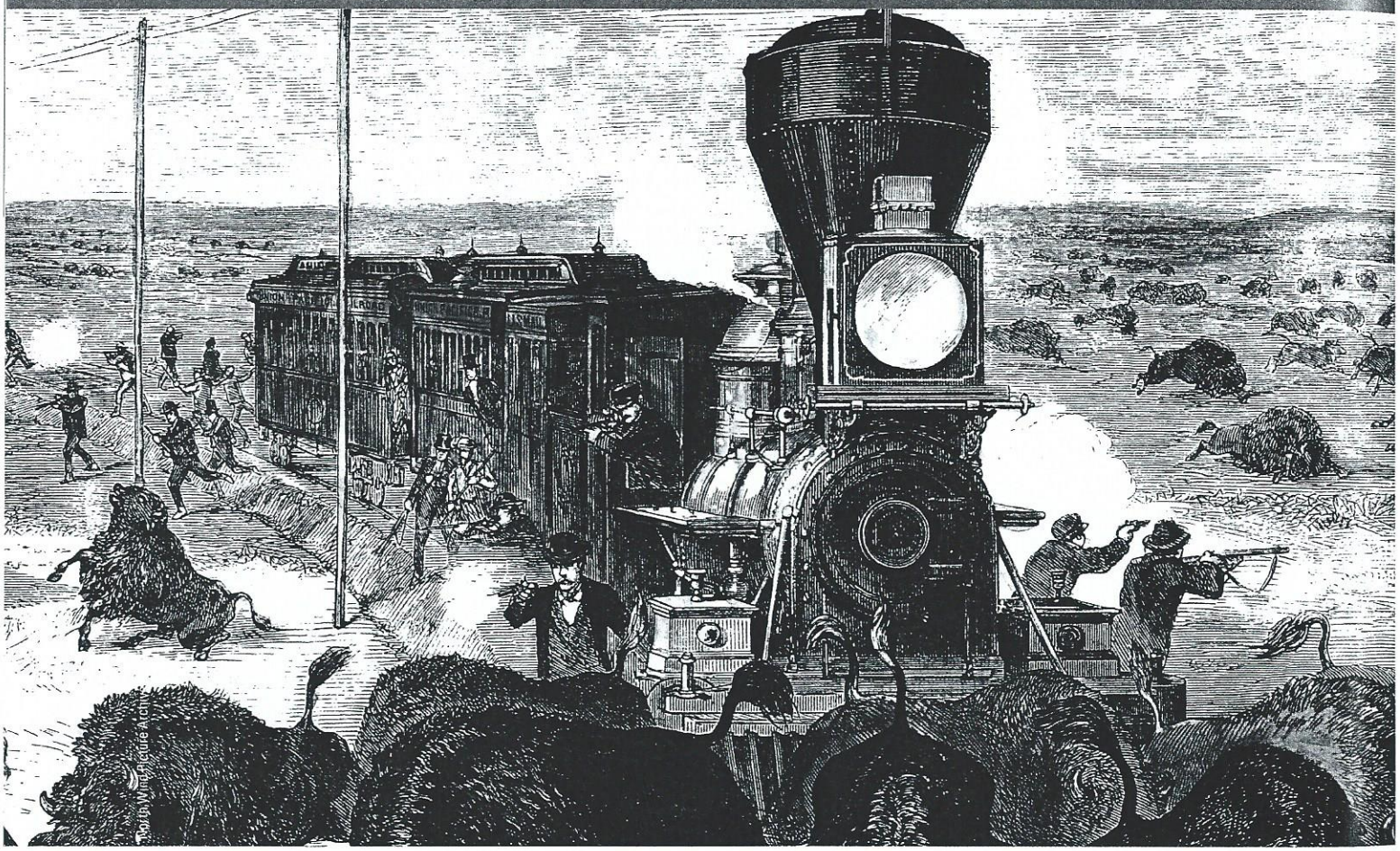
18 | The Industrial Age: North, South, and West



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter, you should be able to do the following:

- 18-1 Describe the urbanization and immigration in the North during the second half of the nineteenth century, and how those two factors shaped the region's social relations, including its disparities of wealth.
- 18-2 Evaluate the accuracy of the term *New South* in describing the post-Civil War South, and discuss ways in which the term was and was not appropriate.
- 18-3 Describe the development of the American West that took place during the second half of the nineteenth century, addressing both industrialization and the general defeat of Native American nations on the plains.
- 18-4 Discuss the problems that confronted America's farmers in the North, South, and West during the late 1800s, and describe how their attempts to solve those problems led to the formation of a new political party.

AFTER FINISHING THIS CHAPTER GO TO **PAGE 353** **FOR STUDY TOOLS**

The Industrial Revolution affected all aspects of American life, and it provoked more changes than just those in the factories. But how one experienced the Industrial Revolution depended on where one lived. In the North, the small factories that had emerged in the early nineteenth century took on gigantic proportions. There were also many, many more of them. Jobs in these factories turned northern cities into magnets for people far and wide and created a rambunctious urban life that we still associate with modern living. The jobs created by this industrial growth also made the North a draw for European immigrants searching for economic opportunities and freedom from persecution. Unlike previous waves of immigration, though, the immigrants that came during the last quarter of the nineteenth century mostly came from southern and eastern Europe, speaking foreign tongues, coming from different political backgrounds, and often practicing different religions. These turn-of-the-twentieth-century immigrants made America an even more polyglot nation than it had been and prompted questions about the meaning of America more generally. These two impulses—urbanization and immigration—shaped the Industrial Age in the North.

While the North grew tremendously during the years after the Civil War, it had a foundation on which to grow. Factories were familiar sights in the North starting in the late eighteenth century, and urban life had been part of the landscape since the colonial era. This was not the case in the newly developing South and West.

In the South of the 1870s and 1880s, a collection of regional civic boosters attempted to harness the power of the Industrial Revolution to reshape the image of that region. In the antebellum era, the South was powered by a few crops (especially "King Cotton") and controlled politically and economically by a handful of wealthy families. And of course it was slaves who had done much of the South's laboring. Post-Reconstruction civic boosters in the South, however, made the argument that, after the Civil War, a "New South" had emerged, one based on economic opportunity, rich natural resources, and increased racial equality. While these hopes were sometimes met (some cities did in fact blossom), the promise of the New South was all too often frustrated. This frustrated promise was manifested in perhaps the deepest legacy of the New South: the system of racial segregation known as Jim Crow. Indeed, if the Industrial Age in the North was shaped by urbanization and immigration, in the South it was shaped by slower economic development and hardened racial segregation.

But even the South had more of an industrial foundation upon which to grow than the West. No region of the country was transformed more rapidly by the changes of the Industrial Age than the land west of the Mississippi River. During the final third of the nineteenth century, vast stretches of arable land were rapidly populated by millions of Americans who built great cities, decimated Indian populations, and created industries controlled by industrial magnates. Indeed, even the cowboy, the most memorable image of the late-nineteenth-century West, was often working at the behest of a millionaire industrialist who was sending cattle to a slaughterhouse in one of the West's new great cities. The corporate life of the late nineteenth century knew no boundaries.

But farming would remain central to both the South and the West, and the corporate-friendly politics whose unresponsiveness had sparked the labor movement provoked a rural movement for reform in the South and the West. Collectively called the Populist movement, it was often just as radical in its challenges to industrial capitalism as the labor movement, and it too would encounter more frustration than success. But these rural reformers put forward a platform that would succeed long after the Populists had exited the political stage.

This chapter will examine the social and cultural manifestations of the Industrial Revolution in the North, South, and West, before turning to the second homegrown response to the seemingly unfettered advance of corporate capitalism, the Populist Movement.

18-1 THE NORTH

Most of the massive industries of the Industrial Age emerged in the North. And because these industries created jobs, the cities of the North ballooned into metropolises. As they did, however, the gulf between rich and poor became increasingly pronounced. The corporations of the Industrial Age had generated enormous fortunes for a handful of people in the North, leaving most industrial laborers in poverty.

18-1a Urbanization

By 1900, more than a third of America's people lived in cities, and city populations were growing twice as fast as the population as a whole. Between 1870 and 1920, the number of Americans living in cities increased fivefold,

The railroad was vital in opening the western frontier for American settlement. This image shows trains taking hunters to the western plains to shoot bison (note the discarded carcasses). By 1891, the bison population had dropped from 13 million to just 865 on account of over-hunting by both Native and white Americans.

from 10 million to 54 million. The population of New York City went from 800,000 in 1860 to 2 million in 1900. The population of Boston increased from 180,000 in 1860 to 600,000 in 1900. And Chicago grew from 109,000 in 1860 to 1.7 million in 1900. Cities were booming.

Hulton Archive/Getty Images

>> For working-class families in cities, many of whom were recent immigrants, living in cramped quarters was the norm. This photograph shows an immigrant family living and working in the common room of their tenement.

TENEMENT LIFE

Most of the people living in these growing cities were workers employed in the new factories of the Industrial Age. Manufacturers sometimes provided company housing close to factories so the entire work force could walk to work. For most others, independent builders made quick profits by rapidly building inferior houses. They got away with it because few cities at the time had building codes. Developers also carved previously built single-family homes into multiple-unit dwellings called **tenements**, which often had thin walls and frequently lacked windows as well. Quarters were tight, and bathrooms were frequently outside, in the front or backyard, meaning a person renting a room on the sixth or seventh floor had a long haul to use the facilities. These kinds of close quarters led to communal childcare networks, but they also pushed people out into the streets, creating a raucous, lively, and sometimes dangerous street scene. The housing stock of the era was quickly overwhelmed by all the urban growth, leading to creative, often unsafe solutions.

One effect of such rapid building was a dearth of parks in the new cities. More pertinently, adequate plumbing was virtually nonexistent, and few pre-1900 workers' houses had an indoor water supply; most shared pumps and wells in back alleys. City governments began to build sewers after 1860, but these sewers were primitive; most ended at the nearest river or lake, where raw sewage was simply dumped into the water. Typhoid epidemics swept through city populations at a time when the connection between sewage and disease transmission was not widely understood. In 1900, the city of Chicago reversed the direction of the city's main river, diverting it to the Mississippi River in order to send the city's waste products away from Lake Michigan, its primary water source. Of course, dumping the city's waste into the Mississippi River had unsanitary effects as well, just not for Chicago. The cities were growing tremendously, but the expansion was haphazard, and those at the bottom of the pay scale were often deprived of basic necessities.

tenements Crowded slum houses in urban areas, which housed mostly immigrants

WEALTHY NEIGHBORHOODS

Meanwhile, successful industrialists devoted enormous resources to the building of cultural institutions and wealthy neighborhoods. Many had amassed huge fortunes during the rapid industrial growth. By 1890, for instance, the wealthiest 1 percent of the American population owned as much property as the remaining 99 percent. And in the cities of the North, the leading industrialists ostentatiously displayed their fortunes. Fifth Avenue in New York City, for example, was lined with mansions and townhouses, and on New Year's Day, hostesses drew back their curtains to reveal opulent interiors. The working classes would line the streets in awe and anger. The Newport home of William Vanderbilt, the grandson of Cornelius Vanderbilt, now called "Marble House," cost more than $11 million—a staggering $169.5 million today. "Diamond" Jim Brady, a wealthy New York City financier, was notorious for sitting two inches from his dinner table and continuing to eat until his expanding stomach touched the table. New York socialite Mrs. Stuyvesant Fish threw a party to honor her dog, which arrived wearing a diamond collar worth

Library of Congress/Getty Images

>> Child labor, like the young miners here, was used extensively during the Industrial Revolution. "One of the sights which this coal side of our civilization has to show is the presence of herds of little children of all ages, from six years upward, at work in the coal breakers, toiling in dirt, and air thick with carbon dust, from dawn to dark, of every day of the week except Sunday. These coal breakers are the only schools they know. A letter from the coal regions in the Philadelphia 'Press' declares that 'there are no schools in the world where more evil is learned or more innocence destroyed than in the breakers. It is shocking to watch the vile practices indulged in by these children, to hear the frightful oaths they use, to see their total disregard for religion and humanity.'"—Henry Demarest Lloyd, "The Lords of Industry," 1884

$15,000 (today, nearly $350,000). The wealthy of this era were extremely wealthy, and not shy about showing it off.

This gross materialism did not go unnoticed. Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner published a novel called *The Gilded Age* (providing the era with its most notable label) that satirically described the greed, materialism, and political corruption that accompanied the Industrial Age. To gild something, of course, is to provide a thin coat of gold over a much cheaper metal, suggesting the harsh and debased economics hiding behind the supposed refinement. Economics professor Thorstein Veblen, in his book *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899), called the opulent purchasing of the wealthy "conspicuous consumption." He argued that, ultimately, the selfishness of the rich harmed economic growth. Edith Wharton's novels, particularly *The House of Mirth* (1905), mocked the emptiness of the life led by the wealthy and the stifling social conventions that ruled their lives. Andrew Carnegie, one of the most conscientious of the captains of industry, described the problem of the Gilded Age as that of reconciling the wealthy and the poor in order to maintain a prosperous nation. In the burgeoning cities of the North, the two seemed to be worlds apart.

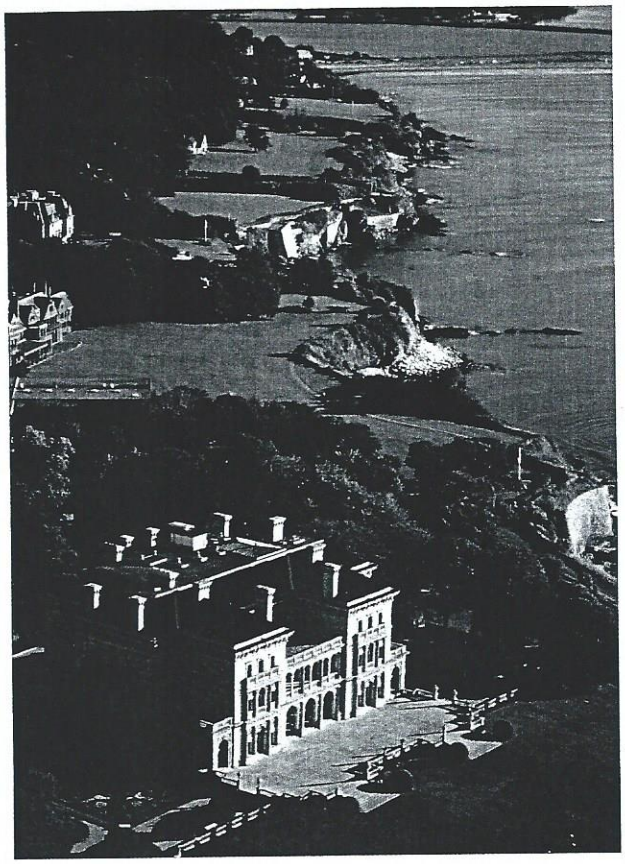
SUBURBS

Often the growing middle classes would try to flee the polarities of the city, and in the late nineteenth century, suburbs began their initial growth. Street railways made it possible to live 4 or 5 miles from work (or farther), yet still get there fairly quickly each morning. Streetcar companies often built their lines beyond the edge of town in the confident expectation that housing developments would soon follow. They were often right; their lines formed the backbone of new suburban communities inhabited by the middle-class wage-earning bookkeepers, sales people, and managers. Slowly, city populations became increasingly stratified, with upper- and middle-class people living outside the noisy industrial districts, venturing as far away as bona fide suburbs, while the working classes and those enduring discrimination because of their race, religion, or country of origin lived in less desirable areas close to the industrial hubs.

ENTERTAINMENTS

Cities had long been spaces of public entertainment, and in the nineteenth century they teemed with vaudeville houses, dance halls, and saloons. These spaces were often deemed immoral or improper by the upper classes. In the 1890s, however, with the growth of the middle and working classes, entrepreneurs found a more wholesome way to lure the city's masses: large, magnificent amusement parks. In 1895, New York's **Coney Island** opened, featuring roller coasters, water slides, and fun houses. Unlike other public amusements like vaudeville and saloons, amusement parks attracted both men and women because they were considered more respectable. For instance, Coney Island helped spur dating among working-class young men and women.

Coney Island Public amusement park opened in New York in 1895; it featured roller coasters, water slides, and fun houses



Bob Krist/Getty Images

>> "The Breakers," the Vanderbilt family's summer home in Newport, Rhode Island, was a seventy-room Renaissance-style palazzo inspired by the sixteenth-century palaces of Genoa and Turin. And, as this photo shows, it was just one of many mansions along the Rhode Island coast.

Attending professional baseball games was another way to relax, and baseball became a source of urban pride during these years. It began in 1876, with the formation of the **National League** by the Cincinnati Red Stockings (America's first professional team) and seven others. The league's success depended on reliable, intercity rail transport to carry the teams to each other's fields, as well as the telegraph lines along which rapid news of scores and results could be carried. The National League's success prompted the creation of the rival **American League** in 1901, and the two leagues competed in the first **World Series** in 1903, all due to the transportation and communications revolutions of the late nineteenth century, as well as the creation of a middle class with enough disposable income to enjoy an afternoon at the ballpark. In that first World Series, pitcher Cy Young led the Boston Americans to victory, five games to three, over the Pittsburgh Pirates, whose star pitcher had injured his shoulder while trap shooting just before the start of the Series.

National League The first professional baseball league, begun in 1876 with eight teams

American League The second professional baseball league, begun in 1901

World Series Baseball competition between the National League and the American League, played for the first time in 1903

18-1b Immigration

Along with urbanization and the growing disparities of wealth, another important development in the industrializing North was immigration. Between 1880 and 1920, approximately 25 million people came to the United States. Unlike earlier arrivals, these new immigrants did not migrate from the British Isles or northern Europe; instead, they came predominantly from eastern, central, and southern Europe. They were Poles, Greeks, Italians, Bulgarians, Ukrainians, Czechs, Serbs, and Croats; they were Orthodox Jews, Eastern Orthodox Catholics, and Roman Catholics. This new immigration was the result of at least four factors (see "The Reasons Why . . ." box).

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>> Crowds at a daytime baseball game in the bleachers of Forbes Field in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Their presence at a daytime baseball game suggests the leisure time allotted to the Industrial Age's new middle class.

The Reasons Why...

There were at least four reasons for the rise in immigration during these years:

European population growth. Europe had experienced tremendous population growth during the nineteenth century, creating gaps between the number of workers and the number of jobs.

Urban crowding in Europe. The Industrial Revolution in Europe drew people away from agricultural industries to cities, where the crush of newcomers made employment even harder to find.

Antisemitism. A rise in antisemitism, especially within the Russian Empire, forced many Jews to flee.

Economic opportunities. America served as a magnet because it promised economic opportunity and personal freedoms. Many who came planned only to acquire enough wealth to make a better life for themselves back in Europe. For example, between 1910 and 1914, more than 400,000 Italian immigrants left the United States to return to Italy. These immigrants were usually men who came to America alone, planning to return home and rejoin their families.

THE IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE

Most of these new immigrants, who were sometimes called **greenhorns** because of their awkward, uncultivated ways, faced a hard life in America. After successfully passing through well-known gateways like New York's **Ellis Island**, these immigrants struggled against tremendous adversity. America itself provided a tight labor market, and many immigrants came with limited knowledge of English, limited education, and limited work skills. Most stayed close to where they had landed, settling in urban areas like New York City, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Boston. They found themselves on the bottom rung of the industrial hierarchy, working low-paying factory jobs.

Nevertheless, they kept coming, and by the end of the 1800s, immigrants made up a majority of the populations of most major American cities. By 1890, for example, New York's population was 80 percent immigrant. Chicago's population was a remarkable 87 percent immigrant. Most immigrants lived in crowded tenements, and unsurprisingly, poverty and overcrowding precipitated murder and other violent crimes. Some immigrant girls, driven by poverty and desperation, turned to prostitution.

ETHNICITY, ASSIMILATION, AND THE AMERICAN DREAM

Despite the struggle, immigrants also had their share of triumphs. Some even prospered, and many eventually gained a material stake in their new country by owning property. However, there was a fundamental tension at the core of the immigrant success story. Immigrants often sought to maintain a sense of connection to their native countries, but their status in America was inextricably tied to assimilation into American culture. New York and other major cities contained an amazing patchwork of different ethnic communities. These communities developed numerous resources for comforting lonely and homesick immigrants, including foreign-language newspapers and fraternal and religious organizations. These were the years when America's cities evolved into complex mosaics of ethnic neighborhoods.

18-2 THE "NEW SOUTH"

Even before the Civil War, the South lagged behind the North in urbanization and industrialization, mainly because of its dependence on slavery and the domination of plantation owners in the state governments. But after the war, southerners such as Henry Grady, the owner and editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*, argued that the South should improve its cities and provide for the growth of industry. It should partake in the Industrial Revolution and encourage economic relations with the North, including accepting northern loans. Grady's stirring speech, "The New South," argued that the postwar South was a different world from the antebellum South, especially because it was not built on the subjugation of an entire race or the domination of a single industry like cotton. A spirit of enterprise characterized southern life in the late 1870s and 1880s, he argued.

Southern iron, steel, textile, and tobacco industries all emerged during the thirty-five years following

greenhorns European newcomers to America

Ellis Island Immigrant gateway to New York City from 1892 to 1954

"The New South is enamored of her new work. Her soul is stirred with the breath of a new life. The light of a grander day is falling fair on her face."

—Henry Grady, "The New South," 1886

the Civil War, too, as did numerous cities. Still, despite Grady's celebration of cooperation between black and white southerners in the New South, black people rarely benefited from any of these changes. Worse still, the era bore witness to the rise of the segregated society that would last until the 1960s and beyond. Thus, there were two components of the New South: (1) the halting and haphazard creation of an industrialized South, and (2) the quick and summary creation of a racial caste system, with white people on top, black on bottom. If many southerners shared the optimism, energy, and inventiveness that characterized the Industrial Revolution in the North, it nonetheless manifested itself far differently.

18-2a Southern Industries

Southern industry grew up around railroads, iron manufacture, textile production, and tobacco. However, the South never developed a strong industrial base, at least not one comparable to what was taking place in the North.

RAILROADS

Railroads led the South's industrial expansion, attracting capital from wealthy northern investors. Railroads also provided much-needed connections between the cities and towns of the South. Before the Civil War and up until about 1880, southern railroad development was very slow. But between 1880 and 1890—just one ten-year period—southern rails grew from 16,605 miles to 39,108 miles, an increase of more than 100 percent. Southern state governments poured resources into supporting rail companies, and northern rail companies began to expand into southern states, seeing an opportunity for profit in the developing southern economy. By 1890, southern railroads had become a model for railroad development worldwide.

IRON PRODUCTION

The expansion of the railroads also helped foster the urbanization of southern cities and the growth of the iron industry. Many New South advocates hoped that iron production would become the central means for the South to compete with the North in industry. Because the demand for iron was high, especially in construction trades and in laying railroad lines, the iron industry seemed an ideal place to invest. As a result, it grew; the southern iron industry expanded seventeenfold in the 1800s.

COTTON AND TEXTILES

The easy transportation provided by new railroads also allowed for the expansion of the southern textile industry. The industry grew fast in the South because of the abundance of cheap labor and the wide availability of cotton. Throughout the 1880s and 1890s, a mill-building craze swept the South. In 1870, about 10,000 people were employed in textile manufacturing. By 1900, nearly 100,000 people worked in the industry. The work was harsh, reflecting the typical labor conditions of the Industrial Age, and it was not uncommon for a mill worker to work a fourteen-hour day.

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>> Vendors of all sorts of goods with their many pushcarts on crowded Mulberry Street, the heart of New York's Little Italy, around 1900.

Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division[LC-USZ6-1226]

>> Child labor was common in the southern textile industry. Here, an 8-year-old boy named Leo picked up bobbins for 15 cents a day in a Tennessee mill. He said, "No, I don't help me sister or mother, just myself."

TOBACCO

Tobacco was another growth industry in the New South. In the 1880s, James Buchanan Duke took advantage of the invention of the automatic cigarette-rolling machine to overwhelm the tobacco-producing competition. The new machine, invented in 1881 by James Bonsack, could roll 200 cigarettes per minute, the same as what a skilled worker could produce in an hour. Using this competitive advantage, and aggressively advertising his cigarettes across the nation, Duke bought up more than two hundred of his competitors, ultimately forming the American Tobacco Company, one of the largest companies in the country and one of the original twelve companies included in the Dow Jones Industrial Average. It alone was known as "the Tobacco Trust."

INDUSTRIAL FAILURES

Despite the growth of the southern iron, textile, and tobacco industries, hopes of a new industrial South proved fleeting. The growth of the steel industry in Pennsylvania eventually surpassed southern iron production. Furthermore, although textile growth was impressive, the industry employed only a small percentage of southerners, and wages were as much as 30 percent lower than they were in the North, limiting the development of an expansive marketplace (because there were fewer dollars in circulation). Finally, although men like Grady had touted the contributions of African Americans, most black southerners were still barred from industrial employment. Poor white people were far more likely to be employed in railroads, iron, or textiles than African Americans, and these poor whites often resisted efforts at integration in their workplaces. Despite the industrial developments of the late 1800s, agriculture still led the southern economy.

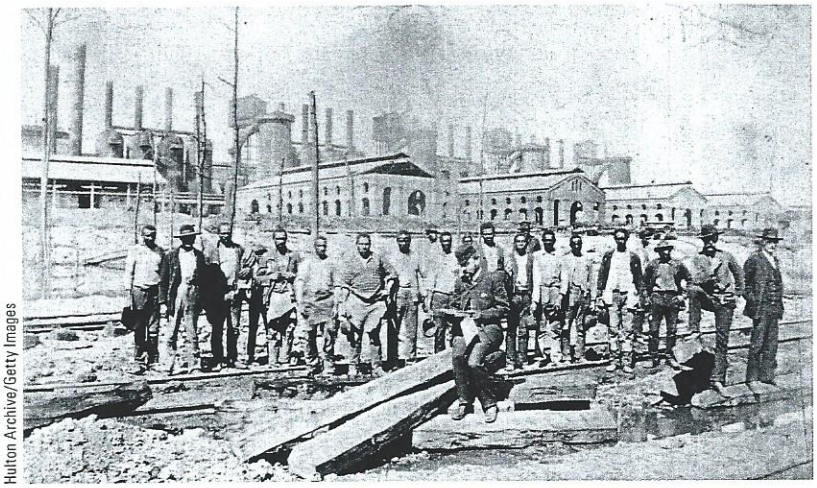
18-2b Southern Urbanization

For supporters of the New South, Birmingham, Alabama, became the symbol of southern urbanization. The city was ideally suited for growth because the Louisville and Nashville Railroad connected Birmingham with coal-mining towns all over Alabama, making it easy to ship the raw iron ore to the city's production facility. And grow it did. Birmingham became the center of the South's iron production in the late nineteenth century, and visitors from all over the world marveled at Birmingham's promise for future expansion. Many investors, including industrialist Andrew Carnegie, fueled this growth by pouring money into Birmingham's iron production, and Birmingham became the crown jewel of southern urbanization.

Atlanta, Nashville, and Memphis all followed suit, taking precedence over water-centered, "Old South" cities like New Orleans and Charleston. But beyond them, similar cities were slow to develop. There was simply not enough industry to merit continued urban expansion, in part because of southerners' unwillingness to increase wages for the South's black population, which would have expanded markets, encouraged growth, and made southern industry more competitive. Immigrants, who could choose where to settle, almost always chose the cities of the North over those of the South because of the depressed wages throughout the South.

18-2c Segregation in the New South

Worse than low wages, though, was the southern drive to repeal political and social rights for black people. After the North retreated from military rule of the South in 1877, race relations became increasingly rigid and violent, especially in areas where black and white Americans competed for economic opportunities. Southern white Democrats continued to deprive African Americans of their civil and political rights by passing laws that disenfranchised African Americans and separated blacks from whites. These efforts were coupled with an even more violent effort to block black citizens from participating in southern public life. Both efforts would prove only too successful. While the South did not have a monopoly on racism, it was where 95 percent of African Americans lived in 1865. And thus racism's worst manifestations appeared there.



Hulton Archive/Getty Images

>> Workers from the blast furnace at Ensley, six miles from Birmingham, Alabama, where iron ore was converted into about 200 tons of pig iron per day in each of the three functioning furnaces. Note the racial distinction between worker and manager in the New South. New South, with the foreman in front white, while all the workers in the back row are African American.

RACIAL DISENFRANCHISEMENT

Since the decline of Reconstruction, southern states had sought to disenfranchise African American voters, although it typically had to depend on utilizing violence in order to succeed. Formal, and legal, disenfranchisement began in Mississippi in 1890 with what came to be called the "**Second Mississippi Plan**." The plan established legal barriers preventing African Americans from voting. The plan served as a model for other states, and politicians across the South amended their state constitutions to deny black people the right to vote (South Carolina did so in 1895, Louisiana in 1898, and North Carolina in 1900). They did this through a series of questionable laws, such as the poll tax, which required voters to pay a fee to vote; literacy tests, which required voters to prove various levels of literacy; and property qualifications, which disqualified most black people, who were often too poor to own property. Eventually black citizens in every southern state effectively lost the right to vote. For example, in Louisiana, 95.6 percent of the state's black population was registered to vote in 1896, and more than half of them voted. In 1904, after the passage of these shady laws, only 1,342 of the state's black people were still registered—more than a 90 percent decline in just eight years.

"Second Mississippi Plan" Plan that established legal barriers (the poll tax, literacy tests, and property qualifications) to prevent African Americans from voting in Mississippi; served as a legislative model for other states

Jim Crow laws State and local laws, usually passed in southern states, that mandated racial segregation in public facilities, including schools, restaurants, and rail cars

Louisiana Separate Car Act 1890 law mandating that black people and white people ride in separate train cars; challenged by Homer Plessy

JIM CROW SEGREGATION

Disenfranchisement occurred simultaneously with the development of other laws between 1890 and 1913 that segregated African Americans from white Americans in every public place in the South. These laws, known as **Jim Crow laws**, prevented African Americans from attending the same schools as white people or sitting in the same areas of restaurants. They couldn't ride in the same train cars, drink from the same drinking fountains, or stay in the same hotels. The name "Jim Crow" has its origins in the 1830s, when the famous white minstrel actor, Thomas D. Rice, did a black-face performance baffooning African Americans. His fictional black character was named "Jim Crow," and because of Rice's popularity the name quickly became a prevailing pejorative for a black person. The press began to use the phrase "Jim Crow laws" in the 1890s, and, citing these Jim Crow laws, one historian has called the 1890s the nadir of American race relations. For more on why southerners created the system known as Jim Crow, see "The Reasons Why . . ." box.

PLESSY V. *FERGUSON*

Black people, of course, challenged these laws, but they were mostly frustrated in their efforts. The most important case emerged in Louisiana, when Homer Plessy, who claimed to be one-eighth black, challenged segregation on trains by sitting in a white car and announcing he was black. Plessy intentionally violated the 1890 **Louisiana Separate Car Act** in order to support a local protest movement against the law. After his arrest, Plessy hoped the courts would rule that the law violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

The case eventually went to the Supreme Court, which, in 1896, issued one of its landmark decisions. In

The Reasons Why...

There were at least four reasons why southerners created the racially segregated system known as Jim Crow during the decades after the Civil War:

History of slavery. The South, of course, was where the vast majority of American slaves lived before the Civil War, and the major underlying cause of the war was the perpetuation of slavery. Despite losing the war, many southerners sought to restore the South to what they idealized as its antebellum grandeur. This imperfect vision included, and indeed was predicated upon, creating a racist system as close to slavery as possible. The segregated social vision was, however, historically inaccurate, because slavery relied on relatively close proximal relations between black and white people, whereas segregation introduced social and spatial differences that were entirely new.

Science. The South did not have a monopoly on racism, though, and in most states throughout the nation black people could not vote and were denied many other basic rights. Indeed, the best science at the time openly advocated that the white race was superior and ranked the other races in descending order, with African Americans almost always at the bottom. Measurements of skulls and a variety of aptitude tests seemed to confirm the thesis. Using this **hierarchy of races**, white Americans in the North rebuked southern and eastern European immigrants (who were often not deemed "white"). White Americans in the West confidently lorded over Indians and Chinese. And white Americans in the South found justification for creating a social system that not only denied basic rights to African Americans but also segregated them from the rest of society. A large part of the fear, it must be noted, was that these evolutionary "lesser" beings might try to improve their genetic stock by having sexual relations with white women, and interracial sex became a bogeyman behind much of the South's justification for segregation.

Economics. In 1865, about 95 percent of African Americans lived in the South. When the Industrial Age came south, the availability of black workers often kept wages low. This created tremendous animosity from much of the South's white working class. They argued that if black workers could be denied access to certain jobs, wages for white workers would go up. Indeed, the towns that had the highest number of lynchings in this period were those that had witnessed industrial growth and that had a competitive number of African American and white workers.

Politics. The Democratic Party shamelessly took advantage of all these factors, using its political power in the South to create the legal system of segregation known as Jim Crow. While claiming to be honoring southern history and using science as its justification, the Democratic Party secured votes by calling for racial solidarity within the white working class. When the Populist Party threatened to create an interracial working-class party, the Democrats fought back by calling for racial solidarity and by disenfranchising the "unfit" African American voters. By the 1890s, the legal system of segregation that would last until the 1960s was largely in place.

Plessy* v. *Ferguson, the Court declared that segregation laws were constitutional, claiming that, as long as the accommodations were "separate but equal," it was legal to have separate facilities for black and white America. The nation's highest court had evaluated racial segregation and let it stand.

LYNCHING

Violence was another form of political and social intimidation, and it was especially effective in areas where black and white Americans competed for similar jobs. Much of this violence came in the form of lynching, whereby a mob would gather to murder (usually by hanging, then burning) someone whom they believed to have violated a law or social custom. In the 1880s and 1890s, nearly 2,000 black men were lynched in the South.

hierarchy of races A theory based on the idea that some racial groups are superior to others; in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, many Americans used purported scientific evidence and social science data to argue that white people from British descent sat atop the hierarchy, while racial minorities and new immigrants were less sophisticated and less capable of self-rule

Plessy* v. *Ferguson 1896 Supreme Court case that declared that segregation laws were constitutional, claiming that, as long as the accommodations were "separate but equal," it was legal to have separate facilities for black and white Americans

Photos 12/Alamy Stock Photo

>> Lynchings were often communal events, similar to a neighborhood picnic. Here, white onlookers observe the hanging body of Ruben Stacy, who was lynched for "threatening and frightening a white woman."

AFRICAN AMERICAN RESPONSES

Although every African American had thoughts about the rise of racial segregation in the South, there were two major responses from the African American community. The first called for black Americans to accommodate their situation and not fight for political and civil rights, focusing instead on economic success. Booker T. Washington exemplified this accommodationist response. In Atlanta in 1895, he delivered a speech that became known as the **Atlanta Compromise**, encouraging black economic development and assuaging white fears of racial intermingling. Black and white people, Washington said, should remain as separate as the fingers on a hand, but they should work together to reach common economic ground. Economic progress, he believed, could take place without racial integration. Washington believed that self-help within the African American community would stop the violence and allow for the progress of the race. He had enormous influence in the late nineteenth century, and his beliefs won wide support among white and black people into the twentieth century.

The other response from black America exemplified a refusal to compromise. For example, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, a writer and editor, led a crusade against lynching during the late nineteenth century after three of her friends were murdered in Memphis, Tennessee. In 1892, Wells-Barnett authored one of the most powerful anti-lynching pamphlets in the country, *Southern Horrors*. She became internationally famous for her protests.

W. E. B. Du Bois similarly criticized Washington's Atlanta speech. In the **Niagara Movement** (an attempt at political organization among black activists in the early 1900s), Du Bois drafted a "Statement of Principles" declaring that African Americans should fight for their rights rather than accept abuse and separation. Du Bois later played an important role in organizing the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Formed in 1909, the NAACP led a decades-long assault on lynching and Jim Crow laws, continuously (and, for more than half a century, unsuccessfully) pressuring the government to end segregation and outlaw lynching. Du Bois and Washington openly debated black people's options, with Du Bois offering a stinging critique of Washington in Du Bois's famous book *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903). Both responses, it must be noted, failed to prevent the creation of the Jim Crow South.

Atlanta Compromise Speech delivered by Booker T. Washington in 1895 encouraging black economic development and assuaging white fears of racial intermingling; black and white people, he said, should remain as separate as the fingers on a hand, but they should work together to reach common economic ground

Niagara Movement An attempt at political organization among black activists in the early 1900s; W. E. B. Du Bois drafted a "Statement of Principles," which declared that African Americans should fight for their rights rather than accept abuse and separation

Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library

>> The great anti-lynching reformer Ida B. Wells-Barnett, pictured here with her family in 1909, was brought into the crusade after three of her friends were lynched in Memphis.

18-2d Society and Culture in the Postwar South

The white South's brutal restrictions on the region's African American population gained greater popular acceptance in the late nineteenth century through a cultural revival that centered on the "myth of the lost cause." This myth tried to diminish the importance of slavery as a cause of the Civil War by lionizing the rebels of the Confederacy as avid defenders of "states' rights." Not only were many southerners attempting to reinstitute antebellum social practices, but many were also aiming to glorify the cause and culture of institutionalized slavery.

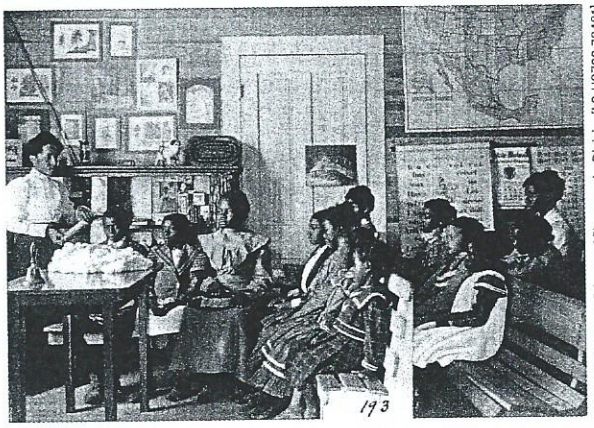
THE MYTH OF THE LOST CAUSE

If the hierarchies of race science provided an intellectual justification for the creation of Jim Crow laws, the myth of the lost cause provided cultural justification for the return of white political power. Associated with the defeat of the Confederacy, the myth was first presented in Edward Pollard's book *The Lost Cause* (1866). The war, as portrayed by Pollard, was a valiant effort fought against overwhelming odds to protect southern independence. Slavery, he argued, was not a cause of the Civil War; rather, it was northern aggression that disrupted the peaceful relationship between white masters and black slaves.

Many organizations were established in the late-nineteenth-century South to defend this myth. These included the Southern Historical Society, founded in 1869 by a former Confederate general to promote a "proper" interpretation of the Civil War; the United Confederate Veterans Association, founded to establish a "Confederate Memorial Day"; and the United Daughters of the Confederacy, founded in 1895 to celebrate the southern war effort. Many northerners, racists themselves, were all too eager to accept this demotion of the importance of slavery as a cause of the war, and throughout the North historians reconceptualized the history of Reconstruction as a horror, characterized not by the violence of the Ku Klux Klan, but by corrupt black domination.

AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURAL LIFE

As white southerners variously confronted the impact of the Civil War and the meaning of the region's race relations, African Americans found ways to support their struggle for freedom and independence. For example, in Texas, black Americans celebrated their own holidays to keep the issues



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>> Forbidden from learning to read or write by pre-Civil War slave codes, African Americans made literacy and education a central priority after the war. In this photo, African American children and teacher are shown in a classroom studying corn and cotton at Annie Davis School, near Tuskegee, Alabama.

surrounding slavery and the Civil War alive. The celebration of **Juneteenth**, marking the date that slaves were formally freed in Texas (June 19, 1865), was the most popular of these holidays, and it spread to black communities across the South. It is still celebrated in many southern communities today. But two other institutions reveal the central concerns of southern black people in the late nineteenth century: (1) education and (2) the church.

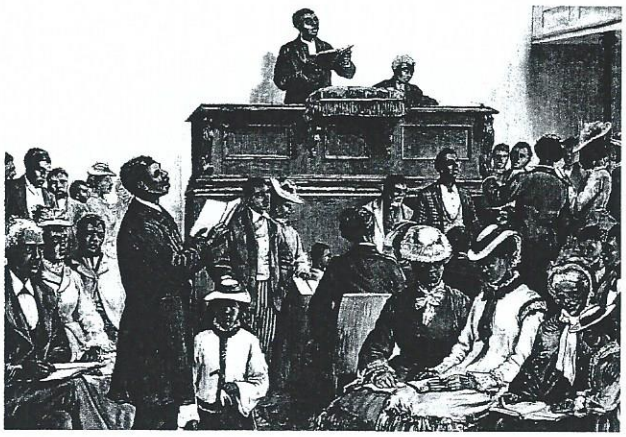
BLACK LITERACY AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

One of the most important goals of African Americans after the Civil War was expanding educational opportunity. Forbidden from learning to read or write by pre-Civil War slave codes, African Americans made literacy and education a central priority after the war. As a result, black literacy rates grew dramatically in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Schools popped up, and African Americans attended institutions of higher learning, such as Fisk University in Nashville (founded in 1866), Howard University in Washington, D.C. (1867), and Atlanta University in Georgia (1865).

The most prominent institution was Booker T. Washington's **Tuskegee Institute** in Tuskegee, Alabama (1881). Washington pioneered higher learning for African Americans and devoted his life to the growth of black education at all levels. However, he was often chastised for his belief that it would be better for black Americans to learn practical skills that would prepare them for industrial machine work than to seek other kinds of education, such as the arts and sciences, that might be perceived as challenging the white hierarchy. In this, as in so many other areas, Washington and Du Bois would spar over the relevancy of different kinds of education. Regardless, educational opportunities for African Americans in the South expanded, if in a segregated manner.

RELIGIOUS LIFE

The second central institution of black life in the South of the late 1800s was the church. After the war, the role of the black church quickly expanded in African American communities. The largest denominations were the Baptist Church and the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Churches became the central arenas of black social life after the Civil War because they were supposedly apolitical and therefore unthreatening to the South's white population. Churches did, however, host political meetings and develop social welfare institutions in an era before large-scale public welfare programs existed.



North Wind Picture Archives

>> In the aftermath of the Civil War, churches became central organizing institutions within African American society. In this image of an African American church in Washington, D.C., in the 1870s, the congregation sings songs from the hymnal.

18-3 THE INDUSTRIALIZING WEST

If the Industrial Age brought urbanization and immigration to the North, and if the South entered the age still burdened by the oppressions of history, including a commitment to racial inequality and the myth of the lost cause, the West confronted the new era in its own way. The main concerns of those in the West during the late nineteenth century were getting soil to produce crops and keeping Indians and immigrants at bay. The federal government aggressively assisted in all these efforts.

But working the land is of course difficult, and many farmers struggled to make a living off their newly acquired property. As they fought to make ends meet, another harbinger of the Industrial Age interceded. Large corporations were often lurking in the background, seeking to buy out failed farms in order to create what were then called bonanza farms and what we would today call agribusinesses. The West of the late nineteenth century inspired the lore of the "Wild West," with its tales of cowboys and

Juneteenth A celebration marking the date that slaves were formally freed in Texas: June 19, 1865

Tuskegee Institute College established for African Americans in Tuskegee, Alabama, by Booker T. Washington in 1881

Indians. And indeed, some components of the development of the West were in fact wild. But for the most part, those most interested in the development of the West were corporations, usually with bases in the industrial capitals of the North. Like the South, which often depended on northern wealth to industrialize, the West too is sometimes referred to as a mere colony to the rest of the United States. Nevertheless, the Industrial Age did transform the West in ways that few could have predicted.

>> Despite the benevolent promises of the Homestead Act, the first homesteaders faced particularly severe trials. Sodbusters faced the ravages of locust swarms, tornadoes, hailstorms, and extreme temperatures. Here, a family of sodbusters poses outside their earthen home.

Pioneer family pose outside their sod house, Kansas, c.1860 (b/w photo), American Photographer, (19th century) / Private Collection / Peter Newark American Pictures / The Bridgeman Art Library

18-3a Expansive Farming

American settlers in the West had always been farmers, and before the Civil War most Americans in the region were still involved in agriculture. They might have been grain elevator operators, agricultural commodities brokers, or farmers, but in general, most Americans in the West lived off the land. Chicago and St. Louis were booming towns, but most of their wealth was attributable to processing and distributing natural goods like lumber, corn, cattle, and wheat.

THE HOMESTEAD ACT

This commitment to the land only accelerated during the Civil War, when northern congressmen took advantage of the absence of southerners in Congress and encouraged the expansion of a free-labor West by passing the **Homestead Act** in 1862. The Homestead Act awarded 160 acres to settlers who occupied the land for five years, and between 1862 and 1890 it led to the creation of almost 400,000 farms, on which some 2 million people eventually lived. African Americans seeking land, northerners seeking to avoid the industrialization of their cities, and new immigrants all came west.

INDUSTRIAL FARMING

Despite the promises of the Homestead Act, the first homesteaders faced particularly severe trials. On the northern Great Plains, rainfall dwindled to as few as eight inches a year, and pioneers, or **sodbusters** as they were known, faced the ravages of locust swarms, tornadoes, hailstorms, and extreme temperatures. By the 1870s, however, life for Great Plains farmers had improved, mainly because of the Industrial Revolution. As we've seen, between 1870 and 1910, urbanization and immigration led eastern urban populations to increase by 400 percent, and this growth stimulated demand for western wheat and other crops. In response to this new demand, the eastern plains from Minnesota and the Dakotas and south to Texas became the nation's wheat belt. Corn and hog production also spread throughout much of the West. In addition, the nation's growing rail network offered more, better, and cheaper connections to the markets of the East. Indeed, moving the western commodities to the East was one of the principal reasons for railroad expansion throughout the nineteenth century.

BONANZA FARMS

As technologies improved and markets grew, more and more speculators began growing wheat, and corporations similarly got interested. Often buying land from frustrated sodbusters, these large industrial interests quickly combined several plots of land in order to build huge **bonanza farms** covering thousands of acres.

Homestead Act Federal act, passed in 1862, that awarded 160 acres to settlers who occupied the land for five years

sodbusters American pioneers who settled the northern Great Plains

bonanza farms Giant farms on the Great Plains, covering thousands of acres and employing hundreds of workers

Across the Great Plains, these "factories in the fields" operated with an economy of scale heretofore unknown to American agriculture. In the 1880s, a single bonanza farm in North Dakota's Red River Valley covered 13,000 acres and employed a thousand workers. By embracing the newest technologies, recruiting cheap laborers from Chicago and other midwestern cities, and securing lands from railroad companies, bonanza farmers increased farm yields dramatically, making food more plentiful in the cities to the east. But they also put greater economic pressures on the small farms.

18-3b Industry in the West

Besides farming, three major industries shaped the post-Civil War western economy: (1) railroads, (2) cattle, and (3) mining.

THE RAILROADS

During the Civil War, northern congressmen passed many internal improvement bills, including several that assisted the development of railroads in the West. Their efforts were just the beginning: during the 1800s, Congress awarded various railroad companies more than 223 million acres to encourage the construction of lines connecting East and West. The arrival of a railroad depot spurred the creation of towns. If an established town lay far from the newly built railroad lines, that town usually dwindled into nonexistence. As a boy, Thomas Edison and his family were forced to leave Milan, Ohio, after the railroads bypassed the town.

THE CATTLE INDUSTRY

Cattle was one of the industries that railroads developed the most (see Map 18.1). Beginning in the 1860s, cowboys began to lead mass cattle drives from Texas, where most cattle were, to various cities along the railroad lines, especially Abilene, Kansas. Abilene was the nation's first "cow town," or town developed in order to facilitate the movement of cattle from Texas and Oklahoma to other parts of the country. From places like Abilene, the cattle would then be moved via rail to Chicago's slaughterhouses and meatpacking plants, where the animals would be slaughtered and the meat packaged and sent in refrigerated rail cars to eastern markets. The most recognizable image of the era was the cowboy, but cowboys were often actually employees of large corporations working to supply the world's demand for beef, and in fact they largely disappeared by the 1880s. Barbed wire, first patented in 1874 and spread through the West by the late 1880s, closed the open ranges on which the cowboys' long drives depended. Between 1865 and 1885, the work of being a cowboy attracted some 40,000 young men from a variety of ethnic and class backgrounds. Many were white, but about 30 percent of the West's cowboys were either Mexican or African American; hundreds were Native American.

THE MINING INDUSTRY

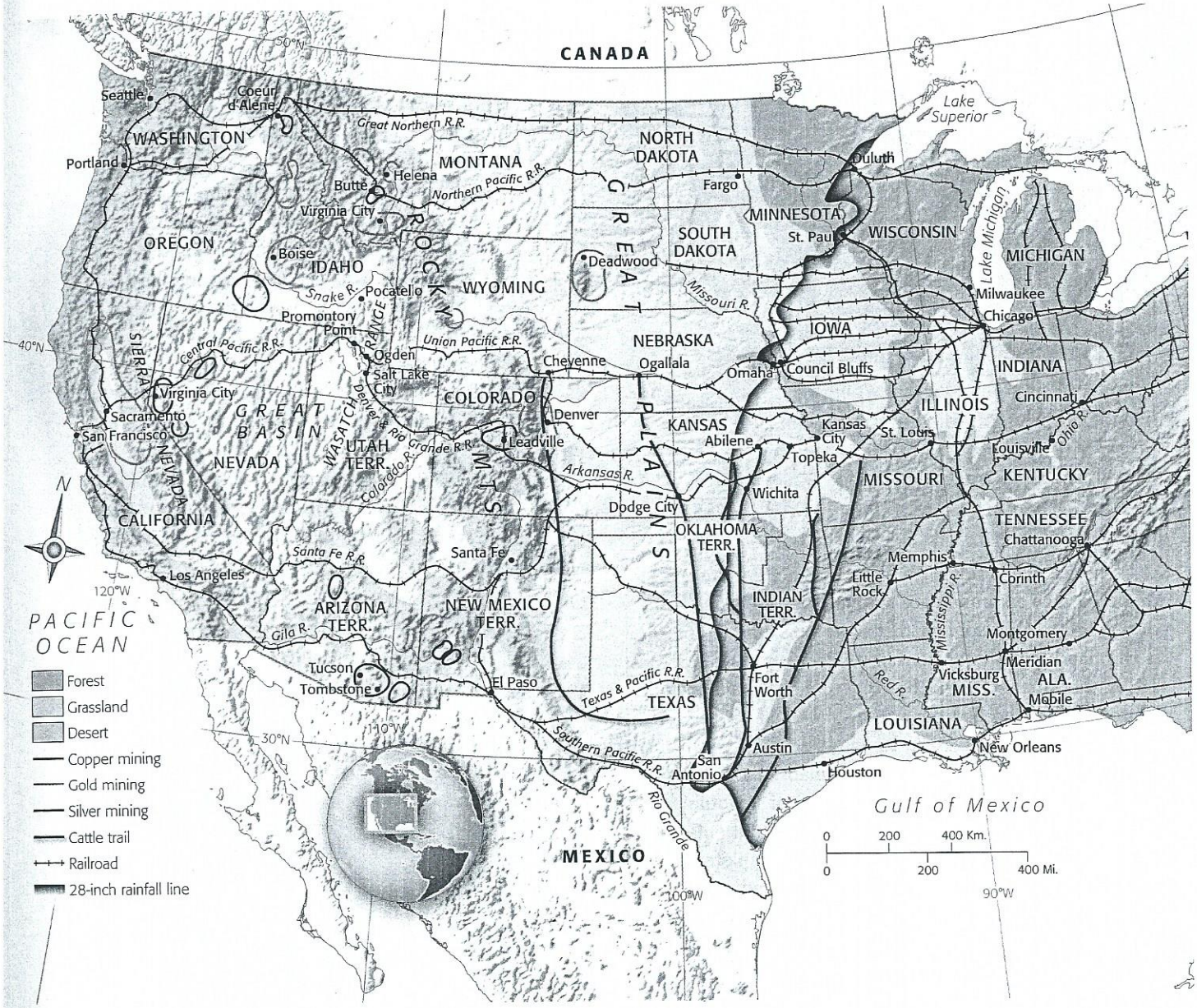
The third pillar of western industry was mining (see Map 18.1), mainly for gold, silver, copper, and coal. Mining had fostered much of the original settlement in the West, when the first California gold rush of 1849 established the rollicking, boom-and-bust cycle that defined the region's economy. Yet the nature of mining changed dramatically after the Civil War, when most of the gold and silver deposits within reach of individual prospectors had been exhausted. Large investors, often backed by corporations with access to new technology, displaced the roughshod world of the forty-niners. Unlike earlier rushes, the silver strike at Colorado's Leadville (1877) and the gold strike at Cripple Creek (1891) offered few opportunities for individual prospectors because big companies controlled access to the mines. As in the North and the South, large corporations controlled most of the wealth in the industrializing West.

18-3c Western Cities

Farming, mining, and cattle were the lifeblood of the West, and that blood flowed through towns and cities. Western cities connected the natural resources of the West to urban centers in the East. Thus huge cities emerged rapidly in the West, humming with all the industries necessary to convert raw material into packaged goods ready for shipping. No city grew faster than Chicago. With its busy train station and its avid business promoters, Chicago became the capital of western commerce. It developed meatpacking plants to turn cattle into cash and a stock market where speculators could bet on that year's yield. By 1900, 1.7 million people lived in Chicago. And Chicago was not alone. By 1890, a greater percentage of westerners lived in cities than in any other region in the nation. Within a few short years, cities like Dodge City, Kansas, transitioned from a fur-trading post to a cattle town to a stockyard city.

18-3d Outsiders in the Industrializing West

The two groups that did not mesh with the way of life developing in the West were American Indians and the Chinese, both of whom were persecuted as outsiders.

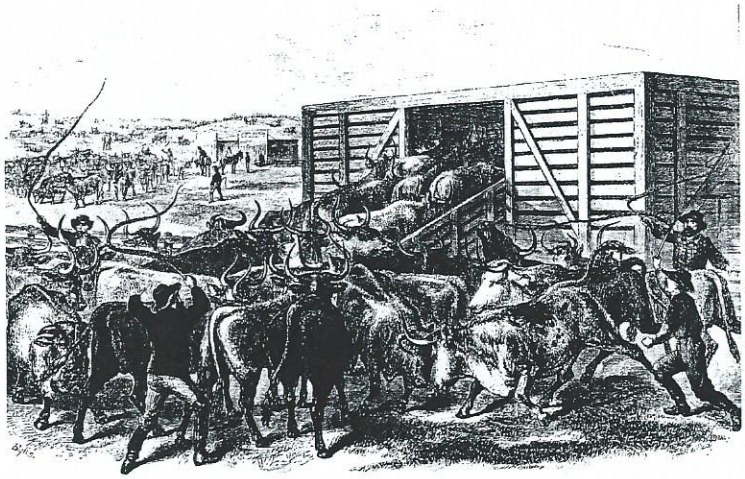


Map 18.1 Use of the Western Lands in the Late Nineteenth Century

>> A map of the western two-thirds of the nation, showing the various uses of the land as well as the cattle trails and railroads.

SUBJUGATING THE PLAINS INDIANS

As always, westward migration entailed conflict with Indians, and it was during the last decades of the nineteenth century that U.S. federal policy became bent on the complete destruction of tribal life. Like immigrants in the northern cities and African Americans in the South, American Indians suffered from the white Americans' racism, paternalism, and belief that the United States had a "manifest destiny" to control all the land between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans (for more on manifest destiny, see Chapter 13). Although conflict was constant, violence between white Americans and Indians accelerated during the Civil War, as Union troops streamed into the West to put down various Confederate revolts. During those travails, it was often difficult to tell where the Civil War ended and the escalating war against the Indians began.



North Wind Picture Archives/North Wind Pictures

>> Cowboys push, pull, and persuade cows to get into boxcars that would take them to the slaughterhouses of Chicago.

These small "Indian Wars," as the U.S. Army called them, became commonplace throughout the second half of the 1800s. One conflict that epitomizes the violence is the Sand Creek Massacre of 1864. During the early 1860s, the Arapahoe and Cheyenne Indians clashed with white settlers who had been drawn to Colorado by the 1859 Pike's Peak gold rush. As white settlers began to demand the extermination of the Indians, a handful of chiefs sought peace. During one round of negotiation, a Cheyenne delegation near Denver was told it enjoyed army protection until negotiations were complete. The next morning, November 29, 1864, Colorado militiamen attacked the sleeping Indians. By the day's end, more than two hundred Cheyenne lay dead. As news of the massacre spread throughout the Great Plains, anger turned to outrage among Indians, and battles between Indian nations and white settlers escalated.

The increasing violence between Indians and settlers inspired General William T. Sherman, of Civil War fame, to call for the extermination of all the Sioux. But, despite continuing conflict, U.S. government leaders in Washington, especially President Grant, still declared a desire for peace. In 1869, Grant initiated a so-called Peace Policy that consisted of empowering church leaders to distribute payments and food to the Indians. This "conquest through kindness" aimed to turn the Plains Indians, who had been offered open reservations to continue their traditional lifestyles, to the American ideals of private property, settled farming, and Christianity. Notwithstanding this paternalistic hope, Grant warned the Indians that any Native Americans unprepared to make peace on his terms would be subject to continued military action. In essence, he told them to accept his terms or face eventual destruction.

Unfortunately, many Americans did not follow Grant's Peace Policy, choosing instead to continue to invade lands guaranteed to Indians.

"Their village consisted of one hundred and thirty Cheyenne and Arapahoe lodges. These, with their contents, were totally destroyed."

—Rocky Mountain News, 1864


Cinquième Année. — N° 251. Huit pages : CINQ centimes Dimanche 26 Novembre 1893.

Le Petit Parisien

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CAVALIER CONTRE VÉLOCIPÉDISTES

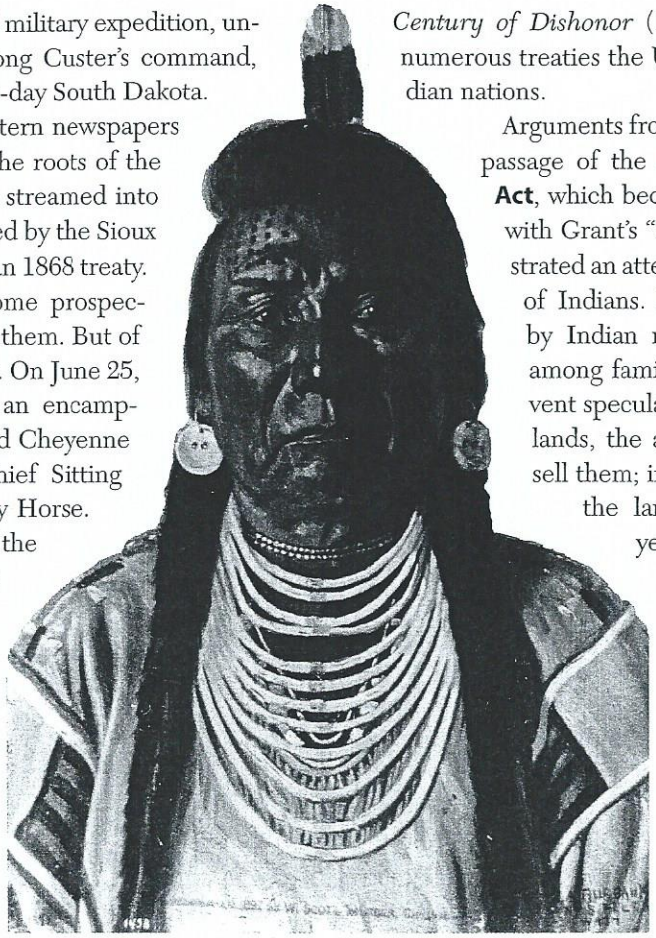
Cody, le roi des « Cowboys », et les cyclistes Gaby-Fournier en « Tandem »

Leemage/Getty Images

>> The cowboy boom didn't last long, and cowboys, such as William "Buffalo Bill" Cody, had to be creative to make money, including racing bicycles, as shown here.

One such example is the 1874 military expedition, under General George Armstrong Custer's command, into the Black Hills of present-day South Dakota. When Custer reported to eastern newspapers that there was "gold among the roots of the grass," American prospectors streamed into land not only considered sacred by the Sioux but also promised to them in an 1868 treaty. When the Sioux attacked some prospectors, Custer vowed to protect them. But of course he was unable to do so. On June 25, 1876, his force came upon an encampment of some 2,500 Sioux and Cheyenne warriors, commanded by Chief Sitting Bull and his lieutenant, Crazy Horse. Despite Custer's belief that the Indians would cower to the white army, the two Indian nations annihilated Custer's division of some 200 troops along the Little Bighorn River, in today's southeastern Montana.

The Sioux victory at Little Bighorn was short-lived. The winter of 1876–1877 saw a massive counterattack that caused most of the Indian alliance to surrender. Chief Sitting Bull and some fifty Sioux escaped to Canada. However, cut off from bison, they had a difficult time finding food, and, in 1881, they too surrendered to U.S. forces. Other Indian efforts at resistance also failed. For example, in 1877, Chief Joseph and the Nez Percé nation refused to be moved from their lands in Idaho to a reservation in Washington. Rather than fight, Joseph led a brilliant retreat to Canada with about 250 of his warriors and 450 noncombatants. The army followed Chief Joseph's party through 1,700 miles of mountains before catching up to them and demanding their surrender.



>> Chief Joseph.

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THE DAWES ACT

By the 1870s, many reformers and U.S. policymakers decided that placing American Indians on large reservations might not be the best way to bring order to white–Indian relations. For one thing, reservations obstructed the routes of certain planned railroads. Furthermore, reformers such as Helen Hunt Jackson criticized the U.S. policy on humanitarian grounds. Jackson wrote *A Century of Dishonor* (1881), which examined the numerous treaties the United States broke with Indian nations.

Arguments from these reformers led to the passage of the **Dawes General Allotment Act**, which became federal law in 1887. As with Grant's "Peace Plan," the act demonstrated an attempt to alter the tribal nature of Indians. It declared that lands held by Indian nations were to be divided among families and individuals. To prevent speculators from getting title to the lands, the act did not allow Indians to sell them; instead, the government held the land in trust for twenty-five years. At the end of the twenty-five years, individual Indians were to receive title to the land and become U.S. citizens. This was yet another attempt at peace by conversion. In the prevailing American view, Indians were capable of citizenship, but they were not quite ready yet, so they needed to be treated as wards of the state until they learned the ways of American citizens.

As it turned out, the Dawes Act did not help Indians establish farms because the arid land of the northern Plains was unsuited to agriculture. In addition, despite the alleged safeguards, tribal lands were often lost by fraud or coercion, so that, by 1934, white Americans owned two-thirds of lands originally reserved for Indians. Most pointedly, the Dawes Act struck at Indians' greatest strength—their communal ethos—by dividing many of the reservations into individual plots of land.

DIRE CIRCUMSTANCES

In the midst of these efforts, conditions in the Indian nations became desperate. In particular, the loss of the

Dawes General Allotment Act Federal law, passed in 1887, declaring that lands held by Indian nations were to be divided among families, and the Indians were not allowed to sell their lands because the government held these lands in trust for twenty-five years, after which individual Indians were to receive title to the land and become U.S. citizens

> I do not come to fight the white men. If you leave me alone I will harm no one. I have been driven from my home by the white men and am going to the buffalo country to find another.
>
> —Chief Joseph, according to his biographer

bison proved devastating to the way of life that had sustained Indians since they first occupied the Great Plains. In 1865, the number of bison in the United States was some 13 million; by 1891, that number had dwindled to just 865. Railroads and commercial hunters were responsible for most of this decimation, as was over-hunting by the Comache Indians in the Southwest. Without bison to hunt, the Plains Indians had little means of subsistence. Confined to reservations, they obtained only a meager living from farming the barren lands provided by relocation treaties. The poor-quality food supplies from the U.S. government sometimes did not come at all because of the widespread corruption in the government's Bureau of Indian Affairs. Starvation and epidemics pervaded the Indian nations, making it even more difficult for them to defend themselves against further encroachment.

LAST ATTEMPTS AT RESISTANCE

With little hope left, some Indians attempted to participate in a revitalization movement similar to the one preached by Neolin before the Revolutionary War. The central ritual for the Plains Indians became the **"Ghost Dance."** A dance that often lasted five days, the Ghost Dance had different meanings for each Indian nation. One signified a commitment to peace through communicating with one's ancestors and adopting an older way of life. Another interpretation promised that, if done properly and at the right time, the dance would supposedly raise the Indians above the ground while the land below them was replaced with new land, effectively sandwiching the white men between the two layers of sod, removing them forever. But, when too many Indians began attending the mass meetings, they attracted the attention of the U.S. government, which sought to arrest several of the leaders. When an attempt to arrest a Sioux Indian who had fired at the army at Pine Ridge Reservation ended in a small battle, killing the Sioux chief Sitting Bull, a group of Sioux seeking to intervene agreed to the U.S. Army's command to encamp near the army at Wounded Knee Creek. On December 29, 1890, an accidental rifle discharge led soldiers from the U.S. Army to fire on the Sioux. After what became known as the **Wounded Knee Massacre**, 39 U.S. soldiers lay dead, while the Sioux suffered 146 deaths, including 44 women and 18 children.

Wounded Knee was the tragic and grisly end of the federal government's century-long war against the Indians. The next forty years witnessed continuing efforts to break up tribal sovereignty—most notably in Indian territories, where the government forced the liquidation of tribal governments. By 1900, the Indian population had reached its lowest point in American history, bottoming out at just 250,000. The "Wild West" of cowboy-and-Indian lore was gone.

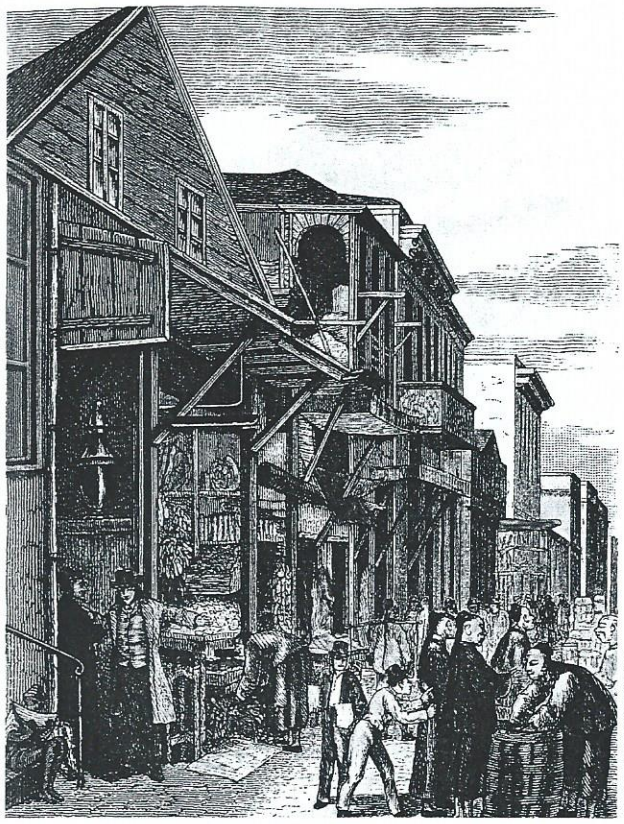
"Ghost Dance" The central ritual for the Plains Indians, this was a dance lasting five days that would supposedly raise the Indians above the ground while the land below them was replaced with new land, effectively sandwiching the white men between the two layers of sod, removing them forever

Wounded Knee Massacre 1890 conflict in which the U.S. Army fired on the Sioux, triggering a battle that left 39 U.S. soldiers and 146 Sioux dead

THE CHINESE EXCLUSION ACT

In addition to subjugating the Plains Indians, white Americans in the West also targeted another population—the Chinese. In the 1850s, Chinese immigrants began traveling to the American West in search of gold and other lucrative minerals. Most never discovered those riches, but ample work for the railroads provided another impetus for migration, and by 1880, more than 200,000 Chinese immigrants had settled in the United States, mostly in California.

Accounts of their lives suggest that most white Americans initially saw them as hardworking people, but as the number of Chinese immigrants increased, many white Americans challenged their right to be in the United States. In the early 1850s, the California legislature passed a tax on "foreign miners," which led most of the Chinese immigrants to search for work outside of mining. Many found jobs in the railroad industry, which was booming after the Civil War. Indeed, Chinese laborers made up 90 percent of the laborers who worked on the western half of the first transcontinental railroad. Once the American system of railroad tracks was mostly completed, many Chinese immigrants moved to cities, such as San Francisco, and developed an expansive "Chinatown." Most of the urban Chinese worked as laborers and servants, but some rose to prominence and positions



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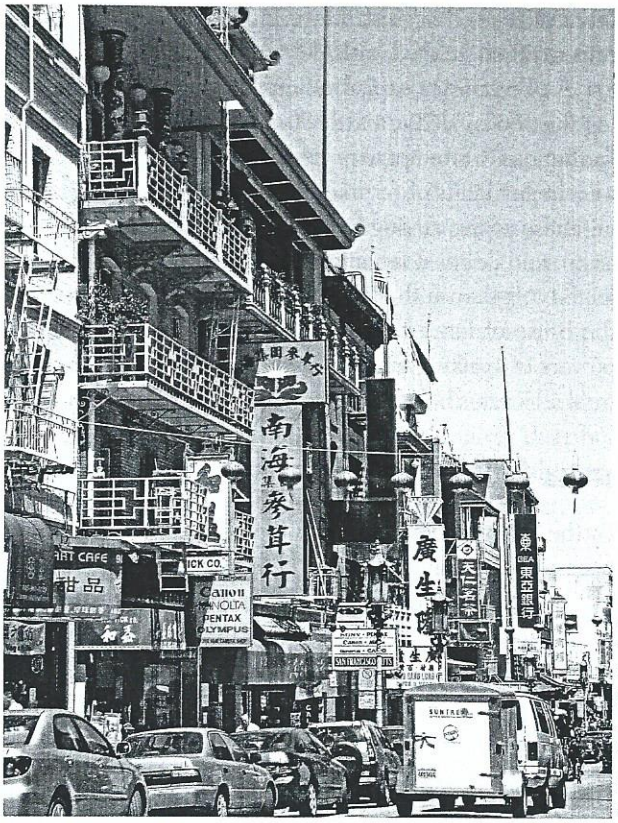


Ritu Manoj Jethani/Shutterstock.com

>> San Francisco's Chinese quarter of the 1870s evolved into today's sprawling Chinatown. In the 1870s, Chinese immigrants were forced, by law and practice, to segregate in their own quarters. Today, it's most self-segregation and history that drive the isolation.

of leadership within their communities. These leaders often joined together to handle community disputes, place workers in jobs, and dispense social services.

In the workplace, however, Chinese laborers gained a reputation for working for lower wages than their white counterparts. This situation led to interethnic hostilities, especially among workers. Denis Kearney, an Irish immigrant who created the Workingman's Party of California in 1878, made the issue of Chinese immigration a political one. By the late 1870s, anti-Chinese sentiment extended along the entire Pacific Coast.

In 1882, Congress responded to Californians' demands that something be done to restrict Chinese immigration. At the behest of California's senators, Congress passed the **Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882**, which banned the immigration of Chinese laborers for ten years and prohibited the Chinese who were already in the United States from becoming citizens. The bill was renewed in 1892 and made permanent in 1902. In doing so, it was the first repudiation of the United States's long history of open immigration. While the bill was most certainly racist, it is worth noting that, until 1917, there were few restrictions on wealthy Chinese immigrants, and in 1898 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the children of Chinese immigrants who were born in the United States were still American citizens. Nevertheless, the Chinese Exclusion Act remained law of the land until 1943, when having China as an ally during World War II made the law an embarrassment.

18-4 THE POPULISTS

In the topsy-turvy agricultural worlds of the South and the West, the corporations of the Industrial Age were rapidly turning into transformative players, dominating key industries like railroads and tobacco, and even challenging the sustainability of the self-sufficient farmer. Farmers, both western and southern, felt squeezed by a system that

Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 Act that banned the immigration of Chinese laborers for ten years and prohibited the Chinese who were already in the United States from becoming citizens

seemed stacked against them. Vulnerable to falling crop prices, often saddled with debt, and unable to meet the forces of corporate capitalism on a level playing field, during the 1860s, 1870s, and 1880s many farmers formed organizations to attempt to protect their rural interests. There were many kinds of farm advocacy groups developed during these years, varying in objective, degree of racial liberalism, and political techniques. But in the 1890s, farmers joined together in the **Populist Party**, which championed the cause of farmers over what it saw as the entrenched powers of banking and credit. Collectively, these agricultural advocates have come to be called the Populists.

18-4a Problems Confronting Farmers

By the late nineteenth century, the business of farming had become a risky endeavor. In addition to the age-old threats of bad weather and poor crops, many farmers were now deeply in debt from loans needed to purchase the large-scale machinery required to increase yields. Thus, while the technological advances of the Industrial Revolution had made farming physically easier, they had also put farmers more in debt. Meanwhile, the great distances between western farms and the markets of the East increased shipping costs, a problem exacerbated by grain elevator owners and railroad companies, who often exploited their monopolies. Similarly, the increase in the amount of goods shipped to market from the expansive and bountiful Great Plains meant that prices plummeted. Farmers who had taken advantage of the Homestead Act were being stretched thin. Sharecroppers in the South owed increasing amounts of money to their landowners. By the late nineteenth century, most farmers were in debt.

DEFLATION

Even worse, they all confronted the basic problem of falling crop prices. While overproduction played a part in pushing down prices, another, more insidious force was at work: deflation. Between 1873 and 1875, the federal government responded to the inflation and rampant speculation that had provoked the Panic of 1873 by putting the nation on a **gold standard**, taking out of circulation most paper money ("greenbacks") and silver coins, thus leaving gold as the primary form of currency. But when gold became scarce, the result was deflation, whereby prices fell because there was not enough money circulating in the system. This situation had a ruinous effect on farmers. As deflation pushed down the prices of all goods, including crops, farmers made smaller profits; meanwhile, their debts stayed the same as before. Only now, they had less money with which to pay it off.

Populist Party A political party of the 1890s that championed the "farm" cause of land and crops over the powers of banking and credit

gold standard An economic plan using gold as the primary form of currency while taking paper money and silver coins out of circulation

***Munn* v. *Illinois* (1877)** A Supreme Court case that declared states could regulate businesses within their borders if those businesses operated in the public interest

18-4b Farmers Unite

Several movements arose in response to farmers' problems of debt and deflation. Two of the most powerful included (1) the Grange Movement and (2) the Farmers' Alliance.

EMERGENCE OF THE GRANGE MOVEMENT

The first movement to protest the farmer's plight emerged shortly after the Civil War. Founded in Washington, D.C., in 1867, the Grange (formally known as the National Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry) began life as a local fraternal organization. But by the early 1870s, as deflation plagued farmers, the Grange became a national movement that expressed farmer discontent. In seeking political solutions to the farmers' problems, it did achieve some limited success. Grangers demanded the regulation of railroad rates, for instance, and succeeded in having rate legislation passed in several states, including Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, and Wisconsin. They also succeeded in having the Supreme Court declare, in the case of ***Munn* v. *Illinois* (1877)**, that states could regulate businesses within their borders if those businesses operated in the public interest. But internal divisions ultimately doomed the Grange, and in the late 1870s its influence waned.

RISE OF THE FARMERS' ALLIANCE

In the late 1880s, another national movement known as the Farmers' Alliance emerged. The Farmers' Alliance was a network of smaller local alliances that first sprang up in the early 1880s in pockets of the South and Midwest and then spread to other farming regions. These alliances acted as cooperatives, meaning that they organized farmers into a unified front to gain bargaining power. Like labor unions, alliances hoped to find strength in numbers, and sometimes they did just that.

THE TURN TO POLITICS

But the alliances failed to be effective in the long term because bankers and commercial interests often simply refused to do business with them. The Farmers' Alliance then sought a political remedy. In 1890, Dr. Charles W. Macune,

Universal History Archive/Getty Images

>> An idealized view of the National Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry, with each circle representing an aspect of Western life.

the national movement's leader, lobbied members of the U.S. Congress to support his **Subtreasury Plan**. Under this plan, crops would be stored in government-owned warehouses and used as collateral for low-cost government loans to struggling farmers.

In 1890, when legislation to enact the plan was defeated in Congress, desperation among American farmers reached a fever pitch. With deflation running rampant and crop prices continuing to fall, farmers suspected a conspiracy: Eastern bankers and corporations, with the tacit blessing of the government, were deliberately keeping gold out of circulation to lead the farmers to bankruptcy, which would then force the sale of large tracts of agricultural land. The farmers knew they needed to create a stronger, more powerful movement in order to be heard.

18-4c Populism

The farmers thus entered the national political arena in 1892 with a broad and far-reaching movement known as Populism. In 1892, a convention of farmers in Omaha, Nebraska, formed the People's Party (its members were called Populists) to advocate farmers' concerns in local, state, and federal politics. On the one hand, the Populists sought to address such day-to-day issues as high storage and shipping rates. In this vein, Populists also sought to reverse deflation so that crop prices would rise, which would enable them to pay down their debts. In particular, they wanted the government to **remonetize** silver or, in other words, turn silver into an acceptable currency. This would end the economy's reliance on gold, which had made currency hard to find and expensive, and put more currency in the marketplace, boosting prices. On the other hand, they also put forward dramatic and at times radical proposals about ensuring a fairer distribution of wealth, including nationalizing certain industries and creating broad government regulations. Frustrated with what they saw as political inaction, they also advocated increased political transparency, such as the direct election of senators (who had often been chosen by the state legislatures). Like those in the labor movement, the Populists advocated not only improvements in their daily lives but also a dramatic reconsideration of the way the United States was encountering the Industrial Age.

A NATIONAL MOVEMENT

Building from the national network of the Farmers' Alliance, the Populist Movement quickly spread across the country. With their promise of relief for farmers and their far-reaching vision, the Populists overcame existing political and regional loyalties (white southerners were usually Democrats and preoccupied with race, whereas Midwestern farmers, owing their land to Lincoln's Homestead Act, were nearly all Republicans). Tom Watson, a Populist leader from Georgia, argued that white and black sharecroppers alike were in danger of economic ruin, and he spoke to mixed-race audiences that were temporarily united by the Populist message. Some Populists even advocated bringing in industrial workers to fashion a working-class political party. A revolt against the extravagances of the Industrial Age seemed to be brewing.

The Populists rapidly gained ground in the political arena. In 1892, James Weaver, the Populists' presidential candidate, won several western states, and the hard times that followed a financial panic in 1893 sparked

Subtreasury Plan An economic plan advocated by the Farmers' Alliance, in which crops would be stored in government-owned warehouses and used as collateral for low-cost government loans to struggling farmers

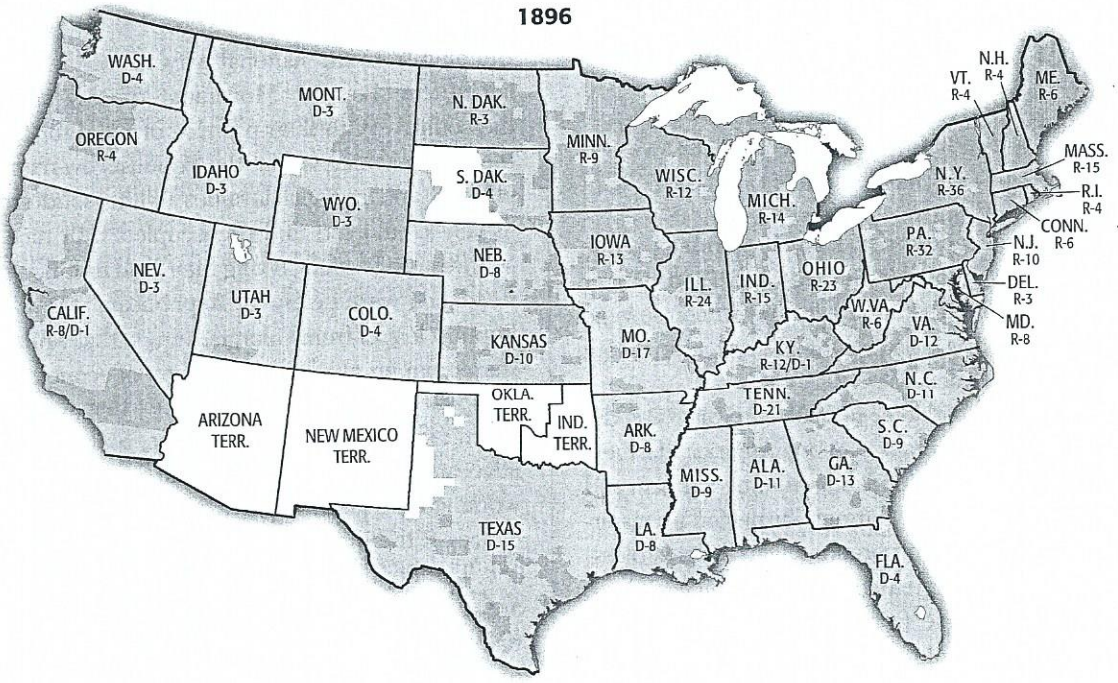
remonetize To turn a certain commodity (for instance, silver) back into an acceptable currency

widespread interest in the Populist demands for economic justice. Several Populist candidates won congressional elections in 1894. That same year, Populist supporter Jacob Coxey led an army of roughly four hundred workers on a march from Ohio to Washington to demand government jobs for the unemployed. The year 1894 also saw the publication of *Coin's Financial School*, a national bestseller that made a dramatic appeal for the unlimited government purchase of silver, a plan commonly called "free silver." Populists' demands were on the rise.

THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OF 1896

The mainstream popularity of currency reform, however, proved to be a double-edged sword for the Populists. In the 1896 presidential election (Map 18.2), Democratic nominee William Jennings Bryan was a charismatic thirty-six-year-old Nebraskan whose embrace of the free-silver position left the Populists in a quandary. As a member of one of the two traditional political parties, Bryan stood the best chance of winning the election, but beyond currency reform, he was not interested in Populist issues such as grain storage and debt relief. Yet a separate Populist candidate would likely split the vote for Bryan, thus handing victory to Republican nominee William McKinley, who favored the gold standard; McKinley's election was the worst possible outcome for the Populists. Faced with this prospect, the Populist Party nominated Bryan for president and Tom Watson for vice president.

The election was one of the most impassioned in American history and ended badly for the Democrats and the Populists. Bryan, whose free-silver "Cross of Gold" speech ("you shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold") is one of the most vivid political speeches in American history, never appealed to the largest voting bloc in the Northeast: urban immigrant workers. These workers actually benefited from deflation's low prices because they did not have large debts, and many felt alienated by Bryan's evangelical Protestantism. Thus, by supporting Bryan, the Populists had helped prevent a union of laboring people across the nation.



Map 18.2 The Election of 1896

>> An electoral map of the 1896 presidential election, showing Bryan's strength in the South and the West, although it wasn't enough to allow him to beat McKinley.

In the end, Bryan carried most of the South and West, but Republican votes in the urban Northeast led to his overwhelming defeat. McKinley gained the presidency, beginning a fourteen-year Republican reign in office and ending the political stalemate that had marked the previous two decades.

THE VANISHING OF THE POPULISTS

After 1896, the Populists' mass movement declined. In the South, southern Democrats beat them back with calls for white solidarity, and indeed, the Democrats' fear of the racial collaboration evidenced by the Populist Movement led to a rapid increase in the speed of African American disenfranchisement, a potent, horrifying response. More importantly to the demise of the Populists, though, was the fact that the long deflationary trend for farmers that had been ongoing since the end of the Civil War finally broke in 1897, allowing many farmers to begin to prosper. When Bryan ran for president again in 1900, he lost even more emphatically than he had in 1896. Nevertheless, despite their political decline, many of the less radical goals of the Populists were achieved in the twentieth century, including the direct election of senators, low-interest government loans for farmers, federal regulation of railroad rates, and regulation of the money supply.

>LOOKING AHEAD...

The Industrial Revolution affected each region of the United States differently. The North became one of the most industrialized regions in the world, confronting the challenges of immigration, urbanization, and the labor movement. Many southerners, meanwhile, attempted to transform their region into a smaller, more humane industrialized hub, but instead fell back into the racial disparities that had long been part of the region's identity. Americans in the West took more and more of that region away from American Indians, as homesteaders and corporate farmers tapped into the soil in order to provide much of the raw materials for the Industrial Age.

All Americans confronted numerous challenges in adapting to the new era. The land did not always prosper. Racism and fear of outsiders provoked reactionary political responses. And northern businessmen lost interest in the regions they exploited once they felt they had tapped their economic potential. Often frustrated by how state and federal governments were not addressing their economic needs, farmers from the West and South combined under the name of the Populists to challenge America's industrial order. Meanwhile, workers came together to fashion the modern labor movement in an effort to protest the most egregious disparities of the new Industrial Age. The Populists and the workers did not achieve most of their goals, but the issues they brought forward—and the radical politics they threatened to usher in—would be central to the third, most successful wave of reformers responding to the Industrial Revolution. It is to those reformers, the Progressives, that we now turn.

STUDY TOOLS 18

READY TO STUDY? IN THE BOOK, YOU CAN:

- ❑ Rip out the Chapter Review Card, which includes key terms and chapter summaries.

ONLINE AT WWW.CENGAGEBRAIN.COM, YOU CAN:

- ❑ Collect StudyBits while you read and study the chapter.
- ❑ Quiz yourself on key concepts.
- ❑ Find videos for further exploration.
- ❑ Prepare for tests with HIST5 Flash Cards as well as those you create.
- ❑ Compare accounts of the Sand Creek Massacre.
- ❑ Explore the past of Ellis Island.
- ❑ Read the Dawes Act.
- ❑ Read Grady's "New South" speech.
- ❑ Read the "Atlanta Exposition Address."
- ❑ Read W. E. B. Du Bois's thoughts on Booker T. Washington.
- ❑ Read Andrew Carnegie's essay "Wealth."
- ❑ Read the Populists' 1892 election platform.
- ❑ Read the *Plessy* v. *Ferguson* decision.
- ❑ Read the Niagara Movement's "Statement of Principles."

CH 18 TIMELINE

1862 Republican Homestead Act grants 160 acres of western lands to farming settlers.

1864 In Sand Creek Massacre, Colorado militia kills over 200 Cheyenne following land disputes with white gold seekers.

1866 Edward Pollard's *The Lost Cause* turns Civil War into Old South mythology.

1869 Completion of transcontinental railroad.

1873–1875 Federal government forces economy back on gold standard at farmers' expense.

1874 Barbed wire closes open range, signaling the decline of cattle drives.

1877 In *Munn* v. *Illinois*, Supreme Court finds that states can regulate businesses within their borders that operate in the public interest.

1879 John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil Company controls 90 percent of petroleum market.

Thomas Edison completes experimentation on the incandescent light bulb.

1882 Exclusion Act bans most Chinese immigration and citizenship.

What Else Was Happening

1876: *Sioux and Cheyenne warriors wipe out General Custer's division at Little Big horn.*

Alexander Graham Bell's telephone speeds up long-distance communication.

1885: *The first modern hamburger is made in Seymour, Wisconsin.*

1887 With single plots of land, Dawes Act tries to turn Plains Indians into family farmers.

1890 Second Mississippi Plan models legal black voter disfranchisement for New South.

39 soldiers and 146 Indians die in Wounded Knee Massacre after ritual Ghost Dance.

1892 Carnegie steel plant strike in Homestead pits workers against Pinkertons and militia.

Southern and western farmers form backbone of new People's Party (Populists).

1894 Populist Jacob Coxey leads unemployed in march on Washington demanding jobs.

1895 New York's Coney Island amusement park opens.

1896 In *Plessy* v. *Ferguson*, Supreme Court declares racial segregation constitutional.

Democrat-Populist presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan loses to William McKinley.

1899 Economist Thorstein Veblen describes "conspicuous consumption" of the rich.

1903 American and National League teams play first World Series.

1909 Niagara Movement establishes NAACP.

Pharmacist Caleb Bradham produces "Brad's Drink" as a digestive aid and energy booster; in 1898 it would be renamed Pepsi-Cola.

1893: *The melody for "Happy Birthday to You" is copyrighted.*