Grade 8 Louisiana Social Studies

The Changing Nation

Flatiron Building

Student Volume

Andrew Carnegie

Madam C. J. Walker

Free Silver Movement

Growing cities

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The Changing Nation

Student Volume

BAYOU BRIDGES
A K-8 Louisiana Social Studies Curriculum

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The Changing Nation

Table of Contents

01 Chapter 1:
Industrialization, Immigration, and Urbanization 2

02 Chapter 2:
Populism and the People's Party..... 24

03 Chapter 3:
Reform Movements..... 36

Glossary 52

Chapter 1

Industrialization, Immigration, and Urbanization

The Transformation

The United States saw expansive economic growth and dynamic social change in the decades following the American Civil War. In the half century from the end of that war in 1865 to the beginning of the First World War in 1914, the nation was transformed by immigration, industrialization, and urbanization.

Vocabulary

immigration, n. the act of coming to live permanently in a new country

industrialization, n. a shift to the widespread use of machines and factories to produce goods

urbanization, n. the formation and growth of cities

The Framing Question

How did immigration, industrialization, and urbanization change America in the late 1800s and early 1900s?

Millions of immigrants were drawn to America by the promise of a better life.

Factories, mines, and mills grew in importance. Waves of immigrants arrived on America's shores. Cities grew bigger. Historians call this time period the Second Industrial Revolution. From 1865 to 1914, some eleven million Americans moved from rural farming communities into the towns and cities that housed growing numbers of factories. In these same years, twenty-five million new immigrants, most from Europe, were drawn by the promise of finding work in the expanding American **economy**. Many of these new arrivals settled in major cities, especially those in the Northeast and Midwest. Others settled in rural areas, where they took up farming and other work.

Vocabulary

economy, n. the way a country manages its money and resources to produce, buy, and sell goods and services

Think Twice

Why are these events referred to as the Second Industrial Revolution?

Who Immigrated and Why?

Push and pull factors played key roles in people deciding to immigrate to the United States. A push factor is a reason

to leave a country, like poverty, religious persecution, or political unrest. A pull factor is something that draws people to a location, like economic opportunity, religious freedom, or democracy.

The potato famine in Ireland was a major push factor for Irish immigrants during the mid-1800s. For several years, beginning in 1845, a plant disease known as potato blight devastated Ireland's potato crop. Potatoes were a staple of the Irish diet. A million people perished from starvation or from diseases related to **malnutrition**, and more than a million more left Ireland and immigrated to America. Many newly arrived Irish settled in the Northeast, especially in Boston and New York City. Others found work on railroads and in factories in the growing industrial economy in cities such as Albany, Buffalo, Cleveland, and Chicago.

In the decade after 1845, more than a million Germans were pulled to the United States by the prospect of economic opportunity and jobs. German farmers and laborers settled on farms across the Midwest and in cities, including Cincinnati, Milwaukee, and St. Louis. Other Germans fled to the United States after the

Vocabulary

malnutrition, n. a state of poor health due to not having enough healthy food

During the Second Industrial Revolution, an increasing number of immigrants came from countries in eastern Europe, southern Europe, and Asia. Previously, most immigrants came from parts of northern and central Europe.

Ellis Island

Most immigrants who arrived in America after 1892 first set foot on American soil at Ellis Island in New York Harbor. There, the government had built a receiving station that could handle five thousand people a day. When that proved too small, the facility was enlarged to handle up to fifteen thousand immigrants a day. Altogether, sixteen million people passed through Ellis Island, the great bulk of them during the first thirty years of the receiving station's existence. Ellis Island closed as an entry point for immigrants in 1954.

Immigrants coming into Ellis Island were greeted by the Statue of Liberty.

revolutions of 1848 failed to bring greater democracy to Europe. Among these new immigrants were lawyers, doctors, and skilled artisans.

Between 1880 and 1920, Europeans from southern and eastern Europe, such as people from Italy and Poland, began to arrive in large numbers. Up to this time in American history, there had not been many immigrants from these regions of Europe. Many of these immigrants were Catholic. They were joined in this wave of immigration by two million Jewish men, women, and children who sought to escape poverty and religious persecution in Europe.

Think Twice

What push factors encouraged immigration to the United States of America?

The Realities of Immigration

The story of American immigration is one of tensions between ideals and realities. Many immigrants who came to the United States from the mid-1880s to the early 1900s arrived poor and with limited skills. They took whatever work they could get, often at low pay.

Immigrant women found work as household servants. Immigrant men found work sweeping streets, hauling trash, or selling food from carts as street vendors. In cities, immigrant families—women, men, and children alike—sometimes worked together in their apartments, sewing garments for low pay. In the Northeast and Midwest, immigrants found work in factories, mines, and mills.

Immigrants often faced **discrimination**. The anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic "Know-Nothing" movement formed in the 1840s and 1850s. Even after that movement dissolved, **nativism** persisted. Nativists believed immigrants were hurting native-born Americans by taking "their" jobs and lowering wages.

The issue of religion was also important. Beginning in colonial times, most Americans were Protestants. Many of the new arrivals—especially those from Ireland, Italy, Germany, and Slavic countries—were Catholics. Although both groups are Christian, Protestants and Catholics have somewhat different practices and beliefs. American Protestants commonly were untrusting of Catholics.

Chinese immigrants settling in the United States encountered their own version of discrimination. By 1880, more than one hundred thousand Chinese people lived in the United States—nearly all on the West Coast. Many found work laying railway tracks for the nation's expanding western railroads or working in factories and mines. Chinese immigrants had different styles of dress as well as cultural and religious practices that set them apart from native-born Americans and European immigrants. This made them easy targets of extreme prejudice and even violence.

It's important to note that the immigrant experience was not always negative. New arrivals also found Americans who welcomed and helped them. Many also started churches and synagogues that offered charity and assistance. And as their numbers grew, immigrants gained political power. For example, as the number of Irish immigrants grew in Boston and

Vocabulary

discrimination, n. unfair treatment of a person or group because of beliefs about that group of people

nativism, n. a preference for people born in a country rather than immigrants

Find Out the Facts

How did the Know-Nothing movement get its name?

New York City, they were able to elect people of Irish heritage to the city council and the mayor's office in both cities. Soon, these cities employed many Irish police officers, firefighters, and civil servants.

Think Twice

How might having political power change an immigrant group's experience?

African Americans Move North

Between 1865 and 1920, many thousands of African Americans moved northward. Most African Americans had lived in the South during slavery. In the South, pervasive segregation and race prejudice continued to exclude African Americans from full citizenship and economic opportunity. Between 1879 and 1880, about sixty thousand African Americans moved to Kansas, where they hoped to find better livelihoods and better schools than in the South. During the First World War (1914–18) and especially after America's entry into the war in 1917, many African Americans moved to northern cities like Detroit, Chicago, Pittsburgh, and New York to work in factories producing materials for the war effort. To be sure, they continued to experience prejudice even in the North. Yet some northern cities became centers of African American arts and culture.

The Effects of Urbanization

Cities were centers of economic opportunity for immigrants embarking on a new life. At the same time, the increased use of farm machinery and the growth of factories caused migration from rural areas to cities. The rapid urbanization that resulted came at a cost. Demand for housing in urban areas grew faster than supply. Homes intended for just one family were subdivided and hastily expanded to accommodate many families. New tenements were constructed to maximize space, both within the building and on the city block. Conditions in the tenements were cramped, and fresh air and natural light were hard to come by. Built quickly and cheaply, these homes lacked sufficient plumbing and were often made of wood, creating a risk of dangerous fires. What's more, many tenements lacked fire escapes.

Cities like New York also struggled with issues like sanitation and waste removal. People dumped their garbage into the street and into nearby rivers or the ocean.

This, like the cramped conditions of the tenements, encouraged the spread of contagious diseases such as cholera. Exhaust from factories and other sources like railroads caused unhealthy air pollution.

Many immigrants seeking work in American cities endured the close quarters of tenements.

Think Twice

How did rapid urbanization impact the quality of life in cities?

The Second Industrial Revolution

Before the Civil War, most Americans were farmers. There were some factories, mostly cloth-making ones in New England. However, after 1865, the number of factories, mines, and mills grew rapidly. By 1880, more Americans worked in non agricultural jobs than in agricultural ones. By the 1910s, American industries were producing a third of the world's manufactured goods. America's commercial society, in combination with the country's representative democracy, had given rise to astonishing economic growth. How exactly did this happen?

Part of the answer to this question is the basic structure of the American economy: capitalism. **Capitalism** is an economic system in which resources and businesses are privately owned and the government does not control prices. The United States does not have a pure capitalist economy—the government intervenes in the economy in a multitude of ways. Yet in the 1800s and into the 1900s, it was the practice of the government to mostly stay out of the way of entrepreneurs and businesses. ***Laissez-faire*** is a French term meaning "let it be" or "leave it alone," and during this period, Congress

Vocabulary

capitalism, n. an economic system in which resources and businesses are privately owned and the government does not control prices

laissez-faire, n. a philosophy that calls for very little or no government involvement in the economy

and state governments largely left businesses alone. This meant that there were no federal laws to protect workers. There was no minimum wage, no limit on workday hours, no safety standards in factories or mines, and no laws mandating that children go to school rather than to work. At times, state legislatures did pass some laws regulating businesses. But when New York State passed a law regulating the hours people could work in bakeries, the United States Supreme Court, in *Lochner v. New York* (1905), struck down the New York law. The court ruled that it violated freedom of contract, which is the right of employers and employees to operate without restrictions from the government, as protected by the Fourteenth Amendment.

Another important factor in the growth of the U.S. economy was **mechanization**. Machines were central to mass production in factories during the Second Industrial Revolution. They were used to make a variety of products, from thread to nails, from shoes to typewriters. The use of machines also led to the adoption of assembly lines. Assembly lines broke the production of an item into smaller, repetitive tasks. As machine production output increased, labor costs per unit fell. Industrialization made possible an ever-increasing abundance of goods at declining prices.

Mechanization was also responsible for changes to American agriculture. Inventions like the mechanical reaper and the gas-powered tractor meant that fewer people were required to produce more crops.

Vocabulary

mechanization, n. the process of replacing human or animal labor with machine labor

Think Twice

Do you think such rapid economic growth could have happened without millions of immigrants coming to America?

The Role of Railroads

One of the most important developments was the expansion of railroads. Railroads were not a new invention. A patchwork of local lines had existed in the early to mid-1800s. The Pacific Railway Act of 1862 changed this. The act authorized the construction of the first transcontinental railroad. As you have learned, it was

Cities and Railroads, 1860

Cities and Railroads, 1890

Railroads expanded rapidly across the urbanizing United States during the Second Industrial Revolution.

completed in 1869. Four more transcontinental lines followed by 1900. The number of miles of line also exploded, growing from forty-five thousand miles (72,420 km) of track in 1871 to nearly two hundred thousand miles (321,900 km) in just under thirty years.

Railroads were an important driver of industrialization. They transported massive amounts of raw materials around the country. They were also one of the greatest consumers of raw materials, and their construction encouraged growth in the coal, timber, and steel industries. Railroads affected American producers and consumers alike. They transported passengers and finished goods faster than ever. They opened new markets for businesses across the country, resulting in increased competition and lower prices. But as you know, the growth of the railroads had a large cost: the displacement of Native Americans from their land and destruction of their traditional ways of life.

Think Twice

How were railroads both producers and consumers during the Second Industrial Revolution?

Technological Innovations

The Second Industrial Revolution was a time of incredible technological innovation that reshaped the way Americans lived and worked. Two such innovations included electricity and the telephone.

In 1882, Thomas Edison opened the world's first electrical generating station on Pearl Street in Manhattan. Wires strung throughout cities brought electric power to businesses and homes, and electric lights began to replace gas lanterns along city streets. By the early 1900s, Nikola Tesla's motor, which used alternating currents, powered increasing numbers of machines on factory floors. It also powered household lighting and appliances—the electric-powered vacuum cleaner, invented in 1901, among them.

Automobiles, invented in 1886, uneasily shared city streets with horse-drawn carriages and carts. Telephones, invented by Alexander Graham Bell back in 1876, were being installed in a growing number of homes and businesses. Marie Curie's

People, horses, and cars shared streets in cities at the turn of the twentieth century.

experiments with X-rays led to new medical **diagnostic** tools and treatments. Biologists identified disease-causing bacteria. In 1900, a new medicine called aspirin went on sale and was used in many households to relieve pain.

Vocabulary

diagnostic, adj. related to identifying a disease or a problem

Enabled by new elevator technology and by the plentiful availability of electricity and steel, buildings so tall they were said to "scrape the sky" were built in some cities. In 1902, the twenty-one-story steel-framed Flatiron Building went up in New York. The next year, it was eclipsed by the sixty-story Woolworth Building in downtown Manhattan. Electric-powered subways and streetcars became available in some cities. Vast numbers of Henry Ford's gasoline-powered and inexpensive Model T cars rolled out of Detroit, Michigan, factories beginning in 1908.

Think Twice

How did innovations like electricity and the telephone change daily life? How did they change the way people worked?

The Beginnings of Big Business

Big business was a defining feature of the Second Industrial Revolution. Many businesses of the age started big and became much bigger.

Many industrialists and entrepreneurs formed **corporations**. The first modern corporations in the United States began during the 1770s, though they did not become popular until the mid-1800s. Simple to organize, corporations protected their owners financially if the business failed. This made them more attractive to entrepreneurs and investors than

Vocabulary

corporation, n. a type of large business

other business structures. Corporations were made more powerful through the creation of **monopolies** that reduced or eliminated competition.

Vocabulary

monopoly, n. the complete control of the supply of a good or service by one person, country, or company

Some monopolies were formed through vertical integration, or by acquiring every part of an industry's supply chain from raw materials to final products. This practice was used by Andrew Carnegie, a Scottish immigrant, to build his fortune. Carnegie purchased the mines that produced the iron and coal to make steel. He also bought the railroads used to ship iron and other raw materials to his mills and finished products to their destinations. This allowed him to keep his production costs low and increase his profits. It also made it very difficult for other steel producers to compete.

Other monopolies were formed through horizontal integration, or by controlling one step or phase of production across an entire industry. John D. Rockefeller realized that the oil industry could be a huge business in Ohio. He began building oil refineries in the state in the 1860s and, along with other investors, formed the Standard Oil Company in 1870. Standard Oil began as a corporation but later grew into a **trust**. Standard Oil purchased competing refineries through the 1880s. By 1890, Rockefeller owned about 90 percent of the oil refineries in the United States. Rockefeller's use of horizontal integration didn't end with control over the oil industry. Rockefeller also made Standard Oil very influential over the railroads, enabling the trust to dictate its own shipping rates.

Carnegie and Rockefeller were not the only entrepreneurs to accumulate massive wealth during the Second Industrial Revolution. In the 1850s, Cornelius Vanderbilt began investing in railroads in New York. He then expanded his control over other major lines through the Northeast and into the Midwest. This made him the first person to offer rail service from New York City to Chicago. Vanderbilt's control over the railroads made rail travel faster and cheaper. By the time he died in 1877, he was worth more than $100 million,

Vocabulary

trust, n. a combination of corporations created to reduce competition and control prices

which made him the wealthiest person in the United States at that time.

Banker John Pierpont Morgan provided the capital needed to grow many of the country's fledgling industries, including railroads and oil. By 1895, J. P. Morgan and Company ranked among the world's most influential banks. Morgan arranged numerous mergers of different companies, including the formation of General Electric and the United States Steel Corporation.

Not all successful entrepreneurs of the time were men. Sarah Breedlove was born in Louisiana in 1867 and was the daughter of formerly enslaved people. Breedlove began to lose her hair in the 1890s. One remedy she tried was made by Annie Malone, an entrepreneur who specialized in hair care products for African American women. Breedlove began working for Malone, moved to Denver, and changed her name to Madam C. J. Walker. She went on to start her own business making hair and beauty products. Walker began by traveling the country selling products door to door and eventually established the Madam C. J. Walker Manufacturing Company in Indianapolis. Walker eventually employed over forty thousand people. In addition to amassing an impressive fortune, she became a role model for other self-made women entrepreneurs around the world.

Madam C. J. Walker built a successful beauty product empire at a time when big business was dominated by men.

Think Twice

What made Madam C. J. Walker so exceptional?

Captains of Industry or Robber Barons?

The influence of America's wealthiest entrepreneurs and business leaders increased in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Men like Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller amassed fantastic fortunes using cutthroat business practices, making them two of the richest and most successful entrepreneurs in history. The legacy of these entrepreneurs is complicated. Some Americans saw these men and other entrepreneurs like them as "captains of industry" and focused on the good they were doing by leading important businesses. Their corporations each enabled tens of thousands of workers to earn a living. But other Americans criticized them as "robber barons," describing them as rich and selfish individuals who lived like kings and made their millions from other peoples' labor.

Andrew Carnegie made a great deal of money in steel. He also donated money to build libraries and schools.

Carnegie and Rockefeller were two business leaders who also used their fortunes for good. Carnegie was a particularly great philanthropist. A philanthropist is someone wealthy who uses money to help others. And Carnegie did this in a big way. During his lifetime, Andrew Carnegie gave away much of his wealth; he donated millions of dollars to charities, foundations, and universities, and he paid for the building of hundreds of public libraries across America.

Think Twice

What do you think? Were the entrepreneurs of the Second Industrial Revolution captains of industry or robber barons?

Factory Conditions

Mass production by machines made goods less expensive and more readily available than ever before. But mechanized mass production also made

factory work repetitive and exhausting. What's more, to keep production costs as low as possible, factory managers pushed employees to work longer hours, increased the pace of work, and kept wages low. The resulting products could then be priced lower than the products from other factories.

The drive to lower costs led to the development of sweatshops. A **sweatshop** is a factory or a workshop, especially in the clothes-making industry, in which workers are employed at very low wages for long hours. Sweatshops in the 1890s and 1900s were sometimes located in tenements—the very apartments where the workers lived. Unfortunately, these conditions still exist in some parts of the world today.

Vocabulary

sweatshop, n. a factory in which employees work for long hours in unsafe conditions for a low wage

Child Labor

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, more than two million children were sent to work in factories, mines, and mills in the United States. Prior to industrialization, most Americans made their living by farming, and many children worked alongside their parents. Although agricultural work was hard and farming chores had to be carried out in all kinds of weather, children saw daylight, worked outside, and could experience the passing seasons.

Children working in factories and mines had a much different experience. Depending on the industry and the season, children worked anywhere from twelve to eighteen hours a day. The work week was five or six days long. The wages they earned, though meager, were often critical to the survival of their families. There was no time for education and little for play. Children working in mills performed numerous tasks, including fixing a broken thread on a machine that was still in motion or collecting fabric and putting it into bins. In coal mines, child workers picked small bits of coal from piles of rubble, or they carried bags of coal and dumped them into coal cars. Children working in factories frequently suffered injuries in accidents involving machinery. Breathing in the tiny bits of fiber in the mills and coal dust in the mines caused respiratory diseases, including cancer.

Find Out the Facts

Research what life was like for children working in factories, sweatshops, or mines during this time in American history.

Writers' Corner

Use your research to write about a day in the life of a child working in a factory, mill, or mine. Either imagine you are that child and describe your day, or imagine you are a journalist reporting on what you have discovered.

Unions

Industrialization helped entrepreneurs and corporate investors become wealthy, but most workers struggled to make enough money to live comfortably. Recognizing that there is strength in numbers, workers joined together to protect their interests. They formed organizations to bargain with their employers for better pay or safer conditions. Such organizations are called unions. There are different kinds of unions.

Small boys in factories climbed onto spinning frames to mend broken threads and replace empty bobbins.

Skilled workers—like carpenters, bricklayers, and steam pipefitters—form trade unions, while unskilled workers generally form labor unions.

Unskilled workers in the late 1800s were largely unsuccessful when they tried to form unions. When unskilled workers staged a **strike**, they were often easily replaced. But the same was not true for skilled workers. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, skilled workers were in demand and difficult to replace. This put them in a better position to negotiate for better pay, for safer conditions, or to improve their standard of living.

Vocabulary

strike, n. a practice of workers refusing to work until the company meets their demands in negotiations

One important national labor union in the United States was the Knights of Labor (KOL). Founded in 1869 as a secret organization to protect its members from employer retaliations, the KOL represented the interests of skilled and unskilled workers from a variety of industries. The KOL's membership swelled in 1877 after a major railroad strike. In 1886, the KOL reached its peak membership with seven hundred thousand workers. The group's struggles in winning concessions and the violence that broke out around strikes caused its numbers to decline.

In 1886, a group of trade unions came together to form the American Federation of Labor (AFL). The AFL and its president, Samuel Gompers, promoted what they called "pure and simple trade unionism." Their goal was to improve the lives of workers by bargaining directly with employers for better hours, safer working conditions, and higher wages. When **collective bargaining** failed, they went on strike. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, Gompers noticed that the courts and governors almost always acted in favor of business. The courts repeatedly agreed to **injunctions** against workers for striking. And the courts rarely ruled against employers who mistreated or underpayed workers. In response, Gompers and his union, as he wrote, "harassed the

Vocabulary

collective bargaining, n. the negotiation of better wages and working conditions by a group, such as a union

injunction, n. a court order that specifies an action a person or group must or must not take

A founder of the American Federation of Labor (AFL), Samuel Gompers was one of the most important leaders of the American labor movement.

manufacturers by strikes and agitation." Through these actions, the skilled workers achieved "what [they] had failed to achieve through legislation."

Early on, the AFL excluded women and African Americans from joining its trade unions. In the 1890s, Gompers seemed open to including African Americans. He said to the white members of the AFL, "As working men we are not justified in refusing them [African Americans] the right of the opportunity to organize."

But ten years later, he abandoned this view. While the AFL worked to protect skilled workers, it did little to aid the organizing efforts of semiskilled or unskilled workers, including tens of thousands of women and child laborers.

Think Twice

Why did the Knights of Labor decide to keep its organization secret?

Find Out the Facts

Put together a brief presentation explaining the history and impact of a local trade or labor union, including its connection to national labor organizations.

Strikes and Retaliation

Labor strife in the period from 1865 to 1914 was at times intense. There were hundreds of strikes each year across America. And actions—strikes or **lockouts**—sometimes turned violent as workers made demands and employers pushed back.

Vocabulary

lockout, n. the closure of a business by an owner to gain concessions from workers during a labor dispute

One incident occurred in Chicago in May 1886. On May 1, several workers were killed or hurt by police during a strike at the McCormick Reaper Works. Three days later, on May 4, workers met in Haymarket Square to protest the violence from police. Someone in the crowd threw a bomb toward the police, and an officer was killed. In the confusion that followed, police opened fire, killing both police officers and other people. In the aftermath, eight people were convicted of conspiracy, though the bomb thrower was never identified. The Haymarket incident attracted international attention. Employers used it as an example to help accuse the labor movement of being full of foreigners, anarchists, and radicals.

Unions can be powerful, and when workers strike, they can sometimes win better wages, hours, and working conditions. But this was not what resulted

The events at the Haymarket Riot contributed to anti-union sentiment across the country.

from the Homestead Steel Strike of 1892. The Homestead Steel Works, located just outside Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, was owned by the Carnegie Steel Company and employed more than three thousand workers. Carnegie Steel's owners—Andrew Carnegie and his business partner Henry Frick—had installed new equipment and begun new processes for making steel at Homestead. When the steelworkers' union, the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel, and Tin Workers, tried to enforce the union's contract with the Carnegie Steel Company, the company built a tall fence around the steel mill and announced that the plant would reopen without union workers. On July 6, 1892, a group of three hundred men from the Pinkerton Detective Agency, employed by Carnegie and Frick, approached the Homestead Steel Works by boat. Gunfire erupted between blockading strikers on shore and the Pinkerton men. Three Pinkertons and seven workers were killed in the exchange. Within days, the governor of Pennsylvania sent eight thousand soldiers to Homestead, and the plant was reopened. The workers had lost.

Think Twice

Why do you think employers resisted workers' demands for shorter hours and better working conditions?

The Second Industrial Revolution brought many changes to the United States. As you have read, many people were dissatisfied by these changes. Many Americans, frustrated with the status quo, began to advocate for political, economic, and social reforms to address the new problems they faced.

PRIMARY SOURCE: "THE GOSPEL OF WEALTH" BY ANDREW CARNEGIE

Andrew Carnegie was a wealthy industrialist who made a massive fortune from the steel industry. In this essay, Carnegie explains the importance of philanthropy in addressing the growing economic inequality in the United States.

The problem of our age is the proper administration of wealth, that the ties of brotherhood may still bind together the rich and poor in harmonious relationship. . . . The contrast between the palace of the millionaire and the cottage of the laborer with us to-day measures the change which has come with civilization. . . . But whether the change be for good or ill, it is upon us, beyond our power to alter, and, therefore, to be accepted and made the best of. . . .

This, then, is held to be the duty of the man of wealth: To set an example of modest, unostentatious living, shunning display or extravagance; to provide moderately for the legitimate wants of those dependent upon him; and, after doing so, to consider all surplus revenues which come to him simply as trust funds, which he is called upon to administer, and strictly bound as a matter of duty to administer in the manner which, in his judgment, is best calculated to produce the most beneficial results for the community—the man of wealth thus becoming the mere trustee and agent for his poorer brethren, bringing to their service his superior wisdom, experience, and ability to administer, doing for them better than they would or could do for themselves.

Source: Carnegie, Andrew. "The Gospel of Wealth." *The Gospel of Wealth, and Other Timely Essays*. New York: The Century Co., 1900. pp. 1–2, 15.

PRIMARY SOURCE: *WITH POOR IMMIGRANTS TO AMERICA* BY STEPHEN GRAHAM (1914)

In this excerpt, Stephen Graham describes being on a ship with other immigrants traveling to the United States.

"We are going to a great country," [I said,] "where a great people will look at us with creative eyes, making the beautiful out of the ugly, the big and generous out of the little and mean, the headstone out of the rock that the builders rejected."

After supper I left my friend and went upstairs alone. The weather had changed, and the electric lights of the ship were blazing through the rain, the decks were wet and windswept, and the black smoke our funnels were belching forth went hurrying back into the murky evening sky. The vessel, however, went on.

Downstairs some were dancing, some singing, some writing home laboriously, others gossiping, others lying down to sleep in the little white cabins. There was a satisfaction in hearing the throbbing of the engines and feeling the pulse of the ship. We were idle, we passed the time, but we knew that the ship went on.

Going above once more at nine, I found the rain had passed, the sky was clear and the night full of stars. In the sea rested dim reflections of the stars, like the sad faces we see reflected in our memory several days after we have gone from home. I stood at the vessel's edge and looked far over the glimmering waves to the horizon where the stars were walking on the sea. "What will it be like in America?"

Source: Graham, Stephen. *With Poor Immigrants to America*. New York: Macmillan, 1914. pp. 33–34.

Chapter 2
Populism and the People's Party

The Framing Question

What factors contributed to the emergence of the People's Party during the late 1800s?

The Granger movement was just one part of a growing populist movement in the United States during the late 1800s.

A New Movement Emerges

Prior to industrialization, the United States was an agrarian country. As you have discovered, most Americans lived and worked on farms. The Second Industrial Revolution reshaped the daily lives of Americans, and not just the individuals it drew to growing cities on the East Coast and in the Midwest.

Vocabulary

agrarian, adj. relating to farming or agriculture

Rapid industrialization also changed the lives of people who continued to farm, and not always for the better. Confronted with new challenges in the late 1800s, America's farmers turned to **populism**.

Vocabulary

populism, n. a political perspective that gives priority to the interests of ordinary people

Agrarian Distress

While industrialists and entrepreneurs grew wealthier during the Second Industrial Revolution, America's farmers faced a much different reality. Farmers, just like factory owners, had benefited from mechanization and new technologies. Human and animal labor was increasingly replaced by machines and devices that saved time and increased crop production. American productivity produced a glut, or excess, of crops, which caused prices to decrease. Farmers were forced to drop their prices further and further to compete with one another. Eventually, prices went so low that farmers were selling their grain for less than it cost them to grow it.

Many farmers went into debt during this time. They borrowed money to buy supplies, machinery, and more land so they could increase their crop production. They hoped that by growing and selling

A number of factors contributed to declining crop prices in the decades following the Civil War.

more crops, they could earn more money. Instead, their actions collectively increased the glut and decreased prices even more.

The federal government did not help farmers deal with these problems. Instead, many turned to a group called the Patrons of Husbandry. Formed in Minnesota in 1867, the original purpose of the organization was to educate farmers. Farmers could also socialize with one another. Membership in the Patrons of Husbandry spread across the country during the 1870s. Local chapters were called Granges. As a result, the Patrons of Husbandry became known as the Granger movement.

The Grangers quickly evolved their mission from education to political activism. Just as factory workers and miners who banded together to form unions, the Grangers realized there was strength in numbers. Granges around the country organized their members to fight unfair business practices. They lobbied state legislatures to pass new laws that protected farmers' interests. Women played an important role in the Granger movement and held leadership positions in the organization. The Granger movement, however, was not always inclusive to African Americans, especially in the South. Southern Grangers viewed formerly enslaved

Think Twice

How did the Granger movement differ from other organizations that existed at the same time?

people as economic competition and prevented Black people from joining. African American farmers responded by forming their own association, the Colored Farmers' National Alliance and Cooperative Union, in 1886.

Grangers in southern states like Louisiana found themselves in opposition to a powerful political group known as Bourbon Democrats. Much like many northern Republicans, Bourbon Democrats supported business interests through their laissez-faire approach to government and the economy. They also supported the Jim Crow laws that kept African Americans as second-class citizens. In the eyes of the Grangers, the Bourbon Democrats were more concerned with lining their own pockets than helping struggling farmers. These sentiments helped populism grow.

Populism vs. Railroads and Banks

A large source of populist frustration was the influence that railroads and banks wielded during the Second Industrial Revolution. Many people also resented the wealth that owners of these industries acquired at farmers' expense. Nationwide, railroads competed for the business of large shippers and buyers. These customers received discounted rates. But farmers, forced to rely on local railroads that faced no price competition, paid much higher shipping rates. Farmers were also forced to pay fees to move their produce using grain elevators, many of which were owned by railroads.

Populists believed that banks, like railroads, also contributed to the plight of American farmers. You recently read that desperate farmers often went into debt in their attempts to increase profits. But the high cost of borrowing money could make their problems worse. Banks offered farmers loans with higher interest rates than loans offered to industries. Banks defended these higher rates on the ground that lending to farmers was riskier than lending to other types of businesses.

Grain elevators are used to store grain in bulk and then load it onto trains or boats for transport to markets across the country.

Farmers could not predict how much they would produce, nor could they control the weather. As crop prices continued to drop, farmers struggled to pay back their loans after each harvest. They then took out new loans to cover their costs of planting. This was a vicious cycle that many farmers could not break.

Think Twice

Do you agree with the justification used by the banks to charge farmers higher interest rates? Why or why not?

Grangers across the country pushed for legislation to protect farmers from the railroads and banks. In the 1870s, Grangers secured the passage of laws in Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin that limited the rates businesses could charge. The railroads and grain-storage companies sued to overturn the laws. The U.S. Supreme Court heard these "Granger cases" in 1877. In *Munn v. Illinois*, the Supreme Court upheld an Illinois law that set a maximum rate for facilities that stored grain. The Supreme Court made a different ruling in *Wabash v. Illinois*. In this case, the court overturned a law that prevented railroads from discriminating against customers based on how far they were shipping their goods.

The Currency Debate

Populists searched for numerous solutions to the growing financial crisis among farmers. One suggestion was that the government could help farmers build silos to store their excess grain until prices increased. Another idea that was very popular among populists, both farmers and some other working people, was that the government could use its power to create **inflation**. Inflation often has the effect of increasing interest rates. Borrowers benefit from unanticipated inflation because the money they pay back to lenders is worth less than the money they borrowed. The populists wanted the government to cause inflation by adding more money into the economy.

Vocabulary

inflation, n. a rise in prices and a fall in the purchasing value of money

In 1873, Congress had passed an act that stopped the production of silver coins and began shifting the country entirely to the gold standard. Under the gold standard, paper currency represented a certain amount of gold held in reserve

by the federal government. The value of gold guaranteed the value of the paper currency. The gold standard helped the government keep tight control over the country's money supply—the amount of paper currency would not go beyond the value of the country's gold.

Think Twice

Why would owners of western silver mines oppose the gold standard?

The Free Silver Movement wanted the government to go back to minting silver coins. Free Silverites called for "bimetallism," a system in which paper currency would be tied to both silver and gold and the amount of silver coins would be unlimited. This would put far more money in circulation, causing the inflation the populists were seeking to achieve.

The federal government did not give in to demands for unlimited coinage of silver coins. But it did pass the Bland-Allison Act in 1878. The act reintroduced the silver dollar. It also required the U.S. Treasury to buy a certain amount of silver each month to be made into coins. For a time, economic prospects for farmers improved. The issue of free silver fell to the wayside. An economic panic in 1893, however, caused populists to take up the cause again.

Free silver got a boost at the 1896 Democratic Party Convention. A populist presidential candidate named William Jennings Bryan gave his powerful "Cross of Gold" speech, calling for the United States to adopt bimetallism. It was the conclusion of his speech that really drew people's attention. He said, "You shall

This silver dollar certificate was printed in 1886, after Congress reintroduced the silver dollar through the Bland-Allison Act.

not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns; you shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold." And as he said this, he threw his arms wide before the hundreds of people gathered in the convention hall. There was complete silence as he slowly returned to his seat. But then, after a few seconds, there was thunderous applause. The audience cheered and threw their hats in the air; they hugged one another in great joy. Bryan's speech was such a success that he won the Democratic nomination. However, he lost the election to the Republican candidate William McKinley, who put the nation on the gold standard.

William Jennings Bryan was an advocate of the Free Silver Movement and promoted many other populist policies.

Find Out the Facts

Find out how long the United States used the gold standard to some degree.

The People's Party

The Granger movement played an important role in farmers' lives. It also led to the formation of new organizations, including the Farmers' Alliance(s) that emerged in the 1870s and 1880s. Like the Granger movement, the Farmers' Alliance(s) tackled key issues that impacted farmers. These included crop failures, low crop prices, and rising debt. One way the Farmers' Alliance(s) helped members was by forming **cooperatives**, which offered lower prices than retail suppliers.

As the situation of America's farmers became more desperate, the Farmers'

Vocabulary

cooperative, n. an organization that is owned and operated by its users for economic benefit

Alliance(s) became more radical and more political, and local Farmers' Alliance(s) had some success at the state level. Then in 1892, leaders of the movement formed a new national political party, the People's Party, also known as the Populists. The core of the People's Party was farmers.

The People's Party **platform** included many social, political, and economic reforms. It championed free silver to increase the money supply and help farmers pay their debts. It advocated for public ownership of railroads and communication lines. It proposed the direct election of federal senators as opposed to their election by state legislatures, a nationwide requirement for secret ballots in elections, and a federal income tax that would target the wealthy. It also recommended constructing public warehouses for farmers to store their surplus crops. And for non-farmers, it called for an eight-hour workday.

Vocabulary

platform, n. the policies supported by a political party

Think Twice

Why did the People's Party platform include electoral reforms?

In Louisiana, a People's Party had formed in 1891, partly in opposition to the Bourbon Democrats, who had controlled the Louisiana legislature since the waning of Reconstruction. The extensive corruption of the Bourbon Democrats caused the state to go into debt. In 1879, the state's general assembly called a convention to deal with the debt problem and instate a new constitution. While the convention resolved the debt crisis, the new constitution protected special interests and severely restricted the rights of African Americans.

The People's Party in Louisiana wanted to change the laws that enabled the Bourbon Democrats to maintain their hold over state politics. Populist support was especially strong in rural areas. Louisiana's farmers and sharecroppers had not recovered from the economic impact of the Civil War, and the Bourbon Democrats had done little to help them.

Elections of 1892 and 1896

The People's Party participated in its first election in 1892. James B. Weaver, the Populist candidate for president, won all the electoral votes in four states and a little over a million popular votes.

James Weaver was the People's Party candidate for the presidency in 1892, and James Field was his running mate.

Populist candidates won several seats in Congress. Three states elected Populist governors. The party also won hundreds of elections at the local and state level across the Midwest. The People's Party was less successful in the South, where voters' desire for reform was outweighed by racial prejudice, and Democratic candidates won elections by promising to uphold segregation and other Jim Crow laws.

The *Louisiana Populist* newspaper, first published in 1894, helped drive support for the People's Party in Louisiana. It promoted populist causes and criticized the gold standard. It's important to note that the *Louisiana Populist* included messaging that promoted white supremacy. While this was not the stance of the national People's Party, the authors of the newspaper included the messaging to attract voters who otherwise would have voted for the Democratic Party.

By 1896, the People's Party was mostly absorbed into the Democratic Party, which chose the populist William Jennings Bryan as its presidential nominee. When Bryan lost the election, the People's Party finally ended. Yet many of the Populists' causes would be picked up by other reformers.

Find Out the Facts

Research the Democratic Party's platform in the 1896 election.

Writers' Corner

Create a poster or other presentation that compares the 1892 People's Party platform to the 1896 Democratic Party platform.

In 1892, the People's Party had a modest showing at the national level. By 1896, the party's presidential aspirations had been absorbed into those of the Democratic Party.

PRIMARY SOURCE: "I FEED YOU ALL" (1875)

PRIMARY SOURCE: EXCERPTS FROM *THE LOUISIANA POPULIST* (JUNE 5, 1896)

All men who recognize the necessity for reform should join the People's party. . . .

All money should be full legal tender whether it suits the bankers or not. . . .

To fund a debt is only another way of robbing the people slowly, but surely. . . .

Let us march in solid phalanx [close formation of soldiers] against the common enemy—the Republican-Democratic Machine. . . .

If every man who complains of money being scarce would vote the Populist ticket we would carry the nation by an immense majority. . . .

It is true Populism to abide by the will of the majority. There is no other road to success in politics. Stick together, vote together, work together, and pray together. . . .

Put in from now until the national and state conventions meet on organizing. Never stop until a Populist club flaunts its banner to the breeze in every voting precinct. Populists must be represented on the board of election managers or be counted out. . . .

If the farmer is not watchful, the weeds will choke out his small grain. So it is with the people in politics; it is a continual warfare against class legislation, which destroys all popular rights. Save the crop, farmers, or it will be useless to plant another year. . . .

Money is the most subtle and refined of disbursing agencies; that the proper function of money is to serve a public use; and that to allow private persons or corporations to issue money and control its volume and the rates of interest is to put the people's property in the hands of speculators.

The earth is the primary source of subsistence. Labor the primary source of production. Transportation the means of distributing property. Money is the medium for exchanging values. These four propositions cover the whole field of human exertion. These principles are fundamental. All the rest are matters of detail. . . .

Source: *The Louisiana Populist.* (Natchitoches, Natchitoches Parish, La.), 05 June 1896. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Library of Congress. p. 1.

Chapter 3
Reform Movements

The Framing Question

How did reformers respond to the effects of industrialization and urbanization?

The Turn of the Century

As you have discovered, the end of the 1800s and the beginning of the 1900s was a time of extraordinary change. It was an age of scientific and technological progress when new inventions transformed everyday life. And it was an age when Americans pursued social progress and more rights to improve people's lives, including civil rights for African Americans.

The Flatiron Building in New York City, built in 1902, symbolized technological progress at a time when many Americans felt that social progress was lagging.

Progressivism and the Gilded Age

In 1873, Mark Twain coauthored a novel titled *The Gilded Age: A Tale of Today.* Historians use the term *Gilded Age* to refer to the time period from the 1870s to the 1890s. When you gild something, you cover something ordinary, such as wood or plaster, with a very thin layer of gold. By calling these years the Gilded Age, historians are suggesting that while a few Americans lived bright lives of riches and pleasure, there were many who experienced poverty and suffering. The historian Eric Foner points out that by 1890, the richest 1 percent of Americans owned more wealth than the other 99 percent.

The period partially overlaps with the years known as the Progressive Era. When someone is called **progressive**, it merely means they want to see things improve by embracing change. But during the late 1800s and early 1900s, the word *progressive* came to have a very specific meaning in politics. Then, as now, a person described as a political progressive was one who believed in making active use of government to bring about economic and social change. Political progressives believed in using laws, rules, public policies, and regulations to shape the economy and society. During the Progressive Era, there were a variety of ways in which government and activism were used to address the many new concerns that were arising as a result of industrialization and urbanization.

One goal of Progressives was to make politics more democratic. They worked against the excesses of the Gilded Age and in furtherance of some populist causes. An example is the Seventeenth Amendment, ratified in 1913, which gave new power to voters by changing the way U.S. senators were elected. The Constitution originally gave state legislatures the power to elect U.S. senators. Progressives wanted to remove this seeming limitation on democracy and make senators directly responsible to the public. Many state legislatures had already come to realize that they were in danger of choosing people who, while well-known and influential, might not reflect the public will. Some had adopted various means, including elections, to conform

Vocabulary

progressive, adj. moving toward new ideas, policies, or opportunities

their choices to popular opinion. The Seventeenth Amendment changed the process nationwide so that U.S. senators are chosen in popular elections, just like members of the House of Representatives.

The Muckrakers

Before problems can be addressed as challenges, they must be identified. Journalists called muckrakers played a key role in the Progressive Era by exploring and exposing a variety of problems within the United States. Why the name *muckrakers*? It was because these investigative reporters were said to be raking the muck—the mud—of society with their investigations, exposing that muck to light.

Working and living conditions were changing, affecting every level of society. Successful business owners saw their personal wealth and living standards improve, often dramatically. Factory workers, on the other hand, faced long hours, endured harsh and often dangerous working conditions, struggled economically, and lived simply.

Jacob Riis was a muckraker and a social reformer who photographed

Robert La Follette

Robert M. La Follette, known as "Fighting Bob," was a governor of and U.S. senator from Wisconsin. In Wisconsin, La Follette took on state political bosses and the railroads. He also fought for increased democracy through the initiative, the referendum, and the recall. Initiatives empowered voters to use a petition to propose legislation rather than relying on legislators to do it. Referendums empowered voters to petition to repeal existing legislation. Recall empowered voters to petition to remove elected officials from office. While Wisconsin's legislature failed to pass amendments that instituted the initiative and referendum, the state did adopt the direct primary, giving voters, instead of party leaders, the power to choose candidates for elected office. On the national level, La Follette became synonymous with the Progressive movement. While in the U.S. Senate, he supported labor reforms, women's suffrage, the direct election of U.S. senators, and greater restrictions on railroads and corporations.

poor neighborhoods in cities. In 1890, he published a book titled *How the Other Half Lives*. In his book, he didn't just describe the poverty of New York City's tenements—he showed it. His photographs captured adults and children wearing torn and ragged clothing and living in small, cramped apartments with few amenities. Riis's book was a call to action and resulted in the passage of new laws. One law required newly built apartment buildings to have courtyards to enable natural light and fresh air to flow into living areas.

Ida Tarbell's reporting focused on large corporations and monopolies. In her 1902 book, *The Rise of the Standard Oil Company*, she wrote about John D. Rockefeller. She detailed the practices he used to drive his competitors out of business on his way to building his oil monopoly. Tarbell's **exposé** was widely read and contributed to the passage of laws that regulated trusts and monopolies.

Vocabulary

exposé, n. a written account that reveals the often scandalous findings of an investigation

This Jacob Riis photograph suggests how bad living conditions were for the poor in New York City in the early 1900s.

Think Twice

Do journalists today have a responsibility to highlight social problems?

Upton Sinclair was a muckraker concerned with the health and safety of the food Americans ate. His 1906 novel, *The Jungle*, exposed the terrible conditions in Chicago's meatpacking plants. Sinclair witnessed the conditions firsthand while working undercover. He wrote:

> There would be meat that had tumbled out on the floor, in the dirt and sawdust, where the workers had tramped and spit. . . . There would be meat stored in great piles . . . rats would race about on it. . . . The packers would put poisoned bread out for them; they would die, and then rats, bread, and meat would go into the hoppers together.

He went on to explain that the meat would be packaged and sold to unsuspecting Americans. Sinclair's account was deeply shocking and captured the attention of the American people. In response, Congress passed the Pure Food and Drug Act and the Meat Inspection Act of 1906.

Not all muckrakers wrote articles or books about the corruption they uncovered. Thomas Nast chose to illustrate the corruption instead. Nast was a popular political cartoonist who illustrated into the Progressive Era. Perhaps the most notorious of his subjects was William Magear "Boss" Tweed. Tweed was a powerful politician in New York City during the 1870s and the leader of the Tammany Hall **political machine**. Boss Tweed and his men stole millions of dollars from New York City's government, and they bribed people to help keep them in power.

Vocabulary

"political machine" (phrase) a group that maintains political control, usually of a city, through bribery and intimidation

Thomas Nast's cartoons of Boss Tweed and Tammany Hall helped put the political boss behind bars.

Nast's cartoons attacked Tweed and Tammany Hall and helped bring their corruption to light. Tweed served a year in prison in 1873. He fled to Spain after being sued by the state of New York. Spanish officials were able to identify Tweed from one of Nast's cartoons, resulting in his arrest and return to a New York City jail.

Nevertheless, while Boss Tweed was clearly involved in corrupt politics, he also helped the immigrants and poor of New York City. In exchange for their votes, Tweed made sure the immigrants had housing, jobs, and food. He gave millions of dollars to immigrant neighborhood churches and synagogues, Catholic schools, and orphanages.

Regulating Big Business

During the 1800s and into the 1900s, the federal and state governments followed a laissez-faire approach and largely left businesses alone. There were no federal laws establishing a minimum wage or a workday's length, no regulations concerning working conditions in factories or mines, and no limitations on child labor.

In 1887, Congress established federal oversight over the railroad industry by passing the Interstate Commerce Act. That law created the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC). The ICC was tasked with creating and enforcing new rules about the ways railroads could do business, including establishing fair rates and ending discriminatory freighting practices. It was not very effective in limiting the railroads' abuses. However, the fact that the ICC existed at all signaled a new

A TREATISE

ON THE

LAW OF RAILROADS

CONTAINING A CONSIDERATION OF THE ORGANIZATION, STATUS AND POWERS OF RAILROAD CORPORATIONS, AND OF THE RIGHTS AND LIABILITIES INCIDENT TO THE

LOCATION, CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF RAILROADS

AND ALSO THE

DUTIES, RIGHTS AND LIABILITIES OF RAILROAD COMPANIES

AS CARRIERS

UNDER THE RULES OF THE COMMON LAW AND THE INTERSTATE COMMERCE ACT

BY

BYRON K. ELLIOTT

AND

WILLIAM F. ELLIOTT

Authors of Roads and Streets, Appellate Procedure and General Practice

In Four Volumes

VOLUME II

INDIANAPOLIS AND KANSAS CITY

THE BOWEN-MERRILL COMPANY

1897

By the end of the nineteenth century, the federal government was passing laws to give more oversight to the railroad industry.

Responsibility in 377 Industrial Accidents Resulting in Death (Pittsburgh, PA, 1907–08)

A study by Crystal Eastman of workplace accidents in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, disproved employers' claim that 95 percent of accidents were the result of worker carelessness.

chapter in government oversight over private business.

The Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890 was intended to increase economic competition by making monopolies illegal. This law was immensely popular and passed by huge majorities in Congress. Under the Sherman Antitrust Act, the federal government had the power to force trusts to break into smaller parts that would compete against one another. Like the Interstate Commerce Act, the Sherman Antitrust Act was a promising idea poorly executed. Its wording was unclear, and a Supreme Court ruling in 1895 weakened the law considerably. The Clayton Antitrust Act, signed into law by President Woodrow Wilson in 1914, strengthened the Sherman Antitrust Act by closing **loopholes**, clarifying important terms, and including new regulations to end anticompetitive business practices.

Vocabulary

loophole, n. a gap or deficiency in a law that enables individuals and organizations to evade the law's stated purpose

Think Twice

Why do you think Congress waited so long to take action against monopolies and trusts?

"The Octopus Who Strangles the World," a cartoon originally from *The Minneapolis Times*, shows the dangers of monopolies.

Social Reform

Social reform in the Progressive Era centered on improving conditions for people who often could not advocate for themselves.

Settlement houses were an important vehicle of reform in poor immigrant neighborhoods in the nation's rapidly growing cities. Settlement house workers were generally well educated and from privileged backgrounds. They volunteered their time to organize kindergartens, clubs,

Dorothea Dix

Dorothea Dix was born in 1802 and died in 1887, before the height of the Progressive Era. However, her work was very influential to the activists who followed in her footsteps. Dix was a social reformer and advocate for improved institutional mental health care. She studied the way the states treated impoverished, mentally ill men and women. As she traveled from state to state—from New Hampshire to Louisiana—she found people kept in terrible conditions in jails, almshouses, and prisons. Dix was often successful in her appeals to state governments to build hospitals and institutions to care for people in need of mental health care.

classes, playgrounds, festivals, and libraries for impoverished immigrants, especially women. Jane Addams founded Hull House in Chicago in 1889, one of the nation's first social settlements. By 1907, Hull House had grown into more than a dozen buildings, including a theater, music school, gym, art gallery, and community kitchen. Addams said, "America's future will be determined by the home and the school. The child becomes largely what he is taught; hence we must watch what we teach, and how we live."

Settlement houses were more than just **civic centers**. They were also political centers. Volunteers worked alongside neighborhood residents on issues like housing reform and city sanitation. In New York City's Greenwich House, poor men and women from the neighborhood traveled with the settlement's founder, Mary Kingsbury Simkhovitch, to City Hall, as she later wrote, "to stir up officials." The urban poor found support, kindness, and aid in settlement houses. By 1910, there were about four hundred social settlements in cities across the United States.

Vocabulary

civic center, n. a building for public performances, sporting events, etc.

Think Twice

Why were settlement houses considered both civic centers and political centers?

The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire

Poor working conditions were another target of Progressive Era reformers. Unfortunately, it was not muckrakers or reformers but a massive tragedy that focused the public's attention on the plight of factory workers.

The Triangle Shirtwaist Company was a sweatshop that produced blouses in New York City. Most of the company's employees were young immigrant women who worked thirteen-hour days hunched over sewing machines and earned just six dollars a week. The factory managers used cruel practices to increase productivity, including locking the exterior doors to the factory to prevent the workers from leaving to use the bathroom. The sweatshop was unsanitary, and there were piles of scrap fabric all over the floor. Workers' demands for improved working conditions and building safety were ignored for years.

Destruction in one of the workrooms at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory

On March 25, 1911, a fire started in the factory and quickly spread. There were no fire extinguishers, only buckets of water to put out the blaze. The building had just one small fire escape, and the firefighters' ladder only reached the sixth floor of the ten-story building. Workers jumped from the windows or into the empty elevator shaft to escape. A total of 146 people died.

The event made national headlines, and several hundred thousand people joined the workers' funeral procession in New York City. Progressive reformers and politicians worked together to pass dozens of new state laws that protected the safety of workers. Many of these laws became the basis of federal laws passed in the 1930s.

Child Labor Reforms

Child labor was another target of Progressive Era reformers, but the issue was complicated by a disagreement: was regulating child labor the responsibility of the federal government or of the states? As of 1900, there were still no federal labor standards that applied specifically to children. Only a fraction of the states had child labor laws, and many of those were not enforced.

Progressive reformers organized the National Child Labor Committee (NCLC) in 1904. Lewis Hine, a photographer, took photos and documented the stories of child

laborers across the country on behalf of the NCLC. His work exposed conditions that caused outrage and demands for action.

Congress responded by passing the Keating-Owen Child Labor Act in 1916. The act made it illegal for factories, shops, and mines to sell products made by children under a certain age or by children under sixteen who worked more than eight hours a day or at night. When a challenge to the law reached the U.S. Supreme Court, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote, "If there is any matter upon which civilized countries have agreed . . . it is the evil of . . . child labor." But Holmes was outvoted by his colleagues, and the Supreme Court ruled the act unconstitutional in the case *Hammer v. Dagenhart*.

Find Out the Facts

Research the Supreme Court's opinion in the *Hammer v. Dagenhart* case. Why did the justices rule the Keating-Owen Act unconstitutional?

Writers' Corner

Write a brief article about the Supreme Court's opinion in *Hammer v. Dagenhart* from the perspective of a journalist living in 1918. Include your opinion of the outcome of the case in the article.

Progressivism and the Presidency

Theodore "Teddy" Roosevelt was a Progressive and Republican who served as president from 1901 to 1909. During his time in office, he made active use of the federal government in a variety of ways to institute reforms. In 1902, he personally intervened to settle a strike by coal miners against owners of coal mines. In 1906, after reading Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, Roosevelt pushed for government regulation of food and drugs sold to consumers.

Roosevelt used the federal government to regulate and control various elements of the economy. He regulated mining, food and drugs, railroads, and the oil industry. He also set out to use the power of the federal government to dissolve corporate monopolies and trusts that he judged were acting against the public interest. To be clear—Roosevelt did not think all trusts acted against the general welfare. Only "bad trusts" were targets of his trust-busting campaign. Using the Sherman Antitrust Act, Roosevelt's administration

filed **lawsuits** to dissolve such trusts. Roosevelt brought lawsuits against more than forty trusts, including a successful case against one of J. P. Morgan's railroad trusts. His energetic support for breaking up trusts and monopolies earned him the nickname "trustbuster."

Theodore Roosevelt's Progressivism also extended to the environment. Industrialization and urbanization called for massive amounts of timber, minerals, and fossil fuels. To keep up with demand, industrialists clear-cut forests, dug new mines, and polluted waterways, endangering the health and living patterns of people and wildlife.

Vocabulary

lawsuit, n. a process in which the courts decide a disagreement or enforce a right

This 1904 political cartoon shows President Theodore Roosevelt as a "trustbuster." He's using a large stick to knock over trusts.

Think Twice

How did industrialization impact the environment?

A lifelong outdoorsperson, Roosevelt was horrified by the destruction and pollution of the land. He knew that the country's natural resources were not infinite. They would need to be conserved for use during his time and for future generations. He was also concerned about preserving outdoor spaces for the enjoyment of all Americans.

The Antiquities Act of 1906 was an important part of Theodore Roosevelt's conservation and preservation efforts. The act empowered the federal government to designate and protect areas of archaeological and cultural importance. Roosevelt created eighteen national monuments through this act. He was also responsible for establishing over two hundred million acres (eighty-one million hectares) of national forest, dozens of wildlife sanctuaries, and five national parks.

Theodore Roosevelt helped to define the role of a Progressive president for his successors, Republican William Howard Taft and Democrat Woodrow Wilson. Taft and Wilson embodied Progressive ideals to varying degrees, but both continued to champion numerous Progressive causes. The Taft administration (1909–13) filed seventy-five lawsuits against companies that violated antitrust laws—nearly twice as many as during Roosevelt's time in office—and oversaw the dissolution of the Standard Oil Company. The Wilson administration (1913–21) introduced many economic reforms and enacted laws that banned child labor and established an eight-hour workday for railroad workers.

Eugene V. Debs and Socialism

Eugene V. Debs was a leading American **socialist** in the Progressive Era. Born in Terre Haute, Indiana, Debs in his youth worked on a railroad and helped form a union for railway workers. In 1901, Debs became a founding member of the Socialist Party of America. Debs and other socialists believed that wealthy Americans and rich corporations had too much influence on shaping the nation's laws. They wanted to expand democratic economic control through public ownership of businesses. That meant that the public would own railroads, banks, and factories.

Vocabulary

socialist, n. a person who supports an economic system in which major industries are owned by the government rather than by private businesses

Relatively few Americans supported the overthrow of capitalism. But socialist support for more modest regulatory measures, such as laws that ensured a minimum wage, shorter working hours, workers' compensation (for injured or otherwise unemployed workers), and other reforms, did influence American politics. Eugene Debs ran for president of the United States five times during the Progressive Era. In 1912, he received 6 percent of the vote—some nine hundred thousand votes. That is the highest percentage of votes a socialist has ever received in an American presidential election. During his election campaign of 1920, Debs was in jail for having spoken out against the draft during World War I. In one speech, he said, "The working class have never yet had a voice in declaring war."

Think Twice

Why do you think many Americans supported Eugene Debs?

The Louisiana Constitution of 1913

The Progressive Era included significant changes to Louisiana's constitution. The state called a constitutional convention in 1913 to discuss two urgent but limited issues (one concerning how to resolve the state's debt and another related to the New Orleans water and sewer board). Swept up by the excitement of the Progressive Era, the delegates greatly expanded their focus. They passed new measures about juvenile justice, trust-busting, education, and public administration. After debating and making major changes, the delegates adjourned instead of conducting a careful review of the final document. Louisiana was left with a confusing constitution that was largely based on the constitution of 1898, which had been written with the primary purpose of disenfranchising African Americans. Confusion reigned after the state supreme court determined that the convention had exceeded its authority. The court invalidated many of the new changes. Another convention was called in 1920 to draft a new constitution.

Working Together

The lives of the social reformers and some of the elected leaders you have read about were in many ways intertwined. William Jennings Bryan and Jane Addams had faced each other as members of college debating teams. Theodore Roosevelt had worked with Jacob Riis to correct the abuses that were common in New York City's homeless shelters. Reformers were able to accomplish much in improving the lives of everyday people partly because they pulled together on so many issues. They proved that a group of people working together can do more than any one person can do alone.

Jane Addams was one of many reformers whose work helped improve the lives of Americans around the turn of the twentieth century.

PRIMARY SOURCE: "THE SENATORIAL ROUND HOUSE" BY THOMAS NAST (1886)

PRIMARY SOURCE: "WHAT DOES THE WORKING MAN WANT?" BY SAMUEL GOMPERS

. . . They tell us that the eight-hour movement can not be enforced, for the reason that it must check industrial and commercial progress. I say that the history of this country, in its industrial and commercial relations, shows the reverse. . . . It means greater prosperity; it means a greater degree of progress for the whole people. . . .

My friends, the only thing the working people need besides the necessities of life, is time. Time. Time with which our lives begin; time with which our lives close; time to cultivate the better nature within us; time to brighten our homes. Time, which brings us from the lowest condition up to the highest civilization; time, so that we can raise men to a higher plane. . . .

What we want to consider is, first, to make our employment more secure, and, secondly, to make wages more permanent, and, thirdly, to give these poor people a chance to work. . . .

We want eight hours and nothing less. We have been accused of being selfish, and it has been said that we will want more; that last year we got an advance of ten cents and now we want more. We do want more. You will find that a man generally wants more. . . . We live in the latter part of the nineteenth century. In the age of electricity and steam that has produced wealth a hundred fold, we insist that it has been brought about by the intelligence and energy of the workingmen, and while we find that it is now easier to produce it is harder to live. We do want more, and when it becomes more, we shall still want more. And we shall never cease to demand more until we have received the results of our labor.

Source: *Pittsburg Dispatch.* (Pittsburg [Pa.]), 02 May 1890. p. 1. Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers. Lib. of Congress.

Glossary

A

agrarian, adj. relating to farming or agriculture **(24)**

C

capitalism, n. an economic system in which resources and businesses are privately owned and the government does not control prices **(8)**

civic center, n. a building for public performances, sporting events, etc. **(44)**

collective bargaining, n. the negotiation of better wages and working conditions by a group, such as a union **(18)**

cooperative, n. an organization that is owned and operated by its users for economic benefit **(30)**

corporation, n. a type of large business **(12)**

D

diagnostic, adj. related to identifying a disease or a problem **(12)**

discrimination, n. unfair treatment of a person or group because of beliefs about that group of people **(6)**

E

economy, n. the way a country manages its money and resources to produce, buy, and sell goods and services **(3)**

exposé, n. a written account that reveals the often scandalous findings of an investigation **(39)**

I

immigration, n. the act of coming to live permanently in a new country **(2)**

industrialization, n. a shift to the widespread use of machines and factories to produce goods **(2)**

inflation, n. a rise in prices and a fall in the purchasing value of money **(28)**

injunction, n. a court order that specifies an action a person or group must or must not take **(18)**

L

laissez-faire, n. a philosophy that calls for very little or no government involvement in the economy **(8)**

lawsuit, n. a process in which the courts decide a disagreement or enforce a right **(47)**

lockout, n. the closure of a business by an owner to gain concessions from workers during a labor dispute **(19)**

loophole, n. a gap or deficiency in a law that enables individuals and organizations to evade the law's stated purpose **(42)**

M

malnutrition, n. a state of poor health due to not having enough healthy food **(4)**

mechanization, n. the process of replacing human or animal labor with machine labor **(9)**

monopoly, n. the complete control of the supply of a good or service by one person, country, or company **(13)**

N

nativism, n. a preference for people born in a country rather than immigrants **(6)**

P

platform, n. the policies supported by a political party **(31)**

"political machine" (phrase) a group that maintains political control, usually of a city, through bribery and intimidation **(40)**

populism, n. a political perspective that gives priority to the interests of ordinary people **(25)**

progressive, adj. moving toward new ideas, policies, or opportunities **(37)**

S

socialist, n. a person who supports an economic system in which major industries are owned by the government rather than by private businesses **(48)**

strike, n. a practice of workers refusing to work until the company meets their demands in negotiations **(18)**

sweatshop, n. a factory in which employees work for long hours in unsafe conditions for a low wage **(16)**

T

trust, n. a combination of corporations created to reduce competition and control prices **(13)**

U

urbanization, n. the formation and growth of cities **(2)**

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